

PERSONALITIES

Beloreya the convert – בְּלוֹרְיָא הַגֵּיּוֹרָת – As indicated by her name, Valeria, or perhaps Valuria, was a wealthy Roman matron who converted to Judaism during the Second Temple period. The Talmud (Yevamot 46a) records the questions that she put to Rabban Gamliel with regard to the meaning of biblical verses.

NOTES

Here it is referring to sins committed between man and God – כָּאֵן בְּעֵבִירוֹת שְׁבִין אָדָם לְמָקוֹם – The Maharsha writes that God does not show favor when one sins against another, as this would be like favoritism, but when one sins against God, He forgives the offender. Similarly, he writes that with regard to sins committed by one person against another God, acts as a judge, who is forbidden to show favor to either side. However, with regard to sins committed between man and God, He is like a plaintiff, who is permitted to forgo his rights (Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch Chajes).

תָּא שְׁמַע: שְׂאֵלָה בְּלוֹרְיָא הַגֵּיּוֹרָת אֵת רַבִּין גַּמְלִיאֵל: כְּתוּב בְּתוֹרַתְכֶם: "אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִשָּׂא פָנִים," וְכָתוּב: "יִשָּׂא ה' פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ."

The Gemara continues: Come and hear: Beloreya the convert^f once asked Rabban Gamliel: It is written in your Torah: "The great, mighty, and awesome God who favors no one" (Deuteronomy 10:17), and elsewhere it is written: "The Lord shall show favor to you and give you peace" (Numbers 6: 26). How can this contradiction be resolved?

נִטְפַל לָהּ רַבִּי יוֹסֵי הַכֹּהֵן, אָמַר לָהּ: אֲמַשּׁוּל לְךָ מִשָּׁל, לְמָה הִדְבַר דּוּמָה – לְאָדָם שְׁנוּשָׁה בְּחִבְרוֹ מִנָּה, וְקִבַּע לּוֹ זְמַן בְּפָנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ, וְנִשְׁבַּע לוֹ בְּחַיֵּי הַמֶּלֶךְ. הִגִּיעַ זְמַן וְלֹא פָּרְעוּ, בָּא לְפָנֵים אֵת הַמֶּלֶךְ. וְאָמַר לוֹ: עֲלֹבוּנִי מִחוּל לְךָ, לְךָ וּפְיִים אֵת חֲבִירְךָ. הֵכָא גַּמְי, כָּאֵן – בְּעֵבִירוֹת שְׁבִין אָדָם לְמָקוֹם, כָּאֵן – בְּעֵבִירוֹת שְׁבִין אָדָם לְחֲבִירוֹ.

Rabbi Yosei the priest joined the conversation with her and said: I will tell you a parable. To what is this matter comparable? To a person who lent his friend one hundred dinars and fixed a time for repayment of the loan before the king, and the borrower took an oath by the life of the king that he would repay the money. The time arrived, and he did not repay the loan. The delinquent borrower came to appease the king for not fulfilling the oath that he had sworn by the life of the king, and the king said to him: For my insult I forgive you, but you must still go and appease your friend. Here also the same is true: Here, the verse that states: "The Lord shall show favor to you," is referring to sins committed between man and God,^h which God will forgive; there, the verse that states: "God favors no one," is referring to sins committed between a person and another, which God will not forgive until the offender appeases the one he hurt.

עַד שֶׁבָּא רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא וְלִימַד:

This is how the contradiction had at first been resolved, until Rabbi Akiva came and taught as follows:

Perek I Daf 18 Amud a

NOTES

Before one's sentence...after the sentence – קוּדְם גְּזֵר דִּין... – This is according to the opinion that one is judged every day. Alternatively, it is referring to the time between Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur, when for one individual it may be before his decree and for another it could be after his decree (Turei Even; see Arukh LaNer).

LANGUAGE

Tribunal [gardom] – גָּרְדוּם: The origin of the word is the Latin gradus, or gradum in the accusative, initially meaning step. Later it came to refer to the steps in front of the Roman judge. It is possible it also took on meaning from the Roman custom of killing those sentenced to death by throwing them down from a rock.

כָּאֵן – קוּדְם גְּזֵר דִּין, כָּאֵן – לְאַחַר גְּזֵר דִּין! הֵכָא גַּמְי בְּחִיזָה.

Here the verse is referring to the time before one's sentence is issued, when God shows favor and forgives; and there the verse is referring to the time after the sentenceⁿ has been issued, when He no longer forgives. This implies that after a sentence has been issued, there is no possibility of repentance, which seems to contradict the statement of Rabbi Yohanan. The Gemara answers: Here too it is referring to an individual, but a community is granted forgiveness even after its sentence has been issued.

וְגַזְרֵי דִּין דְּנִחְיָד תְּנַאֵי הֵיא. דְּתַנְיָא: הִזְיָה רַבִּי מֵאִיר אֹמֵר: שְׁנַיִם שְׁעָלוּ לְמִטָּה וְחוֹלְטִין שׁוּה, וְכֵן שְׁנַיִם שְׁעָלוּ לְגָרְדוּם לִידוֹן וְדִינָן שׁוּה, זֶה יָרַד וְזֶה לֹא יָרַד, זֶה נִיּוֹץ וְזֶה לֹא נִיּוֹץ.

The question of whether or not an individual's sentence can be rescinded is a dispute between tanna'im, as it is taught in a baraita that Rabbi Meir would say: Two people take to their beds, and their illness is the same, or two people ascend to the tribunal [gardom]⁴ for judgment, and their potential sentence is the same; but this one comes down from his bed, while that one does not come down from his bed, and this one is saved from death, while that one is not saved.

מִפְּנֵי מָה זֶה יָרַד וְזֶה לֹא יָרַד, זֶה נִיּוֹץ וְזֶה לֹא נִיּוֹץ? זֶה – הִתְפַּלֵּל וְנִעֲנָה, וְזֶה הִתְפַּלֵּל וְלֹא נִעֲנָה. מִפְּנֵי מָה זֶה נִעֲנָה וְזֶה לֹא נִעֲנָה? זֶה הִתְפַּלֵּל תְּפִלָּה שְׁלִימָה – נִעֲנָה, וְזֶה לֹא הִתְפַּלֵּל תְּפִלָּה שְׁלִימָה – לֹא נִעֲנָה.

For what reason did this one recover and come down from his bed, while that one did not recover and come down from his bed; and why was this one saved from death, while that one was not saved? The difference between them is that this one prayed and was answered, while that one prayed, but was not answered. And for what reason was this one answered and that one not answered? This one prayed a prayer with his whole heart and consequently was answered, while that one did not pray a prayer with his whole heart and therefore was not answered.

רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר אָמַר: כָּאֵן – קוּדְם גְּזֵר דִּין, כָּאֵן – לְאַחַר גְּזֵר דִּין. רַבִּי יִצְחָק אָמַר: יִפְּהָ צִעֲקָה לְאָדָם, בֵּין קוּדְם גְּזֵר דִּין בֵּין לְאַחַר גְּזֵר דִּין.

