

NOTES

The people were separating only *teruma gedola* – שָׂאִין אֶלֶּא תְרוּמָה גְדוּלָה בְּלִבְדּוֹ: Some commentaries explain that the reason that even an *am ha'aretz* separated *teruma gedola* is that, by Torah law, one fulfills his obligation with a single grain. Even people who typically treat mitzvot with contempt would fulfill this simple mitzva (*Tosefot Ri HaLavan*).

The decree to separate tithes – גְּזֵרַת הַפְּרִשְׁת מַעֲשָׂרוֹת: The people were not diligent in the separation of tithes because one who eats *teruma* is punishable by death at the hand of Heaven, while one who wrongfully eats first tithe merely fails to fulfill a positive mitzva (Rabbeinu Hananel).

With regard to second tithe let them separate – מַעֲשֵׂר שְׁנִי: Although it is prohibited *ab initio*, if one redeems even a significant amount of consecrated items in exchange for one *peruta*, it is an effective redemption. In that case, why shouldn't the bakers separate second tithe and then redeem it? Some answer that redemption of that kind is ineffective with regard to second tithe (*Tosafot Yeshanim*). Others explain that the problem with that solution is that there may not be a *peruta* available when he needs it for redemption (*Tosefot HaRosh*).

Eighteen High Priests – שְׁמוֹנֵה עָשָׂר כֹּהֲנִים גְּדוּלִים: See *Tosafot*, where several interpretations of this statement are suggested. Rav Ya'akov Emden has pointed out that it is difficult to cite proof from the book of Chronicles for the number of High Priests, since it is likely that there were other High Priests beyond those listed. One example is Jehoiada the priest, who crowned King Joash. It is therefore unclear whether the list includes all the High Priests who served, and one can only rely on the rabbinic tradition.

Deduct from the figure – צָא מֵהֶם: Certain notable High Priests are not listed here. Among them are Yehoshua ben Yehotzadak, the first High Priest during the Second Temple era, and Yoḥanan ben Narbai. Perhaps they were not listed because their terms were short (*Tosafot Yeshanim*) or because the duration of their service is unknown (Rav Ya'akov Emden).

Did not complete his year in office – לֹא הוֹצִיא שָׁנָתוֹ: It is unlikely that all these High Priests were removed from their position while alive. Josephus claims that only three High Priests were forced from their positions (*Tosefot Ri HaLavan*).

HALAKHA

The decree concerning doubtfully tithed produce – גְּזֵרַת הַמַּאֲסוֹת: During the time of Yoḥanan the High Priest it was discovered that while the people observed the obligation to separate *teruma gedola*, they were lax with regard to separating first and second tithes. It was therefore determined that only those people with the presumptive status of one who separates tithes could be trusted, while the crops of an *am ha'aretz* were suspected to be untithed. Produce purchased from an *am ha'aretz* is characterized as doubtfully tithed produce, which is tithed due to that uncertainty (Rambam *Sefer Zera'im, Hilkhot Ma'asrot* 9:1).

LANGUAGE

Royal appointees [*pursei*] – פּוּרְסֵי: From the Greek ἑφορος, *eforos*, meaning supervisor or appointee.

BACKGROUND

Eighty years that Yoḥanan the High Priest served – שְׁמוֹנֵה עָשָׂר שָׁנִים: Multiple sources make it clear that the Gemara does not mean that Yoḥanan Hyrcanus the Hasmonean held the position himself for eighty years. Actually, several members of the Hasmonean dynasty served as High Priests during those eighty years.

לְפִי שֶׁשָּׁלַח בְּכָל גְּבוּלֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְרָאָה שָׂאִין מִפְּרִישֵׁין אֶלֶּא תְרוּמָה גְדוּלָה בְּלִבְדּוֹ.

מַעֲשֵׂר רִאשׁוֹן וּמַעֲשֵׂר עֲנִי נִמְי לֹא – הַמּוֹצִיא מִחֲבִירוֹ עָלָיו הָרְאָיָה. אֶלֶּא מַעֲשֵׂר שְׁנִי, נִפְרָשׁוּ וְנִסְקוּ, וְנִכְלָוָהוּ בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם!

