

One who reads from the Torah should not read fewer than three verses – הקורא בתורה לא יפחות משלושה פסוקים – Three verses are the minimal number that can be publically read from the Torah. If there is a translator, the reader should read one verse at a time before the translator translates it for the congregation (*Shulhan Arukh, Orach Hayyim 137:2, 145:1*).

אמר רבי אבהו: באומר דמי עלי. ותניא: האומר דמי עלי – שמיין אותו בעבד. ועבד איתקש לקרקעות, דכתיב "והתנחלתם אותם לבניכם אחריכם לרשת אחוזה".

Rabbi Abbahu said: The mishna is referring to one who says: My assessment is incumbent upon me, and thereby pledges to donate a sum of money equivalent to his own monetary value to the Temple treasury, as it is taught in a *baraita*: With regard to one who says: My assessment is incumbent upon me, the court assesses him as though he were a slave in order to determine the amount he is obligated to donate to the Temple treasury. And a slave is compared to land, as it is written with regard to slaves: "And you shall take them as an inheritance for your children after you, to inherit them for a possession" (Leviticus 25:46). Consequently, the same criteria that apply to assessing consecrated land apply to assessing the monetary value of an individual.

מתני' הקורא בתורה לא יפחות משלושה פסוקים, ולא יקרא למתורגמן יותר מפסוק אחד.

MISHNA One who reads from the Torah in the synagogue should not read fewer than three verses.^h And when it is being translated, he should not read to the translator more than one verse at a time, so that the translator will not become confused.

Perek III

Daf 24 Amud a

And with regard to the Prophets, three verses at a time – ובנביא שלשה: If there is a translator in the synagogue, it is permitted to read three verses at once from the Prophets and then the translator recites the translation of all three verses. If the verses are from three distinct paragraphs, one should read the verses one at a time and allow the translator to translate each one separately (*Rambam Sefer Ahava, Hilkhot Tefilla 12:14*).

One may skip while reading the Prophets, but one may not skip while reading the Torah – מדלגין בנביא ואין מדלגין בתורה: It is permitted to skip from one section to another while reading the Torah, as long as both sections address the same topic. Conversely, while reading the Prophets, it is permitted to skip from one section to another within one book of the Prophets even if they address different topics. However, one should not cause the congregation to have to wait for the reading to continue. It is prohibited to skip from one book of the Prophets to another; unless the sections address the same topic, in which case it is permitted (*Peri Hadash*). Within the twelve books of Prophets that are grouped together, it is permitted to skip from one book to another, but only if one skips ahead to a section that comes later (*Shulhan Arukh, Orach Hayyim 144:1*).

ובנביא שלשה. היו שלשתן שלש פרשיות – קורין אחד אחד.

And with regard to the Prophets, one may read to the translator three verses at a time.^h With respect to the Torah, an incorrect translation might lead to an error in practice, but this concern does not apply to the Prophets. If the three verses constitute three separate paragraphs,ⁿ that is to say, if each verse is a paragraph in itself, one must read them to the translator one by one.

One may skip from one place to another while reading the Prophets, but one may not skip from one place to another while reading the Torah.^h How far may he skip? As far as he can, provided that the translator will not conclude his translation while the reader is still rolling the scroll to the new location. The reader may not cause the congregation to wait for him after the translator has finished, as that would be disrespectful to the congregation.

מדלגין בנביא, ואין מדלגין בתורה. ועד כמה הוא מדלג? עד כדי שלא יפסק המתורגמן.

GEMARA The Gemara asks: Corresponding to what were these three verses, i.e., the minimal Torah reading, instituted? Rav Asi said: They correspond to the Torah, Prophets, and Writings.

גמ' הני שלשה פסוקין בנגד מי? אמו רב אסי: בנגד תורה נביאים וכתובים.

We learned in the mishna: And when it is being translated, one should not read to the translator more than one verse at a time. And with regard to the Prophets, he may read to the translator three verses at a time. If the three verses constitute three separate paragraphs, he must read them to the translator separately, for example, the verses: "For thus says the Lord, You were sold for naught" (Isaiah 52:3); "For thus says the Lord God, at first My people went down to Egypt" (Isaiah 52:4); "Now therefore what have I here, says the Lord" (Isaiah 52:5). These are three adjacent verses, each one constituting an independent paragraph.

ולא יקרא למתורגמן יותר מפסוק אחד ובנביא שלשה פסוקים, ואם היו שלשתן שלש פרשיות – קורא אחד אחד, כגון "כי כה אמר ה' חנם נמכרתם"; "כי כה אמר ה' אלהים מצרים ירד עמי בראשונה"; "ועתה מה לי פה נאם ה'".

§ We learned further in the mishna: One may skip from one place to another while reading the Prophets, but one may not skip from one place to another while reading the Torah. The Gemara raises a contradiction from a mishna (*Yoma 68b*): On Yom Kippur, the High Priest reads the section beginning with the verse: "After the death" (Leviticus 16:1), and then he reads the section beginning with the verse: "Only on the tenth day" (Leviticus 23:27). Doesn't he skip from the first section to the second section?

"מדלגין בנביא ואין מדלגין בתורה." ורמינהי: קורא "אחרי מות" ו"אך בעשור." והא קא מדלג!

Abaye said: This is not difficult. Here, where it says that one may not skip in the Torah, the translator will conclude his translation before the reader is ready to continue reading. There, where it is permitted to skip, the translator will not conclude his translation before the reader is ready to continue reading.

אמר אביי: לא קשיא: כאן בכדי שיפסק התורגמן, וכאן – בכדי שלא יפסק התורגמן.

NOTES

If the three verses constitute three separate paragraphs – היו שלשתן שלש פרשיות: The Ran adds that even if the verses do not constitute three separate paragraphs, if they address different topics, they should not be read together. Rabbeinu Yehonatan explains that the reason the mishna specifically cited the example of verses that constitute distinct paragraphs is to allude to the prophecies of consolation that these verses express.

וְהָא עֲלֵה קִתְּנִי: מְדַלְגִין בְּנִבְיָא וְאִין
מְדַלְגִין בְּתוֹרָה, וְעַד כַּמָּה הוּא מְדַלֵּג –
עַד כַּדִּי שְׂלָא יִפְסֹק הַתּוֹרָגְמָן, מְכַלְל
דְּבִתּוֹרָה כְּלָל כְּלָל לָא!

