

CHAPTER IV.

REGULATIONS CONCERNING THE PRIESTS' BLESSING OF THE PEOPLE, THE INSTITUTION OF THE STANDING MEN--THEIR FASTS AND PRAYERS. THE FAST OF THE SEVENTEENTH DAY OF TAMUZ AND THE NINTH OF ABH, AND THE CELEBRATION OF THE FIFTEENTH DAY OF ABH.

MISHNA: At three periods of the year the priests shall raise their hands (to bless the people) at each prayer, (, *i.e.*) four times on each day; viz., during the morning, additional, afternoon, and closing prayer. (The three periods mentioned are:) On the fast-days, on the fast of the standing men, and on the Day of Atonement.

(The reason for the institution of) these standing men is because it is written [Numb. xxviii. 2]: "Command the children of Israel, and say unto them: My offering, my bread for my sacrifices . . . shall ye observe," etc. How can an offering be brought for a person without his being present (at the time when it is sacrificed)? Therefore did the elder prophets institute twenty-four watches (divisions): each watch always had a section of standing men, composed of priests, Levites, and Israelites, stationed at Jerusalem. When the turn of each watch came around to go up (from their cities to the Temple), the priests and Levites went up to Jerusalem, and the Israelites who belonged to that watch assembled in (the synagogues of) their cities to read the history of the creation (*i.e.*, the first chapter of Genesis).

The standing men used to fast four times in the week; viz., from Monday until Thursday (inclusive), but they did not fast on Friday, on account of the honor due the Sabbath, nor on Sunday, that they might not (too suddenly) pass over from rest and pleasure to weariness and fasting--for that might endanger their lives. On Sunday the standing men read (the sections commencing): "In the beginning," etc. [Genesis, i. 1 to 5], and, "Let there be an expansion," etc. [ibid. 6, etc.]; on Monday they read: "Let there be an expansion," and, "Let the waters," etc. [ibid. 9, etc.]; on Tuesday: "Let the waters," and, "Let there be

lights," etc. [ibid. 14, etc.]; on Wednesday: "Let there be lights," and, "Let the waters bring forth," etc. [ibid. 20, etc.]; on Thursday "Let the waters bring forth," and, "Let the earth bring forth," etc. [ibid. 24, etc.]; on Friday: "Let the earth bring forth," and, "Thus were finished," etc. [ibid. ii. 1 to 4]. The long section of the day was read by two persons and the short by one; this was done, however, during the morning and additional prayers; but at the afternoon prayers they entered (the Synagogue) and recited the sections mentioned by heart, even as the Shema' is recited. On Friday afternoon they did not go to the synagogue at all, in honor of the Sabbath.

On the days on which the Hallel was sung, the standing men would not attend during the morning prayer (in Jerusalem). When there was an additional offering, they did not assemble at

the time of the closing prayer. When a wood-offering was brought, they did not assemble during the afternoon prayer. Such is the dictum of R. Aqiba; but Ben Azai said to him: "R. Jehoshua taught as follows: 'When there was an additional offering, the standing men did not assemble during the afternoon prayer; and when a wood-offering was brought, they did not assemble at the time of the closing prayer.'" Thereupon R. Aqiba changed (his opinion) and taught like Ben Azai.

The times when the delivery of wood (for the altar) was made by priests and people were on nine appointed days: viz., on the 1st day of Nissan, the family of Arah ben Jehudah (made the delivery); on the 20th of Tamuz, the family of David ben Jehudah; on the 5th of Abh, the family of Par'os ben Jehudah; on the 7th of that month, the family of Jonadab ben Rekhav; on the 10th of the same month, the family of Sinaha ben Benjamin; on the 15th of that month, the family of Zathoo ben Jehudah, and with them priests and Levites, and all those who did not know from which tribe they were descended--also the family of Gonebe Eli and the family of Kotze'li Ketz'i'oth; and on the 20th, the family of Pa'hath Moab ben Jehudah; on the 20th of Elul, the family of Adin ben Jehudah; and on the 1st of Tebeth, the family of Par'os for the second time.

There was no meeting of the standing men on the 1st of Tebeth; because Hallel was sung and additional sacrifice and wood-offering were brought on that day.

