Perek 1
Daf 6  Amud a

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.30 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.

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.

The Gemara relates that Rav Asi read the Megilla in the city of Huzal31 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.

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.

And not a wall of roofs – A city in which the roofs make up the walls, or the sea serves as its wall, does not have the halakah of a walled city with regard to halakhot of redeeming land. Rather, its status is that of open courtyard cities (Rambam Sefer Zedim, Hilkkot Shemitta V’Hagguah 12:13).

Notes

Huzal – ח札: Huzal was a small city in Babylonia, south of the city of Nehardea. 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.

Background

Tiberias – תיבריה: Herod Antipas founded the city of Tiberias in the year 18 CE and named it after the Roman emperor Tiberius. 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 – גינסאר: 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 ii, 108).
Similarly, the Gemara relates that when Rabbi Zeira died, a certain eulogizer opened his eulogy for him with these words:

The land of Shinar, i.e., Babylonia, Rabbi Zeira's birthplace, conceived and bore him; the land of the deer, i.e., Eretz Yisrael, where Rabbi Zeira lived as an adult and rose to prominence, raised her delights. Woe unto her, said Rakkath, for she has lost her precious instrument. It is apparent from these examples that Rakkath is Tiberias.

Rather, Rabba said: Hammath is the hot springs of Gerar that are adjacent to Tiberias; Rakkath is Tiberias; and Chinnereth is Ginosar. And why was Tiberias called Rakkath? Because even the empty ones of Tiberias – even the empty ones of Tiberias... [Berakhot 57a]

The Gemara asks: Is Kitron really Tzippori? Wasn’t Kitron in the tribal territory of Zebulun, as it is written: “Neither did Zebulun drive out the inhabitants of Kitron, nor the inhabitants of Nahalol” (Judges 1:30)? And the tribe of Zebulun was resentful of its portion, as it is stated: “Zebulun was a people that jeopardized their lives to the death” (Judges 5:18). What is the reason for their resentfulness? Because “Naftali was on the high places of the field” (Judges 5:18).

The verse should be interpreted as follows: Zebulun said before the Holy One, Blessed be He: Master of the Universe! To my brothers, the tribes whose territory is adjacent to mine, You gave fields and vineyards, whereas to me You gave mountains and hills; to my brothers You gave lands, whereas to me You gave seas and rivers. God said back to him: Nevertheless, all will need you due to the hilazon, the small sea creature residing in your territory that is the source of the dye used in the ritual fringes [tzitzit]. As it is stated in Moses' blessing to Zebulun: “They shall call to the mountain: There they shall sacrifice offerings of righteousness; for they shall suck of the abundance of the seas, and of the hidden treasures of the sand” (Deuteronomy 33:19).

NOTES

The author of Ture Even asked why this is applied specifically to Tiberias here in the Gemara, when elsewhere (see Berakhot 57a) this is said of the entire Jewish people. It would appear that Rabba emphasized in this Gemara that this was even more true of Tiberias due to the city's unique position as the religious capital of Eretz Yisrael for many generations. Even during the time of Rav Sa'dia Gaon it was considered an important religious center. Additionally, the vowel notation system for the Hebrew language that is used today was developed in Tiberias.

Why was it called Tiberias – תִּבְרְיָא? It is certainly well known that the city is named for the Roman emperor Tiberius. Nevertheless, the name of the city was interpreted homiletically in the same manner that other foreign words in Hebrew are interpreted, in order to learn additional ideas.

Because its appearance [re'iyyata] is good – תָּﬠֲלֵיהּ. Tosafot explain that the city was aesthetically pleasing. The Mahara-sha explains that this phrase should be interpreted to mean that Tiberias was the seat of the Great Sanhedrin for a time, and the Sages who resided there could perceive things that others could not; according to this, the word re'iyyata is to be interpreted: Its vision. Others write that since Tiberias did not have a wall on the side that bordered the sea, it offered a view of distant places (see Ramban Shimuel).

