

NOTES

For my sea – לִימָתִי: Some commentaries explain that because the term for sea is similar to the word for day [yom], the Sages took her statement to mean that she had completed the days of her zava status and was now bringing the offerings for her ritual purity (Rabbeinu Gershom on Menahot 64b).

Since the priests would walk barefoot... they would contract intestinal disease – על ידי שהיו הִכְהִינִם מִהֲלָכִין יְחִפִּים...היו באין לידי חולי המעים: The later commentaries are puzzled as to how the priests could contract illnesses, as the verse states: "One who keeps a mitzva shall know no evil thing" (Ecclesiastes 8:5). This seems to indicate that no harm will befall someone who is performing a sacred service. Even if one would say that a miraculous intervention would be necessary to prevent barefoot priests from falling ill, it would be fitting for this to occur in the Temple, as the Sages have stated that miracles occurred regularly there (see Avot 5:5).

The commentaries explain that it is God's will that the Temple service should entail some suffering. Alternatively, only priests who were not absolutely sincere but were haughty and profane seeking would fall prey to these illnesses (Minhat Elazar).

HALAKHA

Since the priests would walk barefoot, etc. – על ידי שהיו הִכְהִינִם: Because the priests serving in the Temple would invariably stand directly on the stone floor, eat a lot of meat, and wear a single garment, they would frequently contract intestinal disease. Consequently, an official was appointed over this matter to heal their sicknesses and constantly look after their welfare, along with a specially designated staff (Rambam Sefer Avoda, Hilkhhot Kelei HaMikdash 7:14).

זו שאומרת "לימתי" סברין מימר שופעת בים, אמר לון: בימה סבנת.

With regard to that woman who said: For my sea,^N the Rabbis thought to say that she meant that her post-menstrual blood was flowing like the sea, which likewise means that she was a zava bringing her offerings for ritual purity. But Petahya said to them: She was endangered in the sea, so she too has brought this pair of birds as a thanks-offering.

זו שאומרת "לימתי" סברין מימר זבה ממש, אמר לון: זאב בא ליטול את בנה.

Finally, with regard to that woman who said: For my ziva, the Rabbis thought to say that she meant that she was an actual zava, and she was therefore bringing an offering for ritual purity. But Petahya said to them: A wolf [ze'ev], a word that is similar to the one she used, came and attempted to snatch her son, but he was ultimately saved. She, too, has brought this pair of birds as a thanks-offering.

"בן אחייה" וכו'. על ידי שהיו הִכְהִינִם מִהֲלָכִין יְחִפִּים על הרצפה, והיו אוכלין בשר ושותין מים, היו באין לידי חולי המעים, והנה ידע הא דין חמר טב למעיני, והאי דין חמר סמם למעיני.

The mishna states that ben Ahiyya was appointed to treat those priests who suffered from intestinal disease. The Gemara explains why priests were particularly susceptible to this ailment. Since the priests would walk barefoot^H on the floor, even when it was cold, as their feet had to be in contact with the stones of the Temple floor, and since they would eat a lot of meat from the offerings and drink a lot of water, they would contract intestinal disease.^N And ben Ahiyya knew that this particular type of wine was good for healing the intestines, and that this other type of wine was effective intestinal medicine.

"נחוניא חופר שיחיון". שהיה חופר שיחיון ומערות, והנה ידע

The mishna states that Nehunya was the well digger. The Gemara explains that he would dig wells and caves, where rain-water would collect, for pilgrims to use on their way to Jerusalem for the Festivals. And he knew

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האי דין ביה מקורר מנא, והאי דין ביה אית ביה שרבוני, ועד היכן שרבוניתיה מטנא. אמר רבי אליעזר: ומת בנו בצמא.

which rock contains water,^N and which rock contains fissures in which water may be found, and how far those fissures extend. This would enable him to calculate how deep he had to dig to reach water. Rabbi Eliezer said: And his son died of thirst.^N

אמר רבי חנינא: מאן דאמר רחמנא וותרן – יתוורתן בני מעויי. אלא מאריך ויחיה וגבי דידיה.

Since the previous passage mentioned God's rigorously exacting attitude toward righteous people like Nehunya, the Gemara discusses how God relates to sinners. Rabbi Hanina said: Whoever says that the Merciful One overlooks^N the punishment due to sinners, his intestines will be overlooked, i.e., cease functioning. The reason sinners often appear to go unpunished is rather that God extends His patience with evildoers to give them a chance to repent, but eventually He collects His due and punishes the wicked.

NOTES

Which rock contains water – האי דין ביה מקורר מנא: An alternative explanation of the phrase is: Which rock produces cold water, with the next phrase reading: And which stone produces hot water. The third phrase is: And how far does its heat extend, i.e., what is the temperature of the water (Korban HaEida; Tiklin Hadatin).

And his son died of thirst – ומת בנו בצמא: A similar incident is reported at length in the Babylonian Talmud (Bava Kama 50a; Yevamot 121b): The daughter of Nehunya the well digger fell into a great water pit, and people came and notified Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa. After one hour, he said to them: She is at peace, unharmed, in the pit. After two hours, he told them: She is still at peace. After three hours, he declared: She has ascended from the pit. Later, they asked her: Who pulled you

up? She replied: A ram happened by, led by a certain elderly man. The Gemara adds that they asked Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa whether he was a prophet, as he could accurately report on the girl from so far away. He replied: I am neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet, but I simply reasoned that the offspring of that righteous man could not possibly come to harm through the very object over which he takes so much trouble for the public benefit.

The obvious question is why his merit was to no avail in the situation mentioned in the Gemara here, where his son died. Some explain that Rabbi Hanina's logical reasoning actually included a prayer to God. In other words, it was not only Nehunya's own merit that caused his daughter's salvation, but also Rabbi Hanina's mention of his good deeds in his prayers. However, no one prayed for Nehunya's son, and since God

is exacting with the righteous, that misfortune came upon him (Rabbi Yeshaya in the Shita Mekubbetzet; Penei Yehoshua). Others maintain that the two incidents are not precisely the same, as pits, which are the very objects that Nehunya dug, could never cause his offspring harm, whereas dehydration is not identical to anything Nehunya himself dealt with, and therefore his offspring could be injured in this manner (see Tosafot).

The Merciful One overlooks – רחמנא וותרן: Although God defers his anger toward evildoers, and sometimes it appears as though He were not repaying them their due, this is not because He overlooks their misdoings. Rather, judgment is rendered for every action, as God will ultimately punish every transgressor appropriately for each of his sins.

Up to a hairsbreadth – **קְחוּט הַשְּׂעֵרָה**: In other words, God is exacting with the righteous even for sins that are not considered serious for another person, as the demands upon the righteous increase with their greatness. The Sages express this idea in various forms on different occasions, and it is likewise stated in a verse: “You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities” (Amos 3:2).

Some commentaries explain this idea by means of a parable: God is exacting with the righteous up to a hairsbreadth because they are the foundation of the world. This is similar to a builder who erects a very tall building. He must be especially exacting in his construction of its foundations, as even a small deviation there can cause enormous distortions as he proceeds to the upper levels (Rabbi Shalom Schwadron, citing Rabbi Yosef Hayyim Sonnenfeld). Others state that, as opposed to ordinary people, the righteous are fully aware of God’s greatness. Therefore, even a slight deviation from the correct path is considered insolence toward God (*Panim Yafot, parashat Tetzave*).

Another explanation is that since the righteous have a clearer perception of the Divine, even a minor sin is considered far more consequential than the width of a hair. They interpret that this hairsbreadth is referring to the significance of a sin to those who lack a clear perception of God’s greatness; but for the righteous, this act is considered a major transgression (*Darkhei Mussar*).

And His surroundings storm mightily... and dreadful is He upon all of His surroundings – **וְסִבְיֵי נִשְׂעֵרָה מְאֹד**... **וְנוֹרָא הוּא עַל כָּל סְבִיבֵי**: The commentaries on *Yevamot* 121b have noted that the two derivations of the idea that God is more exacting with the righteous have somewhat different implications. According to the first source, God is more exacting with the righteous, as He punishes them even for the few minor sins they commit. According to the second derivation, there are even times when God punishes the righteous in this world solely to cleanse them through ordeals of love. This suffering serves to sanctify His name. It has been suggested that the deaths of the sons of Aaron is an instance of this phenomenon.

