

HALAKHA

One may not begin a new paragraph and read fewer than three verses from it – אין מתחילין בפרשה פחות – משלשה פסוקים: One may not read the beginning of a new paragraph unless one reads at least three verses from it (*Shulhan Arukh, Orach Hayyim* 138:1).

The reading of the non-priestly watches – קריאה במעמדות: The non-priestly watches read portions from the story of Creation. On the first day, they read the following paragraphs: “In the beginning” and “Let there be a firmament.” After that, on each day of the week they would read the portion relating to what was created on that day and on the following day (Rambam *Sefer Avoda, Hilkhot Kelei HaMikdash* 6:6).

NOTES

I have not heard a solution for this problem from my teachers – זו לא שמעתי: It is difficult to understand how there could have been a doubt about how to read from the Torah on the New Moon, which takes place every month. Perhaps it had been decreed that, on the New Moon, no one may enter or leave the synagogue during Torah reading, and therefore the general prohibitions against beginning a reading fewer than three verses from the beginning of a paragraph or concluding a reading with fewer than three verses remaining in a paragraph had not been enforced (*Ginzei HaMelekh*). Alternatively, there were conflicting customs in this regard and no universal custom had yet been formally established.

Rav and Shmuel – רב ושמואל: The Rashba explains that the dispute between Rav and Shmuel is about whether it is more important to make sure not to divide verses in two or to take precautionary measures with regard to those who enter or leave in the middle of the Torah reading.

According to Rav, it is not common for people to leave in the middle of the Torah reading, and those who enter in the middle will ask those present for an explanation if they see something unusual. Therefore, it is not proper to divide a verse in half in order to ensure that those who enter or leave in the middle of Torah reading do not come to incorrect conclusions.

Shmuel, however, maintains that those who enter in the middle of the reading will not ask but rather they will arrive at their own conclusions (see Meiri), and since it has already been permitted to divide a verse, this solution is preferable.

Conversely, some suggest that Rav’s opinion that any verse that Moses did not divide, we may not divide, does not mean that it is prohibited to do so. Rather, a verse that is not whole is not considered a verse with regard to the requirement that each reader must read three verses, and therefore nothing is to be gained by dividing a verse in half (*Sefat Emet*).

אין מתחילין בפרשה פחות משלשה פסוקים. ליקרי תרי מהא ותלתא מהך – פשו להו תרי!

אמר לו: זו לא שמעתי, כיוצא בה שמעתי. דתנן: ביום הראשון “בראשית” ויהי רקיע” ותני עלה: “בראשית” – בשנים, “יהי רקיע” – באחד.

והוין בה: בשלמא “יהי רקיע” באחד – דתלתא פסוקי הו, אלא “בראשית” בשנים? חמשה פסוקי הו, ותניא הקורא בתורה לא יפחות משלשה פסוקים!

ואיתמר עלה: רב אמר: דולג, ושמואל אמר: פוסק.

רב אמר דולג, מאי טעמא לא אמר פוסק? קסבר: כל פסוקא דלא פסקיה משה אגן לא פסקינן ליה.

ושמואל אמר: פסקינן ליה. והא אמר רבי חנניא קרא: צער גדול היה לי אצל רבי חנניא הגדול, ולא התיר לי לפסוק אלא לתינוקות של בית רבן, הואיל ויהתלמד עשויין!

one may not begin a new paragraph and read fewer than three verses from it.¹⁴ And if you say he should read two verses from this paragraph, i.e., the entire second paragraph, and then three verses from that final paragraph, only two verses will remain from the final paragraph. This is problematic because one may not conclude a reading with fewer than three verses left until the end of a paragraph and because the fourth reader will not have a sufficient number of verses to read.

Rava said to him: I have not heard a solution for this problem from my teachers.¹⁵ However, with regard to a similar problem I heard a solution from them, as we learned in a mishna (*Ta’anit* 26a): On Sunday, the non-priestly watches would read two paragraphs from the Torah:¹⁶ “In the beginning” (Genesis 1:1–5) and “Let there be a firmament” (Genesis 1:6–8). And it is taught in that regard that the paragraph “In the beginning” was read by two readers and the paragraph “Let there be a firmament” by one reader.

And we discussed this ruling and raised difficulties with it: Granted, the paragraph “Let there be a firmament” was read by one reader, as it consists of three verses. But how was the paragraph “In the beginning” read by two? It consists of only five verses, and it was taught in a mishna (23b): One who reads from the Torah should not read fewer than three verses.

And it was stated with regard to that mishna that the *amora'im* disagreed about how to divide the verses. Rav said: The second reader repeats the last verse that the first reader had recited, so that each of them reads three verses. And Shmuel¹⁷ said: The first reader divides the third verse and reads half of it, and the second reader begins with the second half of that verse, as though each half were its own verse.

The Gemara explains the opinions of Rav and Shmuel. Rav said that the second reader repeats the last verse that the first reader recited. What is the reason that he did not state that the first reader divides the third verse, in accordance with the opinion of Shmuel? The Gemara answers: He holds that any verse that Moses did not divide, we may not divide.

The Gemara asks: Does Shmuel say that we may divide a verse into two parts? Didn’t Rabbi Hananya Kara,¹⁸ the Bible expert, say: I had great distress with Rabbi Hanina the Great; there were many times I had to ask his permission to divide a verse, and he permitted me to divide it only for the benefit of schoolchildren, since they need to be taught in this manner, as it is difficult for children to learn long verses all at once? In other cases, however it is prohibited to divide a verse.

