

9 Adar

**THE FAST OF
HILLEL AND
SHAMMAI**

צום הלל ושמאי – ט' אדר

An opening song

A song of ascents, for David –

Look, how good and how pleasant is the dwelling of brothers together.

Like goodly oil on the head coming down over the beard,

Aaron's beard that comes down over the opening of his robe.

Like Hermon's dew that comes down on the parched mountains.

For there the Eternal One ordained the blessing: life forevermore.

שיר המעלות לדוד –

הִנֵּה מָה טוֹב וּמָה נְעִים שֵׁבֶת אַחִים
גַּם יַחַד:

כְּשֶׁמֶן הַטּוֹב עַל הָרֹאשׁ יֵרֵד עַל הַזָּקֵן
זָקֵן אַהֲרֹן שְׂיֵרֵד עַל פִּי מִדֹּתָיו:

כְּטֵל חֶרְמוֹן שְׂיֵרֵד עַל הַרְרֵי צִיּוֹן כִּי
שָׁם צִוָּה יְקֹוֹק אֶת הַבְּרָכָה חַיִּים עַד
הָעוֹלָם:

Shir hama'a-lot l'David.

Hinei mah tov u-mah nai'im shevet achim gam yachad.

*Ka-shemen ha-tov al ha-rosh yo-reid
al ha-zakan Aharon she-yo-reid al pi mi-do-tav.*

*K'tal Cher-mon she-yo-reid al ha-r'rei Tzi-yon
ki sham tzivah y'kovak et ha-b'rachah chayim ad ha'olam.*

A yahrzeit candle is lit

Blessed are You, our Living God,
Sovereign of the universe, who
sent forth a Voice that said 'these
and these' are words of wisdom.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר
הוֹצִיא בַּת קוֹל שְׁאֵמְרָהּ, אֱלוֹ וְאֱלוֹ דְּבָרֵי
חֻכְמָה:

*Baruch attah Adonai Eloheinu Melech ha-olam,
asher hotsi bat kol she-amrah, eillu va-eillu divrei chochmah.*

Relations between the House of Hillel and the House of Shammai are used as a glowing example of constructive conflict. The two schools disagreed strongly on matters of religious law, yet always parted as friends and maintained good relations. Everyone had the chance to speak their mind and to be heard respectfully.

Even though one would forbid and the other permit, one would rule impure and the other pure, the House of Shammai did not refrain from intermarrying with the House of Hillel, nor did the one refuse to use articles declared pure by the other.

*Af al pi she-eilu osrin v'eilu matirin, eilu poslin v'eilu mach-shirin,
lo nim-n'u Beit Shammai mi-lisa nashim mi-Beit Hillel,
v'lo Veit Hillel mi-Beit Shammai, v'lo nim-n'u osin tohorot eilu al gabei eilu.*

אף על פי שאֵלו אוסְרין וְאֵלו מַתִּירין אֵלו
פּוֹסְלִין וְאֵלו מְכַשְׂרִין לֹא נִמְנְעוּ בֵּית
שַׁמַּי מִלְשׂא נָשִׁים מִבֵּית הַלֵּל וְלֹא בֵּית
הַלֵּל מִבֵּית שַׁמַּי וְלֹא נִמְנְעוּ עוֹשֵׂין
טְהוֹרוֹת אֵלו עַל גְּבֵי אֵלו:

Their disagreements were always holy and never self-serving, always wholehearted and never venal.

An argument for the sake of Heaven will, in the end, endure; one not for the sake of Heaven will not endure. What is an argument for the sake of Heaven? That between Hillel and Shammai.

