

NOTES

As the New Moon is itself a holiday – ראש חודש גופיה – Rashi explains that the New Moon is considered a holiday in accordance with the interpretation of the verse: “He has called a solemn assembly [moed] against me” (Lamentations 1:15), as a reference to the New Moon (see 29a). The term moed is one of the biblical synonyms for a holiday. Others suggest that the verse “And on the day of your rejoicing, and on your appointed seasons, and on your New Moons” (Numbers 10:10) equates New Moons and the other holidays with regard to fasting and eulogizing (Rabbi Elyakim).

אמר מר: מריש ירחא דניסן עד תמניא ביה, איתוקם תמידא. דלא למיספד. למה לי מריש ירחא? לימא מתרי בניסן, וראש חודש גופיה יום טוב הוא ואסור! אמר רב: לא נצרכה אלא לאסור יום שלפניו.

The Gemara seeks to clarify these statements by comparing them to the ruling of the mishna. The Master said above: From the New Moon of Nisan until the eighth of the month, the daily offering was established, and therefore it was decreed not to eulogize on these dates. The Gemara asks: Why do I need Megillat Ta’anit to say: From the New Moon? Let it say: From the second of Nisan, as the New Moon is itself a holiday,^N and it is already prohibited to eulogize on that day. Rav said: It is necessary to mention the New Moon of Nisan only to prohibit eulogizing on the day before, in accordance with the statement in Megillat Ta’anit that fasting on the day before any of the specified commemorative days is also prohibited.

ושלפניו נמי – תיפוק ליה דהוה ליה יום שלפני ראש חודש! ראש חודש דאורייתא הוא, ודאורייתא לא בעי חיזוק.

The Gemara asks: And with regard to the day before the New Moon of Nisan as well, one can derive the prohibition against eulogizing on this day from the fact that it is the day before the New Moon. Since it is prohibited to fast on the New Moon, it is likewise prohibited on the day before. The Gemara answers that as the New Moon is by Torah law and a Torah law requires no reinforcement, it is permitted to fast on the previous day.

דתניא: הימים האלה הכתובין במגילת תענית – לפנייהם ולאחרייהם אסורין. שבתות וימים טובים – הן אסורין, לפנייהן ולאחרייהן מותרין. ומה הפרש בין זה לזה? הללו דברי תורה, ודברי תורה אין צריכין חיזוק. הללו דברי סופרים, ודברי סופרים צריכין חיזוק.

As it is taught in a baraita: With regard to these days that are written in Megillat Ta’anit, it is prohibited to fast before them and after them. However, concerning Shabbatot and Festivals, fasting on those days is prohibited, but before them and after them fasting is permitted. And what is the difference between this and that? These, Shabbat and Festivals, are statements of Torah, and statements of Torah do not require reinforcement, whereas these days mentioned in Megillat Ta’anit are statements of rabbinic law, and statements of rabbinic law require reinforcement.

אמר מר: מתמניא ביה עד סוף המועד, למה לי עד סוף המועד? לימא עד המועד, ומועד גופיה יום טוב הוא ואסור! אמר רב פפא: כדאמר רב: לא נצרכא

§ The Master said above: From the eighth of Nisan until the end of the festival of Passover, the festival of Shavuot was restored and it was decreed not to eulogize. The Gemara asks: Why do I need Megillat Ta’anit to say: Until the end of the Festival? Let it say: Until the Festival, as it is anyway prohibited to eulogize on the festival of Passover. Rav Pappa said that this, too, should be explained as Rav said: It is necessary to mention the first of Nisan

Perek II Daf 18 Amud a

NOTES

In accordance with whose opinion, in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei – כמאן, כרבי יוסי – Some commentaries explain that the Gemara is asking why the halakha is in accordance with the minority opinion of Rabbi Yosei (Rashi; Shita Mekubbetzet). However, most commentaries maintain that this statement is not a question, but a preamble to the difficulty that results if it is claimed that Megillat Ta’anit is in accordance with Rabbi Yosei’s opinion.

LANGUAGE

Matron [matronita] – מטרוניתא: From the Aramaic form of the Latin matrona, meaning woman, especially an important woman. In the time of the Mishna, many women of the noble class admired the Jews and their religion, and some even converted to Judaism.

אלא לאסור יום שלפניו, הכא נמי לא נצרכה אלא לאסור יום שלאחריו. כמאן? כרבי יוסי, דאמר: בין לפניו ובין לאחריו אסור? אי הכי, בעשרים ותשעה נמי, מאי איריא דהוי יומא דמקמי יומא דמיתוקם תמידא? תיפוק ליה דהוה ליה יומא דביתר עשרין ותמניא ביה,

only to prohibit eulogizing on the day before. Here too, it is necessary to mention Passover only to prohibit eulogizing on the following day. The Gemara asks: In accordance with whose opinion is this ruling? It is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei,^N who said that eulogizing is prohibited both on the day before the date recorded in Megillat Ta’anit and on the following day. The Gemara asks: If so, with regard to the twenty-ninth of Adar too, why state specifically that eulogizing is prohibited then because it is the day before the day on which the daily offering was established? Let him derive this prohibition from the fact that it is the day after the twenty-eighth of Adar.