אָמַר עוּלָא: מִתּוֹךְ שִׁפְרָהֲדִין הִלְלוּ חוֹבְטֵין אוֹתָן כֹּל שְׁנִים עֶשֶׂר חֹדֶשׁ, וְאוֹמְרִים לָהֶן: מְכָרוּ בּוֹזֵל, מְכָרוּ בּוֹזֵל! לֹא אִטְרַחוּנְהוּ רַבָּנַן. מֵאֵי פְרָהֲדִין – פּוּרְסֵי.

אָמַר רַבָּה בַר בַּר חֲנָה אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן: מֵאֵי דְכִתְבִּיב: "וְרֵאת ה' תוֹסִיף יָמִים וְשָׁנוֹת וְרֵשָׁעִים תִּקְצְרֶנָּה", "וְרֵאת ה' תוֹסִיף יָמִים" – זֶה מִקֶּדֶשׁ רִאשׁוֹן, שֶׁעָמַד אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת וְעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנִים וְלֹא שָׁמְשׁוּ בוֹ אֶלֶּא שְׁמוֹנֵה עָשָׂר כֹּהֲנִים גְּדוּלִים.

"וְשָׁנוֹת וְרֵשָׁעִים תִּקְצְרֶנָּה" – זֶה מִקֶּדֶשׁ שְׁנִי, שֶׁעָמַד אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת וְעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה, וְשָׁמְשׁוּ בוֹ יוֹתֵר מִשְׁלֹשׁ מֵאוֹת כֹּהֲנִים. צָא מֵהֶם אַרְבַּעִים שָׁנָה שֶׁשָּׁמְשׁוּ שְׁמַעוֹן הַצְּדִיק, וְשְׁמוֹנִים שֶׁשָּׁמְשׁוּ יוֹחָנָן בֶּהֱוֹן גְּדוּל, עֶשֶׂר שֶׁשָּׁמְשׁוּ יִשְׁמַעֵאל בֶּן פֶּאֲבִי, וְאַמְרִי לָהּ אַחַת עֶשְׂרִים שֶׁשָּׁמְשׁוּ רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן חֲרוּסִים – מִכָּאן וְאֵילָךְ צָא וַחֲשׁוּב: כֹּל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד לֹא הוֹצִיא שָׁנָתוֹ.

This is because Yoḥanan the High Priest sent emissaries throughout all the areas located within the borders of *Eretz Yisrael* to assess the situation and saw that the people were separating only *teruma gedola*^N and were neglecting to separate tithes. Therefore, he issued a decree that anyone who purchases produce from an *am ha'aretz* must be concerned about the possibility that it was not tithed and is required to tithe it.^H Since even an *am ha'aretz* separates *teruma gedola*, the bakers who purchased grain from them were not required to do so.

And granted, bakers need not separate first tithe and poor man's tithe^N due to the principle: **The burden of proof rests upon the claimant.** Neither first tithe, given to Levites, nor poor man's tithe, given to the poor, is sacred. It is merely the property of the Levite and the pauper, respectively. Since with regard to doubtfully tithed produce, by definition, there is no certainty that one is actually required to tithe it, if the Levite or the pauper should seek to take possession of the gifts, they must first prove that in fact the produce was not tithed. **However**, with regard to second tithe, why are the bakers exempt? **Let them separate**^N second-tithe from the produce, **take it up to Jerusalem, and eat it in Jerusalem**, which is the *halakha* with regard to anyone else who purchases doubtfully tithed produce.

Ulla said: It is because these *parhedrin*, government appointees, beat the bakers throughout the entire twelve months of their tenure and tell them: **Sell your baked goods cheaply, sell them cheaply.** Since the officers insist that the bakers refrain from raising their prices, the Sages did not further burden them with the exertion of separating second tithe from a large quantity of grain and taking it to Jerusalem, as they would be unable to raise their prices to cover the cost of the lost grain and the trip to Jerusalem. Since the presumptive status of the grain is that it was tithed, and the obligation to tithe doubtfully tithed produce is a stringency, the Sages exempted the baker from the obligation to do so. **What** is the meaning of *parhedrin*? These are royal appointees [*pursei*]^L charged with performance of different tasks.

