

Tiqqun leyl Shavu'ot 5781

Why Do We Whisper Part of the Shema?¹

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שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְהוָה אֶחָד:

Hear, Israel: the LORD (YHWH) is our God, Adonai is One. (Deut 6:4)

The following two lines are to be said silently:

בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מְלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד

Blessed [is His] glorious Name, whose kingdom is forever and ever.

וְאַהֲבָתְךָ אֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל-לִבְבְּךָ וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל-מְאֹדֶךָ:

You shall love the LORD (YHWH) your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. (Deut 6:5)

I. How is *Barukh shem* to be parsed? Is it even grammatical?

- Literally: “Blessed name glory his-kingdom forever.”
- Possibly: “Blessed is/be the One the name of the glory of whose kingdom is everlasting.”
- Possibly: “Blessed is/be the name of his glorious kingdom forever.”
- Possibly: “Blessed is/be the name [of God]. The glory of his kingdom is everlasting.”

II. Are there biblical parallels to the phrase *Barukh shem*? How are they different?

1) Psalm 72:18–19

בְּרוּךְ אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עֹשֵׂה נִפְלְאוֹת לְבָדּוּ:

Blessed is the LORD (YHWH) God, God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things;

וּבְרוּךְ אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְעוֹלָם וְיָמָּא כְבוֹדוֹ אֶת-כָּל הָאָרֶץ אָמֵן וְאָמֵן:

Blessed is His glorious name forever; His glory fills the whole world. Amen and Amen.

2) Nehemiah 9:5

וַיֹּאמְרוּ הַלְוִיִּם יֵשׁוּעַ וְקַדְמִיאֵל בְּנֵי חֲשַׁבְנִיָּה שְׂרָבְיָה הוֹדִיָּה שְׁבַנְיָה פְתַחְיָה קוּמוּ בְּרַכּוּ אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם מִן-הָעוֹלָם עַד-הָעוֹלָם וַיְבָרְכוּ אֱלֹהֵיכֶם כְּבוֹדוֹ וְיָמָּא עַל-כָּל-בְּרָכָה וְתִהְיֶה:

The Levites Jeshua, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabniah, Sherebiah, Hodiah, Shebaniah, and Pethahiah said, “Rise, bless the LORD (YHWH) your God who is from eternity to eternity [saying]: ‘May your glorious name be blessed, exalted though it is above every blessing and praise.’”

¹ All texts and translations are from Sefaria.org. We have sometimes modified the translations.

III. The earliest appearance of the full *Barukh shem* phrase: The evidence of the Mishnah Mishnah Yoma 3:8

בָּא לוֹ אֶצֶל פָּרוֹ, וּפְרוּ הָיָה עוֹמֵד בֵּין הָאוֹלָם וְלַמִּזְבֵּחַ, רֹאשׁוֹ לְדָרוֹם וּפְנָיו לְמַעְרָב, וְהִכְהֵן עוֹמֵד בְּמִזְרַח
וּפְנָיו לְמַעְרָב, וְסוֹמֵךְ שְׁתֵּי יָדָיו עָלָיו וּמְתוּנָהּ. וְכֵן הָיָה אוֹמֵר, אֲנִי הֵשֵׁם, עֲוֹתִי פִשְׁעֵי חַטָּאתִי לְפָנֶיךָ אֲנִי
וּבֵיתִי. אֲנִי הֵשֵׁם, כִּפֹּר נָא לְעֹנֹת וּלְפִשְׁעֵים וּלְחַטָּאִים, שְׁעוֹתִי וְשִׁפְשָׁעֵי וְשִׁחַטָּאתִי לְפָנֶיךָ אֲנִי וּבֵיתִי,
כִּכְתוּב בְּתוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה עֲבָדְךָ (וַיִּקְרָא טו:ל) כִּי בַיּוֹם הַזֶּה יִכַּפֵּר עֲלֵיכֶם לְטַהֵר אֶתְכֶם מִכָּל חַטָּאתֵיכֶם לְפָנַי יְיָ
תִטְהַרְוּ. וְהֵן עוֹנִין אַחֲרָיו, בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