Rabbi Elazar said: Not so; rather, here he prayed before his heavenly sentence was issued, and so he was answered, whereas there the other one prayed after his heavenly sentence was issued, and therefore he was not answered. Rabbi Yitzhak disagreed and said: Crying out to God is effective for a person, both before his sentence has been issued and also after his sentence has been issued, as even after his sentence has been issued, it can still be rescinded if he repents.

A sentence accompanied by God's oath – גִּזְרֵי דִין שְׁיִישׁ – עֲמוּ שְׁבוּעָה: Although this was a decree for a single individual, Eli, since the decree was also on his whole family it is considered like a decree against a community (Ritva).

Is atoned through Torah study and acts of kindness – מִתְכַּפֵּר בְּתוֹרָה וּבְגִמְלוּת חֻסְדִים – The Jerusalem Talmud explains that it is also atoned through prayer. Accordingly this corresponds to the mishna which refers to the three things upon which the world stands, Torah, prayer, and acts of kindness (Avot 1:2).

Abaye, who engaged in both Torah study and in acts of kindness – אַבְיֵי דְעֶסֶק בְּתוֹרָה וּבְגִמְלוּת חֻסְדִים – Although the Gemara (Sanhedrin 98b) describes how Rabba engaged in both Torah study and acts of kindness, nevertheless, Abaye did more acts of kindness. This was due to the fact that Rabba was very poor and therefore unable to be as generous in his kindness (Ritva on tractate Yevamot).

PERSONALITIES

Abaye – אַבְיֵי: Abaye was one of the most famous of the Babylonian *amora'im*. The disagreements between Abaye and his colleague Rava recorded in the Gemara are so essential that the Gemara itself is referred to as: The discussions of Abaye and Rava. Among those hundreds of discussions, the *halakha* follows Abaye in only six cases.

Abaye was orphaned at the time of his birth and he was raised by his paternal uncle, Rabba. The woman who raised him impressed upon him many life lessons that he quotes in her name. There are a number of stories in the Gemara which illustrate his intelligence even as a child, including some where his adoptive father, Rabba, tests him with questions.

Abaye was chosen to head the academy in Pumbedita. He celebrated the study of Torah and would proclaim a Festival for the scholars whenever one of them completed a tractate. Growing up in his uncle's home he was aware of the difficulties of scholars who were without financial means. The Gemara in tractate *Berakhot* (35b) relates that Abaye testified that many were successful following the path of Rabbi Yishmael, who instructed his students to plow, plant, and harvest in the appropriate time; only very few were successful following the path of Rabbi Shimon bar Yoḥai, who taught that one should devote himself entirely to Torah and ignore worldly concerns.

וְגִזְרֵי דִין דְּצָבוּר מִי מִיקָרַע? וְהָא כְּתוּב:
אֶחָד אָמַר "כְּבִסִּי מִרְעָה לְבָבְךָ" וְכָתוּב:
"כִּי אִם תִּכְבְּסִי בַנְּתָר וְתִרְבִּי לֶךְ בּוֹרִית
נִכְתָּם עֲוֹנֶךָ לְפָנַי". מֵאֵי לָאוּ כָּאֵן – קוּדְם
גִּזְרֵי דִין, כָּאֵן – לְאַחַר גִּזְרֵי דִין?

לֹא. אִיִּדֵי וְאִיִּדֵי לְאַחַר גִּזְרֵי דִין, וְלֹא קִשְׂיָא;
כָּאֵן – בְּגִזְרֵי דִין שְׁיִישׁ עֲמוּ שְׁבוּעָה, כָּאֵן –
בְּגִזְרֵי דִין שְׁאִין עֲמוּ שְׁבוּעָה,

בְּדָרְבַּ שְׁמוּאֵל בְּרַ אֲמִי. דְּאָמַר רַב שְׁמוּאֵל
בְּרַ אֲמִי, וְאָמְרֵי לֵה אָמַר רַב שְׁמוּאֵל בְּרַ
נְחֻמְנִי אָמַר רַב יוֹנָתָן: מִנֵּן לְגִזְרֵי דִין שְׁיִישׁ
עֲמוּ שְׁבוּעָה שְׁאִינוּ נִקְרָע? שְׁנֵאמַר: [וְ]
לְכֹן נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי לְבֵית עֲלִי אִם יִתְכַּפֵּר עֲוֹן
בֵּית עֲלִי בְּזֹבַח וּבְמִנְחָה.

אָמַר רַבָּא: בְּזֹבַח וּבְמִנְחָה – אֵינוּ מִתְכַּפֵּר,
אֲבָל מִתְכַּפֵּר בְּתוֹרָה. אַבְיֵי אָמַר: בְּזֹבַח
וּמִנְחָה – אֵינוּ מִתְכַּפֵּר, אֲבָל מִתְכַּפֵּר
בְּתוֹרָה וּבְגִמְלוּת חֻסְדִים. רַבָּה וְאַבְיֵי
מִדְּבַיִת עֲלִי קָאֲתוּ. רַבָּה דְּעֶסֶק בְּתוֹרָה
חָיָה אַרְבַּעֵין שָׁנִין. אַבְיֵי דְּעֶסֶק בְּתוֹרָה
וּבְגִמְלוּת חֻסְדִים – חָיָה שִׁיתֵין שָׁנִין.

תְּנִי רַבְנֵן: מִשְׁפַּחַת אַחַת הִיְתָה בִירוּשָׁלַיִם
שְׁהָיוּ מִתְיָה מִתֵּין בְּנֵי שְׁמוּנָה עֶשְׂרֵה שָׁנָה.
בָּאוּ וְהוֹדִיעוּ אֶת רַבֵּן יוֹחָנָן בֶּן זְכַאִי.
אָמַר לְהֵם: שְׁמָא מִמְשַׁפַּחַת עֲלִי אַתֶּם,
דְּכָתוּב בֵּיה "וְכָל מִרְבֵּית בֵּיתְךָ יָמוּתוּ
אֲנָשִׁים" – לְכוּ וְעַסְקוּ בְּתוֹרָה וְחִיו. הֲלָכוּ
וְעַסְקוּ בְּתוֹרָה וְחִיו, וְהָיוּ קוֹרִין אוֹתָהּ
מִשְׁפַּחַת רַבֵּן יוֹחָנָן עַל שְׁמוֹ.

אָמַר רַב שְׁמוּאֵל בְּרַ אֲיִנְיָא מִשְׁמִיָּה דְּרַב:
מִנֵּין לְגִזְרֵי דִין שְׁל צָבוּר שְׁאִינוּ נִחְתָּם?
אֵינוּ נִחְתָּם? וְהִכְתִּיב! נִכְתָּם עֲוֹנֶךָ לְפָנַי!
אֵלָּא, אַף עַל גַּב שְׁנִחְתָּם – נִקְרָע, שְׁנֵאמַר:
"כֹּה" אֵלֵהֵינוּ בְּכָל קְרָאֵנוּ אֵלֵינוּ."

