

אמר רב פפא: מתניתין דעבידא כו
אמגוזא.

Rav Pappa said: It is possible to understand that the mishna is referring to phylacteries that one constructed to be round like a nut, i.e., in the shape of a ball. However, the mishna does not indicate that the phylacteries must be square, as it does not address the case of phylacteries that are rounded but not a true sphere.

מתני' האומר

MISHNA If one says in his prayers:

Perek III
Daf 25 Amud a

בְּרִכּוֹךְ טוֹבִים – הָרִי זֶה דֶּרֶךְ הַמִּינוּת. עַל
קֹן צְפוּר יִגְעוּ רַחֲמֶיךָ, וְעַל טוֹב יִזְכֵּר שְׁמֶךָ,
מוֹדִים מוֹדִים – מְשַׁתְּקִין אוֹתוֹ.

May the good bless You,^N this is a path of heresy, as heretics divide the world into two domains, good and evil. If one says the following in his prayers: Just as Your mercy is extended to a bird's nest,^H as You have commanded us to send away the mother before taking her chicks or eggs (see Deuteronomy 22:6–7), so too extend Your mercy to us; or: May Your name be mentioned with the good; or: We give thanks, we give thanks, twice,^H he is suspected of heretical beliefs and they silence him.

הַמְכַנֶּה בְּעֵרִיּוֹת – מְשַׁתְּקִין אוֹתוֹ, הָאוֹמֵר:
"יִמְזַדְּעֶךָ לֹא תִתֵּן לְהַעֲבִיר לַמוֹלֶךְ", לֹא
תִתֵּן לְאֶעֱבְרָא בְּאַרְמִיּוֹתָא – מְשַׁתְּקִין
אוֹתוֹ בְּגוֹיָפָה.

If one modifies the text while reading the laws of forbidden sexual relations, i.e., he introduces euphemisms out of a sense of propriety, they silence him. Similarly, if one says while translating the verse: "And you shall not give any of your seed to set them apart to Molekh" (Leviticus 18:21): And you shall not give any of your seed to impregnate an Aramean woman, he is silenced with rebuke.

גַּמ' בְּשִׁלְמָא מוֹדִים מוֹדִים – דְּמִיחֵזִי
בְּשִׁתֵּי רְשׁוּיּוֹת. וְעַל טוֹב יִזְכֵּר שְׁמֶךָ נָמִי,
דְּמִשְׁמַע: עַל טוֹב – אִין, וְעַל רַע – לֹא.
וְתַנֵּן: חַיִּיב אָדָם לְבָרַךְ עַל הַרְעָה כְּשֵׁם
שֶׁהוּא מְבָרַךְ עַל הַטּוֹבָה. אֲלֵא, עַל קֹן
צְפוּר יִגְעוּ רַחֲמֶיךָ, מֵאִי טַעֲמָא?

GEMARA The mishna cites three instances where the communal prayer leader is silenced. The Gemara clarifies: Granted, they silence one who repeats: We give thanks, we give thanks, as it appears like he is acknowledging and praying to two authorities. And, granted, they also silence one who says: May Your name be mentioned with the good, as this formulation indicates one is thanking God only for the good and not for the bad, and we learned in a mishna (*Berakhot* 54a): One is obligated to bless God for the bad^H just as he blesses Him for the good. However, in the case of one who recites: Just as Your mercy is extended to a bird's nest, what is the reason that they silence him?

פְּלִיגי בה תרי אמוראי במערבא: רבי יוסי
בר אבין ורבי יוסי בר זבידא. חד אמר:
מפני שמטיל קנאה במעשה בראשית,
וחד אמר: מפני שעושה מדותיו של
הקדוש ברוך הוא רחמים, ואינן אלא
גזירות.

Two amora'im in the West, Eretz Yisrael, disagree about this question, Rabbi Yosei bar Avin and Rabbi Yosei bar Zevida. One said that this was because one who says this engenders jealousy^N among God's creations, as it appears as though he is indicating that God favored one creature over all others. And one said that saying this is prohibited because one transforms the attributes of the Holy One, Blessed be He, into expressions of mercy, and they are nothing but decrees of the King^N that must be fulfilled without inquiring into the reasons behind them.

HALAKHA

על – Just as Your mercy is extended to a bird's nest – על קֹן צְפוּר יִגְעוּ רַחֲמֶיךָ: One who says in his prayers: Just as You have shown mercy to birds, as expressed through the mitzva to chase away the mother bird before taking eggs from its nest, have mercy and pity upon us, or: You have shown mercy to animals, as reflected in the prohibition of slaughtering an animal and its offspring on the same day, have mercy and pity upon us, is silenced. These mitzvot are not due to mercy, but they are decrees of God (Rambam *Sefer Ahava, Hilkhot Tefilla* 9:7).

מוֹדִים מוֹדִים – We give thanks, we give thanks: One who says this twice is silenced (*Shulhan Arukh, Orach Hayyim* 121:2).

חַיִּיב אָדָם – One is obligated to bless God for the bad – לְבָרַךְ עַל הַרְעָה: One is obligated to recite the blessing: The true judge, when bad things occur. The blessing should be recited with full sincerity, just as when one recites a blessing over good tidings (*Shulhan Arukh, Orach Hayyim* 222:3).

NOTES

May the good bless You – בְּרִכּוֹךְ טוֹבִים: There are several explanations as to why this expression is heretical. Rashi and others explain that one who says this phrase includes only the righteous among those who praise God, whereas this category must include the entire Jewish people. Conversely, many commentaries explain this halakha based on the verse: "For then we had plenty of food and were well [tovim]" (Jeremiah 44:17), which indicates that tovim means satiated (Rid; Rabbeinu Yehonatan). Therefore, those who insert the phrase: May the tovim bless You, indicate that only one who is fully satiated must recite Grace after Meals. The halakha, however, is that anyone who has eaten an olive-bulk of bread must recite Grace after

Meals. Similarly, the Ra'avad and Rabbeinu Yona explain that the implication is that only those who are satiated and happy bless God. The Meiri cites an explanation that tovim refers to the angels. Consequently, one who says this phrase removes God's glory from the earthly world and confines it to the upper realms. This constitutes heresy.

