

וְהָא שְׂוִיר תִּיבָה! אִי מְשׁוּם תִּיבָה, לֹא וְשִׁירָא הוּא. מִלִּי דְצִינְעָא קְתָנִי, מִלִּי דְבִפְרֻהֶסְיָא לֹא קְתָנִי.

אָמַר רַב אֲשִׁי: מִתְּנִיתִין נְמִי דִיקָא. דְקָתָנִי: מַה "אֵלֹו יְתִירוֹת עַל הָרָאשׁוֹנוֹת"? אֵלֹא "שְׂבָאֵלוֹ מִתְרִיעִין וְנוֹעֲלִין אֶת הַחֲנוּוֹת". אֲבָל בְּכָל דְבָרֵיהֶן זֶה וְזֶה שְׁוִין. וְכִי תִמָּא הָכָא נְמִי תִנָּא וְשִׁירָא, וְהָא מַה אֵלֹו קְתָנִי!

וְתִסְבְּרָא מַה אֵלֹו דְוֹקָא הוּא? וְהָא שְׂוִיר לָה תִיבָה! אִי מְשׁוּם תִּיבָה, לֹא וְשִׁירָא הוּא. מְשׁוּם דְקָא חָשִׁיב לָה בְּאִידֶךָ פְּרָקָא. הַשְׁתָּא דְאֲתִית לְהִכִּי, עֲשָׂרִים וְאַרְבַּעָה נְמִי לֹא וְשִׁירָא הוּא. דְקָתָנִי לָה בְּאִידֶךָ פְּרָקָא.

מֵאִי הוּי עֵלָה? אָמַר רַבִּי שְׁמוּאֵל בְּרַי סַסְרֵטָא, וְכֵן אָמַר רַב חִיָּא בְרַי אֲשִׁי אָמַר רַב: בֵּין גּוֹאֵל לְרֹפֵא. וְרַב אֲשִׁי אָמַר מְשֻׁמֵּיהָ דְרַבִּי יְנָאִי בְרִיהַי דְרַבִּי יִשְׁמַעֵאל: בְּשׁוּמַע תְּפִלָּה. וְהִלְכְתָּא: בְּשׁוּמַע תְּפִלָּה.

תְּנִי חֲדָא: עוֹבְרוֹת וּמִינִיקוֹת מִתְעַנּוֹת בְּרָאשׁוֹנוֹת, וְאִין מִתְעַנּוֹת בְּאַחֲרוֹנוֹת. וְתִנָּא אִידֶךָ: מִתְעַנּוֹת בְּאַחֲרוֹנוֹת, וְאִין מִתְעַנּוֹת בְּרָאשׁוֹנוֹת. וְתִנָּא אִידֶךָ: אִין מִתְעַנּוֹת, לֹא בְּרָאשׁוֹנוֹת וְלֹא בְּאַחֲרוֹנוֹת.

אָמַר רַב אֲשִׁי: נְקוּט אֲמַצְעֵייתָא בִידֶךָ, דְּמִיתְרַצֵּן כּוּלָּהּ.

But he omitted any mention of the ark and the *halakha* that during the last seven fast days the ark was brought into the streets of the city. The Gemara rejects this argument: If the omission is due to the ark, that is not a real omission. The reason is that the *tanna* teaches only matters that are performed in private, whereas he does not teach matters that are performed in public [*parhesya*].¹

Rav Ashi said: The wording of the *mishna* is also precise, according to this explanation, as it teaches: How are these seven fast days more stringent than the first ones? Rather, the difference is that on these days, in addition to all the earlier stringencies, they sound the alarm and they lock the stores. However, in regard to all their other matters, both this and that are identical. And if you say that here too he taught and omitted, but it teaches: How are these more stringent, an expression that indicates that the *mishna* states the only difference.

The Gemara asks: And how can you understand the phrase: How are these, specifically, as indicating that there is only one difference between the cases? But he omitted the ark. The Gemara responds: If the omission is due to the ark, that is not a real omission, because the *tanna* includes it in another chapter (15a). The Gemara comments: Now that you have arrived at this^N solution, a similar answer can be applied to the earlier difficulties. The matter of the twenty-four blessings is also not an omission, as he teaches this *halakha* in another chapter, also on 15a, where the *mishna* provides further details of the blessings. Here, however, the *tanna* lists only those matters that are not discussed later.

Since no decisive proof was offered in support of any of the opinions as to where an individual inserts the *Aneinu* prayer, the Gemara asks: What halakhic conclusion was reached about this matter?^N Rabbi Shmuel bar Sasretai said, and similarly Rav Hiyva bar Ashi said that Rav said: One inserts it between the seventh blessing of the *Amida*: Who redeems, and the eighth blessing: Who heals. And Rav Ashi said in the name of Rabbi Yannai, son of Rabbi Yishmael: One inserts it in the blessing: Who listens to prayer. The Gemara concludes: And the *halakha* is that one includes it in the blessing: Who listens to prayer.

It is taught in one *baraita*: Pregnant and nursing women fast with the community on the first fasts, but they do not fast on the last fasts. And it was taught in another *baraita*: Pregnant and nursing women fast on the last set of fasts but they do not fast on the first set of fasts. And it was taught in yet another *baraita*: They do not fast either on the first fast days or on the last fast days.

Rav Ashi said: Take the mention of the middle fasts in your hand^{NH} as the decisive matter, as this resolves all three *baraitot*. The *halakha* is that pregnant and nursing women fast only on the middle fasts, as they are stricter than the first fasts but less taxing than the last seven fasts. Consequently, when the first *baraita* is referring to the first fasts, it in fact means the middle set, which is the first of the last two sets. Similarly, when the second *baraita* mentions the last fasts, it means the middle set, which is the last of the two sets. In the third *baraita*, the first and last fasts are literally the first three and last seven fasts, respectively. In this manner all three *baraitot* follow the same *halakha*.

