

And I will...purge away your dross as with lye – וְאַצְרוֹף כְּבוֹר סִיגִיךָ: Some write that the Gemara also alludes to the continuation of the verse: “And I will take away all your impurities [bedilayikh],” as *bedilayikh* can also mean: Those who separate themselves from you, i.e., sectarians, and the suppression of separatist sects is the central theme of the following blessing.

ומה ראו לומר קיבוץ גלויות לאחר ברכת השנים – דכתיב ואתם הרי ישראל ענפכם תתנו ופריכם תשאוי לעמי ישראל כי קרבו לבוא. וכיון שנתקבצו גלויות – נעשה דין ברשעים, שנאמר: וְאַשִׁיבָה יְדֵי עַלְיָךְ וְאַצְרוֹף כְּבוֹר סִיגִיךָ וְכִתִּיב וְאַשִׁיבָה שׁוֹפְטֶיךָ כְּבָרָא שׁוֹנָה.

The Gemara asks: And why did they see fit to institute that one says the blessing of the ingathering of the exiles after the blessing of the years? As it is written: “And you, O mountains of Israel, you shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to My people Israel; for they will soon be coming” (Ezekiel 36:8), which indicates that the ingathering of the exiles will follow after Eretz Yisrael is blessed with bountiful produce. And once the exiles have been gathered, judgment will be meted out to the wicked, as it is stated: “And I will turn my hand against you and purge away your dross as with lye” (Isaiah 1:25),^N and immediately after it is written: “And I will restore your judges as at first” (Isaiah 1:26). For this reason the blessing of the restoration of judges comes after the blessing of the ingathering of the exiles.

וכיון שנעשה דין מן הרשעים – בלו הפושעים, וכולל זדים עמהם, שנאמר: וְשֹׁבֵר פֹּשְׁעִים וְחַטָּאִים יַחְדָּו (יבלי).^N

And once judgment is meted out to the wicked, the transgressors, i.e., the heretics and sectarians, will cease to be. Consequently, the next blessing is that of the heretics, and one includes evildoers with them, as it is stated: “And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together, and they that forsake the Lord shall cease to be” (Isaiah 1:28). The “transgressors and sinners” are the evildoers, and “they that forsake the Lord” are the heretics.

וכיון שכלו הפושעים – מתרוממת קרן צדיקים, דכתיב וכל קרני רשעים אגדע תרוממה קרנות צדיק, וכולל גירי הצדק עם הצדיקים, שנאמר מפני שיבה תקום והדרת פני זקן. וסמיך ליה וכי גיור אתכם גר.

And once the heretics cease to be, the horn, i.e., the glory, of the righteous will be exalted, as it is written: “All the horns of the wicked will I cut off; but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted” (Psalms 75:11). Therefore, after the blessing of the heretics, one says the blessing about the righteous. And he includes the righteous converts along with the righteous, as it is stated: “You shall rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the elder” (Leviticus 19:32), and adjacent to this it is stated: “And if a stranger sojourns with you” (Leviticus 19:33). An “elder” is one with Torah wisdom and a “stranger” is one who has converted to Judaism.

והיכן מתרוממת קרנם – בירושלים, שנאמר שאלו שלום ירושלים ישליו אוהביך.

And where will the horns of the righteous be exalted? In Jerusalem, as it is stated: “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they who love you shall prosper” (Psalms 122:6). “They who love you” are the righteous. Therefore, the blessing of the rebuilding of Jerusalem is placed after the blessing of the righteous.

וכיון שנבנית ירושלים בא דוד, שנאמר:

And once Jerusalem is rebuilt, the Messiah, scion of the house of David, will come, as it is stated:

Perek II

Daf 18 Amud a

אחר ישובו בני ישראל ובקשו את ה' אלהיהם ואת דוד מלכם. וכיון שבא דוד – באתה תפלה, שנאמר והביאותים אל הר קדשי ושמחתים בבית תפלתמי.

“Afterward the children of Israel shall return, and seek the Lord their God and David their king” (Hosea 3:5), and consequently, the blessing of the kingdom of David follows the blessing of the building of Jerusalem. And once the scion of David comes, the time for prayer will come,^N as it is stated: “I will bring them to My sacred mountain and make them joyful in My house of prayer” (Isaiah 56:7). Therefore, the blessing of hearing prayer is recited after the blessing of the kingdom of David.

וכיון שבאת תפלה – באת עבודה שנאמר עולותיהם וזבחתיהם לרצון על מזבחי. וכיון שבאת עבודה – באתה תודה, שנאמר זובח תודה יבדנני.

And after prayer comes, the Temple service will arrive, as it is stated in the continuation of that verse: “Their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be accepted on My altar” (Isaiah 56:7). The blessing of restoration of the Temple service follows the blessing of hearing prayer. And when the Temple service comes, with it will also come thanksgiving,^N as it is stated: “Whoever sacrifices a thanks-offering honors Me” (Psalms 50:23), which teaches that thanksgiving follows sacrifice. Therefore, the blessing of thanksgiving follows the blessing of restoration of the Temple service.

And once the scion of David comes, prayer will come – וְכִיּוֹן שֶׁבָּא דָּוִד בְּאַתֶּה תְּפִלָּה: According to the Meiri, this means that the coming of the Messiah is the realization of our most essential prayers.

When the Temple service comes, with it will also come thanksgiving [toda] – בְּאֵת עֲבוּדָה בְּאַתֶּה תוֹדָה: Some explain that here thanksgiving refers to the thanks-offering described in Leviticus 7:12, in that it is among the various kinds of sacrifices and services in the Temple (see Meiri). Others explain that here *toda* means confession, not thanksgiving, and the Gemara is saying that the Temple service and confession go hand in hand, as when one brings an offering he also confesses his sins (Maharsha).

Why did they see fit that one says grant peace after the Priestly Benediction – וּמָה רָאוּ לומר שִׁים שְׁלוֹם אַחַר בְּרַכַּת הַדְּוָדָה – דְּכַתִּיב וַיִּשָּׂא אֶהָרֵן אֶת יָדָיו אֶל הָעָם וַיְבָרְכֵם וַיֵּרֶד מֵעֲשׂוֹת הַחֲטָאֹת וְהָעוֹלָה וְהַשְּׁלָמִים.”

Only for one who can declare all His praise – לְמִי שִׁיבֹל – לְהִשְׁמִיעַ כָּל תְּהִלָּתוֹ: Rashi explains this to mean that anyone who cannot declare all of God's praises, i.e., any human being, should not even attempt to do so. This concept is explicitly mentioned in tractate *Berakhot* (33b) as well. However, some explain that here the Gemara means something else: One who praises God beyond the set formula runs the risk of erroneously saying something that is not truly praise. Therefore, only one who is a great scholar and who can be certain that he will say only appropriate praises may add to the formula established by the Sages (see Jerusalem Talmud; *Turei Even*).

וּמָה רָאוּ לומר בְּרַכַּת כְּהֻנִּים אַחַר הַדְּוָדָה – דְּכַתִּיב וַיִּשָּׂא אֶהָרֵן אֶת יָדָיו אֶל הָעָם וַיְבָרְכֵם וַיֵּרֶד מֵעֲשׂוֹת הַחֲטָאֹת וְהָעוֹלָה וְהַשְּׁלָמִים.”

אֵימָא קוּדְם עֲבוּדָה! לָא סְלִיקָא דְעֵתְךָ, דְכַתִּיב וַיֵּרֶד מֵעֲשׂוֹת הַחֲטָאֹת” וגו’. מִי כַתִּיב “לְעֲשׂוֹת” “מֵעֲשׂוֹת” כַּתִּיב.

וְלִמְרָה אַחַר הָעֲבוּדָה! לָא סְלִיקָא דְעֵתְךָ, דְכַתִּיב “זוֹבַח תוֹדָה”.

מֵאִי חֲזִית דְסִמְכַתְּ אֶהָאִי, סְמוּךְ אֶהָאִי! מִסְתַּבְרָא, עֲבוּדָה וְהוֹדָה תְּדָא מִלִּתָּא הִיא.

