

**HALAKHA**

Once one has started, he no longer stops – בִּינּוֹן שֶׁהִתְחִיל – שׁוֹב אֵינוֹ פּוֹסֵק: Even in the Diaspora, where two days of each Festival are observed, one begins to insert the expression: He makes the wind blow and the rain fall, in the additional prayers of the Eighth Day of Assembly, from which point one continues to mention rain continuously until the end of the rainy season (*Shulhan Arukh, Orach Hayyim* 114:1).

**PERSONALITIES**

Rav Hananel – רַב הַנַּנְאֵל: A Babylonian *amora* of the second generation, Rav Hananel was a disciple of Rav, and most of his teachings are transmitted in the name of his great teacher. He was, apparently, one of Rav's preeminent students; and Rav's successor, Rav Huna, treated Rav Hananel with great respect. By profession, he was a scribe who wrote Torah scrolls. It is said of him that he could copy the entire Torah accurately by heart.

**BACKGROUND**

And the last rain is in Nisan – וּמִלְקוֹשׁ בְּנִסָּן: According to weather observations, only a small amount of rain, one percent of the annual precipitation, falls in Eretz Yisrael in May. Weather observations in the coastal plain, over a period of many years, reveal that the last rain usually falls no later than April 28, around the end of the month of Nisan.

Locust – אַרְבֵּה: The term locust refers to a group of insects that are found worldwide. The common name generally refers to the group of short-horned grasshoppers that often increase greatly in numbers and migrate long distances in destructive swarms. The sporadic appearance and disappearance of locust has bewildered people throughout history and, even today, there are only theories available to explain this phenomenon. Locusts are edible insects and are considered a delicacy in some countries. There have been references to their consumption as food throughout history and some species are permitted for consumption according to Torah law.



Desert locust, a species that is kosher according to some Yemenite traditions

רַבָּא אָמַר: בִּינּוֹן שֶׁהִתְחִיל – שׁוֹב אֵינוֹ פּוֹסֵק וְכֵן אָמַר רַב שֶׁשֶׁת: בִּינּוֹן שֶׁהִתְחִיל שׁוֹב אֵינוֹ פּוֹסֵק.

וְאִף רַב הֲדַר בֵּיהּ דְּרַבָּא רַב חַנְנְאֵל אָמַר רַב: מוֹנֵה עֶשְׂרִים וְאַחַד יוֹם בְּדַרְךְ שְׁמוֹנֵה עֶשְׂרֵה יָמִים מֵרֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה עַד יוֹם הַכַּפּוּרִים, וּמֵתְחִיל וְכִינּוֹן שֶׁהִתְחִיל שׁוֹב אֵינוֹ פּוֹסֵק, וְהִלְכְּתָא בִּינּוֹן שֶׁהִתְחִיל שׁוֹב אֵינוֹ פּוֹסֵק.

מֵתַנּוּ עַד מַתִּי שׁוֹאֲלִין אֶת הַגְּשָׁמִים? רַבִּי יְהוּדָה אָמַר: עַד שֶׁיַּעֲבֹר הַפֶּסַח, רַבִּי מֵאִיר אָמַר: עַד שֶׁיֵּצֵא נִסָּן, שְׁנַאֲמַר "וַיִּוָּרֵד לָכֶם גֶּשֶׁם מוֹרָה וּמִלְקוֹשׁ בְּרֵאשׁוֹן".

גַּם אָמַר לֵיהּ רַב נַחֲמָן לְרַבִּי יִצְחָק: יוֹרֵה בְּנִסָּן? יוֹרֵה בְּמַרְחֶשְׁוֹן הוּא! דַּתְנָן: יוֹרֵה בְּמַרְחֶשְׁוֹן וּמִלְקוֹשׁ בְּנִסָּן! אָמַר לֵיהּ: הֲכִי אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן: בְּיָמֵי יוֹאֵל בֶּן פְּתוּאֵל נִתְקַיְּיַם מִקְרָא זֶה, דְּכָתוּב בֵּיהּ "וַיֵּתֶר הַגֹּזֵם אֶכֶל הָאֲרֵבָה" וְגו'. אוֹתָהּ שָׁנָה יֵצֵא אֲדָר וְלֹא יֵרְדוּ גְשָׁמִים, יֵרְדָה לָהֶם רַבִּיעָה רֵאשׁוֹנָה בְּאַחַד בְּנִסָּן.

אָמַר לָהֶם נְבִיא לְיִשְׂרָאֵל: צֵאוּ וּזְרְעוּ. אָמְרוּ לוֹ: מִי שֵׁשׁ לוֹ קֶבֶט חֲטִים אוֹ קֶבֶטִים שְׁעוּרִין יֵאָכְלֵנוּ וְיַחֲיֶיהָ, אוֹ יִזְרְעֵנוּ וְיִמוּתוּ? אָמַר לָהֶם: אִף עַל פִּי בֶן, צֵאוּ וּזְרְעוּ. נַעֲשֶׂה לָהֶם נֶס וְנִתְגַּלְּהַ לָהֶם מֵהַ שְׂבֻכְתֵּילֵין וּמֵהַ שְׂבֻחֹרֵין נִמְלִים.

