

וסיפא איצטריכא ליה: פושטין ומקפלין ומניחין תחת ראשיהם.

פושטין ומקפלין ומניחין אותן תחת ראשיהן. שמעת מינה: בגדי כהונה ניתנו ליהנות בהן! אמר רב פפא: לא תימא תחת ראשיהן, אלא אימא: כנגד ראשיהן. אמר רב משרשיא, שמעת מינה: תפילין מן הצד שפיר דמי.

הכי נמי מסתברא דכנגד ראשיהן, דאי סלקא דעתך תחת ראשיהן – ותפוק לי משום בלאים, דהא איכא אבנט! ונהי נמי דניתנו ליהנות בהן – הא מתהני מבלאים!

הניחא למאן דאמר: אבנטו של בהן גדול זה הוא אבנטו של בהן הדיוט, אלא למאן דאמר: אבנטו של בהן גדול לא זה הוא אבנטו של בהן הדיוט – מאי איכא למימר?

וכי תימא: בלאים בלבישה והעלאה הוא דאסור, בהצעה שרי – והתניא: "לא יעלה עליך" – אבל אתה מותר להציעו תחתיה, אבל אמרו חכמים: אסור לעשות כן, שמא תיכרך נימא אחת על בשור.

וכי תימא: דמפסיק ליה מידי ביני ביני – והאמר רבי שמעון בן פזי אמר רבי יהושע בן לוי אמר רבי משום קהלא קדישא שבירושלים: אפילו עשר מצעות זו על גב זו, ובלאים תחתיהן – אסור לישן עליהן. אלא לאו שמע מינה: כנגד ראשיהן, שמע מינה.

That mishna's teaching highlighting the prohibition to sleep in priestly vestments is needed for the latter clause of that mishna, which states: **They remove their priestly vestments and fold them and place them under their heads.** Since they are allowed to sleep on them, it must be emphasized that they may not sleep while wearing them.

The Gemara considers resolving the dilemma from the latter clause: **They remove their priestly vestments and fold them and place them under their heads.** The Gemara suggests: **Learn from this that it is permitted to derive benefit from priestly vestments.** Rav Pappa said: **Do not say that the mishna means they may actually place the vestments under their heads as a pillow; rather, say that the mishna permits the vestments to be placed only next to their heads.** Rav Mesharshiyya said: Given this understanding of that mishna, one can learn from here that one who places **phylacteries to the side** of his head when he sleeps has done well; there is no concern that he will turn over in his sleep and lie upon them.

So too, it is reasonable to say that the mishna permits the vestments to be placed only next to their heads and not under their heads; as, if it could enter your mind to say that the mishna permits the vestments to be placed under their heads, and I would derive that it is prohibited due to the fact the priestly vestments contain a forbidden mixture of diverse kinds,^N as among them there is the belt, which is woven from a mixture of wool and linen. And even if it is assumed that it is permitted to derive benefit from priestly vestments, it would still be prohibited to lie upon them because by doing so the priests would be deriving benefit from a garment made of diverse kinds.

The Gemara elaborates on the preceding argument: If one claims that the mishna permits priests to sleep upon their vestments, it works out well according to the one who said: **The belt of the High Priest worn on Yom Kippur, which does not contain diverse kinds, is the same as the belt of a common priest.** According to this view, the common priest's belt does not contain diverse kinds, and therefore it may be permitted for a priest to sleep upon it. However, according to the one who said that the High Priest's belt on Yom Kippur is not the same as the belt of a common priest, and that the belt of the common priest is made of diverse kinds, what is there to say? How could the mishna possibly permit priests to sleep upon their vestments?

And if you say that with regard to the prohibition of diverse kinds only wearing or placing the garment upon oneself is prohibited, but spreading them out and lying upon them on is permitted, and as such it should be permitted for the priests to sleep upon their vestments, this is incorrect. As, wasn't it taught in a baraita that the verse states: "Neither shall there come upon you a garment of diverse kinds" (Leviticus 19:19), which implies: **But you are permitted to spread it beneath you to lie upon.** This is true according to Torah law, but the Sages said: **It is prohibited to do so, lest a fiber wrap upon his flesh,** which would lead to the transgression of the Torah prohibition.

And if you say that a priest could still avoid the prohibition of diverse kinds by placing a separation between himself and the belt containing diverse kinds, didn't Rabbi Shimon ben Pazi say that Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said that Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi said in the name of the holy community in Jerusalem: **Even if there are ten mattresses piled one atop the other and a garment of diverse kinds^H is placed underneath them all, it is prohibited to sleep upon them?** This is because the rabbinic decree is applied equally to all cases irrespective of whether the original concern exists. Therefore, there can be no way for the priests to sleep upon the vestments without transgressing the prohibition of diverse kinds. Rather, must one not conclude from the preceding discussion that the mishna permits the vestments to be placed only next to their heads? The Gemara concludes: **Learn from it that this is indeed so.**

NOTES

And I would derive that it is prohibited due to diverse kinds – ותפוק לי משום בלאים: Why did the Gemara not also consider the possibility that wearing the priestly vestments is prohibited as an act of misuse of consecrated property, since it is prohibited to derive benefit from any sacred object? Some suggest that the Gemara did not consider this challenge because it is possible to entirely avoid this prohibition by consecrating the priestly vestments under the condition that the priests be permitted to derive benefit from them (*Tosafot Yeshanim*). The issue is debated at length by the later commentaries, who discuss whether and to what extent the priestly vestments have the status of sacred vessels, such that they would be subject to the prohibition of misuse of consecrated property.

