

The Soncino Babylonian Talmud



MEGILLAH

Folios 2a-32a

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH WITH NOTES

CHAPTERS I - IV

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Megillah 2a

CHAPTER I

MISHNAH. THE MEGILLAH¹ IS READ ON THE ELEVENTH, THE TWELFTH, THE THIRTEENTH, THE FOURTEENTH, AND THE FIFTEENTH [OF ADAR], NEVER EARLIER AND NEVER LATER.² CITIES³ WHICH HAVE BEEN WALLED SINCE THE DAYS OF JOSHUA SON OF NUN⁴ READ ON THE FIFTEENTH; VILLAGES AND LARGE TOWNS⁵ READ ON THE FOURTEENTH. THE VILLAGES, HOWEVER, MAY [SOMETIMES] PUSH THE READING FORWARD TO THE COURT DAY.⁶ HOW DOES THIS WORK OUT? IF [THE FOURTEENTH OF ADAR] FALLS ON MONDAY,⁷ THE VILLAGES AND LARGE TOWNS READ ON THAT DAY AND THE WALLED PLACES ON THE NEXT DAY: IF IT FALLS ON TUESDAY OR ON WEDNESDAY, THE VILLAGES PUSH THE READING FORWARD TO THE COURT DAY,⁸ THE LARGE TOWNS READ ON THE DAY ITSELF, AND THE WALLED PLACES ON THE NEXT DAY. IF [THE FOURTEENTH FALLS] ON THURSDAY, THE VILLAGES AND LARGE TOWNS READ ON THAT DAY AND THE WALLED PLACES ON THE NEXT DAY: IF IT FALLS ON FRIDAY, THE VILLAGES PUSH THE READING FORWARD TO THE COURT DAY⁹ AND THE LARGE TOWNS AND WALLED PLACES READ ON THE DAY ITSELF.¹⁰ IF IT FALLS ON SABBATH, THE VILLAGES AND LARGE TOWNS PUSH THE READING FORWARD TO THE COURT DAY.⁹ AND THE WALLED PLACES READ ON THE NEXT DAY.¹¹ IF IT FALLS ON SUNDAY, THE VILLAGES PUSH THE READING FORWARD TO THE COURT DAY,⁹ THE LARGE TOWNS READ ON THE SAME DAY, AND THE WALLED CITIES ON THE DAY FOLLOWING.

GEMARA. THE MEGILLAH IS READ ON THE ELEVENTH. Whence is this derived? — [How can you ask,] ‘Whence is this derived?’ Surely it is as we state further

on,¹² ‘The Sages made a concession to the villages, allowing them to push the reading forward to the Court day, so that [they should have leisure to] supply food and water for their brethren in the large towns’?—

What we mean [by our question] is this: Let us see now. All these dates were laid down by the Men of the Great Assembly.¹³ For if you should [deny this and affirm] that the Men of the Great Assembly laid down only the fourteenth and fifteenth, [is it possible that] the [later] Rabbis should have come and annulled a regulation made by the Men of the Great Assembly, seeing that we have learnt, ‘One Beth din cannot annul the ordinances of another unless it is superior to it in number¹⁴ and in wisdom’?¹⁵ Obviously, therefore, all these days must have been laid down by the Men of the Great Assembly, [and we ask therefore], where are they hinted [in the Scripture]? —

R. Shaman b. Abba replied in the name of R. Johanan: Scripture says, To confirm these days of Purim in their times.¹⁶ [which indicates that] they laid down many ‘times’ for them. But this text is required for its literal meaning?¹⁷ —

If that were all, Scripture could say simply ‘at the [appointed] time’. What then is implied by ‘their times’? A large number of ‘times’! But still I may say that [the expression ‘their’ times’] is required to indicate that the time of one is not the same as the time of the other?¹⁸ —

In that case, Scripture should say [simply], ‘their time’. Why does it say ‘their times’? So that you may infer from this all of them. But cannot I say that ‘their times’ means ‘numerous times’?¹⁹ —

The expression ‘their times’ is to be interpreted in the same way as we should interpret ‘their time’: just as ‘their time’

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would indicate two [days], so ‘their times’ indicates two [in addition].²⁰ But why not make these the twelfth and thirteenth? —

For the reason given [elsewhere] by R. Samuel b. Isaac, that the thirteenth is a time of assembly for all,²¹ and no special indication is required for it in the text; so we may say here that the thirteenth day is a time of assembly and no special indication is required for it in the text. But why not say that the sixteenth and seventeenth are meant? —

It is written, and it shall not pass.²² R. Samuel b. Nahmani, however, explained thus. Scripture says. As the days wherein the Jews had rest from their enemies.²³ [The expression] ‘the days’ [would have sufficed] and we have ‘as the days’, to include the eleventh and the twelfth. But cannot I say rather the twelfth and thirteenth? —

R. Samuel b. Isaac said: The thirteenth is a time of assembly for all, and does not require special indication. But cannot I say the sixteenth and the seventeenth? —

It is written, ‘and it shall not pass’. Why did R. Samuel b. Nahmani not derive the rule from the expression ‘in their times’? —

He does not accept the distinction [made above between] ‘time’, ‘their time’ and ‘their times’. And why did R. Shaman b. Abba not derive the rule from the expression ‘as the days’? —

He can say to you: This is meant to make the rule apply to future generations. Rabbah b. Bar Hanah said in the name of R. Johanan: This [rule stated in the Mishnah] is the ruling of R. Akiba the anonymous authority,²⁴ who draws the distinction between ‘time’, ‘their time’ and ‘their times’, but according to the Sages the Megillah is to be read only on the proper day.²⁵ The following was adduced in refutation of this: ‘R. Judah said, When does this rule hold good? When the years are

properly fixed²⁶ and Israel reside upon their own soil. But in these days, since people reckon from it,²⁷ the Megillah is to be read only on the proper day’. Now which authority is R. Judah here following? Shall I say, R. Akiba? This cannot be, because [according to him] the regulation²⁸ is in force in these days also. It must be then that he follows the Rabbis, and [even according to them] we read [on the other days] at any rate when the years are properly fixed and Israel reside on their own soil! Is not this a refutation of R. Johanan? —

It is. Some report as follows. Rabbah b. Bar Hanah said in the name of R. Johanan: This rule follows the ruling of R. Akiba the anonymous authority, but the Sages held that in these days, since people reckon from it, we read it only on the proper day. It has been taught to the same effect: ‘R. Judah said: When does this rule hold good? When the years are properly fixed and Israel reside upon their own soil, but in these days, since people reckon from it, it is read only on the proper day.’²⁹ R. Ashi noted a contradiction between two statements of R. Judah,

(1) Lit., ‘scroll’. The scroll of the Book of Esther is meant (v. Introduction).

(2) Lit., ‘neither less nor more’.

(3) כרמין (Sing. כרם). This word is generally applied to large centers of population with a more or less metropolitan character. In Mishnah Megillah, (cf. 19a), however, it seems to be used exclusively of walled towns, whatever their size.

(4) The Gemara infra discusses what is meant by this.

(5) כפרים ועיירות גדולות. The expression ‘villages and large towns’ in the Mishnah here seems to be merely a periphrasis for ‘other places’, since, as appears from the Gemara, the distinction here is between places which were walled in the days of Joshua and places which were not. The epithet ‘large’ is added because the word עיר (or עירה) is also often used of a small place, hardly distinguishable from a village.

(6) Lit., ‘the day of assembly’, i.e. Monday or Thursday, when the Beth din sat in the towns, and the people came in from the villages. They were allowed to read the Megillah then because they were more likely to find someone who could read to them in the town than in their own village

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(Rashi). Another reason is also given in the Gemara infra.

(7) Lit., 'the second (day of the week)'. In the Talmud the days of the week are distinguished by the ordinal numbers.

(8) I.e., the previous Monday.

(9) I.e., the preceding Thursday.

(10) Reading on the Sabbath was prohibited, for fear the scroll might be carried from place to place. V. infra.

(11) On the Sunday.

(12) V. infra p. 116.

(13) Or 'synagogue'. A name given to Ezra and his Beth din and their successors, up to the time of Simon the Just. V. Aboth, Sonc. ed. p. 1, n. 5. According to the Talmud, the Book of Esther was composed by or under the direction of the Men of the Great Assembly.

(14) Of the members of the Beth din.

(15) Cf. M.K. 3b; Git. 36a.

(16) Esth. IX, 31. E.V. 'their appointed times'. The plural form 'times' is stressed.

(17) Lit., 'for itself'; viz., the 14th and 15th mentioned in the text.

(18) Viz., the time for the villages is not the same as that for the walled towns.

(19) E.g., five or six.

(20) To the fourteenth and fifteenth, viz., the eleventh and twelfth.

(21) Rashi explains this to refer to the statement in the Scripture that on the thirteenth the Jews assembled and defended themselves. Asheri, however, points out that this has nothing to do with the reading of the Megillah, which was instituted to commemorate the resting, and he therefore prefers the explanation of R. Tam, that on the thirteenth the Jews assemble to observe the fast of Esther.

(22) Ibid. 27. These words are interpreted to mean, 'the observance shall not pass beyond the fifteenth day'. E.V., and it shall not fail.

(23) Ibid. 22.

(24) So called because Rabbi in compiling the Mishnah usually followed R Akiba when he mentioned no authority.

(25) Viz., the fourteenth and fifteenth of Adar.

(26) I.e., when there is a Beth din which fixes new moons and leap years as occasion arises.

(27) I.e. count thirty days from Purim to Passover, since the new moon of Nisan will not be promulgated by the Beth din

(28) That the Megillah may be read on the eleventh, twelfth, or thirteenth.

(29) And there is now no contradiction between R. Johanan and Rabbi Judah.

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and therefore attributed the statement in the Baraitha to R. Jose son of R. Judah. [He said]: Can R. Judah really have said that in these days, since people reckon from it, it is read only on the proper day? To this may be opposed the following:¹ R. Judah said, When [do they push forward the reading]? In places where the villagers go to town² on Monday and Thursday; but in places where they do not go to town on Monday and Thursday, it is read only on the proper day. But at any rate in places where they do go to town on Monday and Thursday it is read [on the earlier dates] even in these times'? He accordingly ascribed the statement in the Baraitha³ to R. Jose son of R. Judah. And because he finds a contradiction between two statements of R. Judah, is he entitled to ascribe the one in the Baraitha to R. Jose son of R. Judah? —

R. Ashi had heard some report the statement in the name of R. Judah and some report it in the name of R. Jose son of R. Judah, and to avoid making R. Judah contradict himself he said that the one who ascribed the statement to R. Judah was not [reporting] accurately, while the one who ascribed it to R. Jose son of Judah was [reporting] accurately.

CITIES WHICH HAVE BEEN WALLED SINCE THE DAYS OF JOSHUA SON OF NUN READ ON THE FIFTEENTH. Whence is this ruling derived? — Raba replied: Because Scripture says, Therefore do the Jews of the villages that dwell in the unwalled towns,⁴ etc. Since the villages [are to read] on the fourteenth, the walled towns [must read] on the fifteenth. But why not say that the villages [should read] on the fourteenth, and those in walled towns not at all?⁵ —

But are they not also Israelites? And moreover is it not written, From India into Ethiopia?⁶ But why not say that the villages [should read] on the fourteenth and those in

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walled towns on both the fourteenth and fifteenth, as it is written, that they should keep the fourteenth day of the month of Adar and the fifteenth day of the same yearly?⁷ —

If the text had said, ‘the fourteenth day and [we] the fifteenth’, you would have been right. Now, however, that it is written ‘the fourteenth day and [we-eth] the fifteenth — the Eths comes and makes a distinction, so that the one set is on the fourteenth and the other set on the fifteenth. But why not say that the villages are on the fourteenth, and those surrounded [by a wall] can [celebrate] if they like on the fourteenth or if they like on the fifteenth? —

The text says, in their seasons,⁹ the season of one is not the same as the season of the other. But why not say that they¹⁰ should celebrate on the thirteenth? —

[They must do] as Susa [did]. We have accounted for the celebration [of Purim]; how do we know that the recital¹¹ [of the Megillah must be on these days]? —

The text says, that these days should be remembered and kept;¹² ‘remembering’ is put on the same footing as ‘keeping’. Our Mishnah does not take the same view as the following Tanna, as it has been taught: ‘R. Joshua b. Korha says: Cities which have been walled since the days of Ahasuerus read on the fifteenth’. What is the reason of R. Joshua b. Korha? —

[They must be] like Susa: just as Susa has been walled since the days of Ahasuerus and reads on the fifteenth, so every city that has been walled since the days of Ahasuerus reads on the fifteenth. What then is the reason of our Tanna? —

He draws an analogy between the two occurrences of the word Perazi [villagers]. It is written here, Therefore the Jews of the villages [Ha-perazim],¹³ and it is written in another place, beside the unwalled [Ha-

perazi] towns, a great many;¹⁴ just as there the reference is to towns which were [not] walled in the days of Joshua son of Nun, so here the reference is to towns which were [not] walled in the days of Joshua son of Nun.¹⁵ I can understand why R. Joshua b. Korha did not adopt the view of our Tanna; he does not accept the analogy of Perazi and Perazi.¹⁶ But why does not our Tanna accept the view of R. Joshua b. Korha? —

[You ask] why does he not? Why, because he draws the analogy of perazi with perazi, of course! What the questioner meant was this: [On the view of our Tanna], whom did Susa follow?¹⁷ It followed neither the villages nor the walled towns!¹⁸ —

Raba, or, as some say, Kadi,¹⁹ replied: Susa was an exception, because a miracle was performed in it.²⁰ We can understand according to the view of our Tanna why the text should say, city and city, town and town;²¹ ‘city and city’²² to make a distinction between those which were walled in the days of Joshua son of Nun and those which were walled in the days of Ahasuerus; ‘town and town’ likewise to distinguish between Susa and other towns.²³ But according to R. Joshua b. Korha, it is true we can account for ‘city and city’, as being intended to distinguish between Susa and other cities,²⁴ but what is the purpose of ‘town and town’? —

R. Joshua b. Korha can answer: And can our Tanna explain the words satisfactorily? Since he draws the analogy between perazi and perazi,²⁵ why do we require the words ‘city and city’? The truth is that the text is inserted for a homiletical purpose, and to teach the rule laid down by R. Joshua b. Levi. For R. Joshua b. Levi said: ‘A city²⁶ and all that adjoins it and all that is taken in by the eye with it is reckoned as city’.²⁷ Up to what distance? —

R. Jeremiah, or you may also say R. Hiyya b. Abba, said: As far as from Hamthan²⁸ to

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Tiberias, which is a mil. Why not say [simply] a mil? —

We learn from this what is the extent of a mil, namely, as far as from Hamthan to Tiberias. R. Jeremiah —or you may also say R. Hiyya b. Abba —also said: The [alternative forms of the] letters M'N'Z'P'K²⁹ were prescribed³⁰ by the Watchmen.³¹ Do you really think so? Is it not written, These are the commandments,³² which implies that no prophet is at liberty to introduce anything new³³ henceforward? And further, R. Hisda has said: The Men and the Samek in the tablets

- (1) Infra n. 4.
- (2) Lit., 'assemble'.
- (3) The former of the statements quoted.
- (4) Esth. IX, 19.
- (5) Since no mention is made of walled towns in the context.
- (6) These words occur in Esth. I, 1, and are used here loosely instead of the words in Esth. IX, 30, and he (Mordecai) sent letters to... the hundred and twenty—seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus.
- (7) Ibid. 21.
- (8) Eth is a sign of the accusative, and as its use is optional, it is usually interpreted as indicating something not specified in the text. The interpretation placed upon it here is rather unusual.
- (9) Ibid. 31.
- (10) Those in the walled towns.
- (11) Lit., 'remembrance'.
- (12) Ibid. 28.
- (13) Ibid. 19.
- (14) Deut. III, 5, referring to the territory of Sihon conquered by the Israelites in the time of Moses.
- (15) The word 'not' is not in the text of the original here, but is necessary for the sense. Rashi greatly simplifies the text by reading: 'Just as there (the villages were such) from the days of Joshua, so here, (the villages must have been such) from the days of Joshua'.
- (16) I.e., he had not learnt this particular Gezerah Shawah from his teacher, and therefore could not reply upon it.
- (17) Since there is no evidence that it was walled in the days of Joshua.
- (18) These last words make no satisfactory sense, and seem to be interpolated. [They do not occur in MS.M.]
- (19) Aliter: 'an unknown authority', v. B.M., Sonc. ed. p. 3, n. 1.]

(20) Since they were allowed to continue slaying their enemies on the fourteenth and did not rest till the fifteenth, they were allowed to celebrate that day (Rashi).

(21) Esth. IX, 28. The word Medinah which the Talmud here takes as equivalent to כרך is translated in E.V. by 'province'.

(22) As much as to say, 'Some cities one way and some another'.

(23) Susa also having been an unwalled town till the time of Ahasuerus.

(24) Rashi here reads, 'to distinguish between those which were walled from the days of Ahasuerus and those which were not yet walled in the days of Ahasuerus', and this seems to be required by the sense.

(25) That the wall must have been in existence since the days of Joshua.

(26) כרך v. supra p. 1, n. 3.

(27) For purposes of reading the Megillah on the fifteenth.

(28) [The Hammath mentioned in Josh. XIX, 35.]

(29) The five letters of the Hebrew alphabet, Mem, Nun, Zadi, Pe, and Kaf, which have two forms — a middle and final form, the latter being more closed than the former. In the case of Mem the final is completely closed מ, with the other the final form is distinguished by the shaft being drawn straight down as distinct from the middle form where it is bent round towards the left , (כ) ך

ה (פ), ץ (צ), ן (נ).

(30) Lit., said'.

(31) A name applied to the prophets who flourished towards the end of the period of the first Temple. There is a play on the words Zophim (watchmen) and Manzepak. [Perhaps to be read Min Zofeka 'from thy watcher' v. G.K.

(1910) p. 27, n. 1.]

(32) Lev. XXVII, 34.

(33) I.e., to make any alteration in the written Torah, whether in the wording or the writing.

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remained in place by a miracle.¹ — That is so; they were in use, but people did not know which form came in the middle of a word and which one at the end, and the Watchmen came and ordained that the open forms should be in the middle of a word and the closed forms at the end. But when all is said and done, [we have the text] 'these are the commandments', which implies that no prophet was destined ever to introduce an innovation hereafter?² —

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What we must say therefore is that they were forgotten³ and the Watchmen established them again. R. Jeremiah — or some say R. Hiyya b. Abba — also said: The Targum⁴ of the Pentateuch was composed by Onkelos the proselyte under the guidance⁵ of R. Eleazar and R. Joshua.⁶ The Targum of the Prophets was composed by Jonathan ben Uzziel under the guidance of Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi,⁷ and the land of Israel [thereupon] quaked over an area of four hundred parasangs by four hundred parasangs, and a Bath Kol⁸ came forth and exclaimed, Who is this that has revealed My secrets to mankind?⁹

Jonathan b. Uzziel thereupon arose and said, It is I who has revealed Thy secrets to mankind. It is fully known to Thee that I have not done this for my own honor or for the honor of my father's house, but for Thy honor I have done it, that dissension may not increase in Israel.¹⁰ He further sought to reveal [by] a Targum [the inner meaning] of the Hagiographa, but a Bath Kol went forth and said, Enough! What was the reason? —

Because the date¹¹ of the Messiah is foretold in it.¹² But did Onkelos the proselyte compose the Targum to the Pentateuch? Has not R. Ika said in the name of R. Hananel who had it from Rab: What is meant by the text, And they read in the book, in the law of God, with an interpretation. and they gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading?¹³ 'And they read in the book, in the law of God': this indicates the [Hebrew] text; 'with an interpretation': this indicates the targum,¹⁴ 'and they gave the sense': this indicates the verse stops; 'and caused them to understand the reading': this indicates the accentuation,¹⁵ or, according to another version, the Massoretic notes?¹⁶ —

These had been forgotten, and were now established again. How was it that the land did not quake because of the [translation of the] Pentateuch, while it did quake because of that of the prophets? —

The meaning of the Pentateuch is expressed clearly, but the meaning of the prophets is in some things expressed clearly and in others enigmatically. [For instance,] it is written , In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon,¹⁷ and R. Joseph [commenting on this] said: Were it not for the Targum of this verse, we should not know what it means.¹⁸ [It runs as follows]: 'On that day shall there be great mourning in Jerusalem like the mourning of Ahab son of Omri who was killed by Hadadrimmon son of Rimmon in Ramoth Gilead¹⁹ and like the mourning of Josiah son of Ammon who was killed by Pharaoh the Lame in the plain of Megiddo'.²⁰ And I, Daniel, alone saw the vision; for the men that were with me saw not the vision; but a great quaking fell upon them, and they fled to hide themselves.²¹ Who were these 'men' —

R. Jeremiah — or some say, R. Hiyya b. Abba — said: These were Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. They were superior to him [in one way], and he was superior to them [in another]. They were superior to him, because they were prophets and he was not a prophet.²² He was superior to them, because he saw [on this occasion] and they did not see. But if they did not see, why were they frightened?—

Although they themselves did not see, their star saw.²³ Rabina said: We learn from this that if a man is seized with fright though he sees nothing, [the reason is that] his star sees. What is his remedy? He should recite the shema'.²⁴ If he is in a place which is foul,²⁵ he should move away from it four cubits. If he cannot do this, he should say this formula: 'The goat at the butcher's is fatter than I am'.²⁶ Now that you have decided that the words 'city and city' have a homiletical purpose, what is the purpose of the words 'family and family' [in the same verse]? —

R. Jose b. Hanina replied: This contains a reference to the families of the Priests and Levites, [and indicates] that they should

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desist from their [Temple] service in order to come and hear the reading of the Megillah. For so said Rab Judah in the name of Rab: The Priests at their [Temple] service, the Levites on their platform,²⁷ the lay Israelites at their station²⁸ — all desist from their service in order to hear the reading of the Megillah. It has been taught to the same effect: Priests at their [Temple] service, Levites on their platform, lay Israelites at their station — all desist from their service in order to come and hear the reading of the Megillah.

It was in reliance on this dictum that the members of the house of Rabbi²⁹ were wont to desist from the study of the Torah in order to come and hear the reading of the Megillah. They argued a fortiori from the case of the [Temple] service. If the service, which is so important, may be abandoned, how much more the study of the Torah? But is the [Temple] service more important than the study of the Torah? Surely it is written, And it came to pass when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold there stood a man over against him,... (and he fell on his face.³⁰ Now how could he do such a thing, seeing that R. Joshua b. Levi has said that it is forbidden to a man to greet another by night, for fear that he is a demon? —

It was different there, because he said to him, 'I am captain of the host of the Lord'. But perhaps he was lying? —

We take it for granted³¹ that they do not utter the name of heaven vainly).³² He said to him: This evening you neglected the regular afternoon sacrifice, and now you have neglected the study of the Torah.³³ Joshua replied: In regard to which of them have you come? He answered, 'I have come now'.³⁴ Straightway, Joshua tarried that night in the midst of the valley [Ha-emek],³⁵ and R. Johanan said:

(1) According to tradition, the letters on the tablets of Moses were cut completely through the

stone, and therefore a letter which was wholly closed could keep in place only by a miracle. Hence the Mem to which R. Hisda refers must have been wholly enclosed; which shows that such a Mem must have been used already by Moses. This objection against R. Jeremiah is valid only if we suppose him to have been speaking of the closed forms of the letters, which is not necessarily the case. Cf. Shab. 104.

(2) And the determining which letters should go in which place (in the Sefer Torah) was an innovation.

(3) Viz., the correct place of each.

(4) Apparently what is meant is the official Aramaic version of the Pentateuch used in the synagogue.

(5) Lit., 'from the mouth of'.

(6) We know on good authority that a Greek translation of the Bible was composed under the guidance of R. Eleazar and R. Joshua by a proselyte named Aquilas. The Aramaic Targum probably took shape about the same time, but there is no authority except this passage for connecting it with anyone of the name of Onkelos. We may surmise therefore that we have here some confusion between the two translations. For the discussion and literature on the subject v. J.E. s.v. Targum, and Silverstone, E.A. Aquila and Onkelos.

(7) Jonathan b. Uzziel was a disciple of Hillel, so he can hardly have had any direct contact with the prophets mentioned. He may, however, have had traditions handed down from them (Maharsha).

(8) V. Glos.

(9) The Targum of Jonathan b. Uzziel is very paraphrastic, and applies many of the prophetic verses to the Messianic age.

(10) Through different interpretations being placed on the prophetic allusions.

(11) Lit., 'end'.

(12) The reference is probably to the Book of Daniel.

(13) Neh. VIII, 8.

(14) Which shows that the Targum dates back to the time of Ezra.

(15) פיסוק טעמים V. Ned., Sonc. ed. p. 113, n. 5.

(16) For notes v. Ned., Sonc. ed. p. 116.

(17) Zech. XII, 11.

(18) Because there is no mourning for Hadadrimmon mentioned in the Scripture.

(19) V. I Kings XXII.

(20) v. II Kings XXIII. It is difficult to see what 'mystery' is here revealed that should have caused the land to quake.

(21) Dan. X, 7.

(22) Although he had visions, he did not admonish or exhort the people.

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(23) Or 'guardian angel' or 'spirit'. The Hebrew Mazzal here seems to mean something corresponding to the Roman genius.

(24) V. Glos.

(25) And where the Shema' may not be recited.

(26) Go to them for a victim.

(27) On which they stood to chant the daily psalm.

(28) A number of lay Israelites were always appointed to be present at the offering of the daily sacrifices, which they accompanied with certain prayers. V. Ta'an. 26a; and Glos. s.v. Ma'amad.

(29) R. Judah I, the Prince.

(30) Josh. V, 13f.

(31) Lit., 'we have learnt by tradition'.

(32) The passage in brackets (from 'and he fell') is parenthetical, and has nothing to do with the argument.

(33) It is not clear what indication there is of this in the text. V. Tosaf., s.v. זמזמ.

(34) I.e., on account of the study of the Torah which you are neglecting now.

(35) This seems to be an alternative reading of Joshua VIII, 13. which in our text reads, And Joshua went that night in the midst of the valley. Cf. Tosaf., s.v.

Megillah 3b

This shows that he tarried in the depths ['Umkah] of the Halachah.¹ And R. Samuel b. Unia also said: The study of the Torah is greater than the offering of the daily sacrifices, as it says. 'I have come now' — There is no contradiction; in the one case² [the study] of an individual is meant, in the other³ that of the whole people.⁴ But is that of an individual unimportant? Have we not learnt: Women [when mourning] on a festival make a dirges but do not beat the breast. R. Ishmael says: If they are near the bier,⁶ they can beat the breast. On New Moon, Hanukkah and Purim they may make a dirge and beat the breast, but on neither the one nor the other do they wail;⁷ and in reference to this, Rabbah b. Huna said: The festival involves no restrictions in the case of a scholar, still less Hanukkah and Purim? —

You are speaking of the honor to be paid to the Torah. The honor to be paid to the learning of an individual is important, the study of an individual is [comparatively]

unimportant. Raba said: There is no question in my mind that, as between the Temple service and the reading of the Megillah, the reading of the Megillah takes priority, for the reason given by R. Jose b. Hanina.⁸ As between the study of the Torah and the reading of the Megillah, the reading of the Megillah takes priority, since the members of the house of Rabbi based themselves [on the dictum of R. Jose].⁸

As between the study of the Torah and attending to a Meth Mizwah,⁹ attending to a Meth Mizwah takes precedence, since it has been taught: The study of the Torah may be neglected in order to perform the last rites or to bring a bride to the canopy. As between the Temple service and attending to a Meth Mizwah, attending to a Meth Mizwah takes precedence, as we learn from the text or for his sister,¹⁰ as it has been taught: 'Or for his sister. What is the point of these words? Suppose he was on his way to kill his Pascal lamb or to circumcise his son, and he heard that a near relative had died,¹¹ shall I assume that he should defile himself? You must say, he should not defile himself. Shall I assume then that, just as he does not defile himself for his sister, so he should not defile himself for a Meth Mizwah?¹² It says significantly, 'or for his sister,' it is for his sister that he may not defile himself, but he may defile himself for a Meth Mizwah.¹³

Raba propounded the question: As between the reading of the Megillah and [attending to] a Meth Mizwah, which takes precedence? Shall I say that the reading of the Megillah takes precedence in order to proclaim the miracle, or does perhaps [the burying of] the Meth Mizwah take precedence because of the respect due to human beings? —

After propounding the question, he himself answered it saying, [Burying] the Meth Mizwah takes precedence, since a Master has said: Great is the [obligation to pay due] respect to human beings, since it overrides a negative precept of the Torah.¹⁴ The text [above states]: 'R. Joshua b. Levi said: A

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city¹⁵ and all that adjoins it and all that is taken in by the eye with it is reckoned as city'. A Tanna commented: Adjoining, even if it is not visible, and visible even if it is not adjoining. Now we understand what is meant by 'visible even though not adjoining': this can occur for instance with a city situated on the top of a hill. But how can there be 'adjoining but not visible'? —

R. Jeremiah replied: If it is situated in a valley. R. Joshua b. Levi further said: A city which was first settled and then walled is reckoned as a village.¹⁶ What is the reason? Because it is written, And if a man sell a dwelling house of a walled city,¹⁷ one, [that is,] which was first walled and then settled, but not first settled and then walled. R. Joshua b. Levi also said: A city in which there are not ten men of leisure¹⁸ is reckoned as a village. What does he tell us? We have already learnt this: 'What is a large town? One in which there are ten men of leisure. If there are less than this, it is reckoned as a village'. —

He had to point out that the rule applies to a city,¹⁹ even though [leisured] people come there from outside.²⁰ R. Joshua b. Levi also said: A city which has been laid waste and afterwards settled is reckoned as a city. What is meant by 'laid waste'? Shall I say, that its walls have been destroyed, in which case if it became settled²¹ it is reckoned as a city but otherwise not? [How can this be], seeing that it has been taught: R. Eleazar son of R. Jose says: [The text says], which has a wall;²² [which implies that it is to be reckoned as a city] even though it has not a wall now, provided it had one previously?²³ What then is meant by 'laid waste'? Laid waste of its ten men of leisure. R. Joshua b. Levi further said:

- (1) This shows that the study of the Torah is superior to the Temple service.
- (2) That of the household of Rabbi.
- (3) That of Joshua.
- (4) Lit., 'many'.
- (5) Heb. מִצְוֹת, all raising their voices in unison.
- (6) Lit., 'bed'.

(7) Heb. מִקְוֹנוֹת one chanting and the others responding.

(8) V. supra P. 11

(9) Heb. מֵת מִצְוָה strictly speaking, a body which there is no-one else to bury and the burial of which is a religious duty. V. Glos. Meth Mizwah.

(10) Num. VI, 7, in reference to the Nazirite.

(11) Lit., 'that a dead one had died for him'.

(12) Nazir 48b.

(13) Although Scripture says 'If thou seest the ox of thy neighbor falling by the way, thou shalt not hide thyself' (Deut. XXII, 4), the Rabbis said that a man of eminence for whom it would be undignified to help may hide himself.

(14) V. p. 13, n. 7.

(15) כָּרֵךְ. V. supra p. 1, n. 3.

(16) It is not clear whether this means for purposes of reading the Megillah on the fourteenth or the fifteenth, or for purposes of restoring a house to its original owner at the Jubilee. Rashi takes the latter view, Tosaf. the former. V. Tosaf. s.v. כָּרֵךְ.

(17) V. Rashi .e.g. 'in a walled city'. Lev. XXV, 29.

(18) Who always have time to attend synagogue. V. infra 5a.

(19) [A כָּרֵךְ which is distinguished from a עִיר גְּדוּלָה in that it is a marketing center to which are drawn people from all parts.]

(20) Lit., 'from the world'. These are only a floating population, and we require ten men who are always available.

(21) I.e., its walls were raised anew.

(22) Lev. XXV, 30.

(23) The lesson is derived from the curious spelling of the word in the Hebrew text, which may imply either that it has or has not a wall.

Megilah 4a

Lod and Ono and Ge Haharashim¹ were walled in the days of Joshua son of Nun. But did Joshua build these? Was it not Elpaal who built them, as it is written, And the sons of Elpaal Eber and Misham and Shemed, who built Ono and Lod, with the towns there of?² —

But on your showing³ Asa built them, as it is written, And he built fenced cities in Judah?⁴ —

R. Eleazar replied: These places were walled in the days of Joshua son of Nun. They were laid waste in the days of the concubine of Gibeat,⁵ and Elpaal came and rebuilt them. They again fell, and Asa came and repaired

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them. There is an indication of this in the text also, as it is written, For he said unto Judah, Let us build these cities.⁶ From this we can infer that they had already been towns beforehand; and this may be taken as proved.⁷ R. Joshua b. Levi also said: Women are under obligation to read the Megillah, since they also profited by the miracle then wrought.⁸

R. Joshua b. Levi further said: If Purim falls on a Sabbath, discussions and discourses are held on the subject of the day. Why mention Purim? The same rule applies to festivals also,⁹ as it has been taught: Moses laid down a rule for the Israelites that they should discuss and discourse on the subject of the day — the laws of Passover on Passover, the laws of Pentecost on Pentecost, and the laws of Tabernacles on Tabernacles! —

It was necessary to state the rule [separately] in the case of Purim. For you might suggest that we should forbid this for fear of breaking the rule of Rabbah.¹⁰ We are therefore told that this is not so. R. Joshua b. Levi further said: It is the duty of a man to read the Megillah in the evening and to repeat it in the day, as it is written, O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou answerest not, and in the night season and am not silent.¹¹ The students took this to mean that the [Megillah] should be read at night, and the Mishnah relating to it should be learnt in the morning.¹² R. Jeremiah, however, said to them: It has been explained to me by R. Hiyya b. Abba [that the word 'repeat' here has the same meaning] as when, for instance, men say, I will go through this section and repeat it. It has also been stated: R. Helbo said in the name of 'Ulla of Biri:¹³ It is a man's duty to recite the Megillah at night and to repeat it the next day, as it says, To the end that my glory may sing praise to thee [by day]. and not be silent [by night]. O Lord, my God, I will give thanks to thee for ever.¹⁴

THE VILLAGES, HOWEVER, MAY PUSH THE READING FORWARD TO THE

COURT DAY. R. Hanina said: The Sages made a concession to the villages by allowing them to push the reading forward to the Court day, in order that they might furnish food and water to their brethren in the cities.

- (1) Three towns in the territory of Benjamin.
- (2) I Chron. VIII, 12.
- (3) I.e., if you appeal to the Book of Chronicles.
- (4) II Chron. XIV, 6. 'Judah' is here apparently taken by the Talmud to include Benjamin, which was ruled by the kings of Judah.
- (5) When the territory of Benjamin was laid waste. Jud. XX.
- (6) II Chron. XIV, 6.
- (7) [The text of this paragraph is in disorder. According to a Geonic responsum (v. B.M.) Lewin ארזר הגאונים a.l. the passages, 'But on your showing. . . in Judah' and 'There is an indication... taken as proved' are later interpolations. For other readings v. Aruch s.v. שפץ.]
- (8) Lit., 'for also these were (included) in that miracle'. Since Haman plotted to destroy the women also. Esth. III, 13.
- (9) Although they are discussed for thirty days beforehand, so that the rule should apply all the more to Purim. V. Tosaf. s.v. גאזי.
- (10) Not to read the Megillah on Sabbath, since this might lead to its being carried from place to place, v. infra p. 19.
- (11) Ps XXII, 3. This Psalm is supposed by the Talmud to refer to Esther. V. Yoma 29a.
- (12) They took the word לשנותה ('to repeat it') used by R. Joshua b. Levi in the sense of 'learning the Mishnah'.
- (13) [Either Bira, S.E. or Kefar Birim, N.W. of Gush Halab, v. Klein N.B. p. 39.]
- (14) Ps. XXX, 13. This Psalm was also applied by the Rabbis to Mordecai and Esther.

Megilah 4b

This would show [would it not] that the regulation is for the benefit of the cities; but we have learnt: 'If Purim falls on Monday, the villages and large towns read on that day'. Now if it is as you say, they should push the reading forward to the [previous] Court day? —

This would bring it to the tenth, and the Sages did not fix the tenth [as a possible day]. Come and hear: 'If it falls on Thursday, the villages and large towns read on that same day'. Now if it is as you say,

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they should push the reading forward to the [previous] Court day which is the eleventh?—

We do not shift it from one Court day to another. Come and hear [again]: ‘R. Judah says: When [is the reading pushed forward]? In places where the villagers come into town on Mondays and Thursdays, but in places where they do not come into town on Mondays and Thursdays it is read only on the proper day’. Now if you assume that the regulation is for the benefit of the cities, because they do not come into town on Mondays and Thursdays; are the cities to be deprived of the benefit? —

Do not read [in the dictum of R. Hanina] ‘in order that they may furnish food and water’, but read, ‘because they furnish food and water to their brethren in the cities’.¹

HOW [DOES THIS WORK OUT]? IF IT FALLS ON MONDAY, VILLAGES AND LARGER TOWNS READ ON THAT SAME DAY, etc. How is it that in the first clause of the Mishnah² the dates of the month are mentioned and in the second³ the days of the week?⁴ —

Since (in the second clause) the dates of the month would have to go backwards,⁵ the Mishnah prefers to mention the days.⁶

IF IT FALLS ON FRIDAY, etc. Which authority does our Mishnah follow? — [You may say], either Rabbi or R. Jose. How Rabbi? —

As it has been taught: ‘If it falls on Friday, villages and large towns push the reading forward to the Court day, and walled cities react on the day itself. Rabbi said: I maintain that towns should not have to shift their date,⁷ but both one and the other read on the day itself’. What is the reason of the First Tanna? —

Because it is written, every year:⁸ just as every year towns read before cities, so in this

case towns should read before cities. But why not argue thus: ‘Every year’: just as every year towns have not to shift their date, so here towns should not have to shift their date? —

There is a special reason [for not reasoning thus here] since this is impracticable.⁹ What is Rabbi's reason? —

[It is written], ‘every year’: just as in most years the towns have not to shift their date, so here they should not have to shift their date. But why not reason thus: ‘every year’: just as in most years towns read before walled cities, so here towns should read before walled cities? —

There is a special reason [for not arguing thus here], because this is impracticable.¹⁰ How R. Jose? —

As it has been taught: ‘If it falls on Friday, walled cities and villages push the reading forward to the Court day, and large towns read on the day itself. R. Jose said: Walled cities do not read before towns, but both read on the day itself’. What is the reason of the First Tanna? —

Because it is written, every year’: just as in most years towns react on the fourteenth and their time is not the same as the time of the walled cities, so here towns should read on the fourteenth and their time should not be the same as the time of the walled cities. But why not reason thus: ‘Every year’: just as in most years walled cities do not read before towns, so here walled cities should not read before towns? —

Here the case is different, because it cannot be avoided. What is R. Jose's reason? —

[It says], ‘every year’: just as in most years walled cities do not read before towns, so here walled cities should not read before towns. But why not reason thus: ‘Every year’: just as in most years the time of one is not the same as the time of the other, so here

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the time of one should not be the same as the time of the other? —

Here the case is different, because it cannot be avoided. But did Rabbi really hold that towns should not shift their time to the Court day? Has it not been taught: ‘If it falls on Sabbath, villages push the reading forward to the Court day, and large towns read on Friday and walled cities on Sunday. Rabbi said: My view is that, since the towns have to shift their time, they may as well shift it to the Court day’?¹¹ —

Are the two cases parallel? In this last case, the proper time is Sabbath, and since they must shift they can shift [further]; but in our case the proper time is Friday. Whose authority is followed in this dictum enunciated by R. Helbo in the name of R. Huna: ‘If Purim falls on Sabbath, all shift the reading to the Court day’? ‘All shift their reading’, do you say? [How can this be] seeing that we have the walled cities which read on the Sunday? —

What we should say is, ‘All who are shifted are shifted to the Court day’. Which authority, [you ask]? — Rabbi. But at any rate all agree that the Megillah is not to be read on Sabbath. What is the reason? —

Rabbah replied: All are under obligation to read the Megillah, but not all are competent to read it, and there is therefore a danger that one may take the scroll in his hand and go to an expert to be instructed and [in doing so] convey it four cubits in a public domain. This is also the reason for [not blowing] the Shofar on Sabbath and [for not carrying] the Lulab.¹² R. Joseph said: It is because the poor are anxiously awaiting the reading of the Megillah.¹³ It has been taught to the same effect: ‘Although it has been laid down that villages push the reading forward to the Court day, contributions are collected and distributed on the same day’. ‘Although it has been laid down’! On the contrary, it is because it has been laid down!¹⁴ —

Read therefore: Since it has been laid down that villages push the reading forward to the Court day, contributions are collected and distributed on the same day, because the poor are waiting anxiously for the reading of the Megillah, but

(1) The concession was therefore made to them as a reward, but if they do not come into town there would be no concession in allowing them to read earlier.

(2) THE MEGILLAH IS READ ON THE ELEVENTH, THE TWELFTH, etc.

(3) IF IT FALL, ON MONDAY, etc.

(4) Lit., ‘in the first clause he (the Tanna) takes the order of the months and in the second the order of the days’.

(5) If he specified the dates of the month instead of the days of the week, he would have to begin with the reading on the fourteenth, and then take the thirteenth and so on.

(6) Because as these go in regular order, it is easier to remember, and there is less danger of the Tanna making a mistake.

(7) Lit., ‘towns should not be shifted from their place’.

(8) Esth. IX, 27.

(9) It is impracticable for towns to retain this date and also to read before the walled cities.

(10) It is impracticable for the towns to read before the walled cities and yet not shift their date.

(11) Lit., ‘since they are shifted, let them be shifted to, etc.’

(12) V. Glos.

(13) Because they expect to receive gifts immediately afterwards, and on Sabbath these could not be given.

(14) As otherwise they would receive them on the actual day of Purim.

Megilah 5a

rejoicing¹ is kept only at the proper season. Rab said: On the actual day of Purim the Megillah can be read even by an individual, but on the alternative days² it should be read only in a company of ten. R. Assi, however, said: Whether on the actual day or on the alternative days, it should be read only in a company of ten. In a case which actually occurred, Rab gave weight to the opinion of R. Assi.³ But could Rab actually have said this?⁴ —

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Did not Rab Judah the son of R. Samuel b. Shilath say in the name of Rab: ‘If Purim falls on Sabbath, Friday is the proper time’?
—

Friday the proper time! Surely Sabbath is the proper time! What Rab must have meant therefore is this: The alternative time is like the proper time.⁵ Just as at the proper time [the Megillah may be read] by an individual, so at the alternative time [it may be read] by an individual. —

No. For the reading of the Megillah⁶ Rab requires ten. What then did he mean by saying ‘Friday is the proper time’? His intention was to reject the opinion of Rabbi, who said that since the towns had to shift their time they might as well shift to the Court day. Here, therefore, Rab informs us that Friday is the proper day [to which they should shift].

MISHNAH. WHAT IS RECKONED A LARGE TOWN? ONE WHICH HAS IN IT TEN MEN OF LEISURE.⁷ ONE THAT HAS FEWER IS RECKONED A VILLAGE. IN RESPECT OF THESE⁸ IT WAS LAID DOWN THAT THEY SHOULD BE PUSHED FORWARD BUT NOT POSTPONED. THE TIME, HOWEVER, OF BRINGING THE WOOD FOR THE PRIESTS,⁹ OF KEEPING THE [FAST OF] THE NINTH OF AB,¹⁰ OF OFFERING THE FESTIVAL SACRIFICE,¹¹ AND OF ASSEMBLING THE PEOPLE¹² IS TO BE POSTPONED¹³ [TILL AFTER SABBATH] BUT NOT PUSHED FORWARD. ALTHOUGH IT WAS LAID DOWN THAT THE TIMES [OF READING THE MEGILLAH] ARE TO BE PUSHED FORWARD BUT NOT POSTPONED, IT IS PERMISSIBLE ON THESE [ALTERNATIVE] DAYS¹⁴ TO MOURN, TO FAST, AND TO DISTRIBUTE GIFTS TO THE POOR. R. JUDAH SAID: WHEN IS THIS?¹⁵ IN PLACES WHERE PEOPLE COME TO TOWN ON MONDAYS AND THURSDAYS. IN PLACES, HOWEVER, WHERE THEY DO NOT COME TO TOWN EITHER ON MONDAYS OR THURSDAYS, THE MEGILLAH IS READ ONLY ON ITS PROPER DAY.

GEMARA. [TEN MEN OF LEISURE]: A Tanna taught: The ten unoccupied men who attend synagogue.¹⁶ IN RESPECT OF THESE IT WAS LAID DOWN THAT THEY SHOULD BE PUSHED FORWARD BUT NOT POSTPONED. What is the reason? —

R. Abba said in the name of Samuel: The text says, and he shall not go further.¹⁷ R. Abba further said in the name of Samuel: Whence do we know that years are not to be counted by days?¹⁸ Because it says, [It is the first to you] of the months of the year,¹⁹ [which implies] that you reckon a year by months but not by days. The Rabbis of Caesarea said in the name of R. Abba: How do we know that a month is not reckoned by its hours?²⁰ Because it says, until a month of days:²¹ you reckon a month by days, but you do not reckon a month by hours.²²

THE TIME, HOWEVER, OF BRINGING THE WOOD FOR THE PRIESTS, OF KEEPING [THE FAST OF] THE NINTH OF AB, OF OFFERING THE FESTIVAL SACRIFICE AND OF ASSEMBLING THE PEOPLE IS POSTPONED BUT NOT PUSHED FORWARD. [The reason for the Fast of] the ninth of Ab is that we do not hasten the approach of trouble. [The reason for] the festival sacrifice and the assembling of the people is that the time for their performance has not yet arrived.²³ A Tanna taught: ‘The festival sacrifice and all the period of the festival sacrifice is to be postponed’. We understand what is meant by the festival sacrifice, namely, that if its day happens to be Sabbath we postpone it till after the Sabbath. But what is meant by the ‘period of the festival sacrifice’? —

R. Oshaia replied: What is meant is this: The festival sacrifice [is postponed if its time] occurs on Sabbath, and the ‘burnt-offering of appearance’²⁴ is postponed even till after the festival day which is the proper time for a festival sacrifice.²⁵ Which authority does this follow? Beth Shammai, as we have

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learnt: 'Beth Shammai say, Peace-offerings may be brought on the festival, but without laying on of hands; not, however, burnt-offerings; while Beth Hillel say, Both burnt-offerings and peace-offerings may be brought, and hands may be laid on'.²⁶

Raba said: [The meaning is]: The festival sacrifice may be postponed for the whole period of the festival sacrifice,²⁷ but not more, as we have learnt: 'If one did not bring a festival sacrifice on the first day of the festival, he may go on to do so throughout the festival, including the last day. If the festival terminated without his having brought the festival sacrifice, he need not bring another in compensation'.²⁸ R. Ashi said: [It means that] the festival sacrifice may be postponed for the whole period of the festival sacrifice,²⁹ and even on Pentecost which is only one day it may be postponed [for seven days], as we have learnt: [Beth Hillel] agree that if Pentecost falls on Sabbath, the day for killing [the sacrifice] is after the Sabbath'.³⁰ R. Eleazar said in the name of R. Hanina: Rabbi planted a shoot on Purim,

- (1) I.e., feasting.
- (2) Lit., 'not in its proper time'.
- (3) And put himself out to assemble ten persons.
- (4) That on the alternative days it can only be read before ten.
- (5) 'Friday is the proper time' means, 'Friday is regarded as the proper time'.
- (6) On the alternative days.
- (7) Heb. Batlanim (idle men), v. supra, p. 14, n. 5.
- (8) The times when the Megillah is to be read.
- (9) It was usual for certain families to undertake to bring to Jerusalem on a certain day of the year a certain quantity of wood for the fire on the altar. V. Ta'an. 28a.
- (10) In commemoration of the destruction of the first and second Temples, v. Glos.
- (11) The Hagigah, an optional peace-offering brought by individuals in honor of the festival, usually on the first day of the festival.
- (12) On the Feast of Tabernacles in the first year of the Septennate, to hear the Law read. V. Deut. XXXI, 10-13.
- (13) If it happens to fall on Sabbath.
- (14) On which the Megillah is actually read.
- (15) That a concession is made to villagers to read on the alternate days.

(16) Lit., 'Who are in the synagogue'. I.e., who are always available to attend synagogue if required. Cf. supra. [According to Rashi: These were men specially maintained for the purpose from the communal fund. Aliter: men of ample means who freely devoted their time to the service of the community. V. Aruch s.v. בטל

(17) Esth. IX, 27. V. supra 2a.

(18) Lit., that we do not count days (to make up) years. I.e., 'a year' without further specification does not mean three hundred and sixty-five days but twelve (lunar) months.

(19) Ex. XII, 2.

(20) I.e., if the month is defective, we reckon it as twenty-nine days, and 'a month' without further specification means (if it is defective) twenty-nine days and not twenty-nine and a half, which is the real interval between one new moon and the next.

(21) Num. XI, 20. E.V. 'a full month'.

(22) V. Nazir, Sonc. ed. p. 20 notes.

(23) And so with the wood for the priests, since none of these things can be done on Sabbath. The same, however, cannot be said of the Megillah, the purpose of which is to serve as a reminder.

(24) עולת ראיה A burnt-offering which was brought to fulfill the injunction of 'they shall not appear before the Lord empty, (Deut. XVI, 16). This was regarded as obligatory.

(25) I.e., even if the first day is not a Sabbath, and a

(26) V. Bez. 19a.

(27) I.e., the whole seven days of Passover or Tabernacles.

(28) Lit., 'he is not responsible for it'.

(29) [So MS.M.; cur. ed. 'The festival sacrifice and all the period of the festival sacrifice'.]

(30) Beth Hillel differed from Beth Shammai in the case where Pentecost fell on Friday, but in this case they also agreed that both the festival sacrifice (Hagigah) and the 'burnt-offering of appearance' could be killed after the festival, since they could not be offered on Sabbath. V. Hag. 17a.

Megillah 5b

and bathed in the [bathhouse of the] marketplace¹ of Sepphoris on the seventeenth of Tammuz² and sought to abolish the fast of the ninth of Ab, but his colleagues would not consent. R. Abba b. Zabda ventured to remark:³ Rabbi, this was not the case. What happened was that the fast of Ab [on that year] fell on Sabbath, and they postponed it till after Sabbath, and he said to them, Since it has been postponed, let it be postponed altogether, but the Sages

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would not agree. The festival peace-sacrifice (Hagigah) may be brought, this offering is not brought till the intermediate days. [R. Eleazar] thereupon applied to himself the verse, Better are two than one.⁴ But how could Rabbi have planted a shoot on Purim seeing that R. Joseph has learnt: [We read in connection with Purim] gladness and feasting and a good day;⁵ ‘gladness’: this teaches that it is forbidden on these days to mourn; ‘feasting’: this teaches that it is forbidden on them to fast; ‘a good day’: this teaches that it is forbidden on them to do work? —

The fact is that Rabbi belonged to a place which kept Purim on the fourteenth, and when he planted, it was on the fifteenth. Is this so?⁶ Was not Rabbi in Tiberias, and Tiberias was walled in the days of Joshua son of Nun? —

The fact is that Rabbi was in a place which kept on the fifteenth, and when he planted it was the fourteenth. But was he certain that Tiberias was walled in the days of Joshua son of Nun, seeing that Hezekiah read the Megillah in Tiberias both on the fourteenth and on the fifteenth, being uncertain whether it had been walled in the days of Joshua son of Nun or not? Hezekiah was in doubt, but Rabbi was certain. But even supposing he was certain, was he permitted to do this, seeing that it is written in Megillath Ta'anith,⁷ ‘The fourteenth day and the fifteenth day are the days of Purim on which there is to be no mourning’, and Raba said, The only purpose of mentioning these days [in Megillath Ta'anith]⁸ was to make whatever is forbidden on the one forbidden on the other also? —

This applies only to mourning and fasting, but for abstention from work one day and no more is prescribed. Is that so? Did not Rab see a man sowing flax on Purim, and curse him, so that the flax did not grow? —

There he [the man] was doing it on the day which he ought to have kept. Rabbah the son

of Raba said. You may even say [that Rabbi planted] on the day [which he ought to have kept]: [the Jews] bound themselves [in the days of Esther] to abstain from mourning and fasting, but not from work, since first it is written, ‘gladness and feasting and a good day’, but afterwards it is written, that they should make them days of feasting and gladness,⁹ and ‘a good day’ is not mentioned. Why then did Rab curse that man? —

It was a case of ‘things which are permitted but others make a practice of abstaining from them’; but in Rabbi's place this¹⁰ was not the practice. Or if you like I can say that they did in fact make a practice of this, and Rabbi planted a festive shoot, as we have learnt:¹¹ If these days¹² pass and they are still not answered, they abstain to a certain extent from business, from building and from planting, from betrothing and from marrying,¹³ and a Tanna taught: ‘Building’ here means festive building; ‘planting’ means festive planting. What is festive building? If one builds a wedding residence for his son [on the occasion of his marriage]. What is a festive planting? If one plants a royal Abarnaki.¹⁴ The text [above state]: ‘Hezekiah read in Tiberias on the fourteenth and on the fifteenth, being doubtful whether it had been walled in the days of Joshua son of Nun or not’. But could he have been in doubt about Tiberias, seeing that it is written, And the fortified cities were Ziddimzer and Hamath and Rakath and Kinnereth,¹⁵ and it is generally agreed that Rakath is Tiberias? —

The reason why he was doubtful was because one side is bounded by the lake.¹⁶ If so, why was he in doubt? It certainly was not walled, as it has been taught : Which has a wall,¹⁷ and not merely a fence of houses.¹⁸ Round about:¹⁹ this excludes Tiberias, the lake forming its wall!²⁰ In respect of the houses of a walled town he was not in doubt; where he was in doubt was in respect of reading the Megillah. [He asked]: What constitutes the difference between villages

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and walled towns which are mentioned in connection with the reading of the Megillah? Is it that the former are exposed and the latter are not exposed, [in which case] Tiberias [belongs to the former] being also exposed, or is it that the latter are protected and the former are not protected, [in which case] Tiberias [belongs to the latter], being protected? That was why he was in doubt. R. Assi read the Megillah in Huzal²¹ on the fourteenth and on the fifteenth, being in doubt whether it had been walled in the days of Joshua son of Nun or not. According to another report, R. Assi said: Huzal of the house of Benjamin was walled in the days of Joshua son of Nun. R. Johanan said: When I was a boy, I made a statement about which I afterwards questioned the old men,

(1) Heb. קרוינה, a place where wagons were stationed on market-day (Rashi). [Alter: 'spring' from Gk. **. V. Aruch and Krauss T.A. 1. 212.]

