

NOTES

הוחל שבועתו – נגדל The oath of Abimelech was negated – **נגדל**: Rashi explains that since the Philistines subjected the Jewish people to their rule, they violated the oath and therefore Abraham’s obligation to Abimelech and his descendants was negated. Although the Philistines had previously tormented the Jewish people, it was only at this point that they attempted to rule over them. *Tosefot HaRash* writes that this does not agree with the interpretation of Rashi that King David did not attempt to conquer Jerusalem until the oath of Abimelech was negated, as King David lived many years later. *Tosefot HaRosh* explains that the general oath to Abimelech was negated, but there was an additional promise made by Abraham to the Jebusites with regard to Jerusalem because he purchased the Cave of Machpelah from them (see Genesis, chapter 23).

With what did He bless him – בְּמָה בֵּרַכּוּ: The commentaries explain that since the term blessing generally refers to riches, a long life, or children, none of which Samson had, the Gemara offers an explanation specific to his life (see Rashi; Riaf).

Twenty-two years – עֶשְׂרִים וּשְׁתַּיִם שָׁנָה: This appears to be in direct opposition to the verse stating that Samson judged the Jewish people for twenty years (see Judges 16:31). Rav Hai Gaon explains that the Gemara here includes the two years that Samson spent in prison, as he was imprisoned due to his actions on behalf of the Jewish people (see Maharsha).

BACKGROUND

That goes in reverse – שְׂחֹזֵר לְאַחֲרָיו: The fox is considered to be a clever animal, and there are many stories told by hunters of various methods used by the fox to conceal its tracks. One of the strategies it employs to escape the tracking of a hunter is that it does not always run in a straight path. A fox changes direction frequently and often runs backward in the direction from which it came while the pursuers continue to chase it forward.

הוחל שבועתו של אבימלך, דכתוב: “אם תשקוד לי ולגנבי ולגנבדי.”

וַיִּגְדַּל הַנְּעַר וַיְבָרְכֵהוּ ה'... בְּמָה בֵּרַכּוּ? אָמַר רַב יְהוּדָה אָמַר רַב: שֶׁבֵּרַכּוּ בְּאַמְתּוֹ. אַמְתּוֹ כִּבְנֵי אָדָם, וְזָרְעוֹ כִּנְחַל שׁוֹתֵף.

“וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמֹשׁוֹן אֶל ה' וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֱלֹהִים זְכְרֵנִי נָא וְחַזְקֵנִי נָא אַךְ הַפַּעַם הַזֶּה... וְאַנְקָמָה נִקְּמֵ אֶחָת מִשְׁתֵּי עֵינַי מִפְּלִשְׁתִּים” – אָמַר רַב, אָמַר שְׁמֹשׁוֹן לִפְנֵי הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא: רַבּוֹנוּ שֶׁל עוֹלָם, זְכוֹר לִי עֶשְׂרִים וּשְׁתַּיִם שָׁנָה שֶׁשִּׁפְטָתִי אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְלֹא אָמַרְתִּי לְאַחַד מֵהֶם “הַעֲבֵר לִי מִקַּל מִמְּקוֹם לְמִקְוֹם.”

“וַיִּלְךְ שְׁמֹשׁוֹן וַיִּלְבֹּד שְׁלֹשׁ מֵאוֹת שׁוּעֵלִים... מֵאֵי שָׁנָא שׁוּעֵלִים? אָמַר רַבִּי אִיבּוּ בַר נַגְדִּי אָמַר רַבִּי חֵיִיא בַר אֲבָא: אָמַר שְׁמֹשׁוֹן: יָבֵא מִי שְׂחֹזֵר לְאַחֲרָיו, וַיִּפְרַע מִפְּלִשְׁתִּים שְׂחֹזֵרוֹ בְּשִׁבְעֵתָן.

Samson’s parents were being told that the oath of Abimelech, king of the Philistines, was negated,ⁿ as it is written that Abimelech said to our forefather Abraham: “Now therefore swear unto me here by God that you will not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my son’s son; but according to the kindness that I have done unto you, you shall do to me, and to the land wherein you have sojourned” (Genesis 21:23). The oath of the descendants of Abraham was no longer binding since the Philistines broke their oath by subjugating the Jewish people.

The verse states: “And the woman bore a son, and called his name Samson; and the child grew, and the Lord blessed him” (Judges 13:24). The Gemara asks: With what did He bless him?ⁿ Rav Yehuda says that Rav says: It means that He blessed him with regard to his penis, that despite his youth his penis should function like that of physically mature men, and that his seed should be like an overflowing river.

Prior to Samson’s death, the verse states: “And Samson called unto the Lord, and said: Lord God, remember me, I pray to You, and strengthen me, I pray to You, only this once, O God, that I may be this once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes” (Judges 16:28). Rav said that Samson said before the Holy One, Blessed be He: Master of the Universe, remember on my behalf the twenty-two yearsⁿ that I judged the Jewish people without receiving any reward, and I did not even say to any one of them: Move a stick for me from one place to another place.

The verse states earlier: “And Samson went and caught three hundred foxes, and took torches, and turned tail to tail, and put a torch in the midst between every two tails” (Judges 15:4). The Gemara asks: What is different about foxes than any other animal, that he chose them for this purpose? Rabbi Aivu bar Nagdi says that Rabbi Hiyya bar Abba says: Samson said: Let the animal that goes in reverse⁸ when it tries to escape, i.e., the fox, come and exact punishment from the Philistines, who reneged on their oath that Abimelech swore to Abraham.

Grinding is nothing other than a language of a transgression – אין טחינה אלא לשון עבירה: The commentaries question why the Gemara provides a homiletical interpretation for Samson's grinding in the prison. The verse can easily be understood to mean that the blinded Samson ground with a millstone, as this was a common punishment for prisoners. Some explain that the interpretation here is based on what the Gemara will soon state, that Samson was lame in both legs, and therefore would not have been able to turn a millstone (*Iyyun Ya'akov*). Others suggest that since the verse indicates that Samson was chained, he would not have been able to turn a millstone (Riaf).

