

מתני' מגילה נקראת באחד עשר, בשנים עשר, בשלושה עשר, בארבעה עשר, בחמשה עשר, לא פחות ולא יותר. כרבין המוקפין חומה מימות יהושע בן נון קורין בחמשה עשר, כפרים ועירות גדולות קורין בארבעה עשר, אלא שהכפרים מקדימין ליום הכניסה.

ביצד? חל להיות ארבעה עשר בשני, כפרים ועירות גדולות קורין בו ביום, ומוקפות חומה למחר. חל להיות בשלישי או ברביעי – כפרים מקדימין ליום הכניסה, ועירות גדולות קורין בו ביום, ומוקפות חומה למחר.

חל להיות בחמישי – כפרים ועירות גדולות קורין בו ביום, ומוקפות חומה למחר. חל להיות ערב שבת – כפרים מקדימין ליום הכניסה, ועירות גדולות ומוקפות חומה קורין בו ביום.

חל להיות בשבת – כפרים ועירות גדולות מקדימין וקורין ליום הכניסה, ומוקפות חומה למחר. חל להיות אחר השבת – כפרים מקדימין ליום הכניסה, ועירות גדולות קורין בו ביום, ומוקפות חומה למחר.

MISHNA The Megilla is read^N on the eleventh, on the twelfth, on the thirteenth, on the fourteenth, or on the fifteenth of the month of Adar, not earlier and not later.^{HN} The mishna explains the circumstances when the Megilla is read on each of these days. **Cities** [*kerakin*]^L that have been surrounded by a wall since the days of Joshua, son of Nun, read the Megilla on the fifteenth of Adar, whereas **villages and large towns** that have not been walled since the days of Joshua, son of Nun, read it on the fourteenth. However, the Sages instituted that the villages may advance their reading to the day of assembly, i.e., Monday or Thursday, when the rabbinical courts are in session and the Torah is read publicly, and the villagers therefore come to the larger towns.^N

How so? If the fourteenth of Adar occurs on Monday, the villages and large towns read it on that day, and the walled cities read it on the next day, the fifteenth. If the fourteenth occurs on Tuesday or Wednesday, the villages advance their reading to the day of assembly, i.e., Monday, the twelfth or thirteenth of Adar; the large towns read it on that day, i.e., the fourteenth of Adar, and the walled cities read it on the next day, the fifteenth.

If the fourteenth occurs on Thursday, the villages and large towns read it on that day, the fourteenth, and the walled cities read it on the next day, the fifteenth. If the fourteenth occurs on Shabbat eve, the villages advance their reading to the day of assembly, i.e., Thursday, the thirteenth of Adar; and the large towns and the walled cities read it on that day, i.e., the fourteenth of Adar. Even the walled cities read the Megilla on the fourteenth rather than on the fifteenth, as they do not read it on Shabbat.

If the fourteenth occurs on Shabbat, both the villages and large towns advance their reading to the day of assembly, i.e., Thursday, the twelfth of Adar; and the walled cities read it on the day after Purim, the fifteenth. If the fourteenth occurs on Sunday, the villages advance their reading to the day of assembly, i.e., Thursday, the eleventh of Adar; and the large towns read it on that day, i.e., the fourteenth of Adar; and the walled cities read it on the next day, the fifteenth.

HALAKHA

מועדי הקריאה בזמננו – In cities that were walled during the days of Joshua, son of Nun, even if they are not surrounded by a wall today, the Megilla is read on the fifteenth of Adar. In all other places, it is read on the fourteenth of Adar (*Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim* 688:1, 3).

LANGUAGE

City [*kerakh*] – כרך: A *kerakh* is a large city, and usually walled. Some maintain that the word derives from the Greek *κράξ*, *kharax*, which also refers to a place that is fortified with beams. Others suggest that it is of Semitic origin, perhaps Assyrian, and that perhaps it is related to the word *kerakh* meaning circuit or circumference, indicating that that the city is surrounded by a wall.

NOTES

The Megilla is read – מגילה נקראת: The early authorities ask: Why does the mishna state: The Megilla is read, and not: We read the Megilla? The Ritva explains that the mishna uses this formulation because the obligation that applies to each individual is not to read the Megilla, but rather to hear the Megilla being read. Some suggest that this wording is used to teach that there is no obligation to read the Megilla on all of these days; rather, the Megilla is read in each location on only one of these days (*Re'ah Duda'im; Sefat Emet*).

Not earlier and not later – לא פחות ולא יותר: This phrase literally means not less and not more. The commentators understand that it is referring here to the number of days on which the

Megilla is read (Ritva). The author of the *Roke'ah* notes that there is an allusion to this in the fact that the word Purim appears five times in the book of Esther, corresponding to the five days established by the Sages for reading the Megilla. The author of *Rishon LeTziyyon* writes that the key elements here are the words: Not later. If the Megilla was not read in its proper time, there is no possibility of making it up afterward.

The days of Purim – ימי הפורים: The Ramban asks: Why did the Sages establish the holiday of Purim in such a way that it is celebrated by different sets of Jews on different days rather than by everyone on the same day? He explains that the story of Purim took place after the Jews had already

begun their return to Zion. The Jews who returned were, however, still dwelling in towns and villages without walls. They, and others living in similar conditions, were in the greatest danger due to Haman's decree. When these communities were saved from their enemies, they took the initiative to establish a holiday for themselves on the fourteenth of Adar, the day they were able to rest securely. When the Sages formally established Purim as a national holiday, they affirmed its celebration on the fourteenth for those communities who had begun to celebrate it then, and added a day of celebration on the fifteenth for those in walled cities, in commemoration of the day when the Jews of Shushan had rested from battling their enemies.

NOTES

From where do we derive this halakha – מנלן: Tosafot (Zevahim 89a) ask: Why is the Gemara astonished about the question: From where do we derive this halakha? Even if the derivation is explained in a baraita, not all of the baraitot were well known, and therefore it is appropriate to ask and to provide an answer from the baraita.

