

**Administering an oath to the High Priest – הַשְּׂבָעָה בְּהֵן גְּדוּל** – In the era of the Second Temple the High Priests were suspected of Sadducee tendencies. Therefore, they were forced to take an oath that they would not deviate from the accepted Yom Kippur procedure (Rambam *Sefer Avoda, Hilkhot Avodat Yom HaKippurim* 1:7).

**He would teach and read – דוֹרֵשׁ וְקוֹרֵא** – The High Priest was not allowed to sleep the entire night of Yom Kippur. If he was a Torah scholar, he would teach, and if not, Torah scholars would teach him. If he was accustomed to read the Bible, he would read; otherwise, they would read to him from the Bible (Rambam *Sefer Avoda, Hilkhot Avodat Yom HaKippurim* 1:8).

LANGUAGE

**Kevutal – קְבוּטָל** – Possibly from the Latin Capitolium, a proper name from the root caput, meaning head.

**MISHNA** The Elders of the court who read the order of the service of the day before the High Priest passed him to the Elders of the priesthood, and they took him up to the House of Avtinas. And they administered him an oath<sup>h</sup> and took leave of him and went on their way. When they administered this oath they said to him: My Master, High Priest. We are agents of the court, and you are our agent and the agent of the court. We administer an oath to you in the name of Him who housed His name in this House, that you will not change even one matter from all that we have said to you with regard to the burning of the incense or any other service that you will perform when alone. After this oath, he would leave them and cry, and they would leave him and cry in sorrow that the oath was necessary.

**מתני'** מסֹדוֹהוּ וְקָנִי בֵּית דִּין לְקַנֵּי כְּהוֹנֵה וְהֶעֱלוּהוּ בֵּית אַבְטִינָס וְהִשְׁבִּיעוּהוּ, וְנִפְטְרוּ וְהִלְכוּ לָהֶם. וְאָמְרוּ לוֹ: אִישִׁי בְּהֵן גְּדוּל, אָנּוּ שְׁלוּחֵי בֵּית דִּין וְאַתָּה שְׁלוּחֵנוּ וְשִׁלַּח בֵּית דִּין, מִשְׁבִּיעֵינוּ אָנּוּ עֲלֶיךָ בְּמִי שֶׁשָּׂבַן שְׁמוֹ בְּבֵית הַזֶּה שְׁלֹא תִשְׁנֶה דָבָר מִכָּל מַה שֶׁאָמַרְנוּ לְךָ. הוּא פּוֹרֵשׁ וּבוֹכֵה, וְהֵן פּוֹרְשִׁין וּבוֹכִין.

**אם (הוא) היה חכם – דוֹרֵשׁ, וְאִם לֹא – תִלְמִידֵי חֻכְמִים דּוֹרְשִׁים לְפָנָיו. וְאִם רִגִּיל לְקִרְוֹת – קוֹרֵא, וְאִם לֹא – קוֹרִין לְפָנָיו. וּבְמַה קוֹרִין לְפָנָיו – בְּאִיּוֹב וּבְעִזְרָא וּבְדַבְרֵי הַיָּמִים. וְכִרְיָה בֶן קְבוּטָל אָמַר: פְּעָמִים הִרְבֵּה קִרְוֵי לְפָנָיו בְּדַנְיָאֵל.**

They kept him occupied throughout the night to prevent him from sleeping. If he was a scholar, he would teach Torah. If he was not a scholar, Torah scholars would teach Torah before him. And if he was accustomed to read the Bible, he would read;<sup>h</sup> and if he was not, they would read the Bible before him. And what books would they read before him to pique his interest so that he would not fall asleep? They would read from Job, and from Ezra, and from Chronicles. Zekharya, son of Kevutal,<sup>l</sup> says: Many times I read before him from the book of Daniel.

Perek I  
Daf 19 Amud a

**גמ'** תנא: ללמדו חפינה. אמר רב פפא: שתי לשכות היו לו לכהן גדול, אחת לשבת פרהדרין ואחת לשבת בית אבטינס, אחת בצפון ואחת בדרום. אחת בצפון – דתנן שש לשכות היו בעזרה, שלש בצפון ושלש בדרום.

**GEMARA** A *tanna* taught: The Sages took the High Priest to the House of Avtinas, where the incense was prepared, to teach him the method of taking handfuls<sup>n</sup> of incense, which is a difficult and complex skill. Rav Pappa said: The High Priest had two chambers. One was the *Parhedrin* chamber and one was the Chamber of the House of Avtinas. One of them was in the north of the courtyard, and one was in the south. The Gemara explains: One was in the north, as we learned in the mishna: There were six chambers in the Israelite courtyard,<sup>h</sup> three in the north and three in the south.

שבדרום לשכת המלח, לשכת הפרוה, לשכת המדיחין. לשכת המלח – ששם היו נוהגין מלח לקרבן. לשכת הפרוה – ששם היו מולחין עורות קדשים, ועל גגה היתה בית טבילה לכהן גדול ביום הכפורים. לשכת המדיחין – שם היו מדיחין קרבי קדשים, ומשם מסיבה עולה לגג בית הפרוה.

The chambers in the south were the Chamber of the Salt, the Chamber of the *Parva*, and the Chamber of the Rinsers. The Gemara explains the function performed in each chamber. The Chamber of the Salt was where the priests would place the salt for the offering in storage. The Chamber of the *Parva*, the hides, was where they salted the consecrated hides that belonged to the priests, to prevent them from spoiling. And on the roof of that chamber was the Hall of Immersion for the High Priest for Yom Kippur. The Chamber of the Rinsers was where they would rinse the innards of consecrated animals, which were not taken up to the altar while dirty or with undigested food remaining in them. From there a circular staircase ascended to the roof of the Chamber of the *Parva*.