(2) One of the four public fasts. V. R. H. 18.

(3) Lit., 'said in his (R. Eleazar's) presence'.

(4) Eccl. IV, 9. He was glad to be corrected.

(5) Esth. IX, 19.

(6) This is not so

(7) V. Glos.

(8) We know already from the Scripture that 'mourning is forbidden on these days.

(9) Esth. IX, 22

(10) To abstain from work.

(11) That there is a planting of a festive kind.

(12) Of fasting for rain.

(13) V. Ta'an 12b.

(14) The correct form according to Levy and Jast. is Achvarnaki, a Persian word for a spreading tree in a garden under which banquets could be held.

(15) Josh. XIX, 35.

(16) Of Galilee. Rakath therefore was not fortified on this side, and the question arises whether it should be accounted a 'walled city' for religious purposes.

(17) Lev. XXV, 30. In a town with a wall houses could be sold permanently.

(18) Lit., 'wall of roofs', though this is also a barricade.

(19) Ibid. 31.

(20) I.e., the lake being where the wall ought to be.

(21) [In Babylonia between Nehardea and Sura. It was called 'of the House of Benjamin' (v. infra) probably because its early settlers hailed from Benjamin (v. Obermeyer pp. 299ff). There was

also a Huzal in Palestine. V. Keth., Sonc. ed. p. 716, n. 7.]

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and it was found that I was right: [I said:] Hamath is Tiberias. And why was it called Hamath? On account of the hot springs [Hamme] of Tiberias. Rakath is Sepphoris, And why was it called Rakath? Because it slopes down like the bank [Raktha] of a river. Kinnereth is Gennesaret. And why was it called Kinnereth? Because its fruits are sweet like the music of a harp [Kinnor].¹ Raba said: Is there anyone who can maintain that Rakath is not Tiberias, seeing that when a man dies here [in Babylonia] they mourn for him there [in Tiberias] as follows: 'Great was he in Sheshach² and he has a name in Rakath',³ and when the coffin is taken there they mourn for him thus: 'Ye lovers of the remnants,⁴ dwellers in Rakath, go forth and receive the slaughtered of the depths'.⁵

When R. Zera departed, a certain mourner opened his dirge thus: 'The land of Shinar⁶ conceived and bore him, the beautiful land⁷ brought up her delight. Woe to me, saith Rakath, for her precious instrument is lost!'⁸ No, said Raba. Hamath is the hot springs of Gerar; Rakath is Tiberias; and Kinnereth is Gennesaret. Why is it called Rakath? Because even the least worthy⁹ of its inhabitants are full of religious performances like a pomegranate. R. Jeremiah said: Rakath is its proper name. And why is it called Tiberias? Because it is situated in the very center¹⁰ of the land of Israel. Rabbah said: Rakath is its name. And why is it called Tiberias? Because its aspect is good.¹¹ Zeira said: Kitron is Sepphoris. And why is it called Sepphoris? Because it is perched on the top of a mountain like a bird [Zippor].

But is Kitron Sepphoris? Now Kitron was in the territory of Zebulun, as it is written, Zebulun drove not out the inhabitants of Kitron nor the inhabitants of Nahalol.¹² Now

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Zebulun complained of his portion, as it says, Zebulun was a people which shamed his soul to death.¹³ Why? Because Naphtali was on the high places of the field.¹⁴ Zebulun complained to the Holy One, blessed be he, saying: Sovereign of the Universe, to my brethren Thou hast given fields and vineyards and to me Thou hast given hills and mountains; to my brethren Thou hast given lands, and to me Thou hast given lakes and rivers. [God] replied: They will all require thee for the hilazon,¹⁵ as it says, and the hidden treasures of the sand,¹⁶ and R. Joseph learnt: ‘Hidden’ indicates the Hilazon; ‘treasures’ indicates the tunny fish;¹⁷ ‘sand’ indicates white glass.¹⁸

Zebulun then said: Sovereign of the Universe, who will inform me?¹⁹ He replied: There they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness.²⁰ This shall be thy sign: whoever takes of thee without payment will not prosper in his business. Now if you assume that Kitron is Sepphoris, why did Zebulun complain of his portion, seeing that Sepphoris is an excellent spot? Nor can you say that it is not ‘flowing with milk and honey’.

For Resh Lakish has said: I have myself seen the trail of milk and honey²¹ round Sepphoris, and it is sixteen miles by sixteen miles. Nor can you say that [even so] his is not as good as his brothers, since Rabbah b. Bar Hanah said in the name of R. Johanan: I have myself seen the trail of milk and honey of the whole land of Israel, and it extends [altogether] about as far as from Be Kubiz²² to the Fort of Tulbanke, twenty-two parasangs in length and six parasangs in breadth?²³ Even so, he preferred fields and vineyards. This is also indicated by the language of the text, as it says, ‘Naphtali upon the high places of the field’. This is a proof.

R. Abbahu said: [It is written], Ekron shall be rooted up;²⁴ this is Kisri the daughter of Edom,²⁵ which is situated among the sands, and which was a thorn in the side of Israel²⁶

in the days of the Greeks. When the House of the Hasmoneans grew powerful and conquered them, they called it ‘the capture of the tower of Shir’.²⁷

R. Jose b. Hanina said: What is meant by the text, 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?²⁸ ‘And I will take away his blood out of his mouth’: this refers to their sacrificial shrines.²⁹ ‘And his detestable things from between his teeth’: this refers to their oracles.³⁰ ‘And he also shall be a remnant for our God’: these are the synagogues and houses of learning in Edom.³¹ And he shall be as a chief in Judah, and Ekron as a Jebusite:³² these are the theatres and circuses³³ in Edom in which one day the chieftains of Judah shall publicly teach the Torah.

R. Isaac said: Leshem is Pamias.³⁴ Ekron shall be rooted out: this is Caesarea, the daughter of Edom, which was a metropolis³⁵ of kings. Some say that this means that kings were brought up there, and others that kings were appointed from there. Caesarea³⁶ and Jerusalem [are rivals]. If one says to you that both are destroyed, do not believe him; if he says that both are flourishing, do not believe him; if he says that Caesarea is waste and Jerusalem is flourishing, or that Jerusalem is waste and Caesarea is flourishing, you may believe him, as it says, I shall be filled, she is laid waste;³⁷ if this one is filled, that one is laid waste, and if that one is filled, this one is laid waste.

R. Nahman b. Isaac derived the same lesson from here: and the one people shall be stronger than the other people.³⁸ R. Isaac also said: What is the meaning of the verse, Let favor be shown to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness?³⁹ Isaac said in the presence of the Holy One, blessed be He: Sovereign of the Universe, let mercy be shown to Esau. He replied: He is wicked. He said to Him; He has not learnt righteousness.⁴⁰ He replied: In the land of

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uprightness⁴¹ will he deal wrongfully.⁴² He said: If so, let him not behold the majesty of the Lord.⁴²

R. Isaac also said: What is meant by the verse, Grant not, O Lord, the desires of the wicked, draw not out his bit,⁴³ so that they exalt themselves, Selah?⁴⁴ Jacob said before the Holy One, blessed be He: Sovereign of the Universe, grant not to Esau the wicked the desire of his heart, draw not out his bit:

- (1) A more probable reason is that Kinnereth is shaped like a harp.
- (2) A name given to Babylon in Jer. XXV, 26; LI, 41.
- (3) Tiberias was for many centuries a great center of Jewish learning, especially in the field of Biblical study.
- (4) Hebrew שרידים 'left', 'escaped'. A name given to Israel, after Jer. XXXI, 1.
- (5) Babylon, so called because it was low-lying.
- (6) Babylonia.
- (7) The land of Israel, so called after Dan. XI, 16.
- (8) Which shows that all are agreed that Rakath is Tiberias.
- (9) Heb. Rekanin, lit., 'empty ones'.
- (10) Heb. Tibbur, lit., 'navel'.
- (11) Heb. Tobah Re'Iathah.
- (12) Jud. I, 30.
- (13) Ibid. V, 18. E.V. jeopardized their lives to the death'.
- (14) Ibid.
- (15) A small shell-fish from which was extracted the purple color used for the fringes.
- (16) Deut. XXXIII, 19.
- (17) Much used for salting or pickling and an important article of commerce in ancient Palestine.
- (18) Which was made from the sand of Zebulun. [This was a source of wealth owing to the difficulty of the process for producing colorless glass among the ancients. V. Krauss T.A. II, 286.]
- (19) If they are cheating me.
- (20) Ibid.
- (21) Left by the goats after eating dates.
- (22) [Near Pumbeditha. The parallel passage (Keth. 112a) has Be Mikse (cf. also בִּי כְּסִי in MS.M. a.l.). On the geographical names v. Keth., Sonc. ed. p. 724 notes.]
- (23) As a parasang was four miles, this would be about eight times the extent of Zebulun's trail.
- (24) Zeph. II, 4.
- (25) [Caesarea by the Sea is designated 'the daughter of Edom' because it was an outpost of the Roman Empire, Edom being in Rabbinic literature the prototype of Imperial Rome.]
- (26) Lit. 'a peg driven into Israel'.

(27) This seems to be a mistake for Zor (Tyre) which is the reading of MS.M. The Aruk reads Shed, lit., 'demons'. [The reference is probably to the conquest of Caesarea by Alexander Jannaeus, v. Josephus Ant. XIII, 15, n. Cf. also Meg. Ta'an. III. The old name of Caesarea was Strato's Tower, after the Phoenician king Strato, its founder. The reading 'shed'(demon) contains perhaps an allusion to the worship of Astarte by the original inhabitants. On the other readings v. Hildesheimer, H. Beitrage z. Geographie Palastinas, pp. 4ff]

(28) Zech. IX, 7.

(29) Beth Bamya. Lit., 'house of high places'.

(30) Beth Galya. Lit., 'house of revelation'. [These terms are taken by others as names of idolatrous shrines, the former being identified with Dajr al Banat and the latter with Bait Galia, both in the neighborhood of Bethlehem. V. Horowitz S. Palestine, pp. 126 and 129.]

(31) I.e., the Roman Empire.

(32) Zech. IX, 7.

(33) Where the Roman Games took place.

(34) More correctly Panias, Caesarea Philippi, the modern Banias, a place near the source of the Jordan.

(35) This may mean either that it was a capital of Palestine or that some of its Roman Governors became Emperors.

(36) Probably Rome is meant.

(37) Ezek. XXVI, 2, of Tyre and Jerusalem.

(38) Gen. XXV, 23.

(39) Isa. XXVI, 10.

(40) Rashi renders: 'Can not one find a plea on his behalf'.

(41) I.e., the land of Israel.

(42) Ibid.

(43) E.V., 'further not his evil device'.

(44) Ps, CXL, 9.

Megilah 6b

this refers to Germamia of Edom,¹ for should they but go forth they would destroy the whole world. R. Hama b. Hanina said: There are three hundred crowned heads in Germamia of Edom and three hundred and sixty-five chieftains in Rome,² and every day one set go forth to meet the other and one of them is killed, and they have all the trouble of appointing a king again. R. Isaac also said: If a man says to you, I have labored and not found, do not believe him. If he says, I have not labored but still have found, do not believe him. If he says, I have labored and found, you may believe him. This is true

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in respect of words of Torah,³ but in respect of business, all depends on the assistance of heaven. And even for words of Torah this is true only of penetrating to the meaning,⁴ but for remembering what one has learnt, all depends on the assistance of heaven.

R. Isaac also said: If you see a wicked man being favored by fortune,⁵ do not contend with him, as it says, Do not contend with evildoers.⁶ Nor is this all, but he may even prosper in his undertakings, as it says, His ways prosper at all times.⁷ Nor is this all, but he may even be declared right, as it says, Thy judgments are far above out of his sight.⁸ Nor is this all, but he may even triumph over his enemies, as it says, As for all his adversaries, he puffeth at them.⁸ Is this so? Has not R. Johanan said in the name of R. Simeon b. Yohai: It is permitted to contend with the wicked in this world, as it says, They that forsake the law praise the wicked, but such as keep the law contend with them.⁹

Also it has been taught: R. Dosethai b. Mathon says: It is permitted to contend with the wicked in this world. And if one should whisper to you saying, [As for the text] Do not contend with evildoers, neither be thou envious against them that work unrighteousness, one whose conscience smites him speaks thus, and the meaning is, Do not contend with the evildoer to be like evildoers, neither be envious of such as work unrighteousness; and so it says also, Let not thy heart envy sinners?¹⁰ —

There is no contradiction; the one [piece of advice] refers to one's own affairs the other to religious matters.¹¹ Or if you like I may say that both refer to one's own affairs, and still there is no contradiction: the one is addressed to a man who is wholly righteous, and the other to one who is not wholly righteous,¹² as R. Huna said: What is the meaning of the verse, Wherefore lookest thou when they deal treacherously, and holdest thy peace when the wicked swalloweth up the man that is more

righteous than he?¹³ He can swallow up one that is more righteous than himself, he cannot swallow up one that is completely righteous. Or if you like I can say that when fortune is smiling on him, the case is different.

‘Ulla said: ‘Greek Italy’¹⁴ is the great city of Rome,¹⁵ which covers an area of three hundred parasangs by three hundred. It has three hundred markets corresponding to the number of days of the solar year. The smallest of them is that of the poultry sellers, which is sixteen mil by sixteen. The king dines every day in one of them. Everyone who resides in the city, even if he was not born there, receives a regular portion of food from the king's household,¹⁶ and so does everyone who was born there, even if he does not reside there. There are three thousand baths in it, and five hundred windows the smoke from which goes outside the wall.¹⁷ One side of it is bounded by the sea, one side by hills and mountains, one side by a barrier of iron, and one side by pebbly ground and swamp.¹⁸

MISHNAH. IF THE MEGILLAH HAS BEEN READ IN THE FIRST ADAR AND THE YEAR HAS SUBSEQUENTLY BEEN PROLONGED,¹⁹ IT IS READ AGAIN IN THE SECOND ADAR. THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE FIRST ADAR AND THE SECOND ADAR SAVE ONLY IN THE READING OF THE MEGILLAH AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF GIFTS TO THE POOR.²⁰

GEMARA. This [last statement] implies that in respect of the series of special portions²¹ they are on the same footing.²² Which authority does the Mishnah follow? [It would seem], neither the First Tanna nor R. Eliezer son of R. Jose nor R. Simon b. Gamaliel [in the following Baraita], as it has been taught: ‘If the Megillah has been read in the first Adar and the year has then been prolonged, it is read in the second Adar, since all the precepts which are to be performed in the second Adar can be

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performed in the first,²³ except the reading of the Megillah’.

R. Eliezer son of R. Jose says that it is not to be read [again] in the second Adar, because all precepts that are to be performed in the second Adar may be performed in the first. R. Simon b. Gamaliel says in the name of R. Jose that it is to be read again in the second, because precepts which are to be performed in the second Adar may not be performed in the first. They all however agree in regard to mourning and fasting, that they are forbidden on [the fourteenth and fifteenth of] both. Does not R. Simon b. Gamaliel here repeat the First Tanna? —

R. Papa replied: They differ on the question of the series of special portions — the First Tanna holding that these should in the first instance be read in the second [Adar], but if they have been read in the first, this suffices. [But he also] excludes from this ruling the reading of the Megillah, [holding that], even though it has been read in the first [Adar], it must be read again in the second.

R. Eliezer son of R. Jose on the other hand held that even the Megillah may in the first instance be read in the first [Adar], and R. Simon b. Gamaliel held that even the series of special portions, if they have been read in the first [Adar], must be read again in the second. Which authority then [does our Mishnah follow]? If [you say] the First Tanna, there is the difficulty of gifts.²⁴ If [you say] R. Eliezer son of R. Jose, there is the difficulty of the reading of the Megillah also. If [you say] R. Simon b. Gamaliel, there is the difficulty of the series of special portions! —

In fact it is the First Tanna, and when he mentioned the reading of the Megillah, we suppose the same to apply to the gifts of the poor, since one depends on the other. Or if you like, I can say that in fact it is R. Simon b. Gamaliel, and there is an omission²⁵ in our Mishnah and what it means is this: ‘There is no difference between the fourteenth of the

first Adar and the fourteenth of the second Adar save in the matter of reading the Megillah and gifts to the poor’. from which we infer that in regard to mourning and fasting they are on the same footing, while in regard to the special portions no ruling is given.²⁶

R. Hiyya b. Abin said in the name of R. Johanan: The Halachah²⁷ is as laid down by R. Simon b. Gamaliel, who gave it in the name of R. Jose. R. Johanan said: Both of them [R. Simon and R. Eliezer son of R. Jose] based their opinions on the same text, in every year.²⁸ R. Eliezer son of Jose reasoned: ‘In every year’; just as in most years [we think of] Adar as the month which adjoins Shebat, so here [we keep the precepts] in the Adar which adjoins Shebat.

R. Simon b. Gamaliel again reasoned: Just as in most years [we think of] Adar as adjoining Nisan, so here [we keep the precepts] in the Adar which adjoins Nisan. Now we understand R. Eliezer son of R. Jose taking the view he did, because it is inherently probable, it being a rule that we do not postpone the performance of religious precepts.²⁹ But what is the reason of R. Simon b. Gamaliel? —

R. Tabi said: The reason of R. Simon b. Gamaliel is that more weight is to be attached to bringing one period of redemption close to another.³⁰ R. Eleazar said: The reason of R. Simon b. Gamaliel is derived from this verse: to confirm this second letter of Purim.³¹ And it was necessary for the text to write

- (1) There was another Germamia which was probably the land of the Cimmerians. [Rieger, P. (MGWJ. LXXX, p. 455) identifies it with Carminia, the Persian Kerman.]
- (2) This word seems to be an interpolation.
- (3) I.e., of the effort to gain enlightenment from the Torah.
- (4) Lit., ‘sharpening’ (the understanding).
- (5) Lit., ‘on whom the hour smiles’.
- (6) Ps. XXXVII, 1. E.V. ‘fret not thyself because of evildoers’.
- (7) Ps. X, 5.

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- (8) Ibid.
(9) Prov. XXVIII,4.
(10) Prov. XXIII, 17. R. Johanan and R. Dosethai say that it is not permissible to contend with the wicked, which contradicts R. Isaac.
(11) In regard to which it is permissible to contend with the wicked.
(12) For whom it is not safe to contend with the wicked.
(13) Hab. I, 13.
(14) 'Ulla probably had in mind the saying quoted in the Midrash of Cant. that when Jeroboam made the golden calf (according to another version, when Manasseh brought the image into the Temple), the angel Gabriel stuck a pole in the sea, and a dry place was formed on which subsequently Rome was built.
(15) [home is so designated on account of the great influence of the Greek civilization on the Roman, v. Bacher, REJ, XXXIII, p. 190.]
(16) [Alluding to the regular distribution of corn and money in Rome.]
(17) The windows being higher than the wall of the city. Another reading is: 'Each one of them has five hundred windows, the smoke, etc.' [The allusion is to the famous thermal baths constructed by Diocletian (284-304).]
(18) [The reference is respectively to the Tiber, the wall erected by the Emperor Aurelius (271-276) and to the Ostian Marshes (stagno di ostia). For the other allusions in this hyperbolic description of Rome, v. Bacher, op. cit. pp. 190ff.]
(19) By the intercalation of a second Adar.
(20) This statement is immediately discussed in the Gemara.
(21) The special portions of Shekalim (Ex. XXX, 11-16), Zakor (Deut. XXV, 17-19), Parah (Num. XIX, 1-22) and ha-Hodesh (Ex. XII, 1-20) read in the synagogue between the Sabbath preceding the first of Adar and the first of Nisan. V. infra 29a.
(22) I.e., if they had been read in the first of Adar and the year is then proclaimed a leap year, they need not be read again in the second.
(23) I.e., if they have been performed in the first and the year is then prolonged, they need not be performed again.
(24) Since, as he does not mention gifts, we presume that he allows these to be made in the first Adar.
(25) These words are out of place here and seem not to have been read by Rashi. If we omit them we translate: 'and the meaning of the Mishnah is as follows'. The omission in fact, as will be seen, is not in the Mishnah but in the Gemara which immediately follows it.
(26) It is this last clause which was omitted from the Gemara above.
(27) [הלכה So MSS.; cur. edd. הלכה.]
(28) Esth. IX, 27.

(29) I.e., we perform them at the first opportunity, even though it is also permissible to perform them later.

(30) Viz., Purim to Passover.

(31) Ibid. 29.

Megilah 7a

'the second' and also to write 'in every year'. For if I had to base the rule on 'every year', I could raise the difficulty stated above: therefore it is written 'second'.¹ And if I had been told only 'second', I might say that the Megillah is properly to be read both in the first and in the second. Therefore it says, in every year.² And what does R. Eliezer son of R. Jose make of this second'? —

He requires it for the statement enunciated by R. Samuel b. Judah. For R. Samuel b. Judah said: At first they [Mordecai and Esther] decreed the observance of Purim only in Susa, but afterwards³ throughout the world. R. Samuel b. Judah said: Esther sent to the Wise Men saying, Commemorate me⁴ for future generations. They replied, You will incite the ill will of the nations against us.⁵ She sent back reply: I am already recorded in the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia.

Rab and R. Hanina and R. Johanan and R. Habiba record [the above statement in this form]: (in the whole of the Order Mo'ed, wherever this set of Rabbis is mentioned, R. Johanan is replaced by R. Jonathan):⁶ Esther sent to the Wise Men saying, Write an account of me for posterity. They sent back answer, Have I not written for thee three times⁷ — three times and not four?⁸ [And they refused] until they found a verse written in the Torah, Write this a memorial in a book,⁹ [which they expounded as follows]: 'Write this', namely, what is written here and in Deuteronomy;¹⁰ 'for a memorial', namely, what is written in the Prophets;¹¹ 'in a book', namely, what is written in the Megillah. The difference [between the first and second of these opinions] is also found between two Tannaim. 'Write this', what is written

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here.¹² ‘For a memorial’, namely, what is written in Deuteronomy. ‘In a book’, namely, what is written in the Prophets. So R. Joshua.¹³

R. Eliezer of Modi'im says: Write this', namely, what is written here and in Deuteronomy; for a memorial', namely, what is written in the Prophets; 'in a book', namely, what is written in the Megillah. Rab Judah said in the name of Samuel; [The scroll] of Esther does not make the hands unclean.¹⁴ Are we to infer from this that Samuel was of opinion that Esther was not composed¹⁵ under the inspiration of the holy spirit? How can this be, Seeing that Samuel has said that Esther was composed under the inspiration of the holy spirit? —

It was composed to be recited [by heart], but not to be written. The following objection was raised: ‘R. Meir says that [the scroll of] Koheleth¹⁶ does not render the hands unclean, and that about the Song of Songs there is a difference of opinion. R. Jose says that the Song of Songs renders the hands unclean, and about Koheleth there is a difference of opinion. R. Simeon says that Koheleth is one of those matters in regard to which Beth Shammai were more lenient and Beth Hillel more stringent, but Ruth and the Song of Songs and Esther [certainly] make the hands unclean’! —

Samuel concurred with R. Joshua.¹⁷ It has been taught: R. Simeon b. Menasia said: Koheleth does not render the hands unclean because it contains only the wisdom of Solomon.¹⁸ They said to him], Was this then all that he composed? Is it not stated elsewhere, And he spoke three thousand proverbs,¹⁹ and it further says, Add thou not unto his words.²⁰ Why this further quotation? —

In case you might object that he composed very much, and what it pleased him to write he wrote and what it did not please him he did not write. Therefore it says,²¹ Add thou not to his words.²² It has been taught: R.

Eleazar said: Esther was composed under the inspiration of the holy spirit, as it says, And Haman said in his heart.²³

R. Akiba says: Esther was composed under the inspiration of the holy spirit, as it says, And Esther obtained favor in the eyes of all that looked upon her.²⁴ R. Meir says: Esther was composed under the inspiration of the holy spirit, as it says, And the thing became known to Mordecai.²⁵ R. Jose b. Durmaskith said: Esther was composed under the inspiration of the holy spirit, as it says, But on the spoil they laid not their hands,²⁶ Said Samuel: Had I been there,²⁷ I would have given a proof superior to all, namely, that it says, They confirmed and took upon them,²⁸ [which means] they confirmed above²⁹ what they took upon themselves below.

Raba said: All the proofs can be confuted except that of Samuel, which cannot be confuted. [Thus,] against that of R. Eleazar it may be objected that it is reasonable to suppose that Haman would think so, because there was no one who was so high in the esteem of the king as he was, and that when he spoke at length,³⁰ he was only expressing the thought concerning himself.

Against the proof of R. Akiba it may be objected that perhaps the fact is as stated by R. Eleazar, who said that these words show that to every man she appeared to belong to his own nation.³¹ Against R. Meir it may be objected that perhaps the fact is as stated by R. Hiyya b. Abba who said that Bigthan and Teresh were two men from Tarsis.³² Against the proof of R. Jose b. Durmaskith it may be objected that perhaps they³³ sent messengers. Against the proof of Samuel certainly no decisive objection can be brought.

Said Rabina: This bears out the popular saying, Better is one grain of sharp pepper than a basket full of pumpkins. R. Joseph said: It³⁴ can be proved from here: And these days of Purim shall not fail from among the Jews.³⁵ R. Nahman b. Isaac said,

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From here: Nor the memorial of them perish from their seed.³⁶

AND GIFTS TO THE POOR. R. Joseph learnt: And sending portions one to another³⁷ that means two portions³⁸ for one man. And gifts to the poor³⁹ that means two gifts to two men.⁴⁰ R. Judah Nesi'ah⁴¹ sent to R. Oshaia the leg of a third-born calf⁴² and a barrel of wine. He sent him back word saying,

- (1) To show that it must be the Adar adjoining Nisan.
- (2) To show that it is to be read only once even in leap years.
- (3) By means of this second letter.
- (4) Lit., 'fix me', by means of a book and a festival.
- (5) Who will accuse the Jews of rejoicing at their downfall and celebrating it.
- (6) This is evidently a gloss made by a later commentator.
- (7) Prov. XXII, 20. (E. V. 'have I not written unto thee excellent things'.) The meaning is, Is not the war of Israel against Amalek mentioned three times in Scripture.
- (8) The three times are (i) Ex. XVII, 8-16; (ii) Deut. XXV, 17-19; (iii) I Sam. XV.
- (9) Ex. XVII, 14, referring to the war against Amalek.
- (10) Which, being both in the Pentateuch, are counted as one.
- (11) Viz., the Book of Samuel.
- (12) In Ex. XVII.
- (13) Who thus holds that the Megillah was not meant to be written.
- (14) Like the scrolls of other books of the Scripture. V. Shab.14.
- (15) Lit., 'said'.
- (16) Ecclesiastes.
- (17) That the Megillah was not meant to be written.
- (18) And not inspired wisdom.
- (19) I kings, V, 12. Since these were not written and Ecclesiastes was, we may conclude that the latter was inspired.
- (20) Prov. XXX, 6.
- (21) Lit., 'come and hear'.
- (22) Which shows that whatever he wrote down was inspired.
- (23) Esth. VI, 6. How could the author know this if he was not inspired?
- (24) Ibid. II, 15. Cf. previous note.
- (25) Ibid. 22. Who revealed it to him if not the holy spirit?
- (26) Ibid. IX, 10. Cf. note 8.

- (27) among the Tannaim who discussed this matter.
- (28) Ibid. 27.
- (29) In heaven.
- (30) 'As for the man whom the king delighteth to honor', etc.
- (31) V. infra 13a.
- (32) V. infra 13b.
- (33) Those in the more distant parts.
- (34) That Esther was written under the inspiration of the holy spirit.
- (35) Esth. IX, 28.
- (36) Ibid. R. Nahman prefers the second half of the verse, because the first half might refer only to that generation.
- (37) Ibid. 22.
- (38) The minimum number of 'portions' being two.
- (39) Ibid.
- (40) The minimum number of the plural אביונים 'poor' being two. Or it may mean that a gift is twice as big as a portion (Maharsha).
- (41) R. Judah, the Prince II.
- (42) So Rashi. Aliter: 'a third grown'; 'in the third year' — which was supposed to be specially good.

Megilah 7b

You have fulfilled in our person, O our teacher, the words, and sending portions one to another.¹ Rabbah sent to Mari b. Mar by Abaye a sack-full of dates and a cupful of roasted ears of corn.

Said Abaye to him: Mari will now say, 'If a countryman becomes a king, he does not take his basket off his neck'.² The other [Mari] sent him [Rabbah] back a sack-full of ginger and a cup full of long-stalked pepper.

Said Abaye: Now the Master [Rabbah] will say, I sent him sweet and he sends me bitter. Abaye said: When I went out of the Master's [Rabbah's] house, I was already full, but when I reached the other places they set before me sixty dishes of sixty different preparations, and I had sixty pieces from them. The last preparation was called pot-roast, and [I liked it so much that] I wanted to lick the dish after it.

Said Abaye: This bears out the popular saying, The poor man is hungry and does not

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know it,⁴ or the other saying, There is always room for sweet things. Abaye b. Abin and R. Hananiah b. Abin used to exchange their meals with one another.⁵ Raba said: It is the duty of a man to mellow himself [with wine] on Purim until he cannot tell the difference between cursed be Haman' and 'blessed be Mordecai'.⁶

Rabbah and R. Zera joined together in a Purim feast. They became mellow, and Rabbah arose and cut R. Zera's throat.⁷ On the next day he prayed on his behalf and revived him. Next year he said, Will your honor come and we will have the Purim feast together. He replied: A miracle does not take place on every occasion. Raba said: If one eats his Purim feast on the night [of the fourteenth], he does not thereby fulfill his obligation. What is the reason? It is written, days of feasting and gladness.⁸

R. Ashi was sitting before R. Kahana. It grew late, and still the Rabbis did not arrive. He said to him, Why have not the Rabbis come? Perhaps they are busy with the Purim feast. He said to him: Could they not have had it last night? He replied: Is your honor not acquainted with the diction of Raba, 'If one eats his Purim feast on the night [of the fourteenth], he does not thereby fulfill his obligation'? He said to him; Did Raba really say so? (He replied Yes).⁹ He then repeated it after him forty times, until he had safely stored it in his mind.¹⁰

MISHNAH. THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN FESTIVALS AND SABBATH SAVE ONLY IN THE MATTER OF [PREPARING] FOOD.¹¹

GEMARA . We can infer from this that in the matter of preliminaries for preparing food¹² they are on the same footing. The Mishnah then does not agree with R. Judah, as it has been taught: 'There is no difference between festivals and Sabbath save in the matter of [preparing] food'. R. Judah, however, permits [on the festivals] the preliminaries for preparing food.¹² What is

the reason of the First Tanna? The Scripture says: [Save that which every man must eat], that only [shall be prepared]:¹³ that and not its preliminaries. R. Judah, on the other hand, stresses the word for you:¹⁴ for you, which means, for all your requirements. Why then does not the other also admit this, seeing that it is written, 'for you'? —

[This, he says, means], 'for you' and not for non-Jews; 'for you' and not for dogs. And [why does not] the other [adopt this view], seeing that it is written, 'that only'? [He replies]: It is written, 'that only', and it is written, 'for you'; we apply the one to preliminaries which can be attended to on the day before the festival, and the other to preliminaries which cannot be attended to on the day before the festival.

MISHNAH. THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SABBATH AND THE DAY OF ATONEMENT SAVE ONLY THAT THE DELIBERATE VIOLATION OF THE ONE IS PUNISHED BY A HUMAN COURT AND THE DELIBERATE VIOLATION OF THE OTHER BY KARETH.¹⁵

GEMARA. It is to be inferred from this that in respect of compensation¹⁶ they are on the same footing. Whose view does the Mishnah follow? — That of R. Nehunia b. ha-Kaneh, as it has been taught: R. Nehunia b. ha-Kaneh used to put the Day of Atonement on the same footing as Sabbath in respect of compensation: just as [one who deliberately breaks] Sabbath forfeits his life but is released from the obligation to make compensation,¹⁷ so [one who deliberately breaks] the Day of Atonement forfeits his life but is released from the obligation to make compensation. We have learnt elsewhere: If any who have incurred the penalty of Kareth are flogged — they become quit of their Kareth, as it says, Then thy brother should be dishonored in thine eyes;¹⁸ once he has been flogged, he is like thy brother.¹⁹ So R. Hananiah b. Gamaliel.

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Said R. Johanan: The colleagues of R. Hananiah b. Gamaliel joined issue with him on this point. Raba said, They said in the school of Rab: We have [also] learnt [this]:²⁰ There is no difference between the Day of Atonement and Sabbath save that he who breaks the one is punished by a human court, while he who breaks the other is punished with Kareth. Now if [R. Hananiah's opinion] is correct, then both are punished by the human court?²¹ –

R. Nahman replied: Whose view is this?²² That of R. Isaac, who said that lashes are never inflicted on those who have incurred Kareth, as it has been taught: Those who have incurred Kareth are included in the general statement.²³ Why then is Kareth specially mentioned in the case of [one who lies with] his sister?²⁴ To show that she is punished with Kareth and not with lashes.²⁵

R. Ashi said: You may even say that it²⁶ is the view of the Rabbis:²⁷ in the case of the one [the breaker of Sabbath], the essential [punishment for] his presumption is inflicted by the human court, but in the case of the other, the essential punishment for his presumption consists in 'being cut off'.²⁸

- (1) [Cur. ed. add: and 'gifts to the poor'].
- (2) As much as to say, Although you have become head of the Academy (in Pumbeditha), you send very ordinary gifts.
- (3) The house of Mari.
- (4) Till the food is actually set before him.
- (5) According to Rashi, this means that one provided the feast one year and the other the next. More naturally it could mean that they sent their meals to one another and thereby fulfilled the obligation of 'sending portions to one another' (Maharsha).
- (6) [The two phases have the same numerical value, 502.]
- (7) Apparently without actually killing them But cf. Maharsha.
- (8) Esth. IX, 22.
- (9) These words are bracketed in the text.
- (10) Lit., 'and he was (then) like one who had put it in his purse'.
- (11) Lit., 'food of the person'. I.e., that food for the day may be cooked on festivals but not on Sabbath.
- (12) E.g., the sharpening of a knife.

- (13) Ex. XII, 16; relating to the Passover.
- (14) Ibid.
- (15) I.e., by the hand of heaven. V. Lev. XXIII, 30 and Glos.
- (16) For damage done by the act of transgression.
- (17) The lesser penalty being merged in the larger penalty.
- (18) Deut. XXV, 3.
- (19) Which shows that he is not 'cut off'.
- (20) That there is a difference of opinion.
- (21) And the one who is flogged for breaking Yom Kippur becomes quit of Kareth.
- (22) That of our Mishnah.
- (9) And not of the colleagues of R. Hananiah.
- (23) Of the punishment for incest. Lev. XVIII, 29.
- (24) In Lev. XX, 17.
- (25) And the same applies to all other cases punishable by Kareth. V. Mak. 13b.
- (26) Our Mishnah.
- (27) And still there is no difference between them and R. Hananiah.
- (28) הכרת cf. Num. XV, 31; though lashes may also be inflicted.

Megillah 8a

MISHNAH. THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ONE WHO IS INTERDICTED BY VOW TO HAVE NO BENEFIT FROM HIS NEIGHBOUR AND ONE WHO IS INTERDICTED BY VOW FROM HIS FOOD, SAVE IN THE MATTER OF SETTING FOOT [ON HIS PROPERTY] AND OF UTENSILS WHICH ARE NOT USED FOR [PREPARING] FOOD.¹

GEMARA. It is to be inferred from this that in the matter of utensils which are used for preparing food they are on the same footing.

SETTING FOOT. But people are not particular about this?² – Raba said: Whose view is this? R. Eleazar's, who said that [even] a thing which is usually excused³ is forbidden to one who vows to have no benefit.

MISHNAH. THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN VOWS AND FREEWILL-OFFERINGS SAVE THAT VOWED OFFERINGS HAVE TO BE REPLACED⁴ BUT FREEWILL-OFFERINGS NEED NOT BE REPLACED.

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GEMARA. It is to be inferred from this that in respect of ‘not delaying’⁵ they are on the same footing. We have learnt in another place: What is a vow? Where a man says, I take upon me the obligation to bring a burnt-offering. What is a freewill-offering? Where a man says, Behold this is [to be] a burnt-offering. What then is the [practical] difference between vows and freewill-offerings? —

If vowed animals die or are stolen or lost, the one who offered is under obligation to replace them;⁶ if freewill-offerings die or are stolen or lost, he is not under obligation to replace them.⁷ Whence is this rule derived? —

As our Rabbis have taught: And it shall be accepted for him to make atonement upon him:⁸ R. Simeon says: That which is ‘upon him’⁹ he is under obligation to replace.¹⁰ How is it implied [that this substitute is upon him’]? — R. Isaac b. Abdini replied: Since he has said ‘[I take] upon me’, it is as if he had taken it upon his shoulder.

MISHNAH. THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ONE SUFFERING FROM AN ISSUE WHO MAKES TWO OBSERVATIONS¹¹ AND ONE WHO MAKES THREE,¹² SAVE IN THE MATTER OF BRINGING A SACRIFICE.¹³

GEMARA. From this it is to be inferred that in the matter of [defiling] a bed or a seat¹⁴ and counting seven days¹⁵ they are on the same footing. Whence is this rule derived? —

As our Rabbis have taught: ‘R. Simai says: The text specified two [observations]¹⁶ and designated the man as unclean, and also specified three¹⁷ and designated him as unclean’. How do we explain this? Two bring uncleanness but do not entail a sacrifice, three entail a sacrifice. But cannot I say that two bring uncleanness but do not entail a sacrifice, while three entail a sacrifice but no uncleanness?¹⁸ —

To this you may answer that before he has three observations he must have two.¹⁹ Let me say then that two observations entail a sacrifice but not uncleanness,¹⁸ whereas three bring uncleanness also? —

Do not imagine such a thing, since it has been taught: And the priest shall make atonement for him before the Lord from his issue;²⁰ this implies that some persons with an issue bring a sacrifice and some do not.²¹ How is this? if he has three observations, he brings a sacrifice, if only two, he does not bring. Or shall we expound differently and say that if he has two he brings the sacrifice, but if three he does not? —

You can reply to this that before he has three he must have had two.²² And both the exposition of R. Simai and the text ‘from his issue’ are necessary [to prove this point]. For if I had only the dictum of R. Simai, I could raise against it the objection mentioned, and therefore I have recourse to ‘from his issue’. And if I had only ‘from his issue’, I should not know how many observations [are necessary for a sacrifice]; therefore I have the dictum of R. Simai.²³ Now, however, that you have assumed that the words ‘from his issue’ are to be used for a special exposition,²⁴ [I may ask], what lesson do you derive from the words and when he that hath an issue is cleansed from his issue?²⁵ That is required for the following lesson, as it has been taught: ‘And when he that hath an issue is cleansed’: that is to say, when the issue ceases.²⁶ ‘From his issue’: that is to say from his issue [only], and not from both his issue and his leprosy.²⁷ ‘Then he shall number’: this teaches us that one with an issue who has had two observations must count seven days [without issue]. But cannot this be deduced logically [as follows]?²⁸ If he defiles bed and seat, shall he not [all the more] be required to count seven days? —

(1) The latter may take these liberties, the former may not.

(2) And therefore if one takes this liberty, he cannot be said to be deriving any benefit.

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- (3) ויתור Aliter: 'The (retailer's customary) addition (to exact measure)', and the accenting of which is not counted as receiving a benefit.
- (4) Lit., one is responsible for them'. V. infra.
- (5) To fulfill the undertaking, in accordance with Deut. XXIII, 22.
- (6) Because the vow still stands.
- (7) Because the undertaking applied only to that particular animal.
- (8) So lit. E.V, 'for him'. Lev. I, 4.
- (9) I.e., the vow.
- (10) Apparently R. Simeon renders: 'Any animal will be accepted so long as it is "upon him"'.
(11) On a single day or two successive days.
- (12) On one day or three successive days or two on one day and one on the next.
- (13) V. Lev. XV, 13-15.
- (14) Ibid. 4-6.
- (15) For his cleansing, after the cessation of the issue. Ibid.13.
- (16) Lev. XV, 2: When a man hath an issue out of his flesh, his issue is unclean.
- (17) Ibid. 3: And this shall be his uncleanness in his issue: whether his flesh run with his issue, or his flesh be stopped from his issue, it is his uncleanness,
- (18) Viz., the stringent uncleanness of one with an issue (cf. nn. 3-4), but only the lighter uncleanness resulting from a discharge of semen. V. Deut. XXIII, 11-12.
- (19) And is already unclean as a Zab.
- (20) Ibid. 15.
- (21) The proposition 'from' is stressed, as implying only part of these who have an issue.
- (22) And so already become liable for the sacrifice.
- (23) To show that it is three.
- (24) I.e., for some lesson not contained in the literal meaning of the words.
- (25) Ibid. 13.
- (26) V. next note.
- (27) If the one with an issue was also a leper, he need not wait for his counting till he is healed of his leprosy.
- (28) And why therefore is a text required?

Megilah 8b

This argument can be confuted by the case of the woman who is keeping day for day,¹ for such a one defiles bed and seat² but does not count seven days. And thus do not be surprised that this one also, although he defiles bed and seat, should not be obliged to count seven days. Therefore it says, 'from his issue, and he shall number', which implies that after part of his issue³ he shall number;

this teaches with regard to one with an issue who has had two observations that he is required to count seven days.

R. Papa said to Abaye: Why do we use the one text 'from his issue' to include⁴ one with an issue who has had two observations, and the other text 'from his issue' to exclude⁵ one with an issue who has had two observations?
—

He replied: If you should assume that the former text⁶ is for the purpose of excluding, then the text could simply omit the word. And should you say, we could then derive the rule [that he is to count seven days] by a logical deduction, such a deduction could be confuted by the case of the woman who counts day for day. And should you say that this word is required to show that the text refers to one who is cleansed of his issue [only] and not [of his issue and] his leprosy, — in that case the text should say, 'and when he that hath an issue is cleansed', and no more. Why do I require, 'from his issue'? This teaches that one with an issue who has two observations is required to count seven days.

MISHNAH. THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A LEPER WHO IS UNDER OBSERVATION⁷ AND ONE DEFINITELY DECLARED SUCH⁸ SAVE IN THE MATTER OF LEAVING THE HAIR LOOSE⁹ AND RENDING THE GARMENTS.¹⁰ THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A LEPER WHO HAS BEEN DECLARED CLEAN⁸ AFTER BEING UNDER OBSERVATION¹¹ AND ONE WHO HAS BEEN DECLARED CLEAN⁸ AFTER HAVING BEEN DEFINITELY DECLARED A LEPER SAVE IN THE MATTER OF SHAVING AND [OFFERING] THE BIRDS.¹²

GEMARA. From this it is to be inferred that in the matter of being sent outside [the camp]¹³ and uncleanness¹⁴ they are on the same footing. Whence is this rule¹⁵ derived?— As R. Samuel b. Isaac taught before R. Huna: Then the priest shall pronounce him clean; it is a scab; and he

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shall wash his clothes and be clean;¹⁶ which implies that he shall already have been [in a sense] clean¹⁷ from the first, not having been liable to rending the garments and loosening the hair.

Said Raba to him. If that is so, then in regard to one with an issue, of whom it is written, and he shall wash his garments and be clean,¹⁸ how is it possible to say that he shall have been clean from the start? What it means then is, ‘clean now so far as not to defile earthenware vessels by moving them’,¹⁹ so that, even if he observes an issue again, he does not defile them retrospectively. So here, [the meaning is that] the leper is clean now to the extent of not defiling retrospectively by his entrance!²⁰ The fact is, said Raba, that we learn it from here: And the leper in whom the plague is;²¹ [that means] one whose leprosy is due to the state of his body, excluding this one²² whose leprosy is due to days.²³

Said Abaye to him: If that is so, then when it says, All the days wherein the plague is in him he shall be unclean,²⁴ are we to say that one whose leprosy is due to his state of body is required to be sent out of the camp, but one whose leprosy is not due to his state of body is not to be sent out of the camp? And should you reply that that is so, [how can this be] seeing that it states, THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A LEPER UNDER OBSERVATION AND ONE DEFINITELY DECLARED SUCH SAVE IN THE MATTER OR LOOSENING THE HAIR AND RENDING THE GARMENTS, from which it may be inferred that in the matter of being sent out [of the camp] and defiling by entrance they are on the same footing? —

[The text might have said simply] ‘the days’, and it says, ‘all the days’, to bring a leper under observation within the rule of sending out [of the camp]. If that is the case, what is the reason that he is not required to shave and offer birds [which is not the case], as it

states: THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A LEPER UNDER OBSERVATION AND ONE DEFINITELY DECLARED SUCH SAVE IN THE MATTER OF SHAVING AND OFFERING BIRDS? —

Abaye replied: Scripture says: And the priest shall go forth out of the camp, and behold the plague of leprosy is healed in the leper;²⁵ this means, one whose leprosy is such because it requires healing,²⁶ and excludes one whose leprosy is such in virtue not of [requiring] healing but of days [of isolation].

MISHNAH. THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BOOKS [OF THE SCRIPTURE]²⁷ AND TEFILLIN AND MEZUZAHS²⁸ SAVE THAT THE BOOKS MAY BE WRITTEN IN ANY LANGUAGE²⁹ WHEREAS TEFILLIN AND MEZUZAHS MAY BE WRITTEN ONLY IN ASSYRIAN.³⁰ R. SIMEON B. GAMALIEL SAYS THAT BOOKS [OF THE SCRIPTURE] ALSO WERE PERMITTED [BY THE SAGES] TO BE WRITTEN ONLY IN GREEK.

GEMARA. [From this we infer] that for requiring [the sheets] to be stitched with sinews³¹ and for defiling the hands³² both are on the same footing.

BOOKS MAY BE WRITTEN IN ANY LANGUAGE. The following seems to conflict with this: ‘[A Scriptural scroll containing] a Hebrew text written³³ in Aramaic or an Aramaic text written in Hebrew,³⁴ or [either] in Hebraic script,³⁵ does not defile the hands;³⁶ [it does not do so] until it is written in Assyrian script upon a scroll and in ink’! —

Raba replied: There is no contradiction;

(1) If a Niddah (v. Glos.) who is counting her eleven days between the menses sees blood on one or two of the days, she need not count seven clean days but becomes clean after ablution on the evening of the following day. V. Sanh., Sonc. ed. p. 577, n. 2.

(2) V. Nid. 72b.

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- (3) Cf. p. 43. n. 10.
(4) Under the obligation to count seven days.
(5) From the obligation to bring a sacrifice.
(6) Lev. XV, 13.
(7) מוּסָגֵר Lit., 'shut up'. V. Lev. XIII, 4.
(8) מוּחָלָט Lit., 'confirmed'; by the priest. Ibid. v. 11.
(9) Or 'let his hair grow wild', v. M.K 15a.
(10) Which is incumbent on the latter but not on the former. Ibid. 45.
(11) I.e., one in whom the suspicious signs did not develop into actual leprosy
(12) Which was incumbent on the latter. Lev. XIV, 2-7.
(13) V. Num. V, 2.
(14) The stringent laws of uncleanness to which lepers are subjected.
(15) That the leper under observation need not loosen his hair and rend his garments.
(16) Lev. XIII, 6, of the suspect in whom the signs do not develop.
(17) The Hebrew word being וְטָהַר in the present tense (as if to say: 'and he was already clean'), where the future וְיִטָּהַר might have been used.
(18) Lev. XV, 13. Here again he present tense וְטָהַר is used.
(19) Without touching them. Such a defilement is termed דְּיִסָּט.
(20) The rule was that a leper by entering a room defiled persons and things within it. The question thus remains, Whence is this rule (v. p. 45, n. 9) derived?
(21) Lev. XIII, 45.
(22) The leper under observation.
(23) It is the seven days of his observation that cause him to be designated a leper, for should there be no change in the leper at the end of the seven days he is pronounced clean.
(24) Ibid. 46.
(25) Lev. XIV, 3.
(26) I.e., who has been declared definitely a leper. Only such a one has to shave and bring birds.
(27) This means apparently, scrolls of the Scriptural books.
(28) V. Glos.
(29) Apparently what is meant is that official translations for use in the synagogue may be made in any language. We know actually of two such — the Aramaic translation known as Targum Onkelos, and the Greek translation of Aquilas made under the supervision of R. Eleazar and R. Joshua.
(30) 'Assyrian is used as the equivalent of Hebrew written in the square characters used for religious writings. This script was called 'Assyrian', the reason being that it came into common use after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian exile; v. Sanh. 21b, Sonc. ed. pp. 119ff and notes.
(31) And not merely with flax thread.

- (32) V. supra p. 35, n. 11.
(33) I.e., translated into.
(34) E.g., the Chaldaic parts of Daniel and Ezra.
(35) כְּתָב עֵבְרִי. The ancient Hebrew script (as found e.g., in the Siloam and Moabite inscriptions and old Jewish coins, and in modified form in Samaritan writing) which was in common use before the Exile. V. Sanh. ibid.
(36) Whereas the Mishnah seems to imply that they do.

Megilah 9a

the one statement [that of the Mishnah] speaks of [books written in] our script,¹ the other of [books written in] their script.² Said Abaye to him: How have you explained the other statement [that of the Baraitha]? As referring to their script. [If so], why should it say, 'A Hebrew text written in Aramaic or an Aramaic text written in Hebrew'? The same would apply even to a Hebrew text which is written in Hebrew or an Aramaic text which is written in Aramaic, since it goes on to say. 'till it is written in Assyrian on a scroll in ink'!³ No. [What you must say is], there is no contradiction: the one statement [in the Mishnah] represents the view of the Rabbis, the other that of R. Simeon b. Gamaliel. But if it is the view of R. Simeon b. Gamaliel, what about Greek?⁴ —

No. What you must say is, there is no contradiction; the one statement [in the Mishnah] refers to scrolls, the other to Tefillin and Mezuzahs. What is the reason [why] Tefillin, and Mezuzahs [must be written in Assyrian]? —

Because in reference to them it is written, and they shall be,⁵ which implies, they shall be as they originally were. What cases are there of Aramaic which can be written in Hebrew? I grant you we find in the Torah Yegar Sahadutha;⁶ but here [in the case of Tefillin, and Mezuzoth] what Aramaic is there? —

No. What you must say is, there is no contradiction; the one statement [in the Baraitha] refers to the Megillah, the other to

MEGILLAH – 2a-32a

the other books [of the Scripture]. What is the reason in the case of the Megillah? —

Because it is written In regard to it, according to their writing and according to their language.⁷ What case of Aramaic being written in Hebrew is possible here?—

R. Papa said: And the king's pithgams shall be published;⁹ R. Nahman b. Isaac said: And all the wives shall give yekar¹⁰ to their husbands.¹¹ R. Ashi said: That statement [in the Baraitha] was made in reference to other books [of the Scripture], and it follows the view of R. Judah, as it has been taught: 'Tefillin and Mezuzahs are to be written only in Assyrian, but our Rabbis allowed them to be written in Greek also'.¹² But is it not written, and they shall be? I must say therefore, 'Scrolls of the Scripture may be written in any language, and our Rabbis permitted them to be written in Greek'.¹³ They permitted! This would imply that the First Tanna forbade it! What I must say therefore is, 'Our Rabbis permitted them to be written only in Greek'. And it goes on to state, 'R. Judah said: When our teachers permitted Greek, they permitted it only for a scroll of the Torah'.¹⁴

This was on account of the incident related in connection with King Ptolemy,¹⁵ as it has been taught: 'It is related of King Ptolemy that he brought together seventy-two elders and placed them in seventy-two [separate] rooms, without telling them why he had brought them together, and he went in to each one of them and said to him, Translate¹⁶ for me the Torah of Moses your master.¹⁷ God then prompted each one of them and they all conceived the same idea and wrote for him, God created in the beginning,¹⁸ I shall make man in image and likeness,¹⁹ And he finished on the sixth day, and rested on the seventh day,²⁰ Male and female he created him²¹ [but they did not write 'created them'],²² Come let me descend and confound their tongues,²³ And Sarah laughed among her relatives;²⁴ For in their anger they slew an ox and in their wrath

they digged up a stall;²⁵ And Moses took his wife and his children, and made them ride on a carrier of men;²⁶ And the abode of the children of Israel which they stayed in Egypt and in other lands was four hundred years,²⁷ And he sent the elect of the children of Israel;²⁸ And against the elect of the children of Israel he put not forth his hand;²⁹

- (1) Even though in another language.
- (2) The Scriptural text was transliterated into the characters of a foreign language.
- (3) This shows, according to Abaye, that the Baraitha is speaking of the language independently of the script.
- (4) According to Abaye the Baraitha, in saying, 'till it is written in Assyrian' forbids even Greek, which is allowed by R. Simeon.
- (5) Deut. VI, 8.
- (6) Gen. XXXI, 47.
- (7) Esth. VIII, 9.
- (8) Aramaic for the Heb. Dabar, 'decree'.
- (9) Ibid. I, 20.
- (10) Aramaic for the Heb. Kabod, 'honor'.
- (11) Ibid.
- (12) The quotation is here interrupted.
- (13) The quotation is again interrupted.
- (14) Thus R. Judah forbade other books of the Scripture to be written save in the original language.
- (15) It seems to be an historical fact that a Greek translation of the Pentateuch was made in the time of King Ptolemy Philadelphus of Egypt (285-247), but many regard this as apocryphal; cf., The Letter of Aristeas.
- (16) Lit., 'write'.
- (17) Here follow a number of cases in which the translation of the Elders did not follow the Massoretic text. We do not find all these variants in our texts of the Septuagint.
- (18) Instead of 'In the beginning God created'. The purpose of this change was apparently to prevent the idea of Two Powers being read into the text, i.e., 'In the beginning' and 'God'. V. Rashi and Tosaf. a.I.
- (19) Gen. 1, 26, instead of 'Let us make', for the same reason.
- (20) Ibid. II, 2, instead of 'and he finished on the seventh day', which might be taken to imply that some work was done on the seventh day.
- (21) Ibid. V, 2.
- (22) Which might be taken to mean that they were separate from the first.
- (23) Ibid. XI, 7: 'me' instead of 'us'. V. n. 7.
- (24) Ibid. XVIII, 12: instead of 'in herself', in order to make a distinction between Sarah and Abraham, who also laughed inwardly.

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(25) Ibid. XLIX, 6: 'ox' instead of 'man', to save the name of Jacob's sons.

(26) Ex. IV, 20: carrier of men' instead of 'ass', to save the dignity of Moses.

(27) Ibid. XII, 40. The words 'and in other lands' are inserted because, according to the Biblical record, the Israelites were at the utmost 210 years in Egypt.

(28) Ibid. XXIV, 5: 'elect' instead of 'young men', which is regarded as not suitable to the context.