There are those who ask how Samson permitted himself to engage in sexual intercourse with married women, as intercourse with the wife of a gentile is considered an act of adultery. One answer suggested is that adultery with a married gentile is viewed as a form of theft from the husband. Here there was no theft, as the husbands themselves brought their wives to Samson, and therefore there would be no prohibition of adultery (*Eshel Avraham*).

Anyone who commits adultery, his wife commits adultery against him – כל המזנה אשתו מוננת: The Maharal explains that spouses are suitable to each other, and the shortcomings of one can be found in the other.

Others ask: If this statement in the Gemara is in fact accurate, then what is the purpose of a *sota* drinking the bitter water, as the water is ineffective if the woman's husband was also unfaithful? An answer given is that the Gemara means to say that it is likely that if one spouse is unfaithful the other spouse will be so as well, but there are still spouses that remain faithful and avoid transgression even when their partner does not.

He is found among the pumpkins and his wife among the zucchinis – איהו בי קארי ואיתתיה בי בוצני: The straightforward understanding of this phrase is that a wife's behavior is just like that of her husband. The *Arukh* also offers a literal explanation, that they masturbate using these vegetables.

BACKGROUND

Before one who digs in the ground bring figs – קמי רפוקא גרידיא דובלא: The meaning of these words is unclear. The difficulty is compounded due to the fact that there are several versions of the text. The *Arukh* cites a different version of the text that reads: Before the hoe that weeds the fields, bring a *se'a* of grass.

It is taught in a *baraita* that Rabbi Shimon the Pious said: The width between the shoulders of Samson was sixty cubits, as it is stated: “And Samson lay till midnight, and arose at midnight, and grabbed hold of the doors of the gate of the city, and the two posts, and plucked them up, bar and all, and put them upon his shoulders, and carried them up to the top of the mountain that is before Hebron” (Judges 16:3). The verse indicates that the width of the gate of the city of Gaza was equal to the width of Samson's shoulders, and it is learned as a tradition that doors of the gate of Gaza were no less than sixty cubits wide.

With regard to Samson's capture, the verse states: “And the Philistines laid hold on him, and put out his eyes; and they brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass; and he did grind in the prison-house” (Judges 16:21). Rabbi Yohanan says: Grinding is nothing other than a language of a transgression^N of sexual intercourse, and so the verse says: “Then let my wife grind unto another man” (Job 31:10). This teaches that each and every Philistine man brought his wife to the prison in order that she should be impregnated by Samson. Rav Pappa said: This is an example of the folk saying that people say: Before a wine drinker, bring wine; before one who digs in the ground, bring figs.^B So too, Samson, who married Philistine women, was brought more Philistine women while in prison.

And Rabbi Yohanan says: With regard to anyone who commits adultery, his wife commits adultery against him,^N as it is stated: “If my heart has been enticed unto a woman, and I have lain in wait at my neighbor's door” (Job 31:9), and it is written: “Then let my wife grind unto another man and may strangers kneel over her” (Job 31:10). And this explains the folk saying that people say: He is found among the pumpkins [*karei*]^L and his wife among the zucchinis [*butzinei*],^N which are similar types of vegetables. In other words, she acts the same way that he does.

LANGUAGE

Pumpkins [*karei*] – קארי: This refers to the calabash, also known as bottle gourd, *Lagenaria siceraria*. It is a summer vegetable from the squash family grown either on the ground or trellised over a frame. It is quite large, approximately 45 cm long and 25 cm wide, and shaped like a bottle. The vegetable itself is eaten cooked, and its seeds are eaten as a snack. Calabash is harvested young for consumption and late for use as a bottle or other utensil.



Bottle gourd



Traditional African musical instrument made out of a dried bottle gourd

As their Father in Heaven – כַּאֲבִיהֶם שְׁבַשְׁמִים: The *Iyyun Ya'akov* explains this to mean that he judged through divine inspiration, without hearing testimony or evidence.

Zedekiah in his eyes, etc. – צְדָקְיָה בְּעֵינָיו וכו': Rashi writes that he cannot find a source that Zedekiah and Asa were blessed with special eyes and feet, respectively. Some explain that the fact that they were blessed in this regard is derived from the nature of their punishment, as they were certainly stricken in a way that was connected to their outstanding characteristics (see Maharsha). With regard to Asa, perhaps it is based on the verses in II Chronicles, chapter 14, which detail how Asa pursued the army of Zerah HaKushi, intimating that he was particularly fleet of foot.

BACKGROUND

A horned snake in the path – שְׁפִיפֵן עַל־אֶרֶץ: This blessing, bestowed by Jacob to his son Dan, is viewed by the Talmud as a reference to Samson, who was from the tribe of Dan. As is clear from the stories that appear in Judges (chapters 13–16), the ongoing tension between the tribe of Dan and the Philistines was carried out at that time largely in a snakelike manner, by means of guerrilla warfare rather than direct warfare.

וְאָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן: שְׁמִשׁוֹן דָּן אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל כַּאֲבִיהֶם שְׁבַשְׁמִים, שְׁנֵאמַר: "דָּן יְדִין עִמּוֹ כְּאֶחָד" וְגו'. וְאָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן: שְׁמִשׁוֹן עַל שְׁמוֹ שֶׁל הַקְּדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא נִקְרָא, שְׁנֵאמַר: "כִּי שָׁמַשׁ וּמִגֵּן ה' אֱלֹהִים" וְגו'. אֲלֵא מֵעַתָּה, לֹא יִמְחָה! אֲלֵא מֵעַן שְׁמוֹ שֶׁל הַקְּדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא. מִה הַקְּדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא מְגִינֵן עַל כָּל הָעוֹלָם כּוּלּוֹ, אִף שְׁמִשׁוֹן מְגִינֵן בְּדוֹרוֹ עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל.

וְאָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן: בְּלִעָם חִיגַר בְּרַגְלוֹ אַחַת הָיָה, שְׁנֵאמַר: "וַיִּלְךְ שָׁפִי", שְׁמִשׁוֹן חִיגַר בְּשֵׁתֵי רַגְלָיו הָיָה, שְׁנֵאמַר: "שְׁפִיפֵן עַל־אֶרֶץ".

