

Sleeping on an overturned bed – שינה על מיטה כפוייה – It is not enough for a mourner to overturn his bed; he must sleep on it overturned as well (Rambam *Sefer Shofetim, Hilkhot Evel* 5:18).

Sweep and sprinkle water – מכבדין ומרביצין – It is permitted to sweep and sprinkle water on the dirt floor in a mourners' house. Similarly, one may wash dishes there as well. However, one should not bring any type of fragrant spices there. Spices may be taken into a house in which a dead body is present, but one does not recite a blessing over those spices (*Shulhan Arukh, Yoreh De'a* 378:7).

Customs of mourning during the intermediate days of the Festival – מנהגי אבילות במועד – The mourners' blessing is not recited in open areas during the intermediate days of a Festival. However, the consolers stand in a line and the mourners dismiss the masses (*Tur, Yoreh De'a* 401).

Placing a bier during the intermediate days of the Festival – הנחת המיטה במועד – The bier is not placed in the street during the intermediate days of a Festival, so as not to encourage eulogizing at that time. On these days, eulogies are given only in honor of a Torah scholar. A bier is not taken for burial during the intermediate days of the Festival until the grave has already been prepared (*Shulhan Arukh, Yoreh De'a* 401:1).

LANGUAGE

Tray [tavla] – טבלא – From the Greek τάβλα, *tabla*, which is borrowed from the Latin *tabula*. Ordinarily, it refers to a tablet that was used for writing or on which objects were placed. By extension, the word is used here in reference to a flat tray that is similar to a tablet. See also LANGUAGE, p. 54.

Bowl [iskutla] – אסקוטלא – From the Latin *scutella*, meaning flat dish.

Narrow-mouthed basket [kanon] – קנון – From the Greek κάθεον, *kaneon*, or κανών, *kanon*, meaning breadbasket, or a basket in which items were taken as gifts or to be sacrificed as offerings. According to the description in the Talmud, this basket had a narrow opening.

תנו רבנן: ישן על גבי כסא, על גבי אודיני גדולה, על גבי קרקע – לא יצא ידיו חזבת. אמר רבי יוחנן: שלא קיים כפיית המטה.

תנו רבנן: מכבדין ומרביצין בבית האבל, ומדיחין קערות וכוסות וצלוחיות וקיתונות בבית האבל, ואין מביאין את המוגמר ואת הבשמים לבית האבל.

איני: והא תני בר קפרא: אין מברכין לא על המוגמר ולא על הבשמים בבית האבל. ברובי הוא דלא מברכין, הא אתווי – מייתני!

לא קשיא: הא – בבית האבל, הא – בבית המנחמין.

מתני' אין מוליכין לבית האבל לא בטבלא ולא באסקוטלא ולא בקנון, אלא בסלים. ואין אומרים ברפת אבלים במועד, אבל עומדין בשורה, ומנחמין, ופותרין את הרבים.

אין מניחין את המטה ברחוב שלא להרגיל את ההספד. ולא של נשים לעולם. מפני הקבדו.

The Sages taught the following *baraita*: If the mourner sleeps on a chair, or on a large overturned mortar, or on the ground, he does not fulfill his obligation, even though he is uncomfortable while sleeping. Rabbi Yohanan said: This is because he did not fulfill the mitzva of overturning the bed.¹⁴

The Sages taught another *baraita*: One may sweep and sprinkle water¹⁵ on a dirt floor in the house of a mourner, and one may wash bowls, cups, jugs, and pitchers in the house of a mourner. But one may not bring incense or fragrant spices into the house of a mourner.

The Gemara asks: Is that so? But doesn't bar Kappara teach the following *baraita*: One may not recite a blessing either over incense or over fragrant spices in the house of a mourner? From this one may infer that one may not recite a blessing over these incense or spices, but one may bring them into the house of the mourner. This appears to contradict the previous *baraita*.

The Gemara explains: It is not difficult. Here, the *baraita* is referring to the house of a mourner, into which spices should not be taken; there, the *baraita* that states that one may not recite a blessing over them, is referring to the house of the consolers, his relatives, into which spices may be brought.¹⁶

MISHNA One does not bring¹⁷ the first meal after the burial to the house of mourning on a small tray [tavla],¹⁸ in a bowl [iskutla],¹⁹ or in a narrow-mouthed basket [kanon],²⁰ but rather in ordinary baskets. And the mourners' blessing is not recited on the intermediate days of a Festival, but the consolers may stand in a row when the mourners leave the cemetery and console them. And the mourners dismiss the many consolers,²¹ by telling them that they may return home after they have fulfilled the mitzva of consoling the mourners.²²

The bier of the deceased is not set down in the street during the intermediate days of a Festival²³ so as not to encourage eulogies. On an ordinary weekday, people would gather in the street around the bier to eulogize the deceased, but this should be avoided during the intermediate days of the Festival. And the biers of women are never set down, even if it is not the intermediate days of a Festival, due to their honor. Blood might drip from their bodies, and it would cause them dishonor if their blood stained the street.

NOTES

The house of the mourner and the house of the consolers – בית האבל ובית המנחמין: The authorities disagree with regard to the meaning of the expression: House of the mourner. Some say that the house of the mourner refers to a house where the mourner alone is present, and the house of the consolers refers to the place where people come to comfort him (Ra'avad; Rabbeinu Yehonatan of Lunel).

Others explain that the house of the mourner refers to a house that still contains the body of the deceased, and the more correct name would be the house of the mourning; whereas the house of the consolers is the room that no longer contains the body of the deceased, where others come to console the mourners (Rosh).

Similarly, there is a dispute with regard to the *halakha*, as there are those who say that it is permitted to bring fragrant spices into a house where the body of the deceased is present, to remove any unpleasant odor, however such spices may not be brought to a place where there is no dead body (Rabbi Yitzhak ibn Giat; Ritva; Meiri). Some say that in a house where only the mourner is present one may not bring fragrant spices because it is not appropriate for the mourner to take pleasure while he

is mourning. However, in honor of the consolers one may bring such spices (Rabbeinu Hananel).

One does not bring – אין מוליכין: Some say that this mishna refers to the intermediate days of the Festival. Despite the honor of the intermediate days of the Festival, one may not take food to the mourner's house in elaborately decorated vessels. This is all the more so prohibited on an ordinary weekday (Ritva).

In a bowl – באסקוטלא: Some explain that this refers to a type of large bowl (Rashi) or that it was a gold or silver bowl (*Arukh*). Others understand it to be a small table (Rabbeinu Yehonatan of Lunel), or a fine tablecloth (Rabbi Shlomo ben HaYatom).

And dismiss the many consolers – ופותרים את הרבים: Some explain that the mourners would dismiss the consolers immediately, telling them that they have not fulfilled their obligation since they cannot recite the mourners' blessing (Rabbeinu Yehonatan of Lunel). Those who came to console were also exempt after the Festival from reciting the mourners' blessing (Ra'avad). Some say that in honor of the Festival it is permitted to tell the consolers: Go in peace (Ran).

Would be brought...and the poor were embarrassed – **היו מוליכין...והיו עניים מתביישים** – There is a dispute as to whether the concern is for the honor of the mourners or the consolers. According to one opinion, people would use inexpensive vessels to bring food to the mourners who were from poor households, and the Sages were concerned about the honor of the poor. Alternatively, this ordinance was instituted because the poor consolers would bring simple utensils, and the Sages were concerned about the honor of the consolers (Rabbeinu Yehonatan of Lunel; see *Nimmukei Yosef*).

Uncover the faces of the wealthy – **מגלין פני עשירים** – Uncovering the face was done to increase the eulogies because people would be pained when they saw the face of the deceased. Or perhaps those present, when seeing the deceased, would realize that despite how beautiful he had once been his body will nevertheless soon become dirt and decay. This leads to an understanding of the frailty of life (Rabbeinu Yehonatan of Lunel).

BACKGROUND

Colored glass – **זכוכית צבועה**:



Roman glassware in various colors

GEMARA The Sages taught the following *baraita*: At first, the meal after the burial would be brought to the house of the mourner in various ways. The wealthy would bring the meal in baskets of silver and gold, and the poor would bring it in baskets of peeled willow branches. And the poor were embarrassed,¹ as everyone would see that they were poor. The Sages instituted that everyone should bring the meal in baskets of peeled willow branches,² due to the honor of the poor.

The Sages taught a similar *baraita*: At first, they would serve wine in the house of the mourner during the first meal after the burial; the wealthy would do so in cups made from white glass, and the poor would serve this wine in cups of colored glass.³ And the poor were embarrassed, as everyone would see that they were poor. The Sages instituted that all should serve drinks in the house of the mourner in colored glass cups, due to the honor of the poor.

Furthermore, at first they would uncover the faces of the wealthy⁴ who passed away and cover the faces of the poor, because their faces were blackened by famine. And the poor were embarrassed because they were buried in a different manner. The Sages instituted that everyone's face should be covered, due to the honor of the poor.⁵

Additionally, at first the wealthy would take the deceased out for burial on a *dargash*, and the poor would take the deceased out

גמ' תנו רבנן: בראשונה היו מוליכין בבית האבל, עשירים – בקלתות של כסף ושל זהב, ועניים – בסלי נצרים של ערבה קלופה. והיו עניים מתביישים, התקינו שיהו הכל מביאין בסלי נצרים של ערבה קלופה, מפני כבודן של עניים.

תנו רבנן: בראשונה היו משקין בבית האבל, עשירים – בזכוכית לבנה, ועניים – בזכוכית צבועה, והיו עניים מתביישין. התקינו שיהו הכל משקין בזכוכית צבועה, מפני כבודן של עניים.

בראשונה היו מגלין פני עשירים, ומכסין פני עניים, מפני שהיו מושרחין פניהן מפני בצורת, והיו עניים מתביישין. התקינו שיהו מכסין פני הכל, מפני כבודן של עניים.

בראשונה היו מוציאין עשירים בדרגש, ועניים

HALAKHA

סלי נצרים של ערבה קלופה – Baskets of peeled willow branches – Food for the first meal after burial may be transferred only in simple willow baskets (Rambam *Sefer Shofetim, Hilkhot Evel* 13:7).

כיסוי פני המת – Covering the faces of the deceased should be covered, regardless of whether they were wealthy or poor, in accordance with the enactment of the Sages (*Shulhan Arukh, Yoreh De'a* 353:1).

Perek III

Daf 27 Amud b

בכליכה, והיו עניים מתביישין. התקינו שיהו הכל מוציאין בכליכה, מפני כבודן של עניים.

on a plain bier made from poles that were strapped together, and the poor were embarrassed. The Sages instituted that everyone should be taken out for burial on a plain bier, due to the honor of the poor.

בראשונה היו מניחין את המוגמר תחת חולי מעים מתים, והיו חולי מעים חיים מתביישין, התקינו שיהו מניחין תחת הכל, מפני כבודן של חולי מעים חיים.

Similarly, at first they would place incense under the beds of those who died with an intestinal disease, because the body emitted an especially unpleasant odor. And those who were alive with an intestinal disease were embarrassed when they understood that they, too, would be treated in this manner after their death, and that everyone would know the cause of their death. The Sages instituted that incense should be placed under everyone, due to the honor of those with an intestinal disease who were still living.