HALAKHA

The chambers in the Israelite courtyard – הַלְשָׁכוֹת שֶׁבְּעִזְרַת – and the Chamber of Hewn Stone. There were an additional two chambers adjacent to the eastern gate: The Chamber of Pinehas the Dresser and the Chamber of the Preparers of the Griddle-Cake Offering, which was offered daily by the High Priest (Rambam *Sefer Avoda, Hilkhot Beit HaBehira* 5:17).

NOTES

To teach him the method of taking handfuls – לְלַמְדוֹ חֲפִינָה – The House of Avtinas was where the incense was prepared, and the High Priest had no actual function there. However, since that was where the incense was stored, he was taken there to learn the method of taking handfuls. As will be seen, this was one of the most difficult tasks in the Temple (*Yad David*).

**The Chamber of Hewn Stone [gazit] – לְשֵׁכֶת הַגִּזִּית:** Several suggestions were raised to explain the name of this chamber. Some commentaries explain that the chamber was constructed of hewn and dressed stones. Although no iron tools were permitted in the Temple, it was permitted to chisel stones outside the Temple and use them in the Temple. The only exception was stones for the altars (Ritva). Others explain that this chamber was unique in that it was closed, and its name *gazit* is from a Hebrew root meaning cut. The chamber was cut in that it was separated from its surroundings (*Arukh*). Alternatively, it may refer to the priests who were disqualified and cut from the roster of active priests by the Sanhedrin that convened there (Ritva, citing *ge'onim*).

**The High Priest's chamber was behind the two chambers – לְשֵׁכֶת כְּהֵן גְּדוּל הַיֵּיתָה אַחֲרֵי שְׁתֵּי הַחֲבוּטִים:** *Tosefot Ri HaLavan* writes that there are two ways to understand the statement of Abba Shaul. One opinion is that he is completing the statement of Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya'akov. The other opinion (Rambam) is that it disagrees with the statement of Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya'akov (*Siah Yitzhak*).

**The Gate of Fire and the Gate of the Offering – שַׁעַר הַדֶּלֶקָה וְשַׁעַר הַקֶּרְבָּן:** Some explain that the Gate of Fire was so called because fire for the arrangement of wood was brought through it (*Tosafot Yeshanim*). Others claim that the name derives from the firewood that was carried via this gate to the altar (*Mefarsh Tamid*). The Gate of the Offering is referred to elsewhere as the Gate of the Firstborn because the firstborn animals were led through this gate for sacrifice.

**Immersion in the sacred area of the courtyard – טְבִילוֹת בְּקִדְשֵׁי הַחֲצוֹת:** A detailed description of the High Priest's Yom Kippur immersions will follow. From the verse: "He will cleanse his flesh in water in a sacred place" (Leviticus 16:24), it is derived that the immersions took place in the sacred area. However, the first immersion was the usual one undertaken by all who entered the Temple, so it did not require special regulations as immersions in the Temple did.

## HALAKHA

**The Chamber of Hewn Stone – לְשֵׁכֶת הַגִּזִּית:** The Chamber of Hewn Stone was the permanent seat of the Sanhedrin of seventy-one judges. One of the tasks of these judges was to examine the priests to determine that all those performing the Temple service were unblemished and fit for duty (Rambam *Sefer Avoda, Hilkhot Biat HaMikdash* 6:11).

**The courtyard gates – שַׁעֲרֵי הָעֵדָרָה:** There were seven gates in the courtyard: Three in the north adjacent to the western side, three in the south adjacent to the western side, and one in the east opposite the Holy of Holies, in accordance with the *mishnayot* in tractate *Middot* (Rambam *Sefer Avoda, Hilkhot Beit HaBehira* 5:4).

**The Gate of the Spark – שַׁעַר נִיצוֹץ:** The Gate of the Spark was one of the places where the priests and Levites stood guard in the Temple (Rambam *Sefer Avoda, Hilkhot Beit HaBehira* 8:8).

**Immersion of the High Priest on Yom Kippur – טְבִילוֹת הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל בְּיוֹם הַכִּפּוּרִים:** The High Priest would immerse five times on Yom Kippur and sanctify his hands and feet ten times that day. These actions were performed when the High Priest changed from the gold garments to his white linen garments (Rambam *Sefer Avoda, Hilkhot Avodat Yom HaKippurim* 2:2).

**Immersion in the sacred area of the courtyard – טְבִילוֹת בְּקִדְשֵׁי הַחֲצוֹת:** All of the High Priest's immersions were performed in the sacred area of the Temple as instructed by the Torah, with the exception of the first immersion, which was the standard immersion of anyone entering the Temple courtyard and therefore did not have the special status of the immersions of Yom Kippur (Rambam *Sefer Avoda, Hilkhot Avodat Yom HaKippurim* 2:3).

שָׁלֹשׁ שְׂבָצוֹפוֹן: לְשֵׁכֶת הָעֵץ, לְשֵׁכֶת הַגּוֹלָה, לְשֵׁכֶת הַגִּזִּית. לְשֵׁכֶת הָעֵץ, אָמַר רַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר בֶּן יַעֲקֹב: שְׂבָצוֹתֵי מַה הֵייתָה מְשֻׁמֶשֶׁת. אָבָא שְׂאוּל אָמַר: לְשֵׁכֶת כְּהֵן גְּדוּל הַיֵּיתָה אַחֲרֵי שְׁתֵּי הֵן, וְגַם שְׂלִשְׁתָּן שׂוּהָ.

