

INTERPRETING JEWISH LITURGY: THE LITERARY-INTERTEXT METHOD

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INTERPRETING JEWISH LITURGY: THE LITERARY-INTERTEXT METHOD

Abstract

By Eliezer Gershon Kaunfer

Advisor: Prof. Burton L. Visotzky

This study conducts a close literary analysis of a variety of Talmudic-era prayers in order to develop a method of interpretation, called the “literary-intertext” method. Drawing on literary theory and the work of intertextuality in biblical and midrashic fields, this method offers a literary reading of prayer texts based on the juxtaposition with biblical intertexts. The method can be described as follows:

Step 1: Approach the liturgical text from a standpoint of exegesis, in which allusions abound and the surface rendering is never satisfactory.

Step 2: Using the tools of philology and academic inquiry, establish as many parallels to the liturgical text as one can to point more clearly to the identification of the intertexts.

Step 3: Identify the biblical intertext or intertexts at play in the line of prayer, and consider the surrounding biblical context.

Step 4: Identify the rabbinic interpretation(s) of the biblical intertext, giving additional layers of meaning to the text behind the prayer text.

Step 5: Offer an interpretation or set of interpretations that relate to the prayer.

In the course of this study, we employ this method with the first blessing of the *amidah*, the blessings that constitute *havdalah*, and the texts of confession for Yom Kippur. In each case, the multiplicity of interpretations that emerges through the juxtaposition of the prayer text with the biblical intertext (and its rabbinic understanding) extends far beyond the original surface rendering. These interpretations are offered throughout the analysis.

To Lisa,
My loving partner on the journey

וְאֶנְקְנוּ לֹא נִדְעַ מַה נַּעֲבֹד אֶת יְקֹנֶק עַד בְּאַנּוּ שְׂמֵה
- שְׁמוֹת יְכוּ

And to Maytal and Amalya,
May you continue to grow in *tefilah*, in Torah, and in *hesed*

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Acknowledgements

“...When I exit, I give thanks for my portion.” - <i>B Berakhot</i> 28b	תלמוד בבלי מסכת ברכות דף כח עמוד ב וביציאתי אני נותן הודאה על חלקי
----------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------

I have been engaged in the words of prayer for as long as I can remember, and have profound gratitude to my parents, Rabbi Alvan and Marcia Kaunfer, for providing me a home suffused with the rhythms of prayer. As I became more interested in analyzing the words, and not just saying them, my father became my *havruta*, always ready with a reference, suggestion, or distillation of a complex idea. We spent many hours in *havruta* studying Joseph Heinemann’s classic study *Ha-Tefilah Betkufat Ha-Tannaim Ve-Ha-Amoraim*. It has been one of my greatest joys to share with my father in the study of the texts that form the backbone of this work.

My first teachers were my parents, but I have been privileged to gain many more along the way. Since first hearing her teach at a *Tikkun Leil Shavuot* in the late 1990s, I have gravitated to the teaching of Dr. Devora Steinmetz. My thinking on the issues in this work, as well as countless other areas, has been deeply influenced by her. Specifically, our numerous conversations in Jerusalem in the summer of 2012 were particularly helpful. Judy Klitsner has influenced my understanding of the Bible in a profound way. She opened me up to the world of inner-biblical intertextuality through her teaching and writing. In more recent years, I have also benefited greatly from the approach of Rabbi David Silber and Rabbi Dudi Goshen to the reading of prayer and *Tanakh*. Rabbi Daniel Landes has been a rabbinic model to me, and continues to teach me much about reading Jewish texts with a lens for religious meaning.

My academic study of Jewish liturgy was first encouraged by Dr. Stephen Garfinkel, in a conversation in 2002; I was later accepted as the first student in a new MA in liturgy program at the Jewish Theological Seminary. While in that program, and transitioning to this project, Dr. Debra Reed Blank served as my advisor. She guided me through the maze of classes and requirements, and steered me to open new vistas of my own academic interest. Throughout the process, I have also been guided by other advisors: Rabbi Sami Barth, Hazzan Boaz Tarsi, and Dr. Robbie Harris. I also had the privilege of learning about liturgy from Professors Raymond Scheindlin, Lawrence Hoffman, Reuven Kimelman, Avigdor Shinan, Israel Francus, Yosef Tobi, Neil Danzig, David Golinkin and Stephen Geller. To them all I owe a debt of gratitude. I especially appreciated Larry Hoffman's work Beyond the Text, first read on subway trips in Summer 2005, which significantly altered my understanding of the study of liturgy. I benefited from many conversations with Prof. Avraham Holtz, who generously read my papers for numerous classes throughout my time at JTS. I also thank Professors Uri Ehrlich, Dalia Marx, Seth Schwartz, Jeremy Dauber, Eliezer Diamond, Janet Walton, Rabbi Dr. Robert Scheinberg, Rabbi Dr. Jeffrey Hoffman and Haim Be'er for their encouragement and willingness to teach me over the years.

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the world of *piyyut* to me, as well as the scholarship of Daniel Goldschmidt, which had a significant impact on my studies over the years. He is a model of scholarship and *Menschlichkeit*.

Much of the first two chapters of this dissertation were written while I served as a visiting scholar at the Mandel Leadership Institute in Jerusalem. Through the generosity of the foundation, and particularly Dr. Eli Gottlieb, I was able to formulate the basic arguments that led to the completed version of this work. The Mandel Leadership Institute is incredibly conducive to clear and sustained thinking on a single topic, and I thank the fellows and teachers there for providing such a supportive environment.

I am privileged to work with incredible colleagues at Mechon Hadar. Shai Held and Ethan Tucker have been my fellow travelers in building a different kind of Jewish world since the mid-1990s at Harvard Hillel. They have both served as an inspiration to me, both on the academic plane and, more significantly, on the plane of Torah and *mitzvot*. Avital Hochstein has not only been a co-visionary at Mechon Hadar, but a classmate and *havruta* of mine in my course of study; I cherish our times learning together. Jason Rubenstein, Dena Weiss, Aviva Richman, Devorah Zlochower and Joey Weisenberg have all deepened my understanding of Torah and prayer.

Over the years, I have floated a number of the ideas in this dissertation in classes to students at Mechon Hadar and at synagogues, minyanim and conferences around the country. In the course of those classes, I deepened my understanding of the texts, and learned tremendous amounts from the probing questions of those students. Special thanks to the year-round fellows at Mechon Hadar who offered their thoughts in the context of the *tefilah* class I taught over the past three years.

My family is populated by teachers, and I have done my best to learn from them. My brother Oren taught me what davening could look like years ago at the Carlebach Shul; now he has built a life of teaching children about prayer (and much more!) in Boston, and I continue to learn from him. My in-laws, Jake and Emma Exler, are model religious souls, teaching me by example what family love and responsibility look like when taken most seriously. I have fond memories of writing parts of this dissertation in their house in Baltimore, surrounded by Jake's library. My brother-in-law and sister-in-law, Rabbi Steven Exler and Shira Billet, have provided sound advice from the depths of both of their learning. Just about all my aunts, uncles and cousins are in the world of education, and I have looked to each of them for inspiration over the years.

My daughters Maytal and Amalya have been my cheerleaders as I ran this marathon, generously making space for "Abba to work on his book." In sympathy, Maytal took on a project to complete a 100-page coloring book; we are predicted to finish around the same time. My love for them extends beyond the written word.

I first met my extraordinary wife, Lisa Exler, in the context of prayer. We both attended the first Hadar Shavuot Retreat in 2002, and – separately – had profoundly meaningful prayer experiences there. Lisa has been a partner in the journey of understanding prayer in so many different ways: talking through ideas with me, contributing to prayer communities with me, and initiating our children into the life of Jewish prayer. Lisa's selflessness and willingness to devote much lopsided time to Sunday parental care allowed me to write this dissertation in the ever-shrinking moments of solitude in our lives. I learn so much from Lisa about the deepest purpose of prayer – and religious living in general. I am truly blessed by the home we have built.

My hope – and prayer – is that the work I have been engaged with will draw us closer to the ultimate source of all language. Although it is praise of mere silver, when the Holy Blessed One is surrounded by gold, I offer my deepest gratitude.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The focus of this study is to explore an interpretive method for prayers dating to the Talmudic period. Specifically, we will investigate the intertextual allusions¹ in selected prayers, and ask: how does the reframing of the prayer as a set of texts in dialogue with other texts (biblical texts and rabbinic understanding of those biblical texts) open new vistas of interpretations for these prayers?

Review of Literature: Three Modes of Liturgical Analysis

In the academic study of Jewish liturgy, there have been three major approaches to encountering the texts of prayer: philology, form-criticism, and holism.²

The first model scholar of the scientific study of Judaism, Leopold Zunz (1794-1886), pioneered one approach to analyzing words in prayers. Known as “philology,” Zunz’s approach to liturgical texts was drawn from the larger field of contemporary German historical critical scholarship. By studying the variants and history of the text, he claimed to be able to uncover earlier recensions of a given prayer.³ Zunz and his intellectual heirs, including Ismar Elbogen,⁴ E. Daniel Goldschmidt,⁵ Ezra Fleischer,⁶ and

¹ For a more precise treatment of the terms “intertextual” and “allusion,” see below.

² The first two – philology and form-criticism – were treated extensively by Richard S. Sarason, “The Modern Study of Jewish Liturgy” in *The Study of Ancient Judaism I: Mishnah, Midrash, Siddur*, ed. Jacob Neusner (New York: Ktav, 1981), pp. 107-179. The third was pioneered by Lawrence Hoffman in *Beyond the Text: A Holistic Approach to Liturgy* (Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1989), pp. 1-19 (where he also treats philology and form-criticism) and Lawrence Hoffman, “Reconstructing Ritual as Identity and Culture” in Paul Bradshaw and Lawrence Hoffman eds., *The Making of Jewish and Christian Worship* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991), pp. 22-41. This schema of philology, form-criticism and holism was also outlined in Peter Lehnardt, “*Mehkar Ve-Hora’ah Be-Veit Sefer Ha-Gavohah (Hochschule) Le-Mada Ha-Yahadut Be-Berlin: Heker Ha-Liturgiyah Ha-Yehudit Ke-Mikre Mivhan*,” in *Mi-Breslau Le-Yerushalayim*, ed. Guy Miron (Jerusalem: Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies, 2009), pp. 100-116, esp. pp. 108-109. See further below.

³ See, for example, Y. L. Zunz, *Ha-Derashot Be-Yisrael*, trans. Chanoch Albeck (Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik, 1974), pp. 178-183. Cf. Sarason, “The Modern Study of Jewish Liturgy,” pp. 109-114.

⁴ His classic comprehensive treatment of Jewish liturgy is Ismar Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy: A Comprehensive History*, trans. Raymond Scheindlin (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1993). See an analysis in Sarason, “The Modern Study of Jewish Liturgy,” pp. 116-120.

contemporary scholar Uri Ehrlich,⁷ believe, with varying degrees of certainty, that such an original text can be uncovered, or at least rely on “objective” methods that uncover

⁵ He describes his methodology in contrast to the form-critics (whose approach is analyzed below) in E. Daniel Goldschmidt, *Mahzor Le-Yamim Nora'im* (Jerusalem: Koren, 1970), vol. 1, p. 18, n. 18 and p. 22, n. 23. His classic work on the Haggadah also reflects his philological approach: See E. Daniel Goldschmidt, *Haggadah shel Pesah Ve-Toldotehah* (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1960). See an analysis in Sarason, pp. 137-140.

⁶ Fleischer presents his approach in two influential articles in *Tarbiz*: Ezra Fleischer, “*Le-Kadmoniyut Tefilot Ha-Hova Be-Yisrael*,” *Tarbiz* 59:3-4 (1990), pp. 397-441 and Idem, “*Tefilat Shemonah Esrei: Iyunim Be-Ofyah, Sidrah, Tokhnah, U-Magamoteha*,” *Tarbiz* 62:2 (1993), pp. 179-224. This generated a host of scholarly controversy and evaluation of the method. See Stephan Reif, “*Al Hitpathut Ha-Tefilah Ha-Kedumah Be-Yisrael (Beshulei Ma'amaro Shel Ezra Fleischer)*,” *Tarbiz* 60:4 (1991), pp. 677-682; and Fleischer’s response: “*Ma'aneh (Beshulei Hasagotav Shel S. C. Reif)*,” *Ibid.*, pp. 683-688. See Menahem Zvi Fuchs, “*Teshuvot Le-Shnei Mahapkhanim*,” *Sinai* 114 (1994), pp. 162-170, esp. pp. 164f; See also Ruth Langer’s evaluation of Fleischer’s work: Ruth Langer, “*Revisiting Early Rabbinic Liturgy: The Recent Contributions of Ezra Fleischer*,” *Prooftexts* 19:2 (1999), pp. 179-194; Fleischer’s response in Ezra Fleischer, “*On the Origin of the Amidah: Response to Ruth Langer*,” *Prooftexts* 20 (2000), pp. 380-384; and Langer’s response in Ruth Langer, “*Considerations of Method: A Response to Ezra Fleischer*,” *Prooftexts* 20 (2000), pp. 384-387. See also Uri Ehrlich’s review: “*Al Mekomo Shel Professor Ezra Fleischer Be-Heker Ha-Tefilah*,” *Jewish Studies* 45 (2008), pp. 123-133, esp. pp. 129-131, and Shulamit Elizur, “*Mif'alav Ha-Mehkari'im Shel Ezra Fleischer: Tziyunim Klaliyim*,” in *Le-Zikhro shel Ezra Fleischer*, ed. Mordechai Akiva Friedman (Jerusalem: Israel Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2010), pp. 9-36, esp. pp. 29-36. Fleischer references his two articles on this subject in his final publication before his death, but modifies his claim slightly, adding the word “basically” (twice) to his claim that Rabban Gamliel established the words of the *amidah* at *Yavneh*. See Ezra Fleischer, “*Keriat Shema shel Arvit Ke-Minhag Eretz Yisrael: Bein Ha-Halakhah Ha-Kedumah Le-Minhag Ha-Me'uhar*,” in *Torah Lishmah: Mehkarim Be-Mada'ei Yahadut Likhvod Professor Shama Yehuda Friedman*, eds. David Golinkin, et al. (Jerusalem: Makhon Schechter, 2008), pp. 268-302, here pp. 272 and 273. For a summary of Fleischer’s evolving approach to this issue in his own writing, see Idan Ha-Cohen, “*Le-Toldot Hithavutah Shel Ha-Kedushta Ha-Eretz Yisraelit Ha-Kedumah*,” in *Ta Shma: Mehkarim Be-Mada'ei Ha-Yahadut Le-Zikhro Shel Yisrael M. Ta-Shma*, eds. Avraham Reiner, et al. (Alon Shevut: Michlelet Herzog: 2012), pp. 281-318, here p. 282, n. 4.

⁷ Uri Ehrlich and Ruth Langer, “*The Earliest Texts of the Birkat Haminim*,” *HUCA* 76 (2005), pp. 63-112; Idem, “*More Palestinian Versions of the Eighteen Benedictions Prayer from the Cairo Genizah*,” *Kobez Al-Yad* 19 [29] (2006), pp. 3-22; Idem, “*A Complete Ancient Palestinian Version of the Eighteen Benedictions Prayer from the Cairo Genizah*,” *Kobez Al-Yad* 18 [28] (2005), pp. 3-22. And also see Idem, *Tefilat Ha-Amidah Shel Yemot Ha-Hol: Nushei Ha-Sidurim Be-Geniza Ha-Kahirit – Shorsheihem Ve-Toldotam* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben Zvi, 2013), which claims to “even reconstruct the oldest *amidah* traditions that we can possibly recognize.” (p. 7). (My thanks to Prof. Ehrlich for sharing an advance copy of the manuscript.) In the conclusion of this work, Ehrlich claims that the unity between the Babylonian and Palestinian *nusha'ot* indicate that it is indeed possible to reconstruct an *Urtext* (p. 277). While he stops short of attempting to reproduce this *Urtext* or date it (as Finkelstein attempted to do in Louis Finkelstein, “*The Development of the Amidah*,” *JQR* (N.S.) 16/1 (1925), pp. 1-43), Ehrlich does indicate that an *Urtext* existed.

It should be noted that while Ruth Langer has critiqued Fleischer’s method (see previous note), she has suggested using philological methods in analyzing the texts in the *sidur*: “...[P]hilological methods, largely discounted today in Jewish liturgical studies, should be carefully applied to the earliest documentable variants of the prayer texts to investigate how these prayers might have been shaped by the historical realities of life in the early medieval worlds in which Jews began to crystallize their texts.” Ruth Langer, “*Early Rabbinic Liturgy in its Palestinian Milieu: Did Non-Rabbis Know the Amidah?*” in *When*

older forms of prayers (e.g. that shorter texts represent older forms⁸). As Sarason notes in his survey of liturgical scholarship through the 1970s, Zunz employs a model based on “a temporal continuum in which the various developments follow each other in time in a cumulative fashion, rather than occurring simultaneously. Such a model presupposes that changes and additions are instituted from above in an orderly fashion at a certain point in time and that textual variations can best be explained sequentially.”⁹ Many in this school also attempt to draw historical/political conclusions from the original text (for example, the introduction of the curse against the heretics in the *amidah* as a reflection of live political debates).¹⁰

Joseph Heinemann (1915-1978) best represents the second approach, known as “form-criticism.” His book, Prayer in the Talmud: Forms and Patterns,¹¹ is animated by one central claim: prayers do not have an *Urtext*, or an original text.¹² Heinemann, and

Judaism and Christianity Began, eds. Alan Avery-Peck, Daniel Harrington and Jacob Neusner (Leiden: Brill, 2004), pp. 423-439, here p. 439.

⁸ For criticism of this notion, see Joseph Heinemann, Ha-Tefilah Betkufat Ha-Tannaim Ve-Ha-Amoraim: Tivah U-Defuseha (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1966), p. 12 and p. 47. See also Shulamit Elizur’s discussion in Shulamit Elizur, “*Sharsherot Ha-Pesukim Be-Qedushta Ve-Ha-Berakha Ha-Kedumah*,” Tarbiz 77/3-4 (2008), pp. 425-473, here pp. 435-6.

⁹ Sarason, “The Modern Study of Jewish Liturgy,” p. 111.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 112-113. Reuven Kimelman has critiqued this approach of attributing liturgical developments to political circumstances in Reuven Kimelman, “Blessing Formulae and Divine Sovereignty in Rabbinic Liturgy,” in Liturgy in the Life of the Synagogue: Studies in the History of Jewish Prayer, eds. Ruth Langer and Steven Fine (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005), pp. 1-39, esp. pp. 25-26 and Idem, “Polemics and Rabbinic Liturgy,” in Discussing Cultural Influences: Text, Context, and Non-Text in Rabbinic Judaism, ed. Rivka Ulmer (Lanham: University Press of America, 2007), pp. 59-97. For a discussion of this question with respect to the “blessing” for the heretics, see Ruth Langer, Cursing the Christians?: A History of the Birkat HaMinim (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

¹¹ Joseph Heinemann, Prayer in the Talmud: Forms and Patterns, trans. Richard Sarason (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 1977), which is a translation and slightly updated version of Idem, Ha-Tefilah Betkufat Ha-Tannaim Ve-Ha-Amoraim.

¹² Heinemann draws on the work of Arthur Spainer. See his articles listed in Lehnardt, p. 109, n. 23. For the disagreement between philology and form-criticism concerning the liturgical *Urtext*, cf. the parallel debate between Peter Schäfer and Chaim Milikowsky about the existence of an *Urtext* in rabbinic literature generally. Schäfer argues that “the category *Urtext* cannot be applied to rabbinic literature....no single redactional version of a text is the source of all other redactional versions of the same text.” (Peter Schäfer, “Once Again the Status Quaestionis of Research in Rabbinic Literature: An Answer to Chaim Milikowsky,” JJS 40 (1989), pp. 89-94, here p. 90.) Milikowsky takes a more “philological” approach, as

the form critic students who followed him, argue that prayers developed orally, in tandem, and without a central rabbinic authority to write and promulgate a specific version.¹³ Ultimately, argue the form critics, multiple versions of texts represent multiple

described by Carol Bakhos (“Recent Trends in the Study of Midrash and Rabbinic Narrative,” Currents in Biblical Research 7:2 (2009), pp. 272-293): “Milikowsky affirms the value and necessity of stemmatic analysis in the attempt to recover the most original text possible” (p. 285). See further: Peter Schäfer, “Research into Rabbinic Literature: An Attempt to Define the Status Questionis,” JJS 37 (1986), pp. 132-152; Chaim Milikowsky, “The Status Quaestionis of Research in Rabbinic Literature,” JJS 39 (1988), pp. 201-11 and Idem, “Further on Editing Rabbinic Texts,” JQR 90 (1999), pp. 137-149. See also Lieve Teugels, “Textual Criticism of a Late Rabbinic Midrash: Agadat Bereishit,” in Lieve Teugels and Rivka Ulmer, Recent Developments in Midrash Research: Proceedings of the 2002 and 2003 SBL Consultation on Midrash (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2005), pp. 137-154. Cf. Milikowsky’s summary of this in Idem, Seder Olam: Mahadura Mada’it, Perush U-Mavo (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 2013), vol. 1, p. 211, n. 1.

¹³ The question of orality and rabbinic culture in general is germane to this approach. Talya Fishman notes how “prayer (like Talmud) is a corpus in the category of *oral matters*.” Talya Fishman, Becoming the People of the Talmud: Oral Culture as Written Tradition in Medieval Jewish Cultures (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), p. 203 (emphasis in original). She argues that the writing of prayers was only reified among the medieval Hasidei Ashkenaz, who counted letters and words (which would rely on a fixed text). Cf. Daniel Sperber, On Changes in Jewish Liturgy: Options and Limitations (Jerusalem: Urim, 2010), pp. 99-102. Fishman understands prayers to be purely oral from the dictum in *B Shabbat* 115b and *Y Shabbat* 16:1; 15c: “*kotvei berakhot (ke-)sorfei Torah*” (see also *T Shabbat* 13:4, ed. Lieberman p. 58). So too Maurice Liber, “Structure and History of the *Tefilah*,” JQR 40:4 (1950), pp. 331-357, here p. 332, n. 4. However, it is not clear how useful a proof-text this is, since from the context it seems to concern a blessing that is parallel to an amulet, probably used for some theurgic purpose, and not a standard prayer akin to writing a section of a legitimate *siddur* (contra Rashi ad loc.). See further Saul Lieberman, Tosefta Kifshuta (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1993 [repr.]), vol. 3, p. 206-207. See also Ruth Langer, “The Amidah as a Formative Rabbinic Prayer,” in Identität durch Gebet, eds. Albert Gerhards, et al. (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2003), pp. 127-156, here pp. 133-134, esp. n. 23: “There is real question as to whether this tradition refers to prayer texts or to amulets.” There is medieval evidence for the writing of prayers following an oral origin, although it is not clear when this shift occurred prior to the authors’ comments. For instance:

<p>R. Yehuda ruled that this is only in the case of their days, when they would not forget anything. Therefore they did not write down Talmud or prayers, because “Words that are oral one may not write.” But we who live afterward, who write all words down because of “It is a time to act for YHVH, they have discarded your Torah,” we save prayers, or Talmud, or all holy writings, from a fire. – <i>Mordekhai</i>, Shabbat, #393 (Cf. <i>Sefer Ha-Terumah</i> #245)</p>	<p>מרדכי מסכת שבת פרק כל כתבי [רמז שצג] פסק ר"י דה"מ [רמז שצז] בימיהם שלא היו שוכחין דבר לפיכך לא היו כותבין לא תלמוד ולא תפלות משום דברים שבעל פה אי אתא רשאי לכותבם אבל אנן דרי בתראה דכתבין כל מילי משום עת לעשות לה' הפרו תורתך מצילין להו מפני הדליקה הן תפלות הן תלמוד הן כל כתבי הקדש:</p>
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By this point, the term “*tefilot*” was likely to have been understood as the actual prayers recited as liturgy, as opposed to amulets. See further Neil Danzig, “‘*Mi-Talmud Al Peh Le-Talmud Katuv*’: *Al Derekh Mesirat Ha-Talmud Ha-Bavli Ve-Limmudo Bimei Ha-Beinayim*,” Bar Ilan Yearbook 30-31 (2006), pp. 49-112, here p. 51. See also Benjamin M. Lewin, Otzar Ha-Geonim (Jerusalem, 1934), vol. 2, pp. 101-102; Idem, Iggeret Rav Sherira Gaon (Jerusalem: Makor, 1972 [repr.]), pp. LI-LIII.; See generally Stefan Reif, Judaism and Hebrew Prayer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 122-152 and Ruth Langer, “‘We Do Not Even Know What to Do!’: A Foray into the Early History of *Tahanun*,” in Seeking the Favor of God, Volume 3: The Impact of Penitential Prayer beyond Second Temple Judaism, eds. Mark

communities' approach to prayer.¹⁴ While we can't discover the original text, Heinemann claimed that we can classify it into various institutional origins. So, for instance, Heinemann noticed that *Barekhu* is one of the very few prayers that is said in the second person. He connected this to the priestly institution, in which the religious leadership would exhort others to bless.¹⁵ Contrast this to another prayer locus, the Beit Midrash, which was the origin of other prayers, including the *kaddish* (originally said after a section of study).¹⁶ This classification is common in form criticism generally, wherein the scholar identifies the *Sitz im Leben* based upon the form of the text.¹⁷

Lawrence Hoffman (1942 -) challenged both of these methods in his work, *Beyond the Text: A Holistic Approach to Liturgy*.¹⁸ He critiques the previous methods of analysis because they are limited to textual investigations only. "Of course research must begin with the literature in which the evidence is embedded; that indeed is necessary. But both philology and form-criticism end with that literature as well; and that is not necessary at all."¹⁹

Hoffman recognizes that praying is much more than the texts themselves, and as a result, he introduces a "holistic" approach. In his words, this approach is meant to argue "from the texts to the people."²⁰ That is, texts should tell us about the people who prayed

Boda, Daniel Falk and Rodney Werline (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), pp. 39-70, here p. 51.

¹⁴ For useful tabular comparisons of certain prayers in the Talmud vs. their appearance in various *siddurim*, see Ayala Tsruya, *The Text of the Prayer in the Talmud*, MA Thesis (Bar Ilan University, 1996).

¹⁵ Heinemann, *Prayer in the Talmud*, pp. 104-122.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 251-275.

¹⁷ Compare the work of Hermann Gunkel, as reviewed in its relationship to liturgy by Sarason, "The Modern Study of Jewish Liturgy," pp. 144-151.

¹⁸ See above, n. 2. See also J. Michael Joncas, "Lawrence A. Hoffman's 'Holistic' Approach to Liturgical Studies," *Questions Liturgiques* 72 (1991), pp. 89-107.

¹⁹ Hoffman, *Beyond the Text*, p. 5.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

them, and through the use of other disciplines, such as anthropology and linguistic theory, one could say something significant about the symbolic system of the Jews who pray.²¹

Hoffman is surely right when he states: “Prayers are unique human cultural extensions of those who pray them, indistinguishable as prayers, in fact, as long as they are separated from the act of praying.”²² Hoffman stresses his holistic approach when he says: “Liturgy is not a literary matter in the first place.”²³

But while there is much that is appealing about Hoffman’s approach, we are not prepared to fully move “beyond the text,” or to completely surrender the literariness of praying. Liturgy is, in fact, “a literary matter.” Even Hoffman admits that the words are the starting place. In delineating the approach of our proposed method, we take guidance from Abraham Joshua Heschel:

We must learn how to study the inner life of the words that fill the world of our prayerbook. Without intense study of their meaning, we feel, indeed, bewildered when we encounter the multitude of those strange, lofty beings that populate the inner cosmos of the Jewish spirit. It is not enough to know how to translate Hebrew into English; it is not enough to have met a word in the dictionary and to have experienced unpleasant adventures with it in the study of grammar. A word has a soul, and we must learn how to attain insight into its life....This is our affliction – we do not know how to look across a word to its meaning. We forgot how to find the way to the word, how to be on intimate terms with a few passages in the prayer book. Familiar with all words, we are intimate with none....The same word may evoke new understanding when read with an open heart...What we need is a sympathetic prayerbook exegesis.²⁴

²¹ For a related approach, see Kevin W. Irwin, Context and Text: Method in Liturgical Theology (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1994) and the summary of both approaches in Joyce Ann Zimmerman, Liturgy and Hermeneutics (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999), pp. 86-88. For broader connections between performance and liturgy, see Catherine Bell, “Ritual, Change, and Changing Ritual,” in Paul Bradshaw and John Melloh eds., Foundations in Ritual Studies (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Publishing Group, 2007), pp. 167-175 and more generally: Eadem, Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

²² Hoffman, Beyond the Text, p. 6.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Abraham Joshua Heschel, Man’s Quest for God (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954), pp. 78, 81, 83.

Heschel was opposed to articulating specific prescriptions, and therefore he didn't flesh out the concept of a "sympathetic prayerbook exegesis." The purpose of this project is to take up Heschel's challenge, outlining an approach to exegesis for the words of the prayerbook.

Here we take guidance from a broader trend in Jewish studies. In other fields that have experienced the move from philology to form-criticism, there has been a later development: the literary approach. This approach, widely applied in Bible studies²⁵ and in Midrash,²⁶ has not yet been fully developed for texts of prayer. In fact, the nature of Talmudic-era prayer texts, which are chiefly built on language from the Bible (see further below), call for a particular application of the literary approach. The purpose of this study is to explore and develop this approach, which we call the "literary-intertext" method.

The Literary-Intertext Method: Precursors

Scholars in Bible and Midrash have recently argued for the importance of intertextuality as a critical component in interpreting any given text. Boyarin describes

²⁵ See, for example, Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (New York: Basic Books, 1981); Robert Alter and Frank Kermode, *The Literary Guide to the Bible* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987); Michael Fishbane, "Revelation and Tradition: Aspects of Inner-Biblical Exegesis," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 99 (1980), pp. 343-361; Idem, "Inner Biblical Exegesis: Types and Strategies of Interpretation in Ancient Israel," in *Midrash and Literature*, eds. Geoffrey Hartman and Sanford Budick (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), pp. 19-37; Idem, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985).

²⁶ See the literature reviewed by Carol Bakhos, "Recent Trends in the Study of Midrash and Rabbinic Narrative," pp. 273-277 and a review of more recent literature in Burton L. Visotzky, "Leaning Literary, Reading Rabbinics," *Prooftexts* 28 (2008) 85-99. See also Devora Steinmetz, "Agada Unbound: Inter-Agadic Characterization of Sages in the Bavli and Implications for Reading Agada," in *Creation and Composition: The Contribution of the Bavli Redactors (Stammim) to the Aggada*, ed. Jeffrey Rubenstein (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), pp. 293-337, for a more expanded approach to the literary method of Yonah Fraenkel (described by Bakhos and Visotzky, above). See also Daniel Boyarin, *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1990), and now the Hebrew translation of that work, with updated information: Daniel Boyarin, *Midrash Tannaim: Intertextualit U-Keriat Mekhilta* (Jerusalem: Shalom Hartman Institute and Alma, 2011) and the review by Itai Merinburg, "Yoshev Ve-Dores Ve-Ha-Eish Melahetet Saviv," *Ha'aretz*, July 27, 2012. See also Jeremy Schonfield, *Undercurrents of Jewish Prayer* (Oxford: Littman, 2008), p. 55, who connects Boyarin's approach to the field of liturgy.

this approach generally: “Every text is constrained by the literary system of which it is a part and that every text is ultimately dialogical in that it cannot but record the traces of its contentions and doubling of earlier discourses.”²⁷ Or, in the words of Steven Moyise, “...a text cannot be studied in isolation. It belongs to a web of texts which are (partially) present whenever it is read or studied.”²⁸

Intertextuality as a theme within literary theory first gained ascendancy through the work of Julia Kristeva, who coined the term in 1967.²⁹ Essentially, Kristeva argues that texts do not transmit meaning to the reader in an unmediated form. Rather, the texts are filtered through the other texts – intertexts – in dialogue with those texts. As a result, the meaning that is created is multivalent and ultimately dynamic.

Intertextuality as an approach to texts is situated in the development of linguistic/literary theory, a field that exploded in the 20th century and is too expansive for extensive treatment here.³⁰ For our purposes, it is worth noting that intertextuality was an advance beyond the structuralist approach of Ferdinand de Saussure, which limits language to a clear “signified” and a “signifier.”³¹ Saussure’s ideas developed further in the field of semiotics, which is the study of sign systems. Structuralism and semiotics were ultimately interested in the text as a final production, “it is not interested in its

²⁷ Boyarin, p. 14.

²⁸ Steven Moyise, “Intertextuality and the Study of the Old Testament in the New Testament,” in The Old Testament in the New Testament: Essays in Honour of J. L. North, ed. Steven Moyise (Sheffield, 2000), pp. 14-41, here pp. 15-16. See further Steinmetz, p. 310, n. 33.

²⁹ Julia Kristeva, “Bakhtine, Le Mot, Le Dialogue et Le Roman,” Critique 33 (1967), pp. 438-65. Cited in Thomas Hatina, “Intertextuality and Historical Criticism in New Testament Studies: Is There a Relationship?” Biblical Interpretation 7/1 (1999), pp. 28-43, here p. 30.

³⁰ For a useful overview, see Thais Morgan, “Is there an Intertext in this Text?: Literary and Interdisciplinary Approaches to Intertextuality,” The American Journal of Semiotics 3,4 (1985), pp. 1-40.

³¹ For a brief overview of these concepts, including their relevance to liturgy, see Zimmerman, Liturgy and Hermeneutics, pp. 62-81.

authorial intent, historical setting, or development...it is synchronic, immanent to the text itself. Herein lies semiotics' strength and its weakness."³²

Critics of the structuralist/semiotic approach, such as Paul Ricoeur,³³ note how the text can never be the ultimate end point of the creation of meaning. There is an important interaction between the text and the reader: "interpretation [is] the intersection of the world of the text and the world of the hermeneut."³⁴ Another critic of the structuralist/semiotic approach was Jacques Derrida, who pioneered the "deconstructionist" paradigm. "Deconstructionism is concerned with the processes that cause sign systems to destabilize and call into question the very meanings they produce....Derrida transposes the structural task of intra-textual interpretation (a radically synchronic method) to the deconstructive task of *inter*-textual interpretation (emphasis in original)."³⁵

The implication of the post-structuralist school is one in which texts by definition have multiple meanings. "[A] text has a wealth of possibilities of interpretation....no text has a single, absolute interpretation. There is no 'right' interpretation. Ricoeur is not only comfortable with a conflict of interpretations, he promotes it."³⁶ This approach to multiple interpretations will be of significance as we analyze prayer texts in light of their

³² Zimmerman, Liturgy and Hermeneutics, p. 65, 67. For a more recent application of semiotics to the reading of the *siddur*, see Steven Kepnes, Jewish Liturgical Reasoning (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 164-191.

³³ Paul Ricoeur, Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning (Forth Worth, TX: The Texas Christian University Press, 1976); Joyce Ann Zimmerman, Liturgy as Language of Faith: A Liturgical Methodology in the Mode of Paul Ricoeur's Textual Hermeneutics (New York: University Press of America, 1988).

³⁴ Zimmerman, Liturgy and Hermeneutics, p. 69.

³⁵ Ibid., pp. 70-72. The post-structuralists have developed many other approaches to text and interpretation, for instance "reader-response theory" which claims that meaning of texts is determined at least in part by the readers of those texts themselves (see Zimmerman, Liturgy and Hermeneutics, pp. 77-79).

³⁶ Zimmerman, Liturgy and Hermeneutics, p. 39.

biblical intertexts, even though we will not claim the radical indeterminacy of meaning as advanced by Ricoeur.

It should be noted that the term “intertextuality” itself has a range of meanings, including very expansive ones, imagined by Kristeva herself:

Society and history are not elements external to textuality, to be brought to bear in interpretation. Rather, society and history are themselves texts, and so are already and unavoidably inside the textual system....Everything is a text; not just revolutions and administrations, but professional wrestling and detergent are texts to be interpreted....The ontology of intertextuality claims that there is no transcendental signified, that the signifier points only to other signifiers, that texts refer only to other texts....Every text is potentially the intertext of every other text, and so reading becomes an infinite process.³⁷

For our purposes, we will define the term in a more constrained fashion,³⁸ noting the biblical quotations³⁹ and allusions⁴⁰ present in the Talmudic-era liturgy and the

³⁷ Kristeva’s viewpoint is summarized here by William Irwin, who describes the original intent of the term by Kristeva and Roland Barthes in Idem, “Against Intertextuality,” *Philosophy and Literature* 28/2 (2004), pp. 227-242, here p. 229 and pp. 235-236. Numerous authors have pointed out that divorcing the term from the political goals of Kristeva is a misreading of the full sense of the term. See, for example, Hatina, p. 32 and William Scott Green’s opinion below, n. 41.

³⁸ Following Richard Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New London: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 15, who, after discussing Kristeva’s broader theories, notes: “I propose instead to discuss the phenomenon of intertextuality in Paul’s letters in a more limited sense, focusing on his actual citations of and allusions to specific texts.” We will examine Hays’s work in further detail below.

³⁹ In describing the direct quotation of Job 13:16 in Phil 1:19, which shares 5 exact words in order, Stanley Porter (“The Use of the Old Testament in the New Testament: A Brief Comment on Method and Terminology,” in *Early Christian Interpretation of the Scriptures of Israel: Investigations and Proposals*, eds. C. A. Evans and J. A. Sanders (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), pp. 79-96, here p. 92) notes how the criteria for what constitutes a direct quotation is overly restrictive in the work of Richard Hays and Christopher Stanley, *Paul and the Language of Scripture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992): “This definition is that quotation is confined to texts explicitly marked by some kind of citation formula....To limit oneself to discussion of those passages that are introduced by an explicit quotation formula clearly skews the evidence.” Following Porter’s suggestion about what constitutes a quotation (“formal correspondence with actual words found in antecedent texts” (p. 95), our use of the direct quotation criteria will be broader than one marked by explicit quotation formulas (such as “*kakativ be-toratekha*”) to include other direct quotations not marked by introductions (such as “*elohei Avraham, elohei Yitzhak, ve-elohei Ya’akov*” in the *amidah*, analyzed in the following chapter). Cf. Jeffrey Hoffman’s criteria, in Idem, *The Bible in the Prayerbook: A Study in Intertextuality*, D.H.L. diss. (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1996), p. 3. This work will be discussed further below.

implications of these background texts. While the use of the term “intertextuality” has been critiqued by those who claim it is “fashionable jargon for traditional notions such as allusion and source study,”⁴¹ we have nevertheless chosen this term because of the unusual nature of the relationship between multiple texts under analysis here: prayer texts, biblical quotations in those prayers (sometimes from multiple sources in the Bible), the larger biblical context, and rabbinic understanding of those quotations.⁴² This extends

⁴⁰ For helpful understandings of this term, see Ziva Ben-Porat, “The Poetics of Literary Allusion,” *PTL: A Journal for Descriptive Poetics and Theory of Literature* 1 (1976), pp. 105-128; and Carmella Perri, “On Alluding,” *Poetics* 7 (1978), pp. 289-307. For Hays’s use of this term, in contrast to quotation and echo, see Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, p. 29.

⁴¹ Irwin, p. 229. For an example of the range of terms in a parallel arena, the textual connections between the Bible and the New Testament, Stanley Porter lists: “citation, direct quotation, formal quotation, indirect quotation, allusive quotation, allusion (whether conscious or unconscious), paraphrase, exegesis (such as inner-biblical exegesis), midrash, typology, reminiscence, echo (whether conscious or unconscious), intertextuality, influence (either direct or indirect), and even tradition, among other terms.” Porter (p. 80) attempts to bring some order to this. Porter (p. 84) also critiques the use of the term “intertextuality” in the identification of prior sacred texts, noting that “allusion” and “echo” would work just as well. See also Hatina, pp. 36-7.

William Scott Green critiques Richard Hays’s use of the term “intertextuality” (analyzed further below) by stating: “The larger purpose of intertextual analysis is to undergird and underscore an ideological position about the fluidity of textual meaning. Hays uses intertextuality more as a technique than as an ideology.” William Scott Green, “Doing the Text’s Work for It: Richard Hays on Paul’s Use of Scripture,” in *Paul and the Scripture of Israel*, eds. Craig Evans and James Sanders (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), pp. 58-63, here, p. 63. Hays is quick to dismiss an attachment to the term: “...I am indeed operating with a notion of intertextuality that is ‘minimal’ by Green’s canons, and that I have chosen consciously to do so. If Green should insist on denying me permission to use the term ‘intertextuality’...I will surrender it with a shrug. Nothing is at stake for me in the use of the term.” Richard Hays, “On the Rebound: A Response to Critiques of *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* in *Paul and the Scripture of Israel*, pp. 70-96, here p. 81. We intend to use the term in a similar sense to that employed by Hays, while also willing to forego ultimate attachment to the term.

⁴² In proposing an expanded understanding of Paul’s interpretation of Scripture through the use of intertextuality as delineated by Richard Hays (see below), Craig Evans adds the dimension of the filtered understanding of Scripture, not just the quote from Scripture itself. He helpfully suggests: “[T]he echo that we hear in Romans 10 is made up of Scripture *and its exegesis* in late antiquity. It is for this reason that I think that it would be more accurate to speak of the echoes of interpreted Scripture in the letters of Paul.” Craig Evans, “Listening for Echoes of Interpreted Scripture,” in Evans and Sanders, *Paul and the Scripture of Israel*, pp. 47-51, here p. 50 (emphasis in original). Hays accepts this critique: “Evans and I have no disagreement in principle about the necessity of discerning multilayered intertextual echoes....I have no stake in arguing for an unmediated encounter between Paul and Scripture.” Hays, “On the Rebound,” p. 71. Hays seems to acknowledge this from the outset: “[T]o hear and understand the poet’s allusions we need to know not only the tradition to which the allusion points but also the way in which that tradition was understood in the poet’s time...” Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, p. 18. See a similar phenomenon in Ben-Porat, p. 120, n. 13. This also is similar to Michael Riffaterre’s semiotic triangle, involving a text, intertext, and “a third text, or the secondary intertext, which ‘mediates’ between the primary intertext and the text.” Morgan, p. 15. Significantly for our work, Lieber notes this as the effect of Yannai’s use of biblical allusions: “Frequently his quotations and allusions carry with them not merely the biblical context to which the

beyond a dyadic relationship between a text and its biblical source and is best analyzed, we argue, through the use of the term “intertextuality.” Indeed, it is this network of texts, as noted by Steinmetz and others in other contexts,⁴³ that is the fruitful basis of analysis.

An intertextual approach as a starting point for interpretation has significant implications for unlocking how the Bible understood itself (e.g. Fishbane) and how the rabbis read the Bible *midrashically* (e.g. Boyarin). But this approach can also shed light on how later sacred texts referred to biblical phrases and verses as the basis for their construction. One classic example of this approach is seen in Paul’s references and interpretation of the Bible in his letters, analyzed by many, but most significantly by Richard Hays.⁴⁴ Hays goes beyond simply identifying the scriptural text to which Paul is referring or employing; he uses it as the fuel for new interpretation. “To identify allusions is only the beginning of an interpretive process.”⁴⁵ Indeed, it is our goal here to identify the biblical quotations/intertexts in service of catalyzing an interpretation that opens new meanings.⁴⁶

quotations refer, but that biblical context as understood in accord with aggadic interpretations.” Laura Lieber, Yannai on Genesis: An Invitation to Piyyut (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 2010), p. 130.

⁴³ Steinmetz, pp. 309-310, n. 33. Steinmetz’s application of the network of texts to the Bavli stories is also apt for our investigation of prayers: “[O]nce we recognize how different Bavli passages absorb and transform traditional texts in a shared intertextual field, we should see these passages as participating in – and thus requiring to be read within – a network of relationships with each other” (*Ibid.*) There has been some scholarly debate about the aesthetic value of quoting from the bible in the formation of a liturgical piece. But this is clearly a subjective matter. See the opposing positions in Elie Kaunfer, “The History and Meaning of the ‘Other’ *Lekha Dodi* Poem(s),” HUCA 79 (2008), pp. 87-105, here p. 95, n. 39.

⁴⁴ Hays, Echoes of Scripture. For a series of reviews as well as Hays’s response, see the essays in “Part I: Echoes of Scripture in Paul – Some Reverberations,” in Craig Evans and James Sanders eds. Paul and the Scripture of Israel (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993), pp. 42-96. See also Porter; and Dale Martin, “Reviews,” Modern Theology 7:3 (1991), pp. 291-292. For an appreciation of the importance of Hays’s approach to Jewish liturgy, see Schonfield, pp. 52-3 and Jeffrey Hoffman, p. 5, n. 12 and p. 13, n. 39.

⁴⁵ Hays, Echoes of Scripture, p. 17. Hays describes further how the interpretative process alters once one holds up Text B in light of Text A: “[W]hen the source of the phrase is read in counterpoint with the new setting into which it has been transposed, a range of resonant harmonics becomes audible.” (*Ibid.*, p. 23).

⁴⁶ Whether the author intended these allusions and the concomitant associations, or whether this is something that the reader uncovers distinct from the authorial intent (a dilemma discussed in Hays, Echoes

To the extent this approach is employed at all in relation to Jewish liturgy, its champion is Reuven Kimelman (although in this study we attempt to develop this method further).⁴⁷ Kimelman looks for literary themes within prayers, and often connects them to the biblical text that stands behind the prayer. In his words: “[T]he meaning of the

of Scripture, pp. 25-26) is less significant in our analysis because the identification of the author in the first place (never mind his intent/field of knowledge) is so difficult with ancient prayer texts. What the author intended may be an interesting, if impossible, historical question (note Morgan’s summary of the critique against the school of Historicism, p. 1), but it is not a relevant factor in our interpretive stance. As Irwin notes, “A reader can make an accidental association that actually produces a more aesthetically pleasing reading than would correct understanding of the allusion...no harm occurs in doing so as long as one does not attribute meaning to the author and his intention.” (Irwin, “What is in Allusion,” p. 295) We can reasonably assume that the author(s) of a given piece of Talmudic-era liturgy knew the Bible and alluded to that text (consciously or unconsciously - Irwin discusses the issue of conscious vs. unconscious allusion, p. 291). We cannot know all the intended associations through that allusion. But the reader’s associations are relevant to the interpretative approach here. See further below, n. 49. It should be noted that Hays considered the possibility that Paul was not intending to reach his audience through this intertextual method: “Often it appears that his readers found him baffling. One reason for their incomprehension may have been that he was not able to fill in all the gaps left for his hearers by his allusive references to Scripture; he may have been consistently presupposing knowledge that he ought not to have presupposed.” Hays, “On the Rebound,” p. 86. For an attempt to connect the allusions in a poetic liturgical piece with an author’s biography, see Elie Kaunfer, “The Liturgical History and Significance of *Yedid Nefes*,” in *Mituv Yosef: Sefer Ha-Yovel Likhvod Prof. Yosef Tobi*, eds. Ayelet Oettinger and Danny Bar-Maoz (Haifa: University of Haifa, 2011), pp. 361-385.

⁴⁷ Other scholars have attempted to demonstrate the source of various prayers in biblical texts. See, for instance, Leon Liebreich, “The Impact of Nehemiah 9:5-37 on the Liturgy of the Synagogue,” *HUCA* 32 (1961), pp. 227-237; Aharon Mirsky, “*Mekorah Shel Tefilat Shemonah Esrei*,” *Tarbiz* 33 (1963), pp. 28-39; Michael Weizman, “*Le-Beirur Ha-Yesodot Ha-Mikra’im She-Ba-Tefilah*,” *Mehkarim Ba-Lashon* 5-6 (1992), pp. 25-39; Moshe Weinfeld, “*Mekorah Ha-Mikra’i shel Tefilot Ha-Amidah Be-Shabbat U-Mo’ed*,” in Idem, *Ha-Liturgiyah Ha-Yehudit Ha-Kedumah* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2004), pp. 125-147; Stefan Reif, “The Bible in the Liturgy,” in *The Jewish Study Bible*, eds. Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 1937-1948. These analyses differ from an intertextual approach. The former looks for patterns in the Bible that serve as supposed models for later prayers; the latter analyzes clear references and allusions in the prayer itself to biblical verses to further understand the prayer. (For a critique of the former method, esp. that of Liebreich, see Sarason, “The Modern Study of Jewish Liturgy,” pp. 131-135.)

The use of biblical language in *piyyut* has long been recognized (although also not necessarily analyzed on an interpretive plane). See Lieber, *Yannai on Genesis*, pp. 111-131; Eadem, “Confessing from A to Z: Penitential Forms in Early Synagogue Poetry,” in *Seeking the Favor of God, Volume 3: The Impact of Penitential Prayer beyond Second Temple Judaism*, eds. Mark Boda, Daniel Falk and Rodney Werline (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008), pp. 99-125, here p. 102; Menahem Schmelzer, “Some Examples of Poetic Reformulations of Biblical and Midrashic Passages in Liturgy and Piyyut,” in Menahem Schmelzer, *Studies in Jewish Bibliography and Medieval Hebrew Poetry* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 2006), pp. 201*-211*, and the literature cited on p. 201*, n. 1. Our present study attempts to expand the common understanding of *piyyut* as “the offspring of both the Bible and methods of studying the Bible that we think of as ‘rabbinic’” (Lieber, “Confessing from A to Z,” p. 102) to the process of interpretation of the core prayer texts in the liturgy.

For a similar, although not fully developed, approach in the Christian scholarly community, see Renato De Zan, “Bible and Liturgy,” in *Handbook for Liturgical Studies: Introduction to the Liturgy*, ed. Anscar Chupungco (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1997), pp. 33-51, esp. pp. 39f.

liturgy exists not so much in the liturgical text per se as in the interaction between the liturgical text and the *biblical* intertext. Meaning, in the mind of the reader, takes place between texts rather than within them.”⁴⁸ Kimelman claims that one can never examine a prayer text on its own. There is always another text – an intertext – that stands behind it. It is only when one analyzes both texts, by juxtaposing them, that meaning emerges.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Reuven Kimelman, “The Shema’ Liturgy: From Covenant Ceremony to Coronation,” *Kenishta: Studies of the Synagogue World* 1 (2001), pp. 9-105, here p. 28 (emphasis mine). While not discussing the meaning that emerges from these intertexts, other modern scholars have also noted this phenomenon. See the comments of Catherine Madsen: “Jewish and Christian liturgy is a tissue of quotes from the Bible.” Catherine Madsen, *The Bones Reassemble: Reconstituting Liturgical Speech* (Colorado: The Davies Group, 2005), p. 125; and Debra Reed Blank: “Jewish liturgical language derives almost entirely from the biblical corpus.” Debra Reed Blank, “The Curious Theological Grammar of *Ga’al Yisra’el*,” in *The Experience of Jewish Liturgy: Studies Dedicated to Menahem Schmelzer*, ed. Debra Reed Blank (Leiden, Brill, 2011), pp. 9-21, here p. 14, and see n. 12. It should be noted that many of the biblical intertexts in Jewish liturgy are drawn from Psalms. As Hoffman notes:

[B]y and large the psalms are stitched into the liturgical narrative, sentence by sentence, one verse here and another there, so skillfully that unless one knows the Psalter by heart the snippets are easy to miss. In addition to citing verses out of context, the liturgy sometimes deliberately alters the biblical text for its own ends. Alterations may be merely stylistic (e.g. a change in person) or a matter of content, an alteration that amends biblical theology so that the liturgy reports the Bible differently from the way that the Bible itself does.

Lawrence Hoffman, “Hallels, Midrash, Canon and Loss: Psalms in Jewish Liturgy,” in Harold W. Attridge and Margot E. Fassler, *Psalms in Community: Jewish and Christian Textual, Liturgical and Artistic Traditions* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature: 2003), pp. 33-57, here pp. 43-44. See also Joseph Heinemann, “*Sefer Tehilim Ke-Makor Le-Nusah Ha-Tefilah*,” in *Iyunei Tefilah*, ed. Avigdor Shinan (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1981), pp. 176-179.

⁴⁹ Cf. Jeffrey Hoffman, p. 5. Lieber, in her work on Yannai’s intertextual references, distinguishes between *midrash* and *piyyut*: “[T]he difference...lies in the fact that in *midrash*, the connections between lemma and intertext are generally elucidated, while in *piyyut*, the same interpretation and effects are achieved by juxtaposition.” Lieber, *Yannai on Genesis*, p. 114. This juxtaposition is similar to what Kimelman describes above, which leads to the creation of meaning.

There is a longstanding debate concerning the competency demanded of the average listener or worshipper when attempting to unlock these intertexts and their accompanying meanings. See Ruth Langer, “Early Rabbinic Liturgy,” p. 433 and n. 33. For this question in relation to *piyyut*, see Lieber, *Yannai on Genesis*, p. 96, nn. 3-4 and p. 98; Zvi Meir Rabinowitz, *Mahzor Piyyutei Rabbi Yannai La-Torah Ve-La-Mo’adim* (Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik, 1985), vol. 1, pp. 72-76; Shraga Abramson, “*Le-Piyutot*,” *Sinai* 56:4-5 (1965), pp. 238-241, here p. 238; Ezra Fleischer, “*Iyunim Be-Hashpa’at Ha-Yesodot Ha-Makhelatiyim Al Itzuvam Ve-Hitpathutam Shel Sugei Ha-Piyyut*,” *Yuval* 3 (1974), pp. 18-48, esp. p. 21, nn. 13-14; Shulamit Elizur, “*Kahal Ha-Mitpalelim Ve-Ha-Kedushta Ha-Kedumah*,” in *Knesset Ezra: Sifrut Ve-Hayim Be-Veit Ha-Knesset*, eds. Shulamit Elizur, et al. (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1994), pp. 171-190; Seth Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society: 200 BCE to 640 CE* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 267. Idem, “Language, Power and Identity in Ancient Palestine” *Past and Present* 148 (1995), pp. 3-47. Porter (p. 83, 95), discussing the use of the Bible in the New Testament, offers helpful guidance on this issue, claiming that the knowledge of the audience is not relevant to the project of the author in the use of intertexts:

Although Kimelman is sensitive to the intertextual nature of the liturgy, he does not ultimately view these texts as opening a multiplicity of meanings. Instead, he sees a master structure that leads inevitably to the theme he recognized, precluding other

[I]f one is writing to an uninformed audience who does not know the source text, does that mean that the echoes are no longer present? If they are clear to another audience, does that mean that the text itself is now different, or only the audience?...Although investigation of an audience-based approach has merit in establishing the shared assumptions and biblical knowledge of the audience..., it is questionable whether it provides the proper basis for establishing the author's use of the Old Testament. If one is interested in establishing a given author's use of the Old Testament, it would appear imperative to orient one's discussion to the language of the author, rather than supposed, reconstructed 'knowledge' of the audience. William Irwin, citing E. D. Hirsch, Jr., draws the distinction between meaning and significance: Hirsch argues there is an important distinction to be noted between what an author intends, a text's meaning, and that intended meaning as it relates to the interests of readers, a text's significance. According to Hirsch's intentionalism, the author does indeed supply meaning, but this does not really restrict the reader, who can read the text however she likes as long as she does not represent her idiosyncratic reading as the author's intention. - Irwin, pp. 234-235

Thus our question is not, "Could the author have intended this allusion if his audience would never detect it?" As Irwin notes elsewhere (William Irwin, "What is an Allusion?" The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism 59/3 (Summer 2001), pp. 287-297, here p. 292), an author can make an allusion without any expectation that the audience would understand it (although in theory *could* understand it if explained the connection): "We can clearly have private allusions in the sense that only the author, as a matter of fact, recognizes the allusion. The allusion may be very well concealed, the author may not have shown anyone else his or her text, the audience may not be well informed, etc." In commenting on Hays's approach, William Scott Green notes: "The presence of these echoes...in no way depends – indeed cannot depend – on Paul's intention to make them, or on any reader's ever having actually understood them." Green, "Doing the Text's Work for It," p. 60.

Our view is different from that of Hoffman, "Hallels, Midrash, Canon and Loss," who makes clear conclusions about what the rabbis expected from their audience: "[The rabbis] assumed that worshipers had enough familiarity with the biblical text to recognize a biblical citation when they saw it, but not to know its context" (p. 44). However, it is not clear to me that we can say anything about what the rabbis assumed about their audience's knowledge, nor if that was a determining factor in the ways they (or other authors – for it is not clear that the rabbis are synonymous with the authors of prayers, as Hoffman assumes) wrote prayers by quoting the Bible.

A related issue is whether or not the author in fact intended to allude to another text, including the "further associations" that accompany the second text. Irwin helps define this:

Can an author be unaware of an allusion that he or she is making? Yes, clearly authors are not always conscious of their motivations for alluding or even that they are alluding. In such a case, then, do we have a situation in which allusion is present and yet the author did not intend the allusion? No. What we actually have is a situation in which the author intended an allusion but was nonetheless unaware that he or she was alluding. That is, we have an allusion, unconsciously intended. (Irwin, "What is an Allusion?" pp. 290-1.)

For the purposes of this study, then, the presence of an allusion/intertext, whether or not consciously intended by the author of the prayer, is significant fodder for interpretation, including its relevant associations.

interpretations.⁵⁰ Our approach to the possibilities of intertextuality will take a more polysemous approach to interpretive results.⁵¹

An intertextual lens for interpreting liturgy is also the general theme of Jeffrey Hoffman's dissertation: The Bible in the Prayer Book: A Study in Intertextuality.⁵² For example, he states: "Out of this confrontation of texts comes the new meaning of the verse...when the reader can identify the sources upon which a particular piece of work is based, the meaning is enriched."⁵³ Hoffman chooses 13 examples from the standard liturgy to explore for intertextual meaning. While influenced by some of Hoffman's frame, we mean to advance the discussion in three ways: (1) looking more in-depth at specific examples,⁵⁴ (2) using Genizah and other parallels of the liturgical phrases in order to arrive at a more complete set of intertextual possibilities, and (3) introducing the rabbinic understanding of the biblical intertext⁵⁵ as a key ingredient in formulating the

⁵⁰ See, for instance, Reuven Kimelman, "Psalm 145: Theme, Structure, and Impact," Journal of Biblical Literature 113/1 (1994), pp. 37-58; Idem, "The Literary Structure of the Amidah and the Rhetoric of Redemption," in William Dever and J. Edward Wright eds., Echoes of Many Texts: Reflections on Jewish and Christian Traditions: Essays in Honor of Lou H. Silberman (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1997), pp. 171-230; Idem, "Liturgical Studies in the 90's," Jewish Book Annual 52 (1994-95), pp. 59-72, esp. pp. 71-72. Cf. Jeremy Schonfield's notion of liturgical "narrative," described below.

⁵¹ We do not here aim to be as radical as Kristeva and her colleague, Roland Barthes, in claiming that the author is dead and there are in fact no stable meanings whatsoever (See Roland Barthes, "*La Mort de L'auteur*," Manteia 5 (1968), pp. 12-17; Irwin, p. 230). As Irwin points out, although that move attempted to radically redistribute power, it simply set up a new hierarchy, perhaps as difficult as the old one: "The reader now becomes as powerful as the author was." (Irwin, "Against Intertextuality," p. 233).

Nevertheless, the power of allusions and their concomitant associations is one that leads to multiple readings and interpretations. For the distinction between polysemy and radical indeterminacy in *midrash*, see David Stern, Midrash and Theory: Ancient Jewish Exegesis and Contemporary Literary Studies (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1996), pp. 15-38.

⁵² See above, n. 39.

⁵³ Jeffrey Hoffman, pp. 5, 15.

⁵⁴ To use Hays's language: "I aim at a deep reading of a single text (or handful of...texts)." Hays, "On the Rebound," p. 76.

⁵⁵ To use Evans's framing: "to listen for echoes of *interpreted* Scripture, and not just for echoes of Scripture itself." Evans, "Listening for Echoes," p. 51. See further above, n. 42. In our analysis, rabbinic *midrash* on the biblical intertext provides a window into the "interpreted Scripture."

juxtaposed meaning.⁵⁶ In addition, Hoffman (p. 1) claims that “ignoring the original context of a verse is characteristic also of the way the Bible is often used in the Siddur.” By contrast, we claim that the context of the biblical citation is in fact quite relevant to an interpretive strategy.⁵⁷

Finally, Jeremy Schonfield also advocates an intertextual reading as part of his method of analyzing prayers.⁵⁸ He imagines an “ideal reader” who is able to note “the sources of citations, allusions, and echoes appearing in the liturgy....”⁵⁹ Schonfield makes a number of advances in the intertextual approach. He is supportive of the notion of indeterminacy (although he also seems to view this as a temporary state on the way to a more definitive reading) and the possibility for varied individual understandings.⁶⁰

“Liturgical words have intertextual connotations derived both from their meaning and their previous contexts, whether scriptural or rabbinic, and these generate counter-texts

⁵⁶ While following primarily a semiotic approach to the analysis of the *siddur*, Stephen Kepnes also notes the intertextual nature of the liturgy. Most important for our purposes, Kepnes notes not only how the liturgy is infused with meaning from the Bible (“these associations remain and give the liturgy its infinite semantic depth,”) but also how the liturgy gives the texts of the Bible new meaning: “The liturgy creates a kind of separate ‘hermeneutical tent’ that preempts the original contexts in the Hebrew Bible and Talmud from which texts are taken and provides those texts with a new context that gives the texts new meaning. By virtue of this second, liturgical context, verses receive a whole new series of associations that follow from the surrounding liturgical texts...” (Kepnes, pp. 170-1). Ziva Ben-Porat makes a similar point in her classification of literary allusion: “It is very probably that the creation of intertextual patterns affects and enriches the evoked text (RT) as well. Even if the evoked text preceded the alluding text by several hundred years, a simultaneous activation is possible for the reader of both.” Ben-Porat, p. 114, n. 9.

⁵⁷ It should be noted that Hoffman (p. 5) backs down somewhat from this stark initial formulation.

⁵⁸ Schonfield, pp. 41-63, esp. pp. 51f.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

⁶⁰ “[T]he composite text is ambivalent and fluid and that its meaning must constantly be renegotiated...” (pp. 311-312). Also, the reader must have “a tolerance of a high degree of indeterminacy of meaning and readiness to defer the need to establish the precise ‘meaning’ of the text. Indeed, any one citation might be illuminated only by others appearing later on...” (p. 43). Schonfield thus sees meaning as deferred until the entire poetic work is digested. He does not seem as open to indeterminacy within each given line, because of the multiple understandings of any given intertext. In addition, while asserting that the liturgy has a “multivocal nature” (p. 312), Schonfield often sees the multiple voices as the surface “traditional” one in battle with the subtext “radical” one, which is what he means when he refers to “the sometimes paradoxical directions in which it leads the speaker” (p. 312).

that overlay the superficial chaos with a home-grown coherence.”⁶¹ Schonfield sees the “gaps” in the liturgical text “not as barriers to understanding, but as spurs to attention.”⁶²

However, Schonfield, whose father published a *siddur* with intertextual references in the margins,⁶³ is most interested in what he terms “reverie”: “It consists of *integrating* the atomized scriptural and rabbinic texts into a *continuous* reading . . . Its effect is to transform the liturgy from an anthology into a *narrative*, albeit of an unconventional kind.”⁶⁴ But in his pursuit of the “reverie,” he seems to force the disparate references into a single, coherent (and often self-described “radical”) reading, which he refers to as a “narrative” or “tale.”⁶⁵ This does not view liturgy as a montage of images (enriched by the intertextual references), but as a story being told. This approach suffers from the same problem as Kimelman’s approach: a singular interpretation to which all the intertexts are driving. In particular, within these narratives, Schonfield sees unorthodox interpretations lurking behind each turn of the *siddur*, and views his task as bringing this “undercurrent” of radical theology to the fore. A typical comment: “. . . the surface meaning appears to blend petition, thanks, and study in a conventionally devotional way, while the multi-layered subtext analyses the problematic nature of the divine promises to humans.”⁶⁶ Schonfield views the intertexts as a cunning way to express otherwise unallowable ideas: “The idea implied here, that everyday dangers derive from God, including those which arise from putting God to the test, is perhaps impossible to express openly in a rabbinic

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 55.

⁶³ Solomon Schonfeld, *Sidur Metsuyan: The Standard Siddur-Prayer Book with an Orthodox English Translation and a Lineal Set of References* (London: J.S.S. Books 1973). The differences in last name spellings are discussed in Schonfield, p. viii, n. 2.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 42 (emphasis mine).

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 311.

context.”⁶⁷ Or elsewhere, he claims that there is a “theological protest embodied in the liturgy,”⁶⁸ claiming that liturgy “contains an unacceptable message” and “unwelcome ideas.”⁶⁹ This approach seems more steeped in Schonfield’s personal narrative⁷⁰ than in a plausible reading of the *siddur*.

While Kimelman, Hoffman and Schonfield represent the modern version of this approach, the sensitivity to intertextuality in Jewish prayer is already found in the traditional commentaries on the *siddur*.⁷¹ In fact, two medieval commentators, R. Yehuda (R”I) bar Yakar, who was the teacher of the Ramban (13th century Spain), and R. David Abudraham (14th century Spain) both constructed book-length commentaries on the *siddur* that traced the origins of the prayers to biblical intertexts.⁷² Abudraham⁷³ wrote about this explicitly in the beginning of his commentary.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 315.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 317.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

⁷⁰ In thanking his father, Schonfield writes: “He no doubt would have preferred a work of more conventional piety...” (p. ix).

⁷¹ Joshua Levinson makes this point generally about literary approaches to reading *midrash*:

The literary approach to the study of *midrash* is both the youngest and the oldest of the various traditional and scholarly schools. As a modern discipline its emergence can easily be dated to the 1970s. However, from a historical perspective the literary approach is probably older than its historical and philological counterparts. In fact, while the historical and philological schools are anchored in fairly recent concepts of language, development, influence etc., there is in fact, nothing new in the literary approach per se. - Joshua Levinson, “Literary Approaches to Midrash,” in Carol Bakhos, *Current Trends in the Study of Midrash* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), pp. 189-226, here p. 191.

Concerning the same claim about intertextuality generally, see Irwin, “Against Intertextuality,” pp. 236-237.

⁷² On R”I bar Yakar, see: R. Yehuda b Yakar, *Perush Ha-Tefilot Ve-Ha-Berakhot*, ed. Shmuel Yerushalmi (Jerusalem, Me’orei Yisrael, 1979); See also Hayyim David Chavel, “*Perush Tefilot Yom Ha-Kippurim Mi-Rabbenu Yehuda be-Rabbi Yakar*,” *Sinai* 62 (1967), pp. 1-12. Chavel writes (p. 1): “His main project, which is to prove that there is not one phrase in the prayers and blessings that *haza”l* affixed that does not have a foundation in the language of the Bible or the legends of *haza”l*, expresses a new approach in the understanding of prayer.” On R. David Abudraham, see: David Abudraham, *Sefer Abudraham Ha-Shalem*, ed. Shlomo A. Wertheimer (Jerusalem: Usha, 1963). See also the edition with manuscript comparison: *Sefer Rabbenu David Abudraham*, ed. Menahem Brown (Jerusalem: *Or Ha-Sefer*, 2001).

⁷³ Or: Abudarham; there is some debate about how to pronounce his name. See H. Hirschfeld’s review of Abraham I. Schechter’s *Lectures on Jewish Liturgy* in *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* 1 (1935), pp. 181-182, here p. 182.

<p>“You should know that the language of prayer is based on the language of Scripture. Therefore you will find written in this commentary on every word a verse like it or relating to its essence. There are a few words that did not have a biblical basis, and therefore I will bring for them a basis from the Talmud.”⁷⁴</p>	<p>ויש לך לדעת כי לשון התפלה הוא מיוסד על לשון המקרא ולכן תמצא כתוב בפ' הזה על כל מלה ומלה פסוק כמוה או מעניניה, ומלות מעטים יש שלא נמצא להם יסוד במקרא ולכן אביא להם יסוד מהגמרא.</p>
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Abudraham, who is more well known, but who drew largely on the R”I bar Yakar’s method (and copied whole sections of his book),⁷⁵ delineated his methodology clearly. But these commentators were also not the first to spell out the connection between the prayers and the Bible. The following Talmudic-era story (which we will return to in the following chapter) illustrates this point as well:

<p>There was once one who prayed the <i>amidah</i> (lit: went down⁷⁶) before Rabbi Hanina. He said: “The great, mighty, awesome, powerful, strong, courageous God.”</p> <p>[Rabbi Hanina] said to him: Have you finished praising your Master? These three (descriptions): were it not that they were written by Moses in the Torah and affixed by the Men of the Great Assembly, we would not even say them! But you say all of these?! It may be compared to a human who had thousands upon thousands of gold coins, and people praised him for his silver coins. Isn’t that a degradation of him?</p> <p>- <i>B Megillah</i> 25a⁷⁷</p>	<p>תלמוד בבלי מסכת מגילה דף כה עמוד א</p> <p>ההוא דנחית קמיה דרבי חנינא, אמר: האל הגדול הגבור והנורא האדיר והחזק והאמיץ. אמר ליה: סיימתינהו לשבחיה דמרך? השתא הני תלתא, אי לאו דכתבינהו משה באורייתא ואתו כנסת הגדולה ותקנינהו, אנן לא אמרינן להו, ואת אמרת כולי האי? משל לאדם שהיו לו אלף אלפי אלפים דינרי זהב, והיו מקלסין אותו (באלף) דינרי כסף. לא גנאי הוא לו?</p>
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⁷⁴ *Sefer Abudraham* (ed. Wertheimer, p. 6; ed. Brown, p. 15).

⁷⁵ See Walter Orenstein, “The Influence of Judah Ben Jakar’s Liturgy on Abudraham,” *JQR* (N.S.) 62 (1971), pp. 120-128. Chavel (p. 2, n. 9) theorizes that perhaps Abudraham did not mention R”I bar Yakar by name because the text we have of Abudraham is perhaps not complete. Abudraham himself writes in his introduction (ed. Wertheimer, p. 6, ed. Brown, p. 3): “I am only one who copies from book to book and from scroll to scroll.”

⁷⁶ For more on this term, see Ze’ev Weiss, “*Matai Hehelu Moridin Shaliah Tzibbur Lifnei Ha-Teivah?*” *Katedra* 55 (1990), pp. 8-21.

⁷⁷ Compare the translation in Reuven Hammer, *Entering Jewish Prayer: A Guide to Personal Devotion and the Worship Service* (New York: Schocken Books, 1994), p. 96.