בראשונה היו מטבילין את הכלים על גבי נדות מתות, והיו נדות חיות מתביישות. התקינו שיהו מטבילין על גבי כל הנשים, מפני כבודן של נדות חיות. בראשונה מטבילין על גבי זבין מתים, והיו זבין חיים מתביישין. התקינו שיהו מטבילין על גבי הכל, מפני כבודן של זבין חיים.

Moreover, at first they would ritually immerse all the utensils that had been used by women who died while menstruating, which had thereby contracted ritual impurity. And due to this, the living menstruating women were embarrassed. The Sages instituted that the utensils that had been used by all dying women must be immersed, due to the honor of living menstruating women. And, at first they would ritually immerse all the utensils that had been used by *zavin*, men suffering from gonorrhoea, who died, as the utensils had thereby contracted ritual impurity. And due to this the living *zavin* felt embarrassed. The Sages instituted that the utensils that had been used by all men must be immersed, due to the honor of the living *zavin*.

NOTES

Rabban Gamliel came and acted – בא רבן גמליאל ונהג – He was remembered for this practice throughout the generations, since he did it for the sake of the masses. It was such an important act that when people would drink cups of wine in the house of the mourner, as was the custom then, they would also drink an extra cup in honor of Rabban Gamliel (*Ketubot* 8b).

Hemp garments that cost one dinar – צרדא ברוזא – Some explain that this is a simple thick garment (Rabbi Shlomo ben HaYatom).

Killus is referring to stomping with one's foot – קילום ברגל: This custom is mentioned in the Bible as a mourning custom, as it is stated: "Stamp your feet and say: Alas!" (Ezekiel 6:11). This custom continued for a long time as a sign of mourning in Eretz Yisrael (Rabbi Shlomo ben HaYatom; *Tosefot HaRosh*).

Should not stomp with a sandal – לא יקלס בסנדל – One version of the text inverts the statement and says: One should not stomp with a shoe, because it has a soft sole and one may injure himself. On the other hand, a sandal has a hard sole, which was made from wood (Rashi manuscript). There is another version that reads: Not with a shoe and not with a sandal, lest one become distracted and be injured.

Once a mourner nods his head – אביל ביון שנגנע ראשו – Some explain that when a mourner nods his head he displays that he has already been somewhat consoled, and it is no longer necessary to sit with him and trouble him with conversation (Rabbeinu Gershom Meor HaGola; Rabbeinu Yehonatan of Lunel). Some say that since he is sitting with his face wrapped and he is required to sit quietly, if he wishes to hint that he is tired or that it is difficult for him to be in the company of others, then he should do so only with a nod of his head (Rav Hai Gaon).

LANGUAGE

Hemp garments [*tzerada*] – צרדא: According to most commentaries this refers to a simple linen or hemp garment. It is apparently related to the Middle Persian *čadur*, meaning a veil.

Killus – קילום: Apparently a Greek word, although there is dispute with regard to its precise origin. Some say that it is derived from *κλῆσις*, *klēsis*, meaning to raise one's voice or to call.

בראשונה היתה הוצאת המת קשה לקרוביו יותר ממימתתו, עד שהיו קרוביו מניחין אותו ובורחין. עד שבא רבן גמליאל ונהג קלות ראש בעצמו ויצא בכלי פשתן, ונהגו העם אחריו ליצאת בכלי פשתן. אמר רב פפא: והאידידא נהוג עלמא אפילו בצרדא בר זוזא.

"אין מניחין את המטה ברחוב." אמר רב פפא: אין מועד בפני תלמיד חכם, וכל שכן חנוכה ופורים.

והני מילי – בפניו, אבל שלא בפניו – לא. איני? והא רב כהנא ספדיה לרב זביד מנהרדעא בפום נהרא! אמר רב פפי: יום שמועה הוה, וכבפניו דמי.

אמר עולא: הספד על לב, דכתוב: "על שדים סופדים"; טיפוח – ביד; קילום – ברגל.

תנו רבנן: המקלס – לא יקלס בסנדל, אלא במנעל, מפני הסכנה.

אמר רבי יוחנן: אביל, ביון שני ענע ראשו – שוב אין מנחמין רשאיין לישב אצלו.

Likewise, at first taking the dead out for burial was more difficult for the relatives than the actual death, because it was customary to bury the dead in expensive shrouds, which the poor could not afford. The problem grew to the point that relatives would sometimes abandon the corpse and run away. This lasted until Rabban Gamliel came and acted^N with frivolity, meaning that he waived his dignity, by leaving instructions that he be taken out for burial in linen garments. And the people adopted this practice after him and had themselves taken out for burial in linen garments.^H Rav Pappa said: And nowadays, everyone follows the practice of taking out the dead for burial even in plain hemp garments [*tzerada*]^L that cost only a dinar.^N

It is taught in the mishna: The bier of the deceased is not set down in the street during the intermediate days of a Festival, so as not to encourage eulogies. Rav Pappa said: There are no restrictions on eulogizing on the intermediate days of a Festival in the presence of a deceased Torah scholar,^H and therefore he may be eulogized in the ordinary manner during the Festival week. And all the more so a Torah scholar may be eulogized on the days of Hanukkah and Purim, which have less sanctity than the intermediate days of a Festival.

The Gemara comments: But this allowance to eulogize a Torah scholar during the intermediate days of a Festival applies only when the eulogy is in the presence of the deceased, before the bier. However, giving a eulogy that is not in his presence is not permitted. The Gemara asks: Is that so? But didn't Rav Kahana eulogize Rav Zevid from Neharde'a in his city Pum Nahara during the intermediate days of a Festival? Rav Pappa said: It was the day on which Rav Kahana received the news of Rav Zevid's death, and a eulogy in such a situation is considered as if it is in his presence.

The Gemara continues its discussion of the *halakhot* of mourning: Ulla said: Although *hesped* usually refers to a eulogy, strictly speaking, *hesped* is referring to striking oneself on the heart, as it is written: "Striking [*sofedim*] the breasts" (Isaiah 32:12). The term *tipuah* is referring to striking with one hand against the other hand, i.e., clapping. The term *killus*^L is referring to stomping with one's foot^N on the ground.

The Sages taught a *baraita*: One who stomps his foot on the ground as a sign of mourning should not stomp with a sandal,^N but rather he should do so wearing a shoe, due to the danger of being hurt. Because a sandal is easily torn, it is possible that something sharp on the ground will puncture his foot, or that he will suffer some other injury.

Rabbi Yoḥanan said: Once a mourner nods his head^{NH} to show that his grief has slightly diminished, the consolers may no longer sit next to him, as with his action the mourner shows that he no longer desires their presence.

HALAKHA

The people adopted...burial in linen garments – נהגו העם...: It is customary not to bury the dead in expensive shrouds, even if he was a great person (*Shulḥan Arukh, Yoreh De'a* 352:1).

There are no restrictions of a Festival in the presence of a deceased Torah scholar – אין מועד בפני תלמיד חכם: When a Torah scholar dies, even during the intermediate days of a Festival, and all the more so on Hanukkah, Purim, or a New Moon, he is eulogized as he would be during a weekday, as a sign of respect. The eulogy must be delivered in the presence of his body, and if the body is not present it is prohibited to eulogize the deceased. One may also eulogize a Torah scholar on the

day one hears about his death, even if it is not in the presence of his body. The custom today is to eulogize the deceased during the intermediate days of a Festival or on holidays only if the deceased is a Torah scholar and it is in his presence (*Arukh HaShulḥan; Shulḥan Arukh, Yoreh De'a* 401:5).

Once a mourner nods his head – אביל, ביון שנגנע ראשו: Once the consolers see that the mourner wants them to leave then they must leave, even if he does not say so explicitly. For example, they should leave even if he simply nods his head or motions in any other way (see *Arukh HaShulḥan; Shulḥan Arukh, Yoreh De'a* 376:1).

ואמר רבי יוחנן: הכל חייבין לעמוד מפני נשיא, חוץ מאבל וחולה. ואמר רבי יוחנן: לכל אומרים להם "שבנו" חוץ מאבל וחולה.

אמר רב יהודה אמר רב: אבל, יום ראשון – אסור לאכול לחם משלו, מדאמר ליה רחמנא ליתחילא: "ולחם אנשים לא תאכל". רבה ורב יוסף מחלפי סעודתיהו להדרין.

ואמר רב יהודה אמר רב: מת בעיר – כל בני העיר אסורין בעשיית מלאכה.

רב המנונא איקלע לדרומתא. שמע קול שיפורה דשבכא. הוא הניג אינשי דקא עבדי עבדתא. אמר להו: ליהו הניג אינשי בשמתא! לא שבכא איכא במתא? אמרו ליה: חבורתא איכא במתא. אמר להו: אי הכי – שריא לכי.

ואמר רב יהודה אמר רב: כל המתקשה על מתו יותר מדאי – על מת אחר הוא בוכה. והיא איתתא דהות בשביביתיה דרב הונא. הוה לה שבועה בני מת חד מינייהו. הוות קא בכיא ביתרתא עליה. שלח לה רב הונא: לא תעבדי הכי לא אשגחה ביה. שלח לה: אי צייתת – מוטב; ואי לא – צבית זוודתא לאידך מית. ומיתו כולהו. לסוף אמר לה: תימוש זוודתא לנפשך, ומיתא.

Rabbi Yohanan further said: All are obligated to stand in the presence of the *Nasi*, except for a mourner^H and one who is sick. Rabbi Yohanan said: To all who stand before a great person one says: Be seated,^{NH} and only then may they sit down, except for a mourner and one who is sick. If they stood up they do not need permission to sit down, but rather they may do so if they wish.

Rav Yehuda said in the name of Rav: A mourner on the first day of his mourning is prohibited from eating of his own bread.^{NH} From where is this derived? From what the Merciful One says to Ezekiel when the latter is in mourning: "Nor eat the bread of men" (Ezekiel 24:17), which indicates that other mourners must eat bread made by others. It was related that when Rabba and Rav Yosef were in mourning they would exchange their meals^N with each other.

And Rav Yehuda said in the name of Rav: When a person dies in a city,^N all of the residents of that city are prohibited from performing work until he has been buried.^H

The Gemara relates that when Rav Hamnuna once happened to come to a place called Darumata he heard the sound of a *shofar* announcing that a person had died in the town. When he saw some people doing work he said to them: Let these people be under an excommunication. Is there not a dead person in town? They said to him: There are separate groups in the town, each one responsible for its own dead. Knowing that the deceased was not from our group, we continued our work. He said to them: If so, it is permitted to you,^N and he revoked his excommunication.

And Rav Yehuda said further in the name of Rav: Anyone who grieves excessively over his dead^{NH} and does not allow himself to be consoled will in the end weep for another person.^N The Gemara relates that a certain woman who lived in the neighborhood of Rav Huna had seven sons. One of them died and she wept for him excessively. Rav Huna sent a message to her: Do not do this. But she took no heed of him. He then sent another message to her: If you listen to me, it is well, but if not, prepare shrouds for another death. But she would not listen and they all died. In the end, when she continued with her excessive mourning, he said to her: Since you are acting in this way, prepare shrouds for yourself, and soon thereafter she died.

HALAKHA

A mourner is not required to stand – אבן אבן חייב לעמוד – A mourner, and similarly a sick person, is not required to stand in respect in the presence of the *Nasi* (*Shulhan Arukh Yoreh De'a* 376:1, and in the comment of Rema).

