

יהיו כמותך. אף אתה, במה אברכך?  
אם בתורה, הרי תורה, אם בעושר, הרי  
עושר. אם בבנים, הרי בנים. אלא, יהי  
רצון שיהיו צאצאי מעריך כמותך.

תנו רבנן: יורה שמונה את הבריות  
להטיח גזותיהן, ולהכניס את פירותיהן,  
ולעשות כל צרכיהן. דבר אחר: שמונה  
את הארץ ומשקה עד תהום, שנאמר:  
"תלמיה רוח; נחת גדודה; ברביבים  
תמגגנה; צמחה תברך." דבר אחר: יורה  
שיוורד בנחת, ואינו יורד בועף.

או אינו יורה אלא שמשיר את הפירות,  
ומשטיף את הזרעים, ומשטיף את  
האילנות? תלמוד לומר: "מלקוש". מה  
מלקוש לברכה, אף יורה לברכה. או  
אינו מלקוש אלא שמפיל את הבתים,  
ומשבר את האילנות, ומעלה את  
הסקאין? תלמוד לומר: "יורה". מה יורה  
לברכה, אף מלקוש לברכה.

יורה גופיה מנלן? דכתיב: "ובני ציון, גילו  
ושמחו בה' אלהיכם, כי נתן לכם את  
המונה לצדקה, ויורד לכם גשם, מונה  
ומלקוש בראשון."

תנו רבנן: יורה במרחשון ומלקוש בניסן.  
אתה אומר יורה במרחשון ומלקוש  
בניסן. או אינו אלא יורה בתשרי  
ומלקוש באייר? תלמוד לומר: "בעתו".

מלקוש? אמר רב נהילאי בר אידי  
אמר שמואל: דבר שמואל קשיותיהן של  
ישראל. דבי רבי ישמעאל תנא: דבר  
שממלא תבואה בקשיה. במתניתא  
תנא: דבר שיוורד על המלילות ועל  
הקשין.

be like you. So it is with you. With what shall I bless you? If I bless you with Torah, you already have Torah; if I bless you with wealth, you already have wealth; if I bless you with children, you already have children. Rather, may it be God's will that your offspring shall be like you.

§ The Gemara returns to the topic of rain. **The Sages taught in a baraita:** The first rain [yoreh]<sup>N</sup> is called by this name due to the fact that it instructs [moreh] people to plaster their roofs and to bring in their produce from the fields to their houses and to attend to all their needs in the field before more rain falls. Alternatively, yoreh is referring to the fact that it moistens [marve] the earth and waters it to the depths, as it is stated: "Watering [ravvei] its ridges abundantly, settling down its furrows, You make it soft with showers, You bless its growth" (Psalms 65:11). Alternatively, yoreh means that it falls gently and it does not fall vehemently.

Or perhaps that is not the case; rather, yoreh means that the rain causes the fruit to drop from the trees, washes the seeds away, and washes the trees away in a destructive manner. According to this interpretation, yoreh is related to yeriya, shooting. Therefore the verse states: "Last rain [malkosh]" (Deuteronomy 11:14);<sup>N</sup> just as malkosh refers specifically to rains that are for a blessing, so too, yoreh is referring to rains that are for a blessing. Or perhaps that is not the case; rather, malkosh means that the rain falls so hard [kashē] and vehemently that it knocks down the houses, shatters the trees and brings up the locusts:<sup>N</sup> Therefore, the verse states: "Yoreh," from which it may be inferred that just as yoreh is for a blessing, so too, malkosh is for a blessing.

And with regard to yoreh itself, from where do we derive that it is referring to rain that falls for a blessing? As it is written: "You children of Zion, be glad and rejoice in the Lord your God, for He has given you the first rain [moreh] in His kindness, and He caused to come down for you the rain, the first rain [moreh] and the last rain [malkosh], in the first month" (Joel 2:23). This verse clearly states that yoreh, also referred to as moreh, fall due to God's kindness, for a blessing.

The Gemara cites another baraita on the same topic. **The Sages taught:** The first rain falls in Marḥeshvan and the last rain in Nisan. Do you say that the first rain is in Marḥeshvan and the last rain in Nisan, or perhaps it is only that the first rain falls in Tishrei and the last rain in Iyyar? Therefore, the verse states: "I shall give the rain of your land in its due time" (Deuteronomy 11:14). Its due time is in Marḥeshvan, when rain is needed for the crops to sprout, and in Nisan, to complete the growth of the crops.

The Gemara clarifies the meaning of the word for the last rain [malkosh]. Rav Nehilai bar Idi said that Shmuel said: It is a matter that circumcises [mal] the stubbornness [kashyuteihen] of the Jewish people, i.e., it penetrates to the hearts of the Jewish people, as when rain does not fall in its time, they turn to God in repentance. **The school of Rabbi Yishmael taught:** The last rain is called malkosh because it is a matter that fills out [memalle] produce in its stalks [bekasheha]. Although the stalks already exist from earlier in the year, it is this rain that causes the grain within to swell and fill them. It was taught in a baraita: Malkosh is a matter that comes down on the ears [melilot] and on the stalks [kashin].

NOTES

**First rain [yoreh] – יורה:** The range of derivations for the word yoreh is based on the variety of roots that can be associated with this term, some of which themselves bear multiple meanings. The root y-r-a, which represents the straightforward etymology of yoreh, can mean tossing, shooting, or instruction. An alternative exposition relates yoreh to the root r-v-a, meaning satiety, as in the verse: "And he who satisfies others [marve] shall himself be sated [yoreh]" (Proverbs 11:25).

**Last rain [malkosh] – מלקוש:** This term is derived from the rare root l-k-sh, which apparently means tardy or latter. Rashi notes that in the verse cited by the Gemara (Deuteronomy 11:14) the term lekesh is apparently a synonym for locusts.

