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## BAVLI TRACTATE MEGILLAH CHAPTER ONE

### FOLIOS 2A-17A

1:1-2

1:1

- A. [2A] The Megillah may be read on the eleventh, on the twelfth, on the thirteenth, on the fourteenth, and on the fifteenth [of the month of Adar], not before and not after.
- B. Cities that have been surrounded by a wall since the time of Joshua bin Nun read on the fifteenth. Villages and large towns read on the fourteenth, but the villages may advance to the [preceding] day of assembly [Monday or Thursday].

1:2

- C. How [does this happen]?
- D. If the fourteenth falls on the second day, villages and large towns read on that very day, and walled cities on the next day [Adar 15].
- E. If it [Adar 14] falls on the third or on the fourth [day of the week], villages advance to the day of assembly [Monday, Adar 13 or 12, respectively]; and large towns read on that very day [Tuesday or Wednesday, Adar 14]; and walled cities on the next day [Wednesday or Thursday, Adar 15].
- F. If it [Adar 14] falls on the fifth day, villages and large towns read on that very day, and walled cities on the next day [Friday, Adar 15].
- G. If it [Adar 14] falls on the eve of the Sabbath [Friday], villages advance to the day of assembly [Thursday, Adar 13], and large towns and walled cities read on that very day [Friday].
- H. If it [Adar 14] falls on the Sabbath, villages and large towns advance and read [it] on the day of assembly [Thursday, Adar 12], and walled cities on the next day [Sunday, Adar 15].
- I. If it [Adar 14] falls after the Sabbath [on Sunday], villages advance to the day of assembly [Thursday, Adar 11], and large towns read on that very day, and walled cities on the next day [Monday, Adar 15].

- I.1** A. *How on the basis of Scripture do we know that the Megillah is read on the eleventh [of Adar] (M 1:1A)?*
- B. *Since, further on, we find it necessary to state, “[The] sages ruled leniently regarding the villages, allowing them to advance [the Megillah reading] to the day of assembly, in order that they could provide water and food for their relatives in the [walled] cities” [thereby advancing the date to as early as Adar 11 and extending the celebration to five days in contrast to the two that appear to be intended in Est. 9:31], we therefore rule as follows: In fact, the Men of the Great Assembly instituted all [five] of them.*
- C. *For if you think that the Men of the Great Assembly established the fourteenth and fifteenth [of Adar, this would mean that] the [later and less authoritative] rabbis have come along and altered a promulgation instituted by the the Men of the Great Assembly! But we have learned in the Mishnah: A court is unable to annul the words of its fellow court unless it is greater in wisdom and in number (M Ed. 1: 5). [And the earlier Men of the Great Assembly are assumed to have possessed greater wisdom and to have functioned at the level of a full court.] So, obviously, the Men of the Great Assembly instituted all [five] of them.*
- I.2** A. *Where is this [notion that Esther may be read on five different days, M 1:1A] hinted at [in Scripture]?*
- B. Said Rav Shimon bar Abba, said R. Yohanan: Scripture said: “[And he (Mordecai) sent dispatches to all the Jews...] to observe these days of Purim at their [proper] times” (*be-zemaneihem*, Est. 9:31), [from which we may conclude that] they [i.e., the Men of the Great Assembly] instituted many days for them [to observe the holiday].
- C. *This [the word be-zemaneihem, “at their (proper) times”] is needed for itself [i.e., for the simple promulgation of the law].*
- D. *If so [i.e., if only this were intended], let Scripture say [be-]zeman, “[at the (proper)] time.” What is the meaning of “[at their] times”? Many times [two or more].*
- E. *But still it [be-zemaneihem] is needed [as we learn below]: The time of one [type of place, i.e., walled cities] is not the time of another [i.e., large towns]. [So there is no overlap, and each type of location, i.e., walled cities, large towns, and villages, requires one different day for a total of three.]*
- F. *If so, let Scripture say [be-]zemanam, “[at] their time,” [taken to mean “at each place’s appropriate time”].*
- G. *What is [the precise connotation of be-]zemaneihem, “[at] their times”? From this I learn all of them [i.e., the five dates that are acceptable for reading Esther].*
- H. *Say zemanim, “times,” is plural. “Their times” (zemaneihem) is like “their time” (zemanam). Just as “their time” refers to two times, so “their times” refers to two. Should I say that [these two times refer to] the twelfth and thirteenth [of Adar]?*
- J. *[No.] According to the teaching of Rav Samuel bar Isaac: The thirteenth is a time of assembly for everyone and requires no [special scriptural*

*derivation for] inclusion. Here, too, the thirteenth is a time of assembly for everyone and requires no [special scriptural derivation for] inclusion.*

K. *Should I say [that these two times refer to] the sixteenth and seventeenth [of Adar]?*

L. *[No,] for “and let it not pass” (Est. 9:27) is written.*

M. And Rav Samuel bar Nahmani said: Scripture said: “[...to observe the fourteenth day of the month of Adar and the fifteenth day each and every year], like the days on which the Jews rested...” (Est. 9:22), [meaning] “days” “like the days,” to include the eleventh and twelfth [i.e., two days, Adar 11 and 12, like the original two days, Adar 14 and 15].

