The Gemara rejects this argument. It is different there, as in any case “Sing aloud” is the psalm of the day, either because it was an ordinary Thursday or because it was Rosh HaShana. However, there is no proof from here that in all uncertain cases they would recite the psalm for an ordinary weekday, as it is possible that they did not recite any psalm at all.

§ The Gemara expands on the topic of the daily psalms recited by the Levites. It is taught in a baraita that Rabbi Yehuda ben Bava: On the first day of the week, Sunday, what psalm would the Levites recite? The psalm beginning with the phrase: “The earth is the Lord’s, and its fullness” (Psalms 24:1), in commemoration of the first day of Creation, because on that day He acquired the world and transferred it to man, and He was the only ruler in His world, as the angels were not created until the second day.

On the second day of the week what psalm would the Levites recite? The psalm that begins: “Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised in the city of our God, His sacred mountain” (Psalms 48:2). This is because on the second day of Creation He separated His works, dividing between the upper waters and the lower waters, and ruled over them as King; and this psalm speaks of Jerusalem as “The city of a great King” (Psalms 48:3).

On the third day of the week they would recite the psalm beginning: “God stands in the congregation of God” (Psalms 82:1), because on the third day of Creation He revealed the land in His wisdom and thereby prepared the world for His assembly that could now live on the dry land. On the fourth day of the week they would recite the psalm beginning: “O Lord God, to Whom vengeance belongs” (Psalms 94:1), because on the fourth day of Creation He created the sun and the moon, and in the future He will punish and take vengeance upon those who worship Him.

On the fifth day of the week the Levites would recite the psalm beginning: “Sing aloud to God our strength” (Psalms 81:2), because on the fifth day of Creation He created birds and fish to praise His name. On the sixth day of the week they would recite the psalm beginning: “The Lord reigns, He is clothed with majesty” (Psalms 93:1), because on that day He completed His labor and ruled over all of creation in full glory. On the seventh day of the week, Shabbat, they would recite the psalm beginning: “A psalm, a song for the day of Shabbat” (Psalms 92:1), as the future world will be a day that is all Shabbat.

Rabbi Nehemya said: What did the Sages see that led them to distinguish between these chapters, as they interpret the psalms recited on the six weekdays as referring to the past, whereas the psalm recited on Shabbat is referring to the future. Rather, all of the psalms refer to the past. The first six are as explained above: On the first day, the reason is that He acquired the world and transferred it to man, and He was the only ruler in His world; on the second day, the reason is that He separated His works and ruled over them as King; on the third day, the reason is that He revealed the land in His wisdom and thereby prepared the world for His assembly.
On the fourth day, the reason is that He created the sun and the moon, and in the future He will punish those who worship them; on the fifth day, the reason is that He created birds and fish to praise His name; on the sixth day, the reason is that He completed His labor and ruled over all of creation. However, on the seventh day, the reason is that He rested from His work, as the phrase “A psalm, a song for the day of Shabbat” is referring to the first Shabbat of Creation.

The Gemara comments: And these tannaim disagree with regard to a statement of Rav Ketina,6 as Rav Ketina said: “The world will exist for six thousand years, and for one thousand years it will be destroyed, as it is stated: “And the Lord alone shall be exalted on that day” (Isaiah 2:11), and one day for God is a thousand years, as indicated in the verse: “For a thousand years in Your sight are but as yesterday when it is past” (Psalms 90:4). Rav Ketina’s statement is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Akiva. Conversely, Abaye said: The world will be destroyed for two thousand years; as it is stated: “After two days He will revive us” (Hosea 6:2). According to the opinion of Abaye that the destruction will be for two days, there is no connection between the future world and the day of Shabbat, which is only one day.

The Gemara further asks: When it came to the additional offerings of Shabbat,7 what would the Levites recite? Rav Anan bar Rava said that Rav said: “They would recite in accordance with the mnemonic hei, zajin, yod, vaḥ, lamed, kaf:” Thus they would divide the song Ḥa’azinu into six sections, each of which began with a letter of the mnemonic: “Give ear [ha’azinu], you heavens” (Deuteronomy 32:11); “Remember [zekhor] the days of old” (Deuteronomy 32:7); “He made him ride [yarkivehu] on the high places of the earth” (Deuteronomy 32:13); “The Lord saw it [vayar] and spurned” (Deuteronomy 32:19); “Were it not [lulei] that I dread the enemy’s provocation” (Deuteronomy 32:27); “For [ki] the Lord will judge His people” (Deuteronomy 32:36).