The Gemara asks: **Wasn't it taught** in the mishna with regard to that issue: **One may skip while reading the Prophets, but one may not skip while reading the Torah. How far may he skip?** As far as he can, provided that **the translator will not conclude** his translation before the reader is ready to continue reading. This applies to reading the Prophets; it therefore proves **by inference that while reading the Torah one may not skip at all.**

אֶלָּא אָמַר אַבְיִי: לָא קִשְׁיָא: כָּאן – בְּעֵינֵן
אֶחָד, כָּאן – בְּשֵׁתֵי עֲנִינּוֹת. וְהִתְנַיָּא:
מְדַלְגִין בְּתוֹרָה בְּעֵינֵן אֶחָד, וּבְנִבְיָא
בְּשֵׁתֵי עֲנִינּוֹת. כָּאן וְכָאן בְּכַדִּי שְׂלָא יִפְסֹק
הַתּוֹרָגְמָן.

Rather, Abaye said it is **not difficult** for a different reason: **Here**, where it says that the High Priest skipped from one section to another, it was permitted because the two sections address **one topic. There**, where the mishna says one may not skip while reading the Torah, it is where the two sections address **two distinct topics. And so it is explicitly taught** in a *baraita*: **One may skip** from one section to another while reading **the Torah** if the two sections address **one topic, and in the Prophets** one may skip even if the two sections address **two distinct topics. Both here and there**, with regard to the Torah and the Prophets, one may skip only if **the translator will not conclude** his translation before the reader is ready to continue reading.

תְּנַיָּא אִידָךְ: אִין מְדַלְגִין מִנִּבְיָא לְנִבְיָא,
וּבְנִבְיָא שְׁלֵשִׁים עָשָׂר – מְדַלֵּג, וּבְלִבְד
שְׂלָא יִדְלֵג מִסּוּף הַסֵּפֶר לְתַחִילָתוֹ.

It is taught in another *baraita*: **One may not skip from prophet to prophet**, i.e., from one book of Prophets to another, even if the selections address the same topic. **However, one may skip** from one **prophet** to another **among the twelve** books of Prophets,^N which are grouped together, **provided that he does not skip from the end of the book to the beginning**, i.e., that he does not read a later section and then an earlier section.

מִתְנִי הַמִּפְטִיר בְּנִבְיָא הוּא פּוֹרֵס עַל
שְׁמַע, וְהוּא עוֹבֵר לְפָנֵי הַתִּיבָה, וְהוּא
נוֹשֵׂא אֶת כַּפָּיו. וְאִם הָיָה קָטָן – אָבִיו
אוֹ רֵבּוֹ עוֹבְרִין עַל יָדוֹ.

MISHNA The one who concludes with a reading from the Prophets [*haftara*] is also the one who is honored to **recite** the introductory prayers and **blessing** before *Shema*,^N and he passes before the ark to repeat the *Amida* prayer, and if he is a priest he **lifts his hands** to recite the Priestly Benediction.^N **And if the one who reads the haftara is a minor**, who may read the *haftara* but is not qualified to lead the congregation in prayer, **his father or teacher** is honored to **pass** before the ark in his place.

NOTES

The twelve books of Prophets – שְׁנַיִם עָשָׂר: In several of the methods in which the Bible is divided, including the Gemara's method in *Bava Batra* 14a, there are twenty-four books of the Bible. In that case, the twelve books of Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi are seen as one book.

The one who concludes with a reading from the Prophets [*haftara*] is also the one to recite the introductory prayers and blessing before *Shema* – הַמִּפְטִיר בְּנִבְיָא הוּא פּוֹרֵס עַל שְׁמַע: Rashi explains that this is referring to one who regularly reads the *haftara*. This resolves a difficulty with regard to the sequence of the prayer service, as the *Shema* is recited before the reading of the *haftara*. Since this individual agrees to regularly read the *haftara*, he is compensated in the form of other honorific tasks (Ritva). The reason the reader of the *haftara* needed to be compensated was because he was not counted for the quorum of readers from the Torah but rather was called to supplement the Torah reading. Furthermore, it was common for a minor to be appointed to read the *haftara*, and therefore an adult who accepts the responsibility of regularly reading the *haftara* lowers his stature. However, over

the course of the generations, since they would grant numerous honors to the one who read the *haftara*, reading the *haftara* became an honorable position, and it is generally viewed as an honor in its own right.

וְהוּא – וְהוּא לִפְנֵי הַתִּיבָה: This phrase is difficult to understand, as every priest recites the Priestly Benediction, regardless of whether he read the *haftara*. The commentaries suggested various answers to this question. Some say that it is referring to a synagogue where all the congregants were priests, in which case they do not all recite the Priestly Benediction (*Turei Even*). Alternatively, when a priest serves as the prayer leader, he generally does not recite the Priestly Benediction, due to a concern that he will become confused and will not be able to continue reciting the prayers. In this case, however, he would be permitted to recite the Priestly Benediction (Rashash). Others explain that the Gemara means to say that even if his beard has yet to grow, he may regularly recite the Priestly Benediction (*Sefat Emet*). The *Tosefot Yom Tov* explains that this phrase is inserted merely to ensure consistent phraseology between the beginning and end of the mishna.

אינו עובר לפני התיבה – אינו עובר לפני התיבה – He may not pass before the ark – Only one whose beard has fully grown should be appointed as the regular prayer leader. This does not refer to growing an actual beard; rather, it indicates that one must have reached the age when this usually occurs (*Arukh HaShulhan*). Some say that since this is out of respect for the congregation, the congregation may forgo its honor in this matter (see *Magen Avraham*). Others disagree (*Bah; Taz*). However, it is permitted for anyone who has reached adulthood to lead the prayers on a temporary basis. On public fast days and the High Holidays, however, even one who serves as the prayer leader on a temporary basis must be one whose beard has fully grown (*Mishna Berura; Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayyim 53:6*).

He may not lift his hands to recite the Priestly Benediction – אינו נושא את כפיו: One who has not reached physical maturity, signified by the growth of two pubic hairs, may not recite the Priestly Benediction on his own, i.e., if there are no other priests in the synagogue. Some say that once he turns thirteen, it can be assumed that he has grown two hairs and this need not be verified (*Eliya Rabba*), while others disagree (*Magen Avraham*). However, if other priests are reciting the Priestly Benediction, even a minor may join them in order to learn how to perform this mitzva. Once he has reached maturity, a priest may recite the benediction even if no other priests are present. However, he should not do this on a regular basis until his beard has grown in (*Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayyim 128:34*).

One whose limbs are exposed [poḥe'ah] – פוּחַח: A *poḥe'ah* is one whose garments are torn so that his arms and shoulders are bare (Vilna Gaon). He may not serve as the prayer leader or read from the Torah, but he is permitted to lead the congregation in reciting the introductory prayers and blessing before *Shema*. It is proper for the prayer leader to wear clothes that cover his legs, and if his garments are not long enough, he should wear socks that go up to his knees (*Rambam Sefer Ahava, Hilkhot Tefilla 8:12; Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayyim 53:13; Kaf HaHayyim*).

