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The Quality Quandary

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1.

COMMUNAL PRAYER

The Sages and Rabban Gamliel¹ have a dispute concerning communal prayer² — which is among prayer’s most valued elements.³ The Sages maintain that “just as the prayer leader {*shliach tzibbur*} is obligated {to pray for himself}, so is every individual (in the congregation) is obligated {to pray for himself}.” Rabban Gamliel says: “The *shliach tzibbur* fulfills the obligation of the congregation.”

The Gemara⁴ cites a beraisa⁵ regarding this dispute:

They {the Sages} asked Rabban Gamliel: According to your opinion, why does the congregation recite the prayer? He replied: For the *shliach tzibbur* to prepare his prayer (to provide time for the *shliach tzibbur* to prepare his prayer).⁶ Rabban Gamliel told them: According to your opinion {that each person is responsible for reciting the prayer himself}, why does the *shliach tzibbur* stand before the ark {and repeat the prayer aloud}? They answered: To fulfill the obligation of someone inept {in prayer}. Rabban Gamliel retorted: Just as the *shliach tzibbur* can fulfill the obligation of an inept person, so, too, he can fulfill the obligation of an adept person.

In other words, according to the Sages, “the congregation is of primary importance.”⁷ The idea of communal prayer is that the congregation prays in unison. The repetition of the prayer by the *shliach tzibbur* was enacted merely to fulfill the obligation of “a person who is inept.” In contrast, Rabban Gamliel maintains that “the *shliach tzibbur* is of primary importance”: The primary point of communal prayer lies in the *shliach tzibbur*’s prayer. The individual’s silent

¹ Mishnah, end of *Rosh Hashanah* (33b).

² {In the original Hebrew, “*tefillah be’tzibbur*,” praying with a quorum or “*minyan*.” Communal prayer requires an assembly of at least ten Jewish adult men, which then permits certain communal prayers to be said, such as *kaddish* and the reading of the Torah. The Sages enacted that when praying with a *minyan*, one member is appointed to serve as the *shliach tzibbur*.}

³ See *Berachos* 8a; *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Tefilah*,” beg. of ch. 8; et al; see *Sefer HaLikkutim* (*dach* — Tzemach Tzedek), “*Tzibbur*,” and the sources cited there.

⁴ *Rosh Hashanah* 34b.

⁵ *Tosefta*, end of *Rosh Hashanah*.

⁶ As stated in *Tosefta* *ibid*: The *shliach tzibbur* prepares himself.

⁷ Language of *Rosh* on *Rosh Hashanah* 34b.

prayer before the *shliach tzibbur*'s repetition was enacted for the sake of *shliach tzibbur* — “To give time to the *shliach tzibbur* to prepare his prayer.”

2.

RABBAN GAMLIEL'S VIEW

What is the rationale for the debate regarding whether the congregation or the *shliach tzibbur* is of primary importance”?

This issue, we can posit, is interconnected with the famous question:⁸ Which is of greater import, quantity or quality? Regarding this question, we find an argument between Rabban Gamliel and his colleagues:

The Gemara⁹ recounts that during Rabban Gamliel's tenure as *nassi*,¹⁰ “he would... declare, ‘Any student whose inner character does not match his outer demeanor should not enter the *bais midrash*.¹¹’” After he was removed from his position as *nassi* and Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah was appointed in his stead,¹² “the guard at the door was removed, and those students were given entry. On that day, many benches were added.”

This means that Rabban Gamliel believed that the primary attribute of a yeshivah (*bais midrash*) lies in its students' **quality**. Therefore, he admitted only students whose inner character matched their outer demeanor (even though this meant fewer students attending). In contrast, his colleagues (Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah, Rabbi Yehoshua, and Rabbi Akiva) held that quantity is more important than quality. Thus, students whose inner character did not match their outer demeanor should also be permitted entrance, as the main objective was to have a larger student body — more quantity, even though this

⁸ See *Lekach Tov* (Rabbi Yosef Engel), sec. 15-16; see *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 11, p. 65 ff; vol. 12, p. 126; et al.

⁹ *Brachos* 28a.

¹⁰ {Lit., “prince.” Referring here to the head of the Sanhedrin and the dean of the most important study hall.}

¹¹ {The highest study hall in the land where halachah was analyzed, debated, and decided.}

¹² See *Berachos* 27b ff.

would reduce the overall quality of the *bais midrash* and, consequently, the quality of its constituent parts.