And Rav Hanan bar Rava said that Rav said: In the manner that the verses of the song of Ḥa’azinu are divided here for the recitation of the additional offerings of Shabbat in the Temple, so too are they divided when they are read in the synagogue on Shabbat.8

The Gemara asks another question: When it came to the daily afternoon offering on Shabbat, what would the Levites recite? Rabbi Yohanan said: “Then sang Moses” (Exodus 15:1), and: “Who is like You” (Exodus 15:11), the two halves of the Song of the Sea, and: “Then Israel sang this song” (Numbers 21:17), the entire Song of the Well.

A dilemma was raised before the Sages: Does one recite all these sections of the song of Ḥa’azinu on each Shabbat, or perhaps on each and every Shabbat they would recite one section? The Gemara suggests: Come and hear, as it is taught in a baraita that Rabbi Yosei said: By the time that those who recite the first set, i.e., the verses for the additional offerings brought on Shabbat, recite it once, those who recite the second set, for the daily afternoon offering, would repeat their cycle twice, as the first set was comprised of six sections, whereas the second set included only three verses. Learn from here that each and every Shabbat they would recite only one section. The Gemara concludes: Indeed, learn from here that this is correct.
The Divine Presence traveled ten journeys, as derived from verses. From the Ark cover to the cherub; and from one cherub to the other cherub; and from the second cherub to the threshold of the Sanctuary; and from the threshold to the courtyard; and from the courtyard to the altar; and from the altar to the roof; and from the roof to the wall of the Temple Mount; and from the wall to the city; and from the city to a mountain close to Jerusalem; and from that mountain to the wilderness; and from the wilderness it ascended and rested in its place in Heaven, as it is stated: “I will go and return to My place” (Hosea 5:15).

The Gemara elaborates: The Divine Presence traveled ten journeys, as derived from verses. The ten journeys are: From the Ark cover to the cherub; and from one cherub to the other cherub; and from the second cherub to the threshold of the Sanctuary; and from the threshold to the courtyard; and from the courtyard to the altar; and from the altar to the roof; and from the roof to the wall of the Temple Mount; and from the wall to the city; and from the city to a mountain close to Jerusalem; and from that mountain to the wilderness; and from the wilderness it ascended and rested in its place in Heaven, as it is stated: “I will go and return to My place” (Hosea 5:15).

The Gemara cites the sources for each of these stages: From the Ark cover, the Divine Presence traveled to the cherub, and from one cherub to the other cherub, and from the second cherub to the threshold, as it is written with regard to Moses in the Tabernacle: And there I will meet with you, and I will speak to you from above (Exodus 25:22). And it is written: And He rode upon a cherub, and flew (11 Samuel 22:11), which indicates that the glory of the Divine Presence can rest upon one cherub. And it is written: And the glory of the God of Israel had ascended from the cherub, on which it was, to the threshold of the House (Ezekiel 9:3), i.e., the Divine Presence moved from the cherub to the threshold.

And from the threshold of the Sanctuary the Divine Presence went to the courtyard, as it is written: “And the House was filled with the cloud and the courtyard was full of the brightness of the Lord’s glory” (Ezekiel 10:4). From the courtyard to the altar, as it is written: “I saw the Lord standing on the altar” (Amos 9:1). And from the altar to the roof, as it is written: “It is better to dwell in a corner of the roof than in a house together with a contentious woman” (Proverbs 21:9). From the roof to the wall, as it is written: “And behold, the Lord stood upon a wall made by a plumb line” (Amos 7:7). From the wall to the city, as it is written: “The Lord’s voice cries to the city” (Micah 6:9).

