

מסכת תענית · דף כ"ו

Elucidated Talmud · Statement and Proof · Navy & Gold Edition

THE SUGYA

We begin this beautiful Sugya by finishing up our discussion of the proper frame of mind for reciting Hallel on a fast day, learning how the Chachamim balanced the joy of Hallel with the physical state of the tzibbur. From there, we enter a major new Mishnaic discussion regarding the times of the year when the Kohanim would lift their hands to bless the Am Yisrael with Birchas Kohanim four times in a single day. This leads us into the holy foundations of the Ma'amados—the non-priestly watches of Yisraelim who stood by the Tamid offerings in the Beis HaMikdash, representing the entire nation in their avodah.

We will learn how these Ma'amados were structured, how they fasted and cried out to the Aibershter from Monday through Thursday, and how they read the Ma'aseh Bereishis from the Torah to sustain the creation of the world. The Mishna also details the specific schedule of these Torah readings, how they managed their fasts in deference to Shabbos, and the special family wood-offering days, the Korban Eitzim, which brought their own unique joy and halachic adjustments to the daily Temple service.

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

EXPLANATION

אֵלָא עַל נֶפֶשׁ שְׂבֵעָה וְכֶרֶם מְלֵאָה.

Rather, Hallel is recited only upon a satisfied soul and a full stomach.

QUESTION

איני? והא רב פפא איקלע לבי כנישתא דאבי גובר וגזר תענית, וירדו להם גשמים עד חצות, ואמר [להם: אמרו] הֲלֵל וְאַחַר כֶּה אֵכְלוּ וְשָׂתוּ!

The Gemara asks: Is that so? But surely Rav Pappa happened to come to the synagogue of Avi Govar and decreed a fast, and rain fell for them before midday, and he said to them: Recite Hallel, and afterward eat and drink!

ANSWER

שְׂאֵנִי בְּנֵי מְחוּזָא, דְּשִׁכְיָחִי בְּהוּ שְׁכָרוֹת.

The Gemara answers: The people of Mechoza are different, as drunkenness is common among them. If they had gone home to eat first, they would have become drunk and been unable to pray.

STATEMENT

הֲדָרְנוּ עֲלֶיךָ סֵדֶר תַּעֲנִיּוֹת אֵלֶיךָ

May we return to you, "Seder Taaniyos Elu"!

MISHNAH

בשלשה פרקים בשנה כהנים נושאים את כפיהן ארבע פעמים ביום; בשחרית, במוסף, במנחה, ובנעילת שערים:

At three times in the year, the Kohanim raise their hands to recite the Priestly Blessing four times in the day: in Shacharis, in Musaf, in Minchah, and in Neilas Shearim (the closing of the gates):

MISHNAH

בתעניות, ובמעמדות, וביום הכפורים.

on communal fasts, and on Maamados (non-priestly watches), and on Yom Kippur.

MISHNAH

אלו הן מעמדות. לפי שנאמר: "צו את בני ישראל את קרבני לחמי", וכי היא קרבנו של אדם קרב והוא אינו עומד על גביו?

These are the Maamados: Since it is stated: "Command the children of Israel... My offering, My food," which teaches that the daily offering is a communal obligation, how can a person's offering be sacrificed and he is not standing over it?

MISHNAH

התקינו נביאים הראשונים עשרים וארבעה משמרות, על כל משמר ומשמר היה מעמד בירושלים של כהנים של לויים ושל ישראלים.

Therefore, the early prophets instituted twenty-four watches; for each and every watch there was a Maamad in Yerushalayim of Kohanim, of Leviim, and of Israelites representing the nation.

MISHNAH

הגיע זמן המשמר לעלות, כהנים ולויים עולים לירושלים, וישראל שבאותו משמר מתכנסין לעריהן, וקוראין במעשה בראשית.

When the time of the watch arrived to ascend, the Kohanim and Leviim would ascend to Yerushalayim, and the Israelites of that watch would gather in their cities and read the story of Creation from the Torah.

MISHNAH

ואנשי המעמד היו מתעניין ארבעה ימים בשבוע מיום שני ועד יום חמישי.