PERSONALITIES

Rav and Shmuel – רב ושמואל: When Rav returned to Babylonia from Eretz Yisrael, there were already there several eminent Sages there, including Rav Sheila and Shmuel. However, within a short time, Rav was recognized by all as the greatest Sage of Babylonia. All other Sages were subordinate to him, despite the fact that Rav did not hold any official position of authority. Shmuel was among the first to accept Rav’s authority, and he accorded him great honor both in Rav’s presence and when he was not present.

However, shortly after Rav came to Babylonia, Shmuel, who was a doctor by profession, tried to heal him of an illness. Rav did not know what Shmuel was doing and thought that Shmuel was needlessly causing him pain. Therefore, he cursed Shmuel. When

Rav realized what had happened, he greatly regretted having cursed Shmuel. In order to appease Shmuel, Rav treated him with great honor and gave deference to him whenever they met.

Rabbi Hananya Kara – רבי חנניא קרא: A second generation *amora* in Eretz Yisrael, Rabbi Hananya, who is sometimes called Rabbi Hanina, was a disciple of Rabbi Hanina bar Hama, also known as Rabbi Hanina the Great, and Rabbi Yannai. Apparently, Rabbi Hananya not only taught young children, but he was also a Bible expert. For this reason, he was called *kara*. In the Talmud and the Midrash, he is mentioned in discussions with his two teachers, both on matters relating to his work and on other halakhic matters.

התם טעמא מאי - משום דלא אפשר, הקא נמי - לא אפשר.

ושמואל אמר פוסק, מאי טעמא לא אמר דולג? גזירה משום הנכנסין ומשום היוצאין.

מיתבי: פרשה של ששה פסוקים קורין אותה בשנים, ושל חמשה פסוקים - ביחוד. קרא ראשון שלשה - השני קורא שנים מפרשה זו ואחד מפרשה אחרת, ויש אומרים: שלשה, לפי שאין מתחילין בפרשה פחות משלשה פסוקים.

ואם איתא, למאן דאמר דולג - נדלוג, וּלְמַאן דְּאָמַר פּוֹסֵק - נְפֹסֵק!

שאני התם, דאפשר בהכי.

אמר רבי תנחום אמר רבי יהושע בן לוי: הלכה ביש אומרים. ואמר רבי תנחום אמר רבי יהושע בן לוי: בשם שאין מתחילין בפרשה פחות משלשה פסוקים - כך אין משיירין בפרשה פחות משלשה פסוקים.

פשיטא! השתא ומה אתחלתא, דקא מקיל תנא קמא - מחמירי יש אומרים, שייר דמחמיר תנא קמא, לא כל שבן דמחמירי יש אומרים!?

מהו דתימא: נכנסין - שכיחי יוצאין - לא שכיחי דמנחי ספר תורה ונפקי, קא משמע לן.

The Gemara answers: **There**, in the case of schoolchildren, **what is the reason** that it is permitted to divide a verse? **Because it is not possible** to teach the children without doing so. **Here, too**, when a paragraph of five verses must be divided between two readers, **it is not possible** to divide them without dividing the middle verse.

The Gemara now examines the opinion of Shmuel. **And Shmuel said:** The first reader **divides** the third verse and reads half of it. The Gemara asks: **What is the reason** that **he did not state** that the second reader **repeats** the last verse recited by the first reader, in accordance with the opinion of Rav? The Gemara answers: It is because of a rabbinic decree that was instituted **due to those who enter and those who leave** the synagogue between the readings. These individuals might erroneously conclude that since the reading they heard consisted of three verses, the reading they missed consisted of only two verses. Therefore, the middle verse is divided into two parts, so that all will realize that no reader recites only two verses.

The Gemara **raises an objection** to the opinions of Rav and Shmuel from the following *baraita*: **Two people may read a paragraph of six verses, but a paragraph of five verses may be read only by a single reader. If the first one read three verses, the second one reads the remaining two verses from this paragraph and then one verse from another, i.e., the following, paragraph. And some say that it does not suffice to read one verse from the next paragraph; rather, he must read three verses, as one may not begin a new paragraph and read fewer than three verses from it.**

And if it is so, if it is permissible to do as Rav and Shmuel suggested, **according to the one who said** that the second reader **repeats** a verse that the previous reader recited, i.e., Rav, **let him repeat** the verse in this case as well. **And according to the one who said** that the second reader **divides** the verse, i.e., Shmuel, **let him divide** the verse in this case as well.

The Gemara answers: **There**, in the case of the *baraita*, **it is different, as it is possible** to solve the problem in this manner by reading additional verses. On the New Moon, however, the next paragraph deals with an entirely different subject, and consequently it cannot be included in the Torah reading. Therefore, Rav and Shmuel presented alternate solutions.

With regard to the dispute cited in the *baraita*, **Rabbi Tanḥum said that Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: The halakha is in accordance with the opinion** introduced by the phrase: **Some say**, which maintains that at least three verses must be read from the next paragraph. **And furthermore, Rabbi Tanḥum said that Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: Just as one may not begin a new paragraph and read fewer than three verses from it, so too, one may not leave fewer than three verses before the end of a paragraph at the conclusion of a reading.**

The Gemara challenges this statement: This is **obvious. Now**, if with regard to **the beginning** of a paragraph, where **the first tanna is lenient** and holds that it is sufficient to read one verse from the next paragraph, the opinion introduced with the phrase: **Some say, is stringent**, then with regard to **leaving** verses at the end of a paragraph, where even **the first tanna is stringent** and holds that one may not conclude a reading with fewer than three verses remaining until the end of a paragraph, is it **not all the more so** obvious that the opinion introduced with: **Some say, is stringent?**

The Gemara answers: **Lest you say: Entering** in the middle of the Torah reading **is common**, and therefore one should not conclude a reading after having read fewer than three verses of a paragraph, but **leaving** in the middle of the Torah reading, whereby one **abandons a Torah scroll and leaves, is not common**, and therefore one may conclude a reading with fewer than three verses left in the paragraph, Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi **teaches us** that the second opinion cited in the mishna is also concerned that people may leave in the middle of the Torah reading, and consequently one may not conclude a reading with fewer than three verses left in the paragraph.

