

אי מה משרת בעל מום לא, אף כהן מברך בעל מום לא! הא איתקש לנייר!

The Gemara asks: If so, then just as a priest who ministers in the Temple may not be physically blemished, so too, a priest who recites the benediction may not be blemished.¹¹ The Gemara rejects this suggestion: The priest who recites the benediction is also juxtaposed to a nazirite, who is not affected by a blemish.

ומאי חזית דמקשת לקולא? אקיש לחומרא! אסמכתא ניהו מדרבנן, ולקולא.

The Gemara asks: And what did you see that you juxtaposed the cases in favor of a leniency? Perhaps you should juxtapose for a stringency, by comparing the priest who recites the benediction to a nazirite with regard to grape pits, and comparing him to a priest ministering in the Temple in relation to the prohibition against reciting the benediction if he has a physical blemish. The Gemara explains: These proofs are cited merely as supportⁿ for halakhot that apply by rabbinic law, and consequently, they are interpreted as a leniency, not a stringency.

"אלו הן מעמדות: לפי שנאמר 'צו את בני ישראל' בו. מאי קאמר? הכי קאמר: אלו הן מעמדות. ומה טעם תיקנו מעמדות? לפי שנאמר: 'צו את בני ישראל ואמרת אליהם: את קרבני, לחמי לאשי'."

§ The mishna taught that these are the non-priestly watches: Since it is stated: "Command the children of Israel." The Gemara asks: What is the mishna saying about the non-priestly watches? How does the verse relate to the watches? The Gemara explains that the mishna is saying as follows: These are the non-priestly watches, which will be explained later. And what is the reason that they instituted non-priestly watches? Since it is stated: "Command the children of Israel and say to them: My offering of food, which is presented to Me made by a fire, of a sweet savor to Me, you shall observe to sacrifice to Me in their due season" (Numbers 28:2).

והיאך קרבנו של אדם קרב והוא אינו עומד על גביו? התקינו נביאים הראשונים עשרים וארבעה משמרות. על כל משמר ומשמר היה מעמד בירושלים של כהנים ושל לויים, ושל ישראלים. הגיע זמן משמר לעלות, כהנים ולויים עולין לירושלים.

The mishna continues: But how can a person's offering be sacrificed when he is not standing next to it? The early prophets, Samuel and David, instituted twenty-four priestly watches.⁸ For each and every priestly watch there was a corresponding watch in Jerusalem of priests, Levites, and Israelites. When the time arrived for the members of a certain priestly watch to ascend, the priests and Levites of that watch would ascend to Jerusalem.

HALAKHA

Blemished – בעל מום: A priest who has a physical blemish on his face or hand may not recite the Priestly Benediction, lest the people are distracted from the benediction by his defect. If the local populace is already accustomed to the priest's defect,

or if the priests recite the benediction with their prayer shawls drawn forward to cover their heads and their hands, even a priest with a blemish on his face or hand may recite the benediction (*Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim* 128:30–31).

NOTES

Are support, etc. – אסמכתא ניהו: According to many commentaries, the conclusion of the Gemara is that both comparisons, i.e., comparing a priest who recites the benediction to a ministering priest and to a nazirite, are cited merely as support for a rabbinical law. However, some contend that the verse "To minister to Him and to bless in His name" (Deuteronomy 10:8) is an explicit comparison, which cannot be relegated to mere support (Ra'avad). According to this opinion, the prohibi-

tion against a drunk priest reciting the benediction is derived from the comparison to a priest who is performing the Temple service in a state of inebriation, a prohibition that is expressly stated in the Torah (Leviticus 10:8). Conversely, the comparison to a nazirite is only a hint that a priest who recites the benediction is not similar to a ministering priest in all regards (see *Mikhtam* and Meiri). Rabbeinu Hananel also indicates that only the juxtaposition is rabbinical.

BACKGROUND

Priestly watches – משמרות: The twenty-four priestly watches were apparently centered in specially chosen areas of Eretz Yisrael. Just as when the land was originally distributed among the tribes certain cities were set aside for the priests, the custom continued in the Second Temple period for

priests to live in particular locales. Even after the destruction of the Temple, the priests went into exile as families, and each watch lived in a different village in the Galilee, as can be seen from various lists of priestly watches in their towns.

BACKGROUND

Ascend from all over Eretz Yisrael – עולה מארץ ישראל – The list of priestly watches is preserved in memory of the Temple. For many generations, until roughly one thousand years after the destruction of the Temple, there was a custom on each Shabbat to read out the name of the priestly watch for that week, and they would even engrave the names on the walls of synagogues. Here is the list of the watches and their towns in the Galilee:

- 1. Jehoiarib – Meron
2. Jedaiah – Tzippori
3. Harim – Maphshata
4. Seorim – Ithalo
5. Malchijah – Bethlehem
6. Mijamin – Jodfat
7. Hakkoz – Ilbo
8. Abijah – Kfar Uzziah
9. Jeshua – Arbel
10. Shechaniah – Kebul
11. Eliashib – Kanah
12. Jakim – Safed
13. Huppah – Beit Maon
14. Jeshebeab – Shihin
15. Bilgah – Maariah
16. Immer – Jabnit
17. Hezir – Mimlah
18. Happizzez – Nazareth
19. Pethahiah – Arab
20. Jahezkel – Migdal Nuniah
21. Jachin – Kfar Johannah
22. Gamul – Beit Huviah
23. Delaiah – Zalmin
24. Uzziah, aka Maaziah – Hamat Ariah

HALAKHA

The main aspect of their song – עיקר שירה: The musical accompaniment provided by the Levites to the sacrificial services in the Temple was mainly vocal. In addition to the choral singing, there was also instrumental music played by Levites and Israelites (Rambam Sefer Avoda, Hilkhotei Kelei HaMikdash 3:3).