לְשֵׁכֶת הַגּוֹלָה – שֶׁם הָיָה בּוֹר הַגּוֹלָה, וְהַגְּלָל נָתוּן עָלָיו, וּמִשָּׁם מִסְפִּיקִין מִים לְכָל הָעוֹרָה. לְשֵׁכֶת הַגִּזִּית – שֶׁם הָיָה סִנְהֶדְרִין שֶׁל יִשְׂרָאֵל יוֹשְׁבֵת וְדָנָה אֶת הַכֹּהֲנִים, וּמִי שֶׁנִּמְצָא בּוֹ פֶסֶל הָיָה לֹבֵשׁ שְׂחֹרִים וּמְתַעֲשֵׂף שְׂחֹרִים וְיֵצֵא וְהֵלֵךְ לוֹ, וְשִׂילָא נִמְצָא בּוֹ פֶסֶל – הָיָה לֹבֵשׁ לְבָנִים וּמְתַעֲשֵׂף לְבָנִים וְנִכְנָס וּמְשַׁמֵּשׂ עִם אַחֲרֵי הַכֹּהֲנִים.

אַחַת בְּדָרוֹם, דְּתַנּוּ: שֶׁבַע שַׁעֲרִים הָיוּ בְּעוֹרָה, שָׁלֹשׁ בְּצָפוֹן וְשָׁלֹשׁ בְּדָרוֹם וְאַחַד בְּמִזְרָח. שְׂבָצוֹתֵי שַׁעַר הַדֶּלֶקָה, שֵׁנִי לוֹ – שַׁעַר הַקֶּרְבָּן, שְׁלִישִׁי לוֹ שַׁעַר הַמִּים. שְׂבָצוֹתֵי שַׁעַר נִקְנֹר. וְשְׁתֵּי לְשֵׁכֶת הָיוּ שָׁם. אַחַת בְּיַמִּינוֹ וְאַחַת בְּשִׂמְאָלוֹ. אַחַת לְשֵׁכֶת פְּנֵחָס הַמְּלַבֵּשׁ, וְאַחַת לְשֵׁכֶת עוֹשֵׂי חֲבִיתָין.

שְׂבָצוֹפוֹן שַׁעַר נִיצוֹץ, בְּנִין אֲכֹסְדָרָה הָיָה וְעַלֵּיהָ בְנוּיָה לוֹ עַל גְּבִי, וְשָׁם כֹּהֲנִים שׂוֹמְרִים מְלַמְעֵלָה וְלוֹאִים מְלַמְטָה. וְשִׁלְפָנִים הֵימָנוּ חֲחִיל שֵׁנִי לוֹ שַׁעַר הַקֶּרְבָּן, שְׁלִישִׁי לוֹ שַׁעַר בֵּית הַמוֹקֵד.

וְתַנּוּ: חֲמֵשׁ טְבִילוֹת וְעֶשְׂרֵה קְדוּשִׁין טוֹבֵל כְּהֵן גְּדוּל וּמְקַדֵּשׁ בּוֹ בַיּוֹם, וְכוֹלֵן בְּקִדְשֵׁי [עַל גַּג] בֵּית הַפְּרוּהָ, חוּץ מִזוֹ שְׁהֵייתָה בַּחוּל עַל גְּבִי שַׁעַר הַמִּים, וְבָצַד לְשֵׁכֶת הָיִתָּה.

וְלֹא יָדְעָנָא אִי לְשֵׁכֶת פְּרָהֲדִין בְּצָפוֹן וְלְשֵׁכֶת בֵּית אֲבִטְיָנָס בְּדָרוֹם, אוֹ לְשֵׁכֶת בֵּית אֲבִטְיָנָס בְּצָפוֹן וְלְשֵׁכֶת פְּרָהֲדִין בְּדָרוֹם. וּמִסְתַּבְּרָא דְלְשֵׁכֶת פְּרָהֲדִין בְּדָרוֹם הוּאִי.

The three chambers in the north of the courtyard were the Chamber of the Wood, the Chamber of the Exile, and the Chamber of Hewn Stone.<sup>NH</sup> With regard to the Chamber of the Wood, Rabbi Eliezer ben Ya'akov, who is the *tanna* of the *mishnayot* in tractate *Middot* in which this mishna appears, said: I forgot what purpose that chamber would serve. Abba Shaul says: The High Priest's chamber was behind the two chambers,<sup>N</sup> the Chamber of the Exile and the Chamber of Hewn Stone, and the roofs of all three of them were level. As the three were attached, they shared a roof.

In the Chamber of the Exile there was the well excavated by those returning from exile, for which the chamber was named, and the wheel with which water was drawn was positioned over it. And from there, they would supply water for use in the entire Temple courtyard for washing and rinsing. In the Chamber of Hewn Stone, there the great Sanhedrin of Israel convened and judged whether the priests were fit for service. A priest in whom a disqualification was detected due to a blemish or lineage would wear black and would wrap himself in black in a display of sorrow and mourning and would emerge from the Temple and go on his way, because he was not fit for service as a priest. And any priest in whom a disqualification was not found would wear white and wrap himself in white in a display of joy and would enter and serve with his fellow priests.