(29) Ibid. 11 : 'elect' instead of 'nobles'.

Megillah 9b

I have taken not one valuable of theirs;¹ Which the Lord thy God distributed to give light to all the peoples;² And he went and served other gods which I commanded should not be served.³ They also wrote for him 'the beast with small legs' and they did not write 'the hare',⁴ because the name of Ptolemy's wife was hare,⁵ lest he should say, The Jews have jibed at me and put the name of my wife in the Torah.

R. SIMEON B. GAMALIEL SAYS THAT BOOKS [OF THE SCRIPTURE] ALSO ARE PERMITTED TO BE WRITTEN ONLY IN GREEK. R. Abbahu said in the name of R. Johanan: The Halachah follows R. Simeon b. Gamaliel. R. Johanan further said: What is the reason of R. Simeon b. Gamaliel? Scripture says, God enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem;⁶ [this means] that the words of Japheth⁷ shall be in the tents of Shem. But why not say [the words of] Gomer and Magog?⁸—

R. Hiyya b. Abba replied: The real reason is because it is written, Let God enlarge [Yaft] Japheth: implying, let the chief beauty [Yafyuth] of Japheth⁹ be in the tents of Shem.

MISHNAH. THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A PRIEST ANOINTED WITH THE OIL OF ANOINTMENT AND ONE WHO [ONLY] WEARS THE ADDITIONAL GARMENTS¹⁰ SAVE IN THE MATTER OF THE BULLOCK WHICH IS OFFERED FOR THE [UNWITTING BREAKING OF] ANY OF

THE COMMANDMENTS.¹¹ THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A REGULAR¹² [HIGH] PRIEST AND ONE WHO HAS PASSED THROUGH [THE OFFICE]¹³ SAVE IN RESPECT OF THE BULLOCK OF THE DAY OF ATONEMENT AND THE TENTH OF THE EPHAH.¹⁴

GEMARA. [BETWEEN THE PRIEST ANOINTED, etc.]. From this we infer that in the matter of the bullock of the Day of Atonement and the tenth of the Ephah they are on the same footing. The Mishnah, it appears, does not concur with R. Meir; for with regard to the view of R. Meir, it has been taught: 'One who wears the additional garments [without having been anointed] brings the bullock which is offered [by the High Priest] for the [unwitting breaking of] any of the precepts'. So R. Meir. The Sages, however, say that he does not offer it. What is the reason of R. Meir? —

As it has been taught: [If the] anointed [priest shall sin]:¹⁵ this tells me only of one anointed with the oil of anointment. How do I know that it applies also to one who [merely] wears the additional garments? —

Because it says, the 'anointed'.¹⁶ How have you explained [the Mishnah]? As not concurring with R. Meir. Look now at the next clause: THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A REGULAR HIGH PRIEST AND ONE WHO HAS PASSED THROUGH THE OFFICE SAVE IN THE MATTER OF THE BULLOCK OF THE DAY OF ATONEMENT AND THE TENTH OF THE EPHAH. We infer from this that in all other matters they are on the same footing; and so we come round to the view of R. Meir, as it has been taught: 'If something happened to disqualify him and another priest was appointed to take his place, when the first returns to his service the second is still liable to all the obligations of the high priesthood'.¹⁷ So R. Meir.

R. Jose said: The first returns to his service whereas the second is qualified to act neither

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as a high priest nor as an ordinary priest. R. Jose further said: it happened with R. Jose b. Ulam¹⁸ from Sepphoris that a disqualification occurred to the high priest and they appointed him in his place, and the case eventually came before the Sages and they said: The first returns to his service. The second is qualified to act neither as a high priest nor as an ordinary priest: as a high priest, so as not to create enmity,¹⁹ as an ordinary priest, because we can raise to a higher grade of holiness but we never put down to a lower.²⁰ Are we then to say that the first clause [of the Mishnah] follows the Sages and the second R. Meir? —

Said R. Hisda: Yes; the first clause follows the Sages and the second R. Meir. R. Joseph said: The whole gives the opinion of Rabbi, who combined the views of²¹ differing Tannaim.²²

MISHNAH. THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE²³ BETWEEN A GREAT HIGH PLACE²⁴ AND A SMALL ONE²⁵ SAVE IN THE MATTER OF THE PASCAL LAMB OFFERING.²⁶ THIS IS THE GENERAL PRINCIPLE: ANY ANIMAL WHICH IS THE OBJECT OF A VOW OR A FREEWILL-OFFERING MAY BE BROUGHT ON A [SMALL] HIGH PLACE, ANY ANIMAL WHICH IS NOT THE OBJECT OF A VOW OR A FREEWILL-OFFERING MAY NOT BE BROUGHT ON A [SMALL] HIGH PLACE.

GEMARA. THE PASCAL LAMB and nothing else?²⁷ — We should say, things like the Pascal lamb.²⁸ Whose view is this? — R. Simeon's, as it has been taught: 'The congregation also did not offer [on the large high place] anything save Pascal lambs and obligatory sacrifices for which there is a fixed time; but obligatory sacrifices for which there is no fixed time²⁹ were not offered either on the one or the other'.

MISHNAH. THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SHILOH³⁰ AND JERUSALEM SAVE THAT IN SHILOH SACRIFICES OF LESSER SANCTITY³¹ AND SECOND TITHE³² COULD BE EATEN ANYWHERE WITHIN

SIGHT [OF THE TOWN], WHEREAS IN JERUSALEM THEY HAD TO BE CONSUMED WITHIN THE WALLS. IN BOTH PLACES THE MOST HOLY SACRIFICES³³ WERE EATEN WITHIN THE CURTAINS.³⁴ AFTER THE SANCTIFICATION OF SHILOH

- (1) Num. XVI, 15: 'valuable' for 'ass'.
- (2) Deut. IV, 19. The words 'to give light' are inserted, to guard against misunderstanding.
- (3) Ibid. XVII, 3. The words 'should be served' are inserted, to avoid misunderstanding.
- (4) In Lev. XI, 6.
- (5) In fact, it was Ptolemy's father who was named 'hare' (**).
- (6) Gen. IX, 27.
- (7) Javan (Greece) is reckoned among the sons of Japheth in Gen. X, 2.
- (8) Who are also reckoned among the sons of Japheth, loc. cit.
- (9) I.e., the Greek language.
- (10) I.e., the robe, the breastplate, the miter and the plate, which were worn by the high priest but not by ordinary priests. High priests, according to tradition, ceased to be anointed from the days of Josiah.
- (11) Lev. IV, 3.
- (12) Lit., 'officiating'.
- (13) And who retired; i.e., one who was appointed to take the place of a High Priest while the latter is temporarily disqualified. When the disqualification is removed the High Priest returns to his duties while his substitute retires. V. infra.
- (14) The daily offering of the High Priest. Lev. VI, 13-15. Only one person could make these two offerings.
- (15) Lev. IV, 3.
- (16) The definite article is regarded as adding something.
- (17) E.g., to minister only in eight garments, not to mourn, etc.
- (18) [Or Ailim; Joseph b. Ellimus mentioned in Josephus. V. Hor., Sonc. ed. p. 89, n. 5.]
- (19) Between him and the original High priest.
- (20) Hence, having served as a High Priest, he can never revert to the status of an ordinary one.
- (21) Lit., 'who took it according to'.
- (22) For further notes on the whole passage v. Hor., Sonc. ed. pp. 88ff.
- (23) In the period when the high places (Bamoth, sing. Bamah) were permitted, i.e., when there was no sanctuary at Shiloh or Jerusalem.
- (24) Those at Nob and Gibeon, where the altar made by Moses was used for public services.
- (25) Erected by any individual for private sacrifices.
- (26) Which could be offered only on the large one.

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(27) This seems to contradict the next clause, which implies that congregational sacrifices were brought on the large high places.

(28) As explained presently.

(29) E.g. the bullock offered in atonement for a sin committed unwittingly by the whole congregation.

(30) Shiloh was made the religious center of the people in the time of Joshua (Josh. XVIII, 1), and remained such till the time of Samuel, when it seems to have been laid waste by the Philistines (cf. Jer. XXVI, 6, 9).

(31) Viz., peace-offerings, firstlings and tithe of cattle.

(32) Set aside on the first, second, fourth and fifth years of the seven-year cycle after the dues to the priests and Levites had been paid. Their second tithe or redemption money was taken to Jerusalem and there consumed by the owners. V. Deut. XIV, 22ff.

(33) Viz., sin- and guilt-offerings, and congregational peace-offerings.

(34) This expression applies strictly only to the Tabernacle at Shiloh. The corresponding place in the Temple at Jerusalem was the space within the walls of the Temple court.

Megillah 10a

THE HIGH PLACES COULD AGAIN BECOME PERMITTED, BUT AFTER THE SANCTIFICATION OF JERUSALEM THERE CAN BE NO SUCH PERMISSION.

GEMARA. R. Isaac said: I have heard that sacrifices may be offered in the Temple of Onias¹ at the present day.² He was of opinion that the Temple of Onias is not an idolatrous shrine, and that the first holiness [of Jerusalem] was conferred on it for the time being but not for all time,³ as it is written, For ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance.⁴ 'Rest' here means Shiloh and 'inheritance' means Jerusalem, and 'inheritance' is put on the same footing as 'rest', [to show that] just as after the [destruction of the] 'rest' the high places were again permitted, so after the [destruction of the] 'inheritance' they will be permitted. They said to him: Do you really say so? He replied, No. Said Raba: By God! he did say it and I learnt it from him. Why then did he retract? On account of the difficulty raised by R. Mari.

For R. Mari adduced the following in confutation: **AFTER THE SANCTIFICATION OF SHILOH HIGH PLACES CAN AGAIN BE PERMITTED, BUT AFTER THE SANCTIFICATION OF JERUSALEM THERE CAN BE NO SUCH PERMISSION.** We have also learnt further: After they [the Israelites] occupied Jerusalem, the high places were forbidden, and they were never permitted again, and it was the 'inheritance'. —

There is a difference of Tannaim on this point, as we have learnt. 'R. Eliezer said: I have heard that when they were building the hekals [in the second Temple] they made curtains for the Hekal and for the courtyard,⁵ the difference being that in the Hekal they built [the walls] outside [the curtains]⁶ and in the courtyard they built [the walls] within [the curtains]. And R. Joshua said: I have heard that sacrifices may be brought even though there is no temple; that the most holy foods may be eaten, even though there are no curtains; and that foods of lesser sanctity and second tithe may be eaten even though there is no wall, because the first holiness was conferred on Jerusalem⁷ both for the time being and for all time.'⁷ We infer from this⁸ that R. Eliezer was of opinion that it was not [at first] sanctified for all time.⁹

Said Rabina to R. Ashi: How can we draw this inference? Perhaps all agree that the first holiness was conferred upon it for the time being and for all time, and one Master reported what he had heard and the other what he had heard. Should you ask, In that case, why were curtains needed according to R. Eliezer, we can answer that they were merely for privacy.

Rather it is the following Tannaim who differ on this point as it has been taught: 'R. Ishmael son of R. Jose said: Why did the Sages enumerate these?¹⁰ Because when the exiles returned they found these cities [still walled] and sanctified them;¹¹ the others,¹²

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however, lost their privilege when the land lost its sanctity'. This shows that he was of opinion that the first holiness was conferred for the time being and not for the future.

And a contradiction was pointed out with the following: 'R. Ishmael son of R. Jose said: Were these all? Do we not find it said, Sixty cities, all the region of Argob,¹³ and it is written, All these were fortified cities with high walls?¹⁴ Why then did the Sages enumerate these? Because when the exiles returned, they found these [still walled] and sanctified them'.¹⁵ They sanctified then,

(1) A shrine built at Leontopolis in Egypt by Onias IV, a high priest who fled from Jerusalem. c. 154 B.C.E., v. Josephus, Ant. XIII, iii, 1ff and Men. 109b.

(2) This must refer to the period of the originator of the dictum, as the Temple of Onias did not exist any longer in the time of R. Isaac.

(3) Lit., 'for the future to come'. Hence after its destruction the high places would again be permitted.

(4) Deut. XII, 9.

(5) We assume for the present that the reason for the curtains was to invest the place with holiness enabling sacrifices to be offered and eaten pending the construction of the walls.

(6) [To prevent the builders from either penetrating into the Hekal or gazing into it whilst engaged in their work. V. Rashi a.I. and Shebu. 16a.]

(7) V. 'Ed. VIII, 7 and Zeb. 107b.

(8) From the fact that curtains were required to confer holiness.

(9) This shows that Tannaim differ on this point.

(10) Nine cities enumerated in Tractate Arakin 32b as having been walled in the time of Joshua.

(11) I.e. gave them the status of 'walled towns'.

(12) Lit., 'the earlier ones, i.e., all the others which had previously been walled.

(13) Deut. III, 4.

(14) Ibid. 4f.

(15) The quotation is here interrupted.

Megillah 10b

now, [say you]! Do we not say that they did not require to be sanctified?¹ What [you should say is], they found these and enumerated them. And not only in these alone, but in every one in regard to which you shall find a tradition from your

ancestors that it was walled from the days of Joshua son of Nun, all these precepts² are to be observed, because the first holiness was conferred for the time being and for all future time. There is thus a contradiction between two statements of R. Ishmael! —

Two Tannaim report R. Ishmael son of R. Jose differently. Or if you like, I can say that the latter dictum emanates from R. Eleazar b. Jose, as it has been taught: 'R. Eleazar b. Jose says: That has [no] wall;³ even though it has not now, but it had in previous times.' And it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus.⁴

R. Levi, or some say R. Jonathan said: The following remark is a tradition handed down to us from the Men of the Great Assembly:⁵ wherever in the Scripture we find the term Wa-yehi [and it was, and it came to pass], it indicates [the approach of] trouble.⁶ Thus, and it came to pass in the days of Ahasuerus — there was Haman. And it came to pass in the days when the Judges judged⁷ — 'there was a famine'. And it came to pass when man began to multiply⁸ — then 'God Saw that the wickedness of man was great'. And it came to pass, as they journeyed east⁹ — then 'they said, come let us build a city'. And it came to pass in the days of Amrafel¹⁰ — then 'they made war'. And it came to pass when Joshua was in Jericho¹¹ — then 'his [the angel's] sword was drawn in his hand'.¹² And the Lord was [Wa-yehi] with Joshua¹³ — then, 'the children of Israel committed a trespass', And there was a certain man of Ramathaim-Zophim¹⁴ — then, for he loved Hannah but the Lord had shut up her womb'. And it came to pass when Samuel was old¹⁵ — then, 'his sons walked not in his ways'. And David had [Wa-yehi] great success in all his ways¹⁶ — then, 'And Saul eyed David'.¹⁷ And it came to pass when the king dwelt in his house¹⁸ — then, 'Nevertheless thou shalt not build the house'.¹⁹ But is it not written, —

And it came to pass on the eighth day,²⁰ and it has been taught, 'On that day there was

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joy before the Holy One, blessed be He, as on the day when heaven and earth were created. For it is written, And it came to pass [Wa-yehi] on the eighth day, and it is written in the other place, And there was [Wa-yehi] one day?²¹ Nadab and Abihu died on that day. But is it not written, And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year,²² And it came to pass when Jacob saw Rachel,²³ and it is also written, And there was evening and there was morning one day, and there is the second day and the third, and there are many other cases? —

R. Ashi replied: The fact is that ‘Wa-yehi’ sometimes has this signification and sometimes not, but the expression ‘and it came to pass in the days of’ always indicated trouble. Five times we find the expression ‘and it came to pass in the days of’; viz., ‘And it came to pass in the days when the Judges judged’, ‘and it came to pass in the days of Amrafel’, ‘and it came to pass in the days of Ahaz’,²⁴ ‘and it came to pass in the days of Jehoiakim’.²⁵

R. Levi further said: The following is a tradition that we have from our ancestors, that Amoz²⁶ and Amaziah²⁷ were brothers. What does this tell us?²⁸ — It confirms what was said by R. Samuel b. Nahmani in the name of R. Jonathan: Every bride who is modest in the house of her father-in-law is rewarded by having kings and prophets among her descendants. How do we prove this? From Tamar, as it is written, And Judah saw her and thought her to be a harlot; for she had covered her face.²⁹ Now because she had covered her face did he think her to be a harlot? Rather, what it means is that because she had covered her face in the house of her father-in-law and he did not know her, she was rewarded by having among her descendants kings and prophets; kings from David, and prophets — as R. Levi said, ‘It is a tradition handed down to us from our ancestors that Amoz and Amaziah were brothers’, and it is written, The vision of Isaiah son of Amoz.³⁰

R. Levi further said: We have a tradition from our ancestors that the ark took up no room.³¹ It has been taught to the same effect: ‘The ark which Moses made had round it an [empty] space of ten cubits on every side’. Now it is written, And in front of the Sanctuary was twenty cubits in length [and twenty cubits in breadth],³² and it is also written, And the wing of the one cherub was ten cubits and the wing of the other cherub was ten cubits.³³ Where then was the ark itself? We must therefore conclude that it stood by a miracle [without occupying any room].³⁴

R. Jonathan prefaced his discourse on this section³⁵ with the text,³⁶ And I will rise against them, saith the Lord, and cut off from Babylon name and remnant’, and offshoot and offspring, saith the Lord,³⁷ [which he expounded as follows]: ‘Name’ means script; ‘remnant is language;³⁸ ‘offshoot’ is kingdom, and ‘offspring’ is Vashti.

R. Samuel b. Nahmani introduced his discourse on this section with the following text: Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle:³⁹ ‘Instead of the thorn’: instead of the wicked Haman who put himself up as an object of worship, as it is written, and upon all thorns and upon all brambles⁴⁰ ‘shall come up the cypress’: this is Mordecai who was called the chief of all spices, as it is said, And do thou take to thee the chief spices, flowing myrrh,⁴¹ which [last words] we translate [in Aramaic], mar deki.⁴² ‘Instead of the brier’: instead of the wicked Vashti, the daughter of the wicked Nebuchadnezzar who burnt the ceiling of the house of the Lord; as it is written, its top was gold,⁴³ ‘the myrtle shall come up’: this is the virtuous Esther who is called Hadassah,⁴⁴ as it is said, And he brought up Hadassah.⁴⁵ ‘And it shall be to the Lord for a name’: this is the reading of the Megillah; ‘and for an everlasting sign which shall not be cut off’: these are the days of Purim.

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R. Joshua b. Levi introduced his discourse on this section with the following text: And it shall come to pass that as the Lord rejoiced over you to do you good, so the Lord will rejoice over you to cause you to perish.⁴⁶ Now does the Holy One, blessed be He, rejoice in the downfall of the wicked? Is it not written, as they went out before the army, and say, Give thanks unto the Lord, for his mercy endureth for ever',⁴⁷ and R. Johanan said, Why are the words 'for he is good' omitted from this thanksgiving? Because the Holy One, blessed be He, does not rejoice in the downfall of the wicked?

And R. Johanan further said, What is the meaning of the verse, And one came not near the other all the night?⁴⁸ The ministering angels wanted to chant their hymns, but the Holy One, blessed be He, said, The work of my hands is being drowned in the sea, and shall you chant hymns? — R. Eleazar replied: He himself does not rejoice, but he makes others rejoice. This is indicated also by the text, which writes Yasis and not Yasus;⁴⁹ which proves [what we said].

R. Abba b. Kahana introduced his discourse on this section with the following text: For to the man that is good in his sight he giveth wisdom, and knowledge and joy.⁵⁰ This, he said, is the righteous Mordecai. But to the sinner He giveth the task, to gather and to heap up;⁵⁰ this is Haman. That he may leave it to him, that is good in the sight of God;⁵⁰ this refers to Mordecai and Esther, as it is written, And Esther set Mordecai over the house of Haman.⁵¹

Rabbah b. 'Ofra introduced his discourse on this section with the following text: And I will set my throne in Elam, and will destroy from thence king and princes.⁵² 'King' indicates Vashti, and 'princes' indicates Haman and his ten sons.

R. Dimi b. Isaac introduced his discourse on this section with the following text:

(1) As it says presently, that all which are traditionally known to have been walled are sanctified.

(2) Of sending out a leper and reading the Megillah on the fifteenth and restoring a house to a vendor at the end of a year.

(3) Lev. XXV, 31. The Kere means which has a wall' and the Kethib 'which has no wall', and R. Eleazar combines both meanings, he being of the opinion that the first holiness is retained for all times, in contradistinction to R. Ishmael. These then are the two Tannaim who differ on this point.

(4) Esth. I, 1.

(5) V. p. 2, n. 5.

(6) Wa-yehi being read as Wai, Hi (woe and sorrow). V. infra.

(7) Ruth I, I.

(8) Gen. VI, I

(9) Ibid. XI, 2.

(10) Ibid. XIV, I.

(11) Josh. V, 13.

(12) Ibid.

(13) Ibid. VI, 27.

(14) I Sam. I, 1.

(15) Ibid. VIII, 1.

(16) Ibid. XVIII, 14.

(17) This is in fact mentioned before the other, in v. 9 of the same chapter.

(18) II Sam VII, 1.

(19) This is in fact found in I Kings VIII, 19. In II Sam. VII the expression is, 'Shalt thou build a house'.

(20) Lev. IX, 1 of the setting up of the Tabernacle.

(21) Gen. I, 5.

(22) I Kings VI, 1 of the building of the Temple.

(23) Gen. XXIX, 10.

(24) Isa. VII, 1.

(25) Jer. I, 3.

(26) The father of Isaiah. V. infra.

(27) The king of Judah.

(28) I.e., what homiletical lesson does it convey.

(29) Gen. XXXVIII, 15.

(30) Isa. I, 1.

(31) Lit., 'the place of the ark was not included in the measurements'.

(32) I Kings VI, 20.

(33) This is the sense but not the exact wording of I Kings VI, 24, 25.

(34) V. Yoma 21a and B.B. 99a.

(35) The Book of Esther.

(36) Lit., 'from here'.

(37) Isa. XIV, 22.

(38) The connection between 'name' and 'script' and between 'remnant' and 'language' is not very clear. But v. Maharsha.

(39) Isa. LV, 13.

(40) Ibid. VII, 19. The proof is not clear. Cf. Maharsha.

(41) Ex. XXX, 23.

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(42) ‘Pure myrrh’ a popular etymology of Mordecai.

(43) Cant. III, 10. There is here a play on the words Sirpad (brier), and Refidah (top).

(44) The Aramaic for myrtle.

(45) Esth. 11, 7,

(46) Deut. XXVIII, 63.

(47) II Chron. XX, 21, of the army of Jehoshaphat marching against the Moabites.

(48) Ex. XIV, 20, of Pharaoh and the Israelites at the Red Sea.

(49) Yasis is a Hif’il form, and should properly mean ‘cause to rejoice’, though it is often used as equivalent to the Kal, Yasus rejoice’.

(50) Eccl. II, 26.

(51) Esth. VIII, 2.

(52) Jer. XLIX, 38.

Megilah 11a

For we are bondmen; yet hath God not forsaken us in our bondage, but hath extended mercy unto us in the sight of the kings of Persia.¹ When was this? In the time of Haman.

R. Hanina b. Papa introduced his discourse on this section with the following text: Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads, we went through fire and through water:² through fire in the days of the wicked Nebuchadnezzar, and through water in the days of Pharaoh. But thou didst bring us out into abundance,² in the days of Haman.

R. Johanan introduced his discourse on this section with the following text: He hath remembered his mercy and his faithfulness to the house of Israel, all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our Lord.³ When did all the ends of the earth see the salvation of our Lord? In the days of Mordecai and Esther.⁴

Resh Lakish introduced his discourse on this section with the following text: As a roaring lion and a ravenous bear, so is a wicked ruler over a poor people.⁵ ‘A roaring lion’: this is the wicked Nebuchadnezzar, of whom it is written, A lion is gone up from his thicket.⁶ ‘A ravenous bear’: this is Ahasuerus, of whom it is written, And behold another beast, a second, like to a

bear’,⁷ and R. Joseph learnt: These are the Persians, who eat and drink like bears, and are coated with flesh like bears, and are hairy like bears, and can never keep still like bears.⁸ ‘A wicked ruler’: this is Haman. ‘Over a poor people’: this is Israel, who are poor in [the observance of] precepts.

R. Eleazar introduced his discourse on this with the following text: By slothfulness he that lays beams⁹ becomes poor [Yimak], and through idleness of the hands the house leaketh.¹⁰ Through the slothfulness in which Israel indulged, not busying themselves with the Torah, the enemy of¹¹ the Holy One, blessed be He, became poor. The meaning of ‘Mak’ is poor, as it says, And if he is too Mak for thy valuation,¹² and mekoreh means only the Holy One, blessed be He, as it says, Who layest the beams [ha-Mekareh] of thy upper chambers in the waters.¹³

R. Nahman b. Isaac introduced his discourse on this section with the following text: A Song of Ascents: If it had not been for the Lord who was for us, let Israel now say If it had not been the Lord who was for us when a man¹⁴ rose up against us¹⁵ — ‘a man’ and not a king.¹⁶

Raba introduced his discourse on this section from here: When the righteous are increased the people rejoice, but when the wicked beareth rule the people sigh.¹⁷ ‘When the righteous are increased the people rejoice’ — this is illustrated by Mordecai and Esther, as it is written, and the city of Shushan shouted and was glad.¹⁸ ‘But when the wicked beareth rule the people sigh’ — this is illustrated by Haman, as it is written, but the city of Shushan was perplexed.¹⁹

R. Mattenah made his introduction²⁰ from this verse: For what great nation is there that hath God so nigh to them.²¹ R. Ashi made it from this verse: Or hath God assayed, etc.²² And it came to pass [Wa-yehi] in the days of Ahasuerus²³, etc. Rab said, [The word Wa-yehi is equivalent to] ‘Wai and Hi’ [woe and mourning]. With reference

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to this it is written, and there ye shall sell yourselves unto your enemies for bondmen and for bondwomen, and no man shall buy you.²⁴ Samuel quoted: I did not reject them, neither did I abhor them to destroy them utterly.²⁵ ‘I did not reject them’ in the days of the Greeks; ‘neither did I abhor them’ — in the days of Nebuchadnezzar;²⁶ ‘to destroy them utterly’ — in the days of Haman; ‘and to break my covenant with them’ — in the days of the Persians;²⁷ ‘for I am the Lord their God’ — in the days of Gog and Magog.²⁸

In a Baraita It was taught: ‘I have not rejected them’ — in the days of the Chaldeans, when I raised up for them Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah; ‘neither did I abhor them’ — in the days of the Greeks, when I raised up for them Simeon the Righteous and Hasmonai and his sons, and Mattathias the High Priest;²⁹ ‘to destroy them utterly’ — in the days of Haman, when I raised up for them Mordecai and Esther; ‘to break my covenant with them’ — in the days of the Persians,³⁰ when I raised up for them the members of the house of Rabbi and the Sages of the various generations. ‘For I am the Lord their God’ — in the time to come, when no nation or people³¹ will be able to subject them.

R. Levi introduced [his discourse] from this verse: But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land before you.³²

R. Hiyya introduced [his discourse] from this verse: And it shall come to pass that as I thought to do unto them, so will I do unto you.³³ Ahasuerus: Rab said: He was [as his name implies], the brother of the head³⁴ and the counterpart of the head — ‘The brother of the head’: the brother of Nebuchadnezzar the wicked who was called head, as it is written, Thou art the head of gold.³⁵ ‘The counterpart of the head’: the one slew, the other sought to slay; the one laid waste, the other sought to lay waste, as it is written, And in the reign of Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, wrote they an

accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem.³⁶ Samuel said that [as his name indicates], the face of Israel was blackened³⁷ in his days like the sides of a pot.

R. Johanan said that [his name indicates that] everyone who thought of him said ‘alas for my head’.³⁸ R. Hanina said, [it indicates that] all became poor³⁹ in his days, as it says, And the king Ahasuerus laid a tribute.⁴⁰ That [Hu] is Ahasuerus. —

[this means that] he persisted in his wickedness from beginning to end — [Similarly] this is [Hu] Esau:⁴¹ the same in his wickedness from beginning to end. [Similarly], These are that [Hu] Dathan and Abiram:⁴² the same in their wickedness from the beginning to the end. [Similarly], this same [Hu] king Ahaz:⁴³ the same in his wickedness from the beginning to the end. [Similarly], Abram, the same [Hu] is Abraham:⁴⁴ the same in his righteousness from the beginning to the end. [Similarly], These are that [Hu] Aaron and Moses:⁴⁵ the same in their righteousness from the beginning to the end. [Similarly], And David, he was [Hu] the smallest;⁴⁶ he persisted in his humility⁴⁷ from the beginning to the end; just as in his youth he humbled himself before anyone who was his superior in Torah, so in his kingship he humbled himself before anyone who was his superior in wisdom.

Who reigned: Rab said: this indicates that he raised himself to the throne.⁴⁸ Some interpret this to his credit, and some to his discredit. Some interpret it to his credit, holding that there was no other man equally fitted for the throne. Others interpret it to his discredit, holding that he was not fitted for the throne, but that he was very wealthy, and by means of lavish distribution of money rose to the throne.

From Hodu to Cush.⁴⁹ Rab and Samuel gave different interpretations of this. One said that Hodu is at one end of the world and Cush at the other, and the other said that Hodu and Cush adjoin one another, and that

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[the meaning is that] as he ruled over Hodu and Cush, so he ruled from one end of the world to the other. A similar difference occurs with reference to the words, For he had dominion over all the region on this side of the River, from Tiphseh even unto Gaza.⁵⁰ Here again Rab and Samuel interpreted differently. One said that Tiphseh is at one end of the world and Gaza at the other, and the other said that Tiphseh and Gaza are near one another [and that what is meant is that] as he [Solomon] ruled over Tiphseh and over Gaza, so he ruled over the whole world.⁵¹ Seven and twenty and a hundred provinces.

R. Hisda said: At first he ruled over seven, then over twenty [more], and finally over a hundred [more]. But if you interpret thus, what of the verse, And the years of the life of Amram were seven and thirty and a hundred years?⁵² What lesson will you derive from that? — There is a difference here, because the whole text is superfluous. See now: it is written, from Hodu to Cush. Why then do I require, seven and twenty and a hundred provinces? You must conclude that it is for a special lesson .

Our Rabbis taught: Three [potentates] ruled over the whole globe,⁵³ namely, Ahab, Ahasuerus and Nebuchadnezzar.⁵⁴ Ahab, as it is written, As the Lord thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee, etc.⁵⁵ Now if he was not king over them, how could he make them take an oath? Nebuchadnezzar, as it is written: And it shall come to pass that the nation and the kingdom which will not serve the same Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and will not put their neck under the yoke of the King of Babylon.⁵⁶ Ahasuerus, as we have pointed out above.

- (1) Ezra IX, 9.
- (2) Ps. LXVI, 12.
- (3) Ps. XCVIII, 3.
- (4) Since letters were sent to all the provinces of the Persian Empire.
- (5) Prov. XXVIII, 15.
- (6) Jer. IV, 7.

- (7) Dan. VII, 5.
- (8) V. A.Z. 2b.
- (9) Heb. המקרה E.V. 'the rafters sink in'.
- (10) Eccl. X, 18.
- (11) Euphemism.
- (12) Lev. XXVII, 8.
- (13) Ps. CIV, 3.
- (14) E.V. 'men'.
- (15) Ps. CXXIV, 1, 2.
- (16) Referring to Haman.
- (17) Prov. XXIX, 2.
- (18) Esth. VIII, 15
- (19) Ibid. III, 15.
- (20) Lit., 'said'.
- (21) Deut. IV, 7.
- (22) Ibid. 34.
- (23) Esth. I, 1.
- (24) Deut. XXVIII, 68.
- (25) Lev. XXVI, 44.
- (26) [The order followed here differs from that in the parallel passage in the Yalkut a.I. which is the more chronological. V. Maharsha.]
- (27) Read with MS.M. 'Romans', v. Wilna Gaon Glosses.
- (28) I.e., the days of the Messiah. V. Ezek. XXXVIII, XXXIX.
- (29) Mattathias is usually identified with Hasmonai. [MS.M. omits 'Hasmonai and his sons'.]
- (30) Here also read with MS.M. 'Romans', v. Wilna Gaon Glosses.
- (31) Lit., 'tongue, language'
- (32) Num. XXXIII, 55.
- (33) Ibid. 56.
- (34) Heb. Ahiw Shel Rosh.
- (35) Dan. II, 38.
- (36) Ezra IV, 6.
- (37) Heb. Hushharu.
- (38) Heb. Ah Le-Rosho.
- (39) Heb. Rashin.
- (40) Esth. X, 1.
- (41) Gen. XXXVI, 43.
- (42) Num. XXVI, 9.
- (43) II Chron. XXVIII, 22.
- (44) I Chron. I, 27.
- (45) Ex. VI, 26.
- (46) I Sam. XVII, 14. E.V. youngest'.
- (47) The Heb. Katan means both 'young' and 'humble'.
- (48) Because it does not say 'who was king'.
- (49) E.V. 'from India to Ethiopia'.
- (50) I Kings V, 4.
- (51) V. Sanh., Sonc. ed. p. 110, nn. 5-6.
- (52) Ex. VI, 20.
- (53) Heb. כיפה Lit., 'arch', the space beneath the vault of the heaven.
- (54) Only those mentioned in Scripture are reckoned (Tosaf.).

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(55) I Kings XVIII, 10. The text continues, and when they said, he is not here, he took an oath, etc.

(56) Jer. XXVII, 8.

Megilah 11b

(Mnemonic: *Sh'S'D'K'*)¹

But are there no more? Is there not Solomon? —

He did not retain his kingdom [till his death]. This is a sufficient answer for the one who holds that he was first a king and then a subject.² But for the one who holds that he was first a king, then a subject, and then a king again, what can we reply? —

Solomon was in a different category, because he ruled over the denizens of the upper world³ as well as of the lower, as it says, And Solomon sat upon the throne of the Lord.⁴ But was there not Sennacherib, as it is written, Who are they among all the gods of these countries that have delivered their country out of my hand.⁵ —

There was Jerusalem which he had not subdued. But was there not Darius, as it is written, Then king Darius wrote unto all the peoples, nations and languages that dwell in all the earth, Peace be multiplied unto you?⁶ —

There were the seven over which he did not rule, as it is written, It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom a hundred and twenty satraps.⁷ But there was Cyrus, of whom it is written, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdom of the earth hath the Lord given me?⁸ —

There he was merely indulging in a boast. In those days, when the king sat [on his throne].⁹ [How can this be] seeing that it says just afterwards, in the third year of his reign? —

Raba said: What is meant by 'when he sat'? After he began to feel secure. He reasoned

thus: 'Belshazzar calculated and made a mistake; I have calculated and made no mistake' — What is the meaning of this? —

It is written, After seventy years are accomplished for Babylon I will remember you,¹⁰ and it is written, That He would accomplish for the desolations of Jerusalem seventy years.¹¹ He reckoned forty-five years of Nebuchadnezzar and twenty-three of Evilmerodach and two of his own, making seventy in all. He then brought out the vessels of the Temple and used them. And how do we know that Nebuchadnezzar reigned forty-five years? —

As a Master has said: 'They went into exile in the seventh year and they went into exile in the eighth year; they went into exile in the eighteenth year and they went into exile in the nineteenth year' —

[That is to say], in the seventh year after the subjection of Jehoiakim¹² they underwent the exile of Jeconiah, this being the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar.¹³ In the eighteenth year from the subjection of Jehoiakim¹⁴ they underwent the exile of Zedekiah, this being the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar,¹⁵ as a Master has said, In the first year [of his reign] he [Nebuchadnezzar] overthrew Nineveh; in the second year he conquered Jehoiakim¹⁶ and it is written, And it came to pass in the seven and thirtieth year of the captivity of Jehoiachin king of Judah, in the twelfth month in the seven and twentieth day of the month, that Evilmerodach King of Babylon, in the year of his reign, lifted up the head of Jehoiachin king of Judah and brought him forth out of prison.¹⁷ Eight and thirty-seven make forty-five of Nebuchadnezzar. The twenty-three of Evilmerodach we know from tradition. These with two of his own¹⁸ make seventy. He [Belshazzar] said to himself, Now of a surety they will not be redeemed. So he brought out the vessels of the Temple and used them. Hence it was that Daniel said to him, but thou hast lifted up thyself against

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the Lord of heaven, and they have brought the vessels of his house before thee.¹⁹

It is further written, In that night Belshazzar the Chaldean king was slain,²⁰ and it is written, And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about threescore and two years old.²¹ He [Ahasuerus] said: He calculated and made a mistake,²² I will calculate and make no mistake. Is it written, ‘seventy years for the kingdom of Babylon?’²³ It is written, seventy years for Babylon. What is meant by Babylon? The exile of Babylon —

How many years [is this reckoning] less [than the other]? Eight.²⁴ So in place of them he inserted one of Belshazzar,²⁵ five of Darius and Cyrus,²⁶ and two of his own, which made seventy — When he saw that seventy had been completed and they were not redeemed, he brought out the vessels of the Temple and used them — Then the Satan came and danced among them and slew Vashti. But he reckoned correctly? —

He also made a mistake, since he ought to have reckoned from the destruction of Jerusalem.²⁷ Granted all this, how many years are short? Eleven. How long did he reign? Fourteen.²⁸ Consequently in the fourteenth year of his reign he ought to have rebuilt the Temple. Why then is it written, Then ceased the work of the house of God which is at Jerusalem?²⁹ —

Raba replied: The years were not full ones.³⁰

(1) Sh=Solomon (Shelomoh); S = Sennacherib; D = Darius; K = Koresh (Cyrus).

(2) Cf. Git. 68b.

(3) The demons.

(4) 1 Chron. XXIX, 23.

(5) Isa. XXXVI, 20.

(6) Dan. VI, 26.

(7) Ibid. 2.

(8) Ezra 1, 2.

(9) Esth. I, 2. Which would naturally mean, immediately after his accession.

(10) Jer. XXIX, 10.

(11) Dan. IX, 2.

(12) By Nebuchadnezzar, as explained infra. V. Jer. LII, 28: This is the people whom

Nebuchadnezzar carried away captive: in the seventh year, etc.

(13) V. II Kings XXIV, 12: And Jehoiachin (Jeconiah) the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon... and he took him in the eighth year of his reign.

(14) Jer. LII, 29.

(15) V. II Kings XXV, 8.

(16) Jehoiakim served Nebuchadnezzar three years (II Kings XXIV, 1), and according to the Seder Olam, he was in rebellion for three years. (This is based on Daniel I, 1. In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, Nebuchadnezzar came to Jerusalem, etc. which is interpreted to mean, the third year of his rebellion. V. Rashi.) In the same year he was deposed and Jeconiah went into exile, and as this was the eighth of Nebuchadnezzar (v. supra), his subjection must have commenced in the second or third year of Nebuchadnezzar.

(17) II Kings XXV, 27.

(18) It was in the third year of his reign that he gave his feast.

(19) Dan. V, 23.

(20) Ibid. 30.

(21) Ibid. VI, 1.

(22) In thinking that the prophecy had already been falsified.

(23) I.e., from the accession of Nebuchadnezzar.

(24) Because the exile of Jeconiah took place in the eighth year of Nebuchadnezzar. V. supra

(25) I.e., the third year of Belshazzar, which he himself did not reckon.

(26) According to the Talmudic chronology, the Darius mentioned in Daniel VI was succeeded by the Cyrus who gave permission for the building of the Temple. On what authority they are supposed to have reigned five years is not clear.

(27) Which took place eleven years after the exile of Jehoiachin.

(28) Haman cast lots in the twelfth year (Esth. III, 7). The deliverance took place in the next year, and the second letter of Esther (v. Esth. IX, 29) is supposed to have been sent out in the next.

(29) Until the second year of Darius who succeeded Ahasuerus. Ezra IV, 24.

(30) I.e., the five years of Darius I and Cyrus were really only four, and a year may also have been added to the reigns of Nebuchadnezzar and Evilmerodach, so that the seventy years were really not completed till the second year of Darius II.

Megillah 12a

It has been taught to the same effect: There was yet another year left to Babylon,¹ and Darius arose and completed it. Raba said: Daniel also made a mistake in this

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calculation, as it is written, In the first year of his reign, I Daniel meditated in the books [etc.].² From his use of the words 'I meditated' we can infer that he [at first] made a mistake. All the same, there is a contradiction between the texts [is there not]? It is written [in one], when there are accomplished for Babylon,³ and it is written [in the other], for the desolations of Jerusalem? —

Raba replied: [The first term] was for visitation [Pekidah] only, and this was fulfilled, as it is written, Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the Lord, the God of the heavens, given to me, and he hath charged [Pakad] me to build him a house in Jerusalem.⁴

R. Nahman son of R. Hisda gave the following exposition. What is the meaning of the verse, Thus saith the Lord to his anointed to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden.⁵ Now was Cyrus the Messiah? Rather what it means is: The Holy One, blessed be He, said to the Messiah: I have a complaint on thy behalf against Cyrus.⁶ I said, He shall build my house and gather my exiles,⁷ and he [merely] said, Whosoever there is among you of all his people, let him go up. The army of Persia and Media, the nobles. And elsewhere it is written, [The chronicles] of the kings of Media and Persia.⁸ [How is this]? —

Raba replied: They [the Medes and Persians] made a stipulation with one another, saying, if we supply the kings, you will supply the Governors, and if you supply the kings we will supply the Governors. When he showed the riches of his glorious [Tif'ereh] kingdom. R. Jose b. Hanina said: This shows that he arrayed himself in priestly robes. It is written here, 'the riches of his glorious [Tif'ereh] kingdom', and it is written elsewhere [in connection with the priestly garments], for splendor and for glory, [Tif'ereh].⁹

And when these days were fulfilled.¹⁰ Rab and Samuel interpreted this differently. One said he was a clever king, and the other said that he was a foolish king. The one who held he was a clever king said that he did well in entertaining¹¹ his distant subjects first, because he could win over the inhabitants of his own city any time he wished. The one who held that he was foolish says that he ought to have entertained the inhabitants of his metropolis first, so that if the others rebelled against him, these would have supported him.

R. Simon b. Yohai was asked by his disciples, Why were the enemies of Israel¹² in that generation deserving of extermination? He said to them: Do you answer. They said: Because they partook of the feast of that wicked one.¹³ [He said to them]: If so, those in Susa should have been killed, not those in other parts?¹⁴ They then said, Give your answer. He said to them: It was because they bowed down to the image.¹⁵ They said to him, Did God then show them favouritism?¹⁶ He replied: They only pretended to worship,¹⁷ and He also only pretended to exterminate them; and so it is written, For he afflicted not from his heart.¹⁸ In the court of the garden of the king's palace.¹⁹

Rab and Samuel gave different interpretations of this — One said that those who had the entree²⁰ of the court were [entertained] in the court, and those who had the entree of the garden in the garden, and those who had the entree of the palace in the palace. The other said: He first put them in the court, and it did not hold them — Then he took them into the garden and it did not hold them; and finally he had to take them into the palace, and he found room for them.

In a Baraita it was taught: He took them into the court and opened two doors for them, one into the garden and one into the palace. White [Hur], fine cotton [Karpas] and blue.²¹ What is Hur? — Rab said, fine lace-work. Samuel said: He spread for them, carpets of white silk. Karpas: R. Jose b.

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Haninah said: [this means] cushions of velvet.²² Upon silver rods and pillars of marble; the couches were of gold and silver.²¹

It has been taught: R. Judah said: Silver for some and gold for others, according to their degree. Said R. Nehemiah to him: If that were so, there would have been²³ jealousy at the banquet! No; the couches themselves were of silver and their feet of gold. Green [Bahat] and white marble.²¹ R. Assi said: [This means] stones that flash back at their owner;²⁴ and so it says, as the stones of a crown, glittering over his land.²⁵ And shell [Dar] and onyx marble [Sohareth].²¹ Rab said: This means rows [Dari] upon rows.²⁶ Samuel says: There is a precious stone in the seaports called Darah. He put it in the midst of the guests, and it lit up the place as at midday [Sahara].²⁷ In the school of R. Ishmael it was taught: It means that he gave a remission of taxes [Deror] to all who dealt in merchandise [Sehorah]. And they gave them drink in vessels of gold, the vessels being diverse [Shonim] one from another.²⁸ It should have said, in different vessels? —

Raba said: A Bath Kol²⁹ went forth and said to them, Your predecessors³⁰ met their end on account of vessels, and yet you use them again [Shonim]?³¹ And royal wine in abundance:²⁸ Rab said: This teaches that each one was given to drink wine older³² than himself. And the drinking was according to law.³³ What is meant by 'according to law'? —

R. Hanan said in the name of R. Meir: According to the law of the Torah. Just as according to the law of the Torah the [quantity of] food exceeds the drink,³⁴ so in the feast of that wicked one there was more food than drink. None did compel.³³ R. Eleazar said: This teaches that each one was given to drink from the wine of his own country.³⁵ That they should do according to every man's [ish, ish] pleasure.³³ Raba said: This means that they should do according to the will of Mordecai and Haman.³⁶ Mordecai

[is called 'man'] as it is written, A Jewish man;³⁷ and Haman, [as it is written], a man, an adversary and an enemy.³⁸ Also Vashti the queen made a feast for the women in the royal house.³⁹ It should have said, 'the women's house'? —

Raba said: Both of them [Ahasuerus and Vashti] had an immoral purpose. This bears out the popular saying, He with large pumpkins and his wife

(1) I.e., when Belshazzar was killed, according to Seder Olam, only sixty-nine years had passed since Nebuchadnezzar had subdued Jehoiakim, and not seventy as reckoned above.

(2) Dan. IX, 2. Heb. בִּינּוּתִי, which conveys the idea of calculating and revising.

(3) Ibid. I.e., from the rise of Nebuchadnezzar.

(4) Ezra I, 2. But the actual building was commenced some years later.

(5) Isa. XLV, 1.

(6) And we translate: 'God said to his anointed regarding Cyrus'.

(7) Ibid. 13.

(8) Esth. X, 2. Here 'kings' is put next to Media, not next to Persia as in the case of the 'nobles' in the earlier passage.

(9) Ex. XXVIII, 2.

(10) Esth. 1,5.

(11) Lit., 'bringing near'.

(12) Euphemism for 'Israel'.

(13) Ahasuerus.

(14) As only those in Susa were invited.

(15) Set up by Nebuchadnezzar.

(16) By delivering them, since they really deserved to be exterminated.

(17) Lit., 'they did only for appearance'.

(18) Lam. III, 33. מִלֵּבָב is rendered 'without heart', לֵב being taken as partitive: God does not afflict him who sins without intent (Maharsha).]

(19) Esth. I, 5.

(20) Lit., 'he who was worthy'.

(21) Esth. I, 6.

(22) These interpretations are based on similarities in sound to the words Hur and Karpas.

(23) Lit., 'you cast'.

(24) מִתְחַוֵּשׂוֹת play on בְּהַט ('green marble'). [Aliter: much sought after by their owners (v. Rashi).]

(25) מִתְנוֹסְסוֹת Zech. IX, 16. [On Rashi's interpretation the verse is to be rendered as 'stones of a crown obtainable only after many trials (בְּנִסְיוֹנֵיהֶן)'.]

(26) Possibly mosaics are meant (Jastrow).

(27) V. Rashi.

(28) Esth. I, 7

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(29) V. Glos.

(30) Belshazzar and his company.

(31) Lit., 'repeat'.

(32) The word Rab (in abundance) being taken in its other sense of 'older'.

(33) Ibid. 8.

(34) E.g., the meal-offering for a bullock was three tenth deals, and the wine-offering only half a Hin.

(35) Which did not easily intoxicate him.

(36) [Both served as butlers at the banquet (Rashi).]

(37) Ibid. II, 5.

(38) Ibid. VII, 6.

(39) Ibid. I, 9.

Megilah 12b

with small pumpkins. On the seventh day, where the king's heart was merry with wine.¹ Was then his heart not merry with wine until then? — Rab said: The seventh day was Sabbath, when Israel eat and drink. They begin with discourse on the Torah and with words of thanksgiving [to God]. But the nations of the world, the idolaters, when they eat and drink only begin with words of frivolity. And so at the feast of that wicked one.

Some said, The Median women are the most beautiful, and others said, The Persian women are the most beautiful. Said Ahasuerus to them, The vessel that I use is neither Median nor Persian, but Chaldean. Would you like to see her? They said, Yes, but it must be naked — (For man receives measure for measure.² This [remark] teaches you that the wicked Vashti used to take the daughters of Israel and strip them naked and make them work on Sabbath.³ So it is written, After these things when the wrath of the king Ahasuerus abated, he remembered Vashti and what she had done and what was decided against her.⁴ As she had done so it was decreed against her.) And the queen Vashti refused.⁵ Let us see. She was immodest, as the Master said above, that both of them had an immoral purpose. Why then would she not come? —

R. Jose b. Hanina said: This teaches that leprosy broke out on her. In a Baraita it was taught that Gabriel came and fixed a tail on her.⁶ And the king was very angry,⁵ Why was he so enraged? —

Raba said: She sent him back answer: Thou son of my father's steward,⁷ my father drank wine in the presence of a thousand,⁸ and did not get drunk, and that man has become senseless with his wine. Straightway, his wrath burnt within him.⁵ And the king said to the wise men.⁹ Who are the wise men? —

The Rabbis. Who knew the times:⁹ that is, who knew how to intercalate years and fix new moons. He said to them: Try her for me. They said [to themselves]: What shall we do? If we tell him to put her to death, to-morrow he will become sober¹⁰ again and he will require her from us. Shall we tell him to let her go? She will lose all her respect for royalty. So they said to him: From the day when the Temple was destroyed and we were exiled from our land, counsel has been taken from us and we do not know how to judge capital cases. Go to Ammon and Moab¹¹ who have remained in their places like wine that has settled on its lees. They spoke to him thus with good reason, since it is written, Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity. Therefore his taste remaineth in him, and his scent is not changed.¹²

Straightway [he did so, as we read], and the next unto him was Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish [etc.].¹³ R. Levi said: Every name in this verse contains a reference to the sacrifices. Thus, Carshena: the ministering angels said to the Holy One, blessed be He: Sovereign of the Universe, did they ever offer before thee lambs of the first year [Karim Bene Shanah] as Israel offered before Thee? Shethar: did they ever offer before Thee two pigeons [Shte Torim]? Admatha: did they ever build before Thee an altar of earth [Adamah]? Tarshish: did they

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ever minister before Thee in the priestly garments, of which it is written [that they contained] a beryl [Tarshish], an onyx and a jasper?¹⁴ Meres: did they ever stir [Mersu] the blood [of the sacrifice] before Thee? Marsena: did they ever stir [Mersu] the meal-offerings before Thee? Memucan: did they ever prepare [Hekinu] a table before Thee? And Memucan said.¹⁵ A Tanna taught: Memucan is the same as Haman, And why was he called Memucan? Because he was destined [Mukan] for punishment. R. Kahana said: From here we see that an ordinary man always pushes¹⁶ himself in front.¹⁷ That every man should bear rule in his house.¹⁸

Raba said: Had it not been for these first letters, there would have been left no shred or remnant of the enemies of Israel.¹⁹ People said: What does he mean by sending us word that every man should bear rule in his own house? Of course he should! Even a weaver in his own house must be commander!²⁰ And let the king appoint officers.²¹

Rabbi said: What is the meaning of the verse, Even prudent man dealeth with forethought, but a fool unfoldeth folly?²² ‘Every prudent man dealeth with forethought’: this applies to David, of whom, it is written, Wherefore his servants said unto him, Let there be sought for my lord the king a young virgin:²³ every one who had a daughter brought her.²⁴ But a fool unfoldeth folly’: this applies to Ahasuerus, of whom it is written, and let the king appoint officers: whoever had a daughter hid her.²⁵ There was a certain Jew in Shushan the castle, etc. a Benjamite.²⁶ What is the point of this verse? If it is to give the pedigree of Mordecai, it should trace it right back to Benjamin!²⁷ [Why then were only these specified?] —

A Tanna taught: All of them are designations [of Mordecai]. ‘The son of Jair’ means, the son who enlightened [He’ir] the eyes of Israel by his prayer. ‘The son of Shimei means, the son to whose prayer God

hearkened [Shama’]. ‘The son of Kish’ indicates that he knocked [Hikkish] at the gates of mercy and they were opened to him. He is called ‘a Jew’ [Yehudi] which implies that he came from [the tribe of] Judah, and he is called ‘a Benjamite’, which implies that he came from Benjamin. [How is this]? —

R. Nahman said: He was a man of distinguished character.²⁸ Rabbah b. Bar Hanah said in the name of R. Joshua b. Levi: His father was from Benjamin and his mother from Judah. The Rabbis, however, said: The tribes competed with one another [for him]. The tribe of Judah said: I am responsible for the birth of Mordecai, because David did not kill Shimei the son of Gera, and the tribe of Benjamin said: He is actually descended from me. Raba said: The community of Israel explained [the two designations] in the opposite²⁹ sense: ‘See what a Judean did to me and how a Benjamite repaid me!’ What a Judean did to me

(1) Ibid. 10.

(2) Lit., ‘for with the measure with which a man measures they measure to him’.

(3) [Add with MS.M.: ‘Therefore was it decreed that she should be killed naked on Sabbath’.]

(4) Esth. II, 1.

(5) Ibid. I, 12.

(6) [זנב does not necessarily mean a ‘tail’ but any projection or growth, v. Aruch s.v. זנב.]

(7) [Var. lec., ‘Thou steward of my father’. Ahasuerus was said to have been the steward of Belshazzar, the father of Vashti.]

(8) V. Dan. V, 1.

(9) Esth. I, 13.

(10) Lit., ‘his wine will pass off’.

(11) According to Tosaf., ‘Ammon’ here should be omitted, as the Ammonites were carried into exile by Nebuchadnezzar.

(12) Jer. XLVIII, 11.

(13) Esth. I, 14.

(14) Ex. XXVIII, 20.

(15) Esth. I, 16.

(16) Lit., ‘jumps’.

(17) Memucan is mentioned last of the seven princes, and yet it was he who spoke first.

(18) Ibid. 22.

(19) Euphemism for Israel. Had the people not seen from this letter how foolish the king was, when the next letter was sent out for the

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destruction of the Jews, they would not have waited till the appointed day.

(20) Pardashca: a Persian word meaning 'policeman' or 'officer'.

(21) Esth. II, 3.

(22) Prov. XIII, 16.

(23) I Kings I, 2.

(24) Since only one was to be tried.

(25) Because all were to be tried, though only one was to be closed.

(26) Esth. II, 5.

(27) And not mention three names only.

