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TRACT MOED KATAN (MINOR FESTIVALS).

CHAPTER I.

REGULATIONS CONCERNING LABOR AND MARRIAGE IN THE INTERMEDIATE DAYS.

MISHNA: Beth Hashal'hin (Dry Land) may be irrigated during the middle days, and also during the Sabbatical year, as well from a fountain that is newly sprung forth as from one that is not newly sprung forth; but one must not irrigate it with rainwater, nor with water (drawn) from a deep well; nor may one make trenches (to hold water) round vines.

R. Elazar ben Azariah said: "One must not make (dig) a fresh trench (conduit, or water course) during the middle days, or during the Sabbatical year." The sages, however, hold, that a fresh trench (water course) may be dug during the Sabbatical year, and that those (conduits) which are choked up may be repaired during the middle days. One may likewise repair water reservoirs (which are) on the public ground, and cleanse them. One may also repair the roads (streets), the market (public) places, and the spring-baths. In short, it is allowed to do whatever the exigencies of the public (service) require. Tombs may be marked, and messengers are to be sent out on account of possible Kilaim. [1](#)

GEMARA: As the Mishna permits irrigation from a newly sprung fountain, although its sides are likely to cave in, it is self-understood then that it is the more so allowed from a fountain not newly sprung, the sides of which are not likely to cave in? For what purpose then did the Mishna state expressly that irrigation is also allowed from a fountain not newly sprung? If not for this statement we might assume that from a newly sprung fountain whose sides are likely to cave in, dry land may and lowland

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may not be irrigated, but from a spring not newly sprung even Beth Habal (lowland not requiring frequent irrigation) may also be irrigated, it therefore comes to teach us that there is no difference.

But whence do we deduce that "Beth Hashal'hin" means dry land. From the passage [Deut. xxv. 18]: "When thou wast 'faint' and weary"; the translation of Onkeles of which is: "When thou wast 'Mshalhi' and weary." (The letter "h" is changeable for "h"; and "mshalhi" is equivalent to "mshal'hi.") And whence do we deduce that "Beth Habal" means "husband fields"? From the passage [Isaiah, lxii. 5]: "For as a young man 'espouseth' a virgin," etc., the translation of Jonathan whereof being "as a young man 'husbands' a virgin," etc.

Who is the Tana who holds that irrigation is permitted only for the purpose of preventing loss

but not for the purpose of deriving gain; and even in case of loss no troublesome work is permitted? Said R. Huna: "It is R. Eliezer ben Jacob, as we have learned in the following Mishna: R. Eliezer ben Jacob said: Water may be conveyed from one tree to another, provided the whole orchard be not irrigated." (This is in the case of lowland and because it is only for gain; R. Eliezer said it must not.) From this statement it may only be deduced that R. Eliezer holds so in case of gain, but no deduction can be made therefrom as to where loss is involved? Therefore said R. Papa: It is in accordance with R. Jehudah of the following Boraitha: From a newly sprung fountain even lowland may be irrigated, this is the dictum of R. Meir. R. Jehudah holds that only dry land which became ruined may be irrigated. R. Elazar b. Azariah, however, agrees with neither of them. R. Jehudah went further than that and said: "One may not direct a water channel to irrigate his garden and ruined land, during the middle days."

What is meant by "ruined"? Does it mean actual ruin? why then irrigating it? Said Abayi: "It means, land one spring of which was ruined but another one sprung forth." R. Elazar b. Azariah, however, does not allow even in this case. But why all this argument? Perhaps R. Jehudah did not allow the irrigation of lowland only from a new spring, for the reason stated above; but from an old spring, the sides of which are not likely to cave in, it is permitted? If this be so, then according to whom would be the statement in our Mishna? We, therefore, must say, that according to R. Jehudah from both newly sprung and not newly sprung fountains dry land may and lowland may not be irrigated;

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and the statement in the Boraitha: "From a newly sprung fountain," etc., is for the purpose of indicating the extent of R. Meir's permission, viz., that dry land may be irrigated, and even from a newly sprung fountain. It was taught: "One who weeds or waters plants on Sabbath, against what principal labor must he be warned?" 1 Said Rabba: "Ploughing, as, these are derivative from it." R. Joseph, however, said: "Sowing, as these are derivative from it."

