The Gemara cites a related incident:

רַב יוֹסַף – Rav Avya felt ill and did not come to the lecture of Rav Yosef.[1] לְמָחֶר בִּי אָתָא – The next day when [Rav Avya] came to the study hall, בַּעָא אָבָיי קאַנוּחַי דַעְתֵּיה דְרָב יוֹסֶף – Abaye wished to put Rav Yosef's mind at ease.[2] אמר ליה – He said to [Rav Avya]: מאי טעמא לא אָתָא מֶר לפּרְקא – What is the reason master did not come to the lecture? אַמֵּר לְיה – [Rav Avya] replied: דָהָנָה חָלִישׁ לַבָּאי אַמֶר לִיה – I felt faint from hunger and was unable. אָמֶר לִיה – [Abaye] said to him: אַמָאי לא טָעַמָת מִידִי וָאָתִית — Why did you not taste something and come? אָמֶר לֵיה – [Rav Avya] replied: לא סָבַר לָה מֵר לְהָא דְרַב הוּנָא – Does master not agree with [the ruling] of Rav Huna? דָאָמֶר רָב הוּנָא – For Rav Huna said: אָסוֹר לוֹ לאָדָם שִׁיִטְעוֹם כְּלוֹם קוֹדֶם שֵּיִתְפָּלֶל תְפַלֶּת דמוסקין – It is forbidden for a person to taste anything before he prays the Mussaf Prayer.[3] אמר ליה – [Abaye] said to him: איבעי ליה למר לצלויי צלותא דמוספין ביחיד – Master should have prayed the Mussaf Prayer privately ולטעום מידי – אמר ליה – and then tasted something and come. אָמֶר לִיה [Rav Avya] replied: ולא סֶבַר לָה מֵר לְהָא דְאָמֵר רַבִּי יוֹחָגָן – Does master not agree with that which R' Yochanan said: אָסוּר לו ד לְאָרָם שְּיַקְרִּים תְּפֶּלְתוּ לְתְפֵּלְת הַצְּבּוּר recite his Prayer before the Prayer of the congregation? בְּאַה – [Abaye] said to him: אָמָר עָלָה – Was it not stated regarding [that ruling]: אָמָר רָבִּיּ אָבָא – R' Abba said: אַמָר רָבִּי אָבָא – They taught this only with regard to one who is with the congregation in the synagogue? [4] Privately, however, one may pray before the congregation. [5]

The Gemara rules:

קלית הְלְבָתָא לא בְּרֵב הוּנָא וְלא בְּרֵבִּי יְהוּשָׁעֵ בֶּן לֵוִי – And the law accords neither with Ray Huna nor with R' Yehoshua ben Levi.

The Gemara explains:

רְרֶבְ הּוּנָא הָא דְּאָמָר – In saying that the law does not accord with Rav Huna, we refer to that which we stated above [that it is forbidden for a person to taste anything before praying Mussaf]. [6] בּרֶבְי יְהוּשָׁעַ בְּן לֵּוִי – And in saying that the law does not accord with R' Yehoshua ben Levi, the reference is to the following. בִּיןן – For R' Yehoshua ben Levi said: בְּיוָן יְהִוּשְׁעַ בָּן לֵיוי – Once the time for the Minchah Prayer arrives, אָסוּר לוֹ לְאָרֶם שִׁיִּחְעוֹם בְּלוֹם לְוֹרֶם שִׁיִּחְעוֹם בְּלוֹם לְוֹרֶם שִׁיִּחְעוֹם בְּלוֹם לְוֹרֶם שִׁיִתְּפֵּלֵל הְפַלֶּח - it is forbidden for a person to taste anything before he prays the Minchah Prayer. [7]

Mishnah

After completing the morning prayers in the synagogue, one should repair to the study hall for a fixed session of Torah study before going out to pursue his livelihood (see Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 155). Accordingly, after having mentioned the times for the daily Prayers in the previous Mishnah, the Mishnah proceeds to discuss a law relevant to the study hall: [8]

