

**מתני' מאימתי מזכירין גבורות גשמים? רבי אליעזר אומר: מיום טוב הראשון של חג. רבי יהושע אומר: מיום טוב האחרון של חג.**

**אמר לו רבי יהושע: הואיל ואין הגשמים אלא סימן קללה בחג, למה הוא מזכיר? אמר לו רבי אליעזר: אף אני לא אמרתי לשאול, אלא להזכיר משיב הרוח ומוריד הגשם בעונתו. אמר לו: אם כן לעולם יהא מזכיר!**

**אין שואלים את הגשמים אלא סמוך לגשמים. רבי יהודה אומר: העובר לפני התיבה ביום טוב האחרון של חג – האחרון מזכיר. הראשון אינו מזכיר. ביום טוב ראשון של פסח – הראשון מזכיר, האחרון אינו מזכיר.**

**גמ' תנא היכא קאי דקתני "מאימתי" תנא התם קאי,**

**MISHNA** From when, i.e., from which date, does one begin to mention<sup>N</sup> the might of the rains<sup>H</sup> by inserting the phrase: He makes the wind blow and rain fall, in the second blessing of the *Amida* prayer? **Rabbi Eliezer says:** The phrase is inserted **from the first Festival day of the festival of Sukkot.** **Rabbi Yehoshua says:** **From the last Festival day of the festival of Sukkot.**

**Rabbi Yehoshua said to Rabbi Eliezer:** Since rain is nothing other than a sign of a curse during the festival<sup>N</sup> of *Sukkot*, as rainfall forces Jews to leave their *sukkot*, why should one mention the might of rain during this period? **Rabbi Eliezer said to him:** I too did not say that it is proper to request rain at this time, but it is proper only to mention the phrase: **He makes the wind blow and rain fall, in its due time.**<sup>N</sup> **Rabbi Yehoshua said to him:** If so, i.e., if reciting the phrase does not constitute a request for rain, one should always mention rain, even in the summer.

The mishna states a general principle: **One requests rain only immediately preceding the rainy season.**<sup>B</sup> **Rabbi Yehuda**<sup>P</sup> says: With regard to the one who passes before the ark as prayer leader on the concluding Festival day of the festival of *Sukkot*, the Eighth Day of Assembly: **The last prayer leader, who leads the additional prayer, mentions rain, whereas the first prayer leader, for the morning prayer, does not mention rain.** The opposite is the case at the conclusion of the period for mentioning rain on the first Festival day of Passover: Here, the first prayer leader, who leads the morning prayer, mentions rain, while the last prayer leader, who leads the additional prayer, does not mention rain.<sup>N</sup>

**GEMARA** The Gemara asks: **Where does the tanna of the mishna stand, that he teaches: From when?** The mishna's opening question indicates that it has already been established that there is an obligation to mention rain at this time of the year. Where is this obligation stated? The Gemara answers: **The tanna is standing there, i.e., he bases himself on a mishna in Berakhot.**

**NOTES**

**From when does one mention – מאימתי מזכירין:** Most sources place tractate *Ta'anit* immediately after *Rosh HaShana*. See Meiri, who cites an alternative tradition concerning the arrangement of the tractates. The Rambam, in his introduction to the Commentary on the Mishna, explains that the *tanna* positioned *Ta'anit* right after the tractates that discuss Festivals mandated by Torah law, as the fasts discussed in *Ta'anit* are mentioned by the Prophets, especially those fasts instituted in commemoration of the destruction of the Temple (see Isaiah, chapter 58; Zechariah 8:19). It is logical to list special days mentioned by the Prophets after listing special days mentioned in the Torah. Some add another connection between the two tractates; *Rosh HaShana* discusses the *halakhot* of sounding the *shofar*, and similar blasts are sounded on the fasts days discussed in this tractate. Furthermore, as stated in the Gemara, *Rosh HaShana* mentions the period of judgment for rain, while *Ta'anit* addresses the prayers and the fasting for rain in its proper time (*Meleket Shlomo*).

**A sign of a curse during the festival – סימן קללה בחג:** Rashi and Rav Natronai Gaon explain, based on a statement in tractate *Sukka*, that rainfall during *Sukkot* is considered to be a Divine rebuke to the Jewish people as it indicates that God has rejected their performance of the mitzva of residing in a *sukka*. Others explain that rainfall simply prevents people from fulfilling the mitzva

properly (Meiri). Some authorities maintain that it is obligatory to eat in the *sukka* only on the first night of the Festival, which means that rainfall is a curse only on that night. Nevertheless, rainfall at any time during *Sukkot* is not considered to be a blessing. This is particularly true according to Rabbi Eliezer, who maintains that one is obligated to eat two meals in the *sukka* on each of the seven days of *Sukkot*.

**משיב – הרוח ומוריד הגשם בעונתו:** Some explain that according to Rabbi Eliezer one must state this entire sentence: He makes wind blow and the rain fall in its due time (see Rabbi Aharon HaLevi). However, most commentaries maintain that the phrase: In its due time, is not part of the text inserted into the *Amida* prayer; rather, it is simply Rabbi Eliezer's interpretation of that insertion. In other words, he maintains that it is appropriate to mention rain any-time throughout the year provided that one intends that the rain should fall in its proper season (see Ritva).

**Mentioning rain on Sukkot and Passover – הזכרה בסכות ובפסח:** In the Jerusalem Talmud, an additional rationale is cited for this *halakha*. As explained in the Gemara (2b), it is preferable to recite the prayer for dew in most of the Festival prayers, as dew is a sign of a reliable blessing that comes without suffering.

**HALAKHA**

**From when does one mention the might of the rains – מאימתי מזכירין גבורות גשמים:** One begins to insert the expression: He makes the wind blow and the rain fall, in the additional *Amida* prayer of the last day of *Sukkot*, the Eighth Day of Assembly. One ceases to recite it in the additional *Amida* prayer of the first day of Passover, in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda (*Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim* 114:1).