תַּנּוּ רַבָּנֵינוּ: חֲמִשָּׁה נִבְרְאוּ מֵעֵין דְּוִיגְמָא שֶׁל מַעְלָה, וְכוּלָן לָקוּ בְּהֵן: שְׁמִשׁוֹן בְּכַחוֹ, שָׂאוּל בְּצוּאָרוֹ, אַבְשָׁלוֹם בְּשַׁעְרוֹ, צְדָקְיָה בְּעֵינָיו, אָסָא בְּרַגְלָיו.

שְׁמִשׁוֹן בְּכַחוֹ, דְּכַתִּיב: "וַיִּסַּר כַּחוֹ מֵעַלְיוֹ".

שָׂאוּל בְּצוּאָרוֹ, דְּכַתִּיב: "וַיִּקַּח שָׂאוּל אֶת הַחֶרֶב וַיִּפֹּל עָלָיָהּ".

אַבְשָׁלוֹם בְּשַׁעְרוֹ, כְּדַבְּעִינָן לְמִימַר קַמְּנוּ. צְדָקְיָה בְּעֵינָיו, דְּכַתִּיב: "וַיֹּאֲת עֵינָיו צְדָקְיָהוּ עוֹר".

אָסָא בְּרַגְלָיו, דְּכַתִּיב: "רַק לֵעֵת זְקַנְתּוֹ חָלָה אֶת רַגְלָיו" – וְאָמַר רַב יְהוּדָה אָמַר רַב: שְׁאֲחֻזתוֹ פְּדָגְרָא. אָמַר לִיה מַר זוּטְרָא בְּרִיָּה דְרַב נַחֲמָן לְרַב נַחֲמָן: הֵיכִי דְמִי פְּדָגְרָא? אָמַר לִיה: כְּמַחַט בְּבֶשֶׂר הַחַי. מִנָּא יָדַע? אֵיבָא דְאָמְרִי: מִיחַשׁ הוּא חֵשׁ בִּיה. וְאֵיבָא דְאָמְרִי: מִרְבִּיָּה שְׁמַע לִיה. וְאֵיבָא דְאָמְרִי: "סוּד ה' לִירֵאִיו וּבְרִיתוֹ לְהוֹדִיעֵם".

And Rabbi Yoḥanan says: Samson judged the Jewish people as their Father in Heavenⁿ does, with complete justice, as it is stated: "Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel" (Genesis 49:16), which is interpreted to mean that Samson, from the tribe of Dan, judges his people just as God, Who is "One." And Rabbi Yoḥanan says: Samson [*Shimshon*] is called by the name of the Holy One, Blessed be He, as it is stated: "For the Lord God is a sun [*shemesh*] and a shield" (Psalms 84:12). The Gemara comments: If that is so, then his name should not be erased just like other sanctified names are not erased. Rather, he is not called by the name of God but his name is akin to the name of the Holy One, Blessed be He, for just as the Holy One, Blessed be He, protects the entire world, so too Samson, in his generation, protected all the Jewish people.

And Rabbi Yoḥanan says: Balaam was lame in one of his legs, as it is stated with regard to him: "And he went, limping [*shefi*]" (Numbers 23:3). Samson was lame in both of his two legs, as it is stated that when Jacob mentioned the tribe of Dan in the prophecy that pertained to Samson, he referred to him as: "Dan shall be a serpent in the way, a horned snake [*sheffifon*] in the path" (Genesis 49:17),^b which is double *shefi*, i.e., doubly lame.

§ The Sages taught in a *baraita*: Five individuals were created with a characteristic that is akin to a representation of the One on High, and they were all stricken by that characteristic. Samson was glorified in his strength, Saul in his neck (see I Samuel 9:2), Absalom in his hair, Zedekiah in his eyes,ⁿ and Asa in his feet.

The Gemara clarifies: Samson was stricken by his strength, which led to his demise, as it is written: "And she made him sleep upon her knees; and she called for a man and had the seven locks of his head shaved off; and she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him" (Judges 16:19).

Saul was smitten in his neck, as it is written: "Then said Saul to his armor-bearer: Draw your sword, and thrust me through with it; lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and make a mock of me. But his armor-bearer would not; for he was sore afraid. Therefore, Saul took his sword and fell upon it" (I Samuel 31:4); he fell with his neck upon the sword.

Absalom was stricken in his hair, as we will state later. Zedekiah was stricken in his eyes, as it is written: "And they slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him in fetters, and carried him to Babylon" (II Kings 25:7).

Asa was stricken in his feet, as it is written: "Now the rest of all the acts of Asa, and all his might, and all that he did, and the cities that he built, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah? But in the time of his old age he was diseased in his feet" (I Kings 15:23). And Rav Yehuda says that Rav says: This indicates that gout [*padagra*]^{1b} grabbed hold of him. Mar Zutra, son of Rav Nahman, said to Rav Nahman: What are the circumstances of gout? What pain does it involve? He said to him: It feels like a needle inserted into living flesh. The Gemara asks: From where did he know this? The Gemara answers: Some say that he himself suffered from this condition, and some say that he heard it from his teacher, and some say that he knew it through divine inspiration, as it stated: "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him; and His covenant, to make them know it" (Psalms 25:14).

LANGUAGE

Gout [*padagra*] – פְּדָגְרָא: From the Greek ποδάγρα, *podagra*, whose literal meaning is a trap for the foot. It is used to refer to gout, which is a sickness of the foot.

BACKGROUND

Gout – פְּדָגְרָא: Gout results from disturbances in the secretion of uric acid from the body. Crystals of the acid accumulate in various joints in the body, particularly in the toes, causing the severe pain that Rav Nahman described as being like a needle inserted into living flesh.