Rava said an alternative suggestion: Once one has started to mention rain, he no longer stops,<sup>1</sup> i.e., he continues the mention of rain consistently until the summer. And, so too, Rav Sheshet said: Once one has started to mention rain, he no longer stops. In other words, once one has begun to mention rain in his prayers in the additional prayer on the Eighth Day of Assembly, he continues to do so uninterrupted, even in the Diaspora.

The Gemara adds: And even Rav retracted his previously stated opinion, as Rav Hananel<sup>2</sup> said that Rav said: One counts twenty-one days from Rosh HaShana, just as one counts ten days<sup>3</sup> from Rosh HaShana until Yom Kippur. And after the twenty-one days, one starts to mention rain, and once one has started, he no longer stops. The Gemara concludes: And the halakha is in accordance with the opinion that once one has started to mention rain, he no longer stops.

**MISHNA** Until when does one request rain?<sup>4</sup> Rabbi Yehuda says: We request rain until Passover has passed. Rabbi Meir says: Until the month of Nisan has ended, as it is stated: "And He causes to come down for you the rain," the first rain and the last rain, in the first month" (Joel 2:23). Since the verse states that it rains in Nisan, the first month, this indicates that the entire month is considered part of the rainy season.

**GEMARA** Rav Nahman said to Rabbi Yitzhak: Is the first rain in Nisan? The first rain is in Marḥeshvan, as we learned in a *baraita*: The first rain is in Marḥeshvan and the last rain is in Nisan.<sup>5</sup> Rabbi Yitzhak said to Rav Nahman that Rabbi Yohanan said as follows: This verse was fulfilled in the days of the prophet Joel, son of Pethuel, in a year concerning which it is written: "That which the palmer-worm has left, the locust<sup>6</sup> has eaten and that which the locust has left, the canker-worm has eaten; and that which the canker-worm has left, the caterpillar has eaten" (Joel 1:4), when no crops remained. In that year, the month of Adar ended and still no rain had fallen. The rain of the first rainy season fell for them on the first of Nisan.

After the first rain fell, the prophet said to the Jews: Go out and sow. They said to him: One who has one kav of wheat or two kav of barley left, should he eat them and live off them for a while or sow them and die? Given the improbability of the crops' growth under these circumstances, it appears wasteful to plant them rather than consume that which remains. The prophet said to them: Nevertheless, go out and sow. A miracle occurred for them and they discovered wheat and barley seeds that were hidden in the walls and that were concealed in ant holes.

**NOTES**

<sup>1</sup>Just as one counts ten days – כְּדַרְךְ שְׁמוֹנֵה עֶשְׂרֵה יָמִים: The early commentaries offer various explanations of this comparison. The *Shita Mekubbetzet* suggests that just as one counts the ten days from Rosh HaShana to Yom Kippur starting from the first day of Rosh HaShana without taking into account the possibility that Elul might consist of thirty days, in which case one should count only from the second day, so too, with regard to the request for rain, there is no need to entertain the concern that the number of days counted will change based on the length of the month (see also *Gevurat Ari*).

<sup>2</sup>Until when does one request rain – עַד מַתִּי שׁוֹאֲלִין אֶת הַגְּשָׁמִים: This mishna is not related to the central topic of this tractate,

the fasts for drought. However, as the previous mishna had discussed the date for the beginning of the request for rain, the *tanna* also mentions the date when this request ends (Meiri).

<sup>3</sup>As it is stated, And He causes to come down for you the rain – שְׁנַאֲמַר "וַיִּוָּרֵד לָכֶם גֶּשֶׁם": The commentaries discuss the nature of this proof. One explanation is that the verse is not cited by Rabbi Meir but by the unattributed author of the mishna, and it is interpreted by each *tanna* in accordance with his respective line of reasoning. Although the verse speaks of the final rain falling in the first month of Nisan, it does not clearly state whether this occurs in the middle or at the end of the month (*Meleket Shlomo*).

Young shoots [*haziz*] – תְּחִיזִי – According to the *Arukh* and the *ge'onim*, the word is *hazin*, which means tender shoots, e.g., bright green stalks of grain.

## BACKGROUND

The stalk was one span, the ear two spans – קנה נֶרֶת – Normally the stalk and the ear of grain grow to the same length, which complicates the harvesting process. Consequently, in modern times, grain is cultivated with a shorter stalk, by means of various mechanisms. These strains of grain have ears that are longer than those of the taller strains.

## NOTES

In those seven years what did they eat – בְּהֵנָּה שֶׁבַע – Although we find other instances of famine in the Bible, including the famous seven year famine in the time of Joseph, Rav Naḥman singled out the famine that afflicted the people in the days of Jehoram, king of Israel, for his question with regard to what people ate during the period of scarcity. One explanation is that the Divine decree concerning this famine was carried out in its full severity and for its entire intended duration, in accordance with the verse: "For the Lord has called upon a famine and it shall also come upon the land seven years" (II Kings 8:1; Maharsha).