This would be correct as for the intermitting days, during which work is permitted in case of loss; but as for the Sabbatical year, during which both ploughing and sowing are prohibited, how can it be allowed? Said Abayi: "The Mishna treats of the Sabbatical year subsequent to the destruction of the Temple, and Rabbi said elsewhere that this is only rabbinical." Rabha, however, said: "The Mishna maybe explained even according to the rabbis, who hold that it is biblical, but the Scripture prohibits only principal labors but not derivative; as it is written [Lev. xxv. 4]: "But in the seventh year there shall be a sabbath of rest unto the land, a sabbath of the Lord; thy field shalt thou not sow, and thy vineyard shalt thou not. prune," etc. Let us see: Is not sowing the principal of pruning, and is not reaping the principal of gathering? For what purpose then did the Scripture expressly state pruning and gathering? We must say that it is to point out the derivatives for which one *is* liable.

But is one not liable even for other derivatives? Did we not learn in a Boraitha: It is written [Lev. xxv. 4]: "Thy field shalt thou not sow, and thy vineyard shalt thou not prune"? Whence do we deduce that weeding, grubbing up vines, cutting, plucking, sawing (off branches, when they are too numerous), and supporting (trees), manuring, removing rubbish from the roots, or covering the roots with earth, or smoking (for the purpose of killing the insects on the tree) are also not permitted to be done during the Sabbatical year? From the arrangements of the words in the passage: It is not written: "Thou shalt not sow thy field, and thou shalt not prune thy vineyard," but, "Thy field shalt thou not sow," etc., which indicates that all work pertaining to

the field and all work pertaining to the vineyard shall not be done. But this generalization does not include grubbing up olive-trees, or vines, or filling water conduits, or digging trenches

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round vines. Whence do we deduce these exceptions? From the statement, "Thy field thou shalt not sow." Was not sowing included in the general commandment, "A year of rest shall it be unto the land"? Why the repetition of sowing? For the purpose of comparison: As "sowing" includes both the field and the vineyard, so other labor similar to it is prohibited. (Hence we see that for other derivatives one is also liable?) Nay, all those enumerated in the Boraitha are only rabbinical prohibitions, and the biblical passage is only a slight reference.

Is grubbing up olive-trees permitted during the Sabbatical year? Is it not written [Exod. xxii. 11]: "But the seventh year shalt thou let it rest and lie still," etc., and it was construed to mean, "let it rest from being grubbed, and lie still from being cleaned from stones"? Said R. Uqba bar Hama: "Grubbing is done for two different purposes, viz., to promote the growth of, and to fill the cracks in the tree; the latter is permitted, the former is not."

We have learned in a Mishna (Shekalim I., 1): "Up to what time is it permitted to dig in an orchard during the year immediately preceding the Sabbatical year? The school of Shammai hold, during all the time the fruit may benefit thereby. The school of Hillel, however, decree, up to the feast of Pentecost." Both these limits are almost identical. And up to what time is it permitted to plough corn-fields during the year preceding the Sabbatical year? Until the ground ceases to be damp, and during all the time people till the soil to plant melons and cucumbers. Said R. Simeon: "If this be so, then the Law permitted every individual to fix his own time?" Therefore, the time is fixed as follows: Corn-fields may be tilled up to the Passover and orchards up to Pentecost. (The school of Hillel fix the time at the Passover.) And R. Simeon ben Pazzi in the name of R. Joshua ben Levi, quoting Bar Qappara, said: "Rabban Gamaliel and his tribunal have abolished those two limits." Said R. Zera to R. Abbahu (and according to others, Resh Lakish to R. Johanan): "How could Rabban Gamaliel and his court abolish a regulation established by the schools of Shammai and Hillel? Did we not learn in a Mishna: No one court is permitted to overrule the decision of another court, unless they exceed the other in number and wisdom? He was astound for one hour [Daniel, iv. 16], and then answered: Say, so was the condition of the first court, that those who differ with them may overrule them. R. Ashi, however, said: Rabban Gamaliel and his court are in

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accordance with R. Ishmael, who holds that this was oral law, and as such it was binding only during the existence of the Temple, similar to that of "pouring water on the altar," but not after.

The rabbis taught "It is not permitted to irrigate from the water basins, or trenches, which were filled with rain-water on the eve of the feast, unless there is a water-channel passing between them." Said R. Papa: "Even this is permitted only where the greater part of the land is irrigated therefrom." R. Ashi, however, said: "It is permitted even if this is not the case, for when water is likely to flow in (into the channel) one is not likely to do any troublesome work, and is rather likely to think to himself, 'if it cannot be irrigated in one day it will be so in two or three days.'"

The rabbis taught: "It is permitted to irrigate dry land from a water basin which receives its water supply from the dry land situated above it" (the upper land being irrigated from a well and some water is dripping down into the basin). But is it not likely to cease (and some troublesome work may be done in bringing water from another place)? Said R. Jeremiah: "The case is when it is still dripping." Abayi adds: "This case holds good only when the original spring has not ceased."