וּמָה רָאוּ לומר “שִׁים שְׁלוֹם” אַחַר בְּרַכַּת כְּהֻנִּים – דְּכַתִּיב וַיִּשָּׂא אֶת שְׁמִי עַל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֲנִי אֲבָרְכֵם. בְּרַכָּה דְהַקְדוּשָׁה בְּרוּךְ הוּא – שְׁלוֹם, שְׁנֵאמַר ה’ יְבָרְךָ אֶת עַמּוֹ בְשָׁלוֹם”.

וְכִי מֵאַחַר דְמֵאָה וְעֶשְׂרִים זְקֵנִים, וּמֵהֶם כַּמְּה נְבִיאִים, תִּקְנֵוּ תַפְלָה עַל הַסֵּדֶר, שְׂמֵעוֹן הַפְּקוּלִי מֵאִי הַסֵּדִיר? שְׂכַחוּם וְחִזְרוּ וְסִדְרוּם.

מִכַּאֵן וְאֵילֶךְ אָסוּר לְסַפֵּר בְּשִׁבְחוֹ שֵׁל הַקְדוּשָׁה בְּרוּךְ הוּא, דְאָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר: מֵאִי דְכַתִּיב “מִי יִמְלֵל גְבוּרוֹת ה’ יִשְׁמִיעַ כָּל תְּהִלָּתוֹ”, לְמִי נֶאֱמַר לְמִלֵּל גְבוּרוֹת ה’ – לְמִי שִׁיבֹל לְהִשְׁמִיעַ כָּל תְּהִלָּתוֹ.

And why did they see fit to institute that one says the Priestly Benediction after the blessing of thanksgiving? As it is written: “And Aaron lifted up his hand toward the people and blessed them, and he came down from sacrificing the sin-offering, and the burnt-offering, and the peace-offerings” (Leviticus 9:22), teaching that the Priestly Benediction follows the sacrificial service, which includes the thanks-offering.

The Gemara asks: But the cited verse indicates that Aaron blessed the people and then sacrificed the offerings. Should we not then say the Priestly Benediction **before** the blessing of the Temple service? The Gemara answers: **It should not enter your mind** to say this, as it is written: “And he came down from sacrificing the sin-offering.” Is it written that he came down to sacrifice the offerings, implying that after blessing the people Aaron came down and sacrificed the offerings? No, **it is written, “from sacrificing,”** indicating that the offerings had already been sacrificed.

The Gemara asks: If, as derived from this verse, the Priestly Benediction follows the sacrificial service, the Priestly Benediction should be said immediately **after** the blessing of restoration of the Temple service, without the interruption of the blessing of thanksgiving. The Gemara rejects this argument: **It should not enter your mind** to say this, as it is written: “Whoever sacrifices a thanks-offering honors Me,” from which we learn that thanksgiving follows sacrifice, as already explained.

The Gemara asks: **What did you see to rely on this** verse and juxtapose thanksgiving with sacrifice? **Rely rather on the other** verse, which indicates that it is the Priestly Benediction that should be juxtaposed with the sacrificial service. The Gemara answers: **It stands to reason** to have the blessing of thanksgiving immediately following the blessing of the sacrificial service, since the sacrificial service and thanksgiving, which are closely related conceptually, **are one matter**.

And why did they see fit to institute that one says the blessing beginning with the words: **Grant peace, after the Priestly Benediction?**^N As it is written immediately following the Priestly Benediction: “And they shall put My name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them” (Numbers 6:27). The Priestly Benediction is followed by God's blessing, and the blessing of the Holy One, Blessed be He, is peace, as it is stated: “The Lord blesses His people with peace” (Psalms 29:11).

The Gemara returns to the *baraita* cited at the beginning of the discussion: **Now, since the baraita teaches that a hundred and twenty Elders, including many prophets, established the Amida prayer in its fixed order, what is it that Shimon HaPakuli arranged** in a much later period of time, as related by Rabbi Yohanan? The Gemara answers: Indeed, the blessings of the *Amida* prayer were originally arranged by the hundred and twenty members of the Great Assembly, but over the course of time the people forgot them, and Shimon HaPakuli then arranged them again.

The Gemara comments: These nineteen blessings are a fixed number, and **beyond this it is prohibited for one to declare the praises of the Holy One, Blessed be He, by adding additional blessings to the Amida. As Rabbi Elazar said: What is the meaning of that which is written: “Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? Who can declare all His praise?”** (Psalms 106:2)? It means: **For whom is it fitting to utter the mighty acts of the Lord? Only for one who can declare all His praise.**^N And since no one is capable of declaring all of God's praises, we must suffice with the set formula established by the Sages.

Kefar Gibboraya – **כפר גבוריא**: Some claim that the reading should be Kefar Navorayya, or Navor Hayil, the name of a place north of Safed, in which the ruins of an ancient synagogue have been found.

When Rav Dimi came – **כי אתא רב דימי**: Rav Dimi was one of the Sages who would often travel from Eretz Yisrael to Babylonia, primarily to transmit the Torah of Eretz Yisrael to the Torah centers of the Diaspora, although occasionally he traveled on business as well. Consequently, many questions, particularly those concerning the Torah of Eretz Yisrael, remained unresolved, until the messenger would arrive and elucidate the *halakha*, the novel expression, or the unique circumstances pertaining to a particular statement that required clarification.

NOTES

Silence is worth two – **משתוקא בתרין**: Some explain that coming up with an appropriate comment to say is worth one *sela*, and refraining from making an inappropriate comment is worth twice as much (*Sefat Emet*).

אמר רבה בר בר חנה אמר רבי יוחנן: המספר בשבחו של הקדוש ברוך הוא יותר מדאי – נעקר מן העולם, שנאמר: "היסופר לו כי אדבר אם אמר איש כי יבלע".

דרש רבי יהודה איש כפר גבוריא, ואמרי לה איש כפר גבור חיל: מאי דכתיב "לך דומיה תהלה" – סמא דכולה משתוקא. כי אתא רב דימי אמר: אמרי במערבא: מלה – בסלע, משתוקא – בתרין.

"קראתה על פה לא יצא" וכו': מנלן? אמר רבא: אתיא זכירה וזכירה, בתיב ה"א ויהימים האלה נזכרים" ובתיב התם "כתב זאת זכרון בספר", מה להלן בספר – אף כאן בספר.

וממאי דהאי זכירה קריאה היא? דלמא עיון בעלמא! – לא סלקא דעתך, (דכתיב) "זכור" יכול בלבד כשהוא אומר "לא תשכח" הרי שכחת הלב אמור, ה"א מה אני מקיים "זכור" – בפה.

"קראתה תרגום לא יצא" וכו': היכי דמי? אילימא דכתיבה מקרא וקרי לה תרגום – היינו על פה! לא צריכא, דכתיבה תרגום וקרי לה תרגום.

"אבל קורין אותה ללועזות בלעז" וכו': והא אמרת קראתה בכל לשון לא יצא! רב ושמואל דאמרי תרווייהו: בלעז יווני.

Rabba bar bar Hana said that Rabbi Yohanan said: With regard to one who excessively declares the praises of the Holy One, Blessed be He, his fate is to be uprooted from the world, as it appears as if he had exhausted all of God's praises. As it is stated: "Shall it be told to Him when I speak? If a man says it, he would be swallowed up" (Job 37:20). The Gemara interprets the verse as saying: Can all of God's praises be expressed when I speak? If a man would say such a thing, he would be "swallowed up" as punishment.

The Gemara relates: Rabbi Yehuda, a man of Kefar Gibboraya,⁸ and some say he was a man of Kefar Gibboraya, taught: What is the meaning of that which is written: "For You silence is praise" (Psalms 65:2)? The best remedy of all is silence, i.e., the optimum form of praising God is silence. The Gemara relates: When Rav Dimi came⁹ from Eretz Israel to Babylonia, he said: In the West, Eretz Yisrael, they say an adage: If a word is worth one *sela*, silence is worth two.¹⁰

It is taught in the mishna: If one read the Megilla by heart he has not fulfilled his obligation. The Gemara asks: From where do we derive this? Rava said: This is derived by means of a verbal analogy between one instance of the term remembrance and another instance of the term remembrance. It is written here, with regard to the Megilla: "That these days should be remembered" (Esther 9:28), and it is written elsewhere: "And the Lord said to Moses: Write this for a memorial in the book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: That I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under the heavens" (Exodus 17:14). Just as there, with regard to Amalek, remembrance is referring specifically to something written in a book, as it is stated, "in the book," so too here, the Megilla remembrance is through being written in a book.

