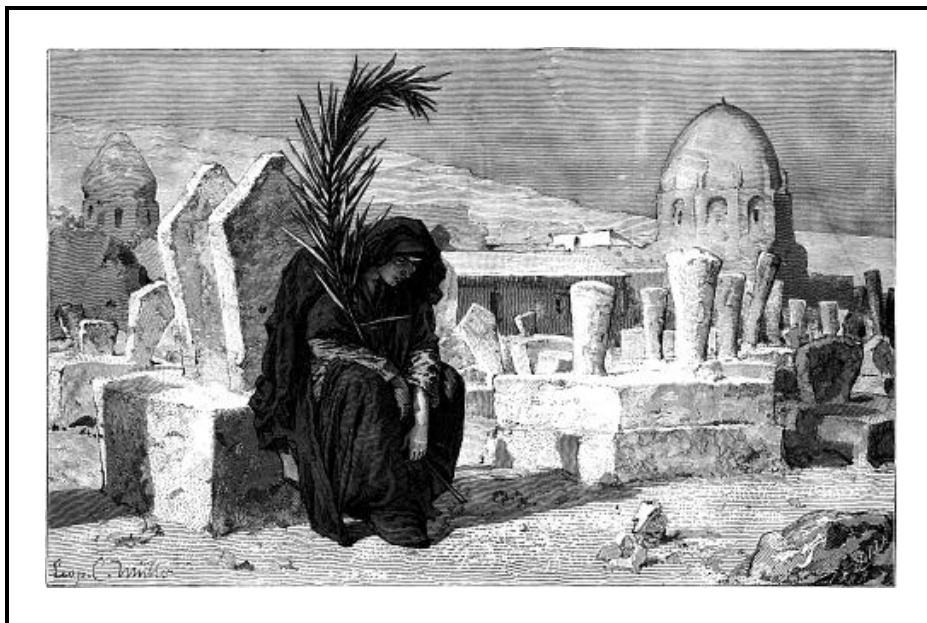


**The Soncino Babylonian Talmud**



**TA'ANIS**

**Folios 2a-31a**

**TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH WITH NOTES**

**CHAPTERS I - IV**

*Reformatted by Reuven Brauner, Raanana 5771*

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# TA'ANIS – 2a-31a

## Ta'anith 2a

### CHAPTER I

**MISHNAH.** WHEN DO WE [BEGIN TO] MAKE MENTION OF THE POWER OF RAIN?<sup>1</sup> R. ELIEZER SAYS: ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE FEAST.<sup>2</sup> R. JOSHUA SAYS: ON THE LAST DAY OF THE FEAST. R. JOSHUA SAID TO HIM: SEEING THAT RAIN ON THE FEAST IS A SIGN OF [GOD'S] ANGER<sup>3</sup> WHY MAKE MENTION OF IT? THEREUPON R. ELIEZER SAID TO HIM: I ALSO DID NOT SAY TO PRAY<sup>4</sup> BUT TO MAKE MENTION [IN THE WORD] 'HE CAUSETH THE WIND TO BLOW AND THE RAIN TO FALL'<sup>5</sup> - IN ITS DUE SEASON. HE [R. JOSHUA] REPLIED TO HIM: IF THAT IS SO ONE SHOULD AT ALL TIMES MAKE MENTION OF IT. WE PRAY FOR RAIN ONLY CLOSE TO THE RAINY SEASON. R. JUDAH SAYS: THE LAST TO STEP BEFORE THE ARK<sup>6</sup> ON THE LAST DAY OF THE FEAST MAKES MENTION, THE FIRST DOES NOT; ON THE FIRST DAY OF PASSOVER THE FIRST MAKES MENTION, THE LAST DOES NOT.

**GEMARA.** What has the Tanna [in mind] when he teaches WHEN, etc.?<sup>7</sup> — The Tanna refers to [a Mishnah] elsewhere which teaches: We make mention of the Power of Rain in the [benediction of] the Revival of the Dead,<sup>8</sup> and we pray for [rain] in the Benediction of the Years<sup>9</sup> and [we insert] the Habdulah<sup>10</sup> in [the benediction] 'Thou favorest man with knowledge'.<sup>11</sup> [With that passage in mind] the Tanna now teaches: When do we [begin] to make mention of the Power of Rain? Would it not have been more appropriate to teach it there, why did he leave it until now? —

[Say] rather, because the Tanna had just completed [learning the Tractate] Rosh Hashanah<sup>12</sup> where we have learnt: And on the Feast [the world] is judged through water. And, [as there] he taught: 'And on the Feast [the world] is judged through water,' therefore there he teaches: When do we [begin] to make mention of the Power of

Rain. But let him teach: When do we [begin] to make mention of Rain: why, the Power of Rain?-R. Johanan said: Because Rain comes down by the Power [of God], as it is said, Who doeth great things und unsearchable, marvelous things without number.<sup>13</sup> And it is [further] written, Who giveth rain upon the earth, and sendeth waters upon the fields.<sup>14</sup> Where [in these verses is this idea] implied? —

Rabbah b. Shila replied: It is derived from the analogous use of the word Heker in verses treating of Creation. Here it is written, 'Who doeth great things and unsearchable'. And there it is written, 'Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard that the everlasting God, The Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? His discernment is past searching out.<sup>15</sup> And [of Creation] it is [also] written, Who by Thy strength settest fast the mountains, Who art girded about with might.<sup>16</sup> Whence do we know that mention of Rain is to be made in the Prayer?<sup>17</sup> —

It has been taught: To love the Lord your God and to serve Him with all your heart.<sup>18</sup> What is Service of Heart? You must needs say, Prayer. And the verse following reads, That I will give the rain of your land in its season, the former rain and the latter rain.<sup>19</sup> R. Johanan said: Three keys the Holy One blessed be He has retained in His own hands and not entrusted to the hand of any messenger, namely, the Key of Rain, the Key of Childbirth, and the Key of the Revival of the Dead. The Key of Rain, for It is written, The Lord will open unto thee His good treasure, the heaven to give the rain of thy land in its season,<sup>20</sup> The Key of Childbirth, for it is written, And God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened

(1) The term 'power of Rain' is applied to the phrase 'He causeth the wind to blow and the rain to fall' inserted in the second benediction of the prayer known as 'the Eighteen Benedictions' — The Tefillah (v. Glos.) On the expression POWER OF RAIN v. infra.

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(2) The Feast, **טבת**, the name by which the festival of Tabernacles is referred to in Mishnah and Talmud. Cf. I Kings VIII, 2, 65; Neh. VIII, 14, 15.

(3) Lit., curse, v. Suk. 28b.

(4) I.e., to insert in the ninth benediction the words, 'Give dew and rain for a blessing upon the face of the earth'.

(5) V. n. 1.

(6) To step before the Ark (Tebah), a technical term denoting the recitation of the Tefillah or the Amidah by the reader. V. R.H., Sonc. ed. p. 160, n. 9.

(7) What is the Tanna's authority that the power of rain has to be mentioned at all?

(8) The second benediction.

(9) The ninth benediction.

(10) Additional prayer inserted in the fourth benediction in the evening service at the termination of Sabbath and festivals.

(11) Ber. 33a.

(12) The order of the tractates of the Mishnah mentioned here is the same as given by the Gaon Sherira of Pumbeditha (968 C.E.) in the letter addressed by him to the community of Kairwan. (V. Neubauer Med. Jew. Chronicles, p. 13). The same sequence is given by Maimonides in the Introduction to his Commentary on the Mishnah.

(13) Job V, 9-10. The Gemara cites IX, 10, but the commentators substitute for it V, 9 which makes the sequence of ideas clearer.

(14) V. supra n. 5.

(15) Isa. XL, 28.

(16) Ps. LXV, 7. Rabbah b. Shilah infers from the analogous use of the word **קקק**, in Job (where it speaks of rain) and Isaiah (where it refers to Creation) that just as God displayed 'Power' at Creation so too 'Power is a concomitant of rain. Hence the expression, POWER OF RAIN.

(17) The Tefillah.

(18) Deut. XI, 13.

(19) Ibid. v. 14.

(20) Deut. XXVIII, 12.

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to her, and opened her womb.<sup>1</sup> The Key of the Revival of the Dead, for it is written, And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves.<sup>2</sup> In Palestine they said: Also the Key of Sustenance, for it is said, Thou openest thy hand, etc.<sup>3</sup> Why does not R. Johanan include also this [key]? — Because in his view sustenance is [included in] Rain.<sup>4</sup>

**R. ELIEZER SAYS: ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE FEAST, etc.** The question was asked, Whence did R. Eliezer derive this? Did

he learn it from Lulab<sup>5</sup> or from the Libation of Water?<sup>6</sup> If he learnt it from Lulab, then just as the obligation of the use of the Lulab comes into force on the [first] day of Tabernacles, so too should we begin to make mention of rain on that day. Or perhaps he learnt it from Libation. [If so, then] just as Water Libation may be [carried out] on the evening [preceding the first day] — (for a Master [interpreting the verse], And the meal-offering thereof and their drink-offerings,<sup>7</sup> said, Even by night)-so too should one begin to make mention of rain on that evening!<sup>8</sup> —

Come and hear: R. Abbahu said: R. Eliezer deduced it from Lulab only. Some there are who say: R. Abbahu had a tradition. Whilst others say: He based it on a Baraitha. Which is the Baraitha? —

It has been taught: 'When do we [begin to] make mention of Rain? R. Eliezer says: From the time of the taking up of the Lulab; R. Joshua says, From the time when the Lulab is discarded.<sup>9</sup> Said R. Eliezer: Seeing that these Four Species are intended only to make intercession for water,<sup>10</sup> therefore as these cannot [grow] without water so the world [too] cannot exist without water. R. Joshua said to him: Is not rain on the Feast a sure sign of [God's] anger? R. Eliezer replied: I too did not say to pray but to make mention. And just as one makes mention of the Revival of the Dead all the year round<sup>11</sup> although it will take place only in its proper time, so too should mention be made of the Power of Rain all the year round although it comes only in its due season. Therefore if one desires to make mention all the year round he may do so.

Rabbi says: I hold the view that when one ceases to pray [for rain]<sup>12</sup> one should also no longer make mention of it. R. Judah b. Bathyra says: On the second day of the Feast one [begins] to make mention. R. Akiba says: On the sixth day of the Feast. R. Judah says in the name of R. Joshua: The last to step before the Ark on the last day of the Feast

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makes mention, the first does not; on the first day of Passover the first makes mention, the last does not. Did not then R. Eliezer reply well to R. Joshua? —

R. Joshua can answer you: It is quite in order to make mention of the Revival of the Dead [all the year round], since any day may be its time, but is rain seasonable at all times? Have we not learnt: Should Nisan terminate and then rain fall it is a sign of [God's] anger, for it is said, Is it not wheat harvest to-day, etc.?<sup>13</sup> 'R. Judah b. Bathyra says: on the second day of the Feast one [begins] to make mention'. What is R. Judah b. Bathyra's reason? —

It has been taught: R. Judah b. Bathyra says, Of the second day of the Feast, Scripture Says, we-niskehem,<sup>14</sup> ['and their drink-offerings'] and of the sixth day, u-nesakeah<sup>15</sup> ['and its drink-offerings'] and of the seventh day, kemishpatam<sup>16</sup> [according to their rule]. Note [the letters] Mem, Yod, Mem which form the word Mayim ['water'].<sup>17</sup> Here you have the biblical allusion to the Libation of Water. And what makes him [R. Judah b. Bathyra] fix it on the second day? —

Because [the first of the allusions to the Water Libation] is found in connection [with the order for] the second day. Hence why we should [begin] to make mention on the second day. R. Akiba says: On the sixth day of the Feast one [begins] to make mention, for of the sixth day Scripture says, And its drink-offerings.<sup>18</sup> Scripture thus speaks of two libations,<sup>19</sup> the Libation of Water and the Libation of Wine. Perhaps both Libations must be of wine? —

He [R. Akiba] is of the same opinion as R. Judah b. Bathyra who said, There is an allusion to water.<sup>20</sup>

(1) Gen. XXX, 22. R. Joshua stresses the connection between מפתח key (lit., opener') and the verb פתח to open, in the verses cited.

(2) Ezek. XXXVII, 13.

(3) Ps. CXLV, 16.

(4) Since it comes through rain.

(5) The Palm-branch. Term applied to the Four Plants used in the service on Tabernacles. Cf. Lev. XXIII, 40.

(6) [The vessel for the Water Libation was filled the preceding evening, v. Suk. 51 b. Aliter: The drink-offerings of wine brought in conjunction with animal sacrifices could be offered on the evening following the animal sacrifice, v. p. 4, n.1.]

(7) Num. XXIX, 18.

(8) [On this first interpretation of Rashi this verse is irrelevant and is to be omitted, v. Rashi. On the second interpretation the argument will run as follows: Should R. Eliezer deduce his opinion from the Water Libation, the mention of rain would have to be mentioned in the evening, seeing that the evening is a time at which drink-offerings (of wine) may be offered. Once, however, it is granted that the mention of rain starts on the evening, it will have to be the preceding, so as to be on the same day as the Water Libation (the night always being counted with the following day). V. Tosaf, s.v. איבער. On this interpretation the text should read as 'Libation (not 'Water Libation') may be on the evening', v. Me'iri a.i. where also other interpretations of this difficult passage are given.]

(9) On the seventh day of the Feast.

(10) V. Suk. 37b.

(11) In the second benediction.

(12) On the first day of Passover.

(13) I Sam. XII, 17.

(14) Num. XXIX, 18.

(15) Ibid. 31.

(16) Ibid. 33.

(17) The מ of נסכיהם, the י of נסכיה, and the מ of מים taken, together spell the word, מים water.

(18) The plural form implies (at least) two drink-offerings. [It is taken to refer to the festival, in contradistinction to the phrase, 'their drink-offering' mentioned in the sixth day where 'their' has reference to the sacrifices.]

(19) On the Festival of Tabernacles.

(20) I.e., he accepts the allusion supplied by the letters Mem, Yod, Mem.

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If he accepts the view of R. Judah b. Bathyra let him also agree with him [that one begins to make mention on the second day of the Feast]? —

R. Akiba holds the view that the additional Libation occurs in the text<sup>1</sup> on the sixth day. It has been taught: R. Nathan says, In the holy place shalt thou pour out a drink-offering of strong drink unto the Lord.<sup>2</sup> Scripture [here] speaks of two Libations, the



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**Libation of Water and the Libation of Wine.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps both are of wine?- If it were so, he should have said, either Hassek Hassek or Nasok Neseq. What is the force [of the words] Hassek Neseq? —**

**From this is to be inferred, that one points to the Libation of Water, and the other to the Libation of Wine.<sup>4</sup> Who is the authority for that which we have learnt, The Libation of Water [is performed] throughout the seven days [of the Feast]? Is it R. Joshua? He would have stated on one day only!<sup>5</sup> Is it R. Akiba? According to him it is performed on two days!<sup>6</sup> Is it R. Judah b. Bathyra? According to him it is performed on six days?<sup>7</sup> —**

**I can still say, It is R. Judah b. Bathyra and he will hold the same opinion as R. Judah of the following Mishnah. For we have learnt: R. Judah says, A vessel of a logs capacity was used for Libation throughout the eight days [of the Feast]; but he [R. Judah b. Bathyra] excludes the first day and includes the eighth day.<sup>9</sup> Why does he exclude the first day? Is it because the [first of the] biblical allusions to water [is to be found] on the second day? Then the eighth day too should be excluded seeing that the last [of the] allusions to water is on the seventh day!—**

**It must then be R. Joshua, and as for the Libation of Water being performed throughout the seven days [of the Feast] this is founded on a tradition;<sup>10</sup> for R. Ami said in the name of R. Johanan, in the name of R. Nehunia a native<sup>11</sup> of the Plain of Beth-Hawartan,<sup>12</sup> the laws concerning the Ten Young Trees,<sup>13</sup> the Willow of the Brook,<sup>14</sup> and the Libation of Water are laws [communicated] to Moses from Sinai.<sup>15</sup> ‘R. Judah in the name of R. Joshua says: The last to step before the Ark on the last day of the Feast makes mention [of rain], the first does not; on the first day of Passover the first makes mention, the last does not. Which R. Joshua? Is it R. Joshua of our Mishnah?**

**Surely he said, ON THE LAST DAY OF THE FEAST ONE MAKES MENTION? Or,**

**is it R. Joshua of the Baraitha? Surely he said: From the day that the Lulab is discarded? And further, when it is taught: R. Judah says in the name of Ben Bathyra: The last to step before the Ark on the last day of the Feast makes mention. Which Ben Bathyra [is meant]? Is it R. Judah b. Bathyra? Surely he said: On the second day of the Feast one makes mention?—**

**R. Nathan bar Isaac replied: [In both passages cited] it is R. Joshua b. Bathyra. Sometimes he is called by his own name and some times he is referred to by his father's name; by the one before his ordination, and by the other after his ordination. It has been taught: The Sages did not make it obligatory on one to make mention of dew and winds, but if one desires to make mention he may do so. What is the reason? —**

**R. Hanina said: Because they are never withheld. And how do we know that dew is never withheld? — For it is written, And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the settlers of Gilead, said to Ahab: As the Lord the God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years but according to my word.<sup>16</sup> And it is written further, Go, show thyself unto Ahab, and I will send rain upon the land.<sup>17</sup> Of dew, however, Scripture does not speak. Why?**

(1) Lit., ‘written’.

(2) Num. XXVIII, 7.

(3) On the Festival of Tabernacles.

(4) The two different word formations of the root, **לָבַב** seem to point to two kinds of libation.

(5) On the seventh day, since R. Joshua says: We begin to make mention from the time when the Lulab is discarded. [The question is not quite clear. Rashi did not seem to have this passage which is also omitted by MS.M.]

(6) On the sixth and seventh day. Cf. 2b.

(7) From the second until the seventh inclusive.

(8) A liquid measure equal to the contents of six eggs.

(9) [I.e., whilst R. Judah b. Bathyra agreed with R. Judah that the Water Libation continued to the eighth day, he differs in so far that he holds that the rite began only with the second day, so that it lasted only seven days.]

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(10) [Var. lec. omit R. Joshua and read, 'It must then be that as for the libation of water being performed, etc.' On this reading all authorities agree that the rite is performed for seven days, the difference between them being only as to where the allusion is to be found, v. D.S. a.l.]

(11) Lit., 'a man of'.

(12) Perhaps Beth Hawran, east of the Jordan. V. Neubauer, Geog. du Talmud, p. 50.

(13) All work in a tree-planted field had to be discontinued thirty days before the end of the sixth year of the Sabbatical cycle; but where ten saplings are spread over an area of fifty square cubits they may be cultivated right until the end of the sixth year. V. Sheb. 1, 6.

(14) The use of the Willow in the daily processions around the altar during the festival of Tabernacles. V. Suk. IV, 5-6.

(15) A phrase often denoting a law which has no scriptural basis and the origin of which is no longer known. V. Moore, Judaism I, 256.

(16) I Kings XVII, 1.

(17) I Kings XVIII, 1.

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Because it is never withheld. But if it is never withheld, why did Elijah take an oath on it? — This is what he conveyed to him [Ahab]. The dew of blessing also would not fall. Then the dew of blessing should also have been restored? —

Because the difference would not have been discernable. How do we know that winds are not withheld? R. Joshua b. Levi said: Scripture says, For I have spread you abroad as the four winds of heaven, saith the Lord.<sup>1</sup> What does the prophet desire to convey? Shall we say that the Holy One, blessed be He, spoke thus to Israel, 'I have scattered you to the four corners of the world'. If so, Scripture should have said not 'as the four' but 'to the four'. But this is what he meant: 'As the world cannot endure without winds, so too the world cannot exist without Israel'.

R. Hanina said: Therefore, if in the summer one inserted [in the Tefillah the words], 'He causeth the wind to blow', he is not compelled to repeat [the Tefillah]; if, however, he said, 'He causeth the rain to fall', he is compelled to repeat [it]. Similarly, if in winter one did not insert, 'He causeth the wind to blow', he

is not compelled to repeat; if, however, he did not say, 'He causeth the rain to fall', he is compelled to repeat. And furthermore, even if he said, 'He causeth the wind to pass and the dew to disappear',<sup>2</sup> he is not compelled to repeat.

A Tanna taught: The Sages did not make it obligatory to make mention of clouds and winds, but if one desires to make mention he may do so. What is the reason? Is it because they are never withheld? But are they never withheld? Did not R. Joseph learn, 'And He will shut up the heaven,<sup>3</sup> means, in respect of clouds and winds. You say that this verse is in respect of clouds and winds, perhaps it is not so but means in respect of rain? When Scripture adds, So that there shall be no rain, rain is thus already referred to. What then is the force of [the words], And He will shut up the heaven? [It must mean] in respect of clouds and winds'. There will then be a contradiction between 'winds and winds' and between 'clouds and clouds'? —

There is really no contradiction between clouds and clouds'. In the one case [the reference is] to early clouds<sup>4</sup> and in the other to late clouds.<sup>5</sup> Between winds and winds' too there is no contradiction; in the one case they are normal winds and in the other extraordinary winds.<sup>6</sup> But are not extraordinary winds suitable for<sup>7</sup> [winnowing] in the barn? —

This can be done with sieves [independently of the wind]. A Tanna taught: The clouds and the winds are secondary to rain.<sup>8</sup> Which are they? 'Ulla said, or as some say, R.<sup>9</sup> Judah said: Those that come after the rain. Can we then say that these are beneficial? Is it not written, The Lord will make the rain of thy land powder and dust,<sup>10</sup> and on this 'Ulla, or as some say, R. Judah commented, [This refers to] the wind following the rain?<sup>11</sup> —

There is no contradiction; in the one case [it speaks] of when the rain comes down gently and in the other when it comes down with vehemence.<sup>12</sup> In the latter it throws up dust,

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and in the former it does not. Rab Judah further said: Wind after rain is as beneficial as rain, clouds after rain as beneficial as rain, sunshine after rain as beneficial as twofold rain. What does this exclude? —

The glow after sunset and sunshine between clouds. Raba said: Snow is beneficial to the mountains as fivefold rain to the earth, as it is said, For he saith to the snow, 'Fall thou on the earth'; likewise to the shower of rain and to the showers of His mighty rain.<sup>13</sup> Raba further said: Snow is beneficial to the mountain, heavy rain to the trees, gentle rain to the fruits of the field,

(1) Zech. II, 10.

(2) Lit., 'to fly away'.

(3) Deut, XI, 17.

(4) Before the rain. These are never withheld.

(5) After the rain. [Such clouds depend on the rain and are withheld, nevertheless, as clouds as a whole are never withheld, no mention need be made of them.]

(6) [Such are withheld. Since, however, they are not particularly beneficial no mention need be made of them.,

(7) [R. Gershom reads, 'are necessary'].

(8) I.e., they are almost as beneficial as rain.

(9) [Read with MS.M., Rab Judah.]

(10) Deut. XXVIII, 24.

(11) The wind raises dust which in turn sticks to the damp produce.

(12) [Cur. edd. insert here in brackets, 'If you wish I can tell you', but this is best left out.]

(13) Job XXXVII, 6.

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drizzling rain ['Urpila] even to the seeds under a hard clod. What is 'Urpila? 'Uru pili ['Wake up ye cracks']. Raba further said: A young scholar may be likened to the seeds under a hard clod; once he has sprouted he soon shoots forth. Raba further said: If a young scholar gets into a rage it is because the Torah inflames him, as it is said, Is not my word like a fire? said the Lord.<sup>1</sup>

R. Ashi said:<sup>2</sup> A scholar who is not as hard as iron is no scholar, as it is said, And like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces.<sup>3</sup> R. Abba said to R. Ashi: You have learnt this

from that verse but we have learnt it from the following verse: A land whose stones are iron.<sup>4</sup> Do not read, Abaneha [stones] but Boneha [builders].<sup>5</sup> Rabina said: Despite this, a man should train himself to be gentle, for it is said, Therefore remove vexation from thy heart, etc.<sup>6</sup>

R. Samuel b. Nahmani said in the name of R. Jonathan: Three [men] made haphazard requests,<sup>7</sup> two of them were fortunate in the reply they received and one was not, namely, Eliezer, the servant of Abraham; Saul, the son of Kish; and Jephtha the Gileadite.

Eliezer, the servant of Abraham, as it is written, So let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, 'Let down thy pitcher, etc.'<sup>8</sup> She might have been lame or blind, but he was fortunate in the answer given to him in that Rebecca chanced to meet him.

Saul, the son of Kish, as it is written, And it shall be, that the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter.<sup>9</sup> [He] might have been a slave or a bastard. He too was fortunate in that it chanced to be David.

Jephtha, the Gileadite, as it is written, Then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth out of the doors of my house, etc.<sup>10</sup> It might have been an unclean thing. He, however, was fortunate in that it so happened that his own daughter came to meet him. This is what the prophet had in mind when he said to Israel, Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?" And it is further written, Which I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it to my mind.<sup>11</sup> 'Which I commanded not': This refers to the sacrifice of the son of Mesha, the king of Moab, as it is said, Then he took his eldest son that should have reigned in his stead and offered him for a burnt-offering.<sup>12</sup> 'Nor spake it'; This refers to the daughter of Jephtha.<sup>13</sup> 'Neither came it to my mind': This refers to the sacrifice of Isaac, the son of Abraham.

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R. Berekiah said: The Congregation of Israel also made a thoughtless request, yet God granted that request,<sup>14</sup> as it is said, And let us know, eagerly strive to know the Lord. His going forth is sure as the morning; and He shall come to us as the rain.<sup>15</sup> The Holy One, blessed be He, said to her [Israel]: My daughter, thou askest for something<sup>16</sup> which at times is desirable and at other times is not desirable, but I will be unto thee something which is desirable at all times, as it is said, I will be as dew unto Israel.<sup>17</sup> She further made another thoughtless request. She said before Him: O God, Set me as a seal upon thy heart,- as a seal upon thine arm.<sup>18</sup> Thereupon the Holy One, blessed be He, replied to her: My daughter, thou askest for something which at times can be seen and at other times cannot be seen. I, however, will make of thee something which can be seen at all times, as it is said, Behold I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands.<sup>19</sup>

**WE PRAY FOR RAIN ONLY, etc.** [The scholars] were of the opinion that ‘praying’ and ‘making mention’ are one and the same thing. Who is the authority for this?-Raba replied: It is R. Joshua, who said, [We begin to make mention of rain] from the time when the Lulab is discarded<sup>20</sup> —

**Abaye said to him:** You can even say, that it is R. Eliezer; ‘praying’, however, is one thing and ‘making mention’ is another. Others have the reading:

- (1) Jer. XXIII, 29.
- (2) [So MSS. cur. edd., And R. Ashi said.]
- (3) Ibid.
- (4) Deut. VIII, 9.
- (5) Cf. Ber. 64a for a similar example of אל תקרי. The scholar as the builder of minds must be adamant and determined if he is to succeed in his lofty mission.
- (6) Eccl. XI, 10.
- (7) Lit., ‘asked not in a proper manner’, two they answered in a proper manner, and one they answered in a non-proper manner.
- (8) Gen. XXIV, 14.
- (9) I Sam. XVII, 25.
- (10) Jud. XI, 31.

(11) Jer. VIII, 22. [Was there no remedy for Jephtha? Surely he could have had his...??? Ibid. XIX, 5.

(12) II Kings III, 27.

(13) [So MS.M., cur. ed., ‘this refers to Jephtha’.]

(14) Cf. supra p. 10, n. 7.

(15) Hos. VI, 3.

(16) I.e., rain.

(17) Hos. XI, 6.

(18) Cant. VIII, 6.

(19) Isa. XLIX, 16. A seal on the heart and arm is not always visible. Hence the reply of God.

(20) Supra 2b. After the seventh day which is close to the rainy season.

## Ta'anith 4b

Shall we say it is R. Joshua, who said, From the time when the Lulab is disvow annulled by appealing to Phinehas who was in Gilead for a remission of the vow; —

Raba replied: You can even say that it is R. Eliezer; ‘praying’, however, is one thing and ‘making mention’ is another, R. JUDAH SAYS: THE LAST TO STEP BEFORE THE ARK, etc. The following was cited in contradiction to this: Until when do we [continue] to pray for rain? R. Judah says: Until Passover is over; R. Meir says, Until the end of Nisan! —

R. Hisda replied: The two statements [of R. Judah] are not contradictory; the one refers to ‘praying’ and the other to ‘making mention’; ‘praying’<sup>1</sup> one continues [until] the end of Passover] but ‘making mention’ is discontinued on the first day [of Passover]. ‘Ulla said: This [solution of the contradiction] by R. Hisda is as difficult as vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke for the eyes. If one makes mention of rain at such times when it is not permissible to pray for<sup>2</sup> [it], how much more so should one make mention of rain when it is permissible to pray for it? —

It must be, says ‘Ulla, that [there is a dispute] between two Tannaim as to the opinion of R. Judah. R. Joseph said: What is the meaning of, ‘Until Passover is over’? Until the first reader on the first day of Passover is over [with his prayers].<sup>3</sup> Said Abaye to him: Is



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there then a place in the Festival [Tefillah] for inserting the prayer for rain? He replied to him: Yes, the Meturgeman<sup>4</sup> 'prays' — Does then the Meturgeman ever pray for something of which the community has no need? Therefore, the better solution is that of 'Ulla.

Rabbah said: What is the meaning of, 'Until Passover is over'? Until the time limit for the slaughtering of the Paschal offering has passed;<sup>5</sup> and as at its beginning<sup>6</sup> so at its end; just as at its beginning one makes mention [of rain] although one has not yet [begun] to pray,<sup>7</sup> so too at its end he makes mention although he no longer has to pray.<sup>8</sup> Abaye replied: I can understand that one should make mention at the beginning, seeing that making mention is a form of propitiation [prefatory to prayer] but as for the end, what place is there for such propitiation? Therefore, the better solution is that of 'Ulla.

R. Assi said in the name of R. Johanan, The Halachah is according to R. Judah. Thereupon R. Zera asked R. Assi: Could then R. Johanan [really] have said so? Have we not learnt: We [begin] to pray for rain on the third of Marcheshvan; Rabban Gamaliel said: On the seventh of the same month —

And with reference to this R. Eleazar declared: The Halachah is according to Rabban Gamaliel. He [R. Assi] replied to him: You set one authority against another!<sup>9</sup> Moreover, if you like I will say there is no contradiction; the one [case] speaks of 'praying' and the other of 'making mention'.<sup>10</sup> But did not R. Johanan say: Whenever one prays one should also make mention? That [rule] applies only to the discontinuation [of 'praying'].<sup>11</sup> But did not R. Johanan say: When one begins to make mention one should also [begin] to pray; when one discontinues to pray one should also cease to make mention? —

There is really no contradiction; one statement refers to us [Babylonians] and the other to them [Palestinians],<sup>12</sup> Why should we

be different? — Is it because we have produce in the field?<sup>13</sup> They also have Pilgrims?<sup>14</sup> — R. Johanan speaks [of conditions] after Temple times.<sup>15</sup> Now that you have arrived at this conclusion [I can say], Both teachings apply equally to them [Palestinians] and there is no contradiction; the one speaks [of conditions] in Temple times and the other [of conditions] after Temple times. But as for us who observe two days [of the festival],<sup>16</sup> what shall our practice be? —

Rab says: He begins [to make mention] in the Additional Service of the Eighth Day of the Feast, he discontinues in the Afternoon Service and in the Evening Service and in the Morning Service but resumes in the Additional Service of the second day. Samuel said to them [to the scholars]: Go and say to Abba:<sup>17</sup> After you have declared the day holy<sup>18</sup> can you declare it again a weekday?<sup>19</sup> —

Therefore Samuel said: He begins [to make mention] in the Additional Service and in the Afternoon Service and discontinues in the Evening Service and in the Morning Service [of the following day], and resumes it in the Additional Service.

cf. Gen. Rab. LX, .] ????  
carded? ????

(1) V. supra p. 1, n. 4.

(2) I.e., in the Musaf of the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles, the 'prayer' for rain being inserted only in the weekday Tefillah

(3) I.e., the Shaharith Tefillah. (v. Glos.). [MS.M. 'until the time of the first... is over'].

(4) The translator or interpreter. The function of this official in Talmudic times was to interpret to the audience in the Synagogue in a popular manner and to enlarge upon the theme of the rabbi lecturing. Rashi, feeling that in our passage no such official could be referred to, explains that here the lecturing rabbi and interpreter are one and the same person, he who lectures on the first day of Passover, and that he included in his address a prayer for rain. V. however, the commentary of R. Hananel ad loc.

(5) I.e., noon of the fourteenth of Nisan.

(6) I.e., of the rainy season.

(7) V. supra p. 1, n. 4.

(8) Having ceased to pray on the preceding day in the afternoon service, v. Rashi.

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(9) R. Eleazar against R. Johanan.

(10) Which begins on the seventh whereas in regard to mentioning R. Johanan will rule in accordance with R. Judah.

(11) At the end of the rainy season we stop at the same time both the making of mention and the praying for rain; but at the beginning of the rainy season we commence with the making mention of rain and at a later date we also add the formal prayer for rain.

(12) [In Babylonia the harvest was gathered later than in Palestine and consequently the prayer for rain would also begin later].

(13) And therefore rain was not opportune as long as the harvest had not been gathered in.

(14) And therefore mention of rain should be put off as late as possible to enable the Pilgrims to reach home in comfort before the rains set in. (15) When pilgrimages to Jerusalem, no longer took place.

(16) [Because of doubt, In this case whether it is the eighth or seventh day of the Festival of Tabernacles.]

(17) I.e., Rab. His proper name was Abba Arika.

(18) By making mention of rain indicating thereby that it is the eighth day of the Festival.

(19) [By discontinuing it at the afternoon service and then implying that it is still the seventh day which belongs to the half holiday.]

## Ta'anith 5a

Raba said: Once he has begun [to make mention] he should not discontinue. And so said R. Shesheth: Once he has begun he should not discontinue. Rab also retracted his statement. For R. Hananel said in the name of Rab: One counts twenty-one days from New Year<sup>1</sup> and begins to make mention in the same way as one counts Ten Days [of Penitence] from the New Year until the Day of Atonement; and once he has begun he should not discontinue. And the law is, once he has begun he should not discontinue.

**MISHNAH.** UNTIL WHEN DO WE PRAY FOR RAIN? R. JUDAH SAYS: UNTIL THE PASSOVER IS OVER. R. MEIR SAYS: UNTIL THE END OF NISAN, AS IT IS SAID: AND HE CAUSETH TO COME DOWN FOR YOU THE RAIN, THE FORMER RAIN AND THE LATTER RAIN, AT THE FIRST.<sup>2</sup>

**GEMARA.** R. Nahman said to R. Isaac: Does then the former rain [fall] in Nisan? The

former rain surely [falls] in Marcheshvan. It has been taught: Former rain, [falls] in Marcheshvan and latter rain in Nisan. He replied: Thus said R. Johanan, This verse<sup>3</sup> was fulfilled in the days [of the prophet] Joel, the son of Pethuel, That which the palmerworm hath left hath the locust eaten, etc.<sup>4</sup> In that year, although Adar had passed yet no rain had fallen, and it was not until the first of Nisan that the first rain, came down. Thereupon the prophet said to Israel, 'Go and sow' — They replied, If a man has a kabs of wheat or two Kabim of barley, should he eat them and keep himself alive, or sow them and die?

He answered: 'Despite this, go and sow' — A miracle happened for them and they discovered whatever [grain] which was hidden [in the chinks of] the walls and in the ant-holes; they proceeded to sow on the second, on the third, and on the fourth and the second rain came down on the fifth of Nisan; on the sixteenth of Nisan they offered the 'Omer;<sup>6</sup> and thus it so came about that the grain which should take six months to ripen ripened in eleven days.<sup>7</sup> To that generation was applied the scriptural verses, They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. Though he goeth on his way weeping that beareth the measure of seed, etc.<sup>8</sup> What is the meaning of, 'Though he goeth on his way weeping that beareth the measure, etc.'? —

Rab Judah said: When the ox is plowing, on his forward journey he weeps, but on his return journey he eats the young green from the furrows — And this is the force of the words, 'He shall come home with joy' — What is the meaning of, 'Bearing his sheaves'? —

R. Hisda said: Others say it was taught in a Baraitha: The stalk was then one span and the ear two spans. R. Nahman said to R. Isaac: What is the meaning of the scriptural verse, For the Lord hath called for a famine, and it shall also come upon the land seven years?<sup>9</sup> What had they to eat during these seven years? —

He replied: Thus said R. Johanan, In the first year they ate what was stored up in the houses, in the second what was in the fields, in the third the flesh of clean animals, in the fourth the flesh of unclean animals, in the fifth the flesh of forbidden animals and reptiles, in the sixth the flesh of their sons and daughters and in the seventh the flesh of their own arms and thus the verse of Scripture was fulfilled, They eat every man the flesh of his own arms.<sup>10</sup>

Further, R. Nahman said to R. Isaac: What is the meaning of the scriptural verse, The Holy One in the midst of thee and I will not come in to the city?<sup>11</sup> [Surely it cannot be that] because the Holy One is in the midst of thee I shall not come into the city! He replied: Thus said R. Johanan: The Holy One, blessed be He, said, 'I will not enter the heavenly Jerusalem until I can enter the earthly Jerusalem'. Is there then a heavenly Jerusalem?-Yes; for it is written, Jerusalem thou art builded as a city that is compact together.<sup>12</sup> R. Nahman further said to R. Isaac: What is the meaning of the verse, But they are altogether brutish and foolish; the vanities by which they are instructed are but a stock?<sup>13</sup> —

He replied: Thus said R. Johanan, There is one thing that brings about the perdition of the wicked in Gehenna<sup>14</sup> and that is, idolatrous worship. Here it is written, 'The vanities by which they are instructed' and elsewhere [of the idols] it is written, They are a vanity, a work of delusion.<sup>15</sup> R. Nahman further said to R. Isaac: What is the meaning of the verse, For my people have committed two evils?<sup>16</sup> Were they only two? Has he then ignored the fact that they were twenty-four?<sup>17</sup> —

He [R. Isaac] replied: There is one [evil]

(1) [I.e., from the first day of New Year to the eighth day of the Festival of Tabernacles. This is despite the general rule that where a Jewish month has two New Moon days, the days of the month are counted from the second day].

- (2) Joel II, 23. E.V. 'at first'.
- (3) I.e., Joel I, 4.
- (4) Joel I, 4.
- (5) A measure of capacity equal to one-sixth of a Se'ah.
- (6) V. Glos.
- (7) From the fifth of Nisan to the sixteenth.
- (8) Ps. CXXVI, 5-6.
- (9) II Kings VIII, 1.
- (10) Isa, IX, 19.
- (11) Hosea XI, 9- The A.V. renders, I will not come in fury. Cf. Tosaf, s.v. לא.
- (12) Ps. CXXII, 3. Stressing the word שְׁהוּבְרָה R. Johanan adduces from the verse that Jerusalem has a הַבְּרָה a companion (or prototype) in heaven. Both are said to be situated exactly opposite each other. [The verse in Hosea is thus taken to mean: There is a holy (city) in thy midst (referring to the earthly Jerusalem) and I (i.e., God) will not enter the city (the heavenly Jerusalem)].
- (13) Jer. X, 8.
- (14) A play upon the word וּבְעָרָיו the root of which (בָּעַר) in the Pi'el means, to destroy, to remove. The wicked, by following the instructions of idols that are but wood, find themselves fooled and are carried off into Gehenna.
- (15) Jer. X, 15.
- (16) Ibid. II, 13.
- (17) [Aliter: 'Has he forgiven them the twenty-four?'] The twenty-four sins enumerated in Ezek. XXII; according to some commentators the sins in transgressing the commandments contained in the twenty-four canonical books of Scripture. [Some take twenty-four as a round number. For other renderings v. Aruchs v. עֲשָׂר].

## Ta'anith 5b

which is equal to two, and that is, idolatrous worship, for it is written, For my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns.<sup>1</sup> And further it is written, For pass over to the isles of the Kittites, and see, and send unto Kedar, and consider diligently, etc. Hath nation changed its gods, which are yet no gods? But my people hath changed its glory for that which doth not profit.<sup>2</sup>

A Tanna taught: The Kittites worship fire and the Kedarites water, and although they know that water extinguishes fire they have yet not changed their gods but my people hath changed their God for that which doth not profit. R. Nahman further said to R.

## TA'ANIS – 2a-31a

Isaac: What is the meaning of the verse, And it came to pass when Samuel was old.<sup>3</sup> Did Samuel ever reach old age? He lived only for fifty-two years. For a Master said: If a man dies in his fifty-second year he is said to have died at the age reached by Samuel, the Ramathite?<sup>4</sup>—

He replied: Thus said R. Johanan: Old age came prematurely upon him, for it is written, It repenteth Me that I have set up Saul to be king.<sup>5</sup> Samuel complained before Him: Sovereign of the Universe! You have made me equal to Moses and Aaron, for it is written, Moses and Aaron are amongst His priests, and Samuel among them that call upon His name.<sup>6</sup> As in the case of Moses and Aaron the work of their hands did not come to naught in their lifetime, so too let not the work of my hands come to naught in my lifetime.

The Holy One, blessed be He, replied: How shall I act? Shall Saul die? Of this Samuel will not approve. Shall Samuel die young? People will speak ill of him.<sup>7</sup> Shall neither Saul nor Samuel die? The time has come for David to reign and one reign may not encroach on another even by a hair's breadth. Thereupon the Holy One, blessed be He, said: I will make him prematurely old and this is what is written, Now Saul was sitting in Gibeah, under the Tamarisk tree in Ramah.<sup>8</sup> How comes Gibeah to Ramah?<sup>9</sup> This is to teach you that it was the prayer of Samuel the Ramathite that was the cause of Saul's two and a half years'<sup>10</sup> sojourn as king in Gibeah? Should then one man be put aside because of another? —

Yes, for R. Samuel b. Nahmani said in the name of R. Jonathan: What is the meaning of the verse, Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets, I have slain them by the words of my mouth?<sup>11</sup> Scripture does not say, 'by their works,' but, 'by the words of my mouth', this proves that one may be put aside because of another.

R. Nahman and R. Isaac were sitting at a meal and R. Nahman said to R. Isaac: Let the Master expound something. He replied: Thus said R. Johanan: One should not converse at meals lest the windpipe acts before the gullet and his life will thereby be endangered. After they ended the meal he added: Thus said R. Johanan: Jacob our patriarch is not dead. He [R. Nahman] objected: Was it then for naught that he was bewailed and embalmed and buried? —

The other replied: I derive this from a scriptural verse, as It is said, Therefore fear thou not, O Jacob, My servant, saith the Lord; neither be dismayed, O Israel, — for, lo, I will save thee from afar and thy seed from the land of their captivity.<sup>12</sup> The verse likens him [Jacob] to his seed [Israel]; as his seed will then be alive so he too will be alive.

R. Isaac said: Whosoever repeats [the name] Rahab, Rahab, becomes immediately subject to an onset of issue.<sup>13</sup> Thereupon R. Nahman said to him: I have repeated it and was not in any way affected. R. Isaac replied: I speak only of one who knew her intimately (and recalls her likeness).<sup>14</sup> When they were about to part, [R. Nahman] said: Pray Master, bless me. He replied: Let me tell you a parable —

To what may this be compared? To a man who was journeying in the desert; he was hungry, weary and thirsty and he lighted upon a tree the fruits of which were sweet, its shade pleasant, and a stream of water flowing beneath it; he ate of its fruits, drank of the water, and rested under its shade. When he was about to continue his journey, he said: Tree, O Tree, with what shall I bless thee? Shall I say to thee, 'May thy fruits be sweet'? They are sweet already; that thy shade be pleasant? It is already pleasant; that a stream of water may flow beneath thee? Lo, a stream of water flows already beneath thee; therefore [I say], 'May it be [God's] will that all the shoots taken from thee

(1) Jer. II, 13.

(2) Ibid. v. 10-11.



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- (3) I Sam. VIII, 1.
- (4) M.K. 28a.
- (5) I Sam. XV, 11.
- (6) Ps. XCIX, 6.
- (7) Saying that he died young on account of his sins.
- (8) I Sam. XXII, 6.
- (9) Gibeah being in Benjamin while Ramah is in Ephraim.
- (10) V. Seder 'Olam XIII.
- (11) Hos. VI, 5.
- (12) Jer. XXX, 10.
- (13) Cf. Josh. II. According to Meg. 15a, she was a very beautiful woman. The thought of her physical beauty may lead one to harbor impure thoughts.
- (14) Lit., 'her name'. [The words in brackets are bracketed also in the original, and left out in many edd.]

## Ta'anith 6a

be like unto thee'. So also with you. With what shall I bless you? With [the knowledge of the Torah?] You already possess [knowledge of the Torah]. With riches? You have riches already. With children? You have children already. Hence [I say], 'May it be [God's] will that your offspring be like unto you'.