A minor sin committed by a righteous person can have a stronger impact than more serious sins committed by others, both in the material world, because of the desecration of God’s name entailed, as well as in the lofty spiritual worlds (*Iyyun Yaakov on Yevamot* 121b). Furthermore, when God is very strict with the righteous, other people realize how much more deserving of punishment they are themselves, and proceed to mend their ways (*Maharsha on Yevamot* 121b).

As far as eight parasangs – **עַד שְׁמוֹנֵה פָּרְסָאוֹת**: Although the Gemara here speaks of eight parasangs, in tractate *Tamid* (30b) it is stated that Gevini’s voice could be heard in Jericho, which, as stated in tractate *Yoma* (39b), is ten parasangs from Jerusalem. A parasang is approximately 4.5 km. It appears that the reason for this discrepancy is simply that the incident here occurred when King Agrippa was only eight parasangs from Jerusalem (*Tiklin Hadatin*).

LANGUAGE

Agrippa – **אַגְרִיפָּס**: **Ἀγρίππας**, *Agrippas*, is the Greek form of this king’s name. In Hebrew it is also pronounced Agrippas.

אָמַר רַבִּי אֲחָא: כְּתִיב “וְסִבְיֵי נִשְׂעֵרָה מְאֹד” – מְדַקְדֵּק עִמָּהּ כְּחוּט הַשְּׂעֵרָה.

The Gemara explains the harsh judgment inflicted on the righteous Nehunya. **Rabbi Aḥa said that it is written:** “Our God comes and does not keep silence; a fire devours before Him, and His surroundings storm [*nis’ara*] mightily” (Psalms 50:3). The Hebrew spelling of the word *nis’ara* is very similar to the word *sa’ara*, hair. This hints that God is exacting with the righteous, who are close to Him and can be called His surroundings, **up to a hairsbreadth.**^N Even slight deviations from the proper path can elicit punishment.

אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹסֵי: לֹא מִטַּעַם הַזֶּה, אֲלֵא מִן מַה דְּכְתִיב “וְנוֹרָא הוּא עַל כָּל סְבִיבֵי” – מוֹרָאוֹ עַל הַקְּרוֹבִים יוֹתֵר מִן הַרְחוֹקִים.

Rabbi Yosei said: This idea is derived **not through that source, but rather from that which is written about God:** “**And dreadful is He upon all of His surroundings**” (Psalms 89:8),^N which indicates that **His dread is upon those close to Him, i.e., the righteous, more than upon those distant from Him, i.e., the sinful.**

רַבִּי חֲגַי בִּשְׁם רַבִּי שְׁמוּאֵל בֶּר נַחְמָן: מַעֲשֵׂה בַחֲסִיד אֶחָד שֶׁהָיָה חוֹפֵר בּוֹרוֹת שִׁיחִין וּמְעָרוֹת לְעוֹבְרִים וְשׁוֹבִים, פָּעַם אֶחָת הִיָּתְרָה בְּתוֹ עוֹבְרָת לְהַנְשִׂא וּשְׁטָפָה נְהַר, וְהוּוּן כָּל עַמָּא עֲלֵיָּן לְגַבֵּי בְּעוּן מִנְחַמְתִּיהָ וְלֹא קִיבַל עָלָיו מִתְנַחֲמָא.

The Gemara cites a related story. **Rabbi Ḥaggai said in the name of Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahman:** There was an incident involving a certain pious man who would dig pits, wells, and caves to collect water for passersby. Once his daughter was passing over a river for the purpose of marriage, and the river washed her away. And all the people came to console him, but he refused to accept their condolences.

עָאֵל רַבִּי פִּנְחָס בֶּן יֵאִיר לְגַבִּיָּהּ, בְּעֵי מִנְחַמְתִּיהָ וְלֹא קִיבַל עָלָיו מִתְנַחֲמָא. אָמַר לוֹ: דִּין הוּא חֲסִידְכוֹן? אָמְרוּ לִיה: רַבִּי, כִּךְ וְכִךְ הָיָה עוֹשֶׂה וְכִךְ וְכִךְ אִירַע לִיה.

Rabbi Pineḥas ben Yair came to visit him to console him, but he refused to accept condolences even from Rabbi Pineḥas. Rabbi Pineḥas said to the people of that community: **Is this your righteous man, who will not be consoled and accept God’s judgment? They said to him: Rabbi, he would perform such and such acts of righteousness, by supplying water, and yet such and such tragedy, the drowning of his daughter, occurred to him.**

אָמַר: אֶפְשֵׁר שֶׁהָיָה מְכַבֵּד אֶת בּוֹרָאוֹ בְּמִים וְהוּא מְקַפְחוֹ בְּמִים? מִיָּד נִפְלָה הַבְּרָה בְּעֵיר: בָּאת בְּתוֹ שֶׁל אוֹתוֹ הָאִישׁ. אֵיִת דְּאִמְרֵי בְּסוֹכְתָא אִיתְעָרִית, וְאֵיִת דְּאִמְרֵי מִלְּאָךְ יָרַד כְּדָמוֹת רַבִּי פִּנְחָס בֶּן יֵאִיר וְהִצִּילָהּ.

Rabbi Pineḥas said: Is it possible that he honors his Creator with water, and yet his Creator strikes him with water? **Immediately thereafter, a report spread throughout the city: The daughter of that righteous man has arrived, as she did not actually drown. Some say she grasped a branch and pulled herself out of the river, and some say an angel in the form of Rabbi Pineḥas ben Yair descended from heaven and rescued her.**

“גְּבִינֵי רוֹז” שֶׁהָיָה מְכַרְזוֹ בְּבֵית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ. מַה הָיָה אוֹמֵר: עֲמְדוּ הַכֹּהֲנִים לְעִבּוּדָהּ, וְלוֹוִים לְדוֹכְנָן, וְיִשְׂרָאֵל לְמַעֲמָדָן. אַגְרִיפָּס הַמֶּלֶךְ שָׁמְעוּ קוֹלוֹ עַד שְׁמוֹנֵה פָּרְסָאוֹת, וְנָתַן לוֹ מִתְּנֻחוֹת הַרְבֵּה.

S The mishna states that Gevini was the Temple crier. The Gemara cites a *baraita* that states that Gevini would issue an announcement every morning in the Temple. What would he say in his announcement? **Arise, priests, to service; and Levites to their platform to sing; and Israelites, i.e., the group of Israelites who represented the entire community at the sacrifice, to their watch.** Gevini’s voice was so powerful that **King Agrippa^{LP} once heard his voice as far away as eight parasangs,^N and Agrippa gave him many gifts as a sign of his appreciation.**

PERSONALITIES

King Agrippa – **אַגְרִיפָּס הַמֶּלֶךְ**: This story is probably referring to King Agrippa I, the grandson of Herod and Miriam the Hasmonean, who died in the year 44 CE. He spent his youth in Rome, in the dissolute and intrigue-filled society of the emperor’s court. Still, when he finally came home to Eretz Yisrael, upon his appointment as ruler over all of the areas governed by Herod, Agrippa appears to have undergone a spiritual awakening that drew him into a positive relationship with the Sages and a practical commitment to the mitzvot. Although the Sages never acknowledged him as the legitimate king, they treated him with respect, and several of his good deeds are mentioned in the Talmud.



Ancient coin bearing the profile of King Agrippa I

BACKGROUND

Kufra – כופרה: This is a neighborhood in the region of Tiberias. According to the Jerusalem Talmud (*Megilla* 4:5), it is referring to the location of ancient Tiberias, Rabbi Hillel of Kipra's place of origin.

Cymbal – צלצל: This is a metallic percussion instrument. Several musical instruments with similar names are mentioned in the Bible, e.g., “loud-sounding cymbals” and “clanging cymbals” (Psalms 150:5), but their precise identity has yet to be determined. The apparatus pictured here is probably the *sistrum* from the Roman period, a wooden-handled instrument with an arched top and metal tablets.



Egyptian *sistrum* dating from between 380 and 250 BCE

”בן גבר על נעילת שערים.” תיגס רב קומי דבית רבי שילא: קרא גברא – אכריז ברזא.