The Gemara raises a question: But from where do we know that this remembrance that is stated with regard to Amalek and to the Megilla involves reading it out loud from a book? Perhaps it requires merely looking into the book, reading it silently. The Gemara answers: It should not enter your mind to say this, as it was taught in a *baraita*: The verse states: "Remember what Amalek did to you" (Deuteronomy 25:17). One might have thought that it suffices for one to remember this silently, in his heart. But this cannot be, since when it says subsequently: "You shall not forget" (Deuteronomy 25:19), it is already referring to forgetting from the heart. How, then, do I uphold the meaning of "remember"? What does this command to remember add to the command to not forget? Therefore, it means that the remembrance must be expressed out loud, with the mouth.

It was taught further in the mishna: If one read the Megilla in Aramaic translation he has not fulfilled his obligation. The Gemara asks: What are the circumstances of this case? If we say that the Megilla was written in the original biblical text, i.e., in Hebrew, and he read it in Aramaic translation, then this is the same as reading it by heart, as he is not reading the words written in the text, and the mishna has already stated that one does not fulfill his obligation by reading the Megilla by heart. The Gemara answers: No, it is necessary to teach this case as well, as it is referring to a case in which the Megilla was written not in the original Hebrew but in Aramaic translation, and he read it as written, in Aramaic translation.

The mishna continues: However, for those who speak a foreign language, one may read the Megilla in that foreign language. The Gemara raises a difficulty: But didn't you say in the mishna: If he read it in any other language he has not fulfilled his obligation? The Gemara cites the answer of Rav and Shmuel, who both say: When the mishna says: A foreign language, it is referring specifically to the Greek foreign language, which has a unique status with regard to biblical translation.

LANGUAGE

Coptic [Giptit] – גִּיפְטִית: From the Greek Αἰγύπτιος, Aigyptios, meaning Egyptian.

HALAKHA

Coptic to Copts – גִּיפְטִית לְגִיפְטִים: If a Megilla is written in Aramaic or in any other language, only one who knows that language fulfills his obligation by reading it. The Rema states that it is permitted to write the Megilla in any script, but others maintain that it must be written in Ashurit script (Rid; Peri Hadash). The universal custom is to write the Megilla in Hebrew with Ashurit script (Levush; Shulhan Arukh Oraḥ Hayyim 690:9).

הִכִּי דְמִי אֵילִמָּא דְכַתְּיבָה אֲשׁוּרִית וְקָרָא לָהּ יוּנִית – הֵינּוּ עַל פֶּה! אָמַר רַבִּי אַחָא אָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר: שְׁכַתְּוּבָה בְּלֵעָו יוּנִית.

The Gemara asks: What are the circumstances of the case? If we say that the Megilla was written in Ashurit, i.e., in Hebrew, and he read it in Greek, this is the same as reading it by heart, and the mishna teaches that one does not fulfill his obligation by reading by heart. The Gemara answers: Rabbi Aḥa said that Rabbi Elazar said: The mishna is dealing with a case in which the Megilla was written in the Greek foreign language and was also read in that language.

וְאָמַר רַבִּי אַחָא אָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר: מִנֵּן שִׁקְרָאוּ הַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לְיַעֲקֹב "אֵל"? שְׁנָאמַר "וַיִּקְרָא לוֹ אֵל אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל". דְּאֵי סִלְקָא דְעַתְדָּן לְמוֹצַח קָרָא לֵיהּ יַעֲקֹב אֵל – וַיִּקְרָא לוֹ יַעֲקֹב מִיבְעֵי לֵיהּ, אֶלְא וַיִּקְרָא לוֹ לְיַעֲקֹב אֵל, וּמִי קָרָאוּ אֵל – אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל.

Apropos statements in this line of tradition, the Gemara adds: And Rabbi Aḥa further said that Rabbi Elazar said: From where is it derived that the Holy One, Blessed be He, called Jacob El,^N meaning God? As it is stated: "And he erected there an altar, and he called it El, God of Israel" (Genesis 33:20). It is also possible to translate this as: And He, i.e., the God of Israel, called him, Jacob, El. Indeed, it must be understood this way, as if it enters your mind to say that the verse should be understood as saying that Jacob called the altar El, it should have specified the subject of the verb and written: And Jacob called it El. But since the verse is not written this way, the verse must be understood as follows: He called Jacob El; and who called him El? The God of Israel.

מִיִּתְבִּי: קָרָאָה גִּיפְטִית, עֵבְרִית, עֵילְמִית, מְדִית, יוּנִית – לֹא יֵצֵא.

The Gemara returns to discussing languages for reading the Megilla and raises an objection against Rav and Shmuel, who said that one may read the Megilla in Greek but not in other foreign languages. It is taught in a baraita: If one read the Megilla in Coptic [Giptit],^L Ivrit,^N Elamite, Median, or Greek, he has not fulfilled his obligation, indicating that one cannot fulfill his obligation by reading the Megilla in Greek.

הָא לֹא דְמִיָּא אֶלְא לְהָא: גִּיפְטִית לְגִיפְטִים, עֵבְרִית לְעֵבְרִים, עֵילְמִית לְעֵילְמִים, יוּנִית לְיוּנִים – יֵצֵא.

The Gemara answers: The clause in the mishna that teaches that the Megilla may be read in a foreign language to one who speaks that foreign language is comparable only to that which was taught in a different baraita: If one reads the Megilla in Coptic to Copts,^{HN} in Ivrit to Ivrit, in Elamite to Elamites, or in Greek to Greeks, he has fulfilled his obligation. The Megilla may be read in any language, provided the listener understands that language.

אֵי הִכִּי, רַב וּשְׁמוּאֵל אִמְרֵי מוֹקְמֵי לָהּ לְמַתְנִיתִין בְּלֵעָו יוּנִית? לֹקְמָה בְּכָל לֵעָו: [אֶלְא מַתְנִיתִין כְּבָרִיתָא] וְכִי אִיתְמַר דְּרַב וּשְׁמוּאֵל – בְּעֵלְמָא אִיתְמַר. רַב וּשְׁמוּאֵל דְּאִמְרֵי תְרוּיְהוּ: לֵעָו יוּנִי לְכָל כְּשֵׁר.

The Gemara asks: But if so, that one who reads the Megilla in a foreign language that he speaks fulfills his obligation, why did Rav and Shmuel establish the ruling of the mishna as referring specifically to Greek? Let them interpret it as referring to any foreign language that one speaks. The Gemara explains: Rather, the mishna is to be understood like the baraita, that one who reads the Megilla in a language that he speaks fulfills his obligation; and that which was stated in the name of Rav and Shmuel was said as a general statement, not relating to the mishna but as an independent ruling, as follows: Rav and Shmuel both say: The Greek language is acceptable for everyone,^N i.e., anyone who reads the Megilla in Greek has fulfilled his obligation, even if he does not understand Greek.