**Locusts [saka'in] – סקאין:** Most commentaries hold that this term is referring to locusts, although some maintain that it is referring to a type of worm (Rabbi Elyakim). Similarly, there are various translations for the word tzelatzal (Deuteronomy 28:42), which is generally rendered as locust.

BACKGROUND

The times of the first rain and the last rain – זמני יורה ומלקוש: The establishment of dates concerning rain in the Jewish calendar is complicated, in part because the dates based on the lunar cycle do not always align with the same solar dates.

The first rains generally fall in Eretz Yisrael during the first half of October, which can coincide with the end of Tishrei, while the last rains usually fall at the end of April, which can be in the middle of Iyyar.

NOTES

When is the first rainfall – איזו היא רביעה ראשונה: The early commentaries cite alternative versions of the text here (see Rishon LeTziyyon and Kesef Mishneh). It stands to reason that the three dates mentioned by each tanna do not refer to three possible dates in the same year for the first rainfall. Rather, the early, intermediate, and late dates refer to various years of the leap year cycle. The year following a leap year is called an early year, as the rains can be expected to start at an earlier lunar date. Using similar logic, the year preceding a leap year is labeled a late year, and the intervening year is called an intermediate year.

The halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei – הלכה כרבי יוסי: There are different versions of this statement. According to some readings, including the one cited by Rashi, Rav HIsda states that the halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda. The logic of Ameimar's alternative version of Rav HIsda's ruling is clear according to this version: If the time of the first rainfall is the seventh of Marḥeshvan, it stands to reason that one would likewise begin to request rain on this date. With regard to the version of the Gemara here, some commentaries explain that the ruling that one begins to request rain from the seventh of Marḥeshvan can indeed be reconciled with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei, as the idea is that one begins to request rain shortly before the time of the first rainfall, just as one starts to mention rain before it actually falls (Rabbeinu Yehonatan).

The first and second rainfalls, or the second and third – רביעה ראשונה ושנייה ושלישית: The explanation here is in accordance with a version of the text which states that these seven days are considered either like the first and second rainfall, or like the second and the third. This is similar to the version of the scholars of Narbonne cited in Tosafot. A plain reading of the standard version of the text indicates that the seven days are considered like all three rainfalls. The difficulty with this is that even Rabbi Yosei, who places the rainfalls nearest to each other in time, sets a seven day interval between the various rainfalls, and therefore there is no justification for saying that all three rainfalls have occurred over a period of seven days. One explanation of the version of the baraita as it appears here, based on Rabbeinu Hananel and the Arukh, is that depending on the time of day when the rainfall begins it is indeed possible, according to the opinion of Rabbi Yosei, for the seven days of consecutive rainfall to cover the first two rainfalls and the beginning of the third.

HALAKHA

The time for requesting rain – זמן שאילת גשמים: In Eretz Yisrael one begins to request rain on the seventh of Marḥeshvan, in accordance with the opinion of Rabban Gamliel, as ruled by Rav HIsda (Shulḥan Arukh, Oraḥ Ḥayyim 117:1).

תנו רבנן: יורה במרחשון ומלקוש בניסן. אתה אומר יורה במרחשון. או אינו אלא בחדש כסליו? תלמוד לומר: "בעתו יורה ומלקוש". מה מלקוש בעתו, אף יורה בעתו. בין שיצא ניסן וירדו גשמים, אינו סימן ברכה.

תנא אידך: יורה במרחשון ומלקוש בניסן. דברי רבי מאיר. וחכמים אומרים: יורה בכסליו.

מאן חכמים? אמר רב חסדא: רבי יוסי היא, דתנא: איזו היא רביעה ראשונה? הפריחה בשלשה במרחשון. בינונית בשבעה בו. אפילה בשבעה עשר בו. דברי רבי מאיר. רבי יהודה אומר: בשבעה, ובשבעה עשר, ובעשרים ושלשה.

רבי יוסי אומר: בשבעה עשר, ובעשרים ושלשה, ובראש חודש כסליו. וכן היה רבי יוסי אומר: אין היחידים מתענין עד שיגיע ראש חודש כסליו.

אמר רב חסדא: הלכה כרבי יוסי. אממר מתני להא דרב חסדא בהא לישנא: בשלשה במרחשון שאלין את הגשמים. רבן גמליאל אומר: בשבעה בו. אמר רב חסדא: הלכה כרבן גמליאל.

כמאן אזלא הא דתנא. רבן שמעון בן גמליאל אומר: גשמים שירדו שבעה ימים זה אחר זה, אתה מונה בהן רביעה ראשונה ושנייה ושלישית? כמאן? רבי יוסי. אמר רב חסדא: הלכה כרבי יוסי.

The Sages taught in a baraita: The first rain falls in Marḥeshvan and the last rain in Nisan.<sup>8</sup> Do you say that the first rain is in Marḥeshvan, or perhaps it is only in the month of Kislev? The verse states: "I shall give the rain of your land in its due time, the first rain and the last rain" (Deuteronomy 11:14). Just as the last rain falls in its due time, so too, the first rain falls in its due time. And, as previously stated, once Nisan has ended and the rains subsequently fall, this is not a sign of a blessing, but a curse. Likewise, Marḥeshvan is the best time for the first rains to fall.

It is taught in another baraita: The first rain is in Marḥeshvan and the last rain is in Nisan. This is the statement of Rabbi Meir. And the Rabbis say: The time of the first rain is in Kislev.

The Gemara asks: Who are the Rabbis cited here? Rav HIsda said: It is the opinion of Rabbi Yosei,<sup>9</sup> as it is taught in a baraita: When is the first rainfall?<sup>10</sup> Each opinion cited in the baraita provides a range of dates for when this rainfall is expected. The earliest date on which the first rainfall might occur is on the third of Marḥeshvan, the intermediate time is on the seventh of the month, and the latest is on the seventeenth of the month. This is the statement of Rabbi Meir. Rabbi Yehuda says: The earliest that it might fall is on the seventh of Marḥeshvan, the intermediate date is on the seventeenth, and the latest is on the twenty-third.