Due to those who enter – משום הנכנסין – Most of the commentaries explain that the concern is that someone will enter between readings. When the next reader begins his reading fewer than three verses from the beginning of a paragraph, the latecomer will mistakenly assume that the previous reader had begun from the beginning of the paragraph and had read fewer than three verses. The Ritva adds that there is also a concern that someone will enter in the middle of the previous reading, and when the reader concludes after having read fewer than three verses from the beginning of a paragraph, the latecomer will assume that he had begun from the beginning of the paragraph and read fewer than three verses.

The *halakha* is that one repeats a verse, and it is the middle reader who repeats it – דולג ואמצי דולגן – The early commentaries disagree with regard to this statement. Rashi explains that this applies to the readings of the non-priestly watches; however, the Gemara does not come to a conclusion with regard to the reading on the New Moon. Others question this explanation, as it is unusual for the Gemara to state: The *halakha* is, etc., with regard to a matter that has not been observed since the destruction of the Temple, such as the non-priestly watches. Conversely, the Rif and *ge'onim* explain that the Gemara's ruling is referring to the Torah reading on the New Moon. The *ge'onim* further explain that the middle reader is the second reader. Others have noted that this is difficult, as there are four readers, and therefore none of them is the middle reader (*Re'ah Duda'im*). In fact, some hold that it is the third reader who repeats verses, as he can also be considered a middle reader (Ramban; Vilna Gaon, based on tractate *Soferim*). However, some argue that the Gemara is referring to the first of the middle readers. There are other instances in which the second in a group or series is referred to as the middle (*Turei Even*).

On a public fast, how many people read from the Torah – תענית צבור בכמה – Rabbeinu Tam asks: Can't it be proven from the Torah readings of the non-priestly watches, who would also fast, that there are three readers on a fast day? A possible answer is that three readers would read the portion of the day relating to the watch, and an additional reader would read a portion pertaining to the fast.

An additional prayer – מוסף תפלה – Rashi and others explain that this addition is the prayer: *Aneinu*. Some say that it is referring to the twenty-four blessing *Amida* that was customarily recited on certain fasts. Others explain that it is referring to the *ne'ila* prayer that was recited at the end of the day on public fast days (Ritva, based on Ramban).

ותנא קמא מאי שנא שיערי דלא – משום יוצאין, אסתחולי נמי – גוירה משום הנכנסין! אמרי: מאן דעייל – שיערי שויל.

שלח ליה רבה ברביה דרבא לרב יוסף: הלכתא מאי? שלח ליה: הלכתא דולג, ואמצי דולגן.

זוה הכלל כל שיש בו מוסף וכו'. איבעיא להו: תענית צבור בכמה? ראש חדש ומועד דאיכא קרבן מוסף – ארבעה, אבל הכא דליכא קרבן מוסף – לא, או דלמא: הכא נמי איכא מוסף תפלה?

תא שמע: בראשי חדשים ובחולו של מועד קורין ארבעה, הא בתענית צבור – שלשה! אימא רישא: בשני ובחמישי, ובשבת במנחה קורין שלשה, הא תענית צבור – ארבעה! אלא, מהא ליכא למישמע מינה.

תא שמע, דרב איקלע לבבל בתענית צבור, קם קרא בספרא, פתח בריך, חתים ולא בריך. נפול כולי עלמא אאנפיהו. ורב לא נפל על אפיה.

The Gemara asks: And according to the first *tanna*, what is different about leaving fewer than three verses at the end of a paragraph, which is not permitted due to concern about those who leave the synagogue in the middle of the Torah reading? In the case of beginning a paragraph without reading at least three verses, he should also hold that there is a rabbinic decree due to those who enter,^N lest the latecomer think that the previous reader read fewer than three verses. The Gemara responds: Say in answer to this question that one who enters in the middle of the Torah reading asks how the Torah was read until then, and those present will explain to him that the reader started in the previous paragraph. Therefore, he will not erroneously think that the reader recited fewer than three verses.

Rabba, son of Rava, sent a messenger to ask Rav Yosef: What is the *halakha* with regard to dividing a small Torah portion? Rav Yosef sent him the following answer: The *halakha* is that one repeats a verse, in accordance with the opinion of Rav, and it is the middle reader who repeats it,^{NH} and not the last reader, so that it will not be necessary to leave fewer than three verses until the end of the paragraph.

§ We learned in the mishna: This is the principle: Any day on which there is an additional offering sacrificed in the Temple and that is not a Festival, four people read from the Torah. A dilemma was raised before the Sages: On a public fast, how many people read from the Torah?^N Does the mishna mean to say that only on the New Moon and the intermediate days of a Festival, when there is an additional offering, four people read; but here, on a public fast day, when there is no additional offering, no, only three people read? Or perhaps here, too, there is an additional prayer,^N as on public fast days the prayer: *Aneinu*, is inserted into the *Amida* prayer, and so too an additional reader is called to read from the Torah.

