

Appendix 2 - Excerpts from “An Ancient Jewish Banquet”¹

2. The Preparation of the Meal

Without a doubt the preparation of the various foods lay primarily in the experienced hands of the host’s domestic staff.^a Yet in Jerusalem there also would have been the custom of entrusting the entire banquet to a caterer [*Unternehmer*], who was responsible for purchasing and providing all the food.^b

We should not underestimate the number of courses that were normally prepared at the same time, and then brought to the table one after the other.^c If, for example, it can be related that for a single guest, who arrived unexpected, his host set 24 courses before him, and that for another guest his host even served him 80 dishes made with constantly different foods,^d then at banquets prepared well in advance for distinguished guests there certainly would have been no lack of a tremendously rich abundance of exquisite delicacies.

Of course, the best part of every banquet, in the ancient Jewish view, was and remained the bread. That was so well established that the expression “to break bread” was simply synonymous with “to have a meal” or “to eat.”^e Even the Halacha recognized this fact. It decrees that, when bread and hors d’oeuvres are being enjoyed, a blessing need be spoken only over the bread. The implication is that the bread is the main course, and anything else eaten with it, like meat, eggs, or fish, is merely a side dish.^f In full agreement with this view is the fact that the baking of the bread heads the list of preparations demanded by a banquet; see *Kethuboth* 4^a: “If his [the host’s] bread was baked and his meat prepared and his wine mixed...”²

However, we should be careful lest we imagine that bread, as the main course, was consumed in large quantities, and that meat, fish, etc., as side dishes, were consumed in small quantities. Just the opposite is true, as demonstrated by the large consumption of meat during the aftercourse. See no. 9, note *e*.

Of course no banquet was complete without wine,^g but it was only drunk as mixed wine.^h The mixing itself was not done until the meal had begun, and it was done by the attendant.ⁱ At larger banquets this task was assigned to a special wine-mixer (נְלִיזֵן).^k

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¹ Hermann L. Strack and Paul Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*, vol. 4, *Exkurse zu einzelnen Stellen des Neuen Testaments*, part 2 (Munich: C. H. Beck’sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1928), p. 612,613,614,620-622,623,624,627,628,630,631. Translated by Nathaniel J. Biebert.

² Soncino, 11.

g. Wine belonged to every joyous occasion. *Pesahim* 109^a Baraita: “Our Rabbis taught: A man is in duty bound to make his children and his household rejoice on a Festival, for it is said, And thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, [thou and thy son, and thy daughter, etc.] [Dt 16:14]. Wherewith does he make them rejoice? With wine. R. Judah [c. 150] said: Men with what is suitable for them, and women with what is suitable for them. ‘Men with what is suitable for them’: with wine. And women with what? R. Joseph [† 333] recited: In Babylonia, with coloured garments; in [the land of Israel], with ironed linen garments. It was taught, R. Judah b. Bathyra [c. 110] said: When the temple was in existence there could be no rejoicing save with meat, as it is said, And thou shalt sacrifice peace-offerings, and shalt eat there; and thou shalt rejoice before the Lord thy God [Dt 27:7]. But now that the Temple is no longer in existence, there is no rejoicing save with wine, as it is said, And wine that maketh glad the heart of man [Ps 104:15].”³

h. Mixed wine (גזוג) was contrasted with raw or natural wine (יין טהור). Tosefta, *Berakoth* 4, 3 (8): “Over raw wine one speaks the blessing, ‘[Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe,] who create the fruit of the tree’ ... If one has added water to it, he speaks over it the blessing, ‘[Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe,] who create the fruit of the vine’ ... These are the words of R. Eliezer [c. 90]. The sages, however, said, ‘Whether it is raw [יין טהור] or mixed [גזוג], one speaks over it the blessing, “...who create the fruit of the vine” ...’ • *Berakoth* 50^a Mishnah: “**A blessing is not said over the wine until water is put in it. So R. Eliezer** [c. 90]. **The sages, however, say that the blessing may [also] be said** [beforehand. Then one adds the water and drinks the wine.]”⁴ Cf. JT *Berakhot* 6:1;⁵ *Berakoth* 50^b.⁶

The ratio of wine to water was always different depending on the strength of the wine. With Sharon wine the normal ratio was two parts water to one part wine. Thus in *Niddah* 19^a Mishnah a color of blood like diluted wine is illustrated this way: “**Two parts of water and one of wine of the wine of Sharon.**”⁷ *Niddah* 20^b, 21^a adds as a Baraita: “Sharon wine [diluted] is regarded as the Carmel wine in its natural undiluted state [חיי ולא מוזג] when it is new.”⁸ — The same is found more succinctly in Tosefta, *Niddah* 3, 11 (644). According to that, Sharon wine would have been three

³ Soncino, 563.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 303, 304.

