

JUDAISM

The Talmud

Taanit

A massive, multi-volume compendium of rabbinic debates and commentary on the Torah that forms the basis of Jewish religious law, ethics, and practice. Presents all 37 tractates with Gemara, via Sefaria's William Davidson Talmud (the Koren Talmud Bavli translation, CC BY-NC), plus Avot and Eduyot (which have no Gemara) via Michael L. Rodkinson's 1896-1918 translation.

Presented by Earth's Sacred Texts — blackbetty.space

Contents

Taanit

Taanit

Chapter 1

¹ MISHNA: From when, i.e., from which date, does one begin to mention the might of the rains by inserting the phrase: He makes the wind blow and rain fall, in the second blessing of the Amida prayer? Rabbi Eliezer says: The phrase is inserted from the first Festival day of the festival of Sukkot. Rabbi Yehoshua says: From the last Festival day of the festival of Sukkot.

² Rabbi Yehoshua said to Rabbi Eliezer: Since rain is nothing other than a sign of a curse during the festival of Sukkot, as rainfall forces Jews to leave their sukkot, why should one mention the might of rain during this period? Rabbi Eliezer said to him: I too did not say that it is proper to request rain at this time, but it is proper only to mention the phrase: He makes the wind blow and rain fall, in its due time. Rabbi Yehoshua said to him: If so, i.e., if reciting the phrase does not constitute a request for rain, one should always mention rain, even in the summer.

³ The mishna states a general principle: One requests rain only immediately preceding the rainy season. Rabbi Yehuda says: With regard to the one who passes before the ark as prayer leader on the concluding Festival day of the festival of Sukkot, the Eighth Day of Assembly: The last prayer leader, who leads the additional prayer, mentions rain, whereas the first prayer leader, for the morning prayer, does not mention rain. The opposite is the case at the conclusion of the period for mentioning rain on the first Festival day of Passover: Here, the first prayer leader, who leads the morning prayer, mentions rain, while the last prayer leader, who leads the additional prayer, does not mention rain.

⁴ GEMARA: The Gemara asks: Where does the tanna of the mishna stand, that he teaches: From when? The mishna's opening question indicates that it has already been established that there is an obligation to mention rain at this time of the year. Where is this obligation stated? The Gemara answers: The tanna is standing there, i.e., he bases himself on a mishna in Berakhot.

⁵ As it teaches (Berakhot 33a): One mentions the might of the rains and recites: He makes the wind blow and the rain fall in the second blessing of the Amida prayer, the blessing of the resurrection of the dead. And the request for rain: And grant dew and rain as a blessing, is recited in the ninth blessing of the Amida prayer, the blessing of the years. And the prayer of distinction [havdala] between the sacred and the profane, recited in the evening prayer following Shabbat and Festivals, is recited in the fourth blessing of the Amida prayer: Who graciously grants knowledge. And it is based on that mishna, which establishes the obligation to request for rain, that this mishna teaches: From when does one begin to mention the might of the rains.

⁶ The Gemara asks: But if so, let the tanna teach this halakha there, in tractate Berakhot, at the beginning of the order of Zera'im. What is different about this case that he left it until here, toward the end of the order of Moed? In other words, if this issue is indeed a continuation of the mishna in Berakhot, why did the tanna neglect it until tractate Ta'anit?

⁷ The Gemara answers: Rather, the tanna interrupted a discussion from tractate Rosh HaShana. As we learned in a mishna there: And on the festival of Sukkot all creatures are judged for water. Since the tanna taught: And on the festival of Sukkot all creatures are judged for water, from which it can be inferred that one should request rain near the time of this judgment, he taught here: From when does one mention the might of the rains.

⁸ § The Gemara asks a question with regard to the language of the mishna: And let the tanna simply teach: From when does one mention the rains. What is the meaning of the phrase: The might of the rains? Rabbi Yoḥanan said: Because the rains fall with might. The might of the rain displays God's power in the world, as it is stated: "Who does great things beyond comprehension, marvels without number" (Job 5:9). And it is also written: "Who gives rain upon the earth, and sends water upon the fields" (Job 5:10).

⁹ The Gemara asks: From where may it be inferred that these verses indicate that rainfall is considered a mighty act of God? Rabba bar Sheila said: This is derived by means of a verbal analogy between the term "comprehension" here and the term "comprehension" from a passage that deals with the creation of the world.

¹⁰ Rabba bar Sheila elaborates on this verbal analogy. It is written here: "Who does great things that are beyond comprehension," and it is written there, with regard to the creation of the world: "Have you not known? Have you not heard that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, does not grow faint or weary? His discernment is beyond comprehension" (Isaiah 40:28). This shows that both creation and rainfall are beyond comprehension. And concerning the creation of the world, it is written elsewhere: "Who sets firm the mountains with Your strength; Who is girded with might" (Psalms 65:7). From this verse it can be inferred that rainfall, like the creation of the world, reflects God's might.

¹¹ The Gemara asks: And from where do we derive that rain must be mentioned specifically in the Amida prayer? The Gemara answers: As it was taught in a baraita with regard to the verse: "To love the Lord your God and to serve Him with all your heart" (Deuteronomy 11:13). Which is the service of God that is performed in the heart? You must say that this is referring to prayer. And, afterward, it is written: "And I shall give the rain of your land in its due time, the first rain and the last rain" (Deuteronomy 11:14). This juxtaposition teaches that it is appropriate to request rain while engaged in the service of the heart, i.e., prayer.

¹² § The Gemara cites related statements concerning the idea that rainfall provides evidence of God's might. Rabbi Yoḥanan said: There are three keys maintained in the hand of the Holy One, Blessed be He, which were not transmitted to an intermediary, i.e., God tends to these matters Himself. And they are: The key of rain, the key of birthing, and the key of the resurrection of the dead.

¹³ Rabbi Yoḥanan cites verses in support of his claim. The key of rain, as it is stated: "The Lord will open for you His good treasure, the heavens, to give the rain of your land in its due time" (Deuteronomy 28:12), indicates that rainfall is controlled by God Himself. From where is it derived that the key of birthing is maintained by God? As it is written: "And God remembered Rachel and listened

¹⁴ to her, and He opened her womb" (Genesis 30:22). From where is it derived that the key of the resurrection of the dead is maintained by God Himself? As it is written: "And you shall know that I am the Lord when I have opened your graves" (Ezekiel 37:13).

¹⁵ In the West, Eretz Yisrael, they say: The key of livelihood is also in God's hand, as it is written: "You open Your hand and satisfy every living thing with favor" (Psalms 145:16). The Gemara asks: And what is the reason that Rabbi Yoḥanan did not consider this key of livelihood in his list? The Gemara answers that Rabbi Yoḥanan could have said to you: Rain is the same as livelihood in this regard, as rain is indispensable to all livelihoods.

¹⁶ § The mishna taught that Rabbi Eliezer says: One mentions rain from the first Festival day of the festival of Sukkot etc. A dilemma was raised before the Sages: From where did Rabbi Eliezer derive this halakha? He must have learned it from one of the two mitzvot of Sukkot that are linked to rain. Did he derive it from the mitzva to wave the lulav, or did he derive it from the obligation of the water libation?

¹⁷ The Gemara clarifies the significance of this dilemma: Did he derive this halakha from the lulav, in which case one would say: Just as the mitzva to take the lulav applies during the day and not at night, so too, the mention of rain begins during the day of the first Festival day of Sukkot. Or perhaps he derives this halakha from the water libation, in which case one would say: Just as the water libation can be prepared from the first night of Sukkot, as the Master said, with regard to the verse: "And their meal-offerings and their libations" (Numbers 29:18), and certain meal-offerings and libations may be brought even at night, so too, the mention of rain begins from the evening.

¹⁸ The Gemara seeks to resolve this dilemma: Come and hear a resolution, as Rabbi Abbahu said that Rabbi Eliezer derived this halakha from nothing other than the case of lulav. Some say that Rabbi Abbahu learned this claim by way of a tradition, which was the source of Rabbi Eliezer's opinion; and some say that he learned it from a baraita.

¹⁹ The Gemara asks: What is the baraita from which Rabbi Abbahu may have derived his statement? The Gemara answers: As it is taught in a baraita: From when does one begin to mention the rains in his prayers? Rabbi Eliezer says: From the time that one takes the lulav, i.e., the first day of Sukkot. Rabbi Yehoshua says: From the time that one puts the lulav down, i.e., at the conclusion of Sukkot.

²⁰ § The baraita cites a discussion of these opinions. Rabbi Eliezer said: It is since these four species, the lulav and the other species taken with it, come only to offer appeasement for water, as they symbolize the rainfall of the coming year. And this symbolism is as follows: Just as these four species cannot exist without water, as they need water to grow, so too, the world cannot exist without water. Therefore, it is proper to mention rain in one's prayers when taking the four species.

²¹ Rabbi Yehoshua said to him in response: But rain during the festival of Sukkot is nothing other than a sign of a curse. Rabbi Eliezer said to Rabbi Yehoshua: I too did not say that it is proper to ask for rain at this time, but only to mention it. And just as with regard to the resurrection of the dead, one mentions it the entire year and yet it will come only at its proper time, when God wills the resurrection, so too, one mentions the might of the rains all the year, and they fall only in their season. Therefore, if one seeks to mention rain throughout the year, he may mention it. Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi says: I say that when one ceases to request rain, one also ceases to mention it.

²² Rabbi Yehuda ben Beteira says: On the second day of the festival of Sukkot one mentions rain, rather than on the first day. Rabbi Akiva says: On the sixth day one mentions rain. Rabbi Yehuda says in the name of Rabbi Yehoshua: With regard to the one who passes before the ark as prayer leader on the concluding Festival day of the festival of Sukkot, the Eighth Day of Assembly, the last prayer leader of the additional prayer mentions rain, whereas the first prayer leader for the morning prayer

does not mention rain. Conversely, on the first Festival day of Passover, the first prayer leader mentions rain, while the last prayer leader does not mention rain.

²³ The Gemara asks: Rabbi Eliezer is speaking well to Rabbi Yehoshua. How does Rabbi Yehoshua respond to Rabbi Eliezer's powerful argument that one can mention God's praises at any time of the year? The Gemara answers: Rabbi Yehoshua could have said to you: Granted, with regard to the resurrection of the dead, one mentions this daily, as although it is not fulfilled every day, any day is fit to be its proper time.

²⁴ However, in the case of rain, are all times when it falls its proper time? But didn't we learn in a mishna (12b): If the month of Nisan has ended and rains subsequently fall, they are a sign of a curse, as it is stated: "Is not the wheat harvest today? I will call to the Lord that He may send thunder and rain, and you will know and see that your wickedness is great, which you have done in the sight of the Lord, in asking you a king" (I Samuel 12:17).

²⁵ § The baraita states that Rabbi Yehuda ben Beteira says: On the second day of the festival of Sukkot, one begins to mention rain. The Gemara asks: What is the reason for this ruling of Rabbi Yehuda ben Beteira? The Gemara answers: As it is taught, in a baraita that deals with the source for the water libation on Sukkot, that Rabbi Yehuda ben Beteira says: The Torah alludes to the water libation in its description of the libations of the additional offerings of Sukkot. The Torah uses a slightly different term for the libations of certain days. On most days, it states that the sin-offering must be brought with "its libation [veniskah]" (e.g., Numbers 29:16), in the singular form.

²⁶ By contrast, it is stated on the second day that one must offer "their libations [veniskeihem]" (Numbers 29:19). The plural form indicates the presence of multiple offerings. And furthermore, it is stated concerning the sin-offering libations on the sixth day: "And its libations [unsakheha]" (Numbers 29:31), which is again a plural form that is referring to many libations. And finally, it is stated, with regard to the libations of the additional offering on the seventh day, that they must apportion the respective animals, i.e., oxen, rams, and sheep: "According to their laws [kemishpatam]" (Numbers 29:33), using another plural form which differs from the phrase used on the other Festival days: "According to the law [kamishpat]" (e.g., Numbers 29:19), in the singular.

²⁷ These variations yield the three superfluous letters mem, yod, and mem, from veniskeiheM, unsakhEha, and kemishpataM, which together spell the Hebrew word for water [MaYiM]. The letter yod is represented in unsakhEha with the letter E and in MaYiM with the letter Y. From here one learns an allusion to the mitzva of the water libation in the Torah.

²⁸ The Gemara asks: And what is different about the second day that Rabbi Yehuda ben Beteira took it as the day on which one begins to mention rain? The Gemara answers: The reason is that when the verse first alludes to the water libation, it is on the second day of Sukkot that it alludes to it (Numbers 29:19). Therefore, on the second day one begins to mention rain.

²⁹ The baraita stated that Rabbi Akiva says: On the sixth day one begins to mention rain. The Gemara explains that this ruling is based on the allusion to the water libation in the offering of this day. As it is stated on the sixth day: "And its libations [unsakheha]" (Numbers 29:31). The allusion is written in the plural, which indicates that the verse is speaking of two libations: One is the water libation and the other one is the standard wine libation.

³⁰ The Gemara raises an objection: Even if it is accepted that the verse is referring to two libations, one can say that both libations are of wine. The Gemara answers: Rabbi Akiva holds in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda ben Beteira, who said that the superfluous letters of these verses allude to water [mayim]. This proves that the additional libation of the sixth day must be a water libation.

³¹ The Gemara objects: If Rabbi Akiva holds in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda ben Beteira with regard to this derivation, let him say that it is in accordance with his ruling that one begins mentioning rain from the second day of Sukkot, not the sixth day. The Gemara answers: Rabbi Akiva holds that when that extra reference to libation is written in the verse, it is with regard to the sixth day that it is written. In other words, it is the plural phrase: “Its libations [unsakheha]” (Numbers 29:31), which appears on the sixth day, that directly indicates that one must perform more than one libation, while the other two superfluous letters merely serve to teach that this second libation must be of water, not wine. Therefore, the additional libation is performed on the sixth day.

³² § It is taught in a baraita that Rabbi Natan says: “In the Sanctuary you shall pour out a libation [hassekh nesekh] of strong drink to the Lord” (Numbers 28:7). The Torah states the term for libation twice, which indicates that the verse is speaking of two libations: One is the water libation and the other one is the wine libation. The Gemara asks: Why not say that both libations are of wine? The Gemara answers: If so, let the verse write either hassekh hessekh or nassekh nesekh, with the same prefix each time. What is the meaning of the varied formulation: “Hassekh nesekh”? Learn from this that one libation is of water and the other one is of wine.

³³ The Gemara asks: However, what about that which we learned in a mishna (Sukka 42b): The water libation is performed all seven days of Sukkot. Who is the author of this mishna? If you say it is Rabbi Yehoshua, let us say that this ritual is performed only one day, the Eighth Day of Assembly. If it is Rabbi Akiva, the mishna should state two days, the sixth and the seventh Festival days. If it is Rabbi Yehuda ben Beteira, the mishna should say that the water libation is performed on six days, from the second day of Sukkot onward.

³⁴ The Gemara answers: Actually, the ruling of the mishna is that of Rabbi Yehuda ben Beteira, and he holds in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda, as stated in a mishna. As we learned in a mishna (Sukka 48b) that Rabbi Yehuda says: He would pour with a utensil that held a log of water all eight days of Sukkot, which includes the Eighth Day of Assembly. And Rabbi Yehuda ben Beteira removes the first day from this obligation and includes the eighth, which results in seven days of water libations.

³⁵ The Gemara asks: And what is different about the first day, that the water libation is not performed on that day, according to the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda ben Beteira? Is the reason that when the Torah alludes to water, it is on the second day that it alludes to this libation? If so, one should not bring the libation on the eighth day either, because when the Torah alludes to water for the last time, it is on the seventh day that it alludes to it.

³⁶ Rather, the Gemara retracts from the previous explanation in favor of the claim that this mishna is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehoshua. And Rabbi Yehoshua maintains that this ruling that the water libation is performed all seven days of Sukkot is a halakha transmitted to Moses from Sinai, learned through tradition. In other words, this obligation is not based upon a textual source.

³⁷ As Rabbi Ami said that Rabbi Yoḥanan said in the name of Rabbi Neḥunya of the valley of Beit Ḥortan: The halakha of ten saplings, that if there are ten saplings that require water planted in an area of a beit se'a, 2,500 square cubits, it is permitted to plow the entire field in the summer preceding the Sabbatical Year despite the fact that it is prohibited to plow other fields starting from the preceding Shavuot; the practice of walking around the altar with a willow and adorning the altar with it on Sukkot and taking it on the last day of Sukkot; and the obligation of the water libation; each of these three is a halakha transmitted to Moses from Sinai.

³⁸ It is stated in the same baraita cited previously that Rabbi Yehuda says in the name of Rabbi Yehoshua: With regard to the one who passes before the ark as prayer leader on the concluding Festival day of the festival of Sukkot, the Eighth Day of Assembly, the last prayer leader of the additional prayer mentions rain, whereas the first prayer leader for the morning prayer does not mention rain. Conversely, on the first Festival day of Passover, the first prayer leader mentions rain, while the last prayer leader does not mention rain.

³⁹ The Gemara asks: To which statement of Rabbi Yehoshua is Rabbi Yehuda referring? If we say that he is referring to the statement of Rabbi Yehoshua cited in the mishna, this cannot be the case, as Rabbi Yehoshua in our mishna said that one begins to mention rain on the last Festival day of the festival of Sukkot, the Eighth Day of Assembly. This indicates that one starts to mention rain from the beginning of the day, i.e., the evening prayer service.

⁴⁰ Rather, you will say that Rabbi Yehuda is referring to the opinion of Rabbi Yehoshua, cited in the baraita. However, this too is untenable, as didn't Rabbi Yehoshua say there that one begins to mention rain from the time one puts down the lulav, i.e., from the end of the seventh day of Sukkot? This statement also indicates that one begins to mention rain from the evening service of the Eighth Day of Assembly.

⁴¹ The Gemara asks another question: And, furthermore, that which is taught in a baraita that Rabbi Yehuda says in the name of ben Beteira: With regard to the one who passes before the ark on the concluding Festival day of the festival of Sukkot, the Eighth Day of Assembly, the last prayer leader mentions rain. To which of the halakhot of ben Beteira is Rabbi Yehuda referring here? If we say he is referring to the ruling of Rabbi Yehuda ben Beteira, this cannot be the case, as he said that one begins to mention rain on the second day of Sukkot.

⁴² Rav Naḥman Bar Yitzḥak said: Let the ben Beteira mentioned by Rabbi Yehuda in the baraita be understood as a reference to Rabbi Yehoshua ben Beteira, and this will resolve all the above difficulties. At times, Rabbi Yehuda calls him by his name, Rabbi Yehoshua, despite the fact that the name Rabbi Yehoshua generally refers to Rabbi Yehoshua ben Ḥananya. At other times, Rabbi Yehuda calls him by his father's name, e.g., in the second baraita, when the ruling is attributed to ben Beteira. And the Gemara explains the reason for the different names: This baraita, where he is called by his father's name, was written before he was ordained, and this baraita, where he is called simply Rabbi Yehoshua, was from after he was ordained.

⁴³ § It is taught in another baraita: With regard to dew and with regard to wind, the Sages did not obligate one to mention them by reciting: He makes the wind blow and the dew fall, in the second blessing of the Amida, but if one seeks to mention them, he may mention them. The Gemara asks: What is the reason that this recitation is optional? Rabbi Ḥanina said: Because winds and dew are consistent and not withheld, since the world could not exist without them, their mention is optional.

⁴⁴ The Gemara explains: And dew, from where do we derive that it is not withheld? As it is written: “And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the settlers of Gilead, said to Ahab: As the Lord, the God of Israel, lives, before whom I stand, there shall be no dew or rain in these years but according to my word” (I Kings 17:1), and it is written: “Go, show yourself before Ahab, and I will send rain upon the land” (I Kings 18:1). God stated that He will resume rainfall, whereas He did not say to Elijah that He will restore dew. What is the reason? Because dew

⁴⁵ is not withheld, and therefore it continued even during this time of drought. The Gemara asks: And since dew is not withheld, why did Elijah swear that there would be no dew as well as no rain? The Gemara explains that this is what Elijah said to Ahab: Not only will there be no rainfall, but even the dew of blessing, which helps crops grow, will not come. This prediction was indeed fulfilled. The Gemara asks: But if so, let God restore the dew of blessing when He ended the drought of rain, in the aforementioned verse. The Gemara answers: This was not necessary, because the matter is not recognizable, i.e., people cannot distinguish between dew of blessing and the regular dew which is always present.

⁴⁶ The Gemara asks: However, with regard to winds, from where do we derive that it is not withheld but perpetually blows? Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said that the verse states: “For I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heaven, says the Lord” (Zechariah 2:10). He clarifies: What is God saying to them? If we say that this is what the Holy One, Blessed be He, is saying to the Jewish people: I have scattered you to the four winds of the world; if so, why did He say “as the four winds”? He should have said: To the four winds. Rather, this is what God is saying: Just as the world cannot exist without winds, so too, the world cannot exist without the Jewish people. This interpretation of the verse is based on the claim that the winds never cease.

⁴⁷ Rabbi Ḥanina said: Therefore, since wind and dew are always present, if during the summer one recited: He makes the wind blow, we do not require him to return and repeat the blessing since the wind blows during the summer as well. However, if one recited during the summer: He makes the rain fall, we require him to return and repeat the blessing, because rain in the summer is a curse.

⁴⁸ Conversely, in the rainy season, if one did not recite: He makes the wind blow, we do not require him to return to the beginning, because the wind blows regardless. If one did not recite: He makes the rain fall, we require him to return and repeat the blessing. And not only that, but even if one mistakenly recited: He removes the wind and lifts the dew, i.e., that there should be no wind or dew, we do not require him to return and repeat the blessing, because wind and dew are always present.

⁴⁹ It was taught in a similar baraita: With regard to clouds and with regard to wind, the Sages did not obligate one to mention them, but if one wishes to mention them, he may mention them. The Gemara asks: What is the reason? The Gemara answers, as above: Because clouds and winds are constant and are not withheld.

⁵⁰ The Gemara asks: And are they not withheld? But didn’t Rav Yosef teach in a baraita that the verse: “And He will close up the heavens” (Deuteronomy 11:17), means that God will stop up the heavens from the clouds and from the winds? Do you say that “close up the heavens” means from the clouds and from the winds, or perhaps it is only referring to the absence of rainfall? When the same verse says: “So that there will be no rain,” rain is already mentioned explicitly. How then do I uphold the meaning of the verse: “And He will close up the heavens”? This must mean from the clouds and from the winds.

⁵¹ The Gemara summarizes its question: This is difficult due to the contradiction between the statement about wind in the first baraita and the statement about wind in the second baraita, and is similarly difficult due to the contradiction between the statement about clouds in the first baraita and the statement about clouds in the second baraita. The Gemara answers: The contradiction between one statement about clouds and the other statement about clouds is not difficult, as this first baraita is referring to early clouds that precede the rain, which come whether or not rain actually falls, whereas this second baraita is referring to late clouds, which materialize after rainfall. These late clouds are sometimes withheld by God as a punishment.

⁵² Likewise, the contradiction between the first statement about wind and the second statement about wind is not difficult, as this first baraita is referring to a typical wind, which is never withheld, while this second baraita is referring to an atypical wind, which may be withheld. The Gemara asks: An atypical wind is fit for winnowing grain on the threshing floor. Since this wind is also a necessity, one should pray for it as well. The Gemara answers: Since it is possible to winnow grain with sieves when there is no wind, there is no great need for these winds.

⁵³ § It was taught in a baraita: Clouds and winds are so significant that, in terms of their benefit, they are secondary only to rain. The Gemara asks: What are the circumstances in which this claim is correct? Ulla, and some say Rav Yehuda, said: The baraita is referring to the clouds and winds that come after rainfall. The Gemara asks: Is this to say that clouds and winds that come after rain are beneficial? But isn't it written in the chapter of the curses: "The Lord will make the rain of your land powder and dust" (Deuteronomy 28:24), and Ulla, and some say Rav Yehuda, said: This curse is referring to winds that come after rain, as they raise up powder and dust?

⁵⁴ The Gemara answers: This is not difficult, since this first statement of Ulla is referring to beneficial wind that comes gently, whereas this second statement of Ulla is referring to harmful wind that comes forcefully [razya], raises up powder and dust, and reduces the effectiveness of the rain. And if you wish, say instead: This, Ulla's second statement, is referring to wind that raises dust; whereas this, Ulla's first statement, is referring to wind that does not raise dust.

⁵⁵ And on a related topic, Rav Yehuda said: Wind that blows after rain is as beneficial to the earth as rain itself. Clouds that appear after rain are as beneficial as rain, while sunlight that follows after rain is as beneficial as two rainfalls. The Gemara asks: If wind, clouds, and sun are all beneficial after rainfall, what does Rav Yehuda's statement serve to exclude? The Gemara answers: He comes to exclude the glow of the evening and the sun that shines between the clouds, appearing only in patches. These phenomena are harmful after rain.

⁵⁶ On a related note, Rava said: Snow is as beneficial to the mountains as five rainfalls to the earth of the plains, as it is stated: "For He says to the snow: Fall on the earth, likewise to the shower of rain, and to the showers of His mighty rain" (Job 37:6). This verse compares snow to rain by means of five allusions to types of rainfall: The word "rain," which appears twice; the word "shower"; and the plural "showers," which indicates two rainfalls. This teaches that snow is as beneficial as five rainfalls.

⁵⁷ And on the same topic, Rava said: Snow brings benefits to the mountains; strong rain provides benefits to trees; light rain brings benefit to fruit;

⁵⁸ and drizzle [urpila] is even beneficial to a seed [partzida] under a clod of earth, as it can reach anywhere without causing any harm. The Gemara asks: What is the meaning of the word drizzle?

The Gemara explains: It is a contraction of the phrase: Arise, furrows [uru pilei]. And the Gemara cites another saying in which Rava uses the same imagery. Rava said: This Torah scholar [tzurva] is like a seed under a clod of earth, as once he sprouts and begins to develop, he continues to sprout and his greatness increases.

⁵⁹ § And, incidentally, the Gemara relates that which Rava said: This Torah scholar who grows angry, it can be presumed that it is his Torah study that angers him. Therefore, he must be given the benefit of the doubt, as it is stated: “Is not my word like fire, says the Lord” (Jeremiah 23:29). And similarly, Rav Ashi said: Any Torah scholar who is not as hard as iron, but is indecisive and wavers, he is not a Torah scholar, as it is stated in the same verse: “And as a hammer that breaks rock in pieces” (Jeremiah 23:29).

⁶⁰ Rabbi Abba said to Rav Ashi: You learned the proof for this idea from that verse there; we learned it from here, as it is written: “A land whose stones [avaneha] are iron” (Deuteronomy 8:9). Do not read this phrase as “whose stones [avaneha],” rather, read it as whose builders [boneha], since Torah scholars build the land spiritually and are as tough as iron. With regard to these statements praising the toughness of a Torah scholar, Ravina said: And even so, one is required to teach himself to act gently, as it is stated: “And remove anger from your heart, and put away evil from your flesh” (Ecclesiastes 11:10).

⁶¹ As a preamble to the statement of Rabbi Berekhya, below, the Gemara cites that which Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani said that Rabbi Yonatan said: Three people entreated God in an unreasonable manner, i.e., in situations where their requests might have received an unfavorable answer. To two of them God responded reasonably, with a favorable response to their requests, and to one God responded unreasonably, i.e., unfavorably, in a manner befitting the unreasonable request. And they are: Eliezer, servant of Abraham; Saul, son of Kish; and Jephthah the Gileadite.

⁶² The Gemara clarifies each of these cases in turn: With regard to Eliezer, servant of Abraham, he made a request when he prayed beside the well, as it is written: “That the maiden to whom I shall say: Please let down your pitcher that I may drink; and she shall say: Drink, and I will also give your camels to drink; that she be the one whom you have appointed for your servant Isaac” (Genesis 24:14). Eliezer entreated God unreasonably, as his request allowed for the possibility that she might even be lame or even blind, and yet he had promised to take her to Isaac. Nevertheless, God responded to him reasonably and the eminently suitable Rebecca happened to come to him.

⁶³ With regard to Saul, son of Kish, he made an offer when Goliath the Philistine challenged the Jews, as it is written: “And it shall be that the man who kills him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter” (I Samuel 17:25). The man who killed Goliath might even have been a slave or a mamzer, one born from an incestuous or adulterous union, who would be unfit to marry his daughter. Nevertheless, God responded to him reasonably and David happened to come to him.

⁶⁴ By contrast, there is the case of Jephthah the Gileadite. Upon leaving for battle he issued a statement, as it is written: “Then it shall be that whatever comes forth from the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace...it shall be to the Lord and I will bring it up for a burnt-offering” (Judges 11:31). This might even have been an impure, non-kosher animal, which he had committed himself to sacrifice. In this instance, God responded to him unreasonably, and his daughter happened to come to him.

⁶⁵ Regarding the incident of Jephthah, the Gemara remarks: And this is what the prophet said to the Jewish people: “Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then has the health of the daughter of my people not recovered?” (Jeremiah 8:22). This verse alludes to the fact that had he sought a means to do so, Jephthah could have had his vow annulled.

⁶⁶ And it is written, with regard to human sacrifice: “And they have also built the high places of the Ba’al, to burn their sons in the fire for burnt offerings to Ba’al, which I did not command, and I did not speak, nor did it come into My heart” (Jeremiah 19:5).

⁶⁷ The Gemara interprets each phrase of this verse: “Which I did not command,” this is referring to the son of Mesha, king of Moab. King Mesha sacrificed his son, as it is stated: “Then he took his firstborn son, who would reign after him, and he offered him as a burnt-offering” (II Kings 3:27). “And I did not speak,” this is referring to Jephthah, who sacrificed his daughter as an offering. “Nor did it come into my heart,” this is referring to Isaac, son of Abraham. Although God commanded Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, there was no intent in God’s heart that he should actually do so; it was merely a test.

⁶⁸ § In light of the above statement, the Gemara returns to the issue of rain. Rabbi Berekhya said: The Congregation of Israel also entreated God unreasonably, and yet the Holy One, Blessed be He, responded reasonably, as it is stated: “And let us know, eagerly strive to know the Lord. His going forth is sure as the morning, and He will come to us as the rain” (Hosea 6:3). They compared the revelation of God to the rain.

⁶⁹ In response, the Holy One, Blessed be He, said to the Jewish people: My daughter, you request the manifestation of My Presence by comparing Me to a matter, rain, that is sometimes desired, but is sometimes undesired, e.g., during the summer. However, I will be to you like a matter that is always desired, dew, as it is stated: “I will be as the dew to Israel” (Hosea 14:6), since dew appears in all seasons and is invariably a blessing.

⁷⁰ And the Congregation of Israel further entreated God unreasonably in another context, saying before Him: Master of the Universe: “Set me as a seal upon Your heart, as a seal upon Your arm” (Song of Songs 8:6). The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to her: My daughter, you ask that I be manifest to you in a matter that is sometimes visible and sometimes not visible, as the heart and arm are not covered. However, I will act so that I manifest Myself for you like a matter that is always visible, as it is stated: “Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of My hands, your walls are continually before me” (Isaiah 49:16).

⁷¹ § The Gemara returns to the halakhot of the mishna: One requests rain only immediately preceding the rainy season. The Sages assumed that requesting and mentioning are one and the same thing, and consequently they asked: Who is the tanna who taught this halakha? The Gemara answers that Rava said: It is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehoshua, who said that one mentions rain from the time of putting down the lulav, i.e., the Eighth Day of Assembly, which is indeed near the rainy season.

⁷² Abaye said to him: Even if you say that it is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Eliezer, who holds that one mentions rain from the first day of the festival of Sukkot, this ruling of the mishna can be explained by distinguishing between the two terms: Requesting is a discrete concept and mentioning is another discrete concept. In other words, even according to the opinion of Rabbi

Eliezer, one begins to request rain just before the rainy season, on the Eighth Day of Assembly, whereas one starts to mention rain already on the first day of Sukkot.

⁷³ And some say a different version of this discussion: Let us say

⁷⁴ that our mishna is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehoshua, who said that one mentions rain from the time of putting the lulav down, from the Eighth Day of Assembly, and it is not in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Eliezer. Rava said: Even if you say that the ruling of the mishna is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Eliezer, one can explain this by distinguishing between the terms: Requesting is a distinct notion and mentioning is another distinct notion, even according to the opinion of Rabbi Eliezer.

⁷⁵ § The mishna stated that Rabbi Yehuda says: With regard to the one who passes before the ark as prayer leader on the concluding Festival day of Sukkot, the Eighth Day of Assembly, the prayer leader of the additional prayer mentions rain, while the leader of the morning prayer does not. The reverse is the case at the conclusion of the period of mentioning rain, as the leader of the morning prayer mentions rain, while the one who leads the additional prayer does not.

⁷⁶ And the Gemara raises a contradiction from a baraita (5a): Until when does one request rain? Rabbi Yehuda says: Until Passover has passed. Rabbi Meir says: Until the month of Nisan has passed. According to the baraita, Rabbi Yehuda holds that one prays for rain until the end of Passover, whereas the mishna states that Rabbi Yehuda's opinion is that one prays for rain only until the beginning of the Festival.

⁷⁷ Rav Ḥisda said: This is not difficult. The baraita here is referring to the request for rain, which continues until the end of Passover, whereas the mishna there rules that one is to mention rain only until the first Festival day. In other words, Rabbi Yehuda holds that one continues requesting rain until the end of Passover, but with regard to the mention of rain, already on the first day of the Festival one ceases to do so.

⁷⁸ The Gemara raises a difficulty against this answer. Ulla said: That which Rav Ḥisda said is as difficult to accept "as vinegar to the teeth, and as smoke to the eyes" (Proverbs 10:26). He elaborates: If when one does not yet request rain, at the beginning of the rainy season, one nevertheless mentions rain; in a case when one requests rain, i.e., during Passover, according to this explanation, is it not right that one should also mention rain?

⁷⁹ Rather, Ulla said an alternative resolution: In fact, two tanna'im expressed different rulings in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda. According to one tanna, Rabbi Yehuda holds that one both mentions and requests rain during Passover, whereas according to the other tanna, Rabbi Yehuda holds that one neither mentions nor requests rain after the morning prayer of the first day of Passover.

⁸⁰ The Gemara cites an additional resolution of the apparent contradiction. Rav Yosef said: What is the meaning of the phrase: Until Passover has passed [ya'avor]? It means: Until the first prayer leader who descends to pray has passed before the ark for the morning prayers on the first Festival day of Passover. According to this explanation, the mishna and baraita specify the same time period for the end of the mention and request for rain.

⁸¹ Abaye said to Rav Yosef: Is there a request for rain on a Festival? The request for rain is included in the ninth blessing of the Amida, the blessing of the years, which is not recited on Shabbat and Festivals. If the term Passover in the baraita is referring to the entire Festival, this includes the

intermediate Festival days, during which the ninth blessing of the Amida is recited. However, according to your interpretation, the baraita refers only to the first day of the Festival, and yet the request for rain is not recited on this date.

⁸² The Gemara cites the response: Rav Yosef said to Abaye: Yes, the baraita is speaking of the first day of Passover. However, it does not refer to the request for rain recited in the Amida. Rather, the disseminator and translator of the Torah portion would recite a request for rain after the Festival prayers. The Gemara asks: But would a disseminator request a matter that the community does not need? As there is no need for rain on Passover, why would the disseminator recite a request for it? Rather, it is clear, as Ulla explained, there are two tannaitic versions of Rabbi Yehuda's opinion.

⁸³ Rabba said another explanation: What is the meaning of the phrase: Until Passover has passed? It means until after the time for the slaughter of the Paschal lamb has passed, the afternoon of the fourteenth of Nisan, i.e., until the beginning of Passover. And according to this opinion, the practice at the beginning of the time for praying for rain is like that of the end: Just as at the beginning of the rainy season one mentions rain although one does not request it, so too, at the end, on the first day of Passover, one mentions rain although one does not request it. The request for rain ends on the eve of Passover, while the mention of rain continues until the morning service the following day.

⁸⁴ Abaye said to Rabba: Granted, at the beginning of the rainy season one mentions rain before requesting it, as mentioning rain is also an appeasement to God in advance of the forthcoming request. However, at the end of the season, what appeasement toward a request is there that would necessitate the mention of rain after one has ceased requesting it? The Gemara again concludes: Rather, it is clear as Ulla explained.

⁸⁵ Rabbi Asi said that Rabbi Yoḥanan said: The halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda. Rabbi Zeira said to Rabbi Asi: And did Rabbi Yoḥanan actually say that? But didn't we learn in a mishna (6a): On the third of Marḥeshvan one starts to request rain. Rabban Gamliel says: One starts on the seventh of Marḥeshvan. And with regard to this mishna, Rabbi Elazar, Rabbi Yoḥanan's preeminent student, said: The halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Rabban Gamliel.

⁸⁶ Rabbi Asi said to Rabbi Zeira: Are you raising a contradiction from the statement of one man against the statement of another man? Although Rabbi Elazar was Rabbi Yoḥanan's student, their opinions need not be consistent with one another. If you wish, say instead that this is not difficult, as Rabbi Elazar's ruling here is referring to the request for rain, which begins on the seventh of Marḥeshvan, whereas Rabbi Yoḥanan's ruling there is referring to the mention of rain, which begins on the Eighth Day of Assembly.

⁸⁷ The Gemara asks: But didn't Rabbi Yoḥanan say: At the same time when one requests rain, one mentions it. The Gemara answers: That ruling was stated only with regard to ceasing the request and mention of rain. Although Rabbi Yoḥanan maintains that one stops requesting and mentioning rain on the same date, he does not hold that one begins to do both at the same time. The Gemara objects: But didn't Rabbi Yoḥanan explicitly say: When one begins to mention rain, one begins to request it; and when one ceases to request rain, one ceases to mention it. This clearly indicates that, in his opinion, there is no discrepancy between the dates when one begins reciting the two formulations.

⁸⁸ The Gemara answers: Rather, it is not difficult. This statement, where Rabbi Elazar ruled in accordance with the opinion of Rabban Gamliel, is for us, who live in Babylonia and start to pray for rain later, whereas that statement of the mishna is for them, the residents of Eretz Yisrael. The

Gemara asks: What is different with regard to us in Babylonia that we do not request rain immediately after Sukkot? The reason is that we still have fruit in the field. Therefore, we do not want rain to fall. However, they, the inhabitants of Eretz Yisrael, also have pilgrims who need to travel for a significant time to reach their homes after the Festival, and they do not want it to rain on them.

⁸⁹ The Gemara answers: When Rabbi Yoḥanan said this ruling in the mishna, he was referring to the period when the Temple is not standing; therefore, in Eretz Yisrael, one can immediately request rain. The Gemara comments: Now that you have arrived at this answer, one can say that both this statement and that statement are for them, i.e., those in Eretz Yisrael. And yet, it is not difficult, as this statement here, that one waits before requesting rain, applies at the time when the Temple is standing, while the ruling there, that one requests rain right after the Festival, is referring to the time when the Temple is not standing.

⁹⁰ The Gemara asks: And we in the Diaspora who have two Festival days, how do we act with regard to beginning the mention of rain, given the uncertainty concerning the Eighth Day of Assembly, which might in reality be the seventh day of Sukkot? The Gemara answers that Rav said: One begins to mention rain in the additional prayers of the eighth day, the first day of the Eighth Day of Assembly. And one temporarily ceases this practice on the afternoon prayer of the eighth day, continuing through the evening and morning prayers of the ninth day, the second day of the Eighth Day of Assembly. And finally one again resumes mentioning rain in the additional prayers of the ninth day, Simḥat Torah.

⁹¹ Shmuel said to those who reported Rav's explanation to him: Go out and tell Abba, referring to Rav by his name, the following objection: After you have rendered the first day of the Eighth Day of Assembly sanctified, shall you defile it by treating it as though it is not a Festival day? Rather, Shmuel said (10a): One begins to mention rain in the additional prayers and also mentions it in the afternoon prayer of the eighth day, the first day of the Eighth Day of Assembly, and temporarily ceases this practice on the afternoon prayer of the eighth day, continuing through the evening and morning prayers of the ninth day, Simḥat Torah. And finally, one again resumes mentioning rain in the additional prayers of the ninth day, Simḥat Torah.

⁹² Rava said an alternative suggestion: Once one has started to mention rain, he no longer stops, i.e., he continues the mention of rain consistently until the summer. And, so too, Rav Sheshet said: Once one has started to mention rain, he no longer stops. In other words, once one has begun to mention rain in his prayers in the additional prayer on the Eighth Day of Assembly, he continues to do so uninterrupted, even in the Diaspora.

⁹³ The Gemara adds: And even Rav retracted his previously stated opinion, as Rav Ḥananel said that Rav said: One counts twenty-one days from Rosh HaShana, just as one counts ten days from Rosh HaShana until Yom Kippur. And after the twenty-one days, one starts to mention rain, and once one has started, he no longer stops. The Gemara concludes: And the halakha is in accordance with the opinion that once one has started to mention rain, he no longer stops.

⁹⁴ MISHNA: Until when does one request rain? Rabbi Yehuda says: We request rain until Passover has passed. Rabbi Meir says: Until the month of Nisan has ended, as it is stated: "And He causes to come down for you the rain, the first rain and the last rain, in the first month" (Joel 2:23). Since the

verse states that it rains in Nisan, the first month, this indicates that the entire month is considered part of the rainy season.

⁹⁵ GEMARA: Rav Naḥman said to Rabbi Yitzḥak: Is the first rain in Nisan? The first rain is in Marḥeshvan, as we learned in a baraita: The first rain is in Marḥeshvan and the last rain is in Nisan. Rabbi Yitzḥak said to Rav Naḥman that Rabbi Yoḥanan said as follows: This verse was fulfilled in the days of the prophet Joel, son of Pethuel, in a year concerning which it is written: “That which the palmer-worm has left, the locust has eaten and that which the locust has left, the canker-worm has eaten; and that which the canker-worm has left, the caterpillar has eaten” (Joel 1:4), when no crops remained. In that year, the month of Adar ended and still no rain had fallen. The rain of the first rainy season fell for them on the first of Nisan.

⁹⁶ After the first rain fell, the prophet said to the Jews: Go out and sow. They said to him: One who has one kav of wheat or two kav of barley left, should he eat them and live off them for a while or sow them and die? Given the improbability of the crops’ growth under these circumstances, it appears wasteful to plant them rather than consume that which remains. The prophet said to them: Nevertheless, go out and sow. A miracle occurred for them and they discovered wheat and barley seeds that were hidden in the walls and that were concealed in ant holes.

⁹⁷ They went out and sowed on the second, third, and fourth days of Nisan, and the rain of the second rainy season fell for them on the fifth of Nisan. The crops grew so quickly that they were able to sacrifice the omer offering in its proper time, on the sixteenth of Nisan. Consequently, grain that normally grows in six months grew in eleven days, and consequently, the omer that is generally sacrificed from grain that grows in six months was sacrificed that year from grain that grew in eleven days.

⁹⁸ And with regard to that generation the verse says: “They who sow in tears shall reap with songs of joy. Though he goes on his way weeping, who bears the measure of seed, he shall come home with joy, bearing his sheaves” (Psalms 126:6). The Gemara asks: What is the meaning of the expression: “Though he goes on his way weeping, who bears the measure of seed”? Rabbi Yehuda said: An ox, when it plowed at that time, it went on its way weeping and lamenting its labor; and yet upon its return, through the same furrow, it was able to eat the young shoots [ḥaziz] of crops that had already sprouted from the furrow. And this is the meaning of the phrase: “He shall come home with songs of joy.”

⁹⁹ The Gemara further asks: What is the meaning of the expression: “Bearing his sheaves”? Rav Ḥisda said, and some say this was taught in a baraita: The stalk of that crop was one span, i.e., the distance between the thumb and the little finger, while the ear itself was two spans, i.e., the ears were twice as long as the stalk, whereas usually the stalk is three or four times longer than the ear.

¹⁰⁰ § Incidental to the interpretation of these verses, the Gemara cites a series of verses, starting with the topic of hunger, that also involve questions that Rav Naḥman posed to Rabbi Yitzḥak. Rav Naḥman said to Rabbi Yitzḥak: What is the meaning of that which is written: “For the Lord has called upon a famine and it shall also come upon the land seven years” (II Kings 8:1)? Specifically, in those seven years, what did they eat?

¹⁰¹ Rabbi Yitzḥak said to Rabbi Naḥman that Rabbi Yoḥanan said as follows: In the first year they ate that which was in their houses; in the second year they ate that which was in their fields; in the third year they ate the meat of their remaining kosher animals; in the fourth year they ate the meat of

their remaining non-kosher animals; in the fifth year they ate the meat of repugnant creatures and creeping animals, i.e., any insects they found; in the sixth year they ate the flesh of their sons and their daughters; and in the seventh year they ate the flesh of their own arms, to fulfill that which is stated: “Each man shall eat the flesh of his own arm” (Isaiah 9:19).

¹⁰² And Rav Naḥman said to Rabbi Yitzḥak: What is the meaning of that which is written: “It is sacred in your midst, and I will not enter the city” (Hosea 11:9)? This verse is puzzling: Because it is sacred in your midst, will God not enter the city? Rabbi Yitzḥak said to Rav Naḥman that Rabbi Yoḥanan said the verse should be understood as follows: The Holy One, Blessed be He, said: I shall not enter Jerusalem above, in heaven, until I enter Jerusalem on earth down below at the time of the redemption, when it will be sacred in your midst.

¹⁰³ The Gemara asks: And is there such a place as Jerusalem above? The Gemara answers: Yes, as it is written: “Jerusalem built up, a city unified together” (Psalms 122:3). The term unified indicates that there are two cities of Jerusalem, a heavenly one and an earthly one, which are bound together.

¹⁰⁴ § And Rav Naḥman said to Rabbi Yitzḥak: What is the meaning of that which is written: “And with one they are brutish and foolish, the teaching of their vanity is a stock” (Jeremiah 10:8)? Rabbi Yitzḥak said to Rabbi Naḥman that Rabbi Yoḥanan said as follows: There is one transgression that causes the wicked to burn in Gehenna. What is this transgression? Idol worship. This can be proven by a verbal analogy. It is written here: “The teaching of their vanity [hevel] is a stock,” and it is written there, with regard to idols: “They are vanity [hevel], a work of delusion” (Jeremiah 10:15).

¹⁰⁵ And Rav Naḥman said to Rabbi Yitzḥak: What is the meaning of that which is written: “For my people have committed two evils” (Jeremiah 2:13)? Were there only two evils they performed? Were, then, the twenty-four violations listed in the book of Ezekiel abandoned, i.e., pardoned? Rabbi Yitzḥak said to Rav Naḥman that Rabbi Yoḥanan said as follows: They have violated one transgression that is

¹⁰⁶ equivalent to two. And what is this sin? Idol worship, as it is written: “For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, to hew for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns” (Jeremiah 2:13), and it is written about the Jewish people: “For pass over the isles of the Kittim and see; and send to Kedar and observe carefully, and see if there has been such a thing. Has a nation exchanged its gods, although they are no gods? But My people has exchanged its glory for that which does not profit” (Jeremiah 2:10–11).

¹⁰⁷ It is taught in a baraita with regard to this verse: Kittites, i.e., the people of the isles of Kittim, worship fire and the people of Kedar worship water, and even though they know that water extinguishes fire, nevertheless they have not exchanged their god: “But My people has exchanged its glory for that which does not profit.”

¹⁰⁸ And Rav Naḥman said to Rabbi Yitzḥak: What is the meaning of that which is written: “And it came to pass when Samuel was old” (I Samuel 8:1)? And did Samuel really grow so old? But he was only fifty-two years old when he died, as the Master said in a baraita that deals with the Divine punishment of karet: One who dies at the age of fifty-two years is not considered to have suffered the premature death of karet, as this is the age of the death of Samuel of Rama. This shows that Samuel died at the relatively young age of fifty-two.

¹⁰⁹ Rabbi Yitzḥak said to Rav Naḥman that Rabbi Yoḥanan said as follows: Old age sprang upon Samuel, which caused him to appear older than his actual age, as it is written: “I regret that I made Saul king” (I Samuel 15:11). Samuel said before God: Master of the Universe, You have considered me the equivalent of Moses and Aaron, as it is written: “Moses and Aaron among His priests, and Samuel among those who call upon His Name” (Psalms 99:6). Just as with regard to Moses and Aaron, their handiwork was not annulled in their lifetimes, so too, let my handiwork not be annulled in my lifetime. I anointed Saul; please do not annul his reign.

¹¹⁰ The Holy One, Blessed be He, said: What shall I do? Shall Saul die now? Samuel will not allow it, as he has petitioned that Saul should not die. Shall Samuel die young, with Saul passing away immediately afterward? The people will murmur about him, and wonder what transgression Samuel committed that caused his early demise. Shall neither Saul nor Samuel die? The time of David’s reign has already arrived, and one kingdom does not overlap with another and subtract from the time allotted to it even by a hairbreadth [nima].

¹¹¹ Therefore, the Holy One, Blessed be He, said: I will spring old age upon him and everyone will think that Shmuel is elderly. This is the meaning of that which is written: “And Saul dwelled in Gibeah under the tamarisk tree in Rama” (I Samuel 22:6). What does Gibeah have to do with Rama; these are two separate places. Rather, the verse comes to tell you: Who caused Saul to dwell in Gibeah for two and a half years? The prayer of Samuel of Rama.

¹¹² The Gemara asks: And is one man set aside before another man? In other words, is Samuel’s life set aside simply because the time for David’s reign has arrived? The Gemara answers: Yes, as Rabbi Shmuel bar Naḥmani said that Rabbi Yoḥanan said: What is the meaning of that which is written: “Therefore I have hewn by the prophets, I have slain them by the words of My mouth” (Hosea 6:5)? It is not stated: By their deeds, but rather: “By the words of My mouth,” i.e., God sometimes ends the life of an individual simply by virtue of His decree. Apparently, one man is indeed set aside before another man.