I shall not enter Jerusalem above, etc. – לֹא אָבֹא – One interpretation of the concept of: Jerusalem above, is that Jerusalem and the Temple signify the refined matters of the intellect, as corresponding to the earthly Eretz Yisrael there are spiritual levels located in the lofty worlds (Rashba). With regard to the interpretation of the verse itself, some say that the verse should be read as an expression of wonder: Since your midst shall be sacred, shall I not enter the city? (Maharsha; see *Sefat Emet*). They further explain that the verse is meant as a source of comfort for the Jewish people in exile; that it is almost as if the Almighty Himself is also in exile, and He will not enter Jerusalem up high until the Jews are redeemed on earth (*Iyyun Ya'akov*).

וַיֵּצְאוּ וַיִּזְרְעוּ שְׁנֵי וּשְׁלִישִׁי וּרְבִיעִי, וַיִּרְדּוּ לָהֶם רְבִיעֵה שְׁנֵי בַחֲמִשָּׁה בְּנִיסָן, הִקְרִיבוּ עֹמֶר בְּשִׁשָּׁה עָשָׂר בְּנִיסָן, נִמְצְאוּ תַבּוּאָה הַגְּדִילָה בְּשִׁשָּׁה חֳדָשִׁים גְּדִילָה בְּאַחַד עָשָׂר יוֹם, נִמְצָא עֹמֶר הַקָּרֵב מִתַּבּוּאָה שֶׁל שִׁשָּׁה חֳדָשִׁים קָרֵב מִתַּבּוּאָה שֶׁל אֶחָד עָשָׂר יוֹם.

They went out and sowed on the second, third, and fourth days of Nisan, and the rain of the second rainy season fell for them on the fifth of Nisan. The crops grew so quickly that they were able to sacrifice the *omer* offering in its proper time, on the sixteenth of Nisan. Consequently, grain that normally grows in six months grew in eleven days, and consequently, the *omer* that is generally sacrificed from grain that grows in six months was sacrificed that year from grain that grew in eleven days.

וַיֵּל אֹתוֹ הַדּוֹר הוּא אוֹמֵר: "הַדּוֹעִים בְּדַמְעָה בְּרִנָּה יִקְצְרוּ. הַלּוֹךְ יֵלֵךְ וּבְכָה נִשָּׂא מִשָּׁךְ הַזֶּרַע" וְגו'. מֵאֵי "הַלּוֹךְ יֵלֵךְ וּבְכָה נִשָּׂא מִשָּׁךְ" וְגו'? אָמַר רַבִּי יְהוּדָה: שׁוֹר כָּשָׂהוּא חוֹרֵשׁ – הַלּוֹךְ וּבּוֹכָה, וּבַחֲזוֹרָתוֹ אוֹכֵל חֲזוֹן מִן הַתֶּלֶם. וְזֶהוּ "בָּא יֵבֵא בְּרִנָּה".

And with regard to that generation the verse says: "They who sow in tears shall reap with songs of joy. Though he goes on his way weeping, who bears the measure of seed, he shall come home with joy, bearing his sheaves" (Psalms 126:6). The Gemara asks: What is the meaning of the expression: "Though he goes on his way weeping, who bears the measure of seed"? Rabbi Yehuda said: An ox, when it plowed at that time, it went on its way weeping and lamenting its labor; and yet upon its return, through the same furrow, it was able to eat the young shoots [*haziz*]<sup>1</sup> of crops that had already sprouted from the furrow. And this is the meaning of the phrase: "He shall come home with songs of joy."

מֵאֵי "נִשָּׂא אֶלְמִתּוֹ" אָמַר רַב חֲסֵדָא וְאָמַרִי לָהּ בְּמִתְנַתָּא תַּנְא: קִנְה – זֶרַת, שִׁיבּוֹלֶת – זֶרֶתִים.

The Gemara further asks: What is the meaning of the expression: "Bearing his sheaves"? Rav Ḥisda said, and some say this was taught in a *baraita*: The stalk of that crop was one span, i.e., the distance between the thumb and the little finger, while the ear itself was two spans,<sup>2</sup> i.e., the ears were twice as long as the stalk, whereas usually the stalk is three or four times longer than the ear.

אָמַר לִיָּה רַב נַחֲמָן לְרַבִּי יִצְחָק: מֵאֵי דְכִתְבִּיב "בִּי קָרָא ה' לְרַעַב וְגַם בָּא אֶל הָאָרֶץ שֶׁבַע שָׁנִים", בְּהֵנָּה שֶׁבַע שָׁנִים מֵאֵי אָכְלוּ?