This engenders jealousy, etc. – מְטִיל קְנָאָה וכו': In the Jerusalem Talmud, it is explained that the problem is that the individual limits God's mercy by implying that it is applied only to birds.

And they are nothing but decrees of the King – וְאֵינָן אֲלֵא:

גְּזִירוֹת: The great thinkers and philosophers have debated the meaning of this statement; they especially discussed its implications with regard to suggesting reasons for the mitzvot. According to the Rambam, presenting reasons for the mitzvot is problematic when one assumes that he has completely understood the full significance of a mitzva. This is an assumption that human beings have no right to make. Some explain that with regard to the mitzva of chasing away a bird, mercy is indeed a reason for the mitzva; however, the mitzva is not due to God's mercy toward the birds, but rather by God's interest in training mankind to be merciful (Meiri; see Maharah Tiferet Yisrael).

Rabba – רבָּה: Rav Abba bar Nahmani HaKohen, popularly referred to as Rabba throughout the Babylonian Talmud, was a third-generation Babylonian *amora*. Rabba was a student of Rav Huna, who himself was a student of Rav. Consequently, Rabba's approach to *halakha* was in concert with Rav's teachings. Rabba was considered the sharpest among his peers, to the extent that he was referred to as: One who uproots mountains, in contrast with his colleague, Rav Yosef, whose breadth of knowledge earned him the nickname: Sinai. With regard to disagreements between Rabba and Rav Yosef, the *halakha* is almost always in accordance with the opinion of Rabba.

Rabba had many students, and virtually all of the Sages of the following generation studied with him. His personal life was one of great tragedy. It appears that his children died during his lifetime. He was poverty stricken his entire life, eking out a living from agricultural work. When his nephew, Abaye, became orphaned at a young age, Rabba took him in and raised him.

Abaye – אבֵּי: Abaye was one of the most famous of the Babylonian *amora'im*. The disagreements between Abaye and his colleague Rava, recorded in the Gemara, are so essential that the Talmud itself is sometimes referred to as: The discussions of Abaye and Rava. Among those hundreds of discussions, the ruling follows Abaye in only six cases.

Abaye was orphaned at the time of his birth and was raised by his paternal uncle, Rabba. The woman who raised him impressed upon him many life lessons, which he quotes in the Gemara in her name. The Gemara records numerous incidents that illustrate Abaye's sharp intellect even as a child, including a number where his adoptive father, Rabba, tests him with questions.

Abaye was chosen to head the academy in Pumbedita. He celebrated the study of Torah and would announce a holiday for the scholars whenever one of them completed a tractate. Growing up in his uncle's home, he was aware of the difficulties of scholars who were without financial means. The Gemara in tractate *Berakhot* (35b) relates that he testified that many were successful following the path of Rabbi Yishmael, who instructed his students to plow, plant, and harvest in the appropriate time; only very few were successful following the path of Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai, who taught that one should devote himself entirely to Torah study and ignore worldly concerns.

NOTES

To hone Abaye's intellect – לְחַדְוֵי לְאַבְי: Many have questioned how Rabba intended to hone Abaye's intellect by saying something that contradicts an explicit mishna. Additionally, why did the Sage who served as the prayer leader act in a way that contradicts this mishna? Some explain that since the prayer leader mentioned both birds and animals, he reasoned that it was clear that he intended to state general praises of God. Abaye, however, understood that it is nonetheless prohibited.

הָהוּא דְנַחֲתָת קַמֵּיהּ דְרַבָּה, אָמַר: אַתָּה חֲסֵתָ עַל קֶן עֲפוּר אַתָּה חוּס וְרַחֵם עָלֵינוּ, (אַתָּה חֲסֵתָ עַל אוֹתוֹ וְאַתָּה בְּנֵו אַתָּה חוּס וְרַחֵם עָלֵינוּ) אָמַר רַבָּה: כַּמָּה יָדַע הָאִי מַרְבָּנָן לְרַצּוּיֵי לְמַרְיָה! אָמַר לֵיהּ אַבְי: וְהָא מְשַׁתְּקִין אוֹתוֹ תַנּוּ!

וְרַבָּה לְחַדְוֵי לְאַבְי הוּא דְבָעָא.

הָהוּא דְנַחֲתָת קַמֵּיהּ דְרַבִּי חֲנִינָא, אָמַר: הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל הַגְּבוּר וְהַנּוֹרָא וְהַאֲדִיר וְהַחֹזֵק וְהָאֵמִיץ.

אָמַר לֵיהּ: סֵימַתֵּינָהּ לְשִׁבְחָהּ דְמַרְדָּן? הַשְׁתָּא הֵנִי תַלְתָּא, אִי לֹא דְכַתְּבִינָהּ מֹשֶׁה בְּאוּרֵיִתָּא וְאַתָּה בְּנֶסֶת הַגָּדוֹלָה וְתַקְנִינָהּ, אֲנִן לֹא אָמַרְיִן לָהּ, וְאַתָּ אָמַרְתָּ בּוֹלֵי הָאִי? מִשָּׁל לְאֲדָם שְׁהִיוּ לוֹ אֶלֶף אֶלְפֵי אֶלְפִים דִּינָרֵי זָהָב, וְהִיוּ מַקְלָסִין אוֹתוֹ (בְּאֶלְף) דִּינָרֵי כֶּסֶף. לֹא גָנָא הוּא לֹא?

