

So the Lord will rejoice [*ken yasis*], and it is not written *yasus* – כִּן יִשֵׁשׁ וְלֹא כִתִּיב יִשׁוּשׁ – 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, *yasus* is always causative, and therefore it always implies the latter. For this reason, the Gemara uses the word *yasus* to indicate how *yasis* should be understood (Hida; *Mahzik Berakha*).

אמר רבי אלעזר: הוא אינו שש, אבל אחרים משיש. ודיקא נמי, דכתיב: "כִּן יִשֵׁשׁ" וְלֹא כִתִּיב "יִשׁוּשׁ", שִׁמְעַע מִיָּה.

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 28:63). **And it is not written *yasus***,<sup>n</sup> 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.

רבי אבא בר כהנא פתח לה פיתחא להאי פרשתא מהכא: "לֹא אֲדַם שְׂטוֹב לְפָנָיו נָתַן חֵכְמָה וְדַעַת וְשִׂמְחָה" – זֶה מְרַדְּכֵי הַצְּדִיק, "וְלַחֹטֵא נָתַן עֵינִן לְאַסּוּף וְלִכְנוּס" – זֶה הָמָן, "לְתַת לְטוֹב לְפָנָיו הָאֱלֹהִים" – זֶה מְרַדְּכֵי וְאַסְתֵּר, דְּכִתִּיב: "וַתִּשֶׂם אֶסְתֵּר אֶת מְרַדְּכֵי עַל בֵּית הָמָן".

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).

רבה בר עופרן פתח לה פיתחא להאי פרשתא מהכא: "וְשִׂמְתִּי כִסְאִי בְּעִילָם וְהֶאֱבַדְתִּי מִשָּׁם מֶלֶךְ וְשָׂרִים." "מֶלֶךְ" – זֶה הָמָן וְעֶשְׂרֵת בָּנָיו.

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.

רב דימי בר יצחק פתח לה פיתחא להאי פרשתא מהכא:

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

## Perek I

### Daf 11 Amud a

"כִּי עֲבָדִים אָנַחְנוּ וּבַעֲבֹדוֹתֵינוּ לֹא עֲזָבוּנוּ אֱלֹהֵינוּ וַיִּטַּע עָלֵינוּ חֶסֶד לְפָנָיו מִלְּכֵי פָרִס", אֵימָתִי – בְּזִמְנֵי הָמָן.

"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.

רבי חנינא בר פפא פתח לה פיתחא להאי פרשתא מהכא: "הֲרֹכַבְתָּ אָנוּשׁ לְרֹאשֵׁנוּ בָּאֵנוּ בָּאֵשׁ וּבַמַּיִם", "בָּאֵשׁ" – בִּימֵי נְבוּכַדְנֶצַּר הַרְשָׁע, "וּבַמַּיִם" בִּימֵי פְרַעֲוֹה. "וַתוֹצִיאֵנוּ לְרוּיָהּ" – בִּימֵי הָמָן.

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<sup>n</sup> 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.

רבי יוחנן פתח לה פתחא להאי פרשתא מהכא: "זָכַר חֶסֶדּוֹ וְאֱמוּנָתוֹ לְבֵית יִשְׂרָאֵל רְאוּ כָּל אֲפָסֵי אֶרֶץ אֶת יְשׁוּעַת אֱלֹהֵינוּ", אֵימָתִי רְאוּ כָּל אֲפָסֵי אֶרֶץ אֶת יְשׁוּעַת אֱלֹהֵינוּ – בִּימֵי מְרַדְּכֵי וְאַסְתֵּר.

Rabbi Yohanan 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 have seen 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.

We went through fire – בָּאֵנוּ בָּאֵשׁ: The Maharsha explains that "through fire" is referring to the burning of the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar. "And you brought us out into abundance" is referring to Purim, primarily because the miracle of Purim relates back to a banquet with an abundance of wine, and Purim is celebrated through the drinking of wine (Rabbi Yoshiya Pinto; Maharsha).

**Persians – פרסיים:** Rav Yosef lived among the Persians and was therefore familiar not only with their unique customs with regard to eating and drinking, but also with their layers of flesh and long hair. There is evidence that unlike the Babylonians, the Persians let the hair on their head grow long, at times even braiding it onto their heads. The restlessness attributed here to the Persians may be indicative of their being horseback riders, as their army was based largely on their horses, especially their swiftness and mobility.

And they never rest like a bear – ואין להם מנוחה כדוב – As opposed to some animals mentioned in the Gemara whose identification is questionable, it is clear that the animal referenced in the Gemara here is in fact a bear. Although bears are heavy, as the Gemara here says that they are coated with flesh, they are known to be restless and can run quite quickly. Consequently, they are said to never rest.



Bear running

ריש לקיש פתח לה פתחא להא פרשתא מהכא: "ארי נוהם ודוב שוקק מושל רשע על עם דל". "ארי נוהם" – זה נבוכדנצר הרשע; דכתיב ביה: "עלה אריה מסובכו", "דוב שוקק" – זה אחשוורוש; דכתיב ביה: "וארו חיה אחרי תניינה דמיה לדוב" ותני רב יוסף: אלו פרסיים, שאוכלין ושותין כדוב, ומסובכין בשר כדוב, ומגדלין שער כדוב, ואין להם מנוחה כדוב.

"מושל רשע" – זה המן, "על עם דל" – אלו ישראל, שהם דלים מן המצות.

רבי אלעזר פתח לה פתחא להא פרשתא מהכא: "בעצלתיים ימך המקרה ובשפלות ידים ידלוף הבית", בשביל עצלות שהיה להם לישראל שלא עסקו בתורה, נעשה שונאו של הקדוש ברוך הוא מך. ואין מך אלא עני, שנאמר: "ואם מך הוא מערפך", ואין מקרה אלא הקדוש ברוך הוא, שנאמר: "המקרה במים עליותיו".

רב נחמן בר יצחק פתח לה פתחא להא פרשתא מהכא: "שיר המעלות לולי ה' שהיה לנו יאמר נא ישראל לולי ה' שהיה לנו בקום עלינו אדם" – אדם ולא מלך.

רבא פתח לה פתחא להא פרשתא מהכא: "ברבות צדיקים ישמח העם ובמשול רשע יאנח עם", "ברבות צדיקים ישמח העם" – זה מרדכי ואסתר, דכתיב: "והעיר שושן צהלה ושמחה", "ובמשול רשע יאנח עם" – זה המן, דכתיב: "והעיר שושן נבוכה".

Reish Lakish introduced this passage with an introduction from here: "As a roaring lion, and a ravenous bear, so is a wicked ruler over a poor people" (Proverbs 28:15). "A roaring lion"; this is the wicked Nebuchadnezzar, as it is written about him: "The lion has come up from his thicket" (Jeremiah 4:7). "A hungry bear"; this is Ahasuerus, as it is written about him: "And behold, another beast, a second one, like a bear" (Daniel 7:5). And Rav Yosef taught that these who are referred to as a bear in the verse are the Persians.<sup>b</sup> They are compared to a bear, as they eat and drink in large quantities like a bear; and they are coated with flesh like a bear; and they grow their hair long like a bear; and they never rest like a bear,<sup>b</sup> whose manner it is to move about from place to place.