Jeopardized their lives to the death – לָמוּת. The interpretation of this verse indicates that it was as if the members of the tribe of Zebulun wanted to die because they were angered over the shortcomings of their portion. The Maharsha writes that during the war against enemy forces commanded by Sisera, about which this verse is written, the people of Zebulon passed through Naftali's portion and compared it to their unfertile land. However, the simple explanation of this verse is that because Zebulon had meager land, and the gentiles did not let them spread out, they fought harder in the war and risked their lives.
Round sardinella

White glass: Glass is usually made from a mixture of several silicates, most of which are ubiquitous to sea sand. However, it is difficult to find a suitable mixture of silicates that will be easy to fuse and will not have any metallic substances that give it color. White glass is either completely transparent or white and was very expensive in ancient times.

Tarit – תרט: The tarit, Sardinella aurita, also known as the round sardinella, is a species of sardine that is commonly eaten salted. It is found in vast numbers in the Mediterranean Sea and is listed among the items with which the coasts of Eretz Yisrael are blessed.

It is clear from the exposition of the verse in Judges that the territory of Zebulun did not contain fields and vineyards. And if it enters your mind to say that Kitron is Tzippori, why was Zebulun resentful of his portion? Wasn’t Tzippori in his territory, which was land that was vastly superior with regard to its produce? And if you would say that Zebulun’s portion did not have quality land flowing with milk and honey, didn’t Reish Lakish say: I myself have seen the land flowing with milk and honey around Tzippori, and it was sixteen mil by sixteen mil?

And if you would say that the part of his territory that flowed with milk and honey was not as vast as that of his brothers, the other tribes, didn’t Rabba bar bar Ḥana say that Rabbi Yohanan said: I myself have seen the land flowing with milk and honey over all of Eretz Yisrael. And the size of the fertile land was like the distance from Bei Kovai to the fortress of Tulkahni, a total of twenty-two parasangs [parsa] in length and six parasangs in width. A parasang is four mil; consequently, the area flowing with milk and honey around Tzippori was four by four parasangs, which is more than the fair share of one tribe among twelve.

The Gemara answers: Even so, fields and vineyards were preferable to Zebulun. The fertile land in Zebulun’s territory is in a mountainous region, which makes it more difficult to cultivate. The Gemara comments: The language of the verse is also precise according to this explanation, as it is written: “And Naphtali was on the high places of the field,” which indicates that Zebulun’s complaint was due to the fact that Naphtali had fields. The Gemara concludes: Indeed, learn from here that this is so.
The Gemara continues its discussion with regard to identifying places mentioned in the Bible. Rabbi Abbahu said: “And Ekron shall be uprooted” (Zephaniah 2:4). This is an allusion to Caesarea, daughter of Edom, which is situated among the sands. Caesarea was primarily populated by Greeks and Romans, and it served as the seat of Roman rule when the Romans, who are identified with Edom in Jewish literature, ruled Eretz Yisrael. And it was a spike stuck in the side of the Roman people already in the days of the Greeks, as it was an obstacle to the spread of Jewish settlement. When the Hasmonean monarchy prevailed and triumphed over them, they called it: The captured tower of Shir.

Rabbi Yosei bar Ḥanina said: What is the meaning of that which is written: “And I will take away his blood out of his mouth, and his detestable things from between his teeth, and he also shall be a remnant for our God; and he shall be as a chief in Judah, and Ekron as a Jebusite” (Zechariah 9:7)? The verse should be understood as follows: “And I will take away his blood out of his mouth”; this is referring to their house of altars, where they sacrifice offerings. “And his detestable things from between his teeth”; this is referring to their house of piles, where they heap their ritual stones.

“And he also shall be a remnant for our God,” these words are referring to the synagogues and study halls in Edom. “And he shall be as a chief [ala] in Judah,” and Ekron as a Jebusite,” these words are referring to the theaters [tere’atrayot]; and the circuses [kirkesayot] in Edom where the officers of Judah are destined to teach Torah in public.

Rabbi Yitzḥak said: “And the children of Dan went up and fought against Leshem” (Joshua 19:37): this is referring to the city that was known in the Talmudic period as Parnas. Ekron shall be uprooted” (Zephaniah 2:4); this is referring to Caesarea, the daughter of Edom, which was a metropolis [metropolin]; i.e., a capital city, of kings. There are those who say this means that kings were raised there, and there are those who say it means that kings were appointed from there, meaning the kings of Edom were appointed from among the residents of this city.

