BACKGROUND

Warp and woof threads – בַּשַּׁבָּת: Even when weaving is done evenly, and the warp threads, those attached to the loom, are of the same type of thread as the woof, they are still somewhat different because of how they are used. The warp threads are usually both slimmer and stronger than the woof threads.

Perek VIII
DaT 78 Amud a

NOTES

From this point forward it will grow in strength – בַּשַּׁבָּת: This is a hint to the way the future redemption will take place. It will begin slowly, until the Messiah, the descendant of David, arrives. Then the salvation will bring about the resurrection of the dead and the nullification of the Angel of Death (Yissur Yisroel).

She must sit – מִכָּאן: This is stated, since it has already been established that it is prohibited to stand in water that reaches the neck (see Shabbat 11a). In the phrase "to the inhabitants of [yoshvei] Jerusalem" (Zechariah 13:1), yoshvei literally means “those who sit” and is an allusion to this (see Ohol Moshe).

HALAKHA

Crossing water on Shabbat – בַּשַּׁבָּת: It is permitted to cross water on Shabbat when wearing shoes, but not when wearing sandals. This is due to the concern that one may come to carry his sandals if they fall off (Shabbat 10a).

BACKGROUND

Lecture (pirka) – בַּשַּׁבָּת: The pirka was generally a lecture given by a Sage to his colleagues and their students. There was obvious importance given to a lecture that the Exilarch attended and occasionally delivered. All of the Sages in the vicinity felt obligated to be present at such lectures.

The Gemara cites more midrashim about the river that will flow from the Holy of Holies. Rabbi Pinehas said in the name of Rav Huna of Tzipori: The spring that comes forth from inside the Holy of Holies is at first very narrow and resembles grasshoppers’ antennae in width. Once it reaches the opening of the Sanctuary it becomes as thick as the thread of the woof; once it reaches the Entrance Hall of the Sanctuary, it becomes as thick as the thread of the woof, which is wider than the warp thread. Once it reaches the opening of the Temple courtyard it becomes like the mouth of a small jug. This is as we learned in a mishna: Rav Eliyzer ben Yaakov says: Water,

In the future, will bubble from under the threshold of the Temple. From this point forward, the spring will grow in strength and rise until it reaches the opening of David’s house, i.e., his grave, which is outside of Jerusalem. When it reaches the opening of David’s house, it will become a flowing river in which zavim and zavot, menstruating women, and women after childbirth will bathe to purify themselves. As it is stated: “On that day there shall be a fountain opened for the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for purification and for sprinkling” (Zechariah 13:1).

Rav Yosef said: From here, there is an allusion that a menstruating woman must be able to sit up to her neck in water, i.e., that this is the appropriate depth for waters of a ritual bath to purify. The Gemara comments: But the halakha is not in accordance with his opinion. Rather, the depth of the water is irrelevant. As long as the water can cover an entire adult body, the ritual bath is kosher.

The Gemara investigates the permissibility of crossing water in order to fulfill a mitzva: It works out well that on Yom Kippur it is permitted because there are no shoes, and there is no problem going through water barefoot. However, on Shabbat, when there are shoes, what is the halakha? Is one permitted to cross water wearing shoes? Is there a concern that his shoe might come off and he may pick it up, thereby violating the prohibition of carrying out? Nehemya, the son-in-law of the Nasi, said: I saw Rabbi Ami and Rabbi Asi come to a pool of water that they had to cross on Shabbat, and they crossed it while wearing their shoes without removing them first.

The Gemara asks: It works out well that shoes are permitted, since one can tie them tightly, but what is there to say about sandals? Since they do not fit tightly on the foot, they might come off in the water. Rav Ribumi said: I saw Ravina cross a river while wearing sandals on his feet. Rav Ashi said: If he is wearing sandals, he should not cross the water ab initio, lest the sandal fall off his foot and he violate the prohibition of carrying on Shabbat by picking it up.