Rava taught: For what reason was Asa punished in his feet? Because he made Torah scholars perform forced labor [angarya],¹ as it is stated: “Then King Asa made a proclamation unto all Judah; none was exempted; and they carried away the stones of Ramah and the timber thereof, with which Baasa had built, and King Asa built with them Geba of Benjamin and Mizpah” (1 Kings 15:22). The superfluous expression “unto all” indicates that the proclamation was issued to **everyone, including Torah scholars**. The Gemara asks: **What is the meaning of the next phrase in the verse: “None was exempted [ein naki]”?** Rav Yehuda says that Rav says: **This includes even a bridegroom from his chamber and a bride from her canopy, as the verse states with regard to a bridegroom: “He shall be free [naki] for his house one year” (Deuteronomy 24:5).**

It is written with regard to Samson: “And Samson went down to Timnah, and saw a woman in Timnah of the daughters of the Philistines” (Judges 14:1), and it is written in the Torah passage concerning the incident of Judah and Tamar: “And it was told to Tamar, saying: Behold, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep” (Genesis 38:13). The verses contain an apparent contradiction as to whether Timnah was a place to which one must descend or a place to which one must ascend. Rabbi Elazar says: These terms do not refer to the manner of traveling to Timnah but are used figuratively. Concerning Samson, who was disgraced there in Timnah, the term indicating descent is written with regard to his journey. Concerning Judah, who was elevated there, the term indicating ascent is written with regard to his journey.

Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani says differently: There were two cities named Timnah, one was reached by descent into a valley, and one was reached by ascent.

Rav Pappa said differently: There was one Timnah, and it was located on the slope of a mountain. One who came from this side reached it by descent, and one who came from that side reached it by ascent. The Gemara presents examples of such cities: For example: Vardonia, and Bei Varei, and the market of Neresh.^B

The verse states with regard to Tamar: “And she put off from her the garments of her widowhood, and covered herself with her veil, and wrapped herself, and sat in the entrance of Enaim [befetaḥ einayim],^N which is by the way to Timnah; for she saw that Shelah was grown up, and she was not given unto him to wife” (Genesis 38:14). The amora'im dispute the meaning of the word einayim. Rabbi Alexandri says: This teaches that she went and she sat at the entrance of the home of Abraham our forefather, a place that all eyes hope to see it, as she was certain that Judah would pass there. Rabbi Hanin says that Rav says: It is a place called Enaim, and similarly the verse states in the list of cities in Eretz Yisrael in the portion of Judah: “Tappuah and Enam” (Joshua 15:34).

Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani says: She provided eyes [einayim] for her statements, i.e., with her words she provided an opening [petah] for Judah to solicit her. When Judah solicited her to engage in sexual intercourse with him, he first attempted to verify her status and said to her: Are you perhaps are a gentile? She said to him: I am a convert. He asked: Perhaps you are a married woman? She said to him: I am an unmarried woman. He asked: Perhaps your father accepted betrothal for you and you are unaware of it? She said to him: I am an orphan. He asked: Maybe you are impure? She said to him: I am pure.

The Gemara discusses Abraham's house: It is written: “And he planted an eshel in Beersheba, and called there on the name of the Lord, the Everlasting God” (Genesis 21:33). Reish Lakish says: This teaches that Abraham made an orchard and planted in it all kinds of sweet things.

Forced labor [angarya] – אנגריא: From the Greek ἀγγαρεία, angareya, which means forced labor performed for the authorities.

BACKGROUND

Neresh – נרש: A Babylonian city near the Neresh River, south of Sura, this was an important agricultural and commercial center. It was home to a large number of date palm farmers and producers of alcoholic beverages. Their community straddled the desert and was cut off from culture. Despite its isolation, it was home to a Jewish community for many generations, producing no small number of Sages. At one point, the prominent Sage Rav Pappa was the head of the yeshiva in Neresh.

NOTES

פתח עינים [petah einayim] – Entrance of Enaim: The midrash explains that the reason for all the expositions is because there is no explicit mention in the Bible of a place called Enaim or Petah Enaim. Therefore, it was assumed that it is not the name of a place.

דרש רבא: מפני מה נענש אסא? מפני שעשה אנגריא בתלמידי חכמים, שנאמר: “יהמלך אסא השמיע את כל יהודה אין נקי”. מאי “אין נקי”? אמר רב יהודה אמר רב: אפילו חתן מחדרו וכלה מחופתה.

בתיב: “ויורד שמשון תמנתה”, ובתיב: “הנה חמך עלה תמנתה!” אמר רבי אלעזר: שמשון שנתגנה בה – בתיב ביה ירידה. יהודה שנתעלה בה – בתיב ביה עליה.

רבי שמואל בר נחמני אמר: שתי תמנאות היו, חדא בירידה וחדא בעליה.

רב פפא אמר: חדא תמנה הוא, דאתי מהאי גיסא – ירידה, ודאתי מהאי גיסא – עליה, כגון ורדונאי ובי בארי ושוקא דנרש.

“ותשב בפתח עינים” – אמר רבי אלכסנדר: מלמד, שהלכה וישבה לה בפתחו של אברהם אבינו, מקום שכל עינים צופות לראותו. רבי חנן אמר רב: מקום הוא ששמו “עינים”. וכן הוא אומר: “תפוח והעינים”.

רבי שמואל בר נחמני אמר: שנתנה עינים לירבוייה; בשתבעה, אמר לה: שמא נברית את? אמרה ליה: גיורת אני; שמא אשת איש את? אמרה ליה: פנויה אני; שמא קיבל בך אביך קידושין? אמרה ליה: יתומה אני; שמא טמאה את? אמרה ליה: טהורה אני.

“ויטע אשל בבאר שבע” – אמר ריש לקיש: מלמד, שעשה פרדס ונטע בו כל מיני מגדים.

Orchard [*pardes*] – פָּרְדֵּס: This word is found in the Bible as an appellation for a pomegranate orchard (see Song of Songs 4:13). In the language of the Sages, it means an orchard of fruit trees of any kind. At times the word is used to refer to a garden enjoyed as a place of rest and relaxation.

Inn [*pundak*] – פּוֹנְדֵק: From the Greek πανδοκεία, *pan-dokeya*, which means a guesthouse or hotel.

רְבִי יְהוּדָה וְרַבִּי נְחֵמְיָא – חָד אָמַר: פְּרִדְסֵי וְחָד אָמַר: פּוֹנְדֵק. בְּשִׁלְמָא לְמָאן דְּאָמַר פְּרִדְסֵי, הֵינּוּ דְכָתִיב: "וַיִּטַּע"; אֲלָא לְמָאן דְּאָמַר פּוֹנְדֵק, מָאי "וַיִּטַּע"? בְּדְכָתִיב: "וַיִּטַּע אֱהִלִּי אֶפְרָתָה" וְגו'.