אָמַר רַבִּי חֲנִינָא: הַכֹּל בְּיַדֵּי שָׁמַיִם, חוּץ מִיְרֵאת שָׁמַיִם, שְׁנָאֵמַר "וְעַתָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל מָה ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ שׂוֹאֵל מֵעַמְּךָ כִּי אִם לִירְאָה".

מִכְּלָל דִּירְאָה מִיְלֵתָא זּוּטְרָתֵי הִיא? אִין, לְגַבֵּי מֹשֶׁה רַבִּינוּ מִיְלֵתָא זּוּטְרָתֵי הִיא. מִשָּׁל לְאֲדָם שְׁמַבְקָשִׁין הִימְנוּ בְּלֵי גָדוֹל וְיֵשׁ לוֹ – דּוּמָה עָלֵינוּ בְּכָלֵי קָטָן, קָטָן וְאִין לוֹ – דּוּמָה עָלֵינוּ בְּכָלֵי גָדוֹל.

The Gemara relates that a particular individual descended before the ark as prayer leader in the presence of Rabba,^p and said in his prayers: **You have shown mercy to birds**, as expressed through the mitzva to chase away the mother bird before taking eggs from its nest; **have mercy and pity upon us. You have shown mercy to animals**, as expressed through the prohibition against slaughtering an animal and its offspring on the same day; **have mercy and pity upon us. Rabba said: How much does this rabbi know to appease the Lord, his Master! Abaye^p said to him: Didn't we learn in the mishna that they silence him?**

The Gemara explains: **And Rabba, too, held in accordance with this mishna but merely acted this way because he wanted to hone Abaye's intellect.**ⁿ Rabba did not make his statement to praise the rabbi, but simply to test his nephew and student, Abaye, and to encourage him to articulate what he knows about the mishna.

With regard to additions to prayers formulated by the Sages, the Gemara relates that a particular individual descended before the ark as prayer leader in the presence of Rabbi Hanina. He extended his prayer and said: **God, the great, the mighty, and the awesome, the powerful, and the strong, and the fearless.**

When he finished, Rabbi Hanina said to him: **Have you concluded all of the praises of your Master? Even these three praises that we recite: The great, the mighty, and the awesome, had Moses our teacher not written them in the Torah (Deuteronomy 10:17), and had the members of the Great Assembly not come and incorporated them into the Amida prayer (see Nehemiah 9:32), we would not be permitted to recite them. And you went on and recited all of these. It is comparable to a man who possessed many thousands of golden dinars, yet they were praising him for owning a thousand silver ones. Isn't that deprecatory toward him? All of the praises one can lavish upon the Lord are nothing but a few silver dinars relative to many thousands of gold dinars. Reciting a litany of praise does not enhance God's honor.**^h

Tangentially, the Gemara cites an additional statement by Rabbi Hanina, concerning principles of faith. **Rabbi Hanina said: Everything is in the hands of Heaven, except for fear of Heaven.**^h Man has free will to serve God or not, as it is stated: **"And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God ask of you other than to fear the Lord your God"** (Deuteronomy 10:12). The fact that God asks man to fear Him indicates that it is in man's ability to do so.

The Gemara notes: This proves by inference that fear of Heaven is a **minor matter**, as the verse is formulated as though God is not asking anything significant. Can it in fact be maintained that fear of Heaven is a minor matter? The Gemara responds: **Indeed, for Moses our teacher, fear of Heaven is a minor matter. It is comparable to one who is asked for a large vessel and he has one; it seems to him like a small vessel because he owns it. However, one who is asked for just a small vessel and he does not have one, it seems to him like a large vessel. Therefore, Moses could say: What does the Lord your God ask of you other than to fear, because in his eyes it was a minor matter.**

HALAKHA

לֹא יִרְבֶּה בְּשִׁבְחֵם – One should not use too many adjectives to praise God during his prayer. He should say only: God, the great, the mighty, and the awesome. This is the formula said by Moses and established by the Sages as part of the daily prayer. Since man is unable to fully articulate God's greatness, adding additional superlatives is deprecatory (Rambam *Sefer Ahava, Hilkhos Tefilla* 9:7).

הַכֹּל בְּיַדֵּי שָׁמַיִם חוּץ מִיְרֵאת שָׁמַיִם – God does not decree in advance whether one will be righteous or wicked. Each individual may choose whether to be righteous or wicked and he is not forced in either direction (Rambam *Sefer Madda, Hilkhos Teshuva* 5:2).

הַאֲמֹר שְׁמַע – One who says: Listen Israel, listen Israel – **שְׁמַע**: It is prohibited to repeat the *Shema*, whether one repeats the entire verse or any individual word. If one was not focused while reciting the verse, he should repeat it quietly (*Taz*). However, when one reviews the weekly Torah portion by reciting each verse twice and then the *Targum*, he may read the verse of *Shema* twice as well (*Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayyim* 61:9).

NOTES

הַאֲמֹר שְׁמַע – One who says: Listen Israel, listen Israel – **שְׁמַע**: Most of the commentaries maintain that one who says the complete verse and then repeats it is silenced, whereas one who says any word twice is denounced because it is foolishness. Conversely, Rabbeinu Ḥananel and others explain that one who repeats the verse is denounced and one who repeats a word is silenced (see Ritva).

תּוֹכַחְתּוֹ שֶׁל אָבִיו וְשֶׁל אִמּוֹ – The shame of his father and the shame of his mother – **קָלוֹן אָבִיו וְקָלוֹן אִמּוֹ**: Most commentaries explain that out of respect to the listeners, he does not say: The nakedness of your father, but rather: The nakedness of his father, in the third person (see Rav Hai Gaon; Rabbeinu Ḥananel; *Arukh*; Rambam). This is the implication of the Jerusalem Talmud as well. Conversely, Rashi, as well as the Rid and Ran, explain that one is giving a different meaning to the verse, explaining it to mean that one may not reveal embarrassing information about one's relatives. It is also possible that one does not even pronounce the word nakedness, but instead says: Shame.

