

שמחה אינה נוהגת אלא בזמנה.

אמר רב: מגילה בזמנה – קורין אותה אפילו ביחיד, שלא בזמנה – בעשרה. רב אסי אמר: בין בזמנה בין שלא בזמנה בעשרה. הוה עובדא וחש ליה רב להא דרב אסי.

ומי אמר רב הקי? והאמר רב יהודה בריה דרב שמואל בר שילת משמיה דרב: פורים שחל להיות בשבת – ערב שבת זמנם. ערב שבת זמנם?! והא שבת זמנם הוא! אלא לאו הכי קאמר: שלא בזמנם – בזמנם, מה זמנם אפילו ביחיד, אף שלא בזמנם – אפילו ביחיד!

לא לענין מקרא מגילה בעשרה. אלא, מאי ערב שבת זמנם – לאפוקי מדרב, דאמר: האיל ונדחו עירות ממקומן ידחו ליום הכניסה, הא קא משמע לן דערב שבת זמנם הוא.

מתני' אי זו היא עיר גדולה? כל שיש בה עשרה בטלמי. פחות מכאן – הרי זה כפר.

the rejoicing that takes place on Purim is practiced only in its designated time, the fourteenth of Adar.

**S** Rav said: One may read the Megilla in its proper time, i.e., on the fourteenth of Adar, even privately.<sup>h</sup> However, when it is read not at its proper time,<sup>n</sup> e.g., when the villages advance their reading to the day of assembly, it must be read with a quorum of ten, because the enactment allowing the Megilla to be read before its proper time was only made for a community. Rav Asi disagreed and said: Both at its proper time and not at its proper time, the Megilla must be read with a quorum of ten. The Gemara relates that there was an incident where Rav had to read the Megilla on Purim, and he was concerned for this opinion of Rav Asi and gathered ten men even though he was reading the Megilla in its proper time, on the fourteenth of Adar.

The Gemara asks: And did Rav actually say this, that when the Megilla is read not at its proper time, it can only be read with a quorum of ten? Didn't Rav Yehuda, son of Rav Shmuel bar Sheilat, say in the name of Rav: If Purim occurs on Shabbat, Shabbat eve is the proper time for reading the Megilla? The Gemara expresses surprise with regard to the wording of Rav's statement: Is Shabbat eve the proper time for reading the Megilla? Isn't Shabbat itself its proper time?<sup>n</sup> Rather, is it not true that this is what he said, i.e., that this is the way his statement should be understood: Reading the Megilla not at its proper time is like reading it at its proper time; just as at its proper time, it can be read even privately, so too, not at its proper time, it can be read even privately.

The Gemara rejects this argument: Rav's statement was not made with regard to reading the Megilla with a quorum of ten. Rather, what is the meaning of Rav's statement that Shabbat eve is the proper time? It was meant to exclude the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi, who said: Since the readings in the large towns were already deferred from their usual date and the Megilla was not read on the fourteenth, they are deferred to the day of assembly. This statement of Rav teaches us that Shabbat eve is the proper time for these towns to read the Megilla, as stated in the mishna.

**MISHNA** What is considered a large city, where the Megilla is read on the fourteenth of Adar? Any city in which there are ten idlers.<sup>h</sup> However, if there are fewer than that, it is considered a village,<sup>n</sup> even if it has many inhabitants.

HALAKHA

Megilla... privately – מגילה... ביחיד: The Megilla is read in its time even in private, in accordance with the opinion of Rav, who was the teacher of Rav Asi. Rabbi Yohanan concurs with Rav's opinion. One should seek out a quorum of ten to read the Megilla *ab initio*, in accordance with the custom of Rav himself, but if it not possible to read it with ten men, it is read privately. If the Megilla was already read in public and an individual was not present, he may read it privately even *ab initio*, as it was already read with a quorum of ten in that same place. In such

case the individual needs to recite the blessing (*Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim* 690:18, and in the comment of Rema).

What is considered a large city – אינהו עיר – A city that does not have ten regular idlers in the synagogue has the *halakha* of a village. During the period when the reading of the Megilla for villagers was advanced to the day of assembly, it was advanced in these places as well (Rambam *Sefer Zemanim, Hilkhoh Megilla* 1:8).

NOTES

Not at its proper time – שלא בזמנה: Rashi explains this as referring to the villages that advance their reading to the day of assembly. Some find this explanation difficult, because in the time of Rav the villages no longer advanced the time of reading the Megilla. Consequently, they explain that it is discussing a scenario when Purim occurred on Shabbat, and therefore the reading was advanced to Friday (Rashba; Ran). The *ge'onim* explain that this is referring to a situation where one advanced

the reading due to unavoidable circumstances, such as one who is traveling in a convoy. This individual is permitted to read before the appointed time like the villages, on the condition that he reads it in a group of ten people (see Rabbi Zerahya HaLevi).

Isn't Shabbat itself its proper time – והיא שבת זמנם הוא: Some explain this phrase to be referring to the other commandments

of the day, like the Purim feast and the sending of portions (see Rabbi Levi ibn Habib).

Fewer than that, it is considered a village – הרי זה כפר: Some explain that when there aren't ten regular idlers in the synagogue, the people come to the public prayer service only on Monday and Thursday to hear the Torah reading, and therefore the Megilla is read then as well (Ritva).

**תשעה באב מאחרין** – The Ninth of Av is postponed – The Ninth of Av, and the other fast days in particular, when they fall on Shabbat they are postponed until after Shabbat, except for the Fast of Esther, which cannot be postponed and is advanced to Thursday (*Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayyim 550:3, 552:10*).

**תגינה** – The Festival peace-offering is postponed – **מאחרין**: The Festival peace-offering and the burnt-offering of appearance do not override Shabbat. If the Festival occurs on Shabbat, the sacrifice is deferred until after Shabbat (Rambam *Sefer Korbanot, Hilkhot Hagiga 1:8*).

**תגינה** – The commandment of assembly [*hakhel*] is postponed – **מאחרין**: If the day of assembly falls on Shabbat, it is postponed until after Shabbat (Rambam *Sefer Korbanot, Hilkhot Hagiga 3:7*).