דתניא: בעשרים ותמניא ביה אתת בשורתא טבתא ליהודאי דלא יעידון מן אורייתא. שפעם אחת גזרה מלכות הרשעה שמד על ישראל שלא יעסקו בתורה, ושלא ימולו את בניהם, ושיחללו שבתות. מה עשה יהודה בן שמוע וחבריו? הלכו ונטלו עצה ממטרוניתא אחת שכל גדולי רומי מצויין אצלה.

As it is taught in Megillat Ta’anit: On the twenty-eighth of Adar good tidings came to the Jews, that they would not be restricted from Torah study, and they declared this date a commemorative day. The baraita proceeds to describe the events of this day. As on one occasion the wicked empire, Rome, issued a decree of apostasy against the Jews, that they may not occupy themselves with Torah study, and that they may not circumcise their sons, and that they must desecrate Shabbat. What did Yehuda ben Shammua and his colleagues do? They went and sought the advice of a certain Roman matron [matronita]^L whose company was kept by all the prominent people of Rome.

Cry out [*hafginu*] – **הִפְגִּינוּ**: Possibly related to the Middle Persian verbal stem *ābxōn-*, meaning cry. The root *p-g-n* is also found in the Aramaic of Targum Yonatan with the same meaning.

NOTES

בְּתַעֲנִית – Fasting is prohibited but eulogizing is permitted – **אָסוּר בְּהִסְפַּד מוֹתֵר**: This passage is cited in support of the opinion adopted by most early authorities that the prohibition against fasting applies on all the days recorded in *Megillat Ta'anit*, whereas the prohibition against eulogizing applies to only some of them.

Since it is positioned between two commemorative holidays – הַזְּאִיל וּמוֹטֵל בֵּין שְׁנֵי יָמִים טוֹבִים – As is explained below (19a), the rulings of *Megillat Ta'anit* were later rescinded, which means that fasting and eulogizing are permitted even on the days recorded in the scroll. Consequently, Rav Ashi's statement that a day between two days that have special observances assumes the character of a day with special observances, has no practical significance with respect to those days. Nevertheless, it does have ramifications even today with regard to a different issue. The *tahanun* prayer, a supplication that is recited after the prayer leader's repetition of the *Amida* in the daily morning and afternoon services and that is omitted on Shabbat, Festivals, and days with special observances, is not recited on the second of Sivan, as that day occurs between the first of Sivan, a New Moon, and the third of Sivan, which is the first of the three days immediately preceding the festival of *Shavuot*. These days are treated in some respects as days with special observances.

בֵּין דְּאִילוּ – Since if an event happened and they canceled – **מִקְלַע לִיָּה מִלְתָּא וּבְטְלִינֵיהּ**: The Jerusalem Talmud also discusses the difficulty that arises from the fact that for various reasons fasting and eulogizing were already prohibited on some of the days recorded in *Megillat Ta'anit*, either because they are Festivals by Torah law, or because they commemorate other events also mentioned in *Megillat Ta'anit*. The Jerusalem Talmud explains that *Megillat Ta'anit* simply provides a list of dates on which miracles occurred for the Jewish people, on account of which fasting, and in some cases eulogizing, are prohibited. The scroll lists all of the dates on which these miracles took place, regardless of the fact that fasting and eulogizing may already be prohibited on some of those dates for other reasons.

PERSONALITIES

Rav Hiyya bar Asi – רַב חֵיַיא בַר אָסִי – A Babylonian *amora* of the second generation, Rav Hiyya bar Asi was a very close disciple of Rav, and he presents statements in his teacher's name in dozens of places in the Talmud. He was also the teacher of Rav's son, and he studied with Shmuel and Zeiri. Rav Hiyya bar Asi apparently lived in the city of Korkonya, close to Sura, and seems to have been an artisan, specifically a net maker. He was a colleague of Rav Huna's. Several Sages of his generation and the following one attribute halakhic rulings to Rav Hiyya bar Asi. Additionally, the Talmud speaks of his righteousness and piety.

