

**רבי אלעזר בן שמעון** – Rabbi Elazar ben Shammua – Rabbi Elazar ben Shammua was a *tanna* in the generation prior to the redaction of the Mishna and was among the greatest of Rabbi Akiva's students. Rabbi Elazar was among the leaders of the Jewish people in the years following the persecution in the wake of the failure of the bar Kokheva rebellion. Despite the dire situation, many students studied with him. One of his primary students was Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi, the redactor of the Mishna. Not many of Rabbi Elazar's *halakhot* are cited in the Mishna; however, he was held in high esteem by the Sages of the following generations. Rav, an *amora*, referred to him as the happiest of the Sages, and Rabbi Yohanan said of him: The hearts of the early Sages and Rabbi were like the Entrance Hall to the Sanctuary. In the Mishna and in *baraitot*, he is called simply Rabbi Elazar.

Rabbi Elazar ben Shammua lived a long life. According to one tradition he was 105 years old when he was killed. He is listed among the ten martyrs executed by the Romans.

שאלו תלמידיו את רבי אלעזר בן שמעון: במה הארכת ימים? אמר להם: מימי לא עשיתי קפנדריא לבית הכנסת, ולא פסעתי על ראשי עם קדוש, ולא נשאתי כפי בלא ברכה.

The Gemara discusses the second occasion where a Sage explained his longevity: **Rabbi Elazar ben Shammua<sup>p</sup> was once asked by his disciples: In the merit of which virtue were you blessed with longevity? He said to them: In all my days, I never made a shortcut<sup>n</sup> through a synagogue. Nor did I ever stride over the heads of the sacred people, i.e., I never stepped over people sitting in the study hall in order to reach my place, so as not to appear scornful of them. And I never raised my hands in the Priestly Benediction without reciting a blessing beforehand.<sup>n</sup>**

שאלו תלמידיו את רבי פרידא: במה הארכת ימים? אמר להם: מימי לא קדמני אדם לבית המדרש.

On the third occasion, **Rabbi Perida was once asked by his disciples: In the merit of which virtue were you blessed with longevity? He said to them: In all my days, no person ever arrived before me to the study hall, as I was always the first to arrive.**

## NOTES

I never made a shortcut – לא עשיתי קפנדריא: Generally, it is prohibited to take a shortcut through a synagogue. Therefore, some explain that Rabbi Elazar ben Shammua was particular about this even in cases where it was permitted to do so, such as in cases where the shortcut predated the synagogue. Similarly, a person who is needed by the community may stride over the people's heads. However, even in such a case, Rabbi Elazar ben Shammua was careful not to do so (see *Ramat Shmuel* and *Turei Even*).

ולא נשאתי – כפי בלא ברכה: The raising of one's hands in the Priestly Benediction and reciting a blessing upon doing so is an obligation upon every priest. What was unique here about Rabbi Elazar ben Shammua's behavior? Some explain that he would make a blessing even in cases where he could have relied on the blessing of his peers, since he had already fulfilled the mitzva once that day. Others suggest that Rabbi Elazar ben Shammua was referring to various additional blessings that were customary for priests to say following the Priestly Benediction (see Rabbi Yoshiya Pinto, Ritva, and Meiri).

Perek IV  
Daf 28 Amud a

ולא ברכתי לפני כהן, ולא אכלתי מבהמה שלא הורמו מתנותיה.

**And I never recited Grace after Meals in the presence of a priest, but rather I gave him the privilege to lead. And I never ate from an animal whose priestly portions,<sup>n</sup> i.e., the foreleg, the jaw, and the maw, had not already been set aside.**

דאמר רבי יצחק אמר רבי יוחנן: אסור לאכול מבהמה שלא הורמו מתנותיה. ואמר רבי יצחק: כל האוכל מבהמה שלא הורמו מתנותיה – כאילו אוכל טבליים. ולית הלכתא כוותיה.

Another example of Rabbi Perida's meticulous behavior is based on that **which Rabbi Yitzhak said that Rabbi Yohanan said: It is prohibited to eat meat from an animal whose priestly portions have not been set aside.<sup>h</sup> And Rabbi Yitzhak said: Anyone who eats meat from an animal whose priestly portions have not been set aside is regarded as if he were eating untithed produce.** The Gemara comments: **And the halakha is not in accordance with his opinion.** Rather, it is permitted to eat meat from such an animal. Nevertheless, Rabbi Perida acted stringently and did not eat from it.

ולא ברכתי לפני כהן.

The Gemara considers another of Rabbi Perida's actions: He said: **And I never blessed Grace after Meals in the presence of a priest, but rather I gave him the privilege to lead.**

למימרא דמעליותא היא? והא אמר רבי יוחנן: כל תלמיד חכם שמברך לפניו, אפילו בהן גדול עם הארץ – אותו תלמיד חכם חייב מיתה, שנאמר "כל משנאי אהבו מות". אל תקרי "משנאי" אלא משנאי!

**Is this to say that doing so is especially virtuous? But hasn't Rabbi Yohanan said: Any Torah scholar who allows someone else to bless Grace after Meals in his presence, i.e., to lead for him, even if that person is a High Priest who is an ignoramus, then that Torah scholar is liable to receive the death penalty for belittling his own honor? This is as it is stated: "All those who hate me, love death" (Proverbs 8:36). Do not read it as "those who hate Me [*mesan'ai*]," rather read it as though it said: Those who make Me hated [*masn'ai*].** The honor due to a Torah scholar is representative of the honor of God in the world. Therefore, by belittling his own honor, he causes others to fail to respect God, which can ultimately develop into hate. If so, why did Rabbi Perida consider his behavior to be so deserving of praise?

## NOTES

**Priestly portions** – מתנותיה: The Torah specifies that the foreleg, the jaw, and the maw of an animal should be given to a priest (Deuteronomy 18:3). These gifts differ from the priestly tithes separated from grain and produce of the land in two ways: First, from the outset these gifts are distinct and defined parts of the animals, unlike the tithes, which are taken as a portion of the grain as a whole. Second, unlike the tithes, the foreleg, the jaw, and the maw have no sanctity, and therefore the priest who receives them may give them to a non-priest to consume. For these reasons, it is permitted to consume those parts of the animal that do not have to be given to a priest, even before one has given the parts that do have to be so given (Ritva).

## HALAKHA

**An animal whose priestly portions have not been set aside** – בהמה שלא הורמו מתנותיה: The *halakha* is not in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yitzhak. It is permitted to eat from an animal whose priestly portions have not been set aside (Rambam *Sefer Zera'im, Hilkhhot Bikkurim* 9:14).

I never attained veneration at the expense of my fellow's denigration – לא נתכבדתי בקלון חברי: To pursue honor through degrading one's fellow is certainly prohibited. Rabbi Nehunya ben HaKana was praiseworthy because he would not accept veneration even in cases where other people wished to do so at their own expense, such as in the case of Rav Huna, cited by the Gemara.

If it is stated lamb why is it also stated one – אם נאמר אֶחָד כִּבְשׁ לָמָּה נֶאֱמַר אֶחָד: It would appear that the question is relatively simple. How, then, did it prove to Rabbi Nehunya that Rabbi Akiva was a Torah scholar? Some note that in the *Sifrei* there is an extended discussion with regard to the repeated appearances in the Torah of the mitzva to bring the daily offering. They explain that Rabbi Akiva demonstrated his scholarship by referring to that discussion (*Gan Naul*; see *Noda Bihuda*). Others explain that Rabbi Akiva was hinting to his first question. He knew that the meaning of "one lamb" was that only the unique animal in the flock is chosen to be used as an offering to God. With this he hinted that his original question was to be understood as follows: What unique virtue of Rabbi Nehunya was responsible for his longevity? (*Re'ah Duda'im*).