Our Rabbis have taught: ['Former rain is termed] 'Yoreh',<sup>1</sup> because it warns<sup>2</sup> people to plaster their roofs and to gather in their fruits and to attend to all their needs.<sup>3</sup> Another explanation: It saturates<sup>4</sup> the ground and waters it right down to its depths, as it is said, Watering her ridges abundantly, settling down the furrows thereof, thou makest her soft with showers; thou blessest the growth thereof.<sup>5</sup> Another explanation: [It is termed] 'Yoreh' because it comes down<sup>6</sup> gently and not heavily. Or perhaps [it is termed] 'Yoreh' because it causes the fruit to fall<sup>7</sup> and it washes away the seed, and the trees? The text [therefore] adds 'Malkosh' ['latter rain'];<sup>8</sup> just as latter rain is a blessing, so too is former rain. Or perhaps [it is termed] 'Malkosh',<sup>9</sup> because It razes the houses to the ground and it shatters the trees and brings up the crickets? The text [therefore] adds 'Yoreh'; just as former rain is a blessing so too is latter rain. How do we know that 'Yoreh' itself is a blessing? —

For it is written, Be glad then ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God; for He giveth you the former rain [Moreh] in just measure and He causeth to come down for you the rain, the former rain and the latter rain, at the first.<sup>10</sup>

Our Rabbis have taught: Former rain [falls] in Marcheshvan and latter rain in Nisan. You say, Former rain in Marcheshvan and latter rain in Nisan; perhaps it is otherwise, former rain in Tishri and latter rain in Iyar? The text [therefore] adds, in its due season.<sup>11</sup> R. Nehilai b. Idi said in the name of Samuel: ['Latter rain' is termed] 'Malkosh' because it is a thing that removes the stiff-neckedness of Israel.<sup>12</sup> The school of R. Ishmael taught: It is something that fills the stalks with grain.<sup>13</sup> In a Baraitha it has been taught: [It is] something which falls both upon the ears and upon the stalks.<sup>14</sup>

Our Rabbis have taught: Former rain [falls] in Marcheshvan and latter rain in Nisan. You say, Former rain in Marcheshvan; perhaps, on Kislev? The text [therefore] adds, 'in its due season, former rain and latter rain, as latter rain is that which comes in due season (since should Nisan pass and no rain fall, it is not a sign of blessing)<sup>15</sup> so too former is that which comes in due season. Another [Baraitha] teaches: Former rain [falls] in Marcheshvan and latter rain in Nisan; this is the opinion of R. Meir; but the Sages say: Former rain [falls] in Kislev.

Who are the Sages? R. Hisda replied: It is R. Jose. For it has been taught: Which is the first rainfall?<sup>16</sup> The early [rain] falls on the third of Marcheshvan, the intermediate on the seventh, the late on the seventeenth; this is the opinion of R. Meir. R. Judah says: On the seventh, on the seventeenth, and on the twenty-third. R. Jose says: On the seventeenth, on the twenty-third and on the first of Kislev. And likewise R. Jose used to say: The individuals do not begin to fast until the first day of Kislev. R. Hisda said: The

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Halachah is according to the opinion of R. Jose.

Amemar reported R. Hisda's statement in the following version: On the third day of Marcheshvan we pray for rain; Rabban Gamaliel says, On the seventh of the month. R. Hisda said: The Halachah is according to Rabban Gamaliel. In accordance with whose view then is the following which has been taught: R. Simeon b. Gamaliel says: If rain falls on seven days in succession you may consider it as the combination of the first, the second [or the second] and the third rainfall?<sup>17</sup> —

It is in accordance with the opinion of R. Jose.<sup>18</sup> R. Hisda said: The Halachah is according to R. Jose. The reason for giving a date for the first rainfall is evident seeing that from that date we begin to pray for rain; likewise the date of the third rainfall is given because from that date we begin to fast; but what may be the reason for giving the date of the second rainfall?—R. Zera replied: It has to do with Vows. For we have learnt:

- (1) The reference is to Deut. XI, 14.
- (2) Lit., 'teaches'. Connecting יורה with the root ירה, to teach.
- (3) In preparation of the Winter.
- (4) Connecting יורה with the root רוה, to saturate.
- (5) Ps. LXV, 11.
- (6) Connecting יורה with the root ירד to descend.
- (7) Connecting יורה with the root ירה to throw.
- (8) Deut. XI, 14.
- (9) According to Rashi מלקוש is connected with לקש (cf. Amos VII, 1) which he takes to mean, grasshopper.
- (10) Joel II, 23.
- (11) Deut. XI, 14.
- (12) דבר שמל קשיותיהן של ישראל
- (13) שממלא תבואה בקשיה
- (14) דבר שיורד על המלילות ועל הקשין
- (15) [The words in brackets which appear bracketed also in the original seem irrelevant here. They are more appropriate in the preceding paragraph after the words, 'In its due season' where in point of fact they so occur in some edd.].
- (16) רביעה ראשונה] The Yoreh (former rain) consists of three rainfalls, each being termed Rebi'ah; when each is due is the point at issue in the discussion that follows. The word 'first' is accordingly difficult and is omitted by R. Hananel

and MSS. of the Tosef. Ta'an. I from where the passage is quoted.]

(17) [The words in square brackets are supplied from MS.M.; v. also Tosef. loc. cit.]

(18) [According to R. Jose each rainfall is due within seven days of the other].

## Ta'anith 6b

If one interdicts himself by a vow [from the enjoyment of anything] until the rainy season or until rain has fallen, then his vow remains operative until the second rainfall.<sup>1</sup> R. Zebid said: It has to do with Olives —

We have learnt: When is it permissible for any man to take of the gleanings<sup>2</sup> [of the field] and of the forgotten sheaves<sup>3</sup> and of the corners of the field?<sup>4</sup> After the Nemushot have departed. When [is it permissible to take] of the grapes that have fallen off the branches and of the gleanings of the vine?<sup>5</sup> After the poor have left the vineyard and have come back again. When of the olives?<sup>6</sup> After the second rainfall.<sup>7</sup> Who are the Nemushoth? —

R. Johanan said: Old People who walk on a staffs . Resh Lakish said: Those who glean behind the gleaners.<sup>9</sup> R. Papa said: [The date of the second rainfall is necessary] so that travelers should know whether they may walk on private paths<sup>10</sup> [across the fields]. For a Master said:<sup>11</sup> It is permissible for any one to walk on private paths until the second rainfall. R. Nahman b. Isaac said: [The date is necessary] for the disposal of the produce grown during the sabbatical year. For we have learnt: Until when is it permissible to derive benefit from the burning of straw and stubble grown in the sabbatical year? Until the second rainfall.<sup>12</sup> Why? Because it is written, And for thy cattle, and for the beasts that are in thy land;<sup>13</sup> so long as there is food for the beast in the field you may feed your cattle in the house, but when there is no more food in the field for the beast to eat, you must withhold food that is in your house from the cattle. R. Abbahu said: What is the meaning of rebi'ah?<sup>14</sup> That which fructifies the ground—

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This is according to the teaching of Rab Judah who said: Rain is the husband of the soil, for it is written, For as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither except it water the earth, and make it bring forth and bud.<sup>15</sup> R. Abbahu further said: The first rainfall [to be beneficial] should be sufficient to penetrate the soil one handbreadth deep, the second should be sufficient to make of it a stopper for a cask.

R. Hisda said: When it has rained sufficient to make [of the soil] a stopper for a cask then [the curse contained in the words ‘and He will shut up’<sup>16</sup> does not apply. R. Hisda further said: If rain came down before [the time for reciting in the Shema’], ‘and He will shut up’ then the curse contained in these words does not apply.<sup>17</sup>

Abaye thereupon interjected: This only holds good when the rain fell before [the time for the recital of the words,] ‘and He will shut up’ in the evening [Shema’], but if rain fell before [the time for their recital in] the morning [Shema’] then the curse can still be said to apply.<sup>18</sup> For R. Judah b. Isaac said: The morning clouds have no significance, for it is written, O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? For your goodness is as the morning cloud, etc.<sup>19</sup> Said R. Papa to Abaye: But people say, if it rains when the gates are opened [in the morning], ‘lay down thy sack ass-driver and sleep’!<sup>20</sup> —

This is no contradiction. In the one case the heavens are overcast with thick clouds and the other with light clouds.<sup>21</sup> Rab Judah said: Happy is the year wherein [the month of] Tebeth is widowed.<sup>22</sup> Some say it is so because the gardens do not lie waste<sup>23</sup> [or, because the schools are not empty]; others say, Because the grain will not become subject to blast. Is that so? Did not R. Hisda say: Happy is the year wherein [the month of] Tebeth is muddy!<sup>24</sup> —

This is no contradiction. The former is the case when rain had already fallen [in the previous months] and the latter when it had not yet fallen. R. Hisda further said: If rain falls on some parts of the country and not on others then [the curse contained in the words], ‘and He will shut up’ cannot be said to apply. Is that so? Is it not written, And I also have withholden the rain from you, when there were three months to the harvest: and I caused it to rain upon one city and caused it not to rain upon another city; one piece was rained upon, etc.<sup>25</sup> And referring to this verse, Rab Judah said in the name of Rab: Both are a curse! —

There is no contradiction. In the one case [Scripture speaks of] abnormal rain and in the other of normal rain. R. Ashi said: This can in fact be proved from the use of the word Timoter in the verse, that is to say, it will be a place [flooded by] rain.<sup>26</sup> And thus [the interpretation] is proved. R. Abbahu said: When do we [begin to] recite the benediction over rain?<sup>27</sup> When the bridegroom goes forth to meet the bride.<sup>28</sup> What benediction should one recite? —

Rab Judah said in the name of Rab: ‘We give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, our God for every single drop which thou hast caused to fall upon us’. And R. Johanan concluded the benediction thus: ‘Though our mouths were full of song as the sea, and our tongues of exultation as the multitude of its waves, etc.’ until, ‘Let not Thy mercies forsake us O Lord, our God, even as they have not forsaken us. Blessed art Thou to Whom abundant thanksgivings are due’. ‘Abundant thanksgivings’ and not ‘all the thanksgivings’? —

Raba replied: Read, ‘The God to Whom thanksgivings are due’. R. Papa said: Therefore

- (1) V. Ned. 62b for slight variants.
- (2) Lev. XIX, 9.
- (3) Deut. XXIV, 19.
- (4) Lev. XIX, 9.
- (5) Lev. XIX, 10.

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- (6) Deut. XXIV, 20.  
(7) Pe'ah VIII, 1.  
(8) These walk slowly and usually leave nothing behind them.  
(9) The poor who come for the second gleanings.  
(10) שבילי הרשות Lit., (a) 'paths of permission', i.e., paths which the court has sanctioned for the use of the public (Rashi); (b) 'paths of (private) property', R. Gershon.]  
(11) B.K. 81a. Till then no injury can be done to the seeds sown.  
(12) Sheb. IX, 7.  
(13) Lev. XXV, 7.  
(14) V. supra p. 20 n. 7.  
(15) Isa. LV, 10.  
(16) Deut. XI, 17.  
(17) Although there most of the rain required has not yet fallen.  
(18) Since they did not fall during the day they are not beneficial.  
(19) Hos. VI, 4.  
(20) Rain will continue to fall and there will be plenty of supplies available and consequently the prices will fall.  
(21) Such have no significance.  
(22) I.e., without rain. Cf. supra the statement of Rab Judah, Rain is the husband of the soil.  
(23) As there is no rain people are able to attend undisturbed to the cultivation of the soil. תרביצא a garden. The word is also applied figuratively to mean, School or College Assembly. As the roads are in good condition the scholars are able to attend the lectures at the School Assembly.  
(24) Heavy rains fall.  
(25) Amos IV, 7.  
(26) תמטר rendered as if the word were made up of the three words, תהא מקום מטר  
(27) Cf. Ber. 54a.  
(28) When the accumulated rain-water rebounds to meet every additional drop of rain as it falls.

## Ta'anith 7a

we should say both 'the God to Whom thanksgivings are due' and 'to Whom abundant thanksgivings are due'.

R. Abbahu said: The day when rain fails is greater than [the day of] the Revival of the Dead, for the Revival of the Dead is for the righteous only whereas rain is both for the righteous and for the wicked. And he differs from the opinion of R. Joseph who said: As [rain] is equal to the Revival of the Dead the mention of it has therefore been inserted in the section of the Revival of the Dead.<sup>1</sup>

Rab Judah said: The day when rain falls is as great as the day when the Torah was given, as it is said, My doctrine shall drop as the rain:2 and by 'doctrine' surely, Torah is meant as it is said, For I give you good doctrine, forsake ye not my Torah.<sup>3</sup>

Raba said: It is even greater than the day when the Torah was given, as it is said, My doctrine shall drop as the rain.<sup>4</sup> Who is dependent upon whom? You must needs say, the lesser upon the greater.<sup>5</sup> Raba pointed out a contradiction. It is written 'My doctrine shall drop as the rain', and immediately on this follows, My speech shall distil as dew.<sup>6</sup> [The implication here is]. if the scholar is a worthy person then he is like unto dew, but if he is not then drop him like rain.<sup>7</sup>

It has been taught in a Baraita: R. Banna'ah used to say: Whosoever occupies himself with the Torah for its own sake his learning becomes an elixir of life to him, for it is said, It is a tree of life to them that grasp it;<sup>8</sup> and it is further said, It shall be as health to thy navel;<sup>9</sup> and it is also said, For whoso findeth me, findeth life.<sup>10</sup> But, whosoever occupies himself with the Torah not for its own sake, it becomes to him a deadly poison, as it is said, My doctrine shall drop as the rain, and 'Arifa surely means, death, as it is said, And they shall break [We'arfu] the heifer's neck there in the valley.<sup>11</sup>

R. Jeremiah said to R. Zera: Pray, Master, come and teach. The latter replied: I do not feel well enough<sup>12</sup> and am not able to do so. [Then said R. Jeremiah] Pray, Master, expound something of an Aggadic character, and he replied: Thus said R. Johanan: What is the meaning of the verse, For is the tree of the field man?<sup>13</sup> Is then man the tree of the field? [This can only be explained if we connect the verse with the words immediately before it] where it is written, For thou mayest eat of them, but thou shalt not cut them down; but then again it is written, 'It thou shalt destroy and cut down'?<sup>14</sup> How is this to be explained? — If the scholar is a worthy person learn [eat] from him and do not shun



## TA'ANIS – 2a-31a

[cut] him, but if he is not destroy him and cut him down.

R. Hama b. Hanina said: What is the meaning of the verse, Iron sharpeneth iron?—<sup>15</sup> This is to teach you that just as in the case of one [iron] iron sharpeneth the other so also do two scholars sharpen each others mind by Halachah.

Rabbah b. Hanah said: Why are the words of the Torah likened to fire, as it is said, Is not my word like as fire? saith the Lord?<sup>16</sup> This is to teach you that just as fire does not ignite of itself so too the words of the Torah do not endure with him who studies alone. This is in agreement with what R. Jose b. Hanina said: What is the meaning of the verse, A sword is upon the lonely,<sup>17</sup> and they shall become fools?<sup>18</sup> This means, destruction comes upon the enemies<sup>19</sup> of such scholars who confine themselves to private study; and what is even more they become stultified, as it is said, And they shall become fools; and what is more they are guilty of sin. For here it is written, And they shall become fools, and there it is written, For that we have done foolishly and for that we have sinned.<sup>20</sup> If you wish, you can infer it from the following verse, The princes of Zoan are become fools... they have caused Egypt to go astray.<sup>21</sup>

R. Nahman b. Isaac said: Why are the words of the Torah likened to a tree, as it is said, It is a tree of life to them that grasp it? This is to teach you. just as a small tree may set on fire a bigger tree so too it is with scholars, the younger sharpen the minds of the older. This will be in agreement with what R. Hanina said: I have learnt much from my teachers, and from my colleagues more than from my teachers, but from my disciples more than from them all.

R. Hanina b. Papa pointed out a contradiction. It is written, Unto him that is thirsty bring ye water;<sup>22</sup> and it is also written Ho, everyone that thirsteth come ye for water.<sup>23</sup> If he is a worthy disciple, then, 'Unto him that is thirsty bring ye water', but if he is

not, then, 'Ho, everyone that thirsteth come ye for water'.

R. Hanina b. Hama pointed out a contradiction. It is written, Let thy springs be dispersed abroad,<sup>24</sup> and it is also written, Let them be only thine own!<sup>25</sup> If he is a worthy disciple. 'Let thy springs be dispersed abroad,'<sup>26</sup> but if not, 'Let them be thine own'.

R. Hanina b. Ida said: Why are the words of the Torah likened unto water—as it is written, 'Ho, everyone that thirsteth, come ye for water'? This is to teach you, just as water flows from a higher level to a lower, so too the words of the Torah endure only with him who is meek-minded.

R. Oshaia said: Why are the words of the Torah likened unto these three liquids, water, wine and milk — as it is written, 'Ho, everyone that thirsteth come ye for water'; and it is written, Come ye, buy and eat; yea, come buy wine and milk without money, and without price?<sup>27</sup> This is to teach you, just as these three liquids can only be preserved in the most inferior of vessels, so too the words of the Torah endure only with him who is meek-minded.

This is illustrated by the story of the daughter of the Roman Emperor<sup>28</sup> who addressed R. Joshua b. Hanania, 'O glorious Wisdom in an ugly vessel'. He replied, 'Does not your father keep wine in an earthenware vessel?' She asked, 'Wherein else shall he keep it?' He said to her, 'You who are nobles should keep it in vessels of gold and silver'. Thereupon she went and told this to her father and he had the wine put into vessels of gold and silver and it became sour. When he was informed of this he asked his daughter, 'Who gave you this advice?' She replied, 'R. Joshua b. Hanania' — Thereupon the Emperor had him summoned before him and asked him, 'Why did you give her such advice?' He replied, 'I answered her according to the way that she spoke to me'. But are there not good-looking people who are learned? —

# TA'ANIS – 2a-31a

- (1) V. supra 2a.
- (2) Deut. XXXII, 2.
- (3) Prov. IV, 2.
- (4) E. V. 'my teaching'. Deut. XXXII, 2.
- (5) Hence the Torah, which is compared to rain, is the less important.
- (6) Deut. XXXII, 2.
- (7) ערף from the root ערף, to break the neck, to destroy; cf. Ex. XIII, 13. Hos. X, 11. Drop him with all your might just as the heavy rains coming down with force on the crops crush them.
- (8) Prov. III, 18.
- (9) Ibid. v. 8.
- (10) Prov. VIII, 35.
- (11) Deut. XXI, 4.
- (12) Lit., 'my heart is faint'.
- (13) Deut. XX, 19.
- (14) Ibid. v. 20.
- (15) Prov. XXVII, 17.
- (16) Jer. XXIII, 29.
- (17) בדיים from בדי to be alone. E.V. 'boasters'.
- (18) Jer. L, 36.
- (19) A euphemism for the scholars themselves.
- (20) Num. XII, 11.
- (21) Isa. XIX, 13.
- (22) Isa. XXI, 14.
- (23) Isa. LV, 1.
- (24) Prov. V, 16.
- (25) Ibid. v. 17.
- (26) Reveal the secrets of the Torah unto him.
- (27) Isa. LV, 1.
- (28) Hadrian.

## Ta'anith 7b

If these very people were ugly they would be still more learned.<sup>1</sup> Another explanation: Just as these three liquids can become unfit for consumption only through inattention,<sup>2</sup> so too the words of the Torah are forgotten only through inattention.

R. Hania b. Hanina said: The day when rain falls is as great as the day on which heaven and earth were created, as it is said, Drop down, ye heavens from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness: let the earth open, that they may bring forth salvation, and let her cause righteousness to spring up together; I the Lord have created it.<sup>3</sup> It is not said, 'I created them', but I have created it.<sup>4</sup> R. Oshaia said: The day when rain falls is great for on it even salvation springs forth and waxes great, as it is said, 'Let the earth open, that they may bring forth salvation'.

R. Tanhum b. Hanilai said, No rain falls unless the sins of Israel have been forgiven, as it is said, Lord, Thou hast been favorable unto Thy land, Thou hast turned the Captivity of Jacob. Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of Thy people, Thou hast pardoned all their sins. Selah.<sup>5</sup> Ze'iri of Dahabath<sup>6</sup> said to Rabina: You have learnt it from this verse, but we have learnt from the following verse, Then hear Thou in heaven and forgive the sin, etc.<sup>7</sup>

R. Tanhum the son of R. Hiyya of Kefar Accos said: Rain is withheld only when the enemies of Israel<sup>8</sup> have merited destruction as it is said, Drought and heat consume the snow waters; so doth the nether world those that have sinned.<sup>10</sup> Ze'iri of Dahabath said to Rabina: You have learnt from this verse, but we have learnt it from the following verse, And He will shut up the heaven... and ye perish quickly.<sup>11</sup> R. Hisda said: Rain is withheld only because of the neglect to bring heave-offerings and tithes, as it is said, Drought and heat<sup>12</sup> consume the snow waters. How is this derived from the verse?—

In the school of R. Ishmael it was taught: Because you have not performed in the summer the things I have commanded you, you shall be denied snow waters in the winter. R. Simeon b. Pazzi said: Rain is withheld only because of those who talk slander, as it is said, The north wind bringeth forth rain, and a backbiting tongue an angry countenance.<sup>13</sup> R. Salla said in the name of R. Hamnuna: Rain is withheld only because of the insolent, as it is said, Therefore the showers have been withheld, and there hath been no latter rain; yet thou hadst a harlot's forehead, etc.<sup>14</sup> R. Salla further said in the name of R. Hamnuna: Any man who is insolent stumbles in the end into sin, for it is said, 'Thou hadst a harlot's forehead'.

R. Nahman said: It is evident that he [actually] stumbled into sin, for it is said 'Thou hadst' and not, 'thou wilt have'. Rabbah the son of R. Huna said: It is

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permissible to call 'wicked' any one who is insolent, as it is said, A wicked man hardeneth his face.<sup>15</sup> R. Nahman the son of R. Isaac said: One may even hate him, as it is said, And the boldness of his face is changed.<sup>16</sup> Do not read Yeshuneh [changed] but Yesuneh [hated].

R. Kaltina said: Rain is withheld only because of the neglect of the Torah, as it is said, By slothfulness the rafters sank in [Yimak].<sup>17</sup> Because of the sloth displayed by Israel in not occupying themselves with the Torah the enemy of the Holy One, blessed be He,<sup>18</sup> becomes Poor. Mak, actually means, poor, as it is said, But if he be too poor [Mak] for thy valuation.<sup>19</sup> Mekoreh actually denotes God, as it is said, Who layest [ha-mekoreh] the beams of Thine upper chambers in the waters.<sup>20</sup>

R. Joseph derived it from the following verse, And how men see not the light which is bright in the skies; but the wind passeth and cleanseth them.<sup>21</sup> And 'light' surely means Torah, as it is said, For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching [Torah] is light.<sup>22</sup> 'Which is bright in the skies': [With reference to this] it was taught In the school of R. Ishmael: Even when the heavens are full of white spotted clouds ready to cause dew and rain to fall a wind passes and cleanses them.<sup>23</sup>

R. Ammi said: Rain is withheld only because of the sin of violent robbery, as it is said, He covereth His hands with the lightning;<sup>24</sup> that is to say, for the sin [of violent robbery committed by] their hands He covereth the light. And 'hands' surely signifies, violent robbery, as it is said, And from the violence that is in their hands,<sup>25</sup> and 'light' Surely [stands for] rain, as it is said, He spreadeth abroad the cloud of His lightning.<sup>26</sup> What is then his remedy?—

Let a man make many prayers, as it is said, And giveth it a charge that it strike the mark [be-mafgi'ah],<sup>27</sup> and Pegi'ah is prayer, as it is said, Therefore pray not thou for this people... neither make intercession [Tifga'] to

me.<sup>28</sup> R. Ammi further said: What is the meaning of the verse, If the iron be blunt, and one do not whet the edge?<sup>29</sup> If you see the sky hard as iron so that neither dew nor rain fall, this is to be attributed to the deeds of the generation which are corrupt, as it is said, And one do not whet the edge. What then shall be their remedy? Let them make many prayers [for mercy], as it is said, Then must he put to more strength; but wisdom is profitable to direct.<sup>30</sup> [The latter words indicate,] how much more [efficacious their prayer would prove] if their deeds had originally been righteous.<sup>31</sup>

Resh Lakish said: If you see a student

- (1) They would be meek and devote themselves even more to their studies.
- (2) If one neglects to cover them.
- (3) Isa. XLV, 8.
- (4) Thus referring to the rain.
- (5) Ps. LXXXV, 2, 3.
- (6) Place not identified. Rashi reads: Said Mar Ze'iri to Rabina.
- (7) I Kings VIII, 36.
- (8) [Caphare Accho in lower Galilee; v. Hildesheimer, Beitrage, p. 81.]
- (9) A euphemism for Israel themselves.
- (10) Job XXIV, 19.
- (11) Deut. XI, 17.
- (12) צייה drought, is here connected with צויה to command and חום heat, taken to mean, summer. With the completion of the harvest heave-offerings tithes have to be brought.
- (13) Prov. XXV, 23
- (14) Jer. III, 3.
- (15) Prov. XXI, 29.
- (16) Eccl. VIII, 1.
- (17) Ibid. X, 18.
- (18) A euphemism for God Himself. God is unable (lit., 'too poor') to send rain because Israel do not merit it.
- (19) Lev. XXVII, 8.
- (20) Ps. CIV, 3.
- (21) Job XXXVII, 21.
- (22) Prov. VI, 23.
- (23) Because of their disregard of the Torah which is compared to light, the wind disperses the clouds that were bringing the rain.
- (24) Job. XXXVI, 32.
- (25) Jonah III, 8.
- (26) Job XXXVII, 11. [The meaning then of the verse is: On account of hands (violence). He covers the lightning (withholds rain).]
- (27) Job XXXVI, 32.

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(28) Jer. VII, 16. All interplay upon the word **נצט** meaning both to strike and to intercede. [Var. lec. omit: 'What is then his remedy?... to me' which passage is apparently an intrusion from infra p. 31. V. D.S. It is a well established Talmudic teaching that no amends can be made for robbery by prayer alone; this must be accompanied by restitution, v. infra 16a and Yoma 85b.]

(29) Eccl. X, 10. R. Ammi recalling the words **ונתתי את שמיכם כברסל ברזל** in Lev. XXVI, 19 endeavors to find an allusion in **ברזל** in the verse quoted. to the hardness of the heavens. He takes the negative **לא** as **לו** 'to it', 'of it' and interprets the word **קלקל** 'to whet', in the later Hebrew sense of, 'to be corrupt', thus rendering the face of it (of the generation) is corrupt.

(30) Eccl. X, 10.

(31) **הכשיר** from the root **כשר** to be proper. Cf. Esth. VIII, 5.

## Ta'anith 8a

to whom his studies are as hard as iron,<sup>1</sup> it is because he has failed to systematize his studies, as it is said, And one do not whet the edge.<sup>2</sup> What is his remedy? Let him attend the school even more regularly, as it is said, Then must he put to more strength; but wisdom is profitable to direct. [The latter words indicate] how much more profitable would his efforts be if he had originally systematized his studies. Thus for example, Resh Lakish made it his practice to repeat in systematic order his studies forty times corresponding to the forty days<sup>3</sup> during which the Torah was given, and only then would he come before R. Johanan. R. Adda b. Abbahu made it his practice to repeat in systematic order his studies twenty-four times corresponding to the [twenty-four books<sup>4</sup> which embody] the Torah, the Prophets and the Hagiographa, and only then would he come before Raba.

Raba said: If you see a student who finds his studies as hard as iron, it is because his teacher does not encourage him,<sup>5</sup> as it is said, 'and one do not whet the edge'.<sup>6</sup> What is his remedy? Let him seek many companions [to intercede for him with his teacher], as it is said. 'Then must he put to more strength; but wisdom is profitable to direct.' [The latter words indicate,] how much more successful

he would have been had his efforts originally found favor with his teacher.

R. Ammi further said: What is the meaning of the verse, If the serpent bite before it is charmed, then the charmer hath no advantage?<sup>7</sup> If you see a generation over whom the heavens are rust-colored<sup>8</sup> like copper so that neither dew nor rain falls, it is because that generation is wanting in men who pray softly.<sup>9</sup> What then is their remedy? Let them go to one skilled in the art of praying softly, as it is written, The noise thereof telleth concerning it.<sup>10</sup> 'Then the charmer hath no advantage' [means]: 'As to him who is skilled in the art of praying softly and does not do so what benefit has he?<sup>11</sup> But if he has prayed softly and was not answered, what is his remedy? Let him go to the most pious man of that generation that he may intercede abundantly for him, as it is said, And giveth it a charge that it strike the mark [Be-mafgia'h]. and striking the mark [Pegi'ah] is prayer, as it is said, Therefore pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession [Tifga'] to Me.<sup>12</sup> But if he did pray softly and proved successful and on account of this he becomes over-proud he thereby brings divine displeasure upon the world, as it is said, The cattle also concerning the storm that cometh up.<sup>13</sup>

Raba said: Two scholars who reside in the same city but are intolerant of each other in matters of Halachah provoke anger and bring it upon themselves, as it is said, The cattle also concerning the storm that cometh up.<sup>14</sup>

Resh Lakish said: What is the meaning of the verse, If the serpent bite before it is charmed, then the charmer hath no advantage? In the Messianic age all animals will assemble and come to the serpent and say to him, 'The lion claws [his victim] and devours him, the wolf tears him and devours him, but as for thee what benefit dost thou derive? His reply will be, The charmer hath no advantage.<sup>15</sup>



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R. Ammi said: A man's prayer is only answered if he takes his heart into his hand,<sup>16</sup> as it is said, Let us lift up our heart with our hands.<sup>17</sup> [But it is not so. Surely]<sup>18</sup> Samuel appointed an Amora<sup>19</sup> to act for him and his exposition ran thus: But they beguiled Him with their mouth, and lied unto Him with their tongue. For their heart was not steadfast with Him, neither were they faithful in His covenant; and yet, But He being full of compassion, forgiveth iniquity, etc.<sup>20</sup> — This is no contradiction. The one refers to the individual, and the other to the community.<sup>21</sup>

R. Ammi said: Rain falls only for the sake of Men of Faith,<sup>22</sup> as it is said, Truth springeth out of the earth and righteousness hath looked down from heaven.<sup>23</sup>

R. Ammi further said: Come and see how great the Men of Faith are as is evidenced from the episode of the Weasel<sup>24</sup> and the Well. If this is the case with one who trusts in the Weasel and the Well how much more so if one trusts in the Holy One blessed be He!

R. Johanan said: He who leads a righteous life [on earth below]<sup>25</sup> is judged strictly [in heaven] above, as it is said, Truth springeth out of the earth and righteousness hath looked down from heaven. R. Hiyya b. Abin in the name of R. Huna [adduced this lesson] from this verse, And Thy wrath according to the fear that is due unto Thee.<sup>26</sup> Resh Lakish said: [It may be adduced] from this verse, Thou didst take away him that joyfully worked righteousness, those that remembered Thee in Thy ways — behold Thou wast wroth, and we sinned — upon them have we stayed of old, that we might be saved.<sup>27</sup>

R. Joshua b. Levi said: He who joyfully bears the chastisements that befall him brings salvation to the world as it is said, 'Upon them have we stayed of old, that we might be saved'.

Resh Lakish said: What is the meaning of the verse, And He will shut up the heaven?<sup>28</sup> —

When the heavens are shut up so that neither dew nor rain falls it is like to a woman who is in labor but who cannot give birth. This is in keeping with what Resh Lakish said in the name of Bar Kappara: 'Withholding' is applied to rain, and 'withholding' is applied to a woman;

- (1) He cannot grasp what he learns.
- (2) Taking קלקל as a reduplication of קל light, clear. I.e., he did not make it clear unto himself: פנים the meaning of a passage in the Torah, cf. Aboth III, 11,
- (3) Ex. XXXIV, 28.
- (4) On the twenty-four books of the Bible v. Blau, Zur Einleitung in die heilige Schrift, pp. 6ff.
- (5) Does not show him a cheerful countenance. Cf. Aboth 1, 15 בסבר פנים יפות.
- (6) [Taking קלקל in the sense of 'corrupting' to make unpleasant. He showed a displeasing countenance to him.]
- (7) Eccl. X, 11.
- (8) Taking נשך to bite, in the Aramaic sense of שתך to become rusty-colored; נחש shortened for נחשת copper. The heavens are, so to speak, covered with a deposit of copper-rust and this prevents rain and dew from falling.
- (9) להש to charm, is also used in the sense of, to whisper. and then to pray. The Tefillah (v. Glos.) was recited in silence.
- (10) Job XXXVI, 33. Connecting רע noise, from root רוע to shout, with רע friend from root רעה to associate with. The context in Job deals with rain.
- (11) He himself suffers with others from the drought that follows.
- (12) V. supra p. 30, n. 3. [MS.M omits: 'But if he has prayed... to me'.]
- (13) Job XXXVI, 33- The verse is generally interpreted, that the cattle through their greater sensitiveness to atmospheric conditions feel in advance the coming of the storm. The Gemara reads מקנה (for מקנה of the Massoretic Text) in the sense of, acquire, and it takes אף to be a noun meaning anger; and עולה exalted or elated (with pride). The meaning of the verse according to this interpretation would be: He brings upon the world divine displeasure who is overbearing with pride because his prayer was answered.
- (14) Raba takes מקנה = התקנה ב... to provoke; אף as previously, and על יעולה = that cometh up.
- (15) Heb. בעל הלשון lit., 'the man of tongue'; figuratively, the slanderer. The allusion here is to the tempting of Eve, Gen. III.
- (16) He feels deeply what he prays.
- (17) Lam. III, 41.
- (18) So Bomberg ed. and inserted in cur. edd. in square brackets, p. 33 n. 1.
- (19) Same as Meturgeman. V. supra p. 12, n. 4.

# TA'ANIS – 2a-31a

(20) Ps. LXXVIII, 36-38. [MS.M. adds: 'Do these (verses) not contradict one another'. This reading makes unnecessary the insertion noted on p. 32, n. 7. V. Marginal Glosses.]

(21) The prayers of a community are accepted even if they do not come up to the higher standard set by R. Ammi.

(22) Trustworthy men, honest in business. Cf. Prov. XXVIII, 20 אִישׁ אֲמוּנָהּ.

(23) Ps. LXXXV, 12. R. Ammi takes the verse to mean: When there is truth on earth righteousness symbolizing rain, (cf. Isa. XLV, 8) looketh down from heaven.

(24) An allusion to the story of a young man who extracted a promise of marriage from a maiden who had fallen into a well, if he rescued her. The well and a passing weasel were made witnesses to the undertaking and avenged subsequently the maiden for the young man's breach of promise. V. Rashi and Tosaf. a.l. and Aruch s.v. דָּלָה.

(25) The greater the man the more strictly he is judged for his actions. R. Johanan takes צָדִיק in the sense of strict justice צָדִיק.

(26) Ps. XC, 11.

(27) Isa. LXIV, 4.

(28) Deut. XI, 17.

## Ta'anith 8b

'withholding' is applied to a woman, as it is said, For the Lord had fast closed up all the wombs;<sup>1</sup> and 'withholding' is applied to rain, as it is written, 'And He will shut up the heaven.' 'Bearing' is applied to a woman, and 'bearing' is applied to rain; 'bearing' is applied to a woman, as it is written, And she conceived and bore a son;<sup>2</sup> and 'bearing' is applied to rain, as it is written, And make it bear<sup>3</sup> and bud.<sup>4</sup> 'Remembering' is applied to a woman and 'remembering' is applied to rain; 'remembering' is applied to a woman, as it is written, And the Lord remembered Sarah;<sup>5</sup> and 'remembering' is applied to rain, as it is written, Thou hast remembered the earth, and watered her, greatly enriching her, with the river of God that is full of water.<sup>6</sup> What is the meaning of, 'With the river of God that is full of water'? —

A Tanna taught: There is in heaven a kind of chamber from which the rain issues. R. Samuel b. Nahmani said: What is the meaning of the verse, Whether it be for correction, or for His earth, or for mercy,

that He cause it to come?<sup>7</sup> If the rain is 'for correction,' [then it falls] upon the mountains and upon the hills; if it is 'for mercy', He causes it to come upon His earth, upon the fields and upon the vineyards;<sup>8</sup> if it is 'for correction', upon the trees; if it is upon His earth, upon the seeds [in the ground]; if it is 'for mercy', He causes it to come for cisterns, pits and caves.

In the days of R. Samuel b. Nahmani there was a famine and pestilence. People asked, What shall we do? Shall we pray for [the removal] of the two? That is not possible. Let us then pray for [the removal of] the pestilence and we will endure the famine. Thereupon R. Samuel b. Nahmani said to them: Let us rather pray [for the removal of] the famine, because when the All-Merciful gives plenty, He gives it for the living, as it is said, Thou openest Thy hand, and satisfiest every living thing with favor.<sup>9</sup> How do we know that it is not fitting to pray for two things [at the same time]? —

Because it is written, So we fasted and besought our God for this.<sup>10</sup> 'This' would indicate that there were other things to pray for. In the West [Palestine] it was reported in the name of R. Haggai that it could be adduced from this verse, That they might ask mercy of the God of heaven concerning this secret.<sup>11</sup> 'This would indicate that there were other things too [to pray for].

In the days of R. Zera there was a religious persecution and fasting was also prohibited. R. Zera said to his colleagues: Let us now resolve to fast and when the decree is rescinded we will observe these fasts. His colleagues asked him: What is your authority for this? He replied: Because it is written, Then said he unto me, 'Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day when thou didst set thy heart to understand, and to humble thyself before thy God, thy words were heard'.<sup>12</sup>

R. Isaac said: If rain falls on the eve of Sabbath then though the years be [years of drought] as in the days of Elijah<sup>13</sup> it is yet

# TA'ANIS – 2a-31a

none-the-less but a sign of [divine] anger.<sup>14</sup> This is in agreement with the statement of Rabbah b. Shila who said: The day when rain falls is as hard [to bear]<sup>15</sup> as a day of Judgment.<sup>16</sup> Amemar said: Were it not that mankind must have rain we would pray and have it cease.

R. Isaac further said: Sunshine on the Sabbath is an act of kindness towards the poor, as it is said, But unto you that fear My name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in its wings.<sup>17</sup>

R. Isaac further said: The day when rain falls is great for thereon even the peruta<sup>18</sup> in one's purse is blessed, as it is said, To give the rain of Thy land in its season, and to bless all the work of thy hands.<sup>19</sup>

R. Isaac further said: Blessing is only possible in things hidden from sight, as it is said, The Lord will command the blessing with thee in thy barns.<sup>20</sup>

In the school of R. Ishmael it was taught: Blessing is only possible in things not under the direct control of the eye, as it is said, 'The Lord will command the blessing with thee in thy barns.'

Our Rabbis have taught: On entering the barn to measure the new grain one shall recite the benediction, 'May it be Thy will O Lord, our God, that Thou mayest send blessing upon the work of our hands'. Once he has begun to measure he says, 'Blessed be He who sends blessing into this heap'. If, however, he first measured the grain and then recited the benediction then his prayer is in vain, because blessing is not to be found in anything that has been already weighed or measured or numbered, but only in a thing hidden from sight.

(Mnemonic: *Gathering of Armies, Charity, Tithes, Sustenance.*)

R. Johanan said: The day on which rain falls is as great as the day of the Gathering of

exiled [Israel,] as it is said, Turn our captivity: O Lord, as the streams in the dry land.<sup>21</sup> By 'streams' rain is meant, as it is said, And the channels of the sea appeared.<sup>22</sup>

R. Johanan further said: The day when rain falls is great, for thereon even warring armies cease [fighting], as it is said, Watering her ridges abundantly, settling down the furrows thereof.<sup>23</sup>

R. Johanan further said: Rain is withheld only on account of those who subscribe to charity in public and fail to pay, as it is said, As vapors and wind without rain, so is he that boasteth himself of a false gift<sup>24</sup>

R. Johanan further said: What is the meaning of the verse,

- (1) Gen. XX, 18.
- (2) Ibid. XXX, 23.
- (3) E.V. bring forth.
- (4) Isa. LV, 10.
- (5) Gen. XXI, 1.
- (6) Ps. LXV, 10.
- (7) Job XXXVII, 13.
- (8) [The text from this point to the end of the passage is in disorder and omitted in MS.M.]
- (9) Ps. CXLV, 16.
- (10) Ezra VIII, 23.
- (11) Dan. II, 18.
- (12) Dan. X, 12. The good intention was acceptable as a good deed.
- (13) Cf. 1 Kings XVII, 7ff
- (14) Because the rain prevents the people from making the necessary preparations for Sabbath.
- (15) Owing to the inconvenience and discomfort to which people are put.
- (16) Mondays and Thursdays when the Beth din met and the people could have their cases tried (Rashi).
- (17) Mal. III, 20. You that fear my name, I.e., those who keep the Sabbath. On the Sabbath the poor have the time and leisure to enjoy the sunshine.
- (18) Smallest coin. The word is used for money in general.
- (19) Deut. XXVIII, 12.
- (20) Deut. XXVIII, 8. R. Isaac connects the Hebrew word באסמך with טמא to hide, conceal.
- (21) Ps. CXXVI, 4.
- (22) II Sam. XXII, 16. The same word אפיקים is used in both verses.
- (23) Ps. LXV, n. 'Watering ridges' implies rain. ארזי 'furrows' has also the meaning of, 'army'.

# TA'ANIS – 2a-31a

(24) Prov. XXV, 14. Both act deceitfully and disappoint.

## Ta'anith 9a

Thou shalt surely tithe?<sup>1</sup> Give tithes that you may be enriched.<sup>2</sup>

R. Johanan met the young sons of Resh Lakish and said to him, 'Recite to me the Bible verse [you have learnt to-day]. The latter replied, 'Thou shalt surely tithe', at the same time asking, 'What may be the meaning of these words?' R. Johanan answered, 'Give tithes that you may be enriched'. The boy then asked, 'Whence do you adduce this?' R. Johanan replied: 'Go test it [for yourself]'. The boy thereupon asked: Is it permissible to try the Holy One, blessed be He, seeing that it is written, Ye shall not try the Lord?<sup>4</sup>—

R. Johanan replied: Thus said R. Oshaia: The case of tithe-giving is excepted [from the prohibition], as it is said, Bring ye the whole tithe unto the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and try Me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall be more than sufficiency.<sup>5</sup> (What is the meaning [of the words], 'That there shall be more than sufficiency?' — R. Rami b. Hama said in the name of Rab: Until your lips grow weary from saying, 'It is enough'.) The boy thereupon exclaimed, Had I reached this verse [in my Bible studies] I should need neither you nor R. Oshaia, your teacher.

On another occasion R. Johanan met the young son of Resh Lakish sitting and reciting the verse, The foolishness of man perverteth his way; and his heart fretteth against the Lord.<sup>6</sup> R. Johanan thereupon<sup>7</sup> exclaimed in amazement: Is there anything written in the Hagiographa to which allusion cannot be found in the Torah? The boy replied: Is then this verse not alluded to in the Torah, seeing that it is written, And their heart failed them, and they turned trembling one to another, saying: 'What is this that God hath done unto

us?'<sup>8</sup> R. Johanan lifted up his eyes and stared at him, whereupon the boy's mother came and took him away, Saying to him, 'Go away from him, lest he do unto you as he did unto your father'.<sup>9</sup>

R. Johanan further said: Rain may fall even for the sake of an individual but sustenance [is granted] only for the sake of the many. [That] rain [may fall] for the sake of even one man may be learnt from the verse where it is written, The Lord will open unto thee his good treasure, the heaven to give the rain of thy land;<sup>10</sup> sustenance for the sake of the many, as it is written, Behold I will cause to rain bread for you.<sup>11</sup>

An objection was raised: R. Jose the son of R. Judah says: Three good leaders had arisen for Israel, namely. Moses, Aaron and Miriam, and for their sake three good things were conferred [upon Israel], namely, the Well,<sup>12</sup> the Pillar of Cloud and the Manna; the Well, for the merit of Miriam; the Pillar of Cloud for the merit of Aaron; the Manna for the merit of Moses. When Miriam died the well disappeared, as it is said, And Miriam died there,<sup>13</sup> and immediately follows [the verse], And there was no water for the congregation; and it returned for the merit of the [latter] two. When Aaron died the clouds of glory disappeared, as it is written, And the Canaanite, the king of Arad heard.<sup>14</sup> What news did he hear? He heard that Aaron had died, and that the clouds of glory had disappeared; he thought that he was free to make war on Israel. Therefore it is written, And all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead.<sup>15</sup> With reference to which R. Abahu said: Do not read, 'they saw' [Wayir-u] but 'they were seen' [wayyero-u].<sup>16</sup>

This is also in accordance with the view of Resh Lakish who said: [The word] Ki may be used in four different senses, namely, 'if' 'perhaps'. 'but', 'because'.<sup>17</sup> The two [the Well and the Cloud] returned because of the merit of Moses, but when Moses died all of them disappeared, as it is said, And I cut off the three shepherds in one month.<sup>18</sup> Did they



# TA'ANIS – 2a-31a

then all [three] die in one month? Did not Miriam die in Nisan, Aaron in Ab and Moses in Adar? This therefore is meant to teach you that the three good gifts which were given because of their merit were nullified and they all disappeared in one month. Thus we find that sustenance<sup>19</sup> may be granted for the sake of one individual! — The case of Moses is exceptional; as he prayed on behalf of the many, he himself is regarded as a multitude.

R. Hunah b. Manoah and R. Samuel b. Idi and R. Hiyya of Wastanya<sup>20</sup> were wont to attend the discourses of Raba. When Raba died they came to those of R. Papa and whenever he expounded to them a law which did not appeal to them they winked at one another, and thus hurt him greatly.

(1) עֶשֶׂר תְּעָשֶׂר Deut. XIV, 22.

(2) A play upon the words תְּעָשֶׂר to give tithes, and תִּעָשֶׂר to grow rich.

(3) The boy was a nephew of R. Johanan, being the son of his sister.

(4) Deut. VI, 16.

(5) Mal. III, 10.

(6) Prov. XIX, 3.

(7) [So MS.M. Cur. ed. Insert 'sat'.]

(8) Gen. XLII, 28. First they sold their brother and then they complained at the punishment meted out to them by God.

(9) In B.M. 84a it is related that R. Johanan was the cause of R. Lakish's untimely death.

(10) Deut. XXVIII, 12.

(11) Ex. XVI, 4.

(12) A rock that accompanied the Israelites throughout their wanderings in the wilderness. Cf. Shab. 35a.

(13) Num. XX, 1.

(14) Ibid. XXI, 1.

(15) Ibid. XX, 29.

(16) With the disappearance of the Pillar of Cloud Israel became visible and exposed to the enemy.

