

מסכת תענית • דף י"ז

Elucidated Talmud • Statement and Proof • Navy & Gold Edition

THE SUGYA

In this daf, we continue our learning of the special tefillos and fasts, focusing on the order of the blessings and the deep connection between our prayers and the historical figures who were answered by Hashem. The Gemara discusses the specific wording of the blessings, explaining why certain prophets and kings are mentioned in a particular order, and how their cries and prayers serve as the foundation for our own supplications in times of distress.

We then move into a beautiful and practical discussion regarding the kohanim and their service in the Beis HaMikdash. The Gemara details the restrictions placed on the priestly watches (mishmaros) and their sub-divisions (batei avos) regarding drinking wine, cutting hair, and laundering clothes. This leads into a touching discussion of how these halachos apply in our times, reflecting our constant yearning and readiness for the rebuilding of the Beis HaMikdash.

All introductions, summaries, and contextual notes are the editor's commentary and are not part of the original text.

MISHNAH מִשְׁנָה

MISHNAH

אַלֹּא בְּרֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה, וּבְיוֹבְלוֹת, וּבְשָׁעַת מְלָחְמָה.

Rather, the shofar is blown on Rosh HaShana, and on the Jubilee Years, and in a time of war.

MISHNAH

עַל הָרִאשׁוֹנָה הוּא אוֹמֵר: מִי שֶׁעָנָה אֶת אַבְרָהָם כּוֹי'.

The Mishnah taught: For the first blessing he recites: He Who answered Abraham etc.

GEMARA גְּמָרָא

BRAISA

תָּנָא: יֵשׁ מַחְלִיפִין צִעֲקָה לְאַלְיָהוּ, וּתְפִלָּה לְשָׁמוּאֵל.

It was taught in a baraita: Some reverse the order of the blessings, assigning crying to Elijah, and prayer to Samuel.

QUESTION

בְּשָׁלְמָא גַּבִּי שְׁמוּאֵל — כְּתִיב בִּיהַ תְּפִלָּה וּכְתִיב בִּיהַ צִעֲקָה.

The Gemara asks: Granted, with regard to Samuel, both options are appropriate, as it is written concerning him: Prayer, and it is likewise written concerning him: Crying.

QUESTION

אֵלֶּה גִּבִּי אֱלֹהֵינוּ — תַּפִּלָּה כְּתִיב, צְעָקָה לֹא כְּתִיב!

However, with regard to Elijah, although prayer is written, crying is not written! How can one conclude his blessing with crying?

ANSWER

”עֲנֵנִי ה' עֲנֵנִי” לְשׁוֹן צְעָקָה הִיא.

The Gemara answers: Elijah's statement: "Answer me, Hashem, answer me" is an expression of crying.

מִשְׁנָה MISHNAH

MISHNAH

עַל הַשְּׁשִׁית הוּא אוֹמֵר: מִי שֶׁעָנָה אֶת יוֹנָה כו'. עַל הַשְּׁבִיעִית הוּא אוֹמֵר: מִי שֶׁעָנָה אֶת דָּוִד כו'.

The Mishnah taught: For the sixth he recites: He Who answered Jonah etc. For the seventh he recites: He Who answered David etc.

גְּמָרָא GEMARA

QUESTION

מִכַּדֵּי יוֹנָה בְּתֵר דָּוִד וְשְׁלֹמֹה הָיָה, מַאי טַעְמָא מְקַדִּים לֵיהּ בְּרִישָׁא?

The Gemara asks: Since Jonah was after David and Solomon, what is the reason that the tanna mentions him first?

ANSWER

מִשּׁוּם דְּבָעֵי לְמִיחָתָם ”מֶרְחֵם עַל הָאָרֶץ”.

The Gemara answers: Because he wants to conclude the series with: Who has mercy on the Land, which fits David and Solomon who prayed for Eretz Yisrael.

BRAISA

תָּנָא, מִשּׁוּם סוּמְכוּס אָמְרוּ: ”בְּרוּךְ מְשַׁפִּיל הָרָמִים”.

It was taught in a baraita: In the name of Sumakhos they said that he concludes the final blessing with: Blessed is He Who humbles the exalted.