LANGUAGE

Public [*parhesya*] – פְּרֻהֶסְיָא: From the Greek *παρρησία*, *parresia*, which originally referred to freedom of speech or a free political regime. As used by the Sages, the word means public or visible to all.

NOTES

Now that you have arrived at this – הַשְׁתָּא דְאֲתִית לְהִכִּי – Sometimes the Sages raise a series of objections to a certain opinion, each of which is met with a different response. Eventually, an answer is suggested to one of the objections that resolves not only that difficulty but all the previous ones as well. At this point the Gemara might use this expression to propose a revision of the solutions first advanced.

What conclusion was reached about this matter – מֵאִי הוּי עֵלָה: This question is usually asked at the end of a lengthy discussion of a problem in which different opinions have been expressed and been neither proven nor dismissed. At this point, the Gemara inquires into the final halakhic ruling on the matter.

Take the middle in your hand – נְקוּט אֲמַצְעֵייתָא בִידֶךָ: Most early authorities follow the explanation of Rashi and the Rif, that according to Rav Ashi pregnant and nursing women need observe only the middle three fasts. They are not required to fast on the first three days, as these are not especially stringent, and they are not required to observe the last seven fasts, because those fasts are too numerous and too stringent. Other commentaries add that pregnant and nursing women are not required to observe the last series of fasts because certain practices laden with emotion are observed on those days, e.g., visiting cemeteries and extreme manifestations of crying, which might prove dangerous for them (Rabbeinu Yehonatan).

In contrast, the Rambam rules that pregnant and nursing women fast on the last seven fasts, not on the first or middle series of three fasts (Rambam *Sefer Zemanim, Hilkhot Ta'anit* 3:5). Apparently, he understands Rav Ashi as saying: Take the middle *baraita* in your hand, i.e., disregard the first and the last *baraitot*, and rule in accordance with the middle *baraita*, which states that pregnant and nursing women are required to observe only the last fasts. Some commentaries, who accept the Rambam's ruling that pregnant and nursing women fast only on the last series of days, suggest a way in which all three *baraitot* can be reconciled with that opinion (*Shita Mekubbetzet*).

HALAKHA

Take the middle in your hand – נְקוּט אֲמַצְעֵייתָא בִידֶךָ: Pregnant and nursing women are obligated to fast on the middle three fasts imposed upon the community in times of drought, but not the first three fasts or the last seven. However, on fast days that they are not required to observe they may eat only what is necessary for the well-being of the fetus or infant. Some commentaries add that a pregnant or nursing woman may not act stringently and observe a fast from which she is exempt (*Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayyim* 575:5, and in the comment of Rema).

Rav Yehuda, son of Rav Shmuel bar Sheilat – רב יהודה בריה דרב שמואל בר שילת: Rav Yehuda, son of Rav Shmuel bar Sheilat, was a Babylonian *amora* of the second and third generations. His father, Rav Shmuel bar Sheilat, was a close disciple of Rav, and Rav Yehuda apparently also studied with Rav, as he reports many statements in his name. Rav Yehuda maintained close relations with Rav's important disciples, and the Sages of the subsequent generation often report his teachings.

מה אלו יתירות על הראשונות? אלא ששבאלו מתריעין ונועלין את החנויות. במאי מתריעין? רב יהודה אמר: בשופרות. ורב יהודה בריה דרב שמואל בר שילת משמיה דרב אמר: בענגו.

קא סלקא דעתן מאן דאמר: בענגו, לא אמר: בשופרות, ומאן דאמר: בשופרות, לא אמר: בענגו. והתניא: אין פוחתין משבע תעניות על הצבור, שבהן שמונה עשרה התרעות. וסימן לדבר ירחו. וירחו שופרות הוה. ותיובתא למאן דאמר: בענגו!

אלא, בשופרות דבולי עלמא לא פליגי דקרי לה התרעה. כי פליגי בענגו. מר סבר: קרי לה התרעה. ומר סבר: לא קרי לה התרעה.

למאן דאמר: בענגו – כל שכן בשופרות. ולמאן דאמר: בשופרות – אכל בענגו לא.

§ The mishna teaches: **How are these seven fast days more stringent than the first ones? Rather, the difference is that on these days, in addition to all the earlier stringencies, they sound the alarm and they lock the stores.** The Gemara asks: **With what do they sound the alarm?**^N Rav Yehuda said: **With shofarot.** And Rav Yehuda, son of Rav Shmuel bar Sheilat,^P said in the name of Rav: **With the Aneinu prayer.**

The Gemara analyzes the dispute: **It might enter our mind to say that the one who said that the community sounds the alarm by reciting Aneinu, i.e., Rav, did not say that they cry out with shofarot, and likewise the one who said that they do cry out with shofarot, Rav Yehuda, did not say that they sound the alarm by reciting Aneinu. But isn't it taught in a baraita:** The court does not decree fewer than seven fasts on the community, which include eighteen acts of sounding the alarm.^N **And a mnemonic for this matter is Jericho. And as there were many episodes of sounding the shofarot in Jericho, this is a conclusive refutation of the one who said that according to the opinion of Rav they sound the alarm only by reciting Aneinu.**

Rather, the Gemara explains that the dispute must be understood differently: **With regard to shofarot, everyone, i.e., Rav and Rav Yehuda, agrees that the mishna calls this: Sounding the alarm. When they disagree, it is with regard to the Aneinu prayer. One Sage, Rav, holds that this too is called sounding the alarm, and one Sage, Rav Yehuda, holds that reciting Aneinu is not called sounding the alarm.**

The Gemara comments: **If so, then it follows that according to the one who said that they sound the alarm by reciting Aneinu, all the more so they can do so with shofarot,^N but according to the one who said that they sound the alarm with shofarot, this is the way they sound the alarm; however, they may not do so with Aneinu, i.e., the community does not sound the alarm by reciting this prayer. This indicates that the Aneinu prayer is recited only in extreme cases, as it is a greater form of petitioning to God than blowing the shofar.**

NOTES

With what do they sound the alarm – במאי מתריעין: A distinction is made between trumpets, which are made of metal, and the *shofar*, which is from an animal horn. The Gemara elsewhere (*Rosh HaShana* 27a) cites a *baraita* that teaches that outside the Temple, at those times when trumpets are sounded, *shofarot* are not sounded, and when *shofarot* are sounded, trumpets are not sounded. Rashi explains that when that *baraita* speaks of a time when trumpets are sounded, it is referring to communal fast days. This indicates that on communal fasts, only trumpets are blown, not *shofarot*.