"A wicked ruler"; this is Haman. "Over a poor people"; this is the Jewish people, who are referred to in this manner because they are poor in their observance of the mitzvot.

Rabbi Elazar introduced this passage with an introduction from here: "Through laziness the rafters [*hamekare*] sink in [*yimakh*]; and through idleness of the hands the house leaks" (Ecclesiastes 10:18). Rabbi Elazar interprets the verse homiletically: Through the laziness of the Jewish people, who did not occupy themselves with Torah study, the enemy of the Holy One, Blessed be He, a euphemism for God Himself, became poor [*makh*], so that, as it were, He was unable to help them, as *makh* is nothing other than poor, as it is stated: "But if he be too poor [*makh*] for the valuation" (Leviticus 27:8). And the word *mekare* in the verse is referring to no one other than the Holy One, Blessed be He, as it is stated: "Who lays the beams [*hamekare*] of His chambers in the waters" (Psalms 104:3).

Rav Nahman bar Yitzhak introduced this passage with an introduction from here: "A song of ascents of David. If not for the Lord Who was with us, let Israel now say; if not for the Lord who was with us, when a man rose up against us" (Psalms 124:1–2). The verse speaks of "a man" who rose up against us and not a king.<sup>n</sup> This occurred in the days of Haman, as he, and not King Ahasuerus, was the chief enemy of the Jewish people.

Rava introduced this passage with an introduction from here: "When the righteous are on the increase, the people rejoice; but when the wicked man rules, the people mourn" (Proverbs 29:2). "When the righteous are on the increase, the people rejoice"; this is Mordecai and Esther, as it is written: "And the city of Shushan rejoiced and was glad" (Esther 8:15). "But when the wicked man rules, the people mourn"; this is Haman, as it is written: "But the city of Shushan was perplexed" (Esther 3:15).

NOTES

A man and not a king – אדם ולא מלך: Several explanations are offered for the significance of the distinction between a king and a man. One idea is that because a king is concerned with the stability of his kingdom, he will usually be cautious and

therefore resistant to decimating a complete nation from within it. Haman, however, was a regular man, not a king, and therefore he wasn't concerned with threats to the throne and attempted to destroy all of the Jews within the kingdom (*Or Hadash*).

For what nation is there so great – **כִּי מִי גוֹי גָדוֹל** – Some explain that this homily is indicating that although the Jews are scattered and divided, they still have “God so near to them” (Maharsha). Others explain that the focus of the statement is the conclusion of that same verse: “As the Lord our God is whenever we call upon Him,” for it relates how the Jews called out to God and were answered (*Sefat Emet*).

Or has God ventured, etc. – **אוּ הִנֵּסָה אֱלֹהִים וְגו'**: The meaning is that the Purim redemption was similar to the redemption from Egypt, which is the subject of this verse. Both were redemptions of “a nation from the midst of another nation,” in the sense that both redemptions involved a reversal of fortune for the two nations involved. In Egypt, a body of water that had been the means to drown Jewish babies became the means to drown the Egyptian pursuers of Israel. Similarly, in the case of Purim, lots were cast to pick a day for the destruction of Israel. This day ended up becoming a day of annihilation for many of Israel's enemies (Maharsha).

And it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus – **וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם**: Some understand that this explanation of Rav's served as his introduction to the Megilla, connecting it with the verse in Deuteronomy that he cites (*Turei Even*). That verse, which says: “And there you shall sell yourselves to your enemies for bondsmen and bondswomen, and no man shall buy you,” correlates with Esther's statement in the Megilla: “But if we had been sold for bondsmen and bondswomen I would have held my peace” (Esther 7:4). The Jews of the time would gladly have sold themselves as slaves to escape death, but there was no buyer (Maharsha).

In the days of Vespasian – **בַּיּוֹם נְבוּכַדְנֶצַּר**: The Hebrew text reads Nebuchadnezzar, but the English translation reads Vespasian, in order to reflect the original version of the text. To avoid offending the Romans, the censor removed the phrase: In the days of Vespasian, a Roman emperor, and replaced it with the less provocative Nebuchadnezzar.

When I appointed for them Daniel – **שֶׁהֶעֱמַדְתִּי לָהֶם**: The Gemara is apparently noting individuals in various generations who were not only righteous but also respected by the gentile governments and thereby awarded a certain measure of authority to defend the Jewish people from their enemies (Rid).

In the days of the Romans – **בַּיּוֹם רוֹמַיִם**: The Hebrew text reads: Persians, but the English translation reads Romans, in order to reflect the original version of the text, which was altered by the censor in order to avoid offending the Romans.

## PERSONALITIES

Shimon HaTzaddik – **שִׁמְעוֹן הַצַּדִּיק**: There were two High Priests, a grandfather and grandson, who were both named Shimon ben Honyo. It is unclear which one of them is referred to as Shimon HaTzaddik, and it is possible that both shared this epithet. Shimon HaTzaddik was one of the last members of the Great Assembly, and he is the first individual known by name in the chain of transmission of the Oral Law. Many stories of his righteousness appear throughout the Mishna and Talmud. Unique words of praise for him were uttered by his contemporary, Shimon ben Sira, who said that he was: The greatest of his brothers and the splendor of his people; who is concerned for his people and strengthens them in times of trouble... How splendid he is as he looks out from the Temple, and as he emerges from the inner chamber behind the curtain, like a star of light between trees, like a full moon during a Festival (*Sefer Ben Sira* 49).

רב מתנה אִמְר מִהֶכָּא: **כִּי מִי גוֹי גָדוֹל** אֲשֶׁר לֹא אֱלֹהִים קְרוּבִים אֵלָיו. רב אשי אִמְר מִהֶכָּא: **“אוּ הִנֵּסָה אֱלֹהִים”** וְגו'.

Rav Mattana said his introduction from here: “For what nation is there so great,<sup>N</sup> that has God so near to them” (Deuteronomy 4:7), as to witness the great miracles in the days of Mordecai and Esther? Rav Ashi said his introduction from here: The verse states: “Or has God ventured<sup>N</sup> to go and take Him a nation from the midst of another nation?” (Deuteronomy 4:34), as in the times of Esther, God saved the Jewish people who were scattered throughout the Persian Empire.

וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם אַחְשָׁרוֹשׁ. אִמְר רב: וַיְהִי הִדָּא דְכִתְיָב: **וְהִתְמַכְרְתֶם שִׁם לְאוֹיְבֵיךָ לְעַבְדִּים וְלִשְׂפָחוֹת”** וְגו'.

§ The Gemara returns to its interpretation of the book of Esther. The verse states: “And it came to pass [*vayhi*] in the days of Ahasuerus” (Esther 1:1).<sup>N</sup> Rav said: The word *vayhi* may be understood as if it said *vai* and *hi*, meaning **woe and mourning**. This is as it is written: “And there you shall sell yourselves to your enemies for bondsmen and bondswomen, and no man shall buy you” (Deuteronomy 28:68). The repetitive nature of the verse, indicating that no one will be willing to buy you for servitude, but they will purchase you in order to murder you, indicates a doubly horrific situation, which is symbolized by the dual term *vayhi*, meaning woe and mourning.