NOTES

From where is it derived that the Holy One, Blessed be He, called Jacob El – מִנֵּן שִׁקְרָאוּ הַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לְיַעֲקֹב אֵל – See Tosafot, who note that there are other instances in the Bible in which people call altars by names of God. However, unlike those cases, there was no particular incident at this time that Jacob might have wished to commemorate by giving his altar such a name. The Ritva writes that the Gemara's unconventional interpretation of the verse, that it tells about a name given to Jacob rather than to his altar, is based on the verse's superfluous wording. See Maharsha for a similar idea. As for the concept itself, that Jacob was called El, see Ramban's commentary on the Torah, where he adduces several midrashic statements to the effect that Jacob's image was engraved under God's throne of glory, meaning that Jacob achieved a virtually God-like perfection in this world.

gauge, in this context it refers to a different language (Rashba), a language spoken on the other side [ever] of the river (Rashi). Coptic to Copts – גִּיפְטִית לְגִיפְטִים: Many of the commentaries and halakhic authorities discuss this issue, and several varying opinions have been presented with regard to it. It appears that the opinion of the Rambam, and apparently of Rashi as well, is that if one understands a particular foreign language he can fulfill his obligation by hearing the Megilla read in that language. The Ramban, however, basing his opinion on the Jerusalem Talmud, maintains that one is permitted to hear the Megilla in a foreign language only if he does not understand Hebrew at all.

the commentaries. The Rif's opinion here is unclear and is explained by several commentaries in various ways. Rabbi Zerahya HaLevi, the Rambam, and other authorities maintain that although generally one may fulfill his obligation by hearing the Megilla in a foreign language only if he understands that language, one can fulfill his obligation by hearing the Megilla in Greek even if he does not understand Greek, as is the case with Hebrew. Other commentaries rule that that even according to Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel, only one who speaks Greek can fulfill his obligation by hearing the Megilla in Greek (Ramban; Rashba). See the Ritva, Meiri, and Rabbi Zerahya HaLevi, who disagree even with regard to the accurate presentation of these opinions. The Mikhtam explains that Greek has an exceptional status, because in talmudic times the Greek language was widely used and understood throughout the world. Consequently, it was assigned a special status in halakha at that time.

Ivrit – עֵבְרִית: Although Ivrit usually refers to the Hebrew lan-

The Greek language is acceptable for everyone – לֵעָו יוּנִי – לְכָל כְּשֵׁר: The explanation of the various opinions here, as well as the final halakhic decision, is the subject of debate among

One who speaks a foreign language who heard the Megilla in *Ashurit* has fulfilled his obligation – והלועז ששמע אשורית יצא: Some explain that as most Jews know some Hebrew, even one who knows no Hebrew can ask other people in the synagogue to explain to him at least the main idea of the Megilla. This, however, is not the case with other languages (Rabbeinu Yehonatan).

What is meant by *seirugin* – מאי סירוגין: Some explain that they knew the general meaning of the word but were uncertain whether it meant specifically long pauses or if it also included short pauses (see *Penei Yehoshua* and *Sefat Emet*).

BACKGROUND

Purslane – פרפריני: It appears that this plant is *Portulaca oleracea*, also known as common purslane or pursley. It is a widespread weed, recognizable by its small yellow flowers. It grows in places with ample water sources, and its leaves are eaten fresh in salads or pickled.



Common purslane

והא קתני יוונת ליוונים – אין, לכולי עלמא – לא! אינהו דאמור ברבן שמעון בן גמליאל – דתנן, רבן שמעון בן גמליאל אומר: אף ספרים לא התירו שיכתבו אלא יוונת.

The Gemara raises a difficulty: **But doesn't** the *baraita* cited above **teach** that if one reads the Megilla in **Greek to Greeks** he has fulfilled his obligation? This implies that reading in Greek, **yes**, this is acceptable for Greeks, but **for everyone else, no**, it is not. The Gemara answers: Rav and Shmuel disagree with this statement of the *baraita*, because they **agree with the opinion of Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel**. As we learned in a mishna (*Megilla* 8b): **Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says: Even for books of the Bible, the Sages did not permit them to be written in any foreign language other than Greek**, indicating that Greek has a special status, and is treated like the original Hebrew.

ולמרו הלכה ברבן שמעון בן גמליאל! אי אמרי הלכה ברבן שמעון בן גמליאל הוה אמיןא: הני מילי – שאר ספרים, אבל מגילה דכתיב בה "ככתבם" אימא לא – קא משמע לן.

The Gemara asks: But if this was the intention of Rav and Shmuel, **let them state explicitly: The halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel**. Why did Rav and Shmuel formulate their statement as if they were issuing a new ruling? The Gemara answers: **Had they said simply that the halakha is in accordance with Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel, I would have said that this applies only to the other books of the Bible, but with regard to the Megilla, of which it is written: "According to their writing," I would say that one does not fulfill his obligation if he reads it in Greek**. Therefore they stated their own opinion to **teach us** that even in the case of the Megilla one fulfills his obligation if he reads it in Greek.

והלועז ששמע אשורית יצא" וכו': והא לא ידע מאי קאמרי? מידי דהוה אנשים ועמי הארץ.

§ It was taught in the mishna: **And one who speaks a foreign language who heard the Megilla being read in Ashurit, i.e., in Hebrew, has fulfilled his obligation.**ⁿ The Gemara asks: **But isn't it so that he does not understand what they are saying?** Since he does not understand Hebrew, how does he fulfill his obligation? The Gemara answers: **It is just as it is with women and uneducated people;** they too understand little Hebrew, but nevertheless they fulfill their obligation when they hear the Megilla read in that language.

מתקיף לה רבינא: אטו אנן האחשתרנים בני הרמכים" מי ידעין? אלא מצות קריאה ופרסומי ניסא – הכא נמי מצות קריאה ופרסומי ניסא.

Ravina strongly objects to the premise of the question raised above, i.e., that someone who does not understand the original, untranslated language of the Megilla cannot fulfill his obligation. **Is that to say that even we, the Sages, who are very well acquainted with Hebrew, know for certain the meaning of the obscure words *ha'ahashteranim benei haramakhim* (Esther 8:10), often translated as: "Used in the royal service, bred from the stud"? But nevertheless, we fulfill the mitzva of reading the Megilla and publicizing the miracle of Purim by reading these words as they appear in the original text. Here too, one who speaks a foreign language who hears the Megilla being read in Hebrew fulfills the mitzva of reading the Megilla and publicizing the Purim miracle, even if he does not understand the words themselves.**

"קראה סירוגין יצא" וכו': לא הוה ידעי רבנן מאי סירוגין, שמעיה לאמתא דבי רבי דקאמרה להו לרבנן דהו עילי פסקי פסקי לבי רבי, עד מתי אתם נכנסין סירוגין סירוגין!

§ The mishna continues: **If one reads the Megilla at intervals [*seirugin*] he has fulfilled his obligation**. The Gemara relates that **the Sages did not know what is meant by the word *seirugin***.ⁿ One day they heard the maidservant in Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi's house saying to the Sages who were entering the house **intermittently** rather than in a single group: **How long are you going to enter *seirugin seirugin*?** As she lived in Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi's house and certainly heard the most proper Hebrew being spoken, they understood from this that the word *seirugin* means at intervals.

לא הוה ידעי רבנן מאי חלוגלוגות, שמעיה לאמתא דבי רבי דאמרה ליה לההוא גברא דהוה קא מבידר פרפריני, עד מתי אתה מפזר חלוגלוגך.

It is similarly related that **the Sages did not know what is meant by the word *halogelot***, which appears in various *mishnayot* and *baraitot*. One day they heard the maidservant in Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi's house saying to a certain man who was scattering purslane:⁸ **How long will you go on scattering your *halogelot*?** And from this they understood that *halogelot* is purslane.

Arab [*Tayya'a*] – טַיְיָעָא: From the name of an Arab nomadic tribe [*altai*]. Apparently, the members of this tribe were at the time so common in the area close to Babylonia that anyone who was an Arab was called *Tayya'a*.

Your *yehav* – יְהַבִּיךָ: It is unclear if that Arab used an Arabic word or a rarely used Aramaic word. However, this root usually means to give or to place one object upon another object in both Aramaic and Hebrew as well as in Arabic: وهب, *wahaba*.

לֹא הוּוּ יָדְעֵי רַבְנֵי מַאי "סְלִסְלָהּ וְתוֹרֵמְמָךְ". שְׁמַעוּהָ לְאַמְתָּא דְּבִי רַבִּי דִּהְוֹת אַמְרָה לְהָהוּא גְּבָרָא דִּהְוָה מְהַפֵּךְ בְּמַוְיָה, אַמְרָה לִיה: עַד מָתַי אַתָּה מְסַלֵּסל בְּשַׁעְרֶךָ.