The Rashba quotes Tosafot as answering that the Gemara's astonishment is based on the fact that the Sages asked for a source for the halakha concerning the days on which the Megilla is read but did not ask for a source for the halakha in the next clause in the mishna, which states that the villagers advance their reading to the day of assembly. The fact that they did not ask for a source for the second halakha indicates that they knew that the earlier Sages had allowed the villagers to read the Megilla early, in which case the question about the source for the first clause is unnecessary, as the answer is the same.

Some write that the question: From where do we derive this halakha, usually refers to something that is not explicitly written in the Bible but is alluded to in the text. Here, the Gemara asks: Why search for an allusion in the Bible for something that is a rabbinic enactment? (Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch Chajes; see Kelalei HaTalmud).

BACKGROUND

The members of the Great Assembly – אנשי כנסת הגדולה: The exact role and composition of the group known as the members of the Great Assembly is unclear. According to the introductory mishna in Pirkei Avot, the members of the Great Assembly received the oral tradition from the prophets and served as a link in a chain of transmission of the Torah going back to Moses at Mount Sinai. The assembly served as the religious leadership during the Second Temple period. The last of the prophets, including Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, are identified as being part of this group, together with Mordecai of Megillat Esther.

HALAKHA

One court may not annul – אין בית דין יכול לבטל: If a court issued a decree, made an enactment, or established a practice, and it spread throughout the Jewish people, another court cannot cancel the enactment of the first court, unless the latter court is superior in wisdom and in number. Even if the reason for the edict no longer applies, it is not automatically annulled; rather, it must be actively annulled by a court. In the case of earlier and later courts that both consist of seventy-one judges, superiority in number means that the number of Sages who are not members of the court who accept the court's ruling exceeds the number who originally accepted the ruling of the previous court (Rambam Sefer Shofetim, Hilkhot Mamrim 2:2).

גמ' 'מגילה נקראת באחד עשר', מנלן? מנלן?! בדבועינן למימר לקמן: חכמים הקילו על הפפרים להיות מקדימין ליום הנקטה כדי שישפיקו מים ומזון לאחייהם שבכרכים!

אנן הכי קאמרינן: מכדי, בוליהו אנשי כנסת הגדולה תקנינהו, דאי סלקא דעתך אנשי כנסת הגדולה ארבעה עשר וחמשה עשר תקון – אתו רבנן ועקרי תקנתא דתקינו אנשי כנסת הגדולה? והתנן: אין בית דין יכול לבטל דברי בית דין תבירו אלא אם כן גדול ממנו בחכמה ובמנין.

אלא פשיטא – בוליהו אנשי כנסת הגדולה תקינו, היכא זמין?

אמר רב שמן בר אבא אמר רבי יוחנן: אמר קרא לקיים את ימי הפורים האלה בזמניהם, זמנים הרבה תקנו להם.

האי מוביעיא ליה לגופיה! אם כן לימא קרא 'זמן' מאי 'זמניהם' – זמנים טובא.

ואבתי מוביעי ליה: זמנו של זה לא כזמנו של זה! אם כן לימא קרא 'זמנים', מאי 'זמניהם' – שומעת מינה בוליהו.

GEMARA We learned in the mishna: The Megilla is read on the eleventh of Adar. The Gemara asks: From where do we derive this halakha? The Gemara expresses surprise at the question: What room is there to ask: From where do we derive this halakha?⁸ The reason is as we intend to say further on: The Sages were lenient with the villages and allowed them to advance their reading of the Megilla to the day of assembly, so that they would be free to supply water and food to their brethren in the cities on the day of Purim. Accordingly, the Megilla is read on the eleventh due to a rabbinic enactment.

The Gemara explains: This is what we said, i.e., this is what we meant when we asked the question: Now, all of these days when the Megilla may be read were enacted by the members of the Great Assembly⁹ when they established the holiday of Purim itself. As, if it enters your mind to say that the members of the Great Assembly enacted only the fourteenth and fifteenth as days for reading the Megilla, is it possible that the later Sages came and uprooted an ordinance that was enacted by the members of the Great Assembly? Didn't we learn in a mishna (Eduyyot 1:5) that a rabbinical court cannot rescind the statements of another rabbinical court, unless it is superior to it in wisdom and in number?¹⁰ No subsequent court was ever greater than the members of the Great Assembly, so it would be impossible for another court to rescind the enactments of the members of the Great Assembly.

Rather, it is obvious that all these days were enacted by the members of the Great Assembly, and the question is: Where is the allusion to this in the Bible? The Megilla itself, which was approved by the members of the Great Assembly, mentions only the fourteenth and fifteenth of Adar.

Rav Shemen bar Abba¹¹ said that Rabbi Yoḥanan said: It is alluded to when the verse states: "To confirm these days of Purim in their times" (Esther 9:31). The phrase "in their times" indicates that they enacted many times for them and not only two days.

The Gemara objects: This verse is necessary for its own purpose, to teach that the days of Purim must be observed at the proper times. The Gemara responds: If so, let the verse say: To confirm these days of Purim in its time. What is the significance of the term "their times," in the plural? It indicates that many times were established for the reading of the Megilla.

The Gemara objects: But still, the plural term is necessary to indicate that the time of this walled city is not the same as the time of that unwalled town, i.e., Purim is celebrated on different days in different places. The Gemara answers: If so, let the verse say: Their time, indicating that each place celebrates Purim on its respective day. What is the significance of the compound plural "their times"? Learn from this term that although the verse (Esther 9:21) specifies only two days, the Megilla may, at times, be read on all of the days enumerated in the mishna.

PERSONALITIES

Rav Shemen bar Abba – רב שמן בר אבא: This is Rav Shimon bar Abba HaKohen (Shemen is a version of the name Shimon), a second-generation amora in Eretz Yisrael. Rav Shimon bar Abba originally came from Babylonia, where he studied with Shmuel, but he appears to have arrived in Eretz Yisrael at a relatively young age, and there was among the students of Rabbi Hanina. His principal teacher, however, was Rabbi Yoḥanan, to whom he attended with great affection. Much has been said in praise of his great righteousness and also of his extensive wisdom. The Sages applied the verse "There is no bread to the wise" (Ecclesiastes 9:11) to Rav Shemen not only due to his poverty, but also due

to the fact that although he was certainly one of the leading authorities of his generation, Rabbi Yoḥanan did not succeed in ordaining him.