N. *Should I say [these two times refer to] the twelfth and thirteenth?*

O. Said Rav Samuel bar Isaac: The thirteenth is a time of assembly for everyone and requires no [special scriptural derivation for] inclusion.

P. *Should I say that [these two times refer to] the sixteenth and seventeenth?*

Q. [No], for it is written: “...and let it not pass” (Est. 9:27).

R. *Why did R. Samuel bar Nahmani not base his explanation on “at their times”?*

S. *He did not understand “time,” “their time,” and “their times” this way.*

T. *And why did R. Shimon bar Abba not base his explanation on “like the days”?*

U. *He would say to you: It was written [to specify that the celebration is to apply] for future generations [as well].*

**I.3** A. Said Rabbah bar Bar Hanna, said R. Yohanan: This [i.e., M 1:1] is the words of R. Aqiba, *the anonymous one, who expounded* “time,” “their time,” “their times.” But the sages say: One does not read it [the Megillah] other than at its [proper] time [i.e., Adar 14 or 15].

B. *They retorted:* Said R. Judah: When [is the Megillah read from Adar 11 to 15]? When the years [i.e., the calendar] are as they should be, and Israel is settled on its land. But, now, since they [the masses of Jews] take note of it [in order to determine the date of Passover, which falls 30 days after Purim], one should not read it other than at its [proper] time *In accordance with which opinion does R. Judah speak? If we say in accordance with the opinion of R. Aqiba, this law should apply even today [because his position is unqualified]. Rather, [he speaks] in accordance with the teachings of the rabbis. And [according to them], where the years are as they should be, and Israel is settled on its land, we read [the Megillah on all five days].*

C. *And [thus] the retort to R. Yohanan stands.*

D. *[An alternate version of A:] Some say:* Said Rabbah bar Bar Hanna, said R. Yohanan: This [i.e., M 1:1] is the words of R. Aqiba, *the anonymous one.* But the sages said: Now, since they [the masses] take note of it [the date of Purim], one should not read it other than at its [proper] time.

E. *F. So too it is also learned this way [in a baraita]:* Said R. Judah: When [is Esther read from Adar 11 to 15]? When the years are as they should be, and Israel is

settled on its land. But, now, since they take note of it, one should not read it other than at its [proper] time.

- F. *Rav Ashi sees a contradiction between the two teachings of R. Judah, [2b] and attributes the baraita to R. Yosé bar Judah: And did R. Judah really say: Now, since they take note of it, one should not read it other than at its [proper] time? And by contrast: Said R. Judah: When [is Esther read from Adar 11 to 15]? In a place in which they assemble on the second and fifth [days of the week]. But in a place in which they do not assemble on the second and on the fifth [days of the week], one does not read it other than at its [proper] time [cf. T 1:3]. So [according to this statement of R. Judah], even now, we read in a place where the people gather on the second and on the fifth [days of the week]; and, therefore, he [Rav Ashi] attributes the baraita to R. Yosé bar Judah.*
- G. *But because one teaching of R. Judah contradicts another teaching of R. Judah, should he [Rav Ashi] attribute the baraita to R. Yosé bar Judah?*
- H. *Rav Ashi [must have] heard that some teach this like [what is attributed] to R. Judah and that others teach it like [what is attributed to] R. Yosé bar Judah. And because one teaching of R. Judah contradicts another teaching of R. Judah, he [must have] said: The one who teaches it as the statement of R. Judah is inaccurate, and the one who teaches it as the statement of R. Yosé bar Judah is accurate.*

## **II.1 Cities that have been surrounded by a wall since the time of Joshua bin Nun read on the fifteenth... (M 1:1A):**

- B. *What is the scriptural source of this rule?*
- C. *Said Rava, Scripture has said: “Therefore, the Jews who live in the unwallled cities [observe the fourteenth of the month of Adar...]” (Est. 9:19). Since the unwallled cities [read Esther] on the fourteenth, the walled cities [read] on the fifteenth.*
- D. *[Or,] should I say the unwallled [cities read] on the fourteenth and on the fifteenth, but the walled [cities read] not at all?*
- E. *[No, for] are they not Israel also? Moreover, “from India to Kush [Ethiopia]”(Est. 8: 9) is written [thereby including all Jews].*
- F. *[But perhaps, then] I should say the unwallled cities [read] on the fourteenth, and the walled cities on [both] the fourteenth and the fifteenth, as is written, “...to observe (‘et) the fourteenth day of the month of Adar and (we-’et) the fifteenth [of it] every year” (Est. 9:21).*
- G. *[No,] If it would have written “[to observe] (‘et) the fourteenth [...] and the fifteenth” [omitting the second usage of the accusative particle ‘et], it would be as you say. But since “[to observe] ‘et the fourteenth [...] we-’et the fifteenth,” is written, [the second particle] ‘et divides [the sentence and separates the phrases in question, allowing one to separate the days of celebration in like manner, so that] one group [observes] on the fourteenth and the other on the fifteenth.*
- H. *Should I say unwallled cities [read] on the fourteenth, but walled cities [may read] on the fourteenth or on the fifteenth, as they prefer?*
- I. *[No.] Scripture says, “...at their times” (Est. 9:31) [meaning] the time of one [type of place] is not the time of another [cf. II.E].*
- J. *Should I say [they should read] on the thirteenth?*

