He will keep the feet of His pious ones — אַפַּרְסְמוֹן. The Gemara seems to be explaining the term feet (אַפַּרְסְמוֹן) in the sense of becoming accustomed [הַנְּגַלְּפָה]; God protects those who are accustomed to act righteously (Maharsha).

He will never sin — חֲזֵידֵו. God does not provide opportunities for this person to sin; however, if he seeks to sin, the choice is his. There were several righteous people who sinned later in life (Tosafot Yeshanim, Ritva).

BACKGROUND

Naphtha [נפת] — נפת. Apparently from the Persian naf, via the Greek ναφθα, naphtha or ναφθᾶ, naphthas, meaning mineral oil. Some believe that the word has a Semitic root.

Naphtha — נפת. In mishnayic and talmudic times kerosene had various uses. It was used as fuel for heating, for medicinal purposes, and for warfare in a weapon known as Greek fire. Unrefined crude oil emits a foul odor, which is why it may not be used to light the Shabbat lamps, and Persian crude oil emits a particularly foul odor.

Greek fire grenades

Apropos the righteous, Rabbi Hiyya bar Abba said that Rabbi Yoḥanan said: No righteous person departs from this world until another comparable righteous person is created, as it is stated: “And the sun rises and the sun sets” (Ecclesiastes 1:5); before the sun sets the new sun has already risen. Before the sun of Eli was extinguished, the sun of Samuel of Ramah had already shone (see 1 Samuel, chapter 3), and so on throughout the generations. And Rabbi Hiyya bar Abba said that Rabbi Yoḥanan said: The Holy One, Blessed be He, saw that righteous people were few, so He arose and planted some of them in each and every generation to ensure the presence of at least one righteous person in each generation. As it is stated: “For the pillars of the earth are the Lord’s, and He has set the world upon them” (1 Samuel 2:8). Since the world rests upon the righteous, each generation requires the presence of a righteous person to provide that support.

Rabbi Hiyya bar Abba said that Rabbi Yoḥanan said: Even for one righteous person the world exists, as it is stated: “But the righteous is the foundation of the world” (Proverbs 10:25). Rabbi Hiyya himself said: The proof is from here, as it is stated: “He will keep the feet of His pious ones” (1 Samuel 2:9), meaning that God maintains the world due to the pious people. The Gemara questions this proof; “pious ones” indicates many rather than a single righteous person. Rav Naḥman bar Yitzḥak said: Although the text is vocalized in the plural, it is written in the singular: “His pious one”; God maintains the world even for a single pious individual.

Rabbi Hiyya bar Abba said that Rabbi Yoḥanan said: Once most of a person’s years have passed and he did not sin, he will never sin, as it is stated: “He will keep the feet of His pious ones” (1 Samuel 2:9). Once a person has established himself as righteous, God will keep him from falling thereafter. In the school of Rabbi Sheila they say: Once the opportunity to perform a sinful act presents itself to a person a first time and a second, and he does not sin, he will never sin, as it is stated: “He will keep the feet of His pious ones” (1 Samuel 2:9). Once he has refrained from sin several times, he has established himself as pious and God will protect him thereafter.

Reish Lakish said: What is the meaning of the verse that is written: “It concerns the scorners, He scorches them, but to the humble He gives grace” (Proverbs 3:34)? If one comes to impurify, they open before him the opportunity to exercise his free will and do as he pleases. If one comes to purify, they assist him. In the school of Rabbi Yishmael it was taught with regard to this verse: This is comparable to the case of a man who was selling both crude naphtha [נפת], whose odor is vile, and balsam, whose fragrance is pleasant.

In the case of one who comes to measure and purchase naphtha, the merchant says to him: Measure it for yourself, as I prefer to keep my distance from the foul odor. With regard to one who comes to measure and purchase balsam, the merchant says to him: Wait for me until I can measure it with you, so that you and I will both be perfumed. Similarly, with regard to sin God merely provides an opening, whereas with regard to mitzvot God assists the individual in their performance.
In the school of Rabbi Yishmael it was taught: Sin stupefies the heart of a person who commits it, as it is stated: “And do not impurify yourselves with them, so that you should not be thereby impurified” (Leviticus 11:43). Do not read that term as: “And be impurified [ritmitem]”; rather, read it as: And your hearts will be stupefied [ritamtem].