It is mentioned that Rav Shemen bar Abba married the daughters of his first teacher, Shmuel, after they had been taken captive and were subsequently redeemed in Eretz Yisrael. He married the second one after the first one had passed away. The students of Rabbi Yoḥanan were his colleagues, and the Sages of the next generation report words of Torah in his name. His son, Rav Amram, was also a Torah scholar who reported words of Torah in his father's name.

Say that the plural term indicates many times – **אימא זמנים טובא**: Many ask: Certainly there is a rule that a plural term should be interpreted as implying minimally two. What, then, is the basis for the Gemara's question that the plural should indicate more than two additional days for reading the Megilla? Some answer that since the Megilla states: "The month that was turned for them from sorrow to gladness, and from mourning into a good day; that they should make them days of feasting and gladness, and of sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor" (Esther 9:22), one might have thought that the Megilla may be read from the beginning of the month (Rashba; Ritva). In fact, according to the Jerusalem Talmud, this verse indicates that one may, in fact, read the Megilla starting from the beginning of the month of Adar.

A time of assembly for all – **זמן קהילה לכל**: Rashi explains that the thirteenth of Adar was the day on which the Jews assembled to fight their enemies. Rav Aḥai Gaon, in his *She'iltot*, understands that the term: A time of assembly, alludes to the Fast of Esther, on which all gather in order to fast. If this is the Gemara's intention, this is the earliest reference to the fast, which is not explicitly mentioned in the Talmud (see Rabbeinu Tam, cited in Rosh).

אימא: זמנים טובא! "זמניהם" דומיא ד"זמנים", מה זמנים תרי – אף "זמניהם" תרי.

The Gemara asks: If so, say that the plural term indicates many times,^N and the Megilla may be read even earlier than the eleventh of Adar. The Gemara rejects this argument: The compound plural "their times," should be understood as similar to the simple plural term, **their time**. Just as the term **their time** can be understood to refer to two days, indicating that each location reads the Megilla in its respective time on the fourteenth or the fifteenth of Adar, so too, "their times" should be understood as referring to only two additional days when the Megilla may be read.

ואימא תריסר ותליסר! כדאמר רב שמואל בר יצחק: שלשה עשר זמן קהילה לכל היא, ולא צריך לרבויי. הכא נמי שלשה עשר זמן קהילה לכל היא ולא צריך לרבויי.

The Gemara asks: Say that these two added days are the twelfth and the thirteenth of Adar. How is it derived that the Megilla may be read on the eleventh as well? The Gemara answers: It is as Rav Shmuel bar Yitzḥak said in a different context: **The thirteenth of Adar is a time of assembly for all**,^N as it was on that day that the Jews assembled to fight their enemies, and the main miracle was performed on that day. Consequently, **there is no need** for a special derivation to include it as a day that is fit for reading the Megilla. **Here too**, since the thirteenth of Adar is a time of assembly for all, there is no need for a special derivation to include it among the days when the Megilla may be read.

ואימא שיתסר ושיבסר! "ולא יעבור" בתויב.

The Gemara objects: **And say** that the two additional days are the sixteenth and the seventeenth of Adar. The Gemara responds: **It is written**: "And it shall not pass" (Esther 9:27), indicating that the celebration of Purim is not delayed until a later date.

ורבי שמואל בר נחמני אמר: אמר קרא "בנימים אשר נחו בהם היהודים", "ימים" "בנימים" – לרבבות אחד עשר, ושנים עשר.

Having cited and discussed the opinion of Rav Shemen bar Abba, the Gemara cites another answer to the question of where the verses allude to the permissibility of reading the Megilla on the days enumerated in the mishna. **And Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani said**: These dates are alluded to when the verse states: "As the days on which the Jews rested from their enemies" (Esther 9:22). The term "days" is referring to the two days that are explicitly mentioned in the previous verse, i.e., the fourteenth and the fifteenth. The term "as the days" comes to include two additional days, i.e., the eleventh and twelfth of Adar.

ואימא תריסר ותליסר! אמר רב שמואל בר יצחק: שלשה עשר זמן קהילה לכל היא, ולא צריך לרבויי ואימא שיתסר ושיבסר! "ולא יעבור" בתויב.

The Gemara asks: **And say** that the two additional days are the twelfth and thirteenth of Adar. How is it derived that the Megilla may be read on the eleventh as well? In answer to this question, **Rav Shmuel bar Yitzḥak said**: **The thirteenth of Adar is a time of assembly for all**, and there is no need for a special derivation to include it as a day fit for reading. The Gemara objects: **Say** that these additional days are the sixteenth and seventeenth of Adar. This suggestion is rejected: **It is written**: "And it shall not pass."

רבי שמואל בר נחמני מאי טעמא לא אמר מ"בזמניהם"? זמן, זמנים, זמניהם לא משמע ליה.

Since two derivations were offered for the same matter, the Gemara asks: **What is the reason** that **Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani did not state** that the days enumerated in the mishna are fit for reading the Megilla based upon the term "in their times," in accordance with the opinion of Rav Shemen bar Abba? The Gemara answers: **He does not learn** anything from the distinction between the terms **time**, **their time**, and **their times**. Therefore, the verse indicates only that there are two days when the Megilla may be read.

ורב שמן בר אבא, מאי טעמא לא אמר מ"בנימים"? אמר לך: ההוא לדורות הוא דכתיב.

The Gemara asks: **And what is the reason** that **Rav Shemen bar Abba did not state** that the days enumerated in the mishna are fit for reading the Megilla based upon the term "as the days," in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani? The Gemara answers: He could have said to you: **That verse is written** as a reference to future generations, and it indicates that just as the Jews rested on these days at that time, they shall rest and celebrate on these days for all generations.

Rabbi Akiva the unattributed – רבי עקיבא סתמתא – Rashi explains that many unattributed *mishnayot* reflect the opinion of Rabbi Akiva. Alternatively, most unattributed statements of *tanna'im* were formulated by his students, as explained in tractate *Sanhedrin* (86a). Some suggest that this term simply means that Rabbi Akiva's opinion is cited in this particular mishna anonymously (*Arukh*; Ritva).

In accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Akiva even nowadays – הוה איל ומסתכלין בה – Rashi proves this from the fact that Rabbi Akiva lived after the destruction of the Temple. Note, however, the Rashba, who challenges this assertion, as Rabbi Akiva was also alive when the Temple was still standing, and furthermore, the Sages had much to say about *halakhot* that were no longer practiced in their day.

Since people look [*mistaklin*] to it – הוה איל ומסתכלין בה – According to some, the concern is that people may come to set the date of Passover according to the date on which the Megilla is read (Rashi; Rid). Others explain that the poor look to the time when the Megilla is read and expect to receive the Purim gifts for the needy at the same time. They may become distraught if the Megilla is read and the gifts are not distributed (Rif; Rosh).

Rabbeinu Efrayim explains in similar fashion: If the money is distributed when the Megilla is read in advance of the holiday, the poor might come to squander it and not have any money left with which to celebrate on Purim itself.

Rav Hai Gaon's version of the text read *mistaknin*, they endanger themselves. He explains that nowadays, when the Jews are subject to persecution, it is better not to add to the days of Purim, so as not to intensify the danger. This is also indicated in the Jerusalem Talmud.

אמר רבה בר בר חנה אמר רבי יוחנן: זו דברי רבי עקיבא סתמתא, דדריש זמן, ומנס, ומניהם, אבל חכמים אומרים: אין קורין אותה אלא בזמנה.

מיתבי: אמר רבי יהודה אימתי – בזמן שהשנים כתיקון, וישראל שרויין על אדמתן. אבל בזמן הזה, הואיל ומסתכלין בה – אין קורין אותה אלא בזמנה.

רבי יהודה אליבא דמאן? אליבא דרבי עקיבא – אפילו בזמן הזה איתא להאי תקנתא.

אלא לאו – אליבא דרבנן, ובזמן שהשנים כתיקון וישראל שרויין על אדמתן מיהא קרינן! תיובתא דרבי יוחנן, תיובתא.

איבא דאמרי: אמר רבה בר בר חנה אמר רבי יוחנן: זו דברי רבי עקיבא סתמתא. אבל חכמים אמרו: בזמן הזה, הואיל ומסתכלין בה אין קורין אותה אלא בזמנה.

תניא נמי הכי: אמר רבי יהודה: אימתי – בזמן שהשנים כתיקון וישראל שרויין על אדמתן, אבל בזמן הזה הואיל ומסתכלין בה – אין קורין אותה אלא בזמנה.

רב אשי קשיא ליה דרבי יהודה אדרבי יהודה,

§ With regard to the mishna's ruling that the Megilla may be read on the day of assembly, **Rabba bar bar Hana said that Rabbi Yoḥanan said: This is the statement of Rabbi Akiva the unattributed.**ⁿ Most unattributed statements of *tanna'im* were formulated by Rabbi Akiva's students and reflect his opinions. **As, he derives halakhot based on the distinction that he draws between the terms time, their time, and their times. However, the Sages say: One may read the Megilla only in its designated time, i.e., the fourteenth of Adar.**

The Gemara raises an objection based upon the following *baraita*. **Rabbi Yehuda said: When is one permitted to read the Megilla from the eleventh to the fifteenth of Adar? One may read on these dates at a time when the years are established properly and the Jewish people dwell securely in their own land. However, nowadays, since people look to the reading of the Megilla and use it to calculate when Passover begins, one may read the Megilla only in its designated time, so as not to cause confusion with regard to the date of Passover, which is exactly one month from the day after Purim.**

The Gemara analyzes this *baraita*: **In accordance with whose opinion did Rabbi Yehuda issue his ruling? If we say that it is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Akiva, whose opinion is expressed in the mishna, there is a difficulty, as Rabbi Akiva holds that even nowadaysⁿ this ordinance applies.** According to Rabbi Akiva, it is permitted for residents of villages to read the Megilla on the day of assembly even nowadays, as he did not limit his ruling to times when the Jewish people dwell securely in their land.

Rather, is it not in accordance with the opinion of the Sages, who disagreed with Rabbi Akiva? **And, nevertheless, at least when the years are established properly and the Jewish people dwell securely in their land, the Megilla is read even prior to the fourteenth, as the Sages disagree only about the halakha nowadays.** This contradicts the statement of Rabbi Yoḥanan, who holds that the Megilla could never be read earlier than the fourteenth of Adar. The Gemara concludes: **The refutation of the opinion of Rabbi Yoḥanan is indeed a conclusive refutation.**

There are those who say a different version of the previous passage. **Rabba bar bar Hana said that Rabbi Yoḥanan said: This is the statement of Rabbi Akiva, the unattributed. However, the Sages said: Nowadays, since people look to the reading of the Megillaⁿ and use it to calculate when Passover begins, one may read the Megilla only in its designated time.**

The Gemara comments: **This is also taught in a baraita: Rabbi Yehuda said: When is one permitted to read the Megilla from the eleventh to the fifteenth of Adar? At a time when the years are established properly and the Jewish people dwell securely in their own land. However, nowadays, since people look to the reading of the Megilla and use it to calculate when Passover begins, one may read the Megilla only in its designated time.**^h According to this version, Rabbi Yehuda's statement is consistent with the opinion of the Sages, as cited by Rabbi Yoḥanan.

The Gemara adds: **Rav Ashi poses a difficulty based on an apparent contradiction between the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda in the aforementioned baraita and a ruling cited in a mishna in the name of Rabbi Yehuda,**

HALAKHA

Reading the Megilla early on the day of assembly – הקדמה – The enactment that the villages advance their reading of the Megilla to the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth of Adar applies only when Israel is sovereign in its land. Today,

however, the Megilla is read only on its designated days, the fourteenth and the fifteenth of Adar. This ruling is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda, as the Gemara follows his opinion (Rambam *Sefer Zemanim*, *Hilkhot Megilla* 1:9).

ומוקים לה לבריייתא ברבי יוסי בר יהודה.

ומי אמר רבי יהודה בזמן הזה הואיל ומסתכלין בה אין קורין אותה אלא בזמנה? ורמינהי אמר רבי יהודה: אימתני – מקום שנכנסין בשני ובחמישי, אבל מקום שאין נכנסין בשני ובחמישי – אין קורין אותה אלא בזמנה.