Ⓢ Apropos the Second Temple period, when High Priests were frequently replaced, the Gemara cites that Rabba bar bar Hana said that Rabbi Yoḥanan said: **What is the meaning of that which is written: "The fear of the Lord prolongs days, but the years of the wicked will be shortened" (Proverbs 10:27)? The fear of the Lord prolongs days; that is a reference to the First Temple, which stood for four hundred and ten years and in which only eighteen High Priests^N served, as is written in the lists of the genealogy of the priests in the Bible.**

But the years of the wicked will be shortened; that is a reference to the Second Temple, which stood for four hundred and twenty years and in which over three hundred High Priests served. In calculating the tenures of the High Priests, deduct from the figure^N of four hundred and twenty years **forty years that Shimon HaTzaddik served, and eighty years that Yoḥanan the High Priest served,^B ten years that Yishmael ben Pavi served, and some say eleven years that Rabbi Elazar ben Harsum served.** These men were all righteous and were privileged to serve extended terms. After deducting those one hundred and thirty or one hundred and forty-one years, **go out and calculate from this point forward and conclude: Each and every one of the remaining High Priests did not complete his year in office,^N as the number of remaining High Priests is greater than the number of years remaining.**

Shiloh – שִׁילֹה: When the Jewish people entered Eretz Yisrael, they erected the Tabernacle in Gilgal. It was later moved to Shiloh, where it stood for 369 years.



Tel Shiloh, believed to be the site of ancient Shiloh



Ruins at Tel Shiloh

אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן בֶּן תּוֹרְטָא: מִפְּנֵי מָה חָרְבָה שִׁילֹה – מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהָיוּ בָּהּ שְׁנֵי דְבָרִים, גְּלוּי עֲרִיּוֹת וּבִזְיוּן קִדְשִׁים. גְּלוּי עֲרִיּוֹת – דְּכַתְּיִב: "וַיַּעַל יָקֵן מְאֹד וַשְּׁמַע אֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר יַעֲשֶׂוּן בְּנָיו לְכָל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֵת אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁכָּבוּן אֶת הַנָּשִׁים הַעֹבְבוֹת פֶּתַח אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד." וְאֵף עַל גֵּב דְּאָמַר רַבִּי שְׁמוּאֵל בְּרַחֲמֵי אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן: כָּל הָאֹמַר בְּנֵי עֲלִי חָטְאוּ – אֵינֻ אֶלָּא טוֹעָה, מִתּוֹךְ

§ Apropos the sins of the High Priests in the Second Temple, the Gemara cites that Rabbi Yohanan ben Torta said: **Due to what reason was the Tabernacle in Shiloh⁸ destroyed** in the time of the prophet Samuel? It was destroyed **due to the fact that there were two matters** that existed in the Tabernacle: **Forbidden sexual relations and degradation of consecrated items.** There were **forbidden sexual relations**, as it is written: “Now Eli was very old and he heard what his sons were doing to all of Israel, how they lay with the women who did service at the opening of the Tent of Meeting” (1 Samuel 2:22). **And although Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani said that Rabbi Yohanan said: Anyone who says that the sons of Eli sinned by engaging in forbidden sexual relations is nothing other than mistaken**, even according to the alternative interpretation of the verse that it was **due to the fact**

Perek I

Daf 9 Amud b

שֶׁשָּׂהוּ אֶת קִימֵיהֶן. מִיְהָא מַעְלָה עֲלֵיהֶן הִכְתוּב כְּאֵילוּ שְׁכָבוּם.

that they deferred the sacrifice of their bird-offerings^N by women after childbirth; **nevertheless, the verse ascribes to them as if they lay with them.** These women came to the Tabernacle to sacrifice doves or pigeons as bird-offerings as part of their purification process, which would permit them to engage in sexual relations with their husbands. Eli’s sons delayed the sacrifice of these offerings and thereby delayed the return of these women to their husbands and their fulfillment of the mitzva of procreation. Even though, according to this opinion, Eli’s sons did not actually engage in sexual relations with these women, the verse attributes that degree of severity to their conduct.