Five calamities happened to our ancestors on the 17th of Tamuz, and five on the 9th of Abh: viz., on the 17th of Tamuz the tables of the Holy Law were broken; on that day the

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continual daily offerings ceased, and the city of Jerusalem was stormed; on the same date Apostamos burned the Holy Scrolls and placed an idol in the Temple;--on the 9th of Abh it was decreed that our ancestors should not enter the Holy Land; on that day the first and second Temples were destroyed, the city of Bethar was taken, and the site (of Jerusalem) was ploughed up (like a field). From the 1st of Abh it is incumbent upon a person to lessen his participation in joyful events (until after the 9th of that month).

During the week in which the 9th of Abh occurs, it is prohibited to a person to shave himself, or to wash (his clothes), but on Thursday this is allowed in honor of the Sabbath. On the day before the 9th of Abh a person should not partake of two different kinds of dishes of meat, nor may he drink any wine. Rabbon Simeon ben Gamaliel says: "He should change" (his ordinary mode of living). R. Jehudah considers it obligatory for a person to turn over the bed places, 1 but the sages do not coincide with him.

Rabbon Simeon ben Gamaliel said: Never were there any more joyous festivals in Israel than the 15th of Abh and the Day of Atonement, for on them the maidens of Jerusalem used to go out dressed in white garments-borrowed ones, however, in order not to cause shame to those who had none of their own. These clothes were also to be previously immersed, and thus the maidens went out and danced in the vineyards, saying: Young men, look and observe well whom you are about to choose (as a spouse); regard not beauty alone, but rather look to a virtuous family, for "false is grace, and vain is beauty: a woman only that feareth the Lord shall indeed be praised" [Proverbs, xxxi. 30]; and it is also said [ibid. 31]: "Give her of the fruit of her hands, and let her own works praise her in her gates." Thus also is it written (alluding to that custom):

"Go forth and look, O ye daughters of Zion, on King Solomon, with the crown wherewith his mother bath crowned him on the day of his espousals, and on the day of the joy of his heart" [Solomon's Song, iii. 11]. "The day of the espousals" refers to the day on which the Law was given, and "the day of the joy of his heart" was that when the building of the Temple was completed. May it soon be rebuilt in our days!

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GEMARA: "*At three periods of the year,*" etc. Is there then an additional prayer on fast-days and for the standing men? The Mishna is not complete, and should read thus: "At three periods of the year the priests shall raise their hands (to bless the people) at each prayer, and among such periods there are days when this is done four times during the day: viz., during the morning, the additional, the afternoon, and the closing prayers; and the three periods of the year are on fast-days, on the fast of the standing men, and on the Day of Atonement . Said R. Na'hman in the name of Rabba bar Abbahu: "Such is the dictum of R. Meir. But the sages maintain that during the morning and additional prayers the priests raise their hands; but not during the afternoon and closing prayers." Whose opinion is that attributed to the sages? That is the opinion of R. Jehudah, as we have learned in the following Boraitha: "In all the four prayers mentioned above, the priests are to raise their hands. This is the dictum of R. Meir, but R. Jehudah said that this is not done in the afternoon and closing prayers, while R. Jose maintains that it is not done in the afternoon prayer, but it is done in the closing prayer." Said R. Na'hman: "The Halakha prevails according to the opinion of R. Jose." And so it remains.

Why is it, then, the custom at present that the priests raise their hands in the afternoon prayer of a fast-day? Because the afternoon prayer is said very near to the time of sunset, it is regarded the same as the closing prayer.

"*These standing men,*" etc. How is the Mishna to be understood? The Mishna means to say: "These are the standing men, and the reason of their institution is because it is written," etc.

The rabbis taught: "There are twenty-four watches in the Land of Israel, and of these there are twelve in Jericho. When the watches were to go up to the Temple, half went up from all parts of the Land of Israel to Jerusalem, and the other half from Jericho." Why were half of them in Jericho? Because they had to prepare food and drink for their brethren in Jerusalem.

R. Jehudah said in the name of Samuel: Priests, Levites, and Israelites that compose the division of the standing men prevent, in the event of their absence, the offering of the sacrifices. In a Boraitha we have learned: R. Simeon ben Elazar said: "The priests, Levites, and the musical instruments prevent, by their absence, the offering of the sacrifices," because he

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holds that the chanting at the offering of the sacrifices must be accomplished mainly through the musical instruments, and not vocally.