CHAPTER FOUR

רְבִּי נְחוּנְיָא בֶּן הַקְּנָה הָיָה מִתְפֵּלֵל בְּבְנִיסְתוּ לְבִית הַמִּדְרָשׁ וּבִיצִיאָתוּ תְּפְּלָה קְצֶרָה — R' Nechunya ben Hakanah would pray, upon entering and leaving the study hall, a short prayer. דְבִי לִתְפָלָה זוֹ — They said to him: אָמְרוּ לוֹ – אָמְרוּ לוֹ – אָמְרוּ לוֹ – אָמְרוּ לִהָּם – אָמָר לְהָם – He said to them: אָמָר אָנִי מִתְפָּלֵל שׁל יָדִי – He said to them: אָנִי מִתְפָּלֵל עִל יָדִי – When I enter I pray that a mishap not come about through me, וּבִיצִיאָתִי אֲנִי נוֹתַן – and when I exit I give thanks for my portion. פּוֹ

קנו רבָּנָן רבָּנָן רבָּנָן ה' הָנּוּ רבָּנָן רבּנָן רבּנָן רבּנָן רבּנִן רבּנָן רבּנִיסְתוֹ מְהוּ אוֹמֵר ערסת entering the study hall what does one say? בְּנִיסְתוֹ מְהוֹ אַלְהַי May It be your will, hashem, my god, יִהִי רֶצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךְ ה' אֱלְהַי That a mishap not come about through me. יְּאָרְהוֹּ בִּיְרֶכִר הַלָּכֶה And may I not stumble in a matter of Law and cause my colleagues to rejoice over me. (יִשְׁמְחוֹ בִּי הְבָרִי בְּלָא אוֹמֵר עַל טָמֵא בּרְבַר בּאַמְרָבְי And may I not say regarding something which is tamei that it is tahor, יְלא עַל טָהוֹר טָמָא – And not regarding somethat it is tahor, יְלא עַל טָהוֹר טָמָא – And not regarding some

thing which is Tahor that it is Tame! וְלָשְׁמֵח בֶּרֶכּר בְּלֶכָּה הַלֶּכָּה AND MAY MY COLLEAGUES NOT STUMBLE IN A MATTER OF LAW AND I would be led to REJOICE OVER THEM.

MATTER OF LAW AND I would be led to REJOICE OVER THEM.

מוֹרָה עשׁמָה בּינְיאָתוֹ מָהוֹ אוֹמָר – UPON EXITING WHAT DOES ONE SAY? מוֹרֶה הַ אֲלֹהִי שְׁשְׁמָּהָ חְלְּכִי הִי לְּכָּנֶיךְ הֹי אֱלֹהִי – ITHANK YOU, O HASHEM, MY GOD, שְׁשְׁמָּהָ חְלְכִי הַ הַמְּדְרָשׁ – THAT YOU HAVE ESTABLISHED MY PORTION WITH THOSE WHO DWELL IN THE STUDY HALL, יְלֹא שֻׁמְהָ חֶלְקִי הְלָּהְי – AND YOU HAVE NOT ESTABLISHED MY PORTION WITH IDLERS.[11]

NOTES

- 1. As head of the academy in Pumbedisa, Rav Yosef would lecture every Sabbath prior to the Mussaf service. After the lecture, the people would return to the synagogue and pray Mussaf (Rashi).
- 2. [He was concerned that Rav Yosef felt slighted that Rav Avya did not attend his lecture. Thus, if Rav Avya would explain that it was due to some special circumstance that he had not come (and not because he did not appreciate Rav Yosef's lecture), Abaye could relate this to Rav Yosef and he would be mollified.]
- 3. As mentioned above, the lecture was given before Mussaf. Thus, Rav Avya, who followed the view of Rav Huna, would not eat anything.
- 4. He should pray together with the congregation, for a communal prayer is more readily accepted by God (*Rabbeinu Yonah*). Alternatively, because by praying ahead of the congregation one displays an apparent disdain for the congregation (*Orchos Chaim* cited by *Mishnah Berurah* 90:34).
- 5. [Nevertheless, it is meritorious even for one who is forced to pray privately to time his *Shemoneh Esrei* so that he recites it at the same time as the congregation recites theirs (*Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim* 90:9, based on Gemara above, 7b-8a).]
- 6. Thus, it is permitted to taste food before Mussaf. One may therefore recite Kiddush and eat a small amount of bread (up to an egg's volume) or cake, or even a large amount of fruit and vegetables, for this constitutes "tasting." Eating a *meal*, however, containing *more* than an egg's

