

NOTES

For placing hands and for slaughtering – לְסַמְּכָה וְלִשְׁחִיטָה – The fact that these two actions, as well as several others, must be done during the day is derived from specific verses, although other sacrificial acts are derived from the verse that states: “On the day that he commanded the children of Israel to present their offerings” (Leviticus 7:38). See *Tosafot*, who explain why this general verse is not used for all actions related to offerings. However, in the Jerusalem Talmud, these actions are indeed derived from the verse that starts: “On the day that he commanded.”

וְלִיּוּדֵי מַעֲשֵׂר וְכוּ': דְּכַתִּיב "וְאִמַּרְתָּ לְפָנָי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ בַּעֲרִיתִי הַקֹּדֶשׁ מִן הַבַּיִת" וְסַמְּךָ לַיּוֹם הַזֶּה ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ מִצֹּרֶךְ.

And daytime is the time for the declaration with regard to tithes, as it is written in the formula of this declaration: “And you shall say before the Lord your God, I have removed the sacred things out of my house” (Deuteronomy 26:13–15); and juxtaposed to that passage it is written: “This day the Lord your God has commanded you to do” (Deuteronomy 26:16), implying during the day and not at night.

לְסַמְּכָה וְלִשְׁחִיטָה: דְּכַתִּיב "וְסַמְּךָ וְשַׁחֲטוּ, וְכַתִּיב בָּהּ בִּשְׁחִיטָה "בַּיּוֹם זִבְחֶכֶם", וְלִתְנוּפָה – דְּכַתִּיב "בַּיּוֹם הַנִּיפְכֶם אֶת הָעֹמֶר".

For placing hands on the head of an offering and for slaughtering<sup>n</sup> an offering, it is derived as it is written: “And he shall lay his hand upon the head of his offering, and slaughter it” (Leviticus 3:8), comparing the laying of hands to slaughtering. And it is written with regard to slaughtering: “On the day that you slaughter” (Leviticus 19:6), meaning during the day and not at night. And for waving the offerings that require waving, it is derived as it is written: “And on the day you wave the omer” (Leviticus 23:12).

וְלִהְגִּישָׁה – דְּאִיתְקַשׁ לְתַנּוּפָה, דְּכַתִּיב "וְלָקַח הַכֹּהֵן מִיַּד הָאִשָּׁה אֶת מִנְחַת הַקְּנָאוֹת וְהִנִּיף...וְהִקְרִיב". וְלִמְלִיקָה וְלִקְמִיצָה וְלִהְקַטְרָה וְלִהְזִיחַ – דְּכַתִּיב "בַּיּוֹם צִוְּתוּ אֶת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל".

And with regard to bringing the meal-offerings near the altar, it is likened to waving, as it is written: “And the priest shall take the meal-offering of jealousy from the woman’s hand, and shall wave the offering before the Lord, and sacrifice it upon the altar” (Numbers 5:25). The words “sacrifice it” are referring to bringing the offering near the altar. And for scooping out a fistful of flour, and for pinching the necks of the bird-offerings, and for burning the fistful of flour on the altar, and for sprinkling the blood, these are derived as it is written: “This is the law of the burnt-offering, of the meal-offering, and of the sin-offering, and of the guilt-offering, and of the consecration-offering, and of the sacrifice of the peace-offering; which the Lord commanded Moses on Mount Sinai on the day that he commanded the children of Israel to present their offerings” (Leviticus 7:37–38).

וְלִהְשִׁיקֵית סוּטָה אֶתִּיא 'תּוֹרָה' תּוֹרָה; כַּתִּיב הָכָא "וַעֲשֵׂה לָּהּ הַכֹּהֵן אֶת כָּל הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת" וְכַתִּיב הֵתָם "עַל פִּי הַתּוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר יוֹרֵךְ וְעַל הַמִּשְׁפָּט".

And with regard to giving the *sota* to drink from the bitter waters, this is derived from a verbal analogy between one instance of the word “Torah” and another instance of the word “Torah.” It is written here with respect to a *sota*: “And the priest shall execute upon her all this Torah” (Numbers 5:30), and it is written there with regard to judgment: “According to the Torah, which they shall teach you, and according to the judgment, which they shall tell you” (Deuteronomy 17:11).

Perek II  
Daf 21 Amud a

מִה מִשְׁפָּט בַּיּוֹם – אֵף כָּאֵן בַּיּוֹם.

Just as judgment may be done only by day,<sup>n</sup> so too here, the *sota* is given the bitter waters to drink only by day.

"וְלִעֲרִיפַת הָעֵגְלָה": אִמְרוּ דְּבִירְבֵי יֵנְאִי: כְּפָרָה כְּתִיב בָּהּ בְּקֹדְשִׁים: "וְלִטְהָרַת מְצֹרַע": דְּכַתִּיב – "זֹאת תִּהְיֶה תּוֹרַת הַמְצֹרַע בַּיּוֹם טְהָרְתּוֹ".

And daytime is the time for breaking the neck of the heifer, as the Sages of the school of Rabbi Yannai said: Atonement is written with regard to the heifer, teaching that it is treated like sacred offerings, and it has already been established that all actions relating to offerings must be performed during the day. And for purifying the leper, it is derived as it is written: “This shall be the law of the leper on the day of his cleansing” (Leviticus 14:2).

NOTES

מִה מִשְׁפָּט בַּיּוֹם – אֵף כָּאֵן בַּיּוֹם: just as matters of inheritance are judged by day, so are all other judgments made by day. *Tosafot* in tractate *Sota* offer a proof from that which is stated with regard to capital punishment: Rashi suggests a proof from the verse “Then it shall be in the day that he caused his sons to inherit” (Deuteronomy 21:16); “And hang them...in face of the sun” (Numbers 25:4).

The time for reaping the *omer* – זמן קצירת העומר – The time for reaping the *omer* is on the night of the sixteenth of Nisan (Rambam *Sefer Avoda, Hilkhot Temidin UMusafin* 7:6).

Counting the *omer* at night – ספירה בלילה – On the night of the sixteenth of Nisan, after the evening prayer, one begins counting the *omer*. If one forgot to count at the beginning of the night he may count with a blessing at any time throughout the night (*Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim* 489:1).