On this basis, we can posit that Rabban Gamliel's statement that “the *shliach tzibbur*'s prayer is of primary importance” aligns with his view that quality outweighs quantity.

3.

CLARIFYING FURTHER

To clarify this disagreement:

The advantage of a “congregation” encompasses both the virtues of “quantity” and “quality”:¹³ (a) a congregation consists of at least **ten** Jews;¹⁴ and (b) when ten Jews assemble, they form a new entity — a sanctified congregation (a qualitative significance).

Herein lies the difference between communal prayer (which consists of the individual prayers of every member) and the prayer of the *shliach tzibbur*:

Communal prayer embodies the virtue of quantitative **abundance** — the many prayers that converge together — when ten Jews pray together.

Conversely, the *shliach tzibbur*'s prayer embodies the virtue of **quality** because:

[aside from the fact that a *shliach tzibbur* must meet certain conditions and possess specific qualities,¹⁵ and thus, his prayer (as an individual) holds greater significance than the prayers of the other ordinary congregants — moreover:]

¹³ See *Lekach Tov*, sec. 16, par. 7.

¹⁴ *Megillah* 23b (in the mishnah; see the Gemara, ad loc.) and the sources cited there.

¹⁵ See *Taanis* 16a ff; *Tur*, *Shulchan Aruch* (and Alter Rebbe's *Shulchan Aruch*), “*Orach Chaim*,” sec. 53.

The role of a *shliach tzibbur* who includes “the voices of Your nation, the House of Israel,”¹⁶ is that “he serves as the emissary for all of them..., for his voice becomes like their voice.”¹⁷ As such, every word he utters is as if the entire congregation utters it. This means, in the *shliach tzibbur’s* prayer, the congregation’s prayer merges into a **single** entity — the prayer of a holy congregation — a different **qualitative** category of prayer, outclassing even the prayers of the many constituents of the congregation.

Herein lies the dispute between the Sages and Rabban Gamliel: The Sages maintain that abundance of quantity outweighs quality. Thus, they opine that the primary element of communal prayer is the congregation’s prayer. In contrast, Rabban Gamliel maintains that the excellence of quality outweighs the abundance of quantity. Thus, even though the *shliach tzibbur’s* prayer is quantitatively minor — it is only the prayer of a single person — it is still of greater significance than the congregation’s prayer. This is because this prayer is far greater (loftier) qualitatively (as it carries the concentrated energy of the entire congregation).

4.

DELVING DEEPER

We have previously discussed¹⁸ that each argument has a unique novelty when we find a dispute among the Sages with similar conflicting rationales in two (or more) places. (For this reason, all the disputes must be recorded, and we cannot extrapolate the opinions from one dispute to another. In the wording of the Talmud, וְצָרִיכָא, “it is necessary”¹⁹ {to teach each dispute separately, although the disputants are consistent in their positions}.

¹⁶ Wording from the morning blessings recited for Torah learning— (according to the Gemara’s version) *Berachos* 11b.

¹⁷ Wording of the Alter Rebbe — Alter Rebbe’s *Shulchan Aruch*, “*Orach Chaim*,” sec. 213, par. 6 (concerning a individual who recites a blessing for performing a mitzvah on behalf of everyone).

¹⁸ See *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 6, p. 71 ff; vol. 7, p. 115 ff; vol. 18, p. 109 ff; vol. 19, p. 75 ff; et al.

¹⁹ {In the original Hebrew, “*utzricha*.”}

Similarly, in our context, each of the two disputes mentioned above contains a novelty:

Regarding the issue of the “*bais midrash*,” the Gemara discusses a student “whose inner character does not match his outer demeanor,” and therefore, lacks the general “quality” of a “student.” As our Sages taught,²⁰ “Any Torah scholar²¹ whose inner character does not match his outer demeanor is **not a wise student.**” In contrast, regarding prayer, the community's prayer is endowed with (not only the advantage of quantity but) also the advantage of quality. Such prayer has both advantages because when ten Jews {quantity} pray together, each participant's prayer has an advantage over an ordinary **individual's** prayer since, in this situation, each individual is part of a community {quality}. It is just that the quality of the *shliach tzibbur's* prayer (in which the entire congregation becomes a unified entity — a holy congregation) is of greater significance and possesses a superior quality.