Rabbi Zerahya HaLevi cites the *ge'onim*, who note that by common practice, only *shofarot* are sounded on communal fasts, a practice supported by the Jerusalem Talmud. He further argues that this custom cannot be reconciled with the *baraita* in tractate *Rosh HaShana*. The Ra'avad adds that the Gemara here further strengthens the difficulty with that *baraita*, as Rav Yehuda maintains that the alarm is sounded on communal fasts by means of *shofarot*. He explains that the *baraita* in tractate *Rosh HaShana* is referring to the blasts that follow each of the six additional blessings inserted into the *Amida* recited by the prayer leader. These were performed by trumpets. The Gemara here, in contrast, refers to the blasts of *shofarot* at the conclusion of the *Amida* when the service was extended with additional prayers and supplications.

Others cite an opinion according to which the term *shofar* mentioned by Rav Yehuda actually is referring to trumpets (Ramban; Ritva). According to these two opinions, *shofarot* should not be sounded on communal fasts during the *Amida*, in contradiction to the common practice attested to by the

ge'onim (see also Rambam *Sefer Zemanim*, *Hilkhot Ta'anit* 1:4, 4:14).

The commentaries suggest several ways in which this passage can be understood in its plain sense, that *shofarot* are sounded after each of the additional blessings recited on communal fasts, and yet the common practice of blowing *shofarot* can be reconciled with the *baraita* in *Rosh HaShana* (Ramban; Rashba; Ritva). One possibility is that when the *baraita* speaks of sounding trumpets, it is not referring to communal fast days but to times of war, when the entire Jewish people gathers together to recite special prayers. Alternatively, the *baraita* may indeed be referring to communal fasts, but it does not mean that only trumpets are sounded. Rather, it merely means that if trumpets are sounded, *shofarot* should not be blown together with them, and vice versa. By common practice, only *shofarot* are blown, as they are generally more available.

Not fewer than seven fasts on the community, which include eighteen acts of sounding the alarm – אין פוחתין משבע תעניות: According to the standard text of the Gemara, the *baraita* is teaching that on each of the last seven fasts there are eighteen soundings of the alarm, and, as the Gemara explains, this means *shofarot* blasts. Rashi explains that there are eighteen *shofarot* blasts on each of these fasts, as *shofarot* are sounded three times after each of the six additional blessings inserted into the prayer leader's *Amida*.

Several later authorities point out that there are in fact twenty-one *shofarot* blasts, as *shofarot* are also sounded three times after the prayer leader recites the expanded seventh

blessing of: Who redeems the Jewish people (see *Lehem Mishne*; *Gevurat Ari*; Rashash). However, the *baraita* is referring specifically to the blasts that accompany the special blessings added on these fast days. The Vilna Gaon emends the *baraita* so that it indeed reads: On each of these there are twenty-one soundings of the alarm.

Many early authorities have the version: On which there are seven soundings of the alarm. Some commentaries explain that the *baraita* is referring not to the blasts sounded after each of the additional blessings inserted into the prayer leader's *Amida*, but to the ones sounded at the conclusion of the *Amida* when the service was extended with additional prayers and supplications, with one blast of the *shofar* on each of the seven fasts (Ra'avad). Others explain that all the *shofar* blasts on each of the fasts are called a sounding of the alarm, and the alarm is sounded seven times on each fast day. The alarm is sounded once after the expanded blessing of: Who redeems the Jewish people, and once after each of the six additional blessings inserted into the *Amida*, with each sounding of the alarm consisting of three *shofar* blasts (see Ramban; Ritva; *Sefer Hashlama*).

All the more so with shofarot – קל שכן בשופרות: The meaning of this particular statement depends on how the entire passage is understood: Is the Gemara emphasizing the obligation to sound *shofarot* on the last set of fasts, or is it saying that they recite *Aneinu* and offer special prayers on every major communal fast? Alternative readings of the text suggest a version in which the question is whether the recitation of *Aneinu* is considered to be sounding the alarm at all.

והתנאי: ושאָר כָּל מִינֵי פּוֹרְעָנוּת
הַמְתַּרְגְּשׁוֹת, כְּגוֹן חִיבוֹךְ, חֲגָב, זְבוֹב,
וְצִירְעָה, וְיִתוּשִׁין, וְשִׁילּוּחַ נְחָשִׁים
וְעִקְרָבִים, לֹא הָיוּ מִתְרַעְוִין, אֲלָא
צוֹעֲקִין מִדְּצַעֲקָה בְּפֶה, הַתְּרַעָה
בְּשׁוֹפְרוֹת!

The Gemara raises a difficulty against this conclusion. **But isn't it taught in a baraita: And with regard to all other types of calamities than drought that break out, for example scabs,^H plagues of locusts,^H flies, or hornets,^H or mosquitoes,^B or infestations of snakes or scorpions, they would not sound the alarm, but they would cry out.** From the fact that crying out is, according to all opinions, a prayer recited with one's mouth, it follows that **sounding an alarm must be with shofarot.**^H This *baraita* indicates that sounding the alarm with *shofarot* is the response to a serious situation, whereas the *Aneinu* prayer is recited on less worrisome occasions.