**מתי אמרו** – When did they say that it is advanced – **מקדימין**: When the reading of the Megilla was advanced to the day of assembly, it was advanced only for the residents of villages who would go to the city on the day of assembly. However, if they would not go into the city on those days, they would read the Megilla on the in its proper time, on the fourteenth of Adar. This ruling is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda, who comes only to explain the opinion of the Sages in the mishna (Rambam *Sefer Zemanim, Hilkhot Megilla 1:8*).

**חדשים לשנים** – Months to make up years – **חדשים לשנים**: A year is only considered a year when calculated by the number of whole months. Even though the solar year has eleven more days than the lunar year, solitary days are not added; rather, we wait until there is a full month's difference between the calendars and add it in an intercalated year (Rambam *Sefer Zemanim, Hilkhot Kiddush HaHodesh 1:2*).

**באלו אמרו מקדימין ולא מאחרין**. אבל זמן עצי כהנים ותשעה באב, תגינה, והקהל – מאחרין ולא מקדימין.

אף על פי שאמרו מקדימין ולא מאחרין – מותרין בהספד ובתענית ומתנות לאביונים. אמר רבי יהודה: אימתי – מקום שנכנסין בשני ובחמישי, אבל מקום שאין נכנסין לא בשני ולא בחמישי – אין קורין אותה אלא בזמנה.

**גמ' תנא**: עשרה בטלמין שבבית הכנסת:

**באלו אמרו מקדימין ולא מאחרין**: מאי טעמא? אמר רבי אבא אמר שמואל: אמר קרא "ולא יעבור".

ואמר רבי אבא אמר שמואל: מנין שאין מונין ימים לשנים – שנאמר: "לחדשי השנה" חדשים אתה מונה לשנים, ואי אתה מונה ימים לשנים.

It was with regard to these times for reading the Megilla that the Sages said that **one advances**<sup>N</sup> the reading of the Megilla before the fourteenth of Adar and **one does not postpone** the reading to after its proper time. However, with regard to **the time** when families of priests donate wood<sup>N</sup> for the fire on the altar, which were times those families would treat as Festivals; as well as the fast of the **Ninth of Av**;<sup>H</sup> the **Festival** peace-offering that was brought on the Festivals;<sup>H</sup> and the commandment of assembly [*hakhel*]<sup>HN</sup> of the entire Jewish people in the Temple courtyard on *Sukkot* in the year following the Sabbatical year to hear the king read the book of Deuteronomy; **one postpones** their observance until after Shabbat and **does not advance** their observance to before Shabbat.

The mishna continues: **Even though** the Sages said that **one advances** the time for reading the Megilla and **one does not postpone** the reading, one is **permitted to eulogize and fast** on these days, as they are not actually Purim; nevertheless, **gifts for the poor** are distributed on this day.<sup>N</sup> **Rabbi Yehuda said**: When is the Megilla read on the day of assembly, before the fourteenth of Adar? In a place where the villagers generally enter town on Monday and Thursday. However, in a place where they do not generally enter town on Monday and Thursday, one may read the Megilla only in its designated time, the fourteenth of Adar.<sup>H</sup>

**GEMARA** We learned in the mishna that a large city is one that has ten idlers. It was taught in a *baraita*: The ten idlers that are mentioned here are ten idlers that are in the synagogue, i.e., men who do not have professional responsibilities other than to sit in the synagogue and attend to communal religious needs. The presence of ten such men establishes a location as a prominent city.

We learned in the mishna: It was with regard to these times for reading the Megilla that the Sages said that **one advances** the reading of the Megilla and **one does not postpone** it. The Gemara asks: **What is the reason** for this? **Rabbi Abba said** that **Shmuel said**: The verse states: "The Jews ordained, and took upon them, and upon their seed, and upon all who joined themselves to them, and it shall not pass, that they should keep these two days" (Esther 9:27), which indicates that the designated time must not pass without the reading of the Megilla.

Having mentioned a teaching of Rabbi Abba in the name of Shmuel, the Gemara cites another of his statements: **And Rabbi Abba said** that **Shmuel said**: **From where** is it derived that **one does not count days** to make up years, i.e., a year is considered to be comprised of either twelve or thirteen lunar months, and not 365 days? **As it is stated**: "Of the months of the year" (Exodus 12:2), which indicates that **you count months** to make up years,<sup>H</sup> but you do not count days to make up years.

NOTES

It was with regard to these that the Sages said that one advances – **באלו אמרו מקדימין**: Rashi and Rabbeinu Yehonatan explain: With regard to these, i.e., the various times for reading the Megilla, one advances the time but does not postpone it. However, the word "these," in plural, is slightly difficult according to this interpretation. Some explain, based on the Jerusalem Talmud and the *Tosefta* (1:4), that the reference is to the reading of the Megilla and the collection of shekels for communal offerings (see Meiri). Others explain that the word "these" refers to the residents of the villages and the small cities (Rashba; Ritva).

The time when families of priests donate wood – **זמן עצי כהנים**: It is explained in tractate *Ta'anit* (28a) that in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, certain families volunteered to bring the wood offering on set days of the year, since there was a lack of funds in the Temple. Although after a while there was no longer a financial need for this, these families maintained the practice

of donating wood and rejoicing on these days. As for the reason why the bringing of the wood is not advanced, some explain that the donation of wood is viewed as a vow that has a specific time that it is supposed to be fulfilled, and therefore donating wood before the appropriate time would not be a fulfillment of the vow (Rashi; Rambam). The Ran and Rashi's commentary that appears with the Rif suggest that if this time were advanced it would interfere with the dates that were set for others to bring the wood offering.

The commandment of assembly [*hakhel*] – **הקהל**: The mitzva of *hakhel* is detailed in the Torah (Deuteronomy 31:10–13). This practice took place on the day after the first festival day of *Sukkot*; some say it took place at the conclusion of the last festival day of *Sukkot* (Rashi; Jerusalem Talmud). They would build a stage of wood in the courtyard, and the king would stand upon it and read from the book of Deuteronomy to the entire nation:

Men, women, and children. Rashi explains that the reason this is not done on Shabbat is that this ceremony requires that the children be brought as well, and there is concern that the prohibition against carrying and taking out items on Shabbat will be violated (see Rif). A different explanation is cited in the Jerusalem Talmud, which maintains that the reason that *hakhel* did not take place on Shabbat is due to the horn blasts that accompanied the ceremony. Alternatively, it is because they needed to build the stage on that same day.