Therefore, if Rabban Gamliel's view was only expressed concerning the “*bais midrash*,” we might have assumed that he considers the quality of prime importance specifically in that context. In contrast, regarding prayer, we might have thought that he concedes that “communal prayer {quantity} is of primary importance” {and trumps the importance of the *shliach tzibbur's* prayer}. (After all, communal prayer embodies both advantages: it is better quality [than an individual's prayer] and possesses abundant quantity).

Thus, Rabban Gamliel's view regarding prayer also tells us that in this case, too, a minor quantity is worthwhile for **superior** quality.

Conversely, if Rabban Gamliel's dissenting view was stated only regarding prayer (aside from the fact that we could have thought that the Sages would agree with Rabban Gamliel in the case of the *bais midrash*, for the reason mentioned above — also regarding the view of Rabban Gamliel), we could not deduce from there that he would maintain the same view regarding “the *bais midrash*.” After all, the purpose of the *bais midrash* is Torah, which is **acquired**

²⁰ *Yuma* 72b; see the continuation in the Gemara there.

²¹ {In the Hebrew original, “*talmid chacham*”; lit., “wise student.”}

through “the bonding of peers and through dialogue among students.”²² And on the contrary, “{I have learned} from my students more than all of them.”²³ The more students (including those whose inner character does not match their outer demeanor), the more dialogue and the more thorough the “acquisition.”

[From the perspective of *Mussar*,²⁴ we can add: Since Torah is etymologically related to the word “**horaah, instruction**,”²⁵ instructing people on how to conduct themselves, there is room to argue that a yeshivah is also intended for students whose inner character **does not** match their outer demeanor. This is so they may learn how to behave, and so they strive for their “inner character to match their outer demeanor.”]

Therefore, Rabban Gamliel’s view regarding “the *bais midrash*” must teach us that, in this context, Rabban Gamliel maintains that we prioritize quality.

²² *Avos* 6:6.

²³ *Taanis* 7a; *Makkos* 10a.

²⁴ {The Hebrew word “*mussar*” means instruction or ethics. It refers to an approach that focuses on personal spiritual growth and character development.}

²⁵ *Zohar*, vol. 3, 53b; *Gur Aryeh* on beg. of *Bereishis* in the name of *Radak*.

5.

“FORM” AND “MATTER”

The subject of the inquiry discussed above — whether quantity outweighs quality, or vice versa — dovetails, or is at least analogous to, the question that is relevant in many contexts (as Rogatchover discusses in several places):²⁶ What is the principal element of anything? the object’s “matter” (its physical substance), or its “form” (its essential characteristics)?

If we primarily consider the **matter**, then abundance in quantity holds greater significance than excellence in quality. However, if we primarily consider the object’s form (and essential characteristics), then quality outweighs quantity.

On this basis, we can address another dispute between Rabban Gamliel and the Sages, “the disputants following their respective positions.” Concerning the law that “if a person claims {that someone owes him} wheat, and he {the defendant} admits to {owing} barley, the Sages (the first *Tanna*) maintain that he {the defendant} is exempt {from an oath}. Rabban Gamliel, however, obligates him.”²⁷ The Sages believe that a defendant who makes a partial admission²⁸ is only obligated to take an oath when the partial admission is “of the same type as in the claim of the plaintiff.” However, Rabban Gamliel maintains that when the admission is not the same type as the claim, the defendant is still obligated to swear due to his partial admission.

We can posit that this dispute also hinges on the inquiry mentioned above — what is an object’s primary dimension, its matter (and quantity), or its form (and quality)? To preface:

²⁶ See at length *Mefanayach Tzefunos*, ch. 1, 11, **and the sources cited there**.

²⁷ *Shavuos* 38b (mishnah).

²⁸ {In the original Hebrew, “*modeh bemiktzas*.” The law concerning a partial admission to a claim that requires the defendant to swear an oath affirming the truth of their partial admission. Subsequently, they are obligated to repay the admitted amount but are exempt from paying the difference.}

The rationale for requiring a partial admission to be of the same type as in the claim {before obligating the defendant to make an oath} is²⁹ as follows: If the admission is not of the same type as in the claim, the defendant is not admitting partially to the **claim**. Regarding a wheat claim, he is not making a “partial admission.” He “**denies the claim entirely.**” As for the admission regarding barley, there is no **claim** from the plaintiff from the outset (and consequently, there cannot be a partial [admission of the] claim).

