

HALAKHA

**Measure of seclusion – שיעור סתיירה:** The seclusion of a *sota* is defined as when witnesses see a woman secluded with a man with whom her husband had warned her not to be secluded. The duration of the seclusion is the time needed for defilement, which is equivalent to the time required for roasting and swallowing an egg. This ruling is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Akiva, whose opinion is accepted when he is involved in a dispute with others (Rambam *Sefer Nashim, Hilkhot Sota* 1:2; *Shulhan Arukh, Even HaEzer* 178:4).

NOTES

**Equivalent to the time needed to perform the initial stage of intercourse – כְּדֵי הֶעֱרָאָה:** Rashi here defines the initial stage of intercourse as the initial contact between the male and female sexual organs. Most commentaries, however, accept the opposing opinion in tractate *Yevamot* (55b), which defines the initial stage of intercourse as the insertion of the corona.

**To roast an egg – לְעֻלוֹת בֵּיצָה:** In the Jerusalem Talmud the expression used is: Equivalent to the time needed to roll an egg, which involves roasting an egg slightly to the point where it will roll easily. This is a more precise measurement of time than that of the time needed to roast an egg.

**Although there is no explicit proof, etc. – אַף עַל פִּי שְׂאִין:** This phrase, which is found in several places in the Talmud, indicates that the quoted verse cannot serve as a definitive proof, as it does not relate directly to the matter under discussion. However, the verse does present a verbal linkage or an association in meaning to the matter and is worth noting.

**I would say the equivalent to the time needed to perform the initial stage of intercourse and her appeasement – הָיָה אֲמִינָא כְּדֵי הֶעֱרָאָה וְאֶרְצוּתָהּ:** *Tosafot* cite the Jerusalem Talmud, where it is explicitly stated that all these measures of time refer only to the time necessary for the defilement itself. As such, one must add the measure of time needed for the woman to remove her undergarments. It is discussed in the *Torat HaKenaot* whether this should be understood as disagreeing with the measures stated here in that it requires additional time, or whether it may be that the Babylonian Talmud is discussing a case where her undergarments had been removed prior to the seclusion, and therefore only the actual time needed for the act of sexual intercourse itself is listed.

LANGUAGE

**Weaver [gardi] – גַּרְדִּי:** From the Greek γέρδιός, *gerdios*, meaning weaver.

**String [nima] – נִימָא:** From the Greek νῆμα, *nēma*, meaning string.

PERSONALITIES

**Peleimu – פְּלִימוֹ:** The Sage Peleimu was one of the prized students of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi, and in several instances he is quoted as asking his teacher brilliant questions. Several of his statements are recorded in *baraitot*, where he often disagrees with Rabbi Eliezer, son of Rabbi Shimon, another student of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi. There are also a number of narratives in the Talmud describing his great righteousness.

The *baraita* clarifies: **And what is the measure of seclusion,<sup>H</sup> i.e., how is the seclusion of a *sota* defined? The measure of seclusion is equivalent to the time needed for defilement, which is equivalent to the time needed to perform intercourse, which is equivalent to the time needed to perform the initial stage of intercourse.<sup>N</sup>**

The *baraita* quotes several practical examples of this period of time. This is equivalent to the time needed for circling a palm tree; this is the statement of Rabbi Yishmael. Rabbi Eliezer says: This is equivalent to the time needed for mixing a cup of wine with water, with the total volume of a quarter-log. Rabbi Yehoshua says: This is equivalent to the time needed to drink that cup of wine.

The *baraita* quotes several more examples. Ben Azzai says: This is equivalent to the time needed to roast an egg.<sup>N</sup> Rabbi Akiva says: This is equivalent to the time needed to swallow it. Rabbi Yehuda ben Beteira says: This is equivalent to the time needed to swallow three eggs one after another. Rabbi Elazar ben Yirmeya says: This is equivalent to the time needed for a weaver [gardi]<sup>L</sup> to tie a string [nima].<sup>L</sup>

Hanin ben Pinehas says: This is equivalent to the time that a woman may need to extend her hand into her mouth to remove a wood chip from between her teeth. The Sage Peleimu<sup>P</sup> says: This is equivalent to the time that she may need to extend her hand into a basket in order to take a loaf of bread. He adds: Although there is no explicit proof<sup>N</sup> from a verse for the matter, there is an allusion to the matter from the verse: “For on account of a harlot a man is brought to a loaf of bread” (Proverbs 6:26).

The *baraita* stated that the measure of seclusion is equivalent to the time needed for defilement, which is equivalent to the time needed to perform sexual intercourse, which is equivalent to the time needed to perform the initial stage of intercourse, and it added nine practical examples of that length of time. The Gemara asks: **And why do I need all these times when one should have sufficed?**

The Gemara answers: All three are necessary, as if the *baraita* taught only: **Equivalent to the time needed for defilement, I would say that the measure is equivalent to the time for her defilement and her appeasement, i.e., the amount of time needed to convince her to engage in sexual intercourse. Therefore, the *baraita* teaches us that the measure is equivalent to the time needed to perform sexual intercourse alone.**

**And if the *baraita* taught only:** The measure of seclusion is equivalent to the time needed to perform sexual intercourse, I would say that the measure is equivalent to the time needed for the completion of the act of intercourse. Therefore, the *baraita* teaches us that the measure is equivalent to the time needed to perform the initial stage of intercourse.

