



TORAH in MOTION

## Uncovering Diverse Approaches to Davening Between the Bavli and the Yerushalmi

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### **1. Mishnah Berakhot 5:1**

One should not stand up to pray save in a reverent frame of mind (*Koved Rosh*).

The pious men of old (*Hasidim ha-Rishonim*) used to wait an hour before praying in order that they might concentrate their thoughts upon their father in heaven.

Even if a king greets him [while praying] he should not answer him; even if a snake is wound round his heel he should not interrupt his prayer.

### **2. Bavli Berakhot 32a-33a**

R. Yosef said: This was meant to apply only to Jewish kings, but for a Gentile king he may interrupt...

Our Rabbis taught: It is related that once when a certain *hasid* was praying by the roadside, an officer came by and greeted him and he did not return his greeting. So he waited for him until he finished his prayer. When he had finished his prayer he said to him: Fool! is it not written in your Law, "Only take heed to thyself and keep thy soul diligently", and it is also written, "Take ye therefore good heed unto your souls"? When I greeted you why did you not return my greeting? If I had cut off your head with my sword, who would have demanded your blood from me? He replied to him: Wait until I appease you with words. If, [he went on], you had been standing before a mortal king and your friend had come and given you greeting, would you have returned it? No, he replied. And if you had returned his greeting, what would they have done to you? They would have cut off my head with the sword, he replied. He then said to him: Have we not here then an a fortiori argument? If [you would have behaved] in this way when standing before an earthly king, who is here today and tomorrow in the grave, how much more so I when standing before the supreme King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, who endures for all eternity? Forthwith the officer was appeased, and the *hasid* departed (*niftar*) to his home in peace.



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**3. Bavli Berakhot 28b**

When R. Yohanan ben Zakkay fell ill his disciples went in to visit him. When he saw them he began to weep. His disciples said to him: ...Lamp of Israel, pillar of the right hand, mighty hammer! Why do you weep? He replied: If I were being brought today before a mortal king who is here today and tomorrow in the grave, whose anger, if He is angry with me, does not last forever, who if he imprisons me does not imprison me forever and who if he puts me to death does not put me to everlasting death, and whom I can appease with words and bribe with money, even so I would weep. Now that I am being brought before the King of Kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, who lives and endures for all eternity, whose anger, if He is angry with me, is an everlasting anger, who if He imprisons me imprisons me forever, who if He puts me to death puts me to death forever, and whom I cannot appease with words or bribe with money — and what's more, but there are two ways before me, one leading to Paradise and the other to Hell, and I do not know by which I shall be taken, shall I not weep? They said to him: Master, bless us. He said to them,: May it be [God's] will that the fear of heaven shall be upon you like the fear of flesh and blood. His disciples said to him: Is that all? He said to them: If only [you can attain this]! You can see, for when a man wants to commit a transgression, he says, I hope no man will see me. At the moment of his departure (*petirato*) he said to them: Remove the vessels so that they shall not become unclean, and prepare a throne for Hezekiah the king of Judah who is coming.

<b><u>R. Yohanan b. Zakkay story</u></b>	<b><u>Hasid story</u></b>
<p>...before a mortal king who is here today and tomorrow in the grave...</p> <p>and whom I can appease with words...</p> <p>...before the King of Kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, who lives and endures for all eternity... and whom I cannot appease with words</p> <p>At the moment of his <u>departure</u> (<i>petirato</i>)</p>	<p>...before a mortal king who is here today and tomorrow in the grave...</p> <p>[Wait until I appease you with words]</p> <p>how much more so I when standing before the supreme King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, who endures for all eternity?</p> <p>Forthwith the officer was <u>appeased</u>, and the <i>hasid</i> <u>departed</u> (<i>niftar</i>) to his home in peace.</p>



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### **5. Bavli Berakhot 33a**

R. Shesheth said: This applies only in the case of a serpent, but if it is a scorpion, he breaks off... Our Rabbis taught: In a certain place there was once a reptile/lizard which used to injure people. They came and told R. Hanina b. Dosa. He said to them: Show me its hole. They showed him its hole, and he put his heel over the hole, and it came out and bit him, and it died. He put it on his shoulder and brought it to the Beth ha-Midrash and said to them: See, my sons, it is not the reptile/lizard that kills, it is sin that kills! On that occasion they said: Woe to the man whom a reptile/lizard meets, but woe to the reptile/lizard which R. Hanina b. Dosa meets!

### **6. Yerushalmi Berakhot 5:1, 8c**

R. Yohanan was sitting and reciting (the 'Shema') in front of the Babylonian synagogue in Zipporin (sepphoris). A governor passed and he did not rise before him. They (the governor's escorts) came and wanted to strike him, he said to them: leave him alone, for he is occupied with the law of his creator...

R. Huna says in the name of R. Yosse – the mishnah relates only to the case of a snake, however, if it is a scorpion he stops (praying) since it strikes again and again...

It was told about R. Hanina b. Dossa that he was standing and praying, and a certain poisonous reptile (*habarbar*) came and bit him, and he didn't interrupt his prayer. They went and found the reptile dead upon his hole. They said: Woe to the man who a reptile bites, and woe to the reptile who bit R. Hanina b. Dossa.

What was the nature of this poisonous reptile? When he bites a man, if the man reaches water first the reptile dies, and if the reptile reaches water first the man dies.

His disciples said to him: Rabbi, didn't you feel anything? He said: I swear that my heart was concentrated on prayer and I didn't feel anything. R. Yitzhak b. Elazar said: God (right away when he was bitten) created a spring under his feet...