The mishna states that **ben Gever** was responsible for locking the Temple gates in the evening and opening them in the morning. The Gemara cites an incident involving ben Gever. It is taught in a mishna (*Yoma* 20a): On each day, the ashes are removed from the altar at the calling of the *gever* or near this time. The Sages dispute whether the term *gever* in this context means man or rooster. The Gemara relates that when Rav went to visit Rabbi Sheila, he would serve as his interpreter, explaining his lectures to the public. On one occasion, after Rabbi Sheila had explicitly stated that *gever* means a rooster, Rav nevertheless interpreted in the study hall of Rabbi Sheila that the phrase: **Gever cried out**, means: **The crier announced**.

אמר ליה: אמור קרא תרנגולא! אמר ליה: והתנינן בן גבר אית לך למימר בר תרנגולא?!

Rabbi Sheila said to him: Say that this expression means: **The rooster cried out**. Rav said to him: **But we learned** in a mishna above (13a) that there is a man called **ben Gever**. **Could you possibly say** that his name means **son of a rooster?**^N In this context, *gever* must mean man, not rooster. Therefore, in *Yoma* as well it must indicate that a man issued an announcement.

”בן בבי על הפקיע.” שהיה מוויג פתילות. רבי יוסי עאל לכופרה, בעו ממניא עליהון פרנסים ולא קיבלון מינהן.

The mishna states that **ben Bevai** was responsible for the shreds of garments. The Gemara explains that he would braid shreds together to prepare wicks^N for the candelabrum that were of the appropriate thickness, so that they would burn the entire night during each period of the year. The Gemara relates that **Rabbi Yosei came to the town of Kufra**^B and wanted to appoint community leaders for them to care for the needs of the community and the provisions of the poor. **However**, those who were selected would not accept the appointment from them, i.e., from Rabbi Yosei, because they deemed this job beneath their dignity.

עאל ואמר קומיהון: בן בבי על הפקיע. ומה אם זה שנתמנה על הפתילות וכה להימנות עם גדולי הדור, אתם שאתם נתמנין על חיי נפשות לא כל שכן.

Rabbi Yosei came and said to them: **Ben Bevai**, was responsible for the lowly function of the shreds of garments, and if this man, who was appointed to deal with the wicks, merited to be listed with the greatest of that generation, you, who are appointed for life-sustaining matters, all the more so are you not honored by the position? You should therefore accept the request without hesitation.

”בן ארזה על הצלצל.” כי הא דתנינן תמן: הניף הסגן בסודרין, והקיש בן ארזה על הצלצל.

The mishna further taught that **ben Arza** was responsible for the cymbal.^B The Gemara explains that this is referring to that which we learned in a mishna there (*Tamid* 33b): When the High Priest bent over to pour the wine libation, the deputy High Priest waved the scarves as a signal and **ben Arza beat upon the cymbal**.

”הוגרס בן לוי על השיר.” אמר רבי אחא: נעימה יתירה היה יודע. ואמרו עליו על הוגרס בן לוי שהיה מנעים את קולו בומר, וכשהיה נועץ גודלו בתוך פיו היה מוציא כמה מיני זמר, והיו כל אחיו הכהנים נוקרין לו בבית ראש.

The mishna states that **Hugras ben Levi** was responsible for the song. **Rabbi Aha said: He knew an extraordinary manner of singing. And they said of Hugras ben Levi that he would make his voice pleasant in song, and when he would stick his thumb into his mouth he could produce several types of music simultaneously, and all of his fellow priests would lurch toward him all at once**,^N from the intensity and the charm of the sound.

NOTES

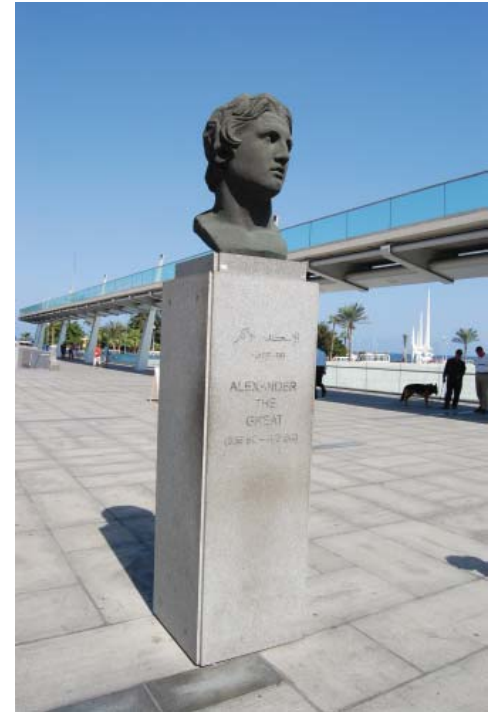
קרא גברא...בר תרנגולא – Gever cried out... the son of a rooster – This incident is cited at greater length in the Babylonian Talmud (*Yoma* 20b). Some commentaries maintain that it is simply a dispute concerning terminology that has no practical ramifications. Other authorities claim that this dispute bears on the precise time for the removal of the ashes from the altar in the Temple, as the rooster's cry occurs much earlier in the morning than the Temple crier's announcement (*Me'iri* on *Yoma* 20b). Although this issue is left undecided in tractate *Yoma*, here Rav cites a proof that the word means a man, as the official responsible for the Temple gates would certainly not be called the son of a rooster. Some derive from the ruling in the mishna (*Bava Kama* 79b) that roosters may not be raised in Jerusalem that

there could not have been roosters in the capital, and therefore the phrase must refer to the Temple crier's announcement (see Rabbi Yair Bakhrakh on *Yoma* 20b).

מוויג פתילות – Braid shreds together to prepare wicks – Another interpretation is that ben Bevai was proficient at ensuring that all the wicks were of equal length (*Tiklin Hadatin*).

All at once – בבית ראש: This phrase literally means: With one head. Alternatively, it is explained that when Hugras, who supervised the other singers, would produce his extraordinary music, the other priestly singers would join in, bending back their heads in an effort to raise their voices. This explains the reference to their heads (*Maharsha* on *Yoma* 38b).

Alexandria – אלכסנדריאה: This port city, which lies west of the Nile delta, was founded by Alexander the Great in 332 BCE. In its glory days, during the Ptolemaic rule in Egypt and until the end of the mishnaic period, Alexandria was one of the largest cities and cultural centers in the world. The greatest scientists, doctors, and artisans of the time lived in Alexandria, and Alexandrian doctors were renowned throughout the entire world. The Sages of the Talmud were very familiar with Alexandrian doctors and held them in high regard, often praising the medical accomplishments of this important urban center.



Bust of Alexander the Great near the Alexandria Library



Alexandria in relation to Eretz Yisrael and the lands surrounding it

”בית גרמו על מעשה לחם הפנים”. בית גרמו היו בקיאין במעשה לחם הפנים וברדייתו, ולא רצו ללמד.

The mishna mentioned that the house of Garmu was responsible for the preparation of the shewbread, which is the bread baked each week in a special form and displayed for a week on the designated table in the Sanctuary. The Gemara relates a story from a *baraita* about the house of Garmu and their talent in baking. The house of Garmu was proficient in the preparation of the shewbread and in its removal from the oven without ruining it, but they did not want to teach these skills to others.

שָׁלְחוּ חֲכָמִים וְהֵבִיאוּ אוֹמְנִים מֵאַלְכְסַנְדְּרִיָּא, שֶׁהֵיוּ בְקִיָּאִין בְּמַעֲשֵׂה לֶחֶם הַפְּנִים, וּבְרִדְיָתוֹ, וְלֹא הָיוּ בְקִיָּאִין.

Therefore, the Sages sent messengers and brought in craftsmen from Alexandria,⁸ who were also proficient in the preparation of the shewbread, in an attempt to replace the house of Garmu. However, they were not as proficient as the house of Garmu in its removal from the oven. The complex form of the shewbread rendered it very difficult to remove from the oven without its breaking.

בֵּית גַּרְמוֹ הָיוּ מְסִיקִין מִבְּפָנִים וְרוֹדִין מִבַּחוּץ וְלֹא הִיתָה מִתְעַפְּשֵׁת, וְאֵלּוּ הָיוּ מְסִיקִין מִבְּפָנִים וְרוֹדִין מִבְּפָנִים, וְהִיתָה מִתְעַפְּשֵׁת.

The Gemara clarifies the difference between the two manners of preparation. The house of Garmu would ignite the fire within the oven, bake the shewbread in a mold, and remove the bread from the mold only outside the oven, after it was fully baked. And, as they would remove it from the mold at this late stage, it would not spoil. Whereas these Egyptian craftsmen would ignite the fire within the oven and bake the shewbread in the mold, but, out of fear that it would break when removed from the mold, they would remove it from the mold inside the oven before it was fully baked. And the result was that the bread would spoil.