**And if the *baraita* taught only:** The measure of seclusion is equivalent to the time needed to perform the initial stage of intercourse, I would say that the measure is equivalent to the time needed to perform the initial stage of intercourse and her appeasement.<sup>N</sup> Therefore, the *baraita* teaches us that the measure is equivalent to the time needed for defilement, which does not include appeasement. The *baraita* concludes by offering a practical measure: **And what is the measure of the equivalent amount of time needed to perform the initial stage of intercourse? It is equivalent to the time needed for circling a palm tree. Other Sages then offered their own practical examples.**

וכמה שיעור סתיירה? כְּדֵי טוּמְאָה, כְּדֵי בִיאָה, כְּדֵי הֶעֱרָאָה,

כְּדֵי הַקֶּפֶת דְּקַל, דְּבָרֵי רַבִּי יִשְׁמַעֵאל; רַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר אָמַר: כְּדֵי מְזִיגַת הַכּוֹס; רַבִּי הוֹשֵׁעַ אָמַר: כְּדֵי לְשִׁתּוֹת;

בְּן עֲזַאי אָמַר: כְּדֵי לְעֻלוֹת בֵּיצָה; רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא אָמַר: כְּדֵי לְגוּמְמָה; רַבִּי יְהוּדָה בֶּן בֶּתְרִיאָא אָמַר: כְּדֵי לְגְמוּעַ שְׁלֹשׁ בֵּיצִים זוֹ אַחֵר זוֹ; רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן יִרְמְיָהּ אָמַר: כְּדֵי לְקָשׁוֹר גַּרְדִּי נִימָא;

חֲנִינ בֶּן פִּנְחָס אָמַר: כְּדֵי שְׁתוּשִׁיט יָדָהּ לְתוֹךְ פִּיהָ לִישׁוֹל קִיסָם; פְּלִימוֹ אָמַר: כְּדֵי שְׁתוּשִׁיט יָדָהּ לְסַל לִישׁוֹל כֶּבֶד. אַף עַל פִּי שְׂאִין רָאָהּ לְדָבָר – זָכָר לְדָבָר: “כִּי בַעַד אִשָּׁה וּזְנָה עַד כֶּבֶד לָהֶם.”

וְכָל הֵנּוּ לְמָה לִּי?

צְרִיכֵי, דְּאֵי תִנָּא כְּדֵי טוּמְאָה, הָיָה אֲמִינָא כְּדֵי טוּמְאָתָהּ וְאֶרְצוּתָהּ, קָא מְשַׁמְעַ לָן כְּדֵי בִיאָה.

וְאֵי תִנָּא כְּדֵי בִיאָה, הָיָה אֲמִינָא כְּדֵי גִמְר בִיאָה, קָא מְשַׁמְעַ לָן כְּדֵי הֶעֱרָאָה.

וְאֵי אֲשַׁמְעִינָן כְּדֵי הֶעֱרָאָה, הָיָה אֲמִינָא כְּדֵי הֶעֱרָאָה וְאֶרְצוּתָהּ, קָא מְשַׁמְעַ לָן כְּדֵי טוּמְאָה. וְכִמָּה כְּדֵי [הֶעֱרָאָה]? כְּדֵי הַקֶּפֶת דְּקַל.

Shall stand [teiku] – תיקו: Various explanations have been offered with regard to the etymology of this term. One explanation is that the word is an abbreviated form of the word *tikom*, meaning let it stand. Another explanation is that its source is the word *tik*, meaning a case or pouch. Just as upon seeing a case or pouch one is unsure of its contents, so too, the word *teiku* is used in a situation where a resolution is unknown to us, as if the solution were hidden inside a case (*Arukh*). Although not the literal meaning, some suggest that the term *teiku* is an allusion to the acrostic for the phrase: The Tishbite, i.e., Elijah the prophet, will resolve questions and dilemmas (*Tosefot Yom Tov*). This is in reference to the tradition that when Elijah returns to the Jewish people to herald the advent of the Messiah he will also reveal the solutions to outstanding halakhic difficulties.

ורמינהי: "ונסתרה" – וכמה שיעור  
סתירה לא שמענו. כשהוא אומר "והיא  
נטמאה", הוי אומר: כדי טומאה, כדי  
ביאה. כדי הערה, כדי חזרת דקל, דברי  
רבי אליעזר;

רבי יהושע אומר: כדי מציגת הכוס; בן  
עזאי אומר: כדי לשתותו; רבי עקיבא  
אומר: כדי לצלות ביצה; רבי יהודה בן  
בתירא אומר: כדי לגומעה;

קא סלקא דעתין היינו הקפת דקל היינו  
חזרת דקל. התם אומר רבי ישמעאל כדי  
הקפת דקל ופליג רבי אליעזר עליה. הכא  
אמר רבי אליעזר כדי חזרת דקל!

אמר אביי: הקפה בגל, חזרה ברוח.

בעי רב אשי: חזרה ברוח כי היכי דאזיל  
והדר אתי, או דילמא כי היכי דאזיל  
ואתי והדר קאי בדוכתיה? תיקו.

התם אומר רבי אליעזר: כדי מציגת הכוס,  
הכא – כדי חזרת דקל! אידי ואידי חד  
שיעורא הוא.

התם אומר רבי יהושע: כדי לשתותו,  
הכא אומר: כדי מציגת הכוס! אימא: כדי  
למוזג ולשתות. ולימא: אידי ואידי חד  
שיעורא הוא! אם בן, היינו רבי אליעזר.

התם אומר בן עזאי: כדי לצלות ביצה,  
הכא אומר: כדי לשתותו! אידי ואידי חד  
שיעורא הוא.