In any event, it was taught that there was a chamber of the High Priest in the north of the courtyard, and there is proof that he also had one chamber in the south of the courtyard, as we learned in a mishna: Seven gates were in the Temple courtyard,<sup>H</sup> three in the north and three in the south and one in the east. The gates in the south were the Gate of Fire; second to it was the Gate of the Offering;<sup>N</sup> third to it was the Gate of the Water. The gate that was in the east was called the Gate of Nicanor, and two chambers were there next to the Gate of Nicanor, one to its right and one to its left. One was the Chamber of Pinehas the Dresser, where the priestly vestments were stored, and one was the Chamber of the Preparers of the Griddle-Cake Offering, where the daily griddle-cake offering was prepared on behalf of the High Priest.

The gates that were in the north: The first was the Gate of the Spark,<sup>H</sup> which was a portico building, meaning it had a roof but was not completely closed on every side. And there was a second story built atop it, and there the honor guard of the Temple stood, with the priests guarding from above and the Levites from below. Inside of this gate was the rampart, and an opening led from the gate to the rampart. Second to this gate was the Gate of the Offering; third to it was the Gate of the Hall of the Hearth.

And it was taught in a *baraita*: The High Priest would perform five immersions<sup>H</sup> and ten sanctifications of his hands and feet on that day, Yom Kippur. And each of these was performed in the sacred area of the courtyard,<sup>NH</sup> on the roof of the Hall of the Parva, except for this first immersion, which was performed in the non-sacred area outside the courtyard. The first immersion was not unique to Yom Kippur but was performed every day by any priest entering the Temple. That immersion was performed on the roof of the Gate of the Water, and that gate was alongside his chamber. Apparently, the High Priest had a chamber next to the Gate of the Water, which was in the south of the courtyard.

The High Priest had use of two chambers, but we do not know whether the *Parhedrin* chamber was in the north and the Chamber of the House of Avtinas was in the south, or the Chamber of the House of Avtinas was in the north and the *Parhedrin* chamber was in the south. And, however, it is reasonable to say that the *Parhedrin* chamber was in the south and the High Priest slept there.

שְׁלוּחֵי דְרַחֲמָנָא – Agents of the Merciful One – A practical ramification of this opinion is in the case of one who vows not to derive benefit from a particular priest. Since the priest is an agent of God and not of the person bringing the offering, the priest may sacrifice his offering.

מאי טעמא? מקדים קאי ומיסך את רגליו, וטביל ואזיל לצפון וגמר חפינה, ואתי לבית המקדש ועביד עבודה כולי יומא, לבהדי פניא מדו עליה, והדר אזיל לדרום וטביל וניח.

What is the reason for that assumption? Because if that is the case, the High Priest arises early every morning of the seven days of sequestering and he covers his legs, a euphemism for defecating, and immerses alongside his chamber, which was in the south. And then he walks to the north of the courtyard to the second chamber, which is the Chamber of the House of Avtinas, and learns there the method of taking handfuls. And then he comes to the Temple and performs the service for the entire day. Toward the evening they sprinkle purification water upon him, and he then walks back to the south and immerses again alongside his chamber and rests in his chamber.

דאי אמרת לשבת פרהדרין בצפון – מקדים קאי ומיסך רגליו ואזיל לדרום, וטביל וגמר חפינה, ואתי לבית המקדש ועביד עבודה כולי יומא, להדי פניא מדו עליה והדר אזיל לדרום וטביל, ובעי מהדר ומיזל לצפון ומינת. ומי טרח מטרחינן ליה כולי האי?

As, if you say that the Chamber of *Parhedrin* was in the north, this would mean that the High Priest would be forced to exert himself and walk significant distances. According to this understanding, he arises early, and he covers his legs. However, since it was taught in the *baraita* that the place of his immersion was in the south, he then walks to the south and immerses. And then he learns the method of taking handfuls. And then he comes to the Temple and performs the service for the entire day. Toward the evening they sprinkle purification water upon him, and he then walks back to the south and immerses, and then he needs to walk back to the north and rest. Do we impose upon him to that extent? Rather, it is reasonable to say that the *Parhedrin* chamber, the High Priest's private chamber, was in the south, which would limit the distance that he needed to walk.

אלמה לא? מטרחינן ליה טפי, דאי צדוקי הוא – ליפרוש.

The Gemara rejects this reasoning: Why not impose upon him? On the contrary, we impose upon him even more, so that if he is a Sadducee, he will retire. As he is not a God-fearing person, he would prefer to walk away rather than subject himself to that added exertion. That is a desirable result, ridding the High Priesthood of a Sadducee.

אי נמי – שלא תזוז דעתו עליו. דאי לא תימא הכי – נעבידיהו לתרויהו בהדי הדדי, אי נמי – תסגי ליה בחדא.

Or, alternatively, there is even value in imposing on a God-fearing Pharisee High Priest, as it so that he will not become haughty in his lofty position. Since he is occupied in performing his task, he does not have leisure to be impressed with his elevated status. As, if you do not say that it is an intentional attempt to impose upon him, let us establish both of the chambers of the High Priest next to one another; or, alternatively, one chamber would be sufficient for him. From the fact that neither of these alternatives is adopted, it is apparently an intentional attempt to impose upon him, and there is no proof as to the location of either of the chambers of the High Priest.