תַּנְיָא מִבְּיַד רַבִּי יִשְׁמַעְיָאֵל – A Sage from the school of Rabbi Yishmael taught – **דְּבִי רַבִּי יִשְׁמַעְיָאֵל**: It would seem that this Sage interprets the verse precisely as the mishna states one may not interpret it. Some explain that the Sage was merely explaining the mistaken interpretation that the mishna was referring to. However, this explanation is difficult.

The *Arukh* and others explain that the mishna is referring to one who interprets the verse as relating only to Arameans. One might infer from this that it is permissible to marry women from other nations who do not worship Molekh. The Sage from the school of Rabbi Yishmael explained that the verse is referring to all gentile women. It can also be suggested that the interpretation of the verse as referring to fathering a child with a gentile woman is a valid homiletic approach, but it may not be presented as the literal meaning of the verse (*Re'ah Duda'im*). This also explains why the *Targum Yonatan* interprets the verse in this manner, as it is a homiletic work.

אָמַר רַבִּי זֵירָא: האומר שמע שמע
אָמַר מוֹדִים מוֹדִים דְּמִי.

מִתִּיבֵי הַקּוֹרֵא אֶת שְׁמַע וְכוּפְלֵהּ – הרי זה מגונה. מגונה הוא דהוי, שתוקי לא משתקין ליה! לא קשיא: הא – דאמר מילתא מילתא ותני לה, הא – דאמר פסוקא פסוקא ותני לה.

אָמַר לִיה רַב פַּפָּא לְרַבָּא – ודלמא מעיקרא לא ביון דעתיה והשתא ביון דעתיה? אָמַר לִיה: חברותא בלפי שמיא? אי לא מכיון דעתיה – מחינא ליה בארזפתא דנפחא עד דמכיון דעתיה.

הַמְכַנֶּה בְּעֵרִיּוֹת מִשְׁתַּקִּין אוֹתוֹ. תנא רב יוסף: קלוין אביו וקלוין אמו.

הַאֲמֹר וּמִזְרַעְךָ לֹא תִתֵּן לְהַעֲבִיר וכו'. תנא דבי רבי ישמעאל: בישאל הבא על הגויה והוליד ממנה בן לעבודה זרה הכתוב מדבר.

מִתְנִי' מַעֲשֵׂה רְאוּבֵן נִקְרָא וְלֹא מִתְרַגְּס, מַעֲשֵׂה תָמָר נִקְרָא וּמִתְרַגְּס, מַעֲשֵׂה עֶגְלָה נִקְרָא וּמִתְרַגְּס וְהַשְּׁנִי נִקְרָא וְלֹא מִתְרַגְּס. בְּרַבְת כְּהֵנִים, מַעֲשֵׂה דָּוִד וְאַמְנֹן נִקְרָאִין וְלֹא מִתְרַגְּמִין.

אִין מִפְטִירִין בְּמִרְכָּבָה, וְרַבִּי יְהוּדָה מִתִּיר. רַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר אָמַר: אִין מִפְטִירִין בְּהוֹדַע אֶת יְרוּשָׁלַם.

גַּמ' תְּנוּ רַבְנָן: יֵשׁ נִקְרִין וּמִתְרַגְּמִין, וְיֵשׁ נִקְרִין וְלֹא מִתְרַגְּמִין, וְיֵשׁ לֹא נִקְרִין וְלֹא מִתְרַגְּמִין. אֵלּוּ נִקְרִין וּמִתְרַגְּמִין: בְּלִית עִקְוִן נִשְׁפִּי'ה סִימָן.

Rabbi Zeira said: One who repeats himself while reciting Shema and says: Listen Israel, listen Israel,^{HN} is like one who says: We give thanks, we give thanks.

The Gemara raises an objection: It was taught in a *baraita*: **One who recites Shema and repeats it, it is reprehensible.** One may infer: **It is reprehensible, but they do not silence him.** The Gemara answers: **This is not difficult.** This case, where one repeats *Shema* and it is reprehensible but they do not silence him, is referring to **one who recites and repeats each individual word.** In so doing, he ruins the recitation of *Shema*. However, **that case, where Rabbi Zeira holds that they silence one who repeats Shema, is referring to one who recites and repeats an entire verse, as it appears that he is worshipping separate authorities.**

Rav Pappa said to Rava with regard to this halakha: And perhaps initially he did not focus his attention on the recitation of Shema and therefore had to repeat it, and now he focused his attention. Rava said to him: **Can one have that degree of familiarity with Heaven, to the extent that he can take his words lightly and say them however he likes? If he did not focus his attention, we beat him with a blacksmith's hammer until he focuses his attention, as conduct of that sort is unacceptable.**

We learned in the mishna: **If one modifies the text while reading the laws of forbidden sexual relations, they silence him.** Rav Yosef taught that this is referring to one who says: **The shame of his father and the shame of his mother,^N** instead of: “The nakedness of your father and the nakedness of your mother you shall not uncover” (Leviticus 18:7).

We learned in the mishna: **If one says, while translating the verse: “And you shall not give any of your seed to set them apart to Molekh” (Leviticus 18:21): And you shall not give any of your seed to impregnate an Aramean woman, he is silenced with rebuke.** A Sage from the school of Rabbi Yishmael taught:^N **One who translates the verse in this manner maintains that the verse speaks of a Jew who has relations with a gentile woman and fathered from her a son who will be raised to engage in idol worship.**

MISHNA **The incident of Reuben, about which it says: “And Reuben went and lay with Bilhah, his father’s concubine” (Genesis 35:22), is read from the Torah in public but not translated, so that the uneducated not come to denigrate Reuben. The incident of Tamar (Genesis, chapter 38) is read in public and also translated. The first report of the incident of the Golden Calf, i.e., the Torah’s account of the incident itself (Exodus 32:1–20), is read and translated, but the second narrative, i.e., Aaron’s report to Moses of what had taken place (Exodus 32:21–24) is read but not translated. The verses constituting the Priestly Benediction (Numbers 6:24–26) and the incident of David and Amnon (II Samuel, chapter 13) are read, but not translated.**

One may not conclude the Torah reading with by reading from the Prophets the account of the Divine Chariot (Ezekiel, chapter 1), so as not to publicize that which was meant to remain hidden. And Rabbi Yehuda permits it. Rabbi Eliezer says: One may not conclude with section from the Prophets beginning with: “Make known to Jerusalem her abominations” (Ezekiel 16:2), because it speaks derogatively of the Jewish people.