And the Gemara raises a contradiction from a different *baraita* (*Tosefta* 1:2): The verse states: “**And she was defiled secretly**” (Numbers 5:13), and we have not heard what is the measure of seclusion. When it says in that verse: “**And she was defiled secretly,**” you must say that the measure of seclusion is equivalent to the time needed for defilement, which is equivalent to the time needed to perform sexual intercourse, which is equivalent to the time needed to perform the initial stage of intercourse, which is equivalent to the time needed for the returning of a palm tree; this is the statement of Rabbi Eliezer.

The *baraita* continues: **Rabbi Yehoshua says:** This is equivalent to the time needed for mixing a cup of wine with water, with the total volume of a quarter-log. **Ben Azzai says:** This is equivalent to the time needed to drink that cup of wine. **Rabbi Akiva says:** This is equivalent to the time needed to roast an egg. **Rabbi Yehuda ben Beteira says:** This is equivalent to the time needed to swallow it.

The Gemara now addresses several contradictions between this *baraita* and the one quoted earlier. The Gemara first comments: It might enter our mind to say that circling a palm tree is the same as the returning of a palm tree. The Gemara asks: **There**, in the first *baraita*, **Rabbi Yishmael says it is equivalent** to the time needed for circling a palm tree and **Rabbi Eliezer disagreed with him**, while **here**, in the second *baraita*, **Rabbi Eliezer himself says it is equivalent** to the time needed for the returning of a palm tree; doesn't this contradict what he stated in the previous *baraita*?

To resolve this contradiction, **Abaye says:** These measures are not the same, as circling is referring to the amount of time it takes for one to circle a palm tree by foot, and returning is referring to the amount of time it takes for a palm branch blown by the wind to revert to its prior position.

**Rav Ashi asks:** This returning of the palm branch by the wind, is this the time only so that it goes forward with the wind and returns to its place one time, not including the time it is still moving back and forth due to the wind? Or perhaps it is the time so that it goes forward with the wind and comes back and returns until it settles in its place. The Gemara states: The question shall stand<sup>b</sup> unresolved.

The Gemara presents another contradiction. **There**, in the first *baraita*, **Rabbi Eliezer says:** This is equivalent to the time needed for pouring a cup of wine. **Here**, in the second *baraita*, he says: This is equivalent to the time needed for the returning of a palm tree. The Gemara answers: **This and that are one**, i.e., the same, measure.

The Gemara presents another contradiction. **There**, in the first *baraita*, **Rabbi Yehoshua says:** This is equivalent to the time needed for drinking a cup of wine. **Here**, in the second *baraita*, **he says:** This is equivalent to the time needed for mixing a cup of wine. The Gemara answers: **Say** that he requires both together, i.e., he requires an amount of time equivalent to the time needed to both mix and drink a cup of wine. The Gemara asks: Instead of combining the measures, why not let us say that **this and that are one measure?** The Gemara answers: **If so**, this is the same as the opinion of **Rabbi Eliezer** in the first *baraita*, with whom **Rabbi Yehoshua** disagrees.

The Gemara presents another contradiction. **There**, in the first *baraita*, **ben Azzai says:** This is equivalent to the time needed to roast an egg. **Here**, in the second *baraita*, **he says:** This is equivalent to the time needed to drink a cup of wine. The Gemara answers: **This and that are one measure.**

Where the ends are far or where they are near – **דְּמַרְחָק אוֹ דְּמַקְרֵב**: *Tosafot* explain that Rav Ashi does not ask about the thickness of the palm tree to be circled or the size of the egg to be roasted, as they were already compared to other measures in the *baraita*. *Tosefot HaRash* explains that in all cases it refers to an average-sized item. The Ya'avetz notes that since the word used here to describe the palm tree, *dekel*, refers specifically to a large palm, as a small palm tree is called by another name, there was no need to clarify further. Others explain that there was no need to clarify further because the palm is thick enough that it must be circled by foot (*Meromei Sadeh*).

## BACKGROUND

Where the ends are far or where they are near – **דְּמַרְחָק אוֹ דְּמַקְרֵב**: Since all the estimates of time for defilement are extremely short, the difference between them can be a matter of seconds. Therefore, it was necessary to attempt to give as precise a measure as possible, leading to these very specific questions.

The Gemara presents another contradiction. **There**, in the first *baraita*, Rabbi Akiva says: This is equivalent to the time needed to swallow an egg. **Here**, in the second *baraita*, he says: This is equivalent to the time needed to roast an egg. The Gemara answers: Say that he requires both together, i.e., he requires an amount of time equivalent to the time needed to roast an egg and to swallow it. The Gemara asks: Instead of combining the measures, why not let us say that this and that are one measure? The Gemara answers: If so, this is the same as the opinion of ben Azzai in the first *baraita*, with whom Rabbi Akiva disagrees.

The Gemara presents another contradiction. **There**, in the first *baraita*, Rabbi Yehuda ben Beteira says: This is equivalent to the time needed to swallow three eggs one after another. **Here**, in the second *baraita*, he says: This is equivalent to the time needed to swallow an egg, meaning one egg. The Gemara answers: In the first *baraita*, he did not state his own opinion, but stated his opinion in accordance with the statement of Rabbi Akiva, who stated that one measures according to the time needed for roasting and swallowing. Rabbi Yehoshua responded: Say instead the measure of the time needed for swallowing alone, i.e., an amount of time equivalent to the time needed to swallow three eggs one after another, which is equal to the amount of time necessary for roasting and swallowing, and therefore Rabbi Akiva would not need to include roasting in the measurement.

