The Gemara asks: Up to what distance is considered adjacent?\(^9\) 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, a mill. The Gemara asks: Let him say simply that the limit is a mill! 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 mill? It is like the distance from Hamtan to Tiberias.

§ Having cited a statement of Rabbi Yirmeya, which some attribute to Rabbi Hiyya bar Abba, the Gemara cites other statements attributed to these Sages. Rabbi Yirmeya said, and some say that it was Rabbi Hiyya bar Abba who said: The Seers, i.e., the prophets, were the ones who said\(^6\) that the letters mem, nun, tzadi, peh, and kaf (mantzepakh)\(^7\) have a different form when they appear at the end of a word.

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

The Seer’s said – זו הכתובת: 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 the measure. He teaches us this:

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Yisrael were greatly disturbed by this translation (Rashba; Ritva). And Yonatan ben Uziel also sought to reveal a translation of the Writings, 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.

Yonatan ben Uziel 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.

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, distinct; 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.

Yet 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 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.
The Gemara asks: What is different about the translation of the 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, 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). What 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. 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 – 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 Yaakov 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 Uziel that has come down to us. He was not a prophet – Tosfot: 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 HaKtoshi), 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 — Ravina said: Learn from this incident that with regard to one who is frightened 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.’

§ 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)?

Ravina bar Hanina said: This is also taught in a ba’aita: The priests at their service, the Levites on their platform in the Temple, where they sang 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.

This is also taught in a ba’aita: The priests at their service, the Levites on their platform in the Temple, where they sang the daily psalm, 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 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?

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).

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 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 was an angel. And he should say: The goat of the slaughterhouse is fatter than I am, and if a calamity must fall upon something, it should fall upon it. But I am captain of the host of the Lord.

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.
And Joshua lodged that night—and: “And Joshua went that night into the midst of the valley” (Joshua 8:9), 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 LeTzion 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.

And Rav Shmuel bar Unya said: “Rabbi Yoḥanan 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) “in the midst of the valley” (Joshua 8:13), and Rabbi Yoḥanan said:

This teaches that he spent the night in the depths [be’umeka] of halakhu, i.e., that he spent the night studying Torah with the Jewish people. And Rav Shmuel bar Unya said:8 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?

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,6 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.

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 lament7 the demise of the deceased in unison, but they may not clap their hands in mourning.8n 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 responsibly, a form of wailing where one woman wails and the others repeat after her.

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 responsibly 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.

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,8n but the Torah study of an individual in itself is light and is less significant than the Temple service.

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 offering9 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) “in the midst of the valley” (Joshua 8:13), and Rabbi Yoḥanan said:
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], the task of burying the met mitzva takes precedence. This is derived from the fact that this is taught in a baraita: One cancels his Torah study to bring out a corpse for burial, 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).8

As it is taught in a baraita with regard to verses addressing the laws of anazrite: “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 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.9

On the basis of these premises, Rava raised a dilemma: If one must choose between reading the Megilla and tending to a met mitzva, 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, 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**

Torah study and bringing out a corpse – רמוא לשלו: One is required to interrupt his Torah study in order to bury the deceased (Shabbat 69a, Yoreh De’ah 361:1).

Becoming impure for a met mitzva – רמוא לשלו: 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 (Shulchan Arukh, Yoreh De’ah 335:1).

Reading the Megilla and tending to a met mitzva – רמוא לשלו: 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 Darhei Moshe and Or Zaruah). 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 (Shulchan Arukh). Others maintain that even in these circumstances an unattended corpse should be buried first (Zur; 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; Shulchan Arukh, Oloa: Hayyim 682:2).

**BACKGROUND**

A corpse with no one to bury it [met mitzva] – דוקא וriages: 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 its 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 – ולחתיו: 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.

One who was going to slaughter – ויוכדו הלכו ה用车: 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, Rashbi (in Zoharim 10a) 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 Tosafot Halakhah (on Berakhot 13b), who addresses the apparent contradiction between Rashi’s explanations.

Great is human dignity – תויוכדוabloו הלכו: 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 Rida 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.
A city that was settled and only later surrounded by a wall – שֶׁיָּשַׁב בַּטְלָנִין. If it was a city that was first settled and then surrounded by a wall, this city has the halakha of a village. However, if it was a city that was settled with the intention of surrounding it with a wall, it is considered a city. Some say that it is considered a city if it 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, Orah Hayyim 688:2), and in the comment of Rema.

A walled city – וְכָל כְּרַך. A place that is not considered a walled city unless it has at least three courtyards, each one consisting of at least two houses. Additionally, it must be surrounded by a wall and then settled. If it does not fulfill these criteria, its halakha is that of a house in a courtyard. This is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Elezer bar Yosei (Rambam, Shulhan Arukh, Hilchos Shmita VeYovel 12:12).

A walled city that does not have ten idlers – לֵיהּ כְּרַך וְלֹא. 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 (Rambam), 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, Orah Hayyim 688:1).

HALAKHA

Can be seen although it is not adjacent – בַּטְלָנִין וְכָל כְּרַך. Anything that is near a walled city is only subordinate to it if it is within a distance of a mil from the city (Riva; 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 Perez).

Background: Surround by a wall and settled – בַּטְלָנִין וְכָל כְּרַך. 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.

Background: Considering a walled city – שֶׁיָּשַׁב בַּטְלָנִין. 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 (Riva; 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 Perez).

That was settled and only later surrounded by a wall – בַּטְלָנִין וְכָל כְּרַך. 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. It was taught in the Tosafot: 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. The Gemara examines the Tosafot: 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 8 is considered a village 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 25:39). 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.

And Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: A walled city that does not have ten idlers, 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 (2a): 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

1 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. It was taught in the Tosafot: 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.

8 Is considered a village – כְּרַך.猴 11. 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 – נִדְדֵי עֲאָרָים. 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 (Shelite; see Rashba).
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 alif, which means no, but in context the word lo is used as thought 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.

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.

And Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said:

The cities Lod,\(^7\) and Ono,\(^{8}\) and Gei HeHarashim are cities that have been surrounded by walls since the days of Joshua, son of Nun.

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 8:13)? 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 11 Chronicles 14:5). Therefore, it is apparent that these cities were built more than once.

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 Gibea, 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.

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” (11 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.