Incidental to the interpretation of these verses, the Gemara cites a series of verses, starting with the topic of hunger, that also involve questions that Rav Naḥman posed to Rabbi Yitzḥak. Rav Naḥman said to Rabbi Yitzḥak: What is the meaning of that which is written: "For the Lord has called upon a famine and it shall also come upon the land seven years" (II Kings 8:1)? Specifically, in those seven years, what did they eat?<sup>3</sup>

אָמַר לִיָּה: הֵכִי אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן: שְׁנֵי רִאשׁוֹנָה – אָכְלוּ מֵה שֶׁבַּבְּתִים, שְׁנֵי – אָכְלוּ מֵה שֶׁבַּשְׂדוֹת, שְׁלִישִׁית – בֶּשֶׂר בְּהֵמָה טְהוֹרָה, רְבִיעִית – בֶּשֶׂר בְּהֵמָה טְמֵאָה, חֲמִישִׁית – בֶּשֶׂר שְׂקָצִים וְרִמְשִׁים, שְׁשִׁית – בֶּשֶׂר בְּנִיָּהִם וּבְנֹתֵיהֶם, שְׁבִיעִית – בֶּשֶׂר זְרוֹעוֹתֵיהֶם, לְקִיִּים מֵה שְׁנֵאֵמַר "אִישׁ בֶּשֶׂר זָרְעוֹ יֵאָכְלוּ".

Rabbi Yitzḥak said to Rabbi Naḥman that Rabbi Yoḥanan said as follows: In the first year they ate that which was in their houses; in the second year they ate that which was in their fields; in the third year they ate the meat of their remaining kosher animals; in the fourth year they ate the meat of their remaining non-kosher animals; in the fifth year they ate the meat of repugnant creatures and creeping animals, i.e., any insects they found; in the sixth year they ate the flesh of their sons and their daughters; and in the seventh year they ate the flesh of their own arms, to fulfill that which is stated: "Each man shall eat the flesh of his own arm" (Isaiah 9:19).

וְאָמַר לִיָּה רַב נַחֲמָן לְרַבִּי יִצְחָק: מֵאֵי דְכִתְבִּיב "בְּקִרְבְּךָ קְדוֹשׁ וְלֹא אָבֹא בְּעִיר", מִשׁוֹם דְּבְקִרְבְּךָ קְדוֹשׁ לֹא אָבֹא בְּעִיר? אָמַר לִיָּה, הֵכִי אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן: אָמַר הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לֹא אָבֹא בִירוּשָׁלַיִם שֶׁל מַעְלָה עַד שְׁאָבֹא לִירוּשָׁלַיִם שֶׁל מַטָּה.

And Rav Naḥman said to Rabbi Yitzḥak: What is the meaning of that which is written: "It is sacred in your midst, and I will not enter the city" (Hosea 11:9)? This verse is puzzling: Because it is sacred in your midst, will God not enter the city? Rabbi Yitzḥak said to Rav Naḥman that Rabbi Yoḥanan said the verse should be understood as follows: The Holy One, Blessed be He, said: I shall not enter Jerusalem above,<sup>4</sup> in heaven, until I enter Jerusalem on earth down below at the time of the redemption, when it will be sacred in your midst.

וְמֵי אֵיכָּא יְרוּשָׁלַיִם לְמַעְלָה? אֵין, דְּכִתְבִּיב "יְרוּשָׁלַיִם הַבְּנוּיָה בְּעִיר שְׁחִבְרָה לָהּ יַחַד".

The Gemara asks: And is there such a place as Jerusalem above? The Gemara answers: Yes, as it is written: "Jerusalem built up, a city unified together" (Psalms 122:3). The term unified indicates that there are two cities of Jerusalem, a heavenly one and an earthly one, which are bound together.

NOTES

Were the twenty-four violations abandoned – עשרין וארבע שביקא להו: There are variant textual readings of the number specified here. Some explain that the version that states twenty-two rather than twenty-four is based on a mere semantic difference, as both concur that there are twenty-four violations altogether. Since punishment is meted out for only two of these, the question is raised with regard to the remaining twenty-two. Others suggest that the twenty-two violations are an allusion to the entire Torah, written with the twenty-two letters of the alphabet (Maharsha). Some early commentaries have twenty-six as the number of violations, also based on the list of offenses cited in Ezekiel (Rabbeinu Gershom; *Shita Mekubbetzet*).

As for the significance of these twenty-four offenses, most commentaries explain that they are referring to the twenty-four offenses listed in the book of Ezekiel (chapter 22) as the sins of Jerusalem, as indicated in the midrash. Some *ge'onim* suggest that the twenty-four transgressions can also be found in the continuation of the passage in Jeremiah cited here (Jeremiah 2:13). One commentary cites a tradition that this refers to the twenty-four offenses mentioned in the eleventh chapter of *Sanhedrin* in the Jerusalem Talmud as transgressions for which repentance is particularly difficult (Rabbeinu Hananel; see also Rabbam *Sefer HaMadda, Hilkhot Teshuva*, chapter 4). Rav Hai Gaon suggests that there is no particular significance to the number twenty-four in this context; rather, it merely signifies a large amount.

Perek I

Daf 5 Amud b

NOTES

One that is equivalent to two – אחת שהיא שקולה בשתים: Some commentaries explain that the phrase: Equivalent to two, is referring to the fire worshippers and the water worshippers mentioned in this passage (Rashi; Rabbeinu Gershom). Others maintain that this is referring to the two aspects of idolatry discussed here, the abandonment of God and the adherence to the vanities of the idolatrous gods (Rabbeinu Hananel). Yet others state that as the sin of idolatry is one of the three most severe transgressions, along with forbidden sexual relations and murder, it is considered the equivalent of the other two transgressions (Rabbi Elyakim). Alternatively, idolatry is equivalent to two sins because it constitutes a violation of both the commands: "I am the Lord your God" (Exodus 20:2), and, in the next verse: "You shall have no other gods before Me" (*Ahavat Eitan*).