R. Hama bar Guria said in the name of Rabh: Moses established for the Israelites only eight watches; viz., four for the descendants of Elazar the priest and four for those of Ithamar. Subsequently Samuel the prophet increased the number to sixteen, and finally David further

increased them to twenty-four, as it is written [I Chronicles, vi. 26]: "In the fortieth year of David were they inquired into, and there were found among them mighty men of valor at Ya'zer and Gil'ad."

The rabbis taught: "Four watches went up out of exile, and they are: Yida'yah, Harim, Pash'hor, and Imar. And the prophets who went with them increased them to twenty-four." How was this done? They threw lots into an urn, and Yida'yah came and drew lots for himself and companions to the number of six. Then came Harim, and drew lots for himself and for his companions to the number of six. Likewise did Pash'hor, and thus also Imar; and the prophets also enacted that, even should Jehoyoreb, the chief of the watches, come up out of exile, he should not displace Yid'ayah, but Yid'ayah should be first, and Jehoyoreb act merely as an additional (to Yid'ayah).

The rabbis taught: The men of the watch would pray that the sacrifices of their brethren should be favorably accepted; and the standing men would congregate in the synagogues and fast four fast-days; viz., from Monday until Thursday, inclusive. On the first fast-day they would fast for those who plied the seas; on the second, for those who traverse the desert; the third, that the children might be saved from the disease of croup; and the last day, for pregnant women and for those suckling their babes--that the former might be happily delivered and the latter retain their strength. On the day preceding the Sabbath they would not fast, in honor of the Sabbath, and most assuredly not on the Sabbath itself. Why did they not fast on Sunday? Said R. Samuel ben Na'hmeni: "Because that is the third day (after man was created)"; and Resh Lakish said: "Because of the second soul that is given to man on the Sabbath, and which leaves him at the close of the Sabbath day" (hence he would be too weak to fast on the following day).

"*On Sunday the standing men read, 'In the beginning,'*" etc. We have learned in a Boraitha: The first section, *i.e.*, from the

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passage commencing, "In the beginning," until that commencing, "Let there be an expansion, was read by two men, while the second section, commencing, Let there be an expansion," until, "Let the waters," etc., was read by one man only.

"*The long section of the day was read by two persons,*" etc. We have learned in a Boraitha: During the morning and additional prayers they would enter into the synagogues and read the sections from the Scrolls as usual; but during the afternoon prayer one man would recite the section by heart. Said R. Jose: "May, then, an individual recite a section of the Scriptures by heart in the presence of the entire congregation?" "Therefore," said he, "the entire congregation went in and recited the section by heart, just as they do the Shema' prayer."

"*On the days on which the Hallel was sung, the standing men would not attend,*" etc. What is the difference? (*i.e.*, why, when a wood-offering was brought, was the closing prayer omitted and the afternoon prayer retained?). Because the closing prayer was a rabbinical institution, while the afternoon prayer was a biblical ordinance.

"*The times when the delivery of wood was made by priests and people.*" The rabbis taught: Why did the Mishna have to mention both the times when the priests and when the people made the delivery of wood? Because it was said that when the children of Israel returned from exile they

found no wood in the wood-chamber, and the priests contributed the wood of their own accord. In consideration of this fact, the prophets at that time made the enactment that even when the wood-chamber was filled with wood, the priests be allowed to furnish wood of their own accord (and from their own means), as it is written [Nehemiah, x. 35]: "And we--the priests, the Levites, and the people--cast lots concerning the procuring of the wood, to bring it into the house of our God, unto the house of our fathers, at fixed times, year by year, to burn upon the altar of the Lord our God, as it is written in the Law."

