

Object Lessons #2

Second Temple Period

Timeline

- 164 BCE Judah Maccabee defeats the Greeks in Jerusalem, Hasmonean sovereignty begins
- 134-104 Johanan Hyrcanus reigns and expand Hasmonean Kingdom, converts the Edomites
- 63 Romans come to end the civil war between Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II, Roman rule begins
- 44 Julius Caesar murdered
- 40 Mattityahu Antigonus conquers Jerusalem with the help of the Parthians, Herod flees to Masada and then to Rome where he is appointed king of the Jews
- 37 Herod's rule begins
- 20 Herod rebuilds the Temple in Jerusalem
- 4 BCE Herod dies and is buried in Herodion
- 66 CE -70 CE Great Revolt
- 70 CE Destruction of the Temple and of Jerusalem
- 132 -135 CE Bar Kokhba Revolt
- 1967 Six-Day War
- 1969 Beginning of excavations in the Jewish Quarter

Stone Vessels: Unique to This Time and Place

And anything on which one of them falls when dead shall be impure: be it any article of wood, or a cloth, or a skin, or a sack—any such article that can be put to use shall be dipped in water, and it shall remain impure until evening; then it shall be pure. And if any of those falls into an earthen vessel, everything inside it shall be impure and [the vessel] itself you shall break. (VaYikra 11:32-33)

Stone vessels and dung vessels and earth vessels [pottery that was not fired] are not susceptible to ritual impurity, neither by Torah law nor by rabbinic law (Menachot 69b)

And they brought oxen, upon whose backs were placed doors, and the children sat upon them with stone cups in their hands. When they reached the Shiloah

spring they got down and filled the cups with water and then they ascended and sat again on the doors. (Mishnah Para 3:2)

And why was it called the Chamber of the Stone House? It is because all the actions [associated with the red heifer were performed] in dung vessels, stone vessels, and earth vessels (Yoma 2a)

Come and see how far purity has spread in Israel! (Shabbat 13a)

The way down to the place of immersion, they are impure; the way up, they are pure, since the way down is not the same as the way up. (Shekalim 21)

Same Practice, Different Meaning

After which they assemble themselves together again into one place, and when they have clothed themselves in white veils, they then bathe their bodies in cold water. And after this purification is over, they every one meet together in an apartment of their own, into which it is not permitted to any of another sect to enter; while they go, after a pure manner, into the dining-room, as into a certain holy temple, and quietly set themselves down; upon which the baker lays them loaves in order; the cook also brings a single plate of one sort of food, and sets it before every one of them; but a priest says grace before meat; and it is unlawful for any one to taste of the food before grace be said. (Josephus Jewish War Book 2, chapter 8)

Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. ¹⁴ But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" (Matthew 3:13)

Shallow Waters

Regarding a [impure] needle on the steps of a cavern [which houses a *mikveh*], if one was moving the waters back and forth [by stirring the waters around with one's hands or feet], once a wave passes over it [the needle], it is pure. (Mishnah Mikvaot 7:7)

MISHNA: One must wash his hands before eating non-sacred food, and for tithes and for teruma; but for eating sacrificial food one must immerse one's hands in purification waters (Hagigah 18b)

Everyday Life

In our excavations in the Jewish Quarter we discovered a different Jerusalem, Jerusalem of the everyday, residences which we had never seen before. This is the uniqueness and importance of these finds. Our excavation uncovered a neighborhood of wealthy and powerful people. We saw this in the expansive homes, the decorative wall paintings and the colorful mosaics, the sophisticated

baths and the luxurious accoutrements of the wealthy. . . influenced by the styles of the Hellenistic-Roman world. (Nahman Avigad, The Upper City of Jerusalem)

Sundial

So the prophet Isaiah called to the LORD, and He made the shadow which had descended on the dial of Ahaz recede ten steps. (Kings 2 20:11)

How Did People Tell Time?

Rava said to his servant: You, who are not expert in the measures of the Sages, when the sun is at the top of the palm trees, light the Shabbat lights. [His servant asked him:] What should we do on a cloudy day? : In the city, watch the roosters. In a field, watch the ravens. Alternatively, you can watch the plants [*adanei*] (Shabbat 35b)

אמר רבי אבהו אמר רבי שמעון בן לקיש: כדי שילך אדם ממגדל נוניא לטבריא מיל.