ואמר ליה רב נחמן לרבי יצחק: מאי דכתיב "ובאחת יבערו ויכסלו מוסר הבלים עץ הוא?" אמר ליה: הכי אמר רבי יוחנן: אחת היא שמבערת רשעים בגיהנם, מאי היא – עבודה זרה. כתיב הכא "מוסר הבלים עץ הוא" וכתיב התם "הבל המה מעשה תעתעים".

ואמר ליה רב נחמן לרבי יצחק: מאי דכתיב "כי שתים רעות עשה עמי" תרתין הוא דהווי? עשרין וארבע שביקא להו? אמר ליה, הכי אמר רבי יוחנן: אחת שיהיא

And Rav Nahman said to Rabbi Yitzhak: What is the meaning of that which is written: "And with one they are brutish and foolish, the teaching of their vanity is a stock" (Jeremiah 10:8)? Rabbi Yitzhak said to Rabbi Nahman that Rabbi Yohanan said as follows: There is one transgression that causes the wicked to burn in Gehenna. What is this transgression? Idol worship. This can be proven by a verbal analogy. It is written here: "The teaching of their vanity [*hevel*] is a stock," and it is written there, with regard to idols: "They are vanity [*hevel*], a work of delusion" (Jeremiah 10:15).

And Rav Nahman said to Rabbi Yitzhak: What is the meaning of that which is written: "For my people have committed two evils" (Jeremiah 2:13)? Were there only two evils they performed? Were, then, the twenty-four violations listed in the book of Ezekiel abandoned,<sup>N</sup> i.e., pardoned? Rabbi Yitzhak said to Rav Nahman that Rabbi Yohanan said as follows: They have violated one transgression that is

שקולה בשתים ומאי ניהו – עבודה זרה, דכתיב "כי שתים רעות עשה עמי אתי עובו מקור מים חיים לחצב להם בארות בארות נשברים". וכתיב בהו "כי עברו איי כתיים וראו וקדר שולחו והתבוננו מאד וגו' ההימיר גוי אלהים והמה לא אלהים ועמי המיר כבודו בלא יועיל".

תנא: בותיים עובדים לאש, וקדריים עובדין למים, ואף על פי שיודעים שהמים מכפיין את האש – לא המירו אלהיהם, ועמי המיר כבודו בלא יועיל".

ואמר ליה רב נחמן לרבי יצחק: מאי דכתיב "ויהי כאשר זקן שמואל" ומי סיב שמואל כולי האי? והא בר חמישים ושתים הוה, דאמר מר: מת בחמישים ושתים שנה – זהו מיתתו של שמואל הרמתי!

equivalent to two.<sup>N</sup> And what is this sin? Idol worship, as it is written: "For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, to hew for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns" (Jeremiah 2:13), and it is written about the Jewish people: "For pass over the isles of the Kittim and see; and send to Kedar and observe carefully, and see if there has been such a thing. Has a nation exchanged its gods, although they are no gods? But My people has exchanged its glory for that which does not profit" (Jeremiah 2:10–11).

It is taught in a *baraita* with regard to this verse: Kittites, i.e., the people of the isles of Kittim, worship fire and the people of Kedar worship water, and even though they know that water extinguishes fire, nevertheless they have not exchanged their god: "But My people has exchanged its glory for that which does not profit."

And Rav Nahman said to Rabbi Yitzhak:<sup>P</sup> What is the meaning of that which is written: "And it came to pass when Samuel was old" (1 Samuel 8:1)? And did Samuel really grow so old? But he was only fifty-two years old when he died, as the Master said in a *baraita* that deals with the Divine punishment of *karet*: One who dies at the age of fifty-two years is not considered to have suffered the premature death of *karet*, as this is the age of the death of Samuel of Rama. This shows that Samuel died at the relatively young age of fifty-two.

PERSONALITIES

Rabbi Yitzhak – רבי יצחק: Two *amora'im* of this name lived in the same period in Eretz Yisrael, both of whom were principal students of Rabbi Yohanan. However, one was a renowned halakhic authority, while the other concentrated on *aggada*. Clearly, the Rabbi Yitzhak mentioned here was the one who dealt in matters of *aggada*. Elsewhere he is called Rabbi Yitzhak, son of Pinehas. Rabbi Yitzhak apparently spent

a considerable time in Babylonia, where he taught the Torah he had learned in Eretz Yisrael, particularly the opinions of his teacher, Rabbi Yohanan. He was close to Rav Nahman, who asked him various questions of an aggadic nature. Many aggadic sayings are attributed to him throughout the Babylonian Talmud, and several Babylonia *amora'im* cite statements in his name.

