

Forgotten Synagogue Classics Part V

Third Time's the Charm? The Rabbinical Council of America's Siddurim

1) New York Times (June 15, 1945)

Orthodox Rabbis 'Excommunicate' Author Of Prayer Book Though He Is Not a Member

The Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada has issued a proclamation of excommunication, the first in its forty-three-year history, against Dr. Mordecai M. Kaplan, dean of the Teachers Institute of the Jewish Theological Seminary, accusing him of expressing "atheism, heresy and disbelief in the basic tenets of Judaism" in the compilation of a recently published prayer book, it was learned yesterday.

Rabbi Israel Rosenberg, president of the union, said the ancient cherem, one of the severest forms of Jewish excommunication, was invoked Tuesday at a meeting of the members of the organization. After the edict was passed unanimously, Dr. Kaplan's work, the "Sabbath Prayer Book," was burned before the assembly.

In an interview at the union's headquarters, 132 Nassau Street, Rabbi Rosenberg said statements in Dr. Kaplan's introduction to the book outlining a "modification of traditional doctrine" were contrary to the spirit and law of Judaism. He added that there was danger that the book might be confused with the traditional volume of prayer, and that the edict prohibited its use in synagogues.

Although Dr. Kaplan is not a member of the union and is not an Orthodox rabbi, Rabbi Rosen-

berg said the proclamation was directed to "all Jewry."

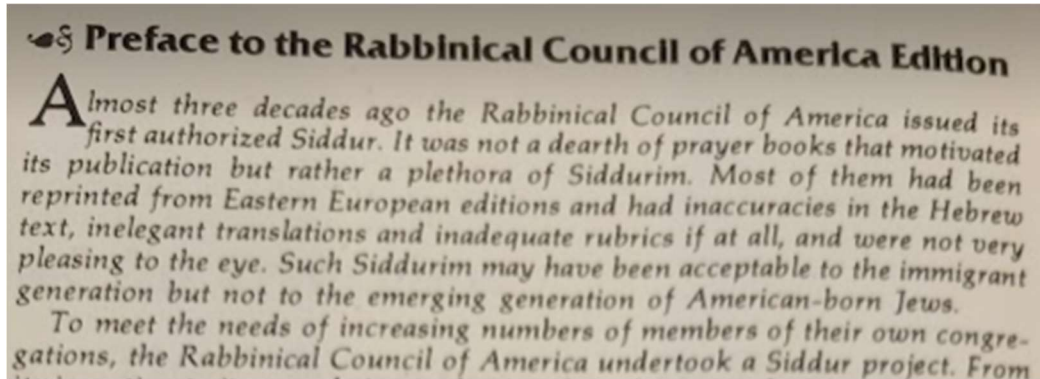
Dr. Kaplan, who is the founder of the Society for the Advancement of Judaism and head of the Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation, publishers of the book, said the charge that he was an atheist was "absurd."

"How can any one who edits a prayer book be an atheist?" he asked. He added that since he was not a member of the union and had no responsibility to it, he was "excommunicated from nothing."