Moses instituted for the Jews – משה תקן להם לישראל: Moses divided the priesthood into eight watches, four from the descendants of Elazar and four from the descendants of Itamar. This continued until the days of Samuel, when the prophet and King David divided the priesthood into twenty-four watches (Rambam Sefer Avoda, Hilkhotei Kelei HaMikdash 4:3).

תנו רבנן: עשרים וארבעה משמרות בארץ ישראל, ושתים עשרה ביריחו. שתיים עשרה ביריחו? נפישן להו טובא! אלא: שתיים עשרה מהן ביריחו. הגיע זמן המשמר לעלות, חצי המשמר היה עולה מארץ ישראל לירושלים, וחצי המשמר היה עולה מיריחו כדי שיספקו מים ומוזן לאחייהם שבירושלים.

אמר רב יהודה אמר שמואל: כהנים ולוים וישראלים מעבדין את הקרבן במתניתא תנא: רבי שמעון בן אלעזר: כהנים ולוים וכלי שיר מעבדין את הקרבן. במאי קמיפלגי? מר סבר: עיקר שירה בפה. ומר סבר: עיקר שירה בכלי.

אמר רב חמא בר גוריא אמר רב: משה תיקן להם לישראל שמונה משמרות, ארבעה מאלעזר וארבעה מאיתמר. בא שמואל והעמידן על שש עשרה. בא דוד והעמידן על עשרים וארבעה, שנאמר: "בשנת הארבעים למלכות דוד נדרשו, וימצא בהם גבורי חיל בניעזר גלעד".

מיתבי: משה תיקן להם לישראל שמונה משמרות, ארבעה מאלעזר וארבעה מאיתמר. ובא דוד ושמואל והעמידן על עשרים וארבע, שנאמר: "המה יסד דוד ושמואל הראה באמונתם!" הכי קאמר: מיסודו של דוד ושמואל הרמתי העמידום על עשרים וארבע.

The Sages taught: There were twenty-four priestly watches in Eretz Yisrael, and twelve in Jericho. The Gemara expresses surprise at this statement: Twelve in Jericho? In that case there are too many of them, as this makes a total of thirty-six watches. Rather, the baraita should be read as follows: There were twenty-four in total, twelve of which were in Jericho. How so? When the time arrived for the members of a certain priestly watch to ascend, half the priestly watch would ascend from all over Eretz Yisrael to Jerusalem, and half the priestly watch would ascend from Jericho, in order to provide water and food to their brothers in Jerusalem from Jericho.

Rav Yehuda said that Shmuel said: Priests, Levites, and Israelites are all indispensable for the offering, and consequently, they all must be present when the daily offering is sacrificed. It is taught in a baraita that Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar says: Priests, Levites, and musical instruments are indispensable for the offering. The Gemara asks: With regard to what principle do they disagree? One Sage, Shmuel, holds that the main aspect of the Levites' song that accompanied the offerings is vocal, and one Sage, Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar, holds that the main aspect of their song is instrumental, performed with a vessel, and therefore both the Levites and their instruments must be present for the daily offering.

Rav Hama bar Gurya said that Rav said: Moses initially instituted for the Jews eight priestly watches, four from the descendants of Elazar and four from the descendants of Itamar. Samuel came and established them as sixteen, and David came and established them as twenty-four, as it is stated, after the watches are listed: "In the fortieth year of the reign of David they were sought for, and there were found among them mighty men of valor at Jazer of Gilead" (1 Chronicles 26:31).

The Gemara raises an objection against this opinion from a baraita. Moses instituted for the Jews eight priestly watches, four from Elazar and four from Itamar. And David and Samuel came and established them as twenty-four, as it is stated: "Whom David and Samuel the seer ordained in their set office" (1 Chronicles 9:22). This baraita indicates that David and Samuel together established the twenty-four watches. The Gemara explains: This is what the baraita is saying: Through their ordination by David and Samuel of Rama the priestly watches incrementally increased in number until they established them as twenty-four.

NOTES

וחצי – And half the priestly watch would ascend from Jericho – העשרה היה עולה מיריחו: Some commentaries maintain that when the time came for the members of a particular watch to ascend to Jerusalem for their week of service in the Temple, half would ascend to the capital, while the other half would go to Jericho to bring supplies of water and food for their brothers in Jerusalem. After three days, the two groups would switch roles (Meiri). In the Jerusalem Talmud it is indicated that most of the members of the watches were residents of Jerusalem or Jericho.

