

ושל בית הכסא – רעות, של סם ושל שחוק  
ושל פירות – יפות.

“ביום שיזועו שומרי הבית והתעוה וגו’.”  
“ביום שיזועו שומרי הבית” – אלו הכסלים  
והצלעות, “והתעוה אנשי החיל” – אלו  
שוקים, “ובטלו הטוחנות” – אלו שיניים,  
“וחשכו הראות בארובות” – אלו עינים.

אמר ליה קיסר לרבי יהושע בן חנניה: מאי  
טעמא לא אתית לבי אבידן? אמר ליה:  
טור תלג סחרוי גלידין, פלבוהי לא נבחיין,  
טחנהי לא טוחנין. בי רב אמרי: אדלא  
אבידנא בחישנא.

תנא, רבי יוסי בר קיסמא אמר: טבא תרי  
מתלת, ווי לה לחדא דאזלא ולא אתיא.  
מאי היא? אמר רב חסדא: ינקותא. כי אתא  
רב דימי אמר: ינקותא – בלילא דוורדא,  
סבותא – בלילא דחילפא. תנא משמיה  
דרבי מאיר: דוק בכבי ותשבח בניגרי,  
שנאמר “ונשבע לחם ונהיה טובים ורעה  
לא ראינו”. אמר ליה שמואל לרב יהודה:  
שינא שרי שקד ועייל לחמדך. עד ארבעין  
שנין – מיכלא מעלי, מכאן ואילך – משתי  
מעלי.

אמר ליה ההוא גוזא רבי יהושע בן  
קרחא: מהכא לקרחינא כמה הוי? אמר  
ליה: כמהכא לגוזינא. אמר ליה צדוקי:  
ברחא קרחא בארבעה. אמר ליה: עיקרא  
שליפא בתמנא.

חזייה דלא סיים מסאניה, אמר ליה: דעל  
סום – מלך, דעל חמור – בן חורין, ודמנעלי  
בריגלוהי – בר אינשו, דלא הא ולא הא –  
דחפיר וקביר טב מיניה. אמר ליה: גוזא  
גוזא, תלת אמרת לי תלת שמעת; הדרת  
פנים – זקן, שמחת לב – אשה, נחלת  
ה’ – בנים – ברוך המקום שמנעך מכולם.  
אמר ליה: קרחא מצוינא. אמר ליה: עיקרא  
שליפא תוכחא.

and from pain in the bathroom are bad for the eyes. Tears that  
come from medicinal drugs, and from laughter, and from sharp  
produce are good for the eyes.

The Gemara continues to interpret verses from the Book of Eccle-  
siastes. The verse states: “On the day when the keepers of the  
house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves,  
and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out  
the windows shall be dimmed” (Ecclesiastes 12:3). “On the day  
when the keepers of the house shall tremble”; this is referring to  
the flanks and ribs that surround and protect a person’s internal  
organs. “And the strong men shall bow themselves”; these are the  
thighs, which support a person’s strength. “And the grinders  
cease”; these are the teeth, which decay and fall out. “And those  
that look out the windows shall be dimmed”; these are the eyes,  
which become dimmer.

The Gemara relates: The Roman emperor said to Rabbi Yehoshua  
ben Hananya: What is the reason you did not come to the House  
of Avidan? This was a place in which dialogues and debates were  
conducted. Rabbi Yehoshua ben Hananya said to him enigmati-  
cally: The snowy mountain is surrounded with ice, meaning that  
his hair had turned white; his dogs do not bark, meaning that his  
voice could no longer be heard; his grinders have ceased grinding,  
meaning that his teeth had fallen out. In the school of Rav they say  
that he added: I am searching for that which I have not lost, be-  
cause an old man walks bent over and appears to be searching for  
something.

It was taught in a *baraita* that Rabbi Yosei bar Kisma says: The two  
feet of one’s youth are better than the three of old age, when one  
walks with a cane. Woe to the one who goes and does not come  
back. What is this referring to? Rav Hisda said: Youth. Similarly,  
when Rav Dimi came from Eretz Yisrael to Babylonia he said:  
Youth is a crown of roses; old age is a crown of thorns. The Sage  
taught in the name of Rabbi Meir: Grind food with your teeth  
and you will find in your feet<sup>N</sup> the strength to carry your body, as  
it is stated: “For we were sated with our bread and were well, and  
saw no evil” (Jeremiah 44:17). Shmuel said to Rav Yehuda: Large-  
toothed one; untie your sack, that is, your mouth, and insert your  
food. Until the age of forty years, food is beneficial; from here  
and on, drinking is beneficial.

