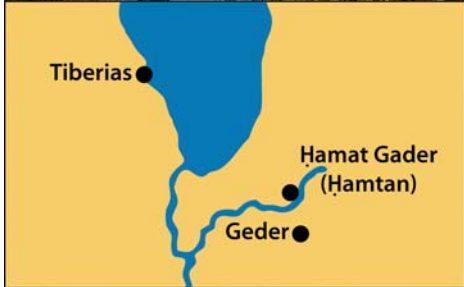


**HALAKHA**

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

**BACKGROUND**

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**NOTES**

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

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

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

Perek I  
Daf 3 Amud a

**NOTES**

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

בגס היו עומדין? stood by way of a miracle?<sup>N</sup>

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

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

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

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

**Onkelos the convert – אונקלוס הגר**: There are differing opinions as to whether Onkelos the convert can be identified with Aquila, who translated the Bible into Greek. It is related that Onkelos came from the family of the Roman emperor and subsequently converted and became a student of Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua. Many stories are told about his conversion process and the powers of persuasion he displayed. According to the theory that Onkelos can be identified with Aquila, he translated the Bible into Greek and then in turn into Aramaic. The translation of Onkelos is considered to be accurate and in line with the Jewish traditions and *halakhot*. Usually the translation presents the literal meaning of the text, with the exception of instances where he thought the simple meaning of the text did not follow the literal translation of the words. In these cases, he would translate the text in a more figurative manner.

Onkelos's Aramaic translation is highly regarded by the Sages, and when they would read from the Torah in synagogue, they would translate the text using this translation. This custom is observed to this day by the Yemenite Jews. At the very least, this translation is recommended in order to fulfill the practice of reading the weekly portion twice in the original and once in translation. Other commentaries elaborate on Onkelos's translation and expound upon its meaning, the most detailed being *Netina LaGer*.

**Yonatan ben Uzziel – יונתן בן עוזיאל**: Very little is known of Yonatan ben Uzziel, who was the greatest student of Hillel the Elder. His greatest project, as is related here, was the translation of the books of the Prophets from Hebrew into Aramaic. It is not clear whether the translation that is presently extant is his original one or whether it is merely based on that translation. Clearly, the extant version is a loose translation that includes much interpretation and explanation. Although there were previous translations into Greek, his translation was the first that also served as a type of interpretation and whose methodology was accepted for use by the Sages of Israel. He was a preeminent scholar in his generation, and we find that Shammai the Elder, the president of the court, would discuss *halakha* with him.

## BACKGROUND

**A translation of the Writings – תרגום של כתובים**: Aramaic translations of the Writings were composed by Sages who lived after Yonatan ben Uzziel. There are actually two such translations of the Scroll of Esther, and it is known that a translation of the book of Job existed already in the time of the Temple. According to the *geonim*, however, these translations were not authorized or composed by leading Torah scholars, and consequently they related to them as mere commentaries that do not necessarily always reflect the real meaning of the verse. Furthermore, most of these compositions were composed much later than the time of Yonatan ben Uzziel. They were generally written in Eretz Yisrael and are based on aggadic midrash.

וְאָמַר רַבִּי יִרְמְיָהּ וְאִיתִימָא רַבִּי חֵיָא בַר אֲבָא: תַּרְגּוּם שֶׁל תּוֹרָה – אֲוֹנְקֵלוֹס הֵגַר אָמְרוּ מִפִּי רַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר וְרַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ. תַּרְגּוּם שֶׁל נְבִיאִים – יוֹנָתָן בֶּן עֻזִּיאֵל אָמְרוּ מִפִּי חֲגִי זְכַרְיָהּ וּמַלְאָכִי, וְנִדְעוּעָה אַרְצָּ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת פְּרָסָה עַל אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת פְּרָסָה. יִצְתָהּ בֵּת קוֹל וְאָמְרָה: מִי הוּא זֶה שֶׁגִּילָה עֲתָרַי לְבָנֵי אָדָם?

**Yonatan ben Uzziel stood up on his feet and said: I am the one who has revealed Your secrets to mankind through my translation.** However, it is revealed and known to You that I did this not for my own honor, and not for the honor of the house of my father, but rather it was for Your honor that I did this, so that discord not increase among the Jewish people. In the absence of an accepted translation, people will disagree about the meaning of obscure verses, but with a translation, the meaning will be clear.

**And Yonatan ben Uzziel also sought to reveal a translation of the Writings,<sup>NB</sup> but a Divine Voice emerged and said to him: It is enough for you that you translated the Prophets.** The Gemara explains: **What is the reason that he was denied permission to translate the Writings? Because it has in it a revelation of the end,** when the Messiah will arrive. The end is foretold in a cryptic manner in the book of Daniel, and were the book of Daniel translated, the end would become manifestly revealed to all.

The Gemara asks: **Was the translation of the Torah really composed by Onkelos the convert? Didn't Rav Ika bar Avin say that Rav Hananel said that Rav said: What is the meaning of that which is written with respect to the days of Ezra: "And they read in the book, the Torah of God, distinctly; and they gave the sense, and they caused them to understand the reading"** (Nehemiah 8:8)? The verse should be understood as follows: **"And they read in the book, the Torah of God," this is the scriptural text; "distinctly," this is the translation,** indicating that they immediately translated the text into Aramaic, as was customary during public Torah readings.