Rabbi Yosei says: The earliest time for the first rain is on the seventeenth of Marḥeshvan, the intermediate date is on the twenty-third, and the latest is on the New Moon of Kislev. And, so too, Rabbi Yosei would say: The learned individuals who would start to fast for rain at an earlier time than the rest of the community do not start to fast due to a drought until the New Moon of Kislev. Until this date arrives it is not considered a drought, as the first rainfall could still fall in its proper time.

Rav HIsda said: The halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei.<sup>11</sup> Ameimar would teach this ruling of Rav HIsda in the following language: On the third of Marḥeshvan one starts to request rain;<sup>12</sup> Rabban Gamliel says: On the seventh. With regard to this statement, Rav HIsda said: The halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Rabban Gamliel.

The Gemara asks: In accordance with whose opinion is that which is taught in a baraita. Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says: With regard to rains that fell on seven consecutive days, you count them as two separate rainfalls, either as the first and second rainfalls together, or as the second and third<sup>13</sup> rainfalls together. In accordance with whose opinion is this statement? It is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei, as he alone establishes a set interval of seven days between each of the rainfalls. Rav HIsda said: The halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei.

PERSONALITIES

Rabbi Yosei – רבי יוסי: Rabbi Yosei ben Ḥalafta, one of the foremost tanna'im, lived in the generation before the completion of the Mishna, and the imprint of his teachings is evident throughout tanna'itic literature.

Rabbi Yosei was the son of Abba Ḥalafta who was also a great Sage. He lived in Tzippori, in the Upper Galilee, where he earned his living as a leather worker.

In addition to studying with his father, Rabbi Yosei was a preeminent student of Rabbi Akiva, with the other main disciples of Rabbi Akiva: Rabbi Meir, Rabbi Yehuda, and Rabbi Shimon bar Yoḥai. This group formed the core of scholarly creativity in that generation and their opinions form the backbone of the Mishna. A well-known principle in halakha is that Rabbi Yosei's reasoning is with him, i.e., his opinions are always well considered. Rabbi Yosei was so well regarded that the rule was established that the halakha is always

in accordance with his opinion in a dispute with any of the other leading students of Rabbi Akiva mentioned above. This principle may also be related to the fact that Rabbi Yosei was known for his moderation, both in his rulings and in his lifestyle.

Rabbi Yosei was also renowned for his piety. The Talmud relates many stories about his modesty, humility, and sanctity. It is told that Elijah the Prophet would reveal himself to Rabbi Yosei every day, and several conversations between them are recorded. According to tradition, Rabbi Yosei was the main editor of a series of baraitot on the history of the Jewish people known as Seder Olam.

Many of the Sages of the following generation were his disciples, including Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi, the redactor of the Mishna. However, his closest students were his five sons, all of whom became Sages. The most famous were Rabbi Eliezer ben Rabbi Yosei, one of the great masters of aggada, and Rabbi Yishmael ben Rabbi Yosei.

בְּשִׁלְמָא רְבִיעָה רִאשׁוֹנָה לְשִׁאֵל,  
שְׁלִישִׁית לְהִתְעַנּוֹת, שְׁנֵי לְמֵאִי?  
אָמַר רַבִּי זֵירָא: לְגַדְרִים, דְּתַנּוּ:

With regard to the mention of three rainfalls in the *baraita*, the Gemara asks: **Granted**, the time of the **first rainfall** is significant, as it is the date when one begins to **request** rain. Likewise, the time of the **third rainfall** is important, so that one knows when to begin to **fast** if no rain has fallen by then. However, for **what** reason is the **second rainfall** mentioned in the *baraita*? **Rabbi Zeira said**: The second rainfall is significant for the issue of **vows**, as we learned in a mishna:

Perek I

Daf 6 Amud b

הַגֹּדֵר עַד הַגְּשָׁמִים, מְשִׁירָדוֹ גְּשָׁמִים,  
עַד שֶׁתֵּרֵד רְבִיעָה שְׁנֵי.

In the case of **one who vows** to prohibit from himself a type of benefit **until the rains**,<sup>H</sup> the vow is in effect **from when the rains begin to fall until the second rainfall**, as this is considered the time of the rains.

רַב זְבִיד אָמַר: לְיוֹתִים. דְּתַנּוּ: מֵאִמְתִּי  
כָּל אָדָם מוֹתְרִין בְּלֶקֶט, בְּשִׁכְחָה,  
וּבִפְאָה? מְשִׁילְכוֹ הַנְּמוּשׁוֹת. בְּפֶרֶט  
וּבְעוֹלָלוֹת? מְשִׁילְכוֹ עֲנִיִּים בְּכֶרֶם  
וּבְיוֹאוֹ. בְּזִיתִים? מְשִׁתֵּרֵד רְבִיעָה  
שְׁנֵי.

Rav Zevid said: The time of the second rainfall is also significant with regard to a *halakha* that deals with **olives**, as we learned in a mishna: **From when is any person permitted to collect gleanings, forgotten sheaves, and *pe'á*,**<sup>H</sup> produce of the corners of a field, which may normally be taken only by the poor? Any individual is permitted to collect them only **from when the searchers [*namoshot*], the last of the poor to arrive, have left the field.** From when may anyone collect yield of the vineyard in the case of the **single grapes and small, incompletely formed clusters of grapes,**<sup>H</sup> likewise reserved for the poor? **From when the poor have left the vineyard and come back after the second time**, an indication that they have collected all that they wish. From when may anyone collect yield of the trees in the case of **forgotten olives? From when the second rainfall falls.**

מֵאִי נְמוּשׁוֹת? אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן: סָבִי  
דְּאֵלֵי אֲתִיגְרָא. רִישׁ לְקִישׁ אָמַר:  
לְקוּטֵי בְּתֵר לְקוּטֵי.

