GEMARA Rabbi Yitzhak said: I heard that one sacrifice offerings in the temple of Onias in Egypt at the present time. The Gemara cites the basis for the statement of Rabbi Yitzhak. He maintains that the temple of Onias is not a house of idol worship but rather a temple devoted to the service of God, and he maintains that the initial consecration sanctified Jerusalem for its time and did not sanctify Jerusalem forever. Therefore, after the destruction of the Temple, the sanctity of Jerusalem lapsed and the sacrifice of offerings elsewhere was no longer prohibited. For these reasons it was permitted to sacrifice offerings in the temple of Onias after the Temple was destroyed.

The Gemara cites the source of this halakha. It is as it is written: “For you are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance” (Deuteronomy 12:9), which is interpreted: “Rest,” this is Shiloh; “inheritance,” this is Jerusalem. The verse juxtaposes and likens inheritance to rest: Just as in the place of rest, Shiloh, after its destruction there is permission to sacrifice offerings on improvised altars, so too in the place of inheritance, Jerusalem, after its destruction there is permission to sacrifice offerings on improvised altars.

The Gemara reports that the other Sages said to Rabbi Yitzhak: Did you say this halakha with regard to the temple of Onias? He said to them: No, I did not say that. 8 Rava said, reinforcing his assertion with an oath: By God! Rabbi Yitzhak did in fact say this, and I myself learned it from him, but he later retracted this ruling.

The Gemara asks: And what is the reason he retracted his ruling? 9 The Gemara explains: It is due to the difficulty raised by Rav Mari, as Rav Mari raised an objection from the mishna: With regard to the sanctity of Shiloh, after the Tabernacle was destroyed there is permission to sacrifice offerings on improvised altars. But with regard to the sanctity of Jerusalem, after the Temple was destroyed there is no permission to sacrifice offerings on improvised altars. And furthermore, we learned in a mishna (Zevahim 112b): Once they came to Jerusalem, improvised altars were prohibited, and they did not again have permission to do so, and Jerusalem became the everlasting inheritance.
Hangings for the Sanctuary – הקְלָﬠִים

Rashi says the Gemara seeks to prove from here that according to Rabbi Eliezer, the initial consecration sanctified Jerusalem for its time only and not forever. Consequently, hangings were necessary to establish barriers around the Temple in order to sanctify it. The hangings were later replaced with walls. Others seek to prove from the statement of Rabbi Eliezer that he maintained that the initial consecration sanctified Jerusalem forever, as otherwise, when they established the Sanctuary in the Second Temple, they fashioned temporary hangings for the Sanctuary in and temporary hangings for the courtyard to serve as partitions until construction of the stone walls was completed. The difference was only that in building the Sanctuary, the workers built the walls outside the hangings, without entering, and in the courtyard, the workers built the walls inside the hangings.

And Rabbi Yehoshua said: I heard that one sacrifices offerings on the altar even though there is no Temple, one eats offerings of the most sacred order in the Temple courtyard even if there are no hangings, and one eats offerings of lesser sanctity and second tithe produce in Jerusalem even if there is no wall surrounding the city, due to the fact that the initial consecration sanctified Jerusalem for its time and also sanctified Jerusalem forever. Even if the walls do not exist, the sanctity remains intact. The Gemara concludes: From the fact that Rabbi Yehoshua based his opinion on the principle that the initial sanctification sanctified Jerusalem forever, by inference one can conclude that Rabbi Eliezer holds: It did not sanctify Jerusalem forever. Apparently, this issue is subject to a dispute between tanna’im.

Ravina said to Rav Ashi: From where do you draw this inference? Perhaps everyone maintains that the initial consecration sanctified Jerusalem for its time and also sanctified Jerusalem forever. And one Sage, Rabbi Eliezer, stated that tradition, which he heard from his teachers, and one Sage, Rabbi Yehoshua, stated that tradition, which he heard from his teachers, and there is no dispute between them. And if you would say: Why then do I need hangings at all according to Rabbi Eliezer? The original sanctity remained when Jerusalem was not surrounded by walls, and the presence or absence of hangings is irrelevant as well. The Gemara answers: The hangings were established merely for seclusion, as it would have been unbecoming for the activity in this most sacred venue to be visible to all.