And the members of the Maamad would fast four days in the week, from Monday until Thursday.

MISHNAH

ולא היו מתעניין ערב שבת — מפני כבוד השבת, ולא באחד בשבת — כדי שלא יצאו ממנוחה ועונג ליגיעה ותענית וימותו.

And they would not fast on Erev Shabbos, because of the honor of Shabbos; and not on Sunday, so that they should not go from rest and delight to exertion and fasting, and die from the sudden change.

MISHNAH

ביום הראשון: בראשית, ויהי רקיע. בשני: יהי רקיע, ויקוו המים. בשלישי: יקוו המים, ויהי מארת. ברביעי: יהי מארת, וישרצו המים. בחמישי: ישרצו המים, ותוצא הארץ. בששי: תוצא הארץ, ויכלו השמים.

On the first day (Sunday) they read: "In the beginning" and "Let there be a firmament." On the second: "Let there be a firmament" and "Let the waters be gathered." On the third: "Let the waters be gathered" and "Let there be lights." On the fourth: "Let there be lights" and "Let the waters swarm." On the fifth: "Let the waters swarm" and "Let the earth bring forth." On the sixth: "Let the earth bring forth" and "And the heaven and the earth were finished."

MISHNAH

פרשה גדולה קורין אותה בשנים, והקטנה ביחיד.

A large portion, consisting of many verses, they read it with two people, and the small portion with one person.

MISHNAH

בשחרית ובמוסף. ובמנחה נכנסין וקורין על פיהן, בקורין את שמע.

This was in Shacharis and in Musaf. But in Minchah, they enter and read by heart, just as they read the Shema.

MISHNAH

ערב שבת במנחה לא היו נכנסין — מפני כבוד השבת.

On Erev Shabbos at Minchah, they would not enter to read, because of the honor of Shabbos.

MISHNAH

כל יום שיש בו הלל — אין מעמד בשחרית, קרבן מוסף — אין בנעילה, קרבן עצים — אין במנחה. דברי רבי עקיבא.

Any day that has Hallel on it, there is no Maamad in Shacharis; if there is a Musaf offering, there is no Maamad in Neilah; if there is a wood offering, there is no Maamad in Minchah. These are the words of Rabbi Akiva.

MISHNAH

אמר לו בן עזאי, כך הנה רבי יהושע שונה: קרבן מוסף — אין במנחה, קרבן עצים — אין בנעילה.

Ben Azzai said to him: This is how Rabbi Yehoshua would teach: If there is a Musaf offering, there is no Maamad in Minchah; if there is a wood offering, there is no Maamad in Neilah.

MISHNAH

חזר רבי עקיבא להיות שונה כבן עזאי.

Rabbi Akiva retracted to teach like Ben Azzai.

MISHNAH

זמן עצי כהנים והעם, תשעה: באחד בניסן בני ארח בן יהודה, בעשרים בתמוז בני דוד בן יהודה, בחמשה באב בני פרעוש בן יהודה, בשבעה בו בני יונדב בן רכב, בעשרה בו בני סנאה בן בנמיז, בחמשה עשר בו בני זתוא בן יהודה.

The times of the wood offering of the Kohanim and the people were nine: On the first of Nisan, the descendants of Arach ben Yehudah; on the twentieth of Tammuz, the descendants of David ben Yehudah; on the fifth of Av, the descendants of Parosh ben Yehudah; on the seventh of it, the descendants of Yonadav ben Rechav; on the tenth of it, the descendants of Senaah ben Binyamin; on the fifteenth of it, the descendants of Zattu ben Yehudah.

MISHNAH

ועמם כהנים ולוים, וכל מי שטעה בשבטו, ובני גונבי עלי ובני קוצעי קציעות.

And with them on the fifteenth of Av brought Kohanim and Leviim, and anyone who erred regarding his tribe, and the descendants of those who stole the pestle, and the descendants of those who dried figs.

MISHNAH

בעשרים בו בני פחת מואב בן יהודה, בעשרים באלול בני עדיו בן יהודה, באחד בטבת שבו בני פרעוש שניה.