And from the city the Divine Presence arose to the mountain nearest the Sanctuary, i.e., the Mount of Olives, as it is written: “And the glory of the Lord went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain, which is on the east side of the city” (Ezekiel 11:23). And from the mountain to the wilderness, as it is written: “It is better to live in the wilderness than with a contentious and fretful woman” (Proverbs 21:19). And from the wilderness it ascended and rested in its place in Heaven, as it is written: “I will go and return to My place until they acknowledge their guilt” (Hosea 5:15).

Rabbi Yohanan said: For six months the Divine Presence lingered in the wilderness, waiting for the Jewish people, hoping that perhaps they would repent and it would be able to return to its place. When they did not repent, the Divine Presence said: Let them despair and be lost, as it is stated: “But the eyes of the wicked shall fail, and they shall have no way to flee, and their hope shall be the drooping of the soul” (Job 11:20). This concludes the discussion of the ten stages of the exile of the Divine Presence from the Holy of Holies.

And corresponding to these ten stages, the Sanhedrin was exiled in ten stages at the end of the Second Temple period and after the destruction of the Temple, and this is known from tradition: From the Chamber of Hewn Stone, its fixed seat in the Temple, to Hanut, literally, shop, a designated spot on the Temple Mount outside the Temple proper; and from Hanut to Jerusalem; and from Jerusalem to Yavne;
The exiles of the Great Sanhedrin – הַסַּנְהֶדְרִין הַפִּילִים

The initial location of the Great Sanhedrin outside Jerusalem was in Yavne, where Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai and Rabban Gamliel of Yavne served. After the bar Kokhba revolt the Great Sanhedrin moved to Usha in the north, where the ordinances of Usha were instituted. It is likely that they tried to return to Yavne in the time of Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel, when the decrees of the gentiles were canceled, but this effort was unsuccessful, as the land of Judea was almost completely destroyed. Consequently, they returned to the Galilee region in the north, specifically to Usha and Shefaram.

Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi at first lived in Beit She’arim, and the Great Sanhedrin resided there. However, for health reasons he moved to Tzippori, which was located on a hill. Apparently, Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi’s son, Rabban Gamliel, lived permanently in Tiberias, and the Great Sanhedrin remained there until it was disbanded.

Should go only to the place where the Great Sanhedrin gathers – הליך ירחא את כל הערים ושם ירחא: In the Jerusalem Talmud it is explained that they go to the specific place where the Sanhedrin gathered to declare the new month. Some commentaries discuss the question of whether the court fully sanctifies the month in the absence of the head of the court, as indicated by Rashbi here, or whether it sanctifies it conditionally, in anticipation of his subsequent agreement (Turei Even).

PERSONALITIES

Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai – רב ברני זעקב רבן יוחנן בן זקוק: Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai served as the head of the Great Sanhedrin after the destruction of the Second Temple. One of the greatest leaders of the Jewish people in all generations, Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai, a priest, was one of the youngest students of Hillel the Elder. He lived a long life and led the Jewish people for many years. Before the destruction of the Temple he lived in the city Bnor Hayl and afterward he moved to Arav.

In his praise it is stated that there was not one thing, great or small, that he did not learn, from the Act of the Divine Chariot to the minutiae of the discussions between Abaye and Rava (Sukka 28a). Nevertheless, he was modest and would regularly greet everyone, even a non-Jew, in the marketplace.

In the time of the Second Temple he was already the greatest Sage of his generation, and most of the other Sages were his students. He opposed the revolution against the Romans and attempted to achieve peace. However, as he saw during the siege on Jerusalem that the city’s end was near, he managed to leave with some of his students. When he was received with great honor by Vespasian, Rabban Yohanan said that Vespasian would soon be the Roman emperor. The realization of this prediction raised his status tremendously, as the new emperor agreed to establish a center for Torah in Yavne (Gitin 56a–b). Rabban Yohanan also rescued Rabban Gamliel of Yavne.

In Yavne, Rabban Yohanan worked hard to institute various ordinances: On the one hand he sought to preserve the memory of the Temple in the hope of its speedy rebuilding, while on the other hand he strove to provide a spiritual base for the people in the absence of the Temple. The Sages of the generation, Rabbi Eleazar, Rabbi Yehoshua, and others, who spread Torah among the Jewish people, were all his students. He also appointed Rabban Gamliel his successor as the head of the Great Sanhedrin, and some say he did this during his own lifetime. Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai had one son, Rabbi Yehuda, who was also a Sage.