"*One must not make a fresh trench,*" etc. This would be correct in reference to the middle days, because it is considered work, but what is the reason for the Sabbatical year? R. Zera and R. Abba bar Mamel: One holds, the reason is because it resembles delving; and the other says, because it is considered a preparation of the adjacent ground for sowing.

"*And those conduits that are choked up may be cleansed.*" What is meant by "choked up"? Said R. Abba: "If it was only one span deep, it may be restored to its original depth of six spans."

Abayi allowed the inhabitants of Hamdoch to cut off the branches of the trees growing in the river (during the middle days). R. Jeremiah allowed the inhabitants of Sekutha to cleanse a choked well of the river. R. Ashi permitted the inhabitants of Matha M'hasiah to deepen the river Burniz; and the reason assigned by him for this permission was, that because many persons used its water it was to be considered as a public necessity, and our Mishna states that all work for public service is permitted.

"*One may repair water reservoirs located on public ground.*"

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[paragraph continues] Is cleansing only, and no digging, permitted? Said R. Jacob in the name of R. Johanan.: The Mishna refers to a case in which the public do not need it, but otherwise even digging is permitted. Is that so? Have we not learned in a Boraitha: "Basins, pits, and cavities may be cleansed, if they belong to private persons, and so much the more if they are public. But it is not allowed to dig even when they are public, and so much the more when they are private." Should we not assume, that it is not permitted even when needed by the public? Nay, the case is when the public do not need it. Then how would it be in case of the private ones? Shall we assume that it is even when one does not need it? Then why should cleansing be permitted? Explain thus: Private basins may be cleansed when needed by him, and so much the more public basins if required by the public; but it is not permitted to do so even when they are public in case they are not needed by the public, and so much the more private ones if not needed by the owners, for if not needed by the owners -even cleansing is not permitted. Said R. Ashi: "The explanation of our Mishna seems to mean the same, as it states *all* that is necessary," etc., and this word "all" adds also digging. But the expression "all" may include the works enumerated in the following Boraitha: Messengers may be sent out (on the middle days) to remove prickles from the roads and to repair the markets and thoroughfares, and to ascertain the contents of the legal baths; and if they do not contain the prescribed measure they must be regulated. And whence do we deduce that if the messengers were not sent out and in consequence thereof an accident happened, that those guilty of such neglect are personally charged with having caused that accident? Therefore it is written [Deut. xix. 10]: "And bloodguiltiness be brought upon thee"? Are all these not expressly stated in our Mishna? "The roads," etc., "may be repaired?" why then repeat, "all" what is required by the public, etc.? We must then assume that it adds digging. Infer herefrom.

"*And tombs may be marked*," etc. R. Simeon b. Pazzi said: Where is it hinted at in the Scripture that tombs must be marked? It is written [Ezek. xxxix. 15]: "When any one seeth a man's bone, there shall be set up a sign by it." Said Rabina to R. Ashi: Were not tombs marked prior to Ezekiel? Therefore we must say, that it was traditional and the passage in Ezekiel only refers to it. Rabina, however, said: We may find a reference to this in the following passage [Psalms, l. 23]: "And

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to him that ordered his course aright will I show the salvation of God." (From this passage it may be inferred that the tombs were marked in order not to pass over them.) As R. Joshua b. Levi said: One who weighs his ways will be rewarded in seeing the salvation of the Holy One, blessed be He. As the Hebrew term of the above passage is "Vessom derech," do not read "vessom," but "veshom." ¹ A pupil of R. Janai who was wont to ask questions of the latter whenever he was lecturing, refrained from doing so on the Sabbath preceding a holiday, when a multitude of people used to gather (for fear that R. Janai might not be able to answer him and get confused), and R. Janai referred to him the passage just quoted (as explained by R. Joshua b. Levi).

The rabbis taught: Those things which cannot communicate uncleanness when in a tent need not be marked; but the following parts of a dead person must be marked: the spinal cord; the head; the major part of the structure of the skeleton, and the major number of parts of the skeleton. Those places which are known to be unclean need not be marked, but those which are doubtful need be. The following are considered doubtful places: Those having trees with spread out branches, places near fences the stones of which are projecting forward, and Beth Haperes (Perch): and no signs should be put up on the *very spot* of the uncleanness (but a short distance away), in order not to injure those who are clean (because if one inadvertently approaches the sign he becomes unclean); neither shall a sign be put too far away from the unclean spot, in order not to injure the land of Israel (*i.e.*, not to mark too much clean space as unclean). R. Jehudah said: "No marking should be done unless there is the Elder (of the congregation) or a scholar, for not every one is experienced in such things." Said Abayi: "From this we may infer, that if there is a young scholar in the city, all the business of the congregation must be attended to by him" (if there is no one else [to do](#) it).