אָמְרָה לָהֶם: עֲמְדוּ וְהִפְגִּינוּ בַּלַּיְלָה. הֲלָכּוּ וְהִפְגִּינוּ בַּלַּיְלָה, אָמְרוּ: אֵי שָׁמַיִם! לֹא אַחִים אֲנַחְנוּ, לֹא בְּנֵי אָב אֶחָד אֲנַחְנוּ, לֹא בְּנֵי אִם אַחַת אֲנַחְנוּ? מַה נִּשְׁתַּנְּנוּ מִכָּל אוֹמָה וְלִשׁוֹן שְׂאֵתֶם גּוֹזְרִין עֲלֵינוּ גְזֵרוֹת רְעוּת! וּבְטָלוּם. וְאוֹתוֹ יוֹם עֲשָׂאוֹהוּ יוֹם טוֹב.

אָמַר אַבְיִי: לֹא נַעֲרְכָה אֶלָּא לְחַדֵּשׁ מַעֲוָב.

She said to them: Arise and cry out [*hafginu*]^l at night. They went and cried out at night, saying: O Heaven! Are we not brothers? Are we not children of one father? Are we not the children of one mother? How are we different from any other nation and tongue that you single us out and issue against us evil decrees? Their cries were effective, and the authorities annulled the decrees, and they made that day a commemorative holiday.

§ Since the twenty-eighth of Adar is also a commemorative day, according to the opinion of Rabbi Yosei, it is also prohibited to fast on the following day. The question therefore remains: Why was it necessary to list the New Moon of Nisan, when the day before was already prohibited? **Abaye said: It is necessary to include the New Moon of Nisan only for the case of a full, thirty-day month.** If the month of Adar is thirty days long, fasting on the thirtieth day would be prohibited only because it is the day preceding the New Moon, not because it follows the twenty-eighth of Adar.

רַב אֲשִׁי אָמַר: אֶפְיִלוּ תִימָא לְחַדֵּשׁ חָסַר. כָּל שְׁלֹאֲחֵרִיו, בְּתַעֲנִית אָסוּר בְּהִסְפַּד מוֹתֵר. וְזוֹ, הַזְּאִיל וּמוֹטֵל בֵּין שְׁנֵי יָמִים טוֹבִים, עֲשָׂאוֹהוּ בְּיוֹם טוֹב עֲצָמוֹ, וְאֶפְיִלוּ בְּהִסְפַּד נַמִּי אָסוּר.

Rav Ashi said: Even if you say that we are dealing with a deficient month, with twenty-nine days, the inclusion of the New Moon of Nisan can still be explained. The reason is that with regard to all days that follow the dates listed in *Megillat Ta'anit*, **fasting is prohibited but eulogizing is permitted.**ⁿ But in this case, since the twenty-ninth of Adar is positioned between two commemorative holidays,ⁿ the twenty-eighth of Adar and the New Moon of Nisan, the Sages made it like a commemorative holiday in its own right, and it is therefore prohibited even to eulogize on this date.

אָמַר מַר: מִתְּמַנְיָא בֵּיהּ יַעַד סוֹף מוֹעֵדָא אֵיתוֹתֵב חֲגָא דְשַׁבּוּעֵינָא דְלֵא לְמִיִּסְפַּד. לְמַד לִי לְמִימַר מִתְּמַנְיָא בֵּיהּ? לִימָא מִתְּשַׁעָה בֵּיהּ, וְתַמְנֵינָא גּוֹפִיָה אָסוּר, דְּהוּהִי לִיָּה יוֹמָא דְאֵיתוֹקֵם בֵּיהּ תְּמִידָא!

§ The Master said above, in *Megillat Ta'anit*: **From the eighth of Nisan until the end of the festival of Passover, the festival of Shavuot was restored, and it was decreed not to eulogize during this period.** The Gemara asks: **Why do I need it to say: From the eighth of Nisan? Let the tanna say: From the ninth of Nisan, and the eighth itself will still be prohibited because, as stated earlier, it is the day on which the daily offering was established.**

בֵּין דְּאִילוּ מִקְלַע לִיָּה מִלְתָּא וּבְטְלִינֵיהּ לְשַׁבְּעָה, תְּמַנְיָא גּוֹפִיָה אָסוּר, דְּהוּהִי לִיָּה יוֹמָא קָמָא דְאֵיתוֹתֵב בֵּיהּ חֲגָא דְשַׁבּוּעֵינָא.

The Gemara answers: **Since if a calamitous event happened and they canceledⁿ the seven days commemorating the establishment of the daily offering, the eighth day itself will remain prohibited, as it is the first day on which the festival of Shavuot was restored.** Since this date is not merely the last of the series for the daily offering, but it also commemorates the restoration of *Shavuot*, it is not affected by the cancellation of the previous seven days.

הֲשֵׁתָא דְאֵתִית לְהַכִּי, עֲשָׂרִים וְתִשְׁעָה נַמִּי, בֵּין דְּאִילוּ מִקְלַע מִלְתָּא וּבְטְלִינֵיהּ לְעֲשָׂרִים וְתַמְנֵינָא, עֲשָׂרִין וְתִשְׁעָה גּוֹפִיָה אָסוּר, דְּהוּהִי לִיָּה יוֹמָא דְמַקְמֵי יוֹמָא דְאֵיתוֹקֵם תְּמִידָא.