To all who stand one says, Be seated – לכל אומרים שבו – One who wishes to honor his fellow should say to him: Be seated. However, one does not say this to a mourner or to a sick person (*Shulhan Arukh, Yoreh De'a* 376:2).

The first meal after the burial – סעודת הבראה: During the first meal after the burial it is prohibited for the mourner to eat his own food, and it is a mitzva for his neighbors to bring him food to eat. However, if no one sends him food or he has no neighbors he may eat his own food and is not required to starve himself (*Taz*). It was the common practice in the time of the Gemara to prepare special foods as a sign of mourning, such as eggs or lentils, and in many places it is customary to serve the mourner a cup of wine. Nowadays there are many different customs. One may bring food to another when he is mourning and that person can return the favor and bring food

to the first if he is subsequently in mourning, like Rabba and Rav Yosef, provided that this condition to repay the meal is not stated explicitly (*Shulhan Arukh, Yoreh De'a* 378:1).

Prohibition against working when there is a dead person in the city – איסור מלאכה בשמת בעיר: When there is an unburied dead person in a city all of the residents of that city are prohibited from working until he is buried. Anyone who sees a funeral and does not join is deserving of excommunication. If there are assigned groups that care for the dead, then other people in this city may perform work. However, at the time when the deceased is taken out for burial everyone must refrain from working (*Shulhan Arukh, Yoreh De'a* 343:1).

One who grieves excessively over his dead – המתקשה על מתו – One should not excessively mourn over his dead. Instead there should be three days of mourning, seven days for eulogizing, and thirty days during which it is prohibited to cut one's hair or iron one's clothes (*Shulhan Arukh, Yoreh De'a* 394:1).

To all who stand one says, Be seated – לכל אומרים שבו: The early authorities write that saying: Be seated, to a mourner is a bad omen, as if saying to him that he should remain in mourning. *Tosefot HaRosh* writes that in the Bible the word sitting means remaining and continuing. Some say that this custom applies only during the time of the ritual sitting and standing after the burial, when one may not say to the mourners: Be seated (Rabbeinu Yehonatan of Lunel). Others explain that if mourners stand before an important person he should not say to them: Be seated, but should instead use different language that does not contain a bad omen (see Ran).

Is prohibited from eating of his own – משלו: The early authorities write that it is implied in the Jerusalem Talmud that if a mourner does not wish to eat or to accept assistance from other people then he may fast for the first day.

Exchange their meals – מחלפי סעודתיהו: Some explain that this refers to a case in which they were both mourning at the same time (Commentary on *Moed Katan*).

When a person dies in a city – מת בעיר וכו': Some explain that the *halakha* that all residents of a city must refrain from work in order to involve themselves in the burial applies specifically to a corpse with no one to bury it [*met mitzva*], whom everyone is obligated to bury (*Be'er Halakhot Gedolot*). However, most of the early authorities do not accept this explanation and state that the obligation to refrain from working refers to whenever there is any dead person in the city.

It is permitted to you – שריא לכו: Some explain this expression to mean that you are permitted to act in accordance with your custom, while others say that it means that the excommunication that he had just declared was nullified (Rashi manuscript).

One who grieves excessively [*hamitkashe*] over his dead – המתקשה על מתו יותר מדאי: Some, including Rashi in the manuscript, have a version that reads: Passionately eulogizes [*hamakshir*] or [*hamitkashir*], which is understood to mean that he excessively eulogizes his dead, as in the expression: Tied eulogy [*heshped kashur*] (Jerusalem Talmud, *Yevamot* 16:4), which refers to the custom of tying something to the doorway of a house so that passersby would know it was a house of mourning (*Korban HaEda*).

Will in the end weep for another person – על מת אחר הוא – מוכה: The early authorities explain this statement in two different ways. Perhaps he will continue to weep because he shows that he does not accept God's judgment upon himself. If so, his punishment corresponds to his transgression in that he is punished by having to mourn again. Alternatively, it is possible that he is punished for a similar reason to when the Jewish people in the desert were punished for crying without cause upon hearing the report of the spies (see *Iyyun Ya'akov*).

To one who leaves the world without children – להולך – בלא בנים: Some write that since, as the Sages say, one who does not have children is considered to be as though he is dead, it is as though this person died twice, once during his lifetime and once after his death. Therefore, the grief over his demise is much greater (*lyyun Ya'akov*). This issue is explained in several other ways, based on both its simple meaning and the mystical meaning.

Rav Huna said this is one who committed a transgression – רב הונא אמר זה שעבר עבירה – Many of the early authorities hold that Rav Huna does not dispute the first explanation of the verse. Rather, he bases his teaching on the second half of the same verse: “He shall return no more, nor see his native land,” meaning that the sinner will not find a path of repentance for himself (see Ran; Meiri).

Between his two thighs – בין שתי ירכתי – Many have a version of the text that reads: Between his shoulders, meaning that the mourner stands bowed over in the manner of one who stands in fear lest he be stabbed in the back with a sword, and must consequently be fearful and submissive at every moment (Rabbeinu Yehonatan of Lunel). *Tosafot* cite a parallel statement from the Jerusalem Talmud. It is also stated there that if a child is born within that family, it is a good sign that the family has been healed.

“אל תבכו למת ואל תגודו לו” – “אל תבכו למת” – יותר מדאי; “ואל תגודו לו” – יותר מכשיעור. הא ביצד? שלשה ימים – לבכי ושבעה – להספד, ושלשים – לגיהוץ ולתספורת. מכאן ואילך – אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא: אי אתם רחמנים בו יותר ממני.

“בכו בכו להולך”, אמר רב יהודה: להולך בלא בנים. רבי יהושע בן לוי לא אול לבי אבלא אלא למאן דאול בלא בני, דכתיב: “בכו בכו להולך בי לא ישוב עוד וראה את ארץ מולדתו”. רב הונא אמר: זה שעבר עבירה ושנה בה.

רב הונא לטעמיה, דאמר רב הונא: מין שעבר אדם עבירה ושנה בה – הותרה לו. הותרה לו סלקא דעתך? אלא אימא: נעשית לו בהיתר.

אמר רבי לוי: אבל שלשה ימים הראשונים – יראה את עצמו כאילו חרב מונחת לו בין שתי ירכתי. משלשה עד שבעה – כאילו מונחת לו כנגדו בקרן זוית. מכאן ואילך – כאילו עוברת כנגדו בשוק.

“ולא של נשים לעולם מפני הכבוד” – אמרי נהרדעי: לא שנו

The Sages taught in a *baraita* with regard to the verse that states: “Weep not for the dead, neither bemoan him” (Jeremiah 22:10): “Weep not for the dead” is referring to excessive mourning; “neither bemoan him” more than the appropriate measure of time. How so? What is the appropriate measure? Three days for weeping, and seven for eulogizing, and thirty for the prohibition against ironing clothing and for the prohibition against cutting hair. From this point forward the Holy One, Blessed be He, says: Do not be more merciful with the deceased than I am. If the Torah commands one to mourn for a certain period of time, then that suffices.

It is stated in the continuation of the verse: “Weep sore for him that goes away.” Rav Yehuda said: This is referring to one who leaves the world without childrenⁿ to survive him, since mourning for him is much more intense. It was related that Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi would go to a house of mourning only for one who passed away without children, as it is written: “Weep sore for him that goes away; for he shall return [*yashuv*] no more, nor see his native land” (Jeremiah 22:10). Rav Huna disagreed with the interpretation of the verse and said: “Him that goes” is one who committed a transgressionⁿ and then repeated it, i.e., one who sins constantly and does not repent [*yashav*], and therefore loses his portion in the World-to-Come, his “native land.”

The Gemara notes that Rav Huna conforms to his standard line of reasoning, as Rav Huna said: Once a person commits a transgression and repeats it, it becomes permitted to him. The Gemara questions the wording used here: Does it enter your mind that it is actually permitted? How could it possibly be permitted for him to sin? Rather, say instead: It becomes as though it were permitted, for after doing it twice he no longer relates to his action as the violation of a serious prohibition.

Rabbi Levi said: A mourner during the first three days of his mourning should see himself as though a sword were lying between his two thighs,ⁿ meaning that he too may be facing imminent death. During this period he should live in dread. From the third to the seventh days he should conduct himself as if the sword were lying opposite him in the corner, but still threatening him. From this point forward it is as if the sword was moving before him in the marketplace, and the fear is not as great.

§ The mishna teaches: And the biers of women are never set down, due to their honor. The Sages of Neharde’a say: They only taught this

Perek III
Daf 28 Amud a

Even other women – אפילו שאר הנשים – Some say that not placing the bier of women in the street is a Torah law, as it is derived from the Torah’s description of Miriam’s death. Others say that it was due to the honor of the community (Meiri). Some suggest that it is done on account of the women’s honor and that it is not appropriate for a woman to be displayed in burial shrouds before all (Rabbeinu Yehonatan).

אלא חיה, אבל שאר נשים – מנחין.

רבי אלעזר אמר: אפילו שאר הנשים, דכתיב: “ותמת שם מרים ותקבר שם” – סמוך למיתה קבורה.

with regard to a woman who died in childbirth, and therefore continues to bleed. But the biers of other women may be set down in the street.

Rabbi Elazar said: Even the biers of other womenⁿ must not be set down in the street,^h as it is written: “And Miriam died there and was buried there” (Numbers 20:1), which teaches that the site of her burial was close to the place of her death. Therefore, it is preferable to bury a woman as close as possible to the place where she died.

The bier of a woman in the street – מיסת אשה ברחוב – The bier did not die in childbirth, in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Elazar (*Shulchan Arukh, Yoreh De’a 355:1*).

ואמר רבי אלעזר: אף מרים בגישיקה מתה. אֲתֵיָא שָׁם שָׁם ממשנה. ומפני מה לא נאמר בה על פי ה' – מפני שגנאי הדבר לאומו.

With regard to that same verse Rabbi Elazar said further: **Miriam also died by the divine kiss, just like her brother Moses.** What is the source for this? **This is derived** through a verbal analogy between the word “there” stated with regard to Miriam and the word “there”^N mentioned with regard to Moses. With regard to Moses it says: “So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab by the mouth of the Lord” (Deuteronomy 34:5). **For what reason was it not explicitly stated with regard to her, as it is stated with regard to Moses, that she died “by the mouth of the Lord”?** It is because it would be unseemly to say such a thing, that a woman died by way of a divine kiss, and therefore it is not said explicitly.

אמר רבי אמי: למה נסמכה מיתת מרים לפרשת פרה אדומה? לומר לך: מה פרה אדומה מכפרת – אף מיתתן של צדיקים מכפרת. אמר רבי אלעזר: למה נסמכה מיתת אהרן לבגדי כהונה? מה בגדי כהונה מכפרין – אף מיתתן של צדיקים מכפרת.

Rabbi Ami said: **Why was the Torah portion that describes the death of Miriam juxtaposed to the portion dealing with the red heifer? To tell you: Just as the red heifer atones for sin, so too, the death of the righteous atones for sin.** Rabbi Elazar said: **Why was the Torah portion that describes the death of Aaron juxtaposed to the portion discussing the priestly garments? This teaches that just as the priestly garments atone for sin, so too, the death of the righteous atones for sin.**^N

תנו רבנן: מת פתאום – זו היא מיתה חטופה. חלה יום אחד ומת – זו היא מיתה דחופה. רבי חנניא בן גמליאל אומר: זו היא מיתת מגפה, שנאמר: “בן אדם הנני לוקח ממך את מחמד עיניך במגפה” וכתוב: “אדבר אל העם בבקר ותמת אשתי בערב.”