"*And messengers are to be sent out on account of Kilaim.*" Were messengers sent out on the middle days? Have we not learned in a Mishna (Shekalim, I., *a*) that they were sent out on the first day of Adar? R. Elazar and R. Jose bar 'Hanina: One explains the contradiction thus: "Our Mishna relates to those

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plants which are late in season and the other to those early in season." The other explains that our Mishna refers to vegetables and the other to herbs. Said R. Assi in the name of R. Johanan: This is the case only when the plants have not sprung up, but when they have (and Kilaim were noticed) messengers are sent out even before. Why are messengers sent out on the *middle days*? Said R. Jacob in the name of R. Johanan: Because on those days labor is cheap. How much of the mixed seeds must there be in order to constitute Kilaim? Said R. Samuel bar Itzhak: As we

have learned (in Kilaim, II., i): "Every Sah that contains one-fourth of seed of another species must be lessened." But did we not learn in a Boraitha: "It was determined that the whole field be confiscated (made ownerless)"? This presents no difficulty. The former was said before and the latter after the determination was made, as we have learned in a Boraitha: Formerly the messengers used to pull out the Kilaim and throw them to the cattle, and the owners used to be doubly pleased, first because their fields were weeded, and secondly because their cattle were fed; so it was determined that it be pulled out and thrown on the roads, but the owners were still very pleased because of the weeding of their fields, and it was finally determined that the whole field should be given to the free use of the people.

MISHNA: R. Elazar ben Jacob said: "One may lead water from one tree to another, provided always the whole orchard be not irrigated; plants which have not imbibed (water) before the middle days, must not be irrigated during the middle days. The sages, however, permit both."

GEMARA: R. Jehudah said: "If it was damp land it may be done." So also we have learned in the following Boraitha: The prohibition to irrigate during the middle days applies only to plants that have not imbibed prior to the feast, but those that have may be irrigated during the middle days. And if it was damp land it may. Withered land, however, must not. But the sages permit both. Rabina said: From this it is to be inferred that a yard-garden may be besprinkled during the middle days, for what is the reason for withered land? because by irrigation it is changed from one late in season unto one early in season? The same is the case with a yard-garden.

MISHNA: One may catch Ishuth (moles) and field mice in orchards and fields in the usual manner, both during the middle days and the Sabbatical year. The sages, however, said, that in

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an orchard (the vermin may be caught) in the usual manner, but that in a corn-field it must not be caught in the usual manner. During the middle days one may pile (loose stone) to stop a gap in a fence; on the Sabbatical year, however, it may be repaired in the ordinary way.

GEMARA: What is "Ishuth"? Said R. Jehudah: It is an eyeless insect. Said Rabha bar Ishmael, and according to others R. Yemar bar Shlamia: Where is it mentioned in the Scripture that Ishuth is an eyeless insect? It is written [Psalms, lviii. 9]: "As a snail which melted, let him pass away, like the untimely birth of a woman: (Ehsheth) 1 which hath not seen the sun."

"*But that in a cornfield it must not be caught in the usual manner.*" We have learned in a Boraitha: "R. Simeon ben Elazar (or ben Jacob) said: This refers only to those corn-fields that are adjacent to a town, but in case of those adjacent to an orchard it may be done even in the usual manner, for the reason that they might overstep the boundary and injure the trees."

"*During the middle days one may pile loose stones to stop a gap in a fence.*" With what is it stopped? Said R. Joseph: With the twigs of shrubbery and the bay-tree. In a Boraitha we have learned: "The stones maybe piled up but no mortar must be used." Said R. Hisda: "This applies only to garden fences, but in case of court walls it may be rebuilt in the usual manner." Said R. Ashi: This may be inferred from our own Mishna. It states: "And during the Sabbatical year it may be rebuilt in the usual manner." This statement cannot relate to a court wall, because there is no reason why it should not be permitted; it must then relate to garden fences, and although it

looks as if done for the purpose of protecting the fruit, infer herefrom that it is permitted.

MISHNA: R. Meir said: Priests make the first inspection of the plague (of leprosy) in order to relieve (the patient) but not to restrict him. The sages, however, decide, neither to relieve nor to restrict.