HALAKHA

Ten mattresses...and diverse kinds – עשר מצעות... ובלאים: According to Torah law it is permitted to sit on mattresses made of diverse kinds. However, by rabbinic law it is prohibited to sit upon a garment made of diverse kinds, even if there are ten mattresses in between. This halakha applies to a soft garment, but it is permitted to sleep upon a stiff garment if it does not touch one's skin. This is permitted only when it is placed on something hard, such that there is no concern that it will fold over and cover part of one's skin. Therefore, it would be prohibited to sit on a stiff garment which lay on a soft bed. Some authorities say that these halakhot apply only in cases of diverse kinds prohibited by Torah law, but would be permitted for mixtures of diverse kinds prohibited by rabbinic law. However, it is certainly prohibited to do so ab initio (*Shulhan Arukh, Yoreh De'at* 301:1, and in the comment of the Rema).

LANGUAGE

Felt [namta] – נִמְטָא: From the Middle Iranian namat, related to Middle Persian namad, meaning mat or thick blanket. In modern Persian the word means felt.

BACKGROUND

Stiff felt – נִמְטָא גְמָדָא: Felt is made from various types of fibers, such as wool or cotton. When treated with heat, moisture and pressure, the fibers are mixed to create a single entity that is not woven but bound together. Wool fibers are especially good for making felt because one can easily mix them with a certain amount of other materials, including linen. Such a mixture would be considered diverse kinds. The felt is sometimes shrunken to make it more close-knit and sturdy, and this is what the Gemara refers to here.

Megillat Ta'anit – מִגִּילַת תְּעֵנִית: Megillat Ta'anit is a chronicle which enumerates various days throughout the year on which the Jewish People experienced victories and salvations. The dates were designated as joyous days and the Sages decreed that it was forbidden to observe a fast day on them. Consequently, Megillat Ta'anit, which means literally: The scroll of fast days, lists the days on which one may not fast. Composed mainly during the Second Temple period, the chronicle is one of the earliest halakhic texts, and significantly predates the writing of the Mishna. Following the destruction of the Second Temple, the chronicle was annulled, i.e., the days were no longer observed and it was permitted to observe fast days on those dates.

Mount Gerizim – הַר גְּרִזִים: The Samaritans, also known as the Cutheans, built a shrine there during the early Second Temple period and directed their prayers there instead of to Jerusalem. Members of this sect, which still exists in very small numbers, live chiefly on the mountain slopes and in adjacent Shechem. They still perform the sacrifice of the Paschal lamb according to their interpretation of the verses. The ceremony attracts many tourists.



Map showing location of Mount Gerizim



Mount Gerizim

רַב אֲשִׁי אָמַר: לְעוֹלָם תַּחַת רַאשֵׁיהֶן, – וְהָא קָא מְתַהֲנִי מִכְּלָאִים! בְּגָדֵי כְּהוֹנָה קָשִׁין הֵן, כִּי הָא דְאָמַר רַב הוֹנָא בְּרִיהַ דְּרַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ: הָאִי נִמְטָא גְמָדָא דְנָרְשׁ – שְׂרִיא.

תָּא שְׁמַע: בְּגָדֵי כְּהוֹנָה, הַיּוֹצֵא בְּהֵן לְמִדְיָנָה – אָסוּר, וּבְמִקְדָּשׁ, בֵּין בְּשַׁעַת עֲבוּדָה בֵּין שְׁלָא בְּשַׁעַת עֲבוּדָה – מוּתָר, מִפְּנֵי שְׁבִגְדֵי כְּהוֹנָה נִתְּנֻ לִיהֵנוּת בְּהֵן, שְׁמַע מִינָה.

וּבְמִדְיָנָה לָא? וְהֵתְנֵא: בְּעֶשְׂרִים וַחֲמִשָּׁה [בְּטִבְתָּ] יוֹם הַר גְּרִזִים [הוּא] דְּלֵא לְמִסְפַּד.

יוֹם שְׁבִקְשׁוּ כּוֹתֵימִים אֶת בֵּית אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֵאַלְכְּסַנְדְּרוֹס מוֹקְדוֹן לְהַחְרִיבוּ וְנִתְּנָנוּ לָהֶם. בָּאוּ וְהוֹדִיעוּ אֶת שְׁמַעוֹן הַצַּדִּיק. מָה עָשָׂה? לְבַשׁ בְּגָדֵי כְּהוֹנָה, וְנִתְעַטֵּף בְּבִגְדֵי כְּהוֹנָה, וּמִקִּירֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עָמְוּ, וְאַבּוֹקוֹת שֶׁל אוֹר בִּידֵיהֶן, וְכָל הַלְּוִיָּהּ הַלְּלוּ הוֹלְכִים מִצַּד זֶה וְהַלְּלוּ הוֹלְכִים מִצַּד זֶה עַד שֶׁעָלָה עֲמוּד הַשָּׁחַר.