תנאי היא, דתנן: על אלו מתרעין
בשבת: על עיר שהקיפוה גיסי או
נהר, ועל ספינה המטורפת בים. רבי
יוסי אומר: לעורה, אבל לא לצעקה.

The Gemara answers: This is a dispute between *tanna'im*, as we learned in a mishna: **For the following calamities they sound the alarm even on Shabbat: For a city that is surrounded by an enemy army or in danger of being flooded by a river,^H or for a ship tossed about at sea. Rabbi Yosei said: An alarm may be sounded on Shabbat to summon help, but it may not be sounded for crying out^N to God.**

במאי? אילימא: בשופרות, שופרות
בשבת מי שרי? אלא לאו בענגו, וקרי
לה התרעה. שמע מינה.

The Gemara clarifies this case. **With what do they sound the alarm? If we say with shofarot, is the sounding of shofarot permitted on Shabbat?** Even when Rosh HaShana occurs on Shabbat, one must refrain from sounding the *shofar* on that day. **Rather, is it not the case that this is referring to the recitation of the Aneinu prayer, and yet the mishna calls this recitation: Sounding the alarm. Conclude from this that there is a tanna who maintains that sounding of the alarm is in fact performed by prayer, as claimed by Rav Yehuda, son of Rav Shmuel bar Sheilat.**

בשמי דרבי יהודה נשיאה הוה צערא.

S The Gemara relates: **During the years of Rabbi Yehuda Nesia there was a trouble that afflicted the community.**

Scabs – חיבוך: If the majority of the members of the community are suffering from boils that ooze with pus, they must fast and sound the alarm. However, if they are suffering from dry scabs, they cry out in prayer (*Shulḥan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayyim 576:5*).

Locusts [ḥagav] – חגב: If a community is struck by locusts, its members must fast and sound the alarm. However, if it is plagued by a relatively harmless type of locust called *ḥagav*, they do not fast or sound the alarm. Nowadays, however, when we cannot distinguish between the different types of locusts, the alarm is sounded for all locusts (*Shulḥan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayyim 576:9*).

Flies or hornets – זבוב וצירעה: If a community is struck by a plague of flies or hornets, its members do not fast or sound the alarm, but only cry out in prayer (*Shulḥan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayyim 576:7*).

Sounding an alarm with shofarot – התרעה בשופרות: In the last set of fasts several blessings are added to the prayers, and in each of those additional blessings *shofarot* are sounded, in accordance with the opinion of Rav Yehuda (*Shulḥan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayyim 575:4*).

A city that is surrounded by an army or a river – עיר שהקיפוה – גיסי או נהר: If a city is surrounded by an enemy army or threatened by an overflowing river, or if a boat is tossed about at sea, or even if a single individual is in mortal danger, the community cries out and offers special supplications even on Shabbat, but they do not sound the *shofar*. However, they may sound the *shofar* to summon people to assist in the rescue efforts, in accordance with the opinion of the anonymous first *tanna*, who agrees with Rabbi Yosei on this point (*Shulḥan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayyim 576:13*).

BACKGROUND

Flies, or hornets, or mosquitoes – זבוב, וצירעה, ויתושין: The appearance of a multitude of these insects is caused by particular weather conditions. An increase of flies is a serious nuisance in its own right, so much so that certain nations had a special cult and a god for the removal of flies. Mosquitoes, apart from the irritation they cause, can spread malaria. The hornet, whose sting is mentioned in the Bible as one of the factors that led to the overthrow of the Canaanites (Exodus 23:28; Joshua 24:12), may be identified with the Oriental hornet, *Vespa orientalis*. Similarly, later historians tell of cities that were abandoned due to a plague of mosquitoes or hornets.



Oriental hornet

NOTES

To summon help but not for crying out – לעורה אבל לא לצעקה: Rashi explains Rabbi Yosei's words in two ways. The commentary on the text follows Rashi's first explanation, according to which Rabbi Yosei permits the community to sound the alarm in times of danger to summon people for assistance even on Shabbat, but he does not allow them to cry out to God in prayer on Shabbat. According to Rashi's second explanation, Rabbi Yosei maintains that on Shabbat

the people may pray for assistance as individuals, but not as a community.

The Rambam (*Sefer Zemanim, Hilkhot Ta'anit 1:6*) maintains that when Rabbi Yosei permits a community in danger to summon people to its rescue, he even permits the *shofar* to be sounded for that purpose. The anonymous first *tanna* agrees with him on this point, as when it comes to saving lives, all the prohibitions of Shabbat are suspended.

NOTES

He did so on his own authority – לגרמיה הוא דעבד: The translation and commentary follow Rashi's interpretation of this phrase in *Berakhot* 48a. Here, however, Rashi and Rabbeinu Hananel offer a different explanation: Rabbi Ami, who issued the ruling that no more than thirteen fasts may be imposed on the community, was speaking on his own behalf, as he personally found fasting difficult.

The question of the inhabitants of Nineveh – שאלת בני נינבה: According to Rashi, their question was whether they should treat the day as an individual fast; the Jerusalem Talmud indicates likewise. However, most early authorities explain that they were inquiring about asking for rain in the blessing of the years. It is possible that the Rambam maintains that their question referred to both issues (*Keren Ora*; see *Sefat Emet*). As for the reason why this request should not be added to the blessing of the years, the commentaries explain that one should not deviate from the formula of blessings established by the Sages. Furthermore, as a blessing of rain in one country can be a curse for others, it is treated as an individual calamity (*Ra'avad*).

HALAKHA

One does not decree more than thirteen fasts on the community – אין גוזרין יותר משלש עשרה תעניות על הצבור: If the community's prayers have not been answered after thirteen fasts, the court may not decree additional fasts. This ruling applies only if the fasts were decreed on account of drought. However, if they were imposed due to some other calamity, the court may continue to decree fasts until the trouble has passed (*Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayyim* 575:6).