One who is blind may recite the introductory prayers and blessing before Shema – סומא פורס את שמע: One who is blind may recite the introductory prayers and blessing before *Shema*, even if he has been blind his entire life. He may also serve as the prayer leader for the duration of the prayer service (*Mishna Berura*). The *halakha* is in accordance with the first view cited in the mishna (*Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayyim 69:2*).

קטן קורא בתורה ומתרגם, אבל אינו פורס על שמע ואינו עובר לפני התיבה, ואינו נושא את כפיו.

פוּחַח פּוֹרֵס אֶת שְׁמַע וּמְתַרְגֵּם, אֲבָל אֵינוֹ קוֹרֵא בַּתּוֹרָה, וְאֵינוֹ עוֹבֵר לִפְנֵי הַתִּיבָה, וְאֵינוֹ נוֹשֵׂא אֶת כַּפָּיו.

סומא פורס את שמע ומתרגם, רבי יהודה אומר: כל שלא ראה מאורות מימינו – אינו פורס על שמע.

גמ' מאי טעמא? רב פפא אמר: משום כבוד, רבה בר שמי אמר: משום דאיתי לאינצוי.

מאי בניייהו? איכא בניייהו דעביד בהנם.

תנן: ואם היה קטן – אביו או רבו עוברין על ידו. אי אמרת משום נצוי – קטן בר נצוי הוא?

אלא מאי משום כבוד – קטן בר כבוד הוא?! אלא: איכא כבוד אביו וכבוד רבו,

A minor may read the Torah in public and also translate the text for the congregation into Aramaic, but he may not recite the introductory prayers and blessing before *Shema*, and he may not pass before the ark to lead the congregation in prayer,^H and he may not lift his hands to recite the Priestly Benediction.^H

One whose limbs are exposed [*poḥe'ah*]^{NH} may recite the introductory prayers and blessing before *Shema* and translate the Torah reading into Aramaic, but he may not read from the Torah out of respect for the Torah; he may not pass before the ark to lead the congregation in prayer; and he may not lift his hands to recite the Priestly Benediction out of respect for the congregation.

One who is blind may recite the introductory prayers and blessing before *Shema*,^H and he may also translate the Torah reading into Aramaic. Rabbi Yehuda says: Anyone who has not seen the luminaries, the sun, moon, and stars, in his life, i.e., he was blind from birth, may not recite the introductory prayers and blessing before *Shema*. The first of the blessings before *Shema* is the blessing over the luminaries, and one who has never seen them cannot recite the blessing at all.

GEMARA The Gemara asks: What is the reason that the one who reads the *haftara* is honored with these other roles? Rav Pappa said: It is due to a desire to grant him honor. Since even minors are qualified to read the *haftara*, it was considered an insult for a person to be called up to read the *haftara* rather than be called up as one of those needed to read the Torah. Since he was willing to serve in this role, he is granted other, more honorable roles in the synagogue. Rabba bar Shimi said a different reason: It is due to a concern that they will come to quarrel, as the individual who read the *haftara* will quarrel with the individual honored to lead the congregation in prayer.

The Gemara asks: What is the practical difference between them? The Gemara explains: There is a practical difference between them where the one who passes before the ark does so free of charge.^N In that case, there is still a need to grant the one who read the *haftara* honor, but it is not likely that they will quarrel.

We learned in the mishna: And if the one who reads the *haftara* is a minor, his father or teacher is honored to pass before the ark in his place. If you say that the reason the reader of the *haftara* passes before the ark is due to a concern that they will quarrel, will a minor engage in quarreling? He has no valid claim to the right to pass before the ark. Consequently, the concern for strife must not be the reason for the *halakha* stated in the mishna.

The Gemara rejects this argument: Rather, what is the reason; is it due to honor? Does a minor have honor that is slighted when he reads the *haftara* and therefore must be assuaged? Rather, according to Rav Pappa it is a display of honor to his father and his teacher.

NOTES

One whose limbs are exposed [poḥe'ah] – פוּחַח: Many explanations have been suggested for the term *poḥe'ah*, which indicates someone who is not properly dressed, and parts of his body are therefore exposed. Some explain that it refers to one who is wearing only a sash around his hips and waist (*Sefer Halakhot Gedolot*). Others hold that it refers to one whose garment does not have sleeves (*Arukh*), one whose arms and shoulders are bare (*Rosh*), or one whose chest is bare (*Meiri; Rid the Younger*). It appears that the term is used in tractate *Soferim* to refer to one whose legs are bare. Some of these interpretations are based upon the verse: "Like as my servant

Isaiah has walked naked [*paḥiah*] and barefoot" (*Isaiah 20:3*). The previous verse states: "Loosen the sackcloth from off your loins" (*Isaiah 20:2*), indicating that removing certain garments causes one to be a *paḥiah* (see *Rashi* and *Rosh*).

Where he does so free of charge – דְּעֵבִיד בְּהִנָּם: According to most commentaries, it was customary for those leading the prayer service to be paid for their services. Alternately, some explain that this means that one reads the *haftara* without the desire to receive another honor in return (*Sefat Emet*).

הָכָא נָמִי אִיכָא נְצוּי אָבִיו וְנְצוּי רַבּוּ.

“פּוֹחַח פּוֹרֵס עַל שְׁמַע” וכו'. בַּעַא מִינְהָ עוֹלָא בְרַב מֵאַבְיִי: קָטָן פּוֹחַח מֵהוּ שִׁיקְרָא בְּתוֹרָה?

אָמַר לֵיהּ: וְתִיבְעִי לָךְ עָרוֹם? עָרוֹם מֵאִי טַעְמָא לֹא – מִשּׁוּם כְּבוֹד צְבוּר, הָכָא נָמִי – מִשּׁוּם כְּבוֹד צְבוּר.

“סוּמָא פּוֹרֵס עַל שְׁמַע” וכו'. תִּנְיָא, אָמְרוּ לוֹ לְרַבֵּי יְהוּדָה: הֲרֵבָה צָפוּ לְדְרוּשׁ בְּמִרְכָּבָה וְלֹא רָאוּ אוֹתָהּ מִימֵיהֶם.

וְרַבֵּי יְהוּדָה: הֲתָם בְּאַבְנֵתָא דְלֵיבָא תְלִיָא מִלְּתָא, וְהָא קָא מִיבּוּיִן וְיַדְע. הָכָא – מִשּׁוּם הֲנָאָה הוּא, וְהָא לִית לֵיהּ הֲנָאָה.