The time for eating the Paschal offering – זמן אכילת הפסח – By Torah law, the time for eating the Paschal offering is throughout the night; however, the Sages decreed that it should not be eaten beyond midnight, in order to prevent people from transgressing by eating it after sunrise. However, many early authorities maintain that the *halakha* is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya, that even by Torah law the Paschal offering may be eaten only until midnight, as there are several *mishnayot* that are in accordance with his opinion (Rabbeinu Hananel; *Tosafot*; Rid). Therefore, the custom with regard to eating the *matza* of the *afikoman*, which is eaten as a remembrance of the Paschal offering, is to finish it before midnight (Rambam *Sefer Korbanot, Hilkhot Korban Pesah* 8:15).

NOTES

Counting the *omer* at night – ספירה בלילה – The halakhic authorities discuss at length whether the counting of the *omer* may be done during the day, without the blessing, if one forgot to count at night. Some compare this situation to the *halakha* that although the reaping of the *omer* barley is supposed to take place at night, if it was reaped by day it is valid after the fact (see Rashba).

The entire night...what does this come to add – כל הלילה לאתנוי מאי: A possible answer to this question would seem to be that it comes to include the nighttime reading of the Megilla, which may be done all night. The Gemara does not give this answer, however, because the mishna lists only those *halakhot* that have a biblical basis, and the nighttime reading of the Megilla appears to be a rabbinic enactment.

“כל הלילה כִּשְׁר לְקַצֵּרְתָּ הָעוֹמֵר” וכו’: דֹּאמַר מֶר: קַצִּירָה וְסַפִּירָה בַּלַּיְלָה, וְהִבְאָה בַּיּוֹם: “וְלֹהֲקֵטֶר חֲלָבִים וְאַבְרִים”: דְּכַתִּיב “כָּל הַלַּיְלָה עַד הַבּוֹקֵר.”

It was taught in the mishna: **The entire night is a valid time for reaping the *omer*,**<sup>H</sup> as the Master said in tractate *Menahot*: **The reaping of the *omer* and the counting of the *omer* must be performed at night,<sup>NH</sup> whereas bringing the *omer* offering to the Temple must be done during the day. And for burning the fats and limbs of the offerings, it is derived as it is written with regard to them: “Which shall be burning upon the altar all night until the morning” (Leviticus 6:2).**

“זֶה הַכֶּלֶל: דְּבַר שְׂמֵצוֹתוֹ בַּיּוֹם כִּשְׁר כָּל הַיּוֹם: זֶה הַכֶּלֶל לְאַתְנוּי מֵאִי? לְאַתְנוּי סִידוֹר בְּיוֹבֵן וְסִלּוֹק בְּיוֹבֵן.”

§ The mishna states: **This is the principle: Something that it is a mitzva to perform during the day is valid if performed any time during the entire day.** The Gemara asks: As the mishna has seemingly mentioned all daytime mitzvot explicitly, the words: **This is the principle, are to add what?** The Gemara answers: This principle comes to include the arranging of the vessels of frankincense alongside the shewbread in the Temple, and the removal of those vessels at the end of the week, as the verse does not specify the time when these procedures should be performed.

“וְכַרְבֵּי יוֹסֵי. דְּתַנְיָא, רַבִּי יוֹסֵי אוֹמֵר: סִילֵק אֶת הַיִּשְׁנָה שְׁחִירִית וְסִידֵר אֶת הַחֲדָשָׁה עֶרְבִית – אִין בְּכֶךְ בְּלוֹם.”

And this mishna would consequently be in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei, as it is taught in a *baraita* that Rabbi Yosei said: **If one removed the old shewbread and frankincense in the morning and arranged the new ones toward the evening,** i.e., at the end of the day, **there is nothing wrong with this,** as it suffices if the changeover is made any time over the course of the same day. The Sages, however, maintain that the new ones must be set in place immediately after the old ones have been removed.

“מִהָ אֲנִי מְקַיֵּים (לִפְנֵי ה’ תְּמִיד) שְׁלֵא יְהֵא שׁוֹלְחַן בְּלֵא לְחָם.”

And, according to Rabbi Yosei, **how do I uphold that which is written with regard to the shewbread: “He shall set it in order before the Lord continually”** (Leviticus 24:8), implying that the bread must be on the table at all times? It means only **that the table should not be an entire day without the bread,** but if there is bread on the table for even a part of the day, it is considered as being there “continually.”

“דְּבַר שְׂמֵצוֹתוֹ בַּלַּיְלָה כִּשְׁר כָּל הַלַּיְלָה: לְאַתְנוּי מֵאִי?”

§ The mishna concludes: **Something that it is a mitzva to perform at night may be performed the entire night.** The Gemara asks: **What does this principle come to add<sup>N</sup> that has not already been mentioned explicitly?**

לְאַתְנוּי אֲכִילַת פֶּסַחִים, וְדִלָּא כְּרַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן עֲזַרְיָה. דְּתַנְיָא, “וְאָכְלוּ אֶת הַבָּשָׂר בַּלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה” אָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן עֲזַרְיָה: נֶאֱמַר כָּאן “בַּלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה” וְנֶאֱמַר לְהֵלֵךְ “וְעָבַרְתִּי בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם בַּלַּיְלָה הַזֶּה” מִה לְהֵלֵךְ עַד חֲצוֹת – אֶף כָּאן עַד חֲצוֹת.

The Gemara answers: It comes to include the eating of the Paschal offering,<sup>H</sup> and consequently this mishna is not in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya, as it is taught in a *baraita* that it is written: **“And they shall eat the meat on that night”** (Exodus 12:8). Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya said: **It is stated here: “On that night,” and it is stated further on: “And I will pass through the land of Egypt on that night”** (Exodus 12:12). **Just as there,** when God passed through the land of Egypt, it was **until midnight, so too here,** the Paschal offering may be eaten only **until midnight.** The mishna, which asserts that the Paschal offering may be eaten all night, is not in accordance with Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya.

