

The Mishna and Gemara (ראש השנה לב:א) note the dispute between Rabbi Yochanan the son of Nuri and Rabbi Akiva regarding the formulation of the blessings that comprise the core prayer, the Amida, on Rosh HaShana. As a parenthetical note, the Baal HaMaor is of the opinion that we recite 9 blessings at all the prayers of Rosh HaShana, Maariv, Shacharit, Mussaf and Mincha. This is based on the Gemara's statement that asks about the origin of the nine blessings in the Amida on Rosh HaShana, where the Gemara can be interpreted to mean that every Amida on Rosh HaShana consists of 9 blessings. The Baal HaMaor notes that we would still only blow the Shofar at the Mussaf Amida. He also realized that most would not follow this opinion and would do as is our common practice, have only 7 blessings at each Amida on Rosh HaShana except for Mussaf where all agree that it is expanded to nine blessing.

According to Rabbi Yochanan, the nine blessings consist of Avot (מגן אברהם), Gevurot (מחי-ה המתים), Kedushat Hayom (המלך הקדוש) which includes the recitation of מלכיות, the verses that proclaim Gd's monarchy over all creation. The next blessing is for the sanctity of the day, קדושת היום, consisting of מלך על כל הארץ מקדש followed by Zichronot (זוכר הברית), followed by Shofrot (שומע קול) followed by the usual three blessings that conclude the Amida.

Rabbi Akiva disagrees with Rabbi Yochanan and says that the פסוקי מלכיות, the verses proclaiming Gd's dominion over all, are included with קדושת היום. The rest of the Amida text is the same according to Rabbi Akiva. The Gemara does not seem to conclude the Halacha according to either opinion. However, it records the story that at the Great Academy of Yavne, a שליח צבור recited the Amida according to the format of Rabbi Yochanan and the Rabbis did not approve. The following year a different שליח צבור conducted the service according to Rabbi Akiva's format and the Rabbis concurred. It is interesting to note that the Rabbis did not repeat the Amida even though they disapproved of the order followed by the שליח צבור who agreed with Rabbi Yochanan's opinion. The Gemara does not mention how the Halacha was to be decided. Rambam does not render a decision in the יד חזקה as to how the Halacha was decided either. However, in his סדר תפלה included in the יד חזקה, Rambam cites the Amida order suggested by Rabbi Akiva.

Based on the lack of definite direction as to who's opinion to follow, and based on the story of the prayers at the Yavne academy, it would appear that even though the Rabbis favored Rabbi Akiva's opinion they did not reject Rabbi Yochanan's opinion. Apparently both were acceptable.

Apparently there is significant agreement between Rabbi Yochanan and Rabbi Akiva. For example, both agree that the section of קדושת השם includes ובכן תן פחדך and the rest of the paragraphs included in קדושת השם which describe 'מלכות הד'. According to Rabbi Akiva, it would seem appropriate to combine all the references to 'מלכות הד' in a single blessing. From this it would appear that even Rabbi Akiva agrees that 'מלכות הד' belongs in קדושת השם. However they disagree as to where the nine special verses from תורה כתובים ונביאים belong. According to Rabbi Akiva, they belong in קדושת היום as the conclusion of the blessing, מלך על כל הארץ מקדש, ישראל ויום הזכרון, is more appropriate. Rabbi Akiva underscores that point by adding the tenth verse, שמע ישראל, outside of the paragraph that includes the blessing, as opposed to זכרונות and שופרות where the tenth verse is included in the paragraph that includes the blessing (זוכר הברית and שומע קול תרועת עמו ישראל). Rabbi Yochanan's opinion is that since מלכות is mentioned first in קדושת השם we must continue and mention all the verses related to מלכות in the same blessing.

We now understand why the Rabbis in Yavne did not order the שליח צבור to repeat the Amidah, as both Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Yochanan agree that mention of מלכות belongs in both places. They disagree as to the placement of the verses. As the Gemara records, Rabbi Yochanan's opinion was accepted in the Galilee region. However, in the Yavne Academy and ultimately across the Jewish community, Rabbi Akiva's opinion was the accepted one.

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