- volume of bread, is forbidden (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 286:3 with Mishnah Berurah).
- 7. R' Yehoshua ben Levi forbids consuming even a morsel of food ("tasting") before Minchah (see also *Tosafos*). The law, however, does not follow R' Yehoshua ben Levi. Rather, merely tasting is permitted.

[Here too the law permits only "tasting" but not sitting down to a full meal. However, the nature of this meal (i.e. whether it refers to an ordinary meal or to a large, festive one such as a wedding feast) and the time during which it is forbidden (i.e. whether during minchah gedolah or minchah ketanah) is subject to a wide-ranging debate among the authorities. See Shabbos 9b with Rishonim and Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 232:2 regarding this matter.]

- 8. Tiferes Yisrael §8.
- 9. The text of these prayers will be cited presently.
- 10. I.e. to rejoice over the fact that I erred. Thus, in addition to the incorrect ruling, I would be the cause of my colleagues being punished (Rashi, as explained by Tos. Yom Tov).

Another explanation: May I not stumble in a matter of law, and may my friends rejoice in the fact that I did not stumble (Maharsha).

For additional explanations see Teshuvos Chasam Sofer, Orach Chaim §208 ד״ה להודיע and Tiferes Yisrael, Boaz §2.

11. Literally: with those who sit on the street corners. This refers to shopkeepers and unlearned men who while away their time with idle chatter (Rashi).

AND THEY ARISE EARLY: אָני משְׁבִּים לְדְבְרֵי תוֹרָה – I ARISE EARLY FOR WORDS OF TORAH, בטלים בטלים – AND THEY ARISE EARLY FOR IDLE WORDS. אָני עַמֵּל וְהָם עַמְלִים – I TOIL AND THEY TOIL: אָני עָמֵל וּמְקָבֶּל שֶׁבֶּר – I TOIL AND RECEIVE REWARD, יהם עמלים ואינם מקבלים שכר – AND THEY TOIL AND DO NOT RECEIVE REWARD.[12] אַני רָץ והָם רָצִים – I RUN AND THEY RUN: קני הָעולָם הָבָּא – I RUN TO THE LIFE OF THE WORLD TO COME, אַחָת לְבָאַר שְׁחָת – AND THEY RUN TO THE PIT OF DESTRUCTION.[13]

An incident:

תָנוּ רַבָּנָן – The Rabbis taught in a Baraisa: בְּשֶׁחָלָה רַבִּי אֱלִיעָזָר – WHEN R' ELIEZER BECAME ILL, נְנְנָטוֹ תַּלְמִירָיוֹ לְבָקְרוֹ – HIS STUDENTS ENTERED TO VISIT HIM. אָמְרוּ לו – THEY SAID TO HIM: OUR TEACHER, למדנו אורחות חיים – TEACH US THE WAYS רָנְקָבֶּה בָּהָן לְחַיֵּי הָעוֹלֶם הַבָּא — THAT WE MAY MERIT OF LIFE. THROUGH THEM THE LIFE OF THE WORLD TO COME! אָמֶר לָהָם – HE SAID TO THEM: הַּנְּהַרוּ בִּכְבוֹד חָבְרֵיכֶם — BE MINDFUL OF THE HONOR OF YOUR COLLEAGUES; ומגעו בניכם מן ההגיון – AND RESTRAIN YOU CHILDREN FROM RECITATION, [14] והושיבום בין ברבי תלמידי הכמים – AND PLACE THEM BETWEEN THE KNEES OF TORAH SCHOLARS; וּבְשָׁאַתָּם מִתְפָּלְלִים – AND WHEN YOU PRAY, דעו לפְנֵי מי אָתָם רעומדים – KNOW BEFORE WHOM YOU STAND, און רעו אַתָּם עומדים הבָא הוְלָם הָנָא – AND ON ACCOUNT OF THIS YOU WILL MERIT THE LIFE OF THE WORLD TO COME.[16]