The Gemara attempts to adduce a proof: Come and hear that which 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. Doesn't this indicate that on a public fast, only three people read? The Gemara responds: Say the first clause of the mishna: On Mondays and Thursdays during the morning service and on Shabbat during the afternoon service, three people read from the Torah. Doesn't this indicate that on a public fast, four people read from the Torah? Rather, it must be concluded that nothing can be derived from this mishna with regard to a public fast day, as the mishna does not mean to indicate the *halakha* in every possible case.

A different proof is now suggested. Come and hear the following incident: Rav once happened to come to Babylonia on a public fast. He stood and read from a Torah scroll. When he began to read, he recited a blessing, but when he concluded, he did not recite a blessing. Everyone else fell on their faces, i.e., bowed down on the floor, during the *Tahanun* supplication, as was the custom, but Rav did not fall on his face.

HALAKHA

One repeats a verse, and it is the middle reader who repeats it – דולג ואמצי דולגן – On the New Moon, the Torah reading is divided up among the readers in the following manner: The priest reads the first three verses (Numbers 28:1–3) of the paragraph. The Levite repeats verse 3 and reads the following two verses. The Israelite then reads the final three verses of the paragraph (Numbers 28:6–8), as well as the next paragraph, which consists of two verses (Numbers 28:9–10). The

fourth reader then reads the next paragraph, which is the portion that relates to the New Moon (Numbers 28:11–15). However, some have the custom for the Levite to read from where the priest left off until the end of the paragraph (Numbers 28:4–8), and for the Israelite to repeat the last two verses of that paragraph and to read the two verses of the following paragraph (Vilna Gaon, based on tractate *Soferim*; *Shulhan Arukh, Orach Hayyim* 423:2).

Rav Huna – רב הונא: Rav Huna was one of the great second-generation Babylonian *amora'im*. He succeeded his teacher, Rav, as the head of the yeshiva of Sura. After the death of Shmuel, Rav Huna was considered by all to be the greatest Sage in Babylonia. His colleagues, Rav's other students, accepted his rulings, and even Shmuel asked him questions on several occasions.

Under his tenure, the yeshiva of Sura experienced significant growth, both in the number of its students and in their quality. Almost all of the Sages of the next generation were considered Rav Huna's students to a certain degree. This included Rav Ami and Rav Asi, who studied from Rav Huna in Babylonia. Even after they moved to Eretz Yisrael and were recognized as the leading Sages there, they considered themselves subordinate to Rav Huna.

According to a tradition recorded by the *ge'onim*, Rav Huna was from the family of the Exilarch. Nonetheless, he was very poor in his youth, but he studied Torah despite his poverty. He became wealthy later in life (see 27b). The Talmud recounts numerous anecdotes about Rav Huna's piety (see *Ta'anit* 20b), and his wisdom was legendary.

Rav Huna lived for over eighty years, and after his death he was brought with great honor to Eretz Yisrael, where he was buried next to the great Sage Rabbi Hiyya.

Rav Huna's son, Rabba bar Rav Huna, was among the most prominent *amora'im* of the next generation.

NOTES

Rav Huna would read the first reading, which is generally designated for priests – **רב הונא קרי בכהני**: Although there is a mitzva to honor priests by allowing them to take precedence over non-priests, the honor of the Torah supersedes the honor of priests. The mishna in tractate *Horayot* (13a) states that a Torah scholar of illegitimate lineage [*mamzer*] takes precedence over a High Priest who is an ignoramus. The law of honoring the priest applies only when the people involved are of equal stature in Torah knowledge (see Rambam *Sefer HaMadda, Hilkhot Talmud Torah* 3:1–2). However, the universal custom is to honor the priest with the first reading from the Torah, in order to avoid strife (see Meiri and *Beit Peret*).

HALAKHA

קריאת התורה בתענית – Torah reading on a fast day: On fast days, three people read from the Torah during both the morning and afternoon prayer services (Rambam *Sefer Ahava, Hilkhot Tefilla* 12:16).

מבדי רב בישראל קרא, מאי טעמא תתם ולא בריך? לאו משום דבעי למיקרי אחרינא בתריה?

The Gemara attempts to clarify the *halakha* based upon Rav's conduct. Now, Rav must have read the portion that is designated for an Israelite, as he was neither a priest nor a Levite, and therefore he was the third person to read from the Torah. **What, then, is the reason that when he concluded his reading he did not recite a blessing? Was it not because another person was to read after him, and since only the last reader recites a blessing, Rav did not recite a blessing upon completion of his portion?** This would indicate that four readers are called to the Torah on public fasts.

לא רב בכהני קרא, דהא רב הונא קרי בכהני.

The Gemara rejects this proof: **No, Rav read the first reading, which is generally designated for priests.** He was the leading Torah authority of his generation, and one who holds this position is called to read from the Torah even before a priest, **as Rav Huna^p would read the first reading, which is generally designated for priests,ⁿ and Rav would do the same.**

בשלמא רב הונא קרי בכהני – דהא אפילו רב אמר ורב אסי, דכהני חשיבי דארעא ישראל, מיכף כייפו ליה לרב הונא. אלא רב, הא איכא שמואל, דכהנא הוה ודבר עליה!