- K. *[No, they should conduct themselves] like Susa [and read it on the fifteenth].*
- L. *In this way we would have [the biblical source for] observance [of the holiday]; what is the source for commemoration [i.e., for the reading of Esther?]*
- M. *Scripture says: “And these days are commemorated and observed...” (Est. 9:28); commemoration [the reading of Esther] is juxtaposed to observance.*

**II.2** A. *The Mishnah [1:1A] is not in accordance with this [next quoted] Tannaite authority, as is taught: R. Joshua ben Qorha says: Cities that have been surrounded by a wall since the time of Ahasuerus read on the fifteenth [cf. T Meg. 1:1A].*

- B. *What is the reason of R. Joshua ben Qorha?*
- C. *It [such a city] is analogous to Susa. Just as Susa was surrounded by a wall since the time of Ahasuerus, and they [its inhabitants] read on the fifteenth, so should [the inhabitants of] any city surrounded by a wall since the time of Ahasuerus read on the fifteenth.*
- D. *And what is our Tannaite authority's reason?*
- E. *He derives his notion from a comparison of the word perazi (“unwalled”) in two places. It says here “Therefore the Jews in unwalled cities (ha-yehudim ha-perazim)” (Est. 9:19), and it says there “...except for the unwalled cities (‘arei ha-perazi), very many” (Deu. 3:5). Just as there [in Deu. 3:5] they existed [surrounded by a wall] since the time of Joshua bin Nun, so here [the reference is to cities] [surrounded by a wall] since the time of Joshua bin Nun.*
- F. *It is understandable that R. Joshua ben Qorha did not stipulate as did our Tannaite authority, since he does not accept the association of perazi, “unwalled,” in the two verses cited. But why has our Tannaite authority not stipulated as did R. Joshua ben Qorha?*
- G. *What is the reason? He accepts the association of perazi in the two verses cited.*
- H. *This is what he actually said: Which model should Susa follow? Surely neither the unwalled nor the walled cities. [The verse says it should observe the fifteenth, but, not being surrounded by a wall since the time of Joshua, it cannot do so.]*
- I. *Said Rava, and some say [the following was transmitted] anonymously: Susa is different, because a miracle was performed there.*
- J. *This is understandable according to our Tannaite authority, for it is written, “...province by province (medinah u-medinah) and city by city (ve-ir va-ir)” (Est. 9:28); “province by province” to differentiate between those [cities] surrounded by a wall since the time of Joshua bin Nun and those surrounded by a wall since the time of Ahasuerus, “city by city” also to differentiate between Susa and [all] other cities. But, according to R. Joshua ben Qorha, while it is understandable that “province by province” is to differentiate between Susa and [all] other cities, why is “city by city” included?*
- K. *R. Joshua ben Qorha would say to you: And who says everything is fine according to our Tannaite authority? Since he accepts the association of*

*“unwalled,” in the two verses, why is the phrase “province by province” [here]?*

- M. *[No, it is understandable according to our Tannaite authority, and] the verse is included to permit midrashic exposition, as presented by R. Joshua ben Levi, for said R. Joshua ben Levi: A city, and everything near it, and everything seen together with it, are considered like the city [for purposes of determining the date of reading Esther; cf. 3b].*

## **Four Teachings of Rabbi Yermiah or Rabbi Hiyya bar Abba**

**II.3** A. How far [does this area around the city extend]?

B. Said R. Yermiah, or, if you prefer, R. Hiyya bar Abba: About [the distance] from Hamtan to Tiberias, a *mil*.”

P. Let him say: [Exactly] a *mil*.

Q. *We conclude from this:* What is the length of a *mil*? *About [the distance] from Hamtan to Tiberias.*

**II.4** A. And said R. Yermiah, or, if you prefer, R. Hiyya bar Abba: The seers (*sofim*) [the biblical prophets] established [the double forms of the letters] Mem, Nun, Sadi, Pe, [and] Qof.

B. *Do you really think so?* For it is written, “These are the commandments” (Lev. 27:34) [meaning that,] from now on, a prophet may not introduce any innovations [understood here to refer to the form in which the laws are written, not merely their contents or interpretations] (Sifra, end). Furthermore, said Rav Hisda: The Mem and Samekh in the tablets [of the Ten Commandments] **[3a]** were standing in place miraculously.

C. *Yes, they existed, but they did not know if [they were to be used] in the middle of a word or at the end of a word; and along came the seers and established [that] the open forms of the letters [should be used] in the middle of a word and the closed forms of the letters [should be used] at the end of a word.*

E. [But,] in the last analysis, “These are the commandments” [means] that no prophet will introduce any innovations from now on. [So how could they have done even this?]

F. They forgot them, and [the seers] re-established them.

**II.5** A. And said R. Yermiah, or, if you prefer, R. Hiyya bar Abba: Onkelos the proselyte translated the Aramaic rendition of the Torah following R. Eliezer and R. Joshua.

B. Jonathan ben Uzziel translated the Aramaic rendition of the Prophets following Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, and the Land of Israel quaked over an area four hundred parasangs square.