Rather, this matter is subject to the dispute between these tanna’im, as it is taught in a baraita that Rabbi Yishmael, son of Rabbi Yosei, said: Why did the Sages enumerate these nine cities in tractate Arakhin as cities walled since the days of Joshua, son of Nun? Weren’t there many more? As, when the exiles ascended to Eretz Yisrael from Babylonia, they discovered these cities and consecrated them as walled cities; but the sanctity of the first walled cities enumerated in the book of Joshua was negated when settlement in the land was negated and the Jewish people were exiled. Apparently, Rabbi Yishmael, son of Rabbi Yosei, maintains: The initial consecration sanctified Jerusalem for its time only and did not sanctify Jerusalem forever.

The Gemara raises a contradiction from a different baraita. Rabbi Yishmael, son of Rabbi Yosei, said: Were these cities that were enumerated in tractate Arakhin the only walled cities? Wasn’t it already stated: “Sixty cities, all the region of Argov” (Deuteronomy 3:14), and concerning these cities it is written: “All these cities were fortified with high walls, gates and bars” (Deuteronomy 3:5), indicating that there were a great number of walled cities? Rather, why then did the Sages enumerate these specific cities? It is due to the fact that when the exiles ascended from Babylonia they discovered these and consecrated them as walled cities.

The Gemara asks: Consecrated them? If their sanctity remained, why was it necessary to consecrate them?

NOTES

First consecration and second consecration – הקְדָשָׁהּ לֶﬠָתִיד. In terms of the Temple, the initial consecration is the establishment of the First Temple, built by Solomon, and the second consecration is the establishment of the Second Temple. However, with regard to the consecration of Eretz Yisrael, the initial consecration is the conquest of the land by Joshua and the second is the return of the exiles, led by Ezra, from Babylonia to Zion.

The initial consecration sanctified Jerusalem for its time and sanctified it forever – הקְדָשָׁהּ לֶﬠָתִיד. With regard to this matter there is a fundamental dispute cited by Tosafot and the other early authorities here, and it apparently also relates to the dispute between the Rambam and the Ria’av with regard to the sanctity of the Temple. Based on the Gemara here, there appears to be one question: Was the sanctity of the land abrogated by the destruction of the Second Temple? If it was, then the sanctity of Jerusalem was similarly abrogated.

However, in the opinion of the Rambam and many others, the sanctity of Jerusalem in terms of the prohibition against sacrificing offerings elsewhere and the sanctity of Eretz Yisrael are not interdependent. The sanctity of Jerusalem and the Temple was never abrogated, although the sanctity of Eretz Yisrael was. See the Rashi, who discusses this at length. Others write that Rabbi Yitzhak retracted his opinion due to those same considerations. Initially, he maintained that there is only one dispute here, basing his opinion on those who said the sanctity of the land was abrogated. However, once he realized that the sanctity of Jerusalem and the sanctity of Eretz Yisrael are not interdependent, and that there is no one who holds that the sanctity of Jerusalem was abrogated, he retracted his opinion (Zikkaron Ba’asefer, Sefer Emor).

HALAKHA

One sacrifices offerings even when there is no Temple – קְדָשָׁהּ לֶﬠָתִיד וְלֶﬠָתִיד. It is permitted to sacrifice all offerings even though the Temple is not standing. The offerings of the most sacred order may be eaten in the entire courtyard even though its walls are destroyed. Second tithe and offerings of lesser sanctity may be eaten throughout Jerusalem even if its walls are not standing, because the initial consecration sanctified Jerusalem for its time and forever, in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehoshua (Rambam Sefer Avoda, Hilkhot Bet HaBe’irah ch.5).

The Gemara comments: This matter is subject to a dispute between tanna’im, as it is taught in a mishna (Eduyot 6:6): Rabbi Eliezer said: I heard that when they were building the Sanctuary in the Second Temple, they fashioned temporary hangings for the Sanctuary and temporary hangings for the courtyard to serve as partitions until construction of the stone walls was completed. The difference was only that in building the Sanctuary, the workers built the walls outside the hangings, without entering, and in the courtyard, the workers built the walls inside the hangings.
Rabbi Elazar, son of Rabbi Yosei

As it is taught in a baraita: Rabbi Elazar, son of Rabbi Yosei, said, said: Rabbis of the Second Temple era found that it is not necessary to consecrate them. Rather, this is what the baraita means to say: It is due to the fact that when the exiles ascended from Babylonia they discovered these and enumerated them.