Incidental to this, the Gemara reports: The Exilarch came to deliver a lecture in Rav Natan’s study hall in Hagronya. Raffam and all the Sages came to the lecture, but Ravina did not come. The next day, when he came, Raffam wanted to remove any anger towards Ravina from the mind of the Exilarch, for missing the lecture. Raffam therefore asked Ravina: What is the reason that the Master did not come to the lecture? He said to him: My foot hurt. He said to him: You should have put shoes on. Ravina answered him: It was the back of the foot that hurt, so wearing shoes would have been hard for me.
Cooling off on Yom Kippur – סירוב מים ביום כיפור: The prohibition of bathing on Yom Kippur does not include alternative ways of cooling off. One is therefore allowed to cool off using empty vessels, fruits, and babies. Cooling off using damp clay is prohibited, if the clay is wet enough to make something else wet by touching it. Furthermore, using a vessel that has water in it is prohibited, since it may spill and lead to batting. It is prohibited to soak a cloth in water the day before and use it to cool off, since one may come to wring it out on Yom Kippur (Rama). However, if the cloth is dry and was already used the day before, one may wipe one’s eyes with it on Yom Kippur (Mishna Berura, Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayim 613:9).

Cooling off with cloth on the Ninth of Av – סירוב בecture ביום ה Innocent: The day before the Ninth of Av, one may soak a cloth in water and remove it from the water before the fast begins, in order to wipe oneself with it and cool off the next day (Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayim 554:19).

Permitting firstborn animals – צורוב בנים ה�: A priest is not trusted to rule that a firstborn in his possession became blemished. Others, however, even a relative or another priest, are trusted to give such testimony (Shulhan Arukh, Yoreh De’ra 314:3).
BACKGROUND

Was given to the house of the Nasi – אֵלָיָּה הַכִּפּוּרִים

Based on the Sages who were involved in this discussion, it seems that it took place during the period of Rabbi Yehuda Nesi. In those generations, the leadership position was an honor inherited by the descendants of Hillel the Elder. However, most of the Nasi/or were not prominent Torah scholars; they served primarily as liaisons with the Romans and the true religious leaders were the heads of the yeshivot. Despite this, in order to give honor to their ancestors and to maintain the honor of the office of the Nasi, the Nasi was given honorary tasks such as granting the Sages the authority to rule in certain matters of halakha.

The testimony of Rabbi Tzadok ben Haluka addressed the comparative status of Rabbi Yosei ben Zimra and Rabbi Yehuda Nasi, both of whom lived two generations earlier. Although Rabbi Yehuda Nasi was one of the greatest scholars of his time, Rabbi Yosei ben Zimra was considered to be greater than him both in years and in wisdom. Nevertheless, he asked permission from Rabbi Yehuda Nasi.

HALAKHA

Wearing shoes on Yom Kippur – מַחֲרֹת הַסַּנְדָּל

It is prohibited to wear sandals or shoes made from leather on Yom Kippur, even if they are only covered in leather. However, shoes made of straw, cloth, or any other type of material are permitted. Some authorities prohibit shoes made from other materials if one does not feel afflicted by wearing them, but most authorities disagree with that ruling (see Mishna Berura, Shulhan Arukh, Orach Hayyim 612:2). The usual custom is to use cork on the soles of sandals.

Wearing shoes on a communal fast – מַחֲרֹת בַּיְשִׁיבָה

Wearing leather shoes is prohibited on the Ninth of Av. If the shoes are made from cloth or other materials, they are permitted, as stated in the Gemara (Shulhan Arukh, Orach Hayyim 534:16). The same halakha applies to any communal fast day decreed when there is drought. However, nowadays there are no longer such communal fast days.

