

What is the remedy, he should increase prayers – מאי תקנתיה ירבה בתפלה: That is, the robber must pray for forgiveness after returning the object that he took by violence. However, if he does not first restore what he took, all of his repentance and prayers are of no avail. As the Gemara states elsewhere (16a), one who confesses to a robbery while the article he has taken is still in his possession is likened to someone undergoing ritual immersion while holding an unclean reptile in his hand. This person remains ritually impure (*Gevurat Ari*).

מאי תקנתיה? ירבה בתפלה, שנאמר: "ויצו עליה במפגיע." ואין "פגיעה" אלא "תפלה", שנאמר: "ואתה, אל תתפלל בעד העם הזה, וגו', ואל תפגע בי".

What is the remedy of one who has caused the rain to be withheld? He should increase his prayers,ⁿ as it is stated in the same chapter: "And He has commanded it due to imploring" (Job 37:12), and "imploring" means nothing other than prayer, as it is stated: "Therefore, do not pray you for this nation, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither implore Me" (Jeremiah 7:16).

ואמר רבי אמי: מאי דכתיב: "אם קהה הברזל, והוא לא פנים קלקל"? אם ראית רקיע שקיהה כברזל מלהוריד טל ומטר, בשביל מעשה הדור שהן מקולקליו. שנאמר: "והוא לא פנים קלקל".

And Rabbi Ami said: What is the meaning of that which is written: "If the iron is blunt, and does not whet the edge" (Ecclesiastes 10:10)? If you see a sky that is blunt as iron, in that it does not bring down dew and rain, this is due to the deeds of the generation, which are corrupt, as it is stated: "And does not whet [kilkal] the edge [panim]." *Panim*, which also means face, is often used in reference to the leaders of a generation, while the term *kilkal* is similar to the word for corrupt, *mekulkalin*.

מה תקנתן? יתגברו ברחמים, שנאמר: "וחילים יגבר, ויתרון הכשיר חכמה." כל שכן, אם הוכשרו מעשיהן מעיקרא.

What is their remedy? They must increase their prayers for mercy, as it is stated in the same verse: "Then must he increase his strength, but wisdom is profitable to direct" (Ecclesiastes 10:10). This verse hints that rain will fall if one increases his strength, i.e., his prayers for mercy. The last part of the verse means that, all the more so, if their deeds had been righteous and direct from the beginning, the rains would not have been withheld.

ריש לקיש אמר: אם ראית תלמיד

The Gemara cites a different interpretation of the same verse. Reish Lakish said: If you see a student

He must increase the time he sits – ירבה בישיבה – Rashi explains that a student who finds his studies hard should spend a great deal of time with other students and review with them the material that he has not fully mastered on his own. Others suggest that the student who is struggling with his studies should sit by himself and review the difficult material in an organized manner until he is confident that he knows it thoroughly (Meiri).

Perek I

Daf 8 Amud a

ש'למודו קשה עליו כברזל, בשביל משנתו שאינה סדורה עליו, שנאמר: "והוא לא פנים קלקל".

whose studies are hard as iron for him, i.e., difficult to understand, this is due to his lack of familiarity with the Mishna, which is not organized for him. If the Mishna is unclear, any further study of Gemara is rendered all the more difficult, as it is stated: "And does not whet [kilkal] the edge [panim]" (Ecclesiastes 10:10). As *panim* can also mean surface, this indicates that the surface, i.e., the basic statements of the Mishna, is corrupted. As stated previously, *kilkal* can also mean corrupted.

מאי תקנתיה? ירבה בישיבה, שנאמר: "וחילים יגבר, ויתרון הכשיר חכמה." כל שכן, אם משנתו סדורה לו מעיקרא.

What is his remedy? He must increase the time he sitsⁿ and studies, as it is stated: "Then must he increase his strength" (Ecclesiastes 10:10). The last part of the verse: "But wisdom is profitable to direct," means that all the more so, if his study of the Mishna is organized for him from the beginning, he will avoid this trouble.

כי הא דריש לקיש הוה מסדר מתניתיה ארבעין זמנין כנגד ארבעים יום שמתנה תורה, ועייל לקמיה דרבי יוחנן. רב אדא בר אבהו מסדר מתניתיה עשרין וארבע זמנין כנגד תורה נביאים וכתובים, ועייל לקמיה דרביא.

That is like this practice of Reish Lakish, who would review his studies forty times, corresponding to the forty days in which the Torah was given to Moses at Sinai, and only afterward would he go before Rabbi Yoḥanan to study from his teacher. Similarly, Rav Adda bar Ahava would review his learning twenty-four times, corresponding to the twenty-four books in the Torah, Prophets, and Writings, i.e., the Bible, and only afterward go before Rava to study with him.

רבא אמר: אם ראית תלמיד שלמודו קשה עליו כברזל, בשביל רבו, שאינו מסביר לו פנים, שנאמר: "והוא לא פנים קלקל".

With regard to the aforementioned verse from Ecclesiastes, Rava said: If you see a student whose studies are as difficult for him as iron, this is due to his teacher, who does not show him a friendly countenance, but is overly strict with him. This practice inhibits the student's learning, as it is stated: "And it has not whetted the surface [panim]" (Ecclesiastes 10:10). As explained previously, *panim* can also mean countenance.

