

Lesson 33-The Words Of The ברכה Of ולמלשינים (ברכת המינים) That Led To Its Censorship

מינים

Source 1

Jewish Liturgy by Ismar Elbogen, page 31:

The Hebrew word מין has the basic meaning "species" and can denote any special or exceptional group -- hence, all those who separate themselves from the way of the Torah, heretics. Any heresy could be called מינות; the term embraces the views of the Sadducees, Samaritans, Christians, and Gnostics. Accordingly, considerable debate has occurred as to what particular heresy this benediction was intended to attack, and whether it did not exist already before Christianity.

Source 2

רש"י מסכת ברכות דף יב' עמוד ב' - מינות - אותם תלמידי ישו הנוצרי ההופכים טעמי התורה למדרש טעות ואילול.

Translation: Those followers of Jesus the Nazareth who incorrectly interpret the meaning of the Torah and make false statements about it.

Source 3

Jewish Liturgy by Ismar Elbogen, page 31:

Originally the Christians did not have any special prayers or any particular public worship of their own. They held assemblies for whatever rites were peculiar to Christianity, like the Lord's Supper, but they did not have a coherent liturgy; hence, no Christian liturgy from the first century exists. The Jewish Christians continued to pray with the Jews. At first no one prevented them from doing so, and they had no reason to avoid the synagogue. In one sense the synagogue offered them too little, because it did not take into consideration their particular type of messianic faith and made no room for its expression in the prayers; they found expression for it in their assemblies. Yet, by the same token, nothing in the service conflicted with their own religious views. Thus, they participated in public worship and even served as precentors. The fact that they were Jews who believed in C did not make any difference at all, and only gradually did the synagogue attempt to protect itself against heterodox phenomena. Little by little tension arose between Judaism and Judeo-Christianity. The natural development of Christianity led to the increasing deification of J and to the growing tendency to address him in prayer as a miracle worker. Therefore, the sages ruled that when a sectarian recites a benediction, one does not answer "amen" unless he has heard the benediction in its entirety. This makes perfect sense to anyone who has read the ancient Christian prayer texts. Add to this the fact that the Christians came to be enemies of the Jewish nation, for in their desire to curry favor with the Romans, they denounced their former coreligionists -- hence, the words דילטורין and מוסרים (informers) became synonyms for Christians. The hope and the longing of the Jews was for the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem. For the Christians, the destruction of the

Temple was a principal propaganda point; for them, G-d -- by putting an end to the sacrifices -- had in effect proclaimed His will that the law of Moses be abrogated. They would not let themselves be deprived of this proof. It was a matter of principle to the Christians that the word of the gospel would be fulfilled, and that Jerusalem would remain in total subjugation until the end of time. Whether and when the Jews acquired any serious, wellfounded hopes for the fulfillment of their desires before the rebellion in the time of the Emperor Trajan we do not know. Such hopes may have been connected with the journey to Rome of some tannaim, led by R. Gamaliel during the brief reign of the Emperor Nerva. In any case, the beginning of the total break between Jews and Jewish Christians must be fixed at this period. An important step in accomplishing the separation was the expulsion of the Christians from the synagogue. The synagogue was a convenient base for missionary activities. It provided occasion for discussions of matters of faith and opinion, and excellent opportunities for disseminating propaganda. The Jewish Christians were among the most eager synagogue-goers, and they even served as precentors, as mentioned above. It was necessary to make this function distasteful to them and to pressure them out of the synagogue. To achieve this end, Benediction 12 was introduced into the Amida, and Samuel the Lesser established it according to the instructions of R. Gamaliel, "Samuel the Lesser arose and composed it" (B. Ber., *ibid.*). The petition for the annihilation of the sectarians was intended to expel them from the synagogue. This follows clearly from the words of the Midrash:

If one passes before the ark and makes a mistake in any of the benedictions, he is not made to repeat it; but in the benediction concerning the sectarians he must be made to repeat it against his will. The reason that he must repeat it is that, if he has in him any element of heresy, he will be cursing himself and the congregation will respond "amen" (Tanhuma B., Leviticus, 2a).