הדרן עלך הקורא למפרע

**מתני'** הקורא את המגילה עומד ויושב. קראה אחד, קראה שנים – יצאו. מקום שנהגו לברך – בברך. ושלא לברך – לא יברך.

בשני וחמישי, בשבת במנחה – קורין שלשה, אין פוחתין מהן ואין מוסיפין עליהן, ואין מפטירין בנביא. הפותח והחותם בתורה – מברך לפניך ולאחריה.

בראשי חדשים ובחולו של מועד – קורין ארבעה, אין פוחתין מהן ואין מוסיפין עליהן, ואין מפטירין בנביא. הפותח והחותם בתורה – מברך לפניך ולאחריה.

זה הכלל: כל שיש בו מוסף ואינו יום טוב – קורין ארבעה. ביום טוב חמשה. ביום הכפורים – ששה, בשבת – שבעה. אין פוחתין מהן, אבל מוסיפין עליהן, ומפטירין בנביא. הפותח והחותם בתורה – מברך לפניך ולאחריה.

**MISHNA** One who reads<sup>N</sup> the Megilla may position himself as he wishes, either **standing or sitting**.<sup>H</sup> Whether one person reads the Megilla<sup>N</sup> or two people read it together, they have fulfilled their obligation. In a place where the people are accustomed to recite a blessing over the reading, one should recite a blessing. And in a place where it is customary not to recite a blessing, one should not recite a blessing.

The mishna records several laws governing public Torah readings. **On Mondays and Thursdays during the morning service and on Shabbat during the afternoon service, three people read from the Torah;**<sup>H</sup> one may neither decrease the number of readers nor add to them. **And one does not conclude with a reading from the Prophets [haftara] on these occasions.** Both the one who begins the reading and the one who concludes the reading from the Torah recite a blessing; one recites before the beginning of the reading and one recites after its conclusion, but the middle reader does not recite a blessing.

**On the days of the New Moon<sup>H</sup> and on the intermediate days of a Festival,<sup>H</sup> four people read from the Torah; one may neither decrease the number of readers nor add to them. And one does not conclude with a reading from the Prophets.** Both the one who begins the reading and the one who concludes the reading from the Torah recite a blessing. The first reader recites a blessing before the beginning of the reading, and the last reader recites a blessing after its conclusion, but the middle readers do not recite a blessing.

The mishna formulates a general principle with regard to the number of people who read from the Torah on different occasions. **This is the principle: Any day on which there is an additional offering sacrificed in the Temple and that is not a Festival, i.e., the New Moon and the intermediate days of a Festival, four people read from the Torah; on a Festival,<sup>H</sup> five people read; on Yom Kippur, six people read; and on Shabbat,<sup>H</sup> seven people read. One may not decrease the number of readers, but one may add to them. And on these days one concludes with a reading from the Prophets.** Both the one who begins the reading and the one who concludes the reading<sup>N</sup> from the Torah recite a blessing; one recites before the beginning of the reading and one recites after its conclusion, but the middle readers do not recite a blessing.

NOTES

**One who reads – הקורא:** In the Mishna, the Jerusalem Talmud, and a version of the Babylonian Talmud used by several early authorities, this chapter comes after the following chapter. It is the fourth chapter in the tractate rather than the third.

**Whether one person reads the Megilla – קראה אחד:** The commentaries question the necessity of this phrase; isn't it obvious that if one person reads the Megilla, he and his audience have fulfilled their obligation? Some explain that one may have thought that the requirement to publicize the miracle requires multiple people to read the Megilla together, and therefore it was necessary to state that one reader is also acceptable. Alternatively, the mishna is teaching that even if an individual reads the Megilla in private, he has fulfilled his obligation (*Re'ah Duda'im*). With regard to the mishna's statement that two people may read the Megilla, the straightforward interpretation is that two people read it together at the same time. However, the mishna can also be understood as indicating that if one person read part of the Megilla and then another person read the rest of it, the reading is valid (*Sefat Emet*).

**The one who begins the reading and the one who concludes the reading – הפותח והחותם:** *Tosafot* question why it is necessary to repeat this statement three times in the mishna. They answer that one might have thought that when there are more readers, more blessings are required. The Rashba and the Ran expound further: One might have thought that when there are more than three readers, each reader must recite the blessings before and after reading from the Torah. Later authorities explain that since each public Torah reading must have at least three readers, one might have thought that additional readers are considered to be participating in an entirely new Torah reading and must recite additional blessings. Therefore, the mishna states that even when there are four readers, only the first and last readers must recite a blessing. The third time this ruling is stated, it comes to teach that even if they call additional readers beyond those required on a Shabbat, additional blessings are not recited (*Sefat Emet*).

HALAKHA

**One who reads the Megilla may position himself either standing or sitting – הקורא את המגילה עומד ויושב:** The Megilla may be read either standing or sitting. However, the blessing must be recited while standing (*Magen Avraham*). Still, when one reads in public he should read standing, out of deference to the honor of the congregation. Some say that if the congregation wishes to forgo its honor and allow the reader to sit, they may do so (*Kaf HaHayyim; Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayyim 690:1*).

**Reading the Torah on Mondays and Thursdays – קריאת התורה:** בשני ובחמישי: On Mondays and Thursdays that are regular weekdays, the Torah is read during the morning prayers. Three people read from the Torah; one may neither decrease this number nor call additional readers. One does not conclude with a reading from the Prophets (*Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayyim 135:1*).

**Reading the Torah on the New Moon – קריאת התורה בראש חודש:** The Torah is read on the New Moon following the recital

of *hallel*. Four people read from the Torah; one may not decrease this number nor call additional readers. One does not conclude with a reading from the Prophets (*Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayyim 423:1*).

**Reading the Torah on the intermediate days of a Festival – קריאת התורה בחולו של מועד:** Four people read from the Torah on the intermediate days of a Festival. One may neither decrease this number nor add additional readers. One does not conclude with a reading from the Prophets (*Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayyim 663:1*).

**Reading the Torah on a Festival – קריאת התורה ביום טוב:** On Festivals, two Torah scrolls are removed from the ark. Five people read from the first scroll and a concluding reader [*maftir*] reads from the second scroll. A *haftara* is read from the Prophets (*Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayyim 488:3, 494:1*). It is permitted to increase the number of readers on a Festival. However, some say that this should not be done. This is generally the accepted

practice. There is an exception on *Simhat Torah*, when it is the universal custom to call many readers to the Torah, and it is common for communities to call every man who is present in the synagogue (*Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayyim 282:1*, and in the comment of Rema).