(28) Lit., 'crowned with his nimus'. The word nimus means in the Talmud 'manner', or 'way' (**), hence bearing, character. Rashi translates 'with his names' (as just explained) as if 'nimus' here = Greek **. [Var. lec. add 'as an ornament', כענין. V. Aruch who explains: He was adorned with the precepts of the Law as with an ornament. Yehudi as applied to Mordecai then does not denote a tribal name but is an epithet of distinction.]

(29) I.e., derogatory.

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viz., that David did not kill Shimei from whom was descended Mordecai who provoked Haman. 'And how a Benjamite repaid me', viz., that Saul did not slay Agag from whom was descended Haman who oppressed Israel. R. Johanan said: He did indeed come from Benjamin. Why then was he called 'a Jew'? Because he repudiated idolatry. For anyone who repudiates idolatry is called 'a Jew', as it is written, There are certain Jews¹, etc.

R. Simon b. Pazzi once introduced an exposition of the Book of Chronicles as follows: 'All thy words are one,² and we know how to find their inner meaning'. [It is written], And his wife the Jewess bore Jered the father of Gedor, and Heber the father of Socho, and Jekuthiel the father of Zanoah, and these are the sons of Bithya the daughter of Pharaoh, whom Mered took.³ Why was she [the daughter of Pharaoh] called a Jewess? Because she repudiated idolatry, as it is written, And the daughter of Pharaoh went down to bathe in the river,⁴ and R. Johanan, [commenting on this,] said that she went down to cleanse herself⁵ from the idols

of her father's house. 'Bore': But she only brought him [Moses] up? —

This tells us that if anyone brings up an orphan boy or girl in his house, the Scripture accounts it as if he had begotten him. 'Jered': this is Moses. Why was he called Jered? Because manna came down [Yarad] for Israel in his days.⁶ 'Gedor': [he was so called] because he fenced in [Gadar] the breaches of Israel. 'Heber', because he joined [Hiber] Israel to their Father in heaven. 'Socho', because he was like a sheltering booth [Sukkah] for Israel. 'Jekuthiel', because Israel trusted in God [Kiwu Le'el] in his days. 'Zanoah', because he made Israel abandon [Hizniah] their iniquities. 'Father of', 'father of', 'father of': he was a father in Torah, a father in wisdom, a father in prophecy. 'These are the sons of Bithya whom Mered took'. Was Mered his name? Was not Caleb his name?⁷ —

The Holy One, blessed be He, said: Let Caleb who rebelled [Marad] against the plan of the spies come and take the daughter of Pharaoh who rebelled against the idols of her father's house. Who had been carried away from Jerusalem.⁸ Raba said: [We understand this to mean] that he went into exile of his own accord.⁹ And he brought up Hadassah.¹⁰ She is called Hadassah¹¹ and she is called Esther. It has been taught: Esther was her proper name. Why then was she called Hadassah? After the designation of the righteous who are called myrtles,¹² for so it says, And he stood among the myrtle trees.¹³ R. Judah says: Hadassah was her name — Why then was she called Esther? Because she concealed [Mastereth] the facts about herself, as it says, Ester did not make known her people or her kindred.¹⁴ R. Nehemiah says: Hadassah was her name. Why then was she called Esther? All peoples called her so after Istahar.¹⁵

Ben 'Azzai said: Esther was neither too tall nor too short, but of medium size, like a myrtle. R. Joshua b. Korha said: Esther was sallow,¹⁶ but endowed with great charm.¹⁷

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For she had neither father nor mother. [And it continues] and when her father and mother died.¹⁰ Why these last words?¹⁸ —

R. Aha said: When her mother became pregnant with her, her father died; when she was born, her mother died. And when her father and mother died, Mordecai took her for his own daughter.¹⁹

A Tanna taught in the name of R. Meir: Read not 'for a daughter' [Le-bath], but 'for a house' [Le-bayith].²⁰ Similarly it says: But the poor man had nothing save one little ewe lamb, which he had brought up and reared; and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own morsel, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter.²¹ Because it lay in his bosom, was it like a daughter to him? Rather what it means is like a wife; so here, it means a wife. And the seven maidens who were meet to be given to her.²²

Raba said: [They were seven so that] she could count the days of the week by them. And he changed²³ her and her maidens. Rab said: [This means that] he gave her Jewish food to eat. Samuel, however, said, it means that he gave her chines of pork²⁴ while R. Johanan said that he gave her pulse, and so it says, So the steward took away their food and gave them pulse.²⁵ Six months with the oil of myrrh.²⁶

What is the oil of myrrh? R. Hiyya b. Abba said, Satchet;²⁷ R. Huna said, Oil from olives not a third grown. It has been taught: R. Judah says that anpikinun²⁸ is oil of olives not a third grown. Why is it used for smearing? Because it removes hair and makes the skin soft. In the evening she went and on the morrow she returned.²⁹ From the discreditable account of that wicked man we can learn something to his credit, namely, that he did not perform his marital office by day. And Esther obtained favour.³⁰

R. Eleazar said: This informs us that every man took her for a member of his own

people. So Esther was taken unto king Ahasuerus into his house royal in the tenth month, which is the month Tebeth:³¹ the month when body warms up body.³² And the king loved Esther above all the women, and she obtained grace and favor in his sight more than all the virgins.³³ Rab said: If he wanted to find in her the taste of a virgin he found it; if the taste of a married woman, he found it. Then the king made a great feast.³⁴ He made a feast for her, and she did not tell him [who she was]. He remitted taxes,³⁵ and she did not tell him. He sent gifts,³⁶ and she [still] did not tell him. And when the virgins were gathered together the second time, etc.³⁷ He went and took counsel of Mordecai who said, The way to rouse a woman is to make her jealous;³⁸ and even so she did not tell.

R. Eleazar said: What is the meaning of the verse,

(1) Dan. III, 12. Though Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah to whom he refers were not of the tribe of Judah. V. Sanh. 93 b (Tosaf.).

(2) I.e., numerous names in the Book of Chronicles refer to the same person.

(3) I Chron. IV, 18.

(4) Ex. II, 5.

(5) By means of the Tebillah or ceremonial bath taken by a proselyte.

(6) According to Wilna Gaon the correct reading is, 'because he brought down the Torah (from Heaven) for Israel'.

(7) As stated in I Chron. IV, 15.

(8) Esth. II, 6.

(9) The ground of this inference is not clear. Possibly Raba is stressing the word **עם**, as meaning 'in company with', 'on a footing of equality with', instead of **אם**, which would have meant 'taken along with as subsidiary'.

(10) Ibid. 7.

(11) Lit., 'myrtle'.

(12) V. Sanh. 93a.

(13) Zech. I, 8.

(14) Esth. II, 20.

(15) The planet Venus (Jast.).

(16) Lit., 'greenish', like a myrtle leaf.

(17) Lit., 'a thread of grace was drawn about her'.

(18) Which seem superfluous.

(19) Esth. II, 7.

(20) I.e., a wife.

(21) II Sam. XII, 3.

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- (22) Esth. II, 9.
(23) E.V., 'advanced'.
(24) קתלי דחזירי. Not that she necessarily ate them (Tosaf.). [Var. lec. קדלי דחזירי 'heads of radish' — a delicatessen, v. Aruch.]
(25) Dan. I, 16; of Daniel and his companions.
(26) Esth. II, 12.
(27) Heb. טַטְכָּה =**.
(28) **, a kind of oil that was not allowed to be used for sacrifices.
(29) Ibid. 14.
(30) Ibid. 15.
(31) Ibid. 16.
(32) The season being midwinter.
(33) Esth. II, 17.
(34) Ibid. 18.
(35) As it says here, 'and he made a release to the provinces'.
(36) As it says, 'and gave gifts, according to the bounty of the king'.
(37) Ibid. 19
(38) Lit., 'a woman is only jealous of the thigh of another'.

Megillah 13b

He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous?¹ In reward for the modesty displayed by Rachel, she was granted to number among her descendants Saul; and in reward for the modesty displayed by Saul, he was granted to number among his descendants Esther.² What was the modesty displayed by Rachel? —

As it is written: And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father's brother.³ Now was he her father's brother? Was he not the son of her father's sister? What it means is this: He said to her, Will you marry me? She replied, Yes, but my father is a trickster, and he will outwit you.⁴ He replied, I am his brother in trickery. She said to him, Is it permitted to the righteous to indulge in trickery? He replied. Yes: with the pure thou dost show thyself pure and with the crooked thou dost show thyself subtle.⁵ He said to her, What is his trickery? She replied : I have a sister older than I am , and he will not let me marry before her. So he gave her certain tokens. When night came, she said to herself, Now my sister will be put to shame. So she handed over the tokens to her. So it is written, And it came to pass in the morning

that, behold, it was Leah.⁶ Are we to infer from this that up to now she was not Leah? What it means is that on account of the tokens which Rachel gave to Leah he did not know till then. Therefore she was rewarded by having Saul among her descendants — What modesty did Saul display? —

As it is written, But concerning the matter of the kingdom whereof Samuel spoke he told him not.⁷ He was therefore rewarded by having Esther among his descendants.

R. Eleazar further said: When the Holy One, blessed be He, assigns greatness to a man, he assigns it to his sons and his sons' sons for all generations, as it says, [With kings on the throne;] He setteth them for ever and they are exalted.⁸ If, however, he becomes arrogant, God humiliates him, as it says. And if they be bound in fetters, etc.⁹ For Esther did the commandment of Mordecai.¹⁰

R. Jeremiah said: [This means] that she used to show the blood of her impurity to the Sages. Like as when she was brought up with him.¹⁰

Rabbah b. Lema said in the name of Rab: [This means] that she used to rise from the lap of Ahasuerus and bathe and sit in the lap of Mordecai.¹¹ In those days, while Mordecai sat in the king's gate, Bigthan and Teresh were wroth.¹²

R. Hiyya b. Abba said in the name of R. Johanan: The Holy One, blessed be He, [once] caused a master to be wroth with his servants in order to fulfill the desire of a righteous man, namely Joseph, as it says, And there was with us there a young man, a Hebrew, etc.;¹³ and servants with their master in order to perform a miracle for a righteous man, namely, Mordecai, as it is written, 'And the thing was known to Mordecai, etc.

'R. Johanan said: Bigthan and Teresh were two Tarseans¹⁴ and conversed in the Tarsean language. They said: From the day this

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woman came we have been able to get no sleep.¹⁵ Come, let us put poison in the dish so that he will die. They did not know that Mordecai was one of those who had seats in the Chamber of Hewn Stone,¹⁶ and that he understood seventy languages.¹⁷ Said the other to him, But are not my post and your post different?¹⁸ He replied: I will keep guard at my post and at yours. So it is written, And when inquisition was made, he was found,¹⁹ that is to say, they were not [both] found at their posts. After these things.²⁰ After what? —

Raba said: After God had created a healing for the blow [which was about to fall]. For Resh Lakish has said: The Holy One, blessed be He, does not smite Israel unless He has created for them a healing beforehand, as it says . When I have healed Israel, then is the iniquity of Ephraim uncovered.²¹ Not so, however, with the other nations: He smites them first, and then creates for them a healing, as it says: The Lord will smite Egypt, smiting and healing.²² But it seemed contemptible in his eyes to lay hands on Mordecai alone.²³ At first he aimed at ‘Mordecai alone’, then at ‘the people of Mordecai’ —

and who are these? The Rabbis; and finally at ‘all the Jews’. They cast Pur, that is the lot.²⁴ A Tanna taught: When the lot fell on the month of Adar, he rejoiced greatly, saying, The lot has fallen for me on the month in which Moses died. He did not know, however, that Moses died on the seventh of Adar and was born on the sixth of Adar. There is one people.²⁵

Raba said: There never was a traducer so skillful as Haman. He said to Ahasuerus, Come, let us destroy them. He replied: I am afraid of their God, lest He do to me as He did to my predecessors. He replied: They are ‘negligent’²⁶ of the precepts. He said, There are Rabbis among them.²⁷ He replied. They are ‘one people’.²⁸ Should you say that I will make a void²⁹ in your kingdom, [I reply], they are ‘scattered abroad among the

peoples’. Should you say. There is some profit in them, I reply, ‘they are dispersed’ [Nifredu], like an isolated bough [Peridah] that does not bear fruit.

Should you say that they occupy one province, I reply, ‘they are in all the provinces of thy kingdom’. ‘Their laws are diverse from those of every other people’: they do not eat of our food, nor do they marry our women nor give us theirs in marriage, ‘Neither keep they the king’s laws’, since they evade taxes the whole year³⁰ by their loitering and sauntering.³¹ ‘Therefore it profiteth not the king to suffer them’, because they eat and drink and despise the throne. For if a fly falls into the cup of one of them, he throws it out and drinks the wine, but if my lord the king were to touch his cup, he would dash it on the ground and not drink from it. ‘If it please the king, let it be written that they be destroyed, and I will pay ten thousand talents of silver’: Resh Lakish said: It was well known beforehand to Him at whose word the world came into being that Haman would one day pay Shekels for the destruction of Israel. Therefore He anticipated his Shekels with those of Israel. And so we have learnt: ‘On the first of Adar³² proclamation is made regarding the shekalim³³ and the mixed seeds’.³⁴

And the king said to Haman, The silver is given to thee and the people also, to do with them as it seemeth good to thee.³⁵ R. Abba said:

- (1) Job XXXVI, 7.
- (2) There seems to be no authority in the Scripture for this statement. V. Rashi
- (3) Gen. XXIX, 12.
- (4) Lit., ‘you will not be able to deal with him’.
- (5) II Sam. XXII, 27.
- (6) Gen. XXIX, 25.
- (7) I Sam. X, 16.
- (8) Job XXXVI, 7.
- (9) Ibid. 8. How the text implies this is not clear. V. Maharsha.
- (10) Esth. II, 20.
- (11) As wife. The word **באת** (brought up) means literally ‘nursing’.

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- (12) Ibid. 21.
- (13) Gen. XLI, 12.
- (14) There was a Tarsus in Cilicia and in Cappodocia and it is not certain which is referred to.
- (15) Having always to dance attendance on Ahasuerus.
- (16) לשכת הגזית. The meeting place of the Sanhedrin in the Temple at Jerusalem.
- (17) V. Sanh. 17a.
- (18) So that neither of us can do duty for both.
- (19) E.V., 'it was found'.
- (20) Esth. III, 1.
- (21) Hos. VII, 1. E.V., 'when I would heal'.
- (22) Isa. XIX, 22.
- (23) Esth. III, 6.
- (24) Ibid. 7.
- (25) Ibid. 8. E.V. 'a certain people'.
- (26) ישנים, lit., 'asleep' from a play on the word ישנו (there is).
- (27) Who keep the precepts.
- (28) And all hang together.
- (29) Lit., 'baldness'.
- (30) Lit., 'they bring out the whole year with'.
- (31) Heb. שהי פהי, which may also be an abbreviation for שבת היום פסח היום 'To-day is Sabbath, to-day is Passover'.
- (32) I.e., fourteen days before the date fixed by Haman.
- (33) For the repair of the Temple.
- (34) Which it is now time to uproot. V. Shek. I, 1.
- (35) Esth. III, 11.

Megillah 14a

To what can we compare Ahasuerus and Haman at this point? To two men one of whom had a mound in the middle of his field and the other a ditch in the middle of his field. The owner of the ditch said, I wish I could buy that mound, and the owner of the mound said, I wish I could buy that ditch. One day they met, and the owner of the ditch said, Sell me your mound, whereupon the other replied, Take it for nothing, and I shall be only too glad.¹ And the king removed his ring.²

R. Abba b. Kahana said: This removal of the ring was more efficacious than forty-eight prophets³ and seven prophetesses⁴ who prophesied to Israel; for all these were not able to turn Israel to better courses, and the removal of the ring did turn them to better courses.⁵ Our Rabbis taught: 'Forty-eight

prophets and seven prophetesses prophesied to Israel, and they neither took away from nor added aught to what is written in the Torah save only the reading of the Megillah'. How did they derive it [from the Torah]? —

R. Hiyya b. Abin said in the name of R. Joshua b. Korha: If for being delivered from slavery to freedom we chant a hymn of praise, should we not do so all the more for being delivered from death to life? If that is the reason we should say Hallel⁶ also? —

[We do not do so] because Hallel is not said for a miracle which occurred outside of the land of Israel. How then do we come to say it for the Exodus from Egypt which was a miracle which occurred outside the land of Israel? —

As it has been taught: 'Until they entered the land of Israel, all lands were counted as proper for chanting a hymn of praise [for miracles done in them] — After they had entered the land, other countries were not counted as proper for chanting a hymn of praise [for miracles done in them]. R. Nahman said: The reading of the Megillah is equivalent to Hallel. Raba said:⁷ There is a good reason in that case [of the Exodus from Egypt] because it says [in the Hallel], Praise ye O servants of the Lord, who are no longer servants of Pharaoh — But can we say in this case, Praise ye, servants of the Lord and not servants of Ahasuerus? We are still servants of Ahasuerus! Whether on the view of Raba⁸ or on the view of R. Nahman,⁹ there is a difficulty in what has been taught [above], that 'after they had entered the land, other countries were not counted as proper for chanting a hymn of praise [for miracles done in them]'? —

When the people went into exile, the other countries became proper as at first. Were there no more prophets than these [forty-eight]? —

Is it not written, How there was a man from Ramathaim-Zophim,¹⁰ [which we interpret],

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one of two hundred prophets [Zophim]¹¹ who prophesied to Israel? —

There were actually very many, as it has been taught, ‘Many prophets arose for Israel, double the number of [the Israelites] who came out of Egypt’, only the prophecy which contained a lesson for¹² future generations was written down, and that which did not contain such a lesson was not written.

R. Samuel b. Nahmani said: This [Ramathaim-Zophim] means, a man who came from two heights which faced one another.¹³ R. Hanin said: It means, a man who came from ancestors of the most exalted position.¹⁴ And who were they? The sons of Korah, as it says, And the sons of Korah did not die.¹⁵

A Tanna taught in the name of our Teacher:¹⁶ A special place was assigned¹⁷ to them in Gehinnom and they stood on it. ‘Seven prophetesses’. Who were these? —

Sarah, Miriam, Deborah, Hannah, Abigail, Hulda and Esther. ‘Sarah’, as it is written, The father of Milkah and the father of Yiscah,¹⁸ and R. Isaac said [on this]. Yiscah is Sarah; and why was she called Yiscah? Because she discerned [Sakethah] by means of the holy spirit, as it is said, In all that Sarah saith unto thee, hearken to her voice.¹⁹ Another explanation is: because all gazed [Sakin] at her beauty. ‘Miriam’, as it is written, And Miriam the prophetess the sister of Aaron.²⁰ Was she only the sister of Aaron and not the sister of Moses?—

R. Nahman said in the name of Rab: [She was so called] because she prophesied when she was the sister of Aaron [only]²¹ and said, My mother is destined to bear a son who will save Israel. When he was born the whole house was filled with light, and her father arose and kissed her on the head, saying, My daughter, thy prophecy has been fulfilled. But when they threw him into the river her father arose and tapped her on the head,

saying. Daughter, where is thy prophecy? So it is written, And his sister stood afar off to know;²² to know, [that is,] what would be with the latter part of her prophecy. ‘Deborah’, as it is written, Now Deborah a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth.²³ What is meant by a woman of flames²³? [She was so called] because she used to make wicks for the Sanctuary. And she sat under a palm tree²⁴ Why just a palm tree? —

R. Simeon b. Abishalom said: [To avoid] privacy.²⁵ Another explanation is: Just as a palm tree has only one heart, so Israel in that generation had only one heart devoted to their Father in heaven. ‘Hannah’, as it is written, And Hannah prayed and said, My heart exulteth in the Lord, my horn is exalted in the Lord.²⁶ [She said], my horn is exalted’, and not, my cruse is exalted’, thus implying that the royalty of [the hour of] David and Solomon, who were anointed from a horn,²⁷ would be prolonged,²⁸ but the royalty of [the house of] Saul and Jehu,²⁹ who were anointed with a cruse, would not be prolonged. There is none holy as the Lord, for there is none beside thee.³⁰

R. Judah b. Menashia said: Read not Bilteka, ‘beside thee’], but read Lebalotheka [‘to survive thee’]. For the nature of the Holy One, blessed be He, is not like that of flesh and blood. It is the nature of flesh and blood to be survived by its works, but God survives His works. Neither is there any rock [Zur] like our God.³⁰ There is no artist [Zayyar] like our God. A man draws a figure on a wall, but is unable to endow it with breath and spirit, inward parts and intestines. But the Holy One, blessed be He, fashions a form within a form and endows it with breath and spirit, inward parts and intestines. ‘Abigail’, as it is written, And it was so, as she rode on her ass and came down by the covert of the mountain.³¹ ‘By the covert [Sether] of the mountain’? It should say from the mountain’! —

Rabbah b. Samuel said: It means that she came with reference to blood that came from

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the hidden parts [Setharim]. She brought some blood and showed it to him.³² He said to her: Is blood to be shown by night? She replied: Are capital cases tried at night?³³ He said to her:

- (1) Lit., 'would it were so'. So Ahasuerus was as eager to get rid of the Jews as Haman.
- (2) Ibid. 10.
- (3) These are enumerated in Rashi (s.v. גְּבוּיָהָה) and Seder Olam XX-XXI.
- (4) V. infra.
- (5) As it says, fasting³ and weeping and mourning, many put on sackcloth and ashes. Esth. IV,3.
- (6) V. Glos.
- (7) The Bah. reads: Raba demurred to this, saying.
- (8) Who holds that Hallel would be said were we not servants of Ahasuerus.
- (9) Who holds that the Megillah is equivalent to Hallel.
- (10) I Sam. I, 1.
- (11) Lit., 'watchers'. V. supra.
- (12) Lit., 'was required for'.
- (13) The literal meaning.
- (14) Lit., 'height of the world'.
- (15) Num. XXVI, 11.
- (16) Rab (?).
- (17) Lit., 'fenced in'.
- (18) Gen. XI, 29.
- (19) Ibid. XXI. 12.
- (20) Ex. XV, 20.
- (21) I.e., before the birth of Moses.
- (22) Ex. II, 4.
- (23) Jud. IV,4. 'Lapidoth' means literally 'flames'.
- (24) Ibid. 5.
- (25) And the possibility of scandal, a palm tree not being leafy.
- (26) I Sam. II, 1.
- (27) V. I Sam. XVI, 13 (David); I Kings I, 39 (Solomon).
- (28) As symbolized by a horn.
- (29) V. I Sam. X, 1 (Saul); II Kings IX. 1 (Jehu).
- (30) I Sam. II, 2.
- (31) Ibid. XXV, 20.
- (32) David was supposed to have been an authority on the Torah, v. Ber. 4a.
- (33) And yet you are condemning Nabal to death.

Megillah 14b

He [Nabal] is a rebel against the king and no trial is necessary for him.¹ She replied; Saul is still alive, and your fame is not yet spread abroad in the world. Then he said to her:

Blessed be thy discretion and blessed be thou, that hast kept me this day from bloodguiltiness.² The word Damim [blood-guiltiness] is plural, to indicate two kinds of blood.³ The passage teaches that she bared her thigh⁴ and he went three parasangs by the light of it.⁵ He said, Listen to me. She replied, Let not this be a stumbling-block to thee.⁶ The word 'this' implies that something else would be, and what was that? The incident of Bathsheba; and so it was eventually.⁷ The soul of thy lord shall be bound up in the bundle of life.⁸ When she left him she said to him, and when the Lord shall have done good to my lord... then remember thy handmaid.⁹ R. Nahman said: This bears out the popular saying, While a woman talks she spins.¹⁰ Some adduce the saying: The goose stoops as it goes along, but its eyes peer afar. 'Hulda, as it is written, So Hilkiyah the priest and Ahikam and Achbor, etc.¹¹ But if Jeremiah was there,¹² how could she prophesy? —

It was said in the school of Rab in the name of Rab: Hulda was a near relative of Jeremiah, and he did not object to her doing so. But how could Josiah himself pass over Jeremiah and send to her? —

The members of the school of R. Shila replied, Because women are tender-hearted.¹³ R. Johanan said: Jeremiah was not there, as he had gone to bring back the ten tribes. Whence do we know that they returned? —

Because it is written, For the seller shall not return to that which is sold.¹⁴ Now is it possible that after the Jubilee had ceased¹⁵ the prophet should prophesy that it will cease? The fact is that it teaches that Jeremiah brought them back.¹⁶ Josiah the son of Amon ruled over them, as it says, Then he said, What monument is that which I see? And the men of the city told him, It is the sepulcher of the man of God who came from Judah, and proclaimed these things that thou hast done against the altar in Beth-el.¹⁷ Now what connection is there between

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Josiah and the altar in Bethel?¹⁸ What it teaches therefore is that Josiah reigned over them.

R. Nahman said: We learn it from here: Also, O Judah, there is a harvest appointed for thee, when I would turn the captivity of my people.¹⁹ ‘Esther,’ as it is written, Now it came to pass on the third day that Esther clothed herself in royalty.²⁰ Surely it should say, ‘royal apparel’? What it shows is that the holy spirit clothed her. It is written here, ‘and she clothed’, and it is written in another place. Then the spirit clothed Amasai, etc.²¹

R. Nahman said: Haughtiness does not befit women. There were two haughty women, and their names are hateful, one being called a hornet²² and the other a weasel.²³ Of the hornet it is written, And she sent and called Barak,²⁴ instead of going to him. Of the weasel it is written, Say to the man,²⁵ instead of ‘say to the king’.

R. Nahman said: Hulda was a descendant of Joshua. It is written here [in connection with Hulda]. The son of Harhas,²⁶ and it is written in another place [in connection with Joshua], In Timnath-Heres.²⁷

R. ‘Ena Saba cited the following in objection to R. Nahman: ‘Eight prophets who were also priests were descended from Rahab the harlot, namely, Neriah, Baruch, Serayah, Mahseyah, Jeremiah, Hilkiyah, Hanamel and Shallum.’

R. Judah says: Hulda the prophetess was also one of the descendants of Rahab the harlot. [We know this] because it is written here ‘the son of Tikvah’ and it is written elsewhere [in connection with Rahab]. ‘the line [Tikvath] of scarlet thread’!²⁸ –

He replied: ‘Ena Saba’²⁹ – or, according to another report. ‘Black bowl’,³⁰ – the truth can be found by combining my statement and yours’.³¹ We must suppose that she became a proselyte and Joshua married her. But had Joshua any children? Is it not

written, Nun his son, Joshua his son?³² – He had no sons, but he had daughters.

- (1) I.e., he can be condemned at night. V. Tosaf.
- (2) I Sam. XXV, 33.
- (3) Of uncleanness and capital punishment.
- (4) Not necessarily in his presence. V. Maharsha.
- (5) I.e., through desire for her. V. Tosaf.
- (6) Ibid. 31.
- (7) This shows that she was a prophetess.
- (8) Ibid. 29. This sentence seems to be an interpolation and should be omitted (Maharsha).
- (9) Ibid. 30, 31.
- (10) Ibid. So Abigail, while speaking about Nabal, put in a word for herself, proposing that David should marry her should Nabal die (Rashi).
- (11) II Kings XXII, 14.
- (12) Jeremiah began to prophesy in the thirteenth year of Josiah (Jer. I, 2) and this happened in the eighteenth year of Josiah.
- (13) And she would pray for them (Maharsha).
- (14) Ezek. VII, 13. Ezekiel prophesied in the period between the exiles of Jeconiah and Zedekiah.
- (15) The Jubilee was to be kept only when all Israel were in the land, and therefore ceased as soon as the tribes across the Jordan were deported (Rashi).
- (16) So that in that year they commenced counting again for the Jubilee.
- (17) II Kings XXIII, 17.
- (18) Which was in the kingdom of Ephraim.
- (19) Hos. VI, 11. ‘Harvest’ here is supposed to have the sense of ‘power’ or ‘greatness’ (Rashi).
- (20) Esth. V, 1.
- (21) I Chron. XII, 19.
- (22) The literal meaning of Deborah.
- (23) The literal meaning of Hulda.
- (24) Jud. IV, 6.
- (25) II Kings XXII, 15.
- (26) Ibid. 14.
- (27) Jud. II, 9. This is interpreted as ‘Timnath belonging to Heres’, who is identified with Harhas.
- (28) Josh. II, 18.
- (29) Lit., ‘old eye’.
- (30) Alluding perhaps to his ugliness (Maharsha).
- (31) Lit., ‘from me and thee is the matter concluded’.
- (32) I Chron. VII, 27. The genealogy stops at this point; from which it is inferred that Joshua had no sons.

Megilah 15a

We admit that [some of] those [eight] mentioned above are expressly described [as

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prophets],¹ but how do we know that their fathers² [were prophets]? —

From the dictum of ‘Ulla; for ‘Ulla said: Wherever a man's name is given along with that of his father as the author of a prophecy³ we know that he was a prophet son of a prophet. Where his own name is given but not that of his father, we know that he was a prophet but not the son of a prophet. Where his name and the name of his town are specified, we know that he came from that town — Where his name is given but not that of his town, we know that he was from Jerusalem. —

In a Baraitha it was stated: If nothing is known about the character of a man or of his ancestors,⁴ and the Scripture mentions any one of them in connection with a praiseworthy action, as for instance, The word of the Lord which came to Zephaniah son of Cushi son of Gedaliah,⁵ we may know that he was a righteous man son of a righteous man; and wherever the Scripture mentions any one of them in connection with a reprehensible action, as for instance, And it came to pass in the seventh month that Ishmael the son of Elishama came,⁶ we may know that he was a wicked man son of a wicked man. R. Nahman⁷ said: Malachi is the same as Mordecai. Why was he called Malachi? Because he was next to the king.⁸ The following was cited in objection to this: ‘Baruch the son of Neriah and Serayah the son of Mahseyah and Daniel and Mordecai, Bilshan, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi all prophesied in the second year of Darius’! — This is a refutation.

It has been taught: R. Joshua b. Korha said: Malachi is the same as Ezra, and the Sages say that Malachi was his proper name. R. Nahman said: There is good ground for accepting the view that Malachi was the same as Ezra. For it is written in the prophecy of Malachi, Judah hath dealt treacherously and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem, for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the

Lord which he loveth and hath married the daughter of a strange God.⁹

And who was it that put away the strange women? Ezra, as it is written, And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam answered and said unto Ezra: We have broken faith with our God and have married foreign women.¹⁰ The Rabbis taught: There have been four women of surpassing beauty in the world — Sarah, Rahab, Abigail and Esther. According to the one who says that Esther was sallow,¹¹ Vashti should be inserted in place of Esther.

Our Rabbis taught: Rahab inspired lust by her name; Jael by her voice; Abigail by her memory; Mical daughter of Saul by her appearance. R. Isaac said: Whoever says. ‘Rahab, Rahab’, at once has an issue. Said R. Nahman to him: I say Rahab, Rahab, and nothing happens to me! He replied: I was speaking of one who knows her and is intimate with her. Now when Mordecai knew all that was done¹² [etc.]. What [was his cry]? —

Rab said: He said, ‘Haman has raised himself above Ahasuerus’; Samuel said, ‘The upper king has prevailed over the lower king’.¹³ And the queen was exceedingly pained [Wa-tithhalhal].¹⁴ What is the meaning of Wa-tithhalhal?¹⁵ —

Rab said: It means that she became menstruous; R. Jeremiah said that her bowels were loosened. And Esther called Hatach.¹⁶ Rab said: Hatach is the same as Daniel. Why was he called Hatach? Because he was degraded [Hataku-hu] from his position.¹⁷ Samuel said, Because all affairs of state were decided [Nehtakim] by his voice. To know what this was and why this was.¹⁸

R. Isaac said: She sent to him saying. Perhaps Israel have transgressed the five books of the Torah, in which is written, On this side and on this they were written.¹⁸ And they told Mordecai Esther's words.¹⁹ But Hatach did not go to him on this occasion.²⁰

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This shows us that a recalcitrant answer²¹ need not be taken back [by the messenger].²² Go, gather together all the Jews... which is not according to the custom.²³

R. Abba said: It will not be [she said] according to the custom of every other day. Till now [I have associated with Ahasuerus] under compulsion, but now I will do so of my own will. And if I perish, I perish.²³ As I am lost to my father's house so I shall be lost to thee.²⁴ And Mordecai passed [Waya'abor].²⁵

Rab said: This indicates that he made the first day of Passover pass²⁶ as a fast day. Samuel said: It indicates that he crossed a stream [on that day].²⁷ Now it came to pass on the third day that Esther put on royalty.²⁸ Surely it should say, 'royal apparel'? —

R. Eleazar said in the name of R. Hanina: This tells us that the holy spirit clothed her. It is written here, 'and she put on', and it is written elsewhere, And a spirit clothed Amasai.²⁹

R. Eleazar b. Hanina also said: Let not the blessing of an ordinary man be lightly esteemed in thine eyes, for two men great in their generation received from ordinary men blessings which were fulfilled in them. They were, David and Daniel. David was blessed by Araunah, as it is written, And Araunah said unto the king, The Lord thy God accept thee.³⁰ Daniel was blessed by Darius, as it is written 'Thy God whom thou servest continually, He will deliver thee.'³¹

R. Eleazar further said in the name of R. Hanina: Let not the curse of an ordinary man be lightly esteemed in thine eyes, because Abimelech cursed Sarah, saying, Behold he is to thee a covering of the eyes,³² and this was fulfilled in her seed, [as it says], And it came to pass that when Isaac was old his eyes were dim.³³

R. Eleazar further said in the name of R. Hanina: Come and observe that the way of

the Holy One, blessed be He, is not like the way of flesh and blood — The way of flesh and blood is that a man places a pot on the fire and then pours water into it, but God first puts in the water and then fixes the pot, to fulfill what is written, At the sound of his giving a multitude of waters in the heavens.³⁴

R. Eleazar further said in the name of R. Hanina: Whoever reports a saying in the name of its originator brings deliverance to the world, as it says, And Esther told the king in the name of Mordecai.³⁵

R. Eleazar further said in the name of R. Hanina: When a righteous man dies, he dies only for his own generation.³⁶ It is with him as with a man who loses a pearl. Wherever it is, it remains a pearl,³⁷ and is lost only to its owner. Yet all this availeth me nothing.³⁸

R. Eleazar said in the name of R. Hanina: Because he saw Mordecai sitting in the king's gate, was this any reason why he should say, 'All this availeth me nothing'? The explanation is in the dictum of R. Hisda; for R. Hisda said: The one came [to the court] as a counsellor³⁹ and the other

(1) Viz., Jeremiah and Hanamel (Jer. XXXII) and also Baruch and Serayah, who were disciples of Jeremiah and therefore presumably prophets also (Rashi).

(2) Viz., Hilkiyah, Shallum, Neriah and Mahseyah.

(3) Lit., 'in prophecy'.

(4) Lit., 'where his actions and those of his ancestors are not defined'.

(5) Zeph. I, 1.

(6) Jer. XLI, 1. They came to murder Gedaliah.

(7) According to a better reading, Rab. V infra.

(8) V. Esth. X, 3. 'And he was looked on as an angel (Mal'ak)'. (Maharsha).

(9) Mal. II, 11.

(10) Ezra X, 2.

(11) V. supra p.75.

(12) Esth. IV, 1.

(13) Euphemistically, meaning the opposite. Or it may be taken literally, as a kind of prayer (Maharsha).

(14) Esth. IV 4.

(15) Lit., 'became full of hollows'.

(16) Ibid. 5.

(17) Which he held in the reigns of Belshazzar, Darius and Cyrus.

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- (18) Ex. XXXII, 15.
(19) Esth. IV, 12.
(20) As, if so, it would say he told.
(21) E.g., Esther's reluctance to petition the king.
(22) And Mordecai must have learnt from some other source.
(23) Ibid. 16.
(24) [By submitting voluntarily to Ahasuerus she would be for ever forbidden to Mordecai who was (v. p. 78, n. 5) her legitimate husband, according to the law which forbids a wife to her husband where she had relations of her own free will with another man.]
(25) Ibid. 17.
(26) A play on the word He'ebir which means, 'to prolong a month by adding an extra day', [or in the sense of 'transgressed', cf. Targum a.L.: 'and he transgressed the joy of the feast of Passover'.] The order for the destruction of the Jews was given in Susa on the thirteenth day of Nisan, and the Jews fasted the next three days.
(27) To inform the Jews on the other side. [The Jewish quarter in Susa was separated from the main city by a small tributary of the Tigris. V. Obermeyer, p. 214.]
(28) Esth. V, 1.
(29) I Chron. XII, 19.
(30) II Sam. XXIV, 23.
(31) Dan. VI, 17.
(32) Gen. XX, 16.
(33) Ibid. XXVII, 1. V. supra.
(34) Jer. X, 13. The text continues, when he causeth the vapors to ascend, like steam from a boiling pot.
(35) Esth. II, 22.
(36) And his name, or his soul, survives.
(37) Lit., 'its name is pearl'.
(38) This verse from the Book of Esther (V. 13) is here commented on out of its place, in order to introduce another dictum of R. Eleazar in the name of R. Hanina.
(39) Heb. פרוזבולי apparently = **.

Megilah 15b

as an envoy.¹ R. Papa said: They also called him, The slave that was sold for loaves of bread.² Yet all this availeth me naught. This tells us that all the treasures of that wretch were engraved on his heart, and when he saw Mordecai sitting in the king's gate he said, Yet all this³ availeth me naught.

R. Eleazar further said in the name of R. Hanina: God will in the time to come be a crown on the head of every righteous man, as it is said, In that day shall the Lord of

Hosts be for a crown of glory⁴, etc. What is meant by a 'crown of glory' [Zebi] and a 'diadem [Zefirath] of beauty'? For them that do his will [Zibyono] and who await [Mezapin] his glory. Shall He be so to all? [Not so]. since it says, 'unto the residue of [Lish'ar] his people': that is, to whoever makes of himself a mere residue [Shirayim]. 'And for a spirit of judgment': this indicates one who brings his inclination to trial.⁵ 'To him that sitteth in judgment': this indicates one who gives a true verdict on true evidence.⁶ 'And for strength': this indicates one who subdues his evil passions.⁷ 'That turn back the battle': this indicates those who thrust and parry⁸ in the war of the Torah. 'At the gate': these are the disciples of the wise who are early and late in synagogues and houses of study.

Said the Attribute of Justice⁹ before the Holy One, blessed be He: Why this difference between these and the others? The Holy One, blessed be He, said to him: Israel busy themselves with the Torah, the other nations do not busy themselves with the Torah —

He replied to Him, But these also reel through wine, and stagger through strong drink, they totter in judgment¹⁰ [Paku Pelilyah]; and 'Paku' contains a reference to Gehinnom, as it says, that this shall be no stumbling-block [Pukah] to thee;¹¹ and 'Pelilyah' contains a reference to the judges, as it says. and he shall pay as the judges determine [Bi-felim].¹² And stood in the inner court of the king's house.¹³

R. Levi said: When she reached the chamber of the idols, the Divine Presence left her. She said, My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me.¹⁴ Dost thou perchance punish the inadvertent offence¹⁵ like the presumptuous one, or one done under compulsion like one done willingly? Or is it because I called him 'dog', as it says. Deliver my soul from the sword, mine only one from the power of the dog?¹⁶ She straightway retracted and called him lion, as it says. Save

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me from the lion's mouth.¹⁷ And it was so when the king saw Esther the queen.¹⁸

R. Johanan said: Three ministering angels were appointed to help her at that moment; one to make her head¹⁹ erect, a second to endow her with charm²⁰ and a third to stretch the golden scepter. How much [was it stretched]? —

R. Jeremiah said: It was two cubits long and he made it twelve cubits — Some say, sixteen, and some again twenty-four. In a Baraitha it was stated, sixty. So too you find with the arm of the daughter of Pharaoh,²¹ and so you find with the teeth of the wicked, as it is written, Thou hast broken [Shibarta] the teeth of the wicked,²² and Resh Lakish said in regard to this, Read not Shibarta but Shirbabta [Thou hast prolonged].

Rabbah b. 'Ofra said in the name of R. Eleazar who had it from his teacher, who had it from his teacher, [that the scepter was stretched] two hundred [cubits]. And the king said to her, What wilt thou, queen Esther? For whatever thy request, even to the half of the kingdom, it shall be given thee.²³ 'Half the kingdom', but not the whole kingdom. and not a thing which would divide the kingdom.²⁴ What could that be? The building of the Temple. Let the king and Haman come unto the banquet.²⁵

Our Rabbis taught: What was Esther's reason for inviting Haman? —

R. Eleazar said, She set a trap for him, as it says. Let their table before them become a snare.²⁶ R. Joshua said: She learnt to do so from her father's house, as it says. If thine enemy be hungry give him bread to eat, etc.²⁷ R. Meir said, So that he should not form a conspiracy²⁸ and rebel. R. Judah said: So that they should not discover that she was a Jewess.²⁹ R. Nehemiah said: So that Israel should not say, We have a sister in the palace, and so should neglect³⁰ [to pray for] mercy. R. Jose said: So that he should always be at hand for her.³¹ R.

Simeon b. Menassiah said: [She said], Perhaps the Omnipresent will notice³² and do a miracle for us. R. Joshua b. Korha said: [She said], I will encourage him so that he may be killed, both he and I.³³ Rabbah Gamaliel said: [She said]. Ahasuerus is a changeable king.³⁴ Said R. Gamaliel: We still require the Modean,³⁵ as it has been taught: R. Eliezer of Modi'im says, She made the king jealous of him and she made the princes jealous of him. Rabbah said: [She said], Pride goeth before destruction.³⁶ Abaye and Raba gave the same reason, saying: [She said], With their poison I will prepare their feast.³⁷

Rabbah b. Abbuha came across Elijah and said to him, Which of these reasons prompted Esther to act as she did? He replied: [All] the reasons given by all the Tannaim and all the Amoraim. And Haman recounted unto them the glory of his riches and the multitude of his children.³⁸ How many are indicated by 'the multitude of his children'? —

Rab said: Thirty. Ten died, ten were hung, and ten were reduced to beggary. The Rabbis, however, said: Those who were reduced to beggary numbered seventy, as it says, They that were full [Sebe'im] have hired themselves out for bread.³⁹ Read not Sebe'im, but Shib'im [seventy]. Rami b. Abba said: In all they were two hundred and eight, as it says, And the multitude [we-rob] of his sons. But We-rob in gematria⁴⁰ is two hundred and fourteen?⁴¹ — R. Nahman b. Isaac said: The word is written defectively.⁴²

On that night the sleep of the king was disturbed.⁴³ R. Tanhun said: The sleep of the King of the Universe was disturbed. The Rabbis, however, say: Those above⁴⁴ were disturbed and those below⁴⁵ were disturbed. Raba said: It means literally 'the sleep of king Ahasuerus. A thought occurred to him: What is the meaning of Esther inviting Haman? Perhaps they are conspiring⁴⁶ against me to kill me? He thought again: If that is so, is there no man who is my friend

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and who would tell me? Then he thought again: Perhaps there is some man who has done me a good turn and I have not rewarded him; and therefore men refrain from informing me. Straightway, he commanded to bring the book of records of the chronicles.⁴³ And they were read.⁴³ This [form of expression]⁴⁷ indicates that they were read of themselves. And it was found [being] written.⁴⁸ It should say, a writing [Kethab] was found? — This shows

- (1) Heb. פרוסבויט apparently = ** There was a tradition that Mordecai once went with a deputation to the king of Persia to ask permission for the Jews to rebuild the Temple, v. Jast. [Rashi: One (Mordecai) came as a rich man, the other (Haman) as a debtor. Haman according to the legend had sold himself during one of the wars as a slave to Mordecai for a loaf of bread.]
- (2) V. previous note.
- (3) Pointing to it (Maharsha).
- (4) Isa. XXVIII, 5f.
- (5) And forces himself to repent (Rashi).
- (6) Lit., 'true to its own truth'.
- (7) Avoids sin.
- (8) Lit., 'take and give', i.e., 'argue', 'debate'.
- (9) The qualities assigned to God in Ex. XXXIV, 6,7 are called in the Talmud the divine Attributes (Middoth, lit., 'measures'). and those of Justice and Mercy are often personified.
- (10) Isa. XXVIII, 7.
- (11) I Sam. XXV, 31.
- (12) Ex. XXI, 22.
- (13) Esth. V, 2.
- (14) Ps. XXII, 2.
- (15) In associating with Ahasuerus.
- (16) Ibid. 21.
- (17) Ibid. 22.
- (18) Esth. V, 2.
- (19) Lit., 'neck'.
- (20) Lit., 'to draw a thread of grace over her'.
- (21) In Ex. II, 5 the words ותשלח את אמתה are translated by the Rabbis 'and she put forth her arm' (E.V., 'she sent her handmaid')
- (22) Ps. III, 8. Cf. Ber.
- (23) Esth. V, 3.
- (24) By setting up a rival power.
- (25) Ibid. 4.
- (26) Ps. LXIX, 23.
- (27) Prov. XXV, 21. The next verse continues, 'for thou heapest coals of fire upon his head'.
- (28) Lit., 'take counsel'.
- (29) Since she was willing to eat with Haman.
- (30) Lit., 'discuss their mind'.
- (31) If she wanted to accuse him.
- (32) To what straits I am brought.
- (33) Lit., 'she'.

- (34) And I may persuade him to alter his mind while Haman is with us, so that he will not have time to change again.
- (35) To explain why Haman alone was invited (Maharsha).
- (36) Prov. XVI, 18.
- (37) Jer. LI, 39.
- (38) Esth. V, 11.
- (39) I Sam. II, 5.
- (40) V. Glos.
- (41) Viz., W = 6; R = 200; W = 6; B = 2.
- (42) I.e., without the middle waw.
- (43) Esth. VI, 1.
- (44) The angels.
- (45) Israel.
- (46) Lit., 'taking counsel'.
- (47) Instead of 'and they read them'.
- (48) Ibid. 2.

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that Shamschai kept on erasing and Gabriel kept on writing.

R. Assi said: R. Shila, a man of Kefar Temarta,² drew a lesson from this, saying: If a writing on earth which is for the benefit of Israel cannot be erased, how much less a writing in heaven!³ There is nothing done for him.⁴

Raba said: [They answered him thus] not because they loved Mordecai but because they hated Haman. He had prepared for him.⁵

A Tanna stated: [This means], he had prepared for himself.⁶ And do even so to Mordecai, etc.⁷ Haman said to him: Who is Mordecai? He said to him: 'The Jew'. He said: There are many Mordecais among the Jews. He replied: 'The one who sits in the king's gate'. Said Haman to him: For him [the tribute] of one village or one river is sufficient! Said Ahasuerus: Give him that too; 'let nothing fail of all that thou hast spoken'. Then took Haman the apparel and the horse.⁸ He went and found [Mordecai with] the Rabbis sitting before him while he showed them the rules of the 'handful'.⁹ When Mordecai saw him approaching and leading the horse, he became frightened and said to the Rabbis, This villain is coming to

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kill me. Get out of his way so that you should not get into trouble with him.¹⁰ Mordecai thereupon drew his robe round him and stood up to pray. Haman came up and sat down before them and waited till Mordecai had finished his prayer. He said to him: What have you been discussing? He replied: When the Temple stood, if a man brought a meal-offering he used to offer a handful of fine flour and make atonement therewith. Said Haman to them: Your handful of fine flour has come and displaced my ten thousand talents of silver. Said Mordecai to him: Wretch, if a slave acquires property, whose is the slave and whose is the property?¹¹ Haman then said to him: Arise and put on this apparel and ride on this horse, for so the king desires you to do. He replied: I cannot do so until I have gone into the bath and trimmed my hair, for it would not be good manners to use the king's apparel in this state.

Now Esther had sent and closed all the baths and all the barbers' shops. So Haman himself took him into the bath and washed him, and then went and brought scissors from his house and trimmed his hair. While he was doing so, he sighed and groaned. Said Mordecai to him: Why do you sigh? He replied: The man who was esteemed by the king above all his nobles is now made a bath attendant and a barber. Said Mordecai to him: Wretch, and were you not once a barber in Kefar Karzum?¹² (For so a Tanna stated: Haman was a barber in Kefar Karzum twenty-two years.) After he had trimmed his hair he put the garments on him, and said to him, Mount and ride. He replied: I am not able, as I am weak from the days of fasting. So Haman stooped down and he mounted [on his back]. When he was up he kicked him. He said to him: Is it not written in your books,¹³ Rejoice not when thine enemy faileth?¹⁴ He replied: That refers to an Israelite, but in regard to you [folk] it is written, And thou shalt tread upon their high places.¹⁵ And proclaimed before him, This shall be done to the man whom the king delighted to honor.¹⁶ As he

was leading him through the street where Haman lived, his daughter who was standing on the roof saw him. She thought that the man on the horse was her father and the man walking before him was Mordecai. So she took a chamber pot and emptied it on the head of her father. He looked up at her and when she saw that it was her father, she threw herself from the roof to the ground and killed herself. Hence it is written...¹⁷ And Mordecai returned to the king's gate.

R. Shesheth said: This indicates that he returned to his sackcloth and fasting. But Haman hastened to his house, mourning and having his head covered; mourning for his daughter, and with his head covered on account of what had happened to him. And Haman recounted unto Zeresh his wife and all his friends, etc. They are first called 'his friends' and then they are called 'his wise men'.

R. Johanan said: Whoever says a wise thing even if he is a non-Jew¹⁸ is called 'wise'. If Mordecai be of the seed of the Jews. They said to him: If he comes from the other tribes, you can prevail over him, but if he is from the tribe of Judah or of Benjamin, Ephraim or Manasseh, you will not prevail over him. 'Judah', as it is written, Thy hand shall be on the neck of thine enemies.¹⁹ The others, because it is written of them, Before Ephraim and Benjamin and Manasseh stir up thy might.²⁰ But falling thou shalt fall.²¹

R. Judah b. Ila'i drew a lesson from this verse, Saying: Why are two fallings mentioned here? Haman's friends said to him: This people is likened to the dust and it is likened to the stars. When they go down, they go down to the dust, and when they rise they rise to the stars. Came the king's chamberlains and hastened [Wa-yabhilu] to bring Haman.²² The use of this word [Wa-yabhilu]²³ tells us that they brought him all in confusion [Behalah]. For we are sold, I and my people, etc.... For the adversary cares²⁴ not that the king is endamaged.²⁵ She said to him: This adversary cares not for the

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damage of the king. He was angry with Vashti and killed her,²⁶ and he is angry with me and wants to kill me. Then said the king Ahasuerus, and he said to Esther the queen.²⁷ Why ‘said’ and again ‘said’?

R. Abbahu replied: He first spoke to her through an intermediary.²⁸ When she told him that she came from the house of Saul,²⁹ forthwith, ‘he said to Esther the queen’. And Esther said, An adversary and an enemy, even this wicked Haman.³⁰

R. Eleazar said: This informs us that she was pointing to Ahasuerus and an angel came and pushed her hand so as to point to Haman.³¹ And the king rose in his wrath...and the king returned out of the palace garden.³² His returning is put on the same footing as his arising. Just as the arising was in wrath, so the returning was in wrath. For he went and found ministering angels in the form of men who were uprooting trees from the garden. He said to them, What are you doing? They replied: Haman has ordered us. He came into the house, and there ‘Haman was falling³³ upon the couch’. ‘Falling’? It should say. ‘had fallen’? —

R. Eleazar said: This informs us that an angel came and made him fall on it. Ahasuerus then exclaimed: Trouble³⁴ inside, trouble outside! ‘Then said the king, Will he even force the queen before me in the house? Then said Harbonah, etc.’

R. Eleazar said: Harbonah also was a wicked man and implicated in that plot.³⁵ When he saw that his plan was not succeeding, he at once fled, and so it is written, And he cast upon him and did not pity, from his hand he surely fleeth.³⁶ Then the king's wrath was assuaged.³⁷ Why are there two assuagings here?³⁸ —

One of the [wrath of the] King of the Universe,³⁹ and the other of Ahasuerus. Others say, one [of the wrath] on account of Esther and the other on account of Vashti.

To all of them he gave to each man changes of raiment but to Benjamin he gave five changes of raiment.⁴⁰ Is it possible that that righteous man⁴¹ should fall into the very mistake from which he himself had suffered?

(1) A scribe, mentioned in the book of Ezra (IV, 8) as an enemy of the Jews. According to tradition he was a son of Haman.

(2) [Tamara, south of Kabul, v. E.J. s.v.]

(3) Seeing that Gabriel is already there (Maharsha).

(4) Esth. VI, 3.

(5) Ibid. 4.

(6) As otherwise the words ‘for him,’ are superfluous.

(7) Ibid. 10.

(8) Ibid. 11.

(9) V. Lev. II, 2 and infra.

(10) Lit., ‘that you be not burnt with his coal’.

(11) How then can you, being the slave of Ahasuerus, talk of your ten talents of silver. [Aliter: Haman had sold himself to Mordecai as slave. V. supra p. 90. n. 4.]

(12) [MS.M. קרניוס, Kefar Karnayim in Transjordan, cf. Josephus, Ant. XII, 8,4; v. however, Romanoff, P. Amer. Acad. for Jewish Research, VII, pp. 58ff].

(13) Lit., ‘for you’.

(14) Prov. XXIV, 17.

(15) Deut. XXXIII, 29.

(16) Esth. VI, 11.

(17) These words connect with the sentence after the next, ‘but Haman hastened’, etc.

(18) Lit., ‘of the nations of the world’.

(19) Gen. XLIX, 8.

(20) Ps. LXXX, 3.

(21) So lit. E.V. Shalt surely fall.

(22) Esth. VI, 14.

(23) Instead of the more usual וימקרו.

(24) E.V., ‘is not worthy’.

(25) Esth. VII, 4.

(26) V. supra 12b.

(27) Ibid. 5.

(28) Heb. Turgeman; lit., ‘interpreter’.

(29) I.e., that she was of royal descent.

(30) Ibid. 6.

(31) She meant the words ‘adversary and enemy’ to apply to Ahasuerus himself.

(32) Esth. VII, 7f.

(33) Heb. נפל.

(34) Lit., ‘woe!’.

(35) To hang Mordecai. [Otherwise how would he have known the exact measurements of the gallows.]

(36) Job XXVII, 22.

(37) Esth. VII, 10.

(38) The Hebrew is שככה, where שכה might have been used.

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(39) Against Israel for bowing down to the image; supra 12a.

(40) Gen. XLV, 22.

(41) Joseph.