Rav Ashi said: Actually, the mishna may be understood as permitting the vestments to be placed under their heads. One should not object that by doing so the priests would be deriving benefit from a garment made of diverse kinds because priestly vestments, and specifically the belt, are stiff, and therefore the prohibition of diverse kinds does not apply to them. This is in accordance with that which Rav Huna, son of Rabbi Yehoshua, said: This stiff felt [namta],^{LB} made of diverse kinds,^{NH} that is produced in the city of Neresh, is permitted, since a stiff object does not wrap around the body to provide warmth, and therefore the person wearing is not considered to have derived benefit from it.

Since the mishna's intention is uncertain, it cannot provide a clear proof for the dilemma of whether it is permitted to derive benefit from priestly vestments. The Gemara therefore suggests another proof: Come and hear an explicit baraita concerning this issue: With regard to priestly vestments, it is prohibited to go out to the country, i.e., outside the Temple, while wearing them, but in the Temple it is permitted for the priests to wear them, whether during the Temple service or not during the service, due to the fact that it is permitted to derive benefit from priestly vestments.^H Learn from this that it is indeed permitted.

S The baraita taught that the priestly vestments may not be worn outside the Temple. The Gemara challenges this: Is it really not permitted to wear priestly vestments in the country? Wasn't it taught in another baraita, in Megillat Ta'anit:^B The twenty-fifth of Tevet is known as the day of Mount Gerizim,^B which was established as a joyful day, and therefore eulogizing is not permitted.

What occurred on that date? It was on that day that the Samaritans [kutim] requested the House of our Lord from Alexander the Macedonian in order to destroy it, and he gave it to them, i.e., he gave them permission to destroy it. People came and informed the High Priest, Shimon HaTzaddik, of what had transpired. What did he do? He donned the priestly vestments and wrapped himself in the priestly vestments. And the nobles of the Jewish People were with him, with torches of fire in their hands. And all that night, these, the representatives of the Jewish people, approached from this side, and those, the armies of Alexander and the Samaritans, approached from that side, until dawn, when they finally saw one another.

NOTES

Stiff felt of diverse kinds – כְּלָאִים שֶׁל נִמְטָא גְמָדָא לְבָד: Rashi implies that the reason stiff garments of diverse kinds are permitted is because it is impossible to be warmed by wearing stiff material. Therefore, even if one wears

them, it is not considered a normal act of wearing and is therefore excluded from the prohibition (but see Tosafot and Tosafot Yeshanim, who disagree; see also Halakha notes).

HALAKHA

Stiff felt of diverse kinds – כְּלָאִים שֶׁל נִמְטָא גְמָדָא לְבָד: It is permitted to lie upon stiff garments made from diverse kinds, and it is even permitted to wear stiff felt made from diverse kinds. Nevertheless, some are careful to avoid even such garments (Shulhan Arukh, Yoreh De'a 301:2).

wear them the entire day that they served in the Temple, even when not on duty. This is in accordance with the conclusion of the Gemara here. The Rambam rules that the belt provided an exception to this rule because it was made of diverse kinds. It was therefore only permitted to be worn while engaged in a service. However, the Ra'avad argues that it is permitted for a priest to wear the belt even when he is not engaged in a service (Rambam Sefer Avoda, Hilkhot Kelei HaMikdash 5:11–12).

It is permitted to derive benefit from priestly vestments – בְּגָדֵי כְּהוֹנָה נִתְּנֻ לִיהֵנוּת בְּהֵם: It is permitted to derive benefit from priestly vestments, and therefore priests would

Antipatris – אַנְטִיפַטְרִיס: This city in Eretz Yisrael was founded by Herod and named in honor of his father. Its location was apparently next to the Rosh HaAyin springs, at the crossroads to Jerusalem, Caesarea, and Jaffa. Although the city was built in the time of Herod, it was constructed at the site of an older town. For generations it was considered to be the border of the Judea.



Antipatris

פְּגִישַׁת – פְּגִישַׁת The meeting of the High Priest and Alexander – **הַבְּהֵן הַגְּדוֹל וְאַלְכֶסְנָדֵר**: The description of the meeting between Alexander and the High Priest is cited by Josephus with some variation. Although Greek sources do not refer to the episode, it seems that this meeting did in fact occur, as described in the Talmud, at the location of the future city of Antipatris. This location was on the main road south, toward Egypt, on which Alexander traveled. According to Josephus the meeting was connected to the High Priest's reluctance to violate his pledge of allegiance to the Persian king. The Persians were at war with Alexander, and the situation provided a pretext for the enemies of the Jewish people, primarily the Samaritans, to turn the Greeks against them.

NOTES

The image of this man's face – דְּמוּת דְּיוֹקָנוֹ שֶׁל זֶה: This miracle was performed for Alexander in order to provide the circumstances which ultimately saved the Jewish people from danger and the Temple from destruction (*Iyyun Ya'akov*).

