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.

MISHNA

If one says in his prayers:

May the good bless You, 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, as 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, or: You have shown mercy to animals, as expressed through the mitzva to chase away the mother bird 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, he is suspected of heretical beliefs and they silence him.

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 18:12): And you shall not give any of your seed to impregnate an Aramean woman, he is silenced with rebuke.

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 5:4a): One is obligated to bless God for the bad 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?

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 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 that must be fulfilled without inquiring into the reasons behind them.

HALAKHA

Just as Your mercy is extended to a bird’s nest – יאển ודרק‎ שער היהstructors: 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 her chicks or 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, Hilchot Tekila 9:7).

We give thanks, we give thanks – פיודא‎ מוריםך‎. One who says this twice is silenced (Shulhan Arukh, Oraḥ Hayyim 121).

One is obligated to bless God for the bad – יבֶּי עָנָי. 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, Oraḥ Hayyim 22:3).

NOTES

May the good bless You – ברכה מעשה: 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” (товינ) (Jeremiah 44:17), which indicates that tovin means satiated (Bd; Rabbeinu Yehonatan). Therefore, those who insert the phrase: May the tovin bless You, indicate that only one who is fully satiated must recite Grace after Meals. The Halakho, 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 tovin 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. – מתני׳. 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 – יאַאנא קַלְקַל. 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 Maharal, Tiferet Yisrael).
Rabba – רבובא: Rav Abba bar Nahmani Hakohen, popularly referred to as Rabba throughout the Babylonian Talmud, was a third-generation Babylonian amorah. Rabba was a student of Rav Hun, 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, Ray Yosef, whose breadth of knowledge earned him the nickname: Sinai. With regard to disagreements between Rabba and Ray 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, Rahba took him in and raised him.

Abaye – אבאי: Abaye was one of the most famous of the Babylonian amoraim. 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 (5b) 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 Yo]ah, who taught that one should devote himself entirely to Torah study and ignore worldly concerns.

PERSONALITIES

Rabba – רבובא: Rav Abba bar Nahmani Hakohen, popularly referred to as Rabba throughout the Babylonian Talmud, was a third-generation Babylonian amorah. Rabba was a student of Rav Hun, 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, Ray Yosef, whose breadth of knowledge earned him the nickname: Sinai. With regard to disagreements between Rabba and Ray Yosef, the halakha is almost always in accordance with the opinion of Rabba.

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To hone Abaye's intellect – תלמידו של אבאי: Many have questioned how Rabba intended to hone Abaye's intellect by saying something that contradicts an explicit mishna. Additionally, why did the Sages 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.

The Gemara relates that a particular individual descended before the ark as prayer leader in the presence of Rabba,4 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! Abaye5 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.6 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 gold 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.7

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.8 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

One should not recite too many praises – תלמידו של אבאי: 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 Akiva, Hilkhot Tefillah 9:7).

Everything is in the hands of Heaven except for fear of Heaven – yiḥidu ה’ מすべき: 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 Middot; Hilkhot Teshuva 5:2).
Rabbi Zeira said: One who repeats himself while reciting Shema and says: Listen Israel, listen Israel, א"ה 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 reprehenisible. One may infer: It is reprehenisible, but they do not silence him. The Gemara answers: This is not difficult. This case, where one repeats Shema and it is reprehenisible 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, א"ה 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 Molek” (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: 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.

Most commentsaries 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 Hananel; Arukh; Ramban). This is the implication of the Jerusalem Talmud as well. Conversely, Rashi, as well as the Rish 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.

A Sage from the school of Rabbi Yishmael taught: א"ה 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 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.

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 ber, lamed, tav; ayin, kaf, nun; nun, shin, peh, heh comprise a mnemonic for the sections included in this category, as the Gemara will explain.
The incident of Tamar and Judah – 362
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,

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

The Tosafot 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.

The Tosafot continues: The incident of Tamar, beginning with a tav, and Judah is read and translated. The name Tamar begins with a dag, the third 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 Judah, therefore the Tosafot teaches us that there is no such concern. On the contrary, the story is to his credit, as he confessed to his sin.

The Tosafot 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 Tosafot 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.

The Tosafot 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 Tosafot teaches us that this is not a concern.

The Tosafot 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 Tosafot teaches us that this section is read and translated.

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 Tosafot teaches us that this section is read and translated.

The Tosafot continues: The incident of the concubine [pilegesh] 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 Tosafot teaches us that this section is read and translated.
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 Reuben 1 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 line.

The Tosefta continues: The second narrative of the incident of the Golden Calf 2 is read but not translated. Eigel, 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 Amnon 3 is neither read nor translated. 4 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. 5

1. 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 haftarah in Rabbi Eliezer’s town without his permission (Ran). The author of the Levush wrote that the accepted halakhah 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.

2. The incident of Reuben was 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.

3. The second narrative of the incident of the Golden Calf – מַﬠֲשֵׂה הַשֵּׁנִי – is read but not translated. Rash 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.

4. The incident of David and Amnon is neither read nor translated – מַﬠֲשֵׂה דָּוִד וְאֶת מַﬠֲשֵׂה אֶת אֶלִיוּזֶר – Some explain that this is referring to two separate incidents: The incident of David and Bathsheba and the incident of Amnon and Tamar (Rabbeinu Yehorvatam, Kesef Mishneh). Some commentators 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 haftarah; therefore, it is possible to skip these sections entirely (Tosafot Yom Tov).

5. The incident of David and Amnon is neither read nor translated – מַﬠֲשֵׂה דָּוִד וְאֶלִיוּזֶר – 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.
Although mockery is forbidden, it is permitted to mock idol worship (Shulchan Arukh, Yoreh De’ah 147:
364). 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 ga’ala shayto, foolish harlot. Some explain that it means: Son of a gentle (goya) maidservant [sifha]. Others explain that it stands for rebuke [gadna] and excommunication [shamoa]. The Gemara in tractate Sanhedrin (6:8) 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 – לְשַׁבּוּחֵיהּ. 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):

The Sages taught in a baraita: All of the verses that are written in the Torah in a coarse manner 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]” (1 Kings 6:25) is read divyonim. The phrase “to eat their own excrement [loreihem] and drink their own urine [meimei shineihem]” (1 Kings 18:27) is read with more delicate terms: To eat their own excrement [tsodatom] and drink their own urine [meimei rageileihem].

Similarly, Rav Nahman said: All mockery and obscenity is forbidden except for mockery of idol worship, 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 defeat. 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...to eat their own excrement...” (Hosea 13:16). He explains that the inhabitants of Samaria, like Nevo and Beth-aven, shall humble themselves and one who praises them, blessings will rest upon his head.

Rav Huna bar Manoah 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 gimel sin, an acronym for gitra sarya, son of a putrid harlot. One whose reputation is commendable, it is permitted to publicly praise him, and one who praises him, blessings will rest upon his head.
Residents of a town\textsuperscript{9} who sold the town square,\textsuperscript{10} 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.\textsuperscript{11} 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\textsuperscript{12} for the sacred scrolls. If they sold wrapping cloths, they may purchase scrolls\textsuperscript{13} of the Prophets and the Writings. If they sold scrolls of the Prophets and Writings, they may purchase a Torah scroll.

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 clothes. If they sold wrapping clothes, 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.

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.\textsuperscript{14}