

JUDAISM

The Talmud

Sotah

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

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Chapter 1

¹ MISHNA: With regard to one who issues a warning to his wife not to seclude herself with a particular man, so that if she does not heed his warning she will assume the status of a woman suspected by her husband of having been unfaithful [sota], Rabbi Eliezer says: He issues a warning to her based on, i.e., in the presence of, two witnesses for the warning to be effective. If two witnesses were not present for the warning, she is not a sota even if two witnesses saw her seclusion with another man. And the husband gives the bitter water to her to drink based on the testimony of one witness who saw the seclusion, or even based on his own testimony that he himself saw them secluded together, as Rabbi Eliezer holds that only the warning requires witnesses, not the seclusion. Rabbi Yehoshua says: He both issues a warning to her based on two witnesses and gives the bitter water to her to drink based on the testimony of two witnesses.

² The mishna asks: How does he issue a warning to her in an effective manner? If he says to her in the presence of two witnesses: Do not speak with the man called so-and-so, and she nevertheless spoke with him, she is still permitted to her home, i.e., she is permitted to engage in sexual intercourse with her husband, and if she is the wife of a priest she is still permitted to partake of teruma.

³ However, if after he told her not to speak with so-and-so, she entered into a secluded place and remained with that man long enough to become defiled, i.e., sufficient time to engage in sexual intercourse, she is forbidden to her home from that moment until she undergoes the sota rite. And likewise, if she was the wife of a priest she is prohibited from partaking of teruma, as she was possibly disqualified by her infidelity, so long as her innocence is not proven by means of the bitter water. And if her husband dies childless before she drinks the bitter water, she performs ḥalitza with her late husband's brother and may not enter into levirate marriage, as, if she had been unfaithful, levirate marriage is forbidden.

⁴ GEMARA: The Gemara questions the placement of this tractate within the mishnaic order of Nashim. Now, the tanna arose from tractate Nazir, which is the tractate preceding Sota in the order of the Mishna. What did he teach in Nazir that required that he teach tractate Sota immediately afterward, as at first glance there seems to be no connection between this tractate and Nazir?

⁵ The Gemara answers: This was done in accordance with the statement of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi with regard to the sequence of passages in the Torah, as it is taught in a baraita that Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi says: Why is the portion of a nazirite (Numbers, chapter 6) placed adjacent to the portion of a sota (Numbers, chapter 5)? This was done to tell you that anyone who sees a sota in her disgrace as she undergoes the rite of the bitter water should renounce wine, as wine is one of the causes of sexual transgression, as it loosens inhibitions. For the same reason that the Torah teaches these passages one after the other, Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi arranged these tractates one after the other.

⁶ The Gemara asks: But if so, let him teach tractate Sota first and then let him teach tractate Nazir, which is the way these topics are ordered in the Torah, and also accords better with the statement of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi. The Gemara answers: Since the tanna taught tractate Ketubot, and in that tractate he taught a chapter that begins: One who vows, in which there are several mishnayot concerning vows between husbands and wives, he then taught tractate Nedarim, whose subject is the halakhot of vows. And since he taught tractate Nedarim, he then taught tractate Nazir, which is similar to tractate Nedarim in that one becomes a nazirite by taking a vow. And he then teaches tractate Sota, in accordance with the statement of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi.

⁷ § The Gemara begins clarifying the mishna. The mishna states: One who issues a warning to his wife. By employing the descriptive phrase: One who issues a warning, and not the prescriptive phrase: One issues a warning, the tanna indicates that after the fact, yes, it is effective if he issues a warning in this manner, but ideally, no, one should not issue a warning to his wife at all ab initio. Apparently, the tanna of our mishna holds that it is prohibited to issue a warning to one's wife ab initio in a manner that can cause her to become a sota, and all the halakhot concerning a sota are for one who issued a warning when not obligated to do so.

⁸ Rav Shmuel bar Rav Yitzhak says: When Reish Lakish would introduce his discussion of the Torah passage of sota he would say this: Heaven matches a woman to a man only according to his actions, as it is stated: "For the rod of wickedness shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous" (Psalms 125:3), indicating that if one has a wicked wife it is due to his own evil conduct. Rabba bar bar Hana says that Rabbi Yohanan says: And it is as difficult to match a couple together as was the splitting of the Red Sea, as it is stated in a verse that speaks of the exodus from Egypt: "God makes the solitary individuals dwell in a house; He brings out prisoners into prosperity [bakosharot]" (Psalms 68:7). God takes single individuals and causes them to dwell in a house by properly matching a man to a woman. This is similar to the exodus from Egypt, which culminated in the splitting of the Red Sea, where He released prisoners into prosperity.

⁹ The Gemara asks: Is that so that a man is matched to a woman according to his actions? But Rav Yehuda says that Rav says: Forty days before an embryo is formed a Divine Voice issues forth and says: The daughter of so-and-so is destined to marry so-and-so; such and such a house is destined to be inhabited by so-and-so; such and such a field is destined to be farmed by so-and-so. This clearly states that these matters, including marriage, are decreed for a person even before he is formed. The Gemara answers: This is not difficult. This statement that Rav Yehuda says in the name of Rav is with regard to a first match [zivug], while this statement of Rabba bar bar Hana in the name of Rabbi Yohanan is with regard to a second match. A first match is decreed in heaven; a second match is according to one's actions.

¹⁰ § The Gemara now clarifies the dispute in the mishna. Rabbi Eliezer says: The husband must issue a warning to her based on, i.e., in the presence of, two witnesses, and he gives the bitter water to her to drink based on the testimony of one witness. Rabbi Yehoshua says: He both issues a warning to her based on two witnesses and gives the bitter water to her to drink based on the testimony of two witnesses who saw them secluded together. The Gemara notes: Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua disagree only with regard to the requisite number of witnesses for the warning and the seclusion, whether one or two witnesses are required, but with regard to the testimony concerning defilement after the warning was issued and seclusion had occurred, they agree that even the testimony of one

witness is deemed credible to establish that the woman actually engaged in sexual intercourse with the man while secluded.

¹¹ The Gemara comments: And we learned also in another mishna (31a) that if a single witness says: I saw that she was defiled, then she would not drink the bitter water, as the testimony is accepted, and her husband must divorce her and she forfeits payment of her marriage contract. Therefore, there is no need to perform the sota rite.

¹² The Gemara asks: By Torah law, from where do we derive that one witness is deemed credible with regard to testifying that a sota engaged in sexual intercourse? The Gemara answers: As the Sages taught in reference to the verse describing the circumstances in which a woman defiled through an act of adultery becomes forbidden to her husband, which states: “And a man lie with her carnally and it be hid from the eyes of her husband, she being defiled secretly, and there is no witness [ed] against her” (Numbers 5:13), the verse is speaking of a lack of two witnesses. When the verse refers to the lack of an ed, written in the singular, it actually indicates that there are not two witnesses against her, but only one, as the baraita will now explain.

¹³ The baraita continues and asks: Or perhaps the verse is referring only to a case where there was not even one witness to the act of sexual intercourse, as the singular usage of the word ed would seem to indicate? The baraita now proves that elsewhere the word ed is used to indicate two witnesses, as the verse states: “One witness [ed] shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity or any sin that he sins; by the mouth of two witnesses or by the mouth of three witnesses shall a matter be established” (Deuteronomy 19:15).

¹⁴ The baraita infers a general principle from this verse by asking: By inference from that which is stated in the verse, even with the omission of the word “one”: “A witness shall not rise up against a man” (Deuteronomy 19:15), do I not know that it is referring to one witness, as the term “rise up [yakum]” is written in the singular form? What is the meaning when the verse states explicitly: “One witness,” since it is obviously referring to only one witness? The baraita answers: This established a paradigm that every place where the word “witness [ed]” is stated in the Torah without specifying a number, there are two witnesses here, unless the verse specifies that it is referring to only one witness by writing the word “one.”

¹⁵ The baraita returns to discuss the verse concerning a sota. And the Merciful One states: “There is no witness [ed] against her” (Numbers 5:13), which therefore means that there are not two witnesses to the sexual intercourse that could testify with regard to her; rather, there is only one witness. The baraita completes its interpretation: Further in the verse it states: “And she was not taken,” indicating that the verse is referring to a case in which it is known that the woman had not been raped. This knowledge is based on the testimony of only one witness, as the verse had already stated that there were not two witnesses, and since one witness saw her willingly engage in sexual intercourse with another man, she is forbidden.

¹⁶ The Gemara questions this reasoning: But this would seem to indicate that the only reason to interpret the verse concerning a sota as referring to a case where there is only one witness is that it is written in the other verse: “One witness shall not rise up against a man” (Deuteronomy 19:15), indicating that any unspecified usage of the word ed in the Torah refers to two witnesses, but were it not for this inference, I would say that when the term witness is employed in the verse concerning a sota it is referring to one witness. However, this would mean that the woman is forbidden to her

husband even if there is not even one witness who saw the alleged sexual intercourse, and if there is not even one witness to testify, then with what testimony does she become forbidden to her husband? Obviously, even without another verse, it must be understood that the verse is indicating that there are not two witnesses but there is one, or else there would be no testimony to her actions.

¹⁷ The Gemara answers: It was necessary to infer the interpretation of the verse concerning the sota from the other verse mentioning one witness. Otherwise it might enter your mind to say that the verse here that states: "There is no witness against her," means that a single witness testifying about the sexual intercourse is not deemed credible with regard to her under any circumstances, and the testimony of one witness is not accepted in the case of a sota.

¹⁸ The Gemara questions this analysis: What would be the logic in interpreting the verse as indicating that a single witness is not deemed credible with regard to her? But if that is the interpretation, what does the verse require in order for a sota to be rendered forbidden?

¹⁹ The Gemara explains its question: If the verse is understood as indicating that a woman isn't forbidden until there are two witnesses to testify to her infidelity, then let the verse be silent from any mention of witnesses, as the requirement for two witnesses in matters of sexual impropriety is derived by means of a verbal analogy from the word "matter" written with regard to forbidden relations, and the word "matter" written with regard to monetary matters. The verbal analogy by which it is learned that two witnesses are required is as follows: A verse concerning forbidden relations states: "Because he has found some unseemly matter about her" (Deuteronomy 24:1), and a verse concerning monetary matters states: "By the mouth of two witnesses or by the mouth of three witnesses shall a matter be established" (Deuteronomy 19:15). And I would know that the requirement that two witnesses testify applies in the case of a sota, just as it does in all other matters of testimony in the Torah.

²⁰ The Gemara answers: It was necessary that the verse be stated in the case of a sota as well, for it might enter your mind to say that testimony concerning a sota is different from other testimony, and even testimony of one witness would be sufficient because there is a basis for anticipating the matter. Since the husband issued a warning to her about this particular man and she then secluded herself with him, perhaps even one witness should be deemed credible with regard to her. Therefore, the verse informs us that one witness is not deemed credible to render her forbidden to her husband.

²¹ The Gemara asks another question concerning its earlier analysis: But how can you think to say that the verse would be stating that one witness is not deemed credible with regard to her having engaged in sexual intercourse and she would remain permitted to her husband? But from the continuation of the same verse, from the fact that it is written: "And she was not taken," which indicates that the verse is referring to a case where she was not raped, one concludes by inference that the verse is referring to a woman who becomes forbidden to her husband for engaging in consensual adulterous sexual intercourse.

²² The Gemara answers: Nevertheless, it still was necessary to teach the principle derived from the other verse that the term "ed" is referring to two witnesses even in the context of a sota, as it might enter your mind to say that the verse should be understood to mean that one witness is not deemed credible with regard to her, and she remains permitted until there are two witnesses who testify to the sexual intercourse, and with the testimony of two witnesses as well, it is only when she was not seized and forced to cohabit with the man. Therefore, to refute this possible interpretation, the baraita

teaches us that “ed” always refers to two witnesses unless stated otherwise. Therefore, the phrase in the verse concerning a sota that says: “There is no witness [ed] against her,” means that there were not two witnesses, but if there was only one witness he is deemed credible.

²³ The mishna teaches that Rabbi Yehoshua says: He both issues a warning to her based on two witnesses, and he gives the bitter water to her to drink based on the testimony of two witnesses who saw her secluded. The Gemara asks: What is the reasoning of Rabbi Yehoshua? The Gemara answers: The verse states: “And there is no witness [ed] against her [bah]” (Numbers 5:13), which was explained to mean there were not two witnesses, but only one, who testified concerning her defilement. Rabbi Yehoshua derives from the term bah, which could also be understood as: With regard to it, that in this matter of defilement one witness suffices, but not with regard to the warning. Additionally, he derives: With regard to it, but not with regard to the seclusion. Therefore, there must be two witnesses to testify about both the warning and the seclusion.

²⁴ The Gemara now explains Rabbi Eliezer’s opinion. And Rabbi Eliezer says that the only derivation to be learned is: With regard to it, but not with regard to the warning. Therefore, the warning, unlike the defilement, requires two witnesses. The seclusion is not contrasted with the defilement, and, like the defilement, requires only one.

²⁵ The Gemara questions Rabbi Eliezer’s opinion: But why not say that one should also derive: With regard to it, but not with regard to the seclusion, as does Rabbi Yehoshua? The Gemara answers: Rabbi Eliezer does not accept that derivation, as seclusion is juxtaposed to defilement by the verse, as it is written: “And she was defiled secretly” (Numbers 5:13), and the term “secretly” is referring to seclusion. Therefore, the same halakha should apply to both.

²⁶ The Gemara asks: But the warning is also juxtaposed to defilement, as it is written: “And he warned his wife, and she had become defiled” (Numbers 5:14) and the same halakha should apply to both. The Gemara answers: The Merciful One excluded at least one of the two by use of the expression bah, which teaches that in one matter other than defilement, two witnesses are required.

²⁷ The Gemara asks: And what did you see to determine that the exclusion from the halakha of one witness sufficing is with regard to the warning? Perhaps the exclusion from the halakha of one witness sufficing is with regard to the seclusion. The Gemara answers: It stands to reason that it is preferable to compare seclusion to defilement, as testimony with regard to seclusion forbids her to her husband just as testimony with regard to defilement does.

²⁸ The Gemara rejects this reasoning: On the contrary, it is preferable to compare the warning to the defilement, as it is the main cause of her becoming forbidden. Seclusion alone, absent a warning, would not cause her to be forbidden to her husband.

²⁹ The Gemara counters: If there is no seclusion, is there any significance to the warning? The warning results in a prohibition only after the warned woman secludes herself with the man. The Gemara counters: And if there is no warning, what effectiveness does seclusion have? Both the warning and the seclusion are required for her to be forbidden.

³⁰ The Gemara concludes: Even so, it is preferable to compare the seclusion to the defilement, as the seclusion is the beginning of defilement. Therefore, just as the testimony of one witness suffices with regard to the defilement, the testimony of one witness suffices with regard to the seclusion.

³¹ The Gemara comments: The mishna is not in accordance with the opinion of this tanna, who presents a different version of Rabbi Eliezer's opinion, as it is taught in a baraita (Tosefta 1:1) that Rabbi Yosei, son of Rabbi Yehuda, says in the name of Rabbi Eliezer: One who issues a warning to his wife issues a warning based on one witness or based on his own testimony, and he gives the bitter water to her to drink based on the testimony of two witnesses who saw her secluded. The baraita further states that the Rabbis responded: According to the statement of Rabbi Yosei, son of Rabbi Yehuda, as to Rabbi Eliezer's opinion that one need not issue a warning in the presence of two witnesses, there is no end to the matter, as the Gemara will explain.

³² The Gemara explains: What is the reasoning of Rabbi Yosei, son of Rabbi Yehuda? The verse states: "Bah," from which he infers that one witness suffices to testify with regard to it, i.e., the defilement, but not with regard to seclusion, as above.

³³ The Gemara asks: But why not say that one should also derive: With regard to it, but not with regard to the warning? The Gemara answers: The warning is juxtaposed to defilement, as it is written: "And he warned his wife, and she had become defiled" (Numbers 5:14), and the same halakha should apply to both.

³⁴ The Gemara counters this argument: Seclusion is also juxtaposed in the verse to defilement, as it is written: "And she was defiled secretly" (Numbers 5:13). Therefore, the same halakha should apply to both. The Gemara responds: That verse is coming to teach how much is the measure of seclusion, i.e., the amount of time that the man and woman must be secluded together for it to be defined as seclusion, which, as the comparison indicates, is the amount of time sufficient for defilement.

³⁵ The Gemara continues to clarify the baraita. The Rabbis responded: According to the statement of Rabbi Yosei, son of Rabbi Yehuda, as to Rabbi Eliezer's opinion, there is no end to the matter. The Gemara asks: What is the meaning of: There is no end to the matter? The Gemara answers: It is that there may be times when the husband did not warn his wife but after hearing of her seclusion with another man says: I warned her, which will be sufficient to render her forbidden to him until she drinks.

³⁶ The Gemara is puzzled by this logic: But according to our mishna, does the matter in fact have an end? Rabbi Eliezer states in the mishna that a woman must drink the bitter water based upon her husband's own statement that she secluded herself with the man about whom he had warned her. There too, one could ask whether there may be times when she did not seclude herself with the other man and where her husband says: She secluded herself, thereby rendering her forbidden to him until she drinks the bitter water. If so, why do the Rabbis take issue only with the version of Rabbi Eliezer's opinion as presented by Rabbi Yosei, son of Rabbi Yehuda, and not with the version recorded in the mishna?

³⁷ Rav Yitzḥak bar Yosef says that Rabbi Yoḥanan says: The Rabbis in the baraita meant to state that even according to the statement of Rabbi Yosei, son of Rabbi Yehuda, there is no end to the matter. The Rabbis wished to say that even according to his version of Rabbi Eliezer's opinion, the husband can cause her to drink if he were to lie. The same is obviously true for the mishna.

³⁸ The Gemara notes: The phrase even according to the statement of Rabbi Yosei, son of Rabbi Yehuda, indicates it is a lesser novelty to say that there is no end to the matter according to him, and it is not necessary to say that the same would be true according to the opinion of Rabbi Eliezer cited in our mishna. The Gemara asks: On the contrary, according to the opinion of Rabbi Eliezer cited in

our mishna, there is a legitimate basis of suspicion with regard to the woman, as there are witnesses who saw the husband issue a warning to her, and therefore, it is understandable that the testimony of the husband may be relied upon when he testifies that she secluded herself with another man. By contrast, there, according to the opinion of Rabbi Yosei, son of Rabbi Yehuda, there is no legitimate basis to prohibit her to him, since there are no witnesses that she had been warned by her husband at all. Therefore, it may be that the Rabbis took issue only with the version of Rabbi Eliezer's opinion presented by Rabbi Yosei, son of Rabbi Yehuda.

³⁹ The Gemara clarifies the statement of Rabbi Yoḥanan: Rather, if it was stated, it was stated like this: Rav Yitzḥak bar Yosef says that Rabbi Yoḥanan says that the Rabbis said: According to the statement of Rabbi Yosei, son of Rabbi Yehuda, who is not concerned that accepting the testimony of one person with regard to the warning will enable false claims by the husband, even according to the opinion of Rabbi Eliezer cited in our mishna there is no end to the matter, since the concern there is less severe, as there is no legitimate basis to render her forbidden to her husband.

⁴⁰ Rav Ḥanina of Sura says: In the present a man should not say to his wife: Do not seclude yourself with so-and-so. The reason is that perhaps we maintain that the halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei, son of Rabbi Yehuda, who says that a warning is effective even based on his own testimony, and if she were then to seclude herself with that man she would be required to drink the bitter water to render herself permitted to her husband, and since today the bitter water of a sota is not used to evaluate her fidelity and permit her to her husband, he will end up forbidding her to himself with an irrevocable prohibition.

⁴¹ § Reish Lakish says: What is the meaning of the term: Warning [kinnui]? It means a matter that causes anger [kina] between her and others, as other men will not understand why she does not wish to be friendly with them any longer. The Gemara comments: Apparently, he holds that a warning is effective based on the husband's own testimony, and therefore everyone else will not know that her husband issued a warning to her, and they will say: What is this matter happening before us that she separates herself from us, and they will come to act in anger with her.

⁴² And Rav Yeimar bar Rabbi Shelemya says in the name of Abaye: The term kinnui means a matter that causes anger between him and her, i.e., between husband and wife. The Gemara comments: Apparently, he holds that a warning is effective based on the testimony of two witnesses. And since there are two witnesses, everyone knows that he issued a warning to her. Therefore, the warning does not cause anger between her and others. And the husband is he who will come to act in anger with her, as they will have mutual antagonism toward each other.

⁴³ Apparently, both Reish Lakish and Rav Yeimar bar Rabbi Shelemya hold that it is prohibited to issue a warning. Both are of the opinion that the word kinnui is a term for anger. Since causing anger is a negative trait, it follows that it is prohibited to issue a warning.

⁴⁴ The Gemara asks: And according to the one who says that it is permitted for him to issue a warning, what is the meaning of the term kinnui? Rav Naḥman bar Yitzḥak says: The term kinnui means nothing other than a term of forewarning, and so it says: "Then the Lord warned [vayekanneh] concerning His land and had pity for His people" (Joel 2:18). As detailed in that passage, the Lord ordered the locusts to stop destroying Eretz Yisrael.

⁴⁵ It is taught in a baraita that Rabbi Meir would say: A person commits a transgression in private and the Holy One, Blessed be He, proclaims about him openly, i.e., in public, that he transgressed, as

it is stated concerning a sota, who transgressed in private: “The spirit of jealousy came [avar] upon him” (Numbers 5:14); and the term avira means nothing other than a term of proclamation, as it is stated: “And Moses gave the commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed [vaya’aviru] throughout the camp” (Exodus 36:6).

⁴⁶ Reish Lakish says: A man commits a transgression only if a spirit of folly [shetut] enters him, as it is stated: “If any man’s wife goes aside [tisteh]” (Numbers 5:12). The word tisteh is written with the Hebrew letter shin, affording an alternative reading of tishteh, which is related to the term for folly, the word shetut.

⁴⁷ § The Gemara discusses why the testimony of one witness suffices with regard to defilement. The school of Rabbi Yishmael taught a baraita: For what reason did the Torah deem credible a single witness with regard to the defilement of a sota? It is because there is a basis for anticipating the matter, as there is strong circumstantial evidence that she committed adultery. What is the basis for anticipating the matter? As he warned her not to seclude herself with a specific man, and she nevertheless secluded herself with him, and one witness testifies that she is defiled, then the combination of her behavior and the testimony renders it reasonable to assume that she has in fact committed adultery.

⁴⁸ Rav Pappa said to Abaye: But when the warning is written in the Torah, it is written in the verse after seclusion and defilement are mentioned, indicating that the circumstance in which one witness is deemed credible with regard to defilement is even when there was no previous warning. The order in which the Torah describes the sota process seems to indicate that the husband’s warning is issued only after the wife already secluded herself with the other man and was defiled, as the verses state: “And a man lie with her carnally, and it was hidden from the eyes of her husband, and she was defiled secretly, and there is no witness against her, and she was not taken. And the spirit of jealousy came [ve’avar] upon him, and he warned his wife, and she had become defiled” (Numbers 5:13–14).

⁴⁹ Abaye said to him in response: That which the verse states: “And the spirit of jealousy came [ve’avar] upon him,” means: And it had already come upon him, that the husband warned his wife not to seclude herself with a specific man prior to her seclusion and defilement.

⁵⁰ The Gemara asks: If that is so, that “ve’avar” is referring to a matter that already occurred, then in the case of the agreement between Moses and the tribes of Gad and Reuben before they entered Eretz Yisrael, where he stated: “And every armed man of you will pass over [ve’avar] the Jordan” (Numbers 32:21), so too did he mean that they had already crossed? Moses was stipulating a condition with regard to the future; they had yet to cross the Jordan.

⁵¹ The Gemara answers: There, from the fact that it is written: “And the land be subdued before the Lord, and you return afterward” (Numbers 32:22), it is clear that it teaches concerning the future. But here, if it enters your mind that the verses should be understood as they are written in the Torah, that “ve’avar” (Numbers 5:14) is after the defilement and seclusion, then why do I need a warning? If the woman had already secluded herself with the man and become defiled, the husband’s warning would be irrelevant, as she had already become forbidden to him. Therefore, the word ve’avar in this context must be referring to a past event, i.e., the husband issuing a warning to his wife prior to the seclusion.

⁵² The school of Rabbi Yishmael taught: A man issues a warning to his wife only if a spirit entered him, as it is stated: “And the spirit of jealousy came upon him, and he warned his wife” (Numbers 5:14). The Gemara asks: Of what spirit does Rabbi Yishmael speak?

⁵³ The Rabbis say: A spirit of impurity, as one should not issue a warning to one’s wife. Rav Ashi says: A spirit of purity, as issuing a warning indicates that he will not tolerate promiscuous behavior.

⁵⁴ The Gemara comments: And it stands to reason like the one who says that Rabbi Yishmael was speaking of a spirit of purity, as it is taught in a baraita: “And he warned his wife,” i.e., the issuing of the warning, is optional, that the husband is neither enjoined to nor prohibited from issuing a warning; this is the statement of Rabbi Yishmael. Rabbi Akiva says: It is mandatory, as one who sees his wife behaving in an inappropriate manner with another man is obligated to warn her. The Gemara explains: Granted, if you say that Rabbi Yishmael was speaking of a spirit of purity, then it is well, as it may be optional, or even mandatory, to issue a warning. But if you say that he was speaking of a spirit of impurity, can it be optional or mandatory for a person to introduce a spirit of impurity into himself? The Torah would not require a husband to act in a manner that results from having a spirit of impurity enter him.

⁵⁵ § The Gemara discusses the matter itself. “And he warned his wife,” i.e., the warning, is optional; this is the statement of Rabbi Yishmael. And Rabbi Akiva says: It is mandatory. The Gemara notes that Rabbi Yishmael and Rabbi Akiva engage in a similar dispute with regard to several other verses. Although under normal circumstances it is prohibited for a priest to become ritually impure through contact with a corpse, the verse states that he may do so for the sake of burying his relatives. The baraita teaches: “For her may he become impure” (Leviticus 21:3), i.e., for a priest to participate in the burial of his sister, despite the fact that he will contract ritual impurity, is optional; this is the statement of Rabbi Yishmael. A priest is not obligated to participate, but he may. And Rabbi Akiva says: It is mandatory for him to do so.

⁵⁶ The verse states: “Of them may you take your bondmen forever” (Leviticus 25:46), i.e., keeping one’s Canaanite slave forever, is optional, this is the statement of Rabbi Yishmael. One is not enjoined against emancipating a Canaanite slave, but one is permitted to keep his Canaanite slaves forever. Rabbi Akiva says: It is mandatory, and it is prohibited for one to free his Canaanite slave.

⁵⁷ Rav Pappa said to Abaye, and some say that Rav Mesharshiyya said to Rava: Shall we say that Rabbi Yishmael and Rabbi Akiva disagree in this manner with regard to the entire Torah? In other words, is it so that whenever there is a statement where it is unclear whether it is referring to an optional or mandatory act, that one master, Rabbi Yishmael, says that it is optional, and the other master, Rabbi Akiva, says that it is mandatory. Abaye said to Rav Pappa in response: Here, in these particular cases, they disagree with regard to the meaning of these specific verses, but it is not a general dispute.

⁵⁸ The Gemara explains their dispute in these specific contexts, beginning with the dispute concerning a man’s warning to his wife: “And he warned his wife,” the warning is optional; this is the statement of Rabbi Yishmael. Rabbi Akiva says: It is mandatory.

⁵⁹ What is the reason of Rabbi Yishmael? He holds in accordance with the statement of this tanna, as it is taught in a baraita: Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya’akov says: With regard to that which the Torah said: “You shall not hate your brother in your heart” (Leviticus 19:17), one might have thought that this prohibition applies in a case such as this one, when one sees his wife behaving improperly with

another man, and the verse would instruct the husband to avoid conflict and strife. Therefore, the verse states: “And the spirit of jealousy came upon him, and he warned his wife” (Numbers 5:14), teaching that it is permitted for one to issue a warning to his wife in such a case.

⁶⁰ The Gemara asks: And how does Rabbi Akiva derive that it is mandatory? The Gemara answers: There is another warning written in the same verse, as the entire verse reads: “And the spirit of jealousy came upon him, and he warned his wife, and she be defiled; or if the spirit of jealousy came upon him, and he warned his wife, and she be not defiled.” Therefore, the first half of the verse teaches that it is permitted to issue a warning, and the second half teaches that it is in fact mandatory.

⁶¹ The Gemara asks: And how does Rabbi Yishmael explain the repetition? The Gemara answers: Since it needed to write in this verse both possibilities as to whether the woman was unfaithful: “And she be defiled,” and also: “And she be not defiled,” to teach that although it is uncertain whether she had become defiled, she is still forbidden to her husband, therefore, it is also written: “And he warned his wife,” a second time. This repetition should not be interpreted as rendering the issuance of the warning as mandatory.

⁶² This manner of interpreting verses is as taught by the school of Rabbi Yishmael, as the school of Rabbi Yishmael taught: Every passage in the Torah that was stated and repeated was repeated only for the novel element introduced therein. Although the Torah could have merely mentioned the element necessary to teach an additional halakha, one should not interpret the repetition of a previously mentioned matter as teaching a second additional halakha, as the style of the Torah is to repeat a passage even to teach only one additional halakha. In the case of the passage concerning a sota as well, the repetition of the warning does not teach a new halakha.

⁶³ The Gemara discusses the second dispute between Rabbi Yishmael and Rabbi Akiva. The baraita teaches: “And for his sister a virgin, that is near to him, that has had no husband, for her may he become impure” (Leviticus 21:3), i.e., for a priest to participate in the burial of his sister despite the fact that he will contract ritual impurity is optional; this is the statement of Rabbi Yishmael. A priest is not obligated to participate, but he may do so. Rabbi Akiva says: It is mandatory for him to do so.

⁶⁴ What is the reason of Rabbi Yishmael? Since it is written: “Speak to the priests, the sons of Aaron, and say to them: There shall none become impure for the dead among his people” (Leviticus 21:1), indicating that a priest is enjoined from contact with the dead, it was necessary to be written: “For her may he become impure,” which teaches that a priest may become impure at the burial of a relative.

⁶⁵ The Gemara asks: And how does Rabbi Akiva derive that it is mandatory? The Gemara answers: He derives that it is permissible from the previous verse, which states: “Except for his kin, that is near to him” (Leviticus 21:2). Since it is derived that it is permitted from that verse, why do I need the additional verse: “For her may he become impure”? To teach that it is mandatory.

⁶⁶ The Gemara asks: And how does Rabbi Yishmael explain the repetition? The Gemara answers: He explains that the verse teaches that he may become impure for her, but he may not become impure to bury only one of her limbs. This additional verse teaches that a priest may become ritually impure to bury a relative only in the case of burying a complete body.

⁶⁷ And what does Rabbi Akiva respond to this claim? The Gemara answers: If so, that the verse serves to render it prohibited for a priest to become impure to bury a limb, then let the Merciful One

write: “And for his sister a virgin, that is near to him, that has had no husband, for her,” and then be silent. Why do I need the verse to write: “May he become impure”? Learn from the additional phrase that making himself impure is mandatory.

⁶⁸ And how does Rabbi Yishmael explain the additional phrase? Since the verse wrote: “For her,” it also wrote: “May he become impure,” for the same reason as was taught by the school of Rabbi Yishmael. As the school of Rabbi Yishmael taught: Every passage in the Torah that was stated and repeated, was repeated only for the novel element introduced therein. Therefore, it is possible that the verse serves to teach the halakha that a priest may not become impure in order to bury a limb, and that would account for the repetition of the phrase “may he become impure” as well.

⁶⁹ The Gemara discusses the third dispute between Rabbi Yishmael and Rabbi Akiva. The verse states: “Of them may you take your bondmen forever” (Leviticus 25:46), i.e., the halakha that one keeps his Canaanite slave forever, is optional; this is the statement of Rabbi Yishmael. One is not enjoined against emancipating a Canaanite slave, but one is permitted to keep a Canaanite slave forever. Rabbi Akiva says: It is mandatory, and one is prohibited from freeing his Canaanite slave.

⁷⁰ What is the reason of Rabbi Yishmael? Since it is written with regard to Canaanites: “You shall save alive nothing that breathes” (Deuteronomy 20:16), it was necessary to write: “Of them may you take your bondmen forever” (Leviticus 25:46), as well, in order to permit one from any of the other, non-Canaanite nations who engaged in sexual intercourse with a Canaanite woman and she bore him a child. This verse teaches that you are permitted to purchase the child as a slave, as he is not included in the mitzva “You shall save alive nothing that breathes” that was stated with regard to full-fledged Canaanites. Therefore, this verse cannot be teaching that it is mandatory.

⁷¹ This is as it is taught in a baraita: From where is it derived that in the case of one from any of the other, non-Canaanite nations who engaged in sexual intercourse with a Canaanite woman, and she bore him a child, that you are permitted to purchase the child as a slave? The verse states: “Moreover, of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them may you buy” (Leviticus 25:45). This verse permits the purchase of slaves from among those individuals who are not members of the Canaanite nations, even if they settle in Eretz Yisrael.

⁷² The baraita continues: One might have thought that even in the case of a Canaanite man who engaged in sexual intercourse with a woman from one of the other nations and she bore him a child, that you are permitted to purchase the child as a slave, despite the fact that his father is a Canaanite. Therefore, the same verse states: “Which they have given birth to in your land,” teaching that one is permitted to purchase slaves only from the ones who are born in your land but whose paternal origins are from other lands, but not from the ones who already reside in your land, i.e., ones who have a Canaanite father.

⁷³ The Gemara asks: And how does Rabbi Akiva derive this halakha? The Gemara answers: He derives it from the words in the same verse: “Of them may you buy.” Once the halakha is already taught that one may purchase as a slave the child of a Canaanite woman and a man from another nation, why do I need the verse to state: “Of them may you take your bondmen forever” (Leviticus 25:46)? It is stated to teach that it is mandatory to enslave a Canaanite slave forever.

⁷⁴ The Gemara asks: And what does Rabbi Yishmael derive from this verse? The Gemara answers: “Of them may you take your bondmen forever,” teaches that you can enslave “of them,” but not of your brethren, i.e., it is prohibited to enslave a fellow Jew, even a slave, forever.

⁷⁵ The Gemara asks: And how does Rabbi Akiva derive this halakha? The Gemara answers: The prohibition against enslaving your brethren is derived from the latter phrase of the verse, where it is explicitly stated: “But over your brethren the children of Israel you shall not rule, one over another, with rigor” (Leviticus 25:46).

⁷⁶ The Gemara asks: And what does Rabbi Yishmael derive from this verse? The Gemara answers: He holds that since it is written: “But over your brethren,” which explicitly states that it is prohibited to subjugate a Jew forever, it also writes with regard to Canaanites “of them,” but that phrase does not teach any novel halakha, because of the reason that was taught by the school of Rabbi Yishmael. As the school of Rabbi Yishmael taught: Every passage in the Torah that was stated and repeated, was repeated only for the novel element introduced therein. Therefore, it is possible that the verse serves to teach the halakha that one may enslave a Canaanite forever, and that would account for the ostensibly superfluous phrase “of them.”

⁷⁷ § The Gemara discusses matters related to sin and sexual impropriety. Rav Ḥisda says: Licentious behavior in a home causes damage like a worm [karya] causes damage to sesame [shumeshema]. And Rav Ḥisda says: Anger in a home causes damage like a worm causes damage to sesame. The Gemara comments: Both this and that, i.e., that licentious behavior and anger destroy a home, were said with regard to the woman of the house, but with regard to the man, although these behaviors are improper, we do not have the same extreme consequences with regard to it, as the woman’s role in the home is more significant, resulting in a more detrimental result if she acts improperly.

⁷⁸ And Rav Ḥisda says: Initially, before the Jewish people sinned, the Divine Presence resided with each and every one of them, as it is stated: “For the Lord your God walks in the midst of your camp” (Deuteronomy 23:15). Once they sinned, the Divine Presence withdrew from them, as it is stated in that same verse: “That He see no unseemly matter in you, and turn away from you” (Deuteronomy 23:15), teaching that when there is an “unseemly matter” among the Jewish people, the Divine Presence no longer resides among them.

⁷⁹ Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani says that Rabbi Yonatan says: Anyone who fulfills one mitzva in this world, that mitzva precedes him and goes before him to the World-to-Come, as it is stated: “And your righteousness shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your reward” (Isaiah 58:8). And anyone who commits one transgression in this world, it shrouds him and goes before him to the Day of Judgment, as it is stated: “The paths of their way do wind, they go up into the waste, and are lost” (Job 6:18).

⁸⁰ Rabbi Elazar says: The transgression is chained to him and accompanies him like a dog, as it is stated concerning Joseph’s refusal to commit adultery with the wife of Potiphar: “That he listened not to her, to lie by her, or to be with her” (Genesis 39:10), which is understood to mean: If he would agree “to lie by her” in this world, the result would be that he would have “to be with her” forever, as the transgression would accompany him to the World-to-Come.

⁸¹ § The Gemara returns to its discussion of the number of witnesses necessary for different elements of the process of a woman becoming a sota. We learned in a mishna elsewhere (31a) with regard to the credibility of one witness who testifies concerning a woman’s infidelity: The halakha that one witness is deemed credible concerning defilement needs to be stated, as, by right, it should not have been deemed credible based on the following a fortiori inference:

⁸² And just as with regard to the first testimony concerning seclusion, which does not forbid her to her husband with an irrevocable prohibition, as the woman can be found innocent, permitting her again to her husband by drinking the bitter water, it is not established with fewer than two witnesses, as that mishna is written in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehoshua, who stated (2a) that testimony of two witnesses must be provided by two witnesses, then with regard to the final testimony concerning defilement, which forbids her with an irrevocable prohibition, is it not logical that it not be established with fewer than two witnesses?

⁸³ Therefore, to counter this derivation, the verse states: “And there is no witness against her” (Numbers 5:13), teaching that any testimony that there is against her with regard to her defilement is sufficient, and two witnesses are not required.

⁸⁴ The mishna asks: And now that it is established that one witness suffices to testify with regard to defilement, an a fortiori inference can be made with regard to the first testimony of seclusion: And just as with regard to the final testimony concerning defilement, which forbids her with an irrevocable prohibition, yet it is established with one witness, then with regard to the first testimony, which does not forbid her with an irrevocable prohibition, is it not logical that it should be established with only one witness?

⁸⁵ Therefore, to counter this derivation, the verse states: “If a man marries a woman and lives with her and it will be that she not find favor in his eyes, because he has found some unseemly matter [davar] about her” (Deuteronomy 24:1), and there, in the verses concerning the halakhot of monetary matters, it states: “By the mouth of two witnesses or by the mouth of three witnesses shall a matter [davar] be established” (Deuteronomy 19:15). This teaches that just as the “matter” stated there is established by the mouth of two witnesses, so too here, the “matter” of her seclusion must be established by the mouth of two witnesses.

⁸⁶ The Gemara asks: Is this need for two witnesses derived from: “Because he has found some unseemly matter about her” (Deuteronomy 24:1)? It is derived from: “And there is no witness [ed] against her [bah]” (Numbers 5:13), which was explained to mean there were not two witnesses, but only one, who testified concerning her defilement (2a). The Gemara above (2b) derives from the term “bah,” which could also be understood as: With regard to it, that in this matter of defilement one witness suffices, but not with regard to the warning. And one also derives: With regard to it, but not with regard to the seclusion. Therefore, there must be two witnesses to testify about both the warning and the seclusion. The mishna should have given this inference as the source for requiring two witnesses for seclusion, and not the juxtaposition of “matter” and “matter.”

⁸⁷ The Gemara answers: That is also what he is saying. The mishna should read: The verse states: “And there is no witness against her [bah],” teaching that: With regard to it [bah], but not with regard to the warning. And one also derives: With regard to it, but not with regard to the seclusion.

⁸⁸ The Gemara comments: And with regard to defilement in general, without a prior warning and without witnesses to seclusion, from where do we derive that one witness is not deemed credible? Here it is stated: “Because he has found some unseemly matter about her” (Deuteronomy 24:1), and there it is stated: “By the mouth of two witnesses or by the mouth of three witnesses shall a matter be established” (Deuteronomy 19:15), teaching that just as the “matter” stated there is established by two witnesses, so too here, with regard to defilement it is established by two witnesses.

⁸⁹ The Sages taught (Tosefta 1:1): In the mishna quoted above, which is the first testimony? This is referring to the testimony of seclusion. Which is the final testimony? This is referring to the testimony of defilement.

⁹⁰ The baraita clarifies: And what is the measure of seclusion, i.e., how is the seclusion of a sota defined? The measure of seclusion is equivalent to the time needed for defilement, which is equivalent to the time needed to perform intercourse, which is equivalent to the time needed to perform the initial stage of intercourse.

⁹¹ The baraita quotes several practical examples of this period of time. This is equivalent to the time needed for circling a palm tree; this is the statement of Rabbi Yishmael. Rabbi Eliezer says: This is equivalent to the time needed for mixing a cup of wine with water, with the total volume of a quarter-log. Rabbi Yehoshua says: This is equivalent to the time needed to drink that cup of wine.

⁹² The baraita quotes several more examples. Ben Azzai says: This is equivalent to the time needed to roast an egg. Rabbi Akiva says: This is equivalent to the time needed to swallow it. Rabbi Yehuda ben Beteira says: This is equivalent to the time needed to swallow three eggs one after another. Rabbi Elazar ben Yirmeya says: This is equivalent to the time needed for a weaver [gardi] to tie a string [nima].

⁹³ Ḥanin ben Pineḥas says: This is equivalent to the time that a woman may need to extend her hand into her mouth to remove a wood chip from between her teeth. The Sage Peleimu says: This is equivalent to the time that she may need to extend her hand into a basket in order to take a loaf of bread. He adds: Although there is no explicit proof from a verse for the matter, there is an allusion to the matter from the verse: “For on account of a harlot a man is brought to a loaf of bread” (Proverbs 6:26).

⁹⁴ The baraita stated that the measure of seclusion is equivalent to the time needed for defilement, which is equivalent to the time needed to perform sexual intercourse, which is equivalent to the time needed to perform the initial stage of intercourse, and it added nine practical examples of that length of time. The Gemara asks: And why do I need all these times when one should have sufficed?

⁹⁵ The Gemara answers: All three are necessary, as if the baraita taught only: Equivalent to the time needed for defilement, I would say that the measure is equivalent to the time for her defilement and her appeasement, i.e., the amount of time needed to convince her to engage in sexual intercourse. Therefore, the baraita teaches us that the measure is equivalent to the time needed to perform sexual intercourse alone.

⁹⁶ And if the baraita taught only: The measure of seclusion is equivalent to the time needed to perform sexual intercourse, I would say that the measure is equivalent to the time needed for the completion of the act of intercourse. Therefore, the baraita teaches us that the measure is equivalent to the time needed to perform the initial stage of intercourse.

⁹⁷ And if the baraita taught only: The measure of seclusion is equivalent to the time needed to perform the initial stage of intercourse, I would say that the measure is equivalent to the time needed to perform the initial stage of intercourse and her appeasement. Therefore, the baraita teaches us that the measure is equivalent to the time needed for defilement, which does not include appeasement. The baraita concludes by offering a practical measure: And what is the measure of the equivalent

amount of time needed to perform the initial stage of intercourse? It is equivalent to the time needed for circling a palm tree. Other Sages then offered their own practical examples.

⁹⁸ And the Gemara raises a contradiction from a different baraita (Tosefta 1:2): The verse states: “And she was defiled secretly” (Numbers 5:13), and we have not heard what is the measure of seclusion. When it says in that verse: “And she was defiled secretly,” you must say that the measure of seclusion is equivalent to the time needed for defilement, which is equivalent to the time needed to perform sexual intercourse, which is equivalent to the time needed to perform the initial stage of intercourse, which is equivalent to the time needed for the returning of a palm tree; this is the statement of Rabbi Eliezer.

⁹⁹ The baraita continues: Rabbi Yehoshua says: This is equivalent to the time needed for mixing a cup of wine with water, with the total volume of a quarter-log. Ben Azzai says: This is equivalent to the time needed to drink that cup of wine. Rabbi Akiva says: This is equivalent to the time needed to roast an egg. Rabbi Yehuda ben Beteira says: This is equivalent to the time needed to swallow it.

¹⁰⁰ The Gemara now addresses several contradictions between this baraita and the one quoted earlier. The Gemara first comments: It might enter our mind to say that circling a palm tree is the same as the returning of a palm tree. The Gemara asks: There, in the first baraita, Rabbi Yishmael says it is equivalent to the time needed for circling a palm tree and Rabbi Eliezer disagreed with him, while here, in the second baraita, Rabbi Eliezer himself says it is equivalent to the time needed for the returning of a palm tree; doesn’t this contradict what he stated in the previous baraita?

¹⁰¹ To resolve this contradiction, Abaye says: These measures are not the same, as circling is referring to the amount of time it takes for one to circle a palm tree by foot, and returning is referring to the amount of time it takes for a palm branch blown by the wind to revert to its prior position.

¹⁰² Rav Ashi asks: This returning of the palm branch by the wind, is this the time only so that it goes forward with the wind and returns to its place one time, not including the time it is still moving back and forth due to the wind? Or perhaps it is the time so that it goes forward with the wind and comes back and returns until it settles in its place. The Gemara states: The question shall stand unresolved.

¹⁰³ The Gemara presents another contradiction. There, in the first baraita, Rabbi Eliezer says: This is equivalent to the time needed for pouring a cup of wine. Here, in the second baraita, he says: This is equivalent to the time needed for the returning of a palm tree. The Gemara answers: This and that are one, i.e., the same, measure.

¹⁰⁴ The Gemara presents another contradiction. There, in the first baraita, Rabbi Yehoshua says: This is equivalent to the time needed for drinking a cup of wine. Here, in the second baraita, he says: This is equivalent to the time needed for mixing a cup of wine. The Gemara answers: Say that he requires both together, i.e., he requires an amount of time equivalent to the time needed to both mix and drink a cup of wine. The Gemara asks: Instead of combining the measures, why not let us say that this and that are one measure? The Gemara answers: If so, this is the same as the opinion of Rabbi Eliezer in the first baraita, with whom Rabbi Yehoshua disagrees.

¹⁰⁵ The Gemara presents another contradiction. There, in the first baraita, ben Azzai says: This is equivalent to the time needed to roast an egg. Here, in the second baraita, he says: This is equivalent to the time needed to drink a cup of wine. The Gemara answers: This and that are one measure.

¹⁰⁶ The Gemara presents another contradiction. There, in the first baraita, Rabbi Akiva says: This is equivalent to the time needed to swallow an egg. Here, in the second baraita, he says: This is equivalent to the time needed to roast an egg. The Gemara answers: Say that he requires both together, i.e., he requires an amount of time equivalent to the time needed to roast an egg and to swallow it. The Gemara asks: Instead of combining the measures, why not let us say that this and that are one measure? The Gemara answers: If so, this is the same as the opinion of ben Azzai in the first baraita, with whom Rabbi Akiva disagrees.

¹⁰⁷ The Gemara presents another contradiction. There, in the first baraita, Rabbi Yehuda ben Beteira says: This is equivalent to the time needed to swallow three eggs one after another. Here, in the second baraita, he says: This is equivalent to the time needed to swallow an egg, meaning one egg. The Gemara answers: In the first baraita, he did not state his own opinion, but stated his opinion in accordance with the statement of Rabbi Akiva, who stated that one measures according to the time needed for roasting and swallowing. Rabbi Yehuda responded: Say instead the measure of the time needed for swallowing alone, i.e., an amount of time equivalent to the time needed to swallow three eggs one after another, which is equal to the amount of time necessary for roasting and swallowing, and therefore Rabbi Akiva would not need to include roasting in the measurement.

¹⁰⁸ The Gemara discusses an opinion cited in the first baraita. Rabbi Elazar ben Yirmeya says: This is equivalent to the time needed for a weaver to tie a string. Rav Ashi asks: Is this speaking of where the ends of the string to be tied are far apart from each other, or is it speaking of where they are near to each other? The Gemara states: The question shall stand unresolved.

¹⁰⁹ The Gemara discusses another opinion cited in the first baraita. Ḥanin ben Pineḥas says: This is equivalent to the time that a woman may need to extend her hand into her mouth to remove a wood chip from between her teeth. Rav Ashi asks: Is this speaking of a case where the wood chip is stuck between her teeth, or is it speaking of a case where it is not stuck? The Gemara states: The question shall stand unresolved.

¹¹⁰ The Gemara discusses another opinion cited in the first baraita. Peleimu says: This is equivalent to the time that a woman may need to extend her hand into a basket in order to take a loaf of bread. Rav Ashi asks: Is this speaking of an occasion where the loaf adheres to the basket, or is it speaking of a case where it does not adhere? Is this speaking of a case where the basket is new, whereby the tips of the shoots forming the basket might restrain the loaf, or this speaking of where the basket is old and smooth, enabling easy removal? Is this speaking of a case where the loaf is hot and therefore softer and may adhere to the basket, or is this speaking of a case where the loaf is cold and easily removed?

¹¹¹ Is this speaking of a case where the loaf is made of wheat, which is slippery and takes longer to remove, or is this speaking of a case where the loaf is made of barley, which is easily removed? Is this speaking of a case where the loaf is soft, so that it may catch upon the side of the basket, or a case where the loaf is hard, where this is not a concern? The Gemara states: These questions shall stand unresolved.

¹¹² The Gemara notes: Rav Yitzḥak bar Rav Yosef says that Rabbi Yoḥanan says: Each and every one of these Sages who presented an opinion with regard to the time needed for the initial stage of intercourse estimated based on himself, i.e., based on his own experience. The Gemara asks: But there is ben Azzai, who did not marry, so how could he estimate based on his own experience?

¹¹³ The Gemara answers: If you wish, say that he was married and separated from his wife. And if you wish, say that he heard from his teacher. And if you wish, say his knowledge can be understood based on the verse: “The counsel of the Lord is with them that fear Him” (Psalms 25:14), teaching that those who fear God are privy to knowledge beyond their personal experience.

¹¹⁴ § Having quoted an allusion from the verse: “For on account of a harlot a man is brought to a loaf of bread” (Proverbs 6:26), the Gemara offers another interpretation of that verse. Rav Avira interpreted a verse homiletically; there were times he said this interpretation in the name of Rabbi Ami and there were times he said it in the name of Rabbi Asi: Concerning anyone who eats bread without washing his hands, it is as if he engaged in sexual intercourse with a prostitute, as it is stated: “For on account of a harlot a man is brought to a loaf of bread.”

¹¹⁵ Rava said: This phrase: “For on account of a harlot a man is brought to a loaf of bread,” is not how the verse would present this idea. It should have stated: “On account of a loaf a man is brought to a harlot.” Rather, Rava says the verse should be interpreted as follows: Anyone who engages in sexual intercourse with a harlot will eventually be reduced to poverty and beg people for a loaf of bread.

¹¹⁶ The Gemara continues its discussion of washing hands. Rabbi Zerika says that Rabbi Elazar says: Anyone who treats the ritual of washing hands with contempt is uprooted from the world. Rav Ḥiyya bar Ashi says that Rav says: With regard to the first water, i.e., the water used when washing one’s hands before a meal, one must raise his hands upward after washing. With regard to the last water, i.e., the water used when washing one’s hands at the conclusion of the meal before reciting Grace after Meals, one must lower his hands downward. This distinction is also taught in a baraita (Tosefta, Yadayim 2:2): One who washes his hands before a meal must raise his hands upward after washing, lest the water advance past the joint onto the part of the hands that he was not required to wash, becoming impure, and then return to the area he had washed, rendering his hands ritually impure.

¹¹⁷ Rabbi Abbahu says: Anyone who eats bread without wiping his hands dry after washing them causes the bread to become repulsive and is considered as if he were eating impure bread, since the verse refers to repulsive bread as impure bread, as it is stated: “And the Lord said: Even thus shall the children of Israel eat their bread unclean among the nations where I will drive them” (Ezekiel 4:13). Eating bread with wet hands causes the bread to become repulsive. The verse deems eating in an uncouth manner, as did the gentiles among whom the Jewish people were exiled, as akin to eating ritually impure bread.

¹¹⁸ § The Gemara now continues the interpretation of the above quoted verse: “For on account of a harlot a man is brought to a loaf of bread” (Proverbs 6:26). The Gemara asks: And what is the meaning of the continuation of the verse: “But the adulteress hunts for the precious life”? Rabbi Ḥiyya bar Abba says that Rabbi Yoḥanan says: Any person who has arrogance within him will eventually stumble by sinning with an adulteress, as it is stated: “But the adulteress hunts for the precious life,” i.e., she sins with one who considers himself precious.

¹¹⁹ Rava said: This phrase: “The precious life,” is not how the verse would present this idea. It should have stated: An arrogant life. And further, it should have stated: A precious life, she hunts for the adulteress, indicating that the precious soul will entrap the adulteress, and not vice versa, as the verse indicates as written. Rather, Rava says that the verse should be interpreted as follows: Anyone who engages in sexual intercourse with an adulteress, even if that man studied Torah, about which it

is written: “She is more precious than rubies [peninim]” (Proverbs 3:15), which, based on its etymological connection with the Hebrew term for the Holy of Holies, *lifnai velifnim*, is interpreted by the Sages to mean that one who studies Torah is more precious than a High Priest, who enters the innermost sanctum, still, this transgression of adultery will entrap him into the judgment of Gehenna, and the Torah he studied will not be able to save him.

¹²⁰ Rabbi Yoḥanan says in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yoḥai: Any person who has arrogance within him is considered as if he were an idol worshipper, as it is written here: “Everyone that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord” (Proverbs 16:5), and it is written there concerning the destruction of idols: “And you shall not bring an abomination into your house” (Deuteronomy 7:26).

¹²¹ And Rabbi Yoḥanan said his own statement: Any person who has arrogance within him is considered as if he has denied the core belief in God’s existence, as it is stated: “Then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the Lord your God” (Deuteronomy 8:14).

¹²² Rabbi Ḥama bar Ḥanina says: Any person who has arrogance within him is considered as if he engaged in sexual intercourse with all of those with whom relations are forbidden, as it is written here: “Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord” (Proverbs 16:5), and it is written there, at the end of the passage concerning forbidden sexual relationships: “For all these abominations have the men of the land done” (Leviticus 18:27).

¹²³ Ulla says: Any person who has arrogance within him is considered as if he built a personal altar for idol worship, as it is stated: “Cease you from man, in whose nostrils there is breath, for how little [bammeh] is he to be accounted” (Isaiah 2:22), referring to an arrogant person. Do not read the verse as it is written, bammeh, how little. Rather, read it as bama, altar.

¹²⁴ Having interpreted the phrase: “Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord” (Proverbs 16:5), the Gemara interprets the continuation of the verse. What is the meaning of: “Hand to hand, he shall not be unpunished” (Proverbs 16:5)? Rav says: Anyone who engages in sexual intercourse with an adulteress, even if he were to have attributed possession of heaven and earth to the Holy One, Blessed be He, just as Abraham our forefather did, that it is written with regard to him: “I have lifted up my hand to the Lord, God Most High, Maker of heaven and earth” (Genesis 14:22), he will not be unpunished from the judgment of Gehenna. Abraham is described as one whose hands were lifted to declare the glory of God, yet this verse declares that even if one who engaged in forbidden sexual intercourse were to use his hands in the same way, still, due to his sin, the verse says: “He shall not be unpunished.”

¹²⁵ This interpretation poses a difficulty to the Sages of the school of Rabbi Sheila: This phrase: “Hand to hand, he shall not be unpunished,” is not how the verse would present this idea. It should have stated: My hand, as that is the term employed in the verse with regard to Abraham.

¹²⁶ Rather, the Sages of the school of Rabbi Sheila say: This teaches that even if one who engages in sexual intercourse with an adulteress had received the Torah from the hand of God like Moses our teacher did, that it is written with regard to him: “At His right hand was a fiery law unto them” (Deuteronomy 33:2), i.e., God gave the Torah from His right hand into the hand of Moses in order to give to the Jewish people, the sinner will not be unpunished from the judgment of Gehenna.

¹²⁷ This interpretation also poses a difficulty to Rabbi Yoḥanan: This phrase “hand to hand” is not how the verse would present this idea. It should have stated: Hand from hand, as that is the term employed in the verse with regard to Moses.

¹²⁸ Rather Rabbi Yoḥanan says:

¹²⁹ Even if the one who committed adultery performs charitable deeds secretly, as alluded to in the phrase “hand to hand,” and even if one might think that one who does so will go unpunished, as it is written with regard to charity of this kind: “A gift in secret pacifies wrath” (Proverbs 21:14), nevertheless, he will not be unpunished from the judgment of Gehenna.

¹³⁰ § The Gemara previously discussed the impropriety of the trait of arrogance. Now the Gemara discusses the source of its prohibition. From where is the warning derived, i.e., what is the source prohibiting the behavior of the arrogant? Rava says that Ze’eiri says: The source is from the verse: “Hear, you, and give ear, be not proud, for the Lord has spoken” (Jeremiah 13:15). Rav Naḥman bar Yitzḥak said the warning is from here: “Then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the Lord your God” (Deuteronomy 8:14), and it is also written in that same passage: “Beware lest you forget the Lord your God” (Deuteronomy 8:11).

¹³¹ The Gemara explains: And these sources are in accordance with a statement that Rabbi Avin says that Rabbi Ile’a says, as Rabbi Avin says that Rabbi Ile’a says: Wherever it is stated in a verse “beware,” “lest,” or “not,” this is nothing other than a prohibition. Since these verses employ these terms in the context of one who is arrogant, they serve as sources for the prohibition.

¹³² Rav Avira interpreted the following verse homiletically: “They are exalted for a little while, and they are gone; yes, they are brought low, they are gathered in as all others, and wither as the tops of the husks” (Job 24:24). There were times when he said this interpretation in the name of Rav Asi and there were times when he said it in the name of Rav Ami: Any person who has arrogance within him will ultimately be diminished in standing, as it is stated in the phrase: “They are exalted for a little while,” indicating that one who raises himself above others will be exalted only briefly. And lest you say that even if he is diminished he will still exist in this world and live a full life, the verse states: “And they are gone,” indicating that they die before their time.

¹³³ He continues the interpretation: But if he repents from his arrogance, he is gathered in death at his proper time like Abraham our forefather, as it is stated: “Yes, they are brought low, they are gathered in as all [kakkol] others” (Job 24:24), indicating that when he repents from his arrogance he will die like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as it is written about them that they were blessed with the term “all,” as in the verse above. With regard to Abraham, the verse states: “And the Lord had blessed Abraham in all things [bakkol]” (Genesis 24:1). With regard to Isaac, the verse states: “And I have eaten of all [mikkol]” (Genesis 27:33). With regard to Jacob, the verse states: “And because I have all [khol]” (Genesis 33:11). And if one does not repent, then, the verse in Job continues: “And wither like the tops of the husks.”

¹³⁴ The Gemara asks: What is the meaning of the phrase “and wither like the tops of the husks”? Rav Huna and Rav Ḥisda offered differing interpretations. One says that it means: Like the awn of bristle-like growth on the top of the husk, and one says that it means: Like the husk itself. The Gemara comments: Granted, according to the one who says: Like the awn of bristle-like growth on the top of the husk, that is that which is written in the verse: “And wither like the tops of the husks,” since this awn is on the top of the husk. But according to the one who says: Like the husk itself, what is the

meaning of the expression “and wither like the tops of the husks”? Rav Asi says, and similarly the school of Rabbi Yishmael taught: This can be explained by way of an analogy to a person who enters into his field, as he gathers the taller stalks before the shorter ones. The verse is therefore referring to the tallest stalks, not the tops of the stalks.

¹³⁵ The Gemara continues the discussion of arrogance, and its converse, humility. The verse states: “For thus says the High and Lofty One that inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, also with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones” (Isaiah 57:15). Rav Huna and Rav H̄isda offered differing interpretations of this verse. One says that the verse means: Together with Me is the person who is contrite and humble. In other words, God elevates the humble. And one says that the verse means: I, God, descend, and am found together with the person who is contrite and humble.

¹³⁶ The Gemara comments on this: And it stands to reason that the meaning of the verse is like the one who says: I am with the contrite person, as the Holy One, Blessed be He, disregarded all of the mountains and hills, and rested His Divine Presence on the lowly Mount Sinai, and He did not choose to raise Mount Sinai up toward Him. God chose to give the Torah on Mount Sinai, as it was a symbol of humility due to its lack of height, and He lowered His Divine Presence, as it were, to the mountain.

¹³⁷ Rav Yosef says: A person should always learn proper behavior from the wisdom of his Creator, as the Holy One, Blessed be He, disregarded all of the mountains and hills and rested His Divine Presence on the lowly Mount Sinai. And similarly, when appearing to Moses, He disregarded all of the beautiful trees and rested His Divine Presence on the bush (Exodus 3:2).

¹³⁸ Rabbi Elazar says: Concerning any person who has arrogance within him, it is fitting to hew him down, as a tree designated for idolatry [asheira] is hewn down, as it is written here with regard to the arrogant: “And the high ones of stature shall be hewn down [gedu’im]” (Isaiah 10:33), and it is written there with regard to trees designated for idolatry: “And hew down [teggade’un] their trees worshipped as part of idolatrous rites [asheireihem]” (Deuteronomy 7:5).

¹³⁹ And Rabbi Elazar also says: Concerning any person who has arrogance within him, his dust, i.e., his remains in his grave, will not stir at the time of the resurrection of the dead, as it is stated: “Awake and sing for joy, you who dwell in the dust” (Isaiah 26:19). It is not stated: You who lie in the dust, which would indicate that all the dead will be awakened in the future, but rather: “You who dwell in the dust,” indicating that only one who became a neighbor to the dust in his lifetime by living with extreme humility will stir at the time of the resurrection.

¹⁴⁰ And Rabbi Elazar says: Concerning any person who has arrogance within him, the Divine Presence wails over him. As it is stated: “For though the Lord is high, yet regards He the lowly, and from the haughty He is pained from afar” (Psalms 138:6).

¹⁴¹ Rav Avira interpreted a verse homiletically, and some say that Rabbi Elazar interpreted as follows: Come and see that the attribute of the Holy One, Blessed be He, is not like the attribute of flesh and blood. The attribute of flesh and blood is that the elevated sees the elevated, but the elevated does not see the lowly. But the attribute of the Holy One, Blessed be He, is not like that. He is elevated but sees specifically the lowly, as it is stated: “For though the Lord is high, yet regards He the lowly” (Psalms 138:6).

¹⁴² Rav Ḥisda says, and some say that Mar Ukva says: Concerning any person who has arrogance within him, the Holy One, Blessed be He, said: He and I cannot dwell together in the world, as it is stated: “He who slanders his neighbor in secret, him will I destroy; he who is haughty of eye and proud of heart, him will I not suffer [oto lo ukhal]” (Psalms 101:5–6). These verses should be understood as follows: Do not read the verse as: “Oto lo ukhal”; rather, read it as: Itto lo ukhal, meaning, with him, I cannot bear to dwell. There are those who teach that this was stated with regard to those who speak slander because the beginning of the verse states: “He who slanders his neighbor in secret, him will I destroy.”

¹⁴³ Rabbi Alexandri says: Concerning any person who has arrogance within him, even a slight wind disturbs him, as it is stated: “But the wicked are like the troubled sea, for it cannot rest” (Isaiah 57:20). And if with regard to the sea, which contains many quantities of quarters of a log of water, yet a slight wind disturbs it, certainly with regard to a person, who has in his body only one quarter-log of essential lifeblood, all the more so will a slight wind disturb him.

¹⁴⁴ Rav Ḥiyya bar Ashi says that Rav says: Despite the opprobrium assigned to one who exhibits the trait of arrogance, a Torah scholar must have one-eighth of one-eighth of arrogance. Rav Huna, son of Rav Yehoshua, said: And this minute measure of arrogance crowns him as the awn of bristle-like growth on the top of the husk. Rava said: A Torah scholar who has arrogance should be excommunicated, and one who does not have arrogance at all should be excommunicated as well. As such, he must have only a minute measure of arrogance.

¹⁴⁵ Rav Naḥman bar Yitzḥak said: Even a Torah scholar should not have any arrogance or any part of arrogance, i.e., not even one-eighth of one-eighth. He explains why arrogance should be avoided entirely by asking: Is it a small matter that it is written with regard to arrogance: “Everyone that is proud of heart is an abomination to the Lord” (Proverbs 16:5)?

¹⁴⁶ Ḥizkiyya says: The prayers of a person are heard only if he casts his heart to be like flesh, by being free of arrogance. As it is stated: “And it shall come to pass, that from one New Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before Me, says the Lord” (Isaiah 66:23).

¹⁴⁷ Rabbi Zeira said: Concerning leprosy of the flesh, it is written in the verse with regard to it: “And when the flesh has in the skin thereof a boil, and it is healed” (Leviticus 13:18), but concerning the leprosy of a person, it is not written in the verse with regard to it: And it is healed. Both verses discussing leprosy of a person make no mention of healing (Leviticus 13:2, 13:9). This indicates that one who sees himself as flesh will be cured, but one who holds himself in high regard will not be cured.

¹⁴⁸ Rabbi Yoḥanan said: The Hebrew word for person, adam, written: Ales, dalet, mem, is an acronym for efer, dust; dam, blood; and mara, bile, alluding to man’s insignificance. Similarly, the Hebrew word for flesh, basar, written: Beit, sin, reish, is an acronym for busha, shame; seruḥa, putrid; and rimma, worm, also alluding to his insignificance. There are those who say that the letter sin of the word basar actually is referring to a different word, sheol, the netherworld, as it is written with the Hebrew letter shin. The letter sin is phonetically similar to the letter samekh, the first letter of the word seruḥa, but is orthographically similar to the letter shin, the first letter of the word sheol. The dispute is whether the acronym should be based upon the pronunciation or upon the way it is written.

¹⁴⁹ Rav Ashi says: Any person who has arrogance within him will ultimately be diminished in stature, as it is stated with regard to different types of leprosy:

¹⁵⁰ “And for a sore [se’et] and for a scab [sappaḥat]” (Leviticus 14:56), and se’et means nothing other than elevated, as it is stated: “And upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are lifted up [nissaot]” (Isaiah 2:14). And sappaḥat means nothing other than an appendage, as it is stated in the context of the curse given to the descendants of Eli: “Put me [sefaḥeni], I pray of you, into one of the priests’ offices, that I may eat a morsel of bread” (I Samuel 2:36). They will have to be joined with another priestly family to receive their priestly gifts. One can therefore interpret the verses discussing leprosy as teaching that one who initially is arrogant, se’et, will eventually become a sappaḥat, diminished in stature.

¹⁵¹ Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi says: Come and see how great the lowly in spirit are before the Holy One, Blessed be He. For when the Temple was standing, a person would sacrifice a burnt-offering and the merit of a burnt-offering would be his; he would sacrifice a meal-offering and the merit of a meal-offering would be his. But with regard to one whose spirit is lowly, the verse ascribes him credit as if he had sacrificed all the sacrificial offerings, as it is stated: “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit” (Psalms 51:19), indicating that one who is humble of spirit is regarded as if he offered all the “sacrifices of God.” And not only that, but his prayer is not despised by God, as it is stated at the end of that verse: “A broken and contrite heart, O God, You will not despise.”

¹⁵² And Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi also says: Whoever appraises his ways in this world, i.e., whoever carefully considers all his actions before deciding on the proper mode of conduct, merits and sees the salvation of the Holy One, Blessed be He, as it is stated: “And to him that orders his way aright [vesam derekh] will I show the salvation of God” (Psalms 50:23). Do not read it as “vesam,” “that orders”; rather, read it as vesham derekh, that appraises his way.

¹⁵³ § The mishna teaches: How does he issue a warning to her in an effective manner? If he says to her in the presence of two witnesses: Do not speak with the man called so-and-so, and she nevertheless spoke with him, she is still permitted to engage in sexual intercourse with her husband. However, if after he told her not to speak with so-and-so, she entered into a secluded place and remained with that man for sufficient time to engage in sexual intercourse, she is forbidden to her home, i.e., to engage in sexual intercourse with her husband, from that moment until she undergoes the sota rite. The Gemara notes the apparent contradiction in the mishna: This matter itself is difficult: You said in detailing the wording of the warning that he said to her in the presence of two witnesses: Do not speak with the man called so-and-so, apparently indicating that speaking is tantamount to seclusion. Therefore, speaking with that man should result in the woman becoming forbidden to her husband.

¹⁵⁴ But then the mishna teaches: If she nevertheless spoke with him, she is still permitted to her home, i.e., to engage in sexual intercourse with her husband, and if she is the wife of a priest she is still permitted to partake of teruma, apparently indicating that speaking is nothing. Therefore, issuing a warning to her not to speak with a particular man should not qualify as an effective warning.

¹⁵⁵ Abaye said an explanation: This is what the mishna is saying: If he said to her: Do not speak with so-and-so, and she later spoke with him; or if the husband said to her: Do not speak with so-and-so, and she later secluded herself with him, it is nothing, as this was not an effective warning. Similarly, if he said to her: Do not seclude yourself with so-and-so, and then she spoke with him without

secluding herself with him, she is still permitted to her home, i.e., her husband, and she is still permitted to partake of teruma. However, if after he issued a warning to her not to seclude herself with someone, she entered with that man into a secluded place and remained there with him for a period of time sufficient for defilement, then she is forbidden to her home, i.e., her husband, and forbidden to partake of teruma.

¹⁵⁶ § The mishna teaches that after a woman who was warned by her husband not to seclude herself with another man, nevertheless secludes herself with another man, she becomes forbidden to her husband, and if her husband dies childless before she drank the bitter water, she performs ḥalitza with her late husband's brother and does not enter into levirate marriage. The Gemara asks: Why must she perform ḥalitza? Let her enter into levirate marriage. After all, although she secluded herself with the other man after the warning, there is only an unverified suspicion of adultery. Why should it be prohibited for her to enter into levirate marriage with her deceased husband's brother, the yavam?

¹⁵⁷ Rav Yosef said: With regard to a man who divorces his wife because: "He has found some unseemly matter about her" (Deuteronomy 24:1), i.e., he suspects her of sexual impropriety, the verse states: "And she departs out of his house, and goes and becomes another man's wife" (Deuteronomy 24:2). It is inferred from this that she is free to marry another man, but she is not permitted to marry the yavam. The yavam is not considered "another man," as he takes the place of his brother.

¹⁵⁸ Abaye said to him: If that is so, that the Torah explicitly prohibits levirate marriage in this case, then she should not require ḥalitza as well, as the verse explicitly permitted her to marry another man, seemingly abrogating the need for ḥalitza to free her from the bond to the yavam. Rav Yosef said to him in response: If the husband were alive, would she not require a bill of divorce to permit her to remarry, even though she was forbidden to him? Now, as well, she should require ḥalitza in order to release her bond with the yavam, even though, as the verse indicates, it remains prohibited for them to enter into levirate marriage.

¹⁵⁹ And there are those who say that in answer to Abaye's question Rav Yosef said: The Merciful One said with regard to a man who divorces his wife because he has found some unseemly matter about her: "And she departs out of his house, and goes and becomes another man's wife," indicating that the man should divorce her so that his house not be destroyed by his continuing to dwell with her, and you want to say that she should enter into levirate marriage? How can it be that the same verse instructing the husband to divorce her would also instruct the yavam to marry her? However, there is no reason to exempt her from performing ḥalitza.

¹⁶⁰ Abaye said to him: If that is so, that the verse would not tell the yavam to marry her, she should not marry another man either, so that the second husband's house not be destroyed. How can it be that the same verse instructing the husband to divorce her would also instruct another man to marry her?

¹⁶¹ Rav Yosef said to him:

¹⁶² Do we impose on him an obligation to marry her against his will? Unlike levirate marriage, there is no obligation for another man to marry her. Therefore, the verse is not instructing him to do so.

¹⁶³ And there are those who say that Rav Yosef said differently: The verse calls a man who marries a woman after she was divorced from her first husband due to suspicion of adultery “another man,” as the verse states: “And she departs out of his house and goes and becomes another man’s wife” (Deuteronomy 24:2). This indicates that one who subsequently marries her is not a peer of her first husband because this one, the first husband, removed an evil woman from his house, and that one brought an evil woman into his house. There is an implied criticism of the second husband in the verse; and yet you say that the verse instructs that she should also enter into levirate marriage.

¹⁶⁴ Abaye said to him: If that is so, then if she married another man and he died without children, then she should not enter into levirate marriage with the brother of her second husband even if she did not commit adultery during the second marriage, since the verse calls the second husband “another man,” which excluded the possibility of levirate marriage. Rav Yosef answered Abaye: With regard to that one, i.e., this second husband, at least she remained with a good name. Since she did not engage in illicit behavior during her second marriage, she can enter into levirate marriage with the brother of her second husband.

¹⁶⁵ Rava says a different reason why a *sota* cannot enter into levirate marriage: This prohibition can be deduced through an *a fortiori* inference: If, due to the suspicion of adultery, she becomes forbidden to the one who was previously permitted to her, i.e., her first husband, then with regard to one who was forbidden to her, i.e., the husband’s brother, is it not all the more so that she remains forbidden to him?

¹⁶⁶ Abaye said to him: If that is so, if this *a fortiori* reasoning is the basis of the prohibition against her entering into levirate marriage, then in the case of a High Priest who betrothed a widow, which he is prohibited from doing, and he died before the marriage took place, and he has a brother who is a common priest, who is permitted to marry a widow, she should still not be permitted to enter into levirate marriage with him, since the same inference can be stated: If she becomes forbidden to the one who was permitted to her, i.e., her husband the High Priest, who was prohibited from marrying a widow, then with regard to one who was forbidden to her, i.e., his brother, the common priest who wishes to enter into levirate marriage with her, is it not all the more so that she should be forbidden?

¹⁶⁷ The Gemara refutes this inference. In the case of the High Priest, can one say: She becomes forbidden? But she was forbidden to him and remains forbidden to him. She did not become forbidden to her husband, the High Priest, due to the marriage. Furthermore, in the case of the High Priest, can one say: Permitted to her? But the High Priest is forbidden to her always. Therefore, the case of the High Priest does not serve as a refutation of the *a fortiori* inference.

¹⁶⁸ Rather, the refutation is as follows: In the case of a priest’s wife who was raped, who becomes forbidden to her husband, and then her husband dies; and he has a brother who is a priest disqualified due to flawed lineage [*ḥalal*], who is not bound by the restrictions on marriage given to a priest, then she should not be permitted to enter into levirate marriage with him. If she becomes forbidden to the one who was permitted to her, i.e., her husband the priest, then with regard to one who was forbidden to her, i.e., her brother-in-law, is it not all the more so that she remains forbidden to him?

¹⁶⁹ The Gemara answers: Nevertheless, this *a fortiori* inference is not applicable here because a raped woman is completely permitted to an Israelite. Therefore, a married woman raped by another man may remain with her Israelite husband. And with regard to this person, i.e., the brother of the deceased, who is a *ḥalal*, in any event there is no prohibition. The fact that the woman was forbidden

to her ḥalal brother-in-law while she was married to her husband is immaterial. This is because, had she been raped while she was married to the ḥalal, it would not render her forbidden to him, as he has the status of an Israelite with regard to marriage. Consequently, this case cannot be compared to the case of the mishna, as a woman who commits adultery is forbidden to any husband, not only a priest.

¹⁷⁰ MISHNA: And these are women who, despite being married to priests, are prohibited from partaking of teruma due to suspicion of adultery: A woman who says to her husband: I am defiled to you, i.e., she admitted to having committed adultery with another man; and in a case where witnesses came forth and testified that she is defiled; and a woman who says after a warning and seclusion: I will not drink the bitter water of a sota; and in a case where her husband does not want to force her to drink the water even after she secluded herself with another man after his warning; and in a case where her husband engaged in sexual intercourse with her on the way to bringing her to the Temple to drink the bitter water, as in such a case the water will not be effective in evaluating whether she was unfaithful, due to the husband's own prohibited act.

¹⁷¹ GEMARA: Rav Amram says: Rav Sheshet told us this matter, and he enlightened our eyes for us by citing support for his statement from the mishna: In the case of a sota for whom there are witnesses concerning her in a country overseas, who can testify that she engaged in sexual intercourse, the bitter water of a sota does not evaluate whether or not she was unfaithful. Although she committed adultery, the water evaluates her fidelity only when there is no possibility of proving her guilt in court. What is the reason for this? It is as the verse states: "And a man lie with her carnally, and it was hidden from the eyes of her husband, and she was defiled secretly, and there was no witness against her" (Numbers 5:13). This indicates that the bitter water is given only when there is no one who knows about her action, to the exclusion of the case of this woman who is not given the bitter water, as there are those who know about her.

¹⁷² And Rav Sheshet enlightened our eyes for us by adducing support for his ruling from the mishna, as it teaches: And where witnesses came forth and testified that she is defiled, this is one of the women who can no longer partake of teruma, Rav Sheshet asks: This is a case where the witnesses came when? If we say that they came before she drank, then what is novel about the fact that it is prohibited for her to partake of teruma? She is a woman who had sexual relations with a man forbidden to her by the Torah [zona], as she is a confirmed adulteress, and it is obviously prohibited for her to partake of teruma.

¹⁷³ Rav Sheshet answers: Rather, it must be referring to a case where the witnesses testified after she already drank. Granted, if you say that the bitter water of a sota does not evaluate her in a case where there are witnesses elsewhere who can testify with regard to her infidelity, it is well. But if you say that the water evaluates her in a case where there are witnesses elsewhere who can testify with regard to her infidelity, then it should be revealed retroactively that they are false witnesses, as the fact that she survived the drinking of the bitter water would indicate that she never committed adultery.

¹⁷⁴ Rav Yosef said to Rav Sheshet: Actually, I will say to you that the bitter water evaluates her in a case where there are witnesses elsewhere who can testify with regard to her infidelity. Nevertheless, the fact that the woman survived the drinking of the water does not prove her innocence, and one can say that this woman who already drank had merit that delayed the punishment for her. According to some opinions, if an unfaithful woman has certain merits, she will not die immediately upon drinking

the water. Therefore, if witnesses were to testify to her infidelity after she drank the water without dying, it is not clear that their testimony is false.

¹⁷⁵ The Gemara explains: With regard to what principle do Rav Sheshet and Rav Yosef disagree? With regard to whether she deteriorates [mitnavvena], as explained by Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi, as we learned in a mishna (22a): Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi says: Merit delays punishment with regard to the bitter water of a sota. Even if a woman actually committed adultery, she will not die immediately due to the merit that she has. But she will not give birth, and she will not improve in terms of her physical condition after having drunk the bitter water. Rather, she will progressively deteriorate until she ultimately dies in the same manner of death as suffered by a sota who drank the bitter water without having merit.

¹⁷⁶ Rav Sheshet holds: Both according to the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi and according to the opinion of the Rabbis, who disagree with him, she begins to deteriorate despite her merit. Therefore, if she doesn't begin to deteriorate immediately, the witnesses who testified subsequent to her drinking must be false witnesses. And Rav Yosef holds: Only according to the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi is it so that she begins to deteriorate when she has merit. According to the opinion of the Rabbis, she does not begin to deteriorate. Therefore, Rav Yosef explains that the mere fact that she survived the drinking of the bitter water and didn't begin deteriorating does not prove that the testimony was false.

¹⁷⁷ Rav Shimi bar Ashi raises an objection from the aforementioned mishna (22a), which also teaches that Rabbi Shimon says: Merit does not delay punishment with regard to the bitter water of a sota, and if you say that merit delays punishment with regard to the bitter water, then you push aside the deterrent force of the bitter water before all the women who must drink it, as guilty women will rely on their merit to protect them from the immediate consequences. And furthermore, you defame the untainted women who drank and survived. People will not view this as proof of their innocence, and they will say: They are defiled, but their merit delayed the punishment for them.

¹⁷⁸ After quoting the statement of Rabbi Shimon, Rav Shimi bar Ashi now explains his objection: And if it is so that the bitter water of a sota does not evaluate the faithfulness of a woman about whom there are witnesses in a country overseas, then the same claim can be made as well: You defame the untainted women who drank and survived. People will not view this as proof of their innocence, and they will say: They are defiled, but there are witnesses about them in a country overseas.

¹⁷⁹ The Gemara responds: Do you say this according to the opinion of Rabbi Shimon? Indeed, according to Rabbi Shimon, from the same logic that merit does not delay punishment, witnesses in a country overseas do not delay it either, and Rav Sheshet would concede that his statement would not be accepted by Rabbi Shimon.

¹⁸⁰ Rav raises an objection from the latter clause of the mishna there (22a), which teaches: And these are the sota women whose meal-offerings are burned and not offered on the altar:

¹⁸¹ One who says: I am defiled, and witnesses came forth and testified with regard to her that she is defiled.

¹⁸² Rav clarifies: In the case where witnesses came forth, when did they come forth? If we say that they came forth before the meal-offering was sanctified, as all meal-offerings become sanctified only

when placed in the service vessels used in the Temple service, then the testimony should obviate the need for the sota rite, and the meal-offering should be transferred to non-sacred status, as any meal-offering that was found to be consecrated in error before it was sanctified in a service vessel reverts to non-sacred status. Therefore, Rav infers that the witnesses could not have testified before the offering's sanctification, or the meal-offering would not be burned.

¹⁸³ Rav states his objection: Rather, the witnesses must have come forth after the meal-offering was sanctified. Granted, if you say the bitter water of a sota evaluates whether she was unfaithful in a case where there are witnesses to her infidelity, even if they have not testified, evidently the meal-offering is suitable to be sanctified and sacrificed; and when it was sanctified at the outset, although there were witnesses who could have testified, it was properly sanctified, and due to that reason her meal-offering is burned, because once an offering has been properly sanctified it cannot be transferred to non-sacred status.

¹⁸⁴ But if you say that the bitter water does not evaluate whether she was unfaithful so long as there are witnesses to her infidelity, then once the witnesses come forth, the matter should be revealed retroactively that when the meal-offering was sanctified at the outset, it was sanctified in error. And the meal-offering should therefore be transferred to non-sacred status, not burned.

¹⁸⁵ Rav Yehuda from Diskarta said, in response, that the mishna concerning meal-offerings is referring to a case where the woman committed adultery in the Temple courtyard after the meal-offering had been sanctified in a service vessel, as at the outset, when the meal-offering was sanctified due to the previous seclusion, it was properly sanctified, as the witnesses were to the infidelity that occurred in the Temple courtyard, not to infidelity during the seclusion.

¹⁸⁶ Rav Mesharshiyya objects to this explanation: But how can she commit adultery in the Temple courtyard? Don't young priests [*pirḥei kehunna*] accompany her to the place where she drinks? The Gemara answers: This is a case where she committed adultery with the young priests themselves.

¹⁸⁷ Rav Ashi said differently: It is a case where she needed to relieve herself and the accompanying young priest allowed her to go relieve herself in private, and she committed adultery there, for is that to say that the young priests hold her in a cell? Since there are times when she is out of their sight, there remains a possibility that she will commit adultery with others even when accompanied by the young priests.

¹⁸⁸ Rav Pappa said differently: Actually, the explanation is as we initially said, that the witnesses testify that she had been defiled during the initial seclusion for which she must drink, and not for adultery committed in the Temple courtyard. And that which you say, that if the bitter water does not evaluate a woman about whom there are witnesses concerning her infidelity, and therefore the offering was sanctified in error and it should be transferred to non-sacred status, you are correct that by Torah law it is non-sacred. However, it is considered sacred by rabbinic law, due to a rabbinic decree, lest people who do not know that the sanctification was done in error will mistakenly say: One can transfer a meal-offering to non-sacred status without it being redeemed even after it had been sanctified in a service vessel.

¹⁸⁹ Rav Mari raises an objection to Rav Pappa's interpretation from a baraita in the Tosefta (2:4–6) that states: If the meal-offering of a sota became ritually impure, its status is determined by when it became impure. If it became impure before it was sanctified by being placed in a service vessel, it is like all other meal-offerings that became impure prior to sanctification, and it should be redeemed by

a replacement offering brought in its stead. If it became impure after it had been sanctified by being placed in a service vessel, it is like all other meal-offerings that became impure after sanctification and must be burned.

¹⁹⁰ The baraita continues: If, after the meal-offering was sanctified by being placed in a service vessel, the priest removed a handful from it to be sacrificed on the altar, and the handful was sanctified by being placed in its own service vessel, but the priest did not manage to sacrifice it before he, the husband, died, or before she, the wife, died, rendering the offering irrelevant, then it is like all other meal-offerings that are invalidated between the removal of the handful and its being sacrificed, and it must be burned.

¹⁹¹ The baraita continues: If the handful was sacrificed but the priest did not manage to eat the remainder of the meal-offering before the husband died, or before the wife died, it is like all other meal-offerings that become invalidated after the handful has been sacrificed, and it must be eaten by the priests. The baraita explains why, despite the death of the husband or wife, which renders this meal-offering irrelevant as the woman will not drink the bitter water, the meal-offering still is eaten: Because this meal-offering initially came due to an uncertainty as to whether the woman had been unfaithful, and it atoned for its uncertainty and left, i.e., it fulfilled its purpose of being sacrificed at the time when the husband and wife were still alive, it remains valid afterward as well.

¹⁹² The baraita continues: If witnesses came forth before the handful was offered and testified with regard to her that she is defiled, her meal-offering is burned. If the witnesses who testified about her infidelity are later found to be conspiring, her meal-offering is transferred to non-sacred status. This final clause teaches that if the witnesses to the wife's infidelity are found to be conspiring witnesses, then the meal-offering is transferred to non-sacred status even after it was already sanctified in a service vessel. This is difficult for Rav Pappa, for he said that in a similar case, where witnesses testified about her infidelity after the offering was sanctified, the Sages decreed that the offering should be burned, in order to prevent people from saying that a meal-offering that has been sanctified in a service vessel may be transferred afterward to non-sacred status.

¹⁹³ The Gemara refutes this objection: Do you say that one can question Rav Pappa's statement from a ruling concerning conspiring witnesses? The cases are not comparable, as conspiring witnesses generate publicity. Since the circumstances of these cases are well publicized, everyone knows that the offering was sanctified in error.

¹⁹⁴ After attempting to question Rav Sheshet's novel ruling, that in the case of a sota with regard to whom there are witnesses in a country overseas who can testify that she engaged in sexual intercourse, the bitter water does not evaluate whether she was unfaithful, the Gemara attempts to adduce support for his ruling: It is taught in a baraita in accordance with the opinion of Rav Sheshet, but not due to his reasoning, rather based upon the explication of a verse.

¹⁹⁵ The baraita expounds several words in the verse concerning a sota who survives the drinking of the bitter water and is found to have been faithful: "And if the woman be not defiled, but be clean [utehora hee], then she shall be cleared and shall conceive seed" (Numbers 5:28). Noting that the phrase "but be clean," is apparently redundant, the baraita explains: The usage of the word "clean [tehora]" in the verse indicates that only one who survived the drinking of the bitter water due to her fidelity will conceive a child, but this will not happen in a case where she did not die because there are witnesses for her in a country overseas who can testify that she engaged in sexual intercourse.

¹⁹⁶ Additionally, from the additional letter vav in the word “utehora,” meaning “but be clean,” another case is excluded. Only one who survived the drinking of the bitter water due to her fidelity will conceive a child, but this will not happen in a case where merit delays punishment for her, and she consequently doesn’t die immediately after drinking the bitter water.

¹⁹⁷ The baraita continues: The next word in the verse, “she [hee],” excludes a third case: But not where she, i.e., her infidelity, is discussed by weavers [mozerot] in the moonlight. Women would sit in groups while spinning thread in the moonlight and gossip about the goings-on in the city. If they discuss her having committed adultery, then it is considered public knowledge, and the bitter water would not evaluate her in that case, as evaluation is not needed.

¹⁹⁸ After citing this baraita as proof for the ruling of Rav Sheshet, albeit from a different source, the Gemara questions how Rabbi Shimon could deny the ability of the woman’s merit to delay the sota punishment due to fear that it will discredit the whole sota rite, being that there is another case that prevents the bitter water from evaluating a woman, i.e., where witnesses in a country overseas are able to testify. And Rabbi Shimon, granted that he does not interpret the letter vav, as he holds that its addition is not significant, and therefore he holds that her merit does not delay her punishment, but there is

¹⁹⁹ the case where there are witnesses for her in a country overseas who can testify that she engaged in sexual intercourse, when the bitter water will not evaluate her faithfulness. Therefore, Rabbi Shimon should be concerned that such a dispensation will result in the defamation of the untainted women who drank and were unaffected, as people will view them as guilty women who were not affected because there were witnesses overseas.

²⁰⁰ The Gemara answers: The case of witnesses in a country overseas is not common, and therefore no one will assume that that is the reason why the woman was not affected. By contrast, a woman having merit is common.