וְהִכְתִּיב: "דְּרָשׁוּ ה' בְּהִמְצָאוֹ!" הֲתָם
בִּיחִיד, הֲכָא בְּצָבוּר.

The Gemara asks: Can a sentence of a community really be torn up because they have repented? But one verse says: "O Jerusalem, wash your heart from wickedness, that you may be saved" (Jeremiah 4:14), and elsewhere it is written: "For though you wash yourself with lye, and use much soap, yet the stain of your iniquity is before Me, says the Lord God" (Jeremiah 2:22). What, is it not that here the verse is referring to the time before the sentence, when the heart can still be washed with repentance, whereas there the verse is referring to the time after the sentence, when washing no longer helps, as the sentence cannot be canceled?

The Gemara answers: No, both this verse and that verse refer to the time after the sentence has been decreed, and still it is not difficult: Here the verse is referring to a sentence accompanied by an oath taken by God not to cancel the sentence, whereas there the verse is referring to a sentence that is not accompanied by God's oath not to cancel the sentence, and so the sentence can in fact be canceled through repentance.

This is like what Rav Shmuel bar Ami said, as Rav Shmuel bar Ami said, and some say that it was Rav Shmuel bar Nahmani who said that Rabbi Yonatan said: From where is it derived that a sentence accompanied by God's oathⁿ not to cancel it cannot be torn up or canceled? As it is stated: "And therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house will not be purged with sacrifice nor offering forever" (1 Samuel 3:14).

With regard to this verse Rava said: With sacrifice or offering the sin of Eli's house is not atoned, but it can be atoned through Torah study. Abaye said: With sacrifice or offering the sin of Eli's house is not atoned, but it is atoned through Torah study and the performance of acts of kindness.ⁿ It is related that Rabba and Abaye came from the house of Eli, which was subject to the curse that most of its members would die young. Rabba, who engaged almost exclusively in Torah study, lived for forty years, whereas Abaye,^p who engaged in both Torah study and in the performance of acts of kindnessⁿ lived for sixty years.

The Sages taught in a *baraita*: There was a certain family in Jerusalem whose members used to die at the age of eighteen, and they did not know why. They came and told Rabban Yoḥanan ben Zakkai about their situation. He said to them: Perhaps you are descended from the family of Eli, as it is written about them: "And all the increase of your house shall die young men" (1 Samuel 2:33). If indeed this is so, the remedy is as follows: Go and engage in Torah study, in the merit of which you will live. They went and engaged in Torah study and lived. And people would call that family afterward by the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan in his honor.

Rav Shmuel bar Inya said in the name of Rav: From where is it derived that the sentence of a community is never sealed [*nehtam*]? The Gemara immediately asks: Is never sealed? But isn't it written: "Yet the stain [*nikhtam*] of your iniquity is before Me" (Jeremiah 2:22), which implies that the sentence of a community is indeed sealed. Rather, one must say that the question was as follows: From where is it known with regard to the sentence of a community that although it is sealed, it can still be torn up? As it is stated: "As is the Lord our God whenever we call out to Him" (Deuteronomy 4:7). This implies that there is always a way to draw close to God.

The Gemara asks: But isn't it written: "Seek the Lord while He may be found; call upon Him when He is near" (Isaiah 55:6), which implies that there are times when He is not near and does not answer. The Gemara answers: There the verse is referring to an individual, to whom God is near only at certain times; here the verse is referring to a community, to which God is close whenever the people call out to Him.

HALAKHA

Ten days of repentance – עשרת ימי תשובה: In the ten days from Rosh HaShana to Yom Kippur prayers and supplications are increased in the synagogue. Some people fast and make extra effort in mitzva observance, as this is a propitious time for repentance and for atonement for sins (Rambam Sefer HaMadda, Hilkhoh Teshuva 2:6; Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim 602).

NOTES

Ten days of Nabal – נבל עשרה ימים של: This disagrees with other midrashim, which explain that Nabal's death was delayed so that it would not occur at the same date as the death of Samuel the prophet, which occurred on the twenty-eighth of Iyyar.

Like a flock of sheep...like the ascent of Beit Maron – כבני אִמְרָנָא...כְּמַעְלוֹת בֵּית מְרוֹן: Aside from the disagreement with regard to the meaning of the words, the Gemara is explaining three mitigating factors that could lead to a more favorable judgment. One opinion describes people as sheep who do not realize what they are doing. Another describes the role of mankind in this world as climbing a tall mountain with an abyss on either side. And the third opinion sees the Jewish people as the army of the Holy One, Blessed be He, in constant battle with their evil inclination (Petaḥ Einayim).

Scanned in a single scan – נִסְקְרִין בְּסִקְרִיה אַחַת: Tosefot Rid explains that based on the conclusion of the mishna it must be understood as two separate concepts combined together: Although every inhabitant of the world passes before God individually, like benei maron, nevertheless there is also a scan of everyone at once. Accordingly, the mishna hints at the dichotomy between individual providence and general providence. Rambam alludes to this in his Commentary on the Mishna, where he writes that the deeper meaning of this mishna is very difficult to understand (Tosefot Yom Tov).

BACKGROUND

The ascent of Beit Maron – מַעְלוֹת בֵּית מְרוֹן: According to this version of the text this is referring to a steep path that leads to the village of Maron in the upper Galilee, which is on what is today called Mount Meron. This is one of the highest mountains in Israel.

Some have a text which reads: The steps of Beit Horon, which are mentioned in other places as a very steep slope, but this does not fit as well with the wording of the mishna: Benei maron.

בְּיַחֲד אֵימַת? אָמַר רַבָּה בַּר אַבּוּה: אֵלּוּ עֶשְׂרֵה יָמִים שְׁבִין רֵאשִׁי הַשָּׁנָה לְיוֹם הַכַּפּוּרִים. וַיְהִי כְּעֶשְׂרֵת הַיָּמִים וַיָּגַף ה' אֶת נָבָל. עֶשְׂרֵה יָמִים מֵאֵי עֲבִידְתֵּיהוּ? אָמַר רַב יְהוּדָה אָמַר רַב: כִּנְגַד עֶשֶׂר לְגִמּוֹת שְׁנָתָן נָבָל לְעַבְדֵי דָּוִד. אָמַר רַב נַחֲמָן אָמַר רַבָּה בַּר אַבּוּה: אֵלּוּ עֶשְׂרֵה יָמִים שְׁבִין רֵאשִׁי הַשָּׁנָה לְיוֹם הַכַּפּוּרִים.

