And why doesn’t the other Sage include these curses? The Gemara answers: He maintains that these are praise for her, not pain, either because they are modest practices, e.g., urinating in a seated position, or because they add to her comfort, e.g., her bottom position during relations.

As Rabbi Hyya said: What is the meaning of that which is written: “Who teaches us by the beasts of the earth, and makes us wiser by the birds of the sky”? (Job 35:11) He explains: “Who teaches us by the beasts of the earth”; this is the female mule, which crouches and urinates and from which we learn modesty. “And makes us wiser by the birds of the sky”; this is the rooster, which first cajoles the hen and then mates with it.

Similarly, Rabbi Yoĥanan said: Even if the Torah had not been given, we would nonetheless have learned modesty from the cat, which covers its excrement, and that stealing is objectionable from the ant, which does not take grain from another ant, and forbidden relations from the dove, which is faithful to its partner, and proper relations from the rooster, which first appeases the hen and then mates with it.

What does the rooster do to appease the hen? Rav Yehuda said that Rav said: Prior to mating, it spreads its wings as if to say this: I will buy you a coat that will reach down to your feet. After mating, the rooster bends its head as if to say this: May the crest of this rooster fall off if he has the wherewithal and does not buy you one. I simply have no money to do so.

MISHNA With regard to the door to a rear court, i.e., a door that opens from a house to the courtyard situated behind it, which is typically not a proper door but merely a wooden board without hinges that closes off the doorway; and likewise bundles of thorns that seal a breach; and reed mats, one may not close an opening with them on Shabbat. This would be considered building or completing a building, unless they remain above the ground even when they are open.

GEMARA And the Gemara raises a contradiction from a baraita: With regard to a door, or a mat, or a lattice [kankan]; that drag along the ground and are used for closing up openings, when they are tied and suspended in place one may close an opening with them on Shabbat; and needless to say this is permitted on a Festival. According to the baraita, the critical factor is apparently that they must be tied and suspended, not that they have to be held up above the ground.

Abaye said: The baraita is referring to ones that have a hinge. As they are considered proper doors, closing them does not appear like building. Rava said: The baraita is referring even to doors that once had a hinge, even though they no longer have one. These partitions also bear the clear form of a door, and therefore one’s action does not have the appearance of building.

The Gemara raises an objection from another baraita: With regard to a door, or a mat, or a lattice that drag along the ground, when they are tied and suspended in place and they are held above the ground even by as little as a hairbreadth, one may close an opening with them. However, if they are not raised in this manner, one may not close an opening with them. Clearly, these doors must indeed be raised above the ground as well.
The best of them is as a brier – “טוֹבָם כְּחֵדֶ”. This verse compares the leaders of Israel to thorns in a positive light, in that they protect the people. The rationale for this unusual metaphor is that it is the job of the leaders to reprove the people and set them on the correct path (Mehil).

A certain heretic said to Rabbi Yeho-shua ben Hananya: Man of thorns! For it says about you: “The best of them is as a brier” (Micah 7:4), which indicates that even Israel’s best are merely thorns. He said to him: Fool, go down to the end of the verse: “The most upright is worse than a thorn hedge,” a derogatory expression meant as praise. Rather, what is the meaning of the best of them is as a brier? It means that just as these thorns protect a breach, so the best among us protect us. Alternatively: The best of them is as a brier [kedek] means that they grind [mehad-kein] the nations of the world into Gehenna, as it is stated: “Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion, for I will make your horn iron, and you shall beat in pieces [sala-dikot] many peoples; and you shall devote their gain to God, and their substance to the God of the whole earth” (Micah 4:13).

A person may not stand in the private domain and open a door located in the public domain with a key, lest he inadvertently transfer the key from one domain to the other. Likewise, one may not stand in the public domain and open a door in the private domain with a key, unless in the latter case he erected a partition ten handbreadths high around the door and stands inside it. This is the statement of Rabbi Meir.