The Sages taught the following with regard to the verse: “And do not impurify yourselves with them, so that you should not be thereby impurified”; a person who impurifies himself a bit, they impurify him greatly. If a person impurifies himself of his own volition below, on earth, they impurify him even more so above, in Heaven. If a person impurifies himself in this world, they impurify him in the World-to-Come.

Conversely, the Sages taught the following with regard to the verse: “Sanctify yourselves and you will be sanctified” (Leviticus 11:44); a person who sanctifies himself a bit, they sanctify him and assist him greatly. If a person sanctifies himself below, they sanctify him above. If a person sanctifies himself in this world, they sanctify him in the World-to-Come.

NOTES

They impurify him above — Some commentaries explain that there are angels above who prosecute a person and others who defend him (Ritva).
MISHNA The High Priest would mix the lots in the lottery receptacle used to hold them and draw the two lots from it, one in each hand. Upon one was written: For God. And upon the other one was written: For Azazel. The deputy High Priest would stand to the High Priest’s right, and the head of the patrilineal family would stand to his left. If the lot for the name of God came up in his right hand, the Deputy would say to him: My master, High Priest, raise your right hand so that all can see with which hand the lot for God was selected. And if the lot for name of God came up in his left hand, the head of the patrilineal family would say to him: My master, High Priest, raise your left hand.

Then he would place the two lots upon the two goats, the lot that arose in his right hand on the goat standing to his right side and the lot in his left hand on the goat to his left. And upon placing the lot for God upon the appropriate goat, he would say: For God, as a sin-offering. Rabbi Yishmael says: He need not say: As a sin-offering. Rather, it is sufficient to say: For God. And upon saying the name of God, the priests and the people respond after him: Blessed be the name of His glorious kingdom forever and all time.

GEMARA Why do I need the High Priest to have mixed the lots in a receptacle before he draws the lots? In order that he not be able to intentionally take the lot for God specifically with his right hand. Since it is a forlornous omen for the lot for God to arise in his right hand, there is a concern that he might force the result, in contravention of the requirement that the designation of the goats be made through a random lottery.

Rava said: The receptacle was made out of wood and did not have the status of a sacred vessel. Rather, it was unconsecrated, and it had enough space inside only for the High Priest’s two hands.

Ravina strongly objects to this: Granted, it was constructed so that it had enough space inside it only for the High Priest’s two hands. This was done so that he could not maneuver his hands inside the box to feel and examine the lots, in order that he not be able to intentionally take the lot for God specifically with his right hand. But why was the receptacle unconsecrated? Let it be consecrated as a sacred vessel. If so, if it were to be consecrated, it would be a sacred vessel made of wood, and the halakha is that we do not make a sacred vessel from wood.

But if this is the only issue, let it be made out of silver or let it be made out of gold. However, the Torah spared the money of the Jewish people and did not want to burden them with the expense of having to make the receptacle from expensive materials. Therefore, it is made from wood, and as such it is precluded from being a sacred vessel.

HALAKHA Would mix the lots in the receptacle. The High Priest mixes the lots in the receptacle, takes out the two lots with his two hands, and opens his hands. If the lot for God is in his right hand, the Deputy says to him: My master, High Priest, raise your right hand. If it appears in his left hand, the Deputy says to him: My master, High Priest, raise your left hand. The two lots are then placed upon the two goats (Rambam Sefer Avoda, Hilkhot Avodat Yom HaKippurim 3:3).

And he would say: For God, as a sin-offering. This is stated in the Tosefta (Sefer Avoda, Hilkhot Avoda Yom HaKippurim 2:6).

Receptacle – מַמּוֹן: The two lots are placed in a utensil that has just enough room for two hands; so that the priest can insert both of his hands inside but cannot intentionally take a particular lot with each hand. This box is made from wood and is not sacred (Rambam Sefer Avoda, Hilkhot Avodat Yom HaKippurim 3:1).