Rabbi Abbahu said that Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish said in the time it takes a person to walk the distance from Migdal Nunia to Tiberias, which is a mil. (Pesachim 46a)

רבי יעקב בר אבא רבי עולא דקיסרין בשם רבי חנינה. עד כדי הילוך ארבעת מיל

Up to four *mil*'s walk (Yerushalmi Pesachim 21a)

Night Watches

וַיְהִי בַּאֲשֶׁמֶרֶת הַבֹּקֶר וַיִּשְׁקֹף יְהוָה אֶל-מַחֲנֵה מִצְרַיִם בַּעֲמֹד אֵשׁ וָעָנָן וַיִּהְיֶה אֵת מַחֲנֵה מִצְרַיִם:

At the morning watch, God looked down upon the Egyptian army from a pillar of fire and cloud, and threw the Egyptian army into panic. (Shmot 14:24)

וַיָּבֹא גִדְעֹון וּמֵאֵה-אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר-אֵתוֹ בַּקֶּצֶה הַמִּחֲנֶה רֹאשׁ הָאֲשֶׁמֶרֶת הַתִּיכּוֹלָה אֶךְ הֵקֵם הַקִּימוּ אֶת-הַשֹּׁמְרִים

Gideon and the hundred men with him arrived at the outposts of the camp, at the beginning of the middle watch, just after the sentries were posted. (Judges 7:19)

קוּמִי וְרִנִּי (בְּלִיל) [בְּלִילָה] לְרֹאשׁ אֲשֶׁמֶרֶת שְׁפָכִי כַמַּיִם לִבְךָ וְכַח פְּנֵי אֲדֹנִי

Arise, cry out in the night At the beginning of the watches,
Pour out your heart like water In the presence of the Lord! (Eicha 2:19)

מֵאִמְתִּי קוּרִין אֶת שְׁמַע בְּעֶרְבִית. מִשְׁעָה שֶׁהַכֹּהֲנִים נִכְנְסִים לֶאֱכֹל בְּתֵרוּמָתָן, עַד סוֹף הָאֲשֶׁמוּרָה הָרִאשׁוֹנָה, דְּבָרֵי רַבִּי אֶלְיעֶזֶר

From what time may one recite the Shema in the evening?
From the time that the priests enter [their houses] in order to eat their terumah

until the end of the first watch, the words of Rabbi Eliezer. (Mishnah Berachot 1:1)

וְסִימָן לְדַבֵּר: מִשְׁמֶרֶת רִאשׁוֹנָה חֲמֹר נֹעֵר, שְׁנִיָּה כְּלָבִים צוֹעֲקִים, שְׁלִישִׁית, תִּינוֹק יוֹנֵק מִשְׁדֵּי אִמּוֹ, וְאַשָּׁה מְסַפֶּרֶת עִם בַּעְלָהּ.

In the first watch, the donkey brays; in the second, dogs bark; and in the third people begin to rise, a baby nurses from its mother's breast and a wife converses with her husband. (Berachot 3a)

Twilight Time

וְאִיזֶהוּ בֵּין הַשְּׁמָשׁוֹת? — מִשְׁתַּשְׁקַע הַחֲמָה כָּל זְמַן שְׁפָנִי מִזְרַח מַאֲדִימִין. הַכְּסִיף הַתַּחְתּוֹן וְלֹא הַכְּסִיף הָעֶלְיוֹן — בֵּין הַשְּׁמָשׁוֹת. הַכְּסִיף הָעֶלְיוֹן וְהַשֶּׁנֶּה לַתַּחְתּוֹן — זֶהוּ לֵילָה, דְּבָרֵי רַבִּי יְהוּדָה. רַבִּי נְחֵמְיָה אוֹמֵר: כְּדֵי שְׂיִהְיֶה אָדָם מִשְׁתַּשְׁקַע הַחֲמָה חֲצִי מִיל. רַבִּי יוֹסִי אוֹמֵר: בֵּין הַשְּׁמָשׁוֹת כְּהָרֹף עֵין, זֶה נִכְנָס וְזֶה יוֹצֵא, וְאִי אֶפְשָׁר לַעֲמֹד עָלָיו.