Having quoted some aphorisms of the Sages, the Gemara relates the  
following conversation: A certain eunuch who was an apostate said  
the following to Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korḥa as a provocation: How  
far is it from here to Karḥina? The provocateur’s intention was to  
hint to the fact that Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korḥa was bald [*kere’ah*].  
He said to him: It is the same as the distance from here to the  
mountains of Gozen, hinting at the eunuch’s castration, which in  
Aramaic is *goza* (Rav Ya’akov Emden). The apostate said to him: A  
bald buck<sup>N</sup> is sold for four *dinar*. He said to him: A castrated goat  
[*ikkara shelifa*]<sup>L</sup> is sold for eight.

The apostate saw that Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korḥa was not wearing  
shoes. He said to him: One who rides on a horse is a king. One  
who rides on a donkey is a free man. And one who wears shoes is  
at least a human being. One who does neither this nor that, some-  
one who is buried in the earth is better than him. He said to him:  
Eunuch, eunuch, you said to me three things, and now hear three  
things: The glory of a face is the beard, the joy of the heart is a  
wife, and “the portion of the Lord is children” (Psalms 127:3);  
blessed is the Omnipresent who has denied you all of them, for  
a eunuch does not have a beard, a wife or children. He said to him:  
Does a bald man quarrel? He said to him: Does a castrated male  
goat speak words of rebuke?

## NOTES

Grind food with your teeth and you will find in  
your feet – דוק בכבי ותשבח בניגרי: Rabbi Meir’s advice  
is meant as preparation for old age. If a person eats  
well during the younger years, his strength will be  
preserved even in old age (Maharsha).

Bald buck – ברחא קרחא: Rabbeinu Hananel ex-  
plained that after the eunuch degraded Rabbi Ye-  
hoshua ben Korḥa, calling him a “bald buck,” Rabbi  
Yehoshua responded by saying that the eunuch was  
just goading him to admit to the superiority of a eu-  
nuch over a bald person. His statement: Does a cas-  
trated male goat speak words of rebuke, means: You  
are not quarreling with me, you are just scolding me.

## LANGUAGE

Castrated goat [*ikkara shelifa*] – עיקרא שליפא: The  
version in the *Arukh* is *ika shelifa*. The word *ika* is from  
the Greek *αἶξ*, *aix*, or *αἴγος*, *aigos*, meaning goat.

BACKGROUND

Old age and weakness – זקנה ותשישות: The Gemara describes examples of the weakness and illness that accompany old age. The protrusion of the hip bone is particularly noticeable when an elderly person suffers from weight loss as a result of the weakness of old age, known as senile marasmus.

NOTES

Destinations that are near have become far away – קרובים נעשו רחוקים: In a midrash in Vayikra Rabba it is explained that this means that the ears that could once hear well, can now only hear with difficulty and from close by.

That which brings peace to the house – משים שלום: In Anaf Yosef it is explained that this phrase is referring to digestion, which makes peace within one's body. If one cannot properly digest his food, he suffers significant discomfort and a lack of internal peace.

And terrors shall be on the road – וחתחתים בדרך: In his commentary to Ecclesiastes, Rashi explains that the word terrors [hathatim] stems from the word hita, meaning fear. This phrase means that one will be afraid while traveling.

אמר ליה רבי לרבי שמעון בן חלפתא: מפני מה לא הקבלנו פניך ברגל בדרך שהקבילו אבותי לאבותיך? אמר ליה: סלעים נעשו גבוהים, קרובים נעשו רחוקים, משתים נעשו שלש, משים שלום בבית בטל.

”וסגרו דלתים בשוק וגו’ – אלו נקביו של אדם, בשפל קול הטחנה” – בשביל קורקבן שאינו טוחן, ויקום לקול הצפור” – שאפילו צפור מנערתו משנתו, וישחו כל בנות השיר” – שאפילו (קול שירים ושיירות) דומות עליו בשוחה.

ואף ברזילי הגלעדי אמר לדוד: “בן שמנים שנה אנכי היום האדע בין טוב לרע” – מכאן שדעותן של זקנים משתנות, אם יטעם עבדך את אשר אוכל ואת אשר אשתה” – מכאן ששפתותיהן של זקנים מתרפטות, אם אשמע עוד בקול שרים ושרות” – מכאן שאזניהם של זקנים מתכבדות.