BACKGROUND

Rabbi Elazar says: There are six exiles, if you count only the places, not the number of journeys, and a different verse alludes to this, as it is stated: “For He has brought down those who dwell high, the lofty city laying it low, laying it low, to the ground, bringing it to the dust” (Isaiah 26:5). This verse mentions six expressions of lowering: Brought down, laying it low, laying it low, to the ground, bringing it to the dust. Rabban Yohanan said: And from there, i.e., from their lowest place of descent, they are destined to be redeemed in the future, as it is stated: “Shake yourself from the dust, arise, sit, Jerusalem” (Isaiah 52:2).

MISHNA

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korha said: And this, too, Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai instituted, that even if the head of the court of seventy-one is in any other place, not where the Great Sanhedrin is in session, the witnesses should nevertheless go only to the place where the Great Sanhedrin gathers to deliver testimony to determine the start of the month. Although the date of the month is dependent on the head of the Great Sanhedrin, as it is he who declares that the month is sanctified (see 244), nevertheless, Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai instituted that the members of the Great Sanhedrin may sanctify the month in the absence of the head of the court.
The Gemara relates: ‘There was a certain woman who was called to judgment before Ameimar’ in Neharde’a. Ameimar temporarily went to Mehoza, and she did not follow him⁶ to be judged there. He wrote a document of excommunication [petitula]⁷ concerning her, for disobeying the court. Rav Ashi said to Ameimar: ‘Didn’t we learn in the mishna: Even if the head of the court of seventy-one is in any other place, the witnesses should go only to the place where the Great Sanhedrin gathers? This shows that one must appear in the court itself, rather than follow the head of the court.’

Ameimar said to him: ‘This applies only to testimony to determine the start of the month, for which it is necessary to have a fixed place. The reason is that if so, if the witnesses come to the court when the head of the court is absent and they will have to go to another place, consequently you will be obstructing them for future occasions, as they will consider it too much trouble and perhaps they will not come the next time. Therefore, the Sages said that these witnesses should go to the regular place where the Great Sanhedrin meets. However, here, with regard to monetary claims, the verse states: “The borrower is servant to the lender” (Proverbs 22:7), i.e., the defendant must act as is convenient to the claimant and the court.’

§ The Sages taught in a baraita: Priests are not allowed to ascend with their sandals to the platform⁸ to recite the Priestly Blessing in the synagogue. And this is one of the nine ordinances that Rabban Yoḥanan ben Zakai instituted. Six are mentioned in this chapter: Sounding the shofar on Shabbat in Yavne, taking the lulav all seven days, the prohibition against eating new grain the entire day of waving, accepting testimony to determine the start of the month all day, having the witnesses to the New Moon go to the place of meeting, and reciting the Priestly Blessing without sandals. And one is stated in the first chapter, that the witnesses to the New Moon may desecrate Shabbat only for the months of Tishrei and Nisan.

And the other, as it is taught in a baraita: A convert who converts nowadays⁹ is required to set aside a quarter-shkel for his nest, i.e., his pair of doves. By Torah law a convert must bring two burnt-offerings of birds, in addition to his immersion and circumcision. After the destruction, it was instituted that he must set aside the value of two young pigeons in anticipation of the rebuilding of the Temple. Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar said: Rabban Yoḥanan ben Zakai already assembled a majority who voted and rescinded the ordinance due to a potential mishap. If a convert is obligated to set aside money, someone might unintentionally use this money, thereby violating the prohibition against misuse of consecrated property.

And the other ordinance, the ninth, is the subject of a dispute between Rav Pappa and Rav Nahman bar Yitzḥak. Rav Pappa said: The ordinance concerned the fruit of a fourth-year grapevine. Rav Nahman bar Yitzḥak said: It was with regard to the strip of crimson wool.