Gifts for the poor are distributed on this day – **וימתנות לאביונים**: From the language of the Rambam it is clear that he understands this phrase to mean that on the day of reading the Megilla, one may bring gifts for the poor and thereby fulfill his obligation. Conversely, some explain that his intention is that on that day one is exempt from giving gifts to the poor (Meiri; see Ran).

Days to reckon the months – ימים... לחדשים: These principals are relevant in various ways. They impact the setting of the times of the calendar such that years are only composed of complete months; likewise, months are not counted from the hour of the new moon but rather consist of complete days. The calendar, in turn, impacts the *halakhot* of vows and contracts, which depend upon the months and years.

## HALAKHA

Sacrifices of the Festival – קרבנות הַחַג: The Festival peace-offering and the burnt-offering of appearance are permitted to be sacrificed on a Festival day. Similarly, the peace-offerings of joy are sacrificed on Festivals. For every offering that is brought, it is permitted for one to place his hands on the head of the offering, in accordance with the opinion of Beit Hillel (Rambam *Sefer Korbanot, Hilkhot Hagiga* 1:8–9).

Compensation for the offerings – תשלומי קרבנות: One who has not brought his Festival peace-offering and the burnt-offering of appearance on the first day of the Festival may bring it on the remaining days of the Festival (Rambam *Sefer Korbanot, Hilkhot Hagiga* 1:4).

If the pilgrimage Festival has passed and he did not bring the Festival peace-offering – עבר הרגל ולא חג: If the entire Festival has passed and one has not yet brought the offerings of the Festival, he is no longer obligated to bring them. This is a fulfillment of the verse (Ecclesiastes 1:15): “That which is crooked cannot be made straight” (Rambam *Sefer Korbanot, Hilkhot Hagiga* 1:6).

ורבנן דקיסרי משום רבי אבא אמרו: מנן שאין מחשבין שעות לחדשים – שנאמר: “עד חדש ימים” – ימים אתה מחשב לחדשים, ואי אתה מחשב שעות לחדשים.

“אבל זמן עצי כהנים ותשעה באב וחגיגה והקהל מאחרין ולא מקדימין: תשעה באב – אקדומי פורענות לא מקדמי, חגיגה והקהל – משום דאפתמי לא מטא זמן חיוביהו.

תנא: חגיגה וכל זמן חגיגה מאחרין. בשלמא חגיגה, דאי מיקלע בשבתא – מאחרין לה לבתר שבתא. אלא זמן חגיגה מאי היא?

אמר רב אושעיא, הכי קאמר: חגיגה בשבת, ועולת ראיה אפילו ביום טוב דזמן חגיגה – מאחרין.

מני – בית שמאי היא, דתנן: [בית שמאי אומרים] מביאין שלמים ביום טוב ואין סומכין עליהן.

אבל לא עולות, ובית הלל אומרים: מביאין שלמים ועולות, וסומכין עליהן.

רבא אמר: חגיגה, כל זמן חגיגה מאחרין, טפי – לא. דתנן: מי שלא חג ביום טוב הראשון של חג – חוגג והולך את כל הרגל כולו ויום טוב האחרון של חג. עבר הרגל ולא חג – אינו חייב באחריותו.

The Gemara adds: **And the Sages of Caesarea said in the name of Rabbi Abba: From where is it derived that one does not calculate hours to reckon the months?** A lunar cycle takes approximately twenty-nine and a half days, but a calendar month is considered to be twenty-nine or thirty full days and not precisely a lunar cycle. **As it is stated: “Until a month of days”** (Numbers 11:20), which indicates that **you calculate days to reckon the months,<sup>n</sup> but you do not calculate hours to reckon the months.**

§ We learned in the mishna: **However, with regard to the time when families of priests donate wood for the fire on the altar, the fast of the Ninth of Av, the Festival peace-offering, and the commandment of assembly [hakhel], one postpones their observance until after Shabbat and does not advance their observance to before Shabbat.** The Gemara explains the reason for this *halakha* with respect to each item mentioned in the mishna. The fast of the **Ninth of Av** is not advanced because **one does not advance calamity**; since the Ninth of Av is a tragic time, its observance is postponed as long as possible. **The Festival peace-offering and the commandment of assembly [hakhel] are not advanced because the time of their obligation has not yet arrived,** and it is impossible to fulfill mitzvot before the designated time has arrived.

It was taught in a *baraita*: **One postpones the Festival peace-offering and the entire time period of the Festival peace-offering.** The Gemara attempts to clarify this statement: **Granted that when the baraita says that the Festival peace-offering is postponed, it means that if a Festival occurs on Shabbat, when the Festival peace-offering cannot be sacrificed, one postpones it until after Shabbat and sacrifices the offering on the intermediate days of the Festival. However, what is the meaning of the phrase: The time period of the Festival peace-offering?**

Rav Oshaya said: **This is what the baraita is saying:** One postpones the Festival peace-offering if the Festival occurs on Shabbat, and one postpones the burnt-offering of appearance even due to the Festival itself. Despite the fact that a Festival day is the time for sacrificing a Festival peace-offering, the burnt-offering of appearance may not be sacrificed until after the Festival day.

The Gemara adds: **Whose opinion is reflected in the mishna according to Rav Oshaya’s explanation? It is the opinion of Beit Shammai, as we learned in a mishna (Beitza 19a) that Beit Shammai say: One may bring peace-offerings on a Festival day to be sacrificed in the Temple.** Most portions of a peace-offering are eaten by the priests and the individual who brought the offering. Consequently, its slaughter is considered food preparation, which is permitted on a Festival day. **And one may not place his hands on the head of the offering, as that includes leaning with all one’s might upon the animal, which is prohibited on a Festival.**

**However, burnt-offerings may not be brought at all on the Festival.** Since they are not eaten, their slaughter is not considered food preparation, and it therefore constitutes a prohibited labor on the Festival. **Beit Hillel disagree and say: One may bring both peace-offerings and burnt-offerings on a Festival day, and one may even place his hands on them.<sup>h</sup>**

Rava said that the *baraita* should be understood as follows: **One postpones the Festival peace-offering for the entire time period of the Festival peace-offering, i.e., for the entire duration of the Festival.** However, it may **not** be postponed for longer than this. **As we learned in a mishna (Hagiga 9a): One who did not offer the Festival peace-offering on the first Festival day of the festival of Sukkot may offer the Festival peace-offering for the duration of the entire pilgrimage Festival, including the intermediate days and the last day of the Festival.<sup>h</sup> If the pilgrimage Festival has passed and he did not yet bring the Festival peace-offering,<sup>h</sup> he is not obligated to pay restitution for it.** The obligation is no longer in force, and he therefore is not liable to bring another offering as compensation.