In this selection, the phrase which we know in the *amidah* – the great, mighty, and awesome God – is supplemented by an anonymous prayer leader. In this version (the story appears many times in rabbinic literature⁷⁸), the leader adds the adjectives: “powerful, strong and courageous.” R. Hanina chastises him for doing that, saying that “if Moses had not written these words in the Torah” we wouldn’t even be able to say the first three adjectives. And indeed, these words appear in Deuteronomy:

<p>For God your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords. The great, mighty, and awesome God who shows no favor and takes no bribe; who does justice for the orphan and widow, and loves the stranger, providing him with food and clothing - You too must love the stranger, for you were strangers in the Land of Egypt. (Deuteronomy 10:17-19)⁷⁹</p>	<p>דברים פרק י (יז) כִּי יִקְוֶה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הוּא אֱלֹהֵי הָאֱלֹהִים וְאֲדֹנֵי הָאֲדָנִים הָאֵל הַגָּדֹל הַגִּבֹּר וְהַנּוֹרָא אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִשָּׂא פָנִים וְלֹא יִקַּח שֹׁחַד : (יח) עֹשֶׂה מִשְׁפָּט יְתוֹם וְאִלְמָנָה וְאֹהֵב גֵּר לָתֵת לוֹ לֶחֶם וְשִׂמְלָה : (יט) וְאֹהֲבֹתֶם אֶת הַגֵּר כִּי גֵרִים הָיִיתֶם בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם :</p>
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Essentially, R. Hanina is pointing to the biblical intertext as the source and legitimacy of the prayer text itself.⁸⁰ As Ruth Langer notes, commenting on this Talmudic selection: “Thus, apparently by the early amoraic period, the rabbis voiced a real preference for Hebrew prayer language that explicitly pointed to biblical precedents.”⁸¹ It is the search for these biblical intertexts, and the meaning that is created through their juxtaposition with the prayer texts, that will define our project.

⁷⁸ See our detailed analysis in the following chapter, and Appendix B there.

⁷⁹ All translations of Tanakh in this study are based on NJPS translation, with some modifications.

⁸⁰ Joseph Heinemann makes a similar point about this text. See Heinemann, “*Sefer Tehilim Ke-Makor Le-Nusah Ha-Tefilah*,” p. 176. Cf. Maimonides, *Guide to the Perplexed*, Section 1, chap. 59, trans. Shlomo Pines (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963), vol. 1, pp. 140: “[T]his dictum makes it clear that...two necessary obligations determined our naming these attributes in our prayers: **one of them is that they occur in the Torah...**” (emphasis mine).

⁸¹ Ruth Langer, “Biblical Texts in Jewish Prayers: Their History and Function,” in Albert Gerhards and Clemens Leonhard, eds. *Jewish and Christian Liturgy and Worship: New Insights into its History and Interaction* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2007), p. 67. Langer also cites Judith Newman (*Praying by the Book*

The Literary-Intertext Method: Five Steps of Analysis

Having delineated the precedents to this approach, we now spell out the process of this literary-intertext method here.

Step 1: Approach the liturgical text from a standpoint of exegesis, in which allusions abound and the surface rendering is never satisfactory. Ask questions about phrases in the prayer text – what is strange? What needs further explanation?

Step 2: Using the tools of philology and academic inquiry, establish as many parallels to the liturgical text as one can. Drawing from quotations of the prayer in rabbinic sources, the Cairo Genizah, and varied rites, one can see the range of texts under examination, and more clearly understand the language choices performed by the author of any given liturgical expression, pointing to the identification of the intertexts in Step 3.

Step 3: Identify the biblical intertext or intertexts at play in the line of prayer. The intertext will be most fruitful when understood in its larger context – not just as a textual snippet, but as a stand-in for a larger section of text.⁸²

Step 4: Identify the rabbinic interpretation(s) of the biblical intertext, giving additional layers of meaning to the text behind the prayer text.⁸³

(Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1999)) who demonstrates that the use of biblical language was a feature of Second Temple texts and prayers.

⁸² One issue of research worth investigating is to what extent the context matters/is assumed in Writings vs. in narrative elements of Torah/Prophets. See Hoffman, “Hallels, Midrash, Canon and Loss,” p. 44:

Psalm fragments might be cited metonymically, cited, that is, precisely because the worshiper is expected to recognize the biblical context in which the snippet occurs. I began my study expecting to find this happening and thereby to reveal covert layers of intended meaning in all citations. I was disappointed to find this happening rarely, if at all. At least with the psalms, looking at their original context seems hardly to increase understanding of a prayer in which the psalm is cited. The rabbis cite psalms with abandon but usually because of what the cited excerpt says expressly, not because of its original content.

Our intertexts in this study are not largely drawn from Psalms, and the context does indeed seem relevant, although a large-scale investigation of this phenomenon in Jewish prayer should take into account Hoffman’s claim.

Step 5: Offer an interpretation or set of interpretations that relate to the prayer.⁸⁴

The combination of steps 3 and 4 is critical. The importance of locating the biblical intertext, identifying its larger biblical context *and* the subsequent understanding of that text by *Haza"l* was noted by Neal Kozody as applied to medieval poetry. He writes:

A biblical locution carrying in its train the almost automatic associations of the *entire* biblical passage in which it appears and the entire hermeneutical context in which it has traditionally been understood to belong, would in its new incarnation cast subtle and far-ranging effects over all the meanings and significations, both the actual and the possible, of the new-made poem.⁸⁵

Indeed, as Yonah Fraenkel points out, the rabbis learned the Bible concurrent with the *midrashic* understanding of the scriptural verses.⁸⁶ If the prayer text is drawn from the Bible, the biblical text is one that is understood through a particular rabbinic lens.

In the course of this study, we will analyze three prayers from the Talmudic era as case studies to apply this method: the first blessing of the *amidah*, the blessings of *havdalah*, and the confessional prayer known as *vidui*.

Three Case Studies

A. The First Blessing of the *Amidah*

Our opening example will be the core blessing in the most well-known rabbinic prayer: the *amidah*. Ruth Langer points out how the first blessing of the *amidah* is almost

⁸³ This represents the approach to discovering not just Scripture, but interpreted Scripture. See above, n. 42.

⁸⁴ As noted above, this interpretation may or may not have been intended by the author – it is entirely unknowable.

⁸⁵ Neal Kozodoy, "Reading Medieval Love Poetry," *AJS Review* 2 (1977), pp. 111-129, here pp. 119-120 (emphasis mine), apparently contra Lawrence Hoffman's point about the irrelevant nature of the entire biblical context (see above, n. 82). See also Dan Pagis, "Trends in the Study of Medieval Poetry," *AJS Review* 4 (1979), pp. 125-141, who writes about "the famous 'mosaic' style, which has been acknowledged as an original creation in which biblical quotations often changed or even reversed their original meaning, sometimes for humorous purposes" (p. 135 and n. 29).

⁸⁶ Yonah Fraenkel, *Darkei Ha-Aggadah Ve-Ha-Midrash* (Givatayim: Yad Le-Talmud, 1991), p. 27-31.

entirely drawn from biblical quotes. “Hardly a word of the prayer lacks a biblical echo.”⁸⁷

We plan to draw an analysis on multiple lines of this blessing as the opening foray into a case study of the literary-intertext method we propose here.

Step 1: After establishing which part of this blessing was known in Talmudic times, we will analyze a number of phrases in that blessing. Is there thematic coherence to the stringing of phrases? Is the connection between them merely happenstance, or is there some greater contextual meaning to the whole series?⁸⁸

Step 2: Drawing upon the work of Naphtali Wieder, Yehezkel Luger and, most recently, Uri Ehrlich, we will identify multiple versions of this blessing, many of which emerged through the publication of Genizah manuscripts.⁸⁹

Step 3: Having gathered the multiple versions of the blessing, we will identify the biblical intertexts, which in this blessing clearly emerge as direct quotations.⁹⁰

Step 4: We will look at the rabbinic understanding of these phrases and biblical quotations.⁹¹

⁸⁷ Langer, “Biblical Texts in Jewish Prayers,” p. 68; 81-82. Here Langer uses the term echo differently from Hays (Echoes of Scripture, p. 29), to indicate a more direct reference.

⁸⁸ For the general phenomenon of biblical texts strung together serving as prayers, see Ruth Langer, “Sinai, Zion, and God in the Synagogue: Celebrating Torah in Ashkenaz,” in Langer and Fine, eds. Liturgy in the Life of the Synagogue, pp. 121-159; Eadem, “*Shlavim Kedumim Be-Hitpathutah Shel Hotza’at Ha-Torah Ve-Haknasatah Be-Veit Keneset Bimei Ha-Beinayim*,” Kenishta: Studies of the Synagogue World 2 (2003): 99-118; and Eadem, ““We Do Not Even Know What To Do!”” See further Chapter 2 of this study, n. 132.

⁸⁹ Naphtali Wieder, “*Le-Heker Nusah Ha-Amidah Be-Minhag Bavel Ha-Kadmon*,” in Hitgabshut Nusah Ha-Tefilah Ba-Mizrah U-Be-Ma’arav (Jerusalem: Ben Zvi Institute, 1998) vol. 1, pp. 65-90, esp. pp. 65-80; and Idem, “*Hamishah Nos’im Be-Thum Ha-Tefilah*,” in Ibid. vol. 1, pp. 181-194, esp. pp. 186-189. Yehezkel Luger, Tefilat Ha-Amidah Le-Hol Al Pi Ha-Genizah Ha-Kahirit (Jerusalem: Orhot, 2001), esp. pp. 40-52; Ehrlich, Tefilat Ha-Amidah, esp. pp. 31-42.

⁹⁰ This is already clear in the work of Abudraham (ed. Wertheimer, p. 94; ed. Brown, pp. 215). In addition, Mekhilta de-Rabbi Yishmael (ed. Horowitz-Rabin, p. 60; ed. Lauterbach, vol. 1, p. 136) already points to the direct connection between a phrase in this blessing and an intertext in Ex 3:15. Reuven Kimelman, The Amidah: Its Literary Structure and the Rhetoric of Redemption, pp. 40-42 (forthcoming as part of a larger book on liturgy – my thanks to Prof. Kimelman for sharing this with me), also delineates fairly clearly a number of biblical intertexts, although his are all read in service of the theme of redemption. Although Porter (pp. 81-82) notes some confusion even around the criteria for direct quotation, it is fairly clear that the phrases we will examine are direct quotations from the Bible.

Step 5: Throughout the analysis, we will offer meaning(s) highlighted by the juxtaposition of the intertext(s) with the prayer text. We conclude by investigating whether there is a broader meaning to the blessing once these local meanings have been investigated.

B. Havdalah

We will further test this method by examining the blessing of *havdalah*.

Havdalah is most appropriate to our method of literary-intertext approach because, like the case with the Talmudic discussion of *ha-el ha-gadol, ha-gibbor ve-ha-norah* noted above, there is a direct discussion of the method of constructing this blessing in the Talmudim.

Discussing the requirements for *havdalah*, R. Yehoshua ben Levi mentions the following rule:

<p>Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: The one who separates (recites <i>havdalah</i>) must say an aspect of the separations (<i>havdalot</i>) said in the Torah. - <i>B Pesahim</i> 104a</p>	<p>תלמוד בבלי מסכת פסחים דף קד עמוד א אמר רבי יהושע בן לוי: המבדיל צריך שיאמר מעין הבדלות האמורות בתורה.</p>
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Or, as formulated by R. Yehoshua ben Levi's father in the Jerusalem Talmud:

<p>Levi said: As long as they are from the <i>havdalot</i> (separations) mentioned in the Torah. (<i>Y Berakhot</i> 5:2; 9b)</p>	<p>תלמוד ירושלמי מסכת ברכות פרק ה דף ט טור ב/ה"ב לוי אמר ובלבד מאבדלות האמורות בתורה</p>
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⁹¹ For instance, the four biblical citations of some version of *ha-el ha-gadol, ha-gibbor ve-ha-norah* is examined in *B Yoma* 69b and *Y Berakhot* 7:3; 11c (we will examine this in detail in the following chapter). As noted above, R. Hanina objects to additions to this phrase in *B Megillah* 25a = *B Berakhot* 33b; R. Yohanan and R. Yonatan object to those additions in *Y Berakhot* 9:1; 12d. Despite the rabbinic objections, those additions are also found in Heikhalot texts: *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur*, ed. Peter Schäfer (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck 1981) #191, 421, 488, 491, 503, 551, 694. Compare also *Sifre Devarim* #343, *Sifre on Deuteronomy*, ed. Louis Finkelstein (New York, Jewish Theological Seminary, 1969 [repr.]), p. 395.

For our purposes, the statement affirms a reliance on the biblical text as an intertext for *havdalah*.⁹²

Below we delineate the steps of analysis for this prayer:

Step 1: What is unusual about the phrases in this prayer? One obvious question is: why the formulation of “*sheshet yemei ham-ma’aseh*” – the six days of doing/creating? Is there any significance to the phrase for the six days of the week, which could have been articulated in any number of ways?

Step 2: The *havdalah* blessing is actually a direct quote from the Talmud recited by Rava (*B Pesahim* 103b) and R. Zera (*B Hullin* 26b). We will also examine the significance of Genizah versions of this blessing as well as the alternate, longer, version discussed in *B Pesahim* 104a, building a more robust understanding of the textual history of the prayer before identifying the intertexts.

Step 3: We will then identify the multiple biblical intertexts for the prayer’s phrases. We will note, for example, how *bein or le-hoshekh* – between light and darkness – appears in two separate (although related) biblical intertexts: Gen 1:4 and Gen 1:18. Significantly, the term *sheshet yemei ham-ma’aseh* appears only once in the entire Bible: Ez 46:1.

Step 4: We will examine the rabbinic understanding of these biblical intertexts, as they appear in numerous *midrashim*.

⁹² Form critics are drawn to this statement, because R. Yehoshua ben Levi seems to be pointing to a ritual that did not have a set text, but instead had a set of guidelines that someone who chose specific words had to follow (a similar guideline is offered for the selection of biblical verses in Rosh Hashannah Musaf (*M Rosh Hashannah* 4:6). See Joseph Heinemann, “*Malkhuyot, Zikhronot, Ve-Shofarot*,” in *Iyunei Tefilah*, pp. 54-76. This points to the fundamental variation within traditional Jewish prayer texts and the lack of one original *havdalah* text.

Step 5: Finally, we will offer an interpretation of the blessing in light of the biblical intertexts and also in light of the rabbinic understanding of those texts.

C. Vidui

Confession is a core part of prayer, both in daily prayer and on Yom Kippur, as delineated in *B Yoma* 87b. There, six rabbis offer specific texts (or fragments of texts) for the content of confession. The Talmud soon focuses on the essential confession liturgy. Bar Hamdudi reports of his teacher Shmuel: “I was standing before Samuel, and he was seated. When the prayer leader arrived at the phrase, ‘But we have sinned’ (*aval hatanu*)⁹³ Shmuel stood up. We learn that this is the essence of confession.” In the same discussion, Mar Zutra, a later authority, reports that if one says only “But we have sinned” one need confess no further. Thus the essence of confession seems to be “*aval hatanu*.”

Step 1: Having identified the text of confession, we will explore the possible intertexts for some of these prayers, focusing particularly on the prayers of Shmuel. Specifically, we will ask: what is so significant about the words *aval* (“but”) *hatanu* (“we have sinned”)? What does the word “*aval*” add to the liturgy?

Step 2: We will examine various manuscripts of the Talmud and other appearances of the *vidui* in the Genizah and early authorities order to establish the variants of this prayer.⁹⁴

Step 3: We will then examine the possibilities for an intertext, which vary depending on the version of the prayer one follows. In the case of *aval hatanu*, however,

⁹³ In most manuscripts of the Talmud the text reads only “*aval hatanu*.” See Appendix I to Chapter 4 of this study.

⁹⁴ See, for example, Israel Abrahams, “The Lost ‘Confession’ of Samuel,” *HUCA* 1 (1924), pp. 377-385.

the search for the intertext allows us to explore the issue of allusion, attempting to delineate criteria which guide us to connect words to the Bible that are not directly quoted.⁹⁵

Step 4: We will examine the *midrashim* surrounding the potential intertexts, as well as the larger rabbinic approach to the context revealed in the intertexts.

Step 5: Finally, we will offer an interpretation of these texts discovered in steps 3 and 4.

Conclusion

The selection of these three prayer texts represents an appropriate sampling of prayer texts of the Talmudic age.⁹⁶ The text of the first blessing of the *amidah* represents a prayer that is not associated with any particular rabbi, but has a clear textual history within Talmudic literature, and is formed by direct quotations from the Bible. The text of *havdalah* represents a prayer which is connected to a set of guidelines that relate it to the Bible. Finally the *vidui*, which is associated with various early *amoraim*, represents a reference to the Bible that is not a direct quote, and will allow us to explore the more ambiguous instances of allusion, common to the *siddur* in general.⁹⁷

These three examples of intertextual exegesis might be offered simply as forays in linguistic analysis; as exercises in interpretation. They are that, of course. But our examples are also directed to the problem we raised at the outset when quoting Heschel: “The *siddur* must not be used as a scapegoat. A revision of the prayer book will not solve the crisis of prayer. What we need is a revision of the soul, a new heart rather than a new

⁹⁵ For this issue, see Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, p. 20.

⁹⁶ The difficulty of determining the full texts of prayers from this era is well noted in scholarship. See our discussion in the following chapter.

⁹⁷ Most of the interpretive work of R”I bar Yakar and Abudraham represent the association of various phrases with verses in the Bible despite a lack of direct quotation.

text.”⁹⁸ Our intention is for this type of literary analysis to open up new ways in which the *siddur* can be seen as a text to be interpreted, and interpreted in a rigorous manner, that will also open the soul a bit further.

⁹⁸ Heschel, Man's Quest for God, p. 83.

Chapter 2: The First Blessing of the *Amidah*

Introduction

The *amidah* is the rabbinic prayer *par excellence*.¹ It is a series of blessings recited in every mandated Jewish prayer service.² Typically, rabbinic literature uses the term *tefilah* – now commonly translated as “prayer” – to refer specifically to the *amidah*.³ The term *amidah*, which we will use throughout this chapter, actually is a later appellation, appearing first in *Soferim* 16:9.⁴ In the Talmud, the prayer, in addition to being called *tefilah*, is also referred to as *shmonah esrei*, or eighteen, for the number of blessings in the series recited on weekdays.⁵

Our purpose in this chapter is to illustrate the literary-intertext approach, proposed generally in the previous chapter, through the case study of the first blessing of the *amidah*.⁶ Indeed, this blessing presents us with an opportunity to examine a prayer that is

¹ See Langer’s similar characterization in Ruth Langer, “Jewish Worship and Liturgy,” in The Cambridge Guide to Jewish History, Religion, and Culture, eds. Judith Baskin and Kenneth Seeskin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 337-356, here p. 345; David Golinkin, “Adding the *Imahot* to the *Amidah*,” in Idem, The Status of Women in Jewish: Responsa (Jerusalem: Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies, 2012), pp. 124-139, here p. 131; Lieber, Yannai on Genesis, p. 13 and p. 37, n. 2. Cf. Sperber, On Changes in Jewish Liturgy, p. 135.

² *M Berakhot* 4:3. Tabory terms it “an anthology[y] of blessings.” Joseph Tabory, “The Prayer Book (Siddur) As an Anthology of Judaism,” Prooftexts 17/2 (1997), pp. 115-132, here p. 123.

³ Elbogen, Jewish Liturgy, p. 24. See, for example, *M Berakhot* 4:1.

⁴ See Massekhet Soferim, ed. Michael Higger (New York: Debe Rabbanan, 1937), p. 295; In Joel Müller’s edition, it is 16:12. See Massekhet Soferim, ed. Joel Müller (Leipzig, 1878), p. XXXI and notes on pp. 225-230. For an evaluation of the dating of Massekhet Soferim, especially chapters 10-21, see Debra Reed Blank, “It’s Time to Take Another Look at ‘Our Little Sister’ *Soferim*: A Bibliographical Essay,” JQR (N.S.) 90/1-2 (1999), pp. 1-26, esp. p. 5, n. 10. But see the contrasting opinion of Joseph Tabory, “The Early History of the Liturgy of Yom Kippur,” in The Experience of Jewish Liturgy, pp. 283-308, here p. 287, n. 7. For further on the question of terminology, see Langer, “The Amidah as a Formative Rabbinic Prayer,” p. 127, n. 2.

⁵ While Palestinian weekday *amidah* texts, largely preserved in the hundreds of prayer manuscripts discovered in the Cairo Genizah, maintain 18 blessings, the Babylonian tradition had 19 blessings. For the Palestinian traditions, see most recently, Ehrlich, Tefilat Ha-Amidah. For the Babylonian traditions, see Ibid., as well as the discussion in *B Berakhot* 26b and *B Megillah* 17b. The number of blessings on *Shabbat* and holidays is seven, while in *Rosh Hashannah musaf*, the number is nine. For the clearest description of the different number of blessings for varying times of the year, see Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Tefilah u-Nesiat Kapayim, chap. 2. Although not practiced currently, the *Mishnah* records an *amidah* of 24 blessings, recited on public fast days. See *M Ta’anit* 2:2-4.

⁶ This blessing has special status in *halakhic* literature as it is the only blessing for which one minimally must have focus (*kavannah*). See *B Berakhot* 34b, encoded in *Shulkhan Arukh* OH 101:1; Sperber, On

intimately tied to biblical intertexts. As Ruth Langer recently observed about this blessing: “Hardly a word of the prayer lacks a biblical echo.”⁷ Below, we plan to draw out the literary-intertextual analysis by closely reading this particular blessing, analyzing its intertextual references line by line.⁸

Most of the details of the *amidah* –its structure, original dating, and textual history – are matters of well-worn scholarly debate.⁹ Some have attempted to identify an

Changes in Jewish Liturgy, p. 132, n. 4. Joseph Soloveitchik reads this requirement as a comment on the nature of this blessing in relation to the rest of the *amidah*: “All the blessings of the *amidah* are embedded in the blessing of *avot*.” Joseph Soloveitchik, *Al Ha-Tefilah*, ed. Reuven Grodner (Jerusalem, 2011), p. 90. Interestingly, *Hagahot Maimoniot (Hilkhot Tefilah 10:1)* mentions an opinion of Rav Hisda that the blessing for which one requires *kavannah*, at a minimum, is *hoda’ah*, not *avot* (and rules against this opinion). This seems to reflect another version of the passage in *B Berakhot 34b* (see *Sefer Ravivah*, ed. Avigdor Aptowitz (Jerusalem: Harry Fischel Institute, 1964 [repr.]), p. 66, n. 17 = # 89). Rav Hisda’s opinion is not found in the manuscripts of *B Berakhot 34b* that survive today. See Raphael Rabinovicz, *Dikdukei Soferim* (Munich, 1867), vol. 1, p. 186 and the manuscripts in The Saul Lieberman Institute of Talmud Research of the Jewish Theological Seminary: Sol and Evelyn Henkind Talmud Text Databank.⁷ See above, p. 32, n. 87 and below, p. 70, n. 86 and p. 86, n. 132; Ruth Langer, “Biblical Texts in Jewish Prayers,” p. 68; See also the chart of allusions on pp. 81-82. It should be noted that Langer is using the term “echo” in a non-technical sense. See our discussion of this term in Hays’s work, in Chapter 1. Louis Finkelstein also noted that “...all the expressions used in the [first] benediction occur in the Pentateuch...” See Louis Finkelstein, “The Development of the *Amidah*,” p. 27, n. 57. Interestingly, Finkelstein does not connect “*magen Avraham*” to a source in Torah (which we, and many others, do – see further below), but only to Ben Sira 51:1. Joseph Heinemann, (Prayer in the Talmud, pp. 90f.) sees the tendency toward biblical quotations and references in liturgy as expressing the sense among rabbinic authorities that they did not have the freedom to innovate in language. For the concern about the rabbinic dictum “*ein omrim berakha pasuk*” (*Y Berakhot 2:3*) and its relationship to the quoting of the Bible, see the literature cited in *Ibid.*, p. 60, n. 22 and also Shlomo Na’eh, “The Role of Biblical Verses According to the Rabbinic Tradition,” in Prayers that Cite Scripture, ed. James Kugel (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), pp. 43-59, esp. p. 59. See also Saul Lieberman, “*Perurim: Tikunei Yerushalmi*,” *Tarbiz* 3 (1932), pp. 452-453; A. S. Rosenthal, “*Shte’i He’arot*,” *Tarbiz* 41 (1972), pp. 150-151; Ezra Fleischer, “*Kedushat Ha-Amidah (U-She’ar Ha-Kedushot): Hebetim Histori’im, Liturgi’im Ve-Idiologi’im*,” *Tarbiz* 67 (1998), pp. 301-350, here p. 307, n. 30 [Reprinted in *Ibid.*, Tefilot Ha-Keva Be-Yisrael Be-Hithavutan U-Ve-Hitgabshutan, eds. Shulamit Elizur and Tova Beer (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2012), vol. 1, pp. 105-154, here pp. 111, n. 30] and the literature cited there.

⁸ Some of these arguments were laid out in general form in Elie Kaunfer, Empowered Judaism: What Independent Minyanim Can Teach Us about Building Vibrant Jewish Communities (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights, 2010), pp. 163-176. I will not analyze all the phrases in this blessing, since only some of them can reasonably be dated back to the Talmudic era with certainty. See further below.

⁹ For matters of structure, see Kimelman, “The Literary Structure,” pp. 176-179 (discussed further below). For matters of dating and textual history, see the debate between the school of Ezra Fleischer (expressed in Fleischer, “*Le-Kadmoniyut Tefilot Ha-Hova Be-Yisrael*,” and Idem, “*Tefilot Shemoneh Esrei*”) vs. the school of Joseph Heinemann, Prayer in the Talmud, esp. chapter 9. The general literature surrounding the *amidah* is vast, with entire books written on only one blessing (cf. Langer, Cursing the Christians? For a general overview, see Elbogen, Jewish Liturgy, pp. 24ff and Langer, “The *Amidah* as a Formative Rabbinic Prayer.”

overall order or theme to the (weekday) *amidah*.¹⁰ For instance, Reuven Kimelman views the liturgical piece as “a compositional whole. Such an approach is inclined to construct the meaning of the whole, what is called its synthetic meaning.”¹¹ In arguing for a theme to this “compositional whole,” Kimelman proposes redemption as the “synthetic meaning” of the *amidah*.¹² While Kimelman’s approach of looking at the whole of the literary composition is certainly a fruitful avenue for our approach as well, he argues that this whole has one “purpose and intention” (“The Literary Structure,” p. 172).

Specifically, Kimelman claims that the liturgy is involved in the “art of persuasive discourse,” which is an attempt to “make a case” to the worshiper (p. 173).

Even if they do not go as far as Kimelman to identify an *amidah*-wide theme, other modern scholars have also attempted to see a unified theme within this particular blessing.¹³ In early references to the blessing, it was indeed referred to by one term, “*avot*,” implying a single theme (even if it is not entirely clear what the term “*avot*” may signify).¹⁴

¹⁰ *B Megillah* 17b contains a *baraita* that sees an ordinal logic, if not a thematic unity, to the blessings.

¹¹ Reuven Kimelman, “The Literary Structure,” p. 172.

¹² Kimelman notes (“The Literary Structure,” p. 201, n. 133) that he is building on the work of Liber, “Structure and History of the Tefilah.” Like Liber and Kimelman, Menahem Kahane also sees redemption as the overall theme of the *amidah*. See Menahem Kahane, “*Ha-Yahas Le-Nokhrim Be-Tkufat Ha-Tannaim Ve-Ha-Amoraim*,” *Eit Ha-Da’at* 3 (2000), pp. 22-36, here p. 31 (my thanks to Prof. Kahane for sharing this article with me). Lawrence Hoffman also notes that Leon Liebreich had a similar theory. See *My People’s Prayer Book: The Amidah*, ed. Lawrence Hoffman (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights, 1998), pp. 33-35.

¹³ For instance, Uri Ehrlich summarizes the theme of the first blessing of the *amidah* as emphasizing “the unique national relationship between Israel and its God” (Ehrlich, *Tefilat Ha-Amidah*, p. 32). Here Ehrlich draws on Ezra Fleischer’s insistence that the opening blessing has national themes. (See Ezra Fleischer, “*Tefilat Shmoneh Esrei*,” pp. 191-2.) However, the evidence for this supposed theme lacks a connection to the biblical intertexts that stand behind this blessing, as we will show below. Golinkin also offers a theory about the motivation of the authors of the *amidah*: “The Sages who wrote the *amidah* innovated nothing here. They chose the opening for *Avot* from Exodus 3:15 and the conclusion from Genesis 15:1 in order to declare the founding fathers of our nation and their covenant with God at the beginning of The Prayer par excellence.” Golinkin, “Adding the *Imahot*,” p. 131. Yet it is not at all clear what motivated the sages behind the *amidah* to quote these two intertexts. Only an examination of the intertexts themselves will help open up the possibilities for understanding.

¹⁴ *M Rosh Hashannah* 4:5; *B Rosh Hashannah* 32a; *B Megillah* 17b; *Y Berakhot* 4:6; 8c; *Y Rosh Hashannah* 4:10; 59d; *Sifra Emor* 11 (ed. Weiss, p. 101d). The blessing is also called “*magen*” in some

By contrast, we will look at the discrete lines of the blessing (and their accompanying biblical intertexts) and attempt to build up to an interpretation of the whole passage, but one that does not center on a single purpose or theme, or a rhetorical act of persuasion.¹⁵ In our view, the intertextual nature of the liturgical whole by definition leads to multiple interpretations and layers of meaning.¹⁶

One final methodological note before we turn to the blessing itself: The textual witnesses to the *siddur*, the most familiar locus of the *amidah*, are extremely late relative to the Talmud, and certainly relative to the foundational liturgical enactments of *Yavne* and the *Tannaim*.¹⁷ Therefore the *siddur* text itself, although familiar to the modern worshiper, cannot be the core text on which to base our analysis, which seeks to identify

Genizah texts: see Luger, p. 40. But note well that while these references summarize the blessing in one word, they do not detail the meaning of this word.

¹⁵ This is an approach not dissimilar to the midrashic lens on the Bible, as noted by David Stern: “Atomization, one of the most common exegetical techniques of *midrash*, proceeds from the assumption that every word and phrase in Scripture is as meaningful in itself as within its larger Scriptural context.” Stern, *Midrash and Theory*, p. 20.

¹⁶ Kimelman, it should be noted, is also focused on identifying intertexts as a pathway to understanding the meaning of the liturgical text: “The intertexts of the liturgy are often from the Bible and the Midrash. By designating a source as a liturgical intertext, I refer to a textual allusion that unlocks a dimension of the meaning of the liturgy. In other words, the intertext is the background allusion that accounts for a meaning of the text” (“The Literary Structure,” p. 174). However, he reads the intertexts as all pointing to a singular theme of redemption. See our discussion of indeterminacy and our assessment of Kimelman’s approach in Chapter 1 of this study.

¹⁷ The difficulty of determining the full texts of early Jewish prayers is well documented in scholarship. As noted by Stefan Reif: “Although many specific items of prayer and prayer-custom are referred to [in the Talmud], they often appear only as a title or as a few initial words, disembodied liturgy as it were....” Reif, *Judaism and Hebrew Prayer*, p. 126. Or Langer, “The Amidah as a Formative Rabbinic Prayer,” p. 134: “[T]here is no complete text of the *amidah*, or any single regularly recited *berakhah* thereof, in any classical rabbinic text.” As an example of this problem, Rav Amram Gaon’s *siddur*, the first full known *siddur* (mid-9th century), is considered unreliable as a textual witness to prayers, because it was recopied so many times, presumably reflecting the local custom more so than Rav Amram’s original wording. See *Seder Rav Amram Gaon*, ed. Daniel Goldschmidt (Jerusalem: Mossad Ha-Rav Kook, 1972), p. 21; Robert Brody, “*Le-Hidat Arikhato Shel Seder Rav Amram Gaon*,” in *Knesset Ezra: Sifrut Ve-Hayim Be-Veit Ha-Knesset*, eds. Shulamit Elizur, et al. (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1994), pp. 21-34; Idem, *The Geonim of Babylonia and the Shaping of Medieval Jewish Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), pp. 192-3; Wieder, *Hitgabshut*, p. 53, n. 199 and p. 264, where he refers to the *siddurim* of Rav Amram. In the words of Louis Ginzberg, “[W]e shall probably never know its true, original form. It was used until it was used up.” Louis Ginzberg, *Geonica: The Geonim and their Halakic Writings* (New York: Hermon Press, 1968 [repr.]), vol. 1, p. 124. But cf. Fleischer, *Tefilah U-Minhagei Tefilah Eretz-Yisraeli'im Be-Tekufat Ha-Genizah* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1988), p. 131, n. 152.

the prayer texts recited by a Talmudic-era worshiper. Instead, we will attempt to locate the earliest presence of each of the lines under analysis in this blessing as we proceed.¹⁸

Section I

Blessed are You, YHVH, our God And God of our ancestors God of Abraham, God of Isaac and God of Jacob	בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם, אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק, וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב
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Talmudic-Era Sources

The full text of the first blessing is not found at all within Talmudic-era rabbinic literature; we will investigate each line individually. This opening line of the *amidah* appears in multiple Talmudic-era texts, analyzed below.¹⁹

1) *M Bikkurim* 1:4 mentions part of this line:

These are the ones who bring (first fruits) but don't declare (the statement in Deuteronomy 26:3 ²⁰): The proselyte brings but doesn't declare, for he is not able to say: "which YHVH swore to my ancestors	משנה מסכת ביכורים פרק א משנה ד אלו מביאין ולא קורין הגר מביא ואינו קורא שאינו יכול לומר אשר נשבע ה' לאבותינו לתת לנו
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¹⁸ It should be noted that Daniel Goldschmidt is skeptical that any full texts of prayers preserved in Talmudic literature reflect the actual practice. See Goldschmidt, *Haggadah shel Pesah*, p. 33, n.13 (end). However, his skepticism seems to be directed at longer prayers, not at the shorter snippets of prayers that we will be analyzing below.

¹⁹ The opening phrase "*Barukh atta Adonai*" does not appear in the Talmud in the context of the *amidah*. For an analysis of this phrase, see our discussion of the conclusion of the blessing, below. Our analysis here begins with "*Eloheinu ve-elohei avoteinu...*" Louis Ginzberg, *Perushim Ve-Hidushim Be-Yerushalmi*, ed. David Weiss Halivni (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1961), vol. 4, p. 177) claims that the blessing is found "from *barukh* until *norah*," but the sources he cites do not actually have the phrase "*Barukh atta Adonai*." This may simply be because the opening formula was assumed.

The unusual opening of the blessing, without "*melekh ha-olam*," also appears in a version of the morning blessings found in the Cairo Genizah. See Dalia Marx, "*Birkhot Ha-Shahar Be-Genizat Kahir*," *Ginzei Kedem* 3 (2007), pp. 109-161, here p. 118. For the requirement to mention God's kingship in the blessing formula, see Ruth Langer, *To Worship God Properly: Tensions Between Liturgical Custom and Halakhah in Judaism* (Cincinnati: HUC Press, 1998), p. 25 and n. 103.

²⁰

... "I declare today to YHVH your God that I came to the land which YHVH swore to our ancestors to give to us." (Deut 26:3).	דברים פרק כו (ג) הגדתי היום ליקח אלקיך פי באתי אל הארץ אשר נשבע לקח לאבותינו לתת לנו:
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<p>to give to us.” But if his mother was an Israelite, he brings and declares. And when he prays (the <i>amidah</i>) alone, he says: “The God of the ancestors of Israel.” But when he is in the synagogue, he says: “The God of your ancestors.” But if his mother was an Israelite, he says: “The God of our ancestors.” - <i>M Bikkurim</i> 1:4.</p>	<p>ואם היתה אמו מישראל מביא וקורא וכשהוא מתפלל בינו לבין עצמו אומר אלהי אבות ישראל וכשהוא בבית הכנסת אומר אלהי אבותיכם ואם היתה אמו מישראל אומר אלהי אבותינו:</p>
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The final option for the proselyte quoted above is the line from our *amidah* text: *elohei avoteinu*. Binyamin Katzoff raises doubts about the liturgical locus of this line: “[T]he Mishnah does not specify the liturgical context in which this was said, and it is by no means clear that a particular prayer with fixed words was involved.”²¹ Nevertheless, the use of the term *mitpaleil* (prays) seems to indicate the liturgical context of the *amidah*, and lacking evidence to the contrary, it seems reasonable to assign this passage to what we know as the beginning formula of the *amidah* blessing.²²

2) A clearer reference to this phrase in Talmudic-era literature is in *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Yishmael, Pisha* 16.²³

²¹ Binyamin Katzoff, “‘God of our Fathers’: Rabbinic Liturgy and Jewish-Christian Engagement,” *JQR* (N.S.) 99/3 (2009), pp. 303-322, here p. 304.

²² See Shmuel Safrai and Ze’ev Safrai, *Mishnat Eretz Yisrael: Zera’im*, (Jerusalem: Michelelet Lifshitz, 2011), vol. 8, p. 180. See also Uri Ehrlich, “Bein ‘Zechut Avot’ le-‘Ahrayut Avot’: Perek Be-Mahshevet Ha-Tefilah Be-Tekufat Haza”l,” in *Al Pi Ha-Be’er: Mehkarim Be-Hagut Yehudit U-Be-Mahshevet Ha-Halakhah Mugashim Le-Ya’akov Blidstein*, eds. Uri Ehrlich, et al. (Be’er Sheva: Mossad Bialik, 2008), pp. 13-23, here p. 14, n. 13. For the association between the root *p-l-l* (as in *mitpaleil* and *tefilah*) and the *amidah*, see above, n. 1.

²³ See Hayim Horowitz and Israel Rabin, *Mekhilta D’Rabbi Ismael* (Jerusalem: Shalem Books, 1997 [repr.]), p. 60; compare ed. Lauterbach, vol. 1, p. 136. While the above passage is quoted from the text of Horowitz-Rabin, it is in fact an amalgamation of the main manuscripts of this *midrash*. Horowitz-Rabin quotes the Ed. Princ., while filling out some of the abbreviated words and the rest of the verse. For greater clarity on this source, I reproduced the manuscript versions (as provided by the online manuscript collection at Bar Ilan University: <http://www.biu.ac.il/js/tannaim/>), which serve as the textual witnesses to this passage used by Horowitz-Rabin and Lauterbach:

<p>What is the scriptural source for saying: “Blessed are You, YHVH, our God and God of our ancestors, God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob?” As it says (Exodus 3:15): “God said further to Moshe: ‘Thus shall you say to the children of Israel: “YHVH, God of your ancestors, God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob...”’”</p> <p>- <i>Mekhilta de-Rabbi Yishmael, Pisha 16</i></p>	<p>מכילתא דרבי ישמעאל בא - מסכתא דפסחא פרשה טז ומנין שאומרים ברוך אתה יי' אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו אלהי אברהם אלהי יצחק ואלהי יעקב שנאמר ויאמר עוד אלהים אל משה כה תאמר אל בני ישראל ה' אלהי אבותיכם אלהי אברהם אלהי יצחק ואלהי יעקב (שמות ג טו)</p>
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Katzoff raises doubts about the reliability of this source, noting that “and God of our ancestors” does not appear in the Oxford manuscript of the *Mekhilta*.²⁴ Already in the 19th century, Meir Friedmann claimed that this section of the *Mekhilta* (which is followed by an inquiry into the scriptural source for the three blessings following a meal) is not original and was inserted by a later scribe.²⁵

Nevertheless, this passage, while perhaps not original to the *Mekhilta*, does seem to emerge from the Tannaitic period in its form, language and style. Katzoff himself notes: “The doubt cast on the text of the *Mekhilta* relates only to that of the *midrash* there, not necessarily to the text of the first blessing of the *amidah* prayer.”²⁶

<p>Ed. Princ.: ומנין שאומרים בא"י אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו אלהי אברהם אלהי יצחק ואלהי יעקב שנ' ויאמר עוד אלהים אל משה כה תאמר אל בני ישראל וגו'</p>	<p>Munich: ומניין שהם או' בא"י א[ל]הינו ואלהי אבותינו אלהי אברהם שנ' ויאמר עוד אלהים (אלהי) אל משה כה תאמר וגו'</p>	<p>Oxford: מנין שהן או' ב' א' יי' אל'ינו אלהי אברהם אלהי יצחק ואלהי יעקב כענין שנ' ויאמר עוד אל'ים אל משה כה תאמר אל בני ישראל יי' אלהי אבותי' אלהי אברהם אלהי יצחק ואלהי יעקב וגו'</p>
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Lauterbach's edition is “eclectic,” as he describes it (Jacob Lauterbach, *Mekilta de-Rabbi Ishmael* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1949), p. xxxvi) and in this section conforms mainly to the Munich manuscript in the table above, with some edits on his part (including adding *Elohei Yitzhak ve-Elohei Yaakov*, as well as filling out the rest of the verse (as is his method, discussed on p. xlii). The selection does not appear in the *midrash* fragments published by Menahem Kahane, *Kitei Midreshei Halakhah min Ha-Genizah* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2005).

²⁴ See table of manuscripts above.

²⁵ See Meir Friedmann, *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ismael: Der Altteste halachische und hagadische Midrasch au Exodus* (Jerusalem: Or Olam, 2008 [repr.]), p. 19, n. 21. Indeed this section is missing in the parallel *Midrash Hahamim*, as noted by Horowitz-Rabin, p. 60. See also Katzoff, p. 307, n. 11.

²⁶ Katzoff, p. 307, n.12.

3) The phrase also appears in the Babylonian Talmud, known to the *amora* Reish

Lakish:

<p>Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish said: “I will make you into a great nation” (Gen 12:2) – this is what they say: “God of Abraham.” “I will bless you” (Gen 12:2) – this is what they say: “God of Isaac.” “I will make your name great” – this is what they say: “God of Jacob.” Is it possible that they would conclude with all of them? Scripture teaches “And you shall be a blessing” – in you they will conclude, and they will not conclude with all of them. - <i>B Pesahim</i> 117b</p>	<p>תלמוד בבלי מסכת פסחים דף קיז עמוד ב אמר רבי שמעון בן לקיש: +בראשית יב+ ואעשך לגוי גדול - זהו שאומרים אלהי אברהם, ואברכך - זהו שאומרים אלהי יצחק, ואגדלה שמך - זהו שאומרים אלהי יעקב, יכול יהו חותמין בכולן - תלמוד לומר והיה ברכה - בך חותמין, ואין חותמין בכולן.</p>
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Contextually, this interpretation by Reish Lakish clearly seems to refer to a liturgical practice, as is confirmed by the final line of the exegesis which brings the technical term *hotmin*.²⁷ It is clear, then, that Reish Lakish (the first named rabbi in the textual witnesses of this phrase) was familiar with this phrase as part of the blessing.²⁸

4) It is likely that our phrase is also referred to in the following passage:

²⁷ The parallel in *Bamidbar Rabbah* 11:2 makes clear that the *hatimah* referred to here is in fact the final line of the *amidah*:

<p>“You shall be a blessing” – in you they will conclude and say “shield of Abraham” and they will not conclude in all of them.</p>	<p>במדבר רבה (וילנא) פרשת נשא פרשה יא והיה ברכה בך חותמין ואומרים מגן אברהם ואין חותמין בכולן</p>
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See also *Bereishit Rabbati*, ed. Chanoch Albeck (Jerusalem: Or Olam, 2008 [repr.]), p. 68 and *Aggadot Bereishit*, ed. Solomon Buber (Vienna, 1894), p. 26. Although these texts are much later than the source in *B Pesahim*, emerging only in the late Geonic period (see H. L. Strack and Gunter Stemmerger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), pp. 309-312, 355-6), they seem to spell out clearly what the Talmudic text implies. Kimelman (“Literary Structure,” p. 201, n. 135; and Idem, *The Amidah: Its Literary Structure and the Rhetoric of Redemption*, forthcoming), p. 47, n. 224), following Heinemann (Joseph Heinemann, “*Berakhah Ahat Me-Ein Sheva*,” in *Iyunei Tefilah*, pp. 36-43, here p. 41), hints that Reish Lakish was innovating the *hatimah* here, changing an earlier form. For further on the term *hatimah*, see Section IV, below.

²⁸ Although we identify the intertext for this line as a quote from Exodus (see below and the source in the *Mekhilta* passage above), even the intertext itself is multifaceted, for here Reish Lakish identifies Gen 12:2 as the verse being referenced. In other words, a liturgical phrase can simultaneously serve as a direct quote from the Bible *and* as an allusion to another verse in the Bible. See further, Conclusion of this chapter.

<p>Rav Yehuda said in the name of Rav: A person should never bring themselves to be tested (by God), for David, king of Israel, brought himself to be tested, and failed. He said before Him: Master of the universe: Why do we say: “God of Abraham, God of Isaac and God of Jacob,” and we don’t say: “God of David”? He said: Them – I tested. You – I didn’t test. He said to Him: Master of the universe: Examine me, test me. - <i>B Sanhedrin 107a</i></p>	<p>תלמוד בבלי מסכת סנהדרין דף קז עמוד א אמר רב יהודה אמר רב: לעולם אל יביא אדם עצמו לידי נסיון, שהרי דוד מלך ישראל הביא עצמו לידי נסיון ונכשל. אמר לפניו: רבונו של עולם, מפני מה אומרים, אלהי אברהם אלהי יצחק ואלהי יעקב ואין אומרים אלהי דוד? - אמר: אינהו מינסו לי, ואת לא מינסית לי, אמר לפניו: רבונו של עולם, בחנני ונסני.</p>
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It is possible that in Rav’s statement, King David is merely quoting the phrase from Ex 3:16 or 19. However, it is more probable that he is referring specifically to a liturgical practice, likely that of the first blessing of the *amidah*, for a few reasons: 1) David did not live in the time of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, or Moses, and therefore has no claim to be mentioned in Exodus 3. 2) The phrase *mipnei mah omrim* (or *omrin* in some manuscripts) seems to be a technical term introducing a liturgical practice.²⁹

²⁹ The phrase “*mipnei mah omrim*” only appears in this context and in parallels to this story, except for one additional (late) source, which is also in a liturgical context:

<p>Why do we say these sections [=the 3 paragraphs of the Shema] every day? Rabbi Levi said: Because the 10 commandments are included within them. - <i>Yalkut Shim’oni Va-Ethanan #836</i></p>	<p>ילקוט שמעוני תורה פרשת ואתחנן רמז תתלו מפני מה אומרים פרשיות הללו בכל יום, רבי לוי אמר מפני שעשרת הדברות כלולות בהם</p>
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Indeed in *Midrash Tehilim* 18:25 (ed. Buber, p. 77b) – one of the parallels to *B Sanhedrin 107a* – the phrase *mipnei mah omrim* is also used, and while not referring to the triad Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, it is clearly used to indicate a liturgical context (the *hatimah* of the first blessing):

<p>David said to the Holy Blessed One: Why do they say: Shield of Abraham and not Shield of David? He said to him: I tested him with 10 trials. He said to Him: Test me YHVH and try me (Ps 26:2). Since he tested him with Bat Sheva and he passed, David immediately prayed that they should say “Shield of David” in the blessings of the <i>haftarah</i>: “For You swore by Your holy name that his light would never go out. Blessed are You, YHVH, shield of David.” - <i>Midrash Tehilim 18:25</i> (ed. Buber, p. 77b)</p>	<p>מדרש תהלים (בובר) מזמור יח [מגני וקרן ישעי (תהלים יח ג). אמר דוד לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא מפני מה אומרים מגן אברהם, ולא מגן דוד, אמר לו בחנתי בעשרה נסיונות, אמר לפניו בחנני ה' ונסני (שם /תהלים/ כו ב), כיון שנסה אותו בבת שבע ולא עמד בו, מיד התפלל דוד שיאמרו מגן דוד בברכת ההפטרה, כי בשם קדשך נשבעת לו שלא יכבה נרו לעולם ועד ברוך אתה ה' מגן דוד.</p>
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The phrase *mipnei mah omrim* thus seems to indicate a common *liturgical* practice. In addition, *Midrash Tehilim* 18:8 (ed. Buber, p. 70a) states:

<p>“My shield” (Ps 18:3): Just as we say “<i>magen Avraham</i>” in the <i>amidah</i>, so to we say “<i>magen David</i>” after the <i>haftarah</i>.</p>	<p>מדרש תהלים (בובר) מזמור יח מגני. כשם שאומרים מגן אברהם בתפלה, כך אומרים מגן דוד אחר הפטרה.</p>
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Therefore this text represents a second appearance of our phrase by a named *amora* in the Babylonian Talmud.³⁰

One final piece of evidence will help confirm the dating of this phrase to the Talmudic era: In all known Genizah manuscripts, this phrase exists, in both the Babylonian and Palestinian rites.³¹ Given the preponderance of the evidence, it is sufficiently clear that this phrase meets our criteria of a Talmudic-era part of the first blessing of the *amidah*.³² Now we can proceed to identifying the intertext of this phrase.

However, Buber (p. 70, n. 34) notes that this selection only appears in one manuscript and he does not believe it to be original to the text.

A similar phrase, that also introduces a liturgical text, is found in *Bereishit Rabbah*, ed. Theodor-Albeck, p. 375, with critical apparatus:

What they say: “Shield of Abraham.”	מי שהן [משהן\משהם\בשעה שהן] אומרים מגן אברהם
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See further on this text in Section IV below.

³⁰ On the liturgical significance of B Sanhedrin 107a, see further Wieder, *Hitgabshut*, pp. 249-251; *Midrash Shmuel*, ed. Brachayhu Lipshitz (Jerusalem: Makhon Schechter, 2009), pp. 407-409 and the literature cited there. Ehrlich, *Tefilat Ha-Amidah*, p. 32, n. 10, also lists the four sources analyzed thus far in dating the beginning of the *amidah* to the Talmudic era.

³¹ Luger, p. 40; Ehrlich, *Tefilat Ha-Amidah*, p. 33. The phrase is also preserved in the introduction to *piyyutim*. See Ezra Fleischer, *Shirat Ha-Kodesh Ha-Ivrit Bimei Ha-Beinayim* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2008 [repr.]), p. 56. Ehrlich (*Ibid.*, p. 32) also states directly that this phrase had a Talmudic-era dating, with textual witnesses in the *Tannaitic* and *Amoraic* period, as analyzed above. For the terminology of “Babylonian” liturgy vs. “Eretz Yisrael” liturgy and its complexity, see Luger, pp. 15-17 and Ehrlich, *Tefilat Ha-Amidah*, p. 4f.

³² There are a few other texts worth considering in attempting to locate this phrase in the Talmudic era:

- 1) Uri Ehrlich claims that this line from the *amidah* stands behind the story in *B Bava Metzia* 85b. See Uri Ehrlich, “The Ancestors’ Prayers for the Salvation of Israel in Early Rabbinic Thought,” in Gerhards and Leonhard, *Jewish and Christian Liturgy and Worship*, pp. 249-256, here pp. 254-5. See also Inbar Rave, “*Shomea Tefilah: Iyun Be-Sippur min Ha-Talmud Ha-Bavli*,” *Mehkarei Yerushalayim Be-Sifrut Ivrit* 17 (1999), pp. 33-40. However, this phrase is not quoted explicitly in that story, and the text of the prayer is not clear at all (see Rave, p. 39).
- 2) There is a manuscript of *Massekhet Kallah* chap. 2 that includes this liturgical formula (although not connected there to the *amidah*):

At that moment they said: Blessed is YHVH, our God and God of our ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob and the God of R Akiva who revealed secret to Akiva ben Yosef.	באותה שעה אמרו ברוך יי אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו אלהי אברהם אלהי יצחק ואלהי יעקב ואלהי ר עקיבא שגילה סוד לעקיבא בן יוסף
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This excerpt comes following a story in which R. Akiva intuited the status of a boy born from an illicit relationship. However, the dating of this text is not entirely clear, since it appears in only one manuscript of *Massekhet Kallah*, as noted by Wertheimer. See Shlomo Aharon Wertheimer, *Batei Midrashot* (Jerusalem: Ktav Va-Sefer, 1968), vol. 1, p. 231, n. 29. While Meir Bar-Ilan (*Sitrei Tefilah Ve-Heikhalot* (Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 1987), p. 126) cites this as an early text (since he views most of *Heikhalot* literature as *Tannaitic*), this text in fact seems to be

post-Talmudic. For general issues in dating *Massekhet Kallah*, see *Massekhet Kallah, Ve-Hen Massekhet Kallah Ve-Massekhet Kallah Rabbati* ed. Michael Higger (New York: Debe Rabbanan, 1936), pp. 36-7, who claims that *Massekhet Kallah* was written by a student of R Eliezer b. Hyrcanus, and was later added to by a post-Talmudic editor. Binyamin de Vries, “*Zman Hiburah shel Massekhet Kallah Rabbati*,” *Fourth World Congress of Jewish Studies* (1967), vol. 1, pp. 131-132, also argues for an early dating. Yet most scholars follow Avigdor Aptowitzer, “*Le traite de ‘Kalla*,” *REJ* 57 (1909), pp. 239-48, and Solomon Schechter, “The Quotations from Ecclesiasticus in Rabbinic Literature,” *JQR* (O.S.) 3/4 (1891), pp. 682-706, here p. 684, who date it to the Geonic period. See H. L. Strack and Gunter Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), pp. 229-230 (Schechter’s article is not mentioned by Strack and Stemberger).

- 3) The phrase also appears in a text of *Shiur Komah*:

Blessed are You, YHVH our God and God of our ancestors; the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. The great, mighty and awesome God who created heaven and earth...	ברוך אתה יי אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו אלהי אברהם אלהי יצחק ואלהי יעקב האל הגדול הגבור והנורא קונה שמים וארץ...
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See Bar-Ilan, p. 127; Martin Cohen, *The Shi'ur Qomah: Liturgy in Pre-Kabbalistic Jewish Mysticism* (Maryland: University Press of America, 1987), p. 187. Bar-Ilan (p. 139) prefers to see this as evidence that the *Heikhalot* texts are extremely old, preceding the writing of the *amidah* itself. However, contemporary scholars argue against an early (second century) dating of *Shiur Komah*, proposed by Bar-Ilan, Gershom Scholem and others. See Ra’anan Boustan, “*Hekhalot Literature at the Intersections of Regional Cultures*,” in *Hekhalot Literature in Context: Between Byzantium and Babylonia*, eds. Ra’anan Boustan, Martha Himmelfarb, and Peter Schäfer (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), p. 1, n. 1 (My thanks to Ra’anan Boustan for sharing an advance copy of this chapter). See also Peter Schäfer, *The Origins of Jewish Mysticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011), pp. 306-315; and *Midrash Mishle*, ed. Burton L. Visotzky (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 2002 [repr.]), pp. 84-5. It is therefore at best uncertain as to whether this selection in fact derived from the Talmudic era.

- 4) Our phrase also appears in *Midrash Tehilim* 29:2 (ed. Buber, p. 116a):

They said to him: What is the scriptural source for knowing where we begin (the <i>amidah</i>)? He said to them: Look at the beginning of the chapter (of Psalms): “Ascribe to YHVH, O sons of mighty ones”: Sons of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. So you too bless the first blessing: “God of Abraham, God of Isaac and God of Jacob.” – <i>Midrash Tehilim</i> 29:2 (ed. Buber, p. 116a)	מדרש תהלים (בובר) מזמור כט אמרו לו מניין אנו יודעין מהיכן נתחיל, אמר להם ראו מה בראש הפרשה, הברכה בני אלים, בני אברהם יצחק ויעקב, אף אתם ברכו ברכה ראשונה אלהי אברהם אלהי יצחק ואלהי יעקב.
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This also appears in a manuscript of the same *midrash* in Adolph Jellenik, *Beit Ha-Midrash* (Vienna, 1873), vol. 5, p. 55. See further Buber, p. 116a, n. 10. While it is possible that *Midrash Tehilim*, edited in the Gaonic period (see Strack and Stemberger, pp. 322-3), preserves Talmudic-era material in this case, it is certainly not clear that is so.

While the above four sources are not particularly helpful in dating our phrase to the Talmudic era, this dating can be further supported from two Christian sources:

- 1) *Constitutiones Apostolorum* (4th century Syria) 7.26.3 reads: “You, Master almighty God of the universe, created the world and the things in it...God of our holy and blameless fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, your faithful servants.” (Quoted in Katzoff, p. 314.) For more on the connection between this liturgical text and Jewish prayer (especially the *amidah*), see Katzoff, p. 313, n. 20 and further, Pieter Van Der Horst and Judith Newman, *Early Jewish Prayers in Greek* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), chapter 1. Another part of the *Constitutiones Apostolorum* (7.33.2) also repeats this formula. Van Der Horst (p. 35) translates it as follows: “Our eternal savior, King of the gods, the one who alone is almighty and Lord, God of all beings, and God of our holy and blameless fathers who were before us, God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob...” Scholars agree that

Identification and Analysis of the Intertext(s)

As the text in the *Mekhilta* notes, the phrase under analysis is a near-direct quotation from Exodus 3.³³ Indeed, although the *Mekhilta* points to one verse as the source, the words themselves match two verses in Exodus 3: Ex 3:6 and Ex 3:15.³⁴ Since both of the intertexts (plus, arguably, verse 16³⁵) are in one chapter of Exodus, we reproduce the entire selection below:

the nature of this section resembles closely the *amidah*, and was likely drawn from it (Van Der Horst and Newman, p. 16, 39.) For more on the connection with the *amidah*, see Menahem Kister, “*Kavim Le-Nusha’ot Be-Tefilot Ha-Kevah Le-Or Berakhot Be-Sefer Ha-Shevi’i Shel ‘Takanat Ha-Shelikhim,*” *Tarbiz* 77/2 (2008), pp. 205-238 and the earlier analysis of David Fiensy, *Prayers Alleged to be Jewish: An Examination of the Constitutiones Apostolorum* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1985). But cf. Paul Bradshaw, “Parallels between Early Jewish and Christian Prayers: Some Methodological Issues,” in *Identitat durch Gebet*, eds. Albert Gerhards, et al., pp. 21-36, esp. pp. 28-29.

- 2) Origen (3rd century Alexandria) writes: “It is certain, however, that the Jews trace their genealogy back to the three fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And the names of these individuals possess such efficacy, when united with the name of God, that not only do those belonging to the nation employ in their prayers to God, and in the exorcising of demons, the words, “God of Abraham, and God of Isaac, and God of Jacob,” but so also do almost all those who occupy themselves with incantations and magical rites.” *Contra Celsum* 4:33 (ed. Henry Chadwick (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), p. 209) See 5:45, p. 300, n. 1. See also 1:22, and see Katzoff, p. 307, n. 12, end. See also Martin Rist, “The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob: A Liturgical and Magical Formula,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 57 (1938), pp. 289-303, here p. 298.

Finally, the phrase was also used in prayer openings that preceded the *amidah*, from Second Temple era texts. See, for instance, Prayer of Azariah 1:2-3: “Then Azariah stood and offered this prayer; in the midst of the fire he opened his mouth and said: ‘Blessed art thou, O Lord, God of our fathers, and worthy of praise; and thy name is glorified forever.’” (RSV Translation). See the other examples cited by Bar Ilan, p. 125 and Greek Esther at 4:17, which includes a reference to God as “God of Abraham” (I thank Prof. Burton Visotzky for this latter reference).

³³ In Moshe Bar-Asher’s taxonomy of uses of the Bible in prayer, this would fall under category 4: direct quotation of sections of a verse. See Moshe Bar-Asher, “*Matbe’a Shetav’u Hakhamim Bivrakhot (Iyyun Rishon)*,” *Kenishta: Studies of the Synagogue World* 4 (2010), pp. 27-49, here p. 37. Bar-Asher notes that in Jewish liturgy there are almost no foreign words, while there is a concerted effort to use biblical language. He notes that this is an attempt at raising the level of language (*segev*) – p. 34, n. 34. However, it could also be seen as an attempt to ground prayer in a common and familiar body of literature. See also Heinemann’s approach to this question, above, n. 7.

³⁴ Kimelman, “The Literary Structure,” p. 199, notes these multiple references. See also the discussion above (n. 28) on the alternative intertext of Gen 12:2. In Liber’s language: “I do not know if it was noted that the appellation, “God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob” so familiar to us, is to be found only in one single passage in the entire Bible.” (Liber, pp. 335-336). Liber views this intertext as leading to only one interpretation, however: “It is in the Book of Exodus (3.6; cf., v. 15), in the chapter wherein God appears to Moses to charge him with the deliverance of the children of Israel. The God of the patriarchs is the redeemer” (Liber, p. 336). We will open a broader interpretation based on this intertext.

³⁵ As noted by Kimelman, “The Literary Structure,” p. 199. Judah Goldin claims that the intertext for the line in the *amidah* is Exodus 6:3, employing a play on words of “*elohei*” and “*el*,” although this seems somewhat farfetched and ignores the evidence of the *Mekhilta* cited above. See Judah Goldin, “*Shuv Al*

<p>1 Now Moses, tending the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian, drove the flock into the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. 2 An angel of YHVH appeared to him in a blazing fire out of a bush. He gazed, and there was a bush all aflame, yet the bush was not consumed. 3 Moses said: "I must turn aside to look at this marvelous sight; why doesn't the bush burn up?" 4 When YHVH saw that he had turned aside to look, God called to him out of the bush: "Moses! Moses!" He answered, "Here I am."</p> <p>5 And He said: "Do not come closer. Remove your sandals from your feet, for</p>	<p>שמות פרק ג</p> <p>(א) ומִשֶׁה הָיָה רֹעֵה אֶת צֹאן יִתְרוֹ חֹתְנוֹ כִּי הָיָה מִדְיָן וַיִּנְהַג אֶת הַצֹּאן אַחֲרֵי הַמִּדְבָּר וַיָּבֵא אֶל הַר הָאֱלֹהִים חֹרֵב:</p> <p>(ב) וַיֵּרָא מִלְאָךְ יִקְוֹךְ אֵלָיו בְּלִבַת אֵשׁ מִתּוֹךְ הַסִּנֵּה וַיֵּרָא וַהֲיָה הַסִּנֵּה בַעַר בְּאֵשׁ וְהַסִּנֵּה אֵינְנו אֹכְלִים:</p> <p>(ג) וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶסְרֶה נָּא וְאֶרְאֶה אֶת הַמַּרְאֶה הַגָּדֹל הַזֶּה מִדּוּעַ לֹא יִבְעַר הַסִּנֵּה:</p> <p>(ד) וַיֵּרָא יִקְוֹךְ כִּי סָר לְרֵאוֹת וַיִּקְרָא אֵלָיו אֱלֹהִים מִתּוֹךְ הַסִּנֵּה וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה מֹשֶׁה וַיֹּאמֶר הַיְיָ:</p> <p>(ה) וַיֹּאמֶר אֵל תִּקְרַב הֵלֶם שֶׁל נִעְלִיךְ מֵעַל רַגְלֶיךָ כִּי הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה עוֹמֵד עָלָיו אֲדַמָּת</p>
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'Gomel Hasadim Tovim,'” *Tarbiz* 60/4 (1981), pp. 659-661, here p. 660. One could also argue (as implied by Kimelman, *The Amidah*, p. 43, n. 206) that Ex 4:5, which is part of the same dialogue, is also referenced (Cf. *My People’s Prayer Book: The Amidah*, p. 60):

<p>Then YHVH said to Moses: “Put out your hand and grasp it by the tail.” He put out his hand and seized it, and it became a rod in his hand. “That they may believe that YHVH the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob, did appear to you.”</p> <p>- Exodus 4:4-5</p>	<p>שמות פרק ד</p> <p>(ד) וַיֹּאמֶר יְקוֹךְ אֵל מֹשֶׁה שְׁלַח יָדְךָ וְאִחֲזוּ בִזְנָבוֹ וַיִּשְׁלַח יָדוֹ וַיִּחַזַק בּוֹ וַיְהִי לְמִטָּה בַכֶּפֶר:</p> <p>(ה) לְמַעַן יֵאמְרוּ כִּי נִרְאָה אֵלֶיךָ יְקוֹךְ אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק וְאֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב:</p>
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These four sources in Ex 3 and 4 (all in one narrative scene) constitute the only occurrence of some version of the phrase: “God of Abraham, (God of) Isaac and (God of) Jacob” in Torah. (The phrase also occurs in I Kings 18:36; I Chron 29:18; and II Chron 30:6. The phrase “Abraham, Isaac and Jacob” (without “God of”) occurs in Torah 18 times (although the count is in dispute – see below), something which the *midrashic* literature notes:

<p>Teach us, our rabbi, how many blessings must one pray each day? Thus taught our rabbis: Every day a person must pray 18 blessings. Why 18? R. Shmuel b. Nahman said: Corresponding to the 18 times that the <i>avot</i> are written in the Torah.</p> <p>- <i>Midrash Tanhuma Vayera</i> 1. See also <i>Y Berakhot</i> 4:3; 5d; <i>Y Taanit</i> 2:2; 65c; <i>Bereishit Rabbah</i> 69:4 (ed. Theodor-Albeck, p. 793); <i>Sekhel Tov Vayetze</i> (ed. Buber, p. 142).</p>	<p>מדרש תנחומא (ורשא) פרשת וירא סימן א</p> <p>(א) ילמדנו רבינו כמה ברכות מתפלל אדם בכל יום כך שנו רבותינו בכל יום מתפלל אדם שמונה עשרה ולמה שמונה עשרה, א"ר שמואל בר נחמן כנגד י"ח פעמים שהאבות כתובין בתורה,</p>
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Seventeen of these mentions are: Gen 50:24; Ex 2:24; 3:6; 3:15; 3:16; 4:5; 6:3; 6:8; 33:1; Lev 26:42; Num 32:11; Deut 1:8; 6:10; 9:5; 9:27; 29:12; 30:20; 34:4. For the disputed 18th mention (either Gen 48:16, Ex 32:13, or Lev 26:42) see *Bereishit Rabbah*, ed. Theodor-Albeck, p. 793, notes to line 4. See also II Kings 13:23.

See Wertheimer, *Batei Midrashot*, vol. 2, p. 77, n. 7 and Isaac Aboab, *Menorat Ha-Maor*, ed. Yehuda Horev (Jerusalem: Mossad Ha-Rav Kook, 1961), p. 239 for a (late) *midrash* that attempts to connect this phrase with two other verses: Ex 32:13 and I Kings 18:36. For this connection to Ex 32:13, see also *Teshuvot Ha-Rashba* 1:26, ed. Haim Dimitrovsky (Jerusalem: Mossad Ha-Rav Kook, 1990), vol. 1, p. 72.

the place on which you stand is holy ground. 6 **He said: “I am the God of your father,³⁶ the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.”** Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. 7 And YHVH continued, “I have seen well the plight of My people in Egypt and have heeded their outcry because of their taskmasters; yes I know their pain. 8 I have come down to rescue them from the Egyptians and to bring them out of that land to a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey, the region of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perzzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. 9 Now the cry of the Israelites has reached Me; moreover, I have seen how the Egyptians oppress them. 10 Come, therefore, I will send you to Pharaoh, and you shall free My people, the Israelites, from Egypt. 11 But Moses said to God: “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and free the Israelites from Egypt?” 12 And He said: “I will be with you; that shall be your sign that it was I who sent you. And when you have freed the people from Egypt, you shall worship God at the mountain.” 13 Moses said to God: “When I come to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?” 14 God said to Moses, “Ehyeh-Asher-Ehyeh.” He continued: “Thus shall you say to the Israelites, ‘Ehyeh sent me to you.’” 15 **And God said further to Moses: “Thus shall you speak to the Israelites: YHVH, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you:** This shall be My name forever, This is my appellation for all eternity.

קדש הוא:
 (ו) ויאמר אנכי אלהי אביך אלהי אברהם אלהי יצחק ואלהי יעקב ויסתר משה פניו כי ירא מהביט אל האלהים:
 (ז) ויאמר יקנן ראה ראיתי את עמי אשר במצרים ואת צעקתם שמעתי מפני נגשיו כי ידעתי את מכאביו:
 (ח) וארד להצילו מיד מצרים ולהעלותו מן הארץ ההוא אל ארץ טובה ורחבה אל ארץ זבת חלב ודבש אל מקום הכנעני והחתי והאמרי והפרזי והחוי והיבוסים:
 (ט) ועתה הנה צעקת בני ישראל באה אלי וגם ראיתי את הלחץ אשר מצרים לחצים אתם:
 (י) ועתה לכה ואשלחך אל פרעה והוצא את עמי בני ישראל ממצרים:
 (יא) ויאמר משה אל האלהים מי אנכי כי אלהי אל פרעה וכי אוציא את בני ישראל ממצרים:
 (יב) ויאמר כי אהיה עמך וזה לך האות כי אנכי שלחתיך בהוציאך את העם ממצרים תעבדון את האלהים על ההר הזה:
 (יג) ויאמר משה אל האלהים הנה אנכי בא אל בני ישראל ואמרת להם אלהי אבותיכם שלחני אליכם ואמרו לי מה שמו מה אמר אלהים:
 (יד) ויאמר אלהים אל משה אהיה אשר אהיה ויאמר כה תאמר לבני ישראל אהיה שלחני אליכם:
 (טו) ויאמר עוד אלהים אל משה כה תאמר אל בני ישראל יקנן אלהי אבותיכם אלהי אברהם אלהי יצחק ואלהי יעקב שלחני אליכם זה שמי לעלם וזה זכרי לדר דר:

³⁶ Interestingly, the Samaritan version reads “*elohei avotekha*,” which conforms better to our *amidah* text – see *Midrash Shemot Rabbah*, ed. Avigdor Shinan (Jerusalem: Dvir Publishing, 1984), p. 119, n. 1.

<p>16 Go and assemble the elders of Israel and say to them: YHVH, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob has appeared to me and said: “I have taken note of you and of what is being done to you in Egypt, 17 and I have declared: I will take you out of the misery of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, to a land flowing with milk and honey.’ - Exodus 3:1-17</p>	<p>(טז) לָךְ וְאַסַּפְתָּ אֶת זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם יִקְנֹךָ אֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֶיךָ נִרְאָה אֵלַי אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹרְתֶיךָ יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב לֵאמֹר פְּקֹד פְּקֹדֹתַי אֶתְכֶם וְאֶת הָעֲשׂוּי לְכֶם בְּמִצְרַיִם: (יז) וְאָמַר אֲעֲלֶה אֶתְכֶם מֵעֲנֵי מִצְרַיִם אֶל אֶרֶץ הַפְּנִיעַנִי וְהַחֲתִי וְהָאֲמָרִי וְהַפְּרִזִי וְהַחֲוִי וְהַיְבוֹסִי אֶל אֶרֶץ זָבַת חֶלֶב וְדָבָשׁ:</p>
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As Hays noted: “To identify allusions is only the beginning of an interpretive process.”³⁷ We begin that interpretive process in this particular case here. The first step in the analysis of the intertexts is to note a few points that emerge directly from the biblical narrative in its fuller context. In Schonfield’s language, “Scriptural citations bring with them clear associations of character and situation, transforming what appear to be simple statements in narratives fraught with background.”³⁸ Below we examine the emotions and identifications that emerge with the character of Moses.³⁹

1) Moses, as a figure, is absent from the weekday *amidah*.⁴⁰ While other biblical characters appear explicitly (in addition to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, David

³⁷ Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, p. 17.

³⁸ Schonfield, *Undercurrents of Jewish Prayer*, p. 80.

³⁹ We take as guide in this process Hays’s notion that “correspondences...suggest more than they assert.” Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, p. 24.