The Gemara raises a difficulty: **Granted, Rav Huna read the portion designated for priests, as even Rav Ami and Rav Asi, who were the most esteemed priests in Eretz Yisrael, were subordinate to Rav Huna, and he was considered the undisputed rabbinic leader of the Jewish people. However, in the case of Rav, there was Shmuel, who was a priest, and Rav had elevated him above himself, showing Shmuel deference in all matters of honor.** Consequently, Rav was not the singular leader of his generation and would not have read the first reading in place of a priest.

שמואל נמי מיכף הוה כייף ליה לרב, ורב הוא דעבד ליה כבוד. וכי עביד ליה – בפניו, שלא בפניו – לא עביד ליה.

The Gemara answers: In fact, **Shmuel was also subordinate to Rav, as Rav was indeed the leading authority in Babylonia, and it was Rav who showed Shmuel honor of his own volition, in order to appease him for having cursed him. And he did this only when Shmuel was in his presence, but when he was not in his presence, Rav did not do this, and therefore Rav would read first from the Torah when Shmuel was not present.**

הכי נמי מסתברא דרב בכהני קרא, דאי סלקא דעתך בישראל קרא – לפניה מאי טעמא בריך? לאחר תקנה.

The Gemara comments: **So too, it is reasonable to assume that Rav read first from the portion that is generally designated for priests, because if it enters your mind to say that he read third, from the portion designated for an ordinary Israelite, what is the reason he recited a blessing before reading his portion?** Only the first reader recites a blessing before reading from the Torah. The Gemara rejects this argument: This incident took place **after it was instituted** that all those called to read from the Torah recite a blessing.

אי הכי לאחריה נמי לברוך? שאני היכא דיתבי רב, דמיעל עיילי

The Gemara asks: **If so, he should also have recited a blessing after his reading, as the rabbinic enactment requires those who read from the Torah to recite blessings both before and after their reading.** The Gemara answers: The reason that the Sages required all the readers to recite blessings both before and after their readings was to prevent misunderstandings on the part of both those who enter the synagogue in the middle of the reading and those who leave early. But **it was different where Rav was present, as people would enter the synagogue in the middle of the reading,**

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מיפק לא נפקי.

but they would not leave early, out of deference to Rav, and therefore it was not necessary for him to recite a blessing after he finished his portion. In any event, the incident with Rav does not provide conclusive proof as to the number of readers on a public fast day.

תא שמע: זה הכלל: כל שיש בו ביטול מלאכה לעם, כגון תענית צבור ותשעה באב – קורין שלשה,

The Gemara tries to adduce another proof: **Come and hear the following baraita: This is the general principle: Any day on which labor is permitted and prolonging the prayer service would constitute a deprivation of labor for the masses, for example, a public fast day^h and the Ninth of Av, only three people read from the Torah, so as not to lengthen the prayer service unnecessarily.**

Any day on which prolonging the prayer service would not constitute a deprivation of labor for the masses, for example, the New Moon – וְשֵׁאִין בּוֹ בִּיטוּל מְלָאכָה לְעָם, כְּגוֹן – רָאִשֵׁי חֲדָשִׁים: The early commentaries attempt to clarify the meaning of this sentence in light of the fact that it is not halakhically prohibited to perform labor on the New Moon. Rashi and others explain that the Gemara is referring to the custom for women to refrain from labor on the New Moon, as though it were the intermediate days of a Festival. Other commentaries argue that there are indications in the Bible that the original custom was for even men to refrain from labor, and this custom has been preserved with regard to women (see Rabbeinu Yehonatan). Some suggest that men should refrain from engaging in hard labor on the New Moon (see Responsa of the Maharit). The *Turei Even* maintains that during the time of the Temple it was halakhically prohibited to perform labor on the New Moon.

Reading from the Torah and concluding with a reading from the Prophets – קורין ומפטיר: The *Turei Even* asks: If more readers were not called up to the Torah out of a concern not to deprive the masses from time to work, why did the Sages institute a *haftara* on public fast days, despite the fact that this also prolongs the service? Some explain that since the *haftara* includes words of encouragement to repent, it is an integral part of the prayers on fast days (*Sefat Emet*).

It merely gives a mnemonic – סימנא בעלמא יהיב: Rav Ashi originally assumed that the principle was meant to include a *halakha* that was not mentioned explicitly in the mishna. The conclusion is that the principle is merely a mnemonic device to remember what is mentioned in the mishna, and it is not intended to allude to any *halakhot* that are not mentioned in the mishna.

וְשֵׁאִין בּוֹ בִּיטוּל מְלָאכָה לְעָם, כְּגוֹן
רָאִשֵׁי חֲדָשִׁים וְחֻלוֹ שֶׁל מוֹעֵד – קוֹרִין
אַרְבַּעַה, שְׁמַע מִינָהּ.

אָמַר רַב אֲשִׁי: וְהָאֵן לָא תַנּוּן הָכִי:
זֶה הַכֶּלֶל: כָּל יוֹם שֵׁיִשׁ בּוֹ מוֹסֵף וְאֵינוֹ
יוֹם טוֹב – קוֹרִין אַרְבַּעַה, לְאַתּוּי
מֵאֵי – לָאוּ לְאַתּוּי תַעֲנִית צִיבּוּר
וְהַשְׁעָה בְּאָב!

וְלִרְבֵּי אֲשִׁי מִתְנַתִּין מִנֵּי? לָא תַנּוּן
קָמָא וְלֵא רַבִּי יוֹסֵי. דְתַנּוּן: חָל
לְהוֹיָת בְּשַׁנֵּי וּבְחַמִּישֵׁי – קוֹרִין שְׁלֹשָׁה
וּמִפְטִיר אֶחָד. בְּשַׁלְּשֵׁי וּבְרַבֵּיעֵי קוֹרִין
אֶחָד וּמִפְטִיר אֶחָד. רַבִּי יוֹסֵי אָמַר:
לְעוֹלָם קוֹרִין שְׁלֹשָׁה וּמִפְטִיר אֶחָד.

