

מסכת תענית · דף ב'

Elucidated Talmud · Statement and Proof · Navy & Gold Edition

THE SUGYA

Shalom aleichem! Welcome to the very beginning of Maseches Taanis. We start our learning on Daf Bais with a beautiful discussion about our connection to Hashem through the rain, which is the source of all parnassah and life. The mishna opens by asking when we begin to mention the "might of the rains" (gevuras geshamim) in our Shemoneh Esrei, bringing a machlokes between Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua about whether we start on the first day of Sukkos or the last day, Shemini Atzeres. We also learn the practical halacha of how the chazzan transitions into mentioning rain during the davening. *All introductions, summaries, and contextual notes are the editor's commentary and are not part of the original text.*

משנה MISHNAH

MISHNAH

מאימתי מזכירין גבורות גשמים?

From when, meaning from which date, **does one begin to mention the might of the rains** by inserting the phrase "He makes the wind blow and the rain fall" in the second blessing of the Shemoneh Esrei?

MISHNAH

רבי אליעזר אומר: מיום טוב הראשון של חג.

Rabbi Eliezer says: From the first Festival day of the festival of Sukkos.

MISHNAH

רבי יהושע אומר: מיום טוב האחרון של חג.

Rabbi Yehoshua says: From the last Festival day of the festival of Sukkos, which is Shemini Atzeres.

MISHNAH

אמר לו רבי יהושע: הואיל ואין הגשמים אלא סימן קללה בַּחֲגֵינוּ, לָמָּה הוּא מְזַכֵּר?

Rabbi Yehoshua said to Rabbi Eliezer: Since rain is nothing other than a sign of a curse during the festival of Sukkos, as it forces us to leave our sukkos, **why should one mention** rain at this time?

MISHNAH

אמר לו רבי אליעזר: אף אני לא אמרתי לשאול אלא להזכיר "משיב הרוח ומוריד הגשם" בְּעֹנֵתוֹ.

Rabbi Eliezer said to him: I too did not say to request rain now, **but only to mention** "He makes the wind blow and the rain fall" in its due time.

MISHNAH

אמר לו: אם כן, לעולם יהא מזכיר!

Rabbi Yehoshua **said to him: If so**, that mentioning is not a request, then **one should always mention** rain, even in the summer!

MISHNAH

אין שואלים את הגשמים אלא סמוך לגשמים.

The Mishnah states a rule: **One requests rain only immediately preceding the rainy season.**

MISHNAH

רבי יהודה אומר: העובר לפני התיבה ביום טוב האחרון של חג — האחרון מזכיר, הראשון אינו מזכיר.

Rabbi Yehuda says: **With regard to the one who passes before the ark as the prayer leader on the last Festival day of the festival** of Sukkos, which is Shemini Atzeres: **The last** prayer leader, who leads the Mussaf prayer, **mentions** rain, but **the first** prayer leader, who leads Shacharis, **does not mention** rain.

MISHNAH

ביום טוב ראשון של פסח — הראשון מזכיר, האחרון אינו מזכיר.

And **on the first Festival day of Pesach: The first** prayer leader, who leads Shacharis, still **mentions** rain, but **the last** prayer leader, who leads Mussaf, **does not mention** rain.

גמרא GEMARA

QUESTION

גמ' תנא היכא קאי דקתני "מאימתי"?

GEMARA: **Where does the tanna stand that he teaches: "From when"?** What prior source established that we must mention rain at all?

ANSWER

תנא קתם קאי — דקתני: מזכירים גבורות גשמים בתחיית המתים, ושואליו בכרפת השנים, והבדלה בחונו הדעת. וקתני: מאימתי מזכירים גבורות גשמים.