¹¹³ § In continuation of Rav Naḥman’s questions of Rabbi Yitzḥak, the Gemara relates: Rav Naḥman and Rabbi Yitzḥak were sitting and eating together at a meal. Rav Naḥman said to Rabbi Yitzḥak: Let the Master say a matter, i.e., share a Torah idea with me. Rabbi Yitzḥak said to Rav Naḥman that Rabbi Yoḥanan said: One may not speak during a meal, lest the trachea will precede the esophagus. Food is meant to enter the esophagus, and when one speaks his trachea opens and the food might enter there. And therefore, one should not speak during a meal, as he might come into the danger of choking.

¹¹⁴ After they had eaten, Rabbi Yitzḥak said to Rav Naḥman that Rabbi Yoḥanan said as follows: Our patriarch Jacob did not die. Rav Naḥman asked him in surprise: And was it for naught that the eulogizers eulogized him and the embalmers embalmed him and the buriers buried him? Rabbi Yitzḥak replied to Rav Naḥman: I am interpreting a verse, as it is stated: “Therefore do not fear, Jacob My servant, says the Lord, neither be dismayed, Israel, for I will save you from afar, and your seed from the land of their captivity” (Jeremiah 30:10). This verse juxtaposes Jacob to his seed: Just as his seed is alive when redeemed, so too, Jacob himself is alive.

¹¹⁵ Rabbi Yitzḥak said: Anyone who says: Rahab Rahab, immediately experiences a seminal emission, due to the arousal of desire caused by Rahab’s great beauty. Rav Naḥman said to him: I say Rahab and it does not affect me. Rabbi Yitzḥak said to Rav Naḥman: When I said this I was

specifically referring to a man who knew her and to one who recognized her. With regard to anyone who had met Rahab in person, the mere mention of her name would arouse his lust.

¹¹⁶ The Gemara relates: When they were taking leave of one another, Rav Nahman said to Rabbi Yitzhak: Master, give me a blessing. Rabbi Yitzhak said to him: I will tell you a parable. To what is this matter comparable? It is comparable to one who was walking through a desert and who was hungry, tired, and thirsty. And he found a tree whose fruits were sweet and whose shade was pleasant, and a stream of water flowed beneath it. He ate from the fruits of the tree, drank from the water in the stream, and sat in the shade of the tree.

¹¹⁷ And when he wished to leave, he said: Tree, tree, with what shall I bless you? If I say to you that your fruits should be sweet, your fruits are already sweet; if I say that your shade should be pleasant, your shade is already pleasant; if I say that a stream of water should flow beneath you, a stream of water already flows beneath you. Rather, I will bless you as follows: May it be God's will that all saplings which they plant from you

¹¹⁸ be like you. So it is with you. With what shall I bless you? If I bless you with Torah, you already have Torah; if I bless you with wealth, you already have wealth; if I bless you with children, you already have children. Rather, may it be God's will that your offspring shall be like you.

¹¹⁹ § The Gemara returns to the topic of rain. The Sages taught in a baraita: The first rain [yoreh] is called by this name due to the fact that it instructs [moreh] people to plaster their roofs and to bring in their produce from the fields to their houses and to attend to all their needs in the field before more rain falls. Alternatively, yoreh is referring to the fact that it moistens [marve] the earth and waters it to the depths, as it is stated: "Watering [ravvei] its ridges abundantly, settling down its furrows, You make it soft with showers, You bless its growth" (Psalms 65:11). Alternatively, yoreh means that it falls gently and it does not fall vehemently.

¹²⁰ Or perhaps that is not the case; rather, yoreh means that the rain causes the fruit to drop from the trees, washes the seeds away, and washes the trees away in a destructive manner. According to this interpretation, yoreh is related to yeriya, shooting. Therefore the verse states: "Last rain [malkosh]" (Deuteronomy 11:14); just as malkosh refers specifically to rains that are for a blessing, so too, yoreh is referring to rains that are for a blessing. Or perhaps that is not the case; rather, malkosh means that the rain falls so hard [kashe] and vehemently that it knocks down the houses, shatters the trees and brings up the locusts? Therefore, the verse states: "Yoreh," from which it may be inferred that just as yoreh is for a blessing, so too, malkosh is for a blessing.

¹²¹ And with regard to yoreh itself, from where do we derive that it is referring to rain that falls for a blessing? As it is written: "You children of Zion, be glad and rejoice in the Lord your God, for He has given you the first rain [moreh] in His kindness, and He caused to come down for you the rain, the first rain [moreh] and the last rain [malkosh], in the first month" (Joel 2:23). This verse clearly states that yoreh, also referred to as moreh, fall due to God's kindness, for a blessing.

¹²² The Gemara cites another baraita on the same topic. The Sages taught: The first rain falls in Marḥeshvan and the last rain in Nisan. Do you say that the first rain is in Marḥeshvan and the last rain in Nisan, or perhaps it is only that the first rain falls in Tishrei and the last rain in Iyyar? Therefore, the verse states: "I shall give the rain of your land in its due time" (Deuteronomy 11:14). Its due time is in Marḥeshvan, when rain is needed for the crops to sprout, and in Nisan, to complete the growth of the crops.

¹²³ The Gemara clarifies the meaning of the word for the last rain [malkosh]. Rav Nehilai bar Idi said that Shmuel said: It is a matter that circumcises [mal] the stubbornness [kashyuteihen] of the Jewish people, i.e., it penetrates to the hearts of the Jewish people, as when rain does not fall in its time, they turn to God in repentance. The school of Rabbi Yishmael taught: The last rain is called malkosh because it is a matter that fills out [memalle] produce in its stalks [bekasheha]. Although the stalks already exist from earlier in the year, it is this rain that causes the grain within to swell and fill them. It was taught in a baraita: Malkosh is a matter that comes down on the ears [melilot] and on the stalks [kashin].

¹²⁴ The Sages taught in a baraita: The first rain falls in Marḥeshvan and the last rain in Nisan. Do you say that the first rain is in Marḥeshvan, or perhaps it is only in the month of Kislev? The verse states: “I shall give the rain of your land in its due time, the first rain and the last rain” (Deuteronomy 11:14). Just as the last rain falls in its due time, so too, the first rain falls in its due time. And, as previously stated, once Nisan has ended and the rains subsequently fall, this is not a sign of a blessing, but a curse. Likewise, Marḥeshvan is the best time for the first rains to fall.

¹²⁵ It is taught in another baraita: The first rain is in Marḥeshvan and the last rain is in Nisan. This is the statement of Rabbi Meir. And the Rabbis say: The time of the first rain is in Kislev.

¹²⁶ The Gemara asks: Who are the Rabbis cited here? Rav Ḥisda said: It is the opinion of Rabbi Yosei, as it is taught in a baraita: When is the first rainfall? Each opinion cited in the baraita provides a range of dates for when this rainfall is expected. The earliest date on which the first rainfall might occur is on the third of Marḥeshvan, the intermediate time is on the seventh of the month, and the latest is on the seventeenth of the month. This is the statement of Rabbi Meir. Rabbi Yehuda says: The earliest that it might fall is on the seventh of Marḥeshvan, the intermediate date is on the seventeenth, and the latest is on the twenty-third.

¹²⁷ Rabbi Yosei says: The earliest time for the first rain is on the seventeenth of Marḥeshvan, the intermediate date is on the twenty-third, and the latest is on the New Moon of Kislev. And, so too, Rabbi Yosei would say: The learned individuals who would start to fast for rain at an earlier time than the rest of the community do not start to fast due to a drought until the New Moon of Kislev. Until this date arrives it is not considered a drought, as the first rainfall could still fall in its proper time.

¹²⁸ Rav Ḥisda said: The halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei. Ameimar would teach this ruling of Rav Ḥisda in the following language: On the third of Marḥeshvan one starts to request rain; Rabban Gamliel says: On the seventh. With regard to this statement, Rav Ḥisda said: The halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Rabban Gamliel.

¹²⁹ The Gemara asks: In accordance with whose opinion is that which is taught in a baraita. Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says: With regard to rains that fell on seven consecutive days, you count them as two separate rainfalls, either as the first and second rainfalls together, or as the second and third rainfalls together. In accordance with whose opinion is this statement? It is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei, as he alone establishes a set interval of seven days between each of the rainfalls. Rav Ḥisda said: The halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei.

¹³⁰ With regard to the mention of three rainfalls in the baraita, the Gemara asks: Granted, the time of the first rainfall is significant, as it is the date when one begins to request rain. Likewise, the time of the third rainfall is important, so that one knows when to begin to fast if no rain has fallen by then.

However, for what reason is the second rainfall mentioned in the baraita? Rabbi Zeira said: The second rainfall is significant for the issue of vows, as we learned in a mishna:

¹³¹ In the case of one who vows to prohibit from himself a type of benefit until the rains, the vow is in effect from when the rains begin to fall until the second rainfall, as this is considered the time of the rains.

¹³² Rav Zevid said: The time of the second rainfall is also significant with regard to a halakha that deals with olives, as we learned in a mishna: From when is any person permitted to collect gleanings, forgotten sheaves, and pe'a, produce of the corners of a field, which may normally be taken only by the poor? Any individual is permitted to collect them only from when the searchers [namoshot], the last of the poor to arrive, have left the field. From when may anyone collect yield of the vineyard in the case of the single grapes and small, incompletely formed clusters of grapes, likewise reserved for the poor? From when the poor have left the vineyard and come back after the second time, an indication that they have collected all that they wish. From when may anyone collect yield of the trees in the case of forgotten olives? From when the second rainfall falls.

¹³³ Incidentally, the Gemara asks: What is the meaning of the term for searchers, namoshot? Rabbi Yoḥanan said: It is referring to elders who walk with a staff [atigra]. Since they walk very slowly, they certainly see everything they wish to collect. Reish Lakish said: It is referring to the gleaners who come after all the gleaners, i.e., who arrive after two rounds of the poor have passed through the field.

¹³⁴ Rav Pappa said that the time of the second rainfall is significant so that one can know until when it is permitted to walk on the permitted paths in fields. One may utilize certain paths on private property, provided no damage is caused to the field. As the Master said: Anyone may walk on the permitted paths until the second rainfall falls. One who walks on them at a later point in time is likely to trample the plowed field and damage its crops.

¹³⁵ Rav Naḥman bar Yitzḥak said that the time of the second rainfall is significant for determining when to remove the produce of the Sabbatical Year from one's possession. As we learned in a mishna: Until when may one derive benefit and burn the straw and the hay of the Sabbatical Year? Until the second rainfall falls.

¹³⁶ The Gemara asks: What is the reason that one must remove the produce of the Sabbatical Year from one's possession? The Gemara answers: As it is written with regard to the Sabbatical Year: "And for your cattle and for the beasts in your land all its increase shall be for food" (Leviticus 25:7). This verse indicates that as long as a beast, i.e., a non-domesticated animal, is able to find and eat produce in the field, you may feed your cattle, your domesticated animals, from that type of food in the house. However, when a given type of produce has ceased to be available to the beast in the field, cease providing it to your cattle in the house. After the time of the second rainfall there is no longer any straw or hay in the fields.

¹³⁷ § The Gemara returns to the subject of rain. Rabbi Abbahu said: What is the meaning of the term for rainfall, revia? It is referring to a matter that penetrates [rove'a], i.e., which causes the earth to bear fruit. This is in accordance with the opinion of Rav Yehuda, as Rav Yehuda said: Rain is the husband of the earth, as it is stated: "For as the rain comes down and the snow from heaven, and returns not there, except it waters the earth, and makes it give birth and sprout" (Isaiah 55:10). This verse indicates that rain fructifies the earth in the manner of a husband and wife.

¹³⁸ And Rabbi Abbahu further said: For rainfall to be considered the first rainfall it must be sufficient to enter the ground and saturate it to a depth of one handbreadth. The second rainfall must be sufficient that the soil is moistened enough to seal the opening of a barrel with its mud. Rav Ḥisda said: Rains which fall and create sufficient mud to seal the opening of a barrel with them means that the year does not constitute a fulfillment of the verse: “And He will close up the heavens and there will be no rain” (Deuteronomy 11:17).

¹³⁹ And Rav Ḥisda said: Rain that falls early in the day, prior to the recitation of Shema, which includes the verse: “And He will close up the heavens,” is enough to ensure that the hour does not constitute a fulfillment of the verse: “And He will close up the heavens,” even if no more rain falls at that time.

¹⁴⁰ Abaye said: We said this only if the rain fell during the day, prior to the recitation of “and He will close up” of the evening Shema. However, if a small amount of rain falls prior to the recitation of “and He will close up” of the morning Shema, this rain could still constitute an expression of “and He will close up.” As Rav Yehuda bar Yitzḥak said: These morning clouds have no substance; they generally yield minimal or no rain. As it is written: “What can I do for you, Ephraim, what can I do for you, Judah, for your goodness is like a morning cloud” (Hosea 6:4). This verse indicates that morning clouds contain little benefit.

¹⁴¹ Rav Pappa said to Abaye: But people say the well-known maxim: When the gates, i.e., doors, are opened in the morning and there is rain, donkey-driver, fold your sack and go to sleep, as it is certain to rain all day, which will render the work of donkey-drivers infeasible. This shows that morning clouds are a sign that it will rain all day. The Gemara answers: This is not difficult. This statement of Rav Pappa is referring to when the sky is overcast with heavy clouds, from which rain will fall all day, whereas that statement of Rav Ḥisda is referring to a morning when the sky is overcast with light clouds which will not bring substantial rain.

¹⁴² § Rav Yehuda said: It is good for the year when the month of Tevet is a widower, i.e., when it features no rainfall. The Gemara explains: Some say that this is so that the gardens [tarbitzei] should not be desolate, as too much rain damages vegetables. And some say: The reason is that it should not suffer blight caused by excessive rain. The Gemara asks: Is that so? But didn’t Rav Ḥisda say: It is good for the year when the month of Tevet is disgusting, i.e., muddy from rain. The Gemara answers: This is not difficult. This statement of Rav Yehuda is referring to a year when it rained initially, i.e., before Tevet, in which case rain during Tevet is not beneficial. That statement of Rav Ḥisda is referring to a year when it did not rain initially, before Tevet, and therefore rain during Tevet is beneficial.

¹⁴³ And Rav Ḥisda also said: Rain that fell on one part of a country and did not fall on another part of the country does not constitute a fulfillment of the verse: “And He will close up the heavens.” The Gemara raises an objection: Is that so? But isn’t it written: “And I have also withheld the rain from you, when there were yet three months to the harvest; and I would cause it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city; one piece was rained upon, and the piece upon which it did not rain withered” (Amos 4:7). And Rav Yehuda said that Rav said: Both the area that receives rain and the area that does not receive rain are cursed. This statement indicates that rain that falls on only part of a country is a curse.

¹⁴⁴ The Gemara answers: This is not difficult. This, Rav Yehuda's statement, is referring to a case when excessive rain falls in one part of the country and causes damage; whereas that, Rav Ḥisda's statement, is referring to a situation when the requisite amount of rain falls in one part of the country. In this case, it is not a sign of a curse, but is a blessing for that particular part of the country. Rav Ashi said: The language is also precise in the verse in Amos that deals with excessive rain in one place, as it is written: "Was rained upon," which indicates that it shall be a place of rain, i.e., an area filled with rain and water. The Gemara concludes: Indeed, learn from it that this is the correct interpretation.

¹⁴⁵ Rabbi Abbahu said: From when does one recite a blessing over rain? From when the groom goes out to meet the bride, that is, when there are puddles of water on the ground such that the water below, represented as the bride in this metaphor, is splashed from above by the raindrops, represented as the groom.

¹⁴⁶ The Gemara asks: What blessing does one recite over rain? Rav Yehuda said that Rav said: We thank you, O Lord our God, for each and every drop that You have made fall for us. And Rabbi Yoḥanan concludes the blessing as follows: If our mouth were as full of song as the sea, and our tongue with singing like the multitude of its waves, etc. And one continues with the formula of the nishmat prayer recited on Shabbat morning, until: May Your mercy not forsake us, O Lord our God, and You have not forsaken us. Blessed are You, O Lord, to Whom abundant thanksgivings are offered.

¹⁴⁷ The Gemara asks: Why does the blessing specify abundant thanksgivings and not all thanksgivings? Rava said: Emend the formula of the blessing and say: God of thanksgivings. Rav Pappa said: Therefore, as there are differences of opinion on this,

¹⁴⁸ we will recite them both: God of thanksgivings, and: Abundant thanksgivings.

¹⁴⁹ § The Gemara cites statements in praise of rainfall. Rabbi Abbahu said: The day of rain is greater than the resurrection of the dead. The reason is that while the resurrection of the dead benefits only the righteous, rain benefits both the righteous and the wicked. The Gemara comments: And this statement disagrees with the opinion of Rav Yosef, as Rav Yosef said: Since rainfall is equivalent to the resurrection of the dead, the Sages established its recitation in the second blessing of the Amida, the blessing of the resurrection of the dead. According to Rav Yosef, rainfall is the equivalent to, but not superior to, the resurrection of the dead.

¹⁵⁰ Similarly, Rav Yehuda said: The day of the rains is as great as the day on which the Torah was given, as it is stated: "My doctrine [likḥi] shall drop as the rain" (Deuteronomy 32:2), and lekaḥ means nothing other than Torah, as it is stated: "For I give you good doctrine [lekaḥ]; do not forsake My Torah" (Proverbs 4:2). Rava said: Rainfall is even greater than the day on which the Torah was given, as it is stated: "My doctrine shall drop as the rain," and when one makes a comparison, which object is made dependent upon which? You must say that the lesser object is dependent upon the greater one. If Torah is compared to rain, it follows that rain is greater than Torah.

¹⁵¹ The Gemara cites another interpretation of the verse from Deuteronomy. Rava raised a contradiction: At the beginning of the verse it is written: "My doctrine shall drop [ya'arof] as the rain," in a harsh manner, and yet later in the verse, it is written: "My speech shall distill as the dew," in a gentle tone. He resolves this apparent contradiction as follows: If he is a worthy Torah scholar,

the Torah flows through him like the dew, but if he is not worthy, it snaps his neck [orfehu] like the powerful rain.

¹⁵² It is taught in a baraita that Rabbi Bena'a would say: Anyone who engages in Torah for its own sake, his Torah study will be an elixir of life for him, as it is stated: "It is a tree of life to them who lay hold upon it" (Proverbs 3:18), and it says: "It shall be health to your navel" (Proverbs 3:8), and it says: "For whoever finds Me finds life" (Proverbs 8:35). And anyone who engages in Torah not for its own sake, e.g., for self-aggrandizement, his Torah will be an elixir of death for him, as it is stated: "My doctrine shall drop [ya'arof] as the rain," and arifa means nothing other than killing, as it is stated: "And they shall break the heifer's neck [arefu] there in the valley" (Deuteronomy 21:4).

¹⁵³ Rabbi Yirmeya once said to Rabbi Zeira: Let the Master come and teach a halakhic discourse. Rabbi Zeira said to him: My heart is weak and I cannot strain myself over a halakhic discourse. Rabbi Yirmeya replied to him: In that case, let the Master tell us a matter of aggada, which does not require as much effort. Rabbi Zeira said to him that Rabbi Yoḥanan said as follows: What is the meaning of that which is written: "For man is a tree of the field" (Deuteronomy 20:19)? And is man actually a tree of the field?

¹⁵⁴ Rather, it is because it is written earlier in the same verse: "You may eat of them but you may not cut them down," and it is written in the next verse: "Them you may destroy and cut down" (Deuteronomy 20:20). This indicates that there are certain trees which may be cut down, while others may not be destroyed. How so? If a Torah scholar is worthy: "You may eat of them but you may not cut them down," but if he is not worthy: "He you may destroy and cut down."

¹⁵⁵ The Gemara cites other expositions that deal with Torah study. Rabbi Ḥama, son of Rabbi Ḥanina, said: What is the meaning of that which is written: "Iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend" (Proverbs 27:17)? This verse comes to tell you that just as with these iron implements, one sharpens the other when they are rubbed against each other, so too, when Torah scholars study together, they sharpen one another in halakha.

¹⁵⁶ Rabba bar bar Ḥana said: Why are matters of Torah compared to fire, as it is stated: "Is not My word like fire, says the Lord" (Jeremiah 23:29)? To tell you: Just as fire does not ignite in a lone stick of wood but in a pile of kindling, so too, matters of Torah are not retained and understood properly by a lone scholar who studies by himself, but by a group of Sages.

¹⁵⁷ And this is what Rabbi Yosei bar Ḥanina said: What is the meaning of that which is written: "A sword is upon the boasters [habaddim], and they shall become fools [noalu]" (Jeremiah 50:36)? This verse can be interpreted homiletically: There is a sword upon the enemies of Torah scholars, a euphemism for Torah scholars themselves, who sit alone [bad bevad] and study Torah. And not only that, but those who study by themselves grow foolish from their solitary Torah study, as it is stated: "And they shall become fools."

¹⁵⁸ And not only that, but they sin, as it is written here: "And they shall become fools," and it is written there: "For that we have done foolishly [noalnu] and for that we have sinned" (Numbers 12:11). And if you wish, say instead that it is derived from here: "The princes of Zoan have become fools [noalu]...they have caused Egypt to go astray" (Isaiah 19:13).

¹⁵⁹ Rav Naḥman bar Yitzḥak said: Why are Torah matters likened to a tree, as it is stated: "It is a tree of life to them who lay hold upon it" (Proverbs 3:18)? This verse comes to tell you that just as a

small piece of wood can ignite a large piece, so too, minor Torah scholars can sharpen great Torah scholars and enable them to advance in their studies. And this is what Rabbi Ḥanina said: I have learned much from my teachers and even more from my friends, but from my students I have learned more than from all of them.

¹⁶⁰ Rabbi Ḥanina bar Pappa raised a contradiction. In one verse it is written: “To him who is thirsty bring water” (Isaiah 21:14), which indicates that the one who has water must bring it to the thirsty person, and it is written elsewhere: “Ho, everyone who thirsts, come for water” (Isaiah 55:1), from which it may be inferred that the thirsty person must seek out water himself. Rabbi Ḥanina bar Pappa resolves this apparent contradiction by explaining that if he is a worthy student the teacher must seek him out, as in “to him who is thirsty bring water,” but if the student is not worthy, then “Ho, everyone who thirsts, come for water,” i.e., this student must seek out a teacher himself.

¹⁶¹ Rabbi Ḥanina bar Ḥama raised another contradiction. In one verse it is written: “Let your springs be dispersed abroad” (Proverbs 5:16), whereas in the next verse it is written: “Let them be your own” (Proverbs 5:17). Rabbi Ḥanina bar Ḥama explains: If the student sitting before you is worthy, then “Let your springs be dispersed abroad,” as you should teach him, but if he is not worthy, then “Let them be your own.”

¹⁶² And Rabbi Ḥanina bar Idi said: Why are matters of Torah likened to water, as it is written: “Ho, everyone who thirsts, come for water” (Isaiah 55:1)? This verse comes to tell you: Just as water leaves a high place and flows to a low place, so too, Torah matters are retained only by one whose spirit is lowly, i.e., a humble person.

¹⁶³ And Rabbi Oshaya said: Why are matters of Torah likened to these three liquids: To water, wine and milk? As it is written with regard to water: “Ho, everyone who thirsts, come for water,” and it is written in the same verse: “Come, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” This verse comes to tell you: Just as these three liquids can be retained only in the least of vessels, e.g., clay pots, but not vessels of silver and gold, as they will spoil, so too, matters of Torah are retained only by one whose spirit is lowly.

¹⁶⁴ The Gemara cites a related incident: This is as the daughter of the Roman emperor said to Rabbi Yehoshua ben Ḥanania, who was an ugly man: Woe to glorious wisdom such as yours, which is contained in an ugly vessel. Rabbi Yehoshua ben Ḥanania said to her, in a seemingly unrelated response: Does your father keep his wine in simple clay vessels? The emperor’s daughter said to him: Rather, in what, then, should he keep it? Rabbi Yehoshua ben Ḥanania said to her: You, who are so important, should put it in vessels of gold and silver.

¹⁶⁵ The emperor’s daughter went and said this to her father. He put the wine in vessels of gold and silver and it turned sour. When his advisors came and told the emperor that the wine had turned sour, he said to his daughter: Who told you to do this? His daughter responded: Rabbi Yehoshua ben Ḥanania. The emperor summoned him and said to him: Why did you say this to her? Rabbi Yehoshua ben Ḥanania said to him: Just as she said to me, so I said say to her, to demonstrate to her that fine material is best preserved in the least of vessels. The emperor said to him: But there are handsome people who are learned.

¹⁶⁶ Rabbi Yehoshua replied: Had they been ugly, they would have been even more learned. Alternatively, the Torah is likened to water, wine, and milk because just as these three liquids are

spoiled only by diversion of attention, so too, are Torah matters forgotten only through diversion of attention. If water, wine and milk are guarded, they will not spoil or have dirty objects fall into them.

¹⁶⁷ § The Gemara returns to the issue of rain. Rabbi Ḥama, son of Rabbi Ḥanina, said: The day of the rains is as great as the day on which the heavens and earth were created, as it is stated: “Drop down, heavens, from above, let the skies pour down righteousness; let the earth open that they may bring forth salvation, and let it cause righteousness to spring up together; I, the Lord, have created it” (Isaiah 45:8). The Gemara explains that the verse does not say: I have created them, in the plural, but: I have created it. In other words, the verse is referring to rain, rather than to the heavens and the earth, which indicates that rainfall is as important as the creation of the world.

¹⁶⁸ Rabbi Oshaya likewise said: The day of rain is great, as rain even facilitates salvation, which is fruitful and multiplies on that day. It is a time of God’s favor, when salvation is brought forth into the world, as it is stated: “Let the earth open that they may bring forth salvation” (Isaiah 45:8). Rabbi Tanḥum bar Ḥanilai said: Rain falls only if the Jewish people’s transgressions have been forgiven, as it is stated: “Lord, You have been favorable to Your land; You have turned the captivity of Jacob; You have forgiven the iniquity of Your people; You have pardoned all their sin. Selah” (Psalms 85:2–3). This chapter proceeds to discuss rainfall: “And righteousness has looked down from Heaven” (Psalms 85:12), in the form of rain.

¹⁶⁹ The Sage Ze’iri from the town of Dihavat said to Ravina: You learned this idea from here, whereas we learned it from here, a different verse: “When heaven is closed up, and there is no rain, when they sin against You, if they pray toward this place and confess Your name and turn from their sin, when You afflict them, then You, hear in heaven and forgive the sin of Your servants and of Your people Israel, when You teach them the good way in which they should walk, and send rain upon Your land, which You have given to Your people as an inheritance” (I Kings 8:35–36).

¹⁷⁰ Rabbi Tanḥum, son of Rabbi Ḥiyya of the village of Akko, said: The rains are withheld only if the enemies of the Jewish people, a euphemism for the Jewish people, have been sentenced to destruction for their sins, as it is stated: “Drought and heat will steal the snow waters; to the grave those who have sinned” (Job 24:19). According to this interpretation, snow water will be stolen by drought, i.e., there will be none available, when people have sinned to the point that they deserve the grave. Ze’iri from Dihavat said to Ravina: You learned this idea from here; we learned it from here: “And the anger of the Lord will be kindled against you, and He will close up the heavens, and there will be no rain, and the earth will not give its fruit, and you will perish quickly” (Deuteronomy 11:17).

¹⁷¹ Rav Ḥisda said: The rains are withheld only due to the sin of the nullification of teruma and tithes, as it is stated: “Drought and heat will steal the snow waters” (Job 24:19). The Gemara asks: From where in the verse may this idea be inferred from the verse? The school of Rabbi Yishmael taught: Due to matters that I have commanded you to do in the summer, e.g., take teruma and tithes from the summer produce, and that you did not do, the snow waters will be stolen from you in the rainy season.

¹⁷² Rabbi Shimon ben Pazi said: The rains are withheld only due to the sin of those who speak slander, as it is stated: “The north wind brings forth rain, but a backbiting tongue, an angry countenance” (Proverbs 25:23). This verse indicates that if the countenance of the heavens is angry, with neither clouds nor rain, it is due to slanderous speech.

¹⁷³ Rav Salla said that Rav Hamnuna said: The rains are withheld only due to impudent people, as it is stated: “Therefore the showers have been withheld, and there has been no last rain, yet you had a harlot’s forehead, you refused to be ashamed” (Jeremiah 3:3). And Rav Salla said that Rav Hamnuna said, with regard to the same verse: Any man who is insolent will ultimately stumble over the transgression of prostitution, as it is stated: “Yet you had a prostitute’s forehead.” Rav Nahman said: The verse does not mean that he will commit a sexual transgression in the future; rather, it is known that he has already stumbled over this transgression, as it is stated: “You had,” in the past tense, and it is not stated: You will.

¹⁷⁴ Rabba bar Rav Huna said: With regard to any man who is insolent, it is permitted to call him wicked to his face, as it is stated: “A wicked man makes his face insolent” (Proverbs 21:29). Rav Nahman bar Yitzhak said: It is permitted to hate him, as it is stated: “And the insolence of his face is changed” (Ecclesiastes 8:1). Do not read it as: “Is changed [yeshunne]”; rather, read it as: Is hated [yissane], as the two words are spelled the same way in Hebrew, albeit with different vocalization and pronunciation.

¹⁷⁵ Rav Ketina said: The rains are withheld only due to the sin of dereliction in the study of Torah, as it is stated: “By slothfulness the rafters [hamekare] will sink in [yimakh], and through idleness of the hands the house leaks” (Ecclesiastes 10:18). Due to slothfulness that was present amongst the Jewish people, that they did not occupy themselves with Torah, the enemy of the Holy One, Blessed be He, a euphemism for God Himself, has sunk. And sunk [makh] means nothing other than poor, as it is stated: “But if he is too poor [makh] for your valuation” (Leviticus 27:8). And “rafters [mekare]” means nothing other than a reference to the Holy One, Blessed be He, as it is stated: “Who lays the beams [hamekare] of Your upper chambers in the water” (Psalms 104:3).

¹⁷⁶ Rav Yosef said that this idea is derived from here: “And now that men do not see the light, it is bright in the skies, but the wind passes and cleanses them” (Job 37:21). And “light” means nothing other than Torah, as it is stated: “For a mitzva is a lamp and Torah is a light” (Proverbs 6:23). According to this interpretation, the verse means that when “men do not see the light,” i.e., when they are not occupied with Torah, “it is bright in the skies,” as there are no rainclouds. With regard to this verse, the school of Rabbi Yishmael taught: Even when the sky is comprised of bright clouds that serve to bring down dew and rain, no rain will fall, as “the wind passes and cleanses them.”

¹⁷⁷ Rabbi Ami said: The rains are withheld only due to the sin of robbery, as it is stated: “He covers His hands with the light, and He has commanded it due to imploring” (Job 36:32). This means that due to the sin of stealing hands, God has covered the light and no rain will fall. And Rabbi Ami adds that the term “hand” means nothing other than a sin of violence, as it is stated: “And from the violence that is in their hands” (Jonah 3:8). And “light” means nothing other than rain, as it is stated: “He spreads abroad the cloud of His light” (Job 37:11).

¹⁷⁸ What is the remedy of one who has caused the rain to be withheld? He should increase his prayers, as it is stated in the same chapter: “And He has commanded it due to imploring” (Job 36:32), and “imploring” means nothing other than prayer, as it is stated: “Therefore, do not pray you for this nation, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither implore Me” (Jeremiah 7:16).

¹⁷⁹ And Rabbi Ami said: What is the meaning of that which is written: “If the iron is blunt, and does not whet the edge” (Ecclesiastes 10:10)? If you see a sky that is blunt as iron, in that it does not bring down dew and rain, this is due to the deeds of the generation, which are corrupt, as it is stated: “And

does not whet [kilkal] the edge [panim].” Panim, which also means face, is often used in reference to the leaders of a generation, while the term kilkal is similar to the word for corrupt, mekulkalin.

¹⁸⁰ What is their remedy? They must increase their prayers for mercy, as it is stated in the same verse: “Then must he increase his strength, but wisdom is profitable to direct” (Ecclesiastes 10:10). This verse hints that rain will fall if one increases his strength, i.e., his prayers for mercy. The last part of the verse means that, all the more so, if their deeds had been righteous and direct from the beginning, the rains would not have been withheld.

¹⁸¹ The Gemara cites a different interpretation of the same verse. Reish Lakish said: If you see a student

¹⁸² whose studies are hard as iron for him, i.e., difficult to understand, this is due to his lack of familiarity with the Mishna, which is not organized for him. If the Mishna is unclear, any further study of Gemara is rendered all the more difficult, as it is stated: “And does not whet [kilkal] the edge [panim]” (Ecclesiastes 10:10). As panim can also mean surface, this indicates that the surface, i.e., the basic statements of the Mishna, is corrupted. As stated previously, kilkal can also mean corrupted.

¹⁸³ What is his remedy? He must increase the time he sits and studies, as it is stated: “Then must he increase his strength” (Ecclesiastes 10:10). The last part of the verse: “But wisdom is profitable to direct,” means that all the more so, if his study of the Mishna is organized for him from the beginning, he will avoid this trouble.

¹⁸⁴ That is like this practice of Reish Lakish, who would review his studies forty times, corresponding to the forty days in which the Torah was given to Moses at Sinai, and only afterward would he go before Rabbi Yoḥanan to study from his teacher. Similarly, Rav Adda bar Ahava would review his learning twenty-four times, corresponding to the twenty-four books in the Torah, Prophets, and Writings, i.e., the Bible, and only afterward go before Rava to study with him.

¹⁸⁵ With regard to the aforementioned verse from Ecclesiastes, Rava said: If you see a student whose studies are as difficult for him as iron, this is due to his teacher, who does not show him a friendly countenance, but is overly strict with him. This practice inhibits the student’s learning, as it is stated: “And it has not whetted the surface [panim]” (Ecclesiastes 10:10). As explained previously, panim can also mean countenance.

¹⁸⁶ What is the remedy for this student? He must increase the number of friends he sends to the teacher to intercede for him, as it is stated: “Then must he increase his strength.” The term used for strength, ḥayalim, can also mean soldiers or colleagues. Nevertheless: “But wisdom is profitable to direct,” meaning that all the more so would he be spared this trouble if his deeds were properly directed before his teacher from the beginning.

¹⁸⁷ § The Gemara returns to the topic of rain. And Rabbi Ami said: What is the meaning of that which is written: “If the serpent [naḥash] bites [yishokh] before it is charmed [laḥash], then the charmer has no advantage” (Ecclesiastes 10:11)? If you see a generation for whom the heavens corrode [meshatkhin] like copper [neḥoshet], which prevents them from bringing down dew and rain, this is due to the lack of those who whisper quiet [loḥashei leḥishot] prayers in the generation.

¹⁸⁸ What is their remedy? They should go to one who knows how to whisper prayers in the proper manner, as it is written: “Its noise tells concerning it” (Job 36:33). As for the phrase: “Then the

charmer has no advantage,” this is referring to one who is able to whisper his prayers correctly and yet does not whisper them correctly. In this case, of what benefit to him is his ability to pray?

¹⁸⁹ And if he whispered his prayers and yet was not answered, what is his remedy? He should go to the most pious individual of the generation, and this pious individual will increase his prayers on his behalf, as it is stated one verse earlier: “And He has commanded it due to imploring” (Job 36:32). And “imploring” means nothing other than prayer, as it is stated: “Therefore, do not pray you for this nation, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither implore Me” (Jeremiah 7:16).

¹⁹⁰ And if he whispered his prayers for rain, and his prayers were successful, i.e., rain fell as he requested, and he becomes prideful as a result, he brings anger into the world, as it is stated: “The cattle [mikne] also [af] concerning the rising storm [al oleh]” (Job 36:33). This verse can be read homiletically as: Anger [af] is acquired [mikne] by one who raises [al oleh] his pride.

¹⁹¹ Following the same interpretation of this verse, Rava said: If there are two Torah scholars who live in one city, and they are not courteous with one another in their discussions of halakha, they arouse anger upon the world and cause it to rise up, as it is stated: “Anger is acquired by one who raises his pride.”

¹⁹² The Gemara cites another interpretation of the aforementioned verse. Reish Lakish said: What is the meaning of that which is written: “If the snake bites before it is charmed, then the charmer has no advantage” (Ecclesiastes 10:11)? In the future, all the animals will gather together and come to the snake and say to him: A lion mauls its prey and eats it; a wolf tears apart its prey and eats it; but you, what pleasure do you have when you bite a person, as you are incapable of eating him? The snake will say to them: “The charmer has no advantage.” The Hebrew phrase for snake charmer literally means the master of the tongue, and therefore the snake is saying that he has a more difficult question: What pleasure does a slanderer receive, as he inflicts more harm for which he obtains no physical enjoyment.

¹⁹³ Rabbi Ami said: A person’s prayer is heard only if he places his soul in his palm, i.e., one must submit his entire soul with sincerity in his outstretched hands as he prays, as it is stated: “Let us lift up our heart with our hands” (Lamentations 3:41). The Gemara raises an objection: Is that so? But Shmuel once established for himself an interpreter to teach in public, and interpreted homiletically the verse: “But they beguiled Him with their mouth and lied to Him with their tongue, for their heart was not steadfast with Him, neither were they faithful to His covenant” (Psalms 78:36–37), and nevertheless the psalm continues: “But He, being full of compassion, forgives iniquity, and does not destroy” (Psalms 78:38). This indicates that all prayers are accepted, even if they lack sincerity.

¹⁹⁴ The Gemara responds: This is not difficult, as here Rabbi Ami is referring to an individual who prays without sincerity and consequently his prayer goes unheard, whereas there Shmuel is saying that when one prays with the community, even if his prayers are deficient, they are accepted in the merit of the congregation.

¹⁹⁵ Rabbi Ami further said: Rain falls only due to faithful people, as it is stated: “Truth springs out of the earth, and righteousness has looked down from heaven” (Psalms 85:12). When “truth springs out of the earth,” i.e., if people are faithful, they will find that “righteousness,” in the form of rain “has looked down from heaven.”

¹⁹⁶ And Rabbi Ami said: Come and see how great the faithful people are, and how God assists them. From where is it derived? From the story of the marten [ḥulda] and the pit. Once a young man saved a girl who had fallen into a pit. After rescuing her they swore to remain faithful to each other, and they declared the pit and a passing marten their witnesses. As time went by the young man forgot his vow and married another woman. They had two children, both of whom died tragically, one by falling into a pit and the other when he was bitten by a marten. Their unusual deaths led the young man to realize his error and he returned to the first woman. And if this is the outcome for one who believes in signs from a pit and a marten, all the more so for one who has faith in the Holy One, Blessed be He.

¹⁹⁷ § Rabbi Yoḥanan said: Whoever is exacting with himself, by striving to act righteously in every way on earth below, he is judged in an exact manner in Heaven above, in order to improve him further still, as it is stated: “Truth springs out of the earth, and righteousness has looked down from heaven” (Psalms 85:12). Rabbi Ḥiyya bar Avin said that Rav Huna said that this idea is derived from here: “And Your wrath is according to the fear that is due to You” (Psalms 90:11). The level of God’s wrath correlates with the offender’s fear of God.

¹⁹⁸ Reish Lakish said that this principle is derived from here: “You took him away who joyfully performed righteousness, those who remembered You in Your ways, behold You were wroth, and we sinned, upon them have we stayed of old, that we might be saved” (Isaiah 64:4). This verse also teaches that God displays wrath specifically due to the transgressions of those who are accustomed to acting righteously. Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said concerning the same verse: Whoever is joyful in the suffering that comes upon him brings salvation to the world [olam], as it is stated: “Upon them have we stayed of old [olam], that we might be saved.”

¹⁹⁹ § Returning to the topic of rain, Reish Lakish said: What is the meaning of that which is written: “And He will close up the heavens” (Deuteronomy 11:17)? This verse teaches that when the heavens are closed up from bringing down dew and rain, this is similar to a woman who has the pangs of labor and yet does not give birth, as the heavens themselves suffer from their inability to bring down rain and dew. And this is what Reish Lakish said in the name of bar Kappara: Closing up is stated with regard to rains, and closing up is likewise stated with regard to a woman.

²⁰⁰ Reish Lakish elaborates: Closing up is stated with regard to a woman who cannot give birth, as it is stated: “For the Lord has fast closed up all the wombs” (Genesis 20:18), and closing up is stated with regard to rains, as it is written: “And He will close up the heavens” (Deuteronomy 11:17).

²⁰¹ Likewise, an expression of giving birth is stated with regard to a woman, and an expression of giving birth is also stated with regard to rain. Specifically, giving birth is stated with regard to a woman, as it is written in the case of Rachel, when God had mercy on her: “And she conceived and gave birth to a son” (Genesis 30:23). And giving birth is stated with regard to rain, as it is written: “For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, and does not return there, except it waters the earth and causes it to give birth and bud” (Isaiah 55:10).

²⁰² Lastly, an expression of remembering is stated in connection with a woman, and an expression of remembering is also stated in connection to rain. Remembering is stated in connection with a woman, as it is written: “And the Lord remembered Sarah” (Genesis 21:1), and remembering is stated in connection to rain, as it is written: “You have remembered the earth and have watered it; greatly enriching it, with the pool of God that is full of water” (Psalms 65:10).

²⁰³ The Gemara asks a question with regard to this verse. What is the meaning of the phrase: “With the pool of God that is full of water”? The Gemara answers that it was taught in a baraita: There is a kind of vault [kuba] in the sky, out of which the rain falls.

²⁰⁴ Rabbi Shmuel bar Naḥmani said: What is the meaning of that which is written: “Whatever he commands them upon the face of the habitable world, whether it is for correction, or for His earth, or for mercy that He causes it to come” (Job 37:12–13)? The phrase “whether it is for correction” means that if the people are judged unfavorably, the rain will fall on the mountains and on the hills. The phrase “or for His earth” indicates that if they have been judged “for mercy,” He will cause it to come “for His earth,” on the fields and on the vineyards.

²⁰⁵ Alternatively, the phrase “whether it is for correction” means that the rain will provide benefit only for the trees; “or for His earth” indicates that rain will fall solely for the benefit of seeds; and “or for mercy that He causes it to come” means that rain will fill the cisterns, ditches, and caves with enough water to last the dry season.

²⁰⁶ § The Gemara relates: In the days of Rabbi Shmuel bar Naḥmani there was a famine and a plague. The Sages said: What should we do? Should we pray for mercy for two troubles, both the famine and the plague? This is not possible, as it is improper to pray for the alleviation of two afflictions at once. Rather, let us pray for mercy for the plague, and as for the famine, we must bear it. Rabbi Shmuel bar Naḥmani said to them: On the contrary, let us pray for mercy for the famine, as when the Merciful One provides plenty, He gives it for the sake of the living, i.e., if God answers this prayer then he will certainly bring an end to the plague as well, as it is written: “You open Your hand and satisfy every living thing with favor” (Psalms 145:16).

²⁰⁷ The Gemara explains: And from where do we derive that one should not pray for two troubles simultaneously? As it is written: “So we fasted and beseeched our God for this” (Ezra 8:23). From the fact that the verse states: “For this,” it may be inferred that there is another trouble about which the people did not pray. In the West, Eretz Yisrael, they say in the name of Rabbi Ḥaggai that this idea comes from here: “That they might ask mercy of the God of Heaven concerning this secret” (Daniel 2:18). From the fact that the verse states: “This secret,” it may be inferred that there is another trouble about which they did not pray.

²⁰⁸ In a similar vein, the Gemara relates: In the days of Rabbi Zeira a decree of religious persecution was decreed against the Jews. And as the decree was that they were not allowed to fast, the Jews were certainly unable to fast and pray for the nullification of the decree itself. Rabbi Zeira said to the people: Let us take a fast upon ourselves, despite the fact that in practice we cannot observe it, and when the decree of religious persecution is annulled we will observe the fast.

²⁰⁹ They said to him: From where do you know this, the fact that one may take a fast upon himself that he cannot observe? Rabbi Zeira said to them that the reason is as it is written: “Then he said to me: Fear not, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to fast before your God, your words were heard” (Daniel 10:12). This verse indicates that from the moment one turns his heart to fast, his prayers are heard.

²¹⁰ The Gemara returns to the topic of rain. Rabbi Yitzḥak said: Even in years like the years of Elijah, when God decreed that no rain would fall, if rain falls on Shabbat eves it is nothing other than a sign of a curse, as the rain disrupts the preparations for Shabbat. This is the same as that which Rabba bar Sheila said: A rainy day is as difficult as a judgment day. Ameimar even said: Were it not

for the fact that rain is needed by people, we would pray for mercy and to annul it, due to the nuisances that rain causes.

²¹¹ And Rabbi Yitzḥak said: Sun on Shabbat is charity for the poor, who are then able to enjoy the outdoors without suffering from cold. As it is stated: “But for you who fear My name, the sun of righteousness shall arise with healing in its wings” (Malachi 3:20). And Rabbi Yitzḥak further said: The day of the rains is great, as even a peruta in one’s pocket is blessed on it, as it is stated: “To give the rain of your land in its due time, and to bless all the work of your hand” (Deuteronomy 28:12).

²¹² And apropos blessings, Rabbi Yitzḥak said: A blessing is found only in an object that is hidden [samui] from the eye, not in an item visible to all, as public miracles are exceedingly rare. As it is stated: “The Lord will command His blessing upon you in your barns [ba’asamekha]” (Deuteronomy 28:8). Rabbi Yitzḥak’s exposition is based on the linguistic similarity between samui and asamekha. Likewise, the school of Rabbi Yishmael taught: A blessing is found only in an object that is not exposed to the eye, as it is stated: “The Lord will command His blessing upon you in your barns.”

²¹³ The Sages taught: One who enters to measure produce in his granary recites: May it be Your will, Lord our God, that You send a blessing upon the work of our hands. After he has begun to measure, he recites: Blessed is He who sends a blessing upon this pile. If one first measured and afterward recited the blessing, it is a prayer in vain, as a blessing is not found either in an object that is weighed or in an object that is measured or in an object that is counted, as these would constitute open miracles. Rather, a blessing is found only in an object that is hidden from the eye.

²¹⁴ § The Gemara cites five statements of Rabbi Yoḥanan, in accordance with the following mnemonic: Ingathering; armies; charity; tithe; sustainer. Rabbi Yoḥanan said: The day of the rains is as great as the day of the ingathering of the exiles, as it is stated: “Turn our captivity, O Lord, as the streams in the dry land” (Psalms 126:4), and “streams” means nothing other than rain, as it is stated: “And the streams of the sea appeared” (II Samuel 22:16).

²¹⁵ And Rabbi Yoḥanan said: The day of the rains is great, as even armies stop fighting on it due to the rain and mud. As it is stated: “Watering its ridges abundantly; settling down its furrows [gedudeha]” (Psalms 65:11). As the word gedudim can mean both furrows or armies and is spelled identically with each meaning, this alludes to the idea that during the rainy season soldiers become entrenched in place. And Rabbi Yoḥanan further said: Rain is withheld only due to those who pledge charity in public but do not give it, as it is stated: “As vapors and wind without rain, so is he who boasts of a false gift” (Proverbs 25:14).

²¹⁶ And Rabbi Yoḥanan said: What is the meaning of that which is written:

²¹⁷ “A tithe shall you tithe [te’aser]” (Deuteronomy 14:22)? This phrase can be interpreted homiletically: Take a tithe [asser] so that you will become wealthy [titasher], in the merit of the mitzva.

²¹⁸ Rabbi Yoḥanan found the young son of Reish Lakish. He said to the boy: Recite to me your verse, i.e., the verse you studied today in school. The boy said to him: “A tithe shall you tithe.” The boy further said to Rabbi Yoḥanan: But what is the meaning of this phrase: “A tithe shall you tithe”? Rabbi Yoḥanan said to him: The verse means: Take a tithe so that you will become wealthy. The boy said to Rabbi Yoḥanan: From where do you derive that this is so? Rabbi Yoḥanan said to him: Go and test it.

²¹⁹ The boy said to him: And is it permitted to test the Holy One, Blessed be He? But isn't it written: "You shall not test the Lord your God" (Deuteronomy 6:16)? Rabbi Yoḥanan said to the boy that Rabbi Hoshaya said as follows: It is prohibited to test God in any way, except in this case of tithes, as it is stated: "Bring the whole tithe into the storeroom, that there may be food in My house, and test Me now by this, said the Lord of hosts, if I will not open for you the windows of heaven, and pour out for you a blessing that there shall be more than sufficiency" (Malachi 3:10).

²²⁰ In relation to the above verse, the Gemara asks: What is the meaning of the phrase: "That there shall be more than sufficiency [ad beli dai]"? Rami bar Ḥama said that Rav said: It means that the abundance will be so great that your lips will be worn out [yivlu], similar to the word beli, from saying enough [dai]. Returning to the above incident, the Gemara adds that the boy said to Rabbi Yoḥanan: Your claim appears explicitly in a verse. If I had arrived there, at this verse, I would not have needed you or Hoshaya your teacher, as I could have understood it on my own.

²²¹ The Gemara relates another story about the precociousness of this child. And furthermore, on a different occasion Rabbi Yoḥanan found the young son of Reish Lakish, when he was sitting and studying and he was reciting the verse: "The foolishness of man perverts his way, and his heart frets against the Lord" (Proverbs 19:3). This verse means that when someone sins and every manner of mishap befalls him, he complains and wonders why these things are happening to him.