**Reading the Torah on Shabbat – קריאת התורה בשבת:** Generally, one Torah scroll is removed from the ark on Shabbat. On special occasions, when an additional portion is read, two scrolls are removed. Seven people read from the first scroll and one from the second, and a *haftara* is read from the Prophets. It is permitted to increase the number of readers. However, some say that nowadays one should not increase the number. It is proper to abide by this ruling unless it is a situation of need, e.g., there are many guests who have come to celebrate a special occasion (*Magen Avraham*, based on *Tashbetz*). According to some authorities, one should never increase the number of readers (*Tzemah Tzedek, Oraḥ Hayyim 35; Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayyim 282:1*).



**עמידה בקריאת התורה – Standing while reading the Torah** – The Torah should be read while standing. It is prohibited even to lean on something, unless it is difficult for the reader to stand without leaning (*Magen Avraham; Sha'ar Efrayim*). However, if the Torah was read while sitting, the reading is valid after the fact (*Peri Hadash*). Nowadays, when there is an official reader, he must stand; the one called to recite the blessings must stand as well. The congregation does not have to stand. However, some have the practice to stand as a sign of honor for the Torah (*Arukh HaShulhan; Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 141:1).

**A master and his disciple – רב ותלמידו** – A teacher should not sit on a chair while his students are sitting on the ground; rather, the teacher and students should either all be sitting on chairs or all be sitting on the ground. However, some say that this *halakha* applies only to students who have already received rabbinical ordination (*Rema*). Some have the custom to express honor for the Torah by standing while studying Torah. They should stand while studying easy material and sit while studying difficult material (*Shakh*, citing *Ran; Shulhan Arukh, Yoreh De'a* 246:9).

**גמ' תנא: מיה שאין בן בתורה. מנהיג מילי? אמר רבי אבהו: דאמר קרא 'ואתה פה עמד עמדי'. ואמר רבי אבהו: אלמלא מקרא כתוב אי אפשר לאומרו, כפיכול אף הקדוש ברוך הוא בעמידה.**

**ואמר רבי אבהו: מנין לרב שלא ישב על גבי מטה וישנה לתלמידו על גבי קרקע – שנאמר 'ואתה פה עמד עמדי'.**

**תנו רבנן: מימות משה ועד רבן גמליאל לא היו למדין תורה אלא מעומד, משמת רבן גמליאל ירד חולי לעולם והיו למדין תורה מיושב. והינו דתנן: משמת רבן גמליאל בטל כבוד תורה.**

**כתוב אחד אומר 'ואשב בהר' וכתוב אחד אומר 'ואנכי עמדתי בהר'! אמר רב: עומד ולומד, יושב ושונה. רבי חנינא אמר: לא עומד ולא יושב אלא שוחה. רבי יוחנן אמר: אין ישיבה אלא לשון עכבה, שנאמר 'ותשב בקדש ימים רבים'. רבא אמר: רבות מעומד, וקשות מיושב.**

**'קראה אחד קראוה שנים יצאו' וכו'.**

**GEMARA** We learned in the mishna that one may read the Megilla while sitting. It was taught in a *baraita*: This is not the case with regard to reading the Torah,<sup>N</sup> as one must stand when reading the Torah.<sup>H</sup> The Gemara asks: From where are these matters derived? Rabbi Abbahu said: It is as the verse states: “But as for you, stand here with Me, and I will speak to you all the commandments and the statutes” (Deuteronomy 5:27), which indicates that the Torah must be received while standing. And Rabbi Abbahu said: Were the verse not written in this manner, it would be impossible to utter it, in deference to God. The phrase “with Me” indicates that, as it were, even the Holy One, Blessed be He, was standing at the giving of the Torah.

And Rabbi Abbahu also said: From where is it derived that the teacher should not sit on a couch and teach his disciple<sup>H</sup> while he is sitting on the ground? It is as it is stated: “But as for you, stand here with Me,” which indicates that the teacher and his disciples should be in the same position.

With regard to Torah study while standing, the Sages taught: From the days of Moses until the time of Rabban Gamliel,<sup>P</sup> they would study Torah only while standing,<sup>N</sup> as learning from one’s teacher is comparable to receiving the Torah at Sinai, during which the Jewish people stood. When Rabban Gamliel died, weakness descended to the world, and they would study Torah while sitting. And this is as we learned in a mishna (*Sota* 49a): When Rabban Gamliel died, honor for the Torah ceased, as standing while learning is an expression of honor for the Torah.

The Gemara points out an apparent contradiction with regard to this very issue. One verse says: “And I sat [*va’eshev*] on the mount” (Deuteronomy 9:9), and another verse says: “And I stood on the mount” (Deuteronomy 10:10). The Gemara cites several possible resolutions. Rav said: Moses would stand and learn the Torah from God, and then sit and review what he had learned. Rabbi Ḥanina said: Moses was not standing or sitting, but rather bowing.<sup>N</sup> Rabbi Yoḥanan said: The term *yeshiva* is nothing more than an expression of remaining in one place, as it is stated: “And you dwelled [*vateshvu*] in Kadesh for many days” (Deuteronomy 1:46). Rava said: Moses studied easy material while standing and difficult material while sitting.

We learned in the mishna: If one person reads the Megilla or two people read it together, they have fulfilled their obligation.

NOTES

**מה – This is not the case with regard to reading the Torah** – שאין בן בתורה: The Torah may not be read in public while sitting, out of deference to the public or out of deference to the Divine Presence, which is present when there is a quorum (*Tosefot Rid*; see Jerusalem Talmud).

**לא היו – They would study Torah only while standing** – למדין תורה אלא מעומד: The early commentaries note that it appears from several sources that even before Rabban Gamliel died, people would often study Torah while sitting. They

answer that difficult material was studied while sitting and easier material was studied while standing (see *Rashba* and others).