⁵ Neusner, 203.

⁶ Soncino, 305.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 124.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 137.

times as strong as Carmel wine. In Numbers Rabbah 1, 4 the proper ratio of wine to water is generally fixed at 1:2: “Wine that is mixed in the correct proportions consists of one-third of a cup of wine to two-thirds of water.”⁹ — Raba († 352) disagrees in *Shabbath* 77a: “Wine which does not carry three parts of water to one [of itself] is not wine.”¹⁰ — That was the mixture for Babylonian wine, which was stronger than the Sharon wine of Palestine. The mixture preferred by Raba (1:3) is also alluded to in *Erubin* 54a;¹¹ *Nedarim* 55a.¹² For more, see p. 31 and note *h* on p. 70ff.

i. In *Pesahim* 86^a Mishnah the boiler (דקיקה, heating kettle), in which water was heated for diluting the wine, is located “**in the middle**” between two table companies simultaneously eating in *one* room, and “**the waiter [שׂוֹמֵר] rises to mix [the wine].**”¹³ — Thus the mixing was done during the meal where the guests could see it.

k. JT *Shabbat* 1:2: “Rab [† 247] washed his hands [with water]. His son Hiyya then signaled the wine-mixer [מְבַרְבֵּר]...”¹⁴ See the entire passage at note *k* on p. 75.

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6. The Actual Meal

Once people had situated themselves on the dining cushions, they removed their phylacteries^a and loosened their belt.^b Servants brought out a small dining table for each guest.^c Other servants mixed the wine and gave the guests their first cup. Still others brought water for the washing of both hands of each guest. This was the so-called “first water.”^e (The washing of *one* hand during the precourse - see no. 4, note *c* - was not included in the count.) They began the washing with the most prominent member of the table company and concluded with the least.^f The water that ran off their hands was collected in basins or ran down on the floor.^g A towel (מִפְּתָח) was used to dry off the hands. After it was used it was laid on the pillow of the dining cushion, as the

⁹ Sonc. MR, 10.

¹⁰ Soncino, 364.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 378.

¹² *Ibid.*, 173.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 454.

¹⁴ The text follows Billerbeck’s German. Neusner reads: “*Rab washed his hands. He indicated to Hiyya, his son, to mix the wine*” (33).

School of Hillel insisted.^h Failure to dry off the hands was forbidden.ⁱ In the Palestinian view, the washing of the hands marked the beginning of the meal.^k

As soon as the washing of the hands was concluded, the host sat up on his cushion and, in sitting position,^l took the bread in front of him in his hand and said the blessing over it: "Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who bring forth bread from the earth!" (see *Berakoth* 35^a Mishnah¹⁵). The guests answered, "Amen!" to indicate that the blessing was spoken in their name and in their interest. As soon as the "Amen" died out, the host broke (נִצְרַף) the bread^m and gave some to each of those invited.ⁿ He was then the first to eat the bread.^o Afterwards he was also the first to reach out his hand toward the table^p with a small piece of bread, which served as an eating utensil,^q to take his portion of the first course that had been served. The guests immediately followed his example, and with that the meal had actually begun.

If the host so desired, he could also assign the solemn opening of the meal to someone else.^r If he did so, the only stipulation was that the one who spoke the blessing and broke the bread in his place had to actually partake of the meal afterwards.^s

In the same way, the host could also speak on everyone's behalf the blessing over the first cup of wine, which was served with the actual meal.^t For the following cups, however, each guest had to speak it for himself.^u The blessing itself went thus: "Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who create the fruit of the vine!" No doubt only a little wine was generally drunk during the meal, since the actual carousal did not begin until after the table was cleared off, though we do also hear of the host drinking to his guests.^v

The blessing spoken over the bread at the beginning of the meal exempted everything eaten during the meal as a side dish to the bread (such as meat, fish, or eggs) from a further blessing. However, everything that was not considered a side dish to the bread, e.g. fruit, required a special blessing which each guest had to speak for himself.^w The blessing over fruit went thus: "Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who create the fruit of the tree!" One could also say, "...who create the fruit of the ground!" or, "...by whose word all things exist!" (*Berakoth* 40^a Mishnah¹⁶).