## LANGUAGE

Attendants [*gavzei*] – גֻּזְזֵי: This word also means a eunuch. It would appear that the root is *g-o-z*, or *g-z-z*, both of which mean cut. Kings would often use eunuchs as their servants, and the term eventually came to be used to refer to a servant in general.

כִּי קָאָמַר אִיהוּ – בְּשׂוּיָן.

שָׁאֵלוּ תַלְמִידָיו אֶת רַבִּי נְחוּנְיָא בְּן הַקָּנָה: בְּמַה הָאֲרַכְתָּ יָמִים? אָמַר לָהֶם: מֵיָמַי לֹא נִתְכַבְּדְתִי בְּקִלּוֹן חֲבֵרִי, וְלֹא עֲלֵתָה עָלַי מִשְׁתֵּי קִלְלַת חֲבֵרִי, וּוְתָרֵן בְּמִמוֹנֵי הָיִיתִי.

לֹא נִתְכַבְּדְתִי בְּקִלּוֹן חֲבֵרִי – כִּי הָא דְרַב הוּנָא דְרִי מְרָא אֲכַתְפִּיָּה, אֲתָא רַב חֲנַנְיָא בְּרַ חֲנִילַי וְקָא דְרִי מֵינְיָה. אָמַר לֵיהּ: אִי רִגִּילַת דְּדְרִית בְּמֵאֲתֵיךְ – דְּרִי, וְאִי לֹא – אֲחֵינְקוּרֵי אֲנָא בְּוִילוּתָא דִּידְךָ, לֹא נִחָא לִי.

וְלֹא עֲלֵתָה עָלַי מִשְׁתֵּי קִלְלַת חֲבֵרִי – כִּי הָא דְמַר זוּטְרָא, כִּי הוּהוּ סְלִיק לְפוּרְיָהּ אָמַר: שְׂרִי לֵיהּ לְכָל מֵאֵן דְּצַעְרֵן.

וּוְתָרֵן בְּמִמוֹנֵי הָיִיתִי – דָּאָמַר מַר: אִיּוֹב וּוְתָרֵן בְּמִמוֹנֵיהּ הָוּה, שְׁהֵיָה מִנִּיחַ פְּרוּטָה לְחֲנֻנֵי מִמּוֹנֵיהּ.

שָׁאֵל רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא אֶת רַבִּי נְחוּנְיָא הַגָּדוֹל, (אָמַר לוֹ) בְּמַה הָאֲרַכְתָּ יָמִים? אָתּוּ גֻזְזֵי וְקָא מְחוּ לֵיהּ. סְלִיק יְתִיב אַרְיִשָׁא דְדִיקְלָא. אָמַר לֵיהּ: רַבִּי, אִם נֶאֱמַר "כִּבְשׁ" לָמָּה נֶאֱמַר "אֶחָד"? אָמַר לֵיהּ: צוּרְבָא מְדַרְבְּנָן הוּא, שְׁבִקוּהוּ.

אָמַר לֵיהּ: "אֶחָד" מֵיּוֹחַד שְׁבַעֲדָרוּ.

אָמַר לֵיהּ: מֵיָמַי לֹא קִבַּלְתִּי מִתְּנוּת, וְלֹא עָמַדְתִּי עַל מְדוּתִי, וּוְתָרֵן בְּמִמוֹנֵי הָיִיתִי.

The Gemara answers: **When Rabbi Perida says this, he was speaking of people of equal stature.** He was particular to honor the priesthood only when the priest was also a Torah scholar.

The Gemara discusses the fourth Sage who was blessed with longevity: **Rabbi Nehunya ben HaKana was once asked by his disciples: In the merit of which virtue were you blessed with longevity? He said to them: In all my days, I never attained veneration at the expense of my fellow's degradation. Nor did my fellow's curse ever go up with me upon my bed.** If ever I offended someone, I made sure to appease him that day. Therefore, when I went to bed I knew that no one had any grievances against me. **And I was always openhanded with my money.**

The Gemara clarifies the meaning of his statement: **Rabbi Nehunya said: I never attained veneration at the expense of my fellow's denigration.**<sup>n</sup> This is referring to conduct such as that of Rav Huna, who was carrying a hoe over his shoulder as he returned from his work. **Rav Hana bar Hanilai came and, out of respect for his teacher, took the hoe from him to carry it for him.** **Rav Huna said to him: If you are accustomed to carry such objects in your own city, you may carry it; but if not, then for me to be venerated through your denigration is not pleasing for me.**

Rabbi Nehunya also said: **Nor did I ever allow the resentment caused by my fellow's curse to go up with me upon my bed.** This is referring to conduct such as that of Mar Zutra. **When he would go to bed at night, he would first say: I forgive anyone who has vexed me.**

Lastly, Rabbi Nehunya said: **And I was always openhanded with my money.** This is referring to conduct such as that which the Master said: **Job was openhanded with his money, as he would always leave at least a *peruta* of his money with the shopkeeper.** He never demanded the change from his transactions.

On a similar occasion, Rabbi Akiva asked Rabbi Nehunya the Great; he said to him: **In the merit of which virtue were you blessed with longevity?** Rabbi Nehunya's attendants [*gavzei*]<sup>1</sup> came and started beating Rabbi Akiva, for they felt that he was acting disrespectfully by highlighting Rabbi Nehunya's old age. Rabbi Akiva ran away from them, and he climbed up and sat upon the top of a date palm. From there, he said to Rabbi Nehunya: **My teacher, I have a question about the verse concerning the daily offering that states "one lamb" (Numbers 28:4). If it is stated "lamb" in the singular, why is it also stated "one"; isn't this superfluous?** Upon hearing Rabbi Akiva's scholarly question, Rabbi Nehunya said to his attendants: **He is clearly a young Torah scholar, let him be.**

Rabbi Nehunya then addressed Rabbi Akiva's questions. With regard to the second question, he said to him: The word "one" teaches that the lamb should be **the unique one of its flock**, i.e., only the best quality lamb should be used.

With regard to the original question, Rabbi Nehunya said to him: **In all my days I never accepted gifts. Nor was I ever inflexible by exacting a measure of retribution<sup>h</sup> against those who wronged me. And I was always openhanded with my money.**

## HALAKHA

וְלֹא נָוֵס לְעֵצָה לְעַשׂוֹת מִשְׁפָּט – אִם אִתְּוֵיבְתָּ מִדְּוִי: One should not be merciless when it comes to forgiving an injustice that has been done to him. However, if one's intention in not forgiving is ultimately for the benefit of the person who wronged him, it is permitted to refuse forgiveness (*Magen Avraham*). In all cases, one must certainly banish any

feelings of hate from his heart (*Mishna Berura*). One does not have to forgive another who slandered him; however, a humble person will do so (*Magen Avraham*, citing *Yam Shel Shlomo*). One is required to forgive the person who wronged him if he publicly states his remorse (*Arukh HaShulhan*; *Shulhan Arukh*, *Orah Hayyim* 606:1, and in the comment of Rema).

**Rabbi Zeira** – רבי זעירא: Born in Babylonia, Rabbi Zeira, known in the Jerusalem Talmud as Rabbi Ze'ira, was one of the great third-generation *amora'im* in Eretz Yisrael. His father was a tax collector for the Persian government, who was praised as one of the few who filled that position with honesty. Rabbi Zeira ascended to Eretz Yisrael, where he entirely identified with the style of Torah study there. The Gemara relates that he fasted one hundred fasts in order to forget the Torah that he had studied in Babylonia.