**"And they gave the sense," these are the divisions of the text into separate verses. "And they caused them to understand the reading," these are the cantillation notes,** through which the meaning of the text is further clarified. **And some say that these are the Masoretic traditions<sup>N</sup> with regard to the manner in which each word is to be written.** This indicates that the Aramaic translation already existed at the beginning of the Second Temple period, well before the time of Onkelos. The Gemara answers: **The ancient Aramaic translation was forgotten and then Onkelos came and reestablished it.**

## NOTES

**Eretz Yisrael quaked** – נִדְעוּעָה אַרְצָּ וְיִשְׂרָאֵל: It has been suggested that this alludes to the fact that all of the Sages of Eretz Yisrael were greatly disturbed by this translation (*Pardes Rimmonim*). Various explanations have been offered for this: Some suggest that it is not proper to reveal something that the Torah has hidden (Rabbeinu Hananel); others suggest that there is a concern that people will devote less time and effort to their study of the meaning of the verses and rely instead on the translation (Rid). A third explanation is that they were concerned that people would no longer study the Bible itself, but only the translation (*Penei Yehoshua*).

**A translation of the Writings – תרגום של כתובים**: Rashi understands that the revelation of the end is found in the book of Daniel. Others suggest that it is alluded to in other books as well,

e.g., the Song of Songs (Rashba). Although Yonatan ben Uzziel did not want to translate Writings if he could not translate it in its entirety, a later Sage translated it with the exception of the book of Daniel, which the Divine Voice indicated should not be translated (Rashba; Ritva).

**These are the Masoretic traditions – אילו המסורת**: This may refer to the tradition [*mesora*] that has come down to us that gathers together and notes linguistic phenomena throughout the Bible, which was arrived at through [*hitbonenu*], careful examination. Alternatively, it is referring to the differences between the ways certain words are written and pronounced, and to instances of extra or missing letters that add to the deeper understanding [*havana*] of the text (Rashash).

מאי שנא דאורייתא דלא אודעוה, ואדנביאי אודעוה? דאורייתא מיפרשא מלתא, דנביאי איכא מילי דמיפרשו, ואיכא מילי דמסתמן, דכתוב: "ביום ההוא יגדל המספד בירושלם כמספד הדררימון בבקעת מגידון".

ואמר רב יוסף: אלמלא תרגומא דהאי קרא לא ידענא מאי קאמר: ביום ההוא יסגי מספדא בירושלים כמספדא דאחאב בר עמרי דקטל יתיה הדררימון בן טבריימון ברמות גלעד, וכמספדא דיאשיה בר אמן דקטל יתיה פרעה חגירא בבקעת מגידו.

"וראיתי אני דניאל לבדי את המראה והאנשים אשר היו עמי לא ראו את המראה אבל חרדה גדולה נפלה עליהם ויברחו בהחבא". מאן גניהו אנשים? אמר רבי ירמיה ואיתימא רבי חייא בר אבא: זה חגי זכריה ומלאכי.

אינהו עדיפי מיניה, ואיהו עדיף מיניהו. אינהו עדיפי מיניה – דאינהו נביאי, ואיהו לאו נביא. איהו עדיף מיניהו – דאיהו חזא ואינהו לא חזו.

וכי מאחר דלא חזו מאי טעמא איבעיתו? אף על גב דאינהו לא חזו – מזליהו חזו.

The Gemara asks: **What is different** about the translation of Prophets? Why is it that when Onkelos revealed the translation of the Torah, Eretz Yisrael **did not quake**, and when he revealed the translation of the Prophets, it **quaked**? The Gemara explains: The meaning of matters discussed in the Torah is clear,<sup>N</sup> and therefore its Aramaic translation did not reveal the meaning of passages that had not been understood previously. Conversely, in the Prophets, there are matters that are clear and there are matters that are obscure, and the Aramaic translation revealed the meaning of obscure passages. The Gemara cites an example of an obscure verse that is clarified by the Aramaic translation: **As it is written: "On that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon"** (Zechariah 12:11).

And with regard to that verse, Rav Yosef said: **Were it not for the Aramaic translation of this verse, we would not have known what it is saying**, as the Bible does not mention any incident involving Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon. The Aramaic translation reads as follows: **On that day, the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great as the mourning for Ahab, son of Omri, who was slain by Hadadrimmon, son of Tavrimon, in Ramoth-Gilead, and like the mourning for Josiah, son of Amon, who was slain by Pharaoh the lame in the valley of Megiddon.** The translation clarifies that the verse is referring to two separate incidents of mourning, and thereby clarifies the meaning of this verse.

§ The Gemara introduces another statement from the same line of tradition. The verse states: **"And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision, for the men who were with me did not see the vision; but a great trembling fell upon them, so that they fled to hide themselves"** (Daniel 10:7). **Who were these men?** The term "men" in the Bible indicates important people; who were they? Rabbi Yirmeya said, and some say that it was Rabbi Hiyya bar Abba who said: **These are the prophets Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.**

The Gemara comments: In certain ways **they**, the prophets, were **greater than him**, Daniel, and in certain ways **he**, Daniel, was **greater than them**. **They were greater than him, as they were prophets and he was not a prophet.**<sup>N</sup> Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi were sent to convey the word of God to the Jewish people, while Daniel was not sent to reveal his visions to others. In another way, however, **he was greater than them, as he saw this vision, and they did not see this vision**, indicating that his ability to perceive obscure and cryptic visions was greater than theirs.

The Gemara asks: **Since they did not see the vision, what is the reason that they were frightened?** The Gemara answers: **Even though they did not see the vision, their guardian angels saw it, and therefore they sensed that there was something fearful there and they fled.**

NOTES

The meaning of matters discussed in the Torah is clear – דאורייתא מיפרשא מלתא: Rabbeinu Hananel writes that this is meant as a generalization, i.e., that most of the matters discussed in the Torah are clear (see Rav Ya'akov Emden). Indeed, the language of the Torah itself is generally not obscure, and most verses can be understood in their plain sense. In contrast, the books of the Prophets are often written as parables, and each parable must be explained and its content revealed. A translation, therefore, is not merely a rendering of the material into a different language, but also an explanation. This, in fact, is the

nature of the translation attributed to Yonatan ben Uzziel that has come down to us.