"And with them priests and Levites," etc. The rabbis taught: Who were those Gonebe Eli and Kotze Ketzi'oth? It was said that at one time the government decreed that the Israelites should not bring any wood for the altar, nor the firstfruit-offerings to Jerusalem, and guards were appointed to watch the wagons in the same manner as Jeroboam ben Nebat appointed guards to prevent the Israelites from going to Jerusalem for the festivals. What did the pious and those who were

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afraid of transgressing do? They would place a basket containing the firstfruits at the bottom of the wagon, and cover it with dried fruits. In addition to that they would carry a pestle, and when stopped by the guards would tell them that they were on their way to a place where they desired to pound the fruit; and after having safely passed the guards, they would ornament the basket containing the firstfruits and bring it into the Temple. And we have learned in a Boraitha, in addition to this, that the Gonebe Eli and the Kotze Ketzi'oth are the same who are called elsewhere the family of Salmi Hanthophathai. Who were the Salmi Hanthophathai? The rabbis taught that when it was decreed that no wood should be brought for the altar they would construct ladders, which they would carry past the guards appointed to watch for any men who would violate the decree, and when stopped would claim that they were about to take down some doves from their dovecots. Having safely eluded the guards and arrived at the Temple, they would take the ladders apart and carry in the wood for the altar. ¹ To these men and those emulating their example the passage may be applied [Proverbs, x. 7]: "The memory of the just is to be blessed."

"On the 20th, the family Pa'hath Moab ben Jehudah," etc. In a Boraitha we have learned: By "the family Pa'hath Moab ben Jehudah" is meant the family of David ben Jehudah (meaning David the King of the tribe of Judah). Such is the opinion of R. Meir; but R. Jose said that they were of the children of Joab ben Tzeruyah.

"On the 20th of Elul, the family of Adin ben Jehudah," etc. The rabbis taught: By "the family of Adin ben Jehudah" is meant the family of David ben Jehudah. Such is the opinion of R. Jehudah; but R. Jose said that they were of the children of Joab ben Tzeruyah.

"There was no meeting of the standing men on the 1st of Tebeth." Said Rabha: The Hallel which is sung on the feast of new moon is not based upon a biblical ordinance, because R. Johanan said in the name of R. Simeon ben Jehozadok: "Eighteen times during the year an individual may recite the

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whole Hallel, and they are: On the eight days of the Feast of Tabernacles, on the eight days of the Feast of Dedication (Hanukah), on the first day of the Passover, and on the day of Pentecost. While in exile, however, one may recite it twenty-one times during the year, namely: On the nine days of the festival of Tabernacles, on the eight days of Hanukah, on the first two days of Passover, and on the two days of Pentecost."

Rabh happened to be in Babylon (*i.e.*, before he removed there permanently) and he saw the people reading the Hallel on the first day of the month. He first intended to interrupt them, but seeing that they read only portions of it, he said: I understand they follow the customs of their ancestors, and it does not matter. In a Boraitha we have learned that an individual shall not start, but if he had already started he may conclude it.

"*Five calamities happened to our ancestors,*" etc. Whence do we know that on the 17th day of Tamuz the tables of the Holy Law were broken? Because we have learned in a Boraitha as follows: On the sixth day of Sivan the ten commandments were given, and on the seventh day Moses ascended unto heaven. R. Jose says: "On the seventh day the ten commandments were given." All agree, however, that on the seventh day of Sivan Moses ascended unto heaven, because it is written [Exodus, xxiv. 16]: "And he called unto Moses on the seventh day out of the midst of the cloud"; and further, it is said [ibid. 18]: "And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and ascended the mount; and Moses was on the mount forty days and forty nights." Thus Moses was there twenty-four days in Sivan and sixteen days in Tamuz, and on the 17th he descended and broke the tables, as it is written [ibid. xxxii. 19]: "And it came to pass, when he (Moses) came nigh unto the camp, and he saw the calf and the dancing, that the anger of Moses waxed hot, and he cast from his hands the tables, and broke them at the foot of the mount."

That the continual daily offerings ceased on the 17th of Tamuz is traditional; and the statement that the city was stormed on that day refers to the second destruction. That the other two calamities occurred on that day is also traditional.