Incidentally, the Gemara asks: **What is the meaning of the term for searchers, *namoshot*?** **Rabbi Yoḥanan said**: It is referring to **elders who walk with a staff [*atigra*].**<sup>N</sup> Since they walk very slowly, they certainly see everything they wish to collect. **Reish Lakish said**: It is referring to the **gleaners who come after all the gleaners,**<sup>N</sup> i.e., who arrive after two rounds of the poor have passed through the field.

רַב פָּפָא אָמַר: כְּדֵי לְהֵלֶךְ בְּשִׁבְלֵי  
הָרְשׁוֹת, דְּאָמַר מַר: מְהֵלְכִין כָּל אָדָם  
בְּשִׁבְלֵי הָרְשׁוֹת עַד שֶׁתֵּרֵד רְבִיעָה  
שְׁנֵי.

Rav Pappa said that the time of the second rainfall is significant so that one can know until when it is permitted to **walk on the permitted paths**<sup>N</sup> in fields. One may utilize certain paths on private property, provided no damage is caused to the field. **As the Master said**: **Anyone may walk on the permitted paths**<sup>H</sup> until the second rainfall falls. One who walks on them at a later point in time is likely to trample the plowed field and damage its crops.

NOTES

With a staff [*atigra*] – אֲתִיגְרָא: The correct version of this word is apparently *tigda*, which is used in the Aramaic translations of the Bible to mean a staff, from the root *g-d-d*, meaning cut off, as it is referring to a branch that has been cut off to serve as a staff.

Gleaners who come after gleaners – לְקוּטֵי בְּתֵר לְקוּטֵי: Rashi in *Bava Metzia* (21b) explains that after the first group of poor would pass through the field, a second wave would arrive. Here he explains that the phrase refers to a poor man walking with his son, i.e., there are different types of gleaners collecting simultaneously (see *Gevurat Ari*).

To walk on the permitted paths – כְּדֵי לְהֵלֶךְ בְּשִׁבְלֵי הָרְשׁוֹת: Aside from public thoroughfares such as main roads, one is allowed to traverse certain other paths, even if they pass through another's private property. Likewise, certain paths serve as temporary shortcuts through fields. The Gemara states elsewhere that when the Jewish people settled Eretz Yisrael, Joshua, son of Nun, instituted various ordinances that declared that anyone could utilize the property of another, provided that no damage was done to the property (*Bava Kamma* 81a).

HALAKHA

**One who vows until the rains** – הַגֹּדֵר עַד הַגְּשָׁמִים: If one vows to prohibit from himself a certain benefit until the rains, the vow is in effect until the time period of the rains in Eretz Yisrael, which is the first of Kislev. This ruling is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei. If rain falls on or after the seventeenth of Marḥeshvan, the vow is no longer in effect. Some authorities maintain that the vow is in effect only until the time period of the first rain according to the opinion of Rabbi Yosei (*Shakh*, citing Ra'avad and Rosh). Others maintain that the correct textual version of the Gemara is that the *halakha* is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda, in which case the vow lapses on the seventh of Marḥeshvan (*Shakh*, citing Rosh). If the vow was formulated as: Until it rains, it remains in effect until rain actually falls after the time of the second rainfall, which is the twenty-third of Marḥeshvan in Eretz Yisrael, in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei. Others add that in the Diaspora the

time of the rains is sixty days after the autumnal equinox. In an ordinary year this is December fourth, while in a Gregorian leap year the date is December fifth. The time of the second rainfall is seventy days after the equinox (*Shulḥan Arukh, Yoreh De'a* 220:18, and in the comment of Rema).

**From when is any person permitted to collect gleanings, forgotten sheaves, and *pe'á*** – מֵאִמְתִּי כָּל אָדָם מוֹתְרִין בְּלֶקֶט, וּבִפְאָה: Once the second set of gleaners has finished gleaning, all people are permitted to collect gleanings of grain left over in the field. According to the Rambam, there is no practical difference between the opinions of Rabbi Yoḥanan and Reish Lakish. Rather, they dispute the meaning of the word *namoshot* (*Kesef Mishne*, citing Rashba; Rambam *Sefer Zera'im, Hilkhot Mattenot Aniyyim* 1:11).

In the case of **single grapes and small, incompletely formed**

**clusters of grapes** – בְּפֶרֶט וּבְעוֹלָלוֹת: Once the poor have passed through the vineyard twice, all people are permitted to collect single grapes and small, incompletely formed clusters of grapes left in the vineyard. With regard to olives forgotten on the tree, anyone may collect them from the first of Kislev (Rambam *Sefer Zera'im, Hilkhot Mattenot Aniyyim* 1:11).

**Anyone may walk on the permitted paths** – מְהֵלְכִין כָּל אָדָם בְּשִׁבְלֵי הָרְשׁוֹת: All people are permitted to walk on the paths that pass through privately owned agricultural fields, from the time of the grain harvest until the seventeenth of Marḥeshvan, the date of the second rainfall. The *halakha* is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda, and contrary to the opinion of Rabbi Yosei. After that date, entry into privately owned fields is prohibited, as it may damage the crops (*Tur, Ḥoshen Mishpat* 274).

NOTES

The straw and the hay of the Sabbatical Year – בתבן ובקש של שביעית: According to Rashi, this is referring to straw and hay of the Sabbatical Year itself, when one may derive benefit from the produce and yield of the land only as long as the wild animals of the field can derive benefit from it. Tosafot explain that the Gemara is referring to plants that grew of their own accord during the seventh year. These plants retain the sanctity of the Sabbatical Year during the eighth year, and one is allowed to maintain them provided that they are available to the wild animals in the field. Yet others explain, based on an alternative version of the text, that the Gemara is speaking specifically of the eighth year. Up until this time straw and hay are fit for consumption by the wild animals of the field but afterward they are no longer fit as fodder, and consequently may be used for other purposes (Meiri).