²⁰¹ MISHNA: The mishna details the procedure for administering the drinking of the bitter water of a sota. What does her husband do with her after she secluded herself with the man about whom she had been warned? He brings her to the court that is found in that location, and the court provides him with two Torah scholars to accompany him, lest he engage in sexual intercourse with her on the way to the Temple, which is not only prohibited but will also prevent the bitter water from evaluating her. Rabbi Yehuda says: Her husband is trusted with regard to her, so there is no need to provide scholars to accompany him.

²⁰² GEMARA: The Gemara assumes that the requirement for there to be two Torah scholars is to avoid the prohibition against a woman being alone with a man. The Gemara notes: Two additional men and he, the husband, are three people altogether. Let us say that this mishna supports the opinion of Rav, as Rav Yehuda says that Rav says: When they taught that it is permitted for a woman to be secluded with two men, they taught that this is permitted only in the town (see Kiddushin 80b). But on the way, when traveling, this is not permitted unless there are three men with the woman. The reason for this stringency is that if there are only two men with her, perhaps one will need to relieve himself and will seek privacy, and it will be found that one of them is in seclusion with a woman forbidden to him.

²⁰³ The Gemara refutes this assumption: No, here, in the case of a sota, this is the reason why there is a requirement for two scholars, so that there are two witnesses with regard to her, i.e., there will be

two witnesses to testify in the event that the husband engages in sexual intercourse with her on the way to the Temple. The reason is not to avoid the prohibition against her being alone with a man, as one scholar would suffice for that.

²⁰⁴ The mishna teaches that the husband is provided with Torah scholars. The Gemara further comments: Torah scholars, yes; anyone else, no. It is specifically Torah scholars who are provided to accompany the husband and wife. Let us say that this mishna supports another statement of Rav, as Rav Yehuda says that Rav says: When they taught that it is permitted for a woman to be secluded with two men, they taught that this is permitted only with regard to men of fit morals. But with regard to those of loose morals, she may not be secluded even with ten men. The Gemara adds: There was an incident and ten men carried out a woman on a bier, as if she were dead, and engaged in sexual intercourse with her.

²⁰⁵ The Gemara refutes this assumption: No, here, in the case of a sota, this is the reason why there is a requirement for two scholars, that they know how to properly warn him not to engage in sexual intercourse with her. Therefore, this mishna does not support the opinion of Rav.

²⁰⁶ § The Gemara now discusses Rabbi Yehuda's statement in the mishna. Rabbi Yehuda says: Her husband is trusted with regard to her. It is taught in a baraita in the Tosefta (1:2): Rabbi Yehuda says: Her husband is trusted due to an a fortiori inference: And just as in the case of a menstruating woman, who is prohibited from engaging in sexual intercourse with her husband by penalty of karet, her husband is nevertheless trusted with regard to her, as he is permitted to seclude himself with her, so too, with regard to a sota, who is prohibited from engaging in sexual intercourse with her husband only by penalty of a prohibition, is it not all the more so that he should be trusted?

²⁰⁷ And the Rabbis say: That provides support for the contrary opinion, as these considerations lead to the opposite conclusion. A menstruating woman is forbidden by penalty of karet. This is a stringent prohibition for him, and this is why he is trusted not to engage in sexual intercourse with her. By contrast, a sota is forbidden to him only by a prohibition. This is not a stringent prohibition to him, and he is therefore not trusted with her.

²⁰⁸ The Gemara asks: And does Rabbi Yehuda in fact derive this halakha from an a fortiori inference? But Rabbi Yehuda derives it from a verse, as it is taught in a baraita: The verse: "Then shall the man bring his wife to the priest" (Numbers 5:15), teaches that by Torah law the man alone brings his wife to the Temple, but the Sages said: The court provides him with two Torah scholars to accompany him, lest he engage in sexual intercourse with her on the way to the Temple.

²⁰⁹ The baraita records a second opinion. Rabbi Yosei says: Her husband is trusted with regard to her based on an a fortiori inference: And just as a menstruating woman, who is prohibited from engaging in sexual intercourse with her husband by penalty of karet, and her husband is nevertheless trusted with regard to her, then with regard to a sota, who is prohibited from engaging in sexual intercourse with her husband by penalty of only a prohibition, should he not all the more so be trusted?

²¹⁰ The Sages said to him: No, if you say that this is true with regard to a menstruating woman, the reason he is trusted is not due to the severity of the prohibition. Rather, he is trusted because she has the ability to become permitted to her husband after her menstrual flow has ceased and she has immersed in a ritual bath. Shall you also say that this is the case with regard to a sota, who potentially does not have the ability to become permitted to her husband due to her suspected adultery? And proof to the notion that people will more readily commit illicit acts that are

permanently prohibited comes from the verse that states: “Stolen waters are sweet and bread eaten in secret is pleasing” (Proverbs 9:17). Consequently, there is a concern that the husband will engage in sexual intercourse with his sota wife if not accompanied by scholars.

²¹¹ The baraita quotes a third opinion. Rabbi Yehuda says: By Torah law, the man alone brings his wife to the Temple, as is stated: “Then shall the man bring his wife to the priest.” This baraita states explicitly that Rabbi Yehuda derives this halakha from the verse itself, not from an a fortiori inference.

²¹² The Gemara answers: Rabbi Yehuda first said to them the a fortiori inference, and they refuted it as mentioned above, and he then said to them the derivation from the verse.

²¹³ The Gemara clarifies: Apparently, the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda is the same as that of the first tanna in the baraita, who also cites the verse as proof that by Torah law the husband alone brings his wife to the priest. The Gemara explains: The difference between them concerns the following clause: But the Sages said that the court provides him with two Torah scholars to accompany him. The first tanna holds that the Sages require two scholars to accompany the husband and wife, while Rabbi Yehuda holds that they do not.

²¹⁴ MISHNA: The mishna details the next stage of the process. They would bring her up to the Sanhedrin that was in Jerusalem, and the judges would threaten her in order that she admit her sin. And this was done in the manner that they would threaten witnesses testifying in cases of capital law. In those cases, the judges would explain to the witnesses the gravity of their testimony by stressing the value of human life. Here too, the judges would attempt to convince the woman to admit her sin, to avoid the loss of her life.

²¹⁵ And additionally, the judge would say to her: My daughter, wine causes a great deal of immoral behavior, levity causes a great deal of immoral behavior, immaturity causes a great deal of immoral behavior, and bad neighbors cause a great deal of immoral behavior. The judge encouraged her to admit her sin by explaining to her that he understands that there may have been mitigating factors.

²¹⁶ The judge then continues: Act for the sake of His great name, so that God’s name, which is written in sanctity, shall not be erased on the water. If the woman admits to having committed adultery, the scroll upon which the name of God is written will not be erased. And additionally, the judge says in her presence matters that are not worthy of being heard by her and all her father’s family, in order to encourage her to admit her sin, as the Gemara will explain.

²¹⁷ If after the judge’s warning she says: I am defiled, she writes a receipt for her marriage contract. That is, she writes a receipt indicating that she has no claims on her husband with regard to the sum written in her marriage contract, as a woman who admits to adultery forfeits her right to this payment. And she is then divorced from her husband.

²¹⁸ But if after the warning she maintains her innocence and says: I am pure, they bring her up to the Eastern Gate, which is at the opening of the Gate of Nicanor, because three rites were performed there: They give the sota women the bitter water to drink, and they purify women who have given birth (see Leviticus 12:6–8), and they purify the lepers (see Leviticus 14:10–20).

²¹⁹ The mishna continues describing the sota rite. And the priest grabs hold of her clothing and pulls them, unconcerned about what happens to the clothing. If the clothes are torn, so they are torn; if the stitches come apart, so they come apart. And he pulls her clothing until he reveals her heart, i.e., her

chest. And then he unbraids her hair. Rabbi Yehuda says: If her heart was attractive he would not reveal it, and if her hair was attractive he would not unbraid it.

²²⁰ If she was dressed in white garments, he would now cover her with black garments. If she was wearing gold adornments,

²²¹ or chokers [katliyyot], or nose rings, or finger rings, they removed them from her in order to render her unattractive. And afterward the priest would bring an Egyptian rope fashioned from palm fibers, and he would tie it above her breasts.

²²² And anyone who desires to watch her may come to watch, except for her slaves and maidservants, who are not permitted to watch because her heart is emboldened by them, as seeing one's slaves reinforces one's feeling of pride, and their presence may cause her to maintain her innocence. And all of the women are permitted to watch her, as it is stated: "Thus will I cause lewdness to cease out of the land, that all women may be taught not to do after your lewdness" (Ezekiel 23:48).

²²³ GEMARA: The Gemara asks concerning the halakha that the sota is brought before the Sanhedrin: From where are these matters derived? Rabbi Ḥiyya bar Gamda says that Rabbi Yosei, son of Rabbi Ḥanina, says: This is derived by means of a verbal analogy between the words "tora" and "torah." It is written here, with regard to a sota: "And the priest shall execute upon her all this law [torah]" (Numbers 5:30), and it is written there, with regard to a rebellious Elder, who must go to the place chosen by God and follow the ruling of the Sanhedrin: "According to the law [torah] that they shall teach you" (Deuteronomy 17:11). Just as there the verse is referring to what occurs in the presence of the Sanhedrin of seventy-one judges, so too here, with regard to a sota, the verse is referring to what occurs in the presence of the Sanhedrin of seventy-one judges.

²²⁴ § The mishna teaches: And they threaten her in order that she admit her sin, to obviate the need to erase God's name. And the Gemara raises a contradiction from that which was taught in a baraita in the Tosefta (1:6): In the same manner that they threaten her so that she will not drink, so too, they threaten her so that she will drink, as they say to her: My daughter, if the matter is clear to you that you are pure, arise for the sake of your clear position and drink. If you are innocent you have nothing to fear, because the bitter water is similar only to a dry poison placed on the flesh. If there is a wound there, the poison will penetrate and enter the blood stream, but if there is no wound there, it does not have any effect. This teaches that the woman is warned not to drink if she is guilty, but if she is not guilty she is encouraged to drink. There is no mention of the latter in the mishna.

²²⁵ The Gemara answers: This is not difficult. Here the mishna is referring to before the scroll was erased, and at that point the woman is warned only not to drink if she is guilty, so that the name of God will not be erased. There the baraita is referring to after the scroll was erased. Then she is warned that if she is innocent she should drink because if she now refuses to drink, it will turn out that the scroll was erased for no purpose.

²²⁶ § The mishna teaches: And the judge says in her presence matters that are not worthy of being heard by her and all her father's family in order to encourage her to admit her sin. The Gemara cites a baraita that details what was said. The Sages taught in a baraita: The judge says in her presence words of homiletical interpretation and mentions incidents that happened to previous generations that are recorded in the early prophetic writings. For example, they expound the following verse: "That

wise men told and did not hide from their fathers” (Job 15:18); this teaches that even during the time of the forefathers, there were people who admitted their sins despite the shame they incurred.

²²⁷ For example, Judah admitted that he sinned with Tamar and was not embarrassed to do so, and what was his end? He inherited the life of the World-to-Come. Reuben admitted that he lay with his father’s concubine Bilhah and was not embarrassed, and what was his end? He too inherited the life of the World-to-Come. The Gemara asks: And what is their reward? The Gemara interjects: What is their reward? Their reward was clearly as we say, that they inherited the life of the World-to-Come. The Gemara clarifies: Rather, the second question was: What is their reward in this world? The Gemara answers by citing the next verse in the book of Job: “To them alone the land was given, and no stranger passed among them” (Job 15:19). Judah was given the kingship, and Reuben inherited a portion of land in the Transjordan before the other tribes.

²²⁸ The Gemara questions the source for Reuben’s admission. Granted, with regard to Judah we have found a source that he admitted his sin with Tamar, as it is written: “And Judah acknowledged them and said: She is more righteous than I” (Genesis 38:26). Judah admitted that he was the one who had impregnated Tamar. But from where do we derive that Reuben admitted his sin?

²²⁹ The Gemara answers: It is as Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani says that Rabbi Yoḥanan says: What is the meaning of that which is written concerning Reuben and Judah in Moses’ blessing of the tribes at the end of his life: “Let Reuben live and not die in that his men become few” (Deuteronomy 33:6), and immediately afterward, in the following verse, it is stated: “And this for Judah, and he said: Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah, and bring him in unto his people; his hands shall contend for him, and You shall be a help against his adversaries” (Deuteronomy 33:7). What is the connection between the blessing of Reuben and that of Judah, juxtaposed with the conjunction “and”?

²³⁰ Rabbi Yoḥanan says: All those years that the Jewish people were in the desert, the bones of Judah, which the Jewish people took with them from Egypt along with the bones of his brothers, were rolling around in the coffin, until Moses arose and asked for compassion on Judah’s behalf. Moses said before God: Master of the Universe, who served as the impetus for Reuben that he admit his sin, through which he merited a blessing and was not excluded from the count of the twelve sons of Jacob (see Genesis 35:22)? It was Judah, as Reuben saw him confess his sin, and thereby did the same. Moses continues in the next verse: “And this for Judah,” as if to say: Is this Judah’s reward for serving as an example of confessing to one’s sins, that his bones roll around?

²³¹ Immediately after Moses prayed, the verse states: “Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah” (Deuteronomy 33:7). His bones then entered their sockets [shafa], and his skeleton was reassembled. But the angels still did not elevate him into the heavenly study hall. Moses then prayed: “And bring him in unto his people” (Deuteronomy 33:7), i.e., those in the heavenly study hall. This prayer was accepted, but he still did not know how to deliberate in Torah matters with the heavenly sages. Moses then prayed: “His hands shall contend for him” (Deuteronomy 33:7), meaning that he should have the ability to contend with them in study. But still he was unable to draw conclusions from his discussion in accordance with the halakha. Moses then prayed: “And You shall be a help against his adversaries” (Deuteronomy 33:7).

²³² The Gemara discusses the propriety of admitting one’s sins in public. Granted, with regard to Judah, it was proper that he admitted his sin in public, as he did so in order that Tamar not be burned innocently. But why did Reuben admit his sin in public? But didn’t Rav Sheshet say: I consider one

who specifies his sins in public to be brazen, as one who does so indicates that he is not embarrassed by his actions? The Gemara answers: The reason he admitted his sin in public was in order that his brothers should not be suspected of having committed the deed.

²³³ § The mishna teaches: If after the judge's warning she says: I am defiled, she writes a receipt for her marriage contract. The Gemara comments: You can learn from this mishna that one writes a receipt to serve as proof that a debt has been paid rather than tearing the promissory note. This matter is the subject of a dispute between the tanna'im in tractate Bava Batra (170b).

²³⁴ Abaye said: Teach in the mishna differently. Rather than understanding that she writes a receipt, explain it to mean: She tears her marriage contract. Rava said to him: But the mishna teaches explicitly that she writes a receipt. Rather, to explain the mishna, Rava said: We are dealing with a place in which they do not write a marriage contract, as they rely on the rabbinical ordinance that all wives are entitled to the sum of a standard marriage contract upon divorce or being widowed, even if no marriage contract has been written. Because there is no marriage contract to tear, a receipt is written so that the man can prove that he no longer has a monetary obligation. However, generally, it is possible that the document would be torn, and no proof can be adduced from this mishna.

²³⁵ § The mishna teaches: But if after the warning she maintains her innocence and says: I am pure, they would bring her up to the Eastern Gate. The Gemara asks: Would they bring her up?

²³⁶ She is already standing there in the Temple courtyard, as that is where the Sanhedrin sits. The Gemara answers: This teaches that they would bring her up and would bring her down repeatedly in order to fatigue her, with the hope that her worn-down mental state will lead to her confession. This was also done with witnesses testifying in cases of capital law, as it is taught in the Tosefta (Sanhedrin 9:1): Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar says: In cases of capital law, the court brings the witnesses from one place to another place in order to confuse them so that they will retract their testimony if they are lying.

²³⁷ § The mishna teaches: Because there, at the Eastern Gate, they give the sota women the bitter water to drink, and there the lepers and women who have given birth are purified. The Gemara asks: Granted, the sota women are given the bitter water to drink there, as it is written: "And the priest shall stand the woman before the Lord" (Numbers 5:18), and the Eastern Gate is directly opposite the Sanctuary, which is the area referred to as "before the Lord." Similarly, with regard to lepers as well, this is as it is written: "And the priest that cleans him shall set the man that is to be cleansed, and those things, before the Lord" (Leviticus 14:11). But what is the reason that a woman who has given birth must also be purified there?

²³⁸ The Gemara suggests: If we say it is because of the requirement for the women who have given birth to come and stand over their offerings, as it is taught in a baraita: The offering of a person is brought only if he stands over it while it is being sacrificed, and that is why they stand at this gate, which is as close to the sacrifice as they are permitted to be while they are ritually impure. If that is so, then the same halakha should apply to men who experience a gonorrhea-like discharge [zavim] and women who experience a discharge of uterine blood after their menstrual period [zavot] as well. They are also ritually impure while their offerings are sacrificed. Why would the mishna then specify women who have given birth? The Gemara answers: Yes, it is indeed so, and the tanna cited one of them, and the same halakha applies to all others in that category.

²³⁹ § The Sages taught in a baraita in the Tosefta (1:6): Two sota women are not given to drink simultaneously, in order that the heart of each one not be emboldened by the other, as there is a concern that when one sees that the other woman is not confessing, she will maintain her innocence even if she is guilty. Rabbi Yehuda says: This is not for that reason. Rather, it is because the verse states: “And the priest shall bring her [ota] near and stand her before the Lord” (Numbers 5:16). Rabbi Yehuda explains his inference: The word “ota” indicates her alone, and therefore there is a Torah edict not to have two women drink the bitter water simultaneously.

²⁴⁰ The Gemara asks: And as for the first tanna, isn’t it written “ota”? The Gemara answers: The first tanna is actually Rabbi Shimon, who interprets the reasons of halakhot written in verses, and he is saying: What is the reason? What is the reason the Torah requires her alone, that each sota drink individually? In order that the heart of each woman not be emboldened by the other.

²⁴¹ The Gemara asks: What is the difference between them? Why should it matter if this halakha is due to a logical reasoning or due to a Torah edict? The Gemara answers: The difference between them is in a case where one of the women is trembling from fear. Since she has obviously not been emboldened by the presence of the other, Rabbi Shimon would allow her to be given to drink at the same time as the other.

²⁴² The Gemara asks: And if she is trembling, can the court give her to drink at the same time as the other? But there is a general principle that one does not perform mitzvot in bundles, as one who does so appears as if the mitzvot are a burden upon him, and he is trying to finish with them as soon as possible.

²⁴³ As we learned in a baraita: Two sota women are not given to drink simultaneously, and two lepers are not purified simultaneously, and two slaves are not pierced simultaneously, and two heifers do not have their necks broken simultaneously, because one does not perform mitzvot in bundles. Accordingly, even Rabbi Shimon would agree that under no circumstances can a priest give two sota women to drink simultaneously. How, then, can the Gemara say that a trembling woman can be given to drink together with another sota?

²⁴⁴ Abaye said, and some say it was Rav Kahana who said: This is not difficult. Here, the second baraita, which says that it is prohibited to give two sota women to drink simultaneously because one does not perform mitzvot in bundles, is speaking with regard to one priest. There, Rabbi Shimon in the first baraita, who permits a trembling sota to be given to drink together with another sota, is speaking with regard to two priests. Since no individual priest is giving two women to drink simultaneously, mitzvot are not being performed in bundles.

²⁴⁵ § The mishna teaches: And the priest grabs hold of her clothing and pulls them until he reveals her heart, and he unbraids her hair. The Gemara cites the source for these acts. The Sages taught: The verse states: “And the priest shall stand the woman before the Lord and uncover the woman’s head” (Numbers 5:18). From this verse I have derived only that he uncovers her head; from where do I derive that he uncovers her body? The verse states: “The woman,” rather than just stating: And uncovers her head. This indicates that the woman’s body should be uncovered as well. If so, what is the meaning when the verse states specifically: “And uncover her head”? Once it has stated that he uncovers the woman, it is already apparent that she, including her hair, is uncovered. It teaches that the priest not only uncovers her hair but also unbraids her hair.

²⁴⁶ The mishna continues by citing that Rabbi Yehuda says: If her heart was attractive he would not reveal it, and if her hair was attractive he would not unbraid it. The Gemara asks: Is this to say that Rabbi Yehuda, who maintains that it is prohibited to uncover an attractive woman, is concerned about onlookers having sexual thoughts, and the Rabbis, who permit it, are not concerned about this?

²⁴⁷ But we have heard the opposite from them, as it is taught in the Tosefta (Sanhedrin 9:6): Although a man condemned to stoning is stoned unclothed, the court covers him with one small piece of material in front of him, to obscure his genitals, and they cover a woman with two small pieces of material, one in front of her and one behind her, because all of her loins are nakedness, as her genitals are visible both from the front and from the back. This is the statement of Rabbi Yehuda. And the Rabbis say: A man is stoned while naked, but a woman is not stoned while naked, but fully clothed. Apparently, Rabbi Yehuda is not concerned that the onlookers seeing the woman unclothed will lead to sexual thoughts, but the Rabbis are concerned about this.

²⁴⁸ Rabba said: What is the reason here, with regard to a sota, that Rabbi Yehuda is concerned? Perhaps the sota will leave the court having been proven innocent, and the young priests in the Temple who saw her partially naked will become provoked by the sight of her. There, in the case of a woman who is stoned, she departs from this world by being stoned and there is no concern for sexual thoughts. The Gemara comments: And if you would say that the fact that she is killed is irrelevant to their sexual thoughts, as the onlookers will be provoked with regard to other women, this is not a concern. As didn't Rava say: It is learned as a tradition that the evil inclination controls only that which a person's eyes see.

²⁴⁹ Rava said: Is the contradiction between one statement of Rabbi Yehuda and the other statement of Rabbi Yehuda difficult, while the contradiction between one statement of the Rabbis and the other statement of the Rabbis is not difficult? There is also an apparent contradiction between the two rulings of the Rabbis, as with regard to a sota, they are not concerned about sexual thoughts, but with regard to a woman who is stoned they are. Rather, Rava said: The contradiction between one statement of Rabbi Yehuda and the other statement of Rabbi Yehuda is not difficult, as we answered above.

²⁵⁰ The contradiction between one ruling of the Rabbis and the other ruling of the Rabbis is not difficult as well. Here, with regard to a sota, what is the reason that her hair and body are uncovered? Because of what is stated in the verse, that other women should be warned: "Thus will I cause lewdness to cease out of the land, that all women may be chastened not to do after your lewdness" (Ezekiel 23:48). There, with regard to stoning, you have no greater chastening than seeing this stoning itself.

²⁵¹ And if you would say that two forms of chastening, both stoning and humiliation, should be done with her, Rav Naḥman said that Rabba bar Avuh said: The verse states: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18), teaching that even with regard to a condemned prisoner, select a good, i.e., a compassionate, death for him. Therefore, when putting a woman to death by stoning, she should not be humiliated in the process.

²⁵² The Gemara suggests: Let us say that the statement of Rav Naḥman is a dispute between tanna'im, and according to Rabbi Yehuda there is no mitzva to select a compassionate death. The Gemara refutes this: No, it may be that everyone agrees with the opinion of Rav Naḥman, and here they disagree about this: One Sage, i.e., the Rabbis, holds: Minimizing one's degradation is

preferable to him than minimizing his physical pain. Therefore, the Rabbis view the more compassionate death as one without degradation, even if wearing clothes will increase the pain of the one being executed, as the clothes will absorb the blow and prolong death. And one Sage, Rabbi Yehuda, holds that minimizing physical pain is preferable to a person than minimizing his degradation, and therefore the one being executed prefers to be stoned unclothed, without any chance of the clothing prolonging the death, although this adds to the degradation.

²⁵³ § The mishna teaches: If she was dressed in white garments, he would cover her with black garments. A Sage taught: If black garments are becoming to her, then she is covered in unsightly garments.

²⁵⁴ The mishna teaches: If she was wearing gold adornments or other jewelry, they are removed from her. The Gemara asks: Isn't this obvious? Now that the priest renders her unattractive by uncovering her and dressing her in unsightly garments, is it necessary to teach that they remove these adornments from her? The Gemara answers: Lest you say that with these adornments on her, she has more degradation, as people say in a known aphorism: Undressed, naked, and wearing shoes. This means that a naked person who wears shoes emphasizes the fact that he is naked. Perhaps one would think that by a sota wearing jewelry, her nakedness is emphasized and her degradation is amplified. Therefore, the mishna teaches us that this is not so.

²⁵⁵ The mishna continues: And afterward the priest would bring an Egyptian rope, and he would tie it above her breasts. Rabbi Abba raised a dilemma before Rav Huna: What is the halakha as to whether the lack of an Egyptian rope will preclude the performance of the rite with regard to a sota? Does any means of tying suffice? Perhaps the primary function of the rope is so that her clothes will not fall off her, and therefore even a small ribbon [tziltzul] would also suffice. Or, perhaps the rope is used because of what the Master said: She girded herself with a comely ribbon when she committed her transgression, and therefore the priest brings specifically an Egyptian rope, which is coarse, and ties it above her breasts. If that is the case, then the Egyptian rope should be indispensable.

²⁵⁶ Rav Huna said to him: You learned the answer to this dilemma in a baraita that teaches: And afterward the priest would bring an Egyptian rope and he would tie it above her breasts, so that her clothes would not fall off her. The baraita states that the use of an Egyptian rope is primarily for holding up her clothing, and therefore use of specifically Egyptian rope is not essential.

²⁵⁷ § The mishna teaches: And anyone who desires to watch her may watch, except for her slaves and maidservants, who are not permitted to watch because her heart is emboldened by them. And all of the women are permitted to watch her. The Gemara comments: This matter is itself difficult, as there is an internal contradiction in the mishna. First you say: And anyone who desires to watch her may watch. Apparently, there is no difference whether the onlookers are men and there is no difference whether they are women; all are permitted to observe the rite. And then the mishna teaches: And all of the women are permitted to watch her, which indicates women, yes, they may watch her, but men, no, they may not.

²⁵⁸ Abaye said: Interpret the first statement, which permits all people to observe the sota, as pertaining to women, but men may not be onlookers. Rava said to him: But it teaches in that first statement that anyone who desires to watch her may watch, and one cannot limit this to women.

²⁵⁹ Rather, Rava said: Anyone who desires to watch her may watch, there is no difference whether the onlookers are men and there is no difference whether they are women. And the next clause of the

mishna teaches that women are obligated to watch her, as is stated: “Thus will I cause lewdness to cease out of the land, that all women may be chastened not to do after your lewdness” (Ezekiel 23:48).

²⁶⁰ MISHNA: The mishna teaches lessons that can be derived from the actions and treatment of a sota. With the measure that a person measures, he is measured with it. For example, she, the sota, adorned herself to violate a transgression, the Omnipresent therefore decreed that she be rendered unattractive; she exposed herself for the purpose of violating a transgression, as she stood in places where she would be noticed by potential adulterers, so the Omnipresent therefore decreed that her body be exposed publicly; she began her transgression with her thigh and afterward with her stomach, therefore the thigh is smitten first and then the stomach, and the rest of all her body does not escape punishment.

²⁶¹ GEMARA: Rav Yosef says: Although the measure with regard to court-imposed capital punishment has ceased, as there is no court today empowered to adjudicate and apply corporal punishment, punishment that is suitable to be applied with a measure by God has not ceased, as a person is punished by Heaven in accordance with his sin.

²⁶² As Rav Yosef says, and Rabbi Ḥiyya similarly teaches: From the day that the Temple was destroyed, although the Sanhedrin ceased, the four types of court-imposed capital punishment have not ceased. The Gemara asks: But they have ceased; court-imposed capital punishment is no longer given. Rather, the intention is: The law of the four types of court-imposed capital punishment has not ceased.

²⁶³ The Gemara explains: How so? One who is liable to be executed by stoning either falls from a roof or an animal mauls him and breaks his bones. This death is similar to the experience of stoning, in which the one liable to be executed is pushed from a platform and his bones break from the impact of the fall. One who is liable to be executed by burning either falls into a fire and is burned or a snake bites him, as a snakebite causes a burning sensation. One who is liable to be executed by slaying of the sword either is turned over to the authorities and they execute him with a sword, or robbers come upon him and murder him. One who is liable to be executed by strangling either drowns in a river and is choked by the water or dies of diphtheria [seronekhi], which causes his throat to become clogged, and he dies.

²⁶⁴ It is taught in a baraita in the Tosefta (3:1–5) that Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi would say: From where is it derived that with the measure that a person measures, he is measured with it? As it is stated: “In full measure [besase’a], when you send her away, you contend with her” (Isaiah 27:8). In other words, in the measure, bese’a, that one used in one’s sin, God will contend with, i.e., punish, him.

²⁶⁵ The baraita continues: I have derived only the relatively large measurement of a se’a, which alludes to a significant sin. From where do I know to include even lesser sins that are comparable to smaller measurements, e.g., a half-se’a [tarkav] and a half-tarkav; a kav and a half-kav; a quarter-kav and half of a quarter-kav; an eighth-kav [toman] and an ukla, which is one-thirty-second of a kav. From where is it derived that all these lesser sins are also dealt with in accordance with the measure of the sin? The verse states: “For every boot [sa’on] stamped with fierceness, and every cloak rolled in blood, shall even be for burning, for fuel of fire” (Isaiah 9:4), indicating that every sa’on, which Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi interprets as a small se’a, is “stamped with fierceness” and doesn’t go unpunished.

²⁶⁶ And from where is it derived that each and every peruta combine to add up to a great sum, alluding to the notion that even if one is not immediately punished for a small transgression, in the final accounting all misdeeds will combine together and be addressed by the imposition of a large punishment? The verse states: “Behold, this have I found, says Koheleth, adding one thing to another, to find out the account” (Ecclesiastes 7:27).

²⁶⁷ The baraita continues: And we found this with regard to a sota, that with the measure with which she measured, she is measured with it: She stood by the opening of her house to exhibit herself to her paramour, therefore a priest has her stand at the Gate of Nicanor and exhibits her disgrace to all; she spread beautiful shawls [sudarin] on her head for her paramour, therefore a priest removes her kerchief from her head and places it under her feet; she adorned her face for her paramour, therefore

²⁶⁸ her face becomes sallow after drinking the bitter water; she painted her eyes for her paramour, therefore her eyes bulge after she drinks; she braided her hair for her paramour, therefore a priest unbraids her hair and makes it disheveled; she indicated to her paramour with a finger that he should come to her, therefore her fingernails fall off; she girded herself for her paramour with a ribbon as a belt, therefore a priest brings an Egyptian rope and ties it for her above her breasts; she extended her thigh for her paramour, therefore her thigh falls away after drinking.

²⁶⁹ She received her paramour upon her stomach, therefore her stomach swells; she fed him delicacies of the world, therefore her offering is animal food, as it is from oats; she gave him fine wine to drink in fine cups, therefore a priest gives her bitter water in an earthenware mekeida, a simple clay vessel, to drink.

²⁷⁰ She acted in secret; therefore, God, referred to in the verse “Who dwell in secret, with the Most High” (Psalms 91:1), turns His face to her, as it is stated: “The eye of the adulterer waits for the twilight, saying: No eye shall see me; and the Hidden Face will turn” (Job 24:15). The adulterer acts in the twilight of the night to act in secrecy, and therefore God, Who is concealed, arranges that the matter is revealed in public.

²⁷¹ Alternatively, she acted in secret, and therefore the Omnipresent revealed it in the open, as it is stated: “Though his hatred be concealed with deceit, his wickedness shall be revealed before the congregation” (Proverbs 26:26), i.e., concealed acts of sin are ultimately revealed in public.

²⁷² § The Gemara questions the need for two verses to indicate that small transgressions are addressed through one significant punishment. And since Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi derives that small transgressions are combined and punished together from: “Behold, this have I found, says Koheleth, adding one thing to another, to find out the account” (Ecclesiastes 7:27), why do I need the verse: “For every boot stamped with fierceness” (Isaiah 9:4)? The Gemara answers: This verse serves to teach that even small transgressions are punished by the measure, i.e., with a punishment appropriate to the transgression.

²⁷³ The Gemara asks: And since he derives it from “for every boot stamped with fierceness,” why do I need “in full measure, when you send her away, you contend with her” (Isaiah 27:8)?

²⁷⁴ The Gemara answers: This verse serves to teach the statement as taught by Rav Hinnana bar Pappa, for Rav Hinnana bar Pappa says: The Holy One, Blessed be He, does not punish a nation deserving of punishment until its time to be banished, i.e., until the time of its final eradication from

the world, as it is stated: “In full measure, when you send her away, you contend with her” (Isaiah 27:8).

²⁷⁵ Is that so? But didn’t Rava say: Why are there specifically three cups of misfortune that are stated with regard to Egypt in the dream of its chief butler (see Genesis 40:11–13)? They are an allusion to three cups of misfortune that would later befall Egypt: One that it drank in the days of Moses during the ten plagues and the Exodus; one that it drank in the days of Pharaoh Neco, the king of Egypt who was defeated by Nebuchadnezzar; and one that it will drink in the future with its companions, i.e., the other nations, when they are punished during the days of the Messiah. This indicates that nations can be punished several times, not only when they are eradicated.

²⁷⁶ And if you would say that those ancient Egyptians, have gone, and these later Egyptians are different ones, but isn’t it taught in a baraita in the Tosefta (Kiddushin 4:3): Rabbi Yehuda said: Minyamin, an Egyptian convert, was a friend of mine from among the students of Rabbi Akiva, and Minyamin the Egyptian convert said: After I converted I was a first-generation Egyptian convert, and so I married another first-generation Egyptian convert. I will marry off my son, who is a second-generation Egyptian convert, to another second-generation Egyptian convert, in order that my son’s son will be permitted to enter into the congregation. The Torah prohibits Egyptian converts before the third generation to enter into the congregation (see Deuteronomy 23:8–9). By Minyamin’s observance of this prohibition even during the time of Rabbi Akiva, it indicates that Egypt during the tannaitic period was still viewed as biblical Egypt.

²⁷⁷ Rather, if anything was stated with regard to the delay of punishment, it was stated like this: Rav Ḥinnana bar Pappa says: The Holy One, Blessed be He, does not punish a sinful king until his time to be banished, as it is stated: “In full measure, when you send her away, you contend with her” (Isaiah 27:8).

²⁷⁸ Ameimar teaches that statement of Rav Ḥinnana bar Pappa with regard to this: What is the meaning of that which is written: “For I the Lord change not; and you, sons of Jacob, are not consumed” (Malachi 3:6)? “For I the Lord change [shaniti] not” is interpreted to mean: I did not strike a nation and repeat [shaniti] striking it, as a stricken nation never recovers from the initial strike. “And you, sons of Jacob, are not consumed,” is interpreted to mean: Despite the fact that I strike you many times for your sins, I do not let you perish. This is the same as that which is written: “I will heap evils upon them; I will consume My arrows upon them” (Deuteronomy 32:23), which is interpreted to mean: My arrows are consumed and used up, and they, the Jewish people, are not consumed but will continue to endure despite the many calamities that will befall them.

²⁷⁹ Rav Hamnuna says: The Holy One, Blessed be He, does not punish a person until his se’a, the measure that is suitable for him, is filled, as it is stated: “In the fullness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits; the hand of every one that is in misery shall come upon him” (Job 20:22). In other words, when the sufficient measure of sin has been reached, then the trouble will overtake him.

²⁸⁰ Having mentioned Rav Ḥinnana bar Pappa, the Gemara quotes another of his interpretations. Rav Ḥinnana bar Pappa interpreted a verse homiletically: What is the meaning of that which is written: “Rejoice in the Lord, you righteous, praise is comely for the upright [nava tehilla]” (Psalms 33:1)? Do not read the conclusion of the verse as: Praise is comely [nava]; rather, read it as: A house [naveh] of praise. This is referring to Moses and David, whose enemies did not rule over their achievements, as they each built a naveh, a house for the Lord, and this house remained in existence.

²⁸¹ With regard to David, the citadel that housed his home and city, was not destroyed, as it is written: “Her gates are sunk into the ground” (Lamentations 2:9), as the gates of Jerusalem built by David were not destroyed by enemies, but sunk into the ground and were buried there. This is also so with regard to Moses, as the Master said: When the first Temple was built, the Tent of Meeting was sequestered, including its boards, its clasps, and its bars, and its pillars, and its sockets. The Gemara asks: Where is it sequestered? Rav Ḥisda says that Avimi says: Beneath the tunnels of the Sanctuary.

²⁸² § The Sages taught in a baraita in the Tosefta (4:16–19): The sota placed her eyes, fixed her gaze, on one who is unfit for her, i.e., another man, so this is her punishment: That which she desired, i.e., to be with her paramour, is not given to her, as she becomes forbidden to him forever. And that which she had, i.e., her husband, was taken away from her, as she is now forbidden to him as well. This teaches that anyone who places his eyes on that which is not his is not given what he desires, and that which he had is taken from him.

²⁸³ And, so too, we found with regard to the primeval snake who seduced Eve, for he placed his eyes on that which was unfit for him, as he wanted to marry Eve. Consequently, that which he desired was not given to him, and that which was in his possession was taken from him. The Holy One, Blessed be He, said: I initially said that the snake will be king over every domesticated animal and non-domesticated animal, but now he is cursed more than all the domesticated animals and all the non-domesticated animals of the field, as it is stated: “And the Lord God said unto the serpent: Because you have done this, you are cursed from among all cattle, and from among all beasts of the field; upon your belly shall you go, and dust shall you eat all the days of your life” (Genesis 3:14).

²⁸⁴ The baraita explains the elements of this curse. I said that the snake will walk upright, but now he shall go on his belly; I said that his food will be the same as the food eaten by a person, but now he shall eat dust. The snake said: I will kill Adam and marry Eve, but now: “I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed” (Genesis 3:15).

²⁸⁵ The baraita continues: And so we found with regard to Cain, who desired to inherit the whole world alone (see Genesis 4); and Korah, who desired the priesthood (see Numbers 16); and Balaam, who desired Balak’s money (see Numbers 22); and Doeg, who was jealous of David (see I Samuel 21–22); and Ahithophel, who was also jealous of David (see II Samuel 16); and Gehazi, who took Naaman’s money (see II Kings 5); and Absalom, who wanted the kingdom (see II Samuel 15); and Adonijah, who also wanted the kingdom (see I Kings 1); and Uzziah, who wanted to be the High Priest (see II Chronicles 26); and Haman, who wanted to kill all the Jews (see Esther 3:13). All of these were people who placed their eyes on that which is unfit for them, and consequently what they desired was not given to them, and what they had was taken from them.

²⁸⁶ § The mishna teaches: She began her transgression with her thigh and afterward with her stomach, therefore the thigh is smitten first and then the stomach. The Gemara asks: From where are these matters derived, i.e., that this is the order of her punishment? If we say it is because it is written in the verse detailing the priest’s curse: “Then the priest shall cause the woman to swear with the oath of cursing, and the priest shall say unto the woman: The Lord make you a curse and an oath among your people, when the Lord does make your thigh to fall away, and your belly to swell” (Numbers 5:21), which indicates the sequence of her punishment; but isn’t the opposite written in the verse describing what actually occurs to a guilty sota: “And her belly shall swell, and her thigh shall fall away” (Numbers 5:27), indicating that the punishment begins with her stomach and then her thigh?

²⁸⁷ Abaye said in explanation: When the priest curses the woman, he first curses the thigh and then he curses the stomach, but when the bitter water evaluates her, it evaluates her along its way through the body. The water first enters the stomach and then reaches the thigh. The Gemara asks: But in the verse detailing the curse it is also written: “And this water that causes the curse shall go into your bowels, and will cause your belly to swell, and your thigh to fall away” (Numbers 5:22). The Gemara answers: That verse teaches that the priest notifies her that the stomach will be affected first and then the thigh, so that one not cast aspersions on the bitter water.

²⁸⁸ MISHNA: The mishna provides additional examples of people who were treated by Heaven commensurate with their actions. Samson followed his eyes, therefore he was punished measure for measure, as the Philistines gouged out his eyes, as it is stated: “And the Philistines laid hold on him, and put out his eyes” (Judges 16:21).

²⁸⁹ Absalom was excessively proud of his hair, and therefore he was hanged by his hair. And furthermore, because he engaged in sexual intercourse with ten of his father’s concubines (see II Samuel 15:16 and 16:22), therefore ten spears [loneviyyot] were put, i.e., thrust, into him, as it is stated: “And ten young men that bore Joab’s armor compassed about and smote Absalom, and slew him” (II Samuel 18:15). And because he stole three times, committing three thefts of people’s hearts: The heart of his father, as he tricked him by saying that he was going to sacrifice offerings; the heart of the court, as he tricked them into following him; and the heart of the Jewish people, as it is stated: “So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel” (II Samuel 15:6), therefore three spears were embedded into his heart, as it is stated: “Then said Joab: I may not tarry like this with you. And he took three spears in his hand, and thrust them through the heart of Absalom, while he was yet alive” (II Samuel 18:14).

²⁹⁰ The mishna continues: And the same is so with regard to the reward of good deeds; a person is rewarded measure for measure. Miriam waited for the baby Moses for one hour at the shore of the Nile, as it is stated: “And his sister stood afar off, to know what would be done to him” (Exodus 2:4). Therefore the Jewish people delayed their travels in the desert for seven days to wait for her when she was smitten with leprosy, as it is stated: “And Miriam was confined outside of the camp seven days; and the people journeyed not until Miriam was brought in again” (Numbers 12:15).

²⁹¹ Joseph merited to bury his father, resulting in a display of great honor to his father, and there was none among his brothers greater than he in importance, for he was viceroy of Egypt, as it is stated: “And Joseph went up to bury his father; and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the Elders of his house, and all the Elders of the land of Egypt, and all the house of Joseph, and his brethren, and his father’s house; only their little ones, and their flocks, and their herds, they left in the land of Goshen. And there went up with him both chariots and horsemen; and it was a very great company” (Genesis 50:7–9). Who, to us, had a greater burial than Joseph, as it was none other than Moses who involved himself in transporting his coffin.

²⁹² Moses merited to be the only person involved in the transportation of Joseph’s bones to be buried in Eretz Yisrael, and there was none among the Jewish people greater than he, as it is stated: “And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him” (Exodus 13:19). Who had a greater burial than Moses, as no one involved himself in his burial other than the Omnipresent Himself, as it is stated: “And He buried him in the valley in the land of Moab over against Beth Peor; and no man knows of his sepulcher unto this day” (Deuteronomy 34:6). The mishna comments: Not only with regard to Moses

did the Sages say that God takes part in his burial, but also with regard to all the righteous individuals, as it is stated: “Your righteousness shall go before you and the glory of the Lord shall gather you in” (Isaiah 58:8).

²⁹³ GEMARA: The Sages taught (Tosefta 3:15): Samson rebelled with his eyes, as it is stated: “Then his father and his mother said to him: Is there never a woman among the daughters of your brethren, or among all my people, that you go out to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines? And Samson said to his father: Get her for me; for she is pleasant in my eyes” (Judges 14:3). Therefore, the Philistines gouged out his eyes, as it is stated: “And the Philistines laid hold on him, and put out his eyes” (Judges 16:21).

²⁹⁴ The Gemara asks: Is that so? But isn’t it written: “But his father and his mother knew not that it was from the Lord; as he sought a subterfuge against the Philistines” (Judges 14:4), indicating that Samson’s searching for a Philistine wife was due to a Divine mission? The Gemara answers: Although God did plan the punishment of the Philistines, in any event when he went, he followed his inclination and did not act for the sake of Heaven.

²⁹⁵ It is taught in a baraita in the Tosefta (3:15): Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi says: His initial wrongdoing was in Gaza, and therefore he was smitten in Gaza. The Gemara explains: His initial wrongdoing was in Gaza, as it is written: “And Samson went to Gaza, and saw there a harlot, and went in unto her” (Judges 16:1). Therefore, he was smitten in Gaza, as it is written: “And the Philistines laid hold on him, and put out his eyes; and they brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison-house” (Judges 16:21).

²⁹⁶ The Gemara asks: But isn’t it written earlier: “And Samson went down to Timnah, and saw a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines” (Judges 14:1), indicating that his initial wrongdoing was in Timnah? The Gemara answers: In any event, his initial wrongdoing was in Gaza, for at least he had married the woman in Timnah; in Gaza, Samson never wed the woman but only engaged in sexual intercourse with her.

²⁹⁷ The Gemara continues its discussion of Samson. The verse states: “And it came to pass afterward, that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah” (Judges 16:4). It is taught in a baraita that Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi says: Even if she had not been called by the name Delilah, it would have been fitting that she be called Delilah, for she weakened [dildela] his strength, she weakened his heart, and she weakened his deeds, thereby decreasing his merits.

²⁹⁸ The Gemara explains: She weakened his strength, as it is written: “And she made him sleep upon her knees; and she called for a man and had the seven locks of his head shaved off; and she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him” (Judges 16:19). She weakened his heart, as it is written: “And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart, she sent and called for the lords of the Philistines, saying: Come up this once, for he has told me all his heart” (Judges 16:18). She weakened his deeds, thereby decreasing his merits, as the Divine Presence left him, as it is written: “And she said: The Philistines are upon you, Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said: I will go out as at other times, and shake myself. But he knew not that the Lord was departed from him” (Judges 16:20).

²⁹⁹ The verse states: “And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart” (Judges 16:18). The Gemara asks: From where did she know that this time he had told her the truth about the source of his strength, as he had lied about it previously? Rabbi Ḥanin says that Rav says: Words of truth are

recognizable, and she felt that this time he was telling the truth. Abaye says differently: She knew about Samson being a righteous individual, that he would not express the name of Heaven in vain. Once he said: "And he told her all his heart, and said to her: There has not come a razor upon my head; for I have been a nazirite unto God from my mother's womb" (Judges 16:17), she said: Now he is certainly saying the truth.

³⁰⁰ The verse states: "And it came to pass, when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him, that his soul was vexed unto death" (Judges 16:16). The Gemara asks: What is the meaning of "and urged him"? How did she do so? Rabbi Yitzḥak of the school of Rabbi Ami says: At the moment immediately before his completion of the act of intercourse, she slipped away from beneath him. By doing this, she urged him to reveal his secret.

³⁰¹ When the angel spoke to Samson's mother, he said: "Now therefore beware, I pray of you, and drink no wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing" (Judges 13:4). The Gemara asks, what is the meaning of "any unclean thing"? That term usually means non-kosher foods, but obviously she would not eat them anyway. And what's more, until now was she eating unclean things, that she should have to be warned not to continue doing so? Rabbi Yitzḥak of the school of Rabbi Ami says: The angel was not referring to foods that are actually unclean, but rather items that are forbidden to a nazirite.

³⁰² After Samson smote one thousand Philistines with the jawbone of a donkey, he called the place Lehi, and God miraculously granted him to drink, as he was dying of thirst. The verse states: "But God cleaved the hollow place that is in Lehi, and out of there came water; and when he had drunk, his spirit came back, and he revived" (Judges 15:19). Rabbi Yitzḥak of the school of Rabbi Ami says: He desired something unclean, as he was driven by lust to Philistine women. Therefore, the saving of his life was dependent on something unclean, the jawbone of a donkey.

³⁰³ The verse states with regard to Samson: "And the spirit of the Lord began [vataḥel] to move him in Mahaneh Dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol" (Judges 13:25). Rabbi Ḥama, son of Rabbi Ḥanina, says: The prophecy of Jacob our forefather concerning the tribe of Dan took effect [ḥaleta] through Samson, a member of the tribe of Dan, as it is written: "Dan shall be a serpent in the way, a horned snake in the path, that bites the horse's heels, so that his rider falls backward" (Genesis 49:17).

³⁰⁴ The verse continues: "To move him [lesa'amo] in Mahaneh Dan." Rabbi Yitzḥak of the school of Rabbi Ami says: This teaches that the Divine Presence jangled before him, inspiring him, like a bell [zog], as it is written here: "To move him [lesa'amo] in Mahaneh Dan," and it is written there with regard to the clothing of the High Priest: "A bell [pa'amon] and a pomegranate" (Exodus 39:26).

³⁰⁵ The verse concludes: "Between Zorah and Eshtaol." Rabbi Asi says: Zorah and Eshtaol were two large mountains, and Samson uprooted them and ground them one against the other.

³⁰⁶ Samson's parents were told: "For behold, you shall conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come upon his head; for the child shall be a nazirite unto God from the womb; and he shall begin to save Israel out of the hand of the Philistines" (Judges 13:5). Rabbi Ḥama, son of Rabbi Ḥanina, says:

³⁰⁷ Samson's parents were being told that the oath of Abimelech, king of the Philistines, was negated, as it is written that Abimelech said to our forefather Abraham: "Now therefore swear unto me here by God that you will not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my son's son; but according to the kindness that I have done unto you, you shall do to me, and to the land wherein you

have sojourned” (Genesis 21:23). The oath of the descendants of Abraham was no longer binding since the Philistines broke their oath by subjugating the Jewish people.

³⁰⁸ The verse states: “And the woman bore a son, and called his name Samson; and the child grew, and the Lord blessed him” (Judges 13:24). The Gemara asks: With what did He bless him? Rav Yehuda says that Rav says: It means that He blessed him with regard to his penis, that despite his youth his penis should function like that of physically mature men, and that his seed should be like an overflowing river.

³⁰⁹ Prior to Samson’s death, the verse states: “And Samson called unto the Lord, and said: Lord God, remember me, I pray to You, and strengthen me, I pray to You, only this once, O God, that I may be this once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes” (Judges 16:28). Rav said that Samson said before the Holy One, Blessed be He: Master of the Universe, remember on my behalf the twenty-two years that I judged the Jewish people without receiving any reward, and I did not even say to any one of them: Move a stick for me from one place to another place.

³¹⁰ The verse states earlier: “And Samson went and caught three hundred foxes, and took torches, and turned tail to tail, and put a torch in the midst between every two tails” (Judges 15:4). The Gemara asks: What is different about foxes than any other animal, that he chose them for this purpose? Rabbi Aivu bar Nagdi says that Rabbi Ḥiyya bar Abba says: Samson said: Let the animal that goes in reverse when it tries to escape, i.e., the fox, come and exact punishment from the Philistines, who reneged on their oath that Abimelech swore to Abraham.

³¹¹ It is taught in a baraita that Rabbi Shimon the Pious said: The width between the shoulders of Samson was sixty cubits, as it is stated: “And Samson lay till midnight, and arose at midnight, and grabbed hold of the doors of the gate of the city, and the two posts, and plucked them up, bar and all, and put them upon his shoulders, and carried them up to the top of the mountain that is before Hebron” (Judges 16:3). The verse indicates that the width of the gate of the city of Gaza was equal to the width of Samson’s shoulders, and it is learned as a tradition that doors of the gate of Gaza were no less than sixty cubits wide.

³¹² With regard to Samson’s capture, the verse states: “And the Philistines laid hold on him, and put out his eyes; and they brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison-house” (Judges 16:21). Rabbi Yoḥanan says: Grinding is nothing other than a language of a transgression of sexual intercourse, and so the verse says: “Then let my wife grind unto another man” (Job 31:10). This teaches that each and every Philistine man brought his wife to the prison in order that she should be impregnated by Samson. Rav Pappa said: This is an example of the folk saying that people say: Before a wine drinker, bring wine; before one who digs in the ground, bring figs. So too, Samson, who married Philistine women, was brought more Philistine women while in prison.

³¹³ And Rabbi Yoḥanan says: With regard to anyone who commits adultery, his wife commits adultery against him, as it is stated: “If my heart has been enticed unto a woman, and I have lain in wait at my neighbor’s door” (Job 31:9), and it is written: “Then let my wife grind unto another man and may strangers kneel over her” (Job 31:10). And this explains the folk saying that people say: He is found among the pumpkins [karei] and his wife among the zucchinis [butzinei], which are similar types of vegetables. In other words, she acts the same way that he does.

³¹⁴ And Rabbi Yoḥanan says: Samson judged the Jewish people as their Father in Heaven does, with complete justice, as it is stated: “Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel” (Genesis 49:16), which is interpreted to mean that Samson, from the tribe of Dan, judges his people just as God, Who is “One.” And Rabbi Yoḥanan says: Samson [Shimshon] is called by the name of the Holy One, Blessed be He, as it is stated: “For the Lord God is a sun [shemesh] and a shield” (Psalms 84:12). The Gemara comments: If that is so, then his name should not be erased just like other sanctified names are not erased. Rather, he is not called by the name of God but his name is akin to the name of the Holy One, Blessed be He, for just as the Holy One, Blessed be He, protects the entire world, so too Samson, in his generation, protected all the Jewish people.

³¹⁵ And Rabbi Yoḥanan says: Balaam was lame in one of his legs, as it is stated with regard to him: “And he went, limping [shefi]” (Numbers 23:3). Samson was lame in both of his two legs, as it is stated that when Jacob mentioned the tribe of Dan in the prophecy that pertained to Samson, he referred to him as: “Dan shall be a serpent in the way, a horned snake [shefifon] in the path” (Genesis 49:17), which is double shefi, i.e., doubly lame.

³¹⁶ § The Sages taught in a baraita: Five individuals were created with a characteristic that is akin to a representation of the One on High, and they were all stricken by that characteristic. Samson was glorified in his strength, Saul in his neck (see I Samuel 9:2), Absalom in his hair, Zedekiah in his eyes, and Asa in his feet.

³¹⁷ The Gemara clarifies: Samson was stricken by his strength, which led to his demise, as it is written: “And she made him sleep upon her knees; and she called for a man and had the seven locks of his head shaved off; and she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him” (Judges 16:19).

³¹⁸ Saul was smitten in his neck, as it is written: “Then said Saul to his armor-bearer: Draw your sword, and thrust me through with it; lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and make a mock of me. But his armor-bearer would not; for he was sore afraid. Therefore, Saul took his sword and fell upon it” (I Samuel 31:4); he fell with his neck upon the sword.

³¹⁹ Absalom was stricken in his hair, as we will state later. Zedekiah was stricken in his eyes, as it is written: “And they slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him in fetters, and carried him to Babylon” (II Kings 25:7).

³²⁰ Asa was stricken in his feet, as it is written: “Now the rest of all the acts of Asa, and all his might, and all that he did, and the cities that he built, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? But in the time of his old age he was diseased in his feet” (I Kings 15:23). And Rav Yehuda says that Rav says: This indicates that gout [padagra] grabbed hold of him. Mar Zutra, son of Rav Naḥman, said to Rav Naḥman: What are the circumstances of gout? What pain does it involve? He said to him: It feels like a needle inserted into living flesh. The Gemara asks: From where did he know this? The Gemara answers: Some say that he himself suffered from this condition, and some say that he heard it from his teacher, and some say that he knew it through divine inspiration, as it stated: “The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; and His covenant, to make them know it” (Psalms 25:14).

³²¹ Rava taught: For what reason was Asa punished in his feet? Because he made Torah scholars perform forced labor [angarya], as it is stated: “Then King Asa made a proclamation unto all Judah; none was exempted; and they carried away the stones of Ramah and the timber thereof, with which Baasa had built, and King Asa built with them Geba of Benjamin and Mizpah” (I Kings 15:22). The

superfluous expression “unto all” indicates that the proclamation was issued to everyone, including Torah scholars. The Gemara asks: What is the meaning of the next phrase in the verse: “None was exempted [ein naki]”? Rav Yehuda says that Rav says: This includes even a bridegroom from his chamber and a bride from her canopy, as the verse states with regard to a bridegroom: “He shall be free [naki] for his house one year” (Deuteronomy 24:5).

³²² § It is written with regard to Samson: “And Samson went down to Timnah, and saw a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines” (Judges 14:1), and it is written in the Torah passage concerning the incident of Judah and Tamar: “And it was told to Tamar, saying: Behold, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep” (Genesis 38:13). The verses contain an apparent contradiction as to whether Timnah was a place to which one must descend or a place to which one must ascend. Rabbi Elazar says: These terms do not refer to the manner of traveling to Timnah but are used figuratively. Concerning Samson, who was disgraced there in Timnah, the term indicating descent is written with regard to his journey. Concerning Judah, who was elevated there, the term indicating ascent is written with regard to his journey.

³²³ Rabbi Shmuel bar Naḥmani says differently: There were two cities named Timnah, one was reached by descent into a valley, and one was reached by ascent.

³²⁴ Rav Pappa said differently: There was one Timnah, and it was located on the slope of a mountain. One who came from this side reached it by descent, and one who came from that side reached it by ascent. The Gemara presents examples of such cities: For example: Vardonia, and Bei Varei, and the market of Neresh.

³²⁵ The verse states with regard to Tamar: “And she put off from her the garments of her widowhood, and covered herself with her veil, and wrapped herself, and sat in the entrance of Enaim [befetaḥ einayim], which is by the way to Timnah; for she saw that Shelah was grown up, and she was not given unto him to wife” (Genesis 38:14). The amora'im dispute the meaning of the word einayim. Rabbi Alexandri says: This teaches that she went and she sat at the entrance of the home of Abraham our forefather, a place that all eyes hope to see it, as she was certain that Judah would pass there. Rabbi Ḥanin says that Rav says: It is a place called Enaim, and similarly the verse states in the list of cities in Eretz Yisrael in the portion of Judah: “Tappuah and Enam” (Joshua 15:34).

³²⁶ Rabbi Shmuel bar Naḥmani says: She provided eyes [einayim] for her statements, i.e., with her words she provided an opening [petah] for Judah to solicit her. When Judah solicited her to engage in sexual intercourse with him, he first attempted to verify her status and said to her: Are you perhaps are a gentile? She said to him: I am a convert. He asked: Perhaps you are a married woman? She said to him: I am an unmarried woman. He asked: Perhaps your father accepted betrothal for you and you are unaware of it? She said to him: I am an orphan. He asked: Maybe you are impure? She said to him: I am pure.

³²⁷ The Gemara discusses Abraham's house: It is written: “And he planted an eshel in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the Lord, the Everlasting God” (Genesis 21:33). Reish Lakish says: This teaches that Abraham made an orchard and planted in it all kinds of sweet things.

³²⁸ The tanna'im Rabbi Yehuda and Rabbi Neḥemya disagree as to the meaning of the word “eshel.” One said that it means an orchard [pardes], and one said that it means an inn [pundak]. The Gemara continues: Granted, according to the one who said that it means an orchard, this is what is written: “And he planted,” and this is suitable language for an orchard. But according to the one who said that

he opened an inn, what is the meaning of the phrase “and he planted”? The Gemara answers: As it is written: “And he shall plant [vayitta] the tents of his palace between the seas and the beautiful holy mountain; and he shall come to his end, and none shall help him” (Daniel 11:45), indicating that the word vayitta, and he planted, is also used to indicate pitching tents.

³²⁹ The verse there states: “And he planted an eshel in Beersheba, and called there [vayyikra] on the name of the Lord, the Everlasting God” (Genesis 21:33). Reish Lakish said: Do not read this word literally as “vayyikra,” and he called,

³³⁰ but rather as vayyakri, and he caused others to call. This teaches that Abraham our forefather caused the name of the Holy One, Blessed be He, to be called out in the mouth of all passersby. How so? After the guests of Abraham ate and drank, they arose to bless him. He said to them: But did you eat from what is mine? Rather, you ate from the food of the God of the world. Therefore, you should thank and praise and bless the One Who spoke and the world was created. In this way, Abraham caused everyone to call out to God.

³³¹ The Gemara continues its discussion of the incident of Judah and Tamar. It is written: “When Judah saw her, he thought her to be a prostitute, for she had covered her face” (Genesis 38:15). The Gemara asks: Because she had covered her face he thought her to be a prostitute? Prostitutes usually uncover their faces in order to attract men.

³³² Rabbi Elazar says: The verse means that Tamar covered her face in the home of her father-in-law, Judah. Therefore, he did not recognize her when her face was uncovered. As Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani says that Rabbi Yonatan says: Any daughter-in-law who is modest in the house of her father-in-law merits that kings and prophets emerge from her. From where do we derive this? From Tamar. Prophets emerged from her, as it is written: “The vision of Isaiah, the son of Amoz” (Isaiah 1:1). Kings emerged from her, as seen from David. And Rabbi Levi says: This matter is a tradition that we received from our ancestors: Amoz, father of Isaiah, and Amaziah, king of Judea, were brothers. This indicates that Isaiah was also from the house of David and therefore a descendant of Tamar.

³³³ The verse describes Tamar’s court hearing: “When she was brought forth [mutzet], she sent to her father-in-law, saying: By the man whose these are, am I with child” (Genesis 38:25). The Gemara comments: It should have stated: When she was mitutzet. The word mutzet also carries the implication of being found. What then, is taught by the use of that term? Rabbi Elazar says: After her signs, which she was using to prove that she was impregnated by Judah, were brought out, the evil angel Samael came and distanced them from each other in an attempt to prevent Judah’s admission and Tamar’s survival, which would enable the birth of King David. The angel Gabriel then came and moved the signs closer again. Therefore, the word mutzet is used, as it alludes to the signs being found again.

³³⁴ The Gemara comments: This is as it is written: “For the leader, upon yonat eilem reḥokim, a psalm [mikhtam] of David” (Psalms 56:1). Rabbi Yoḥanan says the verse means: From the moment that her signs were distanced [reḥokim], she became like a mute dove [yona illemet]. And the phrase “a psalm [mikhtam] of David” means: The one from whom David emerged, as he was modest [makh] and flawless [tam] with everyone. Alternatively, mikhtam indicates that makkato, the place on his body that would have required wounding [makka], was complete [tama], i.e., that David was born circumcised. Alternatively, mikhtam indicates that just as in his youth David made himself

small in front of one who was greater than him in order to learn Torah from that person, so too, when he became great and was crowned king, he still behaved in this manner, so that his modesty, *makh*, was complete, *tam*, all of his life.

³³⁵ The verse concerning Tamar then states: “She sent to her father-in-law, saying: By the man whose these are, am I with child” (Genesis 38:25). The Gemara comments: And let her say to him explicitly that she was impregnated by him. Rav Zutra bar Tuvyya says that Rav says, and some say Rav Ḥana bar Bizna says that Rabbi Shimon Ḥasida says, and some say that Rabbi Yoḥanan says in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yoḥai: It is more amenable for a person to throw himself into a fiery furnace if faced with the choice of publicly embarrassing another or remaining silent even if it leads to being burned, and not humiliate another in public. From where do we derive this? From Tamar, as she was prepared to be burned if Judah did not confess, rather than humiliate him in public.

³³⁶ The verse continues: “And she said: Discern, please, whose are these, the signet, and the cords, and the staff” (Genesis 38:25). Rabbi Ḥama, son of Rabbi Ḥanina, says: With use of the word discern Judah informed his father that Joseph was lost, and also with use of the word discern they informed Judah about the signs. The Gemara explains: With the word discern he informed Jacob his father when he brought him the coat of Joseph and said to his father: “And they sent the coat of many colors, and they brought it to their father; and said: This have we found. Discern now whether it is your son’s coat or not” (Genesis 37:32). With the word discern they informed him: “And she said: Discern, please, whose are these.”

³³⁷ It states: “Discern, please [na].” The word *na* is nothing other than a language of request. The Gemara explains: She said to him: I request of you: Discern the image of your Creator in every person, and do not avert your eyes from me.

³³⁸ The verse states: “And Judah acknowledged them, and said: She is more righteous than I; forasmuch as I gave her not to Shelah my son” (Genesis 38:26). This is the same as Rav Ḥanin bar Bizna says that Rabbi Shimon Ḥasida says: Joseph, who sanctified the name of Heaven in private by not committing adultery with the wife of Potiphar, merited that one letter from the name of the Holy One, Blessed be He, was added to his name, as it is written: “He appointed it in Joseph [biḥosef] for a testimony in his name, when He went forth against the land of Egypt” (Psalms 81:6). In this verse the name Joseph is written with an additional letter *heh*, found in the ineffable name of God.

³³⁹ He continues: Judah, who sanctified the name of Heaven in public, merited that his entire name is called by the name of the Holy One, Blessed be He, for all the letters of the ineffable name of God are included within the name of Judah, with the addition of the letter *dalet*. When he confessed and said: “She is more righteous than I,” a Divine Voice went forth and said: You saved Tamar and her two children in her womb from being burned by the fire. By your life, i.e., in your merit, I will save three of your children from the fire. And who are they? Hananiah, Mishaël, and Azariah (see Daniel, chapter 3).

³⁴⁰ Judah said: “She is more righteous than I [mimmenni].” The word “mimmenni” can also be understood as “from me,” with Judah thereby admitting that he is the father. The Gemara asks: From where did he know that it was in fact from him that Tamar was pregnant? The Gemara answers: A Divine Voice went forth and said: From Me these hidden matters emerged, and this woman will be the mother of royalty, which requires that Judah be the father.

³⁴¹ The same verse continues: “And he knew her [leda’atah] again no more [velo yasaf],” seemingly indicating that Judah did not engage in sexual intercourse with Tamar again. Shmuel the Elder, father-in-law of Rav Shmuel bar Ami, says in the name of Rav Shmuel bar Ami: The verse actually means that once he knew of her that her intentions were for the sake of Heaven, he did not desist from engaging in sexual intercourse with her again, as it is written here: “Velo yasaf od leda’atah,” and it is written there at the giving of the Torah: “These words the Lord spoke unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice and it went on no more [velo yasaf]” (Deuteronomy 5:18), which is interpreted to mean: A great voice that did not cease.

³⁴² § The mishna teaches: Absalom was excessively proud of his hair, and therefore he was hung by his hair. The Sages taught (Tosefta 3:16): Absalom rebelled and sinned due to his hair, as it is stated: “Now in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty; from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him. And when he shaved his head, as it was at every year’s end that he shaved it; because the hair was heavy on him, therefore he shaved it, and he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels, by the king’s stone” (II Samuel 14:25–26). What is the king’s stone? The Sages taught: A stone with which the people of Tiberias and the people of Tzipori weigh items.

³⁴³ The baraita continues: And since he was proud of his hair, therefore, he was hung by his hair, as it is stated in the verse describing the battle between the forces of David and Absalom: “And Absalom chanced to meet the servants of David. And Absalom was riding upon his mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great terebinth, and his head caught hold of the terebinth, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth; and the mule that was under him went on” (II Samuel 18:9). After he was spotted by the opposing troops, Absalom took a sword [safseira] and wanted to cut his hair to save himself. The school of Rabbi Yishmael taught: At that moment, the gates of the netherworld opened beneath him and he was afraid to fall into it, so he did not cut his hair, and he was killed by the opposing troops.

³⁴⁴ It is written with regard to David’s reaction after he learns of the death of Absalom: “And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept; and as he went about he said: O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died in your place, O Absalom, my son, my son” (II Samuel 19:1), and a few verses later it adds: “And the king covered his face, and the king cried with a loud voice: O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son” (II Samuel 19:5). The Gemara asks: Why are there these eight mentions of “my son” by David, i.e., to what do they correspond? The Gemara answers: Seven times he said “my son,” by which he raised him up from the seven chambers of Gehenna. And as for the other, eighth, time, some say that David brought the head of Absalom close to Absalom’s body, and some say that with this eighth mention David brought Absalom to the World-to-Come.

³⁴⁵ It is written there: “Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken and reared up for himself the pillar, which is in the king’s valley; for he said: I have no son to keep my name in remembrance” (II Samuel 18:18). The Gemara asks: What did Absalom take? Reish Lakish says: He engaged in a bad transaction for himself by accepting bad advice for which he was punished. The verse continues: “The pillar, which is in the king’s valley [be’emek hammelekh].” Rabbi Ḥanina bar Pappa says: This

alludes to the pillar that is in the deep [amukka] counsel of the King [melekh] of the universe, as God had already decreed in the aftermath of the incident with Bathsheba that this would occur.

³⁴⁶ This is as it is written there: “Thus said the Lord: Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house” (II Samuel 12:11), and this prophecy was fulfilled through Absalom. Similarly, you can say about Joseph, who was sent by his father to inquire as to the well-being of his brothers, where the verse states: “And he sent him from the valley [emek] of Hebron” (Genesis 37:14). Rabbi Ḥanina bar Pappa says: From the deep [amukka] counsel of that righteous individual who is interred in Hebron, i.e., Abraham, as it is written: “And He said unto Abram: Know that your seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years” (Genesis 15:13). The journey Joseph took to his brothers set in motion the descent of the Jewish people to Egypt.

³⁴⁷ The Gemara continues its discussion of Absalom. The verse states concerning Absalom: “For he said: I have no son to keep my name in remembrance; and he called the pillar after his own name; and it is called Absalom’s monument to this day” (II Samuel 18:18). The Gemara asks: And did Absalom not have sons? But isn’t it written: “And to Absalom there were born three sons, and one daughter” (II Samuel 14:27)? Rav Yitzḥak bar Avdimi says: He meant that he did not have a son worthy for royalty. Rav Ḥisda said: It is learned as a tradition: Anyone who burns the produce of another does not leave a son to inherit from him, and he, Absalom, burned the produce of Joab, as it is written: “Therefore he said to his servants: See, Joab’s field is near mine, and he has barley there; go and set it on fire. And Absalom’s servants set the field on fire” (II Samuel 14:30).

³⁴⁸ § The mishna teaches: And the same is so with regard to the reward for good deeds. Miriam waited for the baby Moses for one hour at the shore of the Nile; therefore, the Jewish people delayed their travels in the desert for seven days to wait for her when she was smitten with leprosy. The Gemara asks: Are these matters comparable? There, Miriam waited one hour, while here, the Jewish people waited for her for seven days. Abaye said: Say this with a slight change: And with regard to the repaying of good it is not so, as a person is not rewarded precisely measure for measure, as the reward may be greater than the good deed.

³⁴⁹ Rava said to him: But the tanna taught in the mishna: And the same is so with regard to the reward of good deeds. Rather, Rava said: This is what the mishna is teaching: And the same is so with regard to the reward of good deeds. It is rewarded with the same measure, i.e., a person is rewarded in the same manner as the good deed, but the measure of good is always greater than the measure of punishment. Therefore, Miriam was rewarded in the same manner as, but in a greater measure than, her deed.

³⁵⁰ With regard to Miriam’s deed the verse states: “And his sister stood afar off, to know what would be done to him” (Exodus 2:4). Rabbi Yitzḥak says: This entire verse is stated in reference to the Divine Presence, i.e., each phrase alludes to the Divine Presence watching over Moses. “And his sister stood”; as it is written: “And the Lord came, and stood” (I Samuel 3:10). “His sister”; as it is written: “Say to wisdom: You are my sister” (Proverbs 7:4). “Afar off”; as it is written: “From afar the Lord appeared to me” (Jeremiah 31:2). “To know”; as it is written: “For the Lord is a God of knowledge” (I Samuel 2:3). “What”; as it is written: “What does the Lord God require of you” (Deuteronomy 10:12). “Would be done”; as it is written: “For the Lord God will do nothing” (Amos 3:7). “To him”; as it is written: “And the Lord said to him: Peace be with you” (Judges 6:23).

³⁵¹ § The Gemara proceeds to discuss the sojourn of the Jewish people in Egypt. The verse states: “And there arose a new king over Egypt, who knew not Joseph” (Exodus 1:8). Rav and Shmuel disagree about the interpretation of this verse. One says that this means he was actually a new king, and one says that this means that his decrees were transformed as if he were a new king. The one who says that he was actually a new king holds that it is because it is written “new.” And the one who says that his decrees were transformed holds that it is because it is not written: “And the previous king of Egypt died and a new king reigned.” This indicates that the same king remained. According to this interpretation, the words: “Who knew not Joseph” (Exodus 1:8), mean that he was like someone who did not know him at all. Although he certainly knew Joseph and his accomplishments, he acted as if he didn’t.

³⁵² The next verse states: “And he said to his people: Behold, the people of the children of Israel are too many and too mighty for us” (Exodus 1:9). It was taught (Tosefta 4:11): He, Pharaoh, initiated the proposal. Therefore, of his people, he was stricken first. He initiated the proposal, as it is written: “And he said to his people.” Therefore, he was stricken first, as it is written: “And the frogs shall come up both upon you, and upon your people, and upon all your servants” (Exodus 7:29).

³⁵³ The next verse states that Pharaoh said: “Come, let us deal wisely with him [lo], lest he multiply, and it come to pass that when there befalls us any war, he will also join our enemies, and fight against us” (Exodus 1:10). The Gemara comments: He should have said in plural: With them [lahem], rather than the singular: “With him.” Rabbi Ḥama, son of Rabbi Ḥanina, says that Pharaoh was saying: Come, let us deal wisely with regard to the savior of Israel, referring to God.

³⁵⁴ His advisors asked: With what form of death shall we judge and decree upon them? If we shall judge them with fire, perhaps we will be punished measure for measure by fire, as it is written: “For behold, the Lord will come in fire” (Isaiah 66:15), and it is written in the verse that follows it: “For by fire will the Lord contend” (Isaiah 66:16). Similarly, we cannot judge them with the sword, as it is written in the continuation of that verse: “And by His sword with all flesh” (Isaiah 66:16).

³⁵⁵ Rather, let us come and judge them with water, by drowning the Jewish babies. God will not punish us with water, for the Holy One, Blessed be He, already took an oath that He will not bring a flood upon the world, as it is stated: “For this is as the waters of Noah unto Me; for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth” (Isaiah 54:9). The Gemara comments: And Pharaoh’s advisors did not know that He will not bring a flood upon all the world, but He may bring destruction by water upon one nation.

³⁵⁶ Alternatively, there is an additional way to punish the Egyptians with water: He does not bring a flood upon them, but they may come and fall into water, and so it says: “And the sea returned to its strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled toward it; and the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea” (Exodus 14:27), indicating that the Egyptians fell into the water. And this is what Rabbi Elazar says: What is the meaning of that which is written: “Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods, for in that which they conspired [zadu] against them” (Exodus 18:11)? The phrase means: In the pot in which they cooked, they themselves were cooked, as they were punished through drowning, measure for measure, for drowning the Jewish babies. The Gemara asks: From where may it be inferred that this word “zadu” is a term meaning a pot? The Gemara answers: As it is written: “And Jacob simmered a pot [vayyazed Ya’akov nazid]” (Genesis 25:29).

³⁵⁷ Rabbi Ḥiyya bar Abba says that Rabbi Simai says: Three noteworthy people were consulted by Pharaoh in that counsel where Pharaoh questioned what should be done with the Jewish people. They were Balaam, and Job, and Yitro.

³⁵⁸ Rabbi Ḥiyya bar Abba teaches what occurred to each of them: Balaam, who advised Pharaoh to kill all sons born to the Jewish people, was punished by being killed in the war with Midian (see Numbers 31:8). Job, who was silent and neither advised nor protested, was punished by suffering, as detailed in the eponymous book in the Bible. Yitro, who ran away as a sign of protest, merited that some of his children's children sat in the Sanhedrin in the Chamber of Hewn Stone, as it is stated: "And the families of scribes who dwelt at Jabez, Tirathites, Shimeathites, and Sucathites, these were the Kenites who descended from Hammath, the father of the house of Rechab" (I Chronicles 2:55). And it is written: "The children of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law" (Judges 1:16). This teaches that the Kenites, descendants of Yitro, the father-in-law of Moses, dwelt at Jabez [Yabetz], referring to the place where the Jewish people go for advice [eitza], i.e., the Chamber of Hewn Stone.

³⁵⁹ The verse states: "Come, let us deal wisely with him, lest he multiply, and it come to pass that when there befalls us any war, he will also join our enemies, and fight against us, and get him up out of the land" (Exodus 1:10). The Gemara comments: He should have said: And get us up, as Pharaoh's fear was that the Jewish people would join the enemies of Egypt and drive Pharaoh and the Egyptians out of Egypt. Rabbi Abba bar Kahana says: By stating this, Pharaoh is like a person who curses himself but applies his curse to another.

³⁶⁰ The next verse states: "Therefore they did set over him taskmasters in order to afflict him with their burdens" (Exodus 1:11). The Gemara comments: It should have stated: Over them, in the plural. The school of Rabbi Elazar, son of Rabbi Shimon, taught: This teaches that at first they brought a brick mold and they hung it on the neck of Pharaoh to create the appearance that he was also participating in the labor. And with regard to each and every Jew who said to the Egyptians: I am a delicate person [istenis] and I cannot participate in the labor, they said to him: Are you at all more of a delicate person than Pharaoh, and he is participating. Therefore, the verse states: "They did set over him," as they first placed the burden on Pharaoh as an artifice to enslave the Jewish people.

³⁶¹ The term "Taskmasters [sarei missim]" is formed from the term: A matter that compels [shemesim] the manufacture of bricks, as the Jewish people were forced into labor when these taskmasters were assigned to them.

³⁶² The verse continues: "In order to afflict him with their burdens" (Exodus:11). The Gemara comments: It should have stated: "In order to afflict them," in the plural. Rather, the intention is, as mentioned previously, in order to afflict Pharaoh, with the result of causing the burdens of the Jewish people.

³⁶³ The verse concludes: "And they built for Pharaoh storage cities [miskenot], Pithom and Raamses" (Exodus 1:11). Rav and Shmuel disagree as to the precise interpretation of the word miskenot. One says that they are called this because they were the type of structures that endanger [mesakenot] their owners, as it is dangerous to work in cities with tall buildings. And one says that they are called this because this is the type of property that impoverishes [memaskenot] their owners, as the Master said: All who engage in construction become poor.

³⁶⁴ The verse states that the names of the cities they built were "Pithom and Raamses" (Exodus 1:11). Rav and Shmuel disagree as to the precise interpretation of this verse, both assuming that only

one city was built, which had primary and secondary names. One says that Pithom was its real name, and why was it called Raamses? It is an appellation indicating that as the buildings were constructed they collapsed [mitroses] one by one and needed to be rebuilt. And one says that Raamses was its real name, and why was it called Pithom? Because the opening of the abyss [pi tehom] swallowed each building they constructed one by one, and it sunk into the ground.

³⁶⁵ The next verse states: “But the more they afflicted him, the more he would multiply and the more he would spread about” (Exodus 1:12). The Gemara comments: It should have stated: The more they multiplied and the more they spread about, in the past tense. Reish Lakish says: Divine inspiration proclaimed to the Egyptians: As long as this nation is afflicted, the more he will multiply and the more he will spread about. As the verse states: “And they became disgusted [vayyakutz] due to the children of Israel.” The Gemara explains: This teaches that the Jewish people appeared in their eyes like thorns [kotzim].

³⁶⁶ The next verse states: “And the Egyptians made the children of Israel work

³⁶⁷ with rigor [befarekh]” (Exodus 1:13). Rabbi Elazar says: The word befarekh is a conjugation of the words: With a soft mouth [bifeh rakh], as the Egyptians enticed the Jewish people into slavery, gradually subjugating them until they had lost their freedom completely. Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani says: The word befarekh should be understood as: With crushing [bifrikha], as the Egyptians subjugated Israel with backbreaking labor.

³⁶⁸ The next verse states: “And they made their lives bitter through hard service, with mortar and brick, and with every laborious service in the field” (Exodus 1:14). Rava says: The verse mentions specifically mortar and brick and then all forms of labor, as initially the Egyptians had them work with mortar and bricks, and ultimately they subjugated them “and with every laborious service in the field.”

³⁶⁹ The verse concludes: “In all their service, wherein they made them serve with rigor” (Exodus 1:14). Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani says that Rabbi Yonatan says: The meaning of befarekh is that the Egyptians would exchange the responsibilities of men and women, giving men’s work to women and women’s work to men, requiring everyone to do work to which they were unaccustomed. And even according to the one who says that there, in the previous verse, bifarekh indicates that the Egyptians enslaved the Jews with a soft mouth, here, in this verse, which describes the physical hardship of the labor, the word befarekh certainly means with crushing labor.

³⁷⁰ § Rav Avira taught: In the merit of the righteous women that were in that generation, the Jewish people were redeemed from Egypt. He tells of their righteous actions: At the time when these women would go to the river to draw water, the Holy One, Blessed be He, would materialize for them small fish that would enter into their pitchers, and they would therefore draw pitchers that were half filled with water and half filled with fish. And they would then come and place two pots on the fire, one pot of hot water for washing their husbands and one pot of fish with which to feed them.

³⁷¹ And they would then take what they prepared to their husbands, to the field, and would bathe their husbands and anoint them with oil and feed them the fish and give them to drink and bond with them in sexual intercourse between the sheepfolds, i.e., between the borders and fences of the fields, as it is stated: “When you lie among the sheepfolds, the wings of the dove are covered with silver, and her pinions with the shimmer of gold” (Psalms 68:14), which is interpreted to mean that as a reward for “when you lie among the sheepfolds,” the Jewish people merited to receive the plunder of

Egypt, as it is stated in the continuation of the verse, as a reference to the Jewish people: “The wings of the dove are covered with silver, and her pinions with the shimmer of gold” (Psalms 68:14).

³⁷² And when these women would become pregnant, they would come back to their homes, and when the time for them to give birth would arrive they would go and give birth in the field under the apple tree, as it is stated: “Under the apple tree I awakened you; there your mother was in travail with you; there was she in travail and brought you forth” (Song of Songs 8:5).

³⁷³ And the Holy One, Blessed be He, would send from the heavens above an angel who would clean and prepare the newborns, just as a midwife prepares the newborn, as it is stated: “And as for your birth, on the day you were born, your navel was not cut nor were you washed with water for cleansing; you were not salted at all, nor swaddled at all” (Ezekiel 16:4). This indicates that there were no midwives to take care of the Jews born in Egypt. And then, the angel would gather for them two round stones from the field and the babies would nurse from that which would flow out of them. One of the stones flowed with oil and one of the stones flowed with honey, as it is stated: “And He would suckle them with honey from a crag and oil from a flinty rock” (Deuteronomy 32:13).

³⁷⁴ And once the Egyptians would notice them, realizing that they were Jewish babies, they would come to kill them. But a miracle would occur for them and they would be absorbed by the earth. And the Egyptians would then bring oxen and would plow upon them, as it is stated: “The plowers plowed upon my back; they made long their furrows” (Psalms 129:3). After the Egyptians would leave, the babies would emerge and exit the ground like grass of the field, as it is stated: “I caused you to increase even as the growth of the field” (Ezekiel 16:7).

³⁷⁵ And once the babies would grow, they would come like many flocks of sheep to their homes, as it is stated in the continuation of the verse: “And you did increase and grow up and you came with excellent beauty [ba’adi adayim]” (Ezekiel 16:7). Do not read the verse as: “Ba’adi adayim,” “with excellent beauty.” Rather, read it as: Be’edrei adarim, meaning: As many flocks.

³⁷⁶ And when the Holy One, Blessed be He, revealed Himself at the Red Sea, these children recognized Him first, as it is stated: “This is my God, and I will glorify Him” (Exodus 15:2). They recognized Him from the previous time that He revealed Himself to them in their infancy, enabling them to say: “This is my God.”

³⁷⁷ § The verse states: “And the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, of whom the name of the one was Shiprah, and the name of the other Puah” (Exodus 1:15). Rav and Shmuel disagree as to the proper interpretation of this verse. One says that these midwives were a woman and her daughter, and one says that they were a daughter-in-law and her mother-in-law. According to the one who says that they were a woman and her daughter, the women were Jochebed, the mother of Moses and Aaron, and her daughter, Miriam. And according to the one who says that they were a daughter-in-law and her mother-in-law, the verse is referring to Jochebed and her daughter-in-law Elisheba, the wife of Aaron.

³⁷⁸ It is taught in a baraita according to the one who says that they were a woman and her daughter, because it is taught in a baraita: With regard to Shiprah, who is referred to in the verse, this is really a reference to Jochebed. And why was she called Shiprah? Because she would prepare [mishapperet] the newborn. Alternatively, she is referred to as Shiprah because the Jewish people increased and multiplied [shepparu verabbu] in her days, due to her assistance.

³⁷⁹ The baraita continues: With regard to Puah, who is referred to in the verse, this is really a reference to Miriam. And why was she called Puah? Because she would make a comforting sound [po'a] as she would remove the child from the womb of the mother. Alternatively, the word Puah is related to one of the verbs that describe speaking, as she would speak [po'a] through divine inspiration and say: In the future, my mother will give birth to a son who will save the Jewish people.

³⁸⁰ The next verse relates the instructions of Pharaoh to the midwives: "And he said: When you deliver the Hebrew women, and you look upon the stones [ovnayim], if it be a son, then you shall kill him; but if it be a daughter, then she shall live" (Exodus 1:16). The Gemara asks: What is the meaning of "stones"? Rabbi Ḥanan says: Pharaoh transmitted a great sign to them. He said to them: At the time when a woman crouches to give birth, her thighs become as cold as stones, and, therefore, this shall be for you a sign that the woman is about to give birth.

³⁸¹ And there are those who say an alternative explanation for ovnayim: As it is written: "So I went down to the potter's shop, and behold, he was at his work on the wheels [ovnayim]" (Jeremiah 18:3). Just as this potter sits so that one thigh is here and one thigh is there and the block upon which he works is in the middle, so too, a woman giving birth also has one thigh here and one thigh there and the newborn is in the middle.

³⁸² The verse continues: "If it be a son, then you shall kill him; but if it be a daughter, then she shall live" (Exodus 1:16). Rabbi Ḥanina says: Pharaoh transmitted to them a great sign to enable them to know the gender of the infant from the beginning of the birth process: A boy is born with his face downward; a girl is born with her face upward. Pharaoh provided them with this sign so that they could kill the boys secretly even before the mother realized what was happening.

³⁸³ The next verse states: "But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt spoke about them [aleihen], but they kept the male children alive" (Exodus 1:17). The Gemara comments: It should have stated: "Spoke to them [lahen]." Rabbi Yosei, son of Rabbi Ḥanina, says: This teaches that Pharaoh proposed to them to engage in a sinful act, i.e., sexual intercourse, with him, but they did not accept his overtures. The word aleihen is often used in reference to sexual intercourse, for example: "And brought her to him; and he consorted with her [eileha]" (Genesis 29:23), and that is its connotation here as well.

³⁸⁴ The verse concludes: "But they kept the male children alive" (Exodus 1:17). A Sage teaches: It is not only that they did not kill the children as Pharaoh had commanded them, but that they would even provide for them water and food, as the phrase "But they kept the male children alive" indicates.

³⁸⁵ After being questioned by Pharaoh concerning their failure to obey his command, the midwives responded, as it is written: "And the midwives said to Pharaoh: Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women, for they are lively [ḥayot], and are delivered before the midwife comes to them" (Exodus 1:19). The Gemara asks: What is the meaning of "ḥayot"? If we say that the Hebrew women are like ḥayot, meaning actual midwives for themselves, and therefore they do not need assistance from others, is that to say that a midwife does not need the assistance of another midwife in order to help her give birth?

³⁸⁶ Rather, the midwives said to Pharaoh: This nation is compared to an animal [ḥayya], and animals give birth without a midwife. For example, with regard to Judah it is written: "Judah is a lion's whelp" (Genesis 49:9); with regard to Dan it is written: "Dan shall be a serpent in the way" (Genesis

49:17); with regard to Naphtali it is written: “A hind let loose” (Genesis 49:21); with regard to Issachar it is written: “A large-boned donkey” (Genesis 49:14); with regard to Joseph it is written: “His first bullock” (Deuteronomy 33:17); with regard to Benjamin it is written: “A ravenous wolf” (Genesis 49:27).

³⁸⁷ The Gemara comments: Concerning those individuals where a comparison to an animal is written with regard to him, it is already written with regard to him. And concerning those where no specific metaphor comparing them to an animal is written with regard to him explicitly, in any case a general comparison is written about the Jewish people: “How your mother was a lioness; among lions she crouched, in the midst of the young lions she reared her whelps” (Ezekiel 19:2), indicating that all the Jewish people are compared to animals.

³⁸⁸ The verse relates the midwives’ reward: “And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, that He made them houses” (Exodus 1:21). Rav and Shmuel disagree as to the precise interpretation of these houses: One says that God made the houses of the priesthood and the Levites descend from the midwives, and one says that God made the houses of royalty descend from them. The one who says that it is referring to the houses of the priesthood and the Levites is referring to Aaron and Moses, who were sons of Jochebed. And the one who says that it is referring to houses of royalty is referring to David, who also comes from Miriam, as it is written: “And Azubah,” the wife of Caleb, “died, and Caleb took to him Ephrath, who bore him Hur” (I Chronicles 2:19) and, as will be explained further, Ephrath is Miriam. And it is written: “David was the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehem in Judah” (I Samuel 17:12). Therefore, he was a descendant of Miriam.