**BACKGROUND**

**Immediately preceding the rainy season – סמוך לגשמים:** The details of this mishna and most of the related issues refer to the climate of Eretz Yisrael, as the main themes of communal prayer always refer to Eretz Yisrael, the heart of the Jewish people.

As will be explained at length in this tractate, the rainy season normally begins in Eretz Yisrael in the month of Marḥeshvan, which corresponds to the months of October or November of the Gregorian calendar. If Marḥeshvan occurs relatively early in the solar year, rainfall may begin later than usual. Nevertheless, it is fairly common for scattered showers to fall even during the previous month of Tishrei. As in the other lands of the Mediterranean region, the rainy season lasts throughout the winter, from Marḥeshvan until Nisan. During the summer, no rain falls at all. Indeed, summer rain is likely to cause significant damage to plants and fruit.

**PERSONALITIES**

**Rabbi Yehuda – רבי יהודה:** When the Mishna refers to Rabbi Yehuda without any addition, it means Rabbi Yehuda, son of Rabbi Ilai, one of the greatest of the fourth generation *tanna'im*. He was one of the last five disciples of Rabbi Akiva, while his father, Rabbi Ilai, was a student of Rabbi Eliezer. In his youth, he studied with Rabbi Tarfon, in whose name he cites *halakhot*, in addition to the other Sages of Yavne: Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbi Yehoshua, Rabban Gamliel, Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya, Rabbi Yishmael, and Rabbi Yosei HaGellili. Nevertheless, Rabbi Yehuda's foremost teacher was Rabbi Akiva, and it was in accordance with Rabbi Akiva's opinion that he laid the foundations for the halakhic exegesis of Leviticus known as the *Sifra*, or *Torat Kohanim*. According to tradition, any unattributed statement in the *Sifra* was authored by Rabbi Yehuda.

Rabbi Yehuda was ordained by Rabbi Yehuda ben Bava and is frequently quoted in aggadic statements alongside Rabbi Neḥemya. When there are differences of opinion between Rabbi Yehuda and Rabbi Meir or between Rabbi Yehuda and Rabbi Shimon, the *halakha* is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda. Rabbi Yehuda's disciples included Rabbi Elazar, son of Rabbi Shimon; Rabbi Yishmael, son of Rabbi Yosei; and Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi. His son, known as Rabbi Yosei, son of Rabbi Yehuda, was also a renowned Sage.

NOTES

The might of the rains – גְבוּרוֹת גְשָׁמִים: Many commentaries elaborate on the connection between rain and the blessing of the resurrection of the dead. They explain that rainfall is a resurrection of the dead in miniature, as plants that appear dead return to life (Rid the Younger; Ritva). Furthermore, rainfall, like the resurrection of the dead, represents a manifestation of God's might and dominion over the world. Another element of similarity shared between rain and the resurrection of the dead is that both emphasize God's loving-kindness since He overrides the established order of nature when He ensures that rain falls at the best time (Ritva). The kabbalists discuss at length the link between rainfall and God's might; they consider rain a manifestation of God's self-contraction and withdrawal [tzimtzum], just as it is a manifestation of His loving-kindness (see *Otzar HaKavod*).

HALAKHA

One mentions the might of the rains in the resurrection of the dead – מְזַכְרִין גְבוּרוֹת גְשָׁמִים בְּתַחֲיִית הַמֵּתִים: Throughout the winter, one mentions rain by reciting the phrase: He makes the wind blow and the rain fall, in the second blessing of the *Amida*. During the summer, there are different customs. The practice of Sephardic communities and some Ashkenazic congregations, specifically Hassidic communities and residents of Eretz Yisrael, is to recite during the summer: He brings the dew, whereas Ashkenazic communities outside Eretz Yisrael omit this phrase (*Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim* 114:1–2).

And the request in the blessing of the years – וְשֹׂאֲלִין: During the winter, a prayer for rain is inserted in the ninth blessing of the *Amida*: the blessing of the years. One begins to add this prayer from the date fixed by the Gemara later in the discussion (2b). According to Ashkenazic custom, the basic text of the blessing remains the same throughout the year. During the summer, the phrase recited is: And give a blessing, while during the winter it is: And give dew and rain for a blessing. According to Sephardic custom, the text of the ninth blessing recited during the winter differs significantly from that of the summer (*Tur, Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim* 117:1).

And the prayer of distinction [*havdala*] in the blessing, Who graciously grants knowledge – וְהַבְדִּילָה בְּחוּץ: One recites *havdala* in the evening *Amida* prayer at the conclusion of Shabbat and Festivals in the blessing: Who graciously grants knowledge (*Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim* 294:1).

דְּקָתַנִּי: מְזַכְרִים גְבוּרוֹת גְשָׁמִים בְּתַחֲיִית הַמֵּתִים, וְשֹׂאֲלִין בְּבִרְכַּת הַשָּׁנִים, וְהַבְדִּילָה בְּחוּץ הַדְּעָת. וְקָתַנִּי: מֵאִמְתִּי מְזַכְרִים גְבוּרוֹת גְשָׁמִים.

וְלִיתִנִּי הַתָּם, מֵאִי שְׁנָא דְשִׁבְקִיהָ עַד הַכָּא?

אָלָּא: תִּנָּא מִרְאֵשׁ הַשְּׁנָה סְלִיק. דְּתַנָּן: וּבְחַג נִידוּנִין עַל הַמַּיִם. וְאִיִּדֵי דְתִנָּא וּבְחַג נִידוּנִים עַל הַמַּיִם, תִּנָּא מֵאִמְתִּי מְזַכְרִין גְבוּרוֹת גְשָׁמִים.