מקום שנכנסין בשני ובחמישי מיהא קרינן, ואפילו בזמן הזה! ומוקים לה לבריייתא ברבי יוסי בר יהודה.

ומשום דקשיא ליה דרבי יהודה אדרבי יהודה מוקים לה לבריייתא ברבי יוסי בר יהודה!

רב אשי שמיע ליה דאיכא דתני לה ברבי יהודה, ואיכא דתני לה ברבי יוסי בר יהודה, ומדקשיא ליה דרבי יהודה אדרבי יהודה אמר: מאן דתני לה ברבי יהודה – לאו דווקא, מאן דתני לה ברבי יוסי בר יהודה – דווקא.

”ברבים המוקפים חומה מימות יהושע בן נון קורין בחמשה עשר” וכו’. מנהיג מילי? אמר רבא: דאמר קרא “על כן היהודים הפרזים היושבים בערי הפרזות” וגו’ מדפרזים בארבעה עשר – מוקפין בחמשה עשר.

ואימא: פרזים בארבעה עשר – מוקפין כלל כלל לא! ולא ישראל ננהו? ועוד, “מהודו ועד כוש” בתבי.

ואימא: פרזים בארביסר, מוקפין בארביסר ובחמיסר, כדכתוב: “להיות עושים את יום ארבעה עשר לחדש אדר ואת יום חמשה עשר [בו] בכל שנה!”

and he establishes the *baraita* in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei bar Yehuda, rather than Rabbi Yehuda.

The Gemara explains the apparent contradiction: **And did Rabbi Yehuda actually say that nowadays, since people look to the reading of the Megilla and use it to calculate when Passover begins, one may read the Megilla only in its designated time?** The Gemara raises a contradiction from a mishna (5a): **Rabbi Yehuda said: When is one permitted to read the Megilla from the eleventh of Adar? In a place where the villagers generally enter town on Monday and Thursday.^h However, in a place where they do not generally enter town on Monday and Thursday, one may read the Megilla only in its designated time, the fourteenth of Adar.**

The mishna indicates that, **at least in a place where the villagers enter town on Monday and Thursday, one may read the Megilla from the eleventh of Adar even nowadays.** And due to this contradiction, Rav Ashi establishes the *baraita* in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei bar Yehuda.

The Gemara expresses surprise: **Because Rav Ashi poses a difficultyⁿ due to the apparent contradiction between the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda in the *baraita* and the opinion cited in a mishna in the name of Rabbi Yehuda, he establishes the *baraita* in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei bar Yehuda?** How could he have emended the text just because he had a difficulty that he did not know how to resolve?

The Gemara explains: **Rav Ashi heard that there were those who taught the *baraita* in the name of Rabbi Yehuda, and there were those who taught it in the name of Rabbi Yosei bar Yehuda. And since he had a difficulty with the apparent contradiction between one ruling of Rabbi Yehuda and another ruling of Rabbi Yehuda, he said: The one who taught it in the name of Rabbi Yosei bar Yehuda is precise, whereas the one who taught it in the name of Rabbi Yosei bar Yehuda is precise, and in this way he eliminated the contradiction.**

S We learned in the mishna: **Cities that have been surrounded by a wall since the days of Joshua, son of Nun, read the Megilla on the fifteenth of Adar.** The Gemara asks: **From where are these matters derived, as they are not stated explicitly in the Megilla?** Rava said: **It is as the verse states: “Therefore the Jews of the villages, who dwell in the unwallled towns, make the fourteenth day of the month of Adar a day of gladness and feasting” (Esther 9:19). From the fact that the unwallled towns celebrate Purim on the fourteenth, it may be derived that the walled cities celebrate Purim on the fifteenth.**

The Gemara challenges this answer: **Say that the unwallled towns celebrate Purim on the fourteenth, as indicated in the verse, and the walled cities do not celebrate it at all.** The Gemara expresses astonishment: **And are they not Jews?ⁿ And furthermore: It is written that the kingdom of Ahasuerus was “from Hodu until Cush” (Esther 1:1), and the celebration of Purim was accepted in all of the countries of his kingdom (Esther 9:20–23).**

Rather, the following challenge may be raised: **Say that the unwallled towns celebrate Purim on the fourteenth and the walled cities celebrate it on the fourteenth and on the fifteenth, as it is written: “That they should keep the fourteenth day of the month of Adar and the fifteenth day of the same, in every year” (Esther 9:21).** This verse can be understood to mean that there are places where Purim is celebrated on both days.

HALAKHA

A place where they enter on Monday and Thursday – מקום שנכנסין בשני ובחמישי: This provision was enacted on behalf of those villagers who generally go to town on Mondays and Thursdays, in order to allow them to advance their reading of the Megilla to the day of assembly. However, in a place where they do not generally go to town on Mondays and Thursdays, no such enactment was made, in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda, following the principle that whenever he says: **When, he comes to explain the opinion of the Sages (Rambam Sefer Zemanim, Hilkhot Megilla 1:6).**

NOTES

Because Rav Ashi poses a difficulty – ומשום דקשיא ליה: The Rashba and the Ritva explain that the Gemara’s objection to Rav Ashi’s reformulation of the *baraita* is based on the fact that it would have been possible to resolve the contradiction in a simpler way by explaining that the conflicting statements of Rabbi Yehuda were stated in accordance with the two different opinions, that of Rabbi Akiva and that of the Sages, and there was no need to attribute one *baraita* to Rabbi Yosei bar Yehuda.

And are they not Jews – ולא ישראל נינהו: Some explain this twofold answer according to the opinion of the Ramban, who states that since the primary danger was to those living in unwallled towns, and especially those in Eretz Yisrael, it was possible to entertain the notion that those living in the walled cities need not celebrate Purim at all. The Gemara answers that, first of all, they too are Jews, and as such they too must celebrate with their brethren. Second, Haman’s edict was “from Hodu until Cush” and therefore also included the residents of the walled cities. Even though they were not in immediate danger, they nevertheless shared in the miracle (*Ginzei HaMelekh*).