Yet, this rationale is contingent on what we deem to be the primary element in a “claim”: A monetary claim has two elements: Firstly, the claim practically manifests in a specific object — wheat, barley, and the like — which is the “matter” (substance) of the claim. And secondly, the essential characteristic (“form”) of the claim — the money owed that he is demanding from his fellow (which remains consistent regardless of the particular: wheat, barley, etc.).

Herein lies the dispute between the Sages and Rabban Gamliel, who follow their respective positions: The Sages, in line with their view, maintain that every object’s primary aspect is its “matter” and quantity. Likewise, in our context, the primary consideration is the “matter” of the claim. Consequently, where “a person claims wheat, and the other admits to owing barley,” there is no partial admission to the claim. In contrast, Rabban Gamliel maintains that we consider the **quality** of the claim to **be the same**, whether the claim concerns wheat or barley. Therefore, admission to owing a different object constitutes a partial admission to a claim, even when it is not an admission to the same kind as in the claim (due to the “matter” of the claim {its monetary value}).

²⁹ Although this law is derived from a verse (*Shavuos* 39b; *Bava Metzia* 5a), it is nevertheless not a Scriptural decree, but rather a principle that is understood through reasoning.

6.

THE NOVELTY

The novelty of **this** dispute, relative to the earlier two disputes:

The *bais midrash* (Torah) and prayer are considered mitzvah objects. It might have been thought that Rabban Gamliel considers their quality of utmost importance for this very reason: Since they are mitzvah objects and sacred, their qualitative dimension is of ultimate significance and decisive.

In contrast, discretionary articles possess no (Torah) significance. [This position is **similar** to what Rashi says regarding a weekday meal:³⁰ “A weekday meal lacks significance and so ‘preparing’³¹ does not apply,” because as a **discretionary** meal — a meal not mandated by Torah — it does not hold significance that would require preparation].

Therefore, if Rabban Gamliel’s view were not stated explicitly regarding the case, “If a person claims wheat, and he admits to him barley,” we would not have been able to deduce his view from cases concerning Torah and prayer.

[On the flip side, if the dispute between the Sages and Rabban Gamliel were stated only about a partial admission to a claim, we would not have known the Sages’ view regarding cases concerning Torah and prayer.]

³⁰ Rashi on *Beitzah* 2b, s.v., “*veain yom tov*.”

³¹ {Weekday meals, being insignificant, don’t require advance preparation or designation, which involves verbally setting aside or reserving food for a specific meal, unlike Shabbos and Yom Tov meals.}

ANOTHER DISPUTE

Just as we encounter the dispute of Rabban Gamliel and the Sages concerning Torah and prayer, two “pillars,”³² similarly, we also encounter a dispute concerning charity (acts of kindness), the third “pillar.”

In the Gemara,³³ there is a dispute regarding the meaning of the verse,³⁴ “Kindness to the nations is a sin”: Rabbi Eliezer says, “*Kindness to the nations is a sin* — any act of charity or kindness performed by the nations is sinful for them, as they only do so to become great through it.” Rabbi Yehoshua says, “Any charity... is sinful for them as they only do so to extend their dominion.” Rabban Gamliel says, “Any charity or kindness... is sinful for them as they only do so **to boast** through it.”

*Maharsha*³⁵ clarifies the difference between “to become great through it” and “to boast through it” as follows: “To become great through it” (is not “a term connoting greatness and importance” since this (also) is the meaning of “to boast.” Instead, it) means, “great in years, that they live longer lives.”

The difference between the first two interpretations (of Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua) and Rabban Gamliel’s teaching is as follows: According to Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua, the “sin” of the nations is that they perform charitable and kind acts solely for **reward**. In contrast, according to Rabban Gamliel, their **sin** is that their kindness and charitable acts lead them to the attribute and sin of **boastfulness**.

What is the **rationale** behind this dispute? We can posit that this is connected to the inquiry: What takes precedence: matter or form?

³² *Avos* 1:2.

³³ *Bava Basra* 10b.

³⁴ *Mishlei* 14:34.

³⁵ *Maharsha’s Chidushei Aggados* on *Bava Basra* 10b; also see *Rif* and *Iyun Yaakov* on *Ein Yaakov* of *Bava Basra* 10b.