בֵּינָן שֶׁיָּדְעוּ חֲכָמִים בְּדָבָר הַזֶּה, אָמְרוּ: כֹּל מִה שֶׁבָּרָא הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא – לְכַבּוֹד בְּרָא, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר “כֹּל פֶּעַל ה’ לְמַעַנְהוּ”.

Once the Sages realized this matter, that their replacement shewbread was flawed, they said: Everything that the Holy One, Blessed be He, created, He created for His glory, as it is stated: “The Lord has made everything for His own purpose” (Proverbs 16:4). Since spoiled shewbread does not promote the glory of God, we must forgo our honor and request the services of the house of Garmu once again.

שָׁלְחוּ אַחֲרֵיהֶם וְלֹא רָצוּ לְבֹא עַד שֶׁכִּפְּלוּ לָהֶם שְׂכָרָן. שְׁנַיִם עָשָׂר מָנֶה הָיוּ נוֹטְלִים, וְנָתְנוּ לָהֶם עָשָׂרִים וָאַרְבָּעָה, רַבִּי יְהוּדָה אוֹמֵר: עָשָׂרִים וָאַרְבָּעָה הָיוּ נוֹטְלִים, וְנָתְנוּ לָהֶן אַרְבָּעִים וּשְׁמוֹנֶה.

Therefore, the Sages sent for the house of Garmu, but they did not want to come back to bake until the Sages doubled their compensation. They had been receiving twelve *maneh*, and now they gave them twenty-four. Rabbi Yehuda says: They had been receiving twenty-four *maneh*, and now they gave them forty-eight.

אָמְרוּ לָהֶן: מִפְּנֵי מַה אֵין אַתֶּם רוֹצִים לְלַמֵּד? אָמְרוּ לָהֶן: מִסּוֹרֶת הִיא בְּיַדֵּינוּ מֵאַבוֹתֵינוּ שֶׁהֵבִיתָ הַזֶּה עֲתִיד לִיְחָרֵב, שְׁלֹא יִלְמְדוּ אַחֲרָיִם וְיַעֲשׂוּ לִפְנֵי עַבְדָּה וְרַחַשׁ שְׁלָחָן. בְּדָבָרִים הַלְלוּ מִזְבִּירֵינָן אוֹתָן לְשִׁבְתָּ: שְׁלֹא יֵצֵא בַיָּד בְּנֵיהֶם פֶּת נִקְיָה מִעוֹלָם, שְׁלֹא יִהְיוּ אוֹמְרִים מִמַּעֲשֵׂה לֶחֶם הַפְּנִים הֵן אוֹכְלִים.

The Sages said to them: For what reason don't you want to teach the art of shewbread baking to others? The house of Garmu said to them: We have a tradition from our fathers that this House, the Temple, will be destroyed. We do not want to teach our method, so that others should not learn this art and unscrupulously perform it for their idolatry. Although their reason for refraining from teaching their method to others was not accepted, on this other matter the Sages did mention them with praise: That refined bread was never found in their children's possession at all, so that people should not say that they feast upon their shewbread labor.



Panoramic view of Alexandria

Smoke raiser – מעלה עשן: As stated in the Gemara, the secret of this herb was guarded by the Avtinas family, and it was apparently lost in the years after the destruction of the Second Temple. A few attempts have been made to identify this plant, and the accepted view is that it is the plant called the desert smoke raiser, *Leptadenia pyrotechnica*. This bush has thin, green branches and is almost completely lacking in leaves. It grows up to 5 m in height and is found in the south of Eretz Yisrael, the southern Jordan Valley, and northern Sinai. The gray-white flowers of the desert smoke raiser are arranged in groups on one stem, called an inflorescence, and they bloom in the spring. Since the plant ignites extremely easily, Arabs once used it as gunpowder for rifles and cannons. If even one branch is lit, the entire bush ignites with astounding speed and creates an enormous flame that can reach up to a height of 10 m. It is conceivable that adding branches of this type to the incense would cause the smoke to rise vertically in a straight line, as depicted in the Talmud.



Desert smoke raiser

”בית אבטינס על מעשה הקטורת”. של בית אבטינס היו בקיאים על מעשי פיתום הקטורת ובמעלה העשן, ולא רצו ללמד.

שלחו והביאו אומנים מאלקסנדריא של מצרים והיו בקיאים בפיתום הקטורת, ובמעלה עשן לא היו בקיאים. של בית אבטינס היתה מתמרת ועולה כמקל ופוסה ויורדת. ושל אלו היתה פוסה מיד.

מיון שייעו חכמים בדבר אמרו: כל מה שברא הקדוש ברוך הוא – לכבודו ברא, שנאמר “כל הנקרא בשמי לכבודי בראתינו” וגו’. שלחו אחריהם ולא רצו לבא, עד שפגלו להן שכן. שנים עשר מנה היו נוטלין, ונתנו להן עשרים וארבעה. רבי יהודה אומר: עשרים וארבעה היו נוטלין ונתנו להן ארבעים ושמונה.

אמרו להן: מפני מה אין אתם רוצין ללמד? אמרו להן: מסורת היא בידינו מאבותינו שהבית הזה עתיד ליחרב, שלא ילמדו אחרים ויהיו עושין בן לפני עבודה זרה שלהן.

בדברים הללו מזכירין אותן לשבח: שלא יצאת אשה משל אחד מהן מבושמת מעולם, ולא עוד אלא כשהיה אחד מהן נושא אשה ממקום אחר היה פוסק עמה על מנת שלא תתבשם, שלא יהו אומרים ממעשה פיתום הקטורת הן מתבשמות, לקיים מה שנאמר “והייתם נקיים מה ומישראל”.

The mishna states that the house of Avtinas was responsible for the preparation of the incense. The Gemara relates a similar story from a *baraita* concerning the house of Avtinas and their knowledge of the incense preparation: **The house of Avtinas was proficient in the preparations of the incense mixture, which included grinding the incense herbs and blending them together. And they were also expert in identifying the so-called smoke raiser,^{BN} a plant that caused the incense smoke to rise upward in a straight line to the ceiling, but they did not want to teach these skills to others.**

Therefore, the Sages sent out messengers and brought in craftsmen from Alexandria in Egypt. And these craftsmen were proficient in the incense mixture, but they were not proficient in identifying the smoke raiser.^N The incense smoke of the house of Avtinas would rise straight up like a staff to the ceiling, and from there it would spread out and descend, whereas the incense smoke of these Egyptian craftsmen would not rise but would simply spread out immediately.

Once the Sages realized this matter, that this incense smoke was flawed, they said: **Everything that the Holy One, Blessed be He, created, He created for His glory, as it is stated: “Everything that is called by My name, and I have created for My glory, I have formed it and even made it” (Isaiah 43:7).** Since incense smoke that rises straight up is superior, we must forgo our honor and request the services of the house of Avtinas once again. The Sages sent for them, but they did not want to come back until they doubled their compensation. They had been receiving twelve *maneh*, and now they gave them twenty-four. Rabbi Yehuda says: They had been receiving twenty-four *maneh*, and now they gave them forty-eight.

The Sages said to them: **For what reason don’t you want to teach the art of incense preparation to others?** The house of Avtinas said to them: **We have a tradition from our fathers that this House, the Temple, will be destroyed. We do not want to teach our method, so that others should not learn these skills and prepare this incense for their idolatry.**

Although their reason for refraining from teaching their method to others was not accepted, on these other matters the Sages did mention them with praise: **That never did the wife of any one of them leave her house perfumed; and not only that, but when one of them would marry a woman from elsewhere, he would stipulate with her that the marriage was on condition that she may not perfume herself, so that people should not say that they perfume themselves from the preparation of the incense mixture. They did so to fulfill that which is stated: “Then you shall be clear before the Lord and before Israel” (Numbers 32:22).**

NOTES

Smoke raiser – מעלה העשן: This herb was known only to a few people, in particular the Avtinas family, as depicted here and in the Babylonian Talmud (*Yoma* 38a). The herb would cause the incense smoke to rise vertically in a straight line. The smoke raiser was used to fulfill an allusion from a verse that deals with Yom Kippur service: “For I appear in the cloud upon the Ark cover” (Leviticus 16:2). The Sages derived from here that the incense of the entire year must form a cloud over the Ark. Some later authorities maintain that the smoke raiser is an essential ingredient in the incense and one is liable to receive death at the hand of Heaven for leaving it out of the recipe, despite the fact that it is not listed in the verse (Exodus 30:35) among the ingredients of the incense (see

Yoma 53a; *Mishne LaMelekh* on Rambam *Sefer Avoda*, *Hilkhot Kelei HaMikdash* 2:3).