Moses instituted for the Jews – משה תקן להם לישראל: According to the plain meaning of the Gemara, the system of watches originated as an enactment of the prophets, as the different opinions dispute only the precise details of its development. However, some commentaries maintain that the division of the priesthood into watches is a Torah obligation (Sefer HaMitzvot, positive mitzva 36; see also Sefer Avoda, Hilkhotei Kelei HaMikdash 4:3-4). The biblical source for the obligation is the verse: "They shall have like portions to eat, besides that which comes of the sale according to the fathers' houses" (Deuteronomy 18:8), which the Sifrei interprets: With the exception

of that which the priestly forefathers sold to each other, saying, you have your week and I have my week (see Onkelos on Deuteronomy 18:8).

Others add that it stands to reason that the system of watches applies by Torah law, for had there been no assigned times for the priests to serve in the Temple, but each priest could decide for himself when to serve, there might be occasions when no priests were available for the Temple service (Ritva). However, the number of watches was not fixed by Torah law but by the various enactments issued by Moses, Samuel, and David, with the number growing in accordance with the changing needs of the priests. Yet others conclude that the watch system does not have a scriptural basis. It originated either as an enactment of the prophets or as a halakha transmitted to Moses from Sinai (Ramban on Sefer HaMitzvot).

שנאמר: בשנת הארבעים – As it is stated, In the fortieth year – This verse is cited to teach us that it was King David, not the prophet Samuel, who expanded the watches so that the total number stood at twenty-four, as Samuel had passed away by the fortieth year of David's reign (Meiri; Maharsha).

Ascended from the exile – עליו מן הגולה – Rashi asks: Only three of these families, Jedaiah, Harim, and Immer, appear in the list of priestly divisions recorded in 1 Chronicles 24:7–18. Although the family of Pashhur is included among the priestly families that returned from the Babylonian exile in the days of Ezra (Ezra 2:37), nowhere is it mentioned as a separate priestly division. Some commentaries suggest that the watch of Pashhur was comprised of the descendants of Pashhur, son of Immer, who was a priest of importance mentioned in Jeremiah, chapter 20. After his descendants greatly increased in number, the clan of Pashhur separated themselves from the rest of the watch of Immer and set up their own watch (Maharsha; see Rid). Others identify this Pashhur with Pashhur, son of Malchijah, who is mentioned in Jeremiah 38:1, Nehemiah 11:12, and 1 Chronicles 9:12 (*Sefat Emet*). If so, the watch of Pashhur developed from the watch of Malchijah.

תניא אידך: משה תיקן להם לישראל שש עשרה משמרות, שמונה מאלעזר ושמונה מאיתמר. וכשרבו בני אלעזר על בני איתמר, חלקום והעמידום על עשרים וארבע, שנאמר: "וימצאו בני אלעזר רבים לראשי הגברים מן בני איתמר, ויחלקום. לבני אלעזר ראשים לבית אבות ששה עשר ולבני איתמר לבית אבותם שמונה." ואומר: "בית אב אחד אחו לאלעזר, ואחו אחו לאיתמר."

It is taught in another *baraita*: Moses instituted for the Jews sixteen priestly watches, eight from Elazar and eight from Itamar. And when the descendants of Elazar grew more numerous than the descendants of Itamar, he divided the descendants of Elazar and established them together with the descendants of Itamar as twenty-four watches, as it is stated: "And there were more chief men found of the sons of Elazar than of the sons of Itamar, and they were divided thus: Of the sons of Elazar there were sixteen heads of fathers' houses, and of the sons of Itamar, according to their fathers' houses, eight" (1 Chronicles 24:4). And it says: "One father's house taken for Elazar, and proportionately for Itamar" (1 Chronicles 24:6).

מאי "ואומר"? וכי תימא כי היכי דנפישו בני אלעזר, הכא נמי דנפישו בני איתמר, שמונה מעיקרא ארבעה הוו, תא שמע: "בית אב אחד אחו לאלעזר, ואחו אחו לאיתמר." תיבתא דרב חמא בר גוריא!

The Gemara asks: What is: And it says? Why was it necessary to quote a second verse? The Gemara explains: And if you would say that just as the descendants of Elazar increased, so too, the descendants of Itamar increased, and the eight watches were initially four, as claimed by Rav Hama bar Gurya, then come and hear: "One father's house taken for Elazar, and proportionately for Itamar," which indicates that the descendants of Itamar remained as they were. This verse is an apparently a conclusive refutation of the opinion of Rav Hama bar Gurya, who says that Moses established only eight priestly watches.

אמר לך רב חמא בר גוריא: תנאי היא, ואנא דאמרי כי האי תנא דאמר שמונה.

The Gemara responds: Rav Hama bar Gurya could have said to you that the initial order of the priestly watches is a dispute between *tanna'im*, as indicated by the previous *baraita*, and I stated my opinion in accordance with that *tanna* who said that Moses instituted eight priestly watches.