The Gemara discusses an opinion cited in the first *baraita*. Rabbi Elazar ben Yirmeya says: This is equivalent to the time needed for a weaver to tie a string. Rav Ashi asks: Is this speaking of where the ends of the string to be tied are far apart from each other, or is it speaking of where they are near<sup>NB</sup> to each other? The Gemara states: The question shall stand unresolved.

The Gemara discusses another opinion cited in the first *baraita*. Hanin ben Pinehas says: This is equivalent to the time that a woman may need to extend her hand into her mouth to remove a wood chip from between her teeth. Rav Ashi asks: Is this speaking of a case where the wood chip is stuck between her teeth, or is it speaking of a case where it is not stuck? The Gemara states: The question shall stand unresolved.

The Gemara discusses another opinion cited in the first *baraita*. Peleimu says: This is equivalent to the time that a woman may need to extend her hand into a basket in order to take a loaf of bread. Rav Ashi asks: Is this speaking of an occasion where the loaf adheres to the basket, or is it speaking of a case where it does not adhere? Is this speaking of a case where the basket is new, whereby the tips of the shoots forming the basket might restrain the loaf, or this speaking of where the basket is old and smooth, enabling easy removal? Is this speaking of a case where the loaf is hot and therefore softer and may adhere to the basket, or is this speaking of a case where the loaf is cold and easily removed?

הָתָם אָמַר רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא: כְּדֵי לְגַמְעָהּ, הֲכָא אָמַר: כְּדֵי לְעִלּוֹת בִּינְיָה! אִימָא: כְּדֵי לְעִלּוֹת בִּינְיָה וּלְגַמְעָהּ. וְלִימָא: אִידי וְאִידי תַּד שִׁיעוּרָא הוּא! אִם כֵּן, הֵינּוּ בֶן עוֹאֵי.

הָתָם אָמַר רַבִּי יְהוּדָה בֶּן בֵּיתֵירָא: כְּדֵי לְגַמְעָה שְׁלֹשׁ בֵּינָיִם זו אַחֵר זו, הֲכָא אָמַר: כְּדֵי לְגַמְעָה! לְדַבְּרֵי דְרַבִּי עֲקִיבָא קָאמַר, דְּקָאמַר: מִשְׁעָרִין בְּצִלְיָאָה וּבְגַמְעָה – אִימָא: שִׁיעוּר גְּמִיעָה לְחוּדָה, כְּדֵי לְגַמְעָה שְׁלֹשׁ בֵּינָיִם זו אַחֵר זו, דְּהֵינּוּ צִלְיָאָה וּבְגַמְעָה.

”רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן יִרְמְיָה אָמַר: כְּדֵי שִׁיקְשׁוּר גְּרָדֵי נִימָא.” בְּעֵי רַב אֲשֵׁי: דְּמַרְחָק אוֹ דְּמַקְרֵב? תִּיקוּ.

”חֲנִין בֶּן פִּנְחָס אָמַר: כְּדֵי שְׁתוּשִׁיט יָדָה לְתוֹךְ פִּיהָ לִישׁוּל קִיסָם.” בְּעֵי רַב אֲשֵׁי: דְּמַהֲדֵק אוֹ דְּלֹא מַהֲדֵק? תִּיקוּ.

”פְּלִימוֹ אָמַר: כְּדֵי שְׁתוּשִׁיט יָדָה לְסַל לִישׁוּל כֶּבֶד.” בְּעֵי רַב אֲשֵׁי: דְּמַהֲדֵק אוֹ דְּלֹא מַהֲדֵק? בְּחֻדָּתָא אוֹ בְּעִתְיָקָא? בְּחַמִּימָא אוֹ בְּקָרִירָא?

Perek I

Daf 4 Amud b

בְּדַחְטֵי אוֹ בְּדִשְׁעָרֵי? בְּרַבִּיכָא אוֹ בְּאִקְוִשָׁא? תִּיקוּ.

Is this speaking of a case where the loaf is made of wheat, which is slippery and takes longer to remove, or is this speaking of a case where the loaf is made of barley, which is easily removed? Is this speaking of a case where the loaf is soft, so that it may catch upon the side of the basket, or a case where the loaf is hard, where this is not a concern? The Gemara states: These questions shall stand unresolved.

**Ben Azzai – בן עזאי:** This is Shimon ben Azzai, one of the *tanna'im* in Yavne. Shimon ben Azzai was never ordained, which is why he is called by his name alone, without a title. He is usually referred to simply as ben Azzai. He was considered one of the outstanding Sages and his wisdom was celebrated for many generations. Apparently, he did not study Torah in his youth until he met Rabbi Akiva's daughter. She promised to marry him if he studied Torah. Consequently, he went to study with Rabbi Yehoshua and Rabbi Yishmael and was the primary student and even a disciple-colleague of Rabbi Akiva, whom he considered to be the preeminent Sage of his generation. It is unclear whether he never married or whether he married Rabbi Akiva's daughter and left her a short time later due to his overwhelming desire to study Torah. He completely devoted himself to the study of Torah, as can be seen in the mishna (49a), which says: Since ben Azzai died, there are no more diligent people. His statements can be found in the Mishna and in the Gemara. Apparently, he had several disciples in Tiberias, his city of residence. Ben Azzai engaged in the study of esoterica and is one of the four who entered the mystical orchard, as recorded in tractate *Hagiga* (14b), where it states that upon doing so, ben Azzai glimpsed at the Divine Presence and died. The verse: "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His pious ones" (Psalms 116:15), was quoted in reference to his death.