Compensation on *Shavuot* – תשלומי עֲצֵרֶת: One who has not brought the offerings of the Festival on *Shavuot*, may bring them on any of the six days after *Shavuot* (Rambam *Sefer Korbanot, Hilkhot Hagiga* 1:7).

רַב אֲשִׁי אָמַר: חֲגִיגָה וְכֹל זְמַן חֲגִיגָה  
מֵאַחֲרָיִן – וְאִפְּלוּ עֲצֵרֶת דְּחַד יוֹמָא  
מֵאַחֲרָיִן. דְּתַנְּן: מוֹדִים, שְׁאֵם חַל  
עֲצֵרֶת לְהֵיטֵב בְּשַׁבַּת שְׁיוּם טְבוּחַ  
אַחַר הַשַּׁבָּת.

Rav Ashi said that the *baraita* should be understood as follows: **The Festival peace-offering may be postponed for the entire time period of a Festival peace-offering.** This indicates that even if *Shavuot*, which is one day, occurs on Shabbat, one postpones the Festival peace-offering and offers it on one of the six days after *Shavuot*.<sup>11</sup> As we learned in a mishna (*Hagiga* 17a): Beit Hillel concede that if *Shavuot* occurs on Shabbat, the day of slaughter is after Shabbat. Since the Festival peace-offering and the burnt-offering of appearance cannot be sacrificed on Shabbat, they are slaughtered after Shabbat. This indicates that the Festival peace-offering may be slaughtered after the Festival day of *Shavuot*, as is the case on the other Festivals.

אָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר אָמַר רַבִּי חֲנִינָא: רַבִּי  
נָטַע נְטִיעָה בְּפּוּרִים,

Rabbi Elazar said that Rabbi Hanina said: Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi did several unusual things: **He planted a sapling on Purim**, and was not concerned about performing labor and thereby possibly denigrating the day.

Perek I  
Daf 5 Amud b

LANGUAGE

Wagons [*kerona*] – קרוֹנָה: Apparently from the Greek κροῖνη, *krênē*, meaning a spring or a well of flowing water. This translation is suggested by the *Arukh* as well. Alternatively, the word may be from the Greek κάρρον, *karron*, meaning car.

BACKGROUND

Tzippori – צִפּוּרִי: Tzippori was a large town in the Upper Galilee and the perennial rival of Tiberias for recognition as the religious capital of Galilee. During the Second Temple period it enjoyed special status among the towns of the Galilee due to its large and learned Jewish community. Among the *tanna'im* who lived there were Rabbi Yohanan ben Nuri, Rabbi Halafta, and his famous son Rabbi Yosei. Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi moved to Tzippori toward the end of his life, and it was the seat of the Sanhedrin for about a generation. Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi's leading disciples lived in Tzippori: Rabbi Yishmael, son of Rabbi Yosei; Rabban Gamliel, son of Rabbi, who was later appointed *Nasi*; his brother, Rabbi Shimon; Rabbi Hanina bar Hama, later the head of the Tzippori yeshiva; and Rabbi Yannai. Even after the Sanhedrin moved to Tiberias, Torah scholars continued to live in Tzippori, among them the important *amora'im* of Eretz Yisrael, Rabbi Hanina of Tzippori and Rabbi Mana.

וְרַחַץ בְּקְרוֹנָה שֶׁל צִפּוּרִי בְּשַׁבְּעָה  
עָשָׂר בְּתַמּוּז, וּבִקְשׁ לְעִקּוֹר תְּשֻׁעָה  
בְּאָב, וְלֹא הוֹדוּ לוֹ.

And he bathed at the time when the wagons [*kerona*]<sup>1</sup> were traveling through Tzippori,<sup>2</sup> i.e., on the market day, when the public would know about it, on the seventeenth of Tammuz,<sup>3</sup> to show that bathing is permitted on that day. And he sought to abolish the fast of the Ninth of Av.<sup>4</sup> And with respect to the Ninth of Av, the Sages did not agree with him.

אָמַר לְפָנָיו רַבִּי אַבָּא בַר זְבִדָּא: רַבִּי,  
לֹא כִךְ הָיָה מַעֲשֵׂהָ, אֶלָּא: תְּשֻׁעָה  
בְּאָב שְׁחַל לְהֵיטֵב בְּשַׁבַּת הַיּוֹם,  
וְדִחִינוּהוּ לְאַחַר הַשַּׁבָּת, וְאָמַר רַבִּי:  
הוֹאִיל וְנִדְחָה – יִדְחָה, וְלֹא הוֹדוּ  
חֲכָמִים. קָרִי עֲלֵיהֶם: "טוֹבִים הַשְּׂנַיִם  
מִן הָאֶחָד."

Rabbi Abba bar Zavda said to Rabbi Elazar: **My teacher, the incident did not occur in this fashion.** Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi never sought to abolish the fast of the Ninth of Av. Rather, it was a year when the Ninth of Av occurred on Shabbat, and they postponed it until after Shabbat. And Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi said about that case: **Since it has already been deferred from its usual time, let it be altogether deferred this year. And the Rabbis did not agree with him.** Rabbi Elazar read the verse about Rabbi Abba bar Zavda: **"Two are better than one"** (Ecclesiastes 4:9), meaning, it is good that you were here to provide an accurate report about that incident.