וְרַבְנָן: אֵית לֵיהּ הֲנָאָה, כְּרַבֵּי יוֹסֵי. דְתִנְיָא, אָמַר רַבֵּי יוֹסֵי: כָּל יְמֵי הָיִיתִי מַצְטַעֵר עַל מִקְרָא זֶה “וְהָיִיתִי מִמְשֹׁשׁ בַּצְּהָרִים כְּאִשׁוּר יִמְשֹׁשׁ הָעוֹר בְּאַפְלָה”, וְכִי מַה אֶכְפֵּת לֵיהּ לְעוֹר בֵּין אֶפְיֵלָה לְאוֹרָה?

עַד שֶׁבָּא מַעֲשֵׂה לֵידֵי. פַּעַם אַחַת הָיִיתִי מְהַלֵּךְ בְּאִישׁוֹן לֵילָה וְאַפְלָה, וְרֵאִיתִי סוּמָא שְׂהִיָּה מְהַלֵּךְ בְּדֶרֶךְ וְאַבּוּקָה בְּיָדוֹ. אָמַרְתִּי לוֹ: בְּנִי, אֲבּוּקָה זֶה לְמַה לָּךְ? אָמַר לִי: כֹּל זְמַן שֶׁאֲבּוּקָה בְּיָדִי – בְּנִי אָדָם רוֹאִין אוֹתִי, וּמִצְלִין אוֹתִי מִן הַפְּחָתִין וּמִן הַקּוֹצִין וּמִן הַבְּרִקְנִין.

Here, also, according to Rabba bar Shimi, it is to prevent his father or teacher from quarreling.

§ We learned in the mishna: **One whose limbs are exposed** [*pohe'ah*] may recite the introductory prayers and blessing before *Shema* and translate the Torah reading into Aramaic, but he may not read from the Torah. **Ulla bar Rav raised a dilemma before Abaye: What is the halakha with regard to whether a minor whose limbs are exposed may read from the Torah?** Can it be argued that a minor's bare limbs do not fall under the category of nakedness, and therefore it is permitted for him to read the Torah despite the fact that parts of his body are exposed?

Abaye said to him: **And according to this reasoning, raise the dilemma with regard to a minor who is totally naked. What is the reason that a minor who is naked may not read the Torah?**^N It is due to respect for the public. **Here, too, a pohe'ah may not read from the Torah due to respect for the public.**

The mishna continues: One who is **blind may recite the** introductory prayers and **blessing before Shema, and he may also translate the Torah reading into Aramaic.** Rabbi Yehuda says: Anyone who has not seen the luminaries in his life may not recite the first of the blessings before *Shema*, which is the blessing over the luminaries. **It is taught in a baraita that they said to Rabbi Yehuda: Many have seen enough with their mind to expound upon the Divine Chariot, although they have never actually seen it.** Similarly, even one who has never seen the luminaries may recite the blessing.

And how does Rabbi Yehuda counter this argument? He can say that **there, with regard to the Chariot, the matter depends upon the heart's comprehension, and one can concentrate his mind and understand the Chariot even if he has never actually seen it.** But **here, with regard to the luminaries, the blessing is recited due to the benefit one derives from them, and one who is blind does not derive any benefit from them, and therefore he may not recite a blessing over them.**

And the Rabbis maintain that even a blind man **derives benefit from the luminaries, in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei, as it is taught in a baraita that Rabbi Yosei said: All of my life I was troubled by this verse, which I did not understand: “And you shall grope at noon as the blind man gropes in the darkness” (Deuteronomy 28:29).**^N I was perplexed: **What does it matter to a blind person whether it is dark or light?** He cannot see in any event, so why does the verse speak about a blind man in the darkness?

I continued to ponder the matter **until the following incident occurred to me. I was once walking in the absolute darkness of the night, and I saw a blind man who was walking on his way with a torch in his hands. I said to him: My son, why do you need this torch if you are blind? He said to me: As long as I have a torch in my hand, people see me and save me from the pits and the thorns and the thistles.** Even a blind man derives at least indirect benefit from the light, and therefore he may recite the blessing over the heavenly luminaries.

NOTES

What is the reason that a minor who is naked may not read the Torah – עָרוֹם מֵאִי טַעְמָא לֹא – It is generally prohibited for one who is naked to read the Torah. However, the male organ is only considered nakedness when it is fit for sexual activity. Therefore, the general prohibition against reading the Torah while unclothed does not apply to a minor. If he is prohibited from reading the Torah, it must be due to another factor (see *Turei Even*).

NOTES

כְּאִשׁוּר יִמְשֹׁשׁ הָעוֹר – As Rabbi Yosei explains, during the daytime the blind man is seen by others who can direct him to safety. At night,

when he is unable to see and others do not see him, he is more likely to become injured. The plain meaning of the verse is that a blind man constantly gropes in the darkness due to his blindness.

LANGUAGE

Satis – סָטִיס: From the Greek word ἰσάτις, *isatis*, which is the woad plant.

BACKGROUND

Satis – סָטִיס: Satis is referring to *Isatis tinctoria* L., also known as dyer's woad, a plant from the *Brassicaceae* family that can be annual or perennial. It grows to a height of 1 m and has smooth leaves and yellow flowers. A blue dye, indigo, can be produced from material extracted from the leaves of this plant. Indigo is a very stable dye, and it is therefore difficult to clean from one's hands. Nowadays, this plant is generally not used for dyeing, as synthetic indigo is cheaper to manufacture than indigo from woad. However, it grows wild in many places in Eretz Yisrael.



Woad flowers



Old woad mill



Indigo from woad

מתני' בהן שיש בידיו מומין לא ישא את כפיו. רבי יהודה אומר: אף מי שהיו ידיו צבועות סטים לא ישא את כפיו מפני שהעם מסתכלין בו.

גמ' תנא: מומין שאמרו – בפניו, ידיו ורגליו. אומר רבי יהושע בן לוי: ידיו בזהקניות – לא ישא את כפיו. תנא נמי רבי: ידיו בזהקניות – לא ישא את כפיו. עקומות, עקושות – לא ישא את כפיו.

