

מסכת תענית · דף כ"ז

Elucidated Talmud · Statement and Proof · Navy & Gold Edition

THE SUGYA

We begin this daf by wrapping up our sugya about the kohanim who daven the Birchas Kohanim, comparing their halachos to those of a nazir and a kohein serving in the Beis HaMikdash. The Gemara clarifies that the comparisons are meant as a support for Rabbinic laws, which is why we lean toward leniency rather than stringency.

From there, we dive into the beautiful inyan of the Ma'amados—the non-priestly watches. The Gemara explains how the early prophets, Shmuel and David HaMelech, established twenty-four watches of kohanim, Levi'im, and Yisraelim. We learn how the Yisraelim of each watch would stand by during the korbanos, because how can a person's offering be brought if he is not standing right there next to it?

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

QUESTION

אי מה משרת — בעל מום לא, אף כהן מכהן — בעל מום לא!

The Gemara asks: If so, then just as a **ministering** priest who is a **blemished person** may **not** serve, so too, a priest who **blesses** the nation with the Priestly Blessing, if he is a **blemished person** he may **not** bless!

ANSWER

הא איתקש לנזיר.

The Gemara answers: **This** priest who blesses is **juxtaposed to a nazirite**, who is not disqualified by a blemish.

QUESTION

ומאי חזית דמקשת לקולא? אקיש לחומרא!

The Gemara asks: **And what did you see that you juxtaposed** the cases **to yield a leniency**? Juxtapose them **to yield a stringency**, comparing him to a nazirite for grape pits and to a ministering priest for blemishes!

ANSWER

אסמכתא נינהו מדרבנן, ולקולא.

The Gemara explains: These derivations are merely a **support** for laws that are **Rabbinic**, and when there is a doubt in Rabbinic laws, we rule **to yield a leniency**.

MISHNAH מִשְׁנָה

MISHNAH

אלו הן מעמדות. לפי שנאמר: "צו את בני ישראל כו".

The Mishnah taught: **These are the non-priestly watches** (ma'amados). Since it is stated: "Command the children of Israel etc."

גְּמָרָא GEMARA

QUESTION

מאי קאמר?

The Gemara asks: **What is** the Mishnah **saying**? How does the verse relate to the watches?

ANSWER

הכי קאמר: אלו הן מעמדות. ומה טעם תיקנו מעמדות, לפי שנאמר: "צו את בני ישראל ואמרת אליהם את קרבני לחמי לאשי".

The Gemara explains: **This is what** the Mishnah **is saying**: **These are the non-priestly watches**. And what is the reason that the Sages **instituted non-priestly watches**? Since it is stated: "Command the children of Israel and say to them: My offering, My food for My fire offerings..."

מִשְׁנָה MISHNAH

MISHNAH

והיאה קרבנו של אדם קרב והוא אינו עומד על גביו?

The Mishnah continues: **But how can a person's offering be sacrificed and he is not standing over it** to watch? Therefore, representatives of the nation must be present.

MISHNAH

התקינו נביאים הראשונים עשרים וארבעה משמרות.

Therefore, **the early prophets instituted twenty-four priestly watches** (mishmaros).

MISHNAH

על כל משמר ומשמר היה מעמד בירושלים של כהנים ושל לויים ושל ישראלים.

For each and every priestly watch, there was a corresponding watch (ma'amad) in Yerushalayim of priests, of Levites, and of Israelites.

MISHNAH

הגיע זמן משמר לעלות, כהנים ולויים עולין לירושלים.

When **the time arrived for a particular priestly watch to ascend**, the priests and Levites of that watch would ascend to Yerushalayim.

BRAISA

תנו רבנן: עשרים וארבעה משמרות בארץ ישראל, ושתים עשרה ביריחו.

The Rabbis taught in a Braisa: There were twenty-four priestly watches in Eretz Yisrael, and twelve in Yericho.

QUESTION

שתים עשרה ביריחו?! נפישן להו טובא!

The Gemara asks in surprise: **Twelve in Yericho?! If so, they are too many**, totaling thirty-six watches!