GEMARA: We have learned in a Boraitha: "R. Jose holds, neither to relieve nor to restrict, for the reason that if an inspection is made, if you cannot relieve him you must restrict him." Said Rabbi: "R. Meir's decision seems to be more proper in the

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case of one who is still subject to the examination; and R. Jose's decision seems to be the more proper one in the case of one who was decidedly afflicted with the disease." Said Rabha: They all agree that no examination is made (during the middle days) of a clean person; they also all agree that an inspection may be made during the first seclusion; 1 in what they differ is: in the case of the second seclusion. One holds that it is discretionary with the priest. If he finds him clean, he informs him; but if he finds him unclean, he keeps silent. And the other holds that, as it is written [Lev. xiii. 59]: "To *pronounce* him clean *or* unclean," he must in either case *pronounce* it. The Master said: "Said Rabbi: R. Jose's decision seems to be more proper," etc. But have we not learned in a Boraitha, *vice versa*? There is a difference of opinions between the Tanim in regard to Rabbi's statement. One holds that one (who is afflicted with the plague) prefers association with the public; and the other holds, that he appreciates more the society of his wife.

MISHNA: R. Meir further said: One may gather the bones of his father or mother (during the middle days to inter them), because it is a joy to him (it relieves his mind). But R. Jose said: "It is a grief to him" (afflicts his mind). One must not grumble over his dead, nor hold a funeral oration for thirty days before the festival.

GEMARA: There is a contradiction: We have learned in a Boraitha (Ebel Rabbati, XII.): 2 "One who gathers the bones of his dead father or mother shall mourn over them the whole day, but not in the evening. Said R. Hisda: This is applicable even if they are wrapped up in his mantle (and are not readily seen by him?) Said Abayi: Read in the Mishna: R. Meir said, etc., for the enjoyment of the festival will prevent him from mourning."

"*One must not grumble over his dead.*" What is meant by "grumble"? Said Rabh: The funeral orators in Palestine use the following expression in their funeral orations "Let all the perturbed join him in mourning." (The Mishna means, then, that he should not excite others to mourn.)

"*Thirty days before the festival.*" Why thirty? Said R. Kahana, according to others Rabh: "It happened once that a funeral orator came around to the house of one who had saved up some money for the prescribed pilgrimage to Jerusalem,

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and he so pleased the wife of the latter with his orations that she handed him all her savings, and

her husband was prevented from going to Jerusalem. And therefore it was then determined that no exciting oration be held within thirty days preceding a festival." Samuel, however, said: The reason is, because no one departed is forgotten by his mourners during the first thirty days. In what respect does it make a difference, whether the one or the other is the reason? In case one volunteers to do it without compensation. (According to Rabh it may, and according to Samuel it may not take place.)

MISHNA: One must not dig graves or burial vaults on the middle days; but one may prepare graves (previously dug); and also make a washing pit, and a coffin in the same court where the corpse lies. This, however, R. Jehudah prohibits, unless the boards have been (previously) provided.

GEMARA. What part is called "grave," and what part "vault"? Said R. Jehudah: Grave is the excavation, and vault is that part which is built in the grave. So also we have learned in a Boraita.

"*But one may prepare graves.*" What is meant by "preparation"? Said R. Jehudah: "If it was too long it may be shortened." In a Boraita we have learned that it may be made both longer and wider.

"*And a coffin in the same court where the corpse lies.*" What we read in this Mishna has reference to what the rabbis taught: "All that is necessary to be done for the dead may be done: his hair may be cut, his wrapper washed; and his coffin may be prepared from boards cut before the festival," R. Simeon ben Gamaliel said: "Timber may be also brought and boards cut therefrom, privately in the house."

MISHNA: One must not espouse a wife on the middle days--neither virgins nor widows; nor must one marry the childless widow of his deceased brother, 1 as that (the espousal) is a cause of joy to him (individually), but one may receive back his own divorced wife. A woman may prepare her ornaments on the middle days. R. Jehudah said: "She must not apply lime (chalk as a cosmetic), because it may disfigure her. A layman may sew (make stitches) in the regular way; but the tailor must do it zigzag. One may twine (the ropes in the sacking) of bedsteads." R. Jose, however, said: "They may only be tightened."