תנו רבנן: ארבעה משמרות עלו מן הגולה, ואילו הן: ידעיה, חרים, פשחור, ואימר. עמדו נביאים שביניהם

The Sages taught: Only four priestly watches ascended from the Babylonian exile,^N while the other twenty stayed in Babylonia. And these are the watches who returned: The descendants of Jedaiah, Harim, Pashhur, and Immer. The prophets among those who returned arose

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וחלקום והעמידום על עשרים וארבעה. בללום ונתנום בקלפי. בא ידעיה ונטל חלקו וחלק חבריו – שש. בא חרים ונטל חלקו וחלק חבריו – שש. וכן פשחור, וכן אימר.

and divided them and established them as twenty-four watches. They achieved this by writing the names of these new twenty-four watches on pieces of paper, mixing them up, and putting them in a receptacle [*kalfei*]^L from which lots were drawn. A representative from the family of Jedaiah came and drew his portion and the lot of five other watches, for a total of six. Harim came and also drew his portion and the lot of five other watches, a total of six. And likewise Pashhur, and likewise Immer.

וכן התנו נביאים שביניהם שאפילו יהויריב ראש משמרת עולה, לא ידחה ידעיה ממקומו, אלא ידעיה עיקר ויהויריב טפל לו.

And likewise the prophets among them stipulated that even if the descendants of Jehoiarib,^N who originally headed the priestly watches, ascended to Eretz Yisrael, Jedaiah would not be demoted from its place as the first of the watches. Rather, the watch of Jedaiah would retain precedence, and Jehoiarib would be subordinate to it.

NOTES

^N שאפילו יהויריב – Rashi explains that if the descendants of the priest Jehoiarib were to return to Eretz Yisrael, they would not regain their position as the head of the watches, but would instead take their place after the five watches starting from Jedaiah. However, a simple reading of the Gemara in tractate *Arakhin* 12b and Rashi's commentary on that passage indicate that if the descendants of Jehoiarib were to return, they would not constitute

an independent watch at all, but would be subordinated to one of the watches formed from the descendants of Jedaiah (Rid). Several sources, however, suggest that the descendants of Jehoiarib did indeed constitute an independent watch during the Second Temple period. Some commentaries note that at least two other watches from the First Temple period, Bilgah and Jeshebeab, were active as independent watches during the Second Temple period as well.

LANGUAGE

Receptacle [*kalfei*] – קלפי – From the Greek κάλπις, *kalpis*, meaning an urn or a box. It also has the narrower meaning of a receptacle used for ballots, drawing lots, and the like.

Heaven and earth would not continue to exist – לא נתקיימו – שמים וארץ: The Gemara in a parallel passage in *Megilla* 31b cites a different verse to prove that the continued existence of the world depends on the non-priestly watches and the communal offerings that are sacrificed in their presence: “Thus says the Lord: If not for My covenant day and night, I would not have appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth” (Jeremiah 33:25). This verse teaches that were it not for the daily offerings brought in the morning and evening, heaven and earth would cease to exist. The Gemara here derives the connection between the continued existence of the universe and the sacrificial service in the Temple from the conversation between Abraham and God. According to this interpretation of their exchange, Abraham did not ask for a sign that his descendants would inherit Eretz Yisrael, but for a means of atonement that would ensure that his descendants would continue to exist and the land would remain theirs forever (Maharsha).

The members of the priestly watch would pray – אֲנִשֵׁי מִשְׁמֶרֶת הַיְהוּדִים: Each priestly watch was divided into six or seven sub-groups called patrilineal families, each of which performed the Temple service for one day of the week. While one patrilineal family performed the actual service, the remaining patrilineal families offered prayers that the offerings be accepted by God (Rabbeinu Gershom; Rabbeinu Elyakim).

Four fasts – אַרְבַּע תַּעֲנִיּוֹת: Some commentaries suggest that the groups for which the members of the non-priestly watch fast correspond to those types of people who are obligated to give thanks-offerings and recite special prayers when they are delivered from distress, as derived from Psalm 107: Seafarers, desert travelers, the sick after they have been healed, and those who have been released from prison, as a newborn child may be compared to someone who has been released from confinement (Maharsha). In the Jerusalem Talmud it is inferred from this *baraita* that the same fast may not be proclaimed for more than one impending calamity, as each potential disaster requires a separate fast. In addition, in the Jerusalem Talmud a *baraita* is cited that teaches that the members of the Great Sanhedrin would likewise divide themselves into sub-groups, each of which fasted one day of the week together with the members of the non-priestly watch (see Rabbeinu Hananel).

וַיִּשְׂרָאֵל שְׂבָאוֹתוֹ מִשְׁמֶרֶת מִתְּבַנְּסִין בְּעָרֵיהֶן וְקוֹרִין בְּמַעֲשֵׂה בְרָאשִׁית. מִנְהֵי מִיֵּלִי? אָמַר רַבִּי יַעֲקֹב בַּר אֲחָא אָמַר רַב אָסִי: אֲלֵמָּלָא מַעֲמָדוֹת, לֹא נִתְקַיְּמוּ שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ, שְׁנַאֲמִי: “וַיֹּאמֶר: ה’ אֱלֹהִים, בְּמָה אֲדַע כִּי אֵירָשָׁנָה?”