²²² Rabbi Yoḥanan sat down and wondered aloud about this verse, saying: Is there anything that is written in the Writings that is not alluded to in the Torah at all? I cannot think of any hint of this idea in the Torah itself. The child said to him: Is that to say that this idea is really not alluded to in the Torah? But isn't it written, with regard to Joseph's brothers: "And their heart failed them and they turned trembling to one to another, saying: What is this that God has done to us?" (Genesis 42:28). This verse exemplifies the notion that when one sins and encounters troubles, he wonders why it is happening to him.

²²³ Impressed by the youth's wisdom, Rabbi Yoḥanan raised his eyes and stared at the boy. At this point, the boy's mother came and took him away, saying to him: Come away from Rabbi Yoḥanan, so that he does not do to you as he did to your father. Reish Lakish, the boy's father, died during a heated dispute with Rabbi Yoḥanan over a Torah matter. The argument ended with an offended look from Rabbi Yoḥanan which caused Reish Lakish's death, and the boy's mother was afraid that her son might suffer the same fate.

²²⁴ § After this brief digression, the Gemara turns to the fifth in the series of statements by Rabbi Yoḥanan concerning rain. Rabbi Yoḥanan said: Rain falls even for the sake of an individual, in response to the petition of a single person in need of rain, whereas a blessing of sustenance comes only for the sake of many. Rain falls even for the sake of an individual, as it is written: "The Lord will open for you His good treasure, the heavens, to give the rain of your land" (Deuteronomy 28:12). The fact that this verse is written in the second person singular demonstrates that rain can fall even for the sake of an individual. Rabbi Yoḥanan further proves that sustenance comes for the sake of many, as it is written: "Behold I will cause to rain bread from the heavens for you" (Exodus 16:4). Here, God is referring to the people in the plural form.

²²⁵ The Gemara raises an objection from a baraita: Rabbi Yosei, son of Rabbi Yehuda, says: Three good sustainers rose up for the Jewish people during the exodus from Egypt, and they are: Moses, Aaron and Miriam. And three good gifts were given from Heaven through their agency, and these are

they: The well of water, the pillar of cloud, and the manna. He elaborates: The well was given to the Jewish people in the merit of Miriam; the pillar of cloud was in the merit of Aaron; and the manna in the merit of Moses. When Miriam died the well disappeared, as it is stated: “And Miriam died there” (Numbers 20:1), and it says thereafter in the next verse: “And there was no water for the congregation” (Numbers 20:2). But the well returned in the merit of both Moses and Aaron.

²²⁶ When Aaron died the clouds of glory disappeared, as it is stated: “And the Canaanite, the king of Arad heard” (Numbers 33:40). What report did he hear? He heard that Aaron had died and the clouds of glory had disappeared, and he thought that the Jewish people were no longer protected by Heaven and therefore he had been given permission to go to war against the Jewish people. And this disappearance of the clouds is the meaning of that which is written: “And all the congregation saw that [ki] Aaron was dead” (Numbers 20:29).

²²⁷ Rabbi Abbahu said: Do not read the verse as: “And they saw [va’yiru]”; rather, read it as: And they were seen [va’yera’u], as the clouds which had concealed the Jewish people were temporarily removed. This is as Reish Lakish taught. As Reish Lakish said: The term ki actually has at least four distinct meanings: If; perhaps; but; because, or that. According to this interpretation, the verse would be rendered: And all the congregation was seen, because [ki] Aaron was dead.

²²⁸ The baraita continues: Both the well and the clouds of glory returned in the merit of Moses. However, when Moses died all of them disappeared. As it is stated: “And I cut off the three shepherds in one month” (Zechariah 11:8). But did the three shepherds really die in one month? Didn’t Miriam die in the month of Nisan, and Aaron in Av and Moses in Adar? Rather, this verse teaches us that with the death of Moses the three good gifts that were given through their agency were annulled, and all three gifts disappeared in one month, which made it seem as though all three leaders had died at the same time.

²²⁹ The Gemara explains the difficulty from this baraita. Apparently, we find that sustenance can come for the sake of an individual, as the baraita states that sustenance in the form of manna came for the sake of Moses. The Gemara answers: Moses is different, since he requested the manna for many, and therefore he was considered like many, not as an individual.

²³⁰ The Gemara relates a story concerning the aforementioned verse from Zechariah. Rav Huna bar Manoah, Rav Shmuel bar Idi, and Rav Hiyya from Vastanya were often found before Rava, as they were among his most distinguished students. When Rava died, they came before Rav Pappa to learn from him. However, as also they were great Sages, whenever Rav Pappa would say a halakha that did not sound reasonable to them, they would gesture to each other that Rav Pappa was not equal in stature to Rava. Rav Pappa was offended by their behavior.

²³¹ A verse was read to Rav Pappa in a dream: “And I cut off the three shepherds in one month” (Zechariah 11:8). The next day, when they took their leave from him, Rav Pappa said to them: May the Rabbis go in peace, a hint that this would be their final parting. Rav Pappa thought that the three Sages would die as punishment for their behavior and he would never see them again.

²³² The Gemara relates a similar incident: Rav Shimi bar Ashi was often found before Rav Pappa and would raise many objections against the opinions of Rav Pappa. One day Rav Shimi bar Ashi saw Rav Pappa fall on his face after prayer. He heard him say: May the Merciful One save me from the embarrassment of Shimi, and as a result Rav Shimi bar Ashi resolved to be silent and not to raise any further objections against Rav Pappa, as he saw how greatly they pained his teacher.

²³³ § The Gemara returns to the issue of rain. And Reish Lakish also maintains that rain can fall for the sake of an individual, as Reish Lakish said: From where is it derived that rain falls even for the sake of an individual? As it is written: “Ask of the Lord rain at the time of the last rain; even of the Lord who makes thunderclouds, and He will give them showers of rain; for a man grass in the field” (Zechariah 10:1).

²³⁴ One might have thought that rain falls for the sake of all the Jewish people. The verse therefore states: “For a man,” i.e., for the needs of an individual. And it was further taught in a baraita: If rain falls “for a man,” one might have thought that the rain is for all his fields. Therefore the verse states: “Field,” which indicates that at times it rains on only one field. If it rains on one field, one might have thought that the rain is for the entire field. This is why the verse states: “Grass”; rain can fall for the sake of even a single plant in the field.

²³⁵ This is like the practice of Rav Daniel bar Ketina, who had a certain garden. Every day he would go and inspect it, to see what it needed. He would say: This bed requires water and this bed does not require water, and rain would come and water everywhere that required water, but nowhere else.

²³⁶ With regard to the aforementioned verse, the Gemara asks: What is the meaning of the phrase: “The Lord Who makes thunderclouds”? Rabbi Yosei, son of Rabbi Ḥanina, said: This teaches that for every righteous person, the Holy One, Blessed be He, prepares a separate thundercloud. The Gemara asks: What is the precise meaning of “thunderclouds”? Rav Yehuda said: Flying clouds. Rabbi Yoḥanan said: A sign of approaching rain is flying clouds. The Gemara asks: What are flying clouds? Rav Pappa said: A flying cloud is a thin cloud under a thick cloud.

²³⁷ Rav Yehuda said that there is another sign of imminent rain: Drizzle before rain means that rain is coming. However, drizzle that falls after rain is a sign that the rain is stopping. Rav Yehuda provides an analogy by way of explanation: Drizzle before rain means that rain is coming, and your mnemonic is a sieve: Just as small quantities of flour drop from the sieve even before one begins to actively sift it, so too drizzle falls before rain. Conversely, drizzle that falls after rain signifies that the rain is stopping, and your mnemonic is goat dung. A goat’s initial droppings are large, whereas its latter droppings are small.

²³⁸ The Gemara relates that when Ulla happened to come to Babylonia, he saw flying clouds. He said to the local residents: Put away your vessels, as the rain is coming now. Ultimately, despite the presence of flying clouds, rain did not fall. He said: Just as Babylonians are liars, so too, their rains are liars, as flying clouds are a reliable sign of rain in Eretz Yisrael, but not in Babylonia.

²³⁹ The Gemara recounts another incident that occurred when Ulla happened to come to Babylonia. He saw a basket full of dates on sale for one dinar, and he said: One can buy a basket full of honey dates for a dinar, and yet these Babylonians do not occupy themselves with Torah. In a place where excellent food is so inexpensive, and where there is no need to engage in hard labor for one’s material needs, the inhabitants should be able to occupy themselves with Torah. Ulla himself ate many dates, but during the night they caused him pain and diarrhea. He subsequently said: A basket full of knives for a dinar, and yet somehow these Babylonians are able to occupy themselves with Torah, despite the trouble these dates cause.

²⁴⁰ § The Gemara discusses the source of rain. It is taught in a baraita that Rabbi Eliezer says: The entire world drinks from the waters of the ocean [okeyanos], i.e., evaporated ocean water is the source of rain. As it is stated: “And there went up a mist from the earth and watered the whole face of

the ground” (Genesis 2:6). Rabbi Yehoshua said to him: But the waters of the ocean are salty, whereas rainwater is sweet. Rabbi Eliezer said to Rabbi Yehoshua: The waters are sweetened in the clouds, before they fall to the earth.

²⁴¹ In contrast, Rabbi Yehoshua says: The entire world drinks from the upper waters, as it is stated: “And it drinks water as the rain of heaven comes down” (Deuteronomy 11:11). The baraita asks: But according to the opinion of Rabbi Yehoshua, how do I uphold the verse: “And there went up a mist from the earth”? Rabbi Yehoshua could answer that this verse teaches that the clouds grow stronger, and rise to the firmament, and open their mouths like a leather bottle, and receive the rain waters from above, as it is stated: “For He draws away the drops of water, which distill rain from His vapor” (Job 36:27).

²⁴² And the clouds are perforated like a sieve, and they come and sprinkle water onto the ground, as it is stated: “Gathering of waters, thick clouds of the skies” (II Samuel 22:12). And between each and every drop there is only a hairbreadth, and yet each drop emerges individually. This serves to teach you that the day of rains is as great as the day on which Heaven and Earth were created, i.e., rainfall is as miraculous as creation.

²⁴³ As it is stated, with regard to the creation of the world: “Who does great things past finding out” (Job 9:10), and as an example of this it is written: “Who gives rain upon the earth” (Job 5:9–10). And it is written below: “Have you not known? Have you not heard that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, does not faint and is not weary; His discernment is past finding out” (Isaiah 40:28). The repetition of “past finding out” indicates that rainfall is as wondrous as the creation of the world. The Gemara adds: And it is written in a psalm that deals with rainfall: “Who by Your strength sets fast the mountains; Who is girded about with might” (Psalms 65:7).

²⁴⁴ The Gemara asks: In accordance with whose opinion is that verse which is written: “Who waters the mountains from His upper chambers” (Psalms 104:13)? And Rabbi Yoḥanan said: This phrase indicates that the water comes from the upper chambers of the Holy One, Blessed be He. In accordance with whose opinion is this statement? It is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehoshua, who maintains that rain falls from above the sky.

²⁴⁵ The Gemara asks: And Rabbi Eliezer, how does he explain this verse? The Gemara answers: According to Rabbi Eliezer, since the clouds ascend there, to the heavens, the verse “who waters the mountains from His upper chambers” calls and describes rainfall as descending from the heavens. As, if you do not say so, with regard to the verse: “Powder and dust from the heavens” (Deuteronomy 28:24), where do you find this phenomenon? Is there powder and dust in Heaven? Rather, you must say that since dust rises up there, they are called dust: “From the heavens.” So too, as the clouds ascend there, they are called and described: “Who waters the mountains from His upper chambers.”

²⁴⁶ The Gemara asks: In accordance with whose opinion is that which Rabbi Ḥanina said, concerning the verse: “He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap; he lays up the deep in storerooms” (Psalms 33:7): What caused the storerooms to be filled with produce? It was the deep, which is the source of the water that nourishes the produce. The Gemara answers: This explanation is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Eliezer. And Rabbi Yehoshua, how does he explain this verse? Rabbi Yehoshua would say: That

²⁴⁷ verse deals with the creation of the world, when all the water was contained in the deep.

²⁴⁸ The Sages taught in a baraita: Eretz Yisrael was created first and the rest of the entire world was created afterward, as it is stated: “While as yet He had not made the land, nor the fields” (Proverbs 8:26). Here, and in the following statements, the term “land” is understood as a reference to the Land of Israel, while “the fields” means all the fields in other lands. Furthermore, Eretz Yisrael is watered by the Holy One, Blessed be He, Himself, and the rest of the entire world is watered through an intermediary, as it is stated: “Who gives rain upon the land, and sends water upon the fields” (Job 5:10).

²⁴⁹ Additionally, Eretz Yisrael drinks rainwater and the rest of the entire world drinks from the remaining residue of rainwater left in the clouds, as it is stated that God is He “who gives rain upon the land” and only afterward takes what is left “and sends water upon the fields.” Eretz Yisrael drinks first, and the rest of the entire world afterward, as it is stated: “Who gives rain upon the land and sends water upon the fields.” There is a parable that illustrates this: A person who kneads his cheese after it has curdled takes the food and leaves the refuse.

²⁵⁰ The Master said above: The ocean waters are sweetened in the clouds. The Gemara asks: From where does Rabbi Eliezer derive this? The Gemara answers that Rav Yitzḥak bar Yosef said that Rabbi Yoḥanan said that it is written: “Darkness [ḥeshkhat] of waters, thick clouds of the skies” (Psalms 18:12). And it is written, in a similar verse: “Gathering of [ḥashrat] waters, thick clouds of the skies” (II Samuel 22:12).

²⁵¹ The Gemara explains the significance of this minor variation. These two phrases vary in only one word, which themselves differ by only one letter, a kaf for a reish. If you join the two versions together, and take the letter kaf from the first version and place it with the second version of the word, which has a reish, you can read into the verse a new word meaning rendering fit [ḥakhsharat]. Accordingly, the verse can be interpreted as: The rendering fit of water is performed in the clouds of the sky.

²⁵² The Gemara asks: And Rabbi Yehoshua, with regard to these verses, what does he learn from them? The Gemara answers that Rabbi Yehoshua holds in accordance with the opinion of this Sage, Rav Dimi. As when Rav Dimi came from Eretz Yisrael to Babylonia, he said that they say in the West, Eretz Yisrael: When clouds are bright, they have little water; when clouds are dark, they have much water. Accordingly, Rabbi Yehoshua explains that when there is “a darkness of waters” in the clouds, there is also “a gathering of waters,” as rain will fall from them.

²⁵³ The Gemara asks: In accordance with whose opinion is that which is taught in a baraita: The upper waters do not stand in any defined place; rather, they are suspended by the word of God, and their fruit is rainwater, as it is stated: “Who waters the mountains from His upper chambers; the earth is full of the fruit of Your works” (Psalms 104:13). In accordance with whose opinion is this statement? It is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehoshua. And Rabbi Eliezer, how does he explain this verse? Rabbi Eliezer could say: That verse from Psalms is written with regard to the handiwork of the Holy One, Blessed be He, not the upper waters.

²⁵⁴ Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: The entire world drinks from the runoff of the Garden of Eden, as it is stated: “And a river went out of Eden to water the garden” (Genesis 2:10). It was taught in a baraita: From the runoff of a beit kor, a field in which a kor of seed can be planted, which is approximately seventy-five thousand square cubits, a field in which a half-se’a [tarkav], of seed can be sown, i.e. one-sixtieth the size of a beit kor, can be watered. If the runoff from a beit kor is

sufficient for a field one-sixtieth its size, it can be inferred that the rest of the world is one-sixtieth the size of the Garden of Eden.

²⁵⁵ The Sages taught in a baraita: The area of the land of Egypt is four hundred parasangs [parsa] by four hundred parasangs. And this is one sixtieth the size of Cush, and Cush itself is one sixtieth the size of the rest of the world. And the world is one sixtieth of the Garden of Eden, and the Garden of Eden is one sixtieth of Eden itself, and Eden is one sixtieth of Gehenna. You find that the entire world is like a pot cover for Gehenna, as Eden, which is far larger than the rest of the world, is only one sixtieth the size of Gehenna. And some say: Gehenna has no measure. And some say that Eden has no measure.

²⁵⁶ Rabbi Oshaya said: What is the meaning of that which is written about Babylonia: “You who dwells on many waters, abundant in storehouses” (Jeremiah 51:13)? What caused Babylonia to have storehouses full of grain? You must say that it is due to the fact that it resides on many waters, the Tigris and the Euphrates Rivers, which render its land easy to irrigate. Similarly, Rav said: Babylonia is wealthy since it can grow crops for harvest even without rain. Abaye said: We hold that it is better for a land to be swampy like Babylonia, and not dry, as crops in Babylonia grow all year.

²⁵⁷ MISHNA: On the third of the month of Marḥeshvan one starts to request rain by inserting the phrase: And give dew and rain, in the blessing of the years, the ninth blessing of the Amida. Rabban Gamliel says: One starts to request rain on the seventh of Marḥeshvan, which is fifteen days after the festival of Sukkot. Rabban Gamliel explains that one waits these extra four days so that the last pilgrim of the Jewish people, who traveled to Jerusalem on foot for the Festival, can reach the Euphrates River without being inconvenienced by rain on his journey home.

²⁵⁸ GEMARA: Rabbi Elazar said: The halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Rabban Gamliel, that one does not begin to request rain until the seventh of Marḥeshvan. It is taught in a baraita that Ḥananya says: And in the Diaspora one does not begin to request rain until sixty days into the season, i.e., sixty days after the autumnal equinox. Rav Huna bar Ḥiyya said that Shmuel said: The halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Ḥananya.

²⁵⁹ The Gemara asks: Is that so? But they raised a dilemma before Shmuel: From when does one mention: And give dew and rain? He said to them: From when they bring wood into the house of Tavut the bird hunter [rishba]. This is apparently a different date than that mentioned by Ḥananya. The Gemara suggests: Perhaps this and that are one measure of time, i.e., Shmuel merely provided a sign of sixty days after the autumnal equinox.

²⁶⁰ A dilemma was raised before the Sages: Is the sixtieth day itself treated as part of the period before the sixtieth day or is it included in the period after the sixtieth day? The Gemara answers. Come and hear that there is a dispute in this regard. Rav said: The sixtieth day is part of the period after the sixtieth day, and Shmuel said: The sixtieth day is part of the period before the sixtieth.

²⁶¹ Rav Naḥman bar Yitzḥak said: And your mnemonic to remember the divergent opinions is: Those above require water; those below do not require water. Since water flows downward, those who live in low places receive their water from above and are generally in less need of additional water. Accordingly, Shmuel, who lived in the lowlands of Babylonia, ruled that one begins to request for rain later, whereas Rav, who studied in Eretz Yisrael, which is higher in elevation and has a greater need for rain, stated an earlier date. Rav Pappa said: The halakha is that the sixtieth day is part of the

period after the sixtieth day, as stated by Rav, and therefore one begins to mention the request for rain on the sixtieth day after the autumnal equinox.

²⁶² MISHNA: If the seventeenth of Marḥeshvan arrived and rain has not fallen, individuals, but not the entire community, begin to fast three fasts for rain. How are these fasts conducted? As the fast begins in the morning, one may eat and drink after dark, and one is permitted during the days of the fasts themselves to engage in the performance of work, in bathing, in smearing oil on one's body, in wearing shoes, and in conjugal relations. If the New Moon of Kislev arrived and rain has still not fallen, the court decrees three fasts on the entire community. Similar to the individual fasts, everyone may eat and drink after dark, and they are permitted to engage in the performance of work, in bathing, in smearing one's body with oil, in wearing shoes, and in conjugal relations.

²⁶³ GEMARA: The Gemara asks: Who are these individuals mentioned in the mishna? Rav Huna said: This is referring to the Sages, who are held to a higher standard and are expected to undertake fasts even when ordinary people do not. And Rav Huna further said: The individuals who fast the three fasts do so on a Monday, and on the next Thursday, and again on the following Monday.

²⁶⁴ The Gemara asks: What is Rav Huna teaching us? We already learned this (15b): The court may not decree a fast on the community starting from a Thursday, so as not to cause an increase in prices. Rather, the first three fasts are established on Monday, and Thursday, and Monday. What does Rav Huna's statement add to this ruling?

²⁶⁵ The Gemara answers: Rav Huna's comment is necessary, lest you say that this applies only to a community, but that in the case of an individual, no, the series of three fasts does not have to start on a Monday. This opinion is also taught in a baraita with regard to those mentioned in the mishna: When the individuals begin to fast, they fast on a Monday, a Thursday, and a Monday. And if one of the fast days occurs on a day with special observances, they interrupt the sequence for New Moons,

²⁶⁶ and for commemorative holidays that are written in Megillat Ta'anit, which contains a list of dates on which the Sages prohibited fasting.

²⁶⁷ The Sages taught in a baraita: A person should not say: I am only a student, and consequently I am unworthy to be considered an individual who fasts, as stated in the mishna. Rather, with regard to the fasts of individuals, all Torah scholars are individuals. The baraita elaborates: Who is an individual and who is a student? An individual is anyone who is learned in Torah and worthy to be appointed leader and teacher over the community. A student is any Torah scholar who is asked a matter of halakha in his studies and he says the correct answer, and this is the case even if he is familiar only with the tractate of the kalla month, i.e., the tractate the community studied that year.

²⁶⁸ The Sages taught in another baraita: Not everyone who wishes to make himself an individual and conduct himself accordingly may do so, and nor may everyone who wants to act like a student do so. This is the statement of Rabbi Meir. Rabbi Yosei says: One may do so, and he is even remembered for good, as the conduct of a Torah student is not a source of praise for him, but it is a source of pain for him. It is proper for one to take these obligations upon himself and he is not considered to be acting inappropriately.

²⁶⁹ It is taught in another baraita: Not everyone who wishes to make himself an individual may do so, and nor may everyone who wishes to act like a student do so. This is the statement of Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar. Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says: In what case is this statement said? It is said

with regard to a matter of praise, e.g., adorning oneself with the garments of a Torah scholar. However, with regard to a matter of pain, when Torah scholars act strictly, one may do so, and one who acts strictly is remembered for good, as it is not a source of praise for him, but it is a source of pain for him.

²⁷⁰ The Sages taught in a baraita: With regard to one who was fasting for a certain trouble and the trouble passed, or if one was fasting for the recovery of a sick person and that person was healed, one may not cease his fast merely because its cause has been removed; rather, he completes his fast. The baraita continues: With regard to one who goes from a place where they are not fasting to a place where they are fasting, he fasts with them. Conversely, with regard to one who goes from a place where they are fasting to a place where they are not fasting, he completes his fast as a resident of his hometown.

²⁷¹ With regard to one who forgot the fast and ate and drank, he should not show himself before the community while satiated, and he should not indulge in luxuries. One should not think that because one has already eaten, his fast is completely nullified, and one may conduct himself as if it were not a fast day at all. Rather, one should minimize one's eating, as it is stated: "And Jacob said to his sons: Why do you show yourselves?" (Genesis 42:1). Jacob said to his sons: Do not show yourselves when you are satiated, not before the members of the house of Esau, nor before those of Ishmael, so that they not be jealous of you, as they suffer from hunger. This teaches that one should not show he is full when others are hungry.

²⁷² § The Gemara presents another piece of advice related to the story of Joseph and his brothers. Joseph said to them: "See that you not fall out by the way" (Genesis 45:24). Rabbi Elazar said that Joseph said to his brothers: Do not become occupied in a matter of halakha, lest you fall out on the way. If you discuss a halakha while traveling you might get into an argument, and it is important for travelers to remain on good terms.

²⁷³ The Gemara asks: Is that so? But didn't Rabbi Elai bar Berekhya say: With regard to two Torah scholars who are walking along the road and there are no Torah matters discussed between them, they are worthy of being burned, as it is stated: "And it came to pass, as they still went on, and talked, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, which parted them both asunder" (II Kings 2:11). The reason that the chariot of fire did not harm Elisha is because there was a Torah matter between them, from which it may be inferred that had they not been discussing a Torah matter, they would have been worthy of being burned.

²⁷⁴ The Gemara answers: This is not difficult. This opinion of Rabbi Elai bar Berekhya is referring to studying by rote, by reviewing material one has already learned, which is permitted and even appropriate while traveling, whereas that opinion of Rabbi Elazar is referring to examining a halakha in depth, in which case it is likely that the scholars will come into conflict.

²⁷⁵ It is taught in a baraita that Joseph said to his brothers: Do not take long strides and bring the sun into the city, i.e., you should enter the city to spend the night there before the sun has set. The Gemara elaborates: Do not take long strides, as the Master said: A long stride takes away one five-hundredth of a person's eyesight, and this loss is not worth the time saved.

²⁷⁶ The Gemara further explains: And bring the sun into the city, this is in accordance with a statement that Rav Yehuda said that Rav said. As Rav Yehuda said that Rav said: A person should always leave the place where he has spent the night with "it is good" (Genesis 1:4), i.e., after sunrise,

as the Torah uses the expression “it is good” with regard to the creation of light. This goodness is manifest in the sense of security one feels when it is light. And likewise, when one comes into an unfamiliar city he should enter with “it is good,” before sunset, as it is stated: “As soon as the morning was light, the men were sent away” (Genesis 44:3).

²⁷⁷ Similarly, Rav Yehuda said that Rabbi Ḥiyya said: One who is walking along the road should not eat more each day than he would normally eat each day in a year of famine. The Gemara asks: What is the reason for this? Here in Babylonia they interpreted that the reason is due to one’s bowels. Since the exertion of traveling can damage full bowels, it is preferable to eat less than the normal amount. In the West, Eretz Yisrael, they say that the reason is due to food, i.e., if one eats too much, his food may not last the entire journey, and therefore he should ration his meals. The Gemara asks: What is the practical difference between these two opinions? The Gemara answers: The practical difference between them

²⁷⁸ is in a case where he is sitting in a boat. The traveler must be concerned about his food supply, but he need not worry that the jostling of the road might force him to exert himself, which has a tendency to cause digestive problems. Alternatively, the practical difference is in a case where he is traveling from station [avna] to station. Here the exertion of the road might cause digestive problems, but one need not be concerned about running out of food, as he can resupply along the way.

²⁷⁹ The Gemara relates that when Rav Pappa traveled, along each and every parasang he would eat one loaf of bread. Rav Pappa did so because he maintained that the prohibition was due to the bowels, and as he was healthy he was not concerned that travel by road would irritate his digestion.

²⁸⁰ Rav Yehuda said that Rav said: Anyone who has food for himself but nevertheless starves himself in years of famine will be saved from an unusual death, as it is stated: “In famine, He will redeem you from death” (Job 5:20). This is derived from the precise wording of the verse. According to its straightforward meaning, instead of “in famine,” it should have said: From famine, as one is delivered from famine. Rather, this is what the verse is saying: As a reward for starving himself in years of famine, Job will be saved from an unusual death.

²⁸¹ Similarly, Reish Lakish said: It is prohibited for a person to have conjugal relations in years of famine, so that children not be born during these difficult years. As it is stated: “And to Joseph were born two sons before the year of famine came” (Genesis 41:50). It was taught in a baraita: Nevertheless, those without children may have marital relations in years of famine, as they must strive to fulfill the mitzva to be fruitful and multiply.

²⁸² Likewise, the Sages taught in a baraita: When the Jewish people is immersed in distress, and one of them separates himself from the community and does not share their suffering, the two ministering angels who accompany a person come and place their hands on his head, as though he was an offering, and say: This man, so-and-so, who has separated himself from the community, let him not see the consolation of the community.

²⁸³ A similar idea is taught in another baraita: When the community is immersed in suffering, a person may not say: I will go to my home and I will eat and drink, and peace be upon you, my soul. And if he does so, the verse says about him: “And behold joy and gladness, slaying oxen and killing sheep, eating flesh and drinking wine; let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we shall die” (Isaiah 22:13). And the prophecy continues with what is written afterward, in the following verse: “And the Lord of

hosts revealed Himself in my ears: Surely this iniquity shall not be expiated by you until you die” (Isaiah 22:14).

²⁸⁴ The baraita comments: Up to this point is the attribute of middling people, who merely exclude themselves from the suffering of the community. However, with regard to the attribute of wicked people, what is written about those who hope for more of these days? “Come, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and tomorrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant” (Isaiah 56:12). And what is written afterward? “The righteous perishes, and no man lays it to heart, and godly men are taken away, none considering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come” (Isaiah 57:1). This verse teaches that righteous people suffer early death to prevent them from witnessing the harm that will befall these evil people.

²⁸⁵ The baraita continues: Rather, a person should be distressed together with the community. As we found with Moses our teacher that he was distressed together with the community, as it is stated during the war with Amalek: “But Moses’ hands were heavy; and they took a stone, and put it under him, and he sat upon it” (Exodus 17:12). But didn’t Moses have one pillow or one cushion to sit upon; why was he forced to sit on a rock? Rather, Moses said as follows: Since the Jewish people are immersed in suffering, I too will be with them in suffering, as much as I am able, although I am not participating in the fighting. The baraita adds: And anyone who is distressed together with the community will merit seeing the consolation of the community.

²⁸⁶ The baraita further states: And lest a person say, I have acted in secret; who will testify against me on the Day of Judgment? The tanna explains that the stones of a person’s house and the beams of a person’s house will testify against him, as it is stated: “For a stone shall cry out from the wall, and a beam out of the timber shall answer it” (Habakkuk 2:11). In the school of Rabbi Sheila they say: The two ministering angels who accompany a person will testify against him, as it is stated: “For He will give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways” (Psalms 91:11).

²⁸⁷ Rabbi Ḥidka said: A person’s soul will testify against him, as it is stated: “Keep the doors of your mouth from her who lies in your bosom” (Micah 7:5). And some say: A man’s limbs will testify against him, as it is stated: “You are My witnesses, says the Lord” (Isaiah 43:10).

²⁸⁸ The baraita cites another verse that deals with judgment. “A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, He is just and righteous” (Deuteronomy 32:4). The baraita interprets “a God of faithfulness” to mean that just as punishment is exacted from the wicked in the World-to-Come even for a light transgression that they commit, so too, punishment is exacted from the righteous in this world for a light transgression that they commit. The righteous suffer their punishment in this world to purify them so they can enjoy the World-to-Come.

²⁸⁹ The baraita turns to the second section of the verse: “And without iniquity.” This teaches that just as reward is paid to the righteous in the World-to-Come even for a minor mitzva that they fulfill, so too, reward is paid to the wicked in this world for even a minor mitzva that they fulfill, to give the wicked all the reward they deserve for the performance of mitzvot in this world, and deprive them of any share in the World-to-Come.

²⁹⁰ With regard to the third section of the verse: “He is just and righteous,” the Sages said: At the hour of a person’s departure to his eternal home, all his deeds are enumerated before him and are rendered visible to him once again, and the deeds themselves say to him: You did such and such, in such and such a place, on such and such a day, and he says: Yes, that is exactly what happened. And

they say to him: Sign a statement that this is correct, and he signs it, as it is stated: “He makes the hand of every man sign” (Job 37:7). And not only that, but after one has been shown all his deeds, he justifies the judgment upon himself, and says to them: You have judged me well. This response serves to fulfill that which is stated: “That You may be justified when You speak and be right when You judge” (Psalms 51:6).

²⁹¹ § The Gemara returns to the primary topic of the tractate, the issue of fasts. Shmuel said: Whoever sits in observance of a fast is called a sinner, as it is inappropriate to take unnecessary suffering upon oneself. The Gemara comments: Shmuel holds in accordance with the opinion of the following tanna, as it is taught in a baraita: Rabbi Elazar HaKappar the Great says: What is the meaning when the verse states, with regard to a nazirite: “And he will atone for him for that he sinned by the soul [nefesh]” (Numbers 6:11). But with what soul did this nazirite sin? Rather, the nazirite sinned by the distress he caused himself when he abstained from wine, in accordance with the terms of his vow.

²⁹² And are these matters not inferred a fortiori? And if this nazirite, who distressed himself by abstaining only from wine, is nevertheless called a sinner and requires atonement, then with regard to one who distresses himself by abstaining from each and every matter of food and drink when he fasts, all the more so should he be considered a sinner.

²⁹³ Conversely, Rabbi Elazar says: One who accepts a fast upon himself is called sacred, as it is stated with regard to the nazirite: “He shall be sacred, he shall let the locks of the hair of his head grow long” (Numbers 6:5). Here too, one can apply an a fortiori inference: And if this nazirite, who distressed himself by abstaining from only one matter, wine, is nevertheless called sacred, then with regard to one who distresses himself by abstaining from every matter, all the more so should he be considered sacred.

²⁹⁴ The Gemara asks: And according to the opinion of Shmuel, the nazirite is indeed called sacred, as stated by Rabbi Elazar. The Gemara answers: That verse is referring to the sanctity of the growth of the locks, as the nazirite’s hair does possess an element of sanctity, but it does not refer to the nazirite himself. The Gemara reverses the question: And according to the opinion of Rabbi Elazar, the nazirite is called a sinner. The Gemara answers: That verse refers specifically to a nazirite who rendered himself ritually impure by coming into contact with a dead body, an act that is prohibited for him. This particular nazirite must bring an offering to atone “for that he sinned by the soul.”

²⁹⁵ The Gemara asks: And did Rabbi Elazar actually say this, that fasting is a virtuous act? But didn’t Rabbi Elazar say: A person should always consider himself

²⁹⁶ as though a sacred object is immersed in his bowels, which he may not damage, as it is stated: “The sacred is in your midst; and I will not come into the city” (Hosea 11:9). This statement indicates that it is prohibited to take a fast upon oneself. The Gemara answers: This is not difficult. This first ruling, that one who fasts is sacred, is referring to a case where he is able to distress himself without causing bodily harm. That second ruling, that one may not overly burden his body, deals with a situation when he is unable to distress himself while avoiding all harm, and he proceeds to fast nevertheless.

²⁹⁷ Reish Lakish said: One who fasts is called pious, as it is stated: “The pious man does good [gomel] to his own soul; but he who troubles his own flesh is cruel” (Proverbs 11:17). The verb gomel can also mean weaning, or abstaining from unnecessary pleasure. Accordingly, Reish Lakish

derives from this verse that one who abstains from food is called pious. Similarly, Rav Sheshet said: This student of a Torah academy who sits in observance of a fast has let a dog eat his portion. Since his fast weakens him and prevents him from studying Torah, it is considered as though a dog ate his meal, as the student derived no benefit from it.

²⁹⁸ Rav Yirmeya bar Abba said: There is no completely stringent communal fast in Babylonia, except for the Ninth of Av alone. All other fasts, even those which are fixed and routine for the community, are treated as individual fasts, with regard to both the customs of the fast itself and the halakhot of who is obligated to fast. Rav Yirmeya bar Abba said that Reish Lakish said: A Torah scholar is not permitted to sit in observance of a fast, due to the fact that his fasting reduces his strength for the heavenly service of Torah study and mitzvot.

²⁹⁹ § The mishna taught that during the first set of fasts they eat and drink from after dark, and begin fasting in the morning. Rabbi Zeira said that Rav Huna said: With regard to an individual who took a fast upon himself, even if he ate and drank the entire night, on the following day he prays in the Amida the prayer of a fast, which begins: Answer us on the day of our fast. If after completing his fast he slept in his fast, i.e., he continued fasting throughout the night, he does not pray the prayer of a fast the next morning.

³⁰⁰ Rav Yosef said: What does Rav Huna maintain in this regard? Does he hold that one does not fast for only a few hours, i.e., that fasts that do not last from daybreak until nightfall are not considered fasts at all, and therefore these extra hours of the night are not part of his fast, or perhaps he holds that one does fast for a few hours, but one who fasts for a few hours does not pray the prayer of a fast?

³⁰¹ Abaye said to Rav Yosef: Actually, Rav Huna holds that one does fast for hours, and one who fasts for a few hours does pray the prayer of a fast. But it is different here, as there are hours of the night that he did not take upon himself at the outset. Since one must take an individual fast upon himself beforehand, if he merely continues his fast into the night, these extra hours are not part of his obligation, and therefore he does not add the special prayer for a fast, Aneinu, on the following morning.

³⁰² § The Gemara relates: Mar Ukva happened to come to the city of Ginzak. The inhabitants of Ginzak, among other matters, asked him three questions to which he did not know the answer: First, does one fast for hours, or does one not fast for hours? Mar Ukva did not have an answer readily available. Second, are the clay jars belonging to gentiles, which have been used for storing wine, permanently prohibited, or can they be rendered permitted? He did not have an answer readily available. Thirdly, in what garments did Moses serve all seven days of inauguration, as the acting priest when Aaron and his sons were initiated into the priesthood? Once again, he did not have an answer readily available.

³⁰³ Mar Ukva went and asked these questions in the study hall. They said to him: The halakha is: One fasts for hours, and he even prays the prayer of a fast. And the halakha is that the jars belonging to gentiles are permitted after they have not been used at all for twelve months. Finally, in what garments did Moses serve all seven days of inauguration? He did not serve in his own clothes, nor in the regular priestly garments, but in a special white cloak. Rav Kahana taught: Moses served in a white cloak that does not have a hem.

³⁰⁴ Rav H̥isda said:

³⁰⁵ The halakha is that which you said, that one may fast for a few hours, provided that one took a fast of a few hours upon himself, and that he fasted and did not taste anything until the evening. Abaye said to Rav Ḥisda: This ruling is obvious, since it is a full-fledged fast, as one ultimately fasts the entire day. Rav Ḥisda answered: No, it is necessary to say this halakha in a case where he changed his mind, i.e., he began the day without intending to fast, but for various reasons he did not eat, and halfway through the day he decided to continue fasting for another few hours until nightfall. Rav Ḥisda maintains that this kind of fasting for hours is considered a fast.

³⁰⁶ And Rav Ḥisda said: Any fast upon which the sun does not set, i.e., when one eats in the middle of the day, it is not called a fast at all. The Gemara raises an objection: The members of the priestly watch, the priests and Levites who are serving in the Temple that week, fast on a communal fast, like the members of the non-priestly watch who are attached to specific groups of priests, but they do not complete the fast with the rest of the community. This indicates that even a fast lasting only a few hours is called a fast. The Gemara explains: There they abstained from food merely to cause themselves distress, as an act of solidarity with the rest of the community, but this was not considered a full-fledged fast.

³⁰⁷ The Gemara cites another proof: Come and hear, as Rabbi Elazar, son of Rabbi Tzadok, said: I am a descendant of Senaah, son of the tribe of Benjamin, and once the Ninth of Av occurred on Shabbat, and we postponed the fast until after Shabbat, as Shabbat supersedes the fast of the Ninth of Av. And we fasted on that day, but we did not complete the fast, due to the fact that the tenth of Av is a holiday of ours, a private holiday for our family (26a), and one does not fast on holidays. This proves that a fast of only a few hours is nevertheless called a fast. The Gemara rejects this claim: There too, they did so merely to cause themselves distress.

³⁰⁸ The Gemara again attempts to disprove the opinion of Rav Ḥisda, this time by citing a custom of Rabbi Yoḥanan: Come and hear, as Rabbi Yoḥanan occasionally said: I shall be in observance of a fast until I come to my house. This indicates that one can take a fast upon himself even for just a few hours. The Gemara rejects this proof as well: There he did this to excuse himself from the household of the Nasi. At times, Rabbi Yoḥanan received an invitation to dine at the house of the Nasi, but wanted to decline. To avoid insulting the Nasi, he would say that he had taken a fast upon himself, and afterward he would eat at home. Since this was not a real fast, it is not proof of the legitimacy of a partial-day fast.

³⁰⁹ Shmuel said: Any fast that one did not take upon himself while it was still day is not called a fast. The Gemara asks: And if one happened to sit in observance of a fast that day, what is that considered? Rabba bar Sheila said: He is likened to a bellows that is full of air. His behavior does not constitute a fast, as he is merely a container full of air, without food.

³¹⁰ § The Gemara asks: When does one take a fast upon himself? Rav said: One takes a fast upon himself in the afternoon of the day preceding the fast, from midday onward. And Shmuel said: One must take a fast upon himself for the following day at the end of the afternoon prayer. Rav Yosef said: It stands to reason that the halakha should be in accordance with the opinion of Shmuel, as it is written in Megillat Ta'anit, after a list of all of the Festivals established by the Sages in commemoration of various events throughout Jewish history: Therefore, whoever has bound himself beforehand with an obligation to fast on one of these commemorative days, he will be bound.

³¹¹ The Gemara explains the apparent proof from the text of Megillat Ta'anit. What, is it not the case that this means that he binds himself to the obligation at the time of prayer, and if he did not do so at that point in time his fast does not go into effect? The Gemara rejects this explanation: No; the text should be amended by one letter so that it does not read yeisar, he shall bind himself, but yei'aser, he shall render himself prohibited from transgressing these instructions. In other words, the text is explaining that despite a prior vow to fast, it is prohibited for one to do so on the commemorative days enumerated in Megillat Ta'anit.

³¹² The Gemara comments: Rabbi Hiyya and Rabbi Shimon, son of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi, disagree with regard to this dispute. One of them said that the text of Megillat Ta'anit reads: He will be bound, and the other one said that it reads: He will be prohibited. The one who said: He will be bound, this is as we just say. However, according to the one who said: He will be prohibited, what does it mean?

³¹³ The Gemara explains: This is as it is taught in Megillat Ta'anit: Whoever has taken upon himself beforehand to fast on one of these Festival days, he will be prohibited to eat and drink. How so? With regard to an individual who took upon himself to fast on each Monday, Thursday, and Monday series of the entire year, and the commemorative holidays written in Megillat Ta'anit occurred on these days, if his vow preceded our decree, i.e., the decree of the Sages establishing these commemorative days, his vow annuls our decree and he must fast, but if our decree preceded his vow, our decree annuls his vow and he may not fast on those days.

³¹⁴ The Sages taught in a baraita: Until when may one eat and drink on communal fasts, when one fasts during the day but not the preceding evening? Until dawn. This is the statement of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi. Rabbi Elazar, son of Rabbi Shimon, says: Until the call of the rooster, which is before dawn. Abaye said: They taught this ruling, that one may eat all night, only if he has not finished his evening meal, as he may continue eating the same meal all night. However, if he has finished his meal, he may not eat any more.

³¹⁵ Rava raised an objection to Abaye from a baraita: If one finished his meal and stood up, nevertheless, he may eat more. This shows that one may in fact eat throughout the night, even if he has finished his meal. Abaye answered: There the baraita is referring to a situation where he has not yet removed or cleared the table, and therefore it is as though he has not yet finished his meal. Some say a slightly different version of this discussion. Rava said: They taught this ruling only if he did not sleep after eating, but if he slept he may not eat anything else that night. Abaye raised an objection to Rava from a baraita: If one slept and arose from his sleep during the night, he may eat. Rava explained: There the baraita is referring to one who was merely dozing, and was not fully asleep.

³¹⁶ The Gemara asks: What are the circumstances of dozing? Rav Ashi said:

³¹⁷ One is asleep but not fully asleep, awake but not fully awake. This means that if they call him he will answer, but he cannot give a coherent reason. And when we remind him of something that just happened he remembers it.

³¹⁸ Rav Kahana said that Rav said: An individual who took a fast upon himself is prohibited to engage in the wearing of shoes on the day of his fast. The reason is that we are concerned that perhaps he took a communal fast upon himself, and wearing shoes is prohibited on communal fast days. The Gemara asks: How should one act, to avoid this problem? Rabba bar Rav Sheila said: Let him recite this formula: Tomorrow I shall be before You in the observance of an individual fast.

³¹⁹ The Gemara relates: The Sages said to Rav Sheshet, who was blind: We see Sages who wear their shoes and go to the study house on a communal fast day. This shows that there is no need to be concerned about this prohibition. Rav Sheshet became angry and said to them: Perhaps they even ate, if you saw them treating the fast lightly.

³²⁰ The Gemara further relates: Abaye and Rava would enter the synagogue while wearing sandals on the leather [apanta] of their shoes, i.e., they would wear their shoes upside down. Mareimar and Mar Zutra would switch the right shoe for the left and the left for the right. By contrast, the Sages of the school of Rav Ashi would go out wearing shoes in their usual manner. They hold in accordance with that which Shmuel said: The only completely stringent communal fast in Babylonia is the Ninth of Av alone. Therefore, in Babylonia there is no need to be concerned that one might have taken a communal fast upon himself.

³²¹ The Gemara discusses another topic related to fasts. Rav Yehuda said that Rav said: A person may borrow his fast and repay, i.e., if one is unable to fast on the specific day he intended to fast, he may annul his fast for that day and fast on another day instead. Rav Yehuda related: When I said this halakha before Shmuel, he said to me: And did he take a vow upon himself, which would mean that it is not possible for him not to repay it? He took upon himself to cause himself discomfort on that day. If he is able, he must cause himself discomfort; if he is unable, he does not need to cause himself discomfort, in which case he need not repay the fast.

³²² Some say a different version of this discussion. Rav Yehuda said that Rav said: One may borrow his fast and repay. When I said this halakha before Shmuel, he said to me: This is obvious. Let it be considered only a vow; even so, is he not required to repay a vow on the next day or on another day? Since a commitment to fast is a type of vow, he is obligated to repay it at some point in time.

³²³ The Gemara relates: Rav Yehoshua, son of Rav Idi, happened to visit the house of Rav Asi. They prepared a third-born calf, whose meat is high quality, for him. They said to him: Let the Master taste something. He said to them: I am sitting in the observance of a fast and may not eat. They said to him: And let the Master borrow and repay the fast. Doesn't the Master hold in accordance with this halakha that Rav Yehuda said that Rav said: A person may borrow his fast and repay? Rav Yehoshua, son of Rav Idi, said to them: It is a fast for a dream. He was fasting to rectify the negative effects of a bad dream he had experienced the night before.

³²⁴ The Gemara explains the relevance of this last comment. And Rabba bar Meḥasseya said that Rav Ḥama bar Gurya said that Rav said: A fast is effective to neutralize a bad dream like fire is effective for burning chaff. Rav Ḥisda said: The fast is effective specifically on that day that one dreamed. And Rav Yosef said: And one suffering from a bad dream is permitted to fast even on Shabbat. The Gemara asks: What is the remedy for one who has denigrated Shabbat by fasting? Let him sit in observance of another fast, on another day, to atone for his fast on Shabbat.

³²⁵ MISHNA: If these three regular fasts have passed and they have not been answered with rain, the court decrees three other fasts upon the community. These are severe fasts, in which one may eat and drink only while it is still day, before the beginning of the night of the fast, and on the day of the fast itself they are prohibited to engage in the performance of work, in bathing, in smearing with oil, in wearing shoes, and in marital relations; and they lock the bathhouses so that no one should come to bathe on that day.

³²⁶ If these three fasts have passed and they still have not been answered, the court decrees on them another seven fasts, which are a total of thirteen fasts, upon the community, not including the first three fasts observed by individuals. These seven fast days are more severe than the first ones, as on these days, in addition to all the earlier stringencies, they sound the alarm, as will be explained in the Gemara, and they lock the stores. Although shops must remain closed most of the time on these days, on Monday they open them a little at nightfall to allow people to purchase food for breaking their fast, and on Thursday they are permitted to open the stores all day in deference to Shabbat, so that people may purchase food for the sacred day.

³²⁷ If these fasts have passed and they have not been answered the court does not decree additional fasts, but the entire community observes the customs of mourning. They decrease their engagement in business transactions, in building and planting, in betrothals and marriages, and in greetings between each person and his fellow, like people who have been rebuked by God. The individuals, i.e., Torah scholars, resume fasting every Monday and Thursday until the month of Nisan ends. After this date they no longer pray for rain, since if Nisan has ended and rains subsequently fall, they are a sign of a curse, as it is stated: "Is not the wheat harvest today? I will call to the Lord that He may send thunder and rain, and you will know and see that your wickedness is great" (I Samuel 12:17). The wheat harvest is around the time of Shavuot, well after Nisan.

³²⁸ GEMARA: The Gemara discusses the activities that are prohibited on a communal fast day: Granted, all of the other actions are prohibited, as they provide pleasure, namely, bathing, smearing, and marital relations. However, working is a cause of suffering. Why was it decreed that one must refrain from working? Rav Hisda said that Rav Yirmeya bar Abba said as that the verse states: "Sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders" (Joel 1:14), this indicates that a fast day is like a day of assembly. Just as on a day of assembly, i.e., a Festival, it is prohibited to engage in working, so too, on a fast it is prohibited to engage in working.

³²⁹ The Gemara asks: If so, one could say: Just as on a day of assembly it is prohibited to work from the previous evening, so too, on a fast it should be prohibited to work from the evening. Rabbi Zeira said: This was explained to me by Rabbi Yirmeya bar Abba himself: The verse states: "Sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders," indicating that a fast is similar to a gathering of elders: Just as the gathering of elders is performed by day, so too, the time for a fast is also by day. The Gemara asks: But if so, one can say that the fast should begin from noon. Rav Sheisha, son of Rav Idi, said: This supports the opinion of Rav Huna, who said: The public gathering on fast days occurs in the hours of the morning.

³³⁰ The Gemara asks: How do they act on a fast day? Abaye said: From the morning until the middle of the day they examine the affairs of the town by checking if there are any deficiencies or corruptions in the city, moral or otherwise, and attempt to fix them, as these problems may have been the cause of the Divine punishment. From this point forward, for a quarter of the day they read a portion from the Torah and a portion from the Prophets [haftara]. From this point forward, they pray and petition for mercy, as it is stated: "And they stood up in their place and they read in the book of the Torah of the Lord their God a fourth part of the day; and another fourth part they confessed, and prostrated themselves before the Lord their God" (Nehemiah 9:3).

³³¹ The Gemara asks: I can reverse the order of events, so that the first half of the day is spent in prayer while the second half is focused on the concerns of the community. The Gemara answers: It

should not enter your mind to say that, as it is written elsewhere: “Then were assembled to me everyone who trembled at the words of the God of Israel due to the faithlessness of them of the captivity and I sat appalled until the evening offering” (Ezra 9:4). And it is written in the next verse: “And at the meal-offering I arose from my fast, even with my garment and my mantle rent; and I fell on my knees and I spread out my hands to the Lord” (Ezra 9:5). These verses indicate that first one must deal with the issues of the community, and only afterward engage in prayer.