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GEMARA: And if it is a cause of joy to him, why not? Said R. Jehudah in the name of Samuel, and so also said R. Elazar in the name of R. Oshiya or Hanina: "For the reason that two different joys must not be comingled." Rabba bar Huna said: "For the reason that the enjoyment of the festival is neglected on account of the enjoyment over his wife." Said Abayi to R. Joseph: The statement of Rabba bar Huna was originally made by Rabh, as R. Daniel bar Ktina said in the name of Rabh: Whence do we deduce that it is not permitted to espouse wives on the middle days? For it is written [Deut. xvi. 14]: "And thou shalt rejoice on thy feast." *Over thy feast* thou shalt *rejoice*, but *not over thy wife*. Ula said: "The reason is: Because there would be too much trouble." R. Itz'hak of Naf'ha said: "The reason is, in order not to restrict reproduction (for every one will postpone his marriage until the festival)."

An objection was made: We have learned elsewhere: "All those said to be prohibited from

espousing wives on the middle days, may do so on the eve of the feast." This seems to contradict all those reasons assigned? This presents no difficulty: According to the one who said, because of the enjoyment--the main enjoyment over his bride is on the first day only; according to the one who said, it is the trouble--the main trouble is also on the first day only; and according to the one who said, in order not to restrict reproduction-for one single day no one will postpone it.

But whence do we deduce that two different joys may not be comingled? It is written [I Kings, viii. 65]: "And Solomon held at the time the feast," etc., "seven days and seven days, even fourteen days." Now then, if comingling of two different joys were permitted, why did Solomon not postpone it until the feast and the seven days of the feast would have served for both? R. Parnach in the name of R. Johanan said: On that year the Israelites had not observed the Day of Atonement and they were perturbed and thought they were sinful, and a Heavenly voice was heard announcing: "All of you are prepared for the world to come."

It is written [I Kings, viii. 66]: "On the eighth day he dismissed the people, and they blessed the king and they went unto their tents," etc.

"And they went unto their tents," meaning, they found their wives clean. "Joyful"--they were delighted with the brightness of the Shekhina. "Glad of heart"--the wife of every one became

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pregnant with a male child. "Because of the good," etc.--for the announcement of the Heavenly voice, as stated above. "For David his servant and Israel his people"--this would be correct so far as Israel is concerned, for they were forgiven their neglect to observe the Day of Atonement; but what is hinted at by the statement, "For David his servant"? Said R. Jehudah in the name of R. Rabh: When Solomon desired to place the ark in the Temple, the gates became fastened to each other and they could not be opened. Solomon then pronounced twenty-four prayer-songs and was not answered. He then commenced to pray [Psalm, xxiv. 7]: "Raise your heads, O ye gates," etc., and still he was not answered; but when he finally said [II Chron. vi. 42]: "O Lord God, turn not away the face of thy anointed, remember the pious deeds of David thy servant," he was at once answered. At that moment the enemies of David became as black as the bottom of a pot, and then it was known to all that the Holy One, blessed be He, had forgiven David *that sin* (of Bath-Sheba).

R. Jonathan ben Esmail and R. Jehudah b. Gerim had been studying the chapter treating of Vows before R. Simeon b. Jo'hi. In the evening they took leave of him and departed. On the following morning they returned and asked leave again. R. Simeon b. Jo'hi questioned them: "Did you not take leave of me last night?" They answered him: "Did not our Master teach us, that a disciple who takes leave of his instructor and remains in the same place over night must take leave again?" As it is written [I Kings, vii. 66]: "On the *eighth* day he dismissed the people, and they blessed the king"; and it is again written [II Chron. vii. 10]: "And on the twenty-third day of the seventh month he dismissed the people." Infer from this, that a disciple who after taking leave of his Master remains over night in the same place must take leave again. Then be (R. Simeon b. Jo'hi) said to his son: "These men are of nice countenance (scholarly). Go and receive their blessing." He went, and found them discussing the contradiction of the following passages: It is written [Prov. iv. 26]: "*Balance* well the track of thy foot, and let all thy ways be firmly right"; and *ibid.* v. 6 reads: "So that (she) *cannot balance* the path of life"? This presents no difficulty. The first passage refers to a commandment that can be performed by others, and the other

passage has reference to such as cannot be performed by others. They again propounded a question: It is written [Prov. iii. 15]: "She is more precious than pearls, and all the things *thou* *valuest* are not equal unto her." From

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this it seems that Heavenly things are equal. And it is written [ibid. viii. 2]: "And *all* the things that men wish for are *not equal* to her"; from which it seems that Heavenly things are also included? And the above answer was applied also to answer this contradiction.