Takes a Torah scroll – נוֹטֵל סֵפֶר תּוֹרָה: Generally, the *halakha* is that out of deference to the honor of a Torah scroll, it should not be brought to the location of the person who needs to read it; rather, that person should exert himself to come to the location of the Torah scroll. Therefore, in the Jerusalem Talmud the question is raised as to why it was permitted in this case for the Torah scroll to be brought from the synagogue to the Temple courtyard so that the High Priest could read from it there. It is explained that this was permitted because honoring the High Priest, who represents the Torah, is considered an act of honoring the Torah itself. For a similar reason it was also permitted to bring a Torah scroll to the Exilarch, who was a scion of the Davidic dynasty.

כִּיּוֹן שֶׁעָלָה עִמּוֹד הַשַּׁחַר אָמַר לָהֶם: מִי הֵלְלוּ? אָמְרוּ לוֹ: יְהוּדִים שֶׁמָּרְדוּ בְּךָ. כִּיּוֹן שֶׁהִגִּיעַ לְאַנְטִיפַטְרִיס וְזָרְחָה חֲמָה, וּפְגָעוּ זֶה בְּזֶה. כִּיּוֹן שָׂרְאָה לְשִׁמְעוֹן הַצַּדִּיק, יָרַד מִמָּרְכָבְתּוֹ וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוָה לְפָנָיו. אָמְרוּ לוֹ: מֶלֶךְ גָּדוֹל כְּמוֹתְךָ יִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לַיהוָה? זֶה! אָמַר לָהֶם: דְּמוּת דְּיוֹקָנוֹ שֶׁל זֶה מִנְצַחַת לְפָנַי בְּבַיִת מְלֻחָמָתִי.

אָמַר לָהֶם: לָמָּה בָּאתֶם? אָמְרוּ: אֲפֹשֶׁר בַּיִת שֶׁמִּתְפַּלְלִים בּוֹ עֲלֵיךָ וְעַל מְלֻכּוֹתֶיךָ שֶׁלֹּא תִחָרֵב יִתְעוֹךְ גּוֹיִם לְהַחְרִיבוֹ? אָמַר לָהֶם: מִי הֵלְלוּ? אָמְרוּ לוֹ: בּוֹתֵיִים הֵלְלוּ שְׁעוֹמְדִים לְפָנֶיךָ. אָמַר לָהֶם: הֲרֵי הֵם מְסוּרִין בְּיַדְיָי.

מִיָּד נִקְבְּרוּ בְּעַקְבֵיהֶם וּתְלָאוּם בְּזַנְבֵי סוּסֵיהֶם, וְהָיוּ מְגֹרְזִין אוֹתָם עַל הַקּוֹצִים וְעַל הַבְּרָקִים עַד שֶׁהִגִּיעוּ לְהַר גְּרִזִים. כִּיּוֹן שֶׁהִגִּיעוּ לְהַר גְּרִזִים חָרְשׁוּהוּ, וְזָרְעוּהוּ בְּרִשְׁמֵינִי. כְּדָרֶךְ שֶׁבִקְשׁוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת לְבַיִת אֱלֹהֵינוּ, וְאוֹתוֹ הַיּוֹם עֲשָׂאוּהוּ יוֹם טוֹב.

אִי בְּעֵית אֵימָא – רְאוּיִן לְבַגְדֵי כְּהוֹנָה, וְאִי בְּעֵית אֵימָא – “עַת לַעֲשׂוֹת לְהַ” הִפְרוּ תוֹרַתְךָ.”

“חֲזוֹן הַכְּנֶסֶת נוֹטֵל סֵפֶר תּוֹרָה.” שָׁמַע מִיָּנָה: חוֹלְקִין כְּבוֹד לְתַלְמִיד בְּמִקּוֹם הָרֵב! אָמַר אַבְיִי: כּוֹלָה מִשּׁוּם כְּבוֹדוֹ דְּכַהֵן גָּדוֹל הִיא.

“וְכַהֵן גָּדוֹל עוֹמֵד.” מִכְּלָל שֶׁהוּא יוֹשֵׁב? וְהָא אֲנִי תַנּוּ:

When dawn arrived, Alexander said to the Samaritans: Who are these people coming to meet us? They said to him: These are the Jews who rebelled against you. When he reached Antipatris,^b the sun shone and the two camps met each other. When Alexander saw Shimon HaTzaddik, he descended from his chariot and bowed before him. His escorts said to him: Should an important king such as you bow to this Jew? He said to them: I do so because the image of this man's faceⁿ is victorious before me on my battlefields, i.e., when I fight I see his image going before me as a sign of victory, and therefore I know that he has supreme sanctity.^b

He said to the representatives of the Jewish people: Why have you come? They said to him: Is it possible that the Temple, the house in which we pray for you and for your kingdom not to be destroyed, gentiles will try to mislead you into destroying it, and we would remain silent and not tell you? He said to them: Who are these people who want to destroy it? The Jews said to him: They are these Samaritans who stand before you. He said to them: If so, they are delivered into your hands to deal with them as you please.