³³² § Rafram bar Pappa said that Rav Ḥisda said: Anything that is prohibited due to mourning, for example, bathing on the Ninth of Av, or prohibited for a private mourner, is prohibited both in hot water and in cold water. Anything that is prohibited due to pleasure, for example, bathing on a communal fast, is prohibited in hot water, but is permitted in cold water, provided one washes for the sake of cleanliness.

³³³ Rav Idi bar Avin said: We, too, learn this in the mishna: And they lock the bathhouses. This phrase indicates that only bathing in hot water is prohibited. Abaye said to Rav Idi bar Avin: And if it were also prohibited to wash in cold water, should the mishna have taught: They dam the rivers? Since it is impossible to dam the rivers to stop people from bathing altogether, the statement of the mishna is insufficient proof that only bathing in hot water is prohibited. Perhaps bathing in cold water is also prohibited but there is no way to prevent it.

³³⁴ Rav Sheisha, son of Rav Idi, said, in explanation of his father’s opinion: With regard to my father, the following poses a difficulty to his ruling: Since we already learned in the mishna that one is prohibited to engage in bathing, why do I need the tanna to state: They lock the bathhouses? Practically speaking, what does this clause add? Rather, isn’t it correct to conclude from this that bathing is prohibited in hot water but permitted in cold water?

³³⁵ The Gemara proposes: Let us say that the following baraita supports Rav Ḥisda’s ruling that it is prohibited for a mourner to bathe himself even in cold water: All who are obligated in immersions immerse themselves in their usual manner, both on the Ninth of Av and on Yom Kippur. The Gemara clarifies this baraita: In what do they immerse themselves? If we say that they immerse themselves in hot water, is there such a concept as ritual immersion in hot water? Hot water is necessarily drawn water, as the water has been placed in vessels for heating, and drawn water is invalid for a ritual bath.

³³⁶ Rather, isn’t the baraita referring to cold water, and it teaches that those obligated in immersions, yes, they are permitted to use cold water, but another person, who is not obligated to immerse, no, he may not wash even in cold water. Rav Ḥana bar Ketina said: This is no proof, as the ruling of the baraita was necessary only for the hot springs of Tiberias, which are warm without having been drawn, and in which it is possible to immerse.

³³⁷ The Gemara objects: If so, say the latter clause of that same mishna: Rabbi Ḥanina, the deputy High Priest, said: The mourning for the House of our God, the Holy Temple, is worthy of the loss of a ritual immersion once a year. And if you say that it is permitted to immerse in cold water, why does Rabbi Ḥanina the deputy High Priest say that he loses his immersion? Let him bathe in cold water, without having to neglect his immersion or transgress the prohibitions of a fast day. Rav Pappa said: It could be argued that the baraita is referring to a place where cold water is not available, but only hot springs. In this case there is no choice but to wait until the following day to immerse.

³³⁸ The Gemara proposes: Come and hear: When they said that one is prohibited in working on fast days, they said so only about working during the day, but at night it is permitted to work. And when

they said that one is prohibited to engage in wearing shoes, they said so only in a city, but on the road it is permitted. How so? When one goes out on the road he wears shoes, but at the end of his journey, when he enters the town, he removes them. And when they said that one is prohibited to engage in bathing, they said this only with regard to bathing his entire body, but washing his face, his hands, and his feet is permitted. And similarly, you find that this ruling applies in the case of one who is ostracized, i.e., placed under a formal ban, and in the case of a mourner, who is also prohibited to engage in bathing, smearing, and wearing shoes.

³³⁹ The Gemara explains the proof from this baraita: What, is it not the case that all these halakhot refer to all of them, including one who is ostracized and one who is in mourning? And with what form of bathing are we dealing here? If we say that the baraita is referring to bathing in hot water, are bathing his face, his hands, and his feet permitted? But didn't Rav Sheshet say: It is prohibited for a mourner to insert even his finger into hot water for the purpose of washing. Rather, is it not correct to say that the baraita is dealing with cold water? If so, it is prohibited on a communal fast to wash one's entire body even in cold water, which contradicts the opinion of Rafram bar Pappa, citing Rav Hisda, who permits washing in cold water on those days for the sake of cleanliness.

³⁴⁰ The Gemara rejects this argument: No, actually the baraita is referring to bathing in hot water. And with regard to what posed a difficulty for you, the phrase: And similarly, that you find in the case of one who is ostracized and in the case of a mourner, does not refer to bathing; rather, it is referring to the rest of the prohibitions, e.g., working and wearing shoes. Consequently, it can be claimed that the baraita refers specifically to hot water, as this clause does not refer to a mourner but only to a communal fast, and bathing in cold water is permitted on communal fasts.

³⁴¹ The Gemara proposes yet another proof. Come and hear a statement of a baraita, as Rabbi Abba the priest said in the name of Rabbi Yosei the priest: An incident occurred in which the sons of Rabbi Yosei, son of Rabbi Ḥanina, died, and he bathed in cold water all seven days of mourning. This indicates that a mourner is in fact permitted to bathe. The Gemara rejects this argument: There it was a case where his mourning periods came one after the other, as his sons died in quick succession, and this leniency is as it is taught in a baraita: If one's mourning periods immediately succeeded each other and his hair grew heavy, then even though it is generally prohibited for a mourner to cut his hair, he may lighten it with a razor, and he may likewise wash his garment in water.

³⁴² With regard to this baraita, Rav Ḥisda said: One who is obligated to observe periods of mourning in quick succession may trim his hair with a razor, but not in the normal manner, with scissors. Likewise, he may wash his garment in water, but not with natron, a type of soap, nor with sand.

³⁴³ Rava said: A mourner is permitted to bathe in cold water all seven days of mourning, despite the fact that he derives a certain degree of enjoyment from the cold bath, just as it is permitted for him to eat meat and wine. The Gemara raises an objection:

³⁴⁴ A grown woman, i.e., a girl over twelve and a half, who is old enough to be married, is not permitted to render herself unattractive during the days of mourning for her father, as this would adversely affect her chances of marriage. The Gemara infers that this halakha applies only to a grown woman, whereas a young woman, a girl between the ages of twelve and twelve and a half, who is not yet old enough to be married, is permitted to render herself unattractive.

³⁴⁵ The Gemara analyzes this halakha: What, is it not referring to the prohibition against bathing? And in what kind of water may a grown woman bathe? If we say that the baraita is referring to hot

water, is a grown woman not permitted to render herself unattractive by refraining from washing in hot water? But didn't Rav Ḥisda say: It is prohibited for a mourner to insert even his finger into hot water for the purpose of washing. Rather, is it not the case that it is permitted for a grown woman to bathe in cold water, from which it may be inferred that it is not permitted for a young woman to bathe even in cold water. The Gemara answers: No, the baraita is not speaking of bathing at all. Rather it is referring to painting the eyes and dyeing [pirkus] one's hair, which it is permitted for a grown woman to do during mourning.

³⁴⁶ The Gemara proposes: Let us say that the aforementioned baraita supports Rava's ruling. As Rabbi Abba the priest said in the name of Rabbi Yosei the priest: An incident occurred in which the sons of Rabbi Yosei, son of Rabbi Ḥanina, died, and he bathed in cold water all seven days of mourning. This ruling apparently indicates that a mourner is permitted to bathe in cold water.

³⁴⁷ The Gemara responds: This is not a proof, as they say: There it is referring to a case where his mourning periods came immediately one after the other, as it is taught in a baraita: If one's mourning periods came immediately one after the other and his hair grew heavy, he may lighten it with a razor, and he may wash his garment in water. And Rav Ḥisda said: He may trim his hair with a razor, but not with scissors. Likewise, he may wash his garment in water, but not with natron, nor with sand, and nor with iceplant.

³⁴⁸ The foregoing is one version of Rava's opinion and the ensuing discussion. Some say a different version of this debate. Rava said: It is prohibited for a mourner to bathe in cold water all seven days of mourning. The Gemara asks: In what way is this case different from eating meat and drinking wine, which a mourner is permitted to do? The Gemara responds: There, he acts to relieve his anxieties. Since a mourner is typically distressed over the death of a close relative, the Sages permitted him to fortify himself with strong food and drink.

³⁴⁹ The Gemara proposes: Let us say that the following baraita supports Rava's ruling. A grown woman is not permitted to render herself unattractive during the days of mourning for her father. As above, the Gemara infers that this halakha applies only to a grown woman, but a young woman is permitted to render herself unattractive. In what kind of water may a grown woman bathe? If we say that this is referring to hot water, is a grown woman not permitted to refrain from washing in hot water? But didn't Rav Ḥisda say: It is prohibited for a mourner to insert his finger into hot water for the purpose of washing. Rather, is it not the case that the baraita is referring to bathing in cold water? The Gemara answers: No; the baraita is speaking of painting the eyes and dyeing the hair.

³⁵⁰ Rav Ḥisda said: That is to say, i.e., as the baraita states that it is permitted for a grown woman who observes successive periods of mourning to paint and dye her hair, the same halakha evidently applies to laundry, from which it may be inferred that in an unexceptional case it is prohibited for a mourner to wash laundry all seven days of mourning. The Gemara concludes: And the practical halakha is: It is prohibited for a mourner to bathe his entire body both in hot water and in cold water all seven days of mourning. However, with regard to his face, his hands, and his feet, although it is prohibited to bathe them in hot water, in cold water it is permitted. However, with regard to smearing with oil, even any minimal amount of smearing is prohibited. But if one does so to remove the dirt, it is permitted.

³⁵¹ § The Gemara returns to the discussion of the Aneinu prayer, recited on fast days. The prayer of a fast, how does one mention it? Rav Yehuda granted his son Rav Yitzḥak general permission to

expound publicly, while instructing him in the substance of what he should say, and Rav Yitzḥak taught: An individual who took a fast upon himself prays the prayer of a fast. And where in the Amida does he recite this additional prayer? Between the seventh blessing of the Amida: Who redeems, and the eighth blessing: Who heals.

³⁵² Rav Yitzḥak strongly objects to this: But may an individual establish a blessing for himself, in addition to the fixed blessings of the Amida? Rather, Rav Yitzḥak said: One mentions his fast in the blessing: Who listens to prayer, in accordance with the general principle that an individual may insert private requests into this general plea for the acceptance of prayers, including matters outside the scope of the established blessings. And similarly, Rav Sheshet said: One recites the prayer for a fast day in the blessing: Who listens to prayer.

³⁵³ The Gemara raises an objection from a baraita: The only halakhic difference between an individual and a community is that this one, an individual, prays eighteen blessings in his Amida, and that one, a community, prays nineteen blessings. The Gemara analyzes this statement: What is an individual and what is a community in this context? If we say that an individual means an actual individual, and community is referring to the communal prayer leader, are there really only nineteen blessings in the communal Amida of a fast? There are twenty-four blessings. As will be explained, six additional blessings are added on communal fast days.

³⁵⁴ Rather, is it not the case that this is what the baraita is saying: The only halakhic difference between an individual who took an individual fast upon himself and an individual who took a communal fast upon himself, is only that this one prays eighteen blessings, as he mentions his fast in the blessing: Who listens to prayer, and that one prays nineteen blessings. Learn from this statement that an individual may establish an individual blessing for himself.

³⁵⁵ The Gemara rejects this contention: No, actually I could say to you that this mention of a community is referring to the prayer leader. And with regard to what poses a difficulty for you, that the prayer leader prays twenty-four blessings, the baraita is referring to the first three fasts, in which there are not twenty-four blessings, but only the usual eighteen blessings, plus one additional blessing for fast days.

³⁵⁶ The Gemara questions this resolution: And are the six additional blessings not recited on the first series of communal fasts? But with regard to this issue, a baraita taught the instructive phrase: The only difference between them, as follows: The difference between the first three fasts and the middle three fasts is only that on these first fasts it is permitted to perform work, and on these middle fasts it is prohibited to perform work. This indicates that with regard to reciting all twenty-four blessings, both this and that are identical.

³⁵⁷ The Gemara rejects this argument: The tanna taught some of the differences between the fasts, and omitted some of them. The Gemara asks: What else did the tanna omit that you can justifiably claim that he omitted this case? In other words, it is possible for the tanna to have omitted a few examples, but he would not have omitted a single case. And furthermore, the baraita does not merely offer a list of differences, as it teaches: The difference between them is only. This phrase indicates that this is the only difference. Rather, the tanna is speaking of the various prohibitions of fast days, but he is not speaking of other differences, such as those that involve the details of prayers. And if you wish, say instead that on the middle three fasts too, the prayer leader does not pray twenty-four blessings, as the six additional blessings are recited only during the last series of fasts.

³⁵⁸ The Gemara expresses surprise at this: And does the prayer leader not recite all twenty-four blessings during the middle three fasts? But isn't it taught in a baraita: The difference between the second set of three fasts and the last seven fasts is only that in these they sound the alarm and lock the stores. This indicates that with regard to all their other matters, both this and that are identical. And if you say that here, too, he taught and omitted, but it teaches: The difference between them is only indicating that there is no other difference.

³⁵⁹ The Gemara asks: And how can you understand it that way? Does the phrase: The difference between them is only, specifically mean that there is only a single difference between the cases?

³⁶⁰ But he omitted any mention of the ark and the halakha that during the last seven fast days the ark was brought into the streets of the city. The Gemara rejects this argument: If the omission is due to the ark, that is not a real omission. The reason is that the tanna teaches only matters that are performed in private, whereas he does not teach matters that are performed in public [parhesya].

³⁶¹ Rav Ashi said: The wording of the mishna is also precise, according to this explanation, as it teaches: How are these seven fast days more stringent than the first ones? Rather, the difference is that on these days, in addition to all the earlier stringencies, they sound the alarm and they lock the stores. However, in regard to all their other matters, both this and that are identical. And if you say that here too he taught and omitted, but it teaches: How are these more stringent, an expression that indicates that the mishna states the only difference.

³⁶² The Gemara asks: And how can you understand the phrase: How are these, specifically, as indicating that there is only one difference between the cases? But he omitted the ark. The Gemara responds: If the omission is due to the ark, that is not a real omission, because the tanna includes it in another chapter (15a). The Gemara comments: Now that you have arrived at this solution, a similar answer can be applied to the earlier difficulties. The matter of the twenty-four blessings is also not an omission, as he teaches this halakha in another chapter, also on 15a, where the mishna provides further details of the blessings. Here, however, the tanna lists only those matters that are not discussed later.

³⁶³ Since no decisive proof was offered in support of any of the opinions as to where an individual inserts the Aneinu prayer, the Gemara asks: What halakhic conclusion was reached about this matter? Rabbi Shmuel bar Sasretai said, and similarly Rav Ḥiyya bar Ashi said that Rav said: One inserts it between the seventh blessing of the Amida: Who redeems, and the eighth blessing: Who heals. And Rav Ashi said in the name of Rabbi Yannai, son of Rabbi Yishmael: One inserts it in the blessing: Who listens to prayer. The Gemara concludes: And the halakha is that one includes it in the blessing: Who listens to prayer.

³⁶⁴ § It is taught in one baraita: Pregnant and nursing women fast with the community on the first fasts, but they do not fast on the last fasts. And it was taught in another baraita: Pregnant and nursing women fast on the last set of fasts but they do not fast on the first set of fasts. And it was taught in yet another baraita: They do not fast either on the first fast days or on the last fast days.

³⁶⁵ Rav Ashi said: Take the mention of the middle fasts in your hand as the decisive matter, as this resolves all three baraitot. The halakha is that pregnant and nursing women fast only on the middle fasts, as they are stricter than the first fasts but less taxing than the last seven fasts. Consequently, when the first baraita is referring to the first fasts, it in fact means the middle set, which is the first of the last two sets. Similarly, when the second baraita mentions the last fasts, it means the middle set,

which is the last of the two sets. In the third baraita, the first and last fasts are literally the first three and last seven fasts, respectively. In this manner all three baraitot follow the same halakha.

³⁶⁶ § The mishna teaches: How are these seven fast days more stringent than the first ones? Rather, the difference is that on these days, in addition to all the earlier stringencies, they sound the alarm and they lock the stores. The Gemara asks: With what do they sound the alarm? Rav Yehuda said: With shofarot. And Rav Yehuda, son of Rav Shmuel bar Sheilat, said in the name of Rav: With the Aneinu prayer.

³⁶⁷ The Gemara analyzes the dispute: It might enter our mind to say that the one who said that the community sounds the alarm by reciting Aneinu, i.e., Rav, did not say that they cry out with shofarot, and likewise the one who said that they do cry out with shofarot, Rav Yehuda, did not say that they sound the alarm by reciting Aneinu. But isn't it taught in a baraita: The court does not decree fewer than seven fasts on the community, which include eighteen acts of sounding the alarm. And a mnemonic for this matter is Jericho. And as there were many episodes of sounding the shofarot in Jericho, this is a conclusive refutation of the one who said that according to the opinion of Rav they sound the alarm only by reciting Aneinu.

³⁶⁸ Rather, the Gemara explains that the dispute must be understood differently: With regard to shofarot, everyone, i.e., Rav and Rav Yehuda, agrees that the mishna calls this: Sounding the alarm. When they disagree, it is with regard to the Aneinu prayer. One Sage, Rav, holds that this too is called sounding the alarm, and one Sage, Rav Yehuda, holds that reciting Aneinu is not called sounding the alarm.

³⁶⁹ The Gemara comments: If so, then it follows that according to the one who said that they sound the alarm by reciting Aneinu, all the more so they can do so with shofarot, but according to the one who said that they sound the alarm with shofarot, this is the way they sound the alarm; however, they may not do so with Aneinu, i.e., the community does not sound the alarm by reciting this prayer. This indicates that the Aneinu prayer is recited only in extreme cases, as it is a greater form of petitioning to God than blowing the shofar.

³⁷⁰ The Gemara raises a difficulty against this conclusion. But isn't it taught in a baraita: And with regard to all other types of calamities than drought that break out, for example scabs, plagues of locusts, flies, or hornets, or mosquitoes, or infestations of snakes or scorpions, they would not sound the alarm, but they would cry out. From the fact that crying out is, according to all opinions, a prayer recited with one's mouth, it follows that sounding an alarm must be with shofarot. This baraita indicates that sounding the alarm with shofarot is the response to a serious situation, whereas the Aneinu prayer is recited on less worrisome occasions.

³⁷¹ The Gemara answers: This is a dispute between tanna'im, as we learned in a mishna: For the following calamities they sound the alarm even on Shabbat: For a city that is surrounded by an enemy army or in danger of being flooded by a river, or for a ship tossed about at sea. Rabbi Yosei said: An alarm may be sounded on Shabbat to summon help, but it may not be sounded for crying out to God.

³⁷² The Gemara clarifies this case. With what do they sound the alarm? If we say with shofarot, is the sounding of shofarot permitted on Shabbat? Even when Rosh HaShana occurs on Shabbat, one must refrain from sounding the shofar on that day. Rather, is it not the case that this is referring to the recitation of the Aneinu prayer, and yet the mishna calls this recitation: Sounding the alarm.

Conclude from this that there is a tanna who maintains that sounding of the alarm is in fact performed by prayer, as claimed by Rav Yehuda, son of Rav Shmuel bar Sheilat.

³⁷³ § The Gemara relates: During the years of Rabbi Yehuda Nesia there was a trouble that afflicted the community.

³⁷⁴ Rabbi Yehuda Nesia decreed thirteen fasts, but he was not answered. He considered decreeing more fasts until they would be answered. Rabbi Ami said to him that they said: One does not trouble the community excessively, and therefore you should not impose more than thirteen fasts.

³⁷⁵ Rabbi Abba, son of Rabbi Ḥiyya bar Abba, said: When Rabbi Ami acted and issued this ruling, he did so on his own authority, as it went against the majority opinion. Rather, Rabbi Ḥiyya bar Abba said that Rabbi Yoḥanan said as follows: They taught only that the community observes a maximum of thirteen fasts when they are praying for rain. However, with regard to other types of calamities, they continue to fast until they are answered from Heaven. The Gemara comments: This halakha is also taught in a baraita: When the Sages said three and when they said seven, they spoke only concerning fasts for rain. However, with regard to other types of calamities, they continue to fast until they are answered.

³⁷⁶ The Gemara suggests: Let us say that this baraita is a conclusive refutation of the opinion of Rabbi Ami. The Gemara answers: Rabbi Ami could have said to you that this is a dispute between tanna'im, as it is taught in a baraita: One does not decree more than thirteen fasts on the community, as one does not trouble the community excessively. This is the statement of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi. Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says: This halakha is not for that reason. Rather, it is due to the fact that after thirteen fasts the time of the rainfall has already passed, and there is no reason to fast for rain after the rainy season has ended.

³⁷⁷ The Gemara relates a story on a similar topic: The inhabitants of Nineveh sent a question to Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi: People such as us, who require rain even during the season of Tammuz, and who live in areas where rain falls all year round, what should we do when there is a drought during the summer? Are we likened to individuals or are we likened to a community? The Gemara explains the practical difference between these two options: Are we likened to individuals and therefore we pray for rain in the blessing: Who listens to prayer? Or are we likened to a community and we pray for rain in the ninth blessing, the blessing of the years? He sent his answer to them: You are likened to individuals and therefore you pray for rain in the blessing: Who listens to prayer.

³⁷⁸ The Gemara raises an objection from a baraita: Rabbi Yehuda said: When do the halakhot concerning the times during which the prayer for rain is recited apply? When the years, i.e., the climate, are as they ought to be and the Jewish people are living in their land. However, nowadays, when the Jewish people are dispersed around the world, and the climate is not always as it ought to be, all is in accordance with the year, i.e., the local climate, all is in accordance with the place in question, and all is in accordance with the particular time, and therefore one prays for rain in the blessing of the years, as necessary for the local climate. He said to him: You raise a contradiction from a baraita against Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi? Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi himself is a tanna, and consequently has the authority to dispute the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda.

³⁷⁹ The Gemara asks: What halakhic conclusion was reached about this matter? Rav Naḥman said: One prays for rain in the blessing of the years, in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda. Rav Sheshet said: One prays in the blessing: Who listens to prayer, as stated by Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi.

The Gemara concludes: And the halakha is that if rain is required when it is not the rainy season in Eretz Yisrael, one prays for rain in the blessing: Who listens to prayer.

³⁸⁰ § The mishna taught: On Monday they open the stores a little at nightfall, and on Thursday they are permitted to open the stores all day, in deference to Shabbat. A dilemma was raised before the Sages: How is this taught, i.e., what is the meaning of this ruling? Does it mean that on Monday the storeowners open their doors a little at nightfall, and on Thursday they likewise open their doors just a little, but do so all day, in deference to Shabbat? Or perhaps, the mishna means that on Monday they open their doors a little, but all day, and on Thursday they open their doors wide the entire day?

³⁸¹ The Gemara answers: Come and hear a resolution of this dilemma, as it is taught in a baraita: On Monday they open their doors a little until the evening, and on Thursday they open them the entire day, in deference to Shabbat. If one's shop had two entrances, he opens one and locks one, thereby demonstrating that his store is not open in the normal manner. If he had a platform opposite his entrance which conceals the door to his store, he may open in his usual manner without concern, as it is prohibited to open one's store not due to work, but only so that it not appear as though people are eating and drinking on this day.

³⁸² § The mishna taught: If these fasts have passed and they have not been answered, they decrease their engagement in business negotiations and in building and planting. It was taught in the Tosefta (Megilla 5:2): Building means joyful building, not building in general. Likewise, planting means joyful planting, not all planting. The Tosefta elaborates: What is joyful building? This is referring to one who builds a wedding chamber for his son. It was customary upon the marriage of a son to build him a small house where the marriage feast was held and where the newlywed couple would live for a certain period of time. What is joyful planting? This is referring to one who plants a splendid, royal garden that does not serve practical purposes, but is only for ornamentation.

³⁸³ § And the mishna further taught that they decrease greetings between one another. The Sages taught: *Ḥaverim*, members of a group dedicated to the precise observance of mitzvot, do not extend greetings between each other at all. *Amei ha'aretz*, common, uneducated people, who extend greetings to *ḥaverim*, do so while unaware that this is inappropriate. The *ḥaverim* answer them in an undertone and in a solemn manner. And *ḥaverim* wrap themselves and sit as mourners and as ostracized ones, like people who have been rebuked by God, until they are shown mercy from Heaven.

³⁸⁴ Rabbi Elazar said: An important person is permitted to fall on his face and humiliate himself in front of the community only if he is certain that he will be answered like Joshua, son of Nun, as it is stated: "And the Lord said to Joshua, Get you up, why are you fallen upon your face?" (Joshua 7:10). One who is not absolutely certain that he will be answered may not fall on his face in public, as if he is unanswered he will become an object of derision.

³⁸⁵ And Rabbi Elazar said: An important person is permitted to gird himself in sackcloth as a sign of mourning and to pray for mercy only if he is certain that he will be answered like Jehoram, son of Ahab, as it is stated: "And it came to pass, when the king heard the words of the woman, that he rent his clothes, now he was passing by upon the wall, and the people looked, and, behold, he had sackcloth within upon his flesh" (II Kings 6:30). Although he was wicked, Jehoram was later answered and the suffering of the Jews was alleviated.

³⁸⁶ And Rabbi Elazar further said: Not all are worthy to petition God by rending their garments, and not all are worthy of falling on their faces in times of trouble. Moses and Aaron were worthy of petitioning God by falling on their faces, whereas their students Joshua and Caleb prayed by only rending their garments. The Gemara elaborates: Moses and Aaron petitioned God by falling on their faces, as it is written: “Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces” (Numbers 14:5). Joshua and Caleb prayed by rending their garments, as it is written in the next verse: “And Joshua, son of Nun, and Caleb, son of Jephunneh, who were of those who spied out the land, rent their garments” (Numbers 14:6).

³⁸⁷ Rabbi Zeira strongly objects to this interpretation, and some say it was Rabbi Shmuel bar Naḥmani who objected: Had the verse written only: Joshua and Caleb, the meaning would be as you said, that Moses and Aaron fell upon their faces whereas Joshua and Caleb only rent their garments. However, now that it is written: “And Joshua,” it is possible that the connecting word “and” indicates that Moses and Aaron merely fell upon their faces, while Joshua and Caleb did both this and that, i.e., they rent their clothing in addition to falling upon their faces.

³⁸⁸ And Rabbi Elazar further said: Not all dignitaries will worship God in the messianic age by rising, and not all will do so by bowing. Rather, kings will serve God by rising, and ministers by bowing. The Gemara elaborates: Kings by rising, as it is written: “Thus says the Lord, the Redeemer of Israel, his Holy One,

³⁸⁹ to he who is despised of men, to he who is abhorred of nations, to a servant of rulers: Kings shall see and arise” (Isaiah 49:7); and ministers by bowing, as it is written, in the same verse: “Ministers, and they shall bow.” Rabbi Zeira strongly objects to this interpretation, and some say it was Rabbi Shmuel bar Naḥmani who objected. Had the verse written: And ministers shall bow, the meaning would have been as you said. However, now that it is written: “Ministers, and they shall bow,” this indicates that ministers will do this and that, i.e., they will both arise and bow.

³⁹⁰ Rav Naḥman bar Yitzḥak said: I too say a similar idea. Not all are fit for light, and not all are fit for gladness. The righteous are fit to be rewarded with light, and the upright are fit to be rewarded with gladness. The righteous are fit to be rewarded with light, as it is written: “Light is sown for the righteous” (Psalms 97:11), and the upright are fit to be rewarded with gladness, as it is written, in the same verse: “And gladness for the upright in heart.”

Chapter 2

¹ MISHNA: What is the customary order of fast days? Normally the sacred ark in the synagogue, which was mobile, was kept in a locked room. However, on fast days they remove the ark to the main city square and place burnt ashes upon the ark, as a sign of mourning. And they also place ashes on the head of the Nasi, and on the head of the deputy Nasi, and each and every member of the community likewise places ashes upon his head.

² The eldest member of the community says to the congregation statements of reproof, for example: Our brothers, it is not stated with regard to the people of Nineveh: And God saw their sackcloth and their fasting. Rather, the verse says: “And God saw their deeds, that they had turned from their evil way” (Jonah 3:10). And in the Prophets it says: “And rend your hearts and not your garments, and

return to the Lord your God” (Joel 2:13). This teaches that prayer and fasting are insufficient, as one must also repent and amend his ways in practice.

³ They stood for prayer. The congregation appoints an elder, who is experienced in leading prayer, to descend before the ark as communal prayer leader. And this prayer leader must have children and must have an empty house, i.e., he must be poor, so that his heart will be fully concentrated on the prayer for the needs of his community.

⁴ And he recites twenty-four blessings before the congregation: The eighteen blessings of the everyday Amida prayer, to which he adds another six blessings, and they are as follows: The special series of blessings recited on Rosh HaShana, the Remembrances and Shofarot; and the sections of Psalms that begin with the verses: “In my distress I called to the Lord and He answered me” (Psalms 120:1), “I will lift up my eyes to the mountains; from where will my help come” (Psalms 121:1), “Out of the depths I have called You, O Lord” (Psalms 130:1), and “A prayer of the afflicted, when he faints” (Psalms 102:1).

⁵ Rabbi Yehuda says: The prayer leader did not need to recite the Remembrances and Shofarot passages. Rather, he recites instead of them the passage beginning with: “If there be famine in the land, if there be pestilence” (I Kings 8:37), followed by the verse “The word of the Lord that came to Jeremiah concerning the droughts” (Jeremiah 14:1).

⁶ And he recites at the end of all of these six blessing their unique conclusions. For the conclusion of the first blessing: Redeemer of Israel, he recites: He Who answered Abraham on Mount Moriah (see Genesis 22:11–18), He will answer you and hear the sound of your cry on this day. Blessed are You, Lord, Redeemer of Israel. For the second blessing, to which he adds the verses of Remembrances, he recites: He Who answered our forefathers at the Red Sea (see Exodus 14:15–31), He will answer you and hear the sound of your cry on this day. Blessed are You, Lord, Who remembers the forgotten.

⁷ For the third blessing, which includes the verses of Shofarot, he recites: He Who answered Joshua at Gilgal, when they sounded the shofar in Jericho (see Joshua 5:6), He will answer you and hear the sound of your cry on this day. Blessed are You, Lord, Who hears the terua. For the fourth blessing, he recites: He Who answered Samuel in Mizpah (see I Samuel, chapter 7), He will answer you and hear the sound of your cry on this day. Blessed are You, Lord, Who hears cries. For the fifth he recites: He Who answered Elijah on Mount Carmel (see I Kings, chapter 18), He will answer you and hear the sound of your cry on this day. Blessed are You, Lord, Who hears prayer.

⁸ For the sixth blessing he recites: He Who answered Jonah from within the innards of the fish (see Jonah 2:2–11), He will answer you and hear the sound of your cry on this day. Blessed are You, Lord, Who answers in a time of trouble. For the conclusion of the seventh blessing, which is actually the sixth additional blessing, as the first blessing listed here is an expanded version of a regular weekday blessing, he recites: He Who answered David and Solomon his son in Jerusalem (see I Kings 8:12–53), He will answer you and hear the sound of your cry on this day. Blessed are You, Lord, Who has mercy on the Land.

⁹ The mishna relates: An incident occurred

¹⁰ in the days of Rabbi Ḥalafta and Rabbi Ḥananya ben Teradyon, that someone passed before the ark as prayer leader and finished the entire blessing of the fast day, but the congregation did not answer amen after him. Instead, the attendant of the synagogue said: Sound the shofar with a long,

unwavering sound, priests, blow the shofar. The prayer leader continued: He Who answered Abraham on Mount Moriah, He will answer you and hear the sound of your cry on this day. Once again, the attendant announced: Blast the shofar, with a wavering sound, sons of Aaron, blast. The prayer leader resumed: He Who answered our forefathers by the Red Sea, He will answer you and hear the sound of your cry on this day, and continued in this way.

¹¹ And when this matter came before the Sages, and they heard the custom of Rabbi Ḥalafta and Rabbi Ḥananya ben Teradyon, they said: They would act in accordance with this custom only at the Eastern Gate of the Temple and on the Temple Mount. However, this ceremony is never performed outside the Temple.

¹² § On the first three fasts, the members of the priestly watch, who are in charge of the Temple service that week, fast but do not complete their fast. And the members of the patrilineal family, who perform the Temple service on that particular day, did not fast at all. On the second set of three fast days, the members of the priestly watch fast and complete the fast, and the members of the patrilineal family fast but do not complete their fasts. On the final seven fasts, both groups fast and complete the fasts. This is the statement of Rabbi Yehoshua.

¹³ And the Rabbis say: On the first three fasts, the members of both groups do not fast at all. On the second three fast days, the members of the priestly watch fast and do not complete their fast, and the members of the patrilineal family do not fast at all. On the final seven, the members of the priestly watch fast and complete the fast, and the members of the patrilineal family fast but do not complete their fast.

¹⁴ The mishna mentions another difference between the members of the priestly watch and the patrilineal family: The members of the priestly watch were permitted to drink wine during the nights, but not during the days, as they might be called upon to assist in the Temple service, which may not be performed after drinking wine. And the members of the patrilineal family, who performed the Temple service, were not permitted to drink wine, neither at night nor during the day, as their tasks were performed at night as well. It is prohibited for both the members of the priestly watch and the members of the non-priestly watch to cut their hair or launder their garments throughout the week, but on Thursday it is permitted for them to cut their hair and launder their clothes in deference to Shabbat.

¹⁵ § The mishna returns to the issue of fasting: Any day concerning which it is written in Megillat Ta'anit not to eulogize on that day, it is also prohibited to eulogize on the day before, but it is permitted to do so on the following day. Rabbi Yosei says: It is prohibited to eulogize both on the day before and on the following day.

¹⁶ The mishna continues: With regard to those days concerning which it is written only not to fast, it is permitted to fast on the day before and on the following day. Rabbi Yosei says: Fasting the day before is prohibited, but on the following day it is permitted to fast.

¹⁷ The mishna continues: One may not decree a fast on the community starting on a Thursday, so as not to cause an increase in prices. If the first of a series of fasts is on a Thursday, then on Friday everyone will come to purchase their food for after the fast and for Shabbat, which will allow the storeowners to take advantage of the crowds and raise their prices. Rather, the first set of three fasts is on a Monday, Thursday, and the following Monday, and the second set of three is on a Thursday, Monday, and the following Thursday. Rabbi Yosei says: Just as the first three fasts do not begin on

Thursday, so too, neither the second set nor the last set starts on a Thursday. Instead, all the series of fasts begin on a Monday.

¹⁸ The mishna further states: One may not decree a fast on the community on New Moons, on Hanukkah, or on Purim. And if they decreed and began a set of fasts, and only afterward realized that one of the fasts would occur on one of these days, they do not interrupt the sequence. This is the statement of Rabban Gamliel. Rabbi Meir said: Although Rabban Gamliel said that they do not interrupt the sequence, he concedes that on these days, which are days with special observances, they do not complete the fast. And similarly, when the Ninth of Av occurs on Shabbat eve, the fast is not completed and one eats before the start of Shabbat, so as not to enter Shabbat while fasting.

¹⁹ GEMARA: The mishna teaches: What is the order of fast days? They remove the ark. The Gemara asks: And is this ritual performed even on the first set of fasts? And the Gemara raises a contradiction from a baraita: On the first and second sets of three fasts, everyone enters the synagogue and they pray in the manner that they pray throughout the entire year.

²⁰ The baraita continues: And on the final seven fasts they remove the ark to the main city square and place ashes upon the ark, and on the head of the Nasi, and on the head of the deputy Nasi, and each and every member of the community takes ashes and places them upon his head. Rabbi Natan says: They would bring specifically burnt ashes. This baraita indicates that the full ritual is performed only on the final set of fasts. Rav Pappa said in explanation: When we taught the mishna as well, it was taught only with regard to the final set of seven fasts, not the earlier series of fasts.

²¹ § And the mishna further states that ashes are placed on the head of the Nasi and on the head of the deputy Nasi. And then it teaches that each and every member of the community places ashes upon his head. The Gemara asks: Is that so? Is this the proper order? Isn't it taught in a baraita that Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi says: With regard to matters of greatness, where it is a mark of honor and distinction to be treated first, one begins with the greatest member of the group, but for any matter involving a curse or dishonor, one begins with the least important member of the group.

²² The Gemara cites a baraita which provides the sources for this principle. With regard to matters of greatness one begins with the greatest member, as it is stated: "And Moses said to Aaron, and to Elazar and to Itamar, his sons" (Leviticus 10:6). Moses first addresses the most important person, Aaron, and this was a matter of distinction, as the verse continues: "For the anointing oil of the Lord is upon you" (Leviticus 10:7). And for any matter involving a curse, one begins with the least important member of a group, as the serpent was cursed first, and afterward Eve was cursed and afterward Adam was cursed.

²³ Why, then, are the leaders of the community, its most important members, the first to perform these fast day expressions of mourning, which are a response to a curse? The Gemara answers: The reason is that this leadership role in the performance of these acts is considered a distinction and an honor for them, as it is as though the community is saying to them: You are worthy of requesting compassion on behalf of everyone.

²⁴ § The mishna teaches: Each and every member of the community places ashes upon his head. The Gemara asks: Let the Nasi and the deputy Nasi also take ashes themselves and place them upon their own heads. What is different with regard to them, that someone else takes the ashes and places them on their heads? Rabbi Abba of Caesarea said: This is done intentionally, as one who humiliates himself, in this case by placing ashes upon his own head, is not similar to

²⁵ one who is humiliated by others. Accordingly, ashes are placed on the heads of the leaders of the community by others, to increase the appearance of their suffering. The Gemara asks: And where exactly are the ashes placed upon their heads? Rabbi Yitzḥak said: On the place of the phylacteries of the head, as it is stated: “To appoint to those who mourn in Zion, to give to them an ornament [pe’er] instead of ashes” (Isaiah 61:3). This verse likens the placement of ashes on one’s head to an ornament, and the term pe’er is traditionally interpreted as a reference to phylacteries.

²⁶ § The Gemara provides a mnemonic device for the forthcoming statements. Square; ark; and sackcloth; ashes; ashes; cemetery; and Moriah. The Gemara asks: Why do they go out to the square? Rabbi Ḥiyya bar Abba said: This is a symbolic action, as though to say: We cried out in private inside the synagogue and we were not answered. We will therefore disgrace ourselves in public, so that our prayers will be heard.

²⁷ Reish Lakish said that the move into the square symbolizes exile, as though they are saying: We have been exiled; may our exile atone for us. The Gemara asks: What is the practical difference between these two explanations? The Gemara answers that the practical difference between them is in a case where they are exiled, i.e., they move, from one synagogue to another synagogue. According to the opinion of Reish Lakish, they have exiled themselves, and therefore this ceremony is adequate. Conversely, Rabbi Ḥiyya bar Abba maintains that as the ritual is performed in private, it is insufficient.

²⁸ The Gemara asks another question concerning the meaning of the ritual. And why do they remove the ark to the city square? Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: This is done as though to say: We had a modest vessel, which was always kept concealed, but it has been publicly exposed due to our transgressions.

²⁹ The Gemara further asks: And why do they cover themselves in sackcloth? Rabbi Ḥiyya bar Abba said: This is as though to say: We are considered before You like animals, which are likewise covered with hide. And why do they place burnt ashes on top of the ark? Rabbi Yehuda ben Pazi said: This is as though to say in God’s name: “I will be with him in trouble” (Psalms 91:15). Reish Lakish said that the same idea can be derived from a different verse: “In all their affliction, He was afflicted” (Isaiah 63:9). By placing burnt ash on the ark, which is the symbol of the Divine Presence, it is as though God Himself joins the Jews in their pain. Rabbi Zeira said: At first, when I saw the Sages place burnt ashes upon the ark, my entire body trembled from the intensity of the event.

³⁰ And why do they place ashes upon the head of each and every individual? Rabbi Levi bar Ḥama and Rabbi Ḥanina disagree with regard to this matter. One said that this is as though to say: We are considered like ashes before You. And one said that these ashes are placed in order to remind God of the ashes of our forefather Isaac, on our behalf. The Gemara asks: What is the practical difference between these two explanations? The Gemara answers that the practical difference between them is in a case where one placed ordinary earth upon the heads of the individuals instead of ashes. Although earth does symbolize self-nullification and may be used according to the first explanation, it has no connection to the sacrifice of Isaac, and therefore it does not satisfy the second explanation.

³¹ The Gemara further asks: And why do they go out to the cemetery on a fast day? Again, Rabbi Levi bar Ḥama and Rabbi Ḥanina disagree with regard to this matter. One said this is as though to say: We are like the dead before You. And one said that one goes out to the cemetery in order that the deceased will request mercy on our behalf. The Gemara asks: What is the practical difference

between them? The Gemara answers that the practical difference between them concerns graves of gentiles. If the purpose of going to graves is to say that they stand before God like the dead, graves of gentiles would suffice. However, if they go to the cemetery for the deceased to ask for mercy on their behalf, they should visit specifically Jewish graves.

³² § Apropos disputes between Rabbi Levi bar Ḥama and Rabbi Ḥanina, the Gemara mentions another dispute between them. What is the meaning of the name Mount [Har] Moriah, the Temple Mount? Rabbi Levi bar Ḥama and Rabbi Ḥanina disagree with regard to this matter. One said that the name alludes to the Great Sanhedrin that convened there, as it is the mountain from which instruction [hora'a] went out to the Jewish people. And one said that it is the mountain from which fear [mora] went out to the nations of the world, as this place signifies God's choice of the Jewish people.

³³ § The mishna taught: The eldest of the community says to them statements of reproof. The Sages taught in a baraita: If there is an elder, then the elder says the admonition, and if not, a Sage says the admonition. And if not, a person of imposing appearance says it. The Gemara asks: Is that to say that the elder of whom we spoke is preferred to a scholar simply by virtue of his age, even though he is not a scholar? Abaye said that this is what the mishna is saying: If there is an elder, and he is also a scholar, this elder scholar says the admonition. And if not, even a young scholar says the reproof. And if there is no scholar of any kind available, a person of imposing appearance says it.

³⁴ What does he say? Our brothers, it is not sackcloth and fasting that cause atonement for our sins. Rather, repentance and good deeds will cause our atonement. This is as we find with regard to the people of Nineveh, that it is not stated about them: And God saw their sackcloth and their fasting. Rather, the verse states: "And God saw their deeds, that they had turned from their evil way" (Jonah 3:10).

³⁵ § Apropos the repentance of the inhabitants of Nineveh, the Gemara discusses their behavior further. The verse states: "But let them be covered with sackcloth, both man and beast" (Jonah 3:8). What did they do? They confined the female animals alone, and their young alone, in a different place. They then said before God: Master of the Universe, if You do not have mercy on us, we will not have mercy on these animals. Even if we are not worthy of Your mercy, these animals have not sinned.

³⁶ It is further stated with regard to the people of Nineveh: "And let them cry mightily to God" (Jonah 3:8). The Gemara asks: What did they say that could be described as calling out "mightily"? The Gemara explains that they said before God: Master of the Universe, if there is a dispute between a submissive one and an intractable one, or between a righteous one and a wicked one, who must yield before whom? Certainly the righteous forgives the wicked. Likewise, You must have mercy on us.

³⁷ The verse states: "And let them turn, every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands" (Jonah 3:8). What is the meaning of the phrase "and from the violence that is in their hands"? Shmuel said that the king of Nineveh proclaimed: Even if one stole a beam and built it into his building, he must tear down the entire building and return the beam to its owner. Although the Sages decreed that one need only pay financial compensation in a case of this kind, these people wanted to repent completely by removing any remnant of stolen property from their possession.

³⁸ § Similarly, Rav Adda bar Ahava said: A person who has a transgression in his hand, and he confesses but does not repent for his sin, to what is he comparable? To a person who holds in his

hand a dead creeping animal, which renders one ritually impure by contact. As in this situation, even if he immerses in all the waters of the world, his immersion is ineffective for him, as long as the source of ritual impurity remains in his hand. However, if he has thrown the animal from his hand, once he has immersed in a ritual bath of forty se'a, the immersion is immediately effective for him.

³⁹ As it is stated: "He who covers his transgressions shall not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them shall obtain mercy" (Proverbs 28:13). That is, confession alone is futile, but one who also abandons his transgressions will receive mercy. And it states elsewhere: "Let us lift up our heart with our hands to God in Heaven" (Lamentations 3:41), which likewise indicates that it is not enough to lift one's hands in prayer; rather, one must also raise his heart and return to God.

⁴⁰ § The mishna teaches: They stood for prayer, and the congregation appoints an elder. The Sages taught in a baraita: They stood for prayer, and even if there is a man there who is elderly and a scholar, they appoint to descend before the ark as prayer leader only a person who is accustomed to lead in prayer. Who is considered an accustomed prayer leader in this sense? Rabbi Yehuda says: One who has financially dependent children but he does not have the means to support them, and he has no choice but to toil in the field, and whose house is empty, and who will therefore pray for rain with great devotion.

⁴¹ Rabbi Yehuda continues with his depiction of the worthy prayer leader. And his youth was becoming, and he is humble and accepted by the people, as he is likable. And furthermore, he must be familiar with songs and his voice pleasant, and he is expert in reading the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings, and he knows how to study midrash, halakha, and aggada. And finally, he must be expert in all of the blessings. Clearly, it is hard to find someone with all these qualities. And the Gemara relates that when this worthy person was described, those Sages present turned their eyes toward Rav Yitzhak bar Ami, who possessed all of these virtues.

⁴² The Gemara asks a question concerning the explanation of Rabbi Yehuda: One who has dependent children and does not have anything with which to support them is apparently the same as one whose house is empty. Why does Rabbi Yehuda list both descriptions? Rav Hisda said: This expression means that his house is empty of transgression. And Rabbi Yehuda further said that the prayer leader must be one whose youth was becoming. In explanation of this phrase, Abaye said: This is one who did not have a bad reputation at any time during his youth.

⁴³ The Gemara cites a verse in relation to the prayer leader: "My heritage has become to me as a lion in the forest. She has uttered her voice against me; therefore I have hated her" (Jeremiah 12:8). What is the meaning of the phrase: "She has uttered her voice against me"? Mar Zutra bar Toviyya said that Rav said, and some say Rabbi Hama said that Rabbi Elazar said: This is an unworthy prayer leader who descends before the ark. When this person calls out to God, He thinks, so to speak: I hate the sound of his prayer.

⁴⁴ § The mishna teaches: And the prayer leader recites twenty-four blessings before them: The eighteen blessings of the everyday Amidah prayer, to which he adds another six blessings. The Gemara asks: Are these six blessings? In fact, they are seven, as we learned in a mishna: For the seventh he recites, Blessed are You, Lord, Who has mercy on the Land. Rav Nahman bar Yitzhak said: What is the meaning of the seventh blessing? This is referring to the seventh for length, i.e., there were actually six new blessings, but as the prayer leader lengthens the sixth weekday blessing it is considered an additional blessing.

⁴⁵ As it is taught in a baraita: In the blessing of: Redeemer of Israel, the prayer leader lengthens the blessing, and for its conclusion he recites: He Who answered Abraham on Mount Moriah, He will answer you and hear the sound of your cry on this day. Blessed are You, Lord, Redeemer of Israel. And the community answers amen after him. And the sexton says to them: Blow a long, unwavering sound, sons of Aaron, blow.

⁴⁶ And the prayer leader resumes and recites the second blessing, concluding: He Who answered our forefathers by the Red Sea, He will answer you and hear the sound of your cry on this day. Blessed are You, Lord, Who remembers the forgotten. And the community answers amen after him. And the sexton says to them: Blast a wavering sound, sons of Aaron, blast. And similarly, this is the procedure for each and every additional blessing: After one blessing he says: Blow a long, unwavering sound, and after the next one he says: Blast a wavering sound.

⁴⁷ The Gemara asks: In what case is this statement said? This method applies in the outlying areas, i.e., everywhere except in the Temple. However, in the Temple itself this is not the correct procedure, as one does not answer amen in the Temple. Instead, one responds with a long blessing. The Gemara inquires: And from where is it derived that one does not answer amen in the Temple?

⁴⁸ The Gemara answers: As it is stated: “Stand up and bless the Lord, your God, from everlasting to everlasting, and let them say: Blessed be Your glorious name, that is exalted above all blessing and praise” (Nehemiah 9:5). One might have thought that for all blessings there should be only one praise, i.e., all blessings are answered with amen. Therefore, the verse states: “That is exalted above all [al kol] blessing and praise,” which indicates that for every [al kol] blessing, you should give it its own praise.

⁴⁹ But if so, in the Temple, what would the prayer leader recite? He would conclude the blessing: Blessed be the Lord, God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Blessed are You, Lord, Redeemer of Israel. And instead of amen, they answer after him: Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom forever and all time. And the sexton says to them: Blow, priests, sons of Aaron, blow.

⁵⁰ And the prayer leader resumes and recites the second blessing, concluding: He Who answered Abraham on Mount Moriah, He will answer you and hear the sound of your cry on this day. Blessed be the Lord, God of Israel, Who remembers the forgotten. And the community answers after him: Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom forever and all time. And the sexton says to them: Blast, priests, sons of Aaron, blast, etc. And similarly, this is the procedure for each and every additional blessing: After one blessing he says: Blow a long, unwavering sound, and after the next one he says: Blast a wavering sound, until he concludes all the blessings.

⁵¹ § The Gemara relates: And this was the custom Rabbi Ḥalafta established in the city of Tzipori, and Rabbi Ḥananya ben Teradyon in the city of Sikhni. And when this matter came before the Sages, they said: They would act in accordance with this custom only at the Eastern Gate of the Temple and on the Temple Mount, but not outside the Temple.