וְאֵלֵא קִשְׁיָא "זֶה הַכֶּלֶל"! לָא, לְאַתּוּי
רָאִשׁ חוֹדֶשׁ וּמוֹעֵד.

הָא בְּהַדְיָא קִתְנֵי לָהּ: בְּרָאִשֵׁי חֲדָשִׁים
וּמוֹעֵד קוֹרִין אַרְבַּעַה!

סִימְנָא בְּעֵלְמָא יְהִיב, דְלֵא תִימָא יוֹם
טוֹב וְחֻלוֹ שֶׁל מוֹעֵד בִּי הַדְדִי מִנְהוּ,
אֵלֵא נְקוּט הָאֵי בְלֵלָא בִּידְךָ: כָּל דְטָפִי
לֵיהּ מִלְתָּא מַחְבְּרִיהּ – טָפִי לֵיהּ גְבֵרָא
וְתִירָא.

הַלְכָךְ, בְּרָאִשׁ חוֹדֶשׁ וּמוֹעֵד דְאֵיכָא
קָרְבַּן מוֹסֵף – קוֹרִין אַרְבַּעַה, בְּיוֹם טוֹב
דְאָסוּר בְּעֵשִׂיית מְלָאכָה – חַמְשָׁה,
בְּיוֹם הַכְּפוּרִים דְעֵנוּשׁ כָּרַת – שֵׁשָׁה.
שַׁבָּת דְאֵיכָא אִיסוּר סְקִילָה –
שִׁבְעָה.

גּוּפָא, רַב אִיקְלַע לְבָבָל בְּתַעֲנִית
צִבּוּר. קָם קָרָא בְּסִפְרָא, פִּתַח בְּרִיךְ,
חָתַם וְלֵא בְרִיךְ. נִפּוּל כּוּלֵי עֲלֵמָא
אַאֲנַפְיִיהוּ – וְרַב לֵא נִפּוּל עַל אֲנַפְיָהּ.
מֵאֵי טַעֲמָא רַב לֵא נִפּוּל עַל אֲנַפְיָהּ?

But any day on which prolonging the prayer service would not constitute a deprivation of labor for the masses, for example, the days of the New Moon,^N when it is customary for women to refrain from work, and on the intermediate days of a Festival, when one may not perform labor unless refraining from labor will cause him to lose money, four people read from the Torah. The Gemara concludes: Indeed, learn from here that on a public fast day three people read from the Torah.

Rav Ashi said: Didn't we learn in the mishna as follows: This is the principle: Any day on which there is an additional offering sacrificed in the Temple and it is not a Festival, four people read from the Torah? What is added by the formulation of this principle? Does it not come to add a public fast and the Ninth of Av, when there is an addition to the prayer service, and therefore four people read from the Torah?

The Gemara asks: But according to Rav Ashi, who is the *tanna* of the mishna? It is not the first *tanna* of the following *baraita* and not Rabbi Yosei. As it is taught in a *baraita*: If the Ninth of Av occurs on a Monday or a Thursday, days on which there is always a Torah reading, three people read from the Torah. And the last one of them concludes with a reading from the Prophets^N [*haftara*]. If it falls on a Tuesday or a Wednesday, one person reads from the Torah, and the same one concludes with a reading from the Prophets. Rabbi Yosei said: Three people always read from the Torah on the Ninth of Av, and the last one concludes with a reading from the Prophets. All agree that no more than three people read from the Torah on the Ninth of Av and other public fast days.

The Gemara responds: However, if only three people read from the Torah on these days, the statement: This is the principle, is difficult, as the mishna has already specifically mentioned every case included in the principle. The Gemara explains: No, it is not difficult; it comes to add the New Moon and the intermediate days of a Festival.

The Gemara challenges this explanation: Aren't these days taught explicitly in the mishna: On the New Moon and on the intermediate days of a Festival, four people read from the Torah?

The Gemara answers: The principle was not intended to add to what is stated explicitly in the mishna. The mishna merely gives a mnemonic^N by which to remember the number of readers on each day. It expresses the following: Do not say that a Festival and the intermediate days of the Festival are the same with regard to their sanctity, and therefore the same numbers of readers are called to the Torah on these days. Rather, hold this rule firmly in your hand: On any day when there is an additional element of the laws of the day, an extra person is added to the number of those who read from the Torah.

Therefore, on the New Moon and the intermediate days of a Festival, when there is an additional offering, four people read from the Torah. On a Festival, when it is prohibited to perform labor, five people read from the Torah. On Yom Kippur, when performance of prohibited labor is punishable by *karet*, six people read from the Torah. On Shabbat, when there is a prohibition to perform labor that is punishable by stoning, seven people read.

The Gemara cited an incident involving Rav, and now it returns to examine the matter itself. Rav once happened to come to Babylonia on a public fast. He stood and read from a Torah scroll. When he began to read, he recited a blessing, but when he concluded, he did not recite a blessing. Everyone else fell on their faces, i.e., bowed down on the floor, during the *tahanun* supplication, as was the custom, but Rav did not fall on his face. The Gemara asks: What is the reason that Rav did not fall on his face?