GEMARA **The Sages taught in the Tosefta (3:31): There are portions of the Bible that are read and translated; there are portions that are read but not translated; and there are portions that are neither read nor translated. The following are read and translated: The Hebrew acronym bet, lamed, tav; ayin, kuf, nun; nun, shin, peh, heh comprise a mnemonic for the sections included in this category, as the Gemara will explain.**

NOTES

The incident of Tamar and Judah – מעשה תמר ויהודה – It is explained in *Otzar HaKavod* that an additional reason why this section should be read is to indicate that Judah performed a mitzva. Before the giving of the Torah, perpetuating the legacy of the deceased through levirate marriage [*yibbum*] applied to the closest relative and not just to the brother of the deceased.

מעשה בראשית נקרא ומתרגם.
פשיטא! מהו דתימא: אתו לשיילי מה
למעלה מה למטה.

The Gemara enumerates the sections indicated by the letters of the mnemonic. The section of the act of Creation [*bereshit*], alluded to by the letter *bet*, is read and translated. The Gemara comments: This is obvious. Why might one think otherwise? The Gemara answers: **Lest you say that if the story of the Creation is read in public people will come to ask questions that should not be asked, for instance: What is above and what is below,**

ומה לפנים ומה לאחור, קא משמע לן.

what was before Creation and what is after, i.e., what will be at the end of time, therefore the *Tosefta* teaches us that the act of Creation is read in public.

”מעשה לוט ושתי בנותיו נקרא ומתרגם.” פשיטא! מהו דתימא: יחוש לכבודו דאברהם, קא משמע לן.

The *Tosefta* continues: **The incident of Lot and his two daughters is read and translated.** The name Lot begins with a *lamed*, the second letter of the mnemonic. The Gemara comments: This is obvious. Why might one think otherwise? The Gemara answers: **Lest you say that one should be concerned for the honor of Abraham, as Lot was his nephew, and therefore the incident casts shame upon Abraham as well, therefore the baraita teaches us that this is not a concern.**

”מעשה תמר ויהודה נקרא ומתרגם.” פשיטא! מהו דתימא: ליחוש לכבודו דיהודה, קא משמע לן: שבחיה הוא דאודי.

The *Tosefta* continues: **The incident of Tamar, beginning with a *tav*, and Judahⁿ is read and translated.** The Gemara comments: This is obvious. The Gemara answers: **Lest you say that one should be concerned for the honor of Judah, therefore the Tosefta teaches us that there is no such concern. On the contrary, the story is to his credit, as he confessed to his sin.**

”מעשה עגל הראשון נקרא ומתרגם.” פשיטא! מהו דתימא: ליחוש לכבודן של ישראל. קא משמע לן: כל שבין דנחא להו דהויא להו כפרה.

The *Tosefta* continues: **The first report of the incident of the Golden Calf [*egel*] is read and translated.** *Egel* begins with the letter *ayin*, the next letter of the mnemonic. The Gemara comments: This is obvious. The Gemara answers: **Lest you say that one should be concerned for the honor of the Jewish people, therefore the Tosefta teaches us that all the more so is it amenable to them that the matter be publicized, so that they will achieve atonement through their shame.**

”קללות וברכות נקריין ומתרגמין.” פשיטא! מהו דתימא: יחוש דלמא פייגא דעתיהו דצבורא, קא משמע לן.

The *Tosefta* states: **The curses [*kelalot*] and blessings are read and translated.** The Gemara comments: This is obvious. The Gemara answers: **Lest you say that one should be concerned that perhaps the congregation will become dismayed by the many curses, therefore the Tosefta teaches us that this is not a concern.**

”אזהרות ועונשין נקריין ומתרגמין.” פשיטא! מהו דתימא: יחוש דלמא אתו למעבד מיראה, קא משמע לן.

The *Tosefta* continues: **The warnings and punishments [*onashin*], alluded to in the first *nun* of the mnemonic mentioned above, are read and translated.** The Gemara comments: This is obvious. The Gemara answers: **Lest you say that if this section is read aloud, people will come to act out of fear and keep the mitzvot due to the fear of punishment rather than love of God, therefore the Tosefta teaches us that this is not a concern.**

”מעשה אמנון ותמר נקרא ומתרגם.” [”מעשה אבשלום נקרא ומתרגם.”] פשיטא! מהו דתימא: ליחוש ליקריה דדוד, קא משמע לן.

It is further taught: **The incident of Amnon and Tamar, alluded to in the second *nun* in the mnemonic mentioned above, is read and translated.** Additionally, **the incident of Absalom is read and translated, alluded to in the *shin* of the mnemonic, the third letter of his name.** The Gemara comments: This is obvious. The Gemara explains: **Lest you say that one should be concerned for the honor of David, therefore the Tosefta teaches us that this section is read and translated.**

”מעשה פילגש בגבעה נקרא ומתרגם.” פשיטא! מהו דתימא: ליחוש לכבודו דבנימין, קא משמע לן.