מִשְׁנָה MISHNAH

MISHNAH

שְׁלֹשׁ תַּעֲנִיּוֹת הָרִאשׁוֹנוֹת אֲנָשִׁי מְשַׁמֵּר מִתַּעֲנִין וְלֹא מִשְׁלִימִין כו'.

The Mishnah taught: On the first three fasts, the members of the priestly watch fast but do not complete their fasts until nightfall etc.

גְּמָרָא GEMARA

BRAISA

תְּנוּ רַבָּנָן: מִפְּנֵי מָה אָמְרוּ אֲנָשֵׁי מִשְׁמֶרֶת מוֹתְרִין לְשָׁתוֹת יַיִן בַּלַּיְלוֹת אָבָל לֹא בַּיָּמִים —

The Rabbis taught in a baraita: For what reason did they say that the members of the priestly watch are permitted to drink wine at nights but not during the days?

EXPLANATION

שָׁמָּה תִּכְבֹּד הָעֲבוֹדָה עַל אֲנָשֵׁי בֵּית אָב, וַיָּבֹאוּ וַיִּסְיְעוּ לָהֶם.

Lest the Temple service becomes burdensome for the members of the patrilineal family, and the members of the priestly watch will come and assist them.

EXPLANATION

מִפְּנֵי מָה אָמְרוּ אֲנָשֵׁי בֵּית אָב לֹא בַּיּוֹם וְלֹא בַּלַּיְלָה — מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהֵן עֲסוּקִין תָּמִיד בְּעֲבוֹדָה.

For what reason did they say that the members of the patrilineal family may not drink wine, neither by day nor by night? Because they are constantly engaged in the Temple service.

RULING

מִכָּאן אָמְרוּ: כָּל כֹּהֵן שֶׁמִּכִּיר מִשְׁמֶרֶתוֹ וּמִשְׁמֶרֶת בֵּית אָב שָׁלוֹ, וַיֵּדַע שְׁבֻעַתִּי אֲבוֹתָיו קְבוּעִין שָׁם —
אָסוּר לְשָׁתוֹת יַיִן כָּל אוֹתוֹ הַיּוֹם.

From here the Sages stated: Any priest who knows his priestly watch and the watch of his patrilineal family, and knows that the family of his forefathers was established there, is prohibited to drink wine that entire day.

RULING

בְּמִכִּיר מִשְׁמֶרֶתוֹ וְאִין מִכִּיר מִשְׁמֶרֶת בֵּית אָב שָׁלוֹ, וַיֵּדַע שְׁבֻעַתִּי אֲבוֹתָיו קְבוּעִין שָׁם — אָסוּר לְשָׁתוֹת
יַיִן כָּל אוֹתָהּ שָׁבֻעַת.

In the case of a priest who knows his priestly watch but does not know the watch of his patrilineal family, and knows that the family of his forefathers was established there, he is prohibited to drink wine that entire week.

RULING

אִינוֹ מִכִּיר מִשְׁמֶרֶתוֹ וּמִשְׁמֶרֶת בֵּית אָב שָׁלוֹ, וַיֵּדַע שְׁבֻעַתִּי אֲבוֹתָיו קְבוּעִין שָׁם — אָסוּר לְשָׁתוֹת יַיִן כָּל
הַשָּׁנָה.

If he does not know his priestly watch or the watch of his patrilineal family, but knows that the family of his forefathers was established there, he is prohibited to drink wine that entire year.

STATEMENT

רבי אומר, אומר אני: אסור לשתות יין לעולם, אבל מה אעשה שתקנתו קלקלתו.

Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi says: I say that it is prohibited for him to drink wine forever; but what can I do, as his misfortune is his advantage, since the Temple has been destroyed for so long, the decree cannot be sustained.

STATEMENT

אמר אביי: כמאן שתו האידינא כהני חמרא — כרבי.

Abaye said: In accordance with whose opinion do priests drink wine nowadays? It is in accordance with Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi.

מִשְׁנָה MISHNAH

MISHNAH

אנשי משמר ואנשי מעמד אסורים לספר ולכבס, ובחמישי מותרין מפני כבוד השבת.