לֹא הוּוּ יָדְעֵי רַבְנֵי מַאי "הַשְׁלִיךְ עַל ה' יְהַבֵּךְ". אָמַר רַבָּה בַר בַּר חֲנָנִי: זִמְנָא חָדָא הָוָה אָזִילְנָא בְּהַדִּי הָוָה טַיְיָעָא, וְקָא דְרִינָא טוֹנָא, וְאָמַר לִי: שְׁקוּל יְהַבִּיךְ וְשׂוּדֵי אַגְמְלָאִי.

לֹא הוּוּ יָדְעֵי רַבְנֵי מַאי "וְטַאטְאִתִּיהָ בְּמַטְאֵטָא הַשְׂמֹד", שְׁמַעוּהָ לְאַמְתָּא דְּבִי רַבִּי דִּהְוֹת אַמְרָה לְחַבְרָתָהּ: שְׁקוּלִי טַאטְיָתָא וְטַאטְיָ בֵּיתָא.

תַּנּוּ רַבְנֵי: קְרָאָה סִירוּגִין – יֵצֵא,

Likewise, the Sages did not know what is meant by *salseleha* in the verse: "Get wisdom... *salseleha* and it will exalt you" (Proverbs 4:7–8). One day they heard the maidservant in Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi's house talking to a certain man who was twirling his hair, saying to him: How long will you go on twirling [*mesalsel*] your hair? And from this they understood that the verse is saying: Turn wisdom around and around, and it will exalt you.

The Gemara relates additional examples: The Sages did not know what is meant by the word *yehav* in the verse: "Cast upon the Lord your *yehav*" (Psalms 55:23). Rabba bar bar Hana said: One time I was traveling with a certain Arab [*Tayya'a*]^l and I was carrying a load, and he said to me: Take your *yehav*^l and throw it on my camel, and I understood that *yehav* means a load or burden.

And similarly, the Sages did not know what is meant by the word *matatei* in the verse: "And I will *tatei* it with the *matatei* of destruction" (Isaiah 14:23). One day they heard the maidservant in Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi's house saying to her friend: Take a *tateita* and *tati* the house, from which they understood that a *matatei* is a broom, and the verb *tati* means to sweep.

On the matter of reading the Megilla with interruptions, the Sages taught the following *baraita*: If one reads the Megilla at intervals, pausing and resuming at intervals, he has fulfilled his obligation.

Perek II Daf 18 Amud b

NOTES

Out of order – סִירוּגִין: It is explained in the Jerusalem Talmud that this refers to skipping verses. The *ge'onim*, however, explain that it is referring to one who reads a verse backward, from the end to the beginning. This appears to be Rashi's interpretation as well.

סִירוּסִין – לֹא יֵצֵא. רַבִּי מוֹנָא אוֹמַר מְשׁוּם רַבִּי יְהוּדָה: אִף בְּסִירוּגִין, אִם שָׁהָה כְּדִי לְגַמֹּר אֶת בּוֹלָה – חוּזֵר לְרֵאשׁוֹ. אָמַר רַב יוֹסֵף: הֲלֹכָה בְּרַבִּי מוֹנָא שְׂאֵמַר מְשׁוּם רַבִּי יְהוּדָה.

אָמַר לִיה אַבְיִי לְרַב יוֹסֵף: כְּדִי לְגַמֹּר אֶת בּוֹלָה, מְהִיבָא דְקָאִי לְסִיפָא, אוֹ דְלִמָּא מְרִישָׁא לְסִיפָא? אָמַר לִיה: מְרִישָׁא לְסִיפָא. דָּאִם כֵּן נִתְתַּ דְּבִרְיךָ לְשִׁיעוּרִין.

But if he reads it out of order,ⁿ i.e., if he changes the order of the words or verses of the Megilla, he has not fulfilled his obligation. Rabbi Mona said in the name of Rabbi Yehuda: Even when he reads it at intervals,ⁿ if he pauses and interrupts his reading long enough for one to finish reading the whole Megilla during that time, he must go back to the beginning and start again. Rav Yosef said: The *halakha* is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Mona, who stated his opinion in the name of Rabbi Yehuda.

Abaye said to Rav Yosef: When Rabbi Mona said: Long enough for one to finish reading the whole Megilla, did he mean from the verse where he is now until the end? Or perhaps he meant long enough to read the entire Megilla from the beginning until the end. He said to him: Rabbi Mona meant from the beginning until the end, as if it were so that he meant from where he paused until the end of the Megilla, you would be subjecting your statement to the varying circumstances of each case. There would be no standard principle to determine the length of a permitted pause; in each case, depending on where one stopped, it would take a different amount of time to finish the Megilla until the end. And the Sages did not institute measures that are not standardized.

HALAKHA

At intervals – בְּסִירוּגִין: If one reads the Megilla with pauses during the reading and continues reading each time from where he left off, he has fulfilled his obligation, even if he pauses long enough to finish reading the entire Megilla. This is in accordance with the final version of the opinion of Rav

(*Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 690:5). Although it is discouraged to speak during the Megilla reading, one who does so has fulfilled his obligation (Rema). One should not pause repeatedly in the Megilla reading, *ab initio* (*Mishna Berura*, citing Rashba).

Sura – סורא: Sura, a town in southern Babylonia, became an important Jewish community only when the great *amora* Rav moved and established the yeshiva there (c. 220 CE). From then until the end of geonic period (c. 1000 CE), Sura was a major Torah center. The yeshiva in Sura, under the leadership of Rav and his closest disciples, was influenced by the halakhic traditions of Eretz Yisrael and was renowned for its unique approach to Torah study. Among the great Sages and leaders of Sura were Rav, Rav Huna, Rav H̄isda, Ravina, and Rav Ashi. The Babylonian Talmud was redacted primarily in Sura.

Pumbedita – פומבדיתא: Pumbedita, a town on the Euphrates River northwest of Neharde'a, was an important center of the Babylonian Jewish community for many generations. As early as the Second Temple period, Pumbedita was referred to simply as the Diaspora. After the destruction of Neharde'a, its yeshiva moved to Pumbedita, and Torah study continued there uninterrupted until the end of the geonic period.

The scholars of Pumbedita were particularly renowned for their acumen. The most famous heads of the yeshiva in Pumbedita were Rav Yehuda, its original founder; Rabba; Rav Yosef; Abaye; Rav Nahman bar Yitzhak; Rav Zevid; and Rafram bar Pappa. The yeshiva in Pumbedita was prominent in the geonic period as well, often overshadowing the yeshiva in Sura. The last heads of the yeshiva in Pumbedita were the renowned *ge'onim* Rav Sherira Gaon and his son, Rav Hai Gaon.

NOTES

A woman waiting for her brother-in-law – שומרת יבם: A woman whose husband dies without children but with at least one surviving brother has the status of a woman who is waiting for her brother-in-law. It is prohibited for her to marry anyone else until one of the brothers, preferably the eldest, performs levirate marriage or, alternatively, releases her through performing the *halitza* ceremony. Until one of these procedures is done, the widow is bound to her husband's brothers by a bond known as *zika*. The *amora'im* and *tanna'im* debated the type and strength of this bond. The opinion of Rabbi Yehuda ben Beteira is in accordance with those who maintain that the bond is comparable to betrothal. Therefore, until the bond is released it is prohibited for any of the brothers to marry a woman who is a close relative to the widow, just as it is prohibited to marry a close relative of one's actual or betrothed wife.

As a translator would do when translating – כמתורגמן: The Rif explains this expression: Just as a translator adds words that are not written in the book before him in order to complete and convey the intent of the source he is translating, so too, this reader adds words that are not in the book before him (see Rashi and *Turei Even*).

If the scribe... omitted letters... he has fulfilled his obligation – השמיט בה סופר אותיות... יצא: The Ran explains, citing the Ramban, that since the Megilla is termed a letter (see 19a), the *halakha* is less demanding than it is concerning the writing of biblical books. Therefore, the Megilla is acceptable even if it is missing material, as long as it is possible to read it understandably. It would seem that the *halakha* is stricter with regard to the Megilla being read out of order than it is with regard to missing words, as a reading that is out of order disrupts the flow of the content (see *Mikhtam*).