אָמַר אַבְרָהָם: רַבּוֹנוּ שֶׁל עוֹלָם! שָׂמָא יִשְׂרָאֵל חוֹטְאִין לְפָנֶיךָ, אַתָּה עוֹשֶׂה לָהֶם כְּדוֹר הַמַּבּוּל וְכְדוֹר הַפְּלִגָּה? אָמַר לֵיהּ: לֹא. אָמַר לְפָנָיו: רַבּוֹנוּ שֶׁל עוֹלָם! הוֹדִיעֵנִי, בְּמָה אֵירָשָׁנָה? אָמַר לֵיהּ: “קַחְתָּ לִּי עֵגְלָה מִשְׁלֶשֶׁת וְעֵז מִשְׁלֶשֶׁת,” וְגו’.

אָמַר לְפָנָיו: רַבּוֹנוּ שֶׁל עוֹלָם! תִּינַח בְּזִמְנֵי שְׁבִיטֵי הַמִּקְדָּשׁ קָיִים. בְּזִמְנֵי שָׂאִין בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ קָיִים מָה תֵּהָא עֲלֵיהֶם? אָמַר לוֹ: כִּבְרַתְּ תִּקְנֵתִי לָהֶם סְדֵר קְרָבָנוֹת. בְּזִמְנֵי שְׁקוּרָאִין בְּהָן לְפָנֵי מַעֲלָה אֲנִי עֲלֵיהֶם כְּאֵילוֹ הַקְּרִיבוֹם לְפָנָי, וְאֲנִי מוֹחֵל לָהֶם עַל כָּל עֲוֹנוֹתֵיהֶם.

תָּנוּ רַבָּנַן: אֲנִשֵׁי מִשְׁמֶרֶת הַיְהוּדִים מִתְּפַלְּלִין עַל קְרָבָן אַחֵיהֶם שְׂתִיקָבֵל בְּרִצּוֹן, וְאֲנִשֵׁי מַעֲמָד מִתְּבַנְּסִין לְבֵית הַכְּנֶסֶת וְיוֹשְׁבֵי אַרְבַּע תַּעֲנִיּוֹת: בְּשֵׁנֵי שַׁבָּת, בְּשַׁלְיִשִׁי, בְּרַבִּיעִי, וּבַחֲמִישִׁי. בְּשֵׁנֵי עַל יוֹרְדֵי הַיָּם, בְּשַׁלְיִשִׁי, עַל הוֹלְכֵי מַדְרָבוֹת.

בְּרַבִּיעִי, עַל אֶסְכְּרָא שְׁלֵא תִיפּוּל עַל הַתִּינּוּקוֹת. בְּחֲמִישִׁי, עַל עוֹבְרוֹת וּמִינִיקוֹת. עוֹבְרוֹת, שְׁלֵא יִפְלוּ. מִינִיקוֹת, שְׁוִיָּקוּ אֶת בְּנֵיהֶם. וּבְעֶרְבַת שַׁבָּת לֹא הָיוּ מִתְּעַנִּין מִפְּנֵי כְבוֹד הַשַּׁבָּת, קָל וְחוֹמֵר בְּשַׁבָּת עֲצֻמָּה.

The mishna taught: And the Israelites of that priestly watch assembled in their towns and read the act of Creation. The Gemara asks: From where is this matter, that they must read this specific portion, derived? Rabbi Ya’akov bar Aha said that Rav Asi said: Were it not for the non-priestly watches and the Temple service, heaven and earth would not continue to exist,^N as it is stated: “And he said: Lord God, by what shall I know that I shall inherit it?” (Genesis 15:8).

The Gemara explains this verse. Abraham said: Master of the Universe, perhaps the Jews will sin before You. Will You treat them as You did the generation of the flood and the generation of the dispersion, and destroy them? God said to him: No. Abraham said before God: Master of the Universe, tell me, with what shall I inherit it? How can my descendants ensure that You will maintain the world? God said to Abraham: “Take for Me a three-year-old heifer, and a three-year-old goat, and a three-year-old ram, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon” (Genesis 15:9). God was alluding to the offerings, in whose merit the Jewish people, and through them the entire world, will be spared divine punishment.

Abraham said before God: Master of the Universe, this works out well when the Temple is standing, but when the Temple is not standing, what will become of them? God said to him: I have already enacted for them the order of offerings. When they read them before Me, I will ascribe them credit as though they had sacrificed them before Me and I will pardon them for all their transgressions. Since the offerings ensure the continued existence of the Jewish people and the rest of the world, the act of Creation is read in their honor.

The Sages taught: The members of the priestly watch would pray^N for the offerings of their brothers, the daily offering, that it should be accepted with favor. And meanwhile, the members of the non-priestly watch remained in their towns and would assemble in the synagogue and observe four fasts:^N On Monday of that week, on Tuesday, on Wednesday, and on Thursday. On Monday they would fast for seafarers, that they should be rescued from danger, as the sea was created on Monday. On Tuesday they would fast for those who walk in the desert, as the dry land was created on Tuesday.