A sacred vessel from wood – מַמּוֹן: The Temple utensils are made only from metal. If they are fashioned from wood, stone, glass, or other materials, they are invalid (Rambam Sefer Avoda, Hilkhot Be’er Halakhah 11:8).

BACKGROUND Azazel – אַזָּאָז: According to some interpretations, Azazel refers to an actual geographic location, identified today as Jabel Muntar in the Judean Desert.
The western lamp would burn – קָרֵבָה לַֽעֲלֹא. Generally, all services are performed using only the right hand. The very fact that the High Priest may use his left hand to remove the second lot demonstrates that it is not a true act of service. Given this conclusion, it is also understandable why, despite that every other part of the day’s service is performed by the High Priest himself, the drawing of the second lot could be performed by another (Tosafot Yeshanim).

The Gemara comments: The mishna is not in accordance with the opinion of this tanna whose opinion was taught in a baraita. Rabbi Yehuda says in the name of Rabbi Eliezer: The Deputy and the High Priest insert their hands into the receptacle. If the lot for God comes up in the High Priest’s right hand, the Deputy says to him: My master, High Priest, raise your right hand. And if the lot for God comes up in the right hand of the Deputy, the head of the patrilineal family says to the High Priest: Speak your word and declare the goat to your left side to be the sin-offering for God.

With regard to what do the tanna im of the mishna and baraita disagree? One Sage, the tanna of the baraita, holds that the Deputy’s right hand is preferable to the High Priest’s left hand. As such, the ideal way for the lots to be drawn is for both the Deputy and High Priest to use their right hands. And the other Sage, the tanna of the mishna, holds they are equivalent. Therefore, there is no reason for the Deputy to be involved, and the entire process is performed by the High Priest.

And who is this tanna who argues with Rabbi Yehuda? It is Rabbi Hanina, the Deputy of the priests, as it was taught in a baraita: Rabbi Hanina, the Deputy of the priests, says: Why did the Deputy remain at the High Priest’s right side throughout the day’s service? Because if some disqualification befalls the High Priest, the Deputy can step in and serve in his stead. It is apparent from Rabbi Hanina’s statement that as long as the High Priest remains qualified, the Deputy has no role in the day’s service, which disputes Rabbi Yehuda’s opinion.

The Sages taught: During all forty years that Shimon HaTzaddik served as High Priest, the lot for God arose in the right hand. From then onward, sometimes it arose in the right hand and sometimes it arose in the left hand. Furthermore, during his tenure as High Priest, the strip of crimson wool that was tied to the head of the goat that was sent to Azazel turned white, indicating that the sins of the people had been forgiven, as it is written: “Though your sins be as crimson, they shall be white as snow” (Isaiah 1:18). From then onward, it sometimes turned white and sometimes it did not turn white. Furthermore, the western lamp of the candelabrum would burn continuously as a sign that God’s presence rested upon the nation. From then onward, it sometimes burned and sometimes it went out.
And during the tenure of Shimon HaTzaddik, the fire on the arrangement of wood on the altar kept going strongly, perpetually by itself, such that the priests did not need to bring additional wood to the arrangement on a daily basis, except for the two logs that were brought in order to fulfill the mitzva of placing wood upon the arrangement. From then onward, the fire sometimes kept going strongly and sometimes it did not, and so the priests could not avoid bringing wood to the arrangement throughout the entire day.

And a blessing was sent upon the offering of the omer; and to the offering of the two loaves from the new wheat, which was sacrificed on Shavuot; and to the shewbread, that there were already satisfied, and there were those who ate only a part of it and left over the rest because they were already satisfied from such a small amount. From then onward, a curse was sent upon the omer, and to the two loaves, and to the shewbread, that there were not sufficient quantities to give each priest a full measure. Therefore, each priest received just an amount the size of a bean; the discreet, pious ones would withdraw their hands, a bean-bulk being less that the quantity needed to properly fulfill the mitzva, and only the voracious ones would take eat it. And an incident occurred with one who took his portion and that of his fellow, and they called him: Son of a robber [hamtzan] until the day of his death.