Corrode [*meshatkhin*] – מִשְׁתַּכֵּיִן: Generally means to corrode; its basic meaning is ruin or decay. It is probably related to the Syriac *shata*, which also denotes ruin or decay. In Mandaeen, the term *shuta*, a noun meaning rust, is derived from this root.

מאי תקנתיה? ירבה עליו רעים, שנאמר: "וחילים יגבר, ויתרון הכשיר חכמה." כל שכן אם הוכשרו מעשיו בפני רבו מעיקרא.

ואמר רבי אמי: מאי דכתיב: "אם ישוך הנחש בלוא לחש, ואין יתרון לבעל הלשון"? אם ראית דור שהשמים משתכין בנחשת מלהוריד טל ומטר, בשביל לוחשי לחישות שאין בדור.

מאי תקנתן? ילכו אצל מי שיודע ללחוש, דכתיב: "גיד עליו רעו." ואין יתרון לבעל הלשון. ומי שאפשר לו ללחוש ואינו לוחש, מה הנאה יש לו?

ואם לחש ולא נענה, מאי תקנתיה? ילך אצל חסיד שבדור, וירבה עליו בתפלה, שנאמר: "ויצו עליה במפגיע." ואין פגיעה אלא תפילה, שנאמר: "ואתה, אל תתפלל בעד העם הזה, ואל תשא בעדם רנה ותפלה, ואל תפגע בי."

ואם לחש, ועלתה בידו, ומגיס דעתו עליו, מביא אף לעולם, שנאמר: "מקנה אף על עולה."

רבא אמר: שני תלמידי חכמים שיושבין בעיר אחת ואין נוחין זה לזה בהלכה, מתקנאין באף ומעלין אותו, שנאמר: "מקנה אף על עולה."

אמר ריש לקיש: מאי דכתיב: "אם ישוך הנחש בלוא לחש, ואין יתרון לבעל הלשון"? לעתיד לבוא, מתקבצות ובאות כל החיות אצל הנחש, ואומרים לו: ארי דורס ואוכל, זאב טורף ואוכל; אתה, מה הנאה יש לך? אמר להם: "ואין יתרון לבעל הלשון."

What is the remedy for this student? He must increase the number of friends he sends to the teacher to intercede for him, as it is stated: "Then must he increase his strength." The term used for strength, *hayalim*, can also mean soldiers or colleagues. Nevertheless: "But wisdom is profitable to direct," meaning that all the more so would he be spared this trouble if his deeds were properly directed before his teacher from the beginning.

S The Gemara returns to the topic of rain. And Rabbi Ami said: What is the meaning of that which is written: "If the serpent [*nahash*] bites [*yishokh*] before it is charmed [*lahash*], then the charmer has no advantage" (Ecclesiastes 10:11)? If you see a generation for whom the heavens corrode [*meshatkhin*]⁴ like copper [*nehoshet*], which prevents them from bringing down dew and rain, this is due to the lack of those who whisper quiet [*lohashei lehisshot*] prayers in the generation.

What is their remedy? They should go to one who knows how to whisper prayers in the proper manner, as it is written: "Its noise tells concerning it" (Job 36:33). As for the phrase: "Then the charmer has no advantage," this is referring to one who is able to whisper his prayers correctly and yet does not whisper them correctly. In this case, of what benefit to him is his ability to pray?

And if he whispered his prayers and yet was not answered, what is his remedy? He should go to the most pious individual of the generation, and this pious individual will increase his prayers on his behalf, as it is stated one verse earlier: "And He has commanded it due to imploring" (Job 36:32). And "imploring" means nothing other than prayer, as it is stated: "Therefore, do not pray you for this nation, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither implore Me" (Jeremiah 7:16).

And if he whispered his prayers for rain, and his prayers were successful, i.e., rain fell as he requested, and he becomes prideful as a result, he brings anger into the world, as it is stated: "The cattle [*mikne*] also [*af*] concerning the rising storm [*al oleh*]" (Job 36:33). This verse can be read homiletically as: Anger [*af*] is acquired [*mikne*] by one who raises [*al oleh*] his pride.

Following the same interpretation of this verse, Rava said: If there are two Torah scholarsⁿ who live in one city, and they are not courteous with one another in their discussions of *halakha*, they arouse anger upon the world and cause it to rise up, as it is stated: "Anger is acquired by one who raises his pride."

The Gemara cites another interpretation of the aforementioned verse. Reish Lakish said: What is the meaning of that which is written: "If the snake bites before it is charmed, then the charmer has no advantage" (Ecclesiastes 10:11)?ⁿ In the future, all the animals will gather together and come to the snake and say to him: A lion mauls its prey and eats it; a wolf tears apart its prey and eats it; but you, what pleasure do you have when you bite a person, as you are incapable of eating him? The snake will say to them: "The charmer has no advantage." The Hebrew phrase for snake charmer literally means the master of the tongue, and therefore the snake is saying that he has a more difficult question: What pleasure does a slanderer receive, as he inflicts more harm for which he obtains no physical enjoyment.

