

Pirkei Avot

We explore Chapter 6 of Avot, pp 277-280 in Sim Shalom.

This chapter is not from Avot, but was added to allow for six weeks of study between Pesah and Shavuot. This extra-Mishnaic text is attributed to Rabbi Meir, one of the *Tannaim* of the Mishna.

Task: Choose a text and relate it to a real or fictitious person, present or past, and explain to the group, why you chose this text.

Water is our friend

Torah: Miriam's Well

במדבר כ:א וַיָּבֹאוּ בְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל כָּל-הָעֵדָה מִדְּבַר-צִן בְּחֹדֶשׁ הָרִאשׁוֹן וַיָּשֻׁב הָעָם בְּקִדְשׁ וַתָּמֶת שָׁם מִרְיָם וַתִּקָּבֵר שָׁם: ב וְלֹא-הָיָה מַיִם לָעֵדָה וַיִּקְהָלוּ עַל-מִשֶּׁה וְעַל-אַהֲרֹן:

The entire assembly of the Israelites came to the wilderness of Tzin, in the first month, and they settled near Kadesh; Miriam died there and was buried there. There was no water for the assembly and they gathered against Moses and Aaron.

ב: ולא היה מים לעדה. מכאן, שכל מ' שנה היה להם הבאר בזכות מרים:

Rashi: *There was no water for the assembly.* From this we learn that through the entire 40 years (in the wilderness) they had the well due to the merit of Miriam.

Prophets - Prophecies of Water:

Amos 5:2 וַיְגַל כַּמַּיִם מִשְׁפָּט וַיְצַדֵּק כְּנַחַל אֵיתָן:

But let Justice be revealed like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream.

Micah 7:19 יָשׁוּב יִרְחַמֵּנוּ יִכַּבֵּשׂ עֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ וְתִשְׁלִיךְ בְּמַצְלוֹת יָם כָּל-חַטָּאתָם:

His mercy for us will return, He will suppress our transgressions. You will cast their sins into the depths of the sea.

Origin of the Tashlikh service...

Isaiah 11:9 and 12:3

לֹא-יַרְעוּ וְלֹא-יִשְׁחִיתוּ בְּכָל-הָר קִדְשֵׁי כִּי-מִלְאָהּ הָאָרֶץ יִדְעָה אֶת-ה' כַּמַּיִם לְיָם מְכַסִּים:

They will no longer do evil or destroy in all My holy mountain, when the land is filled with knowledge of Hashem as the waters cover the sea. (11:9)

וַיִּשְׁאַבְתֶּם-מַיִם בְּשִׂשׁוֹן מִמַּעַיְנֵי הַיְשׁוּעָה: 12:3

You will draw water with joy from the springs of salvation.

Isaiah 35:7: וְהָיָה הַשָּׂרֵב לְאֵגָם וְצִמְאוֹן לְמַבְוְעֵי מַיִם בְּנוֹה תַנִּים רַבְצָה חֲצִיר לִקְנֵה וְגַמְאָ: וְהָיָה הַשָּׂרֵב לְאֵגָם וְצִמְאוֹן לְמַבְוְעֵי מַיִם בְּנוֹה תַנִּים רַבְצָה חֲצִיר לִקְנֵה וְגַמְאָ:
The parched ground will be like a pond, and the thirsty ground like fountains of water, the habitation of jackals an abode, home of reeds and rushes.

Isaiah 48:18 The verse being examined is rebuking Israel, using water as a metaphor for how things *could* be:

לוֹא הִקְשַׁבְתָּ לְמִצְוֹתַי וַיְהִי כְנֶהֱר שְׁלוֹמִי וְצִדְקוֹתַי כְּגַלֵּי הַיָּם:

If you had only listened to My commandments, your peace would be like a river, and your righteousness like waves of the sea.

Isaiah 58:11

וְנָחַד ה' תַּמִּיד וְהִשְׁבִּיעַ בְּצַחְצְחוֹת נַפְשֶׁךָ וְעֲצַמְתֶּיךָ יַחְלִיץ וְהָיִיתָ כְּגֹן רֶוַח וְכִמּוֹצָא מֵיַם אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יִכָּזְבוּ מִיָּמָיו:

Hashem will always give you rest, satisfy your the drought of your souls and strengthen your bones, and you will be like a well-watered garden and like a spring of water whose waters will never fail.

Isaiah 66:12

כִּי-כֹה אָמַר ה' הִנְנִי נֹטֶה-אֶלֶיךָ כְּנֶהֱר שְׁלוֹם וְכִנְחַל שׁוֹטֵף כְּבוֹד גּוֹיִם וַיִּנְקָתֶם עַל-צַד תִּנְשָׂאוּ וְעַל-בְּרָכִים תִּשְׁעָשְׁעוּ:

For thus said Hashem, here I extend peace to you like a river, and like a stream and the honor of nations like a surging stream, and you will suckle, you will be carried on the side, and on knees will you be delighted.