And what is twilight? From when the sun sets, as long as the eastern face of the sky is reddened If the lower segment of the sky has lost its color, and the upper segment has not yet lost its color, that is the twilight period. If the upper segment has lost its color, and its color equals that of the lower one, it is night; this is the statement of Rabbi Yehuda. Rabbi Nehemya says: the time it takes for a person to walk half a *mil* after the sun sets. Rabbi Yosei says: Twilight is like the blink of an eye: This, enters and that, leaves, and it is impossible to calculate it (Shabbat 34b)

אָמַר רַבִּי חֲנִינָא: הַרְצָה לִידַע שִׁיעוּרוֹ שֶׁל רַבִּי נְחֵמְיָה יָנִים חֲמָה בְּרֹאשׁ הַכְּרָמֶל וַיֵּרֶד וַיִּטְבֹּל בָּיָם וַיַּעֲלֶה — וְזֶהוּ שִׁיעוּרוֹ שֶׁל רַבִּי נְחֵמְיָה.

Rabbi Hanina said: One who wants to know the precise measure of Rabbi Nehemya's twilight should do the following: Leave the sun at the top of Mount Carmel, and descend and immerse himself in the sea, and emerge, and that is Rabbi Nehemya's measure (Shabbat 35a)

Time: Temple

The Sages taught: They sound six blasts on Shabbat eve The first blast is in order to stop the people from work in the fields. The second blast is to stop those who are working in the city, and to inform the proprietors to close the stores. The third is to inform them to light the Shabbat light; that is the statement of Rabbi Natan. Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi says: The third blast is to inform those who don phylacteries throughout the day to remove their phylacteriest. And he pauses after the third blast for the length of time it takes to fry a small fish or to stick bread to the sides of the oven And he sounds a *tekia*, and sounds a *terua*, and sounds a *tekia*, and he accepts Shabbat (Shabbat 35b)

Queen Helene, his mother, fashioned a gold chandelier [above the entrance of the Sanctuary]. : When the sun rose, sparks of light would emanate from the chandelier, and everyone knew that the time to recite *Shema* had arrived. (Yoma 37b)

The appointed priest said to the other priests: Go out and observe if it is day and the time for slaughter has arrived. If the time has arrived, the observer says: There is light [*barkai*]. . . And why did they need to ascertain whether or not it is day? Once, the light of the moon rose, and they imagined that the eastern sky was illuminated with sunlight, and they slaughtered the daily offering [before its appropriate time]. (Mishna Yoma 3:1 and 2)

Time: Courts and Pesach

רבי מאיר אומר, אוקלין כל חמש, ושורפין בתחלת שש. ורבי יהודה אומר, אוקלין כל ארבע, ותולין כל חמש, ושורפין בתחלת שש:

ועוד אומר רבי יהודה, שתי חלות של תודה פסולות מנחות על גג האצטבא. כל זמן שמנחות, כל העם אוכלים. נטלה אחת, תולין, לא אוקלין ולא שורפין. נטלו שתיהן, התחילו כל העם שורפין

Rabbi Meir says: one may eat [chametz] the whole of the five [hours] and must burn [it] at the beginning of the sixth. Rabbi Judah says: one may eat the whole of the four [hours], suspend it the whole of the fifth, and must burn it at the beginning of the sixth.