They then turned to him and asked him what his wishes were, and he answered: "Father sent me here to receive your blessing." They then pronounced: "Let it be the Will that thou shalt sow but not reap, thou shalt bring in but not give forth, thou shalt give forth but not bring in; thy house shall be ruined and thy temporary dwelling shall remain; thy table shall be confused; and thou shalt not see a new year." When he returned to his father he said: "Not only did they not bless me, but, on the contrary, they cursed me!" and he recited the above. His father replied: All those are blessings; viz.: "Thou shalt sow and not reap" means, allegorically, "Thou shalt bear children and they shall not die." "Thou shalt bring in and not give forth" "Thou shalt bring in thy house wives for thy sons, and thy male children shall not die, so their wives will not need to leave thy house." "Thou shalt give forth and not bring in"--"Thou shalt have daughters and their husbands shall not die, so that they shall not be compelled to return to thy house." "Thy house shall be ruined and thy temporary dwelling shall remain"--for this world is only a temporary dwelling and the world to come is the real house, as it is written [Psalms, xlix. 12]: "Their inward thought (Kirbom) is, that their houses are to be forever." Do not read "kirbom," but "kivrom" (their graves). "Thy table shall be confused"--by thy many children. "And thou shalt not see a new year"--"Thy wife shall not die, so that thou shalt not be compelled to marry another."

R. Simeon b. Halafta took leave of Rabh, and the latter said to his son: "Go to him and receive his blessing." R. Simeon pronounced the following: "Let it be the Will that thou shalt not shame others and others shall not shame thee." When he returned to his father he said: "He did not bless me, but only advised me." And his father rejoined: "Nay, it is a blessing; and it is the same, the Holy One, blessed be He, pronounced over Israel, as it is written [Joel, ii. 26]: "And ye shall eat in plenty," etc., "and my people shall not be ashamed unto eternity"; and repeated in the next passage: "And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel," etc., "and my people shall not be made ashamed unto eternity." The repetition herein

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means, both that they shall not shame others and others shall not shame them.

"A woman may prepare her ornaments," etc. The wife of R. Hisda was once ornamenting herself in the presence of her daughter-in-law. R. Huna bar Dinna, who was present at the time, said: "It seems to me that only a young woman is allowed to prepare her ornaments, but not an old one?" And R. Hisda rejoined: "By the Lord! even your mother and your grandmother, and even the woman who is on the brink of her grave; as the proverb goes: 'A woman of sixty is as enthusiastic over the music of a cymbal as a girl of six.'"

"R. Jehudah said: She must not apply lime," etc. R. Bibi's daughter applied gradually cosmetics

to every part of her body, and she improved so much that she received a dowry of four hundred Zuz. The daughter of a stranger who resided in the neighborhood (of R. Bibi), learning of that, applied a cosmetic at once to all parts of her body, and in consequence thereof died. The stranger then said: "Bibi killed my daughter." R. Na'hman said: "In R. Bibi's house, where beer was used, his daughters had to use cosmetics, but in our houses, where beer is not used, our daughters need not apply cosmetics."

"*The layman may sew in the regular way,*" etc. Who is considered a layman? The school of R. Janai explained, one who is not experienced in gathering on the needle; R. Jose bar Hanina said: "One who cannot properly place the foundation in the border of a garment."

"*They may twine the ropes,*" etc. What is the difference between "twining" and "tightening"? When R. Dimi came from Palestine he said: "R. Hyya bar Abba and R. Assi, both in the name of Hezekiah and R. Johanan, differ: One says "twining" means both the shoot thread and the warp, and "tightening" means the shoot only; and the other holds that "twining" means the warp and not the shoot thread, and "tightening" means "if they were not tight they might be tightened." When Rabin, however, came from Palestine, he declared that as to "twining," all agree that it means the shoot thread and the warp; they differ only as to "tightening": one holds it means the shoot only, and the other holds that if they were not tight they might be tightened.

MISHNA: One may erect an oven or a hearth, or a mill, on the middle days. R. Jehudah says: "New millstones must not be chipped."

