

GATHER THE PEOPLE

Torah-Based Community Organizing and Development

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FAMILY SIDUR STUDY: LESSON PLAN 9

LAST WEEK WE FINISHED UP BY TALKING ABOUT THE MOURNER'S KADDISH, קדיש יתום.

- We talked about how saying the קדיש helps people who are in mourning.
- And how we can let mourners know that we want to support them by saying “אמן” at the end of each line in the קדיש.

NOW THERE'S SOMETHING YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE KADDISH—IF YOU DON'T ALREADY.

- There are several different versions of the קדיש.
 1. On page 34 in the סידור you'll find the קדיש קוצי or half-kaddish—you see it's pretty short.
 2. If you look on page 48 you'll see the קדיש שלם or full kaddish—it's much longer.
 3. And if you look on page 71 you'll see the קדיש דרבנן or the rabbi's kaddish.
- Each one is somewhat different but they all sound similar, and they all begin with the words יתגדל ויתקדש שמה רבא—may God's great name be exalted and sanctified.
- One other thing to know about the קדיש, whichever one it may be: When we come to a קדיש in the service, it usually means that we're at the beginning or the ending of a section of the service.

SO THE FRIDAY EVENING קבלת שבת SERVICE, WHICH WE'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT FOR SEVERAL WEEKS, ENDS WHEN WE COME TO THE RABBI'S KADDISH, THE קדיש דרבנן, WHICH FOLLOWS RIGHT AFTER THE קדיש יתום, THE MOURNER'S KADDISH.

- It tells us that we're about to end the קבלת שבת service and go on to the מעריב service.
- *Does anyone know what “מעריב” means?*
- So we're about to begin the evening service.

THE FIRST THING THAT HAPPENS IN THE מַעֲרִיב OR EVENING SERVICE IS THE בְּרַכּוֹ, WHICH IS THE FIRST WORD OF THE PRAYER ON PAGE 28.

- You see right above the first line in Hebrew on page 28 is the word “קָזַן.”
- *Can anyone tell us what that means?*
- So in the service, the cantor or leader sings the first line.
- Would someone read the first line in Hebrew for us?
- When the prayer leader chants the בְּרַכּוֹ, it sounds like this. [CHANT]
- And now would someone read the first line in English for us?
- *What kind of sentence is that first line?*
 1. A question?
 2. A statement?
 3. A demand?
- The leader is saying to all of us: “Bless Adonai, the One Who is blessed? Do it! Bless God!”
- *And what does the congregation reply?*
- Would someone read the second line in Hebrew.
- And now in English.
- The congregation, all of us, replies: “Blessed is God, the blessed One forever.”
- And when we sing the reply it sounds like this. [CHANT]

THE FIRST THING TO KNOW ABOUT THE בְּרַכּוֹ IS THAT, LIKE THE קְדֻשָּׁה, WE ONLY SAY IT WHEN WE HAVE A מִנְיָן.

- Does anyone know what a מִנְיָן is?
- *Why do you think we have to have 10 people of bar or bat mitzvah age—12 for a girl and 13 for a boy—to say the בְּרַכּוֹ?*
 1. The reason is that 10 such people is the smallest number of Jews that make up a Jewish *community*.
 2. And Judaism teaches that in all the most important ways, it takes at least 10 people working together to be a real blessing to God.
- In a way it means that the world we want to live in—a world of fairness and kindness for all people—we have to create here first, in our own congregational community.
- If we can’t make fairness and kindness the rule here, we certainly won’t be able to make it happen in the larger world where we work and go to school.

WHAT DOES THAT HAVE TO DO WITH BLESSING GOD?

- Judaism teaches us that we don't bless God just by saying the words "Bless God."
- To bless God *we must become a blessing to God.*
- We do that by doing what God wants us to do, which at least is to treat all people fairly and kindly.
- So the בְּרַכָּה is not a blessing *of* God, which God doesn't need.
- It's a reminder to us to be a blessing *to* God, by making sure that here in our congregation, in school and at work, we're doing everything God wants us to do so that fairness and kindness prevail.

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