Rabba bar bar Sheila said: What is the verse that indicates that a hamtzan is a robber? The verse states: “O, my God, rescue me out of the hand of wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and robbing man [hametz]” (Psalms 71:4). Rava said: From here: “Learn to do well, seek justice, strengthen the robbed [chelak], and to the shewbread, that there were not sufficient quantities to give each priest a full measure. Therefore, each priest received just an amount the size of a bean; the discreet, pious ones would withdraw their hands, but not strengthen the robber.”

§ The Sages taught: During the year in which Shimon HaTzaddik died, he said to them, his associates: In this year, he will die, euphemistically referring to himself. They said to him: How do you know? He said to them: In previous years, on every Yom Kippur, upon entering the Holy of Holies, I was met, in a prophetic vision, by an old man who was dressed in white, and his head was wrapped up in white, and he would enter the Holy of Holies with me, and he would leave with me.” But today, I was met by an old man who was dressed in black, and his head was wrapped up in black, and he entered the Holy of Holies with me, but he did not leave with me. He understood this to be a sign that his death was impending. Indeed, after the festival of Sukkot, he was ill for seven days and died.

Without the presence of Shimon HaTzaddik among them, the Jewish people were no longer worthy of the many miracles that had occurred during his lifetime. For this reason, following his death, his brethren, the priests, refrained from blessing the Jewish people with the explicit name of God in the priestly blessing.

The Sages taught: During the tenure of Shimon HaTzaddik, the lot for God always arose in the High Priest’s right hand; after his death, it occurred only occasionally; but during the forty years prior to the destruction of the Second Temple, the lot for God did not arise in the High Priest’s right hand at all. So too, the strip of crimson wool that was tied to the head of the goat that was sent to Azazel did not turn white, and the westernmost lamp of the candelabrum did not burn continually.

Son of a robber – בן גורל: Why was he called specifically the son of a robber, rather than just a robber? Some suggest that since character is shaped by upbringing, one may assume that a person’s actions are reflective of those of his parents. Based on this assumption, in a case where the nature of a wicked person’s parents is not known, it is permitted to disparage them. In this case, they are referred to as robbers (Rabbi Yoshiya Pinto). Others suggest that the term son of a robber is not a direct reference to a person’s parents; rather, it is a term of disparagement concerning the person himself (Iyyun HaRav).

He would enter with me and he would leave with me – homer vesamayim: In the Jerusalem Talmud it is explained that this vision was a revelation of the Divine Presence.

His brethren the priests refrained from blessing with the explicit name of God – נשמה הכהנים: The priests feared that on their spiritual level the explicit name of forty two letters was too awesome for them to use. Nevertheless, it would appear they continued to use the Tetragrammaton (Tosafot RSh).
The doors of the Sanctuary opened by themselves, as a sign that they would soon be opened by enemies, until Rabban Yoḥanan ben Zakka scolded them. He said to the Sanctuary: Sanctuary, Sanctuary, why do you frighten yourself with these signs? I know about you that you will ultimately be destroyed, and Zechariah, son of Ido, has already prophesied concerning you: “Open your doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour your cedars” (Zechariah 11:1). Lebanon being an appellation for the Temple.

Rav Zutra bar Toviya said: Why is the Temple called Lebanon? Because it whitens [malbin] the Jewish people’s sins, alluded to by the root lavan, meaning white.

But once the gentle nations entered the Sanctuary the golden trees withered, as it states “And the blossoms of Lebanon wither” ( Nahum 1:14). And in the future hour of redemption, the Holy One, Blessed be He, will restore them to us as it is stated: “It shall blossom abundantly, it shall also rejoice and shout, the glory of Lebanon will be given to it” (Isaiah 35:2).

And there already was an incident when the High Priest said the name of God and his voice was so strong that it was heard even in Jericho. Rabba bar Hanå said: The distance from Jerusalem to Jericho is ten parasangs. Despite the great distance, his voice was miraculously heard there.

HaKofer 194

Cedars – שֶׁלַּיְדֵי: The plain meaning of the verse in fact refers to cedars that grow in Lebanon. The species that grows in Lebanon as well as in other places in the Mediterranean region is Cedrus libani, also known as the Cedar of Lebanon.