אמר רב: ברזילי הגלעדי שקרא הוה, דהיא אמתא דהוא בי רבי בת תשעין ותרתין שנין, והות טעמא קידרא. רבא אמר: ברזילי הגלעדי שטוף בזמה הוה, וכל השטוף בזמה – זקנה קופצת עליו. תנאי, רבי ישמעאל ברבי יוסי אומר: תלמידי חכמים, כל זמן שמוקינין – חכמה נתוספת בהם, שנאמר: “בישישים חכמה ואורך ימים תבונה”. ועמי הארץ, כל זמן שמוקינין – טפשות נתוספת בהן, שנאמר “מסיר שפה לנאמנים וטעם זקנים יקח.”

”גם מגבוה ייראו” שאפילו גבושיות קטנה דומה עליו כהרי הרים, וחתחתים בדרך” בשעה שמהלך בדרך נעשו לו תוהים. וינאץ השקד” – זו קליבוסת, ויסתבל החגב” – אלו עגבות, ותפר האביזנה” – זו חמדה.

The Gemara again addresses old age: Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi said to Rabbi Shimon ben Halafta: For what reason did we not greet you during the Festival the way that my fathers greeted your fathers? This was a polite way of asking Rabbi Shimon ben Halafta why he had not come to visit Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi. He said to him: Because I have grown old,<sup>B</sup> and the rocks on the road have become tall, and destinations that are near have become far away,<sup>N</sup> and my two feet have been made into three with the addition of a cane, and that which brings peace to the house,<sup>N</sup> namely, the sexual drive which motivates a couple to make peace, is no more.

The Gemara continues to expound the verses of the final chapter of Ecclesiastes. The verse states: “And the doors shall be shut in the marketplace when the sound of the grinding is low, and one shall start up at the voice of a bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low” (Ecclesiastes 12:4). The Sages expounded: “And the doors shall be shut in the marketplace”; these are a person’s orifices, which cease to function normally. The interpretation continues: “When the sound of the grinding is low”; because the stomach is not grinding and digesting one’s food. “And one shall start up at the voice of a bird”; because one is unable to sleep deeply such that even a bird will wake him from his sleep. “And all the daughters of music shall be brought low”; this means that even the voices of male and female singers will seem to him like mere conversation, and he will no longer derive pleasure from song.

And even Barzilai the Gileadite said to David: “Today I am eighty years old, can I discern between good and bad? Can your servant taste what I eat or what I drink? Can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women?” (II Samuel 19:36). The Gemara explains: “Can I discern between good and bad”; from here we derive that the minds of the elderly change and they no longer discern properly. “Can your servant taste what I eat or what I drink”; from here we derive that the lips of the elderly crack and wither. “Can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women”; from here we derive that the ears of the elderly become heavy.

Rav said: Barzilai the Gileadite was a liar and he merely wanted to avoid joining David upon his return to Jerusalem, for an eighty year old man is not usually this debilitated. For there was a particular maidservant in the house of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi who was ninety-two years old, and she would taste the food that was cooking in the pots. Rava said: Barzilai was speaking the truth, but Barzilai the Gileadite was steeped in promiscuity, and anyone who is steeped in promiscuity is overtaken by old age before his time. It was taught in a baraita that Rabbi Yishmael, son of Rabbi Yosei, says: As Torah scholars grow older, wisdom is increased in them, as it is stated: “With aged men is wisdom; and length of days brings understanding” (Job 12:12). And as ignoramuses grow older, foolishness is increased in them, as it is stated: “He removes the speech of men of trust and takes away the understanding of the aged” (Job 12:20).

The Gemara continues interpreting verses from Ecclesiastes. The verse states: “Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high and terrors shall be on the road, and the almond tree shall blossom, and the grasshopper shall drag itself along, and the caper berry shall fail, for a person goes to his eternal home, and the mourners circle the marketplace” (Ecclesiastes 12:5). The Gemara explains: “Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high”; this means that even a small knoll on the road seems to him, the elderly, like the highest of mountains. “And terrors shall be on the road”;<sup>N</sup> this means that while he is walking on the road he will have terrors, i.e., he will fear falling or otherwise suffering injury. “And the almond tree shall blossom”; this is the hip bone that protrudes from the skin of an elderly person. “And the grasshopper [hagav] shall drag itself along [yistabbel]”; by replacing the letter het of hagav with an ayin, this can be understood as referring to the buttocks [agavot] which become heavy [sevel]. “And the caper berry shall fail”; this is sexual desire that ceases.