What is the reason for the opinion of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korḥa – מאי טעמא דרבי יהושע בן קרחא – The question is not about his basic reasoning. Rather, the question is why was it not enacted that the status of each city be determined by its present situation: A city that is presently walled is a walled city that reads on the fifteenth, and one that is not presently walled is an unwalled town that reads on the fourteenth (*Turei Even*). Indeed, in the Jerusalem Talmud there is a third *tanna*, Rabbi Yosei bar Yehuda, who maintains this opinion as the *halakha*.

From the days of Joshua, son of Nun – מימות יהושע בן נון: The main reason that the status of a city as walled or unwalled depends upon the time of Joshua is to show honor to Eretz Yisrael. In the days of Ahasuerus the cities of Israel were all unwalled cities, yet it would not be fitting to consider them as having the status of unwalled towns for the purposes of reading the Megilla. Therefore, the status of each city is determined based on whether it was walled in the time of Joshua, son of Nun. This is also the understanding in the Jerusalem Talmud, as well as that of the Rambam. Some suggest that since it was Joshua who began the process of wiping out Amalek, the determination of walled and unwalled cities with respect to Purim was made dependent upon his time (Ran; Ritva; Mikhtam; Meiri, citing the midrash).

אי הוה כתב: "את יום ארבעה עשר וחמשה עשר" – בדקאמרת, השתא דכתיב: את יום ארבעה עשר ואת יום חמשה עשר – אתא "את" ופסיק: הני בארבעה עשר, והני בחמשה עשר.

ואימא: פרוזים בארביסר, מוקפין – אי בעו בארביסר, אי בעו בחמיסר! אמר קרא: "בזמניהם" – זמנו של זה לא זמנו של זה.

ואימא בתלסר! כשושן.

אשבחן עשייה, זכירה מנלן? אמר קרא: "והימים האלה נזכרים ונעשים", איתקש זכירה לעשייה.

מתניתין דלא כי האי תנא, דתנא, רבי יהושע בן קרחא אומר: כרבין המוקפין חומה מימות אחשורוש קורין בחמשה עשר.

מאי טעמא דרבי יהושע בן קרחא? כי שושן, מה שושן מוקפת חומה מימות אחשורוש וקורין בחמשה עשר – אף כל שמוקפת חומה מימות אחשורוש קורין בחמשה עשר.

ותנא דידן מאי טעמא? יליף "פרזי" "פרזי", כתיב הכא: "על בן היהודים הפרזים" וכתיב התם: "לבד מערי הפרזי הרבה מאד" מה להלן מוקפת חומה מימות יהושע בן נון – אף כאן מוקפת חומה מימות יהושע בן נון.

בשלמא רבי יהושע בן קרחא לא אמר כתנא דידן – דלית ליה "פרזי" "פרזי" אלא תנא דידן מאי טעמא לא אמר כרבי יהושע בן קרחא?

The Gemara rejects this argument: **If it had been written** in the verse: **The fourteenth day and [ve] the fifteenth**, it would be as you originally said. However, **now that it is written: The fourteenth day and [ve'et] the fifteenth day**, the particle *et* used here to denote the accusative **comes and interrupts**, indicating that the two days are distinct. Therefore, residents of **these** locations celebrate Purim **on the fourteenth**, and residents of **those** locations celebrate it **on the fifteenth**.

The Gemara suggests: **Say** that residents of **unwalled towns** celebrate Purim **on the fourteenth**, as stated in the verse, and with regard to residents of **walled cities**, **if they wish** they may celebrate it **on the fourteenth**, and **if they wish** they may celebrate it **on the fifteenth**. The Gemara responds: **The verse states: "In their times"** (Esther 9:31), indicating that **the time** when the residents of **this** place celebrate Purim **is not the time** when the residents of **that** place celebrate Purim.

The Gemara raises another challenge: **Say** that the walled cities should celebrate Purim **on the thirteenth** of Adar and not on the fifteenth. The Gemara answers: It stands to reason that the residents of walled cities, who do not celebrate Purim on the fourteenth, celebrate it **as it is celebrated in Shushan**, and it is explicitly stated that Purim was celebrated in Shushan on the fifteenth.

The Gemara comments: **We found** a source for **observing** the holiday of Purim on the fourteenth of Adar in unwalled towns and on the fifteenth of Adar in walled cities; **from where do we derive that remembering** the story of Purim through the reading of the Megilla takes place on these days? The Gemara explains that **the verse states: "That these days should be remembered and observed"** (Esther 9:28), from which it is derived that **remembering is compared to observing**.

§ The Gemara notes that **the mishna is not in accordance with the opinion of this tanna**, as it is taught in the *Tosefta* (1:1) that Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korḥa says: **Cities that have been surrounded by a wall since the days of Ahasuerus read the Megilla on the fifteenth**. According to the *Tosefta*, the status of walled cities is determined based upon whether they were walled in the time of Ahasuerus rather than the time of Joshua.

The Gemara asks: **What is the reason for the opinion of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korḥa?**ⁿ The Gemara explains that the Megilla is read on the fifteenth in cities that are **like Shushan: Just as Shushan is a city that was surrounded by a wall since the days of Ahasuerus, and one reads the Megilla there on the fifteenth, so too every city that was walled since the days of Ahasuerus reads the Megilla on the fifteenth**.

The Gemara asks: **What is the reason for the opinion of the tanna of our mishna?** The Gemara explains: It is **derived** through a verbal analogy between one instance of the word **unwalled** and another instance of the word **unwalled**. **It is written here: "Therefore the Jews of the villages, who dwell in the unwalled towns"** (Esther 9:19), **and it is written there, in Moses' statement to Joshua before the Jewish people entered Eretz Yisrael: "All these cities were fortified with high walls, gates and bars; besides unwalled towns, a great many"** (Deuteronomy 3:5). **Just as there, in Deuteronomy, the reference is to a city that was surrounded by a wall from the days of Joshua, son of Nun, so too here it is referring to a city that was surrounded by a wall from the days of Joshua, son of Nun.**ⁿ

The Gemara continues: **Granted that Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korḥa did not state his explanation in accordance with the opinion of the tanna of our mishna because he did not hold that a verbal analogy can be established between one verse that employs the word unwalled and the other verse that employs the word unwalled. However, what is the reason that the tanna of our mishna did not state his explanation in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korḥa?**

Reading in Shushan – קריאה בשושן – Even though the city of Shushan was not walled from the days of Joshua, son of Nun, the Megilla is read there on the fifteenth because the miracle that happened there took place on that day (*Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayyim* 688:2).