רצפה של אבנים היתה. ותנא: ואבן משבית לא תתנו בארצכם, להשתחוות עליה, עליה אי אתה משתחוה בארצכם אבל אתה משתחוה על אבנים של בית המקדש. בדעולא, דאמר עולא: לא אסרה תורה אלא רצפה של אבנים בלבד.

אי הכי מאי איריא רב? אפילו בוליה נמי קמיה דרב הווי.

וליוול לגבי ציבורא, ולינפול על אפיה! לא בעי למיטרח ציבורא. ואיבעית אימא: רב פישוט ידים ורגלים הוה עביד, וכדעולא, דאמר עולא: לא אסרה תורה אלא פישוט ידים ורגלים בלבד.

וליוול על אפיה ולא ליעביד פישוט ידים ורגלים! לא משני ממנהגיה.

ואיבעית אימא: אדם חשוב שאני, כדרכי אלעזר, דאמר רבי אלעזר, אין אדם חשוב רשאי ליפול על פניו אלא אם כן נענה כיהושע בן נון, דכתב ויאמר ה' אל יהושע קום לך" [גו'].

The Gemara answers: **It was a stone floor, and it was taught in a baraita with regard to the verse: "Nor shall you install any figured stone^H in your land,^N to bow down upon it"** (Leviticus 26:1), that, **upon it**, i.e., any type of figured stone, **you shall not bow down in your land**, i.e., anywhere in your land other than in the Temple; **but you shall bow down upon the stones of the Temple**. This is in accordance with the opinion of Ulla, as **Ulla said: The Torah prohibited bowing down only upon a stone floor.**^H

The Gemara asks: **If so, why was it specifically Rav who did not bow down? All of the other people present were also prohibited from bowing down on the stone floor.** The Gemara answers: **The stone section of the floor was only in front of Rav**, as the rest of the floor was not paved.

The Gemara comments: **If so, Rav should have gone to where the rest of the congregation was standing and fallen on his face there.** The Gemara responds: **He did not want to trouble the congregation to make room for him. And if you wish, say the following: Rav would stretch out his arms and legs and fully prostrate himself on the ground, whereas the others would merely bend their bodies as a symbolic gesture but would not prostrate themselves on the ground. And this is in accordance with the opinion of Ulla, as Ulla said: The Torah prohibited bowing down upon a stone floor only when it is done with outstretched arms and legs.**

The Gemara challenges this response: **Rav should have fallen on his face without stretching out his arms and legs.** The Gemara answers: **He did not want to change his usual custom of full prostration, and where he was standing he could not fully prostrate himself in his usual manner because there the floor was of stone.**

And if you wish, say a different reason as to why Rav did not fall on his face: An important person is different, in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Elazar, as Rabbi Elazar said: An important person is not permitted to fall on his face in public^{NH} unless he knows that he will be answered like Joshua bin Nun^N in his time, as it is written: "And the Lord said to Joshua: Get up; why do you lie upon your face?" (Joshua 7:10). It is a disgrace for a distinguished person to fall on his face and have his prayers unanswered. Consequently, Rav did not prostrate himself in public.

NOTES

Nor shall you install any figured stone in your land – ואבן ^H: It was necessary for the Gemara to cite the *baraita* in addition to the verse itself because the verse could have been interpreted as stating that the prohibition of prostrating oneself on stone applies only in Eretz Yisrael. The *baraita* indicates that the reason the verse states "in your land" is to exclude the Temple from the prohibition, but not to exclude lands outside of Eretz Yisrael. This is in accordance with the principle that non-agricultural mitzvot apply equally outside of Eretz Yisrael (*Turei Even*).

The Rambam writes that the reason for this prohibition is because the gentiles would prostrate themselves on stone floors as part of their pagan rituals. In order to distance the Jewish people from these practices, prostration was prohibited outside of the Temple.

An important person is not permitted to fall on his face in public – אין אדם חשוב רשאי ליפול על פניו ^N: The commentaries discuss at length the reason for this policy. The widely accepted explanation is that if an important person falls on

his face, which is an act of submission and self-nullification, and his prayers are not answered, he will be humiliated in the presence of the congregation (Rabbeinu Yehonatan). Some explain that if he is praying as an individual on behalf of the community, he appears haughty, and this is permitted only for someone whose prayers will certainly be answered (see *Mikhtam*).

נענה כיהושע בן נון – Answered like Joshua bin Nun ^N: The commentaries question why the Gemara specifically mentions Joshua. Some explain that other Elders also fell on their face in prayer, but since God said only to Joshua: "Get up; why do you lie upon your face?" (Joshua 7:10), it is clear that only Joshua acted properly by doing so (*Re'ah Duda'im*). Conversely, Rashi explains that God's comment to Joshua indicates that Joshua should not have prostrated himself. The commentary of the Rashash on tractate *Ta'anit* (14b) points out that, according to the Jerusalem Talmud (*Ta'anit* 2:6), Joshua's prayer was answered. He adds that Rashi in tractate *Megilla* disagrees.

Figured stone – אבן משבית ^H: The term figured stone refers to a stone designated for bowing upon. It is prohibited to bow upon a stone even if one is bowing to God. If one fully prostrates oneself on stone, he is flogged. This prohibition applies outside of the Temple; in the Temple, it is permitted to fully prostrate oneself on stone (Rambam *Sefer HaMadda, Hilkhhot Avoda Zara* 6:6–7).