- C. A small voice proclaimed: Who is this who has revealed My secrets to mankind?
- D. Jonathan ben Uzziel stood up and said: It is I who have revealed Your secrets to mankind. It is fully known to you that I did this neither for my honor, nor for the honor of my father's house; rather I did it for your honor, in order that disputes not increase in Israel.
- E. He also sought to reveal the Aramaic rendition of the Hagiographa.
- F. A small voice proclaimed to him: Enough for you!
- G. *Why?*
- H. *Because it contains the time of the Messiah.\**
  - I. Is it true that: Onkelos the proselyte translated the Aramaic rendition of the Torah? For, said Rav Iqa bar Abbin, said Rav Hananel, said Rav: *What is [the meaning of] that which is written*, "And they read in the scroll God's teaching, explaining, giving the meaning; and they understood the reading" (Neh. 8: 8)? "And they read in the scroll God's teaching," this is the reading [itself]; "explaining," this is the Aramaic translation; "giving the meaning," these are the verses;"and they understood the reading," these are the syntactic relationships and inflections (*pisug te'amim*)[others: cantillations], and some say these are the Massoret.[So obviously the Aramaic translation dates from the time of Ezra, not that of Onkelos.]
  - J. They forgot them and [the seers] re-established them.
  - K. *Why is the [the translation of the] Torah different [presumably of lesser significance], seeing that the earth failed to quake [when it was revealed], but it did quake for [that of] the Prophets?*
  - L. *[It did not quake in the first case], because the Torah is clear [and the Aramaic merely clarified what was obvious], but [it quaked] for the Prophets, because some matters are clear, while some are hidden. [And, presumably, the heavenly voice objected to their being revealed in the Aramaic vernacular.]* As is written, "On that day, the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great as the mourning of Hadad-Rimmon in the plain of Megiddon" (Zec. 12:11).



- M. *And said Rav Joseph: Were it not for the Aramaic rendition of this verse [which follows and is identical, within the normal range of targumic textual variants, to Jonathan's translation, a.l.], I would not know what it was talking about.*
- N. *[It means:] "On that day, the mourning in Jerusalem will be as great as the mourning of Ahab son of Omri, whom Hadad-Rimmon son of Tab-Rimmon killed in Rammot Gilead, and the mourning of Josiah son of Amon, whom Pharaoh Hagira killed in the plain of Megiddo."*

- II.6**
- A. "And I alone, Daniel, saw the vision; and the men who were with me did not see the vision, but a great trembling fell upon them, and they fled into hiding" (Dan. 10: 7). Who are the men?
  - B. Said R. Yermiah, or, if you prefer, R. Hiyya bar Abba: Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.
  - C. *They are more important than he; and he is more important than they. They are more important than he, because they are prophets, and he is not a prophet. He is more important than they, because he saw [the vision], and they did not see [it].*
  - D. *And if they did not see [the vision], why did they flee, trembling?*
  - E. *Even though they did not see [the vision], their mazalot saw it.*
  - F. *Said Ravina: From this, learn [the following]: One who trembles, even though he does not see [the cause], his mazal does.*
  - G. *What is the procedure to correct this?*
  - H. *Let him recite the Shema`.*
  - I. *And if he is standing in a dirty place [where the Shema` cannot be recited, cf. M Ber. 3:3 (22b ff)], let him remove himself from the place four paces [usually four cubits is required].*
  - J. *And if not [i.e., either he cannot move or, less likely, if that does not work], let him say: "The goat at the butcher shop is fatter than I."*



## Reverting to B.2's proof. The Importance of Reading the Megillah

- II.7** A. *And now that you have said that "...province by province and city by city..." (Est. 9:28) is to be used for midrashic exposition, why is "...family by family..." included?*
- B. Said R. Yosé bar Hanina: To include the priestly and levitical families, who must interrupt their service and come to hear the Megillah reading, as R. Judah said in the name of Rav: Priests in the midst of sacrificing (*be-avodatan*), and Levites [singing] on their platform (*be-dukhanan*), and Israelites at their prayer station (*be-ma'amadan*), all must interrupt their worship and go to hear the Megillah reading.
- C. *It is also learned this way [in a baraita]:* Priests in the midst of their sacrifices, and Levites [singing] on their platform, and Israelites at their prayer station, all must interrupt their worship and go to hear the Megillah reading.
- D. From here, the sages of the House of R. [Judah the Patriarch] drew support [for the notion] that one should interrupt Torah study and go to hear the Megillah reading. It is an inference from major to minor based the [Temple] service: We interrupt the [Temple] service, which is very important; should this not be even more proper for Torah study?
- E. And is the [Temple] service indeed more important than Torah study?
- F. It is written, "And, while Joshua was in Jericho, he looked up and saw a man standing before him...and he bowed on his face"(Jos. 5:13-14).
- A. *Now, how could he do that, for* said R. Joshua ben Levi: A man is forbidden to greet his fellow at night. *We are concerned that he might be a demon.*
- B. *That case is different, because he [the visitor] said to him [Joshua], "...because I am the leader of God's hosts" (Jos. 5:14).*
- C. *And maybe they [the demons] lie, [so why should Joshua have believed him]?*
- D. *We have learned that they do not pronounce God's name in vain.*
- G. He [the visitor] said to him [Joshua]: Last night you interrupted [or: failed to offer] (*bitaltem*) the evening sacrifice, and tonight you interrupted [or: failed to carry out] Torah study.
- H. He [Joshua] said to him: In response to which of them did you come?
- I. He [the visitor] said to him: "I came now" (Jos. 5:15).
- J. Immediately, "Joshua spent that night in the valley (*ba-'emeq*)" (Jos. 5:13).
- K. Said R. Yohanan: **[3b]** This means that he spent the night in the depths (*be-'omeqah*) of halakhah.
- L. And, Rav Samuel bar Oniah said: Torah study indeed is more important than offering daily sacrifices, for it says, "I came now" (Jos. 5:15).
- M. *There is no contradiction This [Joshua's interruption of study] is communal [study, which is more important than the sacrifices], while the other [mentioned by R. Judah's students, the less important kind] is [that of an] individual.*
- N. And is an individual's [study] really less important [than the sacrifices]? *And we have learned in the Mishnah: On [the weekdays of] a*