NOTES

A deceased person who has no comforters – **מת שאין לו מנחמין**: Maharsha explains that since the soul mourns for the person, the people who come to offer comfort are in fact coming to comfort the deceased himself. This explains why the Gemara uses the expression: A deceased person who has no comforters.

HALAKHA

A deceased person who has no comforters – **מת שאין לו מנחמין**: If a person passes away and has no relatives to mourn for him, ten people come and sit in the person's home for a full seven days while others come and comfort them, in accordance with the example of Rav Yehuda. However, the Rema writes: I have not seen people do this. Even so, if the deceased has no mourners, ten people gather and pray in the place where the person died for all seven days of mourning, in accordance with Rav Yehuda's actions as related in the Gemara (Rambam *Sefer Shofetim*, *Hilkhot Evel* 13:4; *Shulhan Arukh*, *Yoreh De'a* 376:3).

רב כהנא הוה פסיק סידרא קמיה דרב, כי מטא להאי קרא נגיד ואתנת. אמר: שמע מינה בטל ליה חמדיה דרב. אמר רב כהנא: מאי דכתיב "כי הוא אמר ויהי" – זו אשה, "הוא צוה ויעמוד" – אלו בני. תנא: אשה חמת מלא צוה, ופיה מלא דם – והכל רצין אחריה.

The Gemara relates that Rav Kahana was reading biblical verses before Rav. When he got to this verse, Rav sighed. Rav Kahana said: We can derive from this that Rav's desire has ceased. Rav Kahana also said: What is the meaning of that which is written: "For He spoke and it was, He commanded and it stood" (Psalms 33:9)? He understands this to mean that God created man with desires that push him to do things he would not do if he acted purely on the judgment of his intellect, and Rav Kahana therefore interprets the verse in the following manner: "For He spoke and it was"; this is a woman that a man marries. "He commanded and it stood"; these are the children who one works hard to raise. A *tanna* taught in a *baraita*: A woman is essentially a flask full of feces, a reference to the digestive system, and her mouth is full of blood, a euphemistic reference to menstruation, yet men are not deterred and they all run after her with desire.

"כי הולך האדם אל בית עולמו" אמר רבי יצחק: מלמד שכל צדיק וצדיק נותנין לו מדור לפי כבודו. משל למלך שנכנס הוא ועבדיו לעיר, כשהן נכנסין – כולן בשער אחד נכנסין, כשהן לנין – כל אחד ואחד נותנין לו מדור לפי כבודו.

The Gemara interprets the continuation of the verse cited above: "For a person goes to his eternal home" (Ecclesiastes 12:5). Rabbi Yitzhak said: This teaches that each and every righteous person is given a dwelling place in the World-to-Come in accordance with his honor. The Gemara offers a parable in which a king enters a city along with his servants. When they enter, they all enter through a single gate; however, when they sleep, each one is given a dwelling place in accordance with his honor. So too, although everyone dies, not everyone receives the same reward in the World-to-Come.

ואמר רבי יצחק: מאי דכתיב "כי הילדות והשחרות הבל" דברים שאדם עושה בילדותו – משחירים פניו לעת זקנתו.

And Rabbi Yitzhak said: What is the meaning of that which is written: "For childhood and youth [*shaharut*] are vanity" (Ecclesiastes 11:10)? Sinful things that a person does in his youth darken [*mashhirin*] his face with shame as he grows old (Rabbi Yoshiya Pinto).

ואמר רבי יצחק: קשה רימה למת כמחט בבשר החי, שנאמר "אך בשרו עליו יקאב". אמר רב חסדא: נפשו של אדם מתאבלת עליו כל שבועה, שנאמר "ונפשו עליו תאבל". וכתוב "ויעש לאביו אבל שבועת ימים".

And Rabbi Yitzhak said: The maggots that eat the flesh of the deceased are as painful to the dead as a needle in the flesh of the living, as it says with regard to the dead: "But his flesh is in pain for him, and his soul mourns over him" (Job 14:22). Rav Hisda said: A person's soul mourns for him during all seven days of mourning following his death, as it is stated: And his soul mourns over him, and it is also written: "And he mourned his father seven days" (Genesis 50:10).

אמר רב יהודה: מת שאין לו מנחמין הולכין עשרה בני אדם ויושבין במקומו. ההוא דשכיב בשבבותיה דרב יהודה לא היו לו מנחמין.