He was not a prophet – איהו לאו נביא: The *Turei Even* writes that Daniel was not a prophet at all, as we do not find that God Himself spoke to him but only that certain visions were revealed to him by way of an angel. Most of the early authorities, however, maintain that Daniel is counted among the prophets (*Tosefot HaRosh*), as a prophet is one who is sent by God with a message to the Jewish people, regardless of how that message is communicated to him.

One who is frightened – **הוא מאן דמיבועית** – Some explain this figuratively to mean that if one feels a certain weakness in his body, he should recite *Shema*, meaning he should begin with a prayer to God. He should then distance himself from his current location, which means he should change his ways. And he should say: The goat of the slaughterhouse is fatter than I am, which means he should attach less importance to his body and physical needs (*Pardes Rimonim*).

The priests at their Temple service – **כהנים בעבודתן** – *Tosafot*, and the Rashba in a slightly different manner, explain that the Gemara means to say that the priests may perform their service at a later time than usual. Some write that if for some reason the priests have not yet read the Megilla, and they have insufficient time to both read the Megilla and perform the Temple service, they cancel their service and read the Megilla (*Turei Even*). Others suggest that the members of the priestly watch whose day it is to serve in the Temple may interrupt their service in order to hear the Megilla, and other priests, who have already heard the reading of the Megilla, perform the service in their place (*Sefat Emet*).

The Sages of the house of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi relied upon – **סמכו של בית רבי** – The later authorities raise the question: Isn't reading the Megilla also considered Torah study? (*Responsa Beit Efrayim*). Some resolve this by suggesting that if a Torah master did not yet read the Megilla, then even if all of his disciples already did so, he must interrupt his own Torah study and that of his disciples to go and read the Megilla (*Rashash*).

To greet his fellow at night – **שלום להבירו בלילה** – *Rashi* (on *Sanhedrin* 44a) offers a simple proof that this took place at night from the fact that Joshua did not recognize the figure coming toward him, and so apparently it must have been dark.

## HALAKHA

The priests at their Temple service – **כהנים בעבודתן** – One must be careful not to be negligent about reading the Megilla, for even the priests must interrupt their service in order to hear the reading of the Megilla (*Tur, Oraḥ Hayyim* 687).

אמר רבינא: שמע מינה, האי מאן דמיבועית אף על גב דאיהו לא חזי מוליה חזי. מאי תקנתיה? ליקרי קריאת שמע, ואי קאים במקום הטנופת – לינשוף מדוכתיה ארבע גרמידי, ואי לא – לימא הכי: עזא דבי טבחי שמינא מינאי.

Ravina said: Learn from this incident that with regard to one who is frightened<sup>N</sup> for no apparent reason, although he does not see anything menacing, his guardian angel sees it, and therefore he should take steps in order to escape the danger. The Gemara asks: What is his remedy? He should recite *Shema*, which will afford him protection. And if he is standing in a place of filth, where it is prohibited to recite verses from the Torah, he should distance himself four cubits from his current location in order to escape the danger. And if he is not able to do so, let him say the following incantation: The goat of the slaughterhouse is fatter than I am, and if a calamity must fall upon something, it should fall upon it.

והשתא דאמרת "מדינה ומדינה" ועיר ועיר לדרשה, "משפחה ומשפחה" למאי אתא? אמר רבי יוסי בר חנינא: להביא משפחות בהוה ולויה שמבטלין עבודתן ובאין לשמוע מקרא מגילה.

¶ After this digression, the Gemara returns to the exposition of a verse cited above. Now that you have said that the phrases "every province" and "every city" appear for the purposes of midrashic exposition, for what exposition do the words "every family" appear in that same verse (*Esther* 9:28)? Rabbi Yosei bar Hanina said: These words come to include the priestly and Levitical families, and indicate that they cancel their service in the Temple and come to hear the reading of the Megilla.

דאמר רב יהודה אמר רב: כהנים בעבודתן, ולוים בדוכן וישראל במעמדן – בולן מבטלין עבודתן ובאין לשמוע מקרא מגילה.

As Rav Yehuda said that Rav said: The priests at their Temple service,<sup>NH</sup> the Levites on their platform in the Temple, where they sung the daily psalm, and the Israelites at their watches, i.e., the group of Israelites, corresponding to the priestly watches, who would come to Jerusalem and gather in other locations as representatives of the entire nation to observe or pray for the success of the Temple service, all cancel their service and come to hear the reading of the Megilla.

תניא נמי הכי: כהנים בעבודתן, ולוים בדוכן, וישראל במעמדן – בולן מבטלין עבודתן ובאין לשמוע מקרא מגילה. מפאן סמכו של בית רבי שמבטלין תלמוד תורה ובאין לשמוע מקרא מגילה, קל וחומר מעבודה. ומה עבודה שהיא חמורה – מבטלינן, תלמוד תורה – לא כל שכן?

This is also taught in a *baraita*: The priests at their service, the Levites on the platform, and the Israelites at their watches, all cancel their service and come to hear the reading of the Megilla. The Sages of the house of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi relied upon<sup>N</sup> the *halakha* stated here and determined that one cancels his Torah study and comes to hear the reading of the Megilla. They derived this principle by means of an *a fortiori* inference from the Temple service: Just as one who is engaged in performing service in the Temple, which is very important, cancels his service in order to hear the Megilla, is it not all the more so obvious that one who is engaged in Torah study cancels his study to hear the Megilla?

ועבודה חמורה מתלמוד תורה? והכתוב: "ויהי בהיות יהושע ביריחו וישא עינו וירא והנה איש עומד לנגדו [גור] וישתחו (לאפו)".

