

NOTES

Human food may not be fed to animals – מאכל אדם אין – מאכלין לבהמה: It has been pointed out, based on numerous sources, that there is no prohibition against feeding animals food fit for human consumption (Ra'avad). Some commentaries explain that although one may indeed feed animals food fit for humans, it is prohibited to go out and buy this food with the intention of using it as animal fodder. Others suggest that one may feed animals with a small amount of food fit for humans, but not with large quantities of this food. Alternatively, there is a difference between food that is clearly intended for humans and food that is fit for humans but is also commonly given to animals, e.g., carobs and gourds. Lastly, a distinction can be drawn between places where animal fodder is available and places where only food fit for human consumption is available (see Meiri and *Maḥatzit HaShekel*).

The commentaries ask: If it is not permitted to use food fit for human consumption as animal fodder, as this is disrespectful to the food, how could Rav Huna have thrown the vegetables into the river? Rashi explains that Rav Huna intended that the vegetables should drift downstream and be eaten by whoever found them. Others suggest that this was not a recognizable show of disrespect, as those who saw the vegetables in the river would assume that they were already rotten when discarded (*Petaḥ Einayim*, citing Rosh).

HALAKHA

Human food may not be fed to animals – מאכל אדם אין – מאכלין לבהמה: One may not feed food that is fit for human consumption to animals, as this is a disrespectful use of the food (*Magen Avraham; Shulḥan Arukh, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 171:1).

BACKGROUND

A remedy against Shivta – מילתא דשיבתא: Shivta is mentioned in several places in the Gemara as an evil spirit that rests on the hands of one who neglects to wash his hands at the appropriate times (*Yoma* 77b; *Hullin* 107b). In their responsa, the *ge'onim* explain that it is a disease that afflicts young children, causing them to waste away and die.

וְכָל פְּנֵי דַמְעָלֵי שַׁבְּתָא הוּוּ מְשַׁדְּרֵי שְׁלוּחָא לְשׁוּקָא, וְכָל יִרְקָא דְהוּוּ פְּיִישׁ לְהוּ לְגִינְאֵי זְבִין לֵיהּ וְשָׂדֵי לֵיהּ לְנַהֲרָא. וְלִיתְבִּיחָא לְעֵנִיִּים! זְמַנֵּן דְסַמְכָא דְעֵתֵיהּ, וְלֹא אָתוּ לְמִיזְבֵּן. וְלְשָׂדֵייהּ לְבַהֲמָה! קַסְבֵּר מֵאֲכַל אָדָם אִין מֵאֲכִילִין לְבַהֲמָה.

Rafram bar Pappa further relates: **And every Shabbat eve, in the afternoon, Rav Huna would send a messenger to the marketplace, and he would purchase all the vegetables that were left with the gardeners who sold their crops, and throw them into the river. The Gemara asks: But why did he throw out the vegetables? Let him give them to the poor.** The Gemara answers: If he did this, the poor would sometimes rely on the fact that Rav Huna would hand out vegetables, and they would not come to purchase any. This would ruin the gardeners' livelihood. The Gemara further asks: **And let him throw them to the animals.** The Gemara answers: **He holds that human food may not be fed to animals,^{NH} as this is a display of contempt for the food.**

וְלֹא לִיזְבִּיחָא כְּלָל! נִמְצְאָתָּ מִכְשִׁילִין לְעֵתֵיהּ לְבָא.

The Gemara objects: **But if Rav Huna could not use them in any way, he should not purchase the vegetables at all.** The Gemara answers: If nothing is done, you would have been found to have caused a **stumbling block for them in the future.** If the vegetable sellers see that some of their produce is left unsold, the next week they will not bring enough for Shabbat. Therefore, Rav Huna made sure that the vegetables were all bought, so that the sellers would continue to bring them.

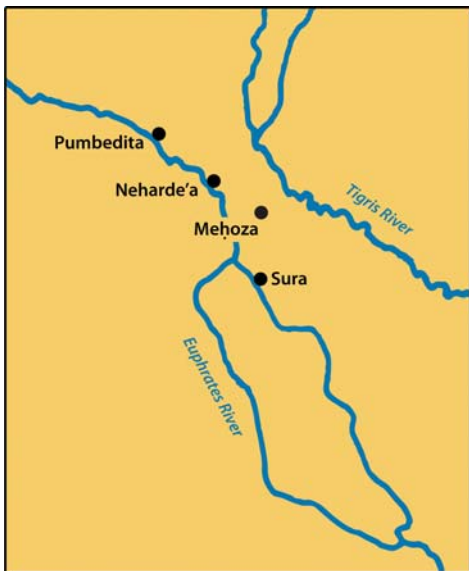
כִּי הוּוּ לֵיהּ מִילְתָּא דְאֶסְוִתָּא, הוּוּ מְלִי בּוּזָא מִיַּמִּינָהּ וְתַלֵּי לֵיהּ בְּסִיפָא דְבֵיתָא וְאָמַר: כָּל דְּבַעֵי, לִיתֵי וְלִישְׁקוּל. וְאִיכָא דְאֶמְרֵי מִילְתָּא דְשִׁיבְתָא הוּוּ גְמִיר, וְהוּוּ מִנַּח בּוּזָא דְמִיָּא וְדָלִי לֵיהּ וְאָמַר: כָּל דְּצָרִיךְ, לִיתֵי וְלִיעוּל, דְלֹא לְסַתְבֵּן.

Another custom of Rav Huna was **that when he had a new medicine, he would fill a water jug with the medicine and hang it from the doorpost of his house, saying: All who need, let him come and take from this new medicine. And there are those say: He had a remedy against the demon Shivta^B that he knew by tradition, that one must wash his hands for protection against this evil spirit. And to this end, he would place a water jug and hang it by the door, saying: Anyone who needs, let him come to the house and wash his hands, so that he will not be in danger.**

כִּי הוּוּ כְּרִיךְ רִיפְתָּא, הוּוּ פְּתַח לְבִיחָהּ וְאָמַר: כָּל מֵאֵן דְּצָרִיךְ, לִיתֵי וְלִיכּוּל. אָמַר רַבָּא: כּוּלְהוּ מְצִינָא מְקִימְנָא, לְבַר מְהָא דְלֹא מְצִינָא לְמִיעֵבַד.