The Gemara answers: Abaye reconciles the objection in accordance with his reasoning, and Rava reconciles the objection in accordance with his reasoning. The Gemara elaborates: Abaye reconciles the objection in accordance with his reasoning by adding to the baraita: They must either have a hinge or be held above the ground. Rava likewise reconciles the objection in accordance with his reasoning, as he reads: They must have had a hinge or else be held above the ground.

The Sages taught a baraita: With regard to branches of thorn bushes or bundles of wood that were arranged to seal a breach in a courtyard, when they are tied and suspended in place, one may close an opening with them on Shabbat; and needless to say, this is permitted on a Festival.

Rabbi Hyya taught a baraita: With regard to a widowed door that drags along the ground, one may not close an opening with it. The Gemara asks: What are the circumstances of a widowed door? Some say it refers to a door built from a single plank, which does not look like a door, and others say it is a door that does not have a lower doorsill (ge’onim) and that touches the ground when closed.

With regard to activities that are prohibited because of their similarity to building, the Gemara cites a teaching that Rav Yehuda said: When arranging a pile of wood for a fire on a Festival, if the logs are arranged from the top down, i.e., the upper logs are temporarily suspended in the air while the lower logs are inserted below them, it is permitted. However, if the wood is placed from the bottom up, it is prohibited, as the arrangement of wood in the regular manner is a form of building.

And the same applies to eggs that are to be arranged in a pile, and the same applies to a cauldron that is to be set down on a fire by means of supports, and the same applies to a bed that will be placed on its frame, and the same applies to barrels arranged in a cellar. In all these cases, the part that goes on top must be temporarily suspended in the air while the lower section is inserted beneath it.

With regard to bundles of thorns used to seal a breach, the Gemara cites a related incident: A certain heretic once said to Rabbi Yehoshua ben Hananyah: Man of thorns! For it says about you: “The best of them is as a brier” (Micah 7:4), which indicates that even Israel’s best are merely thorns. He said to him: Fool, go down to the end of the verse: “The most upright is worse than a thorn hedge,” a derogatory expression meant as praise. Rather, what is the meaning of the best of them is as a brier? It means that just as these thorns protect a breach, so the best among us protect us. Alternatively: The best of them is as a brier [kedek] means that they grind [mehad-kein] the nations of the world into Gehenna, as it is stated: “Arise and thresh, O daughter of Zion, for I will make your horn iron, and I will make your hoofs brass, and you shall beat in pieces [sala-dikot] many peoples; and you shall devote their gain to God, and their substance to the God of the whole earth” (Micah 4:13).
The Gemara asks: And those Rabbis, who cited the case of the poultry dealers of Jerusalem to rebut Rabbi Meir’s opinion, Rabbi Meir spoke to them about unlocking a door in a private domain while standing in the public domain, and they responded with an incident involving a karmelit. As Rabbah bar Hana said that Rabbi Yohanan said: With regard to Jerusalem, were it not for the fact that its doors are locked at night, one would be liable for carrying in it on Shabbat, because its thoroughfares have the status of the public domain. However, since Jerusalem’s doors are typically locked, it is considered one large karmelit, which is subject to rabbinic prohibitions. How, then, could a proof be cited from the markets of Jerusalem with regard to the transfer of objects between a public domain and a private domain, which is prohibited by Torah law?

Rav Pappa said: Here, the Rabbis considered Jerusalem a karmelit during the period before breaches were made in its walls. Its doors did not turn it into a public domain, as they were locked. Whereas there, Rabbi Meir is referring to the time after breaches had been made in the walls, and it therefore acquired the status of a public domain.

Rava said: In the latter clause of the mishna we came to a different issue, i.e., the final section of the mishna is not designed to counter Rabbi Meir’s statement with regard to the public domain. Rather, it refers to the gates of a garden with an area greater than two bet’s; its legal status is that of a karmelit. Consequently, the mishna is saying as follows: And likewise, one may not stand in the private domain and open a door in a karmelit; neither may one stand in a karmelit and open a door in the private domain,

unless he erected a partition ten handbreadths high around the door and stands inside it; this is the statement of Rabbi Meir. The Rabbis said to him: An incident occurred at the poultry dealers’ market in Jerusalem, as they would lock the doors to their shops and place the key in a window that was over the door, which was higher than ten handbreadths. Rabbi Yosei says: That place was a market of wool dealers.