And they were proficient in the incense mixture, but they were not proficient in the smoke raiser – והיו בקיאים בפיתום הקטורת ובמעלה עשן לא היו בקיאים: It has already been noted that it is inconceivable that these craftsmen were entirely unaware of the smoke raiser plant, as the Gemara (*Yoma* 38a) clearly states that any incense that lacks the smoke raiser is disqualified (*Tosafot Yeshanim* on *Yoma* 38a). However, it is possible that they did not know how to prepare the smoke raiser properly, or perhaps there were several plants suitable for this purpose and only the Avtinas family knew which was the best (see *Tosefot HaRosh* on *Yoma* 38a).

Discreet [tzenu'in] – צנועין: The principal meaning of this Hebrew term is to hide or be discrete, which fits the context here. It has expanded to mean those who practice humility and modesty.

אמר רבי יוסי: פעם אחת הייתי עומד בירושלם ומצאתי תינוק אחד משל בית אבטינס, אמרתי לו: בני, מאיזו משפחה אתה? אמר לי: ממשפחת פלוני, אמרתי לו: בני, אבותיך לפי שנתכוונו לרבות כבודן ולמעט כבוד שמים – לפיכך כבודם נתמעט, וכבוד שמים נתרבה.

Rabbi Yosei said: Once I was standing in Jerusalem, and I found a certain child from the house of Avtinan. I said to him: My son, from which family are you? He said to me: I am from a particular family, i.e., the house of Avtinan. I said to him: My son, I will say this about your forefathers: Since they intended to increase their own glory by ensuring that none were as proficient as they at preparing incense and by demanding double their previous wages, and they sought to reduce of the glory of Heaven by taking money from the Temple coffers, therefore they were punished and ultimately their glory was diminished, as after the destruction of the Temple they lost their importance. But the glory of Heaven increased, for God's honor is not dependent upon the existence of the Temple.

אמר רבי עקיבא: שח לי שמעון בן לוגא, מלקט הייתי עשבים אני ותינוק אחד משל בית אבטינס וראיתי אותו שוכה, וראיתי אותו ששחק. אמרתי לו: בני, למה בכיתה? אמר לי: על כבוד של בית אבא שנתמעט. ולמה שחקתה? אמר לי: על הכבוד המתוקן לצדיקים לעתיד לבא.

Rabbi Akiva said: Shimon ben Loga told me: Once I and a certain child from the house of Avtinan were collecting herbs, and I saw him crying, and later I saw him laughing. I said to him: My son, why did you cry? He said to me: I cried for the glory of my father's house, which has been diminished after the destruction of the Temple. I subsequently asked him: And why did you laugh? He said to me: I laughed with joy over the glory prepared for the righteous in the future, when my family will have its role restored to them in the rebuilt Temple.

ומה ראית – מעלה עשן לנגדי. נומית לי: בני, הראה לי! אמר לי: רבי, מסורת בידי מאבותי שלא להראותו לבריה.

Shimon ben Loga added that he asked that child further: And what did you see that brought these things to mind? He replied: I saw the smoke raiser before me, among the herbs we were collecting. I said to him: My son, show it to me, and I will keep its identity secret so that no one will be able to use it for idolatry. He said to me: Rabbi, I have a tradition from my forefathers not to show it to a soul.

אמר רבי יוחנן בן נורי: (מלקט הייתי עשבים אני וזקן אחד) פגע בי זקן אחד משל בית אבטינס ומגילת סמנים בידו, אמר לי: רבי, לשעבר היו בית אבא צנועין והיו

Similarly, Rabbi Yohanan ben Nuri said: Once I and a certain elderly man were collecting herbs. I encountered a certain elderly man from the house of Avtinan with a scroll in his hand with instructions on how to identify herbs for the Temple incense and how to prepare it. That elderly man said to me: Rabbi, in the past the members of my father's house were discreet [tzenu'in]^N and cautious. And they would

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מוסרין את המגילה הזאת אלו לאלו, ועבשיו שאינן בית אבא נאמנים – הילך את המגילה, והזהר בה.

transfer this scroll only to one another, so that it would not come into the possession of anyone who might misuse its information. And now that the members of my father's house are not reliable, I am concerned that they might pass the scroll to the wrong person. I will not give it to one of them but only to someone whom I judge to be completely trustworthy. Therefore, here it is for you, as I can trust you to take the scroll and be careful with it, so that it will not reach anyone who might misuse its information.

וכשבאתי והרציתי הדברים לפני רבי עקיבא ולגו עיני דמעות, ואמר: מעתה אין אנו צריכין להזכירן לגנאי.

Rabbi Yohanan ben Nuri continued: And when I came and recounted these matters to Rabbi Akiva, his eyes shed tears, and he said: From now on, we should not mention the members of the house of Avtinan unfavorably, as it is evident that the only reason they did not teach their skills to others was due to the fear that someone might misuse them for idolatrous purposes.

Supervisor of the Temple curtain weavers – ממנה על אורגי פרוכת – The supervisor of the Temple curtains was in charge of all the curtain weavers and embroiderers. His job was to ensure that the curtains were ready for use in the Sanctuary and on the gates (Rambam *Sefer Avoda, Hilkhot Kelei HaMikdash* 7:16).

Dress him in the High Priestly vestments – מלביש בגדי כהונה גדולה – The supervisor of the priestly vestments would prepare the vestments of both common priests and the High Priest, and he was also in charge of the weaving of their garments. This supervisor had an office in the Temple. The Ra'avad identifies the holder of this office as Pinehas the valet (Rambam *Sefer Avoda, Hilkhot Kelei HaMikdash* 7:20).

There must be no fewer than seven trustees and three treasurers – אין פוחתין משבעה אמרכלין ושלשה גזברין – The authorities must appoint trustees, who are responsible for opening the Sanctuary, as well as treasurers, who are in charge of the collection and redemption of consecrated property. There must be no less than seven trustees and three treasurers. The Rabbaz writes that this is merely the number of treasurers appointed over the collection of consecrated property, as the Rambam explicitly states. However, there were also thirteen officials responsible for the Temple gates, in accordance with the number of gates, as stated in the Gemara here and in tractate *Tamid* 27a (Rambam *Sefer Avoda, Hilkhot Kelei HaMikdash* 4:17).

And we do not appoint an authority over the public of fewer than two – ואין עושין שררה על הצבור פחות משנים – With regard to money matters, e.g., the collection of charity for the indigent, the court may not appoint an authority over the public of fewer than two members. Since this prohibition is not due to a lack of trust, it is permitted to appoint one man as the treasurer for the charity fund after it has been collected. Furthermore, two brothers may be appointed as treasurers (Rambam *Sefer Zera'im, Hilkhot Mattenot Aniyim* 9:5; *Shulhan Arukh, Yoreh De'a* 256:3).

BACKGROUND

The High Priestly vestments – בגדי כהונה גדולה – The garments worn by the High Priest were referred to as the eight vestments or the golden vestments (see Exodus 28). Four of them, the breastplate, the *ephod*, the robe, and the frontplate, were unique to the High Priest. The High Priest's other four vestments, the trousers, the tunic, the belt, and the miter, were similar to those worn by common priests. The Sages dispute whether the belt worn by the High Priest was identical to the one worn by common priests. It appears that the miters of the two types of priests differed, at least in the manner in which they were worn.



High Priest wearing the eight vestments

“אלעזר על הפרוכת” – שיהיה ממנה על אורגי פרוכת. פנחס המלביש” – שיהיה מלביש בגדי כהונה גדולה. מעשה בכהן אחד שהלביש לאיסטרטיות אחד, ונתן לו שמונה זהובים. ואית דאמרין תרי עשר יהב ליה.

הלכה ב מתני' אין פוחתין משבעה אמרכלין ושלשה גזברין. ואין עושין שררה על הצבור פחות משנים. חוץ מבן אחיה ש'על חולי מעיים, ואלעזר ש'על הפרוכת, שאותן קיבלו רוב הצבור עליהן.