³⁸⁹ The Gemara discusses the family of Caleb: In Chronicles it says: “And Caleb, the son of Hezron, begot children of Azubah his wife, and of Jerioth, and these were her sons: Jeshar, and Shobab, and Ardun” (I Chronicles 2:18). The Gemara asks: Was Caleb actually the son of Hezron? Wasn’t he the son of Jephunneh, as the verse states in Numbers 13:6? The Gemara answers: He was the son of Hezron, but he is called “son of Jephunneh” as an appellation indicating that he was a son who turned away [sheppana] from the counsel of the spies.

³⁹⁰ The Gemara asks: But it is still difficult. Hezron could not be his father, as Caleb was the son of Kenaz, as it is written: “And Othniel, the son of Kenaz, Caleb’s younger brother, took it” (Judges 1:13). This would mean that Caleb was also a son of Kenaz. Rava said: Caleb was the stepson of Kenaz, as he and Othniel shared a mother but had different fathers.

³⁹¹ The Gemara comments: The language of another verse is also precise based on this explanation, as it is written: “And Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said unto him” (Joshua 14:6). Although his father was Jephunneh, he is known as “the Kenizzite,” although he was not actually a son of Kenaz. The Gemara accepts this proof and states: Conclude from it that Rava’s explanation is correct.

³⁹² The verse states: “And Caleb, the son of Hezron, begot children of Azubah his wife, and of Jerioth, and these were her sons: Jeshar, and Shobab, and Ardun” (I Chronicles 2:18). The Gemara analyzes the verse: The verse refers to the wife of Caleb by the name Azubah. The Sages teach that this is Miriam. And why is she called Azubah? As everyone initially abandoned her [azavuha] and did not want to marry her because she was sickly and unattractive. The verse additionally states: “And Caleb, the son of Hezron, begot children [holid] of Azubah his wife” (I Chronicles 2:18). The Gemara asks: Why use the term “holid,” begot children? But doesn’t this verse state that he married

her? Rabbi Yoḥanan says: This teaches us that with regard to anyone who marries a woman for the sake of Heaven, as he married her due to her righteousness without concern for her appearance, the verse ascribes him credit as if he gave birth to her.

³⁹³ The same verse refers to Miriam additionally as Jerioth, which the Gemara explains was appropriate, for her face was like extremely pallid curtains [yeriot].

³⁹⁴ The verse continues: “And these were her sons [vaneha].” The Gemara explains: Do not read it as vaneha, her sons; rather, read it as boneha, her builders. In other words, the rest of the names in the verse are not the names of her children, but rather appellations for her husband, whose marriage to her built her, as it were. The first appellation for Caleb, “Jesher,” is referring to his actions, as he set himself straight [yisher] and did not join in the counsel of the spies. The second appellation, “Shobab,” is referring to the fact that he broke [sibbev] his evil inclination by rebelling against the other spies. The third appellation, “and Ardon [veArdon],” is referring to the fact that he ruled [rada] over his evil inclination. And some say: Because the face of his wife Miriam became beautiful like a rose [vered] after they were married, she was also called Vardon, due to her rose-like complexion.

³⁹⁵ The Gemara interprets an additional verse as referring to Caleb. It is stated: “And Ashhur the father of Tekoa had two wives, Helah and Naarah” (I Chronicles 4:5). Ashhur is Caleb. And why was he called Ashhur? Because his face became blackened [husheḥaru] from the extensive fasts that he accepted upon himself so that he would not be entrapped by the counsel of the spies. “The father of” is also referring to Caleb, as he became like a father to his wife. The next word in the verse, “Tekoa,” is an additional reference to Caleb, as he attached [taka] his heart to his Father in Heaven.

³⁹⁶ The phrase in the verse “had two wives” actually means it is as if Miriam became like two wives, because she changed over the course of time. And therefore the two names written in the verse: “Helah and Naarah,” were not two separate women, Helah and Naarah. Rather, initially Miriam was sickly [ḥela] and forlorn, and ultimately she was healthy and beautiful like a young woman [na’ara].

³⁹⁷ The Gemara expounds the following verse as referring to Miriam: “And the children of Helah were Zereth [Tzeret] and Zohar and Ethnan” (I Chronicles 4:7). She was now called “Tzeret,” for she became so beautiful that she was like a rival [tzara] to other women, as they were jealous of her beauty. She is called “Zohar,” as her face shined like the sun does at noon [tzohorayim]. She is called “Ethnan,” as any man that saw her would be aroused so much that he would bring a gift [etnan] to his wife to entice her.

³⁹⁸ § The Gemara returns to the discussion of the bondage in Egypt. “And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying: Every son that is born you shall cast into the river, and every daughter you shall save alive” (Exodus 1:22). Rabbi Yosei, son of Rabbi Ḥanina, says: The use of the phrase “every son that is born” indicates that he decreed even on his own nation that all their male babies must be killed. And Rabbi Yosei, son of Rabbi Ḥanina, says further: He decreed three decrees. Initially, he commanded the midwives only with regard to Jewish infants: “You shall look upon the stones. If it be a son, then you shall kill him; but if it be a daughter, then she shall live” (Exodus 1:16). And afterward, he decreed with regard to the Jewish infants: “Every son that is born you shall cast into the river” (Exodus 1:22). And ultimately, he decreed even on his own nation that Egyptian infant boys should be cast into the river as well.

³⁹⁹ The verse states: “And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took for a wife a daughter of Levi” (Exodus 2:1). The Gemara asks: To where did he go? Rav Yehuda bar Zevina says: He went according to the advice of his daughter Miriam, as the Gemara will proceed to explain.

⁴⁰⁰ A Sage teaches: Amram, the father of Moses, was the great man of his generation. Once he saw that the wicked Pharaoh said: “Every son that is born you shall cast into the river, and every daughter you shall save alive” (Exodus 1:22), he said: We are laboring for nothing by bringing children into the world to be killed. Therefore, he arose and divorced his wife. All others who saw this followed his example and arose and divorced their wives.

⁴⁰¹ His daughter, Miriam, said to him: Father, your decree is more harsh for the Jewish people than that of Pharaoh, as Pharaoh decreed only with regard to the males, but you decreed both on the males and on the females. And now no children will be born. Additionally, Pharaoh decreed to kill them only in this world, but you decreed in this world and in the World-to-Come, as those not born will not enter the World-to-Come.

⁴⁰² Miriam continued: Additionally, concerning Pharaoh the wicked, it is uncertain whether his decree will be fulfilled, and it is uncertain if his decree will not be fulfilled. You are a righteous person, and as such, your decrees will certainly be fulfilled, as it is stated with regard to the righteous: “You shall also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto you” (Job 22:28). Amram accepted his daughter’s words and arose and brought back, i.e., remarried, his wife, and all others who saw this followed his example and arose and brought back their wives.

⁴⁰³ The Gemara asks: If Amram remarried Jochebed, rather than say: “And took for a wife a daughter of Levi” (Exodus 2:1), it should have stated: “And returned for a wife the daughter of Levi.” Rav Yehuda bar Zevina says: He performed an act of marriage just as one would do for a first marriage. He sat her on a palanquin [appiryon], and Aaron and Miriam danced before her, and the ministering angels said: “A joyful mother of children” (Psalms 113:9).

⁴⁰⁴ The verse is referring to Jochebed as “a daughter of Levi” (Exodus 2:1). The Gemara asks: Is it possible that this is Jochebed? Jochebed was then 130 years old and the verse still calls her a daughter? Jochebed’s age is established based on a tradition concerning the number of the descendants of Jacob who came to Egypt, as follows: While the verse states that Leah had thirty-three descendants (Genesis 46:15), only thirty-two were enumerated. This was explained as Rabbi Ḥama, son of Rabbi Ḥanina, says: The “daughter of Levi” is Jochebed, whose conception was on the road, as the family of Jacob descended to Egypt, and she was born between the walls, i.e., in Egypt, as it is stated: “And the name of Amram’s wife was Jochebed, the daughter of Levi, who was born to Levi in Egypt” (Numbers 26:59).

⁴⁰⁵ This interpolation concerning her birth is interpreted: Her birth was in Egypt, but her conception was not in Egypt. Since the Jewish people were in Egypt for two hundred ten years and Moses was eighty years old at the time of the exodus, Jochebed was one hundred thirty years old when Moses was born. In light of this, the Gemara is asking how the verse can refer to her as a daughter. Rabbi Yehuda says: The signs of a young woman were born in her when her husband remarried her, and she became like a young girl again.

⁴⁰⁶ § The verse states concerning Moses: “And the woman conceived, and bore a son; and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months” (Exodus 2:2). The Gemara asks: But Jochebed was pregnant with Moses for three months at the outset, before Amram remarried her, as

will be explained further. Rav Yehuda bar Zevina said: The intention of the verse is to juxtapose her giving birth to her becoming pregnant. Just as her becoming pregnant was without pain, so too, her giving birth was without pain. From here it is derived concerning righteous women that they were not included in the verdict [pitkah] of Eve that a woman will suffer pain during childbirth (see Genesis 3:16).

⁴⁰⁷ The verse states with regard to the birth of Moses: “And the woman conceived, and bore a son; and when she saw him that he was a goodly [tov] child, she hid him three months” (Exodus 2:2). It is taught in a baraita that Rabbi Meir says: “Tov” is his, Moses’, real name, as it was given to him by his parents when he was born. Rabbi Yehuda says: His name was Toviya. Rabbi Nehemya says: They said he was good because they saw that he was fit for prophecy. Others say: They said he was good because he was born when he was already circumcised. And the Rabbis say: At the time when Moses was born, the entire house was filled with light, as it is written here: “And when she saw him that he was a goodly [tov] child,” and it is written there: “And God saw the light, that it was good [tov]” (Genesis 1:4).

⁴⁰⁸ The verse continues: “And she hid him three months” (Exodus 2:2). The Gemara explains that she was able to hide him for three months because the Egyptians counted the nine months of her pregnancy only from the time her husband took her back, but she was pregnant with Moses for three months from the outset of her remarriage.

⁴⁰⁹ The next verse states: “And when she could no longer hide him” (Exodus 2:3). The Gemara asks: Why couldn’t she hide him any longer? Let her continue to hide him. Rather, anywhere that the Egyptians heard that a baby was born and they wanted to locate the baby, they would bring another baby there in order that it could be heard crying, and the two babies would cry together, as it is written: “Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vineyards; for our vineyards are in blossom” (Song of Songs 2:15). The infants who were used to uncover the hidden babies are referred to as little foxes.

⁴¹⁰ The verse states: “And when she could no longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with bitumen and with pitch; and she put the child therein, and laid it in the willows by the river’s bank” (Exodus 2:3). The Gemara asks: What is different about bulrushes that she decided to use them? Rabbi Elazar says: From here it is derived concerning righteous people that their money is more precious to them than their bodies, as she took an inexpensive material to build the ark. And why do they care so much about their money? Because they do not stretch out their hands to partake of stolen property. Therefore, their own property is very precious to them.

⁴¹¹ Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani says an alternative reason for her taking bulrushes for the ark: She took a soft material like bulrush, which is able to withstand an impact both before a soft item and before a hard item. She feared that if she would have made the box from a hard material like wood, if it were to collide with a hard item in the water it might break.

⁴¹² The verse continues: “And daubed it with bitumen and with pitch” (Exodus 2:3). A Sage teaches: She daubed bitumen on the interior and pitch on the exterior, so that righteous person, i.e., Moses, would not smell a foul odor, such as that of pitch.

⁴¹³ The verse continues: “And she put the child therein, and laid it in the willows [bassuf]” (Exodus 2:3). Rabbi Elazar says: This means she placed him in the Suf Sea, i.e., the Red Sea. Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani says:

⁴¹⁴ She placed him in a marsh, as it is written: “The reeds and willows [suf] shall wither” (Isaiah 19:6).

⁴¹⁵ The verse states: “And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe [lirhotz] in the river” (Exodus 2:5). Rabbi Yoḥanan says in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yoḥai: This teaches that she came down to the river to cleanse herself from the impurity of her father’s idols, as she was immersing herself as part of the conversion process. And similarly it states: “When the Lord shall have washed [raḥatz] away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of destruction” (Isaiah 4:4). This washing clearly refers to the purging of spiritual sins, rather than bathing for the sake of cleanliness.

⁴¹⁶ The verse continues: “And her maidens walked along [holekhot] by the riverside” (Exodus 2:5). Rabbi Yoḥanan says: This walking is nothing other than the terminology of going toward death, and similarly it states: “Behold, I am going [holekh] to die” (Genesis 25:32).

⁴¹⁷ The verse continues: “And she saw the ark among the willows” (Exodus 2:5). Once her maidens saw that the daughter of Pharaoh was intending to save Moses, they said to her: Our mistress, the custom of the world is that when a king of flesh and blood decrees a decree, even if all the world does not fulfill it, at least his children and members of his household fulfill it, and yet you are violating the decree of your father. After the maidens tried to convince her not to save Moses, the angel Gabriel came and beat them to the ground and they died.

⁴¹⁸ The verse concludes: “And she sent amatah to take it” (Exodus 2:5). Rabbi Yehuda and Rabbi Nehemya disagree as to the definition of the word “amatah.” One says that it means her arm, and one says that it means her maidservant. The Gemara explains: The one who says that it means her arm explained it in this manner, as it is written “amatah,” which denotes her forearm. And the one who says that it means her maidservant explained it in this manner because it does not explicitly write the more common term: Her hand [yadah]. Therefore, he understands that this is the alternative term for a maidservant, ama.

⁴¹⁹ The Gemara asks: And according to the one who says that it means her maidservant, didn’t you say earlier: Gabriel came and beat them to the ground and the maidservants died, so how could Pharaoh’s daughter send her? The Gemara answers: It must be that Gabriel left her one maidservant, as it is not proper that a princess should stand alone.

⁴²⁰ The Gemara asks: And according to the one who says that it means her hand, let the Torah write explicitly: Her hand [yadah]. Why use the more unusual term amatah? The Gemara answers: This verse teaches us that her arm extended [ishtarbav] many cubits. As the Master said in another context: And similarly you find with regard to the hand of Pharaoh’s daughter that it extended, and similarly you find with regard to the teeth of evildoers, as it is written: “You have broken [shibbarta] the teeth of the wicked” (Psalms 3:8), and Reish Lakish said: Do not read the word as shibbarta, rather read it as sheribbavta, you have extended.

⁴²¹ The next verse states: “And she opened it and saw it [vatirehu], even the child” (Exodus 2:6). The Gemara comments: The verse states: “And she saw it”; it should have stated: And she saw. Rabbi Yosei, son of Rabbi Ḥanina, says: In addition to Moses, she saw the Divine Presence with him. This is indicated by the usage of “saw it.”

⁴²² The verse states: “And saw it, even the child [yeled]; and behold a lad [na’ar] that wept” (Exodus 2:6). The verse calls him “a child [yeled],” and the same verse calls him “a lad [na’ar].” A Sage teaches: He is the age of a child but his voice is as loud and deep as a lad; this is the statement of Rabbi Yehuda. Rabbi Neḥemya said to him: If that is so, you made Moses our teacher blemished, since his voice was unusually deep. Rather, this teaches that his mother made a canopy of youth, i.e., a small canopy, for him in the ark, as she said: Perhaps I will not merit to see his wedding canopy.

⁴²³ The verse concludes: “And she had compassion on him, and said: This [zeh] is one of the Hebrews’ children” (Exodus 2:6). The Gemara asks: From where did she know that he was a Hebrew child? Rabbi Yosei, son of Rabbi Ḥanina, says: As she saw that he was circumcised.

⁴²⁴ The Gemara comments: The Pharaoh’s daughter said: “This [zeh] is one of the Hebrews’ children” (Exodus 2:6). Rabbi Yoḥanan says: This teaches that she prophesied unknowingly, as the intention of the word “zeh” was: This one falls, i.e., is cast, into the water, but no other will fall by means of water, for on that day Pharaoh’s decree was canceled.

⁴²⁵ The Gemara explains: And this is what Rabbi Elazar said: What is the meaning of that which is written: “And when they shall say to you: Seek unto the necromancers and the diviners, that chirp [metzaftzefim] and that mutter [mahggim]” (Isaiah 8:19)? The explanation of their chirping and muttering is: They see [tzofin], but they do not know what they are seeing; they enunciate [mahggim], but they do not know what they are enunciating. Although necromancers and diviners do have some insight into the future, they do not see clearly enough to understand what they are actually seeing.

⁴²⁶ The Gemara applies this to Pharaoh: Pharaoh’s astrologers saw that the savior of the Jewish people would be stricken by water. Therefore, they arose and decreed: “Every son that is born you shall cast into the river” (Exodus 1:22); they thought that their vision indicated that Moses would be killed in the water. Once Jochebed cast Moses into the water, although he was protected in an ark, the astrologers said: We no longer see in the stars anything like that sign we saw as to the downfall of the leader of the Jews by water, and therefore at that moment they canceled their decree. But they did not know that what they saw foretold that Moses would be stricken on account of the waters of Meribah. They envisioned a downfall for Moses by water but didn’t fully comprehend their vision.

⁴²⁷ And this is what Rabbi Ḥama, son of Rabbi Ḥanina, says: What is the meaning of that which is written: “These [hemma] are the waters of Meribah, where the children of Israel strove with the Lord, and He was sanctified in them” (Numbers 20:13)? The verse indicates that these are the waters that the astrologers of Pharaoh saw and on account of which they erred. And this is what Moses said: “The people, among whom I am, are six hundred thousand men on foot [ragli]; and yet You have said: I will give them flesh, that they may eat a whole month” (Numbers 11:21). Moses said to the Jewish people: On account of me, which is an alternative meaning of the word ragli, all of you were saved, as the decree to throw all males into the river was canceled on my account.

⁴²⁸ Rabbi Ḥanina bar Pappa says: That day that Moses was placed in the river was the twenty-first day of the month of Nisan. The ministering angels said before the Holy One, Blessed be He: Master of the Universe, should the one who in the future will say the Song at the Red Sea on this day be stricken on this day? As this was also the date on which the Red Sea would be parted during the salvation of the Exodus.

⁴²⁹ Rabbi Aḥa bar Ḥanina says: That day was actually the sixth day of the month of Sivan. The ministering angels said before the Holy One, Blessed be He: Master of the Universe, should the one who in the future will receive the Torah on Mount Sinai on this day be stricken on this day? As this was also the date on which the Torah was received.

⁴³⁰ The Gemara asks: Granted, according to the one who says that Moses was placed in the water on the sixth of Sivan, you find that there can be three months during which Moses was hidden after his birth; as the Master said (Tosefta 11:7): Moses died on the seventh of Adar, and Moses was born on the seventh of Adar. And based on this, from the seventh of Adar until the sixth of Sivan there are three months, which correspond to the three months Moses was hidden before being placed in the water. But according to the one who says that it was on the twenty-first of Nisan, how can you find that he was hidden for three months?

⁴³¹ The Gemara answers: That year was a leap year in which there were two months of Adar. Moses was hidden most of the first month of the three, from the seventh day of the first Adar when he was born, and most of the last month of the three, i.e., all of Nisan until the twenty-first, and the entire middle one. All of this together is considered as three months.

⁴³² The Gemara now discusses the next verse in Exodus: “Then said his sister to Pharaoh’s daughter: Shall I go and call you a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for you?” (Exodus 2:7). The Gemara asks: And what is different that Pharaoh’s daughter would specifically want a nurse of the Hebrew women?

⁴³³ The Gemara answers: This teaches that prior to this, they took Moses around to all the Egyptian wet nurses and he did not agree to nurse from any of them, as he said: Shall a mouth that in the future will speak with the Divine Presence actually nurse something impure? And this is as it is written: “Whom shall one teach knowledge? And whom shall one make understand the message?” (Isaiah 28:9). The prophet is asking: To whom shall God teach the knowledge of the Torah, and to whom shall God make to understand the message of the Torah? The answer is as the verse continues: “Them that are weaned from the milk, them that are drawn from the breasts” (Isaiah 28:9). The conclusion of the verse indicates that the Torah should be taught to the one who did not want to nurse from the milk of a gentile woman, i.e., Moses.

⁴³⁴ The next verse states: “And Pharaoh’s daughter said to her: Go. And the maiden [ha’alma] went and called the child’s mother” (Exodus 2:8). Rabbi Elazar says: This teaches that she went quickly like a maiden, i.e., with the strength of one of marriageable age, and not as the young child that she was. Rabbi Shmuel bar Naḥmani says: The word ha’alma is related to the word meaning to hide [le’alem], for she hid her words and didn’t tell Pharaoh’s daughter that she was bringing the baby’s mother.

⁴³⁵ The next verse states what Pharaoh’s daughter said to Jochebed: “And Pharaoh’s daughter said to her: Take this [heilikhi] child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it” (Exodus 2:9). Rabbi Ḥama, son of Rabbi Ḥanina, says: Pharaoh’s daughter is prophesying and she does not know what she is prophesying, as the word heilikhi means: This is yours [ha shellikhi], i.e., this is your child. The next part of the verse states: “And I will give you your wages.” Rabbi Ḥama, son of Rabbi Ḥanina, says: This teaches that with regard to righteous people, not only is it so that God arranges that their lost items are returned to

them, but He also arranges that they get their wages, as the son of Jochebed was returned to her and she also received payment for nursing him.

⁴³⁶ Elsewhere, the verse states with regard to Miriam: “And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances” (Exodus 15:20). The Gemara asks: Why is Miriam referred to as “the sister of Aaron,” and not the sister of Moses? Rav Amram says that Rav says, and some say that Rav Nahman says that Rav says: This teaches that Miriam already prophesied when she was still the sister of only Aaron, i.e., before Moses was born.

⁴³⁷ And as a child Miriam would say: In the future, my mother will give birth to a son who will save the Jewish people. And once Moses was born, the entire house was filled with light. Her father arose and kissed her on her head. He said to her: My daughter, your prophecy has been fulfilled. And once they put him into the river, her father arose and hit her on her head. He said to her: My daughter, where is your prophecy? And this is as it is written: “And his sister stood afar off, to know what would be done to him” (Exodus 2:4), i.e., to know what will be the ultimate resolution of her prophecy.

⁴³⁸ § The mishna teaches: Joseph merited to bury his father, resulting in a display of great honor to his father. The Gemara begins its discussion of the burial of Jacob by asking: What is different initially that it is written: “And Joseph went up to bury his father; and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt” (Genesis 50:7), and afterward it says in the following verse: “And all the house of Joseph, and his brethren, and his father’s house; only their little ones, and their flocks, and their herds, they left in the land of Goshen” (Genesis 50:8), indicating that the brothers of Joseph were second in importance to the Egyptians? And what is different at the end that it is written: “And Joseph returned into Egypt, he, and his brethren,” and afterward it states: “And all that went up with him to bury his father, after he had buried his father” (Genesis 50:14), placing the brothers before the Egyptians?

⁴³⁹ Rabbi Yoḥanan says: Initially, before the Egyptians saw the honor of the Jewish people, as the Gemara will soon explain, they did not treat them with honor, so the brothers were behind the servants of Pharaoh. And in the end, when they saw their honor, they treated the brothers with honor.

⁴⁴⁰ The Gemara explains what honor was accorded to the family of Jacob: As it is written: “And they came to the threshing floor of Atad, which is beyond the Jordan, and there they wailed with a very great and sore wailing; and he made a mourning for his father seven days” (Genesis 50:10). The word atad is the name of the boxthorn bush. And does a boxthorn bush have a threshing floor? Thorns are not collected and eaten. Rabbi Abbahu says: This teaches that they surrounded the casket of Jacob with crowns, like this threshing floor that is surrounded with boxthorns, because the children of Esau and the children of Ishmael and the children of Keturah all came to the burial of Jacob.

⁴⁴¹ A Sage taught: Initially, they all came to wage war with the family of Jacob, but once they saw the crown of Joseph, the viceroy of Egypt, hanging on the casket of Jacob, they all took their crowns and hung them on the casket of Jacob. A Sage taught: Thirty-six crowns were hung on the casket of Jacob. This was the great honor accorded to the family of Jacob.

⁴⁴² The Gemara continues its discussion of Jacob's burial. The verse states: "And there they wailed with a very great and sore wailing" (Genesis 50:10). It is taught: Even horses and even donkeys participated in the mourning.

⁴⁴³ Once they reached the Cave of Machpelah, Esau came and was preventing them from burying Jacob there. He said to them: It says: "And Jacob came unto Isaac his father to Mamre, to Kiryat Arba, the same is Hebron, where Abraham and Isaac sojourned" (Genesis 35:27). And Rabbi Yitzhak says: It is called Kiryat Arba because there were four couples buried there: Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and Leah. Esau said: Jacob buried Leah in his spot, and the spot that is remaining is mine.

⁴⁴⁴ The children of Jacob said to Esau: You sold your rights to Jacob. Esau said to them: Though I sold the birthright, did I also sell my rights to the burial site as an ordinary brother? The brothers said to him: Yes, you also sold to Jacob those rights, as it is written that Joseph stated: "My father made me swear, saying: Behold, I die; in my grave that I have dug [kariti] for me in the land of Canaan, there shall you bury me" (Genesis 50:5). And Rabbi Yoḥanan says in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yehotzadak: The word kira in the verse is nothing other than a term of a sale [mekhira] sharing a similar root, because in the cities overseas they call a sale kira.

⁴⁴⁵ Esau said to them: Bring the bill of sale to me, i.e., you can't prove your claims. They said to him: The bill of sale is in the land of Egypt. They said: And who will go to bring it? Naphtali will go, for he is as fast as a doe, as it is written: "Naphtali is a doe let loose, he gives goodly words" (Genesis 49:21). Rabbi Abbahu says: Do not read it as "goodly words [imrei shafer]"; rather, read it as imrei sefer, i.e., the words of the book, as he returned to Egypt to retrieve the bill of sale.

⁴⁴⁶ The Gemara relates: Hushim, the son of Dan, was there and his ears were heavy, i.e., he was hard of hearing. He said to them: What is this that is delaying the burial? And they said to him: This one, Esau, is preventing us from burying Jacob until Naphtali comes back from the land of Egypt with the bill of sale. He said to them: And until Naphtali comes back from the land of Egypt will our father's father lie in degradation? He took a club [kulepa] and hit Esau on the head, and Esau's eyes fell out and they fell on the legs of Jacob. Jacob opened his eyes and smiled. And this is that which is written: "The righteous shall rejoice when he sees the vengeance; he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked" (Psalms 58:11).

⁴⁴⁷ At that moment the prophecy of Rebecca was fulfilled, as it is written that Rebecca said of Jacob and Esau: "Why should I be bereaved of you both in one day?" (Genesis 27:45), as Rebecca foresaw that the future bereavement for both her sons would be on the same day. The Gemara comments: And although their deaths were not on the same day, in any event their burials were on the same day, as Esau was killed and buried on the same day that Jacob was buried.

⁴⁴⁸ The Gemara returns to discuss the involvement of Joseph and his brothers in the burial of their father: And if Joseph would not have dealt with the burial of Jacob, would his brothers not have dealt with it? But isn't it written: "For his sons carried him into the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah" (Genesis 50:13)? Since it is evident that the brothers were involved in the burial, why did they not deal with Jacob's burial needs from the outset? The Gemara answers: They said: Allow Joseph to take care of it, because there is more honor for our father to be prepared for burial by royalty than by common people [hedyotot].

⁴⁴⁹ § It states further in the mishna: Who, to us, had a greater burial than Joseph, as it was none other than Moses who involved himself in transporting his coffin. The Sages taught in the Tosefta (4:6–7): Come and see how beloved mitzvot are to Moses our teacher. As, at the time of the Exodus, all the Jewish people were involved in taking the plunder from Egypt, and he was involved in the performance of mitzvot, as it is stated: “The wise in heart will take mitzvot” (Proverbs 10:8).

⁴⁵⁰ The Gemara asks: And from where did Moses our teacher know where Joseph was buried? The Sages said: Serah, the daughter of Asher, remained from that generation that initially descended to Egypt with Jacob. Moses went to her and said to her: Do you know anything about where Joseph is buried? She said to him: The Egyptians fashioned a metal casket for him and set it in the Nile [Nilus] River as an augury so that its water would be blessed. Moses went and stood on the bank of the Nile. He said to Joseph: Joseph, Joseph, the time has arrived about which the Holy One, Blessed be He, took an oath saying that I, i.e., God, will redeem you. And the time for fulfillment of the oath that you administered to the Jewish people that they will bury you in Eretz Yisrael has arrived. If you show yourself, it is good, but if not, we are clear from your oath. Immediately, the casket of Joseph floated to the top of the water.

⁴⁵¹ And do not wonder how iron can float, as it is written in the verses describing how Elisha was able to cause iron to float: “But as one was felling a beam, the ax head fell into the water; and he cried, and said: Alas, my master! For it was borrowed. And the man of God said: Where did it fall? And he showed him the place. And he cut down a stick, and cast it in there, and the iron floated up” (II Kings 6:5–6). And are these matters not inferred a fortiori: And just as Elisha, who was a mere student of Elijah, and Elijah was a mere student of Moses, as Elijah studied the Torah of Moses, was able to cause the iron to float before him, all the more so would it float before Moses our teacher himself.

⁴⁵² The Gemara now presents a different version of where Joseph was buried. Rabbi Natan says: Joseph was buried in the crypt [kabbarnit] of kings. Moses went and stood by the crypt of kings and said: Joseph, the time has arrived about which the Holy One, Blessed be He, took an oath saying that: I will redeem you. And the time for fulfillment of the oath that you administered to the Jewish people that they will bury you in Eretz Yisrael has arrived. If you show yourself, it is good, but if not, we are clear from your oath. At that moment, the casket of Joseph shook among the caskets. Moses took it and brought it over to himself.

⁴⁵³ And all those years that the Jewish people were in the wilderness, these two arks, one a casket of a dead man, Joseph, and one the Ark of the Divine Presence, i.e., the Ark of the Covenant, were traveling together, and passersby would say: What is the nature of these two arks? They said to them: One is of a dead person and one is of the Divine Presence. The passersby would ask: And in what way is it the manner of a dead person to travel with the Divine Presence? They said in response:

⁴⁵⁴ This one, i.e., the deceased Joseph, fulfilled all that is written in this. Therefore, it is fitting that the two arks should lie side by side.

⁴⁵⁵ The Gemara asks: And if Moses had not dealt with the burial of Joseph, would the Jewish people not have dealt with it? But isn't it written that after Moses died: “And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, they buried in Shechem” (Joshua 24:32), which indicates that the Jewish people completed the burial of Joseph? And furthermore, if the Jewish people had not dealt with Joseph's burial, would his children not have dealt with it? But isn't it written in that same

verse: “And they became the inheritance of the children of Joseph,” as Joseph was buried in Shechem, which was then given to his descendants? Therefore, the question arises: Why did Joseph’s descendants initially leave the task of his burial to the Jewish people and Moses?

⁴⁵⁶ The Gemara answers: They said: Leave Joseph for others. It is more of an honor for Joseph to be buried by the many than by the few, and therefore it is better that the Jewish people be involved in the burial. And furthermore, they said: Leave Joseph for others. It is more of an honor for Joseph to be buried by one of the great men like Moses than by lesser ones like us.

⁴⁵⁷ In the aforementioned verse it states: “And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, they buried in Shechem, in the parcel of ground that Jacob bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for a hundred pieces of money” (Joshua 24:32). The Gemara asks: What is different about Shechem that they specifically chose to bury Joseph there? Rabbi Ḥama, son of Rabbi Ḥanina, says that the Jewish people said: His brothers kidnapped him from Shechem (see Genesis 37:12–28), and to Shechem we should return his lost body.

⁴⁵⁸ The Gemara comments: The verses contradict each other, as it is written: “And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him” (Exodus 13:19), and it is written elsewhere: “And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt” (Joshua 24:32). Who in fact took Joseph’s bones?

⁴⁵⁹ Rabbi Ḥama, son of Rabbi Ḥanina, says: Anyone who performs a matter but does not complete it, and then another comes and completes it, the verse ascribes credit to the one who completed it as if he had actually performed the entire act. Due to the fact that the children of Israel completed Joseph’s burial, the Torah ascribes them credit as if they had performed the entire act.

⁴⁶⁰ Rabbi Elazar says with regard to one who initiates performance of a mitzva but does not complete it when capable of doing so: He is also demoted [moridin] from his position of greatness, as it is written: “And it came to pass at that time, that Judah went down [vayyered] from his brethren, and turned in to a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah” (Genesis 38:1). Usage of the term “went down” indicates that the rest of Judah’s brothers had demoted him from his position of greatness because he began the process of saving Joseph, but he did not complete it.

⁴⁶¹ Rabbi Shmuel bar Naḥmani says: The episode with regard to Judah also indicates that one who initiates performance of a mitzva but does not complete it will also bury his wife and children as Judah did, as it is written: “And in process of time Shua’s daughter, the wife of Judah, died” (Genesis 38:12), and it is written further: “And the sons of Judah: Er, and Onan, and Shelah, and Perez, and Zerah; but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan” (Genesis 46:12).

⁴⁶² Rav Yehuda says that Rav says: For what reason was Joseph called: Bones, even during his lifetime, as he had his brothers take an oath that “God will surely remember you, and you shall carry up my bones from here” (Genesis 50:25)? Because he did not protest for the honor of his father, as the brothers said to Joseph while unaware of his true identity: “Your servant our father” (Genesis 43:28, 44:31), and Joseph said nothing to them in protest that they referred to his father Jacob as Joseph’s servant.

⁴⁶³ And Rav Yehuda says that Rav says, and some say that this was said by Rabbi Ḥama, son of Rabbi Ḥanina: For what reason did Joseph predecease his brothers, as is indicated from his

requesting of them to take care of his burial needs? Because Joseph acted authoritatively, and such behavior can reduce one's life span.

⁴⁶⁴ After describing that Judah "went down" from his greatness, the Gemara discusses a similar term employed with regard to Joseph, as the verse states: "And Joseph was brought down [hurad] to Egypt" (Genesis 39:1). Rabbi Elazar says: Do not read the word as "hurad," meaning that he was passively brought down, but rather read it as horid, meaning: He, Joseph, brought down others, as Joseph brought down the astrologers [itztagninei] of Pharaoh from their position of eminence because he knew the interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams when they did not.

⁴⁶⁵ The continuation of that verse states: "And Potiphar, an officer [seris] of Pharaoh's, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the hand of the Ishmaelites, who had brought him down there" (Genesis 39:1). Rav says: He purchased the handsome Joseph for himself, for the intended purpose of homosexual intercourse, but was unable to fulfill his desires, as the angel Gabriel came and castrated Potiphar [seireso]. Then Gabriel came again and further mutilated him [fero] in the same part of his body. This is alluded to in the verses that write Potiphar's name differently: Initially, it is written "Potiphar" (Genesis 39:1) and in the end it is written "Potiphera" (Genesis 41:45). The change in his name indicates that a part of himself was mutilated.

⁴⁶⁶ § The mishna teaches: Who, to us, had a greater burial than Moses, as no one involved himself in his burial other than the Omnipresent Himself. The Gemara teaches: When Moses relates how God responded to him when denying his request to enter Eretz Yisrael, he states: "And the Lord said to me: Let it suffice for you [rav lakh]; speak no more to Me of this matter" (Deuteronomy 3:26). Rabbi Levi says: Moses proclaimed to the Jewish people when rebuking them with the term "rav," and therefore it was proclaimed to him with the term "rav" that he would not enter Eretz Yisrael. The Gemara explains: He proclaimed with the term "rav" when speaking with the congregation of Korah: "You take too much upon you [rav lakhem], you sons of Levi" (Numbers 16:7), and it was proclaimed to him with the term "rav," as God denied his request and said: "Let it suffice for you [rav lakh]."

⁴⁶⁷ Alternatively: God's telling Moses "rav lakh" was intended to mean: You now have a rav, a master, and who is it? It is Joshua, who has been chosen to lead the Jewish people.

⁴⁶⁸ Alternatively: God's telling Moses "rav lakh" was intended to mean: You have a rav, i.e., God, Who says that you may not enter Eretz Yisrael. You must not importune Me anymore, so that people should not say: How difficult is the Master and how obstinate is the student. The Gemara asks: And why was Moses punished so much in that he was not allowed to enter Eretz Yisrael, despite being so righteous? The school of Rabbi Yishmael taught that the reason is based on the common aphorism: Based on the camel is the burden. In other words, a person is judged in accordance with his stature, and therefore a righteous individual will be punished greatly due to any sins he committed.

⁴⁶⁹ The verse relates what Moses said to the Jewish people at the end of his life: "And he said to them: I am a hundred and twenty years old this day; I can no longer go out and come in; and the Lord has said to me: You shall not go over this Jordan" (Deuteronomy 31:2). The wording is problematic, as there is no need for the verse to state the term "this day." Moses said it in order to indicate: On this day, my days and years have been completed to be precisely one hundred and twenty, in order to teach you that the Holy One, Blessed be He, completes the years of the righteous from day to day

and from month to month, as it is written: “The number of your days I will fill” (Exodus 23:26), indicating that the righteous will live out their years fully.

⁴⁷⁰ The verse continues: “I can no longer go out and come in” (Deuteronomy 31:2). The Gemara asks: What is the meaning of “go out and come in”? If we say it means literally that Moses was actually physically restricted from going out and coming in, but isn’t it written: “And Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died, his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated” (Deuteronomy 34:7), indicating that he was at full physical strength? And it is written further: “And Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo” (Deuteronomy 34:1). And it is taught in a baraita: There were twelve steps there to ascend the mountain, and Moses stepped over them all in one step, also indicating that he was at full physical strength.

⁴⁷¹ Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani says that Rabbi Yonatan says: The verse means that he could no longer go out and come in with words of Torah. This teaches that the gates of wisdom were closed off to him.

⁴⁷² The verse discussing when Joshua was appointed to be the successor of Moses states: “And Moses and Joshua went, and presented themselves in the Tent of Meeting” (Deuteronomy 31:14). A Sage taught: That Sabbath when Moses died was a day of two pairs [deyo zugei], i.e., two wise men, Moses and Joshua, serving together in one place. Authority was taken from one and given to the other.

⁴⁷³ And it is taught in a baraita that Rabbi Yehuda said: If not for an explicitly written verse, one could not say what is written with regard to the death and burial of Moses. Where did Moses die? In the portion of Reuben, as it is written: “And Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo” (Deuteronomy 34:1), and it is known from elsewhere that Nebo is situated in the portion of Reuben, as it is written: “And the children of Reuben built Heshbon, and Elealeh, and Kiriathaim, and Nebo” (Numbers 32:37–38).

⁴⁷⁴ The name is also expounded: It is called “Nebo [Nevo],” for three prophets [nevi'im] died there: Moses, and Aaron, and Miriam.

⁴⁷⁵ Rabbi Yehuda continues: And where is Moses buried? In the portion of Gad, as it is written in the blessing of Moses to the tribe of Gad: “And he chose a first part for himself, for there a portion of a ruler was reserved” (Deuteronomy 33:21), indicating that Moses, the ruler, is buried in the portion of Gad. And how much is the distance from the portion of Reuben to the portion of Gad? Four mil. Rabbi Yehuda asks: For those four mil from Mount Nebo in the portion of Reuben to the burial place of Moses in the portion of Gad, who transported him?

⁴⁷⁶ He answers: The contradiction between the two verses teaches that Moses was lying in the wings of the Divine Presence, as Moses was carried out by God Himself, and the ministering angels were saying: “He executed the righteousness of the Lord, and His ordinances with Israel” (Deuteronomy 33:21). And the Holy One, Blessed be He, was saying: “Who will rise up for Me against the evildoers? Who will stand up for Me against the workers of iniquity?” (Psalms 94:16). In other words, God asked: Who will now defend the Jewish people against its accusers? The idea that God Himself transported Moses to his burial could not have been said if not for the proof from the resolution between the contradictory verses.

⁴⁷⁷ And Shmuel says that God was saying the verse: “Who is as the wise man and who knows the interpretation [peshar] of a matter?” (Ecclesiastes 8:1), referring to the greatness of Moses, who was able to forge compromises, pesharim, between God and the Jewish people. And Rabbi Yoḥanan says that God was saying the verse: “Wisdom, where can it be found?” (Job 28:12). And Rav Naḥman says that God was saying the verse: “And Moses, the servant of God, died there” (Deuteronomy 34:5). Semalyon says that God was saying: And Moses, the great scribe of Israel, died there.

⁴⁷⁸ It is taught in a baraita that Rabbi Eliezer the Great says: Over an area of twelve mil by twelve mil, equivalent to the size of the camp of Israel, a Divine Voice proclaimed and said: And Moses, the great scribe of Israel, died. And some say: Moses did not actually die, as it is written here: “And Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there” (Deuteronomy 34:5), and it is written there: “And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights” (Exodus 34:28). Just as there, where it says: “And he was there with the Lord,” it means that he was standing and serving before God; so too, here, when it says: “And Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there,” it means that he was standing and serving before God.

⁴⁷⁹ The verse describing the burial of Moses states: “And He buried him in the valley in the land of Moab over against Beth Peor; and no man knows of his grave to this day” (Deuteronomy 34:6). Rabbi Berekhya says: This verse provides a sign within a sign, i.e., a very precise description of the location of his burial, and even with this the verse concludes: “And no man knows of his grave to this day” (Deuteronomy 34:6).

⁴⁸⁰ The Gemara relates: And the evil monarchy of the Roman Empire already sent messengers to

⁴⁸¹ the garrison [gastera] of Beth Peor and said to them: Show us where Moses is buried. As the men stood above on the upper section of the mountain, it appeared to them as if the grave was below in the lower section. As they stood below, it appeared to them to be above. They divided into two groups, one above and one below. To those who were standing above, the grave appeared to them to be below; to those who were standing below, the grave appeared to them to be above, to fulfill that which is stated: “And no man knows of his grave to this day” (Deuteronomy 34:6).

⁴⁸² Rabbi Ḥama, son of Rabbi Ḥanina, says: Even Moses our teacher himself does not know where he is buried. It is written here: “And no man knows of his grave,” and it is written there: “And this is the blessing wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death” (Deuteronomy 33:1). In other words, even Moses, as he is referred to by the term “man,” does not know his burial place. And Rabbi Ḥama, son of Rabbi Ḥanina, says: For what reason was Moses buried near Beth Peor? In order to atone for the incident that transpired at Beth Peor (Numbers, chapter 25).

⁴⁸³ And Rabbi Ḥama, son of Rabbi Ḥanina, says: What is the meaning of that which is written: “After the Lord your God shall you walk, and Him shall you fear, and His commandments shall you keep, and unto His voice shall you hearken, and Him shall you serve, and unto Him shall you cleave” (Deuteronomy 13:5)? But is it actually possible for a person to follow the Divine Presence? But hasn’t it already been stated: “For the Lord your God is a devouring fire, a jealous God” (Deuteronomy 4:24), and one cannot approach fire.

⁴⁸⁴ He explains: Rather, the meaning is that one should follow the attributes of the Holy One, Blessed be He. He provides several examples. Just as He clothes the naked, as it is written: “And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skin, and clothed them” (Genesis 3:21), so

too, should you clothe the naked. Just as the Holy One, Blessed be He, visits the sick, as it is written with regard to God's appearing to Abraham following his circumcision: "And the Lord appeared unto him by the terebinths of Mamre" (Genesis 18:1), so too, should you visit the sick. Just as the Holy One, Blessed be He, consoles mourners, as it is written: "And it came to pass after the death of Abraham, that God blessed Isaac his son" (Genesis 25:11), so too, should you console mourners. Just as the Holy One, Blessed be He, buried the dead, as it is written: "And he was buried in the valley in the land of Moab" (Deuteronomy 34:6), so too, should you bury the dead.

⁴⁸⁵ The Gemara discusses the verse: "And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skin, and clothed them" (Genesis 3:21). Rav and Shmuel disagree as to the meaning of the term "garments of skin." One says that these garments were made of something that comes from the skin, and one says that these garments were something from which the skin benefits.

⁴⁸⁶ Rabbi Samlai taught: With regard to the Torah, its beginning is an act of kindness and its end is an act of kindness. Its beginning is an act of kindness, as it is written: "And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife garments of skin, and clothed them" (Genesis 3:21). And its end is an act of kindness, as it is written: "And he was buried in the valley in the land of Moab" (Deuteronomy 34:6).

⁴⁸⁷ Rabbi Samlai taught: For what reason did Moses our teacher greatly desire to enter Eretz Yisrael? Did he need to eat of its produce, or did he need to satisfy himself from its goodness? Rather, this is what Moses said: Many mitzvot were commanded to the Jewish people, and some of them can be fulfilled only in Eretz Yisrael, so I will enter the land in order that they can all be fulfilled by me.

⁴⁸⁸ The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to him: Do you seek to enter the land to perform these mitzvot for any reason other than to receive a reward? I will ascribe you credit as if you had performed them and you will receive your reward, as it is stated: "Therefore will I divide him a portion among the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the mighty; because he bared his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors; yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors" (Isaiah 53:12).

⁴⁸⁹ Rabbi Samlai proceeds to expound the verse "Therefore will I divide him a portion among the great" to mean that he will receive reward. One might have thought that he will receive reward like the later ones and not like the earlier ones, so the verse states: "And he shall divide the spoil with the mighty," meaning like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who were mighty in Torah and in mitzvot. "Because he bared his soul unto death," meaning he gave himself over to death on behalf of the Jewish people, as it is stated: "Yet now, if You will forgive their sin; and if not, blot me, I pray You, out of Your book that You have written" (Exodus 32:32).

⁴⁹⁰ "And was numbered with the transgressors," meaning that he was counted among those who died in the desert, for, just like them, he did not enter Eretz Yisrael. "Yet he bore the sin of many," as he atoned for the incident of the Golden Calf. "And made intercession [yafgia] for the transgressors," as he requested mercy for the sinners of Israel so that they should engage in repentance. And the word pegia means nothing other than prayer, as it is stated: "Therefore pray not you for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, neither make intercession [tifga] to Me; for I will not hear you" (Jeremiah 7:16).

Chapter 2

¹ MISHNA: The husband of the sota would bring his wife's meal-offering to the priest in an Egyptian wicker basket made of palm branches, and he would place the meal-offering in her hands for her to hold throughout the ritual in order to fatigue her. This might lead her to confess her guilt and not drink the water of a sota unnecessarily.

² The mishna lists differences between this meal-offering and other meal-offerings. Generally, all meal-offerings, from their beginnings, i.e., the moment they are consecrated, and until their ends, i.e., the moment they are sacrificed, must be in a service vessel. But in the case of this one, its beginning is in a wicker basket and only at its end, immediately before it is offered, is it placed in a service vessel.

³ All other meal-offerings require oil and frankincense, and this one requires neither oil nor frankincense. Furthermore, all other meal-offerings are brought from wheat, and this one is brought from barley. Although in fact the omer meal-offering is also brought from barley, it is still different in that it was brought as groats, i.e., high-quality meal. The meal-offering of the sota, however, is brought as unsifted barley flour. Rabban Gamliel says: This hints that just as her actions of seclusion with another man were the actions of an animal, so too her offering is animal food, i.e., barley and not wheat.

⁴ GEMARA: It is taught in a baraita that Abba Ḥanin says in the name of Rabbi Eliezer: And why is so much done to her? It is in order to fatigue her, so that she will retract and confess her guilt and be spared death. And if the Torah is so protective of those who transgress His will, i.e., the sota, who secluded herself with the man she was warned against, then by a fortiori inference He is protective of those who do His will.

⁵ The Gemara asks: And from where is it derived that they attempt to induce her to confess because the Torah is protective of the sota? Perhaps it is in order that the scroll of the sota, containing the name of God, will not be erased. The Gemara responds: Rabbi Eliezer holds

⁶ that the priest would first give her the water of the sota to drink, and only afterward would he sacrifice her meal-offering. Therefore, if the concern were due to the scroll, it would no longer be applicable, as it was already erased in the water of the sota before the meal-offering was brought. The efforts to fatigue her by making her hold the meal-offering must indicate that the Torah is protective of her.

⁷ It was taught in the mishna: All meal-offerings, from their beginning until their end, are placed in service vessels and remain there. The Gemara raises a contradiction from the Tosefta (Menahot 1:16): What is the procedure for meal-offerings? A person brings his meal-offering from his property in baskets [kelatot] of silver and of gold, and when he reaches the Temple he places it in a service vessel and sanctifies it in the service vessel, and he puts its oil and frankincense on it, and he carries it to the priest. And the priest then carries it to the altar and brings it near to the southwest horn of the altar, opposite the corner of the horn of the altar. And this is sufficient.

⁸ The baraita continues: And the priest then removes the frankincense to one side, and he removes a handful from the place where its oil has accumulated and mixed with the flour, and he puts the handful into a service vessel and consecrates it in the service vessel. And he then gathers its

frankincense and puts it on top of the handful and brings it up onto the altar. And he brings it up and burns it in the service vessel; and he salts it and places it upon the fires.

⁹ The baraita continues: After the handful is sacrificed, the remainders of the meal-offering are eaten. And the priests are permitted to put wine and oil and honey in it, even though it is prohibited to offer honey on the altar. And they are prohibited only from allowing the meal-offering to become leavened.

¹⁰ The Gemara asks: In any event, the baraita teaches that the meal-offering is first placed in baskets of silver and baskets of gold brought from one's home. This seems to contradict the mishna's statement that all other meal-offerings are initially in service vessels. Rav Pappa said: The mishna means to say that meal-offerings are placed in vessels of silver and gold, as these are suitable to be service vessels if consecrated.

¹¹ The Gemara notes: Since the mishna distinguishes in this regard between the meal-offering of the sota and all other meal-offerings, one may learn by inference that an Egyptian wicker basket is not suitable to be a service vessel even if it is consecrated. In accordance with whose opinion is this the case? It is not in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei, son of Rabbi Yehuda, as it is taught in a baraita: With regard to service vessels that were made of wood, Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi deems them unfit, and Rabbi Yosei, son of Rabbi Yehuda, deems them fit.

¹² The Gemara responds: You can even say that the mishna is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei, son of Rabbi Yehuda. Say that Rabbi Yosei, son of Rabbi Yehuda, says that wooden vessels are deemed fit with regard to those of superior quality; but does he say likewise with regard to vessels of lesser quality, e.g., a basket made of palm branches? Doesn't Rabbi Yosei, son of Rabbi Yehuda, hold to the principle articulated in the verse: "And when you offer the blind for a sacrifice, is it not evil! ...If you would present it now unto your governor, will he be pleased with you or show you favor?" (Malachi 1:8)? Nothing that is unfit for presentation to a ruler may be brought to the Temple. Therefore, even Rabbi Yosei, son of Rabbi Yehuda, must agree that a basket made of palm branches cannot be a service vessel.

¹³ § The baraita states: He places it in a service vessel and sanctifies it in the service vessel. The Gemara asks: Can one learn from the unnecessary repetition of the term service vessel, that service vessels can sanctify their contents only with intention? Must one place the meal-offering in the service vessel with express intent to sanctify it? The Gemara answers: Say: He simply places it in the service vessel in order to sanctify it in the service vessel. He need not intend to sanctify it.

¹⁴ § The baraita teaches: The owner of the meal-offering puts its oil and frankincense on it. The Gemara cites the source of this halakha: As it is stated: "And when anyone brings a meal-offering unto the Lord, his offering shall be of fine flour; and he shall pour oil upon it, and put frankincense thereon" (Leviticus 2:1).

¹⁵ The baraita states: And he carries it to the priest. The Gemara cites the source: As it is written: "And he shall bring it to Aaron's sons, the priests" (Leviticus 2:2).

¹⁶ The baraita states: And the priest then carries it to the altar. The Gemara cites the source: As it is written: "And you shall bring the meal-offering that is made of these things unto the Lord; and it shall be presented unto the priest, and he shall bring it unto the altar" (Leviticus 2:8).

¹⁷ The baraita states: The priest brings it near to the southwest horn of the altar, opposite the corner of the horn. And this is sufficient. The Gemara asks: From where do we derive this?

¹⁸ The Gemara responds: As it is written: “And this is the law of the meal-offering: The sons of Aaron shall offer it before the Lord in front of the altar” (Leviticus 6:7). And it is taught in a baraita: When the verse states: “Before the Lord,” one might have understood this to mean on the western side of the altar, opposite the Holy of Holies. Therefore, the verse states: “In front of the altar.” This must be the south of the altar, where the ramp is located. If the verse had stated only: In front of the altar, one might have understood it to mean specifically on the southern side. Therefore, the verse states: “Before the Lord,” indicating the western side. How can these texts be reconciled? The priest brings it near to the southwest corner of the altar, opposite the corner of the horn. And this is sufficient.

¹⁹ Rabbi Elazar says another interpretation: One might have thought that he offers it up on the western side of the corner or on the southern side of the corner. Say: Anywhere you find two verses, one of which fulfills itself and fulfills the statement of the other, and one of which fulfills itself and nullifies the statement of the other, leave the verse that fulfills itself and nullifies the other, and seize the one that fulfills itself and fulfills the other. The principle is applied as follows: When you say: “Before the Lord,” on the western side, you have nullified the other part of the verse: “In front of the altar,” on the southern side. But when you say: “In front of the altar,” on the southern side, you have also fulfilled: “Before the Lord,” on the western side. How so? He brings it near to the southern side of the corner.

²⁰ The Gemara asks: But where have you fulfilled the phrase “before the Lord”? Rav Ashi said: This tanna holds that the entire altar stands in the north of the Temple courtyard. Therefore, the entire southern side of the altar stood opposite the Holy of Holies in the west, and it can therefore be called: Before the Lord.

²¹ The Gemara asks: What is taught by the phrase: And this is sufficient? Rav Ashi said: This phrase was necessary, as otherwise it might enter your mind to say: Require the priest to bring the meal-offering itself near to the corner of the altar without the use of a vessel. The baraita teaches us that this is not so, and one can bring it to the altar in its service vessel.

²² The Gemara asks: And why not say that this is indeed so? The Gemara responds: The verse states: “And you shall bring the meal-offering that is made of these things unto the Lord; and it shall be presented unto the priest, and he shall bring it unto the altar” (Leviticus 2:8); just as presentation to the priest is in a vessel, so too bringing it to the altar must be in a vessel.

²³ The baraita states: And he removes its frankincense to one side. The Gemara explains: This is done in order that the frankincense not be removed along with the meal-offering when the priest removes a handful. As we learned in a mishna (Menahot 6a): If he removed the handful and a pebble, or a grain of salt, or a crumb [koret] of frankincense came out in his hand, it is invalid. The handful must be entirely fine flour.

²⁴ The baraita continues: And he removes a handful from the place where its oil has accumulated. The Gemara asks: From where do we derive this? As it is written: “And he shall take from there his handful of the fine flour thereof, and of the oil thereof” (Leviticus 2:2). The Torah also states: “And the priest shall make the memorial part of it smoke, even of the groats thereof, and of the oil thereof” (Leviticus 2:16). The handful should be taken from the area where there is an abundance of oil.

²⁵ The baraita continues: And he puts the handful into a service vessel and sanctifies it in the service vessel. The Gemara asks: Why do I need this sanctification? He has already sanctified it once, when he initially brought it to the Temple. The Gemara responds: The sanctification here is just as with the blood of the offerings. Although the knife sanctifies blood by contact with the neck of the animal, since the knife itself is a service vessel, the priest sanctifies it again when he collects it in the service vessel. Here too, it is not different; the meal-offering must be sanctified twice.

²⁶ The baraita continues: And he gathers its frankincense and puts it on top of the handful. The Gemara cites the source: As it is written: “And he shall take up from his handful, of the fine flour of the meal-offering, and of the oil thereof, and all the frankincense which is upon the meal-offering” (Leviticus 6:8).

²⁷ The baraita continues: And he then brings it up

²⁸ and burns it in the service vessel. The Gemara asks: Does he really burn it in a service vessel? Rather, say: He brings it up to the altar in a service vessel in order to burn it.

²⁹ The baraita continues: And he salts it and places it on the fires. The Gemara cites the source: As it is written: “And every meal-offering of yours you shall season with salt” (Leviticus 2:13).

³⁰ The baraita continues: After the handful is sacrificed, the remainders of the meal-offering are eaten. The Gemara asks: From where do we derive this? As it is written: “And he shall bring it to Aaron’s sons, the priests...and the priest shall make the memorial part thereof smoke upon the altar” (Leviticus 2:2). The memorial part is the handful. And it is written afterward: “But that which is left of the meal-offering shall be for Aaron and his sons” (Leviticus 2:3).

³¹ The baraita uses the phrase: After the handful is sacrificed. This phrase can be understood according to one Sage as he holds, and according to another Sage as he holds. As it is stated that there is a dispute between the Sages: From when does the sacrifice of the handful render the remainder of the meal-offering permitted for consumption by the priests? Rabbi Ḥanina says: It is when the fire takes hold of it, i.e., when it ignites. Rabbi Yoḥanan says: It is when the fire consumes most of the handful. Each of these amora’im understands the baraita in accordance with his opinion.

³² The baraita continues: And the priests are permitted to put wine and oil and honey in the remainder of the meal-offering. What is the reason? The verse states with regard to the gifts given to the priests: “And I, behold, I have given you the charge of My terumot...for a consecrated portion” (Numbers 18:8). The phrase “for a consecrated portion” indicates that the gifts are given as a mark of greatness and should be eaten in the manner that the kings eat.

³³ The baraita concludes: And they are prohibited only from allowing the meal-offering to become leavened. The Gemara cites the source: As it is written with regard to meal-offerings: “It shall not be baked with leaven. Their portion I have given it of My offerings made by fire” (Leviticus 6:10). Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish says: One should read the verse as if the phrase “their portion” is part of the same phrase as the prohibition of baking with leaven. This teaches that even their portion, i.e., the portion given to the priests, shall not be baked with leaven.

³⁴ § The mishna states: All other meal-offerings require oil and frankincense. The Gemara asks: But do all other meal-offerings actually require oil and frankincense? But isn’t there the meal-offering of a sinner, with regard to which the Merciful One states: “He shall put no oil upon it, neither shall he put any frankincense thereon; for it is a sin-offering” (Leviticus 5:11).

³⁵ The Gemara responds: This is what the mishna is saying: All meal-offerings other than that of the sota require oil and frankincense, and they are brought from wheat; and they are also brought from fine flour. However, the meal-offering of a sinner, even though it does not require oil and frankincense, must still be brought from wheat and brought from fine flour. Similarly, the omer meal-offering, even though it is brought from barley, requires oil and frankincense, and it is brought as groats. But this one, the sota meal-offering, requires neither oil nor frankincense, and it is brought from barley and brought as unsifted flour. While the meal-offering of a sinner and the omer meal-offering are similar to other meal-offerings in one of these respects, the sota meal-offering is different in both respects.

³⁶ It is taught in a baraita (Tosefta 1:10) that Rabbi Shimon said: By right, it should have been the halakha that the meal-offering of a sinner requires oil and frankincense, so that a sinner should not stand to gain by not having to pay for them. For what reason does the verse not require them? It is so that his offering will not be of superior quality.

³⁷ And by right, it should have been the halakha that a sin-offering brought for transgression of a prohibition punishable by karet, e.g., consumption of forbidden fat, requires fine flour and libations of oil, and wine. Just as burnt-offerings and peace-offerings require these, a sin-offering should require them as well so that a sinner should not stand to gain by not having to pay for them. For what reason does it not require them? It is so that his offering will not be of superior quality.

³⁸ But the sin-offering of a leper and his guilt-offering require libations, as they are not brought on account of a sin. The Gemara asks: Is that so? But didn't Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani say that Rabbi Yonatan says: Leprosy comes on account of seven matters. Leprosy develops on account of sin, so by extension the leper's offerings are also brought on account of sin. The Gemara answers: There, from the time he contracts his leprosy he gains atonement for his sin through the plague of leprosy itself. Consequently, when he brings the offering, he brings it only in order to permit him to eat sacrificial food.

³⁹ The Gemara asks: If that is so, then the sin-offering of a nazirite should require libations, because it is not brought on account of a sin. The Gemara answers: Rabbi Shimon holds in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Elazar HaKappar, who says: The nazirite is also a sinner, since he denies himself wine unnecessarily.

⁴⁰ The mishna states that Rabban Gamliel says: Just as her actions were the actions of an animal, so too, her offering is animal food. It is taught in a baraita that Rabban Gamliel said to the Sages: Scribes, permit me, and I will explain it as a type of decorative wreath [homer], i.e., an allegory.

⁴¹ And why did Rabban Gamliel speak up? It was because he heard Rabbi Meir saying an alternative explanation: She fed him, i.e., her paramour, delicacies from around the world; therefore, her offering is animal food. Rabban Gamliel said to him: Your explanation works out well in the case of a rich sota, but with regard to a poor sota, who cannot afford such delicacies, what is there to say? Rather, the reason she brings an offering of animal food is: Just as her actions were the actions of an animal, so too her offering is animal food.

⁴² MISHNA: The priest would bring an earthenware drinking vessel [peyalei] and he would pour into it half a log of water from the basin in the Temple. Rabbi Yehuda says: The priest would pour only a quarter-log of water. Just as Rabbi Yehuda minimizes the writing, as he requires that less be

written on the scroll of the sota than do the Rabbis, so too he minimizes the amount of water to be taken from the basin for the erasing of the text.

⁴³ The priest would enter the Sanctuary and turn to his right. And there was a place there, on the Sanctuary floor, with an area of a cubit by a cubit, and a marble tablet [tavla] was there, and a ring was fastened to the tablet to assist the priest when he would raise it. And the priest would take loose dust from underneath it and place the dust into the vessel with the water, so that the dust would be visible upon the water, as it is stated: “And the priest shall take holy water in an earthen vessel; and of the dust that is on the floor of the Tabernacle the priest shall take, and put it into the water” (Numbers 5:17).

⁴⁴ GEMARA: The Sages taught: It must be a new earthenware vessel; this is the statement of Rabbi Yishmael. The Gemara asks: What is the reasoning of Rabbi Yishmael? The Gemara answers: Rabbi Yishmael derives this by means of a verbal analogy between “vessel” in the case of the sota (Numbers 5:17) and “vessel” from the case of a leper (Leviticus 14:5). Just as there, with regard to the leper, a new earthenware vessel is required, so too here, a new earthenware vessel is required.

⁴⁵ And there, with regard to the leper, from where do we derive that a new vessel is required? The Gemara answers: As it is written: “And he shall slaughter one of the birds in an earthen vessel over running water” (Leviticus 14:5). Just as running water has not been used beforehand for work, i.e., once used it is no longer considered to be running, so too the vessel must not have been used for work.

⁴⁶ The Gemara asks: If this verbal analogy is extended, then just as there, running water from a flowing spring is required, so too here, with regard the sota, running water from a spring should be required for the water of a sota.

⁴⁷ The Gemara answers: According to Rabbi Yishmael it is indeed so, as Rabbi Yoḥanan says: With regard to the water of the basin in the Temple Rabbi Yishmael says: It is collected from spring water. And the Rabbis say: It may also be from any other type of water and need not be collected from spring water.

⁴⁸ The Gemara asks: The verbal analogy can be refuted: One cannot apply halakhot stated with regard to a leper to a sota, as what is unique about a leper is that he requires cedar wood, and the hyssop, and the scarlet wool for the performance of his purification ritual, and these are not required of the sota. Why, then, should a new vessel be required by the sota?

⁴⁹ Rabba said: The verse cited in the mishna states: “And the priest shall take holy water in an earthen vessel” (Numbers 5:17). The Torah makes no prior mention of the need for the priest to bring with him an earthenware vessel. Therefore, the verse must mean that the water should be placed in the vessel that I have already told you about, i.e., the vessel used for the leper.

⁵⁰ Rava says: Even according to the opinion that a new vessel is not required, they taught that the earthenware vessel is taken only when its exterior was not blackened from usage. But if its exterior was blackened, then it is unfit for use by the sota. What is the reason for this? Its requirements are similar to those of water: Just as the water must be clear and unchanged in appearance, so too the vessel must be unchanged in appearance.

⁵¹ Rava raised a dilemma: If the vessel’s exterior was blackened, and it was returned to the furnace and became white again, what is the halakha? Do we say that once it has been disqualified, it is

disqualified forever and can never be rendered fit for use? Or perhaps since it has returned to a white appearance it has returned to a state of fitness.

⁵² Come and hear evidence from that which Rabbi Elazar says: If the leper tied the cedar wood, and the hyssop, and the scarlet wool for his purification to his basket behind him, so as to carry it on his back, they are disqualified, since their form has changed. But there, after those items have been tied, they can be smoothed out again as if they had never been used, and still they are unfit. Evidently, after being disqualified an item cannot become fit again.

⁵³ The Gemara answers: There, the items are permanently unfit because they are peeled due to tying and can never truly return to their original appearance. That case does not provide proof.

⁵⁴ The mishna states: The priest would enter the Sanctuary and turn to his right. The Gemara asks: What is the reason that he should do so? The Gemara responds: As the Master said: All turns that you turn should be only to the right.

⁵⁵ The mishna continues: There was a place there, on the Sanctuary floor, with an area of a cubit by a cubit, and a marble tablet was there and a ring was fastened to the tablet so that it could be raised. When the priest would raise the tablet, he would take loose dust from underneath it and place the dust into the vessel with the water, so that the dust would be visible upon the water, as it is stated: “And the priest shall take holy water in an earthen vessel; and of the dust that is on the floor of the Tabernacle the priest shall take, and put it into the water” (Numbers 5:17). The Sages taught in a baraita: If the verse had stated only: “And of the dust that is on the floor,” one might have thought that the priest could prepare the concoction from dust from outside the Sanctuary and bring it in afterward.

⁵⁶ Therefore, the verse states: “The dust that is on the floor of the Tabernacle,” indicating that the dust must be from inside the Sanctuary. If the verse had stated only: “On the floor of the Tabernacle,” one might have thought that the priest may dig with axes to loosen the dust there. Therefore, the verse states: “And of the dust that is on the floor of the Tabernacle,” indicating that the dust must be lying there loosely. How so? If there is already loose earth there on the Sanctuary floor, bring it; if there is none there, then place loose dust there from elsewhere, and then pick it up and use it.

⁵⁷ It is taught in another baraita: The verse states: “And of the dust that is on the floor of the Tabernacle”; the fact that the verse does not explicitly state to take the dust from the floor of the Tabernacle teaches that the priest would prepare dust from outside and bring it into the Sanctuary. When the verse states: “The dust that is on the floor of the Tabernacle,” Isi ben Yehuda says that this phrase serves to include the floor of the Tabernacle when it stood in

⁵⁸ Shiloh, Nob, and Gibeon, and also the Eternal House, i.e., the Temple in Jerusalem. The dust for the sota is still brought from the ground of the Sanctuary wherever it is located, even after the Jewish people are no longer in the wilderness.

⁵⁹ Isi ben Menahem says: There is no need to derive this halakha from the verse. It may be learned by an a fortiori inference: With regard to the prohibition against entering the Sanctuary in a state of impurity, a lenient matter for which there is no court-imposed capital punishment, the Torah does not differentiate. It is prohibited for an impure person to enter the Tabernacle no matter where it stands. Therefore, with regard to the impurity of a married woman, which is stringent and carries the penalty of strangulation, all the more so is it not clear that the Torah does not differentiate? The dust must be

brought from the Sanctuary no matter where it stands. If so, what is the meaning when the verse states: “And of the dust that is on the floor of the Tabernacle”? It teaches that one should not bring dust from his own basket and place it directly into the water; he must first place it on the floor.

⁶⁰ A dilemma was raised before the Sages: If there is no dust there, what is the halakha? May one place ashes in the vessel instead? The Gemara responds: There is no need to raise the dilemma if one holds in accordance with the opinion of Beit Shammai, as they say: We never find ashes referred to as dust in the Torah.

⁶¹ When you raise the dilemma, it is in accordance with the opinion of Beit Hillel, who say: We do find ashes referred to as dust in the context of the red heifer (Numbers 19:17). They likewise hold that ashes may also be used instead of dust to cover the blood of a slaughtered bird or undomesticated animal (see Leviticus 17:13). What is the halakha here, with regard to the water of a sota? May ashes replace dust? Although elsewhere ashes may be referred to as dust, here it is written: “On the floor of the Tabernacle,” indicating that dust in particular is required, since dust comes from the ground. Or perhaps the phrase “on the floor of the Tabernacle” comes only to teach that the halakha is in accordance with the teaching of Isi ben Yehuda or in accordance with the teaching of Isi ben Menahem. If so, perhaps ashes are acceptable as well.

⁶² Come and hear evidence from that which Rabbi Yoḥanan says in the name of Rabbi Yishmael: In three instances the halakha supersedes the verse, i.e., the tradition alters the straightforward meaning of the verse.

⁶³ The Torah states: “And whatsoever man...that takes in hunting any beast or fowl that may be eaten, he shall pour out the blood thereof, and cover it in dust” (Leviticus 17:13), but the halakha is that the blood may be covered in anything similar to dust. The Torah states with regard to the nazirite: “All the days of his vow of naziriteship there shall be no razor come upon his head” (Numbers 6:5), but the halakha is that the nazirite may not remove his hair with anything. The Torah states: “That he writes her a bill [sefer] of divorce” (Deuteronomy 24:1). The word sefer denotes a scroll, but the halakha is that the husband may inscribe the bill of divorce on anything that is detached from the ground and suitable to be written upon, not only on a scroll.

⁶⁴ And if it is so that ashes may be placed in the water of a sota despite the verse’s stipulation of dust, consider this fourth case as well to be a halakha that supersedes the verse. Since it is omitted from Rabbi Yishmael’s statement, it seems that ashes may not be used.

⁶⁵ The Gemara responds: Rabbi Yishmael taught some cases and omitted others; his list is not exhaustive. The Gemara asks: What else did he omit that he omitted this? It is not reasonable that he would provide a list lacking only one item. The Gemara answers: He omitted the leper, as it is taught in a baraita (Tosefta, Nega’im 1:9): In the verse: “And it shall be on the seventh day, that he shall shave off all his hair” (Leviticus 14:9), the phrase “all his hair” is a generalization. The phrase that follows: “His head and his beard and his eyebrows,” is a detail. And with the following phrase: “Even all his hair he shall shave off,” the verse then generalized again. In any case of a generalization, and a detail, and a generalization, you may deduce that the verse is referring only to items similar to the detail. Just as the detail is explicitly referring to areas where there is a collection of hair which is visible, so too all areas on the leper that have a collection of hair which is visible must be shaven.

⁶⁶ To what otherwise excluded case does this baraita extend the halakha? It extends the halakha of hair to include pubic hair. What does the baraita exclude? It excludes armpit hair, which is not visible, and body hair that is not collected. This is the straightforward meaning of the verse.

⁶⁷ And yet the halakha is: The leper shaves like a gourd, i.e., his entire body must be shaved. As we learned in a mishna (Nega'im 14:2): When the priest comes to shave the leper, he passes a razor over all of his flesh. And in the latter clause, the mishna teaches: On the seventh day he shaves the leper again. The second shaving is just like the first shaving. The verse previously analyzed is referring to the second shaving, and its straightforward meaning is that not all of the leper's flesh needs to be shaved. However, the mishna states that the leper must shave all of his flesh in the second shaving as well. This is another instance where the halakha supersedes the straightforward meaning of the verse, yet it is omitted from Rabbi Yishmael's list.

⁶⁸ Rabbi Nahman bar Yitzhak said: Rabbi Yishmael consciously omitted the halakha of the leper because he counted only instances where the halakha supersedes the straightforward meaning of the verse. This halakha of the leper, however, is an instance where the halakha supersedes only an exegetical interpretation of the Sages.

⁶⁹ Rav Pappa said: Rabbi Yishmael counted only cases where the halakha both supersedes and uproots the straightforward meaning of the verse. This, however, is an instance where the halakha supersedes and adds. The halakha does not overrule the verse but rather adds an additional requirement, i.e., that the whole body must be shaved.

⁷⁰ Rav Ashi said: This baraita, which teaches that only certain parts of the body must be shaved, is in accordance with whose opinion? It is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yishmael, who interprets verses by means of the principle of generalizations and details. According to this interpretation, only collected areas of hair that are visible must be shaven.

⁷¹ By contrast, the mishna states that the leper must be shaven like a gourd. In accordance with whose opinion is this? It is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Akiva, who interprets verses by means of the principle of amplifications and restrictions. As it is taught in a baraita: In the verse: "And it shall be on the seventh day, that he shall shave off all his hair," the phrase "all his hair" is an amplification. The phrase that follows: "His head and his beard and his eyebrows," is a restriction. In the final phrase: "Even all his hair he shall shave off," the verse then amplified again. The verse is therefore an instance of amplification and restriction and amplification, which includes everything.

⁷² What does it include? It includes the hair of all of the body. What does it nevertheless exclude? It excludes nose hairs, which do not need to be shaved. Since the mishna presents only the opinion of Rabbi Akiva, it poses no challenge to Rabbi Yishmael's list.

⁷³ The Gemara asks: What conclusion was reached about it, i.e., whether ashes may be used instead of dust for the water of the sota? Come and hear evidence from that which Rav Huna bar Ashi says that Rav says: If there is no dust available for the sota water, the priest brings decomposed vegetable matter, and he consecrates the water with it. This indicates that it is permitted to substitute other substances for dust.

⁷⁴ The Gemara responds: But that is not so. Decomposed vegetable matter is permitted because it will become dust, but ashes will not become dust.

⁷⁵ § The mishna states: He would take loose dust from underneath the tablet and place it into the vessel with the water, so that the dust would be visible upon the water. The Sages taught (Tosefta 1:8): Three items are required to be seen: The dust of the sota must be visible in the water, the ashes of the red heifer must be visible when placed in the waters of purification, and the spittle of a woman whose husband, who has a brother, died childless [yevama] must be visible. The yavam, brother-in-law of the yevama, is bound by Torah law to marry her, and this bond is dissolved through the ritual of ḥalitza, in which she spits before him in the presence of judges. In the name of Rabbi Yishmael they said: Even the blood of the bird used in a leper's purification ritual is required to be visible in the vessel.

⁷⁶ The Gemara asks: What is the reasoning of Rabbi Yishmael? As it is written with regard to the process of the purification of a leper: "And he shall take the cedar wood, and the hyssop, and the scarlet, and the living bird, and dip them in the blood of the slain bird, and in the running water" (Leviticus 14:51). And it is taught in a baraita: Had the verse stated only the phrase "in the blood," one might have thought that these items must be dipped only in the blood and should not be dipped in the water at all. Therefore, the verse also states: "In the running water." If the verse had stated only the phrase "in the running water," one might have thought they should be dipped only in the water and not be dipped in the blood at all. Therefore, the verse also states: "In the blood." How can these texts be reconciled? One must bring little enough water so that the blood of the bird will still be recognizable within it. And how much water is this? It is a quarter-log.

⁷⁷ And the Rabbis, who do not require that the blood of the bird be visible in the water, how do they understand the verse? That verse is necessary for its own sake, as this is what the Merciful One is saying: Dip the objects both in blood and in water together. The blood need not be visible.

⁷⁸ And why does Rabbi Yishmael reject this straightforward understanding of the verse? It is because if this understanding were so, then the Merciful One should have written simply: And dip in them, i.e., dip the cedar wood, hyssop, scarlet wool, and live bird in the blood and water, as the blood and water have already been mentioned beforehand. Why do I need the verse to list explicitly: "And dip them in the blood of the slain bird, and in the running water"? This is to teach that the blood must be recognizable in the water.

⁷⁹ And what would the Rabbis respond to this? If the Merciful One had written simply: And dip in them, then I would say the items should be dipped in this liquid separately and in that liquid separately. Therefore, the Merciful One writes: "And dip them in the blood of the slain bird, and in the running water," to teach that one must mix them together.

⁸⁰ And from where does Rabbi Yishmael derive that one must mix them together? Another verse is written: "And he shall slaughter one of the birds in an earthen vessel over running water" (Leviticus 14:50). This indicates that the blood of the bird must fall directly into the water below, and the blood and the water will become mixed together.

⁸¹ And why do the Rabbis not learn it from that verse? If one were to learn it from that verse, I would say that one should slaughter the bird adjacent to the vessel holding the water, and one should grasp the opened veins to ensure that no blood escapes immediately and then collect the blood in a different vessel. The blood and water would therefore be in separate vessels. Therefore, this first verse teaches us that the blood and water must be mixed together.

⁸² Rabbi Yirmeya raised a dilemma before Rabbi Zeira: If the bird is big and contains such a large amount of blood that it effaces the water, rendering it indistinguishable, or if the bird is small and contains so little blood that its blood is effaced due to the water and indistinguishable, what is the halakha?

⁸³ Rabbi Zeira said to him: Haven't I told you not to take yourself out of the bounds of the practical halakha? Do not ask questions about impossible eventualities. The Sages measured the ratio of blood to water specifically with regard to a sparrow. There is no sparrow big enough to efface the water, nor is there one small enough to be effaced due to the water.

⁸⁴ § The Rabbis taught (Tosefta, Para 6:6): If one places the dust in the vessel before the water, the mixture is unfit; but Rabbi Shimon deems it fit. The Gemara asks: What is the reasoning of Rabbi Shimon?

⁸⁵ It is as it is written with regard to the red heifer: "And for the unclean they shall take of the dust of the burning of the purification from sin, and running water shall be put thereto in a vessel" (Numbers 19:17). And it is taught in a baraita that Rabbi Shimon said: Is it dust [afar] that is taken? But isn't it really ashes [efer]? Evidently the Torah altered its usage and referred to ashes as dust in order to derive a verbal analogy from it. Dust is stated in the verse here, and dust is stated there, with regard to the sota. Just as there, with regard to the sota, the verse teaches that the dust must be placed on top of water, so too here, with regard to the red heifer, one learns that the dust, i.e., ashes, must be placed on top of the water.

⁸⁶ And likewise, just as here, with regard to the red heifer, if one places the dust in the vessel before the water, it is fit after the fact, so too there, with regard to the sota, if one places the dust in the vessel before the water, it is fit.

⁸⁷ The Gemara asks: And there, with regard to the red heifer, from where do we derive that the mixture is fit even if the dust is placed first? Two phrases are written in the verse. It is written that the water must be put: "Thereto." Therefore, apparently, the ashes should be placed first. And it is written that the running water must be placed: "In a vessel." Apparently, the water should be placed in the vessel first, while it is still empty. How can these texts be reconciled? If he desires to place the water first he places it, and if he desires to place the ash first he places it.

⁸⁸ And how do the Rabbis, who deem the mixture unfit, interpret the verse? The verse states: "In a vessel," specifically. The water must be placed first. When the verse states: "Thereto," it teaches only that it is required to mix the ashes with the water.

⁸⁹ The Gemara asks: But one could just as easily say the opposite: "Thereto" should be understood specifically, and the ashes must be placed first. The phrase "running water shall be put...in a vessel," should indicate only that the water must run directly into the vessel and that it may not be brought from the spring by means of another vessel.

⁹⁰ The Gemara answers: Just as we find in every instance that the facilitating item goes above the primary item, e.g., in the case of a sota the dust goes on top of the water, so too here, in the case of the red heifer, the facilitating item must go above the primary item. The water must be placed first, and only then the ashes.

⁹¹ MISHNA: When the priest comes to write the scroll of the sota that is to be placed in the water, from what place in the Torah passage concerning the sota (Numbers 5:11–31) does he write?

⁹² He starts from the verse: “If no man has lain with you, and if you have not gone astray to defilement while under your husband, you shall be free from this water of bitterness that causes the curse” (Numbers 5:19); and continues: “But if you have gone astray while under your husband, and if you are defiled, and some man has lain with you besides your husband” (Numbers 5:20).

⁹³ And then he does not write the beginning of the following verse, which states: “Then the priest shall cause the woman to swear with the oath of cursing, and the priest shall say to the woman” (Numbers 5:21), but he does write the oath recorded in the continuation of the verse: “The Lord shall make you a curse and an oath among your people when the Lord will cause your thigh to fall away, and your belly to swell. And this water that causes the curse shall go into your bowels, and cause your belly to swell, and your thigh to fall away” (Numbers 5:21–22); but he does not write the conclusion of the verse: “And the woman shall say: Amen, amen” (Numbers 5:22).

⁹⁴ Rabbi Yosei says: He does not interrupt the verses but rather writes the entire passage without any omissions.

⁹⁵ Rabbi Yehuda says: He writes nothing other than curses recorded in the final verses cited above: “The Lord shall make you a curse and an oath among your people when the Lord will cause your thigh to fall away, and your belly to swell. And this water that causes the curse shall go into your bowels, and cause your belly to swell, and your thigh to fall away.” And he does not write the conclusion of the verse: “And the woman shall say: Amen, amen.”

⁹⁶ GEMARA: With regard to what issue do the Sages in the mishna disagree? What is the source of their disagreement? They disagree concerning the proper interpretation of the verse: “And the priest shall write these [ha’eleh] curses [et ha’alot] in a scroll” (Numbers 5:23).

⁹⁷ Rabbi Meir, the first tanna of the mishna, reasons: The word “alot,” curses, is referring to actual curses. The prefix ha, meaning: The, in the word “ha’alot” serves to include curses that come on account of the blessings, i.e., the curses that are inferred from the phrase: “You shall be free from this water of bitterness that causes the curse” (5:19). The word “eleh,” meaning these, is a limiting term that serves to exclude the long list of curses that are recorded in Mishne Torah, the book of Deuteronomy (chapter 28). Although these curses are also referred to as “alot,” the priest does not write them. The addition of the definite article in the word “ha’eleh” serves to exclude the commands recorded in the sota passage and the acceptances by the word “amen” recorded there as well. The priest need not write these sections of the passage.

⁹⁸ And Rabbi Yosei interprets it: It would all be as you, Rabbi Meir, said; however, the additional word “et” in the verse amplifies its scope. It serves to include both commands and acceptances, as they must be written in the scroll as well.

⁹⁹ And why does Rabbi Meir disagree? As a rule, he does not interpret the additional word et as amplifying a verse’s scope.

¹⁰⁰ And as for Rabbi Yehuda, he interprets all of the terms in the verse as exclusionary: The word “alot” is referring specifically to the actual curses recorded in the verses. The definite article in the word “ha’alot” serves to exclude curses that come on account of blessings. The word “eleh” serves to exclude the curses recorded in the Mishne Torah. And the definite article in the word “ha’eleh” serves to exclude the commands and acceptances recorded in the verses.

¹⁰¹ The Gemara asks: But according to Rabbi Meir, what is different about this letter heh at the beginning of the word “ha’alot” such that it amplifies the halakha to include curses that come on account of the blessings, and what is different about that letter heh in the word “ha’eleh” such that it excludes the commands and acceptances by the word “amen”? Why should one amplify while the other excludes?

¹⁰² The Gemara answers: The letter heh when written near an amplifier is an amplifier. The word “alot” itself amplifies the halakha, and the definite article extends that amplification; and a heh when written near a restrictor is a restrictor. The word “eleh” itself restricts the halakha, and the definite article before it extends that restriction.

¹⁰³ The Gemara asks: But Rabbi Meir does not accept the principle that from a negative statement you can infer a positive statement. What is to be gained by writing the blessings if one cannot infer the curses from them?

¹⁰⁴ Rabbi Tanḥum says: It is written: “If no man has lain with you...you shall be free [hinnaki]” (Numbers 5:19). The word “hinnaki” should be interpreted as if it were in fact hinnaki, meaning: You shall choke. When read with the beginning of the next verse, it then forms the sentence: You shall choke... if you have gone astray while under your husband. Therefore, Rabbi Meir understands the blessings themselves to have a dimension of a curse.

¹⁰⁵ § Rabbi Akiva taught: If a man [ish] and woman [isha] merit reward through a faithful marriage, the Divine Presence rests between them. The words ish and isha are almost identical; the difference between them is the middle letter yod in ish, and the final letter heh in isha. These two letters can be joined to form the name of God spelled yod, heh. But if due to licentiousness they do not merit reward, the Divine Presence departs, leaving in each word only the letters ales and shin, which spell esh, fire. Therefore, fire consumes them.

¹⁰⁶ Rava said: And the fire that consumes the woman is stronger and more immediate than that which consumes the man. What is the reason for this? The letters ales and shin in the word isha are adjacent, joined together, but in the word ish they are not joined, as the letter yod is written between them.

¹⁰⁷ Additionally, Rava says: For what reason did the Torah say: Bring dust for the sota? It is because if she merits to be proven faithful after drinking the water of the sota, a child like our Patriarch Abraham will emerge from her, as it is written with regard to Abraham that he said: “I am but dust and ashes” (Genesis 18:27). But if she does not merit to be proven faithful after drinking the water of the sota, she shall die and return to her dust, the soil from which mankind was formed.

¹⁰⁸ And Rava further taught: As reward for that which our Patriarch Abraham said: “And I am but dust and ashes” (Genesis 18:27), his children merited two mitzvot: The ashes of the red heifer (see Numbers, chapter 19) and the dust of the sota.

¹⁰⁹ The Gemara asks: But there is also another mitzva involving dust: The dust used for covering the blood of a slaughtered undomesticated animal or fowl (see Leviticus 17:13).

¹¹⁰ The Gemara answers: There, the dust does serve as an accessory to the mitzva of covering the blood, but there is no benefit imparted by it. It occurs after the animal has been slaughtered and does not itself render the meat fit for consumption.

¹¹¹ Rava further taught: As reward for that which our Patriarch Abraham said to the king of Sodom: “That I will not take a thread nor a shoe strap nor anything that is yours” (Genesis 14:23), distancing himself from anything not rightfully his, his children merited two mitzvot: The thread of sky-blue wool worn on ritual fringes and the strap of phylacteries.

¹¹² The Gemara asks: Granted, the strap of the phylacteries impart benefit, as it is written: “And all the peoples of the earth shall see that the name of the Lord is called upon you; and they shall be afraid of you” (Deuteronomy 28:10). And it is taught in a baraita that Rabbi Eliezer the Great says: This is a reference to the phylacteries of the head, upon which the name of God is written. Phylacteries therefore impart the splendor and grandeur of God and are a fit reward.

¹¹³ But what is the benefit imparted by the thread of sky-blue wool? The Gemara answers: As it is taught in a baraita that Rabbi Meir would say: What is different about sky-blue from all other colors such that it was specified for the mitzva of ritual fringes?

¹¹⁴ It is because sky-blue dye is similar in its color to the sea, and the sea is similar to the sky, and the sky is similar to the Throne of Glory, as it is stated: “And they saw the God of Israel; and there was under His feet the like of a paved work of sapphire stone, and the like of the very heaven for clearness” (Exodus 24:10). This verse shows that the heavens are similar to sapphire, and it is written: “And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone” (Ezekiel 1:26). Therefore, the throne is similar to the heavens. The color of sky blue dye acts as an indication of the bond between the Jewish people and the Divine Presence.

¹¹⁵ MISHNA: The priest does not write the scroll of the sota upon a wooden tablet, and not upon paper made from grass, and not upon

¹¹⁶ *diftera*, a hide that is only partially processed, as it is salted and treated with flour but not gallnuts; rather, it must be written only on a scroll of parchment, as it is stated: “And the priest shall write these curses in a scroll” (Numbers 5:23).

¹¹⁷ And the scribe may not write with gum [*komos*], and not with iron sulfate [*kankantom*], nor with any substance that makes a mark and cannot be completely erased, but only with ink made from soot, as it is stated in the continuation of the same verse: “And he shall blot them out into the water of bitterness” (Numbers 5:23). This indicates that the scroll must be written with a writing that can be erased in water.

¹¹⁸ GEMARA: Rava says: A scroll of a sota that one wrote at night is unfit. What is the reason for this? It is derived by verbal analogy between one instance of the word “law” and another instance of the word “law.” It is written here, with regard to a sota: “And the priest shall execute upon her all this law” (Numbers 5:30), and it is written there, with regard to judgment: “According to the law, which they shall teach you, and according to the judgment, which they shall tell you” (Deuteronomy 17:11). Just as judgment may be done only by day, so too the scroll of a sota may be written only by day.

¹¹⁹ If one wrote the scroll out of sequence, it is unfit, as it is written: “And the priest shall write these curses in a scroll” (Numbers 5:23). They must be written in the scroll just as they are written in the Torah.

¹²⁰ If one wrote the scroll before the sota accepted the oath upon herself, the scroll is unfit, as it is stated: “Then the priest shall cause the woman to swear with the oath of cursing” (Numbers 5:21), and afterward it states: “And the priest shall write these curses in a scroll” (Numbers 5:23).

¹²¹ If one wrote the scroll as a letter, i.e., without first scoring the lines onto the parchment, it is unfit, as the Merciful One states in the Torah: “In a scroll,” indicating that it must be written like a Torah scroll, in which the parchment must be scored.

¹²² If one wrote the scroll on two unattached pages, it is unfit, as the Merciful One states in the Torah: “Scroll,” in the singular. It must be written on one scroll and not on two or three scrolls.

¹²³ If one wrote one letter and erased that one letter in water, and he then wrote one more letter and erased that one letter, it is unfit, as it is written: “And the priest shall execute upon her all this law” (Numbers 5:30). The entire passage must be written completely and only then erased, all at once.