Megilah 16b

For Raba b. Mehasia said in the name of R. Hami b. Guria, who said it in the name of Rab: Through two Sela's weight of fine silk which Jacob gave to Joseph over what he gave to his brothers, a ball was set rolling and our ancestors eventually went down to Egypt! —

R. Benjamin b. Japhet said: He gave him a hint that a descendant would issue from him who would go forth before a king in five royal garments, as it says, And Mordecai went forth from the presence of the king in royal apparel of blue, etc.¹ And he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck.² How many necks³ had Benjamin? —

R. Eleazar said: He wept for the two Temples which were destined to be in the territory of Benjamin⁴ and to be destroyed. And Benjamin wept upon his neck:² he wept for the tabernacle of Shiloh which was destined to be in the territory of Joseph and to be destroyed. And behold your eyes see and the eyes of my brother Benjamin.⁵

R. Eleazar said: He said to them: Just as I bear no malice against my brother Benjamin who had no part in my selling, so I have no malice against you. That it is my mouth that speaketh unto you. As my mouth is, so is my heart. And to his father he sent in like manner ten asses laden with the good things of Egypt.⁶ What are 'the good things of Egypt'?

R. Benjamin b. Japhet said in the name of R. Eleazar: He sent him [old] wine which old men find very comforting.⁷ And his brethren also went and fell down before him.⁸ R. Benjamin b. Japhet said in the name of R. Eleazar: This bears out the popular saying, A fox in its hour — bow down to it. [You compare Joseph to] a fox! Where was his

inferiority to his brothers? Rather if this was said [by R. Eleazar] it was applied as follows: And Israel bowed down upon the bed's head.⁹

R. Benjamin b. Japhet said in the name of R. Eleazar; A fox in its hour — bow down to it.¹⁰ And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.¹¹

R. Benjamin b. Japhet said in the name of R. Eleazar: This tells us that he spoke to them words which greatly reassured them,¹² [saying], If ten lights were not able to put out one, how can one light put out ten? The Jews had light and gladness and joy and honor.¹³

Rab Judah said: 'Light' means the Torah,¹⁴ and so it says. For the commandment is a lamp and the Torah is a light.¹⁵ 'Gladness' means a feast day; and so it says, And thou shalt be glad in thy feast.¹⁶ 'Joy' means circumcision; and so it says, I rejoice at thy word.¹⁷ 'Honor' means the phylacteries, and so it says, And all the peoples of the earth shall see that the name of the Lord is called upon thee, and they shall be afraid of thee;¹⁸ and it has been taught: R. Eleazar the Great says that this refers to the phylactery of the head. And Parshandatha... the ten sons of Haman.¹⁹

R. Adda from Joppa said: The ten sons of Haman and the word 'ten' [which follows] should be said²⁰ in one breath. What is the reason? Because their souls all departed together.

R. Johanan said: The Waw of Waizatha must be lengthened like a boat-pole of the river Libruth.²¹ What is the reason? Because they were all strung on one pole.

R. Shila, a man of Kefar Temarta, drew a lesson from this saying, All the songs [in Scripture] are written in the form of a half brick over a whole brick,²² and a whole brick²² over a half brick,²³ with the exception of this one and the list of the kings of Canaan²⁴ which are written in the form of a

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half brick over a half brick and a whole brick over a whole brick.²⁵ What is the reason? So that they should never rise again from their downfall. And the king said to the queen, In Shushan the castle the Jews have slain...²⁶ The mode of expression informs us that an angel came and slapped him on his mouth.²⁷ But when she came before the king, he said along with the letter.²⁸ ‘He said’? It should be, ‘she said’! —

R. Johanan said: She said, Let there be said by word of mouth what is written in the letter.²⁹ Words of peace and truth.³⁰ R. Tanhum said: [or, according to some, R. Assi]: This shows that the Megillah requires to be written on ruled lines, like the true essence of the Torah.³¹ And the ordinance of Esther confirmed.³² Only the ordinance of Esther and not the words of the fastings? —

R. Johanan said: We must read thus: The words of the fastings [and their cry] and the ordinance of Esther confirmed these matters of Purim.³³ For Mordecai the Jew was next unto king Ahasuerus, and great among the Jews and accepted of the majority of his brethren.³⁴ Of the majority of his brethren but not of all his brethren; this informs us that some members of the Sanhedrin separated from him.³⁵

R. Joseph said: The study of the Torah is superior to the saving of life. For at first Mordecai was reckoned next after four, but afterwards next after five. At first it is written, Who came with Zerubabel, [namely] Jeshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan,³⁶ and subsequently it is written, Who came with Zerubabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Azariah, Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan.³⁷ Rab — or, some say. R. Samuel b. Martha — said: The study of the Torah is superior to the building of the Temple, for as long as Baruch b. Neriah was alive Ezra would not leave him to go up to the land of Israel.³⁸

Rabbah said in the name of R. Isaac b. Samuel b. Martha: The study of the Torah is

superior to the honoring of father and mother. For, for the fourteen years that Jacob spent in the house of Eber, he was not punished, since a Master has said:

- (1) Esth. VIII, 15.
- (2) Gen. XLV, 14.
- (3) The Heb. צוֹאֵרִי can also be taken as a plural. [Rashi omits this question. He did not regard the exposition that follows as being based upon the supposed difference in the grammatical form. the neck is simply taken as allusion to the Temple.]
- (4) On the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.
- (5) Gen. XLV, 12.
- (6) Ibid. 23.
- (7) Lit., ‘in which the mind of old will take delight’.
- (8) Ibid. L, 18.
- (9) Ibid. XLVII, 31.
- (10) By comparison with his father there would be no disrespect in referring to Joseph as a fox.
- (11) Lit., ‘upon their heart.’
- (12) Lit., ‘which were received upon the heart’.
- (13) Esth. VIII, 16.
- (14) I.e., they resumed the study of the Torah without hindrance; and so with circumcision and phylacteries.
- (15) Prov. VI, 23.
- (16) Deut. XVI, 14.
- (17) Ps. CXIX, 162. The word לֵאמֹר (saying) here is taken to refer to circumcision because God said (אמר) to Abraham that he should circumcise his son, Gen. XVII, 9.
- (18) Deut. XXVIII, 10.
- (19) Esth. IX, 7-10.
- (20) By one reading the Megillah.
- (21) Not identified, v. B.M., Sonc. ed. p. 503, n. 10.
- (22) Al. ‘blank space’.
- (23) The words in each line must be spaced in such a way as to present this appearance, the space of the half-brick being occupied in each case by the writing.
- (24) In Joshua XII.
- (25) תִּסְפְּתָהּ וְאֵת דְּלִפְוֹן וְאֵת פֶּרְשְׁנֵתָהּ וְאֵת, etc.
- (26) Esth. IX, 12.
- (27) Because he commenced as if in anger and then proceeded and what is thy request, etc.
- (28) Ibid. 25.
- (29) Rashi omits here the words, ‘she said’, and explains that R. Johanan is here laying down the rule that the Megillah (which is called ‘letter’) should be read aloud. How he derives this lesson from the text is not clear.
- (30) Ibid. 30.
- (31) I.e., the Pentateuch, v. Git. 6b.
- (32) Ibid. 32.
- (33) Ibid. 31.
- (34) Ibid. X, 3.

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(35) Because when he rose to power he neglected the study of the Torah.

(36) Ezra II, 2.

(37) Neh. VII, 7. The list in Ezra is given in connection with the first return from Babylon, the list in Nehemiah in connection with the dedication of the Temple which is reckoned by the Talmud to have taken place twenty-four years later (v. Rashi); and the incident of Purim is supposed to have taken place in the interval.

(38) I.e., but for Baruch, Ezra would have come back with the first of the returning exiles.

Megillah 17a

Why are the years of Ishmael mentioned? So as to reckon by them the years of Jacob, as it is written, And these are the years of the life of Ishmael, a hundred and thirty and seven years.¹ How much older was Ishmael than Isaac? Fourteen years, as it is written, And Abram was fourscore and six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram,² and it is also written, And Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him,³ and it is written, And Isaac was threescore years old when she bore them.⁴ How old then was Ishmael when Jacob was born? Seventy-four. How many years were left of his life? Sixty-three; and it has been taught: Jacob our father at the time when he was blessed by his father was sixty-three years old. It was just at that time that Ishmael died, as it is written, Now Esau saw that Isaac had blessed Jacob...so Esau went unto Ishmael and took Mahlath the daughter of Ishmael Abraham's son the sister of Nebaioth.⁵

Now once it has been said, 'Ishmael's daughter' do I not know that she was the sister of Nebaioth? This tells us then that Ishmael affianced her and then died, and Nebaioth her brother gave her in marriage.⁶ Sixty-three and fourteen till Joseph was born⁷ make seventy-seven, and it is written, And Joseph was thirty years old when he stood before Pharaoh.⁸ This makes a hundred and seven. Add seven years of plenty and two of famine,⁹ and we have a hundred and sixteen, and it is written, And Pharaoh said unto Jacob, How many are the days of the years of thy life? And Jacob said

unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my sojournings are a hundred and thirty years.¹⁰ But [we have just seen that] they were only a hundred and sixteen? We must conclude therefore that he spent fourteen years in the house of Eber,¹¹ as it has been taught: 'After Jacob our father had left for Aram Naharaim two years.¹² Eber died'.

He then went forth from where he was¹³ and came to Aram Naharaim. From this¹⁴ it follows that when he stood by the well he was seventy-seven years old. And how do we know that he was not punished [for these fourteen years]? As it has been taught: 'We find that Joseph was away from his father twenty-two years.¹⁵ just as Jacob our father was absent from his father'. But Jacob's absence was thirty-six years?¹⁶ It must be then that the fourteen years which he was in the house of Eber are not reckoned. But when all is said and done, the time he spent in the house of Laban was only twenty years?¹⁷ –

The fact is that [he was also punished] because he spent two years on the way, as it has been taught: He left Aram Naharaim and came to Succoth and spent there eighteen months, as it says, And Jacob journeyed to Succoth, and built him a house, and made booths for his cattle;¹⁸ and in Bethel he spent six months and brought there sacrifices.

CHAPTER II

MISHNAH. IF ONE READS THE MEGILLAH BACKWARDS,¹⁹ HE HAS NOT PERFORMED HIS OBLIGATION. IF HE READS IT BY HEART, IF HE READS IT IN A TRANSLATION [TARGUM] IN ANY LANGUAGE,²⁰ HE HAS NOT PERFORMED HIS OBLIGATION. IT MAY, HOWEVER, BE READ TO THOSE WHO DO NOT UNDERSTAND HEBREW²¹ IN A LANGUAGE OTHER THAN HEBREW. IF ONE WHO DOES NOT UNDERSTAND HEBREW HEARS IT READ IN HEBREW, HE HAS PERFORMED HIS OBLIGATION. IF ONE READS IT WITH

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BREAKS,²² OR WHILE HALF-ASLEEP, HE HAS PERFORMED HIS OBLIGATION. IF HE WAS COPYING IT, CORRECTING IT OR EXPOUNDING IT, THEN IF [IN DOING SO] HE PUT HIS MIND [ALSO TO THE READING] OF IT HE HAS PERFORMED HIS OBLIGATION, BUT OTHERWISE NOT. IF [THE COPY FROM WHICH HE READS] IS WRITTEN WITH SAM, WITH SIKRA, WITH KUMUS, OR WITH KANKANTUM,²³ OR ON NEYAR OR DIFTERA,²³ HE HAS NOT PERFORMED HIS OBLIGATION; IT MUST BE WRITTEN IN HEBREW²⁴ ON PARCHMENT²⁵ AND IN INK.

GEMARA. Whence is this rule [not to read backward] derived? — Raba said: The text says, according to the writing thereof and according to the appointed time thereof;²⁶ just as the appointed time cannot be backward,²⁷ so the [reading from the] writing must not be backward. But does the text speak here of reading? It speaks of keeping, as it is written, that they would keep these two days? —

The truth is that we derive the rule from here, as it is written: And that these days should be remembered and kept.²⁸ ‘Remembering’ is here put on the same footing as ‘keeping’: just as keeping cannot be in the wrong order, so remembering also. A Tanna stated: The same rule applies to Hallel,²⁹ to the recital of the Shema,²⁹ and to the ‘Amidah²⁹ prayer. Whence do we derive the rule as regards Hallel? —

Rabbah said: Because it is written, From the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof [the Lord's name is to be praised].³⁰ R. Joseph said, [from here]: This is the day which the Lord hath made.³¹ R. Awia said: Let the name of the Lord be blessed.³² R. Nahman b. Isaac — or you may also say, R. Aha b Jacob — said, It is from here: From this time forth and for ever.³³ ‘To the recital of the Shema’, as it has been taught: The Shema’ must be recited as it is written.³⁴ So Rabbi. The Sages, however, say: It may be

recited in any language. What is Rabbi's reason? Scripture says,

- (1) Gen. XXV, 17.
- (2) Ibid. XVI, 16.
- (3) Ibid. XXI, 5.
- (4) Ibid. XXV, 26.
- (5) Ibid. XXVIII, 6-9.
- (6) Which shows that Ishmael died just about the time that Isaac blessed Jacob.
- (7) It is reckoned by the Talmud that Jacob had been with Laban fourteen years when Joseph was born. V. Gen. XXXI, 41.
- (8) Ibid. XLI, 46.
- (9) V. Ibid. XLV, 6.
- (10) Ibid. XLVII, 8,9.
- (11) [So Rashi: cur. edd., ‘the fourteen years he spent... are not reckoned’.]
- (12) [So Rashi: cur. edd. introduce passage with: ‘Jacob lay hidden in the house of Eber for fourteen years’.]
- (13) This is the reading here of the Bah. The reading of the text is unintelligible.
- (14) [By calculating the years Eber lived, v. Gen. XI, 17.]
- (15) He left when he was seventeen, he was thirty when he stood before Pharaoh, and seven years of plenty and two of famine passed before he saw his father.
- (16) He left when he was sixty-three and returned when he was ninety-nine.
- (17) V. Gen. XXXI, 41.
- (18) Gen. XXXIII, 17: a ‘house’ for one summer, and two ‘booths’ for two winters.
- (19) [Perhaps as a magical incantation for driving away demons. V. Blau Das altjüdische Zauberwesen pp. 146ff.]
- (20) [MS.M. If he read it in Targum (Aramaic); if he read it in any other language. The text of cur. edd. can also bear this interpretation, v. Rashi 18a s.v. קראה].
- (21) לעזות people speaking a foreign (לעז) language.
- (22) I.e., reads a part and then waits some time before resuming v. Gemara.
- (23) Because these materials fade. A similar rule was laid down with regard to the Get. For the meaning of these terms, v. infra in the Gemara.
- (24) Lit., ‘Assyrian’ characters; v. supra 8b.
- (25) Lit., ‘on the book’. [Var lec. ‘on skin’.]
- (26) Esth. IX, 27.
- (27) I.e., the fifteenth cannot come before the fourteenth.
- (28) Esth. IX, 28. The Hebrew word זכירה means both ‘remembering’ and ‘mentioning’.
- (29) V. Glos.
- (30) Ps. CXIII, 3. Just as the sun never goes backward from West to East, so the praise of the Lord should not be recited backward.

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(31) Ibid. CXVIII, 24. The day also cannot go backward.

(32) Ibid. CXIII, 2.

(33) Ibid.

(34) I.e., in the original language.

Megilah 17b

[And these words] shall be,¹ which implies, they shall be kept as they are. And what is the reason of the Rabbis? —

Because Scripture says, Hear,² which implies, in any language which you understand. How then can Rabbi [hold otherwise], seeing that it is written, ‘hear’? — He requires that word for the injunction, ‘Let thine ear hear what thou utterest with thy mouth’.

The Rabbis, however, concurred with the authority who said that if one recites the Shema’ without making it audible, he has performed his obligation. But the Rabbis too — [how can they hold as they do], seeing that it is written, ‘And they shall be’? — They require this for the injunction that it should not be recited backwards. Whence does Rabbi derive the rule that it should not be recited backwards? From [the use of the expression] ‘the words’, where ‘words’ [would have been sufficient].

The Rabbis, however, do not accept this distinction between ‘the words’ and ‘words’. May we say that Rabbi was of opinion that the whole of the Torah has been ordained [to be recited] in any language?³ For should you assume that it has been ordained [to be recited] only in the holy tongue, why should the words ‘and they shall be’ be inserted [in reference to the Shema’]? — These were necessary. For it might have occurred to me to understand ‘hear’ in the same sense as the Rabbis:⁴ therefore the All-Merciful wrote ‘and they shall be’.

May we then say that the Rabbis were of opinion that the whole of the Torah was ordained [to be recited] only in the holy tongue, since, should you assume that it was

ordained to be recited in any language, [I might ask], why should ‘hear’ be inserted [in reference to the Shema’]? — This word is necessary. For it might occur to me to understand ‘and they shall be’ in the same sense as Rabbi. Therefore the All-Merciful wrote, ‘hear’. ‘To the ‘Amidah prayer’. Whence is this derived? — As it has been taught: ‘Simeon the Pakulites formulated eighteen blessings in the presence of Rabban Gamaliel in the proper⁶ order in Jabneh.⁷ R. Johanan said (others report, it was stated in a Baraitha): A hundred and twenty elders, among whom were many prophets, drew up eighteen blessings in a fixed order’.

Our Rabbis taught: Whence do we derive that the blessing of the Patriarchs should be said? Because it says, Ascribe unto the Lord, O ye sons of might.⁹ And whence that we say the blessing of mighty deeds?¹⁰ Because it says, Ascribe unto the Lord glory and strength.¹¹ And whence that we say sanctifications?¹² Because it says, Ascribe unto the Lord the glory due unto His name, worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.¹³ What reason had they for mentioning understanding¹⁴ after holiness? Because it says, They shall sanctify the Holy One of Jacob and shall stand in awe of the God of Israel,¹⁵ and next to this, They also that err in spirit shall come to understanding. What reason had they for mentioning repentance¹⁶ after understanding? Because it is written, Lest they, understanding with their heart, return and be healed.¹⁷ If that is the reason, healing should be mentioned next to repentance?¹⁸ — Do not imagine such a thing, since it is written, And let him return unto the Lord and He will have compassion upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.¹⁹ But why should you rely upon this verse? Rely rather on the other! —

There is written another verse, Who forgiveth all thine iniquity, who healeth all thy diseases, who redeemeth thy life from the pit,²⁰ which implies that redemption and healing come after forgiveness. But it is written, ‘Lest they return and be healed’?

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That refers not to the healing of sickness but to the healing [power] of forgiveness. What was their reason for mentioning redemption in the seventh blessing?²¹ Raba replied: Because they [Israel] are destined to be redeemed in the seventh year [of the coming of the Messiah],²² therefore the mention of redemption was placed in the seventh blessing. But a Master has said, 'In the sixth year will be thunders, in the seventh wars, at the end of the seventh the son of David will come'? — War is also the beginning of redemption. What was their reason for mentioning healing in the eighth blessing? —

R. Aha said: Because circumcision which requires healing is appointed for the eighth day, therefore it was placed in the eighth blessing. What was their reason for placing the [prayer for the] blessing of the years ninth? R. Alexandri said: This was directed against those who raise the market price [of foodstuffs], as it is written, Break thou the arm of the wicked; and when David said this, he said it in the ninth Psalm.²³ What was their reason for mentioning the gathering of the exiles after the blessing of the years? —

Because it is written, But ye, O mountains of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches and yield your fruit to thy people Israel, for they are at hand to come.²⁴ And when the exiles are assembled, judgment will be visited on the wicked, as it says, And I will turn my hand upon thee and purge away thy dross as with lye,²⁵ and it is written further, And I will restore thy judges as at the first.²⁶ And when judgment is visited on the wicked, transgressors cease,²⁷ and presumptuous sinners²⁸ are included with them, as it is written, But the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together, and they that forsake the Lord shall be consumed.²⁹ And when the transgressors have disappeared, the horn of the righteous is exalted,³⁰ as it is written, All the horns of the wicked also will I cut off, but the horns of the righteous shall be lifted

up.³¹ And 'proselytes of righteousness'³² are included with the righteous, as it says, thou shalt rise up before the hoary head and honor the face of the old man,³³ and the text goes on, And if a stranger sojourn with thee. And where is the horn of the righteous exalted? In Jerusalem,³⁴ as it says, Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, may they prosper that love thee.³⁵ And when Jerusalem is built, David³⁶ will come, as it says.

(1) Deut. VI, 6.

(2) Ibid. 4. The word שמע means both 'hear' and 'understand'.

(3) According to Tosaf., this refers only to those passages of the Scripture which were to be recited on special occasions, e.g., the passage relating to the first-fruit, the declaration of Halizah, etc.

(4) Viz., in any language.

(5) Possibly this means 'cotton dealer' (Rashi).

(6) I.e. one based on Scriptural texts, as explained infra.

(7) V. Ber. 28b.

(8) The first blessing, containing the words, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'. For the 'Amidah prayer v. P.B. pp. 44ff.

(9) Ps. XXIX, 1. 'Sons of might' is taken as a description of the Patriarchs. The Talmud renders: 'Mention before the Lord the sons of might', i.e., the Patriarchs.

(10) The second blessing, mentioning the 'mighty deed' of the resurrection.

(11) Ps. XXIX, 1.

(12) The third blessing beginning, 'Thou art holy'.

(13) Ibid. 2.

(14) In the fourth blessing, beginning, 'Thou grantest to man understanding'.

(15) Isa. XXIX, 23f.

(16) In the fifth blessing, commencing, 'Bring us back, O Father'.

(17) Ibid. VI, 10.

(18) Whereas in fact it comes in the next blessing but one, 'redemption' being interposed.

(19) Ibid. LV, 7.

(20) Ps. CIII, 3f.

(21) Concluding, 'Blessed art thou, O Lord, who redeemest Israel'.

(22) V. Sanh. 97a.

(23) In our books it is the tenth (v. 15), but the Talmud apparently reckoned the first and second Psalms as one.

(24) Ezek. XXXVI, 8.

(25) Isa. I, 25.

(26) Ibid. 26. The next blessing proceeds, 'Restore our judges', etc.

(27) MS. M. minim (plur. of min v. Glos.).

MEGILLAH – 2a-32a

(28) Mentioned in the next blessing. This, however, was not one of the original eighteen, v. Ber. 28b.

(29) Ibid. 28.

(30) The next blessing concludes, 'the support and trust of the righteous'.

(31) Ps. LXXV, II.

(32) Mentioned in the same blessing. 'Proselytes of Righteousness' are converts who completely accept the Jewish creed and life.

(33) Lev. XIX, 32.

(34) Mentioned in the next blessing.

(35) Ps. CXXII, 6.

(36) Mentioned in the next blessing, which commences, 'Cause to sprout quickly the shoot of David'.

Megilah 18a

Afterwards shall the children of Israel return and seek the Lord their God, and David their king.¹ And when David comes, prayer² will come, as it says. Even then will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer.³ And when prayer has come, the Temple service⁴ will come, as it says, Their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be acceptable upon mine altar.⁵ And when the service comes, thanksgiving⁶ will come, as it says. Whoso offereth the sacrifice of thanksgiving honoreth me.⁷ What was their reason for inserting the priestly benediction after thanksgiving? Because it is written, And Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and he came down from offering the sin-offering and the burnt-offering and the peace-offerings.⁸ But cannot I say that he did this before the service? —

Do not imagine such a thing. For it is written, 'and he came down from offering'. Is it written 'to offer'? It is written, 'from offering'.⁹ Why not then say it [the priestly benediction] after the [blessing of] the Temple service? —

Do not imagine such a thing, since it is written, whoso offereth the sacrifice of thanksgiving.¹⁰ Why base yourself upon this verse? Why not upon the other? — It is reasonable to regard service and thanksgiving as one. What was their reason

for having 'give peace' said after the priestly benediction? —

Because it is written, So they [the priests] shall put my name upon the children of Israel, and [then] I shall bless them;¹¹ and the blessing of the Holy One, blessed be He, is peace, as it says, The Lord shall bless his people with peace.¹² Seeing now that a hundred and twenty elders, among whom were many prophets, drew up the prayers in the proper order, why did Simeon the Pakulite formulate them? —

They were forgotten, and he formulated them afresh. Beyond this it is forbidden to declare the praise of the Holy One, blessed be He.¹³ For R. Eleazar said: What is the meaning of the verse, Who can express the mighty acts of the Lord, or make all his praise to be heard?¹⁴ For whom is it fitting to express the mighty acts of the Lord? For one who can make all his praise to be heard.

Rabbah b. Bar Hanah said in the name of R. Johanan: One who descants upon the praises of the Holy One, blessed be He, to excess is uprooted from the world, as it says, Shall it be told to him that I should speak? Should a man [try to] say, surely he would be swallowed up.¹⁵ R. Judah a man of Kefar Gibboraya,¹⁶ or, as some say, of Kefar Gibbor Hayil,¹⁷ gave the following homily: What is meant by the verse, For thee silence is praise?¹⁸ The best medicine of all is silence. When R. Dimi came, he said: In the West¹⁹ they say: A word is worth a Sela', silence two Sela's.

IF ONE READS IT BY HEART, HE HAS NOT PERFORMED HIS OBLIGATION. Whence this rule? — Raba said: We explain the expression zekirah²⁰ in one passage from its use in another. It is written here, And these days shall be nizkarim²¹ [remembered] and it is written elsewhere, Write this Lezikaron [for a memorial] in the book.²² Just as there it was to be in a book, so here it must be in a book. But how do we know that

MEGILLAH – 2a-32a

this ‘Nizkarim’ implies ‘uttering’? Perhaps it means mere reading with the eyes? —

Do not imagine such a thing, since it has been taught: ‘Remember’ [Zakor].²³ Am I to say, this means only with the mind? When the text says, thou shalt not forget, the injunction against mental forgetfulness is already given. What then am I to make of ‘remember’? This must mean, by utterance.²⁴

IF ONE READS IT IN A TRANSLATION, HE HAS NOT PERFORMED HIS OBLIGATION. How are we to understand this? Are we to suppose that it is written in Hebrew and he reads it in a translation? This is the same as reading by heart! — It is required for the case where it is written in a translation and he reads it in a translation.

IT MAY, HOWEVER, BE READ TO THOSE WHO DO NOT SPEAK HEBREW IN A LANGUAGE OTHER THAN HEBREW. But you have just said, **IF ONE READS IT IN ANY [OTHER] LANGUAGE HE HAS NOT PERFORMED HIS OBLIGATION?** — Rab and Samuel both answered that what is referred to here is the Greek vernacular. How are we to understand this? Shall we say that it is written in Hebrew and he reads it in Greek? This is the same as saying by heart? —

R. Aha said in the name of R. Eleazar: What is referred to is where it is written in the Greek vernacular. (R. Aha also said in the name of R. Eleazar: How do we know that the Holy One, blessed be He, called Jacob El [God]²⁵ Because it says, And the God of Israel called him [Jacob] El.²⁶ For should you suppose that [what the text means is that] Jacob called the altar El, then it should be written, ‘And Jacob called it’. But [as it is not written so], we must translate, ‘He called Jacob El’. And who called him so? The God of Israel). An objection was brought [against the dictum of Rab and Samuel] from the following: ‘If one reads it in Coptic,²⁷ in

Hebraic,²⁸ in Elamean, in Median, in Greek, he has not performed his obligation!’ —

This [statement]²⁹ means only in the same sense as the following: ‘If one reads it in Coptic to the Copts,³⁰ in Hebrew to the Hebrews, in Elamean to the Elameans, in Greek to the Greeks, he has performed his obligation’. If that is the case, why do Rab and Samuel explain the Mishnah to refer to the Greek vernacular? Let them make it refer to any vernacular? — The fact is that the Mishnah agrees with the Baraita,³¹ and the statement of Rab and Samuel was meant to be a general one [thus]: Rab and Samuel both say that the Greek vernacular is good for all peoples. But it is stated, ‘[He may read] in Greek for the Greeks’ — for the Greeks, that is, he may, but for others not? —

They [Rab and Samuel] concurred with Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel, as we have learnt: ‘Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel says: Scrolls of the Scripture also were allowed to be written only in Greek’.³² Let them then say, The Halachah is as stated by Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel? — Had they said, The Halachah is as stated by Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel, I should have understood them to mean that this is the case with other books of the Scriptures but not with the Megillah, of which it is written, according to the writing thereof.³³ Therefore we are told [that this is not so].

IF ONE WHO DOES NOT UNDERSTAND HEBREW HEARD IT READ IN HEBREW, HE HAS PERFORMED HIS OBLIGATION. But he does not know what they are saying? — he is on the same footing as women and ignorant people. Rabina strongly demurred to this saying;³⁴ And do we know the meaning of Ha-ahashteranim Bene Ha-ramakim?³⁵ But all the same we perform the precept of reading the Megillah and proclaiming the miracle. So they too perform the precept of reading the Megillah and proclaiming the miracle.³⁶

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IF ONE READS IT WITH BREAKS [SERUGIN], HE HAS PERFORMED HIS OBLIGATION. The Rabbis did not know what was meant by Serugin,³⁷ until one day they heard the maidservant of Rabbi's household, on seeing the Rabbis enter at intervals, say to them, How long are you going to come in by Serugin?

The Rabbis did not know what was meant by Haluglugoth, till one day they heard the handmaid of the household of Rabbi, on seeing a man peeling Portulaks, say to him, How long will you be peeling your Haluglugoth?

The Rabbis did not know what was meant by, Salseleah and it shall exalt thee.³⁸ One day they heard the handmaid of the house of Rabbi say to a man who was curling his hair, How long will you be Mesalsel with your hair?³⁹

The Rabbis did not know what was meant by, Cast upon the Lord thy Yehab and he shall sustain thee.⁴⁰ Said Rabbah b. Bar Hanah: One day I was traveling with a certain Arab⁴¹ and was carrying a load, and he said to me, Lift up your Yehab and put it on [one of] the camels.

The Rabbis did not know what was meant by, We-tetethia Bematate of destruction,⁴² till one day they heard the handmaid of the household of Rabbi say to her companion, Take the Tatitha [broom] and Tati [sweep] the house. Our Rabbis taught: If one reads it with breaks, he has performed his obligation;

- (1) Hos. III, 5.
- (2) Mentioned in the next blessing, which commences, 'Hear our voice .
- (3) Isa. LVI, 7.
- (4) The next blessing contains the words, 'Restore the service'.
- (5) Ibid.
- (6) The next blessing commences, 'We give thanks to Thee'.
- (7) Ps. L, 23.
- (8) Lev. IX, 22.

(9) [Omit with MS.M.: 'For it is written... to offer?'].

(10) Which shows that sacrifice is followed immediately by thanksgiving.

(11) Num. VI, 27.

(12) Ps. XXIX, 11.

(13) I.e., it is forbidden to add any more blessings.

(14) Ps. CVI, 2.

(15) Job XXXVII, 20. E.V., 'Or should a man wish that he were swallowed up'.

(16) Lit., 'village of warriors'.

(17) Lit., 'village of a mighty warrior'. [MS.M. has 'Kefar Naburya' and 'Kefar Napor Hayil. The former is identified with en-Nebraten in Upper Galilee, v. Keth., Sonc. ed. p. 391, n. 11].

(18) Ps. LXV, 2. E.V., 'Praise waiteth for thee'.

(19) Palestine.

(20) Which means both 'remembering' and 'mentioning'.

(21) Esth. IX, 28.

(22) Ex. XVII, 14.

(23) Deut. XXV, 17.

(24) Lit., 'with the mouth'. So here, the days of Purim must be 'remembered' by utterance.

(25) Generally rendered 'God'; literally, 'Mighty'.

(26) Gen. XXXIII, 20. E.V., and called it El-Elohe-Israel'.

(27) The language of the Egyptians.

(28) Apparently the reference is to a kind of Aramaic spoken by the Bene Eber, or 'on the other side' (Be'eber) of the Euphrates.

(29) The last clause of our Mishnah.

(30) I.e., the Coptic-speaking Jews.

(31) That it may be read in a vernacular only for those who speak that vernacular.

(32) Supra 8b.

(33) Esth. IX, 27.

(34) [Read with MS.M.: 'For should you not say thus' omitting 'Rabina strongly demurred to this'].

(35) Ibid. VIII, 10. E.V., 'that were used in the king's service, bred of the stud'. The words are obviously Persian.

(36) Because they enquire and are told.

(37) The whole of this passage, down to 'house' is repeated in R.H. 26b.

(38) Prov. IV, 8. E.V., 'extol her'.

(39) Which shows that Salseleah means 'turn it about and about'.

(40) Ps. LV, 23. E.V., 'thy burden'.

(41) [Taya, name of Arab tribe which was applied to all Arabs as a part to a whole].

(42) Isa. XIV, 23. E.V., 'I will sweep it with the besom of destruction'.

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if with omissions,¹ he has not performed it. R. Muna said in the name of R. Judah: Even with breaks, if he stops long enough to finish the whole of it, he must go back to the beginning. R. Joseph said: The Halachah is as stated by R. Muna in the name of R. Judah.

Abaye inquired of R. Joseph: [When it says] ‘long enough to finish the whole of it’, does it mean from where he is to the end, or from the beginning to the end? He replied: It means from the beginning to the end, as otherwise there would be no fixed standard.²

R. Abba said in the name of R. Jeremiah b. Abba who said it in the name of Rab: The Halachah is as stated by R. Muna. Samuel, however, said: The Halachah is not as stated by R. Muna. This is the version given in Sura.

In Pumbeditha the following version is given: R. Kahana said in the name of Rab: The Halachah is as stated by R. Muna, but Samuel said that the Halachah does not follow R. Muna. R. Bibi reverses the statement, [making] Rab say that the Halachah does not follow R. Muna and Samuel that it does follow R. Muna.

R. Joseph said: Adopt³ the version of R. Bibi, since it is Samuel who takes note of the view of an individual authority,⁴ as we have learnt: ‘If a woman was waiting for the levir [to make his decision], and a [younger] brother of his became affianced to her sister, the rule was laid down in the name of R. Judah b. Bathyra that the Beth din say to him, Wait till your elder brother acts [one way or the other];⁵ and Samuel said, The Halachah is as stated by R. Judah b. Bathyra’.⁶

Our Rabbis taught: If the scribe had omitted letters or verses and the reader read them like the translator when he is translating,⁷ he has performed his obligation. The following was cited in objection to this: ‘If letters in it [the scroll] are partially effaced or torn, if

they are still legible, it may be used, but otherwise it may not be used’! — There is no contradiction: the one statements refers to the whole of it, the other⁹ to part of it.

Our Rabbis taught: If the reader omitted one verse, he must not say, I will finish reading it [the Megillah] and I will then read that verse, but he must read [again] from that verse. If a man enters the synagogue and finds that the congregation has read half, he must not say, I will read half with the congregation and then I will read the other half, but he must read it from the beginning to the end.

IF HE WAS HALF-ASLEEP, HE HAS PERFORMED HIS OBLIGATION. What is meant by ‘half-asleep’?¹⁰ — R. Ashi said: He is asleep and not asleep, awake and not awake; if he is called he responds, but he cannot give a rational answer, though if he is reminded [of what has been said] he remembers.

IF ONE WAS WRITING IT, EXPOUNDING IT, OR CORRECTING IT, IF HE PUT HIS MIND TO IT, etc. How are we to understand this? If he was conning each verse and then writing it, what does it matter if he did put his mind to it? He is writing by heart! We must suppose therefore that he writes each verse and then recites it. But does he thereby perform his obligation? Has not R. Helbo said in the name of R. Hama b. Guria who said it in the name of Rab, The Halachah follows the view of him who says that all of it [must be recited],¹¹ and even according to the one who says that it is sufficient [to recite] from ‘A Jew was’, it is necessary that the whole should be [already] written? We must suppose therefore that a Megillah lies before him and he reads from it, verse by verse, and then writes.

Shall we then¹² say that this supports Rabbah b. Bar Hanah, for Rabbah b. Bar Hanah said in the name of R. Johanan. It is forbidden to write one letter [of the

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Megillah], save from a copy? Perhaps [the Mishnah speaks only of a case] where he just happened [to have a copy before him].¹³ The text [above states]: ‘Rabbah b. Bar Hanah said in the name of R. Johanan, It is forbidden to write one letter save from a copy’. The following was cited in opposition to this: ‘It happened once that R. Meir went to prolong the year¹⁴ in Assia,¹⁵ and there was no Megillah there and he wrote one out by heart’! —

R. Abbahu said: R. Meir is different, because to him could be applied the verse, Thine eyelids shall look straight before thee.¹⁶ Rami b. Hama asked R. Jeremiah from Difti:¹⁷ What is the meaning of ‘thine eyelids [‘Af’apeka] shall look straight before thee’? — He replied: This refers to the words of the Torah, of which it is written, Wilt thou direct [Ta’if] thine eyes from it? it is gone.¹⁸ And even so, R. Meir could produce them correctly.

R. Hisda found R. Hananel writing scrolls without a copy. He said to him: You are quite qualified to write the whole Torah by heart,¹⁹ but thus have the Sages ruled: It is forbidden to write one letter save from a copy. Seeing that he said, ‘You are qualified to write the whole Torah by heart’, we may conclude that he could produce them correctly, and we see that R. Meir actually did write?²⁰ — In case of emergency it is different — Abaye allowed the members of the household of Bar Habuz²¹ to write Tefillin and Mezuzoth²² without a copy. What authority did he follow? —

The following Tanna, as it has been taught: R. Jeremiah says in the name of our Teacher:²³ Tefillin and Mezuzoth may be written out without a copy, and do not require to be written upon ruled lines. The law, however, is that Tefillin do not require lines,²⁴ but Mezuzoth do require lines, and both may be written without a copy. What is the reason? — They are well known by heart.

IF IT WAS WRITTEN WITH SAM²⁵, etc. SAM: this is paint. **SIKRA:** this is vermilion. Rabbah b. Bar Hanah said: It is what we call Sekarta [vermilion].

KUMUS: this is gum.

- (1) So Asheri. Rashi: ‘Backwards’.
- (2) Lit., ‘you place your rule at the mercy of different measurements’, according to the amount that still remains to be read.
- (3) Lit., ‘take hold of in your hand’.
- (4) When he differs from the majority.
- (5) I.e., decides either to marry the sister-in-law or to take Halizah from her. Otherwise, since the levirate obligation also devolves on the younger brother, he must not marry the sister.
- (6) Although the majority of the Rabbis did not agree with him. V. Yeb. 18b.
- (7) The Pentateuch into Aramaic in the synagogue, which is done by heart (Rashi). [R. Hananel: Like the translator who paraphrases and adds matter which is not in the text].
- (8) That it may not be used.
- (9) That it may be read if letters are omitted.
- (10) Lit., ‘nodding’.
- (11) Infra 19a.
- (12) Since the Mishnah cannot be explained in any other way.
- (13) And would not insist on the rule laid down by Rabbah b. Bar Hanah.
- (14) By intercalating a second Adar.
- (15) Probably one of the cities of Asia Minor is meant, v. Sanh., Sonc. ed. p. 151, n. 1.
- (16) Prov. IV, 25.
- (17) Dibtha below the Tigris S.E. of Babylonia.
- (18) I.e. if one turns his eyes a moment away from the Torah, he forgets it. Prov. XXIII, 5 E.V., ‘wilt thou set thine eyes upon it’.
- (19) Lit., ‘the whole Torah is fitted to be written at thy mouth’.
- (20) Then why could not he also?
- (21) A vendor of Tefillin, v. B.M. 29b.
- (22) V. Glos.
- (23) Rabbi(?)
- (24) V. supra p. 16b.
- (25) For this passage. cf. Git., Sonc. ed. p. 70 notes.

Megilah 19a

KANKANTUM: this is boot-makers’ blacking.

DIFTERA: this is a skin which has been salted and put in flour but not treated with gall nuts.

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NEYAR: this is paper.¹

IT MUST BE WRITTEN IN HEBREW. As it is written, according to the writing² thereof, and according to the appointed time thereof.²

ON PARCHMENT AND IN INK. Whence this rule? — We explain writing³ in one place by the use of the term in another. It is written here, And Esther the queen wrote,³ and it is written in another place, then Baruch answered them, He pronounced all these words unto me with his mouth, and I wrote them with ink in the book.⁴

MISHNAH. A RESIDENT OF A TOWN WHO HAS GONE TO A WALLED CITY⁵ OR OF A WALLED CITY WHO HAS GONE TO A TOWN, IF HE IS LIKELY TO RETURN TO HIS OWN PLACE⁶ READS ACCORDING TO THE RULE OF HIS OWN PLACE,⁷ AND OTHERWISE READS WITH THE REST. FROM WHERE MUST A MAN READ THE MEGILLAH SO AS TO FULFILL HIS OBLIGATION? R. MEIR SAYS, [HE MUST READ] THE WHOLE OF IT; RABBI JUDAH SAYS, [HE MUST READ] FROM ‘THERE WAS A JEW’;⁸ R. JOSE SAYS, FROM ‘AFTER THESE THINGS’.⁹

GEMARA. Raba said: This rule applies only if he¹⁰ intends to return on the night of the fourteenth; but if he does not mean to return on the night of the fourteenth, he reads with the rest. Said Raba: Whence do I derive this ruling? Because it is written, Therefore do the Jews of the villages that dwell in the unwalled towns.¹¹ See now. It is written, ‘the Jews of the villages’. Why then should it be further written, ‘that dwell in the unwalled towns’? This teaches us that one who is a villager for one day is called¹² a villager. We have proved this for a villager. How do we know that it applies also to inhabitants of walled towns? —

It is reasonable to suppose that since a villager of one day is called a villager, a

walled-city-dweller of one day is called a walled-city-dweller. Raba also said: A villager who has gone to a town reads with the rest in any case. What is the reason? By rights he ought to read at the same time as the townspeople — and it is the Rabbis who made a concession to the villagers so that they might supply food and drink to their brethren in the large cities.¹³ Now this applies only so long as they are in their own place, but when they are in the town, they must read like the townspeople.

Abaye raised an objection to this from the following: ‘If a resident of a walled city has gone to a town, in any case he reads according to the custom of his own place’. ‘A resident of a walled city’, do you say? His rule depends on whether he means to return!¹⁴ What you must read, then, is ‘a villager’.¹⁵ — But must you not [in any case] explain [the passage]?¹⁶ Read, [then] ‘reads with the rest’.

FROM WHERE MUST A MAN READ THE MEGILLAH, etc. It has been taught: R. Simeon b. Yohai says, from On that night’.¹⁷ R. Johanan said: All these authorities derived their lesson from the same verse, viz., Then Esther the queen and Mordecai the Jew wrote all the acts of power.¹⁸ He who says that the whole Megillah must be read refers this to the power of Ahasuerus;¹⁹ he who says it must be read from ‘there was a Jew’, to the power of Mordecai; he who says from ‘after these things’, to the power of Haman; and he who says, from ‘on that night’, to the power of the miracle.

R. Huna said: They derived it from here: And what did they see? For this reason. And what came upon them?²⁰ He who says that the whole of it must be read [interprets thus]: What had Ahasuerus seen to make him use the vessels of the Temple? It was for this reason, that he reckoned seventy years and they had not yet been redeemed;²¹ And what came upon them? that he put Vashti to death. He who says that it should be read

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from ‘there was a Jew’ [interprets thus]: What had Mordecai seen that he picked a quarrel with Haman? It was for this reason, that he made himself an object of worship. ‘And what came upon them’? that a miracle was performed [for him]. He who says that it is to be read from ‘after these things’, [interprets thus]: What did Haman see to make him pick a quarrel with all the Jews? It was for this reason, that Mordecai did not bow down or prostrate himself; ‘and what came upon him’? They hung him and his sons on the tree. He who says that it is to be read from ‘on that night’ interprets thus: What did Ahasuerus see to make him order the book of chronicles to be brought? It was for this reason that Esther invited Haman with him. ‘And what came upon them’? A miracle was performed for them.

R. Helbo said in the name of R. Hama b. Guria, who said it in the name of Rab: The Halachah follows the view of him who says that the whole of it must be read; and even according to him who says that it need be read only from ‘There was a Jew’, it must all be written before him.²²

R. Hama b. Guria said in the name of Rab: The Megillah is called ‘book’²³ and it is also called ‘letter’.²⁴ It is called ‘book’ to show that if it is stitched with threads of flax,²⁵ it is not fit for use; and it is called ‘letter’ to show that if it is stitched with three threads of sinew, it may be used. R. Nahman said: This is only on condition that they are evenly spaced.²⁶

Rab Judah said in the name of Samuel: If one reads the Megillah from a volume containing the rest of the Scriptures,²⁷ he has not performed his obligation.²⁸ Raba said: This is the case only if it is not a little shorter or longer than the rest, but if it is a little shorter or longer than the rest,²⁹ there is no objection to it.

Levi b. Samuel was reading before Rab Judah in a Megillah

- (1) Made from papyrus stalk.
- (2) Esth. IX, 27.
- (3) Ibid. 29.
- (4) Jer. XXXVI, 18.
- (5) רַבִּי. V. supra p. 1 n. 3.
- (6) This is explained in the Gemara.
- (7) I.e., on the fourteenth if he belongs to a town, on the fifteenth if to a city.
- (8) Esth. II, 5.
- (9) Ibid. III, 1.
- (10) According to Rashi, this applies only to the man from the walled city who went to a town; but according to Asheri, even if a man from a town went to a walled city and stayed there over the night of the fourteenth, even if he returns to his own place on the fourteenth, he reads on the fifteenth and not on the fourteenth.
- (11) Ibid. IX, 19.
- (12) I.e., comes under the rule of.
- (13) V. supra. 2a.
- (14) As laid down explicitly in the Mishnah.
- (15) And this would contradict the statement of Raba.
- (16) By showing that the reading should be changed.
- (17) Esth. VI, 1.
- (18) Ibid. IX, 29.
- (19) Who is mentioned at the very beginning.
- (20) Ibid. 26. I.e., this is the subject-matter of the Megillah, as explained presently. E.V., ‘And of that which they had seen concerning the matter’.
- (21) V. supra 11b.
- (22) I.e., he must have a complete copy, even if he does not read the whole of it.
- (23) Esth. IX, 32.
- (24) Ibid. 26.
- (25) According to one authority in Mak. 11a a Sefer Torah must be stitched with sinews.
- (26) Lit., ‘trebled’, i.e., placed at equal distances from one another and from the top and bottom.
- (27) Lit., ‘written among the writings’.
- (28) Because he does not thereby sufficiently proclaim the miracle.
- (29) So that it is recognizable as a separate book.

Megilah 19b

which was included in a volume of the Scriptures. He said to him: [I must tell you that] they have said: ‘If one reads the Megillah from a volume containing the rest of the Scriptures, he has not fulfilled his obligation’.

R. Hiyya b. Abba said in the name of R. Johanan: ‘If one reads the Megillah in a volume containing the rest of the Scriptures,

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he has not fulfilled his obligation'; and he at once qualified this remark¹ by adding, 'in a congregation'.

R. Hiyya b. Abba also said in the name of R. Johanan: It is a rule deriving from Moses at Sinai that a space should be left unstitched [in the Sefer Torah];² and he at once qualified the remark by saying, 'this rule was laid down³ only so that it should not be torn'.⁴

R. Hiyya b. Abba also said in the name of R. Johanan: Had there been in the cave in which Moses and Elijah stood⁵ a chink no bigger than the eye of a fine needle, they would not have been able to endure the light, as it says, for man shall not see me and live.⁶

R. Hiyya b. Abba also said in the name of R. Johanan: What is the meaning of the verse, And on them was written according to all the words which the Lord spoke with you in the mount?⁷ It teaches us that the Holy One, blessed be He, showed Moses the minutiae of the Torah,⁸ and the minutiae of the Scribes,⁹ and the innovations which would be introduced by the Scribes; and what are these? The reading of the Megillah.¹⁰

MISHNAH. ALL ARE QUALIFIED TO READ THE MEGILLAH EXCEPT A DEAF PERSON,¹¹ AN IMBECILE AND A MINOR.¹² R. JUDAH DECLARES A MINOR QUALIFIED.

GEMARA. Who is the Tanna that maintains that [even if] the deaf person has read, it does not count?¹³ — R. Mattenah said: It is R. Jose, as we have learnt: 'If one reads the Shema' inaudibly, he has performed his obligation. R. Jose, however, says that he has not performed his obligation'. But why should we say that [our Mishnah] follows R. Jose and [lays down that] even if the deaf man has read, it does not count? Perhaps it follows R. Judah, and [what it means is that] the deaf man may not read in the first instance, but if he has read, his reading is accepted? —

Do not imagine such a thing. For a deaf man is mentioned in the same category as an imbecile and a minor; just as the reading of an imbecile and a minor is not accepted, so the reading of a deaf man is not accepted. But perhaps there is one rule for the one and another rule for the other? — Since it states in the final clause that R. Judah declares a minor qualified, we may conclude that the first clause does not state the opinion of R. Judah. (But perhaps the whole of the Mishnah states the opinions of R. Judah? —

Is it possible that he should disqualify in the first and permit in the second?)¹⁴ But perhaps the whole [of the Mishnah] gives the views of R. Judah, and he speaks of two kinds of minor, and there is an omission in the Mishnah, and it should run this: 'All are qualified to read the Megillah, except a deaf man, an imbecile and a minor. Of what kind of minor are we speaking? Of one who is not old enough to be trained in the performance of religious duties. But a minor who is old enough to be trained in religious duties¹⁵ may read even in the first instance, since R. Judah declares a minor qualified! —

How then have you explained [the first clause of the Mishnah]? As following R. Judah and applying to an action already performed. What then of this statement made by Judah the son of R. Simeon b. Pazzi: 'One who can speak but not hear may set aside Terumah in the first instance.'¹⁶ Whose view is this? If you say R. Judah's. [this cannot be, because] he would say, his blessing [once made] is a blessing, but he may not say it in the first instance. If you say R. Jose, this also cannot be, since he disallows the action even if already performed! What then will you say? That it follows R. Judah, and that he allows it even in the first instance?¹⁷ What then of this which has been taught: 'A man should not say the grace after food in his heart,¹⁸ but if he does do so, he has performed his obligation'. Whose opinion is this? It is neither that of R. Judah¹⁹ nor that of R. Jose. For if it were to follow R. Judah, it

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would allow this even in the first instance, and if R. Jose, it would disallow it even when performed! —

- (1) Lit., 'he struck it on the head'.
- (2) I.e., the parchment sheets of which the scroll is composed should not be stitched together right to the top and right to the bottom.
- (3) Lit., 'they said', i.e., the Sages. It was not derived from Moses at Sinai.
- (4) Since if it is pulled violently it will give a little and the sheets will not come asunder.
- (5) According to tradition, the cave in which Elijah stood when the Lord passed before him was the same as that in which Moses had stood on a similar occasion.
- (6) Ex. XXXIII, 20.
- (7) Deut. IX, 10.
- (8) Minute indications upon which homiletical lessons are based, e.g., the words קָרַב and קָרַב .
- (9) Inferences drawn by the Scribes from minute indications in the earlier Mishnahs.
- (10) The 'men of the Great Synagogue' who are supposed to have written the Megillah are also numbered among the 'Scribes' (Soferim) by the Talmud.
- (11) Because it is necessary for one who reads the Megillah to hear what he is saying.
- (12) One under thirteen years of age.
- (13) Lit., 'not even if (the thing) is done'.
- (14) The passage in brackets is omitted by Rashi as breaking the connection.
- (15) I.e., nine or ten years old, v. Yoma 82a.
- (16) Although he has to say a blessing which he cannot hear.
- (17) And the Mishnah does not follow R. Judah.
- (18) I.e., inaudibly.
- (19) According to the latest version of his opinion.

Megillah 20a

In fact it follows R. Judah,¹ and he holds that the act may be done even in the first instance, and there is no difficulty: in the first quotation² he is giving his own opinion, in the second³ that of his teacher, as it has been taught: 'R. Judah says in the name of R. Eleazar b. Azariah: One who recites the Shema' must do so audibly, as it says, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is One,⁴ which implies. 'Let thine ear hear what thy mouth utters'.

R. Meir says: [It says], which I command thee this day upon thy heart:⁵ according to the concentration of the mind, so is the value

of the words. Now that you have come so far as this,⁶ you may even say that R. Judah was of the same opinion as his teacher, and the statement made by Judah the son of R. Simeon b. Pazzi follows R. Meir.

R. JUDAH DECLARES A MINOR QUALIFIED. It has been taught: 'R. Judah said: When I was a boy, I read it [the Megillah] before R. Tarfon and the elders in Lydda. They said to him: A proof cannot be adduced from a recollection of boyhood'.⁷ It has been taught: 'Rabbi said: When a boy, I read it before R. Judah. They said to him: A proof cannot be adduced from the very authority who allows [the act]'.⁸ Why did they not say to him, A proof cannot be adduced from recollections of boyhood? They gave him a double answer.⁹ For one thing, they said, you were a boy and besides, even had you been grown up, proof cannot be brought from the very authority who allows.

MISHNAH. THE MEGILLAH SHOULD NOT BE READ, NEITHER SHOULD CIRCUMCISION BE PERFORMED, NOR A RITUAL BATH BE TAKEN,¹⁰ NOR SPRINKLING¹¹ BE PERFORMED, AND SIMILARLY A WOMAN KEEPING DAY FOR DAY¹² SHOULD NOT TAKE A RITUAL BATH UNTIL THE SUN HAS RISEN. BUT IF ANY OF THESE THINGS IS DONE AFTER DAWN HAS APPEARED,¹³ IT COUNTS AS DONE.

GEMARA. Whence this rule [about the Megillah]? — Because the Scripture says, and these days should be remembered [mentioned] and kept,¹⁴ which implies, that they are to be so by day, but not by night. Shall we say that this is a refutation of R. Joshua b. Levi; for R. Joshua b. Levi said: It is a man's duty to read the Megillah by night and a second time by day? — When the Mishnah makes this statement it is referring to the day reading.

NEITHER SHOULD CIRCUMCISION BE PERFORMED. Because it is written, And on the eighth day he shall be circumcised.¹⁵

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NEITHER SHOULD A RITUAL BATH BE TAKEN NOR SPRINKLING BE PERFORMED. Because it is written, **And the clean person shall sprinkle on the unclean... and on the seventh day:**¹⁶ and **bathing**¹⁷ is put on the same footing as sprinkling.

AND SIMILARLY A WOMAN WHO IS KEEPING DAY FOR DAY SHOULD NOT TAKE A RITUAL BATH TILL THE SUN HAS RISEN. This is obvious! Why should a woman keeping day for day be different from all others who are under obligation to take ritual baths?¹⁸ —

Her case had to be mentioned. For you might suppose that she should be on the same footing as the first observation of one with an issue, and the first observation of one with an issue has been put on the same footing as one with a seminal issue, as it is written, **This is the law of him that hath an issue and of him from whom the flow of seed goeth out:**¹⁹ just as one with a seminal issue takes his bath by day, so this one also should take his bath on the same day. This woman, however, cannot bathe on the day, because it is written, **all the days of the issue of her uncleanness she shall be as in the days of her impurity;**²⁰ so [you might say], by night at least she might keep watch for a short time²¹ and then bathe; therefore we are told that [she must not do this], because she requires to count [day for day];²²

(1) And our Mishnah in the first clause follows R. Jose.

(2) Referring to the blessing over Terumah.