§ The Sages taught the following *baraita*: If one dies suddenly without having been sick, **this is death through snatching.** If he became sick for a day and died, **this is an expedited^N death.** Rabbi Hananya ben Gamliel says: **This is death at a stroke, as it is stated: “Son of man, behold, I am about to take away from you the delight of your eyes at a stroke” (Ezekiel 24:16).** And when this prophecy is fulfilled it is written: **“So I spoke to the people in the morning and at evening my wife died” (Ezekiel 24:18).**

שני ימים ומת – זו היא מיתה דחופה; שלשה – גערה; ארבעה – נויפה; חמשה – זו היא מיתת כל אדם.

If he was sick for **two days and died, this is a quickened death.** If he was sick for **three days and died, this is a death of rebuke.** If he died after being sick for **four days, this is a death of reprimand.** If one died after a sickness lasting **five days, this is the ordinary death of all people.**

אמר רבי חנין: מאי קרא? “הן קרבו ימיך למות”, “הן” – חד; “קרבו” – תרי; “ימיך” – תרי; הא חמשה. “הן” – חד – שכן בלשון יוני קורין לאחת “הן”.

Rabbi Hanin said: **What is the verse from which this is derived?** It is stated: **“Behold, your days approach that you must die” (Deuteronomy 31:14).**^N This verse is expounded in the following manner: **“Behold [hen]”** indicates **one**; **“approach [karvu],”** a plural term, indicates **two**; **“your days [yamekha],”** also a plural term, indicates another **two**; and therefore in total **this is five.** How does the word *hen* indicate **one**? **Because in the Greek language they call the number one *hen*.**¹

מת בחמשים שנה – זו היא מיתת כרת; חמשים ושנים שנה זו היא מיתתו של שמואל הרמתני; ששים – זו היא מיתת בידי שמים.

The Gemara discusses the significance of death at different ages: If one dies when he is **fifty years old, this is death through *karet*,**^N the divine punishment of excision, meted out for the most serious transgressions. If he dies when he is **fifty-two years old, this is the death of Samuel from Ramah.** If he dies at the age of **sixty, this is death at the hand of Heaven.**

אמר מר זוטרא: מאי קרא? דכתוב: “תבא בקלח אלי קבר”. “בקלח” בגימטריא שיתין הווי.

Mar Zutra said: **What is the verse from which this is derived?** As it is written: **“You shall come to your grave in a ripe age [bekhelah]” (Job 5:26).** The word “ripe age” [bekhelah] has the numerical value of **sixty,** and it is alluded to there that dying at this age involves a divine punishment.

שבעים – שיבה, שמונים – גבורות, דכתוב: “מי שנותניו בהם שבעים שנה ואם בגבורות שמונים שנה”. אמר רבה: מחמשים ועד ששים שנה – זו היא מיתת כרת. והיא דלא תשיב להו – משום כבודו של שמואל הרמתני.

One who dies at the age of **seventy has reached old age.** One who dies at the age of **eighty dies in strength, as it is written: “The days of our years are seventy, or if by reason of strength, eighty years” (Psalms 90:10).** Rabba said: Not only is death at the age of fifty a sign of *karet*, but even death from **fifty to sixty years of age is death by *karet*.** And the reason that **all of these years were not counted** in connection with *karet* is **due to the honor of Samuel from Ramah, who died at the age of fifty-two.**

This is derived between the word there and there – אֲתֵיָא שָׁם שָׁם: In this version of the text the derivation is from the verses describing the death of Moses. However, there is a different version of the talmudic text in which the fact that Miriam died by divine kiss is derived through a verbal analogy to the verses describing Aaron's death. Rabbi Elyahu Mizrahi explains similarly (*Beit Moed*).

The death of Aaron and the priestly garments – בגדי אהרן וּמִיתָתוֹ: See Rashi manuscript and *Tosafot*, who explain that the Torah describes Aaron's removal of his priestly garments before his death. This detail is unnecessary for the narrative, and is mentioned by the Torah only to teach that there is a relationship between these garments and Aaron's death. The atonement performed by the priestly garments is described in tractate *Zevachim*, and each individual garment atones for a specific sin. The Torah states explicitly that the frontplate of the High Priest atones for sin.

Snatching, expedited – חטופה, דחופה: The death of the wicked is sudden, as the verse states: “Like the passing of the storm, and there is no wickedness” (Proverbs 10:25), and therefore it is a bad sign when one dies in this manner. Death through snatching is extremely sudden, while expedited death is also quick, but not quite as sudden. Quickened death [*mita dehuva*], literally, pushed death, is analogous to when one pushes something and it rolls away gradually. Expedited death [*mita dehuva*] is analogous to pushing something which falls immediately and is lost (Rabbi Shlomo ben HaYatom).

Behold, your days approach that you must die – הן קרבו ימיך למות: The early authorities question this, as the verse refers to Moses, who was not sick at all prior to his death. Some write that this was said to Moses in order to inform him that this is the way that a person ordinarily dies, but that one who is completely righteous like him does not require this (*Tosefot HaRosh*). Some say that the reason ordinary people die in this manner is to give them time to prepare for their death, and therefore God informed Moses that he should prepare himself (*Ritva*).

The age of fifty and *karet* – חמשים מיתת כרת: A proof is offered in the Jerusalem Talmud based on the verses stated with regard to the Levites: “You shall not cut the staff of the families of the Kohathites” (Numbers 4:18), meaning that precautions should be taken that they not die while serving in the Temple. Because Levites served in the Temple until the age of fifty, it is deduced that anyone who dies up to this point dies through *karet*. See the Ran, who offers another reason for this statement: Since the lifespan of strength is eighty years, and the first twenty years, during which one is not punished by divine intervention, are removed from the equation, then one who does not live for half of these remaining years fits the description “They shall not live half of their days” (Psalms 55:24).

LANGUAGE

One [hen] – הן: From the Greek *έν*, *hen*, meaning one.

Rabba – רבא: Rav Abba bar Nahmani HaKohen, popularly referred to as Rabba throughout the Babylonian Talmud, was a third-generation Babylonian *amora*. Rabba was a student of Rav Huna, who himself was a student of Rav. Therefore, Rabba's opinions on *halakha* were in concert with Rav's teachings. Rabba was considered the sharpest among his peers, to the extent that he was referred to as one who uproots mountains, in contrast with his colleague Rav Yosef, whose expertise was in his broad knowledge, and who was consequently referred to as Sinai. In almost every disagreement between them, the ruling follows Rabba's opinion.

Rabba had many students, and virtually all of the Sages of the following generation studied under him. His personal life was one of great tragedy; it appears that his children died during his lifetime. He was poverty stricken his entire life, eking out a living from agricultural work. When his nephew Abaye became orphaned at a young age, Rabba took him in and raised him.

LANGUAGE

Finest flour [*semida*] – סמידא: This word is similar to the Greek *σμιδαλις*, *semidalis*, meaning fine wheat flour.

רב יוסף, כי הוה בר שיתין עבד להו יומא טבא לרבנן. אמר: נפקי לי מכרת. אמר ליה אביי: נהי דנפק ליה מר מכרת דשני, מכרת דיומי מי נפיק מר? אמר ליה: נקוט לך מיהא פלגא בידך.

רב הונא נח נפשיה פתאום. הוה קא דיגי רבנן. תנא להו זוגא דמהדייב: לא שנו אלא שלא הגיע לגבורות, אבל הגיע לגבורות – זו היא מיתת נשיקה.

אמר רבא: חיי, בני ומזוני, לא בזכותא תליא מילתא, אלא במזל תליא מילתא. דהא רבה ורב חסדא תרוניהו רבנן צדיקי הוה, מר מצלי ואתי מיטרא, ומר מצלי ואתי מיטרא.

רב חסדא חיה תשעין ותרתין שנין – רבה חיה ארבעין. בי רב חסדא – שיתין הלולי; בי רבה – שיתין תכלי.

בי רב חסדא – סמידא לכלבי ולא מתבעי, בי רבה – נהמא דשערי לאינשי, ולא משתבח.

ואמר רבא: הני תלת מילי בעאי קמי שמיא, תרתי יהבו לי, חדא לא יהבו לי; חוכמתיה דרב הונא ועותריה דרב חסדא – ויהבו לי; ענותותיה דרבה בר רב הונא – לא יהבו לי.

רב שעורים אחוה דרבא הוה יתיב קמיה דרבא. חזייה דהוה קא מנמנם. אמר ליה: לימא ליה מר דלא לצערן! אמר ליה: מר לאו שושביניה הוא? אמר ליה: בין דאימסר מזל – לא אשגח בני. אמר ליה: ליתחזי לי מר. איתחזי ליה. אמר ליה: הוה ליה למר צערא? אמר ליה: בי ריבדא דכוסילתא.

The Gemara relates that when Rav Yosef turned sixty he made a holiday for the Sages. Explaining the cause for his celebration, he said: I have passed the age of *karet*. Abaye said to him: Master, even though you have passed the *karet* of years, have you, Master, escaped the *karet* of days? As previously mentioned, sudden death is also considered to be a form of *karet*. He said to him: Grasp at least half in your hand, for I have at least escaped one type of *karet*.

It was related that Rav Huna died suddenly, and the Sages were concerned that this was a bad sign. The Sage Zugaⁿ from Hadayeiv taught them the following: They taught these principles only when the deceased had not reached the age of strength, i.e., eighty. But if he had reached the age of strength and then died suddenly, this is death by way of a divine kiss.

Rava said: Length of life, children, and sustenance do not depend on one's merit,ⁿ but rather they depend upon fate. As, Rabba^p and Rav Hisda were both pious Sages; one Sage would pray during a drought and rain would fall, and the other Sage would pray and rain would fall.

And nevertheless, their lives were very different. Rav Hisda lived for ninety-two years, whereas Rabba lived for only forty years. The house of Rav Hisda celebrated sixty wedding feasts, whereas the house of Rabba experienced sixty calamities. In other words, many fortuitous events took place in the house of Rav Hisda and the opposite occurred in the house of Rabba.

In the house of Rav Hisda there was bread from the finest flour [*semida*]^l even for the dogs, and it was not asked after, as there was so much food. In the house of Rabba, on the other hand, there was coarse barley bread even for people, and it was not found in sufficient quantities. This shows that the length of life, children, and sustenance all depend not upon one's merit, but upon fate.

Apropos Rav Hisda's great wealth, the Gemara reports that Rava said: These three things I requested from Heaven, two of which were given to me, and one was not given to me: I requested the wisdom of Rav Huna and the wealth of Rav Hisda and they were given to me. I also requested the humility of Rabba bar Rav Huna, but it was not given to me.

The Gemara continues its discussion of the deaths of the righteous. Rav Seorim, Rava's brother, sat before Rava, and he saw that Rava was dozing, i.e., about to die. Rava said to his brother: Master, tell him, the Angel of Death, not to torment me. Knowing that Rava was not afraid of the Angel of Death, Rav Seorim said to him: Master, are you not a friend of the Angel of Death?ⁿ Rava said to him: Since my fate has been handed over to him, and it has been decreed that I shall die, the Angel of Death no longer pays heed to me. Rav Seorim said to Rava: Master, appear to me in a dream after your death. And Rava appeared to him. Rav Seorim said to Rava: Master, did you have pain in death? He said to him: Like the prick of the knife when letting blood.