The Gemara answers: This is a dispute between two later tannaim, who hold according to the opinion of Rabbi Yishmael, son of Rabbi Yosei, and each transmitted Rabbi Yishmael’s opinion in a different manner. And if you wish, say instead that one of the traditions is mistaken, as with regard to this statement, Rabbi Elazar bar Yosei said it, as it is taught in a baraita: Rabbi Elazar, son of Rabbi Yosei, said that the verse states: “Which has a wall” (Leviticus 23:39). The word lo is written with an alef, no, that it does not have a wall, but its vocalization is in the sense of its homonym, lo with a yer, meaning that it has a wall. This indicates that even though it does not presently have a wall, as it was destroyed, but it had a wall previously, it retains its status as a walled city. It is Rabbi Elazar, son of Rabbi Yosei, who maintains that this first consecration sanctified Jerusalem forever.

The Gemara returns to the primary topic of this chapter, the book of Esther. The Gemara cites various aggadic interpretations of the verses of the Megilla. The opening verse of the Megilla states: “And it came to pass [wayhi] in the days of Ahasuerus” (Esther 1:1). Rabbi Levi said, and some say that it was Rabbi Yonatan who said: This matter is a tradition that we received from the members of the Great Assembly. Anywhere that the word wayhi is stated, it is an ominous term indicating nothing other than impending grief, as if the word were a contraction of the words vai and hi, meaning woe and mourning.

The Gemara cites several proofs corroborating this interpretation. “And it came to pass [wayhi] in the days of Ahasuerus” led to grief, as there was Haman. “And it came to pass [wayhi] in the days when the judges ruled” (Ruth 1:1) introduces a period when there was famine. “And it came to pass [wayhi], when men began to multiply” (Genesis 6:1) is immediately followed by the verse: “And the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth” (Genesis 6:5).

“And it came to pass [wayhi] as they journeyed from the east” (Genesis 11:2) is followed by: “Come, let us build us a city” (Genesis 11:4), which led to the sin of the Tower of Babel. The Gemara cites further examples: “And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel” (Genesis 14:1), about whom it is stated: “These made war” (Genesis 14:2). Another verse states: “And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho” (Joshua 5:13), it was there that he saw an angel “with his sword drawn in his hand” as a warning. It is written: “And the Lord was [wayhi] with Joshua” (Joshua 6:27), and immediately afterward: “But the children of Israel committed a trespass” (Joshua 7:1). It states: “And it came to pass that there was a certain man of Ramathaim” (1 Samuel 1:1), and it mentions shortly afterward Hannah’s inability to conceive: “For he loved Hannah, but the Lord had closed up her womb” (1 Samuel 1:5).
Similarly, the verse states: “And it came to pass, when Samuel was old” (1 Samuel 8:1), and then it is written: “And his sons did not walk in his ways” (1 Samuel 8:3). Also, it states: “And it came to pass that David was successful in all his ways, and the Lord was with him” (1 Samuel 18:14), and only a few verses prior it is written: “And Saul viewed David with suspicion” (1 Samuel 18:9). In another instance, the verse states: “And it came to pass, when the king dwelt in his house” (1 Samuel 7:1). Here King David mentioned his desire to build a temple for God, but it is written elsewhere that he was told: “Yet you shall not build the house” (1 Chronicles 6:9).

After citing several verses where vayhi portends grief, the Gemara mentions a number of verses that seem to indicate otherwise. But isn’t it written: “And it came to pass [vayhi] on the eighth day” (Leviticus 9:1), which was the day of the dedication of the Tabernacle? And it is taught in a baraita with regard to that day: On that day there was joy before the Holy One, Blessed be He, similar to the joy that existed on the day on which the heavens and earth were created. The Gemara cites a verbal analogy in support of this statement. It is written here, with regard to the dedication of the Tabernacle: “And it came to pass [vayhi] on the eighth day, and it is written there, in the Creation story: ‘And it was [vayhi] evening, and it was morning, one day’ (Genesis 1:5). This indicates that there was joy on the eighth day, when the Tabernacle was dedicated, similar to the joy that existed on the day the world was created. Apparently, the term vayhi is not necessarily a portent of grief.