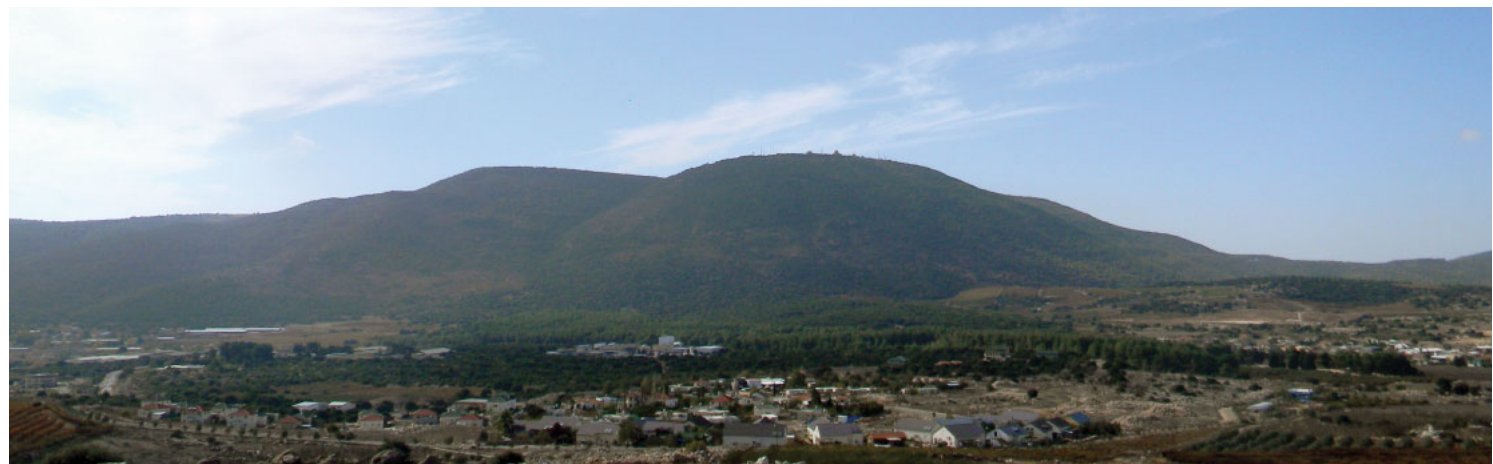
”בְּרֵאשִׁי הַשָּׁנָה כָּל בְּאֵי הָעוֹלָם עוֹבְרִין לְפָנָיו כְּבְנֵי מְרוֹן.” מֵאֵי “כְּבְנֵי מְרוֹן”? הֲכֵא תְּרַגְּמוּ כְּבְנֵי אִמְרָנָא. רִישׁ לְקִישׁ אָמַר: כְּמַעְלוֹת בֵּית מְרוֹן. אָמַר רַב יְהוּדָה אָמַר שְׂמוּאֵל: כְּחַיִּילוֹת שֶׁל בֵּית דָּוִד.

אָמַר רַבָּה בַּר בַּר חֲנָה אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן: וְכוּלָּן נִסְקְרִין בְּסִקְרִיה אַחַת. אָמַר רַב נַחֲמָן בַּר יִצְחָק: אֵי אֲנִי נִמְי תִּינָא “הַיּוֹצֵר יַחַד לְבָם הַמְבִּין אֵל כָּל מַעֲשֵׂיהֶם.” מֵאֵי קָאָמַר? אִילּוּמָא הָכִי קָאָמַר: דְּבַרְנָהוּ לְכוּלֵי עֲלָמָא וּמִיַּיְחַד לְבִייהוּ בְּהַדְּדִי – וְהָא קָא חֲוִינן דְּלָאוּ הָכִי הוּא. אֵלָא לָאוּ הָכִי קָאָמַר: הַיּוֹצֵר רוּאָה יַחַד לְבָם, וּמִבִּין אֵל כָּל מַעֲשֵׂיהֶם.

§ The Gemara asks: With regard to an individual, when is God near to him? Rabba bar Avuh said: These are the ten days between Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur.^H The Gemara asks further: The verse states: “And it came to pass about ten days after that the Lord smote Nabal, and he died” (1 Samuel 25:38). These ten days, what are they doing here, i.e., why was there a delay of ten days before Nabal died? Rav Yehuda said that Rav said: They correspond to the ten meals that Nabal gave the servants of David who came to visit him, as out of politeness he allowed David’s ten servants to eat, and therefore his punishment was delayed for ten days.^N Rav Nahman said that Rabba bar Avuh said: These are the ten days between Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur, during which everyone is given one last opportunity to repent for the sins he committed over the course of the previous year.

§ The mishna teaches: On Rosh HaShana all creatures pass before Him like benei maron. The Gemara asks: What is the meaning of the phrase benei maron? The Gemara answers: Here in Babylonia they interpreted it to mean: Like a flock of sheep [kivnei imarna]. Reish Lakish disagreed and said: Like the ascent of Beit Maron,^{NB} which was very steep; one standing at the summit could discern all those climbing the mountain with a single look. Rav Yehuda said that Shmuel said another opinion: Like the soldiers of the house of King David, who could be surveyed with a single glance.

Rabba bar bar Ḥana said that Rabbi Yoḥanan said: And they are all scanned in a single scan.^N Rav Nahman bar Yitzḥak said: We, too, learn this in the baraita: The verse states: “He who fashions their hearts alike, who considers all their deeds” (Psalms 33:15). What is this verse saying? If we say this is what it is saying: That He created everyone and unites all their hearts together, there is a difficulty, since don’t we see that it is not so, as the hearts of people are not united and are not similar to one another? Rather, is this not what it is saying: The Creator sees their hearts together and considers all their deeds with a single scan?



Mount Meron

על ששה חודשים יוצאים – על ששה חודשים יוצאים: According to most commentators, this mishna is referring to the time after the destruction of the Second Temple since the messengers also went out in the month of Av due to the fast (Rashi; *Tosafot*; *Meiri*). When the Temple stood the messengers did not go out in Av, as the fast of Av commemorates the destruction of the Temple. However they went out in the month of Iyyar (see *Turei Even*). According to the Rambam there was a custom to fast on the Ninth of Av even when the Second Temple was standing, and therefore the mishna refers also to Temple times.

על כסליו מפני חנוכה – Since the Gemara teaches that once the majority of the month has passed people know when the New Moon had been declared, early and later authorities ask: Why was it necessary to go out for Hanukkah, which falls on the twenty-fifth of the month? Some answer that only those living in Eretz Yisrael know the date after the majority of the month has passed, but in the Diaspora they required messengers (*Petaḥ Einayim*, *Arukh LaNer*). Alternatively, most people knew, but in order to ensure that everyone knew, messengers were sent (*Penei Yehoshua*).

פסח קטן – The Talmud uses the name to refer to the second *Pesah* because it lasts for only one day, unlike the first *Pesah*, Passover, which lasts for seven, and also because it has fewer restrictions than Passover (*Melekheth Shlomo*).

וליצקו נמי – In the Jerusalem Talmud it is asked: Why do messengers not go out for the festival of *Shavuot*? The answer is that *Shavuot* is not dependent or connected at all to the New Moon. Rather, it is always fifty days after Passover, regardless of whether it occurs on the fifth, sixth, or seventh of Sivan.