HALAKHA

Following the judge — Ḥalik ha-Riṣḥi: After the court sets a time and place for a trial, they summon the defendant. If he does not arrive, they excommunicate him. Even if the members of the court subsequently moved to a different location, the defendant must follow them, in accordance with the opinion of Ameimar (Shulḥan Arukh, Hoshen Mishpat 111). Not to ascend to the platform in shoes — Ḥalil ha-Dvīḥ ha-Kadan: Priests should not ascend to bless the people wearing shoes. However, they are permitted to wear slippers. Although some authorities are stringent with regard to leather slippers, others are lenient (Rema), provided the shoes do not have straps (Arukh HaShulḥan). For shoes and sandals that are made of materials other than leather, some permit them if they do not have straps (Arukh HaShulḥan), while others prohibit them, at least ab initio (Meshiḥa Berura). Some halakhic authorities are lenient in exigent circumstances, provided that the priests do not actually ascend to the platform but stand on the floor of the synagogue. The custom is for them not to ascend completely barefoot; rather, they should wear socks (Shulḥan Arukh, Orach Hayyim 128:5).

A convert who converts nowadays — Ḥallal veha-Beteq ha-Dvīḥ ha-Kadan: Although by Torah law a convert must also bring a burnt-offering, nowadays a convert does not need to set aside money for his offering, in accordance with Rabban Yoḥanan ben Zakai’s ordinance as stated by Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar. When the Temple will be rebuilt a convert must sacrifice this offering (Rambam Sefer Kedusha, Hilḥoṭ Issurei Bi’a 13:5).
The Sages instituted that the grapes of a fourth-year vine must be brought to Jerusalem without being redeemed if they are within the area of one day’s walk. After the Temple was destroyed grapes of a fourth-year vine could be redeemed anywhere, even close to Jerusalem. They established this halakha only with regard to grapes; other fruits could be redeemed anywhere even while the Temple stood (Rambam, Sefer Zer’im, Hilkhot Matzar Shenii 9:5).

Strip of crimson wool – The fruits of a fourth-year grapevine – could be redeemed anywhere, even close to Jerusalem, even if the vine must be brought to Jerusalem without being tied to the horns of the goat. The appointed emissary would divide a strip of crimson wool in two, half of which he would tie between the horns of the goat while the other half he would tie onto a rock (Rambam, Sefer Avoda, Hilkhot Avodat Yom HaKippurim 3:7).

And Ulla said, and some say Rabbi bar Ulla said that Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai said: For what reason did the Sages institute this ordinance, that one who lives near Jerusalem must bring his fruit there? In order to adorn the markets of Jerusalem with fruit, as this decree ensures that there is always an abundance of fruit in Jerusalem.

Some maintain that in this regard Rabbi Eliezer sought to render the fruit ownerless in favor of the poor, and it was further taught in a baraita: Rabbi Eliezer ben Hycanus, a student of Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai, had a fourth-year grapevine located between Lod and Jerusalem, to the east of Lod alongside the village of Tavi. The vine was within the boundaries of Jerusalem. However, the Sages decreed that fruit from the environs of Jerusalem should not be redeemed; rather, the owners should bring the fruit itself to Jerusalem. The environs of Jerusalem for this purpose were defined as a day’s walk in each direction. And this is its boundary: Eliat to the north, Akratub to the south, Lod to the west, and the Jordan river to the east.

His students said to him: Our teacher, there is no need to do so, as your colleagues have already voted on the matter and permitted it, as after the destruction of the Temple there is no need to adorn the markets of Jerusalem. The Gemara explains: Who are: Your colleagues? This is referring to Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai.

Rav Nahman bar Yitzhak said: The ordinance was with regard to the strip of crimson wool used on Yom Kippur. As it is taught in a baraita: At first they would tie a strip of crimson wool to the opening of the Entrance Hall of the Temple on the outside. If, after the sacrificing of the offerings and the sending of the scapegoat, the strip turned white, the people would rejoice, as this indicated that their sins had been atoned for. If it did not turn white they would be sad. When the Sages saw that people were overly distressed on Yom Kippur, they instituted that they should tie the strip of crimson wool to the opening of the Entrance Hall on the inside, where only a few could enter to see it.