אמר רבי אבא אמר רבי ירמיה בר אבא אמר רב: הלכה כרבי מונא, ושמואל אמר: אין הלכה כרבי מונא. בסורא מתנו הכי. בפומבדיתא מתנו הכי: אמר רב כהנא אמר רב: הלכה כרבי מונא, ושמואל אמר: אין הלכה כרבי מונא. רב ביבי מתני איפכא. רב אמר: אין הלכה כרבי מונא, ושמואל אמר: הלכה כרבי מונא.

אמר רב יוסף: נקוט דרב ביבי בידך, דשמואל הוא דחייש ליחידא. דתנן: שומרת יבם שקידש אחיו את אחותה, משום רבי יהודה בן בתירה אמרו: אומרים לו המתן עד שיעשה אחיך הגדול מעשה.

אמר שמואל: הלכה כרבי יהודה בן בתירה.

תנו רבנן: השמיט בה סופר אותיות או פסוקין, וקראן הקורא כמתורגמן המתרגם – יצא.

Rabbi Abba said that Rabbi Yirmeya bar Abba said: Rav said that the *halakha* is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Mona, but Shmuel said that the *halakha* is not in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Mona. The Gemara elaborates: This is how they taught the opinions of the Sages in Sura.⁸ However, in Pumbedita⁸ they taught it slightly differently, like this: Rav Kahana said that Rav said that the *halakha* is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Mona, but Shmuel said that the *halakha* is not in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Mona. Rav Beivai taught the opposite: Rav said that the *halakha* is not in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Mona, but Shmuel said that the *halakha* is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Mona.

Rav Yosef said: Grasp the version of Rav Beivai in your hand, i.e., accept it as the most authoritative one. It appears to be correct, as we know that Shmuel takes into consideration even an individual dissenting opinion when it is more stringent than the majority opinion. The Gemara proves its assertion about Shmuel: As we learned in a mishna (*Yevamot* 41a) with regard to a different matter, the case of a widow whose husband died childless and who was waiting for one of his surviving brothers to perform the required levirate marriage with her or, alternatively, to release her with the *halitza* ceremony: In a case where a woman was waiting for her brother-in-law⁹ and in the meantime one of her deceased husband's brothers betrothed this woman's sister,¹⁰ they said in the name of Rabbi Yehuda ben Beteira: We say to this brother: Wait before marrying your betrothed until your older brother acts, performing the levirate marriage or *halitza*.

The reason for this is that before levirate marriage or *halitza* is performed, all the brothers are considered, by rabbinic decree, to have a quasi-marital connection with the widow. Consequently, just as one may not marry his wife's sister, he may not marry the sister of a woman who is waiting for him to perform levirate marriage. The Sages, however, disagree with Rabbi Yehuda ben Beteira and maintain that only the oldest of the brothers is considered bound to the widow, as he is the primary candidate to perform these acts. Consequently, the widow has no connection at all with the other brothers. And Shmuel said: The *halakha* is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda ben Beteira. This demonstrates that Shmuel takes into consideration the opinion of a single Sage against the majority when that minority opinion is more stringent than the majority opinion.

S The Sages taught in a *baraita*: If the scribe who wrote the Megilla omitted letters¹¹ or even complete verses when he wrote it, and the reader read these missing items as a translator would do when translating,¹² i.e., he recited the missing parts by heart, he has fulfilled his obligation.¹³ Missing material in a Megilla and reading words or verses by heart do not invalidate the reading.

HALAKHA

A woman was waiting for her brother-in-law [*yavam*] and one of her deceased husband's brothers betrothed her sister – שומרת יבם שקידש אחיו את אחותה: A *yavam*, whether a sole surviving brother or one of several, is prohibited from marrying the close relatives of the widow who is awaiting levirate marriage. Therefore, if one of the brothers betroths a sister of the widow, it is prohibited for him to marry his betrothed until one of the other brothers either marries the widow or performs *halitza*, in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda ben Beteira. Some say that if he had already consummated their marriage, the bond between this brother and the widow is dissolved, and it is permitted for him to have relations with his wife even before the levirate marriage or *halitza* takes place.

Some say that nowadays, when Rabbeinu Gershom's strict prohibition against simultaneously having two wives applies, if a man has a sister-in-law who is awaiting levirate marriage it is

prohibited for him to marry a different woman until the *halitza* is performed with the widow. However, if the other woman was already betrothed to him it is permitted for him to marry her (*Shulhan Arukh, Even HaEzer* 159:5, and in the comment of Rema).

If the scribe omitted letters – השמיט בה סופר אותיות: A Megilla should be entirely complete when it is read, *ab initio*. However, after the fact, if a Megilla is missing some words in the middle, up to half of the words, it is a valid Megilla and as long as the reader recites the missing words by heart, he has fulfilled his obligation. If the scribe omitted the very beginning or end of the Megilla it is unfit for use (Rashba). Also, if the scribe omitted an entire passage even in the middle of the Megilla it is unfit. If more than half the Megilla is missing or is written with letters that are so blurred that they are not legible, it is unfit (*Shulhan Arukh, Orach Hayyim* 690:3).

הַשְּׂמִיט – If the reader omitted one verse, etc. – בָּהּ הַקּוֹרֵא פְּסוּק וְכוּ: If one reads a verse of the Megilla, skips the next verse, and then continues reading from the third verse, he has not fulfilled his obligation, even if he subsequently returns and reads the skipped verse. He must return to where he erred and read from there, in order, to the end of the Megilla (*Shulhan Arukh, Orach Hayyim 690:6*).

If one enters a synagogue and encounters a congregation that has read half – מִצָּא צִבּוֹר: If one enters a synagogue and finds that the congregation has already read half of the Megilla, he should not listen to the second half with the congregation and later read the first half, as this would be reading out of order. Rather, he should read it from the beginning until the end (*Rambam Sefer Zemanim, Hilkhos Megilla 2:2*).

If one was writing a Megilla or expounding upon it – בּוֹתֵבָה, דּוֹרְשָׁה: In the case of one who has a Megilla lying before him and he copies from it verse by verse to another Megilla, if he reads aloud every verse that he writes and intends by this to fulfill his obligation, he has fulfilled his obligation. Likewise, in the case of one who reads the Megilla verse by verse while expounding it as he goes, if he expounds upon only the Megilla itself he has fulfilled his obligation (*Shulhan Arukh, Orach Hayyim 690:13*).

It is prohibited to write...when not copying from a written text – שְׁלֵא מִן – הַכְּתָב: One who writes a Torah scroll must have before him another Torah scroll from which he copies, as it is prohibited to write even one letter without referring to the written text. A Torah scroll that is written without copying from a written text may not be used for Torah readings except in exigent circumstances. Some, however, say that once it has already been written it may be used (*Shakh, citing Ran and Rabbeinu Manoah; Arukh HaShulhan; Shulhan Arukh, Yoreh De'a 274:2*).

מִתִּיבִי: הִיוּ בֵּה אֹתוֹת מְטוּשָׁטוֹת אוּ מְקוֹרְעוֹת, אִם רְשׁוּמֵן נִכָּר – כְּשֶׁרָה, וְאִם לֹא – פְּסוּלָה! לֹא קִשְׂיָא; הָא בְּכוּלָּהּ, הָא – בְּמִקְצָתָהּ.

תִּנּוּ רַבָּנֵי: הַשְּׂמִיט בֵּה הַקּוֹרֵא פְּסוּק אַחַד לֹא יֹאמֵר אֶקְרָא אֶת כּוּלָּהּ וְאַחַר כֵּן אֶקְרָא אוֹתוֹ פְּסוּק, אֶלָּא קוֹרֵא מֵאוֹתוֹ פְּסוּק וְאֵילָן. נִכְנֵס לְבֵית הַכְּנֶסֶת וּמִצָּא צִבּוֹר שֶׁקְרָאוּ חֲצִיָּה, לֹא יֹאמֵר אֶקְרָא חֲצִיָּה עִם הַצִּבּוֹר, וְאַחַר כֵּן אֶקְרָא חֲצִיָּה – אֶלָּא קוֹרֵא אוֹתָהּ מִתְחִילָתָה וְעַד סוֹפָהּ.