The Gemara asks: Is the Temple service more important than Torah study? Isn't it written: "And it came to pass when Joshua was by Jericho that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a man stood over against him with his sword drawn in his hand. And Joshua went over to him and said to him: Are you for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, No, but I am captain of the host of the Lord, I have come now. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and bowed down" (*Joshua* 5:13–14).

והיכי עבד הכי? והאמר רבי יהושע בן לוי: אסור לאדם שיתן שלום לחבירו בלילה, חיישינן שמא שד הוא! שאני התם דאמר ליה: "כי אני שר צבא ה".

The Gemara first seeks to clarify the incident described in the verse. How did Joshua do this, i.e., how could he bow to a figure he did not recognize? Didn't Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi say: It is prohibited for a person to greet his fellow at night<sup>N</sup> if he does not recognize him, as we are concerned that perhaps it is a demon? How did Joshua know that it was not a demon? The Gemara answers: There it was different, as the visitor said to him: But I am captain of the host of the Lord.

ודלמא משקרי? גמורי דלא מפקי שם שמים לבטלה.

The Gemara asks: Perhaps this was a demon and he lied? The Gemara answers: It is learned as a tradition that demons do not utter the name of Heaven for naught, and therefore since the visitor had mentioned the name of God, Joshua was certain that this was indeed an angel.

NOTES

You neglected the afternoon daily offering – בַּטְלִיתָם תְּמִיד שֶׁל – See Tosafot for an explanation as to why the offerings were not brought. Some suggest that owing to the journey they did not have time to erect the Tabernacle, and so they were unable to bring the offerings (Rabbeinu Hananel; Arukh).

And Joshua lodged that night – וַיֵּלֶן יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בַּלַּיְלָה הַהוּא – Tosafot note that here the Gemara joins together two different verses: “And Joshua lodged that night among the people” (Joshua 8:9), and: “And Joshua went that night into the midst of the valley” (Joshua 8:13). This combination of verses is not uncommon in the Talmud; they are combined because the exposition is based on both of them. The Rishon LeTziyyon explains that the entire incident, including the revelation of the angel, took place after the conquering of Jericho, but was written earlier in the text so as not to interrupt the sequence of events with a long digression.

אָמַר לוֹ: אִמָּשׁ בַּטְלִיתָם תְּמִיד שֶׁל בֵּין הָעֶרְבִים, וְעַכְשָׁיו בַּטְלִיתָם תִּלְמוּד תּוֹרָה! אָמַר לוֹ: עַל אֵיזָה מִהֶן בָּאתָ? אָמַר לוֹ: “עֵתָה בָּאתִי.” מִיָּד “וַיֵּלֶן יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בַּלַּיְלָה הַהוּא בְּתוֹךְ הָעֵמֶק.” אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן:

As for the angel’s mission, the Gemara explains that the angel said to Joshua: Yesterday, i.e., during the afternoon, you neglected the afternoon daily offering<sup>N</sup> due to the impending battle, and now, at night, you have neglected Torah study, and I have come to rebuke you. Joshua said to him: For which of these sins have you come? He said to him: I have come now, indicating that neglecting Torah study is more severe than neglecting to sacrifice the daily offering. Joshua immediately determined to rectify the matter, as the verses states: “And Joshua lodged that night” (Joshua 8:9)<sup>N</sup> “in the midst of the valley [ha’emek]” (Joshua 8:13), and Rabbi Yoḥanan said:

Perek I Daf 3 Amud b

NOTES

And Rav Shmuel bar Unya said – וְאָמַר רַב שְׁמוּאֵל בְּרַ אֲוֵנָא – It was necessary to add this, for if not we might have thought that the angel came because they had transgressed two transgressions and not because the mitzva of Torah study is more important than the Temple service (Ramat Shmuel).

Torah study by the masses – תִּלְמוּד תּוֹרָה דְּרַבִּים – Rashi explains that this is referring to the Torah study of the entire Jewish people. He is compelled to explain it in this manner, because the case of the Sages of the house of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi is also dealing with the Torah study of many people, yet the Gemara does not consider them to be the entire community. This must be due to the fact that in relation to all of Israel they are considered as individuals (Re’ah Duda’im).

Clap their hands in mourning – מְטַפְּחוֹת – This action involves hands, either clapping the hands together, or clapping the hand against another part of the body, e.g., the face, chest, or thigh (Ritva).

The honor shown to the Torah in the case of an individual Torah scholar is important – כְּבוֹד תּוֹרָה דְּיַחֲדֵי חָמוּר – The reason for this is that the honor that must be shown to a Torah scholar is for all the Torah that he has learned in his life, whereas the honor shown for the Torah study of an individual is only for the Torah he is presently engaged in studying (Sefat Emet).

HALAKHA

On the intermediate days of a Festival women may lament – נָשִׁים בְּמוֹעֵד מְעַנּוֹת – On the intermediate days of a Festival, women are permitted to lament together in unison, but they may not clap their hands in mourning. On the New Moon, Hanukkah, and Purim, they are even permitted to wail responsively, one woman uttering words of lament and the others responding after her. All this applies so long as the deceased has not yet been buried. However, if one hears of the demise of an immediate relative after he has already been buried, the practices mentioned above are permitted on the day one receives the news.

These restrictions are limited to the passing of an ordinary person. However, in the case of the death of a Torah scholar, it is permitted, even on the intermediate days of a Festival, to lament and engage in other mourning practices in the presence of the body of the deceased. Nowadays these customs of mourning are not practiced. However, the halakhot mentioned above also apply to eulogies; one is not permitted to eulogize on these days except for when a Torah scholar passes away, and then only in the presence of his body (Arukh HaShulhan; Shulhan Arukh, Yoreh De’a 401:5).