The inhabitants of Nineveh – בני נינבה: Individuals who are in need of rain during the summer months may not insert the prayer for rain into the blessing of the years; instead they add it in the blessing: Who listens to prayer. Even if an entire city or a whole country is in need of rain, its residents are treated as individuals, in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi. Some commentaries assert that the prayer for rain is inserted into the blessing: Who listens to prayer, in the silent recitation of the *Amida*, whereas the prayer leader does not recite the prayer for rain when he repeats the *Amida* out loud (*Taz*). In some places it is customary to substitute other forms of petition for rain in the blessing: Who listens to prayer, in place of the usual formula used in the blessing of the years: Give dew and rain (see *Be'er Heitev; Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayyim* 117:2).

גזר תלת עשרה תעניות, ולא איעני. סבר למיגור טפי. אמר ליה רבי אמי: הרי אמרו: אין מטריחין את הצבור יותר מדאי.

אמר רבי אבא בריה דרבי חייה בר אבא: רבי אמי דעבד, לגרמיה הוא דעבד. אלא הכי אמר רבי חייה בר אבא אמר רבי יוחנן: לא שנו אלא לגשמים. אבל לשאר מיני פורענויות מתענין והולכין עד שיענו מן השמים. תניא נמי הכי: בשאמרו שלש וכשאמרו שבע, לא אמרו אלא לגשמים. אבל לשאר מיני פורענויות, מתענין והולכין עד שיענו.

לימא תיהוי תיובתיה דרבי אמי: אמר לך רבי אמי: תנאי היא, דתנא: אין גוזרין יותר משלש עשרה תעניות על הצבור, לפי שאין מטריחין את הצבור יותר מדאי. דברי רבי. רבן שמעון בן גמליאל אומר: לא מן השם הוא זה, אלא מפני שיצא זמנה של רביעה.

שלוחו ליה בני נינבה לרבי: כגון אנן, דאפילו בתקופת תמוז בעינן מטרא, היכי נעביד? ביחידים דמינן או ברבים דמינן? ביחידים דמינן, ובשומע תפלה? או ברבים דמינן, ובברכת השנים? שלח להו: ביחידים דמיתו, ובשומע תפלה.

Rabbi Yehuda Nesia decreed thirteen fasts, but he was not answered. He considered decreeing more fasts until they would be answered. Rabbi Ami said to him that they said: One does not trouble the community excessively, and therefore you should not impose more than thirteen fasts.

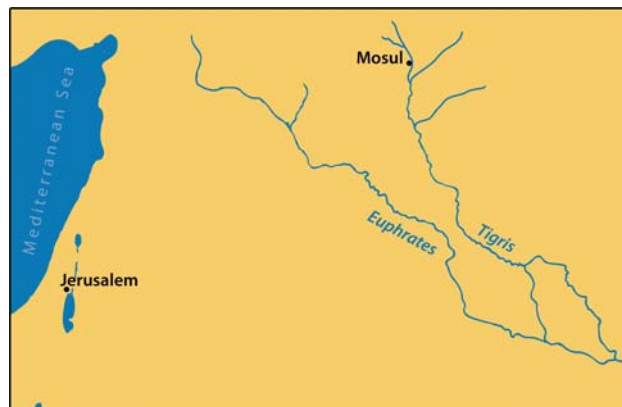
Rabbi Abba, son of Rabbi Hiyya bar Abba, said: When Rabbi Ami acted and issued this ruling, he did so on his own authority,^N as it went against the majority opinion. Rather, Rabbi Hiyya bar Abba said that Rabbi Yoḥanan said as follows: They taught only that the community observes a maximum of thirteen fasts when they are praying for rain. However, with regard to other types of calamities, they continue to fast until they are answered from Heaven. The Gemara comments: This *halakha* is also taught in a *baraita*: When the Sages said three and when they said seven, they spoke only concerning fasts for rain. However, with regard to other types of calamities, they continue to fast until they are answered.

The Gemara suggests: Let us say that this *baraita* is a conclusive refutation of the opinion of Rabbi Ami. The Gemara answers: Rabbi Ami could have said to you that this is a dispute between *tanna'im*, as it is taught in a *baraita*: One does not decree more than thirteen fasts on the community,^H as one does not trouble the community excessively. This is the statement of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi. Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says: This *halakha* is not for that reason. Rather, it is due to the fact that after thirteen fasts the time of the rainfall has already passed, and there is no reason to fast for rain after the rainy season has ended.

The Gemara relates a story on a similar topic: The inhabitants of Nineveh^{HB} sent a question^N to Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi: People such as us, who require rain even during the season of Tammuz, and who live in areas where rain falls all year round, what should we do when there is a drought during the summer? Are we likened to individuals or are we likened to a community? The Gemara explains the practical difference between these two options: Are we likened to individuals and therefore we pray for rain in the blessing: Who listens to prayer? Or are we likened to a community and we pray for rain in the ninth blessing, the blessing of the years? He sent his answer to them: You are likened to individuals and therefore you pray for rain in the blessing: Who listens to prayer.

BACKGROUND

The inhabitants of Nineveh – בני נינבה: The ancient city of Nineveh was located near modern day Mosul, along the Tigris in northwestern Iraq. Little rain falls in this region, about 400 mm annually, while the summers are invariably extremely dry. It is therefore surprising that the people of Nineveh would pray for rain in the summer. Other versions of the text render this name as differently, e.g., *neve*, dwelling place, and it is possible that this incident occurred in a place that had a different climate, where it usually rained in the summer months.