The tanna'im Rabbi Yehuda and Rabbi Nehemya disagree as to the meaning of the word "*eshel*." One said that it means an orchard [*pardes*],¹ and one said that it means an inn [*pundak*].¹ The Gemara continues: **Granted, according to the one who said that it means an orchard, this is what is written: "And he planted,"** and this is suitable language for an orchard. **But according to the one who said that he opened an inn, what is the meaning of the phrase "and he planted"?** The Gemara answers: **As it is written: "And he shall plant [*vayitta*] the tents of his palace between the seas and the beautiful holy mountain; and he shall come to his end, and none shall help him"** (Daniel 11:45), indicating that the word *vayitta*, and he planted, is also used to indicate pitching tents.

וַיִּקְרָא שְׁם בְּשֵׁם ה' אֵל עוֹלָם – אָמַר רִישׁ לָקִישׁ: אַל תִּיקְרִי "וַיִּקְרָא"

The verse there states: "And he planted an *eshel* in Beersheba, and called there [*vayyikra*] on the name of the Lord, the Everlasting God" (Genesis 21:33). Reish Lakish said: **Do not read this word literally as "*vayyikra*,"** and he called,

Perek I

Daf 10 Amud b

NOTES

Rather as *vayyakri* – אֲלָא וַיִּקְרֵא: Some explain that since the verse is stated in the context of building an inn or planting an orchard, which is generally not a means by which one typically proclaims in the name of God, Reish Lakish therefore understands that its purpose was to cause others to recognize God (*Maharsha*).

Modest in the house of her father-in-law – צְנוּעָה בְּבֵית חַמְיָה: Generally, when a married woman is in close quarters with her husband, there will be times when her modesty is compromised. Therefore, a woman who conducts herself with modesty while living in close quarters with her husband in the house of her father-in-law is indicative of an extremely modest woman (*Iyyun Ya'akov*).

אֲלָא "וַיִּקְרֵא" – מִלְּמַד, שֶׁהִקְרִיא אֲבֵרָהֶם אֲבִינוּ לְשֵׁמוֹ שֶׁל הַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא בְּפֶה כָּל עוֹבֵר וְשׁוֹב. כִּי צִדָּד לְאַחַר שֶׁאָכְלוּ וְשָׁתוּ עָמְדוּ לְבָרְכוּ. אָמַר לָהֶם: וְכִי מִשְׁלִי אֲכַלְתֶּם? מִשְׁלֵי אֱלֹהֵי עוֹלָם אֲכַלְתֶּם! הוֹדוּ וּשְׁבַחוּ וּבְרַכּוּ לְמִי שֶׁאָמַר וַהֲיָה הָעוֹלָם!

but rather as *vayyakri*,^N and he caused others to call. This teaches that Abraham our forefather caused the name of the Holy One, Blessed be He, to be called out in the mouth of all passersby. **How so? After the guests of Abraham ate and drank, they arose to bless him. He said to them: But did you eat from what is mine? Rather, you ate from the food of the God of the world. Therefore, you should thank and praise and bless the One Who spoke and the world was created. In this way, Abraham caused everyone to call out to God.**

וַיִּרְאֶה יְהוּדָה וַיַּחַשְׁבֶּהָ לְזוֹנָה כִּי כִסְתָהּ פָּנֶיהָ. מִשּׁוּם דְּכִסְתָהּ פָּנֶיהָ חֲשָׁבָהּ לְזוֹנָה?

The Gemara continues its discussion of the incident of Judah and Tamar. It is written: "When Judah saw her, he thought her to be a prostitute, for she had covered her face" (Genesis 38:15). The Gemara asks: **Because she had covered her face he thought her to be a prostitute? Prostitutes usually uncover their faces in order to attract men.**

אָמַר רַבִּי אֱלֵעָזָר: שֶׁכִּסְתָהּ פָּנֶיהָ בְּבֵית חַמְיָה. דָּאֲמַר רַבִּי שְׁמוּאֵל בַּר נַחֲמָנִי אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹנָתָן: כָּל כְּלָה שֶׁהִיא צְנוּעָה בְּבֵית חַמְיָה – זוֹכָה וְיוֹצֵאִין מִמֶּנָּה מְלָכִים וְנָבִיאִים. מִנְּלִין? מִתַּמָּר. נָבִיאִים, דְּכָתִיב: "חֲזוֹן יִשְׁעֵיהוּ בֶן אֲמוֹץ"; מְלָכִים, מִדָּוִד. וְאָמַר רַבִּי לִוִּי: דָּבָר זֶה מְסוּרָת בְּיַדֵּינוּ מִאֲבוֹתֵינוּ, אֲמוֹץ וְאֲמִצְיָה אֲחִים הָיוּ.

Rabbi Elazar says: The verse means that Tamar covered her face in the home of her father-in-law, Judah. Therefore, he did not recognize her when her face was uncovered. **As Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani says that Rabbi Yonatan says: Any daughter-in-law who is modest in the house of her father-in-law^N merits that kings and prophets emerge from her. From where do we derive this? From Tamar. Prophets emerged from her, as it is written: "The vision of Isaiah, the son of Amoz" (Isaiah 1:1). Kings emerged from her, as seen from David. And Rabbi Levi says: This matter is a tradition that we received from our ancestors: Amoz, father of Isaiah, and Amaziah, king of Judea, were brothers. This indicates that Isaiah was also from the house of David and therefore a descendant of Tamar.**

"הִיא מוֹצֵאת" – "הִיא מִיתוֹצֵאת" מִיִּבְעֵי לִיה! אָמַר רַבִּי אֱלֵעָזָר: לְאַחַר שֶׁנִּמְצְאוּ סִמְנֵיהָ בָּא סְמָאֵל וְרִיחָקוֹן, בָּא גַבְרִיאֵל וְקִירְבָּן.