מתני' על ששה חודשים השלוחין יוצאין: על ניסן מפני הפסח, על אב מפני התענית, על אלול מפני ראש השנה, על תשרי מפני תקנת המועדות, על כסליו מפני חנוכה, ועל אדר מפני הפורים.

ובשהיה בית המקדש קיים – יוצאין אף על אדר מפני פסח קטן.

גמ' וליצקו נמי אתמוז וטבת,

MISHNA In six months of the year the messengers go outⁿ from the court in Jerusalem to report throughout Eretz Yisrael and the Diaspora which day was established as the New Moon, the thirtieth or the thirty-first day since the previous New Moon.ⁿ They go out in the month of Nisan, due to Passover, so that people will know on which day to celebrate it; in the month of Av, due to the fast of the Ninth of Av; in Elul, due to Rosh HaShana, which begins thirty days after the New Moon of Elul; in Tishrei, due to the need to establish the correct dates on which to celebrate the Festivals of Tishrei, i.e., Yom Kippur and Sukkot; in Kislev, due to Hanukkah;ⁿ and in Adar, due to Purim.

And when the Temple was standing, messengers would also go out in the month of Iyyar due to small Passover,ⁿ i.e., second *Pesah*, which occurs on the fourteenth of Iyyar. This holiday allowed those who were ritually impure or on a distant journey on the fourteenth of Nisan, and therefore incapable of bringing the Paschal lamb at that time, to bring their Paschal lamb a month later.

GEMARA The Gemara asks: And if they go out for the month of Av due to the fast, let them go out alsoⁿ in the months of Tammuz and Tevet, as they too contain public fast days.

HALAKHA

The going out of messengers – יציאת השליחים: On six months the messengers go out to inform the people that the New Moon has been sanctified by the court: In Nisan, due to Passover; in Av, due to the fast of the Ninth of Av; in Elul, due to Rosh HaShana, as otherwise the people might set Rosh

HaShana on the thirtieth of Elul in case of doubt; in Tishrei, due to Yom Kippur and Sukkot; in Kislev, due to Hanukkah; in Adar, due to Purim; and when the Temple stood also in Iyyar, due to second *Pesah* (Rambam *Sefer Zemanim*, *Hilkhot Kiddush HaYodesh* 3:9).

Perek I

Daf 18 Amud b

דאמר רב חנא בר ביזנא אמר רבי שמעון חסידא: מאי דכתיב: "כה אמר ה' צבאות צום הרביעי וצום החמישי וצום השביעי וצום העשירי יהיה לבית יהודה לששון ולשמחה?" קרי להו "צום" וקרי להו "ששון ושמחה". בזמן שיש שלום – יהיו לששון ולשמחה; אין שלום – צום!

As Rav Ḥana bar Bizna saidⁿ that Rabbi Shimon Ḥasida said: What is the meaning of that which is written: "Thus said the Lord of hosts: The fast of the fourth month, and the fast of the fifth, and fast of the seventh, and the fast of the tenth, shall become times of joy and gladness, and cheerful seasons, to the house of Judah" (Zechariah 8:19). It calls them days of "fast" and it calls them "times of joy and gladness."ⁿ How so? When there is peace in the world, they will be times of joy and gladness, on which eulogies and fasting are forbidden; but when there is no peace, they are days of fasting. In a time when there is no peace, why are messengers not sent out also for the fourth and tenth months, so that people can know when to observe the fasts?

NOTES

As Rav Ḥana bar Bizna said, etc. – דאמר רב חנא בר ביזנא וכו': According to most commentaries, the statement of Rav Ḥana bar Bizna is part of the question as to why messengers do not go out in Tammuz and Tevet. *Penei Yehoshua* explains that actually there is no fundamental difference between the Ninth of Av and the rest of the fasts. However, according to the Ritva the statement of Rav Ḥana bar Bizna is the beginning of the answer, and comes as a prologue to Rav Pappa's statement.

קרי להו – קרי להו וקרי להו ששון ושמחה: The early authorities ask why Rav Ḥana

bar Bizna sees the verse as contradictory. The verse appears to be a prophecy concerning the future, when the fast days will become festive days. Most commentaries who address this problem answer that the question is from a close reading of the words: It does not say that these days will turn into gladness but that this fast will turn into gladness, implying that it is both a fast day and a happy day (see Ritva). Also, the verse does not state: Fast days, but only "fast" (see Rabbi Yoshiya Pinto and *Beit Yosef*). Some write that the Gemara is noting the future tense: "Shall become times of joy and gladness," implying that at the time of the question they were still fast days (*Yad Efrayim*).

Peace...persecution – שלום...שָׁמַד: There are various opinions in the commentaries with regard to the exact definition of the word peace in this context and the relationship between it and the building of the Temple. The Rambam explains that these are separate concepts even when the Temple is standing. In his opinion, the phrase: No peace, is referring to a time when the gentile nations rule over the Jewish people and do not have a completely independent country in Eretz Israel. And persecution can also occur while the Temple is standing. Other commentaries identify the term peace with the rebuilding of the Temple (see Ramban's *Torat HaAdam* and Ritva).

If people wish they fast – רָצוּ מִתְעַנֵּן: The exact definition of the word wish is not clear. Some explain that since these fasts are dependent on the wishes of the people, they are no longer public fasts but individual fasts, even if the entire nation fasts. Others say that the word wish does not refer to an individual's wishes, but to a collective decision, or the decision of the court. When the Temple stood they did not fast, but in times after the destruction, when there was no decree of persecution it depended only on each individual's wishes. Subsequently the Sages established it as a complete obligation, which nevertheless has the status of a private fast. The Gemara was asking with regard to the time when all already had this custom. The answer was that at the time of the mishna it was still not a set custom and they did not send messengers for these fasts (see Ritva).

The ninth of Tammuz – תִּשְׁעָה בְּתַמּוּז: It is explained in the Jerusalem Talmud that the city was breached on the seventeenth of Tammuz during the destruction of the First Temple, just as it was during the destruction of the Second Temple. Subsequently, the people made a mistake and set the fast on the wrong date, on the ninth. However, it is understood in the Babylonian Talmud that the city was breached on the ninth of Tammuz in the time of the First Temple, but the Sages fixed the fast on the seventeenth because the second destruction was more severe and more relevant for later generations (see *Tosafot*). The Sages did not decree a fast on both the ninth and the seventeenth because they did not want to overburden the public (Ran). Rabbeinu Yehonatan writes that since both tragedies occurred in the fourth month, the Sages established only one fast day in the fourth month (see *Minhat Hinukh*).

