Abaye said to Rava: How did you establish that baraita, i.e., that it is referring to Torah scrolls written in another language? If it is so, why did the baraita specifically teach that the legal status of a Hebrew verse in the Bible that one wrote in Aramaic translation, or a verse written in Aramaic translation that one wrote in the Hebrew of the Bible, is not that of sacred writings? The legal status of even a Hebrew verse in the Bible that one wrote in the Hebrew of the Bible and a verse written in Aramaic translation that one wrote in Aramaic translation are also not that of sacred writings, as it is taught at the end of the baraita: A Torah scroll renders the hands impure only if one writes it in Ashurit script, on a parchment scroll, and in ink.

Rather, the matter must be explained differently. This is not difficult. This ruling in the mishna is according to the Rabbis, who permit writing Torah scrolls in any language, and that ruling in the baraita is according to Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel.

The Gemara asks: If the baraita is according to Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel, in addition to Ashurit, isn’t there Greek in which the Torah may also be written? Rather, say this is not difficult. Here, the mishna is referring to Torah scrolls, which may be written in any language; there, the baraita is referring to phylacteries and mezuzot, which may be written only in Hebrew, using Hebrew script.

Rather, say this is not difficult. Here, the baraita is referring to the Megilla, the Scroll of Esther, which must be written in Hebrew; there, the mishna is referring to Torah scrolls, which may be written in any language. The Gemara asks: What is the reason that the Megilla must be written in Hebrew? It is due to the fact that it is written with regard to the Megilla: “According to their writing, and according to their language” (Esther 8:9), without change. The Gemara asks: But if the baraita is referring to the Megilla, what Aramaic translation that one wrote in the Hebrew of the Bible is there? Granted, in the Torah there is a verse written in Aramaic translation: “Vegar salahdua” (Genesis 31:47); however, here, in phylacteries and mezuzot, what verses in Aramaic translation are there that could be written in Hebrew?

Rav Pappa said that it is written: “And when the king’s decree [pitgam] shall be publicized” (Esther 1:20), and that pitgam is essentially an Aramaic word. Rav Nahman bar Yitzhak said that it is written: “And all the wives will give honor [yekar] to their husbands” (Esther 1:20), and yekar is Aramaic for honor.

Rav Ashi suggested a different explanation and said: When that baraita is taught it is taught with regard to the rest of the books of the Bible, other than the Torah. And it is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda, as it is taught in a baraita: Phylacteries and mezuzot are written only in Ashurit; and our Rabbis permitted writing them in Greek as well.
God created in the beginning (bereshit) – בְּרָאוֹ

The believers in two powers explained that bereshit refers to the logos, the divine will. Since they took it to the next level and totally separated the logos from God, it was necessary to write that it was God who created this world. See the translation in the Jerusalem Targum of the word bereshit as: In His wisdom.

I shall make man – בָּרֵאשִׁית אֲנָחָה רֹאִיתָ שֶׁיִּבָּרֵאשַׁית לָהֶם: Some note that this translation resolves an additional problem, as from the original verse one could draw the mistaken conclusion that God has human form. Therefore, they wrote: In image and in likeness. See the explanation in Ibn Ezra’s commentary on the Torah (Koran Hakola; Rashash; Sefa Einet).

Male and female He created him – אֲנָחָה אֲנָחָה וּשְׁנַיִם בְּרֵאשִׁית: It is written in the Jerusalem Talmud and elsewhere that the change was that the creation of the female was not mentioned at all.

**BACKGROUND**

The Septuagint – תָּרָעָה וּשְׁנַיִם: The Septuagint was the first translation of the Torah into a foreign language. The Sages related to the very translation of the Torah with great concern, to the extent that the day that the Septuagint was completed was designated as a fast in Megillat Ta’anit. Over time, the translation was accepted to a large extent as useful and significant, and as mentioned in the mishna it was accorded status of special significance: Among Egyptian Jews the Septuagint was revered and accorded great sanctity.

