

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 כתרם: 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

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 stood<sup>N</sup> 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,<sup>N</sup> 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 boxthorn<sup>B</sup> 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 crowns<sup>N</sup> 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 horses<sup>N</sup> and even donkeys participated in the mourning.

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.

דכתיב: ויבאו עד גורן האטד. וכי גורן יש לו לאטד? אמר רבי אבהו: מלמד, שהקיפוהו כתרם לארוננו של יעקב כגורן זה שמקיפים לו אטד, שבאו בני עשו ובני ישמעאל ובני קטורה.

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

ויוסף וכה' וכו'. מאי שנא מעיקרא, דכתיב: ויעל יוסף לקבור את אביו ויעלו אתו כל עבדי פרעה' וגו' והדר: 'וכל בית יוסף ואחיו ובית אביו', ומאי שנא ללסוף דכתיב: 'וישב יוסף מצרימה הוא ואחיו', והדר 'וכל העולים אתו לקבור את אביו'?

ואומרת: עתידה אמי שתלד בן שמושיע את ישראל. ובין שנולד משה, נתמלא כל הבית בנורה אור. עמד אביה ונשקה על ראשה, אמר לה: בת, נתקיימה נבואתיך! ובין שהטילהו לניאור, עמד אביה וטפחה על ראשה. אמר לה: בת, היכן נבואתיך! והיינו דכתיב: 'ותתעב אחותו מרחוק לדעה מה יעשה לו', לידע מה יהא בסוף נבואתה.

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

The cities overseas – כְּרִיבֵי 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 דָּן 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 – פְּתַחֲנֵהוּ יַעֲקֹב לַעֲיִנָּה: *Pardes Rimmonim* 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*] – קוּלֵפָּא: Related to the Persian *kūpāl*, meaning a thick stick.



Ancient Egyptian relief depicting an Egyptian king holding a club

Common people [*hedyotot*] – הֶדְיוֹטוֹת: 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) בְּיַד שְׁהִיגְעוּ לְמַעַרְתַּי הַמְּכַפְּלָה, אֲתָא עֵשָׂו קָא מַעֲבָב. אָמַר לְהוֹן: "מִמָּרָא קְרִית הָאַרְבַּע הִיא חֲבֵרוֹן", וְאָמַר רַבִּי יִצְחָק: קְרִית אַרְבַּע – אַרְבַּע זוגות היו: אָדָם וְחוּהָ, אַבְרָהָם וְסָרָה, יִצְחָק וְרִבְקָה, יַעֲקֹב וְלֵאָה. אִיהוּ קְבֵרָהּ לְלֵאָה בְּדִינְיָה, וְהָאֵי דְפִישׁ דִּינֵי הוּא.

אָמְרוּ לֵיהּ: וּבִינְתָהּ. אָמַר לְהוֹ: נְהִי דְבוּבְנֵי בְּכִירוּתָא, פְּשִׁיטוּתָא מִי וּבִינֵי? אָמְרוּ לֵיהּ: אִין, דְּכַתִּיב: "בְּקִבְרֵי אִשְׁרֵי כְרִיתֵי לִי", וְאָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן מְשׁוּם רַבִּי שְׁמַעוֹן בֶּן יוֹהָצְדֵק: אִין כִּירָה אֶלְפָּא לְשׁוֹן מְכִירָה, שְׁכַן בְּכַרְבֵּי הַיָּם קוֹרִין לְמְכִירָה כִּירָה.

אָמַר לְהוֹ: הָבוּ לִי אִיגְרָתָא. אָמְרוּ לֵיהּ: אִיגְרָתָא בְּאַרְעָא דְּמַצְרַיִם הִיא, וּמֵאַן מִיִּזְלֵי? מִיִּזְלֵי נְפַתְלִי, דְּקָלִיל כִּי אִינִילְתָּא, דְּכַתִּיב: "נְפַתְלֵי אִינִילָהּ שְׁלוּחָהּ הַנוֹתֵן אִמְרֵי שְׁפָר" – אָמַר רַבִּי אֲבָהוּ: אַל תְּקִרֵי "אִמְרֵי שְׁפָר", אֶלְפָּא "אִמְרֵי סֵפֶר".

