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 Ecclesiastes. 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 dim.

The Gemara relates: The Roman emperor said to Rabbi Yehoshua ben Hananya: “What is the reason did you 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 enigmatically: 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, because an old man walks bent over and appears to be searching for something.

It was taught in a baraita that Rabbi Yosef 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 the strength to carry your body, as it is stated: “For we were sated with 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 Korha as a provocation: How far is it from here to Karbina? The provocateur’s intention was to hint to the fact that Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korha was bald (kercal). 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 Yalak Emden). The apostate said to him: A bald buck is sold for four dinar. He said to him: A castrated goat [ikkara shelifa] is sold for eight.

The apostate saw that Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korha 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, someone 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?
Old age and weakness – בהית

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.

In his commentary to Ecclesiastes, Rashi explains that the word ħatatim stems from the word ħita, meaning fear. This phrase means that one will suffer from weight loss as a result of the weakness.

In Anaf Yosef: Perek XXIII. 152a.

The Gemara again addresses old age: Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi said to Rabbi Shimon ben Halafa: 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 Halafa why he had not come to visit Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi. He said to him: Because I have grown old, and the rocks on the road have become tall, and destinations that are near have become far away, and my two feet have been made into three with the addition of a cane, and that which brings peace to the house, 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?” (1 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 on 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”; 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 [ystitabel];” by replacing the letter het of hagav with an ayin, this can be understood as referring to the buttocks [agavor] which become heavy [sevec]. “And the caper berry shall fail”; this is sexual desire that ceases.
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” is a woman: that a man marries. “He commanded and it stood” these are the children who work 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.

And Rabbi Yitzĥak said: What is the meaning of that which is written: “For childhood and youth [shabatit] are vanity” (Ecclesiastes 11:1)? Sinful things that a person does in his youth darken [maskharin] his face with shame as he grows old (Rabbi Yoshiya Pinto).

And Rabbi Yitzĥak said: The maggots that eat the flesh of the deceased are as painful to the living 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).

Rav Yehuda said: In the case of a deceased person who has no comforters, namely, 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; 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.

Rabbi Abbahu said: Everything people say before the deceased,61 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;
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.

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 slang” (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).
The Gemara cites a related story: The diggers who were digging in Rav Nahman's land came upon a grave, and Rav Achai bar Yoshiya, 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 Achai bar Yoshiya. Rav Nahman said to him: How has your body been preserved? Didn't Rav Marci say that the righteous will turn to dust? Rav Nahman said to him: And who is Marci, whom I do not know? Why should I be concerned about what he says? Rav Nahman said to him: Even without Rav Marci'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 Achai 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 Achai said to him: You have revealed that you have not even studied Prophets, 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 Achai 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 (Marahsha).

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.