The Gemara notes: **Now that you have arrived at this conclusion, the same logic can be applied to the twenty-ninth of Adar as well: Since if a calamitous event happened and they canceled the commemoration of the twenty-eighth of Adar, nevertheless, the twenty-ninth day itself will remain prohibited, as it is the first day on which the daily offering was established.**

אֵיתַמַּר: רַב חֵיַיא בַר אָסִי אָמַר רַב: הֲלָכָה כְּרַבִּי יוֹסִי. וְשׂוּמְאֵל אָמַר: הֲלָכָה כְּרַבִּי מֵאִיר.

It was stated that there is a dispute between *amora'im*: Rav Hiyya bar Asi^p said that Rav said: **The halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei, that with regard to all the days mentioned in *Megillat Ta'anit* on which eulogizing is prohibited, it is likewise prohibited to eulogize on the day before and the day after.** **And Shmuel said: The halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Meir, the tanna of the unattributed mishna, who said that although it is prohibited to eulogize on the day before, it is permitted on the day after.**

Bali – בְּאֵלִי: An *amora* of Eretz Yisrael of the third generation, Bali was a student of Rabbi Ḥiyya bar Abba, although he also transmits statements in the name of other Sages. His name is apparently derived from a foreign language; some scholars believe that it is Arabic in origin.

ומי אמר שמואל הכי והתנא: רבן שמעון בן גמליאל אומר: ומה תלמוד לומר בהון. בהון שתי פעמים? לומר לך שהן אסורין, לפניהן ולאחריהן מותרין. ואמר שמואל: הלכה כרבן שמעון בן גמליאל!

The Gemara asks: **And did Shmuel actually say this? But isn't it taught in a *baraita* that Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says: And what is the meaning when *Megillat Ta'anit* states: On them, on them, twice, in the phrases: Not to eulogize on them, and: Not to fast on them. This phrase is repeated to say to you that fasting and eulogizing on these days themselves is prohibited, but on the days before and on the following days it is permitted. And Shmuel said: The *halakha* is in accordance with the opinion of Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel.** How, then, can it be said that Shmuel ruled in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Meir?

מעיקרא סבר בין דליבא תנא דמיקל כרבי מאיר, אמר הלכה כרבי מאיר. בין דשמעיה לרבן שמעון דמיקל טפי, אמר הלכה כרבן שמעון בן גמליאל.

The Gemara answers: **Initially, Shmuel maintained that since there is no other *tanna* as lenient as Rabbi Meir, he said that the *halakha* is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Meir. When he heard that the opinion of Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel was more lenient, he said that the *halakha* is in accordance with the opinion of Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel.** Shmuel consistently ruled in the most lenient manner possible on this issue.

וכן אמר בְּאֵלִי אמר רבי חייה בר אבא אמר רבי יוחנן: הלכה כרבי יוסי. אמר ליה רבי חייה לבאלי: אסברא לך. כי אמר רבי יוחנן הלכה כרבי יוסי, אדלא להתענא.

And similarly, the Sage Bali^o said that Rabbi Ḥiyya bar Abba said that Rabbi Yoḥanan said: **The *halakha* is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei.** The Gemara relates that Rabbi Ḥiyya bar Abba said to Bali: **I will explain this ruling to you. When Rabbi Yoḥanan said that the *halakha* is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei, he was not referring to all matters. Rather, he spoke specifically with regard to the day before those dates concerning which *Megillat Ta'anit* said: Fasting is prohibited.** However, with regard to those days on which it is prohibited to eulogize, he did not rule in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei, as Rabbi Yoḥanan maintains that eulogizing on the following day is permitted.

ומי אמר רבי יוחנן הכי? והאמר רבי יוחנן: הלכה כסתם משנה. ותנן: אף על פי שאמרו מקדימין ולא מאחרין

The Gemara asks: **And did Rabbi Yoḥanan actually say this? But didn't Rabbi Yoḥanan say as a principle that the *halakha* is always in accordance with an unattributed mishna. And we learned in a mishna: Although the Sages said, with regard to reading of the Scroll of Esther, that one may read it earlier but one may not read it later,**

Perek II Daf 18 Amud b

NOTES

The reading of the Scroll of Esther – קריאת המגלה – As explained at the beginning of tractate *Megilla*, the Sages instituted that in addition to the official days of Purim, i.e., the fifteenth of Adar for residents of walled cities from the time of Joshua, and the fourteenth for everyone else, sometimes the Scroll of Esther may be read on the eleventh, twelfth, or thirteenth of Adar. The basic principle is that villagers can read the scroll early, on a Monday or Thursday, when they gather together. If Purim occurs on a Tuesday or Friday, they read it one day earlier, on the thirteenth. If Purim occurs on a Wednesday or Shabbat, they read it on the twelfth, and if it occurs on a Sunday they read it even earlier, on the eleventh.