⁴⁰ Moses appears in three instances of the *amidah* generally, but these are not core to the original text, and it is doubtful that they were known to the Talmudic-era worshiper:

1) The prelude to the blessing of the priests, recited in the public recitation of the morning *amidah*, includes a reference to Moses as the scribe who recorded the priestly blessing in the Torah:

<p>Our God and God of our ancestors, bless us with the three-fold blessing in the Torah, written by Moses your servant, said in the mouth of Aaron and his sons, priests, your holy nation, as it says...</p>	<p>אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, בְּרַכְנוּ בְּבִרְכַּת הַמְּשַׁלְשֵׁת בְּתוֹרַת הַכְּתוּבָה עַל יְדֵי מֹשֶׁה עֲבָדְךָ, הָאֲמֹרָה מִפִּי אַהֲרֹן וּבְנָיו כֹּהֲנִים, עִם קְדוֹשְׁךָ, פְּאֵמוֹר.</p>
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The blessing that this selection introduces, based on Num 6:24-6, is in fact quite old (see *M Tamid* 5:1 and *M Sotah* 7:2, and, for its presence in the *amidah*, *M Berakhot* 5:4), as is the requirement for the *hazzan* to call the *kohanim*, which extends back to *Sifre Bamidbar* 39 (*Sifre Bamidbar*, ed. Menahem Kahane (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2011), vol. 1, p. 107 and discussion in vol. 2, p. 313).

But the introduction, which mentions Moses, was already recognized by some *rishonim* as a later innovation. The introduction appears in *Seder Rav Amram Gaon* (ed. Frumkin, p. 144a; ed. Goldschmidt, p. 36 – although see above, n. 17, for questions about the accuracy of liturgical quotations from Seder Rav Amram Gaon) – and in *Siddur Rav Sa'adia Gaon* (eds. Israel Davidson, Simha Assaf and B. Issachar Joel (Jerusalem: Reuven Mass, 2000 [repr.]), p. 42). It is true that Elbogen writes (*Jewish Liturgy*, p. 65): “The text of the introductory formula, ‘Bless us with the threefold blessing,’ is identical in all rites, proof of its great antiquity.” (For a critique of the purely philological approach as a method for dating prayers, see Chapter 1 of this study.)

But *Hagahot Maimoniyot* writes:

<p>But “Our God and God of our ancestors, bless us with the blessing...” does not belong at all to the 18 blessings (=amidah). Thus it is written in <i>Seder Rav Amram</i>, and thus it is written by my teacher, he should live (=Maharam Mi-Rotenberg, see below): ...But “Our God and God of our ancestors...” was written in the later generations, and it is not known when they established to say it, but it was established to say during the raising of the hands (= priestly blessing). - <i>Hagahot Maimoniyot</i> on Rambam’s <i>Seder Tefilot Kol Hashannah</i>, #7 (ed. Frankel, p. 327, with corrections of Yitzhak Kahane <i>Maharam Mi-Rotenberg, Teshuvot Pesakim U-Minhagin</i>, vol. 1, p. 60).</p>	<p>הגהות מיימוניות סדר תפילות נוסח ברכת התפילה אבל אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו ברכנו בברכה אין שייך כלל ל"ה ברכות ו"כ בסדר רב עמרם ו"כ מורי רבינו שיחיה... אבל אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו נתקן בדורות אחרונים ולא נודע (למאי) [מתי] תקנוהו [ונתקן] לאומרו בנשיאות כפים</p>
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Here *Hagahot Maimoniyot* cites his teacher, presumably *Maharam Mi-Rotenberg*. In a source directly attributed to *Maharam Mi-Rotenberg*, he indeed says that this was a later addition to the *amidah*. See *Hidushei Anshei Shem to Mordechai Megillah* #817; *Maharam Mi-Rotenberg, Teshuvot Pesakim U-Minhagin*, ed. Yitzhak Kahane (Jerusalem: Mossad Ha-Rav Kook, 1957), vol. 1, p. 59; (see also Frumkin, p. 144, in *Magen Ha-Elef*) and Menachem Mendel Hayyim Landau and Yaakov Verdiger, *Tslova De-Avraham* (Tel Aviv: Graphika), p. 318 [The printing lists no date for publication, although Daniel Sperber believes the publication date to be “probably 1957.” See Sperber, *On Changes in Jewish Liturgy*, p. 22, n. 3]. See also *Abudraham*, ed. Brown, vol. 1, p. 256, n. 245 and p. 258, n. 264.

- 2) *Yismah Moshe*, an introduction to the 4th blessing for the Shabbat morning *amidah*, is a poetic selection about Moses. However, this selection is most likely a *piyyut* (see Naphtali Wieder, “*Yismah Moshe*” – *Hitnagdut Ve-Senegoreha*,” in *Hitgabshut*, vol. 1, pp. 295-322, here p. 299, n. 18) and not part of the fixed, original text. Rashi himself was opposed to saying this prayer, and it did not gain widespread acceptance even through the time of R Isaac of Vienna. See Wieder, *Ibid.*, pp. 298, 303, 576, n. 2; Sperber, *On Changes in Jewish Liturgy*, pp. 176-178. Israel Yuval sees this prayer as a polemic against a Christian view of Sunday as the holy day, with Moses’s “crown of glory” contrasted to Jesus wearing the crown of thorns. See Israel Yuval, “*Ha-Poshim al Shtei Ha-Se’ifim: Ha-Haggadah shel Pesah Ve-ha-Pasha Ha-Notzrit*,” *Tarbiz* 65/1 (1995), pp. 5-28, here p. 18, n. 48. However, Yuval attributes most liturgical developments to a polemic reaction to Christianity, even when the opposite outcome occurs (for instance, he sees Moses’s *absence* from the *Haggadah* as a reaction to Christian typology around Moses. So why is Moses introduced as a polemic here but edited out as a polemic there? See further in the following note).
- 3) Moses also appears in a variant of the middle blessing for Shabbat *musaf*:

<p>To Moses on Mt. Sinai you commanded Shabbat, “Remember” and “Keep.” - <i>Sefer Ha-Manhig, Hilkhhot Shabbat</i> #42</p>	<p>למשה על הר סיני מצות [צ"ל צוית] שבת זכור ושומר</p>
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See *Sefer Ha-Manhig*, ed. Yitzhak Raphael (Jerusalem: Mossad Ha-Rav Kook, 1978), vol. 1, p. 169. See also Rambam’s version in Daniel Goldschmidt, *Mehkarei Tefilah U-Fiyut*, (Jerusalem: Magnes

appears in the weekday *amidah*), Moses is missing (similar to his near-absence from the *haggadah*).⁴¹ However, the biblical intertext here introduces Moses as a

Press, 1980), p. 206, l. 9, also preserved in the Yemenite *nusakh* (e.g. *Tiklal Anaf Ha-Hayyim* (Jerusalem, 1954, p. 134)). But this is also likely a later poetic addition to the standard text of *musaf* with no precedent in rabbinic references to the *amidah*. Indeed, the statement in *Y Berakhot* 4:6; 8c makes clear that the *musaf amidah* was either the same as other *amidot* (according to Shmuel) or required a very brief addition, according to R. Yose (which did not include this phrase referencing Moses):

<p>Rav said: One must innovate in it something (the <i>musaf amidah</i>) Shmuel said: One must not innovate in it something. R. Zeira asked of R. Yose: What is it: “To innovate in it something?” He said: “Even if one says: ‘And we shall perform before you our obligations, the daily offering and the additional offering,’ he has fulfilled his obligation.” - <i>Y Berakhot</i> 4:6; 8c</p>	<p>תלמוד ירושלמי (ונציה) מסכת ברכות פרק ד דף ה טור ג ה"ה רב אמר צריך לחדש בה דבר ושמואל אמר אין צריך לחדש בה דבר רבי זעירא בעי קומי רבי יוסי מהו לחדש בה דבר אמר ליה אפילו אמר ונעשה לפניך את חובותינו תמידי יום וקרבן מוסף יצא</p>
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See further Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy*, p. 98. Still, it should be noted that this theme of Moses was found in a poem by Zevadiah, a 10th century poet.

<p>A day of delight you gave to the nation you acquired (cf. Ex 15:16)/ Offerings of his additional (service) to Moses He commanded/ We will do and offer before you our obligatory offering/ The daily (offerings) and the additional offering of Shabbat - Abraham Schechter, <i>Studies in Jewish Liturgy</i>, based on a Unique Manuscript Entitled <i>Seder Hibbur Berakhot</i> (Philadelphia: Dropsie College, 1930), p. 99).</p>	<p>יום ענוגה תתה לעם קניתה קרבנות מוספיו למשה צ(י?) ויתה נעשה ונקריב לפניך את קרבן חובותינו תמידי יום וקרבן מוסף שבת</p>
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A near exact version of this was printed by Jacob Mann, “Genizah Fragments of the Palestinian Order of Service,” *HUCA* 2 (1925), pp. 269-338, here p. 335, n. 134. See further Fleischer, *Tefilah U-Minhagei Tefilah*, pp. 30-42, esp. p. 40. See another example of Moses in a poetic version of the *musaf amidah* in Schechter, *Studies in Jewish Liturgy*, p. 100.

It should be noted that Moses is mentioned in the 4th century Christian liturgical text, *Constitutiones Apostolorum*, mentioned above (n. 32). Following three quotations from Genesis that connect to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the prayer then says (following Kister’s translation, p. 209): And thus You said to Moses Your faithful and holy servant in the appearance at the bush: “I am the one who is. This is my name forever, this is my appellation for all generations.” (Ex 3:14-15). This liturgical text, closely tied with the first blessing of the *amidah*, thus explicitly links Moses, and the Moses of the burning bush, to the blessing of the patriarchs. While van der Horst believes this phrase to be a later Christian addition to the text (see Pieter van der Horst, “The Greek Synagogue Prayers in the Apostolic Constitution, Book VII,” in *From Qumran to Cairo: Studies in the History of Prayer*, ed. Joseph Tabory (Jerusalem: Orot, 1999) pp. 19-46, here pp. 44-5, and Van der Horst and Newman, *Early Jewish Prayers in Greek*, p. 36 and p. 46 n. 111), Menahem Kister (p. 209-210) sees it as original because of the link to the quote from Ex 3:15: “God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob.”

⁴¹ See David Henshke, “‘The Lord Brought Us Forth from Egypt’: On the Absence of Moses in the Passover Haggadah,” *AJS Review* 31:1, (2007), pp. 61-73. Interestingly, Henshke’s claim that Moses was downplayed because of the theological statement that redemption does not come from human hands meshes

central figure standing behind the prayer text of the first blessing of the *amidah*.⁴²

The significance of Moses's presence is that the worshiper now has the opportunity to relate to or identify with this character, specifically in the context of Exodus 3-4.⁴³

- 2) While the line under analysis is said in the mouth of the worshiper directed toward God in the context of the *amidah*, in the biblical intertext, the line is actually being spoken *from* God *to* Moses. The act of prayer moves from an attempt to identify and describe God (an objectionable course, as discussed below in Section II) to an act of quoting God's own self-description.⁴⁴

well with Kimelman's view of the *amidah* as one overwhelmingly focused on redemption. See also David Arnou, "The Passover Haggadah: Moses and the Human Role in Redemption," *Judaism* 55:3-4 (Fall-Winter, 2006), pp. 4-28. Israel Yuval sees Moses's absence from the *Haggadah* based on the Christian claim that Moses was a prefiguring of Jesus, and the Jewish attempt to downplay the comparisons. See Israel Yuval, "Easter and Passover as Early Jewish-Christian Dialogue," in Paul Bradshaw and Lawrence Hoffman eds., *Passover and Easter: Origin and History to Modern Times* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999), pp. 98-124, here pp. 109-110 (and p. 122, n. 48 for additional citations) [This is an updated translation of Israel Yuval, "*Ha-Poshim al Shtei Ha-Se'ifim*," p. 18 and n. 48.] The possible reaction to Christian readings of the Bible as a motivator for liturgical change is discussed further below concerning Malki-Zedek. For a critique of the notion that liturgy is used in the service of polemics, see Chapter 1 of this study, n. 10.

⁴² R. Eliezer cites Moses as the model for *tefilah*, especially regarding the range of length of prayer. See *B Berakhot* 34a and parallels (*Mekhilta de-Rabbi Yishmael, Beshalah, VaYasa* 1 ed. Horowitz-Rabin, p. 155; *Sifre Beha'alotecha* 105, ed. Kahane, p. 264, and vol. 3, pp. 688-690; *Mekhilta De-Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai*, ed. Epstein-Melamed, p. 103; *Avot De-Rabbi Natan* A: addition B to chap 4 (ed. Schechter, p. 156. See Menahem Kister, *Iyunim Be-Avot De-Rabbi Natan: Nusah, Arikha, U-Parshanut* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben Zvi and Hebrew University, 1998), p. 66). See Yitzhak D. Gilat, *R. Eliezer ben Hyrcanus: A Scholar Outcast* (Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 1984), pp. 142-3 (= Yitzhak D. Gilat, *Mishnato shel R. Eliezer ben Hyrcanus* (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1968), pp. 83-4).

⁴³ The identification of the person quoting a text with the character in that quoted text has been recognized elsewhere. In connecting Paul's (largely unrecognized) quote of Job in Phil. 1:19, Richard Hays notes how the speaker (Paul) begins to overlap with the referenced biblical character: "...[Paul] implicitly transfers to himself some of the significations that traditionally cluster about the figure of Job....Paul tacitly likens himself to Job...." (Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, pp. 22-3).

⁴⁴ Prayer as the word of God being quoted back to its source is not a new concept. Sa'adia Gaon took the principle that all prayers to God are actually words from God to the extreme by claiming that all of the book of Psalms, including the appeals and petitions, are actually prophecies from God: "[W]e must realize that all of these are from the Lord, who expressed them in these forms of speech employed by His creatures....All is the word of the Lord and nothing is human discourse...." Quoted in Robert Brody, "Liturgical Uses of the Book of Psalms in the Geonic Period," in *Prayers that Cite Scripture*, pp. 61-81, here pp. 72-73.

- 3) The Moses in the narrative of the burning bush is not the Moses we might imagine who would appear in the context of prayer (contrast the Moses of *Yismah Moshe*, who is receiving the law, or the “intercessor” Moses whose model is invoked by R. Eliezer⁴⁵). Here Moses is a shepherd in *Midian*, far away from his people and his past. The dialogue with God is the first re-introduction of the alienated character of Moses back into the national story of the Jewish people.⁴⁶ This is a Moses to whom the average worshiper might be able to relate, more so than, for instance, the Moses who leads the Israelites, whose “entire life in the desert,” in Yochanan Muffs’ words, “was one of sustained prayer to save Israel from the anger of God.”⁴⁷
- 4) This narrative scene in the Bible describes a very intense, one-on-one encounter between a human (who wasn’t searching for God) and the divine.⁴⁸ In that sense,

⁴⁵ See above, n. 40. See further Soloveitchik, *Al Ha-Tefilah*, pp. 160-173.

⁴⁶ See David Silber and Rachel Furst, *A Passover Haggadah: Go Forth and Learn* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2011), p. 41.

⁴⁷ Yochanan Muffs, *Love and Joy: Law, Language and Religion in Ancient Israel* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1992), p. 11. This is a translation of Idem, “*Bein Din Le-Rahamim: Tefilatan Shel Nevi'im*,” in *Torah Nidreshet: Hiburim Be-She'eylot Yesod Be-Olamot Shel Ha-Mikra* ed. Avraham Shapira (Tel Aviv: *Am Oved*, 1984).

⁴⁸ The very language of “*sneh*” – rendered here as ‘bush’ – recalls “*Sinai*,” the most intimate encounter between God and the Israelites. That revelation to the collective, with all its intensity, is foreshadowed here. The etymological connection between *Sinai* and *sneh* is already noted in *Lekah Tov* to Exodus 3:2 (ed. Buber, p. 8b):

“ <i>Sneh</i> ”: On account that in the future He would give Torah to Israel from Mt Sinai.	פסיקתא זוטרתיא (לקח טוב) שמות פרשת שמות פרק ג סימן ב סנה. על שהיה עתיד ליתן תורה לישראל מהר סיני
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This is also discussed by Ibn Ezra on Ex 3:2. See further Nahum Sarna, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Exodus* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1991), p. 14.

it is a model for the context of prayer, especially the intimate prayer of the *amidah* (versus a more declarative and collective prayer such as the *shema*).⁴⁹

- 5) Moses's reaction to God's appearance is not one of submission or even joy at having the divine encounter. Rather it is one of self-doubt and rejection. Moses's first response to God's introduction is:

<p>Who am I that I can go to Pharaoh and take out the people of Israel from Egypt? (3:11)</p>	<p>מי אנכי כי אלך אל פרעה וכי אוציא את בני ישראל ממצרים</p>
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This reaction is also coupled with a lack of ability to speak. “Moses said: ‘What shall I say to them?’” (v. 13) and later in the dialogue (4:10): “I am not a man of words.” Standing before God but not being able to communicate is a clear thrust of this biblical section, and is particularly noteworthy when placed at the beginning of a prayer that is all about verbal expression of needs to God.⁵⁰ (This also may connect to the pre-*amidah* prayer for God to open one's lips, quoting Ps 51:17, which itself is said by a worshiper with a “broken heart and spirit (v. 19)).⁵¹

⁴⁹ On the nature and function of the *Shema*, and the distinction between the role of the *Shema* and the *amidah*, see Israel Knohl, “Parsha She-Yesh Bah Kibul Malkhut Shamayim,” *Tarbiz* 53/1 (1983-84), pp. 11-32 and Idem, “Between Voice and Silence: The Relationship Between Prayer and Temple Cult,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 115/1 (1996), pp. 17-30, esp. pp. 27-28; and, generally, Kimelman, “The *Shema*’ Liturgy.”

⁵⁰ Joseph Soloveitchik gives voice to the doubt that accompanies prayer: “Relating to God through speech and supplication appears to our sages as a brazen and adventurous activity....Does an ordinary subject have license to speak to a great and exalted King...?” Joseph B. Soloveitchik, *Worship of the Heart: Essays on Jewish Prayer*, ed. Shalom Carmy (Jersey City, NJ: Ktav, 2003), p. 149. The process of connecting the emotions that emerge from the intertext to the emotions experienced by the worshiper recalls Hays's method: “[W]hen the source of the phrase is read in counterpoint with the new setting into which it has been transposed, a range of resonant harmonics becomes audible.” (Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, p. 23).

⁵¹ See *B Berakhot* 4b, 9b; *Y Berakhot* 4:4; 8a. See also Gregory Glazov, “The Invocation of Ps. 51:17 in Jewish and Christian Morning Prayer,” *JJS* 26 (1995), pp. 167-182.

6) The physical description of Moses's body is also significant in this selection.

Moses is told to remove his shoes because he is *standing* on holy ground (3:5).

The standing posture is the first time anyone in Exodus is described as *omed*.⁵²

This connects to the standing nature of the *amidah* as a whole.⁵³

It is clear from the above examples that the juxtaposition of the prayer text with the biblical intertext leads to fruitful interpretations not apparent if one looks only at the prayer text itself.⁵⁴ Many scholars have arrived at other interpretations of the import of this line in the *amidah*, but have done so by ignoring the biblical intertexts.⁵⁵ Even

⁵² See Kimelman, *The Amidah*, p. 1, n. 3 for the connection between standing and the *amidah*. For more on the significance of the body movements in the *amidah* see Uri Ehrlich, *The Nonverbal Language of Prayer* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004) and Eric Zimmer, *Olam Ke-Minhago Nohag* (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center, 1996), pp. 72-113.

⁵³ See above, p. 40.

⁵⁴ These interpretations, as should be clear from the above examples, often have theological implications. In Hays's words: "[T]here is *some* correlation between the literary relation of two texts and their theological relation. The correlation is not one-to-one identity; nonetheless, intertextual literary linkages both reflect and create theological convictions." Hays, "On the Rebound," p. 83 (emphasis in original).

⁵⁵ Ehrlich ("Bein 'Zechut Avot' le-'Ahrayut Avot,'" p. 16) sees our phrase as proof that *zechut avot* – the merit of the ancestors – is a critical concept in the *amidah*, so critical that it withstood the liturgical rule that requires all opening blessings to include mention of God's kingship (see above, n. 19). However, in his entire analysis, Ehrlich neglects to mention that this phrase is a direct quote from Exodus 3, a stronger reason, perhaps, why it resisted this rule. In further attempting to develop the theme of *zechut avot* as tied to this phrase, Ehrlich notes that the connection to *zechut avot* and prayer generally is mentioned in rabbinic discussions of *Rosh Hashannah* (*Vayikra Rabbah* 29:7, ed. Mordechai Margolioth (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1993 [repr.]), p. 676 and *Pesikta De-Rav Kahana Rosh Hashannah* 7, ed. Bernard Mandelbaum, (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1987), pp. 339-340). But this simply strengthens the point that *zechut avot* is an important theme of *Rosh HaShannah*, but *not* necessarily in the daily *amidah* (despite Ehrlich's attempt to connect the two). Ehrlich cites *Mishnat R. Eliezer* as connecting the phrase in the *amidah* to the scene in Exodus 32:13 where Moses calls upon *zechut avot* in order to save the people from destruction:

What is the scriptural source for mentioning the three patriarchs (in the <i>amidah</i>)? As it is written: Remember Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Ex 32:13) - <i>Mishnat R. Eliezer</i> 12, ed. H. G. Enelow (New York: Bloch Publishing Company, 1933), p. 229. See also Al-Nakawa, <i>Menorat Ha-Maor</i> , (ed. H. G. Enelow (New York: Bloch, 1929), vol. 2, p. 131 and <i>Midrash Minayin</i> (in Wertheimer, <i>Batei Midrashot</i>), vol. 2, p. 77.	משנת רבי אליעזר פרשה יב עמוד 229 ומניין שמזכירין שלשה אבות, שנ' זכור לאברהם ליצחק ולישראל.
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Kimelman, who does value the investigation into the biblical intertext, focuses only on the redemption themes that emerge, to the exclusion of the other interpretive directions suggested above.⁵⁶ But in fact, as we have shown in the above examples, the narrative that stands as the core intertext to this phrase opens up *many* possible interpretations and connections for the worshiper. There are doubtless other interpretative avenues not suggested here; our point is that the introduction of the intertext, rather than narrowing to a single theme (e.g.: redemption), opens up a host of themes that broaden the experience of reading the prayer.⁵⁷

However, this later formulation of why we mention the three patriarchs (vs. the earlier reason, cited in the *Mekhilta*, above, pp. 44-45) only emphasizes how the tradition of the prayer of Moses after the sin of the Golden Calf is *not* the text quoted by the *amidah*. Thus Ehrlich's overlooking of the core biblical intertext leads to a wholly different interpretation than the ones offered above, based on the intertexts from Exodus 3. (For more generally on *zechut avot* see Ephraim E. Urbach, *Haza"l: Pirkei Emunot Ve-De'ot* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1976), pp. 440-449 (= Idem, *The Sages: Their Concepts and Beliefs*, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1979), pp. 497-505).

Moshe Weinfeld also views the *amidah* as a type of prayer, similar to others, that emphasizes three core beliefs: singularity of God, preserving the covenant, and recognizing God's strength. This view of prayer as a form of credo, with themes that resemble earlier biblical prayers, is a very different approach than one which looks at the literary overlaps with quoted biblical texts, generating multiple interpretations (as delineated above). Indeed, Weinfeld, like Ehrlich, does not mention the intertexts of Exodus 3 in his analysis of the overarching theme of the *amidah*. See Weinfeld, "*Mekorah Ha-Mikra'i shel Tefilot Ha-Amidah*," p. 125.

In addition, R. Joseph Soloveitchik boiled down this blessing to two core themes: "*Avot* contains two elements: that of paternal lovingkindness and the appeal to historical precedent." His analysis does not support these themes from any biblical intertext quoted in the prayer itself. See Soloveitchik, *Worship of the Heart*, p. 155. However, elsewhere Soloveitchik does quote the biblical context of the phrase *elohei Avraham, elohei Yitzhak, ve-elohei Ya'akov*. See Soloveitchik, *Al Ha-Tefilah*, p. 91 and n. 11 there). Interestingly, earlier scholars also ignored the biblical intertext when offering an interpretation of the *amidah*. For instance, in a responsum asking why we mention the phrase *elohei Avraham, elohei Yitzhak, ve-elohei Ya'akov* in the *amidah*, repeating the word *elohei* before each of the patriarchs, R. Meir Eisenstadt (1670-1744) responds by explaining that each of the patriarchs needed to discover God for himself, without only relying on the Avraham's relationship with God. He does not mention the fact that this phrase is drawn directly from the Bible. See *Shu"t Panim Meiros* 1:39; cf. Aryeh Leib Gordon, *Etz Yosef*, in *Otzar Ha-Tefilot* (New York: Hebraica Press, 1966), p. 308. See also Soloveitchik, *Al Ha-Tefilah*, p. 91; *My People's Prayer Book: The Amidah*, p. 70; and Abraham Isaac Kook, *Olat Re'iyah* (Jerusalem: Mossad Ha-Rav Kook, 1996), vol. 1, p. 269.

⁵⁶ "Identifying the intertext shows how the *amidah* sets the tone for the theme of redemption. For the *amidah*, the God of the Patriarchs is the redeeming God. By saying "blessed" is such a God, the worshiper is calling upon the God who once redeemed to redeem again." Kimelman, "The Literary Structure," pp. 200-201. See also Kimelman, *The Amidah*, p. 43.

⁵⁷ The possibility of multiple meanings emerging from the biblical intertext is consistent with the tendency for multiple interpretations found in *midrash* for any given biblical text. See Stern, *Midrash and Theory*, pp. 15-38.

Rabbinic Understanding of Biblical Intertext⁵⁸

To complete our method of interpreting the prayer text, we turn to the rabbinic understanding of the biblical intertext.⁵⁹ While we can't look at all the rabbinic understandings of the full chapter in Exodus, we will suffice to examine one *midrash* directly connected to our phrase, which appears in *Tanhuma* and *Shemot Rabbah*.⁶⁰

This *midrash* recounts God's dilemma in how to speak to Moses for the first time. After concluding that the voice of God could either be too loud or too soft, both with negative effects, God decides to speak to Moses in the voice of his father Amram, calling: "Moses, Moses" (Ex 3:4). Moses is seduced (the *midrash* uses the language of *pitui* – seduction) into believing that his father is calling to him. Only then does God admit the ruse, and reveals Himself. Moses moves from a verbal response ("Here I am!") to a physical response (hiding his face in fear).⁶¹

"He said: I am the God of your father." (Ex 3:6a) [God] revealed Himself in the voice of Amram his father, so that [Moses] would not fear. At that moment, Moses was overjoyed and said: Amram my father lives! God said to him: You said that I am your father. I am none but your father's God. At that moment, "Moses hid his	מדרש תנחומא (בובר) פרשת שמות סימן טז ויאמר אנכי אלהי אביך (שמות ג ו), נגלה עליו בקולו של עמרם אביו, כדי שלא יתיירא, באותה שעה שמח משה ואמר עמרם אבי [חי], א"ל הקדוש ברוך הוא אתה אמרת שאני אביך, ואיני אלא אלהי אביך, באותה שעה ויסתר משה פניו וגו' (שמות ג ו)
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⁵⁸ A different approach at this point would be to also analyze the inner-biblical intertexts connected Exodus 3, for instance Gen 46. See Silber and Furst, A Passover Haggadah, p. 27, n. 35. See further, Chapter 5 of this study.

⁵⁹ It is, however, unclear if this text was composed by rabbinic leaders or preceded them (or composed by non-rabbinic innovators). See above, n. 9.

⁶⁰ It is true these are both late *midrashim*, although it is possible this material is found in earlier traditions. Solomon Buber says that the *Tanhuma* version is the source of the versions in *Shemot Rabbah* and in *Yalkut Shim'oni Shemot* #171 (= #168 ed. Hyman, vol. 3, p. 50) See *Tanhuma* ed. Buber, p. 5a, n. 85. See also Shinan, *Shemot Rabbah*, p. 119. *Rabbenu Bahya: Be'ur Al Ha-Torah* (ed. Hayyim Chavel, (Jerusalem: Mossad Ha-Rav Kook, 1994), vol. 2, p. 26) cites this *midrash*, and comments that God similarly revealed Himself to Samuel in the voice of Eli (The source for this *midrash* is not known, according to Chavel). Compare Ramban, ad loc.

⁶¹ Compare the interpretation of R. Ze'ev Wolf Einhorn ad loc., who reasons that Moses should not have responded verbally at all to God's call, and only did so because he thought it was his father Amram.

<p>face.” (Ex 3:6b) - <i>Tanhuma Shemot</i> 16 (ed. Buber, p. 5a).</p> <p>“He said: I am the God of your father.” (Ex 3:6a). Thus it is written: The simple (<i>peti</i>) believe everything (Proverbs 14:15). “Simple” means only “youth” as we find in Arabic that they call children “<i>patya</i>.” Another interpretation: “<i>peti</i>” means seduction, as it says: If a man seduces (<i>yefateh</i>) a virgin (Ex 22:16). Rabbi Yehoshua Ha-Kohen son of R. Nehemiah⁶²: At the time God revealed himself to Moses, Moses was a tyro in prophecy. God said: If I reveal Myself with a great voice, I will frighten him. In a small voice, he will not respect prophecy. What shall I do? He revealed himself in the voice of his father Amram. Moses said: What does my father want? God said to him: I am not your father but rather the God of your father.⁶³ I came to you in seduction so as not to frighten you. “The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob” (Ex 3:6b). Moses was overjoyed and said: My father is counted among the patriarchs, and not only that but he is great and is mentioned first! - <i>Shemot Rabbah</i> 3:1, ed. Shinan, p. 119-20⁶⁴</p>	<p>שמות רבה (שנאן) פרשת שמות פרשה ג ד"ה ג, א פרשת ג, א פרשת ג. ויאמר אנכי אלהי אביך [אלהי אברהם אלהי יצחק ואלהי יעקב] (שמות/ג'). הדא הוא דכתיב: פתי יאמין לכל דבר (משלי יד). אין פתי אלא נער, שכן מצינו בערביא שקורין לינוקא פתיא. דבר אחר: אין פתי אלא פתוי, כמה דאת אמר: וכי יפתה איש בתולה (שמות/כ"ב). אמר ר' יהושע הכהן בר' נחמיה: בשעה שנגלה הקדוש ברוך הוא למשה טירון היה משה לנבואה. אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא: אם נגלה אני עליו בקול גדול - אני מבעתו; בקול קטון - בוסר על הנבואה. אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא: מה אעשה? נגלה עליו בקול של אביו עמרם. אמר משה: מה אבא מבקש? אמר לו הקדוש ברוך הוא: איני אביך אלא אלהי אביך, בפתוי באתי אליך שלא תתירא: [אנכי] אלהי אביך, אלהי אברהם אלהי יצחק ואלהי יעקב. שמח משה ואמר: הרי אבא נמנה עם האבות, ולא עוד אלא שהוא גדול והוא נזכר תחלה.</p>
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⁶² See further this rarely mentioned rabbi's association with “*peti*” in *Midrash Tehilim* 80, ed. Buber p. 181a.

⁶³ The interpretive question this *midrash* might be addressing is why God said: “I am the God of your father” as opposed to: “I am God” or “I am your God” as an introductory remark to Moses. Compare Gen 46:3:

<p>He said: I am God, the God of your father - Gen 46:3</p>	<p>בראשית פרק מו פסוק ג ויאמר אנכי האל אלהי אביך</p>
<p>He said: I am the God of your father - Ex 3:6</p>	<p>שמות פרק ג פסוק ו ויאמר אנכי אלהי אביך</p>

This *midrash* seems to note the alternative available in Ex 3:6, the revelation to Jacob in Gen 46:3, and asks why God didn't simply reveal God's self in the same way, by stating: “I am God.”

⁶⁴ See also *Shemot Rabbah* 45:5.

Introducing Moses's longing relationship to his father adds another layer of interpretive possibilities to our prayer. The *midrash* explicitly connects God as father and Amram as father, to the point where Moses confuses the two.⁶⁵ Until this point in his life, Moses is a figure lacking a reliable father. Although Amram is his birth father, the Torah records no dialogue between the two.⁶⁶ Pharaoh becomes Moses's adopted (grand)father, but here, too, there is no relationship. Yitro is the closest Moses has to a father, and even here Moses repeatedly separates from him (first in Ex 4: 18, again in Ex 18:27, and finally in Num 10:30).⁶⁷ In this scene, Moses is acutely in search of a father figure.

This rabbinic understanding of the intertext heightens the emphasis on father figures in this prayer.⁶⁸ As Kepnes points out, approaching a father is much more imaginable than approaching a distant monarch: "It is certainly easier to petition our father than to call on the King of the universe for one may hope to find more mercy from his father."⁶⁹ And indeed, the appeal to God as a father, as well as a king, is the model of successful prayer in *Tannaitic* literature.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ In his analysis of the phrase "God of our fathers," Kepnes (*Jewish Liturgical Reasoning*, p. 181) notes the "series of emotions and associations" that are triggered by this relationship. He further comments: "When God as father is coupled with Abraham our father, a relational web is established from the worshipper to the congregation back to ancestors and to the patriarchs." (Ibid.) However, he does not extend this to the intertextual plane, which leads us to Moses and his own father figures (Amram, Yitro, God, and, perhaps, Pharaoh).

⁶⁶ According to Rabbinic understanding (*B Sotah* 12a and parallels), Amram was the leader who decreed all Israelite men to divorce their wives. He is the father who, were it left to him, would have never sired Moses.

⁶⁷ For this last separation and its disastrous impact on Moses's leadership, see Judy Klitsner, *Subversive Sequels in the Bible* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2009), pp. 88-89. Although see Jacob Milgrom's opinion (Jacob Milgrom, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Numbers* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1990), p. 80) that Yitro yielded to Moses's requests and did, in fact, remain with the Israelites.

⁶⁸ Now the term "*avot*" - fathers - takes on new significance as the name of this blessing.

⁶⁹ Kepnes, p. 181.

⁷⁰ See *B Ta'anit* 25b. See further Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy*, pp. 123-4. Heinemann, *Ha-Tefilah*, p. 126, connects the *Avinu Malkeinu* story to *Y Ta'anit* 3:4; 66c-d. God as father appears in numerous statements of rabbinic literature. See Arthur Marmorstein, *The Old Rabbinic Doctrine of God* (New Jersey: Ktav, 1968 [repr.]), pp. 56-62. Other prayers calling God as father include "The Lord's Prayer" = Matthew 6:9 and Luke 11:2 (See further on this: *The Lord's Prayer and Jewish Liturgy*, eds. Jakob Petuchowski and Michael

What this *midrash* makes clear, however, is the aspect of *longing* for a father-figure, revealed in Moses's seduction by God. God knows that Moses will respond to a call from his father Amram (whom Moses had not spoken to in years). When Moses responds here "*hineni*" – "Here I am" – it is the response to a call from a long-lost father.⁷¹ Only when God reveals the truth does Moses respond differently, first hiding his face, and then finally saying: "Who am I?" (Ex 3:11) instead of "Here I am" (Ex 3:4). With this *midrash* in mind, we see our phrase in the *amidah* in a different intertextual narrative light: It quotes God speaking to Moses in the very moment following the revelation of the truth: Amram is not speaking to him; the human father figure remains elusive.⁷² The *amidah* thus employs the phrase that is not only a revelation of God, but a revelation that Amram is not present. In this moment of revealed identities, the emotion

Brocke (New York: Seabury Press, 1978). Heinemann (*Ha-Tefilah*, p. 120) argues that this prayer shares similar characteristics to Jewish prayers. See also Ben Sira 23:1 (*Sefer Ben Sira Ha-Shalem*, ed. Moshe Segal (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1958), p. 136-7) and Tobit 13:4. For the use of "*Av Ha-Rahaman*," see Wieder, *Hitgabshut*, vol. 1, p. 16, n. 9a. "*Avinu Ha-Av Ha-Rahaman*" is known in the second blessing preceding *Shema* in *shaharit*, although Goldschmidt views this as a later addition. See Daniel Goldschmidt, *Mahzor Le-Yamim Nora'im*, vol. 1, p. 17.

⁷¹ This also recalls the response of Abraham to his son Isaac with the phrase: *hineni beni* = here I am, my son (Gen 22:7).

⁷² In fact, in one version of the *midrash*, God reveals to Moses that Amram is no longer alive. Hizkuni cites this version of the *midrash* (see Menahem Kasher, *Torah Sheleimah* (New York: American Biblical Encyclopedia Society, 1944), vol. 8, p. 131):

<p>"I am the God of your father." He revealed to him that his father was dead. Therefore Scripture wrote: "God of your father." For the Holy Blessed One does not unite His name with the righteous in their lives, but only after their deaths, for "He puts no trust in His holy ones (Job 15:16)." Therefore he revealed now the death of his father, so that Moses would not refuse to take greatness upon himself. For before Aaron his brother he refused to take greatness upon himself, so before his father how much the more so! - Hizkuni on Exodus 3:6</p>	<p>חזקוני שמות פרק ג פסוק ו (ו) אנכי אלוקי אביך גלה לו שאביו מת, ולכך כתיב אלוקי אביך. שהרי אין הקדוש ברוך הוא מייחד שמו על הצדיקים בחייהם אלא במיתתם משום דבקדושי לא יאמין, ולכך גלה לו עכשיו מיתת אביו שלא יסרב ליטול גדולה שהרי לפני אהרן אחיו היה מסרב ליטול גדולה, לפני אביו לא כל שכן.</p>
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Here God revealed in this moment that Moses's father was dead. For Moses, this revelation serves to concretize what has been the de facto situation for years: Moses's lack of connection with his father.

of longing surfaces.⁷³ The trigger for this emotion is the very phrase that opens the first blessing of the *amidah*. This phrase is no longer restricted to a sense of “historical precedent.”⁷⁴ Rather it is an emotionally laden double revelation: a revelation of God to Moses, and a revelation that Moses’s human father is not present/alive. This serves to intensify the emotional valence of the encounter between the worshiper and God through the language in the *amidah*.

Having investigated the biblical intertext and associated rabbinic readings of that intertext for this initial phrase of the blessing, we move to consider the next phrase.

Section II

The great, mighty, and awesome God	הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל הַגִּבּוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא
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Talmudic-Era Sources

This line appears in a number of Talmudic-era witnesses to the *amidah*, and is clearly part of the prayer’s original stratum, as evidenced by the context of the following sources:⁷⁵

⁷³ Longing has often been recognized as a component of prayer. Thus Friedrich Heiler, in his classic book on prayer: “The mystic’s prayer is in part ardent longing for the One... Yearning and vision are also the content of many prayers in prophetic worship.” Friedrich Heiler, *Prayer: A Study in the History and Psychology of Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1932), pp. 273-274. Longing for a family member is an emotion deeply tied to the *amidah*. Hannah is seen in rabbinic literature as the model for the performance of the *amidah* (*T Berakhot* 3:6; *B Berakhot* 31a; *Y Berakhot* 4:1; 7a), and she prays out of an acute sense of longing for a child. (A later tradition compares the literary similarities between Hannah’s song to the structure of the *amidah*. See *Yalkut Shim’oni Shmuel* #80). Here, with Moses, the longing is for a father, not a child, but the emotion of loss and yearning is similar.

⁷⁴ Soloveitchik, *Worship of the Heart*, p. 155.

⁷⁵ The full phrase “*ha-el ha-gadol ha-gibbor ve-ha-norah*” appears in numerous prayers in addition to the *amidah*. See, for instance, Wieder, *Hitgabshut*, vol. 1, p. 16, n. 13 and p. 20; Shlomo Tal, *Nusakh Ha-Tefilah Shel Yehudei Pras* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben Zvi, 1981), p. 58, 60, 65, 110; Daniel Goldschmidt, *Mehkarei Tefilah U-Fiyut*, p. 196, 1.7; p. 24 and p. 134; *Siddur Rav Sa’adia Gaon*, p. 24; Ismar Elbogen, “Studies in the Jewish Liturgy,” *JQR* (O.S.) 19/2 (1907), pp. 229-249, here p. 244; the end of the *Nishmat* prayer recited on Shabbat morning (see the variant discussed in Goldschmidt, *Haggadah shel Pesah*, p. 68, n. 40). Langer, “‘We Do Not Even Know What to Do!’: A Foray into the Early History of Tahanun,” pp. 39-70, here p. 57. The phrase also appears in dozens of texts from the *heikhalot* tradition. See the entries for “*ha-el*,” “*gadol*,” “*gibbor*,” and “*norah*” in Peter Schäfer, *Konkordanz zur Hekhalot-Literatur* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1986), vols. 1-2. See also Idem, *Geniza Fragments zur Hekhalot-Literatur* (Tübingen: Mohr

1) The phrase comes in a rabbinic text that criticizes a prayer leader for adding to the standard phrasing of the *amidah*:

<p>There was once one who prayed the <i>amidah</i> (lit: went down⁷⁶) before Rabbi Hanina. He said: “The great, mighty, awesome, powerful, strong, courageous God.”⁷⁷</p> <p>[Rabbi Hanina] said to him: Have you finished praising your Master? These three (descriptions): were it not that they were written by Moses in the Torah and affixed by the Men of the Great Assembly, we would not even say them! But you say all of these?! It may be compared to a human who had thousands upon thousands of gold coins, and people praised him for his silver coins. Isn't that a degradation of him?</p> <p>- <i>B Megillah 25a</i>⁷⁸</p>	<p>תלמוד בבלי מסכת מגילה דף כה עמוד א</p> <p>ההוא דנחית קמיה דרבי חנינא, אמר: האל הגדול הגבור והנורא האדיר והחזק והאמיץ.</p> <p>אמר ליה: סיימתינהו לשבחיה דמרך? השתא הני תלתא, אי לאו דכתבינהו משה באורייתא ואתו כנסת הגדולה ותקנינהו, אנן לא אמרינן להו, ואת אמרת כולי האי?</p> <p>משל לאדם שהיו לו אלף אלפי אלפים דינרי זהב, והיו מקלסין אותו (באלף) דינרי כסף. לא גנאי הוא לו?</p>
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Siebeck, 1984), pp. 20, 21, 69, 130, 141, 148, 153, 167, 173, 174. For an instance of the liturgical use of only the words “*ha-el ha-gadol*” see *B Ketubot* 8a. There, the phrase is used as part of a blessing for God reviving the dead. This raises the question of why our phrase with the word “*gibbor*” appears in the first blessing of the *amidah*, and not the second, which is called “*gevurot*” (see, for instance, *M Rosh Hashannah* 4:5). On this conundrum, see Bar-Ilan, pp. 127f.

⁷⁶ See Chapter 1, n. 76.

⁷⁷ The lists of additional adjectives vary from manuscript to manuscript:

BERAKHOT 33b Florence II- I-7	BERAKHOT 33b Munich 95	BERAKHOT 33b Oxford Opp. Add. fol. 23	BERAKHOT 33b Paris 671	BERAKHOT 33b Vilna
האל הגדול הגבור והנורא האדיר והחזק היראוי והאמיץ והעיוזו	האל הגדול הגבור והנורא האדיר [החזק] היראוי העוזו והאמיץ	האל הגדול הגבור והנורא והאדיר והאמיץ והעיוזו והיראוי החזק והאמתי	האל הגדול הגבור והנורא העוזו החזק האמיץ האדיר הודאי והאמת	האל הגדול הגבור והנורא והאדיר והעוזו והיראוי החזק והאמיץ והודאי והנכבד

This story has numerous parallels in rabbinic literature.⁷⁹ Below is a related version from the *Yerushalmi*.

Rabbi Yohanan and Rabbi Yonatan ⁸⁰ went to make peace in those cities in the south. ⁸¹	תלמוד ירושלמי מסכת ברכות פרק ט דף יב טור ד/ה"א
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MEGILLAH 25a Goettingen 3	MEGILLAH 25a London - BL Harl. 5508 (400)	MEGILLAH 25a Munich 95	MEGILLAH 25a NY - Columbia X 893 T 141	MEGILLAH 25a Oxford Opp. Add. fol. 23
האל הגדול הגבור והנורא האדיר היראוי והעוז והאמת	האל הגדול הגיבור והנורא האדיר והאמיץ והחזק היראוי והעיזוז	האל הגדול הגבור והנורא והאדיר והחזק והיראוי והעוז	האל הגדול הגבור והנורא האדיר והחזק הירוא האמיץ והעוז	האל הגדול הגבור והנורא האדיר והחזק והעוז

⁷⁸ See Chapter 1, n. 77.

⁷⁹ See *B Berakhot* 33b; *Y Berakhot* 9:1; 12d (discussed below); *Midrash Tehilim* 19:2 (ed. Buber, p. 82a); *Yalkut Shim'oni Ekev* #856 (ed. Aaron Hyman (Jerusalem: Mossad Ha-Rav Kook, 1991), pp. 165-166); Note that the expanded list of names for God used by the worshiper in the above story appears in *B Shevuot* 16a, with no criticism:

There are names [of God] that may be erased, and there are names that may not be erased. These are the names that may not be erased. Such as: <i>El, Elohekha, Elohim, Eloheikhem, Ehyeh asher Ehyeh, Aleph Dalet [=Adonai], and Yod Heh [=YHVH], Shaddai, Zevaot</i> – these may not be erased. However, <i>Ha-gadol, Ha-gibbor, Ha-norah, He-adir, and He-hazak, and He-amitz, Ha-izuz, Hanun Ve-Rahum, Erekh Apayim, Ve-Rav Hesed</i> – these may be erased. - <i>B Shevuot</i> 16a	יש שמות שנמחקין, ויש שמות שאין נמחקין; אלו הן שמות שאין נמחקין: כגון אל, אלהיך, אלהים, אלהיכם, אהיה אשר אהיה, אלף דלת, ויוד הי, שדי, צבאות - הרי אלו אין נמחקין; אבל הגדול, הגבור, הנורא, האדיר, והחזק, והאמיץ, העוז, חנון ורחום, ארך אפים, ורב חסד - הרי אלו נמחקין!
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See further Appendix B in this chapter, as well as Bar-Ilan, p. 127, n. 28. See also Joseph Yahalom, “‘Mi-Besari Ehezeh Eloah’: *Min Ha-Homer El Ha-Ruakh Be-Shibutz Ha-Mikraot Be-Fiyut Ha-Sefaradi*,” in *Masoret Ha-Piyyut* 3 (2002), pp. 93-110, here p. 93. See also Avi Hurvitz, *Bein Lashon Le-Lashon* (Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik, 1972), pp. 47-8. See also a near parallel in *B Ketubot* 8b:

The great God , in His abundant greatness / Strong and powerful , in His abundant wonder - <i>B Ketubot</i> 8b	תלמוד בבלי מסכת כתובות דף ח עמוד ב האל הגדול ברוב גדלו, אדיר וחזק ברוב נוראות
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⁸⁰ The attribution is somewhat in question. MS. Vatican has R. Hanina instead of R. Yohanan. See Peter Schäfer and Hans-Jurgen Becker, *Synopse zum Talmud Yerushalmi: Ordnung Zera'im: Berakhot und Pe'a* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991), p. 218, l. 44. See also Heinemann, *Ha-Tefilah*, p. 38, n. 25 = *Prayer in the Talmud*, p. 54, n. 26.

⁸¹ This is a particularly cryptic context – the phrase “*me-abid shlama*” has no other testimony in rabbinic literature. Lieberman skips over the phrase when quoting it in his brief discussion, replacing it simply with “etc.” See Saul Lieberman, “*Hazanut Yannai*,” *Sinai* 4 (1939), pp. 221-250, here p. 223. In his translation of Urbach’s *The Sages*, Israel Abrahams renders it: “R. Johanan and Jonathan went to establish order and harmony in certain cities of the South.” See Urbach, *The Sages*, p. 121. See also Buber, *Midrash Tehilim*, p. 82a, n. 12, who writes that the phrase “to make peace” is an unnecessary addition.

<p>They entered one place and found a <i>hazzan</i>⁸² who said: The great, mighty and awesome, strong, courageous God.⁸³ They silenced him and said to him: You have no permission to add to the form that the sages formulated for blessings.⁸⁴</p>	<p>רבי יוחנן ורבי יונתן אזלין מיעבד שלמא באילין קרייתא דדרומה עלון לחד אתר ואשכחון לחזנא דאמר האל הגדול הגבור והנורא האביר והאמיץ ושיתקו אותו אמרו לו אין לך רשו' להוסיף על מטבע שטבעו חכמים בברכות</p>
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It is clear that our phrase under analysis was known to be a part of the *amidah* in the Talmudic era, both in Babylonia and in Palestine.⁸⁵ Interestingly, the “rule” that is

⁸² The term “*hazzan*” has multiple connotations, which varied across time. See Lieberman, “*Hazanut Yannai*,” pp. 221f. See also Joseph Yahalom, *Piyyut U-Metziut Be-Shilhei Ha-Zman He-Atik* (Tel Aviv: Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Meuchad, 1999), pp. 38-40.

⁸³ An additional adjective – *ha-abir* – is found in MS Vatican. See Schäfer and Becker, *Synopse zum Talmud Yerushalmi*, p. 218. See also the version quoted by Lieberman, “*Hazanut Yannai*,” p. 224: “*ha-adir, ve-ha-abir, ve-ha-amitz*,” which leads him to theorize that this might be a *piyyut* based on the alphabet. See also Yahalom, p. 40 and Schäfer, *Konkordanz*, vol. 1, p. 6 under the terms “*ha-abir*” and “*ve-ha-abir*.”

⁸⁴ For a general treatment of this *halakhic* ruling, see Langer, *To Worship God Properly*, pp. 28-29 and Heinemann, *Prayer in the Talmud*, p 54, n. 26.

⁸⁵ See also the uniform testimony to the phrase in the various rites represented by the Genizah discoveries in Luger, p. 44 and Ehrlich, *Ha-Tefilah*, p. 31. The unsanctioned additions to the phrase here are a fascinating example of the attempted extensions of Jewish prayer, and may even relate to the connection between Jewish prayer and magic. While the additions were outlawed by the rabbinic authorities in the Talmudic selections, similar additions were discovered in much later texts that border on magic and incantation. See, for example, below:

<p>Dan Levene, <i>A Corpus of Magic Bowls: Incantation Texts in Jewish Aramaic from Late Antiquity</i> (London: Kegan Paul, 2003), p. 44)</p> <p>ברוך אתה יקוק אלוהינו מלך העולם האל הגדול הגיבור והנורא והמופלא והמ(ע)ולא...</p>	<p>Schäfer, <i>Synopse</i> #503 (see also Levene p. 49)</p> <p>ברוך אתה יקוק אלהינו מלך העולם האל המלך הגדול הגבור והנורא והנשגב והנפלא והעונה בעת צרה</p>	<p>Peter Schäfer and Shaul Shaked, <i>Magische Texte aus der Kairoer Geniza</i> (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997), Vol. 2, p. 142</p> <p>ב א יי אלהינו מלך העולם הגדול המבו" והנור" האביר והאמיץ</p>	<p>Lawrence Schiffman and Michael Swartz, <i>Hebrew and Aramaic Incantation Texts from the Cairo Genizah: Selected Texts from Taylor-Schechter Box K1</i> (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), p. 149, ll. 99-100</p> <p>בשם השם הוא יקוק האל הגדול הגבור והנורא התקיף</p>	<p>TS K1.71 Schiffman and Swartz, p. 93, ll. 5-6 (compare Joseph Naveh and Shaul Shaked, <i>Magic Spells and Formulae: Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity</i> (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1993), p. 29) אלהא רבא ודהילא האביר והאמיץ</p>
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See also the multiple versions of the extension of Deut 10:17 (without the blessing opening) in Schäfer and Shaked, *Magische Texte aus der Kairoer Geniza*, vol. 2, pp. 31-48; Michael Swartz, “*Alay Le-Shabbah: A Liturgical Prayer in Ma’aseh Merkabah*,” *JQR* (N.S.) 77/2-3 (1986-87), pp. 179-190, here p. 183; Mordecai Margoliot, *Sepher Ha-Razim: A Newly Recovered Book of Magic from the Talmudic Period* (Jerusalem: Yediot Ahronot, 1966), p. 98, and n. 35 there:

violated in each of these texts is slightly different. In *B Megillah/B Berakhot*, the leader is criticized for expanding on what is found in the Torah,⁸⁶ whereas in *Y Berakhot*, the leader has expanded on what the sages had formulated. The *B Megillah/B Berakhot* story seems more conscious of the biblical intertext source in its description of the violation. (Although, perhaps, the *Y Berakhot* version implicitly associates the “form of the blessing” with a quote from the Bible). We will further analyze the intertext below.

2) The phrase also appears in a Talmudic-era source in the context of defining praise in the *amidah*.

<p>Even [in] the 18 blessings that the early prophets established that Israel should pray every day, they did not open with the needs of Israel until they opened with the praise of God (<i>Ha-Makom</i>): “The great, mighty and awesome God. Holy are you and awesome is Your name.” And afterward: “who frees the captives” and afterward: “who heals the sick” and afterward: “We</p>	<p>ספרי דברים פרשת וזאת הברכה פיסקא שמג ואף שמנה עשרה ברכות שתיקנו נביאים הראשונים שיהו ישראל מתפללים בכל יום לא פתחו בצרכם של ישראל עד שפתחו בשבחו של מקום האל הגדול הגבור והנורא קדוש אתה ונורא שמך ואחר כך מתיר</p>
<p>In the name of the great, awesome, powerful, strong, heroic, holy, mighty, wondrous, hidden, raised, enlightened [One]...</p>	<p>בשמו הגדול והנורא והאמיץ והאדיר והעוז והגבור והקדוש והחזק והנפלא והנסתר והנישא והנאור...</p>

Cf. Schäfer and Shaked, *Magische Texte aus der Kairoer Geniza*, vol. 2, p. 81; Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1941), pp. 60-1. For additional (later) evidence of magical additions to the *amidah*, see Shaul Shaked, “‘Peace be Upon You, Exalted Angels’: On Hekhalot, Liturgy and Incantation Bowls,” *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 2 (1995), pp. 197-219, here p. 204 and n. 48; Schäfer and Shaked, *Magische Texte aus der Kairoer Geniza*, vol. 2, pp. 27-152. Heinemann notes how the “piling up” of sacred names borders on magical incantation, and this might have been the motivation for the attack on this particular *hazzan*. See Heinemann, *Ha-Tefilah*, p. 115-116, and n. 34. See also the magical use of the verses from Exodus 3:1-5 in *B Shabbat* 67b (leading right up to our intertext from above, in Ex 3:6) and the discussion in Yuval Harari, *Ha-Kishuf Ha-Yehudi Ha-Kadum* (Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik, 2010), pp. 276-80. For magical uses of the *amidah*, see *Ibid.*, pp. 207-9. For the magical use of the patriarch’s names, see Rist, “The God of Abraham,” and Gideon Bohak, “Hebrew, Hebrew Everywhere?: Notes on the Interpretation of *Voces Magicae*,” in *Prayer, Magic, and the Stars in the Ancient and Late Antique World*, eds. Scott Noegel, Joel Thomas Walker, and Brannon Wheeler (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), pp. 69-82, here p. 72.

⁸⁶ “[T]he bodies of the prayers to which the *Berakah*-pattern served as the eulogy are also at times composed exclusively of biblical verses....This approach becomes explicit in the strong opposition of the Talmudic Sages to the heaping up of additional attributes of praise in the first benediction of the *amidah* over and above the three adjectives, ‘great, mighty, and awesome,’ which appear in the Bible.” Heinemann, *Prayer in the Talmud*, pp. 90-91.

give thanks to You.”
- *Sifre Devarim* #343⁸⁷

אסורים ואחר כך רופא חולים ואחר כך מודים
אנחנו לך.

The above text is unusual in the following way: the phrases mentioned differ considerably from the current text of the *amidah* (regardless of rite) in wording and order. Specifically, the phrase “*matir asurim*” in this text seems to come in the middle section of the *amidah*, whereas in the standard *amidah* text it appears in the second blessing.⁸⁸ Some have even theorized that this text represents an earlier, alternative version of the *amidah*.⁸⁹ It may in fact be a selective quoting of a text more familiar to us rather than an alternate form. Nevertheless, it is clear that the phrase “*ha-el ha-gadol, ha-gibbor ve-ha-norah*” is connected to the *amidah* already at this point.⁹⁰

3) Finally, the phrase appears in both the Bavli and Yerushalmi as the core form (*matbe'a*) of the *amidah*.⁹¹:

⁸⁷ *Sifre Devarim*, ed. Finkelstein, p. 395. On this source, its problems, and its importance for the textual understanding of the *amidah*, see Abraham Marmorstein, “*Shibolim*,” *Ha-Tzofeh Le-Hokhmat Yisrael* 10 (1926), pp. 209-213.

⁸⁸ Heinemann, in his updating of Elbogen’s work, thought this phrase was actually part of the blessing number 7, “which in one of its early versions must have contained a specific reference to the freeing of captives and the like.” (Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy*, p. 31). See also Shmuel David Luzzato, *Mavo Le-Mahzor Benei Romah*, ed. Daniel Goldschmidt (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1966), p. 18.

Even if one considers the phrases “*matir asurim*” and “*rofeh holim*” in their familiar context from the second blessing, the order in this *midrash* is different from the standard order within that blessing (in which *rofeh holim* precedes *matir asurim*). In fact, the familiar order of the terms: *somekh noflim, rofeh holim, u-matir asurim* found in the standard prayers of today has variations in other *siddurim*. For instance: *rofeh holim ve-somekh noflim u-matir asurim* is found in *Siddur Rav Sa’adia Gaon* and many fragments from the Genizah of the Babylonian *nusakh*. However, none have *matir asurim* first. See Uri Ehrlich, “*Le-Heker Nusah Ha-Tefilah Be-Siddur Rav Sa’adia Gaon*,” *Pe’amim* 121 (2010), pp. 67-99, here p. 81 and Idem, “*Birkat Gevurot, Kedushat Ha-Shem, Ve-Ha-Da’at Be-Nusah Ha-Tefilah Ha-Kadum Le-Or Keta Hadash Mi-Siddur Al Pi Minhag Eretz Yisrael*,” *Tarbiz* 73:4 (2004), pp. 555-584, here p. 563.

⁸⁹ See *Sifre Devarim*, ed. Finkelstein, p. 396, note to line 1: “It seems clear that in the days of the orderer of the *baraita* there was fixed one of the 18 blessings with the *nusakh* of the *hatimah* as: *matir asurim*.” See Shadal’s opinion in *Mavo Le-Mahzor Benei Romah*, pp. 18-19. See also Urbach’s response to Shadal: Urbach, *Haza”l*, p. 590, n. 19 (=The Sages, p. 992, n. 19). Elbogen did not derive much from the order of this text as he viewed it as corrupt. Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy*, p. 397, n. 11.

⁹⁰ See Kimelman, “The Literary Structure,” p. 176, n. 15, who dates this text to the first generation of *amoraim*.

⁹¹ The significance of these texts for the interpretation of the blessing will be dealt with below.

<p>Rabbi Simon said in the name of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi: Why were they called the men of the great assembly? Because they returned greatness to its earlier place: Rabbi Pinhas said: Moses established the form of the <i>amidah</i>: The great, mighty and awesome God (Deut 10:17) Jeremiah (32:18) said: The great and mighty God, but did not say awesome. Why did he say mighty? One who can watch the destruction of His house and be quiet is fittingly called mighty. And why didn't he say "awesome"? Because only the Temple is awesome⁹², as it says (Ps 68:36): Awesome is God from his Sanctuary" Daniel (9:4) said "The great awesome God" but did not say "mighty". His sons have been given over to chains, so where is His might? Why did he say "awesome"? For the awesome things He did for us in the fiery furnace,⁹³ He is fittingly called awesome. When the men of the great assembly arose, they returned greatness to its earlier place: The great, mighty, awesome God (Neh. 9:32). But does a human really have the power to set a limit/boundary to these words? R. Yitzhak ben Eleazar said: Prophets know that their God is true and do not flatter Him. - <i>Y Berakhot</i> 7:3; 11c⁹⁴</p>	<p>תלמוד ירושלמי (וילנא) מסכת ברכות פרק ז הלכה ג</p> <p>ר' סימון בשם ר"י בן לוי למה נקרו אנשי כנסת הגדולה שהחזירו הגדולה ליושנה. אמר ר' פנחס משה התקין מטבעה של תפילה [דברים י יז] האל הגדול הגבור והנורא. ירמיה אמר [ירמ' לב יח] האל הגדול הגבור ולא אמר הנורא. למה אמר הגבור לזה נאה לקרות גבור שהוא רואה חורבן ביתו ושותק. ולמה לא אמר נורא אלא שאין נורא אלא בית המקדש שנא' [תהילים סח לו] נורא אלהים ממקדשך. דניאל אמר [דניאל ט ד] האל הגדול והנורא ולא אמר הגבור בניו מסורין בקולרין היכן היא גבורתו. ולמה אמר הנורא לזה נאה לקרות נורא בנוראות שעשה לנו בכבשן האש. וכיון שעמדו אנשי כנסת הגדולה החזירו הגדולה ליושנה [נחמיה ט לב] האל הגדול הגבור והנורא. ובשר ודם יש בו כח ליתן קצבה לדברים הללו. אמר ר' יצחק בן אלעזר יודעין הן הנביאים שאלוהן אמיתי ואינן מחניפין לו:</p>
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Compare this text with the following version in the Bavli⁹⁵:

<p>Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: Why were they called the men of the Great Assembly?</p>	<p>תלמוד בבלי מסכת יומא דף סט עמוד ב</p>
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⁹² Or in one manuscript: *be-veit*, thus rendering: He inspires awe only in the Temple. See Urbach, *Haza"l*, p. 101, n. 96 (=The Sages, p. 121 and p. 731, n. 69). However all the manuscripts in Schäfer and Becker, *Synopse zum Talmud Yerushalmi*, pp. 191-3, match our version of the text.

⁹³ MS London and MS Paris add: and in the lion's den. See Schäfer and Becker, *Synopse zum Talmud Yerushalmi*, p. 192-3.

⁹⁴ Parallel in *Y Megillah* 3:6; 74c. See the very minor differences in formulation in Schäfer and Becker, *Synopse zum Talmud Yerushalmi*, pp. 191-2.

⁹⁵ See also *Midrash Tehilim* 19:2, ed. Buber p. 82a.

<p>Because they returned greatness to its earlier glory. Moses came and said: “The great, mighty and awesome God” Jeremiah came and said: Gentiles are walking about in His sanctuary, where is His awesomeness? He did not say “awesome.” Daniel came and said: Gentiles have enslaved his children, where is His might? He did not say “mighty.” They came and said: On the contrary: this is the strength of His strength, that He can conquer his will, who is patient with evil ones. And this is His awesomeness: for if it were not for the awesomeness of the Holy Blessed One, how could one nation exist among the nations? And the rabbis⁹⁶ – how could they have done this and uprooted a decree that Moses decreed? R. Eleazer⁹⁷ said: Because they know that the Holy Blessed One is truthful, therefore they didn’t lie to Him. - <i>B Yoma</i> 69b⁹⁸</p>	<p>דאמר רבי יהושע בן לוי: למה נקרא שמן אנשי כנסת הגדולה - שהחזירו עטרה ליושנה. אתא משה אמר +דברים י+ האל הגדל הגבר והנורא, אתא ירמיה ואמר: נכרים מקרקרין בהיכלו, איה נוראותיו? לא אמר נורא. אתא דניאל, אמר: נכרים משתעבדים בבניו, איה גבורותיו? לא אמר גבור. אתו אינהו ואמרו: אדרבה, זו היא גבורת גבורתו שכובש את יצרו, שנותן ארך אפים לרשעים. ואלו הן נוראותיו - שאלמלא מוראו של הקדוש ברוך הוא היאך אומה אחת יכולה להתקיים בין האומות? ורבנן היכי עבדי הכי ועקרי תקנתא דתקין משה! - אמר רבי אלעזר: מתוך שיודעין בהקדוש ברוך הוא שאמתי הוא, לפיכך לא כיזבו בו.</p>
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Identification and Analysis of the Intertext(s)

Given the above texts, we have sufficient evidence that this phrase is part of the Talmudic-era *amidah*. Now we can work to identify the intertexts. As in the previous phrase – *elohei Avraham, elohei Yitzhak, ve-elohei Ya’akov* – here, too, the rabbinic sources themselves point to the intertexts. In both the Bavli version of the text that criticizes the *hazzan* for adding to the phrase – “had **Moses** not written in the Torah” – and in the *midrash* of R. Pinhas about the reduction of the phrase – “**Moses** established the form of the *amidah*” – the intertext is spelled out: Deuteronomy 10:17. (Significantly,

⁹⁶ The prophets Jeremiah and Daniel are referred to here as rabbis. See Urbach, *Haza”l*, p. 101, n. 99 (=The *Sages*, p. 731, n. 72).

⁹⁷ Or: R. Isaac b. Eliezer. See the variant manuscripts referenced by Urbach, *Haza”l*, p. 101, n. 99 (The *Sages*, p. 731, n. 72).

⁹⁸ Compare the translation in Urbach, *The Sages*, p. 121-2 and in Daniel Sperber, *On Changes in Jewish Liturgy*, p. 11.

Moses, who also appeared behind the scenes in the previous phrase, once the intertext was identified, appears here as well, as the source of the phrase.) In fact, there are (at least) two biblical intertexts at play, since the same phrase appears in Neh 9:32 (which is noted in the *B Yoma* 69b text and is also likely referred to by R. Hanina when he states: “and affixed by the Men of the Great Assembly” – the Men of the Great Assembly include Ezra and Nehemiah).⁹⁹ But we will focus our analysis on the intertext from Deut 10:17.¹⁰⁰

Below is the surrounding context for the intertext from Deuteronomy 10:12-

11:9:¹⁰¹

<p>12 And now, O Israel, what does YHVH your God demand of you? Only this: to revere YHVH your God, to walk only in His paths, to love Him, and to serve YHVH your God with all your heart and soul, 13 keeping YHVH's commandments and laws, which I enjoin upon you today, for your good. 14 Mark, the heavens to their uttermost reaches belong to YHVH your God, the earth and all that is on it! 15 Yet it was to your fathers that YHVH was drawn in His love for them, so</p>	<p>דברים פרק י (יב) ועתה ישראל מה יקונך אלהיך שאיל מעמך כי אם ליראה את יקונך אלהיך ללכת בכל דרכיו ולא הבה אתו ולעבד את יקונך אלהיך בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך: (יג) לשמר את מצוות יקונך ואת חקתיו אשר אנכי מצוה היום לטוב לך: (יד) הן ליקונך אלהיך השמים ושמי השמים הארץ וכל אשר בה:</p>
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⁹⁹ Leon Liebreich claims that Nehemiah is the main intertext here, because “[a]lthough these words first occur in Deut 10:17, their use in public worship is attested to in Neh. 9:32.” See “The Impact of Nehemiah 9:5-37,” p. 232. Kimelman (*The Amidah*, p. 41) also points to the Nehemiah text. While Liebreich prefers to choose only one intertext to the exclusion of others, it seems that in fact the intertexts are multiple, as R. Pinhas makes clear. For an evaluation of Liebreich’s method, see Sarason, “The Modern Study of Jewish Liturgy,” pp. 130-135.

¹⁰⁰ The version in *Midrash Tehilim* (ed. Buber, p. 82b) claims that what we say in the *amidah* is in fact a quote of Moses (and not *Nehemiah*):

<p>R. Yaakov beRebbe Eleazar said: They know that their God is truthful, and they don't flatter Him, but it is sufficient with the praise that Moses our teacher praised.</p>	<p>מדרש תהלים (בובר) מזמור יט אמר ר' יעקב בר' אלעזר יודעין היו באלהיהן שאמיתי הוא, ואין מחניפין לו, ודי הוא בקילוס שקילסו משה רבינו.</p>
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¹⁰¹ We have included the entire pericope through the break in the following chapter, following the breaks according to the Masoretic tradition. For the argument that this selection should be seen as one whole, see Jeffrey Tigay, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Deuteronomy* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996), pp. 109-110, and p. 363, n.1.

that He chose you, their lineal descendants, from among all the peoples – as is now the case. 16 Cut away, therefore, the thickening about your hearts and stiffen your necks no more. 17 For YHVH your God is God of gods and Lord of lords,¹⁰² **the great, the mighty, and the awesome God**, who shows no favor and takes no bribe, 18 but does justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the stranger, providing him with food and clothing. 19 You too must love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. 20 You must revere YHVH your God: only Him shall you worship, to Him shall you hold fast, and by His name shall you swear. 21 He is your glory and He is your God, who wrought for you those marvelous, awesome deeds that you saw with your own eyes. 22 Your ancestors went down to Egypt seventy persons in all; and now YHVH your God has made you as numerous as the stars of the heaven.

11:1 Love, therefore, YHVH your God, and always keep His charge, His laws, His rules, and His commandments. 2 Take thought this day that it was not your children, who neither experienced nor witnessed the lesson of YHVH your God – His majesty, His mighty hand, His outstretched arm; 3 the signs and the deeds He performed in Egypt against Pharaoh king of Egypt and all his land; 4 what He did to Egypt's army, its horses and chariots; how YHVH rolled back upon them the waters of the Sea of Reeds when they were pursuing you, thus destroying them once and for all; 5 what He did for you in the wilderness before you arrived in this place 6 and what He did to Datan and Aviram, sons of Eliav son of Reuven, when the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them, along with

(טו) רק בְּאַבְתְּיָה חֶשֶׁק יִקְוֶה לְאַהֲבָה אוֹתָם
וַיִּבְחַר בְּזֵרַעַם אַחֲרֵיהֶם בְּכֶם מִכָּל הָעַמִּים
כַּיּוֹם הַזֶּה:
(טז) וּמִלִּתְּם אֶת עַרְלַת לִבְבְּכֶם וְעַרְפְּכֶם לֹא
תִקְשׁוּ עוֹד:
(יז) כִּי יִקְוֶה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הוּא אֱלֹהֵי הָאֱלֹהִים
וְאַדְנֵי הָאֲדֹנִים הָאֵל הַגָּדֹל הַגִּבּוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא
אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִשָּׂא פָנִים וְלֹא יִקַּח שֹׁחַד:
(יח) עֲשֵׂה מִשְׁפֹּט יְתוֹם וְאַלְמָנָה וְאַהֲבֵה גֵר
לְתֵת לוֹ לֶחֶם וּשְׂמֵלָה:
(יט) וְאַהֲבַתְּם אֶת הַגֵּר כִּי גֵרִים הָיִיתֶם
בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם:
(כ) אֶת יִקְוֶה אֱלֹהֵיךָ תִירָא אֶתוֹ תַעֲבֹד וּבו
תִּדְבֹק וּבִשְׂמוֹ תִשָּׁבַע:
(כא) הוּא תְהִלָּתְךָ וְהוּא אֱלֹהֵיךָ אֲשֶׁר עֲשֵׂה
אִתְּךָ אֶת הַגְּדֹלֹת וְאֶת הַנּוֹרָאֹת הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר
רָאוּ עֵינֶיךָ:
(כב) בְּשִׁבְעִים נֶפֶשׁ יָרְדוּ אֲבֹתֶיךָ מִצְרַיִמָּה
וְעַתָּה שְׂמֵךְ יִקְוֶה אֱלֹהֵיךָ כְּכֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם
לְרֹב: דְּבָרִים פָּרָק יֵא

דְּבָרִים פָּרָק יֵא
(א) וְאַהֲבַתְּ אֶת יִקְוֶה אֱלֹהֵיךָ וּשְׂמֵרְתָּ
מִשְׁמֵרְתוֹ וְחֻקֵּי וּמִשְׁפָּטָיו וּמִצְוֹתָיו כָּל
הַיְמִים:
(ב) וַיִּדְעֶתֶם הַיּוֹם כִּי לֹא אֶת בְּנֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר
לֹא יָדְעוּ וְאֲשֶׁר לֹא רָאוּ אֶת מוֹסַר יִקְוֶה
אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֶת גְּדֹלוֹ אֶת יְדוֹ הַתְּזַקָּה וְזָרְעוּ
הַנְּטוּיָה:
(ג) וְאֶת אֹתוֹתַי וְאֶת מַעֲשָׂיו אֲשֶׁר עֲשֵׂה
בְּתוֹךְ מִצְרַיִם לְפָרְעָה מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם וּלְכָל
אֶרֶצוֹ:
(ד) וְאֲשֶׁר עֲשֵׂה לְחַיִל מִצְרַיִם לְסוּסָיו
וּלְרִכְבּוֹ אֲשֶׁר הִצִּיף אֶת מֵי יַם סוּף עַל
פְּנֵיהֶם בְּרִדְפָם אַחֲרֵיהֶם וַיִּאֲבָדוּ יִקְוֶה עַד
הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה:
(ה) וְאֲשֶׁר עֲשֵׂה לָכֶם בְּמִדְבָּר עַד בְּאַכְּם עַד
הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה:

¹⁰² For a liturgical use of this phrase, immediately preceding our phrase under analysis, see Tal, p. 49.