"*On the 9th of Abh it was decreed,*" etc. Whence do we know that? From the following Boraitha: We have learned that on the twenty-ninth day of Sivan Moses sent out the spies, as it is written [Numb. xiii. 25]: "And they returned from spying out the land at the end of forty days," and those forty

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days (included the day of their return, that is) were in reality forty less one, and Abayi said that in that year the month of Tamuz was a full month of thirty days, as it is written [Lam. i. 15]: "He hath called an assembly against me to crush my young men." [1](#)

Further, it is written [Numb. xiv. 1]: "And all the congregation lifted up their voice, and cried aloud, and the people wept that night." Said Rabba in the name of R. Johanan: "That night was the eve preceding the ninth of Abh, and the Holy One, blessed be He, said: 'Ye have cried on this night in vain, and I shall ordain it that your generations shall lament on this day forever.'"

"*On that day the first and second Temples were destroyed.*" It is written [II Kings, xxv. 8]: "And in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month," etc., and [Jeremiah, lii. 12]: "And in the fifth month, on the tenth day of the month." It cannot be said that on the seventh day the

calamity occurred, because it is also written "on the tenth." Neither can it be said that it happened "on the tenth," because it says "on the seventh"--hence it must be assumed that entrance to the Temple was gained by the enemy on the seventh, and they ate and did damage therein on the seventh, on the eighth, and on the ninth. Toward the evening of the ninth they set it on fire, and it continued to burn all day on the tenth, as it is written [ibid. vi. 4]: "Wo unto us! for the day waneth, for the shadows of the evening are stretched out." And this bears out the statement of R. Johanan, who said as follows: "Were I living in those days, I would have ordained the fast for the 10th of Abh; for on that day the greater part of the temple was burned." The sages of that day, however, held that the day when the calamity began should be observed as a fast-day.

Whence do we know that the second Temple was also destroyed on the 9th of Abh? We have learned in a Boraitha: "A happy event is credited to the day on which another happy event happened, while a calamity is ascribed to the day when another calamity occurred; and it was said that when the first Temple was destroyed it was on the eve preceding the 9th of Abh, which was also the night at the close of the Sabbath and also the close of the Sabbatical year. The watch at the time

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was that of Jehoyoreb, and the Levites were chanting in their proper places, at that moment reciting the passage [Psalms, xciv. 23]: "And he will bring back upon them their own injustice, and in their own wickedness will he destroy them"; and they did not have time to end the passage, which concludes, "yea, he will destroy them--the Lord our God," before the enemy entered and took possession of the Temple. This happened also at the destruction of the second Temple.

That the city of Bethar was taken on the 9th of Abh is traditional.

"And the site was ploughed up like afield." We have learned in a Boraitha: When Torosnopos the Wicked destroyed the Temple, a decree was promulgated that Rabbon Gamaliel (the First) should be executed. A certain master came into the house of learning, and said that the man of the nose 1 was being looked for (*i.e.*, the most prominent member of the community). R. Gamaliel understood that he was meant thereby, and hid himself. The same master surreptitiously came to the place where R. Gamaliel was concealed and asked him if, should he (the master) be instrumental in saving his (R. Gamaliel's) life, he would assure him a share in the world to come, and R. Gamaliel answered that he would. The master then demanded that he swear to it, and R. Gamaliel swore. Thereupon the master ascended to an attic, threw himself down, and died. The tradition goes on to say that if one of the signers of a death-warrant or any other unfavorable decree died, the decree became null and void. Thus was Rabbon Gamaliel saved. A heavenly Voice then came forth, and declared that the master would have a share in the world to come.

The rabbis taught: When the first Temple was destroyed, groups of young priests, who had the keys of the Temple, went up to the roof and said: "Creator of the Universe! it being that we were not destined to live and be trustworthy keepers of thy treasure, we herewith return the keys." With that they threw the keys up into the air, and something like a hand was seen to come forth and grasp them, whereupon the priests immediately threw themselves down into the fire beneath. They were mourned by Isaiah the prophet in the verses [Isaiah, xxii. 1 and 2]:

[paragraph continues] "The doom of the valley of vision. What aileth thee now, that thou art wholly gone up to the roofs? O noiseful, tumultuous city, joyous town! thy slain ones are not slain with the sword, and not those that die in battle."

"From the 1st of Abh it is incumbent upon a person to lessen his participation in joyful events." Said R. Jehudah, the son of R. Samuel bar Shilath, in the name of Rabh: "As from the 1st of Abh participation in joyful events must be lessened, so, as soon as the month of Adar enters, joyous festivities should be increased."