בִּזְיוּן קִדְשִׁים – דְּכַתְּיִב: “גַּם בְּטָרִם יִקְטְרוּן אֶת הַחֶלֶב וּבֹא נַעַר הַכֹּהֵן וְאָמַר לְאִישׁ הַיּוֹבֵת תִּנְהַ בָּשָׂר לְעֹלֹת לְכֹהֵן וְלֹא יִקַּח מִמֶּךָ בָּשָׂר מִבּוֹשֶׁל כִּי אִם חַי וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו הָאִישׁ קַטֵּר יִקְטְרוּן כִּיֹּם הַחֶלֶב וְקַח לָךְ כְּאֲשֶׁר תִּאָּוֶה נִפְשֶׁךָ וְאָמַר לוֹ כִּי עֲתָה תֵּתֵן וְאִם לֹא לְקַחְתִּי בְחֻקָּה וְתַהֲי חֲטָאת הַנְּעָרִים גְּדוּלָה מְאֹד אֶת פִּי ה' כִּי נֶאֱצַו הַנְּשִׁים אֶת מִנְחַת ה'.”

Eli’s sons also sinned in the **degradation of consecrated items**, as it is written: “**Before the fat was made burned, the priest’s servant came and said to the man who sacrificed: Hand over some flesh to roast for the priest, for he will not take cooked flesh from you, but raw. And if the man said to him: Let the fat be burnt first and then take as much as you want, then he would say: No, hand it over right now, or I will take it by force. The sin of the young men against the Lord was very great, for the men treated the Lord’s offerings with contempt**” (1 Samuel 2:15–17).

מִקְדָּשׁ רֵאשׁוֹן מִפְּנֵי מָה חָרְבָה? מִפְּנֵי שְׁלֹשָׁה דְבָרִים שֶׁהָיוּ בוֹ: עֲבוּדָה זָרָה, וְגִלּוּי עֲרִיּוֹת, וּשְׁפִיכוֹת דָּמִים. עֲבוּדָה זָרָה – דְּכַתְּיִב: “כִּי קִצַּר הַמִּצֵּעַ מִהַשְׁתָּרַע.”

§ The *Tosefta* continues with a discussion of the sins of the Jewish people over the generations: **Due to what reason was the First Temple destroyed?** It was destroyed **due to the fact that there were three matters** that existed in the First Temple: **Idol worship, forbidden sexual relations, and bloodshed.** Idol worship, as it is written: “**The bed is too short^N for stretching [mehistare’a], and the cover is too narrow for gathering**” (Isaiah 28:20).

NOTES

They deferred the sacrifice of their bird-offerings – שֶׁשָּׂהוּ – אֶת קִימֵיהֶן: Even though technically a woman after childbirth is permitted to have conjugal relations with her husband even before bringing the offering, the women would wait at the Tabernacle to be present at the time that their offerings were sacrificed (Rabbi Elyakim). Others explain that the women of the time were particularly stringent and accepted upon themselves not to return to their husbands before the offerings were sacrificed (*Me’iri*). By preventing a woman from returning to her husband, they interfered with the relationship between husband and wife, which is tantamount to having relations with her. Some explain that since the sons of Eli detained the women, the women were forced to stay overnight and to sleep in the Tabernacle. When it says that they lay with the women, it means they slept in the same place as the women (Rabbi Yoshiya Pinto).

The bed is too short – כִּי קִצַּר הַמִּצֵּעַ: Why does the Gemara cite this verse, which requires interpretation, rather than any number of verses that testify to the existence of idolatry during the First Temple era? Perhaps it is because this verse explicitly expresses that the prophet was insistent about this sin (*Tosefta Ri HaLavan*). Alternatively, perhaps this verse was cited because it is an opportunity to teach a favored interpretation to it (*Gevurat Ari*).

Two counterparts – שְׁנֵי רֵעִים: Some explain that this phrase is used to avoid blasphemy. The two counterparts are two priests; one a priest of God and one a priest of Baal (*Ben Yehoyada*).

They were wicked – רָשָׁעִים הָיוּ: That generation committed many sins for which they were not punished because they put their trust in God. They were punished only for violating the most severe prohibitions (Rabbi Yoshiya Pinto).

מאי קצר המצע מהשתרע? אמר רבי יונתן: קצר מצע זה מהשתרע עליו שני רעים כאחד.