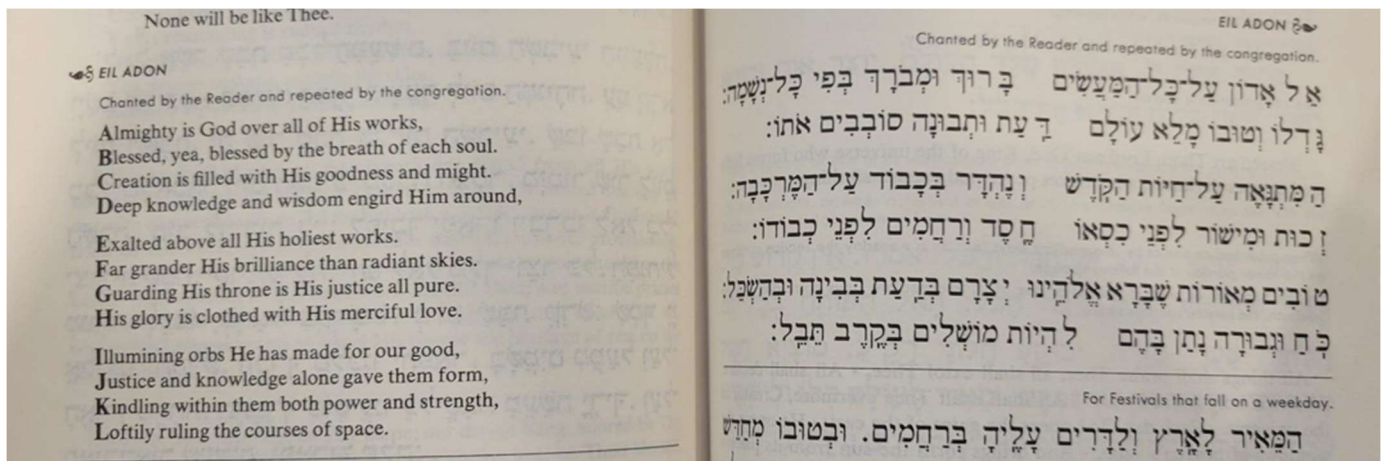
The preparation of the book, Dr. Kaplan explained, was motivated by a desire to develop a religious service that would give "modern-minded Jews a form of worship in which they could participate with devotion and sincerity." He said it was not intended for those Jews who were satisfied with the traditional prayers, and that the action against him raised the question of "freedom of worship." He added that the excommunicating rabbis were merely "making themselves ridiculous."

The "modifications" in Dr. Kaplan's introduction include the statement that Jews are not a divinely chosen race; that the Torah is a human document and not one "supernaturally inspired," and that modern Jews no longer look forward to the advent of a personal Messiah.

2) Preface to the Rabbinical Council of America (RCA) Edition of the ArtScroll Siddur (1987)



3) Cover and sample page from RCA Siddur (edited by R. Dr. David de Sola Pool) (1960)



4) R. Dr. David de Sola Pool, Introduction to the 1960 RCA Siddur

The Siddur, as the Jewish prayer book is called in Hebrew, bears the deep impress of the Jewish faith. It is marked by an all-pervading and radiant optimism. It greets each new-born day with the ringing assertion the soul with which God has endowed man is pure. It maintains an unyielding faith in the basic goodness of the human soul. A somber note is seldom heard. ...

The Prayer Book is a manual of intense personal devotion and piety; but it is no less the expression of Jewish social idealism. It voices the religious aspirations of the whole people and the aim to achieve an ennobled spiritual society. The prayers, overwhelmingly in the plural, express the striving of all the Jewish people to reach their God. In unifying brotherhood of worship the individual draws inspiration and strength from communal praying, while he brings to the congregation his increment of spiritual purpose and devotion. ...



*David de Sola Pool
(1885-1970)*

The English rendition often essays to suggest poetic forms of the Hebrew text and catch the vivid nuances flashing from the original many-faceted Biblical allusions.

5) R. Simcha Elberg (1915-1995), *Ha-Pardes* 35 (Feb. 1961)

חוברת ה' הפרדס שנה ל"ה 5

ב

ה"סידור" החדש המוסמך מטעם הסתדרות הרבנים

המלה "סידור" מקודשת היתה אצל עמנו בכל התקופות והזמנים. ה"סידור" הוא ביטוי שמקורו בקודש הקדשים וה"סידור החדש" אסור לו ליטול את השם סידור מפני שמלבד שהוא מלא ונדוש בורות ומינות, ישנן בו גם שורות מלאות של ניבול-פה, כפי שהוקבע ע"י אגודת הרבנים. קשה למצוא שם עמוד אחד שמדבר בלשון הסידור. בשפה נמלצת ומיופה לא עושים סידור.