The Gemara answers: **The tanna is standing there**, referring to a Mishnah in Berachos, **as it teaches** there: **One mentions the might of the rains in the blessing of the resurrection of the dead, and one requests rain in the blessing of the years, and Havdalah is recited in "Who graciously grants knowledge."** And based on that, our tanna teaches: **From when does one begin to mention the might of the rains?**

QUESTION

וליתי קתם! מאי שנא דשכקיה עד הכא!?

The Gemara asks: **But let him teach it there** in Berachos! **What is different that he left it until here**, in tractate Taanis?

ANSWER

אָלאַ, תַּנָּא מֵרֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה סְלִיק, דִּתְנִין: וּבְחַג נִידוּנִין עַל הַמַּיִם.

Rather, the Gemara answers, the tanna is coming from tractate Rosh Hashanah, as we learned in a Mishnah there: And on the festival of Sukkos all creatures are judged for water.

EXPLANATION

וְאִיִּדִי דִתְנָא וּבְחַג נִידוּנִים עַל הַמַּיִם, תַּנָּא מֵאִמְתִּי מִזְכִּירִין גְּבוּרוֹת גִּשְׁמִים.

And since he taught: "And on the festival they are judged for water," which is the source for rain, he taught here: From when does one mention the might of the rains.

QUESTION

וְלִיתְנִי "מֵאִמְתִּי מִזְכִּירִים עַל הַגִּשְׁמִים". מַאי "גְּבוּרוֹת גִּשְׁמִים"?

The Gemara asks: And let the tanna teach: "From when does one mention the rains." What is the meaning of the phrase "the might of the rains"?

ANSWER

אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן: מִפְּנֵי שְׂיוּרְדִין בְּגְבוּרָה, שְׁנַאֲמַר: "עֲשֵׂה גְדֻלוֹת עַד אֵין חֶקֶר וְנִפְלְאוֹת עַד אֵין מִסְפָּר", וּבְתִיב: "הַנִּתֵּן מָטָר עַל פְּנֵי הָאָרֶץ וְשִׁלַּח מַיִם עַל פְּנֵי חוּצוֹת".

Rabbi Yochanan said: Because they fall with might, as it is stated: "Who does great things beyond comprehension, marvels without number," and it is written immediately after: "Who gives rain upon the earth, and sends water upon the fields."

QUESTION

מַאי מְשַׁמַּע?

The Gemara asks: From where is it implied that these verses connect rain to might?

ANSWER

אָמַר רַבָּה בַּר שֵׁילָא: אֲתֵיא "חֶקֶר" "חֶקֶר" מִבְּרִייתוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם.

Rabba bar Sheila said: It is derived by a gezerah shavah of the word "comprehension" from the word "comprehension" written concerning the creation of the world.

PROOF

כְּתִיב הָכָא: "עֲשֵׂה גְדֻלוֹת עַד אֵין חֶקֶר", וּבְתִיב הָתָם: "הֵלֹא יִדְעַתָּ אִם לֹא שָׁמַעַתָּ אֱלֹהֵי עוֹלָם הִי בּוֹרֵא קְצוֹת הָאָרֶץ לֹא יִיעַר וְלֹא יִיגַע אֵין חֶקֶר לְתַבְנִיתוֹ", וּבְתִיב: "מִכֵּין הָרִים בְּכַחוֹ נֹאָזֵר בְּגְבוּרָה".

It is written here: "Who does great things that are beyond comprehension," and it is written there regarding creation: "Have you not known? Have you not heard? The everlasting God, Hashem, the Creator of the ends of the earth, does not grow faint or weary; His discernment is beyond comprehension," and it is written elsewhere regarding creation: "Who sets firm the mountains with His strength, Who is girded with might." Thus, rain, which is also beyond comprehension, is linked to God's might.

PROOF

ומנא לן דבתפלה — דתנא: "לאהבה את ה' אלהיכם ולעבדו בכל לבבכם", איזו היא עבודה שהיא בלב — הוי אומר: זו תפלה. וכתב בתריה: "ונתתי מטר ארצכם בעתו יורה ומלקוש".