Rabbi Zeira was famous for his sharp intellect, and he was the author of incisive *halakhot*. He was also known as an extremely God-fearing man. There are several stories related to his distinction in this area. His modesty was such that he did not even want to be ordained with the title rabbi. He relented only after he was told that with ordination comes atonement for one's sins.

The Gemara relates that he fasted one hundred additional fasts so that the fire of Gehenna would not harm him. He would test himself by entering a fiery furnace. On one occasion, his legs were scorched, and from then on he was called: The little man with the scorched legs. He was a contemporary of Rav Hisda, Rav Sheshet, and Rabba in Babylonia, and of the disciples of Rabbi Yoḥanan in Eretz Yisrael, and he engaged in extensive halakhic discourse with all of them.

Apparently, he was a flax merchant in Eretz Yisrael, and it is conceivable that he had occasion in the course of his business to return to Babylonia several times.

The text of the beginning of Rabbi Zeira's eulogy is preserved in the Talmud: The land of Shinar, Babylonia, conceived and gave birth; the land of splendor, Eretz Yisrael, raised her plaything. Woe unto her, said Reket, Tiberias, for she has lost her beloved vessel.

He had a son, Rabbi Ahava, who was a Sage in the following generation.

**Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korḥa** – רבי יהושע בן קרחה: Little is known about the life of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korḥa. From the list of Sages with whom he deliberated, it appears that he was one of the students of Rabbi Akiva. Some even suggest that Korḥa is a nickname for Rabbi Akiva himself, and thereby identify him as Rabbi Yehoshua, son of Rabbi Akiva, who is mentioned elsewhere. However, there is little evidence for this. As mentioned in the Gemara, Rabbi Yehoshua lived a long life, and therefore it seems that he must have been born around the time of the destruction of the Second Temple, although he mainly taught during the years after Rabbi Akiva was executed. Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korḥa's teachings on *halakha* and *aggada* are found in the Mishna and in *baraitot*. It appears that he was a gifted debater and would often debate against the heretics and the gentiles of his day.

לא קבלתי מתנות, כי הא דרבי אלעזר, כי הוּוּ מְשַׁדְּרֵי לִיהּ מִתְּנַת מְבִי נְשִׂיאָהּ לֹא הוּוּ שְׂקִיל, כִּי הוּוּ מְזַמְּנֵי לִיהּ – לֹא הוּוּ אֲוִיל, אָמַר לְהוּ: לֹא נִחָא לְכוּ דְאַחֵיהּ? דְּכַתִּיב "שׁוֹנֵא מִתְּנַת יְחִיהּ". רַבִּי זְעִירָא, כִּי הוּוּ מְשַׁדְּרֵי לִיהּ מְבִי נְשִׂיאָהּ – לֹא הוּוּ שְׂקִיל, כִּי הוּוּ מְזַמְּנֵי לִיהּ – אֲוִיל, אָמַר: אֲתִיּוּקוּרֵי דְמִתִּיקוּרֵי בִּי.

The Gemara explains: I never accepted gifts; this is referring to conduct such as that of Rabbi Elazar. When they would send him gifts from the house of the *Nasi*, he would not take them, and when they would invite him, he would not go there, as he considered hospitality to be a type of gift. He would say to them: Is it not pleasing to you that I should live, as it is written: "He that hates gifts shall live" (Proverbs 15:27)? In contrast, it was reported about Rabbi Zeira<sup>p</sup> that when they would send him gifts from the house of the *Nasi*, he would not accept them, but when they would invite him, he would go there. He said: They are honored by my presence; therefore my visiting is not considered like I am taking a gift from them.

וְלֹא עֲמַדְתִּי עַל מְדוּתֵי – דְּאָמַר רַבָּא: כָּל הַמַּעֲבִיר עַל מְדוּתֵי מַעֲבִירִין מְמַנּוּ כָּל פְּשָׁעוֹ, שְׁנַאֲמַר "נוֹשֵׂא עֵז וְעוֹבֵר עַל פְּשָׁע" לְמִי נוֹשֵׂא עֵז – לְמִי שְׁעוֹבֵר עַל פְּשָׁע.

He also said: Nor was I ever inflexible in exacting a measure of retribution against those who wronged me. This is referring to conduct such as that which Rava said: Anyone who overlooks exacting a measure of retribution against those who wronged him, all his transgressions are removed from him, as it is stated: "He pardons iniquity and overlooks transgression" (Micah 7:18), which is homiletically read as saying: For whom does He pardon iniquity? For he who overlooks transgressions that others have committed against him.

שְׂאֵל רַבִּי אֶת רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן קֶרְחָה: בְּמָה הֶאֱרַכְתָּ יָמִים? אָמַר לִיהּ: קִצְתָּ בְּחַיִּי? אָמַר לוֹ: רַבִּי, תוֹרָה הִיא וְלִלְמוּד אֲנִי צְרִיךְ. אָמַר לִיהּ: מִיָּמַי לֹא נִסְתַּבַּלְתִּי בְּדַמּוּת אָדָם רָשָׁע. דְּאָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן: אָסוּר לְאָדָם לְהִסְתַּבֵּל בְּצַלְמֵ דְמוּת אָדָם רָשָׁע, שְׁנַאֲמַר "לוֹלֵא פְּנֵי יְהוֹשֻׁפַט מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה אֲנִי נוֹשֵׂא אִם אֲבִיט אֱלִיךְ וְאִם אֶרְאֶךְ".

In a similar incident, Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi once asked Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korḥa:<sup>p</sup> In the merit of which virtue were you blessed with longevity? He said to him: Why do you ask me, are you wearied of my long life? Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi said to him: My teacher, it is Torah and so I must learn it. Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korḥa said to him: In all my days I never gazed at the likeness of a wicked man, as Rabbi Yoḥanan said: It is prohibited for a person to gaze in the image of the likeness of a wicked man,<sup>n</sup> as it is stated that the prophet Elisha said to Jehoram king of Israel: "Were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat, the king of Judea, I would not look toward you, nor see you" (II Kings 3:14).

רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר אָמַר: עֵינָיו בְּהוּת, שְׁנַאֲמַר "וַיְהִי כִּי יָקַן יִצְחָק וַתְּכַהֵן עֵינָיו מֵרְאוֹת", מִשּׁוּם דְּאִסְתַּבַּל בְּעֵשָׂו הָרָשָׁע.

Rabbi Elazar said: One who gazes at the likeness of an evil man, his eyes become dim, as it is stated: "And it came to pass, that when Isaac was old, and his eyes were dim so that he could not see" (Genesis 27:1). This happened because he gazed at the wicked Esau.

וְהָא גְרָמָא לִיהּ? וְהָאֻמַּר רַבִּי יִצְחָק: לְעוֹלָם אֵל תְּהִי קִלְלַת הַדְּיוּט קִלְלָהּ בְּעֵינֶיךָ, שְׁהִי אֲבִימֶלֶךְ קִלַּל אֶת שָׂרָה וְנִתְקַיֵּים בְּוִרְעָה, שְׁנַאֲמַר "הִנֵּה הוּא לְךָ כְּסוּת עֵינַיִם", אֵל תִּקְרִי "כְּסוּת" אֶלָּא כְּסִיית עֵינַיִם!