**But rather bowing – אלא שוחה:** This was an expression of honor for the Divine Presence (*Maharsha*). Bowing can be considered standing, as one is supporting oneself on one’s feet, but is also similar to sitting, as one is not standing straight to one’s full height. Therefore, different verses use different terms to describe Moses’ position.

PERSONALITIES

**Rabban Gamliel – רבן גמליאל:** The reference here is to Rabban Gamliel the Elder, and not to his grandson, whose name was also Rabban Gamliel, and who was referred to as Rabban Gamliel of Yavne. Rabban Gamliel the Elder was a grandson of Hillel the Elder and served as the head of the Sanhedrin for many years during the Temple period.

It seems that Rabban Gamliel was the first to receive the honorary title Rabban because he was accepted by all of the Sages of the Jewish people. Many of his rulings were cited in the following generations. He enacted many important decrees,

e.g., a woman may remarry based on the testimony of a single witness that her previous husband has died. He enacted other decrees as well, in order to improve the public welfare. During his time, people would still study Torah while standing, and therefore it is said that when Rabban Gamliel died, honor for the Torah ceased.

His son was Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel, who led the Jewish people during the era of the Great Revolt and was later executed by the Romans.

תנא: מה שאין כן בתורה. תנו רבנן: בתורה אחד קורא ואחד מתרגם, ובלבד שלא יהא אחד קורא ושנים מתרגמין. ובגביא אחד קורא ושנים מתרגמין, ובלבד שלא יהו שנים קורין ושנים מתרגמין. ובהלל ובמגילה – אפילו עשרה קורין ועשרה מתרגמין.

מאי טעמא? בין דחביבה – יהבי דעתיהו ושמעו.

”מקום שנהגו לברך יברך”. אמר אביי: לא שנו אלא לאחריה, אבל לפניה – מצודה לברך. דאמר רב יהודה אמר שמואל: כל המצות בולן מברך עליהן עובר לעשייתן.

מאי משמע דהאי ”עובר” לישנא דאקדומי הוא? אמר רב נחמן בר יצחק, אמר קרא ויורץ אחימעץ דרך הכפר ויעבר את הכושי, אביי אמר מהכא: ”והוא עבר לפניהם”, ואיבעית אימא מהכא: ”ויעבר מלכם לפניהם” וה’ בראשם.”

לפניה מאי מברך? רב ששת מקטרוזיא איקלע לקמיה דרב אשי, ובריך מנ”ח.

It was taught: This is not the case with regard to reading the Torah,<sup>H</sup> which may be read only by a single person. The Sages taught (*Tosefta, Megilla* 3:20): When reading from the Torah, one person reads and one may translate<sup>HB</sup> the reading into Aramaic for the congregation, provided that there are not one person reading and two people translating, because two voices cannot be heard simultaneously. And when reading from the Prophets,<sup>H</sup> one person reads and two may translate, as there is less of a need to ensure that everyone hears the precise translation, as the Prophets do not teach *halakha*. This is the case provided that there are not two people reading and two translating. And when reciting *hallel*<sup>H</sup> and reading the Megilla,<sup>H</sup> even ten people may read and ten may translate.

The Gemara asks: What is the reason that the Megilla may be read by several people at once? Since the Megilla is cherished by the congregation, they will pay close attention and hear it,<sup>N</sup> and they will not become distracted by the different voices.

¶ We learned in the mishna: In a place where the people are accustomed to recite a blessing over the reading, one should recite a blessing. Abaye said: They taught that the matter depends upon local custom only with regard to the blessing that is recited after the reading of the Megilla. But as for the blessing that is recited before the reading, it is a mitzva to recite the blessing according to all opinions, as Rav Yehuda said that Shmuel said: With regard to all the mitzvot, one recites a blessing over them prior to [over] their performance.<sup>NH</sup>

The Gemara asks: From where may it be inferred that the word *over* is the language of precedence? Rav Nahman bar Yitzhak said that the verse states: “And Ahimaaz ran by the way of the plain, and overran [*vaya’avor*] the Cushite” (II Samuel 18:23), i.e., Ahimaaz overtook the Cushite. Abaye said: It is derived from here: “And he passed [*avar*] before them” (Genesis 33:3). And if you wish, say instead that the proof is from here: “And their king passed [*vaya’avor*] before them and the Lord at their head” (Micah 2:13).

The Gemara asks: What blessing is recited before the reading of the Megilla?<sup>H</sup> The Gemara relates that Rav Sheshet from Katrazya once happened to come before Rav Ashi, and he recited three blessings, alluded to by the letters *mem, nun, het*: Concerning the reading [*mikra*] of the Megilla; Who has performed miracles [*nissim*] for our fathers; and Who has given us life [*sheheḥeyanu*].

HALAKHA

This is not the case with regard to reading the Torah – **מה שאין כן בתורה**: Nowadays, one person reads the entire Torah portion aloud and those called to the Torah to recite the blessing do not. However, those who recite the blessing should read along with the reader quietly, so that the congregation will not hear their voice (*Shulḥan Arukh, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 141:2, and the comment of Rema).

**אחד קורא ואחד מתרגם** – **אחד קורא ואחד מתרגם**: Two people should not translate the Torah together; rather, one should read and one should translate (*Rambam Sefer Ahava, Hilkhot Tefilla* 12:11).

**Reading the Prophets – קריאה בגביא**: One person reads the Prophets, and even two may translate together (*Rambam Sefer Ahava, Hilkhot Tefilla* 12:13).

**Reciting hallel – קריאת ההלל**: Even ten people may read the *hallel* together (*Shulḥan Arukh, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 488:2).

**Reading the Megilla – קריאת המגילה**: Even ten people may read the Megilla together, and they and those who hear them fulfill their obligation. However, the custom is for only one person to read aloud for the community. One who does not have a valid Megilla should be especially careful to hear the Megilla from the reader and not articulate the words together with him (*Arukh HaShulḥan, Shulḥan Arukh, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 690:2).

**Prior to their performance – עובר לעשייתן**: Blessings are recited before the performance of a mitzva, in accordance with the statement of Shmuel. However, with regard to washing one’s hands and immersing in a ritual bath, the blessing is recited after the performance of the mitzva (*Shulḥan Arukh, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 25:8).