⁵² And some say that they acted as it is taught in a baraita: And he recites twenty-four blessings before them: The eighteen blessings of the everyday Amidah prayer, to which he adds another six blessings. And those extra six, where does he recite them? Between the blessings: Redeemer of Israel, and: Healer of the sick. And he lengthens the earlier prayer of redemption, and the congregation answers amen after him, for each and every blessing. And this was the custom in the outlying areas, outside the Temple.

⁵³ However, in the Temple they would recite: Blessed be the Lord, God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Blessed are You, Lord, Redeemer of Israel, and they would not answer amen after him. And why did the practice differ so much? Because one does not answer amen in the Temple. And from where is it derived that one does not answer amen in the Temple? As it is stated: “Stand up and bless the Lord, your God, from everlasting to everlasting, and let them say: Blessed be Your glorious Name, that is exalted above all blessing and praise” (Nehemiah 9:5). As stated above, this verse indicates that for every blessing, you should give it its own praise.

⁵⁴ The Sages taught: In concluding the first blessing he recites: Blessed be the Lord, God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Blessed are You, Lord, Redeemer of Israel, and they would answer after him: Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom forever and all time. And the sexton says: Blow, priests, blow. And he resumes the blessings and recites: He Who answered Abraham on Mount Moriah, He will answer you and hear the sound of your cry on this day. And they blow a long, unwavering sound, and blast a wavering sound, and blow. And for the second blessing he recites: Blessed be the Lord, God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting, who remembers the forgotten, and they would answer after him: Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom forever and all time.

⁵⁵ And the sexton says: Blast, sons of Aaron, blast. And he recites: He Who answered our forefathers by the Red Sea, He will answer you and hear the sound of your cry on this day. And they blow, and blast, and blow. And similarly, for each and every blessing: After one he says: Blow, and after the next one he says: Blast, until he concludes all of them. And this was the custom Rabbi Ḥalafta established in Tzipori, and Rabbi Ḥananya ben Teradyon in Sikhni. And when this matter came before the Sages, they said: They would act in accordance with this custom only at the Eastern Gate and on the Temple Mount.

⁵⁶ § The mishna taught: Rabbi Yehuda says: The prayer leader did not need to recite the Remembrances and Shofarot passages. Instead, he recited verses dealing with famine and suffering. Rabbi Adda from Jaffa said: What is Rabbi Yehuda’s reason? Rabbi Yehuda maintains that one recites Remembrances and Shofarot

⁵⁷ only on Rosh HaShana, and on Yom Kippur of Jubilee Years, and in a time of war.

⁵⁸ § The mishna teaches: For the first blessing he recites: He Who answered Abraham. It was taught in a baraita: Some reverse the order of the conclusion of two blessings, by reciting: Who hears cries, in the fifth blessing, which deals with Elijah, and the conclusion: Who hears prayer, in the blessing of Samuel. 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. One verse states: “And Samuel said: Gather all of Israel to Mizpah, and I will pray for you to the Lord” (I Samuel 7:5), while another verse states: “And Samuel cried to the Lord for Israel” (I Samuel 7:9).

⁵⁹ However, with regard to Elijah, although prayer is written, as it says: “Elijah the prophet came near and said: Lord, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Israel” (I Kings 18:36), which is referring to a prayer, crying is not written. How, then, can one conclude a blessing that deals with Elijah by mentioning crying? The Gemara answers that Elijah’s statement: “Answer me, Lord, answer me” (I Kings 18:37), is an expression of crying, even if the term crying does not itself actually appear.

⁶⁰ § The mishna further teaches: For the sixth he recites: He Who answered Jonah; for the seventh he recites: He Who answered David. The Gemara asks: Since Jonah was after David and Solomon, what is the reason that the tanna mentions Jonah first? The Gemara answers: The reason is due to the fact

that he wants to conclude the series with: Blessed are You, Lord, Who has mercy on the Land. Therefore, the last blessing mentions David and Solomon, who were kings of Eretz Yisrael and prayed on its behalf. It was taught in the name of Sumakhos that they said he concludes the final blessing with: Blessed are You, Lord, Who humbles the exalted.

⁶¹ § The mishna teaches that on the first three fasts, the members of the priestly watch fast but do not complete their fasts until nightfall. The mishna then proceeds to cite other halakhot that deal with the members of the priestly watch and the patrilineal family. The Sages taught: 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? They said this lest on a certain day the Temple service becomes burdensome for the members of the patrilineal family, and the members of the priestly watch are called to come and assist them. Therefore, it is prohibited for them to drink wine during the day, when their help might be needed, so that they do not enter the Temple after drinking wine.

⁶² The baraita continues to explain the reason for the mishna's ruling. 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.

⁶³ From here the Sages stated: Even nowadays, after the destruction of the Temple, with regard to any priest who knows his priestly watch, in which his family served, and the watch of his patrilineal family, and he knows that the family of his forefathers was established as fit for the Temple service there, it is prohibited for him to drink wine that entire day, in the event that the Temple is rebuilt on that day and he will be called to return to the service. In the case of a priest who knows his priestly watch, i.e., the week of the year in which his family served, and does not know the watch of his patrilineal family, the day of the week that his family served, but he knows that the family of his forefathers was established there, it is prohibited for him to drink wine that entire week.

⁶⁴ Finally, if he does not know his priestly watch or the watch of his patrilineal family, but he knows that the family of his forefathers was established there, he is prohibited to drink wine that entire year. When the Temple will be rebuilt, his priestly watch might be called upon to serve, and he is unaware of the appointed time for his Temple service.

⁶⁵ Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi says: I say that in accordance with this reasoning it is prohibited for any priest to drink wine at any time, even if he knows his priestly watch, as the order of the watches might change when the Temple is rebuilt, or perhaps all the watches will participate in the rededication of Temple. However, what can I do, as his misfortune is his advantage? The unfortunate fact that so many years have passed since the destruction of the Temple means that this decree prohibiting the priests from drinking cannot be sustained. Abaye said: In accordance with whose opinion do priests drink wine nowadays? It is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi.

⁶⁶ § The mishna teaches: It is prohibited for both the members of the priestly watch and the members of the non-priestly watch to cut their hair or launder their garments throughout the week, but on Thursday they are permitted to cut their hair and launder their clothes in deference to Shabbat. The Gemara asks: What is the reason for these prohibitions? Rabba bar bar Ḥana said that Rabbi Yoḥanan said: These prohibitions were enacted in order to ensure that the priests will cut their hair and launder their clothes during the week before their service, so that they will not enter their priestly watch when they are unkempt.

⁶⁷ The Sages taught: A king cuts his hair every day, a High Priest cuts his hair every Friday, and a common priest once every thirty days. The Gemara clarifies: A king cuts his hair every day. What is the reason for this? Rabbi Abba bar Zavda said that the verse states: “Your eyes shall see the king in his beauty” (Isaiah 33:17), which indicates that a king must always look his best. A High Priest cuts his hair every Friday. The Gemara asks: What is the reason for this? Rav Shmuel bar Yitzhak said: Since the watches are renewed and changed every Friday, it is fitting for every watch to see the High Priest with his hair perfectly groomed.

⁶⁸ § A common priest cuts his hair once every thirty days. The Gemara asks: From where do we derive this number? It is derived by a verbal analogy from the word *pera* with regard to priests and *pera* in connection with a nazirite. It is written here, concerning priests: “Neither shall they shave their heads, nor suffer their locks [*pera*] to grow long” (Ezekiel 44:20), 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” (Numbers 6:5). Just as there, a nazirite who does not specify any other time period cuts his hair after thirty days, so too here, a priest cuts his hair every thirty days.

⁶⁹ The Gemara asks: And a nazirite himself, from where do we derive that he may not cut his hair for thirty days? Rav Mattana said: It is a principle that an unspecified naziriteship lasts thirty days. The Gemara inquires: From where do we derive this principle? The Gemara answers that the verse states: “He shall be [*yihye*] sacred” (Numbers 6:5), and the numerical value [*gimatriya*] of *yihye* is thirty. Rav Pappa said to Abaye: But perhaps this is what the Merciful One is saying in the Torah: They should not grow their hair at all, as they must cut it every day. Abaye said to him: If it were written: They shall not grow long their locks, I might have explained as you originally said. Now that it is written: “Nor suffer their locks to grow long,” this indicates that they may have locks, but they may not let them grow long.

⁷⁰ The Gemara asks: If it is so that cutting one’s hair is a necessary preparation for the Temple service by Torah law, then even nowadays priests should cut their hair every thirty days as well, in case the Temple is rebuilt and they must resume their service. The Gemara answers: This issue is similar to the prohibition concerning those who have drunk wine. Just as with regard to those who have drunk wine, it is when one enters the Temple that it is prohibited, whereas when one does not enter the Temple it is permitted to drink wine, here the same also applies.

⁷¹ The Gemara questions this conclusion: But isn’t it taught in the aforementioned baraita that Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi says: I say that it is prohibited for all priests to drink wine at any time. However, what can I do, as his misfortune is his advantage? And Abaye said: In accordance with whose opinion do priests drink wine nowadays?

⁷² It is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi. From the fact that Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi permits priests to drink wine, it may be inferred that the Rabbis prohibit it even nowadays. Why, then, isn’t it prohibited for priests to grow their hair as well? The Gemara explains: What is the reason for the prohibition? It is due to the hope: May the Temple be speedily rebuilt, and we will require a priest who is fit for the Temple service, and there will be none available, as they have all imbibed wine. The time that it will take for the effects of the wine to wear off will delay the Temple service considerably. Here, however, with regard to hair, it is possible for a priest to cut his hair and be ready to enter and perform the Temple service with minimal delay.

⁷³ The Gemara asks: If so, with regard to those who have drunk wine too, it is possible for him to sleep a little and then enter, in accordance with the opinion of Rami bar Abba, as Rami bar Abba said: Walking a distance of a mil, and similarly, sleeping even a minimal amount, will dispel the effect of wine that one has drunk. The Gemara rejects this proof: Wasn't it stated about this halakha that Rav Nahman said that Rabba bar Avuh said: They taught this only with regard to one who has drunk the measure of a quarter-log of wine, but with regard to one who has drunk more than a quarter-log, walking this distance will preoccupy and exhaust him all the more, and a small amount of sleep will further intoxicate him. For this reason, it is prohibited for priests to drink wine, lest no suitable priest will be ready for the Temple service.

⁷⁴ Rav Ashi said that there is a different way to distinguish between these two halakhot. In the case of those who have drunk wine, who desecrate the Temple service, the Sages issued a decree concerning them, that priests should not drink wine even nowadays. However, with regard to those who have long hair, who do not desecrate the Temple service, the Sages did not issue a decree concerning them.

⁷⁵ The Gemara raises an objection from a baraita: And these are the transgressors who are punished by death at the hand of Heaven: Priests who enter the Temple to serve who have drunk wine, and those priests who have long hair while they serve. The Gemara asks: Granted, those who have drunk wine are punished by death, as it is explicitly written: "Drink no wine nor strong drink, neither you nor your sons with you, when you enter the Tent of Meeting, that you should not die" (Leviticus 10:9). However, with regard to those priests who have long hair, from where do we derive that they are punishable by death?

⁷⁶ The Gemara answers that this is as it is written: "Neither shall they shave their heads, nor suffer their locks [pera] to grow long" (Ezekiel 44:20), and it is written immediately afterward: "Neither shall any priest drink wine when they enter the inner courtyard" (Ezekiel 44:21). And in this manner the prohibition concerning those who have long hair is juxtaposed with the prohibition concerning those who have drunk wine, to teach the following: Just as those who have drunk wine and perform the Temple service are subject to death, so too, those who have long hair are punishable by death.

⁷⁷ The Gemara raises a difficulty: And from this comparison one can also argue as follows: If so, just as those who have drunk wine desecrate the Temple service, so too, those who have long hair desecrate the service. The Gemara rejects this contention: No, when the two cases were juxtaposed, it was with regard to death that they were juxtaposed. However, as for desecrating the Temple service, in this regard they were not juxtaposed. Consequently, Rav Ashi's distinction concerning the practical application of these two halakhot still applies.

⁷⁸ On this issue, Ravina said to Rav Ashi: Before Ezekiel came and stated this halakha, who said it? From where was it derived before Ezekiel that priests may not serve with long hair? This prohibition, which is not mentioned in the Torah, could not have been innovated by Ezekiel, as prophets may not enact new halakhot. Rav Ashi said to him: And according to your reasoning, there is a similar difficulty with that which Rabbi H̥isda said: This matter, that an uncircumcised priest may not serve in the Temple, we did not learn it from the Torah of Moses, but we learned it from the text of the tradition, i.e., Prophets and Writings: "No stranger, uncircumcised in heart or uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter my Temple" (Ezekiel 44:9). Before Ezekiel came, who said that it is prohibited for an uncircumcised priest to serve?

⁷⁹ Rather, you must say that it is learned as a definite tradition, like the rest of the Oral Torah, and Ezekiel came and supported it by means of a verse in his book. He did not, however, teach this halakha anew. Here too, with regard to a priest with long hair, it is learned as a tradition, and Ezekiel came and supported it by a verse. And when they learned this halakha, they learned only that one is punishable by death; however, with regard to desecrating the Temple service, they did not learn this halakha.

⁸⁰ § The mishna teaches: Any day concerning which it is written in Megillat Ta'anit not to eulogize on that day, it is also prohibited to eulogize on the day before, but it is permitted to do so on the following day. The Sages taught in Megillat Ta'anit: These are the days on which fasting is prohibited, and on some of them eulogizing is prohibited as well: From the New Moon of Nisan until the eighth of the month, the proper sacrifice of the daily offering was established, and therefore it was decreed not to eulogize on these dates. From the eighth of Nisan until the end of the festival of Passover, the festival of Shavuot was restored and it was likewise decreed not to eulogize during this period.

⁸¹ The Gemara seeks to clarify these statements by comparing them to the ruling of the mishna. The Master said above: From the New Moon of Nisan until the eighth of the month, the daily offering was established, and therefore it was decreed not to eulogize on these dates. The Gemara asks: Why do I need Megillat Ta'anit to say: From the New Moon? Let it say: From the second of Nisan, as the New Moon is itself a holiday, and it is already prohibited to eulogize on that day. Rav said: It is necessary to mention the New Moon of Nisan only to prohibit eulogizing on the day before, in accordance with the statement in Megillat Ta'anit that fasting on the day before any of the specified commemorative days is also prohibited.

⁸² The Gemara asks: And with regard to the day before the New Moon of Nisan as well, one can derive the prohibition against eulogizing on this day from the fact that it is the day before the New Moon. Since it is prohibited to fast on the New Moon, it is likewise prohibited on the day before. The Gemara answers that as the New Moon is by Torah law and a Torah law requires no reinforcement, it is permitted to fast on the previous day.

⁸³ As it is taught in a baraita: With regard to these days that are written in Megillat Ta'anit, it is prohibited to fast before them and after them. However, concerning Shabbatot and Festivals, fasting on those days is prohibited, but before them and after them fasting is permitted. And what is the difference between this and that? These, Shabbat and Festivals, are statements of Torah, and statements of Torah do not require reinforcement, whereas these days mentioned in Megillat Ta'anit are statements of rabbinic law, and statements of rabbinic law require reinforcement.

⁸⁴ § The Master said above: From the eighth of Nisan until the end of the festival of Passover, the festival of Shavuot was restored and it was decreed not to eulogize. The Gemara asks: Why do I need Megillat Ta'anit to say: Until the end of the Festival? Let it say: Until the Festival, as it is anyway prohibited to eulogize on the festival of Passover. Rav Pappa said that this, too, should be explained as Rav said: It is necessary to mention the first of Nisan

⁸⁵ only to prohibit eulogizing on the day before. Here too, it is necessary to mention Passover only to prohibit eulogizing on the following day. The Gemara asks: In accordance with whose opinion is this ruling? It is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei, who said that eulogizing is prohibited both on the day before the date recorded in Megillat Ta'anit and on the following day. The Gemara

asks: If so, with regard to the twenty-ninth of Adar too, why state specifically that eulogizing is prohibited then because it is the day before the day on which the daily offering was established? Let him derive this prohibition from the fact that it is the day after the twenty-eighth of Adar.

⁸⁶ As it is taught in Megillat Ta'anit: On the twenty-eighth of Adar good tidings came to the Jews, that they would not be restricted from Torah study, and they declared this date a commemorative day. The baraita proceeds to describe the events of this day. As on one occasion the wicked empire, Rome, issued a decree of apostasy against the Jews, that they may not occupy themselves with Torah study, and that they may not circumcise their sons, and that they must desecrate Shabbat. What did Yehuda ben Shammua and his colleagues do? They went and sought the advice of a certain Roman matron [matronita] whose company was kept by all the prominent people of Rome.

⁸⁷ She said to them: Arise and cry out [hafginu] at night. They went and cried out at night, saying: O Heaven! Are we not brothers? Are we not children of one father? Are we not the children of one mother? How are we different from any other nation and tongue that you single us out and issue against us evil decrees? Their cries were effective, and the authorities annulled the decrees, and they made that day a commemorative holiday.

⁸⁸ § Since the twenty-eighth of Adar is also a commemorative day, according to the opinion of Rabbi Yosei, it is also prohibited to fast on the following day. The question therefore remains: Why was it necessary to list the New Moon of Nisan, when the day before was already prohibited? Abaye said: It is necessary to include the New Moon of Nisan only for the case of a full, thirty-day month. If the month of Adar is thirty days long, fasting on the thirtieth day would be prohibited only because it is the day preceding the New Moon, not because it follows the twenty-eighth of Adar.

⁸⁹ Rav Ashi said: Even if you say that we are dealing with a deficient month, with twenty-nine days, the inclusion of the New Moon of Nisan can still be explained. The reason is that with regard to all days that follow the dates listed in Megillat Ta'anit, fasting is prohibited but eulogizing is permitted. But in this case, since the twenty-ninth of Adar is positioned between two commemorative holidays, the twenty-eighth of Adar and the New Moon of Nisan, the Sages made it like a commemorative holiday in its own right, and it is therefore prohibited even to eulogize on this date.

⁹⁰ § The Master said above, in Megillat Ta'anit: From the eighth of Nisan until the end of the festival of Passover, the festival of Shavuot was restored, and it was decreed not to eulogize during this period. The Gemara asks: Why do I need it to say: From the eighth of Nisan? Let the tanna say: From the ninth of Nisan, and the eighth itself will still be prohibited because, as stated earlier, it is the day on which the daily offering was established.

⁹¹ The Gemara answers: Since if a calamitous event happened and they canceled the seven days commemorating the establishment of the daily offering, the eighth day itself will remain prohibited, as it is the first day on which the festival of Shavuot was restored. Since this date is not merely the last of the series for the daily offering, but it also commemorates the restoration of Shavuot, it is not affected by the cancellation of the previous seven days.

⁹² The Gemara notes: Now that you have arrived at this conclusion, the same logic can be applied to the twenty-ninth of Adar as well: Since if a calamitous event happened and they canceled the commemoration of the twenty-eighth of Adar, nevertheless, the twenty-ninth day itself will remain prohibited, as it is the first day on which the daily offering was established.

⁹³ It was stated that there is a dispute between amora'im: Rav Ḥiyya bar Asi said that Rav said: The halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei, that with regard to all the days mentioned in Megillat Ta'anit on which eulogizing is prohibited, it is likewise prohibited to eulogize on the day before and the day after. And Shmuel said: The halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Meir, the tanna of the unattributed mishna, who said that although it is prohibited to eulogize on the day before, it is permitted on the day after.

⁹⁴ The Gemara asks: And did Shmuel actually say this? But isn't it taught in a baraita that Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says: And what is the meaning when Megillat Ta'anit states: On them, on them, twice, in the phrases: Not to eulogize on them, and: Not to fast on them. This phrase is repeated to say to you that fasting and eulogizing on these days themselves is prohibited, but on the days before and on the following days it is permitted. And Shmuel said: The halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel. How, then, can it be said that Shmuel ruled in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Meir?

⁹⁵ The Gemara answers: Initially, Shmuel maintained that since there is no other tanna as lenient as Rabbi Meir, he said that the halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Meir. When he heard that the opinion of Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel was more lenient, he said that the halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel. Shmuel consistently ruled in the most lenient manner possible on this issue.

⁹⁶ And similarly, the Sage Bali said that Rabbi Ḥiyya bar Abba said that Rabbi Yoḥanan said: The halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei. The Gemara relates that Rabbi Ḥiyya bar Abba said to Bali: I will explain this ruling to you. When Rabbi Yoḥanan said that the halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei, he was not referring to all matters. Rather, he spoke specifically with regard to the day before those dates concerning which Megillat Ta'anit said: Fasting is prohibited. However, with regard to those days on which it is prohibited to eulogize, he did not rule in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei, as Rabbi Yoḥanan maintains that eulogizing on the following day is permitted.

⁹⁷ The Gemara asks: And did Rabbi Yoḥanan actually say this? But didn't Rabbi Yoḥanan say as a principle that the halakha is always in accordance with an unattributed mishna. And we learned in a mishna: Although the Sages said, with regard to reading of the Scroll of Esther, that one may read it earlier but one may not read it later,

⁹⁸ as the Sages decreed that in certain places one may read the Scroll of Esther on the eleventh, twelfth, or thirteenth of Adar, nevertheless, it is permitted to eulogize and fast on these days. The Gemara clarifies: When does this ruling apply? If we say that it applies to those in walled cities, who normally read the scroll on the fifteenth of Adar and yet this year they read it on the fourteenth, a day on which they normally are permitted to fast and eulogize, but this cannot be the case, as are they permitted to fast and eulogize at all on these days?

⁹⁹ But isn't it written in Megillat Ta'anit: The day of the fourteenth of Adar and the day of the fifteenth of Adar are the days of Purim, on which eulogizing is prohibited. And Rava said: Since these days are already mentioned in the Bible (Esther 9:18–19), it is necessary to state this halakha in Megillat Ta'anit only to prohibit those living in these walled cities from fasting and eulogizing on this date, the fourteenth, and those living in these non-walled cities from fasting and eulogizing on this date, the fifteenth.

¹⁰⁰ The Gemara continues its explanation of the difficulty. But rather, the mishna must be referring to those who normally read on the fourteenth of Adar, but who read the Scroll of Esther early, on the thirteenth. However, it is already prohibited to fast on the thirteenth, as it is Nicanor's Day, which is a commemorative day in its own right. But rather, you will say that the mishna is referring to those residents of cities who normally read on the fourteenth, but who read it early that year, on the twelfth; however, the twelfth of Adar is also a commemorative day, as it is Trajan's Day.

¹⁰¹ Rather, isn't the mishna referring to a case where they read the Scroll of Esther on the eleventh of Adar, and nevertheless that mishna teaches that it is permitted to eulogize and fast on this day, despite the fact that it is the day before Trajan's Day? The opinion in this unattributed mishna is not in accordance with that of Rabbi Yosei, which means that there is a contradiction between the two statements of Rabbi Yoḥanan.

¹⁰² The Gemara answers: No; the mishna is actually referring to those who normally read on the fourteenth, but who read it that year on the twelfth of Adar. And with regard to that which you said, that it is Trajan's Day, Trajan's Day itself was annulled and is no longer celebrated, since Shemaya and his brother Aḥiya were killed on that day. We learn this as in the incident when Rav Naḥman decreed a fast on the twelfth of Adar and the Sages said to him: It is Trajan's Day. He said to them: Trajan's Day itself was annulled, since Shemaya and his brother Aḥiya were killed on that day.

¹⁰³ The Gemara asks: And let him derive that fasting on the twelfth is prohibited in any case, as it is the day before Nicanor's Day. Rav Ashi said: Now that with regard to Trajan's Day itself, they annulled it, will we then arise and issue a decree not to fast on this date due to the following day, Nicanor's Day?

¹⁰⁴ In relation to the above, the Gemara inquires: What is the origin of Nicanor's Day and what is the origin of Trajan's Day? As it is taught in a baraita: Nicanor was one of the generals [iparkhei] in the Greek army, and each and every day he would wave his hand over Judea and Jerusalem and say: When will this city fall into my hands, and I shall trample it? And when the Hasmonean monarchy overcame the Greeks and emerged victorious over them, they killed Nicanor in battle, cut off his thumbs and big toes, and hung them on the gates of Jerusalem, saying: The mouth that spoke with pride, and the hands that waved over Jerusalem, may vengeance be taken against them. This occurred on the thirteenth of Adar.

¹⁰⁵ What is the origin of Trajan's Day? They said in explanation: When Trajan sought to kill the important leaders Luleyanus and his brother Pappas in Laodicea, he said to them: If you are from the nation of Hananiah, Mishaël, and Azariah, let your God come and save you from my hand, just as He saved Hananiah, Mishaël, and Azariah from the hand of Nebuchadnezzar. Luleyanus and Pappas said to him: Hananiah, Mishaël, and Azariah were full-fledged righteous people, and they were worthy that a miracle should be performed for them, and Nebuchadnezzar was a legitimate king who rose to power through his merit, and it is fitting that a miracle be performed through him.

¹⁰⁶ But this wicked man, Trajan, is a commoner, not a real king, and it is not fitting that a miracle be performed through him. Luleyanus and Pappas continued: And we are not wholly righteous, and have been condemned to destruction by the Omnipresent for our sins. And if you do not kill us, the Omnipresent has many other executioners. And if men do not kill us, the Omnipresent has many bears and lions in His world that can hurt us and kill us. Instead, the Holy One, Blessed be He, placed us into your hands only so that He will avenge our blood in the future.

¹⁰⁷ Even so, Trajan remained unmoved by their response and killed them immediately. It is said that they had not moved from the place of execution when two officials [diyoflei] arrived from Rome with permission to remove Trajan from power, and they split his skull with clubs. This was viewed as an act of divine retribution and was established as a commemorative day.

¹⁰⁸ § The mishna taught: One may not decree a fast on the community starting on a Thursday, so as not to cause prices to rise. Furthermore, one may not decree a fast on New Moons, on Hanukkah, or on Purim. However, if one began a set of fasts, one does not interrupt the sequence for these days. The Gemara asks: And how many fasts are considered a beginning? Rav Aḥa said: If one fasted three fasts before the festive day. Rabbi Asi said: Even if one fasted one fast before it.

¹⁰⁹ Rav Yehuda said that Rav said: This halakha of the mishna that a fast that occurs on a festival is not observed, is the statement of Rabbi Meir, who said it in the name of Rabban Gamliel. However, the Rabbis say: If a communal fast occurs on one of these days, one must fast and complete the fast until nightfall. Mar Zutra taught in the name of Rav Huna: The practical halakha is in accordance with the opinion of the Rabbis, that one fasts and completes his fast until nightfall.

Chapter 3

¹ MISHNA: The order of these fasts of increasing severity, as explained in Chapter One, is stated only in a case when the first rainfall has not materialized. However, if there is vegetation that grew and its appearance changed due to disease, the court does not wait at all; they cry out about it immediately. And likewise, if rain ceased for a period of forty days between one rainfall and another, they cry out about it because it is a plague of drought.

² If sufficient rain fell for the vegetation but not enough fell for the trees; or if it was enough for the trees but not for the vegetation; or if sufficient rain fell for both this and that, i.e., vegetation and trees, but not enough to fill the cisterns, ditches, and caves with water to last the summer, they cry out about it immediately. And likewise, if there is a particular city upon which it did not rain, while the surrounding area did receive rain, this is considered a divine curse, as it is written: “And I caused it to rain upon one city, but caused it not to rain upon another city; one piece was rained upon, and the portion upon which it did not rain withered” (Amos 4:7).

³ In a case of this kind, that city fasts and cries out by blowing the shofar, and all of its surrounding areas join them in their fast, but they do not cry out. Rabbi Akiva disagrees and says: They cry out but they do not fast. The mishna continues: And likewise, if a city is afflicted by pestilence or collapsing buildings, that city fasts and cries out, and all of its surrounding areas fast but they do not cry out. Rabbi Akiva says: They cry out but they do not fast.

⁴ The mishna inquires: What is considered a plague of pestilence? When is a series of deaths treated as a plague? The mishna answers: If a city that sends out five hundred infantrymen, i.e., it has a population of five hundred able-bodied men, and three dead are taken out of it on three consecutive days, this is a plague of pestilence, which requires fasting and crying out. If the death rate is lower than that, this is not pestilence.

⁵ For the following calamities they cry out in every place: For blight; for mildew; for locusts; for caterpillars, a type of locust that comes in large swarms and descends upon a certain place; for

dangerous beasts that have entered a town; and for the sword, i.e., legions of an invading army. The reason that they cry out about these misfortunes in every place is because these are calamities that spread.

⁶ An incident occurred in which Elders descended from Jerusalem to their cities throughout Eretz Yisrael and decreed a fast throughout the land because there was seen in the city of Ashkelon a small amount of blight, enough to fill the mouth of an oven. This fast was observed throughout Eretz Yisrael, as blight spreads quickly. And furthermore, they decreed a fast because wolves had eaten two children in Transjordan. Rabbi Yosei says: This fast was decreed not because they ate the children, but because these wolves were merely seen in an inhabited area.

⁷ For the following calamities they cry out even on Shabbat: For a city that is surrounded by gentile troops, or for a place in danger of being flooded by a river that has swelled its banks, or for a ship tossed about at sea. Rabbi Yosei said: One may cry out on Shabbat to summon help, but it may not be sounded for crying out to God. Shimon the Timnite says: One may cry out on Shabbat even for pestilence, but the Rabbis did not agree with him.

⁸ § The mishna adds: In general, they cry out on account of any trouble that should not befall the community, a euphemism for trouble that may befall the community, except for an overabundance of rain. Although too much rain may be disastrous, one does not cry out over it, because rain is a sign of a blessing. The mishna relates: An incident occurred in which the people said to Ḥoni HaMe'aggel: Pray that rain should fall. He said to them: Go out and bring in the clay ovens used to roast the Paschal lambs, so that they will not dissolve in the water, as torrential rains are certain to fall. He prayed, and no rain fell at all.

⁹ What did he do? He drew a circle on the ground and stood inside it and said before God: Master of the Universe, Your children have turned their faces toward me, as I am like a member of Your household. Therefore, I take an oath by Your great name that I will not move from here until You have mercy upon Your children and answer their prayers for rain. Rain began to trickle down, but only in small droplets. He said: I did not ask for this, but for rain to fill the cisterns, ditches, and caves with enough water to last the entire year. Rain began to fall furiously. He said: I did not ask for this damaging rain either, but for rain of benevolence, blessing, and generosity.

¹⁰ Subsequently, the rains fell in their standard manner but continued unabated, filling the city with water until all of the Jews exited the residential areas of Jerusalem and went to the Temple Mount due to the rain. They came and said to him: Just as you prayed over the rains that they should fall, so too, pray that they should stop. He said to them: Go out and see if the Claimants' Stone, a large stone located in the city, upon which proclamations would be posted with regard to lost and found articles, has been washed away. In other words, if the water has not obliterated the Claimants' Stone, it is not yet appropriate to pray for the rain to cease.

¹¹ Shimon ben Shetaḥ, the Nasi of the Sanhedrin at the time, relayed to Ḥoni HaMe'aggel: Were you not Ḥoni, I would have decreed that you be ostracized, but what can I do to you? You nag [mithatei] God and He does your bidding, like a son who nags his father and his father does his bidding without reprimand. After all, rain fell as you requested. About you, the verse states: "Let your father and your mother be glad, and let her who bore you rejoice" (Proverbs 23:25).

¹² The mishna teaches another halakha with regard to fast days: If they were fasting for rain, and rain fell for them before sunrise, they need not complete their fast until the evening. However, if it fell

after sunrise, they must complete their fast. Rabbi Eliezer says: If rain fell before midday, they need not complete their fast; but if it rains after midday, they must complete their fast.

¹³ The mishna relates: An incident occurred in which the court decreed a fast in Lod due to a lack of rain, and rain fell for them before midday. Rabbi Tarfon said to the people: Go out, and eat, and drink, and treat this day as a Festival. And they went out, and ate, and drank, and treated the day as a Festival, and in the afternoon they came to the synagogue and recited the great hallel, to thank God for answering their prayers.

¹⁴ GEMARA: The mishna taught: The order of these fasts is stated only when the fast concerns the first rainfall. And the Gemara raises a contradiction between this statement and the following baraita: If the periods of the first and second rainfall pass without rain, this is the time to ask and pray for rain; if the third passes without rain, this is the time to fast.

¹⁵ Rav Yehuda said that this is what the mishna is saying: When does the order of these fasts that is stated apply? When the periods of the first, second, and third rainfall have passed and rain has not fallen. However, if rain fell in the time of the first rainfall, and the people sowed but the plants did not sprout, or, alternatively, if they sprouted a little, but their appearance changed back for the worse, as no rain fell after the first rainfall, they cry out about it immediately.

¹⁶ Rav Naḥman said: This applies specifically if their appearance changed. However, if they dried out entirely, they do not cry out, as this condition cannot be improved. The Gemara asks: It is obvious that this is the case, because in the mishna we learned the word changed. The Gemara answers: No, it is necessary for Rav Naḥman to issue his statement with regard to a case where they produced stalks after they dried out. Lest you say that producing stalks is a matter of significance, as it is a sign of strengthening, and the crops might be saved through prayer, Rav Naḥman therefore teaches us that this is not the case.

¹⁷ The mishna further taught: And likewise, if rain ceased for a period of forty days between one rainfall and another, they cry out about this, because it is a plague of drought. The Gemara asks: What is the meaning of the phrase: A plague of drought? Isn't this simply a drought? Rav Yehuda said that Rav said: The mishna means that a period of forty days between one rainfall and the next is a plague that may cause a drought. In this regard, Rav Naḥman said: When crops do not grow in one place due to lack of rain and must be imported by means of one river to another river,

¹⁸ this is considered a drought. If produce must be brought from one province to another province, this is considered a famine. And Rabbi Ḥanina said: If a se'a of grain is sold for a sela, but it is available, this is considered a drought. Although prices have risen, there is still grain for those who can afford it. However, if four se'a of grain is sold for a sela, and it is not available, this is considered a famine.

¹⁹ Rabbi Yoḥanan said: They taught this only with regard to a time when money is cheap and everyone has it, and produce is expensive. However, when money is expensive, i.e., unavailable, and produce is cheap, they cry out about it immediately, as this is considered a famine. As Rabbi Yoḥanan said: I remember when four se'a of produce were sold for one sela, and yet there were many swollen by famine in Tiberias, as they did not have even one issar with which to purchase food.

²⁰ § The mishna taught: If sufficient rain fell for the vegetation but not enough fell for the trees; if it was enough for the trees but not for the vegetation; or if sufficient rain fell for both this and that, i.e.,

vegetation and trees, but not enough to fill the cisterns, ditches, and caves with water to last the summer, they cry out about it immediately. The Gemara comments: Granted, with regard to rain that fell in sufficient quantities for the vegetation but not for the trees, this case can be found, e.g., if gentle rain fell but heavy rain did not fall, this is insufficient for the trees. Furthermore, it is possible for enough rain to fall for the trees but it is not effective for the vegetation, if heavy rain fell but gentle rain did not fall.

²¹ Likewise, in the case of rain that benefits both this and that, trees and vegetation, but not cisterns, ditches, and caves, you can find this too, if both heavy and gentle rain fell, however, they did not fall in abundance, and therefore the water in the cisterns will not last through the summer. However, that which is taught in a baraita: If sufficient rain fell for cisterns, ditches, and caves, but not for either this or that, i.e., trees or plants, how can you find these circumstances? If the rain is enough to fill cisterns, how could it not be enough for plants and trees? The Gemara answers: Where rain comes in a single downpour, it will fill the cisterns but will provide no benefit to plants and trees.

²² The Sages taught: They cry out about trees that have not received enough rain, until near Passover, as beyond that time any rain will no longer benefit trees. However, they sound the alarm over cisterns, ditches and caves that have not been filled until before the festival of Sukkot. And at any time, if they have no water to drink, they sound the alarm over them immediately.

²³ And what exactly is the meaning of their use of: Immediately, in these cases? Monday, Thursday, and Monday of the week in which the court became aware of the crisis, but not necessarily on the very day that it became evident. And in all of these cases of interrupted rainfall, they sound the alarm over them only in their district [iparkheya], but not in other areas where rain is falling normally.

²⁴ And with regard to a plague of diphtheria, when it has the potential to cause death they sound the alarm over it, but when it does not have the potential to cause death they do not sound the alarm over it. And they sound the alarm over the arrival of locusts, for any amount, as it is likely that more locusts are on the way. However, they do not sound the alarm over the arrival of grasshoppers. Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar says: They sound the alarm even over grasshoppers, as they too can cause a great deal of damage if they swarm in large numbers.

²⁵ The Sages taught in a baraita: They sound the alarm over trees during the other six years of the seven-year Sabbatical cycle, when the earth is tilled, but not during the Sabbatical Year, when one must refrain from working the land. However, for cisterns, ditches, and caves, they sound the alarm even in the Sabbatical Year. Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says: Even for trees they sound the alarm in the Sabbatical Year, because they serve as sustenance for the poor. Since the poor rely on these trees for their food in the Sabbatical Year, they will lose their means of subsistence if it does not rain.

²⁶ It is taught in another baraita: They sound the alarm over trees during the other years of the Sabbatical cycle, and for cisterns, ditches and caves they sound the alarm even in the Sabbatical Year. Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says: Even for trees. Furthermore, they sound the alarm for aftergrowths of crops that have grown of their own accord in the Sabbatical Year, because they serve as sustenance for the poor, as it is permitted to eat aftergrowths.

²⁷ § It is taught in a baraita that Rabbi Elazar ben Perata said: Since the day that the Temple was destroyed, rain has been meager, i.e., overall, not enough has fallen in the world. There are years whose rains are abundant, and there are years whose rains are scarce. There are years whose rains fall in their proper time, and there are years whose rains do not fall in their proper time.

²⁸ With regard to a year whose rains fall in their proper time, to what may it be compared? To a servant whose master gave him his weekly portion on Sunday. It is thereby found that his dough is baked properly throughout the week, and it is eaten properly, as he has a sufficient amount. Conversely, with regard to a year whose rains do not fall in their proper time, to what may it be compared? To a servant whose master gave him his portion on Shabbat eve, when there is insufficient time to prepare it fully. It is thereby found that his dough is baked improperly, and it is eaten improperly.

²⁹ With regard to a year whose rains are abundant, to what may it be compared? To a servant whose master gave him his portion for a long period of time all at once. He performs all of his milling at one time, and it is therefore found that the mill grinds and produces waste from a kor of produce in the same amount as it grinds and produces waste from the much smaller kav of produce. During each milling process, the same amount of flour goes to waste. Consequently, milling a large amount of flour in a single milling process preserves flour. And similarly, it is found that dough is diminished from a kor, as it diminishes from a kav.

³⁰ In contrast, with regard to a year whose rains are scarce, to what may it be compared? To a servant whose master gave him his portion little by little. It is thereby found that the amount that the mill would have ground from a kor of produce is that which in practice it grinds and produces from each kav. It is likewise found that the dough that would have been diminished from a kor is the same amount that is diminished from a kav. In sum, one retains less dough when given his sustenance little by little.

³¹ Alternatively, when its rains are abundant, to what may this year be compared? To a person who kneads clay. If he has a lot of water, his water is not used up and the clay will be well kneaded. If he has only a little water, the water will be used up and the clay will not be well kneaded.

³² § The Sages taught: Once all the Jewish people ascended for the pilgrimage Festival to Jerusalem and there was not enough water for them to drink. Nakdimon ben Guryon, one of the wealthy citizens of Jerusalem, went to a certain gentile officer [hegemon] and said to him: Lend me twelve wells of water for the pilgrims, and I will give back to you twelve wells of water. And if I do not give them to you, I will give you twelve talents of silver. And the officer set him a time limit for returning the water.

³³ When the set time arrived and no rain had fallen, in the morning the official sent a message to Nakdimon: Send me either the water or the coins that you owe me. Nakdimon sent a message to him: I still have time, as the entire day is mine. At noontime the official again sent a message to him: Send me either the water or the coins that you owe me. Nakdimon sent a message to him: I still have time left in the day. In the afternoon he sent a message to him: Send me either the water or the coins that you owe me. Nakdimon sent a message to him: I still have time left in the day. That officer ridiculed him, saying: Throughout the entire year rain has not fallen,

³⁴ and now it will rain? He entered the bathhouse in a state of joy, anticipating the large sum of money he was about to receive. As the master entered the bathhouse in his joy, Nakdimon entered the Temple in a state of sadness. He wrapped himself in his prayer shawl and stood in prayer.

³⁵ He said before God: Master of the Universe, it is revealed and known before You that I did not act for my own honor, nor did I act for the honor of my father's house. Rather, I acted for Your honor, so that there should be water for the Festival pilgrims. Immediately the sky became overcast and rain

fell until the twelve cisterns were filled with water, and there was even more water, so that they overflowed.

³⁶ As the master left the bathhouse, Nakdimon ben Guryon left the Temple. When they met one another, Nakdimon said to him: Give me the money you owe me for the extra water you received. The official said to him: I know that the Holy One, Blessed be He, has shaken His world and caused rain to fall only for you. However, I still maintain a claim against you, by which I can legally take my coins from you, as you did not pay me on the agreed date, for the sun had already set, and therefore the rain fell onto my property.

³⁷ Nakdimon went back and entered the Temple, wrapped himself in his prayer shawl, and stood in prayer. He said before God: Master of the Universe, let it be known that You have beloved ones in Your world. Immediately, the clouds scattered and the sun shined. At that time, the master said to him: If the sun had not broken through the clouds, I would have had a claim against you, by which I could have taken my coins from you. A Sage taught: Nakdimon was not his real name; rather his name was Buni. And why was he called Nakdimon? Because the sun broke through [nikdera] for him.

³⁸ The Sages taught: With regard to three people, the sun broke through and shone at an irregular time for their sake: Moses, Joshua, and Nakdimon ben Guryon. The Gemara asks: Granted, the case of Nakdimon ben Guryon is known by the aforementioned tradition. The case of Joshua too is derived from a verse, as it is written: “And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies” (Joshua 10:13). However, from where do we derive that the sun shined in a supernatural way for Moses?

³⁹ Rabbi Elazar said: It is derived by verbal analogy between “I will begin” and “I will begin.” Here, with regard to Moses, it is written: “This day I will begin to put the dread of you and the fear of you upon the peoples that are under all the whole heaven” (Deuteronomy 2:25). And there, with regard to Joshua, it is written: “On this day I will begin to magnify you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you” (Joshua 3:7). The repeated use of the phrase “I will begin” indicates that all the miracles performed for Joshua were also performed for Moses.

⁴⁰ Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani said: The fact that the sun stood still for Moses is derived by a different verbal analogy, between the terms “put” and “put.” Here, with regard to Moses, it is written: “I will begin to put the dread of you” (Deuteronomy 2:25). And there, with regard to Joshua, is it written: “Then Joshua spoke to the Lord, on the day when the Lord put the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel: Sun, stand still upon Gibeon, and you, moon, in the valley of Aijalon” (Joshua 10:12).

⁴¹ Rabbi Yoḥanan said: This idea is derived from the verse itself, as it says with regard to Moses: “This day I will begin to put the dread of you and the fear of you upon the peoples that are under all the whole heaven, who, when they hear the report of you, shall tremble, and be in anguish due to you” (Deuteronomy 2:25). When did the nations of the world tremble and when were they in anguish due to you? When the sun broke through for Moses.

⁴² § The mishna taught: And likewise, if there is a particular city upon which it did not rain, while the surrounding area did receive rain, this is considered a divine curse, as it is written: “And I will cause it to rain on one city, but on one city I will not cause it to rain, one portion will be rained upon,

and the portion upon which it did not rain shall wither” (Amos 4:7). Rav Yehuda said that Rav said: And both of the cities are faced with a curse, as one city suffers from drought while the other is afflicted with destructive storms.

⁴³ This statement reverses the plain meaning of a verse. The Gemara provides other interpretations that Rav Yehuda attributed to Rav, which also run contrary to the simple meaning of a verse. “Jerusalem among them was a like a menstruating woman” (Lamentations 1:17). Rav Yehuda said that Rav said: Although the simple meaning of this verse is a curse, it can also be understood as a blessing. Jerusalem was like a menstruating woman: Just as a menstruating woman will become permitted to her husband after the conclusion of her days of ritual impurity, so too, Jerusalem will be repaired from its destruction.

⁴⁴ Similarly, with regard to the verse: “How she has become like a widow” (Lamentations 1:1), Rav Yehuda said: This too is for a blessing. The verse states that Jerusalem is like a widow, but is not an actual widow. Rather, Jerusalem is like a woman whose husband has gone to a country overseas. Without her husband by her side she is likened to a widow, and yet he intends to return to her.

⁴⁵ The same manner of explanation is provided for the verse: “Therefore I have also made you contemptible and base” (Malachi 2:9). Rav Yehuda said: This too can be interpreted as a blessing, as meaning that the nations view us as lowly, but nevertheless, they do not assign us unpleasant jobs. They do not appoint from us either river officials or government officials [geziripatei].

⁴⁶ The prophet Ahijah the Shilonite cursed Israel in the following terms: “For the Lord will smite Israel as a reed is shaken in the water” (I Kings 14:15). Rav Yehuda said that Rav said: This too is for a blessing, as Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani said that Rabbi Yonatan said: What is the meaning of that which is written: “Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful” (Proverbs 27:6)? The curse with which Ahijah the Shilonite cursed the Jewish people is more effective than the blessing with which Balaam the wicked blessed them.

⁴⁷ Rabbi Yoḥanan elaborates: Ahijah the Shilonite cursed the Jewish people by comparing them to a reed: “For the Lord will smite Israel as a reed is shaken in the water.” Although it seems to be a curse, this verse is actually a blessing. Just as this reed stands in a place of water, and its shoots replenish themselves when cut, and its roots are numerous for a plant of its size, and even if all the winds in the world come and blow against it, they cannot move it from its place, rather, it sways with them until the winds subside, and the reed still stands in its place, the same applies to the Jewish people. After all the difficulties that they endure, they will ultimately survive and return home.

⁴⁸ However, Balaam the wicked blessed the Jews by comparing them to a cedar, as it is stated: “As cedars beside the waters” (Numbers 24:6). Just as this cedar does not stand in a place of water, and its shoots do not replenish themselves, and its roots are not numerous, Balaam wished that the same should apply to the Jewish people. Furthermore, while it is true that even if all the winds in the world blow against it they will not move it from its place, once the southern wind blows against it, it uproots the cedar and turns it on its face. And not only that, but the reed merited that a quill [kulmos] is taken from it to write with it a Torah scroll, the Prophets, and the Writings. Evidently, the curse comparing Israel to a reed is better than the blessing likening them to a cedar.

⁴⁹ The Sages further taught in praise of the reed: A person should always be soft like a reed, and he should not be stiff like a cedar. An incident occurred in which Rabbi Elazar, son of Rabbi Shimon, came from Migdal Gedor, from his rabbi’s house, and he was riding on a donkey and strolling on the

bank of the river. And he was very happy, and his head was swollen with pride because he had studied much Torah.

⁵⁰ He happened upon an exceedingly ugly person, who said to him: Greetings to you, my rabbi, but Rabbi Elazar did not return his greeting. Instead, Rabbi Elazar said to him: Worthless [reika] person, how ugly is that man. Are all the people of your city as ugly as you? The man said to him: I do not know, but you should go and say to the Craftsman Who made me: How ugly is the vessel you made. When Rabbi Elazar realized that he had sinned and insulted this man merely on account of his appearance, he descended from his donkey and prostrated himself before him, and he said to the man: I have sinned against you; forgive me. The man said to him: I will not forgive you until you go to the Craftsman Who made me and say: How ugly is the vessel you made.

⁵¹ He walked behind the man, trying to appease him, until they reached Rabbi Elazar's city. The people of his city came out to greet him, saying to him: Greetings to you, my rabbi, my rabbi, my master, my master. The man said to them: Who are you calling my rabbi, my rabbi? They said to him: To this man, who is walking behind you. He said to them: If this man is a rabbi, may there not be many like him among the Jewish people. They asked him: For what reason do you say this? He said to them: He did such and such to me. They said to him: Even so, forgive him, as he is a great Torah scholar.

⁵² He said to them: For your sakes I forgive him, provided that he accepts upon himself not to become accustomed to behave like this. Immediately, Rabbi Elazar, son of Rabbi Shimon, entered the study hall and taught: A person should always be soft like a reed and he should not be stiff like a cedar, as one who is proud like a cedar is likely to sin. And therefore, due to its gentle qualities, the reed merited that a quill is taken from it to write with it a Torah scroll, phylacteries, and mezuzot.

⁵³ § The mishna taught: And likewise, if a city is afflicted by pestilence or collapsing buildings, that city fasts and sounds the alarm, and all of its surrounding areas fast but they do not sound the alarm. Rabbi Akiva says: They sound the alarm but they do not fast. The Sages taught: These collapsing buildings to which the Sages referred are those of sturdy and not dilapidated walls; they have walls that are not ready to fall, and not those that are ready to fall.

⁵⁴ The Gemara expresses puzzlement with regard to the wording of the baraita: What are sound walls; what are walls that are not ready to fall; what are dilapidated walls; what are those that are ready to fall? The elements in each pair of walls are apparently the same, and the baraita is repetitive. The Gemara answers: No, it is necessary to specify that in the case of walls that fell due to their height, i.e., they are sound but also ready to fall, due to their excessive height. Alternatively, the baraita is referring to a case where the walls were positioned on a riverbank, as they are likely to fall despite the fact that they are not dilapidated, as the riverbank itself is unstable.

⁵⁵ The Gemara relates: This is like that dilapidated wall that was in Neharde'a, under which Rav and Shmuel would not pass, although it stood in place thirteen years. One day Rav Adda bar Ahava happened to come there and walked with them. As they passed the wall, Shmuel said to Rav: Come, Master, let us circumvent this wall, so that we do not stand beneath it. Rav said to him: It is not necessary to do so today, as Rav Adda bar Ahava is with us, whose merit is great, and therefore I am not afraid of its collapse.