festival, women [mourners] may chant dirges together, but not beat themselves. R. Ishmael says: If they are near the bier, they may beat themselves. On New Moons, on Hannukah, and on Purim they may both chant dirges together and beat themselves, but they may not recite dirges responsively [following Rashi] (M M.Q. 3:8-9). And said Rabbah bar Huna: A [weekday of a] festival does not take precedence over [the mourning for] a sage; even more so [is this true for] Hannukah and Purim.

- O. *You are talking about reverence for Torah [due a sage by virtue of his learning]. This reverence for Torah due to an individual is more important [than the sacrificial service]. But an individual's Torah study is less important.*

**II.8** A. Said Rava: It is obvious to me, that [if one must choose between] sacrifices and the Megillah reading, the Megillah reading takes precedence, from [the teaching of] R. Yosé bar Hanina, study and the Megillah reading, the Megillah reading takes precedence, from the proof of the House of R., taking care of] an unclaimed corpse (met mitzvah) and the Megillah reading, [taking care of] an unclaimed corpse takes precedence, from what is taught: One should interrupt Torah study to take out a corpse and to bring in a bride; the [Temple] service and [caring for] an unclaimed corpse, [caring for] an unclaimed corpse takes precedence, from "...and for the sake of his sister" (Num. 6: 7).

B. *For it is taught:* What does Scripture mean by "and for the sake of his sister" (Num. 6: 7)? If someone was going to slaughter his Paschal sacrifice or to circumcise his son, and he heard that a [close] relative of his died, perhaps he should defile himself [by caring for the body]. You said: "He may not defile himself" (Num. 6: 7). Perhaps, just as he may not defile himself because of his [dead] sister, he may not defile himself for an unclaimed corpse? [No.] Scripture says: "for the sake of his sister" [meaning] it is for his sister that he may not defile himself, but he may defile himself for an unclaimed corpse.

C. *Rava asked: Which takes precedence, reading the Megillah or [caring for] an unclaimed corpse? Does reading the Megillah take precedence, because of proclaiming the miracle, or does [caring for] an unclaimed corpse, because of respect for a human being?*

D. *After he asked [the question], he answered it: [Caring for] an unclaimed corpse takes precedence, for a master said: Respect for a human being is so important that it supersedes a negative commandment in the Torah.*

## Glossing B. 2. And Further Teachings of Rabbi Joshua ben Levi on Matters Related to Purim

- II.9** A. *Reverting to the body of the foregoing:* Said R. Joshua ben Levi: A city (*kerakh*), and all that is near it, and all that is seen with it is considered like the city.
- B. *One taught:* “Near,” even though not seen; “seen,” even though not near.
- C. *It is understandable [that one says] “seen, even though not near,” as [in a case] where it is situated at the top of a mountain. But, how can it be “near, even though not seen”?*
- D. Said R. Yermiah: When it is situated in a wadi.
- II.10** A. And said R. Joshua ben Levi: A city that was settled and later surrounded by a wall is considered like a village.
- B. *What is the reason?*
- C. *It is written, “If a man sells a dwelling place in a walled city...” (Lev. 25:29) [meaning] that it was surrounded [by the wall] and then settled, and not that it was settled and later walled in.*
- II.11** A. And said R. Joshua ben Levi: A city (*kerakh*) in which there are not ten idle men is considered like a village.
- B. *What does this teach us? We have learned: Which type of town (‘ir) is considered ‘large’? One in which there are ten idle men; [if there are] fewer than that, it is considered a village (M 1:3A).*
- C. *He [Rabbi Joshua ben Levi] requires [this additional statement about the] city (kerakh), [for the rule applies] even if they [i.e., the idle men] come from elsewhere.*
- II.12** A. And said R. Joshua ben Levi: A city (*kerakh*) that was destroyed and subsequently resettled is treated like a city.
- B. *What does “destroyed” mean? If we say that the walls were destroyed, [we can conclude that] if it is settled, yes [it is considered to be a walled city], [but,] if it is uninhabited, no. But it is taught: R. Eliezer beRabbi Yosé says: “which has no wall” (Lev. 25:30) [means] even though it lacks one now, but it had one formerly (Sifra, a.l.). [So a city that was once surrounded by a wall is still considered a city.]*
- C. *So what is the meaning of “destroyed”? “Destroyed” with respect to [its not] having ten idle men.*
- II.13** A. And said R. Joshua ben Levi: **[4a]** Lod, and Ono, and Gei HaHarashim have been surrounded by a wall since the time of Joshua bin Nun.
- B. *Did Joshua [really] build them? Elpaal build them, for it is written, “The sons of Elpaal were Eber, and Misham, and Shemer. He built Ono, and Lod, and its suburbs” (1Ch. 8:12).*
- C. *But, according to you, Asa built them, as is written, “And Asa built the fortified cities of Judah” (2Ch. 14: 5).*
- D. *Said R. Eleazar: They were surrounded by a wall at the time of Joshua bin Nun. They destroyed them in the time of the concubine in Gibeah [cf. Jud.*