## NOTES

As if he engaged in sexual intercourse with a prostitute, etc. – **בְּאֵילּוּ בָּא עַל אִשָּׁה זוֹנָה וְכוּ'.** *Tosefot HaRash* explains this analogy by noting that one who eats without washing his hands fulfills his desire without forethought, as does one who engages in sexual intercourse with a prostitute. The Maharal offers another connection between the two by noting that both eating without washing one's hands and engaging in forbidden sexual relations are forms of benefiting from the world without first sanctifying oneself, by washing one's hands in the one case and by betrothal in the other.

Anyone who treats the ritual of washing hands with contempt – **כָּל הַמְּזַלְזֵל בְּנִטְיַלַּת יָדָיו** – Rashi explains this to refer to someone who never washes his hands before eating. This is also indicated in the Gemara in tractate *Shabbat* (62a), which refers to one who does not wash his hands at all. By contrast, the *She'iltot deRav Ahai Gaon* presents an alternative text of that Gemara that indicates that it refers even to one who only occasionally washes his hands before eating.

Lest the water advance, etc. – **שָׂמָא יֵצְאוּ הַמַּיִם וְכוּ'.** Rashi explains that this *baraita* is based on a mishna in tractate *Yadayim* (2:3) that states that one must wash his hands twice: One washes the first time in order to remove the impurity from his hands, as the Sages decreed that one's hands up to the wrist are ritually impure. Afterward one washes his hands again to wash away the impure water remaining on the hands from the initial washing. The mishna there continues that if one did not wash his hands a second time, or if he washed a second time but the water did not reach all the parts of his hand that remained wet from the initial water, then if the water remaining from the first washing were to touch his hand beneath the wrist, his hands would once again become impure. Accordingly, Rashi explains the *baraita* quoted here that one must lift up his hands so that the initial waters do not again touch his hands. *Tosefot HaRosh* and Rabbi Shimshon of Saens note that the water of the second washing will not purify the water beyond the wrist even if it reaches to there.

The Ra'avad, in his commentary on tractate *Yadayim*, notes that the *halakhot* of washing the hands are based not only on impurity but also on cleanliness. One must wash twice because the first washing cleans the hands and the second clears away any dirt remaining from the first washing. Raising the hands thereby ensures that the dirt beneath the wrist will not dirty the hands a second time.

אָמַר רַב יִצְחָק בַּר רַב יוֹסֵף אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן: כָּל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד בְּעֵצְמוֹ שִׁיעֵר. וְהַאיבַעֲיַת בֶּן עֲזַאי דְּלָא נָסִיב!

אִיבַעֲיַת אֵימָא: נָסִיב וּפִירֵשׁ הוּהוּ;  
וְאִיבַעֲיַת אֵימָא: מְרַבֵּיה שְׂמִיעַ לֵיה;  
וְאִיבַעֲיַת אֵימָא: "סוּד ה' לְיִרְאָיו".

דְּרַשׁ רַב עֲזַרְיָא. זְמַנִּין אָמַר לָהּ מִשְׁמִיחָה  
דְּרַבִּי אָמִי, וְזַמְנִין אָמַר לָהּ מִשְׁמִיחָה  
דְּרַבִּי אָסִי: כָּל הָאוֹכֵל לָחֶם בְּלֹא  
נִטְיַלַּת יָדָיו – בְּאֵילּוּ בָּא עַל אִשָּׁה  
זוֹנָה, שְׂנַאֲמַר: "כִּי בְעַד אִשָּׁה זוֹנָה עַד  
כְּבַר לָחֶם".

אָמַר רַבָּא: הָאֵי "בְּעַד אִשָּׁה זוֹנָה עַד  
כְּבַר לָחֶם", "בְּעַד כְּבַר לָחֶם עַד אִשָּׁה  
זוֹנָה" מִיבַעֲיָ לֵיהּ! אֵלָּא אָמַר רַבָּא: כָּל  
הַבָּא עַל אִשָּׁה זוֹנָה – לְסוּף מִבְּקָשׁ  
כְּבַר לָחֶם.

אָמַר רַבִּי וְרִיקָא אָמַר רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר:  
כָּל הַמְּזַלְזֵל בְּנִטְיַלַּת יָדָיו נֶעְקָר מִן  
הָעוֹלָם. אָמַר רַב חִינְיָא בְּרַ אֲשֵׁי אָמַר  
רַב: מַיִם רַאשׁוֹנִים – צְרִיךְ שְׂגִיבֵיה  
יְדָיו לְמַעְלָה, מַיִם אַחֲרוֹנִים – צְרִיךְ  
שְׂטִיפֵיהּ יְדָיו לְמַטָּה. תַּנְיָא גַּם הֵכִי:  
הַנּוֹטֵל יְדָיו צְרִיךְ שְׂגִיבֵיהּ יְדָיו לְמַעְלָה,  
שְׂמָא יֵצְאוּ הַמַּיִם חוּץ לְפָרֶק וְיַחְזְרוּ  
וְיִטְמְאוּ אֶת הַיְדָיִם.

The Gemara notes: Rav Yitzhak bar Rav Yosef says that Rabbi Yohanan says: Each and every one of these Sages who presented an opinion with regard to the time needed for the initial stage of intercourse **estimated based on himself**, i.e., based on his own experience. The Gemara asks: **But there is ben Azzai,<sup>P</sup> who did not marry**, so how could he estimate based on his own experience?

The Gemara answers: **If you wish, say that he was married and separated from his wife. And if you wish, say that he heard from his teacher. And if you wish, say his knowledge can be understood based on the verse: "The counsel of the Lord is with them that fear Him"** (Psalms 25:14), teaching that those who fear God are privy to knowledge beyond their personal experience.