ANSWER

אלא: שתיים עשרה מהן ביריחו.

Rather, the Braisa means: **Twelve of them**, out of the twenty-four, were located in Yericho.

BRAISA

הגיע זמן המשמר לעלות, חצי המשמר היה עולה מארץ ישראל לירושלים, וחצי המשמר היה עולה מיריחו, כדי שיספקו מים ומזון לאחיהם שבירושלים.

When the time arrived for the priestly watch to ascend, half of the watch would ascend from other parts of Eretz Yisrael to Yerushalayim, and half of the watch would ascend from Yericho, in order that they could supply water and food to their brothers in Yerushalayim.

STATEMENT

אמר רב יהודה אמר שמואל: כהנים ולוים וישראלים מעכבין את הקרבן.

Rav Yehuda said that Shmuel said: Priests, Levites, and Israelites of the watch are indispensable for the offering; if any are missing, the communal offering cannot be brought.

BRAISA

במתניתא תנא רבי שמעון בן אלעזר: כהנים ולוים וכלי שיר מעכבין את הקרבן.

In a Braisa it was taught that Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar says: Priests, Levites, and musical instruments are indispensable for the offering.

QUESTION

במאי קמיפלגי?

The Gemara asks: **Regarding what principle do they disagree?**

ANSWER

מר סבר: עיקר שירה בפה, ומר סבר: עיקר שירה בכלי.

The Gemara answers: One **Master**, Shmuel, holds that the essential song of the Levites is **vocal**, and therefore instruments are not indispensable; and one **Master**, Rabbi Shimon, holds that the essential song is **instrumental**, performed with a vessel.

STATEMENT

אמר רב חמא בר גוריא אמר רב: משה תיכון להם לישראל שמונה משמרות, ארבעה מאלעזר וארבעה מאיתמר.

Rav Hama bar Gurya said that Rav said: Moshe Rabbeinu initially instituted for Israel eight priestly watches, four from the descendants of Elazar and four from the descendants of Itamar.

STATEMENT

בא שמואל והעמידן על שש עשרה, בא דוד והעמידן על עשרים וארבעה, שנאמר: "בשנת הארבעים למלכות דויד נדרשו וימצא בהם גבורי חיל פניעזר גלעד".

Shmuel came and established them as sixteen, and David came and established them as twenty-four, as it is stated: "In the fortieth year of the reign of David they were sought, and there were found among them mighty men of valor at Yazer of Gilead."

OBJECTION

מיתיבי: משה תיכון להם לישראל שמונה משמרות, ארבעה מאלעזר וארבעה מאיתמר, ובא דוד ושמואל והעמידן על עשרים וארבע, שנאמר: "המה יסד דויד ושמואל הראה באמונתם!"

The Gemara raises an objection from a Braisa: Moshe instituted for Israel eight priestly watches, four from Elazar and four from Itamar, and David and Shmuel came and established them as twenty-four, as it is stated: "Whom David and Shmuel the seer ordained in their set office"! This implies they established them together, unlike Rav's breakdown.

RESOLUTION

הכי קאמר: מיסודו של דוד ושמואל הרמתי העמידום על עשרים וארבע.

The Gemara answers: This is what the Braisa is saying: From the foundation of David and Shmuel of Ramah, through their joint planning, they eventually established them as twenty-four.

BRAISA

תנא אידה: משה תיכון להם לישראל שש עשרה משמרות, שמונה מאלעזר ושמונה מאיתמר.

It was taught in another Braisa: Moshe instituted for Israel sixteen priestly watches, eight from Elazar and eight from Itamar.

BRAISA

וכשרבו בני אלעזר על בני איתמר, חלקום והעמידום על עשרים וארבע, שנאמר: "וימצאו בני אלעזר רבים לראשי הגברים מן בני איתמר ויחלקום לבני אלעזר ראשים לבית אבות ששה עשר ולבני איתמר לבית אבותם שמונה",

And when the descendants of Elazar became more numerous than the descendants of Itamar, they divided them and established them as twenty-four, as it is stated: "And there were more chief men found of the sons of Elazar than of the sons of Itamar, and they were divided: of the sons of Elazar there were sixteen heads of fathers' houses, and of the sons of Itamar, according to their fathers' houses, eight,"

BRAISA

וְאָמַר: "בֵּית אָב אֶחָד אָחַז לְאֶלְעָזָר וְאֶחָז אֶחָז לְאִיתָמָר".

and it says: "One father's house taken for Elazar, and proportionately for Itamar."