NOTES

Two Torah scholars, etc. – שני תלמידי חכמים וכו': Some commentaries say that the verse: "Its noise [*re*] tells concerning it," means: If his colleague [*re*] speaks harshly to him, and they are discourteous with one another in their discussions of *halakha*, this causes anger to come (Rabbi Elyakim). Rashi presents an opposite reading: They are courteous with one another in *halakha*. In accordance with this version, some explain that if the

Sages are too courteous with one another and fail to challenge each other's opinions, the *halakha* will not be fully clarified, and this will bring down anger (*Aggadot HaTalmud*).

Then the charmer has no advantage – ואין יתרון לבעל הלשון: Rashi here explains that on the Day of Judgment all the creatures of the world will come before God. The snake will argue

that although he bites and causes severe harm without deriving any benefit from his actions, nevertheless he is not as bad as slanderers. In his commentary on tractate *Arakhin* (15b) Rashi states that the snake will attempt to justify himself by saying: "If the serpent bites before it is charmed," which can also mean: Unless it is whispered to, i.e., a snake bites only if it commanded to do so by God.

He places his soul in his palm – מְשִׁים נַפְשׁוֹ בְּכַףּוֹ: This means that one must express his innermost thoughts, so that his prayers convey his true feelings (see Rashi; *Shita Mekubbetzet*). Some suggest that Rabbi Ami is alluding to the idea that one must immerse himself in prayer to the point where he strips himself of all materiality, so that his spirit alone communicates with God (see *Nefesh HaHayyim*).

From the marten and the pit – מְחוּלְדָּה וְבוֹר: Apparently this story was well known in talmudic times, and did not require retelling. The episode, which is briefly summarized by Rashi and *Tosafot*, is cited by the *Arukh* in a much fuller version, based on a tradition of the *geonim*.

Whoever is exacting with himself below – כָּל הַמְצַדִּיק אֶת-עַצְמוֹ מִלְמַטָּה: According to one interpretation, someone who makes great efforts to act in an exact manner will be treated by God with exacting justice. This individual will be punished in this world for even the slightest infractions, so that he will be entirely cleansed and ready to receive his full reward in the World-to-Come (Rashi; *Shita Mekubbetzet*). Others explain Rabbi Yoḥanan's statement in the opposite manner: One who acts in a particularly righteous manner in this world will be treated by God with special compassion and charity (Rabbi Elyakim).

BACKGROUND

Marten [hulda] – חוּלְדָּה: The *hulda* mentioned in the Talmud has not been clearly identified. Israel Aharoni, an influential early-twentieth-century Israeli zoologist, proposed that it is the brown rat. The brown rat is indeed predatory, and therefore *hulda* became the general name for the rat in modern Hebrew. However, we now know that brown rats reached the Middle East from Norway only very recently; in the talmudic era, the only rat in the Middle East was the black rat, a much smaller rodent, which is not predatory. A more viable opinion is that of the medieval European rabbinic tradition, which identifies the *hulda* as a member of the weasel family. The weasel itself does not live in the Middle East nowadays, although it did live there in the early biblical era and possibly survived through to talmudic times. However, it is exclusively carnivorous, and would not drag leavened bread, as is mentioned in tractate *Pesahim*. As the marten, which belongs to the same family, is found in Israel, it may be the *hulda*.



Marten

Whoever is exacting with himself below – כָּל הַמְצַדִּיק אֶת-עַצְמוֹ מִלְמַטָּה: This idea appears in many statements of the Sages, both by way of interpretations of verses as well as in the form of isolated comments. As a general principle, greatness and righteousness do not exempt one from his duties or from the judgment of Heaven. On the contrary, the greater and more pious the individual, the more is demanded of him and the more severe the punishment for his misdeeds.

אָמַר רַבִּי אָמִי: אִין תְּפִלְתּוֹ שֶׁל אָדָם נִשְׁמַעַת אֲלָא אִם כֵּן מְשִׁים נַפְשׁוֹ בְּכַפּוֹ, שְׁנַאֲמַר: "נִשְׂאָ לְבַבְנוּ אֶל כַּפֵּינָם." אֵינִי? וְהָא אֲוָקִים שְׂמוּאֵל אֲמוּרָא עָלֵיהּ וְדַרְשׁ: "וַיִּפְתּוּהוּ בְּפִיהֶם, וּבִלְשׁוֹנָם יִבְּוּ לוֹ, וְלִבָּם לֹא נָכוֹן עִמּוֹ, וְלֹא נֶאֱמַנּוּ בְּבְרִיתוֹ." וְאִף עַל פִּי כֵן, "וְהוּא רַחוּם, יַכְפֵּר עִוְוֹ" וְגו'.

לֹא קִשְׂיָא. כֵּאֵן בְּיַחֲדִיד, כֵּאֵן בְּצַבּוּר.

אָמַר רַבִּי אָמִי: אִין גְּשָׁמִים יוֹרְדִין אֲלָא בְּשִׁבִיל בְּעֵלֵי אֲמֵנָה, שְׁנַאֲמַר: "אֵמֶת מֵאֶרֶץ תִּצְמַח, וְצֶדֶק מִשָּׁמַיִם נִשְׁקֶף."

וְאָמַר רַבִּי אָמִי: בֵּא וְרֵא הַכְּמָה גְּדוּלִים בְּעֵלֵי אֲמֵנָה. מִיַּיִן? מְחוּלְדָּה וְבוֹר. וְזֶה הַמְּאָמֵן בְּחוּלְדָּה וְבוֹר כֶּךָ, הַמְּאָמֵן בְּהַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא עַל אַחַת כְּמָה וְכֵמָה.

אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן: כָּל הַמְצַדִּיק אֶת עַצְמוֹ מִלְמַטָּה, מְצַדִּיקוֹן עָלָיו הַדִּין מִלְמַעְלָה, שְׁנַאֲמַר: "אֵמֶת מֵאֶרֶץ תִּצְמַח, וְצֶדֶק מִשָּׁמַיִם נִשְׁקֶף." רַבִּי חִיָּיא בַר אֲבִין אָמַר רַב הוּנָא: מִהֲכָא: "יִבְרִיאֲתָךְ עֲבֵרְתָךְ."

Rabbi Ami said: A person's prayer is heard only if he places his soul in his palm,^N i.e., one must submit his entire soul with sincerity in his outstretched hands as he prays, as it is stated: "Let us lift up our heart with our hands" (Lamentations 3:41). The Gemara raises an objection: Is that so? But Shmuel once established for himself an interpreter to teach in public, and interpreted homiletically the verse: "But they beguiled Him with their mouth and lied to Him with their tongue, for their heart was not steadfast with Him, neither were they faithful to His covenant" (Psalms 78:36–37), and nevertheless the psalm continues: "But He, being full of compassion, forgives iniquity, and does not destroy" (Psalms 78:38). This indicates that all prayers are accepted, even if they lack sincerity.

The Gemara responds: This is not difficult, as here Rabbi Ami is referring to an individual who prays without sincerity and consequently his prayer goes unheard, whereas there Shmuel is saying that when one prays with the community, even if his prayers are deficient, they are accepted in the merit of the congregation.

Rabbi Ami further said: Rain falls only due to faithful people, as it is stated: "Truth springs out of the earth, and righteousness has looked down from heaven" (Psalms 85:12). When "truth springs out of the earth," i.e., if people are faithful, they will find that "righteousness," in the form of rain "has looked down from heaven."

And Rabbi Ami said: Come and see how great the faithful people are, and how God assists them. From where is it derived? From the story of the marten [*hulda*]^B and the pit.^N Once a young man saved a girl who had fallen into a pit. After rescuing her they swore to remain faithful to each other, and they declared the pit and a passing marten their witnesses. As time went by the young man forgot his vow and married another woman. They had two children, both of whom died tragically, one by falling into a pit and the other when he was bitten by a marten. Their unusual deaths led the young man to realize his error and he returned to the first woman. And if this is the outcome for one who believes in signs from a pit and a marten, all the more so for one who has faith in the Holy One, Blessed be He.

§ Rabbi Yoḥanan said: Whoever is exacting with himself, by striving to act righteously in every way on earth below,^{NB} he is judged in an exact manner in Heaven above, in order to improve him further still, as it is stated: "Truth springs out of the earth, and righteousness has looked down from heaven" (Psalms 85:12). Rabbi Hiyya bar Avin said that Rav Huna^P said that this idea is derived from here: "And Your wrath is according to the fear that is due to You" (Psalms 90:11). The level of God's wrath correlates with the offender's fear of God.

PERSONALITIES

Rav Huna – רַב הוּנָא: One of the greatest Babylonian *amora'im* of the second generation, Rav Huna was closely associated with his teacher, Rav. Although Rav Huna was of aristocratic descent and belonged to the house of the Exilarch, he was exceedingly poor for many years. Later he grew wealthy and lived in comfort, while distributing his money for the public good.

Rav Huna was the greatest of Rav's students, so much so that Shmuel, Rav's colleague, treated him with marked respect and sent questions to him. After Rav's death, Rav Huna became the head of the academy of Sura, a position he occupied for about forty years. His eminence in Torah knowledge and his

noble character helped turn the Sura academy into the preeminent Torah center for many centuries. Due to Rav Huna's great knowledge of Torah, the *halakha* is almost always decided in accordance with his opinion against that of his colleagues and the other members of his generation, with the exception of monetary cases, in which Rav Nahman's rulings are accepted.

Rav Huna had many disciples, some of whom received their Torah knowledge directly from him. Moreover, Rav's younger students continued to study with Rav Huna, his disciple. Rav Huna's son, Rabba bar Rav Huna, was one of the greatest Sages of the next generation.

ריש לקיש אמר: מהכא: "פגעת את שש ועשה צדק; בדרךך יזכרוך; הן אתה קצפת ונחטא; בהם עולם ונושע". אמר רבי יהושע בן לוי: כל השמח ביסורין שבאין עליו מביא ישועה לעולם, שנאמר: "בהם עולם ונושע".