Map showing Mosul in relation to Jerusalem

When the years are as they ought to be – **בְּיָמֵינוּ שֶׁהַשָּׁנִים** – **בְּתִיקוֹן**: Rashi explains that this *baraita* is referring to the order of fasts mentioned in this chapter. The *halakhot* in the mishna for fasts in years of drought apply only when the seasons occur in their regular order, and the Jewish people are living in their land. However, outside Eretz Yisrael, or if the seasons do not occur in their regular manner, fasts are decreed in accordance with the needs of the community in a particular place at a particular time. Conversely, most early authorities maintain that the *baraita* is referring to the prayer for rain in the blessing: Who listens to prayer. The Rambam possibly understands the *baraita* as referring both to the prayer for rain and to the order of the fasts decreed in times of drought (see Rambam's Commentary on the Mishna, *Ta'anit* 1:3; *Sefer Zemanim*, *Hilkhot Ta'anit* 3:10; see *Gevurat Ari*, *Keren Ora*, and *Sefat Emet*.)

And the *halakha* is that one prays in the blessing: Who listens to prayer – **הַלְכָתָא בְּשׁוֹמֵעַ תְּפִלָּה**: The Gemara elsewhere (*Avoda Zara* 8a) states that if an individual wishes to offer a private prayer for financial assistance, he should insert his petition in the blessing of the years. Why, then, should those who are in need of rain during the summer months insert the prayer for rain in the blessing: Who listens to prayer, rather than in the blessing of the years?

One answer is that an individual may insert his prayer for financial well-being in the blessing of the years, as his success will not necessarily cause others to suffer, whereas rain will certainly affect everyone. Another explanation is that the insertion of a private prayer for financial well-being is not considered a fundamental change in the blessing of the years, whereas the addition of a private prayer for rain when it is not needed by the entire Jewish people is indeed a deviation from the text of the blessing.

Alternatively, rain during the summer months, while necessary for certain people, is a curse for others (*Ra'avad*).

If he had a platform opposite his entrance – **הָיָה לוֹ אֶצְטָבָא** – **כִּנְגַד פֶּתַח**: Rashi and Rabbeinu Gershom explain that the platform somewhat concealed the entrance to the store. Others suggest that it was the usual practice to place one's wares on the platform, and therefore the storeowner would signify his mourning by leaving the platform empty (*Shita Mekubbetzet*).

HALAKHA

However, nowadays – **אֲבָל בְּיָמֵינוּ הָיָה**: In places where the rainy season does not parallel that of Eretz Yisrael, if rain has not fallen when it should, individuals embark on a series of three fasts, after which the court imposes a series of up to thirteen fasts upon the members of the community, in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda. Any communal fast decreed outside Eretz Yisrael is considered an individual fast and therefore these fasts begin only at dawn. This is in accordance with the opinion of Shmuel, that there are no communal fasts outside Eretz Yisrael other than the Ninth of Av (*Shulhan Arukh, Orach Hayyim* 575:9–10).

If these have passed and they have not been answered, they decrease in business negotiations – **עָבְרוּ אֵלָיו וְלֹא נִעֲנֶה** – **מִמַּעֲטֵין בְּמִשְׁאָ וּמִתְּנֵין**: If the thirteen fasts have passed and it has still not rained, no additional fasts are imposed on the community, but business transactions of a joyous nature (*Magen Avraham*) and constructions of a joyous nature must be reduced. Likewise, it is permitted to betroth or marry, only if one has not yet fulfilled his obligation to be fruitful and multiply. Interpersonal greetings must be reduced, and Torah scholars may not extend greetings to each other at all. If an uneducated person greets a Torah scholar, the scholar may answer him in a low and solemn tone. Torah scholars once again begin a series of fasts on Mondays and Thursdays, and continue to do so until the end of the month of Nisan (*Shulhan Arukh, Orach Hayyim* 575:7).

מִתִּיבֵי: אָמַר רַבִּי יְהוּדָה: אִימְתִּי? בְּיָמֵינוּ שֶׁהַשָּׁנִים כְּתִיקוֹן וְיִשְׂרָאֵל שְׂרוּיָן עַל אֲדָמָתוֹן. אֲבָל בְּיָמֵינוּ הָיָה, הַכֹּל לְפִי הַשָּׁנִים, הַכֹּל לְפִי הַמְּקוֹמוֹת, הַכֹּל לְפִי הַיָּמִין. אָמַר לֵיהּ: מִתְּנִיתָא רְמִית עֲלֵיהּ דְּרַבִּי? רַבִּי תְּנָא הוּא וּפְלִיגֵי.

The Gemara raises an objection from a *baraita*: Rabbi Yehuda said: When do the *halakhot* concerning the times during which the prayer for rain is recited apply? When the years, i.e., the climate, are as they ought to be^N and the Jewish people are living in their land. However, nowadays,^H when the Jewish people are dispersed around the world, and the climate is not always as it ought to be, all is in accordance with the year, i.e., the local climate, all is in accordance with the place in question, and all is in accordance with the particular time, and therefore one prays for rain in the blessing of the years, as necessary for the local climate. He said to him: You raise a contradiction from a *baraita* against Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi? Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi himself is a *tanna*, and consequently has the authority to dispute the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda.

מֵאִי הוּי עֲלֵהָ? רַב נַחְמָן אָמַר: בְּבִרְכַת הַשָּׁנִים. רַב שֶׁשֶׁת אָמַר: בְּשׁוֹמֵעַ תְּפִלָּה. וְהִלְכָתָא: בְּשׁוֹמֵעַ תְּפִלָּה.