Immediately, they stabbed the Samaritans in their heels and hung them from their horses' tails and continued to drag them over the thorns and thistles until they reached Mount Gerizim. When they arrived at Mount Gerizim, where the Samaritans had their temple, they plowed it over and seeded the area with leeks, a symbol of total destruction. This was just as they had sought to do to the House of our Lord. And they made that day a festival to celebrate the salvation of the Temple and the defeat of the Samaritans.

It is apparent from the *baraita* that Shimon HaTzaddik wore the priestly vestments even outside the Temple. This would seem to be in contravention of the ruling of the other *baraita* prohibiting this. The Gemara resolves the contradiction: If you wish, say Shimon HaTzaddik did not wear a set of genuine, sanctified priestly vestments; rather, he wore garments that were fitting to be priestly vestments in that they were made of the same material and design. And if you wish, say instead that he indeed wore a set of genuine priestly vestments, but in times of great need, such as when one seeks to prevent the destruction of the Temple, it is permitted to violate the *halakha*, as indicated by the verse: “It is time to act for the Lord, they have nullified your Torah” (Psalms 119:126).

It was taught in the mishna: The synagogue attendant takes a Torah scrollⁿ and gives it to the head of the synagogue, who gives it to the deputy High Priest, who gives it to the High Priest. The Gemara suggests: Learn from here that honor may be given to a student in the presence of the teacher. Although the High Priest is considered everyone's teacher and master, honor was nevertheless extended to other individuals without fear of impugning the High Priest's honor. Abaye said: A proof may not be adduced from here because the entire process is for the honor of the High Priest. The passing of the Torah scroll to people of increasing importance demonstrates that the High Priest is considered the most important of all those present.^h

It was further taught in the mishna: The High Priest stands and receives the scroll from the Deputy. By inference, until that point he had been sitting. But didn't we learn in a mishna:

HALAKHA

Honoring a student – תְּלִיקַת כְּבוֹד לְתַלְמִיד: A student may not be honored in the presence of his teacher, unless his teacher honors him too. However, if the teacher is honored

by the respect shown to his pupil, it is permitted. This ruling is based on the Gemara here (*Shakh; Shulhan Arukh, Yoreh De'a 242:21*).

HALAKHA

Sitting in the courtyard – ישיבה בעזרה: It is prohibited for any person other than the kings of the House of David to sit anywhere in the Israelite courtyard (Rambam *Sefer Avoda, Hilkhot Beit HaBehira* 7:6).

NOTES

What is the meaning of great here – מאי גדול: Since the use of this term does not appear as part of a prayer or praise, but within the narrative describing the event, it is unlikely that it is simply a praise of God. Rather, it must allude to something additional that occurred that day.

אין ישיבה בעזרה אלא למלכי בית דוד בלבד, שנאמר: "ויבא המלך דוד וישב לפני ה'"! כדאמר רב חסדא: בעזרת נשים, הכא נמי – בעזרת נשים.

והיבא איתמר דרב חסדא – אהא. מיתבי דתנא: היכן קורין בו – בעזרה, רבי אליעזר בן יעקב אומר: בהר הבית, שנאמר "ויקרא בו לפני הרחוב אשר לפני שער המים". ואמר רב חסדא – בעזרת נשים.

"ויברך עזרא את ה' האלהים הגדול" מאי "גדול"? אומר רב יוסף אומר רב: שגדלו בשם המפורש. רב גידל אומר: "ברוך ה' אלהי ישראל מן העולם ועד העולם".

אמר ליה אביי לרב דימי: ודילמא שגדלו בשם המפורש? אמר ליה: אין אומרים שם המפורש בגבולים.

ולא? והכתוב: "ויעמוד עזרא הסופר על מגדל עץ אשר עשו לדבר" ואמר רב גידל: שגדלו בשם המפורש! הוראת שעה היתה.

"ויצעקו אל ה' אלהים בקול גדול" מאי אמור? אומר רב ואיתמא רבי יוחנן: בייא, בייא! היינו האי דאחרביה למקדשא, וקליה להיכליה, וקטלינהו לכוהנהו צדיקי, ואגלינהו לישראל מארעהון, ועדיין מרקד בינן. כלום יהבתייה לן אלא לקבולי ביה אגרא – לא איהו בעינן, ולא אגריה בעינן.

נפל להו פיתקא מרקיעא, דהוה כתב בה "אמת".

Sitting in the Temple courtyard is permitted only for kings of the House of David, as it is stated: "Then King David went in and sat before the Lord" (1 Chronicles 17:16)? How, then, could the High Priest have been sitting? The Gemara explains: As Rav H̄isda said in a similar context: This took place not in the Israelite courtyard, where the prohibition against sitting applies, but in the women's courtyard. Here, too, the reading was in the women's courtyard, where it is permitted to sit.^h

§ The Gemara clarifies: And where was this statement of Rav H̄isda originally stated? It was stated in relation to the following: The Sages raised an objection based on that which was taught in a *baraita*: Where did they read the Torah scroll in fulfillment of the mitzva of assembly, in which the Torah is publicly read on the *Sukkot* following the Sabbatical Year? It was read in the Temple courtyard. Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya'akov says: It is read on the Temple Mount, as it is stated concerning the public reading performed by Ezra: "And he read from it before the wide road that was before the Gate of the Water" (Nehemiah 8:3). And Rav H̄isda said: The courtyard referred to by the first *tanna* is the women's courtyard.