Rain that falls prior to, and He will close up – גשמים שיגרו – קודם ועצר: The ge'onim had an alternative version of the text, according to which the best rain is that which falls in the evening after the recitation of Shema. They also cite a different version of the folk saying, which refers to rain when the gates are closed, i.e., at the end of the day. Apparently, the statement concerning morning clouds, which follows in the text we have today, is missing from that version.

Donkey-driver, fold your sack – ברו חמרא, מוך שקך: Rashi and other commentators explain that early-morning rain is a sign that the entire year will be blessed with bounty and consequently there will be little work for donkey-drivers who transport grain from place to place, as local produce will be plentiful. Conversely, Rabbeinu Hananel and most commentaries maintain that rain in the early morning is simply a sign that donkey-drivers should not go out to work that day as it is likely to rain all day.

HALAKHA

The straw and the hay of the Sabbatical Year – בתבן ובקש של שביעית: After the second rainfall in the year after the Sabbatical Year, it is permitted to derive benefit from the straw and hay of the Sabbatical Year or to burn them, as they are no longer fit for animal consumption. The halakha is in accordance with the alternative version of the mishna in tractate Shevi'it (Rambam Sefer Zera'im, Hilkhoh Shemitta VeYovel 5:23).

As long as a beast is able to eat in the field – כל זמן שתיה – אוכלת בשדה: Produce of the Sabbatical Year that has already been brought into the house may be eaten only as long as there is some produce of that same type remaining in the fields. If this type of produce is no longer available in the fields, the produce must be removed from one's possession (Rambam Sefer Zera'im, Hilkhoh Shemitta VeYovel 7:1).

BACKGROUND

To seal the opening of a barrel with it – לגוף בה פי חבית – In talmudic times, earthenware casks were commonly used for storing wine. The casks were sealed with a special cover. To preserve the wine, the opening was sealed by smearing mud on the surrounding area.

Morning clouds – ענני דצפרא: The clouds that form over land during the early hours of the morning are usually thin and light. They produce only a small amount of rain, or none at all. Heavy rain clouds form primarily in the afternoon or evening.

רב נחמן בר יצחק אמר: לבער פירות שביעית, דתנן: עד מתי נהנין ושוזרפין בתבן ובקש של שביעית? עד שתדר רביעה שניה.

מאי טעמא? דכתיב: "ולכהמתך ולחיה אשר בארצך". כל זמן שתיה אוכלת בשדה, האכל לבהמתך בבית. בלה לחיה מן השדה, בלה לבהמתך מן הבית.

אמר רבי אבהו: מאי לשון רביעה? דבר שרובע את הקרקע, כדור יהודה. דאמר רב יהודה: מיטרא בעלה דארעא הוא, שנאמר: "כי כאשר ירד הגשם והשלג מן השמים, ושמה לא ישוב, כי אם הרוה את הארץ, והולידה והצמיחה".

ואמר רבי אבהו: רביעה ראשונה כדי שתדר בקרקע טפה. שניה כדי לגוף בה פי חבית. אמר רב חסדא: גשמים שיגרו כדי לגוף בהן פי חבית אין בהן משום "ועצר".

ואמר רב חסדא: גשמים שיגרו קודם "ועצר" אין בהן משום "ועצר".

אמר אביי: לא אמרן אלא קודם "ועצר" דאורתא, אבל קודם "ועצר" דצפרא יש בהן משום "ועצר". דאמר רב יהודה בר יצחק: הני ענני דצפרא לית בהו משוא, דכתיב: "מה אעשה לך, אפרים? מה אעשה לך, יהודה? וחסדכם בעני בקר" וגו'.

אמר ליה רב פפא לאביי: והא אמרי אינשי: במפתח בבי מיטרא, ברו חמרא, מוך שקך וגני! לא קשיא. הא דקטיר בענבא; הא דקטיר בענני.

Rav Nahman bar Yitzhak said that the time of the second rainfall is significant for determining when to remove the produce of the Sabbatical Year from one's possession. As we learned in a mishna: Until when may one derive benefit and burn the straw and the hay of the Sabbatical Year? Until the second rainfall falls.<sup>4</sup>

The Gemara asks: What is the reason that one must remove the produce of the Sabbatical Year from one's possession? The Gemara answers: As it is written with regard to the Sabbatical Year: "And for your cattle and for the beasts in your land all its increase shall be for food" (Leviticus 25:7). This verse indicates that as long as a beast, i.e., a non-domesticated animal, is able to find and eat produce in the field,<sup>4</sup> you may feed your cattle, your domesticated animals, from that type of food in the house. However, when a given type of produce has ceased to be available to the beast in the field, cease providing it to your cattle in the house. After the time of the second rainfall there is no longer any straw or hay in the fields.

The Gemara returns to the subject of rain. Rabbi Abbahu said: What is the meaning of the term for rainfall, revia? It is referring to a matter that penetrates [rove'a], i.e., which causes the earth to bear fruit. This is in accordance with the opinion of Rav Yehuda, as Rav Yehuda said: Rain is the husband of the earth, as it is stated: "For as the rain comes down and the snow from heaven, and returns not there, except it waters the earth, and makes it give birth and sprout" (Isaiah 55:10). This verse indicates that rain fructifies the earth in the manner of a husband and wife.

And Rabbi Abbahu further said: For rainfall to be considered the first rainfall it must be sufficient to enter the ground and saturate it to a depth of one handbreadth. The second rainfall must be sufficient that the soil is moistened enough to seal the opening of a barrel with its mud.<sup>5</sup> Rav Hisda said: Rains which fall and create sufficient mud to seal the opening of a barrel with them means that the year does not constitute a fulfillment of the verse: "And He will close up the heavens and there will be no rain" (Deuteronomy 11:17).