The Gemara asks: What halakhic conclusion was reached about this matter? Rav Nahman said: One prays for rain in the blessing of the years, in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda. Rav Sheshet said: One prays in the blessing: Who listens to prayer, as stated by Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi. The Gemara concludes: And the *halakha* is that if rain is required when it is not the rainy season in Eretz Yisrael, one prays for rain in the blessing: Who listens to prayer.^N

”בְּשָׁנֵינוּ מִטֵּיִן עִם חֲשִׁיכָה, וּבְחֲמִישֵׁי כָּל הַיּוֹם מִפְּנֵי כְבוֹד הַשַּׁבָּת.” אִיבְעִינָא לָהּ: הֵיכִי קָתְנִי? בְּשָׁנֵי מִטֵּיִן עִם חֲשִׁיכָה, וּבְחֲמִישֵׁי כָּל הַיּוֹם מִפְּנֵי כְבוֹד הַשַּׁבָּת? אִו דִּילְמָא. בְּשָׁנֵי מִטֵּיִן, וּבְחֲמִישֵׁי פּוֹתְחִין כָּל הַיּוֹם כּוֹלוֹ?

§ The mishna taught: On Monday they open the stores a little at nightfall, and on Thursday they are permitted to open the stores all day, in deference to Shabbat. A dilemma was raised before the Sages: How is this taught, i.e., what is the meaning of this ruling? Does it mean that on Monday the storeowners open their doors a little at nightfall, and on Thursday they likewise open their doors just a little, but do so all day, in deference to Shabbat? Or perhaps, the mishna means that on Monday they open their doors a little, but all day, and on Thursday they open their doors wide the entire day?

תָּא שְׁמַע, דְּתִנָּא: בְּשָׁנֵי מִטֵּיִן עַד הָעֶרֶב, וּבְחֲמִישֵׁי פּוֹתְחִין כָּל הַיּוֹם כּוֹלוֹ מִפְּנֵי כְבוֹד הַשַּׁבָּת. הֵיכִי לֹא שָׁנִי פְתָחִים, פּוֹתְחִין אַחַד וְנוֹעֵל אַחַד. הֵיכִי לֹא אֶצְטָבָא כִּנְגַד פֶּתַח, פּוֹתְחִין כְּדָרוֹ וְאִינוּ חוֹשֵׁשׁ.

The Gemara answers: Come and hear a resolution of this dilemma, as it is taught in a *baraita*: On Monday they open their doors a little until the evening, and on Thursday they open them the entire day, in deference to Shabbat. If one's shop had two entrances, he opens one and locks one, thereby demonstrating that his store is not open in the normal manner. If he had a platform opposite his entrance^N which conceals the door to his store, he may open in his usual manner without concern, as it is prohibited to open one's store not due to work, but only so that it not appear as though people are eating and drinking on this day.

”עָבְרוּ אֵלָיו וְלֹא נִעֲנֶה, מִמַּעֲטֵין בְּמִשְׁאָ וּמִתְּנֵין, וּבְנִינֵין וּבְנִטְוִיעָה.” תְּנָא: בְּנִינֵין בְּנִינֵין שֶׁל שְׂמִחָה. נְטִיעָה נְטִיעָה שֶׁל שְׂמִחָה. אִי זֶהוּ בְנִינֵין שֶׁל שְׂמִחָה? זֶה הַבּוֹנֵה בֵּית חֲתָנוֹת לְבָנוֹ. אִי זֶה הֵיא נְטִיעָה שֶׁל שְׂמִחָה? זֶה הַנוֹטֵעַ אֲבוּרִנְקֵי שֶׁל מְלָכִים.

§ The mishna taught: If these fasts have passed and they have not been answered, they decrease their engagement in business negotiations^H and in building and planting. It was taught in the *Tosefta* (*Megilla* 5:2): Building means joyful building, not building in general. Likewise, planting means joyful planting, not all planting. The *Tosefta* elaborates: What is joyful building? This is referring to one who builds a wedding chamber for his son. It was customary upon the marriage of a son to build him a small house where the marriage feast was held and where the newlywed couple would live for a certain period of time. What is joyful planting? This is referring to one who plants a splendid, royal garden that does not serve practical purposes, but is only for ornamentation.

וּבְשִׂאֵילֵת שְׁלוֹם. תְּנֵי רַבְנֵי: חֲבָרִים אִין שִׂאֵילֵת שְׁלוֹם בִּינְהוּן. עֲמֵי הָאֲרָץ שְׂשׁוּאֵלִין מִחֲזִירִין לָהֶם בְּשַׁפְּחָה רְפָה וּבְכּוֹבֵד רֹאשׁ. וְהֵן מִתְּעַטְפִּין וְיוֹשְׁבֵין כְּאֲבָלִים וּכְמִנְדִּין, כְּבָנֵי אָדָם הַנוֹפִיִן לְמִקּוֹם, עַד שִׁירְחִמוּ עֲלֵיהֶם מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם.

§ And the mishna further taught that they decrease greetings between one another. The Sages taught: *Haverim*, members of a group dedicated to the precise observance of mitzvot, do not extend greetings between each other at all. *Amei ha'aretz*, common, uneducated people, who extend greetings to *haverim*, do so while unaware that this is inappropriate. The *haverim* answer them in an undertone and in a solemn manner. And *haverim* wrap themselves and sit as mourners and as ostracized ones, like people who have been rebuked by God, until they are shown mercy from Heaven.

An important person is permitted to fall on his face only if – An important person is not permitted to fall on his face when he prays in public (*Taz*, citing Rosh) on behalf of the community, unless he is certain that he will be answered, like Joshua. Some authorities maintain that one may not fall on his face even if he is praying on his own behalf (*Peri Hadash*). Others maintain that it is prohibited for one to fall on his face only when he prays on behalf of the community; however, they add that this stricture applies even if he is praying in private on the community's behalf (*Arukh HaShulhan; Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim* 131:8).

אָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר: אִין אָדָם חָשׁוּב רְשָׁאֵי לִיפּוּל עַל פָּנָיו אֲלָא אִם בְּנִינָה בִּיהוּשֻׁעַ בֶּן נֹון, שְׁנַאֲמַר: "וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל יְהוֹשֻׁעַ קִם לְךָ, לָמָּה זֶה אָתָּה נָפַל עַל פָּנֶיךָ?"