MISHNA A priest who has blemishes on his hands^{NH} may not lift his hands to recite the Priestly Benediction. Because of his blemish, people will look at his hands, and it is prohibited to look at the hands of the priests during the Priestly Benediction. **Rabbi Yehuda says: Even one whose hands were colored^H with *satis*,^{LB} a blue dye, may not lift his hands to recite the Priestly Benediction because the congregation will look at him.^N**

GEMARA It is taught in a *baraita*: The blemishes that the Sages said disqualify a priest from reciting the Priestly Benediction include any blemishes found on his face, hands, and feet, but not blemishes that are not visible to others. **Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: If his hands are spotted with white blotches, he may not lift his hands to recite the Priestly Benediction. The Gemara notes that this is also taught in a *baraita*: If a priest's hands are spotted, he may not lift his hands to recite the Priestly Benediction. Similarly, if his hands are curved inward or bent sideways,^N he may not lift his hands to recite the Priestly Benediction.**

NOTES

Who has blemishes on his hands – שיש בידיו מומין – Most commentaries explain that the reason he cannot recite the Priestly Benediction is because people will look at him. However, the *Rid* explains that the reason is because it is not respectful to the congregation for a deformed man to bless them.

Divine Presence rests on their hands. However, *Tosafot* (*Hagiga* 16a) and other commentaries point out that this is true only in the Temple. They explain, based on the Jerusalem Talmud, that the reason it is prohibited to look at the priests during the Priestly Benediction outside the Temple is because one will be distracted from focusing on the blessings themselves.

Because the congregation will look at him – מפני שהעם – *Rashi* explains that the reason it is prohibited to look at the priests during the Priestly Benediction is because the

Bent sideways – עקושות – Some explain this term as indicating that his hands are clenched and he cannot open them (*Ran*).

HALAKHA

A priest who has blemishes on his hands – שיש בידיו מומין: A priest who has a blemish on his face or hands may not lift his hands to recite the Priestly Benediction because the people will look at him during the Priestly Benediction. The same applies to one who has a blemish on his feet, in a place where the priests recite the Priestly Benediction without socks. This also applies to one whose saliva drools from his mouth, or whose eyes constantly tear, or if he is blind in one of his eyes and it is a noticeable condition (*Mishna Berura*). In all of these cases, if the priest is a familiar figure in his community and people are accustomed to seeing his blemish and no longer gaze at it, he may recite the Priestly Benediction, even if he is blind in both eyes.

their hands with their *tallit* during the Priestly Benediction, even a priest who has multiple blemishes may recite the Priestly Benediction; this is so as long as his blemishes are not noticeable from under his *tallit* (*Kaf HaHayyim*, citing *Radvaz*) and he does not uncover his hands (*Rema*). Some permit him to recite the Priestly Benediction even in a place where this is not the custom, if it is the custom for the members of the congregation to cover their faces with a *tallit* (*Taz*). However, common custom is not in accordance with this opinion (*Shulhan Arukh HaRav; Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 128:30–31).

Anyone who is a permanent resident of a city, or who moves to a new city and has been there for thirty days, is considered a familiar figure. If one visits another city, some hold that after thirty days he is considered a familiar figure (*Magen Avraham*, citing *Bah*), while others hold that he is not a familiar figure until he has been there for twelve months (*Shulhan Arukh HaRav*).

One whose hands were colored – מי שהיו ידיו צבועות – A priest whose hands are colored may not recite the Priestly Benediction. However, if the majority of the residents of the town work in a profession that causes their hands to become colored, he may recite the Priestly Benediction. Similarly, a priest may recite the Priestly Benediction if he is a familiar figure in town (*Shulhan Arukh HaRav*) or if he is in a place where the priests cover their hands with a *tallit* (*Mishna Berura; Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 128:32).

If it is customary in a particular location for priests to cover

A priest from Haifa or Beit She'an – תִּימְנֵי וּבְשֵׁנִי – One who does not pronounce certain letters properly, e.g., *ayin* like *alef*, *het* like a *heh* (*Magen Avraham*, citing Radvaz), or *shin* like a *samekh* (Rambam), may recite the Priestly Benediction only in a place where most people pronounce the letters in this manner (*Shulḥan Arukh, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 128:33; *Shulḥan Arukh HaRav*).

Because they pronounce *alef* as *ayin* and *ayin* as *alef* – מִפְּנֵי שְׂקוּרֵין לְאֶלְפִין עֵינִין וְלַעֲיִינִין אֶלְפִין: One who does not pronounce certain letters properly may not serve as the prayer leader. However, in a place where most people pronounce the letters in this manner, it is permitted (*Magen Avraham*, citing Radvaz). Some say that if he is the one who is most fit to lead the prayers, he may do so even if he does not pronounce certain letters properly (*Peri Hadash*). Others prohibit this unless he can pronounce the letters properly when he exerts himself to do so (*Shulḥan Arukh, Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 53:12; *Peri Megadim*).

BACKGROUND

The people of Beit She'an – אֲנִישֵׁי בֵּית שֵׁאֲן: Whereas residents of Judea, including the family of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi, had a rich vocabulary and clear pronunciation, the residents of the Galilee had difficulty pronouncing the guttural letters properly and hardly differentiated between the letters *alef* and *ayin*. This was particularly true in certain cities in the Galilee, especially those with large gentile populations. Similarly, Babylonian Jews, perhaps due to the influence of the Babylonian language, which had eliminated guttural letters in ancient times, also had difficulty pronouncing these letters. It is therefore not surprising that Rabbi Ḥiyya, who was Babylonian, had difficulty pronouncing the letter *het* and would pronounce it as a *heh*.

NOTES

Because they pronounce *alef* as *ayin* and *ayin* as *alef* – מִפְּנֵי שְׂקוּרֵין לְאֶלְפִין עֵינִין וְלַעֲיִינִין אֶלְפִין: Although most modern Hebrew speakers pronounce these letters the same way, the *ayin* is actually a more guttural sound than the *alef*.

Go and say to him – יֵלֵךְ אֵימָא לֵיהּ – The *Ḥatam Sofer (Nidda* 49b) offers the following explanation of this conversation: Rabbi Ḥiyya was of the opinion that Rabbi Shimon, son of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi, was unfit to succeed his father as *Nasi* because one who has a blemish that would disqualify a Levite from singing on the platform in the Temple is disqualified from serving on the Sanhedrin. Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi responded that just as Rabbi Ḥiyya himself was fit to serve on the Sanhedrin despite his own speech defect, Rabbi Shimon was also fit to serve on the Sanhedrin.

A familiar figure in his town – דֵּשׁ בְּעִירוֹ: This is generally interpreted to mean that the residents of the town are used to seeing this priest. However, the *ge'onim* interpreted this expression to mean that if the priest is used to reciting the blessings, he may continue to do so, even in a different city.