Bowing down upon a stone floor – השתחוה על אבנים ^H: It is prohibited by Torah law to prostrate oneself with outstretched arms and legs on a stone floor. It is prohibited by rabbinic decree to prostrate oneself even where there is no stone floor, or to bow with one's head touching the ground on a stone floor even if one does not lie down with outstretched arms and legs. However, if one leans to his side or places something on the floor, it is permitted, and this is what is done on Yom Kippur (*Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim* 131:8, and in the comment of Rema).

An important person is not permitted to fall on his face in public – אין אדם חשוב רשאי ליפול על פניו ^N: An important person who is praying for the public is not permitted to fall on his face, unless he is certain that his prayers will be answered. However, this is prohibited only if he is praying in public; it is not prohibited if he is praying in his home for the public (*Taz*, citing Mordekhai). The type of falling on one's face that is customarily practiced nowadays during the daily prayers, which consists merely of lowering one's head and covering it, is permitted everywhere (*Rivash; Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim* 131:8).

תנו רבנן: קידה – על אפים, שנאמר: "ותקד בת שבע אפים ארץ". כריעה – על ברכים, וכן הוא אומר: "מכרוע על ברכיו". השתחוואה – זו פשוט ידים ורגלים, שנאמר: "הבוא נבוא אני ואמך ואחיך להשתחוות לך ארצה".

Apropos Rav's practice of prostrating himself, the Gemara continues with a discussion of different forms of bowing. The Sages taught in a *baraita*: The term *kidda* indicates falling upon one's face,ⁿ with one's face toward the ground, as it is stated: "Then Bathsheba bowed [*vatikod*] with her face to the ground" (1 Kings 1:31). *Keria* means bowing upon one's knees, as it is stated with regard to Solomon: He finished praying and "he rose from before the altar of the Lord, from kneeling [*mikkerora*] upon his knees" (1 Kings 8:54). Finally, *hishtahava'a*,ⁿ that is bowing with one's arms and legs spread in total submission, as it is stated that Jacob asked, in response to Joseph's dream: "Shall I and your mother and your brothers indeed come to bow down [*lehishtahavot*] to you to the ground?" (Genesis 37:10).

לוי אחוי קידה קמיה דרבי ואיטלע.

The Gemara relates that Levi^p once demonstrated the form of *kidda* that was performed by the High Priest before Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi. This bowing was especially difficult, as it involved bending from the waist until his head reached the ground, supporting his body with his thumbs, and then rising at once. In the course of his demonstration, Levi dislocated his hip and became lame.

והא קא גרמא ליה? והאמר רבי אלעזר: לעולם אל יטיח אדם דברים בלפי מעלה, שהרי אדם גדול הטיח דברים בלפי מעלה ואיטלע, ומנו – לוי! הא והא גרמא ליה.

The Gemara asks: Was it **this that caused** Levi to become lame? Didn't Rabbi Elazar say: **A person should never speak impertinently toward God on High, as a great man once spoke impertinently toward God on High and he became lame? And who was he? Levi.** The reason Levi became lame was because of the way he spoke to God (see *Ta'anit* 25a), not due to having performed *kidda*. The Gemara answers: Both **this and that caused** Levi to become lame. Since he spoke impertinently toward God, he was worthy of punishment, and he therefore suffered an injury while exerting himself to perform *kidda*.

אמר רב חייא בר אבין: חזינא להו לאבני

On the topic of bowing, Rav Hiyya bar Avin said: I saw Abaye

NOTES

The term *kidda* indicates falling upon one's face – קידה, על – אפים. *Tosafot* question the Gemara's biblical proofs, as there are other verses that seem to give alternate descriptions of these types of bowing. They conclude that the meaning of these different terms was known through oral tradition. The Maharshal answers the questions of *Tosafot* by explaining that *kidda* means bowing with only one's face touching the ground; *keria* is *kidda* with the addition that one's knees also touch the ground; and *hishtahava'a* is *keria* with the rest of one's body also on the ground.

Kidda, keria, and hishtahava'a – קידה, כריעה, והשתחוואה – The act of bowing before God expresses three levels of submission

before Him. The first, *kidda*, or falling on one's face, conveys the nullification of human wisdom and intelligence, which are nothing in comparison with Godly intellect. The second, *keria*, or falling on one's knees, communicates that human urges and impulses are subjugated to the will of God. The third, *hishtahava'a*, bowing with outspread arms and legs, indicates the recognition that all human action and activity are in the hands of God and the individual is merely a tool wielded by Him. Although God grants many freedoms to human beings, the religious person recognizes that everything he does pales in comparison with God's actions, which are directed by an intelligence that is beyond human comprehension (Rabbi Avraham Yitzhak Kook, *Ein Aya*).

PERSONALITIES

Levi – לוי: This is Levi ben Sisi, who lived in Eretz Yisrael during the transitional generation from *tanna'im* to *amora'im*. Levi was one of the foremost students of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi, the redactor of the Mishna, and he participated, along with the other prominent students, in halakhic deliberations in the presence of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi. Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi was particularly fond of Levi, and when he sent Levi to serve as a rabbi and rabbinical judge, he wrote that Levi was: A man like me.

It is known that Levi was tall. The Gemara relates that during his attempt to show Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi the *kidda* performed

by the High Priest, he became lame. A few years after Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi's death, Levi was unable to remain in Eretz Yisrael due to personal considerations. He immigrated to Babylonia and renewed his friendship with his old friend, Rav. He also became a close friend of Abba bar Abba, the father of Shmuel. Shmuel became Levi's disciple-colleague. Levi also engaged in organizing collections of *baraitot*.

It is not known with certainty whether Levi had any sons; however, some maintain that Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi, the great *amora*, was his son.