The Mishnah taught: The members of the priestly watch and the members of the non-priestly watch are prohibited to cut their hair or launder their garments, but on Thursday they are permitted in deference to Shabbat.

גְּמָרָא GEMARA

QUESTION

מאי טעמא?

The Gemara asks: **What is the reason** for these prohibitions?

ANSWER

אמר רבה בר בר חנה אמר רבי יוחנן: כדי שלא יכנסו למשמרתם פשהו מנוולין.

Rabba bar bar Hana said that Rabbi Yochanan said: In order that they should not enter their priestly watch when they are unkempt.

BRAISA

תנו רבנן: מלך מסתפר בכל יום, כהן גדול — מערב שבת לערב שבת, כהן הדיוט — אחת לשלשים יום.

The Rabbis taught: A king cuts his hair every day, a High Priest from Friday to Friday, and a common priest once every thirty days.

QUESTION

מלך מסתפר בכל יום — מאי טעמא?

The Gemara asks: **A king cuts his hair every day; what is the reason?**

ANSWER

אמר רבי אבא בר זבדא, אמר קרא: "מִלֶּךָ בְּיָפִיּוֹ תִּחְזֶינָה עֵינֶיךָ".

Rabbi Abba bar Zavda said: The verse states: "Your eyes shall see the king in his beauty."

QUESTION

כִּהֵן גָּדוֹל מְעַרְב שַׁבָּת לְעַרְב שַׁבָּת — מַאי טַעְמָא?

The Gemara asks: **A High Priest** from Friday to Friday; what is the reason?

ANSWER

אמר רב שמואל בר יצחק: הואיל ומשמרות מתחדשות.

Rav Shmuel bar Yitzchak said: Since the watches are renewed and changed every Friday, he must look groomed for them.

QUESTION

כִּהֵן הַדְּיוּט אַחַת לְשָׁלִשִׁים יוֹם — מִנָּלָן?

The Gemara asks: **A common priest** once every thirty days; from where do we derive this?

ANSWER

אָתִיא "פֶּרַע" "פֶּרַע" מִנָּזִיר,

The Gemara answers: It is derived by a verbal analogy of the word "pera" and "pera" from a nazirite.

PROOF

כְּתִיב הָכָא: "וְרֹאשָׁם לֹא יִגְלָחוּ וּפֶרַע לֹא יִשְׁלָחוּ", וְכִתִּיב הָתָם: "קֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה גִידֵל פֶּרַע שְׁעַר רֹאשׁוֹ",

It is written here concerning priests: "Neither shall they shave their heads, nor suffer their locks [pera] to grow long," and it is written there with regard to a nazirite: "He shall be sacred, he shall let the locks [pera] of the hair of his head grow long."

INFERENCE

מָה לְהָלֵן שְׁלִשִּׁים — אִם כָּאן שְׁלִשִּׁים.

Just as there, for a nazirite, it is thirty days, so too here, for a priest, it is thirty days.

QUESTION

וּנְזִיר גּוֹפִיָּה מִנָּלָן?

The Gemara asks: **And a nazirite himself**, from where do we derive that his term is thirty days?

ANSWER

אמר רב מתנה: סתם נזירות שלשים יום.

Rav Mattana said: An unspecified naziriteship is thirty days.

QUESTION

מִנָּלָן?

The Gemara asks: **From where** do we derive this?

ANSWER

אמר קרא: "יִהְיֶה" — בגימטריא תלתין הוי.

The verse states: "He shall be [yihyeh]" — in gematria, the numerical value of yihyeh is thirty.

OBJECTION

אמר ליה רב פפא לאבאי: ודלמא הכי קאמר רחמנא: לא לירבו כלל!

Rav Pappa said to Abaye: But perhaps this is what the Merciful One is saying: They should not grow hair at all!

RESOLUTION

אמר ליה: אי הוה כתב "לא ישלחו פרע" — בדקאמרת, השתא דכתיב: "ופרע לא ישלחו" — פרע ליהוי, שלוחי הוא דלא לישלחו.