**S** Having quoted an allusion from the verse: "For on account of a harlot a man is brought to a loaf of bread" (Proverbs 6:26), the Gemara offers another interpretation of that verse. **Rav Avira interpreted a verse homiletically**; there were **times he said** this interpretation in the name of Rabbi Ami and there were **times he said it in the name of Rabbi Asi**. Concerning anyone who eats bread without washing his hands, it is as if he engaged in sexual intercourse with a prostitute,<sup>N</sup> as it is stated: "For on account of a harlot a man is brought to a loaf of bread."

Rava said: This phrase: "For on account of a harlot a man is brought to a loaf of bread," is not how the verse would present this idea. It should have stated: "On account of a loaf a man is brought to a harlot." Rather, Rava says the verse should be interpreted as follows: **Anyone who engages in sexual intercourse with a harlot will eventually be reduced to poverty and beg people for a loaf of bread.**

The Gemara continues its discussion of washing hands. **Rabbi Zerika says that Rabbi Elazar says: Anyone who treats the ritual of washing hands with contempt<sup>NH</sup> is uprooted from the world.** Rav Hiyya bar Ashi says that Rav says: With regard to the **first water**, i.e., the water used when washing one's hands before a meal, one **must raise<sup>H</sup> his hands upward** after washing. With regard to the **last water**, i.e., the water used when washing one's hands at the conclusion of the meal before reciting Grace after Meals, one **must lower<sup>H</sup> his hands downward**. This distinction is also taught in a *baraita* (*Tosefta, Yadayim* 2:2): **One who washes his hands before a meal must raise his hands upward after washing, lest the water advance<sup>N</sup> past the joint onto the part of the hands that he was not required to wash, becoming impure, and then return to the area he had washed, rendering his hands ritually impure.**

## HALAKHA

Anyone who treats the ritual of washing hands with contempt – **כָּל הַמְּזַלְזֵל בְּנִטְיַלַּת יָדָיו** – One must be careful with washing hands, as one who treats this ritual with contempt is uprooted from this world. The Sages also said that such a person should be punished by excommunication, and he will eventually become impoverished (*Shulhan Arukh, Orach Hayyim* 158:9).

With regard to the first water one must raise, etc. – **מַיִם – רַאשׁוֹנִים צְרִיךְ לְהַגְבִּיהּ וְכוּ'** After washing with the first water, one must raise his hands so that the water does not run past the wrist and return to render the hands impure. This applies only to one who does not wash the entire hand up to the wrist. The Rema notes that some hold that this applies even if one washes his entire hand up to the wrist. He also writes that if one keeps his hands directed downward while washing and does not raise them, or if one washes his hands three times, then there is no concern, and one need not raise his hands. Other

later authorities question the efficacy of directing the hands downward. The *Shulhan Arukh* writes that if the amount of the initial water poured on his hands was a quarter-log, there is no need to raise one's hands. There is also no need to raise one's hands in the event that one washed his hands in a ritual bath or a river. Since there are many circumstances in which one need not raise his hands, many were not meticulous to observe this custom. However, because raising one's hands has a basis in a verse, it is proper that one observe this ritual *ab initio*. This is the custom in Sephardic communities. However, those who do not do so but rather wash with a quantity equal to a full quarter-log should be considered as acting properly (Rambam *Sefer Ahava, Hilkhot Berakhot* 6:16; *Shulhan Arukh, Orach Hayyim* 162:1).

With regard to the last water one must lower, etc. – **מַיִם – אַחֲרוֹנִים צְרִיךְ שְׂטִיפֵיהּ וְכוּ'** After washing following a meal, one's fingertips must be directed downward (Rambam *Sefer Ahava, Hilkhot Berakhot* 6:16; *Shulhan Arukh, Orach Hayyim* 181:5).

Anyone who eats bread without wiping his hands – כָּל הַאֹכֵל פֶּת בֶּלֵא נִגְוֵי יָדָיו: After washing one's hands for bread, one must dry them before eating. One who eats without drying his hands is considered as if he were eating impure bread, as noted in the Gemara. In the *Shulhan Arukh* it states that if one would wash his hands in a manner where there is no possibility of his hands becoming impure, e.g., if he dipped them in a ritual bath or poured on them a large amount of water, equal to or greater than a quarter-log, then there is no need to dry one's hands afterward. The Maharshal, however, disagrees, explaining that the primary reason one must dry his hands is not due to concerns of impurity but to the repulsiveness of eating wet bread. Therefore, the requirement to dry one's hands applies even when there is no possibility of the hands becoming impure. See the discussion of this issue in the *Mishna Berura* (Rambam *Sefer Ahava, Hilkhot Berakhot* 6:20; *Shulhan Arukh, Orah Hayyim* 158:12–13).

## NOTES

Anyone who eats bread without wiping his hands – כָּל הַאֹכֵל פֶּת בֶּלֵא נִגְוֵי יָדָיו: Rashi explains that touching bread with wet hands causes the food to become repulsive, which is akin to impurity. Rabbeinu Hananel adds that wet hands moisten the food and consequently make it susceptible to contracting ritual impurity, as food does not contract impurity unless first moistened by one of the seven liquids, one of which is water.

It should have stated: An arrogant life – נֶפֶשׁ גְּבוּהָהּ מִיַּבְעֵי לֵיהּ: The Maharsha explains that an arrogant person is one who is excessively concerned with his appearance, who dresses in fancy clothing, and who adorns himself with jewelry. This type of person eventually entraps women, as exemplified by the biblical narrative about Joseph (see Rashi on Genesis 39:6).

