

“ואבשלום לקח ויצב לו בחייו. מאי לקח? אמר ריש לקיש: שקלח מקח רע לעצמו. “את מצבת אשר בעמק המלך” וגו’ – אמר רבי חנינא בר פפא: בעצה עמוקה של מלכו של עולם.

It is written there: “Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken and reared up for himself the pillar, which is in the king’s valley; for he said: I have no son to keep my name in remembrance” (II Samuel 18:18). The Gemara asks: **What did Absalom take? Reish Lakish says: He engaged in a bad transaction for himself by accepting bad advice for which he was punished.** The verse continues: “The pillar, which is in the king’s valley [be’emek hammelekh].” Rabbi Hanina bar Pappa says: This alludes to the pillar that is in the deep [amukka] counsel of the King [melekh] of the universe, as God had already decreed in the aftermath of the incident with Bathsheba that this would occur.

Perek I

Daf 11 Amud a

דכתיב: “הנני מקים עליך רעה מביתך.” כיוצא בדבר אלה אומר: “וישליחיהו מעמק חברון” – אמר רבי חנינא בר פפא: בעצה עמוקה של אותו צדיק שקבור בחברון. דכתיב: “ידע תדע כי גר יהיה ורעך.”

This is as it is written there: “Thus said the Lord: Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house” (II Samuel 12:11), and this prophecy was fulfilled through Absalom. Similarly, you can say about Joseph, who was sent by his father to inquire as to the well-being of his brothers, where the verse states: “And he sent him from the valley [emek] of Hebron” (Genesis 37:14). Rabbi Hanina bar Pappa says: From the deep [amukka] counsel of that righteous individual who is interred in Hebron, i.e., Abraham, as it is written: “And He said unto Abram: Know that your seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years” (Genesis 15:13). The journey Joseph took to his brothers set in motion the descent of the Jewish people to Egypt.

“כי אמר אין לי בן. ולא הוא היה בני? והכתיב: “ויולדו לאבשלום שלשה בנים ובת אחת! אמר רב יצחק בר אבדימי: שלא היה לו בן הגון למלכות. רב חסדא אמר, גמירי: כל השורף תבואתו של חבירו – אינו מניח בן ליורשו. ואיהו קלייה לדיואב, דכתיב: “ויאמר אל עבדיו ראו חלקת יואב אל ידי ולו שם שערים לכו והציתוה באש ויציתו עבדי אבשלום את החלקה באש.”

The Gemara continues its discussion of Absalom. The verse states concerning Absalom: “For he said: I have no son to keep my name in remembrance; and he called the pillar after his own name; and it is called Absalom’s monument to this day” (II Samuel 18:18). The Gemara asks: **And did Absalom not have sons? But isn’t it written: “And to Absalom there were born three sons, and one daughter”** (II Samuel 14:27)? Rav Yitzhak bar Avdimi says: He meant that he did not have a son worthy for royalty. Rav Hisda said: It is learned as a tradition: **Anyone who burns the produceⁿ of another does not leave a son to inherit from him, and he, Absalom, burned the produce of Joab, as it is written: “Therefore he said to his servants: See, Joab’s field is near mine, and he has barley there; go and set it on fire. And Absalom’s servants set the field on fire”** (II Samuel 14:30).

“וכן לענין הטובה, מרים וכו’. מי דמי? התיב חדא שעתיא, הקא שבעה יומי! אמר אביי – אימא: ולענין הטובה אינו כן.”

§ The mishna teaches: **And the same is so with regard to the reward for good deeds. Miriam waited for the baby Moses for one hour at the shore of the Nile; therefore, the Jewish people delayed their travels in the desert for seven days to wait for her when she was smitten with leprosy.** The Gemara asks: **Are these matters comparable? There, Miriam waited one hour,ⁿ while here, the Jewish people waited for her for seven days. Abaye said: Say this with a slight change: And with regard to the repaying of good it is not so, as a person is not rewarded precisely measure for measure, as the reward may be greater than the good deed.**

אמר ליה רבא: הא “וכן לענין הטובה” קתני! אלא אמר רבא, הכי קתני: וכן לענין הטובה – דבאותה מדה, ולעולם מדה טובה מרובה ממדת פורענות.

Rava said to him: But the tanna taught in the mishna: **And the same is so with regard to the reward of good deeds. Rather, Rava said: This is what the mishna is teaching: And the same is so with regard to the reward of good deeds. It is rewarded with the same measure, i.e., a person is rewarded in the same manner as the good deed, but the measure of good is always greaterⁿ than the measure of punishment.** Therefore, Miriam was rewarded in the same manner as, but in a greater measure than, her deed.

NOTES

כל השורף תבואתו – זכור: This punishment is measure for measure. Just as one destroyed the produce of another, he is also punished by not having produce, i.e., progeny (Iyyun Ya’akov).

One hour – תדא שעתיא: Tosafot write that one hour is not be taken literally, but indicates a short amount of time.

But the measure of good is always greater – ולעולם מדה טובה מרובה: Tosafot ask: Why doesn’t the punishment for the sin of the spies, which included the Jewish people wandering in the wilderness for one year for each day the spies surveyed Eretz Yisrael, prove that the measure of punishment can be greater than the measure of good? In the Yefe Toar it is explained that the wandering in the wilderness should not be viewed as a punishment. This is because the punishment actually was that all the males of that generation would die in the wilderness. Therefore, the extended time they wandered was to their benefit, because their lives were thereby prolonged.

אָמַר לְחַכְמָה אַחֲוֵי אֶת – Say to wisdom: You are my sister – Rav Sherira Gaon explains that the Divine Presence is the manifestation of God's glory in the world. This glory reveals itself in various ways, and wisdom is one of them.

כִּי הִנֵּה ה' בָּאֵשׁ יָבֵא – For behold the Lord will come in fire – The *Ben Yehoyada* points out that it is clear that here, as well as in other similar passages in the Gemara, the Gemara doesn't mean to say that the Egyptians cited this verse from Isaiah, as he prophesied hundreds of years later. Rather, the verse is cited by the Sages, and the Egyptians believed that God punishes with fire, as the verse writes with regard to Sodom: "Then the Lord caused to rain upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire" (Genesis 19:24).

וַיִּתְצַב אַחֲוֵי מִרְחֹק – אָמַר רַבִּי יִצְחָק: פְּסוּק זֶה כּוּלּוֹ עַל שֵׁם שְׂכִינָה נִקְּאָמַר; וַיִּתְצַב – דְּכָתִיב: וַיִּבְאֵהוּ וַיִּתְצַב" וגו'; "אַחֲוֵי" – דְּכָתִיב: "אָמַר לְחַכְמָה אַחֲוֵי אֶת"; "מִרְחֹק" – דְּכָתִיב: "מִרְחֹק ה' נִרְאָה לִי"; "לְדַעַת" – דְּכָתִיב: "כִּי אֵל דְּעוֹת ה'"; "מֵה" – דְּכָתִיב: "מֵה ה' אֱלֹהֵיךְ שָׂאֵל מֵעַמְךָ"; "יַעֲשֶׂה" – דְּכָתִיב: "כִּי לֹא יַעֲשֶׂה ה' אֱלֹהִים דְּבַר"; "לֹא" – דְּכָתִיב: "וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ ה' שְׁלוֹם".

וַיִּקָּם מֶלֶךְ חֲדָשׁ וְגו' – רַב וּשְׂמוּאֵל: חֲדָשׁ אָמַר: חֲדָשׁ מִמֶּשׁ, וְחֲדָשׁ אָמַר: שְׁנַת־חֲדָשׁוֹ גִּזְרֹתָיו. מֵאֵן דְּאָמַר חֲדָשׁ מִמֶּשׁ, דְּכָתִיב: "חֲדָשׁ"; וּמֵאֵן דְּאָמַר שְׁנַת־חֲדָשׁוֹ גִּזְרֹתָיו, דְּלֹא כְּתִיב "וַיִּמָּט וַיִּמְלֹךְ". "אֲשֶׁר לֹא יָדַע אֶת יוֹסֵף" – דְּהוּהוּ דְּמִי כְּמֵאן דְּלֹא יָדַע לֵיהּ כְּלָל.

וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל עַמּוֹ הִנֵּה עִם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל – תִּנָּא: הוּא הִתְחִיל בְּעֵצָה תְּחִילָה, לְפִיכָךְ לָקַח תְּחִילָה; הוּא הִתְחִיל בְּעֵצָה תְּחִילָה, דְּכָתִיב: "וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל עַמּוֹ; לְפִיכָךְ לָקַח תְּחִילָה, בְּדְכָתִיב: "וַיִּבְכֶּה וּבְעַמְךָ וּבְכָל עַבְדֶּיךָ".

"הִבֵּה נִתְחַבְּמָה לוֹ" – "לָהֶם" מִיַּעֲנֵי לֵיהּ! אָמַר רַבִּי חֲמַא בְּרַבִּי חֲנִינָא: בָּאוּ וְנִחְבְּסוּ לְמוֹשִׁיעַן שְׁל יִשְׂרָאֵל.

בְּמָה נְדוּנִים? נְדוּנִים בָּאֵשׁ – כְּתִיב: "כִּי הִנֵּה ה' בָּאֵשׁ יָבֵא", וְכָתִיב: "כִּי בָאֵשׁ ה' נִשְׁפָּט" וגו'! בְּחָרֵב – כְּתִיב: "וַיִּבְחָרְבוּ אֶת כָּל בָּשָׂר"!]

אֵלָּא בּוֹאוּ וְנְדוּנִים בְּמִים, שְׂכַבְרֵי נִשְׁבַּע הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא שְׂאִינוּ מִבֵּיא מִבּוֹל לְעוֹלָם, שְׂנֵאָמַר: "כִּי מִי נָח זֹאת לִי" וגו'. וְהוּן אֵינִן יוֹדְעִין שְׁעַל כָּל הָעוֹלָם כּוּלּוֹ אֵינוּ מִבֵּיא, אָבָל עַל אוֹמָה אַחַת הוּא מִבֵּיא;

With regard to Miriam's deed the verse states: "And his sister stood afar off, to know what would be done to him" (Exodus 2:4). Rabbi Yitzhak says: This entire verse is stated in reference to the Divine Presence, i.e., each phrase alludes to the Divine Presence watching over Moses. "And his sister stood"; as it is written: "And the Lord came, and stood" (1 Samuel 3:10). "His sister"; as it is written: "Say to wisdom: You are my sister" (Proverbs 7:4).^N "Afar off"; as it is written: "From afar the Lord appeared to me" (Jeremiah 31:2). "To know"; as it is written: "For the Lord is a God of knowledge" (1 Samuel 2:3). "What"; as it is written: "What does the Lord God require of you" (Deuteronomy 10:12). "Would be done"; as it is written: "For the Lord God will do nothing" (Amos 3:7). "To him"; as it is written: "And the Lord said to him: Peace be with you" (Judges 6:23).

§ The Gemara proceeds to discuss the sojourn of the Jewish people in Egypt. The verse states: "And there arose a new king over Egypt, who knew not Joseph" (Exodus 1:8). Rav and Shmuel disagree about the interpretation of this verse. One says that this means he was actually a new king, and one says that this means that his decrees were transformed as if he were a new king. The one who says that he was actually a new king holds that it is because it is written "new." And the one who says that his decrees were transformed holds that it is because it is not written: "And the previous king of Egypt died and a new king reigned." This indicates that the same king remained. According to this interpretation, the words: "Who knew not Joseph" (Exodus 1:8), mean that he was like someone who did not know him at all. Although he certainly knew Joseph and his accomplishments, he acted as if he didn't.

The next verse states: "And he said to his people: Behold, the people of the children of Israel are too many and too mighty for us" (Exodus 1:9). It was taught (*Tosefta* 4:11): He, Pharaoh, initiated the proposal. Therefore, of his people, he was stricken first. He initiated the proposal, as it is written: "And he said to his people." Therefore, he was stricken first, as it is written: "And the frogs shall come up both upon you, and upon your people, and upon all your servants" (Exodus 7:29).

The next verse states that Pharaoh said: "Come, let us deal wisely with him [*lo*], lest he multiply, and it come to pass that when there befalls us any war, he will also join our enemies, and fight against us" (Exodus 1:10). The Gemara comments: He should have said in plural: With them [*lahem*], rather than the singular: "With him." Rabbi Hama, son of Rabbi Hanina, says that Pharaoh was saying: Come, let us deal wisely with regard to the savior of Israel, referring to God.

His advisors asked: With what form of death shall we judge and decree upon them? If we shall judge them with fire, perhaps we will be punished measure for measure by fire, as it is written: "For behold, the Lord will come in fire" (Isaiah 66:15),^N and it is written in the verse that follows it: "For by fire will the Lord contend" (Isaiah 66:16). Similarly, we cannot judge them with the sword, as it is written in the continuation of that verse: "And by His sword with all flesh" (Isaiah 66:16).

Rather, let us come and judge them with water, by drowning the Jewish babies. God will not punish us with water, for the Holy One, Blessed be He, already took an oath that He will not bring a flood upon the world, as it is stated: "For this is as the waters of Noah unto Me; for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth" (Isaiah 54:9). The Gemara comments: And Pharaoh's advisors did not know that He will not bring a flood upon all the world, but He may bring destruction by water upon one nation.

Job, who was silent – איוב ששתק – The commentaries discuss why Job's silence was punished so severely. Where, they ask, is the measure for measure in his harsh punishment? Some explain that his silence indicated that he agreed with Balaam, which caused the advice of Balaam to be accepted. Therefore, Job was punished with suffering that he had to accept in silence. Others, citing the *Zohar*, state that Job was not completely silent. Rather, he suggested that the Jewish people not be killed but rather should be made to suffer financial loss and physical affliction. Therefore, Job was punished in a similar manner.

And the families of scribes, etc. – ומשפחות סופרים וכו' – See Rashi, who interprets all the names mentioned there in terms of their Torah knowledge and as alluding to the fact that they were judges.

BACKGROUND

A brick mold – מלבן – This is a form in which bricks are produced. In antiquity, bricks were produced by hand. However, molds were soon developed to enable the production of bricks of uniform size. These molds were box shaped, generally rectangular, but other shapes were used according to the type of brick needed. Clay was first mixed with cut straw to reinforce it, and then the mixture was pressed into the mold and subsequently removed to dry in the sun or in an oven. In ancient times, bricks were generally small. Even the fairly large ones used at the time of the Talmud were square with sides of 3 handbreadths, 24 × 24 cm. Consequently, it was possible to hang a brick of that size on a person's neck.



Brick mold

LANGUAGE

Delicate person [istenis] – איסטניס – From the Greek ἀσθενής, *astēnēs*, which means weak, without power, without energy. The Sages use it to refer to an individual who is extremely refined, either physically or spiritually.

אי נמי, הוא אינו מביא, אבל הן באין ונופלין בתוכו, וכן הוא אומר: "ומצרים נסים לקראתו". והיינו דאמר רבי אלעזר, מאי דכתיב: "כי בדבר אשר ודו עליהם"? בקדירה שבישלו בה נתבשלו. מאי משמע דהאי "ודו" לישנא דקדירה הוא? דכתיב: "ויוד יעקב נזיד".

Alternatively, there is an additional way to punish the Egyptians with water: **He does not bring a flood upon them, but they may come and fall into water, and so it says:** "And the sea returned to its strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled toward it; and the Lord overthrew the Egyptians in the midst of the sea" (Exodus 14:27), indicating that the Egyptians fell into the water. **And this is what Rabbi Elazar says: What is the meaning of that which is written:** "Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods, for in that which they conspired [*zadu*] against them" (Exodus 18:11)? The phrase means: **In the pot in which they cooked, they themselves were cooked**, as they were punished through drowning, measure for measure, for drowning the Jewish babies. The Gemara asks: **From where may it be inferred that this word "zadu" is a term meaning a pot?** The Gemara answers: **As it is written:** "And Jacob simmered a pot [*vayyazed Ya'akov nazid*]" (Genesis 25:29).

אמר רבי חייא בר אבא אמר רבי סימאי, שלשה היו באותה עצה: בלעם, ואיוב, ויתרו.

Rabbi Hiyya bar Abba says that Rabbi Simai says: **Three noteworthy people were consulted by Pharaoh in that counsel where Pharaoh questioned what should be done with the Jewish people. They were Balaam, and Job, and Yitro.**

בלעם שיעץ – נהרג; איוב ששתק – נידון בסיפורין; יתרו שפרח – זכו מבני בניו שישבו בלשכת הגזית, שנאמר: "ומשפחות סופרים יושבי יעבץ תרעתים שמעתים שוכתים המה הקנים הבאים מחמת אבי בית רכב", וכתיב: "ובני קני חתן משה" וגו'.