אמר ריש לקיש: מאי דכתיב: "ועצר את השמים"? בשעה שהשמים נעצרו מלהוריד טל ומטר, דומה לאשה שמחבלת ואינה יולדת. והיינו דאמר ריש לקיש משום בר קפרא: נאמרה עצירה בגשמים ונאמרה עצירה באשה,

Reish Lakish said that this principle is derived from here: "You took him away who joyfully performed righteousness, those who remembered You in Your ways, behold You were wroth, and we sinned, upon them have we stayed of old, that we might be saved" (Isaiah 64:4). This verse also teaches that God displays wrath specifically due to the transgressions of those who are accustomed to acting righteously. Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said concerning the same verse: **Whoever is joyful in the suffering that comes upon him brings salvation to the world [olam], as it is stated: "Upon them have we stayed of old [olam], that we might be saved."**

Returning to the topic of rain, Reish Lakish said: What is the meaning of that which is written: "And He will close up the heavens" (Deuteronomy 11:17)? This verse teaches that when the heavens are closed up from bringing down dew and rain, this is similar to a woman who has the pangs of labor and yet does not give birth, as the heavens themselves suffer from their inability to bring down rain and dew. **And this is what Reish Lakish said in the name of bar Kappara: Closing up is stated with regard to rains, and closing up is likewise stated with regard to a woman.**

Perek I
Daf 8 Amud b

LANGUAGE

Vault [kuba] – קובה: In the language of the Mishna, this term means a small house or a tent, similar to the Arabic *quba*, *qubba*.

נאמרה עצירה באשה, שנאמר: "כי עצר ה' בעד כל רחם". ונאמרה עצירה בגשמים, דכתיב: "ועצר את השמים".

Reish Lakish elaborates: **Closing up is stated with regard to a woman who cannot give birth, as it is stated: "For the Lord has fast close up all the wombs" (Genesis 20:18), and closing up is stated with regard to rains, as it is written: "And He will close up the heavens" (Deuteronomy 11:17).**

נאמר לידה באשה ונאמר לידה בגשמים. נאמר לידה באשה, דכתיב: "ותהר ותלד בן". ונאמר לידה בגשמים דכתיב: "והולידה, והזמיחה".

Likewise, an expression of **giving birth is stated with regard to a woman, and an expression of giving birth is also stated with regard to rain. Specifically, giving birth is stated with regard to a woman, as it is written in the case of Rachel, when God had mercy on her: "And she conceived and gave birth to a son" (Genesis 30:23). And giving birth is stated with regard to rain, as it is written: "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and does not return there, except it waters the earth and causes it to give birth and bud" (Isaiah 55:10).**

נאמר פקידה באשה, ונאמר פקידה בגשמים. נאמר פקידה באשה, דכתיב: "וה' פקד את שרה". ונאמר פקידה בגשמים, דכתיב: "פקדת הארץ ותשקקה; רבת תעשרנה פלג אלהים מלא מים".

Lastly, an expression of **remembering is stated in connection with a woman, and an expression of remembering is also stated in connection to rain. Remembering is stated in connection with a woman, as it is written: "And the Lord remembered Sarah" (Genesis 21:1), and remembering is stated in connection to rain, as it is written: "You have remembered the earth and have watered it; greatly enriching it, with the pool of God that is full of water" (Psalms 65:10).**

מאי: "פלג אלהים מלא מים"? תנא: כמין קובה יש ברקיע, שממנה גשמים יוצאין.

The Gemara asks a question with regard to this verse. **What is the meaning of the phrase: "With the pool of God that is full of water"? The Gemara answers that it was taught in a *baraita*: There is a kind of vault [kuba]¹ in the sky, out of which the rain falls.**

אמר רבי שמואל בר נחמני: מאי דכתיב: "אם לישבט, אם לארצו, אם לחסד, ומצאהו"? "אם לישבט", בהרים ובגבעות. "אם לחסד ומצאהו לארצו", בשדות ובכרמים.

Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani said: **What is the meaning of that which is written: "Whatever he commands them upon the face of the habitable world, whether it is for correction, or for His earth, or for mercy that He causes it to come" (Job 37:12–13)? The phrase "whether it is for correction" means that if the people are judged unfavorably, the rain will fall on the mountains and on the hills. The phrase "or for His earth" indicates that if they have been judged "for mercy," He will cause it to come "for His earth," on the fields and on the vineyards.**

דְּלֵא מְצַלִּינִי – That one should not pray for two troubles – **אֶתְרֵי**: If a community is suffering from two afflictions, it should petition for the alleviation of only one of them. The members of the community should recite: Even though we suffer from many afflictions, it is only with respect to this one affliction that we pray before You. If the community suffers from both famine and plague, it should petition for mercy from the famine. The reason is that if God answers their prayers, He will provide them with food that will restore them to good health (*Shulhan Arukh, Orach Hayyim 576:15*).

נִקְבְּלִיה עֵילוֹן – Let us take upon ourselves – A single individual who is being pursued by enemies is not permitted to fast, as people under threat must preserve their strength. Likewise, if a city is surrounded by a hostile army, the residents may not fast. Instead, they should take upon themselves the obligation to observe several fasts when they are no longer in danger, in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Zeira (*Shulhan Arukh, Orach Hayyim 571:3*).

NOTES

As a judgment day – **יְוִמָא דְדִינָא** – Rashi explains, in accordance with this version of the text, that ordinary activities can be upset by rain, just as they can be disturbed by the noise and tumult emanating from the courthouses on Mondays and Thursdays, when the courts are in session. Rain is all the more disruptive on Fridays, when preparations for Shabbat are underway. Others suggest that the text should be slightly emended so that it reads: A rainy day is difficult on a judgment day (Maharsha). According to this amended version, the Gemara is not providing a comparison but is simply stating that rain causes problems if it falls on a Monday or a Thursday, when the courts are in session. The reason is that on rainy days it is difficult for villagers to travel to the courts, which are found only in the larger cities. Likewise, it is harder to complete one's Shabbat preparations on a rainy Friday.