Apropos the verse in Nehemiah, the Gemara interprets an adjacent verse homiletically. It is stated: "And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God" (Nehemiah 8:6). The Gemara asks: What is the meaning of "great" here?ⁿ Rav Yosef said that Rav said: It means that he ascribed greatness to Him by enunciating God's explicit name. Rav Giddel said: He established that one should say at the conclusion of every blessing: "Blessed be the Lord, God of Israel, from eternity to eternity" (1 Chronicles 16:36).

Abaye said to Rav Dimi: Why does Rav Giddel interpret it this way? Perhaps the meaning of "great" is that he ascribed greatness to Him by enunciating God's explicit name? Rav Dimi said to him: The explicit name may not be enunciated in the provinces, i.e., outside the Temple courtyard.

The Gemara asks: And is this really not permitted? Isn't it written: "And Ezra the Scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose... and Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God" (Nehemiah 8:4-6); and Rav Giddel said: "Great" in this verse means that he ascribed greatness to Him by enunciating God's explicit name. Since this event took place outside the Temple (see Nehemiah 8:3), it suggests that God's explicit name may indeed be enunciated outside the Temple. The Gemara answers: That cannot be proven from here because the permission to use God's explicit name in that context was a provisional edict issued in exigent circumstances, since the people had uniquely come together in a prayerful commitment to God.

The Gemara recounts the event described in the verses: The verse states: And they cried with a loud voice to the Lord their God (Nehemiah 9:4). What was said? Rav said, and some say it was Rabbi Yoḥanan who said: Woe, woe. It is this, i.e., the evil inclination for idol worship, that destroyed the Temple, and burned its Sanctuary, and murdered all the righteous ones, and caused the Jewish people to be exiled from their land. And it still dances among us, i.e., it still affects us. Didn't You gave it to us for solely for the purpose of our receiving reward for overcoming it. We do not want it, and we do not want its reward. We are prepared to forgo the potential rewards for overcoming the evil inclination as long as it departs from us.

In response to their prayer a note fell to them from the heavens upon which was written: Truth, indicating that God accepted their request.

Killing the evil inclination – הרגת יצר הרע – Some explain that the Gemara's description alludes to the measures taken by the members of the Great Assembly to curb the sinful activity that was widespread during the First Temple era. Through the public teaching of Torah they succeeded in increasing the people's knowledge and commitment to the Torah, which was effective in weaning them away from their desire for idolatry. Nevertheless, this was not enough to eliminate the people's sexual passions. However, through several decrees governing the modesty of women in the home, they did succeed in reducing the desire to sin with close relatives (*Ya'arot Devash*).

The great, the mighty, and the awesome – הגדול, הגבור והנורא – Jeremiah, who witnessed the destruction of the Temple, did not feel it appropriate to describe God as awesome. Daniel, who lived after the destruction and saw the enslavement of the Jewish people, ceased to describe God as mighty (*Maharsha*).

אמר רב חנינא, שמע מינה: חותמו של הקדוש ברוך הוא "אמת".

ואותיבו בתעניתא תלתא יומין ותלתא לילואתא, מסרוהו ניהליהו. נפק אתא כי גורינא דנורא מבית קדשי הקדשים. אמר להו נביא לישראל: היינו יצרא דעבודה זרה, שנאמר ויאמר זאת הרשעה.

בהדי דתפסיה ליה אשתמיט בינתא ממוינא, ורמא קלא, ואזל קליה ארבע מאה פרסי. אמרו: היכי נעביד? דילמא חס ושלום מרחמי עליה מן שמיא. אמר להו נביא: שדיהו בודיא דאברא, וחפיהו לפומיה באברא. דאברא משאב שאיב קלא, שנאמר ויאמר זאת הרשעה וישלך אותה אל תוך האיפה וישלך את אבן העופרת אל פיה.

אמרו: הואיל ועת רצון הוא נבעי רחמי איצרא דעבירה. בעו רחמי ואמסר בידיהו.

אמר להו: חזו דאי קטליתו ליה לההוא – בליא עלמא. חבשוהו תלתא יומי, ובעו ביעתא בת יומא בכל ארץ ישראל ולא אשתפת. אמרו: היכי נעביד? נקטליה – בליא עלמא! נבעי רחמי אפלגא – פלגא ברקיעא לא יהבי. בחליהו לעיניה, ושבקוהו. ואהני דלא מיגרי ביה לאיניש בקרבתה.

במערכא מתנו הכי: רב גידל אמר: "גדול" שגדלו בשם המפורש, ורב מתנא אמר: "האל הגדול הגבור והנורא".