מִלְמַד שֶׁלֶן בְּעוֹמְקָהּ שֶׁל הַלְּבָבָה. וְאָמַר רַב שְׁמוּאֵל בְּרַ אֲוֵנָא: גְּדוֹל תִּלְמוּד תּוֹרָה יוֹתֵר מִהַקְרִיבַת תְּמִידִין, שְׁנֵאָמַר: “עֵתָה בָּאתִי!”

This teaches that he spent the night in the depths [be’umeka] of halakha, i.e., that he spent the night studying Torah with the Jewish people. And Rav Shmuel bar Unya said:<sup>N</sup> Torah study is greater than sacrificing the daily offerings, as it is stated: “I have come now” (Joshua 5:14), indicating that the angel came to rebuke Joshua for neglecting Torah study and not for neglecting the daily offering. Consequently, how did the Sages of the house of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi determine that the Temple service is more important than Torah study?

לֹא קָשִׁיָּא: הָא – דְּרַבִּים, וְהָא – דְּיַחֲדֵי.

The Gemara explains that it is not difficult. This statement, with regard to the story of Joshua, is referring to Torah study by the masses,<sup>N</sup> which is greater than the Temple service. That statement of the Sages of the house of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi is referring to Torah study by an individual, which is less significant than the Temple service.

וְדִיחֵיד קַל? וְהֵתֵּן: נָשִׁים בְּמוֹעֵד מְעַנּוֹת, אָבָל לֹא מְטַפְּחוֹת. רַבִּי יִשְׁמַעֵאל אוֹמֵר: אִם הָיוּ סְמוּכוֹת לְמִטָּה – מְטַפְּחוֹת. בְּרֵאשֵׁי חֳדָשִׁים בְּחֻנוּכָה וּבְפִּזְרִים – מְעַנּוֹת וּמְטַפְּחוֹת בְּזָה וּבְזָה אָבָל לֹא מְקוֹנְנוֹת.

The Gemara asks: Is the Torah study of an individual a light matter? Didn’t we learn in a mishna: On the intermediate days of a Festival, women may lament<sup>H</sup> the demise of the deceased in unison, but they may not clap their hands in mourning?<sup>N</sup> Rabbi Yishmael says: Those that are close to the bier may clap. On the New Moon, on Hanukkah, and on Purim, which are not mandated by Torah law, they may both lament and clap their hands in mourning. However, on both groups of days, they may not wail responsively, a form of wailing where one woman wails and the others repeat after her.

וְאָמַר רַבָּה בְּרַ הֵוֵנָא: אֵין מוֹעֵד בְּפִנֵּי תִלְמוּד חָכָם, כָּל שְׁנֵי חֻנוּכָה וּפִזְרִים!

And Rabba bar Huna said: All these regulations were said with regard to an ordinary person, but there are no restrictions on expressions of mourning on the intermediate days of a Festival in the presence of a deceased Torah scholar. If a Torah scholar dies on the intermediate days of a Festival, the women may lament, clap, and wail responsively as on any other day, and all the more so on Hanukkah and Purim. This indicates that even the Torah study of an individual is of great importance.

כְּבוֹד תּוֹרָה קְאָמְרַת, כְּבוֹד תּוֹרָה דְּיַחֲדֵי – חָמוּר, תִּלְמוּד תּוֹרָה דְּיַחֲדֵי – קַל.

The Gemara rejects this argument: You speak of the honor that must be shown to the Torah, and indeed, the honor that must be shown to the Torah in the case of an individual Torah scholar is important;<sup>N</sup> but the Torah study of an individual in itself is light and is less significant than the Temple service.

**מת מצוה** – [met mitzva] A corpse with no one to bury it. It is an important religious obligation to take part in the burial of the dead. If the deceased has no friends or relatives to bury him, everyone is obligated to assist in his burial. According to *halakha*, a corpse with no one available to bury it acquires his place, i.e., the body must be interred where it was found, provided that it is an honorable location; otherwise, the body must be buried in the nearest cemetery. This religious duty is so important that even priests and nazirites, who are ordinarily prohibited to come in contact with a corpse, may bury a deserted corpse if there is no one else available to bury it. Similarly, the obligation to bury this corpse takes precedence over nearly all other religious obligations.

## NOTES

**Or for his sister** – לְאָחוֹתָיו: The derivation of this *halakha* may be understood as follows: The verse states with regard to a nazirite: “He shall not come near to a dead body” (Numbers 6:6), teaching that he is forbidden to become ritually impure by coming into contact with a corpse. In the following verse: “For his father, or for his mother, for his brother, or for his sister, he shall not make himself ritually impure for them when they die” (Numbers 6:7), the words “or for his sister” are superfluous, as it would have sufficed to mention his father or his mother in order to teach that this prohibition applies even to close relatives, unlike a priest, who may become ritually impure for his immediate relatives. Therefore one can derive from the language of this verse that “for them,” i.e., his relatives, he is forbidden to become ritually impure, but there are other instances in which he is permitted to make himself ritually impure, i.e., for a corpse with no one to bury it [met mitzva]. Since the verse mentions four relatives, it may be derived that even in the case of a High Priest, or one who is on his way to slaughter the Paschal lamb, he may nevertheless become ritually impure for the sake of a met mitzva.

**הָרִי שֶׁהָיָה הוֹלֵךְ לְשַׁחֹט** – One who was going to slaughter: Rashi explains that this case refers to anyone who is on his way to perform these mitzvot; just as a nazirite would become ritually impure for a met mitzva, so too would someone on his way to perform these mitzvot (see Rashba). However, Rashi (on *Zevachim* 100a) explains that the case is where an individual who is both the High Priest and a nazirite is on his way to perform these mitzvot. See the *Tosefot HaRosh* (on *Berakhot* 19b), who addresses the apparent contradiction between Rashi’s explanations.