Rav Yehuda said: In the case of a deceased person who has no comforters,<sup>NH</sup> i.e., he has nobody to mourn for him, ten people should go and sit in his place and accept condolences. The Gemara relates the story of a certain person who died in Rav Yehuda's neighborhood and who did not have any comforters, i.e., mourners;

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כל יומא הוה דבר רב יהודה בי עשרה, ויתבי בדוכתיה. לאחר שבועה ימים איתתיו ליה בחילמיה דרב יהודה, ואמר ליה: תנוח דעתך שהנחת את דעתי.

every day of the seven day mourning period, Rav Yehuda would take ten people and they would sit in his place, in the house of the deceased. After seven days had passed the deceased appeared to Rav Yehuda in his dream and said to him: Put your mind to rest, for you have put my mind to rest.

אמר רבי אבהו: כל שאומרים בפני המת יודע, עד שישתם הגולל. פליגי בה רבי חייא ורבי שמעון ברבי: חד אמר: עד שישתם הגולל, וחד אמר: עד שיתעבל הבשר.

Rabbi Abbahu said: Everything people say before the deceased,<sup>N</sup> he knows, until the tomb is sealed with the top-stone. Rabbi Hiyya and Rabbi Shimon, son of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi, disagreed with regard to the meaning of this statement. One of them said that the deceased is aware until the tomb is sealed with the top-stone, which is referring to the covering of the grave (*Tosafot*). And one of them said that it is until the flesh decomposes.

NOTES

Everything people say before the deceased – **כל שאומרים בפני המת**: This statement is a continuation of the previous discussion about a person's soul remaining with his body for a period of time after death. The Sages disagree about the duration of this time period.

NOTES

Royal garments – בגדי מלכות: The Maharsha explains that the wise servants wear the royal garments that have been lent to them only when they perform honorable and clean activities. When they are engaged in other types of activities, they leave the garments in their boxes. On the other hand, the foolish servants do not pay attention to the fact that the clothes are not their own, and wear them even when engaged in ignoble and dirty activities.

LANGUAGE

Box [kufsa] – קופסא: From the Latin word capsula, meaning a container, especially one used for books.

מֵאֵן דְּאָמַר עַד שְׂוִיתֵעֵל הַבָּשָׂר – דְּכַתִּיב “אֲךָ בָּשָׂרוֹ עָלָיו יִכְאֹב וְנִפְשׁוֹ עָלָיו תִּאֲבָל.” מֵאֵן דְּאָמַר עַד שְׂוִיתֵם הַגּוֹלָל – דְּכַתִּיב “וַיָּשׁוּב הָעֶפְרָר עַל הָאָרֶץ בְּשִׂהִיָּה וְגו’.”

תְּנוּ רַבְנָן: “וְהָרוּחַ תָּשׁוּב אֶל הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר נָתַנָּה” – תְּנָה לּוֹ כְּמוֹ שֶׁנִּתְּנָה לְךָ בְּטַהֲרָה – אִף אֵתָה בְּטַהֲרָה. מִשָּׁל לְמֶלֶךְ בְּשָׂר וְדָם שֶׁחָלַק בְּגַדֵי מַלְכוּת לְעַבְדָּיו. פְּקַחִין שְׁבָהֵן קִיפְלוּם וְהַיְחָסוּם בְּקוּפְסָא, טַפְשִׁים שְׁבָהֵן הִלְכוּ וְעָשׂוּ בָּהֶן מְלָאכָה. לְיָמִים בִּיקַשׁ הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶת כָּלָיו, פְּקַחִין שְׁבָהֵן הַחַזִּירוּם לּוֹ כְּשֶׁהָן מְגוּהָצִין, טַפְשִׁין שְׁבָהֵן הַחַזִּירוּם לּוֹ כְּשֶׁהָן מְלוּכְלָכִין. שָׂמַח הַמֶּלֶךְ לְקִרְאָתָם פְּקַחִין, וְכָעַס לְקִרְאָתָם טַפְשִׁין.

עַל פְּקַחִין אָמַר: יִנְתְּנוּ כָּלֵי לְאוֹצָר, וְהֵם יִלְכוּ לְבִתְיָהֶם לְשָׁלוֹם. וְעַל טַפְשִׁין אָמַר: כָּלֵי יִנְתְּנוּ לְכוֹבֵם, וְהֵן יִתְחַבְּשׁוּ בְּבֵית הָאֲסוּרִים.