”ואמרו לו אישי בהן גדול וכו’.” לימא תהוי תיובתא דרב הונא בריה דרב יהושע. דאמר רב הונא בריה דרב יהושע: הני כהני – שְׁלוּחֵי דְרַחֲמָנָא – דאי אמרת שְׁלוּחֵי דִידן מינהו –

It was taught in the mishna that the Elders said to him: My Master, High Priest. We are agents of the court, and you are our agent and the agent of the court. The Gemara suggests: Let us say that this is a conclusive refutation of the opinion of Rav Huna, son of Rav Yehoshua, as Rav Huna, son of Rav Yehoshua, said: These priests who sacrifice the offerings are the agents of the Merciful One.<sup>N</sup> They are not agents representing the Jewish people but are agents representing God, as He commanded them to perform the service. Proof is cited for this opinion: As, if you say they are our agents,

## Perek I

## Daf 19 Amud b

מי איכא מידי דאנן לא מצנינן למעבד ושְׁלוּחֵי דִידן מצו עבדי? הכי קאמר ליה: משביעין אנו עליך על דעתנו ועל דעת בית דין.

is there any matter that we are unable to perform and our agents are able to perform? The role of the agent is to perform a task on behalf of the one who commissioned him. The agent cannot perform a task that the one who commissioned him is unable to perform. Since it is prohibited for Israelites to enter the priests' courtyard and to perform the sacrificial rites, clearly the priests are not agents representing the Israelites. The language of the mishna in which the court Elders address the High Priest as their agent apparently contradicts that understanding. The Gemara answers: This is what they say to him: We administer an oath to you according to our understanding and the understanding of the court, cautioning him that he cannot rationalize violating the oath by claiming that he took the oath based on his own interpretation. He is bound by the understanding of the court. The mishna does not address the nature of the High Priest's agency.

They would leave him and cry – והן פורשין ובוכין – After the elders administered the oath to the High Priest, he would cry because they suspected him, and they would cry due to the concern that they suspected a guiltless man (Rambam *Sefer Avoda, Hilkhot Avodat Yom HaKippurim* 1:7).

NOTES

They would leave him and cry – והן פורשין ובוכין – In the Jerusalem Talmud, the explanation is that the Elders cried due to the fact that the situation of the Jewish people had deteriorated to the point that even the High Priests were not above suspicion (*Siah Yitzhak*).

Prepare the incense and light it outside – יתקן מבחוץ: The author of the *Me'iri* writes that the problem with preparing incense outside is that it contains an element of idolatry, as the priest appeared to be serving one authority inside and another outside.

And worms were coming out of his nose – והיו תולעין: See Rashi, who explains why the worms came specifically out of his nose. Some commentaries explain that he was punished through his nose, which derived pleasure from the smell of the incense that was offered improperly (*Tosafot Yeshanim*; Ritva).

Like the sole of a calf's foot – ככף רגל עגל – In the Jerusalem Talmud, the question is raised: How could the angel have struck the High Priest when angels may not enter the Holy of Holies? The answer is that angels are barred from the Holy of Holies only when the service is performed properly. Otherwise, they are permitted to enter and punish the transgressor. In the *Me'iri* it is explained that the High Priest's conduct in this case evoked the sin of the Golden Calf, which is why he was executed in that manner.

And Rav demonstrated with his hand – ומחוי ליה – Rav moved a tablet sitting on the table and pointed to the shape of the letter *beit*. Or, alternatively, he drew a *beit* in the air (Rabbi Elyakim). In the version of the incident related in the Jerusalem Talmud, the variations of the name were Keputar and Keputal.

And you did not call out to Me, O Jacob – ולא אותי – Some commentaries explain this verse as referring to the midrash that Jacob did not fall on Joseph's neck and embrace him when he met him because he was reciting *Shema* (see Genesis 46:29 and Rashi there). One who gestures with his hands while reciting *Shema* acts contrary to the conduct of Jacob (Rabbi Elyakim; Maharsha).

”הוא פורש ובוכה והן פורשין ובוכין” וכו'. הוא פורש ובוכה – שחשדוהו צדוקי, והם פורשין ובוכין – דאמר רבי יהושע בן לוי: כל החושד בכשרים לוקה בגופו.

וְכַל כֵּן לָמָּה – שְׁלֵא יתְקַן מִבְּחוּץ וַיִּבְנִים, בְּדֶרֶךְ שֶׁהֻצְדָּקוּן עוֹשִׂין.

תְּנוּ רַבְנָן: מִעֲשֵׂה בְּצִדּוּקֵי אֶחָד שֶׁהִתְקִין מִבְּחוּץ וְהִבְנִים. בִּיצִיאָתוֹ הָיָה שִׁמְחָה שִׁמְחָה גְדוֹלָה. פָּגַע בּוֹ אָבִיו, אָמַר לוֹ: בְּנִי, אֵף עַל פִּי שֶׁצִּדּוּקִין אָנוּ – מִתְּוֹרָאִין אָנוּ מִן הַפְּרוּשִׁים. אָמַר לוֹ: כָּל יָמַי הֵייתִי מִצְטָעֵר עַל הַמִּקְרָא הַזֶּה: “כִּי בַעֲנֵן אֶרְאֶה עַל הַכְּפֹרֶת”. אָמַרְתִּי, מִתִּי יָבֹא לְיָדִי וְאֶקְיָמְנֹה. עֲבָשׂוּ שְׂבָא לְיָדִי – לֹא אֶקְיָמְנֹה!?

