

[3] Megilla 14a

מאי דרוש? אמר רבי חייא בר אבין אמר רבי יהושע בן קרחה: ומה מעבדות לחירות אמרינן שירה - ממיתה לחיים לא כל שכן? - אי הכי הלל נמי נימא!...רבא אמר: בשלמא התם הללו עבדי ה' - ולא עבדי פרעה, אלא הכא - הללו עבדי ה' ולא עבדי אחשוורוש? אכתי עבדי אחשוורוש אנן.

On what basis did they add this commandment [to read the Megillah]? Rabbi Ḥiyya bar Avin said in the name of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korḥa: They reasoned as follows: If for the exodus from Egypt when the Jews were delivered from slavery to freedom, we recited songs of praise, the Song of the Sea and the hymns of Hallel – for the miracle of Purim when we were delivered from death to life, all the more so. If so, we should also recite Hallel on Purim! ... Rava said yet a different reason: Granted that Hallel is said there with respect to the exodus from Egypt, for in Hallel it says: “Give praise, O servants of the Lord” (Psalms 113:1), that is to say, servants of the Lord, and not the servants of Pharaoh. **But can it be said here: “Give praise, O servants of the Lord,” and not the servants of Ahasuerus? Even after the miracle of Purim, we are still the servants of Ahasuerus.**

[4] b. Sanhedrin 98a

אמר ליה שבור מלכא לשמואל: אמריתו משיח על חמרא אתי אישדר ליה סוסיא ברקא דאית לי אמר ליה מי אית לך בר חיור גווני King Shapur said to Shmuel: You say that the Messiah will come on a donkey; I will send him the riding horse that I have. Shmuel said to him: Do you have a horse with one thousand colors like the donkey of the Messiah?

[5] b. Bava Metiza 119a

אמ' אפרים תלמידו של ריש לקיש משום ריש לקיש הלכה כרבי שמעון אמרוה קמיה שבור מלכא אמ' ל' זיל נימטייה אפריין לר' שמעון

Efraim the Scribe, a disciple of Reish Lakish, said in the name of Reish Lakish: The law agrees with R. Shim'on. They said it in front of King Shapur. He said: Let us bring praise (*āfrīn*) to R. Shim'on.

[6] b. Niddah 20b

אפרא הורמיז אמיה דשבור מלכא שדרה דמא לקמיה דרבא הוה יתיב רב עובדיה קמיה ארחה אמר לה האי דם חימוד הוא אמרה ליה לבריה תא חזי כמה חכימי יהודאי א"ל דלמא כסומא בארובה הדר שדרה ליה שתין מיני דמא וכולוהו אמרינהו ההוא בתרא דם כנים הוה ולא ידע אסתייע מילתא ושדר לה סריקותא דמקטלא כלמי אמרה יהודאי בתוני דלבא יתביתו

Ifra Hormiz, the mother of King Shapur, **sent blood before Rava**. Rav Ovadiah was sitting in front of him. [Rava] smelled it. He said to her: “This is blood of desire.” She said to her son: “See how wise the Jews are!” He said to her: Maybe [Rava is] like a blind person [who chanced upon] a window? She then sent [Rava] sixty kinds of blood. He stated them all. The last one was lice blood and he did not know it. [Nevertheless,] the matter was aided [by heaven] and he sent her a **lice-exterminating comb**. She exclaimed: “O Jews, you dwell in the chambers of the heart!”

[7] b. Yevamot 63b

בגוי נבל אכעיסם... ר' יוחנן אמ' אלו חברים אמרו ליה לר' יוחנן אתו חברי לבבל שגא נפל אמרו ליה מקבלי שוחדא תריץ יתיב. גזרו על שלש בשביל שלש גזרו על בשר מפני המתנות גזרו על המרחצאות מפני טבילה קא מחטטי שכבי מפני שמחין ביום אידם “With a foolish (*naval*) nation I will anger them” (Deuteronomy 32:21)... R. Yoḥanan said: “These are the Zoroastrian priests.” They said to R. Yoḥanan: “The Zoroastrian priests have come to Babylonia.” He leaned over and fell. They said to him: “They accept bribes.” He sat up straight. They decreed regarding three [things] for three [sins]: They decreed regarding meat because of [negligence in tithing] the priestly gifts; **they decreed regarding the bathhouses because of [negligence in] immersion**; they dig up corpses because [the Jews] are happy on the day of their festivals.