On the twentieth of it (Av), the descendants of Pachat Moav ben Yehudah; on the twentieth of Elul, the descendants of Adin ben Yehudah; on the first of Teves, the descendants of Parosh returned a second time.

MISHNAH

באחד בטבת לא היה בו מעמד, שהיה בו הלל וקרפן מוסף וקרפן עצים.

On the first of Teves, there was no Maamad on it, because there was Hallel, and a Musaf offering, and a wood offering on it.

MISHNAH

חמשה דברים אירעו את אבותינו בשבעה עשר בתמוז, וחמשה בתשעה באב.

Five calamities occurred to our ancestors on the seventeenth of Tammuz, and five on the Ninth of Av.

MISHNAH

בשבעה עשר בתמוז נשתברו הלוחות, ובטל התמיד, והובקעה העיר, ושרף אפוסטמוס את התורה, והעמיד צלם בהיכל.

On the seventeenth of Tammuz, the Tablets were broken, and the daily offering was nullified, and the city walls were breached, and Apostomus burned the Torah, and he placed an idol in the Sanctuary.

MISHNAH

בתשעה באב נגזר על אבותינו שלא יפנסו לארץ, וחרב הבית בראשונה ובשניה, ונלכדה ביתר, ונחרשה העיר.

On the Ninth of Av, it was decreed upon our ancestors that they should not enter the Land, and the Temple was destroyed the first time and the second time, and Betar was captured, and the city of Yerushalayim was plowed.

MISHNAH

משנכנס אב ממעטין בשמחה.

From when A enters, we decrease in joy.

MISHNAH

שבת שחל תשעה באב להיות בתוכה אסור מלספר ומלכבס, ובחמישי מותרין מפני כבוד השבת.

During the week in which the Ninth of Av falls, it is forbidden to cut hair and to wash clothes, but on Thursday they are permitted because of the honor of Shabbos.

MISHNAH

ערב תשעה באב לא יאכל אדם שני תבשילין, לא יאכל בשר ולא ישתה יין.

On Erev Tisha B'Av, a person should not eat two cooked dishes, he should not eat meat, and he should not drink wine at the final meal.

MISHNAH

רבן שמעון בן גמליאל אומר: ישנה.

Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says: He should make a change from his usual eating habits.

MISHNAH

רבי יהודה מחייב בכפיית המטה, ולא הודו לו חכמים.

Rabbi Yehudah obligates the overturning of the bed, but the Sages did not agree with him.

MISHNAH

אמר רבן שמעון בן גמליאל: לא היו ימים טובים לישראל כחמשה עשר באב וכיום הכפורים,

Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel said: There were no holidays for Israel like the fifteenth of Av and Yom Kippur,

MISHNAH

שפּהן בנות ירושלים יוצאות בכלי לָבָן שאולין — שלא לבייש את מי שאין לו.

for on them the daughters of Yerushalayim would go out in borrowed white garments, so as not to embarrass one who did not have her own.

MISHNAH

כל הכלים טעונין טבילה. ובנות ירושלים יוצאות וחולות בכרמים.

All the garments required immersion to ensure they were ritually pure. And the daughters of Yerushalayim would go out and dance in the vineyards.

MISHNAH

ומה היו אומרות: בחור, שא נא עיניך וראה מה אתה בורר לה. אל תתן עיניך בנוי, תן עיניך במשפחה.

And what would they say? "Young man, please lift up your eyes and see what you choose for yourself. Do not set your eyes on beauty; set your eyes on family."

MISHNAH

”שֶׁקֶר הַחַן וְהַבֵּל הַיָּפִי אִשָּׁה יֵרָאֵת ה' הִיא תִתֶּהּ לָלֵךְ”, וְאָמַר: ”תָּנוּ לָהּ מִפְּרֵי יָדֶיהָ וְיֵה לָלוּהָ בְּשַׁעְרֵיהָ מִעֲשִׂיהָ”.

As the verse says: "Grace is false and beauty is vain; a woman who fears Hashem, she shall be praised." And it says: "Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates."