The *Tosefta* continues: **The incident of the concubine [*pilegish*] in Gibeah is read and translated.** The Gemara comments: This is obvious. The Gemara explains: **Lest you say that one should be concerned for the honor of the tribe of Benjamin, therefore the Tosefta teaches us that this section is read and translated.**

Make known to Jerusalem – הודע את ירושלים: The reason Rabbi Eliezer took issue with the reader despite the fact that he acted in accordance with the opinion of other Sages was because the reader should not have read this *haftara* in Rabbi Eliezer's town without his permission (Ran). The author of the *Levush* wrote that the accepted *halakha* does not prohibit reading this section as a *haftara*, and it was read as the *haftara* for *Parashat Shemot*. However, it is no longer customary to read it as a *haftara* because it speaks in a derogatory fashion about the Jewish people.

The incident of Reuben – מעשה ראובן: Reuben also admitted his guilt, as Judah did; however, since this is not explicitly mentioned in the verses or the translation, there was concern for Reuben's honor (Maharsha). Some say that the section is not translated due to concern for Jacob's honor.

The second narrative of the incident of the Golden Calf – מעשה עגל השני: Rashi and many others explain that the reason that this section is not translated is because a listener might think that the calf emerged from the fire on its own and possessed real power. However, *Tosafot* and the Rif explain that it is not translated due to Aaron's honor. The first narrative of the incident of the Golden Calf does not accentuate Aaron's role in the affair, while the second narrative does.

The incident of David and Amnon – מעשה דוד ואמנון: Some explain that this is referring to two separate incidents: The incident of David and Bathsheba and the incident of Amnon and Tamar (Rabbeinu Yehonatan; *Kesef Mishne*). Some commentaries accepted a version of the text that states that these sections are not read at all. Whereas the Torah is read in public in its entirety, not every section of Prophets is read as a *haftara*; therefore, it is possible to skip these sections entirely (*Tosefot Yam Tov*).

The incident of David and Amnon is neither read nor translated – מעשה דוד ואמנון לא נקרו ולא מתרגמין: The version of the mishna printed in the Vilna Talmud actually states: The incident of David and Amnon is read but not translated. Commentaries dispute whether the correct version of the mishna is as stated here in the Gemara, or whether the text of the Gemara should be adjusted to remain consistent with the version of the mishna printed on 25a.

“הודע את ירושלים את תועבותיה” נקרא ומתרגם. פשיטא! לאפוקי מדרבי אליעזר. דתניא: מעשה באדם אחד שהיה קורא למעלה מרבי אליעזר “הודע את ירושלים את תועבותיה” אמר לו: עד שאתה בודק בתועבות ירושלים – צא ובודק בתועבות אמך. בדקו אחרי ומצאו בו שמץ פסול.

“ואילו נקרו ולא מתרגמין” (רעבדן סימן) “מעשה ראובן נקרא ולא מתרגם”. ומעשה ברבי חנינא בן גמליאל שהלך לכבול והיה קורא תזן הכנסת “ויהי בשבון ישראל” ואמר לו למתרגמן: (הפסק) אל תתרגם אלא אחרון, ושיבחהו חכמים.

“מעשה עגל השני נקרא ולא מתרגם” איזה מעשה עגל השני? מן “ויאמר משה” עד “וירא משה”.

תניא רבי שמעון בן אלעזר אומר: לעולם יהא אדם זהיר בתשובותיו, שמתוך תשובה שהשיבו אהרן למשה פקרו המעשרים, שנאמר “ואשליכהו באש ויצא העגל הזה”.

“ברכת כהנים נקרו ולא מתרגמין” מאי טעמא? משום דכתיב “ישא”.

“מעשה דוד ואמנון לא נקרו ולא מתרגמין”, והא אמרת מעשה אמנון ותמר נקרא ומתרגם! לא קשיא: הא – דכתיב אמנון בן דוד, הא – דכתיב אמנון קתמא.

The *Tosefta* continues: The section of: “**Make known [hoda] to Jerusalem her abominations**” (Ezekiel 16:2) is read and translated. The Gemara comments: This is obvious. The Gemara answers: This is needed to exclude the opinion of Rabbi Eliezer, who held that this chapter may not be read as a *haftara*, as it is taught in a *baraita*: There was an incident with regard to a certain man who was reading the *haftara* in the presence of Rabbi Eliezer, and he read the section of: “**Make known to Jerusalemⁿ her abominations.**” Rabbi Eliezer said to him: Before you examine the abominations of Jerusalem, go and examine the abominations of your own mother. The Gemara relates that they examined his lineage and found him to have a stain of illegitimacy. His mother had engaged in illicit sexual relations, and therefore he was of questionable lineage.

The *Tosefta* also states: And these sections are read but are not translated. The acrostic composed of the letters *reish, ayin, bet, dalet, nun* is a mnemonic for the sections included in this category, as the Gemara will explain. The *Tosefta* states that the incident of Reubenⁿ is read but not translated. The name Reuben begins with a *reish*, the first letter of the mnemonic. And there was an incident involving Rabbi Hanina ben Gamliel, who went to the village of Kavul, and the sexton of the synagogue was reading: “**And it came to pass, while Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah, his father’s concubine; and Israel heard of it**” (Genesis 35:22). Rabbi Hanina said to the translator: Stop, translate only the end of the verse. And the Sages praised him for this.

The *Tosefta* continues: The second narrative of the incident of the Golden Calfⁿ is read but not translated. *Egel*, the Hebrew word for calf, begins with an *ayin*, the second letter in the mnemonic. The Gemara explains: What is the second narrative of the incident of the Golden Calf? Aaron’s account of what had taken place, from “**And Moses said to Aaron**” (Exodus 32:21) until “**And Moses saw**” (Exodus 32:25).

With regard to Aaron’s account, the Gemara cites that which is taught in a *baraita*: Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar says: A person should always be careful in the way he formulates his responses, as sometimes the explanation that a person provides for his actions is worse than the original action itself, as, for example, based on Aaron’s response to Moses, the skeptics renounced their religious beliefs. It is stated in Aaron’s response: “**And I cast it into the fire and this calf came forth**” (Exodus 32:24). This formulation implies that the calf came from the fire by itself, suggesting that it had divine power and substance.