The mishna states that Elazar was responsible for the Temple curtains. The Gemara explains that this means he was the supervisor of the Temple curtain weavers.¹⁴ The mishna further teaches that Pinehas was the valet. The Gemara states that he would dress¹⁵ the High Priest in the High Priestly vestments.¹⁶ The expertise of those appointed to this position was so great that there was an incident involving a certain valet priest who dressed a certain Roman army officer [*isteratiyot*],¹⁷ and the officer was so impressed with the manner in which he dressed him that he gave him eight gold coins. And some say he gave him twelve gold coins.

HALAKHA 2 • MISHNA There must be no fewer than seven trustees [*amarkolin*]¹⁸ and three treasurers¹⁹ appointed over the Temple administration. And we do not appoint an authority over the public comprised of fewer than two²⁰ people, except for ben Ahiyya,²¹ who was responsible for healing priests who suffered from intestinal disease, and Elazar, who was responsible for the weaving of the Temple curtains. The reason for these exceptions is that the majority of the public accepted these men upon themselves as officials who served without the assistance of even a single partner.

LANGUAGE

Roman army officer [*isteratiyot*] – איסטרטיות: From the Greek στρατεία, *strateia*, whose many meanings include a group of soldiers, each of whom serve at a specific time, and army units sent to perform particular tasks in a war.

Persian hamarakara, an accountant. This official's job is to collect taxes and the like. Even in ancient times, this term probably referred not only to a treasurer but to any important official. Indeed, this is the meaning of the word in Aramaic translations of the Bible and in mishnaic Hebrew.

Trustees [*amarkolin*] – אמרכלין: Apparently from the

NOTES

That he would dress, etc. – שיהיה מלביש וכו': One interpretation is that Pinehas would dress them in a most becoming manner, and this special method of dressing others was his unique area of expertise (*Penei Moshé; Shiklei Yosef*). Alternatively, Pinehas was a tailor by trade. He would perform alterations on the priestly vestments in accordance with the precise measurements of each individual priest, so that the priests would appear like angels (Rash Sirilio).

the Gemara is speaking of a priest who dressed the High Priest in his vestments, and therefore there is no question of any misuse of consecrated property (*Rabbeinu Meshullam; Talmid HaRashbash*).

That he would dress him in the High Priestly vestments – שיהיה מלביש בגדי כהונה גדולה: The Rambam, in his Commentary on the Mishna, and Rabbi Ovadya Bartenura indicate that Pinehas would also dress the other priests and was responsible for undressing them when they completed their Temple service. Likewise, he stored their garments, as can be inferred from a mishna (*Middot* 1:4; see Rash Sirilio; see Rosh; Rambam *Sefer Avoda, Hilkhot Kelei HaMikdash* 7:20). Other commentaries maintain that Pinehas was responsible only for dressing the High Priest (*Yefe Mareh*).

Trustees [*amarkolin*]...treasurers – אמרכלין...גזברין: Trustees and treasurers are the names of Temple officials who supervise the safeguarding of Temple property and its treasuries. The Sages derived from the verse: "That they may be joined to you, and minister to you" (Numbers 18:2), that one must appoint trustees and treasurers (*Sifrei, Korah* 116). The treasurer is subordinate to the trustee, and sometimes several treasurers are subordinate to a single trustee.

Who dressed a certain Roman army officer [*isteratiyot*] – שהלביש לאיסטרטיות אחד: Although there is a general principle that one who makes personal use of the priesthood has misused consecrated property (see Jerusalem Talmud, *Berakhot* 8:5), this priest was permitted to use his unique skills and dress the military officer because the priest may waive the right not to have to serve others when he benefits from the use of his services (*Matta Dirushalem*). Nevertheless, this case remains problematic, as the dressing of a Roman soldier in priestly vestments should certainly be considered misuse of consecrated property. Some commentaries explain that the priest did not in fact dress the soldier in priestly vestments, but rather dressed him in his own military uniform, but in such a special manner that the soldier was impressed and paid him a large sum of money. Yet others interpret the term *isteratiyot* differently, claiming that it refers to the priestly vestments. In their opinion,

The word in Aramaic for a trustee, *amarkolin*, is interpreted homilectically to mean: He who decrees all [*amar kol*] (*Horayot* 13a). See Rashi in *Horayot*, who states that the *amarkolin* is the highest supervisor, and no one has authority to contradict his words. Alternatively, *amarkolin* can be read as *mar al kol*, master of all (*Tosefta, Shekalim* 2:15), an interpretation that emphasizes his executive position. Indeed, there is a dispute between the Babylonian Talmud and the Jerusalem Talmud with regard to whether the trustee, who was a permanent official, outranked the head of the priestly watch of any particular week or the head of the family serving on a particular day. According to the Jerusalem Talmud (*Horayot* 3:5), the trustee is subordinate to the head of the watch and to the head of the patrilineal family, while the Babylonian Talmud (*Horayot* 13a) states that the trustee is the more senior position. The Rambam rules according to the latter opinion (*Sefer Avoda, Hilkhot Kelei HaMikdash* 4:19).

And we do not appoint an authority...fewer than two except for ben Ahiyya, etc. – פחות משנים...פחות משנים וכו': Apart from ben Ahiyya and Elazar, all the other officials mentioned in the mishna served along with at least one other official, although the mishna lists only the most important of them (Rash Sirilio; *Tiklin Hadatin*).

Executive supervisors [*katalikin*] – כְּתִלְיָקִין: From the Greek καθολικός, *katholikos*, meaning the supervisor or general. In the Roman Empire, this term referred to the senior supervisor of the treasury and economic matters. In this context, it indicates a supervisor who is superior to the trustees and is responsible for the Temple treasury.

HALAKHA

Two executive supervisors – שְׁנֵי כְּתִלְיָקִין: In addition to the trustees and the treasurers, the authorities would also appoint executive supervisors who ranked just below the deputy High Priest. There must be at least two executive supervisors (Rambam *Sefer Avoda*, *Hilkhot Kelei HaMikdash* 4:17).

גַּמ' "אִין פּוֹחֲתִין מִשְׁלֶשָׁה גּוֹבְרִין וּמְשַׁבְּעָה אֲמֵרְבּוּלִין". תַּנּוּ: מִשְׁנֵי כְּתִלְיָקִין.

הָדָא הוּא דְכְּתִיב "וַיַּחֲיֵאל וַעֲזֹזְהוּ וְנַחַת" – גּוֹבְרִין, "וַעֲשֵׂאל וִירִימוֹת וַיִּזְבְּד וַאֲלֵיֵאל וַיִּסְמְכִיהוּ וּמַחַת וּבְנִיהוּ" – אֲמֵרְבּוּלִין, "פְּקִידִים מִיַּד כּוֹנְנִיהוּ וְשִׁמְעִי אַחִיר" – כְּתִלְיָקִין, "בְּמִפְקֵד יִחְזַקִּיהוּ הַמֶּלֶךְ וַעֲזַרְיָהוּ נָגִיד בֵּית אֱלֹהִים" – הַמֶּלֶךְ וְכֹהֵן גָּדוֹל.

כְּשֶׁהוּא חוֹתֵם – הַגֹּבֵר חוֹתֵם וְנֹתְנוּ לְאֲמֵרְבּוּל, אֲמֵרְבּוּל חוֹתֵם וְנֹתְנוּ לְכְּתִלְיָקִין, כְּתִלְיָקִין חוֹתֵם וְנֹתְנוּ לְכֹהֵן גָּדוֹל, כֹּהֵן גָּדוֹל חוֹתֵם וְנֹתְנוּ לְמֶלֶךְ.

וְכִשְׁהוּא מְתִיר, הַמֶּלֶךְ רוֹאֶה חוֹתְמוֹ וּמְתִיר, כֹּהֵן גָּדוֹל רוֹאֶה חוֹתְמוֹ וּמְתִיר, כְּתִלְיָקִין רוֹאֶה חוֹתְמוֹ וּמְתִיר, אֲמֵרְבּוּל רוֹאֶה חוֹתְמוֹ וּמְתִיר, גּוֹבֵר רוֹאֶה חוֹתְמוֹ וּמְתִיר.

"אִין עוֹשִׂין שְׂרָרָה עַל הַצְּבוּר בְּמוֹן פְּחוֹת מְשֻׁנִּים". רַב נַחֲמָן בְּשֵׁם רַבִּי מְנַא: עַל שֵׁם "וְהֵם יִקְחוּ אֶת הַזָּהָב וְאֶת הַתְּבִלֹת וְאֶת הָאֲרוֹגְמָן".