<p>their households, their tents, and every living thing in their train, from amidst all of Israel – 7 but that it was you who saw with your own eyes all the marvelous deeds that YHVH performed. 8 Keep, therefore, all the Instruction that I enjoin upon you today, so that you may have the strength to enter and take possession of the land you are about to cross into and possess, 9 and that you may long endure upon the soil that YHVH swore to your fathers to assign to them and to their heirs, a land flowing with milk and honey. - Deut 10:12-22; 11:1-9</p>	<p>(ו) וְאֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לְדַתְּוֹ וְלְאַבְיָרָם בְּנֵי אֱלִיאָב בְּנֵי רְאוּבֵן אֲשֶׁר פָּצְתָהּ הָאָרֶץ אֶת פִּיהָ וַתִּבְלַעַם וְאֶת בְּתִיָּהֶם וְאֶת אֶהֱלֵיהֶם וְאֶת כָּל הַיְקוּם אֲשֶׁר בְּרַגְלֵיהֶם בְּקָרֵב כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל: (ז) כִּי עֵינֵיכֶם הִרְאִיתֶם אֶת כָּל מַעֲשֵׂה יְקִוֵּק הַגָּדֹל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה: (ח) וַיִּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת כָּל הַמִּצְוָה אֲשֶׁר אֲנֹכִי מִצְוָה הַיּוֹם לְמַעַן תִּחְזְקוּ וּבְאֵתְּם וִירְשִׁתֶּם אֶת הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֲתֶם עֹבְרִים שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ: (ט) וּלְמַעַן תִּאָּרִיכוּ יָמִים עַל הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע יְקִוֵּק לְאַבְתִּיכֶם לָתֵת לָהֶם וּלְזֶרְעָם אֶרֶץ זָבַת חֶלֶב וּדְבָשׁ: ס</p>
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As we did above with the previous phrase, we will first make a few points that emerge directly from the biblical narrative in its fuller context. First, it is worth noting the common associations with the adjectives “great, mighty and awesome.” These descriptions alone, taken out of the biblical context, connote a God who is transcendent, who performs miracles far beyond the reach of ordinary humans. One might imagine the creator God, or the God who redeemed the Israelites from Egypt, as meriting these descriptions.¹⁰³ However, when placed in its biblical context, this understanding of these words becomes much more complicated.

¹⁰³ *Midrash Tehilim* 19:2 (ed. Buber, p. 82b), does indeed list more cosmic associations with each of these adjectives:

<p>R Pinhas the priest son of Hama said: Moses affixed for Israel an order of prayer, as it says: “For YHVH your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords. The great mighty and awesome God...” The great – who did great acts in Egypt; the mighty – who did mighty acts at the sea; the awesome – that the <i>Mishkan</i> was raised up in his days, as it says: Awesome is God from his sanctuary (Ps 68:36). - <i>Midrash Tehilim</i> 19:2, ed. Buber, 82b.</p>	<p>מדרש תהלים (בובר) מזמור יט אמר ר' פנחס הכהן בר חמא משה תקן להם לישראל סדר תפלה, שנאמר כי ה' אלהיכם] הוא אלהי האלהים ואדוני האדונים האל הגדול הגבור והנורא (דברים י ז), הגדול שעשה גדולות במצרים, הגבור שעשה גבורות על הים, והנורא שהוקם המשכן בימיו, שנאמר נורא אלהים ממקדשיך (תהלים סח לו).</p>
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Buber (n. 25) notes this section appears in almost none of the manuscripts of *Midrash Tehilim*, and is also missing from the parallel versions in the *Talmudim*. Nevertheless, it points to a common understanding of these adjectives as describing God’s supernatural powers.

- 1) The immediate context prior to the intertext verse (v. 17) exhorts the Israelites to “circumcise their hearts” and not “stiffen their necks” (v. 16). This plea follows the directive a few verses earlier for Israel to “fear God,” “walk in His ways,” “love him,” and “serve him with all your heart and soul.” (v. 12). Clearly the call for a relationship is paramount in this section, one based on service and love. This serves to cut against the notion that a God who is great, mighty and awesome is a God who is too powerful to have a relationship with humans.¹⁰⁴

- 2) The theme of the patriarchs, explicitly referenced in the previous phrase of the *amidah*, appears in this context as well: God “set his affection on your forefathers and loved them” (v. 15). Read in this light, the intertext of Deuteronomy makes some logical sense following the reference to the *avot* and their relationship with God in the flow of the *amidah* blessing.

- 3) The phrase “great, mighty and awesome” is perhaps surprisingly defined by the context here not as a description of God’s cosmic or miraculous creative abilities, but as an illustration of God’s ethical commitments to the most vulnerable members of society: God does not take bribes. God does justice for the widow and orphan. God loves the stranger, and through that love gives food and clothing. This is an unexpected association for God’s greatness.

¹⁰⁴ “The biblical tradition which expresses the relationship of God and the people Israel is a paradigm case of this outlook [that prioritizes relationship as the central piece of theology]. The God of the Bible, unlike the God of Aristotle, is described almost exclusively in terms of His relationship with human beings.” David Hartman, *Joy and Responsibility* (Jerusalem: Ben Zvi-Posner, 1978), p. 39. See generally Yochanan Muffs, *The Personhood of God: Biblical Theology, Human Faith and the Divine Image* (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights, 2005).

- 4) Significantly, the biblical context gives the addressee of this speech of Moses a clear goal: “You too must love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (Deut 10:19). That is, “walking in God’s ways,” mentioned above in v. 12, is now concretized by you “loving the stranger” just as God “loves the stranger.”¹⁰⁵ The recitation of the phrase “great, mighty and awesome” moves from a contemplation of God’s transcendent powers to a directive for a loving relationship with the stranger, modeled on God’s behavior.¹⁰⁶ This is a fairly radical move for a blessing usually considered to be about praising God, not spurring one to ethical action with other humans.¹⁰⁷
- 5) God’s miraculous behavior makes an explicit appearance in this section further on (10:21), using some of the same terminology as our phrase (“*et ha-gedolot ve-et ha-nora’ot = ha-gadol...ve-ha-norah*). The section mentions the miracles of increasing the Israelite population (v. 22), the destruction against the Egyptians in Egypt (11:3) and at the Reed Sea (11:4), as well as the unnatural death of the

¹⁰⁵ Tigay (p. 109) claims that v.18 is a “digression.”

¹⁰⁶ For this philosophy, see the statement of Abba Shaul in *Mekhilta Beshallah* 3, ed. Horowitz-Rabin, p. 127 (parallel in *Y Peah* 1:1; 15b):

Abba Shaul said: I will imitate Him. Just as He is merciful and gracious, so you too should be merciful and gracious. - <i>Mekhilta de-Rebbi Yishmael Beshallah</i> 3	מכילתא דרבי ישמעאל בשלח - מסכתא דשירה פרשה ג אבא שאול אומר אדמה לו מה הוא רחום וחנון אף אתה רחום וחנון.
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Compare also *Sifre Devarim Ekev* #49 (ed. Finkelstein, p. 114) and *B Sotah* 14a.

¹⁰⁷ For the challenges to the traditional understanding of the *amidah* structure as beginning with praise (*B Berakhot* 34a; *Y Berakhot* 2:4; 4d; Rambam *Mishne Torah Hilkhos Tefilah* 1:4), see Kimelman, *The Amidah*, pp. 3-6. Even Kimelman’s critique of this breakdown is predicated on the fluidity between request and praise: “Since petition and thanksgiving are so often intertwined in petitionary prayer, it is wiser to predicate the meaning of the clustering of blessings on content rather than on genre or the nature of the formulation” (p. 6). But our suggestion here is that the prayer shifts from either of those categories to imperative. For more on prayer as a spur to personal contemplation, see Avi Sagi, *Petzuei Tefilah: Tefilah Le-Ahar ‘Mot Ha-El’* (Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 2011), pp. 98-125.

rebellious Datan and Aviram (11:6), all of which are described as *gadol* (11:2, 7). This has the effect of complicating the notion of what “great, mighty and awesome” really is. Is it indeed something humans can relate to – for instance, loving the stranger, doing justice fairly, and protecting the vulnerable (10:18-19)? Or is it outside of nature, miracles which have no connection to human power? This indeterminate understanding of the adjectives help complicate the experience of describing God as “great,” for which R. Hanina already pointed out the philosophical difficulties.¹⁰⁸

Rabbinic Understanding of Biblical Intertext

With these observations stemming from the biblical context, we will now look at the rabbinic understanding of these verses for another dimension of meaning. One rabbinic comment of R. Yohanan connects the issue of power to the defense of the poor and downtrodden.

<p>Rabbi Yohanan said: Every place that you find God’s strength you also find God’s humility. This is written in the Torah, repeated in the Prophets, and tripled in the Writings. It is written in the Torah: “For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords” and it is written afterward: “but does justice for the fatherless and the widow”... - <i>B Megillah</i> 31a</p>	<p>תלמוד בבלי מסכת מגילה דף לא עמוד א אמר רבי יוחנן: כל מקום שאתה מוצא גבורתו של הקדוש ברוך הוא אתה מוצא ענוותנותו; דבר זה כתוב בתורה ושנוי בנביאים ומשולש בכתובים. כתוב בתורה - +דברים י' + כי ה' אלהיכם הוא אלהי האלהים ואדני האדנים, וכתוב בתריה עשה משפט יתום ואלמנה</p>
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This understanding of the juxtaposition of the power of God with the protection of the widow and orphan emphasizes the reading in which God demonstrates power through

¹⁰⁸ See also Maimonides, Guide to the Perplexed, Section 1, chap. 59, trans. Pines, vol. 1, pp. 140-141. See also the other philosophical objections brought by Avraham Walfish in “*Beit Ha-Midrash Ve-Olam Ha-Mehkar – Heker Siddur Ha-Tefilah*,” Shannah be-Shannah 1999, pp. 467-502, here p. 471, n. 10.

protection of the vulnerable (and not only through miraculous events). This view of God's power opens the possibility of a different form of relationship through its recitation in prayer. Instead of a testimony to the miracles God once performed (see Deut 11), this quotation in the mouth of the worshiper can be a point of connection, and even subtle request, for God to relate to the worshiper through justice and protection.

However, another strain in rabbinic reading of this intertext leads to an exploration of the disappointing reality of God not doing justice to people in need. This is examined by R. Pinhas in the *Yerushalmi* and R. Yehoshua ben Levi in the *Bavli*, both quoted above. R. Pinhas notes all four of the exact or near-exact quotations of this list of adjectives in the Bible, and brings them into dialogue with each other.

<p>For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who shows no favor and takes no bribe – Deut 10:17</p> <p>Who performs lovingkindness for thousands but pay sin of the fathers to the bosom of their children after them, O great, mighty God, YHVH Zevaot is His name. – Jer 32:18</p> <p>I prayed to YHVH my God and confessed, and said: Please, Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps the covenant and lovingkindness to those who love Him and keep His commandments. – Daniel 9:4</p> <p>Now, our God, the great, mighty and awesome God, who keeps the covenant and lovingkindness: Do not let all this hardship seem trifling in your eyes, that has found our kings, our ministers, our priests, our prophets, our ancestors, and all Your nation from the days of the kingdom of Assyria until this day. – Neh 9:32.</p>	<p>דברים פרק י (יז) כִּי יִקְוֶה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם הוּא אֱלֹהֵי הָאֱלֹהִים וְאֲדֹנֵי הָאֲדֹנִים הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל הַגִּבּוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִשָּׂא פָנִים וְלֹא יִקַּח שֹׁחַד:</p> <p>ירמיהו פרק לב (יח) עֲשֵׂה חֶסֶד לְאֲלֹפִים וּמִשְׁלֵם עִוֹן אָבוֹת אֶל בְּנֵיהֶם בְּגִינָתָם אַחֲרֵיהֶם הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל הַגִּבּוֹר יִקְוֶה צְבָאוֹת שְׁמוֹ:</p> <p>דניאל פרק ט (ד) וְאֶתְפַּלֵּלָה לִיקְוֶה אֱלֹהֵי וְאֶתְוַדֶּה וְאֶמְרָה אֲנִי אֲדֹנֵי הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל וְהַנּוֹרָא שְׁמֵר הַבְּרִית וְהַחֶסֶד לְאֶהֱבֵיו וְלִשְׁמָרֵי מִצְוֹתָיו:</p> <p>נחמיה פרק ט (לב) וְעַתָּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל הַגִּבּוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא שׁוֹמֵר הַבְּרִית וְהַחֶסֶד אֵל יִמְעַט לְפָנֶיךָ אֵת כָּל הַתְּלָאָה אֲשֶׁר מִצְּאֵתָנוּ לְמַלְכֵינוּ לְשָׂרֵינוּ וְלַכְהֲנָנֵינוּ וְלַנְּבִיאָנוּ וְלַאֲבֹתֵינוּ וְלְכָל עַמְּךָ מִיָּמֵי מַלְכֵי אַשּׁוּר עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה:</p>
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R. Pinhas notes the missing adjectives in Jeremiah (*ha-norah*) and in Daniel (*ha-gibbor*) and explains why those prophets reduced the litany: either because God's Temple was destroyed (Jeremiah) or because his children are captive in exile (Daniel). But he also explains why each of them said the adjective that the other had omitted. Jeremiah says the word *gibbor* (which Daniel cuts) because God conquers his desire, a reference to *M Avot* 4:1¹⁰⁹:

<p>Ben Zoma said: Who is considered mighty? The one who conquers his will, as it says: "Better a patient one than a hero, one who controls his spirit than one who conquers a city." (Prov 16:32). - <i>M Avot</i> 4:1</p>	<p>משנה מסכת אבות פרק ד בן זומא אומר ... איזהו גבור הכובש את יצרו שנאמר (משלי טו /זט/) טוב ארך אפים מגבור ומושל ברוחו מלוכד עיר</p>
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R. Pinhas notes how the word *gibbor* has gone through an interpretive shift.

Whereas in Deut 10:17 it refers to God's strength in acting in the world for the

¹⁰⁹ This is also mentioned in ARNA, ch. 23 (see also ARNB, ch. 33).

<p>Who is a hero among heroes? The one who conquers his will, as it says (Prov. 16:33): "Better a patient one than a hero, one who controls his spirit than one who conquers a city." And anyone who conquers his will it is as if he conquered an entire city filled with heroes, as it says (Prov. 21:22): "A wise man attacks the city of the heroes, and brings down the stronghold in which they trust."</p>	<p>מסכתות קטנות מסכת אבות דרבי נתן נוסחא א פרק כג איזהו גבור שבגבורים זהו הכובש את יצרו שנאמר טוב ארך אפים מגבור ומושל ברוחו מלוכד עיר (משלי ט"ז ל"ג) וכל הכובש את יצרו מעלין עליו כאלו כבש עיר מלאה גבורים שנאמר עיר גבורים עלה חכם (ויורד עוז מבטחה) [שם כ"א כ"ב]</p>
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The irony is clear here: God acts heroically by stifling His will, *as if* he conquers a city. However in reality, the city is in fact conquered and the Israelites are carried off as slaves. Compare the reference in *Tanhuma Vayikra* 1 (ed. Buber, vol. 3, p. 2) = *Vayikra Rabbah* 1:1, ed. Margoliot p. 4, in which the heroic person is the one who is able to remain silent without speaking while watching others eat his fruit during the *shemithah* - sabbatical - year:

<p>R. Yitzhak Nappha said: These (heroes mentioned in Ps. 103:20) are those who keep [the commandment] of <i>shevi'it</i> (the 7th year in which the land lies fallow). And why are they called "heroes of strength"? Since he sees his field abandoned, and his trees abandoned, and the fences breaches, and he sees his fruits being eaten, but he conquers his will and does not speak. Thus our rabbis taught: Who is a hero? The one who conquers his will. - <i>Tanhuma Vayikra</i> 1 (cf. <i>Vayikra Rabbah</i> 1:1)</p>	<p>מדרש תנחומא (בובר) פרשת ויקרא סימן א ר' יצחק נפחא אמר אילו שומרי שביעית, ולמה נקראו גבורי כח, כיון שרואה שדהו מובקרת, ואילנותיו מובקרין, והסייגין מופרצין, ורואה פירותיו נאכלין, וכובש יצרו ואינו מדבר, ושנו רבותינו ואיזהו גבור הכובש את יצרו.</p>
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downtrodden (=widow, orphan and stranger), in Jeremiah's usage, it refers to God's strength in *not* acting in the world for the downtrodden (=the Israelites under siege). One could view this in a pious light, in which Jeremiah is in fact praising God for being strong, or in a more critical light, in which Jeremiah is frustrated with God's inaction.

In R. Pinhas's reading, Daniel restores the word *norah*, which Jeremiah refused to say because only the Temple is awesome (or: God in the Temple is awesome – see above, n. 92), and that Temple has been destroyed. However, Daniel refuses to say the word “*gibbor*,” adding a third interpretation to this adjective. If the Israelites are in chains, where is God's might? The constantly evolving understanding of the word *gibbor* is an apt microcosm of the experience of interpreting words of prayer. No interpretation is final, and the engaged worshiper (or prophet) brings his own experience in reading the ancient word.

The Men of the Great Assembly get the final say, restoring the full phrase, including “*gibbor*” and “*norah*.” What does *gibbor* mean in its restored version? It is more than just a repeat of what Moses stated in Deuteronomy. The word has gone through an interpretive journey, and the restored version of the phrase brings with it this journey. Thus when the worshiper recites the words in the *amidah*, it is not the idealized first encounter of Deut 10:17, but a more history-worn version that has experienced the destruction of the Temple, God's restraint, and the placing of Israel in chains. This is a weighty string of adjectives, that is not ignorant of God's true actions, or lack thereof, in the world.¹¹⁰

¹¹⁰ The version in the *Bavli* seems even starker than the one in the *Yerushalmi* (which clearly notes which adjectives each prophet said). In the *Bavli* version, it seems that the list is diminished more and more over time, with Jeremiah removing *norah* and Daniel removing *gibbor*, leaving only *gadol*. This of course

Bringing this back to the prayer context, the worshiper of the *amidah* either recites the words of Moses (Deut 10:17), or the restored words of the Men of the Great Assembly (Neh 9:32). Each has its own set of nuances (protecting the downtrodden vs. recognizing the world in which God doesn't act), but both of them move us out of the realm of a simplistic description of God, which was the objection of R Hanina in the first place. It is worth noting that in the treatment of this phrase in the rabbinic sources examined above, both possibilities of editing are tested: adding to the list of adjectives (*B Megillah* 25a) and reducing the list of adjectives (*Y Megillah* 74c = *B Yoma* 69b). In the end, the three adjectives remain, but with a multivocal understanding going far beyond the surface understanding of these descriptions.

Section III

God most high, creator of heaven and earth	אל עליון קונה שמים וארץ
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Talmudic-Era Sources

In order to properly investigate the Talmudic-era sources of the next phrase in the *amidah*, it is important to identify the most accurate wording of the phrase. The above line is not the common phrase in the *nusakh* of the *amidah* familiar to most contemporary worshipers, which is:

God most high, who performs acts of good lovingkindness, creator ¹¹¹ of everything, who remembers the lovingkindness of the patriarchs	אל עליון גומל חסדים טובים וקונה הכל וזוכר חסדי אבות
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ignores the actual quotes on which R. Pinhas is basing himself, but it is the literary effect of the presentation of the prophets' statements. My thanks to Dr. Devora Steinmetz for this insight.

¹¹¹ For the understanding of “*koneh*” as creator (as opposed to owner), see *Bereishit Rabbah* 43:19 (ed. Theodor-Albeck, p. 421) and the citations in Sarah Japhet, *Emunot Ve-De'ot Be-Sefer Divrei Ha-Yamim* (Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik, 1977), p. 53, n. 141.

However, the first phrase listed above is most likely the original phrase, and perhaps the one before the Talmudic-era worshiper, as will be discussed below.

In the Palestinian tradition of the liturgy, the phrase appears as above: *el elyon koneh shamayim va-aretz*, which is also a quote from Gen 14:19 and 14:22.¹¹² As Luger writes: “One of the cornerstones of liturgical research over the past 100 years is that the *nusakh* that includes the words *koneh shamayim va-aretz* is the classic Palestinian *nusakh*.”¹¹³ Naphtali Wieder, in a series of articles, claimed that in the early Babylonian *nusakh*, the phrase also appeared as above: *el elyon koneh shamayim va-aretz*.¹¹⁴ Thus in both Palestinian and Babylonian traditions, the original phrase was most likely a direct quote from the Torah.¹¹⁵

Over time, this phrase was altered. The ongoing process of alteration is evident from the variations to the line, demonstrated by a selection of versions in the chart below¹¹⁶:

¹¹² See generally on this phrase Norman Habel, “‘Yahweh, Maker of Heaven and Earth’: A Study in Tradition Criticism,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 91 (1972), pp. 321-337.

¹¹³ Luger, p. 45. This phrase appears in the descendants of the Babylonian tradition in two places: (1) before *Magen Avot* on Friday night (which is probably a direct borrowing from the Palestinian *amidah* formulation – see below, n. 158), and (2) at the end of the *Nishmat* prayer on Saturday morning.

¹¹⁴ Naphtali Wieder, *Hitgabshut*, vol. 1, pp. 65-100; 186-189; Idem, “*Le-Pitaron Setumah Ahat Be-Yerushalmi*,” *Tarbiz* 43 (1973), pp. 46-52, here p. 51, n. 23 (=Wieder, *Hitgabshut*, vol. 1, p. 285).

¹¹⁵ “There is no doubt that the expression “*koneh hakol*” is a substitute for the language of the verse: “*koneh shamayim va-aretz*,” and it is almost certain that the biblical language is original, in its natural place following “*el elyon*.” Ehrlich, *Tefilat Ha-Amidah*, p. 34. Cf. Sperber, *On Changes in Jewish Liturgy*, pp. 86-87.

¹¹⁶ Wieder makes a claim that whenever there are two core *nusha'ot* in competition, one will always find the combination of the two *nusha'ot* in some version, as demonstrated in this chart. Wieder, *Hitgabshut*, vol. 1, p. 70. See also Saul Lieberman, *Tosefta Kifshuta* vol. 8, p. 686. For an earlier comparison (with fewer Genizah manuscripts) see Marmorstein, “*Shibolim*,” p. 211.

117	זוכר חסדי אבות	גומל חסדים טובים וקונה הכל	אל עליון
		שמים וארץ ¹¹⁸	אל עליון
119	זכר חסדי אבות	גומל חסדים טובים	אל עליון
120	זוכר חסדי אבות	גומל חסדים טובים	אל עליון
121	זוכר חסדי אבות	גומל חסדים טובים	אל עליון
122	זוכר חסדי אבות	גומל חסדים טובים	אל עליון
123	זוכר חסדי אבות	גומל חסדים טובים (ו)קונה הכל	אל עליון
		שמים וארץ	אל עליון
		שמים וארץ	אל עליון
		קונה ברחמיו שמים וארץ ¹²⁵	אל עליון
		קונה ברחמיו שמים וארץ ¹²⁶	אל עליון
127	זוכר חסדי אבות	גומל חסדים טובים וקונה הכל	אל עליון מלך רם מושל על כל

In many of these examples, the unity between the biblical quote (*el elyon koneh shamayim va-aretz*) is preserved, as well as the literary unity between *gomel hasadim tovim* and *zokher hasdei avot* (united by *hesed* - lovingkindness). However, in the standard Babylonian *nusakh*, the phrases *gomel hasadim tovim* and *zokher hasdei avot* are interpolations inserted into the middle of the (original) biblical phrase of *el elyon koneh shamayim va-aretz*.¹²⁸ In addition, *koneh hakol* is a substitute for *koneh shamayim va-aretz*.¹²⁹ Wieder offers his own explanation of why such an interpolation may have

¹¹⁷ Standard Babylonian version. See Luger, p. 42; Ehrlich, *Tefilat Ha-Amidah*, p. 31.

¹¹⁸ Standard Palestinian version. See Luger, p. 42; Ehrlich, *Tefilat Ha-Amidah*, p. 31.

¹¹⁹ Manuscripts: Alliance Israelite Universelle IV 2a; Or. 1080, 13/63. See Wieder, *Hitgabshut*, vol.1, p. 67.

¹²⁰ Mss. T-S 10 H 1/4; 8 H 11/3; H 18/43; 6 H 2/1; Add. 3160/2; TS Arabic 8/10. See Wieder, *Hitgabshut*, vol. 1, p. 68-9.

¹²¹ Mss. AIU IV A 3; T-S NS 230/35. See Wieder, *Hitgabshut*, vol. 1, p. 70.

¹²² Ms. Or. 5557 Q. See Wieder, "Le-Pitaron," p. 51 = Wieder, *Hitgabshut*, vol. 1, p. 290.

¹²³ Mss. T-S 8 H/14; T-S 8 H 9/12. See Wieder, *Hitgabshut*, vol. 1, p. 70.

¹²⁴ Rambam *Hilkhot Tefilah* 9:10.

¹²⁵ Rambam in *Sefer Ha-Batim* and *Sefer Ha-Shulhan* – see ed. Frankel, p. 94. Wieder, *Hitgabshut*, vol. 1, p. 73. Cf. n. 136 below.

¹²⁶ *Siddur Rav Sa'adia Gaon*, p. 184. Wieder, *Hitgabshut*, vol. 1, p. 75.

¹²⁷ Edward N. Adler, "The Persian Jews: Their Books and Their Ritual," *JQR* (O.S.) 10/4 1898, pp. 584-625, here p. 606 = Tal, p. 12. Wieder, *Hitgabshut*, vol. 1, p. 75.

¹²⁸ This was already noticed by Liber (p. 337): "The first expression [*gomel hasadim tovim*] is interpolated in the middle of a biblical citation without any obvious reason."

¹²⁹ It should be noted that the rabbinic use of the word "*kol*" as a substitute for an original biblical phrase also occurs with the first blessing surrounding the *Shema* in the morning: *...oseh shalom uvoreh et hakol* which is a substitute for *uvoreh ra* (Isaiah 45:7). See *B Berakhot* 11b and the discussion on this selection in Moshe Benovitz, *Talmud Ha-Igud: Perek Rishon Mi-Masekhet Berakhot* (Jerusalem: *Ha-Igud Le-Parshanut Ha-Talmud*, 2006), p. 523 and Na'eh, "The Role of Biblical Verses in Prayer."

occurred.¹³⁰ But fundamentally, the original version seems to be the phrase we have listed above, which is a direct biblical quote.¹³¹ When seen in light of the fact that the previous two lines of the *amidah* also direct quotes from Torah, this strengthens the argument that the original phrase was *el elyon koneh shamayim va-aretz*.¹³²

While this phrase seems more original than the later interpolations, it is not clear how old the connection is between this phrase and the Talmudic-era *amidah* text.¹³³ The phrase as we are analyzing it does not even appear explicitly as part of the text for the *amidah* in Talmudic literature. (In fact, no explicit textual witnesses for parts of the *amidah* exist beyond the phrases analyzed above in Sections I and II, and the *hatimah*, discussed below in Section IV). A version of the phrase does appear in *Midrash Tehilim*, following a version of the story analyzed above:

R Hanina and R. Yohanan went to make [peace?] in those cities in the south. They	מדרש תהלים (בובר) מזמור יט
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¹³⁰ Wieder, *Hitgabshut*, vol. 1, pp. 76-80, claims that because a series of *midrashim* connected this verse with Abraham creating or inheriting heaven and earth, those who were afraid that Abraham would be deified made the edits to the *amidah*. Ehrlich notes this theory and says that although there is no textual support for it, there has been no better theory offered yet (Ehrlich, *Tefilat Ha-Amidah*, p. 35). Kister does not accept this theory (Kister, “*Kavim Le-Nusha’ot*,” p. 211, n. 32), preferring Abraham Geiger’s theory that simply sees the phrases as synonyms (see Abraham Geiger, *Ha-Mikra Ve-Targumav* (Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik, 1949), p. 50 and see also pp. 23-4). An interesting aspect of Wieder’s theory is that it assumes the people who pray the *amidah* would understand the *midrashic* meaning to a quoted biblical verse as part of the experience of prayer (here with negative consequences). This multi-text association (prayer text, biblical verse, and *midrashic* understanding) is what we are arguing is a robust way to interpret prayer. For other explanations, see Wieder, *Hitgabshut*, vol. 1, p. 76, n. 43.

¹³¹ Menahem Kister also states that it is “almost certain” that the original form of the line was *koneh shamayim va-aretz*. See Menahem Kister, “*Kavim Le-Nusha’ot*,” p. 211, n. 32.

¹³² For the theory that originally most blessings included chains of direct quotes from the Bible, see Ezra Fleischer, “*Kedushat Ha-Amidah*,” pp. 306-7 [= *ibid.*, *Tefilot Ha-Keva Be-Yisrael*, vol. 1, pp. 110-111], and above, p. 41, n. 7. See also Elizur, “*Sharsherot Ha-Pesukim*,” who claims that the original blessings of the *amidah* might have included longer lists of verses from the Bible. Cf. Ha-Cohen, p. 305, n. 87. If, as we note, the first blessing originally comprised of direct quotations from (partial) verses, this could strengthen her argument. See also Kister, p. 210-11, nn. 28 and 29 and Ruth Langer, “‘We Do Not Even Know What to Do!’: A Foray into the Early History of Tahanun,” p. 53. In contrast, Daniel Goldschmidt claims that verses were later additions to blessings. See Daniel Goldschmidt, *Mahzor Le-Yamim Nora’im*, vol. 1, pp. 20-21, n. 16.

¹³³ Kister (p. 211) theorizes that the phrase “*koneh ha-kol*” is hinted at in the *Constitutiones Apostolorum*, which would date it back to the 4th century, but it is not clear that this is indeed the case.

<p>entered one synagogue and saw a <i>hazzan</i> who approached¹³⁴ and said: The great, mighty, awesome, strong, brave and powerful God. They silenced him and said to him: You may not add to the form that the sages formed for blessings. What is the scriptural source? From Moses, who said: The great, mighty and awesome God (Deut 10:17). They added this to the form of Abraham our father – to: God most high, creator of heaven and earth (Gen 14:19, 22) - <i>Midrash Tehilim</i> 19:2, ed. Buber p. 82a</p>	<p>ר' חנינא ור' יונתן אזלין למיעבד באלין קרייתא דדרומה, עיילוה לחד בי כנישתא, חזאה ליהוא חזנא דקרב ואמר האל הגדול הגבור והנורא, האדיר והאמיץ והעוז, שתקן יתיה, ואמרו ליה אין לך להוסיף על מטבע שטבעו חכמים בברכות, מנין ממשה רבינו שאמר האל הגדול הגבור והנורא (דברים י ז), אוסיפו עליהן מטבעו של אברהם אבינו לאל עליון קונה שמים וארץ (בראשית יד ט).</p>
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Buber notes that this last section, quoting our phrase, does not appear in most manuscripts and in the parallel versions of this story in the Bavli and Yerushalmi (analyzed above). He therefore claims that this was a later addition,¹³⁵ and as such it would not meet our criteria of a phrase known to the Talmudic-era worshiper as part of the *amidah*.

Nevertheless, even without textual witnesses, it is likely that this phrase was part of the Talmudic-era *amidah*. Louis Ginzberg and Louis Finkelstein, and later Yehezkel Luger and Uri Ehrlich, claimed that the earliest versions of the *amidah* concluded with “*el elyon koneh shamayim va’aretz*” and moved immediately to the *hatimah*.¹³⁶ Although

¹³⁴ For the use of “*karev*” as a verb for prayer leaders, see *Bereishit Rabbah* 49 (ed. Theodor-Albeck, pp. 506-507).

¹³⁵ *Midrash Tehilim* 19:2, ed. Buber, p. 82a, n. 16.

¹³⁶ Ginzberg, *Perushim*, vol. 4, p. 177. Ginzberg first claims that the earliest strata of the *amidah* ended with *ve-hanorah*. But he then claims (p. 179) that the line “*el elyon koneh shamayim va’aretz*” was added in the Maccabean period, and ultimately includes this line in the earliest version of the *amidah*, with the remaining phrases as much later additions. He claims the additional phrases were added to strengthen the connection between the body of the blessing and the *hatimah*. See pp. 180-181, 183. See also Finkelstein, “The Development of the *Amidah*,” p. 143. See also Luger, p. 44, who seems to agree with Ginzberg and adds additional support from the *piyyutim* that all begin following the phrase “*el elyon...*” (On the phenomenon of *kerovot* that begin with the word *va-aretz* in the Sephardic tradition, see Davidson, *Otzar Ha-Shirah Ve-Ha-Piyyut*, vol. 2, pp. 175-177. In an Ashkenaz *mahzor* (JTSL MS 4466, p. 365a), the introduction to the *reshut* of the *amidah* read:

El elyon koneh berahamav shamayim va-aretz	אל עליון קונה ברחמיו שמים וארץ
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But the last four words were crossed out, and replaced with *gomel hasadim tovim* etc.... Compare pages 209a, 249a, and 301a. This seems to indicate a return to the older form of the line when introducing a *piyyut*. My thanks to Prof. Menahem Schmelzer for bringing these sources to my attention.) Ehrlich, while

it is not entirely clear that this phrase existed for the Talmudic-era worshiper, we will follow the prevailing scholarly consensus and consider it part of the core text of the *amidah* for our analysis.

Identification and Analysis of the Intertext(s)

The intertext at issue here appears in Genesis 14, as noted above. However, as in the case of the two phrases analyzed above, there is not only one intertext, but (in this case) two intertexts that follow each other in short order: Gen 14:19, 22 (much like the case of “*elohei Avraham, elohei Yitzhak ve-elohei Yaakov*” which is found in Ex 3:6, and Ex 3:15 (as well as in Ex 4:5) and “*ha-el ha-gadol ha-gibbor ve-ha-norah,*” which is found in Deut 10:17 and Neh 9:32 (as well as truncated forms in Jer 32:18 and Dan 9:4). Given its importance for understanding this phrase, as well as the *hatimah* (analyzed in Section IV), we will reproduce the biblical context below:

<p>1 Now, when King Amarphel of Shinar, King Arioch of Ellasar, King Chedorlaomer of Elam and King Tidal of Goi'im 2 made war on King Bera of Sodom, King Birsha of Gemorrah, King Shinab of Admah, King Shemeber of Zeboi'im, and the king of Bela, which is Zoar, 3 all the latter joined forces at the Valley of Siddim, now the Dead Sea. 4 Twelve years they served Chedorlaomer and in the thirteenth year they rebelled. 5 In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him came and defeated the Rephaim at Ashterot-karnaim, the Zuzim at Ham, the Emim at Shaveh-kiriathaim, 6 and the Horites in their hill country of Seir as far</p>	<p>בראשית פרק יד</p> <p>(א) וַיְהִי בַיָּמֵי אֲמֶרְפֶּל מֶלֶךְ שֹׁנַעַר אַרְיֹחַ מֶלֶךְ אֱלֶסָר כְּדֻרְלַעְמֹר מֶלֶךְ עֵילָם וְתִדְעַל מֶלֶךְ גֹּיִם:</p> <p>(ב) עָשׂוּ מִלְחָמָה אֶת בְּרַע מֶלֶךְ סֹדֶם וְאֶת בְּרִשָׁע מֶלֶךְ עֵמֶרָה שֹׁנָאֵב מֶלֶךְ אַדְמָה וְשִׁמְאֵבֶר מֶלֶךְ צַבִּיִּים צְבוּיִים וּמֶלֶךְ בְּלַע הָיָא צֵעֵר:</p> <p>(ג) כָּל אֵלֶּה תָּבְרוּ אֶל עִמְקֵי הַשְּׂדֵיִם הוּא יָם הַמֶּלַח:</p> <p>(ד) נְשִׁתִּים עֲשָׂרָה שָׁנָה עָבְדוּ אֶת כְּדֻרְלַעְמֹר וַיִּשְׁלַח עֲשָׂרָה שָׁנָה מִרְדּוֹ:</p>
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cautioning that it is impossible to know for sure, also seems to agree, bringing additional support from the connection between “*el elyon koneh shamayim va'aretz*” to the *hatimah* “*magen Avraham,*” which he connects to the next verse (Gen 14:20): “*U-varukh el elyon asher migen tzareha be-yadeha...*” (Ehrlich, *Tefilat Ha-Amidah*, p. 37). Interestingly, Ehrlich makes no connection between the *hatimah* and the verse in Gen 15:1: “*Al tirah Avram, Anokhi magen lakh.*” (see also Ehrlich, *Tefilat Ha-Amidah*, p. 33). We will analyze both intertexts below.

as El-paran, which is by the wilderness. 7 On their way back they came to Ein mishpat, which is Kadesh, and subdued all the territory of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites who dwelt in Hazazon-tamar. 8 Then the king of Sodom, the king of Gemorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, which is Zoar, went forth and engaged them in battle in the Valley of Siddim: 9 King Chedorlaomer of Elam, King Tidal of Goiim, King Amraphel of Shinar, and King Arioch of Ellasar – four kings against those five.

10 Now the Valley of Siddim was dotted with bitumen pits; and the kings of Sodom and Gemorrah, in their flight, threw themselves into them, while the rest escaped to the hill country. 11 [The invaders] seized all the wealth of Sodom and Gemorrah and all their provisions and went their way. 12 They also took Lot, the son of Avram's brother, and his possessions, and departed; for he had settled in Sodom.

13 A fugitive brought the news to Avram the Hebrew, who was dwelling at the terebinths of Mamre the Amorite, kinsman of Eshkol and Aner, these being Avram's allies. 14 When Avram heard that his kinsman had been taken captive, he mustered his retainers, born into his household, numbering 318, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. 15 At night, he and his servants deployed against them and defeated them; and he pursued them as far as Hobah, which is north of Damascus. 16 He brought back all the possessions; he also brought back his kinsman Lot and his possessions, and the women and the rest of the people.

17 When he returned from defeating Chedorlaomer and the kings with him, the king of Sodom came out to meet him in the Valley of Shaveh, which is the Valley of the King. 18 And Malki-Zedek, king of Shalem, brought out bread and wine; he was a priest of **God Most High (El Elyon)**.

19 He blessed him, saying:

(ה) וּבְאַרְבַּע עָשָׂרָה שָׁנָה בָּא כְּדָרְלַעְמֹר וְהַמְּלָכִים אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ וַיְכּוּ אֶת רִפְאִים בְּעֵשְׂתָרֶת קַרְנַיִם וְאֵת הַזּוּזִים בְּהֵם וְאֵת הָאִמֹרִים בְּשׁוּה קְרִיָּתִים:
 (ו) וְאֵת הַחֲרִי בְּהֶרְרָם שְׁעִיר עַד אֵיל פְּאָרָן אֲשֶׁר עַל הַמְּדָבָר:
 (ז) וַיָּשָׁבוּ וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל עֵין מִשְׁפָּט הוּא קְדֵשׁ וַיְכּוּ אֶת כָּל שָׂדֵה הָעֵמֶלְקִי וְגַם אֶת הָאֲמֹרִי הַיֹּשֵׁב בְּחֻצְצָן תְּמָר:
 (ח) וַיֵּצֵא מֶלֶךְ סֹדֶם וּמֶלֶךְ עֵמֶרָה וּמֶלֶךְ אֲדָמָה וּמֶלֶךְ צִבְיִים צְבֹוִים וּמֶלֶךְ בְּלַע הוּא צֶעֶר וַיַּעֲרְכוּ אִתָּם מִלְחָמָה בְּעֵמֶק הַשְּׂדִים:
 (ט) אֵת כְּדָרְלַעְמֹר מֶלֶךְ עֵילָם וְתַדְעֵל מֶלֶךְ גּוֹיִם וְאַמְרָפֶל מֶלֶךְ שִׁנְעָר וְאַרְיֹחַ מֶלֶךְ אֶלְסָר אַרְבַּעַה מְלָכִים אֵת הַחֲמֻשָּׁה:
 (י) וְעֵמֶק הַשְּׂדִים בְּאֶרֶת חָמָר וַיִּגְסוּ מֶלֶךְ סֹדֶם וְעֵמֶרָה וַיִּפְּלוּ שָׁמָּה וְהַנֹּשְׂאָרִים הָרָה בְּסוֹ:
 (יא) וַיִּקְחוּ אֶת כָּל רֶכֶשׁ סֹדֶם וְעֵמֶרָה וְאֵת כָּל אֲבָלָם וַיֵּלְכוּ:
 (יב) וַיִּקְחוּ אֶת לוֹט וְאֵת רֶכֶשׁוֹ בֶּן אֲחֵי אַבְרָם וַיֵּלְכוּ וְהוּא יָשָׁב בְּסֹדֶם:
 (יג) וַיָּבֹא הַפְּלִיט וַיִּגַּד לְאַבְרָם הָעֵבְרִי וְהוּא שָׁכֵן בְּאֵלְנֵי מְרָא הָאֲמֹרִי אֲחֵי אֲשָׁכַל וְאֲחֵי עֶנְרִ וְהֵם בְּעֵלֵי בְרִית אַבְרָם:
 (יד) וַיִּשְׁמַע אַבְרָם כִּי נִשְׁבָּה אֲחִיו וַיִּרַק אֵת חֲנִיכּוֹ יְלִידֵי בֵיתוֹ שְׂמֹנֶה עָשָׂר וּשְׁלֹשׁ מֵאוֹת וַיִּרְדֹּף עַד דָּן:
 (טו) וַיַּחֲלֵק עָלֵיהֶם לַיְלָה הוּא וְעַבְדָּיו וַיִּפְּסוּ וַיִּרְדְּפֵם עַד חֹבֶה אֲשֶׁר מִשְׁמָאל לְדַמְשֶׁק:
 (טז) וַיָּשָׁב אֵת כָּל הָרֶכֶשׁ וְגַם אֵת לוֹט אֲחִיו וַרְכֻשׁוֹ הַשֵּׁב וְגַם אֵת הַנְּשִׁים וְאֵת הָעַם:
 (יז) וַיֵּצֵא מֶלֶךְ סֹדֶם לִקְרֹאתוֹ אַחֲרָי שׁוּבוּ מֵהַפּוֹת אֵת כְּדָרְלַעְמֹר וְאֵת הַמְּלָכִים אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ אֶל עֵמֶק שָׁוָה הוּא עֵמֶק הַמְּלָךְ:
 (יח) וּמִלְכִי צֶדֶק מֶלֶךְ שָׁלֵם הוֹצִיא לָחֶם וַיָּבִין וְהוּא כֹהֵן לְאֵל עֵלְיוֹן:
 (יט) וַיְבָרְכֵהוּ וַיֹּאמֶר בְּרוּךְ אַבְרָם לְאֵל עֵלְיוֹן

<p>“Blessed be Avram to God Most High, creator of heaven and earth. 20 And blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your foes into your hand.” And he gave him a tenth of everything. 21 Then the king of Sodom said to Avram, “Give me the people, and take the possessions for yourself.” 22 But Avram said to the king of Sodom: “I raise my hand to YHVH, God Most High, creator of heaven and earth: 23 I will not take so much as a thread or a sandal strap of what is yours. You shall not say: “It is I who made Avram rich.” 24 For me, nothing but what my servants have used up; as for the share of the men who went with me - Aner, Eshkol and Mamre - let them take their share. - Gen 14: 1-24</p>	<p>קִנְיָה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ: (כ) וּבְרוּךְ אֱלֹהֵי עֲלִיּוֹן אֲשֶׁר מִגֵּן צָרֶיךָ בְּיָדֶךָ וַיִּתֵּן לּוֹ מֵעֵשֶׂר מְכֹל: (כא) וַיֹּאמֶר מֶלֶךְ סֹדֶם אֶל אַבְרָם תּוֹן לִי הַנֶּפֶשׁ וְהַרְכָּשׁ קַח לָךְ: (כב) וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָם אֶל מֶלֶךְ סֹדֶם הֲרַמְתִּי יָדִי אֶל יְקוּק אֵל עֲלִיּוֹן קִנְיָה שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ: (כג) אִם מַחֻוֹט וְעַד שְׂרוּף נֶעַל וְאִם אֶקַּח מִכֹּל אֲשֶׁר לָךְ וְלֹא תֹאמַר אֲנִי הִעֲשִׂיתִי אֶת אַבְרָם: (כד) בְּלַעֲדֵי רַק אֲשֶׁר אֶכְלוּ הַנְּעָרִים וְחִלְקֵי הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר הִלְכוּ אִתִּי עֲנֵר אֲשַׁכֵּל וּמִמָּרָא הֵם יִקְחוּ חֵלְקָם: ֵס</p>
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First, some of the noteworthy associations that emerge from the biblical context.

- 1) Perhaps most striking is that the phrase in question is said by Malki-Zedek, who, according to the contextual meaning of the verse, is a non-Israelite priest.¹³⁷

¹³⁷ The term “non-Israelite” might be better formulated as “outside the line of the forefathers,” following Klitsner, *Subversive Sequels*, p. 63, n. 1. Although not mentioned by Wieder as the motivation for the later interpolation, it is possible that later readers of the *amidah* were not comfortable with this line quoted directly from a non-Israelite priest, and therefore altered its form (this serves as an alternate theory to the one posed by Wieder, see above, n. 130). In addition, Malki-Zedek’s association in Christian tradition as a precursor to Jesus (See Hebrews 5:6-10; 6:20-7:17; Justin, Dialogue with Trypho 33; Tertullian, *Adversus Iudaeos* (“Against the Jews”) 2.3; 14; Aprhaat, Homily 11.4; Chrysostom, Hom. against Jews 7.4-5) may also have impacted this process (although one might expect this to take place in Palestine, not Babylonia, where the altered version in fact took root). For a parallel claim about Malki-Zedek’s absence in Jewish art, as well as a polemical understanding of the reinterpretation of who gives whom a tithe in Gen 14:20, see Elisheva Revel-Neher, “The Offerings of the King-Priest: Judeo-Christian Polemics and the Early Byzantine Iconography of Melchizedek,” in *Retzef U-Temurah: Yehudim Ve-Yahadut Be-Eretz Yisrael Ha-Bizantit-Notzrit*, ed. Lee Levine (Jerusalem: Yad Ben Zvi, 2004), pp. 270-299, esp. pp. 298-299. For more on the appearance of Malki-Zedek in Jewish and Christian sources, see Fred Horton, *The Melchizedek Tradition: A Critical Examination of the Sources to the Fifth Century AD and in the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), who does not believe that the treatment of Malki-Zedek in rabbinic sources represents an anti-Christian polemic (see p. 129). However, Louis Ginzberg does see the rabbinic texts that claim the priesthood was removed from Malki-Zedek as “very likely directed against the Christians who took Melchizedek to be a type of Jesus, the everlasting priest.” Louis Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1968 [repr.]), vol. 5, p. 226. See also Marcel Simon, “*Melchisedech dans La Polemique Entre Juifs et Chretiens et Dans la Legend*,” *Revue d’Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses* 17 (1937), pp. 58-93, who demonstrates how rabbinic commentators moved away from this figure after Christians took him up. See more recently: Martin McNamara, “Melchizedek: Gen

Malki-Zedek appears only one other time in the Bible (in a cryptic reference in Ps 110:4). He is clearly a positive figure in Genesis, as demonstrated by his name (king-justice) and the place over which he rules (*shalem* = wholeness/peace). Although some *midrashic* interpretations attribute negative aspects to his character (those that identify him with Shem note that the priesthood was removed because he blessed God after Avram),¹³⁸ the contextual biblical meaning seems completely positive.¹³⁹

- 2) It is also of note that Malki-Zedek is the third figure who is quoted, but not explicitly, in the series of phrases in this blessing of the *amidah* (phrase 1 = God to Moses, phrase 2 = Moses to Israelites, phrase 3 = Malki-Zedek to Avram/third parties?). While others have pointed to the biblical intertexts behind most of prayer, this is an unusual string of biblical quotes explicitly drawing upon scenes of *dialogue*, significant perhaps for a blessing that is the opening of a dialogue between the worshiper and God.¹⁴⁰

14,17-20 in the Targums, in Rabbinic and Early Christian Literature,” *Biblica* 81 (2000), pp. 1-31; Gard Granerod, *Abraham and Melchizedek: Scribal Activity of Second Temple Times in Genesis 14 and Psalm 110* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2010); and Ra’anan Boustan, *From Martyr to Mystic: Rabbinic Martyrology and the Making of Merkavah Mysticism* (Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 2005), pp. 136-138.

¹³⁸ *B Nedarim* 32b; *Vayikra Rabbah* 25:6 (ed. Margolioth, p. 580), and later parallels listed by Margolioth (analyzed further below). See also the evidence from the Targumim cited by Horton, p. 114, n. 1 and the discussion of the identification with Shem on p. 114f.

¹³⁹ Some identify Malki-Zedek’s positive portrayal as a foil to the King of Sodom in this chapter, named “*be-ra*” = in evil (Gen 14:2). See Chayyim ibn Attar, *Or Ha-Hayyim* (ed. A. Bloom, Jerusalem, 1994), p. 64, s.v. “*u-malki-zedek*,” and Klitsner, p. 68, n. 12.

¹⁴⁰ For the view that the *amidah* is a dialogue with God, see Uri Ehrlich, “‘In the Last Benedictions He Resembles a Servant Who has Received a Largess from His Master and Takes His Leave’ (*B. Ber.* 34A),” in Blank, *The Experience of Jewish Liturgy*, pp. 41-61, esp. p. 60. See also Moshe Hallamish, *Hikrei Kabbalah U-Tefilah* (Be’er Sheva: Ben Gurion University Press, 2012), p. 11. See further, Conclusion section of this chapter.

- 3) In a blessing known for its connection to lineage and explicit mention of the patriarchs, it is significant to see the quote of a non-Israelite priest. Given all the possible phrases of praise that could have been chosen, why choose one that originated so clearly from a character outside the Israelite/Jewish genealogy?¹⁴¹ Although not explicit, this does provide some counterbalance to the lineage focus in the typical understanding of this prayer.¹⁴²
- 4) Malki-Zedek serves as a moral support for Avram, who is in the middle of his negotiation with the King of Sodom. The purpose of Malki-Zedek's appearance, in one sense, is to fortify Avram's commitment to righteousness and justice, in contrast to the alliance with the King of Sodom, who stands for evil and self-centeredness (the King of Sodom opens his dialogue with Avram by stating (Gen 14:21): "Give me...")¹⁴³ This phrase, coming after the associations with fairness and ethics from Deut 10:17, adds to the ethical strand in the flow of the lines of the *amidah*.

¹⁴¹ While Avram repeats the formula in v. 22, he adds YHVH to the beginning, which is *not* the portion quoted in the *amidah* blessing. Kimelman also points to this oddity: "It is also peculiar because it introduces an appellation of God coined by Melchizedek (Gen 14:19) and the motif of creation, neither of which fits the blessing." See Kimelman, "Blessing Formulae and Divine Sovereignty in Rabbinic Liturgy," p. 38, n. 167. This is only "peculiar" if the theme of the *amidah* is entirely focused on redemption, which Kimelman argues forcefully. Kimelman also sees this as evidence that this line was a later addition, and also that the wording was later changed to "*koneh shamayim va-aretz*" from "*koneh ha-kol*" in order "to biblicalize it." We have argued the opposite (see above).

¹⁴² For the emphasis on lineage as a critical component of this blessing, see *M Bikkurim* 1:4 (analyzed above in Section I).

¹⁴³ See Klitsner, pp. 68-71. The role of moral guide shifts from the non-Israelite priest – Malki-Zedek and also Yitro – to the Israelites themselves, who are called a kingdom of priests (the only other entity besides Malki-Zedek who share both the appellation king and priest). "Depending on the situation, Jew and Gentile may trade positions; each will need the other in moments of historic or personal crisis in order to maintain moral and pragmatic clarity....Only those who prove capable of providing moral and pragmatic guidance – whether Israelite or non-Israelite – will rise to the position of priesthood." Klitsner, pp. 92-93.

5) This phrase, although first said by Malki-Zedek, is repeated word for word three verses later by Avram, whose only variation is the addition of YHVH before the phrase. The moral guidance offered by Malki-Zedek is reaffirmed by Avram in his quoting of the (new) name of God offered by the former. In his objection to the negotiation with the King of Sodom, Avram quotes Malki-Zedek as a way of invoking the concept of *zedek* (=righteousness) more generally.¹⁴⁴ Here we have an excellent example of the ambiguity of the quotations of this entire section. In the *amidah*, are we quoting Malki-Zedek or are we quoting Avram (reformulating Malki-Zedek)? It seems that we are quoting Malki-Zedek (and indeed the context of a blessing, which is how Malki-Zedek uses the phrase, is more fitting in a prayer than the context of an oath, which is how Avram uses the words). Nevertheless, the phrase could also be modifying YHVH at the beginning of the blessing (Blessed are You, YHVH...God most High, creator of heaven and earth), thus quoting Avram. This inherent ambiguity allows the worshiper to connect to Malki-Zedek or Avram, depending on the interpretation of the moment.

Rabbinic Understanding of Biblical Intertext

With these comments from the contextual biblical verses, we turn now to the rabbinic understanding of this selection for further interpretative meaning. Interestingly, the traditions surrounding Malki-Zedek himself are divergent in the rabbinic interpretations of the verses.¹⁴⁵ We will examine two opposing takes on Malki-Zedek to add to our understanding of its function in the prayer.

¹⁴⁴ See Klitsner, p. 72 for other linguistic similarities between Malki-Zedek's blessing and Avram's rejection of the King of Sodom's offer.

¹⁴⁵ See Boustán, *From Martyr to Mystic*, pp. 136-138.

First, a positive take on Malki-Zedek:

<p>“[And Malki-Zedek, king of Shalem] brought out bread and wine (Gen 14:18)” R. Shmuel bar Nahman said: He transmitted to him the laws of the priesthood. Bread – this is the showbread. Wine – this is the libations. The rabbis said: He revealed Torah to him [as it says]: “Come, eat my bread and drink the wine I have mixed.” (Prov 9:5).¹⁴⁶ - <i>Bereishit Rabbah</i> 43:14 (ed. Theodor-Albeck, pp. 420-1)</p>	<p>בראשית רבה (תיאודור-אלבק) פרשת לך לך פרשה מג</p> <p>הוציא לחם ויין ר' שמואל בר נחמן הלכות כהונה מסר לו, לחם זה לחם הפנים ויין אילו הנסכים, רבנין אמ' תורה גילה לו לכו לחמו בלחמי ושתו ביין מסכתי (משלי ט ה).</p>
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According to this *midrash*, the blessing, which is quoted in our *amidah*, comes in a context of teaching. Malki-Zedek teaches Avram the core lessons of the priesthood, or, according to the majority opinion, the lessons of Torah. Malki-Zedek’s blessing is, in this understanding, a follow-up to the lesson. This opens up a different interpretive angle that extends beyond the simple biblical meaning. For instance: if Malki-Zedek has become the teacher figure for Avram, the prayer now adds the layer of relationship between teacher and student (much like the *midrash* in Section I highlighted the relationship of father and son).¹⁴⁷ Both this *midrash* and the context of Moses at the burning bush (analyzed above in Section I) represent a moment of revelation (the scene with Moses itself a precursor to the revelation of Torah at Sinai¹⁴⁸). The rabbinic understanding of this verse adds a revelatory element that fits well with the initial blessing in the *amidah*, turning it more explicitly into a revelatory moment between the worshiper and God.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ Here the speaker is wisdom (=Torah in rabbinic interpretation), as is made clear from Prov 9:1. See Horton, p. 121, n. 2.

¹⁴⁷ Note also the parallel between Moses and his teacher/father-in-law Yitro. The parallels here are noted by Klitsner, pp. 63-94.

¹⁴⁸ See above, n. 48.

¹⁴⁹ Prayer as a revelatory activity has long been associated with the mystical approach to prayer. “Prayer is understood, in all religions, as a ritual in which a person meets God with a closeness that for most is not found in other rituals.” Joseph Dan, *Al Ha-Kedushah* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1997), p. 358 and n. 17.

Malki-Zedek is also viewed critically in some rabbinic sources:

<p>R. Zecharia said in the name of R. Yishmael: The Holy Blessed One wanted to remove the priesthood from Shem,¹⁵⁰ as it says: “He was a priest to <i>El Elyon</i>” (Gen 14:18). Because he advanced the blessing of Abraham before the blessing of the Omnipresent, he removed it from (Abraham?), as it says: “And he blessed him and said: Blessed is Avram to <i>El Elyon</i>, creator of heaven and earth. And blessed is <i>El Elyon</i>...” (Gen 14:19-20). Abraham said to him (Malki-Zedek): Does one advance the blessing of a slave to the blessing of his master/owner? Immediately it was given to Abraham, as it says: “YHVH said to my lord: Sit at My right hand while I make your enemies your footstool. (Ps 110:1) and afterward it is written: “YHVH has sworn and will not relent, ‘You are a priest forever,’ by my word – Malki-Zedek.” (Ps 110:4). Read it as: “Because of the word of Malki-Zedek.” That is why it is written: “He is a priest to <i>El Elyon</i>” (Gen 14:18) – He is a priest, but his children are not priests. - <i>B Nedarim</i> 32b</p>	<p>תלמוד בבלי מסכת נדרים דף לב עמוד ב אמר רבי זכריה משום רבי ישמעאל: ביקש הקדוש ברוך הוא להוציא כהונה משם, שנאמר: +בראשית יד+ והוא כהן לאל עליון, כיון שהקדים ברכת אברהם לברכת המקום הוציאה מאברהם, שנאמר: +בראשית יד+ ויברכהו ויאמר ברוך אברם לאל עליון קונה שמים וארץ, וברוך אל עליון, אמר לו אברהם: וכי מקדימין ברכת עבד לברכת קוננו? מיד נתנה לאברהם, שנאמר: +תהלים קי+ נאם ה' לאדני שב לימיני עד אשית אויביך הדום לרגליך, ובתריה כתיב: נשבע ה' ולא ינחם אתה כהן לעולם על דברתי מלכי צדק - על דיבורו של מלכי צדק; והיינו דכתיב: והוא כהן לאל עליון, הוא כהן - ואין זרעו כהן.</p>
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This *midrash* views Malki-Zedek critically because of his mis-ordering of the objects of his blessing: he should have advanced the blessing of the divine, and only afterward followed with the blessing of Avram.¹⁵¹ In this context, the non-Jewish source of the blessing is only a temporary source; the real source of the blessing language is Abraham, in whose hands the blessing prowess of Malki-Zedek shifts. That is, while the

¹⁵⁰ The association between Shem and Malki-Zedek appears also in *Tanhuma Lekh Lekha* 19 (ed. Buber, p. 38b); *Tanhuma Lekh Lekha* 15; *Pirke De-Rabbi Eliezer* 7 and 27; *Targum Yerushalmi* Gen 14:18; *Zohar Hadash Noah* 34b; *Midrash Aggadah* (ed. Buber), p. 23 (reading כהן for בהו, which Buber says is unintelligible, following Ginzberg’s suggestion, in following citation). See *Vayikra Rabbah*, ed. Margolioth, p. 580, n.to line 4 and Ginzberg, *Legends*, vol. 5, pp. 225-226.

¹⁵¹ For a discussion of whether this and other similar sources indicates an anti-Christian polemic, see Boustan, *From Martyr to Mystic*, pp. 136-138. For a parallel case of advancing a human (Moses) before God in a legal formula, see *M Yadayim* 4:8.

midrash claims that the priesthood moves from Malki-Zedek (a descendent of Shem) to Abraham, the biblical context itself shifts the blessing of “*el elyon*” from Malki-Zedek (v. 19) to Abraham (v. 22). Extending this to the blessing in the *amidah*, one is made acutely aware of the hierarchy between God and the patriarchs; even though the blessing is called “*avot*,”¹⁵² the focus of the blessing is God, not Abraham.

Read with the rabbinic understanding of the biblical intertext, the shift from v. 19 to v. 22 becomes less of a choice of intertexts to associate with and more of a progression: either a teacher passing down a blessing to a student (in the first set of rabbinic sources) or a privileged religious position being shifted from a non-Israelite priest to Abraham. Either way, the multiple texts quoted in Genesis 14 add a sense of shifting context to the quote that ends up in the *amidah*: this is not simply a quotation of Malki-Zedek (or Avram), but a phrase that is significant specifically for its shifted author: from Malki-Zedek *to* Avram.

Section IV

We now move to the final phrase of this blessing for analysis: the *hatimah* (the seal of the blessing, alternatively known as the ‘eulogy’ or ‘peroration,’ which contain the words that follow the formula: “Blessed are You, YHVH”).¹⁵³ We will not analyze the phrases extending between “*el elyon*...” and the *hatimah* because they have no Talmudic-era textual witness. It is also at this point in the *amidah* blessing that the texts in the Genizah manuscripts begin to diverge, showing a clear distinction between so-

¹⁵² See above, n. 14.

¹⁵³ For more on this term see *M Berakhot* 9:5; *B Berakhot* 12b; *Y Berakhot* 1:8; 3d. See also Ruth Langer, *To Worship God Properly*, p. 26.

called Babylonian and Palestinian *nusakh*.¹⁵⁴ Thus it is entirely unclear if these intermediate phrases, either in Babylonian or Palestinian *nusakh*, were before the Talmudic-era worshiper.¹⁵⁵ However, the *hatimah* clearly dates to the Talmudic era, and we will analyze it below.¹⁵⁶

Blessed are You, YHVH Shield of Abraham.	פְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ מִגֵּן אַבְרָהָם
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Talmudic-Era Sources

In all forms of the *amidah*, the *hatimah* is in the form of the phrase: *barukh atta Adonai magen Avraham*.¹⁵⁷ While some scholars have suggested that there was an

¹⁵⁴ Although Ehrlich, *Tefilat Ha-Amidah*, pp. 38-42, divides the variations into multiple sub-branches, the basic distinction is as follows:

Babylonian: אל עליון, גומל חסדים טובים, וקונה הכל, וזוכר חסדי אבות, ומביא גואל לבני בנייהם למען שמו באהבה: מלך עוזר ומושיע ומגן:	Palestinian: אל עליון קנה שמים וארץ מגנינו מגן אבותינו מבטחנו בכל דור ודור
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For details on the divergence between the two traditions, see Luger, pp. 40-52. Heinemann (*Prayer in the Talmud*, p. 90, n. 20) notes one important difference: The Palestinian version does not move into third person at all.

¹⁵⁵ See Ginzberg’s opinion, above n. 136, that the original blessing moved from “*el elyon koneh shamayim va’aretz*” immediately to the *hatimah*. *Gomel hasadim tovim*, which does not appear in the Palestinian formulations of the blessing, does have its own context in a different prayer, as noted in *B Berakhot* 54b and 60b. See Goldin, “*Shuv Al ‘Gomel Hasadim Tovim*.”

¹⁵⁶ Finkelstein (“Development of the Amidah,” p. 28) claimed that, originally, there was no *hatimah* to the blessing at all: “[T]here can be no doubt that originally Abot, being merely an opening prayer, had no Hatima at all; the present concluding formula, with its warlike echo, ‘the Shield of Abraham,’ dates from the time of the insertion of Geburot, which, as we have seen, also dates from a war period.” Joseph Heinemann represents most modern scholarship in rejecting this notion. See Heinemann, “*Berakhah Ahat Me-Ein Sheva*,” p. 41, n. 25.

¹⁵⁷ Our analysis will focus on the specific ending of the blessing formula: *magen Avraham*. However, it should be noted that the phrase “*barukh atta adonai*,” while not particular to the *amidah*, is also of biblical origin. The two intertexts for this phrase are Ps 119:12:

Blessed are You, YHVH; train me in Your laws. and I Chronicles 29:10:	תהלים פרק קיט (יב) פְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ קַנְחֵם לְמִדְנֵי חֻקֶיךָ:
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David blessed YHVH in front of all the community; David said: ‘Blessed are You, YHVH, God of Israel our father, from eternity to eternity.’	דברי הימים א פרק כט (י) וַיְבָרַךְ דָּוִד אֶת יְהוָה לְעֵינֵי כָל הַקָּהָל וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֵעוֹלָם וְעַד עוֹלָם
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alternate ending of *magen avot*, there is no textual evidence to support this theory.¹⁵⁸ The earliest known appearance of the phrase *magen Avraham* outside the Torah is Ben Sira 51:30.¹⁵⁹ However, it is not clear that this text was part of the original Ben Sira composition, since it is missing from the Greek and Syriac versions.¹⁶⁰ Even if this was

The biblical intertext from Psalms was used as a blessing formula in its own right in some versions of the Talmudic discussion of R. Yohanan's prayer before study. See Rashi (s.v. "*Barukh atta*") and Tosafot (s.v. "*hakhi garsinan*") to Berakhot 12a; Heinemann, *Prayer in the Talmud*, p. 168, n. 14; Benovitz, pp. 541-543; and Zvi Groner, *Berakhot She-Nishtak'u* (Jerusalem: Mossad Ha-Rav Kook, 2003), pp. 168-170. Benovitz (p. 543) points out correctly that this verse is in the context of a request, which makes it less likely as a model for our blessing formula, which is in the category of praise.

The biblical context of the second intertext, from I Chronicles, is particularly interesting for its connections to the *amidah* context specifically: First, it comes in the context of praise, which fits the role of the blessing formula. It follows an explicit mention of joy at having donated much worldly possessions to the construction of the Temple (the *midrash* in *Pesikta deRav Kahana* 28 (ed. Mandelbaum, p. 422) makes this clear, saying that David's blessing was in response to God's giving him the experience of "*shalva*" – peace). Second, it echoes the call of Moses in Ex 3 of "*mi anokhi*" (analyzed above) with the phrase from David: "*mi ani*" = who am I? (v. 14). It also calls God the owner of everything ("*lekha ha-kol*," v. 16), echoing "*koneh hakol*," analyzed above. Finally, it calls God the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel (v. 18), echoing the beginning of the *amidah* blessing. For the use of this biblical selection itself in the liturgy, see Moshe Hallamish, "*Va-Yevarekh David' – 'Berakhah' Ve-Gilguleha*," in Reiner, *Ta Shma*, vol. 1, pp. 425-441. For more on the development of the "*barukh atta Adonai*" formula, including its unique place as a summary formula for a blessing, see Heinemann, *Prayer in the Talmud*, pp. 77-103. See also Kimelman, "Blessing Formulae and Divine Sovereignty in Rabbinic Liturgy."

¹⁵⁸ For this theory, see Heinemann, "*Berakhah Ahat Me-Ein Sheva*," pp. 40-41. Heinemann notes that Haim Brody originally made this suggestion in 1910 based on the appearance of the phrase "*magen avot*" in the *berakhah ahat me-ein sheva* (see n. 21). Heinemann theorizes that there were three stages of development to the *hatimah*: (1) a blessing for each of the *avot*, as preserved in Ben Sira 51:30-32, (2) a blessing that summarized those three blessings, using the language *magen avot*, and (3) a return to only using *magen Avraham* for the *hatimah*. (Other supporters of this theory include: Rave, "*Shomea Tefilah*," p. 40, n. 25; Luger, p. 52; Bar-Ilan, p. 128; Kimelman, "The Literary Structure," p. 201, n. 135; and Kimelman, *The Amidah*, p. 47-8, who writes: "[T]he original 'shield of the fathers' was biblicalized into the 'shield of Abraham.'" See also Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy*, p. 396, n. 8 and the discussion by David Golinkin, *Perek Yom Tov Shel Rosh Hashannah*, Ph.D. diss. (Jewish Theological Seminary, 1988), p. 61-62. My thanks to Prof. Golinkin for sending me a copy of this work. Ehrlich rejects this proposal (*Tefilat Ha-Amidah*, p. 33-34, n. 16), and theorizes instead that the opening of the one blessing comprising seven was actually referring to the Palestinian phrase in the *amidah*: *magineinu magen avoteinu*. Although he doesn't cite him, Ehrlich seems to be building on a similar suggestion made by Gedalyahu Alon, "*Me'on Ha-Berakhot*," *Tarbiz* 14 (1943), 70-74, here p. 71, n. 9. Natan Fried suggests that the phrase *magineinu magen avoteinu* was originally the opening to an ancient piyyut which is no longer preserved. See Natan Fried, "*Minhagim 'Lo Yeduim' Ba-Tefilah*," *Tagim* 2 (1971), pp. 109-123, here p. 121.

¹⁵⁹

Give thanks to the Shield of Abraham - Ben Sira 51:30	הודו למגן אברהם
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See Segal, *Sefer Ben Sira Ha-Shalem*, pp. 355-357. Ehrlich calls the phrase "very ancient" based on this association. See *Tefilat Ha-Amidah*, p. 33, n. 15. See also Lieberman, *Tosefta Kifshuta*, vol. 4, p. 803.

¹⁶⁰ See Kimelman, "The Literary Structure," p. 194, n. 96; Idem, *The Amidah*, p. 29, n. 138.

part of the original composition, as others have claimed more recently,¹⁶¹ it is still not clear that the *amidah* drew the phrase from here, as Kimelman notes.¹⁶²

Regardless of whether the *amidah* text drew from Ben Sira directly, the *hatimah* with the formulation *magen Avraham* was most likely known to the Talmudic-era worshiper. It appears in the following Talmudic-era text in the name of R. Zeira:

<p>Rabbi Yitzhak said: I will establish through you a blessing in the 18 (=amidah), but you don't know if mine comes first or yours comes first. R Aha said in the name of R. Zeira¹⁶³: Yours will come before mine. They say: "Shield of Abraham," and afterward they say: "Who gives life to the dead." - Genesis Rabbah 39:2 (ed. Theodor-Albeck, p. 375)¹⁶⁴</p>	<p>בראשית רבה (תיאודור-אלבק) פרשת לך לך פרשה לט</p> <p>אמר ר' יצחק קובעך אני ברכה בשמונה עשרה אבל אין את יודע אם שלי קודמת אם שלך קודמת, אמר ר' אחא בשם ר' זעירא שלך קודמת לשלי מי שהן אומרים מגן אברהם ואחר כך אומרים מחיה המתים.</p>
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¹⁶¹ Segal (p. 356) argues that this section is in fact original to Ben Sira, and was erased from the Greek and Syriac translations because of the content of 51:29, praising the sons of Zadok. Indeed, recent scholarship seems to have coalesced around the conclusion that this chapter is original: "[W]ith the support of the by now almost unanimous scholarly consensus, we hold Chapter 51 to be an integral part of the book..." Silvana Manfredi, "The True Sage or the Servant of the Lord (Sir 51:13-30 Gr)," in *The Wisdom of Ben Sira: Studies on Tradition, Redaction and Theology*, eds. Angelo Passaro and Giuseppe Bellia (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), pp. 173-194, here p. 173. Cf. Joseph Tabory, "The Precursors of the 'Amidah,'" in *Identität durch Gebet*, eds. Albert Gerhards et al. (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 2003), pp. 113-125, here p. 123, n. 18.