⁵⁶ The Gemara relates another incident. Rav Huna had a certain quantity of wine in a certain dilapidated house and he wanted to move it, but he was afraid that the building would collapse upon

his entry. He brought Rav Adda bar Ahava to there, to the ramshackle house, and he dragged out a discussion with him concerning a matter of halakha until they had removed all the wine. As soon as they exited, the building collapsed. Rav Adda bar Ahava realized what had happened and became angry.

⁵⁷ The Gemara explains: Rav Adda bar Ahava holds in accordance with this statement, as Rabbi Yannai said: A person should never stand in a place of danger and say: A miracle will be performed for me, and I will escape unharmed, lest a miracle is not performed for him. And if you say that a miracle will be performed for him, they will deduct it from his merits. Rav Ḥanan said: What is the verse that alludes to this idea? As it is written: “I have become small from all the mercies and all the truth that You have showed Your servant” (Genesis 32:11). In other words, the more benevolence one receives from God, the more his merit is reduced.

⁵⁸ After recounting stories that reflect Rav Adda bar Ahava’s great merit, the Gemara asks: What were the exceptional deeds of Rav Adda bar Ahava? The Gemara reports that they are as it is stated: The students of Rabbi Zeira asked him, and some say that the students of Rav Adda bar Ahava asked him: To what do you attribute your longevity? He said to them: In all my days I did not become angry with my household, and I never walked before someone greater than myself; rather, I always gave him the honor of walking before me.

⁵⁹ Rav Adda bar Ahava continued: And I did not think about matters of Torah in filthy alleyways; and I did not walk four cubits without engaging in Torah and without donning phylacteries; and I would not fall asleep in the study hall, neither a deep sleep nor a brief nap; and I would not rejoice in the mishap of my colleague; and I would not call my colleague by his nickname. And some say that he said: I would not call my colleague by his derogatory family name.

⁶⁰ § The Gemara relates another story about the righteous deeds of the Sages involving a dilapidated wall. Rava said to Rafram bar Pappa: Let the Master tell us some of those fine deeds that Rav Huna performed. He said to him: I do not remember what he did in his youth, but the deeds of his old age I remember. As on every cloudy day they would take him out in a golden carriage [guharka], and he would survey the entire city. And he would command that every unstable wall be torn down, lest it fall in the rain and hurt someone. If its owner was able to build another, Rav Huna would instruct him to rebuild it. And if he was unable to rebuild it, Rav Huna would build it himself with his own money.

⁶¹ Rafram bar Pappa further relates: And every Shabbat eve, in the afternoon, Rav Huna would send a messenger to the marketplace, and he would purchase all the vegetables that were left with the gardeners who sold their crops, and throw them into the river. The Gemara asks: But why did he throw out the vegetables? Let him give them to the poor. The Gemara answers: If he did this, the poor would sometimes rely on the fact that Rav Huna would hand out vegetables, and they would not come to purchase any. This would ruin the gardeners’ livelihood. The Gemara further asks: And let him throw them to the animals. The Gemara answers: He holds that human food may not be fed to animals, as this is a display of contempt for the food.

⁶² The Gemara objects: But if Rav Huna could not use them in any way, he should not purchase the vegetables at all. The Gemara answers: If nothing is done, you would have been found to have caused a stumbling block for them in the future. If the vegetable sellers see that some of their

produce is left unsold, the next week they will not bring enough for Shabbat. Therefore, Rav Huna made sure that the vegetables were all bought, so that the sellers would continue to bring them.

⁶³ Another custom of Rav Huna was that when he had a new medicine, he would fill a water jug with the medicine and hang it from the doorpost of his house, saying: All who need, let him come and take from this new medicine. And there are those who say: He had a remedy against the demon Shvita that he knew by tradition, that one must wash his hands for protection against this evil spirit. And to this end, he would place a water jug and hang it by the door, saying: Anyone who needs, let him come to the house and wash his hands, so that he will not be in danger.

⁶⁴ The Gemara further relates: When Rav Huna would eat bread, he would open the doors to his house, saying: Whoever needs, let him come in and eat. Rava said: I can fulfill all these customs of Rav Huna, except for this one, which I cannot do,

⁶⁵ due to the fact that there are many soldiers in the city of Mehoza, and if I let them all eat, they will take all the food I own.

⁶⁶ § The Gemara relates another story that involves an unstable wall. Ilfa and Rabbi Yoḥanan studied Torah together, and as a result they became very hard-pressed for money. They said: Let us get up and go and engage in commerce, and we will fulfill, with regard to ourselves, the verse: “Although there should be no needy among you” (Deuteronomy 15:4), as we will no longer be complete paupers. They went and sat under a dilapidated wall and were eating bread, when two ministering angels arrived.

⁶⁷ Rabbi Yoḥanan heard that one angel said to the other: Let us knock this wall down upon them and kill them, as they abandon eternal life of Torah study and engage in temporal life for their own sustenance. The other angel said to him: Leave them, as there is one of them whose time of achievement stands before him, i.e., his time has yet to come. Rabbi Yoḥanan heard all this, but Ilfa did not hear the angels’ conversation. Rabbi Yoḥanan said to Ilfa: Did the Master hear anything? Ilfa said to him: No. Rabbi Yoḥanan said to himself: Since I heard the angels and Ilfa did not hear, I can learn from this that it is I whose time of achievement stands before me.

⁶⁸ Rabbi Yoḥanan said to Ilfa: I will return home and fulfill with regard to myself the contrary verse: “For the poor shall never cease out of the land” (Deuteronomy 15:11). Rabbi Yoḥanan returned to the study hall, and Ilfa did not return, but went to engage in business instead. By the time that Ilfa came back from his business travels, Rabbi Yoḥanan had been appointed head of the academy, and his financial situation had improved.

⁶⁹ His colleagues said to Ilfa: If the Master had sat and studied, instead of going off to his business ventures, wouldn’t the Master have been appointed head of the academy? Ilfa went and suspended himself from the mast [askariya] of a ship, saying: If there is anyone who can ask me a question concerning a baraita of Rabbi Ḥiyya and Rabbi Oshaya, and I do not resolve his problem from a mishna, I will fall from the mast of this ship and be drowned. Ilfa sought to demonstrate that despite the time he had spent in business, he still retained his extensive Torah knowledge.

⁷⁰ A certain old man came and taught a baraita before him: If there is a man who, upon his deathbed, says in his will: Give a shekel to my sons every week, but this is a situation where, based on their needs, they are fit for the court to give them a sela, i.e., double the amount, they give them a sela. When the dying man mentioned a shekel, he presumably meant that they should be given a sum in

accordance with their actual requirements, not that specific amount. But if he said: Give them only a shekel, the court gives them only a shekel and no more.

⁷¹ The baraita further states that if one said: If my sons die, others should inherit their portion in their stead, regardless of whether he said: Give them a shekel, or whether he said: Give them only a shekel, then the court gives his sons only a shekel per week, as their father clearly stated that he wishes to give his sons only a specific stipend and that he intends to leave the bulk of his property to others. Ilfa said to the old man: In accordance with whose opinion is this ruling? It is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Meir, who said: It is a mitzva to fulfill the statement of the dead. This entire baraita can be explained based on a principle that appears in a mishna: In all cases, one should try to execute the wishes of the deceased.

⁷² § The Gemara relates another story about a rundown building. They said about Naḥum of Gam Zu that he was blind in both eyes, both his arms were amputated, both his legs were amputated, and his entire body was covered in boils. And he was lying in a dilapidated house, and legs of his bed were placed in buckets of water so that ants should not climb onto him, as he was unable to keep them off in any other manner. Once his students sought to remove his bed from the house and afterward remove his other vessels. He said to them: My sons, remove the vessels first, and afterward remove my bed, as I can guarantee you that as long as I am in the house, the house will not fall. Indeed they removed the vessels and afterward they removed his bed, and immediately the house collapsed.

⁷³ His students said to him: Rabbi, since you are evidently a wholly righteous man, as we have just seen that as long as you were in your house it did not fall, why has this suffering befallen you? He said to them: My sons, I brought it upon myself. Naḥum of Gam Zu related to them the following: As once I was traveling along the road to my father-in-law's house, and I had with me a load distributed among three donkeys, one of food, one of drink, and one of delicacies. A poor person came and stood before me in the road, saying: My rabbi, sustain me. I said to him: Wait until I unload the donkey, after which I will give you something to eat. However, I had not managed to unload the donkey before his soul left his body.

⁷⁴ I went and fell upon his face and said: May my eyes, which had no compassion on your eyes, be blinded; may my hands, which had no compassion on your hands, be amputated; may my legs, which had no compassion on your legs, be amputated. And my mind did not rest until I said: May my whole body be covered in boils. Naḥum of Gam Zu prayed that his suffering might atone for his failure. His students said to him: Even so, woe to us that we have seen you in this state. He said to them: Woe is me if you had not seen me in this state, as this suffering atones for me.

⁷⁵ The Gemara inquires: And why did they call him Naḥum of Gam Zu? The reason is that with regard to any matter that occurred to him, he would say: This too is for the good [gam zu letova]. Once, the Jews wished to send a gift [doron] to the house of the emperor. They said: Who should go and present this gift? Let Naḥum of Gam Zu go, as he is accustomed to miracles. They sent with him a chest [sifta] full of jewels and pearls, and he went and spent the night in a certain inn. During the night, these residents of the inn arose and took all of the precious jewels and pearls from the chest, and filled it with earth. The next day, when he saw what had happened, Naḥum of Gam Zu said: This too is for the good.

⁷⁶ When he arrived there, at the ruler's palace, they opened the chest and saw that it was filled with earth. The king wished to put all the Jewish emissaries to death. He said: The Jews are mocking me.

Naḥum of Gam Zu said: This too is for the good. Elijah the Prophet came and appeared before the ruler as one of his ministers. He said to the ruler: Perhaps this earth is from the earth of their father Abraham. As when he threw earth, it turned into swords, and when he threw stubble, it turned into arrows, as it is written in a prophecy that the Sages interpreted this verse as a reference to Abraham: “His sword makes them as the dust, his bow as the driven stubble” (Isaiah 41:2).

⁷⁷ There was one province that the Romans were unable to conquer. They took some of this earth, tested it by throwing it at their enemies, and conquered that province. When the ruler saw that this earth indeed had miraculous powers, his servants entered his treasury and filled Naḥum of Gam Zu’s chest with precious jewels and pearls and sent him off with great honor.

⁷⁸ When Naḥum of Gam Zu came to spend the night at that same inn, the residents said to him: What did you bring with you to the emperor that he bestowed upon you such great honor? He said to them: That which I took from here, I brought there. When they heard this, the residents of the inn thought that the soil upon which their house stood had miraculous powers. They tore down their inn and brought the soil underneath to the king’s palace. They said to him: That earth that was brought here was from our property. The miracle had been performed only in the merit of Naḥum of Gam Zu. The emperor tested the inn’s soil in battle, and it was not found to have miraculous powers, and he had these residents of the inn put to death.

⁷⁹ § The mishna taught: What is considered a plague of pestilence? If it is a city that sends out five hundred infantrymen, and three dead are removed from it on three consecutive days, one dead per day, this is a plague of pestilence. The Sages taught: If a city that sends out fifteen hundred infantrymen, i.e., one that has a population of at least fifteen hundred men, e.g., the village of Akko, and nine dead are removed from it on three consecutive days, i.e., three dead per day, this is considered a plague of pestilence.

⁸⁰ If all nine died on a single day, while none died on the other days, or if the nine died over a period of four days, this is not a plague of pestilence. And a city that sends out five hundred infantrymen, for example, the village of Amiko, and three dead are removed from it on three consecutive days, this is a plague of pestilence.

⁸¹ If all three died on one day or over four days, this is not a plague of pestilence.

⁸² In explanation of the counterintuitive ruling that many deaths in one day is not indicative of a plague, the Gemara relates: Drokart was a city that sent out five hundred infantrymen, and three dead were removed from it on one day. Rav Naḥman bar Rav Ḥisda decreed a fast on account of the plague. Rav Naḥman bar Yitzḥak said: In accordance with whose opinion did you declare this fast? It must be in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Meir.

⁸³ This is related to the definition of a forewarned ox, an animal that has gored enough times to be considered a dangerous beast that requires careful supervision, as Rabbi Meir said: The owner of an ox is liable to pay full damages if its acts of goring were separated, i.e., if it gored three times on three consecutive days, as claimed by the Rabbis. If its acts of goring were near each other, performed on a single day, is it not all the more so that this animal should be classified as a forewarned ox? However, Rav Naḥman bar Yitzḥak continued, this represents a minority opinion. Just as Rabbi Meir’s reasoning is rejected for halakha in the case of an ox, so too it is rejected with regard to a plague.

⁸⁴ Upon hearing this impressive argument, Rav Naḥman bar Rav Ḥisda said to Rav Naḥman bar Yitzḥak: Let the Master arise and come to live with us as our community leader. Rav Naḥman bar Yitzḥak said to him: We already learned in a baraita that Rabbi Yosei says: It is not the place of a person that honors him; rather, the person honors his place, as we found with regard to Mount Sinai, that as long as the Divine Presence rested upon it, the Torah said: “Neither let the flocks nor the herds feed before that mount” (Exodus 34:3). Once the Divine Presence departed from the mountain, the Torah said: “When the shofar sounds long they shall come up to the mount” (Exodus 19:13). This indicates that the sanctity was not inherent to the place but was due to the Divine Presence resting there.

⁸⁵ And we likewise found with regard to the Tent of Meeting that was in the wilderness, that whenever it was erected, the Torah said: “That they put out of the camp every leper” (Numbers 5:2). Once the curtain was rolled up and the Tent of Meeting was prepared for travel, zavim and lepers were permitted to enter the place where it had stood. The place itself had no intrinsic sanctity; rather, it was sacred only because the Divine Presence was there. Accordingly, Rav Naḥman bar Yitzḥak maintained that there is no reason for him to move places to receive honor.

⁸⁶ Rav Naḥman bar Rav Ḥisda said to Rav Naḥman bar Yitzḥak: If so, let me arise and come to the Master, to learn Torah from you. Rav Naḥman bar Yitzḥak said to him: It is better that one hundred dinars that is the son of a peras, fifty dinars, should come to one hundred dinars that is the son of one hundred dinars; but one hundred dinars that is the son of one hundred dinars, should not come to one hundred dinars that is the son of a peras. In other words, although Rav Naḥman bar Yitzḥak was a learned scholar, comparable to one hundred dinars, it was nevertheless more appropriate for him to come to Rav Naḥman bar Rav Ḥisda. Whereas Rav Naḥman bar Yitzḥak was the son of a peras, an ordinary man, Rav Naḥman bar Rav Ḥisda was the son of a scholar.

⁸⁷ The Gemara relates another story involving a plague: Once there was a plague of pestilence in Sura, but in the neighborhood of Rav there was no pestilence. The people therefore thought that this was due to Rav’s great merit. However, it was revealed to them in a dream that Rav’s merit was too great and this matter too small for the merit of Rav to be involved. Rather, his neighborhood was spared due to the acts of kindness of a certain man, who would lend his hoe [mara] and shovel [zevila] to prepare sites for burial.

⁸⁸ The Gemara relates a similar incident. In Drokart there was a fire, but in the neighborhood of Rav Huna there was no fire. The people therefore thought that this was due to Rav Huna’s great merit. It was revealed to them in a dream that this matter was too small for the merit of Rav Huna to have played a role. Rather, it was due to a certain woman who heats her oven and lends it, i.e., the use of her oven, to her neighbors.

⁸⁹ They said to Rav Yehuda: Locusts have come to our region. Rav Yehuda decreed a fast. They said to him: They are not destroying anything, as they are eating only a little. He said to them: Have they brought provisions with them, that they have something else to eat? Even if they are not damaging your crops now, they will certainly eat them soon.

⁹⁰ On another occasion, they said to Rav Yehuda: There is pestilence among the pigs. Rav Yehuda decreed a fast. The Gemara asks: Let us say that Rav Yehuda maintains that a plague affecting one species will come to affect all species, and that is why he decreed a fast. The Gemara answers: No, in

other cases there is no cause for concern. However, pigs are different, as their intestines are similar to those of humans. Consequently, their disease might spread to people.

⁹¹ They said to Shmuel: There is pestilence in the region of Bei Ḥozai, which is quite a distance from Babylonia. Shmuel decreed a fast. They said to him: But it is far from here. He said: There is no crossing here that will stop the pestilence, and therefore there is cause for concern that it will reach us.

⁹² They said to Rav Naḥman: There is pestilence in Eretz Yisrael. Rav Naḥman decreed a fast in Babylonia, saying: If the lady of the house, i.e., Eretz Yisrael, is afflicted, is it not all the more so that the maidservant, Babylonia, will be afflicted?

⁹³ The Gemara asks: The reason for this ruling is apparently only because Eretz Yisrael is a lady in comparison to the Diaspora, which is likened to a maidservant. It may be inferred from this that in a case involving a maidservant and a maidservant, i.e., two places in the Diaspora, there is no reason to fast. But in the previous story, when they said to Shmuel: There is pestilence in the region of Bei Ḥozai, he decreed a fast in Neharde'a, despite the fact that Neharde'a is not considered a lady with respect to Bei Ḥozai. The Gemara answers: It is different there. Since there are caravans that regularly travel from Bei Ḥozai to Neharde'a, the pestilence will join and accompany them in the caravans.

⁹⁴ § Apropos the above stories that deal with the merits of ordinary people, the Gemara relates: Abba the Bloodletter would receive greetings from the yeshiva on High every day, and Abaye would receive these greetings every Shabbat eve, and Rava would receive greetings only once a year on Yom Kippur eve. Abaye was distressed due to Abba the Bloodletter, as he did not understand why Abba received greater honor than he did. They said to him: You are unable to perform what he does, and therefore you do not merit the same honor.

⁹⁵ The Gemara asks: And what were these righteous deeds of Abba the Bloodletter? The Gemara explains that when he would perform a matter of bloodletting, he would bring in men separately from women, for reasons of modesty. And he had a special garment that had a slit in the place of the incision [kusilta] where the bloodletting instrument was inserted. When a woman came to him, he would have her dress in that garment, so that he would not see her exposed. And furthermore, he had a hidden place where he worked, where customers would place the coins [peshitei] that he would take as his fee. In this manner, one who had money would throw it there, while one who did not have money was not embarrassed.

⁹⁶ When a Torah scholar came to him for bloodletting, he would take no pay from him, and after the scholar arose, Abba would give him money and say to him: Go and purchase food with this money to heal yourself, as it is important to eat healthy food after bloodletting. One day, Abaye sent a pair of Sages to investigate the extent of Abba the Bloodletter's righteousness. Abba the Bloodletter sat them down, and gave them food to eat, and gave them something to drink. And at night he spread out mats [bistarkei] for them to sleep on.

⁹⁷ In the morning, the Sages rolled up these rugs and took them, and they arose and went out to the market with them. And when Abba found them, the Sages said to him: Let the Master appraise these rugs, how much they are worth. He said to them: Their value is such and such. They said to him: But perhaps they are worth more. He said to them: This is what I paid for them. They said to him: The rugs are yours and we took them from you.

⁹⁸ After explaining the reason for their actions, the Sages said to him: Please tell us, what did you suspect of us? You knew that we had taken your rugs, and yet you did not say anything. He said to them: I said to myself, certainly an unexpected opportunity for a ransom of prisoners became available for the Sages, and they required immediate funds, but they were too embarrassed to say so to me or to ask for money. Instead, they took the rugs. The Sages said to him: Now that we have explained the situation, let the Master take back the rugs. He said to them: From that moment when I realized they were missing, I put them out of my mind and consigned them for charity. As far as I am concerned, they are already designated for that purpose, and I cannot take them back.

⁹⁹ Rava was distressed due to the fact that Abaye received greetings from Heaven every Shabbat eve, while Rava received such greetings only once a year, on Yom Kippur eve, as stated above. They said to him: Be content that through your merit you protect your entire city.

¹⁰⁰ § The Gemara relates another story about the righteousness of common people. Rabbi Beroka Ḥoza'a was often found in the market of Bei Lefet, and Elijah the Prophet would often appear to him. Once Rabbi Beroka said to Elijah: Of all the people who come here, is there anyone in this market worthy of the World-to-Come? He said to him: No. In the meantime, Rabbi Beroka saw a man who was wearing black shoes, contrary to Jewish custom, and who did not place the sky-blue, dyed thread of ritual fringes on his garment. Elijah said to Rabbi Beroka: That man is worthy of the World-to-Come.

¹⁰¹ Rabbi Beroka ran after the man and said to him: What is your occupation? The man said to him: Go away now, as I have no time, but come back tomorrow and we will talk. The next day, Rabbi Beroka arrived and again said to him: What is your occupation? The man said to him: I am a prison guard [zandukana], and I imprison the men separately and the women separately, and I place my bed between them so that they will not come to transgression. When I see a Jewish woman upon whom gentiles have set their eyes, I risk my life to save her. One day, there was a betrothed young woman among us, upon whom the gentiles had set their eyes. I took dregs [durdayya] of red wine and threw them on the lower part of her dress, and I said: She is menstruating [dastana], so that they would leave her alone.

¹⁰² Rabbi Beroka said to him: What is the reason that you do not have threads of ritual fringes, and why do you wear black shoes? The man said to him: Since I come and go among gentiles, I dress this way so that they will not know that I am a Jew. When they issue a decree, I inform the Sages, and they pray for mercy and annul the decree. Rabbi Beroka further inquired: And what is the reason that when I said to you: What is your occupation, you said to me: Go away now but come tomorrow? The man said to him: At that moment, they had just issued a decree, and I said to myself: First I must go and inform the Sages, so that they will pray for mercy over this matter.

¹⁰³ In the meantime, two brothers came to the marketplace. Elijah said to Rabbi Beroka: These two also have a share in the World-to-Come. Rabbi Beroka went over to the men and said to them: What is your occupation? They said to him: We are jesters, and we cheer up the depressed. Alternatively, when we see two people who have a quarrel between them, we strive to make peace. It is said that for this behavior one enjoys the profits of his actions in this world, and yet his reward is not diminished in the World-to-Come.

¹⁰⁴ § The mishna states: For the following calamities they sound the alarm in every place. The Sages taught: For the following calamities they sound the alarm in every place: For blight, for mildew, for

locusts, for caterpillars, a type of locust that comes in large swarms and descends upon a certain place, and for dangerous beasts. Rabbi Akiva says: For blight and mildew they sound the alarm over any amount. For locusts, and for caterpillars, even if only a single wing of one of these pests was seen in all of Eretz Yisrael, they sound the alarm over them, as this is a sign that more are on their way.

¹⁰⁵ The mishna taught that they sound the alarm for dangerous beasts that have invaded a town. The Sages taught in a baraita: The term dangerous beasts that they said is referring to a situation when there is an abnormal outbreak of the animals in a populated area (see Leviticus 26:22). In this case, they sound the alarm over them. However, if it is not an outbreak, they do not sound the alarm over them. The Gemara elaborates: What is considered an outbreak and what is not an outbreak? If a dangerous beast is seen in the city, this is an outbreak. If it is seen in the field, where it is usually found, this is not an outbreak. If it is seen during the day, this is an outbreak. If it is seen at night, this is not an outbreak.

¹⁰⁶ The baraita continues: If the beast saw two people and chased after them, this is an outbreak. If it hid from them, this is not an outbreak. If it tore apart two people and ate one of them, this is an outbreak, as it is clear that the animal did not attack merely due to hunger. If it ate both of them, this is not an outbreak, as the animal was evidently hungry and acted in accordance with its nature. If it climbed to the roof and took a baby from its cradle, this is an outbreak. This concludes the Gemara's citation of the baraita.

¹⁰⁷ The Gemara asks: This baraita is itself difficult. Initially, you said that if a dangerous beast is seen in the city, this is an outbreak, which indicates that it is no different whether it is seen by day and it is no different if it is seen at night. And then you said: If the animal is seen during the day, this is an outbreak; if it is seen at night, this is not an outbreak.

¹⁰⁸ The Gemara resolves this difficulty: This is not difficult, as this is what the baraita is saying: If it is seen in the city during the day, this is an outbreak; if it is seen in the city at night, this is not an outbreak. Alternatively, if it is seen in the field, even during the day, this is not an outbreak. If it is spotted in the field at night, this is certainly not an outbreak.

¹⁰⁹ The Gemara inquires about another apparent contradiction: The baraita states that if the beast saw two people and chased after them, this is an outbreak. This indicates that if it stands but does not run away, this is not an outbreak. And then you said that if it hid from them, this is not an outbreak, from which it may be inferred that if it stands and does not run away, this is an outbreak.

¹¹⁰ The Gemara answers: This is not difficult, as the two sections of the baraita describe different situations. Here, where it is an outbreak, the beast is standing in a field near a marsh. It is natural for the animal to stand, for the beast knows that if people attempt to catch it, it can run into the marsh. Conversely, there, where it is not an outbreak, the beast is standing in a field that is not near a marsh. Since it has nowhere to run, standing demonstrates an unnatural lack of fear.

¹¹¹ The baraita taught that if the beast tore apart two people and ate one of them, this is an outbreak, but if it ate both of them this is not an outbreak. The Gemara asks: But didn't you say that even if the animal merely chased after two people, this is an outbreak? Rav Pappa said: When that ruling of a beast that tore apart two people is taught, it is referring to an animal in a marsh. Since it is in its own habitat, it is natural for a territorial beast to attack.

¹¹² The Gemara returns to the matter of the baraita itself. If a wild animal climbed to the roof and took a baby from its cradle, this is an outbreak. The Gemara asks: It is obvious that this animal is acting unnaturally. Why does the baraita mention this case? Rav Pappa said: The baraita is referring to the roof of a hunter's hideout. Since this hut is in a wild area, one might have thought that it is natural for the beast to attack. Therefore, the baraita teaches us that this is still considered an outbreak.

¹¹³ § The mishna taught that they sound the alarm for the sword. The Sages taught: With regard to the sword that they mentioned, it is not necessary to state that this includes a sword that is not of peace, i.e., an enemy army that has come to wage war against the Jews. Rather, even in a case of a sword of peace, when an army passes through with no intention of waging war against the Jews, but is merely on its way to another place, this is enough to obligate the court to sound the alarm, as you do not have a greater example of a sword of peace than Pharaoh Neco. He passed through Eretz Yisrael to wage war with Nebuchadnezzar, and nevertheless King Josiah stumbled in this matter, as it is stated:

¹¹⁴ “But he sent ambassadors to him saying: What have I to do with you, king of Judea? I do not come against you this day, but against the house with which I am at war; and God has commanded me to make haste. Forbear from meddling with God, Who is with me, so that He will not destroy you” (II Chronicles 35:21). This clearly shows that Pharaoh Neco had no intention of engaging Josiah in battle.

¹¹⁵ The Gemara asks: What is the meaning of the phrase “God, Who is with me”? Rav Yehuda said that Rav said: This is referring to Neco's idolatry, which he brought for assistance. In other words, it is a secular reference and should be read as: The god that is with me, in my possession. Josiah said: Since he trusts in idolatry, I will be able to defeat him.

¹¹⁶ With regard to Josiah's battle with Pharaoh Neco, the verse states: “And the archers shot at King Josiah and the king said to his servants: Move me away, for I am seriously wounded” (II Chronicles 35:23). What is the meaning of the phrase: “For I am seriously wounded”? Rav Yehuda said that Rav said: This teaches that the Egyptian archers made his entire body like a sieve from the many arrows they shot at him.

¹¹⁷ Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani said that Rabbi Yohanan said: For what reason was Josiah punished? Because he should have consulted with the prophet Jeremiah to find out if he should go to war, but he did not consult with him. How did Josiah interpret the verses of the Torah? How did they lead him to go to war? The verse states: “Neither shall a sword go through your land” (Leviticus 26:6).

¹¹⁸ What is the meaning of the term: “Sword”? If we say that it is referring to a sword that is not of peace, but isn't it written earlier in the same verse: “And I will give peace in the land”? Rather, the verse must mean that even a sword of peace shall not pass through the land, and Josiah sought to prevent this occurrence, in fulfillment of the blessing. But he did not know that his generation did not merit these blessings, and he would therefore not receive divine assistance in this regard.

¹¹⁹ The Gemara discusses Josiah's deathbed reflections. When Josiah was dying, Jeremiah saw his lips moving. Jeremiah said: Perhaps, Heaven forbid, he is saying something improper and complaining about God's judgment on account of his great distress. Jeremiah bent over and heard that he was justifying God's judgment against himself. Josiah said: “The Lord is righteous, for I have rebelled against His word” (Lamentations 1:18). At that moment, Jeremiah began his eulogy for

Josiah: “The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the Lord, was trapped in their pits” (Lamentations 4:20).

¹²⁰ § The mishna taught: An incident occurred in which Elders descended from Jerusalem to their cities and decreed a fast throughout the land because a small amount of blight was seen in the city of Ashkelon, enough to fill the mouth of an oven. A dilemma was raised before the Sages: Did they mean enough grain to fill an entire oven, or perhaps they meant enough grain to prepare bread to fill an oven? This is far less, as bread is stuck to the walls of the oven and does not fill its inner area.

¹²¹ The Gemara answers: Come and hear the phrase of the mishna: Enough to fill the mouth of an oven. This indicates that the bread referred to does not fill the entire oven, but rather covers the mouth of the oven. The Gemara further asks: And still you can raise this dilemma before them: Is the mishna referring to the bread of the cover of the oven? Perhaps it is referring to a row of bread around the mouth of the oven. No resolution was found, and the Gemara states that the dilemma shall stand unresolved.

¹²² § The mishna taught: And furthermore, they decreed a fast because wolves had eaten two children in Transjordan. Ulla said in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yehotzadak: An incident occurred in which wolves swallowed two children and excreted them. And the incident came before the Sages for a ruling. They were asked if the remains were ritually impure even after they had passed through the animal’s digestive tract, and they pronounced the flesh ritually pure, as it had been digested, but they pronounced the intact bones ritually impure.

¹²³ § The mishna further taught: For the following calamities they sound the alarm even on Shabbat: For a city that is surrounded by gentile troops, for a place in danger of being flooded by a river that has swelled its banks, or for a ship tossed about at sea. The Sages taught: In the case of a city that is surrounded by gentile troops or a river that has swelled beyond its banks, and this also applies to both a ship tossed about at sea and an individual who is being pursued by gentiles, or by thieves, or by an evil spirit, which may lead him to harm himself, they sound the alarm even on Shabbat. And in all these cases, an individual is permitted to afflict himself by fasting to annul the evil decrees against him.

¹²⁴ Rabbi Yosei says: An individual is not permitted to afflict himself by fasting, lest he become too weak to work and be beholden to other beings, and those beings will not have mercy on him. Rav Yehuda said that Rav said: What is the reason of Rabbi Yosei? It is as it is written: “And man became a living soul” (Genesis 2:7). Rabbi Yosei interprets this verse as a command: The soul I placed within you, preserve and sustain it.

¹²⁵ § The mishna taught that Shimon the Timnite says: One may cry out on Shabbat even for pestilence, but the Rabbis did not agree with him. A dilemma was raised before the Sages: Does this mean that the Rabbis did not agree with him with regard to crying out in these cases on Shabbat, but if they occur on a weekday they agreed with him? Or perhaps they did not agree with him at all, as they maintain that one never cries out over pestilence.

¹²⁶ The Gemara answers: Come and hear, as it is taught in a baraita: One cries out for a plague of pestilence on Shabbat, and needless to say on weekdays. Rabbi Ḥanan ben Pitom, the student of Rabbi Akiva, says in the name of Rabbi Akiva: One does not cry out for pestilence at all. This opinion attributed to Rabbi Akiva is the ruling of the Rabbis in the mishna.

¹²⁷ § The mishna further states that they sound the alarm on account of any trouble that should not befall the community, a euphemism for trouble that may befall the community, except for an overabundance of rain. The Sages taught in a baraita: For any trouble that should not befall the community, they sound the alarm for it, except for an overabundance of rain. The Gemara asks: What is the reason for this? Rabbi Yoḥanan said: Because one does not pray over an excess of good. Since rain is generally good for the world, it is not appropriate to pray for it to stop, even when it falls in excess.

¹²⁸ And Rabbi Yoḥanan said: From where is it derived that one does not pray over an excess of good? It is stated: “Bring the whole tithe into the storeroom, that there may be food in My house, and test Me now by this, said the Lord of hosts, if I will not open for you the windows of heaven, and pour out for you a blessing that there shall be more than sufficiency” (Malachi 3:10). What is the meaning of the phrase: “That there shall be more than sufficiency [ad beli dai]”? Rami bar Ḥama said: It means that the abundance will be so great that your lips will be worn out [yivlu], similar to the word beli, from saying enough [dai]. In other words, even when a blessing is delivered in gross excess, one should not pray for it to cease, as the verse blesses the people with an excess.

¹²⁹ Rami bar Rav Yud said: This is true in Eretz Yisrael, but in the Diaspora, i.e., Babylonia, they do sound the alarm over excessive rain. The reason is that Babylonia is in a low-lying region, where excessive rain poses a real danger. That opinion is also taught in a baraita: In a year whose rains are abundant, the members of the priestly watch in the Temple would send a message to the members of the non-priestly watch: Cast your eyes on your brothers in the Diaspora and have them in mind when you pray, so that their houses should not collapse from excessive rain and become their graves.

¹³⁰ They asked Rabbi Eliezer: How much rain must fall until they should pray that it should not fall anymore? He said to them by way of exaggeration: Enough rain must fall so that a person stands at the colossal cliff Keren Ophel and dips his feet in water. The Gemara asks: But isn’t it taught in a baraita that Rabbi Eliezer said he must be able to place his hands in water? Rabbi Eliezer could answer: When I said to you that he must be able to place his feet, I meant like his hands, i.e., the water must be high enough that he can dip both his hands and feet into the water with ease.

¹³¹ With regard to the height of this great cliff, Rabba bar bar Ḥana said: I personally saw Keren Ophel, and when I peered down I saw that an Arab was positioned below, and while riding a camel and holding a spear in his hand, he looked like a worm [iniva].

¹³² The Sages taught: “Then I will give your rains in their season” (Leviticus 26:4). This means that the earth will be neither drunk nor thirsty; rather, a moderate amount of rain will fall. For as long as the rains are abundant, they muddy the soil of the land, and it does not give out its produce. Alternatively,

¹³³ “In their season” means on Wednesday eves, i.e., Tuesday nights, and on Shabbat eves, i.e., Friday nights, because at these times people are not out in the streets, either due to fear of demonic forces that were thought to wander on Tuesday nights or due to the sanctity of Shabbat.

¹³⁴ As we found in the days of Shimon ben Shetaḥ that rain invariably fell for them on Wednesday eves and on Shabbat eves, until wheat grew as big as kidneys, and barley as big as olive pits, and lentils as golden dinars. And they tied up some of these crops as an example [dugma] for future generations, to convey to them how much damage sin causes, as it is stated: “The Lord our God, Who gives rain, the former rain and the latter rain, in its season that keeps for us the appointed weeks

of the harvest. Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withheld the good from you” (Jeremiah 5:24–25).

¹³⁵ And we likewise found that in the days of Herod that they were occupied in the building of the Temple, and rain would fall at night. And the next day the wind would blow, the clouds would disperse, the sun would shine, and the people would go out to their work. And as rain would fall only at a time when it would not interfere with their labor, the nation knew that the work of Heaven was being performed by their hands.

¹³⁶ § The mishna taught: An incident occurred in which the people sent a message to Ḥoni HaMe’aggel. This event is related in greater detail in the following baraita. The Sages taught: Once, most of the month of Adar had passed but rain had still not fallen. They sent this message to Ḥoni HaMe’aggel: Pray, and rain will fall. He prayed, but no rain fell. He drew a circle in the dust and stood inside it, in the manner that the prophet Habakkuk did, as it is stated: “And I will stand upon my watch and set myself upon the tower, and I will look out to see what He will say to me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved” (Habakkuk 2:1). This verse is taken to mean that Habakkuk fashioned a kind of prison for himself where he sat.

¹³⁷ Ḥoni said before God: Master of the Universe, Your children have turned their faces toward me, as I am like a member of Your household. Therefore, I take an oath by Your great name that I will not move from here until you have mercy upon Your children and answer their prayers for rain. Rain began to trickle down, but only in small droplets. His students said to him: Rabbi, we have seen that you can perform great wonders, but this quantity of rain is not enough to ensure that we will not die. It appears to us that a small amount of rain is falling only to enable you to dissolve your oath, but it is not nearly enough to save us.

¹³⁸ Ḥoni said to God: I did not ask for this, but for rain to fill the cisterns, ditches, and caves. Rain began to fall furiously, until each and every drop was as big as the mouth of a barrel, and the Sages estimated that no drop was less than a log in size. His students said to him: Rabbi, we have seen that you can call on God to perform miracles and we will not die, but now it appears to us that rain is falling only to destroy the world.

¹³⁹ Ḥoni again said before God: I did not ask for this harmful rain either, but for rain of benevolence, blessing, and generosity. Subsequently, the rains fell in their standard manner, until all of the people sought higher ground and ascended to the Temple Mount due to the rain. They said to him: Rabbi, just as you prayed that the rains should fall, so too, pray that they should stop. He said to them: This is the tradition that I received, that one does not pray over an excess of good.

¹⁴⁰ Ḥoni continued: Nevertheless, bring me a bull. I will sacrifice it as a thanks-offering and pray at the same time. They brought him a bull for a thanks-offering. He placed his two hands on its head and said before God: Master of the Universe, Your nation Israel, whom You brought out of Egypt, cannot bear either an excess of good or an excess of punishment. You grew angry with them and withheld rain, and they are unable to bear it. You bestowed upon them too much good, and they were also unable to bear it. May it be Your will that the rain stop and that there be relief for the world. Immediately, the wind blew, the clouds dispersed, the sun shone, and everyone went out to the fields and gathered for themselves truffles and mushrooms that had sprouted in the strong rain.

¹⁴¹ Shimon ben Shetaḥ relayed to Ḥoni HaMe’aggel: If you were not Ḥoni, I would have decreed ostracism upon you. For were these years like the years of Elijah, when the keys of rain were

entrusted in Elijah's hands, and he swore it would not rain, wouldn't the name of Heaven have been desecrated by your oath not to leave the circle until it rained? Once you have pronounced this oath, either yours or Elijah's must be falsified.

¹⁴² However, what can I do to you, as you nag God and He does your bidding, like a son who nags his father and his father does his bidding. And the son says to his father: Father, take me to be bathed in hot water; wash me with cold water; give me nuts, almonds, peaches, and pomegranates. And his father gives him. About you, the verse states: "Your father and mother will be glad and she who bore you will rejoice" (Proverbs 23:25).

¹⁴³ The Sages taught: What message did the members of the Chamber of the Hewn Stone, the Great Sanhedrin, send to Ḥoni HaMe'aggel? About you, the verse states: "You shall also decree a matter, and it shall be established for you; and the light shall shine upon your ways. When they cast down, you will say: There is lifting up, for He saves the humble person. He will deliver the one who is not innocent and he will be delivered through the cleanness of your hands" (Job 22:28–30).

¹⁴⁴ They interpreted: "You shall also decree a matter"; you, Ḥoni, decree from below, and the Holy One, Blessed be He, fulfills your statement from above. "And the light shall shine upon your ways"; a generation that was in darkness, you have illuminated it with your prayer.

¹⁴⁵ "When they cast down, you will say: There is lifting up"; a generation that was cast down, you lifted it up with your prayer. "For He saves the humble person"; a generation that was humble in its transgression, you saved it through your prayer. "He will deliver the one who is not innocent"; a generation that was not innocent, you have delivered it through your prayer. "And he will be delivered through the cleanness of your hands"; you have delivered an undeserving generation through the clean work of your hands.

¹⁴⁶ § The Gemara relates another story about Ḥoni HaMe'aggel. Rabbi Yoḥanan said: All the days of the life of that righteous man, Ḥoni, he was distressed over the meaning of this verse: "A song of Ascents: When the Lord brought back those who returned to Zion, we were like those who dream" (Psalms 126:1). He said to himself: Is there really a person who can sleep and dream for seventy years? How is it possible to compare the seventy-year exile in Babylonia to a dream?

¹⁴⁷ One day, he was walking along the road when he saw a certain man planting a carob tree. Ḥoni said to him: This tree, after how many years will it bear fruit? The man said to him: It will not produce fruit until seventy years have passed. Ḥoni said to him: Is it obvious to you that you will live seventy years, that you expect to benefit from this tree? He said to him: That man himself found a world full of carob trees. Just as my ancestors planted for me, I too am planting for my descendants.

¹⁴⁸ Ḥoni sat and ate bread. Sleep overcame him and he slept. A cliff formed around him, and he disappeared from sight and slept for seventy years. When he awoke, he saw a certain man gathering carobs from that tree. Ḥoni said to him: Are you the one who planted this tree? The man said to him: I am his son's son. Ḥoni said to him: I can learn from this that I have slept for seventy years, and indeed he saw that his donkey had sired several herds during those many years.

¹⁴⁹ Ḥoni went home and said to the members of the household: Is the son of Ḥoni HaMe'aggel alive? They said to him: His son is no longer with us, but his son's son is alive. He said to them: I am Ḥoni HaMe'aggel. They did not believe him. He went to the study hall, where he heard the Sages say about one scholar: His halakhot are as enlightening and as clear as in the years of Ḥoni HaMe'aggel,

for when Ḥoni HaMe'aggel would enter the study hall he would resolve for the Sages any difficulty they had. Ḥoni said to them: I am he, but they did not believe him and did not pay him proper respect. Ḥoni became very upset, prayed for mercy, and died. Rava said: This explains the folk saying that people say: Either friendship or death, as one who has no friends is better off dead.

¹⁵⁰ § The Gemara relates another story, this time about Ḥoni HaMe'aggel's descendants, who were also renowned for their righteous deeds. Abba Ḥilkiyya was the son of Ḥoni HaMe'aggel's son. And when the world was in need of rain they would send Sages to him, and he would pray for mercy, and rain would fall. Once the world was in need of rain, and the Sages sent a pair of Sages to him so that he would pray for mercy and rain would fall. They went to his house but they did not find him there. They went to the field and found him hoeing the ground. They greeted him,

¹⁵¹ but he did not return their greetings. Toward evening, as he was gathering firewood, he placed the wood and hoe on one shoulder and his cloak on the other shoulder. Along the entire way he did not wear his shoes, but when he reached water he put on his shoes. When he reached an area filled with shrubs and thorns he lifted up his clothes. When he reached the city, his wife came out to greet him, adorned with finery. When he reached his house, his wife entered first, he entered afterward, and afterward the two Sages entered. He sat and ate bread, but he did not say to the Sages: Come and eat, as was customary and polite. He divided bread to his children; to the elder child he gave one piece and to the younger one he gave two.

¹⁵² Abba Ḥilkiyya said to his wife: I know that these Sages have come due to the rain. Let us go up to the roof and pray for mercy. Perhaps the Holy One, Blessed be He, will be appeased, and it will rain, and we will not receive credit ourselves for the rainfall. They went up to the roof. He stood in one corner and she stood in the other corner. Clouds began to form on that side where his wife stood. When he descended, he said to the Sages: Why have the Sages come? They said to him: The other Sages have sent us to the Master, so that you should pray for mercy for rain. He said to them: Blessed is God, Who did not require you to petition Abba Ḥilkiyya, as the sky has filled with clouds and rain is certainly on its way.

¹⁵³ They said to him: We know that the rain has come on the Master's account. However, let the Master please say and explain to us these aspects of your behavior that are puzzling to us: What is the reason that when we greeted the Master, the Master did not return our greeting? He said to them: I am a day laborer, hired for the day, and I said to myself that I may not delay my work to answer you. They further inquired: And what is the reason that the Master carried the firewood on one shoulder and his cloak on the other shoulder? He said to them: It was a borrowed robe. I borrowed it for this purpose, to wear it, and I did not borrow it for that purpose, to place wood on it.

¹⁵⁴ The Sages continued to ask Abba Ḥilkiyya about his unusual behavior. What is the reason that the entire way the Master did not wear his shoes, but when he reached water he put on his shoes? He said to them: The entire way I can see and take care where I walk, and therefore there is no need for me to wear out my shoes, but in the water I cannot see. Therefore, I put on my shoes to avoid hurting myself. They asked: What is the reason that when the Master reached shrubs and thorns, he lifted up his clothes? He said to them: This flesh will heal if it is scratched by thorns, but this garment will not heal if it is torn.

¹⁵⁵ They further inquired: What is the reason that when the Master reached the city, the Master's wife came out adorned in her finery? He said to them: She dresses that way so that when I walk

through the city I will not set my eyes upon another woman. They asked: What is the reason that she entered first, and afterward the Master entered, and only afterward we entered? He said to them: Because you have not been checked by me. I cannot be sure how you will act, and therefore I did not want you to be alone with my wife.

¹⁵⁶ The Sages were not done with their questions. What is the reason that when the Master ate bread, you did not say to us: Come and eat? He replied: Because there is not enough bread for guests, and I said to myself that I should not gain credit from the Sages for nothing, by offering you food I cannot serve you. They asked: What is the reason that the Master gave the older child one piece of bread and the younger child two? He said to them: This older child stays at home, and if he is hungry he can eat at any time, but this younger child sits and studies in the synagogue, and therefore he is hungrier.

¹⁵⁷ The two Sages had one final set of queries for Abba Hīlkiyya. And what is the reason that the clouds began to form on that side where the Master's wife stood before your own side? He explained: Because my wife is frequently at home, and she gives bread to the poor, and therefore her provision of benefit to the needy is immediate, i.e., soon after the rains fall she is able to provide the needy with provisions. Accordingly, her prayers are answered without delay. In contrast, I give money to the poor, and consequently, the benefit of my gift is not immediate, i.e., it takes a lot of time before the rainfall results in my ability to give money to the poor. Alternatively, her prayers may have been answered first because when certain hooligans [biryonei] were living in our neighborhood, I prayed that they should die, but she prayed that they should repent. And indeed, they repented.

¹⁵⁸ § The Gemara relates another story about a descendant of Ḥoni HaMe'aggel. Ḥanan HaNeḥba was the son of Ḥoni HaMe'aggel's daughter. When the world was in need of rain, the Sages would send schoolchildren to him, and they would grab him by the hem of his cloak and say to him: Father, Father, give us rain. He said before the Holy One, Blessed be He: Master of the Universe, act on behalf of these children, who cannot distinguish between their Father in Heaven, Who can provide rain, and the father who cannot provide rain. The Gemara asks: And why was he called Ḥanan HaNeḥba? Because he would hide [maḥbi] himself in the lavatory so that people would not bestow honor upon him.

¹⁵⁹ The Gemara relates another story about righteous individuals praying for rain. Rabbi Zerika said to Rav Safrā: Come and see what the difference is between the powerful men of Eretz Yisrael and the pious men of Babylonia. This comparison serves to highlight the righteousness of the great men of Eretz Yisrael. By the pious men of Babylonia, I mean Rav Huna and Rav Ḥisda. When the world is in need of rain, these Sages say: Let us assemble together and pray for mercy, and perhaps the Holy One, Blessed be He, will be appeased and bring rain. In this manner, the pious men of Babylonia publicized their prayers for rain.

¹⁶⁰ By contrast, the powerful men of Eretz Yisrael, such as Rabbi Yona, the father of Rabbi Mani, acted differently. When the world was in need of rain, he enters his house and say to his household: Give me my sack [gevalki] and I will go and buy myself a dinar of grain. When he went outside, he went and stood in a low place, as it is written: "Out of the depths I have called You, O Lord" (Psalms 130:1). And he would stand in a secluded place, and cover himself with sackcloth, and pray for mercy, and rain would come. When he would come home, they would say to him: Did the Master bring grain? He said to them: I said to myself, since rain has now come, there will be relief in the

world and prices will soon go down. In this manner, he hid his greatness even from his own household.

¹⁶¹ And furthermore, the Gemara relates that Rabbi Mani, Rabbi Yona's son, was persecuted by members of the house of the Nasi. He prostrated himself upon his father's grave and said to him: Father, Father, these men are persecuting me. One day, those men were passing there, by the grave, and the legs of their horses became stuck in the ground until they accepted upon themselves not to persecute Rabbi Mani anymore.

¹⁶² And furthermore, the Gemara relates that Rabbi Mani was frequently found before Rabbi Yitzhak ben Elyashiv, a well-known miracle worker. Once, Rabbi Mani said to him: The wealthy members of my father-in-law's house are persecuting me. Rabbi Yitzhak said: May they become poor, so they will no longer lord over you. And indeed, they became poor. Some time later, Rabbi Mani said to his teacher: Now that they are poor they are pressuring me for financial support. Rabbi Yitzhak said: May they become rich again. And indeed, they became rich.

¹⁶³ Rabbi Mani said to his teacher: The members of my household, i.e., my wife, are not acceptable to me, as she is not beautiful. Rabbi Yitzhak said: What is her name? Rabbi Mana replied: Hana. Rabbi Yitzhak declared: Let Hana grow beautiful, and indeed she grew beautiful. After a while, Rabbi Mani said to Rabbi Yitzhak: She acts haughtily toward me, due to her great beauty. He said to him: If so, let Hana return to her homely appearance, and she returned to her homely appearance.

¹⁶⁴ The Gemara relates: These two students, who were sitting before Rabbi Yitzhak ben Elyashiv, said to him: Let the Master pray for mercy on our behalf, that we should become very wise. He said to them: This power was indeed with me at one stage, as I used to be able to pray for matters of this kind, but I sent it away. I took it upon myself never to pray for changes in the world order.