וְלִיתִנִּי "מֵאִמְתִּי מְזַכְרִים עַל הַגְּשָׁמִי", מֵאִי גְבוּרוֹת גְשָׁמִים? אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן: מִפְּנֵי שִׁיּוּרְדִין בְּגְבוּרָה, שְׁנֵאמַר "עִנְשָׁה גְדֹלוֹת עַד אֵין חֶקֶר וְנִפְלְאוֹת עַד אֵין מִסְפָּר" וְכַתִּיב "הַנִּתֵּן מִטֶּרַעַל פְּנֵי הָאָרֶץ וְשִׁלַּח מַיִם עַל פְּנֵי חוּצוֹת".

מֵאִי מִשְׁמַע? אָמַר רַבָּה בַר שֵׁילָא: אֲתֵינָא "חֶקֶר" "חֶקֶר" מִבְּרִיתוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם.

כַּתִּיב הַכָּא "עִנְשָׁה גְדֹלוֹת עַד אֵין חֶקֶר" וְכַתִּיב הַתָּם "הֲלוֹא יָדַעְתָּ אִם לֹא שָׁמַעְתָּ אֱלֹהֵי עוֹלָם ה' בּוֹרֵא קְצוֹת הָאָרֶץ לֹא יֵעָף וְלֹא יִיגַע אֵין חֶקֶר לְתַבוּנָתוֹ" וְכַתִּיב "מִכֵּין הָרִים בְּכַחוֹ נֶאֱוָר בְּגְבוּרָה".

As it teaches (*Berakhot* 33a): One mentions the might of the rains<sup>N</sup> and recites: He makes the wind blow and the rain fall in the second blessing of the *Amida* prayer, the blessing of the resurrection of the dead.<sup>H</sup> And the request<sup>B</sup> for rain: And grant dew and rain as a blessing, is recited in the ninth blessing of the *Amida* prayer, the blessing of the years.<sup>H</sup> And the prayer of distinction [*havdala*] between the sacred and the profane, recited in the evening prayer following Shabbat and Festivals, is recited in the fourth blessing of the *Amida* prayer: Who graciously grants knowledge.<sup>H</sup> And it is based on that mishna, which establishes the obligation to request for rain, that this mishna teaches: From when does one begin to mention the might of the rains.

The Gemara asks: But if so, let the *tanna* teach this *halakha* there, in tractate *Berakhot*, at the beginning of the order of *Zera'im*. What is different about this case that he left it until here, toward the end of the order of *Moed*? In other words, if this issue is indeed a continuation of the mishna in *Berakhot*, why did the *tanna* neglect it until tractate *Ta'anit*?

The Gemara answers: Rather, the *tanna* interrupted a discussion from tractate *Rosh HaShana*. As we learned in a mishna there: And on the festival of *Sukkot* all creatures are judged for water. Since the *tanna* taught: And on the festival of *Sukkot* all creatures are judged for water, from which it can be inferred that one should request rain near the time of this judgment, he taught here: From when does one mention the might of the rains.

**S** The Gemara asks a question with regard to the language of the mishna: And let the *tanna* simply teach: From when does one mention the rains. What is the meaning of the phrase: The might of the rains? Rabbi Yoḥanan said: Because the rains fall with might.<sup>B</sup> The might of the rain displays God's power in the world, as it is stated: "Who does great things beyond comprehension, marvels without number" (*Job* 9:10). And it is also written: "Who gives rain upon the earth, and sends water upon the fields" (*Job* 5:10).

The Gemara asks: From where may it be inferred that these verses indicate that rainfall is considered a mighty act of God? Rabba bar Sheila said: This is derived by means of a verbal analogy between the term "comprehension" here and the term "comprehension" from a passage that deals with the creation of the world.

Rabba bar Sheila elaborates on this verbal analogy. It is written here: "Who does great things that are beyond comprehension," and it is written there, with regard to the creation of the world: "Have you not known? Have you not heard that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, does not grow faint or weary? His discernment is beyond comprehension" (*Isaiah* 40:28). This shows that both creation and rainfall are beyond comprehension. And concerning the creation of the world, it is written elsewhere: "Who sets firm the mountains with Your strength; Who is girded with might" (*Psalms* 65:7). From this verse it can be inferred that rainfall, like the creation of the world, reflects God's might.

BACKGROUND

One mentions...and the request – מְזַכְרִין...וְשֹׂאֲלִין: There is a difference in *halakha* between the time when it is appropriate to mention rain and the date when one starts to request rainfall. Naturally, one asks for rain only when he wants it to fall. However, one begins to think about the upcoming year's rainfall before the rainy season begins. Furthermore, as noted in the Gemara, on *Sukkot* the Jewish people are judged with regard

to rain; therefore, the appropriate time to begin mentioning rain is during the period of *Sukkot*. Even Rabbi Eliezer agrees that one should not mention a matter at an inappropriate time. This is true even when done in praise of God rather than in the form of a request.

Because they fall with might – מִפְּנֵי שִׁיּוּרְדִין בְּגְבוּרָה: The issue

of rainfall is discussed at great length in *Ta'anit*. The Gemara explains that the might of God is manifested particularly through rain, both due to its power and because of the controlled way in which it falls, as strength and control are both characteristics of might. Nowadays, the force of rainfall can be measured. It is estimated that the energy released in any large rainstorm exceeds that of an atomic bomb.

And from where do we derive that rain must be mentioned in prayer – ומנא לן דבתפלה – The Maharsha asks: Why does the Gemara seek a special source for the recital of prayers for rain? This obligation can be derived directly from King Solomon's prayer upon the dedication of the Temple (1 Kings 8:35–36). The Maharsha's answer, which is reflected in his commentary to the Gemara, is that Solomon's prayer teaches only that prayers for rain are to be recited in times of drought: "When heaven is closed up" (1 Kings 8:35). Here, however, the Gemara is dealing with the obligation to petition for rain on a regular basis in one's daily prayers throughout the rainy season. Alternatively, Solomon's prayer serves as a source for the obligation to request rainfall, whereas here the Gemara wishes to find a supporting verse for the obligation to praise God for His ability to cause rain to fall (*Keren Ora*).