**גָּדוֹל כְּבוֹד הַבְּרִיּוֹת** – Great is human dignity: The importance of burying a met mitzva does not stem from the mitzva to bury the dead, but rather from the principle of human dignity, as it is a disgrace to the deceased if his body is not buried. As for the negative mitzva that is superseded by human dignity, both Rashi and the Rid write that this refers to the cancellation of the positive precept of returning a lost object to its owner when returning the object would cause disgrace to the finder. However, many of the early authorities (see Rabbeinu Yehonatan) understand that the reference is to the negative precept of “Do not deviate” (Deuteronomy 17:11), indicating that the concern for human dignity supersedes rabbinic obligations and prohibitions. Some authorities maintain that human dignity sets aside even Torah commandments, but only in a passive manner, whereas one would be permitted to violate rabbinic prohibitions even actively.

**S** Rava said: It is obvious to me that if one must choose between Temple service and reading the Megilla, reading the Megilla takes precedence, based upon the exposition of Rabbi Yosei bar Hanina with regard to the phrase “every family” (Esther 9:28). Similarly, if one must choose between Torah study and reading the Megilla, reading the Megilla takes precedence, based upon the fact that the Sages of the house of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi relied on Rabbi Yosei bar Hanina’s exposition to rule that one interrupts Torah study to hear the reading of the Megilla.

Furthermore, it is obvious that if one must choose between Torah study and tending to a corpse with no one to bury it [met mitzva],<sup>b</sup> the task of burying the met mitzva takes precedence. This is derived from that which is taught in a *baraita*: One cancels his Torah study to bring out a corpse for burial,<sup>c</sup> and to join a wedding procession and bring in the bride. Similarly, if one must choose between the Temple service and tending to a met mitzva, tending to the met mitzva takes precedence, based upon the *halakha* derived from the term “or for his sister” (Numbers 6:7).<sup>d</sup>

As it is taught in a *baraita* with regard to verses addressing the laws of a nazirite: “All the days that he consecrates himself to the Lord, he shall not come near to a dead body. For his father, or for his mother, for his brother, or for his sister, he shall not make himself ritually impure for them when they die” (Numbers 6:6–7). What is the meaning when the verse states “or for his sister”? The previous verse, which states that the nazirite may not come near a dead body, already prohibits him from becoming impure through contact with his sister. Therefore, the second verse is understood to be teaching a different *halakha*: One who was going to slaughter<sup>e</sup> his Paschal lamb or to circumcise his son, and he heard that a relative of his died, one might have thought that he should return and become ritually impure with the impurity imparted by a corpse.

You said: He shall not become impure; the death of his relative will not override so significant a mitzva from the Torah. One might have thought: Just as he does not become impure for his sister, so he does not become impure for a corpse with no one to bury it [met mitzva]. The verse states: “Or for his sister”; he may not become impure for his sister, as someone else can attend to her burial, but he does become impure for a met mitzva.<sup>f</sup>

On the basis of these premises, Rava raised a dilemma: If one must choose between reading the Megilla and tending to a met mitzva,<sup>h</sup> which of them takes precedence? Does reading the Megilla take precedence due to the value of publicizing the miracle, or perhaps burying the met mitzva takes precedence due to the value of preserving human dignity? After he raised the dilemma, Rava then resolved it on his own and ruled that attending to a met mitzva takes precedence, as the Master said: Great is human dignity,<sup>n</sup> as it overrides a prohibition in the Torah. Consequently, it certainly overrides the duty to read the Megilla, despite the fact that reading the Megilla publicizes the miracle.

## HALAKHA

**תְּלִמּוּד תּוֹרָה וְהוֹצֵאת** – Torah study and bringing out a corpse: One is required to interrupt his Torah study in order to bury the deceased (*Shakh*, *Shulhan Arukh*, *Yoreh De’a* 361:1).

**מִיִּטְמָא לְמַת מִצְוָה** – Becoming impure for a met mitzva: Even a High Priest, a nazirite, and one who is on the way to circumcise his son or to slaughter the Paschal lamb is required to abandon the mitzva and become ritually impure in order to bury a met mitzva, an unattended corpse (*Shulhan Arukh*, *Yoreh De’a* 374:1).

**מִקְרָא מְגִילָה** – Reading the Megilla and tending to a met mitzva: Although reading the Megilla takes precedence over other mitzvot, burying an unattended corpse overrides reading

the Megilla. Some say that this ruling isn’t limited to an unattended corpse, but even to one’s relative who requires attending. The funeral of a Torah scholar has the same status as that of an unattended corpse (see *Magen Avraham*, citing the *Darkhei Moshe* and *Or Zarua*). There are those who rule that although attending to a met mitzva takes precedence over reading the Megilla, if one will not be able to read the Megilla afterward, the reading of the Megilla takes precedence (*Rema*). Others maintain that even in these circumstances an unattended corpse should be buried first (*Taz*; *Magen Avraham*). This, however, is only true with regard to an unattended corpse; the reading of the Megilla is not completely abandoned in order to bury a regular corpse (*Mishna Berura*; *Shulhan Arukh*, *Orah Hayyim* 687:2).

**Nearby and seen** – סמוך ונראה: Anything that is near a walled city, i.e., within the distance of a *mil* from a walled city, is considered to be part of the city with regard to the Megilla reading, even if it cannot be seen from the city, such as if it is in a valley. Anything that can be seen from a walled city is considered to be part of the city. Some say that in order for something to be considered seen, it must also be within the distance of a *mil* (Ritva; *Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayyim* 688:2).

**A city that was settled and only later surrounded by a wall** – כרך שישב ולבסוף הוקף: A city that was first settled and then surrounded by a wall has the *halakha* of a village with regard to reading the Megilla. However, a city that was settled with the intention of surrounding it with a wall, as well as a city for which it is not known how it was built, has the *halakha* of a city that was surrounded and then settled (*Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayyim* 688:1, and in the comment of Rema).

