

STUDY SHEET: DECEMBER 2023 CJLS IMAHOT RULING

TOSEFTA BERAKHOT 3:25

שמונה עשרה שאמרו חכמים כנגד שמונה עשרה אזכרות שבהבו לה' בני אלים וכולל של מינים בשל פרושין ושל גרים בשל זקנים ושל דוד בירושלים ואם אמר אלו לעצמן ואלו לעצמן יצא.

The eighteen blessings of which the Sages spoke are aligned with the eighteen citations of YHVH in “Ascribe to YHVH, O divine beings” (Psalm 29), and they include that of the “sectarians” with that of the “excluders,” and that of the “converts” with that of the “elders,” and that of “David” with that of “Jerusalem.” But if one recited the above separately [so there are more than eighteen blessings] he/she fulfills the obligation.

TOSEFTA BERAKHOT 3:23-24

23.

מקום שנהגו לומר ברכת אבלים בשלש אומרי' בשלש בשתים אומרים אחת אומרים אחת. In a place where it is customary to say *Birkat Aveilim* (Blessing of the Mourners), [if the custom is to say] three [*Berakhot* (blessings)], [then] they say three [*Berakhot*]. [If the custom is to say] two [*Berakhot*], [then] they say two [*Berakhot*]. [If the custom is to say] one [*Berakhah*], [then] they say one [*Berakhah*].

24.

מקום שנהגו לומר ברכת אבלים בשלש כולל את הראשונה בתחיית המתים וחותם בה מחיה המתים שניה בתנחומי אבלים וחותם [בה] מנחם עמו בעירו שלישית בגמילות חסדים ואינו חותם. [In] a place where it is customary to say *Birkat Aveilim* (Blessing of the Mourners), [if the custom is to say] three [*Berakhot*] including the first one [on the subject of] *Tehiyat Hameitim* (Resurrection of the Dead) and he seals it off [by saying *Barukh Atah Hashem Mehayeh Hametim* (Blessed are You Hashem Who resurrects the dead). The second [*Berakhah* is on the subject of] *Tanhumei Aveilim* (Consolation of the Mourners), and he seals it off [by saying *Barukh Atah Hashem Menahem Amo Ve'iro* (Blessed are You Hashem who consoles His nation in His city). The third [*Berakhah* is said on the subject of] *Gemilut Hasadim* (Deeds of Kindness), and he does not seal it off. (Translation, Sefaria — with some corrections.)

PESAK HALAKHAH

The text in *Siddur Lev Shalem for Shabbat and Festivals* (including the words in brackets in the Hebrew version, *sans* brackets) adds these three items to the traditional wording of the first blessing of the *Amidah*:

1. The names of the four Matriarchs — Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah — in the body of the blessing, and Sarah in the *hatimah* (concluding blessing).
2. The word *u-fokeid*, “and remembers,” in the body of the blessing and in the *hatimah*.

3. The use of *ve'imoteinu*, "and our Matriarchs," and *ve'imahot*, "and Matriarchs" in the body of the blessing.

These additions present the Matriarchs as equal partners of the Patriarchs in the creation of the Children of Israel.

The CJLS rules that the *Lev Shalem nussah* is the preferred *nussah* for fulfilling the *mitzvah* of praying the first blessing of the *Amidah*. This version shall be the authorized text for current and future Conservative Movement printings of our liturgy.

The CJLS recognizes, however, that variations in the wording of this blessing have arisen over the past decades that do not incorporate all three of the essential elements enumerated above, or that modify them. And the CJLS recognizes that certain of these variant versions now have the status of *minhagim* in any number of Conservative communities, including the Masorti community in Israel that uses *Siddur Va'ani Tefilati*. The CJLS, therefore, rules that, as *minhagim*, they are acceptable and, like the preferred version, fulfill the *mitzvah* of recitation of the blessing. Future Rabbinical Assembly Siddur Committees, pending review by the CJLS, will determine if and how such variations will appear as alternate readings in future *siddurim*.