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[The new chapter discusses the times during the year where the Kohanim perform the Priestly Blessing. It also introduces us to the ma'amados. This Mishna describes the times of the wood offerings and it discusses other fasts as well (besides those for rain).]

The Mishnah states that there are three periods during the year in which the Kohanim raise their hands to give the Priestly Blessings four times during the day - in Shacharis, in Mussaf, and in Minchah, and during Ne'ilah, "closing of the gates": The three periods are on the fasts, and the ma'amados, and on Yom Kippur.

What are the ma'amados? The Mishnah explains that it is written, "Command the children of Israel, and say to them: My offering my food" (Num. 28:2); and how can the korban of one be performed, if he does not stand by its side? The Early Prophets established twenty-four divisions; for each division there was in Jerusalem a delegation [ma'amad] of Kohanim, of Levites, and Israelites. When the time of the division arrives, the Kohanim and Levites go up to Yerushalayim, and Israelites of the division gather in their towns to read the section of the Creation.

The people of the ma'amad would fast four days during the week, from Monday until Thursday. They would not fast on Friday because of the honor of Shabbos. They would not fast on Sunday either, in order that they would not go out from rest and enjoyment to weariness and fast, and might die.

The Mishnah teaches us the Torah readings of the ma'amados. On the first day - "In the beginning" and "Let

there be a firmament" (were recited); on the second - "Let there be a firmament" and "Let the waters be gathered." On the third - "Let the waters be gathered" and "Let there be lights." On the fourth - "Let there be lights" and "Let the waters swarm." On the fifth - "Let the waters swarm" and "Let the earth bring forth." On the sixth - "Let the earth bring forth," "And the heaven...were finished." The larger segment would be read by two people and the smaller one would be read by one. This reading from the Torah was done by Shacharis and by Mussaf. By Minchah, they would enter the synagogues and recite the readings by heart, as they recite the Shema. Friday by Minchah, they would not gather at all because of the honor of Shabbos.

Any day on which Hallel is recited; there is no ma'amad in Shacharis. If there is a korban mussaf, there is no ma'amad by Ne'ilah. On a day that a wood offering is brought, there is no ma'amad by Minchah. This is the opinion of Rabbi Akiva. Ben Azzai said to him: "This is the manner in which Rabbi Yehoshua would learn: when there is a Mussaf sacrifice, there is no ma'amad by Minchah. On a day that a wood offering is brought, there is no ma'amad by Ne'ilah. Rabbi Akiva retracted and taught as Ben Azzai.

There were nine times during the year that there was a wood festival for the Kohanim and the people. (*This was the day that these families donated wood to be used on the Mizbeach. They continued contributing wood on this day for all future years and it was regarded as a festival for that particular family.*) On the first of Nissan - the children of Arah ben Yehudah (donated the wood); on the twentieth of Tammuz - the children of David ben Yehudah; on the fifth of

Av - the children of Parosh ben Yehudah; on the seventh of it - the children of Yonadav ben Rekhav; on the tenth of it - the children of Sena'ah ben Binyamin; on the fifteenth of it - the children of Zattu ben Yehudah, and with them Kohanim and Levites and whoever erred in his tribe, the sons of the pestle deceivers, the sons of the packers of dried figs. On the twentieth of it - the children of Pahat-Moab ben Yehudah; on the twentieth of Elul - the children of Adin ben Yehudah; on the first of Teves, the children of Parosh returned a second time. On the first of Teves there was no ma'amad on it, for they recited Hallel and there was a Mussaf sacrifice and a wood offering.

Five things befell our ancestors on the Seventeenth of Tammuz, and five on the ninth of Av. On the Seventeenth of Tammuz the Tablets were broken and the tamid ceased (to be offered), and the city was breached, and Apostomos burned the Torah and placed an idol in the sanctuary. On the Ninth of Av it was decreed against our ancestors that they would not enter the Land, and the Temple was destroyed the first time and the second time, and Beitar was taken, and the city was plowed up. When the month of Av begins, we limit our joy.

In the week in which the Ninth of Av falls, it is prohibited to cut hair and to wash clothes, and on Thursday, they are permitted because of the honor of Shabbos. On the eve of Tisha B'Av, a man may not eat two cooked dishes, he may not eat meat, and he may not drink wine. Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel maintains that he should change from his usual manner of eating. Rabbi Yehudah obligates overturning the bed, and the Sages did not agree with him.

Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel said: There were no holidays for Israel as the Fifteenth of Av and as Yom Kippur, for on them, the daughters of Yerushalayim go forth in borrowed white garments, so as not to embarrass whoever does not have; all the garments require immersion. And the daughters of Yerushalayim go forth and dance in the vineyards. And what would they say? "Young man, lift up your eyes and see what you choose for yourself. Do not set your eyes on beauty, set

your eyes on the family: 'Grace is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman that fears the Lord, she shall be praised' (Prov. 31:30), and it says, 'Give her the fruit of her hands, and let her works praise her in the gates' (*ibid.*, v. 31)." And similarly it says, "Go forth, O you daughters of Zion, and gaze upon King Solomon, even upon the crown with which his mother has crowned him on his wedding day, and on the day of the gladness of his heart" (Cant. 3:11). "His wedding day" is the giving of the Torah, "on the day of the gladness of his heart" is the building of the Beis Hamikdosh, may it be built speedily in our days. (26a2 - 26b2)

The Mishnah had stated that there are three periods during the year in which the Kohanim raise their hands to give the Priestly Blessings four times during the day - in Shacharis, in Mussaf, and in Minchah, and during Ne'ilah, "closing of the gates": The three periods are on the fasts, and the ma'amados, and on Yom Kippur. - It would seem from the Mishnah that there is a Mussaf prayer on fast days and on ma'amados. This is obviously not the case! The Gemora explains that there are actually some words missing from the Mishnah and this is the clarification. There are three times during the year that the Kohanim recite the Priestly Blessing during every prayer. On Yom Kippur, there are four tefillos where the Kohanim will bless the people. On a fast day and the ma'amados, the Kohanim will bless the people by Shacharis and Minchah (*and whenever Ne'ilah is recited*). (26b2)

Rav Nachman said in the name of Rabbah bar Avuha: This is the opinion of Rabbi Meir. The Sages, however, say: At Shacharis and at Mussaf there is the Priestly Blessing but at Minchah or at Ne'ilah there is no the Priestly Blessing. Who are meant by 'the Sages'? — It is Rabbi Yehudah. For it has been taught: At all [services, namely] at Shacharis, at Mussaf, at Minchah and at Ne'ilah there is the Priestly Blessing; this is the opinion of Rabbi Meir. Rabbi Yehudah says: At Shacharis and at Mussaf there is the Priestly Blessing, but at Minchah or Ne'ilah there is no the Priestly Blessing. Rabbi Yosi says: At Ne'ilah there is the Priestly Blessing, but at Minchah there is no the Priestly Blessing.

In what point do they differ? Rabbi Meir holds the view that the reason why on ordinary days the Kohanim do not bless the people at Minchah is because of the likelihood of drunkenness, but on the days [cited above] the question of drunkenness does not arise. Rabbi Yehudah takes the view that as drunkenness during [the time of] Shacharis and Mussaf on ordinary days is not usual, the Rabbis did not prohibit the Priestly Blessing [at these services on fast-days also], whereas at [the time of] Minchah and Ne'ilah since on ordinary days drunkenness is quite a likely occurrence the Rabbis prohibited the Priestly Blessing [at these services even on fast-days]. Rabbi Yosi holds the view that the Rabbis confined their restriction to the Minchah only seeing that it is read every day, but they did not to the Ne'ilah which is not read every day. (26b2 – 26b3)

Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: The halachah is in accordance with the view of Rabbi Meir. Rabbi Yochanan said: The people followed the view of Rabbi Meir. And Rava said: The established custom is in accordance with the view of Rabbi Meir. On the view that the halachah is according to Rabbi Meir we teach it [explicitly] in the public discourses; but if we say that the established custom is according to Rabbi Meir, then we should not teach it explicitly in the public discourses, but we may give our decisions in accordance with it; if, however, we say that the people followed the view of Rabbi Meir then we do not definitely give a decision in accordance with it, but should one have acted on it we do not declare his action null. But Rav Nachman said: The halachah is according to Rabbi Yosi. And the halachah is [indeed] according to Rabbi Yosi. But nowadays why do the Kohanim recite the Priestly Blessing on fast-days at Minchah? — As they recite the Blessing very near sunset, it is as if this was the Ne'ilah [service]. (26b3)

It is, however, generally agreed that an intoxicated [Kohen] may not recite the Priestly Blessing. From where is this view adduced? — Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said in the name of Bar Kappara: Why does the section dealing with [the blessing by] the Kohen follow immediately after the portion of the nazir?