The Gemara answers: This verse does not contradict the principle. On the day of the dedication of the Tabernacle, a calamity also befell the people, as Nadav and Avihu died.

The Gemara cites additional verses where vayhi is not indicative of impending grief: But isn’t it written: “And it came to pass [vayhi] in the four hundred and eightieth year” (1 Kings 6:1), which discusses the joyous occasion of the building of the Temple? And furthermore, isn’t it written: “And it came to pass [vayhi] when Jacob saw Rachel” (Genesis 29:10), which was a momentous occasion? And isn’t it written: “And it was [vayhi] evening, and it was [vayhi] morning, one day” (Genesis 1:5)? And isn’t there the second day of Creation, and isn’t there the third day, where the term vayhi is used? And aren’t there many verses in the Bible in which the term vayhi appears and no grief ensues? Apparently, the proposed principle is incorrect.

Rather, Rav Ashi said: With regard to every instance of vayhi alone, there are some that mean this, grief, and there are some that mean that, joy. However, wherever the phrase “and it came to pass in the days of [vayhi bime’i]” is used in the Bible, it is nothing other than a term of impending grief.

The Gemara states that there are five instances of vayhi bime’i in the Bible. “And it came to pass in the days of [vayhi bime’i] Ahaseurus” (Esther 8:1); “And it came to pass in the days of [vayhi bime’i] when the judges ruled” (Judges 2:1); “And it came to pass in the days of [vayhi bime’i] Amraphel” (Genesis 20:1); “And it came to pass in the days of [vayhi bime’i] Ahaz” (Isaiah 7:1); “And it came to pass in the days of [vayhi bime’i] Jehoiakim” (Jeremiah 1:1). In all those incidents, grief ensued.

§ Apropos the tradition cited by Rabbi Levi above, the Gemara cites additional traditions that he transmitted. Rabbi Levi said: ‘This matter is a tradition that we received from our ancestors: Amoz, father of Isaiah, and Amaziah, king of Judea, were brothers. The Gemara questions: What novel element is this statement teaching us?’
Any bride who is modest – אשת יפה...

The Gemara comments: This is also taught in a baraita: The Ark crafted by Moses had ten cubits of empty space on each side. And it is written in the description of Solomon’s Temple: “And before the Sanctuary, which was twenty cubits in length, and twenty cubits in breadth” (1 Kings 6:20). The place “before the Sanctuary” is referring to the Holy of Holies. It was twenty by twenty cubits. If there were ten cubits of empty space on either side of the Ark, apparently the Ark itself occupied no space. And it is written: And the wing of one of the cherubs was ten cubits and the wing of the other cherub was ten cubits; the wings of the cherubs occupied the entire area. If so, where was the Ark itself standing? Rather, must one not conclude from it that the Ark stood by means of a miracle and occupied no space?

The Gemara responds: It is in accordance with that which Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani said that Rabbi Yonatan said: Any bride who is modest is in the house of her father-in-law merits that kings and prophets will emerge from her. From where do we derive this? From Tamar, as it is written: “When Judah saw her, he thought her to be a prostitute; for she had covered her face” (Genesis 38:15). Can it be that because Tamar covered her face he thought her to be a prostitute? On the contrary, a harlot tends to uncover her face.

Rather, because she covered her face in the house of her father-in-law and he was not familiar with her appearance, Judah didn’t recognize Tamar, thought she was a harlot, and sought to have sexual relations with her. Ultimately, she merited that kings and prophets emerged from her. Kings emerged from her through David, who was a descendant of Tamar’s son, Peretz. However, there is no explicit mention that she was the forebear of prophets. This is derived from that which Rabbi Levi said: This matter is a tradition that we received from our ancestors. Amoz, father of Isaiah, and Amaziah, brothers, and it is written: “The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz” (Isaiah 1:1). Amoz was a member of the Davidic dynasty, and his son, the prophet Isaiah, was also a descendant of Tamar.

And Rabbi Levi said: This matter is a tradition that we received from our ancestors: The place of the Ark of the Covenant is not included in the measurement of the Holy of Holies in which it rested.