אָמְרוּ: לֹא הָיוּ יָמִים מוֹעֲטִין עַד שִׁמְתָה וְהוּטַל בְּאַשְׁפָּה, וְהָיוּ תוֹלְעִין יוֹצְאִין מִחוּטְמוֹ. וַיֵּשׂ אֹמְרִים: בִּיצִיאָתוֹ נִגְף. דְּתַנִּי רַבִּי חִיָּיא: כַּמִּין קוֹל נִשְׁמַע בְּעוֹרָה, שְׂבָא מִלְּאָךְ וְחֻבְטוֹ עַל פָּנָיו. וְנִבְנְסוּ אֶחָיו הַכֹּהֲנִים וּמִצָּאוּ כַּכָּף רִגְלָ עֵגֶל בֵּין כַּתְּפוֹ, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: “וְרַגְלֵיהֶם רִגְלֵ יִשְׂרָאֵל וְכַף רִגְלֵיהֶם כַּכָּף רִגְלֵ עֵגֶל”.

”אָמַר רַבִּי זְכַרְיָה בֶּן קִבְוֹטָל וְכו’” מִתְּנִי לִיָּה רַב חֲנַן בַּר רַבָּא לְחִיָּיא בַּר רַב קַמְיָה דְּרַב: אָמַר רַבִּי זְכַרְיָה בֶּן קִבְוֹטָל. וּמִתְּנִי לִיָּה רַב בִּידִיָּה: קִבְוֹטָל. וְנִמְמָא לִיָּה מִימַר? קְרִיאַת שְׁמַע הוּוּה קְרִי.

וְכִי הָאִי גּוֹוֵנָא מִי שְׂרִי? וְהָא אָמַר רַבִּי יִצְחָק בַּר שְׁמוּאֵל בַּר מְרִתָּא: הַקּוֹרָא אֶת שְׁמַע לֹא יִרְמוֹז בְּעֵינָיו, וְלֹא יִקְרוֹץ בְּשִׁפְתוֹתָיו, וְלֹא יוֹרֵה בְּאַצְבָּעוֹתָיו. וְתַנָּא, רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר חֲסִמָּא אָמַר: הַקּוֹרָא אֶת שְׁמַע וּמְרַמֵּז בְּעֵינָיו, וּמְקַרֵּץ בְּשִׁפְתוֹתָיו, וּמְרַאֶה בְּאַצְבָּעוֹ – עָלָיו הַפְּתוּבָא אָמַר: “וְלֹא אוֹתִי קְרִיאַת יַעֲקֹב!”

§ The mishna continues: After this oath, he would leave them and cry and they would leave him and cry.<sup>HN</sup> The Gemara explains: He turned aside and cried due to the indignity that they suspected him of being a Sadducee; and they turned aside and cried, as Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: One who suspects the innocent of indiscretion is afflicted in his body. The High Priest might in fact be beyond reproach and they may have suspected him falsely.

The Gemara asks: And why were the Elders so insistent that the High Priest take an oath? The Gemara explains: So that he would not prepare the incense and light it outside<sup>N</sup> in the Sanctuary, before entering the Holy of Holies, and bring the coal pan with the incense already burning on it into the Holy of Holies in the manner that the Sadducees did. Since the High Priest is alone inside the Sanctuary and there is no way to ascertain whether he is in fact performing the service in the proper manner, the Elders insisted that he take an oath to perform it according to their instructions.

The Sages taught in the *Tosefta*: There was an incident involving a certain Sadducee who was appointed as High Priest, who prepared the incense outside and then brought it into the Holy of Holies. Upon his emergence he was overjoyed that he had succeeded. The father of that Sadducee met him and said to him: My son, although we are Sadducees and you performed the service in accordance with our opinion, we fear the Pharisees and do not actually implement that procedure in practice. The son said to his father: All my days I have been troubled over this verse: “For I will appear in the cloud above the Ark cover” (Leviticus 16:2). The Sadducees interpreted this verse to mean that God will appear above the Ark cover, i.e., will enter the Holy of Holies, only after the incense cloud is already there. I said: When will the opportunity become available to me, and I will fulfill it according to the Sadducee interpretation? Now that the opportunity has become available to me, will I not fulfill it?

The Sages said: Not even a few days passed until he died and was laid out in the garbage dump, and worms were coming out of his nose<sup>N</sup> in punishment for his actions. And some say that he was struck as soon as he emerged from the Holy of Holies, as Rabbi Ḥiyya taught: A type of sound was heard in the Temple courtyard, as an angel came and struck him in the face. And his fellow priests came in to remove him from there and they found the likeness of a footprint of a calf between his shoulders. That is the mark left by an angel striking, as it is stated with regard to angels: “And their feet were straight feet, and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf’s foot” (Ezekiel 1:7).<sup>N</sup>

§ It was taught in the mishna that Rabbi Zekharya ben Kevutal says: Many times I read before the High Priest from the book of Daniel. Rav Ḥanan bar Rava taught this to Ḥiyya bar Rav before Rav in the following manner: Rabbi Zekharya bar Kefutal said, and Rav demonstrated with his hand<sup>N</sup> that the name should be pronounced Kevutal. The Gemara asks: Why did Rav demonstrate his point with a gesture? Let him simply say it. The Gemara answers: Rav was reciting *Shema* at that moment and could not interrupt *Shema* by speaking.