אָמַר רַבִּי חֲמַא בִּי רַבִּי חֲנִינָא: מִפְּסוּלֵת שֵׁל לְוַחוֹת הָעֵשִׂיר מִשָּׁה, הָדָא הוּא דְכְּתִיב "פְּסָל לָךְ שְׁנֵי לְוַחוֹת אַבְנִים" – פְּסָל לָךְ, שְׁתֵּיהֶם הַפְּסוּלֵת שֵׁלְךָ. אָמַר רַבִּי חֲנִין: מִחֻצֵּב שֵׁל אַבְנִים טוֹבוֹת וּמְרַגְלִיּוֹת בְּרָא לֹו הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא מִתּוֹךְ אֶהְלוּ, וּמִמֶּנּוּ הָעֵשִׂיר מִשָּׁה.

כְּתִיב "וְהִבִּיטוּ אַחֲרַי מִלְּשָׁה עַד בּוֹאֵה הָאוֹהֶלְהָ" תַּרְוִין אֲמוֹרָאִין, חַד אָמַר לְגִנְאֵי וְחַד אָמַר לְשַׁבַּח.

GEMARA The mishna states that **there must be no fewer than three treasurers and seven trustees**. The Gemara states that it was likewise taught in a *baraita* that there must be no fewer than two executive supervisors [*katalikin*].^{LH}

This is as it is written in the verse that lists the men who supervised the receipt of *teruma* and tithes from the public and their distribution to the priests and the Levites, as well as the receipt of items dedicated to the Temple: "And Jehiel, and Azaziah, and Nahath," these were the treasurers; "and Asahel, and Jerimoth, and Jozabad, and Eliel, and Ismachiah, and Mahath, and Benaiah," these were the trustees; "overseers under the hand of Conaniah and Shimei his brother," these were executive supervisors; "by the appointment of Hezekiah the king and Azariah the ruler of the House of God," they were the king and the High Priest, the most senior officials (II Chronicles 31:13).

These officials participated in the supervision of the Temple assets, according to the level and status of their positions. **When he would seal an item to store in the treasury until it would be needed, the treasurer would first seal it with his own seal; and subsequently give it to a trustee; the trustee would seal it and give it to an executive supervisor; the executive supervisor would seal it and give it to the High Priest; and the High Priest would seal it and give it to the king, who would place the final seal.**

And when a treasurer wanted to release an item for usage, the reverse order was followed: First the king would examine his seal and release the restriction on the item; the High Priest would examine his seal and release it; the executive supervisor would examine his seal and release it; the trustee would examine his seal and release it; and finally the treasurer would examine his seal and release it.

The mishna states that **we do not appoint an authority over the public, in monetary matters**, comprised of fewer than two appointees. Rav Nahman said in the name of Rabbi Mana: This principle is derived on the basis of a verse that is referring to those engaged in building the Tabernacle and weaving the priestly vestments, who received the community's donations: "And they shall take the gold, and the sky blue wool, and the purple wool" (Exodus 28:5). The plural "they" indicates that this authority must consist of at least two people.

Rabbi Hama, son of Rabbi Hanina, said: Although Moses supervised the building of the Tabernacle, he took nothing for himself from the community donations, as **Moses grew wealthy^N only from the shavings** that broke off during the chiseling process of the second tablets.^N This is as it is written: "Hew for yourself two tablets of stone" (Exodus 34:1). "Hew [*pesol*] for yourself" indicates that the shavings [*pesolet*] shall be yours. Rabbi Hanin said: The Holy One, Blessed be He, created a quarry of precious stones and pearls for Moses inside his tent, and Moses grew wealthy from that source.

It is written: "And it came to pass when Moses went out to the Tent, that all the people rose up, and stood, every man at his tent door, and looked after Moses, until he had gone into the Tent" (Exodus 33:8). Two *amora'im* interpreted this verse with regard to Moses' wealth, but in opposite ways. **One said:** The people looked at Moses unfavorably; **while the other said:** The people looked at Moses favorably.

NOTES

Moses grew wealthy – הָעֵשִׂיר מִשָּׁה: The reason it is necessary for a prophet to be rich is to ensure that he will have influence on people and will not be ignored, as King Solomon stated: "The poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard" (Ecclesiastes 9:16; see Rabbi Zalman Sorotzkin, *Oznayim LaTorah*).

Moses grew wealthy from the shavings of the tablets – מִפְּסוּלֵת שֵׁל: The commentaries wonder: How, then, could Moses have served as a prophet before he became rich? Doesn't

the Gemara state that God selects as His prophet only one who is brave, rich, wise, and modest, and this idea is derived from the case of Moses (*Nedarim* 38a)? The answer given is that Moses was indeed wealthy before he chiseled the tablets, but when he learned of the donations necessary for the construction of the Tabernacle and its vessels he gave all his wealth to that cause, as described in the midrash. Consequently, Moses required the shavings of the tablets to grow wealthy once again (*Ya'arot Devash*, part 1, lecture 2).

There were four seals in the Temple, etc. – ארבעה חותמות היו – במקדש וכו': There were four seals in the Temple. On the first, the word calf was inscribed; on the second, male; on the third, kid; and on the fourth, sinner. This is in accordance with the opinion of the first *tanna* (Rambam *Sefer Avoda*, *Hilkhot Kelei HaMikdash* 7:11).

One who seeks libations goes, etc. – מי שהוא מבקש נסכים הולך – וכו': Any individual who brought a private offering to the Temple would pay libation fees to the official responsible for the seals. That official would give him the appropriate seal for his offering. For example, if he brought the offerings of a rich leper, the official would give him a seal on which was written: Sinner. He would take that seal to the official responsible for the libations, who would give him the corresponding libations.

Every evening these two officials would meet and compare the number of seals with the total amount of money. If there was a surplus of money, it was used for the benefit of the Temple treasury of consecrated property. If money was missing, the official responsible for the seals would pay the difference to the Temple treasury from his own pocket. If someone lost their seal, he had to wait until the evening for the two officials to compare their accounts. If they found a surplus of money equal to the value of the seal he claimed he lost, they would give him libations of the value of that seal. If not, they would not give him anything. The name of the day of the week was written on each seal, to prevent cheats from acquiring seals when libations are inexpensive and storing them until they increased in value (Rambam *Sefer Avoda*, *Hilkhot Kelei HaMikdash* 7:12).

NOTES

Calf, male, etc. – יגל וכו': Since the amounts of the libation offerings, which included fine flour, wine, and oil, were not identical for the various types of offerings, a separate seal was required for each type. The calf seal entitled its bearer to a meal-offering of three *isaron* of fine flour and one half of a *hin* each of wine and oil. The male seal entitled its bearer to a meal-offering of two *isaron* of fine flour and one-third of a *hin* each of wine and oil. Finally, the kid seal entitled its bearer to a meal-offering of one *isaron* of fine flour and one quarter of a *hin* each of wine and oil.

Sinner [*hoteh*] – חוטא: Another interpretation is that this term is referring to *hitui*, ritual purification, e.g., “And he shall take to purify [*lehatei*] the house” (Leviticus 14:49) and “And he shall purify [*vehitei*] the house” (Leviticus 14:52).

מאן דאמר לגנאי: חמון שקין, חמון כרעין, חמון קופד, אביל מן דיהודאי ושתי מן דיהודאי, כל מדליה מן דיהודאי. ומאן דאמר לשבחה: מחמי צדיקאי ומיבי טובאי דזכת למיחמי יתיה.

הלכה ג מתני ארבעה חותמות היו במקדש וכתוב עליהן: יגל, זכר, גדי, וחוטא. בן עזאי אומר: חמשה היו וארמית כתוב עליהן: יגל, דבר, גדי, חוטא דל, וחוטא עשיר.

יגל משמש עם נסכי בקר, גדולים וקטנים, זכרים ונקבות. גדי משמש עם נסכי הצאן, גדולים וקטנים, זכרים ונקבות, חוץ משל אילים. איל משמש עם נסכי אילים בלבד. חוטא משמש עם נסכי שלש בהמות של מצורע.

מי שהוא מבקש נסכים הולך לו יאצל יוחנן שהוא ממונה על החותמות. ונותן לו מעות ומקבל ממנו חותם. בא לו יאצל אחייה שהוא ממונה על הנסכים, ונותן לו חותם ומקבל ממנו נסכים.