The Gemara cites prologues utilized by various Sages to introduce study of the Megilla: Rabbi Yonatan introduced this passage, the book of Esther, with an introduction from here: “For I will rise up against them, says the Lord of hosts, and cut off from Babylonia name, and remnant, and offspring [nün], and posterity, says the Lord” (Isaiah 14:22). This verse may be interpreted homiletically: “Name,” this is the writing of ancient Babylonia that will disappear from the world. “Remnant,” this is the language of ancient Babylonia. “Offspring,” this is their kingdom. And “posterity,” this is Vashit, who according to tradition was Nebuchadnezzar’s granddaughter, and the book of Esther relates how she too was removed from the throne.
And upon all thorns –

And it shall be to the Lord for a name; this is the reading of the Gemara’s proof, as there seem to be no other possible readings for the verse that is being discussed. The Gemara’s conclusion is based on the fact that the verse is referring to the victory of God over the nations, and that the thorns in the vineyard symbolize the nations.

Rabbi Shemuel bar Nahmani introduced this passage with an introduction from here: “Instead of the thorns, this means instead of the wicked one, the thorns in the vineyard refer to the wicked one, i.e., King Nebuchadnezzar. The verse continues: ‘And the one came not near the other all the days of Purim’ (Esther 9:12).”
Rabbi Elazar said that this is how the matter is to be understood: Indeed, God Himself does not rejoice over the downfall of the wicked, but He causes others to rejoice. The Gemara comments: One can learn from the language of the verse as well, as it is written: “So the Lord will rejoice [ken yasis]” (Deuteronomy 38:65). And it is not written yasis, the grammatical form of the verb meaning: He will rejoice. Rather, it is written yasis. The grammatical form of this verb indicates that one causes another to rejoice. Consequently, these words are understood to mean that God will cause others to rejoice. The Gemara concludes: Indeed, learn from it that this is the case.

Rabbi Abba bar Kahana introduced this passage with an introduction from here. The verse states with regard to God’s reward to the righteous: “He gives to a man that is good in His sight wisdom, and knowledge, and joy” (Ecclesiastes 2:26). The Gemara explains that this verse is referring to the righteous Mordecai. With regard to the next part of the verse: “But to the sinner He gives the task of gathering and heaping up,” this is referring to Haman. The conclusion of the verse states: “That he may give it to one who is good before God” (Ecclesiastes 2:26). This is Mordecai and Esther, as it is written: “And Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman” (Esther 8:2).

Rabba bar Oferan introduced this passage with an introduction from here: “And I will set my throne in Elam, and destroy from there the king and the princes, says the Lord” (Jeremiah 49:38). “The king,” who was destroyed; this is referring to Vashti. “And the princes”; this is referring to Haman and his ten sons.

Rav Dimi bar Yitzḥak introduced this passage with an introduction from here:

“For we are bondmen; yet our God has not forsaken us in our bondage, but has extended mercy unto us in the sight of the kings of Persia” (Ezra 9:9). When did this occur? In the time of Haman.

Rabbi Hanina bar Pappa introduced this passage with an introduction from here: The verse states: “You have caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water; but You brought us out into abundance” (Psalms 66:12). “Through fire”; this was in the days of the wicked Nebuchadnezzar, who cast the righteous into the furnace. “And through water”; this was in the days of Pharaoh, who decreed that all newborn males be cast into the water. “But You brought us out into abundance”; this was in the days of Haman, where abundant feasts played a pivotal role in their peril and salvation.

Rabbi Yoḥanan introduced this passage with an introduction from here: The verse states: “He has remembered His mercy and His faithfulness toward the house of Israel: All the ends of the earth see the salvation of our God” (Psalms 98:3). When did all the ends of the earth see the salvation of our God? In the days of Mordecai and Esther, for their peril and salvation became known through the letters sent throughout the empire.

So the Lord will rejoice (ken yasis), and it is not written yasis – the verb yasis can be intransitive or causative, meaning that it can be translated either as: He will rejoice, or: He will cause another to rejoice. However, yasis is always causative, and therefore it always implies the latter. For this reason, the Gemara uses the word yasis to indicate how yasis should be understood (Ḥida; Mahzak Berakha).