And Rav Hisda said: Rain that falls early in the day, prior to the recitation of Shema, which includes the verse: "And He will close up" the heavens,<sup>6</sup> is enough to ensure that the hour does not constitute a fulfillment of the verse: "And He will close up the heavens," even if no more rain falls at that time.

Abaye said: We said this only if the rain fell during the day, prior to the recitation of "and He will close up" of the evening Shema. However, if a small amount of rain falls prior to the recitation of "and He will close up" of the morning Shema, this rain could still constitute an expression of "and He will close up." As Rav Yehuda bar Yitzhak said: These morning clouds<sup>6</sup> have no substance; they generally yield minimal or no rain. As it is written: "What can I do for you, Ephraim, what can I do for you, Judah, for your goodness is like a morning cloud" (Hosea 6:4). This verse indicates that morning clouds contain little benefit.

Rav Pappa said to Abaye: But people say the well-known maxim: When the gates, i.e., doors, are opened in the morning and there is rain, donkey-driver, fold your sack<sup>7</sup> and go to sleep, as it is certain to rain all day, which will render the work of donkey-drivers infeasible. This shows that morning clouds are a sign that it will rain all day. The Gemara answers: This is not difficult. This statement of Rav Pappa is referring to when the sky is overcast with heavy clouds, from which rain will fall all day, whereas that statement of Rav Hisda is referring to a morning when the sky is overcast with light clouds which will not bring substantial rain.

**מאימתי – מברכין על הגשמים**: If it rains after a drought that caused hardship, a blessing is recited over the rain. The blessing is recited even if no heavy rainfall occurred provided that puddles form, and drops of water splash up from the puddles almost as if they are greeting the falling rain. Some commentaries maintain that it is customary not to recite this blessing in places where rain is generally abundant (Rema, based on *Sefer Mitzvot Gadol*). However, others claim that even in these places, if there is a period of drought followed by rain, the blessing over rain should be recited (*Taz*, citing *Beit Yosef*; *Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayyim 221:1*).

**וְאָמַר רַב יְהוּדָה: טָבָא לְשָׂתָא דְטֵבַת אֲרָמְלָתָא. אֵיבָא דְאֲמַרִי: דְּלָא בְיַרִי תְרַבִּיזִי. וְאֵיבָא דְאֲמַרִי: דְּלָא שְׁקִיל שׁוּדְפָנָא. אֵינִי? וְהָאֲמַר רַב חֲסֵדָא: טָבָא לְשָׂתָא דְטֵבַת מְנוּלְתָא! לָא קְשִׁיָּא. הָא דְאֲתָא מִיטְרָא מְעִיקְרָא: הָא דְלָא אֲתָא מִיטְרָא מְעִיקְרָא.**

**S Rav Yehuda said:** It is good for the year when the month of Tevet is a widower, i.e., when it features no rainfall. The Gemara explains: Some say that this is so that the gardens [*tarbitzei*]<sup>N</sup> should not be desolate,<sup>N</sup> as too much rain damages vegetables. And some say: The reason is that it should not suffer blight<sup>N</sup> caused by excessive rain. The Gemara asks: Is that so? But didn't Rav Ḥisda say: It is good for the year when the month of Tevet is disgusting, i.e., muddy from rain. The Gemara answers: This is not difficult. This statement of Rav Yehuda is referring to a year when it rained initially, i.e., before Tevet, in which case rain during Tevet is not beneficial. That statement of Rav Ḥisda is referring to a year when it did not rain initially, before Tevet, and therefore rain during Tevet is beneficial.

**וְאָמַר רַב חֲסֵדָא: גְּשָׁמִים שְׁיָרְדוּ עַל מְקַצֵּת מְדִינָה וְעַל מְקַצֵּת מְדִינָה לֹא יֵרְדוּ אִין בְּהֵן מְשׁוּם 'וְעֶצֶר'. אֵינִי? וְהִכְתִּיב: 'וְגַם אֲנֹכִי מְנַעַתִּי מִכֶּם אֶת הַגֶּשֶׁם בְּעוֹד שְׁלֹשָׁה חֳדָשִׁים לְקִצְרוֹ, וְהִמְטַרְתִּי עַל עִיר אַחַת, וְעַל עִיר אַחַת לֹא אֲמַטִּיר, חֲלָקָה אַחַת תִּמְטַר' וְגו'. וְאָמַר רַב יְהוּדָה אָמַר רַב: שְׁתִּיחֵן לְקַלְלָהּ!**

**And Rav Ḥisda also said:** Rain that fell on one part of a country and did not fall on another part of the country does not constitute a fulfillment of the verse: “And He will close up the heavens.” The Gemara raises an objection: Is that so? But isn't it written: “And I have also withheld the rain from you, when there were yet three months to the harvest; and I would cause it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city; one piece was rained upon, and the piece upon which it did not rain withered” (Amos 4:7). And Rav Yehuda said that Rav said: Both the area that receives rain and the area that does not receive rain are cursed. This statement indicates that rain that falls on only part of a country is a curse.

**לָא קְשִׁיָּא. הָא דְאֲתָא טוּבָא: הָא דְאֲתָא כְּדַמְבַּעֵי לֵיהּ. אָמַר רַב אֲשִׁי: דִּיקָא נְמִי, דְכְּתִיב: 'תִּמְטַר', תִּהְיֶה מְקוֹם מְטַר. שְׁמַע מִינָהּ.**

The Gemara answers: This is not difficult. This, Rav Yehuda's statement, is referring to a case when excessive rain falls in one part of the country and causes damage; whereas that, Rav Ḥisda's statement, is referring to a situation when the requisite amount of rain falls<sup>N</sup> in one part of the country. In this case, it is not a sign of a curse, but is a blessing for that particular part of the country. Rav Ashi said: The language is also precise in the verse in Amos that deals with excessive rain in one place, as it is written: “Was rained upon,”<sup>N</sup> which indicates that it shall be a place of rain, i.e., an area filled with rain and water. The Gemara concludes: Indeed, learn from it that this is the correct interpretation.