As if he were an idol worshipper – כָּאִילוֹ עוֹבֵד עֲבוּדָה זָרָה: The *Tanya* explains at length that idolatry is essentially the attribution of independent significance to an entity, separating it from its place within God's world. Similarly, an arrogant individual essentially turns his own personality into a form of idolatry by attributing significance to his successes.

As if he built a personal altar – כָּאִילוֹ בְּנָה בְּמָה: The Maharal explains that the arrogant individual separates himself from others, as he places himself on a pedestal, and he is therefore likened to one who has built an altar to himself. The Maharsha notes that the word used here for altar, *bama*, is used in the Bible in reference to a high place, and therefore is used here as a metaphor for one who views himself as higher than others.

## BACKGROUND

As if he built a personal altar – כָּאִילוֹ בְּנָה בְּמָה: While some early commentaries interpret this to refer to an altar for idol worship, Rashi in tractate *Yevamot* (109b) understands it to mean building an altar to worship God at a time when such altars are forbidden.



Reconstruction of a Jewish altar found in Tel Be'er Sheva, Israel

Rabbi Abbahu says: Anyone who eats bread without wiping his hands<sup>HN</sup> dry after washing them causes the bread to become repulsive and is considered as if he were eating impure bread, since the verse refers to repulsive bread as impure bread, as it is stated: “And the Lord said: Even thus shall the children of Israel eat their bread unclean among the nations where I will drive them” (Ezekiel 4:13). Eating bread with wet hands causes the bread to become repulsive. The verse deems eating in an uncouth manner, as did the gentiles among whom the Jewish people were exiled, as akin to eating ritually impure bread.

The Gemara now continues the interpretation of the above quoted verse: “For on account of a harlot a man is brought to a loaf of bread” (Proverbs 6:26). The Gemara asks: **And what is the meaning of the continuation of the verse: “But the adulteress hunts for the precious life”?** Rabbi Hiyya bar Abba says that Rabbi Yohanan says: **Any person who has arrogance within him will eventually stumble by sinning with an adulteress, as it is stated: “But the adulteress hunts for the precious life,”** i.e., she sins with one who considers himself precious.

Rava said: This phrase: “The precious life,” is not how the verse would present this idea. **It should have stated: An arrogant life.**<sup>N</sup> **And further, it should have stated: A precious life, she hunts for the adulteress,** indicating that the precious soul will entrap the adulteress, and not vice versa, as the verse indicates as written. **Rather, Rava says that the verse should be interpreted as follows: Anyone who engages in sexual intercourse with an adulteress, even if that man studied Torah, about which it is written: “She is more precious than rubies [peninim]” (Proverbs 3:15),** which, based on its etymological connection with the Hebrew term for the Holy of Holies, *lifnai velifnim*, is interpreted by the Sages to mean that one who studies Torah is more precious than a High Priest, who enters the innermost sanctum, still, **this transgression of adultery will entrap him into the judgment of Gehenna, and the Torah he studied will not be able to save him.**

Rabbi Yohanan says in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yoḥai: **Any person who has arrogance within him is considered as if he were an idol worshipper,**<sup>N</sup> as it is written here: “Everyone that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord” (Proverbs 16:5), and it is written there concerning the destruction of idols: “And you shall not bring an abomination into your house” (Deuteronomy 7:26).

And Rabbi Yohanan said his own statement: Any person who has arrogance within him is considered as if he has denied the core belief in God's existence, as it is stated: “Then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the Lord your God” (Deuteronomy 8:14).

Rabbi Hama bar Hanina says: Any person who has arrogance within him is considered as if he engaged in sexual intercourse with all of those with whom relations are forbidden, as it is written here: “Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord” (Proverbs 16:5), and it is written there, at the end of the passage concerning forbidden sexual relationships: “For all these abominations have the men of the land done” (Leviticus 18:27).

Ulla says: Any person who has arrogance within him is considered as if he built a personal altar<sup>NB</sup> for idol worship, as it is stated: “Cease you from man, in whose nostrils there is breath, for how little [*bammeh*] is he to be accounted” (Isaiah 2:22), referring to an arrogant person. **Do not read the verse as it is written, *bammeh*, how little. Rather, read it as *bama*, altar.**

אָמַר רַבִּי אֲבָהוּ: כָּל הַאֹכֵל פֶּת בֶּלֵא נִגְוֵי יָדָיו – כָּאִילוֹ אֹכֵל לֶחֶם טָמֵא, שְׁנֵאמַר: “וַיֹּאמֶר ה' כִּכָּה יֹאכְלוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת לֶחֶמָם טָמֵא” וְגו'.

וּמַאי “וַיֹּאשֶׁת אִישׁ נֶפֶשׁ יִקְרָה תְּצוּד”? אָמַר רַבִּי חֵימָא בְּרַ אֲבָא אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן: כָּל אָדָם שָׁיֵשׁ בּוֹ גַּסּוֹת הָרוּחַ – לְבַסּוֹף נִבְשָׁל בְּאִשֶׁת אִישׁ, שְׁנֵאמַר: “וַיֹּאשֶׁת אִישׁ נֶפֶשׁ יִקְרָה תְּצוּד”.