NOTES

Bathed...on the seventeenth of Tammuz – בְּשַׁבְּעָה עָשָׂר בְּתַמּוּז: The Rashba writes that Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi's behavior was in accordance with the principle set forth in tractate *Rosh HaShana* (18b), where it states that in times of peace, one need not observe the fast days of the seventeenth of Tammuz, the Fast of Gedalia, and the tenth of Tevet; in times when there are evil decrees against the Jewish people, these fasts are obligatory; and in times which are neither peaceful nor times of evil decree, these fasts are optional. During the time of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi, these fasts were optional, yet the Jewish people had accepted upon itself the obligation to fast. Nonetheless, Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi was of the opinion that this voluntary acceptance applied only to actually fasting, but not to other prohibitions of fast days, e.g., bathing. There are those who add that according to the comment of Rabbi Abba bar Zavda, that the Ninth of Av occurred on Shabbat, if the incident of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi bathing on the seventeenth of Tammuz took

place in the same year, it would mean that the seventeenth of Tammuz also occurred on Shabbat and was postponed to Sunday. Perhaps Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi was of the opinion that in such circumstances, the entire fast should not be observed (Rav Ya'akov Emden).

To abolish the fast of the Ninth of Av – לְעִקּוֹר תְּשֻׁעָה בְּאָב – *Tosafot* explain that Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi didn't seek to abolish the fast completely, but rather to abolish its severity and make it equivalent to the other fasts. The Ritva expounds upon this idea and explains that according to the original enactment of the fast days by the prophets, there is no difference between the Ninth of Av and other fast days. Consequently, although the Sages did not want to make fasting on the Ninth of Av optional during times when there are no evil decrees against the Jewish people, Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi sought to equate it to the other fast days with regard to other prohibitions, e.g., bathing and wearing leather shoes (Ritva).

**Megillat Ta'anit – מגילת תענית**: Until the Mishna was written, writing down the Oral Torah was prohibited. However, it was standard practice for scholars to write down notes for personal use, known as hidden scrolls. *Megillat Ta'anit* was the first book, apart from the Bible, that was written. This scroll, to which we have access today, includes a list of days on which it is prohibited to eulogize the deceased or fast, due to the miraculous and joyous events that transpired on those days. The scroll is written in two languages: The primary *halakha*, the day, and its legal status is written in Aramaic, while the descriptions of what happened each day are in Hebrew.

Although *Megillat Ta'anit* is attributed to Hananya ben Hizkiya and his son, they did not author the entire work. Events were added in later generations, continuing until the redaction of the Mishna.

## HALAKHA

**Mourning on Purim – אבלות בפורים**: During the days of Purim, both the fourteenth and the fifteenth of Adar, in all locations, it is forbidden to eulogize or to visit graves. Additionally, if a funeral takes place on one of those days, neither *Tziduk Hadin* nor *kaddish* is recited next to the grave (*Arukh HaShulhan; Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayyim 696:3*).

**Labor on the days of Purim – מלאכה בימי הפורים**: Even in places where it is customary on Purim to refrain from performing the labors prohibited on Shabbat, this prohibition applies only on the day of the Megilla reading, and it is not prohibited to perform labor on the day that other cities read. However, some say that one should be strict in this regard (Maharil; Avudraham). It appears the *halakha* in these cases is dependent on the custom of the place (*Mishna Berura*), and in most places it is not the custom to be strict in this regard (*Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayyim 696:2*).

ורבי, היכי נטע נטיעה בפורים? והתני רב יוסף: "שמחה ומשתה ויום טוב", "שמחה" – מלמד שאסורים בהספד, "משתה" מלמד שאסור בתענית, ו"יום טוב" – מלמד שאסור בעשיית מלאכה! אלא: רבי בר אבויסר הוה, וכי נטע – בתמיסר נטע.

The Gemara asks: **And how could Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi plant a sapling on Purim? Didn't Rav Yosef teach with regard to the verse:** "Therefore the Jews of the villages, who dwell in the unwallled towns, make the fourteenth day of the month of Adar a day of gladness and feasting, and a good day [*yom tov*]" (Esther 9:19), that the term "gladness" teaches that it is prohibited to eulogize on Purim; "feasting" teaches that it is prohibited to fast; and the term "good day" [*yom tov*] teaches that it is prohibited to perform labor, just as on a Festival, which is also referred to as a *yom tov*? Rather, what happened was as follows: **Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi was in a place that observed Purim on the fourteenth, and when he planted the sapling, he planted it on the fifteenth.**

איני? והא רבי בטבריא הוה, וטבריא מוקפת חומה מימות יהושע בן נון הוה? אלא, רבי בר חמיסר הוה, וכי נטע – באבויסר הוה.

The Gemara asks: **Is that so? Wasn't Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi in Tiberias, and Tiberias was surrounded by a wall since the days of Joshua, son of Nun.** Consequently, he was obligated to observe Purim on the fifteenth. Rather, say just the opposite: **Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi lived in a place that observed Purim on the fifteenth, and when he planted the sapling, he planted it on the fourteenth.**

ומי פשיטא ליה דטבריא מוקפת חומה מימות יהושע בן נון? והא חזקיה קרי בטבריא באבויסר ובחמיסר, מספקא ליה אי מוקפת חומה מימות יהושע בן נון היא אי לא! לחזקיה – מספקא ליה, לרבי – פשיטא ליה.

The Gemara asks: **Wasn't it obvious to Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi that the city of Tiberias was surrounded by a wall since the days of Joshua, son of Nun? Didn't Hezekiah read the Megilla in Tiberias both on the fourteenth and on the fifteenth of Adar,** because he was uncertain if it had been surrounded by a wall since the days of Joshua, son of Nun, or not? The Gemara answers: **Hezekiah was indeed uncertain about the matter, whereas it was obvious to Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi that Tiberias had been surrounded by a wall in the time of Joshua.**

וכי פשיטא ליה מי שרי? והכתיב במגילת תענית: את יום ארבעה עשר ואת יום חמשה עשר יומי פוריא אינון, דלא למספד בהון.

The Gemara asks further: **And when it was obvious to Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi that the Megilla should be read in Tiberias on the fifteenth, was it permitted to plant there on the fourteenth? Isn't it written in *Megillat Ta'anit*<sup>8</sup> that the fourteenth day and the fifteenth day of Adar are the days of Purim, and one is not permitted to eulogize on them?**<sup>h</sup>

ואמר רבא: לא נצרכא אלא לאסור את של זה בזה ואת של זה בזה! הני מילי – בהספד ובתענית, אבל מלאכה – יום אחד ותו לא.