מותרין בהספד ותענית. אימת? אילימא בני חמיסר וקא קרו ליה בארביסר, ומי שרי?

as the Sages decreed that in certain places one may read the Scroll of Esther^N on the eleventh, twelfth, or thirteenth of Adar, nevertheless, it is **permitted to eulogize and fast** on these days. The Gemara clarifies: **When does this ruling apply? If we say that it applies to those in walled cities, who normally read the scroll on the fifteenth of Adar and yet this year they read it on the fourteenth, a day on which they normally are permitted to fast and eulogize, but this cannot be the case, as are they permitted to fast and eulogize at all on these days?**

והכתיב במגילת תענית: יום ארבעה עשר בו ויום חמשה עשר בו יומי פוריא אינון, דלא למיספד בהון. ואמר רבא: לא נצרכא אלא לאסור את של זה בזה ואת של זה בזה.

But isn't it written in *Megillat Ta'anit*: The day of the fourteenth of Adar and the day of the fifteenth of Adar are the days of Purim, on which eulogizing is prohibited.^H And Rava said: Since these days are already mentioned in the Bible (Esther 9:18–19), it is necessary to state this *halakha* in *Megillat Ta'anit* only to prohibit those living in these walled cities from fasting and eulogizing on this date, the fourteenth, and those living in these non-walled cities from fasting and eulogizing on this date, the fifteenth.

HALAKHA

These are the days of Purim, on which eulogizing is prohibited – יומי פוריא אינון, דלא למיספד בהון – are prohibited on the fourteenth and fifteenth of Adar both

for those living in walled cities, who celebrate Purim on the fifteenth, and for residents of non-walled cities, who observe Purim on the fourteenth (*Shulḥan Arukh, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 696:3).

תענית בשלשה עשר באדר – A fast on the thirteenth of Adar – There is a fundamental problem here with regard to the fast of Esther, which is a fixed communal fast on the thirteenth of Adar. Since the cancellation of *Megillat Ta'anit* did not include the days of Purim, it should be prohibited to fast as well as to eulogize on the previous day, as accepted by most authorities.

Many resolutions have been offered for this difficulty. Some say that when *Megillat Ta'anit* was rescinded, the prohibition against fasting on the days before all commemorative days was annulled, even if the days of Purim itself were not canceled (Ra'avad, citing Rif). Others say that as Trajan's Day, which was the fixed commemorative day for this date, was annulled, the following day is not significant enough to render it prohibited to fast on the twelfth (Ramban; *Sefer Hashlama*). Yet others maintain that the *halakha* is in accordance with the opinion of Shmuel, that with regard to all of these dates, the day before them is not prohibited (Ritva; *Shita Mekubbetzet*; Meiri).

Another suggestion is that as the days of Purim are written in the Bible, they are considered like statements of Torah, which do not require reinforcement, and therefore it is permitted to fast on the day before (Ran; Rosh). Alternatively, as this fast is merely in commemoration of the events of Purim, its observance is not considered a sign of mourning (Ra'avad).

אמרו ליה רבנן יום – It is Trajan's Day – The Sages said to him, it is Trajan's Day – There is a dispute between the early authorities with regard to the *halakha* that *Megillat Ta'anit* has been rescinded and that all the dates listed there are like regular dates, apart from Hanukkah and Purim. Some maintain that *Megillat Ta'anit* has been canceled only with regard to an individual fast performed in private. A fast of this kind may be performed on the days enumerated in *Megillat Ta'anit*; however, a communal fast may not be declared on those days (Ra'avad). The Ra'avad bases his ruling on the fact that Rav Nahman justified his decree of a fast on the twelfth of Adar not because *Megillat Ta'anit* had been canceled, but because Shemaya and Ahiya were killed on that day. Conversely, other authorities reject this proof, claiming that Rav Nahman merely wanted to provide a more specific reason for fasting on this day (*Sefer Hashlama*).

BACKGROUND

שמעיה ואחיה – Shemaya and Ahiya – It is unknown who Shemaya and Ahiya were. According to some opinions, they were the martyrs of Lod (see *Bava Batra* 10b), the pair who accepted responsibility for the murder of the Caesar's daughter in their hometown of Lod in a false confession that spared the rest of the inhabitants from death.

ניקנור – Nicanor, *Νικάνωρ* in Greek, was a general in the army of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. He probably served as the ruler's representative in Judea. On the seventeenth of Adar in the year 161 BCE his army was routed near the town of Haddasha, and he himself was killed.