There is an extended version of this story in Greek, in the ancient letter of Aristeas, which is similar to the account related in the Gemara. It describes the efforts of the king to organize the translation as well as the wisdom of the Elders who came from Eretz Yisrael for that purpose.

The textual changes in the Septuagint – מִשְׂמַע תָּרָעָה וּשְׁנַיִם: The Septuagint was preserved primarily because the Christians adopted it and ascribed greater significance to it than they ascribed to the Hebrew original. Throughout the generations the translation went through several changes, and apparently even Aquila and Symmachus, the Jewish translators, created a version more in line with the approach of the halakha. In general, there are many differences between the source text and the Septuagint. The current version contains additional passages, and even entire books, i.e., the Apocrypha. Not all of the changes cited here appear in the current version of the Septuagint, although they did appear in the versions used by the Jews.

**NOTES**

Only in a Torah scroll – בְּרָאוֹ: Although the sanctity of the Torah scroll surpasses all the other books, since there was a unique miracle specifically with regard to the translation of the Torah, it is permitted to write the Torah in Greek. However, other books translated into Greek do not have the status of sacred texts.

The Gemara asks: How did our Rabbis permit this? Isn’t it written with regard to phylacteries and mezuzot: “And these words shall be” (Deuteronomy 6:6), indicating that their language may not be changed. Rather, say that this is what the baraita is saying: Torah scrolls are written in any language; and our Rabbis permitted writing them in Greek as well. Once again the Gemara asks: Our Rabbis permitted? By inference, apparently the first tanna prohibits its writing a Torah scroll in any language.

Rather, say in explanation of the baraita: And our Rabbis permitted them to be written only in Greek. And it is taught in another baraita that Rabbi Yehuda said: Even when our Rabbis permitted Greek, they permitted it only in a Torah scroll, and not for other books of the Bible, which must be written only in Hebrew.

The Gemara continues: And this was due to the incident of King Ptolemy, as it is taught in a baraita: There was an incident involving King Ptolemy of Egypt, who assembled seventy-two Elders from the Sages of Israel, and put them into seventy-two separate rooms, and did not reveal to them for what purpose he assembled them, so that they would not coordinate their responses. He entered and approached each and every one, and said to each of them: Write for me a translation of the Torah of Moses your teacher. The Holy One, Blessed be He, placed wisdom in the heart of each and every one, and they all agreed to one common understanding. Not only did they all translate the text correctly, they all introduced the same changes into the translated text.

And they wrote for him: God created in the beginning (bereshit), reversing the order of the words in the first phrase in the Torah that could be misinterpreted as: “Bereshit created God” (Genesis 1:1). They did so to negate those who believe in the preexistence of the world and those who maintain that there are two powers in the world: One is Bereshit, who created the second, God. And they wrote: I shall make man in image and in likeness, rather than: “Let us make man in our image and in our likeness” (Genesis 1:26), as from there too one could mistakenly conclude that there are multiple powers and that God has human form.

Instead of: “And on the seventh day God concluded His work” (Genesis 2:2), which could have been understood as though some of His work was completed on Shabbat itself, they wrote: And on the sixth day He concluded His work, and He rested on the seventh day. They also wrote: Male and female He created him, and they did not write as it is written in the Torah: “Male and female He created them” (Genesis 5:1), to avoid the impression that there is a contradiction between this verse and the verse: “And God created man” (Genesis 1:27), which indicates that God created one person.

Instead of: “Come, let us go down, and there confound their language” (Genesis 11:7), which indicates multiple authorities, they wrote in the singular: Come, let me go down, and there confound their language. In addition, they replaced the verse: “And Sarah laughed within herself [bekirba]” (Genesis 18:12), with: And Sarah laughed among her relatives [bikroveha]. They made this change to distinguish between Sarah’s laughter, which God criticized, and Abraham’s laughter, to which no reaction is recorded. Based on the change, Sarah’s laughter was offensive because she voiced it to others.