**The blessings over the Megilla – ברכות המגילה**: Before the Megilla is read at night, three blessings are recited: Concerning the reading of the Megilla; Who has performed miracles for our fathers; and Who has given us life. The blessing: Who has given us life, is not repeated before the reading of the Megilla during the day. However, the custom in Ashkenazic communities is to recite this blessing during the day as well (Rema). Some Sephardic communities also have this custom (*Kaf HaḤayyim*). After the reading of the Megilla, it is customary nowadays for each individual to recite the blessing: Who pleads our cause. The blessing is concluded: Who, on behalf of Israel, exacts punishment from all their foes; the God Who brings salvation. This practice is in accordance with the ruling of Rav Pappa (*Shulḥan Arukh, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 692:1).

BACKGROUND

And one may translate – **אחד מתרגם**: From the time of Ezra the Scribe and through the talmudic period, it was customary to read the Aramaic translation of Onkelos as part of the Torah reading on Shabbat morning. This practice was intended, among other

things, to allow even those unfamiliar with biblical Hebrew to understand the reading. This custom is no longer practiced today, with the exception of Yemenite communities, where reading the translation of Onkelos remains part of the service.

NOTES

Since the Megilla is cherished by the congregation, they will pay close attention and hear it – **בין דחביבה יהבי דעתיהו ושמעו**: The Ran and others explain that one will listen carefully and discern one of the voices. Alternatively, one will listen carefully to all of the voices together rather than to one particular voice.

Prior to their performance – **עובר לעשייתן**: The Gemara proves

that *over* means prior to. However, it also indicates that the blessing must be recited immediately before the performance of the mitzva. Perhaps this can be derived from the second verse cited in the Gemara: “And he passed before them,” which describes the fact that Jacob went immediately in front of his family members. Similarly, the blessing must be recited immediately before the performance of the mitzva (Ran; Ritva), in order to emphasize that one’s intent is to fulfill the mitzva (*Tosefot Rid*).

Who pleads our cause, etc. – **הָרַב אֶת רִיבֵנוּ וְכוּ'**: Some early commentaries explain that the five expressions mentioned in this blessing correspond to the five times the Bible mentions that the Jews fought Amalek (*Orhot Hayyim*; *Kol Bo*; *Mikhtam*).

Who on behalf of Israel exacts punishment from all their foes, the God Who brings salvation – **הַנִּפְרָע לְיִשְׂרָאֵל מִכָּל**: One may not conclude a blessing with two themes; however, in this case the two phrases complement each other and are considered one theme. The reason it was necessary to add: The God Who brings salvation, is so that it not sound as though God exacted punishment from the foes of the Jewish people but did not save the Jews themselves (*Sefer Halakhot Gedolot*). Alternatively, this addition indicates that the Jews were not harmed when they defeated their enemies (*Meiri*; *Kol Bo*).

And God spoke to Moses saying, is included in the count – **וַיְדַבֵּר**: Rashi explains the novelty of this ruling: Although nothing is learned from this verse, it nonetheless counts as one of the verses. Later commentaries added that although this verse does teach something, nothing is learned from the fact that it is repeated so many times in the Torah (Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch Chajes). The *Sefat Emet* writes that this *halakha* corresponds to the enumeration of the ten utterances with which the world was created, which is the paradigm for the need to read ten verses. The verse “In the beginning” is a general expression referring to God’s utterances, and it is considered one of the ten utterances. Similarly, the generic verse “And God spoke to Moses saying” counts as one of the ten verses in a Torah reading.

Ten utterances – **עֲשָׂה מֵאֲמֹרוֹת**: The commentaries disagree as to which verses are included in this count. All agree that the verse “In the beginning” is inclusive of the entire Creation (see Ramban’s Commentary on the Torah).

## HALAKHA

Ten verses – **עֲשָׂה פְסוּקִין**: On a day when three readers are called to the Torah, they must read a minimum of ten verses in total. However, if the entire topic being read is concluded in fewer than ten verses, such as the story of the war against Amalek (Exodus 17:8–16), that is sufficient (*Jerusalem Talmud*; *Shulhan Arukh*, *Orah Hayyim* 137:1).

He is praiseworthy – **מְשׁוּבָח**: If three readers are to read a section of ten verses, any one of them can read four verses, and he is considered praiseworthy (*Shulhan Arukh*, *Orah Hayyim* 137:2).

One removes the funds from the Temple treasury chamber – **תּוֹרְמִין אֶת הַלְשָׁכָה**: The small boxes in which the coins are collected from the chamber have the letters *alef*, *beit*, and *gimmel*, so that the money in the first box will be used first (*Rambam Sefer Zemanim*, *Hilkhot Shekalim* 2:7).

לְאַחֲרֵיהּ מֵאֵי מְבָרְךְ? בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם (הָאֵל) הָרַב אֶת רִיבֵנוּ, וְהִדָּן אֶת דֵּינֵנוּ, וְהַנּוֹקֵם אֶת נַקְמָתֵנוּ, וְהַנִּפְרָע לָנוּ מֵצָרֵינוּ, וְהַמְשַׁלֵּם גְּמוּלָה לְכָל אוֹיְבֵי נַפְשֵׁנוּ, בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' הַנִּפְרָע לְיִשְׂרָאֵל מִכָּל צָרֵיהֶם. רַבָּא אָמַר: הָאֵל הַמּוֹשִׁיעַ. אָמַר רַב פַּפָּאי: הַלְכָךְ נִמְרִינְהוּ לְתוֹרְוֵיהּ: בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' הַנִּפְרָע לְיִשְׂרָאֵל מִכָּל צָרֵיהֶם הָאֵל הַמּוֹשִׁיעַ.

“בְּשֵׁנוּ וּבְחַמִּישֵׁי, בְּשֶׁבֶת בְּמִנְחָה קוֹרִין שְׁלֹשָׁה” וְכוּ'. הֵינִי שְׁלֹשָׁה כְּנֶגֶד מִי? אָמַר רַב אֲסִי: כְּנֶגֶד תּוֹרָה נְבִיאִים וּכְתוּבִים. רַבָּא אָמַר: כְּנֶגֶד כְּהֻנִּים לְוִיִּם וְיִשְׂרָאֵלִים.