The Gemara asks: Did this cause Isaac's blindness? Didn't Rabbi Yitzḥak say: A curse of an ordinary person should not be lightly regarded in your eyes, because Abimelech cursed Sarah, and although he was not a righteous man, his curse was nevertheless fulfilled, albeit in her descendant. As it is stated that Abimelech said to Sarah with regard to the gift that he gave to Abraham: "Behold, it is for you a covering of the eyes" (Genesis 20:16). Do not read it as "a covering [kesut] of the eyes," but rather read it as: A blindness [kesiat] of the eyes. Abimelech's words were a veiled curse for Sarah to suffer from blindness. While she herself did not suffer, the curse was apparently fulfilled in the blindness of her son, Isaac.

הָא וְהָא גְרָמָא לִיהּ. רַבָּא אָמַר מִהָכָּא: "שְׂאֵת פְּנֵי רָשָׁע לֹא טוֹב".

According to Rabbi Yitzḥak, Abimelech's curse was the cause of Isaac's blindness, and it was not, as Rabbi Elazar suggested, the fact he gazed at Esau. The Gemara explains: Both this and that jointly caused it. Rava said: The prohibition against gazing at the likeness of a wicked person is derived from here: "It is not good to raise the face of the wicked" (Proverbs 18:5).

## NOTES

בְּצַלְמֵ דְמוּת – אָדָם רָשָׁע: This is prohibited because when one gazes at the likeness of another, one is drawn to him and begins to feel closer to him (*Pardes Rimmonim*). Therefore, only extended gazing and study of the image is prohibited, but not a casual

glance (*Gilyon HaShas*). Furthermore, some suggest that the phrase: The image of the likeness, which appears repetitious, is intended to extend the prohibition to looking at even a picture of an evil man and not just the person in the flesh and blood (*Ramat Shmuel*).

בשעת פטירתו אמר ליה: [רבי] ברכני! אמר ליה: יהי רצון שתגיע לחצי ימי ולכולהו לא? אמר לו: הבאים אחריך בהמה ירעו?

At the time of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korḥa's departure from this world, Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi said to him: My teacher, bless me. He said to him: May it be God's will that you live to reach to half of my days. When Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi heard this, he asked in astonishment: Are you saying that to the entirety of your days I should not reach? Why? Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korḥa said to him: Shall those who come after you just tend cattle? If you live as long as me, your sons will never be able to succeed you in the position of Nasi. As such, they will never achieve greatness in Torah, and it will be as if they just tended cattle throughout their lives. It is therefore better that your life not be so prolonged, so that they have the opportunity to rise to eminence.

אבוה בר איהי ומנימן בר איהי, חד אמר: תיתי לי דלא אסתכלי בגוי, וחד אמר: תיתי לי דלא עבדי שותפות בהדי גוי.

Avuh bar Ihi and Minyamin bar Ihi both spoke on this topic: One of them said: May a blessing come to me for I never gazed at a wicked gentile. And the other one said: May a blessing come to me for I never formed a partnership with a wicked gentile,<sup>N</sup> so as not to have any association with a wicked person.

שאלו תלמידיו את רבי זירא: במה הארכת ימים? אמר להם: מימי לא הקפדתי בתוך ביתי, ולא צעדתי בפני מי שגדול ממני, ולא הרהרתי במבואות המטונפות, ולא הלכתי ארבע אמות בלא תורה ובלא תפילין, ולא ישנתי בבית המדרש לא שינת קבע ולא שינת עראי, ולא ששתי בתקלת חבירי, ולא קראתי לחבירי (בחניכתו) ואמרי לה (בחניכתו).

The Gemara presents a similar incident: Rabbi Zeira was once asked by his disciples: In the merit of which virtue were you blessed with longevity? He said to them: In all my days, I was never angry inside my house with members of my household who acted against my wishes. Nor did I ever walk ahead of someone who was a greater Torah scholar than me. Nor did I ever meditate upon words of Torah in filthy alleyways,<sup>NH</sup> as doing so is a disgrace to the Torah. Nor did I ever walk four cubits without meditating on words of Torah or without wearing phylacteries. Nor did I ever sleep in a study hall,<sup>H</sup> neither a deep sleep or a brief nap. Nor did I ever rejoice when my fellow stumbled.<sup>N</sup> Nor did I ever call my fellow by his derogatory nickname [*hanikhato*].<sup>N</sup> And some say that he said: I never called my fellow by his nickname [*hakhinato*], i.e., even one that is not derogatory.

NOTES

דלא עבדי – שותפות בהדי גוי: *Tosafot* note that entering into a partnership with a gentile can lead to an actual prohibition: If there is a dispute between the parties and the gentile is required to attest under oath to the truth of his claim, he will probably swear on his idol, and it is prohibited for a Jew to cause this. Since the Gemara is speaking of a Sage performing a righteous act that is not strictly required, one must explain that the Gemara here is referring to a case where they agreed from the outset that if an oath will be required, the gentile will not make it on an idol (Rashba).

בתקלת חבירי: It would appear that such practice is not just virtuous but required, as the verse states: "Do not rejoice over your enemies' downfall" (Proverbs 24:17). Some suggest that verse is referring only to enemies but not one's fellow. When one rejoices over his enemies' downfall it is an expression of his hatred towards them and is therefore prohibited. However, if a person rejoices over his fellow's downfall it is clearly not an expression of his hatred towards him; rather, it is certainly due to the benefit he derived from the situation. For example, if one purchased something from another at a low price, even though the other certainly lost out, one may still rejoice over his own gain. To refrain from such rejoicing is only a righteous custom (Maharsha; see *Rishon LeZiyon*). Others explain that his statement should be understood differently: Rabbi Zeira so empathized with his colleagues that if they stumbled he would not rejoice even when he was involved in celebrating a joyous occasion such as a wedding or Festival (*Dagan Shamayim*).

ולא הרהרתי במבואות – *halakha* is that meditating upon words of Torah in a filthy alleyway is prohibited. Why, then, was Rabbi Zeira praiseworthy for doing that which he was required to do? Some suggest that Rabbi Zeira himself ruled in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yohanan, that it is permitted to meditate upon words of Torah even in a filthy alleyway, but that out of righteousness he refrained from doing so. He therefore considered his action to be particularly virtuous (Rashba). Others suggest that since Rabbi Zeira was always deep in thought of Torah, it was particularly hard for him to clear his mind. He was praiseworthy for nevertheless exercising control over his mind when he walked through such places (*Rishon LeZiyon*).

חניכתו – [*hanikhato*]: The intention is to a nickname that although it is somewhat derogatory, one has come to terms with it and doesn't mind being referred to by it. Some explain that the root of the word is *k-n-h*, similar to the word *kinui*, which means a nickname. Although it would appear the root should be *h-n-k*, meaning educate, if that is the case it is hard to understand what the connection is with its meaning here.

ולא ששתי – ששתי: Nor did I rejoice when my fellow stumbled

HALAKHA

הרהור תורה – התורה: It is prohibited even to think about words of Torah in a filthy place, i.e., a place that has excrement or urine (*Shulḥan Arukh, Orach Hayyim* 85:2).

שינה בבית המדרש – *halakha* is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Zeira. A brief nap is permitted, but it is a righteous custom not to sleep there at all (*Shulḥan Arukh, Yoreh De'a* 246:16; *Shakh*).