אמר ליה: הכי אמר רבי יוחנן: וקנה קפצה עליו, דכתיב "נחמתי בי המלכותי את שאול". אמר לפניו: רבונו של עולם, שקלתני כמשה ואהרן, דכתיב "משה ואהרן בכהו ושמואל בקראי שמו", מה משה ואהרן – לא בטלו מעשה ידיהם בחייהם, אף אני לא יתבטל מעשה ידי בחיי!

אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא: היכי אעביד? לימות שאול – לא קא שביק שמואל, לימות שמואל אדוטר – מרנני אבתריה, לא לימות שאול ולא לימות שמואל – כבר הגיעה מלכות דוד, ואין מלכות נוגעת בחברתה אפילו כמלא נימא.

אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא: אקפיץ עליו וקנה, היינו דכתיב "ושאול יושב בגבעה תחת האשל ברמה" וכי מה ענין גבעה אצל רמה? אלא לומר לך: מי גרם לשאול שישב בגבעה שתי שנים ומחצה – תפלתו של שמואל הרמתי.

ומי מידחי גברא מקמי גברא? אין, דאמר רבי שמואל בר נחמני אמר רבי יוחנן: מאי דכתיב "על כן חצבתני בנביאים הרגתים באמרי פי", במעשיהם לא נאמר אלא ב"אמרי פי", אלמא: מידחי גברא מקמי גברא.

רב נחמן ורבי יצחק הוו יתבי בסעודתא, אמר ליה רב נחמן לרבי יצחק: לימא מר מילתא! אמר ליה, הכי אמר רבי יוחנן: אין מסיחין בסעודה, שמא יקדים קנה לו שטט ויבא לידי סכנה.

Rabbi Yitzhak said to Rav Nahman that Rabbi Yoḥanan said as follows: **Old age sprang upon Samuel**,<sup>N</sup> which caused him to appear older than his actual age, as it is written: **"I regret that I made Saul king"** (1 Samuel 15:11). Samuel said before God: **Master of the Universe, You have considered me the equivalent of Moses and Aaron, as it is written: "Moses and Aaron among His priests, and Samuel among those who call upon His Name"** (Psalms 99:6). Just as with regard to Moses and Aaron, their handiwork was not annulled in their lifetimes, so too, let my handiwork not be annulled in my lifetime. I anointed Saul; please do not annul his reign.

The Holy One, Blessed be He, said: What shall I do? Shall Saul die now? Samuel will not allow it, as he has petitioned that Saul should not die. Shall Samuel die young, with Saul passing away immediately afterward? The people will murmur about him,<sup>N</sup> and wonder what transgression Samuel committed that caused his early demise. Shall neither Saul nor Samuel die? The time of David's reign has already arrived, and one kingdom does not overlap with another and subtract from the time allotted to it even by a hairbreadth [nima].<sup>L</sup>

Therefore, the Holy One, Blessed be He, said: I will spring old age upon him and everyone will think that Shmuel is elderly. This is the meaning of that which is written: **"And Saul dwelled in Gibeah under the tamarisk tree in Rama"** (1 Samuel 22:6). What does Gibeah have to do with Rama; these are two separate places. Rather, the verse comes to tell you: Who caused Saul to dwell in Gibeah for two and a half years? The prayer of Samuel of Rama.

The Gemara asks: **And is one man set aside before another man?** In other words, is Samuel's life set aside simply because the time for David's reign has arrived? The Gemara answers: **Yes, as Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani said that Rabbi Yoḥanan said: What is the meaning of that which is written: "Therefore I have hewn by the prophets, I have slain them by the words of My mouth" (Hosea 6:5)? It is not stated: By their deeds, but rather: "By the words of My mouth," i.e., God sometimes ends the life of an individual simply by virtue of His decree. Apparently, one man is indeed set aside before another man.**

In continuation of Rav Nahman's questions of Rabbi Yitzhak, the Gemara relates: **Rav Nahman and Rabbi Yitzhak were sitting and eating together at a meal. Rav Nahman said to Rabbi Yitzhak: Let the Master say a matter, i.e., share a Torah idea with me. Rabbi Yitzhak said to Rav Nahman that Rabbi Yoḥanan said: One may not speak during a meal,<sup>H</sup> lest the esophagus will precede the trachea.<sup>B</sup> Food is meant to enter the trachea, and when one speaks his esophagus opens and the food might enter there. And therefore, one should not speak during a meal, as he might come into the danger of choking.**

NOTES

Old age sprang upon him – וקנה קפצה עליו: Some commentaries are puzzled by this interpretation, as the verse that mentions Samuel's old age precedes Saul's appointment as king (see Maharsha). Apparently, the idea is that God anticipated this situation in advance and caused old age to spring upon Samuel even before Saul was appointed king (Rabbi Yoshiya Pinto; Ramat Shmuel).

They will murmur about him – מרנני אבתריה: Some commentaries explain that people will murmur about Divine justice when they observe the righteous Samuel dying at a young age (Shita Mekubbetzet).

LANGUAGE

Hairbreadth [nima] – נימא: From the Greek νῆμα, nēma, meaning thread.