The Gemara asks: And is interrupting in a manner of that sort, by gesturing, permitted during *Shema*? Didn’t Rabbi Yitzhak bar Shmuel bar Marta say: One who is reciting *Shema* should neither make allusions with his eyes, nor open and close his mouth with his lips to convey a message, nor gesture with his fingers? And it was taught in a *baraita* that Rabbi Elazar Ḥisma says: Concerning one who recites *Shema* and makes allusions with his eyes, or opens and closes his mouth with his lips, or gestures with his fingers, the verse says: “And you did not call out to Me, O Jacob” (Isaiah 43:22).<sup>N</sup> By signaling while reciting *Shema* he behaves contemptuously toward God, and it is tantamount to not having recited *Shema* before Him. How, then, could Rav gesture while reading *Shema*?

**קריאת שמע – קריאת שמע** – Reciting *Shema* with the proper intent – **בְּכוּנָה**: It is prohibited for one to interrupt his recitation of the first paragraph of *Shema*. One may neither gesture with one's hands or eyes, even for the purpose of a mitzva (*Mishna Berura*), because it consigns secondary status to *Shema*. Some prohibit interruption even when reciting the second paragraph, unless it is for a mitzva (*Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim 63:7*).

**שיחת חולין – Idle chatter**: It is inappropriate to engage in idle chatter; rather, it is preferable to converse in Torah matters. One should especially avoid idle chatter on Shabbat (*Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim 16:17* in the comment of the Rema, and *Yoreh De'a 246:25*).

**בקש להתנמנם – If the High Priest sought to sleep**: If the High Priest sought to sleep at night, the young priests would snap their fingers before him and have him stand on the cold floor. They would occupy him until the time arrived to slaughter the daily offering (*Rambam Sefer Avodat, Hilkhot Avodat Yom HaKippurim 1:8*).

לא קשיא: הא – בפרק ראשון, הא – בפרק שני.

The Gemara answers: This is **not difficult**. This prohibition to interrupt one's recitation of *Shema* with a gesture applies in the course of reciting the **first paragraph** of *Shema*, which is more fundamental; that case where Rav gestured was in the course of reciting the **second paragraph** of *Shema*, where gesturing to convey a significant message is permitted.<sup>h</sup>

תנו רבנן: "ודברת בם" – בם ולא בתפלה, ודברת בם – בם יש לך רשות לדבר, ולא בדברים אחרים.

Apropos interruptions in the course of reciting *Shema*, the Gemara cites a *baraita* in which the Sages taught: "And these words, which I command you this day, shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently unto your children, and you shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you arise" (Deuteronomy 6:6–7). This means that in the course of reciting them, the study of Torah and the recitation of *Shema*, it is permitted to interrupt to state a significant matter, **but not** in the course of reciting the *Amida* prayer, which may not be interrupted for any kind of speech. Another interpretation of the verse is: **And you shall talk of them** is to emphasize that it is permitted to interrupt *Shema* to speak these matters of Torah, but not to speak other matters that may lead to levity.

רבי אחא אומר: "ודברת בם" – עשה אותן קבע, ואל תעשה עראי. אמר רבא: השח שיחת חולין – עובר בעשה, שנאמר: "ודברת בם" – בם ולא בדברים אחרים, רב אחא בר יעקב אמר: עובר בלאו, שנאמר: "כל הדברים נגעים לא יוכל איש לדבר".

Rabbi Aḥa says: Talk of them means one must render them, the words of Torah, a permanent fixture, and not render them a temporary exercise. Rava said: One who engages in idle chatter<sup>h</sup> without Torah or any particular purpose violates a positive commandment, as it is stated: **And you shall talk of them; talk of them and not of other matters**. Rav Aḥa bar Ya'akov said: Furthermore, one even violates a negative commandment,<sup>n</sup> as it is stated: "All these matters are wearisome; no man can ever state them" (Ecclesiastes 1:7). The phrase: No man can ever state them, is understood as a prohibition against engaging in idle chatter.

מתני' בקש להתנמנם – פרחי כהונה מכין לפניו באצבע צרדא, ואומרים לו: אישי בנה גדול! עמוד והפג אחת על הרצפה. ומעסיקין אותו עד שיגיע זמן השחיטה.

**MISHNA** If the High Priest sought to sleep<sup>h</sup> at night, the young priests would snap the middle [*tzerada*] finger against the thumb before him, and they would say to him every so often: **My Master, High Priest. Stand from your bed and chill yourself once on the floor** and overcome your drowsiness. **And they would engage him** in various ways until the time would arrive to slaughter the daily offering.

גמ' מאי צרדא? אמר רב יהודה: צרתה דדא. מאי היא – גודל. מחוי רב הונא, ואזל קלא בכולי בי רב.

**GEMARA** The Gemara asks: What is the *tzerada* finger mentioned in the mishna? Rav Yehuda said: It is the rival [*tzara*] of that [*da*] one.<sup>n</sup> Which finger is it? *Tzerada* is the rival of the thumb; it is the middle finger. The middle finger would be strongly positioned against the thumb, and when one separates them, the finger hits the palm, creating a sound. Rav Huna demonstrated the loud noise that could be achieved by snapping with the middle finger, and the sound traveled throughout Rav's study hall. The sound created was loud enough to keep the High Priest awake.

"ואומרים לו אישי בנה גדול הפג אחת על הרצפה וכו'". אמר רב יצחק: על חדת. מאי היא? אמרי ליה: אחוי קידה.