And who killed him – יָמֵי הָרְגוֹ: The *Turei Even* asks why the Gemara questions the details of an event that is explicit in the Bible. Some explain that this teaches that although Ishmael acted under orders from the king of the Ammonites, nevertheless the crime is attributed to the one who actually perpetrated it (Rabbi Shlomo HaKohen). Alternatively, the verse states that he was the leader of those who killed Gedaliah but does not state explicitly that Ishmael himself did the deed. Therefore, the Gemara teaches that it was Ishmael himself who killed Gedaliah (*Arukh LaNer*). *Penei Yehoshua* explains that the Gemara's question and answer come to emphasize and even explain the fast: Gedaliah was not like other righteous people who were killed by gentiles and whose death atones for the entire nation; rather, Gedaliah was killed by a Jew, which is an indictment of the nation. Therefore it is necessary to fast in order to remove the indictment.

The death of the righteous is equivalent – מִיתַתְּנוּ מִיתַתְּנוּ: Some bring a proof for this from the fact that the prophet explicitly equates the fast of the fifth and the fast of the tenth (Zechariah 7:5), implying that they are weighted equally (Rashash; see *Arukh LaNer*).

אָמַר רַב פָּפָא: הֲכִי קָאָמַר: בְּזִמְנֵי שִׁישׁ שְׁלוֹם – יְהִי לְשִׁשּׁוֹן וְלִשְׂמִיחָה; יֵשׁ שְׁמַד – צוֹם; אֵין שְׁמַד וְאֵין שְׁלוֹם, רָצוּ – מִתְעַנֵּן, רָצוּ – אֵין מִתְעַנֵּן.

אֵי הֲכִי, תִּשְׁעָה בְּאָב נִמְיֵי אָמַר רַב פָּפָא: שְׂאֵי תִּשְׁעָה בְּאָב, הוֹאִיל וְהוֹכְפְּלוּ בּו צְרוּת. דְּאָמַר מָר: בְּתִשְׁעָה בְּאָב חָרַב הַבַּיִת בְּרָאשׁוֹנָה וּבְשֵׁנִיָּה, וְנִלְכְּדָה בֵּיתָר, וְנִחְרְשָׁה הָעִיר.

תִּנְיָא, אָמַר רַבִּי שְׁמַעוֹן: אַרְבַּעַה דְּבָרִים הֵיךְ רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא דּוֹרֵשׁ, וְאֵי אֵין דּוֹרֵשׁ כְּמוֹתוֹ. "צוֹם הַרְבִּיעִי" – זֶה תִּשְׁעָה בְּתַמּוּז שְׂבוּ הוֹבְקָעָה הָעִיר, שְׁנֵאמַר: "בְּרַבִּיעִי בְּתִשְׁעָה לְחֹדֶשׁ וַיִּחְזַק הָרָעַב בְּעִיר וְלֹא הָיָה לָחֶם לֵעַם הָאָרֶץ וַתִּבְקַע הָעִיר". וְאֵמַאי קָרִי לִיָּה "רַבִּיעִי" רַבִּיעִי לְחֹדֶשִׁים.

"צוֹם הַחֲמִישִׁי" – זֶה תִּשְׁעָה בְּאָב, שְׂבוּ נִשְׂרָף בֵּית אֱלֹהֵינוּ. וְאֵמַאי קָרִי לִיָּה "חֲמִישִׁי"? חֲמִישִׁי לְחֹדֶשִׁים. "צוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי" – זֶה שְׁלֹשָׁה בְּתִשְׁרֵי, שְׂבוּ נִהָרַג גְּדַלְיָה בֶן אַחִיקָם. וְיָמֵי הָרְגוֹ – יִשְׁמַעְיָאֵל בֶּן נְתַנְיָה הָרְגוֹ, לְלַמְדֵּךְ שֶׁשְׂקוּלָה מִיתַתְּנוּ שְׁל צְדִיקִים בְּשָׂרִיפַת בֵּית אֱלֹהֵינוּ. וְאֵמַאי קָרִי לִיָּה "שְׁבִיעִי"? שְׁבִיעִי לְחֹדֶשִׁים.

Rav Pappa said that this is what it is saying: When there is peace in the world and the Temple is standing, these days will be times of joy and gladness; when there is persecutionⁿ and troubles for the Jewish people, they are days of fasting; and when there is no persecution but still no peace, neither particular troubles nor consolation for Israel, the *halakha* is as follows: If people wish, they fast,ⁿ and if they wish, they do not fast. Since there is no absolute obligation to fast, messengers are not sent out for these months.^h

The Gemara asks: If so, the Ninth of Av should also be like the other fast days, that sometimes it is observed and sometimes not, depending upon the wishes of the community at the time. Why does the mishna state that messengers go out for the month of Av? Rav Pappa said: The Ninth of Av is different, since the calamities that occurred on that day were multiplied. As the Master said: On the Ninth of Av the Temple was destroyed, both the first one and the second one; on this day the city of Beitar was captured; and on this day the city of Jerusalem was plowed over by the enemies of the Jewish people, as a sign that it would never be rebuilt. Consequently, the fast of the Ninth of Av is obligatory, and not optional like the other fasts. Messengers are consequently sent out so that people will know when to fast.

§ The Sages disagreed about the fasts alluded to in the words of the prophet, as it is taught in a *baraita*. Rabbi Shimon said: Rabbi Akiva would expound four verses, but I would not expound the texts as he did. One of the disputes relates to the fasts mentioned by Zechariah. Rabbi Akiva would expound the verse as follows: "The fast of the fourth," this is the ninth of Tammuz,ⁿ on which the city of Jerusalem was breached, as it is stated: "And in the fourth month, on the ninth day of the month, the famine was severe in the city, so that there was no bread for the people of the land. Then the city was breached" (Jeremiah 52:6–7). And why does the prophet call it the fast of the fourth? Because it is in Tammuz, the fourth of the months when counting from Nisan.

"The fast of the fifth," this is the Ninth of Av, on which the Temple of our Lord was burnt. And why does he call it the fast of the fifth? Because it falls in the fifth of the months. "The fast of the seventh," this is the third of Tishrei, on which Gedaliah, son of Ahikam, was killed. And who killed him?ⁿ Ishmael, son of Nethaniah, killed him (see II Kings 25:25; Jeremiah, chapter 41). The Sages established a fast to commemorate Gedaliah's death to teach you that the death of the righteous is equivalentⁿ to the burning of the Temple of our Lord. And why did the prophet call it the fast of the seventh? Because Tishrei is the seventh of the months.

HALAKHA

The authority of the fasts – תִּקְפֵּם שְׁל הַצּוּמוֹת: Although the early authorities disagreed about the exact meaning of the words peace and persecution, nevertheless, nowadays when there are no particular troubles for the Jewish people the matter is dependent on the wishes of the people. However, most halakhic authorities agree that the Jewish people as a whole have already accepted upon themselves to fast on these days. Therefore, one can no longer decide not to fast because he did not personally accept the fast upon himself. However, there is a distinction

between the Ninth of Av, on which the troubles were multiplied and which is treated as a public fast, i.e., the fast lasts for twenty-four hours and many activities are prohibited, and the other fasts, which were accepted with only some of the stringencies of fasts, i.e., the fast is only during the daylight hours and the prohibition is only against eating and drinking. All of these fasts remain in force until they will turn into days of gladness when the Temple is rebuilt (Rambam *Sefer Zemanim, Hilkhot Ta'anit* 5:5; *Tur, Oraḥ Hayyim* 549).