And afterward it is written, And I shall give the rain of your land – כתיב בתורה ונתתי מטר ארצכם – This passage continues: "That you may gather in your grain and your wine and your oil" (Deuteronomy 11:14), which alludes to the *halakha* that the prayers for rain should begin on the festival of *Sukkot* at the time of ingathering of produce from the fields (*Rosh Yosef*).

Which were not transmitted to an intermediary – שלא נמסרו ביד שליח – Rabbeinu Gershom and Rashi maintain that this means only that all three keys cannot be transmitted to a single intermediary at the same time. This opinion is based on a midrash that Elijah was given two of the three keys but not all three. By contrast, *Tosafot* explain that none of these three keys were transmitted permanently to an intermediary. The Ra'avad likewise states that there is no special angel who is granted the authority to perform these tasks. Although the so-called angel of the interior and the ministering angel of the world perform God's bidding in the world, they have no control over these three keys (Ra'avad; *Shita Mekubbetzet*; *Otzar HaKavod*).

ומנא לן דבתפלה? דתנא: "לאהבה את ה' אלהיכם ולעבדו בכל לבבכם" איזו היא עבודה שהיא בלב – היו אומר: זו תפלה. וכתיב בתורה "ונתתי מטר ארצכם בעתו יורה ומלקוש".

The Gemara asks: **And from where do we derive that rain must be mentioned specifically in the Amida prayer?**<sup>N</sup> The Gemara answers: **As it was taught in a baraita with regard to the verse: "To love the Lord your God and to serve Him with all your heart" (Deuteronomy 11:13). Which is the service of God that is performed in the heart?**<sup>B</sup> **You must say that this is referring to prayer. And, afterward, it is written: "And I shall give the rain of your land" in its due time, the first rain and the last rain" (Deuteronomy 11:14).** This juxtaposition teaches that it is appropriate to request rain while engaged in the service of the heart, i.e., prayer.

אמר רבי יוחנן: שלישה מפתחות בידו של הקדוש ברוך הוא שלא נמסרו ביד שליח, ואלו הן: מפתח של גשמים, מפתח של חיה, ומפתח של תחיית המתים.

§ The Gemara cites related statements concerning the idea that rainfall provides evidence of God's might. **Rabbi Yohanan said: There are three keys<sup>B</sup> maintained in the hand of the Holy One, Blessed be He, which were not transmitted to an intermediary,<sup>N</sup> i.e., God tends to these matters Himself. And they are: The key of rain, the key of birthing, and the key of the resurrection of the dead.**

מפתח של גשמים – דכתיב 'יפתח ה' לך את אוצרו הטוב את השמים לתת מטר ארצך בעתו'. מפתח של חיה מנן – דכתיב 'ויזכר אלהים את רחל וישמע

Rabbi Yohanan cites verses in support of his claim. **The key of rain, as it is stated: "The Lord will open for you His good treasure, the heavens, to give the rain of your land in its due time" (Deuteronomy 28:12), indicates that rainfall is controlled by God Himself. From where is it derived that the key of birthing is maintained by God? As it is written: "And God remembered Rachel and listened**

#### BACKGROUND

Service [*avoda*] that is in the heart – עבודה שהיא בלב – The Hebrew word *avoda*, meaning work or service, denotes the worship of God through the Temple service and prayer. It refers to an act by which one expresses his veneration for the Creator. When the term *avoda* appears without qualification in rabbinic sources, it is referring to Temple worship, specifically, the sacrifice of offerings. With regard to the verse: "And to serve Him with all your heart" (Deuteronomy 11:13), the Sages say that this is referring to prayer, which essentially involves directing one's heart to the Creator. This, too, is a form of

worship, which is considered one of the most natural ways to serve God.

Three keys – שלישה מפתחות – These three keys all refer to significant changes to reality. Although rainfall and childbirth appear to be natural events to us, they are considered by the Gemara to be departures from the normal course of nature, no less than the resurrection of the dead. Consequently, the control over them is not entrusted to an emissary; God Himself is responsible for them.

#### Perek I

#### Daf 2 Amud b

אליה אלהים ויפתח את רחמה". מפתח של תחיית המתים מנן – דכתיב 'וידעתם כי אני ה' בפתיחי את קברותיכם'.

to her, and He opened her womb"<sup>N</sup> (Genesis 30:22). **From where is it derived that the key of the resurrection of the dead is maintained by God Himself? As it is written: "And you shall know that I am the Lord when I have opened your graves" (Ezekiel 37:13).**

#### NOTES

And He opened her womb – ויפתח את רחמה – The Maharsha asks: Why doesn't the Gemara cite the earlier verse: "And when the Lord saw that Leah was hated, He opened her womb" (Genesis 29:31)? He explains that the Gemara cites the verse referring to Rachel because, in that verse, the name of God immediately precedes the expression "and opened her womb." This serves to emphasize that it was God Himself, not an inter-

mediary, who was responsible for opening Rachel's womb. By contrast, in the verse referring to Leah the name of God does not directly precede the expression: "He opened her womb." Consequently, it might have been possible to interpret the verse as follows: And when the Lord saw that Leah was hated, the one entrusted with the key to childbirth opened her womb.

BACKGROUND

Lulav – לולב: Referred to by the Torah as “branches of palm trees” (Leviticus 23:40), the lulav must be held in one’s hand together with three other species on the festival of Sukkot: the etrog, the myrtle, and the willow. The lulav is a young branch of a date palm whose leaves are still pressed tightly against the branch. All four plants must be of high quality; therefore, the lulav may not be crooked nor may its top be damaged or broken. The lulav must be at least four handbreadths long, roughly 35 cm.