20], and along came Elpaal and built them. They were destroyed again. Then Asa repaired them. Note carefully that it is written, “And he said to Judah: Let us build these cities” (2Ch. 14: 6), because they were [established] cities from before.

E. *Learn from this [i.e., this is a valid observation].*

**II.14** A. And said R. Joshua ben Levi: Women are obligated to [observe] the reading of the Megillah, because they, too, were included in that miracle.

**II.15** A. And said R. Joshua ben Levi: When Purim falls on the Sabbath, one asks about and expounds the matters of the day [even though the Megillah is read on a different day].

B. *Why is Purim different? [The same applies to] even [a] holiday, also, as is taught: Moses instituted the practice for Israel that they should ask about and expound the matters of the day [at the appropriate time], laws of Passover on Passover, laws of Pentecost [Shavu`ot] on Pentecost, and laws of Sukkot on Sukkot [cf. T 3:5, below, 32b].*

C. *Purim needs special mention. Perhaps we should prohibit [expounding the book of Esther and related matters] on the Sabbath out of deference to the decree of Rabbah [who said that one should not read the Megillah on the Sabbath, because one might violate the Sabbath laws by carrying it in a public place]. [No.] It teaches us [i.e., it is as previously stated.]*

**II.16** A. And said R. Joshua ben Levi: One is required to read the Megillah at night [of the appropriate day] and to go over it in the daytime, as is said, “My God, I will read in the daytime, even though you do not answer, and at night, I am not quiet. (Psa. 22: 3).

B. *They deduced from this that one should read it at night and study its Mishnah in the daytime.*

C. *Said R. Yermiah to them: It is clear to me from what R. Hiyya bar Abba [said], that people say: “I will review this passage and go over [i.e., repeat] it.”*

D. *It is also said [parallel to A]: Said R. Helbo, said Ulla of Biri: One is obligated to read the Megillah at night and to go over it in the daytime, as is said, “...in order that my being might sing to you, never being silent; O Lord, my God, I will praise you forever” (Psa. 30:13).*

**III.1** A. **But the villages may advance to the day of assembly (M 1:1B).** Said R. Hanina: [The] sages ruled leniently regarding the villages, allowing them to advance [the Megillah reading] to the day of assembly, in order that they could provide water and food for their relatives in the [walled] cities.

B. **[4b] Is that to say that this was done for the benefit of the villages? And we have learned: If it [Adar 14] falls on the second day [of the week], villages and large towns read on that very day (M 1:2B).** And, if so, they should advance [the reading] to the day of assembly [i.e., to the previous Thursday].

D. *That would be the tenth [of Adar], and the Rabbis did not institute the tenth.*

E. *[But what about the following case?] Come and learn: If it [Adar 14] falls on the fifth day [of the week], villages and large towns read on that very day”*

(M 1:2D), and, if so, they would advance [the reading] to the day of assembly, which would be the eleventh.

- F. *We do not reschedule from one day of assembly to another.*
- G. *Come and learn:* **Said R. Judah: When [is Esther read from Adar 11-15]? In a place where they assemble on the second and fifth days [of the week]. But in a place where they do not assemble on the second and fifth [days of the week], they may read it only at its proper time [cf. T Meg. 1: 3]** *And if you think that this was instituted for the benefit of the cities, because they [the villagers] do not go to the cities on the second and fifth days [of the week], should they cause the cities to lose?*
- H. *Do not say [that the reason is] “so they can provide water and food...,” but say “because they provide water and food for their relatives in the cities.”*

**IV.1 A. How does this happen? If the fourteenth falls on the second day, villages and large towns read on that very day, and walled cities on the next day Adar 15. If Adar 14 falls on the third or on the fourth day of the week, villages advance to the day of assembly Monday, Adar 13 or 12, respectively; and large towns read on that very day Tuesday or Wednesday, Adar 14; and walled cities on the next day Wednesday or Thursday, Adar 15. If Adar 14 falls on the fifth day, villages and large towns read on that very day, and walled cities on the next day Friday, Adar 15.**

- B. *Why is the first part [of the Mishnah], which follows the sequence [of the days] of the month, different from the last part [of the Mishnah], which follows the sequence of the days [of the week]?*
- C. *Since they switch [from one day to the other], he followed the order of the days of the week [to avoid confusion and to make it easier to remember].*