¹²⁴ § Rava raised a dilemma: If one wrote two scrolls for two separate sota women but then erased both of the scrolls in one cup, what is the halakha? Do we require that only the writing be performed for the sake of a specific woman, in which case that is accomplished here? Or perhaps we require that also the erasure be performed for the sake of a specific woman, which is not accomplished here, since both scrolls are erased together?

¹²⁵ And if you say that we require that also the erasure be for the sake of each specific woman, then if the priest erased them in two different cups and afterward mixed the water from both together again, what is the halakha? Do we require that only the erasure be for the sake of a specific woman, in which case that is accomplished here? Or perhaps since this sota does not drink from only her own water and that sota does not drink from only her own water, the water is disqualified?

¹²⁶ And furthermore, if you say that the water is disqualified because this one does not drink from only her own water and that one does not drink from only her own water, what if after mixing the two cups of water together the priest divided them again into two cups and gave one to each? What is the halakha then? Is there retroactive clarification, in which case one may claim that each woman drank her own water, or is there no retroactive clarification? The Gemara responds: The dilemma shall stand unresolved.

¹²⁷ Rava raised a dilemma: If the priest administered the bitter water to the sota to drink through a palm fiber, what is the halakha? Or if he administered it through a tube, what is the halakha? Is this considered a normal manner of drinking, or is it not considered a normal manner of drinking, in which case the act is invalid? The Gemara responds: The dilemma shall stand unresolved.

¹²⁸ Rav Ashi raised a dilemma: If some of the water of the sota spilled out and some of it remained in the cup, what is the halakha? Is it sufficient for the woman to drink some of the water in which the scroll has been erased or must she drink all of it? The Gemara responds: The dilemma shall stand unresolved.

¹²⁹ § Rabbi Zeira says that Rav says: With regard to the two oaths that are stated with regard to the sota: “And the priest shall cause her to swear” (Numbers 5:19), and: “Then the priest shall cause the woman to swear with the oath of cursing” (Numbers 5:21), why are they both necessary? One must be administered before the scroll is erased and one must be administered after it is erased.

¹³⁰ Rava objects to this: Both of the oaths are written in the Torah before any mention of the scroll being erased. What is the basis to claim that one oath was administered afterward? Rather, Rava said:

While both oaths are administered before the sota drinks, the two oaths are different: One is an oath that has a curse with it, and one is an oath that does not have a curse with it.

¹³¹ The Gemara asks: What are the circumstances of an oath that has a curse with it? What is the language of this oath? Rav Amram says that Rav says: The priest says: I administer an oath to you that you are honest in your claim that you were not defiled, as, if you were defiled, all these curses will come upon you.

¹³² Rava said: This is insufficient, as the curse stands by itself and the oath stands by itself. They are said in separate statements, and it cannot be considered to be an oath with a curse. Rather, Rava said: The priest says: I administer an oath to you that if you were defiled, all these curses will come upon you.

¹³³ Rav Ashi said: Even this is insufficient, as there is a curse but there is no oath that she was not defiled. Rather, Rav Ashi said: The priest must say: I administer an oath to you that you were not defiled and that if you were defiled all these curses will come upon you. Here the oath itself includes the curse.

¹³⁴ MISHNA: With regard to what does she say: “Amen, amen” (Number 5:22), twice, as recorded in the verse? The mishna explains that it includes of the following: Amen on the curse, as she accepts the curse upon herself if she is guilty, and amen on the oath, as she declares that she is not defiled. She states: Amen if I committed adultery with this man about whom I was warned, amen if I committed adultery with another man. Amen that I did not stray when I was betrothed nor after I was married,

¹³⁵ nor as a widow waiting for my yavam to perform levirate marriage, since a woman at that stage is prohibited from engaging in sexual intercourse with any men, nor when married through levirate marriage to the yavam; amen that I did not become defiled, and if I did become defiled, may all these curses come upon me.

¹³⁶ Rabbi Meir says that “amen, amen” means: Amen that I did not become defiled in the past, amen that I will not become defiled in the future.

¹³⁷ All agree that he may stipulate with her through this oath neither with regard to what she did before becoming betrothed to him, nor with regard to what she will do after she becomes divorced from him.

¹³⁸ Similarly, if a husband divorced his wife, and while divorced she secluded herself with another man and became defiled, and afterward her husband took her back and remarried her, and he then warned her about a specific man, and she secluded herself, and she is now about to drink the water of the sota, he cannot stipulate with her that she take an oath that she did not become defiled during the period in which she was divorced. This is because her husband would become forbidden to her only if she had married another man after being divorced, not if she merely committed an act of promiscuity.

¹³⁹ This is the principle: In every case where if she would engage in sexual intercourse with someone else she would not become forbidden to her husband due to this act, he may not stipulate with her that her oath include that act. The oath can include only cases in which she would be rendered forbidden to him.

¹⁴⁰ GEMARA: Rav Hamnuna says: In the case of a widow awaiting her yavam who committed adultery, she becomes forbidden to her yavam. From where is this derived? It is from the fact that the mishna teaches: Nor as a widow waiting for my yavam to perform levirate marriage, nor when married through levirate marriage.

¹⁴¹ The Gemara explains: Granted, if you say that a woman awaiting levirate marriage who committed adultery is forbidden to the yavam, due to that reason a husband may stipulate with a sota that she take an oath that she did not commit adultery while she was awaiting levirate marriage with him. But if you say that such a woman does not become forbidden, how can a husband stipulate this with her? But didn't we learn in the mishna that this is the principle: In every case where if she would engage in sexual intercourse with someone else she would not become forbidden to her husband due to this act, he may not stipulate with her that her oath include that act? Clearly she must become forbidden to the yavam if she commits adultery.

¹⁴² They say in the West, Eretz Yisrael: The halakha is not in accordance with the opinion of Rav Hamnuna. A woman awaiting levirate marriage who commits adultery does not become forbidden to the yavam.

¹⁴³ The Gemara asks: But with regard to that which is taught in the mishna: Nor as a widow waiting for my yavam to perform levirate marriage, nor when married through levirate marriage, in accordance with whose opinion is this? It is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Akiva, who says: Betrothal does not take effect even for those who would be merely liable for violating ordinary prohibitions were they to be married. All agree that betrothal does not take effect for forbidden unions that carry the punishment of karet, e.g., unions between siblings. However, according to Rabbi Akiva, in matters of personal status an ordinary Torah prohibition is equivalent to prohibitions that carry the punishment of karet. And he therefore holds that just as a wife who commits adultery, rendering her liable to receive karet, is forbidden to her husband and must be divorced, so too, a widow awaiting her yavam who commits adultery, violating an ordinary Torah prohibition, is considered to be a woman forbidden to her yavam.

¹⁴⁴ Rabbi Yirmeya raised a dilemma: If a man divorced his wife and then remarried her, and she then secluded herself and came to drink the water of a sota, what is the halakha as to whether a man in that situation may stipulate with her concerning their first marriage? May he compel her to include in her oath that she did not commit adultery then either? Similarly, may a yavam stipulate with his yevama concerning the marriage of his brother, requiring her to attest that she did not commit adultery prior to the brother's death? What is the halakha?

¹⁴⁵ The Gemara proposes: Come and hear evidence from the conclusion of the mishna: This is the principle: In every case where if she would engage in sexual intercourse with someone else she would not become forbidden to her husband due to this act, he may not stipulate with her that her oath include that act. One may therefore infer that he may indeed stipulate with her concerning any case in which she would become forbidden. In both of the cases in question the woman would have become forbidden to her husband if she had been guilty. Therefore, the Gemara concludes: Indeed, conclude from the mishna that he is entitled to stipulate in these cases.

¹⁴⁶ § The mishna states: Rabbi Meir says that "amen, amen" means: Amen that I did not become defiled in the past, amen that I will not become defiled in the future. With regard to this it is taught in a baraita (Tosefta 2:2): When Rabbi Meir said: Amen that I will not become defiled in the future, he

did not mean to say that if God knows that she will become defiled in the future, the water that she drinks now evaluates whether she will be unfaithful and passes judgment on her from now. Rather, he meant that in the event that she becomes defiled in the future, the water that she drinks now will destabilize her and evaluate then whether she was unfaithful.

¹⁴⁷ Rav Ashi raised a dilemma: What is the halakha as to whether a man may stipulate with his wife concerning a later marriage, in the event that he would divorce her and then remarry her? Do we say: Now, at least, if she remains faithful during this marriage, she is not forbidden to him? Or perhaps this includes a later marriage, as sometimes a man divorces his wife and remarries her, and if she then commits adultery she will become forbidden to him.

¹⁴⁸ The Gemara answers: Come and hear evidence from the mishna: All agree that he may stipulate with her through this oath neither with regard to what she did before becoming betrothed to him, nor with regard to what she will do after she becomes divorced from him. And if while divorced she secluded herself with another man and became defiled, and afterward her husband took her back and remarried her, he may not stipulate with her with regard to the period in which she was divorced, since that act does not render her forbidden to him. The Gemara infers: But if he remarries her and she then becomes defiled, she would be forbidden to him. Therefore, he may indeed stipulate with her in advance with regard to this. The Gemara states: Indeed, conclude from the mishna that this is so.

¹⁴⁹ § The Sages taught: The verse states: “This is the law of jealousy” (Numbers 5:29), indicating that the same law is to be carried out in all cases of jealousy. This teaches that the woman drinks and repeats, i.e., she must drink a second time if she becomes a sota again.

¹⁵⁰ The baraita continues: Rabbi Yehuda says: The word “this” in the verse is a restricting term, indicating that the woman does not drink and repeat. Rabbi Yehuda said: There was an incident in which Nehunya the ditch digger testified before us in the name of his teachers that the woman drinks and repeats, and we accepted his testimony with regard to two men, but not with regard to one man. Even if she drinks the water of a sota while married to her first husband, she must drink again after violating a warning by her second husband. However, one husband cannot have his wife drink twice.

¹⁵¹ The baraita concludes: And the Rabbis say: The woman does not drink and repeat, whether with regard to one man or with regard to two men.

¹⁵² The Gemara asks: But according to the first tanna of the baraita as well, isn’t it written in the verse: “This,” restricting the number of times a woman must drink? And according to the Rabbis mentioned later in the baraita as well, isn’t it written: “The law of jealousy,” amplifying the number of times a woman must drink to include all cases of jealousy?

¹⁵³ Rava said: Different halakhot apply to different cases: With regard to one husband who accused his wife twice about one paramour, everyone agrees that the woman does not drink and repeat, having been proven innocent once,

¹⁵⁴ as it is written: “This is the law of jealousy.” The word “this” is a restricting term and excludes that possibility. With regard to two different husbands and two different paramours, where her first husband suspected her with regard to one paramour during her first marriage and the second husband suspected her with regard to a different man during the second marriage, everyone agrees that the woman drinks and repeats, as it is written: “This is the law of jealousy,” in all cases of jealousy.

¹⁵⁵ They disagree when there is one husband and two paramours, i.e., where one husband warned her with regard to a second paramour after she survived her first ordeal. They also disagree in a case of two husbands and one paramour, i.e., if her second husband accused her with regard to the same paramour on account of whom she was compelled to drink by her first husband.

¹⁵⁶ The opinions are justified as follows: The first tanna holds that the phrase “the law of jealousy” serves to include all of these cases. In almost all cases the woman drinks and repeats. The word “this” serves to exclude only the case of one husband and one paramour, in which she does not drink and repeat.

¹⁵⁷ And the Rabbis mentioned later in the baraita hold that the word “this” serves to exclude all of these cases. The woman almost never drinks and repeats. The phrase “the law of jealousy” serves to include only the case of two husbands and two paramours, in which she does drink and repeat.

¹⁵⁸ And Rabbi Yehuda holds: The word “this” serves to exclude two of the cases, and the phrase “the law of jealousy” serves to include two. The word “this” serves to exclude the two cases of one husband and one paramour and one husband and two paramours. In neither of these cases does the woman drink and repeat. The phrase “the law of jealousy” serves to include two cases, i.e., two husbands and one paramour, and all the more so two husbands and two paramours. In both of these cases, the woman must drink and repeat.

Chapter 3

¹ MISHNA: He would take her meal-offering out of the Egyptian wicker basket made of palm leaves in which it was lying and would put it into a service vessel and then place it on her hand. And the priest would then place his hand underneath hers and wave it together with her. The priest waved it and brought it near to the southwest corner of the altar, removed a handful from it, and burned the handful; and the remainder was eaten by the priests.

² The priest would force the woman to drink the bitter water of a sota, and afterward he would sacrifice her meal-offering. Rabbi Shimon says: The priest would sacrifice her meal-offering and afterward he would force her to drink, as it is stated: “And the priest shall take a handful of the meal-offering, as the memorial part of it, and burn it upon the altar, and afterward he shall make the woman drink the water” (Numbers 5:26). But Rabbi Shimon concedes that if the priest first forced her to drink and afterward sacrificed her meal-offering, it is still valid.

³ GEMARA: Rabbi Elazar said to Rabbi Yoshiya of his generation, i.e., his contemporary: You shall not sit on your feet until you explain this matter to me: From where is it derived that the meal-offering of a sota requires waving? The Gemara expresses surprise at the question: From where do we derive this? It is explicitly written with regard to the meal-offering of a sota: “And the priest shall take the meal-offering of jealousy out of the woman’s hand, and shall wave the meal-offering before the Lord, and bring it unto the altar” (Numbers 5:25). Rather, the question is as follows: From where do we derive that the waving is performed by the owner, i.e., the woman, and not only by the priest?

⁴ Rabbi Yoshiya answered: This is derived by means of a verbal analogy between the term “hand” written here and “hand” from the peace-offering: It is written here, with regard to the meal-offering of a sota: “And the priest shall take the meal-offering of jealousy out of the woman’s hand”

(Numbers 5:25), and it is written there, with regard to the peace-offering: “He that offers his peace-offerings unto the Lord...His own hands shall bring the offerings...that the breast may be waved before the Lord” (Leviticus 7:29–30).

⁵ Just as here, in the case of the sota, the priest waves the offering, so too there, in the case of the peace-offering, the priest waves the offering. And just as there, in the case of the peace-offering, the owner waves the offering, so too here, in the case of the sota, the owner waves the offering. How is this accomplished? The priest places his hand beneath the hands of the owner and then waves the offering with the owner.

⁶ § The mishna states: The priest waved it and brought it near to the southwest corner of the altar, removed a handful from it, and burned the handful. Yet the continuation of the mishna states: The priest would force the woman to drink, and afterward he would sacrifice her meal-offering. The Gemara asks: Didn’t the mishna state in the previous phrase that the offering was already sacrificed?

⁷ The Gemara answers: This is what the mishna is saying: What was the sacrificial order of meal-offerings in general? The priest waved the meal-offering and brought it near to the southwest corner of the altar, removed a handful from it, and burned the handful, and the remainder was eaten by the priests.

⁸ And as for the correct order for sacrificing the meal-offering of the sota and forcing her to drink, this itself is a matter about which Rabbi Shimon and the Rabbis disagree, as the Rabbis hold that the priest would force the woman to drink and afterward he would sacrifice her meal-offering; and Rabbi Shimon holds that the priest would sacrifice her meal-offering and afterward he would force her to drink, as it is stated: “And the priest shall take a handful of the meal-offering, as the memorial part of it, and burn it upon the altar, and afterward he shall make the woman drink the water” (Numbers 5:26).

⁹ § The mishna states: But Rabbi Shimon concedes that if the priest first forced her to drink and afterward sacrificed her meal-offering, the offering is still valid.

¹⁰ The Sages taught: What is the meaning when the verse states after the sacrifice of the meal-offering: “And he shall make her drink the water” (Numbers 5:27)? But isn’t it already stated: “And he shall make the woman drink the water of bitterness that causes the curse” (Numbers 5:24)? The baraita answers: The repetition teaches that if the scroll was already erased and then the woman says: I will not drink, she is forced [me’arerin] to drink against her will. This is the statement of Rabbi Akiva.

¹¹ Rabbi Shimon says: What is the meaning when the verse states: “And the priest shall take a handful of the meal-offering, as the memorial part of it, and burn it upon the altar, and afterward he shall make the woman drink the water” (Numbers 5:26)? But isn’t it already stated previously: “And he shall make the woman drink” (Numbers 5:24)? Rather, this verse indicates that the sota is given the bitter water to drink only after all the actions that are stated above are performed, i.e., erasing the scroll, sacrificing the meal-offering, and administering the oath. Therefore, this verse teaches that three matters preclude her from drinking: She does not drink until the handful is sacrificed, and until the scroll is erased, and until she accepts the oath upon herself.

¹² The Gemara elaborates: She does not drink until the handful is sacrificed. Rabbi Shimon conforms to his line of reasoning stated earlier, as he says that the priest sacrifices her meal-offering and afterward forces her to drink.

¹³ The Gemara questions the second condition: She does not drink until the scroll is erased. Why does the baraita need to state this? But what could he give her to drink if the scroll was not yet erased into the water? Rav Ashi says: No, this halakha is necessary for an instance where the scroll was erased, but the impression of the ink is still discernible on the parchment. The woman does not drink until the scroll is totally erased.

¹⁴ The Gemara discusses the third condition: She does not drink until she accepts the oath upon herself. One might infer from this statement that it is only that she does not drink before she accepts the oath; however, the scroll is written for her before she accepts the oath. But didn't Rava say: With regard to a scroll of a sota that was written before she accepted the oath upon herself, whoever wrote it did nothing, and the scroll is rendered invalid. The Gemara responds: This was cited for no reason, as in fact the scroll is not even written before she accepts the oath upon herself, and nothing should be inferred.

¹⁵ The Gemara asks: With regard to what do the Rabbis and Rabbi Shimon disagree in the mishna? The Gemara answers: Three verses are written which pertain to drinking the bitter water: The first occurrence of the term is in the verse: "And he shall make the woman drink" (Numbers 5:24); the second: "And afterward he shall make the woman drink the water" (Numbers 5:26); and the last occurrence of the term is in the verse: "And he shall make her drink" (Numbers 5:27).

¹⁶ The Rabbis hold that the first occurrence of the term: "And he shall make the woman drink," is written to teach the halakha itself, i.e., that the priest first forces her to drink and afterward sacrifices her meal-offering. The second instance: "And afterward he shall make the woman drink," is necessary to teach that as long as the impression of the writing is still discernible, the sota is not given the bitter water to drink. The third verse, the last occurrence of the term: "And he shall make her drink," teaches that if the scroll was erased and then the woman says: I will not drink, she is forced to drink against her will.

¹⁷ And Rabbi Shimon holds that the second verse: "And afterward he shall make the woman drink the water" (Numbers 5:26), is written to teach the halakha itself, i.e., that the priest first sacrifices her meal-offering and afterward forces her to drink. The first occurrence of the term: "And he shall make the woman drink," teaches that if he forced her to drink and only afterward sacrificed her meal-offering, the offering is nevertheless valid. The last occurrence of the term: "And he shall make her drink," teaches that if the scroll was erased and then she said: I will not drink, she is forced to drink against her will.

¹⁸ The Gemara explains the Rabbis' opinion: And the Rabbis would respond to Rabbi Shimon that the verse does not begin the discussion with a halakha that is applicable only after the fact, and therefore the initial mention of the drinking is referring to the proper time for the ritual.

¹⁹ The Gemara asks: But does Rabbi Akiva in fact hold that the woman is forced to drink against her will? But isn't it taught in a baraita (Tosefta 2:3) that Rabbi Yehuda says: A hook [kelabus] made of iron is forcibly placed into her mouth, so that if the scroll was erased and she said: I will not drink, she is forced to drink against her will. Rabbi Akiva said: It is not necessary to force her to drink. Don't we need to force her to drink the water only in order to evaluate her fidelity? And isn't she

established as having been evaluated when she refuses to drink, as she is essentially admitting her guilt? Rather, Rabbi Akiva's statement should be understood as follows: Until the handful is sacrificed she can retract her decision to drink the bitter water; however, once the handful is sacrificed she cannot retract her decision to drink.

²⁰ The Gemara asks: But according to your reasoning in explanation of Rabbi Akiva's statement, this explanation itself should pose a difficulty for you. Why can't she retract her decision once the handful is sacrificed? And isn't she established as having been evaluated when she refuses to drink?

²¹ The Gemara answers: This is not difficult; this case, where she is forced to drink, is referring to a situation where she retracts her decision to drink due to fear, as her refusal is not viewed as an admission of guilt, and it is possible that if she drinks she will be found undefiled. And that case, where she does not drink, is referring to a situation where she retracts her decision in a state of good health. Since she does not appear to be afraid, her refusal is viewed as an admission of guilt.

²² And this is what Rabbi Akiva is saying: In any case where she retracts her decision to drink in a state of good health, she does not drink at all. With regard to a sota who retracts her decision due to fear, if she retracts her decision before the handful is sacrificed, when the scroll has not yet been erased; or even if the scroll was already erased, since the priests acted incorrectly when they erased it beforehand; she can retract her decision. Once the handful is sacrificed, in which case the priests acted correctly when they erased the scroll, she cannot retract her decision, and she is forced to drink against her will.

²³ The Gemara asks: The statement of Rabbi Akiva is difficult, as it is contradicted by another statement of Rabbi Akiva: There, in the first baraita, he said that erasure prevents the authorities from compelling the woman to drink the water if she retracted her decision to drink, and here he says that the sacrifice of the handful prevents the authorities from compelling the woman to drink the water. In other words, according to the first baraita the woman can retract her decision to drink until the scroll is erased, whereas according to the second baraita she can retract her decision until the handful is sacrificed.

²⁴ The Gemara responds: There is a dispute between two tanna'im, and they disagree with regard to the opinion of Rabbi Akiva. They disagree with regard to what point in time, according to Rabbi Akiva, is the final moment at which a woman can refuse to drink the bitter water without being forced to do so.

²⁵ A dilemma was raised before the Sages: If she initially said: I will not drink, while in a state of good health, and then she retracted her statement and said: I will drink, what is the halakha? Does one say that when she said: I will not drink, it is as if she confessed and said: I am defiled, and since she established herself as defiled she cannot retract her statement? Or perhaps when she said: I will drink, she revealed her thoughts that it was only due to fear that she said she will not drink? The Gemara concludes that the dilemma shall stand unresolved.

²⁶ Shmuel's father says: It is necessary for one to put a bitter substance into the water that the sota drinks. What is the reason for this? It is as the verse states: "And he shall blot them out into the water of bitterness" (Numbers 5:23), indicating that they are already bitter before the scroll is erased.

²⁷ MISHNA: If before the scroll was erased she said: I will not drink, the scroll that was written for her is sequestered, and her meal-offering is burned and scattered over the place of the ashes, and her

scroll is not fit to give to another sota to drink. If the scroll was erased and afterward she said: I am defiled, the water is poured out, and her meal-offering is scattered in the place of the ashes. If the scroll was already erased and she said: I will not drink, she is forced to drink against her will.

²⁸ When a guilty woman drinks she does not manage to finish drinking before her face turns green and her eyes bulge, and her skin becomes full of protruding veins, and the people standing in the Temple say: Remove her, so that she does not render the Temple courtyard impure by dying there.

²⁹ The mishna limits the scope of the previous statement: If she has merit, it delays punishment for her and she does not die immediately. There is a merit that delays punishment for one year, there is a larger merit that delays punishment for two years, and there is a merit that delays punishment for three years. From here Ben Azzai states: A person is obligated to teach his daughter Torah, so that if she drinks and does not die immediately, she will know that some merit she has delayed punishment for her. Rabbi Eliezer says: Anyone who teaches his daughter Torah is teaching her promiscuity [tiflut].

³⁰ Rabbi Yehoshua says: A woman desires to receive the amount of a kav of food and a sexual relationship [tiflut] rather than to receive nine kav of food and abstinence. He would say: A foolish man of piety, and a conniving wicked person, and an abstinent woman [perusha], and those who injure themselves out of false abstinence; all these are people who erode the world.

³¹ GEMARA: Rav Yehuda says that Shmuel says in the name of Rabbi Meir: When I was studying Torah before Rabbi Akiva, as his disciple, I used to put iron sulfate into the ink with which I wrote Torah scrolls, and he did not say anything to me in protest. Afterward, when I came to learn Torah before Rabbi Yishmael, he said to me: My son, what is your vocation? I said to him: I am a scribe [lavlar] who writes Torah scrolls. He said to me: My son, be careful in your work, as your work is the work of Heaven, lest you omit a single letter from the Torah scroll or add a single letter, and in this you are found to be destroying the entire world if the mistake alters the meaning of the verse and results in blasphemy.

³² Rabbi Meir continues: I said to Rabbi Yishmael: I have one substance that I put into the ink, and it is called iron sulfate, which prevents the writing from being erased. He said to me: And may iron sulfate be put into the ink? The Torah clearly said with regard to the scroll of the sota: “And the priest shall write these curses in a scroll, and he shall blot them out into the water of bitterness” (Numbers 5:23). This indicates that the Torah requires writing that can be blotted out.

³³ Since Rabbi Meir’s remark about iron sulfate seems unrelated to Rabbi Yishmael’s previous statement, the Gemara asks: What is Rabbi Yishmael saying to Rabbi Meir, and what is Rabbi Meir replying to Rabbi Yishmael?

³⁴ The Gemara explains: This is what Rabbi Meir is saying to him: It is not necessary to say that I do not err in omissions and additions, as I am an expert. Rather, there is not even any reason for concern with regard to a fly lest it come and sit on the protrusion of the letter dalet and erase it, thereby rendering it the letter reish, which could be a critical error. There is no concern of this erasure occurring, since I have a certain substance that I put into the ink and that prevents the writing from being erased, and it is called iron sulfate.

³⁵ The Gemara questions the initial part of Rabbi Meir’s statement: Is that so? But isn’t it taught in a baraita that Rabbi Meir said: When I was studying Torah before Rabbi Yishmael, I used to put iron

sulfate into the ink with which I wrote Torah scrolls, and he did not say anything to me. Afterward, when I came to learn Torah with Rabbi Akiva, he prohibited me from doing so.

³⁶ The Gemara points out that there are two separate contradictions between the two statements: Rav Yehuda's statement with regard to Rabbi Meir first serving Rabbi Akiva as a disciple is difficult, as it is contradicted by the statement of the baraita with regard to his first serving Rabbi Yishmael. Furthermore, Rav Yehuda's statement is difficult, since he states that it was Rabbi Yishmael who prohibited the addition of iron sulfate, and this is contradicted by the statement of the baraita that it was Rabbi Akiva who prohibited it.

³⁷ The Gemara answers: Granted, the apparent contradiction between Rav Yehuda's statement with regard to Rabbi Meir's serving Rabbi Akiva first, and the statement of the baraita with regard to serving Rabbi Yishmael first, poses no difficulty. Initially, he came before Rabbi Akiva to study, but since he could not comprehend his extremely complicated method of learning, he came before Rabbi Yishmael and learned the oral tradition from him. Afterward, he returned and came before Rabbi Akiva and studied his method of logical reasoning in order to understand the reasons behind the halakhot he had already learned.

³⁸ However, the contradiction between Rav Yehuda's statement that it was Rabbi Yishmael who prohibited the addition of iron sulfate and the statement of the baraita that it was Rabbi Akiva who prohibited it still poses a difficulty. The Gemara concludes: Indeed, the matter is difficult.

³⁹ It is taught in a baraita: Rabbi Yehuda says that Rabbi Meir would say: Iron sulfate may be put into the ink that is used for all sacred writings, i.e., Torah scrolls, phylacteries, and mezuzot,

⁴⁰ except for the ink used to write the Torah passage about the sota, even when written in a Torah scroll. Rabbi Ya'akov says in the name of Rabbi Meir: It is except for the ink used to write the scroll with the sota passage used in the Temple. The Gemara asks: What is the difference between these two opinions? The Gemara replies: Rabbi Yirmeya says that there is a difference between them with regard to whether it is permitted to erase the passage for the sota from a Torah scroll. According to Rabbi Yehuda, Rabbi Meir holds that this is permitted, and therefore the passage in the Torah scroll must be written with ink that does not contain iron sulfate, so that it can be erased. By contrast, according to Rabbi Ya'akov, Rabbi Meir holds that it is prohibited to erase the passage from a Torah scroll, and therefore the passage may be written with ink containing iron sulfate.

⁴¹ The Gemara assumes that according to Rabbi Ya'akov it is prohibited to erase the passage from a Torah scroll, since he holds that the scroll must be written for the sake of the sota, whereas Rabbi Yehuda, who permits this, holds that the scroll need not be written for the sake of the sota. And therefore, the opinions of these tanna'im are parallel to the opinions of those tanna'im, as it is taught in a baraita: The scroll of one sota is not fit to be used in the preparation of the water to give to another sota to drink, as it was not written for the sake of the other sota. Rabbi Aḥai bar Yoshiya says: Her scroll is fit to be used in the preparation of the water to give to another sota to drink, since it does not need to be written for the sake of the sota.

⁴² Rav Pappa said: Perhaps that is not so, and the two disputes are not comparable. It is possible that the first tanna of the baraita states that the scroll may not be used for another sota only there, in the case if a scroll written for a specific woman; since it was originally designated in the name of one woman, e.g., Rachel, it cannot again be designated in the name of another woman, e.g., Leah.

However, in the case of a Torah scroll, which is written without specifying anyone, indeed we may erase the passage to prepare the water for a sota even though it was not written for her sake.

⁴³ Rav Naḥman bar Yitzḥak said that the comparison between the two disputes can be refuted for a different reason: Perhaps that is not so. It is possible that Rabbi Aḥai bar Yoshiya states that the scroll may be used for another sota only there, with regard to the scroll written for a specific sota, as it was written for the purpose of the curses of a sota in general. However, in the case of a Torah scroll, which is written to be learned from, indeed we may not erase it for a sota, as it was not written for the sake of a sota at all.

⁴⁴ The Gemara asks: And doesn't Rabbi Aḥai bar Yoshiya hold in accordance with that which is taught in a mishna (Gittin 24a): With regard to one who wrote a bill of divorce with which to divorce his wife but later reconsidered and did not divorce her, if a resident of his city found him and said to him: My name is the same as your name, and my wife's name is the same as your wife's name; give me the bill of divorce, and I will use it to divorce my wife, it is unfit to divorce the other woman with it. The reason for this is that it was written for the sake of another woman. Seemingly, the same principle should apply with regard to the scroll of a sota.

⁴⁵ The Sages say in response: There, with regard to a bill of divorce, the Merciful One states: "And he shall write for her a bill of divorce" (Deuteronomy 24:1). This teaches that we require the writing to be performed for the sake of the specific woman. However, no similar requirement is mentioned with regard to a sota. The Gemara asks: Here, too, with regard to the sota, the verse states: "And the priest shall perform with her all of this law" (Numbers 5:30), indicating that the ritual must be performed for the sake of the specific woman. The Gemara answers: What is the performance referred to in the verse? It is referring to the erasure, whereas the writing need not be done for the sake of a specific woman.

⁴⁶ § The mishna states: When a guilty woman drinks she does not manage to finish drinking before her face turns green and her eyes bulge, and her skin becomes full of protruding veins. The Gemara asks: In accordance with whose opinion is this mishna, which indicates that the water evaluates her while she is still drinking? It is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Shimon, who says: The priest sacrifices her meal-offering and afterward forces her to drink, because according to the opinion of the Rabbis the meal-offering is sacrificed only after she drinks, and as long as her meal-offering has not been sacrificed the water does not evaluate her, as it is written: "And he shall bring her offering for her...for it is a meal-offering of jealousy, a meal-offering of remembrance, a reminder of iniquity" (Numbers 5:15).

⁴⁷ The Gemara asks: Say the latter clause of the mishna: If she has merit, it delays her punishment for her. We arrive at the opinion of the Rabbis, as, if this statement were in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Shimon, didn't he say: Merit does not delay punishment in the case of the bitter water of a sota?

⁴⁸ Rav Ḥisda said: In accordance with whose opinion is this mishna? It is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Akiva, who says: The priest sacrifices her meal-offering and afterward forces her to drink. With regard to the order of the ritual he holds in accordance with Rabbi Shimon, and with regard to the matter of merit delaying punishment, he holds in accordance with the opinion of the Rabbis.

⁴⁹ § The mishna states: And the people standing in the Temple say: Remove her, so that she does not render the Temple courtyard impure. The Gemara explains: What is the reason for this? It is lest she die there immediately and render the women's courtyard, where she drinks the water, impure. The Gemara asks: Is this to say that a corpse is prohibited from being in the women's courtyard, which has the same status as the Levite camp in the desert?

⁵⁰ But isn't it taught in a baraita: One who is ritually impure with impurity imparted by a corpse is permitted to enter the Levite camp. And the Sages said this not only with regard to one who is ritually impure with impurity imparted by a corpse; rather, even a corpse itself may be brought into the Levite camp, as it is stated: "And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him" (Exodus 13:19), which is interpreted to mean: With him, in his vicinity, even though Moses was in the Levite camp.

⁵¹ Abaye said: The woman is removed not due to a concern that she will die there but lest the fear of the water cause her to begin to menstruate, and it is prohibited for a menstruating woman to enter the Levite camp. The Gemara asks: Is this to say that fear causes muscular relaxation and menstrual bleeding? The Gemara responds: Yes, as it is written: "And the Queen was exceedingly pained" (Esther 4:4), and Rav says: This means that she began to menstruate. The Gemara asks: But didn't we learn in a mishna (Nidda 39a) that trepidation eliminates the flow of menstrual blood? Presumably, the *sota* experiences trepidation. The Gemara answers: Trepidation generated by extended worry contracts the muscles and prevents the blood from flowing, but sudden fear relaxes the muscles and causes the blood to flow.

⁵² § The mishna states: If she has merit, it delays punishment...for one year...for two years...for three years. The Gemara asks: Whose opinion is expressed in the mishna? It is not the opinion of Abba Yosei ben Ḥanan, and not the opinion of Rabbi Elazar ben Yitzḥak of Kefar Darom, and not the opinion of Rabbi Yishmael.

⁵³ This is as it is taught in a baraita: If she has merit, it delays punishment for her for three months, equivalent to the time necessary to recognize the fetus; this is the statement of Abba Yosei ben Ḥanan. Rabbi Elazar ben Yitzḥak of Kefar Darom says: Merit delays punishment for nine months, as it is stated: "Then she shall be cleared, and shall conceive seed" (Numbers 5:28). It is possible to infer from this that if she has merit she will be cleared temporarily, for the length of time required to conceive a child, and there, in Psalms, it says: "A seed shall serve him; it shall be told of the Lord unto the next generation" (Psalms 22:31). This indicates that the seed must be fit to tell of the Lord once it matures, and a child can live only if it is born after the culmination of nine months in the womb.

⁵⁴ Rabbi Yishmael says: Merit delays punishment for twelve months. And although there is no explicit proof for the concept of merit delaying punishment for twelve months, there is an allusion to the concept, as it is written that Daniel said to Nebuchadnezzar after interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's dream concerning the evil which would befall him: "Therefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable to you, and redeem your sins with charity, and your iniquities by showing mercy to the poor;

⁵⁵ and then there shall be an extension to your tranquility" (Daniel 4:24). And it is written: "All this came upon King Nebuchadnezzar" (Daniel 4:25), and it is written in the following verse that this occurred: "At the end of twelve months" (Daniel 4:26). None of the opinions in the baraita are in accordance with the mishna's statement that merit can delay punishment for up to three years.

⁵⁶ The Gemara answers: Actually, the mishna is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yishmael, who states that merit delays punishment for one year, and he found a verse which states and repeats the possibility that punishment can be delayed, indicating that merit can delay punishment up to three times, as it is written: “Thus says the Lord: For three transgressions of Edom, yes, but for four, I will not reverse it” (Amos 1:11). Punishment can therefore be delayed for three consecutive periods of one year.

⁵⁷ The Gemara asks: And what does Rabbi Yishmael mean by stating: Although there is no explicit proof for the concept of merit delaying punishment for twelve months, there is an allusion to the concept? The verses he cites state explicitly that punishment can be delayed for twelve months. The Gemara answers: The proof is not explicit, as perhaps gentiles are different, as swift judgment is not administered upon them as readily as it is upon the Jewish people, with whom God is more precise in executing judgment.

⁵⁸ § The mishna states: And there is a merit that delays punishment for three years. The Gemara asks: Which merit can delay the punishment of a sota? If we say it is the merit of the Torah that she has studied; but a woman who studies Torah is one who is not commanded to do so and performs a mitzva, whose reward is less than that of one who is obligated? Therefore, it would be insufficient to suspend her punishment. Rather, perhaps it is the merit of a mitzva that she performed.

⁵⁹ The Gemara asks: Does the merit of a mitzva protect one so much as to delay her punishment? But isn’t it taught in a baraita: Rabbi Menahem bar Yosei interpreted this verse homiletically: “For the mitzva is a lamp and the Torah is light” (Proverbs 6:23). The verse associates the mitzva with a lamp and the Torah with the light of the sun. The mitzva is associated with a lamp in order to say to you: Just as a lamp does not protect one by its light extensively but only temporarily, while the lamp is in one’s hand, so too, a mitzva protects one only temporarily, i.e., while one is performing the mitzva.

⁶⁰ And the Torah is associated with light in order to say to you: Just as the light of the sun protects one forever, so too, the Torah one studies protects one forever; and it states in the previous verse with regard to the Torah: “When you walk, it shall lead you; when you lie down, it shall watch over you; and when you awake, it shall talk with you” (Proverbs 6:22). The Gemara explains: “When you walk, it shall lead you”; this is referring to when one is in this world. “When you lie down, it shall watch over you”; this is referring to the time of death, when one lies in his grave. “And when you awake, it shall talk with you”; this is referring to the time to come after the resurrection of the dead. The Torah that one studies protects and guides him both in this world and in the next world.

⁶¹ This can be illustrated by a parable, as it is comparable to a man who is walking in the blackness of night and the darkness, and he is afraid of the thorns, and of the pits, and of the thistles, which he cannot see due to the darkness. And he is also afraid of the wild animals and of the bandits that lurk at night, and he does not know which way he is walking.

⁶² If a torch of fire comes his way, which is analogous to a mitzva, he is safe from the thorns and from the pits and from the thistles, but he is still afraid of the wild animals and of the bandits, and still does not know which way he is walking. Once the light of dawn rises, which is analogous to Torah study, he is safe from the wild animals and from the bandits, which no longer roam the roads, but he still does not know which way he is walking. If he arrives at a crossroads and recognizes the way, he is saved from all of them.

⁶³ Alternatively, the verse associates the mitzva with a lamp and the Torah with the light of the sun in order to teach that a transgression extinguishes the merit of a mitzva one performed, but a transgression does not extinguish the merit of the Torah one studied, as it is stated: “Many waters cannot extinguish the love, neither can the floods drown it” (Song of Songs 8:7). The Torah is compared to love several times in the Song of Songs. One can conclude from the baraita that the merit of performing a mitzva is insufficient to suspend punishment.

⁶⁴ Rav Yosef said that with regard to a mitzva, at the time when one is engaged in its performance it protects one from misfortune and saves one from the evil inclination; at the time when one is not engaged in its performance, it protects one from misfortune but it does not save one from the evil inclination. With regard to Torah study, both at the time when one is engaged in it and at the time when one is not engaged in it, it protects one from misfortune and saves one from the evil inclination. Therefore, the merit of the woman’s mitzvot does protect her from misfortune and delay her punishment.

⁶⁵ Rabba objects to this explanation: If that is so, then with regard to Doeg (see I Samuel, chapters 21–22) and Ahithophel (see II Samuel, chapter 16), who were both wise scholars despite their wickedness, did they not engage in the study of Torah? Why did it not protect them from sinning? Rather, Rava said: With regard to Torah study, at the time when one is engaged in it, it protects and saves; at the time when one is not engaged in it, it protects one from misfortune but it does not save one from the evil inclination. With regard to a mitzva, both at the time when one is engaged in its performance and at the time when one is not engaged in its performance, it protects one from misfortune but it does not save one from the evil inclination.

⁶⁶ Ravina said: Actually, the merit that delays the punishment of the sota is the merit of Torah study, and with regard to that which you say, i.e., that she is not commanded to do so and performs a mitzva, the mishna is not referring to the merit of her own Torah study. Granted, she is not commanded to study Torah herself; however, in reward for causing their sons to read the Written Torah and to learn the Mishna, and for waiting for their husbands until they come home from the study hall, don’t they share the reward with their sons and husbands? Therefore, if the sota enabled her sons and husband to study Torah, the merit of their Torah study can protect her and delay her punishment.

⁶⁷ With regard to the aforementioned parable, the Gemara asks: What is the meaning of the crossroads, which provide clarity? Rav H̥isda says: This is referring to a Torah scholar and his day of death. Due to his continued commitment to the Torah, when the time comes for him to die, it is clear to him that he will go to the place of his eternal reward. Rav Naḥman bar Yitzḥak says: This is a Torah scholar who has also acquired fear of sin, as his fear of sin guides him to the correct understanding of the Torah. Mar Zutra says: This is a Torah scholar who reaches conclusions from his discussion in accordance with the halakha, as that is an indication that he is following the right path.

⁶⁸ The baraita states: Alternatively: A transgression extinguishes the merit of a mitzva, but a transgression does not extinguish the merit of the Torah. Rav Yosef says: Rabbi Menahem bar Yosei interpreted this verse as it was given on Mount Sinai, and had Doeg and Ahithophel only interpreted it in this way they would not have pursued David, as it is written: “For my enemies speak concerning me...saying, God has forsaken him; pursue and take him, for there is none to deliver” (Psalms

71:10–11). Doeg and Ahithophel incorrectly thought that since David had sinned, his sins had extinguished his merits and God had forsaken him.

⁶⁹ The Gemara asks: What verse did Doeg and Ahithophel interpret incorrectly, causing them to err? They interpreted this verse: “For the Lord your God walks in the midst of your camp...to give up your enemies before you...that He see no licentious matter in you, and turn away from you” (Deuteronomy 23:15), to indicate that God turns away from one who engaged in forbidden relations, and since David had sinned with Bathsheba God must have turned away from him. But they did not know that a transgression extinguishes the merit of a mitzva, but a transgression does not extinguish the merit of the Torah.

⁷⁰ The Gemara interprets the continuation of the verse cited by the baraita with regard to Torah study: What is the meaning of: “Many waters cannot extinguish the love...if a man would give all the fortune of his house for love, he would utterly be condemned” (Song of Songs 8:7)? The Torah is compared to love several times in the Song of Songs. Therefore, the verse indicates that one cannot acquire a share in the reward for Torah study with money. Ulla says: The verse is not speaking of individuals like Shimon, brother of Azarya, whose brother Azarya supported him and enabled him to study Torah. And it is not speaking of individuals like Rabbi Yoḥanan of the house of the Nasi, whom the Nasi supported so that he could study Torah.

⁷¹ Rather, it is speaking of individuals like Hillel and Shevna, as when Rav Dimi came to Babylonia he said: Hillel and Shevna were brothers; Hillel engaged in Torah study and remained impoverished, whereas Shevna entered into a business venture and became wealthy. In the end, Shevna said to Hillel: Come, let us join our wealth together and divide it between us; I will give you half of my money and you will give me half of the reward for your Torah study. In response to this request a Divine Voice issued forth and said: “If a man would give all the fortune of his house for love, he would utterly be condemned” (Song of Songs 8:7).

⁷² § The mishna states: From here ben Azzai states: A person is obligated to teach his daughter Torah, so that if she drinks and does not die immediately, she will know that some merit of hers has delayed her punishment. Rabbi Eliezer says: Anyone who teaches his daughter Torah is teaching her promiscuity. The Gemara asks: Could it enter your mind to say that teaching one’s daughter Torah is actually teaching her promiscuity? Rather, say: It is considered as if he taught her promiscuity.

⁷³ Rabbi Abbahu says: What is the reason for Rabbi Eliezer’s statement? It is as it is written: “I, wisdom, dwell with cunning” (Proverbs 8:12), which indicates that once wisdom enters into a person, cunning enters with it. Rabbi Eliezer fears that the woman will use the cunning she achieves by learning the wisdom of the Torah to engage in promiscuous behavior.

⁷⁴ The Gemara asks: And the Rabbis who disagree with him, what do they do with this verse: “I, wisdom, dwell with cunning [orma]”; how do they interpret it? The Gemara responds: He requires that verse for that which Rabbi Yosei, son of Rabbi Ḥanina, states, interpreting the word “orma” as nakedness rather than cunningness, as Rabbi Yosei, son of Rabbi Ḥanina, says: The matters of Torah do not endure except in one who stands naked for them, as it is stated: “I, wisdom, dwell with nakedness [orma]” (Proverbs 8:12). This means that wisdom dwells only in one who is prepared to give away all of his possessions for the sake of Torah study. Rabbi Yoḥanan says: The matters of Torah do not endure except in one who considers himself as one who does not exist, as it is stated: “But wisdom, it can be found in nothingness” (Job 28:12).

⁷⁵ § The mishna states that Rabbi Yehoshua says: A woman desires to receive the amount of a kav of food and a sexual relationship rather than to receive nine kav of food and abstinence. The Gemara asks: What is he saying? This is what Rabbi Yehoshua is saying: A woman desires to receive the amount of a kav of food and with it a sexual relationship, i.e., her husband's availability to fulfill her sexual desires, rather than nine kav of food and with it abstinence, and since her desires are of a sexual nature, it is undesirable for her to study Torah.

⁷⁶ § The mishna continues: He, Rabbi Yehoshua, would say: A foolish man of piety, and a conniving wicked person, and an abstinent woman, and those who injure themselves out of false abstinence; all these are people who erode the world. The Gemara asks: Who is considered a foolish man of piety? For example, it is one who sees that a woman is drowning in a river, and he says: It is not proper conduct to look at her while she is undressed and save her.

⁷⁷ The Gemara asks: Who is considered a conniving wicked person? Rabbi Yoḥanan says: This is one who presents his statement to the judge before the other litigant comes and thereby prejudices the judge in his favor. Rabbi Abbahu says: This is referring to one who gives a dinar to a poor man in order to complete the sum of two hundred dinars for him, so that he will no longer be entitled to receive charity, as we learned in a mishna (Pe'a 8:8): One who has two hundred dinars may not collect gleanings, forgotten sheaves, pe'a, and the poor man's tithe, since he is not defined as poor. However, if he has two hundred less one dinar, even if he is given one thousand dinars at once, he may collect.

⁷⁸ Rabbi Asi says that Rabbi Yoḥanan says: A conniving wicked person is one who provides advice to male orphans to sell from the small quantity of property left to them by their father, before it is appropriated by the court for the purpose of providing for the daughters, who do not inherit property. This causes the daughters to lose their right to sustenance, because although it is improper to do so, the sale is valid, as Rabbi Asi says that Rabbi Yoḥanan says: With regard to male orphans who preemptively sold the property from a small estate, that which they sold, they sold, and the sons retain the money.

⁷⁹ Abaye says: A conniving wicked person is one who provides advice to sell property in accordance with the ruling of Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel, as it is taught in a baraita: With regard to one who said: My property is given to you, and after you die, to so-and-so, and the first beneficiary entered the property and sold it and consumed the profits, the second beneficiary repossesses the property from the purchasers, as the property belongs to him after the death of the first beneficiary; this is the statement of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi. Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says: The second beneficiary receives only that which the first beneficiary left, since his sale is valid. However, it is not permitted to sell the property ab initio, since the giver intended for the second beneficiary to receive the property.

⁸⁰ Rav Yosef bar Ḥama says that Rav Sheshet says: A conniving wicked person is one who persuades others with his ways, convincing others to mimic his seemingly righteous behavior, in order to hide his faults. Rabbi Zerika says that Rav Huna says: A conniving wicked person is one who is lenient in the halakha for himself and strict for others. Ulla says: This

⁸¹ is one who read the Written Torah and learned the Mishna but did not serve Torah scholars in order to learn the reasoning behind the halakhot. Since he believes himself knowledgeable, he issues halakhic rulings, but due to his lack of understanding he rules erroneously and is therefore considered

wicked. His cunning is in his public display of knowledge, which misleads others into considering him a true Torah scholar.

⁸² It was stated: With regard to one who read the Written Torah and learned the Mishna but did not serve Torah scholars, Rabbi Elazar says: This person is an ignoramus. Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani said: This person is a boor. Rabbi Yannai says: This person is comparable to a Samaritan, who follows the Written Torah but not the traditions of the Sages.

⁸³ Rav Aha bar Ya'akov says: This person is comparable to a sorcerer [magosh], who uses his knowledge to mislead people. Rav Nahman bar Yitzhak said: It is reasonable to accept the opinion of Rav Aha bar Ya'akov, as people say proverbially: The sorcerer chants and does not know what he is saying; so too, the tanna teaches the Mishna and does not know what he is saying.

⁸⁴ § The Sages taught: Who is an ignoramus [am ha'aretz]? It is anyone who does not recite Shema in the morning and evening with its blessings; this is the statement of Rabbi Meir. And the Rabbis say: It is anyone who does not don phylacteries. Ben Azzai says: It is anyone who does not have ritual fringes on his garment. Rabbi Yonatan ben Yosef said: It is anyone who has sons and does not raise them to study Torah. Aherim say: Even if one reads the Written Torah and learns the Mishna but does not serve Torah scholars, he is an ignoramus.

⁸⁵ If one read the Written Torah but did not learn the Mishna, he is a boor. With regard to one who did not read and did not learn at all, the verse states: "Behold, the days come, says the Lord, and I will sow the house of Israel and the house of Judah with the seed of man, and with the seed of beast" (Jeremiah 31:26). One who has not studied at all is comparable to a beast.

⁸⁶ The verse states: "My son, fear the Lord and the king; and meddle not with those who are repeating" (Proverbs 24:21). Rabbi Yitzhak says: These are individuals who repeatedly learn the halakhot but do not know the reasons behind them. The Gemara asks: Isn't that obvious? How else could the verse be understood? The Gemara answers: He states this lest you say that the verse is referring to individuals who repeatedly commit sins, and this is in accordance with the words of Rav Huna, as Rav Huna says: Once a person committed a transgression and repeated it, in his eyes it became permitted for him. Since the verse could be interpreted in this manner, Rabbi Yitzhak teaches us that the verse is referring to those who learn without understanding.

⁸⁷ It was taught in a baraita: The tanna'im, who recite the tannaitic sources by rote, are individuals who erode the world. The Gemara is puzzled by this statement: Could it enter your mind that they are individuals who erode the world? Ravina says: This statement is referring to those who issue halakhic rulings based on their knowledge of mishnayot. This is also taught in a baraita: Rabbi Yehoshua said: Are they individuals who erode the world? Aren't they settling the world, as it is stated: "His ways [halikhot] are eternal" (Habakkuk 3:6)? The Sages read the term halikhot as halakhot, inferring that one who learns halakhot attains eternal life. Rather, this is referring to those who issue halakhic rulings based on their knowledge of mishnayot.

⁸⁸ § The mishna states that an abstinent woman is among those who erode the world. The Sages taught: A maiden who prays constantly, and a neighborly [shovavit] widow who constantly visits her neighbors, and a child whose months of gestation were not completed, all these are people who erode the world.

⁸⁹ The Gemara asks: Is that so? But didn't Rabbi Yoḥanan say: We learned the meaning of fear of sin from a maiden, and the significance of receiving divine reward from a widow. The meaning of fear of sin can be learned from a maiden, as Rabbi Yoḥanan heard a certain maiden who fell on her face in prayer, and she was saying: Master of the Universe, You created the Garden of Eden and You created Gehenna, You created the righteous and You created the wicked. May it be Your will that men shall not stumble because of me and consequently go to Gehenna.

⁹⁰ The significance of receiving divine reward can be learned from a widow, as there was a certain widow in whose neighborhood there was a synagogue, and despite this every day she went and prayed in the study hall of Rabbi Yoḥanan. Rabbi Yoḥanan said to her: My daughter, is there not a synagogue in your neighborhood? She said to him: My teacher, don't I attain a reward for all the steps I take while walking to pray in the distant study hall?

⁹¹ The Gemara answers: When it is stated in the baraita that a maiden who prays constantly is one who erodes the world, it is referring, for example, to Yoḥani bat Retivi, who constantly prayed and pretended to be saintly but actually engaged in sorcery.

⁹² The Gemara asks: What is the meaning of a child whose months of gestation were not completed? Here, in Babylonia, they interpreted this as alluding to an imperfect, incomplete Torah scholar who scorns his teachers.

⁹³ Rabbi Abba says: This is a student who has not yet attained the ability to issue halakhic rulings, and yet he issues rulings and is therefore compared to a prematurely born child. This is as Rabbi Abbahu says that Rav Huna says that Rav says: What is the meaning of that which is written: "For she has cast down many wounded; and a mighty host are all her slain" (Proverbs 7:26)? "For she has cast down [hippila] many wounded"; this is referring to a Torah scholar who has not yet attained the ability to issue rulings, and yet he issues rulings. "And a mighty host [ve'atzumim] are all her slain"; this is referring to a Torah scholar who has attained the ability to issue rulings, but does not issue rulings and prevents the masses from learning Torah properly.

⁹⁴ And until when is it considered too premature for a scholar to issue halakhic rulings? It is until forty years. The Gemara asks: Is that so? But didn't Rabba issue rulings, even though he lived for only forty years? The Gemara answers: It is permitted for a scholar who has not studied for so long to issue rulings when his knowledge reaches the level of the foremost scholar in his city and they are equals.

⁹⁵ § It states in the mishna: And those who injure themselves out of false abstinence [perushin] are people who erode the world. The Sages taught: There are seven pseudo-righteous people who erode the world: The righteous of Shechem, the self-flagellating righteous, the bloodletting righteous, the pestle-like righteous, the righteous who say: Tell me what my obligation is and I will perform it, those who are righteous due to love, and those who are righteous due to fear.

⁹⁶ The Gemara explains: The righteous of Shechem [shikhmi]; this is one who performs actions comparable to the action of the people of Shechem, who agreed to circumcise themselves for personal gain (see Genesis, chapter 34); so too, he behaves righteously only in order to be honored. The self-flagellating righteous; this is one who injures his feet, as he walks slowly, dragging his feet on the ground in an attempt to appear humble, and injures his feet in the process. The bloodletting righteous; Rav Naḥman bar Yitzḥak says that this is one who lets blood by banging his head against

the walls because he walks with his eyes shut, ostensibly out of modesty. The pestle-like righteous; Rabba bar Sheila says that this is one who walks bent over like the pestle of a mortar.

⁹⁷ With regard to the righteous one who says: Tell me what my obligation is and I will perform it, the Gemara asks: Isn't this virtuous behavior, as he desires to be aware of his obligations? Rather, this is referring to one who says: Tell me what further obligations are incumbent upon me and I will perform them, indicating that he fulfills all of his mitzvot perfectly and therefore seeks additional obligations.

⁹⁸ The baraita also includes in the list of pseudo-righteous people those who are righteous due to love and those who are righteous due to fear, i.e., one who performs mitzvot due to love of their reward or due to fear of punishment. Abaye and Rava said to the tanna who transmitted this baraita: Do not teach in the baraita: Those who are righteous due to love and those who are righteous due to fear, as Rav Yehuda says that Rav says: A person should always engage in Torah study and in performance of the mitzvot even if he does not do so for their own sake, as through performing them not for their own sake, one comes to perform them for their own sake.

⁹⁹ Rav Naḥman bar Yitzḥak said: That which is hidden is hidden, and that which is revealed is revealed, but in Heaven everything is known, and the great court in Heaven will exact payment from those who wear the cloak of the righteous but are in fact unworthy. The Gemara relates: King Yannai said to his wife before he died: Do not be afraid of the Pharisees [perushin], and neither should you fear from those who are not Pharisees, i.e., the Sadducees; rather, beware of the hypocrites who appear like Pharisees, as their actions are like the act of the wicked Zimri and they request a reward like that of the righteous Pinehas (see Numbers, chapter 25).

¹⁰⁰ MISHNA: Rabbi Shimon says: Merit does not delay the punishment of the bitter water of a sota, and if you say that merit does delay the punishment of the water that causes the curse, as stated earlier by the Rabbis (20a), you weaken [madhe] the power of the bitter water before all the women who drink the water, who will no longer be afraid of it, as they will rely on their merit to save them. And you defame the untainted women who drank the water and survived, as people say: They are defiled but it is their merit that delayed the punishment for them. Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi says: Merit delays the punishment of the water that causes the curse, but a woman whose punishment is delayed does not give birth and does not flourish; rather, she progressively deteriorates. Ultimately she dies by the same death as a sota who dies immediately.

¹⁰¹ § If the meal-offering of the sota is rendered impure before it has been sanctified in the service vessel, its status is like that of all the other meal-offerings that are rendered impure before being sanctified in a service vessel, and it is redeemed. But if it is rendered impure after it has been sanctified in the service vessel, its status is like that of all the other meal-offerings that are rendered impure after being sanctified in a service vessel, and it is burned. And these are the sota women whose meal-offerings are burned if they have already been sanctified in a service vessel:

¹⁰² A woman who confesses and says: I am defiled, and therefore prohibited to you; and a woman with regard to whom witnesses came and testified that she is defiled; and a woman who says: I will not drink the bitter water of a sota, even if she does not confess her guilt; and a woman whose husband changed his mind and does not want to force her to drink; and a woman whose husband engaged in sexual intercourse with her on the way to the Temple.

¹⁰³ And all the women who are married to priests, their meal-offerings are always burned, as the verse states: “And every meal-offering of a priest shall be completely burned; it shall not be eaten” (Leviticus 6:16). An Israelite woman who is married to a priest, her meal-offering is burned; and the daughter of a priest who is married to an Israelite, her meal-offering is eaten.

¹⁰⁴ The mishna asks a general question: What are the differences between a priest and the daughter of a priest? The meal-offering of the daughter of a priest is eaten by the priests, but the meal-offering of a priest is not eaten. The daughter of a priest can become disqualified from marrying a priest and from partaking of teruma by engaging in sexual intercourse with someone forbidden to her, but a priest does not become desecralized by engaging in sexual intercourse with a woman forbidden to him.

¹⁰⁵ The daughter of a priest may become impure with impurity imparted by a corpse, but a priest may not become impure with impurity imparted by a corpse except for the burial of his seven closest relatives. A priest may eat from offerings of the most sacred order, but the daughter of a priest may not eat from offerings of the most sacred order.

¹⁰⁶ What are the halakhic differences between a man and a woman? A man lets his hair grow and rends his garments when he is a leper, but a woman does not let her hair grow or rend her garments when she is a leper. A man can vow that his minor son shall be a nazirite, obligating the son to remain a nazirite even during his adulthood, but a woman cannot vow that her son shall be a nazirite. A man can shave at the culmination of his naziriteship by using offerings originally designated for his father’s naziriteship, i.e., if one’s father was also a nazirite and he died having already designated offerings for the culmination of his naziriteship; but a woman cannot shave at the culmination of her naziriteship by using offerings designated for her father’s naziriteship.

¹⁰⁷ A man can betroth his daughter to another man while she is a minor, but a woman cannot betroth her daughter even while she is a minor. A man can sell his daughter as a maidservant while she is a minor, but a woman cannot sell her daughter as a maidservant even while she is a minor. A man is stoned naked, but a woman is not stoned naked. A man is hanged after he is stoned for certain transgressions, but a woman is not hanged. A man is sold for his committing an act of theft in order to pay his debt, but a woman is not sold for her committing an act of theft.

¹⁰⁸ GEMARA: The Sages taught (Tosefta 2:6): All the women who are married into the priesthood, their meal-offerings are burned. How so? With regard to the daughter of a priest, or the daughter of a Levite or an Israelite woman who is married to a priest, her meal-offering is not eaten due to the fact that her father or husband, respectively, has a share in the meal-offering, and it is therefore treated as the meal-offering of a priest, which is not eaten. But it is not completely burned without removing a handful from it, as the Torah states with regard to the meal-offering of a priest, due to the fact that she also has a share in it. Rather, the handful is sacrificed by itself, and the remainder of the meal-offering is sacrificed by itself.

¹⁰⁹ The Gemara asks: One should apply here the principle that in the case of any offering that is meant to be partly burned on the flames of the altar, one who burns the remainder of the offering is subject to the prohibition: Do not burn. This prohibition is derived from the verse: “You shall not burn of it as an offering made by fire unto the Lord” (Leviticus 2:11). Yehuda, son of Rabbi Shimon ben Pazi, said that the priest burns the remainder not as an offering but for the purpose of firewood. This is permitted, in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Eliezer, as it is taught in a baraita that

Rabbi Eliezer says: With regard to those parts of an offering which may not be burned, for a pleasing aroma you may not burn them; however, you may burn them on the altar for the purpose of firewood.

¹¹⁰ The Gemara continues: This works out well according to the opinion of Rabbi Eliezer, who holds in accordance with this reasoning and permits burning the remainder of an offering as firewood; however, according to the Rabbis, who do not hold in accordance with this reasoning, what can be said? How is the remainder burned on the altar? The Gemara answers: With regard to the remainder, they act in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Elazar, son of Rabbi Shimon, as it is taught in a baraita: Rabbi Elazar, son of Rabbi Shimon, says with regard to the meal-offering of a sinner who is a priest: The handful is removed from the meal-offering and sacrificed by itself, and the remainder is neither eaten nor burned on the altar; rather, it is scattered on the place of the ashes.

¹¹¹ And even the Rabbis do not disagree with Rabbi Elazar, son of Rabbi Shimon, except with regard to the meal-offering of a sinner who is a priest, as they hold that it is fit to be sacrificed in its entirety without removing a handful. However, in this case, i.e., in the case of the meal-offering of a sota who is married to a priest, even the Rabbis agree that its remainder is scattered on the place of the ashes, since the handful is removed from the offering.

¹¹² § The mishna states: In the case of an Israelite woman who is married to a priest, her meal-offering is burned; and in the case of the daughter of a priest who is married to an Israelite, her meal-offering is eaten. The Gemara asks: What is the reason for this? This is as the verse states: “And every meal-offering of a priest shall be completely burned; it shall not be eaten” (Leviticus 6:16). One can infer that this applies to a priest, but not to the daughter of a priest.

¹¹³ The mishna states: The daughter of a priest can become disqualified from marrying a priest and from partaking of teruma by engaging in sexual intercourse with someone forbidden to her, but a priest does not become desacralized by engaging in sexual intercourse with a woman forbidden to him. The Gemara asks: From where do we derive this? It is as the verse states with regard to a priest who marries a woman forbidden to him: “And he shall not disqualify his offspring among his people” (Leviticus 21:15), indicating that his offspring from forbidden intercourse are desacralized, but he is not personally desacralized through his actions.

¹¹⁴ The mishna states: A daughter of a priest may become impure with impurity imparted by a corpse, but a priest may not. The Gemara asks: What is the reason for this? The Gemara answers: The verse states: “Speak to the priests, the sons of Aaron, and say to them: None shall become impure for the dead among his people” (Leviticus 21:1). The verse indicates that this applies to the sons of Aaron and not to the daughters of Aaron.

¹¹⁵ The mishna states: A priest may eat from offerings of the most sacred order, but a daughter of a priest may not eat from offerings of the most sacred order. The Gemara explains: This is derived as it is written with regard to the meal-offering, which is an offering of the most sacred order: “Every male among the children of Aaron may eat of it” (Leviticus 6:11).

¹¹⁶ § The mishna states: And what are the halakhic differences between a man and a woman? A man lets his hair grow and rends his garments when he is a leper, but a woman does not. The Sages taught: The verse states: “He is a leprous man, he is impure” (Leviticus 13:44). I have derived only that the halakhot of a confirmed leper apply to a man; from where do I derive that they apply to a woman? When it says in the subsequent verse: “And the leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and the hair of his head shall grow wild and he shall cover his upper lip; and he shall

cry: Impure, impure” (Leviticus 13:45), there are two individuals indicated here, as this verse did not need to restate “and the leper,” as the subject of the verse was clear from the previous verse.

¹¹⁷ If so, what is the meaning when the verse states: A leprous “man”? This is referring to the matter of rending one’s clothes and letting one’s hair grow wild, which is stated in the verse below, and teaches that a man lets the hair of his head grow and rends his garments, but a woman does not.

¹¹⁸ The mishna states: A man can vow that his minor son shall be a nazirite, but a woman cannot vow that her son shall be a nazirite. Rabbi Yoḥanan says: This is a halakha transmitted orally to Moses from Sinai with regard to the nazirite, and it is not derived from the Bible. The mishna states: A man can shave at the culmination of his naziriteship by using offerings designated for his father’s naziriteship, but a woman cannot shave by using offerings designated for her father’s naziriteship. Rabbi Yoḥanan says: This is a halakha transmitted orally to Moses from Sinai with regard to the nazirite, and it is not derived from the Bible.

¹¹⁹ The mishna states: A man can betroth his daughter to another man while she is a minor, but a woman cannot betroth her daughter. The Gemara explains: This is as it is written: “And the father of the maiden shall say to the elders: I gave my daughter to this man as a wife” (Deuteronomy 22:16), indicating that it is only the father who has the power to betroth his daughter. The mishna states: A man can sell his daughter as a maidservant but a woman cannot sell her daughter. The Gemara explains: This is derived as it is written: “And if a man sells his daughter to be a maidservant” (Exodus 21:7), indicating that only a man can sell his daughter, while a woman cannot.

¹²⁰ § The mishna states: A man is stoned naked, but a woman is not stoned naked. The Gemara asks: What is the reason for this? The Gemara answers: The verse states: “And let the entire congregation stone him” (Leviticus 24:14). What does the term “him” come to exclude? If we say this means that they stone him but not her, i.e., that a woman is not stoned at all, but isn’t it written: “And you shall take out that man or that woman, who did this evil thing, to your gates, that man or that woman; and you shall stone them with stones, and they shall die” (Deuteronomy 17:5). Rather, the term “him” excludes his garment, indicating that he is stoned without his garment. And a woman is excluded from this halakha, as one may infer from the term “him” that they do not stone her without her garment.

¹²¹ The mishna states: A man is hanged, but a woman is not hanged. The Gemara asks: What is the reason for this? The verse states: “And if a man has committed a sin worthy of death, and he is put to death, and you shall hang him on a tree” (Deuteronomy 21:22). The verse indicates that one should hang “him,” a man, but not her, a woman.

¹²² The mishna states: A man is sold for his committing an act of theft, but a woman is not sold for her committing an act of theft. The Gemara asks: What is the reason for this? The verse states: “If the sun rose upon him, there is blood-guilt for him; he shall make restitution; if he has nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft” (Exodus 22:2). The verse indicates that he is sold for his theft, but she is not sold for her theft.

Chapter 4

¹ MISHNA: With regard to a betrothed woman who secluded herself with another man after being warned by her betrothed, and a widow waiting for her brother-in-law [yavam] to perform levirate marriage who secluded herself with another man after being warned by her yavam, they neither drink the bitter water nor collect payment of their marriage contracts. The reason they are not entitled to payment of their marriage contracts is that the betrothed woman became forbidden to her betrothed or the widow became forbidden to her yavam due to her own actions of entering into seclusion with the paramour. And the fact that they do not drink the bitter water is as it is stated: “This is the law of jealousy, when a wife, while under her husband, goes astray, and is defiled” (Numbers 5:29). The verse excludes a betrothed woman and a widow awaiting her yavam; since they are not yet married, neither is considered as “under her husband.”

² The mishna delineates cases where the woman’s marriage was prohibited in the first place: With regard to a widow who was married to a High Priest, or a divorcée or ḥalutza who was married to a common priest, or a mamzeret

³ or Gibeonite woman who was married to a Jew of unflawed lineage, or a Jewish woman of unflawed lineage who was married to a mamzer or a Gibeonite, all of these women neither drink the bitter water nor collect payment of their marriage contracts, as the sota ritual applies only to permitted marriages.

⁴ And the following women neither drink the bitter water nor collect payment of their marriage contracts: A woman who confesses and says: I am defiled, and a woman with regard to whom witnesses came and testified that she is defiled, and a woman who says: I will not drink the bitter water, even if she does not confess her guilt.

⁵ However, a woman whose husband said: I will not have her drink, and a woman whose husband engaged in sexual intercourse with her on the way to the Temple, collect payment of their marriage contracts even though they do not drink the bitter water, as it is due to the husbands that they do not drink.

⁶ If the husbands of sota women died before their wives drank the bitter water, Beit Shammai say: They collect payment of their marriage contracts and they do not drink the bitter water. And Beit Hillel say: They either drink the bitter water or they do not collect payment of their marriage contracts.

⁷ A woman who was pregnant with the child of another man at the time of her marriage and a woman who was nursing the child of another man at the time of her marriage neither drink the bitter water nor collect payment of their marriage contracts. This is because by rabbinic law they may not marry for twenty-four months after the baby’s birth, and therefore these also constitute prohibited marriages. This is the statement of Rabbi Meir. And the Rabbis say: He can separate from her, and remarry her after the time of twenty-four months has elapsed, and therefore these are considered permitted marriages, and the women can drink the bitter water.

⁸ A sexually underdeveloped woman who is incapable of bearing children [ailonit], and an elderly woman, and a woman who is incapable of giving birth for other reasons, neither collect payment of their marriage contracts nor drink the bitter water, as marrying a woman who cannot give birth constitutes a violation of the mitzva to be fruitful and multiply. Rabbi Elazar says: He can marry

another woman and procreate through her; therefore, these are considered permitted marriages, and women in these categories can drink the bitter water.

⁹ And all other women either drink the bitter water or do not collect payment of their marriage contracts. The wife of a priest drinks, and if she is found to be innocent of adultery, she is permitted to her husband. The wife of a eunuch also drinks.

¹⁰ A husband can issue a warning to his wife forbidding her to seclude herself with any man, even with regard to all those men with whom relations are forbidden, e.g., her father or brother, with the exception of a minor and of one who is not a man, i.e., in a situation where a man suspects his wife of bestiality.

¹¹ And these are the women to whom the court issues a warning in place of their husbands: One whose husband became a deaf-mute or became an imbecile, or was incarcerated in prison. The Sages said that the court warns her not in order to have her drink the bitter water if she disobeys the warning, but in order to disqualify her from receiving payment of her marriage contract. Rabbi Yosei says: The court's warning also serves to have her drink, and when her husband is released from prison he has her drink.

¹² GEMARA: The mishna states that a betrothed woman and a widow awaiting her yavam do not drink the bitter water. The Gemara infers: She does not drink, but the husband or yavam can warn her against secluding herself with another man, and if she violates his warning, she is forbidden to him. The Gemara asks: From where are these matters derived? The Gemara answers: This is derived as the Sages taught with regard to the verse: "Speak to the children of Israel and say unto them: If the wife of any man goes astray, and acts unfaithfully against him" (Numbers 5:12). The superfluous phrase "and say unto them" is an amplification, and serves to include a betrothed woman and a widow awaiting her yavam in the halakhot of warning.

¹³ And whose opinion is expressed in the mishna? It is the opinion of Rabbi Yonatan, as it is taught in a baraita with regard to the verse: "And the priest shall cause her to swear, and shall say to the woman: If no man has lain with you, and if you have not gone aside to defilement while under your husband" (Numbers 5:19). This excludes a betrothed woman, who does not yet live with her betrothed, from the ritual of the bitter water. One might have thought that I exclude even a widow awaiting her yavam; therefore, the verse states: "If the wife of any man goes astray" (Numbers 5:12). The term "any man" serves to include a widow awaiting her yavam in the ritual of the bitter water. This is the statement of Rabbi Yoshiya.

¹⁴ Rabbi Yonatan says: The phrase "while under your husband" excludes a widow awaiting her yavam from drinking the bitter water. Lest one would say that I will exclude a widow awaiting her yavam but I will not exclude a betrothed woman, the verse therefore states: "This is the law of jealousy, when a wife, while under her husband, goes astray, and is defiled" (Numbers 5:29). The term "while under her husband" excludes a betrothed woman from drinking the bitter water.

¹⁵ The Gemara explains the dispute: One Sage, Rabbi Yonatan, holds that the bond with the betrothed woman is stronger, as it is his own betrothal, whereas in the case of a widow awaiting her yavam, the bond stems from his brother's betrothal. And furthermore, if the betrothed woman commits adultery, she is stoned due to her bond with him, whereas a widow awaiting her yavam who engages in sexual intercourse with another man is liable only to receive lashes. Since the bond with the betrothed woman is stronger, Rabbi Yonatan derives from the phrase "while under your husband"

that a widow awaiting her yavam is excluded with respect to the bitter water, whereas a betrothed woman is excluded only because of the phrase “and say unto them.”

¹⁶ And one Sage, Rabbi Yoshiya, holds that the bond with the widow awaiting her yavam is stronger, as she is not lacking entry into the wedding canopy, as her marriage to the yavam is completed through sexual intercourse alone. Rabbi Yoshiya therefore excludes only a betrothed woman from drinking the bitter water.

¹⁷ The Gemara asks: And Rabbi Yonatan, who excludes both a betrothed woman and a widow awaiting her yavam from drinking the bitter water, what does he do with this term “any man”? What does it serve to include? The Gemara answers: Rabbi Yonatan requires it in order to include the wife of a deaf-mute and the wife of an imbecile, and the wife of

¹⁸ a mentally ill person [shiamum], whom the court warns on behalf of the husband. The Gemara asks: And according to Rabbi Yoshiya, what does he do with this term “while under her husband”? The Gemara answers: Rabbi Yoshiya requires it in order to compare a man to a woman and a woman to a man, as explained later (27a).

¹⁹ The Gemara asks: But according to both opinions, the reason for the exclusion of a betrothed woman is that these verses are written; if it were not so, I would say that a betrothed woman drinks. But when Rabbi Aḥa bar Ḥanina came from the South, he came and brought the following baraita with him: The verse states: “But if you have gone astray while under your husband, and if you are defiled, and some man has lain with you besides your husband” (Numbers 5:20). This indicates that the halakhot of a sota apply only when sexual intercourse with the husband preceded sexual intercourse with the paramour, and not in a case when sexual intercourse with the paramour preceded intercourse with the husband. In the case of a betrothed woman who committed adultery, intercourse with the paramour preceded intercourse with the betrothed, and this verse excludes her from drinking the bitter water of the sota.

²⁰ Rami bar Ḥama said: You find the necessity for an additional exclusion in a case where her betrothed engaged in sexual intercourse with her in her father’s house, i.e., before they were married, and before the sexual intercourse with the paramour.

²¹ The Gemara questions this explanation: In the corresponding situation with regard to a widow awaiting her yavam, whom Rabbi Yonatan excludes from the sota ritual due to the exclusion from the phrase “while under your husband,” is the necessity for this exclusion due to a case where the yavam engaged in sexual intercourse with her in her father-in-law’s house before the levirate marriage took place? But do you call that woman a widow awaiting her yavam? She is his full-fledged wife, as didn’t Rav say: If a widow awaiting her yavam engaged in sexual intercourse with her yavam, even without the intention of implementing a levirate marriage, he has acquired her as his wife with respect to all aspects of marriage, including the halakhot of a sota.

²² The Gemara answers: Rabbi Yonatan’s opinion is in accordance with the opinion of Shmuel, as Shmuel says: A yavam who engages in sexual intercourse with his yevama without intending to consummate the levirate marriage does not acquire her as his wife except with regard to those matters that are stated in the passage in the Torah that deals with levirate marriage, i.e., that he inherits his brother’s estate, and he can free the widow with a bill of divorce without ḥalitza (see Yevamot 56a). He is not considered fully married to the woman, and, according to Rabbi Yonatan, the halakhot of a sota do not apply to her.

²³ The Gemara asks: If so, let us say that Rav stated his opinion in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yoshiya, and Shmuel stated his opinion in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yonatan. The Gemara rejects this interpretation: Rav could have said to you: I state my opinion even according to the opinion of Rabbi Yonatan. Since it was necessary for the verse to exclude a yevama who engaged in sexual intercourse with her yavam from the sota ritual, by inference one may derive that she is his full-fledged wife with regard to all other matters.

²⁴ And Shmuel could have said: I state my opinion even according to the opinion of Rabbi Yoshiya. Since it was necessary for the verse to specifically include in the sota ritual a yevama who engaged in sexual intercourse with her yavam, by inference one may conclude that she is not his wife at all with regard to any matters other than those explicit in the verse.

²⁵ § A dilemma was raised before the Sages: With regard to a woman who violates the precepts of halakha or Jewish custom with regard to modesty, who may be divorced without payment of her marriage contract, is forewarning from her husband required in order to cause her to forfeit her right to collect payment of her marriage contract or is forewarning not required? Do we say that since she is a woman who violates the precepts, forewarning is not required, as she is aware that her actions are prohibited? Or perhaps forewarning is required, so that if she desires to repent, she will be reminded to repent?

²⁶ The Gemara suggests: Come and hear a proof from the mishna: A betrothed woman and a widow awaiting her yavam neither drink the bitter water nor collect payment of their marriage contracts. It is possible to infer that she does not drink, but the husband or yavam can warn her against secluding herself with another man. For what halakha is his warning relevant? Is it not relevant to cause her to forfeit her right to collect payment of her marriage contract? Accordingly, a woman forfeits payment of her marriage contract due to immodest behavior only if she is warned.

²⁷ Abaye said: No, the relevance of the warning of the husband or yavam is to render her forbidden to him in the event that she secludes herself with another man. Rav Pappa said: The relevance of the warning is to have her drink if she secludes herself with another man when she is married, as it is taught in a baraita: One does not issue a warning to a betrothed woman in order to have her drink while she is betrothed. However, one can issue a warning to a betrothed woman in order to have her drink when she is married.

²⁸ Rava said: Come and hear a proof from the continuation of the mishna: A widow who was married to a High Priest, or a ḥalutza who was married to a common priest, or a mamzeret or Gibeonite woman who was married to a Jew of unflawed lineage, or a Jewish woman of unflawed lineage who was married to a mamzer or a Gibeonite; all of these women neither drink the bitter water nor collect payment of their marriage contracts.

²⁹ The Gemara infers: She does not drink, but the husband or yavam can warn her against secluding herself with another man. But for what halakha is his warning relevant? If it is in order to prohibit these women to him, aren't they currently prohibited to him? Rather, is it not relevant to cause them to forfeit their rights to collect payment of their marriage contracts? This indicates that only when a woman is warned in advance does her immodest behavior cause her to forfeit her right to collect payment of her marriage contract.

³⁰ Rav Yehuda of Diskarta said: No, the relevance of the warning is to render her permanently forbidden to her paramour, should she seclude herself with him, just as she would become forbidden

to her husband, as we learned in a mishna (27b): Just as she is forbidden to her husband, so is she forbidden to her paramour.

³¹ Rav Ḥanina of Sura said: Come and hear a proof from the continuation of the mishna: And these are the women to whom the court issues a warning in place of their husbands: One whose husband became a deaf-mute or became an imbecile, or was incarcerated in prison. And the Sages said that the court warns her not in order to have her drink the bitter water if she disobeys the warning; rather in order to disqualify her from receiving payment of her marriage contract. Since the sole purpose of the warning issued by the court is to disqualify her from receiving payment of her marriage contract in the event she secludes herself with the man, one can learn from the mishna that similarly, a woman who violates the precepts requires forewarning. The Gemara concludes: Indeed, one can learn from the mishna that a warning is required.

³² The Gemara asks: With regard to all of the other Sages, who proposed inconclusive proofs from other clauses of the mishna, what is the reason they did not say that proof can be adduced from this explicit statement? The Gemara answers: They reasoned that perhaps it is different there, as the wife has no fear of her husband at all, since he is either incapacitated or incarcerated, and therefore she must be warned first. In other cases, an explicit warning is unnecessary.

³³ A dilemma was raised before the Sages: If a woman violates the precepts and her husband desires to maintain her as his wife, may he maintain her as his wife or may he not maintain her as his wife? Do we say that the Merciful One made the requirement to divorce her dependent on the husband's objection to her behavior, and as this husband does not raise an objection he may maintain her as his wife? Or perhaps, since the Torah objects to this behavior, it is considered as though he objected, as the requirement to divorce her is due to the Torah's objection to this behavior, irrespective of the husband's wishes.

³⁴ The Gemara cites proof: Come and hear the mishna: And these are the women to whom the court issues a warning in place of their husbands: One whose husband became a deaf-mute or became an imbecile, or was incarcerated in prison. And if you say that should the husband desire to maintain her as his wife he may maintain her as his wife, perhaps he may not want the court to warn her. Would the court perform a matter that is perhaps not amenable to the husband? The Gemara replies: The ordinary situation is that since she is violating the precepts, it is amenable to the husband to divorce her, and the court acts under this assumption.

³⁵ § A dilemma was raised before the Sages: With regard to a husband who issued a warning to his wife and later retracted his warning, as he did not wish his wife to acquire the status of a sota, is his warning retracted, or is it not retracted? Do we say that the Merciful One made acquiring the status of a sota dependent on the husband's warning, and the husband retracted his warning? Or perhaps, since he warned her at the outset, he can no longer retract his warning?

³⁶ The Gemara cites proof that the husband cannot retract his warning: Come and hear the mishna: And these are the women to whom the court issues a warning in place of their husbands: One whose husband became a deaf-mute or became an imbecile, or was incarcerated in prison. And if you say that in the case of a husband who retracted his warning, his warning is retracted, would we, i.e., the court, do something that the husband can come and retract? This would cause a diminution of the esteem of the court. The Gemara replies: The ordinary situation is that a person concurs with the

opinion of the court and would not retract a warning issued by the court, so this is not a concern. Therefore, no proof can be brought from the mishna.

³⁷ The Gemara cites proof: Come and hear another mishna (7a): When the husband takes the sota to the Temple, he first takes her to the local court, and the court provides him with two Torah scholars who accompany them, lest he engage in sexual intercourse with her on the way to the Temple, which is prohibited due to her status as a sota. And if you say that with regard to a husband who retracted his warning, his warning is retracted, let him retract his warning and engage in sexual intercourse with her.

³⁸ The Gemara replies that perhaps the husband can retract his warning: What is different about Torah scholars that they are chosen to accompany the husband? They differ from other people as they are learned, and if they see that the husband desires to engage in sexual intercourse with his wife, they say to him: Retract your warning and then you may engage in sexual intercourse with her in a permitted manner.

³⁹ The Gemara cites proof: Come and hear that which Rabbi Yoshiya says: Ze'eira, who was one of the men of Jerusalem, told me three matters: A husband who retracted his warning, his warning is retracted; and in the case of a rebellious Elder whom the court wishes to forgive, the court may forgive him; and in the case of a stubborn and rebellious son whose father and mother wish to forgive him for his sins, they may forgive him.

⁴⁰ And when I came to my colleagues in the South and told them these rulings, they agreed with me with regard to two of them, but with regard to forgiving a rebellious Elder they did not agree with me. They held that a rebellious Elder cannot be forgiven, in order that discord not proliferate among the Jewish people. The Gemara comments: One can conclude from Rabbi Yoshiya's statement that with regard to a husband who retracted his warning, his warning is retracted. The Gemara concludes: Indeed, one can conclude from Rabbi Yoshiya's statement that the husband can retract his warning.

⁴¹ Rav Aḥa and Ravina disagree with regard to the limits of this halakha permitting a husband to retract his warning. One says that if he retracts his warning before her seclusion with another man, his warning is retracted, but if he retracts his warning after her seclusion with another man, it is not retracted. And one says that if he retracts his warning after her seclusion with another man, it is also retracted. And it is reasonable to hold according to the one who says that the husband's warning is not retracted after her seclusion with another man.

⁴² The Gemara asks: From where can one derive that after the wife's seclusion with another man, the warning cannot be retracted? It can be derived from the answer that the Rabbis gave in reply to Rabbi Yosei, as it is taught in a baraita: Rabbi Yosei says: It is unnecessary to provide an escort to accompany the sota and her husband, as the husband of a sota is trusted not to engage in sexual intercourse with her, on the basis of an a fortiori inference: And just as in the case of a menstruating woman, who is prohibited from engaging in sexual intercourse with her husband by penalty of karet, her husband is nevertheless trusted with regard to her, as he is permitted to seclude himself with her, so too, with regard to a sota, who is prohibited from engaging in sexual intercourse with her husband only by an ordinary prohibition, is it not all the more so that he should be trusted?

⁴³ The Rabbis said to Rabbi Yosei: No, if you say that he is trusted with regard to a menstruating woman, the reason is not due to the severity of the prohibition. Rather, he is trusted because she has the ability to become permitted to her husband after her menstrual flow has ceased and she has

immersed in a ritual bath. Shall you also say that he is trusted with regard to a sota, who potentially does not have the ability to become permitted to her husband, due to her suspected adultery?

⁴⁴ The Gemara explains the proof: And if you say that after her seclusion with another man the warning can be retracted for her, you therefore find an instance in which the sota has the ability to become permitted to her husband, as, if the husband desires he can retract his warning and engage in sexual intercourse with her. Rather, conclude from the Rabbis' statement that if he retracts his warning after her seclusion with another man, the warning is not retracted. The Gemara concludes: Indeed, one can conclude from the Rabbis' statement that the warning cannot be retracted.

⁴⁵ § The mishna states: If the husbands of the sota women died before their wives drank the bitter water, Beit Shammai say: They collect payment of their marriage contracts and they do not drink the bitter water. And Beit Hillel say: They either drink the bitter water or they do not collect payment of their marriage contracts. The Gemara asks: With regard to what do Beit Shammai and Beit Hillel disagree? The Gemara answers: Beit Shammai hold that a promissory note that stands to be collected is considered to be as though it was already collected, and since the woman possesses the marriage contract, the payment of the marriage contract is considered as though it is already in her possession. Since the burden of proof rests upon the claimant, she does not lose her rights to the money unless the inheritors prove that she committed adultery.

⁴⁶ And Beit Hillel hold that a promissory note that stands to be collected is not considered as though it was already collected. Therefore, the payment of the marriage contract is not considered to be in the wife's possession, and as this means that she is the claimant, she is not entitled to the money unless she proves that she did not commit adultery.

⁴⁷ § The mishna states (24a): A woman who was pregnant with the child of another man at the time of her marriage...A sexually underdeveloped woman, who is incapable of bearing children [ailonit], and an elderly woman, and a woman who is incapable of giving birth for other reasons, neither collect payment of their marriage contracts nor drink the bitter water. Rabbi Elazar says: He can marry another woman and procreate through her; therefore these are considered permitted marriages, and the women can drink the bitter water. Rav Naḥman says that Rabba bar Avuh says: The dispute between the first tanna and Rabbi Elazar is only in the case of a barren woman and an elderly woman.

⁴⁸ However, with regard to a sexually underdeveloped woman, all agree that she neither drinks the bitter water nor collects payment of her marriage contract. This is as it is stated with regard to a sota who is found to be innocent of adultery: "And she shall be cleared, and shall conceive seed" (Numbers 5:28), indicating that the sota ritual pertains only to one whose way is to bear seed and give birth, excluding this sexually underdeveloped woman, whose way is not to bear seed.

⁴⁹ The Gemara raises an objection to Rav Naḥman's statement from a baraita in the Tosefta (5:4): With regard to one who issues a warning to his betrothed, or to his yevama while she is a widow awaiting her yavam, if she secluded herself with the other man before her husband consummated the marriage, she neither drinks the bitter water nor collects payment of her marriage contract.

⁵⁰ The baraita continues: A woman who was pregnant with the child of another man at the time of her marriage and a woman who was nursing the child of another man at the time of her marriage neither drink the bitter water nor collect payment of their marriage contracts, as their marriages were prohibited by rabbinic law. This is the statement of Rabbi Meir.

⁵¹ The baraita continues: The reason for this is as Rabbi Meir would say: A man may not marry a woman who is pregnant with the child of another man or a woman who is nursing the child of another man, until twenty-four months pass after the baby's birth, so as to ensure that the woman will not become pregnant while the child needs to nurse. And if he married her, he must divorce her and may never remarry her, as the Sages penalized him for transgressing the prohibition. And the Rabbis say: He must divorce her, and when his time to marry her arrives, i.e., twenty-four months after the baby's birth, he can marry her again.

⁵² The baraita continues: In the case of a young man who married a barren woman or an elderly woman, and he did not have a wife and children beforehand, the woman neither drinks nor collects payment of her marriage contract, as it is prohibited for him to marry a woman with whom he cannot procreate. Rabbi Elazar says: This marriage is not forbidden, as he can marry another woman and procreate through her, and therefore she can drink the bitter water.

⁵³ The baraita continues: However, in the case of one who issued a warning to his betrothed, or to his yevama while she was a widow awaiting her yavam, and she secluded herself with the other man after he consummated the marriage, she either drinks the bitter water or does not collect payment of her marriage contract. If his own pregnant or nursing wife becomes a sota, then despite the concern that the bitter water may harm the fetus, she either drinks the bitter water or does not collect payment of her marriage contract. In the case of a young man who married a barren woman or an elderly woman, and he already had a wife and children and was therefore permitted to marry his barren or elderly wife, the woman either drinks the bitter water or does not collect payment of her marriage contract.