אֵלָּא הָא דְתַנִּי רַב שִׁמִּי: אִין פּוֹחֲתִין מֵעֲשָׂרָה פְסוּקִין בְּבֵית הַכְּנֶסֶת. “וַיְדַבֵּר” עוֹלָה מִן הַמִּנּוּן. הֵינִי עֲשָׂרָה כְּנֶגֶד מִי?

אָמַר רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן לִוִּי: כְּנֶגֶד עֲשָׂרָה בְּטַלְמִין שְׁבָבִית הַכְּנֶסֶת, רַב יוֹסֵף אָמַר: כְּנֶגֶד עֲשָׂרַת הַדְּבָרוֹת שֶׁנֶּאֱמָרוּ לְמֹשֶׁה בְּסִינַי. (רַבִּי לִוִּי אָמַר: כְּנֶגֶד עֲשָׂרָה הִילּוּלֵי שְׁאֵמֶר דְּדוֹד בְּסִפְרֵי תְהִלִּים) וְרַבִּי יוֹחָנָן אָמַר: כְּנֶגֶד עֲשָׂרָה מֵאֲמֹרוֹת שֶׁבָּהֶן נִבְרָא הָעוֹלָם.

הֵי נִינְהוּ? “וַיֹּאמֶר” דְּבָרָא שִׁית? הֵינִי תְשַׁעֲהוּ הוּא! “בְּרָאשִׁית” נִמִּי מֵאֲמֶר הוּא, דְּכָתוּב “בְּדַבַּר ה' שָׁמַיִם נִעֲשׂוּ וּבְרוּחַ פִּי כָל צְבָאִים”.

אָמַר רַבָּא: רֵאשׁוֹן שְׁקָרָא אַרְבַּעָה – מְשׁוּבָח, שְׁנִי שְׁקָרָא אַרְבַּעָה – מְשׁוּבָח, שְׁלִישִׁי שְׁקָרָא אַרְבַּעָה – מְשׁוּבָח.

רֵאשׁוֹן שְׁקָרָא אַרְבַּעָה מְשׁוּבָח – דְּתַנּוּן: בְּשֵׁלֶשׁ קוֹפּוֹת שֶׁל שְׁלֹשׁ סָאִין שֶׁבָּהֶן תּוֹרְמִין אֶת הַלְשָׁכָה, וְהֵיחָה כְּתוּב עֲלֵיהֶן אַב”ג, לִידַע אִיזוֹ מֵהֶן נִתְרַמָּה רֵאשׁוֹן לְהַקְרִיב מִמֶּנָּה רֵאשׁוֹן, שְׁמִצְוָה בְּרֵאשׁוֹן.

The Gemara asks: **What blessing is recited after the reading of the Megilla in places where it is customary to recite such a blessing?** The Gemara answers that the following blessing is recited: **Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, the God Who pleads our cause,<sup>N</sup> and Who judges our claim, and Who avenges our vengeance, and Who punishes our foes, and Who and brings retribution to our enemies. Blessed are You, Lord, Who, on behalf of Israel, exacts punishment from all of their foes.** Rava said: The conclusion of the blessing is as follows: **Blessed are you, Lord, the God who brings salvation.** Rav Pappa said: **Therefore, since there are two opinions on the matter, we should say both of them: Blessed are you, Lord, Who, on behalf of Israel, exacts punishment from all their foes; the God Who brings salvation.<sup>N</sup>**

We learned in the mishna: **On Mondays and on Thursdays during the morning service and on Shabbat during the afternoon service, three people read from the Torah.** The Gemara asks: **Corresponding to what were these three readers instituted?** Rav Asi said: **They correspond to the three sections of the Bible: Pentateuch, Prophets, and Writings.** Rava said: **They correspond to the three components of the Jewish people: Priests, Levites, and Israelites.**

The Gemara raises a question: **But with regard to this baraita that Rav Shimi taught: One may not decrease to fewer than ten the number of verses<sup>H</sup> read during a public Torah reading in the synagogue, and a generic verse, e.g., “And God spoke to Moses saying,” is included in the count,<sup>N</sup> to what do these ten verses correspond? Why specifically the number ten?**

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: **They correspond to the ten idlers that are in the synagogue, i.e., ten men who have the leisure not to work, and instead sit in the synagogue and are available to attend to communal needs.** Rav Yosef said: **They correspond to the Ten Commandments that were spoken to Moses at Sinai.** Rabbi Levi said: **They correspond to the ten psalms of praise that David said in the book of Psalms.** And Rabbi Yohanan said: **They correspond to the ten utterances<sup>N</sup> with which the world was created.**

The Gemara asks: **What are these ten utterances?** Presumably, they are the utterances introduced by the words “and God said” in the story of Creation in the first chapter of Genesis. However, **there are only nine of these utterances and not ten.** The Gemara answers: The expression: **“In the beginning”** (Genesis 1:1) is also considered an utterance, as it is written: **“By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth”** (Psalms 33:6), which indicates that the first utterance of Creation was the general creation of the entire universe.

Rava said: **Since ten verses must be read, if the first of the three readers called to the Torah read four verses, he is praiseworthy; if the second one read four verses, he is praiseworthy; and if the third one read four verses, he is praiseworthy.<sup>H</sup>**

Rava explains: **If the first of the three readers called to the Torah read four verses, he is praiseworthy** because the first in a series is privileged, as we learned in a mishna (*Shekalim* 8a): **One removes the funds from the Temple treasury chamber,<sup>H</sup> in order to use them for purchasing communal offerings and attending to other needs of the Temple, with three large baskets, each measuring three se’a. On the baskets is written, respectively, alef, beit, gimmel, in order to know which of them was removed first, in order to sacrifice offerings purchased with money from that basket first, as it is a mitzva to use the money collected with the first basket before the money collected with the others.**



**Western lamp – יג: מערבי** – There was a dispute among the talmudic Sages with regard to the positioning of the candelabrum in the Temple, and accordingly, with regard to the identity of the western lamp. According to the view that the candelabrum was situated on a north-south axis, the western lamp of the candelabrum was actually the middle one. The other lamps were positioned so that their wicks faced the middle lamp.