שָׁמֶשׁ בְּשַׁבָּת – שְׁמֵשׁ בְּשַׁבָּת – Some commentators suggest that the poor are especially in need of sunny weather on Shabbat, as they often do not have suitably warm clothing, and on Shabbat they cannot keep themselves warm by engaging in physical labor (*Shita Mekubbetzet*). Others explain that the poor suffer from intestinal pains on Shabbat, because they change their dietary habits on that day and eat much more than during the rest of the week. Therefore, they are in particular need of the healing power of sunny weather (*Iyyun Ya'akov*).

The proof text cited by Rabbi Yitzhak is somewhat problematic, as the verse does not mention Shabbat at all. Rashi explains that the phrase: You who fear My name, is referring to Shabbat observers. Others point out that the verse in Malachi quoted by Rabbi Yitzhak alludes to the following verse: "Also the foreigners, who join themselves to the Lord, to minister to Him...to be His servants, every one who keeps Shabbat from profaning it" (Isaiah 56:6). This verse indicates that the proper observance of Shabbat is an essential feature of the fear of God (Rabbi Yoshiya Pinto).

אֶפְלוֹ – אֶפְלוֹ – Even a *peruta* in one's pocket is blessed on it – **פְּרוּטָה שְׂבָבִים מִתְבָּרְכֵת בּוֹ**: Rashi notes that rain is a blessing not only for the fields and their produce, but for a person's business pursuits, even those that are not directly dependent on rain. Others add that ample rainfall stimulates the entire economy, even the nonagricultural sector, as when the crops are plentiful food prices fall and more money is available for other business ventures (*Shita Mekubbetzet*).

"אִם לְשֶׁבֶט, לְאֵילָנוֹת. אִם לְאַרְצוֹ," לְרָעִים. "אִם לְחֶסֶד יִמְצָאֵהוּ," בּוֹרוֹת, שִׁיחִין, וּמְעָרוֹת.

Alternatively, the phrase "whether it is for correction" means that the rain will provide benefit only for the trees; "or for His earth" indicates that rain will fall solely for the benefit of seeds; and "or for mercy that He causes it to come" means that rain will fill the cisterns, ditches, and caves with enough water to last the dry season.

S The Gemara relates: **In the days of Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani there was a famine and a plague. The Sages said: What should we do? Should we pray for mercy for two troubles, both the famine and the plague? This is not possible, as it is improper to pray for the alleviation of two afflictions at once. Rather, let us pray for mercy for the plague, and as for the famine, we must bear it. Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani said to them: On the contrary, let us pray for mercy for the famine, as when the Merciful One provides plenty, He gives it for the sake of the living, i.e., if God answers this prayer then he will certainly bring an end to the plague as well, as it is written: "You open Your hand and satisfy every living thing with favor" (Psalms 145:16).**

בֵּימֵי רַבִּי שְׁמוּאֵל בַּר נַחֲמָנִי הָיָה בְּרָעָה וְהָיָה חֶסֶד וּמִתְנַתָּא. אָמְרֵי: הֵיכִי נִעְבִּיד? נִיבְעֵי רַחֲמֵי אֶתְרֵי? לֹא אֶפְשָׁר. אֱלֵא, לִיבְעֵי רַחֲמֵי אֲמוּתָנָא, וּבְפָנָא נִסְבּוּל. אָמַר לְהוּ רַבִּי שְׁמוּאֵל בַּר נַחֲמָנִי: נִיבְעֵי רַחֲמֵי אֲפָנָא, דְּבִי יְהִיב רַחֲמָנָא שׁוֹבְעָא, לְחַיִּי הוּא דְיִהִיב, דְּכִתְבִיב: "פּוֹתִיחַ אֶת יָדְךָ וּמְשַׁבֵּעַ לְכָל חַי רִצּוֹן."

וּמְנַל דְּלֵא מְצַלִּינִי אֶתְרֵי? דְּכִתְבִיב: "וּנְצִימָה וּנְבַקְשָׁה מֵאֱלֹהֵינוּ עַל זֹאת." מִכְּלָל דְּאִיכָא אַחֲרֵי. בְּמַעֲרָבָא אָמְרֵי מִשְׁמִיָּה דְּרַבִּי חַגִּי מְהֵכָא: "וְרַחֲמִין לְמַבְעָא מִן קַדָּם אֱלֹהִים שְׂמִיָּא עַל רֹזָא דְנָה." מִכְּלָל דְּאִיכָא אַחֲרֵי.

The Gemara explains: **And from where do we derive that one should not pray for two troubles^h simultaneously? As it is written: "So we fasted and beseeched our God for this" (Ezra 8:23). From the fact that the verse states: "For this," it may be inferred that there is another trouble about which the people did not pray. In the West, Eretz Yisrael, they say in the name of Rabbi Haggai that this idea comes from here: "That they might ask mercy of the God of Heaven concerning this secret" (Daniel 2:18). From the fact that the verse states: "This secret," it may be inferred that there is another trouble about which they did not pray.**

בֵּימֵי רַבִּי זֵירָא, גִּזְרוּ שְׁמַדָּא, וְגִזְרוּ דְּלֵא לְמִיתָב בְּתַעֲנִיתָא. אָמַר לְהוּ רַבִּי זֵירָא: נִקְבְּלִיה עֵילוֹן, וְלִכִּי בְטִיל שְׁמַדָּא, לִתְבִיָּה.