חוּשִׁים בְּרִיחַ דָּן תַּמָּן הוּא וְיִקְרִין לֵיהּ: אֹדְנֵיהּ, אָמַר לְהוֹ: מֵאֵי הָאֵי? וְאָמְרוּ לֵיהּ: קָא מַעֲבָב הָאֵי עַד דְּאֲתֵי נְפַתְלֵי מְאַרְעָא דְּמַצְרַיִם. אָמַר לְהוֹ: וְעַד דְּאֲתֵי נְפַתְלֵי מְאַרְעָא דְּמַצְרַיִם? הָאֵי אֲבִי אֲבָא מוּטְל בְּבִיזוֹן? שְׁקַל קוּלְפָּא מִחֵייה אַרְשִׁייה, נִתְרַן עֵינֵיהּ וְנִפְלוּ אַפְרָעָא דֵּיעֻקֵּב. פְּתַחֲנֵהוּ יַעֲקֹב לַעֲיִנָּה וְאֶחָיִךְ. וְהֵינֵן דְּכַתִּיב: "וַיִּשְׂמַח צְדִיק כִּי חָזָה נָקָם פְּעַמָּיו יִרְחֵץ בְּדַם הַרְשָׁע".

בְּאוֹתָהּ שְׁעָה נִתְקַיְמָה נְבוֹאָתָהּ שֶׁל רִבְקָה, דְּכַתִּיב: "לָמָּה אֲשַׁבֵּל גַּם שְׂנֵיכֶם יוֹם אֶחָד", וְאֵף עַל גַּב דְּמִיתְתָּן לֹא בְּיוֹם אֶחָד הוּא, קְבוּרָתָן מִיָּהּ בְּיוֹם אֶחָד הוּא.

וְאֵי לֹא עֵסַק בֵּיהּ יוֹסֵף, אֲחָיו לֹא הוּוּ מַעֲסָקוּ בֵּיהּ? וְהַכְּתִיב: "וַיִּשְׂאוּ אוֹתוֹ בְּנֵי אֶרְצָה כְּנַעַן" אָמְרוּ: הִנְחוּ לוֹ, כְּבוֹדוֹ בְּמַלְכִים יוֹתֵר מִבְּהֶדְיוֹטוֹת.

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 Yohanan 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<sup>b</sup> 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,<sup>n</sup> 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*]<sup>l</sup> and hit Esau on the head, and Esau's eyes fell out and they fell on the legs of Jacob. Jacob opened his eyes<sup>n</sup> 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*].<sup>l</sup>

How beloved mitzvot are, etc. – **כִּמָּה חֲבִיבוֹת מִצְוֹת וכו'**: 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*).

And from where did Moses our teacher know – **וּמִנֵּין הָיָה יוֹדֵעַ מִשָּׁה רַבִּינוּ**: 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*).

And set it in the Nile River, etc. – **וּקְבָעוּהוּ בְּנִלוֹם הַנְּהָר** – **וכו'**: 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 HaRash*).

How iron can float – **הַיָּאָךְ בְּרוֹל צָף**: 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.

Elijah was a student of Moses – **אֵלִיָּהוּ תַלְמִידוֹ שֶׁל מֹשֶׁה** – 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*).

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<sup>N</sup> 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<sup>N</sup> 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]<sup>1</sup> River<sup>N</sup> 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,<sup>N</sup> 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,<sup>N</sup> 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]<sup>1</sup> 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] – נִלוֹם**: This is the Greek name, Νεῖλος, *Neilos*, for the main river in Egypt, called Shihor in the Bible (Joshua 13:3).