”מִתְנַמְנֵם יֵצֵא” וְכוּ: הֵיכִי דְמִי מִתְנַמְנֵם? יֹאמֵר רַב אֲשֵׁי: נִים וְלֹא נִים, תִּיר וְלֹא תִיר, דְּקָרוּ לִיהּ וְעָנִי. וְלֹא יָדַע לְאַהֲדוּרֵי סְבָרָא, וְכִי מְדַבְּרוּ לִיהּ – מִדְּבָר.

”הִיָּה בּוֹתֵבָה, דּוֹרְשָׁה, וּמְגִיָּה, אִם כּוּן לְבוּ יֵצֵא” וְכוּ: הֵיכִי דְמִי? אִי דְקָא מְסַדֵּר פְּסוּקָא פְּסוּקָא וְכֹתֵב לָהּ – כִּי כּוּן לְבוּ מֵאִי הָוִי? עַל פֶּה הוּא! אֶלָּא דְכֹתֵב פְּסוּקָא פְּסוּקָא וְקָרִי לִיהּ.

וּמִי יֵצֵא? וְהָאֵמֵר רַבִּי חֲלָבוּ אָמַר רַב חֲמָא בַר גּוּרְיָא אָמַר רַב: הִלְכָה בְּדַבְרֵי הָאוּמֵר כּוּלָּהּ. וְאֶפִּילוּ לְמֵאן דְּאָמַר ”מֵאִישׁ יְהוּדִי” צְרִיכָה שְׂתֵּהָא פְּתוּבָה כּוּלָּהּ!

אֶלָּא, דְּמִנְחָה מְגִילָה קָמְיָה וְקָרִי לָהּ מִינָהּ פְּסוּקָא פְּסוּקָא, וְכֹתֵב לָהּ. לִימָא מְסִיעֵ לִיהּ לְרִבָּה בַר בַּר חֲנָה, דְּאָמַר רַבָּה בַר בַּר חֲנָה אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן: אָסוּר לְכֹתוֹב אוֹת אַחַת שְׁלֵא מִן הַכְּתָב. דְּלִמָּא דְּאִתְרַמִּי לִיהּ אִתְרַמִּי.

The Gemara raises an objection from another *baraita*: If a Megilla contains letters that are blurred or torn, the following distinction applies: If their imprint is still visible, the Megilla is fit for reading, but if not, it is unfit. This *baraita* indicates that even the omission of several letters invalidates the Megilla. The Gemara resolves the contradiction between the two *baraitot*: This is not difficult. This second *baraita*, which says that a Megilla with blurred or torn letters is unfit, is referring to a case where this is so throughout the whole of the Megilla; whereas this first *baraita*, which says that a Megilla is fit even if whole verses are missing, is referring to a case where the missing material is in only part of it.

The Sages taught in a *baraita*: If the reader of the Megilla omitted one verse,^h he may not say: I will continue to read the whole of the Megilla in order, and afterward I will go back and read that verse that I omitted. Rather, he must go back and read from that verse that he omitted and continue from there to the end of the Megilla. Similarly, if one enters a synagogue and encounters a congregation that has already read half^{fi} of the Megilla, he may not say: I will read the second half of the Megilla with the congregation, and afterward I will go back and read the first half. Rather, he must go back and read it in its proper order from the beginning until the end.

It is taught in the mishna: If one read the Megilla while he is dozing off, he has fulfilled his obligation. The Gemara asks: What are the circumstances of the case of dozing off? Rav Ashi said: It is referring to a situation in which one is asleep yet not fully asleep, awake yet not fully awake. If someone calls him he answers. And he is in a mental state in which he does not know how to provide an answer that requires logical reasoning, but when people remind him about something that has happened, he remembers it.

The mishna continues: If one was writing a Megilla, or expounding upon it,^h or correcting it, and he read all its words as he was doing so, if he had intent to fulfill his obligation with that reading he has fulfilled his obligation.ⁿ The Gemara asks: What are the circumstances of this case? If he was articulating each verse of the Megilla and then writing it down, what of it that he intended to fulfill his obligation with that reading, since he recited those words by heart? Rather, it must be that he first wrote each verse in the Megilla and then read it out.

The Gemara asks: But does one really fulfill his obligation in this way? Didn't Rabbi Helbo say that Rav Hama bar Gurya said that Rav said: The *halakha* is in accordance with the statement of the one who says that the Megilla must be read in its entirety in order to fulfill one's obligation. And moreover, he said that even according to the one who said that one need not read the entire Megilla, but only from "There was a certain Jew" (Esther 2:5) and onward, the Megilla itself must nevertheless be written in its entirety. How, then, can it be suggested that one who is reading each verse as he writes it can fulfill his obligation by reading from a Megilla that is not yet written to the end?

The Gemara answers: Rather, this is a case in which a complete Megilla is lying before him and he is copying from it, and he was reading from that complete Megilla verse by verse and then writing each verse in his new copy. The Gemara proposes: Let us say that this supports the opinion of Rabba bar bar Hana, as Rabba bar bar Hana said that Rabbi Yoḥanan said: It is prohibited to write even a single letter of the Bible when not copying from a written text.^h Since it was necessary to explain the mishna as addressing a case in which one was copying a Megilla out of a written text lying before him, this supports Rabbi Yoḥanan's ruling. The Gemara rejects this: This is not a proof, as perhaps the mishna is merely dealing with a case where this is what happened to be what occurred, that one happened to be copying the text from an existing Megilla, but it is not a requirement to do this.

NOTES

אם כּוּן לְבוּ – If he had intent he has fulfilled his obligation – יֵצֵא: According to the opinion mentioned often in the Talmud that one can fulfill a mitzva even without having intent to fulfill that obligation, this line of the mishna would be understood as

follows: If the one writing the Megilla or correcting it has intent to pronounce the words correctly he fulfills his obligation; if he does not have this intent, he does not fulfill his obligation (Rabbeinu Yehonatan).

So he wrote a Megilla by heart and read from it – וְכִתְבָהּ – וְקָרָא: It is stipulated in the Jerusalem Talmud that a Megilla written by heart may not be used for reading; rather, a second Megilla is copied from it and is read, in order to fulfill the *halakha* that biblical books may not be written unless copied from a pre-existing text.

What is the meaning of... *afapekha* – מֵאִי וְעַפְעֵפֶיךָ: These Sages did not wish to translate *afapekha* in the usual sense of eyelids, as it is the eyes, not the eyelids that cover them, which see. For this reason they interpreted it homiletically in the sense of that which flies off [*af*] or is fleeting, as in the word *hata'if*.

Mezuzot require scoring – מְזוּזוֹת צְרִיכִין שְׂרֻטוֹ: Some explain that the reason that phylacteries do not require scoring is that the Torah excerpts contained in them are permanently folded and covered. Since they are not intended to be read, the *halakha* does not require scoring to ensure that the lines are perfectly straight. A *mezuzah*, however, is sometimes read (Rid; see Ran and Meiri). Others explain that the parchment on which the phylacteries are written is very thin, and would be likely to tear if scoring were required (*Mikhtam*).

HALAKHA

Scoring for phylacteries – שְׂרֻטוֹת תְּפִלִּין: The body of the passages in the phylacteries do not require scoring, but scoring the top line is required. If a scribe must score each line in order to be able to write in straight lines he should do so; after the fact, even if the lines are written crooked it is valid (*Mishna Berura*, citing *Bah*). Some say that scoring should be done on all four sides of the text, and this opinion is accepted in practice. The universal practice nowadays is to score each line of the phylacteries passages (*Mishna Berura*; *Beur Halakha*; *Shulhan Arukh*, *Orah Hayyim* 32:6, and in the comment of Rema).

Scoring for a *mezuzah* – שְׂרֻטוֹת מְזוּזָה: The passages in the *mezuzah* require scoring. A *mezuzah* written without scoring is invalid (*Shulhan Arukh*, *Yoreh De'a* 288:8).

Writing the phylacteries passages by heart – כְּתִיבַת בְּהַרְטוּ: It is preferable to copy the phylacteries passages from a written text (*Bah*). Moreover, it is fitting that the scribe read each word aloud before writing it, *ab initio*. If he knows the passages well by heart it is permitted for him to write them without copying. In any case, if one writes the passages and does not make any errors, it is valid after the fact (*Mishna Berura*, citing *Beit Yosef*; *Shulhan Arukh*, *Orah Hayyim* 32:29–31).