(17) 'Ki' here on the reading of R. Abbahu is rendered 'because'.

(18) Zech. XI, 8.

(19) I.e., the manna.

(20) [Astunia, near Pumbeditha, v. Obermeyer, p. 229.]

## Ta'anith 9b

In a dream he was made to recite the verse, 'And I cut off the three shepherds'. When

next day these disciples took leave of him he said to them, Go in peace.<sup>1</sup>

R. Shimi b. Ashi was wont to frequent [the discourses] of R. Papa and used to annoy him, very much with questions. One day he observed that R. Papa fell on his face<sup>2</sup> [in prayer] and he heard him saying, 'May God preserve me from the insolence of Shimi'. The latter thereupon vowed silence and annoyed him no more [with questions].

Resh Lakish too held the view that rain may fall even for the sake of an individual, for Resh Lakish said: Whence do we adduce that rain may fall even for the sake of an individual? Because it is written, Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain, even of the Lord that maketh lightnings, and He will give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field.<sup>3</sup> You might have thought, only when all need [it]. therefore Scripture says, 'to everyone'. Further, it has been taught: Had Scripture said, 'to everyone' [only] you might have thought [rain would fall] only when one needs it for all his fields, therefore Scripture adds, 'field'. Had the word 'field' [been used] you might have thought only when the whole field needs [rain] Scripture therefore adds, 'grass'.

This is borne out by the case of Daniel b. Kattina who had a garden which he was in the habit of inspecting daily and he would exclaim, 'This bed needs water and that one does not'; and rain would fall on those beds that needed water. What is the meaning of the verse, 'Even the Lord that maketh Hazizim [lightnings]? —

R. Jose son of R. Hanina said: This teaches that God provides a Haziz for each righteous man. What are Hazizim? Rab Judah said: Porehoth.<sup>4</sup> R. Johanan said: Porehoth are a sign of [coming] rain. What are Porehoth?— R. Papa said: A thin cloud under a thick cloud.

Rab Judah said: Should fine rain come down before the heavy rain then the rain will

## TA'ANIS – 2a-31a

continue for some time; should it follow a heavy downpour of rain then the rain will soon cease. If before the rain, the rain will continue, of this the sieve serves as a reminder; if after a heavy rain, the rain will cease, of this goats' excrement serves as a reminder.<sup>5</sup>

'Ulla chanced to be in Babylon and observing light clouds [Porehoth] he exclaimed, 'Remove the vessels for rain is now coming'. No rain however fell and he exclaimed, As the Babylonians are false, so too is their rain.

'Ulla chanced to be in Babylon and observing that a basketful of dates was being sold for a zuz<sup>6</sup> he exclaimed, 'A basketful of honey for a Zuz and yet the Babylonians do not occupy themselves with the study of the Torah'. During the night he was in agony [from eating the dates] and he then exclaimed, 'A basketful of knives for a Zuz and yet the Babylonians occupy themselves with the study of the Torah.

It has been taught: R. Eliezer said: The whole world draws its water supply from the waters of the ocean, as it is said, But there went up a mist from the earth and watered the whole of the ground.<sup>7</sup> Thereupon R. Joshua said to him: But are not the waters of the ocean salty? He replied: They are sweetened by the clouds.

R. Joshua said: The whole world drinks from the upper waters, as it is said, And drinketh water as the rain of heaven cometh down.<sup>8</sup> If so, what is the force of the verse, 'But there went up a mist from the earth'? This teaches that the clouds grow in strength as they rise towards the firmament and then open their mouth as a flask and catch the rain water, as it is said, Which distil rain from His vapour,<sup>9</sup> they are perforated like a sieve and they slowly distil [Mehashroth] waters on the ground. as it is said, Distilling [Hashroth] of waters, thick clouds of the skies;<sup>10</sup> there is but one hand-breadth space between one drop and another, in order to teach you that the day on which rain falls is as great as the day

whereon heaven and earth were created, as it is said, Who doeth great things past finding out;<sup>11</sup> and it is written, Who giveth rain upon the earth;<sup>12</sup> and it is also written, Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard that the everlasting God, the Lord... His discernment is past finding out?<sup>13</sup>

Whose view is supported by the verse, Who waterest the mountains from Thine upper chambers,<sup>14</sup> which R. Johanan interprets to mean the upper chambers of the Almighty? Whose view? — It is that of R. Joshua.

And R. Eliezer's<sup>15</sup> view? — As [the waters] ultimately find their way above [Scripture] aptly terms them, 'from Thine upper chambers'<sup>14</sup> For if it were not so, how will you explain, Powder and dust from heaven?'<sup>16</sup> What you must [say is] that as these rise upwards [from the ground] the words, 'from heaven' are quite aptly applied to them. Likewise as the waters eventually find their way above Scripture aptly refers to them as, from Thine upper chambers'. Whose view supports R. Hanina who said this, He gathereth the waters of the sea together as a heap; He layeth up the deeps in storehouses,<sup>17</sup> [as meaning,] Who caused the storehouses to be filled with grain? The deeps — the view of R. Eliezer.

And what of R. Joshua's [view]?<sup>18</sup> — That [verse] refers to Creation of the world.

(1) בשלמא 'Go in peace' was addressed to the dead while to the living the greeting was לשלמא 'Go to peace'. Cf. Ber. 64a. R. Papa. by his greeting, implied that the disciples would not survive long. [MSM. however reads לשלם 'to peace'. R. Papa then in using this formula expressed the wish that the implications of the dream would not be fulfilled.]

(2) He recited the prayer known as the Tahanun. V. P. B. p. 62

(3) Zech. X, 1.

(4) [Transpose with MS.M. R. Johanan's statement after that of R. Papa which follows.]

(5) The fine flour comes first from a sieve then the heavier parts; contrariwise the goat first discharges with force then relaxes.

(6) Zuz = a Dinar=about a quarter of a silver shekel.

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- (7) Gen. II, 6.
- (8) Deut. XI, 11.
- (9) Job XXXVI,27.
- (10) II Sam. XXII, 12. E.V. 'Gathering waters, etc.'
- (11) Job V, 9.
- (12) Ibid. v. 10.
- (13) Isa. XL, 28.
- (14) Ps. CIV, 13.
- (15) How does he explain this verse?
- (16) Deut. XXVIII, 24.
- (17) Ps. XXXIII, 7.
- (18) How does he explain this verse?

## Ta'anith 10a

Our Rabbis have taught: Palestine was created first and then the rest of the world, as it is said, While as yet He had not made the earth, nor the fields.<sup>1</sup> Palestine is watered by the Holy One, blessed be He, and the rest of the world is watered by a messenger, as it is said, Who giveth rain upon the earth, and sendeth waters upon the fields.<sup>2</sup> Palestine is watered by the rain and the rest of the world is watered by the residue,<sup>3</sup> as it is said, 'Who giveth rain upon the earth, etc'.<sup>4</sup> Palestine is watered first and then the rest of the world, as it is said, 'Who giveth rain upon the earth, etc'. This may be compared to a man making cheese; he removes first what is edible and discards the refuse.

The Master said: '[The waters of the ocean] are sweetened by the clouds' — Whence does he learn this? R. Isaac b. Joseph said in the name of R. Johanan: It is written, Darkness of waters, thick clouds of the skies,<sup>5</sup> and it is also written, Distilling of waters, thick clouds of the skies,<sup>6</sup> take away the Kaf and add it to the [word written with] Resh and read haksharath.<sup>7</sup>

As for R. Joshua what use does he make of these verses? — He is of the opinion that these verses are the basis for the statement made by R. Dimi when he came [to Babylon] and he reported that in Palestine people say, If the clouds are bright they contain little water, but if they are dark they contain much water.<sup>8</sup> In keeping with whose view is the teaching which has been taught: The upper

waters remain suspended by Divine command, and their fruit is the rain-water, as it is said, The earth is full of the fruit of Thy works?<sup>9</sup> This is according to R. Joshua. And as for R. Eliezer?-[He is of the opinion] that this [verse] refers to the other handiwork of God.

R. Joshua b. Levi said: The whole world is watered by the residue of the Garden of Eden, as it is said, And a river went out of Eden, etc.<sup>10</sup>

A Tanna taught: The residue of a Kor<sup>11</sup> is enough to irrigate a Tarkab.<sup>12</sup> Our Rabbis taught: Egypt is four hundred parasangs by four hundred, and it is one sixtieth of the size of Ethiopia; Ethiopia is one sixtieth of the world, and the world is one sixtieth of the Garden [of Eden].<sup>13</sup> and the Garden is one sixteenth of Eden, and Eden is one sixtieth of Gehenna;<sup>14</sup> thus the whole world compared with the Gehenna is but as a lid to the pot. Some say that Gehenna has no limit in size; others say that Eden is without limit.

R. Oshaia said: What is the meaning of the verse, O thou that dwellest upon many waters, abundant in treasures?<sup>15</sup> What has brought it about that Babylon's treasures are full of corn? Because it dwells by many waters.<sup>16</sup> Rab said: Babylon is rich because it harvests without rain.

Abaye said: We have a tradition, Better is a flooded land than an arid land.

**MISHNAH.** ON THE THIRD OF MARCHESHVAN WE [BEGIN TO] PRAY FOR RAIN. R. GAMALIEL SAYS: ON THE SEVENTH, [THAT IS.] FIFTEEN DAYS AFTER THE FEAST SO THAT THE LAST ISRAELITE<sup>17</sup> MAY REACH THE RIVER EUPHRATES.

**GEMARA.** R. Eleazar said: The Halachah is according to R. Gamaliel. It has been taught: Hananiah says: In the Diaspora<sup>18</sup> [we do not begin to pray] until the sixtieth day after the [Tishri] cycle.<sup>19</sup> R. Huna b. Hiyya said in the

# TA'ANIS – 2a-31a

name of Samuel: The Halachah is according to Hananiah. Is it really so? Was not a question asked of Samuel: When do we begin to make mention [of the words] 'and give dew and rain'? and he replied, 'When wood is brought into the house of Tabut,<sup>20</sup> the fowler'? — Perhaps the two time limits are identical.

A question was asked in the school: Is the sixtieth day counted with those that precede it or with those that follow it?<sup>21</sup> —

Come and hear:<sup>22</sup> Rab said: The sixtieth day is counted with those that follow it; and Samuel said: With those that precede it.<sup>23</sup> R. Nahman said: The mnemonic for this is, the highlands need water, but the lowlands do not.<sup>24</sup> R. Papa said: The Halachah is that the sixtieth day is counted with those that follow it.<sup>25</sup>

**MISHNAH.** IF THE SEVENTEENTH OF MARCHESHVAN CAME AND NO RAIN FELL THE YEHDIM<sup>26</sup> [INDIVIDUALS] BEGIN TO FAST THREE FASTS; THEY MAY EAT AND DRINK AFTER IT GETS DARK<sup>27</sup> [AND ON THESE FASTS] IT IS PERMISSIBLE FOR THEM TO DO WORK, TO BATHE, TO ANOINT THEMSELVES WITH OIL, TO WEAR SHOES, AND TO HAVE OF TABERNACLES MAY REACH HOME WITHOUT BEING INCONVENIENCED BY THE RAIN. MARITAL RELATIONS. IF THE NEW MOON OF KISLEV CAME AND NO RAIN FELL THE BETH DIN ORDAIN UPON THE COMMUNITY THREE FASTS; [ON THESE] THEY MAY EAT AND DRINK WHILST IT IS STILL DARK AND IT IS PERMISSIBLE TO DO WORK, TO BATHE, TO ANOINT ONESELF WITH OIL, TO WEAR SHOES, AND TO HAVE MARITAL RELATIONS.

**GEMARA.** Who are the Yehidim? R. Huna said: The rabbis. R. Huna further said: The Yehidim fast three fasts, [that is to say, on] Monday, Thursday and Monday. What new fact does he teach us? Has it not already been taught to us:<sup>28</sup> No fast is ordained upon the community to begin on a Thursday in order

to prevent a rise in food prices.<sup>29</sup> Hence the order of the first three fasts must be, Monday, Thursday, Monday? You might have thought that this applies only to public fasts but not to those of individuals therefore he teaches us [that it applies] equally to those of individuals. The same has been taught us elsewhere: When the Yehidim begin to fast they fast on Monday, Thursday and Monday, and they interrupt<sup>30</sup> their fasts on New Moon

(1) Prov. VIII, 26.

(2) Job V, 10. ארץ ארץ taken to mean ארץ ישראל Palestine, and חוצות from חוץ (outside, field) the rest of the world (חוץ לארץ).

(3) [MS.M. adds, of Palestine.]

(4) [The order of the last two sentences should be reversed with MS.M.]

(5) Ps. XVIII, 12.

(6) In the parallel psalm. II Sam. XXII, 12.

(7) By the manipulation of the letters in the words הכשרת and חשרת in the verses cited the word הכשרת is obtained, meaning 'making fit', i.e., drinkable. The meaning is the clouds make the waters drinkable. The additional change of ה to ח involved is quite common in Semitic languages.

(8) [This popular proverb is alluded to in the verse cited from Psalms, 'Darkness of waters — thick clouds of skies', R. Joshua being of the opinion that השכני is not a variant of חשרת.]

(9) Ps. CIV, 13.

(10) Gen. II, 10. The continuation of the verse is, 'and from thence it was parted and became four heads'.

(11) A dry measure = 30 se'ahs. Cf. II Kings VII, 16.

(12) Tarkab, Gk.\*\*\*=3 Kabs= one half Se'ah. With the residue of water used for watering a space sown with a Kab seed one can water a space sown with a Tarkab.

(13) If the world is one sixteenth of the Garden of Eden, then it can be seen from the previous statement that the residue of the Garden of Eden is sufficient to water the whole world.

(14) [Var. lec. omit 'and the Garden... of Eden' which words are difficult to explain.]

(15) Jer. LI, 13.

(16) Being a low-lying country it is well irrigated and consequently it needs but little rain.

(17) Who comes on pilgrimage to Jerusalem on the feast

(18) In the first instance applied to Babylonia.

(19) The year was divided into four cycles (v. Glos. s.v. Tekufah), Tishri, Tebeth, Nisan and Tammuz. Here the Tishri Tekufah is meant—the Autumnal Equinox.

(20) A sign that the rainy season was about to set in.



# TA'ANIS – 2a-31a

(21) Exclusive or inclusive.

(22) [Omitted in MS.M.]

(23) [R. Hananel and Aruch reverse the opinions of Rab and Samuel.]

(24) Rab came from Palestine which is mountainous and so needed more rain, while Samuel came from Babylonia which was well irrigated and therefore needed less rain. [R. Hananel and Aruch (v. n. 6): Samuel's place was Nehardea which was situated higher and consequently in greater need of rain at an earlier period than Sura, the place of Rab.]

(25) And the words 'give dew and rain' are said earlier.

(26) Distinguished persons.

(27) On the night preceding the fast, the fast beginning only with dawn.

(28) V. infra 15b.

(29) Thursday being a market day, they would purchase food for the breaking of their fast and also for the Sabbath and consequently the abnormal demand for food would tend to make the prices soar.

(30) Should any such festive day coincide with their fast days.

## Ta'anith 10b

and on such festive days as are enumerated in the Scroll of Fasts.<sup>1</sup>

The Rabbis have taught: Let not a man say, 'I am but a disciple and I am therefore not worthy to consider myself a Yahid', since all Disciples of the Wise are accounted Yehidim. Who is a Yahid? And who is a disciple? A Yahid is one worthy to be appointed Leader of the Community; a disciple is one who is asked any question of Halachah connected with his studies and can answer it — even though it is on a subject dealt with in the Tractate Kallah.<sup>2</sup>

Our Rabbis have taught: Not everyone desirous to consider himself a Yahid may do so;<sup>3</sup> a disciple however may do so; this is the opinion of R. Meir. R. Jose says: Anyone may do so, and may he be remembered for good, because it is not an advantage to him but a hardship. Another [Baraitha] teaches: Not everyone desirous to consider himself a Yahid may do so; a disciple however may do so; this is the opinion of R. Simeon son of R. Eliezer. R. Simeon b. Gamaliel says: This only applies

to things which are to his distinction<sup>4</sup> but in things which cause him hardship any one may do so and may he be remembered for good, because it is not an advantage to him but a hardship.

Our Rabbis have taught: If one fasted on account of some visitation and it passed, or for a sick person and he recovered, he should nevertheless complete his fast. If one journeys from a place where they do not fast to a place where they do, he should fast with them; from a place where they do fast to a place where they do not, he should nevertheless complete his fast. If he forgot and ate and drank let him not make it patent in public nor may he indulge in delicacies, as it is written, And Jacob said to his sons: Why should you show yourself?<sup>5</sup> Jacob conveyed thereby to his sons 'When you are fully sated do not show yourselves either before Esau or before Ishmael that they should not envy you'. See that ye fall not out by the way.

R. Eleazar said: Joseph said to his brethren, 'Do not busy yourselves with questions of law lest the road become uncertain for you [you lose the way]'.<sup>6</sup> Is it really so; did not R. Elia b. Berackiah say: Two scholars who are journeying on the road and they do not discuss words of Torah merit to be devoured by fire, as it written, And it came to pass, as they still went on and talked, that behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, which parted them asunder?<sup>7</sup> — [They parted asunder] only because they talked [of Torah] but if they had not talked they would have merited to be devoured by fire! — There is no contradiction. The latter case speaks of repeating one's studies, and the former of cogitation.

A Tanna taught: [Joseph said to his brethren] 'Do not take big strides and bring the sun into the city'. 'Do not take big strides': For a Master said: Big strides rob a man of one five-hundredth part of his eyesight. 'And bring the sun into the city': As Rab Judah said in the name of Rab: Let a man always leave [the city by 'daylight',<sup>8</sup> and enter it by

# TA'ANIS – 2a-31a

‘daylight, as it is said, As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away.<sup>9</sup>

Rab Judah said<sup>10</sup> in the name of R. Hiyya: He who journeys on the road should not eat more than one eats in years of famine. Why? Here [in Babylonia] they explained the reason to be in order to prevent digestive troubles<sup>11</sup> but in Palestine they said, in order [to make] his provisions last [throughout the whole journey]. What is the difference between the two [reasons]? — The difference is

(1) Megillath Ta'anith. A chronicle enumerating thirty-five eventful days in the history of the Jewish people on which fasting is forbidden. The Scroll was written between 66-70 C.E. V. Zeitlin, Megillat Taanit.

(2) There are two explanations of the term Kallah. (a) It is the name of an apocryphal tractate of the Talmud not usually studied. (b) The term signifies the half-yearly assemblies in the Babylonian schools in Adar and Elul when a particular tractate was studied and the lecture sessions thrown open to all. V. Shab. 114a and commentaries ad loc.; J.E. VII, 423. and Kid., Sonc. ed. p. 247 n. 4.

(3) With reference to the first three fasts.

(4) Cf. Ber. 16b.

(5) Gen. XLII, 1. E. V. ‘Why do you look upon one another.’

(6) [Aliter: ‘Become unsafe for you’. passers-by might be irritated by your disputes.]

(7) II Kings II, 11.

(8) Cf. Gen. 1, 4. כִּי טוֹב applied by the Rabbis to the daylight.

(9) Gen. XLIV, 3.

(10) [Var. lec. insert: In the name of Rab.]

(11) Which would retard the peace of the journey

## Ta'anith 11a

apparent in the case of a man on board ship<sup>1</sup> or of a man journeying from one inn to another.<sup>2</sup> R. Papa ate a piece of bread at every parasang; he was therefore of the opinion that the reason is in order to prevent digestive troubles.<sup>3</sup> Rab Judah said in the name of Rab:<sup>4</sup> He who starves himself in years of famine escapes unnatural death, as it is said, In famine He will redeem thee from death.<sup>5</sup> [Scripture should have said] ‘from famine’. This is therefore what [Scripture] meant to convey. As a reward for starving

himself in years of famine one will escape unnatural death.

Resh Lakish said: A man may not have marital relations during years of famine, as it is said, And unto Joseph were born two sons before the year of famine came.<sup>6</sup> A Tanna taught: Childless people may have marital relations in years of famine.

Our Rabbis have taught: When Israel is in trouble and one of them separates himself from them, then the two ministering angels who accompany every man come and place their hands upon his head and say, ‘So-and-so who separated himself from the community shall not behold the consolation of the community’. Another [Baraita] taught: When the community is in trouble let not a man say, ‘I will go to my house and I will eat and drink and all will be well with me’. For of him who does so Scripture says, And behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen and killing sheep, eating flesh and drinking wine — ‘Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die’.<sup>7</sup>

What follows after this [verse]? — And the Lord of Hosts revealed Himself in mine ears; surely this iniquity shall not be expiated by you till ye die. This is the conduct of the ordinary man, but what does Scripture say of the conduct of the wicked? Come ye, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and to-morrow shall be as this day.<sup>8</sup>

What follows after this [verse]? The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart... that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come.<sup>9</sup> But rather a man should share in the distress of the community, for so we find that Moses, our teacher, shared in the distress of the community, as it is said, But Moses’ hands were heavy; and they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat thereon.<sup>10</sup> Did not then Moses have a bolster or a cushion to sit on? This is then what Moses meant [to convey], ‘As Israel are in distress I too will share with them. He who shares in the

## TA'ANIS – 2a-31a

distress of the community will merit to behold its consolation'.<sup>11</sup> Perhaps a man will say, 'Who is there to testify against me?' The very stones of his house and its beams testify against him, as it is written, For the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it.<sup>12</sup>

In the school of R. Shila it was taught: The two ministering angels who accompany every man testify against him, as it is said, For He will give His angels charge over thee.<sup>13</sup> R. Hidka says: A man's own soul testifies against him, as it is said, Keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom.<sup>14</sup> And some say: A man's own limbs testify against him, as it is said, Ye are my witnesses saith the Lord.<sup>15</sup> A God of faithfulness and without iniquity.<sup>16</sup> 'A God of faithfulness': Just as punishment will be exacted of the wicked in the world to come even for a slight transgression which they commit, So too is punishment exacted in this world of the righteous for any slight transgression which they commit. 'And without iniquity': Just as the righteous will receive their reward in the world to come, even for the least meritorious act which they do, so too are the wicked rewarded in this world even for the least meritorious act which they do. Just and right is He:<sup>17</sup> They [the Rabbis] said: When a man departs to his eternal home all his deeds are enumerated before him and he is told, Such and such a thing have you done, in such and such a place on that particular day. And he replies, 'Yes'. Then they say to him, 'Sign'—

And he signs, as it is said, He sealeth up the hand of every man.<sup>18</sup> And what is even more, he acknowledges the justice of the verdict and he says, 'You have judged me well', in order that the words of Scripture may be fulfilled, That thou mayest be justified when Thou speakest.<sup>19</sup>

Samuel said: Whosoever fasts [for the sake of self-affliction] is termed a sinner. He is of the same opinion as the following Tanna. For it has been taught: Eleazar ha-Kappar Berabbi<sup>20</sup> Says: What is Scripture referring

to when it says [of the Nazirite] , And make atonement for him, for that he sinned by reason of the soul.<sup>21</sup> Against which soul did he sin?<sup>22</sup> [It must refer to the fact that] he denied himself wine. We can now make this inference from minor to major: If this man [Nazirite] who denied himself wine only is termed, Sinner, how much more so he who denies himself the enjoyment of ever so many things. R. Eleazar says: He is termed, Holy, as it is said, He shall be holy, he shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow long.<sup>23</sup> If this man [Nazirite] who denied himself wine only is termed, Holy. how much more so he who denies himself the enjoyment of ever so many things —

How will then Samuel explain the verse wherein he is termed, Holy? — That refers to the locks growing long. And how will R. Eleazar explain the statement that he is termed, Sinner? — That is because he defiled himself [by contact with the dead]. But did R. Eleazar say so? Did he not say: Let a man always consider himself

(1) The former reason does not apply here, but the latter does.

(2) Lit., 'from station to station' where he can obtain new provisions. The latter does not apply here but the former does.

(3) [Of which he was not afraid owing to his corpulence, v. B.M. 84a.]

(4) [MS.M. adds: In the name of R. Hiyya, cf. n. 3.]

(5) Job V, 20.

(6) Gen. XLI, 50.

(7) Isa. XXII, 13.

(8) Ibid. LVI, 12.

(9) Ibid. LVII, 1.

(10) Ex. XVII, 12.

(11) [This sentence is omitted in MS.M.]

(12) Hab. II, 11.

(13) Ps. XCI, 11.

(14) Micah VII, 5. Bosom is interpreted to mean, 'soul'.

(15) Isa. XLIII, 10.

(16) Deut. XXXII, 4.

(17) [MS.M. reverses the application of the two texts.]

(18) Job XXXVII, 7.

(19) Ps. LI, 6.

(20) Or 'Beribi' v. Nazir, Sonc. ed. p. 64, n. 1. J.E. s.v. Berabbi.

(21) Num. VI, 11. E.V. 'dead'.

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(22) He has sinned against his own soul.

(23) Num. VI, 5.

## Ta'anith 11b

as if the Holy One dwells within him, as it is said, The Holy One in the midst of thee, and I will not come in fury?<sup>1</sup> —

This is no contradiction. The one speaks of him, who is able to bear self-affliction and the other of one who is not able. Resh Lakish says: He is termed, Pious, as it is said, The Pious man<sup>2</sup> weans his own soul but he that is cruel, etc.<sup>3</sup> R. Shesheth, said: The young scholar who would afflict himself by fasting let a dog devour his meal.<sup>4</sup>

R. Jeremiah b. Abba said: There are no public fasts<sup>5</sup> in Babylonia except [the Fast of] the Ninth of Ab.<sup>6</sup> R. Jeremiah b. Abba further said in the name of Resh Lakish: A scholar may not afflict himself by fasting because he lessens thereby his heavenly work.<sup>7</sup>

**THEY MAY EAT AND DRINK AFTER IT GETS DARK**, etc. R. Ze'ira said in the name of R. Hanina: An individual who has undertaken to fast though he may have eaten and drunk the whole of the [preceding] night, yet on the morrow he should recite the [special] prayer for fast days; if, however, he has continued his fast throughout the following night he may not recite the prayer for fast days [on the next day].<sup>8</sup>

R. Joseph asked: What view does R. Huna take? Does he take the view that one cannot [undertake a] fast for a matter of hours? Or perhaps one can undertake a fast for hours, but if one does so he should not recite the [special] prayer for fast days?<sup>9</sup> —

Abaye replied to him: It is quite definite R. Huna may hold the opinion that one can undertake a fast for a matter of hours and if one does so he may recite the [special] prayer for fast days, but here the case is different since he did not previously take upon himself<sup>10</sup> [to fast].

Mar 'Ukba<sup>11</sup> chanced to come to Ganzaka<sup>12</sup> and he was asked: Is fasting for a matter of hours considered a fast or not? and he was unable to answer. [They then asked him] are wine-jars belonging to idolaters prohibited for use or not and he was unable to answer; [he was then asked] in which [garments] did Moses perform the service [in the Tabernacle] during the seven days of consecration<sup>13</sup> and he was unable to answer. He went and inquired in the House of Learning and he was told, the law is that fasting for a matter of hours is considered a fast and we do recite the [special] prayer for fast days [if one has completed the fast].<sup>14</sup> Further the law is that wine-jars belonging to idolaters may be used after twelve months; Moses performed the service during the seven days of consecration dressed in a white frock.

R. Kahana taught: In a white frock without a border.<sup>15</sup> R. Hisda said:

(1) Hosea XI, 9. R. Eleazar holds the view that the divine is ever present in man. How could then a man who fasts be called holy seeing that he humiliates God through his fasting.

(2) E.V. 'merciful'. Resh Lakish takes **איש חסד** as denoting **חסיד**.

(3) Prov. XI, 17. Resh Lakish takes **גמל** in the sense of, to wean (e.g. Gen. XXI, 8). He refrains from food (Rashi). [Aliter: Resh Lakish considers the one who does not fast as pious on this view the verse is rendered: The pious man doeth good to his own soul, v. Tosaf. s.v. **גמל**.]

(4) He deserves to have no food on which to break his fast.

(5) Observed with the same strictness as the fast of the ninth of Ab.

(6) [The reference is (a) to rain fasts of which some were subject to the stringencies of the ninth of Ab (v. infra 30a). As Babylon could do with a minimum of rain (v. supra) such fasts were not decreed (v. Tosaf s.v. **אין**); (b) To fasts decreed for some visitation. Since there was no Sanhedrin in Babylon they were not treated as public fasts. An exception to this rule is the ninth of Ab which has been decreed for all generations by a Sanhedrin of a former age. v. Me'iri, a.I.]

(7) He weakens himself by fasting and consequently his studies suffer.

(8) Every fast must be explicitly undertaken on the preceding day. **קבלת העני**. In the case where he merges one day's fast into another for which he



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has failed to make that undertaking he is not entitled to recite the **ענינו** prayer (v. P. B. p. 50) since the second day's fast in the absence of the undertaking is considered no fast and can be broken at will (Rashi).

(9) [I.e. is R. Huna's view that a fast that has not been undertaken in the preceding day is considered no fast at all, and consequently may be broken at will, or though the fast prayer is not provided for such a fast, it is nevertheless considered a fast in so far that once begun it has to be continued to the end of the stipulated time (Rashi). For other interpretations v. R. Hananel and R. Gershom.]

(10) [I.e., the question whether fasting by hours is considered a fast has no bearing on it. Huna's case where the individual incidentally merged one day's fast into another without at all intending the second day to be a fast. Where, however, a man vows to fast for a number of hours, the fast indeed may be considered a fast in every respect (Rashi).]

(11) The parallel passage in A.Z. 34a has R. Akiba.

(12) Ganzaka, identified with Shiz S.E. of Lake Urmia, N.W. Persia. V. Obermeyer. p. 10.

(13) Lev. VIII, 33. Aaron we know did put on special priestly garments for the occasion. Cf. Ex. XXIX, 29-30.

(14) [Cf. MS.M.: 'and he who fasts by hours recites the fast prayer'; v. also A.Z. loc. cit.]

(15) To indicate that it was for temporary ministrations only. V. Tosaf. A.Z. 34a.

## Ta'anith 12a

With reference to what you said that one may fast for a matter of hours this only applies if [the man concerned] had not tasted anything until the evening. Abaye said to him: This is then a full fast! — This speaks of a case where the fast was only an after thought.<sup>1</sup>

R. Hisda further said: A fast over which the sun has not set cannot be deemed a fast. An objection was raised against this. The men of the Mishmar fast but do not complete [the day]. [Their fasting] is merely in order to afflict themselves [in sympathy with the community].<sup>2</sup>

Come and hear: R. Eleazar b. Zadok said: I am a descendant of Sena'ah<sup>3</sup> of the tribe of Benjamin; once the [fast of] the ninth of Ab fell on the Sabbath and we postponed it until the day after the Sabbath and we fasted but did not complete the fast because it was our

festive day!<sup>4</sup> — There too the fasting was merely in order to afflict themselves [in sympathy with the community].

Come and hear: R. Johanan [once] said: 'I will fast until I return home'! — There he said this merely in order to evade the hospitality of the house of the Nasi.<sup>5</sup> Samuel said: A fast which one does not undertake before sunset on the previous day is not deemed to be a fast. But what if a man does observe such a fast? — Rabbah b. Shila replied: It may be compared to a pair of bellows filled with wind.<sup>6</sup> At what time should one undertake such a fast? —

Rab said: During the time that one may read the Afternoon Service, and Samuel said, In the course of the Afternoon Tefillah. R. Joseph said: The view of Samuel appears the more reasonable, since it is written in the Scroll of Fasts: Therefore any man who has been subject to a fast previous to this [i.e., the incidence of these festive days] should build himself<sup>7</sup> [by an undertaking]. Does this not refer to an undertaking made during prayer?<sup>8</sup> — No; this only denotes that he is forbidden [to break his fast because of his previous undertaking].

R. Hiyya and R. Simeon b. Rabbi differ on this question. One reads<sup>9</sup> yesar<sup>10</sup> ['he should bind himself by his under-taking'] and the other reads, Yeaser<sup>11</sup> [he is forbidden, i.e., to break his fast]. The one who reads, Yesar, justifies his view in the way we have just stated, but the one who reads, Yeaser, what does this mean? —

It has been taught in the Scroll of Fasts: Any man who is subject to a fast previous to this [incidence of these festive days] is forbidden [to break his fast]. How is this to be understood? If a man undertook to fast on Mondays and Thursdays throughout the year and any of the festive days enumerated in the Scroll of Fasts happens to fall on those days, then if his vow was made previous to our decree his vow overrides our decree, but if

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our decree was made before his vow then our decree overrides his vow.

**Our Rabbis taught:** Until when may one eat and drink [on the night preceding a fast]? Until the rise of dawn; this is the opinion of Rabbi. R. Eliezer b. Simeon says: Until cock crow. Abaye said: This only holds good where a man had not yet finished his meal, but if he had finished his meal he may not eat again. Raba raised an objection against this: If one had completed his meal and rose from the table, he may eat further! — There it speaks of the case where he had not yet removed the [table].<sup>12</sup> Some say, Raba said: This holds good only when he has not gone to sleep, but if he has gone to sleep he may not eat again.

Abaye raised an objection against this: If one had gone to sleep and then got up he may eat again! — There it speaks of the case where he was merely dozing. What constitutes dozing?—

**R. Ashi replied:**

(1) R. Hisda's interpretation of fasting for a matter of hours is this. A man was too occupied for the first half of the day to have a meal and decides that he would end the day without food so as to make it constitute a fast. In such special circumstances the fast is a valid one, though the man had not explicitly undertaken it on the day previous (V. Rashi).

(2) V. Mishnah infra 15b and notes.

(3) Cf. Ezra II, 35. The Gemara reads Sena'ab.

(4) V. infra 26a.

(5) V. Glos.

(6) I.e., of no significance.

(7) The text reads, ייסר.

(8) בצלוי in prayer. ייסר בצלוי an undertaking made during the Minhah Tefillah the day previous.

(9) In the text of the Scroll of Fasts.

(10) ייסר.

(11) יאסר.

(12) The meal is not looked upon as ended.

## Ta'anith 12b

A sleep which is no sleep, a wakefulness which is no wakefulness, he answers when he is called, but cannot recall an argument;

when, however, he is reminded of something he remembers it.

**R. Kahana said in the name of Rab:** An individual who has undertaken a fast is forbidden to wear shoes because we fear that perhaps he has undertaken a public fast.<sup>1</sup> How shall he declare his vow [to be able to wear shoes]?—

**Rabbah b. Shila said:** He should make the following declaration, 'To-morrow I shall observe before Thee a private fast'.

**The Rabbis said to R. Shesheth:** We have seen Rabbis who come to an Assembly on a fast day wearing their shoes. Thereupon he became angry and asked them, Perhaps they even eat?

Abaye and Raba used to come [to the Assembly] wearing shoes<sup>2</sup> without soles.

**Meremar and Mar Zutra used to change the right [shoe] to the left [foot] and the left to the right.<sup>3</sup>**

The scholars of the school of R. Ashi wore their shoes as usual; they were of the same opinion as Samuel who said: In Babylonia except for the Fast of the Ninth of Ab there are no public fasts.<sup>4</sup>

**Rab Judah said in the name of Rab:** One may borrow a fast and repay it [on another day]; When I repeated this [statement] before Samuel he said to me, Did he then take a vow upon himself that he must pay it? — He merely undertook to afflict himself, if he is able he afflicts himself, if not he does not do so.

Some say, Rab Judah said in the name of Rab: One may borrow his fast and repay it. When I repeated this before Samuel he said to me, This is self-evident; even if it is merely a vow, would he not have to pay a vow on the next day or on a later day?

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R. Joshua, the son of R. Idi chanced to be with R. Assi, and after they had prepared in his honor a three-year-old calf<sup>5</sup> they said to him, 'Will the Master partake of it?' He replied. 'I am fasting'. They said to him, 'Let the Master borrow and repay [the fast later]'. Is the Master not in agreement with the view of Rab Judah, who said in the name of Rab: One may borrow a fast and repay it? —

He replied: [Mine] is a fast for a [bad] dream, and Rabbah b. Mehasiah said in the name of R. Hama b. Guriah, in the name of Rab: Fasting is as efficacious for the bad dream as fire is for tow, and upon this R. Hisda commented: And [the fast must be] on the same day; and R. Joseph added: Even if [the day] is the Sabbath. What amends shall he make [for having fasted on the Sabbath]? — He should observe an additional fast.<sup>6</sup>

**MISHNAH.** IF THESE FAST DAYS PASSED AND THERE WAS NO ANSWER TO THEIR PRAYERS, THE BETH DIN ORDAIN UPON THE COMMUNITY THREE FURTHER FASTS; [ON DAYS PRECEDING THESE FASTS] THEY MAY EAT AND DRINK [ONLY] WHILST IT IS STILL DAY, AND THEY MAY NOT [ON THESE FAST DAYS] DO WORK, NOR BATHE, NOR ANOINT THEMSELVES WITH OIL, NOR WEAR SHOES, NOR HAVE MARITAL RELATIONS; AND THE BATHS TOO ARE CLOSED. IF THESE [DAYS] PASSED AND THERE WAS [STILL] NO ANSWER TO THEIR PRAYERS THE BETH DIN ORDAIN UPON THE COMMUNITY A FURTHER SEVEN [FASTS]. MAKING THIRTEEN IN ALL. [IN THIS RESPECT ARE] THE LATTER MORE STRINGENT THAN THE FORMER<sup>7</sup> IN THAT ON THEM THE ALARM IS SOUNDED AND THE SHOPS ARE CLOSED. ON MONDAYS THE SHUTTERS [OF THE SHOPS] ARE OPENED A LITTLE WHEN IT GETS DARK, BUT ON THURSDAYS THEY ARE PERMITTED<sup>8</sup> [THE WHOLE DAY]<sup>9</sup> IN HONOR OF THE SABBATH. IF THESE PASSED AND THERE WAS [STILL] NO ANSWER TO THEIR PRAYERS THEN BUSINESS IS RESTRICTED AS ALSO IS BUILDING, PLANTING, BETROTHAL AND MARRIAGE; AND MEN

GREET ONE ANOTHER AS PEOPLE LABORING UNDER DIVINE DISPLEASURE. THE YEHDIM<sup>10</sup> BEGIN THEIR FASTING ANEW AND CONTINUE UNTIL THE END OF NISAN; IF NISAN PASSES AND RAIN FALLS THIS IS A SIGN OF DIVINE ANGER, AS IT IS WRITTEN, IS IT NOT WHEAT HARVEST TODAY, ETC.<sup>11</sup>

**GEMARA.** It is reasonable that all the other restrictions [should be forbidden] because they give pleasure, but why work which is a source of pain? —

R. Hisda replied in the name of R. Jeremiah b. Abba: Scripture says. Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders.<sup>12</sup> This means that [the fast day is to be treated] like a solemn assembly. Just as it is not permissible to do work on a solemn assembly it is likewise not permissible to do work on a fast day. Perhaps just as on the solemn assembly work is forbidden from the preceding evening so too on a fast day work should close on the preceding evening? —

R. Zeira replied: R. Jeremiah b. Abba explained the matter to me thus: Scripture says, Gather the elders'; it is to be like a gathering of elders, as the elders foregather by day so too the fast commences on the day. Perhaps [it commences] from noon? —

R. Shisha b. Idi replied: This is a support for R. Huna who said: The assembly [of the community on a fast day] takes place in the morning. How do they spend [the day]? —

Abaye replied: From morning to midday they look into the affairs of the city;<sup>13</sup> from then onwards they read for a quarter of the day from the Torah and the Prophets and the rest of the day [is spent] in praying for mercy, as it is said, And they stood up in their place, and read in the book of the Law of the Lord their God a fourth part of the day; and another fourth part they confessed and prostrated themselves before the Lord their God.<sup>14</sup>

# TA'ANIS – 2a-31a

- (1) And therefore he must observe the fast with all the strictness of a public fast. V. supra 10a.
- (2) [MS.M 'Used to wear shoes.' V. Tosaf. s.v. ״בא״.]
- (3) To show that they had not forgotten that it was a fast day.
- (4) V. note on supra 11 b.
- (5) Another explanation is: a calf the third born of its mother.
- (6) Lit., 'He should observe a fast for his fast'.
- (7) [Var lec., In what respect are the latter more stringent than the former? in that on them, etc.]
- (8) V. Gemara.
- (9) V. Mishnah text in the Gemara.
- (10) V. supra p. 44, n. 9.
- (11) I Sam. XII, 17.
- (12) Joel I, 14.
- (13) To find out if the citizens were guilty of any dishonesty or whether in the city there were men of violence (Maimonides). V. Buchler, Moses Maimonides, viii Centenary Memorial Volume, ed. by I. Epstein, pp. 13-55.
- (14) Neh. IX, 3.

## Ta'anith 13a

Perhaps the order of the day is to be reversed? — This cannot possibly be so, seeing that it is written, Then were assembled unto me everyone that trembled at the words of the God of Israel, because of the faithlessness of them of the captivity, etc.;<sup>1</sup> and then follows, And at the evening offering I arose from my fasting... and spread out my hands unto the Lord.<sup>2</sup>

Rafram b. Papa said in the name of R. Hisda: On any fast ordained on account of mourning, as for example the Ninth of Ab and a mourner, it is forbidden to bathe in warm or in cold water, but on any fast ordained merely to prevent indulgence in pleasure, as for example, a public fast day, bathing in warm water is forbidden but permissible in cold water.

R. Idi b. Abin said: We too have learnt: **AND THE BATHS TOO ARE CLOSED?** Abaye said to him: If it were forbidden to bathe even in cold water, then it should have stated, 'and the rivers are stopped up'! —

R. Shisha the son of R. Idi replied: This was the difficulty which my father felt. [He

argued]. Let us see: the Mishnah already states, **IT IS NOT PERMISSIBLE TO BATHE**, why does it add **AND THE BATHS TOO ARE CLOSED?** Evidently from this is to be concluded that [bathing] in warm water is forbidden but permissible in cold water. Shall we say that the following supports [R. Hisda]: 'All those who have to take the ritual bath immerse in the usual way both on the Ninth of Ab and on the Day of Atonement'. In what [water is here meant]? Is it in warm [water]? Is then [ritual] immersion in warm water permissible, seeing that such water must of a necessity be drawn<sup>4</sup> [and is therefore unfit for immersion]? It must therefore be in cold [water]; and yet it is only those who have to take the ritual bath who may [immerse] but others may not?<sup>5</sup> —

Said R. Hana b. Kattina [No:] This [passage] has special reference to the hot springs of Tiberias. If this is so how is the concluding statement to be understood?

R. Hanina, the Deputy High Priest said: Our House of God merits that a man should for its sake forego an immersion once a year.<sup>6</sup> Now should you say that bathing in cold water is permissible, let him then bathe in cold water! — R. Papa replied: [It speaks] of a place where cold water is not available.

Come and hear: When the Rabbis declared that it is not permissible to do work [on a public fast day] this applies only to the day but not to the night [preceding]; and when they declared that it is not permissible to wear shoes, this applies only within the city, but on the road it is permissible. How should a man act? When he sets out on a journey he puts his shoes on, but when he enters the city he removes them. And when they declared that it is not permissible to bathe they meant the whole body but he may wash his face, hands or feet. You will find that the same applies to one placed under the ban and also to the mourner. Now does not [this last statement] imply that they are subject to all [the restrictions mentioned previously]? This being so, of what [water does the Baraita]



# TA'ANIS – 2a-31a

## Ta'anith 13b

Speak? Shall we say warm water? Is it then permissible [for a mourner] to wash his face, hands or feet [in warm water]? Did not R. Shesheth say: The mourner may not put even his finger into warm water? Therefore [it must speak of] cold water!<sup>7</sup> —

No; it refers indeed to warm water, and as for your difficulty in interpreting, 'and the same applies to one placed under the ban and also to the mourner', [you must take] this to refer only to the remaining restrictions<sup>8</sup> [and not to bathing].

Come and hear: R. Abba the Priest said in the name of R. Jose the Priest: It happened that the sons of R. Jose b. Hanina died and he bathed in cold water throughout the seven days [of mourning]! —

In his case one bereavement followed close on the other. For it has been taught: Where a man suffers one bereavement close upon another and his hair weighs heavy upon him he may thin them out with a razor and he may also wash his clothes in water.

R. Hisda said: With a razor but not with scissors, in water but not in natron nor in sand.

Raba said: A mourner may bathe in cold water all the seven days in the same way as he may partake of meat and wine. An objection was raised against this:

(1) Ezra IX, 4.

(2) Ezra IX, 5.

(3) E.g. a woman after menstruation or confinement. (V. Num. XIX, 17.)

(4) Ritual immersion takes place only either in running water i.e., in a stream, or in a natural spring or in a ritual bath the waters of which are directly connected with them. To be warmed, waters would have to be 'drawn', and this is not permissible.

(5) This supports R. Hisda.

(6) On the ninth of Ab because of national mourning.

(7) [This shows that on a public fast day, as in the case of a mourner, bathing in cold water is forbidden in opposition to R. Hisda.]

(8) I.e., working and wearing shoes.