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GEMARA: What is the meaning of "chipping"? Said R. Jehudah: It means notching. R. Je'hiehl said: "It means the boring of the centre-hole in the millstone." R. Hama lectured: "Millstones may be cleaned during the middle days." In the name of R. Meir he said: Even the hoofs of the horse and ass may be pared, provided they are used for riding; but not the hoofs of an ass employed in a treadmill. R. Jehudah permitted to pare the hoofs of an ass employed in a treadmill, to place the millstones in proper position, and to build a new mill; to erect a foundation for the millstones, and also to erect a stall. Rabha permitted to comb a mare, to erect a stand and a colonnade. Rabha also permitted to let blood to a domestic animal during the middle days. Said Abayi to Rabha: "We found a Boraitha in your support: 'Blood may be let to a domestic animal; and no restriction is made to the administration of medicines to domestic animals during the middle days.'" Rabha permitted to press garments. Why so? For the reason that it can be done by any unskilled person. Rabha said again: "Trading even in the most moderate degree is not permitted." Said R. Jose bar Abin: "But in case of perishable articles it is." Rabina was to complete a transaction in which he would have earned six thousand Zuz, and by postponing it till after the middle days he earned twelve thousand. Rabina had to collect some money from the inhabitants of the fortress of Shnuatha, and he consulted R. Ashi whether to go there or not. R. Ashi told him: "If you think you can find them now and not on other days, it is as if it were perishable articles and you may do it." We have learned in a Boraitha similar to that just stated, in regard to dealings with idolaters: "It is permitted to attend markets of idolaters and to purchase domestic animals, male and female slaves, land and vineyards, and to write out the deeds and record the same, for it is considered as if rescued from their hands." Rabh permitted Hyya bar Ashi to construct a fisher's net on the middle days. R. Jehudah permitted Ami, the oven-builder, to erect an oven, and to Rabba bar Eshbi he permitted to mesh a sieve.

MISHNA: A railing (balustrade) may be made round a roof, or gallery, in the way a layman does it, but not in the way it is done by a mechanic. Rents (in the roofs) may also be closed, and (then) smoothed with a roller, or with hand and foot, but not with a trowel. Should the hinges of the door-frame, or the beam, or the lock (of the door), or the key (thereto) have been broken

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they may be repaired on the middle days, provided always one does not intentionally put off the repairs till the middle days. All (kinds of) pickled food of which one can eat during the middle days may be pickled.

GEMARA: What is meant "*in the way of a layman*"? Said R. Joseph: "With twigs or wire." A Boraitha states: When the railing was not smeared with clay.

"*Rents may be closed*," etc. If they may be smoothed with a roller, it is self-understood then that it may be done so with the hand and foot? This should be understood thus: "Rents may be closed and smoothed with hand and foot as if done with a roller, but not with a trowel."

"*Should the hinges of the door*," etc., "*they may be repaired*," etc. Is there not a contradiction from what we have learned, that "up to his days (of R. Jo'hanan, the high-priest) the sound of the hammer (falling on the anvil) used to be heard in Jerusalem," etc., from which we see, only up to his days, but not afterwards? Nay, this presents no difficulty. The statement just quoted has reference to a blacksmith's hammer, and that mentioned in our Mishna relates to that of a carpenter.

"*All pickled food of which*," etc. The river Bditha of Libai had an abundance of fish, and any one who wanted to fish them could do so. Rabha permitted to go there, bring fish and salt them. Said Abayi to him: "Does not our Mishna state, only those foods that can be eaten on the middle days?" Rabha replied: These can also be eaten by washing them first, as it happened once with Samuel, who was served with (pickled) fish, and he ate them after washing them sixty times. Rabha happened once to be in the house of the Exilarch (on the middle days), and he was served with pickled fish which were washed sixty times, and he partook of them. Rabh was once the guest of R. Shapir and fish was served, one-third of which was cooked, another third pickled, and the rest fried. Rabh related: "Ada the fisher once told me that fish taste best some time after they are caught." Rabh further stated: "The same told me: 'Fish should be fried with their brother (salt--for both are found in water); after they are fried they should be placed with their father (water--which produces fish), and they should be eaten with their offspring (their juice); and after eating them, drink their father (water).'" Rabh said again: "Ada the fisher told me: 'One who eats fish, dates,

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or milk should not go to sleep right after, unless he takes first a long walk.'" Rabh said again: "Ada the fisher told me: 'After eating fish, dates, or milk, water is to be preferred as a drink to beer, and beer should have preference over wine.'"

Footnotes

[1:1](#) *Vide* Shekalim, Chap. I., M. a.

[3:1](#) No capital punishment, nor even that of stripes, is inflicted without a previous, warning. *Vide* Introduction to Sabbath, p. xxvi.

[7:1](#) The letter "Shin" in Hebrew when pointed rightward reads "sh"; when pointed left reads "ss." The word "shom" in question is pointed left and the rabbi reads it as if pointed right, and explains it to have the meaning of the Aramaic "Shomin"--to weigh, to estimate.

[9:1](#) "Ishuth" and Ehsheth are similar in pronunciation, and it states, "which hath not seen the sun."

[10:1](#) See Lev. xiii. 5.

[10:2](#) See our introduction to same tract.

[11:1](#) See Deut. xxv. 5-11.

[Next: Chapter II](#)