⁵⁴ The baraita concludes: With regard to the wife of a mamzer who is married to a mamzer in a permitted marriage, and the wife of a Gibeonite who is married to a Gibeonite in a permitted marriage, and the wife of a convert or an emancipated slave, and a sexually underdeveloped woman, if any of these women becomes a sota she either drinks the bitter water or does not collect payment of her marriage contract, as the marriage is permitted. After citing the entire baraita, the Gemara explains the difficulty: In any event, the baraita teaches that a sexually underdeveloped woman can drink the bitter water if the marriage is permitted, and this is a conclusive refutation of the opinion of Rav Nahman.

⁵⁵ The Gemara answers: Rav Nahman could have said to you: There is a dispute between tanna'im with regard to this matter, and I state my opinion in accordance with the opinion of this tanna, as it is taught in a baraita: Rabbi Shimon Ben Elazar says: A sexually underdeveloped woman neither drinks nor collects payment of her marriage contract, as it is stated: "And she shall be cleared, and shall conceive seed" (Numbers 5:28), indicating that the sota ritual pertains only to one whose way is to bear seed and give birth, excluding this sexually underdeveloped woman, whose way is not to bear seed.

⁵⁶ The Gemara asks: And as for the Rabbis, what do they do with this verse: "And she shall be cleared, and shall conceive seed"? Since they hold that a sexually underdeveloped woman drinks the bitter water, what do they derive from the verse? The Gemara answers: They require it for that which is taught in a baraita: The verse: "And she shall be cleared, and shall conceive seed" (Numbers 5:28), indicates that if she was barren, she will be remembered and conceive a child; this is the statement of Rabbi Akiva. Rabbi Yishmael said to him: If so, all the barren women will seclude themselves with

other men, and they will be remembered and conceive after drinking the bitter water and being found innocent; but that virtuous barren woman, who does not transgress the prohibition of seclusion, since she does not seclude herself with other men, she loses the opportunity to receive this blessing.

⁵⁷ Rabbi Yishmael continues: If so, what is the meaning when the verse states: “And she shall be cleared, and shall conceive seed” (Numbers 5:28)? This means that if in the past she would give birth in pain, from then on she will give birth with ease; if she gave birth to females, she will now give birth to males; if her children were short, she will now give birth to tall children; if her children were black, she will give birth to white children.

⁵⁸ § The baraita in the Tosefta cited above states: The wife of a mamzer who is married to a mamzer in a permitted marriage... either drinks the bitter water or does not collect payment of her marriage contract. The Gemara asks: Isn’t that obvious? Since their marriage is permitted, why should the sota ritual not apply? The Gemara answers: It is necessary lest you say that she should not drink, since if she drinks and is found to be innocent of adultery, she is permitted to her husband. This is undesirable since their offspring are also mamzerim, and we do not cause the number of individuals of flawed lineage to proliferate. The baraita in the Tosefta therefore teaches us that this is not a concern, and the wife of a mamzer is permitted to drink.

⁵⁹ The aforementioned baraita in the Tosefta states: The wife of a convert or an emancipated slave, and a sexually underdeveloped woman can drink the bitter water. The Gemara asks with regard to the wife of a convert or an emancipated slave, who also has the status of a convert: Isn’t that obvious? Since their marriage is permitted, why should the sota ritual not apply?

⁶⁰ The Gemara answers: It is necessary lest you say that she does not drink, as the verse states: “Speak to the children of Israel, and say unto them: If the wife of any man goes astray, and acts unfaithfully against him” (Numbers 5:12). One might have inferred from this verse that the sota ritual applies only to those born as Jews and not to converts; the baraita in the Tosefta therefore teaches us that this is not so. The Gemara asks: Why not say that indeed the verse excludes converts? The Gemara answers: The subsequent term: “And say unto them” (Numbers 5:12) is an amplification, which serves to include converts.

⁶¹ § The mishna states: The wife of a priest drinks the bitter water, and if she is found to be innocent of adultery she is permitted to her husband. The Gemara asks: Why does the mishna state: The wife of a priest drinks? Isn’t that obvious? The Gemara answers: It is necessary lest you say that she does not drink, as the verse states: “And a man lay with her...neither was she seized” (Numbers 5:13). This indicates that if the sota was not seized she is forbidden; however, if she was seized, i.e., raped, she is permitted to her husband. And with regard to this woman, the wife of a priest, since even if she was seized she is forbidden to her husband, as a priest may not remain married to his wife if she was raped while they were married, one might say that the sota ritual does not apply to her, and she does not drink. Therefore, the mishna teaches us that she does drink.

⁶² § The mishna states: The wife of a priest drinks, and if she is found to be innocent of adultery, she is permitted to her husband. The Gemara asks: Isn’t that obvious? Rav Huna says: The mishna is referring to a case where the woman’s health deteriorates after she drinks the bitter water, and one might have thought that she is defiled. The Gemara asks: In the case of a woman whose health deteriorates, hasn’t the bitter water already evaluated that she was unfaithful? The fact that her health

deteriorates indicates that she is defiled and forbidden to her husband, and her death is delayed due to her merit in other matters.

⁶³ The Gemara answers: The mishna is referring to a case where her health deteriorates, but not in the manner of a sota, who is afflicted in her belly and thighs (see Numbers 5:27). Rather, she is afflicted by way of other limbs. Lest you say: This woman engaged in licentious intercourse, and the fact that the bitter water did not evaluate her in the usual manner is because she engaged in licentious intercourse under duress, and with regard to a priest, even rape renders her forbidden to her husband, the mishna therefore teaches us that the woman's deteriorating health does not indicate anything.

⁶⁴ § The mishna states: The wife of a eunuch drinks. The Gemara asks: Isn't that obvious? Since their marriage is permitted, why should the sota ritual not apply? The Gemara replies: It is necessary lest you say that she does not drink, since the Merciful One states with regard to the sota: "But if you have gone astray while under your husband, and if you are defiled, and some man has lain with you besides your husband" (Numbers 5:20). This indicates that her husband had lain with her, and this husband, the eunuch, is not capable of that. The mishna therefore teaches us that the wife of a eunuch does drink the bitter water.

⁶⁵ § The mishna states: A husband can issue a warning to his wife with regard to all those with whom relations are forbidden, e.g., her father or brother. The Gemara asks: Isn't that obvious?

⁶⁶ The Gemara answers: It is necessary, lest you say that the sota ritual does not apply with regard to forbidden relatives, as the Torah states: "And she was defiled" (Numbers 5:13), "And she was defiled" (Numbers 5:14), two times. One verse teaches that she is defiled and forbidden to her husband, and one verse teaches that she is forbidden to her paramour. One might understand that the sota ritual applies only where she is forbidden to the paramour due to this licentious intercourse; however, with regard to that woman, who secluded herself with a forbidden relative, since the woman already stands prohibited to him due to the prohibition of incest, one might say that the sota ritual does not apply. The mishna therefore teaches us that one can issue a warning even with regard to forbidden relatives.

⁶⁷ § The mishna states: A husband can issue a warning to his wife with regard to all those with whom relations are forbidden, with the exception of a minor and of one who is not a man. The Gemara cites the source for this halakha: The Merciful One states in the Torah: "And a man lay with her" (Numbers 5:13), indicating that one can warn his wife with regard to a man but not with regard to a minor. The Gemara asks: The phrase: And of one who is not a man, serves to exclude what? If we say that it serves to exclude a sick man who lacks the ability to complete intercourse [shaḥus], but didn't Shmuel say: One can issue a warning with regard to a shaḥus, and if a shaḥus engages in sexual intercourse with the daughter of a priest, he disqualifies her from partaking of teruma.

⁶⁸ With regard to Shmuel's statement that one can issue a warning with regard to a shaḥus, the Gemara asks: Isn't that obvious? The Gemara answers: It is necessary, lest you say that one cannot issue a warning with regard to a shaḥus, as the Merciful One states in the Torah: "And a man lay with her carnally [shikhvat zera]" (Numbers 5:13), literally, a lying of seed, and this man is not capable of that, as he cannot ejaculate. Shmuel therefore teaches us that one can issue a warning with regard to a shaḥus.

⁶⁹ The Gemara asks with regard to Shmuel's statement that a shaḥus who engages in sexual intercourse with the daughter of a priest disqualifies her from partaking of teruma: Isn't that obvious?

The Gemara answers: It is necessary lest you say that a shaḥus does not disqualify the daughter of a priest from partaking of teruma, as the Merciful One states in the Torah with regard to a priest: “And he shall not disqualify his offspring among his people” (Leviticus 21:15). One might infer from this verse that one who can have offspring disqualifies a woman from partaking of teruma, through forbidden sexual intercourse, and that one who cannot have offspring does not disqualify a woman from partaking of teruma. Shmuel therefore teaches us that this is not so. In any event, Shmuel states that one can issue a warning on account of a shaḥus, unlike the initial interpretation of the mishna.

⁷⁰ Since Shmuel’s statement contradicts the suggestion that the mishna excludes a shaḥus, the Gemara suggests another explanation: Rather, the mishna serves to exclude a gentile, and teaches that one cannot issue a warning with regard to him. The Gemara asks: But didn’t Rav Hamnuna say: One can issue a warning with regard to a gentile, and if a gentile engages in sexual intercourse with the daughter of a priest, he disqualifies her from partaking of teruma.

⁷¹ The Gemara asks with regard to Rav Hamnuna’s statement that one can issue a warning with regard to a gentile: Isn’t that obvious? The Gemara answers: It is necessary lest you say that one cannot issue a warning in this case, as the verse states: “And she was defiled” (Numbers 5:13), “And she was defiled” (Numbers 5:14), twice. One verse teaches that she is defiled and forbidden to her husband, and one verse teaches that she is forbidden to her paramour. One might understand that the sota ritual applies only where she is forbidden to the paramour due to this licentious intercourse; however, with regard to that woman, who engaged in sexual intercourse with a gentile, since she already stands prohibited to him, one might say that the sota ritual does not apply. Rav Hamnuna therefore teaches us that one can issue a warning even with regard to a gentile.

⁷² The Gemara asks with regard to Rav Hamnuna’s statement that a gentile who engages in sexual intercourse with the daughter of a priest disqualifies her from partaking of teruma: Isn’t that obvious? The Gemara answers: It is necessary lest you say that he does not disqualify her, as the Merciful One states in the Torah: “And if a priest’s daughter should be unto a strange man, she shall not eat of that which is set apart from the holy things” (Leviticus 22:12), indicating that if a woman engages in sexual intercourse with one who is unfit for her, he disqualifies her from partaking of teruma. Since the term “should be unto” denotes marriage, one might say that one who is eligible for betrothal, yes, he disqualifies the woman; but a gentile, who is not eligible for betrothal, does not disqualify her. Rav Hamnuna therefore teaches us that a gentile disqualifies the woman from partaking of teruma, as one can learn from the ruling of Rabbi Yoḥanan.

⁷³ This is as Rabbi Yoḥanan says in the name of Rabbi Yishmael: From where is it derived that a gentile or a slave who engaged in sexual intercourse with the daughter of a priest or with the daughter of a Levite or with the daughter of an Israelite, disqualified her from marrying a priest and from partaking of teruma? This is derived as it is stated: “But if a priest’s daughter should be a widow or a divorcée...she returns to her father’s house...she may eat of her father’s bread” (Leviticus 22:13). This indicates that the daughter of a priest returns to eat of her father’s bread, i.e., teruma, if she engaged in sexual intercourse with one whose marriage to her has the potential to end in widowhood or divorce, i.e., a Jew whom she is permitted to marry. This excludes a gentile and a slave, whose marriage to her does not have the potential to end in widowhood or divorce, as their betrothal is invalid.

⁷⁴ Since Rav Hamnuna's statement contradicts the suggestion that the mishna excludes a gentile, the Gemara asks: Rather, what does the term: And of one who is not a man, serve to exclude? Rav Pappa says: This serves to exclude an animal, as the concept of licentiousness does not apply with regard to an animal. Therefore, the halakhot of a sota do not apply in this case.

⁷⁵ Rava of Parzakya said to Rav Ashi: From where is this matter that the Sages stated derived, that licentiousness does not apply with regard to an animal? Rav Ashi replied that it is as it is written: "You shall not bring the hire of a harlot, or the price of a dog, into the house of the Lord your God for any vow; for both of them are an abomination to the Lord your God" (Deuteronomy 23:19). This verse prohibits one from sacrificing an animal that served as payment to a prostitute or as payment for the purchase of a dog.

⁷⁶ And it is taught in a mishna (Temura 30a): In the converse cases, the hire of a dog, i.e., a kosher animal that was given to the owner of a dog as payment for engaging in intercourse with it, and the price of a prostitute, i.e., a kosher animal which served as payment in the purchase of a maidservant acquired for prostitution, are permitted to be sacrificed, as it is stated in the aforementioned verse: For both of them. This term indicates that only those two animals may not be sacrificed, i.e., those which served as the hire of a harlot and as the price of a dog; and not four animals, as the reverse cases are excluded from this halakha. This indicates that the concept of licentiousness does not apply with regard to animals, as the payment for intercourse with a dog is not considered payment for prostitution.

⁷⁷ The Gemara asks: Shmuel states that one can issue a warning with regard to a shaḥus even though he is unable to discharge semen. But rather, why do I need the verse to state: "And a man lay with her carnally [shikhvat zera]" (Numbers 5:13)? The Gemara answers: It is necessary for that which is taught in a baraita: The term "shikhvat zera" excludes something else.

⁷⁸ The Gemara asks: What is meant by the term: Something else? Rav Sheshet said: This excludes a case where the husband issued a warning to his wife not to engage in sexual intercourse in an atypical manner, i.e., anal intercourse, with another man, and teaches that this is not considered a valid warning. Rava said to Rav Sheshet: Intercourse in an atypical manner is considered sexual intercourse, as it is written: "The cohabitations of a woman" (Leviticus 18:22), indicating that there are two forms of sexual intercourse with a woman, vaginal and anal, and there is no halakhic differentiation between them.

⁷⁹ Rather, Rava said: It excludes a case where the husband issued a warning to his wife not to engage in intimate contact with another man by way of other limbs, as this is not considered sexual intercourse. Abaye said to Rava: That is merely licentious behavior, and does the Merciful One render a woman forbidden to her husband on account of merely licentious behavior, without sexual intercourse? Since this does not render her forbidden to her husband, it is obvious that if the husband issues a warning in this manner, violating the warning does not cause her to become a sota. The verse is therefore not required to exclude this case.

⁸⁰ Rather, Abaye said: The verse excludes a case where the husband issued a warning to his wife with regard to engaging in genital contact without actual penetration. The Gemara asks: This works out well according to the one who says that the definition of the initial stage of intercourse is the insertion of the corona but that genital contact is nothing; this is the reason that the verse came to exclude genital contact. However, according to the one who says that the definition of the initial

stage of intercourse is genital contact, what is there to say? Why should this case be excluded from the halakhot of a sota?

⁸¹ The Gemara answers: Actually, the verse serves to exclude a case where the husband issued a warning to his wife not to engage in intimate contact with another man by way of other limbs. And the verse explicitly excludes this case from the halakhot of a sota, lest you say that the woman is rendered a sota due to this warning, as the Merciful One made this halakha dependent on the husband's objection, and the husband objects to contact of this nature. The verse therefore teaches us that this is not considered a warning, as it does not involve sexual intercourse.

⁸² § Shmuel says: It is better that a man marry

⁸³ a woman whose suspected promiscuity is publicly spoken of [duma], and not marry the daughter of a woman suspected of promiscuity, as this woman, who is herself suspected of promiscuity, comes from seed of unflawed lineage; but that woman, the daughter of a woman suspected of promiscuity, comes from seed of flawed lineage, as she might be a mamzeret.

⁸⁴ And Rabbi Yoḥanan says: It is better that a man marry the daughter of a woman suspected of promiscuity, and not marry a woman suspected of promiscuity, as this daughter maintains the presumptive status of virtuousness, but that woman suspected of promiscuity does not maintain the presumptive status of virtuousness.

⁸⁵ The Gemara raises an objection to Rabbi Yoḥanan's statement from a baraita: A man may marry a woman suspected of promiscuity. Rava said in response: And how can you understand the baraita at face value? The baraita states that a man may marry her ab initio, yet clearly it is undesirable to do so. Rather, the wording of the baraita is imprecise, and one must render it: If one married a woman suspected of promiscuity, she is permitted to him. Since the baraita is imprecise, one should also correct it and teach: The daughter of a woman suspected of promiscuity.

⁸⁶ The Gemara concludes: And the halakha is that it is better that a man marry the daughter of a woman suspected of promiscuity, and not marry a woman suspected of promiscuity. This is as Rav Taḥalisa, from the West, i.e., Eretz Yisrael, taught before Rabbi Abbahu: If a married woman engages in adulterous sexual intercourse, her children are considered of unflawed lineage, as most instances of sexual intercourse are attributed to the husband, and consequently it is presumed that the children were conceived by the husband and not by the paramour. Therefore, the daughter of a woman suspected of promiscuity is not suspected of being a mamzeret.

⁸⁷ Rav Amram raises a dilemma: What is the halakha if the woman was extremely promiscuous and one cannot reasonably attribute most instances of intercourse to the husband? Are her children considered of unflawed lineage, or is their lineage uncertain? According to the opinion of the one who says that a woman becomes pregnant only close to the time of the onset of her menstruation, you do not need to raise this dilemma, as the husband does not know the time of this, i.e., the time of her menstruation, in advance, and he does not watch her actions in order to prevent her from conceiving from another man. Her children are therefore of uncertain lineage.

⁸⁸ When do you need to raise this dilemma? It is necessary according to the opinion of the one who says that a woman becomes pregnant only close to the time of her immersion. What is the halakha? Can it be assumed that since he knows the time of this, i.e., of her immersion, he watches her actions on that day in order to prevent her from conceiving from another man; or perhaps, since she is

extremely promiscuous, her husband cannot adequately watch her and her children are considered of uncertain lineage? The Gemara concludes: The dilemma shall stand unresolved.

⁸⁹ § The mishna states (24a): And these are the women to whom the court issues a warning in place of their husbands: One whose husband became a deaf-mute or became an imbecile, or if he were incarcerated in prison. The Sages taught: The verse states: “If the wife of any man goes astray” (Numbers 5:12). As the verse could have said: The wife of a man, what is the meaning when the verse states: “The wife of any man”? It serves to include the wife of a deaf-mute, and the wife of an imbecile, and the wife of an insane person, and one whose husband went overseas, and one whose husband was incarcerated in prison; and it teaches that the court issues a warning to these women in order to disqualify them from receiving payment of their marriage contract.

⁹⁰ One might have thought that the court’s warning is effective even to have the women drink the bitter water; therefore, the verse states: “Then the man shall bring his wife to the priest” (Numbers 5:15), indicating that only the warning issued by the husband causes his wife to drink. Rabbi Yosei says: The court’s warning is effective even to have her drink, and when her husband is released from prison he has her drink.

⁹¹ The Gemara asks: With regard to what do they disagree? The Gemara answers: The Rabbis hold that we require the same person who issues the warning to bring the woman to the Temple, as the verse states: “And he warned his wife...then the man shall bring his wife to the priest” (Numbers 5:14–15). And Rabbi Yosei holds that we do not require that the actions stated in the verse, i.e., “And he warned...then the man shall bring,” be performed by the same person; and although only the husband may bring the woman to the priest to drink the bitter water, the warning may be issued by the court.

⁹² § The Sages taught that the verse: “This is the law of jealousy, when a wife, while under her husband, goes astray and is defiled” (Numbers 5:29), is superfluous, and serves to compare a man to a woman and a woman to a man. The Gemara asks: With regard to what halakha is this comparison necessary? Rav Sheshet says: This teaches that just as if the husband was blind he would not have her drink, as it is written: “And it was hidden from the eyes of her husband” (Numbers 5:13), indicating that the sota ritual applies only if the husband was capable of seeing her infidelity but did not do so; so too, with regard to the woman, if she were blind, she would not drink. Rav Ashi also says: Just as a lame woman and a woman without hands would not drink, as it is written:

⁹³ “And the priest shall stand the woman before the Lord...and place the meal-offering of memorial in her hands” (Numbers 5:18), indicating that if she is unable to stand up straight or if she does not have hands with which to accept the offering, then she does not drink; so too, if the husband were lame or without hands, he would not cause his wife to drink. Mar Bar Rav Ashi says: Just as a mute woman would not drink, as it is written: “And the woman shall say: Amen, Amen” (Numbers 5:22), indicating that she must be able to speak; so too, if the husband were mute, he would not cause his wife to drink.

Chapter 5

¹ MISHNA: Just as the water evaluates her fidelity, so too, the water evaluates his, i.e., her alleged paramour's, involvement in the sin, as it is stated: "And the water that causes the curse shall enter into her" (Numbers 5:24), and it is stated again: "And the water that causes the curse shall enter into her and become bitter" (Numbers 5:27). It is derived from the double mention of the phrase "and... shall enter" that both the woman and her paramour are evaluated by the water.

² Furthermore, prior to her drinking the water, just as she is forbidden to her husband, so too is she forbidden to her paramour, because in contrast to the verse stating: "Is defiled [nitma'a]" (Numbers 5:14), a superfluous conjoining prefix vav is added to a later verse, rendering the phrase: "And is defiled [venitma'a]" (Numbers 5:29). The addition indicates another prohibition, that of the woman to her paramour. This is the statement of Rabbi Akiva.

³ Rabbi Yehoshua said: That was how Zekharya ben HaKatzav would interpret it, i.e., he also derived from the superfluous vav that the woman is forbidden to her paramour. Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi says an alternate source: The two times that the defilement of the wife is stated in the passage, namely: "And he warns his wife, and she is defiled" (Numbers 5:14), and the later verse: "When a wife, being under her husband, goes astray and is defiled" (Numbers 5:29), indicate that her defilement results in two prohibitions. One is that she is forbidden to her husband and one is that she is forbidden to her paramour.

⁴ § On that same day that Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya was appointed head of the Sanhedrin, Rabbi Akiva interpreted the verse: "And every earthen vessel into which any of them falls, whatever is in it shall be impure [yitma], and you shall break it" (Leviticus 11:33), as follows: The verse does not state: Is impure [tamei], but rather: "Shall be impure," in order to indicate that not only does the vessel itself become ritually impure, but it can now render other items ritually impure. This teaches with regard to a loaf that has second-degree ritual impurity status due to its being placed inside an earthenware vessel that had first-degree impurity, that it can render other food with which it comes into contact impure with third-degree impurity status.

⁵ After hearing Rabbi Akiva's statement, Rabbi Yehoshua said: Who will remove the dirt from your eyes, Rabban Yoḥanan ben Zakkai, so that you could live and see this? As you would say: In the future, another generation is destined to deem pure a loaf that contracted third-degree impurity, as there is no explicit verse from the Torah stating that it is impure. But now Rabbi Akiva, your disciple, brings a verse from the Torah indicating that it is impure, as it is stated: "Whatever is in it shall be impure."

⁶ Furthermore, on that same day Rabbi Akiva interpreted the verses with regard to the Levite cities as follows: One verse states: "And you shall measure outside the city for the east side two thousand cubits...this shall be for them the open land outside the cities" (Numbers 35:5), and another verse states: "And the open land around the cities, which you shall give to the Levites, shall be from the wall of the city and outward one thousand cubits round about" (Numbers 35:4).

⁷ It is impossible to say that the area around the cities given to the Levites was only one thousand cubits, as it is already stated: "Two thousand cubits." And it is impossible to say that two thousand cubits were left for them, as it is already stated: "One thousand cubits." How can these texts be reconciled? One thousand cubits are to be set aside as a tract of open land surrounding the city, and

the two thousand cubits are mentioned not in order to be given to the Levites, but to indicate the boundary of the Shabbat limit, beyond which it is forbidden to travel on Shabbat. This verse thereby serves as the source for the two-thousand-cubit Shabbat limit.

⁸ Rabbi Eliezer, son of Rabbi Yosei HaGelili, says otherwise: One thousand cubits were given to the Levites as an open tract of land, that could not be planted or built upon, and two thousand cubits of additional land were given to the Levites for planting fields and vineyards.

⁹ Additionally, on that same day Rabbi Akiva interpreted the verse: “Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song to the Lord, and said, saying” (Exodus 15:1), as follows: As there is no need for the verse to state the word “saying,” because it states the word “said” immediately prior to it, why must the verse state the word “saying”? It teaches that the Jewish people would repeat in song after Moses every single statement he said, as is done when reciting hallel. After Moses would recite a verse, they would say as a refrain: “I will sing to the Lord, for He is highly exalted” (Exodus 15:1). It is for this reason that the word “saying” is stated, in addition to the word “said.”

¹⁰ Rabbi Nehemya says: The people sang the song together with Moses as is done when reciting Shema, which is recited in unison after the prayer leader begins, and not as is done when reciting hallel.

¹¹ On that same day Rabbi Yehoshua ben Hyrcanus taught: Job served the Holy One, Blessed be He, only out of love, as it is stated: “Though He will slay me, still I will trust in Him” (Job 13:15). And still, the matter is even, i.e., the verse is ambiguous, as there are two possible interpretations of the verse. Was Job saying: I will await Him, expressing his yearning for God; or should the verse be interpreted as saying I will not await Him. As the word “lo” can mean either “to him” or “not,” it is unclear which meaning is intended here. This dilemma is resolved elsewhere, where the verse states a clearer indication of Job’s intent: “Till I die I will not put away my integrity from me” (Job 27:5). This teaches that he acted out of love.

¹² Rabbi Yehoshua said: Who will remove the dirt from your eyes, Rabban Yoḥanan ben Zakkai, so that you could live and see this? As you taught all your life that Job worshipped the Omnipresent only out of fear, as it is stated: “And that man was wholehearted and upright, and God-fearing, and shunned evil” (Job 1:1); but now Yehoshua ben Hyrcanus, the disciple of your disciple, has taught that Job acted out of love.

¹³ GEMARA: It is stated in the mishna that just as the water evaluates whether the woman was unfaithful, so too, the water evaluates whether he committed this sin. The Gemara asks: To whom does this refer? If we say that it is referring to the husband, what did the husband do that he should be evaluated? And if you would say

¹⁴ that if he has committed a similar iniquity the water evaluates his actions, this is difficult, as in a case where he has committed a similar iniquity does the water even evaluate her fidelity? But isn’t it taught in a baraita that the verse: “And the man shall be clear from iniquity, and that woman shall bear her iniquity” (Numbers 5:31), indicates that only when the man is clear of iniquity does the water evaluate the fidelity of his wife, but if the man is not clear of iniquity the water does not evaluate the fidelity of his wife?

¹⁵ And if the mishna is rather referring to the alleged paramour, who is also evaluated by the water that the woman drinks, then let the mishna teach as is taught in its latter clause: Just as she is

forbidden to her husband, so too is she forbidden to her paramour. Just as there the paramour is mentioned explicitly, so too here, the mishna should have stated: Just as the water evaluates whether she was unfaithful, so too, it evaluates whether the paramour committed this iniquity.

¹⁶ The Gemara answers: The entire mishna actually does refer to the paramour, and the reason he is not mentioned explicitly in the first clause of the mishna is because since it teaches that the water evaluates whether the wife was unfaithful by using the direct object her, it also teaches that the water evaluates whether the paramour committed the act by using the direct object him, without mentioning the paramour explicitly. In the latter clause of the mishna, on the other hand, since it teaches explicitly that the woman is forbidden to her husband, it also teaches explicitly that she is forbidden to her paramour.

¹⁷ § In the mishna Rabbi Akiva proves that the water evaluates the paramour as well, as it is stated: “And the water that causes the curse shall enter into her” (Numbers 5:24), and: “And the water that causes the curse shall enter into her and become bitter” (Numbers 5:27). A dilemma was raised before the Sages concerning the precise wording of the mishna: Does the mishna state: “Shall enter [ba’u],” “and shall enter [uva’u]”? According to this version of the mishna, it is derived from the superfluous conjoining prefix vav that the paramour is also evaluated by the water. Or, alternatively, does the mishna state: “And shall enter,” “and shall enter,” indicating that this halakha is derived from the repetition of the phrase in two separate verses?

¹⁸ Come and hear a proof from Rabbi Akiva’s second statement in the mishna, where he says: Just as she is forbidden to her husband, so too is she forbidden to her paramour, as it is stated: “Is defiled [nitma’a],” “And is defiled [venitma’a]” (Numbers 5:29). Here it seems that Rabbi Akiva derives his interpretation from the superfluous prefix vav rather than from the repetition of the phrase. Therefore, the first derivation should be understood in the same manner.

¹⁹ The Gemara asks: But still, let the dilemma be raised with regard to this halakha too: Does Rabbi Akiva state that the source for the halakha is the mention of the phrase “is defiled,” “is defiled,” in two different verses (Numbers 5:14, 29), or does he state that the halakha is derived from the superfluous vav in the phrase “is defiled,” rendering it “and is defiled” (Numbers 5:29)?

²⁰ Come and hear a proof from the fact that the mishna teaches in the latter clause that Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi says: The two times that the wife’s defilement is stated in the passage, namely: “And he warns his wife, and she is defiled” (Numbers 5:14), and the later verse: “When a wife, being under her husband, goes astray and is defiled” (Numbers 5:29), indicate that there are two prohibitions due to her defilement. One is to forbid her to her husband and one is to forbid her to her paramour. By inference from the fact that the dissenting derivation of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi is from the repetition of the entire phrase, evidently Rabbi Akiva derives this halakha from the superfluous vav.

²¹ Therefore, according to the opinion of Rabbi Akiva, since the phrase “and the water...shall enter” is mentioned three times in the passage, and the prefix vav, written each time, is expounded as though the phrase were mentioned twice, the phrase is treated as though it were written in six verses, as follows.

²² One of the mentions (Numbers 5:24) is interpreted for the command concerning her, the woman, meaning that God empowered the waters to punish the woman; and one, the prefix vav in that same verse, is expounded for the command concerning him, the paramour, i.e., that he too shall be punished by the water if he is guilty.

²³ One mention of the phrase, in the description of the drinking of the bitter water of a sota (Numbers 5:27), is interpreted for the execution of her punishment, as the punishment will go into effect so long as the process was performed properly; and one, the prefix vav in that verse, is expounded for the execution of his punishment.

²⁴ One mention (Numbers 5:22) is for her knowledge, i.e., the priest informs her that this punishment will be the result; and one, the prefix vav, is for his knowledge.

²⁵ But Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi maintains that only three verses worthy of exposition are written with regard to the water entering the woman; he does not derive anything additional from the prefix vav that introduces the various mentions of this matter. He therefore interprets one for the command, and one for the execution, and one for the knowledge, all with regard to the woman herself.

²⁶ The Gemara asks: And from where does Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi derive the principle in the mishna that just as the water evaluates whether she was unfaithful, so too, it evaluates whether he committed the sin?

²⁷ The Gemara answers: He derives it from that which is taught in a baraita, that the verse: “And cause the belly to swell and the thigh to fall away” (Numbers 5:22), is referring to the belly and thigh of the paramour. Do you say that the intention is the belly and the thigh of the paramour, or is it only the belly and the thigh of the adulteress? When it says later: “And her belly shall swell, and her thigh shall fall away” (Numbers 5:27), the belly and thigh of the adulteress are explicitly stated. And therefore, how do I realize the meaning of the former verse: “And cause the belly to swell, and the thigh to fall away”? Clearly, it is referring to the belly and thigh of the paramour.

²⁸ And how does the other tanna, Rabbi Akiva, interpret the repetition of verses? The former verse indicates that the priest informs her that her belly will be afflicted first and then her thigh, so as not to cast aspersions on the bitter water of a sota, i.e., to prevent people from claiming that the guilty woman’s death was not due to the bitter water but rather to some other cause. The reason people might claim this is that the priest says to the woman: “The Lord will make you a curse and an oath among your people, when the Lord makes your thigh fall away, and your belly swell” (Numbers 5:21). This seems to imply that her thigh is supposed to be afflicted before her belly. Therefore, when her belly swells first, people might conclude that it is not due to the water. It is for this reason that the priest needs to inform her that her belly will swell first.

²⁹ And why does the other tanna, Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi, disagree with Rabbi Akiva? The Gemara answers: If it is so that the verse: “And cause the belly to swell, and the thigh to fall away” (Numbers 5:22), is referring to the woman, the verse should have written: Her belly...and her thigh. What is meant by the phraseology of “the belly...and the thigh”? Conclude from it that it is referring to the belly and thigh of the paramour.

³⁰ The Gemara asks: And say that the entire verse comes for this, to indicate that the water evaluates the paramour as well, and does not teach the order of the punishment? The Gemara answers: If so, the Torah should have written: His belly...and his thigh. What is the meaning of the general wording: “The belly...and the thigh”? Conclude from it two conclusions: That the paramour is punished and that the priest informs the woman with regard to the order of the punishment.

³¹ § It is stated in the mishna that Rabbi Yehoshua said: That was how Zekharya ben HaKatzav would interpret it. Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi says: The two times that the defilement of the wife is stated

in the passage indicate that there are two prohibitions due to her defilement; one is to forbid her to her husband and one is to forbid her to her paramour.

³² The Sages taught in a baraita: With regard to the three times that the defilement of the wife is stated in the passage, namely: “If she is defiled” (Numbers 5:27), “and he warns his wife, and she is defiled” (Numbers 5:14), and “when a wife being under her husband goes astray and is defiled” (Numbers 5:29), why are all three necessary? One is to prohibit her to her husband, and one is to prohibit her to her paramour, and one is to prohibit her from partaking of teruma, even if she is the wife or daughter of a priest. This is the statement of Rabbi Akiva.

³³ Rabbi Yishmael said: It is unnecessary to derive from a verse that it would also be prohibited for this woman to marry a priest, as it can be derived a fortiori: If a divorced daughter of a priest, who is permitted to partake of teruma, is nevertheless forbidden to marry into the priesthood, then with regard to this sota, who is forbidden to partake of teruma, is it not logical that it is also prohibited for her to marry into the priesthood?

³⁴ The baraita continues by citing additional expositions involving the verse: “And she is defiled” (Numbers 5:14): What is the meaning when the verse states with regard to the cases in which a husband can compel his wife to drink the bitter water of a sota: “And he warns his wife, and she is defiled; or if the spirit of jealousy comes upon him, and he warns his wife, and she is not defiled” (Numbers 5:14)? If she is defiled, why does she need to drink? And if she is not defiled, why does he make her drink? The baraita answers: The verse tells you that it is discussing a case when there is uncertainty as to whether the woman was faithful to her husband, yet it is prohibited for her to engage in sexual intercourse with her husband until the matter is clarified.

³⁵ From here you can derive the halakha in a case of uncertainty with regard to whether the carcass of a creeping animal has imparted ritual impurity: Just as in the case of a sota, where the Torah does not consider unwitting adultery like intentional adultery, and rape is not treated like a willing transgression, because if a married woman committed adultery unwittingly or was raped she is not punished, yet still the Torah considers an uncertain case of adultery like a certain violation inasmuch as the woman is forbidden to her husband until the truth is clarified; so too, with regard to a creeping animal or other agents of ritual impurity, where the Torah does consider unwitting contact with impure items like intentional contact, as one contracts impurity whether or not his contact was intentional and an accident is treated like willing contact, is it not logical that the Torah must also consider an uncertain case of transmission of ritual impurity

³⁶ like a case of certain contact with an impure item? Accordingly, any cases of uncertain ritual impurity should be treated like certain impurity.

³⁷ The baraita continues: And since the case of sota is the source for the halakha with regard to uncertain ritual impurity, the details of the halakha are also derived from the case of sota. Therefore, from the place that you came from, i.e., from the source, it is derived that just as the prohibition with regard to a sota applies only when the uncertainty arises in the private domain, i.e., when she has secluded herself with the alleged paramour, so too, uncertain contact with the carcass of a creeping animal renders an item impure only if the contact was in the private domain.

³⁸ And furthermore, just as a sota is an entity that has awareness in order for her to be asked whether she actually committed adultery, so too, contact with a creeping animal renders an item impure only

if it is an entity that has awareness in order for it to be asked, i.e., a person, or an item that may have contracted impurity in a place where a person was present and could have known.

³⁹ The baraita concludes: And from here the Sages stated that if an entity that has awareness in order for it to be asked may have contracted impurity in the private domain, its uncertain impurity renders it impure; but if it may have contracted impurity in the public domain, its uncertain impurity leaves it pure. And with regard to an entity that lacks awareness in order for it to be asked, whether the uncertainty arose in the private domain or in the public domain, its uncertain impurity is deemed pure, as it is not similar to a sota.

⁴⁰ The Gemara begins its discussion of the baraita by inquiring about the exchange between Rabbi Yishmael and Rabbi Akiva: And what was the intention of Rabbi Yishmael? Apparently, he commented on a statement of Rabbi Akiva, who said that it is prohibited for a sota to partake of teruma, and he answered him concerning the matter of the woman's being prohibited to marry into the priesthood, which was not mentioned by Rabbi Akiva at all.

⁴¹ And furthermore, from where does Rabbi Akiva derive that it is prohibited for a sota to marry into the priesthood? And if you would say that with regard to her prohibition against marrying into the priesthood a verse is not necessary,

⁴² as the Torah has already rendered an uncertain case of a woman who has engaged in sexual intercourse with a man forbidden to her by the Torah [zona] as though she is certainly a zona, since a sota is forbidden to her husband after seclusion even though there are no witnesses that she committed adultery, and therefore it should be prohibited for her to marry a priest just like any zona, then with regard to her prohibition against partaking of teruma a verse should also not be necessary, as it is prohibited for a zona to partake of teruma. Therefore, the Torah renders an uncertain zona like a certain zona.

⁴³ Rather, it must be explained that according to Rabbi Akiva, the equivalent of four verses worthy of exposition are written with regard to the defilement of a sota, as he maintains that an additional halakha should be derived from the superfluous prefix vav in the verse: "And is defiled [venitma'a]" (Numbers 5:29). Therefore, one verse is written to forbid her to her husband, and one is to forbid her to her paramour, and one is to forbid her to marry into the priesthood, and one is to forbid her to partake of teruma.

⁴⁴ And Rabbi Yishmael disagrees with Rabbi Akiva, as he does not expound on the superfluous vav, and therefore maintains that only three verses are written: One is to forbid her to her husband, and one is to forbid her to her paramour, and one is to forbid her to partake of teruma. And her being prohibited to marry into the priesthood is derived through an a fortiori inference, as described in the baraita.

⁴⁵ The Gemara asks: And from where does Rabbi Yishmael derive that the verse was necessary to teach the prohibition of a sota to partake of teruma, and her prohibition against marrying into the priesthood is derived through an a fortiori inference? Perhaps the verse was necessary in order to teach that it is prohibited for the woman to marry into the priesthood, but teruma is permitted for her?

⁴⁶ The Gemara answers: Rabbi Yishmael could have said to you: It is reasonable to derive from this verse a prohibition that is similar to the prohibitions derived from the other verses, i.e., that she is forbidden to her husband and her paramour. Just as she is forbidden to her husband and her paramour

even during the lifetime of her husband, so too, the prohibition against partaking of teruma applies also during the lifetime of her husband, to the exclusion of her prohibition against marrying into the priesthood, which is relevant only after the death of her husband. The reason is that if her husband would divorce her it would be prohibited for her to marry a priest anyway.

⁴⁷ And how would Rabbi Akiva respond? The Gemara answers: He is not of the opinion that it is more reasonable to derive a prohibition from the phrase “and is defiled” that is similar to the prohibitions involving her husband and her paramour, and therefore he requires two separate derivations; one for teruma and one for the priesthood.

⁴⁸ Or alternatively, perhaps he accepts the opinion that the halakha derived from “and is defiled” should be similar to the prohibitions involving the husband and paramour, but nevertheless, in certain instances with regard to a matter that can be derived through an a fortiori inference, the verse nevertheless takes the trouble and writes explicitly. Therefore, although unnecessary, two verses are stated, one for teruma and one for the priesthood.

⁴⁹ The Gemara continues discussing the baraita. Rav Giddel said that Rav said: The halakha with regard to an entity that has awareness in order for it to be asked and an entity that lacks awareness in order for it to be asked in cases of uncertain ritual impurity is derived from this verse: “And the flesh that touches any impure thing shall not be eaten” (Leviticus 7:19). This would seem to indicate that specifically food that is impure for certain is that which shall not be eaten, but food for which it is uncertain whether it is impure and uncertain whether it is pure can be eaten.

⁵⁰ However, say the latter clause of the verse: “And as for the flesh, every one that is pure may eat the flesh” (Leviticus 7:19), which would seem to indicate that specifically one who is pure for certain is one who shall eat meat, but one for whom it is uncertain whether he is impure and uncertain whether he is pure shall not eat. The two clauses in the verse seem to contradict one another with regard to the status of uncertain purity.

⁵¹ Rather, must one not conclude from it that the Torah differentiates between two different types of uncertainty? Here, the latter clause, which discusses “every one that is pure,” is referring to an entity that has awareness in order for it to be asked, e.g., a person, who is considered impure if he is uncertain whether he contracted ritual impurity. There, the former clause which discusses impure meat presents the principle of an entity that lacks awareness in order for it to be asked, where an uncertain case of ritual impurity is deemed pure.

⁵² The Gemara explains the need for two separate derivations concerning uncertain contractions of ritual impurity: And the derivation that Rav Giddel said that Rav said was necessary, and it was also necessary to derive the principle of uncertain ritual impurity from sota; since if it were derived only through the derivation of Rav, I would say that it makes no difference whether the uncertain contraction of impurity occurred in the private domain or whether it occurred in the public domain. Therefore, it was necessary to derive from sota that uncertain impurity is considered impure only in the private domain.

⁵³ And if it is derived only from sota, I would say that similar to sota, where both the woman and the paramour possess awareness in order to be asked if they committed the act, so too, items with uncertain impurity should not be deemed impure unless there is awareness on the part of both the one who touches the impure item and the one who causes him to touch, i.e., the agent of impurity and the recipient of impurity are both competent people. Therefore, the derivation of Rav was necessary, as it

teaches that in an uncertain case of impurity in the private domain, one is deemed impure even if only the contractor of impurity possesses the awareness to be asked.

⁵⁴ § It is stated in the mishna: On that same day Rabbi Akiva interpreted the phrase “shall be impure” in the verse: “And every earthen vessel into which any of them falls, whatever is in it shall be impure [yitma], and you shall break it” (Leviticus 11:33), as indicating that a loaf that has second-degree ritual impurity can render other food with which it comes into contact impure with third-degree impurity. Rabbi Yehoshua related that Rabban Yoḥanan ben Zakkai had predicted that a future generation would purify a loaf that contracted third-degree impurity, as there is no explicit verse in the Torah stating that this degree of impurity exists.

⁵⁵ The Gemara asks: But since the loaf does not have an explicit verse stating that it is impure, why did Rabban Yoḥanan ben Zakkai himself maintain that it is impure?

⁵⁶ Rav Yehuda says that Rav says: Rabban Yoḥanan ben Zakkai maintained that although it has no explicit basis from a verse in the Torah, it has proof for its impurity through an a fortiori inference: If even one who immersed in a ritual bath that day and will become completely purified after nightfall, who is therefore permitted to touch non-sacred articles, i.e., he does not transmit impurity to them, disqualifies teruma that he touches, then with regard to a loaf that has second-degree impurity as result of contact with an impure item of the first degree, which is disqualified, i.e., it is rendered impure, even if it is non-sacred, isn’t it logical that it should impart third-degree impurity upon teruma?

⁵⁷ The Gemara challenges: This a fortiori inference can be refuted. What is unique about one who was ritually impure who immersed that day and is waiting for nightfall for the purification process to be completed is that prior to his immersion, he was a primary source of impurity. He therefore retains his stringent status even after immersion with regard to his capability of disqualifying teruma. The loaf, by contrast, has second-degree impurity from the outset, and should therefore be treated more lightly.

⁵⁸ The Gemara answers: Derive this halakha

⁵⁹ from one who immersed that day who was never a primary source of impurity, as he was rendered impure only through contact with a creeping animal, and nevertheless he disqualifies teruma upon contact.

⁶⁰ The Gemara continues to challenge the inference: What is unique about the impurity of one who immersed that day who was rendered impure through contact with a creeping animal is that this impurity can apply to either a person or a utensil, as people and utensils are capable of achieving purity through immersion, and within its type there can be a primary source of impurity. A loaf, however, is food, which can never be a primary source of impurity. It can only be rendered impure as a secondary source of impurity.

⁶¹ The Gemara answers: The halakhot of an earthenware vessel can prove that the fact that there are primary sources of impurity within its type is not a relevant factor. An earthenware vessel can never become a primary source of impurity, and nevertheless, if it is impure it disqualifies teruma upon contact.

⁶² The Gemara challenges: What is unique about an earthenware vessel is that unlike a loaf, it can render items impure or it can itself become impure from its airspace. An earthenware vessel is the

only vessel that does not require direct contact with another item in order to contract or transfer impurity, but can effect or contract impurity through its airspace.

⁶³ The Gemara answers: One who immersed that day can prove that being able to render items impure through airspace is not a relevant factor. Such an item disqualifies teruma, but imparts impurity only through direct contact and not through its airspace.

⁶⁴ And the derivation has reverted to its starting point. The aspect of this case is not like the aspect of that case and the aspect of that case is not like the aspect of this case, as each case has its own unique stringencies. However, their common denominator is that non-sacred food they come into contact with is permitted, i.e., is not rendered impure, but they disqualify teruma. Therefore, Rabban Yoḥanan ben Zakkai infers a fortiori that all the more so, a loaf that contracted second-degree impurity, which is disqualified, i.e., rendered impure, even if it is non-sacred, should also disqualify teruma with which it comes into contact. This was Rabban Yoḥanan ben Zakkai's logical a fortiori inference that led him to rule that a loaf of second-degree impurity status disqualifies teruma.

⁶⁵ And another generation, i.e., the later generation that Rabban Yoḥanan ben Zakkai predicted would deem teruma that came into contact with second-degree impurity pure, would refute this inference as follows: What is unique about their common denominator is that both cases have a stringent aspect that does not exist in other impure items.

⁶⁶ And Rabban Yoḥanan ben Zakkai maintained that teruma that came into contact with second-degree impurity is pure, as he would not refute an inference that is based on two sources due to the fact that both sources have a stringent aspect, since each source's stringency is not shared by the other.

⁶⁷ § It is taught in a baraita (Tosefta, Ḥagiga 3:18) that Rabbi Yosei said: From where is it derived with regard to sacrificial food with fourth-degree ritual impurity that it is disqualified although it is not capable of imparting impurity to other items?

⁶⁸ It is derived through logical inference: Just as one who is lacking atonement, e.g., a zav or leper who immersed at the conclusion of his period of impurity but has not yet brought an offering for his atonement, who is permitted to partake of teruma, nevertheless disqualifies sacrificial food if he comes into contact with it, so too, with regard to an item of third-degree impurity status, which disqualifies teruma and is therefore more severe than one who is lacking atonement, is it not logical that it should render sacrificial food with which it comes into contact as having fourth-degree impurity?

⁶⁹ The baraita concludes: And we have therefore derived that third-degree impurity applies to sacrificial food from an explicit verse in the Torah, and we have derived that fourth-degree impurity applies to sacrificial food by means of the above a fortiori inference.

⁷⁰ The Gemara asks: From where in the Torah do we derive that third-degree impurity applies to sacrificial food? The Gemara answers: As it is written: "And the flesh that touches any impure thing shall not be eaten" (Leviticus 7:19). Are we not dealing in the verse with meat that touches even an item of second-degree impurity? And the Merciful One states that it "shall not be eaten," indicating that it assumes third-degree impurity. Therefore, fourth-degree impurity can be derived by means of the a fortiori inference of Rabbi Yosei, as we stated above.

⁷¹ Rabbi Yoḥanan says: With regard to the reasoning behind the Distinguished Rabbi Yosei's a fortiori inference, I do not know what it is, as the response to his inference is right by its side: Food whose impurity came from contact with one who immersed that day can prove that a degree of impurity that disqualifies teruma does not necessarily impart fourth-degree impurity to sacrificial food, as this food disqualifies teruma upon contact, but it does not impart fourth-degree impurity upon sacrificial food.

⁷² As it is taught in a baraita (Tosefta, Teharot 1:4) that Abba Shaul says: With regard to one who immersed that day, until sunset he is treated as one who is impure with first-degree impurity vis-à-vis sacrificial food, in that he is able to render two items of sacrificial food impure and to disqualify one additional item. In other words, the first item of sacrificial food that he touches assumes the status of a second-degree impurity. A second item that comes into contact with the first one assumes third-degree impurity. A third item that comes into contact with the second assumes fourth-degree impurity and is therefore disqualified from being eaten, though it cannot impart impurity to other items.

⁷³ Rabbi Meir says: One who immersed that day is considered impure with second-degree impurity, even vis-à-vis sacrificial food, and as such renders only one item impure and disqualifies one additional item. And the Rabbis say: Just as he merely disqualifies teruma foods and teruma liquids, without transferring to them impurity that can then be transferred further, so too, he merely disqualifies sacrificial foods and sacrificial liquids. In other words, the impurity imparted by one who immersed that day can reach only third-degree impurity and not fourth-degree impurity, contrary to the opinion of Rabbi Yosei.

⁷⁴ Rav Pappa objects to Rabbi Yoḥanan's argument: From where is the presumption derived that Rabbi Yosei holds in accordance with the opinion of the Rabbis? Perhaps he holds in accordance with the opinion of Abba Shaul, who says that one who immersed that day is able to render two items of sacrificial food impure, and to disqualify one additional item.

⁷⁵ The Gemara answers: If it enters your mind that Rabbi Yosei holds in accordance with the opinion of Abba Shaul, he should have brought proof for the existence of a fourth degree of ritual impurity with regard to sacrificial food from the case of food whose impurity came from one who immersed that day, as follows:

⁷⁶ Just as with regard to food whose impurity came from one who immersed that day, while the one who immersed that day is himself permitted to consume non-sacred food, nevertheless you say that the food imparts fourth-degree impurity status upon sacrificial food, then with regard to food

⁷⁷ whose third-degree impurity came from contact with an item of second-degree impurity, in which case the item with the second-degree impurity is itself forbidden, i.e. impure, even if it is non-sacred food, isn't it logical to infer that it should be able to impart fourth-degree impurity upon sacrificial food?

⁷⁸ And if you would say that the reason Rabbi Yosei did not employ this a fortiori inference is because it can be refuted as follows: What is unique about one who immersed that day is that prior to his immersion he was a primary source of impurity, this cannot be, as Rabbi Yosei brought proof for the existence of a fourth degree of impurity from the case of one who has not yet brought an atonement offering, who was also a primary source of impurity prior to his immersion, and Rabbi Yosei clearly did not refute the proof due to this factor. Therefore, the reason Rabbi Yosei did not employ an a fortiori inference from the case of food that contracted impurity from one who immersed

that day is clearly that he disagrees with the opinion of Abba Shaul. Consequently, Rabbi Yoḥanan concluded that he cannot understand Rabbi Yosei's reasoning.

⁷⁹ § Rabbi Asi said that Rav said, and some say Rabba ben Isi said that Rav said: Rabbi Meir, and Rabbi Yosei, and Rabbi Yehoshua, and Rabbi Elazar, and Rabbi Eliezer all hold that an item of second-degree ritual impurity status cannot impart third-degree ritual impurity status to non-sacred items. Rav proceeds to prove this by attributing support from the rulings of each of these tanna'im.

⁸⁰ Rabbi Meir is of this opinion, as we learned in a mishna (Para 11:5): Anything that requires immersion in water by rabbinic law renders sacrificial food impure upon contact, with second-degree impurity, and disqualifies teruma, meaning that it renders the teruma itself impure, but not to the extent that the teruma can render other teruma impure. And anything that requires immersion in water by rabbinic law is permitted for non-sacred food and for the second tithe, i.e., it does not render these items impure. This is the statement of Rabbi Meir. But the Rabbis prohibit one who has this degree of impurity from partaking of the second tithe. From the fact that Rabbi Meir permits him to partake of the second tithe, it is inferred that he maintains that an item of second-degree impurity cannot impart third-degree impurity upon non-sacred items.

⁸¹ It is evident that Rabbi Yosei is of this opinion from that which we have stated above, that he derives that sacrificial food can contract fourth-degree impurity, because if he holds that non-sacred items can contract third-degree impurity, he should have derived through his a fortiori inference that there is fourth-degree impurity vis-à-vis teruma and fifth-degree impurity vis-à-vis sacrificial food, since each of these categories has a unique level of impurity.

⁸² Rabbi Yehoshua is of this opinion, as we learned in a mishna (Teharot 2:2): Rabbi Eliezer says: One who eats food with first-degree impurity assumes first-degree impurity. One who eats food with second-degree impurity assumes second-degree impurity. One who eats food with third-degree impurity assumes third-degree impurity. Rabbi Yehoshua says: One who eats food with first-degree impurity or food with second-degree impurity assumes second-degree impurity. One who eats food with third-degree impurity assumes second-degree impurity vis-à-vis sacrificial food, and he does not assume second-degree impurity vis-à-vis teruma.

⁸³ Eating an item with third-degree impurity is possible only in the case of non-sacred items, as eating impure teruma or sacrificial food is prohibited. However, generic non-sacred food cannot contract third-degree impurity at all. Therefore, the case of one who eats food with third-degree impurity refers specifically to non-sacred food items that were prepared as if their level of purity were on the level of the purity of teruma. By means of a vow, one can establish the purity status of non-sacred food items to be treated on the level of purity necessary for teruma.

⁸⁴ The Gemara infers from Rabbi Yehoshua's statement that yes, one is able to prepare items as if their level of purity were on the level of the purity of teruma; but one is not able to prepare items as if their level of purity were on the level of the purity of sacrificial food, and such items would not contract third-degree impurity.

⁸⁵ The Gemara concludes: Apparently, Rabbi Yehoshua holds that an item of second-degree impurity cannot impart third-degree impurity upon ordinary non-sacred items that were not prepared on the level of the purity of teruma.

⁸⁶ Rabbi Elazar is of this opinion, as it is taught in a mishna (Teharot 2:7): Rabbi Elazar says: The three of these are equal in their ability to impart ritual impurity to other items: An item of first-degree impurity, whether it is an item of sacrificial food, or of non-sacred food, or of teruma.

⁸⁷ With regard to sacrificial food, such an item renders impure two additional levels of contact, enabling the items that contracted ritual impurity from it to transfer that impurity to items that they in turn touch afterward. And it disqualifies one level afterward, imparting upon the food fourth-degree impurity, which cannot impart impurity to a fifth item.

⁸⁸ With regard to teruma, an item of first-degree impurity renders impure one additional level of contact, i.e., it imparts second-level impurity to teruma food with which it comes into contact, and that item in turn disqualifies one additional level afterward, as that teruma food imparts third-degree impurity upon teruma.

⁸⁹ And with regard to non-sacred food, an item of first-degree impurity merely disqualifies one additional level of non-sacred food. Evidently, non-sacred items cannot go beyond a second-degree impurity.

⁹⁰ Rabbi Eliezer also agrees with this principle, as we learned in a mishna (Ḥalla 2:8): Rabbi Eliezer says: Ḥalla can be taken from ritually pure dough on behalf of ritually impure dough. How so? If there are two batches of dough, one of which is pure and one of which is impure, one takes the required amount of dough for separating ḥalla for both of the batches from the pure dough when its ḥalla has not yet been separated for itself, and then places less than an egg-bulk of dough, which is not susceptible to becoming ritually impure due to its size, in the middle, between the impure dough and the pure dough set aside for being used as the separated ḥalla. This joins all of the dough together, so that one can fulfill the requirement to take dough for separating ḥalla from dough that is situated near the dough it comes to exempt.

⁹¹ And the Rabbis prohibit separating ḥalla in this manner.

⁹² And it is taught in a baraita that Rabbi Eliezer even allows the ritually pure dough placed in the middle to be as large as an egg-bulk, even though dough of that size is susceptible to the halakhot of ritual impurity.

⁹³ The Gemara now explains the reasoning of those who tried to prove from here that Rabbi Eliezer is of the opinion that second-degree ritual impurity cannot impart third-degree ritual impurity upon non-sacred items: They assumed that both this mishna and this baraita are referring to cases where the dough is of first-degree impurity. And furthermore, they assumed that all the tanna'im agree that non-sacred food that is untithed with regard to the obligation to separate ḥalla, as its ḥalla has not yet been separated, is not treated like ḥalla as far as its ability to contract third-degree ritual impurity. Rather, it is regarded as generic non-sacred food, which is susceptible only to second-degree impurity.

⁹⁴ Based on these assumptions the Gemara explains how these authorities understood the tannaitic dispute: What, is it not clear that Rabbi Eliezer and the Rabbis disagree with regard to the following matter: One Sage, Rabbi Eliezer, holds that an item of second-degree impurity cannot impart third-degree impurity to non-sacred items. Therefore, there is no problem placing an egg-bulk of pure dough in the middle, as although it will touch the impure dough and will thereby contract second-degree impurity, nevertheless it is unable to transmit impurity to the pure dough.

⁹⁵ And one Sage, i.e., the Rabbis, holds that an item of second-degree impurity can impart third-degree ritual impurity to non-sacred items. They therefore prohibit placing an egg-bulk of dough in the middle, as it will assume second-degree impurity status, which, in their opinion, can impart third-degree impurity status upon the pure dough.

⁹⁶ Rav Mari, son of Rav Kahana, said that the dispute can be understood differently: Everyone agrees that an item of second-degree ritual impurity cannot impart third-degree ritual impurity to non-sacred items. But here, the dispute concerns another matter, as they disagree with regard to the status of non-sacred food that is untithed vis-à-vis ḥalla, as its ḥalla has not yet been separated. One Sage, i.e., the Rabbis, holds that it is treated like ḥalla with regard to its ability to contract third-degree impurity, and one Sage, Rabbi Eliezer, holds that it is not treated like ḥalla and cannot contract third-degree impurity. Therefore, he permits separating ḥalla in this manner.

⁹⁷ And if you wish, say instead that they disagree with regard to a different issue: Everyone agrees that non-sacred food that is untithed with regard to ḥalla is not treated like ḥalla and cannot contract third-degree impurity, and that an item of second-degree ritual impurity cannot impart third-degree ritual impurity to non-sacred items. But here, they disagree with regard to whether or not it is permitted to cause ritual impurity to non-sacred food that is in Eretz Yisrael.

⁹⁸ One Sage, Rabbi Eliezer, holds that it is permitted to cause impurity to non-sacred food that is in Eretz Yisrael. Therefore, since the dough placed in the middle cannot impart third-degree ritual impurity status upon the dough designated for ḥalla, there is no reason to prohibit doing so. And one Sage, i.e., the Rabbis, holds that it is prohibited to cause impurity to non-sacred food that is in Eretz Yisrael. Therefore, although the dough of the ritually pure batch will not become impure, nevertheless the Rabbis prohibit separating ḥalla in this manner, as causing the dough in the middle to become impure is prohibited.

⁹⁹ § It is stated in the mishna: On that same day Rabbi Akiva interpreted one of the contradictory verses with regard to the amount of land surrounding the Levite cities as teaching that one may not travel beyond a two-thousand-cubit radius around his city limits on Shabbat. Rabbi Eliezer, son of Rabbi Yosei HaGelili, on the other hand, interprets the contradictory verses as referring to different types of land left for the Levites around their cities.

¹⁰⁰ The Gemara asks: With regard to what halakhic matter do they disagree? The Gemara answers: One Sage, Rabbi Akiva, holds that the halakha of Shabbat boundaries is mandated by Torah law, as he bases it on a verse; and one Sage, Rabbi Eliezer, son of Rabbi Yosei HaGelili, holds that the halakha of Shabbat boundaries is mandated by rabbinic law, and he therefore derives other matters from the verse.

¹⁰¹ § The Sages taught: On that same day Rabbi Akiva taught that at the time that the Jewish people ascended from the split sea they set their eyes on reciting a song of gratitude to God. And how did they recite the song? In the same manner as an adult man reciting hallel on behalf of a congregation, as his reading enables all who hear to fulfill their obligation, and the congregation listening merely recite after him the chapter headings of hallel. So too, by the sea, Moses said: “I will sing unto the Lord” (Exodus 15:1), and the people said after Moses: “I will sing unto the Lord.” Moses continued and said: “For He is highly exalted” (Exodus 15:1), and they said once again the chapter heading: “I will sing unto the Lord.”

¹⁰² Rabbi Eliezer, son of Rabbi Yosei HaGelili, says: The Jewish people sang just like a minor boy reciting hallel and the congregation who hear him repeat after him all that he says, word for word, as hearing the recital of a minor is insufficient for fulfilling one's obligation. So too, by the sea, Moses said: "I will sing unto the Lord" (Exodus 15:1), and the people said after Moses: "I will sing to the Lord." Moses said: "For He is highly exalted," and they said after him the same words: "For He is highly exalted."

¹⁰³ Rabbi Neḥemya says: They sang the song of the sea like a scribe, a cantor, who recites aloud the introductory prayers and blessings before Shema in the synagogue; as he begins by saying the first words of the blessing, and they repeat after him the initial words and continue reciting the rest of Shema together with him in unison. So too, in the song of the sea, Moses began and then everyone recited the entire song together with him.

¹⁰⁴ The Gemara asks: With regard to what do they disagree? The Gemara answers that they disagree with regard to the interpretation of the verse: "Then Moses and the children of Israel sang this song unto the Lord, and said, saying" (Exodus 15:1). Rabbi Akiva holds that the word "saying," which indicates that the people sang after Moses, is referring only to the first words of the song, which the people continually repeated: "I will sing unto the Lord" (Exodus 15:1).

¹⁰⁵ And Rabbi Eliezer, son of Rabbi Yosei HaGelili, holds that the word "saying" is referring to every single word, as they would repeat after Moses every word. And Rabbi Neḥemya holds that the phrase "and they said" (Exodus 15:1) indicates that everyone recited the song of the sea together, and the word "saying" means that Moses began singing the song first; and then the rest of the people sang the beginning after him and they all continued in unison.

¹⁰⁶ § The Sages taught in a baraita that Rabbi Yosei HaGelili taught: At the time that the Jewish people ascended from the sea they resolved to sing a song of gratitude to God. And how did they recite this song? If a baby was lying on his mother's lap or an infant was nursing from his mother's breasts, once they saw the Divine Presence, the baby straightened his neck and the infant dropped the breast from his mouth, and they recited: "This is my God and I will glorify Him" (Exodus 15:2). As it is stated: "Out of the mouths of babies and sucklings You have founded strength" (Psalms 8:3).

¹⁰⁷ Rabbi Meir would say: From where is it derived that even fetuses in their mother's womb recited the song at the sea? As it is stated:

¹⁰⁸ "In full assemblies, bless God, the Lord, you that are from the source of Israel" (Psalms 68:27), indicating that even children that are in the "source," i.e., their mother's womb, blessed God when they gathered at the sea.

¹⁰⁹ The Gemara asks: But the fetuses could not see, so how could they have honestly said: "This is my God and I will glorify him"? Rabbi Tanḥum says: Their mother's stomach was transformed for them like luminous crystal [aspaklarya], and they saw through it.

¹¹⁰ § On that same day Rabbi Yehoshua ben Hyrcanus taught that Job served the Holy One, Blessed be He, only out of love, as it is stated: "Though He will slay me, still I will trust in Him [lo]" (Job 13:15). The mishna continues that the word lo in the verse is ambiguous as to whether it is indicative of Job expressing his yearning for God or his lack thereof. The Gemara asks: Let us see whether this word lo is written lamed ales, and therefore its meaning is: I will not trust, or whether it is written

lamed vav, according to which its meaning is: I trust in Him. Why is there room for doubt with regard to the meaning of the verse?

¹¹¹ The Gemara counters: But is it true that anywhere that the word lo is written lamed ales, its meaning is: Not? If that is so, then in the verse: “In all their affliction He was [lo] afflicted” (Isaiah 63:9), where the word lo is written lamed ales, so too, does it mean: Not, i.e., God was not afflicted in the afflictions of the Jewish people?

¹¹² And if you would say that indeed that is the meaning of the verse, but isn’t it written in the continuation of that same verse: “And the angel of His Presence saved them,” which clearly indicates that God was concerned with their afflictions? Evidently, the word lo in that verse means: “In all their affliction He was afflicted.” Rather, is it not clear that lamed ales sometimes indicates this and sometimes indicates that? Therefore, the mishna had to derive the proper meaning of the word from another verse.

¹¹³ It is taught in a baraita (Tosefta 6:1) that Rabbi Meir says: It is stated with regard to Job that he was “God-fearing” (Job 1:1), and it is stated with regard to Abraham that he was “God-fearing” (Genesis 22:12). Just as the description “God-fearing,” which is stated with regard to Abraham, is referring to Abraham’s fearing God out of love, so too, the description “God-fearing” that is stated with regard to Job indicates that Job feared God out of love.

¹¹⁴ The Gemara asks: And with regard to Abraham himself, from where do we derive that he acted out of a sense of love? As it is written: “The offspring of Abraham who loved Me” (Isaiah 41:8).

¹¹⁵ The Gemara asks: What difference is there between one who performs mitzvot out of love and one who performs mitzvot out of fear? The Gemara answers: There is that which is taught in a baraita that Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar says: Greater is the one who performs mitzvot out of love than the one who performs mitzvot out of fear, as with regard to this one who acts out of fear, his merits endure for one thousand generations, and with regard to that one who serves God out of love, his merits endure for two thousand generations.

¹¹⁶ Proof of this assertion is that here it is written: “And showing mercy unto thousands of generations of those who love Me and keep My commandments” (Exodus 20:5), indicating that merits can last for thousands of generations for those who act out of love, and there it is written: “Know therefore that the Lord your God, He is God; the faithful God, Who keeps the covenant and mercy with those who love Him and keep His commandments for a thousand generations” (Deuteronomy 7:9). The first verse indicates that those who act out of love retain their merits for thousands of generations, whereas the second verse, which mentions only one thousand generations of merit, is referring to the merits of those who keep God’s mitzvot out of fear.

¹¹⁷ The Gemara asks: But there also, in the second verse, it is written: “The faithful God, Who keeps the covenant and mercy with those who love Him and keep His commandments for a thousand generations” (Deuteronomy 7:9). Why is the verse interpreted specifically with regard to those who worship God out of fear, yet it is written that they keep His mitzvot out of love? Both types of people seem to be indicated in both verses.

¹¹⁸ The Gemara answers: That verse, which mentions one thousand generations, is understood as referring to that which is adjacent to it. The phrase “for a thousand generations” is understood as referring those who perform mitzvot out of fear, as it is written immediately preceding the phrase

“and keep His commandments,” which does not mention love. And this verse, which mentions thousands of generations, is understood as referring to that which is adjacent to it: “Unto thousands of generations of those who love Me.”

¹¹⁹ It happened that there were these two students who were sitting before Rava, and one said to him: It was read to me in my dream: “How abundant is Your goodness, which You have laid up for those who fear You” (Psalms 31:20). And one said to Rava: It was read to me in my dream: “So shall all those who take refuge in You rejoice; they will forever shout for joy, and You will shelter them; let them also who love Your name exult in You” (Psalms 5:12). Rava said to them: You are both completely righteous Sages. One Sage, the second dreamer, serves God out of love, and one Sage, the first dreamer, serves God out of fear. Each Sage’s dream corresponded to his manner of serving God.

Chapter 6

¹ MISHNA: In the case of one who warned his wife not to seclude herself with a particular man and she subsequently secluded herself with the man she was warned about, even if he heard about it from a flying bird, or any other source whatsoever, he must divorce his wife. However, he must still grant her the money accorded to her by her marriage contract because there is no actual proof of her seclusion with the man in question. This is the statement of Rabbi Eliezer, who, as quoted in the first mishna of the tractate (2a), holds that there is no necessity for witnesses to testify with regard to the seclusion, and the woman becomes forbidden to her husband even in the absence of witnesses, by the husband’s word alone.

² Rabbi Yehoshua disagrees, as he did in the mishna (2a), and says: He does not divorce his wife in the absence of witnesses until the gossiping women who sit and spin thread by the light of the moon begin to discuss her behavior, as they share the gossip of the town. The Gemara earlier (6b) taught that a woman whose infidelity became subject to this public discussion can no longer be tested by the bitter water of a sota. Consequently, she must get divorced.

³ The mishna continues to list various possible testimonies concerning such acts of seclusion. If one witness said: I saw that she became defiled during her seclusion by engaging in sexual intercourse with that other man, she does not drink the bitter water, but rather, he divorces her immediately. And furthermore, even if the one who testified was a slave or a maidservant, neither of whom is generally regarded as a valid witness, they are deemed credible to testify to the wife’s adultery even to the extent that their testimony disqualifies her from receiving her marriage contract and prevents her from drinking the bitter water.

⁴ The mishna continues by listing women whose testimony is only partially accepted concerning this matter: Her mother-in-law, and her mother in-law’s daughter, and her rival wife, i.e., a second wife of the husband, and her yevama, i.e., her husband’s brother’s wife, and her husband’s daughter, all of whom are generally not deemed credible if they say anything incriminating pertaining to this woman due to the tumultuous relationships these women often have. They are all deemed credible to testify concerning the woman’s defilement while in seclusion, but are not deemed credible to the extent that

their testimony will disqualify her from receiving her marriage contract; rather, it is deemed credible to the extent that she will not drink of the bitter water of a sota.

⁵ This ruling allowing one witness's testimony with regard to defilement needs to be stated, as, by right, it should not have been deemed credible based on the following a fortiori inference: And just as if with regard to the first testimony concerning seclusion, which does not forbid her with an irrevocable prohibition, as the woman can be found innocent permitting her again to her husband by drinking the bitter water, is not established with fewer than two witnesses, since according to the mishna the testimony of seclusion requires two witnesses, then with regard to the final testimony concerning defilement, which forbids her to her husband with an irrevocable prohibition, is it not logical that it should also not be established with fewer than two witnesses?

⁶ Therefore, to counter this derivation, the verse states: "And there be no witness against her" (Numbers 5:13), teaching that any testimony with regard to defilement that there is against her is sufficient, and two witnesses are not required.

⁷ The Mishnah asks: And from now that it is established that one witness suffices to testify with regard to defilement, an a fortiori inference can be made with regard to the first testimony of seclusion: And just as if

⁸ concerning the final testimony of defilement, which forbids her with an irrevocable prohibition, yet it is established by one witness, then with regard to the first testimony, which does not forbid her with an irrevocable prohibition, is it not logical that it should be established with only one witness?

⁹ Therefore, to counter this derivation, the verse states: "When a man takes a wife, and marries her, and it comes to pass, if she finds no favor in his eyes, because he has found some unseemly matter [davar] in her" (Deuteronomy 24:1), and there, in the laws concerning monetary matters, it states: "At the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall a matter [davar] be established" (Deuteronomy 19:15), teaching that just as the "matter" stated there is established "at the mouth of two witnesses," so too, here the "matter" of her seclusion must be established "at the mouth of two witnesses."

¹⁰ The mishna discusses the halakha in a case where two single witnesses contradict each other concerning her defilement. If one witness says: She was defiled, and another witness says: She was not defiled, or similarly in the case of those normally disqualified from bearing witness, if one woman says: She was defiled, and another woman says: She was not defiled, she would drink the bitter water of a sota, due to the uncertainty engendered by the contradictory testimonies.

¹¹ Similarly, if one witness says: She was defiled, and two witnesses say: She was not defiled, she would drink the bitter water. However, if two would say: She was defiled, and one says: She was not defiled, the testimony of the two witnesses is accepted and she would not drink the bitter water, and the husband must divorce her.

¹² GEMARA: The Gemara questions why the mishna proves the need for two witnesses to testify about the seclusion based upon the verbal analogy of "matter" and "matter," if there is an explicit source in the Torah stating that two witnesses are required. This reason is given by the mishna: The verse states: "When a man takes a wife, and marries her, and it comes to pass, if she finds no favor in his eyes, because he has found some unseemly matter [davar] in her" (Deuteronomy 24:1), which

through a verbal analogy based on the word “davar” teaches the need for two witnesses, seems to be superfluous.

¹³ As, the mishna should have said in its place: The verse states: “She was defiled secretly and there was no witness [ed] against her [bah]” (Numbers 5:13), which is explained to mean there were not two witnesses, but only one, who testified concerning her defilement. One can infer from the term “bah,” which could also be understood as: With regard to it, that in this matter of defilement one witness suffices, but not with regard to the warning. Additionally, one can infer: With regard to it, but not with regard to the seclusion. Therefore, there must be two witnesses to testify about both the warning and seclusion.

¹⁴ The Gemara answers: That is also what the tanna of the mishna is saying. The source for the halakha that there is a requirement for two witnesses to testify about the seclusion is that the verse states: With regard to it, that in this matter of defilement one witness suffices, but not with regard to the warning. With regard to it, but not with regard to the seclusion.

¹⁵ The Gemara continues to explain the mishna: And concerning an ordinary accusation of defilement without a previous warning and without an act of seclusion with another man, from where do we derive that a single witness is not deemed credible? It is for this halakha that the mishna cites the verbal analogy: It is stated here: “Because he has found some unseemly matter [davar] in her” (Deuteronomy 24:1), and it is stated there concerning monetary matters: “At the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall a matter [davar] be established” (Deuteronomy 19:15). Just as the “matter” stated there with regard to monetary matters is clarified specifically by the testimony of two witnesses, so too, here with regard to adultery the “matter” of her defilement must be established by the testimony of at least two witnesses.

¹⁶ § The mishna taught: If one witness says: She was defiled, and another witness says: She was not defiled, she drinks the bitter water of a sota. The Gemara infers from this statement in the mishna that the reason the woman would drink the bitter water in this case is specifically because the second witness refutes his testimony, but if a second witness did not refute his testimony, then a single witness would be relied upon in this case and the woman would be forbidden to her husband forever.

¹⁷ From where are these matters derived? As the Sages taught in reference to the verse describing the circumstances in which a woman defiled through an act of adultery becomes prohibited to her husband, which states: “And a man lie with her carnally...and there be no witness [ed] against her” (Numbers 5:13); the verse is speaking of a lack of two witnesses. When the verse refers to the lack of an ed, written in the singular, it actually indicates that there are not two witnesses against her, but only one, as the baraita will now explain.

¹⁸ The baraita continues and asks: Do you say that the verse refers only to a case where there was not even one witness to the act of sexual intercourse, as the singular usage of the word ed would seem to indicate? The baraita now proves that the singular usage notwithstanding, elsewhere the word ed is used to indicate two witnesses, as the verse states: “One witness [ed] shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity or any sin that he sins; at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall a matter be established” (Deuteronomy 19:15).

¹⁹ The baraita infers a general principle from this verse by asking: By inference from that which is stated in the verse, even with the omission of the word “one”: “A witness shall not rise up against a man” (Deuteronomy 19:15), do I not know that it is referring to one witness, as the verse is written in

the singular form? What is the meaning when the verse states explicitly: “One witness,” being that it is obviously referring to only one witness? The baraita answers: This established a paradigm for the principle that every place where the word “witness [ed]” is stated in the Torah without specifying a number, there are two witnesses here, until the verse specifies that it is referring to only one witness, by writing the word “one.”

²⁰ The baraita returns to discuss the verse concerning a sota. And the Merciful One states: “There was no witness [ed] against her,” which therefore means that: There are not two witnesses to the sexual intercourse that could testify with regard to her, rather there is only one witness. The baraita completes its interpretation: Further in the verse it states: “And she was not taken in the act” (Numbers 5:13), indicating that the verse is referring to a case in which it is known that the woman had not been raped. This knowledge is based on the testimony of only one witness, as the verse had already stated that there were not two witnesses, and since one witness saw her willingly engage in sexual intercourse with another man, she is forbidden to her husband.

²¹ The Gemara asks: But since the baraita taught that by Torah law one witness is deemed credible to state that the woman is defiled, how can the other witness who denies the wife’s infidelity refute him with his conflicting testimony and enable the woman to drink the bitter water instead of becoming forbidden outright to her husband? But doesn’t Ulla say: Wherever the Torah relies on one witness, there is the equivalent of the testimony of two witnesses here. Consequently, the testimony of the contradicting witness should be insignificant, as the statement of one witness has no standing in a place where it is contradicted by two witnesses, for the witness testifying about her infidelity is deemed credible as if two witnesses had testified.

²² Rather, Ulla said: Teach the mishna in the following way: If one witness says: She was defiled, and another witness says: She was not defiled, she would not drink the bitter water. And likewise, Rabbi Yitzḥak said: She would not drink. But Rabbi Ḥiyya says in line with the standard text of the mishna: She would drink the bitter water even in the case of a contradiction between two single witnesses with regard to her infidelity.

²³ The Gemara asks: But for Rabbi Ḥiyya, how will he respond to the same difficulty due to the teaching of Ulla, who explained that when a single witness is deemed credible he is considered as two and cannot be contradicted by a single witness to the contrary? The Gemara answers: This is not difficult: Here, the mishna is discussing a case where both witnesses arrived in court and testified simultaneously, thereby canceling each other out. But there, Ulla’s principle, that whenever a single witness’s testimony is accepted it is considered as two and cannot be contradicted by a single witness testifying to the contrary, is referring to a case in which the two conflicting witnesses came to court and testified one after the other.

²⁴ But we learned in the mishna above that if one witness says: She was defiled, and two say: She was not defiled, she would drink the bitter water. The Gemara deduces from here: The implications of this statement are that the woman drinks only because the testimony of the incriminating witness was contradicted by two witnesses, but if there was one witness saying she was defiled and only one witness saying the opposite, she would not drink; this is a conclusive refutation of the opinion of Rabbi Ḥiyya.

²⁵ The Gemara answers: Rabbi Ḥiyya could have said to you: And according to your reasoning that she would not drink, say the latter clause of the mishna, which states: If two witnesses say: She was

defiled, and one says: She was not defiled, the testimony of the two witnesses is accepted and she would not drink the bitter water. But you should deduce from here that if there was one witness testifying to her defilement and one witness stating the opposite, she would drink the bitter water. This inference is in line with Rabbi Ḥiyya's explanation, and contradicts the inference from the previous clause.

²⁶ The Gemara explains: Rather, the correct understanding is that the entire mishna is not dealing with valid witnesses, and stating an obvious halakha in order to enable an inference, but with people who are disqualified from giving testimony, and is teaching us a novel ruling. And the mishna is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Neḥemya. As it is taught in a baraita (Tosefta Yevamot 14:1) that Rabbi Neḥemya says: Wherever the Torah relies on one witness, follow the majority of opinions. In other words, if the testimonies of two disqualified witnesses conflict, the court rules in accordance with the version supported by more witnesses, whether or not they are qualified to testify. And the Sages established that the testimony of two women, who are usually disqualified from testifying, when they testify in opposition to one man, should be like that of two men against one man, and the court will rule in accordance with the testimony of the two women.

²⁷ And some say that Rabbi Neḥemya actually stated something different: And there are those who say a different version of Rabbi Neḥemya's approach: Anywhere that one valid witness came initially, even one hundred women who later contradict him are considered like one witness, and do not override his testimony.

²⁸ And with what are we dealing here in the mishna? A case where a woman, who is generally disqualified from bearing witness, came initially, and testified that the woman committed adultery, and two witnesses say that she did not.

²⁹ And according to this interpretation you must amend the statement of Rabbi Neḥemya so that it reads like this: Rabbi Neḥemya says: Wherever the Torah relies on one witness, follow the majority of opinions. And the Sages established that two women against one woman are like two men against one man. But two women in opposition to one man that is a valid witness, is like half of a pair of witnesses and a half of a pair of witnesses, and the mishna did not address that case.

³⁰ The Gemara poses a question on these two interpretations of the mishna: And why do I need two cases in the mishna to teach the halakha that the majority opinion of those disqualified from bearing witness is followed? The Gemara explains: It is necessary, lest you say that when we follow the majority opinion in the case of invalid witnesses, this is to be stringent to force the woman to drink the bitter water, e.g., if one witness said that she committed adultery and two said that she did not, but to be lenient and absolve her from having to drink the water we do not follow the majority opinion, and she would still drink the water even if there is one witness saying that she did not commit adultery, therefore the mishna teaches us that there is no difference in this regard, and the majority opinion is followed in any case.

Chapter 7

¹ MISHNA: These are recited in any language, not specifically Hebrew: The portion of the warning and the oath administered by the priest to a woman suspected by her husband of having been

unfaithful [sota]; and the declaration of tithes, which occurs after the third and the sixth years of the seven-year Sabbatical cycle, when one declares that he has given his tithes appropriately; Shema; and the Amida prayer; and Grace after Meals; and an oath of testimony, where one takes an oath that he does not have any testimony to provide on a given issue; and an oath on a deposit, where one takes an oath that he does not have possession of another's deposit.

² And these are recited only in the sacred tongue, Hebrew: The recitation of the verses that one recounts when bringing the first fruits to the Temple; and the recitations which form an element of the ritual through which a yavam frees a yevama of her levirate bonds [ḥalitza]; the blessings and curses that were spoken on Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal; the Priestly Benediction; and the blessing on the Torah recited by the High Priest on Yom Kippur; and the portion of the Torah read by the king at the assembly on Sukkot at the conclusion of the Sabbatical Year; and the portion recited during the ritual of a heifer whose neck is broken, when a person is found killed in an area that is between two cities, and the murderer is unknown; and the speech of a priest who is anointed for war when he addresses the nation before going out to battle.

³ How is it derived that the recitation when bringing the first fruits is recited specifically in Hebrew? When the Torah discusses this mitzva it states: "And you shall speak and say before the Lord your God" (Deuteronomy 26:5), and below, in the discussion of the blessings and curses, it states: "And the Levites shall speak and say" (Deuteronomy 27:14). Just as there, the Levites speak in the sacred tongue, so too here, the recitation is in the sacred tongue.

⁴ How is it derived that the recitation at a ḥalitza ceremony must be in Hebrew? The verse in the Torah portion discussing ḥalitza states: "And she shall speak and say" (Deuteronomy 25:9), and below it states: "And the Levites shall speak and say" (Deuteronomy 27:14). Just as there, the Levites speak in the sacred tongue, so too here, the recitation is in the sacred tongue.

⁵ Rabbi Yehuda says: This can be derived from a different word in the verse: "And she shall speak and say: So shall it be done to the man that does not build up his brother's house" (Deuteronomy 25:9). The word "so" indicates that her statement is ineffective unless she says it in these exact words.

⁶ How did the ceremony of the blessings and curses take place? When the Jewish people crossed the Jordan River they came to Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, which are in Samaria alongside the city of Shechem, which is near the oaks of Moreh, as it is stated: "Are they not beyond the Jordan, behind the way of the going down of the sun, in the land of the Canaanites that dwell in the Arabah, over against Gilgal, beside the oaks of Moreh?" (Deuteronomy 11:30), and there it states: "And Abram passed through the land until the place of Shechem, until the oaks of Moreh" (Genesis 12:6). Just as the oaks of Moreh mentioned there with regard to Abraham are close to Shechem, so too, the oaks of Moreh mentioned here are close to Shechem.

⁷ Six tribes ascended to the top of Mount Gerizim and six tribes ascended to the top of Mount Ebal, and the priests and the Levites and the Ark were standing at the bottom in the middle, between the two mountains. The priests were surrounding the Ark and the Levites were surrounding the priests, and all the rest of the Jewish people were standing on the mountains on this side and on that side, as it is stated: "And all Israel, and their elders and officers, and their judges, stood on this side of the Ark and on that side before the priests the Levites that bore the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord" (Joshua 8:33).

⁸ The Levites then turned to face Mount Gerizim and opened with the blessing: Blessed be the man who does not make a graven or molten image (see Deuteronomy 27:15), and these people and those people, i.e., the two groups standing on either mountain, answered: Amen. Then they turned to face Mount Ebal and opened with the curse: “Cursed be the man who makes a graven or molten image” (Deuteronomy 27:15), and these people and those people answered: Amen. They continued in this manner until they completed reciting all of the blessings and curses.

⁹ And afterward they brought the stones as commanded in the Torah, and they built the altar and plastered it with plaster, and they wrote on it all of the words of the Torah in seventy languages, as it is stated: “And you shall write on the stones all the words of this law clearly elucidated” (Deuteronomy 27:8), indicating that it was to be written in every language. And they then took the stones from there and came

¹⁰ to Gilgal and slept in their lodging place.

¹¹ GEMARA: From where do we derive that the portion of the warning and the oath administered by the priest to a sota can be recited in any language? As it is written: “And the priest shall say to the woman” (Numbers 5:21), which indicates: In any language that he speaks.

¹² The Sages taught (Tosefta 2:1): The priest informs the sota in any language that she can hear and understand for what reason she must drink the bitter water of a sota, and from what vessel she will drink, on account of what actions she is considered to be defiled and in what way she defiled herself.

¹³ For what reason must she drink the bitter water? She must drink it on account of the matter of the warning given to her by her husband, and her subsequent seclusion. And from what vessel does she drink? She drinks from a mekeida, a simple vessel, of clay.

¹⁴ On account of what actions is she considered to be defiled? It is on account of matters of levity and immaturity. And in what way did she defile herself? The priest must explain to her that there is a difference between whether she acted unwittingly or intentionally, and whether she acted due to circumstances beyond her control, or whether she acted willingly. And why does all of this need to be explained to her? In order not to cast aspersions on the bitter water of a sota, as, if she committed adultery unwittingly or due to circumstances beyond her control, the water will not affect her.

¹⁵ From where do we derive that the declaration of tithes may be recited in any language? As it is written: “Then you shall say before the Lord your God: I have put away the hallowed things out of my house” (Deuteronomy 26:13). And derive a verbal analogy from the saying mentioned in this verse, and the saying mentioned in the verse with regard to a sota (Numbers 5:21), that one is permitted to recite the declaration of tithes in any language that he speaks.

¹⁶ Rav Zevid said to Abaye: But let us derive a verbal analogy from the saying mentioned in the verse: “And the Levites shall speak and say” (Deuteronomy 27:14). Just as there, the Levites recited the blessings and curses in the sacred tongue, so too here, one must recite the declaration of tithes in the sacred tongue.

¹⁷ Abaye answered: One derives a verbal analogy from the term saying in a verse where the word “say” appears alone and another instance where the word saying appears alone. And one does not derive a verbal analogy from the word saying when it appears alone, as it does in the verse about the declaration of tithes, and in a verse that mentions speaking and saying, such as the verse concerning the Levites.

¹⁸ The distinction between merely saying, and speaking and saying, is significant, as it is taught in a baraita that Rabbi Shimon ben Yoḥai says: A person should say his own praise in a soft voice, and say that which is to his discredit in a loud voice.

¹⁹ That one should say his praise in a soft voice is derived from the portion of the declaration of tithes, where one declares that he has acted appropriately, and the verse does not state: And you shall speak. That one should say that which is to his discredit in a loud voice is derived from the recitation of the first fruits, concerning which the verse states: “And you shall speak and say” (Deuteronomy 26:5), i.e., it should be recited loudly. The portion recited when bringing the first fruits details the hardships that the Jewish people suffered and denigrates Laban the Aramean, who is a progenitor of the Jewish people.

²⁰ The Gemara asks: But should one really say that which is to his discredit in a loud voice? But didn’t Rabbi Yoḥanan say in the name of Rabbi Shimon bar Yoḥai himself: For what reason did the Sages institute that the Amidah prayer should be recited in a whisper? So as not to embarrass transgressors who confess their transgressions during their prayer. There is proof that transgressors should not be embarrassed, as the verse detailing where different offerings are slaughtered does not differentiate between the place where a sin-offering is slaughtered and the place where a burnt-offering is slaughtered, so that it will not be recognized when one is bringing a sin-offering and the sinner will not be embarrassed. This shows that one should also say that which is to his discredit quietly.

²¹ The Gemara corrects the previous statement: Do not say that one should say that which is to his discredit in a loud voice; rather, say that one should publicize his pain in a loud voice. As it is taught in a baraita: It is derived from the verse: “And will cry: Impure, impure” (Leviticus 13:45), that a leper must publicize the fact that he is ritually impure. He must announce his pain to the masses, and the masses will pray for mercy on his behalf. And similarly, anyone to whom a painful matter happens must announce it to the masses, and the masses will pray for mercy on his behalf.

²² The Gemara returns to the aforementioned matter itself: Rabbi Yoḥanan said in the name of Rabbi Shimon bar Yoḥai: For what reason did the Sages institute that prayer should be said in a whisper? It is so as not to embarrass transgressors, as the verse does not differentiate between the place where a sin-offering is slaughtered and the place where a burnt-offering is slaughtered.