Since there was no other eating utensil besides the bread and people therefore had to do quite a bit of eating with their fingers, a washing of the hands *during* the meal was also necessary to maintain cleanliness. This was called the "middle water." Yet this was not considered a required duty, but a matter of free choice.^x The "middle water" only became a required duty when a table companion left the dining room for a bit and after a while returned to the table,^y or when a course of meat was served after cheese had been eaten.^z

¹⁵ Soncino, 217.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 248.

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d. The sequence of events: First the wine was mixed and then came the washing of the hands, in the view of the School of Hillel. *Berakoth* 51^b Mishnah: “**Beth Shammai say that washing the hands precedes the filling [tasting] of the cup, while Beth Hillel say that the filling [tasting] of the cup precedes the washing of the hands.**”¹⁷ — The same can be found, along with the argument for both views, in Tosefta, *Berakoth* 6, 2 (13); JT *Berakhot* 8:2;¹⁸ *Berakoth* 52^a.¹⁹ — The cup was given to the most prominent diner first. Tosefta, *Berakoth* 5, 6 (12): “In what sequence does one mix [taste] the cup? During the meal one begins with the most prominent.”

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k. *Shabbath* 9^b: “And when is the beginning of eating? Rab [† 247] said: When one washes his hands; R. Hanina [c. 225] said: When he loosens his girdle. But they do not differ: the one [the latter] refers to ourselves [Babylonians]: the other [the former] to them [Palestinians].”²⁰ — Cf. Rashi and the Tosafists *ad loc.* • JT *Shabbat* 1:2: “Rab [† 247] washed his hands [before mealtime]. His son Hiyya then signaled the wine-mixer to bring the wine. Rab said to him, ‘We have already begun the meal.’”²¹ After the washing of the hands the opening of the meal immediately follows with the blessing over the bread. No wine may be drunk in between.

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t. JT *Berakhot* 6:6: “**When they [bring out and] mix the wine** [after the guests have reclined at the table], **even though they** [already] **recited a blessing over the first cup** [during the precourse], **they now recite a blessing over the second cup** [which has just been brought]. **[And one person recites the blessing for all of them].**”²² — The same can be found in *Berakoth* 43^a.²³ In the proof passage in Tosefta, *Berakoth* 4, 8 (9), the words “and one says the blessing on behalf of all” are missing.

¹⁷ Soncino, 311.

¹⁸ Neusner, 258.

¹⁹ Soncino, 314, 315.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 33.

²¹ Cf. Neusner, 33. See fn. 14.

²² Neusner, 223.

²³ Soncino, 262.

u. *Berakoth* 42^b Mishnah: “If wine is brought to them in the course of the meal, each one says a benediction for himself.”²⁴ • Tosefta, *Berakoth* 4, 12 (9): “They asked Ben Zoma [c. 110]: Why does it say [in *Berakoth* 42^b Mishnah], ‘If wine is brought to them in the course of the meal, each one says a benediction for himself’? He answered them: Because the throat is not empty. [If one were to speak the blessing for all, so that every guest then had to respond with his ‘Amen!’, this or that diner could choke if he happens to have food in his mouth.]” — The same can be found in JT *Berakhot* 6:6²⁵ and *Berakoth* 43^a.²⁶

v. R. Akiba drinks to the health of his colleagues; see Tosefta, *Shabbath* 7, 9 (118) at Matthew 9:15, note *cc*, p. 516. • In Numbers Rabbah 13, 2 (= Midrash on Song of Songs 5:1), R. Jannai (c. 225) makes a comparison in which he has a king call out to his guests: “May the meal be palatable to you, may it be agreeable to you!”²⁷

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8. The Table Prayer

Immediately after the final washing of the hands, the closing table prayer (בְּרַכַּת הַמִּזְוֶה, “blessing for the food”) was to follow.^a As a rule the host (head of the household) called upon the most distinguished guest for the speaking of the prayer.^b Exceptions to the rule were not impossible.^c Refusing the host’s invitation was considered a grave offense against proper etiquette. Whoever did it anyway was supposed to fear that the days of his life would be shortened,^d while the one who accepted the invitation could expect blessing in time and eternity.^e

The table prayer was introduced with the so-called “blessing of invitation” or “blessing of appeal” (בְּרַכַּת הַזְמִינֵן), in which the one who was supposed to say the table prayer invited the other guests to the common table prayer. The formula for the blessing of appeal was not the same in every case; the more guests were present, the wordier it became.^f Whether the בְּרַכַּת הַזְמִינֵן was already in use in Jesus’ day, we do not know.