A walled city, and all settlements adjacent to it, and all that can be seen with it – כָּרְךְ וְכָל הַסְּמוּךְ וְכָל הַנִּרְאָה – A walled city, and all places near it, and all places that can be seen from it, are considered for the purpose of Megilla like the walled city itself, so that the Megilla is read in those places on the fifteenth of Adar, in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi (*Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayyim* 688:2).

LANGUAGE

Province [*medina*] – מְדִינָה – In rabbinic Hebrew, and perhaps also in biblical Hebrew (see Nehemiah 11:3), the term *medina* means a city, and it seems that it is in this sense that the word is understood in the midrashic expositions found here in the Gemara.

מאי טעמא?! דהא אית ליה פְּרָזִי
“פְּרָזִי, הֲכִי קָאָמַר: אֵלָא שׁוֹשָׁן דְּעָבְדָא
בְּמַאן, לֹא כְּפְרָזִים וְלֹא כְּמוֹקְפִין!

The Gemara expresses astonishment: **What is the reason? Isn't it because he holds** that it is derived from the verbal analogy between one usage of the word **unwalled** and the other usage of the word **unwalled**?^N The Gemara explains: **This is what he said**, i.e., this was the question: According to the *tanna* of our mishna, **in accordance with whom does Shushan observe Purim?** Shushan is **not like the unwalled towns and not like the walled cities**, as residents of Shushan celebrate Purim on the fifteenth, but the city was not surrounded by a wall since the days of Joshua.

אָמַר רַבָּא וְאָמְרִי לָהּ כְּדִי: שְׂאֵי שׁוֹשָׁן
הוּאִיל וְנַעֲשֶׂה בָּהּ נֶס.

Rava said, and some say it **unattributed** to any particular Sage: **Shushan is different since the miracle occurred in it**^N on the fifteenth of Adar, and therefore Purim is celebrated on that day. However, other cities are only considered walled cities and read the Megilla on the fifteenth of Adar if they were walled since the days of Joshua.^H

בְּשִׁלְמָא לְתַנָּא דִּידִן – הֵינִי דְכִתְבִּיב:
“מְדִינָה וּמְדִינָה וְעִיר וְעִיר,” “מְדִינָה
וּמְדִינָה” – לְחֵלֶק בֵּין מוֹקְפִין חוּמָה
מִימֹת יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן נֹון לְמוֹקְפֵת חוּמָה
מִימֹת אַחַשְׁוֵרוּשׁ.

The Gemara asks: **Granted, according to the tanna of our mishna, this is the meaning of what is written:** “And these days should be remembered and observed throughout every generation, every family, every province, and every city” (Esther 9:28). The phrase “every province [*medina*]^{LN} is expressed in the verse using repetition, so that it reads literally: Every province and province, and therefore contains a superfluous usage of the word province, is meant to **distinguish between cities that were surrounded by a wall since the days of Joshua, son of Nun**, where the Megilla is read on the fifteenth, and a city that was surrounded by a wall since the days of Ahasuerus, where the Megilla is read on the fourteenth.

“עִיר וְעִיר” נָמִי – לְחֵלֶק בֵּין שׁוֹשָׁן
לְשָׂאָר עִירוֹת. אֵלָא לְרַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן
קֹרְחָה, בְּשִׁלְמָא “מְדִינָה וּמְדִינָה” –
לְחֵלֶק בֵּין שׁוֹשָׁן לְשָׂאָר עִירוֹת, אֵלָא
“עִיר וְעִיר” לְמָאי אָתָּא?

The phrase “every city,” which is similarly expressed through repetition and contains a superfluous usage of the word city, also serves to **distinguish between Shushan and other cities**, as Purim is celebrated in Shushan on the fifteenth despite the fact that it was not walled since the time of Joshua. **However, according to Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korḥa, granted** that the phrase “every province” comes to **distinguish between Shushan and other cities** that were not walled since the days of Ahasuerus; **but what does the phrase “every city” come to teach?**

אָמַר לָךְ רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן קֹרְחָה: וּלְתַנָּא
דִּידִן מִי נִחְיָא? כִּיֹּן דְאִית לֵיהּ פְּרָזִי פְּרָזִי
“מְדִינָה וּמְדִינָה” לָמָּה לִי? אֵלָא. קָרָא
לְדַרְשָׁה הוּא דְאָתָּא, וְכַדְרַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ
בֶּן לִוִּי הוּא דְאָתָּא. דְאָמַר רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ
בֶּן לִוִּי: כָּרְךְ וְכָל הַסְּמוּךְ לוֹ וְכָל הַנִּרְאָה
עִמּוֹ נִידוֹן כְּכָרְךְ.

The Gemara explains that **Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korḥa could have said to you: According to the tanna of our mishna, does it work out well? Since he holds** that it is derived from the verbal analogy between one verse that employs the word **unwalled** and the other verse that employs the word **unwalled**, **why do I need the phrase “every province”?** Rather, the verse comes for a midrashic exposition, and it comes to indicate that the *halakha* is in accordance with the ruling issued by **Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi. As Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: A walled city, and all settlements adjacent to it, and all settlements that can be seen with it**,^H i.e., that can be seen from the walled city, are **considered like the walled city**, and the Megilla is read there on the fifteenth.

NOTES

He holds that it is derived from the verbal analogy between one usage of the word **unwalled** and the other usage of the word **unwalled** – אִית לֵיהּ פְּרָזִי – This indicates that the book of Esther may be interpreted by way of the hermeneutical rules used for the Torah, such as verbal analogy. This idea is found in the Jerusalem Talmud as well (see Ritva).