The word "siddur" is sacred for our people in all periods and times. The "siddur" is an expression that stems from the holy of holies and the "new siddur" cannot take the name siddur because not only is it full of and packed with foolishness and heresy, but there are also full lines of foul language, as determined by the Agudas Harabbonim. It is hard to find there one page that speaks in the language of the siddur. With grandiloquent and embellished language one does not make a siddur.

6) RCA Preface to the RCA ArtScroll Edition (1987)

Today a new generation of American-born Orthodox Jews has different needs in a Siddur. A growing number attend services every day and therefore require a Siddur that is not limited to Sabbaths and Festivals. While insisting on the traditional Hebrew text, many of today's worshipers want a more literal translation as well as words of commentary and inspirational direction.

This Siddur differs from others in the ArtScroll Series in several ways. The text of the Prayer for the Welfare of the State reflects the fact that this Siddur was intended for Jews who reside in democratic countries where they enjoy constitutionally guaranteed political equality and civil rights and are not ruled by despots. Moreover, it recognizes the importance of the the State of Israel within contemporary Jewish history. Included, therefore, are the Prayer for the Welfare of the State of Israel and memorial prayers for the fallen members of the Israel Defense Forces.



7) Publishers Preface to RCA ArtScroll

Since the ArtScroll Series came into existence, more requests have come for an ArtScroll Siddur than for any other work. From rabbis and laymen, teachers and students, men and women, scholars and strivers for knowledge, came an insistence that the times demand a complete yet functional Siddur, with clear and accurate laws and instructions. The Rabbinical Council of America, too, has recognized this need and we are gratified it has selected the ArtScroll Siddur in this special edition for its congregational use. It features:

• Translation: The translation seeks to balance the lofty beauty of the

8) R. Saul Berman, Introduction to RCA ArtScroll

HaGaon Rav Joseph B. Soloveitchik states a fundamental Jewish truth: ... the very essence of prayer is the covenantal experience of being together with and talking to God and that the concrete performance such as the recitation of texts represents the technique of implementation of prayer and not prayer itself ("The Lonely Man of Faith," *Tradition* 7:2, Summer 1965, p. 35).

The text of the Siddur which lies before us is then no more than a vehicle to facilitate what is truly the essence of prayer — *avodah she'balev* — service of the heart, dialogue between person and God.

But overwhelming questions spring to mind. Firstly, how can the human being, a minuscule element of the universe which God created, presume to beseech or even to praise? By what right do we stand before Him to engage his Creator in conversation? Secondly, on whose behalf do we rightfully pray? What is the nature of the interplay between the petitioner as an individual and the broader society-community of which he is part; is there really such a thing as totally private prayer or do we always represent a constituency beyond ourselves? Thirdly, to what qualities in God do we appeal? As we attempt to evoke responses from the Deity, can we identify with greater clarity which of the relational qualities of God we desire to see exercised?

Surely these are not all the essential questions about prayer, but the answers will help us frame the nature of the experience of prayer of the heart.

A simple *minhag* may help answer these questions. Before we recite the *Amidah* — prayer par excellence — we take three steps forward to symbolize our awe in approaching the King of Kings. Rabbi Eleazar ben Judah (c. 1165 - c. 1230), author of the *Sefer Rokeach*, relates those three steps to the fact that — as an introduction to a petition — the word *וַיִּקְרַב*, "and he approached," appears three times in *Tanach*. Analysis of those three Biblical narratives will uncover the most fundamental elements of Jewish prayer.

9) Ad for planned new edition of RCA ArtScroll Siddur, circa 2010

The New RCA Siddur is nearing completion!

Two decades ago, the original RCA siddur inaugurated a new era in prayer.
Soon, the REVISED RCA SIDDUR will enhance
the prayer experience for decades to come.

The Rabbinical Council of America has mobilized many of the finest minds and eloquent writers from the rabbinate and academia to produce a contemporary American Siddur. It faithfully projects the ever-expanding intellectual strength, deeply felt spiritual needs, and loyalty to Halachah of North America's burgeoning Orthodoxy.