NOTES

Zuga – זוגא: In an alternative version of the text his name appears as Zawa. Rashi in the manuscript understands that Zuga is not a name, but refers to a pair [zug] of Sages.

Do not depend on merit – לא בזכותא תליא: Some of the early authorities write that this opinion is rejected, as it is said elsewhere that Jews are not under the authority of fate (Meiri). However, others say that one's fortune depends not only upon his actions, but

also on his fate, as although one's merit may change his fate, it does not always change it completely (Ran; Ritva; *Tosafot*).

לאו שושביניה הוא – ליתחזי לי: Many stories are told in the Talmud about different Sages who engaged in discussions with various angels, including the Angel of Death (see *Berakhot* 51a, *Hagiga* 4b, and *Ketubot* 77b) The Angel of Death takes the righteous into account and does not kill them in a disgraceful manner.

Bar Natan – בר נתן: Apparently bar Natan refers to Rav Huna bar Rav Natan. It was said that with regard to the combination of Torah and greatness in one place, he was second only to Rav Ashi himself (*Gittin* 59a). According to the tradition of Rav Sherira Gaon, Rav Huna bar Natan was the Exilarch in the time of Rav Ashi. However, due to Rav Ashi's greatness he was also submissive before him. It seems that he was Rav Pappa's student, and he studied Torah under the other leaders of that generation as well. Occasionally the Gemara records his discussions with Rav Ashi.

רבא הוה יתיב קמיה דרב נחמן. חזייה דקא ממנב. אמר ליה: לימא ליה מר דלא לצערן. אמר ליה: מר לאו אדם חשוב הוא? אמר ליה: מאן חשיב, מאן ספין, מאן רקיע?

It was similarly related that Rava sat before Rav Nahman, and he saw that Rav Nahman was dozing, i.e., slipping into death. Rav Nahman said to Rava: Master, tell the Angel of Death not to torment me. Rava said to him: Master, are you not an important person who is respected in Heaven? Rav Nahman said to him: In the supernal world who is important? Who is honorable? Who is complete?^N

אמר ליה: ליתחזי לי מר. אתחזי ליה. אמר ליה: הוה ליה למר צערא? אמר ליה: כמישחל בניתא מחלבא. ואי אמר לי הקדוש ברוך הוא זיל בההוא עלמא כד הווי – לא בעינא, דנפיש ביעתותיה.

Rava said to Rav Nahman: Master, appear to me in a dream after your death. And he appeared to him. Rava said to him: Master, did you have pain in death? Rav Nahman said to him: Like the removal of hair from milk, which is a most gentle process. But nevertheless, were the Holy One, Blessed be He, to say to me: Go back to that world, the physical world, as you were, I would not want to go, for the fear of the Angel of Death is great.^N And I would not want to go through such a terrifying experience a second time.

רבי אלעזר הוה קאכיל תרומה, איתחזי ליה. אמר ליה: תרומה קא אכילנא, ולא קודש איקרין? חלפא ליה שעתא.

The Gemara relates that Rabbi Elazar was once eating *teruma*, when the Angel of Death appeared to him. He said to the Angel of Death: I am eating *teruma*; is it not called sacred? It would be inappropriate for me to die now and thereby defile this sacred *teruma*. The Angel of Death accepted his argument and left him. The moment passed, and he lived for some time afterward.

רב ששת איתחזי ליה בשוקא. אמר ליה: בשוקא כבהמה? איתא לגבי ביתא.

It was similarly related that the Angel of Death once appeared to Rav Sheshet in the marketplace. Rav Sheshet said to the Angel of Death: Shall I die in the market like an animal? Come to my house and kill me there like a human being.

רב אשי איתחזי ליה בשוקא. אמר ליה: איתרח לי תלתין יומין, ואהדר לי לתלמודאי דאמריהו: אשרי מי שבא לכאן ותלמודו בידו. ביום תלתין אתא. אמר ליה: מאי בולי האי? קא דחקא רגליה דבר נתן, ואין מלכות נוגעת בחברתה אפילו כמלא נימא.

So too, the Angel of Death appeared to Rav Ashi in the marketplace. Rav Ashi said to the Angel of Death: Give me thirty days so that I may review my studies, for you say above: Fortunate is he who comes here to Heaven with his learning in his hand. On the thirtieth day the Angel of Death came to take him. Rav Ashi said to the Angel of Death: What is all of this? Why are you in such a hurry to take me? Why can you not postpone my death? He said to him: The foot of Rav Huna bar Natan^p is pushing you, as he is ready to succeed you as the leader of the generation, and one sovereignty does not overlap with its counterpart, even by one hairbreadth. Therefore, you cannot live any longer.

רב חסדא לא הוה יביל ליה, דלא הוה שתיק פומיה מגויסא. סליק יתיב בארזא דבי רב. פקע ארזא ושתיק ויביל ליה.

The Angel of Death was unable to take Rav Hisda because his mouth was never silent from study. So the Angel of Death went and sat on the cedar column that supported the roof of the study hall of the Sages. The cedar cracked and Rav Hisda was silent for a moment, as he was startled by the sound. At that point the Angel of Death was able to take him.

רבי חייא לא הוה מצי למיקרבא ליה. יומא חד אידמי ליה בעניא, אתא טרין אבבא, אמר ליה: אפיק לי ריפתא. אפיקו ליה. אמר ליה: ולא קא מרחם מר אעניא? אההוא גברא אמאי לא קא מרחם מר? גלי ליה, אתו ליה שוטא דנורא, אמצי ליה נפשיה.

The Angel of Death could not come near Rabbi Hiyya, owing to his righteousness. One day the Angel of Death appeared to him as a poor person. He came and knocked on the door. He said to Rabbi Hiyya: Bring out bread for me, and he took out bread for him. The Angel of Death then said to Rabbi Hiyya: Master, do you not have mercy on a poor person? Why, then, do you not have mercy upon that man, i.e., upon me, and give me what I want? The Angel of Death then revealed his identity to him, and showed him a fiery rod in order to confirm that he was the Angel of Death. At this point Rav Hiyya surrendered himself to him.

NOTES

Who is honorable [*sefin*], who is complete [*rekia*] – מאן ספין, מאן רקיע: Some explain that the word *sefin* means important or respected (Rabbi Shlomo ben HaYatom). Others say that the word *sefin*, similarly to the term afraid [*mistafina*], refers to one who is feared and is therefore respected (Rashi manuscript). Or perhaps the word means high (Rashi on *Ein Ya'akov*). *Tosefot HaRosh* explains that the word *sefin* is similar to what is stated with regard to Moses: "For there a portion of a ruler [*safun*] was reserved" (Deuteronomy 33:21).

The word *rekia* is explained by some to mean complete

(*ge'onim*). Others claim that it means simple or smooth, and that this is an honorific adjective for a righteous person (Rabbi Shlomo ben HaYatom). Still others say that the word refers to one who ascends into the sky [*rakia*] like Moses (*Tosefot HaRosh*).

The fear... is great – נפיש ביעתותיה: Most of the commentaries explain that Rav Nahman was very fearful of the Angel of Death. This is also the version of the text in the *Ein Ya'akov*. Therefore, he did not wish to die a second time. However, others say that he was fearful of this world and its physical and spiritual dangers (Rabbi Shlomo ben HaYatom).

HALAKHA

On the intermediate days of a Festival women may wail – נשים במועד מענות – It is permitted to wail during the intermediate days of a Festival when everyone wails a single lament together; however, one may not clap. On New Moons, Hanukkah, and Purim they may wail and clap but not lament, in accordance with the opinion of the first *tanna*. All of this applies only in the presence of the deceased (*Shulhan Arukh, Yoreh De'a 401:5*).

BACKGROUND

Shekhantziv – שכנציב – It is believed that the city of Shekhantziv was on the banks of the Tigris River. It was an important center of Torah, and several Sages were active there.

The residents of this city were well known for their wit and even warned others to stay away from their sharp speech and scoffing. This Gemara demonstrates that the sayings of the women of Shekhantziv were complex and clever.

מתני' נשים במועד מענות, אבל לא מטפחות. רבי ישמעאל אומר: הסמוכות למטה מטפחות.

בראשי חדשים, בחנוכה ובפורים – מענות ומטפחות, בזה וזה – לא מקוננות. נקבר המת – לא מענות ולא מטפחות.

איזהו עינוי – שכולן עונות כאחת; קניה – שאחת מדברת וכולן עונות אחריה, שנאמר: "ולמדנה בנותיכם נהי ואשה רעותה קניה".

אבל לעתיד לבא הוא אומר: "בלע המות לנצח ומחה ה' אלהים דמעה מעל כל פנים" וגו'.

גמ' מאי אמרין? אמר רב: ויי לאולא, ויי לחבילא.

אמר רבא, נשי דשכנציב אמרין הכי: ויי לאולא, ויי לחבילא. ואמר רבא, נשי דשכנציב אמרין: גוד גרמא מבכאי, ונמטי מיאי לאנטיכי.

MISHNA On the intermediate days of a Festival women may wail^H in grief over the deceased, but they may not clap [*metapehot*] their hands in mourning. Rabbi Yishmael says: Those who are close to the bier may clap.

On New Moons, Hanukkah and Purim, which are not Festivals by Torah law, the women may both wail and clap their hands in mourning. On both the intermediate days of a Festival and on New Moons, Hanukkah and Purim they may not lament. After the deceased has been buried they may neither wail nor clap.

The mishna explains: What is considered wailing? This is when they all wail together simultaneously. And what is considered a lament? This is when one speaks and they all answer after her with a repeated refrain, as it is stated: "And teach your daughters wailing and everyone her neighbor lamentation" (Jeremiah 9:19).

In order to conclude on a positive note, the mishna says: But with regard to the future,^N the verse states: "He will destroy death forever; and the Lord, God, will wipe away tears from off all faces and the reproach of His people He will take away from off all the earth" (Isaiah 25:8).

GEMARA What do the women who wail over the dead say? Rav said: They say: Woe over him who is now departing; woe over him who is now returning the pledge, i.e., his soul, which had been deposited in his hands all the years of his life.

Rava said: The women in the city of Shekhantziv,^{NB} who were known for their wisdom, would say as follows: Woe over him who is now departing; woe over him who is now returning the pledge.^N And Rava said: The women of Shekhantziv would say about an elderly person: The bone has been removed from the jaw and the water returns to the kettle.^N

NOTES

But with regard to the future – אבל לעתיד לבא – *Tosafot* explain that this statement is made in order to conclude on a positive note, because according to their ordering of the tractates, *Moed Katan* is the final tractate in the order of *Moed*. However, according to the Rambam's order of the tractates, *Hagiga* is the final tractate. Even so, it is possible to say that the editors of the mishna also wished to conclude each tractate with more positive material (Rabbi Ovadya MiBartenura). Other tractates have similar endings as well.

The women of Shekhantziv – נשי דשכנציב – Rabbi Shlomo ben HaYatom writes that the women of Shekhantziv spoke through deep riddles. He offers explanations from the *ge'onim* but suggests that there may be alternative explanations. Many textual variations exist for these riddles, and different explanations are offered for each variation.