The Sages taught a baraita: With regard to the entrances of garden gates that open into a public domain, when they have a gatehouse on the inside, which is a private domain, one may open and close them from within. This is because the lock, which is four handbreadths wide and ten handbreadths high, also constitutes a private domain. Consequently, the key may be passed from the gatehouse to the lock. However, they may not be opened or closed from without, as the key may not be passed from the public domain to the private domain of the lock. If the gatehouse is on the outside, one may open and close the doors from without, as once again both the lock and the gatehouse are private domains. They may not, however, be opened from within, as the key may not be passed from the garden, which is a karmelit, to the lock. If they have a gatehouse from here, from within, and there, from without, one may open and close the doors here and there. If they do not have a gatehouse; neither here nor there, it is prohibited to open or close the doors here and there, as one may not carry the key either in the public domain or in the garden.

And likewise, this is the halakha with regard to stores that open into the public domain: When the lock is below ten handbreadths off the ground, it is in the public domain. In that case, one may bring a key on Shabbat eve and place it on the threshold, whose legal status is that of a karmelit, and the following day he may open and close the door and return the key to the threshold.
And when the lock is above ten handbreadths off the ground, one
may bring a key on Shabbat eve and place it in the lock. And the
following day he may open and close the door and return the key
to its place on top of the lock. This is the statement of Rabbi Meir.

And the Rabbis say: Even when the lock is above ten handbreadths
off the ground, one may bring a key on Shabbat eve and place it on
the threshold, and the following day he may open and close the
door and return the key to its place on the threshold or in the win-
dow that is above the door.

However, if the window is four by four handbreadths and ten
handbreadths above the ground, its status is that of a private domain, and
it is therefore prohibited to place the key in the window, because it
would be as though one is transferring the key from one domain, a
karmelit, to another private domain.

The Gemara infers: From the fact that it is stated in the baraita: And
similarly, stores, this proves by inference that we are dealing with a
threshold that is a karmelit, as it would otherwise be prohibited to
transfer the key from the threshold to the lock. If so, with regard to
this lock, what are the circumstances? If there is not an area of four
by four handbreadths in it, it does not have the status of a prohibited
domain at all, and it is an exempt domain.

And if it is four by four handbreadths, and therefore a private domain,
would the Rabbis say in that case: Even when the lock is above ten
handbreadths off the ground, he may bring a key on Shabbat eve and
place it in the threshold, and the following day he may open and
close the door and return the key to the threshold or to a win-
dow above the door? Isn’t he moving an object from a karmelit to
the private domain?

Abaye said: Actually, the lock is not four by four handbreadths, but
there is enough space in the door surrounding it to carve out a hole
that would complete its area to the requisite four handbreadths.

And this is their dispute: Rabbi Meir, who conforms to his standard
line of reasoning, maintains that one carves out the space to com-
plete it to four handbreadths. In other words, if a small opening
is located in a place large enough for it to be widened, the place is
viewed as though it had already been carved out, providing the open-
ing with the larger dimensions. And the Rabbis conform to their
standard line of reasoning, as they maintain that one does not carve
out the space to complete it to four handbreadths. Consequently, the
lock in its present condition is not large enough to constitute a place
of significance, and it is therefore regarded as an exempt place.

Rav Beivai bar Abaye said: Learn from this baraita three halakhot:
Learn from it that according to Rabbi Meir, we carve out to com-
plete the necessary dimensions. And further learn from it that
Rabbi Meir retracted his ruling with regard to garden gates. Accord-
ing to Rava, Rabbi Meir prohibited a man standing in a karmelit from
opening a door in a private domain, and yet here he permits a similar
case.