This is the fifth of Tevet, on which the report reached the Diaspora – **זו חמשה בטבת שבו באת** – **שמועה לגולה**: The *Tosefta* (*Sota* 6:11) says that the people of the Diaspora decreed the fast on the fifth of Tevet because that is when they received the report of the destruction of the Temple, five months after the event. The people of Judea, however, established the fast on the tenth of Tevet, since for them that was the day of suffering when the Babylonians began the siege of Jerusalem.

Rabbi Eliezer went down and bathed – **ירד רבי** – **אליעזר ורחץ**: *Tosafot* ask why they did not bring evidence for their claim that *Megillat Ta'anit* was not nullified from the mishna itself, which states that the messengers went out in the month of Kislev due to Hanukkah. Rashba explains that from the mishna it is not explicit, whereas the *baraita* explicitly states the prohibition against fasting on Hanukkah.

Go out and fast – **צאו והתענו**: From here it is learned that one who fasts on a day when it is prohibited to fast, even in an exceptional permitted case, e.g., after a nightmare, must fast again as repentance for his initial fast (*Beit Yosef; Tur, Oraḥ Hayyim* 588; *Tashbetz*).

HALAKHA

The four fast days – **ימי העומות**: The fast days are observed in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Akiva: the Seventeenth of Tammuz, the Ninth of Av, the Fast of Gedaliah on the third of Tishrei, and the Tenth of Tevet (Rambam *Sefer Zemanim, Hilkhot Ta'anit* 5:5; *Tur, Oraḥ Hayyim* 549).

BACKGROUND

Megillat Ta'anit – **מגילת תענית**: *Megillat Ta'anit* was the first book of the Oral Torah to be written down. This scroll was already in the possession of the Sages of the Mishna, who discuss not only the *halakhot* contained within it but also argue over its precise wording.

Megillat Ta'anit lists the festive days on which it is forbidden to fast or eulogize. Most of the events commemorated are from the time of the Hasmoneans until the end of the Second Temple period, although there are mentions of events that occurred both earlier and later.

The actual *halakhot* in *Megillat Ta'anit*, the listing of days, and the short explanation about the events of each day, are written in Aramaic; an appendix written in Hebrew explains each event in greater detail.

“צום העשירי” – זה עשרה בטבת, שבו סמך מלך בבל על ירושלים, שנאמר: “ויהי דבר ה' אלי בשנה התשיעית בחדש העשירי בעשור לחדש לאמר. בן אדם כתב לך את שם היום את עצם היום הזה סמך מלך בבל אל ירושלים”. ואמאי קרי ליה “עשירי”? עשירי לחדשים. והלא היה ראוי זה לכתוב ראשון. ולמה נכתב כאן כדוי להסדיר חדשים כתיקנן.

ואני איני אומר בן, אלא: “צום העשירי” – זה חמשה בטבת שבו באת שמועה לגולה שהוקתה העיר, שנאמר: “ויהי בשתי עשרה שנה בעשירי בחמשה לחדש לגלותנו בא אלי הפליט מירושלם לאמר הוקתה העיר”, ועשו יום שמועה ביום שריפה.

ונראין דברי מדבריו, שאני אומר על ראשון ראשון ועל אחרון אחרון, והוא אומר על ראשון אחרון, ועל אחרון ראשון. אלא שהוא מונה לסדר חדשים, ואני מונה לסדר פורעניות.

איתמר, רב ורבי חנינא אמרי: בטלה מגילת תענית; רבי יוחנן ורבי יהושע בן לוי אמרי: לא בטלה מגילת תענית.

רב ורבי חנינא אמרי: בטלה מגילת תענית. הכי קאמר: בזמן שאיש שלום – יהיו לששון ולשמחה; אין שלום – צום. והנך נמי בי הנני.

רבי יוחנן ורבי יהושע בן לוי אמרי: לא בטלה מגילת תענית, הנני הוא דתליניהו רחמנא בבגין בית המקדש, אבל הנך – כדקיימי קיימי.

מתיב רב כהנא: מעשה וגזרו תענית בחנוכה בלוד, וירד רבי אליעזר ורחץ, ורבי יהושע וסיפר. ואמרו להם: צאו והתענו על מה שהתעניתם!

“The fast of the tenth,” This is the tenth of Tevet, on which the king of Babylonia laid siege to Jerusalem, as it is stated: “And in the ninth year, in the tenth month, on the tenth day of the month, the word of the Lord came to me, saying: Son of man, write the name of the day, of this same day: The king of Babylonia has laid siege to Jerusalem on this very day” (Ezekiel 24:1–2). And why did he call it the fast of the tenth? Because it is in Tevet, which is the tenth of the months. Wouldn't it have been fitting to write this fast first, as the series of events began with the laying of the siege. Why was it written here at the end of the list? This was done in order to list the months in their proper order, as the prophet began with the fourth month and ended with the tenth month. This is the statement of Rabbi Akiva.

Rabbi Shimon disagreed and said: I do not say this, but rather I expound the verse as follows: “The fast of the tenth,” this is the fifth of Tevet, on which the report reached the Diasporaⁿ that the city had been smitten, as it is stated: “And it came to pass in the twelfth year of our exile, in the tenth month, on the fifth day of the month, that one that had escaped out of Jerusalem came to me, saying: The city is smitten” (Ezekiel 33:21); and they made the day of the report of the destruction like the day of the actual burning and decreed a fast on that day.

And Rabbi Shimon added: And my statement seems more convincing than his statement, as I say about the first fast mentioned by the prophet that it marks the event that took place first, and about the last fast that it marks the event that took place last. According to Rabbi Shimon, the fasts are listed in accordance with the chronological order of the events. But he, Rabbi Akiva, says about the first fast mentioned by the prophet that it marks the event that took place last, and about the last fast mentioned that it marks the event that took place first, only that he lists the fasts in the order of the months, whereas I list them also in the order of the calamities that they mark.^h

It was stated that the Sages disagreed about the following matter: Rav and Rabbi Hanina both say: *Megillat Ta'anit*,^b a listing of days on which fasting and eulogizing are forbidden, has been nullified, as in the present period of exile there is no reason to celebrate the joyous events that these days commemorate. Rabbi Yohanan and Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi say: *Megillat Ta'anit* has not been nullified.

The Gemara explains: Rav and Rabbi Hanina say that *Megillat Ta'anit* has been nullified. This is what the prophet is saying: At a time when there is peace in the world, the dates listed will be times of joy and gladness, on which eulogies and fasting are forbidden; but when there is no peace, they are days of fasting. And those days mentioned in *Megillat Ta'anit* are also like these days of fasting, that is to say, the days of joy listed in *Megillat Ta'anit* are also nullified when there is no peace.