And from where do we know that rain must be mentioned specifically in prayer? As it was taught in a Braisa: "To love Hashem your God and to serve Him with all your heart." Which is the service that is in the heart? You must say: This is prayer. And it is written immediately after: "And I shall give the rain of your land in its due time, the first rain and the last rain."

STATEMENT

אמר רבי יוחנן: שלשה מפתחות בידו של הקדוש ברוך הוא שלא נמסרו ביד שליח, ואלו הן: מפתח של גשמים, מפתח של חיה, ומפתח של תחיית המתים.

Rabbi Yochanan said: There are three keys in the hand of the Holy One, Blessed be He, which were not transmitted into the hand of an intermediary, and these are they: The key of rain, the key of birthing, and the key of the resurrection of the dead.

PROOF

מפתח של גשמים — דכתיב: "יפתח ה' לך את אוצרו הטוב את השמים לתת מטר ארצה בעתו".

The key of rain, as it is written: "Hashem will open for you His good treasure, the heavens, to give the rain of your land in its due time."

PROOF

מפתח של חיה מנין — דכתיב: "ויזכר אלהים את רחל וישמע אליה אלהים ויפתח את רחמה".

From where do we derive the key of birthing? As it is written: "And God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her, and He opened her womb."

PROOF

מפתח של תחיית המתים מנין — דכתיב: "וידעתם כי אני ה' בפתחי את קברותיכם".

From where do we derive the key of the resurrection of the dead? As it is written: "And you shall know that I am Hashem when I open your graves."

STATEMENT

במערבא אמרי: אף מפתח של פרנסה, דכתיב: "פותח את ידה וגו'".

In the West, Eretz Yisrael, they say: Also the key of livelihood is held directly by Hashem, as it is written: "You open Your hand and satisfy every living thing with favor."

QUESTION

ורבי יוחנן, מאי טעמא לא קא השיב להא?

And Rabbi Yochanan, what is the reason he did not count this key of livelihood?

ANSWER

אמר לה: גשמים היינו פרנסה.

He could say to you: Rain is itself livelihood, so they are counted as one.

STATEMENT

רבי אליעזר אומר: מיום טוב הראשון של חג בוי.

The Gemara returns to the Mishnah: "Rabbi Eliezer says: From the first Festival day of the festival" etc.

QUESTION

איבעיא להו: רבי אליעזר מהיכא גמיר לה? מלולב גמר לה, או מניסוך המים גמר לה.

An inquiry was raised to them: From where does Rabbi Eliezer derive this? Does he derive it from the lulav, or does he derive it from the water libation?

EXPLANATION

מלולב גמר לה: מה לולב ביום — אף הזכרה ביום. או דלמא מניסוך המים גמר לה: מה ניסוך המים מאורתא, דאמר מר: "ומנחתם ונספיהם", אפילו בלילה — אף הזכרה מאורתא.

Did he derive it from the lulav: Just as the lulav is taken only by day, so too the mentioning of rain begins by day? Or perhaps he derived it from the water libation: Just as the water libation can be brought from the evening, as the Master said: "And their meal-offerings and their drink-offerings" may be offered even at night, so too the mentioning of rain begins from the evening?

PROOF

תא שמע, דאמר רבי אבהו: לא למדה רבי אליעזר אלא מלולב.

Come and hear, as Rabbi Abbahu said: Rabbi Eliezer did not learn it except from the lulav, meaning it begins by day.

STATEMENT

איכא דאמרי: רבי אבהו גמרא גמיר לה, ואיכא דאמרי: מתניתא שמיע ליה.

Some say: Rabbi Abbahu learned this as a tradition, and some say: He heard it from a Braisa.

BRAISA

מאי היא — דתנא: מאימתי מזכירין על הגשמים? רבי אליעזר אומר: משעת נטילת לולב. רבי יהושע אומר: משעת הנחתו.