וּשְׂמוּאֵל אָמַר: **“לֹא מְאַסְתִּים וְלֹא גַעְלִיתִם לְכָלֹתֶם”**, **“לֹא מְאַסְתִּים”** – בַּיּוֹם יוֹנִים, **“וְלֹא גַעְלִיתִם”** בַּיּוֹם נְבוּכַדְנֶצַּר, **“לְכָלֹתֶם”** – בַּיּוֹם הַמָּן, **“לְהַפֵּר בְּרִיתִי אִתְּם”** – בַּיּוֹם פְּרַסְיִים, **“כִּי אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם”** – בַּיּוֹם גּוֹג וּמַגּוֹג.

And Shmuel said his introduction from here: “And yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, **I will not reject them, nor will I abhor them**, to destroy them utterly, and to break My covenant with them; for I am the Lord their God” (Leviticus 26:44). Shmuel explains: “**I will not reject them**”; this was in the days of the Greeks. “**Nor will I abhor them**”; this was in the days of Vespasian.<sup>N</sup> “**To destroy them utterly**”; this was in the days of Haman. “**To break My covenant with them**”; this was in the days of the Persians. “**For I am the Lord their God**”; this is in the days of Gog and Magog.

בְּמַתְנֵי תַנָּא: **“לֹא מְאַסְתִּים”** – בַּיּוֹם בְּשָׂדִים, **שֶׁהֶעֱמַדְתִּי לָהֶם דְּנִינְאֵל חֲנַנְיָה מִיִּשְׂאֵל וְעוֹרִיָּה**, **“וְלֹא גַעְלִיתִם”** – בַּיּוֹם יוֹנִים, **שֶׁהֶעֱמַדְתִּי לָהֶם שְׂמַעוֹן הַצַּדִּיק**, **וְחִשְׁמוֹנְאִי וּבְנָיו**, **וּמַתְתִּיָּה בְּהֵן גָּדוֹל**, **“לְכָלֹתֶם”** – בַּיּוֹם הַמָּן, **שֶׁהֶעֱמַדְתִּי לָהֶם מְרֻדְכִי וְאַסְתֵּר**, **“לְהַפֵּר בְּרִיתִי אִתְּם”** – בַּיּוֹם רוֹמַיִם, **שֶׁהֶעֱמַדְתִּי לָהֶם שְׁלֵב בֵּית רַבִּי וְחַכְמֵי דּוֹרוֹת**, **“כִּי אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם”** – לְעֵתִיד לְבוֹא, **שְׂאִין כָּל אוֹמְהָ וְלָשׁוֹן**; **יְכוּלָה לְשָׁלוֹט בְּהֶם**.

An alternative understanding was taught in a *baraita*: “**I will not reject them**”; this was in the days of the Chaldeans, when I appointed for them Daniel,<sup>N</sup> Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah to pray on their behalf. “**Nor will I abhor them**”; this was in the days of the Greeks, when I appointed Shimon HaTzaddik<sup>P</sup> for them, and the Hasmonean and his sons,<sup>B</sup> and Mattithiah the High Priest. “**To destroy them utterly**”; this was in the days of Haman, when I appointed for them the righteous leaders Mordecai and Esther. “**To break My covenant with them**”; this was in the days of the Romans,<sup>N</sup> when I appointed for them the Sages of the house of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi and the Sages of other generations. “**For I am the Lord their God**”; this will be in the future, when no nation or people of a foreign tongue will be able to subjugate them further.

רַבִּי לֵוִי אִמְר מִהֶכָּא: **“וְאִם לֹא תוֹרִישׁוּ אֶת יוֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ”**.

Rabbi Levi said his introduction from here: “**But if you will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, then it shall come to pass, that those whom you allow to remain of them shall be as thorns in your eyes**” (Numbers 33:55). King Saul's failure to completely annihilate Amalek allowed for the existence of his descendant Haman, who acted as a thorn in the eyes of Israel during the Purim episode.

רַבִּי חִיָּיא אִמְר מִהֶכָּא: **“וְהִיָּה כְּאֲשֶׁר דְּמִיתִי לַעֲשׂוֹת לָהֶם אֲעֲשֶׂה לָכֶם”**.

Rabbi Hiyya said his introduction from here, the continuation of the previously cited verse: “**And it shall come to pass, that as I thought to do unto them, so I shall do unto you**” (Numbers 33:56). Prior to the miracle of Purim, the Jewish people were subject to the punishment that the Torah designated for its enemies, because they did not fulfill God's commandments.

## BACKGROUND

The Hasmonean and his sons – **חִשְׁמוֹנְאִי וּבְנָיו**: The source and meaning of the name Hasmonean is unclear. And although the entire dynasty is referred to in Jewish sources as the house of Hasmonean, its origin is unknown. The Gemara here appears

to differentiate between Hasmonean and Mattithiah, perhaps indicating that Hasmonean is a nickname for Shimon ben Mattithiah, whose descendants were the Hasmonean kings for generations.

**Ahasuerus – אַחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ:** The Maharal explains that the homiletic interpretation of the king's name is due to the fact that the Megilla's opening verse states: "And it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus," without referring to him by his title of king. The impression is that the Megilla is indicating that its purpose is not merely to recount historical events, but to demonstrate that even the name of the king is significant for understanding the unfolding of the story (*Or Hadash*).

**This is Ahasuerus – הוא אַחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ:** The commentaries note that the Gemara emphasizes that the word *hu* appears in reference to all these wicked individuals to indicate that although there is reason to believe that they changed their ways and improved their character, in truth they remained who they were. For instance, although Ahasuerus ultimately protected the Jews, in truth he essentially remained Ahasuerus the wicked. Similarly, although King Ahaz was in danger and witnessed miracles, he did not change. In a similar vein, the word *hu* used in reference to righteous individuals, such as Abraham, Moses, and David, indicates that they were righteous from beginning to end, as their greatness did not lead them to arrogance (Maharsha).

## BACKGROUND

**That everyone became poor in his days – שֶׁהֵבֵל נֶעֱשׂוּ:** Ahasuerus collected an inordinate amount of taxes to finance his wars and to meet the expenses of his vast building projects, as mentioned by Greek historians from that period.

**That he reigned on his own – שְׁמֶלֶךְ מֵעַצְמוֹ:** If Ahasuerus is indeed the king referred to by the Greeks as Xerxes I, then the Gemara's intention would seem to be that although he was not the eldest of Darius's sons, he was nevertheless appointed king in place of his older brother.

**From Hodu to Cush – מֵהוּדוּ וְעַד כּוּשׁ:** It appears that the dispute here centers on the meaning of the word Cush. The question is whether it refers to the land of Cush, located in Africa, south of Egypt, or to the nation of the Cushite people, which arose at the time in the western section of India.

"אַחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ", אָמַר רַב: אָחִיו שֶׁל רֹאשׁ, בֶּן גִּילּוֹ שֶׁל רֹאשׁ. אָחִיו שֶׁל רֹאשׁ – אָחִיו שֶׁל נְבוּכַדְנֶצַּר הַרְשָׁע שֶׁנִּקְרָא רֹאשׁ, שְׁנֵאמַר: "אֵנֶתְּ הוּא רִישָׁא דִּי דְהֶבְא". בֶּן גִּילּוֹ שֶׁל רֹאשׁ, הוּא הֶרֶג – הוּא בִיקֵשׁ לְהַרְגוֹ, הוּא הַחֲרִיב – הוּא בִיקֵשׁ לְהַחֲרִיב, שְׁנֵאמַר: "וּבְמַלְכוּת אַחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ בְּתַחֲלַת מַלְכוּתוֹ כְּתָבוּ שְׁטֵנָה עַל יוֹשְׁבֵי יְהוּדָה וְיְרוּשָׁלַם".

וּשְׁמוּאֵל אָמַר: שְׁהוֹשְׁחֵרוּ פְּנֵיהֶם שֶׁל יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּיָמָיו כְּשׁוֹלֵי קִדְרָה. וְרַבֵּי יוֹחָנָן אָמַר: כָּל שְׂזוּכָרוֹ אָמַר: אֵח לְרֹאשׁוֹ. וְרַבֵּי חֲנִנְיָא אָמַר: שְׁהֵבֵל נֶעֱשׂוּ רִשׁוֹן בְּיָמָיו, שְׁנֵאמַר: "וַיִּשֶׁם הַמֶּלֶךְ אַחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ מִסֵּ".

"הוּא אַחַשְׁוֵרוֹשׁ" – הוּא בְּרִשְׁעוֹ מִתְחִילָתוֹ וְעַד סוֹפוֹ. "הוּא עֲשׂוֹ" – הוּא בְּרִשְׁעוֹ מִתְחִילָתוֹ וְעַד סוֹפוֹ. "הוּא דָתָן וְאַבִּירָם" – הוּא בְּרִשְׁעוֹ מִתְחִילָתוֹ וְעַד סוֹפוֹ. "הוּא הַמֶּלֶךְ אָחִיו" – הוּא בְּרִשְׁעוֹ מִתְחִילָתוֹ וְעַד סוֹפוֹ.

"אַבְרָם הוּא אַבְרָהָם" – הוּא בְּצַדִּיקוֹ מִתְחִילָתוֹ וְעַד סוֹפוֹ. "הוּא אֶהְרֵן וּמֹשֶׁה" – הוּא בְּצַדִּיקוֹ מִתְחִילָתוֹ וְעַד סוֹפוֹ. "וְדָוִד הוּא הַקְּטָן" – הוּא בְּקִטְנוֹתוֹ מִתְחִילָתוֹ עַד סוֹפוֹ, כְּשֶׁשָׂם שְׁבַקְטָנוֹתוֹ הַקְּטִין עֲצָמוֹ אֶצֶל מִי שְׂגָדוֹל מִמֶּנּוּ בְּתוֹרָה – כִּךְ בְּמַלְכוּתוֹ הַקְּטִין עֲצָמוֹ אֶצֶל מִי שְׂגָדוֹל מִמֶּנּוּ בְּחֻקָּה.

"הַמּוֹלֵךְ" אָמַר רַב: שְׁמֶלֶךְ מֵעַצְמוֹ. אָמַרִי לָהּ לְשַׁבַּח, וְאָמַרִי לָהּ לְגַנְאִי. אָמַרִי לָהּ לְשַׁבַּח – דְּלֹא הָיָה אֵינִישׁ דְּחָשִׁיב לְמַלְכָּא כְּוֹתִינָהּ, וְאָמַרִי לָהּ לְגַנְאִי – דְּלֹא הָיָה חַזִּי לְמַלְכוּתָא, וּמְמוּנָא יִתְיָרָא הוּא דִּיחָב וְקָם.

"מֵהוּדוּ וְעַד כּוּשׁ", רַב וּשְׁמוּאֵל, חָד אָמַר: הוּדוּ בְּסוֹף הָעוֹלָם, וְכוּשׁ בְּסוֹף הָעוֹלָם, וְחָד אָמַר: הוּדוּ וְכוּשׁ גְּבֵי הַדָּדִי הוּוּ קִיָּיִמִי, כְּשֶׁשָׂם שְׁמֶלֶךְ עַל הוּדוּ וְכוּשׁ – כִּךְ מֶלֶךְ מִסּוֹף הָעוֹלָם וְעַד סוֹפוֹ.

The Gemara continues with its explanation of the book of Esther, beginning with a discussion of the name Ahasuerus.<sup>N</sup> Rav said: The name should be viewed as a contraction: **The brother of the head [ahiv shel rosh] and of the same character as the head [ben gilo shel rosh].** Rav explains: **The brother of the head, i.e., the brother of the wicked Nebuchadnezzar, who is called "head," as it is stated: "You are the head of gold" (Daniel 2:38). Of the same character as the head, for he, Nebuchadnezzar, killed the Jews, and he, Ahasuerus, sought to kill them. He destroyed the Temple, and he sought to destroy the foundations for the Temple laid by Zerubbabel, as it is stated: "And in the reign of Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, they wrote to him an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem" (Ezra 4:6), and he ordered that the construction of the Temple cease.**

And Shmuel said: The name Ahasuerus should be understood in the sense of black [*shahor*], as **the face of the Jewish people was blackened in his days like the bottom of a pot.** And Rabbi Yohanan said a different explanation: **Everyone who recalled him said: "Woe upon his head" [ah lerosho].** And Rabbi Hanina said: The name alludes to the fact that **everyone became poor [rash] in his days,**<sup>8</sup> as it is stated: **"And the king Ahasuerus laid a tribute upon the land" (Esther 10:1).**

The Gemara continues: **"This is [hu] Ahasuerus" (Esther 1:1);<sup>N</sup> the term hu, this is, comes to teach that he remained as he was in his wickedness from beginning to end.** Similarly, wherever the words "this is" appear in this manner, the verse indicates that the individual under discussion remained the same from beginning to end, for example: **"This is [hu] Esau" (Genesis 36:43); he remained in his wickedness from beginning to end. "This is [hu] Dathan and Abiram" (Numbers 26:9); they remained in their wickedness from beginning to end. "This is [hu] the king Ahaz" (II Chronicles 28:22); he remained in his wickedness from beginning to end.**

The Gemara continues: The word *hu* is also used to recognize sustained righteousness. **"Abram, this is [hu] Abraham" (I Chronicles 1:27); this indicates that Abraham didn't change, as he remained in his righteousness from beginning to end.** Similarly, **"This is [hu] Aaron and Moses" (Exodus 6:26); they remained in their righteousness from the beginning of their life to the end of their life.** Similarly, with respect to David: **"And David, this was [hu] the youngest" (I Samuel 17:14), indicates that he remained in his humility from beginning to end. Just as in his youth, when he was still an ordinary individual, he humbled himself before anyone who was greater than him in Torah, so too, in his kingship, he humbled himself before anyone who was greater than him in wisdom.**