²³ The Gemara asks: But is there really no differentiation between the places where a burnt-offering and a sin-offering are sacrificed? But isn’t there a difference with regard to the place where the blood is sprinkled, as the blood of a sin-offering is sprinkled above, on the upper half of the altar, and the blood of a burnt-offering is sprinkled below, on its lower half? The Gemara answers: There, the priest is the one who knows what offering it is, but other people who are not standing there do not know.

²⁴ The Gemara asks: But isn’t there a visibly apparent difference between the two offerings, as a sin-offering is female and a burnt-offering is male? The Gemara answers: There, in the case of a sin-offering, its genitals are covered by the tail and therefore the gender of the animal is not plainly obvious.

²⁵ The Gemara asks: That works out well if one brings a female lamb for a sin-offering, as its long tail covers its genitals. However, if one brings a female goat, which does not have a long tail, what can be said? The Gemara answers: If one brings a female goat, there he is the one who embarrasses himself, as he should have brought a female lamb if he wanted to hide the fact that he sinned, and

instead he brought a female goat. It is therefore not necessary to be concerned about his embarrassment.

²⁶ The Gemara asks: With regard to a sin-offering that is brought for idol worship, for which it does not suffice to bring any animal that is not a female goat, as it is explicitly stated that in that case one must bring a female goat as a sin-offering, what can be said? The Gemara answers: There, due to the severity of the sin, let him go and be embarrassed, so that his sin will be atoned for through his embarrassment as well.

²⁷ § The Gemara continues its discussion of the recitations that can be stated in any language. From where do we derive that Shema may be recited in any language? As it is written: “Hear, O Israel” (Deuteronomy 6:4), which is homiletically interpreted to mean that it can be recited in any language that you can hear and understand.

²⁸ The Sages taught (Tosefta 7:7): Shema must be recited in Hebrew as it is written; this is the statement of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi. And the Rabbis say: It may be recited in any language.

²⁹ The Gemara asks: What is the reason for the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi? The verse states: “And these words, which I command you this day, will be upon your heart” (Deuteronomy 6:6). “Will be” means as they are, so shall they be. They should remain unchanged, in their original language.

³⁰ The Gemara asks further: And what is the reason for the opinion of the Rabbis? The Gemara answers: The verse states: “Hear, O Israel” (Deuteronomy 6:4), which they explain to mean that Shema must be understood. Therefore, one may recite Shema in any language that you can hear and understand.

³¹ The Gemara asks: But according to the Rabbis as well, isn’t it written: “And these words will be”? The Gemara answers: From that it is derived that one may not recite it out of order. One may not begin reciting Shema from the end, but only in the order in which it is written.

³² The Gemara asks: And from where does Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi derive the halakha that one may not recite it out of order? The Gemara answers: Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi derives it from an additional emphasis in the verse “And the words [hadevarim], which I command you this day, will be upon your heart.” The verse could have conveyed the same idea had it written: Words, without the definite article. However, it says the words, employing the definite article, teaching that it must be recited in the specific order in which it is written. And the Rabbis do not learn anything from the difference between “words” and “the words.”

³³ The Gemara asks: But according to Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi as well, isn’t the word “hear” written? The Gemara answers: He requires that for the halakha that you must have your ears hear that which comes out of your mouth, i.e., one must recite Shema audibly so he hears it while reciting it. And from where do the Rabbis derive that one must recite Shema audibly? The Rabbis do not accept this literal interpretation of the word Shema. Rather, they hold according to the one who says: One who recites Shema in a manner inaudible to his own ears has fulfilled his obligation. The Rabbis therefore interpret the word “hear” as referring to the language that one uses.

³⁴ The Gemara asks: Shall we say that Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi holds

³⁵ that the entire Torah may be recited in any language, as, if it should enter your mind to say that the entire Torah may be recited only in the sacred tongue and not in any other language, why do I need

that which the Merciful One writes: “And these words, which I command you this day, will be”? If in fact it is prohibited for one to recite any portion of the Torah in a language other than Hebrew, then prohibiting the recitation of Shema in a language other than Hebrew is superfluous. Since the Torah specifically requires Shema to be recited in Hebrew, it must be because the rest of the Torah may be recited in any language.

³⁶ The Gemara rejects this suggestion: This is not unquestionably so, as the phrase “and these words, which I command you this day, will be” is necessary in this case because “hear” is also written. Had it not said “and these words, which I command you this day, will be,” it would have been derived from the word “hear” that Shema may be recited in any language, in accordance with the opinion of the Rabbis. Therefore, the phrase “and these words, which I command you this day, will be” is necessary.

³⁷ The Gemara asks: Shall we say that the Rabbis hold that the entire Torah may be recited only in the sacred tongue and not in any other language? As, if it should enter your mind to say that the Torah may be recited in any language, why do I need that which the Merciful One writes: “Hear”? It is permitted for one to recite the entire Torah in any language, rendering a specific requirement with regard to Shema superfluous.

³⁸ The Gemara rejects this: The word “hear” is necessary in any case, because “and these words, which I command you this day, will be” is also written. Had it not been for the word “hear,” the Rabbis would have understood that it is prohibited to recite Shema in any other language, in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi. Therefore, the word “hear” is necessary.

³⁹ § It is stated in the mishna that the Amida prayer may be recited in any language. The reason for this is that since prayer is a request for divine mercy, one may pray in any way that one desires.

⁴⁰ The Gemara asks: But may prayer really be recited in any language? But didn’t Rav Yehuda say: A person should never request in the Aramaic language that his needs be met, as Rabbi Yoḥanan said that with regard to anyone who requests in the Aramaic language that his needs be met, the ministering angels do not attend to him, as the ministering angels are not familiar [makkirin] with the Aramaic language?

⁴¹ The Gemara answers: This is not difficult, as that statement of Rabbi Yoḥanan is referring to the prayer of an individual, who needs the support of the angels, whereas this statement of the mishna is referring to communal prayer.

⁴² The Gemara asks: And are the ministering angels not familiar with the Aramaic language? But isn’t it taught in a baraita (Tosefta 13:5): Yoḥanan the High Priest heard a Divine Voice emerging from the House of the Holy of Holies that was saying: The youth who went to wage war in Antokhya have been victorious. And there was another incident involving Shimon HaTzaddik, who heard a Divine Voice emerging from the House of the Holy of Holies that was saying: The decree that the enemy intended to bring against the Temple is annulled, and Gaskalgas, Caligula, has been killed and his decrees have been voided. And people wrote down that time that the Divine Voice was heard, and later found that it matched exactly the moment that Caligula was killed. The Gemara concludes: And this Divine Voice was speaking in the Aramaic language.

⁴³ The Gemara answers: If you wish, say that the Divine Voice is different, as its purpose is to communicate a message, and therefore it also communicates in Aramaic. And if you wish, say

instead that it was the angel Gabriel, as the Master said with regard to Joseph: Gabriel came and taught him seventy languages, as he knows all of the languages, as opposed to the other angels, who do not.

⁴⁴ § It is stated in the mishna that Grace after Meals may be recited in any language. As it is written: “And you shall eat, and be satisfied, and bless the Lord your God” (Deuteronomy 8:10). The word “bless” is homiletically interpreted to mean: In any language that you bless.

⁴⁵ It is stated in the mishna that an oath of testimony may be said in any language, as it is written: “And if anyone sins, in that he heard the voice of adjuration” (Leviticus 5:1). The emphasis on hearing in the verse is interpreted to mean that it can be recited in any language that a person hears, i.e., understands.

⁴⁶ It is stated in the mishna that an oath on a deposit may be taken in any language. This is derived by means of a verbal analogy from the word “sins” (Leviticus 5:21) that appears in the portion of an oath on a deposit, and the word “sins” (Leviticus 5:1) that is mentioned in the portion of an oath of testimony.

⁴⁷ § It is stated in the mishna: And these are recited only in the sacred tongue: The recitation of the verses that one recounts when bringing the first fruits to the Temple; and ḥalitza... How is it derived that the recitation when bringing the first fruits is recited specifically in Hebrew? When the Torah discusses this mitzva it states: “And you shall speak and say before the Lord your God” (Deuteronomy 26:5), and below, in the discussion of the blessings and curses, it states: “And the Levites shall speak and say to all the men of Israel” (Deuteronomy 27:14). Just as there, in the portion of the Levites, they speak in the sacred tongue, so too here, in the portion of the first fruits, the recitation is in the sacred tongue.

⁴⁸ The Gemara asks: And from where do we derive that the Levites themselves answered in Hebrew? The Gemara answers: It is derived from a verbal analogy between the word “voice” that appears here, in the portion of the blessings and curses, and the word “voice” in the verse that relates to Moses. It is written here: “With a loud voice” (Deuteronomy 27:14), and it is written there: “Moses spoke, and God answered him by a voice” (Exodus 19:19). Just as there, the Ten Commandments were stated in the sacred tongue, so too here, the Levites spoke in the sacred tongue.

⁴⁹ It is stated in the mishna: How is it derived that the recitation at a ḥalitza ceremony must be in Hebrew? The verse states: “And she shall speak and say: So shall it be done to the man that doth not build up his brother’s house” (Deuteronomy 25:9). Rabbi Yehuda derives this halakha from the phrase: “And she shall speak and say: So” (Deuteronomy 25:9). The Gemara asks: And what do the Rabbis do with, i.e., how do they interpret, this word “so”? They require it to teach that any matter detailed in the portion that is an action is indispensable to the ḥalitza ceremony, as the verse states: “So shall it be done.” However, the other aspects of the ritual, e.g., the recitations, are not indispensable, and in their absence the ritual is valid after the fact.

⁵⁰ And Rabbi Yehuda derives this halakha from the fact that the verse could have used the shorter form of the word so [ko], and instead uses the longer form of the word so [kakha]. He therefore derives both halakhot from this word. And the Rabbis do not learn anything from the difference between ko and kakha.

⁵¹ The Gemara asks: And what does Rabbi Yehuda do with this verse: “And she shall speak and say,” from which the Rabbis derive that the recitation at the ḥalitza ritual must be in Hebrew? The Gemara answers: He requires it in order to teach with regard to the Levites that they spoke in the sacred tongue. Whereas the Rabbis derive that the ḥalitza ritual is performed in Hebrew from a verbal analogy between the verses concerning ḥalitza and the verses about the Levites, Rabbi Yehuda derives that the Levites spoke in Hebrew due to this same verbal analogy, with ḥalitza serving as the source.

⁵² The Gemara asks: But let Rabbi Yehuda derive that the Levites spoke in Hebrew from a verbal analogy between the word “voice” that is written with regard to the Levites (Deuteronomy 27:14) and the word “voice” in the verse about Moses (Exodus 19:19). The Gemara answers: He learned the verbal analogy between “speak” and “speak” from his teacher, and he did not learn the verbal analogy between “voice” and “voice” from his teacher.

⁵³ That is also taught in a baraita: Rabbi Yehuda says: Every place where it is stated in the Torah: “So [ko],” or: “So [kakha],” or where the language of speaking and saying is used, it is referring only to the sacred tongue. The word ko appears in the context of the Priestly Benediction: “So [ko] you shall bless the children of Israel” (Numbers 6:23). Kakha appears in the context of the ḥalitza ceremony (Deuteronomy 25:9). The language of speaking and saying appears in relation to the Levites.

⁵⁴ § It is stated in the mishna: How did the ceremony of the blessings and curses take place? When the Jewish people crossed the Jordan River, etc. The Sages taught: When the Jewish people were in Transjordan, the location of Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal was described to them as follows: “Are they not beyond the Jordan, behind the way of the coming of the sun, in the land of the Canaanites that dwell in the Arabah, over against Gilgal, beside the oaks of Moreh?” (Deuteronomy 11:30). “Are they not beyond the Jordan” means farther west, beyond the Jordan River; this is the statement of Rabbi Yehuda. “Behind the way of the coming of the sun”; this is referring to the place where the sun rises, i.e., the east. In other words, they are at a distance from the Jordan River, which is in the east.

⁵⁵ “In the land of the Canaanites that dwell in the Arabah”; this is referring to Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, where the Samaritans now live. “Over against Gilgal”; this means near Gilgal. “Beside the oaks of Moreh”; this is referring to Shechem. And from where is it derived that this is Shechem? There, with regard to Abraham, the verse states: “And Abram passed through the land until the place of Shechem, until the oaks of Moreh” (Genesis 12:6). Just as the oaks of Moreh stated there are identified as Shechem, so too here, they are Shechem.

⁵⁶ It is taught in a baraita that Rabbi Elazar, son of Rabbi Yosei, said: In this matter, I proved the falsehood of the books of the Samaritans. I said to them: You forged your Torah by making additions to it, and you have not gained anything from it, as, you say that the oaks of Moreh is referring to Shechem, and we too concede that the oaks of Moreh is referring to Shechem. However, we derived this by means of a verbal analogy between verses. You, who do not use verbal analogies, how did you derive it?

⁵⁷ Rabbi Elazar disagrees with Rabbi Yehuda and says: “Are they not beyond the Jordan” means near the Jordan River, as, if it meant farther west beyond the Jordan, isn’t it written: “And it shall be when you have passed over the Jordan, that you shall set up these stones which I command you this day, on Mount Ebal” (Deuteronomy 27:4)? This implies that Mount Ebal was near the location where the Jewish people crossed the Jordan.

⁵⁸ “Behind the way of the coming of the sun,” according to Rabbi Elazar, is referring to the place where the sun sets, in the west. This is distant from Shechem, which is in the center of Eretz Yisrael. Furthermore, the verse states: “In the land of the Canaanites,” and Shechem is located in the land of the Hivites (see Genesis 34:2).

⁵⁹ Similarly, the phrase “that dwell in the Arabah” cannot be a description of the mountains known as Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal that are next to Shechem; aren’t they situated among mountains and hills? The description “over against Gilgal” is also difficult; they could not see Gilgal from Shechem, as it is far away. Rather, according to Rabbi Elazar, Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal mentioned in the Torah are located closer to the Jordan River. They are not the mountains known by the same names that are located near Shechem.

⁶⁰ Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya’akov says: The verse does not come to establish the location of Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal. Rather, it comes to show the Jewish people the way the second time, when they were entering the land of Canaan, like the way He showed them the first time, when they left Egypt and a pillar of cloud went before them and made the terrain easier to transverse. The purpose of the verse is to instruct the Jewish people how to enter the land of Canaan with relative ease, despite the absence of the pillar of cloud. The word “way” instructs them to go along a pre-established way, and not in fields and vineyards. The phrase “that dwell” instructs them to go in settled areas and not in the wilderness. “In the Arabah,” which means plain, teaches them to go in the plains and not over mountains and hills.

⁶¹ § The Sages taught (Tosefta 8:1): How did the Jewish people cross the Jordan? Every day the Ark would travel behind the two flags of Judah and Reuben, but on that day the Ark traveled in front, as it is stated: “Behold, the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord of all the earth is passing before you” (Joshua 3:11). On every other day, the Levites would carry the Ark, but on this day the priests carried it, as is stated: “And when the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the Ark of the Lord, the Lord of all the earth, shall rest” (Joshua 3:13).

⁶² It is taught in a baraita (Tosefta 8:2) that Rabbi Yosei says: In three different places the priests carried the Ark. They carried it when the Jewish people crossed the Jordan, and when they surrounded Jericho (Joshua 6:6), and when they returned it to its proper place in the Holy of Holies during the reign of King Solomon (I Kings 8:6).

⁶³ And once the feet of the priests were immersed in the water of the Jordan River, the water flowed backward, as it is stated: “And when those carrying the Ark came to the Jordan and the feet of the priests that bore the ark were dipped in the brink of the water, for the Jordan overflows all its banks all the time of harvest; and the waters that came down from above stood, and rose up in one heap” (Joshua 3:15–16). And what was the height of the water? Twelve mil by twelve mil, parallel to the size of the camp of the Jewish people who were passing through the Jordan. This is the statement of Rabbi Yehuda.

⁶⁴ Rabbi Elazar, son of Rabbi Shimon, said to him: According to your statement, does a person move faster or does water move faster? You must say that water moves faster than a person. If that is so, then before the camp of Israel crossed the river the water would come and drown them, as, after the water rose up to a height of twelve mil it then began flowing normally again.

⁶⁵ Rather, this teaches that the water gathered and rose in heaps upon heaps to a height of more than three hundred mil, until all the kings of the East and West saw it, as it is stated: “And it came to pass,

when all the kings of the Amorites, that were beyond the Jordan westward, and all the kings of the Canaanites, that were by the sea, heard that the Lord had dried up the waters of the Jordan from before the children of Israel, until they were passed over, that their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them anymore, because of the children of Israel” (Joshua 5:1).

⁶⁶ And even Rahab the prostitute said to Joshua’s messengers: “For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea before you” (Joshua 2:10). And it is written: “And as soon as we had heard it, our hearts melted, neither did there remain any more spirit in any man, because of you” (Joshua 2:11). Evidently, the Canaanites were still terrified due to the splitting of the Red Sea, although that had taken place years earlier and in a distant location. It is understood from here how terrified they became when a similar miracle occurred close to where they lived.

⁶⁷ While the Jewish people were still in the Jordan, Joshua said to them: Know for what purpose you are crossing the Jordan. It is in order to drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you, as it is stated: “And you shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you” (Numbers 33:52). If you will do so, then all is well, but if not, water will come and drown otikhem. The Gemara asks: What is the meaning of the word otikhem? The Gemara explains: It is a combination of the words me [oti] and you [etkhem].

⁶⁸ While they were still in the Jordan, Joshua said to them: “Pick up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel” (Joshua 4:5). And it is written: “That this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask in time to come, saying: What do you mean by these stones?” (Joshua 4:6). This will be a sign for the children that their ancestors crossed the Jordan.

⁶⁹ While they were still in the Jordan, Joshua said to them: “Take out of the midst of the Jordan, out of the place where the priests’ feet stood, twelve stones made ready, and carry them over with you, and lay them down in the lodging place, where you shall lodge this night” (Joshua 4:3). One might have thought that they were required to place these stones at each and every lodging place where they stayed. Therefore, the verse states: “Where you shall lodge this night,” meaning only on that night.

⁷⁰ Rabbi Yehuda says: Abba Ḥalafta, and Rabbi Eliezer ben Matya, and Ḥananya ben Ḥakhinai stood on those same stones that the Jewish people took from the Jordan, and they measured them and found that each and every one weighed about forty se’a. And it is learned as a tradition that a load that one can lift onto his shoulders is one-third of the weight of the load that he can carry when others load it onto him.

⁷¹ From here you can calculate the size of the cluster of grapes that the spies carried together from Eretz Yisrael, as it is stated: “And they carried it upon a pole between two” (Numbers 13:23). From the fact that it is stated that they carried the cluster of grapes “on a pole” do I not know that it was carried by two people? That is the only way it can be carried on a pole. What is the meaning when the verse states: “Between two”? It means that the spies carried it on two poles, and four people carried the cluster of grapes together. From here it can be deduced that the weight of the cluster was 480 se’a.

⁷² Rabbi Yitzḥak said: They were configured like upper rods of scales [turtanei] that are balanced on the lower rods of scales, i.e., there were not two but four poles. How so? Eight of the spies carried the cluster of grapes, one of them carried a pomegranate, and one carried a fig. Joshua and Caleb did

not carry anything. Why did Joshua and Caleb not carry anything? If you wish, say that it is because they were more prominent than the others and it was beneath their dignity to carry such a load. And if you wish, say instead that they did not take part in the wicked counsel of the spies, as the cluster of grapes was brought by the spies to scare the people.

⁷³ § Rabbi Ami and Rabbi Yitzhak Nappaḥa disagree with regard to the dispute between the tanna'im as to the height of the water when the Jewish people crossed the Jordan. One says: According to the statement of Rabbi Yehuda, that the water stood at the height of twelve mil,

⁷⁴ the Jewish people crossed in the same formation as they camped. It was necessary for the water to stand only twelve mil high to allow for the entire encampment to pass through the Jordan. According to the statement of Rabbi Elazar, son of Rabbi Shimon, who said the water stood at a height of over three hundred mil, the water had to reach these heights to allow for enough time for everyone to cross the Jordan, as they crossed one after the other.

⁷⁵ And one says: According to both this Sage and that Sage, they crossed in the same formation as they camped. However, one Sage, Rabbi Yehuda, holds that a person moves faster than water, and one Sage, Rabbi Elazar son of Rabbi Shimon, holds that water moves faster than a person does.

⁷⁶ § Since the Gemara mentioned the cluster of grapes that the spies brought back from Eretz Yisrael, it continues discussing the story of the spies. It is stated in the Torah that God told Moses: "Send you men" (Numbers 13:2). Reish Lakish says: "Send you" means that you should send them at your own discretion and not as a divine command. As, if it were a divine command, does a person choose a bad portion for himself? Since God knew the nature of these spies and that they would ultimately slander the land, He certainly would not have sent them Himself. And this is the meaning of that which is written in the passage where Moses retold the story of the spies: "And it was good in my eyes" (Deuteronomy 1:23), and Reish Lakish says: The implication of these words is that it seemed good "in my eyes," but not in the eyes of the Omnipresent.

⁷⁷ The Torah relates that the people asked Moses to send spies so "that they may search the land for us" (Deuteronomy 1:22). Rabbi Ḥiyya bar Abba says: When the Jewish people asked to send spies, their intention was only to shame Eretz Yisrael. It is written here: "That they may search [veyaḥperu] the land for us," and it is written there: "Then the moon will be embarrassed [veḥafera], and the sun will be ashamed" (Isaiah 24:23).

⁷⁸ The Torah states with regard to the spies: "And these were their names: Of the tribe of Reuben, Shammua the son of Zaccur" (Numbers 13:4). Rabbi Yitzhak says: This statement that follows is a tradition of ours that was passed down to us from our ancestors: The spies were named after their actions, but we have obtained the interpretation of only one name, the name of "Sethur the son of Michael" (Numbers 13:13). He is called Sethur, as he hid [satar] the actions of the Holy One, Blessed be He. In other words, he ignored the miracles that God performed for the Jewish people in Egypt and in the wilderness. He is called Michael, as he made Him, God, appear weak [makh] by saying that there was not enough food in the land for everyone.

⁷⁹ Rabbi Yoḥanan says: We can also say an interpretation of the name: "Nahbi the son of Vophsi" (Numbers 13:14): He is called Nahbi, as he concealed [heḥbi] the statement of the Holy One, Blessed be He, that the land is good, by delivering a distorted description of it. He is called Vophsi, as he stomped [pisse'a] on the attributes of the Holy One, Blessed be He, i.e., he did not believe in His promise to give Eretz Yisrael to the Jewish people.

⁸⁰ It is also stated with regard to the spies: “And they went up into the south, and he came to Hebron” (Numbers 13:22). Why is the phrase “and he came” written in the singular form? The verse should have said: And they came. Rava says: This teaches that Caleb separated himself from the counsel of the other spies and went and prostrated himself on the graves of the forefathers in Hebron. He said to them: My forefathers, pray for mercy for me so that I will be saved from the counsel of the spies.

⁸¹ The Gemara explains: Joshua did not go to the graves of the forefathers because Moses had already prayed for mercy for him, as it is stated: “And Moses called Hoshea son of Nun Joshua [Yehoshua]” (Numbers 13:16), meaning: God will save you [Ya yoshiakha] from the counsel of the spies. And this is the meaning of that which is written: “But My servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him, and has followed Me fully, him will I bring into the land where into he went” (Numbers 14:24), which implies that Caleb changed his mind over time. Joshua, however, was opposed to the intentions of the other spies from the outset.

⁸² The verse continues to state about Hebron: “And Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai, the children of Anak, were there” (Numbers 13:22). Ahiman was called by this name because he was the most skilled [meyumman] among his brothers. Sheshai was called by his name because he would turn the land that he treaded upon into ditches [sheḥatot] due to his large dimensions. Talmai was called this because he would turn the land that he treaded upon into furrows upon furrows [telamim] due to his weight.

⁸³ Alternatively, their names signify another matter: Ahiman is the one who built the city of Anat. Sheshai built the city of Alush. Talmai built the city of Talbush. The verse describes them as “the children of Anak” because they were so tall and large that it appeared as if they were wearing [ma’anikin] the sun as a necklace due to their height.

⁸⁴ The continuation of the verse states: “Now Hebron was built seven years [shanim] before Zoan of Egypt [Mitzrayim]” (Numbers 13:22). The Gemara asks: What is the meaning of the phrase “was built”? If we say that it was actually built seven years before Zoan, would a person build a house for his younger son before he builds one for his older son? Canaan was the youngest son of Ham, as it is written: “And the sons of Ham: Cush, and Mizraim, and Put, and Canaan” (Genesis 10:6). How then could Hebron, a city in the land of Canaan, have been built before Zoan, a city in the land of Egypt, occupied by the descendants of Mizraim?

⁸⁵ Rather, the meaning of the verse is that Hebron was seven times more fruitful [mevunna] than Zoan. And there is no stonier land in Eretz Yisrael than Hebron. This is evident because they would bury the dead there, just as the forefathers were buried there. This was done only in land that was not suitable for agriculture. And of all the lands, there is none of a higher quality than the land of Egypt, as it is stated: “Like the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt” (Genesis 13:10). And there was no higher-quality land in all of the land of Egypt than Zoan, as it is written with regard to Pharaoh’s ministers, who would certainly have lived on the finest land in the country: “For his princes are in Zoan” (Isaiah 30:4). And even so, Hebron was seven times more fruitful than Zoan.

⁸⁶ The Gemara asks: But is the land in Hebron in fact stony? But isn’t it written: “And it came to pass at the end of forty years, that Absalom said to the king: I pray, let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed to the Lord, in Hebron” (II Samuel 15:7)? And Rav Avya says, and some say that it was Rabba bar bar Ḥanan: This means that Absalom went to bring sheep specifically from Hebron. And it

is taught in a baraita (Tosefta, Menaḥot 9:3): One must bring the choicest animals to the Temple as offerings. Rams are brought from Moab, and sheep are brought from Hebron. This indicates that Hebron has rich land where fat and healthy sheep are raised. The Gemara answers: From this very source it can be proven that Hebron is not suitable for agriculture. Since the earth there is thin, it produces only grass for grazing and fattens the livestock.

⁸⁷ The verse states: “And they returned from spying out the land at the end of forty days.

⁸⁸ And they went and they came” (Numbers 13:25–26). Rabbi Yoḥanan says in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yoḥai: This verse likens their going to their coming. Just as their coming back was with wicked counsel, so too, their going to Eretz Yisrael was with wicked counsel.

⁸⁹ The Torah states: “And they told him, and said: We came to the land to which you sent us, and it also flows with milk and honey” (Numbers 13:27), and then it is written: “However the people that dwell in the land are fierce” (Numbers 13:28). Why did the spies praise the land and then slander it? Rabbi Yoḥanan says three statements in the name of Rabbi Meir, represented by the mnemonic device: Truth, alone, borrowing. The first statement answers this question: Any slander that does not begin with a truthful statement ultimately does not stand, i.e., it is not accepted by others.

⁹⁰ The verse states: “And Caleb stilled [vayyahas] the people toward Moses” (Numbers 13:30). Rabba says: This means that he persuaded them [hesitan] with his words. Vayyahas and hesitan share the same root in Hebrew.

⁹¹ How did he do so? Joshua began to address the people, and as he was speaking they said to him: Should this person, who has a severed head, as he has no children, speak to the people about entering Eretz Yisrael?

⁹² Caleb said to himself: If I speak they will also say something about me and stop me from speaking. He began to speak and said to them: And is this the only thing that the son of Amram, Moses, has done to us? They thought that he wanted to relate something to the discredit of Moses, and they were silent.

⁹³ He then said to them: He took us out of Egypt, and split the sea for us, and fed us the manna. If he says to us: Build ladders and climb to the heavens, should we not listen to him? “We should go up at once,” even to the heavens, “and possess it” (Numbers 13:30).

⁹⁴ The verses continue: “But the men that went up with him said: We are not able to go up against the people; as they are stronger than us” (Numbers 13:31). Rabbi Ḥanina bar Pappa says: The spies said a serious statement at that moment. When they said: “They are stronger,” do not read the phrase as: Stronger than us [mimmennu], but rather read it as: Stronger than Him [mimmennu], meaning that even the Homeowner, God, is unable to remove His belongings from there, as it were. The spies were speaking heresy and claiming that the Canaanites were stronger than God Himself.

⁹⁵ The spies said: “It is a land that consumes its inhabitants” (Numbers 13:32). Rava taught: The Holy One, Blessed be He, said: I intended the land to appear to consume its inhabitants for their own good, but they considered this proof that the land was bad. I intended it for their good by causing many people to die there so that anywhere that the spies arrived, the most important of them died, so that the Canaanites would be preoccupied with mourning and would not inquire about them. And there are those who say that God caused Job to die at that time, and everyone in Canaan was

preoccupied with his eulogy, and did not pay attention to the spies. However, the spies considered this proof that the land was bad and said: "It is a land that consumes its inhabitants."

⁹⁶ The spies said: "And we were like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and so were we in their eyes" (Numbers 13:33). Rav Mesharshiyya says: The spies were liars. Granted, to say: "We were like grasshoppers in our own eyes," is well, but to say: "And so were we in their eyes," from where could they have known this?

⁹⁷ The Gemara responds: But that is not so, as when the Canaanites were having the mourners' meal, they had the meal beneath cedar trees, and when the spies saw them they climbed up the trees and sat in them. From there they heard the Canaanites saying: We see people who look like grasshoppers in the trees.

⁹⁸ The verse states: "And all the congregation lifted up their voice and cried" (Numbers 14:1). Rabba says that Rabbi Yoḥanan says: That day was the eve of the Ninth of Av, and the Holy One, Blessed be He, said: On that day they wept a gratuitous weeping, so I will establish that day for them as a day of weeping for the future generations.

⁹⁹ The verse states: "But all the congregation bade stone them with stones" (Numbers 14:10), and it is written immediately afterward: "When the glory of the Lord appeared in the Tent of Meeting" (Numbers 14:10). Rabbi Ḥiyya bar Abba says: This teaches that they took stones and threw them upward as if to throw them at God.

¹⁰⁰ The verse states: "And those men who brought out an evil report of the land, died by the plague before the Lord" (Numbers 14:37). Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish says: This means that they died an unusual death. Rabbi Ḥanina bar Pappa says that Rabbi Sheila Ish Kefar Temarta taught: This teaches that their tongues were stretched out from their mouths and fell upon their navels, and worms were crawling out of their tongues and entering their navels, and worms were likewise coming out of their navels and entering their tongues. This is the painful death that they suffered. And Rav Naḥman bar Yitzḥak says: They died of diphtheria, which causes one to choke to death.

¹⁰¹ § The Gemara returns to discuss the entry of the Jewish people into Eretz Yisrael. And once the last one of the Jewish people ascended out of the Jordan, the water returned to its place, as it is stated: "And it came to pass, as the priests that bore the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord came up out of the midst of the Jordan, as soon as the soles of the priests' feet were drawn up unto the dry ground, that the waters of the Jordan returned to their place, and went over all its banks, as it had before" (Joshua 4:18). The Gemara understands that the priests who carried the Ark stood in the water until all of the Jewish people passed through the Jordan. Once all the Jewish people had reached the other side of the Jordan, the priests stepped back from the water and the Jordan returned to its natural state.

¹⁰² It follows that the Ark and its bearers and the priests were on one side of the Jordan, the east side, and the rest of the Jewish people were on the other side, the west side. Subsequently, the Ark carried its bearers in the air and crossed the Jordan, as it is stated: "When all the people were completely passed over, the Ark of the Lord passed on, and the priests, before the people" (Joshua 4:11).

¹⁰³ And over this matter Uzzah was punished for not taking proper care of the Ark, as it is stated: "And when they came to the threshing floor of Chidon, Uzzah put forth his hand to hold the Ark; for the oxen stumbled" (I Chronicles 13:9). The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to him: Uzzah, the Ark carried its bearers when it crossed the Jordan; all the more so is it not clear that it can carry itself?

¹⁰⁴ § The verse states: “And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error [hashal]” (II Samuel 6:7). Rabbi Yoḥanan and Rabbi Elazar disagreed over the interpretation of this verse. One says: God smote him for his forgetfulness [shalo], because he did not remember that the Ark can carry itself. And one says: God smote him because he lifted the edges [shulayyim] of his garment in front of the Ark and relieved himself in its presence.

¹⁰⁵ The verse states: “And he died there with the Ark of God” (II Samuel 6:7). Rabbi Yoḥanan says: Uzzah entered the World-to-Come, as it is stated: “With the Ark of God.” Just as the Ark exists forever, so too, Uzzah entered the World-to-Come.

¹⁰⁶ The verse states: “And David was displeased [vayyiḥar] because the Lord had broken forth upon Uzzah” (II Samuel 6:8). Rabbi Elazar says: Vayyiḥar means that his face changed colors and darkened like baked bread [ḥarara] from displeasure.

¹⁰⁷ The Gemara questions this statement: If that is so, anywhere that the word vayyiḥar is written, including when it is referring to God, should it be interpreted this way as well? The Gemara answers: There, it is written: “And the anger of the Lord was kindled [vayyiḥar af]” (II Samuel 6:7), whereas here, the anger [af] is not written, but only vayyiḥar. Therefore it is interpreted differently.

¹⁰⁸ Rava taught: For what reason was David punished with Uzzah’s death? He was punished because he called matters of Torah: Songs, as it is stated: “Your statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage” (Psalms 119:54).

¹⁰⁹ The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to him: Matters of Torah are so difficult and demanding that it is written: “Will you set your eyes upon it? It is gone” (Proverbs 23:5), i.e., one whose eyes stray from the Torah even for a moment will forget it, and you call them songs? For this reason I will cause you to stumble in a matter that even schoolchildren know, as it is written with regard to the wagons brought to the Tabernacle: “And to the descendants of Kohath he did not give, because the service of the holy things belongs to them; they carry them upon their shoulders” (Numbers 7:9). And although the Ark clearly must be carried on people’s shoulders, David erred and brought it in a wagon.

¹¹⁰ § When the Philistines returned the Ark during the period of Samuel, it is stated: “And He smote of the men of Beit Shemesh because they had gazed upon the Ark of the Lord” (I Samuel 6:19). The Gemara asks: Because they gazed upon it, God smote them? Why did their action warrant this punishment? Rabbi Abbahu and Rabbi Elazar disagreed with regard to the interpretation of the verse. One says that they were punished because they were reaping their crops and prostrating themselves at the same time; they did not stop working in reverence for the Ark. And one says that they also spoke denigrating words:

¹¹¹ Who angered you, i.e., the Ark, so much that you became so angry that you gave yourself into captivity? And who came to you to appease you?

¹¹² The verse states: “And He smote of the people seventy men, fifty thousand men” (I Samuel 6:19). Rabbi Abbahu and Rabbi Elazar disagree over the interpretation of the verse. One says that there were seventy men, and each and every one of them was equivalent to fifty thousand men. And one says that there were fifty thousand men, and each and every one was equivalent to the seventy men in the Sanhedrin.

¹¹³ With regard to David’s journey with the Ark to Jerusalem, the verse states: “And when they who carried the Ark of the Lord had gone six paces, he sacrificed an ox and a fatling” (II Samuel 6:13).

And it is written elsewhere that he sacrificed “seven oxen and seven rams” (I Chronicles 15:26). Rav Pappa bar Shmuel says: For each and every step David took, he sacrificed an ox and a fatling, and for every six steps that he took, he sacrificed seven oxen and seven rams.

¹¹⁴ Rav Ḥisda said to him: If that is so, and he sacrificed an offering for every step that he took, you have filled all of Eretz Yisrael with altars, as they had to build a new altar for each offering. Rather, Rav Ḥisda said: For every six steps he sacrificed an ox and a fatling, and for every six sets of six steps he sacrificed seven oxen and seven rams.

¹¹⁵ It is written that Uzzah died “when they came to the threshing floor of Chidon” (I Chronicles 13:9), and elsewhere it is written that it was “the threshing floor of Nacon” (II Samuel 6:6). Rabbi Yoḥanan says: At first the Ark was similar to a javelin [kidon], as it caused Uzzah’s death. But ultimately, after the people asked for forgiveness, it was established [nakhon], i.e., placed, in the house of Obed Edom, where it was a source of blessing.

¹¹⁶ § The Gemara returns to the discussion of how the Ark was brought into Eretz Yisrael. You are found saying that there were three sets of stones. One is a set that Moses erected in the land of Moab, as it is stated: “Beyond the Jordan, in the land of Moab, Moses took upon himself to expound [be’er] this law, saying” (Deuteronomy 1:5). And it states there with regard to the mitzva to erect the stones on Mount Ebal: “And you shall write on the stones all the words of this law clearly elucidated [ba’er]” (Deuteronomy 27:8). It is derived through a verbal analogy between the word “be’er” that appears with regard to Moses, and the word “ba’er” that appears with regard to the mitzva to write the Torah on the stones on Mount Ebal that Moses also wrote down the Torah on stones.

¹¹⁷ And there is one set that Joshua erected in the Jordan, as it is stated: “Joshua also set up twelve stones in the midst of the Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests that bore the Ark of the Covenant stood, and they are there to this day” (Joshua 4:9). And there is one set that Joshua erected in Gilgal, as it is stated: “And these twelve stones, which they took out of the Jordan, Joshua set up in Gilgal” (Joshua 4:20).

¹¹⁸ The Sages taught: How did the Jewish people write the Torah? Rabbi Yehuda says: They wrote it on stones, as it is stated: “And you shall write on the stones all the words of this law” (Deuteronomy 27:8). And afterward they plastered them over with plaster.

¹¹⁹ Rabbi Shimon said to him: According to your statement that they plastered over the writing, how did the nations of the world study Torah? He said to him: The Holy One, Blessed be He, granted them an extra degree of understanding, and they sent their scribes [noteirin], and they peeled off the plaster and copied it down. And on account of this matter their decree to be sent to the pit of destruction was sealed, as once the Torah was in their possession they should have studied it, and they did not study.

¹²⁰ Rabbi Shimon says: That is not what happened. Rather, the Jewish people wrote the text of the Torah on top of the plaster, and they wrote below for the gentiles to read that the verse commands the Jewish people to destroy the gentile inhabitants of Eretz Yisrael: “Lest they teach you to do like all their abominations” (Deuteronomy 20:18). You derive from the fact that they wrote this verse that if the gentiles who lived in Eretz Israel would have repented, the Jews would have accepted them, i.e., allowed them to live in Eretz Yisrael.

¹²¹ Rava bar Sheila said: What is the reason for the opinion of Rabbi Shimon? As it is written: “And the peoples shall be as the burnings of plaster” (Isaiah 33:12). This is homiletically interpreted to mean that the nations were punished on account of matters of plaster, i.e., they did not study the Torah that was written on plaster.

¹²² The Gemara asks: And how does Rabbi Yehuda, who holds that the Torah was not written on plaster, interpret this verse? The Gemara answers: He explains that the gentiles are like plaster; just as plaster has no remedy but burning, i.e., it is created by burning stone, so too, the nations of the world have no remedy other than burning in Gehenna.

¹²³ In accordance with whose opinion is that which is taught in a baraita: The verse states: “When you go forth to battle against your enemies, and the Lord your God delivers them into your hands, and you take them captive” (Deuteronomy 21:10), implying that there is no obligation to destroy them, to include not only gentiles who are not Canaanites, but even Canaanites that are living outside of Eretz Yisrael, as, if they repent, they are accepted and allowed to live in Eretz Yisrael.

¹²⁴ In accordance with whose opinion is the baraita? It is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Shimon, who holds that the verse: “You shall keep alive no one who breathes” (Deuteronomy 20:16), is not referring to the gentiles living outside of Eretz Yisrael, because there is no concern that the Jewish people will learn “to do like all their abominations” (Deuteronomy 20:18), as these Canaanites are not located in Eretz Yisrael.

¹²⁵ § The Gemara continues to discuss the entrance of the Jewish people into Eretz Yisrael: Come and see how many miracles were performed on that day: The Jewish people crossed the Jordan, and they arrived at Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, which are more than sixty mil from the river, and on that day no entity was able to stand before them. And anyone who stood before them was immediately struck with diarrhea, as it is stated: “I will send My terror before you, and will confound all the people that you encounter” (Exodus 23:27).

¹²⁶ And similarly, the verse says: “Terror and dread falls upon them; by the greatness of Your arm they are as still as a stone; till Your people pass over, Lord” (Exodus 15:16). This alludes to the first arrival of the Jewish people in Eretz Yisrael, during the period of Joshua. The verse continues: “Till the people that You have gotten pass over” (Exodus 15:16). This alludes to the second arrival, when the Jews returned to Eretz Yisrael from Babylonia after the destruction of the First Temple.

¹²⁷ Accordingly, say from now that the Jewish people were worthy of having a miracle performed for them during the second arrival, just like they were worthy of having miracles performed for them during the first arrival, but their sin caused them to enter Eretz Yisrael through a natural process, with the permission of the kings of other nations.

¹²⁸ The Gemara continues its description of the entrance into Eretz Yisrael during the period of Joshua: And afterward they brought the stones and built the altar on Mount Ebal, and plastered it over with plaster, and wrote on the stones all of the words of the Torah in seventy languages, as it is stated: “And you shall write on the stones all of the words of this law clearly elucidated” (Deuteronomy 27:8).

¹²⁹ And they sacrificed burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, and they ate and drank and celebrated, and they uttered the blessings, and they uttered the curses, and they took [kippelu] the stones with

them, and they arrived and slept in Gilgal, as it is stated: “And carry them over with you, and lay them down in the lodging place, where you shall lodge this night” (Joshua 4:3).

¹³⁰ One might have thought that they were required to place these stones at each and every lodging place where they stayed. Therefore, the verse states: “Where you shall lodge this night,” meaning only on that night. And it is written: “And those twelve stones, which they took out of the Jordan, Joshua set up in Gilgal” (Joshua 4:20).

¹³¹ It is taught in a baraita (Tosefta 11:10): The hornet [tzira] did not cross the Jordan with them. The Gemara asks: And did it not? But isn’t it written: “And I will send the hornet before you, which shall drive out the Hivites, and the Canaanites” (Exodus 23:28)?

¹³² Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish says: The hornet stood on the banks of the Jordan and threw its venom at the inhabitants of the land and it blinded their eyes from above and castrated them from below, as it is stated: “Yet I destroyed the Amorites before them, whose height was like the height of the cedars, and they were strong as the oaks; yet I destroyed their fruit from above, and their roots from beneath” (Amos 2:9).

¹³³ Rav Pappa said: There were two hornets. One was the hornet of Moses, which helped conquer the eastern side of the Jordan, and one was the hornet of Joshua. The hornet of Moses did not cross the Jordan, but the hornet of Joshua did cross.

¹³⁴ § It is stated in the mishna: Six tribes ascended to the top of Mount Gerizim, as it is stated: “Half of them in front of Mount Gerizim and the half of them in front of Mount Ebal” (Joshua 8:33). The Gemara asks: What is the meaning of the term “and the half of them”? It seems to be referring to a division that already existed. Rav Kahana says: The same way that the tribes were divided up here on the mountains, so too were they divided on the stones of the ephod, a garment of the High Priest.

¹³⁵ The Gemara raises an objection to this answer: The High Priest had two precious stones on the part of the ephod that rested on his shoulders, one on this side and one on that side, and the names of the twelve tribes were written on them, six on this stone and six on that stone, as it is stated: “Six of their names on the one stone, and the names of the six that remain on the other stone, according to their birth” (Exodus 28:10).

¹³⁶ It is derived from the verse that only the names on the second stone were written according to the order of their birth: Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Joseph, Benjamin. But the names on the first stone were not written according to the order of their birth, as Judah was written first, and afterward came Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Dan, and Naphtali. And there were fifty letters on the two stones of the ephod, twenty-five letters on this stone and twenty-five on that stone.

¹³⁷ Rabbi Ḥanina ben Gamliel says:

¹³⁸ The names of the tribes were not divided on the stones of the ephod the same way that they were divided in the list found at the beginning of the book of Numbers (Numbers 1:1–15). Rather they were divided the way that they were divided in the second book, i.e., Exodus (Exodus 1:2–4).

¹³⁹ How were they written? On one stone, the names of the sons of Leah were written in the order of their birth: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun. On the other stone the sons of Rachel were written. One, Benjamin, was written on this side, i.e., at the bottom of the list, and one, Joseph, was written on that side, i.e., at the top of the list. And the children of the handmaids, i.e.,

Billah and Zilpah, who were Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher, were written on the second stone in the middle.

¹⁴⁰ But rather, if their names were not written in the order of their births, then how do I establish the meaning of the phrase: “According to their birth” (Exodus 28:10)? It means that their names were written according to the names that their father, Jacob, called them, and not according to the names that Moses called them. On the stones it said Reuben, and not Reubenites; Simeon, and not Simeonites; Dan, and not Danites; Gad, and not Gadites. This baraita contradicts Rav Kahana’s opinion, as according to all of the opinions in the baraita, the division of the names on the ephod is not identical to the division of the tribes on Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal. The Gemara confirms: The refutation of the opinion of Rav Kahana is in fact a conclusive refutation.

¹⁴¹ The Gemara asks: Rather, what is meant by the phrase: “And the half of them facing Mount Ebal” (Joshua 8:33)? It is taught in a baraita: The use of the definitive article in the verse indicates that the smaller half of the Jewish people was on Mount Ebal. The half that was facing Mount Gerizim was larger than the half on Mount Ebal, because the tribe of Levi was included in the group that was facing Mount Gerizim, and they remained on the bottom between the two mountains.

¹⁴² The Gemara is puzzled by this statement: On the contrary, because the tribe of Levi remained on the bottom they were fewer in number. The Gemara answers: This is what the baraita is saying: Although the tribe of Levi was on the bottom, the descendants of Joseph were among them, and the tribe of Joseph was numerous, as it is stated: “And the children of Joseph spoke to Joshua, saying: Why did you give me a single lot and one part for an inheritance, seeing I am a great people, forasmuch as the Lord has blessed me thus, and Joshua said to them: If you are a great people, you should go up to the forest” (Joshua 17:14–15).

¹⁴³ The Gemara explains that Joshua said to them: Go and hide yourselves in the forests, so that the evil eye will not have dominion over you, as you are such a large number of people. The tribe of Joseph said to him: The evil eye does not have dominion over the offspring of Joseph, as it is written: “Joseph is a fruitful vine, a fruitful vine by a fountain” (Genesis 49:22), and Rabbi Abbahu says: Do not read the verse as saying: “By a fountain [alei ayin]”; rather, read it as: Those who rise above the evil eye [olei ayin], teaching that Joseph and his descendants are not susceptible to the evil eye.

¹⁴⁴ The Gemara cites an alternative source for the assertion that the evil eye holds no sway over Joseph and his descendants: Rabbi Yosei, son of Rabbi Ḥanina, said that it is derived from here: Jacob blessed Joseph’s children and said: “And let them grow [veyidgu] into a multitude in the midst of the earth” (Genesis 48:16). Just as with regard to fish [dagim] in the sea, waters cover them and the evil eye therefore has no dominion over them, so too, with regard to Joseph’s descendants, the evil eye has no dominion over them.

¹⁴⁵ The Gemara asks with regard to the baraita that contradicts Rav Kahana’s opinion: Are these names of the tribes, which were written on the ephod, composed of a total of fifty letters? There are only forty-nine. Rabbi Yitzḥak says: They added one letter to the name of Joseph [Yosef] when it was written on the ephod, as it is stated: “He appointed it in Joseph [Yehosef] for a testimony when He went forth against the land of Egypt” (Psalms 81:6).

¹⁴⁶ Rav Naḥman bar Yitzḥak objects to this: We require the names to be written “according to their birth,” and Joseph was not called Yehosef from birth. Rather, the explanation is as follows: Throughout the entire Torah, the name of Benjamin is written without a second letter yod between

the letters mem and nun, and here, where he is born, Benjamin is written in full, spelled with a second yod. As it is written: “But his father called him Benjamin” (Genesis 35:18). Therefore, his name was written on the ephod with a second yod, “according to his birth.”

¹⁴⁷ § Rav Ḥana bar Bizna says that Rabbi Shimon Ḥasida says: Joseph, who sanctified the name of Heaven in private, had one letter of the name of the Holy One, Blessed be He, the letter heh, added to his name. Whereas in the case of Judah, who sanctified the name of Heaven in public [befarhesya] at the Red Sea during the exodus from Egypt, merited that his entire name is called by the name of the Holy One, Blessed be He, as the entire four-letter name of God can be found within Judah’s name.

¹⁴⁸ The Gemara explains: What is the situation where Joseph sanctified God’s name in private? As it is written: “And it came to pass on a certain day, when he went into the house to do his work” (Genesis 39:11). Rabbi Yoḥanan says: This teaches that both Joseph and Potiphar’s wife stayed in the house, as they intended to perform a matter of sin. With regard to the phrase “when he went into the house to do his work,” Rav and Shmuel engage in a dispute with regard to its meaning. One says: It means that he went into the house to do his work, literally. And one says: He entered the house in order to fulfill his sexual needs with her.

¹⁴⁹ The verse continues: “And there was none of the men of the house there within” (Genesis 39:11). The Gemara asks: Is it possible that in such a large and important house like the house of that wicked man that no one was in there? The school of Rabbi Yishmael taught: That day was their festival day and they all went to their house of idol worship; and she told them that she was sick and could not go, as she said to herself: I have no day on which Joseph will attend to me like this day.

¹⁵⁰ The verse states: “And she caught him by his garment, saying: Lie with me” (Genesis 39:12). At that moment his father’s image [deyokeno] came and appeared to him in the window. The image said to him: Joseph, the names of your brothers are destined to be written on the stones of the ephod, and you are to be included among them. Do you desire your name to be erased from among them, and to be called an associate [ro’eh] of promiscuous women? As it is written: “But he who keeps company with harlots wastes his riches” (Proverbs 29:3), as he loses his honor, which is more valuable than wealth.

¹⁵¹ Immediately: “And his bow abode [teishev] firm” (Genesis 49:24). Rabbi Yoḥanan says in the name of Rabbi Meir: This means that his bow, i.e., his penis, returned [shava] to its strength, as he overcame his desire. The verse about Joseph continues: “And the arms of his hands were made supple” (Genesis 49:24), meaning that he dug his hands into the ground and his semen was emitted between his fingernails.

¹⁵² “By the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob” (Genesis 49:24): Who caused his name to be etched onto the stones of the ephod? It was only the might of Jacob. “From there, from the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel” (Genesis 49:24) means: From there, because of Joseph’s ability to withstand this trial, he merited to become a shepherd [ro’eh] of the Jewish people, as it is stated: “Listen, O Shepherd of Israel, who leads like the flock of Joseph” (Psalms 80:2).

¹⁵³ It is taught in a baraita: Joseph was deserving of having twelve tribes descend from him, the same as twelve tribes descended from his father Jacob, as it is stated: “These are the generations of Jacob, Joseph” (Genesis 37:2). This implies that everything that happened to Jacob was destined to happen to Joseph. However, he did not merit this because his semen was emitted from between his fingernails. And even so, the offspring that were meant to descend from him descended from his

brother Benjamin, who had ten sons. And they were all named after Joseph, as it is stated: “And the sons of Benjamin: Bela, and Becher, and Ashbel, Gera, and Naaman, Ehi, and Rosh, Muppim, and Huppim, and Ard” (Genesis 46:21).

¹⁵⁴ The Gemara explains how each name relates to Joseph: Bela was named after Joseph, who was swallowed [nivla] among the nations. And Becher received that name because Joseph was the firstborn [bekhor] of his mother, Rachel. And Ashbel received his name because God sent Joseph into captivity [shevao El] in Egypt. Gera was named after Joseph, who dwelled [gar] in a foreign land [akhsaneyut].

¹⁵⁵ And Naaman was called that because Joseph was extremely pleasing [na'im]. Ehi and Rosh received these names, as Benjamin said: Joseph is my brother [aḥi] and my leader [roshi]. Benjamin named his sons Muppim and Huppim, as Benjamin said: Joseph did not see my wedding canopy [ḥuppa] and I did not see his wedding canopy. And Ard was named after Joseph, who descended [yarad] to the lands of the nations of the world. Some say that the name Ard means that Joseph's face was similar in its beauty to a rose [vered].

¹⁵⁶ Rabbi Ḥiyya bar Abba says that Rabbi Yoḥanan says: When Pharaoh said to Joseph: “And without you no man shall lift up his hand or his foot in all the land of Egypt” (Genesis 41:44), Pharaoh's astrologers said: You will appoint a slave whose master bought him for twenty silver coins to rule over us? He said to them: I perceive royal characteristics [ginnunei malkhut] in him and see that he was not initially a slave.

¹⁵⁷ They said to him: If that is so and he is a child of royalty, he should know the seventy languages that all kings' children learn. The angel Gabriel then came and taught him the seventy languages, but he could not learn all of them. Gabriel then added one letter, the letter heh, to Joseph's name from the name of the Holy One, Blessed be He, and then he was able to learn the languages, as it is stated: “He appointed it in Joseph [Yehosef] for a testimony, when he went forth against the land of Egypt, the speech of one that I did not know I heard” (Psalms 81:6). And the next day, when he appeared before Pharaoh, in every language that Pharaoh spoke with him, he answered him.

¹⁵⁸ Joseph then spoke in the sacred tongue, Hebrew, and Pharaoh did not know what he was saying. Pharaoh said to him: Teach me that language. He taught him, but he could not learn it. Pharaoh said to him: Take an oath for my benefit that you will not reveal that I do not know this language. He took an oath for his benefit.

¹⁵⁹ Years later, when Joseph said to Pharaoh: “My father made me swear, saying” (Genesis 50:5) that I would bury him in Eretz Yisrael, Pharaoh said to him: Go request the dissolution of your oath. Joseph said to him: And should I also request dissolution for the oath that I took for your benefit? And consequently, even though Pharaoh was not amenable to letting Joseph go, he worried that Joseph would then request dissolution for the oath that he had taken for his benefit, and Pharaoh therefore said to him: “Go up and bury your father according to what he made you swear” (Genesis 50:6).

¹⁶⁰ § What was the incident where Judah sanctified God's name in public? As it is taught in a baraita that Rabbi Meir would say: When the Jewish people stood at the Red Sea, the tribes were arguing with one other. This one was saying: I am going into the sea first, and that one was saying: I am going into the sea first. Then, in jumped

¹⁶¹ the tribe of Benjamin and descended into the sea first, as it is stated: “There is Benjamin, the youngest, ruling them [rodem]” (Psalms 68:28). Do not read it as: “Ruling them [rodem]”; rather, read it as: Descending [red] into the sea [yam]. And the princes of the tribe of Judah were stoning them [rogmim otam] for plunging in first and not in the proper order, as it is stated in the continuation of the verse: “The princes of Judah, their council [rigmatam]” (Psalms 68:28).

¹⁶² Therefore, Benjamin the righteous was privileged to serve as host to the Divine Presence of the Almighty, as the Temple was built in the territory of Benjamin, as it is stated in Moses’ blessing for the tribe of Benjamin: “The beloved of the Lord shall dwell in safety by Him; He covers him all the day, and He rests between his shoulders” (Deuteronomy 33:12).

¹⁶³ Rabbi Yehuda said to Rabbi Meir: That is not how the incident took place. Rather, this tribe said: I am not going into the sea first, and that tribe said: I am not going into the sea first. Then, in jumped the prince of Judah, Nahshon ben Amminadab, and descended into the sea first, accompanied by his entire tribe, as it is stated: “Ephraim surrounds Me with lies and the house of Israel with deceit, and Judah is yet wayward toward God [rad im El]” (Hosea 12:1), which is interpreted homiletically as: And Judah descended [rad] with God [im El].

¹⁶⁴ And in this regard, the tradition, i.e., the Writings, explicates Nahshon’s prayer at that moment: “Save me, God; for the waters are come in even unto the soul. I am sunk in deep mire, where there is no standing...let not the water flood overwhelm me, neither let the deep swallow me up” (Psalms 69:2–3, 16).

¹⁶⁵ At that time, Moses was prolonging his prayer. The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to him: My beloved ones are drowning in the sea and you prolong your prayer to me? Moses said before Him: Master of the Universe, but what can I do? God said to him: “Speak to the children of Israel that they go forward. And you, lift up your rod and stretch out your hand” (Exodus 14:15–16).

¹⁶⁶ For this reason, because Nahshon and the tribe of Judah went into the sea first, the tribe of Judah merited to govern Israel, as it is stated: “Judah became His sanctuary, Israel His dominion. The sea saw it and fled” (Psalms 114:2–3). The baraita interprets the verses in this manner: What is the reason that Judah became His sanctuary and Israel came under His dominion? It is because “the sea saw it and fled.”

¹⁶⁷ § The Gemara returns to discussing the blessing and curses. It is taught in a baraita (Tosefta 8:9) that Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya’akov says: It is impossible to say that the tribe of Levi stood below, between the two mountains, as it is already stated that they were above, in the verse: “These shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people when you have passed over the Jordan: Simeon and Levi and Judah” (Deuteronomy 27:12). And it is impossible to say that they stood above on the mountain because it is already stated: “And all of Israel, and their elders and officers, and their judges, stood on this side of the Ark and on that side before the priests the Levites” (Joshua 8:33). This shows that the Levites stood below, between the mountains, with the Ark.

¹⁶⁸ How is this possible? Only the Elders of the priesthood and the Levites stood below, and the rest of the Levites stood above on the mountain. Rabbi Yoshiya says: Any Levite who was fit to serve in the Temple stood below, between the mountains, and the rest of the tribe, who were too young or too old to serve in the Temple, stood above on the mountain.

¹⁶⁹ Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi says: Both the Levites and the Israelites were standing below. They turned to face Mount Gerizim and opened with a blessing, and then they turned toward Mount Ebal and opened with a curse. Therefore, what is the meaning of the verse: “These shall stand on [al] Mount Gerizim to bless the people” (Deuteronomy 27:12)? “Al” means adjacent to the mountain but not actually on the mountain itself.

¹⁷⁰ As it is taught in a baraita that discusses the shewbread: “And you shall put pure frankincense on [al] each row” (Leviticus 24:7). Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi says: “Al” in this instance means adjacent to. Do you say that “al” means adjacent to, or perhaps it carries only its literal meaning of “on”? When it says in the verse: “And you shall screen the Ark [al haAron] with the curtain” (Exodus 40:3), the word “al” cannot mean on, as the curtain that separated the Sanctuary and the Holy of Holies was not placed on top of the Ark, but near it. Therefore, you must say that “al” means adjacent to.

¹⁷¹ § It is stated in the mishna: They turned to face Mount Gerizim and opened with a blessing: Blessed be the man who does not make a graven or molten image (see Deuteronomy 27:15), and these people and those people, i.e., the two groups standing on either mountain, answered: Amen. Then they turned to face Mount Ebal and opened with the curse: “Cursed be the man who makes a graven or molten image” (Deuteronomy 27:15), and these people and those people answered: Amen. The Sages taught (Tosefta 8:10): The blessings and curses include a general blessing for one who fulfills the entire Torah, and a particular blessing for each individual statement mentioned in the blessings and curses. Likewise, there is a general curse for one who does not fulfill the entire Torah and a particular curse for each individual statement. And for each of the blessings and curses there is a mitzva to learn and to teach, and to keep and to perform. Consequently,

¹⁷² every mitzva contains four aspects. Four general aspects and four specific aspects add up to eight. Eight blessings and eight curses add up to sixteen. And so too at Mount Sinai, and so too at the plains of Moab, as it is stated: “These are the words of the covenant that the Lord commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the covenant that He made with them in Horeb” (Deuteronomy 28:69). And it is written: “Observe therefore the words of this covenant” (Deuteronomy 29:8). It follows that between the three events where sixteen covenants were made, God established forty-eight covenants for each and every mitzva.

¹⁷³ Rabbi Shimon excludes Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal from this list because only some of the mitzvot were mentioned there, and he includes instead the covenant at the Tent of Meeting in the desert.

¹⁷⁴ The Gemara explains: And it is in the dispute between these tanna'im that they disagree, as it is taught in a baraita (Tosefta 8:11): Rabbi Yishmael says: General statements were said at Sinai, i.e., Moses received general mitzvot at Sinai, including the Ten Commandments. And the details of the mitzvot were explained to Moses at a later time in the Tent of Meeting. Rabbi Akiva says: Both general statements and the details of mitzvot were said at Sinai, and later repeated in the Tent of Meeting, and reiterated a third time by Moses to the Jewish people in the plains of Moab. Rabbi Shimon holds in accordance with his teacher, Rabbi Akiva, and counts Mount Sinai and the Tent of Meeting as two distinct places where all of the mitzvot were given.

¹⁷⁵ The baraita concludes: And there is no mitzva written in the Torah for which forty-eight covenants were not established.

¹⁷⁶ Rabbi Shimon ben Yehuda Ish Kefar Akko said in the name of Rabbi Shimon: There is no mitzva written in the Torah for which forty-eight covenants were not established 603,550 times, corresponding to the population of the Jewish people in the desert. This is because each member of the Jewish people received the covenant both for himself and as a guarantor for the rest of the Jewish people.

¹⁷⁷ Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi says: According to the statement of Rabbi Shimon ben Yehuda Ish Kefar Akko, who spoke in the name of Rabbi Shimon, there is no mitzva in the Torah for which forty-eight covenants were not established 603,550 times; it follows that for every one of the Jewish people there were 603,550 covenants.

¹⁷⁸ The Gemara asks: What is the difference between the statements of Rabbi Shimon ben Yehuda Ish Kefar Akko and Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi? What does the statement of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi add? Rav Mesharshiyya said: The matter of a guarantor and a guarantor for a guarantor is the difference between them. According to Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi, every Jew is not only rendered a guarantor for every other Jew, but he is also rendered a guarantor for every other Jew's responsibility as a guarantor. Therefore, according to his calculation, the number of covenants is multiplied again by 603,550.

¹⁷⁹ § Rabbi Yehuda ben Nahmani, the disseminator of Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish, taught: The entire passage of the blessings and curses is stated only in reference to an adulterer and adulteress.

¹⁸⁰ This is proved from the verse: "Cursed is the man who makes a graven or molten image" (Deuteronomy 27:15). Is a curse a sufficient consequence for the actions of an idol worshipper? He has rebelled against the fundamental tenet of the Torah. Rather, this is referring to one who engaged in sexual intercourse with a forbidden relative and bore her a mamzer son. And the son, who is not allowed to marry a Jew of unflawed lineage, went to live among the other nations of the world and engaged in idol worship. His father and mother are cursed for causing him to worship idols. Likewise, the rest of the curses refer to sins that are the result of adultery.

¹⁸¹ The Sages taught: "And you shall give the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal" (Deuteronomy 11:29). Why must the verse state this? If it is to teach that the blessing must be given on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal, it is already stated: "These shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people" (Deuteronomy 27:12), and it is written: "And these shall stand on Mount Ebal for the curse" (Deuteronomy 27:13). Rather, the verse teaches that the proclamation of the blessing must precede the curse.

¹⁸² One might have thought that all of the blessings should precede the curses. Therefore, the verse states "blessing" and "curse" in the singular, to teach that one blessing precedes each curse, but all of the blessings do not precede the curses. The blessings and curses were recited alternately, first one blessing and then one curse.

¹⁸³ And furthermore, the verse comes to juxtapose the blessing with the curse, to say to you that just as the curse is recited by the Levites, so too, the blessing is uttered by the Levites; and just as the curse is proclaimed loudly, so too, the blessing is proclaimed loudly; and just as the curse is proclaimed in the sacred tongue, Hebrew, so too, the blessing is proclaimed in the sacred tongue; and just as the curse is proclaimed both in general and in detail, so too, the blessing is proclaimed in general and in detail. And just as after the curse is uttered, both groups of people on each mountain respond and say amen, so too, after the blessing is uttered, both groups respond and say amen.

¹⁸⁴ MISHNA: How is the Priestly Benediction recited? In the country, i.e., outside the Temple, the priest recites the verses as three blessings, pausing between each verse while the people respond amen. And in the Temple, the priests recite all three verses as one blessing, after which the people respond: Blessed be the Lord, God, the God of Israel, from eternity to eternity, as is the customary response to blessings in the Temple. In the Temple, the priest utters the name of God

¹⁸⁵ as it is written in the Torah, i.e., the Tetragrammaton, and in the country they use its substitute name of Lordship. In the country, the priests lift their hands so they are aligned with their shoulders during the benediction. And in the Temple they lift them above their heads, except for the High Priest, who does not lift his hands above the frontplate. Since the Tetragrammaton is inscribed on it, it is inappropriate for him to lift his hands above it. Rabbi Yehuda says: Even the High Priest lifts his hands above the frontplate, as it is stated: “And Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them” (Leviticus 9:22).

¹⁸⁶ GEMARA: The Sages taught: The mitzva given to the priests: “So you shall bless the children of Israel” (Numbers 6:23), is that they bless them in the sacred tongue, Hebrew. Do you say that the benediction must be recited in the sacred tongue, or perhaps it may be recited in any language? The baraita answers: It is stated here, with regard to the Priestly Benediction: “So you shall bless,” and it is stated there, with regard to the blessings and curses: “These shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people” (Deuteronomy 27:12). There is a verbal analogy between these two usages of the word “bless”: Just as there, the blessings and curses were recited in the sacred tongue, as stated above (33a), so too here, the Priestly Benediction is recited in the sacred tongue.

¹⁸⁷ Rabbi Yehuda says: It is not necessary to derive this from a verbal analogy, as it says with regard to the Priestly Benediction: “Thus,” which means that it is not recited correctly unless they recite it in this exact language, as it is written in the Torah.

¹⁸⁸ It is taught in another baraita: “So you shall bless,” means while standing. Do you say that the benediction must be recited while standing, or perhaps it may even be recited while sitting? It is stated here: “So you shall bless,” and it is stated there, with regard to the blessings and curses: “These shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless.” Just as there, the blessing was recited while standing, so too here, the priests must recite the Priestly Benediction while standing.

¹⁸⁹ Rabbi Natan says: It is not necessary to derive this from a verbal analogy, as it says in the verse: “At that time the Lord separated the tribe of Levi to bear the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, to stand before the Lord to minister to Him and to bless in His name” (Deuteronomy 10:8). Just as a priest performs the Temple service while standing, so too, he blesses while standing. The Gemara asks: And from where do we derive that he performs the service itself while standing? As it is written: “To stand to minister in the name of the Lord” (Deuteronomy 18:5).

¹⁹⁰ It is taught in another baraita: “So you shall bless” means with lifted hands. Do you say that the priests must recite the benediction with lifted hands, or perhaps they may recite it without lifted hands? It is stated here: “So you shall bless,” and it is stated there, with regard to the dedication of the Tabernacle: “And Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them” (Leviticus 9:22). Just as there, Aaron blessed the nation with lifted hands, so too here, the Priestly Benediction is recited with lifted hands.

¹⁹¹ This halakha was difficult for Rabbi Yonatan to understand: If this halakha is derived from the dedication of the Tabernacle, then why not also say: Just as there, the High Priest was the one who

recited the blessing, and it was the New Moon, and the offerings that were brought were a communal service, so too here, the Priestly Benediction must be recited only by the High Priest, and on the New Moon, and when performing a communal service?

¹⁹² Rabbi Natan says: It is not necessary to derive from a verbal analogy that the Priestly Benediction is recited with lifted hands, as it says with regard to Aaron: “To stand to minister in the name of the Lord, him and his sons forever” (Deuteronomy 18:5). In this verse, his sons are juxtaposed with him. Just as Aaron recited the Priestly Benediction with lifted hands, so too, his sons recite the benediction with lifted hands. And furthermore, it is written “forever,” which indicates that it is referring not only to special occasions. And although the verse is not referring to the Priestly Benediction, the benediction is juxtaposed to the Temple service in another verse: “To minister to Him and to bless in His name” (Deuteronomy 10:8).

¹⁹³ And it is taught in another baraita: “So you shall bless the children of Israel” means the blessing should be recited with the ineffable name. Do you say that the Priestly Benediction must be recited with the ineffable name, or perhaps it is recited with only the substitute name, Adonai? The verse states: “So shall they put My name” (Numbers 6:27), which means My name that is unique to Me.

¹⁹⁴ One might have thought that even in the outlying areas, outside the Temple, this ineffable name is used. It is stated here, with regard to the Priestly Benediction: “So shall they put My name,” and it is stated there, with regard to the place one must sacrifice offerings: “The place that the Lord your God has chosen out of all your tribes to put His name there” (Deuteronomy 12:5). The verbal analogy teaches that just as there, the expression “to put His name there” is referring to the Temple, so too here, the mitzva of “so shall they put My name” applies in the Temple and not anywhere else.

¹⁹⁵ Rabbi Yoshiya says: It is not necessary to derive this halakha from the verbal analogy, as it can be derived from a verse. It says in the verse: “In every place where I cause My name to be mentioned I will come to you and bless you” (Exodus 20:20). Does it enter your mind that this verse literally means that the Divine Presence will be revealed everywhere? Rather, this verse must be interpreted by transposition. It must be reordered and read as follows: In every place where I will come to you and bless you, there I will cause My name to be mentioned. Rabbi Yoshiya explains that God is stating: And where will I come to you and bless you? In the Temple. Therefore, he derives: There, in the Temple, I will cause My name to be mentioned, but the ineffable name is not mentioned elsewhere.

¹⁹⁶ It is taught in another baraita: “So you shall bless the sons of Israel” (Numbers 6:23). I have derived only the halakha to bless the sons of Israel. From where do I derive the halakha of blessing converts, women, and emancipated slaves? The verse states immediately afterward: “You shall say to them,” meaning to all of the Jewish people.

¹⁹⁷ It is taught in another baraita: “So you shall bless,” means that the priests must recite the Priestly Benediction face-to-face with the congregation. Do you say that the Benediction must be recited face-to-face, or perhaps it is only recited with the faces of the priests facing the back of the necks of the congregation? The verse states: “You shall say to them,” face-to-face, like a person who is talking to another.

¹⁹⁸ It is taught in another baraita: “So you shall bless” means that the benediction must be recited out loud. Or, perhaps, is it recited only in a whisper? The verse states: “You shall say to them,” like a person who is talking to another.

¹⁹⁹ Abaye said: We have a tradition with regard to the prayer leader calling the priests to recite the Priestly Benediction: When there are two priests, he calls: Priests, but when there is one priest he does not call: Priest, as it is stated: “You shall say to them,” in plural, meaning to a minimum of two priests. And Rav Ḥisda said: We have a tradition that a priest calls: Priests, but an Israelite does not call: Priests, as it is stated: “You shall say to them,” which means that the saying

²⁰⁰ should be from them; one of the priests themselves should call: Priests. The Gemara concludes: And the halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Abaye, that when only one priest is present, the prayer leader does not call: Priest. And the halakha is not in accordance with the opinion of Rav Ḥisda, as an Israelite may also call: Priests.

²⁰¹ § The Gemara cites a mnemonic device for the statements of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi: Desires the benediction, platform, during the service, cup, recognize, derives benefit, from a heifer.

²⁰² Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi says: From where is it derived that the Holy One, Blessed be He, desires the Priestly Benediction? As it is stated: “So shall they put My name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them” (Numbers 6:27). This shows that God waits for the priests to bless the people, and only then He Himself blesses them. And Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi says: Any priest who blesses the people is blessed from Heaven, and one who does not bless the people is not blessed, as it is stated: “And I will bless those who bless you” (Genesis 12:3).

²⁰³ And Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi says: Any priest who does not ascend the platform to recite the Priestly Benediction violates three positive mitzvot: “So you shall bless,” “And you shall say to them” (Numbers 6:23), and “So shall they put My name” (Numbers 6:27).

²⁰⁴ Rav says: One need be concerned that a priest who does not ascend to recite the Priestly Benediction is perhaps the son of a priest and a divorced woman, or the son of a priest and a yevama who has performed ḥalitza [ḥalutza]. Perhaps he does not ascend to recite the Priestly Benediction because he is disqualified from the priesthood.

²⁰⁵ The Gemara comments: And they do not disagree. This statement of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi is referring to a case where he ascends periodically. Therefore, there is no reason to believe that he is disqualified from the priesthood, and the assumption is that he violates three positive mitzvot. Whereas that statement of Rav is referring to a case where one does not ascend to recite the Priestly Benediction even periodically, and therefore there is reason to suspect that he is disqualified from the priesthood.

²⁰⁶ And Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi says: Any priest who does not ascend the platform during the blessing of the Temple service recited in the Amida prayer may no longer ascend to recite the benediction, as it is stated: “And Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them; and he came down from offering the sin-offering, and the burnt-offering, and the peace-offerings” (Leviticus 9:22). Just as there, in the Tabernacle, Aaron lifted up his hands during the service, as evident from the fact that only after he blessed them does it say that he came down from sacrificing the offerings, so too here, in the Amida prayer, the Priestly Benediction is recited during the blessing of Temple service.

²⁰⁷ The Gemara asks: Is that so? But didn’t the priests Rabbi Ami and Rabbi Asi ascend after the blessing of the service? The Gemara answers: Rabbi Ami and Rabbi Asi would begin walking to the platform during the blessing of the service, but they would not arrive there until after the conclusion

of this blessing. And this is sufficient in accordance with what Rabbi Oshaya taught: They taught that a priest may not recite the benediction if he did not ascend the platform during the blessing of Temple service only in a case where he did not begin walking. But if he began walking before the prayer leader finished the blessing, he may ascend the platform even after he has finished the blessing.

²⁰⁸ And concerning this issue, we also learned in a mishna (Berakhot 34a): A priest who serves as prayer leader does not recite the Priestly Benediction, but if he is certain that he can lift his hands and recite the benediction, and then resume his prayer without becoming confused, he is permitted to do so. And we discussed it and raised the following difficulty: If he did not begin walking to ascend the platform during the blessing of the service, how is it permitted for him to recite the benediction? Rather, it must be explained that he moved slightly to show that he also wanted to ascend the platform. Here too, the statement of Rabbi Oshaya is referring even to a case where the priest uprooted himself slightly from his place during the blessing of the service.

²⁰⁹ And Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi says: One may give a cup of blessing to recite the blessing of Grace after Meals only to someone with a good eye, i.e., a generous person, as it is stated: “One who has a good eye will be blessed [yevorakh], for he gives of his bread to the poor” (Proverbs 22:9). Do not read it: “Will be blessed.” Rather, read it: Will bless [yevarekh].

²¹⁰ And Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi says: From where is it derived that even birds recognize miserly people and do not eat the food they have set in bird traps? As it is stated: “For in vain the net is spread in the eyes of any bird” (Proverbs 1:17).

²¹¹ And Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi says: Anyone who derives benefit from miserly people transgresses a prohibition, as it is stated: “Do not eat the bread of one who has an evil eye, and do not desire his delicacies, for as one that has reckoned within himself, so he is. He says to you: Eat and drink, but his heart is not with you” (Proverbs 23:6–7). Rav Naḥman bar Yitzḥak says: He transgresses two prohibitions, as it says “do not eat” and also “do not desire.”

²¹² And Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi says: When a person is found slain between two cities and it is not known who killed him, a heifer whose neck is broken is brought. This occurs only because of miserly people.

²¹³ As it is stated: “And they shall speak and say: Our hands have not shed this blood” (Deuteronomy 21:7). But did it enter our hearts to think that the Elders of the court are murderers? Why it is necessary for them to publicize that they did not kill him? Rather, they must declare: It is not so that this victim came to us and we dismissed him, and it is not so that we saw him and left him. In other words, he did not come to us and we in turn dismissed him without food, and we did not see him and then leave him without an escort. It is miserly people who do not provide others with food and cause them to travel to places where they might be murdered.

²¹⁴ § Adda said that Rabbi Samlai says: In a synagogue that is made up entirely of priests, everyone ascends the platform to recite the Priestly Benediction. The Gemara asks: If the entire congregation is composed of priests, for whom do they utter the blessing? Rabbi Zeira says: They say the blessing for their brethren who are in the fields.

²¹⁵ The Gemara asks: Is that so? But didn’t Abba, son of Rav Minyamin bar Ḥiyya, teach that the people who are standing behind the backs of the priests are not included in the Priestly Benediction?

The Gemara answers: That is not difficult. This is a case where the people are compelled to be in the fields because of their work, and they are therefore included in the benediction. Whereas that statement is referring to people who are not compelled to be away but still do not stand face-to-face with the priests. Consequently, they are not included in the benediction.

²¹⁶ The Gemara asks: But didn't Rav Shimi of Birte deShihorei teach the following baraita: In a synagogue that is made up entirely of priests, some of them ascend to recite the benediction and some of them answer amen?

²¹⁷ The Gemara answers: That is not difficult. That is a case where, if some of the priests recite the benediction, a quorum of ten priests still remains to receive the benediction and answer amen. Therefore, only some of the priests ascend to recite the benediction. By contrast, this case, which Rabbi Simlai was referring to, is a case where a quorum of ten does not remain to answer amen, so it is better for all of the priests to ascend and bless the people working in the fields.

²¹⁸ The Gemara returns to the matter itself cited above: Abba, son of Rav Minyamin bar Hiyya, taught: The people who are standing behind the priests are not included in the benediction.

²¹⁹ The Gemara raises several questions with regard to this statement: It is obvious that tall people standing in front of short people do not interpose between the priests and the shorter people with regard to the Priestly Benediction. Similarly, a chest or ark containing a Torah scroll does not interpose between the priests and the people. However, what is the halakha with regard to a partition? Come and hear an answer from what Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: Even an iron partition does not interpose between the Jewish people and their Father in Heaven; the people are included in the benediction.

²²⁰ A dilemma was raised before the Sages: What is the halakha in the case of people who are standing to the sides of the priests? Are they included in the blessing? Abba Mar bar Rav Ashi said: Come and hear an answer, as we learned in a mishna (Para 12:2) with regard to the halakha of sprinkling the waters of purification on vessels that contracted ritual impurity imparted by a corpse: If one intended to sprinkle the water forward

²²¹ and instead he sprinkled it backward, or if he intended to sprinkle the water backward and instead he sprinkled it forward, even if the water lands on vessels that require purification, his sprinkling is invalid. However, if one intended to sprinkle the water forward and instead he sprinkled it forward to the sides, his sprinkling is valid. It is derived from here that one's sides are considered as though they were in front of him.

²²² § Rava bar Rav Huna says: Once a Torah scroll has been opened, it is prohibited to converse, even about a matter of halakha. As it is stated: "And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was above all the people, and when he opened it, all the people stood up" (Nehemiah 8:5), and standing is referring to nothing other than silence, as it is stated: "And shall I wait, because they do not speak, because they stand still, and answer no more?" (Job 32:16). Rabbi Zeira said that Rav Hisha said: The prohibition against conversing is derived from here: "And the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law" (Nehemiah 8:3). They were not listening to any other voice.

²²³ And Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi says: Any priest who did not first wash his hands may not lift his hands to recite the Priestly Benediction; as it is stated: "Lift up [se'u] your hands in sanctity and

bless the Lord” (Psalms 134:2), which teaches that before reciting the benediction one must sanctify his hands by washing them.

²²⁴ § Rabbi Elazar ben Shammua was once asked by his disciples: To what do you attribute your longevity? He said to them: In all my days, I never made a shortcut [kappendarya] through a synagogue. Nor did I ever stride over the heads of the sacred people, i.e., I never stepped over people sitting in the study hall in order to reach my place, so as not to appear scornful of them. And I never lifted my hands for the Priestly Benediction without first reciting a blessing.

²²⁵ The Gemara asks: What blessing do the priests recite before the benediction? Rabbi Zeira says that Rav Ḥisda says: Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, Who has sanctified us with the sanctity of Aaron and commanded us to bless His people, Israel, with love.

²²⁶ The Gemara continues: When the priest begins walking to the platform to recite the benediction, what does he say? The Gemara answers: May it be Your will, Lord our God, that this blessing with which You have commanded us to bless Your people, Israel, shall not contain any stumbling block or iniquity. And when the benediction has been completed, when he turns his face away from the congregation, what does he say? Rav Ḥisda instructed Rav Ukva and taught him that this is what he would say: Master of the Universe, we have performed that which You decreed upon us. Do unto us

²²⁷ as You have promised us, namely: “So shall they put My name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them” (Numbers 6:27). “Look forth from your holy habitation, from heaven, and bless Your people, Israel” (Deuteronomy 26:15).

²²⁸ § Rav Ḥisda says: The priests who spread their hands open during the benediction are not permitted to bend the joints of their fingers until they turn their faces away from the congregation once they have completed the benediction. Rabbi Zeira says that Rav Ḥisda says: The one who calls the priests forward is not permitted to call out: Priests, until the response amen to the blessing of thanksgiving concludes from the mouths of the congregation, in order to ensure that everyone will hear the voices of the priests.

²²⁹ And for the same reason, the priests are not permitted to begin reciting the benediction until the statement of the caller, i.e., his announcement: Priests, concludes from his mouth. And the congregation is not permitted to answer amen until the blessing concludes from the mouths of the priests. And the priests are not permitted to begin reciting another blessing until the response amen to the previous blessing concludes from the mouths of the congregation.

²³⁰ And Rabbi Zeira says that Rav Ḥisda says: The priests are not permitted to turn away from the congregation after they have completed the benediction until the prayer leader begins saying the blessing of: Grant peace. And they are not permitted to uproot their feet and walk away from the platform until the prayer leader finishes saying the blessing of: Grant peace.

²³¹ And in a similar vein, Rabbi Zeira says that Rav Ḥisda says: The congregation is not permitted to answer amen to the blessing recited over the Torah reading until the blessing of the one reading from the Torah concludes from his mouth. And the reader is not permitted to begin reading from the Torah until the response amen to the preceding blessing concludes from the mouths of the congregation. And the translator is not permitted to begin the translation of the Torah reading until the reading of the verse from the Torah concludes from the mouth of the reader. And the reader is not permitted to begin reading another verse until the translation concludes from the mouth of the translator.

²³² Rabbi Tanḥum says that Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi says: The one who concludes with a reading from the Prophets [haftara] must first read several verses from the Torah. And Rabbi Tanḥum says that Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi says: The one who concludes is not permitted to conclude with a reading from the Prophets until the Torah scroll is furled.

²³³ And Rabbi Tanḥum says that Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi says: The prayer leader is not permitted to uncover the decorative covering of the ark in public, out of respect for the congregation. It is inappropriate to have the congregation wait while doing this.

²³⁴ And Rabbi Tanḥum says that Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi says: The congregation is not permitted to leave the synagogue after the Torah reading until the Torah scroll has been taken and prepared to be returned to its place, as the Torah scroll used to be stored near the synagogue. And Shmuel said: They may not leave until the Torah scroll is actually taken out of the synagogue, out of respect for the Torah scroll.

²³⁵ The Gemara comments: And they do not disagree about the halakha. Rather, they were discussing different situations. This statement of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi is referring to a case where there is another exit. When the Torah scroll is being taken out of one exit, people may leave through the other exit. However, that statement of Shmuel is referring to a case where there is no other exit, and therefore the congregation must wait until the Torah is carried out. Rava said: The Sage bar Ahina explained to me that this halakha is derived from the verse: “After the Lord your God you shall walk” (Deuteronomy 13:5), meaning that one must walk after the Torah scroll and not in front of it.

²³⁶ § The Gemara continues to discuss the Priestly Benediction. When the priests are blessing the people, what do the people say? Rabbi Zeira says that Rav Ḥisda says: For each blessing that the priests recite, they respond with a blessing from the Bible: “Bless the Lord, His angels, mighty in strength that fulfill His word, hearkening unto the voice of His word” (Psalms 103:20), “Bless the Lord, all of His hosts, His ministers that do His pleasure” (Psalms 103:21), and “Bless the Lord, all of His works, in all places of His dominion, bless the Lord, O my soul” (Psalms 103:22).

²³⁷ When the priests ascend a second time to bless the congregation during the additional prayer of Shabbat, what do the people say? It is not appropriate for them to repeat the same verses of praise that they recited previously. Rabbi Asi said: They say: “A song of ascents. Behold, bless you the Lord, all you servants of the Lord, that stand in the house of the Lord in the night seasons” (Psalms 134:1), “Lift up your hands in sanctity and bless the Lord” (Psalms 134:2), and “Blessed be the Lord out of Zion, Who dwells at Jerusalem. Hallelujah” (Psalms 135:21).

²³⁸ The Gemara asks: And let them also say the third verse that appears right after the first two blessings: “The Lord shall bless you out of Zion” (Psalms 134:3), as it is written in that same matter. Yehuda, son of Rabbi Shimon ben Pazi, says: Since they began with blessings of the Holy One, Blessed be He, they must end with a blessing of the Holy One, Blessed be He, rather than reciting this verse, which is a blessing for the Jewish people.

²³⁹ The Gemara asks: When the priests ascend to recite the Priestly Benediction during the afternoon prayer of a fast day, what do the people say? Rav Aḥa bar Ya’akov said: They say: “Though our iniquities testify against us, O Lord, work for Your name’s sake” (Jeremiah 14:7), “The Hope of Israel, its savior in times of trouble, why should You be a stranger in the land and as a wayfaring man that turns aside to tarry for a night?” (Jeremiah 14:8), and “Why should You be like a man overcome,

as a mighty man who cannot save? Yet You, O Lord, are in the midst of us, and Your name is called upon us; leave us not” (Jeremiah 14:9).

²⁴⁰ During the closing prayer [ne’ila] of Yom Kippur, which also includes the Priestly Benediction, what do the people say? Mar Zutra says, and some say that this was taught in a baraita: “Behold, surely thus shall the man who fears the Lord be blessed” (Psalms 128:4), “The Lord shall bless you out of Zion, and you shall see the good of Jerusalem all the days of your life” (Psalms 128:5), and “And see your children’s children. Peace be upon Israel” (Psalms 128:6).

²⁴¹ The Gemara asks: Where does the congregation say these verses during the Priestly Benediction? Rav Yosef says: They are said between each and every blessing. And Rav Sheshet says: They are said during the mention of the name of God in each of the three blessings.

²⁴² Rav Mari and Rav Zevid disagree about this matter. One says: The congregation recites one verse at a time, corresponding to the verse that the priests recite. And one says: For every single verse that the priests recite, the congregation says all three verses.

²⁴³ Rabbi Ḥiyya bar Abba says: Anyone who recites these verses in the outlying areas, i.e., outside the Temple, is nothing other than mistaken in his practice. Rabbi Ḥanina bar Pappa said: You should know that in the Temple also people should not recite these verses. Do you have a servant who is being blessed and does not listen to the blessing, but rather speaks at the same time?

²⁴⁴ Conversely, Rabbi Aḥa bar Ḥanina says: You should know that in the outlying areas one is also required to say these verses. Is there a servant who is being blessed and his face does not brighten? Therefore, one must recite these verses to give thanks for receiving the Priestly Benediction. Rabbi Abbahu says: At first, I would recite these verses, but since I saw that Rabbi Abba of Akko does not say them, I also do not recite them anymore.

²⁴⁵ And Rabbi Abbahu says: At first, I would say to myself that I was humble. Since I saw that Rabbi Abba of Akko himself stated one reason for a matter, and his interpreter stated one other reason of his own rather than delivering the reason that Rabbi Abba stated, and yet Rabbi Abba did not mind, I say to myself that I am not humble.

²⁴⁶ The Gemara asks: And what was the humility of Rabbi Abbahu? The Gemara relates that Rabbi Abbahu’s interpreter’s wife said to Rabbi Abbahu’s wife: This one of ours, i.e., my husband, has no need for your husband Rabbi Abbahu, as he could teach everything on his own. And the fact that he bends over to listen to Rabbi Abbahu, and then stands up above him, and repeats his words to the congregants is merely to show respect for him. Rabbi Abbahu’s wife went and told this to Rabbi Abbahu. He said to her: And what difference does it make to you? Through me and through him the One above will be exalted, and it does not matter which one of us is teaching.

²⁴⁷ And furthermore, in another example of his humility, the Sages were counted and reached a decision to appoint Rabbi Abbahu to be the head of the yeshiva. Since he saw that Rabbi Abba of Akko had many creditors and was impoverished, he attempted to get him out of debt. He said to them: There is a man who is greater than me, Rabbi Abba.

²⁴⁸ The Gemara relates another example of his humility: Rabbi Abbahu and Rabbi Ḥiyya bar Abba happened to come to a certain place. Rabbi Abbahu taught matters of aggada, and at the same time Rabbi Ḥiyya bar Abba taught halakha. Everyone left Rabbi Ḥiyya bar Abba and went to Rabbi Abbahu, and Rabbi Ḥiyya was offended. Rabbi Abbahu said to him, to appease him: I will tell you a

parable: To what is this matter comparable? It is comparable to two people, one who sells precious stones and one who sells small items [sidkit]. Upon whom do the customers spring? Don't they spring upon the one who sells small items? Similarly, you teach lofty and important matters that do not attract many people. Everyone comes to me because I teach minor matters.