On Wednesday they would fast over croup,^N that it should not befall the children, as on the fourth day the bodies of light [*me’erot*] were created, a textual allusion to curses [*me’erot*]. On Thursday they would fast for pregnant women and nursing women, as living beings were first created on this day. For pregnant women they would fast that they should not miscarry, while for nursing women they would fast that they should be able to nurse their children properly. And on Shabbat eve they would not fast, in deference to Shabbat, and *a fortiori* they would not fast on Shabbat itself.

On Wednesday they would fast over croup – בְּרַבִּיעִי עַל אֶסְכְּרָא: Rashi follows the Jerusalem Talmud, where it is explained that the defective spelling of the Hebrew word for lights [*me’erot*], which were created on the fourth day of the week, teaches that Wednesdays are especially susceptible to curses [*me’erot*]. For this reason the members of the non-priestly watch would fast on Wednesdays, so that the disease of croup should not strike children. Others suggest that as the moon was diminished in

size on Wednesday and became the smaller of the two celestial lights, small children are especially prone to illness on that day (Rav Yoshiya Pinto). Yet others suggest another explanation: Since croup is a divine punishment for the spreading of gossip, children are especially likely to be attacked by the disease on a Wednesday, as it was on that day that the first gossip was spoken: The moon spoke evil of the sun, as a result of which it was diminished in size (Rashi in *Ein Ya’akov*).

Due to the Christians – מִכְּפִי הַנוֹצְרִים: Some commentaries explain that according to the opinion of Rabbi Yoḥanan, the members of the non-priestly watch did not fast on Sunday because the day was observed by Christians as a holiday, and there was concern that the Christians would react in a hostile way if the Jews observed a fast on their holiday (Rabbeinu Gershom; see *Soferim* 17:4). Others suggest that as the members of the non-priestly watch would refrain from work whenever they fasted, they did not fast on Sundays, as they did not want anyone to think that they were doing so in deference to the Christian holiday observed on that day (Maharsha). Yet others maintain that the word for Christians, *notzrim*, should be read as *notzarim*, those who are created. In other words, Rabbi Yoḥanan is providing essentially the same explanation as Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani, that the members of the non-priestly watch did not fast on Sunday because it is the third day after the creation of man. An alternative explanation is that the term *notzrim* here is a reference to the Babylonians, as in the verse: “Watchers [*notzrim*] come from a distant country” (Jeremiah 4:16; see Rabbi David Kimḥi’s commentary on that verse). Since the Babylonians celebrated Sunday as a holiday, the Sages enacted that the members of the non-priestly watch should not fast on that day.

The added soul – נְשֵׁמָה יְתִירָה: One interpretation of the added soul is that it represents man’s ability to enjoy the entirety of creation, which constitutes the soul’s rest on Shabbat (Rashba; see *Arukh*).

HALAKHA

One who reads...may not read fewer than three – הקורא...אל יפחות משלושה: One who is called to read from the Torah should read no fewer than three verses (*Shulḥan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayyim* 137:2).

Repeats – דולג: On those occasions when the Torah reading cannot be divided in such a way that each person reads a separate section consisting of three verses, e.g., on the New Moon, one of the readers may repeat a verse that has already been read by the previous reader, in accordance with the opinion of Rav (*Shulḥan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayyim* 423:2).

בְּאַחַד בְּשַׁבַּת מֵאֵי טַעֲמָא לֹא? אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן: מִכְּפִי הַנוֹצְרִים. רַבִּי שְׁמוּאֵל בַּר נַחֲמָנִי אָמַר: מִכְּפִי שְׁהוּא שְׁלִישִׁי לַיּוֹצֵרָה.

רִישׁ לְקִישׁ אָמַר: מִכְּפִי נְשֵׁמָה יְתִירָה. דְּאָמַר רִישׁ לְקִישׁ: נְשֵׁמָה יְתִירָה נִתְּנָה בּוֹ בְּאֶדָם בְּעֶרְבַּ שַׁבָּת. בְּמוֹצָאֵי שַׁבָּת נוֹטְלִין אוֹתָהּ מִמֶּנּוּ, שְׁנַאֲמַר: “שַׁבָּת וַיִּנְפֹּשׁ” – כִּיּוֹן שְׁשַׁבַּת, וַי אֲבִדָה נֶפֶשׁ.

“בַּיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן: ‘בְּרֵאשִׁית,’ וַיְהִי רְקִיעַ.” תָּנָא: “בְּרֵאשִׁית” בְּשָׁנִים. “וַיְהִי רְקִיעַ” בְּאַחַד. בְּשִׁלְמָא “וַיְהִי רְקִיעַ” בְּאַחַד, תִּלְתָּתָא פְּסוּקֵי הוּוּ. אֲלָא “בְּרֵאשִׁית” בְּשָׁנִים מֵאֵי טַעֲמָא? חֲמִישָׁה פְּסוּקֵי הוּוּ, וְתַנְיָא: הַקּוֹרֵא בַתּוֹרָה אֵל יַפְחוֹת מְשַׁלְּשָׁה פְּסוּקִים!