The Sages said that the fortunes of Caesarea, which represents Rome, and Jerusalem are diametric opposites. If, therefore, someone says to you that both cities are destroyed, do not believe him. Similarly, if he says to you that they are both set up in tranquility, do not believe him. If, however, he says to you that Caesarea is destroyed and Jerusalem is settled, or that Jerusalem is destroyed and Caesarea is settled, believe him. As it is stated: “Because Tyre has said against Jerusalem: Aha, the gates of the people have been broken; she is turned to me; I shall be filled with her that is laid waste” (Ezekiel 26:2), and Tyre, like Caesarea, represents Rome. Consequently, the verse indicates that if this city is filled, that one is laid waste, and if that city is filled, this one is laid waste. The two cities cannot coexist.

As a chief [ala] in Judah: There is a double interpretation of the word ala. In the simple meaning of the verse it refers to the chiefs of Judah, while at the same time there is a play on the Aramaic root yaif, meaning to teach.

Theaters [tere’atrayot]: This is one of the forms in which the Greek word ἀθροισία, theatron, meaning theater, is written. In the contemporary meaning of the word, it refers to a place for performances and games.

Circus [kirkesayot]: From the Latin circus, or the Greek κήρκος, Kirkos, meaning a place in which various competitions take place.

Metropolis [metropolin]: From the Greek μητρόπολις, metropolis. The literal translation of this word is mother city, meaning the main city or the capital.
Rav Nahman bar Yitzḥak said: The same idea may be derived from here, a verse dealing with Jacob and Esau: “And the one people shall be stronger than the other people” (Genesis 25:23), teaching that when one nation rises, the other necessarily falls.

Having mentioned Edom, the Gemara cites what Rabbi Yitzḥak said: What is the meaning of that which is written: “Let favor be shown to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness he will deal wrongfully, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord” (Isaiah 26:10)? Isaac said before the Holy One, Blessed be He: Master of the Universe, let favor be shown to Esau, my beloved son. God said to him: Esau is wicked. Isaac said to God: “Yet will he not learn righteousness,” i.e., is there no one who can find merit in him? God said to him: “In the land of uprightness he will deal wrongfully,” meaning that he is destined to destroy Eretz Yisrael. Isaac said to God: If it is so that he is that wicked, “he will not behold the majesty of the Lord.”

And Rabbi Ḥama Bar Ḥanina said: There are three hundred young princes with crowns tied to their heads in Germany of Edom, and there are three hundred and sixty-five chieftains [marzaven] in Rome. Every day these go out to battle against those, and one of them is killed, and they are preoccupied with appointing a new king in his place. Since neither side is united, neither side is able to achieve a decisive victory. This is the war between Rome and the Germanic tribes that act as a muzelle upon Esau-Edom-Rome and prevent it from becoming too strong.

Rabbi Yitzḥak said in the style of a previous passage: If a person says to you: I have labored and not found success, do not believe him. Similarly, if he says to you: I have not labored but nevertheless I have found success, do not believe him. If, however, he says to you: I have labored and I have found success, believe him.
Provoking the wicked – Should engage in idle flattery of the wicked. Rather, if one sees a wicked man who is having good fortune, he is permitted to abstain from ruling his case so that he will not be harmed. However, after the trial has started, he may not abstain. See tractate Berakhot (3b), where it concludes that one who is not totally righteous should not contend at all with a wicked man who is having good fortune.

The Gemara comments: This applies only to matters of Torah, as success with respect to Torah study is in accordance with the toil and effort invested. But with regard to success in business, it all depends upon assistance from Heaven, as there is no correlation between success and effort. And even with regard to matters of Torah, we said this only with regard to sharpening one’s understanding of Torah, as the more one labors, the deeper the understanding of the material he achieves. However, to preserve what one has learned, it is dependent upon assistance from Heaven. Not everyone achieves this, even with much effort.

And Rabbi Yitzhak also said: If you see a wicked man whom the hour is smiling upon, i.e., who is enjoying good fortune, do not provoke him, as it is stated: “Contend not with evildoers” (Psalms 37:1). And not only that, but if you provoke him, his undertakings will be successful, as it is stated: “His ways prosper at all times” (Psalms 105:5). And not only that, but even if he is brought to court, he emerges victorious in judgment, as it is stated: “Your judgments are far above him” (Psalms 105:5), as though the trial is far removed from him and does not affect him. And not only that, but he will see his enemies fall, as it is stated: “As for all his enemies, he hissets at them” (Psalms 105:5).