Rabbi Yohanan and Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi say that *Megillat Ta'anit* has not been nullified, and they reason as follows: It was those fast days mentioned in the Bible that the Merciful One makes contingent on the building of the Temple, but these festive days listed in *Megillat Ta'anit* remain as they were and have not been nullified.

Rav Kahana raised an objection against Rav and Rabbi Hanina from a *baraita*: There was an incident and the Sages decreed a fast on Hanukkah in Lod, and Rabbi Eliezer went down on that day and bathedⁿ in the bathhouse and Rabbi Yehoshua went down and cut his hair to show that they did not accept the fast. Furthermore, these two Sages said to the others: Go out and fastⁿ another fast as an act of penitence for what you have already fasted, as the days of Hanukkah are days of joy, on which fasting is forbidden. Hanukkah is one of the Festivals listed in *Megillat Ta'anit*. Even after the destruction of the Temple Hanukkah is celebrated, demonstrating that *Megillat Ta'anit* has not been nullified.

BACKGROUND

Requiring the mention of God's name... was abolished – בטילת אדברתא: Although the date of this event is not mentioned, from context it appears that this ordinance was made after the time of Yohanan Hyrcanus, who served as High Priest for eighty years. Perhaps it was instituted in the time of Alexander Jannaeus, and therefore the miraculous aspect is emphasized due to the tense relationship between him and the Sages. Alternatively, it may have occurred in the time of Queen Salome Alexandra, when the Sages were given more authority.

NOTES

And they made that day into a Festival – ואותו היום – עשאוהו יום טוב: The Maharsha wrote that since this halakha to mention God's name on documents was originally instituted by the Hasmoneans in honor of their victory, the Sages were concerned that annulling the halakha would provoke opposition of the Hasmonean kings. When it passed without trouble they established that day as a Festival.

אמר רב יוסף: שאני חנוכה דאיכא מצוה.
אמר ליה אביי: ותיבטיל איהי, ותיבטיל
מצותה!

אלא אמר רב יוסף: שאני חנוכה דמיפרסם
ניסא.

מותיב רב אחא בר הונא: בתלתא בתשרי
בטילת אדברתא מן שטרייא. שגורה
מלכות יון גורה שלא להזכיר שם שמים על
פיהם, וכשגברה מלכות חשמונאי ונצחום
התקינו שיהו מזכירין שם שמים אפילו
בשטרות. וכך היו בותביים: בשנת כך וכך
ליוחנן כהן גדול לאל עליון.

וכששמעו חכמים בדבר אמרו: למחר זה
פורע את חובו ונמצא שטר מוטל באשפה,
וביטלום. ואותו היום עשאוהו יום טוב.
ואי סלקא דעתך בטלה מגילת תענית –
קמיינתא בטול, אחרנייתא מוספיין?!

הכא במאי עסקינן – בזמן שבית המקדש
קיים.

Rav Yosef said: Hanukkah is different, as there is the mitzva of lighting candles, and so, unlike the other days listed in Megillat Ta'anit, the festival of Hanukkah was not nullified. Abaye said to him: What is this argument? Let Hanukkah itself be nullified, and let its mitzva of lighting candles be nullified with it.

Rather, Rav Yosef retracted his previous explanation and said: Hanukkah is different, as its miracle is well known, and it has become so widely accepted by all the Jewish people that it would be inappropriate to nullify it.

Rav Aha bar Huna raised an objection: It is stated in Megillat Ta'anit: On the third of Tishrei the ordinance requiring the mention of God's name in legal documents was abolished,⁸ and on that day fasting is forbidden. For the kingdom of Greece had issued a decree against the Jews forbidding them to mention the name of Heaven on their lips. When the Hasmonean kingdom became strong and defeated the Greeks, they instituted that people should mention the name of Heaven even in their legal documents. And therefore they would write: In year such and such of Yohanan the High Priest of the God Most High.

And when the Sages heard about this they said: Tomorrow this one, the borrower, will repay his debt, the lender will no longer need to save the loan document, the document will be cast on a dunghill, and the name of Heaven written there will come to disgrace. And so they annulled the ordinance to mention God's name in documents, and they made that day into a Festival.^N And if it enters your mind to say that Megillat Ta'anit has been nullified, can you say that the first prohibitions against fasting they annulled, and then later ones were added?

The Gemara answers: With what are we dealing here? This is referring to a time when the Temple was standing and all the days listed in Megillat Ta'anit were in force. From time to time new days of commemoration were added. When the amora'im stated that Megillat Ta'anit was nullified they were referring to the time after the destruction of the Temple.

Perek I
Daf 19 Amud a

NOTES

To prohibit fasting on the preceding day – לאסור את
ש'לפניו: The Gemara could have simply answered that it
is necessary to mention the preceding day in order to
prohibit the following day as well. However, the Gemara
chose to discuss the halakha of the preceding day (Rid).
Alternatively, the later authorities explain that the prohi-
bition against fasting on a day following one listed in
Megillat Ta'anit is not in accordance with the opinion
of all tanna'im, and therefore the Gemara preferred to
mention the preceding day, which is agreed upon by all
(Arukh LaNer; see Turei Even).

The day after the New Moon – יום שלאחר ראש חדש:
Why did the Gemara not mention that it is the day after
Rosh HaShana, which is also a festive day when fasting
is prohibited? It mentioned the New Moon in order
to teach that the New Moon also has the status of a
Festival by Torah law, on which it is prohibited to fast
(Rav Ya'akov Emden; see Arukh LaNer and Sha'agat Arye).

ותיפוק ליה דהיה ליה יום שנהרג בו גדליה
בן אחיקם! אמר רב: לא נצרכה אלא
לאסור את שלפניו.

ש'לפניו נמי, תיפוק ליה דהיה ליה יום
שלאחר ראש חדש! ראש חדש דאורייתא,
ודאורייתא לא בעי חיזוק.

The Gemara raises a difficulty: But if this was at the time that the Temple was standing, derive the prohibition against fasting on the third of Tishrei from the fact that it is the day that Gedaliah, son of Ahikam, was killed. During the time of the Temple the biblical fast days were celebrated as days of joy. Rav said: It was only necessary to include the third of Tishrei in Megillat Ta'anit in order to prohibit fasting on the preceding day^N as well. Fasting was forbidden not only on the actual days listed in Megillat Ta'anit, but also on the preceding day and the following day.

The Gemara raises another difficulty: With regard to the prohibition against fasting on the preceding day, the second of Tishrei, also derive it because it is the day after the New Moon,^N and fasting is forbidden not only on festive days, but also on the preceding day and the following day. The Gemara rejects this argument: The New Moon is by Torah law, and festive days that are by Torah law do not require reinforcement. Therefore no decree was ever enacted prohibiting fasting on the days before and after.