The next term in the opening verse: **"Who reigned" (Esther 1:1), is now interpreted.** Rav said: This comes to teach that he **reigned on his own,**<sup>8</sup> without having inherited the throne. Some say this to his credit, and some say it to his disgrace. The Gemara explains: **Some say this to his credit, that there was no other man as fit as him to be king. And some say it to his disgrace, that he was not fit to be king, but he distributed large amounts of money, and in that way rose to the throne.**

The opening verse continues that Ahasuerus reigned **"from Hodu to Cush."**<sup>8</sup> Rav and Shmuel disagreed about its meaning. **One said: Hodu is a country at one end of the world, and Cush is a country at the other end of the world. And one said: Hodu and Cush are situated next to each other, and the verse means to say as follows: Just as Ahasuerus reigned with ease over the adjacent countries of Hodu and Cush, so too, he reigned with ease from one end of the world to the other.**

And the years of the life of Amram – וְשָׁנֵי חַיֵּי עַמְרָם: Although, when enumerating the years of the other individuals in the Gemara, the division of years into separate phases could indicate changes that they underwent during different periods in their lives, the Gemara in *Shabbat* (55b) teaches that Amram was completely righteous throughout his lifetime. Therefore, the Gemara proves from the fact that the years of Amram's life were divided in that manner that a phased rendering of one's age is not necessarily indicative of change in the course of one's life (*Haggahot Tiferet LeMoshe*).

Ruled over the entire world – מְלִיכּוֹ בְּכִיפָה: The Gemara mentions the vast empires of these kings to indicate that the rulers who reigned over the Jewish people were not small kings with limited power. The Gemara teaches that they were great rulers whose reign over the Jewish people does not imply a lessening of Israel's honor. Mentioning the extent of these kings' empires also indicates that their interactions with Israel not only affected the Jewish people but impacted the entire world (*Hatam Sofer*).

## BACKGROUND

Ruled over the entire world [*kippa*] – מְלִיכּוֹ בְּכִיפָה: The term *kippa* refers to *kippat hashamayim*, the celestial sphere. In other words, it refers to those who ruled over the parts of the earth that are found under the celestial sphere.

כִּי יֵצֵא בְּדָבָר אֶתְּהָ אֹמֵר: "כי הוא וְדָה בְּכָל עֵבֶר הַנְּהָר מִתְּפָסָח וְעַד עֵזָה," רַב וּשְׁמוּאֵל: חָד אָמַר: תְּפָסָח בְּסוֹף הָעוֹלָם וְעֵזָה בְּסוֹף הָעוֹלָם, וְחָד אָמַר: תְּפָסָח וְעֵזָה בְּהַדֵּי הַדְּרֵי הַיָּם קִיּוּמִי, בְּשֵׁם שְׁמֹלֶךְ עַל תְּפָסָח וְעַל עֵזָה – כִּךְ מֶלֶךְ עַל כָּל הָעוֹלָם כּוּלּוֹ.

"שֶׁבַע וְעֶשְׂרִים וּמֵאָה מְדִינָה" אָמַר רַב חֲסִידָא: בְּתַחֲלִילָה מֶלֶךְ עַל שֶׁבַע, וְלְבַסּוֹף מֶלֶךְ עַל עֶשְׂרִים, וְלְבַסּוֹף מֶלֶךְ עַל מֵאָה. אֶלָּא מֵעַתָּה, "וְשָׁנֵי חַיֵּי עַמְרָם שֶׁבַע וּשְׁלֹשִׁים וּמֵאָת שָׁנָה" מֵאִי דְרִשְׁתָּ בֵּיהּ? שְׂאֵנִי הֲכָא דְקִרְאִי יְתִירָא הוּא, מִכְּדֵי כְּתִיב: "מִהוּדוֹ וְעַד כּוּשׁ," "שֶׁבַע וְעֶשְׂרִים וּמֵאָה מְדִינָה" לְמָה לִּי? שְׁמַע מִינָהּ לְדַרְשָׁהּ.

תְּנִי רַבְנֵי: שְׁלֹשָׁה מְלִיכּוֹ בְּכִיפָה, וְאֵלּוּ הֵן: אַחָאב, וְאַחְשָׁוּרוּשׁ, וְנְבוּכַדְנֶצַּר. אַחָאב – דְּכָתִיב: "חַי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ אִם יֵשׁ גּוֹי וּמִמְלָכָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא שָׁלַח אֲדוֹנָי שֵׁם לְבַקֶּשְׁךָ" וְגו', וְאִי לֹא דְהוּא מְלִיכּוֹ עֲלֵיהֶוּ – הֵיכִי מְצִי מִשְׁבַּע לְהוּ?

נְבוּכַדְנֶצַּר דְּכָתִיב: "וְהָיָה הַגּוֹי וְהַמְּמָלְכָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִתֵּן אֶת צְוֹארוֹ בְּעוֹל מֶלֶךְ בְּבָל" אַחְשָׁוּרוּשׁ – הָא דְאָמַר:

On a similar note, you say with regard to Solomon: "For he had dominion over all the region on this side of the river, from Tiphseh even to Gaza" (1 Kings 5:4), and also with regard to this Rav and Shmuel disagreed. One said: Tiphseh is at one end of the world, whereas Gaza is at the other end of the world. And one said: Tiphseh and Gaza are situated next to each other, and the verse means to say as follows: Just as Solomon reigned with ease over the adjacent Tiphseh and Gaza, so too, he reigned with ease over the entire world.

The opening verse continues, stating that Ahasuerus reigned "over seven and twenty and a hundred provinces" (Esther 1:1). Rav H̄isda said: This verse should be understood as follows: At first he reigned over seven provinces; and then he reigned over twenty more; and finally he reigned over another hundred. The Gemara asks: However, if that is so, with regard to the similarly worded verse: "And the years of the life of Amram<sup>n</sup> were seven and thirty and a hundred years" (Exodus 6:20), what would you expound from it? The Gemara answers: It is different here, in the book of Esther, as this part of the verse is entirely superfluous. Since it is already written: "From Hodu to Cush," why then do I need "Seven and twenty and a hundred provinces"? Rather, learn from here that these words come for this exposition, to teach that Ahasuerus did not begin to reign over all of them at the same time.

Ⓢ Apropos the discussion of the kingdoms of Ahasuerus and Solomon, the Gemara cites a *baraita* in which the Sages taught: Three men ruled over the entire world,<sup>nb</sup> and they were Ahab, and Ahasuerus, and Nebuchadnezzar. The Gemara explains: Ahab, as it is written in the words of Obadiah, servant of Ahab, to Elijah: "As the Lord your God lives, there is no nation or kingdom where my master has not sent to seek you, and they said: He is not there; and he made the kingdom and nation swear, that they had not found you" (1 Kings 18:10). And if he did not reign over them, how could he have made them swear? Apparently, then, he reigned over the entire world.

Nebuchadnezzar also ruled over the whole world, as it is written: "And it shall come to pass, that the nation and the kingdom that not serve this same Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylonia, and that will not put their neck under the yoke of the king of Babylonia, that nation will I visit, says the Lord, with the sword, and with the famine, and with the pestilence, until I have consumed them by his hand" (Jeremiah 27:8). Ahasuerus also ruled the world, as we have said above.