Water libation – ניסוך המים: During the festival of Sukkot, in addition to the other special offerings brought in the Temple, a water libation was poured. This libation is not mentioned explicitly in the Torah, its source being an oral tradition transmitted to Moses from Mount Sinai. The water libation was accompanied by great festivity and ceremony. The water was drawn from the Siloam pool and poured into a basin placed upon a hole in the southwestern corner of the altar. According to tradition, this hole, and the adjacent hole where wine was poured, descended to the depths of the world. The water libation was offered on all seven days of Sukkot, including Shabbat, even though it was not permitted to draw water for this offering on Shabbat.



Reconstruction of basin placed upon the hole on the altar



Dinar coin from the bar Kokheva revolt with depiction of jug for libation

He learned this by way of a tradition – גמרא גמיר לה: In other words, this matter was derived from a tradition rather than from a verse of the Torah.

HALAKHA

The water libation at night – ניסוך המים בלילה: The wine libations brought together with the offerings are valid only if performed during the day. Conversely, the water libation, which is poured out during Sukkot, is brought independently of any offering. The proper time to bring the water libation is together with the morning daily offering. However, if it is performed at night, it is valid, as stated here and in Sukka (Maggid Mishne; Rambam Sefer Avoda, Hilkhoh Ma’aseh HaKorbanot 4:5; Hilkhoh Temidin UMusafin 10:7).

במערכבא אָמרו: אף מפתח של פּרנסה, דְּכתיב “פּוֹתַח אֶת יַדְךָ” וגו'. וְרַבִּי יוֹחָנָן מַאי טַעמָא לֹא קָא חָשִׁיב לְהָא? אָמרו לָךְ: גְּשָׁמִים הֵינּוּ פּרנסה.

“רַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר אוֹמֵר מֵיִם טוֹב הָרָאוּן שֶׁל חַג” כּו'. אִיבְעִינָא לְהוּ: רַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר מֵיחָא גְמִיר לָהּ, מְלוּלָב גְמִיר לָהּ אוּ מְנִיסוּךְ הַמֵּיִם גְמִיר לָהּ?

מְלוּלָב גְמִיר לָהּ: מַה לּוּלָב בַּיּוֹם – אִף הַזְכָּרָה בַּיּוֹם. אוּ דְלִמָּא מְנִיסוּךְ הַמֵּיִם גְמִיר לָהּ: מַה נִּיסוּךְ הַמֵּיִם מְאוּרְתָא. דְּאָמְרוּ מַר “וּמְנַחְתָּם וְנִסְכֵיהֶם” אָפִילוּ בְלֵילָהּ, אִף הַזְכָּרָה מְאוּרְתָא?

תָּא שְׁמַע, דְּאָמְרוּ רַבִּי אֲבָהוּ: לֹא לְמַדָּה רַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר אֶלָּא מְלוּלָב. אִיבְעִינָא דְּאָמְרוּ: רַבִּי אֲבָהוּ גְמִיר לָהּ, אִיבְעִינָא דְּאָמְרוּ: מִתְנַתָּא שְׁמִיעַ לֵיהּ.

In the West, Eretz Yisrael, they say: The key of livelihood is also in God’s hand, as it is written: “You open Your hand<sup>N</sup> and satisfy every living thing with favor” (Psalms 145:16). The Gemara asks: And what is the reason that Rabbi Yoḥanan did not consider this key of livelihood in his list? The Gemara answers that Rabbi Yoḥanan could have said to you: Rain is the same as livelihood in this regard, as rain is indispensable to all livelihoods.

§ The mishna taught that Rabbi Eliezer says: One mentions rain from the first Festival day of the festival of Sukkot etc. A dilemma was raised before the Sages: From where did Rabbi Eliezer derive this halakha? He must have learned it from one of the two mitzvot of Sukkot that are linked to rain. Did he derive it from the mitzva to wave the lulav,<sup>B</sup> or did he derive it from the obligation of the water libation?<sup>B</sup>

The Gemara clarifies the significance of this dilemma: Did he derive this halakha from the lulav, in which case one would say: Just as the mitzva to take the lulav applies during the day and not at night, so too, the mention of rain begins during the day of the first Festival day of Sukkot. Or perhaps he derives this halakha from the water libation, in which case one would say: Just as the water libation can be prepared from the first night<sup>NH</sup> of Sukkot, as the Master said, with regard to the verse: “And their meal-offerings and their libations” (Numbers 29:18), and certain meal-offerings and libations may be brought even at night, so too, the mention of rain begins from the evening.

The Gemara seeks to resolve this dilemma: Come and hear a resolution, as Rabbi Abbahu<sup>P</sup> said that Rabbi Eliezer derived this halakha from nothing other than the case of lulav. Some say that Rabbi Abbahu learned this claim by way of a tradition,<sup>B</sup> which was the source of Rabbi Eliezer’s opinion; and some say that he learned it from a baraita.

NOTES

You open Your hand – פּוֹתַח אֶת יַדְךָ: It has been suggested that the inference concerning the key of livelihood is based on a grammatical variation. Throughout Psalm 145, God is referred to in the abstract third person form, whereas in this phrase He is addressed directly, in the second person: “You open Your hand.”

The water libation from the night – ניסוך המים מאורתא: The early commentaries grapple with this statement, for which they offer different interpretations (see Rashi and Meiri). There are two basic opinions: According to one opinion, the water libation on the altar was not performed at night, as the libations that accompany offerings can be poured out only

during the day. Rather, the Gemara is referring to the drawing of the water in preparation for the libation, an act that can take place at night. Consequently, the nighttime can be considered the beginning of the period of the libation (Tosefot Rid; Rabbi Elyakim). Similarly, some state that as the sanctification of the water for the libation can occur at night, it is considered as though the time of the libation begins then (Ra’avad; Shita Mekubbetzet). A second opinion takes this statement literally, as meaning that the water libation is indeed valid if performed at night, despite the fact that everyone agrees that the proper time for this service is during the day, ab initio (see Tosafot and Ritva).