*Kol machloket she-hi l'shem Shamayim sofah l'hit-ka-yeim,
v'she-einah l'shem Shamayim ein sofah l'hit-kayeim.
Eizo hi machloket she-hi l'shem Shamayim?
Zo machloket Hillel v'Shammai.*

כָּל מַחְלֻקַּת שֶׁהִיא לְשֵׁם שָׁמַיִם סוֹפָה
לְהִתְקַיֵּם וְשֶׁאִינָהּ לְשֵׁם שָׁמַיִם אֵין סוֹפָה
לְהִתְקַיֵּם אִיזוּ הִיא מַחְלֻקַּת שֶׁהִיא לְשֵׁם
שָׁמַיִם? זוּ מַחְלֻקַּת הַלֵּל וְשַׁמַּי:

It all went wrong on the Ninth of Adar. Voices were silenced. The two groups of scholars gathered not in their usual study hall, but in the attic of a senior colleague. They proceeded by vote – but this vote was different. It was held in conditions of violence and terror. That day, the House of Shammai brought weaponry, and used force to keep their opponents downstairs. And the House of Hillel was bowed with shame, and Hillel himself sat before Shammai, subjugated, as if he were his junior.

It was taught in the name of Rabbi Yehoshua Oniya: the students of the House of Shammai stood downstairs and began to slaughter the students of the House of Hillel.

תָּנָא רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אוֹנִיָּא תַלְמִידֵי
בֵּית שַׁמַּי עֲמָדוּ לְהֵן מִלְמָטָה
וְהָיוּ הוֹרְגִין בְּתַלְמִידֵי בֵּית הַלֵּל:

*T'na Rabbi Y'hosh-u'a Oni-ya:
talmidei Veit Shammai amdu la-hen mil-matah
v'ha-yu horgin b'talmidei Veit Hillel.*

We will never know exactly what happened in the attic. Some say there were just threats, some say actual bloodshed. Some estimate the number of deaths in the thousands or tens of thousands.

However, the details are not important. Whatever took place, that day was as bad for our people as the day on which the Golden Calf was made. True, not all of the Shammaiites acted with violence; some were in the attic passing the decrees. Yet all those who took part in the sham vote upstairs benefited from the butchery below. They preferred to see their colleagues stifled rather than tolerate a difference of opinion.

Because of the conflict that befell the descendants of the Wise Ones, our teachers decreed us a fast day. Truly, how great a disgrace to our Torah was that dispute between Hillel and Shammai?

עַל מַחְלֻקַּת נִפְלוּ לְבַנֵּי חֲכָמִים
גָּזְרוּ תַעֲנִית בְּךָ מוֹרִינוּ וְכַפָּה בְּנֵי
שַׁמַּי וְהַלֵּל כִּי בְרִיבָם בְּאַמַּת
שִׁפְלוֹת לְתוֹרַתֵינוּ:

*Al machloket naflu livnei chachamim gazru ta'anit b'cha moreinu,
v'kama v'nei Shammai v'Hillel ki b'rivam b'emet shiflut l'Torateinu.*

Please rise

Eternal God, God of wit and wisdom, God who speaks many words to many people: we stand before you shame-faced at our own arrogance. Each of us is created in Your image, with an inquiring mind and a creative soul, yet too often we have sought to suppress and muzzle our fellow human beings whose opinions and thoughts are different to our own.

On the Ninth of Adar, the voice of the House of Hillel was silenced, and 18 decrees were unjustly passed. We now recall 18 ways in which our own behaviour silences others and deters them from speaking their truth.

We have been ¹violent and ²abusive. We have ³defamed. We have ⁴lodged malicious complaints. We have ⁵distorted. We have ⁶misused the memory of the Holocaust. We have ⁷given a platform to inciters of hatred, and we have ⁸reaped the benefit of those who seek to silence others' voices. We have ⁹demanded absolute unity. We have ¹⁰patronised, and ¹¹labelled, and been ¹²sectarian. We have ¹³further marginalised those on the edges. We have ¹⁴mansplained. We have ¹⁵interrupted. We have ¹⁶harassed and ¹⁷stalked. We have ¹⁸sought to create an emotional cost for others.