## Perek I

## Daf 11 Amud b

(סימן שסד"ך) ותו ליכא? והא איכא שלמה! לא סליק מלכותיה.

After mentioning three kings who ruled over the world, the Gemara presents a mnemonic for the names of other kings that will be discussed below: *Shin*, Solomon, i.e., Shlomo; *samekh*, Sennacherib; *dalet*, Darius; *kaf*, Cyrus, i.e., Koresh. The Gemara asks: But is there no other king besides those previously mentioned who ruled over the entire world? But there is King Solomon who ruled over the world and should be added to the list. The Gemara answers: Solomon did not complete his kingship,<sup>n</sup> as he left the throne during his lifetime, and therefore, his name doesn't appear on the list.

## NOTES

לֹא סָלִיק מְלִיכּוּתֵיהּ – Solomon did not complete his kingship: The Gemara relates an opinion that King Solomon ceased to rule and went into exile, at which time he wrote the book of Ecclesiastes (*Gittin* 68b). The Rabbis disagree there as to whether he later returned to the throne or whether he remained a commoner the rest of his life.

He ruled over the heavenly worlds – שְׂמַלְךָ עַל הָעֲלִיּוֹנִים – Rashi writes that Solomon reigned over spirits and demons (see Maharsha). However, even if Solomon ruled over both the heavenly and earthly worlds, why would that be reason not to mention him among the others who ruled over the entire world? The *Hiddushei Aggadot LaRashba* explains that the Gemara is stressing that the kingship of Solomon was of a different nature and therefore cannot be compared with the others. The Rashba elaborates further. He explains that Solomon's rule deserves separate mention, as he did not achieve his reign over the world through victorious battles but rather through his great wisdom. This wisdom also enabled him to reign over the heavenly worlds.

After his mind was settled – לְאַחַר שֶׁנִּתְיַשְׁבָּה דַּעְתּוֹ – Although the simple explanation is that prior to the third year of his reign he was occupied with strengthening his authority and fighting off enemies, nevertheless, he was also worried about the Jewish people's redemption (see *Or Hadash*). The Ramban writes that Ahasuerus thought that Cyrus's permitting the return of the Jewish people was sufficient to fulfill the prophecy, but the Temple would not be rebuilt to its former grandeur. Later authorities explain that for this reason Ahasuerus was not punished to the extent that Belshazzar was, since he did not completely deny the prophecy's authenticity.

## BACKGROUND

The provinces of Persia – מְדִינֹת פָּרֶס – From the time of Darius, and to an extent even in the days of Cyrus, the Persian Empire was divided into ten regions, each of which was the size of a country. At times, these regions were divided into smaller provinces. For example, Judea, referred to as Yehuda in tractate *Ketubot*, was a province inside the greater region of Transjordan. The division of the provinces and regions within the empire was regularly subject to change. Cyrus was unsuccessful in his conquest of Egypt, and therefore his kingdom was smaller than that of Darius, as it did not include even "all of the kingdoms of the earth" (Ezra 1:2) that had been held in the past by the Persians. Darius succeeded in expanding the empire significantly. However, near the end of his reign several provinces rebelled against him. It would appear that during the early days of Ahasuerus's rule the Persian Empire was at its zenith.

הַנִּחָא לְמֵאן דְּאָמַר: מֶלֶךְ וְהַדְּיוּט, אֵלֵּא לְמֵאן דְּאָמַר מֶלֶךְ וְהַדְּיוּט וּמֶלֶךְ, מֵאֵי אֵיבָא לְמִינֵי? שְׁלֵמָה מִלְּתָא אַחֲרֵיתִי הָיָה בֵּיהּ, שְׂמַלְךָ עַל הָעֲלִיּוֹנִים וְעַל הַתַּחְתּוֹנִים, שְׁנַאמַר: "וַיֵּשֶׁב שְׁלֵמָה עַל כֶּסֶף ה'".

וְהָא הָיָה סְנַחֲרִיב, דְּכָתִיב: "מִי בְּכָל אֱלֹהֵי הָאָרְצוֹת הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר הֶעֱלִיוּ אֶת אֶרְצָם מִיָּדִי! הֲאֵ אֵיבָא יְרוּשָׁלַיִם דְּלֵא כְּבִשָּׁה.

וְהָא אֵיבָא דְּרִיּוּשׁ דְּכָתִיב: "דְּרִיּוּשׁ מְלָכָא כְּתִיב לְכָל עַמְמֵי אֹימֵי וּלְשִׁנְיָא דִּי דִּירִין בְּכָל אֶרְעָא שְׁלֵמְכוֹן יִסְגָּא! הָא אֵיבָא שְׁבַע דְּלֵא מֶלֶךְ עֲלֵיהּ, דְּכָתִיב: "שִׁפְרֵי קָדָם דְּרִיּוּשׁ וְהַקִּים עַל מְלָכוּתָא לְאַחַשְׁדְּרִפְנָא מֵאָה וְעֶשְׂרִין".

וְהָא אֵיבָא כּוֹרֶשׁ, דְּכָתִיב: "כֹּה אָמַר כּוֹרֶשׁ מֶלֶךְ פָּרֶס בֵּל מְמַלְכוּת הָאָרֶץ נָתַן לִי ה'!" הֲתָם אֲשַׁתְּבִיחִי הוּא דְקָא מְשַׁתְּבַח בְּנַפְשֵׁיהּ.

"בְּיָמִים הֵּם כְּשֶׁבַת הַמֶּלֶךְ, וּכְתִיב בְּתַרְיָה: "בְּשָׁנַת שְׁלֹשׁ לְמָלוֹכוֹ". אָמַר רַבֵּא: מֵאֵי "כְּשֶׁבַת" – לְאַחַר שֶׁנִּתְיַשְׁבָּה דַּעְתּוֹ. אָמַר: בְּלִשְׁצֵר חֲשִׁב וְטַעַה, אָנָּא חֲשִׁיבְנָא וְלֵא טַעֲנָא.

מֵאֵי הֵיא? דְּכָתִיב: "כִּי לְפִי מְלֵאת לְבָבְךָ שְׁבַעִים שָׁנָה אֶפְקֹד אֶתְכֶם", וּכְתִיב: "לְמַלְאוֹת לְחֻרְבוֹת יְרוּשָׁלַם שְׁבַעִים שָׁנָה". חֲשׁוּב אַרְבַּעִין וְחֲמֵשׁ דְּנְבוּכַדְנֶצַּר, וְעֶשְׂרִים וְתֵלַת דְּאִוִּיל מְרוּדַךְ, וְתַרְתֵּי דִידִיָּה – הָא שְׁבַעִים. אֶפְיָק מֵאֵי דְבִי מְקַדְשָׁא וְאַשְׁתַּמֵּשׁ בָּהּ.