And learn from the statement of the Rabbis that the ruling of Rav
Dimi is accepted. As when Rav Dimi came to Babylonia from Eretz
Israel, he said that Rabbi Yoĥanan said: A place with an area that is
less than four by four handbreadths and that is set apart from the
surrounding area is an exempt domain with regard to carrying on
Shabbat. Consequently, if the domain is located between a public
domain and a private domain, it is permitted for both the people in
the public domain and for the people in the private domain to
adjust the burden onto their shoulders, provided that they do not
exchange objects with one another. This ruling, that it is prohibited
to exchange articles, is supported by the position of the Rabbis that
it is prohibited to transfer the key from the threshold, which is a
karmelit, via the lock, an exempt domain, to the private domain of the
window, as one may not transfer an object from one prohibited
domain to another, even via an exempt domain.
MISHNA

With regard to a bolt that secures a door in place and that has a thick knob (gelustera) at its end, a useful implement for a variety of purposes, the tannaim disagree whether the bolt has the status of a vessel, and one may therefore close the door with it, or whether it is considered a cross beam, which would mean that doing so is classified as building. Rabbi Eliezer prohibits its use, and Rabbi Yosei permits it.

Rabbi Eliezer said: An incident occurred in a synagogue in Tiberias, where they were accustomed to treat use of this bolt as permitted, until Rabban Gamliel and the Elders came and prohibited it to them. Rabbi Yosei says that the opposite was the case: At first they were accustomed to treat use of this bolt as prohibited, and Rabban Gamliel and the Elders came and permitted it to them.

GEMARA

The Gemara narrows the dispute: If the bolt can be moved by the rope with which it is attached to the door, everyone agrees that it is considered part of the door, and one may secure the door with it. When Rabbi Yosei and Rabbi Eliezer disagree,

A bolt and a knob – Rashi and other commentators explain that this refers to a bolt placed in the bottom of a door. It is thin, and a thick piece is attached to the end of this bolt, from which the rope is suspended. Other authorities assert that it is a bar inserted through rings to hold two doors together (Rambam). Rashi, as well as the Meiri and others, state that the knob is the thick part of the bolt that can also be used for pounding and is therefore a kind of utensil. The Rambam explains that the end of the bolt has a special part shaped like a pomegranate or a square, which signifies that this bar is no longer a cross beam but has been changed into a permanent utensil. Still other commentaries claim that the knob is a kind of key, located on the thin end of the bolt (Rabbi Zeraḥya HaLevi).

It has the status of a utensil – In the Jerusalem Talmud, it is explained that the dispute is whether the bolt is nullified by the knob at its end and is therefore considered a utensil, or whether it is not nullified, which would mean that the bolt itself does not have the status of a utensil. Consequently, using it would be considered building.

One that rests and one that drags – Tosafot explains that the use of a bar that rests entirely on the ground does not constitute building. Rather, the dispute concerns whether or not one may move the bar. If it has the status of a utensil, one may move the bar, but if its status is not that of a utensil, it is considered set-aside (muktzeh) and may not be moved on Shabbat.

This refers to a bolt placed in the bottom of a door. It is thin, and a thick piece is attached to the end of this bolt, from which the rope is suspended. Other authorities assert that it is a bar inserted through rings to hold two doors together (Rambam). Rashi, as well as the Meiri and others, state that the knob is the thick part of the bolt that can also be used for pounding and is therefore a kind of utensil. The Rambam explains that the end of the bolt has a special part shaped like a pomegranate or a square, which signifies that this bar is no longer a cross beam but has been changed into a permanent utensil. Still other commentaries claim that the knob is a kind of key, located on the thin end of the bolt (Rabbi Zeraḥya HaLevi).

A bolt that has a knob at its end – Rabbi Yosei and Rabbi Eliezer disagree, as to whether the bolt has the status of a vessel, and one may therefore close the door with it, or whether it is considered a cross beam, which would mean that doing so is classified as building.

A bolt that drags – Me'iri and others, in their opinion, this may be moved on Shabbat, in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yosei. However, it must be attached to the door in some fashion (Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim 313:1).

A bolt that has a knob at its end – An object such as a door, not only a building (Ritva).

A bolt that has a knob [gelustera] – From the Greek κλεῖστρον, kleistron, or the Latin claustrum, meaning lock. In this context, it probably refers to the thick end of the bolt, which can be used for locking.