Abaye said to him: If it were written: "Do not grow a pera," it would be as you said; now that it is written: "And a pera they shall not let grow long," it implies there may be a pera, but they must not let it grow long beyond thirty days.

QUESTION

אי הכי, אפילו האידנא נמי!

The Gemara asks: If so, that it is a biblical prohibition, even nowadays also it should be forbidden for priests to grow their hair!

ANSWER

דומיא דשתויי יין. מה שתויי יין — בזמן ביאה הוא דאסור, שלא בזמן ביאה — שרי, אף הכא נמי.

The Gemara answers: It is similar to those who have drunk wine. Just as those who have drunk wine are only prohibited at the time of entry to the Temple, but not at the time of entry is permitted, so too here also.

OBJECTION

והתנא, רבי אומר: אומר אני כהנים אסורים לשתות יין לעולם, אבל מה אעשה שתקנתו קלקלתו.

The Gemara objects: But wasn't it taught in a baraita, Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi says: I say that priests are prohibited to drink wine forever, but what can I do, as his misfortune is his advantage?

INFERENCE

ואמר אביי: כמאן שתו האידנא כהני חמרא — כרבי, מכלל דרבנן אסרי!

And Abaye said: In accordance with whose opinion do priests drink wine nowadays? It is in accordance with Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi. By inference, the Rabbis prohibit drinking wine nowadays!

EXPLANATION

מאי טעמא: מהרה יבנה בית המקדש, ובעינן כהן הראוי לעבודה וליכא, הכא אפשר דמספר ועייל.

What is the reason? Quickly the Temple will be rebuilt, and we will need a priest fit for service and there will be none. Here, regarding hair, it is possible that he cuts his hair and enters immediately.

QUESTION

אי הכי, שתוי יין נמי — אפשר דגני פורתא ועייל, כדרמי בר אבא.

The Gemara asks: If so, one who has drunk wine also, it is possible that he sleeps a little and enters, as Rami bar Abba said!

PROOF

דאמר רמי בר אבא: דרך מיל, ושינה כל שהוא — מפיגין את היין!

For Rami bar Abba said: A walk of a mil, or a sleep of any amount, dispels the wine!

ANSWER

לאו מי איתמר עליה, אמר רב נחמן אמר רבה בר אבוחה: לא שנו אלא בששתה שיעור רביעית, אבל שתה יותר מרביעית — כל שפן שדרך מטרידתו ושינה משכרתו.

The Gemara answers: Was it not stated concerning this, Rav Nachman said that Rabba bar Avuha said: They only taught this when he drank a quarter-log, but if he drank more than a quarter-log, all the more so a walk tires him and sleep makes him more drunk!

ANSWER

רב אשי אמר: שתויי יין, דמחלי עבודה — גזרו בהו רבנן. פרועי ראש, דלא מחלי עבודה — לא גזרו בהו רבנן.

Rav Ashi said: Those who have drunk wine, whose service is profaned, the Rabbis decreed against them. Those with long hair, whose service is not profaned, the Rabbis did not decree against them.

OBJECTION

מיתבי, ואלו שהן במיתה: שתויי יין, ופרועי ראש.

The Gemara objects: But these are liable to death: Those who have drunk wine, and those with long hair!

QUESTION

בשלמא שתויי יין — בהדיא כתיב בהו: "יין ושכר אל תשת", אלא פרועי ראש מנלן?

Granted, those who have drunk wine, it is explicitly written concerning them: "Do not drink wine or strong drink." But those with long hair, from where do we derive this?

PROOF

דכתיב: "וראשם לא יגלחו ופרע לא ישלחו", וכתיב בתריה: "וייין לא ישתו כל כהן כבואם אל הקצר הפנימית",

As it is written: "Neither shall they shave their heads, nor suffer their locks to grow long," and it is written after it: "Neither shall any priest drink wine, when they enter into the inner court."

INFERENCE

ואיתקוש פרועי ראש לשתויי יין: מה שתויי יין במיתה — אף פרועי ראש במיתה.

And those with long hair are compared to those who have drunk wine: Just as those who have drunk wine are liable to death, so too those with long hair are liable to death.