QUESTION

מאי "וְאָמַר"?

The Gemara asks: **What** is the purpose of quoting the second verse with "and it says"?

ANSWER

וְכִי תֵימָא: כִּי הֵיכִי דְנִפְיִשִׁי בְנֵי אֶלְעָזָר, הֲכָא נִמְי דְנִפְיִשִׁי בְנֵי אִיתָמָר — שְׁמוֹנָה, מְעִיקְרָא אֲרַבְעָה הוּוּ,

The Gemara explains: **And** if you would say that just as the descendants of Elazar increased, here too, the descendants of Itamar increased to eight, but originally they were only four as Rav Hama bar Gurya claimed,

ANSWER

תָּא שְׁמַע: "בֵּית אָב אֶחָד אָחַז לְאֶלְעָזָר וְאֶחָז אֶחָז לְאִיתָמָר".

then come and hear: "One father's house taken for Elazar, and proportionately for Itamar," which shows that the descendants of Itamar remained as they originally were, without increasing.

REFUTATION

תְּיֻבָּתָא דְרַב חָמָא בַּר גּוּרְיָא!

The Gemara notes: This is a **conclusive** refutation of Rav Hama bar Gurya!

RESOLUTION

אָמַר לָהּ רַב חָמָא בַּר גּוּרְיָא: תִּנָּאִי הִיא, וְאִנָּא דְאָמַרִי כִּי הִיא תִּנָּא דְאָמַר שְׁמוֹנָה.

The Gemara answers: Rav Hama bar Gurya could say to you: It is a dispute between Tanna'im, and I stated my opinion in accordance with that Tanna of the first Braisa who said that Moshe originally instituted only eight watches.

BRAISA

תְּנוּ רַבְּנֵי: אֲרַבְעָה מִשְׁמֵרוֹת עָלוּ מִן הַגּוֹלָה, וְאֵלּוּ הֵן: יְדֵעִיָּה, חָרִים, פָּשְׁחוּר, וְאִמֶּר.

The Rabbis taught in a Braisa: Only four priestly watches ascended from the Exile, and these are they: Yedayah, Harim, Pashchur, and Immer.

BRAISA

עָמְדוּ נְבִיאִים שְׁפִינִיָּהֶם, וְחָלְקוּם וְהַעֲמִידוּם עַל עֶשְׂרִים וְאַרְבָּעָה, בְּלֵלוּם וּנְתָנוּם בְּקַלְפֵי.

The prophets among them arose, and divided them and established them as twenty-four watches. They mixed them and placed them in a lottery box (kalfei).

BRAISA

בָּא יְדֵעִיָּה וְנָטַל חֶלְקוֹ וְחָלַק חֲבֵרָיו שֵׁשׁ, בָּא חָרִים וְנָטַל חֶלְקוֹ וְחָלַק חֲבֵרָיו שֵׁשׁ, וְכֵן פָּשְׁחוּר, וְכֵן אִמֶּר.

Yedayah came and drew his portion and the portion of his companions, six watches in total. Harim came and drew his portion and the portion of his companions, six, and likewise Pashchur, and likewise Immer.

BRAISA

וכן התנו נביאים שביניהם: שאפילו יהויריב ראש משמרת עולה — לא ידחה ידעיה ממקומו.

And likewise, the prophets among them stipulated: That even if Yehoyariv, the original head of the first watch, ascends from Babylonia, Yedayah shall not be displaced from his place as the head.

BRAISA

אלא: ידעיה עיקר, ויהויריב טפל לו.

Rather, Yedayah remains the primary head, and Yehoyariv is secondary to him.

משנה MISHNAH

MISHNAH

וישראל שבאותו משמר מתכנסין בעריהן וקורין במעשה בראשית.