¹⁶⁵ The Gemara cites another story involving a complaint. Rabbi Yosei bar Avin was frequently found before Rabbi Yosei from Yokrat. At some point he left him and came to study before Rav Ashi, who did not recognize him.

¹⁶⁶ One day Rabbi Yosei bar Avin heard Rav Ashi studying and reciting the following statement. Shmuel said: With regard to one who removes a fish from the sea on Shabbat, when an area on the skin of the fish the size of a sela coin has dried up, he is liable for violating the prohibition against slaughtering an animal on Shabbat. A fish in that condition cannot survive, and therefore one who removed it from the water is liable for killing it. Rabbi Yosei bar Avin said to Rav Ashi: And let the Master say that this is the case provided that the skin that dried is between its fins. Rav Ashi said to him: And doesn't the Master maintain that Rabbi Yosei ben Rabbi Avin said this ruling? Why didn't you state it in his name? Rabbi Yosei bar Avin said to him: I am he.

¹⁶⁷ Rav Ashi said to him: And didn't the Master sit before and frequent the study hall of Rabbi Yosei from Yokrat? Rabbi Yosei bar Avin said to him: Yes. Rav Ashi said to him: And what is the reason that the Master left him and came here? Rabbi Yosei bar Avin said to him: I was concerned and departed because he is so severe and unforgiving. He is a man who has no mercy on his own son, and no mercy on his daughter. How, then, could he have mercy on me?

¹⁶⁸ The Gemara asks: What is the incident involving his son? One day Rabbi Yosei from Yokrat hired day laborers to work his field. It grew late and he did not bring them food. The workers said to the son of Rabbi Yosei from Yokrat: We are starving. They were sitting under a fig tree, so the son said:

Fig tree, fig tree. Yield your fruits, so that my father's workers may eat. The fig tree yielded fruit, and they ate.

¹⁶⁹ In the meantime, his father came and said to the workers: Do not be angry with me for being late, as I was engaged in a mitzva, and until just now I was traveling for that purpose and could not get here any sooner. They said to him: May the Merciful One satisfy you just as your son satisfied us and gave us food. He said to them: From where did he find food to give you? They said: Such-and-such an incident occurred. Rabbi Yosei from Yokrat said to his son: My son, you troubled your Creator to cause the fig to yield its fruit not in its proper time, so too, you will die young. And indeed, his son died before his time.

¹⁷⁰ The Gemara asks: What is the incident involving his daughter? He had a very beautiful daughter. One day Rabbi Yosei from Yokrat saw a certain man piercing a hole in the hedge surrounding his property and looking at his daughter. Rabbi Yosei said to him: What is this? The man said to him: My teacher, if I have not merited taking her in marriage, shall I not at least merit to look at her? Rabbi Yosei said to her: My daughter, you are causing people distress. Return to your dust, and let people no longer stumble into sin due to you.

¹⁷¹ § The Gemara relates another story involving Rabbi Yosei from Yokrat. He had a certain donkey that people hired each day for work. In the evening they would send it back with the money for its hire on its back, and the animal would go to its owner's house. But if they added or subtracted from the appropriate sum, the donkey would not go. One day someone forgot a pair of sandals on the donkey, and it did not move until they removed the sandals from its back, after which it went off.

¹⁷² The Gemara cites more stories about miracles that occurred to righteous individuals. Whenever the charity collectors would see Elazar of the village of Birta, they would hide from him, as any money Elazar had with him he would give them, and they did not want to take all his property. One day, Elazar went to the market to purchase what he needed for his daughter's dowry. The charity collectors saw him and hid from him.

¹⁷³ He went and ran after them, saying to them: I adjure you, tell me, in what mitzva are you engaged? They said to him: We are collecting money for the wedding of an orphan boy and an orphan girl. He said to them: I swear by the Temple service that they take precedence over my daughter. He took everything he had with him and gave it to them. He was left with one single dinar, with which he bought himself wheat, and he then ascended to his house and threw it into the granary.

¹⁷⁴ Elazar's wife came and said to her daughter: What has your father brought? She said to her mother: Whatever he brought he threw into the granary. She went to open the door of the granary, and saw that the granary was full of wheat, so much so that it was coming out through the doorknob, and the door would not open due to the wheat. The granary had miraculously been completely filled. Elazar's daughter went to the study hall and said to her father: Come and see what He Who loves You, the Almighty, has performed for you. He said to her: I swear by the Temple service, as far as you are concerned this wheat is consecrated property, and you have a share in it only as one of the poor Jews. He said this because he did not want to benefit from a miracle.

¹⁷⁵ The Gemara returns to the topic of fasting for rain. Rabbi Yehuda Nesia decreed a fast and prayed for mercy, but rain did not come. He said, lamenting: How great is the difference between the prophet Samuel of Rama, for whom rain fell even when he prayed for it in summer, and myself,

Yehuda ben Gamliel. Woe to the generation that is stuck with this leadership; woe to him in whose days this has occurred. He grew upset, and rain came.

¹⁷⁶ The Gemara relates another story involving a Nasi's decree of a fast for rain. In the house of the Nasi a fast was declared, but they didn't inform Rabbi Yoḥanan and Reish Lakish of the fast the day before. In the morning they informed them. Reish Lakish said to Rabbi Yoḥanan: What are we to do? We did not accept this fast upon ourselves the evening before, and a fast must be accepted in the afternoon service of the day preceding the fast. Rabbi Yoḥanan said to him: We are drawn after the community, and therefore, when the Nasi declares a public fast there is no need for an individual to accept it upon himself the day before.

¹⁷⁷ The Gemara further states that on another occasion, a fast was declared in the house of the Nasi, but rain did not come. Oshaya, the youngest member of the group of Sages, taught them a baraita. It is written: "Then it shall be, if it shall be committed in error by the congregation, it being hidden from their eyes" (Numbers 15:24). This verse indicates that the leaders are considered the eyes of the congregation.

¹⁷⁸ Oshaya continued: There is a parable that illustrates this, involving a bride who is in her father's home and has not yet been seen by her bridegroom. As long as her eyes are beautiful, her body need not be examined, as certainly she is beautiful. However, if her eyes are bleary [terutot], her entire body requires examination. So too, if the leaders of the generation are flawed, it is a sign that the entire generation is unworthy. By means of this parable, Oshaya was hinting that rain was withheld from the entire nation due to the evil committed by the household of the Nasi.

¹⁷⁹ The servants of the Nasi came and placed a scarf around his neck and tormented him as punishment for insulting the house of the Nasi. His townsmen said to them: Let him be, as he also causes us pain with his harsh reproof, but since we see that all his actions are for the sake of Heaven we do not say anything to him and let him be. You too should let him be.

¹⁸⁰ § The Gemara relates: Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi declared a fast but rain did not come. Ilfa descended to lead the service before him, and some say it was Rabbi Ilfi. He recited: He Who makes the wind blow, and the wind indeed blew. He continued to recite: And Who makes the rain come, and subsequently, the rain came. Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi said to him: What are your good deeds, in the merit of which your prayers are answered so speedily? He said to him: I live in an impoverished city, in which there is no wine for kiddush or havdala. I go to the effort of bringing the residents wine for kiddush and havdala, and I thereby enable them to fulfill their duty. In reward for this mitzva, my prayers for rain were answered.

¹⁸¹ The Gemara relates a similar incident. Rav happened to come to a certain place where he decreed a fast but rain did not come. The prayer leader descended to lead the service before him and recited: He Who makes the wind blow, and the wind blew. He continued and said: And Who makes the rain fall, and the rain came. Rav said to him: What are your good deeds? He said to him: I am a teacher of children, and I teach the Bible to the children of the poor as to the children of the rich, and if there is anyone who cannot pay, I do not take anything from him. And I have a fishpond, and any child who neglects his studies, I bribe him with the fish and calm him, and soothe him until he comes and reads.

¹⁸² The Gemara further relates: Rav Naḥman decreed a fast, prayed for mercy, but rain did not come. In his misery, he said: Take Naḥman and throw him from the wall to the ground, as the fast he decreed has evidently had no effect. He grew upset, and rain came.

¹⁸³ The Gemara relates: Rabba decreed a fast. He prayed for mercy, but rain did not come. They said to him: But when this Rav Yehuda decreed a fast, rain would come. He said to them: What can I do? If the difference between us is due to Torah study, we are superior to the previous generation, as in the years of Rav Yehuda all of their learning

¹⁸⁴ was connected to the order of Nezikin, while they were largely unfamiliar with the rest of the Mishna, and we learn all six orders of the Mishna. And when Rav Yehuda reached tractate Uktzin, which discusses the extent to which various fruits and vegetables are considered an integral part of the produce in terms of becoming ritually impure, which is the basis for the halakha that a woman who pickles a vegetable in a pot, etc. (Teharot 2:1), and some say that when he reached the halakha that olives that are pickled with their leaves are ritually pure, etc., as they are no longer considered part of the fruit (Uktzin 2:1), he would say: Those are the disputes between Rav and Shmuel that we see here. He felt it was an extremely challenging passage, as difficult as the most complex arguments between Rav and Shmuel.

¹⁸⁵ And we, in contrast, learn tractate Uktzin in thirteen yeshivot, while, with regard to miracles, after declaring a fast to pray for a drought to end, when Rav Yehuda would remove one of his shoes as a sign of distress, the rain would immediately come, before he could remove his second shoe. And yet we cry out all day and no one notices us. Rabba continued: If the difference between the generations is due to inappropriate deeds, if there is anyone who has seen me do anything improper, let him say so. I am not at fault, but what can the great leaders of the generation do when their generation is not worthy, and rain is withheld on account of the people's transgressions?

¹⁸⁶ The Gemara explains the reference to Rav Yehuda's shoe. Rav Yehuda saw two people wasting bread, throwing it back and forth. He said: I can learn from the fact that people are acting like this that there is plenty in the world. He cast his eyes angrily upon the world, and there was a famine. The Sages said to Rav Kahana, son of Rav Neḥunya, the attendant of Rav Yehuda: The Master, who is frequently present before Rav Yehuda, should persuade him to leave by way of the door nearest the market, so that he will see the terrible effects of the famine. Rav Kahana persuaded Rav Yehuda, and he went out to the market, where he saw a crowd.

¹⁸⁷ He said to them: What is this gathering? They said to him: We are standing by a container [kuspa] of dates that is for sale. He said: If so many people are crowding around to purchase a single container of dates, I can learn from this that there is a famine in the world. He said to his attendant: I want to fast over this; remove my shoes as a sign of distress. He removed one of his shoes and rain came. When he began to take off the other shoe, Elijah came and said to him: The Holy One, Blessed be He, said: If you remove your other shoe, I will destroy the entire world so that you will not be further distressed.

¹⁸⁸ Rav Mari, son of Shmuel's daughter, said: At that moment, I was standing on the bank of the Pappa River. I saw angels who appeared as sailors bringing sand and filling ships with it, and it became fine flour. Everyone came to buy this flour, but I said to them: Do not purchase this flour, as it is the product of miracles. Tomorrow, boats filled with wheat will come from Parzina, and you may purchase that produce.

¹⁸⁹ § The Gemara relates another story. Rava happened to come to the city of Hagraunya. He decreed a fast, but rain did not come. He said to the local residents: Everyone, continue your fast and do not eat tonight. The next morning he said to them: Whoever had a dream last night, let him say it. Rabbi

Elazar of Hagronya said to them: The following was recited to me in my dream. Good greetings to a good master from a good Lord, Who in His goodness does good for His people. Rava said: I can learn from this that it is a favorable time to pray for mercy. He prayed for mercy and rain came.

¹⁹⁰ The Gemara relates another story that deals with prayer for rain. There was a certain man who was sentenced to be flogged by Rava's court because he had relations with a gentile woman. Rava flogged the man and he died as a result. When this matter was heard in the house of the Persian King Shapur, he wanted to punish Rava for imposing the death penalty, as he thought, without the king's permission. Ifra Hormiz, mother of King Shapur, said to her son: Do not interfere and quarrel with the Jews, as whatever they request from God, their Master, He gives them.

¹⁹¹ He said to her: What is this that He grants them? She replied: They pray for mercy and rain comes. He said to her: This does not prove that God hears their prayers, as that occurs merely because it is the time for rain, and it just so happens that rain falls after they pray. Rather, if you want to prove that God answers the prayers of the Jews, let them pray for mercy now, in the summer season of Tammuz, and let rain come. Ifra Hormiz sent a message to Rava: Direct your attention and pray for mercy that rain may come. He prayed for mercy, but rain did not come.

¹⁹² He said before God: Master of the Universe, it is written: "O God, we have heard with our ears, our fathers have told us, what work You did in their days, in days of old" (Psalms 44:2), but we have not seen it with our own eyes. As soon as he said this, rain came until the gutters of Meḥoza overflowed and poured into the Tigris River. Rava's father came and appeared to him in a dream and said to him: Is there anyone who troubles Heaven so much to ask for rain out of its season? In his dream, his father further said to him: Change your place of rest at night. He changed his place, and the next day he found that his bed had been slashed by knives.

¹⁹³ The Gemara relates: Rav Pappa decreed a fast, but rain did not come. His heart became weak from hunger, so he swallowed [seraf] a bowl [pinka] of porridge, and prayed for mercy, but rain still did not come. Rav Naḥman bar Ushpazti said to him: If the Master swallows another bowl of porridge, rain will come. He was mocking Rav Pappa for eating while everyone else was fasting. Rav Pappa was embarrassed and grew upset, and rain came.

¹⁹⁴ The Gemara tells another story about prayer for rain. Rabbi Ḥanina ben Dosa was traveling along a road when it began to rain. He said before God: Master of the Universe, the entire world is comfortable, because they needed rain, but Ḥanina is suffering, as he is getting wet. The rain ceased. When he arrived at his home, he said before God: Master of the Universe, the entire world is suffering that the rain stopped, and Ḥanina is comfortable? The rain began to come again.

¹⁹⁵ Rav Yosef said, in reaction to this story: What effect does the prayer of the High Priest have against that of Rabbi Ḥanina ben Dosa? As we learned in a mishna: After leaving the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur, the High Priest would recite a brief prayer in the outer chamber. The Gemara asks: What would he pray? Ravin bar Adda and Rava bar Adda both say in the name of Rav Yehuda that this was his prayer: May it be Your will, Lord our God, that this year shall be rainy and hot. The Gemara expresses surprise at this request: Is heat a good matter? On the contrary, it is unfavorable. Why should he request that the year be hot?

¹⁹⁶ Rather, say that he recited the following: If the upcoming year is hot, may it also be rainy and moist with dew, lest the heat harm the crops. The High Priest would also pray: And let not the prayer of travelers enter Your presence. Rav Aḥa, son of Rava, in the name of Rav Yehuda, concluded the

wording of this prayer: May the rule of power not depart from the house of Judea. And may Your nation Israel not depend upon each other for sustenance, nor upon another nation. Instead, they should be sustained from the produce of their own land. Evidently, the High Priest's prayer that God should not listen to the prayer of individual travelers was disregarded in the case of Rabbi Ḥanina ben Dosa.

¹⁹⁷ § The Gemara continues to discuss the righteous Rabbi Ḥanina ben Dosa and the wonders he performed. Rav Yehuda said that Rav said: Each and every day a Divine Voice emerges from Mount Horeb and says: The entire world is sustained by the merit of My son Ḥanina ben Dosa, and yet for Ḥanina, My son, a kav of carobs, a very small amount of inferior food, is sufficient to sustain him for an entire week, from one Shabbat eve to the next Shabbat eve. The Gemara relates: Rabbi Ḥanina ben Dosa's wife would heat the oven every Shabbat eve and create a great amount of smoke,

¹⁹⁸ due to embarrassment, to make it appear that she was baking, despite the fact that there was no bread in her house. She had a certain evil neighbor who said to herself: Now, I know that they have nothing. What, then, is all this smoke? She went and knocked on the door to find out what was in the oven. Rabbi Ḥanina ben Dosa's wife was embarrassed, and she ascended to an inner room [inderona].

¹⁹⁹ A miracle was performed for Rabbi Ḥanina ben Dosa's wife, as her neighbor saw the oven filled with bread and the kneading basin filled with dough. She said to Rabbi Ḥanina's wife, calling her by name: So-and-so, so-and-so, bring a shovel, as your bread is burning. She said to her neighbor: I too went inside for that very purpose. A tanna taught: She too had entered the inner room to bring a shovel, because she was accustomed to miracles and anticipated that one would occur to spare her embarrassment.

²⁰⁰ The Gemara further relates: Rabbi Ḥanina's wife said to him: Until when will we continue to suffer this poverty? He said to her: What can we do? She responded: Pray for mercy that something will be given to you from Heaven. He prayed for mercy and something like the palm of a hand emerged and gave him one leg of a golden table. That night, his wife saw in a dream that in the future, i.e., in the World-to-Come, the righteous will eat at a golden table that has three legs, but she will be eating on a table that has two legs.

²⁰¹ When she told her husband this story, he said to her: Are you content that everyone will eat at a complete table and we will eat at a defective table? She said to him: But what can we do? Pray for mercy, that the leg of the golden table should be taken from you. He prayed for mercy, and it was taken from him. A tanna taught in a baraita: The last miracle was greater than the first, as it is learned as a tradition that Heaven gives but does not take back.

²⁰² The Gemara relates that one Shabbat evening, Rabbi Ḥanina ben Dosa saw that his daughter was sad. He said to her: My daughter, why are you sad? She said to him: I confused a vessel of vinegar for a vessel of oil and I lit the Shabbat lamp with vinegar. Soon the lamp will be extinguished and we will be left in the dark. He said to her: My daughter, what are you concerned about? He Who said to the oil that it should burn can say to the vinegar that it should burn. A tanna taught: That lamp burned continuously the entire day, until they brought from it light for havdala.

²⁰³ Rabbi Ḥanina ben Dosa had some goats. His neighbors said to him: Your goats are damaging our property by eating in our fields. He said to them: If they are causing damage, let them be eaten by

bears. But if they are not eating your property, let each of them, this evening, bring a bear impaled between its horns. That evening, each one brought in a bear impaled between its horns.

²⁰⁴ Rabbi Ḥanina ben Dosa had a certain neighbor who was building a house, but the ceiling beams were not long enough to reach from one wall to the other. She came before Rabbi Ḥanina ben Dosa and said to him: I built my house, but my ceiling beams do not reach the walls. He said to her: What is your name? She said to him: My name is Ikku. He said: If so [ikku], may your beams reach your walls.

²⁰⁵ A tanna taught: The beams were lengthened to such an extent that they not only reached the walls, but they continued until they jutted out a cubit from this side and a cubit from that side. And some say that they extended with segments [senifin], adding new walls at both ends of the beams. It is taught in a baraita that the Sage Palaimo says: I saw that house, and its beams jutted out a cubit on this side and a cubit on that side. And they said to me: This is the house that Rabbi Ḥanina ben Dosa roofed by means of his prayer.

²⁰⁶ The Gemara asks a question about one of the details of this story. And Rabbi Ḥanina ben Dosa, from where did he have goats? Wasn't he poor, as stated above? And furthermore, the Sages have said: One may not raise small, domesticated animals in Eretz Yisrael, as they destroy the fields and property of others. How, then, could Rabbi Ḥanina ben Dosa raise goats? Rav Pineḥas said that this is how it came to pass: An incident occurred in which a certain man passed by the entrance of Rabbi Ḥanina's house and left chickens there. And Rabbi Ḥanina ben Dosa's wife found them and cared for them.

²⁰⁷ And Rabbi Ḥanina said her: Do not eat of their eggs, as they are not ours. And the chickens laid many eggs, and chickens hatched from the eggs. And as the noise and mess of the chickens were distressing them, they sold them and bought goats with their proceeds. Once that same man who lost the chickens passed by and said to his companion: Here is where I left my chickens. Rabbi Ḥanina heard this and said to him: Do you have a sign by which to identify them? He said to him: Yes. He gave him the sign and took the goats. The Gemara concludes: And these are the very goats that brought bears impaled between their horns.

²⁰⁸ § The Gemara relates more stories of desperately poor righteous individuals. Rabbi Elazar ben Pedat was hard-pressed for money. Once an act of bloodletting was performed on him, but he did not have anything to taste afterward. He took a clove of garlic and put it in his mouth. His heart became weak and he fell asleep. The Sages came to inquire about his welfare. They saw him weeping and laughing, and a ray of light was shining from his forehead.

²⁰⁹ When he awoke they said to him: What is the reason that you were laughing and crying? He said to them: The reason is that in my dream the Holy One, Blessed be He, was sitting with me, and I said to Him: Until when will I suffer such poverty in this world? And He said to me: Elazar, My son, is it more convenient for you that I return the world to its very beginning? Perhaps you will be born in an hour of sustenance and not be poor.

²¹⁰ I said before Him: You suggest doing all this, to return the world to its beginning, and even then is it only a possibility that things will be different, not a certainty? I said to Him: Are the years that I have already lived more numerous, or are that I will live more numerous? He said to me: Those years that you have lived are greater. I said before Him: If so, I do not want You to recreate the world for the sake of a brief few years.

²¹¹ He said to me: As a reward for saying: I do not want, I will give you in the World-to-Come thirteen rivers of pure balsam oil as large as the Euphrates and the Tigris for you to enjoy. I said before Him: This and no more? He said to me: But if I give you more, what will I give to your colleagues? I said to Him: And do I request this from a person, who does not have enough? You are omnipotent. He playfully snapped His finger [askutla] on my forehead and said to me: Elazar, my son, My arrows I cast upon you, My arrows. This touch caused the ray of light to shine from his forehead.

²¹² The Gemara returns to the topic of fasting for rain. Rabbi Ḥama bar Ḥanina decreed a fast but rain did not come. They said to him: Didn't Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi decree a fast and rain came? He said to them: This is I; this is a son of a Levite, i.e., we are two different people of unequal stature. They said to him: Let us come and focus our minds. Perhaps the hearts of the members of the community will break and rain will come. They prayed for mercy, but rain did not come.

²¹³ Rabbi Ḥama bar Ḥanina said to them: Are you content that rain should come on our account, and through our merit? They said to him: Yes. He said: Skies, skies, cover your face with clouds. The sky was not covered with clouds. He said in rebuke: How impudent is the face of the sky, to ignore me. The sky became covered with clouds and rain came.

²¹⁴ The Gemara relates a similar story. Levi decreed a fast but rain did not come. He said before God: Master of the Universe, You have ascended and sat up high, and You do not have mercy upon Your children. Rain came, but as a punishment for his harsh statement toward God, Levi became lame. Consequently, Rav Elazar said: A person should never cast harsh statements toward God on High, as a great person cast statements toward God on High, and he became lame. And who was this individual? Levi.

²¹⁵ The Gemara asks: And did this comment of Levi's cause him to become lame? But it is stated that Levi demonstrated kidda, a particular type of bowing on one's face, performed by the High Priest, before Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi, and he became lame as a result (see Megilla 22b). The Gemara explains: Both this and that caused his lameness. As a punishment for acting improperly, he suffered an injury while he was attempting a difficult physical feat and was vulnerable.

²¹⁶ The Gemara relates: Rabbi Ḥiyya bar Lulyani heard these clouds saying to one another, let us go and bring water for Ammon and Moab in Transjordan. He said before God: Master of the Universe, when You gave Your Torah to Your nation Israel, You approached all the nations of the world to see if they would accept the Torah, and they did not accept it. And yet now You are giving them rain. Throw the water here. The clouds threw the rain in their place in Eretz Yisrael.

²¹⁷ Since the Gemara has mentioned Rabbi Ḥiyya bar Lulyani, it cites a statement in his name. Rabbi Ḥiyya bar Lulyani taught: What is the meaning of that which is written: "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon" (Psalms 92:13)? If it is stated "palm tree" why does it state "cedar," and if it is stated "cedar" why does it state "palm tree"? What is added by this double comparison? He explains: Were it stated "palm tree" and were it not stated "cedar," I would say that just as in the case of a palm tree,

²¹⁸ its shoots do not replenish themselves when its stump is cut down, so too, Heaven forbid, with regard to a righteous person, his shoots will not replenish themselves, i.e., he will be unable to recover from misfortune. Therefore, it is stated "cedar" in the verse. Just as the cedar grows new shoots after its stump is cut down, so too, a righteous individual will thrive again. Conversely, were it

stated “cedar” and were it not stated “palm tree,” I would say that just as in the case of a cedar, it does not produce fruit, so too, a righteous man, God forbid, does not produce fruit, i.e., he will have no reward in the World-to-Come. Therefore, it is stated “palm tree” and it is also stated “cedar.”

²¹⁹ § The Gemara asks: And do a cedar’s shoots really replenish themselves? But isn’t it taught in a baraita: With regard to one who bought a tree from another to chop it down for wood, without acquiring total ownership of the tree, he must lift his ax a handbreadth and chop there, so as to allow the tree to grow back? However, in a case where he purchased a large sycamore, he must leave two handbreadths. In the case of an untrimmed sycamore, he must leave three handbreadths. In a situation where one bought reeds or grapevines, he may chop only from the first knot and above. In the case of palms or cedars, one may dig down and uproot it, as its shoots will not replenish themselves. This baraita indicates that cedars will not grow new shoots after they have been cut down.

²²⁰ The Gemara answers: With what are we dealing here? With other species of cedars. This is in accordance with the opinion of Rabba bar Huna, as Rabba bar Huna said: There are ten species of cedars, as it is stated: “I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the acacia tree and myrtle and the oil tree; I will set in the desert cypress, the plane tree and the larch together” (Isaiah 41:19). The seven species mentioned in this verse are all called cedars, as are three additional species.

²²¹ The Sages taught: An incident occurred involving Rabbi Eliezer, who decreed a complete cycle of thirteen fasts upon the congregation, but rain did not fall. At the end of the last fast, the congregation began to exit the synagogue. He said to them: Have you prepared graves for yourselves? If rain does not fall, we will all die of hunger. All the people burst into tears, and rain fell.

²²² There was another incident involving Rabbi Eliezer, who descended to serve as prayer leader before the ark on a fast day. And he recited twenty-four blessings, but he was not answered. Rabbi Akiva descended before the ark after him and said: Our Father, our King, we have no king other than You. Our Father, our King, for Your sake, have mercy on us. And rain immediately fell. The Sages were whispering among themselves that Rabbi Akiva was answered while his teacher, Rabbi Eliezer, was not. A Divine Voice emerged and said: It is not because this Sage, Rabbi Akiva, is greater than that one, Rabbi Eliezer, but that this one is forgiving, and that one is not forgiving. God responded to Rabbi Akiva’s forgiving nature in kind by sending rain.

²²³ § The Sages taught in a baraita: How much rain must fall for the community to cease their fast for rain? If the rain penetrates the soil by the full depth of the blade of a plow until the spot where it bends, they may cease fasting; this is the statement of Rabbi Meir. And the Rabbis say a different measurement: If the earth is completely dry, the soil must become moist to the depth of a single handbreadth. For average soil, they must wait until the moisture reaches a depth of two handbreadths. If it is worked soil, i.e., soil that has been plowed, the moisture must reach to a depth of three handbreadths.

²²⁴ It is taught in a baraita that Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar says: There is no handbreadth of rain from above toward which the water of the deep does not rise three handbreadths. The Gemara raises an objection: But isn’t it taught in another baraita that the water of the deep rises two handbreadths? The Gemara explains: This is not difficult. Here, in first baraita, it is referring to worked land, which water penetrates faster, whereas there, in the second baraita, it is referring to unworked land, which water does not penetrate as easily, and therefore the water of the deep rises only two handbreadths.

²²⁵ Rabbi Elazar said: When the water libation was poured during the festival of Sukkot, these waters of the deep say to the other waters of the deep: Let your water flow, as I hear the voices of two of our friends, the wine libation and the water libation, which are both poured on the altar. As it is stated: “Deep calls to deep at the sound of your channels, all Your waves and Your billows are gone over me” (Psalms 42:8), i.e., the upper waters of the deep call to the lower waters of the deep when they hear the sound of the libations.

²²⁶ Rabba said: I have seen this angel in charge of water, Ridya, in the form of a calf whose lips were parted, standing between the lower waters of the deep and the upper waters of the deep. To the upper waters of the deep, he said: Distill your water and let it rain. To the lower waters of the deep, he said: Let your water flow from below, as it is stated: “The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove [tur] is heard in our land” (Song of Songs 2:12). The appearance of flowers in this verse alludes to the libations, as both the blooming of flowers and pouring of these libations are annual events. The time of the singing is referring to the singing of the Festival. Finally, the term tur in Aramaic can also mean an ox; in this context, it is interpreted as a reference to the angel Ridya.

²²⁷ § The mishna teaches: If they were fasting for rain and rain fell for them before sunrise, they need not complete their fast until the evening. The Sages taught: If they were fasting for rain and rain fell for them before sunrise, they need not complete their fast, as the obligation to fast does not come into effect until sunrise. However, if rain fell after sunrise, they must complete their fast. This is the statement of Rabbi Meir. Rabbi Yehuda says: If rain fell before midday, they need not complete their fast; however, if it rains after midday, they must complete their fast.

²²⁸ Rabbi Yosei says: If rain falls before the ninth hour, three hours into the afternoon, they need not complete their fast; if it rains after the ninth hour of the day, they must complete their fast, as we found with regard to Ahab, king of Israel, who fasted from the ninth hour and onward, as it is stated: “And it came to pass, when Ahab heard these words, that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly. And the word of the Lord came to Elijah the Tishbite saying: Do you see how Ahab humbles himself before Me?” (I Kings 21:27–29). According to tradition, this occurred in the ninth hour.

²²⁹ Rabbi Yehuda Nesia decreed a fast, and rain fell for them after sunrise. He thought to complete the fast, but Rabbi Ami said to him that we learned: Before noon and after noon, i.e., the halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda. Shmuel HaKatan decreed a fast, and rain fell for them before sunrise. The people thought to say: This is a sign of the praiseworthiness of the community, as we merited rainfall even before we prayed.

²³⁰ He said to them: I will tell you a parable. To what is this matter comparable? To a situation where there is a slave who requests a reward from his master, either food or livelihood, and the master says to his ministers: Give him what he asks for and let me not hear his voice, as I would rather not have to listen to him. Here, too, evidently God has no desire to hear our prayers.

²³¹ Again, on another occasion, Shmuel HaKatan decreed a fast, and rain fell for them after sunset. Based on his previous response, the people thought to say: This is a sign of the praiseworthiness of the community, as God listened to our prayers all day. Shmuel HaKatan said to them: It is not a sign of the praiseworthiness of the community. Rather, I will tell you a parable. To what is this matter comparable? To a situation where there is a slave who requests a reward from his master, and the

master says to his ministers: Wait until he pines away and suffers, and afterward give it to him. Here too, the delay is not to the congregation's credit.

²³² The Gemara asks: But if so, according to the opinion of Shmuel HaKatan, what is considered the praiseworthiness of the community; what are the circumstances in which approval is shown from Heaven? The Gemara explains: When the prayer leader recites: He Who makes the wind blow, and the wind blows; and when he recites: And the rain fall, and rain falls.

²³³ The mishna teaches: An incident occurred in which the court decreed a fast in Lod, and when rain fell they ate and drank, and afterward they recited hallel. The Gemara asks: And let us recite hallel at the outset, without delay. Why did they first go home and eat? Abaye and Rava both said: Because one recites hallel

²³⁴ only on a satisfied soul and a full stomach. Consequently, it is preferable to return home to eat and drink so as to recite hallel in the proper frame of mind. The Gemara asks: Is that so? But Rav Pappa happened to come to the synagogue of Avi Govar in Mehoza, and he decreed a fast, and rain fell for them before midday, and yet he recited hallel immediately, and only afterward they ate and drank. The Gemara explains: The inhabitants of the city of Mehoza are different, as drunkenness is common among them. Had Rav Pappa told them to go home to eat and drink, they would have become drunk and been unable to pray.

Chapter 4

¹ MISHNA: At three times in the year priests raise their hands to recite the Priestly Benediction four times in a single day, in the morning prayer, in the additional prayer, in the afternoon prayer, and in the evening in the closing of the gates, i.e., the ne'ila prayer. And these are the three times: During communal fasts held due to lack of rain, on which the closing prayer is recited; and during non-priestly watches [ma'amadot], when the Israelite members of the guard parallel to the priestly watch come and read the act of Creation from the Torah, as explained below; and on Yom Kippur.

² These are the non-priestly watches: Since it is stated: "Command the children of Israel and say to them: My offering of food, which is presented to Me made by a fire, of a sweet savor to Me, you shall guard the sacrifice to Me in its due season" (Numbers 28:2), this verse teaches that the daily offering was a communal obligation that applied to every member of the Jewish people. The mishna asks: But how can a person's offering be sacrificed when he is not standing next to it?

³ The mishna explains: Since it is impossible for the entire nation to be present in Jerusalem when the daily offering is brought, the early prophets, Samuel and David, instituted the division of the priests into twenty-four priestly watches, each of which served for approximately one week, twice per year. For each and every priestly watch there was a corresponding non-priestly watch in Jerusalem of priests, Levites, and Israelites who would stand by the communal offerings for that day to represent the community.

⁴ When the time arrived for the members of a certain priestly watch to ascend, the priests and Levites of that watch would ascend to Jerusalem to perform the Temple service. And as for the Israelites assigned to that priestly watch, some of them went up to Jerusalem, while the rest of them assembled in their towns and read the act of Creation. And the members of the non-priestly watch,

who represented the entire community that week, would fast four days a week, from Monday until Thursday. And they would not fast on Shabbat eve, in deference to Shabbat, as they did not wish to start Shabbat while fasting. And they did not fast on Sunday, so as not to go from rest and delight immediately to exertion and fasting, and run the risk that they might die as a result of the abrupt change.

⁵ Which portions of the Torah would the members of the non-priestly watch read on each day? On Sunday they would read the portions starting with: “In the beginning” and “Let there be a firmament” (Genesis 1:1–8). On Monday they would read: “Let there be a firmament” and “Let the waters be gathered” (Genesis 1:9–13). On Tuesday they would read: “Let the waters be gathered” and “Let there be lights” (Genesis 1:14–19). On Wednesday: “Let there be lights” and “Let the waters swarm” (Genesis 1:20–23). On Thursday: “Let the waters swarm” and “Let the earth bring forth” (Genesis 1:24–31). On Friday: “Let the earth bring forth” and “And the heaven and the earth were finished” (Genesis 2:1–3).

⁶ A long passage, consisting of six verses or more, is read by two people, and a short passage is read by one, as one cannot read fewer than three verses from the Torah together. They read from the Torah in the morning prayer and in the additional prayer. In the afternoon prayer the members of the non-priestly watch enter the synagogue and read the daily portion by heart, just as one recites Shema every day. On Shabbat eve at the afternoon prayer, they would not enter the synagogue for the communal Torah readings, in deference to Shabbat.

⁷ The mishna states a principle: On any day that has the recitation of hallel, but on which the additional offering was not sacrificed, e.g., Hanukkah, there is no reading of the Torah by the non-priestly watch in the morning prayer. On days that have both hallel and an additional offering, such as Festivals, the non-priestly watch would also not read from the Torah at the closing prayer. When a wood offering was brought, as explained below, there was no non-priestly watch in the afternoon prayer. This is the statement of Rabbi Akiva.

⁸ Ben Azzai said to Rabbi Akiva that this is how Rabbi Yehoshua would teach this halakha: On days when an additional offering was sacrificed, there was no non-priestly watch in the afternoon prayer. When a wood offering was brought, there was no non-priestly watch in the closing prayer. Upon hearing this, Rabbi Akiva retracted his ruling and began to teach in accordance with the opinion of ben Azzai.

⁹ The mishna details the times for the wood offering of priests and the people. These were private holidays specific to certain families, on which their members would volunteer a wood offering for the altar. There were nine such days and families: On the first of Nisan, the descendants of Arah ben Yehuda; on the twentieth of Tammuz, the descendants of David ben Yehuda; on the fifth of Av, the descendants of Parosh ben Yehuda; on the seventh of Av, the descendants of Jonadab ben Rechab; on the tenth of Av, the descendants of Sena’a ben Binyamin; on the fifteenth of Av, the descendants of Zattu ben Yehuda.

¹⁰ And included with this group of Zattu ben Yehuda’s descendants were other priests; and Levites; and anyone who erred with regard to his tribe, i.e., Israelites who did not know which tribe they were from, and the descendants of those who deceived the authorities with a pestle; and the descendants of those who packed dried figs. These last groups and their descriptions are explained in the Gemara.

¹¹ The mishna resumes its list. On the twentieth of Av, the descendants of Paḥat Moav ben Yehuda; on the twentieth of Elul, the descendants of Adin ben Yehuda; on the first of Tevet, the descendants of Parosh returned to bring wood for a second time; likewise on the first of Tevet, there was no non-priestly watch, as it is Hanukkah, on which hallel is recited, and it is the New Moon, on which an additional offering is sacrificed, and there was also a wood offering.

¹² The mishna discusses the five major communal fast days. Five calamitous matters occurred to our forefathers on the seventeenth of Tammuz, and five other disasters happened on the Ninth of Av. On the seventeenth of Tammuz

¹³ the tablets were broken by Moses when he saw that the Jews had made the golden calf; the daily offering was nullified by the Roman authorities and was never sacrificed again; the city walls of Jerusalem were breached; the general Apostemos publicly burned a Torah scroll; and Manasseh placed an idol in the Sanctuary.

¹⁴ On the Ninth of Av it was decreed upon our ancestors that they would all die in the wilderness and not enter Eretz Yisrael; and the Temple was destroyed the first time, in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, and the second time, by the Romans; and Beitar was captured; and the city of Jerusalem was plowed, as a sign that it would never be rebuilt.

¹⁵ Not only does one fast on the Ninth of Av, but from when the month of Av begins, one decreases acts of rejoicing. During the week in which the Ninth of Av occurs, it is prohibited to cut one's hair and to launder clothes, but if the Ninth of Av occurs on a Friday, on Thursday these actions are permitted in deference to Shabbat. On the eve of the Ninth of Av a person may not eat two cooked dishes in one meal. Furthermore, one may neither eat meat nor drink wine. Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says: One must adjust and decrease the amount he eats. Rabbi Yehuda obligates one to overturn the bed and sleep on the floor like one in a state of mourning, but the Rabbis did not agree with him.

¹⁶ The mishna cites a passage that concludes its discussion of the month of Av, as well as the entire tractate of Ta'anit, on a positive note. Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel said: There were no days as joyous for the Jewish people as the fifteenth of Av and as Yom Kippur, as on them the daughters of Jerusalem would go out in white clothes, which each woman borrowed from another. Why were they borrowed? They did this so as not to embarrass one who did not have her own white garments. All the garments that the women borrowed require immersion, as those who previously wore them might have been ritually impure.

¹⁷ And the daughters of Jerusalem would go out and dance in the vineyards. And what would they say? Young man, please lift up your eyes and see what you choose for yourself for a wife. Do not set your eyes toward beauty, but set your eyes toward a good family, as the verse states: "Grace is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised" (Proverbs 31:30), and it further says: "Give her the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates" (Proverbs 31:31).

¹⁸ And similarly, it says in another verse: "Go forth, daughters of Zion, and gaze upon King Solomon, upon the crown with which his mother crowned him on the day of his wedding, and on the day of the gladness of his heart" (Song of Songs 3:11). This verse is explained as an allusion to special days: "On the day of his wedding"; this is the giving of the Torah through the second set of tablets on Yom Kippur. The name King Solomon in this context, which also means king of peace, is

interpreted as a reference to God. “And on the day of the gladness of his heart”; this is the building of the Temple, may it be rebuilt speedily in our days.

¹⁹ GEMARA: The mishna taught: At three times in the year priests raise their hands to recite the Priestly Benediction four times in a single day: On communal fasts, non-priestly watches, and Yom Kippur. The Gemara asks: How do they recite the Priestly Benediction four times on these days? Do fast days and gatherings of non-priestly watches have an additional prayer? The Gemara explains that the mishna is incomplete and is teaching the following: At three times in the year priests raise their hands each time they pray, and on some of these they bless four times a day, in the morning prayer, in the additional prayer, in the afternoon prayer, and in the closing of the gates, i.e., the ne’ila prayer. And these are the three times: Communal fasts, non-priestly watches, and Yom Kippur.

²⁰ Rav Naḥman said that Rabba bar Avuh said: This mishna is the statement of Rabbi Meir. However, the Rabbis say: The morning prayer and the additional prayer have the Priestly Benediction of the raising of the hands, whereas the afternoon prayer and the closing prayer [ne’ila] do not have the raising of the hands.

²¹ The Gemara asks: Who are these Rabbis, who disagree with Rabbi Meir? It is the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda, as it is taught in a baraita: The morning prayer, the additional prayer, the afternoon prayer, and ne’ila all have the Priestly Benediction of the raising of the hands. This is the statement of Rabbi Meir. Rabbi Yehuda says: The morning prayer and the additional prayer have the raising of the hands, whereas the afternoon prayer and ne’ila do not have the raising of the hands. Rabbi Yosei says: Ne’ila has the raising of the hands; the afternoon prayer does not have the raising of the hands.

²² The Gemara asks: With regard to what principle do they disagree? Rabbi Meir maintains: What is the reason that priests do not spread their hands to bless the people every day in the afternoon prayer? It is due to potential drunkenness, as people occasionally become intoxicated during their lunch, and it is prohibited for an inebriated priest to bless. However, now, on a fast day, there is no concern about drunkenness, and therefore the priests may recite the Priestly Benediction even in the afternoon prayer.

²³ Conversely, Rabbi Yehuda maintains that with regard to the morning prayer and the additional prayer, when drunkenness is not common on every ordinary day, the Sages did not issue a decree that the Priestly Benediction be omitted during them. However, with regard to the afternoon prayer and ne’ila, when drunkenness is common on every day, the Sages issued a decree that the Priestly Benediction should not be recited during them, despite the fact that intoxication is not a concern on a fast day.

²⁴ Finally, Rabbi Yosei maintains that with regard to the afternoon prayer, which is recited every day, the Sages issued a decree concerning it, whereas with regard to ne’ila, which is not recited every day, the Sages did not issue and apply their decree to it, as there is no concern that people might become confused between ne’ila and an afternoon prayer of a regular weekday.

²⁵ Rav Yehuda said that Rav said: The halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Meir. And Rabbi Yoḥanan said: The people act in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Meir. And Rava said: The custom is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Meir.

²⁶ The Gemara clarifies these statements. The one who said that the halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Meir means that this ruling is taught in the public lectures on Shabbat. The one

who said that the custom is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Meir means that one does not teach this in public, but if someone comes to ask for a practical ruling, one instructs them in private that this is the halakha. And the one who said that the people act in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Meir means that one does not even instruct someone that this is the halakha, but if he acts in accordance with Rabbi Meir, he has acted in a valid manner and we do not require him to return and recite the prayer again.

²⁷ And Rav Nahman said that the halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei. The Gemara concludes: And indeed, the halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei. The Gemara asks: And nowadays, what is the reason that priests spread their hands to bless the people in the afternoon prayer of a fast? The Gemara explains: Since they spread their hands near sunset, it is considered like ne'ila, and therefore the decree of the Sages does not apply.

²⁸ In any event, based on the above, everyone agrees that it is prohibited for a drunken priest to raise his hands and recite the Priestly Benediction. The Gemara asks: From where are these matters derived? Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said in the name of bar Kappara: Why is the portion of the priest who recites the benediction (see Numbers 6:22–27) juxtaposed with the portion of the nazirite (see Numbers 6:1–21)? They are juxtaposed to say that just as it is prohibited for a nazirite to drink wine, so too, it is prohibited for a priest who recites the benediction to drink wine.

²⁹ Rabbi Zeira's father, and some say it was Oshaya bar Zavda, strongly objects to this explanation. If you wish to compare these two cases, you can argue as follows: Just as it is prohibited for a nazirite to eat grape pits, as he may not partake of any of the products of a grapevine, so too, it should be prohibited for a priest who recites the benediction to eat grape pits. Certainly a priest is not barred from raising his hands after eating a few grape pits. Rather, Rabbi Yitzhak said that the verse states: "To minister to Him and to bless in His name" (Deuteronomy 10:8). Just as it is permitted for a priest who ministers to God in the Temple to partake of grape pits, so too, it is permitted for a priest who recites the benediction to partake of grape pits.

³⁰ The Gemara asks: If so, then just as a priest who ministers in the Temple may not be physically blemished, so too, a priest who recites the benediction may not be blemished. The Gemara rejects this suggestion: The priest who recites the benediction is also juxtaposed to a nazirite, who is not affected by a blemish.

³¹ The Gemara asks: And what did you see that you juxtaposed the cases in favor of a leniency? Perhaps you should juxtapose for a stringency, by comparing the priest who recites the benediction to a nazirite with regard to grape pits, and comparing him to a priest ministering in the Temple in relation to the prohibition against reciting the benediction if he has a physical blemish. The Gemara explains: These proofs are cited merely as support for halakhot that apply by rabbinic law, and consequently, they are interpreted as a leniency, not a stringency.

³² § The mishna taught that these are the non-priestly watches: Since it is stated: "Command the children of Israel." The Gemara asks: What is the mishna saying about the non-priestly watches? How does the verse relate to the watches? The Gemara explains that the mishna is saying as follows: These are the non-priestly watches, which will be explained later. And what is the reason that they instituted non-priestly watches? Since it is stated: "Command the children of Israel and say to them: My offering of food, which is presented to Me made by a fire, of a sweet savor to Me, you shall observe to sacrifice to Me in their due season" (Numbers 28:2).

³³ The mishna continues: But how can a person's offering be sacrificed when he is not standing next to it? The early prophets, Samuel and David, instituted twenty-four priestly watches. For each and every priestly watch there was a corresponding watch in Jerusalem of priests, Levites, and Israelites. When the time arrived for the members of a certain priestly watch to ascend, the priests and Levites of that watch would ascend to Jerusalem.

³⁴ The Sages taught: There were twenty-four priestly watches in Eretz Yisrael, and twelve in Jericho. The Gemara expresses surprise at this statement: Twelve in Jericho? In that case there are too many of them, as this makes a total of thirty-six watches. Rather, the baraita should be read as follows: There were twenty-four in total, twelve of which were in Jericho. How so? When the time arrived for the members of a certain priestly watch to ascend, half the priestly watch would ascend from all over Eretz Yisrael to Jerusalem, and half the priestly watch would ascend from Jericho, in order to provide water and food to their brothers in Jerusalem from Jericho.

³⁵ Rav Yehuda said that Shmuel said: Priests, Levites, and Israelites are all indispensable for the offering, and consequently, they all must be present when the daily offering is sacrificed. It is taught in a baraita that Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar says: Priests, Levites, and musical instruments are indispensable for the offering. The Gemara asks: With regard to what principle do they disagree? One Sage, Shmuel, holds that the main aspect of the Levites' song that accompanied the offerings is vocal, and one Sage, Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar, holds that the main aspect of their song is instrumental, performed with a vessel, and therefore both the Levites and their instruments must be present for the daily offering.

³⁶ Rav Ḥama bar Gurya said that Rav said: Moses initially instituted for the Jews eight priestly watches, four from the descendants of Elazar and four from the descendants of Itamar. Samuel came and established them as sixteen, and David came and established them as twenty-four, as it is stated, after the watches are listed: "In the fortieth year of the reign of David they were sought for, and there were found among them mighty men of valor at Jazer of Gilead" (I Chronicles 26:31).

³⁷ The Gemara raises an objection against this opinion from a baraita. Moses instituted for the Jews eight priestly watches, four from Elazar and four from Itamar. And David and Samuel came and established them as twenty-four, as it is stated: "Whom David and Samuel the seer ordained in their set office" (I Chronicles 9:22). This baraita indicates that David and Samuel together established the twenty-four watches. The Gemara explains: This is what the baraita is saying: Through their ordination by David and Samuel of Rama the priestly watches incrementally increased in number until they established them as twenty-four.

³⁸ It is taught in another baraita: Moses instituted for the Jews sixteen priestly watches, eight from Elazar and eight from Itamar. And when the descendants of Elazar grew more numerous than the descendants of Itamar, he divided the descendants of Elazar and established them together with the descendants of Itamar as twenty-four watches, 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 thus: Of the sons of Elazar there were sixteen heads of fathers' houses, and of the sons of Itamar, according to their fathers' houses, eight" (I Chronicles 24:4). And it says: "One father's house taken for Elazar, and proportionately for Itamar" (I Chronicles 24:6).

³⁹ The Gemara asks: What is: And it says? Why was it necessary to quote a second verse? The Gemara explains: And if you would say that just as the descendants of Elazar increased, so too, the

descendants of Itamar increased, and the eight watches were initially four, as claimed by Rav Ḥama bar Gurya, then come and hear: “One father’s house taken for Elazar, and proportionately for Itamar,” which indicates that the descendants of Itamar remained as they were. This verse is apparently a conclusive refutation of the opinion of Rav Ḥama bar Gurya, who says that Moses established only eight priestly watches.

⁴⁰ The Gemara responds: Rav Ḥama bar Gurya could have said to you that the initial order of the priestly watches is a dispute between tanna’im, as indicated by the previous baraita, and I stated my opinion in accordance with that tanna who said that Moses instituted eight priestly watches.

⁴¹ The Sages taught: Only four priestly watches ascended from the Babylonian exile, while the other twenty stayed in Babylonia. And these are the watches who returned: The descendants of Jedaiah, Harim, Pashhur, and Immer. The prophets among those who returned arose

⁴² and divided them and established them as twenty-four watches. They achieved this by writing the names of these new twenty-four watches on pieces of paper, mixing them up, and putting them in a receptacle [kalfei] from which lots were drawn. A representative from the family of Jedaiah came and drew his portion and the lot of five other watches, for a total of six. Harim came and also drew his portion and the lot of five other watches, a total of six. And likewise Pashhur, and likewise Immer.