רַב אָמַר: דּוֹלַג. וְשְׁמוּאֵל אָמַר: פּוֹסֵק. וְרַב, דְּאָמַר דּוֹלַג, מֵאֵי טַעֲמָא לֹא אָמַר: פּוֹסֵק? קָסְבַּר: כָּל פְּסוּקָא דְלֹא פְּסָקִיהָ מִשָּׁה, אֲנִן לֹא פְּסָקִין לִיהָ.

וְשְׁמוּאֵל אָמַר: פּוֹסֵק. וְכִי פְּסָקִין? וְהָאֵמַר רַבִּי חֲנִינָא קָרָא: צַעַר גְּדוֹל הָיָה לִי אֲצֵל רַבִּי חֲנִינָא הַגְּדוֹל, וְלֹא הִתְמִיר לִי לְפָסוֹק אֲלָא לְתִינוּקוֹת שֶׁל בֵּית רַבָּן, הוֹאִיל וְלִהְתְּלַמֵּד עֲשׂוּיָן. וְשְׁמוּאֵל: הֵתָם טַעֲמָא מֵאֵי מִשּׁוֹם דְּלֹא אֶפְשָׁר. הֵכָא נִמְי לֹא אֶפְשָׁר.

The Gemara asks: **What is the reason that they would not fast on Sunday? Rabbi Yoḥanan said: Due to the Christians,^N** as Sunday is their day of rest, and they would claim that even the Jews ascribe significance to their special day. **Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani said: Because it is the third day after the creation of man, who was created on Friday, and the third day of recovery from a wound or sickness, in this case one’s very creation, is considered the most painful.**

Reish Lakish said: They would not fast on Sunday due to the added soul,^N as Reish Lakish said: **An added soul is given to man on Shabbat eve, and at the conclusion of Shabbat it is removed it from him, as it is stated: “He ceased from work and rested [*vayinafash*]” (Exodus 31:17),** which he expounds as follows: **Since one has rested and Shabbat has passed, woe for the soul [*vai nefesh*] that is lost,** the added soul that each individual relinquishes. Consequently, one is still weak from this loss on Sunday.

The mishna taught that **on Sunday** they would read the portions starting with: **“In the beginning”** (Genesis 1:1–5) and **“Let there be a firmament”** (Genesis 1:6–8). It is taught in a *baraita*: The section: **“In the beginning”** is read by two people, while **“Let there be a firmament”** is read by one. The Gemara asks: **Granted,** the passage **“Let there be a firmament”** is read by one individual, as it is three verses long, and one who is called to the Torah reads at least three verses. **However, what is the reason that the section “In the beginning” is read by two individuals? It is five verses long, and it is taught in a mishna (*Megilla* 22a): One who reads from the Torah may not read fewer than three^H verses.** How, then, are five verses read by two individuals?

The Gemara cites two answers. **Rav said:** The first reader reads the first three verses, and the second reader **repeats^H** the last verse read by the first, and continues with the final two verses. **And Shmuel said:** They **split** the middle verse into two, so that each of the pair reads half of it. The Gemara asks: **And with regard to Rav, who said that one repeats, what is the reason that he did not say they should split a verse?** The Gemara answers that **Rav maintains that with regard to any verse that was not divided by Moses, we do not divide it.**

And Shmuel said that one splits the middle verse into two. The Gemara asks: **And may one split a single verse? But didn’t Rabbi Ḥanina Kara,^P** the Bible expert, who taught the Bible to schoolchildren, say: **I had great trouble with Rabbi Ḥanina the Great^P** when I asked him this question, **and he permitted me to split** long verses into two **only for the benefit of schoolchildren, since it is performed to help them learn.** **And Shmuel can respond that what is the reason there,** in the case of schoolchildren, that it is permitted to split verses? **Because it is not possible** to proceed in any other way. **Here too, it is not possible** for two people to read five verses other than by splitting one of them into two.

PERSONALITIES

Rabbi Ḥanina Kara – רַבִּי חֲנִינָא קָרָא: An *amora* from Eretz Yisrael, from the second generation of *amora'im*. This Rabbi Ḥanina was a student of Rabbi Ḥanina bar Ḥama and Rabbi Yannai. Apparently, he was not only a children’s teacher but was also an expert in the Bible, which explains his title. He is presented as engaging in debate with his rabbis concerning matters that pertain to his work, as well as other issues of *halakha*.

Rabbi Ḥanina the Great – רַבִּי חֲנִינָא הַגְּדוֹל: This is Rabbi Ḥanina bar Ḥama, who is labeled this way because he was one of the outstanding Sages of his generation. In the Jerusalem Talmud he is known as Rabbi Ḥanina Rabba, which bears the same meaning. This epithet is generally used when Rabbi Ḥanina is mentioned alongside another Sage of that name, in this case Rabbi Ḥanina Kara, to differentiate between them.