Since the miracle occurred in it – הוּאִיל וְנַעֲשֶׂה בָּהּ נֶס – Rashi and others explain that a miracle was performed there during the battles and the people celebrated there on the fifteenth. Others suggest that the central part of the Purim miracle, i.e., all of the actions involving Esther and Mordecai, took place in Shushan,

and it is therefore fitting that it should receive special honor and be treated as a walled city for future generations (Rabbeinu Yehonatan; *Turei Even*).

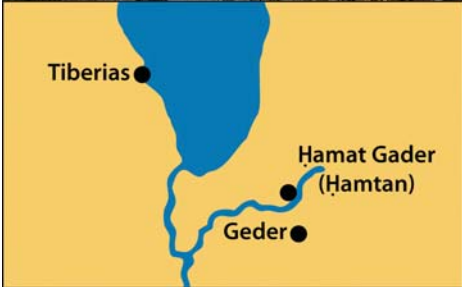
Every province – מְדִינָה וּמְדִינָה – The Rashba explains that according to the *tanna* of the mishna, the words “every family,” which are expressed in the verse in the repetitive phrase: Every family and family, is used in order to distinguish between villages that read on the fourteenth and other villages that advance their reading to the day of assembly, or those that are annexed to the walled cities for the purpose of Megilla reading.

HALAKHA

What is adjacent – איךו קמוך: With regard to reading the Megilla, an adjacent place is a place that is found within a *mil* of the walled city. Some say that in places where there is a train and the like, we do not measure by the distance of a *mil*, but rather the distance one can travel in eighteen minutes (see *Kaf HaHayyim; Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayyim* 688:2).

BACKGROUND

Like from Hamtan to Tiberias – כמחמתן לטבריא: Hamtan, also called Hamat or Hamta, is a city that was built around the hot springs of Tiberias. Although it was close to Tiberias, it was a separate settlement. It was also the seat of one of the priestly watches. Ancient Tiberias was built south of modern-day Tiberias, and the distance between ancient Tiberias and Hamtan was a *mil*, approximately 1,000–1,200 m.



Roman bath ruins at Hamat Gader and map of area surrounding Geder and Hamtan

עד כמה? אמר רבי ירמיה ואיתימא רבי חייא בר אבא: כמחמתן לטבריא, מיל. ולימא מיל! הא קא משמע לן: דשיעורא דמיל במה הוי – כמחמתן לטבריא.

ואמר רבי ירמיה ואיתימא רבי חייא בר אבא: מנצפך צופים אמרום.

ותסברא?! והכתיב: "אלה המצוות שאין נביא רשאי לחדש דבר מעתה ועד עולם, האמר רב חסדא: מ"ם וסמך שבלוחות"

The Gemara asks: **Up to what distance is considered adjacent?**^H Rabbi Yirmeya said, and some say that it was Rabbi Hiyya bar Abba who said: The limit is like the distance from the town of Hamtan to Tiberias,^B a *mil*. The Gemara asks: **Let him say simply that the limit is a *mil*; why did he have to mention these places?** The Gemara answers that the formulation of the answer teaches us this: **How much distance comprises the measure of a *mil*?** It is like the distance from Hamtan to Tiberias.

Having cited a statement of Rabbi Yirmeya, which some attribute to Rabbi Hiyya bar Abba, the Gemara cites other statements attributed to these Sages. Rabbi Yirmeya said, and some say that it was Rabbi Hiyya bar Abba who said: **The Seers, i.e., the prophets, were the ones who said^N that the letters *mem, nun, tzadi, peh,* and *kaf* [*mantzepak*]^N have a different form when they appear at the end of a word.**

The Gemara asks: **And how can you understand it that way? Isn't it written: "These are the commandments that the Lord commanded Moses for the children of Israel in Mount Sinai" (Leviticus 27:34), which indicates that a prophet is not permitted to initiate or change any matter of halakha from now on?** Consequently, how could the prophets establish new forms for the letters? **And furthermore, didn't Rav Hisha say: The letters *mem* and *samekh* in the tablets of the covenant given at Sinai**

NOTES

The Seers said – צופים אמרום: The Rashba asks how it is possible that the manner in which these letters are written was forgotten? After all, the Torah scroll written by Moses himself was kept in the Temple in the Ark and could have been checked at any time. He explains that the doubt occurred after King Josiah hid the Ark due to the prophecies predicting the destruction of the Temple. Following Josiah's reign, wicked kings abolished

Torah study, and this led to the doubts about how the letters were to be written.

Mem, nun, tzadi, peh, and kaf [*mantzepak*] – מנצפך: The *ge'onim* write that the letters were intentionally arranged in this order, and not in alphabetical order [*kemanpatz*], in order to allude to the Seers [*tzofim*] who ordained them.

Perek I
Daf 3 Amud a

NOTES

Stood by way of a miracle – בנס היו עומדין: The letters appearing on the tablets of the covenant were engraved into the stone, and there is a tradition that the engraving went completely through the tablet. Most letters are not closed, and therefore the portions of the stone that remained after the engraving were attached to the rest of the stone. However, since the letter *samekh* is closed, the part of the stone inside the letter could only have remained in place by way of a miracle, as it was not attached to the rest of the tablet. The same is true of the letter *mem* when it appears at the end of the word. This statement of Rav Hisha indicates that the form of the *mem* as it appears at the end of a word was already established at Sinai.

בנס היו עומדין? stood by way of a miracle?^N

אין, מהוה הו, ולא הו ידעי הי באמצע תיבה והי בסוף תיבה, ואתו צופים ותקינו: פתוחין באמצע תיבה וסגורין בסוף תיבה.

The Gemara answers: **Yes, two forms of these letters did exist at that time, but the people did not know which one of them was to be used in the middle of the word and which at the end of the word, and the Seers came and established that the open forms are to be used in the middle of the word and the closed forms at the end of the word.**

סוף סוף "אלה המצוות" שאין נביא עתיד לחדש דבר מעתה! אלא שכחום וחרזו ויסדום.

The Gemara asks: **Ultimately, however, doesn't the phrase "these are the commandments" (Leviticus 27:34) indicate that a prophet is not permitted to initiate any matter of halakha from now on? Rather, it may be suggested that the final letters already existed at the time of the giving of the Torah, but over the course of time the people forgot them, and the prophets then came and reestablished them.**