And Rabbi Yehuda said further – וְעוֹד אָמַר רַבִּי יְהוּדָה: In the previous mishna, Rabbi Yehuda rules that even though a synagogue may not be sold to someone who wishes to use it for inappropriate purposes, it may be sold to be used as a courtyard, and the buyer may then do with it as he wishes. *Tosafot* ask: The fact Rabbi Yehuda's statement is introduced in the mishna as: And he said further, suggests that his statement in this mishna is a progression of his statement in the previous mishna. However, it is difficult to understand how that could be when in the previous mishna he is lenient and in this mishna he is stringent. See their answer, as well as *Tosefot Yom Tov*.

This question is based on the standard text of the Mishna. However, many early commentaries had a different text of the mishna. According to that version it is Rabbi Yehuda, and not Rabbi Meir, who prohibits the sale of the synagogue from a community to an individual. If so, this statement of Rabbi Yehuda is a continuation of that ruling and presents another *halakha* based on the stringency that Rabbi Yehuda attaches to the sanctity of a synagogue.

As it is stated, And I will bring desolation to your sanctuaries – שְׁנֵאמַר וְהִשְׁמֹתִי אֶת מְקוֹדְשֵׁיכֶם – The *Sefat Emet* suggests that the words “your sanctuaries,” as opposed to: Your houses of sanctuary, indicates that the sanctity of a synagogue does not depend on its being a house, i.e., a sound structure. Rather, even in a state of desolation it retains its sanctity. Other suggestions can be found in *Tosefot Yom Tov* and the Responsa of Maharit (222).

מתני' וְעוֹד אָמַר רַבִּי יְהוּדָה: בֵּית הַכְּנֶסֶת שֶׁחָרַב אֵין מְסַפְּדִין בְּתוֹכוֹ, וְאֵין מְפַשְׁלִין בְּתוֹכוֹ חֲבָלִים, וְאֵין פּוֹרְשִׁין לְתוֹכוֹ מְצוּדוֹת, וְאֵין שׁוֹטְטִין עַל גַּגּוֹ פִּירוֹת, וְאֵין עוֹשִׂין אוֹתוֹ קַפְנֵדְרִיא.

שְׁנֵאמַר וְהִשְׁמֹתִי אֶת מְקוֹדְשֵׁיכֶם, קְדוּשָׁתוֹ אֵף כְּשֶׁהוּא שׁוֹמֵמִין.

עַלּוּ בּוֹ עֵשָׂבִים – לֹא יִתְלוֹשׁ, מִפְּנֵי עֲגָמַת נֶפֶשׁ.

גַּמְ' תִּנּוּ רַבְנֵי: בְּתֵי כְּנֶסֶיּוֹת אֵין נוֹהֲגִין בְּהֵן קְלוּת רֵאשׁ: אֵין אוֹכְלִין בְּהֵן, וְאֵין שׁוֹתִין בְּהֵן.

**MISHNA** And Rabbi Yehuda said further:<sup>N</sup> A synagogue that fell into ruin still may not be used for a mundane purpose. Therefore, **one may not eulogize in it. And nor may one stretch out and repair ropes in it.** The wide expanse of the synagogue would have been particularly suitable for this. **And nor may one spread animal traps within it. And nor may one spread out produce upon its roof to dry. And nor may one make it into a shortcut.**

The *halakha* that a synagogue in disrepair still may not be used for mundane purposes is derived from a verse, as it is stated: “**And I will bring desolation to your sanctuaries**”<sup>N</sup> (Leviticus 26:31). The fact that the word “sanctuaries” appears after the word “desolation” indicates that **their sanctity remains upon them even when they are desolate.**

However, if **grass sprang up** of its own accord in the ruined synagogue, although it is not befitting its sanctity, **one should not pick it, due to the anguish** that it will bring to those who see it. It will remind them of the disrepair of the synagogue and the need to rebuild it.

**GEMARA** The Sages taught in a *baraita*: With regard to synagogues: **One may not act inside them with frivolity. Therefore, one may not eat in them; nor may one drink in them;**

#### Perek IV

#### Daf 28 Amud b

וְאֵין גִּיאֹתִין בְּהֵם, וְאֵין מְטַיְלִין בְּהֵם, וְאֵין נִכְנָסִין בְּהֵן בַּחֲמָה מִפְּנֵי הַחֲמָה וּבְגִשְׁמִים מִפְּנֵי הַגִּשְׁמִים, וְאֵין מְסַפְּדִין בְּהֵן הַסֶּפֶד שֶׁל יְהוּדִי. אֲבָל קוֹרִין בְּהֵן, וְשׁוֹנִין בְּהֵן, וּמְסַפְּדִין בְּהֵן הַסֶּפֶד שֶׁל רַבִּים.

אָמַר רַבִּי יְהוּדָה: אֵימְתִי – בִּישׁוּבְךָ, אֲבָל בְּחֻרְבְּךָ – מִנְחִין אוֹתוֹ עוֹלָין בְּהֵן עֵשָׂבִים, וְלֹא יִתְלוֹשׁ מִפְּנֵי עֲגָמַת נֶפֶשׁ.

and one may not adorn oneself<sup>N</sup> inside them; nor may one wander about inside them; nor may one enter them in the sun for protection from the sun, or in the rain to find shelter from the rain; nor may one offer a eulogy inside them for an individual, which is a private event. However, one may read the Bible inside them, and one may study *halakhot* inside them,<sup>N</sup> and one may offer a eulogy inside them for a Torah scholar, if the public attends the eulogy.<sup>H</sup>

Rabbi Yehuda said: When does this apply? When the synagogues are occupied by the people using them. But when they are in a state of ruin, they should be left alone so that grass will sprout up inside them. And that grass should not be picked and removed, due to the anguish that it will bring to those who see it. It will remind them of the disrepair of the synagogue and the need to rebuild it.

#### HALAKHA

**כִּיצַד נוֹהֲגִים בְּבֵית הַכְּנֶסֶת:** One should not act with frivolity in a synagogue or jest or engage in idle talk there. This applies even if the activity is for the sake of one's livelihood (*Magen Avraham*). One who frequently talks idly in the synagogue should repent in the following way: He should fast for forty days, receive lashes every day, and accept upon himself to no longer speak at all when in a synagogue (*Kaf HaHayyim*, citing *Roke'ah*).

One may not eat or drink in a synagogue, nor may one do labor there (*Mishna Berura*). One may not adorn oneself or wander about, and it is prohibited to enter in order to shelter oneself from the sun or the rain. Business calculations may not be done there, except calculations for the fulfillment

of a mitzva, such as for the sake of charity or redeeming captives.

Only a leader of the generation, or the relatives of a leader if the public gathers for them, may be eulogized in a synagogue. Rabbi Yitzhak Luria would be cautious not to speak even words of ethics in a synagogue, in order to avoid the speech digressing into common talk (*Magen Avraham*). And one should not kiss one's children in a synagogue, to show that there is no love like the love of the Holy One, Blessed be He (*Agudat*). However, one may kiss the hand of a scholar or of his father or teacher when he descends from being called up to the Torah, as this demonstrates one's respect for the mitzvot (*Shulhan Arukh, Orach Hayyim* 151:1).

Adorn oneself [*nei'otin*] – גִּיאֹתִין: Rashi and many others understand that this word is derived from the word *noi*, meaning beauty. They therefore explain that the prohibition is to adorn oneself inside a synagogue. The Meiri assumes the word is derived from *naveh*, meaning an abode, and therefore explains that there is a prohibition to use a synagogue as one's dwelling place. Rashi suggests in tractate *Shabbat* (42b) that the word is derived from the *hana'a*, meaning pleasure or benefit, and therefore there is a prohibition to use the synagogue for one's private affairs.