אָמַר רַב אֲסִי: חִיפֵי (וּבְשֵׁנִי) לֹא יִשָּׂא אֶת כַּפָּיו. תִּנְיָא נִמְי הָכִי: אִין מוֹרִיִּין לְפִנֵּי הַתִּיבָה לֹא אֲנִשֵׁי בֵּית שֵׁאֲן, וְלֹא אֲנִשֵׁי בֵּית חִיפָה, וְלֹא אֲנִשֵׁי טְבַעוֹנִין, מִפְּנֵי שְׂקוּרֵין לְאֶלְפִין עֵינִין וְלַעֲיִינִין אֶלְפִין.

אָמַר לֵיהּ רַבִּי חִיפָה לְרַבִּי שְׁמַעוֹן בְּרַבִּי: אֶלְמְלִי אַתָּה לֹוי פְּסוּל אַתָּה מִן הַדּוֹבָן, מִשּׁוּם דְּעֵבִי קָלָךְ. אַתָּה אָמַר לֵיהּ לְאַבּוּהֵי: אָמַר לֵיהּ: וַיֵּל אֵימָא לֵיהּ: בְּשֵׂאֲתָהּ מִגִּיעַ אֶצְל "וְחִבְתִּי לֵה" לֹא נִמְצְאָתָּ מַחְרָף וּמְגַדֵּף?

אָמַר רַב הוּנָא: זְבִלְגִין לֹא יִשָּׂא אֶת כַּפָּיו. וְהָא הָהוּא דְהוּהוּ בְּשִׁיבְבוּתֵיהּ דְּרַב הוּנָא, וְהוּהוּ פְּרִים יְדִיהּ! הָהוּא דֵּשׁ בְּעִירוֹ הוּהוּ. תִּנְיָא נִמְי הָכִי: זְבִלְגִין לֹא יִשָּׂא אֶת כַּפָּיו, וְאִם הָיָה דֵּשׁ בְּעִירוֹ – מוֹתֵר.

Apropos the previous discussion, Rav Asi said: A priest from Haifa or Beit She'an^H may not lift his hands to recite the Priestly Benediction, as he does not know how to properly pronounce the guttural letters. This is also taught in a *baraita*: One may not allow the people of Beit She'an,^B nor the people of Beit Haifa, nor the people of Tivonin to pass before the ark in order to lead the service because they pronounce *alef* as *ayin* and *ayin* as *alef*,^{NH} and they thereby distort the meaning of the prayers.

The Gemara relates that Rabbi Ḥiyya^P once said to Rabbi Shimon, son of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi:^P If you were a Levite, you would be disqualified from singing on the platform in the Temple courtyard because your voice is thick. Offended by this remark, Rabbi Shimon went and told his father, Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi, what Rabbi Ḥiyya had said. Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi said to him: Go and say to him:^N When you study and reach the verse: "And I will wait upon [*vehikkiti*] the Lord" (Isaiah 8:17), will you not be a maligner and a blasphemer? Rabbi Ḥiyya, who was from Babylonia, was unable to differentiate between the letters *het* and *heh*, and he would therefore pronounce the word *vehikkiti* as *vehikkiti*, which means: And I will strike.

Rav Huna said: A priest whose eyes constantly run with tears may not lift his hands to recite the Priestly Benediction. The Gemara asks: Wasn't there a certain priest with this condition in the neighborhood of Rav Huna, and he would spread his hands and recite the Priestly Benediction? The Gemara answers: That priest was a familiar figure in his town. Since the other residents were accustomed to seeing him, he would not draw their attention during the Priestly Benediction. This is also taught in a *baraita*: One whose eyes run should not lift his hands to recite the Priestly Benediction, but if he is a familiar figure in his town,^N he is permitted to do so.

PERSONALITIES

Rabbi Ḥiyya – רַבִּי חִיפָה: Rabbi Ḥiyya, son of Abba from the Babylonian city of Kafri, was one of the last of the *tanna'im* and a contemporary of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi. Rabbi Ḥiyya was born to an important family that traced its roots to King David and included many important Jewish Sages. Rabbi Ḥiyya was recognized as a leading Torah scholar even while living in Babylonia. Many credited his efforts with saving the Torah from oblivion. Upon moving to Eretz Yisrael, Rabbi Ḥiyya became a close friend and colleague of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi. He also became a close friend of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi's son, Rabbi Shimon, with whom he became partners in trade. A powerful force in his generation, Rabbi Ḥiyya also worked closely with Rav, who was recognized as the leader of the Jewish people but still learned from Rabbi Ḥiyya.

Rabbi Ḥiyya's greatest work was his compilation of oral traditions that were not included in the Mishna of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi. This collection, which was assembled with the assistance of Rabbi Ḥiyya's disciple-colleague, Rabbi Oshaya, was viewed as authoritative, to the extent that there are statements of *amora'im* that assert that any *baraita* that was not found in his work should not be discussed in the study hall. Some believe that Rabbi Ḥiyya edited the version of the *Tosefta* that is extant today.

While it appears that Rabbi Ḥiyya received financial support when he first came to Eretz Yisrael, ultimately he became a successful merchant. He dealt in international business ventures,

particularly the silk trade. He had a set of twin daughters, Pazi and Tavi, as well as twin sons, Yehuda and Ḥizkiyya, who were leading Sages in the generation between the *tanna'im* and *amora'im*. Apparently, they took over Rabbi Ḥiyya's yeshiva in Tiberias after his passing.

Rabbi Shimon, son of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi – רַבִּי שְׁמַעוֹן בְּרַבִּי: Rabbi Shimon was the youngest son of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi and his close student. He was one of the great students of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi and discussed various halakhic issues with Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi's other prominent students. He was especially close to Rabbi Ḥiyya, who was also his partner in the silk business. In many places, it is noted that Rabbi Shimon was very meticulous about his honor, which he saw as related to the honor of the *Nasi*. In particular, he was careful to ensure that nothing he did would imply offense to his great father. At least one of his sayings is found in the Mishna itself, although he actually lived in the transition generation between the *tanna'im* and *amora'im*. His sayings are often introduced by the word: *Itmar*, it was stated, which commonly introduces statements of *amora'im*.

Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi considered Rabbi Shimon to be a great scholar, and before his death he appointed Rabbi Shimon as the *Hakham*, the third-highest position in the Sanhedrin after the *Nasi* and the president of the court. However, he appointed Rabbi Shimon's older brother, Rabban Gamliel, to be his replacement as *Nasi*.

I will not pass before the ark in colored garments – איני עובר: One who says that he will not lead the prayers while he is dressed in colored clothes or wearing shoes may not serve as the prayer leader for prayer at all, due to a concern that he has been affected by heretical beliefs. This applies even if he gives a different reason for his actions (*Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim* 53:18 and in the comment of Rema).