After the conclusion of the blessing of appeal, the speaker of the table prayer, sitting upright on his dining cushion,^g grabbed the full cup of wine in front of him on his small dining table, the so-called “cup of blessing” (כּוּס פְּרָכָה; τὸ ποτήριον τῆς εὐλογίας [1Co 10:16]), first with *both* of his hands, then he took it in his right hand alone, elevated

²⁴ Soncino, 259.

²⁵ Neusner, 224.

²⁶ Soncino, 262.

²⁷ Sonc. MR, 505.

it a handbreadth above his small table and, keeping his eyes fixed firmly on it, spoke the customary table prayer.^h The prayer consisted of four benedictions, which were designated according to their content as בְּרַכַּת הַזֶּן, “the blessing: who feed” (= first benediction; e.g. JT *Berakhot* 7:1;²⁸ *Berakoth* 48^b 29); בְּרַכַּת הָאָרֶץ, “the blessing for the land” (= second benediction; e.g. Tosefta, *Berakoth* 7, 1; JT *Berakhot* 7:1;³⁰ *Berakoth* 48^b 31); בְּרַכַּת בּוֹנֵה יְרוּשָׁלַם, “the blessing: who build Jerusalem” (= third benediction; e.g. JT *Berakhot* 7:1;³² *Berakoth* 48^b 33); and בְּרַכַּת הַטּוֹב וְהַמְטִיב, “the blessing: the One who is good and does good” (= fourth benediction; e.g. Tosefta, *Berakoth* 7, 1; JT *Berakhot* 7:1;³⁴ *Berakoth* 48^b 35). The prayer itself is not communicated in our sources, because it is assumed to be well known. However, the occasional quotations from it, which can especially be found in *Berakoth* 46^a,³⁶ 48^b,³⁷ and 49^a,³⁸ show that the first three benedictions already in ancient times went essentially the same as we now have them in modern Jewish prayer books. The fourth benediction is the only exception: Everything that comes after the first sentence in its present form should be regarded as a later addition. We reproduce the entire prayer below according to its present wording in *סדור שפת אמת* (Rodelheim, 1886),ⁱ in order to append to it the most important traditions which have come down from ancient times in connection with our prayer.^k

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h. There were many Halachoth in circulation concerning the “cup of blessing.” We reproduce the chief passages in all their fine details. *Shabbath* 76^b: “R. Nahman [† 320] said in Rabbah b. Abbuha’s [c. 270] name: The cup of benediction must contain

²⁸ Neusner, 232.

²⁹ Soncino, 291.

³⁰ Neusner, 233.

³¹ Soncino, 291, 292.

³² Neusner, 233.

³³ Soncino, 292.

³⁴ Neusner, 232.

³⁵ Soncino, 292.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 279-281.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 291-294.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 294-297.