NOTES

And according to the one who said that they split, let them split it – ולמאן דאמר פוסק ליפסוק – Rashi explains that the opinions of both Rav and Shmuel are contradicted by the clause of the *baraita* that states that a five-verse section should be read by one individual, as according to both of them it is possible for the section to be read by two people, either by repeating or splitting the verse. In a parallel passage in *Megilla* 22a, Rashi says that the following line should be omitted: And according to the one who said that he divides the verse let him divide it. He explains that the difficulty is raised from the last part of the *baraita*, which states that if the first reader read three verses from a five-verse section, the second one should read the next two verses of that section and one or three verses from the subsequent section. That clause is difficult for the opinion of Rav, as it is possible for the second reader to reread the third verse and continue with the next two verses. However, there is no difficulty according to the opinion of Shmuel, as the first reader has already read the third verse, and therefore it is no longer possible to divide that verse between the two readers (see *Tosafot*, Rashba, and Ritva on *Megilla* 22a).

ושמואל אומר: פוסק מאי טעמא לא אמר: דולג? גזירה משום הנכנסין וגזירה משום היוצאין.

The Gemara questions this last conclusion. **And Shmuel said that one splits the middle verse into two. What is the reason that he did not say that he repeats one of the verses, in accordance with the opinion of Rav?** The Gemara explains: It is a rabbinic decree due to those who enter the synagogue in the middle of the reading, and a decree due to those who leave in the middle. If someone entered or exited in the middle of the reading and heard three full verses, he might think that one of the readers had read fewer than three full verses, which might lead him to conclude that it is permitted to read fewer than three verses.

מיתניב: פרשה של ששה פסוקים קורין אותה בשנים, ושל חמשה ביחיד. ואם הראשון קורא שלשה, השני קורא שנים מפרשה זו, ואחד מפרשה אחרת. ויש אומרים: שלשה, לפי שאין מתחילין בפרשה פחות משלשה פסוקין.

The Gemara raises an objection from a *baraita*: **A chapter consisting of six verses may be read by two individuals, and a chapter of five verses must be read by one. And if the first individual reads three verses from the five-verse chapter, the second one reads the last two verses of that chapter and one more from another chapter. And some say that three verses are read from the next chapter, as one may not begin to read a chapter for fewer than three verses.**

למאן דאמר דולג לידלוג ולמאן דאמר פוסק ליפסוק? שאני התם

The Gemara explains the objection: **According to the one who said that they repeat the middle verse, let the second reader repeat a verse here as well. And according to the one who said that they split a verse, here too, let them split it.**^N Apparently, the *baraita* contradicts the opinions of both Rav and Shmuel. The Gemara answers: **It is different there,**

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HALAKHA

ובמנחה – ובמנחה – And in the afternoon prayer they read by heart – **קורין על פיהן**: The same chapters that are read from a Torah scroll in the morning service are again read from a scroll in the additional service. In the afternoon service, they are read by heart (Rambam *Sefer Avoda*, *Hilkhot Kelei HaMikdash* 6:7).

דאית ליה רווחא

as the second reader has space, i.e., he has the option to read from the ensuing paragraph.

”פרשה גדולה קורין אותה בשנים בשחרית ובמוסף ובמנחה קורין על פיהן” כו'. איבעיא להו היכי קאמר בשחרית ובמוסף קורין אותה בספר ובמנחה קורין אותה על פה בקורין את שמע או דלמא הכי קתני בשחרית קורין אותה בספר ובמוסף ובמנחה קורין אותה על פה בקורין את שמע.

S The mishna taught: **A long passage is read by two people, and they read from the Torah in the morning prayer and in the additional prayer. And in the afternoon prayer they read the daily portion by heart,^H just as one recites *Shema*. A dilemma was raised before the Sages: With regard to what case is the *tanna* speaking? Does he mean that in the morning prayer and in the additional prayer they read the portion from a Torah scroll, but in the afternoon prayer each individual reads by heart, just as one recites *Shema*? Or perhaps this is what is taught: In the morning prayer they read it from a Torah scroll, but in the additional prayer and in the afternoon prayer they read it by heart, just as one recites *Shema*.**

תא שמע דתניא בשחרית ובמוסף נכנסין לבית הכנסת וקורין בדרך שקורין כל השנה ובמנחה יחיד קורא אותה על פה. אומר רבי יוסי וכי יחיד יכול לקרות דברי תורה על פה בצבור אלא בולן נכנסין וקורין אותה על פה בקורין את שמע.

The Gemara suggests: **Come and hear, as it is taught in a *baraita*: In the morning prayer and in the additional prayer they would enter the synagogue and read from the Torah in the manner that they read all year. But in the afternoon prayer, a single individual would read the portion for that day by heart.^N Rabbi Yosei said: But can an individual read matters of Torah by heart in the presence of the community? Rather, they all enter and read that day's portion together, just as one recites *Shema*. This *baraita* clearly indicates that they would read by heart only in the afternoon service.**

NOTES

An individual reads it by heart – יחיד קורא אותה על פה – This apparently means that a member of the congregation would serve as a kind of prayer leader and read these chapters before the entire community. Rabbi Yosei takes issue with this ritual,

as he maintains that the Torah is not read by heart by an individual in public, with the exception of the High Priest on Yom Kippur. Instead, everyone reads the chapter together (see *Rid* and *Divrei Shlomo*).