The verse describes Tamar's court hearing: "When she was brought forth [*mutzet*], she sent to her father-in-law, saying: By the man whose these are, am I with child" (Genesis 38:25). The Gemara comments: **It should have stated: When she was *mitutzet*.** The word *mutzet* also carries the implication of being found. What then, is taught by the use of that term? **Rabbi Elazar says: After her signs, which she was using to prove that she was impregnated by Judah, were brought out, the evil angel Samael came and distanced them from each other in an attempt to prevent Judah's admission and Tamar's survival, which would enable the birth of King David. The angel Gabriel then came and moved the signs closer again. Therefore, the word *mutzet* is used, as it alludes to the signs being found again.**

נזח לו לאדם – נקרא בולו וכו'. It is more amenable for a person, etc. – נקרא בולו וכו'. *Tosafot* explain that this statement should be taken literally, that one is halakhically required to allow himself to be killed if the alternative is the public humiliation of another. The Rashbatz maintains that the rationale for this is that humiliating another is included in the general prohibition against murder, as when one humiliates another to the extent that he causes the blood to drain from his face, it is akin to spilling his blood. He adds that the severity of humiliating others is stressed because generally people don't realize how deleterious it is and therefore do not properly atone for this transgression, thereby losing their place in the World-to-Come. The Maharal explains that humiliating someone lessens his human dignity. As human dignity stems from one's having been formed in the image of God, this can be viewed as a more severe transgression than causing bodily injury.

However, many early and later commentaries (see Meiri) explain that this statement is not meant to be a practical halakhic ruling, as the wording of the Gemara: It is more amenable, indicates that it is not an actual *halakha* but a description of pious behavior.

His entire name is called, etc. – נקרא בולו וכו'. Some commentaries note that Judah did not have any letters added to his name, as this was his name from birth, even before he sanctified the name of God in public. One answer suggested is that Judah was given his name as a result of the divine inspiration of his mother, Leah, who chose the name as a foreshadowing of his future actions. Additionally, she could have named him Odeh, which would also carry her intended meaning of thanking God. The fact that the name she gave him contains the letters of the name of God is a result of this divine influence.

HALAKHA

נזח לו לאדם וכו' – נקרא בולו וכו'. It is more amenable for a person, etc. – נקרא בולו וכו'. One who embarrasses another in public has no share in the World-to-Come (Rambam *Sefer HaMadda, Hilkhot Deot* 6:8).

The Gemara comments: **This is as it is written: "For the leader, upon yonat eilem rehokim, a psalm [mikhtam] of David"** (Psalms 56:1). Rabbi Yoḥanan says the verse means: **From the moment that her signs were distanced [rehokim], she became like a mute dove [yona illemet].** And the phrase "a psalm [mikhtam] of David" means: **The one from whom David emerged, as he was modest [makh] and flawless [tam] with everyone.** Alternatively, *mikhtam* indicates that *makkato*, the place on his body that would have required wounding [makka], was complete [tama], i.e., that David was born circumcised. Alternatively, *mikhtam* indicates that just as in his youth David made himself small in front of one who was greater than him in order to learn Torah from that person, so too, when he became great and was crowned king, he still behaved in this manner, so that his modesty, *makh*, was complete, *tam*, all of his life.

The verse concerning Tamar then states: **"She sent to her father-in-law, saying: By the man whose these are, am I with child"** (Genesis 38:25). The Gemara comments: **And let her say to him explicitly that she was impregnated by him.** Rav Zutra bar Tuviyya says that Rav says, and some say Rav Ḥana bar Bizna says that Rabbi Shimon Ḥasida says, and some say that Rabbi Yoḥanan says in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yoḥai: **It is more amenable for a person^{NH} to throw himself into a fiery furnace if faced with the choice of publicly embarrassing another or remaining silent even if it leads to being burned, and not humiliate another in public. From where do we derive this? From Tamar, as she was prepared to be burned if Judah did not confess, rather than humiliate him in public.**

The verse continues: **"And she said: Discern, please, whose are these, the signet, and the cords, and the staff"** (Genesis 38:25). Rabbi Ḥama, son of Rabbi Ḥanina, says: **With use of the word discern Judah informed his father that Joseph was lost, and also with use of the word discern they informed Judah about the signs.** The Gemara explains: **With the word discern he informed Jacob his father when he brought him the coat of Joseph and said to his father: "And they sent the coat of many colors, and they brought it to their father; and said: This have we found. Discern now whether it is your son's coat or not"** (Genesis 37:32). **With the word discern they informed him: "And she said: Discern, please, whose are these."**

It states: **"Discern, please [na]."** The word *na* is nothing other than a language of request. The Gemara explains: **She said to him: I request of you: Discern the image of your Creator in every person, and do not avert your eyes from me.**

The verse states: **"And Judah acknowledged them, and said: She is more righteous than I; forasmuch as I gave her not to Shelah my son"** (Genesis 38:26). This is the same as Rav Ḥanin bar Bizna says that Rabbi Shimon Ḥasida says: **Joseph, who sanctified the name of Heaven in private by not committing adultery with the wife of Potiphar, merited that one letter from the name of the Holy One, Blessed be He, was added to his name, as it is written: "He appointed it in Joseph [bihosef] for a testimony in his name, when He went forth against the land of Egypt"** (Psalms 81:6). In this verse the name Joseph is written with an additional letter *heh*, found in the ineffable name of God.

He continues: **Judah, who sanctified the name of Heaven in public, merited that his entire name is called^N by the name of the Holy One, Blessed be He, for all the letters of the ineffable name of God are included within the name of Judah, with the addition of the letter dalet. When he confessed and said: "She is more righteous than I," a Divine Voice went forth and said: You saved Tamar and her two children in her womb from being burned by the fire. By your life, i.e., in your merit, I will save three of your children from the fire. And who are they? Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah (see Daniel, chapter 3).**

היינו דכתיב: "למנצח על יונת אלקים רחוקים לרוד מכתם" – אמר רבי יוחנן: משעה שנתרחקו סימניה נעשית ביניה אילמת; "לרוד מכתם" – שיצא ממנה רוד שהיה מן ותם לכל. דבר אחר: "מכתם" – שהיתה מכתו תמוה, שגולד כשהוא מהול. דבר אחר: "מכתם" – כשם שבקטנותו הקטין עצמו אצל מי שגדול ממנו ללמוד תורה, כך בגדולתו.

