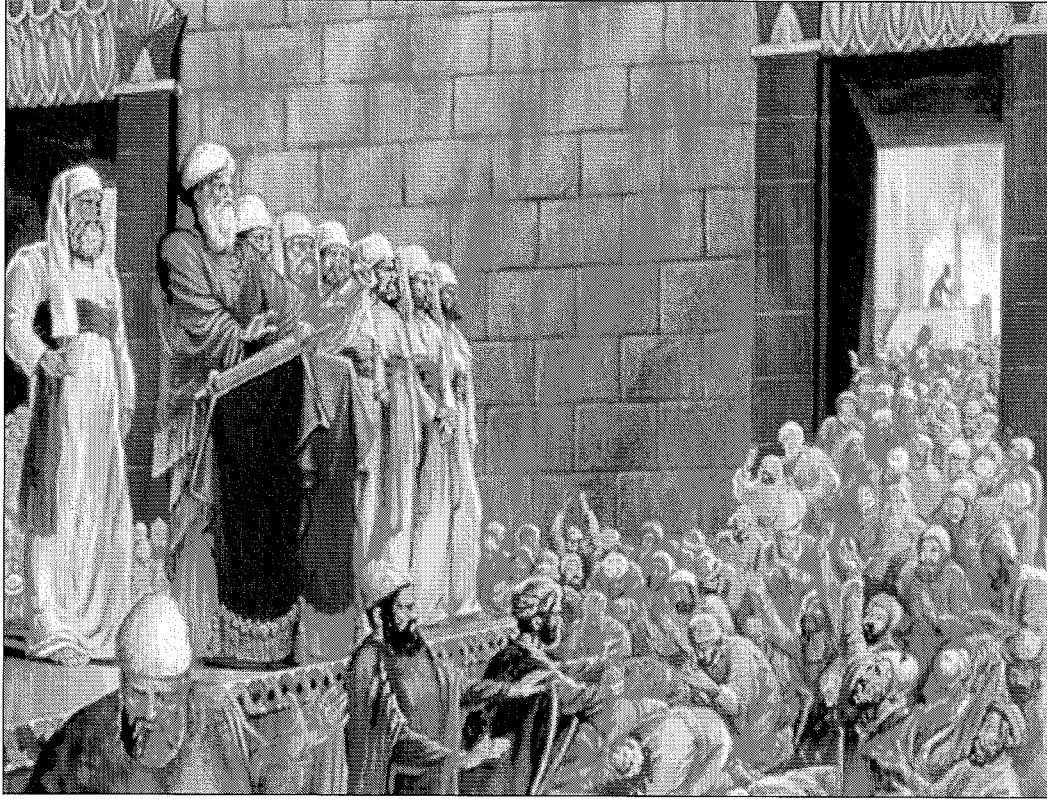


Java and Jewish History

Religious Revival and the End of Prophecy

Primary texts: Ezra, Nehemiah,
Chaggai, Zechariah, Malachi

Important figures: Ezra, Anshei Knesset haGedolah



Now in the second year of their coming unto the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month, began Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and the rest of their brethren the priests and the Levites, and all they that were come out of the captivity unto Jerusalem; and appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to have the oversight of the work of the house of Hashem. Then stood Jeshua with his sons and his brethren, and Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of Judah, together, to have the oversight of the workmen in the house of God; the sons of Henadad also, with their sons and their brethren the Levites. And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of Hashem, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise Hashem, according to the direction of David king of Israel.

And they sang one to another in praising and giving thanks unto Hashem: 'for He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever toward Israel.' And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised Hashem, because the foundation of the house of Hashem was laid.

But many of the priests and Levites and heads of fathers' houses, the old men that had seen the first house standing on its foundation, wept with a loud voice, when this house was before their eyes; and many shouted aloud for joy; so that the people could not

discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people; for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off. (Ezra 3)

And Ezra the priest brought the Law before the congregation, both men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month. And he read therein before the broad place that was before the water gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women, and of those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the Law. And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose; and beside him stood Mattithiah, and Shema, and Anaiah, and Uriah, and Hilkiah, and Maaseiah, on his right hand; and on his left hand, Pedaiah, and Mishael, and Malchijah, and Hashum, and Hashbaddanah, Zechariah, and Meshullam. And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people--for he was above all the people--and when he opened it, all the people stood up. And Ezra blessed Hashem, the great God. And all the people answered: 'Amen, Amen', with the lifting up of their hands; and they bowed their heads, and fell down before Hashem with their faces to the ground. Also Jeshua, and Bani, and Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, even the Levites, caused the people to understand the Law; and the people stood in their place. And they read in the book, in the Law of God, distinctly; and they gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. And Nehemiah, who was the Tirshatha, and Ezra the priest the scribe, and the Levites that taught the people, said unto all the people: 'This day is holy unto Hashem your God; mourn not, nor weep.' For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the Law. (Ezra 8)