(3) Referring to grace after meals

(4) Deut. VI, 4.

(5) Ibid. 6.

(6) To inform us of the difference between R. Judah and R. Meir.

(7) Lit., 'from a boy'.

(8) Seeing that the majority disagree with him.

(9) Lit., 'they answered him (in the form of) one thing and yet another'.

(10) For defilement through a dead body (Num. XIX, 17ff) or through an issue (Lev. XV, 15). So Rashi. Tosaf., however, points out that, according to other passages in the Talmud, it is very

doubtful if this is the rule, and therefore renders, 'the hyssop (for sprinkling) should not be dipped', v. Num. XIX, 11-12.

(11) Of the waters of purification on one who has touched a dead body.

(12) V. supra p. 44, n. 4.

(13) [Lit., 'after the going up of the pillar of the morning'; the first streaks of light visible about 1 1/5 hours before sunrise, v. Maim. Commentary on Ber. I. 1].

(14) Esth. IX, 28.

(15) Lev. XII, 3.

(16) Num. XIX, 19.

(17) V. n. 1.

(18) If we accept the explanation of Tosaf. we must suppose this to refer not to the Mishnah but to mean, 'why should this one be specified rather than any others who have to take ritual baths and who must bathe by day'.

(19) Lev. XV, 32.

(20) Ibid. 25. This shows that she must wait till the day is over. The verse refers to a woman who is keeping day for day.

(21) To make sure that she has no further issue.

(22) Cf. notes supra 3 and 11.

Megilah 20b

and counting must be by day.¹ **IF ANY OF THESE THINGS IS DONE AFTER DAWN HAS APPEARED, IT COUNTS AS DONE.** Whence is this rule derived? —

Raba said: Because the Scripture says, **And God called the light day;**² that which gradually becomes light He called day.³ But according to this, [when it says] and the darkness He called night,⁴ [are we to explain] that which gradually becomes dark He called night? Is it not generally agreed that till the stars come out it is not night? No, said R. Zera; we derive it from here: So we wrought in the work; and half of them held the spears from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared;⁵ and it says further, that in the night they may be a guard to us, and may labor in the day.⁶ What is the point of the second quotation?⁷—

You might say that from the time of the first rising of the dawn it is not yet day, though from the time the sun begins to set it is already night and they were early and late.⁸ Therefore come and hear: that in the night

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they may be a guard to us, and may labor in the day.⁹

MISHNAH. THE WHOLE OF THE DAY IS A PROPER TIME FOR THE READING OF THE MEGILLAH AND FOR THE RECITING OF HALLEL¹⁰ AND FOR THE BLOWING OF THE SHOFAR¹⁰ AND FOR TAKING UP THE LULAB¹⁰ AND FOR THE MUSAF¹⁰ PRAYER AND FOR THE ADDITIONAL SACRIFICES¹¹ AND FOR CONFESSION OVER THE OXEN¹² AND FOR THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT MADE OVER THE TITHE¹³ AND FOR THE CONFESSION OF SINS ON THE DAY OF ATONEMENT,¹⁴ FOR LAYING ON OF HANDS,¹⁵ FOR SLAUGHTERING [THE SACRIFICES], FOR WAVING,¹⁶ FOR BRINGING NEAR [THE VESSEL WITH THE MEAL-OFFERING TO THE ALTAR], FOR TAKING A HANDFUL, AND FOR PLACING IT ON THE FIRE,¹⁷ FOR PINCHING OFF [THE HEAD OF A BIRD-OFFERING]¹⁸ AND FOR RECEIVING THE BLOOD,¹⁹ AND FOR SPRINKLING,²⁰ AND FOR MAKING THE UNFAITHFUL WIFE DRINK²¹ AND FOR BREAKING THE NECK OF THE HEIFER²² AND FOR PURIFYING THE LEPER.²³ THE WHOLE OF THE NIGHT IS PROPER TIME FOR REAPING THE OMER,²⁴ AND FOR BURNING FAT AND LIMBS [ON THE ALTAR].²⁵ THIS IS THE GENERAL PRINCIPLE: ANY COMMANDMENT WHICH IS TO BE PERFORMED BY DAY MAY BE PERFORMED DURING THE WHOLE OF THE DAY, AND ANY COMMANDMENT WHICH IS TO BE PERFORMED BY NIGHT MAY BE PERFORMED DURING THE WHOLE OF THE NIGHT.

GEMARA. Whence this rule [about the Megillah]? —Because the Scripture says, And these days shall be mentioned and kept.²⁶

FOR READING THE HALLEL: as it is written, From the rising of the sun to its going down.²⁷ R. Joseph says: Because it is written, this is the day on which the Lord hath wrought.²⁸

FOR THE TAKING UP OF THE LULAB: as it is written, And ye shall take you on the first day.²⁹

FOR THE BLOWING OF THE SHOFAR, as it is written, it is a day of blowing the horn unto you.³⁰

FOR THE ADDITIONAL SACRIFICES, as it is written, each on its own day.³¹

AND FOR THE MUSAF PRAYER: because the Rabbis put this on the same footing as the additional sacrifices.

AND FOR THE CONFESSION MADE OVER THE OXEN, an analogy being drawn between the ‘atonement’ mentioned in this connection and that mentioned in connection with the Day of Atonement, as it has been taught in reference to the Day of Atonement: ‘And he shall make atonement for himself and for his house:³² the text speaks of atonement made by words. And atonement is by day, as it is written, For on this day shall atonement be made for you.³³

AND FOR THE ACKNOWLEDGMENT MADE OVER THE TITHE: as it is written, And thou shalt say before the Lord thy God, I have put away the hallowed things out of my house,³⁴ and in the same context it says, This day the Lord thy God commandeth thee.³⁵

FOR LAYING ON OF HANDS AND FOR SLAUGHTERING: as it is written, and he shall lay his hand... and he shall kill,³⁶ and it is written in connection with killing, on the same day that ye sacrifice.³⁷

AND FOR WAVING: as it is written, and in the day when ye wave the sheaf.³⁸

AND FOR BRINGING NEAR; because this is compared to waving, as it is written, And the priest shall take the meal-offering of jealousy out of the woman's hand, and shall wave the meal-offering... and bring it near³⁹ [to the altar].

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AND FOR PINCHING AND FOR TAKING A HANDFUL AND FOR BURNING AND FOR SPRINKLING, as it is written, in the day that he commanded the children of Israel [to present their offerings].⁴⁰

AND FOR MAKING THE UNFAITHFUL WIFE DRINK: The word ‘law’ which occurs in this connection is explained by its use in another.⁴¹ It is written here, and the priest shall execute upon her all this law,⁴² and it is written elsewhere, According to the law which they shall teach thee and according to the judgment:⁴³

- (1) As it says, And she shall count seven days. Ibid. 28.
- (2) Gen. I, 5.
- (3) Which shows that from dawn may be called day.
- (4) Ibid.
- (5) Neh. IV, 15.
- (6) Ibid. 16.
- (7) Lit., ‘what is "and it says"’.
- (8) I.e., started before day and finished after nightfall.
- (9) Which shows that all the time during which they labored was called day.
- (10) V. Glos.
- (11) On Sabbath or Festivals. V. Num. XXVIII-IX.
- (12) Brought as a sin-offering for a sin committed unwittingly by the High Priest or by the congregation. V. Lev. IV.
- (13) V. Deut. XXVI, 12-15.
- (14) V. Lev. XVI.
- (15) V. e.g., Lev. I, 4, III, 2.
- (16) E.g., the breast of the peace-offering. V. Lev. VII, 30.
- (17) From the meal-offering. V. Lev. II, 2.
- (18) V. Lev. I, 15.
- (19) Of the slaughtered animal in a vessel.
- (20) The blood on the altar.
- (21) The bitter waters. V. Num. V, 24.
- (22) As atonement for an unpunished murder. V. Deut. XXI, 1-9.
- (23) V. Lev. XIV.
- (24) Lev. XXIII, 10-11.
- (25) V. Lev VI, 2.
- (26) Esth. IX, 28.
- (27) Ps. CXIII, 3.
- (28) Ibid. CXVIII, 24.
- (29) Lev. XXIII, 40.
- (30) Num. XXIX, 1.
- (31) Lev. XXIII, 37.
- (32) Ibid. XVI, 6.

- (33) Ibid. 30.
- (34) Deut. XXVI, 13.
- (35) Ibid. 16.
- (36) Lev. I, 4, 5.
- (37) Ibid. XIX, 6.
- (38) Ibid. XXIII, 12.
- (39) Num. V, 25.
- (40) Lev. VII, 38. and all these ceremonies constitute the presenting of the offering.
- (41) Lit., ‘There comes along "law", "law"’.
- (42) Num. V, 30.
- (43) Deut. XVII, 11.

Megilah 21a

just as judgment is by day,¹ so here it must be by day.

AND FOR BREAKING THE NECK OF THE HEIFER. In the school of R. Jannai it was said: [The word] ‘atonement’ is applied to it² as to holy things.

AND FOR THE PURIFICATION OF THE LEPER: as it is written, This shall be the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing.³

THE WHOLE NIGHT IS A PROPER TIME FOR REAPING THE ‘OMER. Since a Master has said that reaping and counting are to be performed by night and the bringing by day.⁴

AND FOR BURNING FAT AND LIMBS: as it is written, All the night till the morning.⁵

THIS IS THE GENERAL PRINCIPLE: ANY COMMANDMENT THAT IS TO BE PERFORMED BY DAY CAN BE PERFORMED DURING THE WHOLE OF THE DAY. [The words] ‘this is the general principle’ are inserted to add what? — To add the setting of the cups⁶ and the removal of the cups, and in agreement with R. Jose, as it has been taught: ‘R. Jose says: If he removed the old [showbread] in the morning and set the new one in the evening, there is no harm.⁷ What then do I make of the verse, before me continually?⁸ [This is to show that] the table of the Lord should not be without bread.⁹

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A COMMANDMENT WHICH IS TO BE PERFORMED BY NIGHT MAY BE PERFORMED DURING THE WHOLE OF THE NIGHT. What does this add? —It adds the consumption of the Pascal lamb, thus differing from R. Eleazar b. Azariah, as it has been taught: And they shall eat the flesh on that night:¹⁰ R. Eleazar b. Azariah said: It says here, on that night, and it says elsewhere, And I shall pass through the land of Egypt on that night:¹¹ just as there up to midnight [is meant], so here up to midnight [is meant].

CHAPTER III

MISHNAH. HE WHO READS THE MEGILLAH MAY DO SO EITHER STANDING OR SITTING. WHETHER ONE READS IT OR TWO READ IT [TOGETHER] THEY [THE CONGREGATION] HAVE PERFORMED THEIR OBLIGATION. IN PLACES WHERE IT IS THE CUSTOM TO SAY A BLESSING,¹² IT SHOULD BE SAID, AND WHERE IT IS NOT THE CUSTOM IT NEED NOT BE SAID. ON MONDAYS AND THURSDAYS AND ON SABBATH AT MINHAH,¹³ THREE READ FROM THE TORAH, NEITHER MORE NOR LESS, NOR IS A HAFTARAH¹⁴ READ FROM A PROPHET. THE ONE WHO READS¹⁵ FIRST IN THE TORAH¹⁶ AND THE ONE WHO READS LAST¹⁷ MAKE [RESPECTIVELY] A BLESSING BEFORE READING AND AFTER.¹⁸ ON NEW MOONS AND ON THE INTERMEDIATE DAYS OF FESTIVALS FOUR READ, NEITHER MORE NOR LESS, AND THERE IS NO HAFTARAH FROM A PROPHET. THE ONE WHO READS FIRST AND THE ONE WHO READS LAST IN THE TORAH MAKE A BLESSING BEFORE AND AFTER. THIS IS THE GENERAL RULE: ON ANY DAY WHICH HAS A MUSAF¹⁶ AND IS NOT A FESTIVAL FOUR READ; ON A FESTIVAL FIVE READ; ON THE DAY OF ATONEMENT SIX READ; ON SABBATH SEVEN READ; THIS NUMBER MAY NOT BE DIMINISHED BUT IT MAY BE ADDED TO, AND A HAFTARAH IS READ FROM A PROPHET. THE ONE WHO READS FIRST AND THE ONE WHO READS LAST IN THE

TORAH MAKE A BLESSING BEFORE AND AFTER.

GEMARA. A Tanna stated: ‘This [that one may read sitting] is not the case with the Torah’.¹⁹ Whence this rule? —

R. Abbahu said: Because Scripture says, But as for thee, stand thou here by me.²⁰ R. Abbahu also said: Were it not written in the Scripture, it would be impossible for us to say it: as it were, the Holy One, blessed be He, also was standing.²¹ R. Abbahu further said: How do we know that the master should not sit on a couch and teach his disciples while they sit on the ground? Because it says, ‘But as for thee, do thou stand here by me.’²²

Our Rabbis taught: From the days of Moses up to Rabban Gamaliel, the Torah was learnt only standing. When Rabban Gamaliel died, feebleness descended on the world, and they learnt the Torah sitting; and so we have learnt that ‘from the time that Rabban Gamaliel died, [full] honor ceased to be paid to the Torah’. One verse says, And I sat [Wa-esheb] in the mount,²³ and another verse says, And I stood in the mount.²⁴ —

Rab says: He [Moses] stood when he learnt and sat while he went over [what he had learnt]. R. Hanina said: He was neither sitting nor standing, but stooping. R. Johanan said: ‘Sitting’ [Yosheb] here means only ‘staying’, as it says, And ye stayed [Teshbu] in Kadesh many days.²⁵ Raba said: The easy things [he learnt] standing and the hard ones sitting.

WHETHER ONE READS IT OR TWO READ IT, THEY HAVE PERFORMED THEIR OBLIGATION.

(1) V. Sanh. 34b.

(2) ‘And the blood shall be atoned unto them’. Deut. XXI, 8.

(3) Lev. XIV, 2.

(4) This is deduced from scriptural texts in Men. 66a.

(5) Ibid. VI, 2.

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- (6) Containing the frankincense for the showbread.
(7) [Rashi reads, 'also this is (termed) 'continually'].
(8) Lev. XXIV, 3.
(9) [Var lec. 'Should not be overnight without bread'.]
(10) Ex. XII, 8.
(11) Ibid. 12.
(12) After the reading. V. infra.
(13) V. Glos. On these three occasions the first section of the Sedra (portion) of the following Sabbath is read.
(14) V. Glos. [Lit., 'we do not dismiss (the public) with (a reading from) a prophet', the Haftarah having originally formed the concluding part of the morning service Saturdays and Festivals when the worshippers were dismissed to their homes. V. Buchler JQR VI, p. 7].
(15) Lit., 'he who opens', 'begins'.
(16) V. Glos.
(17) Lit., 'he who seals', 'closes'.
(18) V. infra p. 130.
(19) Referring to the public reading of the Law.
(20) Deut. V, 28.
(21) Because it says, by (lit., 'with') me.
(22) And God was to Moses in the relation of master to pupil.
(23) Deut. IX, 9; v. Sot. 49a.
(24) Ibid. X, 10.
(25) Ibid. I, 46.

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A Tanna stated: This is not the case with [the public reading of] the Torah. Our Rabbis taught: As regards the Torah, one reads and one translates,¹ and in no case must one read and two translate [together]. As regards the Prophets, one reads and two may translate, but in no case may two read and two translate. As regards Hallel and the Megillah,² even ten may read [and ten may translate].³ What is the reason? Since the people like it,⁴ they pay attention and hear.⁵

WHERE IT IS THE CUSTOM TO SAY A BLESSING, IT SHOULD BE SAID. Abaye said: This rule applies only to the blessing after the reading, but before the reading it is a religious duty to say a blessing, since Rab Judah said in the name of Samuel: 'Over the performance of all religious precepts a blessing is said as one passes on ['Ober] to

perform them'. How can you prove that this 'passing on means 'just in front of'? —

R. Nahman b. Isaac said: Scripture says, Then Ahimaaz ran by way of the plain and overran [Wa-ya'abor] the Cushite.⁶ Abaye said: We prove it from here: And he himself passed over before them.⁷ Or, if you prefer, I can prove it from here: And their king is passed on before them and the Lord at the head of them.⁸ What blessing is said before the reading of the Megillah? —

R. Shesheth from Kateriza happened [once to read] in the presence of R. Ashi, and he made the blessings M'N'H'.⁹ What blessing is said after it? —

'Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, king of the universe, [the God]¹⁰ who espoused our quarrel and vindicated our cause and executed our vengeance and punished our adversaries for us and visited retribution on all the enemies of our soul. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who avenges Israel on all their enemies'. Raba Says: [The concluding words are], 'The God who saves. R. Papa said: Therefore we should say both: 'Blessed art thou, O Lord, who avenges Israel on all their enemies, the God who saves'.

ON MONDAYS AND THURSDAYS AND ON SABBATH AT MINHAH THREE READ. What do these three represent? — R. Assi said: The Pentateuch, the Prophets and the Hagiographa. Raba said: Priests, Levites, and lay Israelites. But now, in the statement of R. Shimi, 'Not less than ten verses [of the Torah] should be read in the synagogue, the verse 'and [God] spoke to [Moses saying]' being counted as one',¹¹ — what do these ten represent? —

R. Joshua b. Levi said: The ten men of leisure in the synagogue.¹² R. Joseph said: The ten commandments which were given to Moses on Sinai. (R. Levi said: The ten times Hallel [praise] which David uttered in the book of Psalms.)¹³ R. Johanan said: The ten utterances with which the world was

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created.¹⁴ What are these? The expressions ‘And [God] said’ in the first chapter of Genesis.¹⁵ But there are only nine? —

The words ‘In the beginning’ are also a [creative] utterance, since it is written, By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.¹⁶ Raba said: If the first reads four verses¹⁷ he is to be commended; if the second reads four verses¹⁸ he is to be commended; if the third reads four verses he is to be commended. ‘If the first reads four verses he is to be commended’, as we have learnt: ‘There were three bags holding three se’ahs¹⁹ each, in which the priests take up the money-offerings out of the [Shekel] chamber,²⁰ and they were labeled Aleph, Beth, Gimel,²¹ so as to show which was taken out first, so that sacrifices could be brought from that one first, since it is a religious duty to offer from the first. ‘If the middle one reads four verses, he is to be commended’, as it has been taught: ‘[The seven lamps] shall give light in front of the candlestick;²² this teaches that they were made to face the western lamp²³ and the western lamp faced the Shechinah; and R. Johanan said: This shows that the middle one is specially prized’. ‘If the last reads four verses he is to be commended’: because of the principle that ‘in dealing with holy things we promote but never degrade’.²⁴ R. Papa was once in the synagogue of Abe Gobar,²⁵ when the first one [who was called up] read four verses, and R. Papa commended him.

NEITHER LESS NOR MORE [etc.]. A Tanna stated: The one who reads first makes a blessing before the reading, and the one who reads last makes a blessing after it. Nowadays that all make a blessing both before and after the reading, the reason is that the Rabbis ordained this to avoid error on the part of people entering and leaving synagogue.²⁶

ON NEW MOONS AND ON THE INTERMEDIATE DAYS OF THE FESTIVAL FOUR READ. ‘Ulla b. Rab

enquired of Raba: How is the portion of New Moon²⁷ to be divided? [The paragraph commencing] ‘command the children of Israel and say to them’²⁸ has eight verses. How are we to deal with them? Shall two persons read three verses each? Then two verses will be left [to the end of the paragraph], and it is not proper to leave over less than three verses to the end of the paragraph.²⁹ Shall two read four verses each? Then seven verses will be left altogether, [the paragraph beginning] ‘and on the Sabbath day’³⁰ being two, and [the paragraph beginning] ‘and on your new moons’³¹ being five. How are we to do? Shall we read [as one portion] two from one paragraph and one from the next?

- (1) I.e., reads the Aramaic Targum.
- (2) V. Glos.
- (3) Rashi omits these words on the ground that there is no Targum to the Hagiographa. Tosaf., however, points out that there is such a Targum, though it is not attributed to Jonathan b. Uzziel; v. supra 3a.
- (4) Lit., ‘it is beloved’.
- (5) Even though many are speaking together.
- (6) II Sam. XVIII, 23.
- (7) Gen. XXXIII, 3, of Jacob and his family before Esau.
- (8) Micah II, 13.
- (9) M = Mikra (or Megillah), over the reading of the Megillah; N = Nissim, the blessing for miracles; H = She-heheyanu (or Hayyim, life) ‘who has kept us alive to this day’.
- (10) This word is omitted by Alfasi and Asheri.
- (11) Although it is a recurring introductory formula.
- (12) Every community was required to have ten men who had leisure always to attend synagogue when required. V. supra p. 21, n. 9.
- (13) This is bracketed in the text, and is omitted by Bah and MS.M. [This number is exceeded many times in the Book of Psalms and applies to Psalm CL by itself (v. R.H. 32a) hence, the omission].
- (14) V. Aboth V, 1.
- (15) Lit., ‘in “In the beginning”’.
- (16) Ps. XXXIII, 6. The creation of ‘Heavens’ and ‘the host of them’ (the earth) is mentioned in the first verse of Genesis.
- (17) Out of the obligatory ten read on weekdays.
- (18) If the first has read only three, or even if he has read four.
- (19) V. Glos.

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(20) Shekels brought by the public for purchasing the congregational sacrifices.

(21) V. Shek. 5a.

(22) Num. VIII, 2.

(23) According to one opinion, this was the middle lamp of the candlestick; according to another, the one second from the western end. R. Johanan evidently adopted the first opinion.

(24) Hence the religious service of the last should be at least equal to that of those who preceded him.

(25) [Or, Be Gobar, near Mahuza, v. Obermeyer p. 178. This synagogue is also mentioned in Ber. 50a and Ta'an. 26a].

(26) People who come in after the reading has commenced, on seeing a fresh person commence to read without saying a blessing, might think that no blessing is necessary before the reading. Similarly, those who leave before the reading is concluded might think that no blessing at all is necessary after the reading.

(27) Which consists of three paragraphs of eight, two and five verses. Num. XXVIII, 1-15.

(28) Ibid. 1-8.

(29) V. infra. פֶּרֶשֶׁה A 'paragraph' is a section at the end of which a blank space is left in the Scroll.

(30) Ibid. 9, 10.

(31) Ibid. 11-15.

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[This is not right], since we do not read less than three verses together at the beginning of a paragraph.¹ Shall the reader read two from one and three from the other? Then only two verses are left [to the end of the second paragraph]! —

He replied: On this point I have not heard [any pronouncement], but I have learnt the rule in a somewhat similar case, as we have learnt: 'On Sundays, [the ma'amad² read the paragraph] "In the beginning" and "let there be a firmament",³ and to this a gloss was added, "In the beginning" is read by two and "let there be a firmament" by one', and we were somewhat perplexed by this. For that [the paragraph] 'let there be a firmament' can be read by one we understand, since it has three verses, but how can 'In the beginning, be read by two, seeing that it has only five verses, and it has been taught, 'He who reads in the Torah should not read less than three verses'? And it was stated [in answer] to this [question]

that Rab says he should repeat,⁴ and Samuel says he should divide a verse. Rab said he should repeat. Why should he not say 'divide'? —

He was of opinion that any verse which Moses had not divided, we may not divide, whereas Samuel held that we may divide. But surely, R. Hananiah the Bible teachers said, I was in great pain in the house of R. Hanina the great, and he would not allow me to make [additional verse] divisions save for the school children, because they are there to be taught? —

Now what was the reason there [why he was allowed to make divisions]? Because it could not be avoided; here⁶ too it cannot be avoided. Samuel said that he divides. Why did he not say that he repeats? It is a precaution to prevent error on the part of those coming in and going out.⁷ An objection [against both these views]⁸ was brought from the following: 'A section of six verses may be read by two persons, a section of five verses must be read by one. If the first reads three verses, the second reads the remaining two from this section and one from the next; some, however, say that he reads three from the next, because not less than three verses should be read at the beginning of a section'.⁹ Now if it is as you said,¹⁰ then according to the one who says he should repeat, let him repeat, and according to the one who says he should divide, let him divide? —

It is different here,¹¹ because this method is open to him.¹² R. Tanhum, said in the name of R. Joshua b. Levi: The Halachah follows the alternative opinion¹³ mentioned. R. Tanhum also said in the name of R. Joshua b. Levi: Just as at the beginning of a section not less than three verses should be read, so at the end of a section not less than three verses should be left. Surely this is obvious! Seeing that in regard to the beginning of a section where the First Tanna is not so strict the alternative opinion is strict, is it not certain that in regard to the verses left [at

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the end of the section] where the First Tanna is strict the alternative opinion will also be strict? —

You might argue that it is usual for people to come in [to synagogue during the reading of the law],¹⁴ but it is not usual for them to go out and leave the scroll of the law while it is being read;¹⁵ therefore we are told [that we do not argue thus]. But now with regard to the First Tanna: Why does he forbid [less than three verses] to be left [at the end of the section]? On account of people going out of synagogue,¹⁶ is it not? Then with regard to the beginning also he should take precautions on account of people coming in? —

I can answer that a person coming in enquires [how much has been read].¹⁷ Rabbah the son of Raba sent to enquire of R. Joseph: What is the law?¹⁸ He sent him back word: The law is that the verse is repeated, and it is a middle reader¹⁹ who repeats.

THIS IS THE GENERAL RULE: WHENEVER THERE IS A MUSAF, etc. The question was raised: How many read on a public fast day?²⁰ Shall we say that on New Moon and the intermediate days of the festival when there is an additional sacrifice four read, but here where there is no additional sacrifice this is not the case? Or shall we argue that here also there is an additional prayer?²¹ —

Come and hear: ON NEW MOONS AND ON THE INTERMEDIATE DAYS OF FESTIVALS FOUR READ, from which we conclude that on public fasts only three read. Look now at the preceding clause: **‘ON MONDAYS AND THURSDAYS AND ON SABBATH AT MINHAH THREE READ**’, from which we may conclude that on a public fast four read! The truth is that we cannot decide from here.

Come then and hear [this]: ‘Rab happened to be at Babylon²² during a public fast. He came forward and read in the scroll of the

law. Before commencing he made a blessing but after finishing he made no blessing. The whole congregation [afterwards] fell on their faces,²³ but Rab did not fall on his face’. Let us now see. Rab read as a lay Israelite.²⁴ Why then did he say no blessing after finishing? Was it not because another was to read after him? —

No. Rab read as Kohen,²⁵ for R. Huna also read as Kohen.²⁶ I can understand R. Huna reading as Kohen, because even R. Assi and R. Ammi who were distinguished Kohanim of Eretz Israel showed deference to R. Huna.²⁷ But as to Rab there was Samuel [his Babylonian contemporary] who was a Kohen and who took precedence of him?²⁸—

Samuel also showed deference to Rab, and it was Rab²⁹ who of his own accord paid him special honor³⁰ and this he did only in his presence, but not when he was not present. It is reasonable also to assume that Rab read as Kohen, because if you presume that he read as a layman, why did he say a blessing before reading? — It was after the regulation³¹ had been made. If so, he should have said a blessing after reading also? —

Where Rab was present there was a difference, because people came in [late]

(1) V. infra.

(2) V. Glos.

(3) Gen. I, 1-5, and 6-8; v. Ta'an. 26a.

(4) The last verse read by the predecessor. Lit., ‘skip’, ‘go back’.

(5) Heb. אָרָא, a Bible teacher who appears to have been also a professional reader of the Scripture, with proper vowels, stops and accents, as the Tanna (v. Glos. s.v.) was a professional memorizer of the Mishnah or Baraitha.

(6) In the readings of the Ma'amad.

(7) V. supra p. 132, n. 3.

(8) Of Rab and Samuel.

(9) V. Ta'an 27b.

(10) That he either divides or repeats.

(11) Which deals with the Biblical reading on Mondays and Thursdays.

(12) Whereas on New Moon the next paragraph deals with a different subject and therefore cannot be read.

(13) Lit., ‘the "some say"’; viz., that three verses are read from the next paragraph.

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(14) And therefore, if they hear only the first verse of a section read, may not know that at least three verses have been read.

(15) And therefore, even if only one verse of a section is left, they will see that three are read.

(16) Who might think that if two verses to the end of a section had been left by a reader at the point when he went out, only those two will have been read by the next reader. Cf. n. 7.

(17) Supposing he finds when he comes in that someone reads three verses beginning from the third verse of a paragraph, he inquires whether the previous reader read only the preceding two verses or more.

(18) With respect to the reading by the Ma'amad and on the New Moon readings.

(19) I.e., not the one who reads last.

(20) Other than the day of Atonement.

(21) Inserted in the Amidah — the prayer עֲוִינִי, v. P. B. p. 47.

(22) [Babylon stands here, as in other places in the Talmud, for Sura which was in the neighborhood of the old great city of Babylon, and in contradistinction to Nehardea where Samuel had his seat, v. Obermeyer p. 306].

(23) To say propitiatory prayers — Tahanun, v. P.B. p. 62.

(24) I.e., third, being neither Kohen nor Levite.

(25) I.e., first.

(26) Although only a lay Israelite.

(27) Cf. Git. 59b.

(28) V. B.K. 80a.

(29) In giving him precedence.

(30) V. Shab. 108a.

(31) That a blessing should be said both before and after each reading. V. supra, p. 132.

Megilah 22b

but did not go out [during the reading of the law].¹

Come and hear: 'The general principle is that wherever the people would be hindered from their work, as on a public fast and on the month of Ab, three read, and where the people would not be hindered from their work, as on New Moons and the intermediate days of festivals,² four read'. This settles the question.

Said R. Ashi: But we have learnt differently, viz., **THIS IS THE GENERAL RULE: WHEREVER THERE IS A MUSAF BUT NOT A FESTIVAL FOUR READ:** Now what is added [by the words 'THIS IS THE

GENERAL RULE']? Is it not a public fast and the month of Ab? But according to R. Ashi,³ whose view then is recorded in the Mishnah? It is neither that of the First Tanna nor of R. Jose, as it has been taught: 'If it [the month of Ab] falls on Monday or Thursday, three read and one [of them] says a Haftarah. If on Tuesday or Wednesday, one reads and [the same] one says the Haftarah. R. Jose, however, says that in all cases three read and one [of them] says the Haftarah'. But still⁴ the words 'THIS IS THE GENERAL RULE' are difficult! —

No. They add New Moon and the intermediate days. But as these are stated explicitly: **ON NEW MOONS AND THE INTERMEDIATE DAYS FOUR READ?**—

[The Mishnah]⁵ is merely giving an indication that you should not say that the festivals and the intermediate days have the same rule, but you should take this as a general principle, that for every additional distinguishing mark an additional person reads. Hence on New Moon and the intermediate days, when there is an additional sacrifice, four read; on festivals, when [in addition] work is prohibited, five read; on the Day of Atonement when [in addition] there is a penalty of Kareth, six read; on Sabbath when there is a penalty of stoning, seven read. The text [above stated]: 'Rab happened to be in Babylon on a public fast. He came forward and read in the scroll. He made a blessing before commencing, but made no blessing after finishing. The whole congregation [subsequently] fell on their faces, but Rab did not fall on his face'.

Why did not Rab fall on his face? There was a stone pavement there and it has been taught: 'Neither shall ye place any figured stone in your land to bow down upon it: ⁶ upon it ye may not bow down in your land, but you may prostrate yourselves on the stones in the Temple', this teaching is in accord with the opinion of 'Ulla, who said: The Torah [here] is forbidding only a pavement of stone. If that is the case, why is

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only Rab mentioned? All the rest should equally have abstained? —

It was in front of Rab. But could he not have gone among the congregation and fallen on his face? —

He did not want to trouble the congregation.⁷ Or if you like I can say that Rab usually spread out his hands and feet [when he fell on his face], and he followed the opinion of ‘Ulla, who said, The Torah forbade only the spreading out of the hands and feet. But could he not have fallen on his face without spreading out his hands and feet? —

He did not care to change his custom. Or if you like I can say that for a distinguished man the rule is different, as laid down by R. Eleazar; for R. Eleazar said: A man of eminence is not permitted to fall on his faces unless he is [sure of being] answered like Joshua son of Nun, as it is written, Wherefore now art thou fallen upon thy face.⁹

Our Rabbis have taught: Kidah means falling upon the face, as it says, Then Bathsheba bowed [Wa-tikod] with her face to the earth.¹⁰ Keri'ah means going down upon the knees, and so it says, [Solomon arose] from kneeling [Mi-kroa'] on his knees.¹¹ Hishtahawa'ah is spreading out of the hands and feet, as it says, Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren come to prostrate ourselves [Lehishtahawoth] before thee to the earth.¹² Levi displayed a Kidah¹³ in the presence of Rabbi and became lame.¹⁴ But was this the cause of his accident? Did not R. Eleazar Say: ‘A man should never complain against heaven, because a great man complained against heaven and he became lame; and who was he? Levi’?¹⁵ —

Both things caused it. R. Hiyya b. Abin said: I saw Abaye

(1) Hence the reason for saying a blessing after did not apply.

(2) On the intermediate days only work which could not be left over without serious loss was allowed to be done. On New Moon it was the custom for women to abstain from work. V. Rashi and Tosaf. [In ancient times as long as the Temple stood New Moon was marked by a cessation of work; cf. Pseudo-Jonathan on I Sam. XX, 19; v. Halevy, Dorothe, I, p. 330ff].

(3) That the Mishnah means to include a public fast and the month of Ab among the days on which four read.

(4) Viz., if we do not accept R. Ashi's explanation.

(5) In mentioning explicitly new moons and the intermediate days, although these are already implied in THIS IS THE GENERAL RULE.

(6) Lev. XXVI, 1. E.V., ‘to it’.

(7) Who would all have risen.

(8) In public.

(9) Josh. VII, 10. So that Rab never fell on his face for the propitiatory prayer.

(10) I Kings I, 31.

(11) Ibid. VIII, 54.

(12) Gen. XXXVII, 10.

(13) V. Suk. 53a.

(14) In getting up.

(15) V. Ta'an.

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and Raba bend over to one side.¹

ON FESTIVALS FIVE READ, ON THE DAY OF ATONEMENT SIX, etc. Whose view does the Mishnah embody? It is neither that of R. Ishmael nor of R. Akiba, as it has been taught: ‘On festivals five read, on the Day of Atonement six, and on Sabbath seven. This number may neither be increased nor diminished. So R. Ishmael. R. Akiba says: On festivals five read, on the Day of Atonement seven and on Sabbath six. This number may not be diminished but it may be increased’. Whom [does the Mishnah follow]? If R. Ishmael, it conflicts with him over the additional number, if R. Akiba, it conflicts with him over the question of six and seven! —

Raba said: The view is that of a Tanna of the school of R. Ishmael, since in the school of R. Ishmael it was stated: ‘On festivals five, on the Day of Atonement six, on Sabbath seven; this number may not be diminished but it

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may be increased. So R. Ishmael.' R. Ishmael is now in conflict with himself! —

Two Tannaim report R. Ishmael differently. Who is responsible for the statement which has been taught: 'On festivals people come late to synagogue and leave early.² On the Day of Atonement they come early and leave late. On Sabbath they come early and leave early'³? Shall I say it is R. Akiba who makes an extra man [read on the Day of Atonement]? —

You may also say it is R. Ishmael, [his reason being that] the order [of the service] of the day is very long. What do these three, five and seven represent? —

Different answers were given by R. Isaac b. Nahmani and one who was with him, namely, R. Simeon b. Pazzi, or, according to others, by R. Simeon b. Pazzi and one who was with him, namely, R. Isaac b. Nahmani, or according to others, R. Samuel b. Nahmani. One said that [these represent] the [respective number of Hebrew words in the three verses of the] Priestly benedictions,⁴ while the other said 'the three keepers of the door'.⁵ [The five represent] 'five of them that saw the king's face'⁶ [and the seven] 'seven men of them that saw the king's face'.⁷ R. Joseph learnt: Three, five and seven: 'three keepers of the door', five of them that saw the king's face', and 'seven that saw the king's face'. Said Abaye to him: Until to-day your honor never explained the reason to us, he replied: I never knew that you wanted to know. Did you ever ask me anything which I did not tell you? Jacob the Mins asked R. Judah: What do the six of the Day of Atonement represent? —

He replied: The six who stood at the right of Ezra and the six who stood at his left, as it says, And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood which they had made for the purpose, and beside him stood Mattithiah, Shema and Anaiah and Uriah and Hilkiyah and Maaseiah, on his right hand; and on his left hand, Pedaiah, and Mishael and

Malchijah and Hashum and Hashbaddanah, Zechariah, Meshullam.⁹ But these last are seven? —

Zechariah is the same as Meshullam. And why is he called Meshullam? Because he was blameless [Mishlam] in his conduct. Our Rabbis taught: All are qualified to be among the seven [who read], even a minor and a woman, only the Sages said that a woman should not read in the Torah out of respect for the congregation. The question was raised: Should the Maftir¹⁰ be counted among the seven? —

R. Huna and R. Jeremiah b. Abba answered differently. One said that he does count and the other that he does not count. The one who says he does count points to the fact that he actually reads [from the Torah also], while the one who says he does not count relies on the dictum of 'Ulla, who said: Why is it proper for the one who reads the Haftarah from the Prophet to read in the Torah first? To show respect for the Torah.¹¹ Since then he reads [only] out of respect for the Torah,¹² he should not be counted to make up the seven. The following was cited in objection to this: 'He who says the Haftarah from the Prophet should read not less than twenty-one verses, corresponding to [those read by] the seven who have read in the Torah'. Now if it is as you say,¹³ there are twenty-four? —

Since it is only out of respect for the Torah [that he reads],

(1) Because as men of eminence they were not permitted to fall right on their faces.

(2) They come late because they have been busy preparing the festival meal, and they leave early to enjoy the festival.

(3) They come early because their food is already prepared, and they leave early to enjoy Sabbath.

(4) Num. VI, 24-26.

(5) Mentioned in II Kings XXV, 18, among those taken captive from Jerusalem by Nebuzaradon.

(6) Mentioned *ibid.* 19.

(7) Mentioned in the corresponding account in Jer. LII, 25.

(8) V. Glos. Probably a Christian.

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- (9) Neh. VIII, 4.
- (10) The one who reads the Haftarah.
- (11) I.e., by not putting the Prophet on the same level as the Torah.
- (12) And not because an extra one is required to read.
- (13) That the Maftir is not one of the seven.

Megilah 23b

no corresponding verses [to those read by him] are required [in the prophetic reading]. Raba strongly demurred to this: There is, he said, [the Haftarah of] ‘Add your burnt-offerings’¹ in which there are not twenty-one verses, and yet we read it!—

The case is different there, because the subject is completed [before twenty-one verses]. But where the subject is not completed, do we then not [read less than twenty-one]? Has not R. Samuel b. Abba said: Many times I stood before R. Johanan, and when I had read ten verses he said,² ‘Stop [both of] you’? —

In a place where there is a translator³ it is different, since R. Tahlifa b. Samuel has taught: This rule was laid down only for a place where there is no translator, but where there is a translator a stop may be made [earlier].

MISHNAH. THE INTRODUCTION TO THE SHEMA IS NOT REPEATED,⁴ NOR DOES ONE PASS BEFORE THE ARK,⁵ NOR DO [THE PRIESTS] LIFT THEIR HANDS,⁶ NOR IS THE TORAH READ [PUBLICLY] NOR THE HAFTARAH READ FROM THE PROPHET,⁷ NOR ARE HALTS MADE [AT FUNERALS],⁸ NOR IS THE BLESSING FOR MOURNERS SAID,⁹ NOR THE COMFORT OF MOURNERS,¹⁰ NOR THE BLESSING OF THE BRIDEGROOMS,¹¹ NOR IS THE NAME [OF GOD] MENTIONED IN THE INVITATION TO SAY GRACE,¹² SAVE IN THE PRESENCE OF TEN. FOR REDEEMING SANCTIFIED PROPERTIES¹³ NINE AND A PRIEST [ARE SUFFICIENT], AND SIMILARLY WITH HUMAN BEINGS.

GEMARA. Whence these rules?¹⁴ — R. Hiyya b. Abba said in the name of R. Johanan: Because Scripture says, But I will be hallowed among the children of Israel:¹⁵ every act of sanctification requires not less than ten. How does the verse denote this?—

As R. Hiyya taught: We explain the word ‘among’ here by reference to its use in another place. It is written here, ‘But I will be hallowed among the children of Israel’, and it is written elsewhere, Separate yourselves from among this congregation;¹⁶ and we further explain the word ‘congregation’ here by reference to what is written in another place, How long shall I bear with this evil congregation.¹⁷ Just as there ten are indicated,¹⁸ so here.

NOR ARE HALTS MADE [AT FUNERALS]. Since [the conductor of the funeral] requires to say, ‘stand, dear friends, stand; sit, dear friends, sit’,¹⁹ it is not proper²⁰ [to have less than ten].

NOR IS THE BLESSING OF MOURNERS NOR THE BLESSING OF BRIDEGROOMS SAID, etc. What is the blessing of mourners? The blessing of the public square,²¹ since²² R. Isaac said in the name of R. Johanan: The blessing of mourners requires the presence of ten, the mourners not being counted; the blessing of bridegrooms requires the presence of ten, the bridegroom being counted.

THE NAME [OF GOD] IS NOT MENTIONED IN THE INVITATION TO SAY GRACE WITH LESS THAN TEN. Since the one who invites has to say, ‘Let us bless our God’, it is not seemly to do so with less than ten.

FOR REDEEMING PROPERTIES NINE AND A PRIEST. Whence is this rule derived? — Samuel said: Ten priests are mentioned in the section [dealing with sanctifications],²³ one for the actual priest required (and [the first] one [after] to limit),²⁴ and the rest constitute a limitation

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after a limitation, and a limitation after a limitation has the force of an addition, to include, namely, nine Israelites and one priest.²⁵ But cannot I [rather] say five priests and five Israelites?²⁶ – This is indeed a difficulty.

AND SIMILARLY WITH HUMAN BEINGS. But can a human being become sanctified?²⁷ – R. Abbahu said: It refers to one who says, ‘My money [value] be upon me’, as it has been taught: ‘If a man says, My money [value] be upon me, we estimate his value as we would that of a slave’. And a slave is put on the same footing as landed property, as it is written, And ye may make them an inheritance for your children after you, to hold for a possession.²⁸

MISHNAH. ONE WHO READS THE TORAH [IN SYNAGOGUE] SHOULD READ NOT LESS THAN THREE VERSES, AND HE SHOULD NOT READ TO THE TRANSLATOR MORE THAN ONE VERSE [AT A TIME].²⁹

- (1) Jer. VII, 21, the Maftir to section Zaw (Lev. VI, I to VIII, 36).
- (2) To him and to the translator.
- (3) Who repeats each verse, in the Aramaic Targum.
- (4) פורסין על שמע lit., ‘they do not divide over the Shema’ (v. Glos.). According to Rashi this means that if a number of persons (not less than ten, or seven, or six, or three, according to various opinions, v. Tosaf. and Asheri) come into synagogue after the Shema’ has been said, it is allowable for the congregation to repeat the Kaddish and Bareku and the first blessing before the Shema’ for their benefit. From the context one would say that it means here more simply ‘say the Shema’ with its attendant blessings’. V. P.B. pp. 37ff. V. Rabbinowitz Mishnah Megillah, ad loc. [Kohler (The Origin of the Synagogue and the Church; p. 58) explains the phrase: ‘The lifting up the hands towards heaven at the recital of the Shema’ — In continuation of the old practice of the Hasidim’. Krauss (Israel-Theol. Lehranstalt, Wien, Bericht, 1933 p. 53): The stepping forward of the reader to recite the Shema’].
- (5) To lead the congregation in the Amidah.
- (6) To say the priestly blessing, Num. VI, 24-26.
- (7) V. supra p. 140.
- (8) Lit., ‘they do not make a halting and sitting’. It was the custom on the return from a funeral to

have seven pauses during which lamentation was made in honor of the dead. V. infra.

- (9) V. infra.
- (10) The formal words of consolation addressed to the mourners on passing between the two rows formed by friends after the funeral; v. Keth. 8b and Sanh. 19a. Some texts omit ‘NOR COMFORT OF MOURNERS’.
- (11) V. Keth. 7b and 8a and P.B. p. 299.
- (12) Said by one of those present at table to the rest of the company.
- (13) V. Lev. XXVII, 16-23.
- (14) Relating to the synagogue.
- (15) Lev. XXII, 32.
- (16) Num. XVI, 21.
- (17) Ibid. XIV, 27.
- (18) The twelve spies without Joshua and Caleb; v. Sanh. 2a.
- (19) V. B.B. 100b.
- (20) Lit., ‘the way of the world’.
- (21) ברכה רחבה A blessing of consolation pronounced in the open air on the mourners return from the burial; v. Keth., Sonc. ed. p. 41, n. 5.
- (22) [To be omitted with MS.M. ‘R. Isaac said, etc.’ beginning a new sentence v. Tosaf. s.v. ראמר].
- (23) In Lev. XXVII, three times in connection with personal valuations v. 8, three in connection with the valuation of animals vv. 11-13, four with sanctification of property vv. 14, 18, 23; v. 21 is not included as the word priest is not mentioned there in connection with the act of ‘valuation’.
- (24) These words are bracketed in the text.
- (25) V. Sanh., Sonc. ed. p. 71 notes.
- (26) The second mention adding an Israelite, the third going back to a priest, the fourth adding an Israelite and so on.
- (27) Since all Israelite could not be sold in the market like a slave. (V. Tosaf.).
- (28) Lev. XXV, 46.
- (29) So that the translator (who had no book) should not become confused.

Megilah 24a

IN A PROPHET, HOWEVER, [HE MAY GIVE HIM] THREE AT A TIME.¹ IF THE THREE VERSES CONSTITUTE THREE SEPARATE PARAGRAPHS,² HE MUST READ THEM [TO THE TRANSLATOR] ONE BY ONE. THE READER MAY SKIP [FROM PLACE TO PLACE] IN A PROPHET BUT NOT IN THE TORAH. HOW FAR MAY HE SKIP? [ONLY] SO FAR THAT THE TRANSLATOR WILL NOT HAVE STOPPED³ [BEFORE HE FINDS HIS PLACE].⁴

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GEMARA. What do these three verses represent? — R. Assi said: The Pentateuch, the Prophets, and the Hagiographa.

HE SHOULD NOT READ TO THE TRANSLATOR MORE THAN ONE VERSE. IN A PROPHET, HOWEVER, HE MAY READ THREE. IF THE THREE VERSES CONSTITUTE THREE PARAGRAPHS, HE MUST READ THEM ONE BY ONE. For instance, [the three verses], For thus saith the Lord, ye were sold for naught; For thus saith the Lord God, my people went down aforetime to Egypt; Now therefore what do I here, saith the Lord.⁵

THE READER MAY SKIP IN A PROPHET BUT NOT IN THE TORAH. A contradiction was pointed out [between this and the following]: ‘He [the High Priest] reads [on the Day of Atonement] "after the death"⁶ and "only on the tenth day"⁷. But he is skipping? —

Abaye replied: There is no contradiction; in the one case the translator will have come to a stop [before the place is found] in the other case he will not have come to a stop.⁸ But it states in connection with this.

THE READER MAY SKIP IN THE PROPHET BUT HE MAY NOT SKIP IN THE TORAH. AND HOW FAR MAY HE SKIP? SO FAR THAT THE TRANSLATOR WILL NOT HAVE STOPPED. From this we infer that in the Torah he may not skip at all? —

The truth is, said Abaye, that there is no contradiction. In the one case [the reader deals] with one subject, in the other case with two; and in fact it has been taught: ‘The reader may skip in the Torah [provided he keeps] to one subject, and in a Prophet even if he goes on to another subject’; and in both cases only so far that the translator will not have stopped [before he finds the place]. It has been taught in another place: ‘The reader may not skip from one prophet to another. In the Twelve Minor Prophets he

may skip,⁹ provided only that he does not skip from the end of the book to the beginning.’¹⁰

MISHNAH. THE ONE WHO SAYS THE HAFTARAH FROM THE PROPHET REPEATS ALSO THE BLESSINGS BEFORE THE SHEMA¹¹ AND PASSES BEFORE THE ARK¹² AND LIFTS UP HIS HANDS.¹³ IF HE IS A CHILD,¹⁴ HIS FATHER OR HIS TEACHER PASSES BEFORE THE ARK IN HIS PLACE. A CHILD MAY READ IN THE TORAH AND TRANSLATE, BUT HE MAY NOT PASS BEFORE THE ARK NOR LIFT UP HIS HANDS. A PERSON IN RAGS¹⁵ MAY REPEAT THE BLESSINGS BEFORE THE SHEMA AND TRANSLATE, BUT HE MAY NOT READ IN THE TORAH NOR PASS BEFORE THE ARK NOR LIFT UP HIS HANDS. A BLIND MAN MAY REPEAT THE BLESSINGS BEFORE THE SHEMA AND TRANSLATE. R. JUDAH SAYS: ONE WHO HAS NEVER SEEN THE LIGHT FROM HIS BIRTH MAY NOT RECITE THE BLESSINGS BEFORE THE SHEMA’.¹⁶

GEMARA. What is the reason [why the one who says the Haftarah has this privilege]? — R. Papa said: As a mark of honor;¹⁷ R. Shimi said: Because otherwise quarrels might arise.¹⁸ What difference is there in practice between them? —

There is a difference, in the case of one who reads gratis.¹⁹ We learn: IF HE IS A CHILD, HIS FATHER OR HIS TEACHER PASSES BEFORE THE ARK IN HIS PLACE. If now you say it is to avoid quarrels, will a child pick a quarrel? What then? It is a mark of respect? Does a child receive marks of respect? What you must say is, out of respect for his father and his teacher.

- (1) Because if he makes a mistake, it does not matter so much.
- (2) V. infra.
- (3) Lit., ‘so that the translator shall not (have to) pause’.
- (4) I.e., he must not have much to unroll in the scroll.
- (5) Isa. LII, 3, 4 and 5.

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- (6) Lev. XVI, 1ff.
- (7) Ibid. XXIII, 26ff.
- (8) Because the passages read by the High Priest are not far apart.
- (9) As these were all written in one scroll,
- (10) I.e., go backwards.
- (11) V. supra. Sof. XIV, 8 refers this to the Shema' recited at the taking out of the law from the Ark; v. P.B. p. 145.
- (12) To read the 'Amidah, and especially the Kedushah.
- (13) To say the priestly blessing. Why the Maftir should have these privileges is not at all clear, and the 'lifting up of hands' certainly was the privilege of every priest. V. Rabbinowitz, op. cit. MS.M. omits: 'AND LIFTS UP HIS HANDS.
- (14) Under thirteen.
- (15) So that most of his body is exposed.
- (16) Which include a prayer of thanksgiving for the creation of light.
- (17) I.e., as a kind of reward for having consented to read the Haftarah.
- (18) Between persons eager to act as reader.
- (19) In which case there will not be such competition for the honor, and so there is no need to give the one who says the Haftarah priority.

Megillah 24b

So here too, there is the question of quarrels, involving him or his teacher.

A PERSON IN RAGS MAY REPEAT, etc. 'Ulla b. Rab enquired of Abaye: Is a child in rags allowed to read in the Torah?¹ He replied: You might as well ask about a naked one. Why is one without any clothes not allowed? Out of respect for the congregation. So here, [he is not allowed] out of respect for the congregation.

A BLIND MAN MAY REPEAT THE BLESSINGS, etc. It has been taught: They said to R. Judah: Many have discerned sufficiently [with their mind's eye] to expound the Chariot,² and yet they never saw it? —

What says R. Judah to this? — There [he can reply], all depends on the discernment of the heart, and the expounder by concentrating his mind can know, but here one reads for the benefit which he derives therefrom,³ and this one derives no benefit.⁴

The Rabbis, however, hold that he does derive a benefit, for the reason given by R. Jose, as it has been taught: R. Jose said: I was long perplexed by this verse, And thou shalt grope at noonday as the blind gropeth in darkness.⁵ Now what difference [I asked] does it make to a blind man whether it is dark or light? [Nor did I find the answer] until the following incident occurred. I was once walking on a pitch black night when I saw a blind man walking in the road with a torch in his hand. I said to him, My son, why do you carry this torch? He replied: As long as I have this torch in my hand, people see me and save me from the holes and the thorns and briars.⁶

MISHNAH. A PRIEST WHOSE HANDS ARE DEFORMED SHOULD NOT LIFT UP HIS HANDS [TO SAY THE PRIESTLY BLESSING]. R. JUDAH SAYS: ALSO ONE WHOSE HANDS ARE DISCOLOURED WITH WOAD⁷ SHOULD NOT LIFT UP HIS HANDS, BECAUSE [THIS MAKES] THE CONGREGATION LOOK AT HIM.⁸

GEMARA. A Tanna stated: The deformities which were laid down [as disqualifying] are on the face, the hands and the feet.⁹ R. Joshua b. Levi said: If his hands are spotted¹⁰ he should not lift up his hands. It has been taught similarly: 'If his hands are spotted, he should not lift up his hands. If they are curved inwards or bent sideways, he should not lift up his hands'.

R. Assi said: A priest from Haifa or Beth Shean¹¹ should not lift up his hands. It has been taught to the same effect: 'We do not allow to pass before the ark either men from Beth Shean or from Haifa or from Tib'onim,¹² because they pronounce Alif as 'Ayin and 'Ayin as Alif'.¹³

Said R. Hiyya to R. Simeon b. Rabbi: If you were a Levite, you would not be qualified to chant,¹⁴ because your voice is thick. He went and told his father who said to him: Go and say to him, When you come to the verse, And

MEGILLAH – 2a-32a

I will wait [We-hikethi] for the Lord,¹⁵ will you not be a reviler and blasphemer?¹⁶ R. Huna said: A man whose eyes run should not lift up his hands. But was there not one in the neighborhood of R. Huna who used to spread forth his hands? —

The townspeople had become accustomed to him.¹⁷ It has been taught to the same effect: ‘A man whose eyes run should not lift up his hands, but if the townspeople are accustomed to him, he is permitted’. R. Johanan said: A man blind in one eye should not lift up his hands. But was not there one in the neighborhood of R. Johanan who used to lift up his hands? — The townspeople were accustomed to him. It has been taught to the same effect: ‘A man blind in one eye should not lift up his hands, but if the townspeople are accustomed to him, he is permitted’.

R. JUDAH SAYS: A MAN WHOSE HANDS ARE DISCOLOURED SHOULD NOT LIFT UP HIS HANDS. A Tanna stated: If most of the men of the town follow the same occupation it is permitted.