MISHNAH

וְכֵן הוּא אוֹמֵר: ”צִאִינָה וּרְאִינָה בְּנוֹת צִיּוֹן בְּמִלְכָּהּ שְׁלֹמֹה בְּעֹטָרָה שְׁעֹטָרָה לוֹ אָמוּ בְּיוֹם חֲתָנָתוֹ וּבְיוֹם שְׂמִיחָתָהּ לְבֹי”.

And so it says: "Go forth and gaze, daughters of Zion, upon King Shlomo, in the crown with which his mother crowned him on the day of his wedding, and on the day of the gladness of his heart."

MISHNAH

”בְּיוֹם חֲתָנָתוֹ” — זֶה מִתֵּן תּוֹרָה, ”וּבְיוֹם שְׂמִיחָתָהּ לְבֹי” — זֶה בְּנִינָן בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ, שְׂיִבְנָהּ בְּמַהֲרָה בְּיָמֵינוּ.

"On the day of his wedding" — this refers to the Giving of the Torah; "and on the day of the gladness of his heart" — this refers to the building of the Beis HaMikdash, may it be rebuilt speedily in our days.

גְּמָרָא GEMARA

GEMARA

גְּמ' בְּשִׁלְשָׁה פְּרָקִים בְּשָׁנָה כֹהֲנִים נוֹשְׂאִין אֶת כַּפֵּיהֶם כּו'.

GEMARA: At three times in the year, the Kohanim raise their hands etc.

QUESTION

תַּעֲנִיּוֹת וּמַעֲמָדוֹת מִי אֵיכָּא מוֹסָף?

The Gemara asks: On **fasts and Maamados**, is there a **Musaf** prayer? Why does the Mishnah list Musaf as one of the four times they bless the people on those days?

ANSWER

חֲסוּרֵי מִיחֻסָּרָא, וְהֵכִי קֵתְנִי:

The Gemara answers: The Mishnah is **missing words**, and this is what it is teaching:

EXPLANATION

בְּשִׁלְשָׁה פְּרָקִים כֹהֲנִים נוֹשְׂאִין אֶת כַּפֵּיהֶן כָּל זְמַן שְׂמִיחָתָהּ לָלוּ, וְיֵשׁ מִהֵן אַרְבָּעָה פְּעָמִים בְּיוֹם — שְׁחֵרִית וּמוֹסָף מְנַחָה וְנֶעִילָת שַׁעְרֵיהֶם, וְאֵלּוּ הֵן שְׁלֹשָׁה פְּרָקִים: תַּעֲנִיּוֹת, וּמַעֲמָדוֹת, וְיוֹם הַכַּפּוּרִים.

At three times in the year, the Kohanim raise their hands whenever they pray, and some of these times have four times in the day — Shacharis, Musaf, Minchah, and Neilas Shearim. And these are the three times: fasts, Maamados, and Yom Kippur. On Yom Kippur there are four prayers, but on fasts and Maamados there are only three.

STATEMENT

אמר רב נחמן אמר רבה בר אבוח: זו דברי רבי מאיר.

Rav Nachman said in the name of Rabbah bar Avuha: This is the opinion of Rabbi Meir, who holds that Kohanim bless the people at Minchah on fast days.

STATEMENT

אבל חכמים אומרים: שחרית ומוסף — יש בהן נשיאת כפים, מנחה ונעילה — אין בהן נשיאת כפים.

But the Sages say: Shacharis and Musaf have the Priestly Blessing, but Minchah and Neilah do not have the Priestly Blessing.

EXPLANATION

מאן חכמים — רבי יהודה היא.

The Gemara notes: Who are the "Sages" mentioned here? It is Rabbi Yehudah.

BRAISA

דתנא: שחרית ומוסף מנחה ונעילה כולן יש בהן נשיאת כפים, דברי רבי מאיר.

As it was taught in a Braisa: Shacharis, Musaf, Minchah, and Neilah — all of them have the Priestly Blessing; these are the words of Rabbi Meir.

BRAISA

רבי יהודה אומר: שחרית ומוסף — יש בהן נשיאת כפים, מנחה ונעילה — אין בהן נשיאת כפים.