HALAKHA

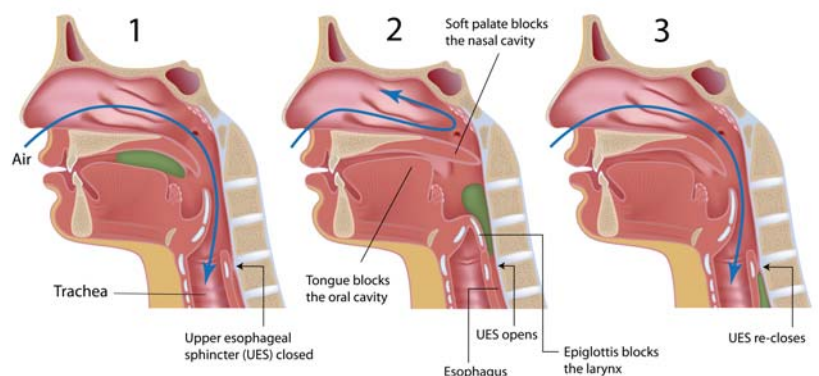
One may not speak during a meal – אין מסיחין בסעודה: It is prohibited to converse during a meal, even if the topic is matters of Torah (Magen Avraham). Some say that one may converse between courses (Arukh HaShulhan; Mishna Berura), whereas others prohibit even this (Perisha). In modern times, people are not stringent in this regard, as the stringency was apparently related to the practice of eating while reclining (Eliyahu Rabba; Sha'arei Teshuva; Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim 170:1).

BACKGROUND

Lest the esophagus precede the trachea and he come into danger – שמא יקדים קנה לו שטט ויבא לידי סכנה: Swallowing food consists of three stages. During the first stage food is mixed with saliva for lubrication and is placed on the back of the tongue. Then the mouth closes and the soft palate rises so that the passage-way between the nasal and oral cavities is closed off. The tongue then moves backward pushing food into the oral pharynx, a chamber behind the mouth that functions to transport food and air. Once food enters the pharynx, the second stage of swallowing begins. Respiration is temporarily inhibited, as the larynx, or voice box, rises to close the epiglottis, the

opening to the air passage, the trachea. At the top of the esophagus there is a muscular constrictor, the upper esophageal sphincter, or UES, which opens when food approaches. Once food is in the esophagus, the final phase of swallowing begins. The larynx lowers, the epiglottis opens, and breathing resumes. Speaking during this process may pose a choking hazard since the larynx may fail to close the epiglottis which prevents food from entering the trachea during the swallowing process.

In the image, the substance being swallowed is represented by the color green.



Stages of swallowing

בְּתַר דְּסַעוּד אָמַר לֵיהּ: הֲכִי אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן: יַעֲקֹב אָבִינוּ לֹא מָת. אָמַר לֵיהּ: וְכִי בְּכַדִּי סִפְדוּ סִפְדָּנִיא וְחֲנֻטוּ חֲנֻטִיָּיא וְקִבְרוּ קִבְרִיָּיא? אָמַר לֵיהּ מְקַרָּא אֲנִי דּוֹרֵשׁ, שְׁנַאֲמַר "וְאַתָּה אֵל תִּירָא עַבְדֵּי יַעֲקֹב נְאֻם ה' וְאֵל תַּחַת יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי הִנְנִי מוֹשִׁיעַךְ מִרְחוֹק וְאֵת זְרַעְךָ מֵאַרְצֵי שָׁבָיִם", מְקִישׁ הוּא לְזַרְעוֹ, מַה זְרַעוֹ בְּחַיִּים – אִף הוּא בְּחַיִּים.

After they had eaten, Rabbi Yitzhak said to Rav Nahman that Rabbi Yohanan said as follows: Our patriarch Jacob did not die.<sup>N</sup> Rav Nahman asked him in surprise: And was it for naught that the eulogizers eulogized him and the embalmers embalmed him and the buriers buried him? Rabbi Yitzhak replied to Rav Nahman: I am interpreting a verse,<sup>N</sup> as it is stated: "Therefore do not fear, Jacob My servant, says the Lord, neither be dismayed, Israel, for I will save you from afar, and your seed from the land of their captivity" (Jeremiah 30:10). This verse juxtaposes Jacob to his seed: Just as his seed is alive when redeemed, so too, Jacob himself is alive.

אָמַר רַבִּי יִצְחָק: כָּל הָאֹמֵר רַחֵב רַחֵב מִיַּד נִקְרִי. אָמַר לֵיהּ רַב נַחְמָן: אֲנָא אָמִינָא, וְלֹא אֵיכָפַת לִי! אָמַר לֵיהּ בִּי קְאָמִינָא – בְּיֹדְעָה וּבְמַכְרִיהָ.

Rabbi Yitzhak said: Anyone who says: Rahab Rahab, immediately experiences a seminal emission, due to the arousal of desire caused by Rahab's great beauty. Rav Nahman said to him: I say Rahab and it does not affect me. Rabbi Yitzhak said to Rav Nahman: When I said this I was specifically referring to a man who knew her and to one who recognized her.<sup>N</sup> With regard to anyone who had met Rahab in person, the mere mention of her name would arouse his lust.