**V.1 A. If Adar 14 falls on the eve of the Sabbath, villages advance to the day of assembly Thursday, Adar 13, and large towns and walled cities read on that very day Friday. If Adar 14 falls on the Sabbath, villages and large towns advance and read it on the day of assembly Thursday, Adar 12, and walled cities on the next day Sunday, Adar 15. If Adar 14 falls after the Sabbath on Sunday, villages advance to the day of assembly Thursday, Adar 11, and large towns read on that very day, and walled cities on the next day Monday, Adar 15: According to whom is the Mishnah [formulated], R. [Judah the Patriarch] or R. Yosé?**

- B. *Why [might one think] R.? For it is taught: If it [Adar 14] falls on the eve of the Sabbath [Friday], villages and large towns advance to the day of assembly, and those surrounded by a wall read on that very day. R. says: I say: The towns should not be rescheduled from their [regular] situation, but rather both read on that very day [cf. T 1:2].*
- C. *What is the reason of the first Tannaite authority?*
- D. *As is written, “...in each and every year” (Est. 9:21), [meaning] just as in every [other] year the towns precede the walled cities, so, here, the towns should precede the walled cities.*

- E. *And should I say [that] “...in each and every year” [means] just as in every [other] year the towns are not rescheduled from their [regular] situation, so, here, the towns should not be rescheduled from their [regular] situation?*
- F. *It is different here, because it is impossible [any other way].*
- G. *And what is Rabbi’s reason?*
- H. “Each and every year” [means] just as in every [other] year the towns are not rescheduled from their [regular] situation, so, here, the towns should not be rescheduled from their [regular] situation.
- I. *And should I say “in each and every year” [means] just as in every [other] year the towns precede the walled cities, so, here, also, the towns should precede the walled cities?*
- J. *It is different here, because it is impossible [any other way].*
- K. *Why [might one think] R. Yosé? As is taught: **If it [Adar 14] fell on the eve of the Sabbath [Friday], the walled cities and the villages advance to the day of assembly, and the large towns read on that very day [cf. T 1:2; above, A.C]. R. Yosé says, the walled cities never precede the towns, but both read on that very day [cf. T 1:2].***
- L. *What is the reason of the first Tannaite authority?*
- M. As is written, “...in each and every year,” [meaning] just as in every [other] year the towns [read] on the fourteenth, and the time of one [type of] place is not the time of the other [type of] place, so here the towns [should read] on the fourteenth, and the time of one [type of] place should not be the time of the other.
- N. *And should I say “in every year” [means] just as in every [other] year the walled cities do not precede the towns, so, here, the walled cities should not precede the towns?*
- O. *It is different here, because it is impossible [any other way].*
- P. *What is the reason of R. Yosé?*
- Q. “In each and every year” [means] just as in every [other] year the walled cities do not precede the towns, so, here, the walled cities do not precede the towns.
- R. *And should I say “each and every year” [means] just as in every other year the time of one [type of] place is not the time of another, so here, the time of one [type of] place is not the time of the other?*
- S. *It is different here, because it is impossible [any other way].*

**V.2** A. Does R. [Judah the Patriarch] really think that we never reschedule the towns back to the [preceding] day of assembly? For it is taught: **If it [Adar 14] falls on the Sabbath, villages advance to the day of assembly, and large towns read on the eve of the Sabbath [Friday], and walled cities on the next day [Sunday]. R. says: I say: since the towns have been rescheduled from their regular situation [from Saturday to Friday], let them be rescheduled to the day of assembly [to Thursday] (T 1: 2).**

B. *Is that how it should be? There, their [proper] time is the Sabbath, and since they have been rescheduled, they may be rescheduled [a little earlier]. And here their [proper] time is the eve of the Sabbath.*



C. *According to whom is formulated the statement that R. Helbo said: Said Rav Huna: Purim that falls on the Sabbath, everyone is rescheduled to the day of assembly.*

D. *Do you really think that “everyone is rescheduled”? There are walled cities who observe [the occasion] on the next day? But [this actually means]: Any place that is rescheduled, should be rescheduled to the day of assembly.*

E. *According to whom [is this formulated]? According to R..*

**V.3** A. *In any case, everyone agrees that we do not read the Megillah on the Sabbath. What is the reason?*

B. Said Rabbah: Everyone is obligated [to hear] the reading of the Megillah [and the blowing of the Shofar], but not everyone is expert in [the way to do] the reading of the Megillah, [so we prohibit reading it on the Sabbath,] lest one take it in his hand and go to an expert to learn [how to read it] and carry it four cubits in a public domain [in violation of the Sabbath law; cf. M **Shab. 1:1**].

C. *And this is the reason for [prohibiting the blowing of] the Shofar [on Rosh HaShannah when it falls on the Sabbath]; and this is the reason for [prohibiting the shaking of] the palm branch [on Sukkot when it falls on the Sabbath] also.*

D. Rav Joseph said: Because the eyes of the poor are lifted up during the reading of the Megillah [to await the distribution of the gifts for the poor, which cannot be done on the Sabbath].