”והמסכה צרה כהתכנס” אמר רבי שמואל בר נחמני: כי מטי רבי יונתן להאי קרא בכי, אמר, מאן דכתיב ביה: “בונים בני מי הם” נעשית לו מסכה צרה!

גלוי עריות, דכתיב: “ויאמר ה' יען כי גבהו בנות ציון ותלכנה נטויות גרון ומשקרות עינים הלוך וטפוף תלכנה וברגליהן תעככסנה”. יען כי גבהו בנות ציון – שהיו מהלכות ארוכה בצד קצרה, ותלכנה נטויות גרון – שהיו מהלכות בקומה יקופה, ומשקרות עינים – דהו מליין בוחלא עיניהן, הלוך וטפוף תלכנה – שהיו מהלכות עקב בצד גודל, וברגליהן תעככסנה – אמר רבי יצחק: שהיו מביאות מור ואפרסמון ומיחות במנגליהן, וכשמגיעות אצל בחורי ישראל בועטות ומתיות עליהן, ומכניסין בהן יצר הרע בארס בכעוס.

שפיכות דמים – דכתיב: “וגם דם נקי שפך מנשה [הרבה מאד] עד אשר מלא את ירושלים פה לפה”.

אבל מקדש שני, שהיו עוסקין בתורה ובמצוות וגמילות חסדים מפני מה חרב? מפני שהיתה בו שנאת חנם. ללמדך ששקולה שנאת חנם כנגד שלש עבירות: עבודה זרה, גלוי עריות, ושפיכות דמים.

רשעים היו, אלא שתלו בטחונם בהקדוש ברוך הוא. אתאן למקדש ראשון, דכתיב: “ראשיה בשוחד ישפוטו וכהניה במחיר יורו ונביאיה בכסף יקסומו ועל ה' ישענו לאמר הלא ה' בקרבנו לא תבוא עלינו רעה”. לפיכך הביא עליהן הקדוש ברוך הוא שלש גזרות כנגד שלש עבירות שבידם, שנאמר: “לכן בגללכם ציון שדה תחרש וירושלים עיין תהיה והר הבית לבמות יער”.

What is the meaning of: “The bed is too short for stretching?” Rabbi Yonatan said: This bed is too short for two counterparts [*re'im*]^N to dominate [*mehistarer*]. *Mehistare'a* is a contraction of *mehistarer re'im*. It is inconceivable that there would be in one Temple both service of God and worship of the idol placed there by King Manasseh.

What is the meaning of: And the cover [*vehamasseikha*] is too narrow [*tzara*] for gathering [*kehitkannes*]? Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani said that when Rabbi Yonatan reached this verse, he wept and said: For He about Whom it is written: “He gathers [*kones*] waters of the sea together as a heap” (Psalms 33:7), the idol [*masseikha*] became a rival [*tzara*]? In the homiletic interpretation, *masseikha* is interpreted as idol and *tzara* is interpreted as rival, as in the term used to describe the relationship between two women married to the same husband, *isha tzara*.

With regard to forbidden sexual relations, it is written: “The Lord says because the daughters of Zion are haughty and walk with outstretched necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go and making a tinkling with their feet” (Isaiah 3:16).

Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, indicates a tall woman walking alongside a short one so that the tall woman would stand out.

And walk with outstretched necks, indicates that they would walk with upright stature and carry themselves in an immodest way.

And wanton eyes, indicates that they would fill their eyes with blue eye shadow in order to draw attention to their eyes.

Walking and mincing as they go, indicates that they would walk in small steps, heel to toe, so onlookers would notice them.

Making a tinkling [*te'akasna*] with their feet, Rabbi Yitzhak said: This teaches that they would bring myrrh and balsam and place them in their shoes and would walk in the marketplaces of Jerusalem. And once they approached a place where young Jewish men were congregated, they would stamp their feet on the ground and splash the perfume toward them and instill the evil inclination into them like venom of a viper [*ke'eres bikhos*].

With regard to bloodshed it is written: “Moreover, Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, until he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another” (II Kings 21:16).