**אָמַר רַבִּי אֲבָהוּ: מֵאִימְתִי מְבָרְכִין עַל הַגֶּשֶׁמִּים? מְשִׁיבָא חָתָן לְקִרְאָת כְּלָהּ.**

**Rabbi Abbahu said:** From when does one recite a blessing over rain?<sup>H</sup> From when the groom goes out to meet the bride,<sup>N</sup> that is, when there are puddles of water on the ground such that the water below, represented as the bride in this metaphor, is splashed from above by the raindrops, represented as the groom.

## NOTES

**Gardens [*tarbitzei*] – תְּרַבִּיזִי:** This Aramaic term means garden. The root *r-v-tz*, meaning to pour out liquid, reflects the fact that plants that need constant watering are commonly grown in a garden. In rabbinic usage, the same term is often used as a poetic epithet for the study hall, which is like a garden in which much water, i.e., Torah, is poured and in which plants, i.e., Torah scholars, can grow.

**That the gardens should not be desolate – דְּלָא בְיַרִי תְרַבִּיזִי:** Several different interpretations for this expression have been suggested (see Rashi). Some commentaries explain that if it rained during Tevet after it rained in Marḥeshvan, the fields will be too wet to plow again before the spring harvest (*ge'onim*). Others maintain that the courtyards will be emptied of their inhabitants, as people will prefer to stay at home (*Arukh*).

**That it should not suffer blight – דְּלָא שְׁקִיל שׁוּדְפָנָא:** The *Arukh* cites an alternative version of the text, according to which he explains that people will prefer to remain in their houses instead of venturing outside. This is similar to his interpretation

of the previous phrase: The gardens should not be desolate, as explained in the preceding note. Consequently, he holds that the difference between the two suggestions in the Gemara is stylistic rather than substantive.

**הָא דְאֲתָא – הָא דְאֲתָא:** Most commentaries explain that too much rain in a given place is also a curse, whereas an appropriate amount is a blessing. Others explain this distinction in the opposite manner: If an overabundance of rain falls in one part of the country, it is a blessing, as enough can be grown there to provide for the rest of the country that lacks rain. However, if rain falls in only one part of the country, in an amount that suffices for that part of the country alone, the inhabitants of the entire country should view themselves as under a Divine curse. Accordingly, Rav Ashi's interpretation of the verse, that it is referring to a place of rain, means a place where a regular amount of rain falls (Rabbeinu Gershon).

**As it is written, was rained upon – דְכְּתִיב תִּמְטַר:** This homiletic interpretation of the verse is based on its unusual linguistic

form. Usually, a verse will speak of the sky or of clouds pouring out water. Here, however, it states that the earth itself will be watered. This can be taken to mean that the earth will become rain, i.e., it will contain much water, as in a flood.

**From when the groom goes out to meet the bride – מְשִׁיבָא חָתָן לְקִרְאָת כְּלָהּ:** Rashi and Rav Hai Gaon explain that this expression is a metaphor. The drops of rain, which are described as a groom, fall into the puddles, which are described as a bride; and the water in the puddles splashes up to greet the falling rain. Some commentaries point out that this does not fit with the Gemara's earlier statement, which indicates that the falling rain is comparable to a husband or groom, with respect to the ground. They suggest that while the rain is described as the husband of the ground, the lower drops of rain are compared to a groom. In light of this difficulty, certain commentaries prefer the Rambam's explanation of this phrase: The rain increases the bubbles in the puddles to the point that they greet one another like a groom going out to meet his bride (*Shita Mekubbetzet*; Ritva).

NOTES

**Abundant [rov] thanksgivings – רוב ההודאות:** The term *rov* does not mean most, as it is generally used in other contexts. It appears here as an abstract noun meaning abundant, a usage that appears in several places in the Torah (see Genesis 27:28). Consequently, the Gemara's question should be understood as follows: In light of the word's more common meaning, of a majority, which indicates the presence of a contrary minority, perhaps this is not the preferred formulation (Ritva; *Nimmukei Yosef*).

Some commentaries suggest that the term *rov* indeed means a majority of thanksgiving, i.e., man is unable to thank God for all the kindness He bestows upon him, but only for most of His kindness (Rid).

**God [El] of thanksgivings – אל ההודאות:** In this context, the term *El* is referring not only to God but also bears the secondary meaning of strength and might. Consequently, the phrase can mean: He who is great and worthy of thanksgiving (*Nimmukei Yosef*).

מאי מברך? אמר רב יהודה אמר רב: מודים אנחנו לך, ה' אלהינו, על כל טפה וטפה שהורדת לנו. ורבי יוחנן מסיים בה הכי: אילו פינו מלא שירה כים, ולשוננו רנה כהמון גליו כו, עד: אל יעזובנו רחמיך, ה' אלהינו, ולא יעזובנו. ברוך רוב ההודאות.

רוב ההודאות ולא כל ההודאות? אמר רבא: אימא: אל ההודאות. אמר רב פפא: הלךך.