A girl who has reached adolescence<sup>1</sup> may not make herself unsightly during the days of mourning for her father.<sup>2</sup> This implies that a girl who has not reached adolescence may [make herself unsightly]. And in which respect [may she neglect herself]? By not bathing. [This being so], in what water? Shall I say in warm? [Then how can you say that] a girl who has not reached adolescence may not neglect herself [in this respect]? Did not R. Hisda say: A mourner may not put even his finger in warm water? Therefore [it must speak of] cold water!<sup>3</sup> —

No; [it speaks of] painting the eyelids and dyeing the hair. Shall we say that the following supports Raba: R. Abba the Priest said in the name of R. Jose the Priest: It happened that the sons of R. Jose b. Hanina died and he bathed in cold water throughout the seven days [of mourning]. The answer is, in his case one bereavement followed close on the other. For it has been taught: Where a man suffers one bereavement close upon another and his hair weighs heavy upon him he may thin them out with a razor and he may also wash his clothes in water. R. Hisda said: With a razor, but not with scissors, in water, but not in natron, nor in sand nor in aloe. Some say. Raba said: The mourner may not [bathe] in cold water all the seven days. Why this differentiation [between bathing in cold water] and partaking of meat and wine?<sup>4</sup> —

Of these [the mourner] may partake in order to counteract his fear.<sup>5</sup> Shall we say that support may be adduced from the following passage: A girl who has reached adolescence may not make herself un-sightly [during the days of mourning for her father]. This implies that one who has not reached adolescence may? And in what respect may she neglect herself? [By not bathing]. [This being so], in what water? Is it in warm water? Then how can you say that a girl who has reached adolescence may not neglect herself in this respect? Did not R. Hisda say: A mourner

## TA'ANIS – 2a-31a

may not put even his finger in warm water?  
Therefore [it must speak of] cold water! —

No; it speaks of painting the eyelids and dyeing the hair. R. Hisda said this proves<sup>6</sup> that a mourner is forbidden to wash his clothes throughout the seven days of mourning.<sup>7</sup> The law is, a mourner is forbidden to bathe his whole body either in warm or in cold water all the seven days; his face, hands and feet he may not [wash] in warm water but in cold water he may; anointing is not permitted at all; if, however, it is to remove the dirt it is permissible. Where is the prayer for the fast days inserted?<sup>9</sup>

Rab Judah brought his son R. Isaac [to the school]<sup>10</sup> and he expounded as follows: An individual who has taken upon himself a fast should recite the prayer for the fast day. And where does he insert it? Between the benediction for 'Redemption' and the benediction for 'Healing'.<sup>11</sup>

R. Isaac demurred to this [saying]: Is it proper that an individual should insert [in his prayers] a special benediction for himself? Therefore said R. Isaac: [He includes it] in the benediction 'Thou hearkenest to the prayer'.<sup>12</sup> And so, too, said R. Shesheth: [In the benediction] 'Thou hearkenest to the prayer'. An objection was raised [against this]: The only difference between [the Order of Prayer] of an individual on a fast day and a community is that the former recites eighteen benedictions and the latter recite nineteen. Now what is [meant by] an 'individual' and what by a 'community'? Shall we say that [by] an 'individual' [is meant] literally and [by] 'community' the Representative of the community [leading in prayer]?<sup>13</sup> If so, are the benedictions [recited by the latter] nineteen? Are they not rather twenty-four?<sup>14</sup> Therefore the [Baraita quoted] should read thus: The only difference between an individual who has undertaken a private fast and an individual who has undertaken a public fast is that the former recites eighteen [benedictions] and the latter nineteen.<sup>15</sup> From

which one may infer that an individual may insert a special benediction for himself.<sup>16</sup>

No; [by 'community' is definitely meant], the Representative of the Community and as to your difficulty, that the Representative recites twenty-four benedictions [and not nineteen]. [this refers] to the first three fasts when the twenty-four are not [recited]. But is this so? Is it not stated that the only difference between the first three [fasts] and the middle three [fasts] is that work is permissible on the former and forbidden on the latter? Does this not imply that with regard to the recital of the twenty-four [benedictions] both are alike?—

The Tanna [of the Baraita] has stated only one [difference] and has left out [others] — What other differences has he left out besides this one?<sup>17</sup> And further, does he not explicitly state: The only difference, etc.? —

The Tanna speaks only of differences with regard to things forbidden on the fast days and not [of differences with regard to] prayers. And if you like, I can say that even on the middle three fasts the twenty-four benedictions are also not recited. But is this so? Has it not been taught: 'The only difference between the second three [fasts] and the last seven is that on the latter the alarm is sounded and the shops are closed.' Does this not imply that in all other respects they are alike? And should you reply that here too [the Tanna] stated one difference only and left out [others], I would object on the ground that it explicitly states, 'The only difference'! —

Do you assume the expression, 'The only difference, etc.'

(1) בוגרת Twelve and a half years of age plus one day. opposed to a נערה twelve years plus one day old.

(2) In order not to prejudice her chances of marriage because of her unsightliness.

(3) [And yet it is forbidden to a girl who has not reached adolescence to bathe in it during her mourning, which contradicts Raba.]

# TA'ANIS – 2a-31a

- (4) Which is permissible for the mourner.
- (5) I.e., to counteract his grief.
- (6) Which is in support of Raba. Cf. P. 59, n. 3 *mutatis mutandis*.
- (7) [Washing clothes is placed on a par with painting eyelids and dyeing hair (Rashi). This passage is omitted in one MS. v. D.S. a.l.]
- (8) תפלת ענני v. P.B. p. 50.
- (9) [This sentence is omitted in MS.B. v. D.S.]
- (10) [אדבריה Lit., 'to lead'. Various meanings have been given to the phrase: (a) Took him for a walk (Rashi. Bezah 29a); (b) Put the words in his mouth (R. Hananel, *ibid.*) i.e., prepared for him the exposition; (c) Gave him permission (Epstein J.N. MGWJ, LXIII, p. 258, adopted by Malter a.I.)
- (11) I.e., between the seventh and the eighth benedictions.
- (12) I.e., in the sixteenth benediction.
- (13) The Reader.
- (14) V. *infra* 15a.
- (15) V. *supra* 12b.
- (16) In opposition to R. Isaac.
- (17) Surely he would not stop short of just one item.

## Ta'anith 14a

to denote the absolute exclusion of any other differences? Has he not left out [mention of the taking out of] the Ark?<sup>1</sup> — [As for the taking out of the] Ark this cannot be considered an omission because [the Baraitha] enumerates only things done in private but not things done in public.

R. Ashi said: This<sup>2</sup> may also be deduced from our Mishnah where it is learnt: **IN WHAT RESPECT ARE THE LATTER MORE STRINGENT THAN THE FORMER?<sup>3</sup> IN THAT ON THEM THE ALARM IS SOUNDED AND THE SHOPS ARE CLOSED.** This would imply that in all other respects they are alike. And should you reply that here too [the Mishnah] has stated only one [difference] and left out [others].

I would object, the Mishnah explicitly states, **IN WHAT RESPECT ARE THE LATTER, etc.**<sup>4</sup> — Do you assume the expression, 'IN WHAT RESPECT ARE THE LATTER, etc. literally? Has he not also left out [mention of the taking out of] the Ark? — [As for the taking out of] the Ark this cannot be considered an omission because he mentions

it in the next chapter. If now that you have arrived at this conclusion [the difference in respect of the recital of] the twenty-four benedictions is also no omission since he mentions it [also] in the next chapter. What is the final decision [with regard to the insertion of the special benediction for fast days]?<sup>5</sup>

R. Samuel b. Sasartai said, and so too R. Hiyya b. Ashi in the name of Rab: [He inserts it] between 'Redemption' and 'Healing'. R. Ashi said in the name of R. Jannai, the son of R. Ishmael: In [the benediction] 'Who hearkenest unto prayer. One Baraitha teaches: Pregnant women and nursing mothers fast on the first fasts but not on the last; another teaches: They fast on the last but not on the first; and yet another teaches: They fast neither on the first nor on the last! — R. Ashi said: Take it that they fast on the middle set of fasts and in this way all [three Baraithas] will be reconciled.<sup>6</sup>

**IN WHAT RESPECT ARE THE LATTER MORE STRINGENT THAN THE FORMER? IN THAT ON THEM THE ALARM IS SOUNDED AND THE SHOPS ARE CLOSED.** How do we sound the alarm? —

Rab Judah said: By the Shofar.<sup>7</sup> Rab Judah the son of R. Samuel b. Shilath in the name of Rab said: By [the recital of the] 'Anenu.<sup>8</sup> The scholars assumed that the authority who said by the 'Anenu was opposed to the sounding of the alarm by the Shofar and that the one who said by the Shofar was opposed to the recital of the 'Anenu. But has it not been taught: No less than seven fasts are ordained upon the community upon each of which the alarm is sounded eighteen times; [as] a sign to remember this take Jericho. Now at Jericho the Shofar [was used to give the alarm]. This would be a refutation of him who said: By 'Anenu [only]! Hence [we must conclude] that all are agreed that the sounding of the Shofar constitutes the sounding of an alarm, and that they differ only with regard to [the recital of] the 'Anenu; one takes the view that it

# TA'ANIS – 2a-31a

constitutes the sounding of an alarm, and the other that it does not.

The authority who says that the recital of the 'Anenu constitutes the sounding of an alarm [will hold] how much more so does the sounding of the Shofar, but the authority who says, 'by the Shofar', would exclude the recital of the 'Anenu. But has it not been taught: In the case of all other visitations that break out [in the world], as for example. Itch, Locusts, Flies, Hornets, Gnats and the invasion by Snakes and Scorpions they did not sound the alarm, but they cried aloud? And as crying can only be by mouth, the sounding of the alarm must consequently be by the Shofar! —

This forms a subject of dispute amongst the Tannaim, for it has been learnt: In the case of these [calamities] they sound the alarm even on the Sabbath; when a city is surrounded by a ravaging troop, or is in danger of inundation by a river or when a ship is foundering on the sea, R. Jose said: [We may sound the alarm to summon] help but not for intercession! Now with what [is the alarm sounded]? Shall we say by the Shofar? Is then the sounding of the Shofar on the Sabbath permissible? It must therefore be by the recital of the 'Anenu, and this is termed: 'Sounding the alarm'. This proves it. In the time of R. Judah the Prince<sup>9</sup> there was distress<sup>10</sup>

(1) Which was taken out during the last seven fasts but not during the intermediary, v. infra 15a.

(2) That the twenty-four benedictions are recited also during the middle three fasts.

(3) ['THE FORMER' means those immediately preceding the middle three fasts which, taken together with what follows, seems to imply that the difference is limited to the points enumerated.

(4) [Where as explained in the Gemara infra 15b it applies only to the last fast days (Rashi). R. Hananel explains differently.]

(5) I.e., by an individual (Rashi).

(6) The reconciliation of the conflicting Baraitas is arrived at in the following manner. Call the three groups of fasts A (the first three), B (the middle three) and C (the last seven). In the first Baraita B is first with regard to C; in the second

B is last with regard to A; and in the third B is the middle one.

(7) V. Glos.

(8) The fast prayer. v. P.B. p. 50.

(9) Text reads, Judah Nesi'ah. Nesi'ah, is the title by which the Patriarch Judah III (end of third century) was known.

(10) Not a drought, but some other kind of visitation.

## Ta'anith 14b

Ta'anith 14b ; he ordained thirteen fast days and their prayer was not answered. He thought of ordaining additional fasts but R. Ammi said to him, 'Did not [the Sages] declare we should not trouble the community unduly'.

Said R. Abba the son of R. Hiyya b. Abba, 'R. Ammi [in saying this] was studying his own interests',<sup>1</sup> for thus did R. Hiyya b. Abba say in the name of R. Johanan: The statement [cited by R. Ammi] holds good only so far [as fasts for] rain are concerned, but in the case of other forms of visitation the fasts are continued until their prayers are answered from heaven. It has been taught to the same effect: When they [the Sages] instituted the order of fasts for [twice] three days, and then a further seven days, they intended these to be applicable only in the case of fasts for rain, but in all other forms of visitation the fasts are to be continued until their prayers are answered from heaven. Shall we say that this will be a refutation of R. Ammi? —

R. Ammi can answer you: The Tannaim are divided on this question. For it has been taught: Not more than thirteen fasts are ordained upon the community because we should not trouble the community unduly; this is the opinion of Rabbi. R. Simeon b. Gamaliel says: This is not the real reason<sup>2</sup> [why no additional fasts are ordained] but it is because after these thirteen fasts the time of rainfall has gone.

The inhabitants of Nineveh<sup>3</sup> sent to enquire of Rabbi: How should we who need rain even in the Tammuz cycle act?<sup>4</sup> Are we to consider



## TA'ANIS – 2a-31a

ourselves individuals and [insert the special prayer for rain] in ‘Who hearkenest unto prayer’. or shall we consider ourselves a community and [insert it] in the ‘Blessing of the Years’?<sup>5</sup> He sent [word] back to them: Consider yourselves individuals and [insert the prayer] in, ‘Who hearkenest unto prayer’.

An objection was raised [against this]: R. Judah said: When did this order of fasts apply? Only at such times when the seasons of the year were normal<sup>6</sup> and Israel dwelt in their own land, but to-day all depends upon the years, the countries and the seasons! He replied:<sup>7</sup> You cite a Baraitha in refutation of Rabbi; Rabbi is a Tanna and has the right to differ [from a Baraitha]. What is the final decision [with regard to this matter]? —

R. Nahman said: [The blessing is inserted] in the Blessing of the Years. R. Shesheth said: In ‘Who hearkenest unto prayer’. The Law is [it is inserted in]. ‘Who hearkenest unto prayer’.

**ON MONDAYS THE SHUTTERS [OF THE SHOPS] ARE OPENED A LITTLE WHEN IT GETS DARK; BUT ON THURSDAYS THEY ARE PERMITTED<sup>8</sup> THE WHOLE DAY IN HONOR OF THE SABBATH.** The question was raised: How did [the Mishnah] teach? Was it that on Mondays the shutters are opened a little when it gets dark and on Thursdays they are opened [a little] during the whole day in honor of the Sabbath, or perhaps, that on Mondays they are open a little and on Thursdays they are open wide for the whole day? —

Come and hear: It has been taught: On Mondays they are opened slightly till the evening and on Thursdays they remain wide open the whole day in honor of the Sabbath; should there be two doors then one is kept open and the other remains closed; should there be a stand<sup>9</sup> in front of the door he may open [the door] in the usual way without any compunction.

**IF THESE ‘PASSED WITHOUT THEIR PRAYER BEING ANSWERED THEN**

**BUSINESS DEALINGS ARE RESTRICTED AS WELL AS BUILDING AND PLANTING.** It has been taught: By BUILDING [is to be understood] building for joyous purposes, and by PLANTING, planting for joyous purposes. What is ‘building’ for joyous purposes? — Building a house for the marriage-feast of one's own son. What is ‘planting’ for joyous purposes? When one erects a royal banqueting hall.<sup>10</sup>

**AND GREETING.** Our Rabbis taught: Scholars do not greet one another at all; the greetings of the ignorant are reciprocated in an undertone in a solemn manner; people are seated covered in mourner's fashion and like those placed under the ban, and like men laboring under Divine displeasure, until mercy is shown to them from heaven.

R. Eleazar said: A prominent man should not fall upon his face<sup>11</sup> unless he is confident that he will be answered like Joshua. as it is said, And the Lord said unto Joshua. ‘Get thee up; wherefore now art thou fallen upon thy face?’<sup>12</sup>

R. Eleazar further said: A prominent man should not put on sackcloth unless he is confident that he will be answered like Jehoram, the Son of Ahab, as it is said, And it came to pass, when the king heard the words of the woman, that he rent his clothes — now he was passing by upon the wall — and the people looked, and, behold, he had sackcloth within upon his flesh, etc.<sup>13</sup>

R. Eleazar further said: Not everyone [is answered] through rending his garments nor is everyone [answered] through falling [on his face]. Moses and Aaron [were answered] through falling [on the face], Joshua and Caleb through rending [their] garments. Moses and Aaron through falling [on the face]; for it is written, Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces.<sup>14</sup> Joshua and Caleb through rending [their] garments, for it is written, And Joshua the son of Num and Caleb ... rent their clothes.<sup>15</sup>

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R. Ze'ira and some say, R. Samuel b. Nahmani demurred to this. Had it been written [in the verse] 'Joshua'. it would be as you say, but seeing that the verse reads 'And Joshua', they may have done both.<sup>16</sup>

R. Eleazar further said: Not all [will in the Messianic era] rise [before Israel], nor will all prostrate themselves; kings will rise and princes prostrate themselves; 'Kings will rise', for it is written, Thus saith the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, his Holy One

- (1) Because he did not wish to fast.
- (2) Lit., 'not of the same denomination'. Cf. Shebu. 3b.
- (3) [Identified by Klein, S. (JQR. N. S. II, p. 551) with Nawa north of the Gaulan in Transjordan. The climatic conditions of the country and the stony nature of the territory rendered it necessary for them to have rain even in the summer season.]
- (4) Heb. Tekufah, v. Glos.
- (5) V. P.B. p. 47.
- (6) I.e., divided according to the work regularly done in the fields-sowing in Marcheshvan and reaping in Nisan.
- (7) [To be omitted with MS.M.]
- (8) V. supra p. 55. n. 3.
- (9) The stand obscures the door and it is not easily visible whether it is open or closed.
- (10) For his son's wedding.
- (11) Recite the Tahanum. v. P.B. p. 57.
- (12) Josh. VII, 10; v. Meg., Sonc. ed. p. 137ff and notes.
- (13) II Kings VI, 30.
- (14) Num. Xlv, 5.
- (15) Ibid. v. 6.
- (16) The 'waw' ('and') connects it with the previous verse and conveys the meaning that Joshua and Caleb both rent their garments in the same way as they both fell on their faces.

## Ta'anith 15a

to him who is despised of men, to him who is abhorred of nations, to a servant of rulers; kings shall see and arise;<sup>1</sup> 'and princes will prostrate themselves,' for it is written, Princes and they shall prostrate themselves.

R. Ze'ira and some say R. Samuel b. Nahmani demurred to this. Had it been written in the verse, 'And princes shall prostrate themselves', it would be as you say, but seeing that the verse reads, 'Princes and

they shall prostrate themselves,' they will perhaps do both.

R. Nahman b. Isaac declared: I say furthermore, Not all are destined to share in the light nor all in the gladness. Light shall be for the righteous and gladness for the upright. 'Light for the righteous', for it is written, Light is sown for the righteous;<sup>2</sup> And gladness for the upright'. for it is written, And gladness for the upright in heart.<sup>2</sup>

## CHAPTER II

*MISHNAH.* WHAT IS THE ORDER [OF SERVICE] FOR FAST DAYS?<sup>3</sup> THE ARK IS TAKEN OUT TO THE OPEN SPACE<sup>4</sup> OF THE CITY, WOOD ASHES ARE PLACED ON THE ARK, ON THE HEAD OF THE NASI<sup>5</sup> AND ON THE HEAD OF THE AB-BETH-DIN.<sup>6</sup> EVERYONE ELSE PUTS ASHES ON HIS OWN HEAD; THE ELDER AMONG THEM ADDRESSES THEM WITH WORDS OF ADMONITION [TO REPENTANCE] THUS, OUR BRETHREN, SCRIPTURE DOES NOT SAY OF THE PEOPLE OF NINEVEH, AND GOD SAW THEIR SACKCLOTH AND THEIR FASTING, BUT, AND GOD SAW THEIR WORKS, THAT THEY TURNED FROM THEIR EVIL WAY;<sup>7</sup> AND IN THE PROPHETS IT IS SAID, AND REND YOUR HEART AND NOT YOUR GARMENTS.<sup>8</sup>

WHEN THEY STAND UP TO PRAY THEY PLACE [AS READER] BEFORE THE ARK AN OLD MAN CONVERSANT [WITH THE PRAYERS], WHO HAS CHILDREN AND WHOSE HOUSE IS EMPTY [OF FOOD], SO THAT HIS HEART IS CONCENTRATED ON HIS PRAYER; HE RECITES BEFORE THEM TWENTY-FOUR BENEDICTIONS, THE EIGHTEEN RECITED DAILY, TO WHICH HE ADDS SIX AS FOLLOWS, ZIKRONOTH,<sup>9</sup> SHOFAROTH,<sup>10</sup> AND [THESE PSALMS]: IN MY DISTRESS I CALLED UNTO THE LORD;<sup>11</sup> I WILL LIFT UP MINE EYES UNTO THE MOUNTAINS, ETC.;<sup>12</sup> OUT OF THE DEPTHS HAVE I CALLED THEE, O LORD;<sup>13</sup> A PRAYER OF THE AFFLICTED WHEN HE FAINTETH.<sup>14</sup>

# TA'ANIS – 2a-31a

R. JUDAH SAYS: HE NEED NOT RECITE THE ZIKRONOTH AND SHOFAROTH, BUT INSTEAD HE SHOULD RECITE THE FOLLOWING SCRIPTURAL, PASSAGES, IF THERE BE IN THE LAND FAMINE, IF THERE BE PESTILENCE;<sup>15</sup> THE WORD OF THE LORD THAT CAME TO JEREMIAH CONCERNING THE DROUGHTS;<sup>16</sup> AND HE ENDS EACH [OF THE ADDITIONAL SIX] SECTIONS WITH ITS APPROPRIATE CONCLUDING BENEDICTION.

THE FIRST HE CONCLUDES WITH, 'HE WHO ANSWERED ABRAHAM ON MT. MORIAH, HE SHALL ANSWER YOU AND HEARKEN THIS DAY TO THE VOICE OF YOUR CRY. BLESSED ART THOU O LORD WHO REDEEMEST ISRAEL.

THE SECOND HE CONCLUDES WITH, 'HE WHO ANSWERED OUR FATHERS AT THE RED SEA, HE SHALL ANSWER YOU AND HEARKEN THIS DAY TO THE VOICE OF YOUR CRY. BLESSED ART THOU O LORD WHO REMEMBEREST ALL FORGOTTEN THINGS.

THE THIRD HE CONCLUDES WITH, HE WHO ANSWERED JOSHUA IN GILGAL, HE SHALL ANSWER YOU AND HEARKEN THIS DAY TO THE VOICE OF YOUR CRY. BLESSED ART THOU O LORD WHO HEAREST THE TRUMPET BLAST.

THE FOURTH HE CONCLUDES WITH, 'HE WHO ANSWERED SAMUEL IN MIZPAH, HE SHALL ANSWER YOU AND HEARKEN THIS DAY TO THE VOICE OF YOUR CRY. BLESSED ART THOU O LORD WHO HEARKENEST TO CRIES.

THE FIFTH HE CONCLUDES WITH, 'HE WHO ANSWERED ELIJAH ON MT. CARMEL, HE SHALL ANSWER YOU AND HEARKEN THIS DAY TO THE VOICE OF YOUR CRY. BLESSED ART THOU O LORD WHO HEARKENEST UNTO PRAYER.

THE SIXTH HE CONCLUDES WITH, 'HE WHO ANSWERED JONAH IN THE BELLY OF

THE FISH, HE SHALL ANSWER YOU AND HEARKEN THIS DAY TO THE VOICE OF YOUR CRY. BLESSED ART THOU O LORD WHO ANSWEREST IN TIME OF TROUBLE.

THE SEVENTH<sup>17</sup> HE CONCLUDES WITH, 'HE WHO ANSWERED DAVID AND SOLOMON HIS SON IN JERUSALEM, HE SHALL ANSWER YOU AND HEARKEN THIS DAY TO THE VOICE OF YOUR CRY. BLESSED ART THOU O LORD WHO HAST MERCY UPON THE LAND. IT HAPPENED

- (1) Isa. XLIX, 7.
- (2) Ps. XCVII, 11.
- (3) For rain.
- (4) According to Krauss (Syn. Alt. pp. 140-1) it was an open space in front of the synagogue.
- (5) Head of the Great Sanhedrin in Jerusalem.
- (6) Lit., 'Father of the Beth din', generally taken to denote the Vice-President of the Great Sanhedrin and next in dignity to the Nasi. V. Hor., Sonc. ed. p. 101, n. 6.
- (7) Jonah III, 10.
- (8) Joel II, 13.
- (9) Lit., 'remembrances'. The term is applied to the second section of the Musaf for the New Year which consists of scriptural verses describing the mindfulness of God for man. The section ends with the prayer that God may show his mindfulness of Israel in their present calamity. Cf. R.H. 32a.
- (10) Lit., 'trumpets'. The term applied to the third section of the Musaf of Rosh Hashanah consisting of scriptural verses which speak of God proclaiming in thunder-notes a message to the world and especially to Israel. The section concludes with the prayer for the great trumpet to be sounded heralding the redemption of Israel. Cf. R.H. 32a.
- (11) Ps. CXX.
- (12) Ps. CXXI.
- (13) Ps. CXXX.
- (14) Ps. CII.
- (15) I Kings VIII, 37-41.
- (16) Jer. XIV, 1-10.
- (17) V. Gemara.

## Ta'anith 15b

IN THE DAYS OF R. HALAFTA AND R. HANINA B. TRADYON THAT A MAN STEPPED BEFORE THE ARK AND COMPLETED THE ENTIRE BENEDICTION AND THEY DID NOT RESPOND, 'AMEN'.<sup>1</sup> [THE SYNAGOGUE ATTENDANT CALLED

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OUT], SOUND A TEK'AH, PRIESTS, SOUND A TEK'AH.<sup>2</sup> [THEN THE READER EXCLAIMED], HE WHO ANSWERED ABRAHAM OUR FATHER ON MT. MORIAH, HE SHALL ANSWER YOU, AND HEarken THIS DAY TO THE VOICE OF YOUR CRY. [THE SYNAGOGUE ATTENDANT CONTINUED], SOUND A TERU'AH,<sup>3</sup> CHILDREN OF AARON, SOUND A TERU'AH. [THEN THE READER EXCLAIMED], HE WHO ANSWERED OUR FATHERS AT THE RED SEA, HE SHALL ANSWER YOU AND HEarken THIS DAY TO THE VOICE OF YOUR CRY.

AND WHEN THE MATTER CAME UP BEFORE THE WISE, THEY DECLARED, THIS<sup>4</sup> WAS OUR ORDER OF PROCEDURE ONLY AT THE EASTERN GATES AND ON THE TEMPLE MOUNT.<sup>5</sup>

ON THE FIRST THREE [RAIN]<sup>6</sup> FASTS THE MEN OF THE MISHMAR<sup>7</sup> FAST BUT DO NOT COMPLETE THEIR FAST, AND THE MEN OF THE BETH-AB<sup>8</sup> DO NOT FAST AT ALL.

ON THE SECOND THREE [RAIN FASTS]<sup>9</sup> THE MEN OF THE MISHMAR FAST AND COMPLETE THEIR FAST AND THE MEN OF THE BETH-AB FAST BUT DO NOT COMPLETE THEIR FAST; ON THE LAST SEVEN<sup>9</sup> BOTH FAST AND COMPLETE THEIR FAST; THIS IS THE OPINION OF R. JOSHUA.

THE SAGES, HOWEVER, SAY: ON THE FIRST THREE FASTS NEITHER FAST AT ALL, ON THE SECOND THREE, THE MEN OF THE MISHMAR FAST AND DO NOT COMPLETE THEIR FAST; BUT THE MEN OF THE BETH-AB DO NOT FAST AT ALL; ON THE LAST SEVEN, THE MEN OF THE MISHMAR FAST AND COMPLETE THEIR FAST, AND THE MEN OF THE BETH-AB FAST BUT DO NOT COMPLETE THEIR FAST. THE MEN OF THE MISHMAR ARE PERMITTED TO DRINK WINE IN THE EVENINGS BUT NOT DURING THE DAY,<sup>10</sup> BUT THE MEN OF THE BETH-AB MAY NOT [DRINK WINE] EITHER ON THE DAY OR ON THE PRECEDING EVENING. BOTH THE MEN OF THE MISHMAR AND

THE MEN OF THE MA'AMAD<sup>11</sup> MAY NOT CUT THEIR HAIR NOR WASH THEIR CLOTHES, BUT ON A THURSDAY THEY MAY IN HONOR OF THE SABBATH. THE RESTRICTION AGAINST MOURNING ON THE DAYS ENUMERATED IN THE SCROLL OF FASTS<sup>12</sup> APPLIES EQUALLY TO THE PRECEDING DAY BUT NOT TO THE DAY FOLLOWING.

R. JOSE SAYS: IT IS FORBIDDEN [TO MOURN] BOTH ON THE PRECEDING DAY AND) THE DAY FOLLOWING. AS FOR FASTING IT IS PERMITTED ON THE PRECEDING DAY AND ON THE DAY FOLLOWING.

R. JOSE SAYS: IT IS FORBIDDEN ON THE PRECEDING DAY BUT PERMITTED ON THE DAY FOLLOWING. WE DO NOT ORDAIN UPON THE COMMUNITY A FAST TO COMMENCE ON A THURSDAY IN ORDER NOT TO CAUSE A RISE IN THE MARKET PRICES. HENCE THE FIRST THREE FASTS ARE HELD [IN THIS ORDER], MONDAY, THURSDAY, AND MONDAY; THE SECOND THREE, THURSDAY, MONDAY, AND THURSDAY; R. JOSE SAYS: JUST AS THE FIRST THREE [FASTS] SHOULD NOT COMMENCE ON A THURSDAY SO TOO NEITHER THE SECOND [THREE] NOR THE LAST [SEVEN].

WE DO NOT ORDAIN UPON THE COMMUNITY A FAST ON NEW MOON, ON HANUKKAH, OR ON PURIM, BUT IF THEY HAD ALREADY BEGUN [A SERIES OF FASTS AND ONE OF THESE FESTIVE DAYS INTERVENED] THEY DO NOT INTERRUPT [THEIR FASTS]; THIS IS THE OPINION OF RABBAN GAMALIEL.

R. MEIR SAID: EVEN THOUGH R. GAMALIEL IS OF THE OPINION THAT THE [FASTS] SHOULD NOT BE INTERRUPTED HE YET AGREES THAT THEY SHOULD NOT COMPLETE THEIR FASTS. AND THE SAME APPLIES TO THE NINTH OF AB SHOULD IT FALL ON A FRIDAY.



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**GEMARA. WHAT IS THE ORDER [OF SERVICES] FOR FAST DAYS? THE ARK IS TAKEN** out, etc. Does all this apply to the first six fasts? If so, is there not a contradiction raised against this? [For it has been taught]: On the first three and also on the second three [fasts] they enter the synagogue and pray there in the same way as they pray all the year round, but on the last seven the Ark is taken to the open space of the city and ashes are placed on the Ark and also upon the head of the Ab-Beth-din, and everyone else puts ashes upon his own head. R. Nathan says: They take wood-ashes!<sup>13</sup> —

R. Papa replied: Our Mishnah also refers to the last seven fasts. **AND ON THE HEAD OF THE NASI:** And afterwards [the Mishnah] states, **EVERYONE ELSE PUTS ASHES UPON HIS OWN HEAD.** But is it so? Has it not been taught: Rabbi says: Where it is a case of doing honor we begin at the most distinguished, but where it is a case of censuring we begin at the least important; as it is said, And Moses said unto Aaron, and unto Eleazar and unto Ithamar;<sup>14</sup> but where it is a case of censuring we begin at the least important, (for a Master said:) First the serpent was cursed, and afterwards Eve and [only] then Adam? — Here [in our Mishnah] it is also a case of doing honor, because [by this act] the people convey to them<sup>15</sup> [the thought] you are worthy to entreat for mercy on behalf of us all.

**EVERYONE ELSE PUTS ASHES ON HIS OWN HEAD:** R. Adda said: Seeing that everyone else puts the ashes on his own head let also the Nasi and the Ab-Beth-din themselves take ashes and place them on their own heads! Why should someone else take ashes and put them on their head? —

R. Aba of Caesarea replied: To humiliate oneself is not the same as being humiliated by others.

(1) [But the response, Blessed be the Name of the Glorious Kingdom for ever, (Me'iri) v. infra p. 77. For other interpretations v. D.S. a.l. Var. lec. 'and they answered, Amen'; v. note 5].

(2) A single long blast, V. Glos.

(3) A series of brief blasts in quick succession as for alarm. V. Glos.

(4) [The response, 'Blessed be the Name, etc.', v. preceding note. On the reading 'they answered, Amen', the reference is to the custom of the synagogue attendant to call upon the priests to blow and the reader to recite the formula 'He who answered' after the conclusion of the Benediction. V. Me'iri. For other interpretations v. D.S. loc. cit.]

(5) [Var. lec. At the Eastern Gate. Others again omit: 'and on the Temple Mount' which in the context is difficult to explain. The Eastern Gate was 'the brass gate situated in the inner space of the Temple towards the East'. V. Buchler, Types p. 207.]

(6) V. supra 10a.

(7) Term applied to each of the twenty-four divisions of priests (and Levites) who did one week's duty in the Temple every half year. V. infra.

(8) Each Mishmar was subdivided into seven sections (בתי אבירה) each detailed for duty on one day of the week, v. loc. cit.

(9) V. supra 12b.

(10) This is a general law without any reference to the rain fasts.

(11) A division of lay Israelites in attendance on the regular daily offerings v. Glos. and infra 20a.

(12) V. supra p. 45.

(13) [MS.M. omits: 'and also upon the head... wood ashes', these words being unnecessary in this connection.]

(14) Lev. X, 6.

(3) [The brackets appear also in the original; these words being apparently superfluous, they are omitted in MS.M.]

(15) To the Nasi and Ab-Beth-din.

## Ta'anith 16a

And where [on the head] does he put [the ashes]?-R. Isaac said: On the place of the phylacteries, as it is said, To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them a garland for ashes.<sup>1</sup>

(Mnemonic: *open space, Ark, sackcloth, wood-ashes, dust, cemetery, Moriah.*)

Why do they go out to the open space [of the city]? R. Hiyya b. Abba said: In order to express thereby [the idea], We have prayed in private but we have not been answered; we will [therefore] humiliate ourselves in public. Resh Lakish said: We have exiled ourselves

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[from the House of God] may our exile atone for us. What is the difference between the two explanations? — The difference is when they move from one synagogue to another.<sup>2</sup> And why do they take out the Ark to the open space of the city? —

R. Joshua b. Levi said: In order to express thereby [the idea], We had a vessel which we kept hidden and now because of our sins it has been rendered common. And why do they clothe themselves in sackcloth? —

R. Hiyya b. Abba said: In order to express thereby [the idea], We consider ourselves animals<sup>3</sup> [before God]. And why do they place wood-ashes upon the Ark? —

R. Judah b. Pazzi said: As if to say, I will be with him in trouble.<sup>4</sup> Resh Lakish said: [As if to say] In all their afflictions He was afflicted.<sup>5</sup> R. Zera said: When I first saw the rabbis placing wood-ashes on the Ark my whole body shook. And why does everyone else put ashes on his head? — With regard to this there is a difference of opinion between R. Levi b. Hama and R. Hanina. One says: [To signify thereby], We are merely like ashes before Thee; and the other says: That [God] may remember for our sake the ashes of Isaac.<sup>6</sup> What is the difference between them? — The difference is with regard to [the use of] ordinary dust.<sup>7</sup> Why do they go to the cemetery? —

With regard to this there is a difference of opinion between R. Levi b. Hama and R. Hanina. One says: [To signify thereby], We are as the dead before Thee; and the other says: In order that the dead should intercede for mercy on our behalf. What is the difference between them? — The difference is with regard to going to the cemetery of Gentiles.<sup>8</sup> What is [the meaning of] ‘Mount Moriah’?<sup>9</sup> —

With regard to this there is a difference of opinion between R. Levi b. Hama and R. Hanina.<sup>10</sup> [One says] because from this mountain instruction went forth unto

Israel;<sup>11</sup> and the other says: Because it is the mountain whence fear<sup>12</sup> came upon the heathens.

**THE ELDER AMONG THEM ADDRESSES THEM WITH WORDS OF ADMONITION.** Our Rabbis have taught: If there is an elder present he addresses them; if not, then a scholar addresses them; and if there is no scholar present then a distinguished looking man addresses them. Does the term ‘elder’ here used denote one who is not a scholar? —

Abaye replied: This is what is meant: If there is present an elder who is also a scholar then he addresses them, and if not, then a [younger] scholar addresses them, and if not, a distinguished looking man addresses them. [And this is what he says], ‘Our brethren, neither sackcloth nor fastings are effective but only penitence and good deeds, for we find that of the men of Nineveh Scripture does not say, And God saw their sackcloth and their fasting, but, God saw their works that they turned from their evil way.’ But let them be covered with sackcloth, both man and beast.<sup>13</sup> How did they act? — They separated the animals from their young and they said, Master of the Universe, if Thou wilt not have mercy upon us we will not show mercy to these. And let them cry mightily unto God.<sup>14</sup> What did they say? —

They said, Master of the Universe, If one is submissive and the other is not, if one is righteous and the other is not, who of them should yield?<sup>15</sup> Let them turn everyone from his evil way and from the violence that is in their hands.<sup>16</sup> What is the meaning of, ‘From the violence that is in their hands’? —

Samuel said: Even if one had stolen a beam and built it into his castle he should raze the entire castle to the ground and return the beam to its owner. R. Adda b. Ahaba said: One who has sinned and confesses his sin but does not repent may be compared to a man holding a dead reptile in his hand, for although he may immerse himself in all the waters of the world his immersion is of no

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avail unto him; but if he throws it away from his hand then as soon as he immerses himself in forty se'ahs of water,<sup>17</sup> immediately his immersion becomes effective, as it is said, But whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall obtain mercy.<sup>18</sup> And it is further said, Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens.<sup>19</sup>

**WHEN THEY STAND UP TO PRAY THEY PLACE BEFORE THE ARK [AS READER] AN OLD MAN, etc.** Our Rabbis have taught: When they stand up to pray, although there may be present an elder and a scholar, they place before the Ark [as Reader] only a man conversant with the prayers. (Who is considered conversant with prayers)?<sup>20</sup> —

**R. Judah says: One having a large family<sup>21</sup> and has no means of support, and who draws his subsistence from [the produce of] the field,<sup>22</sup> and whose house is empty, whose youth was unblemished, who is meek and is acceptable to the people; who is skilled in chanting, who has a pleasant voice, and possesses a thorough knowledge of the Torah, the Prophets and the Hagiographa, of the Midrash, Halachoth and Aggadeth and of all the Benedictions. Thereupon the Rabbis gazed on R. Isaac b. Ammi.<sup>23</sup>**

(1) Isa. LXI, 3. The Gemara takes the word פאר, garland, to refer to the phylacteries. So Ber. 11a in interpreting Ezek. XXIV, 17.

(2) This would constitute an 'exile' but not a humiliation.

(3) Because sackcloth is woven of the hair of animals (Rashi).

(4) Ps. XCI, 15.

(5) Isa. LXIII, 9. The thought implied is that though God punishes people He yet does not fail to have sympathy with them.

(6) This refers to the sacrifice of Isaac. Cf. Gen. XXII.

(7) For humiliation ordinary dust or earth could be used, but for recalling the sacrifice of Isaac only ashes would do.

(8) In the former case any cemetery would be used but in the latter case only a Jewish cemetery.

(9) The mount on which the Temple was built.

(10) The difference of opinion between R. Levi and R. Hama b. Hanina also in the matter accounts for the inclusion here of this passage.

(11) Taking מוריה from ירה 'to teach'. [The Sanhedrin from which proceeded all legislation governing the life of the people had its seat in the Temple Mount.]

(12) II Chron. III, 1. Taking מוריה from ירא, 'to fear'. [Either (a) fear for Israel (Rashi); or (b) reverence for God.]

(13) Jonah III, 8.

(14) Ibid.

(15) Man cannot force God to yield to him. God should, however, in his great loving-kindness yield to the prayer of a man who humiliates himself before him.

(16) Jonah III, 8.

(17) The minimum requirement for ritual immersion.

(18) Prov. XXVIII, 13.

(19) Lam. III, 41.

(20) [The bracketed words appear in brackets also in the original. The statement of R. Judah that follows is hardly relevant as a definition of 'one conversant with prayers'. The words are omitted in MS.M.]

(21) מוטפל, lit., 'burdened'; var. lec. מטפל 'engages himself in work', 'labors away'.]

(22) [And thus depends for his livelihood on rain. This will make him pray with more devotion for the acceptance of his prayers].

(23) As one whom the description befits.

## Ta'anith 16b

Is not one having a large family with no means of support the same as one whose house is empty? —

**R. Hisda replied: The latter refers to a man whose house is free from sin.<sup>1</sup> Whose youth was unblemished. Abaye said: This is one against whom no evil reputation had gone forth in his youth. My heritage is become unto to Me as a lion in the forest; she hath uttered her voice against Me; therefore have I hated her.<sup>2</sup> What is the meaning of, 'She hath uttered her voice against Me'? —**

**Mar Zutra b. Tobiah said in the name of Rab, some say R. Hama said in the name of R. Eleazar: This refers to an unfit person who steps down before the Ark [to act] as Reader.**

**AND HE RECITES BEFORE THEM TWENTY-FOUR BENEDICTIONS, THE EIGHTEEN RECITED DAILY TO WHICH HE ADDS SIX MORE. Are there only six?**

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Are they not actually seven, as we have learnt: **THE SEVENTH [BENEDICTION] HE CONCLUDES WITH BLESSED BE HE WHO HAS MERCY UPON THE EARTH!**

—

R. Nahman b. Isaac replied: [Do you know] which is **THE SEVENTH?** it is the seventh of the longer benedictions.<sup>3</sup> As it has been taught: [The benediction], ‘Who redeemest Israel,’ is prolonged and at its conclusion [the Reader] adds, He who answered Abraham on Mt. Moriah, He shall answer you and hearken this day unto the voice of your cry. Blessed art Thou who redeemest Israel, and the congregation respond, Amen. The synagogue attendant<sup>4</sup> calls out unto them, ‘Blow a Teru'ah, ye children of Aaron, blow a Teru'ah, and [the Reader] resumes with, ‘He who answered our fathers at the Red Sea, He shall answer you and hearken this day to the cry of your voice. Blessed art Thou O Lord who rememberest forgotten things’; and the congregation responds, Amen. The synagogue attendant calls out, Sound a Teru'ah, O ye children of Aaron, sound a Teru'ah. And likewise [he does] with the other benedictions, at one he calls out, sound a Teki'ah, and another, sound a Teru'ah. The order of services [in which the congregation responds, Amen] holds good for the country generally but not for the Temple, because the response, Amen’ is not made use of in the Temple.<sup>6</sup> And whence can it be adduced that the response, Amen, was not made use of in the Temple?—

For it is said, Stand up and bless the Lord your God from everlasting to everlasting; and let them say: Blessed be Thy glorious Name, that is exalted above all blessing and praise.<sup>7</sup> You might have thought that there shall be only one form, of praise after all Benedictions, therefore the text adds, ‘Exalted above all blessing and praise’; that is to say, Give him ‘praise’ after every blessing. ‘What then was said in the Temple? Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Blessed art Thou who redeemest Israel; and the congregation respond, Blessed be the name of his glorious

kingdom for ever and ever.<sup>8</sup> The synagogue attendant calls out unto them, Blow a Teki'ah, O Priests, sons of Aaron, blow a Teki'ah, and [the Reader] resumes with, he who answered Abraham on Mt. Moriah, He will answer you and hearken to the voice of your cry. Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of Israel, who remembers forgotten things; and the congregation respond, Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom for ever and ever. The synagogue attendant calls out, Sound a Teru'ah, O Priests, children of Aaron, sound a Teru'ah, etc. And likewise [he does] with the other benedictions; at one he calls out, Blow a Teki'ah, and at another, Sound a Teru'ah, until he completes them all.

R. Halafta made this order of procedure the custom of Sepphoris and R. Hananya b. Tradyon made it the custom of Siknin. When however the matter came to the notice of the Sages they declared that this custom was observed only at the eastern gates and on the Temple mount. Some report [the passage just cited] in the form taught in the following Baraita: [The Reader] recites before them twenty-four benedictions; the eighteen recited daily, to which he adds six more. ‘Where are those six included? Between the benedictions for redemption and Healing the Sick,<sup>9</sup> the latter benediction being prolonged and the congregation respond, ‘Amen’, after every benediction.

This was the custom in the country generally, but in the Temple they said, Blessed be the Lord, God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting. Blessed art Thou O Lord who redeemest Israel and there was no response, ‘Amen’, after it. And why all this [long response]? Because it was not customary to respond ‘Amen’, in the Temple. And whence can it be adduced that they did not respond, ‘Amen’, in the Temple? For it is said, ‘Stand up and bless the Lord your God from everlasting to everlasting, and let them say: Blessed be Thy glorious name that is exalted above all blessing and praise’; that is to say, Give Him praise after every benediction.



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Our Rabbis have taught: When concluding the first benediction he says: Blessed be the Lord, God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting. Blessed art Thou who redeemest Israel. And the congregation respond, Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom for ever and ever. The synagogue attendant calls out, Sound a Teki'ah, Priests, Sound a Teki'ah, and [the Reader] then resumes, He who answered Abraham on Mt. Moriah, He will answer you and hearken this day to the voice of your cry. And they blow a Teki'ah and sound a Teru'ah, and blow a Teki'ah [again]. When concluding the second benediction he says: Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel from everlasting to everlasting. Blessed art Thou who rememberest forgotten things; and the congregation respond, Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom for ever and ever. The synagogue attendant then calls out, Sound a Teru'ah, children of Aaron, sound a Teru'ah, and the reader resumes, He who answered our fathers at the Red Sea, He will answer you and hearken this day to the voice of your cry. They then sound a Teru'ah and blow a Teki'ah and sound a Teru'ah [again]; and likewise he [does] after every benediction, at one he calls out, Blow a Teki'ah, and at another, Sound a Teru'ah, until all the benedictions are concluded.

R. Halafta made this order of procedure the custom of Sepphoris and R. Hananya b. Tradyon made it the custom of Siknin. When, however, the matter was brought to the notice of the Sages, they declared that this custom was observed only at the eastern gate and on the Temple mount.

**R. JUDAH SAYS: HE NEED NOT RECITE THE ZIKRONOTH AND SHOFAROTH, etc.:** Said R. Adda of Joppa; what may be R. Judah's reason? Because Zikronoth and Shofaroth are recited only on New Year

(1) He has no stolen goods or any property acquired by dishonest means (Rashi).

(2) Jer. XII, 8.