והא דרב מתנא מטייא לדרבי יהושע בן לוי, דאמר רבי יהושע בן לוי: למה נקרא שמן אנשי כנסת הגדולה – שהחזירו עטרה ליושנה. אתא משה אמר: "האל הגדול הגבור והנורא", אתא ירמיה ואמר: גוים מקרקרין בהיכלו, איה נוראותיו? לא אמר נורא. אתא דניאל, אמר: גוים משתעבדים בבניו, איה גבורותיו? לא אמר גבור.

The Gemara makes a parenthetical observation. Rav Hanina said: Learn from this that the seal of the Holy One, Blessed be He, is truth.

In response to the indication of divine acceptance, they observed a fast for three days and three nights, and He delivered the evil inclination to them. A form of a fiery lion cub came forth from the chamber of the Holy of Holies. Zechariah the prophet said to the Jewish people: This is the evil inclination for idol worship, as it is stated in the verse that refers to this event: "And he said: This is the evil one" (Zechariah 5:8). The use of the word "this" indicates that the evil inclination was perceived in a physical form.

When they caught hold of it one of its hairs fell, and it let out a shriek of pain that was heard for four hundred parasangs. They said: What should we do to kill it? Perhaps, Heaven forbend, they will have mercy upon him from Heaven, since it cries out so much. The prophet said to them: Throw it into a container made of lead and seal the opening with lead, since lead absorbs sound. As it is stated: "And he said: This is the evil one. And he cast it down into the midst of the measure, and he cast a stone of lead upon its opening" (Zechariah 5:8). They followed this advice and were freed of the evil inclination for idol worship.

When they saw that the evil inclination for idol worship was delivered into their hands as they requested, the Sages said: Since it is an auspicious time, let us pray also concerning the evil inclination for sin in the area of sexual relationships. They prayed, and it was also delivered into their hands.

Zechariah the prophet said to them: See and understand that if you kill this evil inclination the world will be destroyed because as a result there will also no longer be any desire to procreate. They followed his warning, and instead of killing the evil inclination they imprisoned it for three days. At that time, people searched for a fresh egg throughout all of Eretz Yisrael and could not find one. Since the inclination to reproduce was quashed, the chickens stopped laying eggs. They said: What should we do? If we kill it, the world will be destroyed. If we pray for half, i.e., that only half its power be annulled, nothing will be achieved because Heaven does not grant half gifts, only whole gifts. What did they do? They gouged out its eyes, effectively limiting its power, and set it free. And this was effective to the extent that a person is no longer aroused to commit incest with his close relatives.^N

The Gemara returns to its discussion of the verse in Nehemiah cited above: In the West, i.e., Eretz Yisrael, they taught the debate concerning the verse "the Lord, the great God" as follows: Rav Giddel said: "Great" means that he ascribed greatness to Him by enunciating God's explicit name. And Rav Mattana said: They reinserted the following appellations of God into their prayers: "The great, the mighty, and the awesome God" (Nehemiah 9:32).

The Gemara comments: This interpretation that Rav Mattana said leans to, i.e., is consonant with, the exposition of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi. As Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: Why are the Sages of those generations called the members of the Great Assembly? It is because they returned the crown of the Holy One, Blessed be He, to its former glory. How so? Moses came and said in his prayer: "The great, the mighty, and the awesome^N God" (Deuteronomy 10:17). Jeremiah the prophet came and said: Gentiles, i.e., the minions of Nebuchadnezzar, are crouching in His sanctuary; where is His awesomeness? Therefore, he did not say awesome in his prayer: "The great God, the mighty Lord of Hosts, is His name" (Jeremiah 32:18). Daniel came and said: Gentiles are enslaving His children; where is His might? Therefore he did not say mighty in his prayer: "The great and awesome God" (Daniel 9:4).

NOTES

This is the might of His might – זו היא גבורת גבורתו – Just as with regard to a person it is said: Who is mighty? One who conquers his inclination (Avot 4:1); so too, the same idea may be said of God. God's might is manifested not only by fighting the Jewish people's wars. His decision to restrain Himself and refrain from immediately punishing those who attack His people is itself an illustration of His might.

One may not skip sections in the Torah – אין מדלגים – בתורה: Since the Torah contains numerous mitzvot containing a great deal of technical information, if one skips material he may cause it to be hard to understand, and he runs the risk of confusing people. The Prophets, on the other hand, contain primarily words of rebuke and consolation. Therefore, even if some sections are skipped, the message of the material may still be appreciated (Me'iri).

HALAKHA

Skipping passages during reading – דלוג בקריאה – It is permitted to skip material when reading from the Prophets, but not when reading from the Torah. Nevertheless, this is prohibited only when switching from one topic to another; it is permitted to skip to a new passage within the same topic. That is the case provided the reader does not skip from the end of the book to its beginning but follows the book's sequence. With regard to the Prophets it is permitted to skip only within a single book, with the Twelve Prophets considered as one book. When skipping while reading from the Prophets, care must be taken to do so only if the resulting delay is short enough that the translator does not end up waiting in silence for the reader to continue reading. Nowadays, when the haftara is not read from a scroll but from a book, there is no prohibition against skipping passages during the recitation (Mishna Berura; Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim 144:1).