However, considering that the people during the Second Temple period were engaged in Torah study, observance of mitzvot, and acts of kindness, and that they did not perform the sinful acts that were performed in the First Temple, why was the Second Temple destroyed? It was destroyed due to the fact that there was wanton hatred during that period. This comes to teach you that the sin of wanton hatred is equivalent to the three severe transgressions: Idol worship, forbidden sexual relations and bloodshed.

The Gemara continues: They were wicked;^N however, they put their faith in the Holy One, Blessed be He. With that statement we have come to the First Temple era, about which it is written: “Her chiefs judge for bribes, her priests give rulings for a fee, and her prophets divine for pay; yet they rely on the Lord, saying: The Lord is in our midst, no tragedy will overtake us” (Micah 3:11). At least the final portion of the verse was to their credit. Therefore, the Holy One, Blessed be He, brought upon them three decrees corresponding to their three wicked sins, as it is stated: “Therefore, due to you Zion will be plowed as a field, Jerusalem will become heaps of ruins, and the Temple Mount will be a like shrine in the woods” (Micah 3:12).

The fingernails... the belly – **צפורן... קריסו**: Several interpretations were offered for this comparison. Some say that despite the fact that a fingernail is made for scratching and stabbing and a belly is soft, the sharp fingernails of the first generations were more pleasant than the soft bellies of the later ones (*Or HaYashar*). The imagery may be connected to the process of eating, when most of the food enters the stomach but some ends up under the fingernails. Even so, the fingernails of the earlier generations were preferable (*Ben Yehoyada*). The comparison apparently derives from the fact that both body parts are semicircles and differ merely in size.

Look to [*eineikhem*] the Temple... the Temple is your witness [*eideikhem*] – **תנו עיניכם... עידיכם ביה**: The difference between the two versions of the statement is based on the Jerusalem Talmud which states that the first Temple was mostly destroyed, but the Second Temple was completely razed to the ground following the Bar Kokheva rebellion. The punishment suffered by the later generations was worse than that of the earlier generations (*Gevurat Ari*).

Gave him a hand – **יָהַב לִיהָ יָדָא**: The connection between the story and the statement is this: Rabba bar bar Ḥana helped Reish Lakish up, whereupon the latter said that his actions show the strength of the immigrants. Still, he complained that because the Jews did not come to Eretz Yisrael from Babylonia en masse, they weakened the entire nation (*Li Lishua*).

Wall – **חומה**: A wall's stones are connected to each other (Rabbi Elyakim), which makes it a strong and solid mass consisting of small components (*Benayahu*).

Door – **דלת**: Few people can enter a door simultaneously. That represents the small number of people who returned to Eretz Yisrael (*Benayahu*).

BACKGROUND

Jordan River – **יַרְדֵּן**:



Jordan River in the area of the Jordan Park in northern Israel

ובמקדש ראשון לא היה ביה שנתת חנם? והכתוב: "מגורי אל חרב היו את עמי לכן ספוק אל ירד". ואמר רבי (אליעזר): אלו בני אדם שאוכלין ושותין זה עם זה ודוקרין זה את זה בחברות שבלשונם!

The Gemara asks: **And in the First Temple era was there really no baseless hatred? Isn't it written:** "Cry and wail, son of man, for this will befall my people, this will befall all the princes of Israel: **They will be cast before the sword together with my people, therefore strike the thigh**" (Ezekiel 21:17)? Rabbi Eliezer interpreted this verse and said: **These are people who eat and drink with each other, and stab each other with verbal barbs.** Apparently, even those who were close were filled with hatred toward one another.

ההיא בנשיאי ישראל הוא, דכתוב: "ועק והילל בן אדם כי היא היתה בעמי". ותניא: "ועק והילל בן אדם" יכול לכל? תלמוד לומר: "היא בכל נשיאי ישראל".

The Gemara answers: **That behavior was found only among the princes of Israel, as it is written:** "Cry and wail, son of man, for this will befall my people"; and it was taught in a *baraita*: "Cry and wail, son of man, for this will befall my people"; one might have thought that this unsavory trait was common to all. Therefore, the verse states: **"This will befall all the princes of Israel."** It was only the leaders of the nation who harbored baseless hatred for each other; the people of the nation as a whole did not hate one another.