What is this Braisa? As it was taught in a Braisa: From when does one mention the rains? Rabbi Eliezer says: From the time of the taking of the lulav. Rabbi Yehoshua says: From the time of its laying down, at the end of the festival.

BRAISA

אמר רבי אליעזר: הואיל וארבעת מינין הללו אינן באין אלא לרצות על המים, וכשם שארבע מינין הללו אי אפשר בהם בלא מים — כך אי אפשר לעולם בלא מים.

Rabbi Eliezer said: Since these four species do not come except to appease Hashem for water, and just as these four species cannot exist without water, so too the world cannot exist without water.

BRAISA

אמר לו רבי יהושע: והלא גשמים בָּחַג אינו אלא סימן קללה!

Rabbi Yehoshua said to him: But is not rain on the festival nothing other than a sign of a curse?

BRAISA

אמר לו רבי אליעזר: אף אני לא אמרתי לשאול, אלא להזכיר.

Rabbi Eliezer said to him: I too did not say to request rain, but only to mention it.

BRAISA

וכשם שתחייט המתים מזכיר כל השנה כולל ואינה אלא בזמנה, כך מזכירין גבורות גשמים כל השנה ואינן אלא בזמן. לפיכך, אם בא להזכיר כל השנה כולל — מזכיר.

And just as one mentions the resurrection of the dead all year long, even though it will only occur in its proper time, so too we should mention the might of the rains all year long, even though they only fall in their proper season. Therefore, if one wishes to mention rain all year long, he may mention it.

BRAISA

רבי אומר, אומר אני: משעה שמפסיק לשאלה — כך מפסיק להזכרה.

Rabbi says: I say, from the time one stops requesting rain on Pesach, so too he stops mentioning it.

BRAISA

רבי יהודה בן בתירה אומר: בשני בָּחַג הוא מזכיר, רבי עקיבא אומר: בששי בָּחַג הוא מזכיר.

Rabbi Yehuda ben Beseira says: On the second day of the festival of Sukkos he mentions rain. Rabbi Akiva says: On the sixth day of the festival he mentions rain.

BRAISA

רבי יהודה משום רבי יהושע אומר: העובר לפני התיבה ביום טוב האחרון של חג — האחרון מזכיר, הראשון אינו מזכיר. ביום טוב ראשון של פסח — הראשון מזכיר, האחרון אינו מזכיר.

Rabbi Yehuda says in the name of Rabbi Yehoshua: The one who passes before the ark on the last Festival day of the festival: The last prayer leader mentions rain, the first does not mention rain. On the first Festival day of Pesach: The first mentions rain, the last does not mention rain.

OBJECTION

שפיר קאמר ליה רבי אליעזר לרבי יהושע!

The Gemara notes: Rabbi Eliezer argued well to Rabbi Yehoshua with his comparison to the resurrection of the dead!

RESOLUTION

אמר לה רבי יהושע: בשלמא תחייט המתים מזכיר, דכולי יומא זמניה הוא. אלא גשמים, כל אימת דאתיין זמניהו היא?!

The Gemara answers: Rabbi Yehoshua could say to you: Granted, one mentions the resurrection of the dead all year, because every day is its proper time. But as for rain, is every time they come their proper season?

PROOF

והתנן: יצא ניסן וירדו גשמים — סימן קללה הם, שנאמר: "הלוא קציר חטים היום וגו'".

But did we not learn in a Mishnah: If Nissan passed and rain fell, they are a sign of a curse, as it is stated: "Is it not wheat harvest today" etc. Therefore, rain is not appropriate all year.

QUESTION

רבי יהודה בן בתירה אומר: בשני בָּחַג הוא מזכיר. מאי טעמא דרבי יהודה בן בתירה?

The Gemara analyzes the next opinion: Rabbi Yehuda ben Beseira says: On the second day of the festival he mentions rain. What is the reason of Rabbi Yehuda ben Beseira?