Another incident:

וּבְשֶׁחֶלֶה רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן בֶּן זַבָּאי — AND WHEN R' YOCHANAN BEN ZAKKAI HIS STUDENTS ENTERED TO בְּנָסוּ תַּלְמִידֵיוּ לְבַקְּרוֹ TOOK ILL, VISIT HIM. ביון שֶראָה אותָם הְּתְחִיל לְּבְבּוֹת — WHEN HE SAW THEM HE BEGAN TO WEEP. אָמְרוּ לוֹ הַלְמִידָיוּ – HIS STUDENTS SAID TO HIM: גר ישְרָאל עמוד הִיְמִינִי פַּטִישׁ הָחָזָּך – LIGHT OF ISRAEL, RIGHT-

MOST PILLAR, מפני מָה אַתָּה בּוֹכֶה – WHY DO YOU WEEP? אָמָר לָהָם — HE SAID TO THEM: אִילוּ לִפְנִי מֶלֶךְ בָּשֶׁר ורִם הָיו מוליכִין אותי – IF THEY WERE LEADING ME to judgment BEFORE A KING OF FLESH AND BLOOD, שָׁהָיוֹם בָּאן וּמָחָר בַּקָּבֶּר -WHO IS HERE TODAY AND IN THE GRAVE TOMORROW, שאם בועס עלי אין בַעַסו בָּעַס עולָם – WHO, IF HE BECOMES ANGRY WITH ME, HIS ANGER IS NOT AN EVERLASTING ANGER, זאם אוסרני אין איסורו איסור עולָם – AND IF HE IMPRISONS ME HIS IMPRISONMENT IS NOT AN EVERLASTING IMPRISONMENT, מיתתו מיתתו מיתתו מיתתו עולָם – AND IF HE PUTS ME TO DEATH HIS DEATH IS NOT AN EVER-LASTING DEATH, [18] בדברים בדברים – AND I AM ABLE TO APPEASE HIM WITH WORDS רלשחרו בממון – AND TO BRIBE HIM WITH MONEY, אף על פי כן הָייתי בוכה – EVEN SO I WOULD WEEP. אסא – וְעַבְשָׁיו שָׁמוּלִיכִים אוֹתִי לִפְנִי מֶלֶךְ מַלְכִי הַמְּלֶבִים הַקָּדושׁ בֶּרוּךְ הוּא THAT THEY ARE LEADING ME BEFORE THE KING WHO REIGNS OVER ALL KINGS, THE HOLY ONE, BLESSED IS HE, שֶׁהוּא חַי וְקָיָים עולמי עולמים - WHO LIVES AND ENDURES FOREVER AND EVER, שאם כועס עלי בעטו בעס WHO, IF HE BECOMES ANGRY WITH ME, HIS ANGER IS AN EVERLASTING ANGER, DK עולָם – AND IF HE IMPRISONS ME, HIS IMPRISONMENT IS AN EVERLASTING IMPRISONMENT, אם מְמִיתָנִי מיתֶתו מיתַת עולָם — AND IF HE PUTS ME TO DEATH, HIS DEATH IS AN EVERLASTING DEATH, בּדְבָרִים – AND I AM UNABLE TO APPEASE HIM WITH WORDS ולא לשחרו בממון – NOR TO BRIBE HIM WITH MONEY; ולא עוד – AND NOT ONLY THAT, אָלָא שֶׁיֵשׁ לְפָנִי שְנֵי דְרָכִים – BUT THERE LIE BEFORE ME TWO PATHS, אַחָת שֶׁל גַּן עֶדֶן וְאָחָת שֶׁל גַּיהְנִם – ONE OF THE GARDEN OF EDEN AND ONE OF GEHINNOM, איני יודע באיזו מוליכים אותי – AND I KNOW NOT ON WHICH THEY WILL LEAD ME, ולא אָבֶבֶּה – AND SHOULD I NOT WEEP?[19]

12. The Chafetz Chaim (quoted in Chafetz Chaim al HaTorah, parashas Bechukosai) argues that this statement seems strange. Surely anyone who works — be he a tailor, a shopkeeper or one in any other line of work receives pay for his work. How can it be said that those who labor in other fields "toil but do not receive reward"?