It was taught in the mishna that they said to him: **My Master, High Priest. Stand from your bed and chill yourself<sup>n</sup> once on the floor** and overcome your drowsiness. Rav Yitzḥak said that they said to the High Priest: **Introduce something new**.<sup>n</sup> The Gemara asks: **What is it** that they asked him to introduce? **They say to him: Demonstrate** how to perform the ceremonial bowing [*kidda*].<sup>n</sup> This was a form of bowing that was difficult to perform, in which the High Priest was expert. The thought was that the exercise would keep him awake.

## NOTES

Idle chatter violates a positive commandment... a negative commandment – עובר בעשה... בלאו: The Gemara does not mean that one actually violates a positive and negative commandment by Torah law; it is merely seeking a biblical support for the severity of this behavior (*Havot Ya'ir*).

The rival of that one – צרתה דדא: Most of the commentaries rely on the language of the *Tosefta* and on a practical understanding of finger snapping to explain that the Gemara refers

to the middle finger operating in conjunction with the thumb. The phrase: The rival of that one, is understood as referring to the middle finger being opposite the thumb. Furthermore, the index finger is attached to the thumb like a wife to a husband, and the third finger is a rival to the index finger (*Tosefot Yom Tov*).

Chill yourself – הפג: The Rambam and others interpret the term to mean that the High Priest should cool his feet on the floor.

Once [*ahat*]...introduce something new – על חדת: *Ahat* in this context, as explained by the Sages in several places, is understood to mean unique, and this form of bowing is unique (Rav Shmuel Strashun).

**Bowing [*kidda*] – קידה:** The Gemara in tractate *Sukka* explains that this type of bowing is performed with the individual's face on the floor, and the High Priest would stand by leaning on his thumbs. This is a feat that few people can do, and the exertion involved was enough to rouse him from his drowsiness.

”וּמַעֲסִיקִין אוֹתוֹ עַד שְׁיָגִיעַ זְמַן שְׁחִיטָה” (וכו’). תָּנָא: לֹא הָיוּ מַעֲסִיקִין אוֹתוֹ לֹא בִּנְבֵל וְלֹא בְכִנּוֹר, אֶלָּא בַּפֶּה. וּמָה הָיוּ אוֹמְרִין – ”אִם ה’ לֹא יִבְנֶה בַּיִת שְׂוֹא עֲמָלוֹ בּוֹנֵיו בּוֹ”.

The mishna continues: **And they would engage him in different ways until the time to slaughter the daily offering would arrive.** It was taught: **They would not occupy him with a harp<sup>b</sup> or a lyre,<sup>b</sup> which may not be played on a Festival, but would sing with their mouths.** And what would they say? They would say this verse: “Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labor in vain on it; unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman keeps vigil in vain” (Psalms 127:1). The message to the High Priest was that his service must be performed for the sake of Heaven for it to be accepted by God; otherwise his efforts would be in vain.

מִיִּקְרִי יְרוּשָׁלַיִם לֹא הָיוּ יֹשְׁבֵי בֵּל הַלַּיְלָה, בְּדֵי שִׁישְׁמַע כְּהֵן גְּדוֹל קוֹל הַבְּרָה, וְלֹא תִהְיֶה שִׁנְיָה חוֹטְפִתוֹ. תִּנְיָא, אַבָּא שְׂאוּל אָמַר: אִף בְּגִבּוּלֵין הָיוּ עוֹשִׂין כֵּן זָכַר לְמַקְדָּשׁ, אֶלָּא שֶׁהָיוּ חוֹטְאִין.

The Gemara relates that **the prominent men of Jerusalem would not sleep the entire night** but instead engaged in Torah study, so that the High Priest would hear the sound of noise in the city and sleep would not overcome him in the silence of the sleeping city. It was taught in a *baraita* that **Abba Shaul said: They would do so even in the outlying areas** and stay awake all night in acknowledgment of the Temple; however, the result was that they would sin, as the men and women would participate in games together to pass the time, leading to transgression.

אָמַר אַבְיִי וְאִיתִימָא רַב נַחֲמָן בַּר יִצְחָק: תִּרְגוּמָא – נְהַרְדְּעָא. דְּאָמַר לִיה אֱלִיָּהוּ לְרַב יְהוּדָה אַחוּהַ דְּרַב סַלָּא חֲסִידָא: אָמַרִיתוּ, אַמַּאי לֹא אָתִי מְשִׁיחַ, וְהָא הָאִידְנָא, יוֹמָא דְכִיפּוּרֵי הוּא, וְאַבְעוּל כְּמָה בְּתוּלְתָא בְּנְהַרְדְּעָא. אָמַר לִיה: הַקְדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא מַאי אָמַר? אָמַר לִיה:

Abaye said, and some say it was Rav Nahman bar Yitzhak who said: **Interpret** that statement as referring to **Neharde’a**, as **Elijah the Prophet said to Rav Yehuda, brother of Rav Salla Hasida: You have said and wondered: Why has the Messiah not come?** Why is that surprising? **Isn’t today Yom Kippur, and relations were had with several virgins in Neharde’a**, as the men and women stayed awake all night and that led to promiscuity? **Rav Yehuda said to him: What did the Holy One, Blessed be He, say about those sins committed by the Jewish people? He said: This is what God said:**

**BACKGROUND**

Harp – נְבֵל: Harps and lyres were very prominent in antiquity. The image shows a statue of a harp player from the Cyclades, Greece, dated 2800–2700 BCE.



Ancient depiction of harp player



Lyre

Lyre – כִּנּוֹר: The lyre is a stringed musical instrument closely related to the harp and known for its use in Greek classical antiquity.