רבי יוחנן ורבי אלעזר דאמרי תרווייהו: ראשונים שנתגלה עונם – נתגלה קצם, אחרונים שלא נתגלה עונם – לא נתגלה קצם.

It was Rabbi Yohanan and Rabbi Elazar who both said: In the case of the former, the people in the First Temple era, whose sin was exposed and no attempt was made to disguise their conduct, the end of their punishment was exposed, and the prophet informed them that they would return to their land in seventy years. In the case of the latter, the people in the Second Temple era, whose sin was not exposed; rather, they attempted to disguise their conduct, the end of their punishment was not exposed.

אמר רבי יוחנן: טובה צפורן של ראשונים מפריסו של אחרונים. אמר ליה ריש לקיש: אדרבה, אחרונים עדיפי, אף על גב דאיכא שעבוד מלכות – קא עסקי בתורה! אמר ליה: ביה תוכיח, שתורה לראשונים ולא חזרה לאחרונים.

Rabbi Yohanan said: The fingernails of the former are preferable to the bellyⁿ of the latter. Reish Lakish said to him: On the contrary, the latter were superior; even though there is subjugation by the kingdoms, they are engaged in Torah study. Rabbi Yohanan said to Reish Lakish: The Temple will prove that the former were superior, as it was restored to the former. The Second Temple was constructed after the destruction of the first. However, after the destruction of the Second Temple, it was not restored to the latter. Apparently, the former were superior to the latter.

שאלו את רבי אלעזר: ראשונים גדולים או אחרונים גדולים? אמר להם: תנו עיניכם בבירה. איכא דאמרי, אמר להם: עידיכם בירה.

Similarly, the Sages asked Rabbi Elazar: **Are the former greater or are the latter greater? He said to them: Look to the Temple** and see if it has been restored, as it was to our predecessors. Some say the exchange was slightly different: **He said to them: The Temple is your witness.**ⁿ The restoration of the Temple after the destruction of the First Temple, attests to the fact that the former generation was greater.

ריש לקיש הוי סחי בירדנא, אתא רבה בר בר חנה יהב ליה ידא. אמר ליה: אלהא! סנינא לנו, דכתוב "אם חומה היא נבנה עליה טירת כסף ואם דלת היא נצור עליה לוח ארז" אם עשיתם עצמכם בחומה ועליתם כולכם בימי עזרא – נמשלתם ככסף, שאין רקב שולט בו, עכשיו שעליתם בדלתות נמשלתם כארז שהרקב שולט בו.

Reish Lakish was swimming in the Jordan River^b when Rabba bar bar Ḥana came and gave him a handⁿ to help him out. Reish Lakish said to him: My God! I hate you Babylonians, as it is written: "If she be a wallⁿ we will build a silver turret upon her, if she be a doorⁿ we will cover her with boards of cedar" (Song of Songs 8:9). This is the meaning of the verse as it applies to the Jewish people: **Had you rendered yourselves a solid bloc like a wall and all ascended to Eretz Yisrael in the days of Ezra, you would have been likened to silver, which rot does not infest,** in the sense that you would have merited experiencing the Divine Presence in all its glory. **Now that you ascended like doors, and only some of you came to Eretz Yisrael, you are likened to cedar, which rot infests,** and you merit experiencing only partial revelation of the Divine Presence.

NOTES

Cedar [erez] – אֶרֶז: The *ge'onim* write that the Gemara mentions the cedar because in Hebrew, *erez* evokes the word *raz*, meaning secret. The cedar tree is connected to prophecy, the revelation of secrets.

Reish Lakish would not speak with him – וְלֹא הָיָה מְשַׁתְּעִי – רִישׁ לְקִישׁ בְּהֵדִיָּה: *Tosafot* explain that he would not have started a conversation. *Tosafot Yeshanim* writes that he would not have spoken to him casually.

Cast a man between them – שְׂדֵי גִבְרָא בִּינֵיהוּ – This phrase suggests that there were three people involved in the incident, and Reish Lakish spoke with the third individual (Ritva).