MISHNAH. IF ONE SAYS, I WILL NOT PASS BEFORE THE ARK [TO ACT AS READER] IN COLOURED ROBES, HE MUST NOT PASS BEFORE IT IN WHITE ROBES EITHER. [IF HE SAYS], I WILL NOT PASS BEFORE IT IN SHOES, HE MUST NOT PASS BEFORE IT BAREFOOT EITHER. A PHYLACTERY [FOR THE HEAD] WHICH IS MADE ROUND¹⁸ IS DANGEROUS¹⁹ AND HAS NO RELIGIOUS VALUE. TO PUT THEM ON THE FOREHEAD OR ON THE PALM OF THE HAND²⁰ IN THE MANNER OF THE HERESY,²¹ TO OVERLAY THEM WITH GOLD OR PUT [THE ONE FOR THE HAND] ON ONE'S SLEEVE IS THE MANNER OF THE OUTSIDERS.²²

GEMARA. [IN COLOURED ROBES]. What is the reason [why he must not act as reader]? We are apprehensive that he has a leaning towards minuth.²³

TO MAKE ONE'S PHYLACTERY ROUND IS DANGEROUS AND HAS NO RELIGIOUS VALUE. May we say that our Mishnah teaches here the same as our Rabbis taught: ‘That phylacteries should be square is a law set down by Moses at Sinai’, and Raba explained [this to mean] in their seam and in their diagonal?²⁴ — R. Papa said: The Mishnah is speaking only of those which are made as round as a nut.²⁵

MISHNAH. IF ONE SAYS

- (1) A child not being forbidden to expose himself.
- (2) The first chapter of Ezekiel.
- (3) Viz., the light.
- (4) He does not enjoy the benefit of light.
- (5) Deut. XXVIII, 29.
- (6) So although blind, he does benefit by the light.
- (7) [Var. lec. add: ‘or madder’, a red dye].
- (8) And it is forbidden to look at the priests while saying the blessing, v. Hag. 16.
- (9) The priest said the blessing barefoot, v. Sot. 40a.
- (10) With white pustules. The deformity apparently is the same as that referred to in Lev. XIII, 39.
- (11) Towns in Palestine.
- (12) More correctly Tibe'on, perhaps the same as modern Tubun, W. of Sephoris.
- (13) V. Glos.
- (14) Lit., ‘for the platform’, on which the Levites stood while chanting.
- (15) Isa. VIII, 17.
- (16) Because he could not pronounce a Heth and would say We-hikethi, which would mean ‘And I shall smite’.
- (17) Lit. ‘he had become familiar to the townspeople’.
- (18) Instead of cube-shaped.
- (19) [The capsule might penetrate his head during prostration at Tahanun (supra p. 135 n. 6). V. Rashi and R. Hananel]. R. Tam takes this to mean that it will not avail him in time of danger. V. Shab. 49a.
- (20) According to the literal meaning of the text, and thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand and they shall be phylacteries between thine eyes. Deut. VI, 8.
- (21) Minuth (v. Glos. s.v. Min) Maim.: Sadducees. The reading ‘Karaites’ in some texts is a censor's variant.
- (22) This term apparently designates persons who followed the Rabbis only partially. According to the Rabbis, the phylacteries had to be made wholly of the skin of a clean animal and to be placed directly on the flesh.

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(23) Probably Judeo-Christianity, the Christians being particular about this. For other suggestions v. Rabbinowitz, op. cit. a.l.

(24) Apparently this means ‘both in their base and in their height’.

(25) But the shape of an egg or of a bean might be permitted (Rashi).

Megilah 25a

‘MAY THE GOOD BLESS THEE’, THIS IS A CUSTOM OF HERESY.¹ [IF HE SAYS], ‘MAY THY MERCIES REACH THE NEST OF A BIRD’, ‘MAY THY NAME BE MENTIONED FOR WELL-DOING’, ‘WE GIVE THANKS, WE GIVE THANKS’,² HE IS SILENCED. IF HE INTRODUCES EUPHEMISMS INTO THE PORTION DEALING WITH FORBIDDEN MARRIAGES,³ HE IS SILENCED. IF HE SAYS, [INSTEAD OF] ‘AND THOU SHALT NOT GIVE ANY OF THY SEED TO SET THEM APART TO MOLOCH’, ‘THOU SHALT NOT GIVE TO TRANSFER IT TO A GENTILE WOMAN’,⁴ HE IS BOTH SILENCED AND REBUKED.⁵

GEMARA. We understand the prohibition of saying ‘WE GIVE THANKS, WE GIVE THANKS’, because he seems to be addressing two Powers;⁶ also of ‘THY NAME BE MENTIONED FOR WELL-DOING’, because this implies, for good, yes, for evil, no, and we have learnt, ‘It is the duty of a man to bless [God] for evil in the same way as he blesses for good’.⁷ But what is the reason for prohibiting, ‘MAY THY MERCIES REACH THE NEST OF A BIRD’?⁸ —

Different answers were given by two Amoraim in the West [Palestine], R. Jose b. Abin and R. Jose b. Zebida. One said, it is because he creates jealousy in the work of the creation,⁹ and the other says it is because he makes the commands¹⁰ of the Holy One, blessed be He, acts of grace, whereas they are only decrees.¹¹ A certain man went down [before the ark] in the presence of Rabbah and said, ‘Thou hast shown pity to the nest of a bird, do thou have pity and mercy on us’; (Thou hast shown pity to an animal and

its young,¹² do thou have pity and mercy on us). Said Rabbah: How well this Rabbi knows how to placate his Master! Said Abaye to him: But we have learnt, HE IS SILENCED? —

Rabbah only wanted to sharpen Abaye's wits. A certain [reader] went down before the ark in the presence of R. Hanina and said, ‘The great, the mighty, the terrible, the majestic, the strong, the powerful God’. He said to him: Have you finished the praises of your Master? Even the first three, had it not been that Moses wrote them in the Law¹³ and the Men of the Great Synagogue came and ordained them,¹⁴ we should not recite; and you say all this! It is as if a man had thousands of thousands of Dinarii of gold and people to praise his wealth would say he had a thousand. Would it not be an insult to him? R. Hanina said: Everything is in the hands of heaven except the fear of heaven¹⁵ as it says, And now, Israel, what doth the Lord thy God ask of thee but to fear.¹⁶ Are we to infer from this that fear is a small thing? —

Yes; for Moses our teacher it was a small thing. In the same way, if a man is asked for a big article and he has it, it seems to him only small, but if he is asked for a small article and he has it not, it seems big to him. R. Zera said: For one to say, ‘Hear, Hear’,¹⁷ is like saying, ‘We give thanks, we give thanks’. The following was cited in objection to this: ‘He who recites the Shema’ and repeats is reprehensible’. He is only reprehensible, but we do not silence him? —

There is no contradiction. In the one case we suppose he repeats each word as he says it,¹⁸ in the other that he repeats a whole sentence.¹⁹ Said R. Papa to him: But perhaps [the reason why he repeats] is because at first he was not thinking of what he said, and now he does think? — He replied: Is he to treat heaven like an ordinary acquaintance?²⁰ If he does not think of what he is saying, I will hit him with a hammer till he does think.

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IF HE INTRODUCES EUPHEMISMS INTO THE PASSAGE DEALING WITH FORBIDDEN MARRIAGES, HE IS SILENCED. R. Joseph learned: [If, for example, he says] ‘the shame of his father, the shame of his mother’.²¹

IF ONE SAYS, AND THOU SHALT NOT GIVE ANY OF THY SEED TO SET THEM APART, etc. In the school of R. Ishmael it was stated: The text speaks of an Israelite who has intercourse with a Cuthean woman and begets from her a son for idolatry.²²

MISHNAH. THE INCIDENT OF REUBEN IS READ IN SYNAGOGUE BUT NOT TRANSLATED.²³ THE STORY OF TAMAR²⁴ IS READ AND TRANSLATED. THE FIRST ACCOUNT OF THE INCIDENT OF THE GOLDEN CALF²⁵ IS BOTH READ AND TRANSLATED, THE SECOND²⁶ IS READ BUT NOT TRANSLATED. THE BLESSING OF THE PRIESTS²⁷ IS READ BUT NOT TRANSLATED. THE STORIES OF DAVID²⁸ AND AMNON²⁹ ARE READ BUT NOT TRANSLATED. THE PORTION OF THE CHARIOT³⁰ IS NOT READ AS A HAFTARAH, BUT R. JUDAH PERMITS THIS. R. ELEAZAR SAYS: THE PORTION, MAKE KNOWN TO JERUSALEM’,³¹ IS NOT READ AS A HAFTARAH.

GEMARA. Our Rabbis taught: Some portions [of the Scripture] are both read and translated, some are read but not translated, [and some are neither read nor translated].³² The following are both read and translated: (Mnemonic: *B’L’T’ E’K’N’ N’SH’P’H’*).³³ The account of the creation³⁴ is both read and translated. Certainly! —

You might think that [through hearing it] people are led to inquire what is above and what is below,

- (1) Minuth (v. supra note 4); implying that only the good are invited to bless God (Rashi).
- (2) In the ‘Amidah prayer.
- (3) Lev, ch. XVIII.
- (4) I.e., beget children from a Gentile woman. Aliter: ‘To render pregnant a Gentile woman’.

Either version is a departure from the text which is an injunction against Moloch worship. [Aruch (s.v. מלך): ‘Thou shalt not give any of thy seed to the Arameans to set them apart to Moloch’, implying that the prohibition applies only to the Moloch worship of a particular nation. Albeck Ch., Bericht Hochschule, Berlin 1930 p. 55 renders it: thou shalt not give thy seed to pass to heathendom, viz., to introduce them to the knowledge of heathen culture and custom.]

(5) All this is explained in the Gemara.

(6) V. Ber. 54a.

(7) [The dualism of the Persians — the god of darkness and of light.]

(8) With reference to the prohibition of taking both a bird and its nestlings. Deut. XXII, 6. 7.

(9) As though God had mercy on birds and not on beasts.

(10) Lit., ‘his attributes’. [Herford sees in this a protest against the Pauline antithesis of Law and Grace, v. Christianity in Talmud and Midrash pp. 202ff.]

(11) Which must be obeyed whether they are merciful or not.

(12) V. Lev. XXII, 28. This sentence is bracketed in the text.

(13) Deut. X, 17.

(14) V. Neh. IX, 32.

(15) It is left to the free choice of man whether to be God-fearing or not.

(16) Deut. X, 12.

(17) In reciting the Shema’.

(18) I.e., he says, ‘Hear, hear, Israel, Israel’ which is only a stupidity.

(19) I.e., he says, ‘We give thanks to thee, we give thanks to thee’, as if he were addressing two Powers.

(20) Lit., ‘Intimacy towards heaven!’

(21) From prudery, instead of ‘the nakedness’; Lev. XVIII, 7. [Maim: instead ‘of thy father’, ‘of thy mother’].

(22) Cf. Pseudo-Jonathan a.l. Apparently this is in flat contradiction with the Mishnah. Possibly R. Ishmael means to explain the words of the Mishnah which are somewhat obscure (Rashi). [According to Aruch's and Albeck's explanations (v. p. 149, n. 3) the Mishnah does not denounce R. Ishmael's version.]

(23) Gen. XXXV, 22.

(24) Ibid. XXXVIII.

(25) Ex. XXXII, 1-20.

(26) Ibid. 21-25. (So Maim).

(27) Num. VI, 24-27.

(28) II Sam. XI, 2-17.

(29) Ibid. XIII, 1-4.

(30) Ezek. I and X.

(31) Ibid. XVI.

(32) Wilna Gaon omits the words in brackets.

(33) B = Bereshith (creation); L = Lot; T = Tamar; E = ‘Egel (Calf); K = Kelaloth (curses); N

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= ‘Oneshin (penalties); N = Amnon; Sh =Abshalom, P = Pilegash (concubine); H =Hoda’ (make known).
(34) Gen. I.

Megilah 25b

and what is before and what is after.¹ Therefore we are told [that this is no objection]. The story of Lot and his two daughters² is both read and translated.

Certainly! — You might think that [we should forbear] out of respect for Abraham. Therefore we are told [that this is no objection]. The story of Tamar and Judah is both read and translated.

Certainly! — We might think that [we should forbear] out of respect for Judah. Therefore we are told [that this is no objection]; [the passage] really redounds to his credit, because [it records that] he confessed.³ The first account of the making of the Calf is both read and translated.

Certainly! — You might think that [we should forbear] out of respect for Israel. Therefore we are told [that this is no objection]; on the contrary, it is agreeable to them,⁴ because it was followed by atonement.⁵ The curses and blessings⁶ are both read and translated.

Certainly! — You might think that [we should forbear] lest the congregation should become disheartened; therefore we are told [that this is no objection]. Warnings and penalties are both read and translated.

Certainly! — You might think that [we should forbear] for fear that they may come to keep the commandments out of fear;⁷ therefore we are told [that this is no objection]. The story of Amnon and Tamar is both read and translated.

Certainly! — You might think that [we should forbear] out of respect for David. Therefore we are told [that this is no

objection]. The story of the concubine in Gibeas is both read and translated.

Certainly! — You might think [that we should forbear] out of respect for Benjamin. Therefore we are told [that this is no objection]. The passage commencing ‘Make known to Jerusalem her abominations’ is both read and translated.

Certainly! — This is stated to exclude the view of R. Eleazar, as it has been taught: ‘On one occasion a man read in the presence of R. Eleazar ‘Make known to Jerusalem her abominations’. He said to him, While you are investigating the abominations of Jerusalem, go and investigate the abominations of your own mother. Inquiries were made into his birth, and he was found to be illegitimate.

(Mnemonic: *R'E'B'D'N'*).¹⁰

The incident of Reuben is read but not translated. On one occasion R. Hanina b. Gamaliel went to Kabul,¹¹ and the reader of the congregation read, ‘And it came to pass when Israel abode’,¹² and he said to the translator, Translate only the latter part of the verse, and the Sages commended his action. The second account of the Calf is read but not translated. What is the second account of the Calf? —

From ‘And Moses said’ up to ‘and Moses saw’.¹³ It has been taught: A man should always be careful in wording his answers, because on the ground of the answer which Aaron made to Moses the unbelievers were able to deny [God], as it says, And I cast it into the fire and this calf came forth.¹⁴ The priestly blessing is read but not translated. What is the reason? —

Because it contains the words, May he lift up.¹⁵ The accounts of David and Amnon are neither read nor translated.¹⁶ But you just said that the story of Amnon and Tamar is both read and translated? — There is no contradiction; the former statement refers to

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where it says ‘Amnon son of David’,¹⁷ the latter to where it says ‘Amnon’ simply.

Our Rabbis taught: Wherever an indelicate expression is written in the text, we substitute a more polite one in reading.¹⁸ [Thus for] Yishgalenah¹⁹ [we read] Yishkabenah;²⁰ [for] Ba'apolim²¹ [we read] Ba-tehorim;²² [for] Hiryonim²³ [we read] Dibyonim;²⁴ [for] Le-ekol Eth Horehem We-lishtoeth Eth Meme Shinehem²⁵ [we read] Le-ekol eth Zo'atham We-lishtoeth Eth Meme Raglehem;²⁶ [for] La-mahara'oth²⁷ [We read] Lemoza'oth.²⁸ R. Joshua b. Korha, however, says that the actual word La-mahara'oth²⁷ [is read] because it is a term of opprobrium for idolatry.

R. Nahman said: All gibing²⁹ is forbidden save gibing at idolatry, which is permitted, as it is written, Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth³⁰ and the text goes on, They stoop, they bow down together, they cannot deliver the burden, etc. R. Jannai learns the same lesson from here: The inhabitants of Samaria shall be in dread for the calves of Beth Aven, for the people thereof shall mourn over it and the Priests thereof shall tremble for it, for its glory, because it is departed from it.³¹ Read not ‘its glory’ [Kebodo], but ‘its burden’ [Kebedo].

R. Huna b. Manoah said in the name of R. Aha the son of R. Ika: It is permitted to an Israelite to say to a Cuthean, Take your idol and put it in your shin tof.³² R. Ashi said: It is permissible to abuse a person of ill fame³³ with the term Gimel Shin.³⁴ It is permissible to praise a person of good report and if one does praise him, ‘blessings shall rest upon his head’.

CHAPTER IV

MISHNAH. IF THE TOWNSPEOPLE³⁵ SELL THE TOWN SQUARE,³⁶ THEY MAY BUY WITH THE PROCEEDS A SYNAGOGUE;³⁷ [IF THEY SELL] A SYNAGOGUE, THEY MAY BUY WITH THE PROCEEDS AN ARK;³⁸ [IF THEY SELL] AN ARK THEY MAY BUY

WRAPPINGS [FOR SCROLLS]; [IF THEY SELL] WRAPPINGS

- (1) I.e., before the creation and after the end of the world. Cf. Hag. 11b.
- (2) Gen. XIX, 31-38.
- (3) Ibid. XXXVIII, 26.
- (4) To have the story recounted.
- (5) [MS.M. so that there may be (by the recounting of the lapse) an atonement unto them].
- (6) Lev. XXVI; Deut. XXVII.
- (7) Rashi apparently makes this the reason for reading the curses and blessings, and reads ‘out of love and fear’, i.e., desire for the blessings and fear of the curses, while he transfers to this place the clause in the previous sentence, ‘lest the congregation should become disheartened’. But. v. Maharsha.
- (8) Jud. XIX, XX.
- (9) [Lit., ‘above’, the reader in public occupying a raised position].
- (10) R = Reuben; E = ‘Egel (calf); B = Berakah (blessing); D = David; N = Amnon.
- (11) S.E. of Akko.
- (12) Gen. XXXV, 22.
- (13) Ex. XXXII, 21-25.
- (14) Which seems to be an admission that the calf had divine powers.
- (15) Which seems to imply favoritism for Israel.
- (16) According to R. Bezael Ronsburg, the proper reading is ‘The accounts of David and Amnon are read but not translated’.
- (17) I.e. the first verse of the chapter.
- (18) Lit., ‘wherever the text is written indelicately, we read it delicately’.
- (19) ישגלנה ‘ravish’.
- (20) ישכבנה. Deut. XXVIII, 30. E.V. ‘shall lie with her’.
- (21) בעפולים ‘posteriors’.
- (22) בשחורים I Sam. V, 5. E.V. ‘emerods’.
- (23) חריונים ‘dove's dung’. So E.V.
- (24) דביונים II Kings VI, 25. E.V. ‘decayed leaves’.
- (25) חוריהם... מימי שיניהם ‘excrement... urine’.
- (26) חוריהם... מימי רגליהם... צואתם Ibid. XVIII, 27. E.V. ‘deposit... water of his feet’
- (27) למחראות ‘privies’.
- (28) למוצאות Ibid. X, 27, ‘retreats’. E.V. ‘draught-house’.
- (29) The reference apparently is to obscenity.
- (30) Isa. XLVI, 1.
- (31) Hos. X, 5.
- (32) שח. Fundament.
- (33) I.e., suspected of adultery.
- (34) According to Rashi, = Gala Shaita (adulterer, madman). Another reading is Beth Gimel = Bar Girtha (son of a harlot).
- (35) Lit., ‘sons of the town’: probably the general assembly of residents of over twelve months’ standing. V. Rabbinowitz, op. cit.

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(36) Lit., 'broad place'. Where at times religious ceremonies were performed.

(37) On the principle that we may use for a more holy purpose but not for a less holy'; and so with the rest.

(38) In which to place the Scrolls of the Law.

Megilah 26a

THEY MAY BUY SCROLLS;¹ [IF THEY SELL] SCROLLS THEY MAY BUY A [SEFER] TORAH. BUT IF THEY SELL A [SEFER] TORAH THEY MAY NOT BUY WITH THE PROCEEDS SCROLLS; IF [THEY SELL] SCROLLS THEY MAY NOT BUY WRAPPINGS; IF [THEY SELL] WRAPPINGS THEY MAY NOT BUY AN ARK; IF [THEY SELL] AN ARK THEY MAY NOT BUY A SYNAGOGUE; IF [THEY SELL] A SYNAGOGUE THEY MAY NOT BUY A TOWN SQUARE. THE SAME APPLIES TO ANY MONEY LEFT OVER.²

GEMARA. IF THE TOWNSPEOPLE SELL THE TOWN SQUARE. Rabbah b. Bar Hanah said in the name of R. Johanan: This is the view of R. Menahem b. Jose the anonymous author,³ but the Sages say that no sanctity attaches to the square. What is the reason of R. Menahem b. Jose? — Because the people pray in it on fast days⁴ and at gatherings of the ma'amad.⁵ What say the Rabbis to this? — That happens only exceptionally.

IF [THEY SELL] THE SYNAGOGUE THEY MAY BUY AN ARK. R. Samuel b. Nahmani said in the name of R. Jonathan: This rule applies only to a synagogue in a village, but a synagogue in a large town, since people from all parts come to it,⁶ may not be sold, it being regarded as belonging to a wider public. Said R. Ashi: As for this synagogue in Matha Mehasia,⁷ although people come to it from all parts, since they come at my discretion,⁸ I can if I like sell it. An objection was raised: 'R. Judah says: It is recorded of the synagogue of the coppersmiths⁹ in Jerusalem that they sold it to R. Eliezer and he used it for his own

purposes'. And yet that was one in a large town? —

That was a very small synagogue, and they themselves had made it. The following was further raised in objection: 'In a house of the land of your possession:¹⁰ your possession is defiled by leprosy, but Jerusalem is not defiled by leprosy'.¹¹ R. Judah said: I have not heard this laid down save with respect to the area of the Sanctuary alone. We thus see that [according to R. Judah] synagogues and houses of study are defiled; and yet why [according to you] should this be, seeing that they belong to the town?¹² —

I would emend [the above statement to read]: 'R. Judah says: I have not heard this rule laid down save in relation to a sanctified place only'.¹³ On what point do these [two authorities] join issue? —

The First Tanna is of opinion that Jerusalem was not apportioned to [any of] the tribes,¹⁴ while R. Judah was of opinion that it was apportioned to [certain of] the tribes; and their difference is the same as that of the following Tannaim, as it has been taught: What [part of Jerusalem] was in the portion of Judah?¹⁵ The Temple mountain,¹⁶ the priestly chambers,¹⁷ and the courts.¹⁸ And what was in the portion of Benjamin? The hall¹⁹ and the sanctuary²⁰ and the holy of holies.²¹ A strip projected from the portion of Judah into the portion of Benjamin, and in it the altar [of sacrifice] was built, and every day the righteous Benjamin fretted over it, desiring to swallow it up, as it says, Crouching over it all the day.²² Therefore Benjamin was privileged to become the host of the Shechinah'.²³ The following Tanna, however, held that Jerusalem was not apportioned to any of the tribes, as it has been taught: 'People cannot let out houses²⁴ in Jerusalem as they do not belong to them.

R. Eleazar b. Zadok says: They may not hire out beds either.²⁵ Therefore householders [who took in guests] would seize the skins of [visitors'] sacrifices forcibly'.²⁶ Abaye

MEGILLAH – 2a-32a

remarked: We may see from this that it is good manners for a man to leave his [empty] wine-flask and his skin-rug at his guest-house. Raba said: This rule²⁷ was meant to apply only where the seven ‘good men’ of the town²⁸ did not sell in the assembly of the townspeople. But if the seven ‘good men’ of the town sold in the assembly of the townspeople, even

- (1) Of the Scriptural books other than the Pentateuch.
- (2) From any of these purchases.
- (3) I.e., whose opinions are usually quoted without mention of his name. Cf. supra p. 4, n. 1.
- (4) V. Ta'an. 15a. Apparently the square was usually in front of the synagogue.
- (5) V. Glos. The Ma'amad did not in fact pray in the square but in the synagogue, and this word is omitted by many authorities, v. Rashi.
- (6) And are regarded as having contributed to it, or may actually have contributed to it.
- (7) A suburb of Sura.
- (8) I.e., since they have contributed on condition that I may do as I please with the money (Tosaf.). Cf. B.B. 3b.
- (9) טורסיים (Tarsians), or ‘filigree workers’. [We find a synagogue of Tarsians also in Tiberias and Lydda, and in Krauss, Synagogale Altertumer, p. 201, they are identical with the synagogue of Alexandrians (cf. the parallel passage in the Jerusalem Talmud Megillah III, 1) who had brought over with them to Palestine the industry in Tarsian carpets — an industry which flourished greatly in Egypt; v. also T.A. II, 625].
- (10) Lev. XIV, 34; of leprosy of houses.
- (11) V. infra.
- (12) And so cannot be called ‘your possession’. (V. Tosaf. s.v. רִאשִׁית).
- (13) Including also synagogues and houses of study.
- (14) But remained the possession of all of them jointly.
- (15) Jerusalem was on the border between the territories of Judah and Benjamin.
- (16) On the east of the city.
- (17) The rooms used by the priests for various purposes.
- (18) The Court of Women, the Israelites’ Court, and the Priests’ Court.
- (19) Ulam. Leading to the interior of the Temple.
- (20) Containing the candlestick and table and altar of incense.
- (21) Containing the Ark.
- (22) As if to swallow it. Deut. XXXIII, 12. E. V. ‘He covereth him all the day’.
- (23) Through the Holy of Holies. V. Yoma 12a.

- (24) To the pilgrims who come to Jerusalem for the three Festivals (Rashi).
- (25) Because the ground on which they rested did not belong to them (Tosaf).
- (26) In lieu of payment for lodging.
- (27) That the proceeds of the sale could not be used for purchasing something less holy, and that the thing sold itself retained its holiness.
- (28) Seven men who acted as representatives of the town in communal matters — optimates.

Megilah 26b

if it was for a drinking place,¹ the transaction holds good. Rabina had the ground of a dismantled synagogue. He applied to R. Ashi to know whether he could plant seeds there. He replied: Go and buy it from the seven ‘good men’ of the town in the assembly of the townspeople, and you may then sow it.

Rami b. Abba was building a synagogue. There was a certain old synagogue which he wanted to pull down, so as to take bricks and beams from it and use them for the other. He was doubtful, however, how to interpret the dictum of R. Hisda; for R. Hisda² said: A man should not pull down a synagogue until he has built another [to take its place]. The reason there, [he knew] was so that there should be no negligence.³ But what was the rule in such a case as this?⁴

He applied to R. Papa, who forbade him; to R. Huna, and he also forbade him. Raba said: A synagogue may be exchanged or sold [for secular purposes], but may not be hired or pledged. What is the reason? [In the latter case] its holiness is still adhering to it.⁵ Its bricks also, may be exchanged or sold [for secular purposes], but not lent. This rule applies only to old ones,⁶ but in the case of new ones there is no objection.⁷ And even if we adopt the view that the mere intention [to use a thing for a certain purpose] has a certain force, this would be the case, for instance, with one who weaves a shroud for a dead body,⁸ but in this case [the objects in question] are like thread which has still to be woven into cloth, and no authority says [that in such a case there is force in mere

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intention]. [With regard to a synagogue which has been made] a gift, there is a difference of opinion between R. Aha and Rabina, one forbidding [it to be used for secular purposes] and one permitting. The one who forbade did so on the ground that there is nothing to which its holiness is transferred,⁹ while the one who permitted it argued that if he [the giver] did not derive some benefit from the act¹⁰ he would not give it, so that in the end the gift is equivalent to a sale.

Our Rabbis taught: ‘Accessories of religious observances [when disused] are to be thrown away; accessories of holiness are to be stored away. The following are accessories of religious observances: a Sukkah, a Lulab, a Shofar,¹¹ fringes. The following are accessories of holiness: large sacks for keeping scrolls of the Scripture in, Tefillin and Mezuzoth,¹¹ a mantle for a Sefer Torah,¹¹ and a Tefillin bag and Tefillin straps’.

Raba said: At first I used to think that the stand [on which the Sefer Torah is placed] is an accessory to an accessory and that it is permitted.¹² When, however, I saw that the Sefer Torah is placed actually on it,¹³ I came to the conclusion that it is all accessory of holiness and is forbidden.

Raba further said: At first I used to think that the curtain¹⁴ is an accessory of an accessory. When, however, I observed that it is folded over and a scroll is placed on it, I came to the conclusion that it is itself an accessory of holiness, and forbidden.

Raba further said: When an ark is falling asunder, to make it into a smaller ark is permitted, but to make it into a stand¹⁵ is forbidden.

Raba further said: When a curtain is worn out, to make it into a mantle for a [whole] scroll of the Law is permitted, but for a single Humash¹¹ is forbidden.

Raba further said: These bags for Humashim and boxes for scrolls¹⁶ are accessories of holiness and must be stored away [when disused]. Is not this obvious?—

You might think that these are used not out of respect [for the scrolls] but merely for protection. Therefore we are told [that this is not so]. There was a synagogue of the Roman Jews¹⁷ which opened out into a room where a dead body was deposited.¹⁸ The Kohanim¹⁹ wanted to go in there to pray, and they came and asked Raba [what they should do]. He said: Take the ark and put it down there,²⁰ since it is a wooden vessel which is meant to be stationary, and every wooden vessel which is meant to be stationary is immune from defilement and forms a partition to prevent the passage of defilement.

Said the Rabbis to Raba: But sometimes it is moved while a scroll of the law is resting on it, and thus it becomes a vessel which is moved both when full and when empty? If that is so [he said], there is no remedy. **Mar Zutra said:** Wrappings of scrolls which are worn out may be used for making shrouds for a Meth Mizwah;²¹ and this act constitutes their ‘storing away’.

Raba also said: A scroll of the law which is worn out may be buried by the side of a Talmid Hakam,¹⁹ even though he be one who only repeats Halachoth.²² **R. Aha b. Jacob said:** It should be put in an earthenware vessel, as it says, And put them in an earthen vessel that they may continue many days.²³

R. Papi said in the name of Raba: To turn a synagogue into a college²⁴ is permitted; to turn a college into a synagogue is forbidden. **R. Papa, however, also reporting Raba, states the opposite. R. Aha said:**

(1) Bah. adds: ‘or for spreading out fruit’.

(2) B.B. 3b.

(3) To build the new one after the old one had been pulled down.

(4) Where the object of pulling down the old one was to obtain building material for the new one.

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- (5) But if it is sold or exchanged, its holiness is transferred to the money or to its equivalent.
- (6) I.e., bricks in an old synagogue.
- (7) Because they have not yet become holy.
- (8) The shroud being ready for use for the purpose for which it is intended.
- (9) Lit., '(asked) to what is its holiness transferred', reading במאי with Alfasi; or, 'why should its holiness be lost', reading אמאי with Asheri; cur. edd. בהאי 'with this'.
- (10) I.e., receive some return from the recipient, which acquires the sanctity of the synagogue.
- (11) V. Glos.
- (12) 'To use it for secular purposes when it is worn out'.
- (13) And not on a cloth spread over it.
- (14) Hung over the Ark in synagogue.
- (15) On which to place the Sefer Torah when read.
- (16) Of the Prophets or Hagiographa.
- (17) יהודאי רומאי. Who had settled in Mahuza (Rashi). Probably Syrian Jews are meant, not Roman. [Obermeyer (p. 179): Jews of Rumae, the Persian Rumakan, near Mahuza, the seat of Raba].
- (18) Before being taken to the cemetery, and its uncleanness spread from the room to the synagogue. V. B.B. 20a.
- (19) V. Glos.
- (20) Just between the room and the synagogue.
- (21) Lit., 'an obligatory corpse': a dead body found by the wayside which it is obligatory on passers-by to bury if the relatives cannot be found; v. Glos.
- (22) I.e., he knew only Mishnahs and Baraitas, not the Gemara also (Rashi).
- (23) Jer. XXXII, 14.
- (24) Lit., 'House of Rabbis'.

Megilah 27a

The statement of R. Papi is the more probable, since R. Joshua b. Levi said: It is permissible to make a synagogue into a Beth hamidrash. This seems conclusive.

Bar Kappara gave the following exposition. 'What is the meaning of the verse, And he burnt the house of the Lord and the king's house and all the houses of Jerusalem even every great man's house burnt he with fire?'¹ 'The house of the Lord': this is the Temple. 'The king's house': this is the royal palace. 'All the houses of Jerusalem': literally. 'Even every great man's house burnt he with fire':² R. Johanan and R. Joshua b. Levi gave

different interpretations of this. One said, it means the place where the Torah is magnified; the other, the place where a prayer is magnified. The one who says Torah bases himself on the verse, The Lord was pleased, for his righteousness' sake to make the Torah great and glorious.³ The one who says prayer bases himself on the verse, Tell me, I pray thee, the great things that Elisha has done;⁴ and what Elisha did, he did by means of prayer. It may be presumed that it was R. Joshua b. Levi who said, 'the place where Torah is magnified', since R. Joshua b. Levi said that a synagogue may be turned into a Beth ha-midrash; which is a clear indication.

BUT IF THEY SELL A [SEFER] TORAH THEY MAY NOT BUY SCROLLS. The question was raised: What is the rule about selling an old Sefer Torah to buy a new one? Do we say that since we do not thus go to higher grade [in the use of the money] it is forbidden, or are we to say that since there is no higher grade to go to, there is no objection?

Come and hear: **BUT IF THEY SELL, A [SEFER] TORAH THEY MAY NOT BUY SCROLLS;** it is scrolls that they may not buy, but to buy a [Sefer] Torah with the money of a [Sefer] Torah is unobjectionable! [No.] But the Mishnah speaks of some thing already done, we ask whether it may be done in the first instance? —

Come and hear: A Sefer Torah may be rolled up in the wrappings of a Humash, or a Humash in the wrappings of a scroll of prophets and hagiographa, but prophets and hagiographa may not be rolled up in the wrappings of a Humash, nor a Humash in the wrappings of a Sefer Torah.⁵ Now it states here at any rate that a Sefer Torah may be rolled up in the wrappings of a Humash; [as much as to say], in the wrappings of a Humash it may be, but in those of [another] Sefer Torah it may not be?⁶ —

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Look at the succeeding clause: ‘But a Humash may not be rolled up in the wrappings of a Sefer Torah’, which would imply that there is no objection against wrapping a Sefer Torah in those of another Sefer Torah? — The fact is that from this statement no conclusion can be drawn.

Come and hear: ‘A [Sefer] Torah may be laid on another [Sefer] Torah, and a [Sefer] Torah on separate Humashim, and separate Humashim on scrolls of the prophets and hagiographa, but scrolls of the prophets and hagiographa may not be placed on Humashim, nor Humashim on a [Sefer] Torah!’ — You speak here of laying; laying is different, because it is impossible to avoid it; for if you do not suppose this, [we may ask,] how are we allowed to roll up the scrolls, seeing that in so doing we lay one sheet on another? The fact is that since this cannot be avoided, it is permitted; and so here also, since it cannot be avoided,⁷ it is permitted.

Come and hear, since Rabbah b. Bar Hanah said in the name of R. Johanan, who had it from Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel: A man should not sell an old [Sefer] Torah in order to buy a new one with the proceeds! — There the reason is lest he should [afterwards] neglect to do so; here we speak of a case where the new one is written and waiting to be paid for. What is the rule [in such a case]? —

Come and hear, since R. Johanan said in the name of R. Meir: A man should not sell a Sefer Torah save in order to study the Torah and to marry a wife. From this we may conclude [may we not] that there is no objection against buying one Sefer Torah with the proceeds of another? — Perhaps study comes under a different rule, since study leads on to practice. Marrying also [is permitted because it says], He created it not a waste, he formed it to be inhabited,⁸ but to buy a Sefer Torah with the proceeds of another is still not permitted.

Come and hear: ‘A man should not sell a Sefer Torah even though he does not require it. Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel went further and said: Even if a man has no food and he sells a Sefer Torah or his daughter, he will never have any luck⁹ [from that money]’.

THE SAME APPLIES TO ANY MONEY LEFT OVER. Raba said: This is the rule only if they had money left over from a sale; but if they had money left over from a collection, it is permitted [to use it for any purpose]. Abaye cited the following in objection to this: ‘When does this rule apply? If they made no stipulation; but if they made a stipulation, they may even give it to the *duchsusia*’.¹⁰ Now how are we to understand this? Shall we say that they [the seven good men] sold [a holy article] and had money left over [after purchasing a new one]? Then even if they made a stipulation [that they could do what they liked with it], what does it avail?¹¹ We must say therefore that they collected money and had some left over, and the reason is given that ‘they made a stipulation’, but if they made no stipulation they cannot? —

I still maintain that [what is meant is] that they sold and had something left, and the statement should run thus: ‘When does this rule apply? When the seven "good men" of the town did not make any stipulation in the assembly of the townspeople; but if the seven good men of the town made a stipulation in the assembly of the townspeople, it may be used even for paying a *Duchsusia*’.

Abaye said to a Rabbinical student who used to repeat¹² the Mishnah in the presence of R. Shesheth: Have you ever heard from R. Shesheth what is meant by *Duchsusia*? — He replied: This is what R. Shesheth said: The town horseman.¹³ Abaye thereupon observed: This shows that a Rabbinical student who has heard something of which he does not know the meaning should ask one who is frequently in the company of the Rabbis, since he is almost certain to have heard the answer from some great man.

MEGILLAH – 2a-32a

R. Johanan said in the name of R. Meir: If the representatives of one town¹⁴ go [on a visit] to another town and they are there rated for a charity contribution, they should pay it and on leaving they should bring the money with them¹⁵ to assist with it the poor of their own town. It has been taught to the same effect: 'If the men of one town go to another town and are there rated for a charity contribution, they should pay it, and when they leave they should bring the money back with them. If an individual, however, goes to another town and is there rated for a charity contribution, it is given to the poor of that town R. Huna once proclaimed a fast day.

R. Hana b. Hanilai and all the [leading] men of his place happened to visit him [on that day], and they were called upon for a charity contribution, and they gave it. When they were about to leave, they said to him [R. Huna], Kindly return it to us so that we may go and assist with it the poor of our own town. He replied to them: We have learnt: 'When does this rule apply? When there is no

(1) II Kings XXV, 9.

(2) These words are apparently superfluous and therefore lend themselves to a homiletical exposition.

(3) Isa. XLII, 21.

(4) II Kings VIII, 4.

(5) Because this brings the wrappings to a lower stage of holiness.

(6) And we infer that similarly one Sefer Torah may not be bought from the proceeds of another.

(7) In point of fact it is now avoided in the synagogue by the device of letting someone hold one Sefer Torah while another is being read from.

(8) Isa. XLV, 18.

(9) Lit., 'he will never see a sign of blessing'.

(10) V. infra.

(11) Since the Mishnah expressly says that it is on the same footing as purchase money.

(12) Lit., 'arrange'.

(13) Whose function it was to take urgent messages to the authorities on behalf of the town.

(14) Lit., 'Sons of the town, v. supra p. 155, n. 1. [Aliter: 'a group of people of the same town' —

not necessarily representatives; v. Maim. Mat. 'Aniyim VII, 14].

(15) I.e., secure repayment.

Megilah 27b

town scholar¹ in charge there; but if there is a scholar in control there, it should be given to the town scholar, and all the more so in this case, seeing that both my poor and your poor depend upon me.

MISHNAH. [A SYNAGOGUE]² BELONGING TO A COMMUNITY³ SHOULD NOT BE SOLD TO A PRIVATE PERSON BECAUSE ITS SANCTITY IS [THEREBY] LOWERED. SO R. MEIR. THEY SAID TO HIM: IF SO, IT SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO SELL FROM A LARGER TOWN TO A SMALLER ONE.

GEMARA. That was a sound objection raised by the Rabbis against R. Meir, [was it not]? What says R. Meir to this? — [To sell] from a large town to a small one [is unobjectionable], because if it was holy to begin with, it is still holy now. But if it passes from a community to an individual, there is no holiness left.⁴ [And what is the reply of] the Rabbis [to this]? — If that raises a scruple [in this case], in the other case also it raised a scruple, because 'in the multitude of people is the king's glory'.⁵

MISHNAH. A SYNAGOGUE MAY NOT BE SOLD SAVE WITH THE STIPULATION THAT IT MAY BE BOUGHT BACK [BY THE SELLERS] WHENEVER THEY DESIRE. SO R. MEIR. THE SAGES, HOWEVER, SAY THAT IT MAY BE SOLD IN PERPETUITY, SAVE FOR FOUR PURPOSES-FOR A BATH, FOR A TANNERY, FOR A RITUAL BATH, OR FOR A LAUNDRY. R. JUDAH SAYS: IT MAY BE SOLD FOR [TURNING INTO] A COURTYARD, AND THE PURCHASER MAY DO WHAT HE LIKES WITH IT.

GEMARA. On R. Meir's ruling, how do people live in it? [The rent they pay] would be interest!⁶ — R. Johanan replied: R. Meir

MEGILLAH – 2a-32a

gave this ruling on the basis of the view of R. Judah, who said that interest which is only contingent⁷ is permitted, as it has been taught:⁸ 'If a man lent another a Maneh and the latter made a [conditional] sale to him of his field,⁹ if the vendor takes¹⁰ the produce, this is permitted, but if the purchaser takes the produce, it is forbidden.¹¹

R. Judah said that even if the purchaser takes the produce it is permitted. Said R. Judah further: It happened once that Boethus b. Zunin made a sale of his field with the permission of R. Eleazar b. Azariah, and the purchaser took the produce. They said to him: Do you cite that as a proof? It was in fact the vendor who took the produce and not the purchaser'. On what point of principle did they differ? — On the question of contingent interest; one authority [R. Judah] held that contingent interest is permitted, and the other held that it is forbidden.

Raba said: All authorities agree that contingent interest is forbidden, and the point at issue is the taking of interest on condition of returning it. One authority [R. Judah] held that to take interest on condition of returning it [when the principal is returned] is permitted,¹² while the other held that it is forbidden.

THE SAGES SAY HE MAY SELL IT IN PERPETUITY, etc. Rab Judah said in the name of Samuel: It is permitted to a man to make water within four cubits of where prayers have been said. Said R. Joseph: What has he told us? We have already learnt it: **R. JUDAH SAYS: IT MAY BE SOLD FOR USE AS A COURTYARD, AND THE PURCHASER MAY DO WHAT HE LIKES IN IT;** And even the Rabbis did not forbid save in the synagogue itself, since its sanctity is permanent, but for the four adjoining cubits, the sanctity of which is not permanent,¹³ they did not make such a rule.

A Tanna recited in the presence of R. Nahman: One who has just said prayers may

go a distance of four cubits and make water, and one who has made water may go a distance of four cubits and pray. He said to him: I grant you that one who has made water may go four cubits and pray; this we have learnt:¹⁴ 'How far should he remove from it and from excrement? Four cubits'. But why should one who has prayed remove four cubits before making water? If that is the rule, you have sanctified all the streets of Nehardea!¹⁵ Say, 'should wait' [the time it takes to go four cubits]. [Is that so?] I grant you that one who has made water should wait till he can go four cubits, on account of drippings [on his clothes]. But why should one who has just prayed wait long enough to go four cubits? — R. Ashi replied: Because for the time it takes to go four cubits his mouth is still full of his prayer¹⁶ and his lips are still muttering it.

(Mnemonic *Z'L'P'N'*).¹⁷

R. Zaccai was asked by his disciples: In virtue of what have you reached such a good old age? He replied: Never in my life have I made water within four cubits of a place where prayers have been said, nor have I given an opprobrious epithet to my fellow, nor have I omitted [to perform] the sanctification of the [Sabbath] day.¹⁸ I had a grandmother who once sold her headdress so as to bring me [wine for] the sanctification of the day. It was taught: When she died she left him three hundred barrels of wine, and when he died he left his sons three thousand barrels.

R. Huna once came before Rab girded with a string. He said to him, What is the meaning of this? He replied: I had no [wine for] sanctification, and I pledged my girdle so as to get some. He said: May it be the will of heaven that you be [one day] smothered in robes of silk. On the day when Rabbah his son was married, R. Huna, who was a short man, was lying on a bed and his daughters and daughters-in-law stripped [clothes] from themselves and threw them on him until he was smothered in silks. When Rab heard he

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was chagrined and said, Why when I blessed you did you not say, The same to you, Sir?¹⁹

R. Eleazar b. Shammua' was asked by his disciples: In virtue of what have you reached such a good old age? He replied: Never in my life have I made a short²⁰ cut through a synagogue, nor have I stepped upon the heads of the holy people,²¹ nor have I lifted my hands [to say the priestly blessing] without reciting a blessing.²² R. Peridah was asked by his disciples: In virtue of what have you reached such a good old age? He replied: Never in my life have I allowed anyone to be before me at the house of study,

(1) **הביר עיר**. A Rabbi who took a leading part in the town affairs. [Others vocalize **הביר** 'a group' denoting either a town council similar to the Roman Collegia (Krauss) or an official communal religious or charity organization, v. Krauss, *Synagogale Altertumer* pp. 20ff and Weinberg, *M. Jeschurun*, 1929 pp. 240ff and 1930, 269ff].

(2) V. Rashi s.v. **ורבבן**.

(3) Lit., 'to many'.

(4) Since a quorum of at least ten is required for any act of sanctification (v. supra p. 142) — Rashi.

(5) Prov. XIV, 28. The meaning is that the more worshippers, the greater the glory of God.

(6) I.e., it becomes interest when the place is bought back and the first purchaser recovers his capital.

(7) Lit., 'one side in interest'

(8) B.M. 63a.

(9) I.e., saying, 'the field is sold from now if I do not repay'.

(10) Lit., 'consumes'.

(11) Because if the loan is repaid, this will appear like interest on his Maneh.

(12) According to R. Judah, when the loan is repaid, any profit that has been made out of the field in the interval is to be given up. The Rabbis, however, forbid even this since the lender does after all enjoy interest for the time being on the loan. V. B.M., Sonc. ed. p. 376, n. 8.

(13) But it lasts only while prayers are actually being said.

(14) Ber. 22.

(15) For there is no space of four cubits in them in which prayers have not been said by somebody.

(16) Lit., 'his prayer is ordered in his mouth'.

(17) Z = Zaccai; L = Eleazar; P = Peridah; N = Nehunia.

(18) Kiddush, v. P.B. p. 142.

(19) Because that might also have been fulfilled.

(20) V. infra p. 171, n. 2.

(21) I.e., pushed the disciples out of the way in order to get to his place in the Beth ha-midrash. It was the custom there to sit on the ground.

(22) 'Blessed art thou... who hast sanctified us with the sanctity of Aaron', v. Sot. 39a.

Megilah 28a

nor have I said grace before a Kohen,¹ nor have I eaten of a beast from which the priestly dues² have not been given,³ as R. Isaac said in the name of R. Johanan: It is forbidden to eat from an animal from which the priestly dues have not been given; and R. Isaac further said: To eat from an animal from which the priestly dues have not been given is like eating tebel.⁴ The law, however, is not as stated by him. 'Nor did I say grace before a Kohen'. This implies that this is a meritorious action. But has not R. Johanan said: 'If a Talmid Hakam allows even a high priest who is all ignoramus to say grace before him, that Talmid Hakam commits a mortal offence,⁵ as it says, All that hate me [Mesanne'ai] love death;⁶ read not Mesanne'ai [that hate me], but Masni'ai [that make me hated]?'⁷ —

When R. Johanan made this remark, he was thinking of equals.⁸ R. Nehunia b. ha-Kaneh was asked by his disciples: In virtue of what have you reached such a good old age? He replied: Never in my life have I sought respect through the degradation of my fellow, nor has the curse of my fellow gone up with me upon my bed, and I have been generous with my money.⁹ 'I have not sought respect through the degradation of my fellow', as illustrated by R. Huna who once was carrying a spade on his shoulder when R. Hana b. Hanilai wanted to take it from him, but he said to him, If you are accustomed to carry in your own town, take it, but if not, I do not want to be paid respect through your degradation.

'Nor did the curse of my fellow go up on my bed with me'. This is illustrated by Mar Zutra, who, when he climbed into his bed said, I forgive all who have vexed me. 'I have

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been generous with my money’, as a Master has said, ‘Job was generous with his money; he used to leave with the shopkeeper a Perutah¹⁰ of his change’.

R. Akiba asked R. Nehunia the great: In virtue of what have you reached such a good old age? His attendants came and beat him,¹¹ so he went and sat on the top of a date tree, and said to him: Rabbi, seeing that it says ‘a lamb’, why does it also say ‘one’?¹² Thereupon he [R. Nehunia] said, He is a rabbinical student, leave him alone. He then answered his question, saying, ‘One’ means ‘unique in its flock’. Then he said to him: Never in my life have I accepted presents, nor have I insisted on retribution [when wronged],¹³ and I have been generous with my money. ‘I have not accepted presents’, as illustrated by R. Eleazar, who, when presents were sent to him from the Prince would not accept them and when he was invited there would not go. He said to them: Do you not want me to live, since it says, He that hateth gifts shall live?¹⁴

R. Zera, when presents were sent to him from the Prince, would not accept them, but when he was invited there he used to go, saying, They derive honor from my presence. ‘Nor did I insist on retribution’, as Raba said: ‘He who waives his right to retribution¹⁵ is forgiven all his sins, as it says, that pardoneth iniquity and passeth by transgression.¹⁶ Whose iniquity is forgiven? The iniquity of him who passes by transgression.

Rabbi asked R. Joshua b. Korha: In virtue of what have you reached such a good old age? He said to him: Do you begrudge me my life?¹⁷ Said Rabbi to him: This is [a point of] Torah, and it is important for me to learn. He replied: Never in my life have I gazed at the countenance¹⁸ of a wicked man; for so R. Johanan said: It is forbidden to a man to gaze at the form of the countenance¹⁹ of a wicked man, as it says, Were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king

of Judah, I would not look toward thee nor see thee.²⁰

R. Eleazar said: His eyes become dim, as it says, And it came to pass that when Isaac was old that his eyes were dim, so that he could not see;²¹ because he used to gaze at the wicked Esau. But was that the cause? Has not R. Isaac said: Let not the curse of an ordinary person ever seem of small account to thee, for Abimelech cursed Sarah, and it was fulfilled in her seed, as it says, Behold he is for thee a covering [Kesuth] of the eyes.²² Read not ‘Kesuth’ but ‘Kesiath’ [blinding]? — Both caused the affliction. Raba said. We learn it from here, It is not good to respect the person of the wicked.²³

When he was about to depart life, Rabbi said to him, Bless me. He said to him: May it be heaven's will that you attain to half my days. Not to their whole length [he exclaimed]? Shall those who succeed you,²⁴ [he replied] pasture cattle?²⁵ Abbuha b. Ihi and Minyamin b. Ihi [both left sayings on this subject]. One said: May I be rewarded²⁶ because I have never gazed at a Cuthean, and the other said, May I be rewarded because I have never gone into partnership with a Cuthean.

R. Zera was asked by his disciples: In virtue of what have you reached such a good old age? He replied: Never in my life have I been harsh with my household, nor have I stepped in front of one greater than myself, nor have I meditated on the Torah in filthy alleys,²⁷ nor have I gone four cubits without Torah²⁸ and Tefillin,²⁹ nor have I slept in the Beth ha-midrash,²⁹ either a long or a short sleep,³⁰ nor have I rejoiced in the downfall of my fellow, nor have I called my fellow by his nickname, (or, as some report, ‘family nickname’).³¹

MISHNAH. R. JUDAH SAID FURTHER:³² IF A SYNAGOGUE HAS FALLEN INTO RUINS, IT IS NOT RIGHT TO DELIVER FUNERAL ORATIONS THEREIN NOR TO WIND ROPES³³ NOR TO SPREAD NETS NOR TO

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LAY OUT PRODUCE ON THE ROOF [TO DRY] NOR TO USE IT AS A SHORT CUT,³⁴ AS IT SAYS, AND I WILL BRING YOUR SANCTUARIES UNTO DESOLATION,³⁵ [WHICH IMPLIES THAT] THEIR HOLINESS REMAINS EVEN WHEN THEY ARE DESOLATE. IF GRASS COMES UP IN THEM, IT SHOULD NOT BE PLUCKED, SO AS TO EXCITE COMPASSION.³⁶

GEMARA. Our Rabbis taught: ‘Synagogues must not be treated disrespectfully. It is not right to eat or to drink in them,

- (1) But invariably gave him precedence, v. Git. 59b.
- (2) The shoulder, the two cheeks and the maw. Deut. XVIII, 3.
- (3) Bah. reverses the order of the two last clauses.
- (4) Produce from which the priestly and Levitical dues have not been separated.
- (5) [Lit., ‘deserves death’, a recurring rabbinic phrase not to be taken literally but merely as expressing strong indignation].
- (6) Prov. VIII, 36. Wisdom is speaking.
- (7) The Talmid Hakam makes wisdom hated by allowing the ignoramus to have precedence.
- (8) I.e., where the priest is also a Talmid Hakam, even though not of equal standing (Tosaf.).
- (9) Lit., ‘ready to excuse with my money’.
- (10) V. Glos.
- (11) For asking such a question, v. infra.
- (12) Num. XXVIII, 4, of the daily sacrifice: one lamb in the evening where ‘a lamb’ would have been sufficient.
- (13) Lit., ‘insisted on my measures’.
- (14) Prov. XV, 27.
- (15) Lit., ‘passes by his measures’.
- (16) Micah VII, 18.
- (17) That you ask me such a question.
- (18) Lit., ‘likeness’, with reference to Gen. I, 26.
- (19) Lit., ‘image of the likeness V. ibid.
- (20) II Kings III, 14. Spoken by Elisha to Jehoram.
- (21) Gen. XXVII, 1.
- (22) Ibid. XX, 16.
- (23) Prov. XVIII, 5.
- (24) Your children (Rashi).
- (25) They will also be scholars, and if you live too long, they will not enjoy a position of dignity.
- (26) Lit., ‘let it come to me’.
- (27) V. Ber. 24b.
- (28) I.e., without conning words of Torah.
- (29) V. Glos.
- (30) Lit., ‘a fixed or an accidental sleep’.
- (31) So Rashi. According to Maharsha the reading should be ‘my nickname, i.e., a name of

reproach which he himself would reject. [According to some edd. there is no difference in the meaning but in the Hebrew word used to express ‘nickname’, in the former version it is Hakinah, in the latter Hanikah].

(32) The point of the word ‘further’ is not clear, as R. Judah was the most lenient of the authorities quoted in the last Mishnah, and this Mishnah contains restrictions. V. Tosaf.

(33) This is taken as typical of any kind of rough work which needs a great deal of room such as a synagogue would provide (Rashi).

(34) פקדונות, compendiaria, sc. via.

(35) Lev. XXVI, 31.

(36) In the beholders, and make them pray for the restoration of the holy place.

Megilah 28b

nor to dress up in them, nor to stroll about in them, nor to go into them in summer to escape the heat and in the rainy season to escape the rain, nor to deliver a private funeral address¹ in them. But it is right to read [the Scriptures] in them and to repeat the Mishnah and to deliver public funeral addresses.²

R. Judah said: When is this? When they are still in use; but when they are abandoned, grass is allowed to grow in them, and it should not be plucked, so as to excite compassion’. Who was speaking about grass? — There is an omission, and the statement should read thus: ‘They should be swept and watered so that grass should not grow in them.