The Mishnah taught: And the Israelites of that watch would gather in their cities and read the account of Creation.

גמרא GEMARA

QUESTION

מנהגי מילי?

The Gemara asks: From where are these words derived?

ANSWER

אמר רבי יעקב בר אבא אמר רב אסי: אלמלא מעמדות לא נתקיימו שמים וארץ, שנאמר: "ויאמר ה' אלהים במה אדע כי אירשנה",

Rabbi Yaakov bar Acha said that Rav Assi said: Were it not for the watches, heaven and earth would not endure, as it is stated: "And he said: Hashem Elokim, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?"

ANSWER

אמר אברהם: רבנו של עולם! שמא ישראל חוטאין לפניך, אתה עושה להם כדור המבול וכדור הפלגה?

Avraham said before Him: Master of the Universe! Perhaps Israel will sin before You, and You will do to them as You did to the generation of the Flood and the generation of the Dispersion?

ANSWER

אמר ליה: לאו.

Hashem said to him: No, I will not destroy them.

ANSWER

אמר לפניו: רבוננו של עולם! הודיעני במה אירשנה?

Avraham said before Him: Master of the Universe! Let me know whereby I shall inherit it, meaning how will they be sustained?

ANSWER

אמר ליה: "קחה לי עגלה משלשת ועז משלשת וגו'".

Hashem said to him: "Take for Me a three-year-old heifer, and a three-year-old goat, etc.", hinting at the sacrifices.

ANSWER

אמר לפניו: רבוננו של עולם! תינח בזמן שבית המקדש קיים. בזמן שאין בית המקדש קיים מה תהא עליהם?

Avraham said before Him: Master of the Universe! This is fine when the Beis HaMikdash is standing. But when the Beis HaMikdash is not standing, what will be of them?

ANSWER

אמר לו: כבר תקנתי להם סדר קרבנות, בזמן שקוראין בהן לפני — מעלה אני עליהם כאילו הקריבום לפני ואני מוחל להם על כל עונותיהם.

Hashem said to him: I have already established for them the order of the sacrifices. Whenever they read them before Me, I credit it to them as if they sacrificed them before Me, and I forgive them for all their sins.

BRAISA

תנו רבנן: אנשי משמר היו מתפללין על קרבן אחיהם שיתקבל בריצון.

The Rabbis taught in a Braisa: The men of the priestly watch would pray over the offering of their brothers that it should be accepted with favor.

BRAISA

ואנשי מעמד מתכנסין לבית הכנסת, ויושבין ארבע תעניות: בשני בשבת, בשלישי, ברביעי, ובחמישי.

And the men of the non-priestly watch would gather in the synagogue and observe four fasts: on Monday, on Tuesday, on Wednesday, and on Thursday.

BRAISA

בשני — על יורדי הים. בשלישי — על הולכי מדברות.

On Monday they fasted for those who go down to the sea. On Tuesday they fasted for those who travel through the deserts.

BRAISA

ברביעי — על אספרא שלא תיפול על התינוקות.

On Wednesday they fasted against croup, that it should not fall upon the young children.

BRAISA

בְּחַמִּישִׁי — עַל עוֹבְרוֹת וּמִיִּנְיָקוֹת. עוֹבְרוֹת — שְׁלֹא יִפִּילוּ, מִיִּנְיָקוֹת — שְׁיִנְיָקוּ אֶת בְּנֵיהֶם.

On Thursday they fasted for pregnant women and nursing mothers: pregnant women, that they should not miscarry; nursing mothers, that they should be able to nurse their children.

BRAISA

וּבַעֲרֵב שַׁבָּת לֹא הָיוּ מִתְעַנִּין מִפְּנֵי כְבוֹד הַשַּׁבָּת, קֵל וְחוֹמֶר בַּשַּׁבָּת עֲצָמָה.

And on Erev Shabbos they would not fast due to the honor of Shabbos, and all the more so on Shabbos itself.

QUESTION

בְּאַחַד בַּשַּׁבָּת מָאי טַעְמָא לָא?

The Gemara asks: On Sunday, what is the reason they did not fast?