**Crypt [kabbarnit] – קַבְרָנִית**: 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.

**“מי לנו גדול מיוסף” כו'. תנו רבנן: בא וראיה כמה חביבות מצוות על משה רבינו, שכל ישראל כולן נתעסקו בביזה, והוא נתעסק במצוות, שאמר: “חכם לב יקח מצוות” וגו'.**

ומנין היה יודע משה רבינו היכן יוסף קבור? אמרו: סרה בת אשר ששתירה מאותו הדור. הלך משה אצלה, אמר לה: כלום את יודעת היכן יוסף קבור? אמרה לו: ארון של מתכת עשו לו מצרים וקבעוהו בגילום הנהר, כדי שיתברכו מימיו. הלך משה ועמד על שפת נילום, אמר לו: יוסף, יוסף, הגיע העת שנשבע הקדוש ברוך הוא שאני גואל אתכם, והגיעה השבועה שהשבעת את ישראל. אם אתה מראה עצמך – מוטב; אם לאו – הרי אני מנוקין משבועתך. מיד צף ארונו של יוסף.

ואל תתמה היאך ברזל צף, שהרי כתוב: ויהי האחד מפיל הקורה ואת הברזל נפל אל המים וגו' אהה אדוני והוא שואל ויאמר איש האלהים אנה נפל ויראהו את המקום ויקצב עץ וישלך שמה ויצף הברזל. והלא דברים קל וחומר: ומה אלישע תלמידו של אליהו ואליהו תלמידו של משה – צף ברזל מפניו, מפני משה רבינו – על אחת כמה וכמה.

רבי נתן אומר: בקברנט של מלכים היה קבור. הלך משה ועמד על קברנט של מלכים, אמר: יוסף, הגיע עת שנשבע הקדוש ברוך הוא שאני גואל אתכם, והגיעה שבועה שהשבעת את ישראל. אם אתה מראה עצמך – מוטב, ואם לאו – הרי אני מנוקין משבועתך. באותה שעה נודעו ארונו של יוסף. נטלו משה והביאו אצלו.

וכל אותן שנים שהיו ישראל במדבר, היו שני ארונות הללו, אחד של מת ואחד של שכינה, מהלכין זה עם זה, והיו עוברים ושבים אומרים: מה טיבן של שני ארונות הללו? אמרו: אחד של מת ואחד של שכינה. וכי מה דרכו של מת להלך עם שכינה? אמרו:

## NOTES

His brothers kidnapped him from Shechem – מִשְׁכֶּם – גְּבוּהוֹ: 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 [*dat*] 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 דְבַר 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*).

קַיִים זֶה כָּל מַה שְׂכָתוֹב בְּזֶה.

וְאִי לֹא עָסִיק בֵּיהַּ מֹשֶׁה, יִשְׂרָאֵל לֹא הָיוּ מֵיַעֲקֹב בֵּיהָ? וְהִכְתִּיב: "וְאֵת עֲצָמוֹת יוֹסֵף אֲשֶׁר הָעֵלוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם קָבְרוּ בְּשֵׁכֶם!" וְתוֹ, אִי לֹא אֵינְעֻקוּ בֵּיהַּ יִשְׂרָאֵל, בְּנֵי לֹא הָיוּ מֵיַעֲקֹב בֵּיהָ? וְהִכְתִּיב: "וַיְהִי לְבְנֵי יוֹסֵף לְנַחֲלָה!"

אָמְרוּ: הַנִּיחוּ לוֹ, כְּבוֹדוֹ בְּמַרוֹבִים יוֹתֵר מִבְּמוֹעֲטֵינּוּ. וְתוֹ אָמְרוּ: הַנִּיחוּ לוֹ, כְּבוֹדוֹ בְּגֹדוֹלִים יוֹתֵר מִבְּקֻטְנִים.