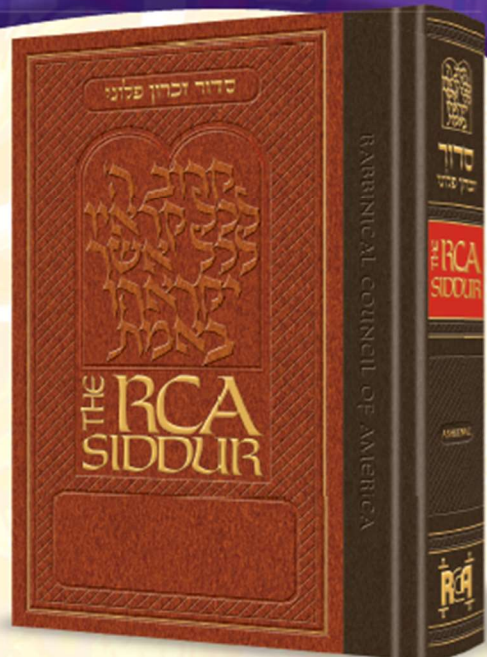
The revised RCA Siddur will incorporate a host of important new features. Here are just a few:

- ▶ **A Simplified Yet Accurate English Translation** will facilitate a better understanding of the language and ideas of the prayers.
- ▶ **The Rewritten Commentary** includes insights and ideas of the great rabbis, scholars, teachers, and authors hailing from the RCA, and the world-wide spectrum of Orthodoxy, past and present. It includes traditional and contemporary perspectives and methodologies in understanding the content, language, history, and context of the tefillos.
- ▶ **The Commentary Facilitates** praying with feeling, emotion, and kavanah.
- ▶ **Introductory Essays** at key sections of the Siddur, by leading rabbis and scholars, in addition to special essays to assist beginners. New explanatory illustrations and diagrams.
- ▶ **Major Events of Contemporary Jewish History**, including on-page instructions, prayers for Yom HaAtzmaut, Yom Hazikaron, Yom Yerushalayim, Holocaust Commemoration, and more, with appropriate instructions.
- ▶ **Sensitivity Throughout to Women's prayer experience**, including halachically sanctioned observances for such occasions as Zeved HaBas, Birkas haGomel, Kaddish, Kiddush, Havdalah, Zimmun, classic pre-candle-lighting and other techinos, Hataras Nedarim, Baruch Shepetarani, and a special introduction by and for women.
- ▶ **Retained Pagination** — the same page numbers as the original RCA Siddur enables synagogues to continue using their present stock of RCA Siddurim, while gradually acquiring the Revised Siddur.
- ▶ **New Halachah Sections** (approved by the halachic authorities of the RCA), including halachos of ethical behavior during prayer, halachos related to contemporary history, and special personal situations, and women in prayer.
- ▶ **Special Guidance** on visiting the sick, the bereaved, dealing with death and mourning, taking terumah and mazer, variant Kedushah texts when praying in non-Ashkenaz nusach synagogues, and much more.
- ▶ **Torah and Haftarah** texts corrected in accordance with the classic authoritative Keter text, including Megillos Esther, Ruth, Koheles, and Shir Hashirim.
- ▶ **A Regularly Updated Multi-Media Website** will contain supplementary prayers, new commentary, inspirational readings, MP3 recordings of shiurim on tefila, and recordings by beloved and popular baalei tefilah, featuring nusach and spiritually-elevating niggunim.

SPECIAL PRICING AND PROMOTIONAL PURCHASING PROGRAMS WILL BE AVAILABLE.

Different Sizes and Formats — The Revised RCA Siddur will be available in a variety of sizes and formats, in due course, for the convenience of its users: regular size, pocket size, hardcover, leatherbound, and Hebrew only.