טוריינוס – Trajan – The external sources do not fully clarify the events referred to here. Apparently, this episode occurred in the context of the great revolts of the Jews against the Romans toward the end of the reign of the Roman emperor Trajan (98–117 CE). It is likely that the man who ordered the deaths of Luleyanus and Pappas was a captain in Trajan's army, who was later defeated in battle and killed. Luleyanus and Pappas were probably not executed at the time, which is why the date was established as a commemorative day.

ואלא. בני ארביסר וקא קרי ליה בתליסר. יום ניקנור הוא! ואלא. בני ארביסר וקא קרי ליה בתריסר. יום טוריינוס הוא!

The Gemara continues its explanation of the difficulty. **But rather**, the mishna must be referring to those who normally read on the fourteenth of Adar, but who read the Scroll of Esther early, on the thirteenth. However, it is already prohibited to fast on the thirteenth,ⁿ as it is Nicanor's Day, which is a commemorative day in its own right. **But rather**, you will say that the mishna is referring to those residents of cities who normally read on the fourteenth, but who read it early that year, on the twelfth; however, the twelfth of Adar is also a commemorative day, as it is Trajan's Day.

אלא לאו דקא קרו ליה בתדיסר, וקתני: מותר בהספד ובתענית!

Rather, isn't the mishna referring to a case where they read the Scroll of Esther on the eleventh of Adar, and nevertheless that mishna teaches that it is permitted to eulogize and fast on this day, despite the fact that it is the day before Trajan's Day? The opinion in this unattributed mishna is not in accordance with that of Rabbi Yosei, which means that there is a contradiction between the two statements of Rabbi Yoḥanan.

לא. בני ארבעה עשר וקא קרו ליה בתריסר. ודקאמרת יום טריינוס הוא, יום טריינוס גופיה בטולי בטלחה, הואיל ונהרגו בו שמעיה ואחיה אחיו. כי הא דרב נחמן גזר תעניתא בתריסר. אמרו ליה רבנן: יום טוריינוס הוא! אמר להו: יום טוריינוס גופיה בטולי בטלחה, הואיל ונהרגו בו שמעיה ואחיה אחיו.

The Gemara answers: **No**; the mishna is actually referring to those who normally read on the fourteenth, but who read it that year on the twelfth of Adar. **And** with regard to that which you said, that it is Trajan's Day, Trajan's Day itself was annulled and is no longer celebrated, since Shemaya and his brother Ahiya^b were killed on that day. We learn this as in the incident when Rav Nahman decreed a fast on the twelfth of Adar and the Sages said to him: **It is Trajan's Day.**ⁿ **He said to them: Trajan's Day itself was annulled, since Shemaya and his brother Ahiya were killed on that day.**

ותיפוק ליה דהיה ליה יום שלפני ניקנור! אמר רב אשי: השתא איהו גופיה בטלחה, משום יום ניקנור ניקום ונגזר?

The Gemara asks: **And let him derive** that fasting on the twelfth is prohibited in any case, as it is the day before Nicanor's Day. **Rav Ashi said: Now** that with regard to Trajan's Day itself, they annulled it, will we then arise and issue a decree not to fast on this date due to the following day, Nicanor's Day?

מאי ניקנור, ומאי טוריינוס? דתניא: ניקנור אחד מאפרכי יוונים היה. ובכל יום יום היה מניף ידו על יהודה וירושלים, ואומר: אימתי תפול בידי וארמסנה? וכשגברה מלכות בית חשמונאי ונצחום, קצצו בהונות ידיו ורגליו ותלאום בשערי ירושלים, ואמרו: פה שהיה מדבר בגאווה וידיים שהיו מניפות על ירושלים – תעשה בהם נקמה.

In relation to the above, the Gemara inquires: **What is the origin of Nicanor's Day and what is the origin of Trajan's Day? As it is taught in a baraita: Nicanor^b was one of the generals [iparkhei]^t in the Greek army, and each and every day he would wave his hand over Judea and Jerusalem and say: When will this city fall into my hands, and I shall trample it? And when the Hasmonean monarchy overcame the Greeks and emerged victorious over them, they killed Nicanor in battle, cut off his thumbs and big toes, and hung them on the gates of Jerusalem, saying: The mouth that spoke with pride, and the hands that waved over Jerusalem, may vengeance be taken against them.** This occurred on the thirteenth of Adar.

מאי טוריינוס? אמרו: כשבקש טוריינוס להרוג את לוליניוס ופפוס אחיו בלודיקא, אמר להם: אם מעמו של חנניה, מישאל, ועזריה אתם, יבא אליהם ויציל אתכם מידי כדרך שהציל את חנניה, מישאל, ועזריה מיד נבוכדנצר. אמרו לו: חנניה, מישאל, ועזריה צדיקים גמורין היו, וראויין היו לעשות להם נס, ונבוכדנצר מלך הגוים היה, וראוי לעשות נס על ידו.