The Gemara further relates: **When Rav Huna would eat bread, he would open the doors to his house, saying: Whoever needs, let him come in and eat. Rava said: I can fulfill all these customs of Rav Huna, except for this one, which I cannot do,**

Perek III
Daf 21 Amud a



Map of central Babylonia

משום דנפישו בני חילא דמחוזא.

due to the fact that there are many soldiers in the city of Mehoza,^B and if I let them all eat, they will take all the food I own.

BACKGROUND

Meḥoza – מחוזא: A city on the Tigris located near the Malka River, Meḥoza was a large commercial city, and most of its inhabitants were Jews. Unlike most other Jewish communities, Meḥoza's Jews generally earned their living from commerce. Jews from different countries of origin lived in Meḥoza, and many converts lived there as well. After Neharde'a was destroyed in 259 CE, its

yeshiva moved to Meḥoza. Meḥoza became the Torah center of leading scholars such as Rav Naḥman; Rav Sheshet; Rava, who later became head of the yeshiva in Meḥoza; Ameimar; and Rav Kahana, Rav Ashi's teacher. After Abaye's death, c. 338 CE, the yeshiva in Pumbedita, then headed by Rava, also moved to Meḥoza for a period of time.

Ilfa – אילפא: Ilfa was from the first generation of *amora'im* in Eretz Yisrael. In the Jerusalem Talmud, he is known as Hilfai. Apparently, he was a disciple of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi, and he also studied under some of his rabbi's students. As related here, he was a friend of Rabbi Yoḥanan's. Ilfa was the older of the pair, and indeed Rabbi Yoḥanan and his disciples transmit statements in his name. Still, Ilfa also asked Rabbi Yoḥanan questions. Ilfa had a very sharp mind and was one of the greatest Torah scholars of his generation. Furthermore, he also taught *aggada*, as several statements of *aggada* are attributed to him. Likewise, stories are related of his piety and great righteousness.

NOTES

נישדי עליהו האי – Let us knock this wall down upon them – גודא: Some commentaries explain this story in light of the tradition that Satan brings charges against a person specifically in his hour of danger. After Ilfa and Rabbi Yoḥanan put aside their Torah studies, the angels waited until the two men entered a dangerous place before considering what should be done with them (Rav Ya'akov Emden).

ולא – And I do not resolve his problem from a mishna – פשטינא ליה ממתניתין: The Gemara elsewhere (*Eiruvim* 92a) states a principle in the form of a question: If Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi did not explicitly teach it, from where does his student Rabbi Hiyya know it? In other words, any statement included in a *baraita* compiled by Rabbi Hiyya and Rabbi Oshaya must be based on traditions they received from Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi, and therefore allusions can be found for these rulings in a mishna.

If one said, if my sons die others should inherit in their stead – אם מתי ירשו אחרים תחתיהם: There is a principle that an inheritance cannot be terminated (*Bava Batra* 129b). In other words, if someone bequeaths his property to his legal heir, saying: This goes to you and afterward to someone else, the property does not pass to the other person upon the heir's death, but to the heir's own heirs. In light of this, the commentaries ask: Why, then, does this *baraita* rule that the father's instructions are effective when he commands that upon his sons' death others will inherit in their place?

Some commentaries explain that the ruling of the *baraita* is restricted to a case where the father explicitly states that his heirs are to receive his property not as an inheritance, but in the form of a gift, as a gift may indeed be terminated (*Rambam Sefer Kinyan, Hilkhot Zekhiya UMattana* 12:6). Others maintain that the *baraita* is referring to a situation where the father deposited his assets in the hands of a trustee; if the heirs actually received the property, the inheritance cannot be terminated (Ra'avad; see Meiri).

LANGUAGE

Mast [*askariya*] – אסקריא: Probably from the Greek *ιστοκεραία*, *histokeraia*, a mast.

HALAKHA

A man who says, give a shekel to my sons every week – האומר תנו שקל לבני בשבת: If a man on his deathbed says: Give my sons a shekel a week, or: Give them only a shekel a week, and it turns out that they require a *sela* a week, they are given a *sela* a week, in accordance with the conclusion of the Gemara in *Ketubot* (69b) that there is no practical difference between the two formulations. However, if the father says: When my sons die I wish my estate to pass to other people and not to my grandsons, his sons are given only a shekel a week (*Shulḥan Arukh, Hoshen Mishpat* 253:17).

It is a mitzva to fulfill the statement of the dead – מצוה: It is a duty to fulfill the instructions of the deceased, even if he was healthy when the commands were issued. However, this applies only when the deceased deposited the funds for his directives in the hands of a third party; there is no mitzva for anyone to pay from his own funds to fulfill the wishes of the deceased (*Shulḥan Arukh, Hoshen Mishpat* 252:2; *Even HaEzer* 54:1).

אילפא ורבי יוחנן הוו גרסי באורייתא, דחיקא להו מילתא טובא. אמרי: גיוס וניזיל וניעבד עיסקא, ונקיים בנפשין: "אפס כי לא יהיה בך אביון." אילו, אותבי תותי גודא רעיעא. הוו קא כרכי ריפתא. אתו תרי מלאכי השרת.

The Gemara relates another story that involves an unstable wall. Ilfa^p and Rabbi Yoḥanan studied Torah together, and as a result they became very hard-pressed for money. They said: Let us get up and go and engage in commerce, and we will fulfill, with regard to ourselves, the verse: "Although there should be no needy among you" (Deuteronomy 15:4), as we will no longer be complete paupers. They went and sat under a dilapidated wall and were eating bread, when two ministering angels arrived.

שמעיה רבי יוחנן דאמר חד לחבריה: נישדי עליהו האי גודא ונקטלינהו, שמניחין חיי עולם הבא ועוסקין בחיי שעה. אמר ליה אידך: שבקינהו, דאיכא בהו חד דקיימא ליה שעתא. רבי יוחנן שמע, אילפא לא שמע. אמר ליה רבי יוחנן לאילפא: שמע מר מדידך אמר ליה: לא. אמר: מדשמעי אנא ואילפא לא שמע, שמע מינה לדידי קיימא לי שעתא.

Rabbi Yoḥanan heard that one angel said to the other: Let us knock this wall down upon themⁿ and kill them, as they abandon eternal life of Torah study and engage in temporal life for their own sustenance. The other angel said to him: Leave them, as there is one of them whose time of achievement stands before him, i.e., his time has yet to come. Rabbi Yoḥanan heard all this, but Ilfa did not hear the angels' conversation. Rabbi Yoḥanan said to Ilfa: Did the Master hear anything? Ilfa said to him: No. Rabbi Yoḥanan said to himself: Since I heard the angels and Ilfa did not hear, I can learn from this that it is I whose time of achievement stands before me.

אמר ליה רבי יוחנן: אי הדר ואוקי בנפשאי: "כי לא יחדל אביון מקרב הארץ." רבי יוחנן הדר, אילפא לא הדר. עד דאתא אילפא, מליך רבי יוחנן.

Rabbi Yoḥanan said to Ilfa: I will return home and fulfill with regard to myself the contrary verse: "For the poor shall never cease out of the land" (Deuteronomy 15:11). Rabbi Yoḥanan returned to the study hall, and Ilfa did not return, but went to engage in business instead. By the time that Ilfa came back from his business travels, Rabbi Yoḥanan had been appointed head of the academy, and his financial situation had improved.

אמרו לו: אי אתיב מר וגריס, לא הוה מליך מר? אול תלא נפשיה באסקריא דספינתא. אמר: אי איכא דשאל לי במתנתא דרבי חייא ורבי אושעיא ולא פשטינא ליה ממתנתין נפילנא מאסקריא דספינתא וטבענא.

His colleagues said to Ilfa: If the Master had sat and studied, instead of going off to his business ventures, wouldn't the Master have been appointed head of the academy? Ilfa went and suspended himself from the mast [*askariya*]^l of a ship, saying: If there is anyone who can ask me a question concerning a *baraita* of Rabbi Hiyya and Rabbi Oshaya, and I do not resolve his problem from a mishna,ⁿ I will fall from the mast of this ship and be drowned. Ilfa sought to demonstrate that despite the time he had spent in business, he still retained his extensive Torah knowledge.

אתא ההוא סבא, תנא ליה: האומר: תנו שקל לבני בשבת, והן ראויין לתת להם סלע, ונתנין להם סלע. ואם אמר: אל תתנו להם אלא שקל, אין נתנין להם אלא שקל.

A certain old man came and taught a *baraita* before him: If there is a man who, upon his deathbed, says in his will: Give a shekel to my sons every week,^h but this is a situation where, based on their needs, they are fit for the court to give them a *sela*, i.e., double the amount, they give them a *sela*. When the dying man mentioned a shekel, he presumably meant that they should be given a sum in accordance with their actual requirements, not that specific amount. But if he said: Give them only a shekel, the court gives them only a shekel and no more.

אם אמר: אם מתו, ירשו אחרים תחתיהם, בין שאמר תנו, בין שאמר אל תתנו, אין נתנין להם אלא שקל. אמר ליה: הא מני? רבי מאיר היא, דאמר: מצוה לקיים דברי המת.

The *baraita* further states that if one said: If my sons die, others should inherit their portion in their stead,ⁿ regardless of whether he said: Give them a shekel, or whether he said: Give them only a shekel, then the court gives his sons only a shekel per week, as their father clearly stated that he wishes to give his sons only a specific stipend and that he intends to leave the bulk of his property to others. Ilfa said to the old man: In accordance with whose opinion is this ruling? It is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Meir, who said: It is a mitzva to fulfill the statement of the dead.^h This entire *baraita* can be explained based on a principle that appears in a mishna: In all cases, one should try to execute the wishes of the deceased.

PERSONALITIES

Naḥum of Gam Zu – נחום איש גז: A *tanna* from the end of Second Temple period. Apart from the stories related here, it is known that Rabbi Akiva was his student, whom he taught his hermeneutical principle of amplification and restriction. Apparently, Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Yishmael's differences of opinion with regard to hermeneutical principles date back to ancient times, as they are based in the principles of Naḥum of Gam Zu and Rabbi Nehunya ben Hakana, respectively. The system of amplificatory terms is also attributed to Naḥum of Gam Zu.

NOTES

And why did they call him Naḥum of Gam Zu – ואמאי קרו ליה נחום איש גז: The plain meaning of his name is apparently derived from his town of origin, Gimzo, which is near Lod and is mentioned in the Bible (II Chronicles 28:18). However, due to Naḥum's praiseworthy character, they made a play on words with his name and called him Gam Zu (*Etz Yosef*).

LANGUAGE

Gift [*doron*] – דורון: From the Greek δῶρον, *doron*, a gift, particularly a gift given in someone's honor.

Chest [*sifta*] – סיפטא: Apparently from the Middle Iranian *sapat*, which can mean a wicker basket.

אמרו עליו על נחום איש גז זו שהיה סומא משתי עיניו, גדם משתי ידיו, קיטע משתי רגליו, וכל גופו מלא שחין, והיה מוטל בבית רעוע ורגלי משתו מונחין בספלין של מים כדי שלא יעלו עליו נמלים. פעם אחת בקשו תלמידיו לפנות משתו ואחר כך לפנות את הכלים. אמר להם: בניי, פנו את הכלים ואחר כך פנו את משתי, שמובטח לכם שכל זמן שאני בבית, אין הבית נופל. פינו את הכלים ואחר כך פינו את משתו, ונפל הבית.

אמרו לו תלמידיו: רבי, וכי מאחר שצדיק גמור אתה, למה עלתה לך כך? אמר להם: בניי, אני גרמתי לעצמי. שפעם אחת הייתי מהלך בדרך לבית חמי, והיה עמי משוי שלשה חמורים, אחד של מאכל, ואחד של משתה, ואחד של מיני מגדים. בא עני אחד ועמד לי בדרך, ואמר לי: רבי, פרנסני! אמרתי לו: המתן עד שאפרוק מן החמור. לא הספקתי לפרוק מן החמור עד שיצתה נשמתו.

הלכתי ונפלתי על פניו, ואמרתי: עיני, שלא חסו על עיניך, וסומו ידיו, שלא חסו על ידיך, יתגדמו. רגלי, שלא חסו על רגליך, יתקטעו, ולא נתקרה דעתי עד שאמרתי: כל גופי יהא מלא שחין. אמרו לו: או לנו שראינוך בכך. אמר להם: או לי אם לא ראיתוני בכך.

ואמאי קרו ליה נחום איש גז זו? דכל מילתא דהוה סלקא ליה, אמר: גז זו לטובה. זימנא חדא בעו לשדורי ישראל דורון לבי קיסר. אמרו: מאן ייזיל? ייזיל נחום איש גז זו, דמלומד בניסין הוא. שדרו בידיה מלא סיפטא דאבנים טובות ומרגליות. אזל בת בההוא דירא. בליליא קמו הנך דיראי, ושקלינהו לסיפטיה ומלוגהו עפרא.

כי מטא התם, שרינהו לסיפטא, חזנהו דמלו עפרא. בעא מלכא למקטלינהו לכוהנהו. אמר: קא מחיבו בני יהודאי! אמר: גז זו לטובה. אתא אליהו, אדמי ליה כחד מיניהו. אמר ליה: דלמא הא עפרא מעפרא דאברהם אבוהון הוא. דכי הוה שדי עפרא, הוה סיפיה; גילי, הוה גירי. דכתיב: "יתן כעפר חרבו, כקש נדף קשתו".

הויה חדא מדינתא דלא מצו למיכבשה. בדקו מינה וכבשה. עילו לבי גנייה, ומלוהו לסיפטיה אבנים טובות ומרגליות, ושדרוהו ביקרא רבה.

S The Gemara relates another story about a rundown building. They said about Naḥum of Gam Zu^p that he was blind in both eyes, both his arms were amputated, both his legs were amputated, and his entire body was covered in boils. And he was lying in a dilapidated house, and legs of his bed were placed in buckets of water so that ants should not climb onto him, as he was unable to keep them off in any other manner. Once his students sought to remove his bed from the house and afterward remove his other vessels. He said to them: My sons, remove the vessels first, and afterward remove my bed, as I can guarantee you that as long as I am in the house, the house will not fall. Indeed they removed the vessels and afterward they removed his bed, and immediately the house collapsed.

His students said to him: Rabbi, since you are evidently a wholly righteous man, as we have just seen that as long as you were in your house it did not fall, why has this suffering befallen you? He said to them: My sons, I brought it upon myself. Naḥum of Gam Zu related to them the following: As once I was traveling along the road to my father-in-law's house, and I had with me a load distributed among three donkeys, one of food, one of drink, and one of delicacies. A poor person came and stood before me in the road, saying: My rabbi, sustain me. I said to him: Wait until I unload the donkey, after which I will give you something to eat. However, I had not managed to unload the donkey before his soul left his body.

I went and fell upon his face and said: May my eyes, which had no compassion on your eyes, be blinded; may my hands, which had no compassion on your hands, be amputated; may my legs, which had no compassion on your legs, be amputated. And my mind did not rest until I said: May my whole body be covered in boils. Naḥum of Gam Zu prayed that his suffering might atone for his failure. His students said to him: Even so, woe to us that we have seen you in this state. He said to them: Woe is me if you had not seen me in this state, as this suffering atones for me.

The Gemara inquires: And why did they call him Naḥum of Gam Zu?^q The reason is that with regard to any matter that occurred to him, he would say: This too is for the good [*gam zu letova*]. Once, the Jews wished to send a gift [*doron*]^l to the house of the emperor. They said: Who should go and present this gift? Let Naḥum of Gam Zu go, as he is accustomed to miracles. They sent with him a chest [*sifta*]^l full of jewels and pearls, and he went and spent the night in a certain inn. During the night, these residents of the inn arose and took all of the precious jewels and pearls from the chest, and filled it with earth. The next day, when he saw what had happened, Naḥum of Gam Zu said: This too is for the good.

When he arrived there, at the ruler's palace, they opened the chest and saw that it was filled with earth. The king wished to put all the Jewish emissaries to death. He said: The Jews are mocking me. Naḥum of Gam Zu said: This too is for the good. Elijah the Prophet came and appeared before the ruler as one of his ministers. He said to the ruler: Perhaps this earth is from the earth of their father Abraham. As when he threw earth, it turned into swords, and when he threw stubble, it turned into arrows, as it is written in a prophecy that the Sages interpreted this verse as a reference to Abraham: "His sword makes them as the dust, his bow as the driven stubble" (Isaiah 41:2).

There was one province that the Romans were unable to conquer. They took some of this earth, tested it by throwing it at their enemies, and conquered that province. When the ruler saw that this earth indeed had miraculous powers, his servants entered his treasury and filled Naḥum of Gam Zu's chest with precious jewels and pearls and sent him off with great honor.

בי אתו ביתו בההוא דיורא. אמרו ליה: מאי אייתית בהדך דעבדי לך יקרא פולי האי? אמר להו: מאי דשקלי מהכא אמטי להתם. סתרו לדיריהו ואמטינהו לבי מלכא. אמרו ליה: האי עפרא דאייתי הכא מדין הוא. בדקוהו, ולא אשכחוהו. וקטלינהו להנדך דיוראי.

When Naḥum of Gam Zu came to spend the night at that same inn, the residents said to him: What did you bring with you to the emperor that he bestowed upon you such great honor? He said to them: That which I took from here, I brought there. When they heard this, the residents of the inn thought that the soil upon which their house stood had miraculous powers. They tore down their inn and brought the soil underneath to the king's palace. They said to him: That earth that was brought here was from our property. The miracle had been performed only in the merit of Naḥum of Gam Zu. The emperor tested the inn's soil in battle, and it was not found to have miraculous powers, and he had these residents of the inn put to death.

”אי זו היא דבר? עיר המוציאה חמש מאות רגלי” כו'. תנו רבנן: עיר המוציאה חמש מאות ואלף רגלי, כפר עבו, ויצאו הימנה תשעה מתים בשלשה ימים זה אחר זה – הרי זה דבר.

S The mishna taught: What is considered a plague of pestilence? If it is a city that sends out five hundred infantrymen, and three dead are removed from it on three consecutive days, one dead per day, this is a plague of pestilence. The Sages taught: If a city that sends out fifteen hundred infantrymen, i.e., one that has a population of at least fifteen hundred men, e.g., the village of Akko, and nine dead are removed from it on three consecutive days, i.e., three dead per day, this is considered a plague of pestilence.

ביום אחד או בארבעה ימים – אין זה דבר. ועיר המוציאה חמש מאות רגלי בגון כפר עמיקו, ויצאו הימנה שלשה מתים בשלשה ימים זה אחר זה – הרי זה דבר.

If all nine died on a single day, while none died on the other days, or if the nine died over a period of four days, this is not a plague of pestilence. And a city that sends out five hundred infantrymen, for example, the village of Amiko, and three dead are removed from it on three consecutive days, this is a plague of pestilence.

Perek III
Daf 21 Amud b

ביום אחד או בארבעה ימים – אין זה דבר.

If all three died on one day or over four days, this is not a plague of pestilence.

דרוקרת עיר המוציאה חמש מאות רגלי הוה, ויצאו ממנה שלשה מתים ביום אחד. גזר רב נחמן בר רב חסדא תעניתא. אמר רב נחמן בר יצחק: כמאן? כרבבי מאיר.

In explanation of the counterintuitive ruling that many deaths in one day is not indicative of a plague, the Gemara relates: Drokart⁸ was a city that sent out five hundred infantrymen, and three dead were removed from it on one day. Rav Naḥman bar Rav Ḥisda decreed a fast on account of the plague. Rav Naḥman bar Yitzḥak said: In accordance with whose opinion did you declare this fast? It must be in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Meir.

דאמר: ריחק נגחותו תיב, קירב נגחותו לא כל שבין!

This is related to the definition of a forewarned ox, an animal that has gored enough times to be considered a dangerous beast that requires careful supervision, as Rabbi Meir said: The owner of an ox is liable to pay full damages if its acts of goring were separated, i.e., if it gored three times on three consecutive days, as claimed by the Rabbis. If its acts of goring were near each other, performed on a single day, is it not all the more so that this animal should be classified as a forewarned ox? However, Rav Naḥman bar Yitzḥak continued, this represents a minority opinion. Just as Rabbi Meir's reasoning is rejected for *halakha* in the case of an ox, so too it is rejected with regard to a plague.

BACKGROUND

Drokart – דרוקרת: The location of Drokart is unclear. Some maintain that it is a city upon which the Arabs later built the city of Wasit in eastern Iraq. Apparently, several important

Sages lived inside this city or in the nearby villages, as Rav Huna and Rav Naḥman bar Yitzḥak, among others, resided there.

Peras – פָּרָס: The root of this word is *p-r-s*. Its primary meaning is to cut, break, or count. However, *peras* is often used to mean a half. In this context it means fifty dinars, half of a unit of one hundred dinars.

Hoe [mara] – מָרָא: From the Latin *marra*, a hoe.



Roman hoe blade

Shovel [zevila] – זְבִילָא: This term is apparently related to *zevel*, garbage, and it denotes a tool used for carrying garbage. From the description in the Talmud, it was probably some kind of shovel.

אָמַר לִיָּה רַב נַחֲמָן בַּר רַב חֲסִידָא לְרַב נַחֲמָן בַּר יִצְחָק: לֵיקוּם מֵרַ, לֵיתִי לְגַבְּךָ. אָמַר לִיָּה: תִּנְיָנָא: רַבִּי יוֹסֵי אוֹמַר: לֹא מְקוּמוֹ שֶׁל אָדָם מְכַבְּדוֹ, אֲלֵא אָדָם מְכַבֵּד אֶת מְקוּמוֹ. שְׁכֵן מְצִינּוּ בְּהַר סִינַי, שְׂכַל זְמַן שֶׁהַשְּׂכִינָה שְׂרוּיָה עֲלָיו, אָמְרָה תּוֹרָה: "גַּם הַצֹּאֵן וְהַבָּקָר אֵל יָרְעוּ אֶל מוֹל הַהָר הַהוּא." נִסְתַּלְקָה שְׂכִינָה מִמֶּנּוּ, אָמְרָה תּוֹרָה: "בְּמִשְׁךְ הַיָּבֵל, הַמָּה יַעֲלוּ בְּהָרִי."

וְכֵן מְצִינּוּ בְּאֵהָל מוֹעֵד שְׂבַמְדָּבָר, שְׂכַל זְמַן שֶׁהוּא נָטוּי, אָמְרָה תּוֹרָה: "וַיִּשְׁלַחוּ מִן הַמַּחֲנֶה כָּל צְרוּעֵי." הוֹגְלָלוּ הַפְּרוֹצִת, הוֹתֵרוּ זְבִין וְהַמְצוֹרְעִים לִיכְנֵס שָׁם.

אָמַר לִיָּה: אִי הָכִי, נִיקוּם אֲנָא לְגַבֵּי מֵרַ. אָמַר לִיָּה: מוֹטָב יֵבֵא מְנָה בֵּין פְּרָס אֲצֵל מְנָה בֵּין מְנָה, וְאֵל יֵבֵא מְנָה בֵּין מְנָה אֲצֵל מְנָה בֵּין פְּרָס.

בְּסוּרָא הוֹוֵת דְּבִרְתָּא, בְּשִׁיבּוּתִיָּה דְּרַב לֹא הוֹוֵת דְּבִרְתָּא. סְבֵרוּ מִינֵיהּ מִשּׁוּם זְכוּתִיָּה דְּרַב, דְּנִפְיֵשׁ. אֵיתְחַזִּי לְהוּ בְּחִילְמָא: רַב דְּנִפְיֵשׁא זְכוּתִיָּה טוֹבָא, הָא מִילְתָּא וּזְטָרָא לִיָּה לְרַב. אֲלֵא מִשּׁוּם הַהוּא גְבִרָא, דְּשִׁיִּיל מְרָא וּזְבִילָא לְקַבּוּרָה.

Upon hearing this impressive argument, Rav Nahman bar Rav Hisda said to Rav Nahman bar Yitzhak: **Let the Master arise and come to live with us as our community leader.** Rav Nahman bar Yitzhak said to him: We already learned in a *baraita* that Rabbi Yosei says: It is not the place of a person that honors him; rather, the person honors his place, as we found with regard to Mount Sinai, that as long as the Divine Presence rested upon it, the Torah said: "Neither let the flocks nor the herds feed before that mount" (Exodus 34:3).^N Once the Divine Presence departed from the mountain, the Torah said: "When the *shofar* sounds long they shall come up to the mount" (Exodus 19:13). This indicates that the sanctity was not inherent to the place but was due to the Divine Presence resting there.

And we likewise found with regard to the Tent of Meeting that was in the wilderness, that whenever it was erected, the Torah said: "That they put out of the camp every leper" (Numbers 5:2). Once the curtain was rolled up and the Tent of Meeting was prepared for travel, *zavim* and lepers were permitted to enter the place where it had stood. The place itself had no intrinsic sanctity; rather, it was sacred only because the Divine Presence was there. Accordingly, Rav Nahman bar Yitzhak maintained that there is no reason for him to move places to receive honor.

Rav Nahman bar Rav Hisda said to Rav Nahman bar Yitzhak: **If so, let me arise and come to the Master, to learn Torah from you.** Rav Nahman bar Yitzhak said to him: It is better that one hundred dinars that is the son of a *peras*,^L fifty dinars, should come to one hundred dinars that is the son of one hundred dinars; but one hundred dinars that is the son of one hundred dinars, should not come to one hundred dinars that is the son of a *peras*.^N In other words, although Rav Nahman bar Yitzhak was a learned scholar, comparable to one hundred dinars, it was nevertheless more appropriate for him to come to Rav Nahman bar Rav Hisda. Whereas Rav Nahman bar Yitzhak was the son of a *peras*, an ordinary man, Rav Nahman bar Rav Hisda was the son of a scholar.

The Gemara relates another story involving a plague: Once there was a plague of pestilence in Sura, but in the neighborhood of Rav there was no pestilence. The people therefore thought that this was due to Rav's great merit. However, it was revealed to them in a dream that Rav's merit was too great and this matter too small for the merit of Rav^N to be involved. Rather, his neighborhood was spared due to the acts of kindness of a certain man, who would lend his hoe [*marra*]^L and shovel [*zevila*]^L to prepare sites for burial.

NOTES

Before that mount – אֵל מוֹל הַהָר הַהוּא: The maxim that it is the person who bestows honor on the place he occupies, and not vice versa, is derived from the two verses cited here. The word "that" in the expression "that mount" is superfluous, and it teaches that it was prohibited to ascend Mount Sinai only while it remained that mount, i.e., the mount on which the Divine Presence was resting. However, once the Divine Presence withdrew from the mount, it once again became accessible to all, in accordance with the second verse: "When the *shofar* sounds long they shall come up to the mount." According to Rashi, the prohibition against ascending Mount Sinai continued after both sets of tablets were given, as the Divine Presence remained on the mount for almost another full year, until the Tabernacle was erected on the first of Nisan.

Others maintain that the verse: "When the *shofar* sounds long," indicates that the prohibition against ascending the mountain was annulled immediately after the revelation and

the first set of tablets of stone were given to Moses. It was therefore necessary for the Torah to again warn the Jewish people that nobody may ascend the mount before the second tablets were given, as access to the mountain in the interim was permitted (Rav Ya'akov Emden).

To one hundred dinars, son of a *peras* – אֲצֵל מְנָה בֵּין פְּרָס: Rashi and *Tosafot* both note the difference in title between the two scholars featured in this story: Whereas one is called Rav Nahman bar Rav Hisda, the other is Rav Nahman bar Yitzhak, and it is not noted that his father was a rabbi. This is because the former scholar was the son of the great Sage Rav Hisda, while the father of the latter scholar was not ordained as a rabbi.

Conversely, some commentaries argue that it would have been disrespectful for Rav Nahman bar Yitzhak to consider himself his father's superior in Torah knowledge and refer to himself as twice the value of his father in this regard. Rather, Rav

Nahman bar Yitzhak was speaking not of scholarly accomplishment but material wealth. Rav Nahman bar Yitzhak himself was a wealthy man, whereas his father Yitzhak was not. Rav Nahman bar Rav Hisda, by contrast, was a rich man who was also the son of a rich man (Rav Ya'akov Emden).

This matter is too small for the merit of Rav – הָא מִילְתָּא וּזְטָרָא – לִיָּה לְרַב: Some commentaries explain that although it is clear that Rav's great merit contributed to the good fortune of his neighborhood, it was revealed to the people in a dream that they would have been spared even without Rav, by virtue of that righteous man who lent out his grave-digging tools for the benefit of the community. Alternatively, it was not due to Rav's merit that his community was saved, so that he would not have to pay for the miracle performed on the community's behalf with the merits he had accumulated through his righteous behavior in the past (Maharsha).

There is pestilence among the pigs – איבא מותנא – *Tosafot* infer from this incident that if a plague is spreading among the gentile inhabitants of a particular community, their Jewish neighbors must proclaim a fast. If there is concern that a disease afflicting pigs will spread to human beings, as the intestines of a pig are anatomically similar to those of a human being, there is certainly cause for concern that a disease will spread from gentiles to Jews. Others cite a view according to which the Jewish community is not required to proclaim a fast if its gentile neighbors have been struck by disease, because the divine decrees issued against the one group do not necessarily apply to the other (Ritva).

You are unable to perform what he does – לא תעניתא: Some commentaries note that although Abaye certainly engaged in charitable activities, he was first and foremost the head of the academy at Pumbedita. Consequently, he was unable to devote as much of his time and money to charity as did Abba the Bloodletter (Maharsha).

HALAKHA

There is pestilence among the pigs – איבא מותנא – *bachurim*: If plague has spread among pigs, a fast must be proclaimed. The intestines of a pig are similar to those of human beings, and therefore there is a concern that the disease will spread to humans. All the more so, a fast must be proclaimed if the plague has reached the Jewish community's gentile neighbors (*Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayyim 576:3*).

There is pestilence in Bei Hozai – איבא מותנא ביה חוזאי – If a plague has spread across a certain area, and caravans travel regularly between that place and other areas, a fast must be proclaimed in all the locations to which the caravans travel, even if they are far away from the stricken area. This ruling is in accordance with the practice of Shmuel. If a plague breaks out in Eretz Yisrael, a fast must be proclaimed throughout the Diaspora, as stated by Rav Nahman (*Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayyim 576:2*).

BACKGROUND

As their intestines are similar to those of humans – דדמיין מעיהו לבני אינשי: Although there are parasites that pass from pigs to humans, i.e., trichinae, this generally occurs when the flesh of the pig is eaten, which is not a concern here.

Nevertheless, the resemblance in internal anatomy between pigs and humans, as well as other similarities, are recognized nowadays. For example, pig intestines are often transplanted into human bodies, due to the relatively low rate of rejection. Consequently, Rav Yehuda was concerned that a disease that affects pigs might well be transferable to people.

Bei Hozai – ביה חוזאי – Bei Hozai was a region southeast of the Tigris River, later known as Huzistan. From the perspective of its Jewish inhabitants, it was a distant extension of the main Jewish community in central Babylonia. Due to its great distance from the center of talmudic activity, its inhabitants were said to be ignorant of Torah. Nevertheless, there was strong commercial activity between the residents of central Babylonia and those of Bei Hozai, in which many Jews, among them Torah scholars, were involved. Consequently, there was a concern that an infectious disease might be transferred between the two places, albeit after a considerable delay.

LANGUAGE

Incision [*kusilta*] – כוסילתא: A Syrian-Aramaic term meaning an incision in the skin for the purpose of letting blood.

Coins [*pehitei*] – פשיטי: From the Middle Persian pišiz, a small copper coin.

בדרוקרת הוות דליקתא, ובשיבבותיה דרב הונא לא הוות דליקתא. סבור מינה בזכותא דרב הונא, דנפיש איתחוי להו בחילמא: האי זוטרא ליה לרב הונא. אלא משום ההיא איתתא דמחממת תנורא ומשיילי לשיבבותיה.

אמרו ליה לרב יהודה: אתו קמצי גור תעניתא. אמרו ליה: לא קא מפסדן. אמר להו: וזודא אייתו בהדייהו?

אמרו ליה לרב יהודה: איבא מותנא בחורי גור תעניתא. נימא קסבור רב יהודה מכה משולחת ממין אחד משולחת מכל המינין? לא. שאני חורי, דדמיין מעיהו לבני אינשי.

אמרו ליה לשמואל: איבא מותנא בי חוזאי גור תעניתא. אמר ליה: והא מרחק! אמר: ליבא מעברא הכא דפסיק ליה.

אמרו ליה לרב נחמן: איבא מותנא בארעא דישראל. גור תעניתא. אמר: אם גבירה לוקה, שפחה לא כל שבין!

טעמא דגבירה ושפחה. הא שפחה ושפחה, לא. והא אמרו ליה לשמואל: איבא מותנא בי חוזאי גור תעניתא! שאני התם, בין דאיבא שירתא דלווי ואתיא בהדיה.

אבא אומנא הוה אתי ליה שלמא ממתיבתא דרקינא כל יומא, ולאבין כל מעלי יומא דשבתא, לרבא כל מעלי יומא דכיפורי. הוה קא חלשא דעתיה דאבין משום דאבא אומנא. אמרו ליה: לא מצית למיעבד בעובדיה.

ומאי הוה עובדיה דאבא אומנא? דכי הוה עביד מילתא, הוה מחית גברי לחוד ונשי לחוד. ואית ליה לבושא דאית ביה קרנא, דהוות בויעא כי כוסילתא. כי הוות אתיא ליה איתתא, הוה מלביש לה, כי היכי דלא ניסתבל בה. ואית ליה דוכתא דצניעא דשידי ביה פשיטי דשקיל. דאית ליה שדי ביה; דלית ליה לא מיכסוף.

The Gemara relates a similar incident. In Drokart there was a fire, but in the neighborhood of Rav Huna there was no fire. The people therefore thought that this was due to Rav Huna's great merit. It was revealed to them in a dream that this matter was too small for the merit of Rav Huna to have played a role. Rather, it was due to a certain woman who heats her oven and lends it, i.e., the use of her oven, to her neighbors.

They said to Rav Yehuda: Locusts have come to our region. Rav Yehuda decreed a fast. They said to him: They are not destroying anything, as they are eating only a little. He said to them: Have they brought provisions with them, that they have something else to eat? Even if they are not damaging your crops now, they will certainly eat them soon.

On another occasion, they said to Rav Yehuda: There is pestilence among the pigs.¹¹ Rav Yehuda decreed a fast. The Gemara asks: Let us say that Rav Yehuda maintains that a plague affecting one species will come to affect all species, and that is why he decreed a fast. The Gemara answers: No, in other cases there is no cause for concern. However, pigs are different, as their intestines are similar to those of humans.¹² Consequently, their disease might spread to people.

They said to Shmuel: There is pestilence in the region of Bei Hozai,¹³ which is quite a distance from Babylonia. Shmuel decreed a fast. They said to him: But it is far from here. He said: There is no crossing here that will stop the pestilence, and therefore there is cause for concern that it will reach us.

They said to Rav Nahman: There is pestilence in Eretz Yisrael. Rav Nahman decreed a fast in Babylonia, saying: If the lady of the house, i.e., Eretz Yisrael, is afflicted, is it not all the more so that the maidservant, Babylonia, will be afflicted?

The Gemara asks: The reason for this ruling is apparently only because Eretz Yisrael is a lady in comparison to the Diaspora, which is likened to a maidservant. It may be inferred from this that in a case involving a maidservant and a maidservant, i.e., two places in the Diaspora, there is no reason to fast. But in the previous story, when they said to Shmuel: There is pestilence in the region of Bei Hozai, he decreed a fast in Neharde'a, despite the fact that Neharde'a is not considered a lady with respect to Bei Hozai. The Gemara answers: It is different there. Since there are caravans that regularly travel from Bei Hozai to Neharde'a, the pestilence will join and accompany them in the caravans.

§ Apropos the above stories that deal with the merits of ordinary people, the Gemara relates: Abba the Bloodletter would receive greetings from the yeshiva on High every day, and Abaye would receive these greetings every Shabbat eve, and Rava would receive greetings only once a year on Yom Kippur eve. Abaye was distressed due to Abba the Bloodletter, as he did not understand why Abba received greater honor than he did. They said to him: You are unable to perform what he does,¹⁴ and therefore you do not merit the same honor.

The Gemara asks: And what were these righteous deeds of Abba the Bloodletter? The Gemara explains that when he would perform a matter of bloodletting, he would bring in men separately from women, for reasons of modesty. And he had a special garment that had a slit in the place of the incision [*kusilta*]¹⁵ where the bloodletting instrument was inserted. When a woman came to him, he would have her dress in that garment, so that he would not see her exposed. And furthermore, he had a hidden place where he worked, where customers would place the coins [*pehitei*]¹⁶ that he would take as his fee. In this manner, one who had money would throw it there, while one who did not have money was not embarrassed.

Mats [*bistarkei*] – ביסטַרְקֵי: Apparently a loanword from the Middle Iranian *bistarak*, which means bedding, a mattress, or a cover.

כי הוּה אַתְרַמִּי לִיה צוֹרְבָא מְרַבְנָן, אַגְרָא מִינֵיה לֹא שְׁקִיל, וְבַתֵּר דְקָאִי, יְהִיב לִיה פְּשִׁיטִי, וְאָמַר לִיה: זִיל בְּרִיא נַפְשֶׁךָ. יוֹמָא חַד שְׂדֵר אַבְיִי זִנְגָא דְרַבְנָן לְמִיבְדְּקֵיהּ. אוֹתְבִינְהוּ, וְאִכְלִינְהוּ, וְאִשְׁקִינְהוּ, וּמַךְ לָהּ בִּיסְתַרְקֵי בְלִילִיא.

When a Torah scholar came to him for bloodletting, he would take no pay from him, and after the scholar arose, Abba would give him money and say to him: Go and purchase food with this money to heal yourself, as it is important to eat healthy food after bloodletting. One day, Abaye sent a pair of Sages to investigate the extent of Abba the Bloodletter's righteousness. Abba the Bloodletter sat them down, and gave them food to eat, and gave them something to drink. And at night he spread out mats [*bistarkei*]^l for them to sleep on.

Perek III
Daf 22 Amud a

NOTES

I put them out of my mind for charity – אֶסְחָתִינְהוּ מִדַּעְתָּאִי: Some commentaries conclude from here that although a mental commitment to give charity is not binding unless it is given verbal formulation, it is commendable not to withdraw from a mental stipulation of this kind, even if the commitment was based on an error (Meiri).

You protect your entire city – מְגִנֵּת אֶבְרָא בְרַכָּא: Some commentaries point out that these words of consolation assume special significance in light of the statement elsewhere that the inhabitants of Mehoza, Rava's place of residence, were evil people who merited destruction (*Rosh HaShana* 17a). It was only Rava's uncommonly righteous behavior that spared them punishment (Rav Ya'akov Emden).

Worthy of the World-to-Come – בַּר עֲלָמָא דְאֵתִי: Although it is stated elsewhere that with few exceptions all Jews have a share in the World-to-Come (*Sanhedrin* 90a), most people must first pass through Gehenna and receive punishment for the transgressions they committed in this world. Only after they have been purified of sin are they fit to enjoy the delights of the World-to-Come. When Rabbi Beroka met Elijah in the marketplace, he asked if there was a man worthy of entering the World-to-Come directly, without having first to suffer in Gehenna, so that he could learn which righteous behaviors merit that great reward.

לְצַפְרָא כְּרִינְהוּ וְשִׁקְלִינְהוּ, וְקָמוּ וּנְפָקוּ לְהוּ לְשׁוּקָא, וְאִשְׁכַּחִינְהוּ. אָמְרוּ לִיה: לְשִׁימִיה מַר הִיבִי שׁוּו. אָמַר לְהוּ: הִכִּי וְהִכִּי אָמְרוּ לִיה: וְדִלְמָא שׁוּו טַפִּי. אָמַר לְהוּ: בְּהִכִּי שְׁקִילִינְהוּ. אָמְרוּ לִיה: דִּידִךָ נִיהוּ, וְשִׁקְלִינְהוּ מִינְךָ.

In the morning, the Sages rolled up these rugs and took them, and they arose and went out to the market with them. And when Abba found them, the Sages said to him: Let the Master appraise these rugs, how much they are worth. He said to them: Their value is such and such. They said to him: But perhaps they are worth more. He said to them: This is what I paid for them. They said to him: The rugs are yours and we took them from you.

אָמְרוּ לִיה: בְּמַטּוֹתָא מִינְךָ, בְּמַאי חֲשַׁדְתִּינָנּוּ? אָמַר לְהוּ: אָמִינָא: פְּרִיזוֹן שְׁבוּיִים אִיקְלַע לְהוּ לְרַבְנָן, וְאִכְסִיפוּ לְמִימַר לִי. אָמְרוּ לִיה: הֲשִׁתָּא נִשְׁקָלִינְהוּ מַר! אָמַר לְהוּ: מִהִיּוּא שְׁעָתָא אֶסְחָתִינְהוּ מִדַּעְתָּאִי לְצַדִּיקָא.

After explaining the reason for their actions, the Sages said to him: Please tell us, what did you suspect of us? You knew that we had taken your rugs, and yet you did not say anything. He said to them: I said to myself, certainly an unexpected opportunity for a ransom of prisoners became available for the Sages, and they required immediate funds, but they were too embarrassed to say so to me or to ask for money. Instead, they took the rugs. The Sages said to him: Now that we have explained the situation, let the Master take back the rugs. He said to them: From that moment when I realized they were missing, I put them out of my mind and consigned them for charity.ⁿ As far as I am concerned, they are already designated for that purpose, and I cannot take them back.

הוּה קָא חֲלָשָׂא דְעֵתִיָּה דְרַבָּא מְשׁוּם דְאֲבִי. אָמְרוּ לִיה: מִסְתַּיִךְ דְקָא מְגִנֵּת אֶבְרָא בְרַכָּא.

Rava was distressed due to the fact that Abaye received greetings from Heaven every Shabbat eve, while Rava received such greetings only once a year, on Yom Kippur eve, as stated above. They said to him: Be content that through your merit you protect your entire city.ⁿ

רַבִּי בְרוּקָא חוּזָאָה הוּה שְׂכִיחַ בְּשׁוּקָא דְבֵי לֶפֶט. הוּה שְׂכִיחַ אֲלֵיהּ גְבִיָּה. אָמַר לִיה: אֵיכָא בְּהַאי שׁוּקָא בַר עֲלָמָא דְאֵתִי? אָמַר לִיה: לֹא. אֲדַהֲבִי וְהִכִּי חָזָא לְהוּוּא גְבִרָא דְהוּה סִיִּים מְסָאנִי אוּכְמִי וְלֹא רָמִי חוּטָא דְתַקְלָתָא בְּגָלִימִיה. אָמַר לִיה: הַאי בַר עֲלָמָא דְאֵתִי הוּא.

The Gemara relates another story about the righteousness of common people. Rabbi Beroka Hoza'a was often found in the market of Bei Lefet,^b and Elijah the Prophet would often appear to him. Once Rabbi Beroka said to Elijah: Of all the people who come here, is there anyone in this market worthy of the World-to-Come?ⁿ He said to him: No. In the meantime, Rabbi Beroka saw a man who was wearing black shoes,^b contrary to Jewish custom, and who did not place the sky-blue, dyed thread of ritual fringes on his garment. Elijah said to Rabbi Beroka: That man is worthy of the World-to-Come.

BACKGROUND

Bei Lefet – בֵּי לֶפֶט: This city, which was probably known as Bel-apat, the city of Bel, was a large commercial city in the north of Bei Hozai. King Shapur, whom the Sages called Shavor Malka, rebuilt Bei Lefet and named it Gunde-sabur after himself. Nevertheless, the name Bei Lefet remained in use for many generations.

Black shoes – מְסָאנִי אוּכְמִי: This was a typical shoe, although there were differences in the number of straps and laces on

various shoes. Each social class had shoes of a specific form with straps of a distinctive color, and there were apparently corresponding differences between the shoes worn by Jews and those of gentiles. Jews wore shoes with white straps, while gentiles' shoes had black straps. This enabled people to distinguish immediately between Jews and gentiles, and the Sages were very strict with people who changed the color of their shoes in an effort to resemble gentiles.