(3) [לאריות] (so R. Hananel, R. Gershom and MS. M.). The seventh benediction of the daily Tefillah ending in, 'Who redeemest Israel' (גואל ישראל) was

on rain fasts increased by the addition of the formula, 'He who answered, etc.' inserted before its conclusion. After this followed the six additional special benedictions as described in the Mishnah thus making a total of seven long benedictions. On the reading לאריות of cur. edd. render the seventh from the seventh lengthened benediction (of the daily Tefillah) .

(4) [Hazzan. There is no certainty either in regard to the original function or rank of the Hazzan; v. Sot., Sonc. ed. p. 202, n. 4.]

(5) Lit., 'in what are these said'.

(6) [No satisfactory reason has so far been given for this regulation. Graetz, MGWJ 1872 pp. 492ff suggests that this does not mean that the response, Amen, was not allowed in the Temple, but that the solemnity of the service, heightened by the pronouncement of the Tetragrammaton as written, demanded a more extensive and impressive formula. V. also Blau, REJ. XXXIX, p. 188.]

(7) Neh. IX, 5.

(8) Cf. 'and let them say, Blessed be Thy Glorious Name, etc..' cited from Neh. IX, 5.

(9) I.e., between the seventh and the eighth benedictions of the daily Tefillah.

## Ta'anith 17a

and on the [Day of Atonement of] the Jubilee year and in the time of war.<sup>1</sup>

**THE FIRST HE CONCLUDES WITH, HE WHO ANSWERED ABRAHAM, etc.:** A Tanna taught: Some reverse the order of the words and attribute 'crying' to Elijah and 'praying' to Samuel. True, of Samuel Scripture uses the words 'praying' and 'crying'.<sup>2</sup> but of Elijah Scripture uses only [the word] 'praying' but never 'crying'. [When Elijah says], Hear me, O Lord, hear me;<sup>3</sup> that is an expression of 'crying'.

**THE SIXTH HE CONCLUDES WITH, HE WHO ANSWERED JONAH, etc.;** **THE SEVENTH HE CONCLUDES WITH, HE WHO ANSWERED DAVID, etc.** Let us see, Did not Jonah live after David and Solomon, why then is he placed first? — Because it was desired to conclude [the prayers] with, Blessed art Thou, O Lord who hast mercy upon the earth.<sup>4</sup> A Tanna taught: It was reported in the name of Symmachos, [that the prayers were concluded] with, Blessed art Thou who humblest the proud.

## TA'ANIS – 2a-31a

**ON THE FIRST THREE [RAIN] FASTS THE MEN OF THE MISHNAH FAST BUT DO NOT COMPLETE THEIR FAST, etc.** Our Rabbis have taught: Why have the Sages ruled that the Men of the Mishmar are permitted to drink wine by night and not by day, lest the work weigh too heavily on the men of the Beth-ab and then they will be called upon to help them; why have the Sages ruled that the men of the Beth-ab are forbidden [to drink] both by day and by night because they are continuously at work [in the Temple].

Hence the Sages have declared that any priest who can identify his Mishmar and his particular Beth-ab and who also knows definitely that the members of his Beth-ab were participating in the service of the Temple is forbidden to drink wine on the whole of that day.<sup>6</sup> If, however, he can identify only his Mishmar but not his particular Beth-ab and yet he knows definitely that the members of his Beth-ab were participating in the service of the Temple, he is forbidden to drink wine the whole of that week.<sup>7</sup> If he cannot identify his Mishmar nor his particular Beth-ab, but he knows definitely that the members of his Beth-ab were participating in the service of the Temple, he is forbidden to drink wine all the year round. Rabbi says: I declare [priests] should not at any time drink wine, but what can I do seeing that his misfortune turned out to be an advantage to him.<sup>8</sup> Abaye said: According to whose opinion do priests drink wine? According to that of Rabbi.

**BOTH THE MEN OF THE MISHMAR AND THE MEN OF THE MA'AMAD MAY NOT CUT THEIR HAIR NOR WASH THEIR CLOTHES, BUT ON A THURSDAY THEY MAY OUT OF RESPECT FOR THE SABBATH. What is the reason? —**

Rabbah b. Bar Hana said in the name of R. Johanan: In order that they should not enter on their week of duty in an unkempt state. Our Rabbis have taught: A king cuts his hair

every day, a high priest on the eve of every Sabbath, all ordinary priest once in thirty days. Why has a king to cut his hair every day? —

R. Abba b. Zabda said: Scripture says, Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty.<sup>9</sup> Why has a high priest [to cut his hair] on the eve of every Sabbath? —

R. Samuel b. Isaac said: Because the Mishmar changes every week. Whence can it be adduced that an ordinary priest [must cut his hair] once in thirty days? —

It is to be adduced from the analogous use of the word Pera' in connection with the Nazirite [and the priests]. Of the priests [it is written], Neither shall they shave their heads, 'nor suffer their locks [Pera'] to grow long;<sup>10</sup> and of the Nazirite it is written, He shall be holy. he shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow long [Pera'];<sup>11</sup> as in the case of the Nazirite the period of growing his hair is thirty days so too must it be in the case of the ordinary priest. But whence do we know this to be the requirement of the Nazirite himself? R. Mattena said: A Nazirite's unspecified [term of] vow is thirty days. Whence is this to be adduced? — Scripture uses the word Yihyeh the numerical value of which is thirty.<sup>12</sup>

R. Papa said to Abaye: Perhaps Scripture means [that the priests] should not let their hair grow at all? —

The latter replied: Had Scripture written, 'nor suffer to grow long their locks', it might be as you suggest, but since Scripture has written, 'Nor suffer their locks to grow long,' this implies, they may grow their hair but they may not suffer their locks to grow long. If that is so, this restriction should be valid even at the present time! —

[This restriction is] on the same lines as that of the drinking of wine; just as the restriction of drinking wine applied only to the time when they might enter [the Temple]<sup>13</sup> to do

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service, so too with regard to the restriction of letting the locks grow long. But has it not been taught: Rabbi says, I declare that [a priest] should not at any time drink wine, but what can I do, seeing that his misfortune turned out to be an advantage to him. And on this Abaye commented: At the present time according to whom do priests drink wine? According to Rabbi.

(1) .????

(2) 1 Sam. VII, 5; VIII, 6: XV, 11.

(3) I Kings XVIII, 37.

(4) Earth, in the first instance refers to the land of Israel. David and Solomon were the founders of the Jewish kingdom and prayed for its welfare.

(5) [There were many of the priestly families who had been disqualified from the priesthood.]

(6) [On the particular day on which his Beth Ab was in service, as the Temple might be rebuilt and they might be called upon to serve.]

(7) [The particular week on which the Mishmar to which he belonged was in service.]

(8) The destruction of the Temple with the consequent cessation of priestly duties enables the priests to drink wine at any time.

(9) Isa. XXXIII, 17.

(10) Ezek. XLIV, 20.

(11) Num. VI, 5.

(12) ייהי taken numerically,  $10 + 5 + 10 + 5 = 30$ .

(13) I.e., so long as the Temple was in being.

## Ta'anith 17b

From this may be inferred that the Rabbis forbid [priests to drink wine], why? Perhaps the Temple may speedily be rebuilt and the need will arise for priests to do service therein and there will be none available; and so here too [in the case of letting the hair grow long] the Temple may speedily be rebuilt and the need will arise for priests fit for service and there will be none available]—

[This difficulty cannot arise] here [in this latter case] since it is always possible for a priest to cut his hair and then enter [the Temple]. If that is so, then priests who are intoxicated could first sleep a little and then enter [the Temple], in accordance with the statement of Rami b. Abba who said: A mile walk or a little sleep drives away the effects of drink? —

Has it not been stated in connection with this [statement]: This only holds good where a man has drunk a quarter of a log, but where he has drunk more than a quarter of a log walking renders him all the more tired, and sleep all the more drunk. R. Ashi replied: The Rabbis have decreed against those who are drunk because they profane [thereby] the service, but against those who perform the service with their hair long they did not decree because they do not [thereby] profane the service.

An objection was raised against this: The following [priests] incur the penalty of death, those who are intoxicated with wine and those whose hair has grown long. With regard to those who are intoxicated with wine, it is expressly stated, Drink no wine nor strong drink,<sup>1</sup> but whence do we adduce that this also applies to those who grow their hair long? For it is written, Neither shall they shave their heads, nor suffer their locks to grow long,<sup>2</sup> and the next verse states, Neither shall any priest drink wine when they enter into the inner court; thus, those who grow their hair long are likened to those who are drunk with wine, just as those who are drunk with wine incur the penalty of death so too those who grow their locks long. Now can we not carry the comparison even further [and say] that just as those who are drunk with wine profane the service, so too should those who grow their hair long profane the service?<sup>3</sup> — (No; [the two] are likened only with regard to the penalty of death but not with regard to the rendering of the service profane).<sup>4</sup>

Rabina asked R. Ashi:<sup>5</sup> Who taught it<sup>6</sup> before Ezekiel's time? — He replied: And according to your reasoning how will you explain the statement of R. Hisda, who said: The rule forbidding an uncircumcised priest<sup>7</sup> to do service we have learnt not from the Law of Moses but from the prophets [where it is written], No alien uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter My sanctuary.<sup>8</sup> But who stated it? It must

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therefore [be assumed] that it was a tradition and then Ezekiel came and gave it a Scriptural basis. Here too [of long hair profaning the service] there was a tradition and then Ezekiel came and gave it a Scriptural basis. (The tradition was with regard to the death penalty only but not with regard to the profaning of the service).<sup>9</sup>

**THE RESTRICTION AGAINST MOURNING ON THE DAYS ENUMERATED IN THE SCROLL OF FASTS APPLIES TO THE PRECEDING DAY BUT NOT TO THE DAY FOLLOWING.** Our Rabbis have taught:<sup>10</sup> These are the days on which fasting is not permissible, and on some of them mourning also is forbidden. From the New Moon of Nisan until the eighth of the month mourning is not permissible because the Daily offering was established;<sup>11</sup> from the eighth day of the same month until the end of the festival [of Passover] mourning is not permissible since the date of the observance of the Feast of Weeks was then definitely fixed.<sup>12</sup> The Master said: From the New Moon of Nisan until the eighth of the month mourning is not permissible because the Daily offering was established. Why does it state, 'from the New Moon'? Let it state from the second of Nisan and as New Moon itself is a festive day mourning is in any case forbidden thereon!

—

Rab replied: This is necessary in order to extend the restriction to the preceding day. But should not the restriction in any case apply to it seeing that it is the day before New Moon? — New Moon is a biblical ordinance, and a biblical ordinance needs no [additional] strengthening. For it has been taught: Mourning is forbidden before and after the days enumerated in the Megillath Ta'anith; as for Sabbaths and Festivals mourning is forbidden on the day before their incidence but not after their incidence. Why this differentiation between the two? The latter are biblical ordinances and need no [additional] strengthening, but the former are

ordinances of the Soferim and ordinances of the Soferim need [additional] strengthening.

The Master said: 'From the eighth of the same month until the end of the festival [Passover] mourning is not permissible since the date of the observance of the Feast of Weeks was then definitely fixed.' Why does it state, 'until the end of the festival'? Let it state 'until the festival' and the festival itself being a holiday will ipso facto be a forbidden period for mourning? — R. Papa replied: [The answer is] as Rab who said: This was necessary

- (1) Lev. X, 9.
- (2) Ezek. XLIV, 20.
- (3) This is in opposition to R. Ashi who holds that priests with long hair do not profane the service.
- (4) [The bracketed words, which appear in brackets also in the original, stand in contradiction to the parallel passage in Sanh. 22b and are omitted in MS.M.; v. Sanh., Sonc., ed., pp. 127-8 and notes.]
- (5) [MS.M.: 'said R. Ashi to Rabina' on which reading what follows is R. Ashi's reply to the objection cited against him; v. p. 84, n. 1.]
- (6) That those who perform service with long hair are punishable by death.
- (7) Cf. Zeb. 18b.
- (8) Ezek. XLIV, 9.
- (9) [These bracketed words, bracketed also in the original, are omitted in MS.M. and are difficult to explain in this context. Accepting, however, the reading of MS.M. cited supra p. 83, n. 5, these words conclude R. Ashi's argument which runs thus: Since Ezekiel merely provides here a basis for laws that are essentially based on tradition, there is no warrant for the suggested analogy between intoxicated priests and those with long hair. While the former do profane the service, there is no tradition for this to apply to the latter.]
- (10) V. Megillath Ta'anith.
- (11) A dispute lasting from the first to the eighth day of Nisan took place between the Pharisees and the Sadducees with regard to the Daily offering (Num. XXVIII, 3). The Pharisees were of the opinion that it could be brought only out of public funds (i.e., from the Temple treasury) and the Sadducees maintained it might also be defrayed by private funds. The Pharisees gained the day. V. Megillath Ta'anith, ch. 1; Men. 65a.
- (12) There was also a dispute between the Pharisees and Sadducees with regard to the fixing of the date of Pentecost. The dispute turned on the interpretation of the words מִמָּוֶת הַשְּׁבִיעִתָּה (Lev. XXIII, 15). The Pharisees took the view that the



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'Omer had to be brought on the second day of Passover, while the Sadducees maintained that these words meant the morrow of the first Sabbath of the Passover week and from that day forty-nine days had to be counted to Pentecost. V. Megillath Ta'anith, ch. 1; Men. 65a.

## Ta'anith 18a

in order to extend the restriction to the preceding day, so here also it was necessary in order to extend the restriction to the following day. With whose view will this agree? Is it with that of R. Jose,<sup>1</sup> who declared that the restriction applies equally to the day before and the day after it? If so, with regard to the twenty-ninth Adar, why need you base your restriction on the ground that it is the day before the Daily offering was established;<sup>2</sup> deduce it rather from the fact that it is the day after the twenty-eighth concerning which it has been taught: On the twenty-eighth of the month [Adar] the good news reached the Jews that they were no longer to be kept back from the study of the Torah.<sup>3</sup> For once it was decreed that the Jews should not occupy themselves with the study of the Torah nor circumcise their children and that they should desecrate the Sabbath.

What did Judah b. Shammua' and his colleagues do? They went and took counsel with a Roman Matron with whom all the prominent Romans were wont to associate. She advised them, 'Arise and raise an alarm by night'. They went and raised the alarm by night thus, 'O ye heavens, are we not your brethren? Are we not the children of one Father? Are we not the children of one mother? Wherein are we different from every other nation and tongue that ye make harsh decrees against us?' Thereupon the decrees were annulled and that day was declared a festive day!<sup>4</sup> — Abaye replied: It was necessary to state the restriction in this way in order to cover the case of a full month [where Adar has thirty days].<sup>5</sup>

R. Ashi said: The same would be the case even when the month [of Adar] is deficient,<sup>6</sup> because on a day following on a festive day

fasting alone is forbidden but mourning is permissible; but as for this day [the twenty-ninth Adar] seeing that it is placed between two festive days it was considered as if it were a festive day itself, and therefore mourning too was forbidden thereon. The Master said: 'From the eighth day of the month until the end of the festival mourning is forbidden since then the date of the observance of the Feast of Weeks was definitely fixed.' Why does he say, 'from the eighth of the same month'? Let him say, 'from the ninth of the same month' and the eighth day would ipso facto be forbidden because it is the day on which the Daily offering was established?<sup>7</sup> —

The reason why it is stated 'the eighth day' is this, should it ever come to pass that the seven festive days be abolished,<sup>8</sup> even then on the eighth day it would still be forbidden to mourn, because it is the first day on which the date of the Feast of Weeks was definitely fixed. Now that you have arrived at this conclusion the same will apply also to the twenty-ninth Adar because should it ever come to pass that the twenty-eighth Adar be abolished as a festive day, even then the twenty-ninth would be forbidden seeing that it is the day before the Daily offering was established.

It has been taught: R. Hiyya b. Asi said in the name of Rab, the Halachah is in accordance with the view of R. Jose.<sup>9</sup> Samuel said, The Halachah is in accordance with the view of R. Meir.<sup>10</sup> But did Samuel actually say so? Has it not been taught: R. Simeon b. Gamaliel said: Why does the text [in the Scroll of Fasts] repeat the word 'Behon' [on them] twice?<sup>11</sup> This is to teach you that the restriction applies to these days but not to the days immediately preceding or following the days enumerated in the Scroll of Fasts. On which Samuel's comment was that the Halachah is in accordance with the view of R. Simeon b. Gamaliel! —

At first he thought that as there was no other authority who took a lenient view as R. Meir did he decided that the Halachah was

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## Ta'anith 18b

according to R. Meir, but when he heard that Rabbi Simeon took an even more lenient view he decided that the Halachah was according to R. Simeon b. Gamaliel. And so too said Bali in the name of R. Hiyya b. Abba, in the name of R. Johanan: The Halachah is according to R. Jose.

Thereupon R. Hiyya said to Bali: I will explain to you that when R. Johanan said that the Halachah was in accordance with R. Jose, he meant only with regard to the prohibition of fasting.<sup>12</sup> But did R. Johanan actually say so? Did not R. Johanan say that the Halachah is in accordance with the anonymous opinion of a Mishnah,<sup>13</sup> and it has been learnt: Although the Rabbis said that [the Megillah of Esther] could be read earlier<sup>14</sup> but not later, yet

(1) In our Mishnah.

(2) I.e., the first of Nisan, v. supra.

(3) R.H. 19a; cf. Megillath Ta'anith, ch. 12.

(4) For notes v. R.H., Sonc. ed. 19a. Why then state that the restriction on the twenty-ninth Adar was due to the matter of the Tamid.

(5) In that case the thirtieth Adar would be the last day of the month and it could only be included in the restriction on the ground that it precedes the first Nisan and not that it follows the twenty-ninth Adar, seeing that a day (the twenty-eighth) intervenes.

(6) I.e., it has twenty-nine days.

(7) I.e., one of the eight festive days.

(8) Because of some misfortune that befalls Israel and it would be necessary to fast on these days.

(9) Who holds that the restriction applies both to the day before and the day after the festive days.

(10) Who holds that the restriction applies only to the day following the festive day but not to the day before it. This view is anonymously stated in the Mishnah and in accordance with the accepted tradition that every anonymous statement in the Mishnah goes back to R. Meir. Hence the statement in our Mishnah is taken, to be the view of R. Meir.

(11) In the introductory sentence cited supra p. 84.

(12) But not mourning.

(13) I.e., R. Meir.

(14) Than the fourteenth and fifteenth days of Adar.

mourning and fasting are permitted.<sup>1</sup> Now to what does this apply? Shall we say that it applies to those [who should read the Megillah] on the fifteenth [Adar] and they read it on the fourteenth? Is then mourning permissible [for them on that day]?<sup>2</sup> Is it not written in the Scroll of Fasts, 'The fourteenth day and the fifteenth day [of Adar] are the days of Purim and no mourning is permissible thereon,' and Raba's comment on this was: It was necessary [to mention both these dates] in order to make it clear that what was forbidden on the one day was equally forbidden on the other! Again, should it refer to [those who should read the Megillah] on the fourteenth and they read it on the thirteenth [Adar];<sup>3</sup> [the question arises] that is Nicanor's Day.<sup>4</sup> Or again, if it refers to those [who should read it] on the fourteenth and read it on the twelfth? But then that is Trajan's Day!<sup>5</sup> Hence it can only have reference [to those who should read it on] the fourteenth and they read it on the eleventh, and yet it is stated that mourning and fasting are permitted thereon!<sup>6</sup>—

No; it has reference to those who should read it on the fourteenth and they read it on the twelfth, and as to your objection that it is Trajan's Day, this [festive] day was subsequently abolished because Shemaiah and his brother Ahijah<sup>7</sup> were killed thereon. Thus R. Nahman once ordained a public fast for the twelfth of Adar and the Rabbis objected to this because it was Trajan's Day. Thereupon R. Nahman replied: This [festive] day has been abolished because Shemaiah and his brother Ahijah were killed thereon. Let, however, the restrictions [aforementioned] remain valid for the day seeing that it is the day before Nicanor's Day? —

R. Ashi replied: If the festive character of the day had been once abolished [is it then feasible] that fasting should be forbidden thereon because it is the day before Nicanor's Day? What is Nicanor's Day? And what is

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Trajan's Day? It has been taught: Nicanor was one of the Greek generals; every day he waved his hand against Judah and Jerusalem and exclaimed, 'When shall it fall into my hands that I may trample upon it?' But when the Hasmonean Rulers proved victorious and triumphed over him they cut off his thumbs and his great toes and suspended them from, the gates of Jerusalem, as if to say of the mouth that spake arrogantly, of the hands that were waved against Jerusalem, May vengeance be exacted.

What is Trajan's [Day]?<sup>8</sup> It was said: When Trajan<sup>9</sup> was about to execute Lulianus and his brother Pappus in Laodicea [Lydia] he said to them, 'If you are of the people of Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, let your God come and deliver you from my hands, in the same way as he delivered Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah from the hands of Nebuchadnezzar; and to this they replied: 'Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah were perfectly righteous men and they merited that a miracle should be wrought for them, and Nebuchadnezzar also was a king worthy for a miracle to be wrought through him, but as for you, you are a common and wicked man and are not worthy that a miracle be wrought through you; and as for us, we have deserved of the Omnipresent that we should die, and if you will not kill us, the Omnipresent has many other agents of death. The Omnipresent has in His world many bears and lions who can attack us and kill us; the only reason why the Holy One, blessed be He, has handed us over into your hand is that at some future time He may exact punishment of you for our blood'. Despite this he killed them. It is reported that hardly had they moved from there when two officials<sup>10</sup> arrived from Rome and split his skull with clubs.

**WE DO NOT ORDAIN UPON THE COMMUNITY FASTS TO COMMENCE ON A THURSDAY, etc.; WE DO NOT ORDAIN UPON THE COMMUNITY A FAST ON NEW MOON, etc. What constitutes a beginning?<sup>11</sup> –**

R. Aha said: Three fasts. R. Assi said: One. Rab Judah said in the name of Rab: The view [that one should not complete the fast] is in accordance with R. Meir who reported it in the name of R. Simeon b. Gamaliel, but the Sages say: He should complete the fast. Mar Zutra expounded in the name of R. Huna: The Halachah is, one should complete the fast.

## CHAPTER III

**MISHNAH. THE ORDER OF PUBLIC FASTS AFOREMENTIONED IS OBSERVED ONLY IN CONNECTION WITH [THE WITHHOLDING OF] THE FIRST RAIN,<sup>12</sup> BUT IF THE CROPS HAVE UNDERGONE [AN UNUSUAL] CHANGE THE ALARM IS SOUNDED AT ONCE. THE SAME TOO IS DONE IF FORTY DAYS ELAPSED BETWEEN THE FIRST AND THE SECOND RAINFALL<sup>13</sup> BECAUSE IT IS THEN A PLAGUE DUE TO DROUGHT. IF [RAIN] FALLS FOR CROPS BUT NOT FOR THE TREES, FOR THE TREES BUT NOT FOR CROPS, FOR BOTH OF THESE BUT NOT FOR CISTERNS, DITCHES AND CAVES THE ALARM IS SOUNDED AT ONCE. AND SO TOO IF NO RAIN FALLS UPON A PARTICULAR CITY, AS IT IS WRITTEN, AND I CAUSED IT TO RAIN UPON ONE CITY, AND CAUSED IT NOT TO RAIN UPON ANOTHER CITY; ONE PIECE WAS RAINED UPON, ETC.<sup>14</sup>**

(1) On the days on which the Megillah is read earlier, v. Meg. 5a.

(2) On the fourteenth.

(3) Cf. Megillah I, 2.

(4) V. infra, that on which fasting is in any case forbidden.

(5) V. infra.

(6) But it is the day before Trajan's Day and according to R. Jose the restriction is extended to it. How can then mourning and fasting be permissible thereon? How could then R. Johanan declare that the Halachah is according to R. Jose?

(7) [Identified with Julianus and Pappus, the martyrs of Lydia mentioned infra v. Aruch s.v. הרה].

(8) [The victory of Judas Maccabeus over Nicanor is mentioned in I Maccabees as the occasion for making the thirteenth of Adar a holiday. This was in 161 B.C.E. V. Zeitlin, Megillat Ta'anit, p. 82.]

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(9) טורייווס] The identification of this name with Trajan is disputed, particularly as Trajan is known to have died a natural death. It is suggested that this reference here is to Trajan's General, Lusius Quietus, who was executed by Trajan (Schurer I, 660 n. 62). Nothing can however as yet be said with certainty. V. HUCA, Lichtenstein Die Fastenrolle, p. 273.]

(10) דיפלי So Rashi. [Aliter: GR. \*\* = GR. \*\* 'dispatch'].

(11) So that the fasts that have been begun should not be interrupted.

(12) רביעה ראשונה The first of the fructification (רביעה) rain that is expected to begin in the month of Marcheshvan, v. supra p. 20, n. 7 and Gemara.

(13) V. supra 6a.

(14) Amos IV, 7.

## Ta'anith 19a

**IN SUCH A CASE THAT CITY FASTS AND SOUNDS THE ALARM, BUT THOSE [IN THE PLACES] AROUND IT FAST BUT DO NOT SOUND THE ALARM.**

**R. AKIBA SAYS: THEY SOUND THE ALARM BUT DO NOT FAST. AND SO TOO IF A PLAGUE RAGES IN A CITY OR [ITS BUILDINGS] COLLAPSE<sup>1</sup> THEN THAT CITY FASTS AND SOUNDS THE ALARM, BUT THE PEOPLE [IN THE PLACES] AROUND IT FAST BUT DO NOT SOUND THE ALARM.**

**R. AKIBA SAYS: THEY SOUND THE ALARM BUT DO NOT FAST. WHAT CONSTITUTES A PLAGUE? IF IN A CITY THAT CAN SUPPLY FIVE HUNDRED FOOT-SOLDIERS THREE DEATHS TAKE PLACE ON THREE CONSECUTIVE DAYS, THIS CONSTITUTES A PLAGUE; LESS THAN THIS IS NO PLAGUE. THE ALARM IS SOUNDED EVERYWHERE ON ACCOUNT OF THE FOLLOWING [VISITATIONS]: BLAST, MILDEW, LOCUST, CRICKET, WILD BEASTS AND THE SWORD, AS THEY ARE ALL PLAGUES LIKELY TO SPREAD.**

**IT HAPPENED THAT ELDERS WENT DOWN FROM JERUSALEM TO THEIR OWN CITIES AND ORDERED A FAST BECAUSE THERE WAS OBSERVED IN ASKELON BLAST WHICH AFFECTED AS MUCH GRAIN AS WOULD FILL AN OVEN [WITH LOAVES**

**MADE THEREOF]. THEY ALSO ORDAINED A FAST BECAUSE WOLVES DEVOURED TWO CHILDREN ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE JORDAN; R. JOSE SAID: NOT BECAUSE THEY DEVOURED [THE CHILDREN] BUT [MERELY] BECAUSE THEY WERE SEEN. THE ALARM IS SOUNDED ON THE SABBATH ON ACCOUNT OF THE FOLLOWING MISHAPS: IF A CITY IS BESIEGED BY HOSTILE TROOPS OR [INUNDATED BY] THE RIVER, OR IF A SHIP IS FOUNDERING ON THE SEA, R. JOSE SAYS: [THE ALARM IS SOUNDED] FOR HELP BUT NOT FOR A CALL TO PRAYERS. SIMEON THE TEMANITE SAYS: [THE ALARM IS SOUNDED] ON ACCOUNT OF PLAGUE, BUT THE SAGES DID NOT AGREE WITH HIM. THE ALARM IS SOUNDED ON ACCOUNT OF ANY VISITATION, THAT COMES UPON THE COMMUNITY<sup>2</sup> EXCEPT ON ACCOUNT OF AN OVER-ABUNDANCE OF RAIN.**

**IT HAPPENED THAT THE PEOPLE SAID TO HONI THE CIRCLE DRAWER, PRAY FOR RAIN TO FALL. HE REPLIED: GO AND BRING IN THE OVENS [ON WHICH YOU HAVE ROASTED] THE PASCHAL OFFERINGS SO THAT THEY DO NOT DISSOLVE.<sup>3</sup> HE PRAYED AND NO RAIN FELL. WHAT DID HE DO? HE DREW A CIRCLE AND STOOD WITHIN IT AND EXCLAIMED, MASTER OF THE UNIVERSE, THY CHILDREN HAVE TURNED TO ME BECAUSE THEY BELIEVE ME TO BE AS A MEMBER OF THY HOUSEHOLD; I SWEAR BY THY GREAT NAME THAT I WILL NOT MOVE FROM HERE UNTIL THOU HAST MERCY UPON THY CHILDREN. RAIN THEN BEGAN TO DRIP, AND THEREUPON HE EXCLAIMED: IT IS NOT FOR THIS THAT I HAVE PRAYED BUT FOR RAIN [TO FILL] CISTERNS, DITCHES AND CAVES. THE RAIN THEN BEGAN TO COME DOWN WITH GREAT FORCE, AND THEREUPON HE EXCLAIMED; IT IS NOT FOR THIS THAT I HAVE PRAYED BUT FOR RAIN OF BENEVOLENCE, BLESSING AND BOUNTY. RAIN THEN FELL IN THE NORMAL WAY UNTIL THE ISRAELITES IN JERUSALEM WERE COMPELLED TO GO UP [FOR SHELTER] TO**



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THE TEMPLE MOUNT BECAUSE OF THE RAIN. THEY CAME AND SAID TO HIM: IN THE SAME WAY AS YOU HAVE PRAYED FOR [THE RAIN] TO FALL PRAY [NOW] FOR THE RAIN TO CEASE. HE REPLIED: GO AND SEE IF THE STONE OF CLAIMANTS<sup>4</sup> HAS BEEN WASHED AWAY.

THEREUPON SIMEON B. SHETAH SENT TO HIM [THIS MESSAGE]: WERE IT NOT THAT YOU ARE HONI I WOULD HAVE PLACED YOU UNDER THE BAN, BUT WHAT CAN I DO UNTO YOU WHO IMPORTUNE GOD AND HE ACCEDES TO YOUR REQUEST AS A SON THAT IMPORTUNES HIS FATHER AND HE ACCEDES TO HIS REQUEST; OF YOU SCRIPTURE SAYS, LET THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER BE GLAD, AND LET HER THAT BORE THEE REJOICE.<sup>5</sup> IF WHILST THEY ARE FASTING RAIN FALLS, IF IT IS BEFORE SUNRISE THEY DO NOT COMPLETE THE FAST,<sup>6</sup> IF AFTER SUNRISE, THEY DO COMPLETE THE FAST.

R. ELIEZER SAYS: IF BEFORE NOON THEY DO NOT COMPLETE THE FAST, AFTER NOON THEY DO COMPLETE IT. IT HAPPENED THAT THE RABBIS ORDAINED A FAST IN LYDIA AND RAIN FELL BEFORE NOON. THEREUPON R. TARFON SAID TO THEM: GO, EAT AND DRINK AND OBSERVE THE DAY AS A HOLIDAY. THEY WENT AND ATE AND DRANK AND OBSERVED THE DAY AS A HOLIDAY AND AT EVENING TIME THEY CAME AND RECITED THE GREAT HALLEL.<sup>7</sup>

**GEMARA.** THE ORDER OF PUBLIC FASTS AFOREMENTIONED IS OBSERVED ONLY IN CONNECTION WITH [THE WITHHOLDING] OF THE FIRST RAIN. A contradiction was raised against this Mishnah: [If rain is withheld at the time of] the first and second rainfalls prayers are offered; if at the third rainfall, fasts are observed!<sup>8</sup> Rab Judah replied: The Mishnah means this: The order of fasts aforementioned is observed only when the time for the first, second and third fructification rainfalls has passed and no rain

fell, but if rain fell at the time for the first fructification rainfall and they sowed but nothing sprouted forth, or if the [plants] did sprout forth but they had undergone an unusual change the alarm is sounded at once.<sup>9</sup>

R. Nahman said: Only when they had undergone an unusual change, but not if they merely withered away. Is not this self-evident? We clearly learned, HAVE UNDERGONE A CHANGE [R. Nahman's statement] is needed to cover the case of seeds that have already shot up into stalks. You might have thought that this is a sign of recovery, he therefore informs us [that it is not].

THE SAME TOO IS DONE IF FORTY DAYS ELAPSED BETWEEN THE FIRST AND THE SECOND RAINFALLS AND NO RAIN FELL, etc. What is the nature of the plague of drought? Rab Judah said in the name of Rab: A plague which leads to scarcity. R. Nahman said: When [grain] has to be transported by river

(1) If the collapse is caused by an earth-quake or by some other extraordinary natural phenomena.

(2) [Aliter: 'that may not come, etc.' a euphemism for 'that may come, etc.']

(3) These ovens were usually made of clay and were portable.

(4) Lit., 'a stone of the losers'. A stone in Jerusalem from which announcements of property lost and found were made. (Cf. B.M. 28b where the reading is אבן הטוען 'stone of claims or claimants'). [The meaning of Honi's statement becomes clear from the parallel passage in Tosef. Ta'an. III, We are confident that God will not bring a flood upon the world according to Gen. IX, 15. It was this assurance which made it impossible for the rain to be so strong as to dissolve the stones and which should allay the fear of the anxious people.]

(5) Prov. XXIII, 25. [With this story cf. Josephus, Ant. XVI, 2,1 and v. Buchler, Types, 198ff for a fine analysis of Honi's prayer.]

(6) Because strictly speaking the fast had not yet begun.

(7) Ps. CXXXVI. Cf. Ber. 4b.

(8) Here it is stated that fasts are ordained after these three rainfalls had failed, whereas the Mishnah says that the fasts are observed immediately after the first expected rainfalls had failed.

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(9) The phrase רביעה ראשונה does not denote, as it was assumed, the first fructification rain but the whole of the former rain season (יורה) which comprises three fructification rains as stated supra 6a.

## Ta'anith 19b

[from one city to another] it is drought, but when it has to be brought [overland] from one province to another it is famine. R. Hanina said: If a Se'ah of grain costs one Sela' and is obtainable it is drought; but if four se'ahs cost a Sela' but are not easily obtainable, then it is a famine.

R. Johanan added: This holds good only when money is cheap and food dear, but if money is dear and food cheap then the alarm is sounded at once. For R. Johanan said: I remember well [the time] when four se'ahs cost one Sela' and yet there were many in Tiberias swollen from hunger because there was not a coin to be had.

**IF RAIN FALLS FOR CROPS BUT NOT FOR THE TREES.** It is of course possible [for rainfall to be beneficial] for crops and not for the trees when [the rain] falls gently and not heavily; similarly, It can be beneficial for trees and not for crops when it falls heavily and not gently; similarly, it can be beneficial for both of them and yet not for cisterns, ditches and caves if it falls heavily and gently but yet not in great enough volume. But is it possible for rain to fall for cisterns, ditches and caves and yet not be beneficial for both of these [crops and trees] as has been taught in the Baraitha? —

When the rain is torrential. Our Rabbis have taught: The alarm [for rain] for the trees is sounded during the middle of the Passover [season],<sup>1</sup> and for the cisterns, ditches and caves even during<sup>2</sup> the middle of the Tabernacles [season]; and at any time should there be no water to drink the alarm is sounded at once. What is meant by 'at once'? —

On the [following] Monday, Thursday and Monday. The alarm is sounded for all the aforementioned only in the particular province affected. In the case of croup the alarm is sounded only when deaths result from it, but if no deaths result the alarm is not sounded. In the case of locust the alarm is sounded no matter how small in number. R. Simeon b. Eleazar says: [The alarm is sounded] also in the case of grasshoppers.

Our Rabbis have taught: The alarm is sounded for the trees during the working years of the Sabbatical Cycle,<sup>3</sup> but for the cisterns, ditches and caves even on the Sabbatical year. R. Simeon b. Gamaliel says: [The alarm is sounded] also for the trees during the Sabbatical year because the poor derive their livelihood from them.<sup>4</sup> Another Baraitha taught: The alarm is sounded for trees during the six working years of the Sabbatical Cycle, but for the cisterns, ditches and caves even on the Sabbatical year. R. Simeon b. Gamaliel says: [The alarm is sounded] also for the trees. For what grows of itself the alarm is sounded even on the Sabbatical year because the poor derive their livelihood from them.

It has been taught: R. Eleazar b. Perata said: Ever since the day the Temple was destroyed the rains have become irregular;<sup>5</sup> there are years in which rains are abundant, and there are other years when they are scanty; there are some years when the rains come in season, and there are other years when they do not. To what may be compared the years when the rains come in season? To a servant to whom his master gave his week's food allowance [in advance] on the first day of the week, with the result that the dough is baked well and eatable.<sup>6</sup> To what may be compared the years when the rains do not come in season? To a servant to whom his master gave his week's food allowance on the eve of the Sabbath with the result that his dough is not well baked<sup>7</sup> and uneatable. To what may be compared the years when the rains are abundant? To a servant to whom his master gave his [year's] food allowance in one lot so

# TA'ANIS – 2a-31a

that the [waste of] the mill in grinding a Kor is no more than [the waste] in grinding a Kab<sup>9</sup> and likewise the waste in kneading a Kor is no more than in kneading a Kab. To what may be compared the years when the rains are scanty? To a servant to whom his master gave his [year's] food allowance little by little, so that the waste in grinding a Kab is no less than in grinding a Kor, and likewise the waste in kneading a Kab is no less than in kneading a Kor.

Another explanation: When the rains are plentiful they may be compared to a man kneading clay; if he has a plentiful supply of water then the clay is well kneaded without all the water being used up, but if the supply is scanty the water will give out and the clay is not well kneaded.

Our Rabbis have taught: Once it happened when all Israel came up on pilgrimage to Jerusalem that there was no water available for drinking. Thereupon Nakdimon b. Gurion approached a certain [heathen] lord and said to him: Loan me twelve wells of water for the Pilgrims and I will repay you twelve wells of water; and if I do not, I will give you instead twelve talents of silver, and he fixed a time limit [for repayment]. When the time came [for repayment] and no rain had yet fallen the lord sent a message to him in the morning: Return to me either the water or the money that you owe me.

Nakdimon replied: I have still time, the whole day is mine. At midday he [again] sent to him a message, Return to me either the water or the money that you owe me. Nakdimon replied: I still have time to-day. In the afternoon he [again] sent to him a message, Return to me either the water or the money that you owe me. Nakdimon replied, I still have time to-day. Thereupon the lord sneeringly said to him, Seeing that no rain has fallen throughout the whole year

(1) פרוס 'half'. This is explained by J. T. (Sheck. III, 47b) to mean half of the thirty days before the feast, i.e., within fifteen days before the feast.

(2) Though it is still summer season (Rashi). MS.M. omits 'even'.

(3) At any time within the six years of the seven years' cycle (Shemittah).

(4) The poor had equal rights with the owners to the produce of the seventh year. Cf. Ex. XXIII, 11 and Lev. XXV, 6.

(5) צימוקין Rashi explains the word to mean 'with difficulty'. Jastrow thinks the word to be a corruption of xenium, 'a host or king's gift, donation indefinite as to time and amount', hence, irregular.

(6) He has plenty of time to devote to its baking.

(7) It is baked hurriedly.

(8) Thirty se'ahs.

(9) One sixth of a Se'ah.

## Ta'anith 20a

will it then rain now? Thereupon he repaired in a happy mood to the baths. Meanwhile, whilst the lord had gone gleefully to the baths, Nakdimon entered the Temple depressed. He wrapped himself in his cloak and stood up to pray. He said, 'Master of the Universe! It is revealed and known before Thee that I have not done this for my honor nor for the honor of my father's house, but for Thine honor have I done this in order that water be available for the Pilgrims'.

Immediately the sky became covered with clouds and rain fell until the twelve wells were filled with water and there was much over. As the lord came out of the baths Nakdimon b. Gurion came out from the Temple and the two met, and Nakdimon said to the lord, Give me the money for the extra water that you have received. The latter replied, I know that<sup>1</sup> the Holy One, blessed be He, disturbed the world but for your sake, yet my claim against you for the money still holds good, for the sun had already set and consequently the rain fell in my possession.

Nakdimon thereupon again entered the Temple and wrapped himself in his cloak and stood up to pray and said, 'Master of the Universe! Make it known that Thou hast beloved ones In Thy world'. Immediately the clouds dispersed and the sun broke through. Thereupon the lord said to him, Had not the sun broken through I would still have had a

## TA'ANIS – 2a-31a

claim against you entitling me to exact my money from you.

It has been taught: His name was not Nakdimon but Boni and he was called Nakdimon because the sun had broken through [Nikdera] on his behalf. The Rabbis have taught: For the sake of three the sun broke through, Moses, Joshua and Nakdimon b. Gurion. Now of Nakdimon we know from the above tradition; of Joshua too we know from Scripture where it is written, And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed,<sup>2</sup> etc.; but of Moses whence do we know this?

R. Eleazar said: We deduce it from an inference from the analogous use of the word *ahel*.<sup>3</sup> Here it is written, I will begin [Ahel] to put the dread of thee,<sup>4</sup> and elsewhere it is written, I will begin [Ahel] to magnify thee.<sup>5</sup> R. Samuel b. Nahmani said: From an analogous use of the word *teth*.<sup>6</sup> Here it is written, I will begin to put [Teth] the dread of thee, and elsewhere it is written, In the day when the lord delivered [Teth] up the Amorites, etc.<sup>7</sup> R. Johanan said: It can be derived from the verse itself, Who, when they hear the report of thee, shall tremble and be in anguish because of thee.<sup>8</sup> When did they tremble and were in anguish before Moses? When the sun broke<sup>9</sup> through for Moses.

AN SO TOO IF NO RAIN FALLS UPON A PARTICULAR CITY, etc. Rab Judah said in the name of Rab: Both [cities cited in the verse are under] divine displeasure.<sup>10</sup> Jerusalem is among them as one unclean.<sup>11</sup> Rab Judah said in the name of Rab: [The verse implies] blessing; as an unclean [menstruous] woman becomes permissible [to her husband],<sup>12</sup> so too will Jerusalem be reinstated. She is become as a widow;<sup>13</sup> Rab Judah said: [The verse implies] blessing; 'as a widow'; not a real widow, but a woman whose husband has gone to a country beyond the sea [fully] intending to return to her. Therefore have I also made you contemptible and base before all the people:<sup>14</sup> Rab Judah said: [The verse implies] blessing; of you no overseers of rivers<sup>15</sup> nor officers<sup>16</sup> shall be

appointed. For the Lord will smite Israel as a reed is shaken in the water:<sup>17</sup>

Rab Judah said in the name of Rab: [The verse implies] blessing. For R. Samuel b. Nahmani said in the name of R. Johanan: What is the meaning of the verse, Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are importunate?<sup>18</sup> Better is the curse which Ahijah the Shilonite pronounced on Israel than the blessings with which Balaam the wicked blessed them. Ahijah the Shilonite cursed them by comparing them with the 'reed'; he said to Israel, For the Lord will smite Israel as a reed is shaken in water. [Israel are as the reed], as the reed grows by the water and its stock grows new shoots<sup>19</sup> and its roots are many, and even though all the winds of the universe come and blow at it they cannot move it from its place for it sways with the winds and as soon as they have dropped the reed resumes its upright position. But Balaam the wicked blessed them by comparing them with the 'cedar', as it is said, As cedars beside the waters;<sup>20</sup> the cedar does not grow by the waterside and its stock does not grow new shoots and its roots are not many, and even though all the winds of the universe blow at it they cannot move it from its place;<sup>21</sup> if however the south wind blows at it, it uproots it and turns it upside down. Moreover, [because of its yielding nature] the reed merited that of it should be made a pen for the writing of the Law, the Prophets and Hagiographa.

Our Rabbis have taught: A man should always be gentle as the reed and never unyielding as the cedar. Once R. Eleazar son of R. Simeon was coming from Migdal Gedor,<sup>22</sup> from the house of his teacher, and he was riding leisurely on his ass by the riverside and was feeling happy and elated because he had studied much Torah.

- (1) no.
- (2) Josh. X, 13.
- (3) לָרֵחַ
- (4) Deut. II, 25.
- (5) Josh. III, 7.
- (6) ,, ????



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- (7) Josh. X, 12.  
(8) Deut. 11, 25.  
(9) There is in this passage a confusion of the root **קדח** with the root **קדר** to break through. Jast. Reads **שנקדה** V. Jast. s.v. **קדח**.  
(10) The one suffers from a want of rain and the other from an excess.  
(11) Lam. I, 17.  
(12) After her period of separation.  
(13) Ibid. I.  
(14) Mal. 11,9.  
(15) I.e., toll collectors.  
(16) **גזיריפטי** Jastrow derives the word from the Persian meaning, a class of oppressive Persian officers.  
(17) I Kings XIV, 15.  
(18) Prov. XXVII, 6.  
(19) If the stock is cut it grows again.  
(20) Num. XXIV, 6.  
(21) [Read with MS.M.: 'it does not sway with them'. I.e., it offers resistance to the wind.]  
(22) probably in Judah. V. Josh. XV, 36.

## Ta'anith 20b

There chanced to meet him an exceedingly ugly man who greeted him, 'Peace be upon you, Sir'. He, however, did not return his salutation but instead said to him, 'Raca,<sup>1</sup> how ugly you are. Are all your fellow citizens as ugly as you are?' The man replied: 'I do not know, but go and tell the craftsman who made me, "How Ugly is the vessel which you have made"'. When R. Eleazar realized that he had done wrong he dismounted from the ass and prostrated himself before the man and said to him, 'I submit myself to you, forgive me'. The man replied: 'I will not forgive you until you go to the craftsman who made me and say to him, "How ugly is the vessel which you have made"'.<sup>2</sup>

He [R. Eleazar] walked behind him until he reached his native city. When his fellow citizens came out to meet him greeting him with the words, 'Peace be upon you O Teacher, O Master,' the man asked them, 'Whom are you addressing thus?' They replied, 'The man who is walking behind you.' Thereupon he exclaimed: 'If this man is a teacher, may there not be any more like him in Israel?! The people then asked him: 'Why'? He replied: 'Such and such a thing has he done to me. They said to him:

'Nevertheless, forgive him, for he is a man greatly learned in the Torah.'