אִף הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא, עַל גּוֹפֵן שֶׁל צְדִיקִים אָמַר “יָבֵא שָׁלוֹם יְנוּחוּ עַל מִשְׁכְּבוֹתָם” וְעַל נִשְׁמָתָן הוּא אָמַר “וְהִיָּתָה נַפְשׁ אַדֹּנֵי צְרוּרָה בְּצִרוּר הַחַיִּים.” עַל גּוֹפֵן שֶׁל רָשָׁעִים הוּא אָמַר “אֵין שָׁלוֹם אָמַר ה’ לְרָשָׁעִים” וְעַל נִשְׁמָתָן הוּא אָמַר “וַיָּאֵת נַפְשׁ אוֹיְבֶיךָ וְקִלְעָנָה בְּתוֹךְ כַּף הַקֶּלֶעַ.”

תְּנִינָא, רַבֵּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר אָמַר: נִשְׁמָתָן שֶׁל צְדִיקִים גְּנוּזוֹת תַּחַת כִּסֵּא הַכְּבוֹד, שְׁנֵאמַר “וְהִיָּתָה נַפְשׁ אַדֹּנֵי צְרוּרָה בְּצִרוּר הַחַיִּים,” וְשֶׁל רָשָׁעִים זוֹמְמוֹת וְהוֹלְכוֹת, [וּמְלֻאָךְ אֶחָד עוֹמֵד בְּסוֹף הָעוֹלָם וּמְלֻאָךְ אֶחָר עוֹמֵד בְּסוֹף הָעוֹלָם, וּמְקַלְעִין נִשְׁמָתָן זֶה לְזֶה], שְׁנֵאמַר “וַיָּאֵת נַפְשׁ אוֹיְבֶיךָ וְקִלְעָנָה בְּתוֹךְ כַּף הַקֶּלֶעַ.”

אָמַר לִיה רַבָּה לְרַב נַחֲמָן: שֶׁל בֵּינוּנִים מֵאִי? אָמַר לִיה: אֵיכָא שְׂכִיבְנָא לֹא אָמַרִי לְכוּ הָאֵי מְלִיתָא. הָכִי אָמַר שְׂמוּאֵל: אֵלוֹ וְאֵלוֹ לְדוּמָה נִמְסְרִין, הִלְלוּ – יֵשׁ לָהֶן מְנוּחָה, הִלְלוּ – אֵין לָהֶן מְנוּחָה. אָמַר (לִיה) רַב מַרִי: עֵתִידִים צְדִיקִים דְּהוּוּ עֶפְרָא, דְּכַתִּיב “וַיָּשׁוּב הָעֶפְרָר עַל הָאָרֶץ בְּשִׂהִיָּה.”

The one who said that it is until the flesh decomposes can support his position based on that which is written in the following verse: “But his flesh grieves for him, and his soul mourns over him” (Job 14:22). This indicates that the deceased is aware of the pain of his flesh in the grave. The one who said that the deceased is aware only until the tomb is sealed with the top-stone can support his view based on that which is written in a different verse: “And the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it” (Ecclesiastes 12:7). This indicates that when the body returns to the earth, the spirit also returns to its place and is no longer aware of what is happening to the body.

The Sages taught with regard to the verse: “And the spirit returns to God who gave it” (Ecclesiastes 12:7) that the words: Who gave it, mean: As it was given. In other words, give it to Him as He gave it to you; just as He gave it to you in purity, you too should return it to God in purity. The Gemara cites a parable of a king of flesh and blood who distributed royal garments<sup>n</sup> to his servants. The wise ones folded them and placed them in a box [kufsa]<sup>l</sup> to protect them, whereas the foolish ones went and worked in them. After a period of time the king requested that his garments be returned to him. The wise ones returned them to him pressed, as they were when the servants received them, and the foolish ones returned them dirty. The king was happy to greet the wise ones and angry to greet the foolish ones.

With regard to the wise ones he said: My garments shall be given back to the storehouse, and let them go to their homes in peace. And with regard to the foolish ones he said: My garments shall be given to the launderer, and they, the fools, will be locked up in prison as a punishment for degrading the king’s garments for their own purposes.