The Gemara asks: This works out well according to the one who said that Solomon was first a king and then a commoner, never returning to the throne. But according to the one who said that he was first a king and then a commoner, and then afterward he returned again to be a king, what can be said to explain why he is not mentioned in the list of kings who ruled over the entire world? The Gemara answers: There was something else about Solomon that makes it impossible to compare him to the others, for he ruled over the inhabitants of the heavenly worlds,<sup>N</sup> i.e., demons and spirits, as well as the human inhabitants of the earthly worlds, as it is stated: "Then Solomon sat upon the throne of the Lord as king" (1 Chronicles 29:23), which indicates that his reign extended even to the heavenly worlds, with King Solomon sitting upon the throne of the Lord, and therefore he cannot be compared to the others, who merely ruled on earth.

The Gemara asks further: But there was Sennacherib, who ruled over the entire world, as it is written: "Who are they among all the gods of these countries, that have delivered their country out of my hand that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?" (Isaiah 36:20). The Gemara answers: There is Jerusalem that he did not conquer, as indicated in the verse.

The Gemara continues to ask: But there is Darius, as it is stated: "Then King Darius wrote to all the peoples, nations, and languages that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you" (Daniel 6:26). The Gemara answers: There are the seven provinces over which he did not rule, as it is written: "It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom a hundred and twenty satraps" (Daniel 6:2). It is apparent from here that Darius did not rule over the entire world, for his son Ahasuerus ruled over a hundred and twenty-seven provinces, an additional seven.<sup>B</sup>

The Gemara raises another question: But there is Cyrus, as it is written: "Thus says Cyrus, king of Persia: The Lord, God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth" (Ezra 1:2). The Gemara answers: This is not proof that he ruled the world, for there he was merely boasting about himself, although in fact there was no truth to his words.

**S** The second verse in Esther states: "In those days when the king Ahasuerus sat on the throne of his kingdom" (Esther 1:2), implying that the events to follow took place during the first year of his reign; and one verse afterward it is written: "In the third year of his reign" (Esther 1:3), indicating that it was the third year, not the first. Rava said: There is no contradiction. What is the meaning of "when he sat" [*keshevet*]? It is intended to indicate that he acted not immediately upon his rise to the throne, but rather after his mind was settled<sup>N</sup> [*shenityasheva*], and he overcame his anxiety and worry with regard to the redemption of the Jewish people. He said to himself as follows: Belshazzar, the king of Babylonia, calculated and erred with regard to the Jewish people's redemption. I too will calculate, but I will not err.

The Gemara explains: What is this calculation? As it is written with regard to Jeremiah's prophecy of a return to Eretz Yisrael: "After seventy years are accomplished for Babylonia I will remember you and perform My good word toward you, enabling you to return to this place" (Jeremiah 29:10), and elsewhere it is written in a slightly different formulation: "In the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, meditated in the books, over the number of the years, which the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish for the desolations of Jerusalem seventy years" (Daniel 9:2). He, Belshazzar, calculated as follows: Forty-five years of Nebuchadnezzar, and twenty-three of Evil-merodach, and two of his own, for a total of seventy years that had passed without redemption. He was therefore certain that Jeremiah's prophecy would no longer be fulfilled, and he therefore said: I will take out the vessels of the Holy Temple and use them.

ונבוכדנצר מנלן דארבעין וחמש שנים מלך? דאמר מר: גלו בשבע, גלו בשמונה, גלו בשמונה עשרה, גלו בתשע עשרה.

גלו בשבע לכיבוש יהויקים – גלות יהויכין, שהיא שמונה לנבוכדנצר. גלו בשמונה עשרה לכיבוש יהויקים גלות צדקיהו שהיא תשע עשרה לנבוכדנצר, דאמר מר: שנה ראשונה כיבש מנוה, שנה שנייה כיבש יהויקים, ובתיב: "ויהי בשלשים ושבע שנה לגלות יהויכין מלך יהודה בשנים עשר חדש בעשרים וחמשה להחדש נשא אויל מרודך מלך בבל [בשנת מלכותו] את ראש יהויכין מלך יהודה ויצא אותו מבית הכלא".

תמני ותלתין ושבע – הרי ארבעין וחמש דנבוכדנצר ועשרין ותלת דאויל מרודך – גמרא, ותרתין ידיה – הא שבעין. אמר: השתא ודאי תו לא מיפרקי, אפיק מאני דבי מקדשא ואשתמש בהו.

היינו דקאמר ליה דניאל: "ועל מרי שמיא התרוממת ולמאניא די ביתיה היתיו קדמך", ובתיב: "ביה בלילא קטיל בלשאצר מלךא [כשדאי]", ובתיב: "ודרוש מדא קבל מלכותא כבר שנין שתין ותרתין".

אמר: איהו מיטעא טעי, אנא חשיבנא ולא טעינא. מי כתיב: "למלכות בבל" – "לבבל" כתיב. מאי "לבבל" – לגלות בבל. כמה בציון – תמני חשיב ועייל חילופיהו. חדא דבלשאצר, וחמש דדרווש וכוש, ותרתין ידיה הא שבעין. בין דחזי דמלו שבעין ולא איפרוק. אמר: השתא ודאי תו לא מיפרקי, אפיק מאני דבי מקדשא ואשתמש בהו. בא שטן וריקד ביניהו והרג את ושתי.

The Gemara asks: From where do we derive that Nebuchadnezzar reigned for forty-five years? As the Master said: They were exiled in the seventh year;<sup>N</sup> they were exiled in the eighth year; they were exiled in the eighteenth year; and they were exiled in the nineteenth year.

The Gemara explains: They were exiled in the seventh year after Nebuchadnezzar's subjugation of Jehoiakim, in what was known as the exile of Jehoiachin, which was actually the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign. Then later they were exiled a second time in the eighteenth year after the subjugation of Jehoiakim, in what was known as the exile of Zedekiah, which was actually in the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign, as the Master said: In the first year of his reign, Nebuchadnezzar conquered Nineveh; in his second year he conquered Jehoiakim. And it is written: "And it came to pass in the thirty-seventh year of the exile of Jehoiachin, king of Judea, in the twelfth month, on the twenty-fifth day of the month, that Evil-merodach, king of Babylonia, in the first year of his reign, lifted up the head of Jehoiachin, king of Judea, and brought him out of prison" (Jeremiah 52:31).

The Gemara calculates: Since Evil-merodach acted in the first year of his reign, immediately after coming to power, it turns out that Nebuchadnezzar ruled for eight years before he sent Jehoiachin into exile, and thirty-seven years during which Jehoiachin was in prison. This equals forty-five years of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar. And the twenty-three years of Evil-merodach are known through tradition. And together with the two years of Belshazzar, this brings the count of the years of exile to seventy. At that point Belshazzar said to himself: Now for sure they will not be redeemed. Therefore, I will take out the vessels of the Holy Temple and use them.