Lebanon cedar

From Jerusalem to Jericho – לאירואל הלוחה. Ten parasangs are forty ml, somewhat less than 40 km. The distance here is measured based on the length of the road. Obviously, a direct aerial route would be shorter.

Location of Jericho

All kinds of sweet fruit trees of gold – אֲרָזִים: Some commentators offer a rational explanation of the Gemara. There was a decorative vine formed from gold that hung at the entrance to the Temple. People would donate a cluster or branch to the vine, thereby creating decorative trees of gold. These items could then be sold to support the priesthood (Eshkol Halakot).

Mentions the name of God – שְׁמוֹ: The Tosefta is referring specifically to the exceptional use of the explicit name of God. Certainly, God’s general names were used frequently throughout the day in the High Priest’s statements and prayers (Tosafot Ye’ivonim).

And the doors of the Sanctuary opened by themselves as a sign that they would soon be opened by enemies, until Rabban Yoḥanan ben Zakka scolded them. He said to the Sanctuary: Sanctuary, Sanctuary, why do you frighten yourself with these signs? I know about you that you will ultimately be destroyed, and Zechariah, son of Ido, has already prophesied concerning you: “Open your doors, O Lebanon, that the fire may devour your cedars” (Zechariah 11:1). Lebanon being an appellation for the Temple.

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§ The mishna states that after selecting the two lots, the High Priest places them upon the two goats. Upon placing the lot for God upon the appropriate goat, he says: For God, as a sin-offering. This is just one of the occasions on which he mentions God’s name, as the Sages taught in the Tosefta ( Yoma 2:3): The High Priest mentions the name of God ten times on that day: Three times during the first confession; and three times during the second confession, over the bull; and three times when he confesses over the scape-goat to Azazel; and one time with the lots, when placing the lot for God upon the goat.

And there already was an incident when the High Priest said the name of God and his voice was so strong that it was heard even in Jericho. Rabba bar Hanå said: The distance from Jerusalem to Jericho is ten parasangs. Despite the great distance, his voice was miraculously heard there.
The Gemara describes similar miracles in which events in the Temple were sensed a great distance away: And the sound of the doors of the Sanctuary opening was heard from a distance of eight Shabbat limits, which is eight mil. Furthermore, goats that were in Jericho would sneeze from smelling the fragrance of the incense that burned in the Temple; the women that were in Jericho did not need to perfume themselves, since they were perfumed by the fragrance of the incense, which reached there; a bride that was in Jerusalem did not need to adorn herself with perfumes, since she was perfumed by the fragrance of the incense, which filled the air of Jerusalem.

Rabbi Yosei ben Dolgai said: Father had goats in the hills of Mikhnarov, a district some distance from Jerusalem, and they would sneeze from smelling the fragrance of the incense. Similarly, Rabbi Hyya bar Avin said that Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korba said: An old man reported to me: One time I went to the ruins of the Tabernacle in Shiloh, and I smelled the smell of the incense from between its walls. The Tabernacle stood there during the period of the Judges, and more than a thousand years had passed since its destruction.

Some say that the drawing of the lot from inside the receptacle is an indispensable part of the service, as it determines which goat will be for God and which for Azazel. However, the actual placing of the lots upon the goats is not indispensable. And Rabbi Yohanan said: Even the drawing of the lots from inside the receptacle is not indispensable, since the High Priest may designate the goats himself, without employing the lottery.

The Gemara explains the dispute: In accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda, who said that all matters that are performed in the white garments outside of the Holy of Holies are not indispensable, everyone agrees that the drawing of the lots is not indispensable, since it is held outside the Holy of Holies. When they disagree, it is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Nehemya. He holds that all matters performed in the white garments, even those performed outside the Holy of Holies, are indispensable. The one who said that the drawing of the lots is indispensable holds in accordance with the straightforward application of the principle of Rabbi Nehemya. And the one who said the drawing of the lots is not indispensable claims that this principle applies only with regard to matters that are classified as a Temple service. The drawing of the lots is not a Temple service, therefore it is indispensable, even according to Rabbi Nehemya’s principle.