Rabbi Elazar said: An important person is permitted to fall on his face and humiliate himself in front of the community only if^{HN} he is certain that he will be answered like Joshua, son of Nun, as it is stated: "And the Lord said to Joshua, Get you up, why are you fallen upon your face?" (Joshua 7:10). One who is not absolutely certain that he will be answered may not fall on his face in public, as if he is unanswered he will become an object of derision.

וְאָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר: אִין אָדָם חָשׁוּב רְשָׁאֵי לְחַגּוֹר שָׂק אֲלָא אִם בְּנִינָה בִּיהוֹרָם בֶּן אַחְבָּב, שְׁנַאֲמַר: "וַיְהִי, כְּשָׁמַע הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת דְּבָרֵי הָאִשָּׁה, וַיִּקְרַע אֶת בְּגָדָיו, וְהוּא עָבַר עַל הַחֲמָה, וַיֵּרָא הָעָם, וְהִנֵּה הַשָּׂק עַל בְּשָׂרוֹ" וְגו'.

And Rabbi Elazar said: An important person is permitted to gird himself in sackcloth as a sign of mourning and to pray for mercy only if he is certain that he will be answered like Jehoram, son of Ahab, as it is stated: "And it came to pass, when the king heard the words of the woman, that he rent his clothes, now he was passing by upon the wall, and the people looked, and, behold, he had sackcloth within upon his flesh" (II Kings 6:30). Although he was wicked, Jehoram was later answered and the suffering of the Jews was alleviated.

וְאָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר: לֹא הִבֵּל בְּקָרִיעָה וְלֹא הִכָּל בְּנִפְלֵה. מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן בְּנִפְלֵה; יְהוֹשֻׁעַ וְכָלֵב בְּקָרִיעָה. מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן בְּנִפְלֵה, דְּכָתִיב: "וַיִּפּוּל מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן עַל פְּנֵיהֶם". יְהוֹשֻׁעַ וְכָלֵב בְּקָרִיעָה, דְּכָתִיב: "וַיְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן נֹון, וְכָלֵב בֶּן יִפְנֵה... קָרְעוּ בְּגָדֵיהֶם".

And Rabbi Elazar further said: Not all are worthy to petition God by rending^N their garments, and not all are worthy of falling on their faces in times of trouble. Moses and Aaron were worthy of petitioning God by falling on their faces, whereas their students Joshua and Caleb prayed by only rending their garments. The Gemara elaborates: Moses and Aaron petitioned God by falling on their faces, as it is written: "Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces" (Numbers 14:5). Joshua and Caleb prayed by rending their garments, as it is written in the next verse: "And Joshua, son of Nun, and Caleb, son of Jephunneh, who were of those who spied out the land, rent their garments" (Numbers 14:6).

מִתְקִיף לָהּ רַבִּי זֵירָא, וְאִי תִּמָּא רַבִּי שְׁמוּאֵל בַּר נַחֲמָנִי: אִי הוּא כְּתִיב, יְהוֹשֻׁעַ, כְּדָקְאֲמַרְתָּ. הַשְׁתָּא דְּכָתִיב, "וַיְהוֹשֻׁעַ", הָא וְהָא עֲבִיד.

Rabbi Zeira strongly objects to this interpretation, and some say it was Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani who objected: Had the verse written only: Joshua and Caleb, the meaning would be as you said, that Moses and Aaron fell upon their faces whereas Joshua and Caleb only rent their garments. However, now that it is written: "And Joshua," it is possible that the connecting word "and" indicates that Moses and Aaron merely fell upon their faces, while Joshua and Caleb did both this and that, i.e., they rent their clothing in addition to falling upon their faces.

וְאָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר: לֹא הִבֵּל בְּקִימָה, וְלֹא הִכָּל בְּהִשְׁתַּחֲוּיָה. מְלָכִים בְּקִימָה, וְשָׂרִים בְּהִשְׁתַּחֲוּיָה. מְלָכִים בְּקִימָה, דְּכָתִיב: "כֹּה אָמַר ה', גָּאֵל יִשְׂרָאֵל, קְדוֹשׁוֹ"

And Rabbi Elazar further said: Not all dignitaries will worship God in the messianic age by rising, and not all will do so by bowing. Rather, kings will serve God by rising, and ministers by bowing. The Gemara elaborates: Kings by rising, as it is written: "Thus says the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, his Holy One,

NOTES

An important person is permitted to fall on his face only if – Rashi states that the reason is so that he does not suffer public humiliation in the event that his prayers go unanswered. Alternatively, if he is not answered after falling on his face, this might constitute a desecration of God's Name (see Jerusalem Talmud and Meiri). Yet others state that this behavior might upset the community (*Nimmukei Yosef*), or that it is a sign of arrogance and pretentiousness, a display of assurance that one's prayers will be answered (*ge'onim; Talmid HaRamban*). Some say this *halakha* applies only when an individual is praying in public. However, if one is praying in private or on his own behalf, he is permitted to fall on his face (see Ra'avad on Rambam *Sefer Ahava, Hilkhhot Tefilla UVirkat Kohanim* 5:14; see also *Tosafot on Megilla* 22b).

לֹא הִבֵּל – לִיבְרִיעָה: To illustrate his point that not every person is worthy of falling on his face to elicit divine compassion, Rabbi Elazar cites the example of Joshua and Caleb, who rent their garments but did not fall on their faces. Some commentaries note that at one stage Joshua was in fact answered when he fell on his face in prayer, as Rabbi Elazar also stated (*Maharsha*). The *Maharsha* explains that Joshua was not worthy of falling on his face during the lifetimes of Moses and Aaron, as he was not of their stature, and therefore this would have been considered an act of pretentiousness. However, after their death, when Joshua enjoyed the status of king, it was appropriate for him to fall on his face and it was no longer suitable for him to only rend his garments.