מֵאֵי אֶרְזֵי? אָמַר עוֹלָא: סַסְמָגוֹר. מֵאֵי סַסְמָגוֹר? אָמַר רַבִּי אָבָא: בַּת קוֹל. כְּדִתְנִיָּא: מְשִׁמְתוּ נְבִיאִים הָאֲחֵרוֹנִים חֲגִי זְכַרְיָה וּמְלָאכִי נִסְתַּלְקָה רוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל, וְעַדְיִין הָיוּ מְשַׁתְּמִשִּׁין בְּבַת קוֹל.

וְרִישׁ לְקִישׁ מִי מְשַׁתְּעִי בְּהֵדִי רַבָּה בַּר בַּר חֲנָה? וּמָה רַבִּי (אֱלִיעֶזֶר). דְּמָרָא דְאֶרְעָא דְיִשְׂרָאֵל הוּא, וְלֹא הוּא מְשַׁתְּעִי רִישׁ לְקִישׁ בְּהֵדִיָּה, דְּמֵאֵן דְּמְשַׁתְּעִי רִישׁ לְקִישׁ בְּהֵדִיָּה בְּשׁוּק יְהוּבָו לִיָּה עֵיסְקָא בְּלֹא סְהָדִי, בְּהֵדִי רַבָּה בַּר בַּר חֲנָה מְשַׁתְּעִי?!

אָמַר רַב פַּפָּא: שְׂדֵי גִבְרָא בִּינֵיהוּ, אִו רִישׁ לְקִישׁ הוּא וְזַעֲרִי, אִו רַבָּה בַּר בַּר חֲנָה הוּא וְרַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר. כִּי אֲתָא לְקַמְיָה דְרַבִּי יוֹחָנָן אָמַר לִיה: לֹא הוּא הֵינֵנו טַעְמָא, אִי נְמִי סְלִיקוּ בּוֹלְהוּ בֵּימֵי עוֹרָא לֹא הוּא שְׂרִיא שְׂכִינָה בְּמַקְדָּשׁ שְׁנִי, דְּכַתִּיב: "יָפֶת אֱלֹהִים לִיָּפֶת וַיִּשְׁכֵּן בְּאֹהֲלֵי שֵׁם."

The Gemara asks: What rot infests cedar?^N Ulla said: It is *sasmagor*,^B a type of worm. The Gemara asks: What does *sasmagor* have to do with the Divine Presence during the Second Temple era? Rabbi Abba said: Just as little remains from a cedar tree infested by this worm, similarly, all that remained from the Divine Presence during the Second Temple period was a Divine Voice, as it was taught in a *baraita*: After the last prophets Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi died, the Divine Spirit of prophetic revelation departed from the Jewish people, and they were still utilizing a Divine Voice, which they heard as an echo of prophecy.

The Gemara asks: And would Reish Lakish speak with Rabba bar bar Hana in public? Just as Rabbi Elazar, who was the master of Eretz Yisrael in wisdom and character, and nevertheless, Reish Lakish would not speak with him^N in public, as Reish Lakish was sparing in his speech and extended friendship to only a select few prominent, righteous people, to the extent that a person to whom Reish Lakish was seen speaking in the marketplace, one would give him a loan and do business with him without witnesses; would he have spoken with Rabba bar bar Hana?

Rav Pappa said: Cast a man between them,^N and say that the incident did not involve Reish Lakish and Rabba bar bar Hana. It was either Reish Lakish bathing in the river and Ze'iri, the prominent Babylonian Sage, who extended him a hand, or it was Rabba bar bar Hana who was in the river and Rabbi Elazar extended a hand to him. In any event, when the Sage who heard what Reish Lakish said came before Rabbi Yohanan and related it, Rabbi Yohanan said to him: That is not the reason; even had they all ascended in the days of Ezra, the Divine Presence would not have rested in the Second Temple, as it is written: "God will enlarge Japheth, and dwell in the tents of Shem" (Genesis 9:27).

BACKGROUND

Sasmagor – סַסְמָגוֹר: The Arukh explains that this is a worm that strikes fear into wood, from the verse "the worm [sas] shall eat them like wool" (Isaiah 51:8) and *magor*, meaning fear. Others explain that *sasmagor* means wood that has been filled with holes by a woodworm.



Above: Beech wood, infested by the common woodworm.

Diameter of the holes is about 1–1.5 mm.

Left: Woodworms eating away at tree bark