The answer, the Chafetz Chaim replies, is this: Should a tailor labor long hours but not produce a suit, he would not be justified in demanding pay. The customer engaged him to sew a suit. If he cannot produce one, even if he labored all week long, the customer will not pay him, because it is not for his effort that he is paid but for the finished product.

Such is not the case with Torah. One who labors hard but still does not fully understand the subject he is studying is rewarded for his effort. This is the meaning of this prayer: We toil and receive reward for the toil, and they toil and do not receive reward for the toil, only for the finished product.

13. I.e. to hell (see Psalms 55:24 with Targum and Radak; cf. Rambam, Hil. Teshuvah 8:5).

This last statement ("I run to the life of the World to Come etc.") is not merely a rewording of the previous one ("I toil and receive reward etc."). Rather, here a new thought is added: I realize that every day brings me closer ("I run") to the day of death. Therefore, I arm myself with Torah and good deeds in order to merit a place in the Afterlife. ("I run to the life of the World to Come"). The idlers, however, are oblivious to the fact that the days are passing. They are therefore destined for ("run towards") hell (Rabbeinu Yonah).

From the fact that the Baraisa opens with the words מה הוא אומר, What does one say, rather than מָה הָיָה, What did he say, Rambam (Commentary to the Mishnah) infers that the recital of these prayers is obligatory on everyone, and was not simply a private practice of R' Nechunya ben Hakanah. Indeed, this is the ruling of Shulchan Aruch (110:8). Rosh Yosef is therefore at a loss to explain why people are apparently not careful to recite these prayers. See, however, Ritva and Meiri to the Mishnah.

14. Do not accustom them to spend too much time studying Scripture, because they will be drawn to it [and neglect the study of the Oral Torah]

This refers even to children who are not yet old enough to begin

learning Mishnah or Gemara. R' Eliezer therefore continues that in stead of having them sit idle, their fathers should bring them to sit at the feet of Torah sages, so that they may learn from their beautiful charac ters (Maharsha).

Another explanation of this phrase by Rashi: Do not allow you children to while away their precious time with children's chatter (see

A third explanation: Train your children not to translate literall those verses whose plain meaning might create ideological misconcer tions (Meiri). [For additional explanations of this phrase, see Iyu Yaakov, Eitz Yosef, Tzlach.]

- 15. In order that you pray with awe and concentration (Rashi).
- 16. [The three things mentioned by R' Eliezer correspond to the three things upon which our Sages teach the world stands: Torah, the Tempi service, and acts of kindness [תורה עבודה וגמילות הסרים] (Avos 1:2). Placin one's children at the feet of Torah scholars corresponds to Toral bearing in mind before Whom one stands corresponds to the Temp service (since prayer today takes its place) and being careful with the honor of one's fellow corresponds to acts of kindness (Pnei Yehoshua
- 17. [Solomon placed two massive pillars in the Temple (see I Kings 7:2) The rightmost pillar is singled out here because the right side is alway considered the more important (Rashi; see Iyun Yaakov).]
- 18. I.e. he has the power to kill me only in this world, not in the Wor to Come (Rashi).
- 19. Even if I indeed am not sentenced to everlasting Gehinnom or eternal destruction as are the most wicked, I may still be made to pe through Gehinnom (to traverse the "path of Gehinnom") for a limit time to purge my sins before I enter Gan Eden (see Maharsha, based Rosh Hashanah 17a).

Another explanation of what R' Yochanan ben Zakkai meant to add saying, "And not only that . . . ": When a person is judged by a court flesh and blood, the outcome of the trial is limited to either punishme or freedom therefrom. If he is found guilty he is punished, and if he acquitted he is set free. Reward, however, does not figure into the ca

Not so one who is judged by the King of kings. Here the different between acquittal and conviction is the difference between punishment