PERSONALITIES

Rabbi Abbahu – רַבִּי אֲבָהוּ: A third generation amora of Eretz Yisrael, Rabbi Abbahu was the preeminent disciple of Rabbi Yoḥanan. He headed an academy and served as a judge in Caesarea, and also represented the interests of the Jewish people in their dealings with the Romans. He transmitted statements in the name of Reish Lakish, Rabbi Elazar, Rabbi Yosei bar Ḥanina, and others. Rabbi Zeira was a student and colleague of his. His other colleagues included Rabbi Hiyya bar Abba, as well as the heads of the Tiberias academy, Rabbi

Ami and Rabbi Asi. He counted among his many disciples Rabbi Yona, Rabbi Yosei, and Rabbi Yirmeya. The numerous Sages who gathered around him became known as the Sages of Caesarea.

Rabbi Abbahu taught many statements of aggada and was an excellent preacher. He spoke Greek well and taught it to his daughter. His father-in-law was Rabbi Tahlifa of Caesarea, and his sons were the Sages Rabbi Ḥanina, Avimi, and Rabbi Zeira.

**From the time that one puts it down – מְשַׁעַת הַנְּחָתוֹ** – Rashi and *Tosafot* debate the interpretation of the phrase: From the time one puts down the *lulav*. The meaning of this expression is already discussed in the Jerusalem Talmud. It may refer to the seventh day of *Sukkot* after the morning prayers when the *lulav* is usually put down for the last time. Alternatively, as the obligation to take the *lulav* can be fulfilled throughout the day, the time that the *lulav* is put down might refer only to the end of the seventh day of *Sukkot*. According to this interpretation, the time of putting down the *lulav* is at the start of the Eighth Day of Assembly.

**The rationales of Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua – טַעְמֵי** **רַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר וְרַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ**: The reasoning of Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua are explained differently in the Jerusalem Talmud. Rabbi Eliezer contends that it is appropriate to begin mentioning rain on the first day of *Sukkot* because that is when the four species, i.e., the *lulav*, *etrog*, myrtle, and willow, are first taken. Since these species require water for their growth, they serve as suitable advocates for rain. Moreover, when a servant knows that he has obeyed his master faithfully, he can utilize this opportunity to ask for a reward, even if he only wishes to receive it later. It is therefore fitting to begin mentioning rain on the first day of *Sukkot* when God's mitzvot are fulfilled and the four species are first taken. Rabbi Yehoshua counters by pointing out that a servant should not ask for a reward until he has completed his service. Therefore, one should not mention rain until the end of *Sukkot*. Moreover, the proper time to issue a request is just before one wants the request to be granted.

## BACKGROUND

**From the time that one takes the *lulav*...from the time that one puts it down – מְשַׁעַת נְטִילַת לֻלָב...מְשַׁעַת הַנְּחָתוֹ** – The *baraita* indicates that both Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua link the mention of rain with the taking of the *lulav*. The difference is that, in Rabbi Eliezer's opinion, all the actions designed to recall rain should be brought together: The taking of the *lulav*, the water libation, and the mention of rain in the second blessing of the *Amida*. By contrast, Rabbi Yehoshua holds that one must first conclude the symbolic deeds that recall rain and only afterward mention rain explicitly in prayer.

**The resurrection of the dead – תְּחִיַּת הַמֵּתִים**: This concept is alluded to in various places in the Torah and the Prophets and is mentioned explicitly in Daniel (12:2).

According to the Rambam, the resurrection of the dead will take place after the coming of the Messiah. Many authorities maintain that this will mark the beginning of a new era of life on earth (see Ramban's *Sha'ar HaGemul*). The resurrection of the dead is therefore a unique development that will occur only in the future. Nevertheless, we pray for it and anticipate it at all times.

מֵאֵי הִיא – דִּתְנָא: מֵאִמְתֵּי מְזִבְרִין עַל הַגְּשָׁמִים – רַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר אָמַר: מְשַׁעַת נְטִילַת לֻלָב, רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אָמַר: מְשַׁעַת הַנְּחָתוֹ.

אָמַר רַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר: הוֹאִיל וְאַרְבַּעַת מִיָּנִין הִלְלוּ אֵינִן בְּאֵין אֶלָּא לְרִצּוֹת עַל הַמַּיִם, וְכֵשֶׁם שְׂאֵבֵעַ מִיָּנִין הִלְלוּ אֵי אֶפְשָׁר בְּהֵם בְּלֹא מַיִם – כֵּן אֵי אֶפְשָׁר לְעוֹלָם בְּלֹא מַיִם.

אָמַר לוֹ רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ: וְהִלָּא גְשָׁמִים בְּחַג אֵינִן אֶלָּא סִימָן קָלֵלָה! אָמַר לוֹ רַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר: אַף אֲנִי לֹא אֶמְרָתִי לְשִׂאֵל, אֶלָּא לְהוֹבִיר. וְכֵשֶׁם שְׂתַחֲוִית הַמֵּתִים מְזִבְרִין כָּל הַשָּׁנָה בּוֹלָה וְאֵינָה אֶלָּא בְּיָמֵנָה – כֵּן מְזִבְרִין גְּבוּרֹת גְּשָׁמִים כָּל הַשָּׁנָה וְאֵינִן אֶלָּא בְּזִמְנָן. לְפִיכָךְ, אִם בָּא לְהוֹבִיר כָּל הַשָּׁנָה בּוֹלָה – מְזִבְרִין רַבִּי אָמַר: אֲנִי מְשַׁעַת שְׂמַפְסִיק לְשִׂאֵלָה כֵּן מְפָסִיק לְהוֹבִירָה.