And he does not fulfill the mitzva – ואין בה מצוה: One who placed his phylacteries on his palm instead of on his bicep or on his forehead instead of above his hairline is following the practices of the Sadducees. Additionally, one who constructs his phylacteries to be round like a nut does not fulfill a mitzva (Rambam *Sefer Ahava, Hilkhot Tefillin* 4:3).

If one plated his phylacteries with gold – ציפן זהב: If one plates his phylacteries with gold, the phylacteries are disqualified (*Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim* 32:48).

The requirement that phylacteries must be square – תפלין מרובעות: There is a *halakha* transmitted to Moses from Sinai that requires both the phylacteries worn on the arm and those worn on the head to be square. This applies both to the base of the phylacteries as well as to the box that sits on the base. However, they do not need to be a perfect cube, and therefore the height of the box does not need to be the same dimension as its length and width (Rema). Some say that even if the phylacteries were originally square, if they become damaged and are no longer square, they must be repaired (*Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim* 32:39).

BACKGROUND

I will not pass before the ark in colored garments – איני עובר לפני התורה בצבועין: There are sources in the Torah that identify white clothes as a symbol of sanctity, e.g., the priestly vestments, particularly the High Priest's vestments on Yom Kippur. However, insisting on wearing white clothes for prayer was apparently a custom of heretics. The Essenes insisted on this, and it is possible that some of their sects were considered outsiders. Additionally, early Christian priests wore white robes as part of their ritual service.

One who constructs his phylacteries in a round shape exposes himself to danger and does not fulfill the mitzva – העושה תפלתו עגולה ואין בה מצוה: In point of fact, there is evidence that phylacteries worn on the arm were made round throughout history, inasmuch as such phylacteries were found in the Cairo Geniza and in various illustrations of Jewish practice. The Mordekhai, writing in the thirteenth century, relates that this tradition still existed in his time, although he rejects it entirely.

NOTES

He exposes himself to danger – סכנה: Rashi and many others explain that the danger here is due to the phylacteries themselves: Were they to be spherical, if one bumped into something, the phylacteries could cause him injury. Since phylacteries are square, the force of the collision gets spread through the entire bottom side; whereas if they were circular, the impact of the force would be at a single point, where the circle meets his head.

The way of the outsiders – דרך החיצונים: It is not considered heresy, as he does accept the traditions of the Sages; however, he transgresses the details pertaining to this mitzva (Ran).

Along their seams and their diagonals – בתפרן ובאלכסון: This means that one must be careful to sew the stitches in a way that will not ruin the square shape of the phylacteries. Additionally, the phylacteries must be a perfect square, with the appropriate relative lengths of the sides and diagonals; it is not sufficient for the phylacteries to merely be a rectangle (Rabbeinu Yehonatan).

אמר רבי יוחנן: סומא באחת מעיניו לא ישא את כפיו. והא הווא דהוה בשביבבותיה דרבי יוחנן, דהוה פריס ידיה! הווא דש בעירו הוה. תנא נמי הכי: סומא באחת מעיניו לא ישא את כפיו, ואם היה דש בעירו – מותר.

”רבי יהודה אומר מי שהיו ידיו צבועות לא ישא את כפיו. תנא: אם רוב אנשי העיר מלאכתו בכך – מותר.”

מתני' האומר איני עובר לפני התורה בצבועין – אף בלבנים לא יעבור. בסנדל איני עובר – אף יחף לא יעבור.

העושה תפלתו עגולה – סכנה ואין בה מצוה. נתנה על מצחו או על פס ידו – הרי זו דרך המינות. ציפן זהב ונתנה על בית אונקלי שלו – הרי זו דרך החיצונים.

גמ' מאי טעמא? חיישינן שמא מינות נורקה בו.

”העושה תפלתו עגולה סכנה ואין בה מצוה. לימא תנינא להא דתנו רבנן: תפלין מרובעות הלכה למשה מסיני! ואמר רבא: בתפרן ובאלכסון.”

Rabbi Yohanan said: One who is blind in one eye may not lift his hands to recite the Priestly Benediction because people will gaze at him. The Gemara asks: Wasn't there a certain priest who was blind in one eye in the neighborhood of Rabbi Yohanan, and he would lift his hands and recite the Priestly Benediction? The Gemara answers: That priest was a familiar figure in his town, and therefore he would not attract attention during the Priestly Benediction. This is also taught in a *baraita*: One who is blind in one eye may not lift his hands and recite the Priestly Benediction, but if he is a familiar figure in his town, he is permitted to do so.

We learned in the mishna that Rabbi Yehuda said: One whose hands are colored should not lift his hands to recite the Priestly Benediction. It was taught in a *baraita*: If most of the townspeople are engaged in this occupation, dyeing, he is permitted to recite the Priestly Benediction, as the congregation will not pay attention to his stained hands.

MISHNA One who says: I will not pass before the ark to lead the prayer service in colored garments,^{HB} may not pass before the ark to lead the prayer service even in white garments. There is concern that one who insists on wearing clothing of a specific color during his prayers is a heretic and therefore unfit to lead the service. Similarly, if one says: I will not pass before the ark wearing sandals, he may not pass before it even barefoot, as he is not acting in accordance with the teachings of the Sages.

One who constructs his phylacteries in a round shape exposes himself to danger^N during times of persecution, when foreign governments impose a ban on the mitzva of phylacteries, and yet he does not fulfill the mitzva^{HB} to don phylacteries, as phylacteries must be square. If one placed the phylacteries worn on the head on his forehead, and not in its proper place above his hairline, or if he placed the phylacteries worn on the arm on his palm, and not on his bicep, this is the way of the heretics, i.e., those who reject the tradition of the Sages with regard to the proper placement of the phylacteries. If one plated his phylacteries with gold^H or placed the phylacteries worn on the arm on the outside of his sleeve [*unkeli*],^L this is the way of the outsiders,^N i.e., those who do not take part in the traditions of the Jewish people.

GEMARA What is the reason that one who wishes to pray only with white clothes or barefoot is not permitted to lead the prayer? We are concerned that perhaps he has been imbued with heresy, as these are the practices of idolaters. He is therefore barred from leading the service.

We learned in the mishna: One who constructs his phylacteries in a round shape exposes himself to danger and does not fulfill the mitzva to don phylacteries. The Gemara comments: Let us say that we already learned in this mishna that which the Sages taught in a *baraita*: The requirement that phylacteries must be square^H is a *halakha* transmitted to Moses from Sinai. And Rava said about this: Square means along their seams and their diagonals [*alakhsonan*],^{NL} i.e., they must be perfectly square. It would seem that all this was already stated in the mishna, which says that round phylacteries are disqualified.