The man replied: 'For your sakes I will forgive him, but only on the condition that he does not act in the same manner in the future.' Soon after this R. Eleazar son of R. Simeon entered [the Beth Hamidrash] and expounded thus, A man should always be gentle as the reed and let him never be unyielding as the cedar. And for this reason the reed merited that of it should be made a pen for the writing of the Law, Phylacteries and Mezuzoth.<sup>2</sup>

AND SO TOO, IF A PLAGUE RAGES IN A CITY OR [ITS BUILDINGS] COLLAPSE, etc. Our Rabbis have taught: The 'COLLAPSE spoken of refers only to sound buildings but not to those already dilapidated; only to those which are not likely to fall in but not to those that are likely to fall in. Are not 'sound buildings' the same as 'those that are not likely to fall in'? And are not those already dilapidated' the same as 'those likely to fall in'? — It is necessary [to distinguish between them] when for instance they collapsed because of their excessive height, or, when they stood on the bank of a river.<sup>3</sup>

In Nehardea there was a dilapidated wall and neither Rab nor Samuel would go past it although it had remained standing in the same position for thirteen years. One day R. Adda b. Ahaba happened to come there and Samuel said to Rab: 'Come, Sir, let us walk around it', and the latter replied, 'This precaution is not necessary now because R. Adda b. Ahaba is with us; his merit is great and therefore I do not fear'. R. Huna had wine [stored] in a certain dilapidated house and he desired to remove it. He took R. Adda b. Ahaba into that house and kept him occupied with traditional teaching until he had removed it. As soon as he had left the house it fell in. R. Adda b. Ahaba noticed this and was offended, because he agreed with the statement of R. Jannai who said: A man should never stand in a place of danger and

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declare, 'A miracle will befall me'; perhaps a miracle will not befall him. And if a miracle does befall him he suffers thereby a reduction from his merits. R. Hanan said: This can be inferred from the verse where it is written, I am not worthy of all the mercies, and of all the truth.<sup>4</sup> What were the merits of R. Adda b. Ahaba? —

Thus it has been stated: The disciples of R. Adda b. Ahaba asked him: To what do you attribute your longevity? — He replied: I have never displayed any impatience in my house, and I have never walked in front of any man greater than myself, nor have I ever meditated [over the words of the Torah] in any dirty alleys, nor have I ever walked four cubits without [musing over] the Torah or without [wearing] phylacteries, nor have I ever fallen asleep in the Beth Hamidrash for any length of time or even momentarily, nor have I rejoiced at the disgrace of my friends, nor have I ever called my neighbor by a nickname given to him by myself, or, some say by the nickname given to him by others.<sup>6</sup>

Raba said to Rafram b. Papa: Tell me some of the good deeds which R. Huna had done. He replied: Of his childhood I do not recollect anything, but of his old age I do. On cloudy [stormy] days they used to drive him about in a golden carriage and he would survey every part of the city and he would order the demolition of any wall that was unsafe; if the owner was in a position to do so he had to rebuild it himself, but if not, then [R. Huna] would have it rebuilt at his own expense. On the eve of every Sabbath [Friday] he would send a messenger to the market and any vegetables that the [market] gardeners had left over he bought up and had then, thrown into the river. Should he not rather have had these distributed among the poor? —

[He was afraid] lest they would then at times be led to rely upon him and would not trouble to buy any for themselves. Why did he not give the vegetables to the domestic animals? —

He was of the opinion that food fit for human consumption may not be given to animals<sup>7</sup> Then why did he purchase them at all? —

This would lead [the gardeners] to do wrong in the future [by not providing an adequate supply].<sup>8</sup> Whenever he discovered some [new] medicine he would fill a water jug with it and suspend it above the doorstep and proclaim, Whosoever desires it let him come and take of it. Some say, he knew from tradition a medicine for that disease, Sibetha<sup>9</sup> and he would suspend a jug-full of water and proclaim, Whosoever needs it let him come [and wash his hands] so that he may save his life from danger. When he had a meal<sup>10</sup> he would open the door wide and declare, Whosoever is in need let him come and eat. Raba said: All these things I could myself carry out except the last one

- (1) 'Empty one', 'Good for nothing'.
- (2) V. Gos. s.v. mezuzah.
- (3) Though they were sound they were liable to fall, because of their height or because of the water washing away the foundations.
- (4) Gen. XXXII, 11. R. Hanan renders the verse thus: I have become smaller on account of all the mercies, etc.
- (5) Cur. edd. insert in brackets, 'R. Zera and according to some, the disciple of'.
- (6) V. Meg., Sonc. ed. p. 170, n. 11.
- (7) That would be treating God's food disrespectfully.
- (8) It would cause a rise in prices and the poor would suffer thereby.
- (9) שִׁבְתָּהּ the name of an evil spirit that attacks those who eat food with unwashed hands. Cf. Yoma 77b. Hence R. Huna suspended a jug filled with water in order to warn those whose hands were unwashed to wash them and so save themselves from the power of the evil spirit, v. Rashi ad loc. [R. Hananel takes Sibetha to be the name of a liquid medicine.]
- (10) Lit., 'wrapped bread'. It was the custom to begin a meal with herbs and salt placed between two pieces of bread, hence the phrase.

### Ta'anith 21a

because there are so many in Mahuza.<sup>1</sup> Ilfa and R. Johanan studied together the Torah and they found themselves in great want and they said one to another, Let us go and

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engage in commerce so that of us may be fulfilled the verse, Howbeit there shall be no need among you.<sup>2</sup> They went and sat down under a ruinous wall and while they were having their meal two ministering angels came and R. Johanan overheard one saying to the other, Let us throw this wall upon these [people] and kill them, because they forsake life eternal and occupy themselves with life temporal. The other [angel] replied: Leave them alone because one of them has still much to achieve.<sup>3</sup>

R. Johanan heard this but Ilfa did not. Whereupon R. Johanan said to Ilfa, Master, have you heard anything? He replied: No. Thereupon R. Johanan said to himself: Seeing that I heard this and Ilfa has not, it is evident that I am the one who still has much to achieve. R. Johanan then said to Ilfa: I will go back, that of me may be fulfilled, For the poor shall never cease out of the land.<sup>4</sup> Thereupon R. Johanan went back but Ilfa did not. When [at last] Ilfa returned, R. Johanan was already presiding over the school, and the scholars said to him: Had you remained here and studied the Torah you might have been presiding.<sup>5</sup>

Ilfa then suspended himself from the mast of a ship and exclaimed, If there is any one who will ask me a question from the Baraithas of R. Hiyya and R. Hoshaiyah and I fail to elucidate it from the Mishnah then I will throw myself down and be drowned [in the sea]. And an old man came forward and cited the following Baraitha: If a man [in his last will and testament] declares, Give a shekel weekly to my sons, but actually they needed a Sela's then they should be given a Sela'; but if he declared, Give them a shekel only, then they should be given a shekel. If, however, he declared, On their death others should inherit [their allowance] in their stead, then whether he has declared 'give' or 'give only' they are given a shekel only.<sup>7</sup> He replied: This is in accordance with the view of R. Meir who said: It is a duty to carry out the will of a dying man.<sup>8</sup>

It is related of Nahum of Gamzu<sup>9</sup> that he was blind in both his eyes, his two hands and legs were amputated — and his whole body was covered with boils and he was lying in a dilapidated house on a bed the feet of which were standing in bowls of water in order to prevent the ants from crawling on to him. On one occasion his disciples desired to remove the bed and then clear the things out of the house, but he said to them, My children, first clear out the things [from the house] and then remove my bed for I am confident that so long as I am in the house it will not collapse. They first cleared out the things and then they removed his bed and the house [immediately] collapsed. Thereupon his disciples said to him, Master, since you are wholly righteous, why has all this befallen you? and he replied, I have brought it all upon myself. Once I was journeying on the road and was making for the house of my father-in-law and I had with me three asses, one laden with food, one with drink and one with all kinds of dainties, when a poor man met me and stopped me on the road and said to me, Master, give me something to eat. I replied to him, Wait until I have unloaded something from the ass; I had hardly managed to unload something from the ass when the man died [from hunger]. I then went and laid myself on him and exclaimed, May my eyes which had no pity upon your eyes become blind, may my hands which had no pity upon your hands be cut off, may my legs which had no pity upon your legs be amputated, and my mind was not at rest until I added, may my whole body be covered with boils. Thereupon his pupils exclaimed, 'Alas! that we see you in such a sore plight'. To this he replied, 'Woe would it be to me did you not see me in such a sore plight'.

Why was he called Nahum of Gamzu? — Because whatever befell him he would declare, This also is for the best. Once the Jews desired to send to the Emperor a gift and after discussing who should go they decided that Nahum of Gamzu should go because he had experienced many miracles. They sent with him a bag full of precious

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stones and pearls. He went and spent the night in a certain inn and during the night the people in the inn arose and emptied the bag and filled it up with earth. When he discovered this next morning he exclaimed, This also is for the best. When he arrived at his destination and they undid his bag they found that it was full of earth.

The king thereupon desired to put them<sup>10</sup> all to death saying, The Jews are mocking me. Nahum then exclaimed, This also is for the best. Whereupon Elijah appeared in the guise of one of them<sup>11</sup> and remarked, Perhaps this is some of the earth of their father Abraham,<sup>12</sup> for when he threw earth [against the enemy] it turned into swords and when [he threw] stubble it changed into arrows, for it is written, His sword maketh them as dust, his bow as the driven stubble.<sup>13</sup> Now there was one province which [the emperor had hitherto] not been able to conquer but when they tried some of this earth [against it] they were able to conquer it.

Then they took him [Nahum] to the royal treasury and filled his bag with precious stones and pearls and sent him back with great honor. When on his return journey he again spent the night in the same inn he was asked, What did you take [to the king] that they showed you such great honor? He replied, I brought thither what I had taken from here. [The innkeepers] thereupon razed the inn to the ground and took of the earth to the king and they said to him, The earth that was brought to you belonged to us. They tested it and it was not found to be [effective] and the innkeepers were thereupon put to death.

**WHAT CONSTITUTES PLAGUE? IF IN A CITY THAT CAN SUPPLY FIVE HUNDRED FOOT-SOLDIERS,** etc. Our Rabbis have taught: If in a city that can supply fifteen hundred foot-soldiers, as for example Kefar Acco,<sup>14</sup> nine deaths take place in three consecutive days, this constitutes plague; if, however, these deaths take place in one day or in four days it is not plague. And if

in a city that can supply five hundred foot-soldiers, as for example, Kefar-Amiko,<sup>15</sup> three deaths take place in three consecutive days this constitutes plague; if, however, they take place in one day or in four days it is not plague.

- (1) A city in Mesopotamia on the river Tigris where Raba lived. [Soldiers would frequently be billeted in Mahuza on account of its proximity to the capital Ktesifon, v. Obermeyer, p. 174.]
- (2) Deut. XV, 4.
- (3) Lit., 'time stands for him' (in his favor).
- (4) Ibid. 11.
- (5) [Tosaf.: 'Had you returned... he (R. Johanan) would not have been presiding.]
- (6) Two common Shekalim make a Sela'.
- (7) V. B.B. 129a. Keth. 69a.
- (8) And thus make it possible for others to inherit the residue of the estate on the death of the sons, v. Keth. 69b.
- (9) גמרא is mentioned in II Chron. XXVIII, 18 as the name of a place. Here it is not a name of a place but a cognomen and the Gemara explains it to be the combination of גמ 'also', and ר 'this'.
- (10) The Jews.
- (11) Romans.
- (12) Cf. Midrash Tanhuma on Genesis XIX (ed. Buber); Gen. Rab. XLIII.
- (13) Isa. XLI, 2.
- (14) V. supra p. 28, n. 4.
- (15) [North of Acco, Klein, NB, p. 9].

## Ta'anith 21b

In Derokereth,<sup>1</sup> a city that supplied five hundred foot-soldiers three deaths took place in one day, whereupon R. Nahman b. Hisda ordained a [public] fast. R. Nahman b. Isaac said, This must be in accordance with the authority of R. Meir who declared, If forgoing at long intervals [during three days] there is [full] liability, how much more so forgoing at short intervals [in one day].<sup>2</sup>

Said R. Nahman b. Hisda to R. Nahman b. Isaac: Pray, take a seat nearer us.<sup>3</sup> The latter replied: We have taught, R. Jose says: It is not the place that honors the man but it is the man who honors the place. We find it thus In connection with Mt. Sinai, as long as the Shechinah dwelt thereon the Torah declared, Neither let the flocks nor herds feed before that mount;<sup>4</sup> but once the Shechinah had



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departed thence the Torah said, When the ram's horn soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount.<sup>5</sup>

The same too we find in connection with the Tent of Meeting in the wilderness; so long as it remained pitched the Torah commanded, That they put out of the camp every leper;<sup>6</sup> but once the curtains were rolled up<sup>7</sup> both those with a running issue and the lepers were permitted to enter therein. Thereupon R. Hisda retorted: If so I will come nearer to you; whereupon the latter replied: It is more fitting that a scholar, the son of an ordinary man, should go to one who is a scholar and is the son of a scholar, than the latter should go towards the former.<sup>8</sup>

Once a plague broke out in Sura but it did not affect the locality in which Rab resided. People thought that this was on account of Rab's great merit but in a dream it was made clear to them that this was far too small a matter to need Rab's great merit, but that it was on account of the merit of a certain man who made it a practice to lend shovel and spade for burials.

Once a fire broke out in Derokereth but it did not spread to the locality where R. Huna resided. People thought that it was on account of the great merit of R. Huna, but in a dream it was made clear to them that this was far too small a matter to need R. Huna's great merit, but that it was on account of a certain woman who [on the eve of Sabbaths] would heat her oven and permit her neighbors to make use of it.

Once Rab Judah was informed that locusts had come and he ordained a fast. He was then told that no damage had been done, whereupon he exclaimed: Have they then brought provision with them?<sup>9</sup>

Once Rab Judah was informed that pestilence was raging among the swine and he ordained a fast. Can it then be concluded from this that Rab Judah is of the opinion that a plague scourging one species of animals is likely to

attack also other species? No, the case of the swine is exceptional, because their intestines are like unto those of human beings.

Once Samuel was informed that pestilence was raging amongst the inhabitants of Be Hozae,<sup>10</sup> and he ordained a fast. The people said to him: surely [Be Hozae] is a long distance away from here.<sup>11</sup> He replied: Would then a crossing prevent it from spreading?<sup>12</sup>

Once R. Nahman was informed that there was pestilence in Palestine and he ordained a fast, for he said, If the 'Mistress' is stricken how much more so the 'Maid-servant' .<sup>13</sup> [Are we then to assume] that the reason for his ordaining the fast was because it was a case of 'mistress' and 'maid-servant', but if both were maid-servants', he would not have ordained the fast? But did not Samuel ordain a fast [in Nehardea] when he was informed that there was pestilence amongst the inhabitants of Be Hozae?<sup>14</sup> The case there was exceptional since there are caravans which it accompanies and with which it comes along.

Abba was a cupper and daily he would receive greetings from the Heavenly Academy. Abaye received greetings on every Sabbath eve, Raba on the eve of every Day of Atonement. Abaye felt dejected because of [the signal honor shown to] Abba the Cupper. People said to him: This distinction is made because you cannot do what Abba does. What was the special merit of Abba the Cupper? When he performed his operations he would separate men from women, and in addition he had a cloak which held a cup [for receiving the blood]<sup>15</sup> and which was slit at the shoulder<sup>16</sup> and whenever a woman patient came to him he would put the garment on her shoulder<sup>17</sup> in order not to see her [exposed body].<sup>18</sup> He also had a place<sup>19</sup> out of public gaze<sup>20</sup> where the patients deposited their fees which he would charge; those that could afford it put their fees there, and thus those who could not pay were not put to shame.<sup>21</sup> Whenever a young scholar happened to consult him not only would he accept no fee from him but on taking leave of him he also

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## Ta'anith 22a

would give him some money at the same time adding, Go and regain strength therewith.

One day Abaye sent to him two scholars in order to test him. He received them and gave them food and drink and in the evening he prepared woolen mattresses for them [to sleep on].

- (1) Identified with Daraukat on the Tigris, v. Obermeyer p. 197.
- (2) Cf. B.K. 24a. An ox is considered a goring ox (Mu'ad) if he gored three times in three days. R. Meir takes the view that he is considered a goring ox if he gored three times in one day (cf. ibid. 23b).
- (3) Take a more prominent place worthy of your great learning of which you have just given us proof.
- (4) Ex. XXXIV, 3.
- (5) Ex. XIX, 13.
- (6) Num. V, 2.
- (7) For the continuation of their journeyings.
- (8) R. Hisda, the father of R. Nahman, was a more eminent scholar than Isaac, the father of R. Hisda, as can be seen from the fact that the former was an ordained rabbi and is referred to as R. Hisda, whereas the latter is termed Isaac without the title 'Rabbi'. To show his less distinguished ancestry R. Nahman refers to himself as מנה בן פרס (= GR. \*\*, mina and פרס, half of a mina). Lit., 'a mina the son of half a mina', while R. Nahman is designated by him as 'mina the son of a mina'.
- (9) That they did not damage the crops.
- (10) [The modern Khurzistan, v. Obermeyer p. 204.]
- (11) Nehardea, the place of Samuel.
- (12) So MS.M. and Rashi. Nothing can prevent disease from spreading. Cur. edd. 'There is here no crossing to prevent them'.
- (13) Palestine is the Mistress and Babylon the Maidservant.
- (14) And there the Maidservant alone was concerned.
- (15) The caravans carry with them the pestilence to Nehardea.
- (16) Lit., 'between the shoulders, shoulder blade'.
- (17) [Var. lec.: a garment which had many slits at the shoulder blade.]
- (18) He would insert the cup through the slit on the shoulder to bleed the patient without having to expose her body.
- (19) Lit., 'hidden'.
- (20) [Var. lec.: 'outside (his surgery)'].
- (21) [Var. lec.: and those who could not pay could come in and sit down, and were not, etc.]

In the morning the scholars rolled these together and took them to the market [for sale]. There they met Abba and they said to him, Sir, value these, how much they are worth, and he replied, So-and-so much. They said to him, Perhaps they are worth more? He replied, This is what I paid for them. They then said to him, They are yours, we took them away from you; tell us, pray, of what did you suspect us. He replied: I said to myself, perhaps the Rabbis needed money to redeem captives and they were ashamed to tell me. They replied, Sir, take them back. He answered: From the moment I missed them I dismissed them from my mind and [I devoted them] to charity.

Raba was dejected because of the special honor shown to Abaye and he was therefore told, Be content that [through your merit] the whole city is protected.

R. Beroka Hoza'ah<sup>1</sup> used to frequent the market at Be Lapatz where Elijah often appeared to him. Once he asked [the prophet], is there any one in this market who has a share in the world to come? He replied, No. Meanwhile he caught sight of a man wearing black shoes and who had no thread of blue on the corners of his garments and he exclaimed, This man has a share in the world to come. He [R. Beroka] ran after him and asked him, What is your occupation? And the man replied: Go away and come back tomorrow. Next day he asked him again, What is your occupation? And he replied: I am a jailer and I keep the men and women separate and I place my bed between them so that they may not come to sin; when I see a Jewish girl upon whom the Gentiles cast their eyes I risk my life and save her.

Once there was amongst us a betrothed girl upon whom the Gentiles cast their eyes. I therefore took lees of [red] wine and put them in her skirt and I told them that she was unclean.<sup>4</sup> [R. Beroka further] asked the man, Why have you no fringes and why do you

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wear black shoes?<sup>5</sup> He replied: That the Gentiles amongst whom I constantly move may not know that I am a Jew, so that when a harsh decree is made [against Jews] I inform the rabbis and they pray [to God] and the decree is annulled. He further asked him, When I asked you, What is your occupation, why did you say to me, Go away now and come back to-morrow? He answered, They had just issued a harsh decree and I said I would first go and acquaint the rabbis of it so that they might pray to God. Whilst [they were thus conversing] two [men]<sup>6</sup> passed by and [Elijah] remarked, These two have a share in the world to come.

R. Beroka then approached and asked them, What is your occupation? They replied, We are jesters, when we see men depressed we cheer them up; furthermore when we see two people quarrelling we strive hard to make peace between them.

**THE ALARM IS SOUNDED EVERYWHERE ON ACCOUNT OF THE FOLLOWING [VISITATIONS],** etc. Our Rabbis have taught: The alarm is sounded everywhere on account of the following visitations, blast, mildew, locust, crickets and wild beasts. R. Akiba says: For the slightest attack of blast and mildew; and In the case of locust and crickets even if only one winged creature is seen the alarm is sounded [immediately].

**FOR WILD BEASTS,** etc. Our Rabbis have taught: The Alarm is sounded for wild beasts only when they are a [divine] visitation but not otherwise. What constitutes a [divine] visitation and what does not? When they make their appearance in the city that is a [divine] visitation, in the field it is not; by day it is a [divine] visitation, by night it is not; if a beast sees two persons and pursues them it is a [divine] visitation, but if it hides itself on seeing them it is not; if it killed two persons and devoured only one of them that is a [divine] visitation, but if it devoured both of them it is not;<sup>7</sup> if it mounted the roof and carried off an infant out of the cradle that is a

divine visitation. Is not this [Baraita] self-contradictory? [First] you say, 'If it makes its appearance in the city it is a visitation' and no distinction is made whether this happens by day or by night, and then you add 'it is a visitation', but by night it is not!—

There is no contradiction. This is what is meant. If it makes its appearance in the city by day it is a visitation, but in the city by night it is not. Or, in the field even by day it is not a visitation.<sup>8</sup> [First you say,] 'If the beast sees two persons and pursues them it is a visitation' which implies that if it remains still it is no visitation and then you add 'if it hides itself on seeing then it is not a visitation'; this would imply that if it remains still it is a visitation! —

This is no contradiction. In the one case it speaks of [a beast] in a field near reedland,<sup>9</sup> in the other in a field not near reed-land. [You say,] 'If it kills two men and devours one of them, that is a visitation but if it devours both of them it is not.' But did you not say that even if it only pursues [two people] that is a visitation? —

R. Papa replied: That speaks of a case [where the beast is standing] in reed-land. The [above] text [states] 'If it mounted the roof and carried off an infant out of the cradle it is a visitation'. Is not this self-evident? R. Papa replied: This statement is meant to refer to [the case of a beast carrying off an infant out of a cradle in] a hunter's cave.<sup>10</sup>

**AND THE SWORD,** etc. Our Rabbis have taught: By 'SWORD' is meant not only a hostile attack by an invading army but also the passing en route of a friendly army.<sup>11</sup> For there could be no more friendly army than that of Pharaoh-Necho, and yet through it king Josiah met his fate, as it is said

(1) Of Be Hozae (Khuzistan).

(2) [The capital of the province of Khuzistan during the Sasanian period, v. Obermeyer p. 209.]

(3) Cf. Num. XV, 38.

(4) She was menstruating. [As protection of the woman this was singularly effective, as among the

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Persians the laws of menstruation were of extreme rigor, v. Obermeyer p. 210, n. 1.]

(5) [It was the black lachets which were the distinguishing marks between Jews and Gentiles, v. Sanh. 74b and Krauss TA. I, 628.]

(6) [Var. lec.: 'two brothers'.]

(7) The animal had already satisfied its hunger by devouring the first person whom it killed; when therefore it kills another person then it can only be a divine visitation.

(8) [The text is doubtful and in disorder. MS.M. omits, or in the field... visitation'. The words 'in the fields by night it is not a visitation', which appear in the cur. ed. in brackets are best left out.]

(9) When the animal stands near reed-land and it feels itself secure because it has a place of escape and it therefore is not likely to attack a person

(10) Although it is a low building and the animal need not climb up high for its prey, the attack is yet taken as a divine visitation.

(11) Lit., 'there is no need to speak of a sword that is not of peace but ever a sword of peace'.

## Ta'anith 22b

But he sent ambassadors to him, saying<sup>1</sup>: What have I to do with thee, thou king of Judah? I come not against thee this day, but against the house wherewith I have war: and God hath given command to speed me; forbear thee from meddling<sup>1</sup> with God, who is with me, that He destroyeth thee not.<sup>1</sup> What is meant by 'God who is with me'? —

Rab Judah said in the name of Rab: Idols. Josiah said [to himself], Since he [Pharaoh-Necho] puts his trust in his idols I will prevail over him. And the archers shot at king Josiah; and the king said to his servants: Have me away, for I am sore wounded.<sup>2</sup> What is meant by, 'For I am sore wounded'? Rab Judah said in the name of Rab: This teaches that his whole body was perforated like a sieve.<sup>3</sup> R. Samuel b. Nahmani said in the name of R. Jonathan: Josiah was punished because he should have consulted Jeremiah and he did not. On what did Josiah rely? —

On the divine promise contained in the words, Neither shall the sword go through your land.<sup>4</sup> What sword? Is it the warring sword? It is already stated [in the same verse], And I will give peace in the land.<sup>4</sup> It must surely refer to the peaceful sword.

Josiah, however, did not know that his generation found but little favor [in the eyes of God]. When he was dying Jeremiah observed that his lips were moving and he feared that perhaps, Heaven forefend, [Josiah] was saying something improper because of his great pain; he thereupon bent down and he overheard him justifying [God's] decree against himself saying, The Lord is righteous; for I have rebelled against His word.<sup>5</sup> He [Jeremiah] then cited of him, The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the Lord.<sup>6</sup>

IT HAPPENED THAT THE ELDERS RETURNED FROM JERUSALEM TO THEIR OWN CITIES, etc. The question was asked, [Does the Mishnah mean] as an oven full of grain, or as an oven full of bread?<sup>7</sup> —

Come and hear: As much as would fill the opening of an oven. The following question however still remains, Does it mean [as much bread] as would close the opening of an oven, or a row of loaves extending to the opening of the oven? This is left undecided.

THEY ALSO ORDAINED A FAST BECAUSE WOLVES DEVOURED, etc. 'Ulla said in the name of R. Simeon b. Jehozadak: It happened that wolves devoured two children and they passed them out through their secretory canal and the question came up before the Sages and they declared that the flesh [of the children] was clean but that their bones were unclean.<sup>8</sup>

THE ALARM IS SOUNDED ON THE SABBATH, etc. Our Rabbis have taught: When a city is surrounded by hostile Gentiles, or threatened with inundation by the river, or when a ship is foundering in the sea, or when an individual is being pursued by Gentiles or robbers or by an evil spirit,<sup>9</sup> the alarm is sounded [even] on the Sabbath; and on account of all these an individual may afflict himself by fasting. R. Jose says: An individual may not afflict himself by fasting lest thereby he come to need the help of his fellow men and it may be that they will not have mercy



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upon him. Rab Judah said in the name of Rab: R. Jose's reason is because It is written, And became a living soul;<sup>10</sup> Scripture thereby implies, [God says], Keep alive the soul which I gave you.

SIMEON THE TEMANITE SAYS [THE ALARM IS SOUNDED] ALSO EVEN ON ACCOUNT OF PLAGUE, etc. The question was asked: Did the Rabbis disagree with him only when it was a question of sounding the alarm on the Sabbath, but on weekdays they agreed with him; or, perhaps they did not agree with him in any circumstances? —

Come and hear: The alarm is sounded on account of plague on the Sabbath, and, it goes without saying, on weekdays. R. Hanan b. Pitom,<sup>11</sup> a disciple of R. Akiba, said in the name of R. Akiba: We may not under any circumstances sound the alarm on account of plague.

THE ALARM IS SOUNDED ON ACCOUNT OF ANY VISITATION, THAT COMES UPON THE COMMUNITY! Our Rabbis have taught: The alarm is sounded on account of any visitation that comes upon the community! except on account of an overabundance of rain. Why? — R. Johanan said: Because we may not pray on account of an excess of good. R. Johanan further said: Whence do we derive that we may not pray on account of an excess of good? For it is said, Bring ye the whole tithe into the storehouse... that there shall be more than sufficiency.<sup>12</sup> What is the meaning of, 'More than sufficiency'? —

Rami son of R. Yud interpreted: Until your lips grow weary with saying, Sufficient. Rami son of R. Yud said: In the Diaspora the alarm is sounded on account of this.<sup>13</sup> It has been taught likewise: In a year of excessive rain the Men of the Mishmar send [a message] to the Men of the Ma'amad:<sup>14</sup> Think of your brethren in the Diaspora that their houses may not become their graves.<sup>15</sup> R. Eliezer was asked, How excessive must the rainfall be to warrant prayer for it to cease? He replied:

When a man standing on Keren Ofel<sup>16</sup> is able to dabble his feet in water. But has it not been taught 'his hands'? —

I mean, his feet [at the same time] as his hands.<sup>17</sup> Rabah bar b. Hana related: Once as I was standing on Keren Ofel I saw [below] an Arab with a spear in his hand riding on a camel and to me he looked as small as a flax-worm.

The Rabbis have taught: And I will give you rains in their season.<sup>18</sup> [This means that the soil shall be] neither soaked nor parched, but moderately rained upon. For whenever the rain is excessive it scours away the soil so that it yields no fruit.

(1) II Chron. XXXV, 21.

(2) Ibid. 23.

(3) Rab Judah infers this from the words ויירו היוורים which he renders, 'And the archers continued shooting.' [Or, ההליתי is connected with הלל to pierce through.]

(4) Lev. XXVI, 6.

(5) Lam. I, 18.

(6) Ibid. IV, 20.

(7) The former is the larger quantity.

(8) Their flesh as mere secretion does not render anyone coming into contact with them unclean, but their bones, still retaining their solid nature, do; cf. Lev. V, 2-3.

(9) [Var. lec.: 'an evil beast'.]

(10) Gen. II, 7.

(11) [Var. lec.: b. Phinehas.]

(12) Mal. III, 10.

(13) Because of an excess of rain.

(14) The phrase, Men of the Mishmar' here does not refer to priests but to a division of lay Israelites whose representatives in Jerusalem known as the Men of the Ma'amad (v. Glos.) stood by during the sacrificial ceremonies reciting prayers (v. Malter, a.l. and infra 27a notes).

(15) Diaspora in the first instance denotes Babylon. Babylon being a low lying country would be swamped by an excess of rain.

(16) The name of a high rock on the brook of Kidron E. of Jerusalem. Cf. Tosef. Ta'an. III, I. [The water to reach the Ofel would have to rise five hundred feet. V. Buchler, op. cit. p. 197.]

(17) [MS.M. omits, 'I mean', the reference being to the Baraitha. I.e., the Baraitha, in stating 'hands' means that the water had risen so high that one can sit on the Keren Ofel and wash his hands whilst his feet dabble in the water.]

(18) Lev. XXVI, 4.

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## Ta'anith 23a

Another explanation. 'In their season': [This means that rain would fall only] on the eve of Wednesdays<sup>1</sup> and Sabbaths. For so it happened in the days of Simeon b. Shetah. [At that time] rain fell on the eve of Wednesdays and Sabbaths so that the grains of wheat came up as large as kidneys and the grains of barley like the stones of olives, and of the lentils like the golden Denarii and they stored specimens of them for future generations in order to make known unto them the in effects of sin, as it is said. Your iniquities have turned away these things and your sins have withholden good from you.<sup>2</sup> Likewise we find happened in the days of Herod when the people were occupied with the rebuilding of the Temple. [At that time] rain fell during the night but in the morning the wind blew and the clouds dispersed and the sun shone so that the people were able to go out to their work, and then they knew that they were engaged in sacred work.

IT HAPPENED THAT THE PEOPLE SAID TO HONI, THE CIRCLE DRAWER, etc. Once it happened that the greater part of the month of Adar had gone and yet no rain had fallen. The people sent a message to Honi the Circle Drawer, Pray that rain may fall. He prayed and no rain fell. He thereupon drew a circle and stood within it in the same way as the prophet Habakkuk had done, as it is said, I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, etc.<sup>3</sup> He exclaimed [before God], Master of the Universe, Thy children have turned to me because [they believe] me to be a member of Thy house. I swear by Thy great name that I will not move from here until Thou hast mercy Upon Thy children!

Rain began to drip and his disciples said to him, We look to you to save us from death;<sup>4</sup> we believe that this rain came down merely to release you from your oath. Thereupon he exclaimed: It is not for this that I have prayed, but for rain [to fill] cisterns, ditches and caves. The rain then began to come down

with great force, every drop being as big as the opening of a barrel and the Sages estimated that no one drop was less than a log.

His disciples then said to him: Master, we look to you to save us from death; we believe that the rain came down to destroy the world. Thereupon he exclaimed before [God], It is not for this that I have prayed, but for rain of benevolence, blessing and bounty. Then rain fell normally until the Israelites [in Jerusalem] were compelled to go up [for shelter] to the Temple Mount because of the rain. [His disciples] then said to him, Master, in the same way as you have prayed for the rain to fall pray for the rain to cease. He replied: I have it as a tradition that we may not pray on account of an excess of good. Despite this bring unto me a bullock for a thanks-giving-offering.]

They brought unto him a bullock for a thanks-giving-offering and he laid his two hands upon it and said, Master of the Universe, Thy people Israel whom Thou hast brought out from Egypt cannot endure an excess of good nor an excess of punishment; when Thou wast angry with them, they could not endure it; when Thou didst shower upon them an excess of good they could not endure it; may it be Thy will that the rain may cease and that there be relief for the world. Immediately the wind began to blow and the clouds were dispersed and the sun shone and the people went out into the fields and gathered for themselves mushrooms and truffles.

Thereupon Simeon b. Shetah sent this message to him, Were it not that you are Honi I would have placed you under the ban; for were the years like the years [of famine in the time] of Elijah<sup>5</sup> (in whose hands were the keys of Rain) would not the name of Heaven be profaned through you?<sup>6</sup> But what shall I do unto you who actest petulantly before the Omnipresent and He grants your desire, as a son who acts petulantly before his father and he grants his desires; thus he says to him,

## TA'ANIS – 2a-31a

Father, take me to bathe in warm water, wash me in cold water, give me nuts, almonds, peaches, and pomegranates and he gives them unto him. Of you Scripture says, Let thy father and thy mother be glad, and let her that bore thee rejoice.<sup>7</sup>

Our Rabbis have taught: What was the message that the Sanhedrins sent to Honi the Circle-Drawer? [It was an interpretation of the verse], Thou, shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee, and light shall shine upon thy ways, etc.<sup>9</sup> ‘Thou shalt also decree a thing:’ You have decreed [on earth] below and the Holy One, Blessed be He, fulfills your word [in heaven] above. ‘And light shall shine upon thy ways:’ You have illumined with your prayer a generation in darkness. ‘When they cast thee down, thou shalt say: There is lifting up:’ You have raised with your prayer a generation that has sunk low. ‘For the humble person He saveth:’ You have saved by your prayer a generation that is humiliated with sin. ‘He delivereth him that is not innocent:’ You have delivered by your prayer a generation that is not innocent. ‘Yea, He shall be delivered through the cleanliness of thy hands:’ You have delivered it<sup>10</sup> through the work of your clean hands.

R. Johanan said: This righteous man [Honi] was throughout the whole of his life troubled about the meaning of the verse, A Song of Ascents, When the Lord brought back those that returned to Zion, we were like unto them that dream.<sup>11</sup> Is it possible for a man to dream continuously for seventy years?<sup>12</sup>

One day he was journeying on the road and he saw a man planting a carob tree; he asked him, How long does it take [for this tree] to bear fruit? The man replied: Seventy years. He then further asked him: Are you certain that you will live another seventy years? The man replied: I found [ready grown] carob trees in the world; as my forefathers planted these for me so I too plant these for my children.

Honi sat down to have a meal and sleep overcame him. As he slept a rocky formation enclosed upon him which hid him from sight and he continued to sleep for seventy years. When he awoke he saw a man gathering the fruit of the carob tree and he asked him, Are you the man who planted the tree? The man replied: I am his grandson. Thereupon he exclaimed: It is clear that I slept for seventy years. He then caught sight of his ass who had given birth to several generations of mules;<sup>13</sup> and he returned home. He there enquired, Is the son of Honi the Circle-Drawer still alive? The people answered him, His son is no more, but his grandson is still living. Thereupon he said to them: I am Honi the Circle-Drawer, but no one would believe him.

He then repaired to the Beth Hamidrash and there he overheard the scholars say, The law is as clear to us as in the days of Honi the Circle-Drawer, for whenever he came to the Beth Hamidrash he would settle for the scholars any difficulty that they had. Whereupon he called out, I am he; but the scholars would not believe him nor did they give him the honor due to him. This hurt him greatly and he prayed [for death] and he died.

Raba said: Hence the saying, Either companionship or death. Abba Hilkiyah was a grandson of Honi the Circle-Drawer, and whenever the world was in need of rain the Rabbis sent a message to him and he prayed and rain fell.

Once there was an urgent need for rain and the Rabbis sent to him a couple of scholars [to ask him] to pray for rain. They came to his house but they did not find him there. They then proceeded to the fields and they found him there hoeing. They greeted him

(1) People did not venture out on Wednesday evenings as there was a belief that demons were about. Cf. Pes. 112b.

(2) Jer. V, 25.

(3) Hab. II, 1.

(4) The meaning of the Hebrew phrase is doubtful.

(3) [Rashi: ‘for confession of sins’.]

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(5) Cf. I Kings XVII, 1ff.

(6) [Honi would not have hesitated to force, so to speak, the hand of Heaven even in the face of an oath such as Elijah had made in the name of God that there would be no rain for years (1 Kings XVII, 1ff).]

(7) Prov. XXIII, 25.

(8) Lit., 'the Men of the Hall of Hewn Stone'. The Sanhedrin met in the Hall of Hewn Stone.

(9) Job XXII, 28ff.

(10) The nation.

(11) Ps. CXXVI, 1.

(12) Cf. Jer. XXV, 11; XXIX, 10.

(13) [MS.M. omits the last sentence.]

## Ta'anith 23b

but he took no notice of them. Towards evening he gathered some wood and placed the wood and the rake on one shoulder and his cloak on the other shoulder.

Throughout the journey he walked barefoot but when he reached a stream he put his shoes on; when he lighted upon thorns and thistles he lifted up his garments; when he reached the city his wife well bedecked came out to meet him; when he arrived home his wife entered first [the house] and then he and then the scholars. He sat down to eat but he did not say to the scholars, 'Join me'. He then shared the meal among his children, giving the older son one portion and the younger two. He said to his wife, I know the scholars have come on account of rain, let us go up to the roof and pray, perhaps the Holy One, Blessed be He, will have mercy and rain will fall, without having credit given to us. They went up to the roof; he stood in one corner and she in another; at first the clouds appeared over the corner where his wife stood.

When he came down he said to the scholars. Why have you scholars come here? They replied: The Rabbis have sent us to you, Sir, [to ask you] to pray for rain. Thereupon he exclaimed, Blessed be God, who has made you no longer dependent on Abba Hilkiah. They replied: We know that the rain has come on your account, but tell us, Sir, the

meaning of these mysterious acts of yours, which are bewildering to us?

Why did you not take notice of us when we greeted you? He answered: I was a laborer hired by the day and I said I must not relax [from my work].

And why did you, Sir, carry the wood on one shoulder and the cloak on the other shoulder? He replied: It was a borrowed cloak; I borrowed it for one purpose [to wear] and not for any other Purpose.

Why did you, Sir, go barefoot throughout the whole journey but when you came to a stream you put your shoes on? He replied: What was on the road I could see but not what was in the water.

Why did you, Sir, lift up your garments whenever you lighted upon thorns and thistles? He replied: This [the body] heals itself, but the other [the clothes] does not.

Why did your wife come out well bedecked to meet you, Sir, when you entered the city? He replied: In order that I might not set my eyes on any other woman.

Why, Sir, did she enter [the house] first and you after her and then we? He replied: Because I did not know your character.<sup>2</sup>

Why, Sir, did you not ask us to join you in the meal? [He replied]: Because there was not sufficient food [for all].

Why did you give, Sir, one portion to the older son and two portions to the younger? He replied: Because the one stays at home and the other is away in the Synagogue<sup>3</sup> [the whole day].

Why, Sir, did the clouds appear first in the corner where your wife stood and then in your corner? [He replied]: Because a wife stays at home and gives bread to the poor which they can at once enjoy whilst I give them money which they cannot at once



## TA'ANIS – 2a-31a

enjoy.<sup>4</sup> Or perhaps it may have to do with certain robbers in our neighborhood; I prayed that they might die, but she prayed that they might repent [and they did repent].

Hanan ha-Nehba was the son of the daughter of Honi the Circle-Drawer. When the world was in need of rain the Rabbis would send to him school children and they would take hold of the hem of his garment and say to him, Father, Father, give us rain. Thereupon he would plead with the Holy One, Blessed be He, [thus], Master of the Universe, do it for the sake of these who are unable to distinguish between the Father who gives rain and the father who does not. And why was he called, Hanan ha-Nehba?— Because he was wont to lock [Mihabbeh] himself in the privys [out of modesty].

R. Zerika said to R. Safra: Come and see the difference between the [so called] hard men of Palestine and the pious men of Babylonia. When the world was in need of rain the pious men of Babylonia, R. Huna and R. Hisda said: Let us assemble and pray, Perhaps the Holy One, Blessed be He, may be reconciled and send rain. But the great men of Palestine, as for example, R. Jonah the father of R. Mani, would go into his house when the world was in need of rain and say to his [family]: Get my haversack and I shall go and buy grain for a Zuz. When he left his house he would go and stand in some low-lying spot, and then standing in this hidden spot, as it is written, Out of the depths have I called thee O Lord,<sup>6</sup> dressed in sackcloth he prayed and rain came. When he returned home [his family] asked him, Have you brought the grain? He replied: Now that rain has come the world will feel relieved.

Again his son, R. Mani, was annoyed by the members of the household of the Patriarch, he went and prostrated himself on the grave of his father and exclaimed: Father, father, these people persecute me. Once as they were passing [the grave] the knees of their horses became stiff [and remained so] until they undertook not to persecute him any longer.

Again, R. Mani used often to attend [the discourses] of R. Isaac b. Eliashab and he complained: The rich members of the family of my father-in-law are annoying me. The latter exclaimed: May they become poor! And they became poor. Later on he [R. Mani] complained: They press me [for support] and R. Isaac exclaimed: Let them become rich! And they became rich. [On another occasion] he complained: My wife is no longer acceptable to me.

R. Isaac thereupon asked: What is her name? He replied: Hannah. Whereupon R. Isaac exclaimed: May Hannah become beautiful! And she became beautiful. He then complained: She is too domineering over me. Whereupon R. Isaac exclaimed: If that is so, let Hannah revert to her [former] ugliness! And she became once again ugly.

Two disciples used to attend [the discourses of] R. Isaac b. Eliashab and they said to him, Master, pray that we may become very wise. He replied: Once I had the power to do this, but now I no longer possess this power.<sup>7</sup> R. Jose b. Abin used to attend [the discourses of] R. Jose of Yokereth.<sup>8</sup> Later he left him and went to those of R. Ashi.

- (1) no.
- (2) Therefore he would not leave his wife unprotected.
- (3) [For instruction. The School, in Talmudic days, was attached to the synagogue.]
- (4) Immediate relief is best.
- (5) [Var. lec. omit: 'in the privy'. V. Rashi.]
- (6) Ps. CXXX, 1.
- (7) Lit., 'it was with me and I dismissed her'.
- (8) Probably to be identified with דרוקרת V. supra 21b.

### Ta'anith 24a

One day he heard him reciting a tradition that Samuel had said: He that takes out of the sea a fish on the Sabbath, as soon as there is on it a dry spot as large as a Sela', he has committed a breach of the Sabbath laws.<sup>1</sup> Thereupon R. Jose b. Abin asked him: Why does not the Master add, 'and between the

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fin's? He replied: Are you not aware that R. Jose b. Abin had [already] stated this? [The former] retorted: I am R. Jose b. Abin. Thereupon R. Ashi enquired: Did you not frequent the discourses of R. Jose of Yokereth? He replied: Yes. R. Ashi then asked him: Why did you leave him, Sir, and come here? He replied: How could the man who showed no mercy to his son and daughter show mercy to me? What happened to his son?

Once R. Jose had day-laborers [working] in the field; night set in and no food was brought to them and they said to his son, 'We are hungry'. Now they were resting under a fig tree and he exclaimed: Fig tree, fig tree, bring forth thy fruit that my father's laborers may eat. It brought forth fruit and they ate. Meanwhile the father came and said to them, Do not bear a grievance against me; the reason for my delay is because I have been occupied up till now on an errand of charity. The laborers replied, May God satisfy you even as your son has satisfied us. Whereupon he asked: Whence? And they told him what had happened.

Thereupon he said to his son: My son, you have troubled your Creator to cause the fig tree to bring forth its fruits before its time, may you too be taken hence before your time! What happened to his daughter? He had a beautiful daughter. One day he saw a man boring a hole in the fence so that he might catch a glimpse of her. He said to the man, What is [the meaning of] this? And the man answered: Master, if I am not worthy enough to marry her, may I not at least be worthy to catch a glimpse of her? Thereupon he exclaimed: My daughter, you are a source of trouble to mankind; return to the dust so that men may not sin because of you.

He also had an ass. When it was hired out for the day [the people who hired it] would place, in the evening, the hire on its back and the ass would make its way home to its master. If, however, the money was too much or too little, it would not go. One day a pair of

sandals were left on its back and the ass would not move until they were removed and only then did it proceed.

Whenever the collectors of charity caught sight of R. Eleazar b. Birtah<sup>2</sup> they would hide themselves from him, because he was in the habit of giving away to them all that he had. One day he was going to the market to buy a trousseau for his daughter. When the collectors of charity caught sight of him they hid themselves from him. He ran after them and said to them: I adjure you, [tell me] on what mission are you engaged? And they replied: [The marriage of] an orphaned pair. He said to them: I swear, they must take precedence over my daughter. And he took all that he had and gave to them. He was left with one Zuz and with this he bought wheat which he deposited in the granary.