The High Priest comes and stands next to his bull, and his bull was standing between the Entrance Hall and the altar, its head facing to the south and its face to the west. And the priest stands to the east of the bull, and his face points to the west. And he places his two hands on the bull and confesses. And this is what he would say: Please, God, I have sinned, I have done wrong, I have rebelled before You, I and my family. Please, God, grant atonement, please, for the sins, and for the wrongs, and for the rebellions that I have sinned, and done wrong, and rebelled before You, I and my family, as it is written in the Torah of Moses your servant: “For on this day atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you of all your sins; you shall be clean before LORD (YHWH)” (Lev 16:30). And they respond after him: Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom forever and all time.

IV. The origin of the practice according to the Babylonian Talmud: History or Legend? Bavli Pesahim 56a

דָּאָמַר רַבִּי שִׁמְעוֹן בֶּן לָקִישׁ: “וַיִּקְרָא יַעֲקֹב אֶל בְּנָיו וַיֹּאמֶר הֲאִסְפוּ וְאֶגִּידָה לָכֶם”. בֵּיקֵשׁ יַעֲקֹב לְגִלוֹת לְבָנָיו קִץ הַיָּמִין,
וְנִסְתַּלְקָה מִמֶּנּוּ שְׂכִינָהּ. אָמַר: שָׂמָא חַס וְשְׁלוֹם יֵשׁ בְּמַטְתִּי פְסוּל, כְּאֲבָרְהָם שִׁיבָא מִמֶּנּוּ יִשְׁמַעְאֵל, וְאֲבִי יִצְחָק שִׁיבָא מִמֶּנּוּ
עֵשָׂו? אָמְרוּ לוֹ בְּנָיו: “שִׁמְעֵ יִשְׂרָאֵל, ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ ה' אֶחָד”. אָמְרוּ: כְּשֵׁם שְׂאִין בְּלִבָּךְ אֵלָּא אֶחָד, כִּךְ אִין בְּלִבְנוּ אֵלָּא אֶחָד.
בְּאוֹתָהּ שְׁעָה פְתַח יַעֲקֹב אֲבִינוּ וְאָמַר: “בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד”.
אָמְרֵי רַבָּנָן: הֵיכִי נַעֲבִיד? נֹאמְרֵיהּ, לֹא אָמְרוּ מֹשֶׁה רַבִּינוּ. לֹא נֹאמְרֵיהּ, אָמְרוּ יַעֲקֹב. הֲתִקְוִנוּ שִׁיְהוּ אוֹמְרִים אוֹתוֹ בְּחֻשָּׁא.
אָמַר רַבִּי יִצְחָק אָמְרֵי דְבֵי רַבִּי אַמִּי: מְשַׁלְּ לְבַת מְלֹךְ שְׁהֲרִיחָה צִיקֵי קִדְרָהּ. אִם תֹּאמַר — יֵשׁ לָהּ גְּנָאִי. לֹא תֹאמַר — יֵשׁ
לָהּ צַעַר. הֲתַחֲלִיו עֲבָדֶיהָ לְהַבִּיא בְּחֻשָּׁא.

As Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish said that it is written: “And Jacob called his sons and said, Gather around and I will tell you what will occur to you in the end of days [בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים]” (Genesis 49:1). Jacob wanted to reveal to his sons when the complete redemption would arrive at the end of days (compare Daniel 12:13: (לְקִץ הַיָּמִין)), but the Divine Presence abandoned him, rendering him unable to prophesy. He said: “Perhaps the Divine Presence has abandoned me because, Heaven forbid, one of my descendants is unfit, as was the case with my grandfather Abraham, from whom Ishmael emerged, and like my father Isaac, from whom Esau emerged.” His sons said to him: “Hear Israel, our father, the LORD (YHWH) is our God, the LORD (YHWH) is One.” They said: “Just as there is only one God in your heart, so too, there is only one in our hearts.” At that moment, Jacob our father said in praise: “Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom for ever and ever.”

The Rabbis said: What should we do? Shall we recite this verse? But Moses our teacher did not say it in the Torah. Shall we not recite it? But Jacob said it. In order to resolve this dilemma they established that it should be recited, but only surreptitiously.