We learned in the mishna: The verses constituting the Priestly Benediction [*birkat kohanim*] are read but not translated. The Gemara asks: What is the reason for this? The Gemara explains that it is because it is written: “**May the Lord lift up His countenance to you**” (Numbers 6:26). Listeners may understand this to mean that God shows unfair favoritism to the Jewish people.

We also learned in the mishna: The incident of David and Amnonⁿ is neither read nor translated.ⁿ David’s name begins with a *dalet*, the next letter in the mnemonic; *nun*, the last letter of the mnemonic, is the third letter in Amnon’s name. The Gemara asks: Didn’t you say in the *Tosefta* that the incident of Amnon and Tamar is both read and translated? The Gemara explains that this is not difficult. This statement of the mishna applies where Amnon’s name is written: Amnon, son of David. That statement of the *Tosefta* applies where it is written simply as Amnon.^h

HALAKHA

מה מתרגמים ומה לא מתרגמים – Not all of the Bible is translated in public. The incident of Reuben; the Priestly Benediction; the incident of the Golden Calf from: “And Moses said to Aaron” (Exodus 32:21) until: “And Moses saw” (Exodus 32:25); as well as the

verse: “And the Lord smote the people” (Exodus 32:35), are read but are not translated. Additionally, with regard to the incident of Amnon and Tamar, verses that mention Amnon, son of David, are not translated (Rambam *Sefer Ahava, Hilkhot Tefilla* 12:12).

BACKGROUND

Written in the Torah in a coarse manner – כתובין – בתורה לנגאי: The words mentioned in the Gemara are written in the Torah scroll, but when the Torah is read, these words are not pronounced. Instead, other words are verbalized in their place. The Rambam explains that the written words that are replaced are not obscene; they are merely blunt, and therefore when the Torah is read, they are replaced with words that are more delicate. However, the majority of the commentaries agree with the Ramban that these words are indeed coarse, and for that reason they are replaced with more dignified words when the Torah is read.

HALAKHA

Mockery of idol worship – ליענותא דעבודה זרה: Although mockery in general is forbidden, it is permitted to mock idol worship (Shulhan Arukh, Yoreh De'ea 147:5).

NOTES

Gimmel sin – גימיל שיין: The Gemara itself did not explain clearly the meaning of this in order to avoid writing coarse language. The commentaries dispute the meaning of this acronym. Rashi explains in the name of his teachers that it stands for gaifa shatya, foolish harlot. Some explain that it means: Son of a gentile [goy] maidservant [shifha]. Others explain that it stands for rebuke [ga'ara] and excommunication [shamta]. The Gemara in tractate Sanhedrin (63b) derives from here that it is permitted to mock the parents of a wicked individual, even if the parents themselves are not wicked (see Nimmukei Yosef).

It is permitted to praise him – שרי לשובחיה: It is not advisable to praise others in public, as it may lead to mentioning the individual's faults. Therefore, it was necessary for the Gemara to mention that it is permitted to do so in this case because praising the individual increases the honor of Heaven (Maharsha).

תנו רבנן: כל המקראות הכתובין בתורה לגנאי קורין אותן לשבח, כגון "ישגלנה" – ישכבנה, "בעפולים" – בטחורים, "חיריונים" – דביונים, "לאכול את חוריהם ולשתות את מימי שיניהם" – לאכול את צואתם ולשתות את מימי רגליהם,

"למחראות" – למוצאות. רבי יהושע בן קרחה אומר: למחראות – בשמן, מפני שהוא גנאי לעבודה זרה.

אמר רב נחמן: כל ליענותא אסירא בר מליענותא דעבודה זרה דשריא, דכתיב "פרע בל קרס נבו" וכתוב "קרסו פרעו יחדיו לא יכלו מלט משא" וגו'. רבי ינאי אמר מהכא: "לעגלות בית און יגורו שכן שומרון כי אבל עליו עמו וקמרו עליו יגילו על כבודו כי גלה ממנו", אל תקרי "כבודו" אלא כבידו.

אמר רב הונא בר מנחם משמיה דרב אחא בריה דרב איקא: שרי ליה לבר ישראל למימר ליה לגוי שקליה לעבודה זרה ואנחיה בשין תיו שלו. אמר רב אשי: האי מאן דסנאי שומעניה שרי ליה לבזייה בגימיל ושיין. האי מאן דשפיר שומעניה – שרי לשובחיה, ומאן דשבחיה ינחו לו ברכות על ראשו.

הדרן עלך הקורא את המגילה עומד

The Sages taught in a baraita: All of the verses that are written in the Torah in a coarse manner⁸ are read in a refined manner. For example, the term "shall lie with her [yishgalena]" (Deuteronomy 28:30) is read as though it said yishkavena, which is a more refined term. The term "with hemorrhoids [bafolim]" (Deuteronomy 28:27) is read batehorim. The term "doves' dung [hiryonim]" (II Kings 6:25) is read divyonim. The phrase "to eat their own excrement [horeihem] and drink their own urine [meimei shineihem]" (II Kings 18:27) is read with more delicate terms: To eat their own excrement [tzo'atam] and drink their own urine [meimei ragleihem].

The term "into latrines [lemohra'ot]" (II Kings 10:27) is read as the more refined lemotza'ot. Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korha says: Lemohara'ot is read as it is written because it is used here as an expression of contempt for idol worship, and it is therefore permissible to use an indelicate term.