²⁴⁹ The Gemara relates that every day Rabbi Ḥiyya bar Abba would escort Rabbi Abbahu to his lodging place [ushpizei] out of respect for the house of the emperor, with which Rabbi Abbahu was associated. On that day, Rabbi Abbahu escorted Rabbi Ḥiyya bar Abba to his lodging place, and even so, Rabbi Ḥiyya bar Abba's mind was not at ease with Rabbi Abbahu and he felt insulted.

²⁵⁰ § The Gemara returns to discuss the response of the congregants to certain parts of the prayer service. While the prayer leader is reciting the blessing of: We give thanks, what do the people say? Rav says that they say: We give thanks to You, Lord our God, for the merit of giving thanks to You. And Shmuel says that one should say: God of all living flesh, for the merit of giving thanks to You. Rabbi Simai says that one should say: Our Creator, Who created everything in the beginning, for the merit of giving thanks to You. The Sages of Neharde'a say in the name of Rabbi Simai that one should say: We offer blessings and praises to Your great name, for You have given us life and sustained us, for giving thanks to You. Rav Aḥa bar Ya'akov would finish the blessing as follows: So may You give us life, and show us favor, and collect us, and gather our exiles into Your sacred courtyards, in order to observe Your laws and to fulfill Your will wholeheartedly, for giving thanks to You.

²⁵¹ Rav Pappa said: These Sages each added a different element to the prayer. Therefore, we should combine them together and recite all of them.

²⁵² § Rabbi Yitzḥak says: The awe of the public should always be upon you, i.e., one must always treat the public courteously. As when the priests bless the people they face the people and their backs are toward the Divine Presence, out of respect for the congregation.

²⁵³ Rav Naḥman said that this principle is derived from here: "Then King David stood up upon his feet, and said: Hear me, my brethren, and my people" (I Chronicles 28:2). Evidently, King David stood up to address the people rather than remain seated. If he said "my brethren," why did he say "my people"? And if he said "my people" why did he say "my brethren"? Rabbi Elazar says: David said to the Jewish people: If you listen to me, you are my brethren. And if you do not listen to me willingly, you are my people and I am your king, and I will rule over you by force with a staff. This shows that if the nation acted properly, David would relate to them respectfully.

²⁵⁴ The Sages say that the importance of showing respect for the congregation is derived from here: The halakha is that the priests are not permitted to ascend the platform to recite the benediction in their sandals, as is taught in a baraita. And this halakha is one of nine ordinances that Rabban Yoḥanan ben Zakkai instituted. What is the reason for this ordinance? Is it not out of respect for the congregation, as it would be disrespectful for the priests to display their dirty sandals in front of the congregants? Rav Ashi said: No, this is not the reason. There, in the baraita, the reason is a concern lest a strap of his sandal break, and he will therefore return to his place to go tie it and not ascend the platform in time for the benediction, and people will say that he was removed from the platform because he is disqualified from the priesthood, as he is the son of a priest and a divorced woman or the son of a priest and a ḥalutza.

²⁵⁵ § It is taught in the mishna: And in the Temple, the priests recite the three verses as one blessing.

²⁵⁶ The Gemara asks: And why does the practice in the Temple differ so much from outside the Temple? Because one does not answer amen in the Temple, and therefore there is no pause between the blessings.

²⁵⁷ The Sages taught: From where is it derived that one does not answer amen in the Temple? As it is stated: “Stand up and bless the Lord, your God, from everlasting to everlasting” (Nehemiah 9:5). This blessing is recited instead of amen in the Temple. And from where is it derived that for each and every blessing in the Temple the people respond with these words of praise? As it is stated: “And let them say: Blessed be Your glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise” (Nehemiah 9:5). This verse indicates that for each and every blessing, you should give Him praise. However, those present do not respond amen.

²⁵⁸ MISHNA: How are the blessings of the High Priest recited on Yom Kippur? The synagogue attendant takes a Torah scroll and gives it to the head of the synagogue that stands on the Temple Mount, and the head of the synagogue gives it to the deputy High Priest, and the deputy High Priest gives it to the High Priest.

²⁵⁹ And the High Priest stands; and receives the Torah scroll; and reads the Torah portion beginning with the verse: “After the death” (Leviticus 16:1–34), and the portion beginning with the verse: “But on the tenth” (Leviticus 23:26–32); and furls the Torah scroll; and places it on his bosom; and says: More than what I have read before you is written here. He then reads by heart the portion beginning with: “And on the tenth,” from the book of Numbers (see 29:7–11).

²⁶⁰ And after the reading the High Priest recites the following eight blessings: A blessing concerning the Torah, and concerning the Temple service, and concerning thanksgiving, and concerning forgiveness for iniquity, and concerning the Temple, and concerning the Jewish people, and concerning the priests, and concerning Jerusalem, and the rest of the prayer.

²⁶¹ GEMARA: The Gemara suggests: You can learn from the fact that the head of the synagogue and the deputy High Priest receive the Torah scroll before the High Priest that honor may be given to a student in the presence of the teacher. Although the High Priest is considered everyone’s teacher and master, honor was nevertheless extended to other individuals in his presence without fear of impugning the High Priest’s honor.

²⁶² Abaye said: A proof may not be adduced from here. Usually one does not show honor for a student in the presence of the teacher, but here the entire process is for the honor of the High Priest. The passing of the Torah scroll to people of increasing importance demonstrates that the High Priest is considered the most important of all those present.

²⁶³ It is stated in the mishna: And the High Priest stands, and receives the Torah scroll, and reads from it. The Gemara asks: From the fact that he stands, it can be understood by inference that until that point he had been sitting. But didn’t the Master say (Tosefta, Sanhedrin 4:4) that sitting in the Temple courtyard is permitted only for kings from the house of David, as it is stated: “Then King David went in, and sat before the Lord; and he said: Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that You have brought me thus far?” (II Samuel 7:18).

²⁶⁴ The Gemara answers: As Rav Ḥisda said in a similar context: This took place not in the Israelite courtyard, where the prohibition against sitting applies, but in the women’s courtyard. Here, too, the

reading was in the women's courtyard, where it is permitted to sit, as it does not have the sanctified status of the Temple itself.

²⁶⁵ The Gemara raises an objection from a baraita (Tosefta 7:13): And where does the High Priest read from the Torah scroll? He reads from it in the Temple courtyard. Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya'akov says: He reads from it on the Temple Mount, as it is stated:

²⁶⁶ "And he read there before the broad place that was before the Gate of the Water" (Nehemiah 8:3). According to this opinion, the High Priest would read from the Torah in the Temple courtyard. Rav Ḥisda says in response: The baraita also means that the reading takes place in the women's courtyard.

²⁶⁷ § It is taught in the mishna that the High Priest receives the Torah scroll and reads the Torah portion beginning with the verse: "After the death" (Leviticus 16:1), and the portion beginning with the verse: "But on the tenth" (Leviticus 23:26). Since these two portions are not adjacent to each other, the High Priest skips the section between the two portions. The Gemara raises a contradiction from a mishna (Megilla 24a): One may skip sections when reading the haftara in the Prophets, but one may not skip sections when reading in the Torah.

²⁶⁸ Abaye said: This is not difficult. There, in the mishna in tractate Megilla that teaches that one may not skip, the intention is that one should not skip if the sections are so far apart from one another that the delay caused by doing so will be of such length that the translator who recites the Aramaic translation will conclude his translation before the next section is reached. However, in the case of the mishna here, it is permitted to skip verses because the two passages are in close proximity to one another. The delay caused is of such short length that the translator will still not conclude his translation.

²⁶⁹ The Gemara challenges this resolution: But isn't it taught about this mishna in a baraita: One may skip sections when reading in the Prophets, but one may not skip sections when reading in the Torah. And how much may one skip from one passage to another in the Prophets? One may skip when the section skipped is of such short length that when the furling of the scroll is completed the translator will still not have concluded his translation. By inference, when reading in the Torah one may not skip at all.

²⁷⁰ Rather, Abaye said another explanation: This is not difficult. In the mishna here, it is permitted to skip because both passages pertain to a single topic. There, in the mishna in tractate Megilla that teaches that one may not skip, the halakha is referring to a case where the passages pertain to two different topics.

²⁷¹ And this is as it is taught in a baraita: One may skip sections when reading in the Torah when both sections pertain to a single topic, and in the Prophets one may skip from one section to another even if they pertain to two different topics. And both here and there, one may skip only when the section skipped is of such short length that when the furling of the scroll is completed the translator will still not have concluded his translation.

²⁷² And one may not skip from one book of the Prophets to another book of the Prophets, even if both pertain to the same topic. But among the books of the Twelve Prophets one may skip, provided that one does not skip from the end of the book to its beginning. Rather, if one wishes to read from several of the Twelve Prophets, he must read the passages in the order that they are written.

²⁷³ § It is taught in the mishna: And he furls the Torah scroll, and places it on his bosom, and says: More than what I have read before you is written here. The Gemara comments: And why must he say all of this? It is so as to not cast aspersions on the Torah scroll, because people might think the portion that he read by heart is not written there.

²⁷⁴ It is stated in the mishna that he reads by heart the portion beginning with: “And on the tenth,” from the book of Numbers (29:7–11). The Gemara asks: But let him furl the Torah scroll to that portion and read it from the text. Rav Huna bar Yehuda says that Rav Sheshet says: This is not done because one may not furl a Torah scroll in public, out of respect for the congregation.

²⁷⁵ The Gemara asks: But why not let them bring another Torah scroll that has previously been furled to that portion and read from it? Rav Huna bar Yehuda says: People might then mistakenly think that the second scroll was brought due to a flaw that was found in the first scroll. Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish says: Another scroll is not brought because then the High Priest will need to recite an additional blessing over it, and one may not recite a blessing that is unnecessary.

²⁷⁶ The Gemara questions Rav Huna bar Yehuda’s answer: But are we really concerned that people will think that there is a flaw in the first scroll? But didn’t Rabbi Yitzhak Nappaḥa say: When the New Moon of Tevet, which always occurs during Hanukkah, occurs on Shabbat, one brings three Torah scrolls. And he reads from one scroll the topic of the day, i.e., the weekly portion; and from one scroll the portion of the New Moon; and from one scroll the portion of Hanukkah. It is apparent from the statement of Rabbi Yitzhak Nappaḥa that many Torah scrolls may be used, and there is no concern that people will mistakenly think that one or more has a flaw.

²⁷⁷ The Gemara answers: When three men read from three scrolls, there is no concern that people will think that one of the scrolls has a flaw, since people assume that it is befitting for each individual to read from his own scroll. However, when one man reads from two different Torah scrolls, there is a concern that people will think that the first scroll has a flaw, and they will not realize that this was done only to avoid forcing the community to wait while the scroll is furled.

²⁷⁸ § It is taught in the mishna: And after the reading the High Priest recites eight blessings. The Sages taught that these are the eight blessings: He recites a blessing concerning the Torah in the usual way one recites a blessing in the synagogue, and he recites the three blessings concerning the Temple service, and concerning thanksgiving, and concerning forgiveness for iniquity, and all are recited in accordance with their established forms in the Amida prayer. He recites the blessing concerning the Temple in and of itself, the blessing concerning the priests in and of itself, the blessing concerning the Jewish people in and of itself, and the blessing concerning Jerusalem in and of itself.

²⁷⁹ With regard to the end of the mishna, which states: And the rest of the prayer, the Sages taught: The text of the rest of the prayer is as follows: A supplication, a song, and a request that Your people, Israel, are in need of redemption. And he concludes the blessing with: Blessed are You, Lord, the One Who hears prayer. From this point forward, each and every person present brings a Torah scroll from his home and reads from it. And why do all these people bring their personal Torah scrolls? Everyone brings his own in order to show its beautiful appearance to the public, as a way of showing fondness for the mitzva.

²⁸⁰ MISHNA: How is the portion of the Torah that is read by the king recited at the assembly, when all the Jewish people would assemble? At the conclusion of the first day of the festival of Sukkot, on the eighth, after the conclusion of the Sabbatical Year, they make a wooden platform for the king in

the Temple courtyard, and he sits on it, as it is stated: “At the end of every seven years, in the Festival of the Sabbatical Year” (Deuteronomy 31:10).

²⁸¹ The synagogue attendant takes a Torah scroll and gives it to the head of the synagogue that stands on the Temple Mount. And the head of the synagogue gives it to the deputy High Priest, and the deputy High Priest gives it to the High Priest, and the High priest gives it to the king. And the king stands, and receives the Torah scroll, and reads from it while sitting.

²⁸² King Agrippa arose, and received the Torah scroll, and read from it while standing, and the Sages praised him for this. And when Agrippa arrived at the verse in the portion read by the king that states: “You may not appoint a foreigner over you” (Deuteronomy 17:15), tears flowed from his eyes, because he was a descendant of the house of Herod and was not of Jewish origin. The entire nation said to him: Fear not, Agrippa. You are our brother, you are our brother.

²⁸³ And the king reads from the beginning of Deuteronomy, from the verse that states: “And these are the words” (Deuteronomy 1:1), until the words: “Hear, O Israel” (Deuteronomy 6:4). And he then reads the sections beginning with: “Hear, O Israel” (Deuteronomy 6:4–9), “And it shall come to pass, if you shall hearken” (Deuteronomy 11:13–21), “You shall tithe” (Deuteronomy 14:22–29), “When you have made an end of the tithing” (Deuteronomy 26:12–15), and the passage concerning the appointment of a king (Deuteronomy 17:14–20), and the blessings and curses (Deuteronomy 28), until he finishes the entire portion.

²⁸⁴ The same blessings that the High Priest recites on Yom Kippur, the king recites at this ceremony, but he delivers a blessing concerning the Festivals in place of the blessing concerning forgiveness for iniquity.

²⁸⁵ GEMARA: The mishna states that the assembly takes place on the eighth. The Gemara asks: Does it enter your mind that the assembly takes place on the eighth day of the festival of Sukkot? The mishna clearly states that the ceremony takes place at the conclusion of the first day of the Festival. Rather, say that it takes place during the eighth year of the Sabbatical cycle.

²⁸⁶ The verse describes in detail when the assembly takes place: “At the end of every seven years, in the Festival of the Sabbatical Year, in the festival of Sukkot, when all Israel comes to appear before the Lord your God” (Deuteronomy 31:10–11). The Gemara asks: And why do I need all these details?

²⁸⁷ The Gemara answers: All of these details are necessary, as, if the Merciful One had written only “at the end of every seven years” (Deuteronomy 31:10), I would have said that we count from now, i.e., from when this was said, and that the tally of years begins from the fortieth year in the wilderness, even though by this calculation the assembly would not occur in the Sabbatical Year. Therefore, the Merciful One writes: “The Sabbatical Year.”

²⁸⁸ And if the Merciful One had written only the phrase: At the end of every seven years of the “Sabbatical Year,” I would have said that it takes place at the end of the Sabbatical Year. Therefore, the Merciful One writes: “In the Festival,” and the first Festival following the Sabbatical Year is in the month of Tishrei.

²⁸⁹ And if the Torah had written only: “At the end of every seven years in the Festival of the Sabbatical Year,” I would have said that it takes place on the festival of Rosh Hashanah, which is on the first day of Tishrei. Therefore, the Merciful One also writes: “In the festival of Sukkot.”

²⁹⁰ And if the Merciful One had written only: “In the festival of Sukkot,” I would have said that it could refer even to the last day of the Festival. Therefore, the Merciful One also writes: “When all Israel comes” (Deuteronomy 31:11),

²⁹¹ implying that the assembly takes place at the beginning of the Festival, when the entire Jewish people comes to Jerusalem.

²⁹² § It is taught in the mishna: And the synagogue attendant takes a Torah scroll and gives it to the head of the synagogue, until it is eventually passed to the king. The Gemara suggests: You can learn from the fact that all of these dignitaries receive the Torah scroll before the king that honor may be given to a student in the presence of the teacher. Abaye said: A proof may not be adduced from here, as the entire process is for the honor of the king, to show that he is removed from ordinary people by many ranks.

²⁹³ It is taught in the mishna: And the king stands, and receives the Torah scroll, and reads from it while sitting. King Agrippa arose, and received the Torah scroll, and read from it while standing. The Gemara asks: By inference, until that point he had been sitting. But didn’t the Master say (Tosefta, Sanhedrin 4:4) that sitting in the Temple courtyard is permitted only for kings from the house of David, as it is stated: “Then King David went in, and sat before the Lord; and he said: Who am I?” (II Samuel 7:18). The Gemara answers: As Rav Ḥisda said in a similar context: This took place not in the Israelite courtyard, where the prohibition against sitting applies, but in the women’s courtyard. Here too, the assembly was in the women’s courtyard.

²⁹⁴ It is stated in the mishna that King Agrippa read from the Torah while standing, and the Sages praised him for this. The Gemara asks: From the fact that they praised him, can it be concluded that he acted appropriately? Didn’t Rav Ashi say: Even according to the one who says with regard to a Nasi who relinquished the honor due him, his honor is relinquished, i.e., he may do so, with regard to a king who relinquished the honor due him, his honor is not relinquished, as it is stated: “You shall place a king over you” (Deuteronomy 17:15). This is interpreted to mean that his awe shall be upon you. The Torah establishes that awe is an essential component of kingship, and it is not the prerogative of the king to relinquish it.

²⁹⁵ The Gemara answers: Since he relinquished his honor for the sake of a mitzva, this situation is different and does not dishonor him.

²⁹⁶ The mishna continues: And when Agrippa arrived at the verse: “You may not appoint a foreigner over you” (Deuteronomy 17:15), tears flowed from his eyes because he was a descendant of the house of Herod and was not of Jewish origin. The entire nation said to him: You are our brother. It is taught in the name of Rabbi Natan: At that moment the enemies of the Jewish people, a euphemism for the Jewish people, were sentenced to destruction for flattering Agrippa.

²⁹⁷ Rabbi Shimon ben Ḥalafta says: From the day that the power of flattery prevailed, the judgment has become corrupted, and people’s deeds have become corrupted, and a person cannot say to another: My deeds are greater than your deeds, as everyone flatters one another and people no longer know the truth.

²⁹⁸ Rabbi Yehuda of the West, Eretz Yisrael, and some say Rabbi Shimon ben Pazi, taught: It is permitted to flatter wicked people in this world, as it is stated concerning the future: “The vile person

shall no longer be called generous, nor shall the churl be said to be noble” (Isaiah 32:5). By inference, this indicates that in this world it is permitted to flatter them.

²⁹⁹ Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish said that this can be proven from here. Jacob said to Esau: “I have seen your face, as one sees the face of angels, and you were pleased with me” (Genesis 33:10). Jacob flattered him by comparing seeing him to seeing a divine vision.

³⁰⁰ The Gemara notes: And Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish, in interpreting Jacob’s statement, disagrees with Rabbi Levi, as Rabbi Levi says: With regard to the interaction between Jacob and Esau, to what is this matter comparable? To a person who invited another to his home and the guest realized that he wants to kill him. The guest said to him: The flavor of this dish that I taste is like a dish that I tasted in the king’s house. The host then said to himself: The king must know him. Therefore, he was afraid and did not kill him. Similarly, when Jacob told Esau that his face is like the face of an angel, he intended to let him know that he had seen angels, in order to instill fear in him so that Esau would not seek to harm him.

³⁰¹ Rabbi Elazar says: Any person who has flattery in him brings wrath to the world, as it is stated: “But those with flattery in their hearts bring about wrath” (Job 36:13). And moreover, his prayer is not heard, as it is stated in that same verse: “They do not cry for help when He binds them.”

³⁰² The Gemara cites a mnemonic device for the statements of Rabbi Elazar: Wrath, fetus, Gehenna, in his hands, menstruating woman, exiled.

³⁰³ And Rabbi Elazar says: Any person who has flattery in him, even fetuses in their mothers’ wombs curse him, as it is stated: “He who says to the wicked: You are righteous, peoples shall curse him [yikkevuhu], nations [leummim] shall execrate him” (Proverbs 24:24); and kov, the linguistic root of the word yikkevuhu, means only a curse, as it is stated: Balaam explained that he did not curse the Jewish people, as he said: “How can I curse [ekkov] whom God has not cursed [kabbo]?” (Numbers 23:8). And le’om is homiletically interpreted to mean only fetuses, as it is stated with regard to Jacob and Esau, when they were still in Rebecca’s womb: “And one people [le’om] shall be stronger than the other people [le’om]” (Genesis 25:23).

³⁰⁴ And Rabbi Elazar says: Any person who has flattery in him falls into Gehenna, as it is stated: “Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil” (Isaiah 5:20). What is written afterward? “Therefore, as the tongue of fire devours straw, and as the chaff is consumed by the flame” (Isaiah 5:24), meaning that the people described in the earlier verse will end up burning like straw in the fires of Gehenna.

³⁰⁵ And Rabbi Elazar says: Anyone who flatters another ultimately falls into his hands. And if he does not fall into his hands, he falls into his children’s hands. And if he does not fall into his children’s hands, he falls into his grandchild’s hands, as it is stated: “Then the prophet Jeremiah said to Hananiah...Amen, the Lord should do so, the Lord should perform your words” (Jeremiah 28:5–6). This was a form of flattery, as Jeremiah did not explicitly say that Hananiah was a false prophet. And it is written:

³⁰⁶ “And when he was in the gate of Benjamin, a captain of the ward was there, whose name was Irijah, the son of Shelemiah, the son of Hananiah; and he laid hold on Jeremiah the prophet, saying: You shall fall to the Chaldeans. Then Jeremiah said: It is false; I shall not fall to the Chaldeans” (Jeremiah 37:13–14). And it is then written: “So Irijah laid hold on Jeremiah, and brought him to the

princes” (Jeremiah 37:14). Irijah was the grandson of Hananiah, and Jeremiah was punished by falling into his hands because he had flattered his grandfather.

³⁰⁷ And Rabbi Elazar says: Any congregation in which there is flattery is as repulsive as a menstruating woman, as it is stated: “For a flattering congregation shall be desolate [galmud]” (Job 15:34), and in the cities overseas they call a menstruating woman galmuda. What is the meaning of the word galmuda? It means separated [gemula] from her husband [mibbala].

³⁰⁸ And Rabbi Elazar says: Any congregation in which there is flattery is ultimately exiled. It is written here: “For a flattering congregation shall be desolate [galmud]” (Job 15:34), and it is written there: “Then you will say in your heart: Who has begotten me these, seeing I have been bereaved of my children, and am solitary [galmuda], an exile, and wandering?” (Isaiah 49:21). The verse states: “An exile,” as an appositive to “galmuda,” indicating that they are the same.

³⁰⁹ Rabbi Yirmeya bar Abba says: Four classes of people will not greet the Divine Presence: The class of cynics, and the class of flatterers, and the class of liars, and the class of slanderers.

³¹⁰ The proof for this statement is as follows: The class of cynics, as it is written: “He draws His hand from cynics” (Hosea 7:5), i.e., God does not want to be in their presence; the class of flatterers, as it is written: “That a flatterer cannot come before Him” (Job 13:16); the class of liars, as it is written: “He who speaks falsehood shall not dwell before My eyes” (Psalms 101:7).

³¹¹ The class of slanderers will not greet the Divine Presence, as it is written: “For You are not a god who has pleasure in wickedness, evil shall not sojourn with You” (Psalms 5:5), which means: You, the Lord, are righteous and evil shall not dwell with You in Your dwelling place. “Evil” here is referring to slanderers, as is evident from the continuation of the chapter, which states: “For there is no sincerity in their mouth; their inward part is a yawning gulf, their throat is an open tomb, they make smooth their tongue” (Psalms 5:10).

Chapter 8

¹ MISHNA: With regard to the priest who was anointed for war, at the time that he would speak to the nation, he would speak to them in the sacred tongue, Hebrew, as it is stated: “And it shall be, when you draw near to the battle, that the priest shall approach and speak to the people” (Deuteronomy 20:2). This priest identified in the verse is the priest anointed for war, the priest who is inaugurated specifically to serve this function. “And speak to the people”; he addresses them in the sacred tongue, Hebrew.

² The Torah dictates the priest’s address: “And he shall say to them: Hear Israel, you draw near today to battle against your enemies; let not your heart faint; fear not, nor be alarmed, and do not be terrified of them” (Deuteronomy 20:3). The priest expounds: “Against your enemies” and not against your brothers. This is not a war of the tribe of Judah against Simon and not Simon against Benjamin, such that if you fall into their hands your brothers will have mercy on you, as it is stated with regard to a war between Judah and Israel: “And the men that have been mentioned by name rose up, and took the captives, and with the spoil clothed all that were naked among them, and arrayed them, and shod them, and gave them to eat and to drink, and anointed them, and carried all the feeble of them upon donkeys, and brought them to Jericho, the city of palm trees, unto their brethren; then they

returned to Samaria” (II Chronicles 28:15). Rather, you are marching to war against your enemies, and if you fall into their hands, they will not have mercy on you.

³ The priest continues: “Let not your heart faint; fear not, nor be alarmed, and do not be terrified of them” (Deuteronomy 20:3). “Let not your heart faint” due to the neighing of horses and the sharpening of the enemy’s swords. “Fear not” due to the knocking of shields [terisin] and the noise of their boots [calgassin]. “Nor be alarmed” by the sound of trumpets. “Do not be terrified” due to the sound of shouts.

⁴ The priest explains why the soldiers need not be terrified. “For the Lord your God is He that goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you” (Deuteronomy 20:4). Remember that they come to war championed by flesh and blood, and you are coming championed by the Omnipresent. The Philistines came championed by Goliath. What was his end? In the end, he fell by the sword, and they fell with him (see I Samuel, chapter 17). The Ammonites came championed by Shobach. What was his end? In the end, he fell by the sword, and they fell with him (see II Samuel, chapter 10). But as for you, you are not so, reliant upon the strength of mortals: “For the Lord your God is He that goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you”; this verse is referring to the camp of the Ark of the Covenant that accompanies them out to war.

⁵ GEMARA: The Gemara clarifies an ambiguous point in the mishna: What is it saying when the mishna derives from the verse that the priest must address the people in Hebrew? The Gemara answers: This is what the mishna is saying: The ruling is derived from a verbal analogy, as it is stated here: “And speak” (Deuteronomy 20:2), and there, concerning the giving of the Torah, it is stated: “Moses spoke and God answered him by a voice” (Exodus 19:19). Just as there, the voice spoke in the sacred tongue, so too here, the priest speaks in the sacred tongue.

⁶ The Sages taught: “The priest shall approach and speak to the people” (Deuteronomy 20:2). One might have thought that any priest who would want to address the people may assume this role. To counter this idea, the verse states: “And the officers shall speak” (Deuteronomy 20:5). Just as the officers described are those who have been appointed to discharge their responsibilities, so too, the priest described is one who has been appointed for this role. The Gemara asks: But if so, why not say that the High Priest should deliver this address, as he is also appointed? The Gemara replies: The appointed priest must be similar to an appointed officer. Just as an officer is one who has someone else, i.e., a judge, with greater authority appointed above him, so too, the priest described must be one who has someone else, i.e., the High Priest, appointed above him.

⁷ The Gemara rejects this answer: The High Priest also meets this qualification, as there is the king above him, and therefore, the High Priest should deliver the address. The Gemara clarifies: The caveat that one must have someone appointed above him is saying someone above him in his function. That there is a king is irrelevant to the station of the High Priest, who ranks highest in the priesthood. The Gemara suggests: Then say it may be the deputy High Priest, who is second to the High Priest; he should deliver the address. The Gemara answers: The deputy is not an appointed office, as this position has no particular function other than being a ready substitute for the High Priest. As it is taught in a baraita: Rabbi Ḥanina, the deputy High Priest, says: To what end is the deputy appointed? It is merely for the possibility that if some disqualification befalls the High Priest, the deputy steps in and serves in his stead. However, the deputy has no specific role of his own.

⁸ § The Torah says about the priest anointed for war: “And he shall say to them: Hear Israel” (Deuteronomy 20:3). The Gemara asks: What is different in this setting that necessitates the usage of the phrase: “Hear Israel”? Rabbi Yoḥanan said in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yoḥai: The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to the Jewish people: Even if you have not fulfilled any mitzva except reciting Shema of the morning and the evening, you will not be delivered into the hands of your enemies. As an allusion to this promise, the priest’s address borrows the phrase “Hear Israel,” a phrase most familiar from the beginning of the recitation of Shema.

⁹ With respect to the mishna’s comments about the verse: “Let not your heart faint; fear not, nor be alarmed, and do not be terrified of them” (Deuteronomy 20:3), the Sages taught (Tosefta 7:18): The priest speaks with them twice, one time when they are gathered for war at the border, and one time when they are on the battlefield itself. When they are at the border, what does he say?

¹⁰ Hear my words, the regulations of war, and consider who is fit to participate in the battle. And return home, all of you who are exempt from combat. What does he say on the battlefield? “Let not your heart faint; fear not, nor be alarmed, and do not be terrified of them” (Deuteronomy 20:3). These four cautions correspond to four actions done by the nations of the world: They clash their weapons, and they blast horns, they shout, and they trample heavily with their horses to frighten their adversaries.

¹¹ The mishna recorded the particulars of the priest’s address: The Philistines came championed by Goliath. The Gemara describes the battle between David and Goliath. What is implied by the name Goliath? Rabbi Yoḥanan says: The verse indicates that he stood before the Holy One, Blessed be He, with brazenness [gilui panim], as it is stated: “Choose yourselves a man [ish], and let him come down to me” (I Samuel 17:8), and man [ish] is referring to none other than the Holy One, Blessed be He, as it is stated: “The Lord is a man [ish] of war” (Exodus 15:3). The Holy One, Blessed be He, said: I will hereby fell him by the son of a man [ben ish], as it is stated: “Now David was the son of that man [ben ish] of Ephrath” (I Samuel 17:12).

¹² Rabbi Yoḥanan said in the name of Rabbi Meir: In three instances, his own mouth ensnared that wicked one and unwittingly foretold his own downfall. One time he said: “Choose yourselves a man, and let him come down to me,” describing himself at the bottom. And another time, he said: “If he is able to fight with me and kill me then will we be your servants; but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall you be our servants, and serve us” (I Samuel 17:9). There, he supposed that his opponent would defeat him, before supposing that he, Goliath, would be victorious. Finally, the other time was when he said to David (I Samuel 17:43): “Am I a dog, that you come to me with staves?” The Gemara asks: But didn’t David also speak in this manner? David also said to him: “You come to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a javelin” (I Samuel 17:45). The Gemara answers: David then said to him, immediately afterward: “But I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted” (I Samuel 17:45).

¹³ The verse says: “And the Philistine drew near morning and evening” (I Samuel 17:16). Rabbi Yoḥanan says: He did this specifically in order to prevent them from completing the recitation of Shema in the required times of morning and evening. “And Goliath presented himself forty days” (I Samuel 17:16). Rabbi Yoḥanan says: These days correspond to the forty days over which the Torah was given, as he wanted to do away with it.

¹⁴ The verse introduces Goliath: “And a champion [ish habeinayim] went out from the camp of the Philistines, named Goliath” (I Samuel 17:4). The Gemara asks: What is indicated by the term beinayim? Rav said: The word is related to the root beit, nun, heh, meaning build, and means that he is built [muvneh] perfectly and free of any blemish. And Shmuel said: The word is related to the word bein, meaning between, and means that he was the middle [beinoni] among his brothers. A Sage from the school of Rabbi Sheila said: The word is related to the root beit, nun, heh, meaning build, and means that he was made strong as a building [binyan]. Rabbi Yoḥanan said: The word is related to the word bein, meaning between, and means that he was born from among many, as follows: He was the son of one hundred fathers [pappi] and one dog [nanai], as his mother engaged in sexual intercourse with one hundred men and a dog, and he was fathered from among them.

¹⁵ The verse recounts that he was “named Goliath, of Gath” (I Samuel 17:4). Rav Yosef taught: This is because everyone would thresh his mother by cohabiting with her like people do in a winepress [gat], where everyone tramples. It is written that Goliath came from “the caves [me’arot] of the Philistines” (I Samuel 17:23), but we read, according to the Masoretic text: He came from among “the ranks [ma’arkhot] of the Philistines.” What is meant by the written term me’arot? Rav Yosef taught: The word is related to the word he’era, meaning penetrated, and implies that everyone penetrated [he’eru], i.e., engaged in sexual intercourse with, his mother.

¹⁶ It is written that Goliath’s mother was: “Harafa” (II Samuel 21:16), and in another place it is written: “Orpah” (Ruth 1:4), and the Gemara will soon explain that this was the same woman. Rav and Shmuel engaged in a dispute concerning this matter. One of them said: Her name was Harafa, and why is she called by the name Orpah? It is because everyone came at her from behind [orfin] her, i.e., sodomized her. And one of them said: Her name was Orpah, and why is she called by the name Harafa? It is because everyone threshed her like groats [harifot], i.e., engaged in sexual intercourse with her, and so it says that this word means groats: “And the woman took and spread the covering over the well’s mouth, and strewed groats [harifot] thereon” (II Samuel 17:19). And if you wish, you can say from here: “Though you should crush a fool in a mortar with a pestle among groats [harifot], yet will not his foolishness depart from him” (Proverbs 27:22).

¹⁷ The Gemara continues its discussion of the battle of David and Goliath. “These four were born to Harafa in Gath; and they fell by the hand of David, and by the hand of his servants” (II Samuel 21:22). The Gemara asks: What are the names of the four siblings mentioned here? Rav Ḥisda said: They are Saph, and Madon, Goliath, and Ishbi in Nob (see II Samuel 21:16–20).

¹⁸ It says: “And they fell into the hands of David and his servants.” Why? It is because of the acts of their forebears, as it is written: “And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, and Ruth cleaved to her” (Ruth 1:14). Rabbi Yitzḥak says: The Holy One, Blessed be He, said: The children of the one who kissed, referring to the four giants descended from Orpah, will come and fall into the hand of the children of the one who cleaved, referring to David, who was descended from Ruth. Rava taught: As a reward for the four tears that Orpah shed in sadness over her mother-in-law, she merited four mighty warriors descended from her, as it is stated: “And they lifted up their voice and wept again” (Ruth 1:14).

¹⁹ It is written about Goliath: “And the half [ḥetz] of his spear was like a weaver’s beam” (I Samuel 17:7), and we read, according to the Masoretic tradition: “And the shaft [etz] of his spear.” Rabbi Elazar says: The written version of the text demonstrates that we have not yet reached half [ḥetzi] of

the praise of that wicked man. Only half of his spear was as long as a weaver's beam, but the Masoretic reading offers a less impressive description. It is learned from here that it is prohibited to relate the praise of wicked people. The Gemara asks: If so, then the verse should not begin by praising him at all. The Gemara answers: It was necessary in this case in order to relate the praise of David, who defeated Goliath.

²⁰ § According to the mishna, the priest would say: The Ammonites came championed by Shobach (see II Samuel, chapter 10). In one account, his name is written: "Shobach" (II Samuel 10:18), and in another place it is written: "Shophach" (I Chronicles 19:18). Rav and Shmuel engaged in a dispute concerning this matter. One of them said: His name was Shophach, and why is he called by the name Shobach? It is because he was built like a dovecote [shovakh], as he was exceptionally tall. And one of them said: His name was Shobach, and why is he called by the name Shophach? It is because anyone who would see him would become terrified and his courage would be spilled [nishpakh] before him like water from a jug.

²¹ The Gemara records a dispute concerning the enemy forces of Nebuchadnezzar. The prophet states: "Their quiver [ashpato] is an open sepulcher, they are all mighty men" (Jeremiah 5:16). Rav and Shmuel, and some say Rabbi Ami and Rabbi Asi, engaged in a dispute concerning the implication of the verse. One of them said: When they shoot an arrow, they produce heaps and heaps [ashpatot ashpatot] of corpses. And lest you say that they are skilled in the arts of battle but they are not particularly strong, the verse states: "They are all mighty men." And one of them said: When they perform their needs, i.e., relieve themselves, they produce heaps and heaps [ashpatot ashpatot] of excrement, which indicates they eat heartily, like mighty men. And lest you say it is because they are ill in their intestines, the verse states: "They are all mighty men" and are not ill.

²² Rav Mari said: Learn from this exchange that if there is one whose excrement is abundant, he is ill in his intestines. The Gemara asks: What difference is there whether or not he is ill in his intestines? The Gemara answers: It is so that one who suffers these symptoms will tend to himself medically.

²³ In a similar vein, one is urged to relieve his distress. The verse states: "If there is a care in the heart of a man, let him bend it [yashḥena]" (Proverbs 12:25). Rabbi Ami and Rabbi Asi dispute the verse's meaning. One said: He should force it [yashḥena] out of his mind. He should remove his worries from his thoughts. And one said: It means he should tell [yesḥena] his troubles to others, which will relieve his anxiety.

²⁴ The mishna recounts the priest's address: But you are not like them, because, as the verse states: "For the Lord your God is He that goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you" (Deuteronomy 20:4). And why does the verse elaborate so much in spelling out the nature of God's attendance in battle? It is because the ineffable name of God and all of His appellations that are written on the tablets

²⁵ were resting in the Ark. And similarly, it says in the verse with regard to the war against Midian: "And Moses sent them, a thousand of every tribe, to the war, them and Pinehas the son of Elazar the priest, to the war, with the holy vessels and the trumpets for the alarm in his hand" (Numbers 31:6). The verse is interpreted as follows: "Them"; these are the Sanhedrin. "Pinehas"; he was the priest anointed for war. "And the holy vessels"; this is the Ark and the tablets that were within it. "And the trumpets for the alarm"; these are the shofarot.

²⁶ A tanna taught: It was not for nothing that specifically Pinehas went to war with Midian; rather, it was to exact the rightful judgment of his mother's father, Joseph, as it is stated: "And the Midianites sold him into Egypt to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's" (Genesis 37:36). The Gemara asks: Is this to say that Pinehas came, on his mother's side, from the family of Joseph? But it is written: "And Elazar, Aaron's son, took himself a wife from the daughters of Putiel; and she bore him Pinehas" (Exodus 6:25). What, is it not that Pinehas came from the family of Yitro, who was also called Putiel because he fattened [pittem] calves for idol worship? They answer: No; he was descended from Joseph, who mocked [pitpet] his desire by resisting the advances of Potiphar's wife.

²⁷ The Gemara asks: But is it not the case that, according to an oral tradition, the tribes were denigrating Pinehas after he killed Zimri, saying: Did you see this son of Puti, the son whose mother's father fattened cows for idol worship? Should this man kill a prince of Israel? Evidently, his grandfather Puti was Yitro, not Joseph. The Gemara answers: Rather, Pinehas was descended from both Joseph and Yitro. If his mother's father descended from Joseph, his mother's mother descended from Yitro. And if his mother's mother descended from Joseph, his mother's father descended from Yitro. The Gemara confirms this resolution: The language is also precise, as it is written: Elazar took a wife "from the daughters of Putiel," which implies that she came from two daughters of men named Putiel. The Gemara concludes: You may learn from the verse that this is so.

²⁸ MISHNA: The mishna continues its discussion of the speech given before battle. "And the officers shall speak to the people, saying: What man is there that has built a new house, and has not dedicated it? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man dedicate it" (Deuteronomy 20:5). He is sent home if he is one who builds a storehouse for straw, a barn for cattle, a shed for wood, or a warehouse. Similarly, it applies if he is one who builds, or if he is one who purchases, or if he is one who inherits, or if he is one to whom it is given as a gift. In all these instances, the man returns from the war encampment.

²⁹ The next verse states: "And what man is there that has planted a vineyard, and has not used the fruit thereof? Let him go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle and another man use the fruit thereof" (Deuteronomy 20:6). He is sent home if he is one who plants a whole vineyard of many vines, or if he is one who plants as few as five fruit trees of another variety, and even if these five are from the five species. The produce need not be all of one species. The same applies if he is one who plants, or if he is one who layers the vine, bending a branch into the ground so that it may take root and grow as a new vine, or if he is one who grafts different trees onto one another. And it applies if he is one who purchases a vineyard, or if he is one who inherits a vineyard, or if he is one to whom the vineyard is given as a gift.

³⁰ The next verse states: "And what man is there that has betrothed a wife, and has not taken her? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man take her" (Deuteronomy 20:7). He is sent home if he is one who betroths a virgin, or if he is one who betroths a widow. This applies even if his yevama, his late brother's wife, is a widow waiting for him as her yavam to perform levirate marriage; and even if he heard that his brother died in the war and the widow begins to wait for him only then, he returns and goes home. Each of these men, although they are exempt, still hear the address of the priest and the regulations of war at the local camp, and thereafter they return to their respective homes. However, they still support the war effort, and they provide water and food for the soldiers and repair the roads.

³¹ And these are the men who do not return to their homes: One who builds a gateway, or an enclosed veranda [akhsadra], or a balcony; or one who plants no more than four fruit trees or even five or more non-fruit bearing trees; or one who remarries his divorced wife. Nor is there an exemption for one who has betrothed a woman whom he is not permitted to marry: With regard to a widow betrothed to a High Priest (see Leviticus 21:7); a divorcée or a yevama who performed ḥalitza [ḥalutza], in lieu of entering into a levirate marriage, betrothed to a common priest (see Leviticus 21:13–15); a mamzeret or a Gibeonite woman betrothed to an Israelite; or an Israelite woman betrothed to a mamzer or a Gibeonite (see Deuteronomy 23:3); such a man does not return to his home. Rabbi Yehuda says: Even one who rebuilds a house as it stood originally would not return. Rabbi Eliezer says: Even one who builds a new brick house in the Sharon would not return because these houses are not stable and are expected to collapse periodically.

³² These are the men who do not even move from their places because they do not even report to the camp: One who built a house and dedicated it within the year; one who planted a vineyard and used its fruit for less than a year; one who marries his betrothed and one who marries his yevama, his brother's widow who must enter into a levirate marriage or perform ḥalitza, as it is stated: "When a man takes a new wife, he shall not go out with the army...he shall be free for his house one year, and shall cheer his wife whom he has taken" (Deuteronomy 24:5). The mishna interprets the verse as follows: "For his house"; this means his house that he built. "He shall be"; this term includes his vineyard. "And shall cheer his wife"; this is his wife. "Whom he has taken"; this phrase comes to include his yevama, who is considered his wife with respect to this halakha although he has not yet married her. Those who are exempt for these reasons do not even provide water and food to the soldiers, and they do not repair the roads.

³³ GEMARA: The Sages taught: "And the officers shall speak...What man is there that has built a new house, and has not dedicated it? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man dedicate it" (Deuteronomy 20:5). One might have thought that they say their own words and that the priest does not issue these proclamations. However, when it says: "And the officers shall speak further" (Deuteronomy 20:8), their own words are mentioned only in this latter verse. Evidently, then, the priest is the speaker in the earlier verse. How then do I realize the meaning of: "And the officers shall speak" in the first verse? The verse is speaking of the words of the priest anointed for war. How so? The priest speaks in an undertone, and an officer calls out the priest's words so that they are audible to the assembled.

³⁴ It is taught in one baraita: A priest speaks, and an officer calls out his words; and it is taught in another baraita: A priest speaks and a priest calls out. And it is taught in yet another baraita: An officer speaks and an officer calls out. Abaye said: How can these texts be reconciled? From the words: "That the priest shall approach" (Deuteronomy 20:2), until the words: "And the officers shall speak" (Deuteronomy 20:5), which consist of words of encouragement and inspiration, a priest speaks and another priest calls out. From the words "and the officers shall speak" until the words: "And the officers shall speak further" (Deuteronomy 20:8), which list various people who are to return home from the battle front because of happy occasions, a priest speaks and an officer calls out. From the words "and the officers shall speak further" and on, which address those who are fearful and fainthearted, an officer speaks and another officer calls out.

³⁵ § The mishna teaches that the officers announce: “What man is there that has built a new house, and has not dedicated it? Let him go and return to his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man dedicate it” (Deuteronomy 20:5). The Sages taught: From the phrase “That has built,” I have derived only that this applies to one who has literally built a house. From where do I derive that it includes one who purchased, or inherited, or has been given a house as a gift? The verse states broadly: “What man is there that has built.” By not merely stating: One that has built, but using the expanded “what man is there that has built,” the verse includes any of these circumstances.

³⁶ From the term “a house” I have derived only a house in which people live. From where is it derived that the exemption is understood to also include one who builds a storehouse for straw, a barn for cattle, a shed for wood, or a warehouse? The verse states: “That has built,” which includes whatever one built, in any case. One might have thought that I should include even one who builds a gateway, or an enclosed veranda, or a balcony; however, the verse states: “A house,” which teaches that just as a house is, by definition, a structure that is fit for living, so too, this halakha applies to every structure that is potentially fit for living, although in practice it may be used for another purpose.

³⁷ Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya’akov says: The word “house” is to be understood to mean, as it indicates, a building meant for human residence. With regard to the house for which a man may be sent back from the camp, since the verse does not state merely: “And has not dedicated,” but rather: “And has not dedicated it,” specifying the particular house to which the man is connected, the verse therefore excludes a robber who does not own his house. The Gemara asks: Shall we say that this opinion is not in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei HaGelili? As, if it were in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei HaGelili, didn’t he say: When the verse singles out the “fearful and fainthearted” (Deuteronomy 20:8), this is referring to one who is afraid

³⁸ because of sins that he has. According to this interpretation, one who stole another’s real estate should return home from war because of his guilt, which would seem to contradict the opinion of Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya’akov.

³⁹ The Gemara answers: Even if you say that this ruling is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei HaGelili, Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya’akov still needs to exclude one in possession of a stolen house, as in a case where one repented and gave money to the owners of the house that he stole. Although in such a case he is not considered a criminal, the house was originally stolen, and therefore he must remain among the military ranks. The Gemara challenges this: If so, i.e., he repaid the owners, he is now a legal purchaser of the house and he should return from the military ranks. The Gemara answers: Since initially it entered his possession with the status of stolen property, he does not return.

⁴⁰ § The Gemara continues its discussion of those who return from the ranks. “And what man is there that has planted a vineyard, and has not used the fruit thereof” (Deuteronomy 20:6). The Sages taught: From the phrase “that has planted,” I have derived only that it applies to one who actually planted a vineyard. From where is it derived that the military exemption likewise includes one who purchased it, one who inherited it, and one to whom it was given as a gift? The verse states: “And what man is there that has planted.” By not merely stating: One that has planted, but using the expanded “what man is there that has planted,” the verse includes any of these circumstances.

⁴¹ From the specific term “vineyard,” I have derived only a vineyard; from where do I derive that it comes to include five fruit trees even from other species? The verse states: “That has planted,” to

include different types of trees. Might I include even one who plants only four fruit trees and one who plants five or more non-fruit bearing trees? The verse states: "Vineyard." The term excludes a quantity of trees that is too few to qualify as a vineyard, as well as trees that do not yield fruit at all.

⁴² Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya'akov says: The word "vineyard" is to be understood as it indicates, and it is referring only to a grape vineyard. And since the verse does not state merely: "And has not used the fruit," but rather: "And has not used the fruit thereof," it excludes one who layers the vine or branch and one who grafts different trees onto one another. The Gemara asks: But didn't we learn in the mishna: He is released if he is one who plants, or if he is one who layers, or if he is one who grafts trees? Rabbi Zeira said that Rav H̥isda said: This is not difficult. Here, in the case where one does not return from the ranks, the man has performed forbidden grafting; there, in the case where one does return from the ranks, he has performed permitted grafting.

⁴³ The Gemara asks: With regard to this permitted grafting, what are the circumstances? If we say that it is a young tree grafted together with another young tree, then let him derive the halakha that one must return from the ranks due to the first young tree. One should be exempt because of his first tree, which is young, and the grafted tree is irrelevant. Rather, it is a case in which a young tree is grafted with an old tree. The Gemara objects: But didn't Rabbi Abbahu say: With regard to a young tree that was entangled, i.e., grafted, with an old tree, the young one is negated by the old one, and the law of orla does not apply to it. Therefore, the grafted tree should likewise lose its status as a young tree, and one in this situation should not return from the ranks.

⁴⁴ Rabbi Yirmeya said: Actually, one returns home if he grafts a young tree with another young tree, and it is a case in which he planted this first one for a fence or for beams, so that he is exempt from battle only because of the second tree, which he grafts for fruit. As we learned in a mishna (Orla 1:1): In a case of one who plants a tree for a fence or to yield wood for beams, the tree is exempt from the halakhot of orla.

⁴⁵ The Gemara asks: And what is different about the case of a young tree paired with an old tree such that the young tree is negated, and what is different about the case of a young tree being planted for fruit paired with a young tree planted for wood such that the fruit tree is not negated?

⁴⁶ The Gemara answers: There, in the case of an older tree, if one changes his mind about it and wants it to be a young tree obligated in orla, it cannot return to its previous state, as he has grafted it. Therefore, it is exempt from the halakhot of orla. Here, when a tree is planted for wood, if he changes his mind and decides to grow it for fruit, it can return to its default state of being planted for fruit, because initially it stands to be used for fruit. Therefore, it is not exempt from the halakhot of orla. This ruling is just as it is concerning trees that grew by themselves, which are subject to orla although they were not consciously planted for their fruit. As we learned in a mishna (Orla 1:2): Fruit trees that grew by themselves are obligated in orla although the landowner did not plant them himself.

⁴⁷ The Gemara asks: Why is there a need to establish the mishna as discussing a case where one planted the first tree for a fence or for beams? But let the mishna be established as referring to a vineyard belonging to two partners, where the two trees involved in the grafting were co-owned by partners, and both trees were young. As in this case this one man returns due to his tree and that other man returns due to his tree. Rav Pappa says: Since the Gemara avoids the scenario of the vineyard belonging to partners in favor of discussing a case where one planted the first tree for a fence or for

beams, that is to say if there is a vineyard belonging to two partners, evidently they do not return for the vineyard from the ranks of soldiers waging war.

⁴⁸ The Gemara asks: And in what way is the case of partners different from the following case: If there are five brothers and one of them dies in the war, the halakha is that they all return. Just as each brother returns because of his shared responsibility to perform levirate marriage or ḥalitza for the widow, each partner should return for his share in the young tree that was grafted. The Gemara answers: There, each and every one is considered one who must return for his wife, as any of them could readily marry her. However, here, each and every one is not considered one who must return for his vineyard because it does not belong exclusively to either of them.

⁴⁹ Rav Naḥman bar Yitzḥak said: In accordance with the baraita mentioned above, one does not normally return for a grafted or layered tree. However, the mishna states that one does return for a grafted or layered tree in a case where one layers a tree and grafts it with a vegetable plant. And that ruling is in accordance with this tanna, Rabbi Yehuda ben Gamda, as cited in a baraita. As it is taught in a baraita (Tosefta, Kilayim 1:12): With regard to one who layers a tree and grafts it with a vegetable plant, the tanna'im engaged in a dispute concerning whether this kind of breeding is permitted. Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel, speaking in the name of Rabbi Yehuda ben Gamda of the village of Akko, permits one to do so, and the Rabbis prohibit it. Therefore, one would return from the ranks for a tree grafted to a vegetable plant, in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda ben Gamda, although he would not return for the vegetable itself.

⁵⁰ The Gemara offers another alternative resolution to the contradiction over whether one returns for a grafted tree. When Rav Dimi came from Eretz Yisrael, he said that Rabbi Yoḥanan said: In accordance with whose opinion is this statement, which says that one does not return for a grafted tree? It is the opinion of Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya'akov. He explains: Didn't Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya'akov say there in the baraita cited earlier: The word vineyard is to be understood as it indicates, i.e., that the exemption is only for a grape vineyard? Here too, the word planted is to be understood as it indicates; with regard to one who plants, yes, he does return, but one who grafts or layers a tree does not return.

⁵¹ § After citing Rabbi Yoḥanan's interpretation of the opinion of Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya'akov, the Gemara cites a string of other rulings that Rabbi Yoḥanan said in the name of Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya'akov. When Rav Dimi came from Eretz Yisrael, he said that Rabbi Yoḥanan said in the name of Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya'akov: The Sages decreed that if there is a young grapevine less than one handbreadth tall, it is obligated in orla all its years, even after the three years mandated by the Torah, because it appears like a vine of one year. The Sages were concerned that if they permitted one to eat from such a vine, people would also eat true orla. And this prohibition applies to a very small section of two grapevines opposite two grapevines and one more vine emerging and growing between them, in the formation of a tail. But if the entire vineyard grows so short, it generates publicity, and people know that the vines are old enough to no longer be subject to orla.

⁵² When Rav Dimi came from Eretz Yisrael, he said that Rabbi Yoḥanan said in the name of Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya'akov: A corpse occupies four cubits with regard to the exemption from the recitation of Shema, so that it is prohibited to recite Shema within this space, as it is written in the verse: "Whoever mocks the poor blasphemes his Maker" (Proverbs 17:5). Because the deceased cannot perform mitzvot, one who performs a mitzva in front of them is considered to be mocking them.

⁵³ Rabbi Yitzḥak says that Rabbi Yoḥanan says in the name of Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya'akov: With regard to a man's stepdaughter who grows up among the brothers from a different marriage, she is eligible to be married to them in principle, because they are not actually her siblings. Nevertheless, she is prohibited to be married to the brothers, because she appears as though she is their sister. The Gemara comments: And that is not so; such a marriage is not prohibited because the matter generates publicity, and the public knows that they are not truly related.

⁵⁴ And Rabbi Yitzḥak says that Rabbi Yoḥanan says in the name of Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya'akov: With regard to gleanings (Leviticus 19:9, 23:22), forgotten sheaves (Deuteronomy 24:19), or produce in the corner of the field which is given to the poor [pe'a] (Leviticus 19:9, 23:22), three obligatory agricultural gifts that must be given to the poor, if one gathered them into the threshing floor, the produce was thereby rendered obligated for tithes. Although one does not take tithes from produce for the poor, onlookers are likely to presume that this is his own produce. Ulla said: We stated this halakha only when the granary is in the field, but in the city, the matter generates publicity. People see that the produce was gathered in small quantities from different places, and they know that this produce is for the poor. In that case, one need not separate tithes.

⁵⁵ And Rabbi Yitzḥak says that Rabbi Yoḥanan says in the name of Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya'akov: If there is a young grapevine less than one handbreadth tall, it does not render the seeds that are planted next to it forbidden. Normally, diverse kinds of produce may not be planted in close proximity, but this vine is too small to qualify as a prohibited vineyard. The Gemara limits the scope of this statement: And this statement applies to a very small section of two grapevines opposite two grapevines and one more vine emerging and growing between them, in formation of a tail. But if the entire vineyard grows so short, a vine of this size does render the other seeds planted at its side forbidden.

⁵⁶ And Rabbi Yitzḥak says that Rabbi Yoḥanan says in the name of Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya'akov:

⁵⁷ A corpse occupies four cubits with regard to impurity, as the Sages decreed that one becomes impure when he stands within four cubits of a corpse. This measure protects priests and others who are forbidden to contract ritual impurity imparted by a corpse, so that they do not inadvertently become impure. And the tanna of the mishna taught in another mishna as well (Oholot 15:8): With regard to a courtyard adjacent to a grave, one who stands within it is ritually pure, provided that there are four cubits by four cubits within it. A courtyard this size constitutes its own space, according to the statement of Beit Shammai. Beit Hillel say: A space of four handbreadths by four handbreadths is enough. In what case is this statement said? Four handbreadths suffice when the entrance to the courtyard is from above. In such a case there is no concern that one will cover the grave with his body, and thereby become ritually impure, when entering the courtyard. However, if its entrance is from the side, everyone agrees the courtyard must be at least four cubits by four cubits in size.

⁵⁸ The Gemara challenges the preceding resolution: In which direction [kelapei layya] is there a distinction between the positions of the entrance? On the contrary, if one enters from the side, he can slip away and exit without becoming impure. However, if one enters from above it is impossible that he will not overlie the grave over the course of climbing in and out of the courtyard. Rather, it should say: In what case is this statement of Beit Hillel, according to which four handbreadths by four handbreadths are enough, said? It is when the entrance is from the side. However, if the entrance is from above, then the courtyard must be at least four cubits by four cubits according to all opinions.

The Gemara further qualifies: And this statement applies in a courtyard adjacent to a grave whose partitions are delineated, but if there is only a corpse lying about without any enclosures, it certainly occupies and affects a surrounding area of four cubits.

⁵⁹ § The mishna teaches among the statements that were said before battle: “What man is there that has betrothed a wife and has not taken her? Let him go and return to his house” (Deuteronomy 20:7). The Sages taught: “That has betrothed” is referring to one who betroths a virgin, and to one who betroths a widow, and to one whose yevama is a widow awaiting her yavam, i.e., this man in the military ranks, to perform levirate marriage. And even if there are five brothers, and one of them dies in the war, they all return for the widow. In addition, the verse could have singled out one who has not taken a wife. When the verse specifies: “and has not taken her,” this excludes men in forbidden marriages: A widow who is betrothed to a High Priest; either a divorcée or a yevama who performed ḥalitza [ḥalutza], who is betrothed to a common priest; a mamzeret or a Gibeonite woman who is betrothed to an Israelite; or an Israelite woman who is betrothed to a mamzer or to a Gibeonite.

⁶⁰ The Gemara asks: Shall we say that this opinion is not in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei HaGelili? As, if it were in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei HaGelili, he says: When the verse singles out “fearful and fainthearted” (Deuteronomy 20:8), this is referring to one who is afraid because of sins that he has. According to this interpretation, one who marries a woman forbidden to him should return home from war because of his guilt, which seems to contradict the opinion mentioned above that such a man does not return from the ranks.

⁶¹ The Gemara answers: Even if you say that the ruling is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei HaGelili, such a man does not return, in accordance with the opinion of Rabba. As Rabba said: A man is never liable for a forbidden marriage until he engages in sexual intercourse with his wife. With regard to the forbidden marriages of a High Priest, the Torah states: “A widow, or a divorcée, or a profaned woman, or a harlot, these he shall not take...And he shall not profane his seed among his people” (Leviticus 21:14–15). What is the reason that “he shall not take” one of these women as a wife? It is due to: “He shall not profane his seed” by engaging in sexual intercourse. Due to that reason, he is not flogged until he engages in sexual intercourse with a woman who is forbidden to him. Therefore, even according to Rabbi Yosei HaGelili, one who merely betroths a forbidden wife might not return home from the ranks.

⁶² § The Sages taught (Tosefta 7:20-21): The Torah states: “What man is there that has built” (Deuteronomy 20:5), and then “that has planted” (Deuteronomy 20:6), and finally “that has betrothed” (Deuteronomy 20:7). The Torah has taught a person the desired mode of behavior: A person should build a house, then plant a vineyard, and afterward marry a woman. And even King Solomon said in his wisdom: “Prepare your work outside, and make it fit for yourself in the field; and afterward build your house” (Proverbs 24:27). The Sages explained: “Prepare your work outside”; this is a house. “And make it fit for yourself in the field”; this is a vineyard. “And afterward you shall build your house”; this is a wife.

⁶³ Alternatively, this verse may be understood as relating to Torah study: “Prepare your work outside”; this is the study of Bible. “And make it fit for yourself in the field”; this is the study of Mishna. “Afterward you shall build your house”; this is the study of Gemara, the analysis of and deliberation over the statements of the Sages. Alternatively: “Prepare your work outside”; this is the study of Bible and Mishna. “And make it fit for yourself in the field”; this is the study of Gemara.

“Afterward you shall build your house”; these are good deeds. Rabbi Eliezer, son of Rabbi Yosei HaGelili, says: “Prepare your work outside”; this is the study of Bible, and Mishna, and Gemara. “And make it fit for yourself in the field”; these are good deeds. “Afterward you shall build your house”; expound upon new understandings of Torah and receive reward, which is possible only after the initial steps.

⁶⁴ § The mishna teaches: And these are the men who do not return from the ranks: One who builds a gateway, or an enclosed veranda, or a balcony... Rabbi Yehuda says: Even one who rebuilds a house as it stood originally would not return. A Sage taught (Tosefta 7:18): If one adds one additional row of stones [dimos] to the original structure, he returns from the ranks. That is enough to render it a new building. The mishna further teaches: Rabbi Eliezer says: Even one who builds a new brick house in the Sharon would not return. A Sage taught: This is because the owners renew it twice in a period of seven years, and it is therefore not considered a permanent structure.

⁶⁵ § The mishna teaches: These are the men who do not even move from their places: One who built a house and dedicated it within the year; one who planted a vineyard and used its fruit for less than a year; one who marries his betrothed and one who marries his yevama, as it is stated: “When a man takes a new wife, he shall not go out with the army, neither shall he be charged with any business; he shall be free for his house one year, and shall cheer his wife whom he has taken” (Deuteronomy 24:5). With respect to a new husband’s exemption, the Sages taught a number of halakhot from this verse. From the term: “A new wife” I have derived only that a man returns only for a new virgin wife. From where do I derive that it applies to a widow or a divorcée? The verse states: “A wife,” in any case. If so, what is the meaning when the verse states: “A new wife?” It is referring to one who is new for him, excluding one who remarries his divorcée, who is not new to him.

⁶⁶ The Sages taught with regard to the verse: “He shall not go out with the army” (Deuteronomy 24:5); one might have thought it is with the army that he does not go out, but he does go to supply water and food to the army and to repair the roads for them. Therefore, the verse states: “Neither shall he be charged with any business.” One might have thought that I include even one who has built a house and has not dedicated it, or one who has planted a vineyard and has not used its fruit, or one who has betrothed a woman and has not taken her as his wife? The verse states: “Neither shall he be charged with any business”; you do not charge him with any responsibilities, but you do charge others. The Gemara asks: And since the Torah states: “Neither shall he be charged with any business,” why do I need to be taught: “He shall not go out with the army”? The Gemara answers: The Torah adds this clause so that he will violate two prohibitions if he goes out to war: “He shall not go out with the army,” and: “Neither shall he be charged.”

⁶⁷ MISHNA: The mishna continues its discussion of the speech given before battle. “And the officers shall speak further to the people, and they shall say: What man is there that is fearful and fainthearted? Let him go and return unto his house” (Deuteronomy 20:8). Rabbi Akiva says: “That is fearful and fainthearted” is to be understood as it indicates, that the man is unable to stand in the battle ranks and to see a drawn sword because it will terrify him. Rabbi Yosei HaGelili says: “That is fearful and fainthearted”; this is one who is afraid because of the sins that he has; he, too, returns. Therefore, the Torah provided him with all these additional reasons for exemption from the army so he can ascribe his leaving to one of them. In this way, the sinner may leave the ranks without having to publicly acknowledge that he is a sinner.

⁶⁸ Rabbi Yosei says: With regard to one who has betrothed a woman forbidden to him, including a widow betrothed to a High Priest; a divorcée or a yevama who performed ḥalitza [ḥalutza] betrothed to a common priest; a mamzeret or a Gibeonite woman betrothed to an Israelite; or a daughter of an Israelite betrothed to a mamzer or a Gibeonite; this man is he whom the verse calls “fearful and fainthearted.” He fears that his sin will jeopardize his safety in the war.

⁶⁹ The mishna continues its discussion. The verse states: “And it shall be, when the officers conclude speaking to the people, that captains of legions shall be appointed at the head of the people” (Deuteronomy 20:9). The mishna adds: As well as at the rear of the people. The officers station guards [zekifin] in front of them, and other guards behind them, and they have iron rods [kashilin] in their hands. And with regard to anyone who attempts to turn back and flee from the war, the guard has license to beat [lekape’ah] his legs

⁷⁰ because the beginning of fleeing is a downfall on the battlefield, as it is stated: “Israel has fled before the Philistines, and there has been also a great slaughter among the people” (I Samuel 4:17), and likewise it says further on: “And the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in Mount Gilboa” (I Samuel 31:1).

⁷¹ The mishna adds: In what case are all of these statements, with regard to the various exemptions from war, said? They are said with regard to elective wars. But in wars whose mandate is a mitzva, everyone goes, even a groom from his room and a bride from her wedding canopy. Rabbi Yehuda said: In what case are all of these statements, with regard to the various exemptions from war, said? They are said with regard to wars whose mandate is a mitzva. But in obligatory wars, everyone goes, even a groom from his room and a bride from her wedding canopy.

⁷² GEMARA: The Gemara asks: With regard to their understanding that the “fearful and fainthearted” is referring to one harboring sins, what difference is there between the opinion of Rabbi Yosei and the opinion of Rabbi Yosei HaGelili? The Gemara answers: There is a practical difference between them with regard to a sin which violates a prohibition by rabbinic law. According to Rabbi Yosei HaGelili, one who has violated a rabbinic law returns home, whereas Rabbi Yosei maintains that one returns home only if he has violated a Torah law, as in the case of a priest who has married a divorcée.

⁷³ The Gemara asks: In accordance with whose opinion is that which is taught in a baraita: If one spoke between donning the phylactery of the arm and the phylactery of the head, he has a sin on his hands, and due to that sin he returns from the ranks of soldiers waging war. In accordance with whose opinion does this man return? It is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei HaGelili, who maintains that one returns even due to a minor transgression.

⁷⁴ The Gemara asks: Who is the tanna who taught this halakha that the Sages taught in a baraita: If one heard the sound of trumpets and trembled; or he heard the knocking of shields and he trembled; or he heard the sharpening of swords, and urine was trickling down his knees in fear, he returns from the battlefield. In accordance with whose opinion is this? Shall we say that it is the opinion of Rabbi Akiva, who interprets “fearful and fainthearted” literally, and it is not the opinion of Rabbi Yosei HaGelili? The Gemara answers: In this case even Rabbi Yosei HaGelili would concede that he should return, because it is written: “What man is there that is fearful and fainthearted? Let him go and return...lest his brethren’s heart melt as his heart” (Deuteronomy 20:8). Someone so clearly frightened invariably spreads his fear to those around him.

⁷⁵ § The mishna teaches: “And it shall be, when the officers conclude speaking to the people, that captains of legions shall be appointed at the head of the people” (Deuteronomy 20:9), and that the guards have the license to beat the legs of anyone who attempts to turn back and flee from the war, because the beginning of fleeing is a downfall. The Gemara is puzzled by the language of the mishna: This phrase: Because the beginning of fleeing is a downfall, appears to be backward. The mishna should have said the opposite: Because the beginning of the downfall is the act of fleeing. The Gemara concedes: Indeed, say that the mishna means: Because the beginning of the downfall is the act of fleeing.

⁷⁶ The mishna teaches: In what case are these statements said? They are said with regard to elective wars, as opposed to obligatory wars or wars whose mandate is a mitzva. Rabbi Yoḥanan says concerning the various categories of war: The elective war referenced by the Rabbis is the same as a war whose mandate is a mitzva referenced by Rabbi Yehuda, and the war that is a mitzva mentioned by the Rabbis is the same as the obligatory war mentioned by Rabbi Yehuda. Therefore, Rabbi Yehuda is merely stating that the wars which the Rabbis call elective are to be seen as mandated by a mitzva.

⁷⁷ Rava said: With respect to the wars that Joshua waged to conquer Eretz Yisrael, all agree that they were obligatory. With respect to the wars waged by the House of King David for the sake of territorial expansion, all agree that they were elective wars. When they disagree, it is with regard to preventative wars that are waged to reduce the gentiles so that they will not come and wage war against them. One Sage, Rabbi Yehuda, called this type of war a mitzva, and one Sage, the Rabbis, called it an elective war. There is a practical difference between these opinions with respect to the principle: One who is engaged in a mitzva is exempt from performing another mitzva. According to Rabbi Yehuda, one fighting in this kind of war is exempt from performing another mitzva.

Chapter 9

¹ MISHNA: In certain cases of unsolved murder, the Torah prescribes a ritual performed with a heifer whose neck is broken. During the course of this ritual, the judges say a confession in the sacred tongue, Hebrew, as it is stated in the verse: “If one be found slain in the land which the Lord your God has given you to possess it, lying in the field, and it is not known who has smitten him; then your Elders and your judges shall come forth” (Deuteronomy 21:1–2). What is the procedure for this ritual? Three members of the High Court [Sanhedrin] that is in Jerusalem would go out to see the corpse. Rabbi Yehuda says: Five would go out, as it is stated: “Your Elders,” in the plural form, indicating at least two; and it is written: “And your judges,” in the plural form, indicating another two judges; and a court may not be comprised of an even number of judges because they need to be able to issue a majority ruling. Consequently, they add to them one more Elder.

² If the corpse was found concealed in a pile of stones, or hanging on a tree, or floating on the surface of the water, then the judges would not break the neck of the heifer, as it is stated: “If one be found slain in the land” (Deuteronomy 21:1), and not concealed in a pile of stones; “lying” on the ground and not hanging on a tree; “in the field,” and not floating on the surface of the water.

³ If a corpse was found close to the border of the country, or close to a city in which the majority of its inhabitants are gentiles, or close to a city that is without a rabbinical court of twenty-three judges, then the judges would not break the heifer's neck. Additionally, the Elders measure the distance from the corpse only to a city that has a rabbinical court with twenty-three judges.

⁴ GEMARA: The Gemara asks: What is the first sentence in the mishna saying? The mishna is attempting to prove that the verses read during the ritual of breaking a heifer's neck are to be recited in Hebrew, yet the verse does not offer any proof of this. Rabbi Abbahu said that this is what the mishna is saying: The confession is recited in Hebrew, as it is stated with regard to the ritual of the heifer whose neck is broken: "And they shall speak and say" (Deuteronomy 21:7), and later it is stated with regard to the curses stated on Mount Ebal: "And the Levities shall speak and say" (Deuteronomy 27:14). Just as the word "speak" that is said later with regard to the Levites is referring to a speech that is recited in the sacred tongue, so too here the declaration is recited in the sacred tongue.

⁵ The mishna continues to answer the question of: And how is the ritual of the heifer whose neck is broken ordered? The mishna states: It is written in the Torah: "If one be found slain in the land which the Lord your God has given you to possess it, lying in the field, and it is not known who has smitten him; then your Elders and your judges shall come forth, and they shall measure unto the cities which are round about him that is slain" (Deuteronomy 21:1–2). Three members of the High Court that is in Jerusalem would go forth. Rabbi Yehuda says: Five.

⁶ The Sages taught: "And your Elders and judges shall come forth." "Your Elders" indicates two; "and your judges" also indicates two; and a court may not be composed of an even number of judges, so they add to them one more judge. Therefore, there are five judges. This is the statement of Rabbi Yehuda. Rabbi Shimon says: "Your Elders" indicates two, and as a court may not consist of an even number of judges they add to them one more. Therefore, there are three.

⁷ The Gemara asks: But according to Rabbi Shimon as well, isn't it written: "And your judges"; why does he not agree that this indicates a need for two more judges? The Gemara answers: He requires that additional word "Elders" in order to teach that they must be the distinguished among your judges, i.e., judges from the Sanhedrin. And how does Rabbi Yehuda, who derives from the phrase "and your judges" that there is a need for two additional judges, know that they need to be from the Sanhedrin? He derives it from an extra letter. The verse could have simply stated: The Elders. Instead, it adds a letter and states: "Your Elders," to teach that they must be the distinguished among the Elders of Israel.

⁸ And Rabbi Shimon could say: If the Merciful One had written in the Torah: The Elders, I would say that it includes even the Elders of the marketplace, meaning any honorable people. Therefore, the Merciful One writes in the Torah: "Your Elders," to indicate specifically Torah Sages, who are revered by all. And if the Merciful One had written in the Torah only: "Your Elders," I would say that it includes even Elders from a lesser Sanhedrin. Therefore, the Merciful One also writes: "And your judges," to teach that they must be the distinguished among your judges, from the Great Sanhedrin.

⁹ And what is the source of Rabbi Yehuda that the judges may not come from a lesser Sanhedrin? He derives this halakha from a verbal analogy between "Elders," written here, and "Elders," written with regard to the offering that the Sanhedrin brings when the nation has sinned as a result of a mistaken ruling. This offering is brought by "the Elders of the congregation" (Leviticus 4:15). Just as there,

“the Elders of the congregation” are the distinguished among the congregation, from the Great Sanhedrin, so too, here the verse is referring to the distinguished among the congregation.

¹⁰ The Gemara asks: If he derives this halakha from this verbal analogy, then he should derive the entire matter from there, including the requirement for five judges. If so, why do I need the phrase “your Elders and your judges”? Rather, it must be that Rabbi Yehuda does not derive the halakha from this verbal analogy. Instead, he understands that the phrase “your Elders” indicates two, and that “your judges” indicates that they must be the distinguished among your judges, and the letter vav in the phrase “and your judges [veshofetekha]” is to add two more to the count of the judges. And Rabbi Shimon does not accept this derivation

¹¹ because he does not learn anything from the letter vav. Rather, what is the Merciful One saying in the Torah with the phrase “and your judges”? He is referring to the distinguished that are among your judges. The Gemara raises an objection: However, if that is so, if every plural form in the verse adds another two judges, then when it later states: “And they shall go out,” this should indicate another two. And: “And they shall measure” (Deuteronomy 21:2), should indicate yet another two. This means that according to the reasoning of Rabbi Yehuda there are nine judges enumerated here, while according to the reasoning of Rabbi Shimon there are seven judges enumerated here.

¹² The Gemara responds: He requires that verse: “And they shall go out...and they shall measure,” for that which is taught in a baraita: “And they shall go out,” serves to emphasize that they themselves go out, and not their agents, i.e., they may not appoint an agent to measure the distance but must do it themselves. “And they shall measure,” teaches that even if the corpse was found clearly near to a particular city they would nevertheless measure the distance, as it is a mitzva to engage in this act of measurement.

¹³ § The Gemara comments: The mishna is not in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya’akov, as it is taught in a baraita: Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya’akov says: “Your Elders,” this is the Sanhedrin; “your judges,” this is the king and the High Priest. According to Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya’akov, the king and the High Priest need to participate in the ritual of breaking the neck of the heifer. From where is it learned that they are called judges? A king is called a judge, as it is written: “A king by justice establishes the land” (Proverbs 29:4). A High Priest is called a judge, as it is written: “If there arise a matter too hard for you in judgment...And you shall come to the priests the Levites, and to the judge who shall be in those days” (Deuteronomy 17:8–9).

¹⁴ A dilemma was raised before the Sages: Is it so that Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya’akov disagrees only with regard to a king and a High Priest, contending that they too must be present at the measurement, but that with regard to the Sanhedrin he holds either in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda that five Elders are needed or in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Shimon, that three suffice? Or, perhaps he also disagrees with regard to the Sanhedrin and claims that the ritual is not performed unless there is the entire Sanhedrin participating.

¹⁵ Rav Yosef said: Come and hear a proof from a baraita: If a rebellious Elder found the Sanhedrin not in the Hewn Chamber, which was their usual place, but in Beit Pagei, near Jerusalem, and he rebelled against them there, by teaching in opposition to their ruling, one might have thought his rebellion should be considered a rebellion, rendering him liable to punishment. The verse therefore states: “And you shall arise and go up to the place” (Deuteronomy 17:8), which teaches that it is the place where the Sanhedrin resides that causes the halakha of a rebellious Elder to take effect.

¹⁶ The Gemara analyzes this statement: In this case, how many members of the Sanhedrin were there who went out to Beit Pagei? If we say that only a minority of them went out, why should he be considered a rebellious Elder? Perhaps those judges who are inside the Hewn Chamber hold in accordance with his opinion, which would mean that the Elder in question ruled with the majority. Rather, it is obvious that they all went out.

¹⁷ The assumption that they all went out leads to the following question: And for what purpose did they all leave the Hewn Chamber? If it was for an optional matter, may they leave? But isn't it written: "Your navel [shorerekh] is like a round goblet, let no mingled wine be wanting" (Song of Songs 7:3). This verse is interpreted as referring to the Sanhedrin, the ministers [sarei] of Israel who sit in a semicircle, like half of a round goblet. The words "let no mingled wine be wanting" teach that if one of the great Sanhedrin needed to leave, then if there are still present in the Hewn Chamber twenty-three members, corresponding to the number of a lesser Sanhedrin, he may leave; and if not, he may not leave. This indicates that it is prohibited for the entire Sanhedrin to leave for an optional matter.

¹⁸ Rather it is obvious that they left for a matter of a mitzva. For what particular mitzva did they venture out? Is it not for the measurement associated with the ritual of the heifer, and it is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya'akov? This would prove that Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya'akov holds that the entire Sanhedrin goes out to measure the distance from the corpse to the nearby cities. Abaye said to Rav Yosef: No, this is not a proof, as perhaps they went out for a different mitzva, to expand the city of Jerusalem or the courtyards of the Temple, as we learned in a mishna (Sanhedrin 2a): They may expand the sanctified area of the city of Jerusalem or of the Temple courtyards only with the court of seventy-one.

¹⁹ It is taught in a baraita in accordance with the opinion of Rav Yosef, that Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya'akov disagrees even with regard to the number of judges: If the rebellious Elder found the Sanhedrin in Beit Pagei and rebelled against them, for example, if they went out for the measurement of the ritual of the heifer or to expand the area of the city or that of the courtyards, one might have thought that his rebellion should be a rebellion. Therefore, the verse states with regard to the requirement to follow the rulings of the Sanhedrin: "And you shall arise and go up to the place" (Deuteronomy 17:8). This teaches that the place causes the halakha of a rebellious Elder to take effect, indicating that the entire Sanhedrin participates in the measurement of the distance from the corpse to the cities.

²⁰ § The mishna teaches: If the corpse was found concealed in a pile of stones or hanging on a tree, they would not perform the ritual of the heifer. The Gemara suggests: Let us say that the mishna is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda and not in accordance with the opinion of the Rabbis. This is as it is taught in a baraita with regard to the halakha that sheaves of grain forgotten in the fields must be left for the poor: "And you forget a sheaf in the field" (Deuteronomy 24:19). This excludes a concealed sheaf; it is not considered forgotten and it may be collected by the owner, even if he did forget it. This is the statement of Rabbi Yehuda. And the Rabbis say: The phrase "in the field" serves to include the concealed sheaves, and these must be left for the poor. Rabbi Yehuda holds, like the ruling in the mishna here, that when the verse states "in the field" it excludes a concealed corpse.

²¹ Rav said: You can even say that the mishna is in accordance with the opinion of the Rabbis, as here they expound the halakha based on the context of the verse, and there too they expound the halakha based on the context of the verse.

²² In this case, as it is written: “If one be found slain” (Deuteronomy 21:1), the default assumption is that the halakha applies no matter where it is found. When the verse then states: “In the ground,” it must be serving to exclude a matter, i.e., a concealed corpse. And similarly, there, in the case of forgotten sheaves, they also expound based on the context of the verse, as it is written: “When you reap your harvest in your field, and you forget a sheaf” (Deuteronomy 24:19). This indicates that forgotten sheaves are similar to those of the harvest: Just as the harvest is performed with revealed objects, i.e., the growing grain, so too, the halakhot of forgetting pertain to revealed sheaves. Consequently, when the Merciful One writes in the Torah “in the field,” it must be in order to include the concealed sheaves.

²³ In light of this explanation, the Gemara asks: According to Rabbi Yehuda as well, let him derive that covered sheaves are not included from the fact that forgotten sheaves are similar to those of the harvest. Why does he have to derive it from the words “in the field”? The Gemara answers: Yes, it is indeed so, he does not derive that halakha from the phrase “in the field.”

²⁴ The Gemara therefore inquires: But then why do I need the phrase “in the field,” which indicates either an exclusion or an inclusion? The Gemara answers: He requires it in order to include the forgotten stalks of standing grain. Produce that one forgot to reap is considered forgotten, even if it is still attached to the ground. The Gemara asks: And the Rabbis, from where do they learn the halakha of forgotten stalks of standing grain? The Gemara answers: They derive it from the verse: “When you reap your harvest in your field, and you forget,” which indicates that the halakha includes one who forgot to harvest part of his field.

²⁵ The Gemara asks: And what does Rabbi Yehuda derive from this verse? The Gemara answers: It is necessary for him in order to learn that which Rabbi Abbahu says that Rabbi Elazar says, as Rabbi Abbahu says that Rabbi Elazar says: This verse excludes sheaves that floated through the air from his field into another’s field. Such sheaves are not classified as forgotten and may be retrieved later by the owner. And the Rabbis, from where do they derive this halakha? They derive it from the fact that the verse could have stated: In the field, but instead states “in your field,” to include sheaves situated only in one’s own field. The Gemara continues to ask: And what does Rabbi Yehuda learn from this phrase? The Gemara answers: He does not learn anything from the difference between: In the field, and “in your field,” as he holds it is not a significant difference.

²⁶ Rabbi Yirmeya raises a dilemma: If sheaves floated into his field, i.e., if one sheaf landed on another sheaf or on another item, what is the halakha? Is the airspace of a field considered to be like it is the field itself, in which case one sheaf on top of another meets the legal requirements to be deemed forgotten? Or, is it not considered like the field, in which case one sheaf on top of another does not meet the legal requirements to be deemed forgotten?

²⁷ Rav Kahana said to Rav Pappi, and some say Rav Kahana said it to Rav Zevid: Let him resolve the dilemma from the statement of Rabbi Abbahu, who says that Rabbi Elazar says: This excludes sheaves that floated into another’s field. If they floated into another’s field, yes, Rabbi Elazar said that they are not deemed forgotten, but if they floated into his own field, they are not discussed by Rabbi Elazar, and therefore they are deemed forgotten.

²⁸ The Gemara refutes this proof: And according to your reasoning that the halakha of the baraita is limited to the case stated, one could infer: In a case where the sheaves drifted into another's field, then if they were floating, yes, they are not deemed to be forgotten, but if they were resting directly on the ground in another's field, no, they are deemed to be forgotten. But this cannot be the halakha, as we require the sheaves to be "in your field," and these sheaves are not in his field.

²⁹ Rather, you must admit that the words: Into another's field, include not only those sheaves which are lying on other items, but even those resting directly on the ground. And the reason that Rabbi Abbahu states: Floated, is that you find a situation where sheaves end up in the field of another only in a case where they floated through the air and fell there. Since the term floated was not used to teach a halakha, no inference can be made from this baraita with regard to sheaves that floated in one's own field.

³⁰ The Gemara again attempts to resolve the dilemma: Come and hear a proof from a baraita (Tosefta, Pe'a 3:7): In the case of a sheaf that had been held by its owner in order to take it to the city, and he placed it on top of another sheaf, and he forgot both sheaves, the lower sheaf is deemed to be a forgotten sheaf, and the upper one is not deemed to be a forgotten sheaf. Rabbi Shimon ben Yehuda says in the name of Rabbi Shimon: Both of them are not deemed to be forgotten sheaves; the lower one because it is concealed, and the upper one because it is floating and not directly touching the field. The Gemara points out: They disagree only with regard to the lower sheaf, but with regard to the upper one all agree that it is not deemed a forgotten sheaf. This demonstrates that a sheaf located in the airspace of the field is not deemed to be forgotten.

³¹ The Gemara rejects this proof: There it is different, as, since the owner had held it to take it to the city, he acquired it. The reason it is not deemed to be a forgotten sheaf is not because it is not touching the field but because the owner had already acquired that particular sheaf before forgetting it. The Gemara raises an objection to this explanation: If so, why specifically state the case of a sheaf that was placed on top of another? The same would hold true in a case where one put the sheaf down directly in the field as well, as he has already acquired it. The Gemara answers: Yes, it is indeed so, and the reason that the baraita teaches: On top of another, is due to the lower sheaf rather than the upper one, in order to teach the dispute concerning the lower sheaf.

³² The Gemara asks: But Rabbi Shimon said: Because it is floating. How can one then say that the reason for his ruling is because the owner of the field has acquired it? The Gemara answers: Say instead: Because it is like it is floating. In other words, it is as though the upper sheaf had not been put down at all, but remains in the owner's hands.

³³ The Gemara tells of a related incident. On one occasion Abaye said: I am hereby as sharp and expert as ben Azzai, who taught Torah in the markets of Tiberias, and am ready to answer any question that might be posed to me. One of the Sages said to Abaye, with regard to the ritual of the heifer whose neck is broken: If there were two slain people found one on top of the other not precisely aligned, from where does one measure the distance to the surrounding cities?

³⁴ The various aspects of the dilemma are as follows: Is a substance in contact with the same type of substance considered to be concealed, and is a substance in contact with the same type of substance not considered to be floating, which would mean that the lower, concealed corpse is ignored because one does not measure the distance from a concealed corpse, as taught in the mishna, and one measures the distance from the upper one? Or perhaps a substance in contact with the same type of

substance is considered to be floating, and a substance in contact with the same type of substance is not considered to be concealed, and he measures the distance from the lower one, because it is not considered to be concealed, but not from the upper one, which is considered to be floating.

³⁵ Or perhaps a substance in contact with the same type of substance is considered to be concealed, and a substance in contact with the same type of substance is considered to be floating, and he therefore does not measure the distance from the lower one nor does he measure the distance from the upper one. According to this last option, in such a situation no measuring is done, and the ritual is not performed.

³⁶ Abaye said to him:

³⁷ You learned it in the baraita (Tosefta, Pe'a 3:7): In the case of a sheaf that had been held by its owner in order to take it to the city, and he placed it on top of another sheaf, and he forgot both sheaves, the lower sheaf is deemed to be a forgotten sheaf, and the upper one is not deemed to be a forgotten sheaf. Rabbi Shimon ben Yehuda says in the name of Rabbi Shimon: Both of them are not deemed to be forgotten sheaves; the lower one because it is concealed and the upper one because it is floating and not directly touching the field. The Sages assumed that these tanna'im in the baraita basically hold in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda, who says that the phrase "in the field" serves to exclude a concealed sheaf.

³⁸ The Gemara continues Abaye's statement: What, is it not the case that they disagree about this, as one Sage, Rabbi Shimon, holds that a substance in contact with the same type of substance is considered to be concealed, and therefore the lower sheaf is not deemed to be a forgotten sheaf, and one Sage, the Rabbis, holds that it is not considered to be concealed, which means it is deemed to be a forgotten sheaf. The same dispute would apply to the two corpses.

³⁹ The Gemara refutes this claim: No, if they hold in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda, then it could be that everyone agrees that a substance in contact with the same type of substance is considered to be concealed, and they would maintain this with regard to the two corpses as well. And here they disagree with regard to the issue that is the subject of the dispute of Rabbi Yehuda and the Rabbis, in that the opinion of the Rabbis of this baraita is in accordance with the opinion of the Rabbis there, which claims that the halakha of a forgotten sheaf applies even to a concealed sheaf, and Rabbi Shimon ben Yehuda holds in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda, who maintains that a concealed sheaf is exempt from the halakha of forgotten sheaves.

⁴⁰ The Gemara asks: If that is so, that their dispute is with regard to the halakha of concealed sheaves, why did they specifically disagree in the case of a sheaf that was on top of another sheaf; the same would hold true even in a case where the sheaf was concealed in dirt and pebbles? The Gemara answers: Yes, it is indeed so. They disagree with regard to all concealed sheaves, and their dispute is stated with regard to a case of one sheaf on top of another in order to convey to you the far-reaching nature of the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda, who says that even a substance that is in contact with the same type of substance is considered concealed. Therefore, a substance concealed in a different type of matter is all the more so considered concealed.

⁴¹ § The Gemara returns to discuss when the ritual of breaking the neck of the heifer is performed. The Sages taught, expounding the verse "If one be found slain in the land which the Lord your God has given you to possess it, lying in the field" (Deuteronomy 21:1): "Slain" indicates one killed by a sword, but not one who was strangled; "slain," but not one who was found twitching in his death

throes; “in the land,” but not concealed in a pile of stones; “lying,” but not hanging on a tree; “in the field,” but not floating on the surface of the water. Rabbi Elazar says: In all these cases, if a person was slain by the sword, the judges break the neck of the heifer, and it does not matter where the corpse was found.

⁴² It is taught in a baraita: Rabbi Yosei bar Yehuda says that the Sages said to Rabbi Elazar: Do you not concede that if he was strangled and left in a garbage heap, that they do not break the heifer’s neck? Apparently, “slain” is a precise term that means slain but not strangled. If you accept that, here too the words “in the land” should indicate: In the land, but not concealed in a pile of stones; “fallen” should indicate: Fallen but not hanging on a tree; and “in the field” should indicate in the field but not floating on the surface of the water. And Rabbi Elazar holds that those other situations are not excluded, and that because in that first case the Torah writes “slain” an extra time in the next verse: “About him that is slain” (Deuteronomy 21:2), this repetition teaches that a victim of strangulation is not included in this halakha.

⁴³ § The mishna taught: If a corpse was found close to the border of the country or close to a city in which the majority of its inhabitants are gentiles, the judges would not break the heifer’s neck, as it is written: “If one be found slain” (Deuteronomy 21:1). This excludes places where murdered bodies are commonly found, such as the aforementioned locations.