The Gemara asks: What are they asking? What is the basis of the question? The Gemara explains: This is what they are asking, like this statement of Rav Idi bar Avin, who said: This matter, the authority of the Nasi to grant permission, was given to the house of the Nasi to raise its stature. Therefore, must permission be received, since the request itself honors the Nasi? Or, perhaps because the individual in question is an Elder who sits and studies Torah in a yeshiva, there is no need. Rav Tzadok ben Haluka rose to his feet and said: I saw Rabbi Yosei ben Zimra, who was an Elder who sat in the yeshiva and who stood before the grandfather of this current Nasi, ask permission from him to permit firstborn animals.

Rabbi Abba said to him: The way you described it was not how the incident was. Rather this was the incident: Rabbi Yosei ben Zimra was a priest, and he raised the following dilemma: Is the halakha in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Meir, who said: One who is suspect in a certain area may not judge it and may not testify about it? Priests are suspected of inflicting blemishes on firstborn animals because of the destruction of the Temple, even priests may not benefit from a firstborn animal until it becomes blemished. The question was not one of seeking permission from the Nasi, but it was a question of halakha. Are priests who are Torah scholars also suspected of inflicting blemishes? Or perhaps the halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel, who said: One who is suspect is believed about his fellow but is not believed about himself. He resolved the question for him: The halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel.

They raised another dilemma before them, the same Sages mentioned: What is the halakha with regard to going out in sandals made of cork? Is it considered a shoe, and therefore it may not be worn on Yom Kippur, or not? Rabbi Yitzhak bar Nahmani stood on his feet to testify and said: I saw that Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi went out on Yom Kippur in cork sandals, and I said to him: What is the law on a communal fast that is decreed in a time of drought, when shoes are similarly prohibited? Are reed sandals permitted? He said to me: It is no different, and such sandals are permitted even on a communal fast day. Rabbi bar Hana said: I saw Rabbi Elazar from Nineveh go out in cork sandals on a communal fast day, and I said to him: What is the law on Yom Kippur? He said to me: It is no different, and it is permitted. The Gemara reports: Rav Yehuda went out on Yom Kippur in reed sandals. Abaye went out in sandals made of palm fiber. Rava went out in sandals braided with reeds. None of these sandals are considered to be shoes. Rabba bar Rav Huna wrapped a scarf around his feet and went out.

NOTES

Yom Kippur and a communal fast – יום הקפורה ויום קבורה

There are separate reasons to be stringent on each of these days. One must suffer on a communal fast, and therefore certain afflictions are required. However, the wearing of shoes is permitted. It is prohibited specifically on Yom Kippur because of a scriptural allusion. On the other hand, since the wearing of shoes on Yom Kippur is based on a scriptural allusion perhaps it includes even non-leather shoes (Shulhan Arukh).
A prosthetic leg on Shabbat – ריכוזٹקיסא בֶּיﬠֲתָא: Since a prosthetic leg is used just to provide the appearance of a leg, it is prohibited to walk into the public domain wearing one on Shabbat, lest it fall off and be carried. This follows Rabbi Yosei’s opinion (Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim 351:5).

A prosthetic leg on Yom Kippur – ריכוזٹקיסא בֵּיהָי: If a prosthetic leg is covered in leather it is considered a type of shoe, and it may not be worn on Yom Kippur (Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim 614:2).

Young children on Yom Kippur – אֹטֲמָא פּוּרְתָּא בֵּיהָי: Young children are permitted to eat, drink, bathe, and smear oil on Yom Kippur, but they are not allowed to wear leather shoes as a single child. Wearing shoes will not cause children to suffer unduly. This ruling applies only to a child old enough to understand the mitzvot somewhat; a very young child may wear shoes. During times when children are not bathed or smeared with oil every day, it is appropriate to refrain from these activities on Yom Kippur (see Mishna Berura, Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim 616:1).

Notes

The prosthetic leg is impure – ראַבָּא בָּרָא: According to the halakhot of ritual purity and impurity, raw materials other than food and drink can become impure only if they are fashioned into vessels. Depending on the material, there is a range of definitions as to what constitutes a vessel in this area of law. For example, wooden utensils can become impure only if they have a hollow space in them; completely flat objects cannot be impure. Consequently, a prosthetic leg with a hollow space into which rags are placed is subject to impurity.