OBJECTION

ומינה: אי מה שתיי יין דמח לי עבודה — אף פרועי ראש דמח לי עבודה!

And from this comparison: Just as those who have drunk wine profane the service, so too those with long hair profane the service! This refutes Rav Ashi.

RESOLUTION

לא: כי איתקוש — למיתה הוא דאתקוש, אבל לאחולי עבודה — לא אתקוש.

The Gemara answers: No; when they are compared, they are compared only regarding death, but regarding profaning the service, they are not compared.

QUESTION

אמר ליה רבינא לרב אשי: הא, מקמי דאתא יחזקאל, מאן אמרה?

Ravina said to Rav Ashi: Before Ezekiel came and wrote this verse, who said this halacha?

OBJECTION

אמר ליה: ולטעמיה, הא דאמר רב חסדא: דבר זה מתורת משה לא למדנו, ומדברי קבלה למדנו: "כל בן נכר ערל לב וערל בשר לא יבוא אל מקדשי" — הא, מקמי דאתא יחזקאל, מאן אמרה?

Rav Ashi said to him: And according to your reasoning, that which Rav Chisda said: This matter we did not learn from the Torah of Moshe, but from the words of the Prophets we learned: "No stranger, uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter My Sanctuary" — before Ezekiel came, who said this?

RESOLUTION

אלא גמרא גמירי[י] לה, ואתא יחזקאל ואסמכה אקרא.

Rather, they learned it as a tradition, and Ezekiel came and supported it with a verse.

RESOLUTION

הכא נמי: גמרא גמירי[י] לה, ואתא יחזקאל ואסמכה אקרא, כי גמירי ה'לכה — למיתה, לאחולי עבודה — לא גמירי.

Here too, they learned it as a tradition, and Ezekiel came and supported it with a verse. And when they learned the halacha, they learned it only regarding death, but regarding profaning the service, they did not learn it.

משנה MISHNAH

MISHNAH

כל הכתוב במגילת תענית "דלא למיספד" — לפניו אסור, לאחריו מותר.

The Mishnah taught: Any day written in Megillat Taanit on which it is forbidden to eulogize, the day before it is forbidden, but the day after it is permitted.

BRAISA

תנו רבנן: אליו יומיא דלא להתענא ביה, ומקצתהון דלא למיספד בהון:

The Sages taught: These are the days on which it is forbidden to fast, and on some of them it is forbidden to eulogize:

BRAISA

מריש ירחא דניסן ועד תמנא ביה איתוקם תמידא, דלא למיספד בהון.

From the New Moon of Nisan until the eighth of it, the daily offering was established, on which it is forbidden to eulogize.

BRAISA

מתמנא ביה עד סוף מועדא איתותב חגא דשבועיא, דלא למיספד בהון.

From the eighth of it until the end of the festival of Pesach, the festival of Shavuot was established, on which it is forbidden to eulogize.

STATEMENT

אמר מר: מריש ירחא דניסן עד תמנא ביה איתוקם תמידא, דלא למיספד.

The Master said above: From the New Moon of Nisan until the eighth of it, the daily offering was established, on which it is forbidden to eulogize.

QUESTION

למה לי מריש ירחא? לימא מתרי בניסן, וראש חודש גופיה יום טוב הוא ואסור!

The Gemara asks: Why do I need it to say from the New Moon? Let it say from the second of Nisan, and Rosh Chodesh itself is a holiday and forbidden to fast or eulogize anyway!

ANSWER

אמר רב: לא נצרכה אלא לאסור יום שלפניו.

Rav said: It is only necessary to forbid the day before it, which is the day before Rosh Chodesh.

QUESTION

ושלפניו נמי, תיפוק ליה דהנה ליה יום שלפני ראש חדש!

The Gemara asks: But the day before it also, let it be derived because it is the day before Rosh Chodesh!

ANSWER

ראש חדש דאורייתא הוא, ודאורייתא לא בעי חיזוק.

The Gemara answers: Rosh Chodesh is from the Torah, and Torah laws do not need reinforcement by forbidding the day before them.