The Gemara asks: Is that so? Didn’t Rabbi Yoḥanan say in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yoḥai: It is permitted to provoke the wicked in this world, as it is stated: “They that forsake the Torah praise the wicked; but they who keep the Torah contend with them” (Proverbs 28:4)? And furthermore, it is taught in a baraita that Rabbi Dostai bar Matun said: It is permitted to provoke the wicked in this world, and if a person whispers to you to say that this is not so, relying on the verse: “Contend not with evildoers, nor be envious against the workers of iniquity” (Psalms 37:1), know that only one whose heart strikes him with pangs of conscience over sins that he committed says this.

Rather, the true meaning of that verse is: “Contend not with evildoers,” to be like the evildoers; “nor be envious against the workers of iniquity,” to be like the workers of iniquity. And it says elsewhere: “Let not your heart envy sinners, but be in the fear of the Lord all the day” (Proverbs 23:17). In this context, to be envious of sinners means to desire to be like them. Rabbi Yoḥanan and Rabbi Dostai indicate that one is permitted to provoke the wicked, against the opinion of Rabbi Yitzhak.

The Gemara explains: This is not difficult, as it can be understood that this, Rabbi Yitzhak’s statement that one may not provoke the wicked, is referring to his personal matters, while that, the statements of Rabbi Yoḥanan and Rabbi Dostai that it is permitted to provoke them, is referring to matters of Heaven, i.e., religious matters.

And if you wish, say: Both this statement and that statement are stated with regard to his own affairs, and still it is not difficult. This statement, that it is permitted to provoke the wicked, applies to a completely righteous individual; that statement, that one may not provoke them, applies to an individual who is not completely righteous. As Rav Huna said: What is the meaning of that which is written: “Why do you look upon that deal treacherously, and remain silent when the wicked devours the man that is more righteous than he” (Habakkuk 1:13)? This verse indicates that the wicked devours one who is more righteous than he; however, he does not devour one who is completely righteous.

And if you wish, say instead: When the hour is smiling upon him, i.e., when the wicked individual is enjoying good fortune, it is different. He is receiving divine assistance, and even the completely righteous should not provoke him.
Having mentioned Rome, the Gemara cites what Ulla said. Greek Italy, i.e., southern Italy, is the great city of Rome, and it is three hundred parasang [parasa] by three hundred parasang. It has three hundred and sixty-five markets, corresponding to the number of days in the solar year, and the smallest of them all is the market of poultry sellers, which is sixteen mil by sixteen mil. And the king, i.e., the Roman emperor, dines every day in one of them.

And one who resides in the city, even if he was not born there, receives an allowance for his living expenses from the king’s palace. And one who was born there, even if he resides elsewhere, also receives an allowance from the king’s palace. And there are three thousand bathhouses in the city, and five hundred apertures that let the smoke from the bathhouses out beyond the walls in a way that doesn’t blacken the walls themselves. One side of the city is bordered by the sea, one side by mountains and hills, one side by a barrier of iron and one side by gravel [hulsit] and swamp.

If the people read the Megilla during the first Adar and subsequently the year was then intercalated by the court and now the following month will be the second Adar, one reads the Megilla again during the second Adar. The Sages formulated a principle: The difference between the first Adar and the second Adar with regard to the mitzvot that are performed during those months is only that the reading of the Megilla and distributing gifts to the poor are performed in the second Adar and not in the first Adar.

The Gemara asks: If so, whose opinion is taught in the mishna? It is neither the opinion of the anonymous first tanna of the following baraita, nor that of Rabbi Eliezer, son of Rabbi Yosei, nor that of Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel, as it is taught in a baraita: If they read the Megilla during the first Adar and the year was then intercalated, they read it during the second Adar, as all mitzvot that are practiced during the second Adar are practiced in the first Adar, except for the reading of the Megilla.

Rabbi Eliezer, son of Rabbi Yosei, says: They do not read it again during the second Adar, as all mitzvot that are practiced during the second Adar are practiced during the first Adar. Once the Megilla was read during the first Adar, one need not read it again during the second Adar. Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says in the name of Rabbi Yosei: They even read it again during the second Adar, as all mitzvot that are practiced during the second Adar are not practiced during the first Adar. And they all agree with regard to eulogy and with regard to fasting that they are prohibited on the fourteenth and the fifteenth days of this month of the first Adar and on that month of the second Adar.¹⁴

The Gemara refers to the matter of the sequence of Torah portions: Each year, people read the Megilla during the first Adar and then the year was intercalated, they read it again during the second Adar (Tur, Orah Hayyim 697:1).