And furthermore, Rabbi Yehuda said: Two disqualified loaves of a thanks-offering are placed on the bench in the colonnade in the Temple. As long as the loaves are placed there, the entire nation continues to eat leaven. When one of the loaves was taken away, they neither eat nor burn their leaven. When they were both taken away, the entire nation began burning (Mishnah Pesachim 1:4-5)

אחד אומר בחמש ואחד אומר בשבע, עדותן בטלה, שבחמש חמה במזרח ובשבע חמה במערב:

Rabbi Yehuda adds: But if one says that the event occurred at five hours, and one says that the event occurred at seven hours, their testimony is void. since at five hours the sun is in the east and at seven the sun is in the west, (Mishnah Sanhedrin 5:3)

Sectarian Time

ויעל על-המזבח | אשר-עשה בבית-אל בחמשה עשר יום בחדש השמיני בחדש אשר-בדא (מלבד) [מלבד] ויעש חג לבני ישראל ויעל על-המזבח להקטיר:

On the fifteenth day of the eighth month—the month in which he had contrived of his own mind to establish a festival for the Israelites—Jeroboam ascended the altar that he had made in Bethel. (Kings I 12:33)

ויעל המלך ושגרו וכל-הקהל בירושלם לעשות הפסח בחדש השני:

The king and his officers and the congregation in Jerusalem had agreed to keep the Passover in the second month, (Divrei HaYamim II 30:2)

כִּיּוֹן שְׁחַשְׁכָּה, אָמַר לָהֶם, בָּא הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ, אֹמְרִים, הֵן. בָּא הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ, אֹמְרִים הֵן. מַגֵּל זֶה, אֹמְרִים הֵן. מַגֵּל זֶה, אֹמְרִים הֵן. קָפָה זֶה, אֹמְרִים הֵן. קָפָה זֶה, אֹמְרִים הֵן. בְּשַׁבַּת אָמַר לָהֶם, שַׁבַּת זֶה, אֹמְרִים הֵן. שַׁבַּת זֶה, אֹמְרִים הֵן. אֶקְצֹר, וְהֵם אֹמְרִים לוֹ קָצֹר. אֶקְצֹר, וְהֵם אֹמְרִים לוֹ קָצֹר. שְׁלֹשׁ פְּעָמִים עַל כָּל דָּבָר וְדָבָר, וְהֵם אֹמְרִים לוֹ הֵן, הֵן, הֵן. וְכָל כֶּה לָמָּה. מִפְּנֵי הַבִּיטּוֹסִים, שֶׁהֵיוּ אֹמְרִים, אֵין קִצִּירַת הָעֵמָר בְּמוֹצָאֵי יוֹם טוֹב:

. . . Why do I need those involved to publicize each stage of the rite to that extent? The mishna answers: It is due to the Boethusians, who would say: There is no harvest of the *omer* at the conclusion of the first Festival day of Passover (Mishnah Menachot 10:3)

he took his staff and his money in his hand, and went to Yavne to Rabban Gamliel on the day on which Yom Kippur occurred according to his own calculation. Rabban Gamliel stood up and kissed him on his head. He said to him: Come in peace, my teacher and my student. My teacher in wisdom and my student, as you accepted my statement, (Mishnah Rosh haShanah 2:9)

Roman Holidays

MISHNA: And these are the festivals of Gentiles: Kalenda, Saturnalia, and Kratesis (Avodah Zarah 8a)

When he saw that days were getting longer, he said calendies [kalen is good or beautiful in Greek, dies is day in Latin: beautiful day] . . . Rabbi Johanan does not say so, but the empire of Egypt and the empire of Rome were fighting with one another. They said, how long are we killing one another in this war? Let us institute the rule that the empire should be preeminent which will tell its army commander, fall on your sword, and he will obey. The Egyptian did not obey. In Rome there was an old man by the name of Januarius who had twelve sons. They told him, if you obey us we shall make your sons dukes, eparchoi, and generals. He listened to them. Therefore, it is called Calendae Januarii. .” (Yerushalmi Avodah Zarah 1:2)

Jews and Roman Holidays

Rebbi Ze'ira sent Rebbi Bevai that he should buy him a small web from the Saturnalia of Bet-Shean.” (Yerushalmi Avodah Zarah 1:2)

Kratesis. The day when Rome took hold of the Empire. . . Rebbi Levi said, on the day when Solomon married the daughter of Pharaoh Necho, the king of Egypt, Michael descended and put a stick into the Sea which attracted debris and formed a forest; that is the great fortification in Rome. On the day when Jeroboam put up two golden calves, Remus and Romulus built two sheds in

Rome. On the day Eliahu disappeared a king was installed at Rome; (Yerushalmi Avodah Zarah 1:2)