One may read the Bible inside them and one may study *halakhot* inside them – קוֹרִין בְּהֵן וְשׁוֹנִין בְּהֵן: It is not immediately obvious that it should be permitted to study and perform mitzvot other than prayer inside a synagogue. The synagogue is a place designated uniquely for prayer, and therefore one might have deemed it inappropriate to do anything else there, even actions of religious value. Furthermore, the Gemara cites an opinion that the sanctity of the synagogue, i.e., of prayer, is greater than that of a study hall, i.e., of Torah study. Therefore, it is necessary for the *baraita* to teach that these activities are indeed permitted (*Rishon LeTziyyon*).

BACKGROUND

The text of the *baraita* is incomplete and is teaching the following – חסורי מיחפרא והכי קתני – This method of explanation, which is commonly used by the Gemara, does not suggest an actual emendation of the text of the *baraita*. Rather, the addition introduced by the Gemara is an elaboration upon that which is written in the *baraita*, which is insufficiently clear in its current form. The addition provides the necessary clarification.

NOTES

Are built with a stipulation – על תנאי הן עשוין – Some suggest that the stipulation is effective only to permit the use of a synagogue for other purposes once it has been abandoned or has fallen into disrepair. At that point, due to the stipulation, it automatically loses its sanctity and may be used even for mundane purposes (*Tosafot*). However, others claim that the stipulation is effective even while the synagogue is still in use (*Rashi*). Therefore, some authorities rule that a synagogue may be used even to house guests, based on the stipulation (*Rid the Younger*; *Rashba*).

Torah scholars and their disciples are permitted – חכמים ותלמידיהם מותרין – The commentaries are divided on how to relate to this permission. Some suggest that it is permitted for scholars to use the synagogue for their own needs only out of necessity; if the scholars were forced to return home to eat and drink, it would interrupt their study. Therefore, a special dispensation was provided for them (*Tur*). However, others suggest that because the scholars are constantly present in the study hall, it becomes a home for them. As such, it is no longer inappropriate for them to eat and drink there. In the Jerusalem Talmud, this issue is discussed at length.

HALAKHA

Synagogues in the Diaspora – בתי כנסיות שבהוצאה לארץ – If a stipulation was made during the construction of a synagogue that it will be permitted to use the synagogue for all purposes, then it is permitted to use it for these purposes once it falls into ruin. However, while it is still standing, it is prohibited to do so. Even when the synagogue is falls into ruin, the stipulation does not permit use of the synagogue for disrespectful purposes, e.g., sowing plants or business calculations of the community. This stipulation is effective only in the Diaspora, but not in Eretz Yisrael. However, some claim that even in Eretz Yisrael a stipulation can be made to permit the use of a synagogue for non-frivolous behavior (*Magen Avraham*) and one may rely on the lenient opinions (*Mishna Berura*). Some say that if the intention from the outset was to use the place for prayer for only a limited time, then once it is no longer used for prayer, it may be used for any purpose (*Arukh HaShulhan*, citing *Bah*; *Shulhan Arukh*, *Orah Hayyim* 151:1).

Torah scholars in a study hall – תלמידי חכמים בבית מדרש – Torah scholars and their disciples are allowed to eat and drink in a synagogue when absolutely necessary. Some say that it is permitted in a study hall even when there is no pressing need, provided that those doing so are studying there (*Magen Avraham*; *Shulhan Arukh*, *Orah Hayyim* 151:1 and in the comment of *Rema*).

LANGUAGE

Shower [*zilha*] – ילחא – A root used in the Semitic languages, prominent in Assyrian and used in Syriac to mean to pour or throw.

North wind [*istena*] – אסתנא – This is the Syriac name for the north wind. The day of the *istena* is the day when the north wind is strongest. It clears the sky of its clouds, and consequently it is a sign that the coming year will be bright and clear.

עשבים – מאן דכר שמייהו? חסורי מיחפרא והכי קתני: ומכבדין אותן, ומרביצין אותן כדי שלא יעלו בהן עשבים. אמר רבי יהודה: אימתי – בישובן, אבל בחורבנן – מנחין אותן לעלות. עלו בהן עשבים – לא יתלוש, מפני עגמת נפש.

אמר רב אסי: בתי כנסיות שבבבל על תנאי הן עשוין, ואף על פי כן אין נוהגין בהן קלות ראש, ומאי ניהו – חשבונות.

אמר רב אסי: בית הכנסת שמתשבין בו חשבונות – מלינין בו את המת. מלינין סלקא דעתך? לא סגי דלאו הכי?! אלא: לסוף שילינו בו מת מצוה.

ואין נאזותין בהן: אמר רבא: חכמים ותלמידיהם מותרין. דאמר רבי יהושע בן לוי: מאי בי רבנן – ביתא דרבנן.

ואין נכנסין בהן בחמה מפני החמה ובגשמים מפני הגשמים: כי הא דרבנא ורב אדא בר מתנה הוו קיימי ושאלי שאילתא מרבא, אתא וילחא דמיטרא. עיילי לבי כנישתא. אמרי: האי דעיילין לבי כנישתא – לאו משום מיטרא, אלא משום דשמעתא בעא צילותא כיומא דאסתנא.

The Gemara asks: Why did Rabbi Yehuda discuss the *halakha* about grass? Who mentioned anything about it? The Gemara explains: The text of the *baraita* is incomplete and is teaching the following:<sup>8</sup> And among the other things that may be done in synagogues, they should also be sure to sweep them and to sprinkle their floors with water, in order that grass not sprout up in them. Rabbi Yehuda said: When does this apply? When the synagogues are occupied by the people using them, but when they are in a state of ruin, they should be left alone so that grass will sprout up inside them. If grass did sprout up, it should not be removed, due to the anguish that this will bring to those who see it.

Rav Asi said: Synagogues in Babylonia are built from the outset with a stipulation<sup>N</sup> that they not have the full sanctity of a synagogue, in order that it be permitted to use them for the community's general needs.<sup>H</sup> But nevertheless, one should not act inside them with frivolity. The Gemara explains: What is meant by this? One should not make business calculations in a synagogue.

Rav Asi said: With regard to a synagogue in which people make business calculations, they will eventually keep a corpse inside it overnight. The Gemara questions the wording of this dictum: Can it really enter your mind to say that they will ever actually keep a corpse inside it overnight? Could it really be that there will not be any other alternative? Rather, Rav Asi means that as a punishment for acting with frivolity people in the community will die, including those who have no family, and so ultimately they will have to keep a corpse with no one to bury it [*met mitzva*] overnight in the synagogue.

S The *baraita* taught: And one may not adorn oneself inside them. Rava said: The prohibition applies only to laypeople, but Torah scholars and their disciples are permitted<sup>N</sup> to do so,<sup>H</sup> as Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: What is the meaning of the term: *Bei of the Sages*, which is used to describe a study hall? It is a shortened form of house [*beita*] of the Sages. In order to facilitate the constant presence of the Torah scholars in the study hall, it is permitted for them to use the hall as though it were their home.

The *baraita* continued: And nor may one enter them in the sun for protection from the sun, or in the rain to find shelter from the rain. The Gemara explains: This is similar to that case of Ravina<sup>P</sup> and Rav Adda bar Mattana. They were standing and asking a question of Rava, when a shower [*zilha*]<sup>L</sup> of rain began to fall upon them. They all entered the synagogue, saying: Our having entered the synagogue is not due to the rain, that we stay dry; rather, it is due to the fact that the *halakha* we were discussing requires clarity like the day the north wind [*istena*]<sup>L</sup> blows and the sky is perfectly clear. Therefore, we are entering the synagogue for the sake of studying Torah, which is certainly permitted.