¹⁶² Kimelman, "The Literary Structure," p. 194, n. 96; Idem, *The Amidah*, p. 29, n. 138, although see *Ibid.*, p. 47, where he entertains the notion that "the epithet derives from *Ben Sira* 51:12." (Some of the verse numbering for this line is inconsistent because in the Hebrew text it is a subset of v. 12, sometimes labeled with its own verses (e.g. v. 30)). See also Heinemann, *Prayer in the Talmud*, p. 219.

¹⁶³ In *Bamidbar Rabbah* 11:2 this statement is attributed to R. Hiyya bar Zeira.

¹⁶⁴ See Ehrlich, *Tefilat Ha-Amidah*, p. 33. This *midrash* also appears in *Tanhuma Lekh Lekha* 5 (ed. Buber p. 31b); *Tanhuma Lekh Lekha* 4, and *Bamidbar Rabbah* 11:2. Abraham is mentioned as the subject of the *hatimah* in *B Pesahim* 117b, analyzed above, although the particular phrasing of the *hatimah* is not given there (this is true in all the extant manuscripts – see Appendix A), and therefore we cannot use that source to claim the existence of *magen Avraham* as the *hatimah*.

The *hatimah* also appears in the following later *midrashim*:

1) *Midrash Tehilim*:

At least in the time and circle of R. Zeira, this *hatimah* was already in use to complete the first blessing of the *amidah*.

Identification and Analysis of the Intertext(s)

The root “*m-g-n*” only appears three times in all of Torah, twice relating to Abraham (when he was still called Avram.) The first time appears in Gen 14:20, when

<p>The way of God is perfect, the word of YHVH is pure; He is a shield to all who seek refuge in Him. (Ps. 18:31) Another explanation: “The way of God is perfect” The verse is speaking of Abraham our father; For the Holy One saw that he was dwelling after Him, and chose him, and said: I am <i>El Shaddai</i>, walk before me and be perfect (Gen 17:1). “The word of YHVH is pure” – He was cleansed through 10 trials... And what is his reward? “He is a shield to all who seek refuge to Him” as it says: “I am a shield for you” (Gen 15:1)...and in the future his sons will bless him in prayer (=amidah): Blessed are You, YHVH, Shield of Abraham - <i>Midrash Tehilim</i> 18:25, ed. Buber, p. 77b</p>	<p>תהלים פרק יח (לא) האל תמים דרכו אמת ונקק צרופה מגן הוא לכל החסידים בו: מדרש תהלים (בובר) מזמור יח ד"א האל תמים דרכו. באברהם אבינו הכתוב מדבר, שראה הקדוש ברוך הוא שמתגורר אחריו, ובהר בו, ואמר לו אני אל שדי התהלך לפני והיה תמים (בראשית יז א). אמרת ה' צרופה. שצרפו בעשר נסיונות.... ומה שכרו, מגן הוא לכל החוסים בו, שנאמר אנכי מגן לך (שם /בראשית/ טו א), ואומות העולם אומרים למה הקדוש ברוך הוא מחבב את אברהם והצילו מכבשן האש, ומן תשועת המלכים, ומן האוכלוסין, ומכל הצרות שעברו עליו, אמר להן הקדוש ברוך הוא הריני מקריב ומראה לכם אפילו אומר לו שיקח ויקריב את בנו לשמי, הוא שומע לי, לכך אני מגינך, מגן הוא לכל החוסים בו, ולמחר בניו מברכין בתפלה ברוך אתה ה' מגן אברהם.</p>
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2) Pirkei De-Rabbi Eliezer

<p>And it says (Gen 14:20): “Blessed is God Most High who has delivered his foes into his hands.” Abraham stood and prayed before the Holy One: Master of the Universe, not by the might of my hand, and not by the might of my right (hand) did I do all this. Rather it was through the might of Your right (hand), for you shield me in this world and the world to come...and the upper ones answered: Shield of Abraham. - <i>Pirkei De-Rabbi Eliezer</i> 27</p>	<p>פרקי דרבי אליעזר (היגר) - "חורב" פרק כז ואומר ברוך אל עליון אשר מגן צריך, עמד אברהם והיה מתפלל לפני ה' ואמ' רבון כל העלמים לא בכח ידי ולא בכח ימיני עשיתי את כל אלה אלא בכח ימינך שאתה מגן לי בעולם הזה ובעולם הבא, שנ' ואתה ה' מגן בעדי בעולם הזה, כבודי ומרים ראשי לעולם הבא, וענו העליונים ואמרו "מגן אברהם"</p>
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For general issues in dating and text, see Eliezer Treitl, *Pirkei De-Rabbi Eliezer: Nusakh, Arikhah Ve-Dugmat Synopsis shel Kitvei Ha-Yad* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben Zvi and Hebrew University, 2013). For additional examples of the *hatimah* in later *midrashim*, see above, n. 29, as well as *Lekah Tov* 12:2 (ed. Buber, p. 29a); *Yalkut Shim'oni Bereishit* #64 and #68 (ed. Hyman (Jerusalem: Mossad Ha-Rav Kook, 1973), pp. 248; 259); *Mishnat R. Eliezer* 12 (ed. Enelow, p. 229).

The *hatimah* also appears in the final line of *Constitutiones Apostolorum* 7:33: “Propugnator generis Abraham, benedictus es in saecula” (Note: Greek is at <http://archive.org/stream/didascaliaetcons00funk#page/426/mode/1up>, line 9)

<p>Defender of the offspring of Abraham, blessed are you forever! Trans. van der Horst and Newman, p. 36; cf. Fiensy, p. 59</p>	<p>מגן עם אברהם, ברוך אתה לעולם Trans. Menahem Kister, “Kavim Le-Nusha’ot,” p. 209</p>
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See further, van der Horst and Newman, p. 47. This text, dating from the 4th century (see above, n. 32), is another clear witness to the Talmudic era nature of the *hatimah*.

Malki-Zedek blesses *El Elyon* for delivering (*migen*) Avram's foes into his hands,¹⁶⁵

analyzed in detail above. God is called the shield (*magen*) of Avram in only one place:

Gen 15:1. This is clearly the intertext for this line of the *amidah*.¹⁶⁶ Below we bring the

biblical context, which immediately follows the biblical context of Gen 14, analyzed

above.

<p>After those things, the word of YHVH came to Avram in a vision, saying: “Don’t fear, Avram, I am a shield for you. Your reward will be very great.”</p> <p>But Avram said: “Lord, YHVH, what can you give me, seeing that I shall die childless and the one in charge of my household is Damesek Eliezer!” Avram said: “Since You have granted me no offspring, my steward will be my heir.”</p> <p>The word of YHVH came to him saying: “That one shall not be your heir; none but your very own issue shall be your heir.” He took him outside and said: “Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them.” And He added: “So shall your offspring be.” And because he put his trust in YHVH, He reckoned it to his merit.</p> <p>Then He said to him: “I am YHVH who brought you out from Ur Casdim to assign this land to you as a possession.” And he said: “Lord YHVH, how shall I know that I am to possess it?”</p>	<p>בראשית פרק טו (א) אחר הדברים האלה היה דבר יקוק אל אברם במחזה לאמר אל תירא אברם אנכי מגן לך שכרך הרבה מאד : (ב) ויאמר אברם אדני יקוק מה תתן לי ואנכי הולך עירי ובו משק ביתי הוא דמשק אליעזר : (ג) ויאמר אברם הן לי לא נתתה זרע והנה בן ביתי יורש אתי : (ד) והנה דבר יקוק אליו לאמר לא יירשך זה כי אם אשר יצא ממעיך הוא יירשך : (ה) ויוצא אתו החוצה ויאמר הבט נא השמימה וספר הכוכבים אם תוכל לספר אתם ויאמר לו כה יהיה זרעך : (ו) והאמן ביקוק ויחשבה לו צדקה : (ז) ויאמר אליו אני יקוק אשר הוצאתיך מאור כשדים לתת לך את הארץ הזאת לרשתה : (ח) ויאמר אדני יקוק במה אדע כי</p>
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¹⁶⁵ The use of *m-g-n* in the *piel* form is extremely rare, occurring only two other places in the Bible: Hos 11:8 and Prov 4:9. In both of those places, the parallel word associated is *natan*, to give or deliver. See Rashi on Gen 14:20. See also Klitsner, p. 74, n. 21. Given the connection to the word “give,” it is of significance that Avram’s dialogue with God is about “giving” – *mah titein li* – what can you give me, immediately following God’s pledge of being a “*magen*,” shield – but perhaps better understood as: giver. For other meanings of *migen* and *magen* in rabbinic literature, connecting to the words “break” and “melody,” see *Eikhah Rabbah* 1, ed. Buber, p. 29b and parallels.

¹⁶⁶ Medieval sources identified this as the intertext: See *Seder Rav Sa’adia Gaon*, p. 6; *Mishnat R. Eliezer* 12 (ed. Enelow, p. 229); Wertheimer, *Batei Midrashot*, vol. 2, p. 78; Yitzhak Aboab, *Menorat Ha-Maor*, p. 239; R. Yehuda b Yakar, *Perush Ha-Tefilot Ve-Ha-Berakhot*, p. 35; Abudraham, ed. Brown, p. 216. Modern scholars also connected this verse with the *hatimah*. See, for instance, Langer, “Biblical Texts in Jewish Prayers,” p. 83; Golinkin, “Adding the *Imahot*,” p. 131; Kimelman, *The Amidah*, p. 43, n. 205; Lieber, *Yannai on Genesis*, p. 121. Kimelman (“Literary Structure,” p. 201; Idem, *The Amidah*, p. 47), following Abudraham and R”I bar Yakar, attempts to link it as well to Deut 33:29. For the use of *Avraham* and not *Avram* in the *hatimah*, see *B Berakhot* 13a and *T Berakhot* 1:12, discussed in Benovitz, pp. 626-633.

<p>He answered: Bring Me a 3-year old heifer, a 3-year old she-goat, a 3-year old ram, a turtledove, and a young bird. He brought Him all these and cut them into two, placing each half opposite the other; but he did not cut up the bird. Birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, and Avram drove them away. As the sun was about to set, a deep sleep fell upon Avram, and a great dark dread descended upon him. And [God] said to Avram: ‘Know well that your seed shall be strangers in a land not theirs and they shall be enslaved and afflicted for 400 years. But upon the nation for whom they slave I will bring judgment, and afterward they shall come forth with great substance. As for you, You shall go to your fathers in peace; You shall be buried at a ripe old age. And they shall return here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not complete...’ - Genesis 15:1-16</p>	<p>אִרְשָׁנָה : (ט) וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו קַח־לִי עֵגְלָה מִשְׁלֵשֶׁת וְעֵז מִשְׁלֵשֶׁת וְאֵיל מִשְׁלֵשׁ וְתֹר וְגֹזָל : (י) וַיִּקַּח לוֹ אֶת כָּל אֵלֶּה וַיְבַתֵּר אֹתָם בְּתוֹךְ וַיִּתֵּן אִישׁ בְּתֵרוֹ לְקִרְאֵת רֵעֵהוּ וְאֶת הַצֶּפֶר לֹא בָתֵּר : (יא) וַיֵּרֶד הָעֵיט עַל הַפְּגָרִים וַיֵּשֶׁב אֹתָם אַבְרָם : (יב) וַיְהִי הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ לְבוֹא וְתִרְדָּמָה נָפְלָה עַל אַבְרָם וְהָנָה אִימָה חֲשֵׁכָה גְדֹלָה נִפְלֶת עָלָיו : (יג) וַיֹּאמֶר לְאַבְרָם יָדַע תֵּדַע כִּי גֵר יִהְיֶה זְרַעְךָ בְּאֶרֶץ לֹא לָהֶם וְעַבְדוּם וְעֵנוּ אֹתָם אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת שָׁנָה : (יד) וְגַם אֶת הַגּוֹי אֲשֶׁר יַעֲבֹדוּ דָן אֲנֹכִי וְאַחֲרָי כֹּן יֵצְאוּ בְּרַכְשׁ גְּדוֹל : (טו) וְאֶתָּה תָּבוֹא אֶל אֲבֹתֶיךָ בְּשָׁלוֹם תִּקָּבֵר בְּשֵׂיבָה טוֹבָה : (טז) וְדוֹר רְבִיעִי יָשׁוּבוּ הֵנָּה כִּי לֹא שָׁלֵם עוֹן הָאָמְרִי עַד הֵנָּה :</p>
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- 1) First it is worth noting that this section begins with Avram’s state of mind: fear (=yirah).¹⁶⁷ God responds to this state of mind with an offer of protection: *magen*.
The question is: what is Avram afraid of?¹⁶⁸ Some, following the rabbinic tradition of understanding of this verse, connect it to the war that immediately precedes this section, in Gen 14.¹⁶⁹ However, it seems that the fear expressed by Avram is not only connected directly to the war, but also to the lack of children, as he notes immediately following God’s words of comfort: “Lord, YHVH, what

¹⁶⁷ As *Bereishit Rabbah* 76 (ed. Theodor-Albeck, p. 897) states (regarding God’s similar statement to Moses: *al tirah*): One only says “don’t fear” to someone who is afraid. See Albeck’s note on p. 896 for parallel *midrashim* that make this claim even stronger.

¹⁶⁸ “God’s words address Abraham’s fear, yet no fear has been expressed.” Klitsner, p. 74.

¹⁶⁹ See *Bereishit Rabbah* 44:5 (ed. Theodor-Albeck, p. 428) and parallels. Rashi and Rashbam, ad loc., follow this interpretation. According to this interpretation, Avram is afraid that the kings will take revenge following the battle or that his capacity for reward has been diminished because he has, in effect, used up his credit. See further Klitsner, p. 74. We will return to these interpretations below.

can you give me, seeing that I shall die childless.”¹⁷⁰ It seems, in fact, that Avram is expressing a concern out of doubt and questioning, despite the earlier promise (Gen 12:2 and 13:16) that he will be the father of many children.¹⁷¹ The contextual meaning of the phrase “*al tirah*” – don’t fear – seems to imply the promise of children and its lack of fulfillment.¹⁷²

- 2) This is also the first time Avram speaks to God at all, and it is out of a sense of frustration of unfulfilled promises. As Nahum Sarna writes:

For the first time Abram speaks to God. In unquestioning obedience to the divine command, he had broken his ties with his family and become a wanderer in a strange land. His life had been repeatedly in danger. The years had rolled by and the promises of progeny had not materialized. Through it all Abram maintained his silence. Now the measure of recurring disappointment and prolonged frustration has reached its limit. The bonds of restraint are broken, and the patriarch bares the bitterness of his soul in a brief, poignant outburst bordering on utter despair.¹⁷³

¹⁷⁰ Indeed, in *Bereishit Rabbah* 44:5 (ed. Theodor-Albeck, p. 428), R. Yudan’s opinion is that the word *ahar* indicates a division to distinguish from the section that precedes (as opposed to R. Huna, who says *ahar* connects it to the section that precedes, while *aharei* distinguishes.) Rashi follows R. Huna. But Shada”l takes a different approach. He first states that there is no difference between *ahar* and *aharei*, and therefore rejects both R. Yudan and R. Huna. Then, Shada”l says explicitly, after quoting the two opinions expressed in *Bereishit Rabbah* 44:5, that “it seems to me that there is no connection between this section and the previous story.” (*Perush Shada”l*, ed. Pinhas Schlesinger (Jerusalem: Horev, 1993 [repr.]), p. 68). Ramban ad loc. also notes that Avram may be fearful of not having any children, although he connects it to the fear of the revenge from the kings (that they will kill him before he has any children).

¹⁷¹ *Or Ha-Hayyim* on Gen 15:2 points to Avram’s state of mind by questioning the apparent simple reading of the verse. He writes:

<p>How could Avram have said “you have not given me.” For hadn’t God already promised him (Gen 13:16): I will make your children like the dust of the earth. And how could he, God forbid, be skeptical about the word of God?</p>	<p>אור החיים בראשית פרק טו קשה א' איך יוכל לומר לא נתת וגו' והלא כבר הבטיחו ואמר לו (לעיל יג טז) ושמתני זרעך כעפר הארץ ומה לו לפקפק ה"ו בדברי ה'.</p>
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The *payytan* Yannai gives voice to Avram’s fears and doubts in his *qedushta* for *Lekh Lekha*. See Laura Lieber, *Yannai on Genesis*, p. 429; Rabinowitz, *Mahzor Piyutei Rabbi Yannai*, vol.1, pp. 135-136; T. Carmi, *The Penguin Book of Hebrew Verse* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1981), p. 218.

¹⁷² It is true the phrase *al tirah* comes in advance of battles (such as Num 21:34 and Josh 8:1). However, with the patriarchs themselves it seems to be in direct reference to the promise of children. Compare concerning Isaac (Gen 26:24) and Jacob (Gen 46:3). The fear of dying in battle may be related to the fear of not having descendants to carry on one’s name (see Ramban’s opinion, above n. 170).

¹⁷³ Sarna, *The JPS Torah Commentary: Genesis*, pp. 112-113. While Sarna’s characterization makes many assumptions about Avram’s state of mind, it is certainly consistent with the context of this dialogue.

As Avram's first speech to God, this "outburst" sets well the stage for Avram's more famous dialogue with God about justice, in Gen 18. The only intermediate dialogue between this scene and the attempt to save Sodom is Avram's plea for the validation of his child Ishmael (Gen 17:18). For Avram, the issue of children is the issue that causes him to speak.¹⁷⁴

- 3) The choice of words in Avram's first dialogue with God is particularly harsh. Avram says: "What can you *give* me?" (Gen 15:2) This echoes the dialogue between Avram and the King of Sodom, who says to Avram: "*Give* me the people" (Gen 14:21). It seems that although Avram stood up to the King of Sodom and did not cut a deal of dividing the spoils (perhaps through the inspirational intervention of Malki-Zedek),¹⁷⁵ in this scene, Avram is as direct and demanding as the King of Sodom.¹⁷⁶
- 4) In the dialogue around having children, God responds by renewing the promise, as God had previously done (without prompting) in Gen 13:16. God takes Avram outside to count the stars, and promises that his offspring will outpace them in number. The scene ends with Avram's faith renewed. But while Sarna claims that

¹⁷⁴ It is worth noting that Moses also speaks to God for the first time in the intertext for the second line of the *amidah*, analyzed above. Indeed, Moses's first speech is also a question, and one of self-doubt: "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring out the children of Israel from Egypt?" (Ex 3:11). (This assumes that when Moses answers "*hineni*" in v. 4, he did not yet know his interlocutor was God).

¹⁷⁵ See Klitsner, pp. 68-73.

¹⁷⁶ Klitsner, *Ibid.*, attempts to demonstrate how the reformulation of many words in Gen 15 from Gen 14 indicates the impact of Malki-Zedek on Avram. But this is one example of Avram's "inspiration" from the king of Sodom.

Avram is “steadfast” in his faith,¹⁷⁷ the biblical narrative immediately moves to the next crisis in Avram’s trust: the issue of land. It is here that Avram continues to have questions about God’s faithfulness to the promises from earlier chapters.¹⁷⁸

Ultimately, the biblical intertext cited here is one in which Avram’s faith is certainly not perfect. However, the prayer text emphasizes God’s response to that fear or, perhaps, lack of faith. God says: I will protect you. In the transposition to the worshiper, it is this protection that also is emphasized. Far from being a perfect faithful worshiper, the person who says the *amidah* can take heart that the God referenced in the *hatimah* is the God who protects those with questions of faith.¹⁷⁹ In addition, the part quoted by the prayer is the catalyst for the dialogue. God tells Avram not to fear, and that God will be a shield, and this allows Avram to open up with the doubts and skepticism he is feeling. God as shield is open to hearing doubts, and the worshiper might bring those claims against God, modeled on Avram, to the continuation of the prayer.

Analyzing the intertext yields a very different set of meanings that emerge from this blessing than those articulated previously. For instance, Maurice Liber claims:

¹⁷⁷ “The scene that opens with fear and depression closes with a firm statement that Abram remains steadfast in his faith in God.” Sarna, *Genesis*, p. 113.

¹⁷⁸ See *B Nedarim* 32a. For similar criticism of Avram’s dialogue here as a lack of faith, see *Vayikra Rabbah* 11:5 (ed. Margolioth, p. 224-5); *Tanhuma Kedoshim* 13, (ed. Buber, p. 40a); *Pesikta Rabbati* 47 (ed. Friedmann, p. 190a) and parallels cited by Ginzberg, below. Ginzberg delineates the two positions about “whether or not lack of trust in God is implied in Abraham’s words: ‘Whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?’ ... The view prevalent among the Rabbis is that Abraham is greatly to be blamed for his lack of trust in God.” Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, vol. 5, p. 227-228. Contrast Philo’s statement: “The words, ‘What wilt Thou give me?’ are the cry not so much of uncertainty as of thankfulness for the multitude and greatness of the blessings which one has enjoyed.” Philo, *Quis Rerum Divinarum Heres* eds. F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker (Cambridge: Harvard University Press: Loeb Classical Library Edition, 1958), p. 299.

¹⁷⁹ While it is true that Shmuel’s position articulates a clear consequence – (slavery in Egypt) – for lack of faith, by quoting Gen 15:1, the prayer emphasizes the response to the fear that precedes the further lack of faith articulated in Gen 15:2.

The circle is completed: the final eulogy ties up with the initial one; both the former and the latter evoke the biblical text in which God appears to Moses as well as to Abraham, in the role of the Redeemer of Israel. The first of the three initial benedictions is thus entirely a call for the coming of the Messiah, guaranteed by the merit of the patriarchs.¹⁸⁰

But in our understanding, based on the intertext itself, the commonality between Moses and Abraham is not limited to “the coming of the Messiah” or even the “merit of the patriarchs.” Rather, what emerges is a common thread of two prophets struggling with faith and confidence. This is not to exclude another reading of redemption, suggested by Liber, and later by Kimelman. But the multiple possibilities of interpretation encoded in this blessing, through the intertexts, certainly give pause to the claim that redemption *must* be the one and only theme to the blessing.

Rabbinic Understanding of Biblical Intertext

We have already considered some of the rabbinic understandings of the biblical intertext in trying to understand what the force of Avram’s questions are (*bamah eidah* and *mah titein li*). However, we want to add one additional dimension that emerges from the rabbinic understanding of the biblical intertext. This *midrash* is cited by Kimelman as connected to our text, but he is mainly concerned with its connection to the redemption-focused text in Ps. 18:3. However, there seems more to this rabbinic text than simply a link to another biblical text (although that is clearly here as well):

<p>[“...and the pillar of cloud shifted from in front of them and took up place behind them.] And it came between the camp of Egypt and the camp of Israel; and there was the cloud and the darkness. The cloud upon Israel and the darkness upon the</p>	<p>מכילתא דרבי ישמעאל בשלח - מסכתא דויהי פרשה ד ויבא בין מחנה מצרים ובין מחנה ישראל ויהי הענן והחשך, הענן אל ישראל והחשך אל</p>
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¹⁸⁰ Liber, pp. 337-338.

<p>Egyptians...And what is more, since those placed in the dark can see those placed in the light, the Egyptians being placed in the dark could see the Israelites, who were in the light, eating and drinking and rejoicing. And they would shoot at them arrows and stones from their catapults, which the angel and the cloud intercepted, just as it is said: “Fear not Abram, I am thy Shield” (Gen 15:1); And it also says: “My shield and my horn of salvation” (Ps. 18:3). And it also says: “He is a shield unto all them that take refuge in Him.” (Ps. 18:31). <i>Mekhilta De-Rabbi Yishmael Beshallah 4</i> (trans. Lauterbach, pp. 226-7).¹⁸¹</p>	<p>מצרים מגיד הכתוב שהיו ישראל נתונים באורה ומצרים באפלה... ולא עוד אלא כל מי שהוא נתון באפלה רואה כל מי שהוא נתון באורה שהיו מצרים שרוים באפלה רואים את ישראל שהיו נתונים באורה אוכלים ושותים ושמחים והיו מזרקים בהם בחצים ובאבני בליסטרא והיה המלאך והענן מקבלן שנ' אל תירא אברם אנכי מגן לך שכרך הרבה מאד (בראשית טו א) ואומר מגיני וקרן ישעי משגבי ומנוסי מושיעי מחמס תושיעני (ש"ב =שמואל ב' = כב ג) ואומר מגן הוא לכל החוסים בו (שם /שמואל ב' כב / לא):</p>
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With this intertext, the understanding of “I am a shield for you” becomes even more complex. If the biblical context analyzed above demonstrated how this was a reference to Avram’s emotion of fear, this association connects it to the very tangible threat of war: arrows and stones are flying, but God serves as a protection. This also removes the image of protection from the personal to the national, with Abraham here understood as a stand-in for all of Israel. Finally, the image of security that is called upon here is one in which the Israelites are not only protected from outside harm, but are actively eating, drinking and rejoicing. The emotional valence of this connotation is one of confidence and celebration, as opposed to struggle with issues of faith.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have demonstrated that a literary-intertext approach to reading the first blessing of the *amidah* yields numerous interpretations and associations not

¹⁸¹ See ed. Horowitz-Rabin, p. 101-102; ed. Friedmann, p. 30b; and see Kahane, *Kitei*, p. 50. In the parallel in *Shemot Rabbah* 14:3, the reference to Gen 15:1 is missing.

initially apparent. Unlike Kimelman, we will not attempt to unify these disparate images into a singular focused theme that lies behind this blessing. It is clear that prayer read in an intertextual fashion defies one interpretation. However, we will attempt to tease out some common themes from the various lines we have analyzed, and thereby draw a more complete whole to the understanding of the prayer text.

First, the characters in the prayer extend beyond the three patriarchs. They include, most prominently, Moses and Malki-Zedek (although one could also make the case for Daniel, Jeremiah and Nehemiah). Significantly, the Moses and Abraham highlighted through the intertexts are not the classic images of these giant forefathers we commonly conjure. This is not the Abraham who almost sacrifices his son on the altar, nor is it the Moses who stands in the breach protecting Israel from destruction following sin.¹⁸² Instead, it is the Moses who, in the language of *Shemot Rabbah* 3:1 (ed. Shinan, pp. 119-20), is the “tyro in prophecy,” unsure of himself and unwilling to accept God’s mission. It is the Abraham who is, according to the mainstream rabbinic interpretation, racked with doubt concerning God’s promises. They are two prophets in vulnerable moments, and God serves to support and buttress them through their hesitations.¹⁸³

Both Abraham and Moses are also speaking to God for the first time in these selections. This connection to speech, and to first-time speech more specifically, is significant in a prayer that is opening a speech dialogue with God. The speech itself, as noted above, is not praise or request, but rather a question. In Abraham’s language, it is “what” (“By what shall I know that I will inherit the land?”) and in Moses’s language it is

¹⁸² See Muffs, *Love and Joy*, chapter 1.

¹⁸³ Although God gets angry at both Abraham (implicitly with the condemnation of his descendants into slavery in Egypt) and with Moses (explicitly after his fourth refusal – see Ex 4:14), the God quoted in the prayer is the one who is supportive, before being pushed to anger.

“who” (“Who am I to accept this mission?”). But this helps us understand the function of prayer as well: to ask questions – of God and of ourselves.

Although the larger context for the intertext includes the first speeches of Moses and Abraham to God, the actual quotes themselves include words from God to Moses and Abraham. God is the one who identifies Himself through the connection to the patriarchs, and God is the one who pledges to be a shield to Abraham. This adds another layer of complexity to the concept of prayer. The language we use is not even a human model, but a divine model. We quote God’s words back to God when mouthing this prayer.

The descriptions that are of human origin (lines 2 and 3) describe God in multiple ways. The seemingly arbitrary list of adjectives from Deut 10:17 actually signal a God who is ethical and fair, one that is meant to be imitated and emulated. And the God who is “most high” is one who delivers – gives over – foes, foreshadowing the final phrase of the prayer (itself a quote that reformulates the word *migen* into *magen*).¹⁸⁴

Finally, Abraham and Moses are connected through the non-Israelite priest (Malki-Zedek and Yitro) from whom they learn.¹⁸⁵ Malki-Zedek is quoted explicitly in the *amidah*, and Yitro is the main figure in Moses’s life when he encounters the burning bush, in Exodus 3. Thus in the heart of the “particularistic” or “national” blessing of ancestry, we meet these two influential non-blood relatives.

When seen with the intertexts – and their rabbinic interpretations – the first blessing of the *amidah* is a near-dizzying set of associations touching on themes ranging from doubt (of God and self), ethics, gratitude, and outside influence. Perhaps there is

¹⁸⁴ Both Avram (Gen 14:22) and God (Gen 15:1) reformulate Malki-Zedek’s description of God. See Beni Gesundheit, *Otzar Hatefilot: Iyunei Tefilah Le-Parashat Ha-Shavua* (Alon Shevut: Mercaz Halakhah Ve-Hora’ah, 2013), p. 18; and Silber and Furst, *A Passover Haggadah*, p. 21.

¹⁸⁵ See Klitsner, p. 92 and n. 42.

nothing so appropriate for a prayer that is itself a paradox: a (thrice daily!) mandated human speech to God. This act goes far beyond a singular dimension of praise¹⁸⁶ or redemption. At its heart, it offers us biblical characters at moments of initiation with whom – perhaps – we can identify. Only through the careful examination of the prayer texts in light of their biblical intertexts (and the rabbinic understandings of them) do these additional dimensions come to light.

¹⁸⁶ While various *amoraim* attempted to identify praise as the theme of the first and last blessings (see *Y Berakhot* 2:4; 4d and *B Berakhot* 34a), Kimelman rightly objects: “The validity of a division based on the distinction between praise/thanksgiving and petition, however, is questionable.” Kimelman, *The Amidah*, p. 5. Cf. *Seder Rav Sa’adiah Gaon*, (eds. Davidson, et al.), p. 3*.

Appendix A

Ny Columbia X893 T 14a אמר ריש לקיש זה שאומרין אלהי אברהם ואברכה זה שאומ' אלהי יצחק ואגדלה שמך זה שאומ' אלהי יעקב יכול יהו חותמין בכולן ת"ל לומ' והיה ברכה בך חותמין	JTS Rab 1623/2 אמ' ריש לקיש זה שאומרין אלהי אברהם ואברכך זה שאומ' אלהי יצחק ואגדלה שמך זה אלהי יעקב יכול יהא חותמין בכולן ת"ל והיה ברכה בך חותמין	JTS Rab 1608 אמ' רב ריש לקיש מאי דכת' ואעשך לגוי גדול זה שאומ' אלהי אברהם ואברכה זה שאומ' אלהי יצחק ואגדלה שמך זה שאומ' אלהי יעקב יכול יהו חותמין בכולן ת"ל והיה ברכה בך חותמין ואין חותמין בכולן	Munich 95 אמ' ריש לקיש ואעשך לגוי גדול זה שאו' אלהי אברהם ואברכך זה אלהי יצחק ואגדלה שמך זה שאו' אלהי יעקב יכול יהו חותמין הכולן ת"ל והיה ברכה בך חותמין ואין חותמין בכולן	Munich 6 ואמ' ריש ' לקיש ואעשך לגוי גדול זה שאומרין אלהי אברהם ואברכך זה שאומרין אלהי יצחק ואגדלה שמך זה שאומרין אלהי יעקב והיה ברכה בך חותמין ואין חותמין בכולן
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Vatican 134 וא' ריש לקי' מאי דכת' ואעשך לגוי גדול זה שאומרין אלקי יצח' אברהם ואברכך זה שאומרין אלקי יצחק ואגדלה שמך זה שאומרין אלקי' יעק' יכול יהו חותמין	Venice Print 1520? אמר רבי שמעון בן לקיש ואעשך לגוי גדול זהו שאומר' אלקי אברהם ואברכך זהו שאמר' אלקי יצחק ואגדלה שמך זהו שאומ' אלקי יעקב יכול יהו חותמין בכולן	Vilna אמר רבי שמעון בן לקיש } בראשית יב { ואעשך לגוי גדול זהו שאומרים אלהי אברהם ואברכך זהו שאומרים אלהי יצחק ואגדלה שמך זהו שאומרים אלהי יעקב יכול יהו חותמין	Vatican 109 אמ' ריש מאי דכת' ואעשך לגוי גדול שיהו אומ' אלהי אברהם ואברכך שיהו אומ' אלהי יצחק ואגדלה שמך שיהו אומ' ואלהי יעקב	Oxford Opp. Ad. Fol 23 אמ' ריש לקיש מאי דכת' ואעשך לגוי גדול זה שאומרים אלהי אברהם ואברכך זה שאומרים אלהי יצחק ואגדלה שמך זה שאומרים אלהי יעקב יכול יהו חותמין בכולם
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<p>בכולם ת"ל והיה ברכה בך חותמי' ואין חותמין בכולם</p>	<p>תלמוד לומר והיה ברכה בך חותמין ואין חותמין בכולן</p>	<p>בכולן תלמוד לומר והיה ברכה בך חותמין ואין חותמין בכולן</p>	<p>והיה ברכה בך חותמין ואין חותמין בכולן</p>	<p>ת"ל והיה ברכה בך חותמין ולא בכ[ו]לם</p>
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Appendix B

תלמוד בבלי מסכת מגילה דף כה עמוד א	תלמוד בבלי מסכת ברכות דף לג עמוד ב	תלמוד ירושלמי מסכת ברכות פרק ט דף יב טור ד	מדרש תהלים (בובר) מזמור יט ד"ה [ב] [השמים מספרים	אוצר המדרשים (אייזנשטיין) היכלות עמוד 120 אדון הגדול הגבור והנורא	ילקוט שמעוני תורה פרשת עקב רמז תתנו	ספר הלכות גדולות סימן עה - הלכות סופרים עמוד תרפא הגדול הגבור והנורא האדיר האביר החזק והאמיץ חנוך ורחום ארך אפים ורב חסד	רי"ף מסכת ברכות דף כג עמוד ב האל הגדול הגבור והנורא החזק העוז והאמיץ היראוי
תלמוד בבלי מסכת מגילה דף כה עמוד א	תלמוד בבלי מסכת ברכות דף לג עמוד ב	תלמוד ירושלמי מסכת ברכות פרק ט דף יב טור ד	מדרש תהלים (בובר) מזמור יט ד"ה [ב] [השמים מספרים	אוצר המדרשים (אייזנשטיין) היכלות עמוד 120 אדון הגדול הגבור והנורא	ילקוט שמעוני תורה פרשת עקב רמז תתנו	ספר הלכות גדולות סימן עה - הלכות סופרים עמוד תרפא הגדול הגבור והנורא האדיר האביר החזק והאמיץ חנוך ורחום ארך אפים ורב חסד	רי"ף מסכת ברכות דף כג עמוד ב האל הגדול הגבור והנורא החזק העוז והאמיץ היראוי

רי"ף מסכת שבועות דף טז עמוד א	בית הבחירה למאירי מסכת מגילה דף כה עמוד ב	ספר מורה הנבוכים חלק ראשון פרק נט	ספר סודי רזיי חלק א אות א' משם אלעזר ד"ה כפרסת רגלי	תלמוד בבלי מסכת שבועות דף לה עמוד א
הגדול הגבור והנורא האדיר החזק האמיץ חנוך ורחום ארך אפים ורב חסד הרי אלו נמחקין	האל הגדול הגבור והנורא העוז והאדיר היראוי והאמיץ	האל הגדול הגבור והנורא האדיר החזק והאמיץ	הגדול והנורא והחזק והאמיץ האדיר והאביר	הגדול, הגבור, הנורא, האדיר, והחזק, והאמיץ, העוז, חנוך ורחום, ארך אפים, ורב חסד – הרי אלו נמחקין!

Chapter 3: The Blessings of *Havdalah*

Introduction

We now turn to our next case study for the literary-intertext method: *havdalah*.¹

Havdalah is a series of liturgical “separations,” beginning and ending with a blessing formula, recited at the end of Shabbat.² While the ritual today has expanded to include an introductory set of verses,³ we will focus on the core blessing of *havdalah* itself. To that

¹ For general literature on *havdalah*, see: Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy*, pp. 101-103; Idem, “Eingang und Ausgang des Sabbats nach talmudischen Quellen,” in *Festschrift zu Israel Lewy’s siebzigstem Geburtstag*, eds. Marcus Brann and Ismar Elbogen (Breslau: M. & H. Marcus, 1911), pp. 173-187, esp. pp. 185f.; Daniel Goldschmidt, “Kiddush Ve-Havdalah,” *Mahanayim* 85-86 (1964), pp. 48-53; Ezra Zion Melamed, *Pirkei Minhag Va-Halakhah*, (Jerusalem, Kiryat Sefer, 1956), pp. 78-82; Naphtali Wieder, “The Old Palestinian Ritual – New Sources,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 4 (1953), pp. 30-37 (=Idem, *Hitgabshut*, vol. 1, pp. 108-125); Hoffman, *Beyond the Text*, pp. 20-45; Avi Greanvald, *Havdalah al Ha-Kos* M.A. Thesis (Bar-Ilan University, 1997); Groner, *Berakhot She-Nishtak’u*, pp. 193-212; Tabory, “The Early History of the Liturgy of Yom Kippur,” pp. 306-308; and Shmuel Safrai and Ze’ev Safrai, *Mishnat Eretz Yisrael: Moed*, (Jerusalem: Micheleit Lifshitz, 2008), vol. 1, pp. 53-59.

Havdalah has appeared in numerous prayerbooks discovered in the Genizah. See: Mann, “Genizah Fragments of the Palestinian Order of Service,” p. 318 and pp. 323-324; Menahem Zulay, “Le-Heker Ha-Siddur Ve-Ha-Minhagim,” in *Sefer Assaf*, eds. Moshe David Cassutto, et al. (Jerusalem: Mossad Ha-Rav Kook, 1953), pp. 302-315, here pp. 303-306; Ezra Fleischer, *Tefilah U-Minhagei Tefilah*, pp. 79-83; Mordechai Margoloth, *Hilkhot Eretz-Yisrael Min Ha-Genizah* (Jerusalem: Mossad Ha-Rav Kook, 1973), p. 147; Wieder, “The Old Palestinian Ritual – New Sources,” p. 36 (= *Hitgabshut*, vol. 1, p. 121); Ezra Fleischer, *Tefilot Ha-Keva Be-Yisrael Be-Hithavutan U-Ve-Hitgabshutan*, eds. Shulamit Elizur and Tova Beeri (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2012), vol. 1, pp. 816-817; vol. 2, pp. 955-8.

² The exact number of “separations” varies, as will be shown in our discussion of the sources below. For the alternative translation of “distinction,” and its significance, see Henri Bacry, “La havdalah,” *Pardes* 22 (1996), pp. 192-206, here p. 197. Zvi Yehuda translates the word: “division, differentiation, distinction...discrimination, partition and delineation.” See Zvi Yehuda, “The Ritual and the Concept of *Havdalah*,” *Judaism* 43/1 (1994), pp. 78-86, here p. 78. Lauterbach attempts to make a meaningful division between the description of “distinction” vs. the act of “separation.” See Jacob Lauterbach, “The Origin and Development of Two Sabbath Ceremonies,” *HUCA* 15 (1940), pp. 367-424, here p. 378, n. 21. For consistency, we will translate the term as “separations.”

³ This tradition is first mentioned in *Mahzor Vitry* ed. Shimon Horowitz (Nuremberg, 1923), p. 116. But see the variety of traditions in the manuscripts of this work, detailed in *Mahzor Vitry*, ed. Aryeh Goldschmidt (Jerusalem: Makhon Otzar Ha-Poskim, 2004), vol. 1, p. 226. Moses Isserles notes the custom of reciting verses before the blessing in *Darkei Moshe* to *Tur* OH 296:1, saying it is not obligatory. He later repeated the custom in *Shulhan Arukh* OH 296:1, but says nothing about the obligatory nature of the verses. For further on the variety of verses said before the blessings, see *Sefer Seder Kiddush ve-Havdalah*, ed. Shmuel Stern (Bnai Brak: Pardes, 1992), p. 70; Seligmann Baer, *Seder Avodat Yisrael* (Rodelheim, 1868), p. 311; Issachar Jacobson, *Netiv Binah* (Tel Aviv: Sinai, 1987), vol. 2, pp. 388-389; Daniel Goldschmidt, *Mehkarei Tefilah U-Fiyut*, p. 137 (=Mahzor Romania); *Sefer Maharil: Minhagim*, ed. Shlomo Spitzer (Jerusalem: Makhon Yerushalayim, 1989), p. 224; Natan Fried, “Minhagim ‘Lo Yedu’im’ Ba-Tefilah: Havdalah,” *Shnaton Mo’etzet Rabbanei Yisrael Ha-Tza’ir Be-Yisrael* 2 (1988), pp. 144-158, esp. pp. 149-150; Idem, “Minhagim ‘Lo Yedu’im’ Ba-Tefilah,” *Or Yisrael* 13 (1999), pp. 109-117, esp. p. 117; Avigdor Berger, “Seder U-Minhagei Ha-Havdalah,” in *Zekhor Le-Avraham* (Holon: Bet Midrash Yeshivat Eliyahu, 1999),

end, we will also not focus on the blessings over wine, spices and fire which constitute the series of blessings that precede the separations.⁴ These blessings over wine, spices and fire are limited to the *havdalah* recited over the cup of wine, whereas the texts we will focus on also occur in the *amidah* of the evening service at the end of Shabbat.⁵

The ritual of *havdalah* is mentioned by R. Yohanan as extending back to the Men of the Great Assembly:⁶

<p>R. Hiyya bar Abba said in the name of R. Yohanan: The men of the Great Assembly affixed for Israel blessings (=berakha), prayers (=amidah), sanctifications (=kiddush) and separations (=havdalah). - <i>B Berakhot</i> 33a</p>	<p>תלמוד בבלי מסכת ברכות דף לג עמוד א אמר רבי חייא בר אבא אמר רבי יוחנן: אנשי כנסת הגדולה תקנו להם לישראל ברכות ותפלות קדושות והבדלות.</p>
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Despite claims to the contrary by medieval and some modern scholars,⁷ it seems clear that even if this body instituted the ritual, they did not institute the *text* of the prayer itself, which is our focus.

pp. 411-412. See also the introductory prayer of a different sort in Gershom Scholem, “*Havdallah De-Rabbi Akiva*,” *Tarbiz* 50 (1980-81), pp. 243-281, here p. 252-253 and p. 268, n. 89.

⁴ The order and wording of these blessings are a source of debate already in the time of Beit Hillel and Beit Shammai. See *M Berakhot* 8:5 and *T Berakhot* 5:30, ed. Lieberman, pp. 30-31.

⁵ The precise wording of the beginning of the *havdalah* in the *amidah* is in dispute, with some recommending *atta honantanu* (*Beit Yosef* to Tur OH 294), and others *atta honein* with the addition of *atta hivdalta* (*Seder Ha-Tefilah shel Ha-Rambam* (ed. Goldschmidt, p. 200), *Orhot Hayim* (Jerusalem, 1988, p. 146), *Seder Rav Amram* (ed. Goldschmidt, p. 81), *Siddur Rav Sa’adia Gaon* (eds. Davidson, et al., p. 124), *Sefer Ha-Manhig* (ed. Raphael, pp. 190-191)), and still others combine *atta honein* and *atta honantanu* (*Levush, Taz*). See generally and *Taz* ad loc. This debate does not alter the central texts of *havdalah* that we will analyze below. For the debate about where to include the *havdalah* liturgy in the *amidah*, see *M Berakhot* 5:2. Safrai claims that *havdalah* was originally made over wine and not in the *amidah*, because the evening *amidah* was only made obligatory after the formation of the *havdalah* ritual. See Shmuel Safrai and Ze’ev Safrai, *Mishnat Eretz Yisrael: Zera’im*, (Jerusalem: Michelelet Lifshitz, 2011), vol. 1, p. 154 and p. 309. Safrai follows the opinion of Jacob Lauterbach. See Lauterbach, “The Origin and Development of Two Sabbath Ceremonies,” p. 377, n. 21. Cf. Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy*, p. 101. This is contrary to the opinion expressed in *B Berakhot* 33a.

⁶ This attribution mirrors that of the *amidah* itself. See *B Berakhot* 33b = *B Megillah* 25a and the discussion in Chapter 2 of this study (p. 66). For a general discussion of this passage see Hoffman, *Beyond the Text*, pp. 28-31.

⁷ See *She’elot U-Teshuvot Ha-Rashba*, section 4, num. 295 and Greanvald, *Havdalah al Ha-Kos*, p. 73 (although see his second-guessing in n. 6, and p. 79, n. 27).

Nevertheless, the actual wording of the *havdalah* liturgy is discussed extensively in Talmudic literature itself. We will first turn to the taxonomy of variations on this liturgy, and then focus on the associated intertexts.

Talmudic-Era Sources

In *B Pesahim* 103b-104b, there are a series of anecdotes in which R. Yaakov Bar Abba comes to the house of his teacher Rava, and questions actions taken by Rava. In one of these dialogues, Rava uses the following *havdalah* formula⁸:

<p>He opened and said:⁹ “who separates between holy and profane, between light and dark, between Israel and the nations,¹⁰ between the seventh day and the six days of doing.” - <i>B Pesahim</i> 103b</p>	<p>תלמוד בבלי מסכת פסחים דף קג עמוד ב פתח ואמר: המבדיל בין קודש לחול, בין אור לחשך, בין ישראל לעמים, בין יום השביעי לששת ימי המעשה</p>
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A near-identical liturgy is reported in the name of R. Zera:

<p>R. Zera said: A holiday which falls in the middle of the week, one (nevertheless) says: “who separates between holy and profane, and between light and dark, and between Israel and the nations, and between the seventh day and the six days of doing.” - <i>B Hullin</i> 26b¹¹</p>	<p>תלמוד בבלי מסכת חולין דף כו עמוד ב א"ר זירא: יום טוב שחל להיות באמצע שבת, אומר: המבדיל בין קדש לחול ובין אור לחשך ובין ישראל לעמים ובין יום השביעי לששת ימי המעשה</p>
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⁸ The debate over the correct *hatimah* is discussed below.

⁹ In the Babylonian Talmud, this phrase “opened and said” often introduces a specific liturgical formula. See, for instance, *B Berakhot* 38a; *B Pesahim* 56a; *B Pesahim* 116a; *B Moed Kattan* 9a; *B Ketubot* 8b; and *B Gittin* 34a. This is in contrast to other *midrashim*, where the phrase seems to indicate the quoting of a verse. See, for example, *Ruth Rabbah* 1:1; *Tanhuma Shelah* 19 (ed. Buber, vol. 4, p. 34b) and many others. Cf. Pinhas Mandel, “Al ‘Patah’ ve-al Ha-Petihah: Iyun Hadash,” in *Higayon Le-Yonah: Hebeitim Hadashim Be-Heker Sifrut Ha-Midrash, Ha-Aggadah, Ve-Ha-Piyyut*, eds. Joshua Levenson, Yaakov Elbaum and Galit Hazan-Rokem (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2007), pp. 49-82, esp. p. 64.

¹⁰ In some manuscripts, this is *la-goyim*. See *Dikdukei Soferim*, vol. 4, p. 157b, n. 7. This appears also in the text from *Seder Hibbur Berakhot*. See Abraham Schechter, *Studies in Jewish Liturgy*, p. 118. There is also some variation between *bein* and *u-vein*. See the note there and see the following text in *B Hullin* 26b.

R. Zera notes that even though a festival concludes in the middle of the week, the (usual?) formula of *havdalah* is to be recited which includes: “between the seventh day and six days of doing.” Therefore this *havdalah* formula employed by Rava seemed to be standard already in the days of R. Zera (who preceded Rava by a generation).¹²

But R. Yaakov bar Abba does not agree that this should be the standard formula. He challenges his teacher Rava by noting that Rebbe (as reported by R. Yehuda in the name of Rav or Shmuel¹³) recited simply: *hamavdil bein kodesh le-hol* – who separates between holy and profane.¹⁴ Indeed, the practice of saying just one separation is just one

¹¹ Note the version cited by Rav Hai missing the word “bein” in Simha Assaf, *Teshuvot Ha-Geonim Mitokh Ha-Genizah* (Jerusalem: Darom, 1929), p. 88, ll. 6-7.

¹² It is worth noting that R. Zera moved between Palestine and Babylonia, but he most likely represents a Babylonian ritual tradition. See Avraham Goldberg, “R. Zera U-Minhag Bavel Be-Eretz Yisrael,” *Tarbiz* 36 (1967), pp. 319 - 341. Interestingly, R. Zera (here R. Zeira) apparently knew of a version of *havdalah* that included the distinction between *tamei* and *tahor* – which appears later in the Bavli sugya, discussed below – as evidenced by the rejoinder of R. Yehuda in the following text:

<p>R. Zeira said in the name of R. Yehuda; R. Abba said in the name of Abba bar Yirmiyah: Even a holiday that starts in the middle of the week one says: “between the seventh day and the six days of doing.” R. Zeira said to Rav Yehuda: Are the six days of doing before him? He said to him: Are impurity and purity before him?</p>	<p>תלמוד ירושלמי מסכת ברכות פרק ה דף ט טור ג/ה"ב רבי זעורא בשם רב יהודה רבי אבא בשם אבא בר ירמיה אפילו יום טוב שחל להיות באמצע שבת אומר בין יום השביעי לששת ימי המעשה אמר רבי זעורא לרב יהודה וכי ששת ימי המעשה לפניו אמר ליה וכי יש טומאה וטהרה לפניו</p>
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Rav Yehuda’s rejoinder to R. Zeira only makes sense if the text of *Havdalah* includes some version of *bein tamei la-tahor* – between pure and impure – in the list of *havdalot* – see Pnai Moshe ad loc. (R. Zeira here is likely the same R. Zera of the Bavli tradition (and not R. Zeiri, student of R. Hanina or R. Zeura II, student of R. Yirmiyah) because he references the same law as in *B Hullin* 26b, and also because he quotes Rav Yehuda, teacher of R. Zera. Cf. *B Berakhot* 39a. *Tanya Rabbati* also links these two texts. See *Tanya Rabbati*, ed. Israel Baron (Jerusalem: Mossad Ha-Rav Kook, 2011), p. 94. Note Goldberg’s word of caution in establishing the identity in *supra*, n. 1).

¹³ See *Dikdukei Soferim*, vol. 4, p. 158a, n. 7.

¹⁴ There is a version of Rebbe’s *havdalah* that read:

<p>Who separates between holy and profane, between light and darkness</p>	<p>המבדיל בין קדש לחול בין אור לחושך</p>
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Rabbinowicz sees this as a scribal error (*Dikdukei Soferim*, vol. 4, p. 158a, n. 1.) However, see Rashbam, s.v. *hakhi garsinan*, end of *B Pesahim* 103b.

It should be noted that R. Yaakov bar Abba’s objection to Rava seems, in the context of his other objections (why bless multiple times on the wine during the meal; why use a torch for *havdalah* instead of a candle) to be one of questioning excess, and not claiming that the actions are invalid. His objection in each case – *lama lakh kulei hai* – why do all this? – indicates that Rava would be able to do less and still perform the ritual correctly.

of many practices of how many separations one should say in *havdalah*. Below we analyze them.

One Separation. Rebbe was not the only authority who recited only one separation in the formula. In fact, we have four different testimonies of only one separation. Although we cannot be sure in all cases that the one formula was *hamavdil bein kodesh le-hol*, reflecting Rebbe's practice, that possibility cannot be excluded.¹⁵

Below are the other examples of the use of only one separation formula:

- 1) A position of the *eino ragil* (person not accustomed to saying *havdalah*) as quoted in the following *baraita* in *B Pesahim* 104a:

<p>A rejection (from a <i>baraita</i>): One says separations at the end of Shabbat, and at the end of holidays, and at the end of Yom Kippur, and at the end of Shabbat that leads to a holiday, and at the end of a holiday that leads to the intermediate days (<i>hol ha-moed</i>). But not at the end of a holiday that leads to Shabbat. The one accustomed says many [<i>havdalot</i>] and the one who is not accustomed says one.¹⁶ - <i>B Pesahim</i> 104a¹⁷</p>	<p>תלמוד בבלי מסכת פסחים דף קד עמוד א מיתבי: אומר הבדלות במוצאי שבתות, ובמוצאי ימים טובים, ובמוצאי יום הכפורים, ובמוצאי שבת ליום טוב, ובמוצאי יום טוב לחולו של מועד. אבל לא במוצאי יום טוב לשבת. הרגיל אומר הרבה, ושאינו רגיל אומר אחת.</p>
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This seems to indicate, as Lieberman notes,¹⁸ a practice of only saying one *havdalah* (like Rebbe's practice, which is the basis of the objection by R. Yaakov b.

Abba to Rava's longer formula).

¹⁵ See *Minhat Bikkurim* on Tosefta Berakhot 5:32 and *Hasdei David* as cited by Saul Lieberman, *Tosefta Kifshuta*, vol.1, p. 97. See also following note.

¹⁶ In the Munich manuscript of the Bavli, instead of "*omer ahat*" – says one – referring to the person who is *eino ragil*, we find instead: *eino omer elah ahat*. See *Dikdukei Soferim*, vol. 4, p. 158a, n. 7.

¹⁷ Tosafot (s.v. *meitvei*) points out that this position matches that of Rebbe, when they state that the objection to the position of mentioning between 3 – 7 *havdalot* (see below) could have come from Rebbe, and not from the *baraita*. Tosafot attempts to solve the problem by arguing that it is preferable to object from a *baraita*. This leads David Weiss Halivni to conjecture that this section, which begins "*gufa*," comes from another source which may not have known Rebbe's position. David Weiss Halivni, *Mekorot U-Mesorot: Eruvin U-Pesahim* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1982), p. 565, n. 5.

This *baraita* echoes *T Berakhot* 5:30 (ed. Lieberman, p. 31), but there the use of “says one” is clearly more of a recommendation to say “one or two,” not one only. Below is the full citation from the *Tosefta*:

<p>One says <i>havdalah</i> at the end of Shabbat, and at the end of a holiday, and at the end of Yom Kippur, and at the end of Shabbat that leads to a holiday, and at the end of a holiday that leads to the intermediate days (<i>hol ha-moed</i>). The one who is accustomed says many <i>havdalot</i>, and the one who is not says (either) one or two. - <i>T Berakhot</i> 5:30</p>	<p>תוספתא מסכת ברכות (ליברמן) פרק ה או' הבדלה במוצאי שבת ובמוצאי יום טוב ובמוצאי יום הכפורים ובמוצאי שבת ליום טוב ובמוצאי יום טוב לחולו של מועד הרגיל או' הבדלות הרבה ושאינו רגיל אומ' או¹⁹ אחת או שתיים</p>
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Nevertheless, as quoted in *B Pesahim* 104a, this *baraita* represents another opinion, like that of Rebbe (and R. Yaakov b. Abba) that one *havdalah* is required, or at least sufficient.

- 2) R. Yohanan reports that “the children of the holy” – “*benan shel kedoshim*” – would say only one *havdalah*, while “the people” – “*ha'am*” – would say three *havdalot* (*B Pesahim* 104a).²⁰ Here, the issue is not one of knowledge, but simply of practice (for one would imagine that if it were an issue of knowledge, “the people” would have done fewer than “the children of *kedoshim*.”)²¹

¹⁸ Lieberman, *Tosefta Kifshuta*, vol. 1, p. 97.

¹⁹ Some manuscripts are missing this word. See ed. Lieberman, vol. 1, p. 31, l. 80.

²⁰ R. Yohanan is reported in multiple places in the Babylonian Talmud as noting the customs of the people (*nahagu ha-am*). See Halivni, p. 566, n. 14.

²¹ “The children of *kedoshim*” is then identified by the *B Pesahim* passage as R. Menahem b. Simai. Perhaps there is a play on words here with the term *kedoshim* and *bein kodesh le-hol* (assuming that the ‘one’ *havdalah* said was, in fact, *hamavdil bein kodesh le-hol*. This, however, is not specified). R. Menahem b. Simai distinguished himself by separating himself from those who would look at the coins with the picture of an emperor on it. This literary play is strengthened by the parallel in the Yerushalmi, where he is called: *Nahum Ish Kodesh Kodashim*, or a variant thereof:

What seems to be a slightly altered parallel to this source in the Yerushalmi reads

thus:

<p>Nahum of the school of R. Simai went out and said in the name of his father: “Even one <i>havdalah</i>.” - <i>Y Berakhot</i> 5:2; 9b</p>	<p>תלמוד ירושלמי מסכת ברכות פרק ה דף ט טור ב/ה"ב נחום ביר' סימאי נפק ומר בשם אבוי ואפילו אבדלה אחת.</p>
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Here, the “children of *kedoshim*” are replaced by Nahum of the school of R. Simai (identified in the Bavli as R. Menahem son of R. Simai – see n. 21). He quotes a practice held by his father/teacher – R. Simai – that one can even say only one *havdalah*. In the context of the Yerushalmi, this seems to be a direct disagreement with the opinion of R. Yohanan and of R. Oshaya that one must say at least three *havdalot*.

3) R. Shmuel b. Idi²² reports that his brother, Hanania,²³ would say only one *havdalah* (*B Pesahim* 104a). The text of this *havdalah* is not specified.

4) In a story reported on *B Peshaim* 104b, Abaye sees Ulla perform only one *havdalah*.²⁴ Here Ulla’s *havdalah* is reported as *hamavdil bein kodesh le-hol* and

<p>תלמוד בבלי מסכת עבודה זרה דף נ עמוד א</p> <p>ואמאי קרו ליה בנן של קדושים? דאפי' בצורתא דזוזא לא מיסתכל.</p>	<p>תלמוד בבלי מסכת פסחים דף קד עמוד א</p> <p>ואמאי קרו ליה בנן של קדושים דלא איסתכל בצורתא דזוזא.</p>	<p>תלמוד ירושלמי מסכת מגילה פרק א דף עב טור ב ה/י</p> <p>ולמה נקרא נחום איש קודש הקדשים שלא הביט בצורת מטבע מימיו</p>	<p>תלמוד ירושלמי מסכת עבודה זרה פרק ג דף מב טור ג/ה"א</p> <p>ולמה נקרא שמו נחום איש קודש קדשים שלא הביט בצורת מטבע מימיו</p>	<p>תלמוד ירושלמי מסכת סנהדרין פרק י דף כט טור ג ה"ה</p> <p>ולמה נקרא שמו נחום איש קדוש קדושים שלא הביט בצורת מטבע מימיו</p>	<p>תלמוד ירושלמי מסכת מגילה פרק ג דף עד טור א ה"ב</p> <p>ולמה נקרא שמו נחום איש קדש הקדשי שלא הביט בצורת מטבע מימיו</p>
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See also *Y Avodah Zara* 3:11; 43b.

²² Or R. Shmuel b. Aha or Ahai or Ada. See *Dikdukei Soferim*, p. 157b, n. ס.

²³ Or Hanina. See *Ibid*.

nothing further. (In this example, the “one” is clearly the same as the “one” performed by Rebbe, whereas in the previous three examples, it is not clear what the “one” *havdalah* was.)²⁵

Ultimately, we see that the practice of mentioning only one *havdalah* – which is explicitly *hamavdil bein kodesh le-hol* in at least 3 of the cases (Rebbe, Ulla and R. Yaakov b. Abba), and certainly possibly in another 2 of the cases (R Shmuel b. Idi and “sons of kedoshim”) – was widespread throughout the Tannaitic and early Amoraic age.²⁶

Two Separations. Co-existing with this practice to recite one separation were multiple practices that mentioned different numbers of separations. We have seen above that according to *T Berakhot* 5:30, the person who was not expert would say one **or two** *havdalot*.

Three Separations. It is not clear what the *havdalot harbeh* mentioned in *T Berakhot* 5:30 are, although it seems from the context this means more than two *havdalot*. Indeed, we see a practice of reciting three *havdalot* in the following text:

<p>R. Eliezer said in the name of R. Oshaya: The one who reduces (<i>havdalot</i>) should not say fewer than three. And the one who adds should not say more than seven.²⁷ - <i>B Pesahim</i> 103b</p>	<p>תלמוד בבלי מסכת פסחים דף קג עמוד ב דאמר רבי אלעזר אמר רבי אושעיא: הפוחת - לא יפחות משלש, והמוסיף - לא יוסיף על שבע.</p>
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²⁴ In fact, Rav Yehuda intends to send his son R. Yitzhak to see how Ulla would perform *havdalah*. But R. Yitzhak sent Abaye instead (and Rav Yehuda responds caustically to his son, saying that he will not merit the reward for finding out the practice on his own).

²⁵ It should be noted that Tosafot (s.v. *kashya le-Ulla*) sees the linguistic parallel between Rebbe and Ulla’s actions regarding *havdalah*. However, in trying to answer why this raises an objection here (and not the earlier similar statement of Rebbe), Tosafot posits that Ulla must have said all of the *havdalot* (cf. Rashi), and the issue in question is why he did not close with a blessing. But on its face, it seems that Ulla was in fact continuing the practice of Rebbe to recite only *hamavdil bein kodesh le-hol*.

²⁶ The practice of saying only one *havdalah* seems to have been preserved in the expression of the minimum one must say before doing work following Shabbat. See the practice of R. Abba and Rav Kahana reported on *B Shabbat* 150b.

²⁷ This actually indicates a choice between three or seven, not a range. See below, n. 28. For another liturgical model of three or seven blessings, see Ha-Cohen, p. 308, n. 100.

The parallel in *Y Berakhot* 5:2; 9b makes it clear that three was a critical minimum number²⁸:

R. Eliezer son of R. Hoshaya said: As long as one does not saw fewer than three <i>havdalot</i> . - <i>Y Berakhot</i> 5:2; 9b	תלמוד ירושלמי מסכת ברכות פרק ה דף ט טור ב /ה"ב רבי אלעזר ב"ר הושעיה ובלבד שלא יפחות משלש אבדלות
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Indeed, we have seen the practice of the “people” to say three *havdalot* also in the Bavli. However, their text is not specified. In none of these cases is there a singular liturgy that is prescribed for the three *havdalot*.²⁹

Four Separations (?). In the text that does specify a particular series of separations, there is a question about whether the list constitutes three or four separations.

We return to the original recitation of Rava, which opens the discussion in the Bavli:

²⁸ In contrast to the Bavli, in the Yerushalmi the opinion of not going below three or above seven is actually transmitted by R. Yohanan:

תלמוד בבלי מסכת פסחים דף קג עמוד ב דאמר רבי אלעזר אמר רבי אושעיא: הפוחת - לא יפחות משלש, והמוסיף - לא יוסיף על שבע.	תלמוד ירושלמי מסכת ברכות פרק ה דף ט טור ב /ה"ב רבי אלעזר ב"ר הושעיה ובלבד שלא יפחות משלש אבדלות	תלמוד ירושלמי מסכת ברכות פרק ה דף ט טור ב /ה"ב אמר רבי יוחנן אמר הפוחת לא יפחות משלש והמוסיף לא יוסיף יותר משבעה אבדלות
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²⁹ There is one text that mentions three *havdalot*, preserved in a Karaite *siddur* published by Louis Ginzberg:

We bless to the God of Israel: “who separates between holy and profane, and between Israel and the nations, and between the seventh day...and the six days...of doing.”	ומבורכים אנו לאלוה ישראל [המ]ב[ד]יל בין קדש לחל ובין ישראל לגוים ובין י[ום] [השביעי]...מששת ימי...המעשה
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See Louis Ginzberg, *Ginzei Schechter* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1929), vol. 2, p. 490 and p. 638 (where Ginzberg notes that this *siddur* has only three *havdalot*.) For more on the Karaite *havdalah* liturgy, see Fried, “*Minhagim ‘Lo Yedu’im’ Ba-Tefilah*.” These three blessings also appear (without *bein or le-hoshekh*) in *Seder Rav Amram Ha-Shalem* (ed. Frumkin), p. 108. But see *Seder Rav Amram* (ed. Goldschmidt), p. 81 for all four *havdalot*. *Siddur Rav Sa’adia Gaon* also has three *havdalot* (missing *bein yisrael le-amim*), but this phrase is present in a number of manuscripts as well as the text for *havdalah al ha-kos*. See eds. Davidson, et al., pp. 124-5.

<p>He opened and said: “who separates between holy and profane, between light and dark, between Israel and the nations, between the seventh day and the six days of doing.” - <i>B Pesahim</i> 103b</p>	<p>תלמוד בבלי מסכת פסחים דף קג עמוד ב פתח ואמר: המבדיל בין קודש לחול, בין אור לחשך, בין ישראל לעמים, בין יום השביעי לששת ימי המעשה</p>
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This seems to be four *havdalot* (with the word *bein* coming four times). Indeed, if one were simply to read the text from Rava or from R. Zera in *B Hullin* 26a, one would have no question about this being four *havdalot*, judging by the language. However, as R. Yaakov b. Abba notes, this seems to contradict the options given by R. Oshaya, which are limited to three *or* seven *havdalot*.³⁰

Rava replies that the final phrase – *bein yom ha-shevi'i le-sheshet yemei ha-ma'aseh* – between the seventh day and the six days of creation – is actually not part of the *havdalot* meant for counting, but instead the prelude to the blessing (*mei'ein hatimah*) which precedes the seal of the blessing itself (*hatimah*).³¹ Thus, even the recitation of three *havdalot* actually contains four *havdalot*, adding to the confusion around the numbers of *havdalot* practiced.

Seven/Eight Separations. Up until this point, we have analyzed textual examples of one separation and three/four separations (while also noting the existence of the two *havdalot*, mentioned in *T Berakhot* 5:30, without an example text³²). But the rule from R.

³⁰ It may seem initially that the rule posits a range, *between* three and seven *havdalot*, in which case Rava's four *havdalot* would comply. However, this would render the objection moot, and the text must be understood as either three or seven. See Tosafot s.v. *u-mar lo tlat amar ve-lo sheva amar*, where they cite the parallel use of language as either/or from *B Menahot* 39a. Cf. *B Sukkah* 53b; *B Arakhin* 10a. See further Halivni, p. 566.

³¹ On this rule, see Langer, *To Worship God Properly*, pp. 26-27, and n. 109.

³² One possible text of the two *havdalot* is:

<p>Who separates between holy and profane, between light and darkness</p>	<p>המבדיל בין קודש לחול בין אור לחשך</p>
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Oshaya posits the possibility of seven separations.³³ Below is one possibility of such a text, although at first glance it seems there are eight separations.³⁴

<p>An objection (from a <i>baraita</i>): The order of <i>havdalah</i> – how? One says: “who separates 1) between holy and profane, 2) between light and dark, 3) between Israel and the nations, 4) and between the seventh day and the six days of doing; 5) between the impure and the pure 6) between the sea and dry land 7) between the upper waters and the</p>	<p>תלמוד בבלי מסכת פסחים דף קד עמוד א מיתבי: סדר הבדלות היאך? אומר המבדיל בין קודש לחול, בין אור לחושך, בין ישראל לעמים, ובין³⁵ יום השביעי לששת ימי המעשה, בין טמא לטהור, בין הים לחרבה,</p>
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See further above, n. 14.

³³ A similar liturgical case in which seven is preferred, although three is tolerated, can be found here:

<p>One should not say less than 10 kingships, 10 memories and 10 <i>shofarot</i>. If one said 7 of each, one has fulfilled his obligation – these are the words of R. Akiva. R. Yohanan b. Nuri said: One should not say less than 7. If one said 3 of each, one has fulfilled one’s obligation. <i>T Rosh Hashannah</i> 2:12 (ed. Lieberman, p. 317)</p>	<p>תוספתא מסכת ראש השנה (ליברמן) פרק ב: הלכה יב אין פוחתין מעשר מלכיות ומעשרה זכרונות ומעשרה שופרות אם אמ' שבע מכולם יצא דברי ר' עקיבא ר' יוחנן בן נורי אמ' אין פחות משבע אם אמ' שלש מכולם יצא</p>
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See also *M Rosh Hashannah* 4:6; *Y Rosh Hashannah* 4:6; 59c and esp. *B Rosh Hashannah* 32a, which uses identical language to our *sugya*:

<p>R. Yohanan b. Nuri said: The one who reduces should not reduce fewer than seven... - <i>B Rosh Hashannah</i> 32a</p>	<p>תלמוד בבלי מסכת ראש השנה דף לב עמוד א רבי יוחנן בן נורי אמר: הפחות - לא יפחות משבע</p>
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See further Jacob N. Epstein, *Mavo Le-Nusakh Ha-Mishnah* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1948), p. 415; Lieberman, *Tosefta Kifshuta*, vol. 5, p. 1053; Shmuel Safrai and Ze'ev Safrai, *Mishnat Eretz Yisrael: Mo'ed*, (Jerusalem: Michelelet Lifshitz, 2011), vol. 8, part 2, pp. 424-425; Joseph Heinemann, “*Malkhuyot, Zikhronot, Ve-Shofarot*,” in *Iyunei Tefilah*, pp. 54-73, esp. pp. 65-68; Daniel Goldschmidt, *Mahzor Le-Yamim Nora'im*, vol. 1, p. 30 and n. 13.

³⁴ Other (later) poetic renditions of the *havdalah* theme include even more *havdalot*. The poem printed in *Siddur Rav Sa'adia Gaon* (see final column in Appendix I) has the root *b-d-l* a total of 12 times, spread throughout the *Ma'ariv* blessings. See *Siddur Rav Sa'adia Gaon*, pp. 123-4; This poem was reprinted and discussed in Ezra Fleischer, *Tefilah U-Minhagei Tefilah*, pp. 80-83 and also referred to in *Seder Rav Amram Gaon*, ed. Goldschmidt, pp. 80-81; ed. Frumkin, vol. 2, p. 107; *Sefer Ha-Manhig*, ed. Raphael, vol. 1, p. 190; *Teshuvot Rav Natronai Gaon*, ed. Robert Brody (Jerusalem: Ofek Institute, 1994), vol. 1, pp. 203-4; *Teshuvot Ha-Rambam*, ed. Yehoshua Blau (Jerusalem: Mekitzei Nirdamim, 1960), pp. 487 and 489. However the themes covered in this poem are only really three: light and dark; Israel and nations; Israel redeemed from Egypt. A request for a future redemption also appears in this poem, adding a level of aspiration to the *havdalah* formula:

<p>Speed salvation for the offspring separated to you / Redeem and save the nation who is saved in you.</p>	<p>תחיש ישועה לזרע מובדל לך / תגאול ותושיע לעם נושע בך</p>
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See further, Appendix I.

³⁵ The word *u-vein* appears as just *bein* in a number of manuscripts, including Munich 6, Munich 95, JTS 1608 (ENA 850) and JTS 1623 (EMC 271). See further *Dikdukei Soferim*, p. 158b.

lower waters 8) between priests, Levites and Israelites. - <i>B Pesahim</i> 104a	בין מים העליונים למים התחתונים, בין כהנים ללויים וישראלים
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This *baraita* posits eight contrasting separations. The text from Rava (and R. Zera) appears as the first four *havdalot*, and then an additional four *havdalot* follow. We will analyze the structure of this text below as we explore the intertexts to *havdalah*. But this text is subject to clarification in the Bavli itself.