Candelabrum with wicks facing the middle lamp

**יג: בני שְׁתָּא דְאָבִי גוֹבֵר** – The synagogue of Avi Gover was apparently located in a small town, perhaps a suburb of Mehoza, between Mehoza and the town of Mavrakhta. The place may have been named after the founder of this synagogue, which is mentioned several times in the Talmud and was visited by some of the great *amora'im* over a number of generations.

HALAKHA

**And the western lamp faces toward the Divine Presence – יג: מערבי כלפי שכינה** – The flames in the six lamps of the branches of the candelabrum all faced the middle lamp, and the flame in the middle lamp faced the Holy of Holies (Rambam *Sefer Avoda, Hilkhoh Beit HaBehira* 3:8).

**One elevates to a higher level of sanctity – מעלין בקודש** – A person should be elevated to higher levels of authority and not demoted. Similarly, utensils that are utilized for sacred purposes should be used only for more elevated purposes but not for purposes of lesser sanctity (Rambam *Sefer Avoda, Hilkhoh Kelei HaMikdash* 4:21 and *Sefer Avoda, Hilkhoh Beit HaBehira* 3:16).

**And now that all who read from the Torah recite blessings – והאידנא דכולהו מברכי** – Nowadays all who are called up to the Torah recite a blessing both before and after the reading (*Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayyim* 139:4).

**And one may not leave fewer than three verses before the end of a paragraph – ואין משיירין בפרשה פחות משלושה פסוקין** – A reader may not conclude reading the Torah with fewer than three verses left before the end of a paragraph (*Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayyim* 138:1).

אמצעי שקרא ארבעה משוּבַח – דתניא “אל מול פני המנוּרה יאירו” מלמד שמצדד פניהם כלפי נר מערבי, ונר מערבי כלפי שכינה. ואמר רבי יוחנן: מכאן שאמצעי משוּבַח.

If the middle one read four verses, he is also praiseworthy, as the middle position is also dignified, as it is taught in a *baraita*: “The seven lamps shall give light in front of the candelabrum” (Numbers 8:2); this teaches that the priest turns the front of each lamp toward the western lamp<sup>8</sup> of the candelabrum, i.e., the middle lamp, and the western lamp faces toward the Divine Presence.<sup>11</sup> And Rabbi Yohanan said: It is derived from here that the middle one is especially praiseworthy.

ואחרון שקרא ארבעה משוּבַח – משום מעלין בקודש ולא מורידין. רב פפא איקלע לבי כנישתא דאבי גובר וקרא ראשון ארבעה ושבתיה רב פפא.

And if the last one called to the Torah read four verses, he too is praiseworthy, due to the principle that one elevates to a higher level of sanctity<sup>11</sup> and does not downgrade. If the last reader reads more verses than did the first two, this is an elevation in sanctity. The Gemara relates that Rav Pappa happened to come to the synagogue of the place called Avi Gover,<sup>8</sup> and the first person called to the Torah read four verses, and Rav Pappa praised him.<sup>11</sup>

“אין פוחתין מהן ואין מוסיפין” – תנא: הפותח מברך לפניה, והחותם מברך לאחריה.

We learned in the mishna that one may neither decrease the number of readers nor add to them. The one who begins the reading and the one who concludes the reading from the Torah each recite a blessing. It is taught in a *baraita*: The one who begins the reading recites a blessing before reading from the Torah, and the one who concludes the reading recites a blessing after the reading.

והאידנא דכולהו מברכי לפניה ולאחריה – היינו טעמא דתקיניו רבנן: גזירה משום הנכנסין ומשום היוצאין.

The Gemara comments: And now that all who read from the Torah recite blessings<sup>11</sup> both before and after reading from the Torah, this is the reason that the Sages instituted this policy: It is a decree due to both those who enter<sup>11</sup> the synagogue in middle of the reading and do not hear the first reader’s initial blessing and due to those who leave the synagogue early and do not hear the final reader’s concluding blessing, lest they come to the erroneous conclusion that one blessing suffices.

בראשי חדשים ובחולו של מועד קורין ארבעה וכו’. בעא מינה עולא בר רב מרבא: פרשת ראש חודש ביצד קורין אותה “צו את בני ישראל ואמרת אליהם את קרבני לחמי” דהויין תמנא פסוקי, היכי נעביד?

We learned in the mishna: On the days of the New Moon and on the intermediate days of a Festival, four people read from the Torah. Ulla bar Rav raised a dilemma before Rava: The Torah portion read on the New Moon consists of three short consecutive paragraphs (Numbers 28:1–8, 9–10, 11–15). How does one read it in order to divide it among four readers? With regard to the first paragraph, which includes the verse: “Command the children of Israel and say to them, My offering, the provision of My sacrifices made by fire” (Numbers 28:2), and which is eight verses, what shall we do?

ניקרי תרי תלתא תלתא פסוקין – פשו להו תרי, ואין משיירין בפרשה פחות משלושה פסוקין. ניקרי ארבעה ארבעה – פשו להו שבעה. “וביום השבת הויין תרי, ובראשי חדשיכם” הויין חמשה, היכי נעביד? ניקרי תרי מהא וחד מהנך

If you say that the first two readers should read three verses each, there will remain only two more verses until the end of the paragraph, and one may not leave fewer than three verses before the end of a paragraph<sup>11</sup> at the conclusion of a reading. If you say that the first two readers should read four verses each and complete the first paragraph, then seven verses will be left until the end of entire portion; the second paragraph of “And on Shabbat day” (Numbers 28:9) is two verses, and the third paragraph of “And on the beginnings of your months” (Numbers 28:11) is five verses. What shall we do with them? If the third reader reads the two verses from this paragraph and one of those verses in the following paragraph, this is improper due to the principle that

NOTES

Rav Pappa praised him – שבתיה רב פפא: Rav Pappa agreed that it is acceptable for any of the three readers to read four verses. He praised the first reader because he took the initiative to read four verses and thereby demonstrated his zeal to perform mitzvot (Maharsha).

Due to those who enter – משום הנכנסין: Some explain this to mean that the one who comes in late will hear the Torah reading without having heard the blessing recited before the reading, and it is proper for everyone to hear both the Torah reading and the blessings (see *Mikhtam* and Meiri).