Errors in the course of prayer were an everyday occurrence, and for the most part they were passed over with indulgence and in silence; only in Benediction 12 was strict attention paid that the precentor not drop or change a word from the prayer text. Here no leniency was granted in case of an error; the precentor either followed the ordained ritual or he was removed, for the whole purpose was to test him to see whether he was inclined to Jewish Christianity or not. A Jewish Christian could not recite this prayer if he did want not to curse himself and to make the congregation join in by saying "amen." Even if he was among the worshipers, he would not be able to listen quietly while the precentor recited the petition for the eradication of his community and the congregation endorsed this petition with its "amen." Thus, Benediction 12 became a touchstone for the presence of Jewish Christians in the synagogue and for their participation in prayer. Unwilling to listen to this prayer on a daily basis, they left the synagogue, and the purpose was achieved.

משומדים

Source 4

רמב"ן שמות פרק יב' פסוק מג' - כל בן נכר - שנתנכרו מעשיו לאביו שבשמים, ואחד גוי ואחד ישראל במשמע. לשון רש"י ממכילתא (כאן). והכתוב לא הוצרך אלא לישראל. וכן

שמונה עשרה-תפלת שחרית-101 Tefila

תרנ"ג אונקלוס כל בן נכר כל בר ישראל דאשתמד, שהתנכר לאחיו ולאביו שבשמים במעשיו הרעים, והוא משומד שהזכירו חכמים בכל מקום, ופירושו מנוכר, ושיעורו משומדע, מלשון ואשתמודע יוסף לאחיו ואינון לא אשתמודעיה' (בראשית מב ח), וחסרו העי"ן, כמו שהבליעה במלות רבות, ואמרו מדם במקום מדעם (עי' ערוך ערך מדעם). דור קטי (כתובות י ב), דור קטיע. בקי, בקיע (סנהדרין ה ב):

Translation: The word "neichar" means that their deeds are estranged from G-d. This word describes types of Jews and non-Jews. That is what Rashi said in his comments on this verse. But the verse was necessary only concerning a Jew. That is how Onkelos translated the words: Kol Ben Naichar-any Jew who "ishtamad". He became a stranger to his brothers and to his Father in heaven through his evil acts. This is the "Mishumad" that Chazal refer to in many places. The meaning of the word is: Minukar, estranged; similar to the word: Mishumdah, from the root-V'Ishtamudah that Onkelos uses in Breishis 42, 8-V'Ishtamudah Yosef L'Achooie V'Einoon Lo Ishtamudohei. They removed the letter "Ayin" from the word as Chazal did to many words; for example-Midam instead of Midaam; Dor Katei and not Dor Kateii; Baki instead of Bakii.

Source 5

מחברת הערוך לרבי שמעון פרחון² – ואמר רב האי גאון כי משומד משפטו משועמד מלשון עמד והשי"ן יתירה, ומשום שיעמידוהו לטבול במים המקודשים נקרא כך.

Translation: Rav Hai Gaon said that a Mishumad is called Mishumad because he is one who stood, from the root word of "stand". The letter Shin is extra. He is called by this name because he allowed them to stand him up to have him immerse into holy water that are called by that name (baptism).

Source 6

ספר הכוזרי מאמר ג' אות סה' – אבל הצדוקים והביתוסים הם המינים שאנו מתפללים עליהם בתפלתנו ואמנם ישו וחבריו הם המשועמדים הנכנסים בתורת המעמודית הטבולים בירדן.

Translation: But the Tzedukim and the Baysusim are the Minim that we refer to in our prayers but J and his followers are the ones who adopted the practice of baptism, baptizing in the Jordan River.

ולמלשינים

Source 7

In his ספר נתיב בינה, Rabbi Yissaschar Jacobsen cites a letter he received from Professor Daniel Goldschmidt:

בכלל בכתבי היד, למשומדים ולמלשינים¹, בכמה מהם נמחקה המלה הראשונה על ידי ובדפוסים 1540 הצנזורה. ולמלשינים' כבר בדפוסים ישנים מאוד, כבר במחזור רומא אשכנזיים העתיקים ביותר.

Translation: V'La'Mishumadim V'La'Malshinim, the first word (V'La'Mishumadim) was erased by the censor. We therefore find in very old editions of the Siddur that the Bracha begins with the word: V'La'Malshinim, as in the Machzor Roma published in 1540 and in Ashkenazic Siddurim that are even older.