The Bavli objects to this list of *havdalot* because the phrase “*bein ha-yam le-haravah*” – between sea and dry land – has no Torah intertext using the root *b-d-l* and therefore violates the rule of R. Yehoshua ben Levi, who states:

R. Yehoshua ben Levi said: The one who separates (recites <i>havdalah</i>) must say an aspect of the separations (<i>havdalot</i>) said in the Torah. - <i>B Pesahim</i> 104a ³⁶	תלמוד בבלי מסכת פסחים דף קד עמוד א אמר רבי יהושע בן לוי: המבדיל צריך שיאמר מעין הבדלות האמורות בתורה.
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The Bavli thus removes the phrase *bein ha-yam le-haravah* to make the *baraita* to fit R. Yehoshua ben Levi’s rule.³⁷ This would leave seven *havdalot* in the list:

“who separates 1) between holy and profane,	המבדיל בין קודש לחול,
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³⁶ The parallel in *Y Berakhot* reads:

Levi said: As long as they are from the <i>havdalot</i> (separations) mentioned in the Torah. - <i>Y Berakhot</i> 5:2; 9b	תלמוד ירושלמי מסכת ברכות פרק ה דף ט טור ב/ה"ב לוי אמר ובלבד מאבדלות האמורות בתורה
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This rule has significant implications for the claim that prayer texts have intertexts from the Bible, as noted in Chapter 1.

Ginzberg notes that oftentimes the same *halakhot* are mentioned by the father and the son. See Ginzberg, *Perushim Ve-Hidushim*, vol. 4, p. 273. Although sea and dry land are often separated in the Bible, the verbs associated with this division are not taken from the root *b-d-l*. The words associated with waters dividing are: *yikavu* (Gen 1:9), *va-yasem* (Ex 14:21), *va-yehatzu* (II Kings 2:8), and *baka'ta* (Neh 9:11).

³⁷ Halivni (p. 567) posits that the phrase *bein ha-yam le-harava* was added because of Rava’s understanding that *bein yom ha-shevi'i le-sheshet yemei ha-ma'aseh* did not count towards the number of *havdalot*, and if *bein kohanim le-levi'im ve-yisraelim* was considered as one phrase, one more separation needed to be added.

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2) between light and dark, 3) between Israel and the nations, 4) and between the seventh day and the six days of doing; 5) between the impure and the pure 6) between the upper waters and the lower waters 7) between priests, Levites and Israelites. 	<p style="text-align: right;">בין אור לחושך, בין ישראל לעמים, ובין יום השביעי לששת ימי המעשה, בין טמא לטהור, בין מים העליונים למים התחתונים, בין כהנים ללויים וישראלים</p>
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But the Bavli then notes that the phrase *bein yom ha-shevi'i le-sheshet yemei ha-ma'aseh* (which, incidentally, also does not have a biblical intertext using the root *b-d-l* and may explain its function as a guide toward the *hatimah*, and not one of the core separations³⁸) is not considered part of the numbering, in keeping with the conclusion above from Rava. Thus we are left with only 6 separations!:

<p>“who separates</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) between holy and profane, 2) between light and dark, 3) between Israel and the nations, and between the seventh day and the six days of doing; 4) between the impure and the pure 5) between the upper waters and the lower waters 6) between priests, Levites and Israelites. 	<p style="text-align: right;">המבדיל בין קודש לחול, בין אור לחושך, בין ישראל לעמים, ובין יום השביעי לששת ימי המעשה, בין טמא לטהור, בין מים העליונים למים התחתונים, בין כהנים ללויים וישראלים</p>
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The Bavli solves this problem by dividing the final phrase – between priests, Levites and Israelites – into two subdivisions: “between priests and Levites” and “between Levites and Israelites,” both of which have biblical (if not Torah-only) intertexts, identified by the Bavli itself (Deut 10:8 and I Chron 23:13). The final text settled on is this:

³⁸ See Rashbam ad loc. and Tosafot s.v. *bein yom ha-shevi'i*. See also Eleazar b. Judah of Worms, *Perushei Siddur Ha-Tefilah La-Rokeah*, eds. Moshe and Yehuda Hershler (Jerusalem: Makhon Hershler, 1992), vol. 2, p. 588-589; and Jacobson, *Netiv Binah*, vol. 2, p. 390.

<p>“who separates</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) between holy and profane, 2) between light and dark, 3) between Israel and the nations, and between the seventh day and the six days of doing; 4) between the impure and the pure 5) between the sea and dry land 6) between priests and Levites 7) between Levites and Israelites. 	<p>המבדיל בין קודש לחול, בין אור לחושך, בין ישראל לעמים, ובין יום השביעי לששת ימי המעשה, בין טמא לטהור, בין מים העליונים למים התחתונים, בין כהנים ללוים בין לויים לישראלים</p>
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Of course, this rewriting (or reconstructing) of the original *baraita* presumes an agreement between the *baraita* and R. Yehoshua b. Levi (or Levi)’s rule. But absent that assumption and the ensuing editing process of the Bavli, we have evidence of an 8-part *havdalah* (or 7-part, if one leaves *bein yom ha-shevi’i le-sheshet yemei ha-ma’aseh* out of the count).³⁹

Literary Structure Analysis of Havdalah

Above we discussed the various texts of *havdalah*, ranging from 1, 3/4, or 7/8 *havdalot*. Before we move to investigate the intertexts and construct our analysis based on that juxtaposition, it is necessary to consider the internal structure of these *havdalah* liturgies themselves. A better understanding of the structure will help us discover the meaning embedded within these texts.

The singular *havdalah*, as recited by Rebbe, R. Yaakov b. Abba and Ulla, has very little to analyze, since there is only one *havdalah: bein kodesh le-hol*. Once we move

³⁹ Indeed, one might ask: How could this phrase be considered leading toward the *hatimah* if it is in the middle of the list of *havdalot*? Halivni (p. 566) suggests that since it comes at the end of the series of three, even though there were other *havdalot* added, this is still the bridge to the *hatimah*, following the minimum number of *havdalot*. Another possibility is reading the list non-linearly, as we will propose below. While this *baraita* did not survive in modern-day usage, the *havdalah* texts from Eretz Yisrael liturgy preserve variants on this *baraita*. The chart in Appendix I shows three of these *havdalah* texts, as well as two more texts which are poetic expansions of the *havdalah* formula.

to the 4-part *havdalah* (counting, for now, *bein yom ha-shevi'i le-sheshet yemei ha-ma'aseh* as part of the *havdalot*) we have to ask: what is the structure of this short liturgical piece? Is *bein kodesh le-hol* the primary category, with the others (light/darkness; Israel/nations; seventh day/six days) as examples of the primary category? Or are they each their own categories, on par with holy/profane? Moreover, what does holy/profane mean? Does it refer to something specific, or is it a general category?⁴⁰

Only when we look at the longer *havdalah* do we start to understand the structure of Rava/R. Zera's *havdalah*. The longer *havdalah* is complex because even in the *sugya* itself, there are three versions of it proposed. However, based on Halivni's comments (see n. 37 above), and the likelihood that a seven-part *havdalah* (not eight-part) makes literary sense for a blessing about units of seven, we will analyze the following version of that *baraita* from *B Pesahim* 104a (quoted above, p. 126):

<p>“who separates</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) between holy and profane, 2) between light and dark, 3) between Israel and the nations, and between the seventh day and the six days of doing; 4) between the impure and the pure 5) between the upper waters and the lower waters 6) between priests, Levites and Israelites. 	<p style="text-align: right;">המבדיל בין קודש לחול, בין אור לחושך, בין ישראל לעמים, ובין יום השביעי לששת ימי המעשה, בין טמא לטהור, בין מים העליונים למים התחתונים, בין כהנים ללויים וישראלים</p>
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⁴⁰ This is redolent of the rabbinic categories of *klal u-prat*. See, for example, *B Pesahim* 6b. Hoffman (*Beyond the Text*, p. 40) argues that “[t]he paired opposites that were kept refer above all to the one basic dyadic category, the holy and the profane, and to a secondary dichotomy between light and darkness.” Hoffman claims that light and dark does not fit the basic category and claims it was added only because of “the ritual situation, since *havdalah* is recited at sunset.” When one looks at the biblical context (as we will below), it is certainly possible to interpret the distinction between holy and profane on a much narrower level than Hoffman implies.

The baraita itself informs us that there is an order (*sefer*) to the *havdalah*, when it asks: “*sefer havdalot he-akh?*” – “What is the order of the separations?” In order to discover this order, it is necessary to contextualize the terms in their biblical origin. (Below we will read this context for its meaning and significance, but here we read simply to discover the structure of the *havdalah* text itself).

First, the phrase “*bein ha-kodesh u-vein ha-hol*” appears only one time in the Torah: in Leviticus 10:10.⁴¹ The full verse reads as follows:

<p>“...to separate between the holy and between the profane and between the impure and between the pure.” - Lev 10:10</p>	<p>ויקרא פרק י (י) וְלִהְבְדִּיל בֵּין הַקֹּדֶשׁ וּבֵין הַחֹל וּבֵין הַטְּמֵא וּבֵין הַטְּהוֹר</p>
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Now it is clear that the terms *kodesh* and *hol* are directly associated with the terms *tamei* and *tahor*. This also answers the question of why the negative term (*tamei*) precedes the positive term (*tahor*) in the *havdalah* of the *baraita*, even though all the other terms seemingly lead with the positive item. This is because the *havdalah* text is quoting this verse in Leviticus, which also has this order (although in Leviticus, the order makes more sense, as it is clearly a chiasmic structure with the first part of the verse: between the holy and between the profane.⁴²)

Matching the phrase “*bein kodesh le-hol*” to “*bein tamei la-tahor*” of the *havdalah* in the *baraita* allows the structure of this prayer to become evident. The phrase

⁴¹ It also appears in Ezekiel 22:26 and 42:20, which will be analyzed below. Indeed, Jacob Milgrom points out that the term *hol* itself only appears here in Torah. See Jacob Milgrom, The Anchor Yale Bible: Leviticus 1-16 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), p. 615.

⁴² “One would have expected the reverse order in view of the preceding clause...Instead, this chiasmic arrangement is probably intentional...” Milgrom, Leviticus 1-16, p. 616. For another reason for why *tamei* precedes *tahor* here, see Milgrom, The Anchor Yale Bible: Leviticus 17-22 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), p. 1763.

bein or *le-hoshekh* is related to *bein mayim ha-elyonim le-mayim ha-tahtonim* also through a biblical intertext, the story of creation:

<p>God separated between the light and between the darkness...it was a separator between the (upper) water and the (lower) water. - Genesis 1:4, 6</p>	<p>וַיִּבְדֵּל אֱלֹהִים בֵּין הָאֹר וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ... וַיְהִי מַבְדֵּיל בֵּין מַיִם לְמַיִם</p>
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These separations are only 2 verses apart (Gen 1:4, 6). Finally, *bein yisrael le-amim* is associated with *bein kohanim le-levi'im u-le-yisraelim*, representing concentric circles of separation, with Israel differentiated from the nations, and priests/Levites separated from Israelites.⁴³

Of the seven terms, six of them match easily based on themes and biblical proximity, as illustrated in the chart below:

<p>(4) בין טמא לטהור (5) בין מים העליונים למים התחתונים (6) בין כהנים ללויים וישראלים</p>	<p>(1) בין קודש לחול (2) בין אור לחושך (3) בין ישראל לעמים</p>
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Related by theme, these separations match up well:

<p>Human Separations בין ישראל לעמים בין כהנים ללויים וישראלים</p>	<p>Creation Imagery בין אור לחושך בין מים העליונים למים התחתונים</p>	<p>Ritual Fitness⁴⁴ בין קודש לחול בין טמא לטהור</p>
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The second set of three couplets following the “standard” *havdalah* of Rava/R.

Zera thus serve as an expansion and commentary of the categories set up in the first three

⁴³ See Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, p. 722 (and fig. 13): “[T]he tripartite division of the human race corresponds to three of its covenants with God: mankind (Gen 9:1-11, including the animals), Israel (i.e., the patriarchs, Gen 17:2; Lev 26:42), and the priesthood (Num 25:12-15; Jer 33: 17-22).” See also Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22*, p. 1718 (and fig. 3).

⁴⁴ The connection between separating pure and impure animals and moral behavior is discussed at length in Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, pp. 718-736.

couplets. This also helps us understand the context of those first three couplets, which will be useful when we analyze the biblical intertexts in the next section.

In this reading, the phrase *bein yom ha-shevi'i le-sheshet yemei ha-ma'aseh* would then serve as a culminating phrase. If the phrases are read linearly, the text makes little sense as a bridge to the *hatimah*, as noted above, n. 39. However, if it is read in a parallel structure manner (known in ancient Latin poetry as *synchysis*⁴⁵), as suggested above, the text *bein yom ha-shevi'i le-sheshet yemei ha-ma'aseh* appears as the summation phrase, the one without a parallel, and which could lead to the *hatimah* (or at the very least, is emphasized through the structure). This reading echoes the reading of the creation story itself, where themes in Day 1 are echoed in Day 4, Day 2 are echoed in Day 5, and Day 3 are echoed in Day 6.⁴⁶ This leaves Day 7 to stand on its own (much like the text *bein yom ha-shevi'i le-sheshet yemei ha-ma'aseh* echoes a reference to the seventh day and its unique quality).⁴⁷

Identification and Analysis of the Intertext(s)

Havdalah is clearly drawn from a series of biblical allusions, as prescribed by R. Yehoshua b. Levi's rule, mentioned above. In fact, this rule is a clear articulation of the basic contention of the literary-intertext approach: Prayer texts (must) refer directly to Scripture. Thus the identification of the intertext is clear in each case, although if one

⁴⁵ See the definition offered by Kathryn Lucchese, "Landscape *Synchysis*: A Demeter Temple in Latium," in *Mystic Cults in Magna Graecia*, eds. Giovanni Casadio and Patricia A. Johnston (Texas: University of Texas Press, 2009), p. 161 and by Kenneth Kitchell and Sean Smith, *Catullus: A Legamus Transitional Reader* (Illinois: Bolchazy-Carducci Publishers, 2006), p. 119.

⁴⁶ See Sarna, *Genesis*, p. 4.

⁴⁷ In fact, even the number of words plays into this. *בין יום השביעי לששת ימי המעשה* numbers 7 words, echoing the number of words in the first verse of Genesis (which Sarna (ibid.) notes is significant there). It is perhaps significant that the *hatimah* *החול קודש בין קודש להול* also has 7 words. This reading also has the advantage of a *havdalah* text with 7 separations, as proposed by R. Oshaya. Seven *havdalot*, as an echo of creation at the end of the 7th day, also has more literary integrity than a list with 8 *havdalot*.

adds in the references from beyond the Torah, the references multiply.⁴⁸ We will analyze each phrase in turn.

Section I

Between holy and profane	בין קודש לחול
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Identification and Analysis of the Intertext(s)

As noted above, the phrase *bein kodesh le-hol* appears only once in Torah (Lev 10:10), and three times more in Ezekiel (22:26, 42:20 and 44:23).⁴⁹ We will first examine the context of the Leviticus reference:

<p>9:23 Aaron lifted his hands toward the people and blessed them; and he stepped down after offering the sin offering, the burnt offering, and the offering of well-being. 23 Moses and Aaron then went inside the Tent of Meeting. When they came out, they blessed the people; and the presence of YHVH appeared to all the people. 24 Fire came forth from before YHVH and consumed the burnt offering and the fat parts on the altar. And all the people saw, and shouted, and fell on their faces.</p> <p>10:1 Now Aaron's sons Nadav and Avihu each took his fire pan, put fire in it, and laid incense on it; and they offered before YHVH alien fire, which He had not enjoined upon them. 2 Fire came forth from before YHVH and consumed them; thus they died before YHVH. 3 Then Moses said to Aaron: "This is what YHVH meant when He said: 'Through those near to Me I shall sanctify Myself, and before all of the people I shall glorify myself.'" And Aaron was silent.</p>	<p>ויקרא פרק ט</p> <p>(כג) וַיִּבֹא מִשָּׁה וְאַהֲרֹן אֶל אֱהֹל מוֹעֵד וַיִּצְאוּ וַיְבָרְכוּ אֶת הָעָם וַיֵּרָא כְבוֹד יְקֹוֹק אֶל כָּל הָעָם:</p> <p>(כד) וַתֵּצֵא אֵשׁ מִלִּפְנֵי יְקֹוֹק וַתֹּאכַל עַל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ אֶת הָעֹלָה וְאֶת הַחֲלָבִים וַיֵּרָא כָּל הָעָם וַיִּרְאוּ וַיִּפְּלוּ עַל פְּנֵיהֶם:</p> <p>ויקרא פרק י</p> <p>(א) וַיִּקְחוּ בְנֵי אַהֲרֹן נָדָב וַאֲבִיהוּא אֵישׁ מִחֶמְתוֹ וַיִּתְּנוּ בָהֶן אֵשׁ וַיִּשְׂימוּ עָלֶיהָ קִטְרֶת וַיִּקְרִיבוּ לִפְנֵי יְקֹוֹק אֵשׁ זָרָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא צִוָּה אֹתָם:</p> <p>(ב) וַתֵּצֵא אֵשׁ מִלִּפְנֵי יְקֹוֹק וַתֹּאכַל אוֹתָם וַיָּמָתוּ לִפְנֵי יְקֹוֹק:</p> <p>(ג) וַיֹּאמֶר מִשָּׁה אֶל אַהֲרֹן הוּא אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְקֹוֹק לֵאמֹר בְּקִרְבִּי אֶקְדֹּשׁ וְעַל פְּנֵי כָּל הָעָם אֶכְבֹּד וַיִּדַם אַהֲרֹן:</p> <p>...</p>
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⁴⁸ At least according to the Bavli's understanding of R. Yehoshua b. Levi's rule, texts beyond the Torah are acceptable for *havdalah*, as in the source for *bein kohanim le-levi'im*, which is identified as I Chron 23:13.

⁴⁹ A number of *rishonim* identify Lev 10:10 as the intertext for *havdalah*, even though the language more closely resembles Ez. 42:20. See Rashi to *B Pesahim* 104a, s.v. *ve-hoteim be-seder Bereishit*; *Siddur Rabbenu Shlomo Mi-Germaiza*, ed. Moshe Hershler (Jerusalem: Hemed, 1972), p. 185-6 (cf. Avraham Grossman, *Hakhmei Ashkenaz Ha-Rishonim* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2001), pp. 346-348); *Abudraham Ha-Shalem*, p. 183; *Perushei Siddur Ha-Tefilah La-Rokeah*, vol. 2, p. 588. Compare also R. Yohanan's association of this verse with *havdalah* in *B Shevuot* 18b.

<p>... 8 YHVH spoke to Aaron saying: 9 “Drink no wine or other intoxicant, you or your sons, when you enter the Tent of Meeting, that you may not die. This is the law for all time throughout the ages, 10 for you must distinguish between the sacred and the profane, and between the unclean and the clean; 11 and you must teach the Israelites all the laws which YHVH has imparted to them through Moses. - Leviticus 9:23-10:11 (NJPS with modifications based on Milgrom, <u>Leviticus 1-16</u>, p. 595)</p>	<p>(ח) וַיְדַבֵּר יְקֹוֹק אֶל אַהֲרֹן לֵאמֹר: (ט) יִין וְשִׁכָּר אַל תִּשְׁתֶּה אֶתְּךָ וּבְנֵיךָ אֶתְּךָ כְּבֹאֲכֶם אֶל אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְלֹא תָמְתוּ חֻקַּת עוֹלָם לְדֹרֹתֵיכֶם: (י) וּלְהַבְדִּיל בֵּין הַקֹּדֶשׁ וּבֵין הַחֹל וּבֵין הַטָּמֵא וּבֵין הַטָּהוֹר: (יא) וּלְהוֹרֹת אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵת כָּל הַחֻקִּים אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר יְקֹוֹק אֱלֹהֵיהֶם בְּיַד מֹשֶׁה: פ</p>
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We will draw some important associations that emerge through this biblical intertext.

- 1) The command about making a distinction between holy and profane interrupts a particularly unsettling narrative portion of the Torah: the death of Nadav and Avihu. Although *midrashim* disagree as to Nadav and Avihu’s innocence or guilt,⁵⁰ the context of the biblical ruling about not bringing wine or intoxicants into the sanctuary seems directed at the narrative that surrounds this law.⁵¹ This

⁵⁰ Compare the negative view of *Vayikra Rabbah* 20:6-10 (ed. Margolioth, pp. 459-468) and *Pesikta De-Rav Kahana*, ed. Mandelbaum, vol. 2, pp. 382-400 vs. the positive view of *Sifra Shemini Millu'im* 1:22-23 (ed. Weiss, pp. 44b-45a). For the positive view expressed in Philo, see Milgrom, Leviticus 1-16, pp. 634-635. See generally Avigdor Shinan, “*Hata’eiheim shel Nadav Ve-Avihu be-Aggadat Haza’l*” *Tarbiz* 48 (1979), pp. 201-214.

⁵¹ “It is likely that, in using this occasion to stress the major roles of the priesthood, the text is linking the restriction on intoxicants to the horrendous deaths of Aaron’s two sons.” Baruch Levine, The New JPS Commentary: Leviticus (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), p. 61. Compare *Vayikra Rabbah* 20:9:

<p>R. Mani of Sha’ab and R. Yehoshua of Sikhnin said in the name of R. Levi: Aaron’s sons died for four reasons, and in all of them were written the word “death.” Because they were drunk, as it is written about them “death”: “Drink no wine or other intoxicant [...that you may not die.]” Lev 10:9] - <i>Vayikra Rabbah</i> 20:9 (ed. Margolioth, p. 463)</p>	<p>ויקרא רבה (מרגליות) פרשת אחרי מות פרשה כ ר' מני דשאב ור' יהושע דסיכנין בש' ר' לוי בשביל ארבעה דברים מתו שני בני אהרן ובכולן כת' בהן מיתה. על ידי שהיו שתווי יין וכת' בהן מיתה יין ושכר אל תשת (ויקרא י, ט).</p>
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See also *Vayikra Rabbah* 12:1 end (ed. Margolioth, p. 255-6); *Vayikra Rabbah* 12:5 (ed. Margolioth, pp. 266-7); *Pesikta De-Rav Kahana*, ed. Mandelbaum, vol. 2, p. 395; *B Zevahim* 17b; Targum Pseudo-Jonathan to Lev 10:9; Rashi to Lev 10:12. See Shinan, “*Hata-eiheim shel Nadav Ve-Avihu*,” p. 208. But

separation between “holy” and “profane” thus becomes much more specific: separating improper intoxication from the holy precincts. While this narrower association may have less resonance than a general injunction about mixing holy and profane, it nevertheless grounds a demand for the worshiper: am I performing the necessary separation between wine and holiness in my own life?⁵²

- 2) The emphasis on protecting holy space is another theme that emerges through this juxtaposition with the intertext of Leviticus 10. We often associate the ritual of *havdalah* with the separation of holy *time* from common *time*.⁵³ But this association reminds us of the *space* elements that define holy and profane.⁵⁴ The biblical context does not warn against intoxication at a particular *time*, but in a particular *place*. The association leads us to ask: what is our relationship to holy space, and how do we mark that distinction?⁵⁵

compare Milgrom, Leviticus 1-16, p. 611: “The relation between this prohibition and the preceding periscope is unclear.” He also later claims (p. 634) that R. Levi’s attempt to connect the violation to the prohibition on wine has “no foundation in the text.”

⁵² Abraham Joshua Heschel attempts to read the association with the prohibition against wine in a metaphoric sense: Abraham Joshua Heschel, Torah Min Ha-Shamayim Be-Aspaklaria Shel Ha-Dorot (London: Soncino, 1962), vol. 1, p. 157. However, see Shinan, “*Hata-eihem shel Nadav Ve-Avihu*,” p. 208, n. 44. For cautionary rabbinic statements about wine, see, for instance, *B Sanhedrin* 70a. The spices in the *havdalah* ceremony could also mirror the (improper) incense offered in Lev 10:1.

⁵³ See, for instance, Abraham Joshua Heschel, The Sabbath (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005 [repr.]), pp. 8, 10, 14-15: “Judaism is a *religion of time* aiming at the *sanctification of time*...Judaism teaches us to be attached to *holiness in time*...The meaning of the Sabbath is to celebrate time rather than space...The seventh day is a *palace in time* which we build” (emphasis in original).

⁵⁴ Ibn Ezra considers both possibilities:

<p>You should separate between the holy and profane <i>space</i>...it is also possible: “between a holy and profane <i>day</i>.” - Ibn Ezra to Lev 10:10, emphasis mine.</p>	<p>אבן עזרא ויקרא פרשת שמיני פרק י פסוק י (*)...ותבדיל בין מקום הקדש ובין החול... גם יתכן בין יום קדש לחול.</p>
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⁵⁵ For the view of Shabbat itself as holy space, see David Kraemer, “The Sabbath as a Sanctuary in Space,” in *Tiferet Le-Yisrael: Jubilee Volume in Honor of Israel Francus*, eds. Joel Roth, Menachem Schmelzer and Yaacov Francus (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 2010), pp. 79-91. Kraemer takes issue with Heschel’s characterization, expressed in the previous note: “Heschel’s thesis distorts the reality” (p. 79). Kraemer (pp. 89-91) also views rabbinic Shabbat as a continuation of the spatial construct of the

3) When taken in light of the biblical context that concludes Leviticus 9, it is clear that the fire that consumed Nadav and Avihu is the same type of fire that consumed the inaugural sacrifices in the *mishkan*.⁵⁶ One can see this clearly in the similarity of the language:

Fire came forth from before YHVH and consumed the burnt offering and the fat parts on the altar (Lev 9:24a)	(כד) וַתֵּצֵא אֵשׁ מִלְּפָנֵי יְקֹנֶק וַתֹּאכַל עַל הַמִּזְבֵּחַ אֶת הָעֹלָה וְאֶת הַחֲלָבִים...
Fire came forth from before YHVH and consumed them (Lev 10:2a)	(ב) וַתֵּצֵא אֵשׁ מִלְּפָנֵי יְקֹנֶק וַתֹּאכַל אוֹתָם...

Nadav and Avihu are perhaps caught up in a moment of religious fervor. After all, God appears to the children of Israel immediately after consuming the sacrifices (Lev 9:24b), and their reaction is to shout (with joy?⁵⁷) and fall on their faces. Nadav and Avihu may also be responding to this theophany by rushing toward the holy.⁵⁸ Here *havdalah* has a different cautionary message: despite the temptation

(destroyed) Temple: “[T]he Sabbath is a space day, a day of location and dwelling. It says: this is your place for this time. Sit there, dwell there, celebrate there, in a space that is in time.” The theme of *havdalah* marking distinctions in space will be further elaborated in Section IV (*bein yom hashevi’i le-sheshet yemei hama’aseh*) below.

⁵⁶ See further on this association: *Sifre Zuta Bemidbar* 11:2 (ed. Haim Horovitz (Jerusalem: Wahrmann Books, 1966, p. 268); Rashbam to Lev 10:23-24; Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, p. 599.

⁵⁷ See Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, p. 591.

⁵⁸ This overpowering feeling of intimacy is represented in one rabbinic reading of the episode:

“The two sons of Aaron took...” (Lev 10:1). They were also in a state of joy. When they saw the new fire, they wanted to add [their] love to [God’s] love. “They took” – took means joy. - <i>Sifra Shemini Miluim</i> 1:32	ספרא שמיני פרשה א (לב) ויקחו שני בני אהרן אף הם בשמחתם כיון שראו אש חדשה עמדו להוסיף אהבה על אהבה, ויקחו אין קיחה אלא שמחה
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Cf. the parallel in Zvi Meir Rabinowitz, *Ginze Midrash* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University Press, 1977), p. 50. See also Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, p. 635: “They responded to the divine fire (9:24) with fire of their own.” Or in Shinan’s formulation, Nadav and Avihu are: “*tze’irim nilhavin she-ta’u mei-rov simcha*” – fervent young men who erred from a place of great joy. Shinan, “*Hata’eihem shel Nadav Ve-Avihu*,” p. 202. See also Gordon Tucker’s formulation: “Rabbi Ishmael saw [Nadav and Avihu’s sin] as an excess of enthusiasm, welling over from the enthusiasm of the people for the consecration of the Sanctuary (Leviticus 9:24).” Abraham Joshua Heschel, *Heavenly Torah As Refracted through the Generations*, trans.

to come close to the holy, a distance must be preserved. This is a message that makes sense particularly at the end of Shabbat, when the desire to remain in the holy state is strong. Nevertheless, a prolonged intimacy – perhaps attempted by Nadav and Avihu’s actions – is not sanctioned.⁵⁹ It is the recognition of the limitation of closeness with the divine that perhaps adds another shade to the gloom of the end of Shabbat, marked by *havdalah*.

- 4) The biblical context also points to a connection between the verb *lehavdil* (Lev 10:10) and the verb *lehorot* (Lev 10:11). The act of separating is only the first part of the command; one must also teach the laws.⁶⁰ The priestly function was not only to separate between pure and impure, but also to teach the laws concerning this separation.⁶¹ The act of making *havdalah* emphasizes the way in which a primarily priestly function (separating and teaching) has been extended to all Jews.⁶²

Gordon Tucker (New York: Continuum, 2007), p. 194, n. 7. Cf. Avraham Goldberg, “*Yahasah shel ‘Mekhlita de-Milluim’ Le-Ikar Ha-Sifra*,” in Joel Roth, et al., *Tiferet Le-Yisrael*, pp. 1-19 [Hebrew section] and Joshua Levinson, *Ha-Sippur Shelo Supar* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2005), p. 115, n. 36.

⁵⁹ Heschel attempts to connect this to the wider approach by the school of R. Ishmael that loving God with actual emotion is not possible; love can only be expressed by following God’s deeds (this is in contrast to the approach of R. Akiva). He quotes a version of the *midrash* from Sifra (quoted above) which reads:

Out of great joy and love of God did they sin by burning incense.	שמרוב שמחה ואהבת המקום עברו והקטירו
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See Heschel, *Torah Min Ha-Shamayim*, vol. 1, p. 157 and n. 10. Incidentally, Goldberg also sees this particular section as part of the school of R. Ishmael. See Goldberg, p.14, and his wider discussion of the distinctions between R. Akiva and R. Ishmael to the sin of Nadav and Avihu, pp. 18-19.

⁶⁰ Rashi makes explicit the connection between the prohibition to drink and the commandment to teach, determining that teaching while drunk is forbidden. See Rashi s.v. *mishum shichrut* to *B Beitzah* 4a. See the other associations made between these two verbs in *B Shevuot* 18b.

⁶¹ See Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, p. 617 and Moshe Greenberg, *The Anchor Bible Series: Ezekiel 21-37* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), p. 462.

⁶² This “democratic thrust” has also been extended in Leviticus 20:24. See Jacob Milgrom, *The Anchor Bible Series: Leviticus 17-23* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), p. 1762. Medieval commentators on *havdalah* also highlighted this connection between *le-havdil* and *le-horot*. See *Sefer Seder Kiddush ve-Havdalah*, pp. 84, 95.

Similar to the intertexts with the first blessing of the *amidah* (explored in the previous chapter), we see that there are also multiple intertexts for *havdalah*. While we have investigated the primary intertext of Leviticus 10:10, below we briefly examine another intertext, from Ezekiel 22:26⁶³:

<p>23 The word of YHVH came to me: 24 O mortal, say to her: You are an uncleansed land, not to be washed with rain on the day of indignation. 25 Her gang of prophets are like roaring lions in her midst, rending prey. They devour human beings; they seize treasure and wealth; they have widowed many women in her midst. 26 Her priests have violated My Teaching: they have profaned what is sacred to Me, they have not separated between the holy and the profane, they have not taught the difference between the unclean and the clean, and they have closed their eyes to My Sabbaths. I am profaned in their midst. - Ezekiel 22:23-26</p>	<p>יחזקאל פרק כב (כג) וַיְהִי דְבַר יְקֹוֹק אֵלַי לְאמֹר: (כד) בְּזֶם אָדָם אָמַר לָהּ אֵת אֶרֶץ לֹא מְטֻהָרָה הִיא לֹא גִשְׁמָהּ בַּיּוֹם זָעַם: (כה) קָשָׁר וְנְבִיאֶיהָ בְּתוֹכָהּ כְּאַרְיֵי שׂוֹאֵג טֶרֶף טֶרֶף נִפְשׁ אֲכָלוּ חֶסֶן וַיִּקְרַר יִקְחוּ אֶלְמְנוֹתֶיהָ הֶרְבּוּ בְּתוֹכָהּ: (כו) כִּהְנִיָּה חֲמָסוֹ תוֹרָתִי וַיִּחַלְלוּ קִדְשֵׁי בֵּין קִדְשׁ לְחֵלֶל לֹא הִבְדִּילוּ וּבֵין הַטְּמֵא לְטָהוֹר לֹא הוֹדִיעוּ וּמִשְׁבַּתוֹתַי הֶעְלִימוּ עֵינֵיהֶם וְאַחַל בְּתוֹכָם:</p>
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This intertext provides the inverse case of separating the holy from the profane; what happens when holy and profane are *not* separated? Here the case is not narrowly limited to keeping improper intoxication from the holy sanctuary. The inability to separate between holy and profane is equated with rejecting the entire set of teachings (Torah) and profaning the holy. Not separating between holy and profane is twinned – in a reference back to Lev 10:10 – with not teaching about the distinctions between pure and impure. But the verse also includes a new element: The priests have also ignored the Shabbat. This intertext explicitly unites the concept of separating holy and profane with Shabbat itself. Failure to separate leads to (or is the same as) failure to keep the

⁶³ Another intertext, Ezekiel 42:20, which is concerned with the physical structure of the sanctuary, will be analyzed in Section IV, together with Ez. 46:1.

Shabbat.⁶⁴ This intertext broadens the implications of separating holy from profane – it is the very essence of Shabbat.

Rabbinic Understanding of Biblical Intertext

Following our method spelled out in Chapter 1, we will turn to the rabbinic understanding of the intertext in Lev 10 in order to deepen our understanding of the connotations of the *havdalah* liturgy. The *Tannaitic* text below understands the application of the prohibition against intoxication expressed in Lev 10:10 to a particular set of circumstances:

<p>“To separate between the holy and between the profane” – these refer to valuations. “between the pure and the impure” – this refers to pure and impure. “To teach the children of Israel” – this refers to teachings⁶⁵ “all the laws” – these are the interpretations/exegeses. “that God spoke to them” – this is (plain) law. “in the hand of Moses” – this is Scripture. Is it possible that Targum (=translation)⁶⁶ was also meant to be included? Thus Scripture wrote: “and to instruct.” - <i>Sifra Shemini</i> 1:9 (ed. Weiss, p. 46b)⁶⁷</p>	<p>ספרא שמיני פרשה א (ט) "ולהבדיל בין הקדש ובין החול" - אילו הערכים "בין הטמא ובין הטהור" - אילו הטמאות והטהרות, "ולהורות את בני ישראל" - אילו ההוראות, "את כל החקים" - אילו המדרשות, "אשר דבר ה' אליהם" - אילו ההלכות, "ביד משה" זה המקרא, יכול אף התרגום תלמוד לומר "ולהורות".</p>
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⁶⁴ According to some rabbinic texts, this failure to keep Shabbat then led to the destruction of the Temple. See Abaye’s opinion in *B Shabbat* 119b and *Midrash Tannaim Devarim* 5:15 (ed. Hoffmann, p. 23).

⁶⁵ This could refer specifically to *kashrut*. See Ra’avad ad loc.

⁶⁶ See Weiss’s note ad loc.

⁶⁷ See the following parallel from *B Keritot* 13b:

The text specifies the areas of law that a priest may not engage in while intoxicated. The holy and profane listed here are not general concepts, but specific dedications made to the holy Temple. The concern, spelled out by Rashi, s.v. *ha-damin ve-ha-arakhin ve-hekdeshot*,⁶⁸ is that a priest who is intoxicated will not be able to estimate the value of these dedications to the Temple accurately.⁶⁹

This understanding of the separation between holy and profane raises a different aspect of interpretation: the ability to properly value something. This ability can range from understanding the value of property to measuring the value of a human being. In addition, if the person cannot afford the “going rate” for the human value, they can pay what they can, which is also in the purview of the priest to determine (see Lev 27:8).⁷⁰ In

<p>It was taught in a <i>baraita</i>: “To separate between the holy and between the profane” – these refer to monetary worth, valuation, proscribed items, and consecrated items; “between the pure and the impure” – this refers to pure and impure. “To teach” – this refers to halakhic rulings. “all the laws” – these are the interpretations/exegeses. “that God spoke” – this is (plain) law. “in the hand of Moses” – this is logic/dialectic. Is it possible that <i>Mishnah</i> was also meant to be included? Thus Scripture wrote: “and to instruct.” R. Yosi beRebbe Yehuda says: Is it possible that Talmud was meant to be included? Thus Scripture wrote: “and to instruct.” - <i>B Keritot</i> 13b</p>	<p>תלמוד בבלי מסכת כריתות דף יג עמוד ב ת"ר: +ויקרא י' + "ולהבדיל בין הקודש ובין החול" - אלו דמין וערכין, חרמין והקדשות, "בין הטמא ובין הטהור" - אלו טמאות וטהרות, "ולהורות" - זו הוראה, "את כל החוקים" - אלו מדרשות, "אשר דבר ה'" - זו הלכה, "ביד משה" - זה תלמוד, יכול אף המשנה? ת"ל: "ולהורות"; ר' יוסי בר' יהודה אומר: "יכול אף תלמוד?" ת"ל: ולהורות.</p>
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See also *Yalkut Shim'oni Shemini* #529 (ed. Aaron Hyman (Jerusalem: Mossad Ha-Rav Kook, 1984), p. 300. For a sense of the distinction between *damin* and *arakhin*, see *M Arakhin* 5:2; *B Arakhin* 19b; and Mira Balberg, “Pricing Persons: Consecration, Compensation, and Individuality in the Mishnah,” *JQR* (N.S.) 103/2 (Spring 2013), pp. 169-195. I thank Yoni Pomeranz for bringing this source to my attention.

⁶⁸ Apparently Rashi’s text did not include *herem*. This is also the case in Ms. Vatican 119. See Appendix II for the manuscript comparisons.

⁶⁹ For more on the general categories, see Jacob Milgrom, *The Anchor Yale Bible Series: Leviticus 23-27* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), pp. 2365-2436, and Levine, *Leviticus*, pp.192-200. See also Balberg, “Pricing Persons” and Jane Kanarek, “A Woman of Value, I Can Find: Personhood and Legal Categorization in Mishnah,” forthcoming, who claims that these laws demonstrate a “non-othering” trend in rabbinic literature toward women. I thank Dr. Kanarek for sharing her work with me.

⁷⁰ Balberg, p. 174, n. 21, notes that this is the one exception to the otherwise fixed price of the human beings, laid out in Lev 27: 2-7. This is in contrast to the variable value of other objects, such as animals or

this expanded understanding of what it means to separate holy and profane, the ritual of *havdalah* takes on an element of measuring the value of humans (and other property). *Havdalah* becomes not (only) about the end of a period of time, or the dedication of a particular holy space, but (also) about the ability to value people in this world.⁷¹

Finally, while the intertext in Lev 10:10, as well as the rabbinic understanding of it, places the power of separating in the hands of the human, the blessing of *havdalah* imputes that skill to God. God is the one who is blessed as separating holy from profane. The intertext allows us to retain the command for humans to perform this act, but the prayer recognizes that the source of that skill is God. Any attempt to fulfill the command of Lev 10:10 by making separations between holy and profane is, *ipso facto*, an attempt to imitate God. The Godly association with separating will become even clearer in the next phrase under examination, discussed below.

Section II

...between light and darkness	בין אור לחושך
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Identification and Analysis of the Intertext(s)

The second “separation” in the series is between light and dark. As with other phrases we have analyzed in this and the preceding chapter, there are two intertexts here, in quick succession. The first is found in Gen 1:4, and the second in Gen 1:18. Below we bring the context for both.⁷²

property. Indeed, this may point to a biblical nod to the equality of human beings (at least controlling for gender and age). See Balberg’s discussion of Philo’s position, p. 175.

⁷¹ In Balberg’s formulation: “The procedure of monetary evaluation of human beings brings to the fore the essential question of *what is a person*, and what components or aspects of a person’s being should be taken into account when evaluating him or her” (p. 171).

⁷² The intertexts in Gen 1:4 and Gen 1:18 also bracket another separation, the third and final example in Genesis 1: the separation of the upper and lower waters (Gen 1:6-7). As noted above, this separation appears in the longer *havdalah* text in *B Pesahim* 104b, and we therefore included it in the passage below.

<p>¹ When God began to create heaven and earth — ² the earth being unformed and void, with darkness over the surface of the deep and a wind from God sweeping over the water — ³ God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. ⁴ God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, a first day. ⁶ God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the water, that it may separate water from water." ⁷ God made the expanse, and it separated the water which was below the expanse from the water which was above the expanse. And it was so. ⁸ God called the expanse Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day.</p> <p>¹⁴ God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate day from night; they shall serve as signs for the set times — the days and the years; ¹⁵ and they shall serve as lights in the expanse of the sky to shine upon the earth." And it was so. ¹⁶ God made the two great lights, the greater light to dominate the day and the lesser light to dominate the night, and the stars. ¹⁷ And God set them in the expanse of the sky to shine upon the earth, ¹⁸ to dominate the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that this was good. ¹⁹ And there was evening and there was morning, a fourth day.</p> <p>- Gen 1:1-8, 14-19</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">בראשית פרק א</p> <p>(א) בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ: (ב) וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה תְהוֹ וּבְהוּ וְחֹשֶׁךְ עַל פְּנֵי תְהוֹם וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם: (ג) וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהי אור וַיְהי אור: (ד) וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הָאֹר כִּי טוֹב וַיַּבְדֵּל אֱלֹהִים בֵּין הָאֹר וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ: (ה) וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לְאֹר יוֹם וְלַחֹשֶׁךְ קָרָא לַיְלָה וַיְהי עֶרֶב וַיְהי בֹקֶר יוֹם אֶחָד: פ בראשית פרק א (ו) וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהי רָקִיעַ בְּתוֹךְ הַמַּיִם וַיְהי מַבְדִּיל בֵּין מַיִם לְמַיִם: (ז) וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַרָקִיעַ וַיַּבְדֵּל בֵּין הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר מִתַּחַת לְרָקִיעַ וּבֵין הַמַּיִם אֲשֶׁר מֵעַל לְרָקִיעַ וַיְהי כֵן: (ח) וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לְרָקִיעַ שָׁמַיִם וַיְהי עֶרֶב וַיְהי בֹקֶר יוֹם שֵׁנִי: פ ... (יג) וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהי מְאֹרֶת בְּרָקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם לְהַבְדִּיל בֵּין הַיּוֹם וּבֵין הַלַּיְלָה וְהָיוּ לְאוֹת וּלְמוֹעֲדִים וּלְיָמִים וּשְׁנָיִם: (טו) וְהָיוּ לְמְאֹרֶת בְּרָקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם לְהָאִיר עַל הָאָרֶץ וַיְהי כֵן: (טז) וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת שְׁנֵי הַמְּאֹרֶת הַגְּדֹלִים אֶת הַמְּאֹר הַגָּדֹל לְמַמְשֶׁלֶת הַיּוֹם וְאֶת הַמְּאֹר הַקָּטָן לְמַמְשֶׁלֶת הַלַּיְלָה וְאֶת הַכּוֹכָבִים: (יז) וַיִּתֵּן אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים בְּרָקִיעַ הַשָּׁמַיִם לְהָאִיר עַל הָאָרֶץ: (יח) וְלְמַשֵּׁל בַּיּוֹם וּבַלַּיְלָה וְלְהַבְדִּיל בֵּין הָאֹר וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים כִּי טוֹב: (יט) וַיְהי עֶרֶב וַיְהי בֹקֶר יוֹם רְבִיעִי: פ</p>
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Both of these texts – Gen 1:4 and Gen 1:18 – are in literary conversation with our phrase: *hamavdil...bein or le-hoshekh*. Gen 1:4 is cited by medieval *siddur* commentators

as the intertext for our phrase.⁷³ But Gen 1:18 has strong literary connections with the previous intertext from Lev 10:10. As the Masoretic notes point out, these are the only two examples of the word *u-lehavdil* in the Torah.⁷⁴ This further strengthens the connection between the first phrase of *havdalah* (whose intertext is Lev 10:10) and the next one (Gen 1:18). The multiple options for this intertext further enrich the understanding of our phrase.

The choice of intertext is significant. Consider the first intertext, Gen 1:4. If one refers to this in the prayer, then the separation between light and darkness takes on a mythic distinction: the light and darkness that was the foundational separation of the creation story. This is not the natural instantiation of light and dark through the sun and the moon, as referenced by the second intertext (Gen 1:18); rather this is the light and darkness as core polarities.

Rabbinic Understanding of Biblical Intertext

The rabbinic understanding of Gen 1:4 is helpful in teasing out the distinction between the separation of light and dark on the first day vs. the light and darkness associated with the fourth day of creation.

⁷³ *Perushei Siddur Ha-Tefilah La-Rokeah*, vol. 2, p. 592; *Siddur Rabbenu Shlomo Mi-Germaiza*, p. 186; *Abudraham Ha-Shalem*, p. 183. See also the commentary attributed to R. Yehiel Ha-Rofe, who reports a custom of reciting the verse Gen 1:4 as part of the *havdalah*. *Sefer Seder Kiddush ve-Havdalah*, p. 87.

⁷⁴ Maharam Mi-Rotenberg (ad loc.) and *Tur* (ad loc.) connect this directly to the blessings of *havdalah*:

<p>“And to separate” – 2 (times) in the tradition. “And to separate between the light and between the darkness” (Gen 1:18); “And to separate between the holy and the profane” (Lev 10:10). That is to say that when one performs (the ritual of) <i>havdalah</i> one must also bless on the light.</p>	<p>בעל הטורים בראשית פרשת בראשית פרק א פסוק יח (יח) ולהבדיל. ב' במסורת. ולהבדיל בין האור ובין החושך. ולהבדיל בין הקדש ובין החול (ויקרא י'). לומר דכשמבדילין בין קודש לחול צריך לברך ג"כ על האור (פסחים נד א):</p>
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See also *Pirke De-Rabbi Eliezer* 20, which associates the fire that drives away darkness with the blessing: “who separates between holy and profane.” See the critical edition of this chapter provided by Rachel Adelman, *The Return of the Repressed: Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer and the Pseudepigrapha* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), pp. 289-291.

<p>Was light created on the first day? But it is written: “And God set them in the expanse of the sky” (Gen 1:17) and “And there was evening and there was morning, a fourth day” (Gen 1:18) - <i>B Hagigah</i> 12a</p>	<p>תלמוד בבלי מסכת חגיגה דף יב עמוד א ואור ביום ראשון איברי? והכתיב ויתן אתם אלהים ברקיע השמים וכתיב ויהי ערב ויהי בקר יום רביעי!</p>
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The objection of the Talmud here is critical. Light could not have been created twice, and it seems to have been created in the way that we experience it on the fourth day, not the first day. The question points to the character of the light created on the first day as something other than natural light related to sun, moon and stars. And indeed, the answer offered to this question points to the mythical, as well as moral, quality of the light of the first day:

<p>This is like R. Eleazar’s opinion. As R. Eleazar stated: The light that God created on the first day – a person could see from one end of the world to the other. When God looked (ahead) to the generation of the flood and the generation of the dispersion, and saw their evil acts, God arose and hid the light from them, as it says (Job 38:15): “He prevented the evil ones from their light.” And for whom did He hide the light? For the righteous in the future, as it says: “God saw the light that it was good” and there is no ‘good’ but for the righteous, as it says (Is 3:10) “Say that a righteous one is good...” - <i>B Hagigah</i> 12a⁷⁵</p>	<p>תלמוד בבלי מסכת חגיגה דף יב עמוד א כדברי אלעזר. דאמר רבי אלעזר: אור שברא הקדוש ברוך הוא ביום ראשון - אדם צופה בו מסוף העולם ועד סופו, כיון שנסתכל הקדוש ברוך הוא בדור המבול ובדור הפלגה וראה שמעשיהם מקולקלים - עמד וגנזו מהן, שנאמר +אויב ל"ח+ וימנע מרשעים אורם. ולמי גנזו - לצדיקים לעתיד לבא שנאמר וירא אלהים את האור כי טוב, ואין טוב אלא צדיק, שנאמר +ישעיהו ג'+ אמרו צדיק כי טוב.</p>
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The separation between light and dark here is tantamount to the separation between good and evil.⁷⁶ The light of the first day is so powerful and pure, one can see

⁷⁵ For parallel sources, see Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, vol. 5, pp. 8-9, n. 19.

⁷⁶ For additional associations between light and dark in a moral valence, see Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, vol. 5, p.16, nn. 40-42. See also Aharon Shemesh, “*Hamavdil Bein Bnai Or Livnei Hoshekh Bein Yisrael Le-Amim*,” in *Atara Le-Hayyim: Mehkarim Be-Sifrut Ha-Talmudit Ve-Ha-Rabbanit Likhvod*

through it from one end of the world to the other.⁷⁷ This light cannot coexist in a world with evil (represented by the generations of the flood and the Tower of Babel), and therefore must be spirited away for the (purely good) righteous, in the world to come.⁷⁸

However, if one refers to the light and dark of the fourth day, there is no mythic or even moral quality to the light. The light is simply the product of the natural bodies: sun, moon and stars.⁷⁹ Indeed, the light of the moon, according to one rabbinic interpretation, was as strong as the sun originally. But the moon noted that “there cannot be one crown for two kings.”⁸⁰ As a result, God lessened the moon, but also gave the light of the stars to the moon as compensation/reward for the moon’s willingness to reduce its light.⁸¹

Professor Hayyim Zalman Dimitrovsky, eds. Daniel Boyarin, et al. (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2000), pp. 209-220.

⁷⁷ Or, in an alternate formulation: “the primordial light which came into being on the first day is the material out of which the souls have been formed.” Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, vol. 5, p. 7, n. 15. Cf. Ramban to Gen 1:14.

⁷⁸ The alternative explanation is one in which the rabbis do not distinguish between the light of the first day vs. the light of the fourth day. They are synonymous and distinguished only by the light on the first day being suspended and brought into full being by the fourth day:

<p>This is like the following tannaitic debate: The light that the Holy Blessed One created on the first day, a person could look and see with it from one end of the world to the other end, thus says R. Yaakov. But the Sages say: these are the very lights that were created on the first day but were not suspended until the fourth day. - <i>B Hagigah</i> 12a</p>	<p>תלמוד בבלי מסכת חגיגה דף יב עמוד א כתנאי: אור שברא הקדוש ברוך הוא ביום ראשון אדם צופה ומביט בו מסוף העולם ועד סופו, דברי רבי יעקב. וחכמים אומרים: הן הן מאורות שנבראו ביום ראשון ולא נתלו עד יום רביעי.</p>
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⁷⁹ It is true that the moon and the stars have their own quality of light, and therefore it is not a simple distinction between light=day and dark=night. However, as Radak notes, the light of the moon and the stars pales in comparison to the sun, and therefore is dark on a relative basis:

<p>This time is called “dark” even though there is light in it, because it is dark relative to the light of day. - Radak to Gen 1:18</p>	<p>רד"ק בראשית פרשת בראשית פרק א פסוק יה ונקרא הזמן ההוא חשך אף שיש בו מאיר' לפי שהוא חשך כנגד אור היום:</p>
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⁸⁰ *B Hullin* 60b.

⁸¹ *Bereishit Rabbah* 6:4 (ed. Theodor-Albeck, p. 43). Rashi to Gen 1:16. Compare the alternative version of the *midrash* in which the moon is punished (*B Hullin* 60b).

These two intertexts allow us to hold multiple valences to the distinction between light and dark when reciting the liturgical phrase “*bein or le-hoshekh*.” In one scenario, the prayer offers us an opportunity to consider the bright line distinction between the light of good and the dark of evil. Much like the boundaries emphasized in the holy vs. profane phrase preceding (especially with Nadav and Avihu’s narrative in mind), one can view this as a warning to begin the week with a clear preference for good. The phrase reminds the worshiper that evil does indeed exist, and it must be avoided and “separated from” at all costs.

Conversely, another scenario invites the worshiper to consider the distinction between light and darkness absent its moral overtones. Darkness is not a time of evil; it is simply a natural moment in the world that God ordered from Day 4 of creation. The value of this phrase thus becomes less about moral caution and more about wonder of the safe passage from one natural cycle to another. This recalls the rabbinic understanding of the relationship between night and day as never-ending natural phenomena, but not cosmic moral enemies.⁸² Through the double intertext for this phrase, the worshiper is able to experience both of these valences to the division between light and darkness.

⁸² See *B Berakhot* 11b:

<p>Abaye said: One who rolls light (away) from the face of darkness, and darkness from the face of light. - <i>B Berakhot</i> 11b</p>	<p>תלמוד בבלי מסכת ברכות דף יא עמוד ב אמר אביי: גולל אור מפני חשך וחשך מפני אור.</p>
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The first blessing before the *Shema* in Babylonian literature incorporates this image into the text. Ginzberg notes that the liturgy could have reflected a more animate and morally charged depiction of the heavenly bodies, but didn’t:

It should, however, be observed that in the liturgy, at least as far as the old prayers are concerned the conception of the heavenly bodies as intelligent or animate beings is entirely ignored, though the opportunity has frequently presented itself to make use of this idea, as, for instance, in the morning and evening prayer, in the passages of Yozer and Ma’arib ‘Arabim.

- Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, vol. 5, p. 40, n. 112.

For an analysis of the Palestinian liturgy of *Arvit*, which does not always include Abaye’s formulation, see Fleischer, “*Keriat Shema shel Arvit Ke-Minhag Eretz Yisrael*.” See also Mann, pp. 307-308.

Section III

...between Israel and the nations	בין ישראל לעמים
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Identification and Analysis of the Intertext(s)

The third “separation” in the series is between Israel and the nations.⁸³ While the exact wording of this phrase is not found in the Torah, the medieval commentaries all point to the same intertext: Leviticus 20:26.⁸⁴ In addition, this verse is quoted at the end of numerous *havdalah* liturgies discovered in the Genizah.⁸⁵

Below is the context for this verse:

<p>You shall faithfully observe all My laws and all My regulations, lest the land to which I bring you to settle in spew you out. You shall not follow the practices of the nation that I am driving out before you. For it is because they did all these things that I abhorred them and said to you: You shall possess their land, for I will give it to you to possess, a land flowing with milk and honey. I YHVH am your God <u>who has set you apart from other peoples. So you shall set apart the clean beast from the unclean, the unclean bird from the clean.</u> You shall not draw abomination upon yourselves through beast or bird or anything with which the ground is alive, which I have set apart for you to treat as unclean. <u>You shall be holy to Me, for I YHVH am holy, and I have set you apart from other peoples to be Mine.</u></p> <p>- Lev 20:22-26</p>	<p>ויקרא פרק כ (כב) ושמרתם את כל חקתי ואת כל משפטי ועשיתם אתם ולא תקיאו אתכם הארץ אשר אני מביא אתכם שמה לשבת בה: (כג) ולא תלכו בחקות הגוי אשר אני משלח מפניכם כי את כל אלה עשו ואקח בם: (כד) ואמר לכם אתם תירשו את אדמתם ואני אתננה לכם לרשת אתה ארץ זבת חלב ודבש אני יקח אלהיכם אשר <u>הבדלתי אתכם מן העמים:</u> (כה) <u>והבדלתם בין הבהמה הטהרה לטמאה</u> ובין העוף הטמא לטהר ולא תשקצו את נפשתיכם בבהמה ובעוף ובכל אשר תרמש האדמה אשר <u>הבדלתי לכם לטמא:</u> (כו) <u>והייתם לי קדושים כי קדוש אני יקח ואבדל אתכם מן העמים להיות לי:</u></p>
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⁸³ In some texts the word *goyim* is found instead of *amim*. See above, n. 10 and the first three columns of Appendix I to this chapter.

⁸⁴ *Perushei Siddur Ha-Tefilah La-Rokeah*, vol. 2, p. 592; *Siddur Rabbenu Shlomo Mi-Germaiza*, p. 186; *Abudraham Ha-Shalem*, p. 183.

⁸⁵ See Appendix I; Schechter, *Studies in Jewish Liturgy*, p. 118; and Ezra Fleischer, “*Shivatot-Havdalah Eretz Yisraeliot*,” *Tarbiz* 36 (1967), pp. 342-365, here pp. 361 and 365. T-S NS 198.98, cited in Appendix I, also includes Deut 26:19 as an intertext. Similar to Lev 20:27 (analyzed below), this verse connects the election of Israel to the behavior of Israel in following the commandments.

As Milgrom notes, verses 24-26 are formed in a chiasm.⁸⁶ God separates between Israel and the people (v. 24b and 26) while Israel separates the clean and unclean animals (v. 25). The biblical context makes clear that the separation between Israel and the nations is not based on inherent superiority, but rather on behavior. In Milgrom's words: "Israel is not innately holy; it is commanded to strive for holiness...Holiness for Israel is achieved by following God's commandments...."⁸⁷ The way that Israel achieves holiness is through its own act of *imitatio dei* – separating between the animals (much as God has separated between the people).⁸⁸ The larger context of this chapter makes clear that the other nations are known not by their inherent traits either, but through their immoral actions (v. 23). The act of separating from these immoral actions is concretized through the act of separating the animals.⁸⁹

Relating the biblical context back into the prayer, two areas are further illuminated. First, the connection between the previous phrase (light and dark of the Creation story) is clearer. Because separation was an essential part of the creation process, this act of separation by Israel in Leviticus serves as the culmination of the

⁸⁶ Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22*, p. 1760.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 1740. R"l bar Yakar explicitly states that the separation in *havdalah* here is between the peoples who keep Shabbat and the peoples who don't, implying that the holiness is dependent on a particular behavior. See *Perush Ha-Tefilot Ve-Ha-Berakhot*, vol. 1, p. 122.

⁸⁸ "Israel is enjoined to live a life of imitation and separation, the former by fulfilling God's commandments, and the latter by separating from impure food as a reminder to separate from the destructive folkways of other peoples....[I]t is Israel's responsibility to realize on earth the divine attributes holiness (*qds*) and separation (*hdl*)." Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22*, pp. 1762, 1764.

⁸⁹ "Israel must keep itself apart from the immoral practices of other nations, just as it eschews their dietary practices. This function of the diet laws is made explicit at the end of our chapter (vv. 25-26), where the theme of separation (*hibdil*) is the explicit bond and common denominator between dietary habits and nationhood." *Ibid.*, p. 1739. In his analysis of the anthropological aspects of *havdalah*, Hoffman (*Beyond the Text*, pp. 39-40) identifies the rabbis as the group who imposed a system of order through separation. However it is clear from this intertext that the effort at maintaining distinction long predates the rabbinic era.

creation story described in Genesis.⁹⁰ This helps connect the creation theme of the previous phrase of *havdalah* (*bein or le-hoshekh*) to the separation theme in this phrase (*bein yisrael le-amim*). In addition the words of *havdalah* are praising *God* for making separations, but this biblical text recalls *our own* imitation of *God's* separating acts. This is re-enacted in the ritual the worshiper is performing: separating Shabbat from the rest of the week. Much like *God* separated in creation and the Israelites separate through food, so too *God* is praised for cosmic separations while the worshiper is performing an act of separation.

Rabbinic Understanding of Biblical Intertext

There are three comments in quick succession from the *Sifra* that add another dimension to this intertext. We bring them below (labeled by section):

<p>[A] “You shall be holy to Me, for I YHVH am holy” (Lev 20:26a) – Just as I am holy, so you should be holy. Just as I am separate, so you should be separate.⁹¹</p> <p>[B] “and I have set you apart from other peoples to be Mine” (Lev 20:26b) – If you are separate from the nations, then you will be Mine. But if not, you will be Nebuchadnezzar’s, King of Bavel, and his colleagues.</p> <p>[C] R. Eleazar ben Azariah said: What is the scriptural source that a person should not say: ‘I don’t want to wear mixed (wool and linen) clothing; I don’t want to eat pig; I don’t want to have illicit sex?’ Rather (he should say) ‘I want to! But what can I do? My father in heaven decreed upon me thus.’</p>	<p>ספרא קדושים פרק יא</p> <p>(כא) והייתם לי קדושים כי קדוש אני ה', כשם שאני קדוש כך אתם (קדושים) היו קדושים, כשם שאני פרוש כך אתם היו פרושים. (כב) ואבדיל אתכם מן העמים להיות לי, אם מובדלים אתם מן העמים הרי אתם לשמי ואם לאו הרי אתם של נבוכדנצר מלך בבל וחבריו, ר' אלעזר בן עזריה אומר מנין שלא יאמר אדם אי איפשי ללבוש שעטנז אי אפשי לאכול בשר חזיר, אי איפשי לבוא על הערוה, אבל איפשי מה אעשה ואבי שבשמים גזר עלי כך ת"ל ואבדיל אתכם מן העמים להיות לי נמצא פורש מן העבירה ומקבל עליו מלכות שמים.</p>
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⁹⁰ “...the separation of Israel from the nations accomplished by Israel’s separation from much of the animal world consumed by the nations helps complete the divine process of creation...[J]ust as God created order out of chaos in the *natural* world by his act of separation (*hibdil*, Gen 1:4, 7, 14, 18), so the separation of Israel from the nations is essential not just for Israel’s survival, but for an orderly *human* world.” Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22*, pp. 1761, 1764 (emphasis in original).

⁹¹ This pairing of *q-d-s* and *p-r-s* is further support to Milgrom’s theory, above n. 88, that holiness and separation are linked (despite the use of a different root – *p-r-s* instead of *b-d-l*).

<p>Scripture wrote: “and I have set you apart from other peoples.” That is, one should keep apart from sin and receive upon himself the kingdom of heaven. - <i>Sifra Kedoshim</i> 11:21-22 (ed. Weiss, p. 93b)⁹²</p>	
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We begin our analysis with Section B, and will return to Section A below. Section B brings further proof of Milgrom’s claim that the separateness of Israel is not inherent, but entirely based on their behavior. This section makes clear that only through Israel’s actions do they belong to God.⁹³ But if their actions falter, they are subdued by Nebuchadnezzar, the figure who represents the opposite of God’s rule on earth.⁹⁴ The implication for the ritual of *havdalah* is important: this is not a ritual exhortation of a superior people reminding themselves of their innate relationship with God; rather it is a reminder that the connection to the holy is behavior-driven. Once the ethics of the worshiper fray, he has signaled that he is aligned with the enemies of God.

Section C adds a further dimension to the separation between Israel and the nations. According to R. Eleazar ben Azariah, Israel and the nations are actually united on the desire to commit sins. The “*id*” aspect of both nations are, in fact, equal. The only distinction is that Israel is enjoined to contain this urge and instead submit to the kingdom of heaven. Relating this back to the prayer, the recitation of the separation between Israel and the nations is less a description of a state of being and more a call to action: *if* one is

⁹² Cf. Rashi to Lev 20:26 and Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22*, p. 1764.

⁹³ Cf. *Bamidbar Rabbah* 10:1, where R. Yehoshua b. Levi defines the differences between Israel and the nations as based on their unique agricultural *actions*.

⁹⁴ This also implies that the state of being a member of the “nations” is not unchangeable. Their ability to convert allows them to be part of the holy people as well. See R Hanina’s opinion in *Midrash Ha-Gadol* Lev 20:26 (ed. Adin Steinsaltz (Jerusalem: Mossad Ha-Rav Kook, 1976), p. 584). Cf. *Pesikta De-Rav Kahana* 5:5 (ed. Mandelbaum, vol. 1, p. 86) *Pesikta Rabbati Hahodesh* 4 (ed. Friedmann, p. 69b); *Bamidbar Rabbah* 10:3; *Shir Ha-Shirim Rabbah* 6:4

to be truly separated from the nations, one must recognize one's urges and nevertheless conquer them. *Havdalah* becomes a moment to reflect on those urges and acknowledge them, but also gird oneself for the possibility of subduing them.

Finally, Section A adds an important corrective to the entire frame of holiness as it relates to a people (and indeed changes the understanding of Sections B and C, which for ease we have analyzed first). Even if one follows the commands (as articulated in Section C) and avoids the false path of Nebuchadnezzar (as noted in Section B), one will still never be in a full state of holiness. Read carefully, Section A draws a distinction between God's *state* of holiness (*kadosh*) and Israel's *attempt* to be holy (*he-yu kedoshim*).⁹⁵ The *midrash* is pointing to the use of the word *heyitem* (instead of *atem li kedoshim*, or some variant thereof). The state of holiness is never fully achieved by humans. It is something that can only be striven after.⁹⁶ This is a critical distinction to acknowledge, for even though worshipers can *attempt* to be holy, only God is *actually* holy.⁹⁷ Reciting the *havdalah* ritual reminds the worshiper to strive for holiness, but to

⁹⁵ Although see *Sifra Shemini* 12:3-4 (ed. Weiss, p. 57a), where the text reads: *ke-shem she'ani kadosh kach atem kedoshim*.

⁹⁶ See Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22*, p. 1605: "Thus, on the one hand, Israel should strive to imitate God, but on the other hand, it should be fully aware of the unbridgeable gap between them." Cf. *Vayikra Rabbah* 24:9, ed. Margolioth, p. 565. Milgrom (*Ibid.*) notes that every time *q-d-s* refers to God, it is spelled *plene*, but with Israel it is spelled defective. Following God's commands "leads to God's attribute of holiness, but not to the same degree – not to God, but to godliness." *Ibid.*, p. 1606. See also Yeshayahu Leibowitz, *Sheva Shanim shel Sifot 'al Parashat Ha-Shavu'a* (Jerusalem: Keter, 2000), pp. 680-681 as well as his articulation below:

In human reality the category of holiness...signifies both the goal toward which we must strive, and the striving itself. But it does not denote any existing entity. Within the confines of human reality there is only functional holiness. Essential holiness pertains to God alone....Man is not intrinsically holy; his holiness is not already existing and realized in him. It is rather incumbent upon him to achieve it. But the task is eternal. It can never be fulfilled except through a never-ending effort.

- Yeshayahu Leibowitz, *Judaism, Human Values and the Jewish State*, ed. Eliezer Goldman (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), p. 46

My thanks to Rabbi Shai Held for directing me to these two sources.

⁹⁷ According to another rabbinic understanding (*Sifra Kedoshim* 1:1, ed. Weiss, p. 86b), God's holiness is not determined by Israel's behavior, despite the temptation to see them as related.

never be audacious enough to believe that he has achieved holiness. The ritual is a moment of articulating a goal, not emphasizing a fact.

Section IV

...between the seventh day and the six days of creation	בין יום השביעי לששת ימי המעשה
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Identification and Analysis of the Intertext(s)

The fourth “separation” in the series is between the seventh day and the six other days of the week. While this fits the pattern of the previous binaries in form, it is distinct in that it does not quote a phrase from the Bible that contains the root *b-d-l*, thus violating R Yehoshua b. Levi’s rule.⁹⁸ Indeed, the medieval *siddur* commentators do not point to the intertext of this line, presumably because it does not fit the rule.⁹⁹ However, this phrase still has a biblical intertext.

Identifying this intertext is a bit complex, because the phrase does not have a verbatim intertext in the Bible. Some possible candidates are Ex 23:12; 31:15; 31:17; 35:2; and Lev 23:3:

Six days shall you do your work, but on the seventh day you shall cease... - Ex 23:12	שמות פרק כג (יב) שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲשֶׂה מְעֹשֶׂיךָ וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי תִשְׁבֹּת... שמות פרק לא (טו) שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים יַעֲשֶׂה מְלֶאכֶה וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שַׁבַּת שְׁבֹתוֹן קֹדֶשׁ לִיקְנוֹךְ... שמות פרק לא (יז) ...כִּי שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים עָשָׂה יְקֹוֹק אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שָׁבַת וַיִּנְפֹּשׁ:
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⁹⁸ See above, n. 36.

⁹⁹ See *Perushei Siddur Ha-Tefilah La-Rokeah*, vol. 2, p. 592; *Abudraham Ha-Shalem*, p. 183; *Siddur Rabbenu Shlomo Mi-Germaiza*, p. 186; The latter calls this phrase “*ikar havdalah*” – the essence of *havdalah*.

<p>Six days may work be done, but on the seventh day you shall have a holy ceasing of complete ceasing to YHVH... - Ex 35:2</p>	<p>שמות פרק לה (ב) שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲשֶׂה מְלָאכָה וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי יִהְיֶה לָּכֶם קֹדֶשׁ שַׁבַּת שְׁבֹתוֹן לַיהוָה... ויקרא פרק כג (ג) שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲשֶׂה מְלָאכָה וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שַׁבַּת שְׁבֹתוֹן מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ...</p>
<p>Six days may work be done, but on the seventh day there shall be a ceasing of complete ceasing, a sacred occasion... - Lev 23:3</p>	<p>שמות פרק לה (ב) שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲשֶׂה מְלָאכָה וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי יִהְיֶה לָּכֶם קֹדֶשׁ שַׁבַּת שְׁבֹתוֹן לַיהוָה... ויקרא פרק כג (ג) שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲשֶׂה מְלָאכָה וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שַׁבַּת שְׁבֹתוֹן מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ...</p>

Indeed, each of these contrasts the “doing” of work six days a week to the ceasing on the seventh day.¹⁰⁰ However, in looking for the intertext for our phrase, none of them offers the exact phrase: “six days of doing” = *sheshet yemei ha-ma’aseh*. In fact, that phrase only appears once in the Bible:

<p>Thus has the Lord YHWH proclaimed: The east gate of the inner court will be closed, during the six working days but open on the Sabbath day and open on the new moon. - Ezekiel 46:1 (Milgrom/Block translation, unpublished, with minor modifications)¹⁰¹</p>	<p>יחזקאל פרק מו (א) כֹּה אָמַר אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה שַׁעַר הַקֶּצֶר הַפְּנִימִית הַפְּנִיָּה קְדִים יִהְיֶה סָגוּר שֵׁשֶׁת יָמֵי הַמַּעֲשֶׂה וּבַיּוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת יִפְתָּח וּבַיּוֹם הַחֹדֶשׁ יִפְתָּח:</p>
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The disadvantage of this possible intertext is that it is missing the phrase “seventh day” – *yom ha-shevi’i*, instead using “the Sabbath day” – *yom ha-Shabbat*. The choice is significant, for in almost all the previous options, the distinction between the six days vs. the seventh is the ability to do work (*melakhah*). In the phrase from Ezekiel, however, the distinction does not mention work at all; instead it is focused on the Temple gate (we will analyze this image further below).

¹⁰⁰ Interestingly, the word “*sheshet*” does not appear in Gen 1 or 2, which one might have expected, given the associations of the creation week with *havdalah*. See, for instance, *Pirke De-Rabbi Eliezer* 20 (above, n. 74).

¹⁰¹ My thanks to Talia Milgrom-Elcott and Jeremy Milgrom for arranging to deliver me this unpublished edition of Ezekiel by Jacob Milgrom. The translation was based on that of Daniel Block.