"During the week in which the 9th of Abh occurs," etc. Said R. Na'hman: "The washing of clothes is prohibited only when they are washed for the purpose of immediate wear, but it is allowed to wash clothes and put them away for future wear." R. Shesheth, however, said that even washing for future wear is also not allowed, and the proof is that the laundresses of Rabh would stop work on that entire week. It was taught also that R. Benjamin said in the name of R. Elazar: "Washing for immediate wear is prohibited during that week, but for future wear it is permitted."

An objection was raised: We have learned: "It is not allowed to wash clothes before the 9th of Abh, even if they be intended for use after the 9th. In those days the washing of the clothes was similar to our laundrying, and as for linen garments the prohibition is not effective (only for silk garments)?" The objection remains.

R. Itz'hak bar Giuri in the name of R. Johanan sent word, saying: "Although the prohibition against washing does not apply to linen garments, still it is not allowed to put on such garments during the week in which the 9th of Abh occurs." Said Rabh: "This applies only to the days preceding the 9th of Abh, but not to those succeeding it," while Samuel said that even on the days following the 9th of Abh it is also not allowed.

This constitutes a difference of opinion among Tanaim, as we learn in the following Boraitha: "If the ninth day of Abh falls on a Sabbath, or even if the eighth falls on a Sabbath, one may eat and drink whatever he chooses, and may place on his table even such viands as were eaten by Solomon while he was yet king. He must not shave or wash (his clothes) from the day of the new moon until after the fast of the 9th of Abh. Such is the dictum of R. Meir. R. Jehudah, however, says that it is

not allowed to do this the entire month of Abh; but R. Simeon ben Gamaliel maintains that the prohibition applies only to the week in which the 9th of Abh occurs."

In another Boraitha we have learned: "A man should be in a state of mourning from the first day of Abh until after the fast-day. Such is the dictum of R. Meir. R. Jehudah, however, says that during the entire month one is not allowed to do things prohibited for a mourner; but R. Simeon ben Gamaliel maintains that one must be in such a state only during the week in which the 9th of Abh occurs." (Hence the difference of opinion between Rabh and Samuel arises from the fact

that Rabh holds with R. Meir, while Samuel holds with the other Tanaim.)

Said R. Johanan: "All the three Tanaim of the Boraitha quoted derived their teachings from the following passage [Hosea, ii. 13]: 'And I will cause to cease all her mirth, her festival, her new moon, and her Sabbath,' etc. The Tana who teaches that one should be in a state of mourning from the 1st of Abh on, derives his teaching from the word 'festival' in the passage, because the 1st, being New Moon, is a festival. The Tana who applies his teaching to the whole month derives it from the words 'new moon,' and infers that it means the entire month; and the Tana who applies his teaching only to the week in which the 9th of Abh occurs, derives it from the word 'Sabbath,' and infers that it means the week of that Sabbath."

Said Rabha: "The Halakha prevails according to R. Meir," and on another occasion he said: "It prevails according to R. Simeon ben Gamaliel"; and by both statements he meant to render the more lenient construction of the ordinance. Thus it was necessary to make both statements. For had he said that the Halakha prevails only according to R. Meir, the state of mourning would extend for the nine days from the 1st to the 9th of Abh inclusive; and had he said that the Halakha prevails only according to R. Simeon ben Gamaliel, the state of mourning would extend over the days following the 9th of Abh in the same week. By citing both decrees, however, the ordinance is made more lenient, in that the state of mourning commences only with the first day of the week in which the 9th occurs and ends with the 9th itself.