⁴³ And likewise the prophets among them stipulated that even if the descendants of Jehoiarib, who originally headed the priestly watches, ascended to Eretz Yisrael, Jedaiah would not be demoted from its place as the first of the watches. Rather, the watch of Jedaiah would retain precedence, and Jehoiarib would be subordinate to it.

⁴⁴ § The mishna taught: And the Israelites of that priestly watch assembled in their towns and read the act of Creation. The Gemara asks: From where is this matter, that they must read this specific portion, derived? Rabbi Ya’akov bar Aḥa said that Rav Asi said: Were it not for the non-priestly watches and the Temple service, heaven and earth would not continue to exist, as it is stated: “And he said: Lord God, by what shall I know that I shall inherit it?” (Genesis 15:8).

⁴⁵ The Gemara explains this verse. Abraham said: Master of the Universe, perhaps the Jews will sin before You. Will You treat them as You did the generation of the flood and the generation of the dispersion, and destroy them? God said to him: No. Abraham said before God: Master of the Universe, tell me, with what shall I inherit it? How can my descendants ensure that You will maintain the world? God said to Abraham: “Take for Me a three-year-old heifer, and a three-year-old goat, and a three-year-old ram, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon” (Genesis 15:9). God was alluding to the offerings, in whose merit the Jewish people, and through them the entire world, will be spared divine punishment.

⁴⁶ Abraham said before God: Master of the Universe, this works out well when the Temple is standing, but when the Temple is not standing, what will become of them? God said to him: I have already enacted for them the order of offerings. When they read them before Me, I will ascribe them credit as though they had sacrificed them before Me and I will pardon them for all their transgressions. Since the offerings ensure the continued existence of the Jewish people and the rest of the world, the act of Creation is read in their honor.

⁴⁷ § The Sages taught: The members of the priestly watch would pray for the offerings of their brothers, the daily offering, that it should be accepted with favor. And meanwhile, the members of

the non-priestly watch remained in their towns and would assemble in the synagogue and observe four fasts: On Monday of that week, on Tuesday, on Wednesday, and on Thursday. On Monday they would fast for seafarers, that they should be rescued from danger, as the sea was created on Monday. On Tuesday they would fast for those who walk in the desert, as the dry land was created on Tuesday.

⁴⁸ On Wednesday they would fast over croup, that it should not befall the children, as on the fourth day the bodies of light [me'erot] were created, a textual allusion to curses [me'erot]. On Thursday they would fast for pregnant women and nursing women, as living beings were first created on this day. For pregnant women they would fast that they should not miscarry, while for nursing women they would fast that they should be able to nurse their children properly. And on Shabbat eve they would not fast, in deference to Shabbat, and a fortiori they would not fast on Shabbat itself.

⁴⁹ The Gemara asks: What is the reason that they would not fast on Sunday? Rabbi Yoḥanan said: Due to the Christians, as Sunday is their day of rest, and they would claim that even the Jews ascribe significance to their special day. Rabbi Shmuel bar Naḥmani said: Because it is the third day after the creation of man, who was created on Friday, and the third day of recovery from a wound or sickness, in this case one's very creation, is considered the most painful.

⁵⁰ Reish Lakish said: They would not fast on Sunday due to the added soul, as Reish Lakish said: An added soul is given to man on Shabbat eve, and at the conclusion of Shabbat it is removed from him, as it is stated: "He ceased from work and rested [vayinafash]" (Exodus 31:17), which he expounds as follows: Since one has rested and Shabbat has passed, woe for the soul [vai nefesh] that is lost, the added soul that each individual relinquishes. Consequently, one is still weak from this loss on Sunday.

⁵¹ The mishna taught that on Sunday they would read the portions starting with: "In the beginning" (Genesis 1:1–5) and "Let there be a firmament" (Genesis 1:6–8). It is taught in a baraita: The section: "In the beginning" is read by two people, while "Let there be a firmament" is read by one. The Gemara asks: Granted, the passage "Let there be a firmament" is read by one individual, as it is three verses long, and one who is called to the Torah reads at least three verses. However, what is the reason that the section "In the beginning" is read by two individuals? It is five verses long, and it is taught in a mishna (Megilla 22a): One who reads from the Torah may not read fewer than three verses. How, then, are five verses read by two individuals?

⁵² The Gemara cites two answers. Rav said: The first reader reads the first three verses, and the second reader repeats the last verse read by the first, and continues with the final two verses. And Shmuel said: They split the middle verse into two, so that each of the pair reads half of it. The Gemara asks: And with regard to Rav, who said that one repeats, what is the reason that he did not say they should split a verse? The Gemara answers that Rav maintains that with regard to any verse that was not divided by Moses, we do not divide it.

⁵³ And Shmuel said that one splits the middle verse into two. The Gemara asks: And may one split a single verse? But didn't Rabbi Ḥanina Kara, the Bible expert, who taught the Bible to schoolchildren, say: I had great trouble with Rabbi Ḥanina the Great when I asked him this question, and he permitted me to split long verses into two only for the benefit of schoolchildren, since it is performed to help them learn. And Shmuel can respond that what is the reason there, in the case of schoolchildren, that it is permitted to split verses? Because it is not possible to proceed in any other

way. Here too, it is not possible for two people to read five verses other than by splitting one of them into two.

⁵⁴ The Gemara questions this last conclusion. And Shmuel said that one splits the middle verse into two. What is the reason that he did not say that he repeats one of the verses, in accordance with the opinion of Rav? The Gemara explains: It is a rabbinic decree due to those who enter the synagogue in the middle of the reading, and a decree due to those who leave in the middle. If someone entered or exited in the middle of the reading and heard three full verses, he might think that one of the readers had read fewer than three full verses, which might lead him to conclude that it is permitted to read fewer than three verses.

⁵⁵ The Gemara raises an objection from a baraita: A chapter consisting of six verses may be read by two individuals, and a chapter of five verses must be read by one. And if the first individual reads three verses from the five-verse chapter, the second one reads the last two verses of that chapter and one more from another chapter. And some say that three verses are read from the next chapter, as one may not begin to read a chapter for fewer than three verses.

⁵⁶ The Gemara explains the objection: According to the one who said that they repeat the middle verse, let the second reader repeat a verse here as well. And according to the one who said that they split a verse, here too, let them split it. Apparently, the baraita contradicts the opinions of both Rav and Shmuel. The Gemara answers: It is different there,

⁵⁷ as the second reader has space, i.e., he has the option to read from the ensuing paragraph.

⁵⁸ § The mishna taught: A long passage is read by two people, and they read from the Torah in the morning prayer and in the additional prayer. And in the afternoon prayer they read the daily portion by heart, just as one recites Shema. A dilemma was raised before the Sages: With regard to what case is the tanna speaking? Does he mean that in the morning prayer and in the additional prayer they read the portion from a Torah scroll, but in the afternoon prayer each individual reads by heart, just as one recites Shema? Or perhaps this is what is taught: In the morning prayer they read it from a Torah scroll, but in the additional prayer and in the afternoon prayer they read it by heart, just as one recites Shema.

⁵⁹ The Gemara suggests: Come and hear, as it is taught in a baraita: In the morning prayer and in the additional prayer they would enter the synagogue and read from the Torah in the manner that they read all year. But in the afternoon prayer, a single individual would read the portion for that day by heart. Rabbi Yosei said: But can an individual read matters of Torah by heart in the presence of the community? Rather, they all enter and read that day's portion together, just as one recites Shema. This baraita clearly indicates that they would read by heart only in the afternoon service.

⁶⁰ The mishna taught: On any day that has the recitation of hallel, but on which the additional offering was not sacrificed, it has no reading of the Torah by the non-priestly watch in the morning service. On days that have both hallel and an additional offering, there was no reading in the afternoon prayer. When a wood offering was brought, there was no reading in the closing prayer. The Gemara asks: What is the difference between this and that, a day on which an additional offering is sacrificed and a day on which a wood offering is brought? The Gemara explains: These days, on which an additional offering is brought, apply by Torah law, but these days, on which a wood offering is brought, apply by rabbinic law, and therefore it overrides only the closing prayer.

⁶¹ The mishna continues with a list of the times for the wood offering of priests and the people. The Sages taught: Why was it necessary to state the times for the wood offering of priests and the people? They said in response that this is what happened: When the people of the exile ascended to Jerusalem in the beginning of the Second Temple period, they did not find enough wood in the Temple chamber for the needs of the altar. And these families arose and donated from their own wood to the Temple.

⁶² And the prophets among them stipulated as follows, that even if the entire chamber were full of wood, the descendants of these families would donate wood from their own property on these specific days, as it is stated: “And we cast lots, the priests, the Levites and the people, for the wood offering, to bring it into the house of our God, according to our fathers’ houses, at appointed times year by year, to burn upon the altar of the Lord our God, as it is written in the Torah” (Nehemiah 10:35). Although these donations were not always necessary, it was established that all generations would observe these days.

⁶³ The mishna further taught that on the fifteenth of Av, wood was brought by the descendants of Zattu ben Yehuda, and with this group were other priests and Levites, and anyone who erred with regard to his tribe, i.e., Israelites who did not know which tribe they were from, and the descendants of those who deceived the authorities with a pestle, and the descendants of those who packed dried figs. The Sages taught: Who were the descendants of those who deceived the authorities with a pestle and the descendants of those who packed dried figs?

⁶⁴ They said in explanation: Once, the evil kingdom of Greece issued a decree of apostasy against the Jews, that they may not bring wood for the arrangement of the altar and that they may not bring first fruits to Jerusalem. And they placed guards [prozda’ot] on the roads, in the manner that Jeroboam, son of Nevat, placed guards, so that the Jews could not ascend for the pilgrim Festival.

⁶⁵ What did the worthy and sin-fearing individuals of that generation do? They brought baskets of first fruits, and covered them with dried figs, and took them with a pestle on their shoulders. And when they reached the guards, the guards said to them: Where are you going? They said to them: We are going to prepare two round cakes of pressed figs with the mortar that is down the road before us and with the pestle that we are carrying on our shoulders. As soon as they passed the guards, they decorated the baskets of first fruits and brought them to Jerusalem.

⁶⁶ A Sage taught: This was something that was performed in a similar manner by the descendants of Salmai of Netophat. The Gemara explains this comment by quoting a baraita. The Sages taught: Who are the descendants of Salmai of Netophat? They said in explanation: Once, the evil kingdom of Greece issued a decree of apostasy against the Jews, that they may not bring wood for the arrangement of the altar. And they placed guards on the roads, in the manner that Jeroboam, son of Nevat, placed guards, so that the Jews could not ascend for the pilgrim Festival.

⁶⁷ What did the sin-fearing individuals of that generation do? They brought their pieces of wood and prepared ladders [sulamot], and they placed the ladders on their shoulders and went off to Jerusalem. When they reached the guards, the guards said to them: Where are you going? They said to them: We are going to bring down doves from the dovecote that is located down the road before us and with these ladders that are on our shoulders. As soon as they had passed the guards, they dismantled the ladders and took them up to Jerusalem. The name Salmai alludes to the Hebrew word for ladder, sulam.

⁶⁸ And about these families who provided these donations and others like them, the verse says: “The memory of the righteous shall be for a blessing” (Proverbs 10:7), as they are remembered for the good throughout the generations. And about Jeroboam, son of Nevat, and his ilk, it is stated: “But the name of the wicked shall rot” (Proverbs 10:7).

⁶⁹ § The mishna taught: On the twentieth of Av, the wood offering was brought by the descendants of Pahath Moab ben Yehuda. A tanna taught: The descendants of Pahath Moab ben Yehuda are the descendants of David ben Yehuda. He is called Moab because Ruth the Moabite was the grandmother of David’s father, Yishai. This is the statement of Rabbi Meir. Rabbi Yosei says: These are the descendants of Joab, son of Zeruiah, whose mother was the daughter of Yishai and therefore also descended from Ruth.

⁷⁰ The mishna further taught: On the twentieth of Elul, the descendants of Adin ben Yehuda brought their wood offering. The Sages taught: The descendants of Adin ben Yehuda are the descendants of David ben Yehuda, who was called Adin. This is the statement of Rabbi Yehuda. Rabbi Yosei says: These are the descendants of Joab, son of Zeruiah.

⁷¹ The mishna taught: On the first of Tevet, the descendants of Parosh returned to bring wood for a second time. The Gemara asks: Who is the author of this opinion of the mishna? It is not the opinion of Rabbi Meir, nor that of Rabbi Yehuda, nor that of Rabbi Yosei. The Gemara elaborates: If it represents the opinion of Rabbi Meir, let him teach, with regard to the twentieth of Av, that the descendants of David ben Yehuda returned for a second time. According to Rabbi Meir, the descendants of Pahath Moab are the descendants of David, and consequently they would return for a second time on that date.

⁷² The Gemara continues: If it represents the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda, let him teach that the descendants of David ben Yehuda returned for a second time on a different date, the twentieth of Elul, as he contends that the descendants of Adin ben Yehuda are the descendants of David. And if the mishna represents the opinion of Rabbi Yosei, let him teach that the descendants of Joab, son of Zeruiah, returned for a second time, as he maintains that the descendants of Pahath Moab and the descendants of Adin ben Yehuda are both the descendants of Joab.

⁷³ The Gemara answers: Actually, the mishna represents the opinion of Rabbi Yosei, and there are two tanna'im whose opinion is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei. One tanna maintains that only the descendants of Pahath Moab are the descendants of Joab, while the other claims that only the descendants of Adin ben Yehuda are the descendants of Joab. According to both opinions, neither group was repeated a second time, and therefore the mishna does not pose a difficulty to either of them.

⁷⁴ § The mishna taught that on the first of Tevet there was no non-priestly watch at all, as there was an additional offering, hallel, and a wood offering. Mar Kashisha, son of Rav Ḥisda, said to Rav Ashi:

⁷⁵ What is different about hallel that it overrides its own watch, i.e., the watch in the morning service, when hallel is recited; and what is different about the additional offering, that it does not override its own watch, of the morning service, but it does override the watch of the afternoon service and the closing prayer?

⁷⁶ Rav Ashi said to him: Now, as the additional offering overrides the watch of the afternoon service, which is not its own, is it not all the more so that it should take precedence over its own watch? Rav Ḥisda said to Rav Ashi: I meant the opposite, as this is what I am saying to you: It should not take precedence over another watch, that of the closing prayer; rather, let it override only its own watch, the one performed in the additional service.

⁷⁷ Rav Ashi said to him: There is Rabbi Yosei, who holds in accordance with your opinion, as it is taught in a baraita that Rabbi Yosei says: On any day on which there is an additional offering, there is a non-priestly watch. The Gemara clarifies: To which non-priestly watch is he referring? If we say that Rabbi Yosei means the non-priestly watch of the morning prayer, but the first tanna also said this. Rather, Rabbi Yosei must mean the non-priestly watch of the additional prayer. However, this too is problematic; is it possible that the additional offering does not override even its own watch, during the additional service itself?

⁷⁸ Rather, Rabbi Yosei must be referring to the watch of the afternoon prayer. However, this is also puzzling, for if the wood offering overrides the watch of the afternoon service, the additional offering should certainly take precedence over it. Rather, is it not the case that Rabbi Yosei is speaking of the watch in the closing prayer? One can learn from this that the additional offering overrides its own watch, but it does not override a watch that is not its own. The Gemara concludes: Indeed, learn from this that this is the case.

⁷⁹ The Gemara asks: And let the mishna also teach: On the first of Nisan there was no non-priestly watch because it is a day on which hallel is recited, and it is the New Moon, on which an additional offering is sacrificed, and there was also a wood offering. Rava said: That is to say that the hallel recited on a New Moon is not required by Torah law but is a custom.

⁸⁰ As Rabbi Yoḥanan said in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yehotzadak: On eighteen days a year, the individual completes the full hallel. And they are: The eight days of the festival of Sukkot, including the Eighth Day of Assembly; the eight days of Hanukkah; the first Festival day of Passover; and the Festival day of Assembly, i.e., Shavuot. And in the Diaspora, where a second day is added to each Festival due to uncertainty over the correct date, there are twenty-one days, and they are: The nine days of the festival of Sukkot, including the last day, known as the Celebration of the Torah, the eight days of Hanukkah, the first two days of Passover, and the two Festival days of Assembly.

⁸¹ On this topic, the Gemara relates: Rav happened to come to Babylonia, where he saw that they were reciting hallel on a New Moon. Unfamiliar with this practice, he thought to stop them, as he assumed that they were reciting hallel unnecessarily. Once he saw that they were omitting portions, he said: I can learn from this that they are maintaining the custom of their forefathers, i.e., they know that it is a custom, not an obligation. It is taught in a baraita: An individual should not begin reciting hallel on a New Moon, but if he has begun he should complete it.

⁸² § The mishna taught: Five calamitous matters occurred to our forefathers on the seventeenth of Tammuz, one of which was that the tablets were broken. The Gemara asks: From where do we derive that the tablets were broken on this day? As it is taught in a baraita: On the sixth of the month of Sivan the Ten Commandments were given to the Jewish people. Rabbi Yosei says: It was on the seventh of that month. The Gemara comments: According to the one who said that they were given

on the sixth of Sivan, they were given on the sixth, and on the seventh Moses ascended to Mount Sinai.

⁸³ According to the one who said that the Ten Commandments were given on the seventh of Sivan, they were given on the seventh, and on the seventh Moses ascended to Mount Sinai, as it is written: “And He called to Moses on the seventh day out of the midst of the cloud” (Exodus 24:16), and it is written: “And Moses entered into the midst of the cloud, and he went up into the mount, and Moses was on the mount forty days and forty nights” (Exodus 24:18). The calculation is as follows: There were twenty-four days remaining in Sivan, plus the first sixteen days of Tammuz, which comes to forty days.

⁸⁴ On the seventeenth of Tammuz, Moses descended, came, observed the people worshipping the Golden Calf, and broke the tablets. And it is written: “And it came to pass, as soon as he came near to the camp, that he saw the calf and the dancing, and Moses’ anger burned, and he cast the tablets out of his hands, and broke them beneath the mount” (Exodus 32:19). This shows that the tablets were shattered on the seventeenth of Tammuz.

⁸⁵ § The mishna taught that on the seventeenth of Tammuz the daily offering was nullified. The Gemara explains: It is a tradition that this occurred on that date.

⁸⁶ The mishna further taught that on the seventeenth of Tammuz the city walls of Jerusalem were breached. The Gemara asks: Was this tragedy something that occurred on the seventeenth of Tammuz? But isn’t it written: “In the fourth month, on the ninth of the month, the famine was severe in the city” (Jeremiah 52:6), and it is written immediately afterward: “Then a breach was made in the city” (Jeremiah 52:7), which clearly indicates that the city was breached on the ninth.

⁸⁷ Rava said: This is not difficult, as here the verse is referring to the First Temple, whereas there, in the mishna, it describes the destruction of the Second Temple, as it is taught in a baraita: Upon the destruction of the First Temple, the city walls were breached on the ninth of Tammuz; and at the destruction of the Second Temple they were breached on the seventeenth of Tammuz.

⁸⁸ The mishna further taught that on the seventeenth of Tammuz Apostemos publicly burned a Torah scroll. The Gemara explains: This, too, is a tradition.

⁸⁹ The mishna also stated that on the seventeenth of Tammuz Manasseh placed an idol in the Sanctuary. The Gemara asks: From where do we derive that this occurred on the seventeenth of Tammuz? As it is written: “And from the time that the daily offering shall be taken away and the abomination that causes appallment is set up” (Daniel 12:11), which indicates that an idol was placed in the Temple on the very day that the daily offering was suspended.

⁹⁰ The Gemara asks: And was there only one idol placed there? But isn’t it written: “And upon the wing of detestable things shall be that which causes appallment” (Daniel 9:27)? The plural, “detestable things,” indicates the presence of at least two idols. Rava said: There were initially two idols, but one fell upon the other and broke its hand. Since only one idol was whole, the mishna mentions only that one. Rava continues: And an inscription was found on the broken idol that read:

⁹¹ You want to destroy the Temple; I have given you your hand. It is as though one idol said to the other: You are seeking to destroy the Temple by causing Israel to pray to you; I, too, give you a hand to assist you.

⁹² § The mishna taught: On the Ninth of Av, it was decreed upon our ancestors that they would not enter Eretz Yisrael. The Gemara asks: From where do we derive this? As it is written: “And it came to pass in the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month, that the Tabernacle was erected” (Exodus 40:17). And the Master said: In the first year after leaving Egypt, Moses built the Tabernacle. At the beginning of the second year, Moses erected the Tabernacle and sent the spies. And it is written: “And it came to pass in the second year in the second month, on the twentieth day of the month, that the cloud was taken up from the Tabernacle of the Testimony” (Numbers 10:11).

⁹³ And it is further written: “And they set forward from the mount of the Lord three days’ journey” (Numbers 10:33). Rabbi Ḥama bar Ḥanina said: That very day, they turned away from God by displaying their anxiety about leaving Mount Sinai. And it is written: “And the mixed multitude that was among them fell a lusting, and the children of Israel also wept on their part, and said: Would that we were given flesh to eat” (Numbers 11:4). And it is written that the Jews ate the meat “for an entire month” (Numbers 11:20). If one adds to the first twenty days an additional three days’ journey, these are twenty-three days. Consequently, the subsequent month of twenty-nine days of eating meat ended on the twenty-second of Sivan.

⁹⁴ After this, the Jews traveled to Hazeroth, where Miriam was afflicted with leprosy, and it is written: “And Miriam was shut out of the camp for seven days, and the people did not journey until Miriam was brought in again” (Numbers 12:15). Including these seven days, they remained in Hazeroth until the twenty-ninth of Sivan before traveling on to Paran, and it is written immediately afterward: “Send you men, that they may spy out the land of Canaan” (Numbers 13:2).

⁹⁵ And this calculation is taught in a baraita: On the twenty-ninth of Sivan, Moses sent the spies. And it is written: “And they returned from spying out the land at the end of forty days” (Numbers 13:25), which means that they came back on the Ninth of Av. The Gemara asks: These are forty days minus one. The remaining days of the days of Sivan, the entire month of Tammuz, and eight days of Av add up to a total of thirty-nine days, not forty.

⁹⁶ Abaye said: The month of Tammuz of that year was a full month of thirty days. Accordingly, there are exactly forty days until the Ninth of Av. And this is alluded to in the following verse, as it is written: “He has called an appointed time against me to crush my young men” (Lamentations 1:15). This indicates that an additional appointed day, i.e., a New Moon, was added so that this calamity would fall specifically on the Ninth of Av.

⁹⁷ And it is further written: “And all the congregation lifted up their voice and cried and the people wept that night” (Numbers 14:1). Rabba said that Rabbi Yoḥanan said: That night was the night of the Ninth of Av. The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to them: You wept needlessly that night, and I will therefore establish for you a true tragedy over which there will be weeping in future generations.

⁹⁸ § The mishna further taught that on the Ninth of Av the Temple was destroyed the first time. The Gemara explains that this is as it is written: “And in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, a servant of the King of Babylon, came to Jerusalem. And he burnt the house of the Lord” (II Kings 25:8–9). And it is also written: “And in the fifth month, on the tenth day of the month, which was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, who served the king of Babylon, came into Jerusalem. And he burnt the house of the Lord” (Jeremiah 52:12–13).

⁹⁹ And it is taught in a baraita: It is impossible to say that the Temple was burned on the seventh of Av, as it has already been stated, in Jeremiah, that it was destroyed on the tenth. And it is also impossible to say that the Temple was burned on the tenth of Av, as it has already been stated that it was destroyed on the seventh, in II Kings 25:8–9. How so; what actually occurred? On the seventh of Av, gentiles entered the Sanctuary, and on the seventh and the eighth they ate there and desecrated it, by engaging in acts of fornication.

¹⁰⁰ And on the ninth, adjacent to nightfall, they set fire to it, and it continuously burned the entire day, as it is stated: “Woe unto us, for the day has declined, for the shadows of the evening are stretched out” (Jeremiah 6:4). This verse is interpreted as a prophecy about the evening when the Temple was burned. And this is what Rabbi Yoḥanan meant when he said: Had I been alive in that generation, I would have established the fast only on the tenth of Av because most of the Sanctuary was burned on that day. And the Sages, who established the fast on the ninth, how do they respond to that comment? They maintain that it is preferable to mark the beginning of the tragedy.

¹⁰¹ And the mishna further taught that the Temple was destroyed for the second time also on the Ninth of Av. The Gemara asks: From where do we derive that the Second Temple was destroyed on this date? It is taught in a baraita: A meritorious matter is brought about on an auspicious day, and a deleterious matter on an inauspicious day, e.g., the Ninth of Av, on which several tragedies had already occurred.

¹⁰² The Sages said: When the Temple was destroyed for the first time, that day was the Ninth of Av; and it was the conclusion of Shabbat; and it was the year after a Sabbatical Year; and it was the week of the priestly watch of Jehoiarib; and the Levites were singing the song and standing on their platform. And what song were they singing? They were singing the verse: “And He brought upon them their own iniquity, and He will cut them off in their own evil” (Psalms 94:23). And they did not manage to recite the end of the verse: “The Lord our God will cut them off,” before gentiles came and conquered them. And likewise, the same happened when the Second Temple was destroyed.

¹⁰³ The mishna teaches that Beitar was captured on the Ninth of Av. The Gemara explains that this is known by tradition.

¹⁰⁴ § The mishna taught that on the Ninth of Av the city of Jerusalem was plowed. It is taught in a baraita: When the wicked Turnus Rufus plowed the Sanctuary, a decree was issued against Rabban Gamliel for execution. A certain Roman officer came and stood in the study hall and said surreptitiously: The man with the nose is wanted; the man with the nose is wanted. This was a hint that Rabban Gamliel, who stood out in his generation like a nose protruding from a face, was sought by the government. Rabban Gamliel heard and went into hiding.

¹⁰⁵ The Roman officer went to him in private, and said to him: If I save you from death, will you bring me into the World-to-Come? Rabban Gamliel said to him: Yes. The officer said to Rabban Gamliel: Swear to me. He swore to him. The officer ascended to the roof, fell, and died. And the Romans had a tradition that when they issued a decree and one of their advisors died, they would cancel the decree. The officer’s sacrifice saved Rabban Gamliel’s life. A Divine Voice emerged and said: That officer is designated for the life of the World-to-Come.

¹⁰⁶ The Sages taught: When the Temple was destroyed for the first time, many groups of young priests gathered together with the Temple keys in their hands. And they ascended to the roof of the Sanctuary and said before God: Master of the Universe, since we did not merit to be faithful

treasurers, and the Temple is being destroyed, let the Temple keys be handed to You. And they threw them upward, and a kind of palm of a hand emerged and received the keys from them. And the young priests jumped from the roof and fell into the fire of the burning Temple.

¹⁰⁷ And the prophet Isaiah lamented over them: “The burden of the Valley of Vision. What ails you now that you have all gone up to the roofs? You that were full of uproar, a tumultuous city, a joyous town, your slain are not slain with the sword, nor dead in battle” (Isaiah 22:1–2). This is referring to the young priests who died by throwing themselves off the roof into the fire. And even with regard to the Holy One, Blessed be He, it is stated: “For it is a day of trouble, and of trampling, and of confusion for the Lord of hosts, in the Valley of Vision; a shouting over walls and a cry to the mountain” (Isaiah 22:5). This verse indicates that even God shouts over the destruction of the Temple.

¹⁰⁸ § The mishna teaches that from when the month of Av begins, one decreases acts of rejoicing. Rav Yehuda, son of Rav Shmuel bar Sheilat, said in the name of Rav: Just as when Av begins one decreases rejoicing, so too when the month of Adar begins, one increases rejoicing.

¹⁰⁹ Rav Pappa said: Therefore, in the case of a Jew who has litigation with a gentile, let him avoid him in the month of Av, when the Jews’ fortune is bad, and he should make himself available in Adar, when his fortune is good.

¹¹⁰ The Gemara mentions a couple of other statements in the name of the same Sages mentioned above. First, it cites a verse that is referring to the Babylonian exile. “To give to you a future and a hope” (Jeremiah 29:11). Rav Yehuda, son of Rav Shmuel bar Sheilat, said in the name of Rav: These are palm trees and garments of linen, which are long-lasting and bring benefit as long as they exist. With regard to Isaac’s comment about Jacob: “And he said: See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord has blessed” (Genesis 27:27), Rav Yehuda, son of Rav Shmuel bar Sheilat, said in the name of Rav: This smell was like that of a field of apple trees.

¹¹¹ § The mishna taught: During the week in which the Ninth of Av occurs, it is prohibited to cut one’s hair and to launder clothes. Rav Naḥman said: They taught that it is prohibited only to launder and to wear clean clothes before the Ninth of Av; however, if one wishes to launder garments and to set them aside, this is permitted. And Rav Sheshet said: Even to launder them and to set them aside is prohibited. Rav Sheshet said: Know that I am correct, as the launderers of Rav’s household were idle during this week, which shows that laundering in and of itself is prohibited.

¹¹² Rav Hamnuna raised an objection against Rav Naḥman’s ruling from the mishna: On Thursday, these actions are permitted in deference to Shabbat. The Gemara clarifies: To which actions is this referring? If we say that it is permitted to launder and to wear clothing immediately, what deference to Shabbat is there in wearing a garment on Thursday?

¹¹³ Rather, it must mean that one can wash and set aside the garment until Shabbat, and this washing is permitted only on Thursday; however, during the rest of the entire week it is prohibited. The Gemara rejects this contention: Actually, the mishna permits one to launder and wear a garment immediately on Thursday, and this ruling is referring to one who has only one shirt [ḥaluk]. This laundering is also considered in deference to Shabbat because if one does not wash his shirt now, on Thursday, he will not have the opportunity to do so later, as the mishna is referring to a case when the Ninth of Av occurs on a Friday. As Rabbi Asi said that Rabbi Yoḥanan said: One who has only one shirt is permitted to launder it on the intermediate days of a Festival, when it is normally prohibited

to do so. It was also stated that Rabbi Binyamin said that Rabbi Elazar said: They taught that it is prohibited only to launder and to wear immediately; however, if one launders to set it aside, this is permitted.

¹¹⁴ The Gemara raises an objection from a baraita: It is prohibited to launder before the Ninth of Av, even if one intends to set aside the clothes until after the Ninth of Av. And our fine laundering [gihutz] in Babylonia is like their plain laundering in Eretz Yisrael. But our plain washing in Babylonia is not considered laundering at all, and it is permitted. And with regard to linen garments, the process of fine laundry does not apply to them, as this category applies only to woolen garments. In any case, this baraita indicates that laundering clothes and setting them aside is prohibited, which means it is a conclusive refutation of the opinion of Rav Nahman.

¹¹⁵ Rav Yitzhak bar Giyorei sent in the name of Rabbi Yoḥanan: Although the Sages said that with regard to linen garments, the process of fine laundry does not apply to them; still, it is prohibited to wear them during the week in which the Ninth of Av occurs.

¹¹⁶ With regard to these restrictions and prohibitions, which apply during the week of the Ninth of Av, Rav said: They taught that these prohibitions apply only before the Ninth of Av, but after the fast laundering is permitted. And Shmuel said: Even after the Ninth of Av, laundering is also prohibited until the end of the week. The Gemara raises an objection: During the week in which the Ninth of Av occurs, it is prohibited to cut one's hair and to launder clothes, but on Thursday these actions are permitted in deference to Shabbat. How so? If the Ninth of Av occurs on a Sunday, it is permitted to launder the entire preceding week.

¹¹⁷ If the Ninth of Av occurs on a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday, on the days before the Ninth of Av, laundering is prohibited, but after the fast it is permitted. If the Ninth of Av occurs on a Friday, it is permitted to launder on Thursday in deference to Shabbat. And if, for whatever reason, one did not launder on the Thursday of that week, he is permitted to launder on Friday from *minḥa* time onward, despite the fact that it is the Ninth of Av. Abaye, and some say Rav Aḥa bar Ya'akov, cursed those who do this.

¹¹⁸ The Gemara resumes its citation of the baraita: If the Ninth of Av occurs on a Monday or on a Thursday, three people are called to read from the Torah, as on a regular week, and one of them recites the portion from the Prophets. If the Ninth of Av occurs on a Tuesday or on a Wednesday, one individual reads the Torah and the same one recites the portion from the Prophets. Rabbi Yosei says: Actually, three people are called to read, no matter what day of the week it is, and one of them recites the portion from the Prophets for the Ninth of Av. In any case, the baraita apparently presents a conclusive refutation of the opinion of Shmuel, as it clearly states that one is permitted to launder during the weekdays following the Ninth of Av.

¹¹⁹ Shmuel could have said to you: This is a dispute between *tanna'im*, as it is taught in a baraita: In the case of the Ninth of Av that occurs on Shabbat, and so too, on the eve of the Ninth of Av that occurs on Shabbat, one need not reduce the amount of food he eats; rather, he may eat and drink as much as he requires and put on his table a meal even like that of King Solomon in his time. And it is prohibited to cut one's hair and to launder from the New Moon until after the fast. This is the statement of Rabbi Meir. Rabbi Yehuda says: These activities are prohibited throughout the entire month. Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says: They are prohibited only during that week of the Ninth of Av.

¹²⁰ And it is taught in another baraita: And one must observe the rites of mourning from the New Moon until after the fast; this is the statement of Rabbi Meir. Rabbi Yehuda says: These activities are prohibited throughout the entire month. Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says: They are prohibited only during that week. These baraitot show that there are at least two tanna'im, Rabbi Yehuda and Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel, who prohibit certain activities even after the fast, like Shmuel.

¹²¹ Rabbi Yoḥanan said: And all three of these tanna'im derived their opinions from one verse, from which they drew different conclusions, as it is written: "And I will cause all her mirth to cease, her Festival, her New Moon, and her Shabbat" (Hosea 2:13). The one who said that these activities are prohibited from the New Moon until after the fast, Rabbi Meir,

¹²² derives from the phrase "her Festival" that acts of mirth and rejoicing are prohibited from the New Moon, which is considered like a Festival. And the one who said that these activities are prohibited during the entire month learns this from the phrase "her New Moon." And the one who said that acts of rejoicing are prohibited during the entire week of the Ninth of Av, derives this from the phrase "her Shabbat," which also means a week.

¹²³ With regard to the halakha itself, Rava said: The halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel. And Rava also said that the halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Meir. The Gemara remarks: And both of these rulings are intended as a leniency. And it is necessary for Rava to state both rulings, for had he taught us only that the halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Meir, I would have said that the mourning practices are obligatory even from the New Moon, as maintained by Rabbi Meir. Therefore, Rava teaches us that the halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel, that the restrictions of mourning do not apply until the week of the Ninth of Av.

¹²⁴ And had he taught us only that the halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel, I would have said that the prohibitions apply even after the fast, until the end of the week. Consequently, Rava teaches us that the halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Meir. The prohibitions apply only until the Ninth of Av itself, not afterward.

¹²⁵ § The mishna taught: On the eve of the Ninth of Av, a person may not eat two cooked dishes in one meal. Rav Yehuda said: They taught that one may not partake of a meal with two dishes only from six hours of the day and onward, but from six hours and earlier it is permitted. And Rav Yehuda also said: They taught that it is prohibited to eat two dishes only in the concluding meal before beginning the fast. However, in a non-concluding meal it is permitted to eat two cooked dishes.

¹²⁶ The Gemara comments: And both of these rulings are intended as a leniency. And it is necessary for Rav Yehuda to state them both, for had he taught us that this halakha is referring only to the concluding meal, I would have said that this applies even from six hours and earlier. Rav Yehuda therefore teaches us that it applies only from six hours and onward. And had he taught us only that it is prohibited to eat two dishes from six hours and onward, I would have said that this applies even to a meal by which he does not stop eating. Rav Yehuda therefore teaches us that it applies only to the concluding meal.

¹²⁷ The Gemara comments: It is taught in a baraita in accordance with the first version, and it is taught in a baraita in accordance with the second version. The Gemara elaborates: It is taught in a baraita in accordance with the second version, as follows: With regard to one who dines on the eve of the Ninth of Av, if he will eat another meal, he is permitted to eat meat and to drink wine during this

first meal. But if he does not intend to eat another meal, he is prohibited to eat meat and to drink wine.

¹²⁸ It is taught in a baraita in accordance with the first version: On the eve of the Ninth of Av, a person may not eat two cooked dishes. Furthermore, one may neither eat meat nor drink wine. Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says: One must adjust and decrease the amount he eats. Rabbi Yehuda said: How should one adjust his meal? If he is accustomed to eat two cooked dishes at each meal, he should eat only one type of food; and if he is accustomed to dine in the company of ten people, he should dine with only five; and if he is accustomed to drinking ten cups of wine, he should drink only five cups. In what case is this statement said? From six hours and onward; however, from six hours and earlier all these practices are permitted.

¹²⁹ It is taught in another baraita: On the eve of the Ninth of Av, a person may not eat two cooked dishes, and he may neither eat meat nor drink wine; this is the statement of Rabbi Meir. And the Rabbis say: One must adjust and reduce his consumption of meat and wine. How does one reduce his meat and wine? If he is accustomed to eating a liter of meat in his meal, he should eat half a liter; if he is accustomed to drinking a log of wine, he should drink half a log of wine; and if he is not accustomed to eating meat or drinking wine at all, it is prohibited for him to do so at all. Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says: If he is accustomed to eating a radish or a salted dish after his meal, he has permission to do so on the eve of the Ninth of Av, as they are not considered an additional dish.

¹³⁰ It is taught in another baraita: In any meal that is eaten due to the fast of the Ninth of Av, it is prohibited to eat meat; and it is prohibited to drink wine; and it is likewise prohibited to bathe in anticipation of the fast. However, in any meal that is not due to the Ninth of Av, i.e., one is eating the meal in order that he shouldn't be hungry on the Ninth of Av, it is permitted to eat meat and to drink wine, but it is nevertheless prohibited to bathe at that time. Rabbi Yishmael, son of Rabbi Yosei, said in the name of his father: For the entire time that one is permitted to eat meat, he is likewise permitted to bathe.

¹³¹ The Sages taught: All mitzvot practiced by a mourner are likewise practiced on the Ninth of Av: It is prohibited to engage in eating, and in drinking, and in smearing oil on one's body, and in wearing shoes, and in conjugal relations. It is prohibited to read from the Torah, from the Prophets, and from the Writings, or to study from the Mishna, from the Gemara, and from midrash, and from collections of halakhot, and from collections of aggadot.

¹³² However, one may read from a place in the Bible that he is unaccustomed to reading, as it will be difficult for him and he will not derive pleasure from it, and he may likewise study from a place of the Talmud that he is unaccustomed to studying. And one may read from the book of Lamentations; from the book of Job; and from the evil matters in Jeremiah, i.e., his prophecies of doom. And schoolchildren interrupt their studies for the day because it is stated: "The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart" (Psalms 19:9).

¹³³ Rabbi Yehuda says: One may not even read from a place in the Bible that he is unaccustomed to reading, nor may one study from a place of the Talmud that he is unaccustomed to studying. However, one may read from Job, and from Lamentations, and from the evil matters of Jeremiah. And schoolchildren interrupt their studies on that day because it is stated: "The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart" (Psalms 19:9).

¹³⁴ § The mishna taught that one may neither eat meat nor drink wine. A tanna taught in the Tosefta: However, one may eat heavily salted meat and drink wine from his press, i.e., wine that has not finished fermenting. The Gemara inquires: With regard to salted meat, how long must this meat remain in salt before it is permitted? Rav Ḥinnana bar Kahana said in the name of Shmuel: As long as it is like peace-offerings, which could be eaten for two days and one night after they were sacrificed. After this time has passed, it is no longer called meat. Therefore, if it was salted for longer than this, it may be eaten on the eve of the Ninth of Av.

¹³⁵ The Gemara asks: And with regard to wine from his press, until when is wine considered from his press? As long as it is fermenting. A tanna taught in a baraita: Wine that is fermenting does not have a problem with regard to exposed liquids, as there is no concern that a snake will leave its venom in that wine. And how long is its fermenting period? Three days from the time the grapes were pressed.

¹³⁶ Rav Yehuda said that Rav said: This was the custom of Rabbi Yehuda, son of Rabbi Ilai. On the eve of the Ninth of Av, near the evening, they would bring him stale bread with salt, and he would sit

¹³⁷ between the oven and the stove, which was considered the least respectable place in the house. And he would eat his bread, and drink a jug [kiton] of water with it, and in doing so he would resemble one whose deceased relative is laid out unburied before him.

¹³⁸ § We learned in a mishna there: In a place where people were accustomed to perform labor on the Ninth of Av, one performs labor. In a place where people were accustomed not to perform labor, one does not perform labor. And in all places, Torah scholars are idle and do not perform labor on the Ninth of Av. Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says: With regard to the Ninth of Av, a person should always conduct himself as a Torah scholar and refrain from performing labor. This is also taught in a baraita: Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says: A person should always conduct himself as a Torah scholar, so that he will feel the hardship of the fast.

¹³⁹ It is taught in another baraita that Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says: Whoever eats and drinks on the Ninth of Av, although the prohibition was instituted by the Prophets, it is as though he eats and drinks on Yom Kippur. Rabbi Akiva says: Whoever performs labor on the Ninth of Av never sees a sign of a blessing from that work.

¹⁴⁰ And the Sages say: Whoever performs labor on the Ninth of Av and does not mourn for Jerusalem will not see her future joy, as it is stated: “Rejoice with Jerusalem and be glad with her, all who love her; rejoice for joy with her, all who mourn for her” (Isaiah 66:10). From here it is stated: Whoever mourns for Jerusalem will merit and see her future joy, and whoever does not mourn for Jerusalem will not see her future joy. This is also taught in a baraita: Whoever eats meat or drinks wine in the meal before the Ninth of Av, about him the verse states: “And whose iniquities are upon their bones, because the terror of the mighty was in the land of the living” (Ezekiel 32:27).

¹⁴¹ § The mishna taught: Rabbi Yehuda obligates one to overturn the bed, but the Rabbis did not agree with him. It is taught in a baraita that the Rabbis said to Rabbi Yehuda: According to your statement, pregnant women and nursing women, who cannot sleep on the floor, what will become of them? Rabbi Yehuda said to them: I, too, spoke only with regard to those who are able.

¹⁴² This is also taught in another baraita: Rabbi Yehuda concedes to the Rabbis with regard to one who is unable to sleep on the floor, and the Rabbis concede to Rabbi Yehuda with regard to one who

is able to do so. The Gemara asks: If so, what is the practical difference between them? The Gemara explains: The practical difference between them is the status of other beds.

¹⁴³ As it is taught in a baraita: When the Rabbis said that a mourner is required to overturn the bed, they meant that he overturns not only his own bed, but also that he must overturn all the beds in the house. Rabbi Yehuda maintains that one must likewise overturn all of the beds of one's house on the Ninth of Av. Rava said: The halakha is in accordance with the opinion of the tanna of our mishna, and the Rabbis did not concede to Rabbi Yehuda at all, even with regard to one who is able. Therefore, there is no requirement to overturn one's bed on the Ninth of Av.

¹⁴⁴ § The mishna taught that Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel said: There were no days as happy for the Jewish people as the fifteenth of Av and as Yom Kippur. The Gemara asks: Granted, Yom Kippur is a day of joy because it has the elements of pardon and forgiveness, and moreover, it is the day on which the last pair of tablets were given.

¹⁴⁵ However, what is the special joy of the fifteenth of Av? Rav Yehuda said that Shmuel said: This was the day on which the members of different tribes were permitted to enter one another's tribe, by intermarriage. It was initially prohibited to intermarry between tribes, so as to keep each plot of land within the portion of the tribe that originally inherited it. This halakha was instituted by the Torah in the wake of a complaint by the relatives of the daughters of Zelophehad, who were worried that if these women married men from other tribes, the inheritance of Zelophehad would be lost from his tribe (see Numbers 36:1–12).

¹⁴⁶ What did they expound, in support of their conclusion that this halakha was no longer in effect? The verse states: "This is the matter that the Lord has commanded concerning the daughters of Zelophehad, saying: Let them marry whom they think best; only into the family of the tribe of their father shall they marry" (Numbers 36:5). They derived from the verse that this matter shall be practiced only in this generation, when Eretz Yisrael was divided among the tribes, but afterward members of different tribes were permitted to marry. On the day this barrier separating the tribes was removed, the Sages established a permanent day of rejoicing.

¹⁴⁷ Rav Yosef said that Rav Nahman said: The fifteenth of Av was the day on which the tribe of Benjamin was permitted to enter the congregation of the Jewish people. After the tragic incident at Gibeah, for which the tribe of Benjamin was blamed, the other tribes ostracized them. They took an oath to prohibit themselves from marrying a member of the tribe of Benjamin, as it is stated: "And the men of Israel had sworn in Mizpah, saying: None of us shall give his daughter to Benjamin as a wife" (Judges 21:1). The Gemara asks: What did they expound that enabled them to dissolve this oath? Rav said: They understood the verse literally, as it states: "None of us," and not: None of our children, i.e., the oath applied only to the generation that took the oath, not their descendants.

¹⁴⁸ Rabba bar bar Hana said that Rabbi Yoḥanan said: The fifteenth of Av was the day on which the deaths of the Jews in the wilderness ceased. The entire generation that had left Egypt had passed away, as the Master said: After the sin of the spies, on account of which the Jews of that generation were sentenced to die in the wilderness, as long as the death of the Jews in the wilderness had not ceased, God's speech did not come to Moses, as it is stated: "And it came to pass, when all the men of war were consumed and dead from among the people, that the Lord spoke to me, saying" (Deuteronomy 2:16–17). This indicates that only then, after the last member of that generation had died, was God's speech delivered to me, i.e., Moses, but not beforehand. When the Jews realized that

the decree that God would not speak to Moses had been lifted, they established that day as a permanent day of rejoicing.

¹⁴⁹ Ulla said: The fifteenth of Av was the day on which King Hoshea, son of Ela, canceled the guards that Jeroboam, son of Nevat, placed on the roads so that the Jews would not ascend to Jerusalem for the pilgrim Festival. And Hoshea, son of Ela, said

¹⁵⁰ that they may ascend to wherever they wish, i.e., they may go to Jerusalem, Bethel, or Dan.

¹⁵¹ Rav Mattana said: There was an additional salvation on this day, as it was the day that the slain of Beitar were brought to burial, several years after the battle at Beitar (see Gittin 57a). And Rav Mattana said: On the same day that the slain of Beitar were brought to burial, they instituted the blessing: Who is good and does good, at Yavne. Who is good, thanking God that the corpses did not decompose while awaiting burial, and does good, thanking God that they were ultimately brought to burial.

¹⁵² It is Rabba and Rav Yosef who both say: The fifteenth of Av was the day on which they stopped chopping down trees for the arrangement of wood that burned on the altar, as it is taught in a baraita that Rabbi Eliezer the Great says: From the fifteenth of Av onward, the strength of the sun grows weaker, and from this date they would not cut additional wood for the arrangement, as they would not be properly dry, and they would therefore be unfit for use in the Temple.

¹⁵³ Rav Menashya said: And they called the fifteenth of Av the day of the breaking of the scythe, as from this date onward no more trees were cut down, and therefore it was a celebration for the trees. The Gemara adds: From the fifteenth of Av onward, when the days begin to shorten, one who adds to his nightly Torah study will add years to his life, and he who does not add [mosif] will be gathered [ye'asef]. The Gemara asks: What is the meaning of the phrase: He will be gathered? Rav Yosef said: It means that his mother will bury him, as he will be gathered to his grave (see Genesis 49:33).

¹⁵⁴ § The mishna taught: As on them the daughters of Jerusalem would go out in white clothes, and on the fifteenth of Av they would go out to the vineyards and dance. The Sages taught this tradition in greater detail: The daughter of the king borrows white garments from the daughter of the High Priest; the daughter of the High Priest borrows from the daughter of the deputy High Priest; the daughter of the deputy High Priest borrows from the daughter of the priest anointed for war, i.e., the priest who would read verses of Torah and address the army as they prepared for battle; the daughter of the priest anointed for war borrows from the daughter of a common priest; and all the Jewish people borrow from each other. Why would they all borrow garments? They did this so as not to embarrass one who did not have her own white garments.

¹⁵⁵ The mishna further taught: All the garments that the women borrowed require immersion, as those who previously wore them before might have been ritually impure. Rabbi Elazar says: Even if the garments were folded and placed in a box [kufsa], an indication that they had not been touched for a long time, they nevertheless require ritual immersion before being worn.

¹⁵⁶ The mishna also stated that the daughters of the Jewish people would go out and dance in the vineyards. A tanna taught: One who did not have a wife would turn to there to find one.

¹⁵⁷ It is taught that those women of distinguished lineage among them would say: Young man, please lift up your eyes and see what you choose for a wife. The Sages taught this practice in greater detail in a baraita: What would the beautiful women among them say? Set your eyes toward beauty, as a

wife is only for her beauty. What would those of distinguished lineage among them say? Set your eyes toward family, as a wife is only for children, and the children of a wife from a distinguished family will inherit her lineage. What would the ugly ones among them say? Acquire your purchase for the sake of Heaven, provided that you adorn us with golden jewelry after our marriage to beautify us.

¹⁵⁸ The tractate concludes with a statement related to the topic of dancing. Ulla of the city of Bira'a said that Rabbi Elazar said: In the future, in the end of days, the Holy One, Blessed be He, will arrange a dance of the righteous, and He will be sitting among them in the Garden of Eden, and each and every one of the righteous will point to God with his finger, as it is stated: "And it shall be said on that day: Behold, this is our God, for whom we waited, that He might save us. This is the Lord; for whom we waited. We will be glad and rejoice in His salvation" (Isaiah 25:9). God will be revealed, so that every righteous individual will be able to say: This is our God, as though they were pointing at Him with a finger.