What is the origin of Trajan's Day? They said in explanation: When Trajan^b sought to kill the important leaders Luleyanus^t and his brother Pappas in Laodicea, he said to them: If you are from the nation of Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, let your God come and save you from my hand, just as He saved Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah from the hand of Nebuchadnezzar. Luleyanus and Pappas said to him: Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah were full-fledged righteous people, and they were worthy that a miracle should be performed for them, and Nebuchadnezzar was a legitimate king who rose to power through his merit, and it is fitting that a miracle be performed through him.

LANGUAGE

Generals [iparkhei] – אפרכי: From the Greek *επαρχος*, *eparkhos*, meaning the commander of an important military unit.

Luleyanus – לוליניוס: This was the Hebrew pronunciation of the Latin name Julianus.

LANGUAGE

Two officials [*diyoflei*] – דְּיוֹפְלֵי: This word has been explained in various ways, and several readings of the text have been proposed. This particular reading is apparently from the Greek expression διπλοῖ, *diploi*, meaning double.

HALAKHA

One may not decree a fast on New Moons – אין גזרין: One does not decree a fast on the community on a New Moon, on Hanukkah, on Purim, or on the intermediate days of a Festival. However, if the community has already started a series of fasts, even if it has observed only a single one, and the next fast in the series falls on one of these days with special observances, the fast is observed until nightfall (*Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim 572:2*).

NOTES

And how many are a beginning – וכמה הויא התחלה: The Rambam indicates in his Commentary on the Mishna that this beginning does not refer to the start of a cycle of fasts, but to the beginning of a fast day itself. It is possible that he explains the mentions of one and three in the Gemara as referring not to the number of fasts but to the number of hours that people had already fasted (Rabbi Ovadya MiBartenura).

ואותו רשע הקדוש הוא, ואינו ראוי לעשות
נס על ידו. ואנו נתחייבנו בלילה למקום.
ואם אין אתה הורגנו, הרבה הורגים יש לו
למקום, והרבה דובין ואריות יש לו למקום
בעולמו שפוגעין בנו והורגין אותנו. אלא
לא מסרנו הקדוש ברוך הוא בידך אלא
שעתיד ליפרע דמינו מידך.

אף על פי כן, הרגן מיד. אמרו: לא זזו משם
עד שבאו דיופלי מרומי ופצעו את מוחו
בגזרין.

”אין גזרין תענית על הצבור בתחלה
בחמישי”, כו. “אין גזרין תענית בראשי
חדשים”, כו. וכמה הויא התחלה? רב
אחא אמר: שלש. רבי אסי אמר: אחת.

אמר רב יהודה אמר רב: זו דברי רבי
מאיר שאמר משום רבן גמליאל. אבל
חכמים אומרים: מתענה ומשלים. דרש מר
זוטרא משמיה דרב הונא: הלכה: מתענה
ומשלים.

הדרן עלך סדר תעניות כיצד

But this wicked man, Trajan, is a commoner, not a real king, and it is not fitting that a miracle be performed through him. Luleyanus and Pappas continued: And we are not wholly righteous, and have been condemned to destruction by the Omnipresent for our sins. And if you do not kill us, the Omnipresent has many other executioners. And if men do not kill us, the Omnipresent has many bears and lions in His world that can hurt us and kill us. Instead, the Holy One, Blessed be He, placed us into your hands only so that He will avenge our blood in the future.

Even so, Trajan remained unmoved by their response and killed them immediately. It is said that they had not moved from the place of execution when two officials [*diyoflei*]¹ arrived from Rome with permission to remove Trajan from power, and they split his skull with clubs. This was viewed as an act of divine retribution and was established as a commemorative day.

§ The mishna taught: One may not decree a fast on the community starting on a Thursday, so as not to cause prices to rise. Furthermore, one may not decree a fast on New Moons,^h on Hanukkah, or on Purim. However, if one began a set of fasts, one does not interrupt the sequence for these days. The Gemara asks: And how many fasts are considered a beginning?ⁿ Rav Aḥa said: If one fasted three fasts before the festive day. Rabbi Asi said: Even if one fasted one fast before it.

Rav Yehuda said that Rav said: This halakha of the mishna that a fast that occurs on a festival is not observed, is the statement of Rabbi Meir, who said it in the name of Rabban Gamliel. However, the Rabbis say: If a communal fast occurs on one of these days, one must fast and complete the fast until nightfall. Mar Zutra taught in the name of Rav Huna: The practical halakha is in accordance with the opinion of the Rabbis, that one fasts and completes his fast until nightfall.

מתני' סדר תעניות אלו האמור ברביעה ראשונה. אבל צמחים ששנו, מתריעין עליהן מיד. וכן שפסקו גשמים בין גשם לגשם ארבעים יום, מתריעין עליהן, מפני שהיא מכת בצורת.

יִרְדוּ לְצִמְחֵינָם אֲבָל לֹא יִרְדוּ לְאֵילָן, לְאֵילָן וְלֹא לְצִמְחֵינָן, לֹוּה וְלֹוּהָ אֲבָל לֹא לְבוֹרוֹת, לְשִׁיחֵינָן, וְלִמְעָרוֹת, מִתְרִיעִין עֲלֵיהֶן מִיָּד. וְכֵן עִיר שֶׁלֹּא יִרְדוּ עָלֶיהָ גְשָׁמִים, דְּכָתוּב: "וְהִמְטַרְתִּי עַל עִיר אַחַת, וְעַל עִיר אַחַת לֹא אֶמְטֵר, חֶלְקָהּ אַחַת תִּמְטֵר" וְגו',

MISHNA The order of these fasts of increasing severity, as explained in Chapter One, is stated only in a case when the first rainfall has not materialized. However, if there is vegetation that grew and its appearance changed^N due to disease, the court does not wait at all; they cry out about it immediately.^{NH} And likewise, if rain ceased for a period of forty days between one rainfall and another, they cry out about it because it is a plague of drought.

If sufficient rain fell for the vegetation but not enough fell for the trees; or if it was enough for the trees but not for the vegetation; or if sufficient rain fell for both this and that, i.e., vegetation and trees, but not enough to fill the cisterns, ditches, and caves with water to last the summer, they cry out about it immediately. And likewise, if there is a particular city upon which it did not rain, while the surrounding area did receive rain, this is considered a divine curse, as it is written: "And I caused it to rain upon one city, but caused it not to rain upon another city; one piece was rained upon, and the portion upon which it did not rain withered" (Amos 4:7).

HALAKHA

The dates of communal fasts – זמן תענית צבור – The order of three and seven fasts applies only if no rain fell at all. However, if rain initially fell in the usual manner, and later ceased, or if the vegetation started to dry out, or if not enough rain fell at the right time for seeds, trees, or water caves, in all these cases the court proclaims a fast and the people cry out without delay (*Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayyim 575:8*).

NOTES

Vegetation that changed – צמחים ששנו – According to most commentaries, this means that the vegetation noticeably changed appearances as it began to wither, or due to disease (Rabbeinu Ḥananel; Rabbeinu Gershom; Rid). Conversely, Rashi and several other commentaries maintain that different plants, i.e., weeds, sprouted in place of the ones that had been sown.

They cry out about it immediately – מתריעין עליהן מיד – The expression: They cry out, is repeated many times in the course of this chapter. Some commentaries explain that this phrase invariably means that the *shofar* is sounded without a fast being proclaimed. If the rain is late, the court proclaims a series of fasts, and the *shofar* is sounded on the last seven of them. In contrast, in the cases discussed in this chapter, the *shofar* is sounded, but fasts are not proclaimed (Ra'avad). This interpretation is based on the argument that the circumstances described in this chapter are less threatening than a delay in the first rain of the season. If the vegetation takes on an unusual appearance or if there is a forty-day interval between the first and second rains of the season, these problems require a less drastic response than if there is no rainfall.

Since the court first decrees a series of less stringent fasts for a lack of rain, and only if the drought persists does it decree the more stringent fasts on which the *shofar* is sounded, it stands to reason that when there is rain but the crops appear unusual, or if there is an interval between rainstorms, the court should

not immediately decree a series of severe fasts that include the blowing of the *shofar*.

However, most early authorities maintain that the expression: They cry out, generally means that the court immediately decrees a series of the most severe fasts on which the *shofar* is sounded (Rashi; *Tosafot*; Ramban; Ritva; Ran). This definition is consistently applied unless it is obvious from the context that the *shofar* is sounded without a fast being proclaimed, e.g., if Rabbi Akiva says that they cry out but do not fast, or if the Gemara states that an alarm is sounded for the recitation of special prayers, as in the following case: For these they cry out on Shabbat.

Although the total lack of rain is a greater calamity than the disasters discussed in this chapter, if rain is late the court first proclaims a series of less stringent fasts and then gradually increases their severity. This is because if the month of Kislev has arrived and rain has still not fallen, the situation is not yet calamitous and may yet be rectified. Therefore, the proclaimed fasts are less stringent. It is only after the drought has lasted for some time and the difficulties caused by the failure of rain have become very serious that the most severe fasts are proclaimed and the *shofar* is sounded.

If contrast, if the crops begin to grow strangely, or if there is a forty-day interval between rainstorms, this poses a serious threat, and therefore the court immediately proclaims fasts of the most severe kind.