One possible support for the Ezekiel text as the intended intertext is the version of *havdalah* from one of the Genizah fragments published by Ezra Fleischer.¹⁰²

<p>You have separated Between darkness and light Between upper and lower waters Between sea and dry land Between impure and pure Between Shabbat and the six days of work Between Israel and the nations As it says: “You shall be holy to Me, for I YHVH am holy, and I have set you apart from other peoples to be Mine.” (Lev 20:26) And it says: “A man may arrange his thoughts, but what he says depends on YHVH.” (Prov 16:1) Blessed....who graces with knowledge¹⁰³</p>	<p>MS Adler 2824, p. 16</p> <p>אתה הבדלת בין חושך לאור בין המים העליונים לתחתונים בין הים ליבשה בין הטמא לטהור בין השבת לששת ימי המעשה בין ישראל לגוים כאמור והייתם לי קדושים פי קדוש אני יקנך ואבדל אתכם מן העמים להיות לי ונא<מר> לאדם מערכי לב ומיקנך מענה לשון ברוך <אתה יי> חונן הדעת</p>
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Here the intertext clearly seems to be Ez 46:1, as both terms – *yom ha-Shabbat* and *sheshet yemei ha-ma’aseh* – are used. Below we bring the larger context for this intertext:

<p>1. Thus has the Lord YHWH proclaimed: The east gate of the inner court will be closed, during the six working days but open on the Sabbath and open on the new moon. 2. Having entered through the vestibule of the gatehouse the prince will stand by the doorpost, while the priests offer up both his whole burnt offering and his well-being offering. He will then bow low on the threshold of the gatehouse and leave; the gatehouse, however, will not be closed until evening. 3. The general population will [also] bow low before YHWH at the entrance of that gatehouse on the Sabbath and the new moons. – Ez 46:1-3 (Milgrom/Block translation)</p>	<p>יחזקאל פרק מו (א) פה אמר אדני יקנך שער הַחֲצַר הַפְּנִימִית הַפְּנֵה קָדִים יִהְיֶה סָגוּר שֵׁשֶׁת יָמֵי הַמַּעֲשֵׂה וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִת יִפְתַּח וּבַיּוֹם הַחֲדָשׁ יִפְתַּח: (ב) וּבֹא הַנָּשִׂיא דָרָךְ אוֹלָם הַשַּׁעַר מְחוּץ וְעָמַד עַל מְזוֹזַת הַשַּׁעַר וְעָשׂוּ הַכֹּהֲנִים אֶת עוֹלָתוֹ וְאֶת שְׁלָמָיו וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוּהוּ עַל מַפְתָּן הַשַּׁעַר וַיֵּצֵא וְהַשַּׁעַר לֹא יִסָּגֵר עַד הָעֶרֶב: (ג) וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ עִם הָאָרֶץ פְּתַח הַשַּׁעַר הַהוּא בַשְּׁבִעִת וּבַחֲדָשִׁים לִפְנֵי יִקְנָךְ</p>
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¹⁰² For this and other Genizah fragments, see Appendix I.

¹⁰³ Fleischer, *Tefilah U-Minhagei Tefilah*, p. 28.

This is part of a much larger angelic tour of the future restored Temple, in exact measurements and detail (Ez 40-48).¹⁰⁴ Two additional texts from this larger selection – Ez 42:20¹⁰⁵ and Ez 44:1-3 – will be important to our analysis of the specific intertext of Ez 46:1:

<p>When he had finished the measurements of the inner Temple [area], he led me out by way of the gate which faces east, and he measured the entire area... Thus he measured it on four sides; it had a wall completely surrounding it, 500 [cubits] long on each side, to separate the holy from the profane. - Ez. 42:15, 20</p>	<p>יחזקאל פרק מב (טו) וְכִלְהָ אֶת מְדוֹת הַבַּיִת הַפְּנִימִי וְהוֹצִיאֲנִי דְרָךְ הַשַּׁעַר אֲשֶׁר פְּנֵיו דְרָךְ הַקְּדִים וּמְדוֹדוֹ סָבִיב סָבִיב... (כ) לְאַרְבַּע רוּחוֹת מְדוֹדוֹ חוּמָה לּוֹ סָבִיב סָבִיב אַרְךְ חֲמֵשׁ מֵאוֹת וְרֹחֵב חֲמֵשׁ מֵאוֹת לְהַבְדִּיל בֵּין הַקֹּדֶשׁ לְחֵל:</p>
<p>Then he led me back by way of the outer gate of the sanctuary that faces east; but it was closed. 2. Then YHWH said to me, This gate will remain closed; it must not be opened! And no one may go through it because YHWH, Israel's God, has gone through it. Therefore, it must remain closed. 3. But the <i>nāśîṭ</i>, and only the <i>nāśîṭ</i>, may be seated there to dine before YHWH. He will enter by way of the vestibule to the gate and exit the same way. – Ezekiel 44:1-3 (Milgrom/Block translation)</p>	<p>יחזקאל פרק מד (א) וַיֵּשֶׁב אֹתִי דְרָךְ שַׁעַר הַמְּקֹדֶשׁ הַחִיצוֹן הַפְּנִיָה קְדִים וְהוּא סָגוּר: (ב) וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלַי יְקֹנֵק הַשַּׁעַר הַזֶּה סָגוּר יִהְיֶה לֹא יִפְתָּח וְאִישׁ לֹא יָבֹא בּוֹ כִּי יְקֹנֵק אֵלָהִי יִשְׂרָאֵל בָּא בּוֹ וְהָיָה סָגוּר: (ג) אֶת הַנְּשִׂיאַת נְשִׂיאָהּ הוּא יֵשֶׁב בּוֹ לֹאכֹל לְאַכֵּל לְחֶם לְפָנָי יְקֹנֵק מִדְּרָךְ אֶלֶם הַשַּׁעַר יָבֹא וּמִדְּרָכּוֹ יֵצֵא:</p>

First, as noted in Section I, the connection between holy and profane is illustrated through space (as opposed to time). Specifically, it is the wall and the gate that function as the physical barrier between holy and profane.¹⁰⁶ In addition, this physical separation is intimately connected to the arrival of the presence of God. The closing of the gate after

¹⁰⁴ See generally, Walter Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel – Chapters 25-48*, trans. James D. Martin (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), pp. 327-328 and Jon D. Levenson, *Theology of the Program of Restoration of Ezekiel 40-48* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1976).

¹⁰⁵ See above, n. 63.

¹⁰⁶ See Zimmerli, p. 404. Rimon Kasher, *Mikra Yisrael: Yehezkel* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2004), p. 823.

the re-entry represents a permanence of God's presence. God no longer intends to abandon the city and the people; in this vision, God is here to stay.¹⁰⁷ This provides more interpretive richness to the binary of *kodesh* and *hol*, analyzed above in Section I. But it also relates to our intertext (Ez 46:1): while the outer gate is closed forever, the inner gate is open on Shabbat and Holidays.¹⁰⁸ The opening of this gate provides a different image – one in which the presence of God is more palpable, inducing the people to prostrate in front of the open gate (Ez 46:3).

Relating this back to the *havdalah* prayer, this phrase offers a different image of the end of Shabbat. Instead of the time image, closely related to *bein or le-hoshekh* (Section II), this phrase offers a spatial image, as in Section I. But the spatial image is one that is also distinct from that described in Section I. Here it is a closing gate instead of a holy precinct. The worshiper can thus experience the ritual of *havdalah* – and specifically its final line in the litany of separations – as an invitation to feel the closing of a gate which – when open – leads to the presence of God.¹⁰⁹ This is a powerful example of the distinction between Shabbat and the rest of the week, which may be marked not only by the return to work (see the possible intertexts from the Torah above), but also for its distancing from God's presence.¹¹⁰

In addition, the ethical imperatives of the previous phrases (esp. Section III) take further shape with this set of intertexts. The return of God's presence, and the opening of

¹⁰⁷ “[God] closes behind him the doors which he no longer intends to open for a new departure of the nature of that in 11:23. Thus, in addition, the closed gate could proclaim also [God's] fidelity.” Zimmerli, p. 440.

¹⁰⁸ Most commentators, modern and traditional, note the distinction between these two gates as outer and inner. However, cf. Rashi ad loc.

¹⁰⁹ “The cosmic significance of the Temple, then, is owing to the presence of God within rather than to the Temple as a human artifact to serve as a place of worship.” Levenson, p. 10.

¹¹⁰ In certain ways, this imagery recalls the *neilah* imagery at the end of Yom Kippur. See R. Yohanan's opinion that the gates being locked were the Temple gates (as opposed to Rav who claimed the gates were the heavenly gates = skies). *Y Berakhot* 4:1; 7c.

the gate on Shabbat and holidays, only follows the correct instruction by the priests themselves (Ez 44:23).¹¹¹ The separation between holy and profane is a precursor to the return of God to the sanctuary, and the regular opening of the gates on a weekly basis. The ethical demands on the worshiper (noted in Section III above) take further shape in this section. By alluding to the text that follows the ethical rejuvenation of the priesthood, the *havdalah* ritual offers the worshiper additional literary reminders of the need to maintain a moral and distinct life, especially at this liminal moment in the week.

Rabbinic Understanding of Biblical Intertext

One rabbinic understanding of these texts from Ezekiel adds another layer of interpretation to the phrase “*bein yom ha-shevi’i le-sheshet yemei ha-ma’aseh.*”

<p>“Rabbi Yehuda says: On New Moons and Shabbatot, Israel sits there and sees the doors open by their own accord, and knows that the Shekhina (presence) of God is there, as it says: “For YHVH the God of Israel came into it” (Ez 44:2). Immediately they fall and prostrate before God, both in the past and in the future, as it says: “And the nation (will) prostrate at the opening of that gate on Shabbatot and holidays.” (Ez 46:3)”</p> <p>– <i>Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer</i> 50 (51)</p>	<p>פרקי דרבי אליעזר (היגר) - "חורב" פרק נ ר' יהודה אומ' בחדשים ובשבתות ישראל יושבים שם ורואין את הדלתות נפתחין מאליהם ויודעין ששכינתו של הב"ה שם, שנ' כי ה' אלהי ישראל בא בו מיד כורעים ומשתחוים לפני האלהים, וכן לשעבר וכן לעתיד, שנ' והשתחוו עם הארץ פתח השער ההוא בשבתות ובחדשים</p>
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In R. Yehuda’s understanding of the biblical intertext, we encounter another emotion – one of longing. On Shabbat and new moons, in this *midrash*, the people Israel are sitting outside the sanctuary, but looking at the open door, and feeling the presence of God. They react in worship by falling prostrate to the ground. They attempt to strengthen a relationship in the face of an opportunity, an open door.

¹¹¹ “The lack of order in the behavior of the priests before the great time of judgment will find no further place in the new temple of the future.” Zimmerli, p. 460.

R. Yehuda also connects the text from Ez 46:3 to the future vision of a redeemed world. Playing with the word *ve-hishtahavu*, he interprets that as an imperfect verb, pointing to the future. For R. Yehuda, the vision of Ezekiel presents a picture of the past as well as a goal for the future. This is also significant for the ritual moment of *havdalah*, when the Shabbat, which is a “taste” of the world to come,¹¹² is ending. By completing the ritual with an allusion to the perfect time – a time which is entirely Shabbat – the *havdalah* liturgy leads the worshiper to long for a full redemption.¹¹³

Addendum – Hatimah Variants

Blessed are You, God, who separates holy from profane	ברוך אתה ה' המבדיל בין קודש לחול
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Ultimately, the *havdalah* liturgy returns to the theme of *kodesh* and *hol* in the *hatimah*. The intertexts and significance of this phrase were analyzed above in Section I. Yet the *baraita* analyzed above indicates a multiplicity of opinions regarding the correct *hatimah*.¹¹⁴ Below are the suggestions in the Bavli, coming at the end of the *baraita* on *B Pesahim* 104a. I have presented the relevant opinions about the correct *hatimah* below:

<p>One concludes with: “orderer (or order) of creation.” Others say: with: “fashioner of creation”¹¹⁵</p> <p>R. Yosi son of R. Yehuda says: one concludes with “who sanctifies Israel.”... What is the conclusion?</p> <p>Rav says: “who sanctifies Israel”</p> <p>And Shmuel says: “Who separates between holy and profane”... It is taught in the name of R. Yehoshua ben</p>	<p>תלמוד בבלי מסכת פסחים דף קד עמוד א וחותם בסדר בראשית. ואחרים אומרים ביוצר בראשית. רבי יוסי ברבי יהודה אומר: חותם מקדש ישראל... מחתם מאי חתים? רב אמר: מקדש ישראל ושמואל אמר: המבדיל בין קודש לחול...</p>
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¹¹² See *M Tamid* 7:4; *B Rosh Hashannah* 31a; *B Sanhedrin* 97a; *B Tamid* 33b; *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Yishmael Ki Tissa* (ed. Horowitz-Rabin, p. 341).

¹¹³ The theme of redemption and *havdalah* is further supported by the references to Elijah at the end of the expanded ceremony. See Hoffman, *Beyond the Text*, p. 44.

¹¹⁴ See generally Groner, pp. 197-8. See also Meir Bar-Ilan, p. 31, n. 36.

¹¹⁵ Compare R. Simai’s text of *modim* in *Y Berakhot* 1:5; 3d.

Hanania ¹¹⁶ : “Whoever concludes with ‘who sanctifies Israel and who separates between holy and profane’ – his days and years are lengthened. - <i>B Pesahim</i> 104a	תנא משמיה דרבי יהושע בן חנניא: כל החותם מקדש ישראל והמבדיל בין קודש לחול - מאריכין לו ימיו ושנותיו.
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The first option offered, *ve-hotem be-seder bereishit*, appears differently in a number of manuscripts.¹¹⁷ Thus the major versions of the *hatimah* are:

מקדש ישראל והמבדיל בין קודש לחול	המבדיל בין קודש לחול	מקדש ישראל	יוצר בראשית	ס[ו]דר[י] בראשית
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Given that the *hatimah* represents the theme of the blessing in general, it is significant that the three basic distinctions in the *hatimot* represent the three basic themes in the *havdalot* discussed above. A decision to use the *hatimah*: *yotser bereishit* or *soder bereishit* indicates a thematic unity around the creation themes in the *havdalot* (emphasizing distinctions brought earlier in the *baraita* such as: *bein or le-hoshekh* and *bein mayim ha-elyonim le-mayim ha-tahtonim*).¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Or: R. Yehoshua b. Levi. See *Dikdukei Soferim*, p. 158b, note ב.

¹¹⁷ The major differences include:

וחותם בסדר בראשית (Columbia X893, JTS 1623, Munich 95,	וחותם בסדרי בראשית (JTS 1608, Munich 6, Vatican 125, Lunzer-Sassoon)	וחותם בסודר בראשית (Oxford, Venice)
--------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------

Rashi, s.v. *ve-hotem be-seder bereishit*, also seems to have the manuscript of *be-soder bereishit* or at least implies that is the *hatimah* being suggested. Vatican 109 has וחותם במ בראשית, which we will discuss further below (n. 118).

¹¹⁸ This tendency to close with creation in the *hatimah* probably includes the abbreviation וחותם במ בראשית of Vatican 109, which stands for *be-ma'aseh*. A possible fleshing out of this option occurs in the manuscript published by Menahem Zulay, occurring at the end of a host of requests following a poetic *havdalah* echoing T-S NS 198.98 (brought in Appendix I). It reads:

Blessed are You, YHVH, who renews the acts of creation and graces knowledge.	ב" אתה יי מחדש מעשה בראשית וחונן הדעת
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The *mem* of Vatican 109 might be short for *ma'aseh* or *mehadesh*. It reflects a *hatimah* following directly on a phrase like *sheshet yemei ha-ma'aseh*. Either way, it seems directed at a creation theme. See Zulay, “*Le-Heker Ha-Siddur*,” p. 306. See also the discussion of this text in Fried, “*Minhagim ‘Lo Yedu’im’ Ba-Tefilah*,” (1999), p. 110, n. 63 and p. 113, n. 81. For more on the contextual meaning of *soder bereishit*, see *B Shabbat* 53b.

A decision to use the *hatimah* of *mekadesh yisrael* indicates a focus on the separations between Israel and the nations, or even within Israel. This recalls the separations in the *baraita* including: *bein yisrael le-amim* and *bein kohanim le-levi'im ve-yisraelim*.

Shmuel's choice for a *hatimah*, *hamavdil bein kodesh le-hol*, recalls the "ritual fitness" explored in Section I (see also p. 129 above).¹¹⁹ The compromise position offered by R. Yehoshua b. Hanania (or b. Levi) attempts to harmonize the disagreement about whether to have a *hatimah* that reflects the beginning or the end of the blessing, by incorporating *both* the beginning and the end into the *hatimah*.

Conclusion

The case of *havdalah* proves very rich when considered in light of its intertexts. Following the liturgical rule of R. Yehoshua b. Levi (or Levi), the texts preserved for *havdalah* have direct resonance with a variety of biblical narratives. We have shown that these intertexts expand the typical association of *havdalah* beyond the context of the creation story to include the spatial images of the Temple consecration and tragedy of Nadav and Avihu; the mythic creation of light and time; the moral distinctions between the peoples who *behave* in God's ways vs. those who don't; and the return to a rebuilt Temple in which holy and profane are clearly separated. Once these intertexts were matched with a rabbinic understanding of the biblical verses, the potential for added meaning and association in the liturgical text expanded greatly.

¹¹⁹ Interestingly, Shmuel's statement reflects an opinion, associated with Pumbedita (and opposed to Shmuel (!) above on *B Pesahim* 104a) in which the *hatimah* should reflect the opening, not the closing, phrase.

In addition, we saw how the structure of *havdalah* itself points to specific recurring themes in the ritual. The intertexts helped us to understand why certain linguistic choices were made, including the ordering of *tamei* before *tahor*. These structural clues led us to better identify the intertexts and their broader themes.

Havdalah was the most explicit example of intertexts standing behind the liturgical text, articulated through R. Yehoshua b. Levi's rule. We now turn our attention to a final and much more subtle version of intertext allusion in the *vidui*.

Appendix I

<p>T-S H.2/152¹</p> <p>...המבדיל בין קדש לקדש בין שבת קדש ליום מקרא קדש בין טמא לטהור בין הים לחרבה בין מים העליונים למים התחתונים בין ישראל לגוים בין קדושת שבת לקדושת יום טוב וכתוב והייתם לי קדשים כי קדוש אני יקוק ואבדל אתכם מן העמים להיות לי ב א יי המבדיל בין קודש לקודש</p>	<p>Westminster College, Liturgica II/85²</p> <p>...המבדיל בין קדש לחול בין המים העליונים למים התחתונים בין הים ליבשה בין ישראל לגוים בין יום השביעי לששת ימי המעשה בין אור לחושך³ וכתוב והייתם לי קדשים כי קדוש אני יקוק ואבדל אתכם מן העמים להיות לי וכתוב כי יקוק יתן חכמה מפיו דעת ותבונה ב...חונן הדעת</p>	<p>Adler 2824, p. 16⁴</p> <p>אתה הבדלת בין חושך לאור בין המים העליונים לתחתונים⁵ בין הים ליבשה בין הטמא לטהור בין השבת לששת ימי (בראשית) המעשה בין ישראל לגוים כאמור והייתם לי קדשים כי קדוש אני יקוק ואבדל אתכם מן העמים להיות לי ונאמר לאדם מערכי לב ומיקוק מענה לשון ברוך אתה יי חונן הדעת</p>	<p>T-S NS 198.98⁶</p> <p>אשר בעוז הבדיל בין קדש לחול בתו ניקוה⁷ בתוך בדל מים ממים גבול רחב מגבול רחבת דברו: להבדיל נהארא מעממא השריץ והעיף הזחיל והרמיש התוה והבדיל טהור מטמא זה יום נחת בדלו משה חשקו לנחלה לעם בדולי מעממים... ככתוב ולתתף עליון על כל הגוים אשר עשה לתהלה ולשם ולתפארת ולהיתף עם קדש ליקוק אלהיך כאשר דבר ונאמר והייתם לי קדשים כי קדוש אני יקוק ואבדל אתכם מן העמים להיות לי</p>	<p><i>Siddur Rav Sa'adia Gaon</i>, pp. 123-4⁸</p> <p>[אל] המבדיל בין קודש לחול ומצפין לנוגה-חמה וחותם בעד כוכבי הרקיע... אותנו הבדלת להיות לך לעם כי אהבתנו ערבה לפניך... אמת אמונה אמרה איומה הבדילני דודי מטמאת ארץ פתרוס בעת רדו בי צוענים בפרך ויכלה באף לוחצי מובדלים ויצמיתם בחצים עשרה ויוציא לאור מבדילים על אור ומכבים אורנו באבדון השקיע ויקרע ים סוף לפני מובדלים וירוממו למבדיל בין קודש לחול בעת שהבדילם פצו לו רגנות ונעמו לו זמירות נער וזקן כעלו מן הים ענו ואמרו מי כמוכה</p>
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¹ Naftali Wieder, "The Old Palestinian Ritual – New Sources," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 4 (1953), p. 36.

² Ibid.

³ Wieder (p. 37, n. 4) supposes this phrase was originally missing, as in the T-S H.2/152 fragment, but later added in (out of place).

⁴ Ezra Fleischer, *Tefilah U-Minhagei Tefilah*, p. 28.

⁵ The phrase appears this way, without the additional *la-mayim* in the Vatican 125 manuscript of the *B Pesahim* 104a. See Appendix III.

⁶ This column and the following are in poetic form. Fleischer, *Tefilah U-Minhagei Tefilah*, p. 79. For additional sources, see *Ibid.*, n. 143.

⁷ Fleischer suggests this is a scribal error and should be read *tikra* as in the parallel manuscripts.

⁸ Also printed in Fleischer, *Tefilah U-Minhagei Tefilah*, p. 81. I have omitted the proof texts introduced by *she-ne'emar* in the poem.

			ברוך אתה יי המבדיל בין קדש לחול	באלים יי וג" על שפת הים עמדו מובדלים ופצו זמירות לאל שהבדילם משבעים לשונות הודו והמליכו ואמרו יי ימלוך לעולם ועד תחיש ישועה לזרע מובדל לך תגאול ותושיע לעם נושע בך... לך נפאר אל מושל בכל כי אתה הבדלת בין קודש לחול...
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Appendix II

Vilna	Venice Print 1522	Vatican 120	Vatican 119	Munich 95	London – BL Add. 25717 (402)	Florence II-I-7
ת"ר {ויקרא י' ולהבדיל בין הקודש ובין החול אלו דמין וערכין חרמין והקדשות בין הטמא ובין הטהור אלו טמאות וטהרות ולהורות זו הוראה את כל החוקים אלו מדרשות אשר דבר ה' זו הלכה ביד משה זה תלמוד יכול אף המשנה ת"ל ולהורות ר' יוסי בר' יהודה אומר יכול אף תלמוד ת"ל	תנו רבנן ולהבדיל בין הקודש ובין החול אלו דמין וערכין חרמין והקדשות בין הטמא ובין הטהור אלו טמאות וטהרות ולהורות זה הוראה את כל החוקים אלו מדרשות אשר דבר ה' זו הלכה ביד משה זה תלמוד יכול אף המשנה תלמוד לומר ולהורות רבי יוסי בר יהודה אומר יכול אף התלמוד תלמוד לומר	תנו רבנן להבדיל בין הקודש ובין החול אילו דמין וערכין חרמין והקדישין בין הטמ' ובין הטהור אל(א)[ו] טמאות וטהרות ולהור' זו הוראה את כל החוקים אילו המדרש' אשר דבר יי' זו הלכה ביד משה זו תלמוד	תנו רבנן ולהבדיל בין הקודש ובין החול אילו דמין וערכין והקדשו' בין הטמא ובין הטהור אילו טמאות וטהרות ולהורות זו הוראת את כל החקים אילו מדרשות אשר דבר יי' זו הלכה ביד משה זו תלמוד יכול אפילו משנה ת"ל להורות ר' יוסי בר' יהוד' או' יכול אפילו תלמוד ת"ל	תנו רבנן ולהבדיל בין הקדש ובין החול אלו דמים וערכין חרמים והקדשות בין הטמ' ובין הטהור אלו טמאות וטהרות ולהורות זו הוראה את כל החקים אלו המדרשות אשר דבר יי' זו הלכה ביד משה זה תלמוד	תנו רבנן ולהבדיל בין הקדש ובין החול אילו דמין וערכין חרמין והקדשות בין הטמא ובין הטהור אילו טמאו' וטהרות ולהורות זו הוראה את כל החקים אילו המדרש' אשר דבר יי' זו הלכה ביד משה זה תלמוד	תנו רבנ' ולהבדיל בין הקודש ובין החול אילו דמים וערכין חרמים והקדישות בין הטמא ובין הטהור אילו טמאות וטהרות ולהורות זו הוראה את כל החוקים אילו המדרשות אשר דיבר יי' זו הלכה ביד משה זו תלמוד

ולהורות	ולהורות	ולהורות	להורות		ולהורות	ולהורות
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Appendix III

<u>PESAHIM 104a</u> <u>Munich 6</u>	<u>PESAHIM 104a</u> <u>Munich 95</u>	<u>PESAHIM 104a</u> <u>New York - JTS</u> <u>Rab. 1608 (ENA</u> <u>850)</u>	<u>PESAHIM 104a</u> <u>New York - JTS</u> <u>Rab. 1623 (EMC</u> <u>271)</u>	<u>PESAHIM 104a</u> <u>NY -</u> <u>ColumbiaX893</u> <u>T141</u>	<u>PESAHIM 104a</u> <u>Oxford Opp. Add.</u> <u>fol. 23</u>
<p>אמ' ר' יהושע בן לוי המבדיל צריך שיאמר מעין הבדלות שבתורה מיתיבי סדר הבדלות כיצד המבדיל בין קדש לחול בין אור לחשך בין ישראל לגוים בין יום השביעי לששת ימי המעשה בין טמא לטהור בין הים לחרבה בין מים העליונים למים התחתונים</p>	<p>א"ר יהושע בן לוי המבדיל צריך שיאמר מעין הבדלות האמורות בתורה מתיבי סדר הבדלות היאך המבדיל בין קדש לחול בין אור לחשך בין ישראל לגוים בין יום השבי' לששת ימי המעשה בין הטמא לטהור בין הים לחרבה בין מים עליונים למים התחתונים</p>	<p>אמ' ר' יהוש' בן לוי המבדיל צריך שיבדיל מעין הבדלות שבתורה' מתיבי סדר הבדלות אומ' המבדיל בין קדש לחול בין אור לחשך בין ישראל לגוים בין יום השביעי לששת ימי המעשה בין טמא לטהור בין הים לחרבה בין מים העליונים למים התחתונים</p>	<p>אמר ר' יהושע בן לוי המבדיל צריך שיאמר מעין הבדלות האמור <...>ת בתורה מותיבי סדר הבדלות כיצד המבדיל בין קדש לחול בין אור לחשך בין ישראל לגוים בין יום השביעי לששת ימי המעשה בין טמא לטהור בין הים לחרבה בין מים העליונים למים התחתונים</p>	<p>אמ' ר' יהושע בן לוי המבדיל צריך שיאמר מעין הבדלות האמורות בתורה מותיבי סברי שסדר הבדלות כיצד המבדיל בין קודש לחול ובין אור לחושך ובין ישראל לגוים ובין יום השביעי לששת ימי המעשה בין טמא לטהור בין הים לחרבה בין מים העליונים למים התחתונים</p>	<p>א"ר יהושע בן לוי המבדיל צריך שיאמר מעין הבדלות האמורות בתורה מיתיבי סדר הבדלו' כיצד המבדיל בין קדש לחול ובין אור לחשך ובין ישראל לגוים ובין יום השביעי לששת ימי המעשה בין טמא לטהור בין מים העליונים למים התחתונים בין הים ליבשה בין כהנים ולוים וישראל והותם בסודר בראשית ואחר כך אומ' ביוצר בראשית ור' יוסי בר' יהודה אומ' מקדש ישראל</p>
<p>בין כהנים ללוים וישראל והותם בסדרי בראשית אחרים אומרים ביוצר בראשית ר' יוסי בר' יהודה אומר מקדש ישראל</p>	<p>בין כהנים ללוים וישר' והותם בסדר (ברא) בראשית ואחרים אומרי' ויוצר בראשית ר' יוסי בר' יהודה או' מקדש השבת ישראל</p>	<p>בין כהנים ללוים וישראל והותם בסדרי בראשית ואחרים אומרים ביוצר בראשית ר' יוסי בר' יהודה אומ' מקדש ישראל</p>	<p>בין כהנים ללוים וישראל והותם בסדר בראשית אחרים אומרין ביוצר בראשית ר' יוסי בי ר' יהודה אומ' מקדש ישראל</p>	<p>בין כהנים ליש' וללוים והותם בסדר בראשית אחרים אומ' ביוצר בראשית ר' יוסי בר ר' יהודה אומ' מקדש ישראל</p>	<p>בין כהנים ולוים וישראל והותם בסודר בראשית ואחר כך אומ' ביוצר בראשית ור' יוסי בר' יהודה אומ' מקדש ישראל</p>

<u>PESAHIM 104a</u> <u>Lunzer-Sassoon</u>	<u>PESAHIM 104a</u> <u>Vatican 109</u>	<u>PESAHIM 104a Venice</u> <u>(1520?)</u>	<u>PESAHIM 104a</u> <u>Vatican 134</u>	<u>PESAHIM 104a</u> <u>Vatican 125</u>
<p>א"ר יהושע ב"ל המבדיל צריך שיבדיל מעין הבדלות</p> <p>כיצד אומ' המבדיל בין קודש לחול בין אור לחושך בין ישראל לגוים בין יום השביעי לששת ימי המעשה בין הטמא לטהור בין הים לחרבה בין מים העליונים למים התחתונים (בין כהנים ללויים בין לויים לישראל) [נ"א בין כהנים ללויים וישראל] וחותם בסדרי בראשית ואחרים אומ' ביוצר בראשית ר' יוסי בר' יהוד' אומ' מקדש ישראל</p>	<p>אמ' ר' יהושע בן לוי המבדיל צריך שיאמר מעין הבדלות שבתורה מיתיבי סדר הבדלות כיצד המבדיל בין קודש לחול בין אור לחשך בין ישראל לגוים בין יום השביעי לששת ימי המעשה בין טמא לטהור בין הים לחרבה בין מים העליונים למים התחתונים בין כהנים ללויים וישראל</p> <p>[וחותם במ בראשית ? אור ? ר' יוסי בר' ימ אור מקרי ישראל]</p>	<p>א"ר יהושע בן לוי המבדיל צריך שיאמר מעין הבדלה האמורות בתורה מיתיבי סדר הבדלו' היאך אומ' המבדיל בין קודש לחול בין אור לחושך בין ישראל לעמים ובין יום השביעי לששת ימי המעש' בין טמא לטהור בין הים לחרבה בי' מים העליוני' למים התחתוני' בין כהנים ללויים וישראלים</p> <p>וחותם בסודר בראשית ואחרי אומ' ביוצר בראשית ר' יוסי בר' יהוד' אומ' חותם מקד' ישר'</p>	<p>א"ר יהושע בן לוי המבדיל צריך שיאמר מעין הבדלות האמורות בתורה מיתיבי סדר הבדלות האמורות היאך המבדיל בין קודש לחול ובין אור לחשך בין ישר' לגוים ובין יום השביעי לששת ימי המעשה בין טמא לטהור בין הים לחרבה בין מים העליונים למים התחתונים בין כהני' לללויים</p> <p>וחותם בסד' בראשית ואחרים אומ' יוצר בראשית ר' יוסי בר' יהודה או' מקדש ישראל</p>	<p>אמ' ר' יהושע בן לוי המבדיל צריך שיאמר [מע... בדל..ת. ..תורה מיתיבי המבדיל צריך שיאמר המבדיל בין קודש לחול בין או.. לחושך..] בין יום השביעי לששת ימי המעשה בין טמא לטהור בין הים לחרבה בין מים העליונים לתחתונים בין כהנים ללויים וישראל</p> <p>וחותם בסידרי בראשית אחרים אומ' יוצר בראשית ר' יוסי בר' ר' יהודה אומ' מקדש ישראל</p>

Chapter 4: The Confession Liturgy

Our final example of the literary-intertext method will focus on the confession liturgy.¹ This gives us the opportunity to examine a Talmudic-era prayer that – in some versions – does not directly quote a biblical passage (such as those prayers analyzed in the previous two chapters), but rather, to use Hays’s terminology, is an echo of a (or multiple) biblical passage(s).² In this way, we expand the interpretive method laid out in this study beyond the direct linking through exact quotation.

Individual confession³ is one of the oldest forms of prayer, and is found in the later books of the Bible.⁴ While some rabbinic confessions have no textual source

¹ On confession in the liturgy generally see: *T Berakhot* 3:6 (ed. Lieberman, p.13) and *T Kippurim* 4(5):14 (ed. Lieberman, pp. 254-255) and related Talmudic *sugyot*, discussed below; Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy*, p. 125; Baer, *Seder Avodat Yisrael*, pp. 414-416; *Seder Rav Amram Gaon* (ed. Frumkin, vol. 2, pp. 338-340); Ze’ev Yaavetz, *Mekor Ha-Berakhot* (Berlin, 1910), pp. 34-36; Arthur Marmorstein, “The Confession of Sins for the Day of Atonement,” in *Essays in Honour of the Very Rev. Dr. J. H. Hertz*, eds. I. Epstein, E. Levine and C. Roth (London: Edward Goldston, 1942), pp. 293-305; *Netiv Binah*, vol. 5, pp. 286-315; Lawrence Hoffman, *The Canonization of the Synagogue Service* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1979), pp. 102-107; and the articles in *Seeking the Favor of God, Volume 3: The Impact of Penitential Prayer beyond Second Temple Judaism*, eds. Mark Boda, Daniel Falk and Rodney Werline (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2008). For a popular, but still useful, overview, see *We Have Sinned: Sin and Confession in Judaism*, ed. Lawrence Hoffman (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights, 2012), esp. pp. 3-12. Some of the ideas in this chapter were first discussed in that volume. See Elie Kaunfer, “*Aval Chatanu* (But/In Truth We Have Sinned): A Literary Investigation,” pp. 181-185. Note Heinemann’s claim that, in contrast to Christianity, “[t]he confessional prayer is not, then, to be regarded as a separate category of prayer which would rank as one of the fundamental constituents of the Jewish statutory liturgy.” Heinemann, *Prayer in the Talmud*, p. 250.

² See Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, p. 20. In Hays’s terminology, we move, especially in the final section of this chapter, from allusion to echo. “[A]llusion is used of obvious intertextual references, echo of subtler ones.” *Ibid.*, p. 29. As Hays states elsewhere, “One implication of my work is that we cannot confine our investigation of Pauline intertextuality to passages in which there is an explicit quotation...of a source.” Hays, “On the Rebound,” p. 88. Lieber, “Confessing from A to Z” (p. 107) notes how some *paytanim* purposely altered biblical quotes “transforming quotations into allusions.” We intend to identify a similar phenomenon here.

³ For the translation of *vidui* as “declaration,” and not “confession,” see Saul Lieberman, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1962), p. 140, n. 11; Lieberman, *Tosefta Kifshuta*, vol. 1, p. 31, n. 11; Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, p. 301; and Heinemann, *Prayer in the Talmud*, p. 206. For other interpretations of this root in prayer, see David Kaufmann, “The Prayer-Book According to the Ritual of England Before 1290,” *JQR* (O.S.) 4/1 (1891), pp. 20-63, here p. 26; Adolf Neubauer, “Miscellanea Liturgica: The Etz Chayim,” *JQR* (O.S.) 6/2 (1894), pp. 348-354, here pp. 351-352. Avraham Wiesel, “*Nusakh Murhav shel Birkat ‘Elohah Neshamah*,” *Ha-Ma’ayan* 40/2 (2000), pp. 32-48, here p. 46; *Otzar Tefilot* (Nusah Sefarad) (New York, 1946), *Etz Yosef* commentary, p. 1113.

⁴ See the so-called “basic four” examples: Ezra 9:5-15; Neh 1:4-11; Neh 9:4-10:40; and Dan 9:3-19. Cf. Richard Sarason, “The Persistence and Trajectories of Penitential Prayer in Rabbinic Judaism,” in *Seeking the Favor of God*, pp. 1-38, here p. 1. Compare the overly schematized appraisal by Heiler, *Prayer: A Study in the History and Psychology of Religion*, p. 322.

accompanying their prayer (cf. *B Shabbat* 153a), a number report actual words for liturgy.⁵ In contemporary Jewish prayer, the liturgical confession mode finds expression in two general arenas: (1) fast days (esp. Yom Kippur),⁶ and (2) daily prayers.⁷ The latter category includes the daily *Tahanun* service,⁸ the morning blessings (*birkhot ha-shahar*) liturgy,⁹ and some prayers recited connected to the *amidah*.¹⁰ While these present us with

⁵ See, for example, *B Ta'anit* 9b, *B Kiddushin* 81b, *B Sotah* 22a, discussed in Tzvi Aryeh Steinfeld, "Nefilat Apayim Ve-Isur Even Maskit," *Sidra* 3 (1987), pp. 53-79, here pp. 60-61. See further p. 53, nn. 1-2.

⁶ See generally Joseph Tabory, *Mo'adei Yisrael Bitkufat Ha-Mishnah Ve-Ha-Talmud* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2000), pp. 285-291; Shimon Diskin, "Be-Inyan Vidui Yom Ha-Kippurim," *Moriah* 16 (1989), pp. 57-59. For Genizah versions of this confession, see Ismar Elbogen, "Die Tefilla fur die Festtage," *MGWJ* 55 (1911), pp. 426-446. and 586-599, esp. pp. 597-598 (discussed by Ezra Fleischer, *Tefilah U-Minhagei Tefilah*, pp. 126-128); Jacob Mann, "Genizah Fragments," p. 331; Ezra Fleischer, "Keta'im Mi-Kovtzei Tefilah Eretz-Yisraeliyim Min Ha-Genizah," in *Tefilot Ha-Keva*, vol. 1, pp. 603-701, esp. pp. 643-645 and pp. 677-678, 697; and Wieder, "Le-Heker Minhag Bavel Ha-Kadmon," in *Hitgabshut*, vol. 1, pp. 18-20. The Yom Kippur confession also has come to include the liturgy said for one about to die. *B Shabbat* 32a and 153a note the requirement to confess before death, but do not quote a text for the liturgy; Cf. *Sifre Bamidbar* 2 (ed. Kahane, vol. 1, p. 13 and vol. 2, p. 44, n. 104) and *Semakhot de-Rabbi Hiyya* 1:2 (ed. Higger, pp. 211-12 and cf. his comments in the Introduction, p. 60). This may be connected to the requirement to confess before accepting capital punishment. See *M Sanhedrin* 6:2; *Semakhot* 2:7 (ed. Higger, p. 105). *Tur* YD 338:1 transfers the text from Yom Kippur (*T Kippurim* 2:1; *B Yoma* 36b) to the moment of death. He also cites the Ramban's text for a death-bed *vidui*, the earliest mention of this practice, which does not have a precedent in the Talmudic-era literature. See *Kitvei Ramban*, ed. Hayyim Chavel (Jerusalem: Mossad Ha-Rav Kook, 1964), vol. 2, p. 47. See further Heinemann, *Prayer in the Talmud*, p. 187, n. 37; Marmorstein, "The Confession of Sin," p. 305. But cf. Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, vol. 4, pp. 22-24. For the relationship between Yom Kippur and death generally, see *T Kippurim* 4(5):8-9 (ed. Lieberman, p. 252).

⁷ See Sarason, "The Persistence." For the movement of the confession liturgy from Yom Kippur to daily prayer, see Daniel Goldschmidt, "Vidui," in Idem, *Mehkarei Tefilah U-Fiyut*, pp. 369-371; Wiesel, pp. 33-34. See also the differing practice between Rava (who recited a confession daily) and Rav Hammuna (who recited the same confession on Yom Kippur) in *B Yoma* 87b, analyzed below.

⁸ Sarason, "The Persistence," pp. 33-38; Daniel Goldschmidt, "Vidui," p. 369-370; Solomon Freehof, "The Origin of the Tahanun," *HUCA* 2 (1925), pp. 339-350; Ruth Langer, "We Do Not Even Know," pp. 39-70, esp. the chart on pp. 41-44. See generally Steinfeld.

⁹ See Wiesel; Marx, "Birkhot Ha-Shahar Be-Genizat Kahir"; Eadem, *Birkhot Ha-Shahar Be-Genizat Kahir (Bet): Iyunim Be-Mashma'utan*, "Ginzei Kedem" 4 (2008), pp. 9-34. Wiesel (p. 36) claims the confession texts in the expanded *Elohai Neshama* prayer have their source in Eretz Yisrael *piyyut*, although it is not clear that these were known in the Talmudic era. These morning prayers also became a model for the confession in the evening prayer before sleep. See Marx, *Birkhot Ha-Shahar Be-Genizat Kahir (Bet)*, p. 20, n. 27.

¹⁰ See *B Berakhot* 16b-17a; *Y Berakhot* 4:2; 7d. Freehof (p. 342) claimed that these individual prayers of the rabbis following the *amidah* "are the first Tahanun texts." See further Benovitz, *Talmud Ha-Igud*, pp. 532-533, and n. 7; Sarason, "The Persistence," pp. 31-33. For the debate about where to add these personal confessions to the *amidah* (preceding, following, or inside), see *B Avodah Zara* 7b-8a. Cf. Langer, "We Do Not Even Know," p. 45 and Marmorstein, "The Confession of Sins," pp. 300-305. For a treatment of confessional themes inside the *amidah* text itself, see Sarason, "The Persistence," pp. 19-25; Reuven Kimelman, "The Penitential Part of the Amidah and Personal Redemption," in *Seeking the Favor of God*,

many options for confessional prayers, we will restrict our analysis to a selected few that have clear Talmudic-era provenance and illustrate our approach.

Talmudic-Era Sources

We begin our analysis by focusing on the *locus classicus* for the confession to be recited on Yom Kippur: *B Yoma* 87b.¹¹ Below we present this text,¹² and then focus our analysis on some of the individual confessions.¹³

What does one say [as the confession]?	תלמוד בבלי מסכת יומא דף פז עמוד ב מאי אמר? - (1) אמר רב: אתה יודע רזי עולם.
1) Said Rav: You know the secrets of eternity... ¹⁴	

pp. 71-84 and Stefan Reif, “The Amidah Benediction on Forgiveness: Links between Its Theology and Its Textual Evolution,” in *Seeking the Favor of God*, pp. 85-98.

¹¹ For a different confession see *Yoma* 8:7; 45c and parallel in *Vayikra Rabbah* 3:3 (ed. Margolioth, pp. 61-2), discussed briefly by Yaavetz, p. 35 as well as Wiesel, p. 36 and Louis Ginzberg, *Perushim Ve-Hidushim Be-Yerushalmi*, vol. 3, pp. 226-228; For a translation, see Sarason, “The Persistence,” p. 26. For medieval quotations of these texts, with variations, see the version in *Sefer Rokeah*, ed. Barukh Schneerson (Jerusalem, 2009), p. 29 and the version in *Arugat Ha-Bosem*, ed. Ephraim Urbach (Jerusalem: Mekitze Nirdamim, 1947), vol. 2, p. 146. Note there that *lehivvado* – confess – is replaced by *oseh teshuvah* – do repentance.

The confessional poem that begins “*ashamnu, bagadnu*” is a post-Talmudic composition, and therefore not part of our analysis. Abrahams notes (p. 381) it “cannot be traced earlier than the eighth century.” For this prayer, see Daniel Goldschmidt, *Mahzor Le-Yamim Nora'im*, vol. 2, p. 10-11; *Siddur Rav Sa'adia Gaon*, Introduction, p. 27, n. 49; Wiesel, p. 37, n. 36; and Lieber, “Confessing from A to Z,” p. 111. However, see Davidson, *Otzar Ha-Shirah Ve-Ha-Piyyut* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1925), vol. 3, p. 270. Compare the version of the core six sins mentioned in *Sefer Ra'aviah*, vol. 2, p. 192 and n. 10; *Shibbolei Ha-Leket Ha-Shalem* # 320 (ed. Buber, Vilna, 1897), p. 149a; and the three mentioned in *Shibbolei Ha-Leket Ha-Katzar*, noted by Buber in n. 8 as well as Sa'adiah's text: *Siddur Rav Sa'adiah Gaon*, p. 259.

¹² See the manuscript comparison in Appendix I.

¹³ For discussions of this text, see Goldschmidt, *Mahzor Le-Yamim Nora'im*, vol. 2, p. 10 and n. 11 (He considers these texts a forerunner to *piyyut*); Moshe Weinfeld, “The Morning Prayers (*Birkhoth HaShachar*) in Qumran and in the Conventional Jewish Liturgy,” *Revue de Qumran* 13 (1988), pp. 481-494, esp. pp. 486-489; Aharon Mirsky, *Ha-Piyyut* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1991), pp. 75-76; Heinemann, *Prayer in the Talmud*, pp. 213-214 (for a form-critical analysis). For the question of whether to say a concluding blessing for the *vidui*, see Lieberman, *Tosefta Kifshuta*, vol. 4, p. 831; B. M. Lewin, *Otzar Ha-Geonim* (Jerusalem, 1934), vol. 6, pp. 39-40; Tzvi Groner, “*Ha-Berakhah al Ha-Vidui Ve-Gilguleha*,” *Bar Ilan* 13 (1976), pp. 158-168. Wieder, *Hitgabshut*, vol. 1, pp. 48-50; Hoffman, *The Canonization of the Synagogue Service*, pp. 106-107; Tabory, *Mo'adei Yisrael*, pp. 286-287.

¹⁴ *Halakhot Gedolot* recommends to say Rav's text for the *vidui* on Yom Kippur, although it is not expanded upon beyond the initial words. See ed. Ezriel Hildesheimer (Jerusalem: Mekitze Nirdamim, 1972), vol.1, p. 318. Cf. *She'iltot Vezot Ha-Berakhah* #167 (ed. Mossad Ha-Rav Kook (Jerusalem, 1999), p. 298). The full text of this confession (and what is commonly said in contemporary *mahzorim*) is in *Halakhot Pesukot (Ra'u)*, ed. Aryeh Leib Scholssberg (Paris, 1886), p. 21. However, Danzig considers this an addition influenced by *Halakhot Gedolot*. See Neil Danzig, *Mavo Le-Sefer Halakhot Pesukot* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1999), p. 522, n. 50. (For the relationship between these two works generally, see Danzig, pp. 52-61.) For another example of Rav's *incipit* expanded upon in the liturgy, see

2) And Shmuel said: [You know the] depths of the heart... ¹⁵	(2) ושמואל אמר: ממעמקי הלב.
3) And Levi said: And in Your Torah it is written... ¹⁶	(3) ולוי אמר: ובתורתך כתוב לאמר.
4) R. Yohanan said: Master of the universe... ¹⁷	(4) רבי יוחנן אמר: רבון העולמים.

Wieder, *Hitgabshut*, p. 18, n. 25 (and addendum on p. 58). In mystical literature, see Gershom Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1965), p. 104:

You know the secrets of eternity, And investigate wisdom and hidden ways	אתה יודע רזי עולם וחוקר חכמות ודרכי נסתרות
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------

Cf. Schäfer, *Synopse*, pp. 204-205 (#548) and Bar-Ilan, p.130. See other references to *razei olam* in *Synopse*, p. 8 (#14).

¹⁵ In a variety of sources this text varies, giving rise to this translation by Sarason. See further below.

¹⁶ In many medieval authorities (e.g. Rashi ad loc.; *Sefer Yera'im* # 263 (ed. Schiff (Vilna, 1899), p. 120b)), as well as Oxford Opp. Add. fol. 23 and the Spanish print of Yoma 87b (see Appendix I), the quote is given as Lev 16:30: "For on this day atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you of all your sins; you shall be clean before YHVH." See Rabbinowicz, *Dikdukei Soferim*, vol. 4, p. 155a, n. ג. Indeed many early scholars accepted this association, including: Baer, *Seder Avodat Yisrael*, p. 44; Salomon Rapoport, "*Toledot Rabbi Eleazar Qallir*," *Bikkurei Ha-Itim* 10 (1829), pp. 95-123, here p. 117; Landshuth, p. 13; Davidson, *Otzar Ha-Shirah Ve-Ha-Piyyut*, vol. 3, p. 370, # 386; Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy*, p. 79; Zvi Karl, *Mehkarim Be-Toldot Ha-Tefilah* (Tel Aviv: Twersky, 1950), p. 59; Eliezer Ha-Levi, *Yesodot Ha-Tefilah* (Tel Aviv: Avraham Zioni, 1962), p. 131; Goldschmidt also held this position (*Mahzor*, vol. 2, p. 10, n. 11), as does Jeffrey Cohen, *Prayer and Penitence: A Commentary on the High Holy Day Machzor* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1983), p. 157 and p. 278, n. 64. But cf. Tabory, *Mo'adei Yisrael*, p. 288, who notes that even if this is the biblical verse Levi refers to, we don't know the full confession.

It is worth noting that Levi, who quotes directly from the Torah, is the author (according to the Yerushalmi; in the Bavli it was his son) of the rule that one can choose any *havdalah* as long as it is mentioned in the Torah. See Chapter 3 of this study, p. 124. Levi's suggestion also raises the question of the function of direct quotes from the Bible, cited as such, as the core of prayer. On this subject see further Elizur, "*Sharsherot Ha-Pesukim*."

¹⁷ Rashi (ad loc.) and others have connected this to the confession liturgy in the morning blessings. See Goldschmidt, *Mahzor Le-Yamim Nora'im*, p. 10, n. 11. But cf. the opinion of Abraham Schechter, *Studies in Jewish Liturgy*, pp. 61-62 and Tabory, *Mo'adei Yisrael*, p. 288.

All manuscripts of the Talmud preserve his statement as *ribbon ha-olamim*, not *ribbon kol ha-olamim*. Abraham Schechter (p. 62) notes this in his argument against associating this confession with the prayer in *birkhot ha-shahar*. However, a number of liturgies are also missing the word *kol*, thus matching it to R. Yohanan's statement. See Baer, *Seder Avodat Yisrael*, p. 44. To his list should be added: *Mahzor Vitry* (ed. Goldschmidt, vol. 1, p. 8, 102); *Beit Yosef* OH 46:8; R"i bar Yakar (ed. Yerushalmi, p. 2 – note that R"i bar Yakar also had a more extended version of the *nusakh*, as noted by *Shu"t Rashba"sh* #49, but does not appear in the version that we have of his commentary); *Abudraham* (ed. Brown, p. 142). While we are sympathetic to Schechter's claim, this cannot be the proof of it.

There are other selections in *birkhot ha-shahar* that mention the phrase "*ribbon ha-olamim*" with other texts following, which in theory could also be the confession of R. Yohanan. See Wiesel, p. 39; Marx, "*Birkhot Ha-Shahar Be-Genizat Kahir*," pp. 119, 128, 132, but cf. p. 133; Mann, "Genizah Fragments," p. 278:

Master of all the worlds, don't decree on me a death sentence, not in this year and not on this day...	רבון כל העולמים אל תוציא עלי גזירת מות לא בשנה הזאת ולא ביום הזה...
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See Wieder's comments on this text in *Hitgabshut*, vol. 2, p. 502-503. Compare the alternate version in Kaufmann, p. 36, beginning with Dan 9:18a instead of Dan 9:18b. R. Yohanan's confession could also be identified with the *Tahanun* text from *Seder Rav Amram Gaon* (ed. Goldschmidt, p. 37):

<p>5) R. Yehuda said: Indeed our iniquities are too many to enumerate, our sins too numerous to count.¹⁸</p> <p>6) Rav Hamnuna said: My God, Before I was formed I was of no worth, and now that I have been formed, it is as if I had not been formed. Dust am I in my lifetime, so much the more so in my death. Behold I am like a vessel full of shame and reproach. May it be Your will that I sin no more. And as for the sins that I have committed – wipe them away in Your mercy, but not through suffering. This is the confession that Rava recited all year long, and that Rav Hamnuna the Younger recited on the Day of Atonement.</p> <p>7) Mar Zutra said: These were recited only if one had not [already] said: Indeed we have sinned. But if one had said: Indeed we have sinned, no more is necessary.¹⁹ For Bar Hamdudi²⁰ said: I was standing before Shmuel, and he was sitting. When the prayer leader arrived and said: Indeed we have sinned, he stood up. I thought: This is proof that this is the essence of confession.²¹</p>	<p>(5) רבי יהודה אמר: כי עונותינו רבו מלמנות וחטאתינו עצמו מספר.</p> <p>(6) רב המנונא אמר: אלהי, עד שלא נוצרתי איני כדאי עכשיו שנוצרתי כאילו לא נוצרתי עפר אני בחיי קל וחומר במיתתי הרי אני לפניך ככלי מלא בושה וכלימה יהי רצון מלפניך שלא אחטא ומה שחטאתי מרוק ברחמיך אבל לא על ידי יסורין.</p> <p>והיינו וידויא דרבא כולה שתא. ודרב המנונא זוטא ביומא דכפורי.</p> <p>(7) אמר מר זוטרא: לא אמרן אלא דלא אמר אבל אנחנו חטאנו. אבל אמר אבל אנחנו חטאנו - תו לא צריך. דאמר בר המדודי: הוה קאימנא קמיה דשמואל, והוה יתיב, וכי מטא שליחא דצבורא ואמר אבל אנחנו חטאנו קם מימם. אמר, שמע מינה: עיקר וידוי האי הוא.</p>
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<p>Master of all the worlds, “and the lord of lords, the great might and awesome God (Deut 10:17)” have mercy on us, for we are your servants, and the making of your hands. Flesh, dust, worm and maggot (cf. Job 25:6).</p>	<p>סדר רב עמרם גאון (הרפנס) נפילת אפים וקדושה דסידרא רבון כל העולמים ואדוני האדונים האל הגדול הגבור והנורא רחם עלינו שאנו עבדיך ומעשה ידיך בשר עפר רמה ותולעה.</p>
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Cf. *Tur* OH 131 and *Mahzor Vitry* (which has *ribbon ha-olamim*), ed. Goldschmidt, p. 147. There it is identified with Rav Sheshet’s prayer, which also begins *ribbon ha-olamim*, but has a different conclusion in *B Berakhot* 17a. It is interesting to note that in *B Berakhot* 17a, Rav Hamnuna and R. Alexandri’s prayer also begins *ribbon ha-olamim*. Given the variety of endings with the beginning of “*ribbon ha-olamim*,” even in the Talmud, it is impossible to know how R. Yohanan’s prayer ended.

¹⁸ Tabory (*Mo’adei Yisrael*, p. 288) considers this text the middle of a confession because it begins with the word “*ki*.”

¹⁹ Until this point the translation is taken from Sarason, “The Persistence,” pp. 27-28. Compare the translation in Hoffman, *We Have Sinned*, pp. 254-255. For this ruling see *Halakhot Gedolot* (ed. Hildesheimer, vol. 1, p. 324= *Otzar Ha-Geonim* vol. 6, p. 38, #102). Note the difference there concerning the word “*anahnu*,” added in ed. Hildesheimer, but not in ed. Avraham Shimon Troib (p. 63). Cf. *Sefer Ra’aviah*, ed. Aptowitz, p. 185.

²⁰ See the variants on this name (which appears only once in rabbinic literature) in Appendix I. See also *Otzar Ha-Geonim*, vol. 6, p. 62; Alexander Kohut, *Arukh Ha-Shalem* (Vienna, 1878-92), vol. 2, p. 175.

²¹ The fact that Shmuel himself offered a text for confession beyond *aval (anahnu) hatanu* is unusual. This was noted already by Yaavetz, p. 34; Ha-Levi also notes this difficulty and proposes that these confessions were additions to the basic confession of *aval anahnu hatanu*. See Ha-Levi, p. 262.

Identification and Analysis of the Intertext(s)

Although these texts have been expanded in various medieval liturgies, “[i]t is not clear whether these fuller texts are later expansions based on the talmudic incipits or whether they represent talmudic-era formularies that simply have been abbreviated by the talmudic text.”²² We will focus our analysis on the statements of Shmuel above (one attributed directly to him, and one reported by his student Bar Hamdudi). Both will represent a more allusive intertextual reference than the ones we have analyzed in previous chapters.

Section I

“...from the depths of the heart...”	...ממעמקי הלב...
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Textual Variants

This is a curious text, and it is one that will be instructive for us because of its opacity. As we dig into the possibilities for this text, using the philological methods described in the Introduction, we will explore how some texts that seem to be mere echoes or allusions to biblical quotes may actually be direct quotes.²³ Either way, the textual variety for this type of prayer allows us to reconsider the clear conceptual dichotomy between direct quote and allusion.

²² Sarason, “The Persistence,” p. 27. Already Zunz was also unsure whether Rav wrote the full text that we recite in the *mahzor*. See Zunz, *Ha-Derashot Be-Yisrael*, p. 181. Cf. *Shibbolei Ha-Leket* #319 (ed. Buber, p. 148b): *kol eleh rashei viduiyin hein* – “these are all beginnings of confessions,” referring to the texts in *B Yoma* 87b. See the expansions of Levi and R. Yohanan’s text that Rashi and Rosh provide, ad loc. The text of Rav Hamnuna, however, does seem to be a full liturgical unit. Abrahams (p. 382) theorizes that it needed to be included in full because it was less well-known. However note that four of the Talmud manuscripts do not have this full liturgical text. See Appendix I. For this problem generally, see Sarason, *Modern Study*, p. 166, n. 34.

²³ This is similar to the phrase *koneh ha-kol*, and its relationship to the direct quote from Gen 14: *koneh shamayim va-aretz*, examined in Chapter 2 of this study.

First, let us consider whether this phrase is the beginning of a sentence or the middle of a sentence. The text as presented in the printed version of the Talmud seems to be a sentence fragment, missing a subject and verb. But as early as Eliezer Landshuth,²⁴ scholars have considered Rav and Shmuel's disagreement to be one based not on the opening line – *atta yode'a* (you know) – but on the continuation of the phrase.²⁵ Both Rav and Shmuel, scholars argue, began their prayer with the phrase *atta yode'a*, but whereas Rav argues the object of God's knowledge is the secrets of the world, Shmuel argues the object is the depths of the heart.²⁶ According to this approach, the disagreement would read as follows:

Says Rav: You know the secrets of the world...	אמר רב: אתה יודע רזי עולם
But Shmuel says: You know the depths of the heart...	ושמואל אמר: אתה יודע ממעמקי הלב

²⁴ Eliezer Landshuth, *Siddur Hegyon Lev* (Konigsberg, 1845), p. 494.

²⁵ See Israel Abrahams, "The Lost 'Confession' of Samuel," *HUCA* 1 (1924), pp. 377-385 (commented on by Jacob Mann, "Genizah Fragments," pp. 327-328; and Fleischer, *Tefilah U-Minhagei Tefilah*, p. 145, n. 212). Abrahams calls it a "well-attested fact that Samuel's Vidui, like Rav's, began with Thou knowest" (p. 379). Indeed, this may be the meaning of Rashi's comment (in the version preserved in the Rif ad loc.) on Shmuel's opinion: *tefilah ahat hi* = this is one prayer (the word *ahat* is missing in Rashi's comment on *B Yoma* 87b), meaning: this is continuous with Rav's prayer preceding; they are one prayer type (contrast Abrahams' reading (p. 378) of Rashi, based on the printed edition of *B Yoma* 87b). It is possible that the other opinions in the *sugya*, or at least that of Levi, which begins with a conjunctive *vav* (although this conjunction is missing in a number of manuscripts – see Appendix I) also are meant to be considered an add-on to the opening offered by Rav: *atta yode'a*. See Tabory, *Mo'adei Yisrael*, p. 288 and Marmorstein, "The Confession of Sins," p. 295. It should also be noted that beginning the fourth blessing of the *amidah* (as is practiced with the *vidui* by the prayer leader – see *T Kippurim* 4:14, ed. Lieberman, p. 254; cf. Wieder, *Hitgabshut*, vol. 1, pp. 36-39) with the word *atta* is the standard opening of such a blessing. See Mirsky, *Ha-Piyyut*, p. 88; Joseph Heinemann, "Yihudan shel Tefilot Shabbat," in *Iyunei Tefilah*, pp. 28-35, here p. 31 and Idem, "Sidrei Berakhot Le-Rosh Hashannah U-Le-Ta'anit," in *Ibid.*, p. 44-53, here p. 48, n. 18.

²⁶ This is similar to the debate between Rav and Shmuel about particular liturgical phrasing despite a similar opening regarding *modim de-rabbanan*. See *B Sotah* 40a. Note that we argue this text is a debate about which text to say, and not a laundry list of options, as in *Berakhot* 16b-17a. Abrahams contends (p. 382) that Shmuel's *vidui* went out of existence because it was too similar to Rav's.

Indeed, the reading in which Shmuel begins “*atta yode’a*” reading is confirmed in a number of manuscripts. However, the variety of manuscripts and medieval quotations of Shmuel’s opinion also confirm the uncertainty of Shmuel’s exact wording. Below are the various texts of Shmuel’s confession²⁷:

B Yoma 87b (<i>dfus</i> , Oxford Opp. Add. fol. 23,	Abrahams Genizah fragment (also <i>Shibbolei Ha-Leket</i> #319):	R. Hananel to B Yoma 87b: ²⁸	B Yoma 87b (Munich 6, JTS 1623 (EMC 271)):	B Yoma 87b (JTS 218 (EMC 270)): ²⁹	Rif to B Yoma 87b:	Rosh to B Yoma 87b: ³⁰	R. Yeruham, p. 52a ³¹ :
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²⁷ Scholars have also long pointed out the differing texts of Shmuel’s confession. See, for example, Julius Furst, *Der Orient* 4 (1843), p. 419. Rabbinowicz, *Dikdukei Soferim*, vol. 4, p. 155a, n. λ. See more recently Tabory, *Mo’adei Yisrael*, p. 288, n.114. *Sefer Yera’im*, #263 (ed. Schiff (Vilna, 1899), p. 120b) has Shmuel simply saying: *mi-ma’amakim*.

²⁸ Abrahams, p. 379, calls this one of two “true readings.”

²⁹ Abrahams, *Ibid.*, calls this “better still.”

³⁰ There is a poem that was known to medieval authorities that began: *atta meivin ta’alumot lev*, perhaps based on Shmuel’s *vidui* as described by Rosh, so Yaavetz, p. 35. Wiesel (p. 37) claims this was a poem of Palestinian origin. For the text of this poem, see Goldschmidt, *Mahzor Le-Yamim Nora’im*, vol. 2, pp. 48-49. For this practice see *Sefer Ra’aviah* #529 quoting *Seder Rav Amram Gaon* (ed. Aptowitz, vol. 2, p. 191-2, and see n. 8 = *Otzar Ha-Geonim*, vol. 6, p. 38). (Note this is missing in our editions of *Seder Rav Amram*. See ed. Goldschmidt, pp. 161-170); *Mordekhai Yoma* #725; *Siddur Rashi* #212 and 213 (ed. Buber p. 98); *Mahzor Vitry* #352 (ed. Horowitz, p. 391; ed. Goldschmidt, vol. 3, p. 782, and see n. 2); *Shibbolei Ha-Leket Ha-Shalem* #319 (ed. Buber, p. 148b); *Hagahot Maimoniyot* to *Rambam Seder Tefilah* #60 (ed. Frankel, p. 336); *Beit Yosef* OH 607. Below is the phrasing from *Sefer Ra’aviah*:

In Seder Rav Amram, he wrote: It is the custom of both yeshivot to say in Arvit, Shaharit and Mincha “ <i>atta meivin</i> ” and “ <i>atta yode’a</i> ” and the “ <i>al chet</i> ” that is alphabetical. - <i>Sefer Ra’aviah</i> Yoma #529 (ed. Aptowitz, p. 192)	ראב"ה חלק ב - מסכת יומא סימן תקכט בסדר רב עמרם כתב מנהג יש [בשתי] ישיבות לומר בערבית ושחרית ומנחה אתה מבין ואתה יודע ועל חטא הבא בא"ב
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Cf. Leopold Zunz, *Die Ritus* (Berlin, 1919), p. 96. Zunz (*Literaturgeschichte der Synagogalen Poesie* (Berlin, 1865), p. 127 (cf. p. 23)) attributes this to R. Eliyahu Ha-Zaken, and Davidson follows this attribution. See Davidson, *Otzar Ha-Shirah Ve-Ha-Piyyut*, vol. 1, p. 400, #8820. Aptowitz (*Sefer Ra’aviah*, p. 192, n. 8) also agrees with this attribution and thus claims the poem referred to in *Seder Rav Amram Gaon* cannot be this one. The editors of *Seder Rav Sa’adiah Gaon* agree, claiming the poem must be *atta meivin sarapei lev*. This poem is mentioned by Sa’adiah Gaon in *Sefer Ha-Nivhar Be-Emunot U-ve-Deot* (ed. Yosef Kapah (Jerusalem: Dfus Ha-Amanim, 1999), p. 183); cf. Wiesel, p. 47, n. 65) and is printed in Goldschmidt, *Mahzor Le-Yamim Nora’im*, vol. 2, pp. 298-301 and in Ezra Fleischer, *Ha-Yotzrot Be-Hithavutan Ve-Hitpathutam* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1984), pp. 204-206. It is also discussed in Mirsky, *Ha-Piyyut*, pp. 77-78. However, contra Aptowitz and the editors of *Siddur Rav Sa’adiah Gaon*, Fleischer and Wiesel believe the other poem to be older than R. Eliyahu Ha-Zaken, and therefore think that *atta meivin ta’alumot lev* is the poem referred to in the medieval sources. See Wiesel, p. 47 and n. 68.

³¹ Landshuth, p. 494, prefers this version. Abrahams (p. 379) rejects this as “inadmissible” but does not explain his objection.

Munich 95): ממעמקי הלב	אתה יודע מעמקי לב	אתה יודע עומקו של לב	אתה יוד(י)ע מעמקי הלב	אתה ידעת מעמקי הלב	אתה יודע בעמקו של לב	אתה מבין תעלומות לב	אתה יודע תעלומות לב
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It is clear from this variety of manuscripts and quoted versions in the *rishonim* that the theory that Rav and Shmuel were not disagreeing about the opening two words is likely correct, as all of the sources begin with the words *atta yode'a*, excluding three versions of *B Yoma 87b* (we are leaving aside for the moment the Rosh's text of *atta meivin*, which, while substituting *meivin* for *yode'a*, also makes clear that the substantive disagreement is about *olam* vs. *lev*). We can now consider the intertext for Shmuel's confession liturgy.

Identification and Analysis of the Intertext(s): I

Discovering the intertext for Shmuel's confession is easier once we understand that the "depths of the heart" are the object of God's knowledge, and not merely a free-floating phrase. This phrase – "You know the depths of the heart" – is not a direct quote from the Bible, and hence a more allusive reference than the ones we have investigated in the previous chapters. However, there are only two possible biblical intertexts that employ the imagery of depths of the heart: Ps 64:7 and Proverbs 20:5. We will analyze each in turn, and then return to the version noted by R. Yeruham.

<p>1 For the leader. A psalm of David: 2 Hear my voice, O God, when I plead; guard my life from the enemy's terror. 3 Hide me from a band of evil men, from a crowd of evildoers, 4 who whet their tongues like swords; they aim their arrows – cruel words – 5 to shoot from hiding at the blameless man; they shoot him suddenly and without fear.</p>	<p>תהלים פרק סד</p> <p>(א) לְמַנְצֵחַ מְזֻמֹּר לְדָוִד: (ב) שִׁמְעֵ אֱלֹהִים קוֹלִי בְּשִׁיחִי מִפְּחַד אוֹיֵב תִּצַּר תִּי: (ג) תִּסְתִּירֵנִי מִסּוּד מְרַעִים מְרַגְּשֵׁת פִּעְלֵי אֲנֹן: (ד) אֲנֹשֶׁר שָׁנְגוּ כְתָרָב לְשׁוֹנָם דָּרְכוּ חֶצֶם דָּבָר מָר:</p>
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<p>6 They arm themselves with an evil word; when they speak, it is to conceal traps; they think: “Who will see them?” 7 Let the wrongdoings they have concealed, each one inside him, his secret thoughts, be wholly exposed. - Ps 64:1-7</p>	<p>(ה) לִירוֹת בְּמִסְתָּרִים תָּם פְּתָאֵם יֵרֶהוּ וְלֹא יֵרְאוּ: (ו) חִזְקוּ לְמוֹ דְבָר רָע יִסְפְּרוּ לְטִמּוֹן מִקְּשִׁים אָמְרוּ מִי יִרְאֶה לְמוֹ: (ז) יִחְפְּשׂוּ עוֹלֹת תִּמְנְוּ חֶפֶשׁ מִחֶפֶשׁ וְקָרַב אִישׁ וְלֵב עֵמֶק:</p>
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We will draw some points out from this biblical intertext, and relate it to the context of confession on Yom Kippur.

- 1) First, it is clear from this psalm that the imagery of the depths of the heart is wholly negative. It is in that deep, seemingly impenetrable place, where the evildoers plot. Relating this back to the confession on Yom Kippur, it is the place that we think no one else has access to in which we scheme evil deeds. Yet the Psalmist pleads for those thoughts to be exposed to the light of day. In many ways, the act of confessing is the admission that nothing is secret from God. It is a moment to “come clean” on the thoughts one naively assumed would never be discovered. The verbal act of enumerating particular sins,³² as opposed to simply thinking about them, gives lie to the thought that one could conceal one’s wicked thoughts from God.³³

- 2) Significantly, the sin of this enemy is one that is connected to words, which are sharp like arrows (v. 4). The military imagery is strong, but the attack is conducted through words. The power of words to injure is a theme throughout

³² See Rambam *Hilkhot Teshuvah* 2:2; Adiel Kadari, *Iyunei Teshuvah* (Be’er Sheva: Ben Gurion University Press, 2010), pp. 52-53; 76. Compare the similar biblical approach to verbalizing confession, described in Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, p. 301.

³³ Cf. Is 29:15-16; Jer 23:24; Ps 19:7, 13; Dan 2:22.

rabbinic literature, as well as the Yom Kippur liturgy.³⁴ What God will discover, therefore, is not acts of physical violence, but the words one uses to hurt others.

Shmuel's confession, when seen in this light, is an admission of the words that the sinner has employed to injure the victim.

- 3) In addition, the Psalmist positions himself as the victim of the cruel words and sharp tongue. But in Shmuel's usage of this image, the person reciting the confession is the perpetrator, not the victim. The Psalmist's language is powerful in its plea for a defense from the enemy. But in the confession from Shmuel, the worshiper admits that he, in fact, is the enemy.

While normally our method includes a look at the rabbinic understanding of the biblical intertext, this particular line from Psalms is not quoted in classic rabbinic literature at all.³⁵ Therefore, we now consider the second potential intertext:

<p>The designs in a man's mind are deep waters, but a man of understanding can draw them out. - Proverbs 20:5³⁶</p>	<p>משלי פרק כ (ה) מים עמקים עצה בלב איש ואיש תבונה ידלגה:</p>
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In this intertext, the waters that run deep are the internal thoughts of a person. But, continuing the water imagery, they can be surfaced by a wise man, much like a bucket

³⁴ Indeed the expanded confession based on Shmuel's opinion includes an admission of *lashon hara* – evil tongue – that the sinner committed. See Abrahams, p. 383.