Rabbi Yehudah says: Shacharis and Musaf have the Priestly Blessing, but Minchah and Neilah do not have the Priestly Blessing.

BRAISA

רבי יוסי אומר: נעילה — יש בה נשיאת כפים, מנחה — אין בה נשיאת כפים.

Rabbi Yose says: Neilah has the Priestly Blessing, but Minchah does not have the Priestly Blessing.

QUESTION

במאי קמיפלגי?

The Gemara asks: In what principle do they differ?

ANSWER

רבי מאיר סבר: כל יום טעמא מאי לא פרשי בהי ידיהו במנחתא — משום שחרות, האידינא ליכא שחרות.

Rabbi Meir holds: Every ordinary day, what is the reason that the Kohanim do not spread their hands to bless the people at Minchah? Because of drunkenness, as they may have drunk wine with lunch. But now, on a fast day, there is no drunkenness, so they may bless the people.

ANSWER

רבי יהודה סבר: שחרית ומוסף דכל יום לא שכיח שכרות — לא גזרו בהו רבנן, מנחה ונעילה דכל יום שכיחא שכרות — גזרו בהו רבנן.

Rabbi Yehudah holds: Shacharis and Musaf, which on any ordinary day drunkenness is not common at those times, the Rabbis did not decree upon them to forbid the blessing on fast days. But Minchah and Neilah, which on any ordinary day drunkenness is common at those times, the Rabbis decreed upon them to forbid the blessing even on fast days.

ANSWER

רבי יוסי סבר: מנחה דאיתה בכל יום — גזרו בה רבנן, נעילה דליתה בכל יום — לא גזרו בה רבנן.

Rabbi Yose holds: Minchah, which exists on every ordinary day, the Rabbis decreed upon it to forbid the blessing. But Neilah, which does not exist on every ordinary day, the Rabbis did not decree upon it.

RULING

אמר רב יהודה אמר רב: הלכה כרבי מאיר.

Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: The halachah is like Rabbi Meir.

RULING

ורבי יוחנן אמר: נהגו העם כרבי מאיר.

And Rabbi Yochanan said: The people custom to act like Rabbi Meir.

RULING

ורבא אמר: מנהג כרבי מאיר.

And Rava said: There is a custom like Rabbi Meir.

EXPLANATION

מאן דאמר הלכה כרבי מאיר — דרשינן לה בפירקא.

The Gemara explains: The one who said "the halachah is like Rabbi Meir" means we expound it in the public lecture.

EXPLANATION

מאן דאמר מנהג — מידרש לא דרשינן, אוריי מורינן.

The one who said "there is a custom" means we do not expound it publicly, but we instruct individuals who ask.

EXPLANATION

ומאן דאמר נהגו — אוריי לא מורינן, ואי עביד — עביד, ולא מהדרינן ליה.

And the one who said "the people custom to act" means we do not even instruct individuals, but if one does it, he does it, and we do not make him turn back.

RULING

ורב נחמן אמר: הִלָּכָה כְּרַבִּי יוֹסִי. וְהִלָּכָה כְּרַבִּי יוֹסִי.

And Rav Nachman said: The halachah is like Rabbi Yose. And the halachah is indeed like Rabbi Yose.

QUESTION

וְהֵאֵיֶדְנָא מַאי טַעְמָא פְּרָשִׁי כְּהֵנִי יְדִיָּהּ בְּמִנְחָתָא דְּתַעֲנִיתָא?

The Gemara asks: And nowadays, what is the reason that the Kohanim spread their hands at Minchah of a fast day?

ANSWER

כִּיּוֹן דְּבִסְמוּרָה לְשִׁקִּיעַת הַחֶמֶה קָא פְּרָשִׁי — כְּתַפִּילָת נְעִילָה דְּמָנָא.

The Gemara answers: Since they spread their hands close to sunset, it is considered like the Neilah prayer, and is permitted according to Rabbi Yose.