בִּי הוּוּ מִיִּפְטְרִי מִהֲדָדִי אָמַר לֵיהּ: לִיבְרַחֵן מְרִ! אָמַר לֵיהּ: אָמְשׁוּל לָךְ מְשׁוּל, לְמַה הֲדַבֵּר דּוּמָה – לְאָדָם שְׁהִיָּה הוֹלֵךְ בְּמַדְבָּר וְהִיָּה רָעֵב וְעִיף וְצָמָא, וּמְצָא אֵילָן שְׁפִירוֹתָיו מְתוּקִין וְצִלּוֹ נָאֵה, וְאִמַּת הַמַּיִם עוֹבֶרֶת תַּחְתָּיו. אָכַל מִפִּירוֹתָיו, וְשָׁתָה מִמֵּימָיו, וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּצִילוֹ.

The Gemara relates: When they were taking leave of one another, Rav Nahman said to Rabbi Yitzhak: Master, give me a blessing. Rabbi Yitzhak said to him: I will tell you a parable. To what is this matter comparable? It is comparable to one who was walking through a desert and who was hungry, tired, and thirsty. And he found a tree whose fruits were sweet and whose shade was pleasant, and a stream of water flowed beneath it. He ate from the fruits of the tree, drank from the water in the stream, and sat in the shade of the tree.

וְכִשְׁבִּיקֵשׁ לֵילָךְ, אָמַר: אֵילָן אֵילָן, בְּמַה אֲבָרְכְּךָ? אִם אֹמַר לָךְ שְׁהִיָּה פִירוֹתֶיךָ מְתוּקִין – הֲרִי פִירוֹתֶיךָ מְתוּקִין, שְׁהִיָּה צִילְךָ נָאֵה – הֲרִי צִילְךָ נָאֵה, שְׁתֵּהָא אִמַּת הַמַּיִם עוֹבֶרֶת תַּחְתֶּיךָ – הֲרִי אִמַּת הַמַּיִם עוֹבֶרֶת תַּחְתֶּיךָ, אֶלֶּא: יְהִי רְצוֹן שְׁכָל נְטִיעוֹת שְׁנוֹטְעִין מִמְּךָ

And when he wished to leave, he said: Tree, tree, with what shall I bless you? If I say to you that your fruits should be sweet, your fruits are already sweet; if I say that your shade should be pleasant, your shade is already pleasant; if I say that a stream of water should flow beneath you, a stream of water already flows beneath you. Rather, I will bless you as follows: May it be God's will that all saplings which they plant from you

NOTES

Our patriarch Jacob did not die – יַעֲקֹב אָבִינוּ לֹא מָת: Many commentaries discuss this puzzling comment. Some explain that Jacob did not die in Egypt, but he merely fainted and all his senses ceased, and that in fact he died in Eretz Yisrael (see Rabbi Yoshiya Pinto and *Hokhmat Manoah*). Yet this does not seem to be the main import of this statement. It is more likely that Rabbi Yitzhak is providing a homiletic interpretation on the level of allusion and hidden ideas, which Rav Nahman initially understood as addressing the simple meaning of the text. Therefore, Rabbi Yitzhak cited a proof from another passage, to indicate that he did not mean to offer a straightforward assertion. Rav Nahman accepted this explanation, despite the fact that the basic claim contradicts explicit statements of the Torah.

As to the deeper meaning of Rabbi Yitzhak's statement, some commentaries explain that because some of the children of the other patriarchs were not valid successors, i.e., Ishmael and Esau, it cannot be said that Abraham and Isaac continued to live after their death. By contrast, Jacob, whose children will continue along his path until the end of days, is perpetuated by them. Therefore, it is appropriate to say that he never died (Rashba; *Asara Ma'amarot*). Alternatively, the normal progression of death, with the various stages of the descent of the soul and its defilement via the angel of death, only occurs to people whose life was characterized by

a struggle with the evil impulse. Jacob, however, had an entirely pure soul, and therefore he did not die in that manner. Rather, his soul passed directly to the life of the World-to-Come (*Otzar HaKavod*). This is similar to the Rambam's description of the death of our teacher Moses.

I am interpreting a verse – מְקַרָּא אֲנִי דּוֹרֵשׁ: Rabbi Yitzhak's statement is apparently based on a close reading of the language of the Torah, as the word death is not mentioned explicitly in connection with Jacob. Since Rabbi Yitzhak's interpretation appeared strange to Rav Nahman, Rabbi Yitzhak noted that it was not based solely on the absence of a single word. Rather, it is connected to the interpretation of various verses which speak of Jacob or of Israel in such a way that the personal, individual denotation of the name and its general, national meaning are not entirely distinguished from each other. Instead, Israel the man and Israel the nation are regarded as a single entity.

To a man who knew her and to one who recognized her – בְּיֹדְעָה וּבְמַכְרִיהָ: See *Tosafot* and the Maharsha in tractate *Megilla*, who suggest that the term: Who knew her, is referring to one who had sexual relations with her, as in the verse: "And no man had known her" (Genesis 24:16).