PROOF

דְּתַנְיָא: הַיָּמִים הָאֵלֶּה הַפְּתוּכִין בְּמַגִּילַת תַּעֲנִית — לְפָנֵיהֶם וּלְאַחֲרֵיהֶם אָסוּרִין, שְׁבֻתוֹת וְיָמִים
טוֹבִים, הֵן — אָסוּרִין, לְפָנֵיהֶן וּלְאַחֲרֵיהֶן — מוֹתְרִין.

As it was taught in a baraita: These days written in Megillat Taanit — before them and after them are forbidden. Shabbos and Yom Tov — they are forbidden, but before them and after them are permitted.

EXPLANATION

וּמָה הַפֶּרֶשׁ בֵּין זֶה לָזֶה? הֲלֵלוּ — דְּבָרֵי תוֹרָה, וְדְבָרֵי תוֹרָה אֵין צְרִיכִין חִיּוּק, הֲלֵלוּ — דְּבָרֵי
סוֹפְרִים, וְדְבָרֵי סוֹפְרִים צְרִיכִין חִיּוּק.

And what is the difference between this and that? These are words of Torah, and words of Torah do not need reinforcement; these are words of the Sages, and words of the Sages need reinforcement.

STATEMENT

אָמַר מָר: מִתְּמַנְיָא בִּיהַ עַד סוֹף מוֹעֵדָא אֵיתוּבַת חֲגָא דְשָׁבוּעִיא, דְּלֹא לְמִסְפַּד.

The Master said: From the eighth of it until the end of the festival, the festival of Shavuot was established, on which it is forbidden to eulogize.

QUESTION

לָמָּה לִי עַד סוֹף מוֹעֵד, לֵימָא עַד הַמוֹעֵד, וּמוֹעֵד גּוֹפִיָּה יוֹם טוֹב הוּא וְאָסוּר!

The Gemara asks: Why do I need it to say until the end of the festival? Let it say until the festival, and the festival itself is a holiday and forbidden!

ANSWER

אָמַר רַב פָּפָא: כְּדָאֻר רַב — לֹא נִצְרָכָא

Rav Pappa said: It is as Rav said — it is only necessary to forbid the day after the festival.

SUMMARY

The daf begins by clarifying the order of the blessings recited on fast days, explaining why the blessing of Jonah precedes those of David and Shlomo, which concludes with a blessing for mercy on the Land of Israel. The Gemara then transitions to the halachos of the kohanim, explaining that members of the mishmar were forbidden to drink wine during the day, and members of the Beis Av were forbidden both day and night, to ensure they were always fit for service. We learn how this restriction extends to kohanim today who might know their specific watch, with Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi noting that while technically kohanim should refrain from wine constantly in anticipation of the Beis HaMikdash being rebuilt, the length of the exile makes such a decree unsustainable. Finally, the Gemara discusses the prohibitions against cutting hair and laundering clothes during the week of service to ensure the kohanim did not enter the Beis HaMikdash looking unkempt, concluding with the frequencies of haircuts for the king, the Kohen Gadol, and common kohanim.

The Gemara teaches us a beautiful, deep lesson about the power of anticipation and readiness. We learn that the Kohanim were restricted from drinking wine because of the constant possibility that the Beis HaMikdash would be rebuilt at any moment, requiring them to step up and serve immediately. Even in the darkness of the Churban, they lived with the active expectation of the Geulah.

This is not just a halachic discussion about the Kohanim; it is a profound guide for our own daily avodah. How often do we find ourselves living in a state of spiritual slumber, assuming that today will be just like yesterday? The Torah is telling us that a Yid must always be ready. We must live with the constant awareness that Hashem can change our situation in the blink of an eye, and we need to be spiritually prepared to answer the call.

When we keep ourselves refined, focused, and ready for the Aibershter's service, we bring that reality closer. We must not let ourselves get carried away by the physical distractions of this world, symbolized by the wine, to the point where we are unprepared when our unique neshama is called upon to do its job.

Today, take five minutes before you daven or learn to consciously remind yourself: "The Beis HaMikdash can be rebuilt today, and my avodah matters right now." Let this thought bring a new level of focus and alacrity to your mitzvos.