[8] Targum Sheni to Esther

<p>Their (=the Jews’) menstrual impurity is seven days, and their wives go out in the middle of the night and defile the water.</p>	<p>נידתהו' לשבעא יומא ונפקן נשיהון בפלגות ליליא ומסאבן ית מ'א</p>
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[9] Pahlavi Videvdad 16.12B (Zoroastrian purity text)

Let them wash (the purifying woman) in two pits with *gōmēz* and one with water.

[10] b. Mo‘ed Qatan Chapter 3 (repeatedly)

<p>For Shmuel said: The law is like the lenient opinion in the laws of mourning.</p>	<p>דאמר שמואל: הלכה כדברי המיקל באבל</p>
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[11] Ardā Wirāz Nāmag 17.7

I came to a place and I saw a big mighty river, dark as hell, in which there were many souls and *fravaši*-spirits, some of whom were not able to cross, and some who were crossing with great difficulty, and some who were crossing easily. And I asked: What is this river and who are these people who are thus troubled? Srōš the pious and the god Ādur said: This river is the many tears which men shed from their eyes after the departed. And they mourn, lament, and cry, they shed tears illicitly, and it increases this river. Those who are not able to cross are those for whom after their passing much mourning, lamenting and crying was made. And those (who cross) more easily are those who are less (lamented). And tell those in the world: When (you are) in the world, do not illicitly mourn, lament, and cry, for the souls of your departed shall receive that much harm and difficulty.

[12] Babylonian Talmud Berakhot 11a

משנה: בשחר מברך שתים לפניו ואחת לאחריה, ובערב מברך שתים לפניו ושתיים לאחריה... [גמרא. מאי מברך? - אמר רבי יעקב אמר רבי אושעיא: יוצר אור ובורא חשך. לימא: יוצר אור ובורא נוגה! כדכתיב קאמרינן. - אלא מעתה: בעשה שלום ובורא רע, מי קא אמרינן כדכתיב? אלא, כתיב רע וקרינן הכל לישנא מעליא, הכא נמי - לימא נוגה לישנא מעליא! - אלא אמר רבא: כדי להזכיר מדת יום בלילה ומדת לילה ביום. בשלמא מדת לילה ביום - כדאמרינן: יוצר אור ובורא חשך, אלא מדת יום בלילה היכי משכחת לה? - אמר אביי: גולל אור מפני חשך וחשך מפני אור.

What blessing does one recite? Rabbi Ya'akov said in the name of Rabbi Oshaya: The blessing focuses on the verse: **“Who forms light and creates darkness, Who makes peace and creates evil, I am the Lord Who does all these things.”** With regard to this formula of the blessing, the Gemara asks: **Let him say** the following formula instead: **Who forms light and creates brightness**, so as not to mention darkness, which has negative connotations. The Gemara answers: **We say** the blessing **as** the verse **is written** in the Bible and do not alter the formula that appears in the verse. The Gemara strongly objects: **But if so**, what about the continuation of the verse: **“Who makes peace and creates evil”?** **Do we say** this blessing **as it is written** in the Bible? **Rather, it is written evil and we euphemistically recite** the blessing **all things** to avoid mention of evil. **Here, too, let us euphemistically say brightness** instead of darkness. **Rather, Rava said:** The reason we recite: “Who creates darkness” is **in order to mention the attribute of day at night and the attribute of night during the day**, and thereby unify day and night as different parts of a single entity. The Gemara continues and asks: **Granted, the attribute of night is mentioned during the day, as we say: Who forms light and creates darkness, but where do you find the attribute of day mentioned at night?** In the blessing over the radiant lights recited at night there is no mention of “Who forms light.” **Abaye said:** Nevertheless, the attribute of day is mentioned at night in the words: **Rolling away light before the darkness and darkness before the light.**