**A walled city** – עיר חומה: A place is not considered a walled city unless it has at least three courtyards, each one consisting of at least two houses. Additionally, it must have been surrounded by a wall and then settled. If it does not fulfill these criteria, its *halakha* is like that of a house in a courtyard. This is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Eliezer bar Yosei (Rambam *Sefer Zera'im, Hilkhot Shemitta VeYovel* 12:14).

**A walled city that does not have ten idlers** – כרך שאין בו עשרה בטלנים: A city that does not have ten idlers is considered a village with regard to the Megilla reading, even if it is a large city. However, cities that were surrounded by a wall in the days of Joshua are always considered to be a city, even if they do not have ten idlers. As there are others who dispute this (Ramban), their opinion should be taken into account, and in such a place the Megilla should also be read on the fourteenth (*Mishna Berura; Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayyim* 688:1).

BACKGROUND

**Surrounded by a wall and settled** – הוקף וישב: For much of history, there was a significant difference between various types of cities. Often a city was designed for the purpose of being a place of shelter and defense for its residents and for the residents of the surrounding villages, and therefore originally built fortified. Other places, however, were first settled, and although they were eventually surrounded by a wall, they are not considered to be as important as cities that were walled from the start. As these cities were not originally planned to provide fortification for the entire area, they are considered open cities that simply had extra defenses added to them at a later time.

גופא, אומר רבי יהושע בן לוי: כרך וכל הסמוך לו וכל הנראה עמו גדון ככרך. תנא: סמוך אף על פי שאינו נראה, נראה – אף על פי שאינו סמוך.

בשלמא נראה אף על פי שאינו סמוך – משכחת לה בגון דיתבה בראש ההר. אלא סמוך אף על פי שאינו נראה, היכי משכחת לה? אומר רבי ירמיה: שישבת בנחל.

ואמר רבי יהושע בן לוי: כרך שישב ולבסוף הוקף – גדון ככפר. מאי טעמא – דכתיב: "ואיש כי ימכור בית מושב עיר חומה" שהוקף ולבסוף ישב, ולא שישב ולבסוף הוקף.

ואמר רבי יהושע בן לוי: כרך שאין בו עשרה בטלנים – גדון ככפר. מאי קא משמע לן? תנינא: איזו היא עיר גדולה – כל שיש בה עשרה בטלנים, פחות מכאן – הרי זה כפר. כרך איצטרך ליה, אף על גב דמיקלעי ליה מעלמא.

The Gemara examines the matter itself cited in the course of the previous discussion. **Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: A walled city, and all settlements adjacent to it, and all settlements that can be seen with it, i.e., that can be seen from the walled city, are considered like the walled city, and the Megilla is read on the fifteenth.**<sup>4</sup> It was taught in the *Tosefta*: This is the *halakha* with regard to a settlement adjacent to a walled city, although it cannot be seen from it, and also a place that can be seen from the walled city, although it is not adjacent to it.<sup>5</sup>

The Gemara examines the *Tosefta*: **Granted** that with regard to a place that can be seen from the walled city, although it is not adjacent to it, you find it where the place is located on the top of a mountain, and therefore it can be seen from the walled city, although it is at some distance from it. **However**, with regard to a settlement that is adjacent to a walled city although it cannot be seen from it, how can you find these circumstances? **Rabbi Yirmeya said:** You find it, for example, where the place is located in a valley, and therefore it is possible that it cannot be seen from the walled city, although it is very close to it.

**And Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: A walled city that was initially settled and only later surrounded by a wall<sup>HN</sup> is considered a village<sup>N</sup> rather than a walled city. What is the reason? As it is written: "And if a man sells a residential house in a walled city" (Leviticus 25:29).**<sup>6</sup> The wording of the verse indicates that it is referring to a place that was first surrounded by a wall and only later settled, and not to a place that was first settled and only later surrounded by a wall.<sup>6</sup>

**And Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: A walled city that does not have ten idlers,<sup>HN</sup> i.e., individuals who do not work and are available to attend to communal needs, is treated as a village.** The Gemara asks: **What is he teaching us? We already learned in a mishna (5a): What is a large city? Any city in which there are ten idlers; however, if there are fewer than that, it is a village.** The Gemara answers: Nevertheless, it was necessary for Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi to teach this *halakha* with regard to a large city, to indicate that even if idlers happen to come there from elsewhere, since they are not local residents, it is still considered a village.

NOTES

**נראה אף על פי שאינו סמוך:** Some early authorities maintain that a place that can be seen from a walled city is only subordinate to it if it is within a distance of a *mil* from the city (Ritva; some explain that this is the intention of the Rambam and *Tur*; see *Beit Yosef*). If so, one might ask why the settlement is not considered to be adjacent to the city, and what is gained when the place may be seen from the city, as even a location that is not visible from the city is subordinate to it if it is within a *mil*. The answer is that with regard to a settlement that cannot be seen from the walled city, the distance of a *mil* is measured on the road one must travel to get to it; whereas in the case of a settlement that can be seen from the walled city, the distance of a *mil* is measured in a straight line, as the bird flies (see *Beit Peretz*).

**That was settled and only later surrounded by a wall** – שישב: Rashi and the Rambam, according to the *Lehem Mishne*, explain that this stipulation of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi pertains to the *halakhot* of selling a residential house in a walled city. The general principle that property returns to its original owner in the Jubilee Year does not apply to residential houses in walled cities. Furthermore, the original owner may redeem the

house for a year after the sale, but if he fails to do so, it becomes the permanent possession of the purchaser. However, many are of the opinion that Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi's statement here pertains to the reading of the Megilla (*Tosafot*).