LANGUAGE

Sleeve [*unkeli*] – אינקלי: From the Greek ἀνάκωλος, *anakolos*, meaning a short garment, like a short tunic with sleeves. According to this interpretation, one who places his phylacteries there does not fulfill the mitzva because he has placed it on his garment rather than directly on his body. Conversely, some explain that *unkeli* is from the Greek ἀγκάλη, *ankalè*, meaning a bent arm or elbow. According to this interpretation,

the problem is that one has placed the phylacteries on the wrong part of his arm.

Their diagonals [*alakhsonan*] – אלכסון: From the Greek λοξόν, *loxon*, meaning slanting or crosswise. This term is generally used in talmudic parlance to refer to the hypotenuse of a triangle.

אמר רב פפא: מתניתין דעבידא כו
אמגוזא.

Rav Pappa said: It is possible to understand that the **mishna** is referring to phylacteries that **one constructed** to be round like a nut, i.e., in the shape of a ball. However, the mishna does not indicate that the phylacteries must be square, as it does not address the case of phylacteries that are rounded but not a true sphere.

מתני' האומר **MISHNA** If one says in his prayers:

Perek III
Daf 25 Amud a

בברוך טובים - הרי זו דרך המינות. על
קו צפור יגיעו רחמיך, ועל טוב יזכר שמך,
מודים מודים - משתקין אותו.

May the good bless You,^N this is a path of heresy, as heretics divide the world into two domains, good and evil. If one says the following in his prayers: Just as **Your mercy is extended to a bird's nest,**^H as You have commanded us to send away the mother before taking her chicks or eggs (see Deuteronomy 22:6-7), so too extend Your mercy to us; or: **May Your name be mentioned with the good; or: We give thanks, we give thanks, twice,**^H he is suspected of heretical beliefs and they **silence him.**

המכנה בעריות - משתקין אותו, האומר:
"ימזרעך לא תתן להעביר למולך", לא
תתן לאעברא בארמיותא - משתקין
אותו בגויפה.

If **one modifies** the text while reading the laws of **forbidden sexual relations**, i.e., he introduces euphemisms out of a sense of propriety, **they silence him.** Similarly, if **one says** while translating the verse: **"And you shall not give any of your seed to set them apart to Molekh"** (Leviticus 18:21): **And you shall not give any of your seed to impregnate an Aramean woman, he is silenced with rebuke.**

גמ' בשלמא מודים מודים - דמיחוי
בשתי רשויות. ועל טוב יזכר שמך נמי,
דמשמע: על טוב - אין, ועל רע - לא.
ותנן: חייב אדם לברך על הרעה בשם
שהוא מברך על הטובה. אלא, על קו
צפור יגיעו רחמיך, מאי טעמא?

GEMARA The mishna cites three instances where the communal prayer leader is silenced. The Gemara clarifies: **Granted, they silence one who repeats: We give thanks, we give thanks, as it appears like he is acknowledging and praying to two authorities. And, granted, they also silence one who says: May Your name be mentioned with the good, as this formulation indicates one is thanking God only for the good and not for the bad, and we learned in a mishna (Berakhot 54a): One is obligated to bless God for the bad^H just as he blesses Him for the good. However, in the case of one who recites: Just as Your mercy is extended to a bird's nest, what is the reason that they silence him?**

פליגי בה תרי אמוראי במערבא: רבי יוסי
בר אבין ורבי יוסי בר זבידא. חד אמר:
מפני שמטיל קנאה במעשה בראשית,
וחד אמר: מפני שעושה מדותיו של
הקדוש ברוך הוא רחמים, ואינן אלא
גזירות.

Two amora'im in the West, Eretz Yisrael, disagree about this question, Rabbi Yosei bar Avin and Rabbi Yosei bar Zevida. One said that this was because one who says this engenders jealousy^N among God's creations, as it appears as though he is indicating that God favored one creature over all others. And one said that saying this is prohibited because one transforms the attributes of the Holy One, Blessed be He, into expressions of mercy, and they are nothing but decrees of the King^N that must be fulfilled without inquiring into the reasons behind them.

HALAKHA

על - Just as Your mercy is extended to a bird's nest - על קו צפור יגיעו רחמיך: One who says in his prayers: Just as You have shown mercy to birds, as expressed through the mitzva to chase away the mother bird before taking eggs from its nest, have mercy and pity upon us, or: You have shown mercy to animals, as reflected in the prohibition of slaughtering an animal and its offspring on the same day, have mercy and pity upon us, is silenced. These mitzvot are not due to mercy, but they are decrees of God (Rambam *Sefer Ahava, Hilkhot Tefilla* 9:7).

מודים מודים - מודים מודים: One who says this twice is silenced (*Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayyim* 121:2).

חייב אדם - One is obligated to bless God for the bad - לברך על הרעה: One is obligated to recite the blessing: The true judge, when bad things occur. The blessing should be recited with full sincerity, just as when one recites a blessing over good tidings (*Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayyim* 222:3).

NOTES

May the good bless You - בברוך טובים: There are several explanations as to why this expression is heretical. Rashi and others explain that one who says this phrase includes only the righteous among those who praise God, whereas this category must include the entire Jewish people. Conversely, many commentaries explain this *halakha* based on the verse: "For then we had plenty of food and were well [*tovim*]" (Jeremiah 44:17), which indicates that *tovim* means satiated (Rid; Rabbeinu Yehonatan). Therefore, those who insert the phrase: May the *tovim* bless You, indicate that only one who is fully satiated must recite Grace after Meals. The *halakha*, however, is that anyone who has eaten an olive-bulk of bread must recite Grace after

Meals. Similarly, the Ra'avad and Rabbeinu Yona explain that the implication is that only those who are satiated and happy bless God. The Meiri cites an explanation that *tovim* refers to the angels. Consequently, one who says this phrase removes God's glory from the earthly world and confines it to the upper realms. This constitutes heresy.

This engenders jealousy, etc. - מטיל קנאה וכו': In the Jerusalem Talmud, it is explained that the problem is that the individual limits God's mercy by implying that it is applied only to birds.

And they are nothing but decrees of the King - ואינן אלא גזירות

גזירות: The great thinkers and philosophers have debated the meaning of this statement; they especially discussed its implications with regard to suggesting reasons for the mitzvot. According to the Rambam, presenting reasons for the mitzvot is problematic when one assumes that he has completely understood the full significance of a mitzva. This is an assumption that human beings have no right to make. Some explain that with regard to the mitzva of chasing away a bird, mercy is indeed a reason for the mitzva; however, the mitzva is not due to God's mercy toward the birds, but rather by God's interest in training mankind to be merciful (Meiri; see Maharah *Tiferet Yisrael*).