"קָבְרוּ בְּשֵׁכֶם" – מֵאִי שָׁנָא בְּשֵׁכֶם? אָמַר רַבִּי חֲמָא בְּרַבִּי חֲנִינָא: מִשְׁכֶּם גְּבוּהוֹ, וְלִשְׁכֶם נַחְזִיר אֲבִידוֹתוֹ.

קָשׁוּ קְרָאֵי אֶהְדְּרִי. כְּתִיב: "וַיִּקַּח מֹשֶׁה אֵת עֲצָמוֹת יוֹסֵף עִמּוֹ", וְכְתִיב: "וְאֵת עֲצָמוֹת יוֹסֵף אֲשֶׁר הָעֵלוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל" וְגו'!

אָמַר רַבִּי חֲמָא בְּרַבִּי חֲנִינָא: כָּל הָעוֹשֶׂה דְבַר וְלֹא גָמְרוּ וְכֹא אַחַר וְגָמְרוּ, מַעֲלָה עָלָיו הַכְּתוּב עַל שְׂגֻמְרוֹ כְּאִילוֹ עָשָׂא.

רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר אֹמֵר: אִף מוֹרִידִין אוֹתוֹ מִגְּדוּלָתוֹ, דְּכְתִיב: "וַיְהִי בָּעֵת הַהִיא וַיֵּרֵד יְהוּדָה".

רַבִּי שְׁמוּאֵל בַּר נַחֲמָנִי אָמַר: אִף קוֹבֵר אֶשְׁתּוֹ וּבְנָיו, דְּכְתִיב: "וְתָמַת בֵּת שׁוּעַ אֶשְׁתִּי יְהוּדָה" וְגו'. וְכְתִיב: "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 Shechem<sup>N</sup> (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,<sup>N</sup> 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. – קרב 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.

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.

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.**

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*,”** 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 [*itztaginiei*] of Pharaoh from their position of eminence because he knew the interpretation of Pharaoh’s dreams when they did not.

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.

§ 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*”** 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*].”**

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.

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.

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.

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

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

“ויקנהו פוטיפר סריס פרעה” – אמר רב: שיקנאו לעצמו. בא גבריאל וסיסו בא גבריאל ופירעו. מעיקרא כתב “פוטיפר”, ולבסוף “פוטיפרע”.

“מי לנו גדול ממשה וכו'.” ויאמר ה' אלי רב לך” – אמר רבי לוי: ב”רב” בישור, ב”רב” בישורוהו; ב”רב” בישור – רב לכם, ב”רב” בישורוהו – רב לך”.

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

דבר אחר: רב לך” – שלא יאמרו הרב כמה קשה ותלמיד כמה סרבן. וכל כך למח? תנא דבי רבי ישמעאל: לפום גמלא שייחנא.

Two pairs [*deyo zugei*] – דיו 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 אֲנֹכִי הָיוֹם – שְׂאִין תִּלְמוּד לומר ‘הַיּוֹם’, הַיּוֹם מֵלֵאוּ יָמֵי וּשְׁנוֹתַי, לְלַמְּדֶךָ, שֶׁהַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא מְשַׁלֵּם שְׁנוֹתֵיהֶם שֶׁל צְדִיקִים מִיּוֹם לַיּוֹם וּמַחְדֵּשׁ לְחַדָּשׁ, דְּבַתִּיב: “אֵת מִסְפַּר יָמֶיךָ אֲמַלֵּא”.

“לֹא אוֹכֵל עוֹד לְצֵאת וּלְבוֹא” – מֵאֵי “לְצֵאת וּלְבוֹא”? אֵילִימָא “לְצֵאת וּלְבוֹא” מִמָּשׁ – וְהַכְּתִיב: “וּמִשָּׁה בֶּן מֵאָה וְעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה בְּמוֹתוֹ... לֹא נָס לְחַה”, וְכַתִּיב: “וַיַּעַל מִשָּׁה מֵעֵרְבַת מוֹאָב אֶל הַר נֶבֹו”, וְתַנְיָא: שְׁתַּיִם עֲשָׂרָה מַעְלוֹת הָיוּ שָׁם, וּפְסָעֵן מִשָּׁה בְּפִסְעָה אַחַת!