ANSWER

אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן: מִפְּנֵי הַנוֹצְרִים.

Rabbi Yochanan said: Because of the Christians, who made Sunday their holiday, and fasting then would arouse enmity.

ANSWER

רַבִּי שְׁמוּאֵל בַּר נַחֲמָנִי אָמַר: מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהוּא שְׁלִישִׁי לַיְצִירָה.

Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachmani said: Because it is the third day from the creation of man on Friday, and a person is physically weakest on the third day after a change in his routine.

ANSWER

רִישׁ לָקִישׁ אָמַר: מִפְּנֵי נִשְׁמָה יְתִירָה, דְּאָמַר רִישׁ לָקִישׁ: נִשְׁמָה יְתִירָה נִיתְּנָה בּוֹ בְּאָדָם בְּעֶרֶב שַׁבָּת, בְּמוֹצָאֵי שַׁבָּת נוֹטְלִין אוֹתָהּ מִמֶּנּוּ, שְׁנַאֲמַר: "שַׁבַּת וַיִּנְפֹּשׁ". כִּיּוֹן שֶׁשַּׁבַּת — וַיִּאֲבֹדָה נִפְשׁוֹ.

Resh Lakish said: Because of the additional soul (neshamah yeseirah). For Resh Lakish said: An additional soul is given to a person on Erev Shabbos, and on Motzaei Shabbos they take it away from him, as it is stated: "He rested and was refreshed" (shavas vayinafash), which is homiletically read: Once he rested and Shabbos ended, woe (vai) for the lost soul (nefesh). Therefore, one should not fast on Sunday.

מִשְׁנָה MISHNAH

MISHNAH

בְּיוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן "בְּרֵאשִׁית" וַיְהִי רָקִיעַ.

The Mishnah taught: On the first day, Sunday, they read "In the beginning" (Genesis 1:1-5) and "Let there be a firmament" (Genesis 1:6-8).

BRAISA

תנא: "בראשית" בשנים, "יהי רקיע" באחד.

A Tanna taught: "In the beginning" was read by two people, and "Let there be a firmament" by one person.

STATEMENT

בשלמא "יהי רקיע" באחד — תלתא פסוקי הוו.

The Gemara analyzes this: **Granted**, "Let there be a firmament" is read by one person, because there are three verses in that section, which is the minimum for one person.

QUESTION

אלא "בראשית" בשנים, מאי טעמא? חמשה פסוקי הויין, ותנא: הקורא בתורה — אל יפחות משלשה פסוקים!

But "In the beginning" read by two, what is the reason? There are only five verses in that section, and it was taught in a Braisa: **One who reads in the Torah should not read fewer than three verses!** If two people read, one of them must read only two verses!

ANSWER

רב אמר: דולג. ושמואל אמר: פוסק.

Rav said: The second reader **repeats** (doleg) one of the verses read by the first. And Shmuel said: One of the readers **splits** a verse in half.

QUESTION

ורב דאמר דולג, מאי טעמא לא אמר פוסק?

The Gemara asks: **And Rav**, who said he repeats, what is the reason he did not say he splits a verse?

ANSWER

קסבר: כל פסוקא דלא פסקיה משה — אנון לא פסקינן ליה.

The Gemara answers: **He holds**: Any verse that Moshe Rabbeinu did not split, we do not split.

QUESTION

ושמואל אמר פוסק, ומי פסקינן?

The Gemara asks: **And Shmuel** said he splits? But do we split verses?

OBJECTION

והאמר רבי חנינא קרא: צער גדול ה'ה לי אצל רבי חנינא הגדול ולא התיר לי לפסוק אלא לתינוקות של בית רבן, הואיל ולהתלמד עשויין.

But did not Rabbi Chanina the Scribe say: I had great pain studying with Rabbi Chanina the Great, and he did not permit me to split a verse except for school children, since they are made to learn and cannot digest a whole verse at once!

RESOLUTION

ושמואל — הֵתָם טַעְמָא מַאי? מְשׁוּם דְּלֹא אִפְשָׁר. הֲכָא נָמִי לֹא אִפְשָׁר.