QUESTION

דְּכוּלִּי עָלְמָא מִיְהֵת שְׂכוּר אָסוּר בְּנִשְׂיָאָת כַּפִּים. מִנְהֵנִי מִיָּלִי?

The Gemara notes: In any event, everyone agrees that a drunk person is forbidden to perform the Priestly Blessing. From where do we derive these words?

ANSWER

אָמַר רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן לֵוִי מִשּׁוּם בַּר קַפְרָא: לָמָּה נִסְמְכָה פְּרִשְׁת פֶּהּ מִבְּרָךְ לְפָרֶשֶׁת נָזִיר?

Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said in the name of Bar Kappara: Why is the portion of the Kohen blessing juxtaposed to the portion of the Nazir?

EXPLANATION

לֹאמַר: מָה נָזִיר אָסוּר בַּיַּיִן, אַף פֶּהּ מִבְּרָךְ אָסוּר בַּיַּיִן.

To say: Just as a Nazir is forbidden in wine, so too a Kohen blessing is forbidden in wine.

OBJECTION

מִתְקִיף לָהּ אָבוּהָ דְּרַבִּי זֵירָא, וְאָמַר לָהּ אוֹשְׁעִיא בַּר זְבִידָא: אִי מָה נָזִיר אָסוּר בְּחִרְצָן — אַף פֶּהּ מִבְּרָךְ אָסוּר בְּחִרְצָן!

The father of Rabbi Zeira, and some say Oshaia bar Zavda, challenged this: If so, just as a Nazir is forbidden in grape seeds, so too a Kohen blessing should be forbidden in grape seeds!

RESOLUTION

אָמַר רַבִּי יִצְחָק, אָמַר קָרָא: "לְשִׁרְתּוֹ וּלְבָרְכּוֹ בְּשֵׁמוֹ", מָה מְשִׁרֵּת מוֹתֵר בְּחִרְצָן — אַף פֶּהּ מִבְּרָךְ מוֹתֵר בְּחִרְצָן.

Rabbi Yitzchak said: The verse says: "To minister to Him and to bless in His Name." This equates blessing to Temple service: Just as a ministering Kohen is permitted in grape seeds, so too a Kohen blessing is permitted in grape seeds.

SUMMARY

The Gemara clarifies that while Hallel is ideally said on a full stomach, in places like Mehoza where people might easily become drunk, it was recited immediately after the fast before going home. We then learn the halachos of the Ma'amados, established by Shmuel and David HaMelech to ensure the entire nation was represented during the daily offerings. The members of the Ma'amad would fast four days a week, read the creation story in the Torah, and adjust their prayers and readings depending on whether the day featured Hallel, Musaf, or the special family wood offerings brought by families such as the descendants of Parosh ben Yehuda and Zattu ben Yehuda.

למעשה WHAT TO TAKE HOME

The Gemara teaches us a profound lesson about how we connect to the service of Hashem. When the Torah commands us to bring the daily offerings, the Mishnah asks a simple, piercing question: 'How can a person's offering be sacrificed when he is not standing next to it?' To solve this, the early prophets instituted the Ma'amados—representatives who stood in the Beis HaMikdash on behalf of all Klal Yisrael, while those back home gathered in their local shuls to fast, pray, and read the story of Creation.

This teaches us that you can never be a mere bystander in your relationship with the Aibershter. You cannot rely on others to do the spiritual heavy lifting for you. Even when the Kohanim were physically offering the korbanos in Yerushalayim, every single Yid back in their own town had to actively participate, fast, and align themselves with the service. Your connection to Torah, mitzvos, and the avodah of the tzibbur requires your personal presence and heart.

Today, we do not have the Beis HaMikdash, but we have our shuls, our batei midrash, and our daily tefillos. When you daven or learn, do not just show up as a spectator watching the chazzan or the person next to you. Stand 'on top of your offering' with full focus and energy, knowing that your personal avodah is an indispensable part of the entire Jewish nation's service of Hashem.

Today, when you daven Mincha or Maariv, do not just answer Amen and let the chazzan carry the tefillah. Take thirty seconds before you start to stand silently, realize you are standing directly before the King, and put your own heart into every single word.