"והיא שלחה אל חמיה לאמר לאיש אשר אלה לו אנכי הרה". ותימא ליה מימר! אמר רב זוטרא בר טוביה אמר רב, ואמרי לה אמר רב חנא בר ביזנא אמר רבי שמעון חסידא. ואמרי לה אמר רבי יוחנן משום רבי שמעון בן יוחי: נזח לו לאדם שיפיל עצמו לתוך כבשן האש ואל ילבין פני חבריו ברבים. מנלן? מתמר.

"הכר נא" – אמר רבי חמא ברבי חנינא: ב"הכר" ביישר לאביו, ב"הכר" ביישרוהו; ב"הכר" ביישר – הכרת בנך היא; ב"הכר" ביישרוהו – "הכר נא למי".

"נא" – אין "נא" אלא לשון בקשה. אמרה ליה: בבקשה ממך, הכר פני בוראך ואל תעלים עיניך ממני.

"ויבר יהודה ויאמר צדקה ממני" – היינו דאמר רב חנין בר ביזנא אמר רבי שמעון חסידא: יוסף שקדש שם שמים בסתר – זכה והוסיפו לו אות אחת משמו של הקדוש ברוך הוא. דכתיב: "עדות ביהוסף שמו".

יהודה שקדש שם שמים בפרהסיא – זכה ונקרא בולו על שמו של הקדוש ברוך הוא. כיון שהודה ואמר "צדקה ממני", יצתה בת קול ואמרה: אתה הצלת תמר ושני בניה מן האור, חייך שאני מציל בוכותך שלשה מבניך מן האור; מאן נינהו? חנניה מישאל ועזריה.

“צָרָקָה מִמֶּנִּי – מִנָּא יִדַּע? יִצְתָה בֵּית קוֹל וְאָמְרָה: מִמֶּנִּי יִצְאוּ כְבוֹשִׁים.”

Judah said: “She is more righteous than I [*mimmenni*].” The word “*mimmenni*” can also be understood as “from me,” with Judah thereby admitting that he is the father. The Gemara asks: **From where did he know** that it was in fact from him that Tamar was pregnant? The Gemara answers: **A Divine Voice went forth and said: From Me these hidden matters emerged,**^N and this woman will be the mother of royalty, which requires that Judah be the father.

From Me these hidden matters [*kevushim*] emerged – מִמֶּנִּי יִצְאוּ כְבוֹשִׁים: According to the standard version of the Gemara, this means that God declared that the hidden matters emerged from Him. Similarly, the Midrash adds that this entire episode occurred in a manner that was clearly divinely orchestrated so as to eventually bring about the monarchy of David and the Messiah. This matter is discussed at length by the kabbalists (see *Sefer HaGilgulim*). The *ge'onim* had a different version of the text that read: From you came out two pressed ones [*kevushim*]. This would mean that Judah was told that the two twin boys who were, so to speak, pressed together in Tamar’s womb, were his children. Another version reads: From you conquerors [*kovshim*] emerged, indicating that from these children conquerors would go forth in the future to conquer Eretz Yisrael.

Once he knew of her, etc. – בֵּין שִׁדְעָה וְכוּ: The term: He knew, is often a euphemism connoting sexual intimacy, similar to “And the man knew Eve his wife” (Genesis 4:1), and the phrase thereby means that Judah no longer separated himself from Tamar. However, Rashi interprets the phrase as a term indicating actual knowledge, as once Judah realized that she had righteous intentions, he no longer separated himself from her.

The Ramban in his commentary on the Torah writes that the actions of Judah were a fulfillment of the mitzva of levirate marriage as performed in his day. He elaborates that before the giving of the Torah, levirate marriage was a mitzva not specifically incumbent upon the brother of the deceased but for all relatives. Therefore, Tamar was permitted to remain married to Judah, as he had actually entered into levirate marriage with her.

Absalom was proud of his hair – אֲבִשְׁלוֹם נִתְנָאָה בְּשַׁעְרוֹ: The length of his hair does not indicate anything negative, as Absalom was a nazirite and obviously had long hair. However, the manner in which he weighed his hair is indicative of the pride he placed in it (*Iyyei HaYam*).

The netherworld opened beneath him – נִבְקַע שְׂאוֹל מִתַּחְתָּיו: Rashi explains that this statement explains why Absalom did not cut his hair, as he was afraid to fall into Gehenna. In *Pirkei DeRabbi Eliezer* (50:3) it says that Absalom was aware of his sin and was afraid that he would be punished there. He therefore preferred to be killed by humans so that his gruesome death would atone for some of his sins. This might also be the allegorical meaning of the statement in the Gemara that Absalom allowed himself to be killed by people (*Iyyei HaYam*).

BACKGROUND

A stone with which the people of Tiberias...weigh – אָבֹן שִׁמְעָאֵל: The idea of a stone being used as a weighing device is mentioned in the Torah (Deuteronomy 25:13). The king’s stone recorded here is a formal royal weight. Apparently, here the expression king’s stone refers simply to a large weight, and indicates that the measures of weight that the people of Tiberias and Tzippori used were larger than those previously used in Jerusalem or in the desert.

LANGUAGE

Sword [*safseira*] – סַפְסֵירָא: Related to the Persian šafšēr, also known as shamshir, and meaning sword.



Shamshir

“וְלֹא יִסַּף עוֹד לְדַעְתָּהּ – אֲמַר שְׂמוּאֵל סָבָא חֲמוּה דְרַב שְׂמוּאֵל בְּר אֲמִי מִשְׁמִייה דְרַב שְׂמוּאֵל בְּר אֲמִי: בֵּין שִׁדְעָה שׁוֹב לֹא פִסַּק מִמֶּנָּה, בְּתִיב הֶכָּא: “וְלֹא יִסַּף עוֹד לְדַעְתָּהּ”, וְכִתִּיב הֵתָם: “קוֹל גְּדוֹל וְלֹא יִסַּף.”