"*On the day before the 9th of Abh a person should not partake of two dishes.*" Said R. Jehudah: "This applies only to the time from the sixth hour on (12 [P.M.](#)). but previous to that time

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it may be done." And again he said: This applies only to the concluding meal, but during the other meals he may eat what he chooses, and both statements are intended for the more lenient construction of the ordinance (*i.e.*, if one eats his last meal before noon, or if he eats a meal after noon but intends to eat again before the fast commences, he may in either case eat as many dishes as he chooses). We have learned in a Boraitha: On the eve of the 9th of Abh one must not eat two dishes, nor eat meat nor drink wine. R. Simeon b. Gamaliel, however, said: "He shall make a change." Said R. Jehudah: "What is meant by making a change? *E.g.*, if he usually eats two dishes, he shall now eat one; if he usually eats in the company of ten men, he shall now eat in the company of five; if his custom is to drink ten cups of wine, he shall now drink five. But all this applies to the time from the sixth hour on; but previously to the sixth hour, everything is permitted." In another Boraitha we have learned: On the eve of the 9th of Abh one should not eat two dishes, nor eat meat, nor drink wine. So is the decree of R. Meir. The sages, however, said: "He shall make a change, and shall use less meat and wine. How so? If his custom had been to eat a *littre* of meat, he shall now eat one-half of it; if his custom had been to drink a *lug* of wine, he shall now drink one-half of a *lug*; but if his custom had been to drink no wine at all, he must not drink it at all--even a drop." R. Simeon b. Gamaliel said: "If his custom had been to eat radishes or something salt, after his meal, he may continue to do it." In yet another Boraitha we have learned: "In case of the concluding meal before the 9th of Abh he must not eat meat, neither drink wine, nor wash himself; but if this meal is not the concluding meal, he may eat meat and drink wine, but must not 'wash." R. Ishmael, the son of R. Jose, however, said in the name of his father: "As long as it is allowed to eat meat, it is allowed to wash one's self also."

The rabbis taught: All ordinances applicable to a mourner are effective for all (Israelites) on the 9th of Abh; viz., one must not eat, drink, anoint himself, wear shoes, or have sexual intercourse. The Pentateuch, the Prophets, and the Hagiographa must not be read. The Mishna, Gemara, and Midrash must not be studied, nor Halakhoth or Haggadoth discussed; but something which one has not previously read he may read, and may study something which he had never before studied. The school-children must not learn on that day, because it is written

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[paragraph continues] [Psalms, xix. 9]: "The precepts of the Lord are upright, rejoicing the heart." R. Jehudah, however, says that one must not even read something new to him nor study anything which is new to him; but all agree that one may read Job, Lamentations, and the evil prophecies of Jeremiah, and the school-children must be idle on that day.

"*Nor drink any wine.*" We have learned in a Boraitha: One may eat salt meat and drink wine still in a state of fermentation (on the day before the 9th). How long must the meat lie in salt in order to be classed as salt meat which may be eaten? Said R. Hinana bar Kahana in the name of Samuel: As long as the time during which a peace-offering may be eaten; *i.e.*, if meat lie in salt two days and one night it is not yet salt meat, but if it lie longer it may be eaten on that day. The prohibition concerning drinking wine that has been standing uncovered does not apply to wine in a state of fermentation, and how long is wine in such a state? Three days.

R. Jehudah said in the name of Rabh: "Such was the custom of R. Jehudah bar R. Ilayi: On the night preceding the 9th of Abh, dry bread with salt and a jug of water were brought to him; he would sit behind the oven and eat the bread and drink the water, and his manner was the same as if the dead body of a near relative were lying before him." In a Boraitha we have learned: To him who eats meat and drinks wine on the 9th of Abh is applied the passage [Ezekiel, xxxii. 27]: "And their iniquities were upon their bones."

"*But the sages do not coincide with him.*" Said Rabha: "The Halakha prevails according to the sages."

"*On the 15th of Abh and on the Day of Atonement,*" etc. It is right that the Day of Atonement should be a day of rejoicing, because that is a day of forgiveness, and on that day the second tables of the Law were given to Moses; but why should the 15th of Abh be a day of rejoicing? Said R. Jehudah in the name of Samuel: "On that day it was permitted to the members of the different tribes to intermarry." Whence is this deduced? Because it is written [Numb. xxxvi. 6]: "This is the thing which the Lord hath commanded concerning the daughters of Zelophehad," etc., they claim that "this is the thing" implies that only for that generation was it decreed, but for later generations the decree does not apply.

R. Joseph in the name of R. Na'hman said: On that day the members of the tribe of Benjamin were permitted to intermarry

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with the other tribes, as it is written [Judges, xxi. 1]: "Now the men of Israel had sworn in Mizpah, saying: Not any one of us shall give his daughter unto Benjamin for wife." Whence was

it deduced that subsequently permission might be given to intermarry with the tribe of Benjamin? Because the quoted passage says "Any one of us," and Rabh said that their descendants were not included in the vow.