**And Rava said:** This statement is necessary only to prohibit those who observe Purim on this day to eulogize on that day, and those who observe Purim on that day to eulogize on this day. Since the two days are mentioned in the Bible, it was only necessary to mention them in *Megillat Ta'anit* in order to indicate that the prohibition against eulogizing applies to both days. Presumably, the same should apply to the prohibition against performing labor. Consequently, how could Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi plant a sapling on the fourteenth of Adar? The Gemara answers: **That applies only to eulogies and fasting. However, labor is prohibited for only one day, either the fourteenth or the fifteenth, and no more.**

איני? והא רב חזייה לההוא גברא דהוה קא שדי כיתנא בפוריא, ולטייה וקא צמח כיתניה! התם בר יומא הוה.

The Gemara asks: **Is that so? Didn't Rav see a certain man planting flax on Purim, and cursed him, and the man's flax never grew.** The Gemara answers: **There, the man was obligated to observe Purim on that day that he planted the flax. Therefore, it was certainly prohibited to perform labor.**

רבה בריה דרבא אמר: אפילו תימא ביומיה, הספד ותענית – קבילו עליהו, מלאכה לא קבילו עליהו.

**Rabba, son of Rava, said** a different answer to the question: **Even if you say that Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi planted the sapling on his own day of Purim, i.e., on the day that the Megilla was read in his location, it was still permitted to plant the sapling.** This is because the Jewish people accepted upon themselves the prohibitions against eulogizing and fasting on Purim, but they did not accept upon themselves the prohibition against performing labor.<sup>h</sup>

The prohibition against performing labor on Purim – איסור מלאכה בפורים – According to *halakha*, it is permitted to perform labor on Purim, in accordance with the statement of Rabba, son of Rava. However, in a place where the custom is not to perform labor, it is prohibited. In our times it is customary not to perform labor (Rema), and one who does perform labor will not achieve productive results (see Rambam and *Magen Avraham*). However, this custom was not extended to all forms of labor: Festive building and planting is permitted. Additionally, it is permitted to do any work for the sake of fulfilling a mitzva, e.g., writing words of Torah or other matters that involve a mitzva, or something that does not need a lot of consideration (*Magen Avraham*). In order to fill the needs of Purim, even full-fledged labor is permitted (*Shulhan Arukh, Orach Hayyim 696:1*).

If these have passed and the prayers have not been answered – עָבְרוּ אֵלוֹ וְלֹא נִעֲנוּ – When the Sages decree fasts for rain and thirteen fasts pass and yet the prayers have not been answered and rain has not fallen, it is incumbent upon the people to reduce their business transactions that are for the purpose of happiness (*Magen Avraham*), as well as festive building and planting. Similarly, betrothals and other feasts are minimized, as are weddings, unless the mitzva to be fruitful and multiply has not yet been fulfilled (*Shulhan Arukh, Orach Hayyim 575:7*).

Uncertainties with regard to walled cities – סָפְקוֹ מוֹקְפִין: With regard to any city in which there is uncertainty as to whether it was surrounded by a wall from the days of Joshua, the custom is like that of Hezekiah in Tiberias, and the Megilla is read on both the fourteenth and the fifteenth, both at night and during the day, and the festivities and the gifts for the poor are observed on both (*Magen Avraham*). However, the blessing is recited only on the fourteenth, and likewise *kaddish* and the *Kedushat HaSeder* are not recited after the reading of the Megilla on the night of the fifteenth, and the Torah is not read during that day (*Kaf HaHayyim*). There were also cities outside of Eretz Yisrael that followed this protocol for dealing with uncertainty. However, in the more northern European cities there is no need for concern that they may have been walled in the time of Joshua (*Magen Avraham*). The custom in Baghdad was to read on both days. In the ancient cities in Eretz Yisrael, e.g., Hebron, Safed, the custom was to read on both days, and in Tiberias it certainly should be read on both days. This is also the custom in Damascus (*Kaf HaHayyim; Shulhan Arukh, Orach Hayyim 688:4*).

LANGUAGE

Garden [*avurneki*] – אַבּוּרְנֵקִי: In the version of the *Arukh* and in the best textual witnesses the reading is *akhvarnka*, which is apparently related to the Middle Persian *xwarnak*, meaning a lavish building. The *ge'onim* note the usage of the Aramaic word to indicate a pavilion built by kings in a garden.

דְּמִיעָקְרָא כְּתִיב: "שְׂמֵחָה וּמְשֵׁחָה וְיוֹם טוֹב" וְלִבְסוּף כְּתִיב: "לַעֲשׂוֹת אוֹתָם יְמֵי מְשֵׁחָה וְשְׂמֵחָה" וְאֵילּוֹ "יוֹם טוֹב" לֹא כְּתִיב.

וְאֵלֶּא רַב, מֵאֵי טַעְמָא לְטִיָּיה לְהַהוּא גְבָרָא? דְּבָרִים הַמוֹתְרִין וְאַחֲרֵים נִהְגוּ בְהֵן אִיסוּר הָהוּא, וּבְאַתְרֵיהּ דְּרַבִּי לֹא נִהְגוּ.

וְאִיבְעִית אִימָא: לְעוֹלָם נִהְגוּ, וְרַבִּי נְטִיעָה שֶׁל שְׂמֵחָה נִטְעָה. כְּדַתְנָן: עָבְרוּ אֵלוֹ וְלֹא נִעֲנוּ – מִמַּעֲטִין בְּמִשְׁאָ וּמִתְּנָן, בְּבִנְיָן וּבְנִטְעָה, בְּאִירוּסִין וּבְנִישׁוּאִין.

וְתַנָּא עֲלֵה: בְּנִין – בְּנִין שֶׁל שְׂמֵחָה, נְטִיעָה – נְטִיעָה שֶׁל שְׂמֵחָה. אִיזְהוּ בְּנִין שֶׁל שְׂמֵחָה – זֶה הַבּוֹנֶה בֵּית חַתָּנוֹת לְבָנוּ. אִיזוּ הִיא נְטִיעָה שֶׁל שְׂמֵחָה – זֶה הַנוֹטֵעַ אֲבוּרְנֵקִי שֶׁל מְלָכִים.