Woe over him who is departing, woe over the pledge [*lahavila*] – ויי לאולא, ויי לחבילא – Some explain the word *lahavila* to be a pledge, and they explain allegorically that a person's soul is a deposit or a security that must be returned upon his death (Rabbeinu Hananel). Others explain that they would say this when a person died in poverty, as his children and the members of his household would have to give security to repay their debts (*Tosefot HaRosh; Meiri*).

There are also those who say that the word *havila* means destruction or pain, and consequently the expression means: Woe over the suffering one endures in death (*ge'onim*). Some explain that the word means load and the expression means:

Woe over the load that one must carry (Rabbi Betzalel Ransburg, citing an earlier commentary). Still others say that the expression means: Woe over the package, and the knot that became undone (Commentary on *Moed Katan*).

The bone has been removed from the jaw and the water returns to the kettle [*antikhei*] – גוד גרמא מבכאי ונמטי מיאי לאנטיכי: Some explain that this means that when the bone that one eats is uprooted from his mouth, i.e., he stops eating it, his temperature rises like water in a kettle (Rabbeinu Hananel). Others say it means: The teeth fall out of the mouth, and the hot water may be returned to the vessel, as one can no longer drink it (Commentary on *Moed Katan*).

Other commentaries have a version of the text that reads: The water is returned to Antioch [*Antokhia*], which was a city very far away. According to this version of the text, the statement means that the water can now go to a very distant place, as there is no longer any need for it. Some see this as an allusion to what happens after death; the women meant that when one dies the soul goes to the place where it was at first (Rabbi Shlomo ben HaYatom).

The *Tosefot HaRosh* understands the text differently, explaining that this refers to a case where one's son died, and the women told the father to remove one of his teeth so as to remember him in the future. Afterward he should heat water and wash the tooth, in order to increase the crying and the eulogizing (see Meiri). Elsewhere (*Berakhot 5b*) the Gemara relates that Rabbi Yohanan acted similarly, and kept a bone from his youngest son who had died.

ואמר רבא, נשי דשכנציב אמרן: עטוף וכסו טורין, דבר רמי ובר רבדי הוא. ואמר רבא, נשי דשכנציב אמרן: שייול אצטלא דמלתא לבר חורין דשלימו זודיה.

And Rava said: The women of Shekhantziv would say at a time of bereavement: **Wrap and cover the mountains^N** in mourning, as the deceased is **the son of the high and distinguished**. Rava said: **The women of Shekhantziv would say: Lend out a cloak of fine wool^N** to serve as a burial shroud for a free man whose sustenance has been depleted. In other words, a wealthy person who loses his fortune would rather die than live in poverty.

ואמר רבא, נשי דשכנציב אמרן: רהיט ונפיל אמעברא, ויומתא זיף. ואמר רבא, נשי דשכנציב אמרן: אחנא תגרי אזבוגי מיבדקי. ואמר רבא, נשי דשכנציב אמרן: מותא כי מותא, ומרעין – חיבוליא.

And Rava said: The women of Shekhantziv would say: **A person runs and tumbles at the ford^N** and still he borrows. And Rava said: **The women of Shekhantziv would say: Our brothers, the merchants, will be examined^N** at their places of business to see if they are honest businessmen. And Rava said: **The women of Shekhantziv would say: Death is like death, as everyone must die, and suffering is like interest.^N**

תנא, היתה רבי מאיר אומר: "טוב ללכת אל בית אבל" וגו' עד "והחי יתן אל לבו" דברים של מיתה. דיספד – יספדיניה, דיקבר – יקברוניה, דיטען – יטעניניה, דיידל – יידלוניה.

It is taught in a *baraita* that **Rabbi Meir would say** with regard to the verse **"It is better to go to the house of mourning than to go to the house of feasting, for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart"** (Ecclesiastes 7:2): **What should the living lay to his heart? Matters relating to death.** And these matters are as follows: **He that eulogizes will be eulogized by others. He that buries others will be buried by others. He that loads many words of praise and tribute into the eulogies that he delivers for others will be similarly treated by others. He that raises his voice in weeping over others will have others raise their voices over him.**

ואיבא דאמרי: דלא ידל – ידלוניה, דכתוב: "כי טוב אומר לך עליה הנה" וגו'.

And some say: **One who does not raise himself with pride, but chooses his place among the lowly, will be raised^N** by others, as it is written: **"Do not exalt yourself in the king's presence, and stand not in the place of great men. For it is better to be told, step up here, than to be degraded in the presence of the great"** (Proverbs 25:6–7).

NOTES

Wrap [atuf] and cover the mountains – עטוף וכסו טורין – Some explain that this is a poetic call for the mountains to wrap themselves in fine clothes in order to greet a great person. Alternatively, it may mean that many people should gather to accompany the deceased, thereby wrapping and concealing the mountains with their multitudes (Rabbeinu Hananel). Others explain similarly, but understand the verb *atuf* to mean darken, i.e., that the mountains should darken themselves (Rashi, Rabbeinu Gershom Meor HaGola).

entire life earning money but fell in with people who lost all of his money, and in the end he no longer had money at the ford, meaning for his burial (Rabbeinu Hananel).

Similarly, the passage is explained in many other ways, based on numerous textual variations that exist. One version reads: Run and go, son of divers, meaning that a diver who makes a living by swimming in deep waters must borrow money to pass over a small river at a ford (*Tosefot HaRosh*; see Meiri).

Some understand this phrase as an allegory that means that the great people, who are referred to as mountains, should come to the funeral (Commentary on *Moed Katan*). Others say that this refers to one who was buried in a mountain cave, so that the mountains become his burial shroud (Ran).

The merchants [azavagei] will be examined – אזבוגי מיבדקי:

Another version of the text has the word purchases [*azbinei*], so that this means: The merchants will be examined not by their speech but by the way in which they conducted their business (Rabbeinu Hananel). Some explain that the merchants will be examined at the end of their lives to see how much they actually profited (Rabbi Betzalel Ransburg). Others have a version that reads *azla bazag*, meaning that the traveling merchants eventually go to the grave (Rabbi Shlomo ben HaYatom).

Lend [shayyul] a cloak of fine wool, etc. – שייול אצטלא דמלתא – וכי: Some explain that this means that it is preferable for a formerly wealthy person who has no food to eat to find a burial shroud, as it is preferable for him to die and not be ashamed (Rabbeinu Hananel). Alternatively, it means that one should prepare fine clothes in order to join the funeral of a person from a wealthy family who died in poverty (Rabbeinu Hananel). Others suggest that it means that one should prepare a fine burial shroud for such a person (Rabbi Shlomo ben HaYatom). Rabbeinu Gershom Meor HaGola explains that the word *shayyul* is similar to the word *She'ol* meaning underworld or death, which is the best state for such a person.

Suffering is like interest – מרעין, חיבוליא – Some explain: The length of one's sickness until he dies is like interest on the capital, i.e., death (Rabbeinu Hananel). Others explain that diseases are additional pain and suffering (Ran).

Runs and tumbles at the ford [amabra] – רהיט ונפיל אמעברא – Many different textual variations and explanations exist for this statement. Some explain that this was said about one who did not work during his life and now must borrow for the sake of the *mabarot*, the burial shrouds (*ge'onim*; see Ran and Maharsha). Others suggest that this refers to one who ran his

One who does not raise himself will be raised [dela yiddal yidlune] – דלא ידל ידלוניה – Rabbeinu Hananel has a version that reads *la yiddal de'idlonei*, meaning that one should not raise himself, so that he will not be lifted and taken down from his place. Others explain, in accordance with our version of the text, that one who does not raise himself will either be raised through receiving honor (Commentary on *Moed Katan*), or other people will carry his bier and eulogize him with honor. Consequently, the verse is an allusion to the matter and the essence of the concept (Rabbi Shlomo ben HaYatom).

Rabbi Yishmael – רבי ישמעאל – Rabbi Yishmael ben Elisha II was the grandson of Rabbi Yishmael ben Elisha, the High Priest who served in the Temple at the end of the Second Temple period. The grandson is the *tanna* who is usually referred to simply as Rabbi Yishmael throughout the Talmud. As a young man, he was imprisoned by the Romans. He was redeemed by Rabbi Yehoshua and ultimately became his student. Later he became one of the renowned scholars in Yavne, where he was a close friend and intellectual adversary of Rabbi Akiva. Each of them developed a unique system of biblical hermeneutics. The thirteen principles of interpretation formulated by Rabbi Yishmael serve as the foundation for halakhic midrash, which derives Jewish *halakha* from the Torah. We find many of his teachings throughout the Mishna. There are many more in the Talmud, which are taught by his students under the rubric: It was taught in the school of Rabbi Yishmael.

It appears that Rabbi Yishmael passed away prior to the bar Kokheva revolt. The Talmud mentions his sons and daughters; it is likely that the *tanna* Rabbi Eliezer, son of Rabbi Yishmael, was among his children.

NOTES

דעו – Know that Rabbi Yishmael is a great Sage, etc. – שְׁחַם גְּדוֹל וְכוּ: Therefore, each one of you should say something novel that Rabbi Yishmael has not yet heard. The phrase: Let none of you interrupt the words of another, means that you should not cite the statement of one of your colleagues and begin to discuss it. Consequently, Rabbi Akiva's choice to volunteer to say something novel after everyone else was the most difficult of the options (Ran). Some explain that the Sages were told not to discuss another's statement lest Rabbi Yishmael forget his mourning. It was best for them to speak in an orderly fashion so that Rabbi Yishmael would listen and not speak (Maharsha).

שְׁלֵא עָשׂוּ אֶלֶּא – Who had performed only one mitzva – מִצְוָה אַחַת: It is explained that this means that they performed only one mitzva, for which they earned merit, and through which they died (Commentary on *Moed Katan*). Others say that this means that they performed a mitzva that is relevant and applicable to all of Israel (Maharsha).

LANGUAGE

Guards [*pardesaot*] – פְּרֻדְסָאוֹת: From the Latin praesidia, meaning guards. In other tractates and other manuscripts this word is written as *peruzdaot*.

תְּנוּ רַבְנֵי: כְּשָׁמַתוּ בְּנֵי שֶׁל רַבִּי יִשְׁמַעְאֵל נִכְנְסוּ אַרְבָּעָה זְקֵנִים לְנַחֲמוֹ: רַבִּי טַרְפוֹן, וְרַבִּי יוֹסֵי הַגְּלִילִי, וְרַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן עֲזַרְיָה, וְרַבִּי עֲקִיבָא. אָמַר לָהֶם רַבִּי טַרְפוֹן: דְּעוּ שְׁחַם גְּדוֹל הוּא, וּבְקִי בְּאַגְדוֹת, אֵל יִכְנֵס אַחַד מֵכֶם לְתוֹךְ דְּבָרֵי חֲבֵירוֹ. אָמַר רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא: וְאַנִּי אַחֲרוֹן.

פָּתַח רַבִּי יִשְׁמַעְאֵל וְאָמַר: רַבּוֹ עוֹנוֹתָיו, תְּכַפּוּהוּ וְאַבְלִיו, הַטְּרִיחַ רַבּוֹתָיו פְּעַם רִאשׁוֹנָה וּשְׁנִיָּה.