Rabbi Hiyya bar Abba teaches what occurred to each of them: **Balaam, who advised Pharaoh to kill all sons born to the Jewish people, was punished by being killed in the war with Midian (see Numbers 31:8). Job, who was silentⁿ and neither advised nor protested, was punished by suffering**, as detailed in the eponymous book in the Bible. **Yitro, who ran away as a sign of protest, merited that some of his children's children sat in the Sanhedrin in the Chamber of Hewn Stone, as it is stated:** "And the families of scribesⁿ who dwelt at Jabez, Tirathites, Shimeathites, and Sucathites, these were the Kenites who descended from Hammath, the father of the house of Rechab" (1 Chronicles 2:55). **And it is written:** "The children of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law" (Judges 1:16). This teaches that the Kenites, descendants of Yitro, the father-in-law of Moses, dwelt at Jabez [Yabetz], referring to the place where the Jewish people go for advice [*eitza*], i.e., the Chamber of Hewn Stone.

וילחם בנו ועלה מן הארץ – ועלינו מיבעי ליה! אמר רבי אבא בר כהנא: כאדם שמקלל את עצמו ותולה קללתו בחבירו.

The verse states: "Come, let us deal wisely with him, lest he multiply, and it come to pass that when there befalls us any war, he will also join our enemies, and fight against us, and get him up out of the land" (Exodus 1:10). The Gemara comments: **He should have said: And get us up**, as Pharaoh's fear was that the Jewish people would join the enemies of Egypt and drive Pharaoh and the Egyptians out of Egypt. **Rabbi Abba bar Kahana says:** By stating this, **Pharaoh is like a person who curses himself but applies his curse to another.**

וישימו עליו שרי מסים – עליהם מיבעי ליה! תנא דבי רבי אלעזר ברבי שמעון: מלמד, שהביאו מלבן ותלו לו לפרעה בצוארו, וכל אחד ואחד מישראל שאמר להם איסטניס אני, אמרו לו: כלום איסטניס אתה יותר מפרעה?

The next verse states: "Therefore they did set over him taskmasters in order to afflict him with their burdens" (Exodus 1:11). The Gemara comments: **It should have stated: Over them**, in the plural. **The school of Rabbi Elazar, son of Rabbi Shimon, taught:** This teaches that at first they brought a brick mold^b and they hung it on the neck of Pharaoh to create the appearance that he was also participating in the labor. **And with regard to each and every Jew who said to the Egyptians: I am a delicate person [istenis]^c and I cannot participate in the labor, they said to him: Are you at all more of a delicate person than Pharaoh, and he is participating.** Therefore, the verse states: "They did set over him," as they first placed the burden on Pharaoh as an artifice to enslave the Jewish people.

שרי מסים – דבר שמישים (ליבנים).

The term "Taskmasters [*sarei missim*]" is formed from the term: **A matter that compels [shemesim] the manufacture of bricks**, as the Jewish people were forced into labor when these taskmasters were assigned to them.

NOTES

Pithom and Raamses – פיתום ורעמסס: The Maharsha writes that the Sages had a tradition that Pithom and Raamses were actually the same place, and therefore the separate names were clearly meant to teach another matter. Others explain that there would be no reason to state the names of these cities in the verse, as it would have been sufficient to simply say: “Storage cities.” Therefore, the fact that the names are given is grounds for exegesis (*Iyyun Ya’akov*).

”למען ענותו בסבלותם” – [”ענותם” מיבועי ליה]! למען ענותו לפרעה בסבלותם דישראל.

”ויבן ערי מסכנות לפרעה” – רב ושמואל, חד אמר: שמסכנות את בעליהן, וחד אמר: שממסכנות את בעליהן, דאמר מר: כל העוסק בבנין מתמסכן.

”את פיתום ואת רעמסס” – רב ושמואל, חד אמר: פיתום שמה, ולמה נקרא שמה רעמסס? שראשון ראשון מתרוסס; וחד אמר: רעמסס שמה, ולמה נקרא שמה פיתום? שראשון ראשון פיתום בולעו.

”וכאשר יענו אותו בן ירבה וכן יפרוץ” – “בן רבו וכן פרוץ” מיבועי ליה! אמר ריש לקיש, רוח הקודש מברשת: “בן ירבה וכן יפרוץ”. “ויקצו מפני בני ישראל” – מלימד שהיו דומין בעיניהם בקוצים.

”ויעבדו מצרים את בני ישראל”

The verse continues: “In order to afflict him with their burdens” (Exodus 1:11). The Gemara comments: It should have stated: “In order to afflict them,” in the plural. Rather, the intention is, as mentioned previously, in order to afflict Pharaoh, with the result of causing the burdens of the Jewish people.

The verse concludes: “And they built for Pharaoh storage cities [miskanot], Pithom and Raamses” (Exodus 1:11). Rav and Shmuel disagree as to the precise interpretation of the word miskanot. One says that they are called this because they were the type of structures that endanger [mesakenot] their owners, as it is dangerous to work in cities with tall buildings. And one says that they are called this because this is the type of property that impoverishes [memaskenot] their owners, as the Master said: All who engage in construction become poor.

The verse states that the names of the cities they built were “Pithom and Raamses” (Exodus 1:11).ⁿ Rav and Shmuel disagree as to the precise interpretation of this verse, both assuming that only one city was built, which had primary and secondary names. One says that Pithom was its real name, and why was it called Raamses? It is an appellation indicating that as the buildings were constructed they collapsed [mitroses] one by one and needed to be rebuilt. And one says that Raamses was its real name, and why was it called Pithom? Because the opening of the abyss [pi tehom] swallowed each building they constructed one by one, and it sunk into the ground.

The next verse states: “But the more they afflicted him, the more he would multiply and the more he would spread about” (Exodus 1:12). The Gemara comments: It should have stated: The more they multiplied and the more they spread about, in the past tense. Reish Lakish says: Divine inspiration proclaimed to the Egyptians: As long as this nation is afflicted, the more he will multiply and the more he will spread about. As the verse states: “And they became disgusted [vayyakutz] due to the children of Israel.” The Gemara explains: This teaches that the Jewish people appeared in their eyes like thorns [kotzim].

The next verse states: “And the Egyptians made the children of Israel work

Perek I
Daf 11 Amud b

NOTES

Initially with mortar and bricks, etc. – בתחילה בחומר: Initially the Egyptians instructed the Jews to work with mortar and bricks to fortify the cities, which is labor incumbent on all citizens of a country. Afterward, they forced them to work in the fields as well, and then they commanded them to perform all the work that had to be done to provide for the needs of the Egyptians (Maharsha).

בפרך” – רבי אלעזר אמר: בפה רך, רבי שמואל בר נחמני אמר: בפריקה.

”וימרו את חייהם בעבדה קשה בחמר ובלבנים” וגו’ – אמר רבא: בתחילה בחומר ובלבנים, ולבסוף “ובכל עבודה בשדה”.

with rigor [befarekh]” (Exodus 1:13). Rabbi Elazar says: The word befarekh is a conjugation of the words: With a soft mouth [bifeh rakh], as the Egyptians enticed the Jewish people into slavery, gradually subjugating them until they had lost their freedom completely. Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani says: The word befarekh should be understood as: With crushing [bifrikha], as the Egyptians subjugated Israel with backbreaking labor.

The next verse states: “And they made their lives bitter through hard service, with mortar and brick, and with every laborious service in the field” (Exodus 1:14). Rava says: The verse mentions specifically mortar and brick and then all forms of labor, as initially the Egyptians had them work with mortar and bricks,ⁿ and ultimately they subjugated them “and with every laborious service in the field.”

מלאכת אנשים לנשים וכו' – Men's work to women, etc. – Even though men's work generally requires more physical effort, women's work requires other character traits such as patience and the ability to pay greater attention to detail. This causes suffering for one not accustomed to this kind of work (*Ben Yehoyada*).

In the merit of the righteous women – בשכר נשים – צדקניות: The Maharsha explains that the primary meaning of this statement relates to the fact that the women remained faithful to their husbands and even encouraged them to engage in sexual intercourse, despite their dire circumstances. In this way they helped keep the Jewish people alive.

BACKGROUND

Small fish – דגים קטנים – Due to its size and slow flow, which leave deposits of organic silt, the Nile River serves as a fertile environment for fish. Moreover, in some seasons the abundance of food in the river attracts large numbers of fish from the sea. During these seasons it is not necessary to use sophisticated equipment to catch fish, as even simple vessels suffice.

“את כל עבדתם אשר עבדו בהם בפרך” – אָמַר רַבִּי שְׁמוּאֵל בַּר נַחֲמָנִי אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹנָתָן: שְׁהָיוּ מַחְלִיפִין מְלֹאכֶת אֲנָשִׁים לְנָשִׁים וּמְלֹאכֶת נָשִׁים לְאֲנָשִׁים. וְלִמָּאן דְּאָמַר נִמְי הָתָם בְּפַח רַךְ, הֲכָא וְדָאֵי בְּפִרְכָּה.

The verse concludes: “In all their service, wherein they made them serve with rigor” (Exodus 1:14). Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani says that Rabbi Yonatan says: The meaning of *befarekh* is that the Egyptians would exchange the responsibilities of men and women, giving men's work to womenⁿ and women's work to men, requiring everyone to do work to which they were unaccustomed. And even according to the one who says that there, in the previous verse, *bifarekh* indicates that the Egyptians enslaved the Jews with a soft mouth, here, in this verse, which describes the physical hardship of the labor, the word *befarekh* certainly means with crushing labor.

דְּרַשׁ רַב עוּרֵי: בְּשֹׁכַר נָשִׁים צְדֻקְנוּת שְׁהָיוּ בְּאוֹתוֹ הַדּוֹר – נִגְאָלוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם. בְּשָׁעָה שְׁהוֹלְכוֹת לְשָׂאוֹב מַיִם, הִקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא מְזַמֵּן לָהֶם דְּגַיִם קְטַנִּים בְּכַדֵּיהֶן וְשׂוֹאֲבוֹת מִחֶצֶה מַיִם וּמִחֶצֶה דְּגַיִם. וּבְאוֹת וְשׂוֹפְתוֹת שְׁתֵּי קְדֵירוֹת אַחַת שֶׁל חֲמִין וְאַחַת שֶׁל דְּגַיִם,

§ Rav Avira taught: In the merit of the righteous womenⁿ that were in that generation, the Jewish people were redeemed from Egypt. He tells of their righteous actions: At the time when these women would go to the river to draw water, the Holy One, Blessed be He, would materialize for them small fish⁸ that would enter into their pitchers, and they would therefore draw pitchers that were half filled with water and half filled with fish. And they would then come and place two pots on the fire, one pot of hot water for washing their husbands and one pot of fish with which to feed them.

ומוליכות אצל בעליהן לשדה, ומרחיצות אותן וסכות אותן ומאכילות אותן ומשקות אותן ונוקקות להן בין שפתים, שנאמר: “אם תשכבון בין שפתים” וגו'. בשכר “תשכבון בין שפתים” זכו ישראל לבית מצרים, שנאמר: “כנפי יונה נחפה בכסף ואברותיה בירקרק חרוץ”.

And they would then take what they prepared to their husbands, to the field, and would bathe their husbands and anoint them with oil and feed them the fish and give them to drink and bond with them in sexual intercourse between the sheepfolds, i.e., between the borders and fences of the fields, as it is stated: “When you lie among the sheepfolds, the wings of the dove are covered with silver, and her pinions with the shimmer of gold” (Psalms 68:14), which is interpreted to mean that as a reward for “when you lie among the sheepfolds,” the Jewish people merited to receive the plunder of Egypt, as it is stated in the continuation of the verse, as a reference to the Jewish people: “The wings of the dove are covered with silver, and her pinions with the shimmer of gold” (Psalms 68:14).

וכיון שמתעברות באות לבתיהם; וכיון שמגיע זמן מולדיהן, הולכות ויולדות בשדה תחת התפוח, שנאמר: “תחת התפוח עורתיך” וגו'.

And when these women would become pregnant, they would come back to their homes, and when the time for them to give birth would arrive they would go and give birth in the field under the apple tree, as it is stated: “Under the apple tree I awakened you; there your mother was in travail with you; there was she in travail and brought you forth” (Song of Songs 8:5).

והקדוש ברוך הוא שולח משמי מרום מי שמוקיר ומשפיר אותן, בחיה זו שמשפיר את הולד, שנאמר: “ומולדותיך ביום הולדת אותך לא כרת שרך ובמים לא רחצת למשעי” וגו'. ומלקט להן שני עגולין אחד של שמן ואחד של דבש, שנאמר: “וינקחו דבש מסלע ושמן” וגו'.

And the Holy One, Blessed be He, would send from the heavens above an angel who would clean and prepare the newborns, just as a midwife prepares the newborn, as it is stated: “And as for your birth, on the day you were born, your navel was not cut nor were you washed with water for cleansing; you were not salted at all, nor swaddled at all” (Ezekiel 16:4). This indicates that there were no midwives to take care of the Jews born in Egypt. And then, the angel would gather for them two round stones from the field and the babies would nurse from that which would flow out of them. One of the stones flowed with oil and one of the stones flowed with honey, as it is stated: “And He would suckle them with honey from a crag and oil from a flinty rock” (Deuteronomy 32:13).

וכיון שמפירין בהן מצרים באין להורגן, ונעשה להם גם ונבלעין בקרקע. ומביאין שוורים וחורשין על גבן, שנאמר: “על גבי חרשו חרשים” וגו'. לאחר שהולכין היו מבצבצין ויוציאין כעשב השדה, שנאמר: “ירבה בצמח השדה נתתיך”.

And once the Egyptians would notice them, realizing that they were Jewish babies, they would come to kill them. But a miracle would occur for them and they would be absorbed by the earth. And the Egyptians would then bring oxen and would plow upon them, as it is stated: “The plowers plowed upon my back; they made long their furrows” (Psalms 129:3). After the Egyptians would leave, the babies would emerge and exit the ground like grass of the field, as it is stated: “I caused you to increase even as the growth of the field” (Ezekiel 16:7).

Her thighs become as cold as stones – יְרֻכֹתֶיהָ מִצְטָנְנוֹת – כְּאֲבָנִים: It is possible that this expression refers to the contraction and hardening of the stomach muscles and the muscles near them during the birth process, which cause these muscles to become like stone. It could be that this contraction and hardening results in a feeling of coldness in other parts of the body as well.

One thigh here – יָרֵךְ מִכָּאן: The way in which a potter sits while at his potter's wheel resembles the birth process in that his feet are spread out on both sides of the wheel, where the lump of clay usually sits. This is done both to enable him to rotate the wheel and easily reach every side of the instrument with his hand.



Potter creating a vessel with a pottery wheel

וְכִינּוּן שְׂמֵתִגְדְּלִין בְּאֵין עֲדָרִים עֲדָרִים לְבִתְיָהוּן, שְׁנֵאמַר: "וּתְרַבִּי וּתְגַדְּלִי וּתְבֹאֵי בְּעֲדֵי עֲדָרִים." אֵל תִּקְרִי "בְּעֲדֵי עֲדָרִים" אֲלֵא "בְּעֲדֵי עֲדָרִים".

וּבְשִׁנְגָלָה הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא עַל הַיָּם, הֵם הַכִּירוּהוּ תַחֲלָה, שְׁנֵאמַר: "זֶה אֱלֹהֵי וְאֵנֹהוּ".

"וַיֹּאמֶר מֶלֶךְ מִצְרַיִם לְמִיֻּלֹּת הָעִבְרִיּוֹת" וְגו' – רַב וּשְׂמוּאֵל. תָּד אָמַר: אִשָּׁה וּבִתָּה, וְתָד אָמַר: כִּלְהָ וְחִמּוּתָהּ. מֵאֵן דָּאָמַר אִשָּׁה וּבִתָּה, יוֹכֶבֶד וּמְרִים; וּמֵאֵן דָּאָמַר כִּלְהָ וְחִמּוּתָהּ, יוֹכֶבֶד וְאֵלִישֶׁבַע.

תְּנִיא כְּמֵאֵן דָּאָמַר אִשָּׁה וּבִתָּה, דְּתִנְיָא: "שִׁפְרָה" – זוּ יוֹכֶבֶד. וְלִמָּה נִקְרָא שְׂמָה שִׁפְרָה? שְׂמֵשֶׁפֶרֶת אֶת הַיֹּלֵד; דְּבַר אַחֵר: "שִׁפְרָה" – שְׁפָרוּ וְרַבּוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּיָמֶיהָ.

"פּוּעָה" – זוּ מְרִים. וְלִמָּה נִקְרָא שְׂמָה פּוּעָה? שְׂהֵיִתָּה פּוּעָה וּמוֹצִיאָה אֶת הַיֹּלֵד; דְּבַר אַחֵר: "פּוּעָה" – שְׂהֵיִתָּה פּוּעָה בְּרוּחַ הַקְּדוֹשׁ, וְאוֹמֶרֶת: עֲתִידָה אִמִּי שִׁתְּלֵד בֵּן שְׂמוֹשִׁיעַ אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל.

"וַיֹּאמֶר בִּילְדָכֵן אֶת הָעִבְרִיּוֹת" וְגו'. מֵאִי "אֲבָנִים"? אָמַר רַבִּי חֲנַן: סִימֵן גְּדוּל מִסָּר לְהֵן. אָמַר לְהֵן: בְּשַׁעָה שְׂבוֹרַעַת לִילֵד, יְרֻכֹתֶיהָ מִצְטָנְנוֹת כְּאֲבָנִים.

וְאֵית דָּאָמַר, כְּדֻכְתִּיב: "וַיֹּאֲרֵד בֵּית הַיּוֹצֵר וְהִנֵּה הוּא עוֹשֶׂה מְלָאכָה עַל הָאֲבָנִים", מֵה יוֹצֵר זֶה – יָרֵךְ מִכָּאן וְיָרֵךְ מִכָּאן וְסָדֵן בְּאֲמִצְעוֹ; אִף אִשָּׁה – יָרֵךְ מִכָּאן וְיָרֵךְ מִכָּאן וְהַיֹּלֵד בְּאֲמִצְעוֹ.

"אִם בֵּן הוּא וְהִמְתֵּן אוֹתוֹ" – אָמַר רַבִּי חֲנִינְיָא, סִימֵן גְּדוּל מִסָּר לְהֵן: בֵּן – פָּנָיו לְמִטָּה; בַּת – פָּנָיהָ לְמַעְלָה.

And once the babies would grow, they would come like many flocks of sheep to their homes, as it is stated in the continuation of the verse: "And you did increase and grow up and you came with excellent beauty [ba'adi adayim]" (Ezekiel 16:7). Do not read the verse as: "Ba'adi adayim," "with excellent beauty." Rather, read it as: Be'edrei adarim, meaning: As many flocks.

And when the Holy One, Blessed be He, revealed Himself at the Red Sea, these children recognized Him first, as it is stated: "This is my God, and I will glorify Him" (Exodus 15:2). They recognized Him from the previous time that He revealed Himself to them in their infancy, enabling them to say: "This is my God."

§ The verse states: "And the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, of whom the name of the one was Shiphrah, and the name of the other Puah" (Exodus 1:15). Rav and Shmuel disagree as to the proper interpretation of this verse. One says that these midwives were a woman and her daughter, and one says that they were a daughter-in-law and her mother-in-law. According to the one who says that they were a woman and her daughter, the women were Jochebed, the mother of Moses and Aaron, and her daughter, Miriam. And according to the one who says that they were a daughter-in-law and her mother-in-law, the verse is referring to Jochebed and her daughter-in-law Elisheba, the wife of Aaron.

It is taught in a baraita according to the one who says that they were a woman and her daughter, because it is taught in a baraita: With regard to Shiphrah, who is referred to in the verse, this is really a reference to Jochebed. And why was she called Shiphrah? Because she would prepare [mishapperet] the newborn. Alternatively, she is referred to as Shiphrah because the Jewish people increased and multiplied [shepparu verabbu] in her days, due to her assistance.

The baraita continues: With regard to Puah, who is referred to in the verse, this is really a reference to Miriam. And why was she called Puah? Because she would make a comforting sound [po'a] as she would remove the child from the womb of the mother. Alternatively, the word Puah is related to one of the verbs that describe speaking, as she would speak [po'a] through divine inspiration and say: In the future, my mother will give birth to a son who will save the Jewish people.

The next verse relates the instructions of Pharaoh to the midwives: "And he said: When you deliver the Hebrew women, and you look upon the stones [ovnayim], if it be a son, then you shall kill him; but if it be a daughter, then she shall live" (Exodus 1:16). The Gemara asks: What is the meaning of "stones"? Rabbi Hanan says: Pharaoh transmitted a great sign to them. He said to them: At the time when a woman crouches to give birth, her thighs become as cold as stones,^b and, therefore, this shall be for you a sign that the woman is about to give birth.

And there are those who say an alternative explanation for ovnayim: As it is written: "So I went down to the potter's shop, and behold, he was at his work on the wheels [ovnayim]" (Jeremiah 18:3). Just as this potter sits so that one thigh is here^b and one thigh is there and the block upon which he works is in the middle, so too, a woman giving birth also has one thigh here and one thigh there and the newborn is in the middle.

The verse continues: "If it be a son, then you shall kill him; but if it be a daughter, then she shall live" (Exodus 1:16). Rabbi Hanina says: Pharaoh transmitted to them a great sign to enable them to know the gender of the infant from the beginning of the birth process: A boy is born with his face downward; a girl is born with her face upward. Pharaoh provided them with this sign so that they could kill the boys secretly even before the mother realized what was happening.

“וַתִּירָאן הַמִּילָדוֹת אֶת הָאֱלֹהִים
וְלֹא עָשׂוּ כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר אֱלֹהִים” וגו’ –
“לָהֶן” מִיִּבְעֵי לֵיהּ! אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹסֵי בְרַבִּי
חֲנִינָא: מִלְּמֹד, שֶׁתִּבְעֵן לְדַבֵּר עִבְרִית
וְלֹא תִתְבַּעוּ.

The next verse states: “**But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt spoke about them** [*aleihen*], but they kept the male children alive” (Exodus 1:17). The Gemara comments: It should have stated: “Spoke to them [*lahen*].” Rabbi Yosei, son of Rabbi Hanina, says: This teaches that Pharaoh proposed to them to engage in a sinful act, i.e., sexual intercourse, with him, but they did not accept his overtures. The word *aleihen* is often used in reference to sexual intercourse, for example: “And brought her to him; and he consorted with her [*eileha*]” (Genesis 29:23), and that is its connotation here as well.

“וַתְּחַיֶּינָן אֶת הַיְלָדִים” – תָּנָא: לֹא
דָּיִן שְׁלֹא הִמִּיתוּ אוֹתָן, אֲלֵא שְׁהָיוּ
מִסְפִּיקוֹת לָהֶם מִים וּמְזוֹן.

The verse concludes: “**But they kept the male children alive**” (Exodus 1:17). A Sage teaches: It is not only that they did not kill the children as Pharaoh had commanded them, but that they would even provide for them water and food, as the phrase “But they kept the male children alive” indicates.

“וַתֹּאמְרֵן הַמִּילָדוֹת אֶל פְּרֹעֹה כִּי לֹא
כַּנְּשִׁים” וגו’. מֵאֵי “חַיּוֹת”? אֵילִמָּא
חַיּוֹת מִמַּשְׁע, אִשׁוּ חַיָּה מִי לֹא צְרִיכָה
חַיָּה אַחֲרֵיתֶי לְאוֹלוֹדָה?

After being questioned by Pharaoh concerning their failure to obey his command, the midwives responded, as it is written: “**And the midwives said to Pharaoh: Because the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women, for they are lively** [*hayot*], and are delivered before the midwife comes to them” (Exodus 1:19). The Gemara asks: What is the meaning of “*hayot*”? If we say that the Hebrew women are like *hayot*, meaning actual midwives for themselves, and therefore they do not need assistance from others, is that to say that a midwife does not need the assistance of another midwife in order to help her give birth?

אֲלֵא, אָמְרוּ לוֹ: אוֹמְרָה זוֹ בְּחַיָּה
נִמְשָׁלָה, יְהוּדָה – גִּזְרֵי אֲרִיָּה; דָּן – יְהִי
דָּן נַחֲשׁ; נַפְתָּלִי – “אֵילָה שְׁלַחָה”;
יִשָּׁשְׁכָר – “חֲמוֹר גָּרִם”; יוֹסֵף – “בְּכוֹר
שׁוֹר”; בִּנְיָמִין – “אָב יִטְרֹף”.

Rather, the midwives said to Pharaoh: This nation is compared to an animal [*hayya*], and animals give birth without a midwife. For example, with regard to Judah it is written: “Judah is a lion’s whelp” (Genesis 49:9); with regard to Dan it is written: “Dan shall be a serpent in the way” (Genesis 49:17); with regard to Naphtali it is written: “A hind let loose” (Genesis 49:21); with regard to Issachar it is written: “A large-boned donkey” (Genesis 49:14); with regard to Joseph it is written: “His first bullock” (Deuteronomy 33:17); with regard to Benjamin it is written: “A ravenous wolf” (Genesis 49:27).

דְּכַתִּיב בֵּיהּ – כְּתִיב בֵּיהּ, וְדָלָא כְּתִיב
בֵּיהּ – כְּתִיב בֵּיהּ: “מָה אֲמַךְ לְבִיא בֵּין
אֲרִיּוֹת רְבִצָּה” וגו’.

The Gemara comments: Concerning those individuals where a comparison to an animal is written with regard to him, it is already written with regard to him. And concerning those where no specific metaphor comparing them to an animal is written with regard to him explicitly, in any case a general comparison is written about the Jewish people: “How your mother was a lioness; among lions she crouched, in the midst of the young lions she reared her whelps” (Ezekiel 19:2), indicating that all the Jewish people are compared to animals.

“וַיְהִי כִּי יֵרָאוּ הַמִּילָדוֹת אֶת הָאֱלֹהִים
וַיַּעַשׂ לָהֶם בָּתִּים” – רַב וּשְׁמוּאֵל, חֲדָ
אָמַר: בָּתֵּי כְּהוֹנֵה וְלוֹיָהּ, וְחֲדָ אָמַר:
בָּתֵּי מַלְכוּת. מֵאֵן דְּאָמַר בָּתֵּי כְּהוֹנֵה
וְלוֹיָהּ, אֲהֲרֹן וּמֹשֶׁה; וּמֵאֵן דְּאָמַר
בָּתֵּי מַלְכוּת, דּוֹד נְמִי מִמְרִים קָאֲתִי,
דְּכַתִּיב: “וַתִּמָּת עֲזוּבָה”, אִשְׁתִּי כְּלָב,
“וַיִּקַּח לוֹ כְּלָב אֶת אֶפְרַת וַתֵּלֶד לוֹ
אֶת חוּר”, וְכַתִּיב: “וַיְדוֹד בֶּן אִישׁ
אֶפְרַתִּי” וגו’.

The verse relates the midwives’ reward: “**And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, that He made them houses**” (Exodus 1:21). Rav and Shmuel disagree as to the precise interpretation of these houses: One says that God made the houses of the priesthood and the Levites descend from the midwives, and one says that God made the houses of royalty descend from them. The one who says that it is referring to the houses of the priesthood and the Levites is referring to Aaron and Moses, who were sons of Jochebed. And the one who says that it is referring to houses of royalty is referring to David, who also comes from Miriam, as it is written: “And Azubah,” the wife of Caleb, “died, and Caleb took to him Ephrath, who bore him Hur” (1 Chronicles 2:19) and, as will be explained further, Ephrath is Miriam. And it is written: “David was the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehem in Judah” (1 Samuel 17:12). Therefore, he was a descendant of Miriam.

“וְכָלֵב בֶּן־חֶזְרוֹן הוֹלִיד אֶת עֻזָּבָה אִשְׁתּוֹ וְאֵת יְרִיעוֹת. וְאֵלֶּה בְנֵיהָ יִשָּׁר וְשׁוּבָב וְאַרְדּוֹן.”
 בֶּן חֶזְרוֹן? בֶּן יִפְנֶה הוּא! בֶּן שְׁפָנָה מַעֲצַת מְרַגְלִים.

The Gemara discusses the family of Caleb: In Chronicles it says: “And Caleb, the son of Hezron, begot children of Azubah his wife, and of Jerioth, and these were her sons: Jeshar, and Shobab, and Ardon” (1 Chronicles 2:18). The Gemara asks: Was Caleb actually the son of Hezron? Wasn’t he the son of Jephunneh, as the verse states in Numbers 13:6? The Gemara answers: He was the son of Hezron, but he is called “son of Jephunneh” as an appellation indicating that he was a son who turned away [*sheppana*] from the counsel of the spies.

וְאֵלֶּה בְנֵיהָ יִשָּׁר וְשׁוּבָב וְאַרְדּוֹן. דְּכַתְיִב: “וַיִּלְכְּדָה עֲתַנְיָאֵל בֶּן קִנְזִי אֶת־כִּלְבִּי” אָמַר רַבָּא: חוֹרְגוּ דְקִנְזִי הוּא.

The Gemara asks: But it is still difficult. Hezron could not be his father, as Caleb was the son of Kenaz, as it is written: “And Othniel, the son of Kenaz, Caleb’s younger brother, took it” (Judges 1:13). This would mean that Caleb was also a son of Kenaz. Rava said: Caleb was the stepson of Kenaz, as he and Othniel shared a mother but had different fathers.

Perek I
 Daf 12 Amud a

NOTES

Anyone who marries, etc. – כָּל הַגּוֹשָׁא וכו' – The Maharsha explains that this principle is derived from the case of Miriam herself, as before she was married she was sickly, and her rejuvenation after her marriage is viewed as a second birth.

As he set himself straight – שִׁיֵּשֶׁר אֶת עַצְמוֹ – Rashi explains that he set himself straight in that he did not join the other spies in their claims against traveling to Eretz Yisrael. The Maharsha interprets this otherwise, explaining that this refers to his act of marrying Miriam for the sake of Heaven.

LANGUAGE

Rose [*vered*] – רֹדָד – Apparently from the Persian *vard*, meaning a red rose. This loanword, and similarly its Greek counterpart *ῥόδον*, *rhodon*, was also used as a general term for the color red.

דִּיקָא נְמִי, דְּכַתְיִב: “הַקְנִי.” שְׁמַע מִיָּנָה.

The Gemara comments: The language of another verse is also precise based on this explanation, as it is written: “And Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenizzite said unto him” (Joshua 14:6). Although his father was Jephunneh, he is known as “the Kenizzite,” although he was not actually a son of Kenaz. The Gemara accepts this proof and states: Conclude from it that Rava’s explanation is correct.

“עֻזָּבָה” – זוּ מְרִים, וְלָמָּה נִקְרָא שְׁמָהּ עֻזָּבָה? שְׁהִכֵּל עֻזָּבָה מִתְחַיִּלְתָּהּ. “הוֹלִיד” וְהִלָּא מִיּוֹסֵב הָיָה נָסִיב לָהּ! אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן: כָּל הַגּוֹשָׁא אִשָּׁה לְשֵׁם שְׁמִים, מַעֲלָה עָלָיו הַכְּתוּב כְּאִילוּ יִלְדָּהּ.

The verse states: “And Caleb, the son of Hezron, begot children of Azubah his wife, and of Jerioth, and these were her sons: Jeshar, and Shobab, and Ardon” (1 Chronicles 2:18). The Gemara analyzes the verse: The verse refers to the wife of Caleb by the name Azubah. The Sages teach that this is Miriam. And why is she called Azubah? As everyone initially abandoned her [*azavuha*] and did not want to marry her because she was sickly and unattractive. The verse additionally states: “And Caleb, the son of Hezron, begot children [*holid*] of Azubah his wife” (1 Chronicles 2:18). The Gemara asks: Why use the term “*holid*,” begot children? But doesn’t this verse state that he married her? Rabbi Yoḥanan says: This teaches us that with regard to anyone who marries^N a woman for the sake of Heaven, as he married her due to her righteousness without concern for her appearance, the verse ascribes him credit as if he gave birth to her.

“יריעות” – שֶׁהָיוּ פָּנֶיהָ דּוֹמִין לִירִיעוֹת.

The same verse refers to Miriam additionally as Jerioth, which the Gemara explains was appropriate, for her face was like extremely pallid curtains [*yeriot*].

“וְאֵלֶּה בְנֵיהָ” – אֵל תִּקְרִי “בְנֵיהָ” אֶלֶּה “בּוֹנֵיהָ.” “יִשָּׁר” – שִׁיֵּשֶׁר אֶת עַצְמוֹ. “שׁוּבָב” – שְׁשִׁיבֵב אֶת יָצְרוֹ. “וְאַרְדּוֹן” – שְׂרָדָה אֶת יָצְרוֹ. וְאִיכָּא דְאָמְרִי: עַל שֶׁהָיוּ פָּנֶיהָ דּוֹמִין לְרֹדָד.

The verse continues: “And these were her sons [*vaneha*].” The Gemara explains: Do not read it as *vaneha*, her sons; rather, read it as *boneha*, her builders. In other words, the rest of the names in the verse are not the names of her children, but rather appellations for her husband, whose marriage to her built her, as it were. The first appellation for Caleb, “Jeshar,” is referring to his actions, as he set himself straight [*yisher*]^N and did not join in the counsel of the spies. The second appellation, “Shobab,” is referring to the fact that he broke [*sibbev*] his evil inclination by rebelling against the other spies. The third appellation, “and Ardon [*veArdon*],” is referring to the fact that he ruled [*rada*] over his evil inclination. And some say: Because the face of his wife Miriam became beautiful like a rose [*vered*]^L after they were married, she was also called Vardon, due to her rose-like complexion.

אף על עמו גזר – He decreed even on his own nation – The source for this statement is the fact that there is no mention in this verse that the decree was only upon the Jewish infants. *Iyyun Ya'akov* suggests that upon finding Moses in the water, the daughter of Pharaoh remarked: "This is one of the Hebrews' children" (Exodus 2:6), indicating that children other than those of the Jews were also thrown into the Nile.

You decreed in this world and in the World-to-Come – **ואתה בעולם הזה ולעולם הבא**: Rashi explains that children who are killed in this world still have a portion in the World-to-Come, and therefore, failing to have children at all means not affording one's potential children this possibility. Some explain this as referring to the parents: By divorcing and purposely not having children, they are neglecting the mitzva to procreate, thereby denying themselves reward for this in the World-to-Come (*Iyyun Ya'akov; Ahavat Eitan*).

ולאשחור אבי תקוע היו שתי נשים חלָה ונערה. "אשחור" – זה כלב. ולמה נקרא שמו אשחור? שהושתרו פניו בתעניות. "אבי" – שנעשה לה כבאב. "תקוע" – שתקע את לבו לאביו שבשמים.

The Gemara interprets an additional verse as referring to Caleb. It is stated: "And Ashhur the father of Tekoa had two wives, Helah and Naarah" (1 Chronicles 4:5). Ashhur is Caleb. And why was he called Ashhur? Because his face became blackened [*husheharu*] from the extensive fasts that he accepted upon himself so that he would not be entrapped by the counsel of the spies. "The father of" is also referring to Caleb, as he became like a father to his wife. The next word in the verse, "Tekoa," is an additional reference to Caleb, as he attached [*taka*] his heart to his Father in Heaven.

"היו שתי נשים" – נעשה מרים כשתי נשים. "חלָה ונערה" – לא חלָה ונערה היא, אלא בתחילה חלָה ולבסוף נערה.

The phrase in the verse "had two wives" actually means it is as if Miriam became like two wives, because she changed over the course of time. And therefore the two names written in the verse: "Helah and Naarah," were not two separate women, Helah and Naarah. Rather, initially Miriam was sickly [*hela*] and forlorn, and ultimately she was healthy and beautiful like a young woman [*na'ara*].

ובני חלָה צרת וצהר ואתנן. "צרת" – שנעשית צרה לחברותיה; "צהר" – שהיו פניה דומין בצצהרים; "אתנן" – שכל הרואה אותה מוליך אתנן לאשתו.

The Gemara expounds the following verse as referring to Miriam: "And the children of Helah were Zereth [*Tzeret*] and Zohar and Ethnan" (1 Chronicles 4:7). She was now called "Zereth," for she became so beautiful that she was like a rival [*tzara*] to other women, as they were jealous of her beauty. She is called "Zohar," as her face shined like the sun does at noon [*tzohorayim*]. She is called "Ethnan," as any man that saw her would be aroused so much that he would bring a gift [*etnan*] to his wife to entice her.

ויצו פרעה לכל עמו – אמר רבי יוסי ברבי חנינא: אף על עמו גזר. ואמר רבי יוסי ברבי חנינא, שלש גזירות גזר: בתחילה – אם בן הוא והמתן אותו; ולבסוף – כל הבן הילוד היארה תשליכהו; ולבסוף – אף על עמו גזר.

§ The Gemara returns to the discussion of the bondage in Egypt. "And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying: Every son that is born you shall cast into the river, and every daughter you shall save alive" (Exodus 1:22). Rabbi Yosei, son of Rabbi Hanina, says: The use of the phrase "every son that is born" indicates that he decreed even on his own nationⁿ that all their male babies must be killed. And Rabbi Yosei, son of Rabbi Hanina, says further: He decreed three decrees. Initially, he commanded the midwives only with regard to Jewish infants: "You shall look upon the stones. If it be a son, then you shall kill him; but if it be a daughter, then she shall live" (Exodus 1:16). And afterward, he decreed with regard to the Jewish infants: "Every son that is born you shall cast into the river" (Exodus 1:22). And ultimately, he decreed even on his own nation that Egyptian infant boys should be cast into the river as well.

"וילך איש מבית לוי" – להיכן הלך? אמר רב יהודה בר זבנא: שהלך בעצת בתו.

The verse states: "And there went a man of the house of Levi, and took for a wife a daughter of Levi" (Exodus 2:1). The Gemara asks: To where did he go? Rav Yehuda bar Zevina says: He went according to the advice of his daughter Miriam, as the Gemara will proceed to explain.

תנא: עמרם גדול הדור היה. כיון שראה שאמר פרעה הרשע: "כל הבן הילוד היארה תשליכהו", אמר: לשוא אנו עמלין! עמד וגירש את אשתו. עמדו בולן וגירשו את נשותיהן.

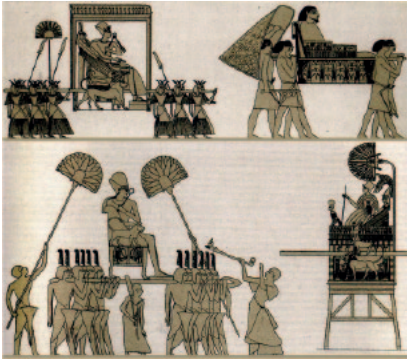
A Sage teaches: Amram, the father of Moses, was the great man of his generation. Once he saw that the wicked Pharaoh said: "Every son that is born you shall cast into the river, and every daughter you shall save alive" (Exodus 1:22), he said: We are laboring for nothing by bringing children into the world to be killed. Therefore, he arose and divorced his wife. All others who saw this followed his example and arose and divorced their wives.

אמרה לו בתו: אבא, קשה גזירתך יותר משל פרעה, שפרעה לא גזר אלא על הזכרים, ואתה גזרת על הזכרים ועל הנקבות! פרעה לא גזר אלא בעולם הזה, ואתה בעולם הזה ולעולם הבא!

His daughter, Miriam, said to him: Father, your decree is more harsh for the Jewish people than that of Pharaoh, as Pharaoh decreed only with regard to the males, but you decreed both on the males and on the females. And now no children will be born. Additionally, Pharaoh decreed to kill them only in this world, but you decreed in this world and in the World-to-Come,ⁿ as those not born will not enter the World-to-Come.

BACKGROUND

Palanquin – אַפּרִיּוֹן



Egyptian palanquins

LANGUAGE

Palanquin [appiryon] – אַפּרִיּוֹן: From the Greek φορεῖον, phoreyon, referring to a chair used to transport people.

Verdict [pitkah] – פִּתְקָה: From the Greek πρτάκιον, pitakion, which means a bill, a formal document, or a material upon which to write. Among other meanings of the word is list, such as a list of persons belonging to a specific group. Here it is used in the sense of a document detailing a court verdict.

NOTES

The signs of a young woman were born in her – שְׁנוּלוֹ בָּהּ סִימְנֵי נַעֲרוֹת: As noted further in the Gemara, Jochebed was already pregnant when Amram remarried her. As such, her rejuvenation was not needed so that she would conceive. Rather, it was so that people should not say that Amram remarried her only because he was not concerned that she would bear children (Iyyun Ya'akov; Anaf Yosef).

From here it is derived concerning righteous women, etc. – מִכָּאן לְנָשִׁים צְדִיקָנוֹת וְכוּ': The Maharal writes that pain during childbirth and difficulty in earning one's livelihood are as a result of the sin of Adam and Eve. Therefore, completely righteous women, who are free of sin, may not suffer pain in childbirth.

Tov is his name – טוֹב שְׁמוֹ: Although he is generally referred to as Moses, that name was given to him by the daughter of Pharaoh. The discussion here, as well as in tractate Megilla and elsewhere in the midrash, relates to the question of what was the name given to him by his family.

פְּרַעַה הָרָשָׁע, סָפַק מִתְקַיְּמַת גְּזֵירוֹתוֹ סָפַק אֵינָהּ מִתְקַיְּמַת, אַתָּה צְדִיק, בּוֹדֵאֵי שְׁגִוִּירְתָּךְ מִתְקַיְּמַת, שְׁנֵאָמַר: "וְתִגְדֹר אֹמֵר וַיִּקָּם לְךָ! עָמַד וְהַחֲזִיר אֶת אִשְׁתּוֹ. עָמְדוּ כוֹלֵן וְהַחֲזִירוּ אֶת נְשׁוֹתֵיהֶן.

"וַיִּקַּח" – "וַיִּחְזוֹר" מִיִּבְעֵי לִיָּהּ! אָמַר רַב יְהוּדָה בְּרַ וְבִינָא: שְׁעָשָׂה לוֹ מַעֲשֵׂה לִיקוּחִין. הוֹשִׁיבָהּ בְּאַפְרִיּוֹן, וְאֶהְרֵן וּמְרִים מְרַקְדִין לְפָנֶיהָ, וּמְלָאכֵי הַשָּׂרֵת אָמְרוּ: אִם הִבְנִים שְׂמַחָה.

"אֶת בֵּת לֵוִי" – אֶפְשָׁר, בֵּת מֵאָה וּשְׁלֹשִׁים שָׁנָה הוּא יִקְרִי לָהּ בֵּת? דָּאִמַר רַבִּי חַמָּא בְּרַבִּי חֲמִנָא: זֶה יוֹכֵבֵד, שְׁהוֹרְתָה בְּדֶרֶךְ וְלִידְתָהּ בֵּין הַחֹמוֹת, שְׁנֵאָמַר: "אֲשֶׁר יִלְדָה אֹתָהּ לֵלֵוִי בְּמִצְרַיִם".

לִידְתָהּ בְּמִצְרַיִם וְאִין הוֹרְתָה בְּמִצְרַיִם! אָמַר רַבִּי יְהוּדָה: שְׁנוּלוֹ בָּהּ סִימְנֵי נַעֲרוֹת.

"וַתֵּהָרֵי הָאִשָּׁה וַתֵּלֶד בֶּן" – וְהָא הוֹת מִיַּעֲבֹרָא בֵּיהּ תֵּלְתָא יָרְחֵי מַעֲקָרָא! אָמַר רַב יְהוּדָה בְּרַ וְבִינָא: מְקִישׁ לִידְתָהּ לְהוֹרְתָה. מָה הוֹרְתָה שְׁלֵא בְצַעַר, אֵף לִידְתָהּ שְׁלֵא בְצַעַר, מִכָּאן לְנָשִׁים צְדִיקָנוֹת שְׁלֵא הִיוּ בְּפִתְקָה שֶׁל תְּוָה.

"וַתֵּרָא אוֹתוֹ כִּי טוֹב הוּא" – תִּנָּא, רַבִּי מֵאִיר אָמַר: טוֹב שְׁמוֹ; רַבִּי יְהוּדָה אָמַר: טוֹבֵיהּ שְׁמוֹ; רַבִּי נְחֵמְיָהּ אָמַר: הִגּוֹן לְנִבְיָאוֹת; אֲחֵרִים אָמְרִים: נוֹלָד כְּשֶׁהוּא מְהוּל; וְחִכְמִים אָמְרִים: בְּשָׁעָה שְׁנוּלָד מִנְשָׂה – נִתְמַלֵּא הַבֵּית כּוֹלוֹ אוֹר. פְּתֵיב הָכָא: "וַתֵּרָא אוֹתוֹ כִּי טוֹב הוּא", וְכַתִּיב הָתָם: "וַיִּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הָאוֹר כִּי טוֹב".

Miriam continued: Additionally, concerning Pharaoh the wicked, it is uncertain whether his decree will be fulfilled, and it is uncertain if his decree will not be fulfilled. You are a righteous person, and as such, your decrees will certainly be fulfilled, as it is stated with regard to the righteous: "You shall also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto you" (Job 22:28). Amram accepted his daughter's words and arose and brought back, i.e., remarried, his wife, and all others who saw this followed his example and arose and brought back their wives.

The Gemara asks: If Amram remarried Jochebed, rather than say: "And took for a wife a daughter of Levi" (Exodus 2:1), it should have stated: "And returned for a wife the daughter of Levi." Rav Yehuda bar Zevina says: He performed an act of marriage just as one would do for a first marriage. He sat her on a palanquin [appiryon],^{BL} and Aaron and Miriam danced before her, and the ministering angels said: "A joyful mother of children" (Psalms 113:9).

The verse is referring to Jochebed as "a daughter of Levi" (Exodus 2:1). The Gemara asks: Is it possible that this is Jochebed? Jochebed was then 130 years old and the verse still calls her a daughter? Jochebed's age is established based on a tradition concerning the number of the descendants of Jacob who came to Egypt, as follows: While the verse states that Leah had thirty-three descendants (Genesis 46:15), only thirty-two were enumerated. This was explained as Rabbi Hama, son of Rabbi Hanina, says: The "daughter of Levi" is Jochebed, whose conception was on the road, as the family of Jacob descended to Egypt, and she was born between the walls, i.e., in Egypt, as it is stated: "And the name of Amram's wife was Jochebed, the daughter of Levi, who was born to Levi in Egypt" (Numbers 26:59).

This interpolation concerning her birth is interpreted: Her birth was in Egypt, but her conception was not in Egypt. Since the Jewish people were in Egypt for two hundred ten years and Moses was eighty years old at the time of the exodus, Jochebed was one hundred thirty years old when Moses was born. In light of this, the Gemara is asking how the verse can refer to her as a daughter. Rabbi Yehuda says: The signs of a young woman were born in her^N when her husband remarried her, and she became like a young girl again.

S The verse states concerning Moses: "And the woman conceived, and bore a son; and when she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months" (Exodus 2:2). The Gemara asks: But Jochebed was pregnant with Moses for three months at the outset, before Amram remarried her, as will be explained further. Rav Yehuda bar Zevina said: The intention of the verse is to juxtapose her giving birth to her becoming pregnant. Just as her becoming pregnant was without pain, so too, her giving birth was without pain. From here it is derived concerning righteous women^N that they were not included in the verdict [pitkah]^L of Eve that a woman will suffer pain during childbirth (see Genesis 3:16).

The verse states with regard to the birth of Moses: "And the woman conceived, and bore a son; and when she saw him that he was a goodly [tov] child, she hid him three months" (Exodus 2:2). It is taught in a baraita that Rabbi Meir says: "Tov" is his, Moses', real name,^N as it was given to him by his parents when he was born. Rabbi Yehuda says: His name was Toviya. Rabbi Nehemya says: They said he was good because they saw that he was fit for prophecy. Others say: They said he was good because he was born when he was already circumcised. And the Rabbis say: At the time when Moses was born, the entire house was filled with light, as it is written here: "And when she saw him that he was a goodly [tov] child," and it is written there: "And God saw the light, that it was good [tov]" (Genesis 1:4).

That their money is more precious to them, etc. – **שְׂמֻמוֹנִים חֲבִיב עֲלֵיהֶן יוֹתֵר וְכוּ'**: Righteous people are willing to undergo physical pain in order to retain their money, as they work exceptionally hard to ensure that all of their wealth is obtained honestly (*Ben Yehoyada*). See also the discussion concerning Abba Hilkiya in tractate *Ta'anit* (23b).

Bitumen on the interior – חֲמֵר מִבְּפִנִּים: The Maharsha explains that there was no need to state that the bitumen was on the interior, as if it were on the exterior it would be dissolved by the water. Therefore, the additional mention that it was smeared inside is to teach that it was placed there not only to protect the ark, but also to prevent Moses from smelling the foul odor of the pitch. *Tosafot* explain the Gemara differently. They claim that the bitumen and pitch were both smeared on the interior of the ark, and that the bitumen was covering the pitch. The term: On the interior, would then mean that it was closer to Moses within the ark. The box was uncovered on the outside in order for it not to be noticeable among the reeds.

BACKGROUND

Pitch – קִפֵּת: In ancient times pitch was made by slowly burning wood, which would be transformed into charcoal. During this process, the wood emitted various fluids. Tar and pitch are made from these fluids. Pitch is the thicker substance, and its foul odor is due to additional materials found in the fluid. Pitch was sometimes made from asphalt, which also had a foul odor caused by the presence of sulfur and sulfur hydroxide.

“וְתַצְפְּנֶהוּ שְׁלֹשָׁה יָרְחִים” – דָּלָא מְנוּ מַצְרִים אֲלָא מִשְׁעָה דְּאֵהֲדָרְהָ, וְהִיא הוּת מִעֲבָרָא בֵּיהּ תִּלְתָּא יָרְחֵי מִעֵיקְרָא.

The verse continues: “And she hid him three months” (Exodus 2:2). The Gemara explains that she was able to hide him for three months **because the Egyptians counted the nine months of her pregnancy only from the time her husband took her back, but she was pregnant with Moses for three months from the outset** of her remarriage.

“וְלֹא יִכְלֶה עוֹד הַצְּפִינוּ” – אִמַּאי? תַּצְּפִינָה וְתִיזִיל! אֲלָא כָּל הַיָּכָא דְהוּ שְׂמֻמֵּי מַצְרָאֵי דְמִתְוִלִּיד יְנוּקָא, מִמְטוּ יְנוּקָא הָתָם כִּי הֵיכִי דְלִישְׂמֻעִינְהוּ וּמַעֲוֵי בְהַדִּיחֵהוּ, דְכַתִּיב: “אֲחֻזּוּ לָנוּ שׁוּעָלִים שׁוּעָלִים קִטְנִים” וְגוּ.

The next verse states: “And when she could no longer hide him” (Exodus 2:3). The Gemara asks: **Why** couldn't she hide him any longer? **Let her continue to hide him. Rather, anywhere that the Egyptians heard that a baby was born and they wanted to locate the baby, they would bring another baby there in order that it could be heard crying, and the two babies would cry together, as it is written: “Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vineyards; for our vineyards are in blossom”** (Song of Songs 2:15). The infants who were used to uncover the hidden babies are referred to as little foxes.

“וְתַקַּח לוֹ תֵבַת גֹּמָא” – מַאי שְׁנָא גֹמָא? אָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר: מִיֵּכָן לְצַדִּיקִים שְׂמֻמוֹנִים חֲבִיב עֲלֵיהֶן יוֹתֵר מִגּוֹפָן. וְכָל כֵּךְ לָמָּה? לְפִי שְׂאִין פּוֹשְׁטִין יְדֵיהֶן בְּגוֹל.

The verse states: “And when she could no longer hide him, she took for him an ark of bulrushes, and daubed it with bitumen and with pitch; and she put the child therein, and laid it in the willows by the river's bank” (Exodus 2:3). The Gemara asks: **What is different about bulrushes** that she decided to use them? **Rabbi Elazar says: From here it is derived concerning righteous people that their money is more precious to themⁿ than their bodies**, as she took an inexpensive material to build the ark. **And why do they care so much about their money? Because they do not stretch out their hands to partake of stolen property.** Therefore, their own property is very precious to them.

רַבִּי שְׁמוּאֵל בַּר נַחֲמָנִי אָמַר: דְּבַר רַךְ, שְׂיִכּוּל לְעִמּוּד בְּפִנֵּי דְבַר רַךְ וּבְפִנֵּי דְבַר קָשָׁה.

Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani says an alternative reason for her taking bulrushes for the ark: She took a **soft material** like bulrush, which is able to withstand an impact both **before a soft item and before a hard item**. She feared that if she would have made the box from a hard material like wood, if it were to collide with a hard item in the water it might break.

“וְתַחֲמֶרָהּ בַּחֲמֵר וּבִקְפֵת” – תִּנְא: חֲמֵר מִבְּפִנִּים וְקְפֵת מִבְּחוּץ, כְּדִי שְׁלֵא יְרִיחַ אוֹתוֹ צַדִּיק רִיחַ רַע.

The verse continues: “And daubed it with bitumen and with pitch” (Exodus 2:3). A Sage teaches: She daubed bitumen on the interiorⁿ and pitch^b on the exterior, so that righteous person, i.e., Moses, would not smell a foul odor, such as that of pitch.

“וְתַשֵּׂם בָּהּ אֶת הַיֶּלֶד וְתַשֵּׂם בְּסוּף” – רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר אָמַר: יָם סוּף. רַבִּי שְׁמוּאֵל בַּר נַחֲמָנִי אָמַר:

The verse continues: “And she put the child therein, and laid it in the willows [*bassuf*]” (Exodus 2:3). Rabbi Elazar says: This means she placed him in the Suf Sea, i.e., the Red Sea. Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani says:

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אַגַּם, כְּדַכְּתִיב: “קִנְהוּ וְסוּף קָמְלוּ”.

She placed him in a marsh, as it is written: “The reeds and willows [*suf*] shall wither” (Isaiah 19:6).

“וְתָרַד בַּת פַּרְעֹה לְרוֹחוֹץ עַל הַיָּאֵר” – אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן מִשּׁוּם רַבִּי שְׂמַעוֹן בֶּן יוֹחֵי: מְלֻמַּד, שְׂרִידָה לְרוֹחוֹץ מִגְּלוּלֵי אֲבִיָּה. וְכֵן הוּא אָמַר: “אַם רַחֵץ ה' אֶת צוֹאֵת בְּנוֹת צִיּוֹן” וְגוּ.

The verse states: “And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe [*lirhotz*] in the river” (Exodus 2:5). Rabbi Yohanan says in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yoḥai: This teaches that she came down to the river to cleanseⁿ herself from the impurity of her father's idols, as she was immersing herself as part of the conversion process. **And similarly it states: “When the Lord shall have washed [*rahatz*] away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of destruction”** (Isaiah 4:4). This washing clearly refers to the purging of spiritual sins, rather than bathing for the sake of cleanliness.

NOTES

This teaches that she came down to cleanse, etc. – **מְלֻמַּד שְׂרִידָה לְרוֹחוֹץ וְכוּ'**: The strongest proof that Pharaoh's daughter converted is from the verse that refers to: “Bithiah the daughter of Pharaoh” (1 Chronicles 4:18), who eventually married a Jew.

Walking is nothing other than, etc. – אין הליכה זו אלא וכו' – This is a reference to their imminent death, as the Gemara will soon discuss (Riaf).

The one who says that it means her arm – מאן דאמר – ידה: The fact that the verse first refers to the women as her maidens [*na'roteha*] and then uses the term *amata* indicates that the latter expression is not a reference to one of her maidens. Additionally, the word *amata* is written without a *dagesh* in the letter *mem*; therefore, it means a maidservant. See the commentary of *Ibn Ezra* on the verse.

The verse calls him a child [*yeled*], etc. – קרי ליה ילד וכו' – The discussion here is based on the use of two alternative terms for the boy in the same verse, although either term could have been appropriate independently (Maharsha).

You made Moses our teacher blemished – עשיתו למשה רבינו בעל מום: Rashi explains that since Moses was a Levite, if he had an unusual voice he would not have been permitted to sing in the Tabernacle. The Maharsha and others explain that having an unusual voice is considered a blemish, and since prophecy rests upon those who are complete in every manner, it is not reasonable to say that Moses had this blemish.

וְנַעֲרֹתֶיהָ הוֹלְכוֹת – וגו' – אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן: אֵין הַלִּיכָה זֶה אֱלָא לְשׁוֹן מִיּוֹתָהּ. וְכֵן הוּא אֹמֵר: הִנֵּה אָנֹכִי הוֹלֵךְ לְמוֹת׃

וְתִרְאֵהָ אֶת הַתִּיבָה בְּתוֹךְ הַסּוּף – בֵּין דְּחֻז דְּקָא עָבְו לְאַצּוּלֵי לְמִשְׁהָ, אָמְרוּ לָהּ: גְּבִירְתְּנָא מְנַהֲגוּ שְׁל עוֹלָם, מְלִךְ בְּשַׁר וְדָם גּוֹזֵר גְּזִירָה, אִם כָּל הָעוֹלָם כּוּלּוּ אֵין מְקַיְיִמִין אוֹתָהּ – בְּנִי וּבְנֵי בֵיתוֹ מְקַיְיִמִין אוֹתָהּ, וְאֵת עוֹבְרֵת עַל גְּזִירַת אָבִיךָ! בָּא גְּבִירָאֵל וְחִבְטֵן בְּקַרְקַע.

וְתִשְׁלַח אֶת אֲמָתָהּ וְתִקְחֶהָ – רַבִּי יְהוּדָה וְרַבִּי נְחֶמְיָה, חֵד אָמְרוּ: יָדָהּ, וְחֵד אָמְרוּ: שְׁפָחָתָהּ. מֵאֵן דְּאָמְרוּ יָדָהּ, דְּכָתִיב: “אֲמָתָהּ”; וּמֵאֵן דְּאָמְרוּ שְׁפָחָתָהּ, מְדֻלָּא כְּתִיב “יָדָהּ”.

וְלִמָּאן דְּאָמַר שְׁפָחָתָהּ, הָא אָמְרַת: בָּא גְּבִירָאֵל וְחִבְטֵן בְּקַרְקַע! דְּשִׁיר לָהּ חֵדָא, דְּלֵאוּ אֹרְחָא דְּבֵת מְלָכָא לְמִיקַם לְחוּדָה.

וְלִמָּאן דְּאָמַר יָדָהּ, לִיכְתוּב “יָדָהּ”! הָא קָא מְשַׁמְעֵ לָךְ, דְּאִישְׁתְּרַבֵּב אִישְׁתְּרַבּוּבֵי, דְּאָמַר מָר: וְכֵן אֵתָהּ מוּצָא בְּאֲמָתָהּ שְׁל בֵּת פְּרַעֲוִי; וְכֵן אֵתָהּ מוּצָא בְּשִׁינֵי רְשָׁעִים, דְּכָתִיב: “שִׁנֵּי רְשָׁעִים שְׁבִרְתָּ”, וְאָמַר רִישׁ לְקִישׁ: אֵל תִּיקְרִי “שְׁבִרְתָּ”, אֱלָא “שְׁרִיבְבָתָהּ”.

וְתִפְתַּח וְתִרְאֶהוּ אֶת הַיֶּלֶד – וְתִרְאֵהָ מִיַּבְעֵי לֵיהּ! אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹסִי בְּרַבִּי חֲנִינָא: שְׂרָאָתָהּ שְׂכִינָה עִמּוֹ.

וְהִנֵּה נֶעַר בָּכָה – קְרִי לֵיהּ “יֶלֶד” וְקְרִי לֵיהּ “נֶעַר”! תִּנְאָ: הוּא יֶלֶד וְקוּלוֹ כְּנֶעַר, דְּבָרֵי רַבִּי יְהוּדָה; אָמַר לוֹ רַבִּי נְחֶמְיָה: אִם כֵּן, עֲשִׂיתוּ לְמִשְׁהָ רַבִּינוּ בְּעַל מוּם! אֱלָא, מְלַמֵּד שְׁעֵשְׂתָהּ לוֹ אִמּוֹ חוּפַת נְעוּרִים בְּתִיבָה, אָמְרָה: שְׂמָא לֹא אֲזַכֶּה לְחוּפַתוֹ.

וְתִחַמְלַ עָלָיו וְתֹאמַר מִיֶּלְדֵי הָעִבְרִים זֶה – מִנָּא יָדְעָה? אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹסִי בְּרַבִּי חֲנִינָא: שְׂרָאָתָהּ אוֹתוֹ מֵהוּל.

The verse continues: “And her maidens walked along [*holekhot*] by the riverside” (Exodus 2:5). Rabbi Yohanan says: This walking is nothing other thanⁿ the terminology of going toward death, and similarly it states: “Behold, I am going [*holekh*] to die” (Genesis 25:32).

The verse continues: “And she saw the ark among the willows” (Exodus 2:5). Once her maidens saw that the daughter of Pharaoh was intending to save Moses, they said to her: Our mistress, the custom of the world is that when a king of flesh and blood decrees a decree, even if all the world does not fulfill it, at least his children and members of his household fulfill it, and yet you are violating the decree of your father. After the maidens tried to convince her not to save Moses, the angel Gabriel came and beat them to the ground and they died.

The verse concludes: “And she sent *amatah* to take it” (Exodus 2:5). Rabbi Yehuda and Rabbi Nehemya disagree as to the definition of the word “*amatah*.” One says that it means her arm, and one says that it means her maidservant. The Gemara explains: The one who says that it means her armⁿ explained it in this manner, as it is written “*amatah*,” which denotes her forearm. And the one who says that it means her maidservant explained it in this manner because it does not explicitly write the more common term: Her hand [*yadah*]. Therefore, he understands that this is the alternative term for a maidservant, *ama*.

The Gemara asks: And according to the one who says that it means her maidservant, didn't you say earlier: Gabriel came and beat them to the ground and the maidservants died, so how could Pharaoh's daughter send her? The Gemara answers: It must be that Gabriel left her one maidservant, as it is not proper that a princess should stand alone.

The Gemara asks: And according to the one who says that it means her hand, let the Torah write explicitly: Her hand [*yadah*]. Why use the more unusual term *amatah*? The Gemara answers: This verse teaches us that her arm extended [*ishtarhav*] many cubits. As the Master said in another context: And similarly you find with regard to the hand of Pharaoh's daughter that it extended, and similarly you find with regard to the teeth of evildoers, as it is written: “You have broken [*shibbarta*] the teeth of the wicked” (Psalms 3:8), and Reish Lakish said: Do not read the word as *shibbarta*, rather read it as *sheribbavta*, you have extended.

The next verse states: “And she opened it and saw it [*vatirehu*], even the child” (Exodus 2:6). The Gemara comments: The verse states: “And she saw it”; it should have stated: And she saw. Rabbi Yosei, son of Rabbi Hanina, says: In addition to Moses, she saw the Divine Presence with him. This is indicated by the usage of “saw it.”

The verse states: “And saw it, even the child [*yeled*]; and behold a lad [*na'ar*] that wept” (Exodus 2:6). The verse calls him “a child [*yeled*],”ⁿ and the same verse calls him “a lad [*na'ar*].” A Sage teaches: He is the age of a child but his voice is as loud and deep as a lad; this is the statement of Rabbi Yehuda. Rabbi Nehemya said to him: If that is so, you made Moses our teacher blemished,ⁿ since his voice was unusually deep. Rather, this teaches that his mother made a canopy of youth, i.e., a small canopy, for him in the ark, as she said: Perhaps I will not merit to see his wedding canopy.

The verse concludes: “And she had compassion on him, and said: This [*zeh*] is one of the Hebrews' children” (Exodus 2:6). The Gemara asks: From where did she know that he was a Hebrew child? Rabbi Yosei, son of Rabbi Hanina, says: As she saw that he was circumcised.

אותה שנה מעוברת היתה; רובו של ראשון, ורובו של אחרון, ואמצעי שלם.

The Gemara answers: **That year was a leap year** in which there were two months of Adar. Moses was hidden **most of the first month** of the three, from the seventh day of the first Adar when he was born, **and most of the last month** of the three, i.e., all of Nisan until the twenty-first, **and the entire middle one**. All of this together is considered as three months.

”ותאמר אחותו אל בית פרעה האלך וקראתי לך אשה מינקת מן העבריות.”
ומאי שנא מעבריות?

The Gemara now discusses the next verse in Exodus: **“Then said his sister to Pharaoh’s daughter: Shall I go and call you a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for you?”** (Exodus 2:7). The Gemara asks: **And what is different** that Pharaoh’s daughter would specifically want a nurse **of the Hebrew women?**

מלמד, שהחזירוהו למשה על כל המצרות כולן ולא ינק. אמר: פה שעתיד לדבר עם השכינה ינק דבר טמא? והיינו דכתיב: “את מי יורה דעה” וגו’, למי יורה דעה ולמי יבין שמועה? “לגמולי מחלב ולעתיקי משדים.”

The Gemara answers: This teaches that prior to this, they took Moses aroundⁿ to all the Egyptian wet nurses and he did not agree to nurse from any of them, as he said: **Shall a mouth that in the future will speak with the Divine Presence actually nurse something impure?**ⁿ And this is as it is written: **“Whom shall one teach knowledge? And whom shall one make understand the message?”** (Isaiah 28:9). The prophet is asking: **To whom shall God teach the knowledge of the Torah, and to whom shall God make to understand the message of the Torah?** The answer is as the verse continues: **“Them that are weaned from the milk, them that are drawn from the breasts”** (Isaiah 28:9). The conclusion of the verse indicates that the Torah should be taught to the one who did not want to nurse from the milk of a gentile woman, i.e., Moses.

”ותאמר לה בית פרעה לבי וגו’ – אמר רבי אלעזר: מלמד, שהלכה בוריות בעלמה. רבי שמואל בר נחמני אמר: “העלמה” – שהעלימה את דבריה.

The next verse states: **“And Pharaoh’s daughter said to her: Go. And the maiden [ha’alma] went and called the child’s mother”** (Exodus 2:8). **Rabbi Elazar says: This teaches that she went quickly like a maiden**, i.e., with the strength of one of marriageable age, and not as the young child that she was. **Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani says:** The word *ha’alma* is related to the word meaning to hide [*le’alem*], **for she hid her words** and didn’t tell Pharaoh’s daughter that she was bringing the baby’s mother.

”ותאמר לה בית פרעה היליכי את הילד הזה” – אמר רבי חמא ברבי חנינא: מתנבאה ואינה יודעת מה מתנבאה, “היליכי” – היא שליכי. ואני אתן את שכרך” – אמר רבי חמא ברבי חנינא: לא דיין לצדיקים שמחזירין להן אבידתן, אלא שנותנין להן שכרן.

The next verse states what Pharaoh’s daughter said to Jochebed: **“And Pharaoh’s daughter said to her: Take this [heilikhi] child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it”** (Exodus 2:9). **Rabbi Hama, son of Rabbi Hanina, says:** Pharaoh’s daughter is prophesying and she does not know what she is prophesying, as the word *heilikhi* means: **This is yours [ha shellikhi]**, i.e., this is your child. The next part of the verse states: **“And I will give you your wages.”** **Rabbi Hama, son of Rabbi Hanina, says:** This teaches that **with regard to righteous people, not only is it so that God arranges that their lost items are returned to them, but He also arranges that they get their wages**, as the son of Jochebed was returned to her and she also received payment for nursing him.

”ותקח מרים הנביאה אחות אהרן וגו’ – אחות אהרן ולא אחות משה? אמר רב עמרם אמר רב, ואמרי לה אמר רב נחמן אמר רב: מלמד, שהיתה מתנבאה כשהיא אחות אהרן.

Elsewhere, the verse states with regard to Miriam: **“And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances”** (Exodus 15:20). The Gemara asks: **Why is Miriam referred to as “the sister of Aaron,” and not the sister of Moses?** **Rav Amram says** that Rav says, **and some say that Rav Nahman says that Rav says:** **This teaches that Miriam already prophesied when she was still the sister of only Aaron**, i.e., before Moses was born.

NOTES

מלמד שהחזירוהו – The Maharsha writes that although there is no halakhic prohibition against a Jewish baby nursing from a gentile woman, Moses refused to do so because of the additional sanctity he possessed (see *Shulhan Arukh, Yoreh De’a* 81:7, and in the comment of Rema).

Nurse something impure – יינק דבר טמא: The Maharsha writes that although there is no halakhic prohibition against a Jewish baby nursing from a gentile woman, Moses refused to do so because of the additional sanctity he possessed (see *Shulhan Arukh, Yoreh De’a* 81:7, and in the comment of Rema).

ואומרת: עתידה אמי שתלד בן שמושיע את ישראל ובין שנולד משה, נתמלא כל הבית כולה אור. עמד אביה ונשקה על ראשה, אמר לה: בתי, נתקיימה נבואתי! ובין שהטילוהו לַיָּאֹר, עמד אביה וטפחה על ראשה, אמר לה: בתי, היכן נבואתי! והיינו דכתיב: "ותתעב אחותו מרחוק לדעה מה יעשה לו", לידע מה יהא בסוף נבואתה.

"ויסף זכה" וכו'. מאי שנא מעיקרא, דכתיב: "וישל יוסף לקבור את אביו ויעלו אתו כל עבדי פרעה" וגו' והדר: "וכל בית יוסף ואחיו ובית אביו", ומאי שנא לבסוף דכתיב: "וישב יוסף מצרימה הוא ואחיו", והדר: "וכל העולים אתו לקבור את אביו"?

אמר רבי יוחנן: בתחילה עד שלא ראו בכבודן של ישראל לא נהגו בהן כבוד, ולבסוף שראו בכבודן נהגו בהן כבוד.

דכתיב: "ויבאו עד גורן האטד". וכי גורן יש לו לאטד? אמר רבי אבהו: מלמד, שהקיפודו בתרים לארזו של יעקב בגורן זה שמקיפים לו אטד, שבאו בני עשו ובני ישמעאל ובני קטורה.

תנא: כולם למלחמה באו. בין שראו בתרין של יוסף תלוי בארזו של יעקב, נטלו כולם בתריהן ותלאום בארזו של יעקב. תנא: שלשים וששה בתרים נטלו בארזו של יעקב.

"ויספדו שם מספד גדול וכבד מאד" – תנא: אפילו סוסים ואפילו חמורים.

And as a child Miriam would say: In the future, my mother will give birth to a son who will save the Jewish people. And once Moses was born, the entire house was filled with light. Her father arose and kissed her on her head. He said to her: My daughter, your prophecy has been fulfilled. And once they put him into the river, her father arose and hit her on her head. He said to her: My daughter, where is your prophecy? And this is as it is written: "And his sister stoodⁿ afar off, to know what would be done to him" (Exodus 2:4), i.e., to know what will be the ultimate resolution of her prophecy.

§ The mishna teaches: Joseph merited to bury his father, resulting in a display of great honor to his father. The Gemara begins its discussion of the burial of Jacob by asking: What is different initially that it is written: "And Joseph went up to bury his father; and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt" (Genesis 50:7), and afterward it says in the following verse: "And all the house of Joseph, and his brethren, and his father's house; only their little ones, and their flocks, and their herds, they left in the land of Goshen" (Genesis 50:8), indicating that the brothers of Joseph were second in importance to the Egyptians? And what is different at the end that it is written: "And Joseph returned into Egypt, he, and his brethren," and afterward it states: "And all that went up with him to bury his father, after he had buried his father" (Genesis 50:14), placing the brothers before the Egyptians?

Rabbi Yohanan says: Initially, before the Egyptians saw the honor of the Jewish people, as the Gemara will soon explain, they did not treat them with honor, so the brothers were behind the servants of Pharaoh. And in the end, when they saw their honor, they treated the brothers with honor.

The Gemara explains what honor was accorded to the family of Jacob: As it is written: "And they came to the threshing floor of Atad," which is beyond the Jordan, and there they wailed with a very great and sore wailing; and he made a mourning for his father seven days" (Genesis 50:10). The word atad is the name of the boxthorn bush. And does a boxthorn⁸ bush have a threshing floor? Thorns are not collected and eaten. Rabbi Abbahu says: This teaches that they surrounded the casket of Jacob with crowns, like this threshing floor that is surrounded with boxthorns, because the children of Esau and the children of Ishmael and the children of Keturah all came to the burial of Jacob.

A Sage taught: Initially, they all came to wage war with the family of Jacob, but once they saw the crown of Joseph, the viceroy of Egypt, hanging on the casket of Jacob, they all took their crowns and hung them on the casket of Jacob. A Sage taught: Thirty-six crownsⁿ were hung on the casket of Jacob. This was the great honor accorded to the family of Jacob.

The Gemara continues its discussion of Jacob's burial. The verse states: "And there they wailed with a very great and sore wailing" (Genesis 50:10). It is taught: Even horsesⁿ and even donkeys participated in the mourning.

NOTES

And this is as it is written, and his sister stood, etc. – והיינו דכתיב ותתעב אחותו וכו'. This verse serves as proof that Miriam went alone, indicating that there was a special reason for her to do so (Iyyun Ya'akov).

The threshing floor of Atad – גורן האטד: In the Jerusalem Talmud it is noted that there is no place in the Bible referred to as Atad. Therefore, it can be assumed that the name here is an allusion to some matter. According to the discussion in the Gemara here, the reason why the term "threshing floor" is used is that when grain grows it is surrounded by thorns, similar to the image of Jacob's casket surrounded by crowns.

Thirty-six crowns – שלשים וששה בתרים: Rashi explains the calculation as follows: There were twelve crowns belonging to the princes of Ishmael, another twenty-three of the chiefs of Esau, and the crown of Joseph. The Maharsha, similar to Tosefot HaRash before him, explains otherwise: According to him there were twelve crowns of the princes of Ishmael, ten of the kings of Keturah, and fourteen of the princes of Edom. Tosefot HaRosh makes a similar calculation with one difference: He counts only nine crowns of the kings of Keturah, but includes the crown of Joseph in the final count.

Even horses, etc. – אפילו סוסים וכו': The simple explanation of this phrase is that the noise and the trumpet calls of the funeral caused the animals to neigh and bray, appearing as if they were participating in the crying (Pardes Rimmonim). Another interpretation is that due to the sorrow and mourning, the animals were not fed that day, and they cried out (Riaf). Alternatively, the horses and donkeys were enrobed in black as a sign of mourning, as is customary at the funerals of kings (Maharsha).



Boxthorn

BACKGROUND

Boxthorn – אטד: The atad, or boxthorn, of the genus *Lycium*, is a thorny plant of the Solanaceae family. It has long, arched branches that form a bush that can reach a height of up to 3 m. It grows red fruits, some of which are edible and some of which are poison-

ous. Species of the atad grow in all parts of Eretz Yisrael and are sometimes used as hedges. In the proverb of the orphan in the book of Judges, chapter 9, the insignificant value of the atad is mentioned.

BACKGROUND

The cities overseas – כְּרִי הַיָּם: This expression is understood by some scholars as a reference to Caesarea or Cyprus. In fact, the stories in the Talmud that involve the towns on the coast usually are invoked in order to answer a linguistic question, since in these towns a certain word was often used with a specific meaning, or to describe an unusual occurrence, oftentimes one of sin or of an atypical practice. For this reason it is likely that when the Sages used this term their purpose was not to refer to a specific geographic place but more to create a setting for pedagogic purposes.

NOTES

Hushim, the son of Dan, etc. – חוּשִׁים בְּרִיחַ דָּדָן וְכוּ': The Maharsha writes that there are many allusions to the details of this narrative in Psalm 58, from which the verse quoted here: "The righteous shall rejoice" (Psalms 58:11), is taken.

The Maharal explains that the brothers witnessed the unfolding of the discussion with Esau gradually. Therefore, they became desensitized to the degradation of Jacob. Hushim, by contrast, was informed of the discussion suddenly, and reacted accordingly. Tosefot HaRash, citing the Jerusalem Talmud, says that there is a tradition that Judah killed Esau, and suggests that Hushim struck Esau first and then Judah killed him.

Jacob opened his eyes – פָּתַח עֵינָיו וַיַּעֲקֹב לְעֵינָיו: Pardes Rimonim writes that this is not meant to be interpreted literally, but merely means that if Jacob were alive he would have opened his eyes and smiled.

LANGUAGE

Club [kulepa] – קוּלְפָא: Related to the Persian kúpāl, meaning a thick stick.



Ancient Egyptian relief depicting an Egyptian king holding a club

Common people [hedyotot] – הַדְּיוֹטוֹת: From the Greek ἰδιώτης, idiotēs, whose basic meaning is a simple person who does not hold any office. The word generally appears in the Talmud with another word as a compound noun, such as kohen hedyot, a common priest, in contrast to the High Priest, or as a term referring to the property of a common person, often in contrast to the Temple treasury of consecrated property.

מאילו מאילו) בִּינון שֶׁהִגִּיעוּ לְמַעְרַת הַמְּכַפְלָה. אֶתָּא עֲשׂו קָא מַעֲבָב. אָמַר לְהוֹ: "מִמְרָא קְרִית הָאַרְבַּע הִיא חֲבֵרוֹן", וְאָמַר רַבִּי יִצְחָק: קְרִית אַרְבַּע – אַרְבַּע זְוָגוֹת הֵיוּ: אָדָם וְחַוָּה, אַבְרָהָם וְשָׂרָה, יִצְחָק וְרִבְקָה, יַעֲקֹב וְלֵאָה. אֵיהוּ קְבֵרָה לְלֵאָה בְּיַדִּיהָ, וְהָאֵי דְפִישׁ יַדִּי הוּא.

אָמְרוּ לֵיהּ: וְבִינְתָהּ. אָמַר לְהוֹ: נְהִי דְזַבִּינָא בְּכִירוּתָא, פְּשִׁיטוּתָא מִי וְבִינִי? אָמְרוּ לֵיהּ: אֵין, דְּכַתִּיב: "בְּקִבְרֵי אֲשֶׁר כְּרִיתִי לִי", וְאָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן מִשּׁוּם רַבִּי שְׁמוּעוֹן בֶּן יְהוֹצְדָק: אֵין כְּרִיחַ אֲלָא לְשׁוֹן מְכִירָה, שְׁבִין בְּכַרְבֵּי הַיָּם קוֹרִין לְמְכִירָה כְּרִיחַ.

אָמַר לְהוֹ: הֲבֵוּ לִי אִיגְרָתָא. אָמְרוּ לֵיהּ: אִיגְרָתָא בְּאַרְעָא דְּמִצְרַיִם הִיא. וּמָאן נְוִייל? נְוִייל נְפִתְלִי, דְּקָלִיל כִּי אִיִּלְתָּא, דְּכַתִּיב: "נְפִתְלִי אִילָה שְׁלוּחָה הַנּוֹתֵן אִמְרֵי שְׁפָר" – אָמַר רַבִּי אֲבָהוּ: אֵל תְּקֵרִי "אִמְרֵי שְׁפָר", אֲלָא "אִמְרֵי סְפָר".

חוּשִׁים בְּרִיחַ דָּדָן תַּמָּן הוּהוּ וַיִּקְרַן לֵיהּ אֹדְנִיָּה, אָמַר לְהוֹ: מָאֵי הָאֵי? וְאָמְרוּ לֵיהּ: קָא מַעֲבָב הָאֵי עַד דְּאֵתִי נְפִתְלִי מְאַרְעָא דְּמִצְרַיִם. אָמַר לְהוֹ: וְעַד דְּאֵתִי נְפִתְלִי מְאַרְעָא דְּמִצְרַיִם יְהָא אָבִי אָבָא מוּטָל בְּבִיזוֹן? שְׁקַל קוּלְפָא מִחֵיָּה אֲרִישִׁיָּה, נִתְרֵן עֵינָיו וְנִפְלו אַבְרָעָא דְּיַעֲקֹב. פָּתַח עֵינָיו וַיַּעֲקֹב לְעֵינָיו וַאֲחִיד. וְהֵינֵן דְּכַתִּיב: "וַיִּשְׂמַח צְדִיק כִּי חָזָה נֶקָם פְּעַמְיוֹ יִרְחַץ בְּדָם הַרְשָׁע".

בְּאוֹתָהּ שְׁעָה נִתְקַיְּמָה גְבוּאַתָּה שְׁל רִבְקָה, דְּכַתִּיב: "לָמָּה אֲשַׁבֵּל גַּם שְׂנֵיכֶם יוֹם אֶחָד". וְאַף עַל גַּב דְּמִיתָתֵן לֹא בְּיוֹם אֶחָד הוּאֵי, קְבוּרָתֵן מִיָּהָא בְּיוֹם אֶחָד הוּאֵי.

וְאֵי לֹא יַעֲסֵק בֵּיהּ יוֹסֵף, אֲחִיו לֹא הוּוּ מַעֲסָקִי בֵּיהּ? וְהַכְּתִיב: "וַיִּשְׂאוּ אוֹתוֹ בְּנָיו אֶרְצָה כְּנַעַן" אָמְרוּ: הִמְנָו לֹו, כְּבוֹדוֹ בְּמַלְכִים וַיִּתֵּר מְבַהֲדֵי יוֹטוֹת.

Once they reached the Cave of Machpelah, Esau came and was preventing them from burying Jacob there. He said to them: It says: "And Jacob came unto Isaac his father to Mamre, to Kiryat Arba, the same is Hebron, where Abraham and Isaac sojourned" (Genesis 35:27). And Rabbi Yitzhak says: It is called Kiryat Arba because there were four couples buried there: Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and Leah. Esau said: Jacob buried Leah in his spot, and the spot that is remaining is mine.

The children of Jacob said to Esau: You sold your rights to Jacob. Esau said to them: Though I sold the birthright, did I also sell my rights to the burial site as an ordinary brother? The brothers said to him: Yes, you also sold to Jacob those rights, as it is written that Joseph stated: "My father made me swear, saying: Behold, I die; in my grave that I have dug [kariti] for me in the land of Canaan, there shall you bury me" (Genesis 50:5). And Rabbi Yoḥanan says in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yehotzadak: The word kira in the verse is nothing other than a term of a sale [mekhira] sharing a similar root, because in the cities overseas^b they call a sale kira.

Esau said to them: Bring the bill of sale to me, i.e., you can't prove your claims. They said to him: The bill of sale is in the land of Egypt. They said: And who will go to bring it? Naphtali will go, for he is as fast as a doe, as it is written: "Naphtali is a doe let loose, he gives goodly words" (Genesis 49:21). Rabbi Abbahu says: Do not read it as "goodly words [imrei shafer]"; rather, read it as imrei sefer, i.e., the words of the book, as he returned to Egypt to retrieve the bill of sale.

The Gemara relates: Hushim, the son of Dan,ⁿ was there and his ears were heavy, i.e., he was hard of hearing. He said to them: What is this that is delaying the burial? And they said to him: This one, Esau, is preventing us from burying Jacob until Naphtali comes back from the land of Egypt with the bill of sale. He said to them: And until Naphtali comes back from the land of Egypt will our father's father lie in degradation? He took a club [kulepa]^l and hit Esau on the head, and Esau's eyes fell out and they fell on the legs of Jacob. Jacob opened his eyesⁿ and smiled. And this is that which is written: "The righteous shall rejoice when he sees the vengeance; he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked" (Psalms 58:11).

At that moment the prophecy of Rebecca was fulfilled, as it is written that Rebecca said of Jacob and Esau: "Why should I be bereaved of you both in one day?" (Genesis 27:45), as Rebecca foresaw that the future bereavement for both her sons would be on the same day. The Gemara comments: And although their deaths were not on the same day, in any event their burials were on the same day, as Esau was killed and buried on the same day that Jacob was buried.

The Gemara returns to discuss the involvement of Joseph and his brothers in the burial of their father: And if Joseph would not have dealt with the burial of Jacob, would his brothers not have dealt with it? But isn't it written: "For his sons carried him into the land of Canaan, and buried him in the cave of the field of Machpelah" (Genesis 50:13)? Since it is evident that the brothers were involved in the burial, why did they not deal with Jacob's burial needs from the outset? The Gemara answers: They said: Allow Joseph to take care of it, because there is more honor for our father to be prepared for burial by royalty than by common people [hedyotot].^l

כִּמָּה חֲבִיבוֹת מִצְוֹת וְכוּ' – How beloved mitzvot are, etc. – Although many people claim that mitzvot are more precious to them than gold and silver, Moses was in a position where he could actually seize whatever he wanted from the plunder, but he occupied himself with mitzvot instead (*Ben Yehoyada*).

וּמִנֵּין הָיָה יוֹדֵעַ מִשָּׁה רַבִּינוּ – And from where did Moses our teacher know – Although, as the Gemara notes, the caskets of the other sons of Jacob were taken along by the tribes, the locations of those caskets were known to the Jews, as the other brothers were buried by their children. The burial of Joseph was performed by the Egyptians. Therefore, the Jewish people did not know the location of his resting place. Furthermore, there is no indication in the verse that prophecy was employed to locate the casket of Joseph (*Maharsha*).

וּקְבָעוּהוּ בְּנִילוּס הַנָּהָר – וְכוּ': The midrash provides another reason for the Egyptians' burying Joseph's casket in the river: They knew that the brothers had taken an oath to transport it to Eretz Yisrael when they would depart from Egypt. By preventing them from finding the casket, the Egyptians thought that they could prevent the Jewish people from leaving (*Tosefot HaRashi*).

הַיָּאֵךְ בְּרִזְלָא צַף – How iron can float – The Gemara questions the ability of iron to float under these circumstances. Although far greater miracles were performed by Moses, miracles are generally done at the command of God, while a miracle that occurs only at the wish of a person is unusual and requires explanation. Therefore, the Gemara provides proof from a similar act of Elisha, who performed a miracle to enable the seemingly trivial return of a borrowed ax.

אֵלִיָּהוּ תַלְמִידוֹ שֶׁל מֹשֶׁה – Elijah was a student of Moses – Rashi explains that this does not mean that Elijah was actually a student of Moses, but rather that he was taught the Torah of Moses and transmitted it to others. In the introduction to his *Mishne Torah*, the Rambam notes that Elijah was a student of Ahijah the Shilonite, who was in turn a student of Moses. Alternatively, according to the opinion that Pinehas is also Elijah, then Elijah was actually a student of Moses, as Pinehas studied under him (*Iyyun Ya'akov*).

”מִי לָנוּ גְדוֹל מִיוֹסֵף” כּו'. תָּנוּ רַבֵּנּוּ: בֵּא וְרָאָה כִּמָּה חֲבִיבוֹת מִצְוֹת עַל מֹשֶׁה רַבֵּינוּ, שֶׁכָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל כּוֹלֵן נִתְעַסְקוּ בְּבִיזָה, וְהוּא נִתְעַסֵּק בְּמִצְוֹת, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: ”חֲכִים לֵב יִקַּח מִצְוֹת” וּגו'.

וּמִנֵּין הָיָה יוֹדֵעַ מִשָּׁה רַבֵּינוּ הֵיכָן יוֹסֵף קָבֹוּ? אָמְרוּ: קָרַח בַּת אֲשֵׁר נִשְׁתַּיְיֶדָה מֵאוֹתוֹ הַדּוֹר. הֵלֶךְ מֹשֶׁה אֶצְלָהּ, אָמַר לָהּ: כְּלוּם אַתְּ יוֹדַעַת הֵיכָן יוֹסֵף קָבֹוּ? אָמְרָה לּוֹ: אֲרוֹן שֶׁל מִתְכַּת עָשׂוּ לוֹ מִצְרַיִם וּקְבָעוּהוּ בְּנִילוּס הַנָּהָר, בְּדֵי שְׂוִית־בְּרֹכוֹ מִיָּמָיו. הֵלֶךְ מֹשֶׁה וְעָמַד עַל שְׂפַת נִילוּס, אָמַר לּוֹ: יוֹסֵף, יוֹסֵף, הִגִּיעַ הַעֵת שֶׁנִּשְׁבַּע הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא שְׂאֵנִי גּוֹאֵל אֶתְכֶם, וְהִגִּיעָה הַשְּׁבוּעָה שֶׁהִשְׁבַּעְתָּ אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל. אִם אַתָּה מֵרָאֵה עֲצָמְךָ – מוֹטֵב; אִם לֹא – הֲרִי אָנוּ מִנְּקִיָּן מִשְׁבוּעֶתְךָ. מִיָּד צַף אֲרוֹנוֹ שֶׁל יוֹסֵף.

וְאֵל תִּתְמָה הַיָּאֵךְ בְּרִזְלָא צַף, שֶׁהָרִי כְּתִיב: ”וַיְהִי הַיּוֹם וַיִּקַּח אֶת הַבְּרִזְלָא וְנָפַל אֵל הַמַּיִם וְגו' אֵתָּה אֲדוֹנִי וְהוּא שְׂאוֹל. וַיֹּאמֶר אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים אָנֹכִי נָפַל וַיִּרְאֶהוּ אֶת הַמְּקוֹם וַיִּקְצֵב עֵץ וַיִּשְׁלַךְ שָׁמָּה וַיִּצֵּץ הַבְּרִזְלָא. וְהִלֵּא דְבָרִים קָל וְחוֹמֵר: וּמָה אֵלִישֶׁעַ תַּלְמִידוֹ שֶׁל אֵלִיָּהוּ וְאֵלִיָּהוּ תַלְמִידוֹ שֶׁל מֹשֶׁה – צַף בְּרִזְלָא מִפְּנֵי מֹשֶׁה רַבֵּינוּ – עַל אַחַת כִּמָּה וְכִמָּה.

רַבִּי נְתַן אָמַר: בְּקָבְרֵיט שֶׁל מְלָכִים הָיָה קָבֹוּ. הֵלֶךְ מֹשֶׁה וְעָמַד עַל קָבְרֵיט שֶׁל מְלָכִים, אָמַר: יוֹסֵף, הִגִּיעַ עֵת שֶׁנִּשְׁבַּע הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא שְׂאֵנִי גּוֹאֵל אֶתְכֶם, וְהִגִּיעָה שְׁבוּעָה שֶׁהִשְׁבַּעְתָּ אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל. אִם אַתָּה מֵרָאֵה עֲצָמְךָ – מוֹטֵב, וְאִם לֹא – הֲרִי אָנוּ מִנְּקִיָּן מִשְׁבוּעֶתְךָ. בְּאוֹתָהּ שְׂעָה נִזְדַּעַע אֲרוֹנוֹ שֶׁל יוֹסֵף. נִטְלוּ מִשָּׁה וְהִבִּיאוּ אֶצְלוֹ.

וְכָל אוֹתָן שָׁנִים שֶׁהָיָה יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּמִדְבָּר, הָיוּ שְׁנֵי אֲרוֹנוֹת הַלָּלוּ, אֶחָד שֶׁל מֵת וְאֶחָד שֶׁל שְׂכִינָה, מְהֻלְכִין זֶה עִם זֶה, וְהָיוּ עוֹבְרִין וְשׁוֹבִין אוֹמְרִים: מַה טִּיבָן שֶׁל שְׁנֵי אֲרוֹנוֹת הַלָּלוּ? אָמְרוּ: אֶחָד שֶׁל מֵת וְאֶחָד שֶׁל שְׂכִינָה. וְכִי מַה דְּרָכוֹ שֶׁל מֵת לְהֵלֶךְ עִם שְׂכִינָה? אָמְרוּ:

It states further in the mishna: **Who, to us, had a greater burial than Joseph**, as it was none other than Moses who involved himself in transporting his coffin. **The Sages taught in the Tosefta (4:6–7): Come and see how beloved mitzvot are^N to Moses our teacher. As, at the time of the Exodus, all the Jewish people were involved in taking the plunder from Egypt, and he was involved in the performance of mitzvot, as it is stated: “The wise in heart will take mitzvot” (Proverbs 10:8).**

The Gemara asks: **And from where did Moses our teacher know^N where Joseph was buried?** The Sages said: **Serah, the daughter of Asher, remained from that generation that initially descended to Egypt with Jacob. Moses went to her and said to her: Do you know anything about where Joseph is buried?** She said to him: **The Egyptians fashioned a metal casket for him and set it in the Nile [Nilus]^L River^N as an augury so that its water would be blessed. Moses went and stood on the bank of the Nile. He said to Joseph: Joseph, Joseph, the time has arrived about which the Holy One, Blessed be He, took an oath saying that I, i.e., God, will redeem you. And the time for fulfillment of the oath that you administered to the Jewish people that they will bury you in Eretz Yisrael has arrived. If you show yourself, it is good, but if not, we are clear from your oath. Immediately, the casket of Joseph floated to the top of the water.**

And do not wonder how iron can float,^N as it is written in the verses describing how Elisha was able to cause iron to float: “But as one was felling a beam, the ax head fell into the water; and he cried, and said: Alas, my master! For it was borrowed. And the man of God said: Where did it fall? And he showed him the place. And he cut down a stick, and cast it in there, and the iron floated up” (II Kings 6:5–6). And are these matters not inferred a fortiori: And just as Elisha, who was a mere student of Elijah, and Elijah was a mere student of Moses,^N as Elijah studied the Torah of Moses, was able to cause the iron to float before him, all the more so would it float before Moses our teacher himself.

The Gemara now presents a different version of where Joseph was buried. **Rabbi Natan says: Joseph was buried in the crypt [kabbarnit]^L of kings. Moses went and stood by the crypt of kings and said: Joseph, the time has arrived about which the Holy One, Blessed be He, took an oath saying that: I will redeem you. And the time for fulfillment of the oath that you administered to the Jewish people that they will bury you in Eretz Yisrael has arrived. If you show yourself, it is good, but if not, we are clear from your oath. At that moment, the casket of Joseph shook among the caskets. Moses took it and brought it over to himself.**

And all those years that the Jewish people were in the wilderness, these two arks, one a casket of a dead man, Joseph, and one the Ark of the Divine Presence, i.e., the Ark of the Covenant, were traveling together, and passersby would say: What is the nature of these two arks? They said to them: One is of a dead person and one is of the Divine Presence. The passersby would ask: And in what way is it the manner of a dead person to travel with the Divine Presence? They said in response:

LANGUAGE

Nile [Nilus] – נִילוּס: This is the Greek name, Νεῖλος, *Neilos*, for the main river in Egypt, called Shihor in the Bible (Joshua 13:3).

Crypt [kabbarnit] – קַבְרֵיט: The source and exact meaning of this word are unclear, but some suggest it is based on the morphemically similar word labyrinth. Others suggest it is based on the Latin caverna, meaning burial cave.

NOTES

His brothers kidnapped him from Shechem – משׁכֶּם גְּנֵבָהוּ: Rashi comments that he was actually kidnapped from Dothan and not from Shechem (see Genesis 37:17). Rashi here explains that Dothan was not actually the name of a place, but was a description of the brothers' plan to find a legal means [da] to kill Joseph. In tractate *Sanhedrin* (102a) Rashi explains differently, that Dothan was a small village close to Shechem, so it can be said that he was kidnapped from the vicinity of Shechem. The Maharsha notes that according to Rashi's commentary on the Torah (Genesis 48:22), Shechem was the special portion of the land that Jacob promised to give to Joseph.

Anyone who performs a matter but does not complete it – כָּל הָעוֹשֶׂה דְבָר וְלֹא גָמְרוּ: One who does not complete a mitzva is lowered from the elevated state he was in while actually performing the mitzva, and therefore he is treated measure for measure and is demoted from his position of prominence (Maharal). One could explain in a similar manner that he is not given the ability to complete the building of his family, and therefore his wife and children die (*lyyun Ya'akov*).

קַיִם זֶה כָּל מַה שְׁכָּתוּב בָּהּ.

וְאִי לֹא עָסִיק בֵּיהּ מִשָּׁה, יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא הוּוּ מִיַּעֲקֹב בֵּיהּ? וְהַכְּתִיב: "וְאֵת עַצְמוֹת יוֹסֵף אֲשֶׁר הָעִלּוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם קָבְרוּ בְּשֶׁכֶם!" וְתוֹ, אִי לֹא אֵינְעֻקוּ בֵּיהּ יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּנֵי לֹא הוּוּ מִיַּעֲקֹב בֵּיהּ? וְהַכְּתִיב: "וַיְהִי לְבָנֵי יוֹסֵף לְנַחֲלָה!"

אָמְרוּ: הַנְּחִיחוּ לוֹ, כְּבוֹדוֹ בְּמִרְוּבֵי יוֹתֵר מִבְּמִוּעָטָיו. וְתוֹ אָמְרוּ: הַנְּחִיחוּ לוֹ, כְּבוֹדוֹ בְּגִדּוּלִים יוֹתֵר מִבְּקִטְנִים.

"קָבְרוּ בְּשֶׁכֶם" – מֵאִי שָׁנָא בְּשֶׁכֶם? אָמַר רַבִּי חֲמָא בְּרַבִּי חֲנִינָא: מִשֶּׁכֶם גְּנֵבָהוּ, וְלִשְׁכֶם נְחִיזֵר אֲבִידָתוֹ.

קָשׁוּ קְרָאֵי אֶהְדְּדֵי בְּתִיב: "וַיִּקַּח מִשָּׁה אֶת עַצְמוֹת יוֹסֵף עִמּוֹ", וְכַתִּיב: "וְאֵת עַצְמוֹת יוֹסֵף אֲשֶׁר הָעִלּוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל" וְגו'!

אָמַר רַבִּי חֲמָא בְּרַבִּי חֲנִינָא: כָּל הָעוֹשֶׂה דְבָר וְלֹא גָמְרוּ וּבָא אַחֵר וּגְמְרוּ, מַעֲלָה עָלָיו הַכְּתוּב עַל שְׂגֻמְרוּ כְּאִילוּ עָשָׂאוּ.

רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר אָמַר: אִף מוֹרִידֵין אוֹתוֹ מְגִדּוּלָתוֹ, דְּכַתִּיב: "וַיְהִי בַעַת הַהִיא וַיֵּרֵד יְהוּדָה".

רַבִּי שְׁמוּאֵל בַּר נַחֲמָנִי אָמַר: אִף קוֹבֵר אֶשְׂתּוֹ וּבְנָיו, דְּכַתִּיב: "וַתָּמָת בַּת שׁוּעַ אִשְׁתּוֹ יְהוּדָה" וְגו'. וְכַתִּיב: "וַיָּמָת עַר וְאוֹנָן".

This one, i.e., the deceased Joseph, fulfilled all that is written in this. Therefore, it is fitting that the two arks should lie side by side.

The Gemara asks: **And if Moses had not dealt with the burial of Joseph, would the Jewish people not have dealt with it? But isn't it written** that after Moses died: **"And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, they buried in Shechem"** (Joshua 24:32), which indicates that the Jewish people completed the burial of Joseph? **And furthermore, if the Jewish people had not dealt with Joseph's burial, would his children not have dealt with it? But isn't it written** in that same verse: **"And they became the inheritance of the children of Joseph,"** as Joseph was buried in Shechem, which was then given to his descendants? Therefore, the question arises: Why did Joseph's descendants initially leave the task of his burial to the Jewish people and Moses?

The Gemara answers: **They said: Leave Joseph for others. It is more of an honor for Joseph to be buried by the many than by the few, and therefore it is better that the Jewish people be involved in the burial. And furthermore, they said: Leave Joseph for others. It is more of an honor for Joseph to be buried by one of the great men like Moses than by lesser ones like us.**

In the aforementioned verse it states: "And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, they buried in Shechem, in the parcel of ground that Jacob bought from the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for a hundred pieces of money" (Joshua 24:32). The Gemara asks: **What is different about Shechem** that they specifically chose to bury Joseph there? **Rabbi Hama, son of Rabbi Hanina, says** that the Jewish people said: His brothers kidnapped him from Shechemⁿ (see Genesis 37:12–28), and to Shechem we should return his lost body.

The Gemara comments: **The verses contradict each other, as it is written:** "And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him" (Exodus 13:19), and it is written elsewhere: "And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt" (Joshua 24:32). Who in fact took Joseph's bones?

Rabbi Hama, son of Rabbi Hanina, says: **Anyone who performs a matter but does not complete it,ⁿ and then another comes and completes it, the verse ascribes credit to the one who completed it as if he had actually performed the entire act.** Due to the fact that the children of Israel completed Joseph's burial, the Torah ascribes them credit as if they had performed the entire act.

Rabbi Elazar says with regard to one who initiates performance of a mitzva but does not complete it when capable of doing so: **He is also demoted [moridin] from his position of greatness, as it is written:** "And it came to pass at that time, that Judah went down [vayyered] from his brethren, and turned in to a certain Adullamite, whose name was Hirah" (Genesis 38:1). Usage of the term "went down" indicates that the rest of Judah's brothers had demoted him from his position of greatness because he began the process of saving Joseph, but he did not complete it.

Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani says: The episode with regard to Judah also indicates that one who initiates performance of a mitzva but does not complete it will also bury his wife and children as Judah did, as it is written: "And in process of time Shua's daughter, the wife of Judah, died" (Genesis 38:12), and it is written further: "And the sons of Judah: Er, and Onan, and Shelah, and Perez, and Zerah; but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan" (Genesis 46:12).

Do not read *hurad* – אל תיקרי הורד – The Maharsha writes that the exposition is based on the fact that the phrase is unnecessary, as it is already stated that Joseph had been taken down to Egypt. Moreover, the midrash notes that the word “*hurad*” generally is used to refer to authority and ruling, as in the verse: “And have dominion [*urdu*] over the fish of the sea” (Genesis 1:28).

He proclaimed with *rav*, etc. – ברב בישור וכו' – The word “*rav*” appears in reference to evildoers (see Genesis 33:9), and since Moses used this language when addressing Korah and his congregation, he was informed of his fate with the same word (Maharsha). *Ben Yehoyada* derives from here that even when rebuking evildoers, such as Korah and his congregation, one should be very careful to speak in a respectful manner.

Others explain that the term used in addressing Moses reflected the actual content of what he had said to the congregation of Korah. He had told them that they should be satisfied with their role as Levites, and not request the elevated position of becoming priests. God similarly informs Moses that he should be satisfied with having lived outside of Eretz Yisrael, and should not request the elevated status of living within its borders (*lyyun Ya'akov*).

LANGUAGE

Astrologer [*itztagini*] – איצטגניני – This refers to one who looks at the stars; an astronomer, but primarily an astrologer. The word is apparently based on a Greek root. Some believe it is related to ἀστὴρ, *astēr*, meaning star, but a precise root has not been found.

אמר רב יהודה אמר רב: מפני מה נקרא יוסף עצמות בחייו? מפני שלא מיתחב בכבוד אביו, דקאמרי ליה “עבדך אבינו”, ולא אמר להו ולא מידי.

Rav Yehuda says that Rav says: For what reason was Joseph called: **Bones**, even during his lifetime, as he had his brothers take an oath that “God will surely remember you, and you shall carry up my bones from here” (Genesis 50:25)? **Because he did not protest for the honor of his father**, as the brothers said to Joseph while unaware of his true identity: “Your servant our father” (Genesis 43:28, 44:31), and Joseph said nothing to them in protest that they referred to his father Jacob as Joseph’s servant.

ואמר רב יהודה אמר רב, ואיתימא רבי חמא ברבי חנינא: מפני מה מת יוסף קודם לאחיו? מפני שזנהיג עצמו ברבנות.

And Rav Yehuda says that Rav says, and some say that this was said by Rabbi Hama, son of Rabbi Hanina: For what reason did Joseph predecease his brothers, as is indicated from his requesting of them to take care of his burial needs? **Because Joseph acted authoritatively**, and such behavior can reduce one’s life span.

“ויוסף הורד מצרימה” – אמר רבי אלעזר: אל תיקרי “הורד”, אלא “הוריד”, שהוריד איצטגניני פרעה מגדולתו.

After describing that Judah “went down” from his greatness, the Gemara discusses a similar term employed with regard to Joseph, as the verse states: “**And Joseph was brought down [*hurad*] to Egypt**” (Genesis 39:1). Rabbi Elazar says: **Do not read the word as “*hurad*,”**ⁿ meaning that he was passively brought down, but rather read it as *horid*, meaning: He, Joseph, brought down others, as Joseph brought down the astrologers [*itztagineei*]^l of Pharaoh from their position of eminence because he knew the interpretation of Pharaoh’s dreams when they did not.

“ויקנהו פוטיפר סריס פרעה” – אמר רב: שקנאו לעצמו. בא גבריאל וסירסו בא גבריאל ופירעו. מעיקרא קתיב “פוטיפר”, ולבסוף “פוטיפרע”.

The continuation of that verse states: “**And Potiphar, an officer [*seris*] of Pharaoh’s**, the captain of the guard, an Egyptian, bought him from the hand of the Ishmaelites, who had brought him down there” (Genesis 39:1). Rav says: **He purchased the handsome Joseph for himself**, for the intended purpose of homosexual intercourse, but was unable to fulfill his desires, as the angel Gabriel came and castrated Potiphar [*seireso*]. Then Gabriel came again and further mutilated him [*fero*] in the same part of his body. This is alluded to in the verses that write Potiphar’s name differently: **Initially, it is written “Potiphar”** (Genesis 39:1) **and in the end it is written “Poti-phera”** (Genesis 41:45). The change in his name indicates that a part of himself was mutilated.

“מי לנו גדול ממשנה וכו'” ויאמר ה' אלי רב לך – אמר רבי לוי: ברב בישור, ברב בישורוהו; ברב בישור – רב לכס, ברב בישורוהו – רב לך.”

§ The mishna teaches: **Who, to us, had a greater burial than Moses**, as no one involved himself in his burial other than the Omnipresent Himself. The Gemara teaches: When Moses relates how God responded to him when denying his request to enter Eretz Yisrael, he states: “**And the Lord said to me: Let it suffice for you [*rav lakh*]; speak no more to Me of this matter**” (Deuteronomy 3:26). Rabbi Levi says: Moses proclaimed to the Jewish people when rebuking them with the term “*rav*,” and therefore it was proclaimed to him with the term “*rav*” that he would not enter Eretz Yisrael. The Gemara explains: **He proclaimed with the term “*rav*”**ⁿ when speaking with the congregation of Korah: “**You take too much upon you [*rav lakhem*], you sons of Levi**” (Numbers 16:7), and it was proclaimed to him with the term “*rav*,” as God denied his request and said: “**Let it suffice for you [*rav lakh*].”**

דבר אחר: רב לך – רב יש לך, ומנו? יהושע.

Alternatively: God’s telling Moses “*rav lakh*” was intended to mean: **You now have a *rav*, a master, and who is it? It is Joshua**, who has been chosen to lead the Jewish people.

דבר אחר: רב לך – שלא יאמרו הרב כמה קשה ותלמיד כמה סרפן. וכל כך למה? תנא דבי רבי ישמעאל: לפום גמלא שיחנא.

Alternatively: God’s telling Moses “*rav lakh*” was intended to mean: You have a *rav*, i.e., God, Who says that you may not enter Eretz Yisrael. You must not importune Me anymore, **so that people should not say: How difficult is the Master and how obstinate is the student**. The Gemara asks: **And why was Moses punished so much** in that he was not allowed to enter Eretz Yisrael, despite being so righteous? **The school of Rabbi Yishmael taught** that the reason is based on the common aphorism: **Based on the camel is the burden**. In other words, a person is judged in accordance with his stature, and therefore a righteous individual will be punished greatly due to any sins he committed.

Two pairs [*doyo zugei*] – דְּיוּ זוגי – From the Greek *διζυγία*, *dizugya*, meaning a double yoke that harnesses two animals together. From this it is extended to mean anything that is doubled, where two serve together.

וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלֵיהֶם בֶּן מֵאָה וְעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה אֲנִכִּי הַיּוֹם – שְׂאִין תִּלְמוּד לֹאמַר “הַיּוֹם” הַיּוֹם מֵלֵאזֵימִי וְשָׁנוּתִי לְלַמְדְךָ. שֶׁהִקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא מְשַׁלֵּם שְׁנוּתֵיהֶם שֶׁל צְדִיקִים מֵיוֹם לַיּוֹם וּמַחֲדֵשׁ לְחַדְשׁ, דְּכָתִיב: “אֵת מִסְפַּר יָמֶיךָ אֲמַלֵּא.”

The verse relates what Moses said to the Jewish people at the end of his life: “**And he said to them: I am a hundred and twenty years old this day; I can no longer go out and come in; and the Lord has said to me: You shall not go over this Jordan**” (Deuteronomy 31:2). The wording is problematic, as there is no need for the verse to state the term “this day.” Moses said it in order to indicate: On this day, my days and years have been completed to be precisely one hundred and twenty, in order to teach you that the Holy One, Blessed be He, completes the years of the righteous from day to day and from month to month, as it is written: “**The number of your days I will fill**” (Exodus 23:26), indicating that the righteous will live out their years fully.

“לֹא אוּכַל עוֹד לֵיצֵאת וּלְבוֹא” – מֵאֵי לֵיצֵאת וּלְבוֹא? אֵילִימָא “לֵיצֵאת וּלְבוֹא” מִמַּשׁ – וְהִכְתִּיב: “וּמֹשֶׁה בֶּן מֵאָה וְעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה בְּמוֹתוֹ... לֹא נָס לַחַהּ, וְכָתִיב: “וַיַּעַל מֹשֶׁה מֵעֲרֵבַת מוֹאָב אֶל הַר נֶבֹז, וַתִּנָּא: שְׁתֵּים עָשָׂרָה מַעְלוֹת הָיוּ שָׁם, וּפָסְעַן מֹשֶׁה בְּפָסְעֵהָ אַחַת!”

The verse continues: “**I can no longer go out and come in**” (Deuteronomy 31:2). The Gemara asks: What is the meaning of “go out and come in”? If we say it means literally that Moses was actually physically restricted from going out and coming in, but isn’t it written: “**And Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died, his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated**” (Deuteronomy 34:7), indicating that he was at full physical strength? And it is written further: “**And Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo**” (Deuteronomy 34:1). And it is taught in a *baraita*: **There were twelve stepsⁿ there to ascend the mountain, and Moses stepped over them all in one step**, also indicating that he was at full physical strength.

אָמַר רַבִּי שְׁמוּאֵל בְּרַחֲמֵי אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹנָתָן: לֵיצֵאת וּלְבוֹא בְּדַבְרֵי תוֹרָה. מִלְּמַד, שְׁנִסְתִּתְמוּ מִמֶּנּוּ שְׁעָרֵי חֻכְמָה.

Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani says that Rabbi Yonatan says: The verse means that he could no longer go out and come in with words of Torah. This teaches that the gates of wisdom were closed off to him.

“וַיֵּלֶךְ מֹשֶׁה וַיְהוֹשֻׁעַ וַיִּתְּנֵצְבוּ בְּאֵהָל מוֹעֵד” – תִּנָּא: אוֹתָהּ שַׁבָּת שֶׁל דְּיוּ זוגי הָיְתָה, נִשְׁלָה רְשׁוּת מֹזֵה וַנִּתְּנָה לְזוֹה.

The verse discussing when Joshua was appointed to be the successor of Moses states: “**And Moses and Joshua went, and presented themselves in the Tent of Meeting**” (Deuteronomy 31:14). A Sage taught: **That Sabbath when Moses died was a day of two pairs [*doyo zugei*],¹ i.e., two wise men, Moses and Joshua, serving together in one place. Authority was taken from one and given to the other.**

וַתִּנָּא אָמַר רַבִּי יְהוּדָה: אֵילִמְלֵא מִקְרָא כְּתוּב אֵי אֶפְשָׁר לְאוֹמְרוּ. הֵיכָן מֹשֶׁה מֵת? בְּחֵלְקוֹ שֶׁל רְאוּבֵן, דְּכָתִיב: “וַיַּעַל מֹשֶׁה מֵעֲרֵבַת מוֹאָב אֶל הַר נֶבֹז, וַנְּבֹו בְּחֵלְקוֹ שֶׁל רְאוּבֵן קִיִּימָא. דְּכָתִיב: “וּבְנֵי רְאוּבֵן בָּנוּ וְגו’ וְאֵת נֶבֹז” וְגו’.

And it is taught in a *baraita* that Rabbi Yehuda said: **If not for an explicitly written verse, one could not say what is written with regard to the death and burial of Moses. Where did Moses die? In the portion of Reuben, as it is written: “And Moses went up from the plains of Moab to Mount Nebo”** (Deuteronomy 34:1), and it is known from elsewhere that Nebo is situated in the portion of Reuben, as it is written: “**And the children of Reuben built Heshbon, and Elealeh, and Kiriathaim, and Nebo**” (Numbers 32:37–38).

“נֶבֹז” – שְׁשִׁים מֵתוֹ שְׁלֹשָׁה נְבִיאִים: מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן וּמִרְיָם.

The name is also expounded: It is called “Nebo [*Nevo*],”ⁿ for **three prophets [*nevi'im*] died there: Moses, and Aaron, and Miriam.**

וְהֵיכָן מֹשֶׁה קָבוּר? בְּחֵלְקוֹ שֶׁל גָּד, דְּכָתִיב: “וַיִּרְא רְאִישִׁית לֹ” וְגו’. וּמִחֵלְקוֹ שֶׁל רְאוּבֵן עַד חֵלְקוֹ שֶׁל גָּד כַּמָּה הָיוּ? אַרְבָּעָה מִילִין. אוֹתָן אַרְבָּעָה מִילִין מִי הוֹלִיכוֹ?

Rabbi Yehuda continues: **And where is Moses buried? In the portion of Gad, as it is written in the blessing of Moses to the tribe of Gad: “And he chose a first part for himself, for there a portion of a ruler was reserved”** (Deuteronomy 33:21), indicating that Moses, the ruler, is buried in the portion of Gad. **And how much is the distance from the portion of Reuben to the portion of Gad? Four mil.** Rabbi Yehuda asks: **For those four mil from Mount Nebo in the portion of Reuben to the burial place of Moses in the portion of Gad, who transported him?**

NOTES

ⁿ Twelve steps, etc. – שְׁתֵּים עָשָׂרָה מַעְלוֹת וכו': These twelve steps are understood to allude to the twelve tribes, who together equaled Moses in stature (Maharsha). Alternatively, according to an esoteric understanding, it alludes to the twelve steps that one ascends to reach the higher worlds, and teaches

that Moses ascended immediately to the highest level (*Otzar HaKavod*).

ⁿ Nebo – נְבוֹ: This does not mean that all three died at Nebo, but rather that they all died in the portion of Reuben.

Semalyon – קמליון: *Tosafot* mention that two opinions are quoted in the name of Rabbeinu Hananel as to whether Semalyon is the name of an angel or a scholar.

מלמד, שהיה משה מוטל בכנפי שכינה, ומלאכי השרת אומרים: "צדקת ה' עשה ומשפטיו עם ישראל", והקדוש ברוך הוא אומר: "מי יקום לי עם מרעים מי יתיצב לי עם פועלי און".

He answers: The contradiction between the two verses teaches that Moses was lying in the wings of the Divine Presence, as Moses was carried out by God Himself, and the ministering angels were saying: "He executed the righteousness of the Lord, and His ordinances with Israel" (Deuteronomy 33:21). And the Holy One, Blessed be He, was saying: "Who will rise up for Me against the evildoers? Who will stand up for Me against the workers of iniquity?" (Psalms 94:16). In other words, God asked: Who will now defend the Jewish people against its accusers? The idea that God Himself transported Moses to his burial could not have been said if not for the proof from the resolution between the contradictory verses.

ושמואל אומר: "מי כהחכם ומי יודע פשר דבר". ורבי יוחנן אומר: "החכמה מאין תמצא". ורב נחמן אומר: "וימת שם משה" וגו'. קמליון אומר: "וימת שם משה ספרא רבה דישראל".

And Shmuel says that God was saying the verse: "Who is as the wise man and who knows the interpretation [*peshar*] of a matter?" (Ecclesiastes 8:1), referring to the greatness of Moses, who was able to forge compromises, *pesharim*, between God and the Jewish people. And Rabbi Yohanan says that God was saying the verse: "Wisdom, where can it be found?" (Job 28:12). And Rav Nahman says that God was saying the verse: "And Moses, the servant of God, died there" (Deuteronomy 34:5). Semalyonⁿ says that God was saying: And Moses, the great scribe of Israel, died there.

תניא, רבי אליעזר הגדול אומר: שנים עשר מיל על שנים עשר מיל, כנגד מחנה ישראל, בת קול משמיע ואומר: וימת משה ספרא רבה דישראל. ויש אומרים: לא מת משה, בתיב הכא: "וימת שם", ובתיב התם: "וידי שם עם ה'", מה להלן עומד ומשמט, אף כאן עומד ומשמט.

It is taught in a *baraita* that Rabbi Eliezer the Great says: Over an area of twelve *mil* by twelve *mil*, equivalent to the size of the camp of Israel, a Divine Voice proclaimed and said: And Moses, the great scribe of Israel, died. And some say: Moses did not actually die, as it is written here: "And Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there" (Deuteronomy 34:5), and it is written there: "And he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights" (Exodus 34:28). Just as there, where it says: "And he was there with the Lord," it means that he was standing and serving before God; so too, here, when it says: "And Moses, the servant of the Lord, died there," it means that he was standing and serving before God.

"ויקבר אותו בגי בארץ מואב מול בית פעור" – אומר רבי ברכיה: סימן בתוך סימן, ואפילו הכי – "ולא ידע איש את קברתו".

The verse describing the burial of Moses states: "And He buried him in the valley in the land of Moab over against Beth Peor; and no man knows of his grave to this day" (Deuteronomy 34:6). Rabbi Berekhya says: This verse provides a sign within a sign, i.e., a very precise description of the location of his burial, and even with this the verse concludes: "And no man knows of his grave to this day" (Deuteronomy 34:6).

וכבר שלחה מלכות הרשעה אצל

The Gemara relates: And the evil monarchy of the Roman Empire already sent messengers to

Perek I

Daf 14 Amud a

גסטרא של בית פעור: הראנו היכן משה קבור. עמדו למעלה – נדמה להם למטה; למטה – נדמה להם למעלה. נחלקו לשתני ביתות, אותן שעומדים למעלה – נדמה להן למטה, למטה – נדמה להן למעלה. לקיים מה שנאמר: "ולא ידע איש את קברתו".

the garrison [*gastera*]^l of Beth Peor and said to them: Show us where Moses is buried. As the men stood above on the upper section of the mountain, it appeared to them as if the grave was below in the lower section. As they stood below, it appeared to them to be above. They divided into two groups, one above and one below. To those who were standing above, the grave appeared to them to be below; to those who were standing below, the grave appeared to them to be above, to fulfill that which is stated: "And no man knows of his grave to this day" (Deuteronomy 34:6).

LANGUAGE

Garrison [*gastera*] – גסטרא: A form of the Latin castra, which means military camp. In the broader sense it is used to refer to military personnel, or soldiers that are assigned to a particular stronghold.