ANSWER

דתניא, רבי יהודה בן בתירה אומר: נאמר בשני "ונסכיהם", ונאמר בששי "ונסכיה", ונאמר בשביעי "כמשפטים", הרי מ"ם יו"ד מ"ם, הרי כאן מים — מכאן רמז לניסוך המים מן התורה.

As it was taught in a Braisa, Rabbi Yehuda ben Beseira says: It is said on the second day of Sukkos: "And their drink-offerings [ונסכיהם]" with an extra letter mem, and it is said on the sixth day: "And its drink-offerings [ונסכיה]" with an extra letter yod, and it is said on the seventh day: "According to their rule [כמשפטים]" with an extra letter mem. This spells mem, yod, mem, which is mayim (water). From here we have an allusion to the water libation from the Torah.

EXPLANATION

ומאי שנא בשני דנקט, דכי רמיזי להו בקרא — בשני הוא דרמיזי, הלכך בשני מדכרינן.

And what is different about the second day that he chose to begin mentioning rain? Because when they are alluded to in the verse, it is on the second day that the allusion begins with the letter mem; therefore, on the second day we begin to mention rain.

STATEMENT

רבי עקיבא אומר: בששי בָּחַג הוא מזכיר, שנאמר בששי: "ונסכיה", בשני ניסוכין הכתוב מדבר — אחד ניסוך המים, ואחד ניסוך היין.

Rabbi Akiva says: On the sixth day of the festival he mentions rain, as it is said on the sixth day: "And its drink-offerings [ונסכיה]" in the plural. The verse speaks of two libations: one the water libation, and one the wine libation.

QUESTION

אימא תרנייהו דחמרא!

The Gemara asks: Say that both of them are of wine!

ANSWER

סבר לה פרבי יהודה בן בתירה, דאמר: רמיזי מים.

The Gemara answers: Rabbi Akiva holds like Rabbi Yehuda ben Beseira, who said: Water is alluded to in the Torah, so one of them must be water.

SUMMARY

In the Gemara, the chachamim delve into the source of this obligation, explaining that our mishna builds upon the judgment of water that takes place on Sukkos, as taught in Rosh Hashanah. The Gemara beautifully explains that rain is called the "might of the rains" because it falls with the awesome power of Hashem, comparing the greatness of rainfall to the very creation of the world itself. Finally, the Gemara brings a baraita to show that mentioning rain belongs in the Shemoneh Esrei,

deriving from the pasuk of "serving Him with all your heart" that we must connect our tefillah—the service of the heart—directly to the blessing of rain that Hashem sends us.

למעשה WHAT TO TAKE HOME

The Gemara teaches us a profound truth about how Hashem runs His world. Rabbi Yoḥanan reveals that there are three keys held directly in the hands of the Holy One, Blessed be He, which are never handed over to any messenger: the key of rain, the key of childbirth, and the key of the resurrection of the dead. In the West, they added that the key of parnassah, a person's livelihood, is also held directly by Him.

Think about what this means for your daily avodah. When it comes to the most fundamental, life-giving areas of our existence—our sustenance, our children, and our very breath—there is no middleman. There is no natural system or human effort that can guarantee these things on its own. When you daven for your parnassah or your family, you are standing directly before the King, pleading for Him to turn the key that only He holds.

This realization should completely transform our shemoneh esrei. When we say "Mashiv haruach umorid hagashem" in the blessing of Techiyas HaMeisim, we aren't just reciting a seasonal formula. We are testifying to the Gevuros—the awesome, direct power of Hashem who personally opens the heavens to sustain us. It demands that we cast away our worries and strengthen our bitachon, knowing that our sustenance is managed directly by our loving Father.

Today, when you daven the Amida, pause for just three seconds before the blessing of Techiyas HaMeisim or the blessing for parnassah, and remind yourself: "I am asking directly from the One who holds the key."