רַבִּי יְהוּדָה בֶּן בְּתֵירָה אָמַר: בְּשָׁנֵי בְּחַג הוּא מְזִבְרִין. רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא אָמַר: בְּשָׁנֵי בְּחַג הוּא מְזִבְרִין. רַבִּי יְהוּדָה מְשׁוּם רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אָמַר: הָעוֹבֵר לְפָנֵי הַתֵּיבָה בְּיוֹם טוֹב הָאֶחָדוֹן שֶׁל תַּג, הָאֶחָדוֹן מְזִבְרִין הָרִאשׁוֹן אֵינִן מְזִבְרִין. בְּיוֹם טוֹב רִאשׁוֹן שֶׁל פֶּסַח – הָרִאשׁוֹן מְזִבְרִין, הָאֶחָדוֹן אֵינִן מְזִבְרִין.

שְׁפִיר קָאֵמַר לִיה רַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר לְרַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ! אָמַר לֵךְ רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ: בְּשִׁלְמָא תַחֲוִית הַמֵּתִים מְזִבְרִין – דְּכֹלֵי יוֹמָא זְמַנָּיה הוּא.

The Gemara asks: What is the *baraita* from which Rabbi Abbahu may have derived his statement? The Gemara answers: As it is taught in a *baraita*: From when does one begin to mention the rains in his prayers? Rabbi Eliezer says: From the time that one takes the *lulav*, i.e., the first day of *Sukkot*. Rabbi Yehoshua says: From the time that one puts the *lulav* down,<sup>NB</sup> i.e., at the conclusion of *Sukkot*.

**S** The *baraita* cites a discussion of these opinions. Rabbi Eliezer said: It is since these four species, the *lulav* and the other species taken with it, come only to offer appeasement for water, as they symbolize the rainfall of the coming year. And this symbolism is as follows: Just as these four species cannot exist without water, as they need water to grow, so too, the world cannot exist without water. Therefore, it is proper to mention rain in one's prayers when taking the four species.

Rabbi Yehoshua said to him in response: But rain during the festival of *Sukkot* is nothing other than a sign of a curse. Rabbi Eliezer said to Rabbi Yehoshua: I too did not say that it is proper to ask for rain at this time, but only to mention it. And just as with regard to the resurrection of the dead, one mentions it the entire year and yet it will come only at its proper time, when God wills the resurrection, so too, one mentions the might of the rains all the year, and they fall only in their season. Therefore, if one seeks to mention rain throughout the year, he may mention it.<sup>N</sup> Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi says: I say that when one ceases to request rain, one also ceases to mention it.

Rabbi Yehuda ben Beteira<sup>P</sup> says: On the second day of the festival of *Sukkot* one mentions rain, rather than on the first day. Rabbi Akiva<sup>P</sup> says: On the sixth day one mentions rain. Rabbi Yehuda says in the name of Rabbi Yehoshua: With regard to the one who passes before the ark as prayer leader on the concluding Festival day of the festival of *Sukkot*, the Eighth Day of Assembly, the last prayer leader of the additional prayer mentions rain, whereas the first prayer leader for the morning prayer does not mention rain. Conversely, on the first Festival day of Passover, the first prayer leader mentions rain, while the last prayer leader does not mention rain.

The Gemara asks: Rabbi Eliezer is speaking well to Rabbi Yehoshua. How does Rabbi Yehoshua respond to Rabbi Eliezer's powerful argument that one can mention God's praises at any time of the year? The Gemara answers: Rabbi Yehoshua could have said to you: Granted, with regard to the resurrection of the dead,<sup>B</sup> one mentions this daily, as although it is not fulfilled every day, any day is fit to be its proper time.

## PERSONALITIES

**Rabbi Yehuda ben Beteira – רַבִּי יְהוּדָה בֶּן בְּתֵירָה**: The Beteira family produced many renowned Sages over several generations. Some members of the family served as *Nasi* during the time of Hillel, but they transferred the position to him.

There were almost certainly two Sages named Yehuda ben Beteira, the second of whom was possibly the grandson of the first. Both lived in the city of Netzivin, or Nisibis, in Babylonia, one while the Temple was still standing, and the other at the end of the tannaitic period. The Rabbi Yehuda ben Beteira whose teaching is cited here is probably the later of the two. He was one of the greatest Torah scholars of his age, and organized the study of Torah throughout Babylonia before the establishment of the great academies. He was held in great esteem by the Sages of Eretz Yisrael.

**Rabbi Akiva – רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא**: The greatest of the *tanna'im*, Rabbi Akiva ben Yosef was a third generation tanna who taught

many of the fourth generation. He began his Torah education when already an adult and studied under Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua for many years. Many stories are told in rabbinic literature of his devotion to Torah study, his wife's loyalty to him, and the financial difficulties they had to overcome.

Rabbi Akiva undertook the first systematic arrangement and division of the Oral Law. This work, which was continued by his disciple Rabbi Meir, formed the basis of the final form of the Mishna, as edited by Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi. Rabbi Akiva also founded a new school of Torah interpretation, according to which almost all the regulations of the Oral Law have their basis in the text of the Torah itself. Rabbi Akiva was active in the period between the destruction of the Second Temple and the bar Kokheva revolt, and he played an active role in the preparations for this rebellion. He was brutally martyred by the Romans.

**Allusion** – רמז: The proof offered by Rabbi Yehuda ben Beteira is not regarded as absolute since this method of combining superfluous letters is not included in the hermeneutic principles for the interpretation of the Torah. Nevertheless, this proof provides an allusion to the notion of the water libation in the Torah, which is not mentioned explicitly.