⁴⁴ The mishna taught: Or if the victim was discovered close to a city that is without a rabbinical court of twenty-three judges, they would not measure the distance to that city. The Gemara explains: This is because the verse requires “the Elders of that city” (Deuteronomy 21:3), and this is not the case here; therefore the rite was not performed. The mishna also taught that the Elders measure the distance from the corpse only to a city that contains a rabbinical court of twenty-three judges. The Gemara asks: This is obvious. Since the mishna taught that they do not measure the distance to a city that does not have a rabbinical court of twenty-three judges, I know that they measure the distance only to a city that has a rabbinical court of twenty-three judges.

⁴⁵ The Gemara answers: This tanna teaches us the halakha as it is taught in a baraita: From where is it derived that if the corpse was found close to a city that does not have a rabbinical court of twenty-three judges, that they leave the city aside and measure the distance from the corpse to a city that has a rabbinical court of twenty-three judges? The verse states: “And the Elders of that city shall take” (Deuteronomy 21:3), which indicates that the Elders of a city are involved in any case, and the measurement is taken even if it is not to the city closest to the body.

⁴⁶ MISHNA: If the slain person is found precisely between two cities, the inhabitants of the two of them bring two heifers total; this is the statement of Rabbi Eliezer. And the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not bring a heifer whose neck is broken, even if Jerusalem is the city closest to the slain victim. If the head of the corpse was found in one place and his body was found in a different place, they bring the head next to the body; this is the statement of Rabbi Eliezer. Rabbi Akiva says: They bring the body next to the head. From where on the body would they measure the distance? Rabbi Eliezer says: From his navel. Rabbi Akiva says: From his nose. Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya’akov says: From the place where he became a slain person, which is from the neck.

⁴⁷ GEMARA: The Gemara explains: What is the reasoning of Rabbi Eliezer, that when a body is found precisely between two cities, the inhabitants of each city bring a heifer? His ruling is based on two factors. First, he holds that it is possible to measure precisely and that it is a real possibility to

determine that both cities are exactly the same distance from the corpse. And second, he interprets the term “That is nearest” (Deuteronomy 21:3), to be referring not only to one city. It can even be understood as: That are nearest, so that the halakhot apply to more than one city.

⁴⁸ The mishna taught: And the inhabitants of Jerusalem do not bring a heifer whose neck is broken. The Gemara explains: This is because the verse states: “If one be found slain in the land which the Lord your God has given you to possess it” (Deuteronomy 21:1), and this tanna holds that Jerusalem was not divided among the tribes in the division of Eretz Yisrael. It was not given as a possession to any particular person but belongs to all; therefore the halakha of the heifer whose neck is broken does not apply to it.

⁴⁹ § With regard to the halakha of a corpse whose head was found in one place and its body elsewhere, the Gemara asks: With regard to what halakha do they disagree? If we say they disagree with regard to whether the measurement is taken from the head or the body, from the fact that the latter clause teaches: From where would they measure the distance, it may be inferred that in the first clause we are not dealing with measurement. Rabbi Yitzḥak said: They disagree with regard to a different matter, the question of whether a corpse with no one to bury it [met mitzva] acquires its place, meaning if an unattended corpse must be buried where it is found.

⁵⁰ And this is what the mishna is saying: With regard to burying him, the victim acquires his place, and he is buried there. The mishna continues: And in a case where his head is found in one place and his body is found in a different place, they bring the head next to the body and bury him there; this is the statement of Rabbi Eliezer. Rabbi Akiva says: They bring the body next to the head. The Gemara explains: With regard to what do they disagree? They both agree that he should be buried in the place where he was killed, but one Sage, Rabbi Eliezer, holds that his body fell in its place, and it was the head that rolled away and fell. And one Sage, Rabbi Akiva, holds that his head fell where it fell, and it was the body that went and continued onward. Therefore, the body is brought to the head.

⁵¹ § The mishna taught that there is a dispute concerning the question: From where on the body would they measure the distance? The Gemara asks: With regard to what do they disagree? One Sage, Rabbi Akiva, holds: A person’s life is sustained mainly in his nose, in his respiratory system. And one Sage, Rabbi Eliezer, holds: His life is mainly in the area of his navel, in his digestive system.

⁵² The Gemara suggests: Shall we say that these tanna’im are like those tanna’im, who had a dispute as it is taught in a baraita: From where is an embryo formed? From its head, and so the verse states: “Out of my mother’s womb You pulled me [gozi]” (Psalms 71:6). And the proof that “gozi” is referring to the head is from the verse that states: “Cut off [gozi] your hair, and cast it away” (Jeremiah 7:29). In this verse, the term gozi relates to the hair of the head. Abba Shaul says: An embryo is formed from its navel, and it sends its roots forth. This dispute concerning the initial formation of an embryo also appears to depend on where the main source of life in a person is.

⁵³ The Gemara refutes this comparison: You can even say that both tanna’im of the mishna agree with Abba Shaul, as Abba Shaul says his opinion only with regard to the forming of an embryo, that when an embryo is formed, it is formed from its middle. But with regard to life, everyone, i.e., both tanna’im in the baraita, agree that it is in his nose, as it is written: “All in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life” (Genesis 7:22).

⁵⁴ The mishna taught another opinion. Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya'akov says: The distance should be measured from the place where the victim became a slain person, from his neck. The Gemara poses a question: What is the reason of Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya'akov? The Gemara answers: As it is written: "To lay you upon the necks of the wicked who are to be slain" (Ezekiel 21:34), which shows that being slain occurs at the neck.

⁵⁵ MISHNA: The mishna continues to describe the ritual. After they would take the measurement, the Elders of Jerusalem took their leave and went away. The Elders of the city that is closest to the corpse bring a heifer from cattle, which has not pulled a yoke. But a blemish does not disqualify it, because, unlike the description of the red heifer, the Torah does not state that it must be without blemish. And they bring it down to a stream that is eitan. Eitan in this context means as the word generally indicates, powerful. The stream must have a forceful flow. The mishna comments: Even if it is not forceful, it is a valid site for the ritual. And they break the neck of the heifer from behind with a cleaver. And with regard to its place, where the heifer was standing when its neck was broken, it is prohibited for that ground to be sown or to be worked, but it is permitted to comb flax there or to cut stones there.

⁵⁶ The Elders of that city would then wash their hands in water in the place of the breaking of the neck of the heifer, and they would recite: "Our hands did not spill this blood, nor did our eyes see" (Deuteronomy 21:7). The mishna explains: But did it enter our minds that the Elders of the court are spillers of blood, that they must make such a declaration? Rather, they mean to declare that the victim did not come to us and then we let him take his leave without food, and we did not see him and then leave him alone to depart without accompaniment. They therefore attest that they took care of all his needs and are not responsible for his death even indirectly.

⁵⁷ And the priests recite: "Forgive, Lord, Your people Israel, whom You have redeemed, and suffer not innocent blood to remain in the midst of Your people Israel" (Deuteronomy 21:8). They did not have to recite the conclusion of the verse: "And the blood shall be forgiven for them," as this is not part of the priests' statement, but rather the Divine Spirit informs them: When you shall do so, the blood is forgiven for you.

⁵⁸ GEMARA: With regard to the mishna's statement that the heifer is not disqualified by a blemish, the Gemara suggests: And a blemish should disqualify in the case of the heifer, by means of an a fortiori inference: And if in the case of the red heifer, which is not disqualified by years, as it may be of any age, and yet a blemish disqualifies it, then a heifer for this ritual, which is disqualified by years, as it is valid only until two years of age, is it not logical that a blemish should disqualify it? The Gemara answers: It is different there, in the case of the red heifer, as the verse states: "Wherein [bah] has no blemish" (Numbers 19:2). This serves as an exclusion and teaches that it is only with regard to it [bah] that a blemish is disqualifying, but a blemish is not disqualifying with regard to the heifer of the ritual of the breaking of the neck.

⁵⁹ The Gemara asks: However, if that is so, if the word "bah" precludes a derivation by an a fortiori inference, then any other labor performed with the red heifer, apart from pulling a yoke, should not disqualify it. While the verse disqualifies a red heifer only if it pulled a yoke, as it states: "And upon which never came a yoke" (Numbers 19:2), a similar a fortiori inference could be learned from the heifer whose neck is to be broken to disqualify a red heifer that has performed any labor. However, since the verse states with regard to the heifer whose neck is to be broken: "That has not been

worked with [bah]" (Deuteronomy 21:3), this indicates that labor is disqualifying only for "bah," a heifer whose neck is to be broken, but not for a red heifer.

⁶⁰ Why, then, does Rav Yehuda say that Rav says: If he placed a bundle [uda] of sacks on a red heifer, the heifer is immediately disqualified from being used as the red heifer; and as for the heifer whose neck is broken, it is not disqualified by such labor until it pulls and moves the burden, as the verse states: "That has not pulled a yoke" (Deuteronomy 21:3). Why does bearing the weight of the bundle disqualify the red heifer? The Gemara explains: The halakha with regard to the red heifer is different, as we learn by a verbal analogy between the word "yoke" used with regard to the red heifer and the word "yoke" used with regard to the heifer whose neck is broken that any labor disqualifies the former.

⁶¹ The Gemara raises an objection: If there is a verbal analogy between the red heifer and the heifer that will have its neck broken, then the halakha that a blemish should disqualify the heifer whose neck is broken should also be derived from the usage of "yoke" with regard to the heifer whose neck is broken and from the usage of "yoke" with regard to the red heifer. The Gemara answers: The Merciful One has excluded this possibility by placing in the verse the word "bah," which indicates that disqualification due to blemish applies only to the red heifer and not to the heifer whose neck is broken.

⁶² The Gemara counters this claim: In the verse concerning a heifer whose neck is broken, the Torah also writes "bah"; it should be the case that forms of labor other than pulling a yoke are disqualifying only with regard to it and not with regard to the red heifer. The Gemara answers: That word "bah" is required by Rav Yehuda in order to exclude sacred offerings, i.e., which are not disqualified by labor, and one may bring an animal that has been used for labor as an offering. It might enter your mind to say that this should be derived by an a fortiori inference from a heifer whose neck is broken, as follows: And if with regard to a heifer whose neck is broken, which is not disqualified by a blemish, labor nevertheless disqualifies it, then with regard to sacred offerings, which are disqualified by a blemish, is it not right that labor should disqualify them? In order to counter this argument, the word "bah" teaches us that a sacred offering is not disqualified by labor.

⁶³ With regard to this suggested a fortiori inference, the Gemara observes that it can be refuted in the following manner: What about the fact that a heifer whose neck is broken is disqualified by years, as once it reaches two years of age it is no longer classified as a heifer? As it is clear that the heifer whose neck is to be broken carries some restrictions that do not apply to sacred offerings, perhaps being disqualified by labor is another such restriction. The Gemara refutes this argument: Is that to say that there are no sacred offerings that are disqualified by years? There are several offerings that may be brought only in their first or second year, and where the verse is necessary to teach that sacred offerings are not disqualified by labor, it is with regard to those sacred offerings that are disqualified by years.

⁶⁴ The Gemara raises an objection: But is the halakha that sacred offerings are not disqualified by labor derived from this verse? It is derived from elsewhere. The verse states with regard to sacred offerings: "Blind, or broken, or maimed, or having a wart, or scabbed, or scurvy, you shall not offer these to the Lord" (Leviticus 22:22). This verse serves to create an exclusion, teaching that it is these that you may not sacrifice, but you may sacrifice sacred animals that have been used for labor. The Gemara answers: It was necessary to state the halakha twice. It might enter your mind to say that this

halakha, that one may sacrifice animals that have been used for labor, applies only in a case where they were used for permitted labor, but if they were used for prohibited labor, e.g., on Shabbat, you might say that it is prohibited to bring them as offerings. In order to refute this argument, it is necessary to state the halakha again.

⁶⁵ The Gemara poses another question: But this halakha that prohibited labor does not disqualify offerings is also derived from here, a verse with regard to the sacrifice of blemished animals: “And from the hand of a stranger you shall not offer the bread of your God from any of these, because... there is a blemish in them” (Leviticus 22:25). This verse emphasizes that it is only “these,” i.e., blemished animals, that you may not sacrifice, but you may sacrifice sacred animals that have been used for labor. Since this verse is discussing the possibility of accepting offerings from a gentile, who presumably also performed prohibited labor with the animal, this demonstrates that prohibited labor does not disqualify animals from being sacrificed as offerings.

⁶⁶ The Gemara answers: It was necessary to teach this halakha a third time. It might enter your mind to say: This halakha, that labor does not disqualify offerings, applies only where one performed labor with them when they were non-sacred and afterward dedicated them as offerings, but if one performed labor with them when they were already sacred animals, you might say that it is prohibited to bring them as offerings. In order to refute this argument, it is necessary to teach this halakha in three separate places.

⁶⁷ § The Gemara returns to discuss the matter itself: Rav Yehuda says that Rav says: If one placed a bundle of sacks on a red heifer, it is disqualified. And as for a heifer whose neck is broken, it is not disqualified until it pulls a burden. The Gemara raises an objection from a baraita: It states with regard to the red heifer: “That upon which never came a yoke” (Numbers 19:2). I have derived only a yoke; from where do I derive that other types of labor also disqualify the animal? You can say the following a fortiori inference: And if with regard to a heifer whose neck is broken, which is not disqualified by a blemish, other types of labor disqualify it, then with regard to a red heifer, which is disqualified by a blemish, is it not right that other types of labor should disqualify it?

⁶⁸ And if it is your wish to say that this a fortiori inference is unsound, you can learn this halakha by a verbal analogy: It is stated here, with regard to the red heifer, “yoke” (Numbers 19:2), and it is stated there, with regard to the heifer whose neck is broken, “yoke” (Deuteronomy 21:3). Just as there, other types of labor disqualify it, so too here, in the case of the red heifer, other types of labor disqualify it.

⁶⁹ The Gemara asks: What is the meaning of: If it is your wish to say? What potential problem with the a fortiori inference necessitates the verbal analogy? The Gemara explains: And perhaps you would say that the a fortiori inference can be refuted in the following manner: What is unique about a heifer whose neck is broken is that it is disqualified by years, which is not the case for a red heifer. Alternatively, one could suggest that sacred offerings will prove that this inference should not be made, as a blemish is disqualifying with regard to them, but labor is not disqualifying with regard to them.

⁷⁰ As the a fortiori inference can be refuted in either of these ways, there is a need for the verbal analogy: It is stated here “yoke,” and it is stated there “yoke.” Just as there, in the case of a heifer whose neck is broken, other types of labor disqualify it, so too, other types of labor disqualify a red heifer. The Gemara raises an objection to this verbal analogy: And from the place that you came you

can offer an alternative exposition: Just as below, in the case of a heifer whose neck is broken, it is not disqualified by carrying a burden until it pulls the yoke, so too here, a red heifer should not be disqualified until it pulls the yoke, contrary to the statement of Rav.

⁷¹ The Gemara answers the objection to the statement of Rav from the baraita: It is a dispute among tanna'im, as there are those who cite the source of this halakha, that labor disqualifies a red heifer, by verbal analogy from a heifer whose neck is broken, and therefore the red heifer is disqualified only if it pulls the burden. There are also those who cite the source of this halakha from a red heifer itself, and consequently they disqualify the red heifer even if it did not pull the yoke.

⁷² This is as it is taught in a baraita with regard to a red heifer: From the term "yoke" I have derived only that a yoke disqualifies a red heifer; from where do I derive the other types of labor? The verse states: "That upon which never came a yoke" (Numbers 19:2). The verse could be read with a pause after the word "came," which would teach that it is disqualified in any case, no matter what labor was performed with it. If so, what is the meaning when the verse states "yoke," if all forms of labor disqualify it? It teaches us that a yoke placed on the animal disqualifies it whether the yoke was on the animal at the time of performing labor or whether it was on the animal not at the time of performing labor, i.e., it was merely placed on the animal. However, other types of labor actions disqualify animals only at the time of actually performing labor. Rav ruled in accordance with this opinion.

⁷³ The Gemara raises an objection: And perhaps one can say a different exposition of the verse: "That upon which never came" is a generalization that disqualifies the animal after any type of labor, while "yoke" is a detail. There is a generalization and a detail, and the principle of halakhic exposition in that case is that there is nothing in the generalization other than what is in the detail. Therefore, with regard to a yoke, yes, it will disqualify an animal from being used as a red heifer; but with regard to anything else, no, it will not disqualify the animal. The Gemara answers: "That upon which never came" is an amplification, and the addition of this term results in this verse not belonging to the category of generalizations and details.

⁷⁴ The Gemara comments: And a case like this is also taught in a baraita with regard to a heifer whose neck is broken: From the word "yoke" I have derived only that a yoke disqualifies; from where do I derive the other types of labor? The same verse states: "That has not been worked with" (Deuteronomy 21:3), to teach that it is disqualified in any case, no matter what labor was performed with it. If so, what is the meaning when the verse states "yoke"? It serves to teach us that a yoke placed on the animal disqualifies it whether the yoke was on the animal at the time of performing labor or whether it was on the animal not at the time of performing labor, i.e., it was merely placed on the animal, whereas other types of labor actions disqualify animals only at the time of actually performing labor.

⁷⁵ The Gemara raises an objection: And perhaps one can say a different exposition of the verse: "That has not been worked with" is a generalization that disqualifies the animal after any type of labor, while "yoke" is a detail. There is a generalization and a detail, and the principle of halakhic exposition in that case is that there is nothing in the generalization other than what is in the detail, which means: With regard to a yoke, yes, it will disqualify an animal, but with regard to anything else, no, it will not disqualify it. The Gemara answers: The phrase "that has not been worked with" is

an amplification, and the addition of this term results in this verse not belonging to the category of generalizations and details.

⁷⁶ Rabbi Abbahu said: I asked of Rabbi Yoḥanan: This pulling of a yoke that disqualifies a heifer whose neck is broken, with how much, i.e., how far, must the animal pull the yoke for it to be disqualified? He said to me: Like the measure of the size of a full yoke. A dilemma was raised before the Sages: Does this mean according to its length or according to its width? One of the Sages, and Rabbi Ya'akov was his name, said to them: It was explained to me personally by Rabbi Yoḥanan himself: The pulling of a yoke is according to its width, which is a handbreadth.

⁷⁷ The Gemara poses a question: And since he stated a fixed measurement, let him merely state: A handbreadth. Why was it necessary to add that this is the width of a yoke? The Gemara answers: This teaches us that the measure of a yoke along its width is a handbreadth. What difference is there in knowing this fact? This teaches that in the case of commercial transactions, a buyer may retract his purchase if the yoke he was given is less than a handbreadth wide.

⁷⁸ Rabbi Yoḥanan ben Shaul says: For what reason did the Torah say to bring a heifer whose neck is broken to a stream? The Holy One, Blessed be He, said: Let something that did not produce fruit, i.e., a heifer that has not given birth, come and have its neck be broken at a stream that flows forcefully, which is a place that does not produce fruit, and atone for the murder of one who was not given an opportunity to produce fruit. The Gemara asks: What is this fruit that he was not given an opportunity to produce? If we say it refers to being fruitful and multiplying, i.e., that the killer prevented him from having more children, but if that is so, in the case of an elderly person or a eunuch, so too will you say that we do not break the heifer's neck because they could not have had any more children even had they lived? Rather, the fruit are mitzvot, as the killer deprived the victim of the opportunity to perform additional mitzvot.

⁷⁹ The mishna taught: And they bring it down to a stream that is eitan. Eitan in this context means as the word generally indicates, forceful. The Sages taught: From where is it derived that eitan is forceful? It is as it is stated:

⁸⁰ "Firm [eitan] is your dwelling-place, and your nest is set in the rock" (Numbers 24:21), and it states: "Hear, O you mountains, the Lord's controversy, and the enduring rocks [eitanim], the foundations of the earth" (Micah 6:2). The use of the word in these verses indicates that "eitan" means something hard, like a rock or a mountain. Others say a different explanation of the word eitan: From where is it derived that eitan means old? As it is stated: "It is an ancient [eitan] nation, a nation from of old" (Jeremiah 5:15).

⁸¹ § The mishna taught: And they break the neck [orfin] of the heifer from behind with a cleaver. The Gemara explains: What is the reason that the Sages understood that the heifer is killed in this manner? They derive that the term arifa, which describes what is done to the heifer, refers to breaking the back of the neck, from the term arifa stated with regard to the bird brought as a sin-offering (see Leviticus 5:8).

⁸² § The mishna taught further: And with regard to its place, it is prohibited for that ground to be sown or to be worked. The Sages taught: The verse: "Which may be neither worked nor sown" (Deuteronomy 21:4) is referring to the past, that is, a place which has not previously been worked or sown. This is the statement of Rabbi Yoshiya. Rabbi Yonatan says: It speaks of the future, meaning it is prohibited to sow or work the land from that point onward.

⁸³ Rava said: As for the future, everyone agrees that it is prohibited to sow or work the land, as it is written “neither worked nor sown” in the future tense. When they disagree is with regard to the past. Rabbi Yoshiya, who disqualifies a place that was sown beforehand, holds: Does it state: And shall not be worked, in the form of a future command? And Rabbi Yonatan responds: Does it state: And was not worked, in the past tense? And Rabbi Yoshiya answers: The term “which” indicates the past. And as for Rabbi Yonatan, in his opinion the term “which” is a term of amplification, as will be explained later in the Gemara, and it is not referring to the past.

⁸⁴ § The mishna taught: But it is permitted to comb flax there or to cut stones there. The Sages taught: From the phrase “which may be neither worked nor sown,” I have derived only sowing; from where do I derive that other types of labor are also prohibited? The verse states: “Which may be neither worked,” indicating that it may not be worked in any manner.

⁸⁵ The baraita continues: If so, why does the verse also need to state “nor sown”? It is in order to say to you: Just as sowing is unique in that it is labor performed on the land itself, so too, all labor that is performed on the land itself is prohibited. This excludes combing flax and cutting stones, which are not done on the land itself.

⁸⁶ The Gemara raises an objection: And perhaps one can say a different exposition: “Which may be neither worked” is a generalization, and “nor sown” a detail. When the Torah writes a generalization and a detail, there is nothing in the generalization other than what is in the detail, i.e., the detail serves to impose a limit on the generalization. Consequently, the verse is teaching that with regard to sowing, yes, it is prohibited, but with regard to anything else, no, it is not prohibited. The Gemara again answers: The term “which” is an amplification, and the addition of this term results in this verse not belonging to the category of generalizations and details.

⁸⁷ § The mishna taught that the Elders of the city would then wash their hands. The Sages taught: With regard to the verse: “And all the Elders of that city, who are nearest to the slain man, shall wash their hands over the heifer whose neck was broken in the valley” (Deuteronomy 21:6), one might have thought that there is no need for the verse to state: “Whose neck was broken,” because there is no heifer mentioned other than the one whose neck was broken. And what is the meaning when the verse states: “Whose neck was broken”? It serves to teach us that they wash their hands over the place where the heifer’s neck was broken.

⁸⁸ The verse further states: “And they shall say: Our hands did not spill this blood, nor did our eyes see” (Deuteronomy 21:7). The mishna explains: But did it enter our minds that the Elders of the court are spillers of blood, that they must make such a declaration? Rather, they mean to declare: The victim did not come to us and then we let him take his leave without food, and we did not see him and then leave him alone to depart without accompaniment. They therefore attest that they took care of all his needs and are not responsible for his death even indirectly.

⁸⁹ It is taught in a baraita: Rabbi Meir would say: There is coercion with regard to accompaniment, i.e., one who does not want to accompany another is nevertheless required to do so, as the reward for accompaniment is without measure. The proof of the importance of accompaniment is from a verse, as it is stated with regard to when the Jewish people laid siege to the city of Bethel: “And the watchers saw a man come out of the city, and they said to him: Show us, please, the entrance into the city, and we will deal kindly with you” (Judges 1:24), and it is written: “And he showed them the

entrance to the city” (Judges 1:25). And what kindness did they perform with him? It is that they killed the entire city by the sword, but that man and his family they sent free.

⁹⁰ The Gemara elaborates on the reward received in that story. The next verse states: “And the man went to the land of the Hittites, and he built a city, and he called its name Luz; that is its name to this day” (Judges 1:26). It is taught in a baraita: This is the city Luz where sky blue wool is dyed. It is the same city Luz where, although Sennacherib came and exiled many nations from place to place, he did not disarrange and exile its inhabitants; Nebuchadnezzar, who conquered many lands, did not destroy it; and even the angel of death has no permission to pass through it. Rather, its Elders, when they have decided that they have reached the end of life, go outside the city wall and die.

⁹¹ Are these matters not inferred a fortiori: And if this Canaanite, who did not speak with his mouth and explicitly tell them where the city entrance was, and did not walk with them by foot, but merely indicated the correct path to them, nevertheless caused himself to be rescued and also had the merit to provide rescue for his descendants until the end of all generations, then with regard to one who accompanies another by foot, all the more so will his reward be great.

⁹² After stating that the man did not openly guide those watching the city, the Gemara asks: How did that Canaanite show them the entrance to the city? Hizkiyya says: He twisted his mouth for them, i.e., he showed them the path to the city by moving his lips. Rabbi Yoḥanan says: He showed them with his finger alone. It is taught in a baraita in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yoḥanan: Because this Canaanite showed them with his finger, he caused himself to be rescued and merited rescue for his descendants as well, until the end of all generations.

⁹³ Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi says: One who walks along the way without having someone to accompany him should occupy himself with words of Torah, as it is stated with regard to words of Torah: “For they shall be a chaplet of grace to your head, and chains around your neck” (Proverbs 1:9). And Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi further says: Due to four steps that Pharaoh accompanied Abraham, as it is stated: “And Pharaoh gave men charge concerning him, and they brought him on the way, and his wife, and all that he had” (Genesis 12:20), Pharaoh enslaved Abraham’s descendants for four hundred years, as it is stated: “And shall serve them, and they shall afflict them four hundred years” (Genesis 15:13). Rav Yehuda says that Rav says: Anyone who accompanies his friend four cubits in a city will come to no harm by accompanying him. The Gemara relates: Ravina accompanied Rava bar Yitzḥak four cubits in a city. He came close to harm, but he was saved.

⁹⁴ The Sages taught: A teacher accompanies a student until the outskirts of the city; a friend accompanies a friend until the Shabbat boundary of that city, which is two thousand cubits; and for a student who accompanies his teacher, there is no measure to the distance he accompanies him. The Gemara asks: And how far? The student is certainly not required to walk with him the entire way. Rav Sheshet says: Up to a parasang [parsa], which is four mil. The Gemara comments: And we said this amount only with regard to one who is not his most significant teacher, but he accompanies his most significant teacher, who taught him most of his knowledge, three parasangs.

⁹⁵ The Gemara relates a story about accompaniment: Rav Kahana accompanied Rav Shimi bar Ashi from the town of Pum Nahara to the palm grove in Babylonia. When they arrived there, Rav Kahana said to Rav Shimi bar Ashi: Is it true that you say that these palm trees of Babylonia have been in this place since the years of Adam the first man?

⁹⁶ Rav Shimi bar Ashi said to him: By mentioning Adam the first man you reminded me of something that Rabbi Yosei, son of Rabbi Ḥanina, says: What is the meaning of that which is written: “Through a land that no man passed through, and where no person [adam] dwelt”? (Jeremiah 2:6). This verse is difficult: Since it is a land through which no man has passed, where would he dwell? And if he did not dwell, where did he pass? Why does the verse add that no person has dwelled there? Rather, this is the meaning: Any land concerning which Adam the first man decreed that it would be a settled area, was settled; but a land concerning which Adam the first man did not decree that it should be settled, was not settled.

⁹⁷ The Gemara also relates that Rav Mordekhai accompanied Rav Ashi from the town of Hagronya until Bei Keifei, and some say that he accompanied him until Bei Dura.

⁹⁸ The Gemara continues to discuss the importance of accompaniment. Rabbi Yoḥanan says in the name of Rabbi Meir: Whoever does not accompany another or will not allow himself to be accompanied is like a spiller of blood and is held responsible for any deaths that occur as a result of his inaction. The proof for this is that had the inhabitants of Jericho accompanied Elisha, he would not have incited the bears to attack the children, as it is stated: “And he went up from there to Bethel, and as he was going up by the way, there came forth young lads out of the city and mocked him, and said to him: Go up, baldhead; go up, baldhead” (II Kings 2:23). Had the residents of Jericho accompanied him, they would have sent away those youths and prevented what occurred next.

⁹⁹ The Gemara proceeds to discuss this episode in detail, beginning with the meaning of the youths’ taunt. They said to him: Go up, away from here, for you have made the place bald, i.e., bare, for us. They had previously earned their living by providing the city of Jericho with water. Elisha sweetened the city’s own water, rendering their services unnecessary. The Gemara asks: What is the meaning of: “Young lads [ne’arim ketanim]”? One would have expected the verse to state either “young” or “lads,” but not both. Rabbi Elazar says: The word “lads [ne’arim]” means that they were shaken empty [meno’arim] of the mitzvot; the word “young [ketanim]” means that they were of little faith [ketannei amana], as they had no trust that they would be able to earn their livelihood by any other means. The Sages taught: They were lads, that is, already of age, but they disgraced themselves like young children.

¹⁰⁰ Rav Yosef objects to this interpretation: And perhaps they were called ne’arim after their place of origin? Isn’t it written: “And the Arameans had gone out in bands, and had brought away captive from Eretz Yisrael a minor young woman [na’ara ketana]” (II Kings 5:2), and this verse raised a difficulty to us: A minor and a young woman; how could she be both of these? And Rabbi Pedat says it means a minor girl from the town of Ne’oran. This verse concerning the lads can be explained in a similar manner: They were young children from Ne’oran. The Gemara answers: These two cases are not comparable. There the verse does not specify her place of origin, so “na’ara” could mean from the town of Ne’oran; but here the verse specifies their place of origin, namely Jericho.

¹⁰¹ The verse further states with regard to the same incident: “And he turned behind him and saw them, and he cursed them in the name of the Lord” (II Kings 2:24). The Gemara asks: What did he see? There are four explanations offered. Rav says: He literally saw, i.e., he stared and bored his eyes into them, as it is taught in a baraita: Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says: Wherever it states that the Sages placed their eyes upon a certain person, they brought upon that person either death or poverty.

And Shmuel says: He saw their essential nature, that all their mothers became pregnant with them on Yom Kippur, when conjugal relations are forbidden.

¹⁰² And Rabbi Yitzhak Nappaḥa says: He saw that they had plaited locks grown on the back of their heads like the gentiles. And Rabbi Yoḥanan says: He saw that they did not contain even a smidgen of a mitzva. The Gemara raises an objection to this last interpretation of Rabbi Yoḥanan: But how could he curse them just because they did not have any mitzvot? Perhaps their descendants would have many mitzvot. Rabbi Elazar says: He saw that mitzvot would be found neither in them nor in their descendants, through all generations.

¹⁰³ The verse states: “And two she-bears came out of the forest and tore forty-two children from them” (II Kings 2:24).

¹⁰⁴ Rav and Shmuel had a dispute with regard to this episode. One says there was a miracle, and one says there was a miracle within a miracle. The Gemara explains: The one who says there was a miracle claims that there was already a forest in that place but there were no bears, and the miracle was the appearance of bears. The one who says it was a miracle within a miracle claims that neither was there a forest nor were there bears in that area. The Gemara asks with regard to the second opinion: Why was a double miracle required? And let there be bears and no forest; the forest served no role in the story, so why was it created? The Gemara explains: The forest was necessary, as bears are frightened to venture into open areas but will attack people in their natural habitat, a forest.

¹⁰⁵ Rabbi Ḥanina says: Due to forty-two offerings that Balak, king of Moab, brought when he tried to have Balaam curse the Jewish people, forty-two children were broken off from Israel, in that incident involving Elisha. The Gemara asks: Is that so? Was that the reward for his offerings?

¹⁰⁶ But didn't Rav Yehuda say that Rav says: A person should always engage in Torah study and in performance of mitzvot, even if he does so not for their own sake, as through such acts performed not for their own sake, one will come to perform them for their own sake. He proves the value of a mitzva done not for its own sake: As in reward for the forty-two offerings that Balak, king of Moab, brought, he merited that Ruth descended from him, from whom King Solomon descended, about whom it is written that he brought many offerings: “A thousand burnt-offerings did Solomon offer up” (I Kings 3:4). And Rabbi Yosei ben Ḥoni similarly says: Ruth was the daughter of Eglon, son of Balak. These Sages state that Balak's reward was to have Ruth descend from him, not that a number of Jewish people perish. The Gemara answers: His desire, in any event, was to curse the Jewish people, and his reward for sacrificing his offerings was that the curse was fulfilled in the incident involving Elisha, as well.

¹⁰⁷ The Gemara returns to discussing the incident involving Elisha: “And the men of the city said to Elisha: Behold, please, the situation of this city is pleasant, as my lord sees, but the water is bad and the land miscarries” (II Kings 2:19). The Gemara asks: But if the water is bad and the land causes women to miscarry, what is pleasant about it? Rabbi Ḥanin says: The grace of a place is upon its inhabitants, i.e., people are fond of their hometown despite its shortcomings. Rabbi Yoḥanan says: There are three graces that have a similar impact: The grace of a place upon its inhabitants; the grace of a woman upon her husband, despite her faults; and the grace of a purchased item upon its buyer, as one who has bought something views it in a positive light.

¹⁰⁸ § The Sages taught: Elisha fell ill three times. One was a punishment for inciting the bears to attack the children; and one was a punishment for pushing Gehazi away with both hands, without

leaving him the option to return; and one was the sickness from which he died, as an expression of illness is stated three times in the verse about Elisha: “And Elisha became sick [hala] with his illness [holyo] from which he would die” (II Kings 13:14). The root het, lamed, heh, which indicates illness, is used twice in this verse, and it is stated once that Elisha will die.

¹⁰⁹ The Sages taught: It should always be the left, weaker, hand that pushes another away and the right, stronger, hand that draws him near. In other words, even when a student is rebuffed, he should be given the opportunity to return. This is not like Elisha, who pushed Gehazi away with both hands, and not like Yehoshua ben Peraḥya, who pushed Jesus the Nazarene, one of his students, away with both hands.

¹¹⁰ The Gemara specifies: What was that incident with Elisha? As it is written: “And Naaman said: Pray, take talents” (II Kings 5:23). Naaman offered Gehazi payment for the help Elisha had given him, and when the verse recounts Elisha’s words to Gehazi, it is written: “And he said to him: Did not my heart go, when the man turned back from his chariot to meet you? Is it a time to take money, and to take garments, and olives, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and servants, and maidservants?” (II Kings 5:26). Here Elisha criticizes Gehazi for taking the payment.

¹¹¹ The Gemara clarifies the criticism: And did he take all that? But it was only money and garments that he took. Rabbi Yitzḥak says: At that time, Elisha was engaged in the study of the topic of the eight impure creeping animals. He said to Gehazi: Wicked one, it is time for you to receive now, in this temporal world, the reward for studying the topic of the eight impure creeping animals. This is why the verse lists eight items. The Gemara adds parenthetically that Elisha also said to Gehazi: “And the leprosy of Naaman shall cleave to you and to your descendants forever” (II Kings 5:27), and that the verse later states: “Now there were four leprous men” (II Kings 7:3), about whom Rabbi Yoḥanan says: This is referring to Gehazi and his three sons.

¹¹² The verse states: “And Elisha came to Damascus” (II Kings 8:7). The Gemara asks: For what purpose did he go there? Rabbi Yoḥanan says: He went to help Gehazi in repentance, but Gehazi would not agree to repent from his evil ways. Elisha said to him: Return from your sins. Gehazi said to him: This is the tradition that I received from you: Whoever sins and caused the masses to sin is not given the opportunity to repent.

¹¹³ The Gemara asks: What did Gehazi do that caused the masses to sin? There are those who say that he hung a magnetic rock on Jeroboam’s calf, the golden calf that Jeroboam established as an idol, and used a magnet to pull the calf off the ground so that he suspended it between heaven and earth, i.e., caused it to hover above the ground. This seemingly miraculous occurrence caused the people to worship it even more devoutly. And there are those who say: He engraved the sacred name on its mouth, and it would say: “I am the Lord your God” and: “You shall not have other gods” (Exodus 20:2). The idol would quote the two prohibitions from the Ten Commandments against idol worship, causing people to worship it even more devoutly.

¹¹⁴ And there are those who say: Gehazi pushed the Sages away from coming before him, preventing them learning from Elisha, as it is written, after the aforementioned incident: “And the sons of the prophets said to Elisha, behold this place where we are staying before you is too cramped for us” (II Kings 6:1). This proves by inference that until that time the place was not cramped, as Gehazi would turn people away.

¹¹⁵ The Gemara returns to the incident in which Yehoshua ben Peraḥya turned away Jesus the Nazarene: What is this incident? When King Yannai was killing the Sages, Shimon ben Shataḥ was hidden by his sister, Yannai's wife, while Rabbi Yehoshua ben Peraḥya went and fled to Alexandria of Egypt. When peace was made between Yannai and the Sages, Shimon ben Shataḥ sent him the following letter: From myself, Jerusalem the holy city, to you, Alexandria of Egypt. My sister, my husband dwells within you, and I am sitting desolate. Rabbi Yehoshua ben Peraḥya said: I can learn from it that there is peace, and I can return.

¹¹⁶ When he came back to Eretz Yisrael, Rabbi Yehoshua arrived at a certain inn. The innkeeper stood before him, honoring him considerably, and overall they accorded him great honor. Rabbi Yehoshua ben Peraḥya then sat and was praising them by saying: How beautiful is this inn. Jesus the Nazarene, one of his students, said to him: My teacher, but the eyes of the innkeeper's wife are narrow [terutot]. Rabbi Yehoshua ben Peraḥya said to him: Wicked one, is this what you are engaged in, gazing at women? He brought out four hundred shofarot and excommunicated him. Every day Jesus would come before him, but he would not accept his wish to return.

¹¹⁷ One day, Rabbi Yehoshua ben Peraḥya was reciting Shema when Jesus came before him. He intended to accept him on this occasion, so he signaled to him with his hand to wait. Jesus thought he was rejecting him entirely. He therefore went and stood up a brick and worshipped it as an idol. Rabbi Yehoshua ben Peraḥya said to him: Return from your sins. Jesus said to him: This is the tradition that I received from you: Anyone who sins and causes the masses to sin is not given the opportunity to repent. The Gemara explains how he caused the masses to sin: For the Master said: Jesus the Nazarene performed sorcery, and he incited the masses, and subverted the masses, and caused the Jewish people to sin.

¹¹⁸ It is taught in a baraita that Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar says: With regard to the evil inclination, to a child, and to a woman, the left hand should reject and the right hand should welcome. If one pushes too forcefully, the damage might be irreversible.

¹¹⁹ MISHNA: If the killer is found before the heifer's neck was broken, the heifer shall go out and graze among the herd. It is not considered sacred at all, and it may rejoin the other animals. If the killer is found from the time when the heifer's neck was broken, even if the rest of the ritual has not yet been performed, it is prohibited to benefit from the animal, despite the killer having been found; it should be buried in its place. This is because the heifer initially came for uncertainty, as the killer was unknown, and it atoned for its uncertainty and left, i.e., it fulfilled its purpose of bringing atonement and is considered a heifer whose neck is broken in all regards. If the heifer's neck was broken and afterward the killer was found, he is killed. The ritual does not atone for him.

¹²⁰ If one witness says: I saw the killer, and one other witness says: You did not see him; or if a woman says: I saw, and another woman says: You did not see, they would break the neck of the heifer, as without clear testimony about the identity of the killer the ritual is performed. Similarly, if one witness says: I saw the killer, and two witnesses say: You did not see, they would break the neck of the heifer, as the pair is relied upon. If two witnesses say: We saw the killer, and one witness says to them: You did not see, they would not break the neck of the heifer, as there are two witnesses to the identity of the killer.

¹²¹ The mishna further states: From the time when murderers proliferated, the ritual of the heifer whose neck is broken was nullified. The ritual was performed only when the identity of the murderer

was completely unknown. Once there were many known murderers, the conditions for the performance of the ritual were no longer present, as the probable identity of the murderer was known. From the time when Eliezer ben Dinai, who was also called Tehina ben Perisha, came, they renamed him: Son of a murderer. This is an example of a publicly known murderer.

¹²² The mishna teaches a similar occurrence: From the time when adulterers proliferated, the performance of the ritual of the bitter waters was nullified; they would not administer the bitter waters to the sota. And it was Rabbi Yoḥanan ben Zakkai who nullified it, as it is stated: “I will not punish your daughters when they commit harlotry, nor your daughters-in-law when they commit adultery; for they consort with lewd women” (Hosea 4:14), meaning that when the husbands are adulterers, the wives are not punished for their own adultery.

¹²³ From the time when Yosei ben Yo’ezer of Tzereida and Yosei ben Yehuda of Jerusalem died, the clusters ceased, i.e., they were the last of the clusters, as explained in the Gemara, as it is stated: “There is no cluster to eat; nor first-ripe fig that my soul desires” (Micah 7:1). The mishna continues in the same vein: Yoḥanan the High Priest took away the declaration of the tithe. After his time, no one recited the passage about the elimination of tithes that had previously been said at the end of a three-year tithing cycle. He also nullified the actions of the awakeners and the strikers at the Temple.

¹²⁴ Until his days the hammer of smiths would strike in Jerusalem on the intermediate days of a Festival, but he banned the practice. And furthermore, in his days there was no need to inquire about doubtfully tithed produce [demaï], as everyone was careful to tithe.

¹²⁵ GEMARA: The Sages taught: From where is it derived that if the heifer’s neck was broken and afterward the killer was found, then the breaking of the neck does not exempt him from punishment? The verse states: “And the land shall not be atoned, for the blood that was spilled in it, but by the blood of he who spilled it” (Numbers 35:33).

¹²⁶ The mishna taught that if one witness says: I saw the killer, and another testifies: You did not see him, they would break the heifer’s neck. The Gemara infers: The reason they break the neck is because the second witness contradicts him, but if no one contradicts him, one witness is relied upon, and they do not break the heifer’s neck.

¹²⁷ From where are these matters derived? The Gemara answers that it is as the Sages taught in a baraita: It states with regard to the heifer whose neck is broken: “It is not known who has smitten him” (Deuteronomy 21:1). Consequently, if it was known who smote him, even if it was only one person at the end of the world who knew, they would not break the neck of the heifer. Rabbi Akiva says: From where is it derived that if the members of the Sanhedrin themselves saw one person kill someone, but they do not recognize him, then they would not break the neck of the heifer? The verse states: “Nor did our eyes see” (Deuteronomy 21:7), and did they not see? Seeing the murder alone obviates the need for the performance of the ritual.

¹²⁸ The Gemara poses a question: Now that you have said that in this case one witness is relied upon, if so, how is the other one able to contradict him? Didn’t Ulla say: Wherever the Torah relies on one witness, there is the equivalent of the testimony of two witnesses here, and the statement of one witness has no standing in a place where it is contradicted by two witnesses. The Gemara answers: Ulla could have said to you that the text of the mishna should be emended and teach the mishna in this way: They would not break the neck of the heifer. And Rabbi Yitzḥak also said to teach: They would not break the neck.

¹²⁹ And Rabbi Ḥiyya said that one should teach: They would break the neck. The Gemara asks: And according to Rabbi Ḥiyya, the above ruling of Ulla is difficult. The Gemara answers: This is not difficult, as here, in the mishna, the case is discussing when two witnesses came simultaneously, and therefore both of their testimonies are rejected; whereas there, with regard to the statement of Ulla, it is referring to a case when they testified one after the other. Ulla rules that once the testimony of the first witness has been accepted the testimony of the second witness cannot nullify it.

¹³⁰ We learned in the mishna: If one witness says: I saw the killer, and two say: You did not see, they would break the neck. This cannot be stated just to teach us this halakha, as the fact that two witnesses override one witness is well known. The Gemara assumes that it is stated for the following inference: Therefore, if one testified, and the other one then testified, they would not break the neck. This appears to be a conclusive refutation of Rabbi Ḥiyya, who has the text of: They would break the neck.

¹³¹ The Gemara answers: And according to your reasoning that the mishna states its cases in order to teach an inference, say the latter clause of the mishna: If two witnesses say: We saw, and one witness says: You did not see, they would not break the neck. The Gemara makes an inference from this clause: Therefore, if one came and then the other one came, i.e., they did not come simultaneously, they would break the neck. The two inferences from the different clauses of the mishna consequently contradict one another, and the mishna needs to be explained differently.

¹³² Rather, the correct understanding is that the entire mishna is not dealing with valid witnesses and stating an obvious halakha in order to enable an inference, but instead it is dealing with people who are disqualified from bearing witness and is also teaching us a novel ruling. And the mishna is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Neḥemya, who says: Wherever the Torah relies on one witness, follow the majority of opinions. In other words, if the testimonies of two disqualified witnesses conflict, the court rules in accordance with the testimony provided by more witnesses, whether or not they are qualified to testify. And they established that with regard to the testimony of two women, who are usually disqualified from testifying, when they testify against one man, it should be like that of two men against one man, and the court will rule in accordance with the testimony of the two women.

¹³³ And there are those who say a different version of Rabbi Neḥemya's opinion: Anywhere that one valid witness came at the outset, even one hundred women who later contradict him are considered like one witness, and do not override his testimony. And with what are we dealing here in the mishna? A case where a woman came at the outset, and testified that she saw the killer. Then two other women arrived to contradict her statement. And according to this interpretation you must emend the statement of Rabbi Neḥemya so that it reads like this: Rabbi Neḥemya says: Wherever the Torah relies on one witness, follow the majority of opinions. And they established that two women against one woman are like two men against one man. But two women in opposition to one man who is a valid witness is like half of a pair of witnesses and half of a pair of witnesses, and the mishna did not address that case.

¹³⁴ The Gemara poses a question on these two interpretations of the mishna: And why do I need two cases in the mishna to teach the halakha that the majority opinion of those disqualified from bearing witness is followed? The Gemara explains: It is necessary, lest you say that when we follow the majority opinion in the case of invalid witnesses, this is when it results in a decision to be stringent

and require the performance of the ritual. But when it results in a decision to be lenient and say that the ritual is not required, we do not follow the majority opinion, and the performance of the ritual is required even if there is one witness saying that the killer was not seen. Therefore, the mishna teaches us that there is no difference in this regard, and the majority opinion is followed in any case.

¹³⁵ § The mishna taught that from the time when murderers proliferated, the ritual of the heifer whose neck is broken was nullified. The Sages taught: From the time when murderers proliferated, the ritual of the heifer whose neck is broken was nullified, because it comes only for a case involving uncertainty with regard to the identity of the murderer. Therefore, when there was an increase of murderers acting openly so that their identities were known, the ritual of the heifer whose neck is broken was nullified.

¹³⁶ The mishna also taught that from the time when adulterers proliferated, the performance of the ritual of the bitter water of a sota was nullified. The Sages taught: It states: “And the man shall be cleared of transgression, and that woman shall bear her transgression” (Numbers 5:31), which indicates that when the man is clear of transgression the waters evaluate if his wife was unfaithful, but if the man is not clear of transgression the waters do not evaluate if his wife was unfaithful. And it states: “I will not punish your daughters when they commit harlotry, nor your daughters-in-law when they commit adultery; for they consort with lewd women, and they sacrifice with prostitutes; and the people that is without understanding is distraught” (Hosea 4:14).

¹³⁷ The Gemara clarifies: What is the purpose of the addition of: And it states? What is lacking in the exposition from the verse of the Torah? The Gemara explains: And if you would say that based on the verse: “And the man shall be cleared of transgression,” the halakha would be that with regard to his transgression, yes, it will cause the waters to be ineffective, but the transgression of his sons and daughters does not impact the effectiveness, come and hear the verse: “I will not punish your daughters,” i.e., I will not punish your wives, due to your daughters, “when they commit harlotry, nor your daughters-in-law when they commit adultery.”

¹³⁸ And if you would say: With regard to the transgression of adultery with a married woman, yes, it will cause the waters to be ineffective, but the transgression of one who engaged in sexual intercourse with an unmarried woman does not impact the effectiveness, come and hear the continuation of the verse: “For they consort with lewd women, and they sacrifice with prostitutes.”

¹³⁹ The Gemara turns its attention to the end of the verse. What is the meaning of: “And the people that is without understanding is distraught”? Rabbi Elazar says: The prophet said to the Jewish people: If you are particular about yourselves, the water evaluates your wives; but if not, the water does not evaluate your wives. This would make people distraught, as they would not know how to overcome their suspicion if they are concerned that their wives have been unfaithful.

¹⁴⁰ § The Gemara cites statements similar to those of the mishna. From the time when those who accept benefit from others proliferated, the laws became twisted and deeds became corrupted, and there was no comfort in the world. From the time when those who look at the faces of the litigants in judgment, in order to rule based on the appearance of the litigants, proliferated, the fulfillment of the verse: “You shall not fear the face of any man” (Deuteronomy 1:17), ceased, and the fulfillment of the verse: “You shall not respect faces in judgment” (Deuteronomy 1:17), halted, and they removed the yoke of Heaven from themselves, and placed upon themselves the yoke of flesh and blood.

¹⁴¹ From the time when those who whisper whisperings in judgment, advising judges surreptitiously, proliferated, fierce anger proliferated in Israel, and the Divine Presence departed, because it is stated: "God stands in the congregation of God; in the midst of the judges He judges" (Psalms 82:1). The Divine Presence that dwells among judges leaves if they judge improperly. From the time when those who are referred to in the verse: "Their heart goes after their covetousness" (Ezekiel 33:31), proliferated, "Those who say to evil good, and to good evil" (Isaiah 5:20) proliferated, i.e., those who treat wicked people as though they were righteous proliferated as a result. From the time when the fulfillment of the verse: "Those who say to evil good, and to good evil," proliferated, the cry of: Woe, woe, proliferated in the world. There was an increase in troubles that cause people to cry out.

¹⁴² From the time when those who show their arrogance by drawing out spittle proliferated, the number of haughty people in general proliferated, and the number of students decreased, as they would say haughtily that there was nothing left for them to learn, and the Torah needs to go around to seek those who study it, as people do not learn of their own initiative. Furthermore, from the time when haughty people proliferated, the daughters of Israel began marrying haughty men, as our generation looks only at the face, i.e., the external aspects of a person, and ignores the inner aspects of a person.

¹⁴³ The Gemara raises a difficulty: Is that so? Do women wish to marry arrogant men? But didn't the Master say: One who is haughty is not even accepted by the members of his household, as it is stated: "The haughty man abides not" (Habakkuk 2:5)? "Abides [yinaveh] not" means that even in his abode [naveh], he is not accepted. The Gemara explains: Initially, she jumps at the chance to marry him, because he appears to be a great person to her, but in the end, once she gets to know him, he is demeaned in her eyes.

¹⁴⁴ The baraita continues: From the time when there was an increase in those who placed upon homeowners the obligation to designate the profits from merchandise for the upkeep of judges, bribery and corruption of judgment proliferated and good ceased. From the time when those judges and leaders who say: I accept your favor, and: I hold your favor, proliferated, the fulfillment of the verse: "Every man did that which was right in his eyes" (Judges 17:6), proliferated. Lowly ones were raised and lofty ones were lowered, and the monarchy is increasingly on the decline. From the time when misers and those greedy for profit proliferated, those hardened of heart and who closed their hands from lending proliferated, and they transgressed that which is written in the Torah: "You shall not harden your heart, nor shut your hand from your needy brother...Guard yourself in case there is a base thought in your heart...and you do not give him" (Deuteronomy 15:7, 9).

¹⁴⁵ From the time when women with "stretched-forth necks and wanton eyes" (Isaiah 3:16) proliferated, the bitter waters of a sota proliferated, as more people were suspected of committing adultery; but they eventually ceased when licentiousness became too widespread. From the time when those who accept gifts proliferated, the days decreased and the years shortened, as it is written: "And he who hates gifts lives" (Proverbs 15:27). From the time when those with boastful [zeḥuḥei] hearts proliferated, dispute proliferated in Israel. From the time when the students of Shammai and Hillel who did not serve their Rabbis sufficiently proliferated, dispute proliferated in Israel, and the Torah became like two Torahs. From the time when those who accept charity from gentiles proliferated, the Jewish people were above and they below; the Jewish people ahead and they behind.

This last statement is a euphemism; it was the Jewish people that were below and behind, but the Gemara did not want to say so explicitly.

¹⁴⁶ § The mishna taught that from the time when Yosei ben Yo'ezer died the clusters ceased. The Gemara poses a question: What is the meaning of clusters [eshkolot]? Rav Yehuda says that Shmuel says: It means a man who contains all [ish shehakol bo] elements of Torah and mitzvot. The mishna further taught that Yoḥanan the High Priest took away the declaration of the tithe. The Gemara poses a question: What is the reason he did this? Rabbi Yosei, son of Rabbi Ḥanina, says: Because they did not give the tithe in the proper manner as stated by the Torah. In what way is that? As the Merciful One states in the Torah that they should give the first tithe to the Levites,

¹⁴⁷ and we give it to the priests. Ezra penalized the Levites for not ascending with him from Babylonia to Eretz Yisrael by taking away their right to the first tithe. Consequently, the owner of the produce can no longer recite the declaration of tithes, which includes the statement: "I have done according to all that You have commanded me" (Deuteronomy 26:14), as he did not give the tithe to the Levites.

¹⁴⁸ The Gemara asks: And let him at least declare that he donated the other tithes in the proper manner. Reish Lakish said: Any house that does not state the declaration about the first tithe can no longer state the declaration of the other types of tithes. The Gemara asks: What is the reason for this? Abaye said: Because the written verse began the declaration with the tithe given to the Levites: "And I also gave it to the Levite, and to the stranger, to the orphan, and to the widow, in accordance with all Your mitzvot that You commanded me" (Deuteronomy 26:13). If he cannot say the first part of the declaration, he cannot say the rest.

¹⁴⁹ The Gemara poses a question: The fact that Rabbi Yoḥanan canceled the declaration of tithes proves by inference that they would separate tithes in his days. But isn't it taught (Tosefta 13:10): He, Yoḥanan the High Priest, also canceled the declaration of tithes and decreed with regard to doubtfully tithed produce [dema'i]? Why did he issue this decree? Because he sent messengers throughout the land, to all the borders of Eretz Yisrael to investigate, and saw that they would separate only teruma gedola, and as for first tithe and second tithe, some people would tithe and some people would not tithe.

¹⁵⁰ He said to them: My sons, come and I will tell you something: Just as the halakhot of teruma gedola include a transgression punishable by death at the hand of God, as one who ate produce from which teruma has not been separated is punished with death from Heaven, so too, the teruma of the tithe, the portion the Levites must separate from their first tithe and give to priests, and untithed produce, these include a transgression punishable by death at the hand of God, if the produce is eaten without the tithes having been taken.

¹⁵¹ Realizing that it was uncertain with regard to whether or not people were separating tithes, he arose and instituted an ordinance for them with regard to doubtfully tithed produce: One who purchases produce from an am ha'aretz, which may or may not have been tithed, must separate from the produce first tithe and second tithe due to the uncertainty as to whether or not the am ha'aretz separated them. As for first tithe, he then separates teruma of the tithe from it and gives it to a priest, and with regard to second tithe, he goes up and eats it in Jerusalem. However, with regard to the giving of first tithe to the Levite, and the poor man's tithe, which can be eaten by anyone, as the Levites and the poor only have monetary rights to the produce, the burden of proof rests upon the

claimant. Since the Levites and the poor cannot prove that these tithes had not already been set aside by the am ha'aretz, they cannot force the buyer to give them those tithes.

¹⁵² In any case, the Gemara proves from the baraita that not all people would separate tithes in the time of Yoḥanan the High Priest. The Gemara answers: He instituted two ordinances: He canceled the declaration of tithes of those devoted to the meticulous observance of mitzvot [ḥaverim], especially halakhot of teruma and tithes, and he decreed with regard to doubtfully tithed produce purchased from amei ha'aretz, because they may not have separated tithes at all.

¹⁵³ § The mishna further taught: He also nullified the actions of the awakeners. The Gemara poses a question: What are awakeners? Raḥava says: On each and every day when the Levites stood on the platform in the Temple they would say: "Awake, why do you sleep, O Lord?" (Psalms 44:24). Therefore, they were called awakeners. Yoḥanan the High Priest said to them: Does the Omnipresent sleep, that you call upon Him to awaken? But isn't it already stated: "Behold, He that keeps Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps" (Psalms 121:4)? Rather, when the Jewish people are in a state of suffering, and the nations of the world are in a state of calm and serenity, it is with regard to this that it is stated: "Awake, why do you sleep, O Lord?" If the verse were to be recited every morning it would be interpreted in the wrong way, so Yoḥanan the High Priest therefore canceled the daily recitation of this verse.

¹⁵⁴ The mishna also taught that Yoḥanan the High Priest canceled the strikers. The Gemara asks: What are strikers? Rav Yehuda says that Shmuel says: They are those who would scratch the calf being prepared for slaughter as an offering between its horns, in order that blood should fall in its eyes, so that the animal would not see and resist being slaughtered. He came and nullified this practice, because it looked like they are causing a blemish.

¹⁵⁵ A different explanation of strikers was taught in a baraita (Tosefta 13:9): They are those who would beat the calf with sticks, to stun it before it was slaughtered, in the manner that they do it before idols. Yoḥanan the High Priest said to them: Until when will you feed unslaughtered animal carcasses to the altar? The Gemara asks: Are these animal carcasses actually unslaughtered animal carcasses? They were slaughtered, i.e., they did not die of their own accord. Rather, he said that the beatings would cause them to become like animals with a wound that will cause them to die within twelve months [tereifot], as perhaps these beatings will perforate the membrane surrounding the brain, which would make the calf a tereifa. He therefore arose and instituted an ordinance for them to put rings in the ground with which they could secure the animals, thereby making it easier to slaughter the animals without having to scratch them between the horns or hit them with sticks.

¹⁵⁶ The mishna stated that until the days of Yoḥanan the High Priest the hammer of smiths would strike in Jerusalem. The Gemara explains: This is referring to the intermediate days of a Festival. Though certain types of labor are permitted on those days, the banging of a hammer was outlawed, as the noise it made would detract from the feeling of sanctity of the day.

¹⁵⁷ They further taught that in all of his days a person did not need to inquire with regard to doubtfully tithed produce. The Gemara notes that this is like that which we stated above, that he instituted an ordinance with regard to the tithing of doubtfully tithed produce.

¹⁵⁸ MISHNA: This mishna continues with the list of items that were nullified. From the time when the Sanhedrin ceased song was also nullified from the places of feasts, i.e., it was no longer permitted

to sing at a feast where wine was served, as it is stated: “With song they shall not drink wine” (Isaiah 24:9).

¹⁵⁹ From the time when the early prophets died the Urim VeTummim was nullified. From the time when the Second Temple was destroyed the shamir worm ceased to exist and also the sweetness of the honeycomb, as the verse says with regard to the laws of the Torah: “More to be desired are they than gold, indeed, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb” (Psalms 19:11). And men of faith ceased from being among the Jewish people, as it is stated: “Help, Lord, for the pious man is finished; for the faithful fail from among the children of men” (Psalms 12:2).

¹⁶⁰ Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says that Rabbi Yehoshua testified: From the day the Temple was destroyed there is no day that does not include some form of curse. And since then the dew has not descended for blessing, and the taste has been removed from fruit. Rabbi Yosei says: Since then, the fat of fruit has also been removed. Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar says: Since then, the lost purity has removed the taste and the aroma from fruit; the tithes that were not separated have removed the fat of the grain. And the Sages say: Promiscuity and witchcraft have consumed it all.

¹⁶¹ GEMARA: The Gemara poses a question with regard to the first clause of the mishna: And from where is it derived that the verse: “With song they shall not drink wine” (Isaiah 24:9) is written about the period from the time when the Sanhedrin was nullified? Rav Huna, son of Rav Yehoshua, said: From that which the verse states: “The Elders have ceased from the gate, the young men from their music” (Lamentations 5:14). This indicates that the dissolution of the Sanhedrin, who are the Elders from the gate, is linked to the end of the young men singing.

¹⁶² Rav said: The ear that hears song should be uprooted, as it is prohibited to listen to music after the destruction of the Temple. Rava said: If there is song in a house there will be destruction on the threshold, as it is stated: “Voices shall sing in the windows; desolation shall be in the doorposts; for its cedar work shall be uncovered” (Zephaniah 2:14). The word “uncovered” [era] could be read to mean: Its city [ira].

¹⁶³ The Gemara asks: What is the meaning of: For its cedar work shall be its city? Furthermore, Rabbi Yitzḥak wondered when he said: Is a house interlaced with cedars not as strong as a city, and therefore not threatened by desolation? Rather, it means that even a house interlaced with cedars will become unstable [mitroe’a] if song is heard there. Rav Ashi said: Learn from it that when the destruction starts it starts with the threshold, as it is stated: “Desolation shall be in the posts.” And if you wish, say instead that they derive this idea from here: “In the city is left desolation, and the gate is smitten unto ruin [she’iyya]” (Isaiah 24:12). The term “ruin” here is referring to the destructive demon known as She’iyya, who strikes the gate first. Mar bar Rav Ashi said: I saw it, this She’iyya, and it was goading and wreaking havoc like an ox.

¹⁶⁴ Rav Huna said: The song of those who pull ships and lead the herd is permitted, for their singing assists them to establish a rhythm in their work. However, that of weavers is forbidden, as they sing only for their own enjoyment. The Gemara relates that subsequently, Rav Huna nullified all types of song, and this led to a general blessing: The price of one hundred ducks stood at a dinar, and one hundred se’a of wheat at a dinar, and there was no desire for them even at such a cheap price, due to their great abundance. Later, when Rav Ḥisda came and belittled this prohibition, people began to sing again. As a result, prices increased greatly, and this led to a situation whereby one wanted a single duck for one dinar and it could not be found.

¹⁶⁵ Rav Yosef said: If men sing and women respond, this is licentiousness. If women sing and men respond, it causes the evil inclination to burn as if one were setting fire to chips of kindling. The Gemara poses a question: What difference is there? Rav Yosef indicates that in any case both are prohibited. The Gemara answers: To nullify one before the other, i.e., if it is impossible to ban singing entirely, they should at least stop the most problematic form.

¹⁶⁶ Rabbi Yoḥanan says: Anyone who drinks wine with the accompaniment of four types of instruments brings five types of retribution to the world, as it is stated: “Woe to them who rise early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; who tarry late into the night, until wine inflames them. And the harp and the psaltery, the drum and the pipe and wine, are at their feasts, but they do not regard the work of the Lord” (Isaiah 5:11–12).

¹⁶⁷ After listing the sin of those who drink wine with musical accompaniment, the verse states their punishment: What is written afterward? “Therefore, My people have gone into captivity, for want of knowledge” (Isaiah 5:13), meaning that they cause exile to the world; “and their honorable men are famished” (Isaiah 5:13), as they bring famine to the world; “and their multitude are parched with thirst” (Isaiah 5:13), that they cause the Torah, which is compared to water, to be forgotten by those who learn it. “And mankind is bowed down, and man is humbled” (Isaiah 5:15), that they cause the enemy of the Holy One, Blessed be He, i.e., God Himself, to be brought down, as “man” in the phrase “and man is humbled” means nothing other than the Holy One, Blessed be He, as it is stated: “The Lord is a man of war” (Exodus 15:3). The verse continues: “And the eyes of the lofty are humbled” (Isaiah 5:15), that they cause the Jewish people to be brought down. These are the five retributions.

¹⁶⁸ And what punishment is written afterward for the people who drank wine with musical accompaniment? “Therefore,

¹⁶⁹ the netherworld has enlarged her desire, and opened her mouth without measure, and down goes their glory and their tumult and their uproar, and he who rejoices among them” (Isaiah 5:14). Their punishment is that they shall descend into the netherworld.

¹⁷⁰ § The mishna taught: From the time when the early prophets died, the Urim VeTummim was nullified. The Gemara poses a question: Who are the early prophets? Rav Huna says: This is referring to David, and Samuel, and Solomon, and after their death the Urim VeTummim was no longer used. Rav Naḥman said: In the days of David there were times an answer rose up for them from the Urim VeTummim and there were times an answer did not rise up, i.e., they did not receive an answer. The proof for this is that Tzadok, the High Priest in David’s time, asked the Urim VeTummim and an answer rose up for him, whereas Abiathar asked and an answer did not rise up for him, as it is stated: “And Abiathar went up” (II Samuel 15:24), and he was removed from serving as the High Priest as a result.

¹⁷¹ Rabba bar Shmuel raises an objection: The verse states concerning Uzziah: “And he set himself to seek God in the days of Zechariah, who had an understanding of the vision of God” (II Chronicles 26:5). What, is the verse not stating that Uzziah would seek God by asking questions of the Urim VeTummim, despite the fact that he lived after the time of Solomon? The Gemara rejects this claim: No, he would seek God by asking questions of the prophets, but not of the Urim VeTummim.

¹⁷² The Gemara suggests: Come and hear a proof from a baraita (Tosefta 13:2) with regard to when the Urim VeTummim ceased: From the time when the First Temple was destroyed, the cities with

fields that were allocated to the Levites were nullified, and the Urim VeTummim ceased, and the monarchy ceased from the house of David.

¹⁷³ And if a person would whisper to you saying that the Urim VeTummim was still extant, as it states with regard to when the Second Temple first stood: “And the Tirshatha said to them that they should not eat of the most sacred things, until there stood a priest with the Urim VeTummim” (Ezra 2:63), which seems to indicate that they merely had to wait until the Second Temple was built for the reappearance of the Urim VeTummim; you should say to him that this is not referring to an expectation of a short-term development, but it is like a person who says to his friend, with regard to something that will occur in the distant future: Until the dead live and the Messiah, the son of David, comes. In any case, the baraita indicates that the Urim VeTummim ceased only from the time when the First Temple was destroyed, and not in the time of Solomon.

¹⁷⁴ Rather, Rav Naḥman bar Yitzḥak said: Who are the early prophets, with regard to whom it states that use of the Urim VeTummim ceased immediately after their death? This term early prophets serves to exclude Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, who are the latter prophets. The Urim VeTummim was used throughout the First Temple period, up to, but not including, their time. As the Sages taught in a baraita (Tosefta 13:3): From the time when Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi died the Divine Spirit departed from the Jewish people, as these three were considered to be the last prophets. And even after the Urim VeTummim ceased to exist, they would nevertheless still make use of a Divine Voice to receive instructions from Above, even after this time.

¹⁷⁵ For on one occasion the Sages were reclining in the upper story of the house of Gurya in Jericho. A Divine Voice from Heaven was issued to them, and it said: There is one person among you for whom it is fitting that the Divine Presence should rest upon him as a prophet, but his generation is not fit for it; they do not deserve to have a prophet among them. The Sages present directed their gaze to Hillel the Elder. And when he died, they eulogized him in the following manner: Alas pious one, alas humble one, student of Ezra.

¹⁷⁶ And again, on another occasion several generations later, the Sages were reclining in an upper story of a house in Yavne, and a Divine Voice from Heaven was issued to them, and said: There is one person among you for whom it is fitting that the Divine Presence should rest upon him, but his generation is not fit for it. The Sages present directed their gaze to Shmuel HaKatan. And when he died, they eulogized him in the following manner: Alas humble one, alas pious one, student of Hillel.

¹⁷⁷ And he too, Shmuel HaKatan, said the following statement of divinely inspired prediction at the time of his death: Shimon, i.e., Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel, and Yishmael, i.e., Rabbi Yishmael ben Elisha the High Priest, are slated for the sword, and their colleagues for killing, and the rest of the people for plunder, and great troubles are destined to befall the people. The Gemara relates: And they also sought to say about Rabbi Yehuda ben Bava, when eulogizing him: Alas pious one, alas humble one, but the moment was disturbed and they could not do so. That is because eulogies are not given for those killed by the monarchy, which was Rabbi Yehuda ben Baba’s fate, in order not to arouse the monarchy’s wrath.

¹⁷⁸ § The mishna taught: From the time when the First Temple was destroyed the shamir ceased to exist. The Sages taught: This shamir is the creature with which Solomon built the Temple, as it is stated: “For the house, when it was built, was built of whole stone from the quarry” (I Kings 6:7).

Now these words should be understood exactly as they are written, that King Solomon took whole stones and shaped them by having the shamir do the cutting. This is the statement of Rabbi Yehuda.

¹⁷⁹ Rabbi Neḥemya said to him: And is it possible to say so? But isn't it already stated: "All these were costly stones, according to the measures of hewn stones, sawed with saws" (II Kings 7:9), which indicates that saws, which are iron implements, were used to shape the stones? If so, what is the meaning when the verse states: "And hammer, ax, and any tool of iron were not heard in the house when it was being built" (I Kings 6:7)? It means that he would prepare the stones outside the Temple Mount using tools, and bring them inside already cut, so that no iron tools were used inside the Temple itself. Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi said: The statement of Rabbi Yehuda that no iron tools were used appears to be correct with regard to the Temple stones, and the statement of Rabbi Neḥemya that tools were used appears to be correct with regard to the stones of the king's own house.

¹⁸⁰ The Gemara poses a question: And according to Rabbi Neḥemya, who maintains that they used iron tools even in the cutting of the stones for the Temple, for what purpose did the shamir come? The Gemara answers: It was necessary for that which is taught in a baraita: These stones in the breastplate and ephod, upon which were inscribed the names of the tribes, they may not be written on with ink, because it is stated: "Like the engravings of a signet" (Exodus 28:21), which means the names must be engraved onto the stones. And they may not be scratched on with a scalpel [izemel], because it is stated: "In their full settings" (Exodus 28:20), indicating that the stones must be complete and not missing any of their mass.

¹⁸¹ The baraita continues: Rather, one writes the letters on them in ink, and shows them, i.e., he places the shamir close to the ink markings from outside, without having it touch the stones, and they split open along the lines of the ink of their own accord, like this fig that splits in the summer without losing anything of its mass, and like this field in a valley that cracks in the rainy season without losing anything of its mass. The shamir was used in this way for these engravings.

¹⁸² The Sages taught: This shamir, its size is that of a barleycorn, and it was created in the six days of creation, and nothing hard can withstand it. In what is it kept, so that it will not break everything in the vicinity? They wrap it in tufts [sefogin] of wool and place it in a leaden vessel [itenei], full of barley bran, which is soft and will not be broken by the shamir.

¹⁸³ § Rabbi Ami says: From the time when the First Temple was destroyed, shiny [peranda] silk [shira] and white glass ceased to exist. This is also taught in a baraita: From the time when the First Temple was destroyed, shiny silk, white glass, and iron chariots ceased; and some say that even congealed wine that comes from Senir, the Hermon, which is similar to round fig cakes after it congeals, ceased to exist as well.

¹⁸⁴ The mishna taught: And the sweetness of the honeycomb [nofet tzufim] also ceased when the First Temple was destroyed. The Gemara asks: What is nofet tzufim? Rav says: Fine flour that floats up and remains on the top of the sieve [nasa], which is similar in taste to dough kneaded with honey and oil. And Levi says that nofet tzufim is the term for two loaves stuck together in an oven, which keep swelling until they reach each other. And Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi says: This is honey that comes from elevated areas [tzipiyya]. The Gemara explains: From where may it be inferred that this is what nofet tzufim is? As Rav Sheshet would translate the words: "As the bees do" (Deuteronomy 1:44): Like the bees spread out and fly all over the world and bring honey from mountainous plants. Similarly, Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi states that honey comes from elevated areas.

¹⁸⁵ We learned in a mishna there (Makhshirin 5:9): Anything that is poured remains ritually pure. In other words, even if a liquid is poured into a ritually impure utensil, the stream of the liquid does not defile the contents that remain in the ritually pure utensil from which they were poured, apart from zifim honey and wafer batter. These substances are too viscous to be considered liquids. The Gemara asks: What is the meaning of zifim? Rabbi Yoḥanan says: Honey of such rare quality that they could falsify [mezayyefin] it, by diluting it with other substances, and it would not be noticed. And Reish Lakish says: It is named after its place, as it is written: “Ziph and Telem and Bealoth” (Joshua 15:24).

¹⁸⁶ Similarly, you can say with regard to the verse: “When the zifim came and said to Saul, does not David hide himself with us” (Psalms 54:2). What is the meaning of zifim, mentioned in this verse? Rabbi Yoḥanan says: It means people who would falsify [hamzayyefin] their words. And Rabbi Elazar says: They are called after their place, as it is written: “Ziph and Telem and Bealoth.”

¹⁸⁷ § The mishna states that from the time when the Second Temple was destroyed men of faith ceased. Rabbi Yitzḥak says: These are people who believe in the Holy One, Blessed be He, and place their trust in Him in all their ways. As it is taught in a baraita: Rabbi Eliezer the Great says that whoever has bread in his basket to eat today and says: What shall I eat tomorrow, meaning he does not know how he will acquire bread for tomorrow, he is nothing other than from those of little faith. One must trust in God to provide him with his sustenance.

¹⁸⁸ And this is what Rabbi Elazar said: What is the meaning of that which is written: “For who plunders the day of small things” (Zechariah 4:10)? What caused the table, i.e., the reward, of the righteous to be plundered, meaning wasted, in the future? It was the small-mindedness they possessed. And what is this small-mindedness? That they did not believe in the Holy One, Blessed be He, with a complete faith. Rava said: Who plunders the day of small things? These are the small children of the wicked ones of the Jewish people, who die young,

¹⁸⁹ who plunder, i.e., destroy, their fathers’ future judgment. When God sits in judgment of their parents, these children say before Him: Master of the Universe, because You were destined to exact punishment from our fathers in the World-to-Come for their wickedness, why did You blunt their teeth with the death of their children in their lifetimes? In this way, the death of their children atones for the fathers.

¹⁹⁰ § Rabbi Ile’a bar Yeverekhya says: If it were not for the prayer of David for Israel to have sustenance, all Israel would be sellers of fat [revav], i.e., involved in debased occupations, as it is stated: “Place for them mastery, O Lord” (Psalms 9:21), that is, may God grant them dignity. And Rabbi Ile’a bar Yeverekhya also says: If it were not for the prayer of Habakkuk, two Torah scholars would have to cover themselves with a single cloak due to poverty and engage in Torah study dressed that way, as it is stated: “Lord, I heard Your report and was afraid; O Lord, revive Your work in the midst of the years” (Habakkuk 3:2). Do not read: “In the midst [bekerev] of the years [shanim],” but in the closeness [bikrov] of two [shenayim]. In other words, Habakkuk prayed that God would nullify His decree of two Torah scholars having to share a single cloak.

¹⁹¹ And Rabbi Ile’a bar Yeverekhya says: In the case of two Torah scholars who are walking along the way and there are no words of Torah between them, but they are conversing about other matters, they are deserving of being burned in fire. As it is stated with regard to Elijah and his disciple Elisha: “And it was as they walked along, talking, that behold, there appeared a chariot of fire and horses of fire, which parted them both asunder” (II Kings 2:11). The reason they were not burned by the

chariot of fire is that there was speech exchanged between them, which presumably was words of Torah, but if there had been no speech, they would have been deserving of being burned by the chariot.

¹⁹² And Rabbi Ile'a bar Yeverekhya says: If there are two Torah scholars who reside in the same city and they are not pleasant to each other with regard to halakha, but are constantly fighting, one of them will die and the other one will be exiled. As it is stated: "That the manslayer might flee there, who slays his neighbor without knowledge" (Deuteronomy 4:42), and "knowledge" means nothing other than Torah, as it is stated: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6).

¹⁹³ Rabbi Yehuda, son of Rabbi Hiyya, says: With regard to any Torah scholar who engages in Torah study while experiencing the pressure of poverty, his prayer is listened to, as it is stated: "For, O people that dwells in Zion at Jerusalem, you shall weep no more; He will surely be gracious to you at the voice of your cry. When He shall hear, He will answer you" (Isaiah 30:19), and after it is written: "And the Lord shall give you sparse bread and scant water" (Isaiah 30:20). This verse indicates that those who sit and study Torah, that is, the people who dwell in Zion, and eat bread sparingly, will have their prayers answered by God.

¹⁹⁴ Rabbi Abbahu says: A Torah scholar who engages in Torah study despite economic pressures is satiated with the glory of the Divine Presence, as it is stated in the same verse, above: "And your eyes shall behold your Teacher." Rabbi Aha, son of Hanina, said: Even the concealing partition [pargod] before the Divine Presence is not locked before him, as it is stated: "And your Teacher shall not hide Himself anymore" (Isaiah 30:20).

¹⁹⁵ § The mishna states that Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says in the name of Rabbi Yehoshua: From the day that the Temple was destroyed, there is no day that does not include some form of curse. Rava says: Each and every day is more cursed than the previous one, as it is stated in the chapter detailing the curses in the book of Deuteronomy: "In the morning you will say, would that it were evening, and in the evening you will say, would that it were morning" (Deuteronomy 28:67). It is unclear which morning the verse means. If we say that in the evening he will wish it would be the following morning, does he know what will be the outcome of the next morning, which would cause him to yearn for its arrival? Rather, it must mean the morning that has passed; that is, in the evening they will pine for the previous morning, because their situation is continuously worsening.

¹⁹⁶ The Gemara poses a question: But if everything is deteriorating, why does the world continue to exist? The Gemara answers: By the sanctification that is said in the order of prayers, after the passage that begins: And a redeemer shall come to Israel, which includes the recitation and translation of the sanctification said by the angels, and by the response: Let His great name be blessed, etc., which is recited after the study of aggada. As it is stated: "A land of thick darkness, as darkness itself; a land of the shadow of death, without any order" (Job 10:22). Therefore, it can be inferred from this verse that if there are orders of prayer and study, the land shall appear from amidst the darkness.

¹⁹⁷ § The mishna taught that since the destruction of the Temple, dew has not descended for a blessing, and the taste has been removed from fruit. It is taught in a baraita: Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar says: The lost purity has removed the taste and the aroma; the tithes that were not separated have removed the fat of grain.

¹⁹⁸ The Gemara relates that Rav Huna found a fragrant date. He took it and wrapped it in his shawl. Rabba, his son, came and said to him: I smell the aroma of a fragrant date. Rav Huna said to him: My

son, there is clearly purity in you, as you were able to notice the fragrance. He gave it to him. Meanwhile, Abba, Rabba's son, arrived. Rabba took the date and gave it to him. Rav Huna said to Rabba: My son, you have made my heart rejoice with your purity, and you have blunted my teeth, by showing your preference for your own son. The Gemara comments: This explains the folk saying that people say: The love of a father is for the sons; the love of the sons is for their own sons, more than for their father.

¹⁹⁹ The Gemara relates another incident: Rav Aḥa bar Ya'akov took care of Rav Ya'akov, the son of his daughter, who was an orphan. When the grandchild grew up, his grandfather once said to him: Give me water to drink. He said to him: I am not your son, and I am not obligated in your honor as a son must honor his father. The Gemara again comments: And this explains the folk saying that people say: Raise, raise your grandchild, but in the end he will retort: I am the son of your daughter, and I do not have to take care of you.

²⁰⁰ MISHNA: In the war [pulemus] of Vespasian the Sages decreed upon the crowns of bridegrooms, i.e., that bridegrooms may no longer wear crowns, and upon the drums, meaning they also banned the playing of drums.

²⁰¹ In the war of Titus they also decreed upon the crowns of brides, and they decreed that a person should not teach his son Greek.

²⁰² In the last war, meaning the bar Kokheva revolt, they decreed that a bride may not go out in a palanquin inside the city, but our Sages permitted a bride to go out in a palanquin inside the city, as this helps the bride maintain her modesty.

²⁰³ The mishna lists more things that ceased: From the time when Rabbi Meir died, those who relate parables ceased; from the time when ben Azzai died, the diligent ceased; from the time when ben Zoma died, the exegetists ceased; from the time when Rabbi Akiva died, the honor of the Torah ceased; from the time when Rabbi Ḥanina ben Dosa died, the men of wondrous action ceased; from the time when Rabbi Yosei the Small died, the pious were no more. And why was he called the Small? Because he was the smallest of the pious, meaning he was one of the least important of the pious men.

²⁰⁴ From the time when Rabban Yoḥanan ben Zakkai died, the glory of wisdom ceased; from the time when Rabban Gamliel the Elder died, the honor of the Torah ceased, and purity and asceticism died. From the time when Rabbi Yishmael ben Pavi died, the glory of the priesthood ceased; from the time when Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi died, humility and fear of sin ceased.

²⁰⁵ GEMARA: The Sages taught: Rabbi Pineḥas ben Ya'ir says: From the time when the Second Temple was destroyed, the ḥaverim and free men of noble lineage were ashamed, and their heads were covered in shame, and men of action dwindled, and violent and smooth-talking men gained the upper hand, and none seek, and none ask, and none inquire of the fear of Heaven.

²⁰⁶ Upon whom is there for us to rely? Only upon our Father in Heaven.

²⁰⁷ Rabbi Eliezer the Great says: From the day the Second Temple was destroyed, the generations have deteriorated: Scholars have begun to become like scribes that teach children, and scribes have become like beadles, and beadles have become like ignoramuses, and ignoramuses

²⁰⁸ are increasingly diminished, and none ask and none seek. Upon whom is there to rely? Only upon our Father in Heaven.

²⁰⁹ He also said: In the times of the approach of the Messiah, impudence will increase and high costs will pile up. Although the vine shall bring forth its fruit, wine will nevertheless be expensive. And the monarchy shall turn to heresy, and there will be no one to give reproof about this. The meeting place of the Sages will become a place of promiscuity, and the Galilee shall be destroyed, and the Gavlan will be desolate, and the men of the border shall go round from city to city to seek charity, but they will find no mercy.

²¹⁰ And the wisdom of scribes will putrefy, and people who fear sin will be held in disgust, and the truth will be absent. The youth will shame the face of elders, elders will stand before minors. Normal family relations will be ruined: A son will disgrace a father; a daughter will rise up against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. A man's enemies will be the members of his household. The face of the generation will be like the face of a dog; a son will no longer be ashamed before his father. And upon what is there for us to rely? Only upon our Father in heaven.

²¹¹ § Rav says concerning the decree banning the wearing of crowns that they taught this halakha only with regard to crowns of salt and sulfur, but those of myrtle and rose are permitted. And Shmuel says that even crowns of myrtle and rose are prohibited, but those made of reeds and bulrush are permitted. And Levi says: Even crowns of reeds and bulrush are prohibited. And likewise Levi teaches in his baraita: Even those of reeds and bulrush are prohibited.

²¹² The mishna taught that the Sages decreed against the wearing of crowns for bridegrooms and upon the drums. The Gemara poses a question: What is this drum [irus]? Rabbi Elazar says: A drum with one mouth. The Gemara relates a story involving this instrument: Rabba bar Rav Huna made a tambourine for his son. His father, Rav Huna, came and broke it. He said to him: This instrument will be confused for a drum with one mouth, and people will assume that a drum with one mouth is permitted. Instead, go and make for him a small drum on the mouth of an earthen jug [ḥatzava], or on the mouth of a container used for measuring a kefiza, a small measurement, which did not pose the concern of being confused with a drum with one mouth.

²¹³ They further taught that in the war of Titus the Sages decreed upon the crowns of brides. The Gemara clarifies: What are the crowns of brides? Rabba bar bar Ḥana says that Rabbi Yoḥanan says: A city of gold, a gold crown engraved with the design of a city, worn by women as an ornament. This is also taught in a baraita: Which are the crowns of brides that were forbidden? The crown of a bride is a city of gold. However, one may make it as a cap of fine wool [meilat].

²¹⁴ The Sage taught: The Sages even decreed upon the canopy of grooms. The Gemara asks: What is the type of canopy of grooms that was prohibited, as they certainly did not ban the marriage canopy. The Gemara answers: It means the golden crimson [zehorit] clothes, dyed red and crimson and decorated with gold, which they would hang on a marriage canopy. This is also taught in a baraita: These are the canopy of grooms the Sages banned: The golden crimson clothes. But he may make a papyrus [papirit] construction and hang upon it whatever he wants, even ornaments made of gold.

²¹⁵ § The mishna taught that during the war of Titus the Sages decreed that a person should not teach his son Greek. The Sages taught that this decree came about as a result of the following incident: When the kings of the Hasmonean monarchy besieged each other in their civil war, Hyrcanus was outside of Jerusalem, besieging it, and Aristobulus was inside. On each and every day they would lower dinars in a box from inside the city, and those on the outside would send up animals for them to bring the daily offerings in the Temple.

²¹⁶ A certain Elder was there, in Jerusalem, who was familiar with Greek wisdom. He communicated to those on the outside by means of Greek wisdom, using words understood only by those proficient in Greek wisdom. He said to them: As long as they are engaged in the Temple service, they will not be delivered into your hands. Upon hearing this, on the following day, when they lowered dinars in a box, they sent up a pig to them. Once the pig reached halfway up the wall, it inserted its hooves into the wall and Eretz Yisrael shuddered four hundred parasangs.

²¹⁷ When the Sages saw this, they said at that time: Cursed is the person who raises pigs, and cursed is the person who teaches his son Greek wisdom. And with regard to that year of civil war, in which the land was destroyed, we learned (Menahot 64b): An incident occurred in which the omer, the measure of barley brought as a communal offering on the sixteenth of Nisan, came from Gaggot Tzerifim, and the two loaves offered on Shavuot came from the valley of Ein Sokher.

²¹⁸ It is understood from both the mishna and the baraita that it is prohibited to learn Greek. The Gemara raises a question: Is that so? But didn't Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi say: In Eretz Yisrael, why should people speak the tongue of Syriac [Sursi], the Aramaic commonly spoken in Eretz Yisrael? Rather, they should speak either in the sacred tongue, Hebrew, or in the beautiful tongue of Greek. And Rav Yosef similarly said: In Babylonia, why should they speak in the vernacular tongue of Aramaic? Rather, they should speak either in the sacred tongue, Hebrew, or in the tongue of Persian, used by the authorities.

²¹⁹ The Gemara answers that there is a difference: The Greek tongue is discrete and Greek wisdom is discrete, and the Sages prohibited the latter but not the former.

²²⁰ The Gemara poses a question: And is Greek wisdom prohibited? But didn't Rav Yehuda say that Shmuel said in the name of Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel: What is the meaning of that which is written: "My eye affected my soul, due to all the daughters of my city" (Lamentations 3:51)? There were a thousand children in my father's house, the princes' household. Five hundred of them learned Torah, and the other five hundred learned Greek wisdom, and there only remained of them, after the bar Kokheva revolt, me, here in Eretz Yisrael, and the son of my father's brother, who lives in Asia Minor [Asya]. The fact that Rabban Gamliel allowed half of his household to study Greek wisdom indicates that it is permitted.

²²¹ The Gemara answers: The members of the house of Rabban Gamliel are different, as they were close to the monarchy, and therefore had to learn Greek wisdom in order to converse with people of authority. As it is taught in a baraita (Tosefta, Shabbat 7:1): One who cuts his hair in the komi style, which was the gentile fashion of cutting and wearing the hair, is considered to be acting in the ways of the Amorites, and it is prohibited to act in their way. However, they permitted Avtolos ben Reuven to cut his hair in the komi style, as he is close to the monarchy, and similarly they permitted the house of Rabban Gamliel to study Greek wisdom, because they are close to the monarchy.

²²² § The mishna taught: In the last war the Sages decreed that a bride may not go out in a palanquin inside the city, but the later Sages permitted it. The Gemara explains: What is the reason they permitted this practice? Due to modesty, so that brides should not have to go out into the street and be seen by all.

²²³ The mishna taught that from the time when Rabban Yoḥanan ben Zakkai died, wisdom ceased. The Sages taught: From the time when Rabbi Eliezer died, it was as if the Torah scroll had been interred, as he had memorized many secrets of the Torah. From the time when Rabbi Yehoshua died,

council and deliberate thought ceased, as he had the sharpest mind in Israel. From the time when Rabbi Akiva died, the powerful arm of Torah, meaning the exposition of all the details of Torah scripture, ceased, and the fountains of wisdom were sealed.

²²⁴ From the time when Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya died, the crowns of wisdom ceased, as “the crown of the wise is their riches” (Proverbs 14:24), and he was both a great Torah scholar and a very wealthy man. From the time when Rabbi Ḥanina ben Dosa died, the men of wondrous deeds ceased. From the time when Abba Yosei ben Katanta died, the pious men ceased. And why was he called Abba Yosei ben Katanta? Because he was among the diminished [miktanei] of the pious people, i.e., he lived in an era when the pious had become few.

²²⁵ From the time when ben Azzai died, the diligent ceased; from the time when ben Zoma died, the exegetists ceased. From the time when Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel died, locusts ascended upon the land and troubles proliferated. From the time when Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi died, the troubles multiplied.

²²⁶ The final line of the mishna states that from the time when Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi died, humility and fear of sin ceased. Rav Yosef said to the tanna who reviewed the mishna: Do not teach that humility ceased, for there is still one who is humble, namely me. Rav Naḥman similarly said to the tanna who reviewed the mishna: Do not teach that fear of sin ceased, for there is still one who fears sin, namely me.