1. The original verse: ויכר יוסף את אחיו והם לא הכרהו.

2. A student of רבי יהודה הלוי.

וכל הרשעה / וכל עושי רשעה

copyright 2020. The Beurei Hatefila Institute, www.beureihatefila.com, Abe Katz, Founding Director

שמונה עשרה-תפלת שחרית-101 Tefila

Source 13

מלאכי פרק ג' פסוק טו'-ועתה אנחנו מאשרים וזדים גם-נבנו עשי רשעה גם בחנו א-להים וימלטו:

Translation: And now we call the arrogant happy; those who work wickedness prosper; even those who tempt God escape.

מלאכי פרק ג', פסוק יט'-כי-הנה היום בא בער כתנור והיו כל-זדים וכל-עשה רשעה קש ולהט אתם היום הבא אמר ה' צב-אות אשר לא-יעזב להם שרש וענף:

Translation: For, behold, the day comes, it shall burn like an oven; and all the arrogant, and all who do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that comes shall burn them up, says the Lord of hosts, so that it will not leave them root nor branch.

Source 14

ספר סדר היום כוונת שמונה עשרה ברכות- וצריך תפלה למפלת הרשעים כי כשיש להם לצדיקים עושי רשעה לפנייהם ואינם יכולים להכניעם ולהכריעם מן העולם הם לשכים בעיניהם ולצנינים בצדיהם ואינם יכולים לעסוק בתורה כראוי שצריכי' להשיב להם כפי אולתם וכפי העולה בלבותם ומבטלים זמנם בדבר שלא מן הראוי והוא צרה גדולה לכל מחזיקים בתורת הש"י אבל בהכרתם מן העולם ובהתבטלם כל א' על מקומו יבא בשלום ועוסק בתורה ואין פוצה פה וזאת היתה כונת ר"י שתקן הברכה הזאת ביבנה עם היות שאנשי כנסת הגדולה לא תקנוה אלא מפני שראה שהצרה גדולה ורבה מכל צרות תקן אותה בפי כל ישראל ואף על פי שאותם המלשינים בטלו סוף סוף הברכה נשארה במקומה כי לעולם לא נמנע מן העולם מעכב על ידינו לולי ה' שהי' לנו:

Translation: We need to include in Shremona Esrei a prayer for the elimination of the evil ones because when the righteous have to face the evil ones and are unable to destroy them and eliminate them from the world, they become traps in the eyes of the righteous and thorns on their side and cannot spend the time they should studying Torah since they are involved to responding to the claims and thoughts of the evil ones which takes time. This is a major problem to those who are Torah observant so that if the evil ones are eliminated, everyone else will be at peace and engaged in Torah study and no one is espousing heretical ideas. This is what Chazal had in mind when Birkat Ha'Minim was composed in Yavne since we know that the Men of the Great Assembly did not compose Birkat Ha'Minim but they saw that they were in a difficult situation, they composed the Bracha. And even though the specific group against whom this Bracha was composed has disappeared, the Bracha remained in its place since there are other evil forces fighting against us in this world.

זדון

Source 15

פירושי סידור התפילה לרוקח [נה] השיבה שופטינו עמוד שמב'-ומלכות זדון אדום הרשעה
Translation: Malchut Zaton is Edom, the evil one.

Source 16

תלמוד בבלי מסכת מגילה דף יז' עמ' ב'-ומה ראו לומר קיבוץ גלויות לאחר ברכת השנים?
דכתיב (יחזקאל ל"ו) ואתם הרי ישראל ענפכם תתנו ופריכם תשאו לעמי ישראל כי קרבו

שמונה עשרה-תפלת שחרית-101 Tefila

לבוא. וכיון שנתקבצו גליות – נעשה דין ברשעים, שנאמר: (ישעיהו א') ואשיבה ידי עליך ואצרף כבר סיגיד; וכתוב (ישעיהו א') ואשיבה שפטיך כבראשנה. וכיון שנעשה דין מן הרשעים – כלו המינים, וכולל זדים עמהם, שנאמר: (ישעיהו א') ושבר פשעים וחמאים יחדו.

Translation: What was their reason for mentioning the gathering of the exiles after the blessing of the years? — Because it is written, But you, O mountains of Israel, you shall shoot forth your branches and yield your fruit to your people Israel, for they are at hand to come. And when the exiles are assembled, judgment will be visited on the wicked, as it says, And I will turn my hand upon you and purge away your dross as with lye, and it is written further, And I will restore your judges as at the first. And when judgment is visited on the wicked, transgressors cease, and presumptuous sinners are included with them, as it is written, But the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together, and they that forsake the Lord shall be consumed.