Rabba bar bar Hana said in the name of R. Johanan: On that day the last of those who were destined to die in the desert died, and the destiny was thus fulfilled; for the Master said that so long as the destiny was still unfulfilled, the Lord did not speak to Moses for his particular sake, as it is written [Deut. ii. 16 and 17]: "So it came to pass, when all the men of war were spent by dying from the midst of the people, that the Lord spoke unto me, saying"; and "unto me" signifies that the Lord spoke unto Moses in particular.

Ula said: "On that day the guards appointed by Jeroboam to prevent the Israelites from coming to Jerusalem were abolished by Hoshea the son of Elah, and he said: 'Let them go wherever they choose.'"

R. Mathnah said: "On that day permission was given to bury the dead who were killed in battle at the city of Bethar." And R. Mathnah said again: "On that day, when it was permitted to bury those killed at Bethar, the assembly at Yamnia ordained the benediction reading: 'Blessed art thou, God the good, that doth good.' What is meant thereby? By 'good' is meant that the bodies were not left to putrefy, and by 'doth good' that burial was permitted."

Rabba and R., Joseph both said: On that day they ceased to cut wood for the altar, as we have learned in a Boraitha: R. Eliezer the Great said: "From the fifteenth day of Abh the heat of the sun was lessened and the timber was no longer dry, so they ceased to cut wood for the altar." [Said R. Menasseh: "That day was called the day on which the saws were broken"], and from that day on, he who adds the night to his time for study may have years and days added to his life.

"In white garments--borrowed ones," etc. The rabbis taught: The king's daughter borrowed from the daughter of the high-priest; the daughter of the latter would borrow from the daughter of the Segan (assistant); the Segan's daughter would borrow from the daughter of the priest who was anointed for the war [see Deut. xx. 2]; and she in turn would borrow

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from the daughter of an ordinary priest. The daughters of the ordinary Israelites would borrow one from the other, in order not to put to shame those who had none of their own.

"These clothes were also to be immersed." Said R. Eliezer: "Even if the clothes were folded and laid in a chest, they must also be immersed."

"The maidens went out and danced," etc. We have learned in a Boraitha: Those that had no wives would go there to procure a spouse.

"Saying: 'Young men, look and observe,'" etc. The rabbis taught: The pretty ones among the maidens would say: "Regard but beauty alone, because a woman is made only for beauty." Those among them who were of good family would say: "Rather look to a good family," for

women are but made to bear children (and those of good family produce good children). The ill-favored ones among them would say: "Make your selections only for the glory of Heaven, but provide liberally for us."

Said Ula Biraah in the name of R. Elazar: "In the future the Holy One, blessed be He, will make a ring of the righteous, and He will sit among them in the garden of Eden, and they everyone will point to Him with their fingers, as it is written [Isaiah, xxv. 9]: 'And men will say on that day, Lo, this is our God, for whom we have waited that He would help us: this is the Lord, for whom we have waited; we will be glad and we will rejoice in His salvation.'"

END OF TRACT TAANITH.

Footnotes

[80:1](#) It was the general custom among the Israelites of that day to turn over the couches on which they sate during the day, and slept during the night, on any occasion of mourning and also as a sign of their being in actual mourning.

[84:1](#) The names Gonebe Eli, Kotze Ketzi'oth, and Salmai Hanthophathai were not in reality proper names, but signified the following: Gonebe Eli means those who stole the pestle; Ketzi'oth means dry figs or cinnamon, from the Arabic cassia; and Salmai is derived from the word Sulam a ladder. The connection is easily established, as alluding to the means employed by those pious men safely to elude the guards appointed to watch for the firstfruits and the wood for the altar.

[86:1](#) How it is inferred from the passage is not understood by us, nor explained by any commentary.

[87:1](#) The expression in the original is 'Hotam, meaning *nose*; but Abraham Krochmal asserts that 'Hotam should read 'Hotham, meaning a *seal*, and thus the passage would read "the man of the seal," *i.e.*, the prince of the community.