In a similar vein, the Gemara relates: **In the days of Rabbi Zeira a decree of religious persecution was decreed against the Jews. And as the decree was that they were not allowed to fast, the Jews were certainly unable to fast and pray for the nullification of the decree itself. Rabbi Zeira said to the people: Let us take a fast upon ourselves,^h despite the fact that in practice we cannot observe it, and when the decree of religious persecution is annulled we will observe the fast.**

אָמְרֵי לִיה: מִנָּא לָךְ הָא? אָמַר לְהוּ: דְּכִתְבִיב: "וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלֶי: אַל תִּירָא, דְּנִיֵּאל, בִּן מִן הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה שׁוֹן אֲשֶׁר נָתַתְּ אֶת לִבְךָ לְהִבּוֹן, וְלִהְתַּעֲנוֹת לִפְנֵי אֱלֹהֶיךָ נִשְׁמְעוּ דְבָרֶיךָ."

They said to him: From where do you know this, the fact that one may take a fast upon himself that he cannot observe? Rabbi Zeira said to them that the reason is as it is written: "Then he said to me: Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to fast before your God, your words were heard" (Daniel 10:12). This verse indicates that from the moment one turns his heart to fast, his prayers are heard.

אָמַר רַבִּי יִצְחָק: אֶפְלוֹ שְׁנֵים בְּשֶׁנִּי אֱלֹהֵינוּ, וַיִּרְדּוּ גְשָׁמִים בְּעַרְבֵי שַׁבָּתוֹת, אִינֵן אֱלֵא סִימָן קָלִילָה. הֵינֵנו דְּאָמַר רַבָּה בְּרִי שִׁילָא: קָשָׁה יוֹמָא דְּמִיטְרָא כְּיוֹמָא דְדִינָא. אָמַר אַמֵּימַר: אִי לֹא דְצָרִיךְ לְבַרְיֵינָא, בְּעִינֵן רַחֲמֵי וּמְבַטְלִינִי לִיה.

The Gemara returns to the topic of rain. **Rabbi Yitzhak said: Even in years like the years of Elijah, when God decreed that no rain would fall, if rain falls on Shabbat eves it is nothing other than a sign of a curse, as the rain disrupts the preparations for Shabbat. This is the same as that which Rabba bar Sheila said: A rainy day is as difficult as a judgment day.ⁿ Ameimar even said: Were it not for the fact that rain is needed by people, we would pray for mercy and to annul it, due to the nuisances that rain causes.**

וְאָמַר רַבִּי יִצְחָק: שְׁמֵשׁ בְּשַׁבָּת צְדָקָה לְעַנְיִים, שְׁנָאֲמַר: "וְזוֹרְחָה לְכֶם וַיֹּאֲרֵי שְׁמֵי שְׁמֵשׁ צְדָקָה וּמִרְפָּא." וְאָמַר רַבִּי יִצְחָק: גְּדוֹל יוֹם הַגְּשָׁמִים, שְׁאֶפְלוֹ פְּרוּטָה שְׂבָבִים מִתְבָּרְכֵת בּוֹ, שְׁנָאֲמַר: "לֵתַת מִטֵּר אֲרָצְךָ בְּעֵתוֹ וּלְבָרְךָ אֶת כָּל מַעֲשֵׂה יָדְךָ."

And Rabbi Yitzhak said: Sun on Shabbat is charity for the poor,ⁿ who are then able to enjoy the outdoors without suffering from cold. As it is stated: "But for you who fear My name, the sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in its wings" (Malachi 3:20). And Rabbi Yitzhak further said: The day of the rains is great, as even a *peruta* in one's pocket is blessed on it,ⁿ as it is stated: "To give the rain of your land in its due time, and to bless all the work of your hand" (Deuteronomy 28:12).

One who enters to measure in his granary – הנכנס למוד – Before measuring the produce in one's granary, one recites: May it be Your will, Lord our God, that You send a blessing upon this pile. Furthermore, while one is actually measuring, one may also recite: Blessed is He who sends a blessing upon this pile. However, one who has completed the measurement may no longer recite a blessing, and if one does so, it is considered a vain prayer (*Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim 230:2*).

ואמר רבי יצחק: אין הברכה מצויה אלא בדבר הסמוי מן העין, שנאמר: "יצו ה' אתך את הברכה באסמךך". תנא דבי רבי ישמעאל: אין הברכה מצויה אלא בדבר שאין העין שולטת בו, שנאמר: "יצו ה' אתך את הברכה באסמךך".

And apropos blessings, Rabbi Yitzhak said: A blessing is found only in an object that is hidden [samui] from the eye,^N not in an item visible to all, as public miracles are exceedingly rare. As it is stated: "The Lord will command His blessing upon you in your barns [ba'asamekha]" (Deuteronomy 28:8). Rabbi Yitzhak's exposition is based on the linguistic similarity between samui and asamekha. Likewise, the school of Rabbi Yishmael taught: A blessing is found only in an object that is not exposed to the eye,^N as it is stated: "The Lord will command His blessing upon you in your barns."