³⁵ See Aaron Hyman, *Torah Ha-Ketuvah Ve-Ha-Mesorah* (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1939), vol. 3, p. 43. Cf. *Mishnat R. Eliezer*, ed. Enelow, p. 84 and *Bereishit Rabbati* (ed. Albeck, p. 238). This is itself an interesting phenomenon, which may lead us to consider more strongly the next biblical text as the intertext in Shmuel's mind.

³⁶ While the link to this text is primarily through *amukim* and *lev*, it is worth noting the connection between *atta meivin* in the Rosh's version above and *ish tevunah*. We did not bring the larger context for this selection, since the style of this section of Proverbs is more of a collection of loosely or unrelated sayings. See Michael Fox, "Proverbs: Introduction and Annotation," in *The Jewish Study Bible*, eds. Adele Berlin and Marc Brettler (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 1448-1449.

brings water to the top of the well. If this does serve as the intertext, then God plays the role of the wise man (perhaps also drawing upon Rav (and Shmuel's) language of *yode'a*, related to *tevunah*).

Rabbinic Understanding of Biblical Intertext: I

This text is treated in a number of rabbinic sources.³⁷ We will analyze the connection with *Bereishit Rabbah* 93:4:

<p>“The designs in a man’s mind are deep waters, but a man of understanding can draw them out.” – Prov 20:5. A parable: A deep well filled with cold water, and its water was good, but no creature could drink from it. Someone came and tied rope to rope, cord to cord, and drew from it and drank. Everyone then began to draw from it and drink. Thus Judah didn’t move until he had responded to Joseph word for word, until he understood him (lit: stood on his heart). “Thus Judah approached him” (Gen 44:18). - <i>Bereishit Rabbah</i> 93:4, (ed. Theodor-Albeck, p. 1153)³⁸</p>	<p>בראשית רבה (תיאודור-אלבק) פרשת ויגש פרשה צג ד"ה מים עמוקים עצה</p> <p>מים עמוקים עצה בלב איש ואיש תבונות ידלגה (משלי כ ה) משל לבאר עמוקה מליאה צונין והיו ממיה יפין, ולא היתה בריה יכולה לשתות ממנה, בא אחד וקשר חבל בחבל נימה בנימה ודלה ממנה ושתה, התחילו הכל דולים ושותים ממנה, כך לא זו יהודה משיב ליוסף דבר על דבר עד שעמד על לבו ויגש אליו יהודה.</p>
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In this *midrash*, Joseph is considered the man who has deep thoughts in his heart. It is unclear whether these thoughts are sinful (given his actions toward his brothers) or simply unknown. But Judah, through his own wisdom, is able to outwit Joseph at his own game, and precipitates the moment when Joseph reveals himself to the brothers (Gen 45:1). In light of this understanding, the confession prayer takes on new meaning. The worshiper is compared to Joseph, who conceals the motives of his actions. But ultimately

³⁷ See, for instance, *B Pesahim* 53b and *Vayikra Rabbah* 3:7 (ed. Margolioth, p. 75). Although see the note on p. 72.

³⁸ See parallel in *Tanhuma Vayigash* 2, (ed. Buber, p. 102b), where the character of Joseph is even more clearly identified with the one whose depths are concealed.

those emotions are revealed, through the cunning work of a sparring partner (in this case Judah, but perhaps in the situation of Yom Kippur it is God). The inability of Joseph to hold back (Gen 45:1) also raises possibilities of meaning for the worshiper. When God is able to draw out, literally, the feelings from deep inside, then the worshiper has no emotions to cover up. The confession is one in which the truth rises to the top, and the effort to hide feelings and identity melts away.

Identification and Analysis of the Intertext(s): II

We have one further intertext to explore based on Shmuel’s confession: that mentioned by R. Yeruham as the text of *B Yoma* 87b: *atta yode’a ta’alumos lev* (see the chart above).³⁹ Unlike the other potential intertexts, analyzed above, this option is in fact a direct quote from the Bible: Ps 44:22.⁴⁰ This psalm begins as a psalm of praise, but then quickly turns to complaint⁴¹ from vv. 10-17: “You have rejected and disgraced us... You make us retreat before our foe... You sell your people for no fortune... You make us a byword among the nations, a laughingstock among the peoples.” What is truly unusual about this psalm is the section that follows (which also contains our phrase). The punishment that Israel bears is not based on unfaithfulness, but rather is completely undeserved given Israel’s reliability:

18 All this has come upon us, yet we have not forgotten You, or been false to Your	תהלים פרק מד
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³⁹ It should be noted that although Rav’s prayer is not expanded on in the Talmud, a number of post-Talmudic expansions (quotations?) of his prayer include the line: *ve-ta’alumos sitrei kol hai*, which also seems to be drawn from the same intertext in Psalms, noted below. See *Netiv Binah*, p. 298.

⁴⁰ For the use of Psalms as intertexts in the prayers, see Hoffman, “Hallels, Midrash, Canon and Loss.” For the possible censoring of this psalm in Temple-era liturgical use, see *M Sotah* 9:10; *T Sotah* 13:9 (ed. Lieberman, p. 234); *B Sotah* 48a; *Tosefta Kifshuta*, vol. 8, p. 746; Idem, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine*, pp. 141-143.

⁴¹ For these categories of psalms, see Hermann Gunkel, *The Psalms: A Form-Critical Introduction*, trans. Thomas Horner (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1967). For a structural analysis of this specific psalm, see J. Clinton McCann, Jr., “The Book of Psalms,” in *The New Interpreter’s Bible* (Nashville: Abington Press, 1996), vol. 4, p. 857. My thanks to Rabbi Shai Held for this reference.

<p>covenant</p> <p>19 Our hearts have not gone astray, nor have our feet swerved from Your path, 20 though You cast us, crushed, to where the sea monster is, and covered us over with deepest darkness.</p> <p>21 If we forgot the name of our God and spread forth our hands to a foreign god, 22 God would surely search it out, for He knows the secrets of the heart.</p> <p>23 It is for Your sake that we are slain all day long, that we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.</p> <p>24 Rouse Yourself! Why do You sleep, O Lord? Awaken, do not reject us forever!</p> <p>25 Why do You hide Your face, ignoring our affliction and distress?</p> <p>26 We lie prostrate in the dust; our body clings to the ground.</p> <p>27 Arise and help us, redeem us, as befits your lovingkindness.</p> <p>- Psalm 44:18-27</p>	<p>(יח) כָּל זֹאת בָּאתָנוּ וְלֹא שָׁכַחְנוּךָ וְלֹא שָׁקַרְנוּ בְּבְרִיתְךָ: (יט) לֹא נִסּוּג אָחֹזר לְבַנּוּ וְתַטּ אֲשֵׁרִינוּ מִנִּי אֲרַחֶךָ: (כ) כִּי דִפִּיתָנוּ בַּמְּקוֹם תַּנִּים וְתַכַּס עָלֵינוּ כְּצִלְמוֹת: (כא) אִם שָׁכַחְנוּ שֵׁם אֱלֹהֵינוּ וַנִּפְרֵשׁ כַּפֵּינוּ לְאֵל זָר: (כב) הֲלֹא אֱלֹהִים יִחְקֹר זֹאת כִּי הוּא יֵדַע תַּעֲלָמוֹת לֵב: (כג) כִּי עָלֶיךָ הִרְגָנוּ כָּל הַיּוֹם נִחַשְׁבָנוּ כְּצֹאן טְבָחָה: (כד) עוֹרָה לְמָה תִישֵׁן אֲדֹנָי הֲקִיץ אֵל תִּזְנַח לְנִצָּח: (כה) לְמָה פָנִיךָ תִסְתִּיר תִשְׁכַּח עֵינֵינוּ וְלִחְצֵנוּ: (כו) כִּי שָׁחָה לְעַפָּר נַפְשֵׁנוּ דָבַקָה לְאָרֶץ בְּטַגְנוּ: (כז) קוֹמָה עֲזֹרְתָה לָנוּ וּפְדֹנוּ לְמַעַן תִּסְדָּד:</p>
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This intertext opens an entirely new frame on the meaning of confession. Instead of an admission of guilt, this psalm presents a worldview in which Israel is faithful and does nothing to deserve its punishment.⁴² Its suffering is not only out of line with its sins, but the sins are entirely absent.⁴³ In fact, it seems this unwarranted suffering is *because of*

⁴² Contrast Heinemann’s description of fixed statutory prayers (*Prayer in the Talmud*, p.248): “There is no room in the context of prayer for reliance upon one’s own merits or for demanding a reward for one’s own good deeds.” This psalm, and its direct quoting – in the context of a confession, no less! – is thus extremely unusual in a liturgical context. “This [psalm] differs from the others in one remarkable feature...its firm profession of innocence under the covenant. ‘In this respect, Ps. xlv stands perfectly alone: it is likely the national mirroring of the Book of Job...’” James Luther Mays, *Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching: Psalms* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1994) p. 176. Mays cites C. F. Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1980), vol. 2, p. 66. Although this is unusual in fixed prayer, see, however, Heinemann’s description of prayers in the courtroom context that accuse God: *Prayer in the Talmud*, pp. 201f.

⁴³ Mays, p. 178: “All that the prayer can offer is a protest of faithfulness (vv. 17-22) that expresses bewilderment rather than understanding....We have not turned to another God, even in secret....This protest does not claim perfect sinlessness or total innocence under the covenant; that would be too much in the light of Israel’s history. But the protest does claim basic loyalty.”

God (v. 22).⁴⁴ Our phrase under analysis, quoted directly from this psalm, does not refer to sinister thoughts that are to be uncovered, but rather deepest purity. The secret, in this psalm, is that there is no secret. Israel, in its most hidden and private places, is in fact faithful to God, and should be forgiven as such.⁴⁵

Rabbinic Understanding of Biblical Intertext: II

This framing of Israel actually having nothing sinful in its past to admit comes to its tragic peak in one rabbinic understanding of this phrase:

<p>Vespasian- his memory be cursed- (lit: his bones be ground) filled three boats of woman and men from eminent of Jerusalem to place them in a house of degradation (=prostitution)⁴⁶ in Rome. When they went to the sea, they said: It isn't enough that we angered God in His sanctuary, but even outside the Land (of Israel) we are going to anger Him? They said to the women: Do you want this? They said: No. They said: If women, whose nature is for this, do not want this, we – how much the more so! They said to them: Say: If we throw ourselves into the sea, will we have a share in the World to Come? God enlightened their eyes with this verse: “The Lord said: ‘I will retrieve from Bashan, I will retrieve from the depths of the sea’” (Ps. 68:23). The first boat said: If we forgot the name of our God and spread forth our hands to a foreign god (Ps 44:21), and threw themselves into the sea. The second boat</p>	<p>איכה רבה (בובר) פרשה א ד"ה אלה אזכרה ואשפכה</p> <p>אלה אזכרה. אספיינוס שחיק עצמות מילא שלש ספינות אנשים ונשים מגדולי ירושלים העמידן לקלון ברומי, כיון שירדו לים אמרו לא דיינו שהכעסנו אלהינו בבית מקדשו, אלא אף בחוצה לארץ אנו הולכים להכעיסו, אמרו לנשים רוצות אתם בכך, אמרו להם לאו, אמרו ומה אלו שזרכם לכך אינן רוצות אנו עאכ"ו, אמרו להם תאמרו אם אנו משליכים עצמינו לים, יש לנו חלק לעה"ב, העיר הקדוש ברוך הוא עיניהם בפסוק הזה, אמר ה' מבשן אשיב אשיב ממצולות ים (תהלים סח כג), הספינה הראשונה אמרה, אם שכחנו שם אלהינו ונפרוש כפינו לאל זר (שם/תהלים/מד כא), והשליכה עצמה לים, השנייה אמרה, הלא אלהים יחקר זאת כי הוא יודע תעלומות לב (שם שם/תהלים מ"ד/כב), והשליכה</p>
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⁴⁴ McCann, p. 858. Although cf. John Goldingay, Psalms Volume 2: Psalms 43-89 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), p. 50. In any case, “it is certain that Psalm 44 and other complaints assisted Israel to reach in the post-exilic era a new and profound understanding of its suffering and vocation.” McCann., pp. 858-859. Cf. Shai Held, Abraham Joshua Heschel: The Call of Transcendence (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2013), pp. 183-185.

⁴⁵ Compare to other poetry in which Israel asks God to overlook its sins given the level of suffering already endured. For instance: *Be-Motza'ei Menuha* (in Seder Ha-Selichot Ke-Minhag Polin, ed. Daniel Goldschmidt (Jerusalem: Mossad Ha-Rav Kook, 1965), p. 28, ll.13-14). Here, by contrast, there are no basic sins to overlook.

⁴⁶ Marcus Jastrow, A Dictionary of the Targumim, The Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature (New York: Judaica Press, 1996 [repr.]), p. 1373.

<p>said: God would surely search it out, for He knows the secrets of the heart (Ps.44:22), and threw themselves into the sea. The third boat said: It is for Your sake that we are slain all day long, that we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered (Ps. 44:23), and threw themselves into the sea. The Holy Spirit cried out and said: On these I cry (Lam. 1:16) - <i>Eikhah Rabbah</i> 1:16 (ed. Buber, p. 41b; translation based on ed. Soncino, pp. 124-125)</p>	<p>עצמה לים, השלישית אמרה, כי עליך הורגנו כל היום נחשבנו כצאן טבחה (שם שם /תהלים מ"ד / כג), והשליכה עצמה לים, ורוח הקודש צווחת ואומרת על אלה אני בוכיה.</p>
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This is a poignant scene in which the survivors of the destruction of Jerusalem look to preserve their dignity by killing themselves rather than be carted off to Rome in chains. The declarations of innocence and faithfulness, given voice in this psalm, turn into the last words of these women martyrs to God. Reading this context back into the confession prayer of Shmuel, the words are more of a reminder and a challenge to God than an admission of guilt. God should forgive Israel because of its loyalty, not despite its infidelity. If seen as a continuation of the essential confession – *aval anahnu hatanu*⁴⁷ – then Shmuel adds a dimension of blamelessness to an act that is all about voicing self-blame. In other words, the “confession” amounts to a claim of: We did this against our will, and are blameless.

We now look more carefully at that essential confession, also attributed to Shmuel, as noted by Bar Hamdudi.

Section II

<p>“Indeed we have sinned.”</p>	<p>אבל אנחנו חטאנו</p>
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⁴⁷ *Pace* Ha-Levi. See above, n. 21.

Textual Variants

In order to search for the intertext of this phrase, we must attempt a clearer understanding of the exact wording of Mar Zutra's minimum confession, for this is somewhat in dispute.⁴⁸ Most manuscripts preserve a version that is missing the word "anahnu," and reads simply: "aval hatanu."⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Landshuth (p. 492) argues that the original confession of Mar Zutra was only these three words (in contrast to his conclusion about the other phrases, which he claims were introductions to longer prayers). Cf. Yaavetz, p. 35 and Tabory, *Mo'adei Yisrael*, p. 289. However, compare the opinion of a number of *rishonim* and *aharonim* who believe that this was merely an introduction to a longer confession (as it appears now in our prayerbooks): *Orhot Hayyim Hilkhoh Yom Kippur*, #30 (*Netiv Binah*, vol. 5, pp. 298-299) and Meiri to *B Yoma* 87b (*Beit Ha-Behirah*, ed. Yosef Klein (Jerusalem: Yad Ha-Rav Herzog, p. 218); *Rokeah, Hilkhoh Teshuvah* #18 (ed. Schneerson, p. 29). For the various interpretations of the Rambam on this question of how long the essential confession is, see Kadari, pp. 77-78, nn. 112-113. Isaiah Horowitz gives the most forceful support for this theory in *Inyanei Tefilah*, (Warsaw, 1930), vol. 2, p. 81b:

...Concerning that which is said: The essence of confession is [limited to the words] "Indeed we have sinned": Everyone is mistaken and think that they wanted [only] these three words. But this is not so! In fact they wanted the full *nusakh* of "we are guilty". "Indeed" is [just] the beginning of the matter: "Indeed we have sinned, we are guilty, we have betrayed, we have stolen, etc., but You are righteous, etc." Thus you will find in the *siddurim* of the *sfaradim*, the word "indeed" is written in big print, and then the rest of the confession in small print. And I have written about this elsewhere.
- *Shla"h*, *Inyanei Tefilah*, #58

של"ה ענייני תפילה, וקריאה בספר תורה
הרי מה שאמרו 'יתברך', רצו בו כל הנוסח. הא למה זה דומה,
לענין האמור (טור או"ח סימן תרז) עיקר הוידוי 'אבל אנחנו
חטאנו', טועים העולם וסוברים שרצו בו אלו שלש תיבות, ואינו
כן, אלא רצו בו כל הנוסח של 'אשמנו'. כי 'אבל' הוא התחלת
הענין, 'אבל אנחנו חטאנו אשמנו בגדנו גזלנו כו' ואתה צדיק'
וכו'. וכן תמצא בדפוס סדורי הספרדיים, 'אבל' כתוב בכתיבה
גסה, ואחר כך בכתיבה קטנה, עד גמר הוידוי, וכתבתי זה
במקום אחר (לעיל מסכת יומא אות נז).

Meir Friedmann also believes that these three words were just the beginning of a longer confession based on evidence from *Pesikta Rabbati* 35 (ed. Friedmann (Vienna, 1880), p. 160b and note 13):

<p><i>aval hatanu</i> - אבל הטאנו</p> <p>In: Munich 95; Munich 6; JTS 1623 (EMC 271); JTS 218 (EMC 270); Oxford Opp. Add. fol. 23⁵⁰</p>	<p><i>aval anahnu hatanu</i> - אבל אנהנו הטאנו</p> <p>In: Spanish print; Venice print; Vilna print</p>
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<p>She does him good and not evil all the days of her life (Prov. 31:12). The Holy One, blessed be He, said to the ministering angels: Come and I will make you know the valorous conduct of My children. Lo, I burdened them with ever so many troubles in this world, and I brought chastisements upon them in this world in each and every generation, yea, in each and every hour; yet they do not recoil rebelliously – rather they call themselves wicked, and they speak of Me as “He who is righteous.” Even in such a moment they speak as follows: “But in truth, we have sinned. We have committed crimes, we have done what is wrong, we have transgressed, we have revolted, we have rebelled. We have turned aside from Your commandments and ordinances, and our sinning has done us no good. “You are righteous in all that has come upon us; for it is You who has acted truly, and it is we who have done wrong.” (Neh 9:33) Therefore Solomon extolled the congregation of Israel: A woman of valor who can find? (Prov 31:10). This is why it is written: A people like a wall (Song of Songs 8:9) - <i>Pesikta Rabbati</i> 35, trans. William Braude, <i>Pesikta Rabbati</i> (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), p. 672</p>	<p>פסיקתא רבתי (איש שלום) פיסקא לה - רני ושמחי גמלתהו טוב ולא רע כל ימי חייה (משלי שם /ל"א/ י"ב) אמר להם הקדוש ברוך הוא למלאכי השרת בואו ואודיע לכם צדקתם של בניי, שאני (טענתיו) [טענתים] בעולם כמה צרות, וייסורים הבאתי עליהם בעולם בכל דור ודור בכל שעה [ושעה] ולא בעטו בהם, שקוראין את עצמן רשעים וקוראין אותי צדיק בפני (רשעים) והם אומרים בלשון הזה אבל אנהנו הטאנו העוינו הרשענו פשענו מרדנו ומרינו וסרנו ממצותיך ומשפטיך ולא שוה לנו ואתה צדיק על כל הבא עלינו כי אמת עשית ואנהנו הרשענו, לפיכך היה שלמה מקלם את כנסת ישראל אשת חיל מי ימצא, לכך נאמר אם חומה.</p>
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See Marmorstein, “The Confession of Sins,” pp. 296-298; Indeed, Strack and Stemberger (p. 301) date this particular section of PR to an early period. See also Rivka Ulmer, *Pesikta Rabbati: A Synoptic Edition of Pesikta Rabbati Based Upon All Extant Manuscripts and the Editio Princeps* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2009), p. xvi. However, it seems likely that this longer version in PR is an addition to the original short confession preserved in the Bavli.

⁴⁹ See Appendix I and *Dikdukei Soferim*, vol. 4, p. 155a, n. 1. See also Goldschmidt, *Mahzor Le-Yamim Nora'im*, vol. 2, p. 11, n. 16 and Mahzor Roma and Romania in Goldschmidt, *Mehkarei Tefilah U-Fiyut*, p. 148 and 168; Assaf, *Teshuvot Ha-Geonim Mitokh Ha-Genizah*, p. 87, l. 16 (= *Otzar Ha-Geonim*, vol. 6, p. 37, #100); *Sefer Ra'aviah*, vol. 2, p. 192; *Otzar Ha-Geonim*, vol. 6, p. 38, #101 and 102; *Sefer Ha-Manhig*, ed. Raphael, vol. 1, p. 303, n. to line 6. Lawrence Hoffman, “The Liturgy of Confession: What It Is and Why We Say It,” in Idem, *We Have Sinned*, pp. 3-12, here p. 10, and p. 269, n. 6; Kaunfer, “*Aval Chatanu*,” p. 181, n. 1. Hoffman (p. 10) draws the distinction of the additional word “*anahnu*” as follows: “When we want to emphasize the subject, however, we add the pronoun (in this case, *anachnu*, ‘we’), as if to say not just ‘We have sinned,’ but ‘It is *we* who have sinned.’”

⁵⁰ The addition of the word “*avoteinu*” – our fathers – is also a post-Talmudic development, not found in manuscripts. See Goldschmidt, *Mahzor Le-Yamim Nora'im*, vol. 2, p. 11, n. 17. See Rambam’s liturgy (ed. Goldschmidt, p. 210): *aval hatanu anahnu va-avoteinu*. *Avoteinu* also appears in some manuscripts of *Seder Rav Amram Gaon*, but see Wieder, *Hitgabshut*, p. 18, n. 25. *Otzar Ha-Geonim*, vol. 6, p. 39, #107; *Abudraham Ha-Shalem*, p. 282. Cf. Jer 3:25; Ps 106:6; Neh 1:6.

This two-word, instead of three-word, confession is indeed powerful as a liturgical minimum (assuming this was not an abbreviation for a longer text).⁵¹ This leads one to ask: what is the function of the word “*aval*”?

This question is strengthened by the fact that the minimum standard for confession could easily have been the word *hatanu* alone. We see the minimization of confession to the word *hatati* or *hatanu* in a number of sources,⁵² including the following:

<p>It is written (I Sam 7:6a): “They assembled at Mizpah, and they drew water and poured it out before YHVH.” Did they [literally] pour water?! Rather: Learn that they poured out their hearts like water. “Samuel said: ‘We have sinned to YHVH’” (I Sam 7:6b – in our texts it reads: “They said there”). R. Shmuel bar R. Yitzhak: Shmuel wore the cloak of all of Israel. He said before Him: “Master of the Universe: Don’t you judge people by them saying before you: ‘We have not sinned’? I will judge you for saying: ‘I have not sinned.’ But these say before you: ‘We have sinned.’” - <i>Y Ta’anit</i> 2:7; 65d</p>	<p>תלמוד ירושלמי (ונציה) מסכת תענית פרק ב דף סה טור ד /ה"ז ה"ז /ה"ז הלכה ז' כתיב ויקבצו המצפתה וישאבו מים וישפכו לפני יי' וכי מים שפכו אלא מלמד ששפכו את לבם כמים ויאמר שמואל חטאנו ליי' אמר רבי שמואל בר רב יצחק לבש שמואל חלוקן של כל ישראל אמר לפניו רבון העולמים כלום את דן את האדם אלא על שהוא אומר לפניך לא חטאתי הנני נשפט אותך על אומרך לא חטאתי ואילו אומרים לפניך חטאנו</p>
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This could easily have been a source for a minimal confession that read: *hatanu* or *hatanu lefanekha*. Thus the addition of the word “*aval*,” we argue, is significant.⁵³ So

⁵¹ See above, n. 48, for the debate on this point.

⁵² This would mirror the text in *Y Yoma* 8:9; 45c, cited above: “*Riboni: Hatati.*” Cf. *Y Berakhot* 4:2; 7d; the texts brought by Wiesel, p. 39 (“*ki anochi hatati*”); and the line *ki lekha hatanu* in Mann, “Genizah Fragments,” p. 331 (=Margolioth, *Hilkhot Eretz Yisrael Min Ha-Genizah*, p. 152). Cf. Wieder, *Hitgabshut*, pp. 62-63. This approach would also be in line with the prayer of R. Akiva (first noted in *B Ta’anit* 25b in multiple manuscripts): *Avinu Malkenu Hatanu Lefanekha*. See also *Midrash Tehilim* 51:1 (ed. Buber, p. 140b).

⁵³ It is interesting to note that many of the examples of confession of sin in the Bible are actually uttered by non-Israelites: Gen 20:9 (Avimelekh); Ex 9:27 and 10:16-17 (Pharaoh); Num 22:34 (Bilaam). In addition, the use of the word *hatati* is also often said by people who claim *not* to have sinned: Gen 20:9; 31:6; 39:9; Jud 11:27; I Sam 20:1; 24:11; I Kings 18:9; Jer 2:35; 37:18; Ps 59:4; Job 10:14. Perhaps the force of *aval* preceding this word is extra significant, as if to say: We know that sometimes this word is used to protest the fact that I have sinned, but here we are admitting that in truth, I (we) have sinned.

what might the word *aval* (attested to in all manuscripts of the Talmud and Medieval sources) add?

Here it is important to understand the correct translation of the word “*aval*.” In modern Hebrew this word indicates a contrasting conjunction, such as “but, however,” etc.⁵⁴ In later books of the Bible, the word “*aval*” also functions in this way, coming in the middle of two independent clauses.⁵⁵ This is true in much of rabbinic literature as well.⁵⁶ However, in biblical and some rabbinic Hebrew the term had another (related) meaning: “in truth, certainly.”⁵⁷ Yosef Segel notes the five times this word comes at the beginning of a sentence in the Bible, and concludes that when the word “*aval*” begins a sentence, this is its meaning.⁵⁸ “*Aval*” also serves this function in rabbinic Hebrew, when coming at the beginning of the sentence.⁵⁹

⁵⁴ See, for example, Adina Abbadi, “*Aval Be-Hashva’ah le-Elah: Te’or Logi U-Pragmati*,” *Leshonenu* 51 (1987), pp. 95-109; and Sigalit Rosmarin, “*Akh, Aval, Ve-Ulam; Lamrot, Elu, Ve-Gam: Milot ha-Kishor Be-Sifrut Ha-Ivrit*,” *Da’at Lashon* (2008), pp. 147-167.

⁵⁵ See Dan 10:7; Ezra 10:12-13; II Chron 19:13. This contrasting conjunction used to be simply the letter “*vav*.” Cf. Yosef Segel, “*Aval*,” *Sinai* 64 (1968), pp. 95-96, here p. 95.

⁵⁶ See, for instance, in our very selection in *B Yoma* 87b, the usage by Mar Zutra when quoting the minimum confession. Here the word “*aval*” is used in both ways in the very same sentence!

⁵⁷ See Eliezer Ben Yehuda, *Milon Ha-Lashon Ha-Ivrit* (Jerusalem: Makor, 1980 [repr.]), vol. 1, p. 27, who translates “*aval*” as: “truly; indeed, and only later did it develop the meaning ‘but’.”

⁵⁸ Segel, “*Aval*,” p. 95. Rashi and Targum Onkelos already point this out. See, for instance, their comments to Gen 17:19, where they translate the word as “*bekushta*” = in truth. Cf. *Lekah Tov* Gen 17:19 (ed. Buber, p. 41a); *Sekhel Tov* Gen 17:19 (ed. Buber, p. 21); Kohut, *Arukh Ha-Shalem*, p. 11. But cf. Sarna, *Genesis*, p. 295, who, following NJPS, translates it: Alas. Compare also *Alshikh* ad loc.

⁵⁹ See, for example, *B Eruvin* 30b; 38a; 41a; *B Ketubot* 13b; *B Niddah* 3b; 14b; 27a; Rashi to *B Eruvin* 38a, s.v. *aval*; Rashi to *B Meilah* 6b, s.v. *ve-hayavin alav* and *M Meilah* 1:2. Cf. Lieberman, *Tosefta Kifshuta*, vol. 7, p. 485-6 and n. 28; Yosef Segel, “*Aval*” *Sinai* 66 (1969), p. 104. Landshuth, p. 14; Kohut, *Arukh Ha-Shalem*, p. 11; Menahem Kahane, *Sifre Zuta Devarim* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2002), p. 50; Schonfield, *Undercurrents*, p. 182, n. 48. One of the clearest examples of how *aval* did not only mean “however” is the following text from *Bereishit Rabbah*:

<p>They said to one another: Indeed we are guilty etc. R. Abba bar Kahana said: In the southern language, “<i>aval</i>” means “however.” - <i>Bereishit Rabbah</i> 91:21 (ed. Theodor-Albeck, p. 1130)</p>	<p>בראשית רבה (תיאודור-אלבק) פרשת מקץ פרשה צא (כא) [ויאמרו איש אל אחיו אבל אשמים] וגו' ר' אבא בר כהנא אמ' לשון דרומי הוא אבל ברם.</p>
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This demonstrates that only in certain dialects did they interpret the word *aval* as however implying that the normal translation must be something else (likely: in truth). Cf. Yehezkel Kutscher, *Erkhei Milin He-Hadash Le-Sifrut Haza”l* (Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 1972), vol. 1, p. 60.

The usage of the phrase “*aval (anahnu) hatanu*” should best be translated as: “Indeed we have sinned”, or “In truth we have sinned.”⁶⁰ In contemporary liturgy, we recite a later version where the word *aval* has shifted from opening the sentence (with the meaning: “indeed” or “in truth”) to a contrasting conjunction that comes after an opening declaration of how we are not filled with hubris to declare that we are sinless (or, in some versions: that we are in fact filled with hubris and declare we are sinless). This liturgical composition ends: “...but we have sinned.”⁶¹ Wieder, among others, suggests this introduction was written to connect to the original key phrase: *aval hatanu*.⁶² But the essential confession of Mar Zutra had a different valence: In truth we have sinned.

Identification and Analysis of the Intertext(s)

Having investigated the liturgical text itself, we are now prepared to propose the biblical intertext. Significantly, the word “*aval*” is not very common in the Bible, coming only 11 times (only twice in the Torah).⁶³ In fact, there is only one biblical text that includes “*aval*” with a reference to guilt⁶⁴: Gen 42:21:⁶⁵

⁶⁰ See Sarason, “The Persistence,” p. 28; Hoffman, “The Liturgy of Confession,” p. 9; Kaunfer, “*Aval Chatanu*,” p. 182. Cf. The *Rokeah*’s commentary to the *siddur* where he substitutes the word “*be-emet*” for “*aval*,” with no comment:

<p>We are not so stubborn as to say before you: We are righteous [and we did not] sin. In truth, we have sinned – we and our ancestors. <i>Perushei Siddur Ha-Tefilah La-Rokeah</i> (ed. Hershler, p. 696)</p>	<p>פירושי סידור התפילה לרוקה [קלו] מעריב ליום הכפורים עמוד תרצו ואין אנו קשי עורף לומר לפניך צדיקים אנהנו חטאנו באמת חטאנו אנהנו ואבותינו</p>
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⁶¹ See, for instance, Joel Hoffman’s translation in Lawrence Hoffman, *We Have Sinned*, p. 96.

⁶² Wieder, *Hitgabshut*, p. 63; Goldschmidt, *Mahzor Le-Yamim Nora'im*, vol. 2, p. 11, n. 18. For a possible *midrashic* link to this kind of liturgical rhetoric, see *Bereishit Rabbah* 92:9 (ed. Theodor-Albeck, p. 1149, n. to l. 2).

⁶³ Avraham Even-Shoshan, *Concordantzia Hadasha* (Jerusalem: Kiryat Sefer, 1988), p. 8.

⁶⁴ For the particular meaning of *ashamnu*, in contradistinction to *hatanu*, in this context, see *Perush Shada”l*, p. 174.

⁶⁵ R”I bar Yakar identifies Gen 42:21 as the intertext, noting that if one translates *aval* as “in truth,” this is the source. See Chavel, “*Perush Tefilot Yom Ha-Kippurim Mi-Rabbenu Yehuda be-Rebbi Yakar*,” p. 5 = (ed. Yerushalmi, vol. 2, p. 106). Abudraham follows this word for word. See *Abudraham Ha-Shalem*, p. 282.

<p>18 On the third day Joseph said to them: “Do this and you shall live, for I am a God-fearing man. 19 If you are honest men, let one of you brothers be held in your place of detention, while the rest of you go and take home rations for your starving households; 20 but you must bring me your youngest brother, that your words may be verified and that you may not die.” And they did accordingly. 21 They said to one another: Indeed, we are guilty⁶⁶ on account of our brother, because we looked on at his anguish, yet paid no heed as he pleaded with us. That is why this distress has come upon us. 22 Then Reuben spoke up and said to them: Did I not tell you, ‘Do no wrong to the boy?’ But you paid no heed. Now comes the reckoning for his blood. 23 They did not know that Joseph understood, for there was an interpreter between him and them.</p> <p>- Genesis 42:14-23</p>	<p>בראשית פרק מב</p> <p>(יח) וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם יוֹסֵף בְּיוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי זֹאת עֲשׂוּ וְחִיּוּ אֶת הָאֱלֹהִים אֲנִי יָרֵא:</p> <p>(יט) אִם כְּנִים אַתֶּם אֲחִיכֶם אַחַד יֵאָסֵר בְּבַיִת מִשְׁמַרְכֶּם וְאַתֶּם לְכוּ הִבִּיאוּ שָׂבָר רַעְבוֹן בְּתִיכֶם:</p> <p>(כ) וְאֵת אֲחִיכֶם הַקָּטָן תְּבִיאוּ אֵלַי וַיֵּאֱמְנוּ דְבַרְיֶכֶם וְלֹא תְמוּתוּ וַיַּעֲשׂוּ כֵן:</p> <p>(כא) וַיֹּאמְרוּ אִישׁ אֶל אָחִיו אֲבָל אֲשֵׁמִים אֲנַחְנּוּ עַל אָחִינוּ אֲשֶׁר רָאִינוּ צָרַת נַפְשׁוֹ בְּהִתְחַנְּנוֹ אֵלֵינוּ וְלֹא שָׁמַעְנוּ עַל כֵּן בָּאָה אֵלֵינוּ הַצָּרָה הַזֹּאת:</p> <p>(כב) וַיַּעַן רְאוּבֵן אֶתֶם לֹא מֵר הָלוֹא אָמַרְתִּי אֵלֵיכֶם לֹא מֵר אֶל תִּחְטְאוּ בְּיָד וְלֹא שָׁמַעְתֶּם וְגַם דָּמוֹ הֵבִיא נְדָרָשׁ:</p> <p>(כג) וְהֵם לֹא יָדְעוּ כִּי שָׁמַע יוֹסֵף כִּי הִמְלִיץ בֵּינְתֶם:</p>
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In Hays’s terminology, this is not a direct quote, but an allusion or echo.⁶⁷ There is no exact quotation in the Bible including *aval* and *hatanu*. However, the quotation of the word *aval*, with the closely associated word *ashemim*, is enough of a connection to qualify as an intertext. Especially given the rarity of the word *aval* in the Bible, the plausibility of this intertext proposal is strengthened.⁶⁸ Having identified the intertext for

⁶⁶ Note that this admission of guilt is used specifically for those who have committed a sin on purpose. See Lev 5:1-4; 16:21; 26:40 and Num 5:6-7. Cf. Milgrom, *Leviticus 1-16*, p. 301. See *Kli Yakar* ad loc., who calls this statement “*derekh vidui*.”

⁶⁷ “The volume of intertextual echo varies in accordance with the semantic distance between the source and the reflecting surface. Quotation, allusion, and echo may be seen as points along a spectrum of intertextual reference, moving from the explicit to the subliminal.” Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, p.23.

⁶⁸ R’I bar Yakar and Abudraham agreed with this linking of texts. See above, n. 655. Lieber’s description of the use of biblical quotations and allusions in the poetry of Yannai is useful here: “[Piyut] draws upon the familiar, canonical literary source as a kind of short-hand, employing a single, meaning-laden word or phrase in order to evoke a world of implicit meaning, both biblical-contextual and exegetical.” Lieber, *Yannai on Genesis*, p. 95. In Hays’s seven tests, this is significant. He asks in test #6: “Have other readers, both critical and pre-critical, heard the same echoes?” Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, p. 31.

the confession, we will examine some aspects of the biblical text, and connect it to the context of confession in the liturgy.⁶⁹

1) The confession uttered by Joseph's brothers is not a general admission of guilt for vague sins; rather it is a direct acknowledgement of the ways in which the brothers saw Joseph's suffering when kidnapping him, but did not listen to him.⁷⁰

In fact, the theme of listening is drawn out in these very verses: (1) the brothers recall how they did not listen to Joseph (v. 21), (2) Reuben accuses them of not listening to him at that moment (v. 22), and (3) they are not aware that Joseph is listening to them throughout this discussion (v. 23).⁷¹ This is also the first mention of any cries Joseph made when he was thrown into the pit by his brothers; in the original story, Joseph's reaction is not reported (see Gen 37:23-36). Only now we understand that Joseph was pleading with the brothers throughout that scene.⁷² In the liturgy, this image raises consciousness for the sinner admitting guilt: what *specific* cries and pleas have we heard but ignored?⁷³

2) It is also clear that the archetype sin that is being confessed to, based on this intertext, is one between people, not between a person and God. Not only that, the

⁶⁹ Some medieval commentators connected the behavior of the brothers in this scene to the recommended behavior for the penitent. See *Rabbenu Bahya* ad loc. (ed. Chavel, p. 341) and *Radak* ad loc.

⁷⁰ Samson Raphael Hirsch ad loc. notes that "until now they did not see themselves as guilty." This is the moment of admission of guilt. See Samson Raphael Hirsch, *The Pentateuch*, trans. by Isaac Levy (New York: Judaica Press, 1971), vol. 1, p. 595.

⁷¹ Cf. Aviva Zornberg, *Genesis: The Beginnings of Desire* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1995), pp. 306-307.

⁷² *Rabbenu Bahya* to Gen 42:21 (ed. Chavel, vol. 1, p. 341): "There is no doubt that he was pleading with them to not do this, but they didn't listen to him." For a *midrashic* version of what Joseph said in his plea, see Testament of Zebulon 2:2-3 (*The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. James Charlesworth (New York: Doubleday, 1985), vol. 1, p. 805). Cf. Ginzberg, *Legends*, vol. 2, p. 11 and pp. 13-14.

⁷³ "In light of this literary parallel, what does confession mean? Confession means dredging up sins that were buried long ago. Confession means beginning to take responsibility for our actions. Confession means recognizing how people plead with us while we refuse to hear them. Ultimately, confession means recognizing the ugly truth and stating it out loud." Kaunfer, "*Aval Chatanu*," p. 183

sin was committed years earlier. This scene offers the possibility that confession is not something that is limited to the actions of the here and now, or even the past year only.⁷⁴ Actions that have been committed long ago can still be recalled, and wrongdoing admitted.

- 3) This confession is a moment of assuming collective responsibility, with the words of guilt recited by “one to another” (v. 21). Significantly, the admission is in the plural. Only Reuben dissents from this group, blaming them for not listening to him at the moment of sin. But while the other brothers could have broken into factions assigning blame for the sin (most significantly was Judah’s role, suggesting he be sold [Gen 37:26:27]),⁷⁵ they did not. The admission is a moment of putting aside blaming others and uniting in accepting the consequences for the action. This is significant in considering the plural language of confession in the liturgy as well.⁷⁶
- 4) The admission of guilt here is also a recognition that the brothers themselves are experiencing the suffering that Joseph endured when thrown into the pit. By sitting in jail for three days (Gen 42:17),⁷⁷ the brothers re-enact Joseph’s time in

⁷⁴ Forgiveness for sins is often viewed in the timeframe of one year, assuming that past sins have been atoned for. See, for instance, *T Kippurim* 4 (5):8 (ed. Lieberman, p. 252).

⁷⁵ See R. Meir’s critical stance toward Judah in *B Sanhedrin* 6b. In *midrashic* literature, Simeon, and sometimes Levi as well, were singled out as trying to do the most harm to Joseph in that moment. See Ginzberg, *Legends*, vol. 5, pp. 328-329, n. 34 and n. 41; *Midrash Mishle* (ed. Visotzky, p. 17).

⁷⁶ For the practice of confessing in the plural, even if one did not commit a specific sin, see *Netiv Binah*, p. 291. On the issue of praying in the language of plural, see *B Berakhot* 29b; 30a; 49b; Heinemann, *Prayer in the Talmud*, pp. 104-105; 190-191.

⁷⁷ Some *midrashim* also place Joseph in the pit for three days. See Ginzberg, *Legends*, vol. 2, p. 14.

the pit, also known as a place of temporary detention in the Bible.⁷⁸ The admission of guilt in this case is only after walking in the footsteps of the aggrieved party. This allows us to ask the question: to what extent does true confession come only following an experience similar to that of the person offended.

Rabbinic Understanding of Biblical Intertext

With this rich intertext standing in the background of the essential confession identified by Mar Zutra, we now explore the rabbinic understanding of this biblical confession by Joseph's brothers. There is no direct rabbinic interpretation for this phrase from Gen 42:22 in the Talmudic-era rabbinic literature.⁷⁹ This affords us the opportunity to explore a more associative possibility of interpretation, one in which the biblical phrase triggers not a direct reference, but a larger set of connections. Specifically in this case: the biblical intertext recalls the rabbinic approach to the delayed punishment for the sale of Joseph: the 10 martyrs of the rabbinic period. This story itself has direct connections to the Yom Kippur liturgy, and to the act of confession in that context. Below we explore this connection more in depth.

The association with this sin of the brothers – throwing Joseph into a pit and then selling him into slavery – connects directly to one of the central liturgical pieces of Yom Kippur: the poem *Eleh Ezkereh*,⁸⁰ based on the legend of the 10 martyrs.⁸¹ While scholars

⁷⁸ See Sarna, *Genesis*, p. 368, n. 21. See also Jon D. Levenson, *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), pp. 147-153, esp. p. 152.

⁷⁹ See *Bamidbar Rabbah* 13:18; *Bereishit Rabbati* ad loc. (ed. Albeck, p. 204).

⁸⁰ See Goldschmidt, *Mahzor Le-Yamim Nora'im*, vol. 2, pp. 568-573; Davidson, *Otzar Ha-Shirah Ve-Ha-Pivvut*, vol. 1, p. 196 (#4273).

⁸¹ This *midrash* appears in a number of forms, identified by Visotzky, *Midrash Mishle*, p. 18 and notes ad loc. See Jellenik, *Beit Ha-Midrash*, vol. 2, pp. 64-72; vol. 6, pp. 19-30 and pp. 31-35. See also *Semahot* 8:8-16 (ed. Dov Zlotnick. *The Tractate "Mourning,"* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), pp. 59-67

have identified the source of this *midrash* as later than the Talmud, and indeed have challenged the historical notion of 10 martyrs,⁸² the underlying notion that the brothers' sale of Joseph is linked to the atonement of Yom Kippur extends back to Jubilees.⁸³ The

and pp. 139-143. Joseph Dan (following Philip Bloch, "Rom und die Mystiker der Merkabah," in *Festschrift zum Siebzigsten Geburtstag J. Guttmanns* (Leipzig, 1915), pp. 113-124) identified it as part of *Heikhalot Rabbati*. Joseph Dan, *Ha-Sippur Ha-Ivri Bimei Ha-Beinayim*, (Jerusalem: Keter, 1974), pp. 63-68. See also *Batei Midrashot*, vol. 1, pp. 74-76; Moshe Hershtler, "Midrash Asarah Harugei Malkhut," *Sinai* 71 (1972), pp. 218-228; Joseph Dan, "Pirkei Heikhalot Rabbati U-Ma'aseh Aseret Harugei Malkhut," *Eshel Be'er Sheva* 2 (1980), pp. 63-80; Michal Oron, "Nusahim Makbilim shel Sippur Aseret Harugei Malkhut ve-Shel Sefer Heikhalot Rabbati," *Eshel Be'er Sheva* 2 (1980), pp. 81-95; Alter Welner, *Aseret Harugei Malkhut: Ba-Midrash U-Be-Piyyut* (Jerusalem: Mossad Ha-Rav Kook, 2005); For a full manuscript comparison of the various versions of this midrash, see Gottfried Reeg, *Die Geschichte von den Zehn Martyrern* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1985). See also Strack and Stemberger, pp. 338-339.

⁸² For the early attempts to connect this to history, see Moshe Auerbach, "Asarah Harugei Malkhut," *Jeschurun* 10 (1923), pp. 60-66; 81-88 [Hebrew section]; Shmuel Krauss, "Asarah Harugei Malkhut," *Ha-Shiloah* 45 (1925), pp. 10-22; 106-117; 221-233; Louis Finkelstein, "The Ten Martyrs," in *Essays and Studies in Memory of Linda R. Miller*, ed. Israel Davidson (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1938), pp. 29-55. Lieberman re-examined the historical basis for this in "The Martyrs of Caesarea," in *Annuaire de L'Institute de Philologie Orientales et Slaves* 7 (1939-1944), pp. 395-446, esp. pp. 416f. He revisited this in "Redifat Dat Yisrael," in *Sefer Ha-Yovel Likhvod Shalom Baron* (Jerusalem: American Academy for Jewish Research, 1975), pp. 213-245. Solomon Zeitlin was the first scholar who declared that the legend of the 10 martyrs had no historical basis whatsoever: "The story about the Ten Martyrs is undoubtedly a legend. There were no Ten Martyrs. I do not mean to say that there were no martyrs....The story of the Ten Martyrs as a group, however, is a legend. Since the story as such is a legend, the scholars who seek to identify the Ten Martyrs labor in vain. See Solomon Zeitlin, "The Legend of the Ten Martyrs and Its Apocalyptic Origins," *JQR* (N.S.) 36 (1945-1946), pp. 1-16, here p. 4. Cf. Urbach, *Haza* "L, pp. 462-463 (= *The Sages*, pp. 521-522). For a more recent analysis of this legend, see Joseph Dan, "Aseret Harugei Malkhut: Martyrologia U-Mystika," in *Mincha La-Menachem: Kovetz Ma'amarim Likhvod Ha-Rav Menahem Ha-Kohein*, eds. Hannah Amit, Aviad Ha-Cohen, and Haim Be'er (Jerusalem: Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Me'uchad, 2007), pp. 367-390; Ra'anana Boustán, *From Martyr to Mystic*, pp. 81-98; Idem, "The Contested Reception of the Story of the Ten Martyrs in Medieval Midrash," in Ra'anana Boustán et al., *Envisioning Judaism: Studies in Honor of Peter Schäfer on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), vol. 1, pp. 369-393. Dan theorizes that the original story of the 10 martyrs in *Heikhalot Rabbati* had only 4 martyrs, and was not connected to the story of 10 being punished for the sale of Joseph, a later development. But he himself admits that there is no proof for this theory. Dan, "Aseret Harugei Malkhut," p. 374.

⁸³ See Jub 34:10-19 (ed. Kahane, vol. 2, pp. 288-289; ed. Charlesworth, vol. 2, p. 121). See on this point Zeitlin, p. 5; Boustán, *From Martyr to Mystic*, pp. 87f. Jubilees also connects the goat that the brothers slaughtered to the goat of atonement in the Yom Kippur ceremony (Jub. 34:18). See James VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), p. 74; 108. Indeed, the animal *se'ir* appears first in Gen 37:31 (the slaughtered animal that the brothers dipped Joseph's coat in) and next in Leviticus 4:23, connected to the sin offerings. See Boustán, "The Contested Reception," p. 378, n. 22. Zeitlin tries to argue that the source in Jubilees and in *Midrash Eleh Ezkerekh* are completely non-rabbinic, based on their theological outlook that later generations can be punished for earlier sins. This claim seems somewhat far-reaching, as noted by Dan, *Ha-Sippur Ha-Ivri*, p. 65. See generally Anke Dorman, "'Commit Justice and Shed Innocent Blood.' Motives behind the Institution of the Day of Atonement in the Book of Jubilees," in *The Day of Atonement: Its Interpretations in Early Jewish and Christian Traditions*, eds. Thomas Hieke and Tobias Nicklas (Leiden: Brill, 2012), pp. 49-61. My thanks to Dr. Dorman for sending me this article. For another approach to the punishment of the brothers for selling Joseph, borne by later

connection also appears in Talmudic-era *midrashim*.⁸⁴ Below is the text found in two manuscripts from *Bereishit Rabbah*:

<p>It is written: If you find a person who has stolen a soul from his brethren... (Deut 24:7). You stole your brother. By your life I will be incited to exact payment from the praiseworthy among you, from those who sit in the chamber of hewn stone ten for the death penalty.</p> <p>It is written: “[A person who steals another man, and sells him or] is found in his hand, he shall surely die” (Ex 21:16). You sold him to the Ishmaelites. By your life, in the</p>	<p>בראשית רבה פד:טז כתי" כי ימצא איש גונב נפש מאחיו ואתם גונבים את אחיכם חייכם אני אגרה ואפרע מן המשובחים שבכם מיושבי לשכת הגזית עשרה להריגה כתי" ונמצא בידו מות יומת אתם מכרתם אותו לישמעאלים חייכם עתיד ישמעאל בניכם לגבות בשבילו שעל דבר זה נגזר על ר" ישמעאל להריגה ועל עשרת חביריו הרוגי אספייאנוס קיסר</p>
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generations, see *Bereishit Rabbah* 84:18 (ed. Theodor-Albeck, pp. 1022-1023) and the sources cited in Ginzberg, *Legends*, vol. 5, p. 330, n. 53.

⁸⁴ There is a testament to this tradition in the *Mekhilta De-Rabbi Yishmael* on Exodus 21:16, but does not appear in our editions (see ed. Horowitz-Rabin, pp. 266-267). This tradition is preserved by Shimon ben Tzemah Duran, *Magen Avot*, ed. Yeruham Fishel Ha-Levi (Brooklyn: Light Publishing Co., 1946), p. 14a (commenting on Avot 1:16):

<p>He [R. Shimon] was one of the 10 martyrs, as is mentioned in the Mekhilta on the section: “One who steals a man and sells him...” (Ex 21:16) and in <i>Midrash Kinot</i>, and in <i>Midrash Tehilim</i>.</p>	<p>והוא [=ר שמעון] היה מעשרה הרוגי מלכות כמו שנוכר במכילתא פרשת וגונב איש ומכרו ובמדרש קינות ובמדרש תהילים</p>
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Cf. *Mekhilta De-Rabbi Yishmael* (ed. Friedmann, Addendum 2:18, p. 123a-b). Friedmann identifies *Midrash Kinot* as *Midrash Eleh Ezkereh*.

The association between Joseph’s brothers sin against Joseph and the 10 martyrs is also found in the following later *midrashim*:

- 1) A version of *Shir Ha-Shirim Rabbah* discovered in the Genizah. See *Midrash Shir Ha-Shirim*, ed. Eleazar Ha-Levi Grünhut (Jerusalem: Ha-Tzvi, 1897), pp. 3f = *Midrash Shir Ha-Shirim*, ed. Yosef Hayyim Wertheimer (Jerusalem: Ktav Va-Sefer, 1971), p. 9f.
- 2) 9th Century *Midrash Mishle* (ed. Visotzky, p. 18) and the related story of R. Akiva’s death (but lacking the torture mentioned in *B Berakhot* 61b) in *Midrash Mishle* (ed. Visotzky, pp. 67-70 and notes to lines therein). See Dan, *Ha-Sippur Ha-Ivri*, p. 66 and Boustan, “The Contested Reception,” p. 380f for an analysis of this connection.
- 3) *Midrash Ha-Gadol* (ed. Mordecai Margolioth (Jerusalem: Mossad Ha-Rav Kook, 1967), pp. 637-8.
- 4) *Yalkut Mishle #929*.
- 5) *Bereishit Rabbati* (ed. Albeck, p. 176) – see Boustan, “The Contested Reception,” p. 383f.

See also Walner, pp. 153-154. Compare Boustan’s opinion that “[t]he connection between the sale of Joseph and rabbinic martyrological traditions... does not appear anywhere in classical rabbinic literature from the third and fourth centuries. Nor is it attested in the early *aggadic* midrashim from fifth- and sixth-century Palestine.” Boustan, “The Contested Reception,” pp. 373-374.

This connection also appears in many of the *Hekhalot* versions of this *midrash*. See Jellenik, *Beit Ha-Midrasch*, vol. 2, pp. 64-5; vol. 6, pp. 19-20; Dan, *Aseret Harugei Malkhut*, pp. 383-384. See *Rabbenu Bahya* (ed. Chavel, vol. 1, pp. 348-350); *Batei Midrashot*, vol. 1, p. 74. For a full manuscript comparison of this part of the legend, see Reeg, *Die Geschichte von den Zehn Martyrern*, pp. 10*-15*. See also Hershler, “*Midrash Asarah Harugei Malkhut*,” p. 219, n. 15. For a translation and overview, see David Stern and Mark Jay Mirsky, *Rabbinic Fantasies: Imaginative Narratives from Classical Hebrew Literature* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1990), pp. 143-165.

<p>future Yishmael your son will be called to account for his sake, for on this matter it was decreed on R. Yishmael to face the death penalty, and on his ten colleagues, those put to death by Vespasian the Caesar. - <i>Bereishit Rabbah</i> 84:16 (Munich manuscript – ed. Theodor-Albeck, p. 1020)⁸⁵</p>	
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This rabbinic understanding of the sin the brothers committed toward Joseph provides some context to the worshiper on Yom Kippur, who confesses in language that recalls Gen 42:22. Not only is the admission of guilt in Gen 42:22 the typology for the confession for future wrongdoing,⁸⁶ but also it serves as the model of acknowledging a sin – not one’s own! – which has not yet been atoned for. This leads the worshiper to consider the ways in which the punishments experienced are not only related to his own sins, but to the sins of his ancestors, which they did not take responsibility for.⁸⁷ The framing of the confession on Yom Kippur is altered once one considers that the sins are not limited to one’s own, but also to the gravest sins of the Jewish people collectively, which have not yet been repaid.

Conclusion

In this analysis, we have focused on Shmuel’s two liturgical confessions. The first – “You know the depths of the heart” – led us indirectly to two intertexts, in Proverbs and

⁸⁵ The Paris manuscript has a nearly identical text. See Albeck’s critical notes ad loc. This approach to the sin of the brothers is contrasted in *Tanhuma Vayeshev* 2 (ed. Or Ha-Hayim (Jerusalem, 1988), vol. 1, p. 196), where R. Mana states that the sin of the brothers was atoned for once they died. For this concept generally, see *M Yoma* 8:8; *T Kippurim* 4 (5): 8 (ed. Lieberman, p. 252); *Sifre Bamidbar Shlah* #112 (ed. Kahane, p. 14).

⁸⁶ See above, n. 699.

⁸⁷ For the connection between this view of sin and the later view that every person should only be punishable for his own sin, see Urbach, *Haza”l*, pp. 463-464 (= *The Sages*, pp. 521-522). Cf. *Sifre Bamidbar Shlah* #112 (ed. Kahane, p. 14); Stern and Mirsky, p. 146. Cf. *Midrash Mishle* (ed. Visotzky, p. 18), which quotes R. Abin as stating that the sin is punished in every generation and still not atoned for! See also Boustan, “The Contested Reception,” p. 380f, esp. p. 388, nn. 52-53.

Psalms. However, an alternate reading of Shmuel's confession, preserved in R. Yeruham, allowed us to explore a third possible intertext, a direct quote from Psalm 44. This psalm, and its rabbinic understanding in *Eikhah Rabbah*, allowed us to explore a sin in which the sinner is, in fact, innocent. More broadly, Shmuel's confession – or part of confession – provided an example of an ambiguous liturgical text that referred to multiple intertexts. We then explored Shmuel's minimum confession, identified by Mar Zutra's quoting of Shmuel's student Bar Hamdudi. This confession is marked by the word “*aval*,” which was not critical to expressing the notion of confession (which could have been accomplished by the word “*hatanu*” alone) and therefore, we argued, a significant word in the formulation. Triggered by the word “*aval*,” we were led to the story of Joseph's brothers admitting guilt, and the rabbinic understanding of this sin as one that is so grave that it must be repaid in every generation. This had direct relevance to the recitation of a confession on Yom Kippur. In contrast to the direct quotations analyzed in previous chapters, the confession liturgy of Shmuel, preserved in *B Yoma* 87b, offered an instructive case study for the allusive connection between prayer text and biblical intertext.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

How does the meaning of the prayer text change when analyzed in light of its biblical intertext? How is that meaning further broadened when the biblical intertext is understood through the lens of its rabbinic interpretation? These are the core questions that have driven this study, and we have tested this method repeatedly throughout the work. While others have explored the use of intertexts to open up the meaning of prayers, we have explored this method further, avoiding the temptation to arrive at a single “compositional whole”¹ or complete “narrative.”²

As we demonstrated in Chapter 1, the first blessing of the *amidah* is much more than a singular focus on the patriarchy, the merit of the ancestors, or even the yearning for redemption.³ In fact, once the biblical intertexts are taken into account, previously unidentified characters – Moses, Malki-Zedek, Yitro – emerge as central to this blessing. Beyond identifying characters, the biblical intertexts also sharpened our understanding of the common associations with this blessing. For instance, while the prayer twice mentions Abraham explicitly, the biblical intertexts lead us to understand which Abraham is being referenced: the skeptical, frustrated questioner of Gen 15. This is true of Moses as well; the Moses who emerges is the fearful, distrusting “tyro in prophecy” of Ex 3. These biblical allusions opened up additional pathways for the worshiper to identify with the references in the prayer itself. While it is hard to compare oneself to Moses splitting the sea or Abraham sacrificing his only son, it is much easier to stand in the footsteps of these characters when questioning God or experiencing doubt. A similar effect occurred

¹ Kimelman, “The Literary Structure,” p. 172.

² Schonfield, *Undercurrents*, p. 58.

³ As argued by previous scholars, identified in Chapter 2 of this study, nn. 11-13.

when recognizing that calling God “great mighty and awesome” referenced a biblical intertext that defined these attributes as treating the widow, orphan and stranger fairly. Performing great, mighty and awesome divine acts in the abstract seems impossible, but performing the great, mighty and awesome acts of Deut 10:17 is plausible, even commanded.⁴

The biblical intertext also enriched the locus of these quotations specifically in prayer. To take the first phrase of the blessing as an example, we first noted that God speaks to a person in the first biblical allusion, not the reverse. How appropriate to begin a direct address to God through prayer by using a quote from God, essentially signaling that all communicative language between God and people originates with the divine. Second, we pointed out that the biblical intertext of Moses at the burning bush is the first mention of someone standing in Exodus, appropriate to the standing prayer. Third, the larger biblical context of the intertext makes clear that Moses is self-conscious about his ability to speak, a reasonable doubt to be expressed when beginning the speech-act of prayer. Finally, we noted that all the phrases in this prayer that point to biblical intertexts stem from scenes of dialogue, quite fitting for a prayer that opens a dialogue with God.

But we did not end our interpretation based on the biblical intertext. Following the notion of looking at “interpreted Scripture,”⁵ we also investigated the rabbinic understandings of the biblical intertext. In the case of the first blessing of the *amidah*, this led us to the theme of fatherhood in the prayer, as Moses was seduced as God spoke to him in the voice of his father, Amram. Now the term “*avot*” – fathers – took on a whole new meaning. Perhaps the most significant rabbinic understanding of the biblical intertext

⁴ Although see our other interpretation of these adjectives in Chapter 2, p. 80. This illustrates the fundamental polysemous outcomes that arise from the interpretation of biblical intertexts.

⁵ Cf. Evans, “Listening for Echoes of Interpreted Scripture,” p. 50. See further our Introduction, n. 42.

in this prayer was expressed by R. Pinhas, who brought four biblical intertexts into dialogue with each other. The final intertext – from Neh 9:32 – mirrors the original one from Deut 10:17, although it has gone through an interpretive journey through the expressions of Jeremiah (32:18) and Daniel (9:4) that question the original pious meaning of the phrase delivered by Moses in Deuteronomy. This rabbinic analysis was critical because it pointed to the shifting understanding of the *same phrase* when seen throughout time.

One of the interesting results of our analysis is that many of the prayer texts actually point to multiple biblical intertexts. This was true throughout the phrases in the first blessing of the *amidah*:

<i>Elohei Avraham, elohei Yitzhak ve-elohei Yaakov</i>	Ex 3:6, 15; 4:5
<i>Ha-el ha-gadol ha-gibbor ve-ha-norah</i>	Deut 10:17; Neh 9:32; and cf. Jer 32:18 and Dan 9:4
<i>El elyon koneh shamayim va-aretz</i>	Gen 14:19, 22
<i>Magen Avraham</i>	Gen 15:1 (and 14:20?)

This was also true for the texts in *havdalah*:

<i>bein kodesh le-hol</i>	Lev 10:10; Ez 22:26, 42:20 and 44:23
<i>bein or le-hoshekh</i>	Gen 1:4, 18

This phenomenon itself points to the multiplicity of interpretations that emerge once one begins to search for the biblical intertext, and cuts against a singular read, or unified narrative, of any prayer unit.

In Chapter 3, we demonstrated how the structure of the prayer can illuminate the correct biblical intertext. While recognizing that all the “separations” were taken from the Bible, following the rule of R. Yehoshua b. Levi (or Levi), we were able to identify the particular biblical context once we unlocked the structure of the “longer” *havdalah* of eight separations presented in *B Pesahim* 104a. The term *bein kodesh le-hol* took on a

very specific meaning, hearkening to the story of Nadav and Avihu, and the prohibition of intoxicants in the Temple environs. The biblical intertext also unraveled a common association with this prayer: that the separation is meant to be located entirely in time. In fact, the theme of separation in space, coming both in Lev 10:10 but also in Ez 46:1, points to a prayer that had a concept of spatial separation in addition to temporal one (with the intertexts of Gen 1:4, 18). By exploring the rabbinic understanding of this intertext, we added yet a third dimension to our understanding of the separation: the valuation of people as a mode of distinction. We also noted a complexity around the intertext of *bein or le-hoshekh*. While this seemed like a reference to time (night and day), the rabbinic understanding of Gen 1:4 clearly pointed to a different understanding of light and dark, one with moral and primeval overtones. This broadened to a discovery of ethical overtones that thread throughout this prayer: the moral contrast between light and darkness of Gen 1:4, the ethical contrast between Israel and the nations (Lev 20:26), and the ethical demands on the priests (Ez 44:23) as a precursor to the renewed relationship with God.

In Chapter 4, we explored the confession texts in the *vidui* prayer, specifically those familiar to/composed by Shmuel. Noting the multiple versions of Shmuel's opinion of what to say for *vidui*, we were led to a variety of biblical intertexts, including Ps 64:7 and Pr 20:5. Perhaps most unexpected, the phrase – in R. Yeruham's version of it – recalled Ps 44:22, a psalm of complaint, where the supposed sinner is in fact innocent. In our investigation of the minimum confession, also recited before Shmuel, we noted the importance of the word "*aval*" as a signifier of the story of Joseph's brothers in their

moment of admission of guilt. It is this latter reference that allowed us to explore a biblical allusion, rather than simply a direct quotation.⁶

In closing, we might ask: what are the limits to this method of interpretation? Are all biblical intertexts meant to open a new plane of meaning, drawn from both the wider biblical context and the rabbinic understanding of that text? We have argued throughout that this method leads to rich interpretive results, although it is certainly possible that not all interpretations are as strong as others. The strength and weakness of this method lies in its multiple possibilities. It is certainly possible that biblical language was “in the mouth” of the liturgical composers, who did not intend a full reference to the wider context. But, as we have noted, determining the author’s conscious intent regarding the intertexts is near impossible, and ultimately may not matter for the purposes of interpretation by the reader.⁷

The “literary-intertext” method explored in this work leads us to ask a number of additional questions, suitable for further research.⁸ This includes the following:

- (1) How might the understanding of the biblical intertext be further complicated when considering inner-biblical exegesis? In our examples, we restricted ourselves to the “interpreted Scripture” of the rabbinic lens. But, as Michael Fishbane and others have amply shown,⁹ biblical texts have also been interpreted in the Bible itself. How might this additional lens of interpretation add to our understanding of the layers of meaning in the liturgy?

⁶ See Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*, p. 29.

⁷ See our Introduction, n. 46.

⁸ For a past evaluation of the liturgical field generally, and future directions, see Kimelman, “Liturgical Studies in the 90s”; Lawrence Hoffman, “Jewish Liturgy and Jewish Scholarship; Method and Cosmology,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Jewish Studies*, ed. Martin Goodman ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 733-755.

⁹ See the works cited in our Introduction, n. 25.

(2) What is the further significance of the multiple biblical intertexts discovered when analyzing each line of liturgy? We noted above, for example, that in the first line of the blessing of the *amidah*, the intertext could be Ex 3:6; 3:15 or 4:5. Similarly, the distinction between light and darkness in *havdalah* could refer to Gen 1:4 or 1:18. The multiple intertexts for the phrase “*ha-el ha-gadol, ha-gibbor ve-ha-norah*” (Deut 10:17, Jer 32:18, Dan 9:4, Neh 9:32) gave rise to the daring interpretation of R. Pinhas in *Y Berakhot* 7:3; 11c and *B Yoma* 69b. How might a search for multiple intertexts (or near-intertexts, such as the quotes from Jeremiah and Daniel above) complicate further the search for the interpretive web? The full investigation of intertexts turns out to not be limited to a single biblical interpretation, with a single rabbinic understanding.¹⁰ The language used by Devora Steinmetz of “a shared intertextual field”¹¹ seems most apt in trying to describe the expansive set of texts brought into dialogue through a robust analysis.

(3) What is the nature of post-Talmudic prayer texts in relation to the ones analyzed in depth in this study? We have restricted our analysis to the prayers that appear in some form in the Talmud or in the Talmudic era. Does the thick use of biblical language hold for later prayers? Did the authors of those later prayers feel more at liberty to quote the Bible principally through allusion or echo, and less through direct quotation? Can the frequency of direct quotation (such as that discovered in

¹⁰ Indeed the rabbinic understanding of the biblical intertext can itself lead to a second biblical intertext. See our discussion in Chapter 2, n. 28 and n. 58.

¹¹ See our Introduction, n. 43.

the first blessing of the *amidah*) teach us anything about the age of the prayer itself? Why and how did this style change through the ages?

(4) How might *piyyutim* be explicated in a more robust fashion through the creation of meaning by juxtaposing the prayer text and the multiple biblical and rabbinic intertexts? *Piyyutim* have long been studied as a source of masterful intertextual creations.¹² The next step in that field might be to develop interpretations of these poems based on the intertextual web weaved by their authors.

(5) How might this understanding of the multilayered meaning in the liturgy impact attempts in modern circles to re-write parts of the liturgy?¹³ Could the debates about liturgical change¹⁴ be centered on the appropriate intertextual reference,

¹² See our Introduction, n. 47. See also, for example, the work done on Yannai's use of biblical intertexts: Menahem Zulay, "Matters of Language in the Poetry of Yannai," in *Yediot Ha-Makhon Le-Heker Ha-Shirah Ha-Ivrit Bi-Yerushalayim* 6 (1945), pp. 165-247; Aharon Mirsky, *Piyyutei Yose ben Yose* (Jerusalem: Mossad Bialik, 1991), pp. 71-74; Idem, *Ha-Piyyut*, pp. 209-218; Rabinowitz, *Mahzor Piyyutei Rabbi Yannai*; Lieber, *Yannai on Genesis*. See generally on *piyyut* the monumental contribution of Goldschmidt in his series of critical edition mahzorim (completed by Yonah Fraenkel). It should be noted that while these scholars brilliantly uncovered the allusions in the *piyyutim*, they largely stopped short of a literary analysis that results from these allusions. Lieber comes closest to this, and also recognizes the significance of the flow of biblical quotations at the end of each poem (pp. 114-116). However, she employs a more general comment approach to the prayers rather than a close line-by-line reading for the purposes of interpretation and meaning. See, for example, *Yannai on Genesis*, pp. 442-444 (although cf. her comments on specific words in p 118). Lieber (p. 112, n. 39) herself points to this gap in *piyyut* studies: "[P]iyyut has not yet received as much serious treatment as biblical intertextuality has...or as much as medieval or modern Hebrew literature have....But...classical piyyut provides a rich repository of textual tradition for scholars of Jewish intertextuality; this is an area of Piyyut Studies that merits substantial attention." We, too, are suggesting there is more work to be done in a close literary read of *piyyutim*, building on the work of these scholars. For one example of this interpretive method applied to *piyyut*, see Elie Kaunfer, "Passing before God: The Literary Theme of *Un'taneh Tokef*," in *Who by Fire, Who by Water: Un'taneh Tokef*, ed. Lawrence Hoffman (Woodstock, VT: Jewish Lights, 2010), pp. 98-102.

¹³ For a cogent aesthetic critique of these efforts to date, see Madsen. For example: "The most compelling liturgy does not yield all its meaning at once. It needs to withhold something, so as to reveal itself over years of use" (Madsen, p. 152). This is certainly the case with a deep intertextual structure.

¹⁴ See, for instance, the debate about adding the matriarchs chronicled in Samuel Freedman, *Jew vs. Jew: The Struggle for the Soul of American Jewry* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2001), pp. 124-161.

rather than, for instance, a simple re-applying of the language of the patriarchs with the names of the matriarchs inserted.¹⁵

(6) Is there a place to reconsider the seemingly far-fetched approaches of *Hasidei Ashkenaz* in considering interpretations of prayers and the search for intertexts?

They managed to discover intertexts not simply through similar language, but through numerical associations.¹⁶ These unconventional hints to biblical texts further serve the understanding of liturgy as a never-ending web of interconnected texts meant to be interpreted but never exhausted.

Ultimately, this work is simply a beginning to a much broader project of interpreting Jewish prayer by discovering and unlocking the various intertexts associated with it.

¹⁵ See, as one example of this approach, the composition by Einat Ramon included in Golinkin, “Adding the *Imahot*,” p. 137. For an argument against liturgical change based on a disruption of the biblical intertext, see *Arugat Ha-Bosem*, ed. Urbach, vol. 4, p. 97 (also referenced in Sperber, *On Changes in Jewish Liturgy*, p. 150):

There are those among you who say: Heal us, YHVH our God. And this is a complete error, for it is a full verse in Jeremiah: Heal me YHVH and I shall be healed.	יש מכם אומרים רפאנו ה' אלוהינו וזהו טעות גמור שהרי פסוק מלא הוא בירמיה (יז יד), רפאני ה' וארפא
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Here, the addition of “our God” to the liturgy (as in Mahzor Vitry and Rambam – see n. 60 there) raises the ire of R. Avraham b. R. Ezriel, because in the source verse, the word “our God” does not appear. See further there for additional examples. The biblical intertext has also been cited as proof for the correct reading of a prayer in dispute. See Sperber, *On Changes in Jewish Liturgy*, p. 154, n. 13.

¹⁶ See, in relation to our text of *havdalah*, *Perushei Siddur Ha-Tefilah La-Rokeah* (ed. Hershtler, p. 592). See further Sperber, *On Changes in Jewish Liturgy*, p. 100, n. 2 and pp. 143-160.

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