נִעְנָה רַבִּי טַרְפוֹן וְאָמַר: "וְאַחֲכֵם כָּל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל יִבְכוּ אֶת הַשְּׂרָפָה, וְהֵלֵא דְבָרִים קָל וְחוֹמֶר: וּמָה נִדְּבָ וְאַבִּיהוּא שְׁלֵא עָשׂוּ אֶלֶּא מִצְוָה אַחַת, דְּכָתִיב: "וַיִּקְרִיבוּ בְנֵי אֱהֲרֹן אֶת הַדָּם אֵילָיו" – כֶּן, בְּנֵי שֶׁל רַבִּי יִשְׁמַעְאֵל – עַל אַחַת כְּמָה וְכְמָה.

נִעְנָה רַבִּי יוֹסֵי הַגְּלִילִי וְאָמַר: "וְסָפְדוּ לוֹ כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְקָבְרוּ אוֹתוֹ". וְהֵלֵא דְבָרִים קָל וְחוֹמֶר: וּמָה אֲבִיהוּ בֶן יִרְבְּעָם שְׁלֵא עָשׂוּ אֶלֶּא דְבָר אֶחָד טוֹב, דְּכָתִיב בֵּיהּ: "וַעַן נִמְצָא בּוֹ דְּבָר טוֹב" – כֶּן, בְּנֵי שֶׁל רַבִּי יִשְׁמַעְאֵל – עַל אַחַת כְּמָה וְכְמָה.

מָאֵי דְבָר טוֹב? רַבִּי זִירָא וְרַבִּי חִינְנָא בַר פָּפָא: חַד אָמַר: שְׁבִיטָל מִשְׁמֵרְתוֹ וְעֵלָה לְרִגְלֵי; וְחַד אָמַר: שְׁבִיטָל פְּרֻדְסָאוֹת שְׁהוּ שִׁיב יִרְבְּעָם אֲבִיו עַל הַדְּרָכִים שְׁלֵא יַעֲלוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל לְרִגְלֵי.

נִעְנָה רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן עֲזַרְיָה וְאָמַר: "בְּשָׁלוֹם תָּמוּת וּבְמִשְׁרָפוֹת אֲבוֹתֶיךָ הַמְּלָכִים הָרָשׁוּנִים [אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בֶּן] יִשְׂרָפוּ לָךְ". וְהֵלֵא דְבָרִים קָל וְחוֹמֶר: וּמָה צִדְקָתוֹ מִלֶּךְ יְהוּדָה, שְׁלֵא עָשָׂה אֶלֶּא מִצְוָה אַחַת, שְׁהָעֵלָה יְרֵמְיָה מִן הַטֵּיט – כֶּן, בְּנֵי שֶׁל רַבִּי יִשְׁמַעְאֵל – עַל אַחַת כְּמָה וְכְמָה.

נִעְנָה רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא וְאָמַר: "בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִגְדֹל הַמִּסְפָּד בִּירוּשָׁלַם כְּמִסְפַּד הַדְּרִימוֹן [בְּבִקְעַת מִגִּידוֹן]". וְאָמַר רַב יוֹסֵף: אֲלֵמָלָא תְּרַגְמוּמִיה דְּהָאֵי קָרָא לָא הוּהִי יִדְעָנָא מָאֵי קָאָמַר:

The Sages taught the following *baraita*: When the sons of Rabbi Yishmael^p died, four Elders entered to console him: Rabbi Tarfon, Rabbi Yosei HaGelili, Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya, and Rabbi Akiva. Rabbi Tarfon said to them: Know that Rabbi Yishmael is a great Sageⁿ and well versed in *aggadot*. Let none of you interrupt the words of another, but rather each person should say something novel of his own. Rabbi Akiva said: And I shall speak last.

Rabbi Yishmael, the mourner, opened and said about himself: Many are his sins. Due to this, his bereavements came in quick succession and he troubled his teachers once and then a second time to come and console him.

Having been granted permission to speak, Rabbi Tarfon answered and said: With regard to the death of Aaron's sons it says: "But let your brethren, the whole house of Israel, bewail the burning that the Lord has kindled" (Leviticus 10:6). Are these matters not inferred *a fortiori*: If, with regard to Nadav and Avihu, who had performed only one mitzvaⁿ that is explicitly mentioned in the Bible, as it is written: "And the sons of Aaron brought the blood to him" (Leviticus 9:9), this was nevertheless stated about them, then with regard to the sons of Rabbi Yishmael, who were well known for their performance of many mitzvot, all the more so should the entire Jewish people bewail their death.

Rabbi Yosei HaGelili answered and said: With regard to Abijah, son of King Jeroboam, the verse states: "And all Israel shall mourn for him, and bury him" (1 Kings 14:13). Are these matters not inferred *a fortiori*: If, with regard to Abijah, son of Jeroboam, who did only one good thing, as it is written: "Because in him there is found some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel" (1 Kings 14:13), i.e., he did only one good thing, and this was his reward, then with regard to the sons of Rabbi Yishmael all the more so should they be rewarded by having the entire Jewish people mourn for them and bury them.

The Gemara asks: What was this one good thing that Abijah did? Rabbi Zeira and Rabbi Hinnana bar Pappa disagreed about this issue. One said: He abandoned his guard post. His father, Jeroboam, had assigned him to serve as one of the guards whose mission it was to prevent people from going up to Jerusalem on the pilgrimage Festivals. And he himself went up to Jerusalem for the pilgrimage Festival. And one said: He removed the guards [*pardesaot*]^l that his father, Jeroboam, had placed along the roads so that the people of Israel would not go up to Jerusalem for the pilgrimage Festivals.

The *baraita* continues: Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya answered and said: With regard to King Zedekiah, the verse states: "But you shall die in peace; and with the burnings of your fathers, the former kings that were before you, so shall they make a burning for you" (Jeremiah 34:5). Are these matters not inferred *a fortiori*: If, with regard to Zedekiah, king of Judea, who had performed only one mitzva that is explicitly mentioned in the Bible, for he had Jeremiah lifted out of the mire (Jeremiah 38:10), this was nevertheless stated about him, then with regard to the sons of Rabbi Yishmael all the more so should they be rewarded by dying in peace.

Rabbi Akiva answered and said: The verse states: "On that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon" (Zechariah 12:11). The Gemara comments: With regard to this verse, Rav Yosef said: Had it not been for the Aramaic translation of this verse, we would not have known what it is saying, as nowhere in the Bible do we find this incident involving Hadadrimmon.

The custom of the consolers – מנהג מנחמים: The consolers may not begin speaking until the mourner speaks first. However, this applies only when one eats in a mourner's house and not when he merely visits (Arukh HaShulhan; Shulhan Arukh, Yoreh De'a 376:1).

בעינינא ההוא יקגי מספדא בירושלם כמספדא דאחאב בר עמרי דקטל יתיה הדרוימון בר טבריימון, וכמספד דיאשיה בר אמון דקטל יתיה פרעה חגיירא בבקעת מגידו.

The Aramaic translation reads as follows: **At that time the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great as the mourning over Ahab, son of Omri, who was slain by Hadadrimmon, son of Tabrimmon, and like the mourning over Josiah, son of Amon, who was slain by Pharaoh the lame in the valley of Megiddon.**

והלא דברים קל וחומר: ומה אחאב מלך ישראל, שלא עשה אלא דבר אחד טוב, דכתיב: "והמלך היה מעמד במרפבה נכח ארם" – כך, בניו של רבי ישמעאל – על אחת כמה וכמה.

The *baraita* continues: **Are these matters not inferred a fortiori: If, with regard to Ahab, king of Israel, who did only one good thing that is explicitly mentioned in the Bible, as it is written: "And the king was propped up in his chariot facing Aram" (I Kings 22:35), as he did not want the Jewish people to see that he was mortally wounded and flee, and this, that he was greatly mourned, was nevertheless stated about him, then all the more so will the sons of Rabbi Yishmael be greatly mourned.**

ואמר ליה רבא לרבה בר מרי, כתיב ביה בעדקיהו "בשלוש תמות", וכתיב "את עיני צדקיהו עור" – אמר ליה: הכי אמר רבי יוחנן: שמת נבוכדנאצר בימיו.

The Gemara discusses issues in the aforementioned verses: **Rava said to Rabba bar Mari: It is written with regard to Zedekiah: "You shall die in peace," but elsewhere it is written: "And he put out Zedekiah's eyes" (Jeremiah 39:7). Rabba bar Mari said to him: Rabbi Yohanan said as follows: The first verse: "You shall die in peace," means that Nebuchadnezzar died in Zedekiah's lifetime and consequently the latter died in peace, having seen the death of the wicked.**

ואמר רבא לרבה בר מרי: כתיב ביה ביאשיהו: "לכן הנני אוסיף על אבותיך ונאספת אל קבורתיך בשלוש" וכתיב: "ויורו היורים למלך יאשיהו", ואמר רב יהודה אמר רב: שעשאוהו ככברה!

And Rava further said to Rabba bar Mari: It is written with regard to Josiah: "Behold, therefore I will gather you unto your fathers, and you shall be gathered into your grave in peace" (II Kings 22:20), and elsewhere it is written: "And the archers shot at King Josiah; and the king said to his servants, Get me away; for I am grievously wounded" (II Chronicles 35:23). And with regard to this verse Rabbi Yehuda said that Rav said: With their many arrows, they made his body like a sieve.

ואמר ליה, הכי אמר רבי יוחנן: שלא תרב בית המקדש בימיו.

Rabba bar Mari said to him: Rabbi Yohanan said as follows: The words "in peace" stated with regard to King Josiah refer to the fact that the Temple was not destroyed in his lifetime, as the verse itself continues: "And your eyes shall not see all the evil that I will bring upon this place" (II Kings 22:20).

ואמר רבי יוחנן: אין מנחמין רשאיין לומר דבר עד שיפתח אבל, שנאמר: "אחרי כן פתח איוב את פיהו" והדר "וינען אליפו התימני".

The Gemara returns to examining the *halakhot* of consolation. **Rabbi Yohanan said: The consolers are not permitted to speak words of consolation until the mourner opens and speaks first.¹⁴ As it is stated: "And they sat down with him upon the ground for seven days and seven nights, and none spoke a word to him; for they saw that his suffering was very great. After this Job opened his mouth" (Job 2:13–3:1). And afterward: "And Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said" (Job 4:1).**

ואמר רבי אבהו: מנין לאבל שמיסב בראש? שנאמר: "אבחר דרךם ואשב ראש ואשבון כמלך בגדוד כאשר אבלים ינחם".

Rabbi Abbahu said: From where is it derived that the mourner reclines at the head [*roshi*] of the table? As it is stated: "I chose out their way, and sat as chief [*roshi*], and dwelt as a king in the army, as one that comforts [*yenahem*] the mourners" (Job 29:25). This indicates that the mourner sits at the head of the table, as the chief.

"ינחם" אחריני משמע! אמר רב נחמן בר יצחק: ינחם כתיב.

The Gemara raises an objection: But the word *yenahem* means that he comforts others, thereby implying that one who comforts the mourners sits at the head of the table. **Rav Nahman bar Yitzhak said: The word is written as *yinahem*,¹⁵ meaning: Will be comforted, and therefore can be understood as referring to the mourner.**

NOTES

It is written *yinahem* – ינחם כתיב: The early authorities imply that the word is actually written in this manner; have a version that reads: It is written *yenuham*, he who is rather, it means that the word can be read in this way as consoled. They comment that this statement does not well (Ritva).