This is that which Daniel said to him with regard to his impending punishment for using the Temple's vessels: "But you have lifted yourself up against the Lord of heaven; and they have brought the vessels of His House before you" (Daniel 5:23). And it is written further in the chapter: "In that night Belshazzar, the king of the Chaldeans, was slain" (Daniel 5:30). This was the description of Belshazzar's mistaken calculation. And it states after the fall of Belshazzar: "And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old" (Daniel 6:1).<sup>N</sup>

Ahasuerus said: He, Belshazzar, erred. I too will calculate, but I will not err, thinking he understood the source of Belshazzar's mistake. Is it written: "Seventy years for the kingdom of Babylonia"? It is written: "Seventy years for Babylonia." What is meant by "for Babylonia"? These words are referring to the seventy years for the exile of Babylonia. How many years are still lacking from the seventy years? Eight years. He calculated, and inserted in their stead one year of Belshazzar, and five years of Darius and Cyrus, and two years of his own, bringing the total to seventy. Once he saw that seventy years had been completed, and the Jewish people were still not redeemed, he said: Now for sure they will not be redeemed. Therefore, I will take out the vessels of the Temple and use them.<sup>N</sup> What happened to him? As a punishment for what he did, the Satan came and danced among them, and brought confusion to his celebration until he killed Vashti.

#### NOTES

They were exiled in the seventh year – גלו בשבע: The Maharsa explains that these details are not relevant to the proofs with regard to the period of Nebuchadnezzar's reign. Rather, once the Gemara clarifies the number of years of his rule, it also explains other calculations. Some are calculated from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, and others from the exile of Jehoiachin, which was concurrent with the conquering of Jehoiakim, as both these incidents took place in the same year.

And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about

וודרוש מדא קבל מלכותא כבר שנין שתין – תרתין: The *Turei Even* asks: Why is it necessary to count the number of years of Darius's rule here, as indeed some texts do not mention this? He explains, based on Rashi's commentary to the book of Daniel, that Darius was born in the same year that the exile of Jehoiachin began, and therefore his age is identical to the number of years of that exile.

I will take out the vessels of the Temple and use them – דבי מקדשא ואשתמש בהו: The Ramban explains that the ves-

sels of the Temple were removed twice. At first, some of them were taken out during the exile of Jehoiachin, and these were the vessels that Belshazzar used. Later, after Cyrus allowed the Jews to return to the land to build the Temple, these vessels were returned. Other vessels were taken during the exile of King Zedekiah and remained in the king's treasury even after Cyrus permitted the Jews to return. It was these vessels that Ahasuerus used, and these same vessels were later given to Ezra the Scribe by the king Artaxerxes, to be returned to the Temple upon his return (see Ezra 7:19).

וְהָא שְׁפִיר חֲשִׁיב? אִיהוּ נְמִי מִיטְעָא  
טְעִי, דְּאִיבְעִי לִיהּ לְמִימְנֵי מַחְרְבוֹת  
יְרוּשָׁלַיִם.

The Gemara asks: **But he calculated properly**; why then did this happen? The Gemara answers: **He too erred** in his calculation, **for he should have counted from the destruction of Jerusalem** at the time of the exile of Zedekiah and not from the first exile of Jehoiachin.

סוּף סוּף כְּמָה בְּצִירָן (חֲדִיסָר). אִיהוּ  
כְּמָה מֶלֶךְ - אַרְבִּיסָר, בְּאַרְבִּיסָר דִּי דִּיה  
אִיבְעִי לִיהּ לְמִיבְנֵי בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ!  
אֵלְמָה פְּתִיב: "בְּאֲדִין בְּטִילַת עֲבִידַת  
בֵּית אֱלֹהֵי דִּי בִירוּשָׁלַיִם!" אָמַר רַבָּא:  
שָׁנִים מְקוּטְעוֹת הִיוּ.

The Gemara asks: **Ultimately, how many years were lacking? Eleven**, for the exile of Zedekiah took place eleven years after that of Jehoiachin. **How many years did Ahasuerus reign as king? Fourteen**. Indeed, **in his fourteenth year, then, the Temple should have been built**. If so, why is it written: "Then the work of the House of God, which is in Jerusalem, ceased; so it ceased until the second year of the reign of Darius, king of Persia" (Ezra 4:24), which indicates that the Temple was not built during the entire reign of Ahasuerus? **Rava said: The years reckoned were partial years**. To complete the seventy years, it was necessary to wait until the second year of the rule of Darius II, when indeed the Temple was built.

תִּנְיָא נְמִי הָכִי: וְעוֹד שָׁנָה אַחֲרַת לְבָבֶל,  
וְעַמְדַּד דְּרוּשׁ וְהַשְׁלִימָה.

This is also taught in a *baraita*, as an indication that the years counted were only partial years: **And when Belshazzar was killed, there was still another year left for Babylonia** before the reckoning of the seventy years was completed. **And then Darius arose and completed it**. Although seventy years were previously counted according to Belshazzar's count, from the exile of Jehoiakim, because the years were only partial, there was still one year left in order to complete those seventy years.

אָמַר רַבָּא: אִף דְּנִיֵּאל טְעָה בְּהֵאֵי  
חוּשְׁבָנָא, דְּכְתִיב: "בְּשָׁנַת אַחַת לְמַלְכוּ  
אֲנִי דְּנִיֵּאל בִּינוֹתִי בְּסִפְרִים", מִדְּקָאֻמַּר  
"בִּינוֹתִי" - מִכְּלָל דְּטְעָה.

Rava said: Daniel also erred in this calculation, as it is written: "In the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, meditated in the books over the number of the years, whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish for the desolations of Jerusalem seventy years" (Daniel 9:2). **From the fact that he said "I meditated," a term indicating recounting and calculating, it can be inferred that he had previously erred.**

מְכַל מְקוֹם קָשׁוּ קְרָאֵי אֲהַדְרֵי: כְּתִיב:  
"מְלֵאוֹת לְבָבֶל" וְכְתִיב: "לְחַרְבוֹת  
יְרוּשָׁלַיִם!"

The Gemara comments: **In any case, the verses contradict each other** with regard to how the seventy years should be calculated. In one verse it is written: "After seventy years are accomplished for Babylonia I will remember [efkod] you, and perform My good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place" (Jeremiah 29:10), which indicates that the seventy years should be counted from the Babylonian exile. **And in another verse it is written: "That he would accomplish for the desolations of Jerusalem seventy years"** (Daniel 9:2), indicating that the seventy years are calculated from the destruction of Jerusalem.

אָמַר רַבָּא: לְפָקִידָה בְּעֵלְמָא. וְהִינֵנו  
דְּכְתִיב: "כֹּה אָמַר בּוֹרֵשׁ מֶלֶךְ פָּרַס  
כֹּל מַמְלְכוֹת הָאָרֶץ נָתַן לִי ה' אֱלֹהֵי  
הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהוּא פָּקַד עָלַי לְבָנוֹת לוֹ בְּיַת  
בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם."

Rava said in response: The seventy years that "are accomplished for Babylonia" were **only for being remembered [lifekida]**, as mentioned in the verse, allowing the Jews to return to Eretz Yisrael but not to build the Temple. **And this is as it is written** with regard to Cyrus's proclamation permitting the Jewish people's return to Eretz Yisrael, in the seventieth year of the Babylonian exile: "Thus says Cyrus king of Persia: The Lord, God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and He has charged [pakad] me to build Him a house in Jerusalem" (Ezra 1:2). The verse makes use of the same root, *peh-kuf-dalet*, heralding the return to Jerusalem to build the Temple, but not its actual completion.