The Holy One, Blessed be He, also acts in this way. With regard to the bodies of the righteous, which are likened to the royal garments that are well kept, it states: “He enters into peace, they rest on their beds each one that walks in his uprightness” (Isaiah 57:2). And with regard to their souls, it states: “And the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with the Lord your God” (1 Samuel 25:29). And conversely, with regard to the bodies of the wicked, it states: “There is no peace, says the Lord, for the wicked” (Isaiah 57:21), and with regard to their souls, it states: “And the souls of your enemies He shall sling out in the hollow of a sling” (1 Samuel 25:29).

It was taught in a baraita that Rabbi Eliezer says: The souls of the righteous are stored beneath the Throne of Glory, as it is stated: “And the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life” (1 Samuel 25:29). And the souls of the wicked are continuously tied up, and one angel stands at one end of the world and another angel stands at the other end of the world and they sling the souls of the wicked back and forth to one another, as it is stated: “And the souls of your enemies He shall sling out in the hollow of a sling” (1 Samuel 25:29).

Rabba said to Rav Nahman: What happens to the souls of middling people, who are neither righteous nor wicked? Rav Nahman said to him: It is good that you asked me this question, for even if I were dead I would not have been able to tell you that. As Shmuel said as follows: These and those, the souls of the wicked and of the middling people, are handed over to Duma, the angel in charge of spirits. But these, the souls of the middling people, have rest, and these, the souls of the wicked, do not have rest. Rav Mari said: Even the bodies of the righteous will not be preserved and will become dust, as it is written: “And the dust returns to the earth as it was” (Ecclesiastes 12:7).

הנהו קפולאי דהו קפלי בארעא דרב נחמן, נחר בהו רב אחאי בר יאשיה. אתו ואמרו ליה לרב נחמן: נחר בן גברא. אתא ואמר ליה: מאן ניהו מר? אמר ליה: אנא אחאי בר יאשיה. אמר ליה: ולאו אמר רב מרי: עתדי צדיקי דהו עפרא? אמר ליה: ומני מרי, דלא ידענא ליה. אמר ליה: והא קרא כתב "וישוב העפר על הארץ כשהיה?"

אמר ליה: דאקרינך קהלת לא אקרינך משלי, דכתב "ורקב עצמות קנאה" כל מי שיש לו קנאה בלבבו - עצמותיו מרקיבים, כל שאין לו קנאה בלבבו - אין עצמותיו מרקיבים.

גשטיה, תזייה דאית ביה מששא. אמר ליה: ליקום מר לגויה דביתא. אמר ליה: גלית אדעתך דאפילו נביאי לא קרית, דכתב "וידעתם כי אני ה' בפתחי את קברותיכם".

אמר ליה: והכתב "כי עפר אתה ואל עפר תשוב". אמר ליה: ההוא - שעה אחת קודם תחיית המתים.

אמר ליה ההוא מינא לרבי אבהו: אמריתו "ונשמתן של צדיקים גנוזות תחת כסא הכבוד". אובא טמיא היכא אסקיה לשמואל בנגידא? אמר ליה: התם בתוך שנים עשר חדש הוה. דתניא: כל שנים עשר חדש גופו קיים, ונשמתו עולה ויורדת. לאחר שנים עשר חדש הגוף בטל.

The Gemara cites a related story: **The diggers who were digging in Rav Nahman's land** came upon a grave, and Rav Aḥai bar Yoshiya,<sup>NP</sup> who was buried there, **rebuked them. They came and said to Rav Nahman: A deceased person just rebuked us.** Rav Nahman came and said to the person buried there: **Who is the Master, i.e., who are you? He said to him: I am Aḥai bar Yoshiya.** Rav Nahman said to him: **How has your body been preserved? Didn't Rav Mari say that the righteous will turn to dust?** Rav Aḥai said to him: **And who is Mari, whom I do not know?** Why should I be concerned about what he says? Rav Nahman said to him: **Even without Rav Mari's statement, there is an explicit verse which is written: "And the dust will return to the earth as it was"** (Ecclesiastes 12:7).

Rav Aḥai said to him: **Whoever taught you the book of Ecclesiastes did not teach you the book of Proverbs, for it is written in Proverbs: "A tranquil heart is the life of the flesh, but envy is the rotting of the bones"** (Proverbs 14:30). This means that **anyone who has envy in his heart during his lifetime, his bones rot in the grave, and anyone who does not have envy in his heart, his bones do not rot.**

Rav Nahman touched him and saw that he had substance. Rav Nahman said to him: **Let the Master arise and come into my house.** Rav Aḥai said to him: **You have revealed that you have not even studied Prophets,<sup>N</sup> and it is not just the Writings of which you are ignorant, for it is written: "And you shall know that I am the Lord when I open up your graves and lift you up from your graves, My nation"** (Ezekiel 37:13). As long as the dead have not been instructed to leave their graves, leaving of their own accord is prohibited.

Rav Nahman once again asked Rav Aḥai about the preservation of the flesh, and he said: **But it is written: "For you are dust and you shall return to dust"** (Genesis 3:19), so why has your body not turned into dust? He said to him: **That verse applies to the righteous only one hour before the resurrection of the dead, so that they, too, may be created anew** (Maharsha).

A certain apostate once said to Rabbi Abbahu: **You say that the souls of the righteous are stored beneath the Throne of Glory, but if so, how did the oracle woman raise up Samuel using necromancy if his soul was no longer in this world?** Rabbi Abbahu said to him: **There, it was within twelve months of his death, as it was taught in a baraita: For a full twelve months a deceased person's body remains and his soul ascends and descends, such that it is sometimes in this world with its body. After twelve months, the body ceases to exist**

NOTES

Rav Aḥai bar Yoshiya – רב אחאי בר יאשיה: Some explain that the people digging in Rav Nahman's land were actually plowing his field and came across the grave. They did not know what to do with the body and went to ask Rav Nahman. Rav Aḥai bar Yoshiya appeared to Rav Nahman in a dream and their entire conversation took place in that dream (*Pardes Rimonia*).

Ecclesiastes, Proverbs, Prophets – קהלת, משלי, נביאים: During the talmudic period, the common educational curriculum began with studying Torah and continued with the Prophets. Then the longer works of the Writings: Job, Proverbs and Psalms, were studied, followed by the shorter Writings: the five Scrolls [*Megillot*], including Ecclesiastes. Thus, Rav Aḥai bar Yoshiya said that Rav Nahman was even not an expert in the subjects taught to children, including Proverbs and the Prophets.

PERSONALITIES

Rav Aḥai bar Yoshiya – רב אחאי בר יאשיה: Rav Aḥai was one of the later *tanna'im* who lived during the time of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi. Apparently, he was the son of the *tanna*, Rabbi Yoshiya, who was a student of Rabbi Yishmael. Rav Aḥai lived in the Babylonian city of Hutzal, although he conducted business in Neharde'a and was buried there. From the few sources that provide background about his life, it appears that he earned a living as a businessman, but was also the leader of the city of Hutzal and the surrounding villages. His teachings are quoted several times in the Talmud and the halakhic midrash. Rav Nahman lived and was active in Neharde'a a few generations after Rav Aḥai bar Yoshiya.

NOTES

They attempt to stir the listener and he is stirred – דמתמו ליה ואחים: If a eulogy is an indication that the deceased has earned a share in the World-to-Come, it is unnecessary to attempt to stir the hearts of the listeners, as it serves no purpose. If a speaker stirs the emotions of the crowd, an outpouring of emotion would not indicate the deceased's greatness. Nevertheless, even when the eulogizer attempts to deliver a moving eulogy, the listeners are not necessarily moved by every eulogy and thus the fact that they are stirred reflects well on the deceased.

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and his soul ascends to its place beneath the Throne of Glory, and does not descend anymore.

אמר רב יהודה בריה דרב שמואל בר שילת משמיה דרב: מהספדו של אדם נפר אם בן העולם הבא הוא אם לא. איני והאמר ליה רב לרב שמואל בר שילת: אחים בהספידא, דהתם קאימנא. לא קשיא, הא – דמתמו ליה ואחים, הא – דמתמו ליה ולא אחים.

Rav Yehuda, son of Rav Shmuel bar Sheilat, said in the name of Rav: **From a person's eulogy it is apparent whether or not he has a share in the World-to-Come.** If the listeners are pained and brought to tears during the eulogy, it is clear that the person was righteous. The Gemara asks: **Is that so? Didn't Rav say to Rav Shmuel bar Sheilat: Stir the hearts of those gathered during my eulogy, for I will be standing there and listening to your words? Even a person as great as Rav needed to give instructions about his eulogy.** The Gemara answers: **This is not difficult, for this statement, which maintains that those who merit a share in the World-to-Come can be identified by their eulogies, is referring to a situation in which they attempt to stir the listener and he is stirred;<sup>N</sup> while that statement is referring to a situation in which they attempt to stir the listener and he is not stirred.** That is an indication that the deceased person was not righteous.