PERSONALITIES

Ravina – רבינא: Ravina was a sixth-generation Babylonian Sage whose major work was assisting Rav Ashi in editing the Babylonian Talmud. In his youth, he studied under Rava. Ravina and Rav Ashi are found discussing matters of *halakha* in many places throughout the Talmud. He passed away in 422 CE.

There is an expression found in the Talmud that Ravina and Rav Ashi are the last decisors, which credits them both

with the editing of the Talmud. However, Ravina and Rav Ashi were not the first to edit the oral traditions, as there are many discussions in the Talmud whose language and style show that they were prepared long before their time. Their contribution was that they arranged the material that they received from previous generations, which emanated from different academies and were written in different styles, to produce an organized and uniform Talmud.

**קריאת אדם –** Summoning a person from a synagogue – **מבית כנסת**: When one must enter a synagogue in order to summon another, he should enter and engage in Torah study or read a verse of Torah. If he does not know how, he should stay in the synagogue for a short time, the amount of time it takes to walk through two four-handbreadth-wide doors (*Shulhan Arukh, Orach Hayyim* 151:1, and in the comment of Rema).

**ודאשתמש –** One who makes use of the crown will perish – **בתנאי הלך**: One who studies Torah in order to gain wealth or honor does not merit the crown of Torah. Some say that this is referring to the prohibition against reciting the sacred names of God as incantations. Others say that also included in this prohibition is taking advantage of someone who studies *halakhot* (*Shakh*, citing Rif; Rosh; *Shulhan Arukh Yoreh De'a* 246:21, and in the comment of Rema).

NOTES

**נישהי פורתא –** He should remain for a short time – The early commentaries cite Rabbeinu Moshe, who explains that doing so is permitted because being present in a synagogue and in other sacred places is itself a mitzva, based on the verse: "Praiseworthy are those that dwell in Your house" (*Psalms* 84:5).

**דשכיח –** Who was frequently present in Eretz Yisrael – **בארעא דישראל**: Maharsha explains that this detail is mentioned to emphasize the great affection that Reish Lakish held for this Torah scholar. Although the Torah scholar did not live in Eretz Yisrael and so was not a fellow countryman of Reish Lakish, Reish Lakish nevertheless showed him great respect.

**בפעורים וארבע שורות –** In the twenty-fourth row – Some suggest that this scholar would sit in the twenty-fourth row of the study hall, due to his low status as a scholar, and Reish Lakish nevertheless held him in high esteem (Maharsha). This is the explanation in the commentary of the Gemara. Others suggest that the eulogy was delivered in the presence of twenty-four rows of disciples (Rashba, citing *Tosafot*).

BACKGROUND

**בפעורים וארבע שורות –** Twenty-fourth row – During the period of the Mishna and Talmud, and especially in Eretz Yisrael when the Sanhedrin still sat, the scholars would sit in the study hall in an order that was set according to their greatness in Torah. The scholar who was teaching would sit at the front and face the students. At times, people of distinguished lineage would also sit at the front. The students listening would sit in rows. In the first row would be the greatest scholars, and it appears that even they sat in a specific order defined by their greatness. The next row had the next greatest scholars, and so on. Consequently, one's row and seat was a mark of the degree of his greatness in Torah study.

LANGUAGE

**תגא –** Crown [*taga*] – The word originates from the Iranian word *tāg*, meaning crown. It was then adopted into the Semitic languages. The word *tahg* is still used in Hebrew to refer to the crowns drawn on top of letters.

אמר ליה רב אחא בריה דרבא לרב אשי: אי אצטרך ליה לאיניש למיקרי גברא מבי כנישתא. מאי אמר ליה: אי צורבא מרבנן הוא לימא הלכתא, ואי תנא הוא – לימא מתניתין, ואי קרא הוא, לימא פסוקא. ואי לא – לימא ליה לינוקא: אימא לי פסוקיך. אי נמי, נישחי פורתא וניקום.

Rav Aha, son of Rava, said to Rav Ashi: If a person needs to summon an individual from inside a synagogue, what should he do, since it is not permitted to enter a synagogue just for that purpose?<sup>H</sup> Rav Ashi said to him: If he is a young Torah scholar, let him recite a *halakha* upon entering the synagogue; and if he is a *tanna* who memorizes large numbers of *mishnayot*, let him recite various *mishnayot*; and if he is an expert in the Bible, let him recite a verse; and if he is not able to do even this, let him say to a child: Recite for me a verse that you have learned today. Alternatively, he should remain in the synagogue for a short time<sup>N</sup> and only afterward stand up and leave.

ומספדין בהן הספד של רבים: היכי דמי הספידא דרבים? מחוי רב חסדא: כגון הספידא דקאי ביה רב ששת, מחוי רב ששת: כגון הספידא דקאי ביה רב חסדא.

The *baraita* continues: And one may offer a eulogy inside them for a Torah scholar if the public attends the eulogy. The Gemara asks: What are the circumstances of a eulogy for the public? Rav Hisha depicted a case: For example, a eulogy for a Torah scholar at which Rav Sheshet is present. Owing to his presence, many people will come. Rav Sheshet himself depicted another case: For example, a eulogy at which Rav Hisha is present.

רפרם אספדה לכלתיה בבי כנישתא, אמר: משום יקרא דידי ודמיתא אתו כוליה עלמא. רבי זירא ספדיה להווא מרבנן בבי כנישתא, אמר: אי משום יקרא דידי, אי משום יקרא דידיה, דמיתא, אתו כוליה עלמא.

The Gemara offers another example: Rafram once eulogized his daughter-in-law inside a synagogue. He said: Due to my honor and the honor of the deceased, everyone will come to the eulogy. It will consequently be a public event, and it is therefore permitted to hold it in a synagogue. Similarly, Rabbi Zeira once eulogized a certain Sage inside a synagogue. He said: Whether due to my honor, or whether due to the honor of the deceased, everyone will come to the eulogy.

ריש לקיש ספדיה להווא צורבא מרבנן דשכיח בארעא דישראל, דהוי תני הלכתא בעשרים וארבע שורות, אמר: ווי חסרא ארעא דישראל גברא רבה.

Reish Lakish<sup>P</sup> once eulogized a certain young Torah scholar who was frequently present in Eretz Yisrael<sup>N</sup> and who used to study *halakha* in the twenty-fourth row<sup>NB</sup> of the study hall. He sat so far back because he was not one of the principal scholars. Nevertheless, when he died, Reish Lakish said: Alas, Eretz Yisrael has lost a great man.

הווא דהוי תני הלכתא סיפרא וסיפרי ותוספתא, ושכיב. אתו ואמרו ליה רב נחמן: ליספדיה מר! אמר: היכי נספדיה? הי צנא דמלי סיפרי דחסר!

In contrast, there was a certain man who used to study *halakha*, the *Sifra*, and the *Sifrei*, and the *Tosefta*, and he died. People came and said to Rav Nahman: Let the Master eulogize him. He said to them: How can I eulogize him? Should I say: Alas, a basket filled with books is lost? This would not be true. Although the man studied many areas of Torah, he was not proficient in them.

תא חוי מה בין תקיפי דארעא דישראל לתסידי דבבל.

The Gemara compares the conduct of Reish Lakish in Eretz Yisrael to that of Rav Nahman in Babylonia. Come and see what the difference is between the harsh scholars of Eretz Yisrael and the saintly ones of Babylonia. Although Reish Lakish was known for his harsh nature, he was still more respectful than Rav Nahman, who was known for his saintliness.