a quarter of a rebi'ith [of raw wine, that is, one-fourth of a quarter log],* so that it may be mixed and amount to a rebi'ith [a quarter log]." Here it is assumed that the ratio is one part wine to three parts water; cf. note *h*, p. 72f. • *Berakoth* 51^{a,b}: "R. Zera [c. 300] said in the name of R. Abbahu [c. 300] — according to others, it was taught in a Baraita: Ten things have been said in connection with the cup used for grace after meals. It requires to be rinsed and washed, it must be undiluted [i.e. the wine must be undiluted before it is mixed] and full [after it has been mixed], it requires crowning and wrapping, it must be taken up with both hands and placed in the right hand, it must be raised a handbreadth from the ground [the cushion], and he who says the blessing must fix his eyes on it. Some add that he must send it round to the members of his [the host's] household [especially to his wife, to show her honor].† R. Johanan [† 279] said: We only know of four [of those ten things]: rinsing, washing, undiluted [at first] and full [after it has been mixed]. A Tanna taught: Rinsing refers to the inside, washing to the outside. ... 'Crowning': Rab Judah [† 299] crowned it with disciples [i.e. his disciples had to be in a tight circle around him when he spoke the table prayer]; R. Hisda [† 309] surrounded it with [other] cups. [Originally 'crowning' certainly meant floral decoration. Babylonian Jews are responsible for the new interpretation.] 'And undiluted': R. Shesheth [c. 300] said: Up to the blessing of the land. 'Wrapping': R. Papa [† 376] used to wrap himself in his robe and sit down [to say grace over a cup]; R. Assi [c. 300] spread a kerchief over his head. 'It is taken in both hands': R. Hinena b. Papa [c. 300] said: What is the Scriptural warrant for this? — Lift up your hands [*plural*] in holiness and bless ye the Lord [Ps 134:2]. 'And placed in the right hand': R. Hiyya b. Abba [c. 280] said in the name of R. Johanan: The earlier [students] asked: Should the left hand support the right? — R. Ashi [† 427] said: Since the earlier [students] inquired and the question was not decided we will follow the more stringent view [and not let the left support the right]. 'He raises it a handbreadth from the ground': R. Aha b. Hanina said: What Scriptural text have we for this? — I will lift up the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord [Ps 116:13]. 'He fixes his eyes on it': so that his [the one praying] attention should not wander from it. 'He sends it round to the members of his household': so that his wife may be blessed [above all with children]. ... R. Assi [c. 300] said: One should not speak over the cup of benediction [once the one reciting the blessing has taken hold of it with his hands]. R. Assi also said: One should not speak over the cup of punishment. What is the cup of punishment? — R. Nahman b. Isaac [† 356] said: a second cup [i.e. a cup that fell on an even number, so a second,

* It is stated as a general rule in *Pesahim* 105^b: "[T]he cup [of wine] for Grace demands a [minimum] standard" (Soncino, 552).

† On this, see note ϵ on p. 35-36.

fourth, or sixth cup]. It has been taught similarly: He who drinks an even number⁴¹ should not say grace, because it says, Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel [Amos 4:12], and this one is not fitly prepared." Concerning even numbers and the coupled cup see the twenty-first excursus, "Ancient Jewish Demonology" (*Zur altjüdischen Dämonologie*), notes *f* & *g*, p. 532. • JT *Berakhot* 7:5: "R. Jeremiah [c. 320] in the name of R. Yohanan [† 279], 'The ancient [sages] used to ask, "Can the left hand help the right hand out [to hold the cup] when one is reciting the blessing [after the meal] over a cup of wine?" *You learn three things from this question. You learn that one must hold the cup in his right hand. And you learn that one must hold his hand up at least a handbreadth above the table [and not rest it on the table]. And you learn that one must pay attention to the cup [and not put it down and take his mind off it]."*⁴² • JT *Berakhot* 7:5: "Said R. Aha [c. 320], 'Three things were said concerning the cup over which one recites the blessing. It must be full. It must be decorated. It must be clean. And all three [are suggested] in one verse, "O Naphtali, satisfied with favor, and full of the blessing of the Lord" [Dt 33:23]. [This implies that for the cup over which one recites, "The blessing of the Lord," one must be] "Satisfied" with decorations. "Favor" [implies the cup must be] clean. And [when one recites the blessings over the cup it must be] as it implies, "Full.'" Said R. [Yosé b.] Haninah [c. 270], 'Since you have gone [and interpreted part of the verse,] what does [the remainder] of the verse mean, "Possess [יִרְשָׁה] the [sea] and the south?" [It implies that when you follow the advice of the verse] you will be worthy to inherit [a share in] both in this world and the world to come. [According to a gloss at this passage, the imperative form *שֶׁר* would have sufficed in Deuteronomy 33:23. The *י* at the beginning and *ה* at the end of *יִרְשָׁה*, which were superfluous in themselves, are supposed to allude to this world and the world to come, which have been created through *ה* and *י*, according to a maxim of R. Judah, c. 150, and R. Yohanan, † 279.]' Said R. Eleazar [c. 270], 'One does not recite a blessing over a defective cup [one that does not contain a quarter log of mixed wine]. [If] he sips it [before saying the blessing], he renders it defective.' *You learn from this three things. You learn that one does not recite a blessing [after the meal] over a defective cup. You learn that a cup must contain a minimum quantity. And you learn that when one sips [the cup beforehand] he renders it defective.*⁴³ — Cf. *Pesahim* 105^b: "[H]e who says a blessing [over the cup of blessing] must partake

⁴¹ Billerbeck: "Whoever has drunk a coupled cup."