הַתְּקַפְנוּ, בְּזִינוּ, הַשְׁמַצְנוּ,
הַתְּלוּנָנוּ בְּאוֹפֵן מְרִגִּיז, סֵרְסָנוּ,
עֵינֵינוּ אֶת־זִכְרוֹן הַשׁוֹאָה, נִתְּנוּ
דוֹכָן לְמַחְרָרֵי שְׁנַאת חַיִּים,
הִרְוַחְנוּ מִמִּשְׁתִּיקֵי קוֹל, תְּבַעְנוּ
אַחַדוֹת דְּעִים, הַתְּנַשְׂאָנוּ,
סוֹגְנוּ, עֲשִׂינוּ כְּתִיתוֹת, הוֹשְׁבָנוּ
בְּסִפָּר, הַסְּגַבְרָנוּ, קִטְעָנוּ,
הִטְרַדְנוּ, צִדְנוּ, יְצָרְנוּ עֲלוֹת
רְגִשִׁית:

*Hit-kafnu, bi-zinu, hish-matznu, hit-lo-nanu b'ofen margiz,
sei-rasnu, i-vinu et zichron ha-Sho'ah, na-tanu du-chan lim-char-charei sin-at chinam,
hir-vachnu mi-mashtikei kol, ta-vanu achadut dei-im,
hit-nasei-nu, si-vagnu, asinu ki-tati'ut, hoshavnu bis-far, his-g'varnu,
ka-tanu, hit-radnu, tzadnu, ya-tzarnu alut rig-shit.*

Read responsively

Everything is contained within the Word:

The Great Voice spoke all.

Within it are faces that change and conflict:

Pure and impure, forbidden and permitted, unclean and kosher.

The Great Voice omitted nothing;

It did not even omit contradictions and paradoxes.

Each receives their own understanding:

Everyone who stands in every generation

These and these are both the words of the Living God.

The Eternal One spoke these words to the entire community.

Kaddish d'Rabbanan

We remember our teachers who are no longer with us – those who inspired and those who challenged – alongside the students of the House of Hillel whose lives were lost to a destructive conflict that stains our tradition with shame.

With the words of the Kaddish d'Rabbanan, the Rabbis' Kaddish, we pray for a time when all humanity will dwell together in peace, each accepting the other for what they are and for what they believe. On that day, all members of the Jewish people will be able to ascend to the attic of the sages, to discuss, expound, interpret and imagine, without fear or fetters.

Let us magnify and let us sanctify in this world the great name of God whose will created it. May God's reign come in your lifetime, and in your days, and in the lifetime of the family of Israel – quickly and speedily may it come. Amen. May the greatness of God's being be blessed from eternity to eternity. Let us bless and let us extol, let us tell aloud and let us raise aloft, let us set on high and let us honour, let us exalt and let us praise the Holy One, whose name is blessed, who is far beyond any blessing or song, any honour or any consolation that can be spoken of in this world. Amen. For the House of Israel and its rabbis, their students, and the students of the students, and for all who engage in the study of Torah here or in any other place, we pray that their Divine Parent may grant them, and all those present, abundant peace, grace, love and compassion, long life, prosperity and redemption. Amen. May great peace from heaven and the gift of life be granted to us and to all the family of Israel. Amen. May the Maker of peace in the highest bring this peace upon us, upon all Israel and upon all the world. And let us say: amen.