אָמַר רַבִּי שְׁמוּאֵל בְּרַחֲמֵי אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹנָתָן: לְצֵאת וּלְבוֹא בְּדַבְרֵי תוֹרָה. מִלְּמַד, שְׁנוֹסְתָמוּ מִמֶּנּוּ שְׁעָרֵי חֻכְמָה.

“וַיֵּלֶךְ מֹשֶׁה וַיהוֹשֻׁעַ וַיִּתְּיָצְבוּ בְּאֵהָל מוֹעֵד” – תִּנְא: אוֹתָהּ שַׁבַּת שֶׁל דִּיּוּ זוּגֵי הַיְתָה, נִטְלָה רְשׁוּת מִזֶּה וְנִיתְּנָה לְזֶה.

וְתַנְיָא אָמַר רַבִּי יְהוּדָה: אֵילְמֵלֵא מִקְרָא כְּתוּב אֵי אֶפְשָׁר לְאוּמְרוּ. הֵיכָן מִשָּׁה מֵת? בְּחֶלְקוֹ שֶׁל רְאוּבֵן, דְּבַתִּיב: “וַיַּעַל מֹשֶׁה מֵעֵרְבַת מוֹאָב אֶל הַר נֶבֹו”, וְנֶבֹו בְּחֶלְקוֹ שֶׁל רְאוּבֵן קִיּוּמָא, דְּבַתִּיב: “וּבְנֵי רְאוּבֵן בְּנוּ וְגו’ וְאֵת נֶבֹו” וְגו’.

“נֶבֹו” – שְׁשָׁם מֵתוֹ שְׁלִישָׁה נְבִיאִים: מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן וּמִרְיָם.

וְהֵיכָן מִשָּׁה קָבֹו? בְּחֶלְקוֹ שֶׁל גָּד, דְּבַתִּיב: “וַיִּרְא רְאֵשִׁית לוֹ” וְגו’. וּמִחֶלְקוֹ שֶׁל רְאוּבֵן עַד חֶלְקוֹ שֶׁל גָּד כְּמָה הָיוּ? אֲרַבְעָה מִילִין. אוֹתָן אֲרַבְעָה מִילִין מִי הוֹלִיכוּ?

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.

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 steps<sup>n</sup> there to ascend the mountain, and Moses stepped over them all in one step**, also indicating that he was at full physical strength.

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.

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 [*deyo zugei*],<sup>1</sup> i.e., two wise men, Moses and Joshua, serving together in one place. Authority was taken from one and given to the other.**

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).

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

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

Twelve steps, etc. – שְׁתַּיִם עֲשָׂרָה 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*).

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

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

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.

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 Yoḥanan says that God was saying the verse: “Wisdom, where can it be found?” (Job 28:12). And Rav Naḥman says that God was saying the verse: “And Moses, the servant of God, died there” (Deuteronomy 34:5). Semalyon<sup>n</sup> says that God was saying: And Moses, the great scribe of Israel, died there.

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.

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).

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

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”.

ושמואל אומר: “מי כהחכם ומי יודע פשר דבר”. ורבי יוחנן אומר: “החכמה מאין תמצא”. ורב נחמן אומר: “וימת שם משה” וגו'. סמליון אומר: “וימת שם משה ספרא רבה דישׂראל”.

תנאי, רבי אליעזר הגדול אומר: שנים עשר מיל על שנים עשר מיל, כנגד מחנה ישׂראל, בת קול משמיע ואומר: וימת משה ספרא רבה דישׂראל ויש אומרים: לא מת משה, בתיב הכא: “וימת שם”, ובתיב התם: “ויהי שם עם ה'”, מה להלן עומד ומשמש, אף כאן עומד ומשמש.

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

וכבר שלחה מלכות הרשעה אצל