We are pleased to welcome inquiries related to dedications of the revised RCA Siddur. They can be directed to **Rabbi Basil Herring** at 212.807.9000 or office@rabbls.org



*The entire Siddur will be newly typeset,
using sharper Hebrew and English fonts*

*The binding will be state-of-the-art and
ultra-reinforced*

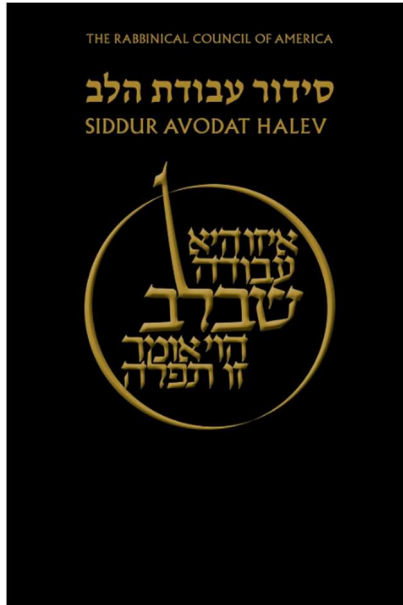
*Special layout of key Psalms to enhance
the understanding and beauty of
essential ideas*

*The Siddur will be designed and produced
with the meticulous attention to beauty
and detail for which ArtScroll / Mesorah
is justly renowned*



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10) Cover and sample page from new RCA Siddur (Koren Publishers, 2018)



bring us to our desired destination in life, joy and peace (and bring us back to our home in peace). Rescue us from any enemy or ambush on the way, and from all kinds of disasters that sometimes happen in the world. Send blessing to the work of our hands, and grant us grace, kindness and compassion from You and from all who see us. Hear our pleas, for You are a God Who hears prayer and pleas. Blessed are You, Lord, Who hears prayer.

Ps. 121 **יהוה** THE LORD will guard your going out and your coming in from now and forever.

Repeat three times:

Gen. 32 **וַיַּעֲקֹב** AND JACOB went on his way, and the angels of God met him. And Jacob said when he saw them: "This is God's camp." And he called the name of that place Mahanaim.

Repeat three times:

Num. 6 **יְבָרֶכְךָ** MAY THE LORD bless you and protect you. May the Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord turn His face toward you and grant you peace.

Ps. 121 **שיר למעלות** A SONG FOR ASCENTS. I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where will my help come? My help is from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. May He not suffer your foot to slip. May He Who guards you not slumber. Behold, He Who guards Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps. The Lord is your guardian. The Lord is your shade upon your right hand. The sun will not smite you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord will guard you from all evil. He will guard your soul. The Lord will guard your going out and your coming in from now and forever.

ASHER YATZAR

After relieving oneself and washing one's hands, say:

ברוך BLESSED ARE YOU, Lord, our God, King of the universe, Who formed man in wisdom and created in him many orifices and cavities. It is revealed and known before the throne of Your glory that were one of them to be ruptured or blocked, it would be impossible to survive and stand before You. Blessed are You, Lord, Healer of all flesh Who does wondrous deeds.

Jacob named the place "Two Camps," when he realized that there was a heavenly camp of angels that had accompanied him on his earthly journeys. Reflecting this duality, Jacob's life

journeys each had a dual aspect – a mundane one and a spiritual one (R. Elchanan Samet). So too, our own physical journeys should incorporate spiritual purposes (R. Aton Holzer).

למחוזו הפצנו לחיים ולשמחה ולשלום, (ותחזירנו לביתנו לשלום) ותצילנו מפף כל אויב ואורב בדרכי, ומקל מיני פגענות המתרגשות לבוא לעולם, ותשלח ברכה במעשה ידינו, ותתננו לחן ולחסד ולרחמים בעיניך ובעיני כל רואינו, ותשמע קול תחנונינו, כי אל שומע תפלה ותחנון אתה. ברוך אתה יהוה, שומע תפלה.

יהוה ישמר-צאתך ובואך, מעתה ועד-עולם: החלים קכא

Repeat three times:

ויעקב להלך לדרכו, ויפגעו בו מלאכי אלהים: ויאמר יעקב כאשר ראם, מחנה אלהים זה, ויקרא שם המקום ההוא מחנים: בראשית לב

Repeat three times:

יברכה יהוה וישמרה: יאר יהוה פניו אליך ויחנה: ישא יהוה פניו אליך וישם לה שלום: במדבר י

שיר למעלות, אשא עיני אל-הרים, מאין גבא עזרי: עזרי מעם יהוה, עשה שמים וארץ: אלי-יתו למוט רגלי, אל-יגום שמרה: הנה לא-יגום ולא יישן, שומר ישראל: יהוה שמרה, יהוה צלך על-ידי מיניך: יומם השמש לא-יפכה, וירח בלילה: יהוה ישמרה מכל-ידי, ישמר את-נפשך: יהוה ישמר-צאתך ובואך, מעתה ועד-עולם:

אשר יצר

After relieving oneself and washing one's hands, say:

ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו מלך העולם, אשר יצר את האדם בְּחִכְמוֹ, וברא בו נקבים ונקבים, חלולים חלולים. גלוי ונדוע לפני כסא כבודך, שאם פתח אחד מהם או יסתם אחד מהם, אי אפשר להתקיים ולעמוד לפניך. ברוך אתה יהוה, רופא כל בשר ומפליא לעשות.

Tefilat HaDerekh is based on the principle that prayer is essentially a response to an צרה (a time of perceived stress and danger). Therefore, the prayer is only recited if there is

some element of potential danger leading to a concern for one's personal safety (R. Joseph B. Soloveitchik).

מחנים – Mahanaim. Ramban explains that

11) 2018 RCA Siddur, p. 765 (Blessing over the Lulav)

PRAYERS PREPARATORY TO MITZVOT
Traditionally, Ashkenazi Jews did not recite prayers prior to performance of *mitzvot*. One simply recited the *berakha* and then performed the *mitzva*. In the eighteenth century, under Hasidic influence, some siddurim started to include various statements, including *LeShem Yihud*, to be recited before performing selected – but not all – *mitzvot* that are fulfilled during prayer. R. Yechezkel Landau (*Noda BeYehuda* Vol. I, YD no. 93) and other authorities, including at least one Hasidic one, opposed the recital of *LeShem Yihud* by the masses, for they would not understand its highly esoteric nature. Others, however, favored its recital. The matter has remained in dispute. In this Siddur we provide the text for those whose custom is to recite it. See page 1336.

12) 2018 RCA Siddur, p. 271 (Nachem for Tisha Be-Av)

and so we recite the paragraph then, and not before (R. Jacob J. Schacter).

הַאֲבֵלָה מִבְּלֵי בְנֵיהָ – *Bereft of her children*. Given the current state of Jerusalem there is ongoing debate among contemporary authorities regarding the recital of *Nahem*. One solution

was proposed by R. Aharon Lichtenstein, who omitted this sentence on the grounds that in prayer we should strive for truthfulness, and thus while these words were certainly accurate in the past, that is no longer the case (R. Chaim Navon).

13) 2018 RCA Siddur, p. 826 (Ka Keli)

יה אֱלִי – *Lord my God*. This *piyut* first appeared in the *Siddur Sha'ar HaShamayim* with the commentary of the Shela, published in 1717, from whence it spread to communities throughout Eastern Europe. The author is unknown, but its content indicates he was a late seventeenth-century Kabbalist (Prof. Daniel Goldschmidt).

וְתוֹרָה לְעוֹלָה (י"א וְתוֹרָה וְלַעֲוֹה) – *May our recital of the Torah passages regarding the burnt-offering, the meal-offering*. The *piyut*'s refrain, as it has reached us, is probably corrupt. A list of sacrifices unconnected to the body of the *piyut* would be odd. The list largely follows Leviticus 7:37: "This is the law for the burnt-offering, the meal-offering, the sin-offering, the guilt-offering, the consecration-offering, and the peace-offering" (וְזֵאת הַתּוֹרָה לְעוֹלָה) etc.),

but it begins with the redundant thanksgiving-offering (*toda*), which in the verse is subsumed under the peace-offering. We may, therefore, surmise that the refrain originally began *ve-Torah la'ola*, more closely echoing the verse. (*Torah* was mistaken for *toda* because of the similarity of *dalet* and *resh*, and a *vav* was added to *la'ola*, to graft the *toda* to the list.) The reconstructed refrain reflects the homiletical reading of Leviticus 7:37 found in *Menahot* 110a: study of "this Torah" can substitute for the sacrifices. For the *paytan* (following R. Bahya ben Asher), the reference is probably to the Torah on the sacrifices. Accordingly, the *piyut* petitions God to accept our reading of the day's prescribed sacrifices, in the *Maftir* and *Musaf* (similarly see *Tosafot, Rosh HaShana* 35a), as sacrifice-equivalents (Prof. Bernard Septimus).

14) 2018 RCA Siddur, p. 938 (Kapparot)

KAPPAROT
 The custom of *Kapparot* can be fulfilled by using either live fowl or money as a substitute. Those who use live fowl should be very careful to ensure that (a) the fowl is treated before, during and after the ceremony with full consideration of the prohibition against inflicting pain or discomfort on the animal life, as well as (b) sensitivity to all local health and safety ordinances relating to livestock. For these and other reasons, many people prefer to observe *Kapparot* by using coins or bills to be given afterward to a worthy charity.

15) 2018 RCA Siddur, p. 220 (Zimmun)

The זימון for three or more women.

	<i>Leader</i>	
חֲבֵרוֹתַי, נְבָרָךְ.		
יְהִי שֵׁם יְהוָה מְבָרָךְ מֵעַתָּה וְעַד־עוֹלָם:	<i>Others</i>	תהלים קיג
יְהִי שֵׁם יְהוָה מְבָרָךְ מֵעַתָּה וְעַד־עוֹלָם:	<i>Leader</i>	
בְּרִשׁוֹת (אָבִי מוֹרִי / אִמִּי מוֹרְתִי / כֹּהֲנִים / מוֹרְגוֹ הָרֵב / בַּעַל הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה / בַּעֲלַת הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה) מְרַנֵּן וְרַבֵּנָן וְרַבּוֹתַי, נְבָרָךְ שְׂאֲכָלְנוּ מִשְׁלוֹ.		
בְּרוּךְ שְׂאֲכָלְנוּ מִשְׁלוֹ וּבִטּוֹבוֹ חֲיִינוּ.	<i>Others</i>	
בְּרוּךְ שְׂאֲכָלְנוּ מִשְׁלוֹ וּבִטּוֹבוֹ חֲיִינוּ. בְּרוּךְ הוּא וּבְרוּךְ שְׁמוֹ.	<i>Leader</i>	

נְבָרָךְ – *Esteemed companions, let us say grace.* R. Joseph B. Soloveitchik explained that in the view of Rambam and Tosafot (*Sukka* 38a), while a woman cannot join with two

LAWS OF זימון, ZIMMUN / INVITATION
 If three or more males aged thirteen or older participate in a meal, a leader is appointed to formally invite the others to join him in the recitation of בְּרַכַּת הַמִּזוֹן – Grace after Meals. This formal invitation is called *zimmun*.
 When three women and fewer than three men are at a meal, the women may (Tosafot), or must (Rosh), make a *zimmun*. The men present should respond to the women's *zimmun* (R. Shlomo Zalman Auerbach as quoted by R. David Auerbach in *Halikhot Beita*). The text used for the women's *zimmun* is below the line.