When his wife returned home she asked her daughter, What did your father bring home? She replied, He has put in the granary all that he had bought. She thereupon went to open the door of the granary and she found that it was so full of wheat that the wheat protruded through the hinges of the door-socket and the door would not open on account of this. The daughter then went to the Beth-Hamidrash and said to him [her father], Come and see what your Friend has done for you. Whereupon he said to her, I swear,<sup>3</sup> they shall be to you as devoted property, and you shall have no more right to share in them than any poor person in Israel.<sup>4</sup>

R. Judah the Prince<sup>5</sup> ordained a fast and he prayed but no rain fell. He thereupon exclaimed: What a great difference there is between, Samuel the Ramathite<sup>6</sup> and Judah the son of Gamaliel! Woe to the generation that finds itself in such plight! Woe to him in whose days this has happened. He felt very grieved and rain fell.

Once the House of the Patriarch ordained a fast and did not inform either R. Johanan or Resh Lakish. In the morning, however, they did notify them. Resh Lakish then said to R.

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Johanan, But we have not undertaken the fast on the previous evening.<sup>7</sup> The latter replied: We are subject to their ordinances.

Once the House of the Patriarch ordained a fast and no rain fell. Thereupon Oshaiah, the youngest of the college scholars,<sup>8</sup> expounded the verse, Then it shall be, if it be done in error by the congregation.<sup>9</sup> This can be compared to a bride who lives in the house of her father. So long as her eyes<sup>10</sup> are beautiful her body needs no examination; should, however, her eyes be bleared then her body needs examination. Thereupon the servants of the Patriarch came and put a scarf around his neck and tortured him. Whereupon the people of the city cried out, Leave him alone; us also he insults but since we see that whatever he does is for the sake of Heaven, we say nothing to him and we leave him alone, so you too leave him alone.

Once Rabbi ordained a fast and no rain fell. Thereupon 'Ilfa (some say, R. Ilfi), [stepped down before the ark and] recited [the prayer], 'He causeth the wind to blow', and the wind blew. [He continued], 'He causeth the rain to fall', and rain fell. Rabbi then asked him, What is your special merit? He replied: I live in a poverty-stricken remote place where wine for Kiddush and Habdalah<sup>11</sup> is unobtainable but I take the trouble to procure for myself wine for Kiddush and Habdalah and thus help also others to fulfill their duty.

Once Rab came to a certain place and decreed a fast but no rain fell. The Reader then stepped down at his request before the ark and recited, 'He causeth the wind to blow', and the wind blew; [he continued], 'He causeth the rain to fall', and rain fell. Rab thereupon asked him, What is your special merit? The latter replied: I am a teacher of young children and I teach the children of the poor as well as those of the rich; I take no fees from any who cannot afford to pay; further, I have a fishpond and any boy who is reluctant [to learn] I bribe with some of the fishes from

it<sup>12</sup> and thereby appease him so that he becomes eager to learn.

Once R. Nahman ordained a fast and he prayed but no rain fell. He thereupon said, 'Take Nahman and throw him down from the wall to the ground'.<sup>13</sup> He felt greatly dejected and then rain came.

Rabbah once decreed a fast. He prayed but no rain came. Thereupon the people remarked to him: When Rab Judah ordained a fast rain did fall. He replied: What can I do? Is it because of studies? We are superior to him, because in the time of R. Judah all studies were concentrated on

(1) Cf. Shab. 107b. He desecrates the Sabbath by killing which is one of the thirty-nine primary types of work forbidden on the Sabbath (cf. Shab. 73a).

(2) [Identified by Horowitz (Palestine p. 115) with Beiruth.]

(3) Lit., 'By the Service of the Temple', one of the formulas of oaths.

(4) R. Eleazar b. Birtah did not wish his daughter to derive any benefit from the results of a miracle.

(5) V. supra p. 64, n. 1.

(6) Cf. I Sam. XII, 17.

(7) V. supra 11b.

(8) [זעירא דמן הבייא, Aliter: (Oshaia) Ze'ira of Haberya, a village in the Hawran district. V. Horowitz, p. 263.]

(9) Num. XV, 24.

(10) The meaning is that the leaders of the community ('the eyes') because of their sins are the cause of the sufferings that have befallen the community.

(11) V. Glos.

(12) [Cur. edd. insert 'and we arrange them for him,' 'clean them for him'.]

(13) Figuratively He is not worthy of his high office.]

## Ta'anith 24b

Nezikin,<sup>1</sup> whereas we study all the six sections. When R. Judah reached the passage in [the Mishnah],<sup>2</sup> 'If a woman was preserving vegetables in a pot, etc. or as some say the passage, 'If olives are preserved together with their leaves then the leaves are not susceptible to uncleanness',<sup>3</sup> he exclaimed: I see here disputations of Rab and

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Samuel,<sup>4</sup> and yet we to-day teach 'Ukkazin in thirteen different sessions.<sup>5</sup> And yet when Rab Judah removed one shoe [as a sign of humiliation]<sup>6</sup> rain fell but when we cry out the whole day no one pays need to us. Is it because of some failing? If so, let any one who knows of it declare it. What, however, can the great men<sup>7</sup> of a generation do when their generation does not [appear good enough to favor in the eyes of God].

Once Rab Judah saw two men using bread wastefully and he exclaimed: It seems that there is plenty in the world. He gave an angry look and a famine arose. Thereupon the Rabbis said to R. Kahana the son of R. Nehunia, his attendant, You who are so constantly with him, endeavor to persuade him to go out by the door near the market place.<sup>8</sup> He prevailed upon him and he went out to the market place and seeing there a large crowd he asked. What is the matter? He was told, They stand around a mass of ground dates which is on sale. Whereupon he exclaimed: It seems that there is famine in the world. He then said to his disciple: Take off my shoes. As soon as he had taken off one shoe rain fell. As he was about to take off the other Elijah appeared and said to him: The Holy One, Blessed be He, said, if you will take off the other shoe I will lay waste the world.<sup>9</sup>

R. Mari the son of the daughter of Samuel related: Once I was standing on the bank of the river Papa<sup>10</sup> and I saw angels in the guise of sailors who brought sand and loaded ships with it and it turned into fine flour. When the people came to purchase [it] I called out to them: Do not buy this because it resulted from a miracle. Next day boatloads of wheat came from Perezina.<sup>11</sup>

Once Raba came to Hagrunia<sup>12</sup> and ordained a fast but no rain fell. Thereupon he said to the people: Continue with your fasting overnight. Next morning he said to them: If there is any one of you who had a dream let him tell it. Thereupon R. Eleazar from Hagrunia replied: To me in my dream the following was said: Good greetings to the

good teacher from the good Lord who from His bounty dispenseth good to His people. Raba then exclaimed: It seems that this is a favorable time to pray. He prayed and rain fell.

Once a certain man was sentenced by the Court of Raba to receive corporal punishment because he had intercourse with a Gentile woman. Raba had the man punished and he died. The matter reached the ears of King Shapur and he sought to punish Raba. Whereupon Ifra Hormuz, the mother of King Shapur,<sup>13</sup> said to her son, Do not interfere with the Jews because whatever they ask of their God He grants them. The king asked her, For example? They pray and rain falls [she replied]. He retorted: This must have been because it is the season for rain; let them pray now, in the Tammuz cycle<sup>14</sup> for rain. She sent a message to Raba: Concentrate now your mind and pray for rain. He prayed but no rain fell. He then exclaimed: Master of the Universe, 'O God, we have heard with our ears, our fathers have told us; a work Thou didst in their days, in the days of old.'<sup>15</sup> But as for us we have not seen [it] with our eyes. Whereupon there followed such a heavy fall of rain that the gutters of Mahuza<sup>16</sup> emptied their waters into the Tigris. Raba's father then appeared unto him in a dream and said to him: Is there anyone who troubles Heaven so much? Change thy [sleeping] place.<sup>17</sup> He changed his place and next morning he discovered that his bed had been cut with knives.

R. Papa ordained a fast and no rain fell. As he felt faint he sipped a plateful of grits and he again prayed, but still no rain fell. Thereupon R. Nahman b. Ushpazarti<sup>18</sup> said to him: If you, Sir, will sip another plateful of grits rain would fall. Raba felt humiliated and faint, and rain fell.

R. Hanina b. Dosa was journeying on the road when it began to rain. He exclaimed: Master of the Universe, the whole world is at ease, but Hanina is in distress; the rain then ceased. When he reached home he exclaimed:



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Master of the Universe, the whole world is in distress and Hanina is at ease; whereupon rain fell. [With reference to this incident] R. Joseph remarked: Of what avail was the prayer of the High Priest [on the Day of Atonement] against that of R. Hanina b. Dosa? For we have learnt:<sup>19</sup> [The High Priest on the Day of Atonement] prayed a short prayer in the outer room [of the Temple]. What did he pray? Raba son of R. Adda and Rabin son of R. Adda both said in the name of Rab Judah: 'May it be Thy will, O Lord our God, that this year may be one of rain and of heat'. Is then heat beneficial? Is it not rather something harmful? —

Rather [the prayer reads thus], 'If the year is to be a year of heat, let it also be a year of rain and of dew, and let the prayer of those journeying on the roads gain admission before Thee. R. Aha the son of Raba in the name of Rab Judah completed the prayer as follows: 'May a ruler never cease from the house of Judah and may Israel never be in need of sustenance one from another, nor from another people'.

Rab Judah said in the name of Rab: Every day a Heavenly Voice is heard declaring, The whole world draws its sustenance because [of the merit] of Hanina my son, and Hanina my son suffices himself with a Kab of carobs from one Sabbath eve to another. Every Friday his wife would light the oven and throw twigs<sup>20</sup> into it

- (1) The fourth order of the Mishnah.
- (2) Toh. II, 1. The word עוקצין is here out of place and refers to the passage which follows.
- (3) M. Uk. 11,1.
- (4) The disputations of Rab and Samuel are proverbial for their complexity. For fuller notes V. Sanh., Sonc. ed. p. 728.
- (5) Cf. Ber. 20a and Rashi there a.l.; Ned. 41a. Rashi, on our passage; in the thirteen colleges that were to be found in the place where Rabbah resided.
- (6) Cf. 12b; Ta'an. I, 6.
- (7) [MSM.: 'leaders'.]
- (8) That he might see for himself how the people suffer because of the famine.
- (9) He should not weary God with any further prayers as He had already answered his prayer.

- (10) A tributary of the Euphrates. V. Obermeyer, p. 227.
- (11) Obermeyer (p. 227, n. 2) identifies with Parazika, Farausag near Baghdad.
- (12) A city near Nehardea in Babylonia. V. Obermeyer, p. 265-7.
- (13) [Shapur II, King of Persia (310-379 C.E.), son of King Hormuzd.]
- (14) Heb. Tekufah, v. Glos.
- (15) Ps. XLIV, 2.
- (16) [For this reading v. D.S. Mahuza was the place of Raba. Cur. edd. 'of Sepphoris'.]
- (17) Underlying this is the popular belief that a change of place brings with it a change of fortune.
- (18) [Aruch reading Ushparti takes it as the name of R. Papa's mother. The phrase is thus to be rendered: 'O son of Ushparti'.]
- (19) Yoma 53b.
- (20) Lit., 'something that produces smoke'.

## Ta'anith 25a

so as not to be put to shame. She had a bad neighbor who said, I know that these people have nothing, what then is the meaning of all this [smoke]? She went and knocked at the door. [The wife of R. Hanina] feeling humiliated [at this] retired into a room. A miracle happened and [her neighbor] saw the oven filled with loaves of bread and the kneading trough full of dough; she called out to her: You, you, bring your shovel, for your bread is getting charred; and she replied, I just went to fetch it. A Tanna taught: She actually had gone to fetch the shovel because she was accustomed to miracles. Once his wife said to him: How long shall we go on suffering so much: He replied: What shall we do? —

Pray that something may be given to you, [she replied]. He prayed, and there emerged the figure of a hand reaching out to him a leg of a golden table. Thereupon he saw in a dream that the pious would one day eat at a three-legged golden table but he would eat at a two-legged table. Her husband said to her: Are you content that everybody shall eat at a perfect table and we at an imperfect table? She replied: What then shall we do? —

Pray that the leg should be taken away from you, [she replied]. He prayed and it was taken

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away. A Tanna taught: The latter miracle was greater than the former; for there is a tradition that a thing may be given but once; it is never taken away again.

Once on a Friday eve he noticed that his daughter was sad and he said to her, My daughter, why are you sad? She replied: My oil can got mixed up with my vinegar can and I kindled of it the Sabbath light. He said to her: My daughter, Why should this trouble you? He who had commanded the oil to burn will also command the vinegar to burn. A Tanna taught: The light continued to burn the whole day until they took of it light for the Habdalah.<sup>2</sup>

R. Hanina b. Dosa had goats. On being told that they were doing damage he exclaimed, If they indeed do damage may bears devour them, but if not may they each of them at evening time bring home a bear on their horns. In the evening each of them brought home a bear on their horns.

Once a woman neighbor of R. Hanina was building a house but the beams would not reach the walls. She thereupon came to him and said: I have built a house but the beams will not reach the walls. He asked her: What is your name? She replied: Aiku. He thereupon exclaimed: Aiku,<sup>3</sup> may your beams reach [the walls]. A Tanna taught: They projected one cubit on either side. Some say, New pieces joined themselves [miraculously] to the beams.<sup>4</sup> It has been taught: Polemo says: I saw that house and its beams projected one cubit on either side, and people told me: This is the house which R. Hanina b. Dosa covered with beams, through his prayer. Whence did R. Hanina b. Dosa have goats seeing that he was poor? And furthermore, did not the Sages say: We may not rear small cattle in Palestine?<sup>5</sup> —

R. Phinehas said: Once it happened that a man passed by his house and left there hens and the wife of R. Hanina b. Dosa found them. Her husband, however, forbade her to eat of their eggs. As the eggs and the chickens

increased in number he was very troubled by them and he therefore sold them and with the proceeds he purchased goats. One day the man who lost the hens passed by [the house] again and said to his companions, Here I left my hens. R. Hanina overhearing this asked him: Have you any sign [by which to identify them]? He replied: Yes. He gave him the sign and took away the goats. These were the goats that brought bears on their horns.

R. Eleazar b. Pedath found himself in very great want. Once after being bled he had nothing to eat. He took the skin of garlic and put it into his mouth; he became faint and he fell asleep. The Rabbis coming to see him noticed that he was crying and laughing, and that a ray of light was radiating from his forehead. When he awoke they asked him: Why did you cry and laugh? He replied: Because the Holy One, Blessed be He, was sitting by my side and I asked Him, How long will I suffer in this world? And He replied: Eleazar, my son, would you rather that I should turn back the world to its very beginnings? Perhaps you might then be born at a happier hour?<sup>6</sup> I replied: All this, and then only perhaps?<sup>7</sup> I then asked Him, Which is the greater life, the one that I had already lived, or the one I am still to live. He replied: The one that I have already lived. I then said to Him: If so, I do not want it. He replied: As a reward for refusing it I will grant you in the next world thirteen rivers of balsam oil as clear as the Euphrates and the Tigris, which you will be able to enjoy. I asked, And nothing more? He replied: And what shall I then give to your fellow men? I said: Do I then ask the share of one who has nothing? He thereupon snapped at my forehead and exclaimed: Eleazar, my son, I have shot you with my arrows.<sup>8</sup>

R. Hama b. Hanina ordained a fast but no rain fell. People said to him: When R. Joshua b. Levi ordained a fast rain did fall. He replied: I am I, and he is the son of Levi.<sup>9</sup> Go and ask him that he may come [and pray for us] and let us concentrate on our prayer, perhaps the whole community will be contrite

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in heart and rain will fall.<sup>10</sup> They prayed and no rain fell. He<sup>11</sup> then asked them: Are you content that rain should fall on our account? They replied: Yes. He then exclaimed: heaven, heaven, cover thy face.<sup>12</sup> But it did not cover [its face]. He then added: How brazen is the face of heaven! It then became covered and rain fell. Levi ordained a fast but no rain fell. He thereupon exclaimed: Master of the Universe, Thou didst go up and take Thy Seat on high and hast no mercy upon Thy children. Rain fell but he became lame.

R. Eleazar said: Let a man never address himself in a reproachful manner towards God, seeing that one great man did so and he became lame, and he is Levi. But was this actually the cause [of his lameness]? Was it not rather because he demonstrated to Rabbi a particular form of prostration?<sup>13</sup> – Both were the cause of his lameness.

R. Hiyya b. Luliani overhearing the clouds saying to one another, Come, let us take water to Ammon and Moab, exclaimed: Master of the Universe! When Thou wast about to give the Law to Thy people Israel Thou didst offer it around amongst all the nations of the world but they would not accept it, and now Thou wouldst give them rain; let them [the clouds] empty their waters here; and they emptied their waters on the spot.

R. Hiyya b. Luliani expounded: What is the meaning of the verse, The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree; he shall glow like a cedar in Lebanon?<sup>14</sup> If it is said, 'Palm-tree' why is also said 'Cedar'? And if 'Cedar' why also 'Palm-tree'? Had it been said, 'Palm-tree' and not 'Cedar' I might have argued that just in the same way

(1) [The text is in disorder. The rendering adopted is based on the reading of MS.M.].

(2) V. Glos.

(3) The name Aiku suggests to him the Greek \*\*= Would that sc. the joists may reach the walls (Malter, Ta'an. p. 188).

(4) [Aliter:(a) They (the angels) made (added) new joints to them (R. Gershom). (b) They made of them (the lengthened beams) new joints (Aruch).]

(5) As these usually destroy the crops of the field. Cf. B.K. 79b.

(6) Lit., 'In an hour of sustenance'.

(7) He would not give God all this trouble for a mere probability.

(8) The text is in disorder and its meaning is doubtful. According to Rashi it is a gesture of God's love for Eleazar.

(9) I.e., I am not as great a man as he is.

(10) [This appears to be the meaning of text of cur. edd. from which MSS. vary.]

(11) [On our text, either R. Hama b. Hanina, or R. Joshua b. Levi, who had come at their request to pray. V. J. Ta'an III, 4.]

(12) With clouds that bring rain.

(13) And so injured himself. V. Suk. 53b.

(14) Ps. XCII, 13.

## Ta'anith 25b

as the stem of the Palm-tree does not renew itself, so too the stem of the righteous, Heaven forefend, does not renew itself; therefore it is said 'Cedar'. Had it been said 'Cedar' and not 'Palm-tree', I might have argued that just in the same way as the Cedar does not yield fruit, so too the righteous do not yield fruit; therefore it is said, 'Palm-tree' and 'Cedar'. But does the stem of the cedar renew itself?

Surely it has been taught: If one buys a tree from his neighbor for felling he must leave of the trunk one handbreadth from the ground;<sup>2</sup> of the trunk of the sycamore tree two handbreadths; of the virgin sycamore tree three handbreadths; of reeds and of vines from the knot above it;<sup>3</sup> in the case, however, of date palms and cedars he may dig into the ground and uproot them because their stock does not renew itself.<sup>4</sup> Here it speaks of other types of cedar trees in accordance with a statement of Rabbah b. Huna, who said:<sup>5</sup> There are ten types of cedar trees, as it is said, I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the acacia tree and the myrtle tree, etc.<sup>6</sup>

Our Rabbis have taught: It is related of R. Eliezer that he ordained thirteen fasts upon the community and no rain fell. In the end, as the people began to depart [from the

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synagogue], he exclaimed: Have you prepared graves for yourselves? Thereupon the people sobbed loudly and rain fell.

It is further related of R. Eliezer that once he stepped down before the Ark and recited the twenty-four benedictions<sup>7</sup> [for fast days] and his prayer was not answered. R. Akiba stepped down after him and exclaimed: Our Father, our King, we have no King but Thee; our Father, our King, for Thy sake have mercy upon us; and rain fell. The Rabbis present suspected [R. Eliezer], whereupon a Heavenly Voice was heard proclaiming. [The prayer of] this man [R. Akiba] was answered not because he is greater than the other man, but because he is ever forbearing and the other is not.

Our Rabbis have taught: How long should it continue to rain to warrant the community breaking their fast? [Until the rain has penetrated] as far as the knee of the plough enters the soil; this is the opinion of R. Meir. The Sages, however, say: In the case of arid soil one handbreadth, in the case of moderately soft soil two handbreadths, and in the case of cultivated soil three handbreadths. It has been taught: R. Simeon b. Eliezer says: Not a handbreadth of rain coming down from above but that the deep with three handbreadths comes up from below to meet it.<sup>8</sup> But has it not been taught: Two handbreadths? — There is no contradiction. In the one case it is cultivated soil, and in the other it is not.<sup>9</sup>

R. Eliezer said: When on the Feast of Tabernacles the water libations are carried out, Deep says to Deep, 'Let thy waters spring forth, I hear the voice of two friends',<sup>10</sup> as it is said, Deep calleth unto Deep at the voice of Thy cataracts, etc.<sup>11</sup> Rabbah said: I myself have seen Ridya.<sup>12</sup> who resembles a three years' old heifer, with its lips parted; he stands between the lower deep and the upper deep; to the upper deep he says. 'Distil thy waters', and to the lower deep he says. 'Let thy waters spring forth', as it is said, The flowers appear on the earth, etc.<sup>13</sup>

**IF WHILST THEY ARE FASTING RAIN FALLS, IF IT IS BEFORE SUNRISE, etc.** Our Rabbis have taught: If whilst they are fasting rain falls, if it is before sunrise they need not complete the fast; if it is after sunrise they must complete it; this is the opinion of R. Meir. R. Judah says: If before midday they need not complete the fast, if after midday they must complete it. R. Jose says: If before the ninth hour they need not complete the fast, if after the ninth hour they must complete it —

For thus we find it in the case of Ahab, King of Israel, that he fasted from the ninth hour onwards, as it is said, Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before Me, etc.<sup>14</sup>

R. Judah the Prince<sup>15</sup> ordained a fast and rain fell after sunrise. He was of the opinion that the people should complete the fast. Said R. Ammi to him: We have learnt: [There is a difference] between before midday and after midday.

Samuel the Little ordained a fast and rain fell before sunrise. The people thought that it was due to the merit of the community, whereupon he said to them: I will quote you a parable. This can be compared to a servant who asked his master for a gratuity and the master exclaimed, Give it to him, and let me not hear his voice.

Another time Samuel the Little ordained a fast and rain fell after sunset. The people thought that it was due to the merit of the community. whereupon Samuel exclaimed: I will quote you a parable. This can be compared to a servant who asked his master for a gratuity and the master exclaimed, Keep him waiting until he is made submissive and is distressed, and then give him his gratuity. According to Samuel the Little, what would be an instance of rain falling on account of the merit of the community? — If they recited [the prayer]. 'He causeth the wind to blow', and the wind blew, and if they recited, 'He causeth the rain to fail, and rain fell.



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**IT HAPPENED THAT THE RABBIS ORDAINED A FAST IN LYDIA, etc. Should they not have recited the Hallel first? — Abaye and Raba explained this to be because the Hallel is recited**

- (1) I.e., it does not produce new shoots once it is cut down.
- (2) So that the trunk above the ground may send forth fresh shoots.
- (3) From the point where the plant begins to branch out.
- (4) V B.B. 80a.
- (5) R.H. 23a.
- (6) Isa. XLI, 19.
- (7) V. supra 15a.
- (8) The waters below the earth rise to meet the water of the rain. Cf. supra 6b, the statement of R. Abbahu.
- (9) [In cultivated soil a small quantity of water sufficient to water only one handbreadth penetrates still lower and so attracts the deep with a response of three handbreadths (Rashi). Strashun explains differently.]
- (10) The two friends are the two vessels used for the libation of water and wine respectively. V. Suk. 48a.
- (11) Ps. XLII, 8.
- (12) In Persian mythology the angel who has charge over rain. V. Kohut, Aruch s.v. רידיא and Yoma, Sonc. ed. ,21a note.
- (13) Cant. II, 12. The verse is taken to point to the resurrection of nature as the result of the rain. [The verse continues, 'and the voice of the turtle (תור) is heard in our land'. תור is taken in its Aramaic sense of 'ox', thus alluding to Ridya's resemblance to a three years' old heifer.]
- (14) I Kings XXI, 29. According to Pes. 107b kings dine at the ninth hour (i.e.. three o'clock) of the day. Scripture tells us that Ahab fasted and humbled himself on the day that Elijah informed him of his doom. The Gemara construes Ahab's fasting to be that he went without his meal that day. This would prove that the last moment resolution to fast, provided a man had not partaken of any food before that time, is counted as a valid fast. V. 12a, the statement of R. Hisda.
- (15) V. supra p. 64, n. 1.

## Ta'anith 26a

only when the appetite is satisfied and the stomach is full? Is that so? Did not R. Papa on one occasion when coming to the synagogue at Abi-Cobar<sup>1</sup> ordain a fast and rain fell before midday and yet he first

recited the Hallel and only after that the people ate and drank! —

It is different with the people of Mahuza, because drunkenness is frequent amongst them.<sup>2</sup>

## CHAPTER IV

*MISHNAH.* ON THREE OCCASIONS OF THE YEAR, ON FAST-DAYS, ON MA'AMADOTH,<sup>3</sup> AND ON THE DAY OF ATONEMENT DO THE PRIESTS LIFT UP THEIR HANDS TO BLESS [THE PEOPLE] FOUR TIMES DURING THE DAY, NAMELY AT THE SHAHARITH<sup>4</sup> [SERVICE], AT MUSAF,<sup>5</sup> AT MINHAH<sup>6</sup> AND AT THE CLOSING OF THE GATES [NE'ILAH].<sup>7</sup> THE FOLLOWING ARE [THE DETAILS CONCERNING] THE MA'AMADOTH. BECAUSE<sup>8</sup> IT IS SAID, COMMAND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL [AND SAY UNTO THEM]: MY FOOD WHICH IS PRESENTED UNTO ME,<sup>9</sup> NOW HOW CAN A MAN'S OFFERING BE BROUGHT [ON THE ALTAR] AND HE IS NOT PRESENT? [THEREFORE] THE EARLIER PROPHETS<sup>10</sup> INSTITUTED TWENTY-FOUR MISHMAROTH,<sup>11</sup> AND EACH MISHMAR WAS REPRESENTED [AT THE TEMPLE] IN JERUSALEM BY ITS OWN MA'AMAD OF PRIESTS, LEVITES AND ISRAELITES.

WHEN THE TIME CAME FOR THE MISHMAR TO GO UP [TO JERUSALEM] THE PRIESTS AND LEVITES WENT UP TO JERUSALEM AND THE ISRAELITES OF THAT MISHMAR ASSEMBLED IN THEIR CITIES AND READ [FROM THE LAW] THE STORY OF CREATION.<sup>12</sup> THE MEN OF THE [ISRAELITE] MA'AMAD FASTED ON FOUR DAYS OF THAT WEEK, FROM MONDAY TO THURSDAY; THEY DID NOT FAST ON FRIDAY OUT OF RESPECT FOR THE SABBATH NOR ON SUNDAY IN ORDER NOT TO CHANGE OVER [WITHOUT A BREAK] FROM THE REST AND DELIGHT [OF THE SABBATH] TO WEARINESS AND FASTING AND SO [PERHAPS] DIE.

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ON SUNDAY [THEY READ],<sup>13</sup> IN THE BEGINNING, AND, LET THERE BE A FIRMAMENT;

ON MONDAY,<sup>14</sup> LET THERE BE A FIRMAMENT, AND, LET THE WATERS BE GATHERED TOGETHER;

ON TUESDAY,<sup>15</sup> LET THE WATERS BE GATHERED TOGETHER, AND, LET THERE BE LIGHTS;

ON WEDNESDAY,<sup>16</sup> LET THERE BE LIGHTS, AND, LET THE WATERS SWARM;

ON THURSDAY,<sup>17</sup> LET THE WATERS SWARM, AND, LET THE EARTH BRING FORTH;

ON FRIDAY,<sup>18</sup> LET THE EARTH BRING FORTH, AND, AND THE HEAVENS [AND THE EARTH] WERE FINISHED.

TWO PERSONS READ BETWEEN THEM A LONG SECTION<sup>19</sup> AND ONE A SHORT SECTION. AT SHAHARITH, MUSAF, AND MINHAH THEY ASSEMBLED AND READ [THE REQUISITE] SECTION BY HEART, IN THE SAME WAY AS PEOPLE RECITE THE SHEMA'. THEY DID NOT ASSEMBLE AT MINHAH ON FRIDAY OUT OF RESPECT FOR THE SABBATH. ON ANY DAY WHEN HALLEL<sup>20</sup> WAS RECITED THERE WAS NO MA'AMAD [SERVICE]<sup>21</sup> AT SHAHARITH;<sup>22</sup> [ON THE DAY WHEN] A MUSAF-OFFERING [WAS BROUGHT] THERE WAS NONE. AT NE'ILAH, [ON THE DAY OBSERVED AS] THE WOOD-FESTIVAL<sup>23</sup> THERE WAS NONE AT MINHAH;<sup>24</sup> THIS IS THE OPINION OF R. AKIBA.

BEN 'AZZAI SAID TO HIM: THUS DID R. JOSHUA LEARN: [ON THE DAY WHEN] A MUSAF-OFFERING [WAS BROUGHT] THERE WAS NONE AT MINHAH; [ON THE DAY OBSERVED AS] THE WOOD-FESTIVAL THERE WAS NONE AT THE CLOSING OF THE GATES. THEREUPON R. AKIBA RETRACTED AND LEARNT LIKE BEN 'AZZAI.

NINE TIMES IN THE YEAR [WAS OBSERVED] THE WOOD-FESTIVAL OF THE PRIESTS AND THE PEOPLE;

ON THE FIRST OF NISAN THE FAMILY OF ARAH<sup>25</sup> OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH BROUGHT THE OFFERING OF WOOD;

ON THE TWENTIETH OF TAMMUZ THE FAMILY OF DAVID OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH;<sup>26</sup>

ON THE FIFTH OF AB THE FAMILY OF PAROSH<sup>27</sup> OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH;

ON THE SEVENTH OF THE SAME MONTH, THE FAMILY OF JONADAB OF THE RECHABITES;<sup>28</sup>

ON THE TENTH OF THE SAME MONTH THE FAMILY OF SENAAB OF THE TRIBE OF BENJAMIN;<sup>29</sup>

ON THE FIFTEENTH OF THE SAME MONTH THE FAMILY OF ZATTU<sup>30</sup> OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH, AND WITH THEM WERE THE PRIESTS AND LEVITES AND ALL THOSE WHO WERE NOT CERTAIN OF THEIR TRIBE AND THE BENE GONBE 'ALI AND THE BENE KOZE KEZI'OTH;<sup>31</sup>

ON THE TWENTIETH OF THE SAME MONTH THE FAMILY OF PAHATH MOAB<sup>32</sup> OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH;

ON THE TWENTIETH OF ELUL THE FAMILY OF ADIN<sup>33</sup> OF THE TRIBE OF JUDAH;

ON THE FIRST OF TEBETH THE FAMILY OF PAROSH A SECOND TIME;

ON THE FIRST OF TEBETH THERE WAS NO MA'AMAD FOR THEREON THERE WAS HALLEL, MUSAF-OFFERING<sup>34</sup> AND THE WOOD-FESTIVAL.

FIVE MISFORTUNES BEFELL OUR FATHERS ON THE SEVENTEENTH OF TAMMUZ AND FIVE ON THE NINTH OF AB.

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## ON THE SEVENTEENTH OF TAMMUZ

- (1) A place in the vicinity of the city of Mahuza. v. Obermeyer, pp. 177-8.
- (2) Hence they cannot be trusted to leave over the Hallel until they had eaten and drunk.
- (3) Cf. *infra* 27a.
- (4) Morning Service.
- (5) Additional Service.
- (6) Afternoon Service.
- (7) V. Glos. [I.e. at the service held at the end of the day about the time of the closing of the gates of the Temple. This service is now represented by the Ne'ilah service on the Day of Atonement.]
- (8) V. Gemara.
- (9) Num. XXVIII, 2.
- (10) Samuel and David. Cf. *supra* 27a.
- (11) Twenty-four divisions of lay people as well as of priests and Levites, v. *supra* 27b.
- (12) Gen. I.
- (13) Gen. I, 1-8. Three were the minimum number of verses each person was permitted to read. As three persons (Priest, Levite and Israelite) read from the Law, there were not sufficient verses in any one section for the reading, and therefore two sections had to be coupled. Even then on some days (e.g., Sunday and Monday) a verse had to be repeated because the two sections did not have the minimum number of nine verses.
- (14) *Ibid.* 6-13.
- (15) *Ibid.* 9-19.
- (16) *Ibid.* 14-23.
- (17) *Ibid.* 20-31.
- (18) *Ibid.* 24-31 and II, 1-3.
- (19) Containing at least six verses.
- (20) The name for the collection of Psalms, CXIII-CXVIII recited on festivals or semi-festivals like Hanukkah. [Here the reference is to Hanukkah, when Hallel is read but not Musaf.]
- (21) I.e., the reading of the section from Genesis.
- (22) So as not to take up too much time. The same reason applies for the absence of a Ma'amad on days when there is Musaf and wood-offering.
- (23) V. *infra* 28a and cf. Neh. X, 35; XIII, 31. V. also Rabbinowitz, Mishnah Megillah pp. 44-45.
- (24) [Provided the celebrants of the wood-festival were the members of the particular division on service, Me'iri.]
- (25) Neh. VII, 10.
- (26) [There is no record of this family in Neh. VII].
- (27) Neh. VII, 8.
- (28) II Kings X, 15.
- (29) Neh. VII, 38.
- (30) Neh. VII, 13.
- (31) V. Gemara.
- (32) Neh. VII, 11.
- (33) Neh. VII, 20.
- (34) Since it was New Moon and Hanukah.

## Ta'anith 26b

THE TABLES [OF THE LAW] WERE SHATTERED, THE DAILY OFFERING WAS DISCONTINUED, A BREACH WAS MADE IN THE CITY AND APOSTOMOS<sup>1</sup> BURNED THE SCROLL OF THE LAW AND PLACED AN IDOL IN THE TEMPLE.

ON THE NINTH OF AB IT WAS DECREED THAT OUR FATHERS SHOULD NOT ENTER THE [PROMISED] LAND, THE TEMPLE WAS DESTROYED THE FIRST AND SECOND TIME, BETHAR WAS CAPTURED AND THE CITY [JERUSALEM] WAS PLOUGHED UP. WITH THE BEGINNING OF AB REJOICINGS ARE CURTAILED.

DURING THE WEEK IN WHICH THE NINTH OF AB FALLS IT IS FORBIDDEN TO CUT THE HAIR AND TO WASH CLOTHES BUT ON THE THURSDAY IT IS PERMISSIBLE IN HONOR OF THE SABBATH.

ON THE EVE OF THE NINTH OF AB ONE MAY NOT PARTAKE OF A MEAL OF TWO COURSES NOR EAT MEAT NOR DRINK WINE. RABBAN SIMEON B. GAMALIEL SAID: ONE SHOULD MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN HIS DIET. R. JUDAH MAKES IT OBLIGATORY TO TURN THE BED OVER;<sup>2</sup> THE SAGES, HOWEVER, DID NOT AGREE WITH HIM IN THIS.

R. SIMEON B. GAMALIEL SAID: THERE NEVER WERE IN ISRAEL GREATER DAYS OF JOY THAN THE FIFTEENTH OF AB AND THE DAY OF ATONEMENT. ON THESE DAYS THE DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM<sup>3</sup> USED TO WALK OUT IN WHITE GARMENTS WHICH THEY BORROWED IN ORDER NOT TO PUT TO SHAME ANY ONE WHO HAD NONE. ALL THESE GARMENTS REQUIRED RITUAL DIPPING.<sup>4</sup> THE DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM CAME OUT AND DANCED IN THE VINEYARDS EXCLAIMING AT THE SAME TIME, YOUNG MAN, LIFT UP THINE EYES AND SEE WHAT THOU CHOOSEST FOR THYSELF. DO NOT SET THINE EYES ON

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BEAUTY BUT SET THINE EYES ON [GOOD] FAMILY. GRACE IS DECEITFUL, AND BEAUTY IS VAIN; BUT A WOMAN THAT FEARETH THE LORD, SHE SHALL BE PRAISED.<sup>5</sup> AND IT FURTHER SAYS,<sup>6</sup> GIVE HER OF THE FRUIT OF HER HANDS; AND LET HER WORKS PRAISE HER IN THE GATES. LIKEWISE IT SAYS, GO FORTH, O YE DAUGHTERS OF ZION, AND GAZE UPON KING SOLOMON, EVEN UPON THE CROWN WHEREWITH HIS MOTHER HATH CROWNED HIM IN THE DAY OF HIS ESPOUSALS, AND IN THE DAY OF THE GLADNESS OF HIS HEART.<sup>7</sup> 'ON THE DAY OF HIS ESPOUSALS:' THIS REFERS TO THE DAY OF THE GIVING OF THE LAW. 'AND IN THE DAY OF THE GLADNESS OF HIS HEART:' THIS REFERS TO THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE; MAY IT BE REBUILT SPEEDILY IN OUR DAYS.

**GEMARA.** ON THREE OCCASIONS OF THE YEAR DO THE PRIESTS LIFT UP THEIR HANDS [TO BLESS THE PEOPLE]. Is there then MUSAF ON FAST-DAYS and ON MA'AMADOTH? —

There is a clause wanting [in our Mishnah]. It should read thus: 'on three occasions do the priests lift up their hands [to bless the people] at all services, and on one of these occasions four times during the day, at the Shaharith [service], at Musaf, at Minhah and at the closing of the Gates. The following are the three occasions, Fast-days, Ma'amadoth and the Day of Atonement'. R. Nahman said in the name of Rabbah b. Abbuha: This is the opinion of R. Meir. The Sages, however, say: At Shaharith and at Musaf there is 'lifting up of hands' but at Minhah or at Ne'ilah there is no 'lifting up of hands'. Who are meant by 'the Sages'? —

It is R. Judah. For it has been taught: At all [services, namely] at Shaharith, at Musaf, at Minhah and at Ne'ilah there is 'lifting up of hands'; this is the opinion of R. Meir.

R. Judah says: At Shaharith and at Musaf there is 'lifting up of hands' but at Minhah or

Ne'ilah there is no 'lifting up of hands'. R. Jose says: At Ne'ilah there is 'lifting up of hands' but at Minhah there is no 'lifting up of hands'. Wherein do they differ? R. Meir holds the view that the reason why on ordinary days the priests do not 'lift up their hands' at Minhah is because of the likelihood of intoxication,<sup>9</sup> but on the days [cited above] the question of Intoxication does not arise.<sup>10</sup>

R. Judah takes the view that as drunkenness during [the time of] Shaharith and Musaf on ordinary days is not usual the Rabbis did not prohibit the lifting up of hands [at these services on fast-days also], whereas at [the time of] Minhah and Ne'ilah since on ordinary days drunkenness is quite a likely occurrence the Rabbis prohibited the 'lifting up of hands' [at these services even on fast-days]. R. Jose holds the view that the Rabbis confined their restriction to the Minhah only seeing that it is read every day, but they did not to the Ne'ilah which is not read every day.<sup>11</sup>

R. Judah said in the name of Rab: The Halachah is in accordance with the view of R. Meir. R. Johanan said: The people followed the view of R. Meir. And Raba said: The established custom is in accordance with the view of R. Meir. On the view that the Halachah is according to R. Meir we teach it [explicitly] in the school sessions; but if we say that the established custom is according to R. Meir, then we should not teach it explicitly in the school sessions but we may give our decisions in accordance with it; if, however, we say that the people followed the view of R. Meir then we do not definitely give a decision in accordance with it, but should one have acted on it we do not declare his action null. But R. Nahman said: The Halachah is according to R. Jose. And the Halachah is [indeed] according to R. Jose. But nowadays why do the priests 'lift up their hands' [to bless the people] on fast-days at Minhah? —

As they lift up their hands [in blessing] very near sunset<sup>12</sup> it is as if this was the Ne'ilah



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[service]. It is, however, generally agreed that an intoxicated [priest] may not lift up his hands [in benediction]. Whence is this view adduced? —

**R. Joshua b. Levi** said in the name of **Bar Kappara**: Why does the section dealing with [the blessing by] the priest follow immediately after the portion of the Nazirite?<sup>13</sup> In order to teach you that, just as the Nazirite is forbidden to drink wine, so too is the priest about to recite the priestly benediction.

The father of **R. Zera**, and some say **Oshaiah b. Zabbda**, demurred to this: [If that is so], then just as the Nazirite is forbidden to eat the shells<sup>14</sup> [of grapes], so too should the priest about to recite the priestly benediction be forbidden [to eat] the ‘shells of grapes’. —

**R. Isaac** replied: Scripture says, To minister unto Him and to bless in His name;<sup>15</sup> [from this is to be inferred] that just as the officiating priest may eat the shells [of grapes]<sup>16</sup> so too may the priest about to recite the priestly benediction.

(1) V. J.E. s.v.

(2) And thus sleep and sit on the ground as a sign of mourning, v. infra.

(3) [Var. lec.: ‘the sons of Israel’. That the same, however, applies to the daughters is clear from the Baraitha cited in the Gemara infra 31a.]

(4) In case they had been worn by a woman in a state of uncleanness and so became unclean. Cf. Lev. XV, 19ff.

(5) Prov. XXXI, 30.

(6) [Mishnah ed. Lowe reads: ‘וכך הוא אומר’, and thus he said’, the quotation which follows being the answer of the young man, v. Malter.]

(7) Cant. III, 11. The Song of Songs has ever been regarded by the Rabbis as an allegory depicting the love of Israel for God.

(8) On the Day of Atonement.

(9) The priest may likely be intoxicated. A priest in a state of intoxication may not officiate in the Temple. Cf., Lev. X, 9.

(10) I.e., on fast days. On Ma'amadot and the Day of Atonement. The men of the Ma'amad fasted four fasts. Cf. infra 27b.

(11) It is read only on all fast-days (Rashi). [Others: only on the Day of Atonement, v. R. Hananel and Me'iri.]

(12) [On fast-days Minhah was recited close to sunset; v. supra 12b. R. Gershom refers this only to ‘the Day of Atonement.’]

(13) Num. VI, 1-21; the priestly section ibid. 22-27.

(14) Or ‘kernels’.

(15) Deut. X, 8.

(16) Scripture forbids expressly the drinking of wine only. Cf. Lev. X, 9.

## Ta'anith 27a

[If so, why not also argue]: Just as an officiating priest may not be blemished so too may a priest reciting the benediction not be blemished. — Surely he is compared to the Nazirite.<sup>1</sup> Why do you choose to make your analogies more lenient [for the priest]? Why not make your analogies more strict [for him]?<sup>2</sup> — These analogies are but supports for a Rabbinical law and they must therefore incline towards the side of leniency.

THE FOLLOWING ARE [THE DETAILS CONCERNING] THE MA'AMADOTH. BECAUSE IT IS SAID, COMMAND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, etc. What does [this Mishnah] mean to say? —

This is what it means to say: THE FOLLOWING ARE [THE DETAILS CONCERNING] THE MA'AMADOTH. AND WHY WERE THE MA'AMADOTH INSTITUTED? BECAUSE IT IS SAID, COMMAND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL AND SAY UNTO THEM: MY FOOD WHICH IS PRESENTED UNTO ME. HOW CAN A MAN'S OFFERING BE BROUGHT [ON THE ALTAR] AND HE IS NOT PRESENT? [THEREFORE] THE EARLIER PROPHETS INSTITUTED TWENTY-FOUR MISHMAROTH; EACH MISHMAR WAS REPRESENTED [AT THE TEMPLE] IN JERUSALEM BY ITS OWN MA'AMAD OF PRIESTS, LEVITES AND ISRAELITES. WHEN THE TIME CAME FOR THE MISHMAR TO GO UP, THE PRIESTS AND LEVITES WENT UP TO JERUSALEM.

Our Rabbis have taught: ‘There were twenty-four Mishmaroth in Palestine and twelve in Jericho’. [You say] there were [also] twelve in

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Jericho, then there were actually far more [than twenty-four]! —

It must therefore be understood to mean that twelve of them [of the twenty-four] were in Jericho. When the time came for the Mishmar to go up [to Jerusalem] one half of the Mishmar went up from [their homes] in Palestine to Jerusalem and the other half went up to Jericho in order to provide their brethren in Jerusalem with water and food. Rab Judah said in the name of Samuel: The absence of the Priests, Levites and Israelites is a bar to [the offering of] the sacrifices. A Tanna taught: R. Simeon b. Eleazar said: The absence of Priests, Levites and musical instruments is a bar to [the offering of] the sacrifices. On what question does their dispute turn? —

The one [Rab Judah] holds the view that the principal music of the Temple was vocal,<sup>3</sup> and the other that it was with an instrument. R. Hama b. Guria said in the name of Rab: Moses instituted for Israel eight Mishmaroth, four from [the family of] Eleazar and four from [the family of] Ithamar; Samuel came and increased them to sixteen; David came and increased them to twenty-four, as it is said, In the fortieth year of the reign of David they were sought for, and there were found among them mighty men of valor at Jazer of Gilead.<sup>4</sup>

An objection was raised against this: Moses instituted for Israel eight Mishmaroth, four from [the family of] Eleazar and four [from the family of] Ithamar; David and Samuel came and increased them to twenty-four, as it is said, Whom David and Samuel the seer did ordain in their set office!<sup>5</sup> —

This is what the passage means: From their institution by David and Samuel the Ramathite they were increased to twenty-four. Another [Baraita] taught: Moses instituted for Israel sixteen Mishmaroth, eight from [the family of] Eleazar and eight from [the family of] Ithamar; but when the descendants of Eleazar increased in number

above those of Ithamar, [the Mishmaroth] were again divided and they were increased to twenty-four, as it is said, And there were more chief men found of the sons of Eleazar than of the sons of Ithamar; and thus were they divided: of the sons of Eleazar there were sixteen, heads of fathers' houses, and of the sons of Ithamar, according to their fathers' houses, eight.<sup>6</sup>

And it says further, One father's house being taken for Eleazar, and proportionately for Ithamar.<sup>7</sup> What is the force of the additional verse cited? Should you say, that just as the descendants of Eleazar increased in number, so also those of Ithamar increased from their original four into eight. Then come and hear: 'One father's house being taken for Eleazar, and proportionately [we-ahuz ahuz] for Ithamar.' This [Baraita] will then refute the opinion of R. Hama b. Gurias — R. Hama b. Guria will answer by saying: Tannaim are divided on the question and I accept the opinion of the Tanna [who says that Moses instituted only] eight Mishmaroth.