לערב באין זה אצל זה, ואחיה מוציא את החותמות ומקבל כנגדן מעות. אם פחתו – פחתו לו, וישלם יוחנן מביתו. ואם הותירו – הותירו להקדש, שיד הקדש על העליונה.

מי שאבד חותמו ממתנין לו עד הערב, ואם מצאו לו כדי חותמו – נותנין לו. ואם לאו – לא היו נותנין לו וישם היום כתוב עליהן, מפני הרמאין.

He who said that the people looked at Moses unfavorably maintains that they said: Look at his legs, look at his feet, look at his flesh. See how healthy they are. All that he eats comes from us Jews, all that he drinks comes from us Jews, and all of his assets are taken from us Jews. And the one who said that they looked at Moses favorably maintains that the people were not responding to Moses' wealth but simply wanted to see the righteous man, saying: We desire to view the righteous, and one who merits to view Moses earns great rewards.

HALAKHA 3 • MISHNA This mishna provides details of the functions performed by Yoḥanan ben Pineḥas and Aḥiyya, the officials mentioned in the first mishna of this chapter, which concerns the seals and libations. **There were four seals in the Temple^H** that confirmed that the bearer had paid for the libations that accompanied his offering. **And one of the following inscriptions was written on them: Calf; male,^N i.e., a ram; kid; and sinner,^N i.e., a leper, as leprosy is a punishment for one of seven sins (see *Arakhin* 16a).** Conversely, **ben Azzai says: There were five seals, and the following was written upon them in Aramaic, not Hebrew: Calf, male, kid, poor sinner, and rich sinner.**

The mishna explains the significance of each of the four aforementioned seals. The calf seal serves as a payment receipt for libations of cattle offerings, whether they are large or small, male or female, as all offerings from the cow family are accompanied by the same libation. The kid seal serves for libations of sheep or goat offerings, whether large or small, male or female, except for those of rams aged thirteen months and older. The ram seal, which was earlier called the male seal, serves exclusively for ram libations. The sinner seal serves for libations of the three animal offerings of a leper, for the completion of his purification.

One who seeks libations for his offering goes^H to Yoḥanan, the official who was responsible for the seals, and gives him the appropriate sum of money and receives a seal from him. With that seal he subsequently comes to Aḥiyya, who was responsible for the libations, and gives him Yoḥanan's seal and receives his libations from him.

In the evening, Yoḥanan and Aḥiyya would get together to reconcile their accounts, and Aḥiyya would take out the seals he had received and accept the money Yoḥanan had received in exchange for them. If the money was less than the value of the seals, they were less to him, i.e., Yoḥanan would bear the loss, and Yoḥanan would have to pay the difference to the Temple treasury from his own property. And if there was some money left over, i.e., the total money was greater than the value of the seals, they were left over to the benefit of the Temple treasury of consecrated property, as the Temple treasury always has the upper hand.

With regard to one who lost his seal that he purchased from Yoḥanan, Yoḥanan and Aḥiyya would wait to resolve his problem until the evening. And when they added their accounts in the evening, if they found for him a surplus of money equivalent to the value of his seal, they would give him the corresponding libations. And if not, they would not give him libations. And the name of the day of the week was written upon the seals because of the cheats. They might try to use old seals that had been lost by the Temple officials or by someone who had brought an offering at an earlier date, so as to receive libations in a deceitful manner.

Log – לוג: This is the basic liquid measure used by the Sages. It is equivalent to the volume of six eggs, one quarter of a *kav*, or one twenty-fourth of a *se'a*. A range of modern opinions estimates this volume to be 300–600 ml.

גמ' ויבן עזאי חוטיא דל למה? היה מביא לוגו עמו. פרם כרבנן, מביא גדי. **GEMARA** The Gemara asks: **And according to the opinion of ben Azzai, why was it necessary to have a seal labeled poor sinner?** The Gemara answers: Ben Azzai maintains that a poor leper **would have to bring his log^b of oil with him.** This is referring to the additional oil required for the leper's purification (Leviticus 14:15–18), some of which is sprinkled on the altar while the rest is applied to the leper's ear, thumb, big toe, and head. According to ben Azzai, a leper would purchase this additional oil from Ahiyya, and therefore he required a separate seal for each log of oil. **However, according to the opinion of the Rabbis, a poor leper brings only the kid seal purchased from Yohanan, by which he receives the oil for his meal offering, and he must use his own private oil for the additional log.**

נסכי רחל מה? מן מה דתנינן גדי משמש נסכי צאן גדולים וקטנים זכרים ונקבות, הדא אמרי נסכי רחל כנסכי גדי דכתיב "כבה יעשה לשור האחד או לאיל האחד או לששה בכבשים או בעזים",

The mishna mentions only the libations for kids, referring to both sheep and goats that are less than one year old, and for rams, which are adult male sheep. The Gemara asks: **What amounts are brought for the libations of a lamb, i.e., a female sheep in its second year?** Are they the same as those of a kid or a ram? The Gemara answers that this *halakha* may be inferred from that which we learned in the mishna, that the kid seal serves for libations of sheep offerings, whether large or small, male or female. That ruling says, i.e., indicates, that the libations of a lamb are like the libations of a kid. The Gemara adds that this is derived from a verse that equates the two libations, as it is written: **"Thus shall it be done for each bull, or for each ram, or for each of the lambs, or of the kids"** (Numbers 15:11).

"לשור האחד" למה נאמר – מגיד שלא חלק בין נסכי עגל לנסכי שור. שהיה בדין בן הצאן טעון נסכים וכן הבקר טעון נסכים, אם מצאנו שחלק בין נסכי כבש לנסכי איל.

The Gemara inquires further: **Why is it stated: For each bull?** The verse teaches that **The Torah does not differentiate between the libations of a calf, which is less than a year old, and the libations of a bull, which is at least one year old.** The Gemara explains: This is because it was fitting to differentiate between them, in light of the fact that both the offspring of a sheep requires libations and the offspring of a cow requires libations. **If we find that the Torah differentiates between the libations of a sheep in its first year, whose meal offering is one isaron of fine flour, and the libations of a ram, a male sheep thirteen months old and older, whose meal offering is two isaron,**

Perek V

Daf 15 Amud a

לכך נחלוק בין נסכי עגל לנסכי שור, תלמוד לומר "כבה יעשה לשור האחד" – מגיד שלא חלק בין נסכי עגל לנסכי שור.

then we should likewise differentiate between the libations of a calf and the libations of a bull. In order to indicate that this is not the case, the aforementioned verse states: **"Thus shall it be done for each bull,"** which teaches that the Torah does not differentiate between the libations of a calf and the libations of a bull.

"או לאיל" למה נאמר? שהיה בדין, אם מצאנו שחלק בין נסכי בן שנה לנסכי בן שנתיים, לכך נחלוק בין נסכי שנתיים לנסכי שלישי – תלמוד לומר "או לאיל האחד".

The Gemara asks: **Why does the verse state: "Or for each ram,"** as the details of the ram libations were specified in the previous verses (Numbers 15:6–7)? The Gemara explains that this verse is necessary because it would be fitting to argue as follows: **If we have found that the Torah differentiated between the libations of a one-year-old sheep and the libations of a two-year-old sheep, i.e., a sheep in its second year, which is already called a ram, then we should differentiate between the libations of a two-year-old and the libations of a three-year-old ram.** In order to indicate that this is not the case, the verse states: **"Or for each ram,"** which teaches that the libations for rams of all ages are identical.

"או לששה בכבשים" למה נאמר? שהיה בדין, אם מצאנו שחלק בין נסכי כבש לנסכי איל, לכך נחלוק בין נסכי כשבה לנסכי רחל – תלמוד לומר "או לששה בכבשים".

The Gemara similarly asks: **Why does the verse state: "Or for each of the lambs,"** as the details of the lamb libations were provided in the previous verses (Numbers 15:4–5)? The Gemara explains that this phrase is necessary because it would be fitting to argue as follows: **If we have found that the Torah differentiated between the libations of a lamb in its first year and the libations of ram that is thirteen months or older, then we should likewise differentiate between the libations of a full-grown ewe in its second year and the libations of a female lamb in its first year.** In order to indicate that this is not the case, the verse states: **"Or for each of the lambs,"** which teaches that the libations for female sheep of all ages are identical.