The Gemara asks: **What blessing does one recite over rain?** Rav Yehuda said that Rav said: **We thank you, O Lord our God, for each and every drop that You have made fall for us.** And Rabbi Yohanan concludes the blessing as follows: **If our mouth were as full of song as the sea, and our tongue with singing like the multitude of its waves, etc.** And one continues with the formula of the *nishmat* prayer recited on Shabbat morning, **until: May Your mercy not forsake us, O Lord our God, and You have not forsaken us. Blessed are You, O Lord, to Whom abundant thanksgivings are offered.**

The Gemara asks: **Why does the blessing specify abundant thanksgivings<sup>N</sup> and not all thanksgivings?** Rava said: **Emend the formula of the blessing and say: God of thanksgivings.<sup>N</sup>** Rav Pappa said: **Therefore, as there are differences of opinion on this,**

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NOTES

**We will recite them both – נִמְרִינְהוּ לְתַרְוֵיהוּ:** Some commentaries explain that this refers both to Rav Yehuda's addition and Rabbi Yohanan's concluding blessing (Rabbi Zerahya HaLevi; Rabbi Yehonatan of Lunel), whereas others reject this opinion and maintain that this is referring to the opinions of Rava and Rav Pappa (Ramban; Rabbi Aharon HaLevi). Although there are variant readings of the text of the blessing, both in the citation here and in *Berakhot*, the accepted version is based on a tradition of the *ge'onim*.

It has been noted that Rav Pappa generally prefers to combine two conflicting opinions rather than decide between them, provided that they are not contradictory (see *Eshel Avraham*).

**The resurrection of the dead benefits only the righteous – תחיית המתים לצדיקים:** Rav Ya'akov Emden explains that the resurrection of the dead will benefit the righteous alone, as the wicked will be revived only to be condemned in judgment.

**Equivalent to the resurrection of the dead – שקולה בתחיית המתים:** The commentaries write that this is because both events bring life to people and plants that are apparently dead and lifeless.

**Greater than the day on which the Torah was given – יותר מיום שניתנה בו תורה:** One explanation of this claim is that the Torah benefits only the righteous, whereas the rain provides benefit to the wicked, as well (*Keren Ora*). Alternatively, rainfall is greater than the revelation of the Torah because the Torah was given only to the Jewish people, whereas rain is God's gift to the entire world (*Shofar Tov*).

**It snaps his neck [orfehu] like the rain – עורפהו כמטר:** Various explanations for this statement have been suggested (see Rashi). One interpretation is that one should teach a student repeatedly, like a persistent rain (*Shita Mekubbetzet*). Alternatively, *orfehu* means that one should turn one's nape [*oref*] to this person (Maharsha). Yet others maintain that this statement does not refer to a teacher but to how matters of Torah are perceived by its students, i.e., for a worthy student the Torah flows easily like the dew, but for an unworthy student it is as difficult as the rain (*Keren Ora*).

נִמְרִינְהוּ לְתַרְוֵיהוּ: אל ההודאות ורוב ההודאות.

**we will recite them both:<sup>NH</sup> God of thanksgivings, and: Abundant thanksgivings.**

אמר רבי אבהו: גדול יום הגשמים מתחיית המתים. דאילו תחיית המתים לצדיקים, ואילו גשמים בין לצדיקים בין לרשעים. ופליגא דרב יוסף. דאמר רב יוסף: מתוך שהיא שקולה בתחיית המתים, קבעיה בתחיית המתים.

The Gemara cites statements in praise of rainfall. **Rabbi Abbahu said: The day of rain is greater than the resurrection of the dead.** The reason is that **while the resurrection of the dead benefits only the righteous,<sup>N</sup> rain benefits both the righteous and the wicked.** The Gemara comments: **And this statement disagrees with the opinion of Rav Yosef, as Rav Yosef said: Since rainfall is equivalent to the resurrection of the dead,<sup>N</sup> the Sages established its recitation in the second blessing of the Amida, the blessing of the resurrection of the dead.** According to Rav Yosef, rainfall is the equivalent to, but not superior to, the resurrection of the dead.

אמר רב יהודה: גדול יום הגשמים ביום שניתנה בו תורה, שנאמר: "יערף כמטר לקחי", ואין לקח אלא תורה, שנאמר: "כי לקח טוב נתתי לכם; תורת אל תעזבו". רבא אמר: יותר מיום שניתנה בו תורה, שנאמר: "יערף כמטר לקחי". מי נתלה במי? הוי אומר: קטן נתלה בגדול.

Similarly, **Rav Yehuda said: The day of the rains is as great as the day on which the Torah was given, as it is stated: "My doctrine [likhi] shall drop as the rain" (Deuteronomy 32:2), and lekah means nothing other than Torah, as it is stated: "For I give you good doctrine [lekah]; do not forsake My Torah" (Proverbs 4:2).** Rava said: **Rainfall is even greater than the day on which the Torah was given,<sup>N</sup> as it is stated: "My doctrine shall drop as the rain,"** and when one makes a comparison, **which object is made dependent upon which? You must say that the lesser object is dependent upon the greater one.** If Torah is compared to rain, it follows that rain is greater than Torah.

רבא רמי: בתיב: "יערף כמטר לקחי", וכתוב: "תזל כטל אמרתי"! אם תלמיד חכם הגון הוא, כטל ואם לאו, עורפהו כמטר.

The Gemara cites another interpretation of the verse from Deuteronomy. **Rava raised a contradiction: At the beginning of the verse it is written: "My doctrine shall drop [ya'arof] as the rain,"** in a harsh manner, **and yet later in the verse, it is written: "My speech shall distill as the dew,"** in a gentle tone. He resolves this apparent contradiction as follows: **If he is a worthy Torah scholar,<sup>H</sup> the Torah flows through him like the dew, but if he is not worthy, it snaps his neck [orfehu] like the powerful rain.<sup>N</sup>**

HALAKHA

**We will recite them both – נִמְרִינְהוּ לְתַרְוֵיהוּ:** The blessing recited over rain, as established by the *ge'onim* and by the Rambam, concludes with the formula: **Blessed are you, O Lord, God of abundant thanksgivings.** This is in accordance with the opinion of Rav Pappa (*Shulhan Arukh, Orach Hayyim 221:2*).

**If he is a worthy Torah scholar – הוא:** One should not teach Torah to an unworthy student. This student should be helped to mend his ways and only afterward brought into the study hall to begin his studies (*Shulhan Arukh, Yoreh De'a 246:7*).