BACKGROUND

Samma – סָמָא: It appears that this is an arsenic mineral, perhaps As_2S_3 , known as orpiment, which was once used for painting and making dye.

Sikreta – סִקְרֵתָא: This is a red pigment used for various purposes, such as dyeing and writing. It appears that it was made from minium, also known as red lead, a type of lead oxide.

Komos – קוֹמוֹס: Apparently this refers to the resin of the tree known as *Acacia arabica* or *Senegalia senegal*. It is not usually used as a writing substance itself, but as a thickener for other dyes. However, it is possible that a colored resin was used for writing as well.

גּוֹפָא, אָמַר רַבָּה בַּר בַּר חַנָּה אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן: אָסוּר לְכַתּוּב אוֹת אַחַת שְׁלֹא מִן הַכְּתָב. מִיִּתְיָבִי, אָמַר רַבִּי שְׁמַעוֹן בֶּן אֱלֵעָזָר: מַעֲשֶׂה בְּרַבִּי מֵאִיר שְׁהַלֵּךְ לְעֵבֶר שָׁנָה בְּעֶסְיָא, וְלֹא הָיָה שָׁם מִגִּילָה, וְכִתְבָהּ מִלְּבֹבו וְקָרָאָהּ.

אָמַר רַבִּי אֲבָהוּ: שָׂאֲנִי רַבִּי מֵאִיר דְּמִקְיָיִם בֵּיהּ יְעַפְעֵפֶיךָ יִישׁוּרוֹ נִגְדֵיךָ. אָמַר לִיהּ רַמִּי בַר חַמָּא לְרַבִּי יְרֵמְיָהּ מְדַפְתִּי: מֵאִי יְעַפְעֵפֶיךָ יִישׁוּרוֹ נִגְדֵיךָ? אָמַר לוֹ: אֵילוֹ דְּבַרִּי תוֹרָה, דְּכַתְּבִיב בְּהוּ "הִתְעַף עֵינֶיךָ בּוֹ וְאִינְנִי" וְאִפְלוּ הֲכִי – מִיִּשְׁרִין הֵן אֶצְל רַבִּי מֵאִיר.

רַב חֲסֵדָא אֲשַׁכְּחִיהּ לְרַב חֲנַנְיָא דְּהוּוּ כְּתַב סְפָרִים שְׁלֹא מִן הַכְּתָב, אָמַר לִיהּ: רַאֲוִיָה כָּל הַתּוֹרָה בּוֹלָה לִפְתָּב עַל פִּיךָ, אֵלֹא כֵךְ אָמְרוּ חַכְמַיִם: אָסוּר לְכַתּוּב אוֹת אַחַת שְׁלֹא מִן הַכְּתָב. מְדַקְאָמַר כָּל הַתּוֹרָה בּוֹלָה רַאֲוִיָה שְׁתִּיבְתָב עַל פִּיךָ – מִפְּלֵל דְּמִיִּשְׁרִין הֵן אֶצְלוּ, וְהָא רַבִּי מֵאִיר כְּתַב! שְׁעַת הַדְּחַק שָׂאֲנִי.

אֲבַיִי שָׂרָא לְרַבִּי בַר חַבּוֹ לְמִכְתָּב תְּפִלִּין וּמְזוּזוֹת שְׁלֹא מִן הַכְּתָב, כְּמֵאֵן – כִּי הָאִי תִנָּא. דְּתִנָּא, רַבִּי יְרֵמְיָהּ אָמַר מְשׁוּם רַבִּינּוּ: תְּפִלִּין וּמְזוּזוֹת נִכְתְּבוֹת שְׁלֹא מִן הַכְּתָב, וְאִין צְרִיכוֹת שְׂרֻטוֹ.

וְהַלְכָתָא: תְּפִלִּין – אִין צְרִיכִין שְׂרֻטוֹ, מְזוּזוֹת – צְרִיכִין שְׂרֻטוֹ. אִידִי וְאִידִי נִכְתְּבוֹת שְׁלֹא מִן הַכְּתָב, מֵאִי טַעְמָא – מִגְרָם גְּרִיסִין

"הִיְתָה כְּתוּבָה בְּסָם" כּוּ: סָם – סָמָא, סִקְרָא – אָמַר רַבָּה בַּר בַּר חַנָּה: סִקְרֵתָא שְׁמָה. קוֹמוֹס – קוֹמָא.

The Gemara examines Rabba bar bar Hana's statement. With regard to the matter itself, Rabba bar bar Hana said that Rabbi Yohanan said: It is prohibited to write even a single letter of the Bible when not copying from a written text. The Gemara raises an objection from a *baraita*: Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar said: One Adar there was an incident involving Rabbi Meir, who went to intercalate the year in Asia Minor, as, owing to persecutory decrees, he could not do this in Eretz Yisrael. And there was no Megilla there when Purim arrived, so he wrote a Megilla by heart and read from it.^N

Rabbi Abbahu said: Rabbi Meir is different, as in him is fulfilled the verse: "And let your eyelids look straight before you" (Proverbs 4:25), and with regard to this verse, Rami bar Hama said to Rabbi Yirmeya of Difti: What is the meaning of the phrase "and let your eyelids [*afapekha*],"^N from the root *a-p-p*, "look straight [*yaishiru*] before you"? He said to him: This is referring to the words of the Torah, which are difficult to remember exactly, and with regard to which it is written: "Will you glance upon it fleetingly [*hata'if*], from the root *a-p-p*, with your eyes? It is already gone" (Proverbs 23:5), but nevertheless they remain exact [*meyusharin*] in the memory of Rabbi Meir, since he knows them all by heart.

It was related that Rav H̄isda once found Rav H̄ananel writing Torah scrolls, but he was not copying them from a written text, as he knew it all by heart. He said to him: It is fitting for the entire Torah to be written by your mouth, i.e., relying on your memory, but this is what the Sages said: It is prohibited to write even a single letter of the Bible when not copying from a written text. The Gemara asks: Since Rav H̄isda said to him: The entire Torah is fitting to be written by your mouth, it may be concluded by inference that the words of the Torah were exact in his memory, i.e., that Rav H̄ananel enjoyed total mastery of the text. But didn't we say that Rabbi Meir wrote a Megilla without copying from a text due to similar proficiency? The Gemara answers: A time of exigent circumstances is different; since there was no other option available, he was permitted to rely on his expertise, but otherwise this must not be done.

It was further related that Abaye permitted the scribes of the house of ben H̄avu to write phylacteries and *mezuzot* when they were not copying from a pre-existing text. The Gemara asks: In accordance with whose opinion did he issue this allowance? The Gemara explains: In accordance with the opinion of the following *tanna*, as it is taught in a *baraita*: Rabbi Yirmeya said in the name of our master, Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi: Phylacteries and *mezuzot* may be written when they are not copied from a written text, and they do not require scoring, i.e., the parchment is not required to have lines etched in it.

The Gemara concludes: And the *halakha* is as follows: Phylacteries do not require scoring,^H whereas *mezuzot* require scoring.^{NH} And unlike biblical books, both these and those, phylacteries and *mezuzot*, may be written when the scribe is not copying from a written text. What is the reason for this exception? These short texts are well known to all scribes, and therefore it is permitted to write them by heart.^H

§ The mishna teaches: If one reads from a Megilla that was written with *sam*^L or with *sikra* or with *komos* or with *kankantom*, he has not fulfilled his obligation. The Gemara identifies these writing materials: *Sam* is what is called in Aramaic *samma*.^B With regard to *sikra*, Rabba bar bar Hana said: Its name in Aramaic is *sikreta*,^B a type of red paint. *Komos*^{BL} is what is called *koma*, a tree resin.

LANGUAGE

Sam – סָם: When it appears in the context of a dyeing substance, the word *sam* is related to the Greek $\sigma\mu\eta\mu\alpha$, *smēma*, a soap that is used for smearing or dyeing. *Komos* – קוֹמוֹס: From the Latin *commis* or the Greek $\kappa\omicron\mu\mu\iota$, *commi*, meaning gum or resin.