תנו רבנן: הנכנס למוד את גרנו ואמר: יהי רצון מלפניך, ה' אלהינו, שתשלח ברכה במעשה ידנו. התחיל למוד, ואמר: ברוך השולח ברכה בכרי הזה. מדר ואחר כך בירך, הרי זו תפלת שוא, לפי שאין הברכה מצויה, לא בדבר השקול ולא בדבר המדוד ולא בדבר המני אלא בדבר הסמוי מן העין.

The Sages taught: One who enters to measure produce in his granary^{HN} recites: May it be Your will, Lord our God, that You send a blessing upon the work of our hands. After he has begun to measure, he recites: Blessed is He who sends a blessing upon this pile. If one first measured and afterward recited the blessing, it is a prayer in vain, as a blessing is not found either in an object that is weighed or in an object that is measured or in an object that is counted, as these would constitute open miracles. Rather, a blessing is found only in an object that is hidden from the eye.

קבוץ; גייסות; צדקה; מעשר; פרנס; סימן. אמר רבי יוחנן: גדול יום הגשמים כיום קבוץ גלויות, שנאמר: "שובה ה' את שביתנו כאפיקים בנגב". ואין "אפיקים" אלא מטר, שנאמר: "ויראו אפיקי ים".

§ The Gemara cites five statements of Rabbi Yoḥanan, in accordance with the following mnemonic: Ingathering; armies; charity; tithe; sustainer. Rabbi Yoḥanan said: The day of the rains is as great as the day of the ingathering of the exiles, as it is stated: "Turn our captivity, O Lord, as the streams in the dry land" (Psalms 126:4), and "streams" means nothing other than rain, as it is stated: "And the streams of the sea appeared" (II Samuel 22:16).

ואמר רבי יוחנן: גדול יום הגשמים, שאפילו גייסות פוסקות בו, שנאמר: "תלמיה רוה; נחת גדודיה". ואמר רבי יוחנן: אין הגשמים נעצרים אלא בשביל פוסקי צדקה ברבים ואין נותנין, שנאמר: "נשיאים ורוח, וגשם אין, איש מתהלל בממתת שקר".

And Rabbi Yoḥanan said: The day of the rains is great, as even armies stop fighting on it due to the rain and mud. As it is stated: "Watering its ridges abundantly; settling down its furrows [gedudeha]" (Psalms 65:11). As the word gedudim can mean both furrows or armies and is spelled identically with each meaning, this alludes to the idea that during the rainy season soldiers become entrenched in place. And Rabbi Yoḥanan further said: Rain is withheld only due to those who pledge charity in public^N but do not give it, as it is stated: "As vapors and wind without rain, so is he who boasts of a false gift" (Proverbs 25:14).

ואמר רבי יוחנן: מאי דכתיב:

And Rabbi Yoḥanan said: What is the meaning of that which is written:

NOTES

בדבר הסמוי מן העין – In an object that is hidden from the eye: Some commentaries explain that a divine blessing is considered a miracle, and miracles are generally performed by God in a discreet manner, as He does not want the general public to witness a change in the natural order. Consequently, a blessing is to be found only in an object that is hidden from the eye. Once an item is exposed to the public gaze it is no longer subject to a divine blessing (*Sefat Emet*).

גרנו: According to some commentaries, the blessings prescribed here are recited with the full formula beginning with: Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe (Ritva). The difficulty with this explanation is that formal blessings are normally recited only for definite occurrences, whereas here the farmer is praying for general, unspecified assistance. To resolve this problem, the Ritva quotes the Ramban, who explains that this blessing is recited only when one measures his produce to determine the quantity of tithes to separate, as God promises a blessing to a farmer who tithes his crops (see Malachi 3:10).

שאיין העין שולטת בו – That is not exposed to the eye – It is unclear whether there is any substantial difference between Rabbi Yitzhak's formulation of an object hidden from the eye, and the version of the school of Rabbi Yishmael, who refer to something that is not exposed to the eye. Indeed, some commentaries maintain that these two expressions bear the same meaning (Maharsha). Some note that miracles are normally performed discreetly, as it is considered inappropriate for uninformed bystanders to observe their occurrence (*Torat Hayyim*; see II Kings 4:4). In general, with regard to merchandise that is not exposed to the eye, it has been pointed out that it is unwise to do business with large objects such as barrels, as they attract too much attention (Rosh).

פוסקי צדקה ברבים – Those who pledge charity in public – Rashi explains that Rabbi Yoḥanan refers to people who pledge charity specifically in public, as the pledge might have been stated to impress others and they are liable to neglect it. By contrast, it is unusual for one who pledges charity in private to fail to donate the money, as if he did not intend to fulfill his pledge he would not have said it in the first place. Others suggest that in response to the disappointment suffered by the poor after one has made a public pledge of charity and failed to fulfill his promise, God causes the clouds and wind to disperse, which causes the world a corresponding disappointment when the rain they were promised fails to fall (Maharsha; see also Rashi on Proverbs 25:14).

One who enters to measure in his granary – הנכנס למוד את