⁴² Neusner, 249, 250.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 250.

thereof [afterwards]; if he tastes it [beforehand] he renders it defective [and therefore unusable].”⁴⁴

i. *First benediction of the table prayer:*[‡] Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who feed the whole world by your goodness! In grace, love, and mercy he gives bread to all flesh, for his grace endures forever. According to his great and everlasting goodness he has not let us be in want, and may he never let us want for food for the sake of his great name. For he feeds and provides for all and does good to all and prepares food for all his creatures which he has made. Blessed are you, O Lord, who feed all!

Second benediction: We thank you, O Lord our God, that you have given our fathers the lovely, good, and wide land [of Israel] as an inheritance, that you have led us, O Lord our God, out of the land of Egypt and redeemed us from the house of slavery. We thank you for your covenant, which you have sealed in our flesh [through circumcision], for your Torah which you have taught us, for your precepts which you have revealed to us, for the life, favor, and love you have graciously bestowed on us, and for the enjoyment of the food with which you continually feed and provide for us day after day, time after time, hour after hour. For all of this we thank you, O Lord our God, and we praise you. May your name evermore be blessed by the mouth of every living thing into all eternity, as it is written: When you have eaten and are satisfied, praise the Lord your God for the good land he has given you [Dt 8:10]. Blessed are you, O Lord, for the land and for the food!

Third benediction: Have mercy, O Lord our God, on Israel, your people, on Jerusalem, your city, on Zion, the place where your glory dwells, on the kingship of the house of David, your anointed, and on the great and holy house on which your name is written. Our God, our Father, tend us, feed us, provide for us, nourish us, and make a spacious place for us, yes, hasten to make us a spacious place out of all our oppressions! Do not let us be in need, O Lord our God, of the charity of men or of their loans, but only of your full, open, holy, and wide hand, that we may never be disgraced and put to shame. Hasten to build Jerusalem, the holy city, in our time! Blessed are you, O Lord, who build Jerusalem in your mercy. Amen!

Fourth benediction: Blessed are you, O Lord our God, King of the universe, God, our Father, our King, our Strong One [Glorious One, נְנִיף־אֵל], our Creator, our Redeemer, our Fashioner, our Sanctifier, the Holy One of Jacob, our Shepherd, the Shepherd of Israel, the King, the One who is good and does good to everyone.[§] For

⁴⁴ Soncino, 522. Billerbeck interprets this somewhat differently than Soncino.

[‡] According to *Sotah* 31^a Mishnah (Soncino, 157), the table prayer could be prayed in any language.

[§] The original wording of the fourth benediction perhaps only went this far. The conclusion would still have been spoken at this point: “So say, ‘Amen!’”

day after day he has done good to us, he continues to do good to us, he will do good to us. He has allotted to us, he continues to allot to us, he will allot to us grace, love, mercy, and freedom, deliverance and success, blessing and health, comfort, provision, and nourishment, compassion, life, peace, and everything good, and he will not let us want for anything of all that is good. The Merciful One - he shall be King over us for all eternity! The Merciful One - blessed be he in heaven and on earth! The Merciful One - praised be he in all families [ethnicities] and extolled by us at all times and glorified by us forever and forevermore! The Merciful One - may he send blessing in abundance to this house and to this table at which we have eaten. The Merciful One - may he send us the prophet Elijah, of blessed memory, that he may bring us glad tidings, help, and comfort. The Merciful One - may he bless my master [my father], the lord of this house, and my mistress [my mother], the lady of this house, them and their house and their children and all that they have, together with us and all that we have. Just as our fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, have been blessed with all, from all, and in all,[¶] so may he bless all of us together with perfect blessing, and we will say, "Amen!" In heaven may one plead what is worthy for them and for us, that it may serve to the preservation of peace [harmony], and that we may receive blessing from the Lord and mercy from the God of our help, and that we may find favor and good understanding in the eyes of God and of men [cf. Pr 3:4]. The Merciful One - may he consider us worthy of the days of the Messiah and of the life of the world to come, the One who makes great the salvation of his King and shows favor to his anointed, to David and his seed forever. The One who makes peace in the heights of his heaven - may he furnish us and all Israel with peace. So say, "Amen!"

[¶] These words are intended as an allusion to Genesis 24:1: "The LORD had blessed Abraham *with all* [בכל]; to Genesis 27:33: "I [Isaac] ate *from* [or *of*] *all* [בכל]; and to Genesis 33:11: "I [Jacob] indeed have *all* [כל]." Cf. *Baba Bathra* 17^a (Soncino, 85).

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