**PERSONALITIES**

King Ptolemy – פּוֹטְלָמֵהוּ: This is the king of Egypt, Ptolemaios II Philadelphus, who ruled over Egypt during the years 246–285 BCE. He inherited his kingdom, which included Eretz Yisrael and parts of North Africa, from his father, Ptolemy I. After his succession to the throne, he worked to establish and organize the kingdom in various ways. He was known as an admirer of culture and science, and during his reign Alexandria developed into the scientific center of the Hellenistic world.

Both the Talmud and the letter of Aristeas attribute the initiative to translate the Torah into Greek to King Ptolemy. Apparently, he showed interest in Eretz Yisrael and had a friendly relationship with the Jews. He renamed the ancient city of Rabat Ammon, which is modern-day Amman, Philadelphia, after himself. The city of Ptolemais, near Akko, was also named for him.
They also altered the verse: “For in their anger they slew a man and in their self-will they slaughtered an ox” (Genesis 49:6), to read: “For in their anger they slew an ox and in their self-will they uprooted a trough, to avoid the charge that Jacob’s sons were murderers. Instead of: “And Moses took his wife and his sons, and set them upon a donkey” (Exodus 12:40), they wrote: And Moses took his wife and his sons, and set them upon a carrier of people, which could be understood as referring to a horse or a camel rather than the lowly donkey.

Instead of: “And the residence of the children of Israel, who resided in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years” (Exodus 12:40), when read literally is imprecise, for they did not dwell in Egypt that long, they wrote: And the residence of the children of Israel, who resided in Egypt and in other lands, was four hundred years. Instead of: “And he sent the youth of the children of Israel, who brought burnt-offerings” (Exodus 24:5), which evokes the question of why young men were sent to perform that service, they wrote: And he sent the elect [za’atutei]6 of the children of Israel. The same term was substituted again several verses later, rendering the verse: “And upon the nobles of the children of Israel He laid not His hand” (Exodus 24:11), as: And upon the elect of the children of Israel He laid not His hand.

NOTES

They slew an ox –살מוני: Some point out that had they written man, it could have been misunderstood as saying that Jacob was upset due to the murder of a single individual, Shechem, or, according to certain opinions, due to his sons’ intention to kill Joseph. Therefore, they wrote ox to show that Jacob was upset about the wanton slaying of animals, and all the more so to the slaying of people (Penei Yehoshua).

A carrier of people –אדוותא: Some explain that they did not write donkey, so that people would not wonder why Moses did not find a quicker animal, in order to accelerate the redemption of the Jewish people (Gelil Ydolok). Others explain that it is disrespectful to Moses to mention a donkey, as that would depict him walking on foot alongside the animal (Gal Naul).

Four hundred years –רבא רבא: Some write that they wrote specifically four hundred years and not 430 so that it would correspond to the number mentioned in the revelation to Abraham during the Covenant of the Pieces (Yeile Maresh).

Elect –זָאָתֻטֵי: Rav Tzemah Gaon explains that za’atutei means relatively young men, not youths and not elders, but in between.

NOTES

I have not taken one item of value from them –בראשית רבה יא קדש: The Maharsha writes that the Sages explained the verse: “I have not taken one donkey from them,” as follows: Even when Moses needed to travel from Midian to Egypt to take the Jews out of Egypt, he did not take from the children of Israel even the donkey on which he transported his family. Since the seventy-two Elders feared Ptolemy’s reaction, they changed the term from donkey to item of value.

LANGUAGE

Short-legged beast (tzurat haraglayim) –ḥṭḥ: The seventy-two Elders, in their translation of the word hare in the list of non-kosher animals, used the word ḥṭḥ, dasapos, which literally means hairy-legged or rough-footed, instead of the standard term for hare, להג, λαγός. They did so because the nickname of the founder of the Ptolemaic kingdom, Ptolemy, was also named Lagos, and they sought to avoid alluding to him in that context.
The beauty of Japheth – תַּשְׁגִּית בֵּן שֵׁם יַפְתִּים: It is stated in the Jerusalem Talmud that the Greek language is one of the four beautiful languages in the world, and in Eretz Yisrael, Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi preferred Greek to the spoken Aramaic.

A High Priest anointed with the oil of anointing and one consecrated by donning the multiple garments – כֹּהֵן וַﬠֲשִׂירִית וַﬠָבַר: When the anointing oil was available, until the time of King Josiah, whoquested it together with the Ark of the Covenant and the tablets, the High Priests were consecrated by anointment with this oil. However, afterward, the High Priest was appointed by pronouncement (see Jerusalem Talmud) and assumed his position by donning the eight garments of the High Priest and performing the service of the High Priest.

The bull that comes for transgression of any of the mitzvot – יָאוֹת מִשְׁכָּחָה: There is a special halakha with regard to a High Priest on Yom Kippur who was rendered unfit and unable to perform the service, requiring the appointment of a different priest in his stead. However, the Rambam and Rabbeinu Yehonatan explain that a former High Priest does not refer specifically to one temporarily replaced. Rather it refers to one who retired due to old age or a permanent blemish, who maintains the legal status of a High Priest. See Penei Yehoshua and Sefat Emet, who adopt the explanation in the Jerusalem Talmud.

Donning the multiple garments – בְּגָדִים בְּאָהֳלֵי מִשְׁחָה: A common priest wore four garments, while the High Priest wore eight.

The mishna cites that Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says: Even with regard to Torah scrolls, the Sages permitted them to be written only in Greek. Rabbi Abbahu said that Rabbi Yoḥanan said: The halakha is in accordance with the opinion of Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel. And Rabbi Yoḥanan said: What is the reason for the opinion of Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel? He based his opinion on an allusion in the Torah, as the verse states: “God shall enlarge Japheth, and He shall dwell in the tents of Shem” (Genesis 9:27), indicating that the words of Japheth shall be in the tents of Shem. The language of Yavan, who is the forbear of the Greek nation and one of the descendants of Japheth, will also serve as a sacred language in the tents of Shem, where Torah is studied.

The Gemara asks: And say that it is the languages of Gomer and Magog that serve as sacred languages, as they too were descendants of Japheth (see Genesis 10:2). The Gemara answers that Rabbi Ḥiyya bar Abba said: This is the reason, as it is written: “God shall enlarge [yaft] Japheth [Yefet].” Yaft is etymologically similar to the Hebrew term for beauty [yaft]. The verse teaches that the beauty of Japheth⁷ shall be in the tents of Shem, and Greek is the most beautiful of the languages of the descendants of Japheth.

The difference between a High Priest anointed with the oil of anointing, which was the method through which High Priests were consecrated until the oil was sequestered toward the end of the First Temple period, and one consecrated by donning multiple garments⁸ is unique to the High Priest, is only that the latter does not bring the bull that comes for transgression of any of the mitzvot. An anointed High Priest who unwittingly issued an erroneous halakhic ruling and acted upon that ruling, and transgressed a mitzva whose unwitting violation renders one liable to bring a sin-offering, is obligated to bring a sin-offering unique to one in his position.

The Gemara infers that with regard to the matter of the bull brought by the High Priest on Yom Kippur, and with regard to the tenth of an ephah meal-offering, both this, the anointed High Priest, and that, the High Priest consecrated by donning multiple garments, are equal.
The Gemara comments: The mishna is not in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Meir, as if it were in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Meir, it would be difficult. Isn’t it taught in a baraita: A High Priest consecrated by donning the multiple garments unique to the High Priest brings the bull brought for the unwitting violation of any of the mitzvot; this is the statement of Rabbi Meir. And the Rabbis say: He does not bring that offering.

The Gemara asks: What is the reason for the opinion of Rabbi Meir? It is as it is taught in a baraita that it is written: “If the anointed priest shall sin” (Leviticus 4:3). From the word anointed, I have derived only that this halakha applies to a High Priest who was actually anointed with the oil of anointing. From where do I derive that even a High Priest consecrated by donning the multiple garments is also included in this halakha? The verse states: “The anointed,” with the definite article, indicating that the halakha applies to every High Priest.

The Gemara asks: How did we establish the mishna? We established it that it is not in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Meir. Say the latter clause of the mishna: The difference between a High Priest currently serving in that capacity and a former High Priest is only with regard to the bull brought on Yom Kippur, and the tenth of an ephah meal-offering. The Gemara infers that with regard to all other matters, both this, a High Priest currently serving, and that, a former High Priest, are equal.4 If so we have arrived at the opinion of Rabbi Meir, as it is taught in a baraita: If temporary disqualification befall the High Priest,5 and they appointed another priest in his stead, then after the cause of disqualification of the first priest passes, he returns to his service as High Priest. With regard to the second priest, all of the mitzvot of the High Priest are incumbent upon him; this is the statement of Rabbi Meir. Rabbi Yosei says: The first returns to his service; the second is fit to serve neither as a High Priest nor as a common priest.6

And Rabbi Yosei said: There was an incident involving the priest Rabbi Yosef ben Elem7 of Tzippori, who, when disqualification befall a High Priest, the priests appointed him in his stead. And after the cause of the disqualification was resolved, the incident came before the Sages for a ruling with regard to the status of Rabbi Yosef ben Elem. And the Sages said: The original High Priest returns to his service, while the second is fit to serve neither as a High Priest nor as a common priest.

The Gemara explains: Neither as a High Priest, due to hatred, jealousy, and bitterness that would arise if there were two High Priests with equal standing in the Temple; nor as a common priest, because the principle is: One elevates to a higher level in matters of sanctity and one does not downgrade. Once he has served as a High Priest he cannot be restored to the position of a common priest. Is that to say that the first clause of the mishna is in accordance with the opinion of the Rabbis, who disagree with Rabbi Meir, and the latter clause is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Meir?

Rav Hisda said: Indeed, the first clause of the mishna is in accordance with the opinion of the Rabbis, and the latter clause is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Meir. Rav Yosef said: The entire mishna is according to Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi, and he formulates it according to the opinions of different tanamaim, that is to say, resulting in a third opinion, in accordance with the opinion of the Rabbis with regard to a High Priest consecrated by donning multiple garments, and the opinion of Rabbi Meir with regard to a former High Priest.
A great public altar and a small personal altar – הָרוֹאֶה. The great altar is the copper altar that stood in the desert Tabernacle, in Nob, and in Gibeon. The reason that the altar there was called the great altar and not the altar of the Tabernacle or Temple is that the Ark of the Covenant was not there; it was at different times taken by the Philistines or stored in Kiriat-jearim. In tractate Zevahim several additional differences between a great and small altar are enumerated. However, as explained elsewhere, not all differences are cited in the mishna here.

Small altars were in use during the period when the great altars were functional. Anyone could establish a small altar and sacrifice burnt-offerings and peace-offerings. Service at these altars was not restricted to priests, and many of the other regulations governing the sacrifice of offerings did not apply.

In Shiloh, in any place that overlooks Shiloh – הָרוֹאֶה. The simple reason for this is because Shiloh was open and unwalled, and had no defined boundary. Its domain, similar to the camp of the Israelites in the desert, included all places from which Shiloh or the Tabernacle could be seen (see Jerusalem Talmud). In tractate Zevahim this is explained homiletically: Since Shiloh was in the tribal territory of Joseph, and because Joseph resisted sinning and did not let his eyes wander inappropriately such as with regard to Potipher’s wife, he was rewarded that in his tribal territory, offerings sacrificed in Shiloh may be eaten anywhere within eyeshot of the town.

HALAKHAT

Offerings of lesser sanctity – נִמְלָת שְׁלָשָׁה. Offerings of lesser sanctity and second tithe produce may be eaten only within the walls of Jerusalem (Rambam Sefer Avoda, Hilkhot Beit HaBeira 7:14).

Offerings of the most sacred order – נִמְלָת חֲשָׁרוֹת. Offerings of the most sacred order are eaten in the Temple courtyard. One who eats an olive-bulk of those offerings outside the courtyard is flogged (Rambam Sefer Avoda, Hilkhot Masa’ot HaKorbanot 11:5).

MISHNA

The difference between a great, public altar, such as the altars established at Nob and Gibeon, which served as religious centers following the destruction of the Tabernacle in Shiloh, and a small, personal altar on which individuals would sacrifice their offerings, is only with regard to Paschal lambs, which may not be sacrificed on a small altar. This is the principle: Any offering that is vowed or contributed voluntarily is sacrificed on a small altar, and any offering that is neither vowed nor contributed voluntarily, but rather is compulsory, e.g., a sin-offering, is not sacrificed on a small altar.

GEMARA

The Gemara asks: Is the difference only Paschal lambs and nothing more? The continuation of the mishna indicates that there are additional differences. The Gemara answers: Say that the difference between them is only with regard to offerings that are similar to Paschal lambs.

The Gemara asks: According to whose opinion is the mishna taught? The Gemara answers: It is according to the opinion of Rabbi Shimon, as it is taught in a baraita that Rabbi Shimon says: Even the public sacrificed only Paschal lambs and compulsory offerings for which there is a set time, like fixed communal offerings. However, compulsory offerings for which there is not a set time, e.g., sin-offerings brought for an unwitting transgression committed by the community, are sacrificed neither here on a small altar nor here on a great altar; they are sacrificed only in the Temple.

MISHNA

The difference between the Tabernacle in Shilo and the Temple in Jerusalem is only that in Shilo one eats offerings of lesser sanctity, e.g., individual peace-offerings, thanks-offerings, and the Paschal lamb, and also the second tithe, in any place that overlooks Shilo, as Shilo was not a walled city and any place within its Shabbat boundary was regarded as part of the city. And in Jerusalem one eats those consecrated items only within the walls.

And here, in Shilo, and there, in Jerusalem, offerings of the most sacred order are eaten only within the hangings. The Tabernacle courtyard in Shilo was surrounded by hangings and the Temple courtyard in Jerusalem was surrounded by a wall. There is another difference: With regard to the sanctity of Shilo,

BACKGROUND

Shilo – שִׁלֹה. Other than the Temple in Jerusalem, the Divine Presence rested in three places in Eretz Yisrael: Shilo, where the Tabernacle was erected after the Jewish people entered the land, and Nob and Gibeon, referred to here as great altars. According to the Gemara in tractate Zevahim (11b), the Tabernacle stood in Shilo for 269 years and in Nob and Gibeon for a total of fifty-seven years.

The city of Shilo, which was located in the tribal land of Ephraim (see Judges 21:9), is approximately 35 km north of Jerusalem on the ancient mountain ridge road that traverses the country from north to south, and a bit less than 16 km south of the city of Shechem. In the modern-day settlement of Shilo, remnants of the Tabernacle were discovered, and a synagogue was built commemorating the Tabernacle.

Second tithe – נִמְלָת חֲשָׁרוֹת. This is the tithe separated after the truma for the priests and the first tithe for the Levites were separated. Second tithe was separated during the first, second, fourth, and fifth years of the Sabbatical cycle. After second tithe was designated, it had to be taken to Jerusalem to be eaten there by its owner. If the journey to Jerusalem was too long, and therefore it was difficult to take the second tithe there, or if the produce became ritually impure, it could be redeemed for an equivalent sum of money. If the owner redeemed his own produce, he was required to add one-fifth of its value. If he redeemed the second tithe produce by selling it to others, there is no need to add one-fifth of its value. The redemption money was then taken to Jerusalem, where it had to be spent on food. Second tithe could be redeemed only with minted coins bearing an imprint; unstamped coins and promissory notes could not be used. Today, second tithe is still redeemed, but for a nominal sum, as in the absence of the Temple it is no longer brought to Jerusalem. The halakhot of second tithe are discussed in tractate Masa’ot Shi’ri.