R. Judah said: When is this? When they are in use; but when they are abandoned, grass is allowed to grow in them; if grass does grow, it is not plucked, so that it may excite compassion **R. Assi said:** The synagogues of Babylon have been built with a stipulation,³ and even so they must not be treated disrespectfully. What [for instance] is this? — Doing calculations [for business purposes] in them.

R. Assi said: A synagogue in which people make calculations is used for keeping a dead body in over night. You actually think it is used for keeping a dead body in? — Is there

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no way otherwise? But [say] in the end a Meth Mizwah⁴ will be kept there over night. ‘Nor to dress up in it’.

Raba said: The Sages and their disciples are permitted — since R. Joshua b. Levi has said: What is the meaning of ‘Be Rabbanan’?⁵ The Rabbis’ house. ‘Nor to go into them in summer to escape the heat and in the rainy season to escape the rain’. For instance, Rabina and R. Ada b. Mattenah were once standing and asking questions of Raba when a shower of rain came on. They went into the synagogue, saying, Why we have gone into the synagogue is not because of the rain, but because the discussion of a legal point requires clarity, like a clear day.⁶

R. Aha the son of Raba asked R. Ashi: If a man has occasion to call another out of synagogue, what is he to do? He replied: If he is a rabbinical student, let him say some Halachah; if he is a Tanna,⁷ let him repeat a Mishnah; if he is a Kara,⁸ let him say a verse of Scripture; if none of these, let him say to a child, ‘Repeat me the last verse you have learnt’; or else let him stay a little while and then get up. ‘To deliver public funeral addresses⁹ in them’. What is meant by a public funeral address? — R. Hisda gave as an example, For instance, a funeral address at which R. Shesheth is present.¹⁰ R. Shesheth mentioned as an example: For instance, a funeral address at which R. Hisda is present.¹¹

Rafam had a funeral address delivered for his daughter-in-law in the synagogue, saying, To pay honor to me and to the dead¹² all the people will come.¹³ R. Zera delivered a funeral address for a certain rabbinical student in the synagogue, saying, Whether to pay honor to me or to pay honor to the dead, all the public will come. Resh Lakish delivered a funeral address for a certain rabbinical student who frequented the Land of Israel and who used to repeat Halachoth¹⁴ before twenty-four rows [of disciples]. He said: Alas! The Land of Israel has lost a great man. [On the other hand] there was a

certain man who used to repeat Halachoth, Sifra and Sifre and Tosefta,¹⁵ and when he died they came and said to R. Nahman, Sir, will you deliver a funeral oration for him, and he said, How are we to deliver over him an address: Alas! A bag full of books has been lost!¹⁶ Observe now the difference between the rigorous scholars of the Land of Israel and the saints of Babylon.¹⁷ We have learnt in another place:¹⁸ ‘Whoever makes use of a crown, passeth away [from the world]’ and Resh Lakish commented: This applies to one who accepts service from one who can repeat Halachoth, and ‘Ulla said: A man may accept service from one who can repeat the four [orders of the Mishnah]¹⁹ but not from one who can [also] teach²⁰ them.

This is illustrated by the following story of Resh Lakish, he was once traveling along a road when he came to a pool of water, and a man came up and put him on his shoulders and began taking him across. He said to the man: Can you read²⁰ the Scriptures? He answered, I can. Can you repeat the Mishnah? [He replied], I can repeat four orders of the Mishnah. Resh Lakish thereupon said: You have hewn four rocks, and you carry Resh Lakish on your shoulder? Throw the son of Lakisha into the water! He replied: I would sooner that your honor tell me something.²¹ If so, he replied, learn from me this dictum which was enunciated by R. Zera: ‘The daughters of Israel imposed spontaneously upon themselves the restriction that if they saw [on their garments] a spot of blood no bigger than a mustard seed, they waited for seven days without issue [before taking a ritual bath].²²

It was taught in the Tanna debe Eliyyahu:²³ ‘Whoever repeats Halachoth may rest assured that he is destined for the future world, as it says, His goings [Halikoth] are to eternity.²⁴ Read not Halikoth but Halachoth’. Our Rabbis taught:

(1) I.e., one not attended by the general public.

(2) V. infra.

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- (3) That they may be used for various purposes.
- (4) As punishment many will die and there will be no near relatives found to attend to their burial. V. Glos.
- (5) Lit., 'at the Rabbis', the common name for the College, exactly equivalent to the French chez les Rabbins, be being a contraction of Beth (the house of).
- (6) Lit., 'a day of the north wind'. They could not think clearly in the rain.
- (7) V. Glos. s.v. (b).
- (8) Lit., 'reader'; one who could recite correctly the Scriptures by heart; v. Supra p. 133, n. 5.
- (9) Heb. Hespel. This was an address in honor of the dead designed to evoke lamentation and mourning, and often delivered by a professional orator called a Safdan.
- (10) Lit., 'a Hespel at which R. Shesheth stands'. (V. Maharsha).
- (11) R. Shesheth and R. Hisda desired to pay compliments to one another.
- (12) Rashi reads: Whether to pay honor to me or to the dead.
- (13) This makes it a public funeral address.
- (14) Traditional teachings.
- (15) Sifra is the Halachah midrash on Leviticus; Sifre the Halachic midrash on Num. V to the end of Deuteronomy; Tosefta the Baraitha of R. Hiyya; v. Sanh. Sonc. ed., p. 567, n. 1.
- (16) As much as to say, that would not redound to his praise: he could only repeat these books parrot-like, but did not know what they meant.
- (17) Resh Lakish was from Palestine, R. Nahman from Babylon. On the rigor of the former v. Yoma 9b; on the saintliness of the latter v. Sot. 49b.
- (18) Ab. I.
- (19) Apparently the Orders of Zera'im and Toharoth were not considered so necessary as no longer having practical application (V. Maharsha).
- (20) I.e., explain.
- (21) So that he might be indebted to Resh Lakish and be allowed to perform service for him.
- (22) Whereas the law demanded this only if an issue was observed three days running, during the eleven days between the menses, v. supra P. 44, n. 4.
- (23) I.e., in a Baraitha attributed to Elijah; v. Keth., Sonc. ed. p. 680, n. 2.
- (24) Hab. III, 6. E.V. 'as of old'.

Megillah 29a

The study of the Torah may be suspended for escorting a dead body to the burying place and a bride to the canopy.

It was recorded of R. Judah b. Ila'i that he used to suspend the study of the Torah for escorting a dead body to the burying place and a bride to the canopy. When does this rule [regarding the dead] apply? When there are not present sufficient numbers [to pay him due honor]; but if sufficient numbers are available, [the study of the Torah] is not suspended. What numbers are sufficient? — R. Samuel b. Inia said in the name of Rab: Twelve thousand and [in addition] six thousand trumpets, or, as according to another version, twelve thousand men of whom six thousand have trumpets. Ulla said: Enough to make a procession extending from the burying ground to the town gate.

R. Shesheth said: The withdrawal of the Torah¹ should correspond to its delivery:² as its delivery was in the presence of sixty myriads, so its withdrawal should be accompanied by sixty myriads. This applies to one who knew by heart Scripture and Mishnah; but for one who [also] taught the Mishnah there is no limit.³

It has been taught: R. Simon b. Yohai said: Come and see how beloved are Israel in the sight of God, in that to every place to which they were exiled the Shechinah went with them. They were exiled to Egypt and the Shechinah was with them, as it says, Did I reveal myself unto the house of thy father when they were in Egypt.⁴ They were exiled to Babylon, and the Shechinah was with them, as it says, for your sake I was sent to Babylon.⁵ And when they will be redeemed in the future, the Shechinah will be with them, as it says, Then the Lord thy God will return [with] thy captivity.⁶ It does not say here We-heshib [and he shall bring back] but We-shab [and he shall return]. This teaches us that the Holy One, blessed be He, will return with them from the places of exile. Where [is the Shechinah] in Babylon? — Abaye said: In the synagogue of Huzal⁷ and in the synagogue of Shaf-weyathib⁸ in Nehardea. Do not, however, imagine that it is in both places,⁹ but it is sometimes in one and sometimes in the other. Said Abaye:

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May I be rewarded¹⁰ because whenever I am within a parasang¹¹ I go in and pray there.

The father of Samuel and Levi were sitting in the synagogue which ‘moved and settled’ in Nehardea. The Shechinah came and they heard a sound of tumult and rose and went out. R. Shesheth was once sitting in the synagogue which ‘moved and settled’ in Nehardea, when the Shechinah came. He did not go out, and the ministering angels came and threatened him. He turned to him and said: Sovereign of the Universe, if one is afflicted¹² and one is not afflicted, who gives way to whom? God thereupon said to them: Leave him. Yet have I been to them as a little sanctuary.¹³ R. Isaac said: This refers to the synagogue and houses of learning in Babylon. R. Eleazar says: This refers to the house of our teacher¹⁴ in Babylon.

Raba gave the following exposition: What is the meaning of the verse, Lord, thou hast been our dwelling [Ma'on] place?¹⁵ This refers to synagogues and houses of learning. Abaye said: Formerly I used to study at home and pray in the synagogue, but when I noticed¹⁶ the words of David, O Lord, I love the habitation [Me'on] of thy house,¹⁷ I began to study also in the synagogue. It has been taught: R. Eleazar ha-Kappar says: The synagogues and houses of learning in Babylon will in time to come be planted in Eretz Israel, as it says, For as Tabor among the mountains and as Carmel by the sea came.¹⁸ Now can we not draw an inference here a fortiori: Seeing that Carmel and Tabor which came only on a single occasion to learn the Torah are implanted in Eretz Israel, how much more must this be the case with the synagogues and houses of learning where the Torah is read and expounded!¹⁹

Bar Kappara gave the following exposition: What is the meaning of the verse, Why look ye askance [Terazedun], ye mountains of peaks.²⁰ A Bath Kol²¹ went forth and said to them: Why do ye desire litigation [Tirzu din] with Sinai? Ye are all full of blemishes as compared with Sinai. It is written here

Gabnunim [with peaks], and it is written elsewhere or crookbacked [Gibben] or a dwarf.²² R. Ashi observed: You can learn from this that if a man is arrogant, this is a blemish in him.

IT SHOULD NOT BE USED AS A SHORT CUT [KAPANDRIA]. What is kapandria?²³ Raba said: Kapandria is as its name implies. What does its name imply? As if one were to say, Instead of going round the block [‘Makifna Adare], I will go through here. R. Abbahu said: If a road passed through there originally,²⁴ it is permitted. R. Nahman b. Isaac said: If one goes in without any intention of using it as a short cut, he may afterwards use it as a short cut. And R. Helbo said in the name of R. Huna: If one enters a synagogue to pray, he may²⁵ afterwards use it as a short cut, as it says, But when, the people of the land shall come before the Lord at the appointed seasons, he that entereth by way of the north gate to worship shall go forth by way of the south gate.²⁶

IF GRASS HAS GROWN IN IT, IT SHOULD NOT BE PLUCKED, SO AS TO EXCITE COMPASSION. But it has been taught: ‘It should not be plucked and given as food [to cattle], but it may be plucked and left there?’ — The statement in our Mishnah also refers to plucking and giving for food.

Our Rabbis taught: ‘Burying grounds must not be treated disrespectfully. Cattle should not be fed in them, nor should a watercourse be turned through them, nor should grass be plucked in them, and if it is plucked, it should be burnt on the spot, out of respect for the dead’. To what do these last words apply? Shall I say, to the last clause? If it is burnt on the spot, what respect does this show for the dead? It must be then to the preceding clauses.

MISHNAH. IF THE NEW MOON OF ADAR FALLS ON SABBATH, THE PORTION OF SHEKALIM²⁷ IS READ [ON THAT DAY]. IF IT FALLS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE WEEK, IT

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IS READ ON THE SABBATH BEFORE, AND ON THE NEXT SABBATH THERE IS A BREAK.²⁸ ON THE SECOND [OF THE SPECIAL SABBATHS] ZAKOR²⁹ IS READ, ON THE THIRD THE PORTION OF THE RED HEIFER,³⁰ ON THE FOURTH THIS MONTH SHALL BE TO YOU.³¹ ON THE FIFTH THE REGULAR ORDER³² IS RESUMED. [THE REGULAR READING]³³ IS INTERRUPTED FOR ANY SPECIAL OCCASION: FOR NEW MOONS, FOR HANUKKAH, FOR PURIM, FOR FASTS, FOR MA'AMADOTH,³⁴ AND FOR THE DAY OF ATONEMENT.³⁵

GEMARA. We have learnt in another place: 'On the first of Adar proclamation is made with regard to the Shekels³⁶

- (1) I.e., the burial of a learned man.
- (2) At Mount Sinai.
- (3) V. Keth. 17a.
- (4) I Sam. II, 27. This is taken to mean that God revealed himself to Aaron in Egypt even before Moses came.
- (5) Isa. XLIII, 14. E.V. (incorrectly) 'have sent'.
- (6) Deut. XXX, 3.
- (7) V. supra p. 26 n. 1. Sherira Gaon, in his Epistle (ed. Lewin p. 73) locates it 'near the Beth Hamidrash of Ezra the Scribe, below Nehardea'.
- (8) שף ויהיב Lit., 'that moved and settled'. The name for a synagogue in Nehardea which according to tradition was built with materials brought by King Jeconiah and his companions from Jerusalem at the time of the first captivity. [For this tradition v. Sherira Gaon op. cit. p. 72-3, where the passage is also found with variants: Rab said in the synagogue of Huzal, Samuel said in the synagogue of Shaf-weyathib in Nehardea. The name is also spelled שפייתהב and is regarded by some as being a name of a place, v. Krauss, Synagogale Altertumer pp. 214ff and Obermeyer pp. 299ff].
- (9) Lit., 'here and there'. [Sherira Gaon: 'here and not there'].
- (10) Lit., 'may it come to me'.
- (11) Of either of these synagogues.
- (12) R. Shesheth was blind.
- (13) Ezek. XI, 16.
- (14) Rab. [The reference is to the venerable old Synagogue founded by Rab in Sura of which there is frequent mention in the Geonic Responsa; v. Krauss, Synagogale, Altertumer, p. 221 and Ginzberg, Geonica, p. 41].
- (15) Ps. XC, 1.
- (16) Lit., 'heard' or 'understood'. This means apparently that his attention was called to them by the exposition of Raba.

- (17) Ibid. XXVI, 8.
- (18) Jer. XLVI, 18. E.V. 'As Tabor... he shall come'. According to tradition these two mountains (or their angelic guardians) came to Sinai at the giving of the Law.
- (19) Lit., 'spread (learning among many)'.
- (20) Ps. LXVIII, 17. According to tradition, all the mountains were jealous of Sinai.
- (21) V. Glos.
- (22) Lev. XXI, 20.
- (23) V. supra p. 171, n. 2.
- (24) I.e., before the synagogue was built.
- (25) According to Asheri, this is not only permitted but is a duty.
- (26) Ezek. XLVI, 9.
- (27) The Gemara discusses what this is.
- (28) In the series of four special Sabbaths; v. supra p. 32, n. 5.
- (29) Deut. XXV, 17-19; on account of Purim.
- (30) Num. XIX, calling the people's attention to the need of ritual cleanness for participating in the Pascal lamb soon to be offered.
- (31) Ex. XII; on account of the proximity of Passover.
- (32) V. Gemara infra.
- (33) The Pentateuch is divided into a number of portions (Sidra), one to be read on each Sabbath of the year, commencing with the Sabbath after Tabernacles. The opening verses of each weekly portion are also read on Sabbath afternoon, and in the morning service on the Monday and Thursday of that week. It is the weekday reading that is here primarily referred to.
- (34) V. Glos.
- (35) In the Minhah service, even when it falls on Sabbath (v. Tosaf.).
- (36) The so-called Terumath Halishkah, contributions to the Shekel chamber to provide the daily sacrifices for the coming year.

Megilah 29b

and with regard to diverse seeds.¹ I can understand it being made for diverse seeds, because it is the time for sowing.² But what is the ground for making it for the Shekels?—

R. Tabi said in the name of R. Josiah: Because Scripture says, This is the burnt-offering of each new moon in its renewal.³ The Torah herein says to us: As you renew the month, bring an offering from the new contributions. And since it is in Nisan that we have to bring from the new contributions,⁴ we read beforehand on the first of Adar so that Shekels should be

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brought [in time] to the Sanctuary. With whose view does this accord? Not with that of R. Simeon b. Gamaliel. For if you take the view of R. Simeon b. Gamaliel, he requires [only] two weeks' [notice], as it has been taught: 'Moot points in the law of Passover are considered⁵ from thirty days before Passover; R. Simeon b. Gamaliel, however, says, from two weeks before'. You may even say it accords with the view of R. Simeon b. Gamaliel. For since a Master has said that 'on the fifteenth of this month [Adar] tables⁶ are set up in the provinces and on the twenty-fifth in the Sanctuary',⁷ On account of the tables we read beforehand [on the first of Adar].⁸

What is the portion of Shekalim? — Rab said, Commanded the children of Israel and say unto them My food which is presented unto me,⁹ Samuel said, When thou takest.¹⁰ We call well see how, according to the one who says the portion is 'When thou takest', it is called the portion of Shekalim, because Shekalim are mentioned in it. But according to the one who says it is 'My food which is presented to me', — are Shekels mentioned there? —

Yes; the reason is based on the dictum of R. Tabi.¹¹ I can well understand [the reason of] the one who says that 'Command the children of Israel' [should be read], because sacrifices are mentioned in it. But according to the one who says that 'When thou takest' should be read, are sacrifices mentioned there? It is the Shekels for the sockets that are mentioned there!¹² —

[The reason is] as R. Joseph learnt: 'There were three contributions;¹³ of the altar for the altar,¹⁴ of the sockets for the sockets, and of the repair of the House for the repair of the House'.¹⁵ There is a justification for the one who says that 'When thou takest' should be read, because he thus makes a difference between this New Moon and other New Moons. But the one who says that 'Command the children of Israel' should be read — what difference does he make?¹⁶ —

He does make a difference, because on other New Moons¹⁷ six read in the portion of the day¹⁸ and one that of New Moon, whereas on this occasion all read in that of New Moon. This is a good answer for one who says that [when the Mishnah says that the 'REGULAR ORDER' IS RESUMED it means] 'the regular order of portions'; but according to the one who says that [what it means is that] the order of Haftarahs¹⁹ is resumed [and the order of Pentateuch portions has not been interrupted], what difference is there [between this New Moon and others]? —

There is a difference, because on other New Moons six read in the portion of the day¹⁸ and one the special portion for New Moon, whereas on this occasion three read in the portion of the day and four in that of New Moon. On objection was raised:²⁰ 'When the New Moon of Adar falls on Sabbath, the portion of Shekalim is read, and the chapter of Jehoiada the Priest²¹ is said as Haftarah'. Now according to the one who says that 'When thou takest' should be said, there is a good reason for reading Jehoiada the Priest as Haftarah because it is similar in subject,²² as it is written [there], the money of the persons for whom each man is rated.²³ But according to the one who says that 'My food which is presented to me' is read, is there any similarity? —

There is, on the basis of R. Tabi's dictum.²⁴ The following was then cited in objection: 'If it [the New Moon of Adar] falls on the portion next to it [the portion of Shekalim], whether before or after, they read it and repeat it'. Now this creates no difficulty for one who holds that 'When thou takest' is read because [the regular portion containing this passage] falls about that time.²⁵ But according to the one who says that 'My food which is presented to me' is read — does [the portion containing that passage] fall about that time?²⁶ — Yes, for the people of Palestine, who complete the reading of the Pentateuch in three years.²⁷ It has been

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taught in agreement with Samuel: ‘When the New Moon of Adar falls on Sabbath, the portion ‘When thou takest’ is read, and the Haftarah is about ‘Jehoiada the Priest’.

R. Isaac Nappaha said: When the New Moon of Adar falls on Sabbath, three scrolls of the Law are taken out [of the Ark], and read out of — from one the portion of the day, from one the portion of New Moon,²⁸ and from one ‘When thou takest’.

R. Isaac b. Nappaha also said: When the New Moon of Tebeth falls on Sabbath, three scrolls of the Law are brought and read out of; from one the regular portion, from a second the portion of New Moon, and from the third that of Hanukkah.²⁹ Both statements are required. For if only the latter had been given, [I might think that] in this case R. Isaac required [three scrolls], but in the other case he followed the view of Rab who said that the portion of Shekalim is ‘My food which is presented to me’, and therefore two would be enough. Therefore we are told that this is not so. But why not state the former [only] and the other would not need to be stated? —

One was inferred from the other.³⁰ It was stated: If the New Moon of Tebeth falls on a weekday, R. Isaac [Nappaha] says that three read the portion of New Moon and one the portion of Hanukkah. R. Dimi from Haifa, however, says that three read the portion of Hanukkah and one that of New Moon. Said R. Mani: The opinion of R. Isaac Nappaha is the more probable, because when it is a question between the regular and the intermittent, the regular takes precedence.³¹ R. Abin, however, said: The opinion of R. Dimi is the more probable. For what is it that causes a fourth man to read?³² The New Moon. Therefore the fourth ought to read the portion of the New Moon. What do we decide? —

R. Joseph said: We take no notice of New Moon,³³ while Rabbah said, We take no notice of Hanukkah. The law, however, is

that we take no notice of Hanukkah,’ and New Moon is the main consideration. It was stated: ‘If it [the Sabbath of Shekalim] falls when the portion ‘And thou shalt command’³⁴ is read, then six persons read from ‘And thou shalt command’ to ‘When thou takest’, and one from ‘When thou takest’ to ‘Thou shalt also make’.³⁵ Abaye remarked:

- (1) That it is time to pluck them up, if any have appeared, v. Shek. I, 1.
- (2) More precisely, sprouting (v. Tosaf.).
- (3) Num. XXVIII, 14.
- (4) This is derived in R.H. 7a from the words ‘for the months of the year’ in this text.
- (5) Lit., ‘one asks concerning the laws of Passover’.
- (6) For changing smaller coins into Shekels.
- (7) Shek. I, 3.
- (8) The two weeks before the tables are set up.
- (9) Num. XXVIII, 2. This is the portion always read on New Moon.
- (10) Ex. XXX, 12ff
- (11) Who said that Shekels are to be brought in Adar for the congregational sacrifices.
- (12) As we learn from Ex. XXXVIII, 26-28.
- (13) The word Terumah occurs three times in Ex. XXX, 12ff.
- (14) For the purchase of congregational sacrifices for the altar.
- (15) So that congregational sacrifices are also referred to in Ex. XXX, 12ff.
- (16) Since this is the portion actually read on every other new moon.
- (17) That fall on Sabbath.
- (18) The Pentateuchal portion of the particular week cf. p. 178, n. 6.
- (19) V. Glos. The special feature of the reading is that the one who is called up Maftir reads a special portion appropriate for the day instead of the one in the sequence of the weeks.
- (20) Against the view that the portion of Shekalim is from Num. XXVIII.
- (21) 11 Kings XII.
- (22) The prophetic reading (Haftarah) must always have some resemblance in subject matter to the Pentateuchal lesson of the day.
- (23) Ibid. 5.
- (24) V. p. 179, n. 7.
- (25) The portion Ki Thisa in which this passage occurs usually falls on a Sabbath about the beginning of Adar.
- (26) This passage is in the portion Pinhas, which usually falls about the middle of Tammuz.
- (27) This is known as the Triennial Cycle.
- (28) Num. XXVIII, 1-15.

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(29) In Num. VII. Hanukkah lasts from Kislev 25 to Tebeth 2 or 3.

(30) I.e., the statement about Hanukkah was given not as a tradition but as an inference.

(31) New Moon comes every month, Hanukkah only every twelve months.

(32) On the other days of Hanukkah only three read.

(33) I.e., we do not make it the first consideration.

(34) The portion Tezaweh from Ex. XXVII, 20 to XXX, 10, which is followed by the portion Ki Thissa.

(35) Ibid. XXX, 11-16. I.e., six read the portion of Tezaweh and one the portion of Shekalim which immediately follows.

Megilah 30a

If that is done, people will say that that is where they stop.¹ No, said Abaye; six read from ‘And thou shalt command’ to ‘Thou shalt also make’, and one repeats and reads from ‘When thou takest’ to ‘Thou shalt also make’. The following was cited in objection to this: ‘If it [the Sabbath of Shekalim] falls on the Sabbath of the portion adjoining it, whether just before or just after,² it is read and repeated’. Now if we accept the view of Abaye, this is quite in harmony with it; but on the view of R. Isaac Nappaha, it does conflict with it,³ [does it not]? —

R. Isaac Nappaha can answer you: And on the view of Abaye does it create no difficulty? We may allow the Sabbath before it, but if it falls on the Sabbath after, where do you find a repetition? What you have to say in fact is that [according to Abaye] this portion [of Shekalim] is read on two successive Sabbaths;⁴ so I too can answer that it is read on two successive Sabbaths. If it falls on the portion of ‘When thou takest’ itself, R. Isaac Nappaha says that six read from ‘Thou shalt also make’ to ‘And Moses assembled’,⁵ and one from ‘When thou takest’ to ‘Thou shalt also make’.

Abaye strongly demurred to this, saying, Now people will say that we are reading backwards!⁶ No, said Abaye; Six read to ‘And Moses assembled’, and one repeats from ‘When thou takest’ to ‘Thou shalt also

make’. It has been taught in agreement with Abaye: ‘If it falls on [the Sabbath of] ‘When thou takest itself, it is read on the Sabbath before’. It was stated: ‘If the new moon of Adar falls on Friday, Rab says that [the portion of Shekalim] is read on the Sabbath before, while Samuel says that it is read on the Sabbath after’. Rab says it is read before, because otherwise there will be a shortage in the days of the tables.⁷ Samuel says it is read after, because after all the fifteenth day [from the new moon] falls on a Friday, and the tables will not be taken out till the Sunday; therefore we delay the reading [of the portion of Shekalim].

We have learnt: IF IT FALLS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE WEEK, IT IS READ ON THE SABBATH BEFORE, AND ON THE NEXT SABBATH THERE IS A BREAK. Does not this rule apply even where it falls on Friday? —

No; only if it falls actually in the middle part of the week. Come and hear: ‘Which is the first Sabbath [of the series]? That in the week succeeding which the new moon of Adar falls, even if it is on the Friday’. Now do not the words ‘even on Friday’ here [put Friday] on the same footing as the middle of the week, so that just as when it falls in the middle of the week we read before, so when it falls on Friday we read before? —

Said Samuel: [The words ‘in the middle’ here mean], ‘on it’.⁸ So too a Tanna of the school of Samuel taught: ‘On it’. The same difference of opinion is found between Tannaim: ‘An interruption can be made [in the series] of Sabbaths. This is the ruling of R. Judah the Prince.⁹ R. Simeon b. Eleazar says: No interruption is made. Said R. Simeon b. Eleazar: When do I rule that no interruption may be made? When it [new moon] falls on Friday;¹⁰ but if it falls in the middle of the week, it [the portion of Shekalim] is read on the Sabbath before, even though that is still in Shebat’.¹¹

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ON THE SECOND ZAKOR, etc. It was stated: If Purim falls on Friday, Rab says that the portion of Zakor is read on the Sabbath before, while Samuel says it is read on the Sabbath after. Rab says it is read on the Sabbath before, so that the celebration [of Purim] should not precede the commemoration [of the miracle]. Samuel says on the Sabbath after; he can argue that since there are the walled cities which celebrate on the fifteenth, celebration and commemoration come together.

We learnt: ON THE SECOND ZAKOR. Now when the new moon [of Adar] is on Sabbath, Purim falls on Friday, and he states **ON THE SECOND ZAKOR?**¹² – R. Papa replied: What is meant by ‘second’ here? The second to the break.¹³

Come and hear: ‘Which is the second Sabbath? That in the week following which Purim falls, even if on Friday’. Now is not the Friday here mentioned meant to be on the same footing as the middle of the week, so that just as when it falls in the middle of the week we read before, so when it falls on Friday we read before? Said Samuel: [The proper reading is] ‘on it’;¹⁴ and so a Tanna of the school of Samuel taught, ‘On it’. If it falls on Sabbath itself. R. Huna said, All authorities concur that the portion of Zakor is not read on the Sabbath before, whereas R. Nahman said, There is a difference of opinion on this point also. It was also stated: ‘R. Hiyya b. Abba said in the name of R. Abba, who had it from Rab: If Purim falls on Sabbath, Zakor is read on the Sabbath before’.

ON THE THIRD THE PORTION OF THE RED HEIFER, etc. Our Rabbis taught: Which is the third Sabbath? The one which follows Purim. It was stated: R. Hama b. Hanina said: The Sabbath next to the new moon of Nisan. There is no conflict [between these two statements]; the one refers to where the new moon of Nisan falls on Sabbath,¹⁵ and the other to where it falls in the middle of the week.¹⁶

ON THE FOURTH, THIS MONTH SHALL BE TO YOU. Our Rabbis taught: If the new moon of Adar falls on Sabbath, we read Ki Thissa¹⁷ and [the account of] Jehoiada as Haftarah. Which is the first Sabbath? The one in the week following which the new moon of Adar falls, even if on Friday. On the second Sabbath Zakor is read, and for Haftarah, I have visited.¹⁸ Which is the second Sabbath? The one in the week following which Purim falls, even if on Friday. On the third Sabbath the portion of the Red Heifer is read, and for Haftarah, And I shall sprinkle on you.¹⁹ Which is the third Sabbath? The one which follows Purim. On the fourth ‘This month’²⁰ is read, and for Haftarah, Thus saith the Lord God, in the first month on the first of the month.²¹

(1) I.e., that the portion of Tezaweh extends to XXX, 16.

(2) I.e., the portion of Tezaweh or that of Wa-yakhel.

(3) Because there is no doubling according to R. Isaac Nappaha.

(4) Lit., ‘he doubles it on Sabbaths’. Once qua Shekalim, and once as part of Ki Thissa; and this is the meaning of the word ‘repeated’ in the Baraitha quoted.

(5) The beginning of the portion next to Ki Thissa — the portion Wa-yakhel. I.e., the whole portion Ki Thissa, commencing from Ex. XXX, 17 up to XXXIV, 35.

(6) Because the first verses of the portion (11-16) are read last.

(7) I.e., two full weeks will not elapse between the proclamation of the Shekalim and the setting of the tables on Adar 15.

(8) Viz., on the Sabbath itself.

(9) I.e., his version of the statement in the Mishnah was, ‘Which is the first Sabbath? That on which, etc.’

(10) In which case even if it is read on the Sabbath after it would not affect the ‘tables’ as stated supra.

(11) The month preceding Adar.

(12) ‘Second’ being taken to mean the second Sabbath of the month.

(13) I.e., the Sabbath after the one on which there is no special portion.

(14) V. supra.

(15) In which case the ‘portion of the red heifer’ is read on the Sabbath preceding it.

(16) In which case the ‘portion of the month’ is read on the Sabbath preceding it.

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- (17) I.e., the portion of Shekalim.
- (18) 1 Sam. XV.
- (19) Ezek. XXXVI, 22ff
- (20) Ex. XII, 1-20.
- (21) Ezek. XLV, 18.

Megilah 30b

Which is the fourth Sabbath? — The one immediately preceding the week in which the new moon of Nisan falls, even if on Friday.

ON THE FIFTH THE REGULAR ORDER IS RESUMED. What order? — R. Ammi said: The order of weekly portions: R. Jeremiah said, The order of Haftarahs is resumed. Said Abaye: The opinion of R. Ammi is the more probable, Since we learnt: **THE REGULAR READING IS INTERRUPTED FOR ANY SPECIAL OCCASION FOR NEW MOONS, FOR HANUKKAH, FOR PURIM, FOR FASTS, FOR MA'AMADOTH AND FOR THE DAY OF ATONEMENT.** This accords well with the opinion of the one who says that the order of weekly portions is resumed,¹ seeing that a portion [of the Law] is read on weekdays.² But on the view of him who says that the order of Haftarahs is resumed — is there any Haftarah on [ordinary] weekdays?³ [What says] the other to this?—

The one rule holds where it applies, and the other where it applies.⁴ But on fast days [according to R. Jeremiah], why should there be an interruption [of the regular portion]? Let us read in the morning from the portion of the week and at Minhah on the subject of the fast? —

[R. Jeremiah's ruling] supports R. Huna; for R. Huna said: 'In the morning of fast days there is a public assembly'.⁵ How do we act? Abaye said: From the morning to midday we examine the affairs of the town;⁶ from midday to evening, for a quarter of the day we read the portion of the Law and the Haftarah, and for a quarter we offer up supplications as it says, And they read in the book of the law of their Lord a fourth part of the day, and another part they confessed and

prostrated themselves before the Lord their God.⁷ But cannot I interpret this in the reverse way?⁸—

Do not imagine such a thing, since it is written, Then were assembled unto me every one that trembled at the words of the God of Israel because of the faithlessness of them of the captivity and I sat appalled unto the evening offering;⁹ and it goes on, And at the evening offering I arose up from my fasting.¹⁰

MISHNAH. ON PASSOVER WE READ FROM THE SECTION OF THE FESTIVALS IN LEVITICUS.¹¹ ON PENTECOST, 'SEVEN WEEKS'¹² ON NEW YEAR, 'ON THE SEVENTH DAY ON THE FIRST OF THE MONTH';¹³ ON THE DAY OF ATONEMENT, 'AFTER THE DEATH';¹⁴ ON THE FIRST DAY OF TABERNACLES WE READ FROM THE SECTION OF THE FESTIVALS IN LEVITICUS, AND ON THE OTHER DAYS OF TABERNACLES THE SECTION OF THE OFFERINGS OF THE FESTIVAL.¹⁵ ON HANUKKAH WE READ THE SECTION OF [THE DEDICATION OF THE ALTAR BY] THE PRINCES;¹⁶ ON PURIM, 'AND AMALEK CAME';¹⁷ ON NEW MOONS, 'AND ON YOUR NEW MOONS';¹⁸ ON MA'AMADOTH,¹⁹ THE ACCOUNT OF THE CREATION;²⁰ ON FAST DAYS,²¹

- (1) R. Ammi held that on Sabbaths a special portion was substituted for the regular one on special occasions, cf. supra p. 180.
- (2) On which the Ma'amadot met for prayer and a fast could be held.
- (3) Though there is on fast days. V. infra.
- (4) I.e., the order of Haftarahs is resumed on Sabbaths and of portions on other days.
- (5) And so there is no time to read the Law; v. Ta'an 12b.
- (6) I.e., the conduct of the inhabitants.
- (7) Neh. IX, 3.
- (8) That the reading of the Law was in the morning.
- (9) Ezra IX, 4.
- (10) Ibid. 5.
- (11) I.e., Lev. XXIII. Heb. Torath Kohanim, (lit., 'law of the priests'), the name given by the Rabbis to Leviticus.
- (12) Deut. XVI, 9ff.

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- (13) Lev. XXIII, 23ff.
- (14) Lev. XVI.
- (15) Num. XXIX, 12ff.
- (16) Num. VII.
- (17) Ex. XVII, 8ff.
- (18) Num. XXVIII, 11ff.
- (19) V. Glos.
- (20) Because the heaven and earth are preserved on account of the sacrifices. V. Ta'an 26a.
- (21) [According to Geonic authorities the reference here is to fasts for rain. v. Lewin, Ozar ha-Geonim, Megillah p. 60].

Megilah 31a

THE SECTION OF BLESSINGS AND CURSES.¹ THE SECTION OF CURSES MUST NOT BE BROKEN UP, BUT MUST ALL BE READ BY ONE PERSON. ON MONDAY AND THURSDAY AND ON SABBATH AT MINHAH THE REGULAR PORTION OF THE WEEK IS READ, AND THIS IS NOT RECKONED AS PART OF THE READING [FOR THE SUCCEEDING SABBATH],² AS IT SAYS,³ AND MOSES DECLARED UNTO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL. THE APPOINTED SEASONS OF THE LORD;⁴ WHICH IMPLIES THAT IT IS PART OF THEIR ORDINANCE THAT EACH SHOULD BE READ IN ITS SEASON.

GEMARA. Our Rabbis taught: 'On Passover we read from the section of the festivals⁵ and for Haftarah the account of the Passover of Gilgal'.⁶ Now⁷ that we keep two days Passover, the Haftarah of the first day is the account of the Passover in Gilgal and of the second day that of the Passover of Josiah.⁸

'On the other days of the Passover the various passages in the Torah relating to Passover are read'⁹ What are these? — R. Papa said: The mnemonic is M'A'P'U'.¹⁰ 'On the last day of Passover we read, And it came to pass when God sent,¹¹ and as Haftarah, And David spoke'.¹²

On the next day we read, All the firstborn,¹³ and for Haftarah, This very day.¹⁴ Abaye said: Nowadays the communities are accustomed to read 'Draw the ox', 'Sanctify with money', 'Hew in the wilderness', and 'Send the firstborn'.¹⁵

'On Pentecost, we read Seven weeks,¹⁶ and for Haftarah a chapter from Habakuk.¹⁷ According to others, we read In the third month,¹⁸ and for Haftarah the account of the Divine Chariot'.¹⁹ Nowadays that we keep two days, we follow both courses, but in the reverse order.²⁰

On New Year we read On the seventh month,²¹ and for Haftarah, Is Ephraim a darling son unto me.'²² According to others, we read And the Lord remembered Sarah²³ and for Haftarah the story of Hannah.²⁴ Nowadays that we keep two days, on the first day we follow the ruling of the other authority, and on the next day we say, And God tried Abraham,²⁵ with 'Is Ephraim a darling son to me' for Haftarah.

On the Day of Atonement we read After the death²⁶ and for Haftarah, For thus saith the high and lofty one.²⁷ At Minnah we read the section of forbidden marriages²⁸ and for Haftarah the book of Jonah.²⁹

R. Johanan said:³⁰ Wherever you find [mentioned in the Scriptures] the power of the Holy One, blessed be He, you also find his gentleness mentioned. This fact is stated in the Torah, repeated In the Prophets, and stated a third time in the [Sacred] Writings. It is written in the Torah, For the Lord your God, he is the God of gods and Lord of lords,³¹ and it says immediately afterwards, He doth execute justice for the fatherless and widow. It is repeated in the Prophets: For thus saith the High and Lofty One, that inhabiteth eternity whose name is holy,³² and it says immediately afterwards, [I dwell] with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit. It is stated a third time in the [Sacred] Writings, as it is written: Extol him that rideth upon the skies, whose name is the Lord,³³ and immediately afterwards it is written, A father of the fatherless and a judge of the widows.

'On³⁴ the first day of Tabernacles we read the section of the festivals in Leviticus, and

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for Haftarah, Behold a day cometh for the Lord'.³⁵ Nowadays that we keep two days, on the next day we read the same Section from the Torah, but what do we read for Haftarah?— And all the men of Israel assembled unto King Solomon.³⁶

On the other days of the festival we read the section of the offerings of the festival.³⁷

On the last festival day we read, 'All the firstlings', with the commandments and statutes [which precede it],³⁸ and for Haftarah, 'And it was so that when Solomon had made an end'.³⁹

On the next day we read, 'And this is the blessing',⁴⁰ and for Haftarah, 'And Solomon stood'.⁴¹

R. Huna said in the name of R. Shesheth: On the Sabbath which falls in the intermediate days of the festival, whether Passover or Tabernacles, the passage we read from the Torah is 'See, Thou [sayest unto me]'⁴² and for Haftarah on Passover the passage of the 'dry bones',⁴³ and on Tabernacles, 'In that day when Gog shall come'.⁴⁴

On Hanukkah we read the section of the Princes⁴⁵ and for Haftarah [on Sabbath] that of the lights in Zechariah.⁴⁶ Should there fall two Sabbaths in Hanukkah, on the first we read [for Haftarah] the passage of the lights in Zechariah and on the second that of the lights of Solomon.⁴⁷

On Purim we read 'And Amalek came'.⁴⁸

On New Moon, 'On your new moons'.⁴⁹ If New Moon falls on a Sabbath, the Haftarah is [the passage concluding] 'And it shall come to pass that from one new moon to another'.⁵⁰ If it falls on a Sunday, on the day before the Haftarah is, 'And Jonathan said to him, tomorrow is the new moon'.⁵¹ R. Huna said:

(1) Lev. XXVI.

(2) And must be repeated on the Sabbath.

(3) This refers to all the previous part of the Mishnah.

(4) Lev. XXIII, 44.

(5) Lev. XXIII.

(6) Josh. V.

(7) This is an interpolation in the Baraita inserted by an Amora who lived in Babylon and gives the practice of the Galuth.

(8) II Kings XXIII.

(9) Lit., 'he collects and reads of the subject of the day'.

(10) M=Mishku (Draw and take you lambs, Ex. XII, 21); A=Im (If thou lend money to any of my people, Ibid. XXII, 24); P = Pesol (Hew thee two tables of stone, Ex. XXXIV, 1); U = Wayedaber (And God spoke, Num. IX, 1). All these passages go on to speak of Passover.

(11) Ex. XII, 17 relating to the passage of the Red Sea which is supposed to have taken place on the seventh day.

(12) David's song of deliverance in II Sam. XXII.

(13) Deut. XV, 19.

(14) Isa. X, 32 referring to the overthrow of Sennacherib which is supposed to have taken place on Passover.

(15) A mnemonic of the key words in the passages following the order: Ex. Xli, 21; Lev. XXII, 27; Ex. XIII; Ex. XXII, 24; Ex. XXXIV, 1; Num. IX, 1; Ex. XIII, 17; Deut. XV, 19. Cf. Tosaf.

(16) Deut. XVI, 9.

(17) Hab. III, which describes the giving of the Law, commemorated (according to the Rabbis) by Pentecost.

(18) Ex. XIX.

(19) Ezek. I, describing the heavenly hosts who also are supposed to have appeared on Mount Sinai.

(20) I.e., Ex. XIX on the first day.

(21) Num. XXIX, 1.

(22) Jer. XXXI, 20. The text proceeds, 'For I shall surely remember him', which is suitable to the day of memorial.

(23) Gen. XXI, in order that the merit of Isaac may be remembered.

(24) I Sam. I, because Hannah was supposed to have been visited on New Year.

(25) Gen. XXII.

(26) Lev. XVI.

(27) Isa. LVII, 15, which goes on to speak of repentance.

(28) Lev. XVIII. Apparently this section is chosen because the temptation to sexual offences is particularly strong (Rashi). Cf. Tosaf.

(29) Which speaks of repentance.

(30) The reference to Isa. LVII leads to the introduction of the passage which follows.

(31) Deut. X, 17.

(32) Isa. LVII, 15.

(33) Ps. LXVIII, 5.

(34) The Baraita is here resumed.

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(35) Zech. XIV, in which the festival of Tabernacles is mentioned.

(36) I Kings VIII, 2. The verse continues, 'on the festival in the seventh month'.

(37) Num. XXIX, 12-34.

(38) The 'commandments and statutes' are those contained in Deut. XIV, 22-XV, 18, after which follows 'all the firstling.' A better reading is: 'We read commandments and statutes and all the firstling.'

(39) I Kings, VIII, 54.

(40) Deut. XXXIII; the conclusion of the Torah.

(41) I Kings VIII, 22.

(42) Ex. XXXIII, 12. The festivals are mentioned in the sequel.

(43) Ezek. XXXVII. The 'dry bones' are supposed to have been those of the Israelites who tried to break out of Egypt before the time (Rashi).

(44) Ezek. XXXVIII, 18. The subject of this chapter is supposed to be the same as that of the chapter of Zechariah read on the first day of Tabernacles (Rashi).

(45) The dedication of the altar in Num. VII.

(46) Zech. IV. .

(47) I Kings VII, 40-50.

(48) Ex. XVII, 8ff.

(49) Num. XXVIII, 11.

(50) Isa. LXVI, 23.

(51) I Sam. XX, 18.

Megillah 31b

If the new moon of Ab falls on a Sabbath the Haftarah is [the passage with the verse] 'Your new moons and your appointed seasons my soul hateth, they are a burden unto me'.¹ What is the meaning of 'they are a burden unto me'? God said: 'It is not enough for Israel that they sin before Me, but they impose on Me the burden of considering what punishment² I shall bring upon them'.

On the Ninth of Ab itself what is the Haftarah? — Rab said: '[The passage containing], How is she become a harlot'.³ What is the section from the Torah? —

It has been taught: Others say, 'But if ye will not hearken unto me';⁴ R. Nathan b. Joseph says, 'How long will this people despise me';⁵ and some say, 'How long shall I bear with this evil congregation'.⁶ Abaye said: Nowadays the custom has been adopted of

reading [from the Torah] 'When thou shalt beget children',⁷ and for Haftarah, 'I will utterly consume them'.⁸

ON MA'AMADOTH THE ACCOUNT OF THE CREATION. Whence is this rule derived? — Said R. Ammi: But for the Ma'amadot, the heaven and earth would not be firmly established, as it says, But for My covenant [which continues] day and night, I had not set the statutes of heaven and earth,⁹ and it is written, And he said, O Lord God, Whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it.¹⁰ Said Abraham before the Holy One, blessed be He: Sovereign of the Universe, perhaps God forbid, Israel will sin before Thee and Thou wilt do to them as Thou didst to the generation of the Flood and the generation of the Division?¹¹ He answered, Not so. He then said before Him: Sovereign of the Universe, by what shall I know this? He said: Take me a heifer of three years old¹², etc. He then said before Him: Sovereign of the Universe, This is very well for the time when the Temple will be standing, but in the time when there will be no Temple what will befall them? He replied to him: I have already fixed for them the order of the sacrifices. Whenever they will read the section dealing with them, I will reckon it as if they were bringing me an offering, and forgive all their iniquities.

ON FAST DAYS [THE PORTION OF] BLESSINGS AND CURSES IS READ, AND THERE MUST BE NO BREAK IN [THE READING OF] THE CURSES. Whence is this rule derived? — R. Hiyya b. Gamda replied in the name of R. Assi: Because Scripture says, My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord.¹³ Resh Lakish said: It is because a blessing¹⁴ should not be said for chastisement. How then is the reader to do? A Tanna taught: He commences his reading with a verse¹⁵ before them and concludes it with a verse after them. Said Abaye: This rule was laid down only for the curses in Leviticus, but in the curses in Deuteronomy a break may be made. What is the reason? — In the former Israel are

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addressed in the plural number and Moses uttered them on behalf of the Almighty;¹⁶ in the latter Israel are addressed in the singular, and Moses uttered them in his own name.¹⁷

Levi b. Buti was once reading the curses [in Deuteronomy] in the presence of R. Huna hesitatingly. Said R. Huna to him: Do just as you please, the rule [against making a break] applies only to the curses in Leviticus, but in those in Deuteronomy a break may be made.

It has been taught: R. Simeon b. Eleazar says: Ezra made a regulation for Israel that they should read the curses in Leviticus before Pentecost and those in Deuteronomy before New Year. What is the reason? — Abaye — or you may also say Resh Lakish said: So that the year may end along with its curses. I grant you that in regard to the curses in Deuteronomy you can say, ‘so that the year should end along with its curses’. But as regards those in Leviticus — is Pentecost a New Year? — Yes; Pentecost is also a New Year, as we have learnt: ‘On Pentecost is the new year for [fruit of] the tree’.¹⁸

It has been taught: R. Simeon b. Eleazar says: If old men say to you, ‘throw down’, and young men say to you ‘build up’ throw down and do not build up, because destruction by old men is construction, and construction by boys is destruction; and the example is Rehoboam son of Solomon.¹⁹

Our Rabbis taught: The place [in the Torah] where they leave off in the morning service on Sabbath is the place where they begin at Minhah; the place where they leave off at Minhah [on Sabbath] is the place where they begin on Monday; the place where they leave off on Monday is the place where they begin on Thursday; the place where they leave off on Thursday is the place where they begin on the next Sabbath. This is the ruling of R. Meir. R. Judah, however, says that the place where they leave off in the morning service on Sabbath is the place where they begin on

[Sabbath] Minhah, on Monday, on Thursday, and on the next Sabbath.

R. Zera said: The Halachah is that the place where they leave off in the morning service on Sabbath is the place where they begin at Minhah, on Monday, on Thursday and on the next Sabbath. Why does he not say, ‘the Halachah follows Rabbi Judah’?—

- (1) Isa. I, 14.
- (2) Lit. ‘harsh decree’.
- (3) Ibid. 21.
- (4) Lev. XXVI, 14ff.
- (5) Num. XIV, 11.
- (6) Ibid. 27.
- (7) Deut. IV, 25.
- (8) Jer. VIII, 13.
- (9) Jer. XXXIII, 25.
- (10) Gen. XV, 8.
- (11) The division of tongues at the Tower of Babel.
- (12) Indicating that Israel would obtain forgiveness through the sacrifices.
- (13) Prov. III, 11. As much as to say, Do not treat the portion of the curses disrespectfully by giving the impression that you do not wish to continue with the reading of it.
- (14) The blessing said over the reading of the Torah.
- (15) More strictly, a few verses, because the curses commence a new paragraph.
- (16) ‘If ye shall not hearken unto me, etc.’.
- (17) ‘If thou shalt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, etc.’.
- (18) R.H. 16a.
- (19) Who destroyed his power by following the advice of the young men which was intended to strengthen it; v. Ned. 50a.

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Because [the names] might be reversed.¹

Our Rabbis taught: [The one who reads] opens the scroll and sees [the place], then rolls it together and says the blessing, then opens it again and reads. So R. Meir. R. Judah says: He opens and looks and says the blessing, and reads. What is R. Meir's reason? — It is similar to that of ‘Ulla [in a parallel case]; for ‘Ulla said: Why did they lay down that he who reads from the Torah should not prompt the translator? So that people should not say that the translation is

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written in the Torah. So here [R. Meir's reason is], so that they should not say that the blessings are written in the Torah. And [what says] R. Judah [to this]? — With regard to translation a mistake might be made, but no mistake will be made with regard to the blessings.²

R. Zera said in the name of R. Mattenah: The Halachah is that he opens and looks, then says the blessing and reads. Why not say, 'The Halachah follows R. Judah'? Because the names might be reversed.³ R. Zera said in the name of R. Mattenah. No sanctity attaches to the boards and to the platforms.⁴

R. Shefatiah said in the name of R. Johanan: When one rolls up a scroll of the Torah, he should make it close at a seam.⁵ R. Shefatiah further said in the name of R. Johanan: One who rolls together a Sefer Torah should roll it from without and should not roll it from within,⁶ and when he fastens it he should fasten it from within and should not fasten it from without.⁷

R. Shefatiah further said in the name of R. Johanan: If ten have had a reading of the Torah, the senior among them rolls up the Sefer Torah. He who rolls it up receives the reward of all of them, since R. Joshua b. Levi said: If ten have had a reading of the Torah, the one who rolls it up receives the reward of all of them. The reward of all of them, think you? No; say rather, he receives a reward equal to that of all of them.

R. Shefatiah further said in the name of R. Johanan: Whence do we know that we may avail ourselves of a chance utterances [as an omen]?⁹ Because it says, And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee saying.¹⁰ This applies, however, only if one hears the voice of a man in town and of a woman in the country,¹¹ and Only if it says, yes, yes, or no, no.¹²

R. Shefatiah further said in the name of R. Johanan: If one reads the Scripture without

a melody¹³ or repeats the Mishnah without a tune,¹⁴ of him the Scripture Says, Wherefore I gave them also statutes that were not good, etc.¹⁵ Abaye strongly demurred to this, saying, Because he cannot sing agreeably, are you to apply to him the verse, 'ordinances whereby they shall not live'? No; this verse is to be applied as by R. Mesharshia, who said: If two scholars live in the same town and do not treat one another's Halachic pronouncements respectfully, of them the verse says, I gave them also statutes that were not good and ordinances whereby they should not live.

R. Parnak said in the name of R. Johanan: Whoever takes hold of a scroll of the Torah without a covering¹⁶ is buried without a covering. Without a covering, think you? — Say rather, without the covering protection of religious performances. Without religious performances, think you? — No, said Abaye; he is buried without the covering protection of that religious performance.¹⁷

R. Jannai the son of the old R. Jannai said in the name of the great R. Jannai: It is better that the covering [of the scroll] should be rolled up [with the scroll] and not that the scroll of the Torah should be rolled up [inside the covering].¹⁸ And Moses declared unto the children of Israel the appointed seasons of the Lord.¹⁹ It is part of their observance that [the section relating to] each one of them should be read in its season.

Our Rabbis taught: Moses laid down a rule for the Israelites that they should enquire and give expositions concerning the subject of the day — the laws of Passover on Passover, the laws of Pentecost on Pentecost, and the laws of Tabernacles on Tabernacles.

(1) I.e., the opinion of R. Judah might be assigned to R. Meir and vice versa.

(2) For everyone knows that they are not written in the Torah.

(3) V. p. 192, n. 3.

(4) הלוחות והבימות. Opinions are divided as to what is meant by these two terms. We should naturally suppose 'boards' to mean a kind of notice-board in

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the synagogue and ‘platforms’ the stand from which the Torah is read. But there is good authority for supposing that both words are technical terms for parts of the scroll of the Torah, ‘boards’ being the side margins and platforms’ the upper margins, and the meaning will be that no sanctity attaches to these if they have been cut away from the scroll (v. Tosaf.) [J. Meg. III, 1 reads **בִּימָה וְלוֹחֵי**; this leads Krauss (Synagogale Altertumer, p. 388) to render, ‘the reading desk (made of boards, on which the Torah was read) and the platform (on which it stood)’. In a word, the Almemor].

(5) So that if it is accidentally pulled, it should come asunder easily without being torn.

(6) I.e., he should have the written side of the scroll facing him (Asheri).

(7) I.e., the wrapping should be fastened in such a way that he will not need to turn the scroll over when he comes to open it again (Asheri). Rashi explains this passage differently.

(8) **בַּת קוֹל** ‘a reverberating sound’, ‘echoing’, — as it were — a thought in one’s mind (Rashi).

(9) In spite of the prohibition of divination (Deut. XVIII, 11).

(10) Isa. XXX, 21.

(11) I.e., in an unusual place.

(12) I.e., says the word twice.

(13) As indicated by the singing accents.

(14) To aid the memory (Tosaf.).

(15) Ezek. XX, 25.

(16) Lit., ‘naked’.

(17) I.e., the precept of reading or rolling up the scroll which he performed at that time is not accounted to him as a merit (Tosaf.).

(18) [Aliter: It is better that the covering (of the scroll) should be rolled up (round the scroll) than that the scroll of the Torah (itself) should be rolled up. MS.M. reads, The covering should be rolled (round the scroll) but not the scroll itself (without a covering); v. R. Hananel and D.S. It may however mean: It is better that the covering should be rolled round the scroll than that the scroll should be wrapped up by being rolled along the scroll].

(19) Lev. XXIII, 44.