8.

THE NATURE OF A SIN

The explanation is as follows:

When saying that charitable and kind acts performed by gentile nations are (not considered mitzvos, but are, moreover) **sinful**, it is because they are not performed with a kind and charitable demeanor. Thus, they constitute something “sinful.”

The mitzvah of charity has two parts: (a) the act of giving to a poor person — providing for his needs; and (b) the “quality” of the giving — giving with a pleasant demeanor, demonstrating empathy to the poor person; (in the words of our Sages)³⁶ a person “who consoles him verbally.” This is the **most crucial** element of charity. As Rambam rules:³⁷ “Whoever gives charity to a poor person with a sour face, even if he gives the poor person 1,000 golden coins, **forfeits his merit.**”

Herein lies the dispute between Rabban Gamliel and the earlier two *tannaim*:

Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua maintain that the primary element of charity lies in its “matter” and quantity — the act of giving to the poor person. Therefore, (according to their view) since the charitable and kind acts of gentile nations are performed solely for the sake of reward, it is deemed a “sin.” This is because their entire motive is the reward they will receive. (So much so, if these nations did not receive the reward, they would **regret**³⁸ giving their charity). It follows that their act of giving is flawed. It is limited to **their** desire for the reward instead of the poor's needs. The nations are not focused on providing the poor person with **his** needs. Instead, they focus on **themselves**, their benefit, securing longevity, or extending “their dominion.”

³⁶ *Bava Basra* 9b.

³⁷ *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Matnos Aniyim*,” ch. 10, par. 4; see the text there and in par. 5 of that ch.; *Tur* and *Shulchan Aruch*, “*Yoreh Deah*,” sec. 249, pars. 3,4.

³⁸ *Basra* (10b), Rashi, s.v., “*kan beyisrael*.”

In contrast, Rabban Gamliel maintains that the primary dimensions of everything is the form and quality. The same holds concerning charity — the primary aspect of charity is a person “who consoles him.” Accordingly, the “sin” in their performance of charity and kindness lies not in their performance for the sake of reward [since this aspect does not touch upon the primary aspect of charity according to his view]. Instead, their shortcoming is in their haughty attitude — because of the importance and greatness of the benefactor. This blemishes the **quality** of charity: The primary point of charity is to present a gracious demeanor and console the poor person, which can only be achieved when the giver does not see himself as superior to the pauper. However, when charity is given by someone haughty, the charitable act is **contradicted** by {the attitude of the giver, the one} “who consoles him.” The benefactor’s goal is to be able to gloat, “to boast” with arrogance and coarseness!

9.

THE NEED

Concerning charity as well, there is a “need” to teach Rabban Gamliel’s view — that emphasizes quality and form — because his view on charity introduces a novelty compared with his view on other holy matters: Prayer and “the *bais midrash*” (Torah).

The primary aspect of Torah and prayer is (not as much their “matter” as it is) their “quality” and form. Torah’s primary aspect³⁹ is⁴⁰ **understanding** the concepts being studied⁴¹ (and similarly, in-depth study that leads to action, which is a fundamental aspect of Torah).⁴² Likewise, prayer is primarily a “service **of the heart**”⁴³ — having in mind before Whom you stand, etc.⁴⁴

³⁹ In addition to the above at the end of Section 4 regarding the *bais midrash*.

⁴⁰ In regard to the Oral Torah (as clarified in the sources cited in the next fn.), from which its practical application stems.

⁴¹ See Alter Rebbe’s *Hilchos Talmud Torah*, end of ch. 2; Alter Rebbe’s *Shulchan Aruch*, “*Orach Chaim*,” sec. 50, par. 2 (from the *Magen Avraham*).

⁴² Alter Rebbe’s *Hilchos Talmud Torah*, ch. 4, par. 2-3.

⁴³ *Sifri* (and Rashi) on *Devarim* 11:13; *Taanis* 2a; *Mishneh Torah*, beg. of “*Hilchos Tefilah*.”

⁴⁴ Without this intention, one’s prayers are unacceptable, even after the fact – see *Mishneh Torah*, “*Hilchos Tefilah*,” ch. 4, p. 15-16. See also *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 22, p. 117 ff, and fn. 36 there.