אָמַר רַבָּא: הָאִי נֶפֶשׁ יִקְרָה. “נֶפֶשׁ גְּבוּהָהּ” מִיַּבְעֵי לֵיהּ! וְעוּד, “הִיא תְּצוּד” מִיַּבְעֵי לֵיהּ! אֲלֵא אָמַר רַבָּא: כָּל הַבָּא עַל אִשֶׁת אִישׁ, אֲפִילוּ לְמַד תּוֹרָה, דְּכָתִיב בָּהּ: “יִקְרָה הִיא מִפְּנִימִים” – מִכְּהֵן גְּדוֹל שְׁנִכְנַס לִפְנֵי וּלְפָנִים, הִיא תְּצוּדָנּוּ לְדִינָהּ שֶׁל גִּיהֵנָם.

אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן מִשּׁוּם רַבִּי שְׁמַעוֹן בֶּן יוֹחָי: כָּל אָדָם שָׁיֵשׁ בּוֹ גַּסּוֹת הָרוּחַ – כָּאִילוֹ עוֹבֵד עֲבוּדָה זָרָה; כְּתִיב הֵכָּא: “תוֹעֵבַת ה' כָּל גְּבוּהַ לֵב”, וְכְתִיב הֵתָם: “וְלֹא תָבִיא תוֹעֵבָה אֶל בֵּיתְךָ”.

וְרַבִּי יוֹחָנָן דִּידִיָּה אָמַר: כָּאִילוֹ כִּפּוּר בְּעִיקָר, שְׁנֵאמַר: “וְרוּם לְבַבְךָ וְשַׁכַּחַת אֶת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ” וְגו'.

רַבִּי חֵמָא בְּרַ חֲנִינָא אָמַר: כָּאִילוֹ בָּא עַל כָּל הָעֲרִיזוֹת; כְּתִיב הֵכָּא: “תוֹעֵבַת ה' כָּל גְּבוּהַ לֵב”, וְכְתִיב הֵתָם: “כִּי אֵת כָּל הַתוֹעֵבוֹת הָאֵל” וְגו'.

עוֹלָא אָמַר: כָּאִילוֹ בְּנָה בְּמָה, שְׁנֵאמַר: “חֲדְלוּ לָכֶם מִן הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁמָה בָּאֵפוֹ בִּי בְּמָה נִחְשָׁב הוּא”, אֶל תִּיקְרִי “בְּמָה” אֲלֵא “בְּמָה”.

Just as Abraham our forefather, etc. – כְּאַבְרָהָם אָבִינוּ – זכור: The reference to Abraham is interpreted by the Meiri as referring to one who does great deeds and publicly spreads the message of God's greatness, as was done by Abraham.

מֵאִי יָד לֵיד לֹא יִנְקָה? אָמַר רַב: כָּל הַבָּא עַל אִשְׁתּוֹ אִישׁ, אֶפִּילוּ הִקְנֶהוּ לְהַקְדוּשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא שְׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ כְּאַבְרָהָם אָבִינוּ, דְּכָתִיב בֵּיהּ: "הֲרִימֹתִי יָדַי אֶל ה' אֵל עֲלִיזֹן קִנְיַת שְׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ", לֹא יִנְקָה מְדִינָהּ שֶׁל גֵּיהֶנֶם.

קִשְׁיָא לְהוּ לְדָבִי רַבִּי שִׁילָא: הָאִי יָד לֵיד לֹא יִנְקָה, "יָדַי" מִיבַעֲי לִיָּהּ!

אֶלָּא אָמְרִי דְבִי רַבִּי שִׁילָא: אֶפִּילוּ קִיבֵל תּוֹרָה כְּמֹשֶׁה רַבִּינוּ, דְּכָתִיב בֵּיהּ: "מִיַּמִּינוּ אֵשׁ דָּת לְמוֹ", לֹא יִנְקָה מְדִינָהּ שֶׁל גֵּיהֶנֶם.

קִשְׁיָא לִיָּהּ לְרַבִּי יוֹחָנָן: הָאִי יָד לֵיד, "יָד מִיָּד" מִיבַעֲיָא לִיָּהּ!

אֶלָּא אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן:

Having interpreted the phrase: "Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord" (Proverbs 16:5), the Gemara interprets the continuation of the verse. What is the meaning of: "Hand to hand, he shall not be unpunished" (Proverbs 16:5)? Rav says: **Anyone who engages in sexual intercourse with an adulteress, even if he were to have attributed possession of heaven and earth to the Holy One, Blessed be He, just as Abraham our forefather<sup>N</sup> did, that it is written with regard to him: "I have lifted up my hand to the Lord, God Most High, Maker of heaven and earth" (Genesis 14:22), he will not be unpunished from the judgment of Gehenna.** Abraham is described as one whose hands were lifted to declare the glory of God, yet this verse declares that even if one who engaged in forbidden sexual intercourse were to use his hands in the same way, still, due to his sin, the verse says: "He shall not be unpunished."

This interpretation poses a difficulty to the Sages of the school of Rabbi Sheila: This phrase: "Hand to hand, he shall not be unpunished," is not how the verse would present this idea. It should have stated: **My hand**, as that is the term employed in the verse with regard to Abraham.

Rather, the Sages of the school of Rabbi Sheila say: This teaches that even if one who engages in sexual intercourse with an adulteress had received the Torah from the hand of God like Moses our teacher did, that it is written with regard to him: "At His right hand was a fiery law unto them" (Deuteronomy 33:2), i.e., God gave the Torah from His right hand into the hand of Moses in order to give to the Jewish people, the sinner will not be unpunished from the judgment of Gehenna.

This interpretation also poses a difficulty to Rabbi Yohanan: This phrase "hand to hand" is not how the verse would present this idea. It should have stated: **Hand from hand**, as that is the term employed in the verse with regard to Moses.

Rather Rabbi Yohanan says: