

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

כִּי הָיָה אֲתָרְמִי לֵיהּ עֹרְבָא מְרַבְנָן,  
אֲגָרָא מִינֵיהּ לֹא שְׁקִיל, וְבִתְרֵי דְקָאִי,  
יְהִיב לֵיהּ פְּשִׁיטִי, וְאָמַר לֵיהּ: זֵיל בְּרִיא  
נִפְשָׁךְ. יוֹמָא חַד שָׂדֵר אַבְיִי זֻגָא דְרַבְנָן  
לְמִיבְדָּקֵיהּ. אוֹתְבִינְהוּ, וְאַכְלִינְהוּ.  
וְאִשְׁקִינְהוּ, וּמַךְ לְהוּ בִּיסְתָּרְקֵי  
בְּלַיְלָא.

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*]<sup>l</sup> for them to sleep on.

Perek III  
Daf 22 Amud a

NOTES

I put them out of my mind for charity – אֶסְחָתֵינְהוּ מִדַּעְתָּאִי – לְצַדִּיקָא: 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 כְּרָכָא: 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 – בְּרַ עֲלָמָא דְאַתֵּי: 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 כְּרִכִּינְהוּ וְשְׁקִלְינְהוּ, וְקָמוּ וּנְפָקוּ  
לְהוּ לְשׁוּקָא, וְאִשְׁכַּחִינְהוּ. אָמְרוּ לֵיהּ:  
לְשִׁימִיָּה מַר הִיבִי שׁוֹ. אָמַר לְהוּ: הִכִּי  
וְהִכִּי אָמְרוּ לֵיהּ: וְדִלְמָא שׁוֹ טַפִּי. אָמַר  
לְהוּ: בְּהִכִּי שְׁקִלְינְהוּ. אָמְרוּ לֵיהּ: דִּינִדְךָ  
נִיְהוּ, וְשְׁקִלְינְהוּ 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 לֵיהּ: בְּמִטּוֹתָא מִינְךָ, בְּמֵאִי  
חֲשַׁדְתֵּינָן? אָמַר לְהוּ: אָמִינָא: פְּרִיזוֹן  
שְׁבוּיִים אִיקְלַע לְהוּ לְרַבְנָן, וְאַכְסִיפּוּ  
לְמִימַר לִי. אָמְרוּ לֵיהּ: הֲשֵׁתָא נִשְׁקִלְינְהוּ  
מַר! אָמַר לְהוּ: מִהֵוּא שְׁעָתָא  
אֶסְחָתֵינְהוּ 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.<sup>n</sup> As far as I am concerned, they are already designated for that purpose, and I cannot take them back.

הָיָה קָא חֲלָשָׁא דְעֵתִיָּה דְרַבָּא מְשׁוּם  
דְּאַבְיִי. אָמְרוּ לֵיהּ: מִסְתֵּינִךְ דְקָא מְגִנֵּת  
אֶבְרָא כְּרָכָא.

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.<sup>n</sup>

רַבִּי בְרוּקָא חֻזְאָה הָיָה שְׂכִיחַ בְּשׁוּקָא  
דְּבֵי לֶפֶט. הָיָה שְׂכִיחַ אֲלֵיהּ גְּבִיָּה.  
אָמַר לֵיהּ: אֵיכָא בְּהָאִי שׁוּקָא בְּר  
עֲלָמָא דְאַתֵּי? אָמַר לֵיהּ: לֹא. אֲדִהִכִּי  
וְהִכִּי חֻזָּא לְהֵוּא גְּבִרָא דְהָיָה סִיִּים  
מְסָאנִי אוּכְמִי וְלֹא רָמִי חוּטָא דְתַקְלָתָא  
בְּגִלְמִיָּה. אָמַר לֵיהּ: הָאִי בְּרַ עֲלָמָא  
דְּאַתֵּי 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,<sup>8</sup> 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?<sup>9</sup> He said to him: No. In the meantime, Rabbi Beroka saw a man who was wearing black shoes,<sup>8</sup> 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.

Prison guard [zandukana] – זַנְדוּקָנָא: The proper reading of this word is probably *zendankana*. It is probably derived from the Middle Iranian *zēndān*, prison, with the agent suffix *akān*.

Dregs [durdayya] – דוּרְדַיָּא: From the Persian *durdī*, meaning dregs.

Menstruating [dastana] – דַּשְׁתָּנָא: This is the Middle Persian word *daštān*, meaning menstruation, menstrual blood, or a menstruating woman.

## BACKGROUND

Blight – שְׁדֵפוֹן: Blight here probably refers to the disease known nowadays as corn smut, caused by the fungus *Ustilago maydis*. When the plant is first affected, whitish galls are formed. They later rupture to release dark spores that may infect other plants over large distances.



Stalk affected by *Ustilago*

## HALAKHA

For locusts, for caterpillar – וְעַל אַרְבֵּה וְחַסִּיל: With regard to all kinds of locusts, even if only one specimen is seen in all of Eretz Yisrael, the alarm must be sounded and fasts proclaimed (*Shulḥan Arukh, Orah Hayyim 576:9*).

And for dangerous beasts – וְעַל חַיָּה רָעָה: Fasts must be proclaimed and the alarm sounded upon the sighting of wild beasts, provided that they indicate an outbreak. Under what circumstances is there considered to be an outbreak of wild beasts? If a wild beast is seen in the city during the day; if it is spotted by day in a field and it sees two people but does not run away from them; if it sees two people by day in a field close to a marsh and chases after them; or if, in the marsh itself, it not only chases after the two people but attacks them and eats one of them, this is an outbreak. However, if the beast attacks two people in the marsh and eats both of them, this is not considered an outbreak, as the animal was clearly acting out of hunger. Even with regard to a building constructed in an otherwise unpopulated area, if a wild beast climbs onto the roof and removes an infant from its cradle, this is considered an outbreak (*Shulḥan Arukh, Orah Hayyim 576:6–7*).

## NOTES

Single wing – כַּנְף אֶחָד: Rashi and others explain that this means a single member of that species. Others claim that this means four, or five, members of the species (Rabbeinu Yehonatan).

רַהֲטָ בַתְּרִיָּה, אָמַר לֵיהּ: מַאי עוֹבְדִיךָ? אָמַר לֵיהּ: זִיל הָאִידְנָא, וְתָא לְמַחֵר. לְמַחֵר אָמַר לֵיהּ: מַאי עוֹבְדִיךָ? אָמַר לֵיהּ: זַנְדוּקָנָא אָנָּא, וְאַסְרִנָּא גְבֵרֵי לְחֻדּוֹ וְנָשֵׁי לְחֻדּוֹ. וְרַמְיָנָא פּוֹרְיָאֵי בֵּין הֵנִי לְהֵנִי כִּי הֵיכִי דְלֵא לִיתוּ לִידֵי אִסְרוּרָא. כִּי חֻינָא בֵּת יִשְׂרָאֵל דִּיהֲבֵי נְכָרִים עֲלֵהּ עֵינֵיהּ, מְסָרְנָא נְפְשָׁאֵי וּמְצִילָנָא לָהּ. יוֹמָא חַד הוּוּת נַעֲרָה מְאוּרְסָה גְבֵן דִּיהֲבּוּ בֵּה נְכָרִים עֵינֵיהּ. שְׁקִלֵי דוֹרְדַיָּא דְחַמְרָא וְשָׂדֵא לָהּ בְּשִׁפּוּלָה, וְאַמְרֵי: דַּשְׁתָּנָא הִיא.

אָמַר לֵיהּ: מַאי טַעֲמָא לִית לָךְ חוּטֵי וְרַמִּית מְסָאֵי אוּכְמֵי? אָמַר לֵיהּ: עֵילָנָא וְנִפְיָנָא בֵּינֵי נְכָרִים כִּי הֵיכִי דְלֵא לִידְעוּ דִּיהוּדָאָה אָנָּא. כִּי הוּוּ גֻזְרֵי גְזִירָתָא, מוֹדַעְנָא לָהּ לְרַבְנָן, וּבַעֲוֵי רַחֲמֵי וּמְבַטְלֵי לְגְזִירָתֵיהּ. וּמַאי טַעֲמָא כִּי אָמִינָא לָךְ אָנָּא, מַאי עוֹבְדִיךָ? וְאַמְרַת לִי: זִיל הָאִידְנָא וְתָא לְמַחֵר? אָמַר לֵיהּ: בְּהֵיא שְׁעֵתָא גֻזְרֵי גְזִירָתָא, וְאַמְיָנָא: בְּרִישָׁא אֵיזִיל וְאַשְׁמַע לָהּ לְרַבְנָן דְּלַבְעֵי רַחֲמֵי עֲלֵהּ דְּמִילָתָא.

אֲדַהֲכֵי וְהֵכִי, אַתּוּ הֵנָּךְ תְּרֵי אַחֵי. אָמַר לֵיהּ: הֵנָּךְ נִמֵּי בְּנֵי עֲלָמָא דְאַתֵּי נִנְהוּ. אִוּל לְגַבִּיָּהוּ אָמַר לָהּ: מַאי עוֹבְדֵיכֶון? אָמַר לֵיהּ: אֵינְשֵׁי בְּדוּחֵי אָנָּן, מְבַדְּחִין עֲצִיבֵי. אֵי נִמֵּי, כִּי חֻינָן בֵּי תְרֵי דְאַתֵּי לָהּ תִּנְגְרָא בְּהַדְרֵיהּ, טְרַחֲנֵן וְעַבְדִּין לָהּ שְׁלָמָא.

”עַל אֵלוּ מְתַרְעִין בְּכָל מְקוֹם” כּוּ. תִּנּוּ רַבְנָן: עַל אֵלוּ מְתַרְעִין בְּכָל מְקוֹם: עַל הַשְּׁדֵפוֹן, וְעַל הַיִּרְקוֹן, וְעַל אַרְבֵּה וְחַסִּיל, וְעַל חַיָּה רָעָה. רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא אוֹמֵר: עַל הַשְּׁדֵפוֹן וְעַל הַיִּרְקוֹן, בְּכָל שְׁהוּא. אַרְבֵּה וְחַסִּיל, אִפִּילוּ לֹא נִרְאָה בְּאַרְץ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶלָּא כַּנְף אֶחָד, מְתַרְעִין עֲלֵיהּ.

”וְעַל חַיָּה” וכו'. תִּנּוּ רַבְנָן: חַיָּה רָעָה שְׂאֵמֵרוּ, בְּזִמְנָא שְׁהִיא מְשׁוּלַחַת, מְתַרְעִין עֲלֵיהּ; אֵינָהּ מְשׁוּלַחַת, אֵין מְתַרְעִין עֲלֵיהּ. אֵי זֶה הִיא מְשׁוּלַחַת וְאֵי זֶה הִיא שְׂאֵינָה מְשׁוּלַחַת? נִרְאִית בְּעִיר, מְשׁוּלַחַת; בְּשָׂדֵה, אֵינָה מְשׁוּלַחַת. בַּיּוֹם, מְשׁוּלַחַת; בַּלַּיְלָה, אֵינָה מְשׁוּלַחַת.

Rabbi Beroka ran after the man and said to him: What is your occupation? The man said to him: Go away now, as I have no time, but come back tomorrow and we will talk. The next day, Rabbi Beroka arrived and again said to him: What is your occupation? The man said to him: I am a prison guard [zandukana],<sup>1</sup> and I imprison the men separately and the women separately, and I place my bed between them so that they will not come to transgression. When I see a Jewish woman upon whom gentiles have set their eyes, I risk my life to save her. One day, there was a betrothed young woman among us, upon whom the gentiles had set their eyes. I took dregs [durdayya]<sup>1</sup> of red wine and threw them on the lower part of her dress, and I said: She is menstruating [dastana],<sup>1</sup> so that they would leave her alone.

Rabbi Beroka said to him: What is the reason that you do not have threads of ritual fringes, and why do you wear black shoes? The man said to him: Since I come and go among gentiles, I dress this way so that they will not know that I am a Jew. When they issue a decree, I inform the Sages, and they pray for mercy and annul the decree. Rabbi Beroka further inquired: And what is the reason that when I said to you: What is your occupation, you said to me: Go away now but come tomorrow? The man said to him: At that moment, they had just issued a decree, and I said to myself: First I must go and inform the Sages, so that they will pray for mercy over this matter.

In the meantime, two brothers came to the marketplace. Elijah said to Rabbi Beroka: These two also have a share in the World-to-Come. Rabbi Beroka went over to the men and said to them: What is your occupation? They said to him: We are jesters, and we cheer up the depressed. Alternatively, when we see two people who have a quarrel between them, we strive to make peace. It is said that for this behavior one enjoys the profits of his actions in this world, and yet his reward is not diminished in the World-to-Come.

¶ The mishna states: For the following calamities they sound the alarm in every place. The Sages taught: For the following calamities they sound the alarm in every place: For blight,<sup>8</sup> for mildew, for locusts, for caterpillars,<sup>11</sup> a type of locust that comes in large swarms and descends upon a certain place, and for dangerous beasts.<sup>11</sup> Rabbi Akiva says: For blight and mildew they sound the alarm over any amount. For locusts, and for caterpillar, even if only a single wing<sup>n</sup> of one of these pests was seen in all of Eretz Yisrael, they sound the alarm over them, as this is a sign that more are on their way.

The mishna taught that they sound the alarm for dangerous beasts that have invaded a town. The Sages taught in a *baraita*: The term dangerous beasts that they said is referring to a situation when there is an abnormal outbreak<sup>8</sup> of the animals in a populated area (see Leviticus 26:22). In this case, they sound the alarm over them. However, if it is not an outbreak, they do not sound the alarm over them. The Gemara elaborates: What is considered an outbreak and what is not an outbreak? If a dangerous beast is seen in the city, this is an outbreak. If it is seen in the field, where it is usually found, this is not an outbreak. If it is seen during the day, this is an outbreak. If it is seen at night, this is not an outbreak.

## BACKGROUND

An outbreak of beasts – חַיָּה מְשׁוּלַחַת: This term: Outbreak, which literally means a dispatch, is based on a biblical expression; see, e.g., “And the teeth of beasts will I send upon them” (Deuteronomy 32:24). Apparently, it refers to the sudden outbreak of wild beasts in human habitations. An outbreak of this kind might be caused by great hunger among these animals,

possibly due to overpopulation. When this happens, animals that generally refrain from any contact with people are liable to break into towns and attack them. Several sources indicate that another cause of this phenomenon is an epidemic of rabies among wild animals, which increases their level of aggression. In this case, their bite poses a mortal threat.

רֵאתָה שְׁנֵי בְנֵי אָדָם וְרָצְתָה אַחֲרֵיהֶן, מְשׁוּלַחַת; נִחְבָּאת מִפְּנֵיהֶן, אֵינָה מְשׁוּלַחַת. טָרְפָה שְׁנֵי בְנֵי אָדָם וְאָכְלָה אֶחָד מֵהֶן, מְשׁוּלַחַת; אָכְלָה שְׁנֵיהֶן, אֵינָה מְשׁוּלַחַת. עֲלֵתָה לְגַג וְנָטְלָה תִינוּק מֵעֵרִיסָה, מְשׁוּלַחַת.

The *baraita* continues: If the beast saw two people and chased after them, this is an outbreak. If it hid from them, this is not an outbreak. If it tore apart two people and ate one of them, this is an outbreak, as it is clear that the animal did not attack merely due to hunger. If it ate both of them, this is not an outbreak, as the animal was evidently hungry and acted in accordance with its nature. If it climbed to the roof and took a baby from its cradle, this is an outbreak. This concludes the Gemara's citation of the *baraita*.

הָא גּוֹפָה קָשְׁיָא. אָמַרְתָּ: נִרְאָתָה בְּעִיר, מְשׁוּלַחַת. לֹא שָׂנֵא בְיוֹם וְלֹא שָׂנֵא בְלַיְלָה. וְהָדָר אָמַרְתָּ: בְיוֹם, מְשׁוּלַחַת; בְּלַיְלָה, אֵינָה מְשׁוּלַחַת!

The Gemara asks: This *baraita* is itself difficult. Initially, you said that if a dangerous beast is seen in the city, this is an outbreak, which indicates that it is no different whether it is seen by day and it is no different if it is seen at night. And then you said: If the animal is seen during the day, this is an outbreak; if it is seen at night, this is not an outbreak.

לֹא קָשְׁיָא. הָכִי קָאָמַר: נִרְאָתָה בְּעִיר בְיוֹם, מְשׁוּלַחַת; בְּעִיר בְּלַיְלָה, אֵינָה מְשׁוּלַחַת. אִי נִמְי, בְּשָׂדֵה אֶפְלוֹ בְיוֹם, אֵינָה מְשׁוּלַחַת.

The Gemara resolves this difficulty: This is not difficult, as this is what the *baraita* is saying: If it is seen in the city during the day, this is an outbreak; if it is seen in the city at night, this is not an outbreak. Alternatively, if it is seen in the field, even during the day, this is not an outbreak. If it is spotted in the field at night, this is certainly not an outbreak.

רֵאתָה שְׁנֵי בְנֵי אָדָם וְרָצְתָה אַחֲרֵיהֶן, מְשׁוּלַחַת. הָא עוֹמְדָת, אֵינָה מְשׁוּלַחַת. וְהָדָר אָמַרְתָּ: נִחְבָּאת מִפְּנֵיהֶן, אֵינָה מְשׁוּלַחַת. הָא עוֹמְדָת, מְשׁוּלַחַת!

The Gemara inquires about another apparent contradiction: The *baraita* states that if the beast saw two people and chased after them, this is an outbreak. This indicates that if it stands but does not run away, this is not an outbreak. And then you said that if it hid from them, this is not an outbreak, from which it may be inferred that if it stands and does not run away, this is an outbreak.

לֹא קָשְׁיָא. כָּאן, בְּשָׂדֵה הַסְמוּכָה לְאָגָם; כָּאן, בְּשָׂדֵה שְׂאִינָה סְמוּכָה לְאָגָם.

The Gemara answers: This is not difficult, as the two sections of the *baraita* describe different situations. Here, where it is an outbreak, the beast is standing in a field near a marsh. It is natural for the animal to stand, for the beast knows that if people attempt to catch it, it can run into the marsh. Conversely, there, where it is not an outbreak, the beast is standing in a field that is not near a marsh. Since it has nowhere to run, standing demonstrates an unnatural lack of fear.

טָרְפָה שְׁנֵי בְנֵי אָדָם כְּאֶחָד וְאָכְלָה אֶחָד מֵהֶן, מְשׁוּלַחַת; שְׁנֵיהֶם, אֵינָה מְשׁוּלַחַת. וְהָא אָמַרְתָּ: אֶפְלוֹ רָצְתָה! אָמַר רַב פֶּפְאָה: כִּי תִנִּי הָהִיא, בְּאֶגְמָא.

The *baraita* taught that if the beast tore apart two people and ate one of them, this is an outbreak, but if it ate both of them this is not an outbreak. The Gemara asks: But didn't you say that even if the animal merely chased after two people, this is an outbreak? Rav Pappa said: When that ruling of a beast that tore apart two people is taught, it is referring to an animal in a marsh. Since it is in its own habitat, it is natural for a territorial beast to attack.

גּוֹפָא: עֲלֵתָה לְגַג וְנָטְלָה תִינוּק מֵעֵרִיסָה, מְשׁוּלַחַת. פְּשִׁיטָא! אָמַר רַב פֶּפְאָה: כְּבוּבֵי דְצִיּוּדֵי.

The Gemara returns to the matter of the *baraita* itself. If a wild animal climbed to the roof and took a baby from its cradle, this is an outbreak. The Gemara asks: It is obvious that this animal is acting unnaturally. Why does the *baraita* mention this case? Rav Pappa said: The *baraita* is referring to the roof of a hunter's hide-out. Since this hut is in a wild area, one might have thought that it is natural for the beast to attack. Therefore, the *baraita* teaches us that this is still considered an outbreak.

HALAKHA

For the sword – על החרב: If an enemy army comes to wage war against Israel, or even if it wishes only to pass through the land to fight another country, fasts must be proclaimed and the alarm sounded (*Shulhan Arukh, Orach Hayyim 576:1*).

NOTES

A sword of peace – חרב של שלום: Even if the invading army does not wish to attack the Jewish people, but merely to cross its territory to wage war with its true enemy, the court sounds the alarm, as it is likely that the soldiers passing through the country will cause serious damage (Meiri). Moreover, the people's transgressions might cause the foreign army to turn their weapons against the Jews, even if the soldiers had originally planned to pass through the country in peace (Ritva).

“על החרב” וכו'. תנו רבנן: חרב שאמר אֵינוֹ צָרִיךְ לִזְמַר חֲרָב שְׂאִינוֹ שֶׁל שְׁלוֹם, אֲלֵא אֶפְלוֹ חֲרָב שֶׁל שְׁלוֹם. שְׂאִין לְךָ חֲרָב שֶׁל שְׁלוֹם יוֹתֵר מִפְּרַעְזָה נְכוּהָ, וְאִף עַל פִּי כֹן נִכְשַׁל בָּהּ הַמֶּלֶךְ יֵאשְׁדָּהוּ, שְׁנֵאמַר:

§ The mishna taught that they sound the alarm for the sword.<sup>H</sup> The Sages taught: With regard to the sword that they mentioned, it is not necessary to state that this includes a sword that is not of peace, i.e., an enemy army that has come to wage war against the Jews. Rather, even in a case of a sword of peace,<sup>N</sup> when an army passes through with no intention of waging war against the Jews, but is merely on its way to another place, this is enough to obligate the court to sound the alarm, as you do not have a greater example of a sword of peace than Pharaoh Neco. He passed through Eretz Yisrael to wage war with Nebuchadnezzar, and nevertheless King Josiah stumbled in this matter, as it is stated:



“וישלח אליו מלאכים, לאמר: מה לי ולך, מלך יהודה? לא עליך אתה היום, כי אל בית מלחמתני, ואלהים אמר לבהלני: חדל לך ממלהים, אשר עמי, ואל ישחיתך.”

מאי “אלהים, אשר עמי”? אמר רב יהודה אמר רב: זו עבודה זרה אמר: הואיל וקא בטח בעבודה זרה, יכילנא ליה.

“וירו הירים למלך יאשיהו, ויאמר המלך לעבדיו: העבירוני, כי החליתי מאד.” מאי “כי החליתי מאד”? אמר רב יהודה אמר רב: מלמד שעשו כל גופו ככברה.

אמר רבי שמואל בר נחמני אמר רבי יונתן: מפני מה נענש יאשיהו? מפני שהיה לו לימלך בירמיהו, ולא נמלך. מאי דרש? “וחרב לא תעבר בארצכם.”

מאי “חרב”? אילמא: חרב שאינה של שלום, והכתוב: “ונתתי שלום בארץ!” אלא, אפילו של שלום, והוא אינו יודע שאין דור דומה יפה.

כי הוה נחא נפשיה, חזא ירמיהו שפוטתיה דקא מרחשון, אמר: שמא, חס ושלום, מילתא דלא מהגנא אמר אגב צעריה. גחין ושמעיה דקא מצדיק עליה דינא אנפשיה, אמר: “צדיק הוא ה, כי פיהו מריתי.” פתח עליה ההיא שעתא: “רוח אפינו, משיח ה.”

“מעשה וירדו זקנים מירושלים לעריהם” כו. איבעיא להו: במלא תנור תבואה, או דלמא במלא תנור פת?

תא שמע: “במלא פי תנור.” ועדיין תיבעי להו: כפיסויא דתנורא, או דלמא כי דרא דרפתא דהדר ליה לפומא דתנורא? תיקו.

“But he sent ambassadors to him saying: What have I to do with you, king of Judea? I do not come against you this day, but against the house with which I am at war; and God has commanded me to make haste. Forbear from meddling with God, Who is with me, so that He will not destroy you” (II Chronicles 35:21). This clearly shows that Pharaoh Neco had no intention of engaging Josiah in battle.

The Gemara asks: **What is the meaning of the phrase “God, Who is with me”?** Rav Yehuda said that Rav said: This is referring to Neco’s idolatry, which he brought for assistance. In other words, it is a secular reference and should be read as: The god that is with me, in my possession. Josiah said: Since he trusts in idolatry, I will be able to defeat him.

With regard to Josiah’s battle with Pharaoh Neco, the verse states: “And the archers shot at King Josiah and the king said to his servants: Move me away, for I am seriously wounded” (II Chronicles 35:23). What is the meaning of the phrase: “For I am seriously wounded”? Rav Yehuda said that Rav said: This teaches that the Egyptian archers made his entire body like a sieve<sup>N</sup> from the many arrows they shot at him.

Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani said that Rabbi Yohanan said: For what reason was Josiah punished?<sup>N</sup> Because he should have consulted with the prophet Jeremiah to find out if he should go to war, but he did not consult with him. How did Josiah interpret the verses of the Torah? How did they lead him to go to war? The verse states: “Neither shall a sword go through your land” (Leviticus 26:6).

What is the meaning of the term: “Sword”? If we say that it is referring to a sword that is not of peace, but isn’t it written earlier in the same verse: “And I will give peace in the land”? Rather, the verse must mean that even a sword of peace shall not pass through the land, and Josiah sought to prevent this occurrence, in fulfillment of the blessing. But he did not know that his generation did not merit these blessings, and he would therefore not receive divine assistance in this regard.

The Gemara discusses Josiah’s deathbed reflections. When Josiah was dying, Jeremiah saw his lips moving. Jeremiah said: Perhaps, Heaven forbid, he is saying something improper and complaining about God’s judgment on account of his great distress. Jeremiah bent over and heard that he was justifying God’s judgment against himself. Josiah said: “The Lord is righteous, for I have rebelled against His word” (Lamentations 1:18). At that moment, Jeremiah began his eulogy for Josiah: “The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the Lord, was trapped in their pits” (Lamentations 4:20).

§ The mishna taught: An incident occurred in which Elders descended from Jerusalem to their cities and decreed a fast throughout the land because a small amount of blight was seen in the city of Ashkelon, enough to fill the mouth of an oven. A dilemma was raised before the Sages: Did they mean enough grain to fill an entire oven, or perhaps they meant enough grain to prepare bread to fill an oven? This is far less, as bread is stuck to the walls of the oven and does not fill its inner area.

The Gemara answers: Come and hear the phrase of the mishna: Enough to fill the mouth of an oven.<sup>NH</sup> This indicates that the bread referred to does not fill the entire oven, but rather covers the mouth of the oven. The Gemara further asks: And still you can raise this dilemma before them: Is the mishna referring to the bread of the cover of the oven? Perhaps it is referring to a row of bread around the mouth of the oven. No resolution was found, and the Gemara states that the dilemma shall stand unresolved.

NOTES

That the archers made his entire body like a sieve – שָׁעֵשׂוּ כָּל גּוּפוֹ כְּכַבְרָה: Rashi explains that this interpretation is derived from the words “And the archers shot.” In Hebrew, the noun archer and the verb shot come from the same root, *y-r-a*. The use of both constitutes repetitive language, which indicates that each archer shot many arrows. Others suggest that it is derived from the word “wounded [*hahaleiti*].” Rav associates this word with *halal*, a hole. Josiah requested to be taken away because his body had been pierced with holes like a sieve (Rashash).

For what reason was Josiah punished – מַפְנֵי מָה: In the midrash, the verse “And he did not hearken to the words of Neco from the mouth of God” (II Chronicles 35:22) is interpreted as an allusion to a warning issued by Jeremiah to Josiah, citing Isaiah, that he should not interfere with Pharaoh Neco, as it is stated with regard to the conflicts of Pharaoh Neco: “And I will spur Egypt against Egypt; and they shall fight every one against his brother, and every one against his neighbor; city against city, and kingdom against kingdom” (Isaiah 19:2).

To fill the mouth of an oven – כִּמְלֵא פִי תֵנּוֹר: Many commentaries explain that the amount of grain required to fill an oven is greater than the amount needed to make the amount of bread that will fill the same oven (Rashi; Rabbeinu Gershom; *Tosafot*). Others claim the opposite, that more grain is required to produce the amount of bread needed to fill the opening of the oven than is required to fill the opening with the grain itself (Rabbi Elyakim).

HALAKHA

To fill the mouth of an oven – כִּמְלֵא פִי תֵנּוֹר: If the crops in a certain area are struck by blight or mildew, even if only a small amount of grain is affected, enough to fill the opening of an oven, fasts must be proclaimed and the alarm must be sounded. The precise definition of this measure has not been determined (*Lehem Mishne; Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim 576:8*).

BACKGROUND

Wolves – זאבים: Wolves, even in packs, do not usually attack people. Nevertheless, the wolves in Eretz Yisrael are bigger and stronger than their European counterparts, and cases have been documented of packs of wolves entering inhabited areas and even attacking children.

NOTES

Wolves swallowed – נבלעו זאבים: This does not literally mean that the wolves swallowed them whole; rather, they did not leave behind any physical remains of their bodies (Gevurat Ari). The halakhic problem concerns the flesh left on the corpses. Does it still have the status of flesh? Perhaps it no longer confers the ritual impurity of the dead, as it has been partially digested.

And beings will not have mercy on him – ואין הבריות מרחמות עליו: The commentaries explain that if someone fasts for many days and weakens his body to such an extent that he can no longer work and support himself, he is likely to be viewed as having brought this desperate situation upon himself (Maharsha).

Or perhaps they did not agree with him at all – או דלמא לא דללו: Many early commentaries pose the following difficulty: Rabbi Hanan ben Pitom stated in the name of his teacher, Rabbi Akiva, that the alarm is not sounded for a plague at all, even on weekdays. However, it is stated explicitly in the mishna that according to the opinion of Rabbi Akiva, people living outside a city affected by a plague must sound the alarm but they need not fast. Certainly, then, the residents of the city affected by a plague itself must sound the alarm.

Some commentaries resolve this difficulty by amending the baraita to read: Rabbi Hanan ben Pitom said in the name of Rabbi Akiva: They do not sound the alarm for a plague on Shabbat (Ra'avad).

However, most early commentaries explain that when Rabbi Akiva said that they do not sound the alarm for a plague at all, he was referring to the communities outside the city affected by the disease and beyond its surrounding areas. Even Rabbi Akiva agrees that the alarm is sounded by the residents of the city afflicted by the plague, as well as by those living in the adjacent areas.

Rabbi Akiva merely disagrees with Shimon the Timnite, who maintains that the alarm is sounded even in other cities, as Rabbi Akiva rules that outside the immediately surrounding areas of a city afflicted by a plague the alarm is not sounded even on weekdays (Ramban; Ritva; Rid).

“ועוד גזרו תענית על שאכלו זאבים” כו'. אמר עולא משום רבי שמעון בן יהוצדק: מעשה ובלעו זאבים שני תינוקות והקיאום דרך בית הרעי. ובא מעשה לפני חכמים, וטיהרו את הבשר, וטמאו את העצמות.

“על אלו מתריעין בשבת” כו'. תנו רבנן: עיר שהקיפוה נכרים או נהר, ואחד ספינה המטרפת ביים, ואחד יחיד שגודף מפני נכרים או מפני לסטין, ומפני רוח רעה מתריעין בשבת, ועל כולן יחיד רשאי לסגף את עצמו בתענית.

רבי יוסי אומר: אין היחיד רשאי לסגף את עצמו בתענית, שמה יצטרך לבריות, ואין הבריות מרחמות עליו. אמר רב יהודה אמר רב: מאי טעמא דרבי יוסי? דכתב: “ויהי האדם לנפש חיה”. נשמה שנתתי בך, החייה.

“שמעון התימני אומר: אף על הדבר” כו'. איבעיא להו: לא הודו לו חכמים בשבת, אבל בחול הודו לו? או דלמא לא הודו לו כלל?

תא שמע, דתניא: מתריעין על הדבר בשבת, ואין צריך לומר בחול. רבי חנן בן פטיסום, תלמידו של רבי עקיבא, משום רבי עקיבא אומר: אין מתריעין על הדבר כל עיקר.

§ The mishna taught: And furthermore, they decreed a fast because wolves had eaten two children in Transjordan. Ulla said in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yehotzadak: An incident occurred in which wolves<sup>b</sup> swallowed<sup>n</sup> two children and excreted them. And the incident came before the Sages for a ruling. They were asked if the remains were ritually impure even after they had passed through the animal’s digestive tract, and they pronounced the flesh ritually pure,<sup>h</sup> as it had been digested, but they pronounced the intact bones ritually impure.

§ The mishna further taught: For the following calamities they sound the alarm even on Shabbat: For a city that is surrounded by gentile troops, for a place in danger of being flooded by a river that has swelled its banks, or for a ship tossed about at sea. The Sages taught: In the case of a city that is surrounded by gentile troops or a river that has swelled beyond its banks, and this also applies to both a ship tossed about at sea and an individual who is being pursued by gentiles, or by thieves, or by an evil spirit, which may lead him to harm himself, they sound the alarm even on Shabbat. And in all these cases, an individual is permitted to afflict himself by fasting<sup>h</sup> to annul the evil decrees against him.

Rabbi Yosei says: An individual is not permitted to afflict himself by fasting, lest he become too weak to work and be beholden to other beings, and those beings will not have mercy on him.<sup>n</sup> Rav Yehuda said that Rav said: What is the reason of Rabbi Yosei? It is as it is written: “And man became a living soul” (Genesis 2:7). Rabbi Yosei interprets this verse as a command: The soul I placed within you, preserve and sustain it.

§ The mishna taught that Shimon the Timnite says: One may cry out on Shabbat even for pestilence,<sup>h</sup> but the Rabbis did not agree with him. A dilemma was raised before the Sages: Does this mean that the Rabbis did not agree with him with regard to crying out in these cases on Shabbat, but if they occur on a weekday they agreed with him? Or perhaps they did not agree with him at all,<sup>n</sup> as they maintain that one never cries out over pestilence.

The Gemara answers: Come and hear, as it is taught in a baraita: One cries out for a plague of pestilence on Shabbat, and needless to say on weekdays. Rabbi Hanan ben Pitom, the student of Rabbi Akiva, says in the name of Rabbi Akiva: One does not cry out for pestilence at all. This opinion attributed to Rabbi Akiva is the ruling of the Rabbis in the mishna.

HALAKHA

And they pronounced the flesh ritually pure – וטיהרו את הבשר: If an animal swallows a child whole, and its remains pass through the creature’s excretory channel, the flesh is ritually pure but the bones are impure (Rambam Sefer Tahara, Hilkhot Tumat Met 20:4).

An individual is permitted to afflict himself by fasting – יחיד רשאי לסגף את עצמו בתענית: Just as the community must observe fasts and offer special prayers when threatened by calamity, so too must every individual fast when faced

with some personal suffering. This is in accordance with the ruling of the Maggid Mishne (see Bah and Peri Megadim). The halakha is in accordance with the unattributed opinion of the first tanna of the baraita (Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayyim 578:1).

For pestilence – על הדבר: On Shabbat, the alarm is not sounded for a plague of pestilence. During the rest of the week, the alarm is sounded for this reason and fasts are proclaimed (Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayyim 576:2; 288:9).

”על כל צרה שלא תבוא על העבור” כו.  
תנו רבנן: על כל צרה שלא תבוא על  
העבור מתריעין עליה, חוץ מרוב גשמים.  
מאי טעמא? אמר רבי יוחנן: לפי שאין  
מתפללין על רוב הטובה.

ואמר רבי יוחנן: מניין שאין מתפללין  
על רוב הטובה? שנאמר ”הביאו את כל  
המעשר אל בית האוצר” גו’ מאי ”עד  
בלי די”? אמר רבי בר חמא: עד שיבילו  
שפתותיכם מלומר: ”די”.

אמר רבי בר רב יוד: ובגולה מתריעין  
עליה. תניא נמי הכי: שנה שגשמייה  
מרובין, אנשי משמר שולחין לאנשי  
מעמד: תנו עיניכם באחיכם שבגולה  
שלא יהא בתיכם קבריהם.

שאלו את רבי אליעזר: עד היכן גשמים  
יורדין ויתפללו שלא ירדו? אמר להם:  
בדי שניעמוד אדם בקרן אפל, וישכשך  
רגליו במים. והתניא: ידיו! רגליו בידיו  
קאמינא.

אמר רבה בר בר חנה: לדידי חזיא לי קרן  
אפל, דקם ההוא טייעא בי רכיב גמלא  
ונקיט רומחא בידיה מיתחזי איניבא.

תנו רבנן: ”ונתתי גשמיכם בעתם”. לא  
שבורה ולא צמאה, אלא בינונית. שכל  
זמן שהגשמים מרובין – מטשטשין את  
הארץ, ואינה מוציאה פירות. דבר אחר:

§ The mishna further states that they sound the alarm on account of any trouble that should not befall the community, a euphemism for trouble that may befall the community, except for an overabundance of rain. The Sages taught in a *baraita*: For any trouble that should not befall the community, they sound the alarm for it, except for an overabundance of rain.<sup>14</sup> The Gemara asks: What is the reason for this? Rabbi Yoḥanan said: Because one does not pray over an excess of good. Since rain is generally good for the world, it is not appropriate to pray for it to stop, even when it falls in excess.

And Rabbi Yoḥanan said: From where is it derived that one does not pray over an excess of good? It is stated: “Bring the whole tithe into the storeroom, that there may be food in My house, and test Me now by this, said the Lord of hosts, if I will not open for you the windows of heaven, and pour out for you a blessing that there shall be more than sufficiency” (Malachi 3:10). What is the meaning of the phrase: “That there shall be more than sufficiency [*ad beli dai*]”? Rami bar Ḥama said: It means that the abundance will be so great that your lips will be worn out [*yivlu*], similar to the word *beli*, from saying enough [*dai*]. In other words, even when a blessing is delivered in gross excess, one should not pray for it to cease, as the verse blesses the people with an excess.

Rami bar Rav Yud said: This is true in Eretz Yisrael, but in the Diaspora, i.e., Babylonia, they do sound the alarm over excessive rain. The reason is that Babylonia is in a low-lying region, where excessive rain poses a real danger. That opinion is also taught in a *baraita*: In a year whose rains are abundant, the members of the priestly watch in the Temple would send a message to the members of the non-priestly watch: Cast your eyes on your brothers in the Diaspora and have them in mind when you pray, so that their houses should not collapse from excessive rain and become their graves.

They asked Rabbi Eliezer: How much rain must fall until they should pray that it should not fall anymore? He said to them by way of exaggeration: Enough rain must fall so that a person stands at the colossal cliff Keren Ophel<sup>6</sup> and dips his feet in water. The Gemara asks: But isn’t it taught in a *baraita* that Rabbi Eliezer said he must be able to place his hands in water? Rabbi Eliezer could answer: When I said to you that he must be able to place his feet, I meant like his hands, i.e., the water must be high enough that he can dip both his hands and feet into the water with ease.

With regard to the height of this great cliff, Rabba bar bar Ḥana said: I personally saw Keren Ophel, and when I peered down I saw that an Arab was positioned below, and while riding a camel and holding a spear in his hand, he looked like a worm [*iniva*].<sup>1</sup>

The Sages taught: “Then I will give your rains in their season” (Leviticus 26:4). This means that the earth will be neither drunk nor thirsty; rather, a moderate amount of rain will fall. For as long as the rains are abundant, they muddy the soil of the land, and it does not give out its produce. Alternatively,

#### HALAKHA

Except for an overabundance of rain – חוץ מרוב גשמים: If there is an excessive amount of rainfall, prayers may be offered for the rain to stop, due to the concern that the water will cause buildings to collapse. In Eretz Yisrael, these prayers are usually not recited, as abundant rain in Eretz Yisrael is considered a blessing

and there is no worry that the excessive rainfall will cause buildings to collapse. Even in Eretz Yisrael, however, prayers that the rain should stop must be offered in places such as Safed, where excessive water might cause structural damage (*Shulḥan Arukh, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 576:11).

#### BACKGROUND

Keren Ophel – קרן אפל: Some maintain that Keren Ophel is another name for Ophel, the ancient fortress of Jerusalem. The

difference in height between Ophel and the nearby Kidron Valley is more than 100 m.

#### LANGUAGE

Worm [*iniva*] – איניבא: Probably from a Semitic root. It also appears in Assyrian as *nabu*, meaning lice or fleas.