Young children are permitted to perform all of them – יָנָא בְּעָבְדִי תְּמוּנָא: There are different opinions within the halakhot with regard to young children. Children who have not reached the age of maturity are not obligated to fulfill mitzvot by Torah law. However, even before children reach this age, they must be educated by their parents, little by little, to follow halakha. Even so, there is no obligation to force very young children to keep the mitzvot.

In some situations, it is prohibited for adults to directly enable children to violate the halakha. For example, a parent may not directly feed a child non-kosher food. With regard to Yom Kippur, there is a question as to whether parents are permitted to do things for their children that they may not do for themselves. Since there is a fear of endangering the child through abstinence, the Gemara concludes that not only are children permitted to eat and drink, but that adults must make sure that they do so.

Cracked ceramic vessels – יָנָא בְּעָבְדִי: Rabbah’s statement teaches about the prohibition against wanton destruction. Rabbah bought his children pieces of broken pottery to smash rather than allowing them to keep whole and usable utensils.

Personalities

My mother told me – אֵיךֶּהוּ אֲבָּא: Abaye quotes the wisdom of his mother throughout the Gemara. However, this woman was not his biological mother, since it is known that she died during his birth. It seems that the woman he called mother was the wife of his uncle, Rabbah bar Nahmani, who raised him. Abaye cites much of her advice for daily life and rearing children.

Background

Kutaha – קולה: In Hebrew this is kutah, a dip used in Babylonia. It was made mostly from bread crumbs and sour milk, with additional spices sprinkled in.
We do not prevent the bride from wearing perfumes – חותא as large as possible, may wash her face? Since a date has three parts, the fruit, the pit, and the space between them, the mishna must be referring to dry barley and not dry barley within its shell. One is permitted to wear shoes to protect himself from scorpions or similar dangers and even to avoid getting dirty from mud (Shuṭḥan Arukh, Orḥ Hayyim 614:4, and in the comment of the Rema).

Volume of a date-bulk – חותא שרשא. A date-bulk is slightly less than an egg-bulk. The halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Rav Ashi, that a large date-bulk is equivalent to the volume of a large date including its pit (see Bah; Shuṭḥan Arukh, Orḥ Hayyim 612:3).

The large date-bulk that they said is the measure that determines liability for eating on Yom Kippur, does this refer to the volume of a large date with its pit or without its pit? Rav Ashi asked a similar question: The mishna that states that a bone that is a barley-grain-bulk imparts ritual impurity, does this refer to the volume of a barley grain with its husk or without its husk? And is that referring to a wet kernel or a dry one? The Gemara clarifies: Rav Ashi did not ask the question that Rav Pappa asked, regarding the size of the date-bulk on Yom Kippur because the answer was clear to him. Since it is stated in the mishna: Large, it means as large as possible, which must include the pit. Conversely, Rav Pappa did not ask the question that Rav Ashi asked regarding the size of the barley-grain-bulk because the answer was clear to him. Wet barley is called shibbolet and not barley; without its shell it is no longer called barley but is called ushla. Therefore, the mishna must be referring to dry barley within its shell.

Volume of a large date and the volume of its pit – חותא בועזא. The Gemara poses this question when the mishna explicitly states that the pit is included. The commentator explains that the conjunctive vav, translated here as the word and, might actually mean or, so that the mishna does not read: The date and its pit, but rather: The date or its pit. In other words, the volume is the amount of food equal to a large date or its pit, which are roughly the same size. Rav Nissim Gaon, cited in the Arukh, explains this differently: Since a date has three parts, the fruit, the pit, and the space between them, the Gemara is asking whether just the fruit and the pit are measured, or whether the space between them is included as well. This issue is also discussed in the Jerusalem Talmud, but a different conclusion is reached there (see Bah).