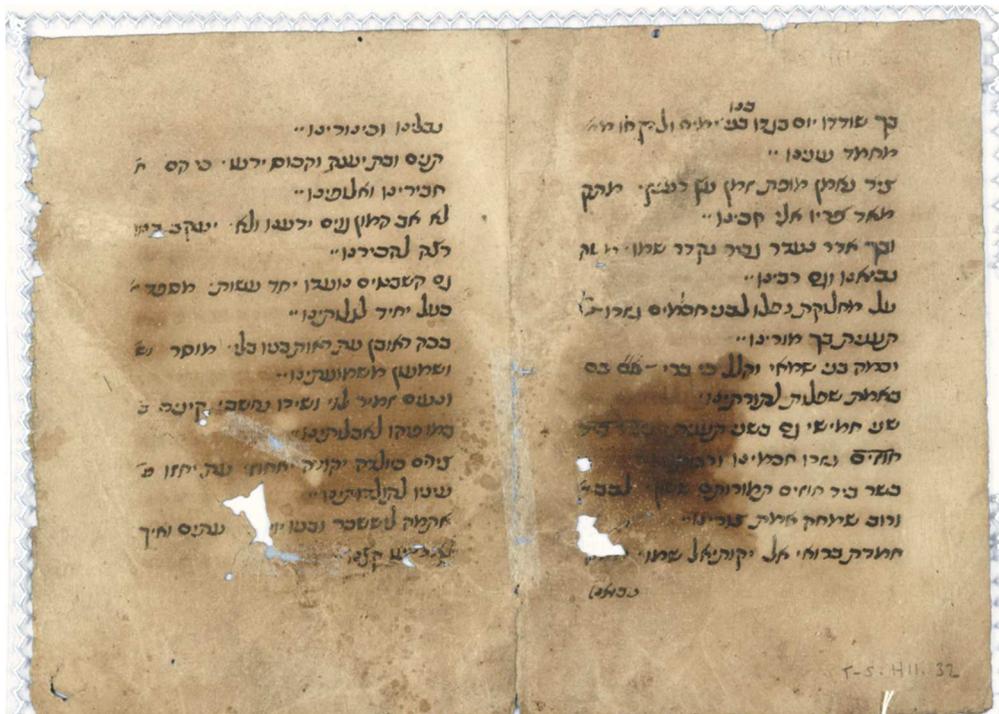
יִתְגַּדַּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא
בְּעֵלְמָא דִּיבְרָא כְרַעוּתֵהּ: וְיִמְלִיךְ
מַלְכוּתֵהּ בְּחַיִּיכוֹן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוֹן וּבְחַיֵּי
דִּיכֹל־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעַגְלָא וּבְזָמַן
קָרִיב. וְאִמְרוּ אַמֵּן: יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא
מְבָרַךְ לְעֵלְמָא וּלְעַלְמֵי עַלְמֵי אֵי:
יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרוֹמַם
וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא וְיִתְהַדָּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלָּל
שְׁמֵהּ דִּי־קֻדְשָׁא. בְּרִיךְ הוּא. לְעֵלְמָא
מְרַבְּל-בְּרַבְתָּא וְשִׁירְתָּא
תְּשַׁבְּחָתָא וְנַחֲמָתָא דִּי־אַמְיָרָן
בְּעֵלְמָא. וְאִמְרוּ אַמֵּן: עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל
וְעַל רַבָּנָן וְעַל תַּלְמִידֵיהוֹן, וְעַל
כָּל-תַּלְמִידֵי תַלְמִידֵיהוֹן, וְעַל כָּל-
מִן דְּעַסְקִין בְּאוּרֵיתָא, דִּי בְּאַתְרָא
הָדָן וְדִי בְּכָל-אַתְרָא וְאַתְרָא, יְהֵא
לְהוֹן וּלְכוּל שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא, חַנּוּא
וְחַסְדָּא וְרַחֲמִין, וְחַיִּין אַרְיִכִין,
וּמְזוּגֵי רוּיַחָא, וּפְרָקְנָא מִן-קֻדָּם
אַבוּהוֹן דִּי בְּשִׁמְיָא וְאַרְעָא וְאִמְרוּ
אַמֵּן: יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמֵי
וְחַיִּים עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל.
וְאִמְרוּ אַמֵּן: עוֹשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם
בְּמְרוֹמָיו הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ
וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְעַל-כָּל-הָעוֹלָם.
וְאִמְרוּ אַמֵּן:

Yitgaddal v'yitkaddash sh'meih rabba,
 b'alma di v'ra chiruteih, v'yamlich malchuteih,
 b'chayyeichon uv'yomeichon uv'chayyei di chol beit yisra'el,
 ba'agala u'vizman kariv, v'imru amen.
 Y'hei sh'meih rabba m'varach, l'alam ul'almei almaya.
 Yitbarach v'yishtabbach v'yitpa'ar v'yitromam v'yitnassei
 v'yit-haddar v'yit'alleh v'yit-hallal, sh'meih di kudsha, b'rich hu,
 l'eilla min kol birchata v'shirata tushb'chata v'nechemata,
 di amiran b'alma, v'imru amen.
 Al Yisra'el v'al rabbanan v'al talmidei-hon,
 v'al talmidei talmidei-hon, v'al kol man d'oskin b'o-rai-ta,
 di v'at-ra ha-dein v'di b'chol atar va-atar,
 y'hei l'hon ul'chol sh'lama rabba, chi-na v'chisda v'ra-chamin,
 v'chayin a-richin, u-m'zonei r'vichei,
 ufur-kana min-kodam Avuhon di vi-Sh'maya v'ar-a, v'imru amen.
 Y'hei sh'lama rabba min sh'maya,
 v'chayyim aleinu v'al kol yisra'el, v'imru amen.
 Oseh shalom bimromav, hu ya'aseh shalom aleinu v'al kol yisra'el,
 v'al kol ha-olam,
 v'imru amen.