Source 17

Does עמלק זרודן represent?

שו"ת קול מבשר חלק ב' סימן מב' ד"ה ולענין זה-ובמדרש תנחומא פ' תצא סימן ט': זכור את אשר עשה לך עמלק. אמרו ישראל לפני הקב"ה לנו עשה, ולך לא עשה? הה"ד זכור ה' לבני אדום את יום ירושלים, וכו'. . . עוד שם סימן י"א: כתוב אחד אומר תמחה את זכר עמלק וכתוב אחד אומר כי מחה אמחה, עד שלא פשט ידו בכסא תמחה, כשפשט ידו בכסא מחה אמחה, אפשר בשר ודם יכול לפשוט ידו בכסא של הקב"ה? אלא ע"י שהחריב ירושלים שכתוב בה בעת ההיא יקראו לירושלים כסא ה', לפיכך מחה אמחה, ונאמר כי יד על כס י-ה מלחמה לה'. וזה דבר חידוש לומר על עמלק שהחריב ירושלים ולא נמצא כן בשום מקום בדברי הנביאים ובדברי חז"ל רק על אדום ולא על עמלק, והמדרש תנחומא מחית להו בחדא מחתא.

Translation: In Midrash Tanchuma, Parsha Ki Taitzai, Siman 9: Zechor Eis Asher Asa Lecha Amalek. Bnei Yisroel said to G-d: the verse says: Lanu Asa (to us they did), O'o'Licha Lo Asa (but did they not do to You as well)? That is the basis for the verse: Zechor Hashem Livnei Edom Es Yom Yerushalayim, etc. . . . Also there is Siman 11: In one verse it is written: Timcheh Es Zecher Amalek (we must eradicate Amalek's name) while in another verse it says: Ki Mocho Emche (that G-d will eradicate Amelek). The two verses teach us that until Amelek raised his hand against G-d's seat, it was the Jews' responsibility to eradicate Amalek; but once Amelek raised his hand against G-d's seat, it became G-d's responsibility to eradicate Amalek. Is it possible that a human being can threaten G-d's place? By destroying Jerusalem as the verse says: at that time, they will call Jerusalem the place of G-d, therefore G-d took on the responsibility of eradicating Amalek. It is further based on the verse: G-d put his hand upon his throne and declared war on Amalek. By claiming that Amalek destroyed Jerusalem, the Midrash Tanchuma is introducing a new idea. This idea is not found among the words of the prophets nor in the words of Chazal. You find sources in which Edom is blamed for destroying Jerusalem but there are no sources that blame Amalek. It is the Midrash Tanchuma that states the original thought that Edom and Amalek are one and the same.

שמונה עשרה-תפלת שחרית-101 Tefila

Source 18

שמות פרק יח פסוק יא

עַתָּה יָדַעְתִּי כִּי־גָדוֹל ה' מִכָּל־הָאֱלֹהִים כִּי בִדְבַר אֲשֶׁר זָדוּ עֲלֵיהֶם:

Translation: Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods; for in the thing where they dealt proudly he was above them.

רש"י שמות פרשת יתרו פרק יח' פסוק יא'-כי בדבר אשר זדו עליהם – כתרגומו במים דמו לאבדם והם נאבדו במים:

Translation: As Ankelos translates: The Egyptians planned to destroy the Jewish People through water so the Egyptians suffered loses through water.

אשר זדו – אשר הרשיעו. ורבותינו דרשוהו לשון (בראשית כה' כט') ויזר יעקב נזיר, בקדרה אשר בשלו בה, נתבשלו:

Translation: As they evilly planned. Our Sages explained: this is similar to the language that the Torah uses to describe Yaakov's actions in respect to his brother Esav.

בראשית פרק כה פסוק כט

וַיֵּזֶר יַעֲקֹב נְזִיר וַיָּבֹא עֵשָׂו מִן־הַשָּׂדֶה וְהוּא עֵיף:

Translation: And Jacob cooked pottage; and Esau came from the field, and he was famished.

שמות פרק כא פסוק יד

וְכִי־יֵזֶר אִישׁ עַל־רֵעֵהוּ לְהָרְגוֹ בְּעֶרְמָה מֵעַם מִזְבְּחֵי תִקְחֶנּוּ לָמוֹת:

Translation: But if a man comes willfully upon his neighbor, to slay him treacherously; you shall take him from my altar, that he may die.