גּוֹפֵא, חֲזָקִיה קָרִי בְּטַבְּרַיָא בְּאַרְבֵּיָא וּבְחַמִּיָא, מִסְפָּקָא לִיָּה אִי מוֹקְפֵת חוֹמָה מִימּוֹת יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן נוּן הִיא אִי לֹא. וְיָמֵי מִסְפָּקָא לִיָּה מְלֵתָא דְּטַבְּרַיָא? וְהַכְּתִיב: "וְעָרֵי מְבֻצָרֹת הָעָדִים צִר וְחֻמַּת רֶקֶת וּבְנִירֹת" וְקִיָּמָא לֵן: רֶקֶת זוּ טַבְּרַיָא! הֵינּוּ טַעְמָא דְּמִסְפָּקָא לִיָּה: מִשּׁוּם דְּחָד אִיסָא שׁוּרָא דִּימָא הוּת.

This can be proven from the fact that initially, when Mordecai and Esther proposed the celebration of Purim, it is written: "A day of gladness and feasting and a good day [*yom tov*]" (Esther 9:19), and at the end, when it the celebration of Purim was accepted by the Jewish people, it is written: "That they should make them days of feasting and gladness" (Esther 9:22), whereas the term good day [*yom tov*], which alludes to a day when it is prohibited to perform labor, is not written. The people never accepted upon themselves the prohibition against performing labor on Purim as if it were a Festival, and therefore the prohibition never took effect.

The Gemara asks: If labor is permitted on Purim, what is the reason that Rav cursed that man who planted the flax? The Gemara answers: It was a case of matters that are permitted by *halakha*, but others were accustomed to treat them as a prohibition,<sup>HN</sup> in which case one may not permit these actions in their presence, lest they come to treat other prohibitions lightly. In the place where that man planted his flax, it was customary to abstain from labor on Purim. However, in Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi's place, it was not the custom to abstain from labor on Purim, and therefore it was permitted for him to plant the sapling even in public.

And if you wish, say an alternative answer: Actually, it was the custom to abstain from labor on Purim in Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi's place, and Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi engaged in a joyful act of planting, for pleasure rather than for financial benefit. As we learned in a mishna with regard to public fasts: If these fasts for rain have passed and the community's prayers have still not been answered,<sup>H</sup> and the drought continues, one decreases his business activities, as well as construction, planting, betrothals, and marriages.

And it was taught in a *baraita* about this mishna: When the Sages said that construction must be decreased on public fasts, they were not referring to the construction of homes for people who have nowhere to live, but to joyful construction. Similarly, when they said that planting must be decreased, they were not referring to planting food crops, but to joyful planting. What is meant by joyful construction? This is referring to one who builds a wedding chamber for his son. It was customary to build a special house where the wedding would take place, and at times the couple would also live there. What is meant by joyful planting? This is referring to one who plants trees for shade and pleasure such as one might find in a royal garden [*avurneki*].<sup>L</sup> Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi engaged in joyful planting on Purim, in keeping with the joyous nature of the day.

The Gemara examines the matter itself cited in the previous discussion. Hezekiah read the Megilla in Tiberias both on the fourteenth and on the fifteenth of Adar, because he was uncertain<sup>N</sup> if it had been surrounded by a wall since the days of Joshua, son of Nun, or not.<sup>H</sup> The Gemara asks: Was he really uncertain about the matter of Tiberias? Isn't it written: "And the fortified cities were Ziddim-zer, and Hammath, Rakkath, and Chinnereth" (Joshua 19:35), and we maintain that Rakkath is Tiberias? The Gemara answers: This is the reason that he was uncertain: Although Tiberias was surrounded by a wall in the time of Joshua, Hezekiah was uncertain about the *halakha* due to the fact that on one side, there was a wall of the sea, i.e., there was no physical wall, but the city was protected due to the fact that it adjoined the sea.

NOTES

Matters that are permitted but others were accustomed to treat them as a prohibition – דְּבָרִים הַמוֹתְרִים וְאַחֲרֵים נִהְגוּ בְהֵן: It is a principle in *halakha* that when something is permitted according to *halakha*, yet people render it prohibited for themselves, one is not allowed to rule that it is permitted or to treat it as permitted in their location. This is the basis for many prohibitions due to custom. However, this principle is limited to scenarios where those who take the prohibition upon themselves know that the action is permitted by *halakha*, and not to cases where they adopt the prohibition due to an error in understanding the law.

Hezekiah... was uncertain – חֲזָקִיה... מִסְפָּקָא לִיָּה: The Sages discuss Hezekiah's uncertainty, mainly due to what can be deduced from here with regard to other places where there is uncertainty as to whether a city was surrounded by a wall. It is possible to understand from Hezekiah's actions that whenever there is uncertainty as to whether a particular city was surrounded by a wall from the days of Joshua, the Megilla should be read there on both days. However, this conclusion would contradict the principles normally used to resolve uncertainty. These principles state that in cases such as this, the majority is followed, and similarly that with regard to an

uncertainty concerning rabbinic laws, the *halakha* is lenient. Therefore, the *ge'onim* explain that a distinction must be made between the case of Tiberias and other cities whose status is uncertain. With regard to Tiberias, Hezekiah was certain that the city itself existed in the days of Joshua and his uncertainty was whether it was surrounded by a wall. However, with regard to other cities, where the uncertainty is whether the city existed at all during the days of Joshua, there is certainly no reason to be strict. The Ramban writes that when Hezekiah read on two days due to uncertainty, he acted only out of a righteous custom.

אי הכי אמאי מספקא ליה? ודאי ל'או חומה היא! דתנא: "אשר לו חומה" – ולא שור איגר, "סביב" פרט לטבריא שימה חומתה!

The Gemara asks: **If so, why was he uncertain?** The sea is **certainly not a wall**. As it is taught in a *baraita* with regard to the sale of houses in walled cities, the phrase: **"Which has a wall"** (Leviticus 25:30), indicates that the city has a bona fide wall and not merely a wall of roofs.<sup>NH</sup> If a city is completely encircled by attached houses but there is no separate wall, it is not considered a walled city. The next verse, which is referring to cities that have no wall **"round about them"** (Leviticus 25:31), **excludes Tiberias** from being considered a walled city, **as the sea is its wall** on one side and it is not fully encircled by a physical wall. Consequently, Tiberias is not considered a walled city.