In contrast, the opposite holds concerning charity: The primary characteristic of charity is to fulfill the needs of the **poor person**, ensuring **his** needs are met. Therefore, we can deduce that the giver's intention is not significant, but rather, what is significant is that the poor man receives his needs. As the *Sifri*⁴⁵ says, when a person “loses a coin from his hand and a poor person sustains himself from it, the verse considers it as if the original owner merited the mitzvah.”

If Rabban Gamliel's view had only been conveyed about prayer and Torah, we might have assumed that he acknowledges quantity as the primary concern regarding charity. Thus, it becomes necessary to explicitly state his view on charity to teach us that Rabban Gamliel also prioritizes quality in this context.

Conversely, we cannot infer from Rabban Gamliel's stance on charity his views on prayer and the *bais midrash*. This is because, regarding charity, the sole importance is which of the two takes precedence — matter (and quantity) or form (and quality) — in a manner that prioritizing quality does not diminish the quantity.

In contrast, prayer and Torah study contradict each other: By prioritizing quality, quantity is **reduced**. In the context of the *bais midrash*, this results in **fewer** students in quantity (but their inner character will match their outward demeanor) instead of having an abundance of benches.

Moreover, regarding prayer, the entire **composition** of the *shliach tzibbur's* quality consists of **diminished quantity**. His distinction is not his contribution of an abundance of prayers (quantity) but his **single** prayer on behalf of the entire community.

Therefore, we would not have derived from Rabban Gamliel's opinion in the case of charity that Rabban Gamliel also prioritizes quality in these other cases.

⁴⁵ *Devarim* 24:19.

From the explanation above, the necessity, צָרִיכָא, to state the opinion of the Sages in both cases is understood, as well.⁴⁶

10.

THEIR ROLE

This novelty regarding Rabban Gamliel's stance (derived from the *shliach tzibbur's* prayer) — even if quality **reduces** the quantity, quality still takes priority — is linked to Rabban Gamliel's role as *nassi*.

The core principle of a *nassi* is that a **single person** is designated to fill the role of *nassi*,⁴⁷ akin to a king. While there can be a second-in-command to the king, a viceroy,⁴⁸ only a single person can be king. [Two kings can only reign when their rule is divided,⁴⁹ similar to the kings of Yehudah and the kings of Israel.]

The reason is that a *nassi* and a king personify **quality**. As known,⁵⁰ a *nassi* and a king embody the core existence of the entire nation. Thus, a *nassi* or a king does not bring multiplicity or plentitude to mind. On the contrary, the king is one individual, the smallest number. His virtue lies specifically in qualitative excellence. (That's why he unifies and leads the nation.)

Therefore, Rabban Gamliel's view on prayer is that its quality is not only its principal component but also so significant that it takes precedence even when it **reduces** the quantity totally.⁵¹

This also sheds light on the divergent views of Rabban Gamliel and the Sages, who were only **members** of the Sanhedrin — and the members of the

⁴⁶ {Using the reverse of the above-mentioned strengths and weaknesses of both cases,}

⁴⁷ See *Horiyos* 11b.

⁴⁸ *Sanhedrin* 98b.

⁴⁹ But when everyone is united, there can only be one leader for the generation, not two (*Sanhedrin* 8a; Rashi on *Devarim* 31:7).

⁵⁰ See, at length, *Likkutei Sichos*, vol. 4, p. 1050ff; vol. 8, p. 25; et al.

⁵¹ {In the case of prayer, the individual prayers of the congregation (the advantage of quantity) disappear as they are subsumed by the quality of the *shliach tzibbur's* prayer and thereby become unified as a single entity.}

Sanhedrin indicate the importance of quantity. This is because the Sanhedrin requires a quorum of **seventy-one** members, and the absence of even one, even the smallest in stature, dissolves the Sanhedrin.⁵²

As such, their general dispute is, as mentioned above, whether quantity outweighs quality or vice versa. As emphasized in their dispute regarding prayer, the Sages maintain that “communal (prayer) is of primary importance” (resembling the body of the Sanhedrin, which comprises seventy-one members).

In contrast, Rabban Gamliel maintains that “the *shliach tzibbur* (and his prayer) is of primary importance” since the *shliach tzibbur* embodies the qualitative virtue of the entire congregation. This is analogous to a *nassi*, who embodies the qualitative virtue of the entire nation.

— From talks delivered on the 6th of *Tishrei* and *Simchas Torah* day, 5737 (1976)

⁵² *Horiyos* 3b.