The Gemara answers: **And Shmuel** would say: **There, what is the reason** it is permitted for children? **Because it is not possible** otherwise. **Here too, it is not possible** otherwise, so we may split the verse.

QUESTION

ושמואל אָמַר פּוֹסֵק, מַאי טַעְמָא לֹא אָמַר דּוּלְגָ?

The Gemara asks: **And Shmuel**, who said he splits, what is the reason he did not say he repeats?

ANSWER

גְּזִירָה מְשׁוּם הַנִּכְנָסִין וְגִזְרָה מְשׁוּם הַיּוֹצְאִין.

The Gemara answers: It is a **decree because of those who enter**, and a decree because of those who leave. Those entering late might think the first reader only read two verses, and those leaving early might think the second reader only read two verses.

OBJECTION

מִיתִיבִי: פָּרָשָׁה שֶׁל שְׁשֶׁה פְּסוּקִים — קוֹרִין אוֹתָהּ בְּשְׁנַיִם, וְשֶׁל חֲמִשָּׁה — בְּיַחֲד.

The Gemara **raises an objection** from a Braisa: **A section of six verses**, we read it with two people, and a section of five verses, we read it **with one** person.

BRAISA

וְאִם הָרִאשׁוֹן קוֹרֵא שְׁלֹשָׁה, הַשֵּׁנִי קוֹרֵא שְׁנַיִם מִפָּרָשָׁה זֹאת וְאֶחָד מִפָּרָשָׁה אַחֶרֶת.

And if the first reader reads three verses, the second reads two from this section and one from another section.

BRAISA

וַיֵּשׁ אוֹמְרִים: שְׁלֹשָׁה, לְפִי שֶׁאֵין מִתְחִילִין בְּפָרָשָׁה פְּחוּת מִשְׁלֹשָׁה פְּסוּקִין.

And some say: He must read three from the next section, because we do not begin a section with fewer than three verses.

QUESTION

לְמַאן דְּאָמַר דּוּלְגָ — לִידְלוג, וְלְמַאן דְּאָמַר פּוֹסֵק — לִיפְסוּק!

In any case, the Braisa says a five-verse section is read by only one person. But **according to the one who says he repeats**, let him repeat, and **according to the one who says he splits**, let him split, so that two people can read it!

ANSWER

שְׂאֵנִי הֵתָם,

The Gemara answers: **It is different there...**

SUMMARY

The Gemara discusses the structure of the twenty-four mishmaros (watches) of kohanim, explaining how half of each watch would ascend from Jericho to help provide food and water for their brothers in Yerushalayim. We analyze a machlokes between Shmuel and Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar regarding whether the main part of the Levi'im's shirah (song) was vocal or instrumental, which determines what is indispensable for the korban. Finally, the Gemara explores different Tannaitic opinions regarding how many watches Moshe Rabbeinu originally established—whether it was eight or sixteen—before David HaMelech and Shmuel HaNozeh ultimately expanded them to twenty-four.

לְמַעַן שֶׁ
WHAT TO TAKE HOME

The Gemara teaches us a profound secret about how the world is sustained. When Avraham Avinu asked how his children would survive if they sinned, Hashem did not just point to the physical sacrifices in the Beis HaMikdash. He established the Ma'amados—the regular, structured prayers and Torah readings of the Jewish people. Hashem promised that even when the Beis HaMikdash is not standing, when we read and speak of these service orders, He considers it as if we brought the offerings ourselves and forgives our sins.

This is the power of our daily davening and learning. It is not just a personal obligation or a nice custom; it is the very pillar that keeps the world from collapsing. When you stand to daven or sit to learn, you are not just an individual. You are standing in the place of the Kohanim and the Levi'im, acting as the representative of the entire Jewish nation before the Aibershter.

To make this real today, treat your set times for davening and learning with the same precision and respect as a Kohen entering the Beis HaMikdash. Before you begin your next tefillah or learning seder, take ten seconds to stop, clear your mind, and say to yourself: 'I am now entering my Ma'amad, standing before the King to bring down forgiveness and life for all of Klal Yisrael.'