Habakuk 2:14 כִּי תִמְלֵא הָאָרֶץ לְדַעַת אֶת-כְּבוֹד ה' כַּמַּיִם יִכְסּוּ עַל-יָם:

For the earth will be filled with knowledge of Hashem's glory, as the waters cover the sea.

Zekhariah 9:10

וְהִכְרַתִּי-רֶכֶב מֵאֶפְרַיִם וְסוּס מִירוּשָׁלַם וְנִכְרַתָּה קֶשֶׁת מִלְחָמָה וְדָבָר שְׁלוֹם לְגוֹיִם וּמִשְׁלוֹ מֵיָם עַד-יָם וּמִנְהַר עַד-אֶפְסַי-אֶרֶץ:

I will remove the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem, and the bow of war will be removed, and He will speak peace to the nations. His dominion will be from sea to sea and from river to the ends of the Earth.

About Prayer

Mishna Tamid Chapter 5 Mishna 1. The superintendent said to them, pronounce one blessing, and they did so: they then recited the Ten Commandments, and the first, second and third sections of the Sh'ma, and they blessed the people with three blessings, namely, true and firm, and avodah, and the priestly blessing. On Sabbath they added a benediction to be said by the watch which was leaving.

Rambam Hil' Tamidim uMusafim 6:4 The superintendent said to them pronounce one blessing; They began by reading "Ahavat Olam" and the Ten Commandments, Sh'ma (and its three paragraphs), True and firm, "R'tzei" (in Amidah before Modim), Sim Shalom. On Shabbat they added a blessing, and this was what the outgoing watch said to the incoming watch, "May the One who establishes His Presence in this house Bring His Presence between you with love, brotherhood, peace and friendship.

Mishna Tamid Chapter 7 Mishna 1. When the high priest went in to prostrate himself, three priests supported him, one by his right and one by his left and one by the precious stones. When the superintendent heard the sound of the footsteps of the high priest as he was about to issue from the heikhal, he raised the curtain for him. He went in, prostrated himself and went out, and then his brother priests went in and prostrated themselves and went out.

Mishna Tamid Chapter 7 Mishnah 4. The following are the Psalms that were chanted in the Temple:

- On the first day they used to say, "The Earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein." (Ps. 24)
- On the second day they used to say, "Great is the Lord and highly to be praised, in the city of our God on His holy mountain." (Ps. 48)
- On the third day they used to say, "God stands in the Divine Assembly, in the midst of the judges He judges." (Ps. 82)
- On the fourth day they used to say, "O Lord, God to whom vengeance belongs, God to whom vengeance belongs, shine forth." (Ps. 94)
- On the fifth day they used to say, "Sing aloud unto God our strength, shout unto the God of Jacob." (Ps. 81)
- On the sixth day they used to say, the Lord reigns, He is clothed in majesty, the Lord is clothed, He has girded Himself with strength." (Ps. 93)
- On Shabbat they used to say, "A Psalm, a song for the Shabbat day." (Ps. 92)
- A psalm, a song for the time to come, for the day that will be all Shabbat and rest for everlasting life.

Talmud Bavli, Ms' Berakhot 30A: If one is standing outside the Land of Israel, he should turn mentally towards the Land of Israel, as it says, and pray unto Thee towards their land. If he stands in the Land of Israel he should turn mentally towards Jerusalem, as it says, and they pray unto the Lord toward the city which You have chosen. If he is standing in Jerusalem he should turn mentally towards the Sanctuary, as it says, If they pray toward this house. If he is standing in the Sanctuary, he should turn mentally towards the Holy of Holies, as it says, If they pray toward this place. If he was standing in the Holy of Holies he should turn mentally towards the mercy-seat. If he was standing behind the mercy-seat he should imagine himself to be in front of the mercy-seat. Consequently, if he is in the east he should turn his face to the west; if in the west he should turn his face to the east; if in the south he should turn his face to the north; if in the north he should turn his face to the south. In this way all Israel will be turning their hearts towards one place.

Talmud Bavli Ms' Berakhot 30B One must not stand to pray except in a reverent state of mind. The early righteous men used to tarry an hour and then pray, so they could direct their hearts to their Father in the Heavens.

Rambam Hil' Tefila 4:16 This is intention (kavana) - where one removes from his heart all thoughts, and sees himself as if he is standing before God's Presence. Therefore one is required to sit for a while before prayer, in order to establish his intention; afterwards he prays with calmness and pleading, and he should not make his prayer like that of one who has heavy burdens which he must bring with him; therefore one must sit for a while after prayer and then finish praying. The early righteous ones would tarry an hour before prayer and an hour after prayer, and draw their prayer out to a full hour.