In order to teach you that, just as the nazir is forbidden to drink wine, so too is the Kohen about to recite the Priestly Blessing. The father of Rabbi Zeira, and some say Oshaya bar Zavda, challenged this: [If that is so], then just as the nazir is forbidden to eat the seed [of grapes], so too should the Kohen about to recite the Priestly Blessing be forbidden [to eat] the seed of grapes. — Rabbi Yitzchak replied: Scripture says: To minister to Him and to bless in His name; [from this is to be inferred] that just as the officiating Kohen may eat the seed [of grapes] so too may the Kohen about to recite the Priestly Blessing. [If so, why not also argue]: Just as an officiating Kohen may not be blemished so too may a Kohen reciting the Priestly Blessing not be blemished. — Surely he is compared to the nazir. Why do you choose to make your analogies more lenient [for the priest]? Why not make your analogies stricter [for him]! — These analogies are but supports for a Rabbinical law and they must therefore incline towards the side of leniency. (26b3 – 27a1)

#### INSIGHTS TO THE DAF

##### EATING PRIOR TO DAVENING MUSSAF

It emerges from the Gemora that Rabbi Yehudah maintains that there will never be the Priestly Blessing by Minchah or Ne'ilah; only by Shacharis or Mussaf. This is true even on Yom Kippur. The reason given is because there is a concern that the Kohen might get drunk and he is prohibited from reciting the Blessing in that state. There is generally no concern for drunkenness in the morning before Shacharis or Mussaf. Since Minchah and Ne'ilah can be recited the entire day, drunkenness is common and therefore he rules that the Blessing is not recited by those tefillos.

The Rosh states in the name of Rabbeinu Chananel that it is implicit from our Gemora that one is not allowed to eat before Mussaf for otherwise, the kohanim might get drunk before Mussaf as well. Shulchan Aruch (O"C 286:3) rules that it is permitted to taste fruit or a little bread prior to davening Mussaf. However, eating a meal is prohibited. This would be consistent with the opinion of the Rosh.

The Bach writes that from the language of the Shulchan Aruch, he can infer that there is no prohibition against eating prior to Mussaf; rather, it has become an accepted practice and therefore drunkenness is not so common. According to the Bach, if one would be weak and he appraises that he cannot daven Mussaf without eating, he would be permitted to eat since it is only a custom not to eat.

In the sefer Shoel U'meishiv (3,1:120), he comments on the custom of some communities, where they refrain from eating prior to shaking the lulav on Sukkos. They daven Shacharis and Hallel early in the morning and then they go home to eat and afterwards return to the Shul to daven Mussaf. The Shoel U'meishiv objects to this because they are now eating before Mussaf. He writes, however, that he remembers in the year 5597, in the city of Nikolsburg, he witnessed people davening every Shabbos morning until the Torah reading, going home to eat and afterwards returning to daven Mussaf in the tenth hour of the day. When he asked them to explain this custom, they responded that the Gaon Rav Mordechai Bennet ruled that they had permission to do so since they were weak and desired to eat. This ruling is seemingly based on the Bach who maintains that there is no actual prohibition regarding eating prior to Mussaf, rather it is only a custom and therefore it can be overridden.

There are many communities where it has become the custom for the entire congregation to recite kiddush and eat a little prior to Mussaf. Rav Shmuel Rosenberg, the Av Beis Din in Unsdorf was asked if it was permitted for an individual to separate from the tzibur and daven Mussaf while everyone is making kiddush and only then would he eat. He rules that the custom of not eating prior to reciting Mussaf is an established custom and there have been many G-d fearing Torah scholars who refrain from eating prior to davening Mussaf. We cannot object to someone who wants to be stringent on himself in this regard. Furthermore, since Shulchan Aruch rules that only tasting is permitted and not an eating which will cause satiation, who can be so meticulous to discern the amount in which he is eating.

There is an argument amongst the poskim as to the amount of food that one is permitted to eat prior to davening Mussaf. Some rule that there is no set amount that is prohibited, providing that he is not eating a meal that would require Birchas Hamazon afterwards. According to this, one would be allowed to eat cake and drink coffee before he davens Mussaf. The Mishnah Berura's opinion is that one should not eat cake that measures more than the size of an egg. It is brought in the name of Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach that the custom is to be lenient and one has who to rely on if he will eat cake that measures more than the size of an egg prior to davening Mussaf. (Peninei Halacha)

### **Understanding Ma'amados**

The Rama in safer Olas R'iyah says the main function of Korbanos is to teach man his mortality and show man the infiniteness of the entire universe. Korbanos show that there is no one but Hashem. Why do we burn a korban and offer an olah? It seems to be a strange gift to Hashem. Imagine I want to show my love for you by spending a lot of money on a gift and throwing it in the garbage!!! A Korban symbolizes the abolition of all that exists. It's not a negative act of desperation or destruction. Rather it is a positive act wherein I can dedicate all which I have to Hashem.