GREEK ITALY

Greek Italy generally refers to southern Italy, since this land was, at that time, a part of Magna Graecia, i.e., Greater Greece; it was ruled by many Greek potentates. However, here, the description of a capital of great dimensions is referring to the city of Rome itself. Some explain this part of the Gemara as referring to Constantinople, which was called, in its day, the new Rome, and which was used as the Roman capital from the beginning of the fourth century; even the description of the place as being between the sea and the hills is fitting. However, this explanation is not historically accurate, as in the time of Ulla, Constantinople was not yet large or important.

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And Rabbi Eliezer, son of Rabbi Yosei, maintains that even the reading of the Megilla may be performed during the first Adar, *ab initio*. However, if they did so during the first Adar, they did so; and they fulfilled their obligation and need not read them again during the second Adar, except for the reading of the Megilla, as even though they already read it during the first Adar, they read it again during the second Adar.

Returning to the original question, according to whose opinion is the mishna taught? If it is the opinion of the first *tanna*, the *halakha* of gifts to the poor is difficult. The first *tanna* does not mention these gifts, indicating that he maintains that if gifts were distributed during the first Adar one need not distribute gifts to the poor during the second Adar. And if the mishna was taught according to the opinion of Rabbi Eliezer, son of Rabbi Yosei, the reading of the Megilla is also difficult. And if it is the opinion of Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel, the sequence of Torah portions is difficult.

The Gemara answers: Actually, the mishna is according to the opinion of the first *tanna*, and he taught the *halakha* with regard to the reading of the Megilla, and the same is true with regard to gifts to the poor, as this mitzva is dependent upon that one. The Gemara already explained that the gifts to the poor are distributed on the day that the Megilla is read.

And if you wish, say instead: Actually, the mishna is according to the opinion of Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel, and the mishna is incomplete and is teaching the following: The difference between the fourteenth day of the first Adar and the fourteenth day of the second Adar is only with regard to the reading of the Megilla and distributing gifts to the poor. The Gemara infers that with regard to the matter of eulogy and fasting, this, the first Adar, and that, the second Adar are equal, while about the sequence of Torah portions, the mishna does not speak at all. The mishna limits its discussion to the *halakhot* of Purim.

Rabbi Hiyya bar Avin said that Rabbi Yoḥanan said: The *halakha* is in accordance with the opinion of Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel, who said it in the name of Rabbi Yosei.

Rabbi Yoḥanan said: And both of them, Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel and Rabbi Eliezer, son of Rabbi Yosei, interpreted the same verse differently, leading them to their conclusions. It is written: “To enjoin upon them that they should keep the fourteenth day of the month of Adar and the fifteenth day of the same, in each and every year” (Esther 9:21). Rabbi Eliezer, son of Rabbi Yosei, maintains: “In each and every year” teaches that Purim must be celebrated the same way each year, even if it is intercalated. Just as each and every year Purim is celebrated during Adar that is adjacent to Shevat, so too here in an intercalated year Purim is celebrated during Adar that is adjacent to Shevat.
And Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel maintains: “In each and every year” teaches that just as each and every year Purim is celebrated in Adar that is adjacent to Nisan, so too here, in an intercalated year, Purim is celebrated during Adar that is adjacent to Nisan.

The Gemara asks: Granted, according to Rabbi Eliezer, son of Rabbi Yosei, the reason for his opinion is logical, based on the principle that one does not forego performance of the mitzvot; rather, when presented with the opportunity to perform a mitzva, one should do so immediately. However, with regard to Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel, what is the reason for his opinion?

Rabbi Tavi said: The reason for the opinion of Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel is that juxtaposing the celebration of one redemption, Purim, to the celebration of another redemption, Passover, is preferable.

Rabbi Elazar said: The reason for the opinion of Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel is derived from here, as it is written: “To confirm this second letter of Purim” (Esther 9:29), indicating that there are circumstances where the Megilla is read a second time (Jerusalem Talmud), i.e., when the year was intercalated after the Megilla was read in the first Adar.

The Gemara comments: And it was necessary to write...