BACKGROUND

The translator – התורגמן – Already during the period of the Mishna, the accepted custom was to read from the Bible in the original Hebrew and to accompany each verse with an oral Aramaic translation. The reader and the translator alternated for the duration of the reading. Although this custom continued throughout the period of the Talmud and even later, most communities abandoned the custom when Aramaic fell into disuse. Today, only Yemenite congregations maintain this custom, with some translating the Torah into both Aramaic and Arabic.

אתו אינהו ואמר: אדרבה, זו היא גבורת גבורתו שבובש את יצרו, שנותן אך אפים לרשעים. ואלו הן נוראותיו – שאלמלא מוראו של הקדוש ברוך הוא היאך אומה אחת יכולה להתקיים בין האומות?

ורבנן היכי עבדי הכי ועקרי תקנתא דתקין משה! אמר רבי אלעזר: מתוך שידעין בהקדוש ברוך הוא שאמתו הוא, לפיכך לא ביבבו בו.

”יקורא אחרי מות ואך בעשור.” ורמינהי: מדלגין בנביא ואין מדלגין בתורה!

לא קשיא: כאן – בכדי שיפסיק התורגמן. כאן – בכדי שלא יפסיק התורגמן.

והא עלה קתני: – מדלגין בנביא ואין מדלגין בתורה, ועד כמה מדלג – בכדי שלא יפסיק התורגמן. הא בתורה – כלל כלל לא!

אמר אבוי: לא קשיא, כאן – בענין אחר, כאן – בשני ענינים.

והתנא: מדלגין בתורה בענין אחר, ובנביא בשני ענינים, כאן וכאן בכדי שלא יפסיק התורגמן, ואין מדלגין מנביא לנביא, ובנביא של שנים עשר מדלגין.

The members of the Great Assembly came and said: On the contrary, this is the might of His might,^N i.e., this is the fullest expression of it, that He conquers His inclination, in that He exercises patience toward the wicked. God's anger is flared by the gentile nations' enslavement of His people, yet He expresses tremendous might by suppressing His anger and holding back from punishing them immediately. Therefore, it is still appropriate to refer to God as mighty. And these acts also express His awesomeness: Were it not for the awesomeness of the Holy One, Blessed be He, how could one people, i.e., the Jewish people, who are alone and hated by the gentile nations, survive among the nations?

The Gemara asks: And the Rabbis, i.e., Jeremiah and Daniel, how could they do this and uproot an ordinance instituted by Moses, the greatest teacher, who instituted the mention of these attributes in prayer? Rabbi Elazar said: They did so because they knew of the Holy One Blessed be He, that He is truthful and hates a lie. Consequently, they did not speak falsely about Him. Since they did not perceive His attributes of might and awesomeness, they did not refer to them; therefore, they cannot be criticized for doing so.

It was taught in the mishna: And he reads from the scroll the Torah portion beginning with the verse: “After the death” (Leviticus 16:1), and the portion beginning with the verse: “But on the tenth” (Leviticus 23:26). Although both of these portions appear in the book of Leviticus, they are not adjacent to one another. Perforce, the High Priest skipped the sections in between the two portions. The Gemara raises a contradiction: It is taught in a mishna in tractate Megilla: One may skip sections when reading the haftara in the Prophets, but one may not skip sections when reading in the Torah.^{NH}

The Gemara answers: This is not difficult: Here, in the mishna in tractate Megilla that teaches that one may not skip, the intention is that one should not skip if the sections are so far apart from one another that the delay caused by doing so will be of such length that the translator^B who recites the Aramaic translation will conclude his translation before the next section is reached. In that case, the community would have to remain in silence while waiting for the next section to be reached, which is considered disrespectful of the community's honor. There, in the case of the mishna here, where it is permitted to skip, the delay caused is of such short length that the translator will still not conclude his translation before the new section is reached.

The Gemara challenges this resolution: But a baraita was taught concerning this mishna: One may skip sections when reading in the Prophets, and one may not skip sections when reading in the Torah. And how much may one skip? One may skip when the section skipped is of such short length that when the furling of the scroll is completed the translator will still not have concluded his translation. The baraita implies that the qualification for the length of the section that may be skipped applies only to reading the Prophets, but when reading the Torah, one may not skip at all. The Gemara's resolution is therefore refuted.

The Gemara offers a different resolution. Abaye said: This is not difficult. Here, in the case of the mishna here, where it is permitted to skip, it is referring to when both sections pertain to a single topic, and therefore the listeners will be unaware that sections were skipped. There, in the mishna in tractate Megilla, which teaches that one may not skip, it is referring to when the two sections pertain to two different topics.

As it was taught in a baraita: One may skip sections when reading in the Torah when both sections read pertain to one topic, and in the Prophets one may skip from one section to another even if they pertain to two different topics. Both here and there, one may skip only when the section skipped is of such short length that when furling is completed the translator will still not have concluded his translation. But one may not skip from one book of the Prophets to another book of the Prophets even if both pertain to the same topic, and even if the gap between them is short. However, among the books of the Twelve Prophets one may skip, as the twelve are considered one book for these purposes.