If one sees a crowd of people, one should say: blessed be the One who is wise in secrets, for just as each face in the crowd is different each other, nor are the thoughts behind them the same, but rather each person – this one and that one – has a unique mind of their own.

אם רָאָה אוֹכְלוֹסִין שֶׁל בְּנֵי אָדָם
 אוֹמֵר, בְּרוּךְ חָכֵם הַרְזִים, כְּשֵׁם שְׂאִין
 פְּרָצוּפוֹתֵיהֶן שׁוֹיִן זֶה לָזֶה, כִּךָּ אֵין
 דַּעְתָּן שׁוֹה, אֲלֵא כֹל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד יֵשׁ
 לוֹ דַּעָה בְּפִנֵי עַצְמוֹ:

*Im ra'ah uch-lusin shel b'nei adam omer,
 baruch cha-cham ha-razim, k'shem she-ein par-tzu-poteihen shavin zeh l'zeh,
 kach ein da-tan sha-veh,
 elah kol echad v'echad yeish lo dei-ah bifnei atzmo.*



BACKGROUND TO THE FAST OF HILLEL AND SHAMMAI

The Ninth of Adar is listed, alongside many other obscure remembrances, as a fast day in the geonic text known as the Megillat Ta'anit Batra. This is supported by genizah fragments, although a range of dates in early Adar are used. One such fragment gives us the name 'Fast of Hillel and Shammai' (see Shulamit Elitzur, *infra*, page 32). The Hilchot G'dolot's calendar of obscure fasts is incorporated by the Tur, Orach Chaim 580:1, although Rabbi Joseph Karo (Beit Yosef, Orach Chaim ad loc) claimed never to have come across anybody who observes them. Perhaps it is time that at least this one is resurrected.

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND NOTES

This liturgy was compiled by Student Rabbi Gabriel Kanter-Webber. Material was drawn from the following sources:

- 2 **Blessed are you...** Adapted from the draft Rosh Hashanah morning machzor released by the Movement for Reform Judaism (2016: 9th ed), page 131.
- 3 **Relations between...** Original.
Even though... mYevamot 1:4.
These disagreements... Original.
An argument... mAvot 5:17.
- 4 **It all went wrong...** Original, referring to mShabbat 1:4 and bShabbat 17a.
It was taught ... yShabbat 1:4, 3c.
We will never ... Original.
Because of the conflict... A medieval piyyut from a Cairo Genizah fragment, quoted in Shulamit Elitzur, *Wherefore Have We Fasted? Megillat Ta'anit Batra and similar lists of fasts* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 2007), pages 82-88, lines 56-57.
- 5 **Eternal God, God of wisdom...** Original.
We have... Original. Choices of Hebrew words reflect, in part: (2) Hilchot Talmud Torah 6:14.1; (13) mGerim 3:4; and (14) Shiri Eisner, "You may be mansplaining if...", *Black-Purple* [Hebrew], 22 July 2011: <<http://bit.ly/36dNB2B>>
Everything is contained... Adapted from Recanati's commentary on Exodus 20:1, which in turn refers to Deuteronomy 5:22 and bEruvin 13b.
- 6 **We remember...** Original.
Let us magnify... From *Siddur Lev Chadash*, page 582.
- 7 **If one sees...** Midrash Tanchuma Buber, Pinchas 1
Image Genizah fragment Cambridge T-S H 11.32, 1v, showing piyyut from page 4.

Further reading:

Daniel Roth. *The Story of the 9th of Adar Told Through Disagreements*, Pardes:
<<https://elmad.pardes.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/The-Story-of-9Adar-A-Day-of-Disagreement.pdf>>



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