תנן התם: ודאשתמש בתגא חלף, תני ריש לקיש: זה המשתמש במי ששונה הלכות, בתרה של תורה.

We learned in a mishna there (*Avot* 1:13): And one who makes use of the crown [*taga*]<sup>L</sup> of Torah learning will perish<sup>H</sup> from the world. Reish Lakish taught: This is referring to one who allows himself to be served by one who studies *halakhot*, which is the crown of the Torah.

PERSONALITIES

**Reish Lakish – ריש לקיש**: Reish Lakish is a contraction of Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish. A disciple-colleague of Rabbi Yoḥanan, he was one of the greatest of the first generation of *amora'im* in Eretz Yisrael. It appears that he was from an important family, and in his youth he strived in his Torah study. However, due to his poverty he was forced to find a means to earn a living. To this end and due to his great physical strength and prowess, he became a gladiator. Only later, under the influence of Rabbi

Yoḥanan, he returned to studying Torah. The halakic decisions of Rabbi Yoḥanan and Reish Lakish form a large part of the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds.

Reish Lakish was well known for his sharp rebukes. He lived a very harsh life. It is recounted that a laugh was never seen on his face, and he chose his friends very carefully. All of the Sages in Eretz Yisrael in the second generation of the *amora'im* were his students, and they passed on his teachings.

בנות ישראל – Jewish women were strict upon themselves – בנות ישראל – If a woman sees blood, even a small drop the size of a mustard seed, she must wait for seven clean days before purifying herself (*Shulhan Arukh, Yoreh De'a* 183:1).

ואמר עולא: לשתמש איניש במאן דתני ארבעה ולא לשתמש במאן דמתני ארבעה. בי הא דריש לקיש הוה אויל באורחא, מטא עורקמא דמיא, אתא ההוא גברא ארכביה אבתפיה, וקא מעבר ליה. אמר ליה: קרית? אמר ליה: קרינא. תנית? תנינא ארבעה סידרי משנה. אמר ליה: פסלת לך ארבעה טורי, וטענת בר לקיש אבתפך? שדי בר לקישא במיא!

אמר ליה: ניתא לי דאשמעין למר. אי הכי גמור מיני הא מלתא דאמר רבי זירא: בנות ישראל הן החמירו על עצמן, שאפילו רואות טיפת דם בחדל יושבות עליו שבעה נקיים.

תנא דבי אליהו: כל השונה הלכות מובטח לו שהוא בן עולם הבא, שנאמר "הליכות עולם לו אל תקרי הלכות אלא הלכות".

תנו רבנן:

And Ulla said: It is better that a person should be served by one who studies four orders of the Mishna,<sup>n</sup> and he should not allow himself to be served by one who teaches<sup>n</sup> to others four orders of the Mishna, as in that case of Reish Lakish. He was traveling along the road when he reached a deep puddle of water. A certain man came and placed him upon his shoulders and began transferring him to the other side. Reish Lakish said to him: Have you read the Bible? He said to him: I have read it. He then asked: Have you studied the Mishna? He answered him: I have studied four orders of the Mishna. Reish Lakish then said to him: You have hewn these four mountains and yet you bear the weight of the son of Lakish upon your shoulders? It is inappropriate for you to carry me; throw the son of Lakish into the water.

The man said to Reish Lakish: It is pleasing for me to serve the Master in this way. Reish Lakish said to him: If so, learn from me this matter<sup>n</sup> that Rabbi Zeira said. In this way you will be considered my disciple, and it will then be appropriate for you to serve me. Jewish women were strict upon themselves<sup>HN</sup> in that even if they see a spot of menstrual blood that is only the size of a mustard seed they wait on its account seven clean days before immersing themselves in a ritual bath to purify themselves.

The school of Eliyahu taught: Anyone who studies *halakhot* every day,<sup>n</sup> he is guaranteed that he is destined for the World-to-Come, as it is stated: "His ways [*halikhot*] are eternal" (Habakkuk 3:6): Do not read the verse as *halikhot* [ways]; rather, read it as *halakhot*.<sup>n</sup> Consequently, the verse indicates that the study of the *halakhot* brings one to eternal life.

The Sages taught in a *baraita*:

## NOTES

**Four orders – ארבעה סידרי**: Although there are six orders of the Mishna, not all of them had the same prominence, and not all were studied to the same degree. The orders of *Moed*, *Nashim*, and *Nezikin* were studied even in the diaspora of Babylonia, due to their practical relevance, in contrast to the orders of *Zera'im*, *Kodashim*, and *Teharot*, the *halakhot* of which did not apply to the situation in Babylonia. Nevertheless, the order of *Kodashim* continued to be studied since the study of the laws of offerings is considered to be of particular value. This reality is highlighted by the fact that only these four orders are significantly represented by the Babylonian Talmud. In the extended version of the Jerusalem Talmud, there is no Gemara on *Kodashim* or *Teharot* at all.

**Who studies...who teaches [dematnei] – דתני...דמתני**: Some explain that Ulla is highlighting the superior status of one who studies and teaches as compared to one who studies only for himself (Rashi on Rif). Others explain the word *dematnei* refers not to one who teaches but rather to one who studies the *halakhot* of the Mishna as well as the Talmud, i.e., the explanations of the *mishnayot* and *baraitot* (Rif).

**Learn from me this matter – גמור מיני הא מלתא**: Ostensibly, Reish Lakish's actions would seem to contradict Ulla's teaching above. The commentaries explain that this is not the case. According to the opinion that Ulla made a distinction between one who only studied and one who also taught, some explain that Reish Lakish assumed that this man also taught, and therefore Reish Lakish did not want to be served by him; however, Reish Lakish claimed that this prohibition does not apply to one's disciple. According to the opinion that Ulla made a distinction between one who studies the *halakhot* and one who also studies the Talmud, Reish Lakish wished to teach the man

something from the Talmud in order for him to deepen his study (Maharsha). Some suggest that Reish Lakish wished to teach him this *halakha* because it was from the order of *Teharot*, which the man had not yet studied (*Zikkaron BaSefer*).

**Jewish women were strict upon themselves – בנות ישראל הן – החמירו על עצמן**: According to Torah law, a woman who experiences a flow of uterine blood becomes ritually impure. If she experiences the flow during the time of her regular menses, she is classified as a *nidda* and may immerse seven days later, even if she has additional discharges during that week. However, if she experiences discharges on three consecutive days when it is not the time of her menses, she is classified as a *zava*. She must then observe seven clean days without any discharge before she is able to immerse and ritually purify herself. Rabbi Zeira reports that Jewish women were stringent in that they essentially ignored the distinctions between these two categories. In all cases, even for a single drop of blood, they accepted upon themselves the observance of seven clean days.

**Anyone who studies halakhot every day – כל השונה הלכות**: Some suggest that this teaching is specifically mentioned here to counterbalance Rabbi Zeira's teaching. Once Jewish women accepted upon themselves this stringency, much of the *halakhot* discussed in tractate *Nidda*, which discusses the differences between the status of a *nidda* and a *zava*, became irrelevant. Nevertheless, the Gemara emphasizes that there is still value in learning the *halakhot* pertaining to them.

**Halikhot, halakhot – הליכות, הלכות**: The word *halakha* is itself derived from the word *halikhot*, ways, because *halakha* provides the path in which the Jewish people have walked and will continue to walk throughout the generations (*Arukh*).