This was the function of the anshei ma'amad. They read the parshiyos of creation to teach that the world on existed and continues to exist in the merit of Korbanos (today we have Tefillos and study about the korbanos). They fasted! Why? They should have eaten because of the Yom Simcha of bringing a korban. They daven one or two (Mussof /Niela) extra t'fillos. They were sh'luchim of all of Klal Yisrael for bringing the Korban tamid.. They were elevated to the highest level of kedushah. Fasting therefore was a complement to their simcha. The fasting was indicative of their high spiritual level, as we see Moshe fasted while on Mount Sinai. To approach the Sh'khnah you must fast and elevate yourself. Extra t'fillos were a consequence of their high level of avodah and obligated them to a level of five t'fillos like Yom Kippur. (based on the Ohr Hatorah: D'vorim)

### **CALCULATIONS OF DEATHS**

Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel said: There were no holidays for Israel like the 15th of Av and Yom Kippur. The *Gemora* offers several reasons for the celebration on the fifteenth of Av. Rabbah bar bar Chanah states in the name of Rabbi Yochanan that this was the day that the last of those who were destined to die in the desert died and that was when Hashem returned to speak to Moshe.

Rashbam cites the words of Chazal which are found in the Yerushalmi and the Medrashim in Eichah. Rabbi Levi said: Each year on the eve of Tishah b'Av, an announcement would be sent throughout the camp, saying: "Go out and dig graves, go out and dig graves." The people would go out and dig graves and sleep in them. In the morning it would be announced to separate the dead from the living. They would arise and find their number diminished. In the last of the forty years, they did this but found themselves undiminished. They said, "We must have made a mistake in counting. Could it be that the Elders had miscalculated the beginning of the month through a mistaken sighting of the new moon?" They did the same thing on the tenth, eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth, but still no one died. When the moon was full, they said, "It seems that the Holy One has annulled the decree from all of us," so they made the fifteenth a holiday. They rejoiced at the realization that their entry to *Eretz Yisroel* was imminent. It was at that time that prophecy returned to Moshe.

Tosfos asks that according to this, they ceased to die on the ninth of Av preceding the last year. Why wasn't the prophecy returned to Moshe from that year? He answers that since they were still under the impression that the following year, there once again will be thousands of deaths; they were still in a state of sadness and the *Shechinah* does not rest on one who is not happy. It wasn't until the fifteenth of Av when they came to the realization that there will be no more deaths; that brought about joy and the *Shechinah* came down to Moshe. Tosfos states that every year there would be a little more than twenty-one thousand deaths. The deaths over

twenty-one thousand totaled fifteen thousand over the duration of the forty years.

The Maharsha and other commentators ask on Tosfos that there were 603,000 people who came out of Egypt, and according to Tosfos, if you make the calculation, it would emerge that over the course of forty years, there will be over eight-hundred thousand deaths.

The *Chavos Yair* (250) cites from Harav Dovid Oppenheim who explains that any year that Tisha b'Av occurred on Shabbos; there would be no deaths. According to the calendar, it would emerge that there were nine times that this occurred in the Wilderness. It emerges that there were only twenty-eight years that the *Bnei Yisroel* would die. Multiply twenty-one thousand times twenty-eight and that will total five-hundred and eighty eight thousand. The numbers more than twenty-one thousand, over the course of the forty years equaled fifteen thousand and that is how the 603,000 people died.

### **DAILY MASHAL**

The Mishnah states that the people of the *maamad* who would come to Jerusalem would fast from Monday through Thursday. They would not fast on Friday, as fasting would detract from the honor of Shabbos, and they would not fast on Sunday, because it is inappropriate to depart from a day of rest and delight and become fatigued through fasting, which could lead to death, i.e. cause one to feel faint. This ruling contains a profound lesson for us as to how we are to view Shabbos every week. Shabbos is a day of rest and a day of delight, and we should savor every moment that HaShem allows us to bask in His Presence. The *Gemara* later (27b) states that when Shabbos ends, the *neshamah yeseira*, the extra soul that one is granted upon the arrival of Shabbos, departs, and one feels sad. It is incumbent upon us to anticipate the Shabbos all week, as the Shabbos literally rejuvenates our souls.