**Is considered a village** – גדון ככפר: The Ramban maintains that such a city is not really treated like a village, but rather like a large town if it is sufficiently large; this seems to be the opinion in the Jerusalem Talmud. Others, however, hold that the city is treated like a village in every respect, even to the extent of advancing the reading of the Megilla to the day of assembly if it is necessary (Rashba).

**Ten idlers** – עשרה בטלנים: Some explain that these ten idlers are ten men who do not have specific work and are consequently always available in the synagogue in order to ensure that there is a quorum for prayer. This appears also to be the opinion in the Jerusalem Talmud. Some authorities, however, understand that the reference is to ten men who are appointed to communal positions: Three judges, three charity collectors, a scribe, a cantor, an officer of the court, and an elementary school teacher (*She'iltot*; see Rashba).

ואמר רבי יהושע בן לוי: כרך שחרב  
 ולבסוף ישב – נדון ככרך. מאי חרב?  
 אילימא חרבו חומותיו, ישב – אין  
 לא ישב – לא? והא תנא, רבי אליעזר  
 בר יוסי אומר: “אשר לוא חומה” –  
 אף על פי שאין לו עכשיו, והיה לו  
 קודם לכן.

And Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi also said: A walled city that was destroyed and then later settled is considered a city. The Gemara asks: What is meant by the term destroyed? If we say that the city’s walls were destroyed, and Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi comes to teach us that if it was settled, yes it is treated as a walled city, but if it was not settled, it is not treated that way, there is a difficulty. Isn’t it taught in a *baraita* that Rabbi Eliezer bar Yosei says: The verse states: “Which has [*lo*] a wall (Leviticus 25:30),” and the word *lo* is written with an *alef*, which means no, but in context the word *lo* is used as though it was written with a *vav*, meaning that it has a wall. This indicates that **even though** the city **does not have** a wall **now**, as the wall was destroyed, if it **had** a wall **before**, it retains its status as a walled city.

אלא: מאי חרב – שחרב מעשרה  
 בטלמי.

Rather, what is meant by the term destroyed? That it was destroyed in the sense that it no longer has ten idlers, and therefore it is treated like a village. However, once it has ten idlers again, it is treated like a city.

ואמר רבי יהושע בן לוי:

And Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said:

Perek I

Daf 4 Amud a

לוד ואונו וגיי החרשים מוקפות  
 חומה מימות יהושע בן נון הו.

The cities Lod,<sup>b</sup> and Ono,<sup>n</sup> and Gei HeHarashim are cities that have been surrounded by walls since the days of Joshua, son of Nun.

והני יהושע בננהי? והא אלפעל  
 בננהי, דכתיב: “[ו] בני אלפעל עבר  
 ומשעם ושמר הוא בנה את אונו ואת  
 לוד ובנותיה”. ולטעמיך אסא בננהי,  
 דכתיב: “ויבן (אסא את ערי הבצורות  
 אשר ליהודה)”.

The Gemara asks: Did Joshua, son of Nun, really build these cities? Didn’t Elpaal build them at a later date, as it is written: “And the sons of Elpaal: Eber, and Misham, and Shemed, who built Ono and Lod, with its hamlets” (1 Chronicles 8:12)? The Gemara counters: According to your reasoning, that this verse proves that these cities were built later, you can also say that Asa, king of Judah, built them, as it is written: “And he, Asa, built fortified cities in Judah” (see II Chronicles 14:5). Therefore, it is apparent that these cities were built more than once.

אמר רבי אלעזר: הני מוקפות חומה  
 מימות יהושע בן נון הו, חרוב בימי  
 פילגש בגבעה ואתא אלפעל בננהי,  
 הדור אינפול – אתא אסא שפצינהו.

Rabbi Elazar said: These cities were surrounded by a wall since the days of Joshua, son of Nun, and they were destroyed in the days of the concubine in Gibe'a, as they stood in the tribal territory of Benjamin, and in that war all of the cities of Benjamin were destroyed (see Judges, chapters 19–21). Elpaal then came and built them again. They then fell in the wars between Judah and Israel, and Asa came and restored them.

דיקא נמי, דכתיב: “ויאמר ליהודה  
 נבנה את הערים האלה” – מבבל  
 דערים הו מעיקרא, שמע מינה.

The Gemara comments: The language of the verse is also precise according to this explanation, as it is written with regard to Asa: “And he said to Judah: Let us build these cities” (II Chronicles 14:6), which proves by inference that they had already been cities at the outset, and that he did not build new cities. The Gemara concludes: Indeed, learn from this that it is so.

NOTES

Lod and Ono – לוד ואונו: Rashi explains that Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi mentioned particularly these cities because their walls had been rebuilt and they did not look ancient enough to have been from the time of Joshua. Alternatively, one could explain that these cities are not mentioned in the book of Joshua among the cities that Joshua conquered, and therefore it was necessary to determine their status. Additionally, Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi lived in Lod and had to establish the practical *halakha* for the residents of his city.

BACKGROUND

Lod – לוד: Lod, or Lydda, was one of the oldest towns in Judea. It grew in significance toward the end of the Second Temple period and served as an important cultural center for many generations after the destruction of the Temple. Some of the greatest *tanna'im* lived there, among them Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus, who was known as Rabbi Eliezer the Great; Rabbi Tarfon; and others. Several important ordinances were

instituted in the upper chamber of the house of Nitza in Lod. After the bar Kokheva revolt the town remained an important place of Torah, becoming the center for scholars in the south of Eretz Yisrael. Among the great *amora'im* who lived there were Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi; Rabbi Simlai; Rabbi Yitzhak bar Nahmani; Rabbi Aha; Rabbi Shimon ben Pazi; and his son, Rabbi Yehuda.