This interpretation of disparate letters is similar to the use of secret codes, which are often based on slight textual deviations. This method was used in many places and generations, especially as a means of highlighting one's name in a well-known text.

The Sages of the Mishna and the Talmud found similar allusions for various *halakhot* elsewhere, and they coined the expression: Although there is no explicit proof of this matter, there is an allusion to the matter. In other words, although the proof from the text is insufficient to establish the *halakha*, it is a hint that provides support for the established *halakha*.

אלא גשמים כל דאתיין ומניהו היא?  
והתנן: יצא ניסן וירדו גשמים – סימן  
קללה הם, שנאמר "הלוא קציר חטים  
היום" וגו'.

רבי יהודה בן בתירה אומר: בשני בחג  
הוא מזכיר. מאי טעמא דרבי יהודה בן  
בתירה? דתנא, רבי יהודה בן בתירה  
אומר:

נאמר בשני "ונסכיהם" ונאמר בשש  
"ונסכיה" ונאמר בשביעי "במשפטים" –

הרי מ"ם יו"ד מ"ם הרי כאן מים. מכאן  
רמז לניסוך המים מן התורה.

ומאי שנא בשני דנקט – דכי רמזי להו  
בקרא בשני הוא דרמזי, הלכך בשני  
מדכרינן.

רבי עקיבא אומר: בשש בחג הוא  
מזכיר, שנאמר בשש "ונסכיה" – בשני  
ניסוכין הכתוב מדבר, אחד ניסוך המים  
ואחד ניסוך היין.

אימא תרווייהו דחמרא! סבר לה כרבי  
יהודה בן בתירה, דאמר: רמזי מיא.

However, in the case of rain, are all times when it falls its proper time? But didn't we learn in a mishna (12b): If the month of Nisan has ended and rains subsequently fall, they are a sign of a curse, as it is stated: "Is not the wheat harvest today? I will call to the Lord that He may send thunder and rain, and you will know and see that your wickedness is great, which you have done in the sight of the Lord, in asking you a king" (1 Samuel 12:17).

§ The *baraita* states that Rabbi Yehuda ben Beteira says: On the second day of the festival of *Sukkot*, one begins to mention rain. The Gemara asks: What is the reason for this ruling of Rabbi Yehuda ben Beteira? The Gemara answers: As it is taught, in a *baraita* that deals with the source for the water libation on *Sukkot*, that Rabbi Yehuda ben Beteira says: The Torah alludes to the water libation in its description of the libations of the additional offerings of *Sukkot*. The Torah uses a slightly different term for the libations of certain days. On most days, it states that the sin-offering must be brought with "its libation [*veniskah*]" (e.g., Numbers 29:16), in the singular form.

By contrast, it is stated on the second day that one must offer "their libations [*veniskeihem*]" (Numbers 29:19). The plural form indicates the presence of multiple offerings. And furthermore, it is stated concerning the sin-offering libations on the sixth day: "And its libations [*unsakheha*]" (Numbers 29:31), which is again a plural form that is referring to many libations. And finally, it is stated, with regard to the libations of the additional offering on the seventh day, that they must apportion the respective animals, i.e., oxen, rams, and sheep: "According to their laws [*kemishpatam*]" (Numbers 29:33), using another plural form which differs from the phrase used on the other Festival days: "According to the law [*kamishpat*]" (e.g., Numbers 29:19), in the singular.

These variations yield the three superfluous letters *mem*, *yod*, and *mem*, from *veniskeiheM*, *unsakhEha*, and *kemishpataM*, which together spell the Hebrew word for water [*MaYiM*]. The letter *yod* is represented in *unsakhEha* with the letter E and in *MaYiM* with the letter Y. From here one learns an allusion<sup>8</sup> to the mitzva of the water libation in the Torah.

The Gemara asks: And what is different about the second day that Rabbi Yehuda ben Beteira took it as the day on which one begins to mention rain? The Gemara answers: The reason is that when the verse first alludes to the water libation, it is on the second day of *Sukkot* that it alludes to it (Numbers 29:19). Therefore, on the second day one begins to mention rain.

The *baraita* stated that Rabbi Akiva says: On the sixth day one begins to mention rain. The Gemara explains that this ruling is based on the allusion to the water libation in the offering of this day. As it is stated on the sixth day: "And its libations [*unsakheha*]"<sup>9</sup> (Numbers 29:31). The allusion is written in the plural, which indicates that the verse is speaking of two libations: One is the water libation and the other one is the standard wine libation.

The Gemara raises an objection: Even if it is accepted that the verse is referring to two libations, one can say that both libations are of wine. The Gemara answers: Rabbi Akiva holds in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda ben Beteira, who said that the superfluous letters of these verses allude to water [*mayim*]. This proves that the additional libation of the sixth day must be a water libation.

NOTES

As it is stated on the sixth day, and its libations [*unsakheha*] – שנאמר בשש "ונסכיה" – The early commentaries ask: Why does Rabbi Akiva say that the allusion to the water libation can be found only in the verse that deals with the sixth day of *Sukkot*: "And its libations [*unsakheha*]" (Numbers 29:31), and not in the verse dealing with the second day of

the Festival, which states: "And their libations [*veniskeihem*]" (Numbers 29:19)? Given the plural form in both verses, why does he consider the verse that refers to the sixth day more binding than the verse that speaks of the second day? The *Shita Mekubbetzet* suggests that since the term *veniskeihem* is referring to multiple offerings, that plural form can be understood

as referring to all the various libations that accompany the oxen, rams, and lambs mentioned in the previous verse. However, the term *unsakheha* indicates the presence of more than one libation for a single offering; therefore, Rabbi Akiva interprets it as an allusion to an additional libation that accompanies the morning daily offering.