LANGUAGE

Mirzah – מִרְזָח: The origin of this word is unclear, even in its Aramaic form, *marzaha*. However, from the verse: "Enter not into the house of mourning [*mirzah*]" (Jeremiah 16:5), it appears to mean a house of mourning. Some explain that the meaning of the root *r-z-h* is to raise one's voice, whether in weeping or in joy.

HALAKHA

A priest at the head – בְּהֵן בְּרֵאשׁ: When many people sit together to eat, the greatest person there should recite the blessing over the bread and cut it. If a groom is present and it is the day of his wedding, then he should cut the bread, even when there is a greater person there (*Magen Avraham*, citing *Beit Yosef*). If everyone is of equal stature and there is a priest present, then it is a mitzva for him to do so first. However, if the priest is an ignoramus and there is a Torah scholar present, then the Torah scholar cuts the bread first (*Magen Avraham*). If the priest is also a Torah scholar, he should be first, even if there is a greater scholar present, but this is not required (Rema). It is a mitzva to first present a priest who is a Torah scholar with any honor related to a mitzva. However, he may pass the honor to someone else in his place (Rema, citing *Smag*; *Shulhan Arukh*, *Orah Hayyim* 167:14, 201:2).

Perek III
Daf 29 Amud a

LANGUAGE

Halyard [*pitirei*] – פִּטִירֵי: According to those who understand that this word means a kind of ship's rope, it is similar to the expression "knobs and open flowers [*peturei tzitzim*]" (1 Kings 6:18), which Rashi explains to mean decorated ropes.

HALAKHA

One who departs from the deceased – הִנְפֹטֵר מִן הַמֵּת: Based on the verse "and you shall go to your fathers in peace" (Genesis 15:15), those who have accompanied the deceased say after the burial: Go in peace (Rambam *Sefer Shofetim*, *Hilkhot Evel* 4:4).

מִרְ זֹטְרָא אָמַר מְהָכָא: "וְסָר מִרְזָח סְרוּחִים", מִרְזָח – נִעְשָׂה שֶׁר לְסְרוּחִים.

אָמַר רַבִּי חֲמָא בַר חֲנִינָא: מִנֵּן לְחַתָּן שְׂמִימִיב בְּרֵאשׁ? שְׁנֵאָמַר: "בְּחַתָּן יְבִהֵן פֶּאֶר", מַה בְּהֵן בְּרֵאשׁ – אִף חַתָּן בְּרֵאשׁ.

וְכֵן גּוֹפִיה מִנֵּן? דְּתַנָּא דְּבִי רַבִּי יִשְׁמַעְלֵא: "וְקִדְשֵׁתוּ" – לְכָל דְּבַר שְׂבָקְדוּשָׁה, לְפִתּוּחַ רֵאשׁוֹן, וְלִבְרַךְ רֵאשׁוֹן, וְלִיטוּל מִנָּה יָפָה רֵאשׁוֹן.

אָמַר רַבִּי חֲנִינָא: קִשָּׁה יְצִיאַת נַשְׂמָה מִן הַגּוּף

Mar Zutra said: A proof may be derived from here: The verse "And the revelry [*mirzah*] of those who stretched themselves out shall pass away [*sar*]" (Amos 6:7) means that *mirzah*,^l he who is bitter [*mar*] and whose mind is overwrought [*zah*] due to grief, is made a prince [*sar*] over those who sit beside him stretched out below him to comfort him.

Rabbi Hama bar Hanina said: From where is it derived that a groom reclines at the head of the table? As it is stated: "As a bridegroom decks himself [*yekhahen*] with a garland" (Isaiah 61:10). Just as a priest [*kohen*] is at the head of the table, so too, a bridegroom is at the head of the table.

The Gemara asks: From where do we derive that the priest himself sits at the head?^h The Gemara answers: As the school of Rabbi Yishmael taught: With regard to a priest it says: "You shall sanctify him, for he offers the bread of your God" (Leviticus 21:8), meaning that you are to sanctify him with regard to all matters of sanctity: To be first to begin reading the Torah, to be first to recite the Grace after Meals, and to be first to take a portion during a meal.

§ The Gemara returns to its discussion of death: Rabbi Hanina said: The soul's departure from the body is as difficult

בְּצִיפּוּרֵי בְּפִי הַוּשֵׁט. רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן אָמַר: בְּפִטִירֵי בְּפִי וּוּשֵׁט.

וְאָמַר רַבִּי לִוִּי בַר חֵיטָא: הִנְפֹטֵר מִן הַמֵּת לֹא יֹאמַר לוֹ "לֵךְ לְשָׁלוֹם" אֶלָּא "לֵךְ בְּשָׁלוֹם". הִנְפֹטֵר מִן הַחַי לֹא יֹאמַר לוֹ "לֵךְ בְּשָׁלוֹם", אֶלָּא "לֵךְ לְשָׁלוֹם".

הִנְפֹטֵר מִן הַמֵּת לֹא יֹאמַר לוֹ "לֵךְ לְשָׁלוֹם" אֶלָּא "לֵךְ בְּשָׁלוֹם" – שְׁנֵאָמַר: "וְיָאֲתָה תְּבֵא אֶל אֲבוֹתֶיךָ בְּשָׁלוֹם".

as it is for a knotted rope [*tzippori*]^N to pass through an eye [*veshet*] in a ship's rigging. Rabbi Yohanan said: It is as difficult as it is for a halyard [*pitirei*]^l to pass through an eye [*veshet*].^N

And Rabbi Levi bar Hayyata said: One who departs from the deceased^h should not say to him: Go to peace, but rather he should say: Go in peace.^N One who departs from the living should not say to him: Go in peace, but rather he should say: Go to peace.

One who departs from the deceased should not say to him: Go to peace, but rather: Go in peace, as it is stated: "And you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age" (Genesis 15:15).

NOTES

Like a knotted rope [*tzippori*] to pass through an eye [*veshet*] in a ship's rigging – בְּצִיפּוּרֵי בְּפִי הַוּשֵׁט: Some explain that the word *tzippori* means: Like the knot of a rope (Rashi). Others explain that it refers to a rope made from the fibers of a coconut tree, which was used to tie ships (*Arukh*). Still others say that the word is related to the term "young goat [*tzefir izim*]" (Daniel 8:8) and means that death is as difficult as the birth of a firstborn goat (Rabbi Shlomo ben HaYatom).

There are some with a version of the text that reads: Like a bird [*tzippor*] caught in the esophagus [*veshet*]. They say that the expression refers to the difficulty of swallowing a bird in a single gulp (*ge'onim*). The Ran has a version that reads: Like a fingernail [*tziporen*] caught in the esophagus, which would cause great pain. Most commentaries explain that the metaphor is meant to compare death to something that has become stuck in the esophagus [*veshet*] and can be swallowed only with difficulty and great pain.

As a halyard [*pitirei*] to pass through an eye – בְּפִטִירֵי בְּפִי וּוּשֵׁט: Most commentaries explain that the word *pitirei* is similar in meaning to the word *tzippori*, and it denotes a thick rope used on a ship. The *ge'onim* explain that it means mushroom [*pitria*], so that

death is compared to one who swallows a mushroom whole (see Ran).

Go to peace...go in peace – לֵךְ לְשָׁלוֹם...לֵךְ בְּשָׁלוֹם: With regard to the difference between these expressions, some say that: Go in peace, means that this person should be in a place where there is peace, i.e., to the grave. Meanwhile, the phrase: Go to peace, refers to the person's direction. Using this time alludes to a person going towards greatness, symbolized by the letter *lamed*, which is the tallest of all the letters (Rabbi Shlomo ben HaYatom). The Ran explains that: Go in peace, means that one's journey should be in peace; however, it does not refer to his destination. Therefore, it is appropriate to say this only with regard to the dead and not the living.

The Ritva explains that the dead no longer need to be concerned about future calamities, and everything that will happen to them in the future depends on what they did in this world. Therefore, those present bless the dead with the words: Go in peace, meaning that this person's passing will be complete and in peace. However, with regard to the living, they have already left in peace and now need only a blessing that they should go peacefully to their future destination.

One who departs from the living^H should not say to him: Go in peace, but rather: Go to peace, as David said to Absalom: “Go in peace” (II Samuel 15:9), and he subsequently went and was hanged; whereas Jethro said to Moses: “Go to peace” (Exodus 4:18), and he went and was successful.

מבית הכנסת לבית – המדרש After leaving the synagogue, one should go to the study hall and set aside time to study. He must establish a regular time to study, so that he will not skip it, even if an opportunity arises during that time to make a large profit. Even one who does not know how to study Torah should go to the study hall so that he will receive reward for walking there (Rabbeinu Yona). One should establish a fixed place for himself in the study hall, so that he can study what he is capable of studying and contemplate his actions, so as to develop the fear of Heaven (*Shulhan Arukh, Orach Hayyim 155:1*, and in the comment of Rema).

NOTES

מבית הכנסת לבית – המדרש By doing so, one shows that engaging in Torah and mitzvot is his primary intent and goal; however, in order to make a living he must also engage in other activities.

אין להם מנוחה – Have no rest This is a continuation of what is stated with regard to one who goes from the synagogue to the study hall. In the World-to-Come, there is no break, and he goes from strength to strength there as well (*Yad David*). The early authorities write that this is based on what is mentioned in many places in the Talmud, that in the supernal world souls engage in Torah study and understanding of the Creator (*Tosefot HaRosh*; Rabbi Shlomo ben HaYatom). The Rambam writes in *Sefer HaMadda* that the reward of the righteous will be that they will know the truth of the Creator, things that they could not know when they were in a body.

הנפטר מן החי לא יאמר לו “לך בשלום” אלא “לך לשלום”, שהרי דוד שאמר לאבשלום “לך בשלום” – הלך ונתלה. יתרו שאמר למשה “לך לשלום” – הלך והצליח.

ואמר רבי לוי: כל היוצא מבית הכנסת לבית המדרש, ומבית המדרש לבית הכנסת – זוכה ומקבל פני שכינה, שנאמר: “ילכו מחיל אל חיל יראה אל אלהים בציון”.

אמר רב חייא בר אשי אמר רב: תלמידי חכמים אין להם מנוחה אפילו לעולם הבא, שנאמר: “ילכו מחיל אל חיל יראה אל אלהים בציון”.

הדרן עלך ואלו מגלחין
וסליקא לה מסכת מועד קטן

One who departs from the living^H should not say to him: Go in peace, but rather: Go to peace, as David said to Absalom: “Go in peace” (II Samuel 15:9), and he subsequently went and was hanged; whereas Jethro said to Moses: “Go to peace” (Exodus 4:18), and he went and was successful.

And Rabbi Levi said: Anyone who leaves from the synagogue and goes to the study hall^{NH} or goes from the study hall to the synagogue, i.e., he goes from the mitzva of prayer to the mitzva of Torah study or vice versa, merits to receive the Divine Presence, as it is stated: “They go from strength to strength, every one of them appears before God in Zion” (Psalms 84:8).

With regard to the same verse, Rav Hiyya bar Ashi said that Rav said: Torah scholars have no rest,^N even in the World-to-Come, as even there they remain in constant movement and ascent, as it is stated: “They go from strength to strength, every one of them appears before God in Zion.” Even when they are in the World-to-Come, they continue to go from strength to strength, until the final redemption will arrive in the end of days and God will appear in Zion.