“אֲבִשְׁלוֹם נִתְנָאָה בְּשַׁעְרוֹ” וְכוּ. תַּנּוּ רַבְנֵי: אֲבִשְׁלוֹם בְּשַׁעְרוֹ מֵרָד, שְׁנֵיאָמְר: “וְכִאֲבִשְׁלוֹם לֹא הָיָה אִישׁ יִפְהָ וְגו’ וּבְגִלְחוֹ אֶת רֹאשׁוֹ וְהָיָה מִקֶּץ יָמִים לְיָמִים אֲשֶׁר יִגְלַח כִּי כִבֵּד עָלָיו וְגִלְחוֹ וְשָׁקַל אֶת שַׁעֲרָו רֹאשׁוֹ מֵאֲתָיִם שְׁקָלִים בְּאָבֹן הַמֶּלֶךְ.” תַּנּוּ: אָבֹן שִׁמְעָאֵל טַבְרָיָא וְאֲנָשֵׁי צִיפּוּרֵי שׁוֹקֵלִים בָּהּ –

לְפִיכֵן נִתְלָה בְּשַׁעְרוֹ, שְׁנֵיאָמְר: “וַיִּקְרָא אֲבִשְׁלוֹם לְפָנָיו עֲבָדֵי דָוִד וְאֲבִשְׁלוֹם רָכַב עַל הַפֶּרֶד וַיִּבֵּא הַפֶּרֶד תַּחַת שׁוֹבֵן הָאֵלֶּה הַגְּדוֹלָה וַיַּחֲזֵק רֹאשׁוֹ בְּאֵלֶּה וַיִּתֵּן בֵּין הַשָּׁמַיִם וּבֵין הָאָרֶץ וְהַפֶּרֶד אֲשֶׁר תַּחְתָּיו עָבַר.” שְׁקַל סַפְסֵירָא בְּעָא לְמִיפְסָקֵיהּ. תַּנּוּ דְבֵי רַבִּי יִשְׁמַעְאֵל: בְּאוֹתָהּ שַׁעֲהָ נִבְקַע שְׂאוֹל מִתַּחְתָּיו.

“וַיִּגַּז הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיַּעַל עַל עֲלִיית הַשַּׁעַר וַיִּבֶן זָכָה וְכוּ” אֲמַר בְּלִבָּתוֹ בְּנֵי אֲבִשְׁלוֹם בְּנֵי אֲבִשְׁלוֹם מִי יִתֵּן מוֹתֵי אֲנִי תַחְתָּיִךְ אֲבִשְׁלוֹם בְּנֵי בְנֵי...וְהַמֶּלֶךְ לֹאֵט אֶת פָּנָיו וַיִּזְעַק הַמֶּלֶךְ קוֹל גְּדוֹל בְּנֵי אֲבִשְׁלוֹם אֲבִשְׁלוֹם בְּנֵי בְנֵי.” הֵנּוּ תַמְנִי “בְּנֵי” לְמָה? שְׁבָעָה, דְאַסְקִיָּה מִשְׁבָּעָה מְדוּרֵי גֵיהֶנֶם; וְאִידֵךְ, אִיכָא דְאֲמַרִי: דְקָרִיב רִישֵׁיהָ לְגַבֵּי גּוֹפֵיהָ, וְאִיכָא דְאֲמַרִי: דְאִיִּיתֵיהָ לְעַמְבָּא דְאֲתָיִי.

The same verse continues: “And he knew her [*leda’atah*] again no more [*velo yasaf*],” seemingly indicating that Judah did not engage in sexual intercourse with Tamar again. Shmuel the Elder, father-in-law of Rav Shmuel bar Ami, says in the name of Rav Shmuel bar Ami: The verse actually means that once he knew of her^N that her intentions were for the sake of Heaven, he did not desist from engaging in sexual intercourse with her again, as it is written here: “*Velo yasaf od leda’atah*,” and it is written there at the giving of the Torah: “These words the Lord spoke unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice and it went on no more [*velo yasaf*]” (Deuteronomy 5:18), which is interpreted to mean: A great voice that did not cease.

§ The mishna teaches: Absalom was excessively proud of his hair,^N and therefore he was hung by his hair. The Sages taught (*Tosefta* 3:16): Absalom rebelled and sinned due to his hair, as it is stated: “Now in all Israel there was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty; from the sole of his foot even to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him. And when he shaved his head, as it was at every year’s end that he shaved it; because the hair was heavy on him, therefore he shaved it, and he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels, by the king’s stone” (II Samuel 14:25–26). What is the king’s stone? The Sages taught: A stone with which the people of Tiberias and the people of Tzippori weigh^B items.

The *baraita* continues: And since he was proud of his hair, therefore, he was hung by his hair, as it is stated in the verse describing the battle between the forces of David and Absalom: “And Absalom chanced to meet the servants of David. And Absalom was riding upon his mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great terebinth, and his head caught hold of the terebinth, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth; and the mule that was under him went on” (II Samuel 18:9). After he was spotted by the opposing troops, Absalom took a sword [*safseira*]¹ and wanted to cut his hair to save himself. The school of Rabbi Yishmael taught: At that moment, the gates of the netherworld opened beneath him^N and he was afraid to fall into it, so he did not cut his hair, and he was killed by the opposing troops.

It is written with regard to David’s reaction after he learns of the death of Absalom: “And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept; and as he went about he said: O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died in your place, O Absalom, my son, my son” (II Samuel 19:1), and a few verses later it adds: “And the king covered his face, and the king cried with a loud voice: O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son” (II Samuel 19:5). The Gemara asks: Why are there these eight mentions of “my son” by David, i.e., to what do they correspond? The Gemara answers: Seven times he said “my son,” by which he raised him up from the seven chambers of Gehenna. And as for the other, eighth, time, some say that David brought the head of Absalom close to Absalom’s body, and some say that with this eighth mention David brought Absalom to the World-to-Come.

”וַאֲבִשָׁלוֹם לָקַח וַיַּצֵּב לוֹ בְּחַיָּיו.” מַאֲי
לָקַח? אָמַר רִישׁ לָקִישׁ: שְׁלָקַח מִקַּח רַע
לְעַצְמוֹ. ”אֵת מִצְבַּת אֲשֶׁר בְּעֵמֶק הַמֶּלֶךְ.”
וְגו’ – אָמַר רַבִּי חַנִּינָא בַר פַּפָּא: בְּעֵצָה
עֲמוּקָה שֶׁל מַלְכוּת שֶׁל עוֹלָם,

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.