

Community aids prayer, as well as religious practice

1. D. E. Saliers, *Liturgy and Ethics: Some New Beginnings*, Journal of Religious Ethics (Fall 1979)

Worship both forms and expresses persons in the beliefs, the emotions and the attitudes appropriate to the religious life.

The mitzvah of communal prayer

2. Kings I 8:30

You shall hear the pleas of Your servant and Your nation Israel, which they will pray toward this place, and You will hear in Your residence in the heavens...

3. Rabbi Moses Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Tefillah 8:1

The prayer of the community is always heard; even if there are sinners among them, Gd does not reject the prayer of the many. Therefore, one must always join himself with the community, and not pray alone so long as he could pray with the community. One must always rise early and go in the evening to the synagogue, for his prayer will not be heard at all times other than in the synagogue. One who has a synagogue in his city and does not pray there with the community is termed a 'bad neighbor.'

A Unified Experience increases our unity

4. Numbers 10:2, 9

Make for yourself two silver trumpets, of one piece shall you make them; they will be for you to summon the nation and to cause the camps to travel... And when you go to war in your land, against the enemy who attacks you, you shall blow the trumpets. And you shall be remembered before HaShem your Gd, and you shall be saved from your enemies.

5. Talmud, Yoma 12a

According to that view, Jerusalem was not divided among the tribes, as we have learned, "They may not charge rent for homes in Jerusalem, for it does not belong to them. Rabbi Elazar bar Shimon said: Beds, too."

6. Rabbi Naftali Zvi Yehudah Berlin (19<sup>th</sup> century Russia), Haameik Davar to Leviticus 7:13

The goal of the thanks-offering that is brought in response to a miracle is to tell of the great generosity Gd performed for him. Therefore the Torah increased the amount of bread and decreased the time for the thanks-offering's consumption beyond that of any other peace-offering, so that he would increase his friends for one meal on the day he brought the offering, and so he would tell of the miracle before many people...

7. Rabbi Yaakov ben Moshe Moellin (14<sup>th</sup> century Germany), Minhagim, Hilchot Yom Kippur 11

One should not change any aspect of local minhag, even to introduce unfamiliar tunes.

8. Students of Rashi (12<sup>th</sup> century France), Machzor Vitry 190

And we remember the dead, who increased Torah and enactments in Israel, as well as those who left anything to the community, and those for whom others left something.

9. Talmud, Taanit 14a

For the following situations we pray even on Shabbat: For a city surrounded by soldiers or an overflowing river, and for a boat that is being tossed in the sea.

10. Talmud, Rosh haShanah 34b

They said to Rabban Gamliel: According to you, why does the community daven? He replied: To give the chazan a chance to order his prayer.

Rabban Gamliel said to them: According to you, why does the chazan descend before the Ark? They replied: To fulfill the mitzvah for those who are not expert.

11. Tur, Orach Chaim 90

It is insufficient to establish a synagogue in which one always prays; even within the synagogue, one should establish a known place for himself, and not sit here today and there tomorrow.

Building Trust

12. Sosis and Ruffle, *Religious Ritual and Cooperation: Testing for a Relationship on Israeli Religious and Secular Kibbutzim*, *Current Anthropology* 44:5 (2003)

Hypotheses: If religious ritual impacts solidarity and cooperation as many anthropological theories suggest, then we should expect members of religious kibbutzim to exhibit higher levels of cooperation than members of secular kibbutzim. Although there is no agreement on the details, these theories maintain that it is collective ritual that promotes solidarity and cooperation, whereas no theory proposes a similar functional role for privately performed rituals. Private rituals appear to serve a different purpose, such as communicating with oneself (e.g., Rappaport 1999, Sosis 2003). Thus, we also expect that religious males will exhibit higher levels of cooperation than religious females because of their greater participation in collective ritual, especially daily prayer. Lastly, we expect the frequency of participation in collective ritual to affect an individual's cooperativeness positively. Therefore we predict that men who participate in communal prayer most frequently will exhibit the highest levels of cooperation.

13. Sosis, *The Adaptive Value of Religious Ritual*, *American Scientist* 92

Abstract: Why do Hari Krishnas shave their heads? Why do Mormons abstain from coffee, tobacco and alcohol? And why do so many religious groups have strict initiation rites, ranging from bathing in icy water to painful scarification, hair plucking and genital mutilation? In other words, why all the ordeals and sacrifices? Most attempts to explain religious rituals and taboos have focused on the spiritual benefits of these practices, but anthropologist Richard Sosis thinks there's a more fundamental reason. They signal commitment to the group, and prevent those who are uncommitted from gaining the benefits of membership. After all, who but a believer would engage in these costly acts?

Practical benefits

14. Talmud, Megilah 32a

Rabbi Shefatiah cited Rabbi Yochanan: When ten read from the Torah, the greatest among them rolls the Torah.

15. Vivienne Mountain, *Prayer is a Positive Activity for Children*, *Int'l Journal of Children's Spirituality* 10:3 (Dec 2005)

The data displayed a sense of joy in, and appreciation of, aspects of communal worship. The sense of identity connected to communities of faith was part of the prayer experience for about two-thirds of participants. To pray together in the positive sense of praise and worship was perceived as a meaningful activity where children found a sense of identity and belonging. The praying community was also valued in intercessory prayer (prayer for others), where the community of faith was identified as a resource. As care for others was expressed through prayer, children could understand a sense of unity where prayer was also available for them.

16. Sinead Donnelly, *Folklore Associated with Dying in the west of Ireland*, *Palliative Medicine* (1999)

In their grief, the community was supported by the loose formality of the wake (torramh), funeral procession, keening (caoineadh) and music. In all these, the men and women of the community and its leaders had distinct and respected roles to play.

17. Talmud, Bava Metziah 28b

Initially, whoever found a lost item would announce it for three festivals, and for seven days after the third festival, so that he could travel three days, return three days, and announce one day. When the Temple was destroyed – it should be rebuilt speedily in our days – they enacted that people should announce in the synagogues and study halls.

18. Talmud, Shabbat 150a

And Rabbi Yaakov bar Idi cited Rabbi Yochanan as saying: They look after lives and they look after the community on Shabbat, and they go to synagogues to look out for communal needs on Shabbat.