לענן בתי ערי חומה לא מספקא ליה, כי קא מספקא ליה – לענן מקרא מגילה: מאי פרוים ומאי מוקפין דכתיבי גבי מקרא מגילה, משום דהני מיגלו, והני לא מיגלו, והא נמי מיגליא, או דלמא: משום דהני מיגנו והני לא מיגנו, והא נמי מיגניא. משום הכי מספקא ליה.

The Gemara answers: **With regard to the sale of houses of walled cities, Hezekiah was not uncertain. Where he was uncertain was with regard to the reading of the Megilla: What are the unwalled towns and what are the walled cities that are written with regard to the reading of the Megilla?** Is the difference between them **due to the fact that these unwalled towns are exposed, whereas those walled cities are not exposed?** If so, since Tiberias is also exposed, as it is not entirely surrounded by a wall, it should be considered unwalled. **Or perhaps the difference is due to the fact that these walled cities are protected, whereas those unwalled towns are not protected, and Tiberias is also protected by the sea and should be treated as a walled city.** It was **due to that reason that Hezekiah was uncertain** when to read the Megilla.

רב אסי קרי מגילה בהוצל בארביסר ובחמיסר, מספקא ליה אי מוקפת חומה מימות יהושע בן נון היא אי לא. איכא דאמר, אומר רב אסי: האי הוצל דבית בנימין מוקפת חומה מימות יהושע היא.

The Gemara relates that **Rav Asi read the Megilla in the city of Huzal<sup>b</sup> in Babylonia on both the fourteenth and the fifteenth of Adar, because he was uncertain if it had been surrounded by a wall since the days of Joshua, son of Nun, or not.** Huzal was an ancient city, and it was possible that it had been surrounded by a wall in the time of Joshua. **Some say a different version of this report, according to which there was no uncertainty. Rav Asi said: This city of Huzal of the house of Benjamin was walled since the days of Joshua, son of Nun.**

אמר רבי יוחנן: בי הוינא טליא, אמניא מלתא דשאלנא לסבייא, I said something that I later asked the Elders about,

Incidental to the previous discussion concerning Tiberias, the Gemara relates that **Rabbi Yohanan said: When I was a child I said something that I later asked the Elders about,**

NOTES

**A wall of roofs – שור איגר:** Some explain the concept of a wall of roofs as large roofs that reach the ground and encircle the entire city. Others explain that it is an incomplete wall, where only a portion of the city is surrounded by a wall (*Arukh*).

HALAKHA

**And not a wall of roofs – ילא שור איגר:** A city in which the roofs make up the walls, or the sea serves as its wall, does not have the *halakha* of a walled city with regard to *halakhot* of redeeming land. Rather, its status is that of open courtyard cities (Rambam *Sefer Zera'im, Hilkhot Shemitta VeYovel* 12:13).

BACKGROUND

**Huzal – הוצל:** Huzal was a small city in Babylonia, south of the city of Neharde'a. This was a very old settlement, and apparently the Jews that resided there belonged to the exiled tribe of Binyamin. In Huzal there was a famous synagogue which was described as a place where the divine spirit rests. A few Sages are known to have lived in that city.

Perek I

Daf 6 Amud a

ואישתבח כוותי: חמת זו טבריא, ולמה נקרא שמה חמת – על שום חמי טבריא. רקת – זו ציפורי, ולמה נקרא שמה רקת – משום דמידלייא ברקתא דנהרא. כינרת – זו גינוסר, ולמה נקרא שמה כינרת – דמתקי פירא בקלא דכינרי.

and it was found in accordance with my opinion. I said that **Hammath is Tiberias.<sup>B</sup> And why was it called Hammath? On account of the hot springs of [hammei] Tiberias that are located there.** And I said that **Rakkath is Tzippori. And why was it called Rakkath? Because it is raised above the surrounding areas like the bank [rakta] of a river.** And I said that **Chinnereth is Ginosar.<sup>B</sup> And why was it called Chinnereth? Because its fruit are sweet like the sound of a harp [kinnor].**

אמר רבא: מי איכא למאן דאמר רקת לאו טבריא היא? והא כי שביב איניש הכא, התם ספדי ליה הכי: גדול הוא בששך, ושם לו ברקת, וכי מסקי ארונא להתם ספדי ליה הכי: אוהבי שרידים יושבי רקת, צאו וקבלו הרוגי עומק.

Rava said: **Is there anyone who says that Rakkath is not Tiberias? Isn't it true that when a great man dies here, in Babylonia, they lament his demise there, in Tiberias, as follows: Great was he in Sheshakh, i.e., Babylonia (see Jeremiah 25:26), and he had a name in Rakkath? Furthermore, when they bring up the casket of an important person to there, to Tiberias, they lament his demise as follows: You lovers of the remnants of the Jewish people, residents of Rakkath, go out and receive the dead from the deep, i.e., the low-lying lands of Babylonia.**

BACKGROUND

**Tiberias – טבריא:** Herod Antipas founded the city of Tiberias in the year 18 CE and named it after the Roman emperor Tiberias. The city was initially built on the ruins of a previous settlement. The Sages deliberated with regard to the status of the graves that were located in Tiberias, which apparently prevented priests from settling there. As stated in the Gemara here, according to most opinions the city was founded on the ruins of the settlement Rakkath.

**Ginosar – גינוסר:** Ginosar is the name of a beautiful valley that stretches along the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, north of Tiberias. Josephus describes the area as follows: Its nature is wonderful as well as its beauty; its soil is so fruitful that all sorts of trees can grow upon it, and the inhabitants accordingly plant all sorts of trees there. For the temper of the air is so well mixed that it agrees very well with those several sorts, particularly walnuts, which require the coldest air, and flourish there in vast plenty. There are palm trees also, which grow best in hot air; fig trees also and olives grow near them, which yet require an air that is more temperate. It supplies men with the principal fruits, with grapes and figs continually during ten months of the year and the rest of the fruits as they become ripe together through the whole year; for besides the good temperature of the air, it is also watered from a most fertile fountain (*Wars of the Jews*, Book III, 10:8).