The Gemara explains this dispute: What is the reason that Rav Nahman bar Yitzhak did not state his opinion with regard to the ordinance in accordance with the opinion of Rav Pappa? He could have said to you: If it enters your mind to say that Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai resided the ordinance of the fruit of fourth-year grapevines, was he one of Rabbi Eliezer’s colleagues, that the students would have referred to him in this manner? He was his teacher. Therefore, Rabbi Yohanan cannot be the one who instituted this ordinance. And the other, Rav Pappa, what would he respond to this? He would say that since they were Rabbi Eliezer’s students it is not proper conduct for one to say to his teacher: Your teacher. Therefore, they referred to Rabbi Yohanan as Rabbi Eliezer’s colleague.
The Gemara asks: And what is the reason that Rav Pappa did not state his opinion in accordance with the opinion of Rav Nahman bar Yitzhak? Rav Pappa could have said to you: If it enters your mind to say that this ordinance for Yom Kippur was instituted by Rabban Yohanan ben Zakka'i, in the days of Rabban Yohanan ben Zakka'i was there in fact a strip of crimson wool? Is it taught in a baraita: All the years of Rabban Yohanan ben Zakka'i’s life were 120 years: Forty years he was involved in business so that he could achieve financial independence and study Torah, forty years he studied Torah, and forty years he taught Torah.

And it is taught in a baraita: During the forty years before the Second Temple was destroyed the strip of crimson wool would not turn white; rather, it would turn a deeper shade of red. And we learned in the mishna: When the Temple was destroyed Rabban Yohanan ben Zakka'i instituted his ordinances. This shows that Rabban Yohanan lived and taught Torah after the destruction. Therefore the ordinance of the crimson wool must have been made while Rabban Yohanan was still studying Torah, before he instituted any ordinances. The Gemara asks: And the other Sage, Rav Nahman bar Yitzhak, what would he answer? According to him, that ordinance was instituted during those forty years that he studied Torah. He was then a student sitting before his teacher, and he said a matter, i.e., he suggested this ordinance, and his reasoning made sense to the Sages.

and his teacher established it in his name. Consequently, it is counted as one of Rabban Yohanan ben Zakka'i’s ordinances.

MISHNA The order of the blessings of the additional prayer on Rosh HaShana is as follows: One recites the blessing of the Patriarchs, the blessing of God’s Mighty Deeds, and the blessing of the Sanctification of God’s Name, all of which are recited all year long. And one includes the blessing of Kingship, containing many biblical verses on that theme, with them, i.e., in the blessing of the Sanctification of God’s Name, and he does not sound the shofar after it.

Next, one adds a special blessing for the Sanctification of the Day, and sounds the shofar after it; followed by the blessing of Remembrances, which contains many biblical verses addressing that theme, and sounds the shofar after it; and recites the blessing of Shofarot, which includes verses that mention the shofar, and sounds the shofar after it. And he then returns to the regular Amida prayer and recites the blessing of God’s Service and the blessing of Thanksgiving and the Priestly Blessing. This is the statement of Rabbi Yohanan ben Nuri.

HALAKHA

Rabbi Akiva said to him: If one does not sound the shofar for the blessing of Kingship, why does he mention it? Rather, the order of the blessings is as follows: One recites the blessing of the Patriarchs and that of God’s Mighty Deeds and that of the Sanctification of God’s Name. He subsequently includes the blessing of Kingship in the blessing of the Day, and sounds the shofar. Next he recites the blessing of Remembrances, and sounds the shofar after it, and the blessing of Shofarot, and sounds the shofar after it. He then recites the blessing of God’s Service and the blessing of Thanksgiving and the Priestly Blessing.

PERSONALITIES

Rabbi Yohanan ben Nuri – רב יוחנן בן נורי: Rabbi Yohanan ben Nuri was one of the most important Sages of Yavne, despite his youth. Most of his discussions of halakha were held with Rabbi Akiva and other Sages of his generation. Rabbi Yohanan ben Nuri lived in the lower Galilee, in Ganim or Beit She’arim. He maintained close ties with the Sages of the Galilee, such as Abba Halafta, the father of Rabbi Yosei, and others. His main students were also Sages from the Galilee, e.g., Rabbi Yosei and Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korha.

Little is known about Rabbi Yohanan ben Nuri’s private life. However, it is related that he was poor and lived off gleanings, forgotten sheaves, and produce of the corners. The Sage Isi ben Yehuda praised his expertise in all areas of Torah, and he was considered a paradigm of one who has fear of sin.