In those days saw I in Judah some treading winepresses on Shabbos, and bringing in heaps of corn, and lading asses therewith; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on Shabbos; and I forewarned them in the day wherein they sold victuals. There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, who brought in fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on Shabbos unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem. Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them: 'What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane Shabbos? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning Shabbos.' And it came to pass that, when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before Shabbos, I commanded that the doors should be shut, and commanded that they should not be opened till after Shabbos; and some of my servants set I over the gates, that there should no burden be brought in on Shabbos. So the merchants and sellers of all kind of ware lodged without Jerusalem once or twice.

Then I forewarned them, and said unto them: 'Why lodge ye about the wall? if ye do so again, I will lay hands on you.' From that time forth came they no more on Shabbos. And I commanded the Levites that they should purify themselves, and that they should come and keep the gates, to sanctify Shabbos. Remember unto me, O my God, this also, and spare me according to the greatness of Thy mercy. In those days also saw I the Jews that had married women of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab and their children spoke half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people. And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God: 'Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters for your sons, or for yourselves. Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, and he was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel; nevertheless even him did the foreign women cause to sin. Shall we then

hearken unto you to do all this great evil, to break faith with our God in marrying foreign women?' And one of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest, was son-in-law to Sanballat the Horonite; therefore I chased him from me. (Nehemiah 13)

Berachot 33

Rav Chiya bar Abba said in the name of Rav Yochanan: *Anshei Knesset haGedolah* instituted for Israel blessings, prayers, *kiddush*, and *havdalah*.

Sanhedrin 11a

The Rabbis taught: When the Chagai, Zekharya and Malakhi, the last prophets, died, the holy spirit was taken from Israel.

Malachi 3

Remember ye the law of Moses (*Toras Moshe*) my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, with the statutes and judgments. Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of Hashem And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

Megillah 17b

Rabbi Yochanan said, One hundred and twenty elders, and among them prophets, established the *Shemonah Esreh*.

Rashi Bava Batra 15a

Anshei Knesset haGedolah: Chaggai, Zecharya, Malakhi, Zerubavel, Mordechai and their companions

Rambam Hilkhos Tefillah Chapter 1

Once the Jews were exiled in the times of the evil Nevu-khadnezzar, they assimilated in Persia and Greece and other nations, had children in those countries and those children spoke confusing languages, as each one was a mixture of several languages. Due to this, people couldn't express themselves fully in one language, rather it would be a mish-mash of language, as it says: **And half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod, and they could not speak the language of Judah, but spoke the language of various peoples** (Nehemiah 13:24); and when one of them would pray, he would find it difficult to request or praise **haKadosh Barukh Hu** (the Holy One, Who is Blessed) in **Lashon haKodesh** (the holy language) without other languages mixing in.

Once Ezra (c. 450 BCE) and his court saw this, they established 18 B'rakhot in order..... so that they [the B'rakhot] would be set in everyone's mouth (**'arukhot b'fi hakol**) and they would learn them; and the T'fillah of these stutterers would be as complete a T'fillah as the T'fillah of those who are erudite. Because of this matter, they established all of the B'rakhot and T'fillot in the mouth of all of Yisra'el (**m'sudarot b'fi kol Yisra'el**) so that the theme of each B'rakhah would be set in the mouth of the stutterer (**'arukh b'fi ha'ileg**).

Yoma 69b

How did the Anshei Knesset haGedolah merit the appellation "great"? Because they restored the glory of God's crown. Moshe came and referred to God as the great, the mighty and the awesome God (Deut. 10:17). Jeremiah came along (when non-Jews were holding pagan celebrations in the First Temple) and declared, "*Strangers are crowing in His palace, where then is His awesomeness?*" He omitted the reference to God as being awesome from the first blessing in the *Amidah*. Daniel came along and said, "*Strangers hold His children in bondage, where then is His might?*" He stopped referring to God as mighty. The Anshei Knesset haGedolah said, "On the contrary, just the opposite! His might is apparent in His self-restraint, in that He restrains His rage, and as for His awesomeness, how else could His people survive among the nations?"