Our Rabbis have taught: Four Mishmaroth returned from the [Babylonian] exile, and they were: Jedaiah, Harim, Pashhur and Immer.<sup>9</sup> The prophets amongst them

- (1) And a blemished person may be a Nazirite.
- (2) [By comparing the priest reciting the blessing to a Nazirite in respect of the eating of the shells and to an officiating priest in respect of a blemish.]
- (3) Hence so long as there were Levites present to sing, the absence of musical instruments does not invalidate the sacrifices.
- (4) I Chron. XXVI, 31.
- (5) Ibid. IX, 22.
- (6) I Chron. XXIV, 4.
- (7) Ibid. XXIV, 6.
- (8) Who said that Moses instituted only eight Mishmaroth, four each.
- (9) V. Ezra II, 36-39.

### Ta'anith 27b

arose and divided them and increased them to twenty-four. [Lots were prepared] and mixed and placed in an urn. First came Jedaiah and took his portion and the portions

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of his colleagues,<sup>1</sup> six [in all]; then came Harim and took his portion and the portions of his colleagues six [in all]; and likewise Pashhur; and likewise Immer. And the prophets amongst them stipulated that even if Jehoiarib, who was the chief of the Mishmaroth should go up to [Jerusalem]<sup>2</sup> Jedaiah should not be ousted from his place, but Jedaiah<sup>3</sup> should have precedence and Jehoiarib should be subordinate [to him].<sup>4</sup>

AND THE ISRAELITES OF THE MISHMAR ASSEMBLED IN THEIR CITIES AND READ [FROM THE LAW] THE STORY OF CREATION, On what is this based? — R. Jacob b. Aha said in the name of R. Assi: Were it not for the Ma'amadoth heaven and earth could not endure, as it is said, And he said: O Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?<sup>5</sup> Abraham said: Master of the Universe, should Israel sin before Thee wilt Thou do unto them [as Thou hast done] to the generation of the Flood<sup>6</sup> and to the generation of the Dispersion?<sup>7</sup> [God] replied to him: No. He then said to him: Master of the Universe, 'Let me know whereby I shall inherit it'. [God] answered: Take Me a heifer of three years old, and a she-goat of three years old, etc.<sup>8</sup> Abraham then continued: Master of the Universe! This holds good whilst the Temple remains in being, but when the Temple will no longer be what will become of them? [God] replied: I have already long ago provided for them in the Torah the order of sacrifices and whenever they read it I will deem it as if they had offered them before me and I will grant them pardon for all their iniquities.

Our Rabbis have taught: The men of the Mishmar<sup>9</sup> prayed over the sacrifice of their brethren that it may be favorably accepted, whilst the men of the Ma'amad assembled in their synagogues and observed four fasts, on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday of that week. On Monday [they fasted] for those that go down to the sea; on Tuesday for those who travel in the deserts; on Wednesday that croup may not attack

children; on Thursday for pregnant women and nursing mothers, that pregnant women should not suffer a miscarriage, and that nursing mothers may be able to nurse their infants; on Friday they did not fast out of respect for the Sabbath; and certainly not on the Sabbath. Why did they not fast on Sunday? —

R. Johanan said: Because of the Nazareans.<sup>10</sup> R. Samuel b. Nahmani said: Because it is the third day after the creation of Man.<sup>11</sup> Resh Lakish said: Because of the additional soul. For Resh Lakish said: Man is given an additional soul on Friday, but at the termination of the Sabbath it is taken away from him, as it is said, He ceased from work and rested<sup>12</sup> [Shabat Wa-yinafash] that is to say, Once the rest had ceased, woe! that soul is gone.

ON SUNDAY [THEY READ], 'IN THE BEGINNING', AND, 'LET THERE BE A FIRMAMENT'. It has been taught: Two persons read [the section] 'In the beginning', and one 'Let there be a firmament'. I can understand one person reading, 'Let there be a firmament', as it contains three verses, but how can two persons read, 'In the beginning', seeing that it contains only five verses? Has it not been taught: He who reads the Law should not read less than three verses? —

Rab answered: [The third verse] is repeated. Samuel said: It is divided into two. Rab who says that the third verse is repeated why does he not agree that it is divided? —

He is of the opinion that any verse which Moses did not divide, we may not divide. And as for Samuel who says that it is divided, may it then be divided? Did not R. Hanina, the Bible teacher, declare, I endeavored hard to get permission from R. Hanina the elder to divide a verse into two and he would permit me only in the case of teaching children, because it is merely for teaching practice! —

To this Samuel can reply: There [in the case of school children] the reason why [R. Hanina

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permitted the verse to be divided] was because it is not possible [for them to read the whole verse at one stretch], here too it is not possible. And as for Samuel who said, 'It is divided', why should he not agree that it be repeated? —

In order to prevent any misunderstanding on the part of those who may enter or leave [the synagogue].<sup>13</sup> An objection was raised: [A section of] six verses is read by two, but [a section of] five verses by one; should, however, the first person have read three verses then the second person reads the [remaining] two and one verse from the following section; some say, he reads three verses [from the following section] because we do not read from a [new] section less than three verses. Now in accordance with the view of him who says that it should be repeated, let then [the third verse of the first section] be repeated; and in accordance with the view of him who says that it should be divided, let the verse be divided? —

There the position is different

- (1) I.e., those of his sub-divisions.
- (2) In the First Temple, I Chron. XXIV, 7.
- (3) [Who in the First Temple was second, v. I Chron. *ibid.*]
- (4) [Because he refused to return at the time with Ezra, v. n. 4.]
- (5) Gen. XV, 8.
- (6) Cf. Gen. VI, 9ff.
- (7) Gen. XI, 1-9.
- (8) Gen. XV, 9.
- (9) The lay representatives at the Temple sacrifices (Rashi). [They are loosely designated the Men of the Mishmar because they were attached to a priestly division (v. Me'iri and Malter, a.l.).]
- (10) I.e., Christians, who may take umbrage at the Jews turning their Sabbath into a fast-day. V. Herford, Christianity in Talmud and Midrash, pp. 171-3.
- (11) Man was created on the sixth day (Friday). Cf. Gen. I, 27. The third day after birth, like the third day after circumcision, was considered a critical period; cf. Gen. XXXIV, 25.
- (12) Ex. XXXI, 17. The word שבת R. Lakish renders as 'ceasing' to observe the Sabbath and the word ויניפשׁ he divides into two, וי 'woe' and נפשׁ 'soul'.
- (13) Those coming in when the second person reads verse three might conclude that the first

person read two verses only; similarly those leaving the synagogue when the first person reads verse three might conclude that the second person will read two verses only.

## Ta'anith 28a

because he has plenty of verses at his disposal.<sup>1</sup>

**TWO PERSONS READ A LONG SECTION... AT SHAHARITH, MUSAF AND MINHAH THEY READ [THE REQUISITE] SECTION BY HEART, etc.** The question was raised: How is this Mishnah to be understood? [Does it mean] that at Shaharith and Musaf [the section] is read from a Scroll of the Law and at Minhah by heart in the same manner as people recite the Shema'? Or, it means this: At Shaharith it is read from a Scroll of the Law and at Musaf and Minhah by heart in the same manner as people recite the Shema'? —

Come and hear: At Shaharith and Musaf they assemble in the synagogue and read [from the Scroll of the Law] in the same way as all the year round, but at Minhah an individual reads it by heart. — R. Jose asked: May then an individual read by heart in public words of the Law? It must surely be that all assemble [in the synagogue] and read it by heart in the same way as the Shema' is recited.

**ON ANY DAY WHEN HALLEL WAS RECITED THERE WAS NO MA'AMAD, etc.** What is the difference between the one and the other?<sup>2</sup> — The one [Minhah] is a Biblical injunction and the other [Ne'ilah] is a rabbinic institution.<sup>3</sup>

**THE WOOD-FESTIVAL OF THE PRIESTS AND OF THE PEOPLE, etc.** Our Rabbis have taught: Why was it necessary [to fix special days for] the Wood-Festival of the Priests and of the People? It is reported that when the exiles returned [to Palestine] they found no wood in the [Temple wood] chamber and the families here mentioned came forward and offered wood of their own.



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The prophets amongst them thereupon made it a condition that even should at any time the chamber be full of wood they should still continue their offerings, as it is said, And we cast lots the priests, the Levites and the people, for the wood-offering, to bring it into the house of our God, according to our fathers' houses at times appointed, year by year, to burn upon the altar of the Lord our God, as it is written in the Law.<sup>4</sup>

AND WITH THEM WERE THE PRIESTS AND THE LEVITES AND ALL THOSE WHO, etc. Our Rabbis have taught: What is the incident connected with the Bene Gonbe 'Ali and the Bene Koze Kezi'oth? It is reported that once the ruling power made a decree that Israel should not bring wood to the altar, nor bring their first-fruit to Jerusalem, and placed guards on the roads as Jeroboam the son of Nebat had done to prevent Israel from going on pilgrimage. What did the pious and sin-fearing men of that generation do? They took the baskets of the first-fruit and covered them with dried figs and carried them with a pestle on their shoulders, and when they reached the guards they were asked: Whither are you going? They replied: With the pestle on our shoulders we are going to make two cakes of pressed figs in the mortar we have yonder. When they had gone away from the guard they decorated the baskets and brought them to Jerusalem.<sup>5</sup> It has been taught: The family of Salami Netofah acted in a similar way.

Our Rabbis have taught: What is the incident connected with the family of Salami Netofah? It is reported that once the ruling power decreed that Israel should not bring wood to the altar and they placed guards on the roads as Jeroboam the son of Nebat had done to prevent Israel from going on pilgrimage. What did the God-fearing men of that generation do? They took the logs of wood and made them into ladders which they carried on their shoulders and proceeded on their journey; when they reached the guards they were asked: Whither are you going? They replied: [We are going] with the ladders

on our shoulders to take down young pigeons from the dovecot at a place further on. When they had gone away from the guards they dismantled [the ladders] and brought them to Jerusalem.<sup>6</sup> And it is of them and of men like them that Scripture says, The memory of the righteous shall be for a blessing;<sup>7</sup> and of Jeroboam and his companions the verse adds, But the name of the wicked shall rot.

ON THE TWENTIETH OF THE SAME MONTH THE FAMILY OF PAHATH MOAB: A Tanna taught: The sons of Pahath Moab b. Judah are identical with the sons of David the son of Judah; this is the opinion of R. Meir. R. Judah says: They are identical with the sons of Joab b. Zeraiah.

ON THE TWENTIETH OF ELUL THE FAMILY OF ADIN THE SON OF JUDAH: Our Rabbis have taught: The sons of Adin the son of Judah are the same as the sons of David the son of Judah; this is the opinion of R. Judah. R. Jose says: They are the same as the sons of Joab the son of Zeraiah.

ON THE FIRST OF TEBETH THE FAMILY OF PAROSH A SECOND TIME, etc. With whose view does the Mishnah agree? It is neither with the view of R. Meir nor with that of R. Judah, nor with that of R. Jose. If it were in agreement with the view of R. Meir then [the Mishnah] would read, 'the sons of David b. Judah a second time'; should it be with that of R. Judah then it should read 'the sons of David b. Judah a second time'; if with that of R. Jose then it should read 'the sons of Joab b. Zeraiah a second time'! — [The Mishnah actually] agrees with the view of R. Jose, but there are two Tannaim in dispute as to what R. Jose's view was.<sup>8</sup>

ON THE FIRST OF TEBETH THERE WAS NO MA'AMAD, etc. Mar Kashisha the son of R. Hisda asked R. Ashi:

(1) But here in the case of the Ma'amadoth the Scriptural verses are limited in number. For further notes on this passage v. Meg., Sonc. ed. p. 133f.

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(2) Why on the day of the Wood-Festival is no Ma'amad held at Ne'ilah but takes place as usual at Minhah?

(3) Minhah is of Biblical origin its institution being attributed to the Patriarch Isaac (cf. Ber. 26b), hence the Wood-Festival cannot supersede the Ma'amad in connection with it, whereas Ne'ilah is a rabbinic institution and therefore the festive day can supersede it. (So Rashi). V. however, Tosaf. ad loc. for an alternative interpretation of the passage.

(4) Neh. X, 35.

(5) Cf. Bik. III, 3.

(6) To be used as fuel for the altar.

(7) Prov. X, 7.

(8) On one view (represented under Mishnah) R. Jose identifies the family of Adin with that of David; on the other (in the Baraitha) with that of Joab.

## Ta'anith 28b

Why is Hallel different that it suspends its own Ma'amad<sup>1</sup> while Musaf does not supersede its own Ma'amad?<sup>2</sup> —

R. Ashi replied: If [Musaf] suspends the Ma'amad of a service of which it is not part, [i.e., Minhah] all the more should it suspend its own Ma'amad? — R. Kashisha then said: This is what I mean to say: Let it [Musaf] suspend its own Ma'amad only!<sup>3</sup> —

R. Ashi replied: There is R. Jose who holds the same view as you. For it has been taught: R. Jose says: Any day on which there is Musaf there is also a Ma'amad. Now which Ma'amad [is here referred to]? Shall I say the Ma'amad of the Shaharith? [Surely] the first Tanna [of our Mishnah] also says likewise! Is it the Ma'amad of the Musaf? Does not Musaf suspend even its own Ma'amad! Is it the Ma'amad of Minhah? But this is already suspended because of the Wood-Festival!<sup>4</sup> It must then surely be the Ma'amad of Ne'ilah. Hence the conclusion therefrom that Musaf suspends its own Ma'amad but it does not suspend the Ma'amad of any other service. Hence it is proved. Let [the Mishnah] also state that there was no Ma'amad on the first of Nisan, because there was Hallel,<sup>5</sup> and Musaf offering and the wood-offering? —

Raba replied: This proves that the recital of Hallel on New Moon is not a Biblical injunction.<sup>6</sup> For R. Johanan said in the name of R. Simeon b. Jehozadak, On eighteen days in the year the individual [worshipper] completes the Hallel<sup>7</sup> and they are, the eight days of the Feast of Tabernacles, the eight days of Hanukkah, the first day of Passover,<sup>8</sup> and the Festival of Pentecost; but in the Diaspora<sup>9</sup> [the Hallel is completed] on twenty-one days, and they are, the nine days of the Feast of Tabernacles, the eight days of Hanukkah, the first two days of Passover and the two days of Pentecost. Rab once came to Babylonia<sup>10</sup> and he noticed that they recited the Hallel<sup>11</sup> on New Moon; at first he thought of stopping them but when he saw that they omitted parts of it he remarked: It is clearly evident that it is an old ancestral custom with them. A Tanna taught: The individual should not deliberately begin to recite [the Hallel]<sup>12</sup> but once he has begun he should complete it.

FIVE MISFORTUNES BEFELL OUR FATHERS ON THE SEVENTEENTH OF TAMMUZ, etc. Whence is it known that the Tables [of the Law] were shattered [on the seventeenth of Tammuz]? For it has been taught:<sup>13</sup> On the sixth of the month [of Sivan] the Ten Commandments were given to Israel; R. Jose says: On the seventh of the month. He who says that they were given on the sixth takes the view that on the sixth they were given and on the seventh Moses ascended the mount. And he who says that they were given on the seventh holds that they were given on the seventh and on the seventh Moses ascended the mount. For it is written, And the seventh day he called unto Moses,<sup>14</sup> and it is further written, And Moses entered into the midst of the cloud, and went up into the mount; and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights.<sup>15</sup> The [remaining] twenty-four days of Sivan and the sixteen days of Tammuz make altogether forty. On the seventeenth of Tammuz he came down [from the mountain] and shattered the Tables, as it is written, And it came to pass as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he

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saw the calf... and he cast the tables out of his hands, and broke them beneath the mount.<sup>16</sup>

**[THE DAILY OFFERING] WAS DISCONTINUED. This is a tradition.**

**A BREACH WAS MADE IN THE CITY. Did this then happen on the seventeenth? Is it not written, In the fourth month, in the ninth day of the month, the famine was sore in the city, etc.<sup>17</sup> and in the following verse it is written, Then a breach was made in the city, etc.! —**

**Raba said: This is no contradiction. The one refers to the First Temple and the other to the Second Temple. For it has been taught: In the First Temple the breach was made in the city on the ninth of Tammuz, but in the Second Temple on the seventeenth of Tammuz.**

**APOSTOMOS BURNED THE SCROLL OF THE LAW. This is a tradition.**

**AND PLACED AN IDOL IN THE TEMPLE. Whence do we know this? — For it is written, And from the time that the continual burnt-offering shall be taken away and the detestable thing that causeth appalment set up.<sup>18</sup> Was there then only one detestable thing? Is it not written, And upon the wing of detestable things shall be that which causeth appalment?<sup>19</sup> —**

**Raba replied: There were two [idols] and one fell upon the other and broke its hand and upon it was found inscribed:**

(1) On the day when Hallel is recited is the corresponding Ma'amad prayer of the Shaharith eliminated.

(2) On the day when there is Musaf the Ma'amad of the Minhah is eliminated and not the one attached to the Musaf.

(3) And not also that of Minhah, having a similar effect as Hallel.

(4) [This is difficult to explain. Wilna Gaon omits the last two sentences and reads: Hence it must then surely be the Ma'amad of Minhah and Ne'ilah.]

(5) Being New Moon.

(6) As the Mishnah does not state this, it is to be inferred that in spite of the fact that the Hallel was recited on the first of Nisan the Ma'amad prayers

were read as usual at the Shaharith. This proves that the recital of the Hallel on New Moon is but a custom that had sprung up and is not a Biblical institution, otherwise the Hallel would eliminate the Ma'amad.

(7) The complete Hallel consisted of Psalms CXIII-CXVIII; on the days when Hallel was not to be completed verses I-XI of Psalms CXV and CXVI were omitted.

(8) The Hallel was also completed on the Eve of Passover at the Passover sacrifices. Cf. Pes. V, 7.

(9) The next day was also observed as a festival.

(10) [Stands here for Sura, v. Meg., Sonc. ed. p. 135, n. 5.]

(11) The recitation of the Hallel on New Moon was one of the points of difference between the ritual of the Jews in Babylonia and Palestine.

(12) On the New Moon.

(13) Cf. Shab. 86a.

(14) Ex. XXIV, 16.

(15) Ibid. 18.

(16) Ex. XXXII, 19. Thus it is proved that Moses broke the Tables on the seventeenth of Tammuz.

(17) Jer. LII, 6-7.

(18) Dan. XII, 11.

(19) Ibid. IX, 27.

## Ta'anith 29a

**You desired to destroy the Temple, but I have handed over your hand to Him.<sup>1</sup>**

**ON THE NINTH OF AB IT WAS DECREED THAT OUR FATHERS SHOULD NOT ENTER THE [PROMISED] LAND. Whence do we know this? For it is written, And it came to pass in the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month, that the tabernacle was reared up.<sup>2</sup> And [regarding this verse] a Master said: In the first year Moses built the Tabernacle, in the second year Moses erected the Tabernacle and sent out spies. Further it is written. And it came to pass in the second year, in the second month, on the twentieth day of the month, that the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle of testimony.<sup>3</sup>**

**And it is further written, And they set forward from the mount of the Lord three days' journey,<sup>4</sup> and R. Hama b. Hanina explained this means that on that day they turned aside from after the Lord.**

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And it is further written, And the mixed multitude that was among them fell a-lusting; and the children of Israel also wept on their part, etc.<sup>5</sup>

And it is further written, But a whole month, etc.<sup>6</sup> That brings us up to the twenty-second of Sivan.

And it is further written, And Miriam was shut up [without the camp] seven days.<sup>7</sup> That brings us up to the twenty-ninth of Sivan.

And it is further written, Send thou men.<sup>8</sup> And it has been taught: Moses sent out spies on the twenty-ninth of Sivan. And it is further written, Add they returned from spying out the land at the end of forty days.<sup>9</sup> But is not this forty days less one?<sup>10</sup> —

Abaye replied: Tammuz of that year was a full month [of thirty days],<sup>11</sup> for it is written, He hath called a solemn assembly against me to crush my young men.<sup>12</sup> And it is further written, And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night.<sup>13</sup> Rabbah said in the name of R. Johanan: That night was the night of the ninth of Ab. The Holy One, blessed be He, said to them: You have wept without cause, therefore I will set [this day] aside for a weeping throughout the generations to come.

[ON THE NINTH OF AB] THE TEMPLE WAS DESTROYED THE FIRST TIME. For it is written, Now in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, a servant of the King of Babylon, unto Jerusalem. And he burnt the house of the Lord, etc.<sup>14</sup> And it is further written, Now in the fifth month, in the tenth day of the month, which was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard, who stood before the king of Babylon into Jerusalem, etc.<sup>15</sup> With reference to this it has been taught: We cannot say that this happened on the seventh, for it has

already been stated that it was 'in the tenth'; and we cannot say that this happened on the tenth, for it has already been stated that it was 'on the seventh'. How then are these dates to be reconciled?

On the seventh the heathens entered the Temple and ate therein and desecrated it throughout the seventh and eighth [of Ab] and towards dusk of the ninth they set fire to it and it continued to burn the whole of that day, as it is said, Woe unto us! for the day declineth, for the shadows of the evening are stretched out.<sup>16</sup> And this is what R. Johanan meant when he said: Had I been alive in that generation I should have fixed [the mourning] for the tenth, because the greater part of the Temple was burnt thereon. How will the Rabbis then [explain the contradiction]? — The beginning of any misfortune is of greater moment.

AND [THE TEMPLE WAS DESTROYED] THE SECOND TIME. Whence do we know this? For it has been taught: Good things come to pass on an auspicious day, and bad things on an unlucky day. It is reported that the day on which the First Temple was destroyed was the eve of the ninth of Ab, a Sunday, and in a year following the Sabbatical year, and the Mishmar of the family of Jehoiarib<sup>17</sup> were on duty and the Levites were chanting the Psalms standing on the Duchan.<sup>18</sup> And what Psalm did they recite? —

[The Psalm] containing the verse, And He hath brought upon them their own iniquity; and will cut them off in their own evil.<sup>19</sup> And hardly had they time to say, 'The Lord our God will cut them off',<sup>19</sup> when the heathens came and captured them. The same thing too happened in the Second Temple.

BETHAR WAS CAPTURED. This is a tradition.

AND THE CITY WAS PLOUGHED UP. It has been taught: When Turnus Rufus the wicked destroyed<sup>20</sup> the Temple, R. Gamaliel



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was condemned to death. A high officer came and stood up in the Beth-Hamidrash and called out, 'The Nose-man<sup>21</sup> is wanted, the Nose-man is wanted'. When R. Gamaliel heard this he hid himself. Thereupon the officer went up secretly to him and said, 'If I save you will you bring me into the world to come?' He replied: Yes.

He then asked him, 'Will you swear it unto me?' And the latter took an oath. The officer then mounted the roof and threw himself down and died. Now there was a tradition [amongst the Romans] that when a decree is made and one of their own [leaders] dies, then that decree is annulled.<sup>22</sup> Thereupon a Voice from Heaven was heard declaring, This high officer is destined to enter into the world to come.

Our Rabbis have taught: When the First Temple was about to be destroyed bands upon bands of young priests with the keys of the Temple in their hands assembled and mounted the roof of the Temple and exclaimed, 'Master of the Universe, as we did not have the merit to be faithful treasurers these keys are handed back into Thy keeping'. They then threw the keys up towards heaven. And there emerged the figure of a hand and received the keys from them. Whereupon they jumped and fell into the fire. It is in allusion to them that the prophet Isaiah laments: The burden concerning the Valley of Vision. What aileth thee now, that thou art wholly gone up to the house tops, thou that art full of uproar, a tumultuous city, a joyous town? Thy slain are not slain with the sword, nor dead in battle.<sup>23</sup> Of the Holy One, blessed be He, also it is said, Kir shouting, and crying at the mount.<sup>24</sup>

**WITH THE BEGINNING OF AB REJOICINGS ARE CURTAILED.** Rab Judah the son of R. Samuel b. Shilath said in the name of Rab: Just as with the beginning of Ab rejoicings are curtailed, so with the beginning of Adar rejoicings are increased.

- (1) V. Tosaf. ad loc. [Aliter: based on MS.M., I desired to destroy Thy Temple but Thy hand cut it (my hand) off.]
- (2) Ex. XL, 17.
- (3) Num. X, 11.
- (4) Ibid. 33.
- (5) Ibid. XI, 4.
- (6) Ibid. 20.
- (7) Ibid. XII, 15.
- (8) Ibid. XIII, 2.
- (9) Ibid. 25.
- (10) 29-30 Sivan; 1-29 Tammuz; 1-8 Ab (2 + 29 + 8 = 39).
- (11) The additional day brings the figure up to forty.
- (12) Lam. I, 15. The word מיועד 'an appointed season', festival, is interpreted homiletically as a season appointed for mourning, as the Talmud goes on explaining.
- (13) Num. XIV, 1.
- (14) II Kings XXV, 8-9.
- (15) Jer. LII, 12.
- (16) Jer. VI, 4.
- (17) V. supra p. 27b.
- (18) The platform in the Temple on which the Levites stood when chanting the Psalms.
- (19) Ps. XCIV, 23.
- (20) Var lec.: 'ploughed'.
- (21) Goldschmidt (a.l.) suggests that the Roman officer confused the Hebrew title Nasi with the Latin word, nasus, nose. Hence he called out, בעל בעל = vir nasi.
- (22) They regard the death as a punishment for the evil decree (Rashi).
- (23) Isa. XXII, 1-2.
- (24) Ibid. 5. קיר is interpreted as \*\*, God (Malter)

## Ta'anith 29b

R. Papa said: Therefore a Jew who has any litigation with Gentiles should avoid him in Ab because his luck is bad and should make himself available in Adar when his luck is good. To give you a future and a hope:<sup>1</sup> Rab Judah the son of R. Samuel b. Shilath said in the name of Rab: By this is meant [an abundance of] palm trees and flaxen garments.<sup>2</sup> And he said: See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed:<sup>3</sup> Rab Judah the son of R. Samuel b. Shilath said in the name of Rab: As the smell of an apple orchard.

**DURING THE WEEK IN WHICH THE NINTH OF AB FALLS IT IS FORBIDDEN TO CUT THE HAIR AND TO WASH**

## TA'ANIS – 2a-31a

**CLOTHES.** R. Nahman said: This restriction only applies to the washing of clothes for immediate wear but the washing of clothes for storing is permissible. R. Shesheth said: It is forbidden to wash clothes even for storing. R. Shesheth said: A proof for this is that the fullers in the house of Rab<sup>4</sup> are then idle.

R. Hammuna raised an objection: **ON THURSDAY IT IS PERMISSIBLE IN HONOR OF THE SABBATH.**<sup>5</sup> What is permissible? Shall I say it is to wash clothes for immediate wear?<sup>6</sup> Where does the honor of the Sabbath enter into it? It must surely mean, washing clothes for storing [till Sabbath], and this is permissible only on Thursday but not during other days of the week! —

In reality [the Mishnah refers] to the washing of clothes for immediate wear and it speaks of a case where a man has only one shirt. For R. Assi said in the name of R. Johanan: When a man has one shirt only he may wash it in the middle days of the Festival.<sup>7</sup> So too it has been stated: R. Benjamin said in the name of R. Eleazar: The restriction applies only to washing clothes for immediate wear but washing clothes for storing is permissible. An objection was raised against this: It is forbidden to wash clothes before the ninth of Ab even for storing them until after the ninth of Ab. And our [Babylonian] laundry work is like their [Palestinian] plain washing, [in respect of this prohibition],<sup>8</sup> but flaxen garments are not included in this prohibition against laundry work. This is indeed a refutation.

R. Isaac b. Giyuri sent a message in the name of R. Johanan: Although the Rabbis declared that flaxen garments are not included in the prohibition against laundry work, yet it is forbidden to wear them [newly laundered] in the week in which the Ninth of Ab falls. Rab said: This applies to the days before the Ninth of Ab but on the days after it, it is permissible to wear them. Samuel said: Even on the days after the Ninth of Ab it is forbidden to wear them. An objection was raised against this:

The week in which the Ninth of Ab falls it is not permissible to cut the hair or to wash clothes, but on Thursday it is permissible in honor of the Sabbath. How is this to be understood?

Should it fall on Sunday it is permissible to wash clothes the whole of the week, [but should it fall] on Monday or Tuesday or Wednesday or Thursday, before it, it is not permissible, but after it, it is permissible; [should it fall] on Friday it is permissible to wash clothes on Thursday in honor of the Sabbath; if however he has not washed them on the Thursday it is permissible to wash them on the Friday from the hour of Minhah onwards. (Abaye, and some say, R. Aha b. Jacob expressed his strongest disapproval<sup>9</sup> of any one who acted so.)

Should [the Ninth of Ab] fall on Monday or on Thursday three people read the Law, and [of these the last] one also reads the prophetic lesson; but [should it fall] on Tuesday or Wednesday one reads the Law and he also reads the prophetic lesson. R. Jose says: Invariably three persons read the Law and the last one of these also reads the prophetic lesson. [Will not this Baraita be] a refutation of Samuel [who holds that it is not permissible to wash clothes, even on the days after the Ninth of Ab]? —

Samuel will reply: Tannaim are divided on this point. For it has been taught: Should the Ninth of Ab fall on the Sabbath, and likewise if the eve of the Ninth of Ab falls on the Sabbath, one may eat and drink as much as he needs and he may load his table with as many viands as Solomon in his time did, but it is forbidden to cut the hair and to wash clothes, from the beginning of the month until after the fast; this is the opinion of R. Meir.

R. Judah says: It is forbidden the whole month. R. Simeon b. Gamaliel says: It is forbidden only on that particular week. And elsewhere it has been taught: And mourning is observed from the beginning of the month until the fast; this is the opinion of R. Meir.

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R. Judah says: It is forbidden the whole month. R. Simeon b. Gamaliel says: It is forbidden only on that particular week.<sup>10</sup>

Said R. Johanan: All three authorities adduced their ruling from the same scriptural verse. For it is written, I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feasts, her new moons, and her sabbaths.<sup>11</sup> The one who says, from the beginning of the month until the fast

(1) Jer. XXIX 11.

(2) Rab Judah points out that the blessings for the future promised by the prophet Jeremiah to the exiles in Babylonia are of a material kind.

(3) Gen. XXVII, 27.

(4) [דְּבֵי רַב] Aliter: of the school house.]

(5) Cf. supra 26b.

(6) On the same day — Thursday.

(7) Although washing is forbidden on these days. Cf. M.K. 14a, 18b.

(8) So that plain washing of clothes is permissible in Babylon for storing after the Ninth of Ab.

(9) Lit., 'cursed'.

(10) Samuel has thus the authority of R. Judah and R. Simeon b. Gamaliel in forbidding the washing of clothes on the days following the Ninth of Ab.

(11) Hosea II, 13.

## Ta'anith 30a

adduces his opinion from 'her feasts';<sup>1</sup> the one who says, it is forbidden the whole month, from 'her new moons';<sup>2</sup> and the one who says, it is forbidden the whole week, from 'her sabbaths'.<sup>3</sup> Raba said: The Halachah is according to R. Simeon b. Gamaliel. And Raba further said: The Halachah is according to R. Meir. And both decisions are in favor of the more lenient practice, and both are needed [to be stated]. For had it only been stated that the Halachah is according to R. Meir, I might have said that the restriction is in force from the beginning of the month, therefore it is also clearly stated that the Halachah is according to R. Simeon b. Gamaliel; and had it only been stated that the Halachah is according to R. Simeon b. Gamaliel, I would have said that the restriction continues even on the days after [the Ninth of Ab], therefore it is clearly

stated that the Halachah is according to R. Meir.<sup>4</sup>

**ON THE EVE OF THE NINTH OF AB ONE MAY NOT PARTAKE OF A MEAL OF TWO COURSES,** etc. Rab Judah said: This restriction applies to any time after middays but not to any time before midday. Rab Judah further said: It applies only to the concluding meal [before the fast] but not to any other meal. And both decisions are in favor of the more lenient practice, and both are needed to be stated. For had it [only] mentioned the concluding meal, I would have said that the restriction held good of a meal partaken even at any time before midday, therefore it is clearly stated, from midday onwards. And had it only mentioned from midday onwards I would have said, that the restriction held good of a meal even though it be not the concluding meal, therefore it is clearly stated that it must be the concluding meal.

It has been taught according to the first statement and it has also been taught according to the second statement. It has been taught according to the second statement: One who has a meal on the eve of the Ninth of Ab if it is his intention to have another meal [later] he may eat meat and drink wine; but if not, he may not eat meat nor drink wine.

It has also been taught according to the first statement: On the eve of the Ninth of Ab one may not partake of a meal of two courses, nor may he eat meat nor drink wine. R. Simeon b. Gamaliel says: He should make a difference [in his diet]. What constitutes a difference in diet? If one is in the habit of having two courses he should have one only; and if he usually dines in the company of ten persons, he should dine with five; if it is his usual practice to drink ten cups [of wine] he should drink five only.<sup>6</sup> These restrictions apply only to meals partaken from midday onwards, but not to meals partaken at any time before midday.

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Another [Baraita] taught: On the eve of the Ninth of Ab a man may not partake of a meal of two courses, he should not eat meat, nor drink wine; this is the opinion of R. Meir. But the Sages say: He should make a difference [in his diet] and restrict his consumption of meat and wine. How should one restrict? If he was in the habit of eating one pound of meat he should eat one half only, if it is his usual practice to drink one log of wine he should drink one half log only; but if he is not in the habit of partaking any of these things he may not have these at all. R. Simeon b. Gamaliel said: If it was his habit to eat radish or savory after his meal he may do so if he wishes.

Another [Baraita] taught: At the meal intended to be the concluding one [prior to the fast of] the Ninth of Ab it is forbidden to eat meat or to drink wine or to bathe after the meal; at the meal which is not intended to be a concluding meal prior to the Ninth of Ab<sup>7</sup> it is permissible to eat meat and to drink wine but not to bathe. R. Ishmael b. Jose said in the name of his father: So long as it is permissible to eat meat it is also permissible to bathe.

Our Rabbis have taught: All the restrictions that apply to the mourner hold equally good of the Ninth of Ab. Eating, drinking, bathing, anointing, the wearing of shoes and marital relations are forbidden thereon. It is also forbidden [thereon] to read the Law, the Prophets, and the Hagiographa or to study Mishnah, Talmud, Midrash, Halachoth, or Aggadoth;<sup>9</sup> he may, however, read such parts of Scripture which he does not usually read and study such parts of Mishnah which he usually does not study;<sup>10</sup> and he may also read Lamentations, Job and the sad parts of Jeremiah; and the school children are free from school for it is said, The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart.<sup>11</sup> R. Judah said: Even such parts of Scripture which he does not usually read he may not read, nor study parts of the Mishnah which he does not usually study, but he may read Job, Lamentations and the sad parts of Jeremiah;

and the school children are free [from school] for it is said, 'The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart'.

**NOR EAT MEAT NOR DRINK WINE.** A Tanna taught: But he may eat salted meat<sup>12</sup> and he may drink [new] wine from his vat.<sup>13</sup> For how long must meat remain in salt so as to render it permissible? For the length of time that peace-offering may be eaten.<sup>14</sup> How long is wine considered new? As long as it remains in its first stage of fermentation. A Tanna taught: The law forbidding the use of liquids left uncovered does not apply to new wine in the first stage of fermentation.<sup>15</sup> And how long does it take to ferment? —

Three days. Rab Judah said in the name of Rab: The following was the practice of R. Judah b. Il'ai. On the eve of the Ninth of Ab there was brought to him dry bread with salt and he would take his seat

- (1) New Moon is also a festive day.
- (2) קדש 'New Moon' can also mean, month.
- (3) שבתה 'Sabbath' has also the meaning, a whole week.
- (4) Who is opposed to the view.
- (5) Lit., 'from the sixth hour onward'.
- (6) [MS.M.: '. . . out of ten (successive) cups... out of five'].
- (7) Any other meal during the day or the concluding meal prior to any other fast, e.g., the Day of Atonement.
- (8) [Var. lec. omit: 'meat'.]
- (9) The study of all these brings delight to the genuine student.
- (10) The study of new subjects needs great application and the pleasure derived from the study is eclipsed by the efforts expended.
- (11) Ps. XIX, 9. This last passage occurs again in the statement of R. Judah that follows and is thus rightly omitted in MS.M.
- (12) I.e., pickled meat.
- (13) As these have not a good taste.
- (14) Two days and one night, i.e., sixty hours. Cf. Zeb. V, 7.
- (15) There is no danger of contamination by the poison of a snake as the snake would not drink such liquid. Cf. Ter. VIII, 4.



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## Ta'anith 30b

between the [baking] oven and the [cooking] stove<sup>1</sup> and eat and he would drink with it a pitcher full of water and he would appear as if a near relation were lying dead before him. Elsewhere we have learnt: Where it is the custom to do work on the Ninth of Ab we may do work, but where it is not the custom we may not; and everywhere the Scholars refrain from work. R. Simeon b. Gamaliel says: [In this respect] a man should always consider himself a scholar. It has been taught likewise: R. Simeon b. Gamaliel says: [In this respect] let a man always consider himself a scholar that he may feel more strongly the fast.

A [Baraita] taught: R. Simeon b. Gamaliel says: Any one who eats or drinks on the Ninth of Ab is as if he ate and drank on the Day of Atonement. R. Akiba says: Any one who does work on the Ninth of Ab will never see in his work any sign of blessing. And the Sages say: Any one who does work on the Ninth of Ab and does not mourn for Jerusalem will not share in her joy, as it is said, Rejoice ye with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her; rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her.<sup>2</sup> From this originates what they [the Rabbis] have said: Everyone who mourns for Jerusalem merits to share in her joy, and any one who does not mourn for her will not share in her joy. It has also been taught likewise: Of him who eats meat and drinks wine on the Ninth of Ab Scripture says: And their iniquities are upon their bones.<sup>3</sup>

**R. JUDAH MAKES IT OBLIGATORY TO TURN THE BED OVER, BUT THE WISE DID NOT AGREE WITH HIM IN THIS.** It has been taught: [The Sages] said to R. Judah: If your view is followed what will happen to pregnant women and nursing mothers?<sup>4</sup>—

He replied to them: I too meant my statement to apply only where it is possible. It has also been taught likewise: R. Judah agrees with the Sages where it is not possible [to overturn

the beds]; and the Sages agree with R. Judah where it is possible. What is the real difference between them? The difference between them arises in the case of other beds [not used for sleeping]. As it has been taught: When the Rabbis said that a man should turn over the bed, they meant not only his own bed but also all the beds [in the house]. Raba said: The Halachah is according to our Tanna, but the Sages would not accept his [R. Judah's] view at all.

**R. SIMEON B. GAMALIEL SAID: THERE NEVER WERE IN ISRAEL GREATER DAYS OF JOY THAN THE FIFTEENTH OF AB AND THE DAY OF ATONEMENT.** I can understand the Day of Atonement, because it is a day of forgiveness and pardon and on it the second Tables of the Law were given,<sup>5</sup> but what happened on the fifteenth of Ab? —

Rab Judah said in the name of Samuel: It is the day on which permission was granted to the tribes to inter-marry.<sup>6</sup> Whence may this be adduced? —

Scripture says, This is the thing which the Lord hath commanded concerning the daughters of Zelophehad, etc.,<sup>7</sup> [meaning] ‘this thing’ shall hold good for this generation only. R. Joseph said in the name of R. Nahman: It is the day on which the tribe of Benjamin was permitted to re-enter the congregation [of Israel], as it is said, Now the men of Israel had sworn in Mizpah, saying: There shall not any of us give his daughter unto Benjamin to wife.<sup>8</sup> From what was their exposition?<sup>9</sup>—

Rab said: From the phrase ‘any of us’ which was interpreted to mean, ‘but not from any of our children’. Rabbah b. Bar Hanah said in the name of R. Johanan: It is the day on which the generation of the wilderness ceased to die out. For a Master said: So long as the generation of the wilderness<sup>10</sup> continued to die out there was no divine communication to Moses,<sup>11</sup> as it is said, So it came to pass, when all the men of war were consumed and dead...

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that the Lord spake unto me.<sup>12</sup> [Only then] came the divine communication ‘unto me’. ‘Ulla said: It is the day on which Hosea the son of Elah removed the guards which Jeroboam the son of Nebat had placed on the roads to prevent Israel from going [up to Jerusalem] on pilgrimage,<sup>13</sup> and he proclaimed,

- (1) He took up a humble position.
- (2) Isa. LXVI, 10.
- (3) Ezek. XXXII, 27.
- (4) Who cannot sleep on the ground.
- (5) [According to a tradition in Seder Olam 6, Moses spent three periods of forty days and forty nights in the Mount beginning with the seventh of Sivan and ending on the tenth of Tishri when he came down on earth with the Second Tables.]
- (6) V. next note.
- (7) Cf. Num. XXXVI, 6-7. The Law was later annulled.
- (8) Judg. XXI, 1.
- (9) I.e., on what did they base their permission.
- (10) Those who came out of Egypt.
- (11) [In a direct manner as described in Num. XII, 8, ‘With him I speak mouth to mouth, etc. (Rashbam, B.B. 121b).]
- (12) Deut. II, 16-17.
- (13) Cf. Git. 88a.

## Ta'anith 31a

Let them go up to whichever shrine they desire. R. Mattenah said: It is the day when permission was granted for those killed at Bethar to be buried. R. Mattenah further said: On the day when permission was granted for those killed at Bethar<sup>1</sup> to be buried [the Rabbis] at Jabneh instituted [the recitation of] the benediction,<sup>2</sup> ‘Who art kind and dealest kindly, etc.’; ‘Who art kind’: Because their dead bodies did not become putrid;<sup>3</sup> ‘And dealest kindly’: Because permission was granted for their burial. Rabbah and R. Joseph both said: It is the day on which [every year] they discontinued to fell trees for the altar.<sup>4</sup>

It has been taught: R. Eliezer the elder says: From the fifteenth of Ab onwards the strength of the sun grows less and they no longer felled trees for the altar, because they would not dry [sufficiently]. R. Menashya

said: And they called it the Day of the Breaking of the Axe.<sup>5</sup> From this day onwards,<sup>6</sup> he who increases [his knowledge through study] will have his life prolonged, but he who does not increase [his knowledge] will have his life taken away.<sup>7</sup> What is meant by ‘taken away’? — R. Joseph learnt: Him his mother will bury.<sup>8</sup>

ON THESE DAYS THE DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM, etc. Our Rabbis have taught: The daughter of the king borrows [the garments] from the daughter of the High Priest, the daughter of the High Priest from the daughter of the deputy High Priest,<sup>9</sup> and the daughter of the deputy High Priest from the daughter of the Anointed for Battle,<sup>10</sup> and the daughter of the Anointed for Battle from the daughter of an ordinary priest, and all Israel borrow from one another, so as not to put to shame any one who may not possess [white garments].

ALL THE GARMENTS REQUIRE RITUAL DIPPING: R. Eleazar said: Even though they lay folded in a box.<sup>11</sup>

THE DAUGHTERS OF ISRAEL CAME OUT AND DANCED IN THE VINEYARDS. A Tanna taught: Whoever was unmarried repaired thither.

THOSE OF THEM WHO CAME OF NOBLE FAMILIES EXCLAIMED, ‘YOUNG MAN, etc.’ Our Rabbis have taught: The beautiful amongst them called out, Set your eyes on beauty for the quality most to be prized in woman is beauty; those of them who came of noble families called out, Look for [a good] family for woman has been created to bring up a family; the ugly ones amongst them called out, Carry off your purchase in the name of Heaven, only on one condition that you adorn us with jewels of gold. Ulla Bira'ah said in the name of R. Eleazar: In the days to come the Holy One, blessed be He, will hold a chorus for the righteous and He will sit in their midst in the Garden of Eden and every one of them will point with his finger towards Him, as it is

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said, And it shall be said in that day: Lo, this is our God, for whom we waited, that He might save us; this is the Lord for whom we waited, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation.<sup>12</sup>

- (1) During the Bar Kochba War. Cf. Git. 57a.
- (2) The fourth benediction of the Grace after Meals.
- (3) [During the long period in which the slain were left lying in the open field owing to Hadrian's decree forbidding their interment.]
- (4) Undried wood harbors woodworms and this makes the wood unfit for the altar. After the fifteenth of Ab the rays of the sun are not sufficiently strong to dry the fresh-cut logs and therefore the felling of trees for the altar was discontinued as from this date. Cf. Mid. II, 5.
- (5) The name signified that there was no longer any need for the woodcutter's axe.
- (6) The nights grow longer and people have more time for study.
- (7) Cf. Aboth. I, 13.
- (8) He will die prematurely.
- (9) Segan, v. Sanh., Sonc. ed., p. 97, n. 1.
- (10) Priest anointed as Chaplain of the Army in time of war, and part of whose duty it was to make the necessary proclamations for the exemptions from military service. Cf. Deut. XX, 2ff.
- (11) Which would show that they were new and had never been worn.
- (12) Isa. XXV, 9.