Similarly, Rav Nahman said: All mockery and obscenity is forbidden except for mockery of idol worship,⁹ which is permitted, as it is written: "Bel bows down, Nevo stoops" (Isaiah 46:1). The prophet mocks these idols by describing them as crouching in order to defecate. Additionally, it is written: "They stoop, they bow down together; they could not deliver the burden" (Isaiah 46:2). Rabbi Yannai said: This principle that one is permitted to mock idol worship is derived from here: "The inhabitants of Samaria shall be in dread for the calves of Beth-aven; for its people shall mourn over it, and its priests shall tremble for it, for its glory, because it is departed from it" (Hosea 10:5). Do not read it as "its glory [kevodo]," rather read it as its burden [keveido], meaning that it is unable to restrain itself from defecating.

Rav Huna bar Manah said in the name of Rav Aha, son of Rav Ika: It is permitted for a Jew to say to a gentile: Take your idol and put it in your shin tav, i.e., shet, buttocks. Rav Ashi said: One whose reputation is tarnished, i.e., he is known as a philanderer, it is permitted to humiliate him by calling him gimmel sin,¹⁰ an acronym for girta sarya, son of a putrid harlot. One whose reputation is commendable, it is permitted to publicly praise him,¹¹ and one who praises him, blessings will rest upon his head.

מתני' בני העיר שמכרו רחובה של עיר – לוקחין בדמיו בית הכנסת, בית הכנסת – לוקחין תיבה, תיבה – לוקחין מטפחות, מטפחות –

MISHNA Residents of a town^N who sold the town square,^N which was at times used for public prayer and therefore attained a certain degree of sanctity, may use the proceeds of the sale only to purchase something of a greater degree of sanctity.^H They may therefore **purchase a synagogue with the proceeds of the sale. If they sold a synagogue, they may purchase an ark in which to house sacred scrolls. If they sold an ark, they may purchase wrapping cloths^B for the sacred scrolls. If they sold wrapping cloths,**

NOTES

Residents of a town – בני העיר: While in the standard version of the Babylonian Talmud this chapter appears as the fourth and final chapter in the tractate, in the Mishna and in the Jerusalem Talmud it appears at the third chapter of the tractate. Furthermore, many of the early commentaries appear to have that order in their versions of the Babylonian Talmud. See *Tosefot Yom Tov*, who explains the ordering of the chapters.

Who sold the town square – שמכרו רחובה של עיר: The mishna discusses a case in which the items of sanctity had already been sold. The commentaries discuss whether such a sale is permitted *ab initio*. Furthermore, the mishna mentions only that it is permitted to purchase an item of greater sanctity. The commentaries debate whether it is also permitted to purchase an item of equal sanctity if one wishes to replace an old item (see Rashba, Ra'avad, and *Rishon LeTziyyon*).

HALAKHA

Selling sacred items – מכירת תשמישי קדושה: When selling sacred items, the proceeds may be used only to purchase other items of a greater degree of sanctity. Therefore, residents of a town who sold a synagogue are permitted to purchase an ark or the table on which the Torah is placed. Similarly, if they sold an ark, they may use the proceeds to purchase wrapping cloths for the Torah (*Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim* 153:2).

BACKGROUND

Wrapping cloths – מטפחות: It would appear that in the period of the Mishna, scrolls of the Torah and other sacred texts were not covered in mantles, as is the Ashkenazic custom today. Rather, they were wrapped in pieces of cloth, which the mishna refers to as wrapping cloths. Alternatively, the wrapping cloths mentioned were attached to the back of scrolls in order to protect them from any damage or wear.

יקחו ספרים, ספרים – לוקחין תורה.

they may purchase scrolls^N of the Prophets and the Writings. If they sold scrolls of the Prophets and Writings, they may purchase a Torah scroll.

אבל אם מכרו תורה – לא יקחו ספרים, ספרים – לא יקחו מטפחות, מטפחות – לא יקחו בית הכנסת, תיבה – לא יקחו בית הכנסת, בית הכנסת – לא יקחו אף הרחוב.

However, the proceeds of a sale of a sacred item may not be used to purchase an item of a lesser degree of sanctity. Therefore, if they sold a Torah scroll, they may not use the proceeds to purchase scrolls of the Prophets and the Writings. If they sold scrolls of the Prophets and Writings, they may not purchase wrapping cloths. If they sold wrapping cloths, they may not purchase an ark. If they sold an ark, they may not purchase a synagogue. If they sold a synagogue, they may not purchase a town square.

וכן במותריהן.

And similarly, the same limitation applies to any surplus funds from the sale of sacred items, i.e., if after selling an item and purchasing something of a greater degree of sanctity there remain additional, unused funds, the leftover funds are subject to the same principle and may be used to purchase only something of a degree of sanctity greater than that of the original item.^H

HALAKHA

Selling sacred items – מכירת תשמישי קדושה: If the wrapping cloths of scrolls were sold, the proceeds may be used to purchase scrolls of individual books of the Torah, scrolls of the Prophets, or scrolls of the Writings. Whether there is a distinction between different types of scrolls is a matter of debate: Some suggest that a scroll of an individual book of the Torah has a greater degree of sanctity than a scroll of the Prophets or the Writings (*Magen Avraham*). Others assert that scrolls of all sacred books have the same degree of sanctity, apart from a scroll of the entire Torah (*Hatam Sofer*). Some suggest further

that if the texts are printed together in a book then all authorities would agree that they will all have the same degree of sanctity, even if one of them is an individual book of the Torah and the other is a book of the Prophets or the Writings (*Arukh HaShulhan*). If the scrolls are sold, the only item that may be purchased with the proceeds is a scroll of the entire Torah. In the event that after the purchase there are still surplus funds, they should also be used to purchase only items of greater sanctity than the original one (*Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim* 153:2).

NOTES

Scrolls – ספרים: Some explain that the reference is to scrolls of the Prophets and the Writings (Rashi). Others suggest that the term includes other sacred texts, such as scrolls of the Mishna (Meiri). A third opinion maintains that the reference is to scrolls of the individual books of the Torah. Since they only contained a single book, they had a lesser degree of sanctity than an entire Torah scroll (Rambam).