Some say a different version of the dispute:

In accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Nehemya, who said that all matters performed in the white garments, even those performed outside the Holy of Holies, are indispensable, everyone agrees that the drawing of the lots is indispensable.

When they disagree, it is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda, who holds that matters that are performed in the white garments outside of the Holy of Holies are not indispensable. The one who said that the drawing of the lots is not indispensable holds in accordance with the straightforward application of the principle of Rabbi Yehuda. And the one who said that the drawing of the lots is indispensable claims that although Rabbi Yehuda’s principle is generally true, it is different here, in the case of the lottery, because the verse repeated the phrase “which came up” (Leviticus 16:9) “which came up” (Leviticus 16:10) two times. In the laws of sacrifices, a repeated phrase indicates the matter is indispensable.

The Gemara raises an objection from that which was taught in a baraita: It is a mitzva to draw the lots, and if the High Priest did not draw the lots but instead designated the goats without using the lots, the designation is valid.
The Gemara considers the opinion presented in the baraita: Granted, according to that first version of the dispute, in which you said: In accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda everyone, i.e., Rabbi Yannai and Rabbi Yohanan, agrees that the drawing of the lots is not indispensable, in accordance with whose opinion is this baraita taught? It is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda, according to all opinions.

But according to that second version of the dispute, in which you said that Rabbi Yannai and Rabbi Yohanan disagree whether the drawing of the lots is indispensable according to Rabbi Yehuda, but according to Rabbi Nehemya it certainly is indispensable, then granted, according to the one, i.e., Rabbi Yohanan, who said that the drawing of the lots is not indispensable, in accordance with whose opinion is this baraita taught? It is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda.

However, according to the one, i.e., Rabbi Yannai, who said that both according to Rabbi Yehuda and Rabbi Nehemya the drawing of the lots is indispensable, then in accordance with whose opinion could this baraita be taught? It would appear that, according to Rabbi Yannai, the baraita does not reflect anyone’s opinion. Perforce, the baraita cannot be referring to drawing the lots, and one must emend and teach the baraita as saying that it is a mitzva to place the lots on the goats.

Come and hear another challenge to Rabbi Yannai’s opinion, as presented in the second version of the dispute, which maintains that both Rabbi Yehuda and Rabbi Nehemya hold that drawing of the lots is indispensable. A baraita teaches: It is a mitzva for the High Priest to draw the lots and to confess upon the goat to be sent to Azazel. If he did not draw the lots or did not confess, the service is still valid. This baraita also appears to say that the drawing of the lots is not indispensable, in contradiction to Rabbi Yannai’s opinion. And if you say: So too, the baraita should be emended to say it is a mitzva to place the lots on the goats, this is problematic. How will you then say, i.e., explain, the latter clause of that baraita, which teaches: Rabbi Shimon says: If he does not draw the lots, it is valid. If he does not confess, it is invalid?

The Gemara clarifies the challenge from the latter clause: In this baraita, what is the meaning of: He did not draw the lots? If we say it means he did not place the lots on the goats, then by inference Rabbi Shimon holds that while the placing is not indispensable, the drawing of the lots is indispensable. But this is incorrect, since wasn’t it taught in a baraita: If, following the designation of the goats, one of them died, a new goat is brought to be the counterpart of the surviving goat and is designated without drawing lots; this is the statement of Rabbi Shimon. It would therefore appear that the baraita should not be understood as referring to the mitzva to place the lots, but as referring to the drawing of the lots themselves. Therefore, the challenge to Rabbi Yannai’s opinion remains.

The Gemara responds: Rabbi Yannai’s opinion can still be defended by claiming that Rabbi Shimon did not know precisely what the Sages were saying, i.e., whether they were referring to the drawing or the placing of the lots. Therefore, in his response to them, this is what he is saying: If when you say: Drawing of the lots, you are saying that the actual drawing of the lots is not indispensable, as I also hold, then I disagree with you only with regard to one halakha, namely with regard to the indispensability of the confession. But if, when you say: Drawing of the lots, you are saying only that the placing of the lots is not indispensable, but you assume that the drawing of the lots is indispensable, then I disagree with you with regard to two halakhot, i.e., with regard to the indispensability of both the drawing of the lots and of the confession.