E. *It is also taught this way [in a baraita]:* Even though they said villages [should] advance [the reading of the Megillah] to the day of assembly, one collects and distributes [the Purim gifts for the poor] on that very day [cf. T 1:4].

F. *[What do you mean] “even though they said...”?* It is really “because they said...”; but, since they said that villages may advance [the reading] to the day of assembly, they should collect and distribute [the Purim gifts for the poor] on that very [same] day, because the eyes of the poor are lifted up during the reading of the Megillah.

H. But **[5a]** “rejoicing” (Est. 9:19) is not observed other than at its [proper] time.

**V.4** A. Said Rav: At the [proper] time, one may read the Megillah, even in private; not at the [proper] time, [it may be read] only among ten [people; i.e., in public].

B. Rav Asi said: Whether at the [proper] time or not at the [proper] time, [one reads the Megillah only] among ten [people].

C. *There was once a [related] incident, and Rav followed the teaching of Rav Asi.*

D. *And did Rav [really] say this?* For said Rav Judah the son of Rav Samuel bar Sheilat in the name of Rav: If Purim falls on the Sabbath, the eve of the Sabbath is their [proper] time.

E. The eve of the Sabbath is their [proper] time? [How can that be?] The Sabbath is their [proper] time.

F. *Not really; this is the way it should be formulated:* Not at their [proper] time is like their [proper] time. Just as at their [proper] time [the Megillah may be read] even in private, so, even not at the [proper] time [may the Megillah be read] in private.



- G. *This was not stated in regard to [the matter of the Megillah reading [requiring] ten [people]. But what [is the meaning of] “the eve of the Sabbath is their [proper] time”?*
- H. *To refute [the teaching of] R. [Judah the Patriarch], who said: **Since the towns have been rescheduled from their [regular] situation [i.e., from Saturday to Friday], let them be rescheduled to the day of assembly [i.e., to Thursday] (T 1: 2).** It teaches us that the eve of the Sabbath is their [proper] time.*

### 1:3

- A. What is [considered] a “large town” [M 1:1B]? One in which there are ten idle men. Less than that is considered a village.
- B. [1] Regarding these [i.e., the above-noted days for reading the Megillah, M 1:1], they said, “...one may advance, but one may not postpone”; [2] but the time of the wood [offering] for the priests [cf. Neh. 10:35], and the Ninth of Av [cf. M **Ta'an. 4:6**], and the holiday offering [cf. M **Hag. 2:4**], and the [seven-year] assembly [cf. Deu. 31:10 ff] — one may postpone but not advance.
- C. Even though they said, “[On these occasions] one may advance but not postpone...,” they [these days] are eligible for eulogy, and for fast, and [for giving] gifts for the poor.
- D. Said R. Judah: When [is this, i.e., B1, applicable]? In a place where they assemble on the second and fifth days [of the week], but [in] a place where they do not assemble on the second and on the fifth days [of the week], one does not read it other than at its [proper] time.

**I.1** A. *One taught:* Ten idle men in the synagogue.

**II.1** A. Regarding these [i.e., the above days for reading the Megillah, M 1:1] they said: “One may advance, but one may not postpone” (M 1:3B).

B. *What is the reason?*

C. Said R. Abba, said Samuel: Scripture said, “...and it may not pass”(Est. 9:27).

**II.2** A. And said R. Abba, said Samuel: From where [i.e., from which biblical source] do we know that one should not count years by the days?

B. As is said, “[...for you it is the first] of the months of the year” (Exo. 12: 2) [meaning] you should count years by the months, but you should not count years by the days.

C. [3] And the rabbis of Caesarea in the name of R. Abba said: From what [biblical source does one know that] one should not count months by hours?

D. As is said, “...up to a month of days” (Num. 11:20) [meaning] you may count months by the days, but you should not count months by the hours.

**III.1** A. But the time of the wood [offering] of the priests, and the Ninth of Av, and the holiday offering, and the [seven-year] gathering may be postponed but not advanced (M 1:3B).

B. “The Ninth of Av...” (M 1:2B) *[is not advanced, because] we do not advance suffering.*

- C. “Holiday offering and the [seven-year] gathering...” *[are not advanced]*, *[because] the time of their obligations has not yet arrived.*
- D. *One taught:* One may postpone the holiday offering and the entire time of the holiday offering.
- E. *[That one makes this claim] for the holiday offering is understandable, because if it occurs on the Sabbath, we postpone it until after the Sabbath. But what is “the time of the holiday offering”?*
- F. *Said Rav Oshiah: This is what he [really] said:* [One may postpone] a holiday offering [due] on the Sabbath and the pilgrimage offering [due] even on a holiday, for one may postpone the time of the holiday offering.
- G. *According to whom is this [teaching]?*
- H. *The House of Shammai, as we have learned: The House of Shammai say: One may offer whole offerings (shelamim) on a holiday — however one may not place the hands on them — but not burnt offerings. And the House of Hillel say: One may offer whole offerings and burnt offerings and place the hands on them [cf. T Hag. 2:8].*
- I. *Rava said [in response to Rav Oshiah, in F]:* One may postpone the time of the holiday offering all throughout the holiday, *but no further, as we have learned: One who has not offered the holiday offering on the first day of the holiday may offer it throughout the entire holiday and [even] the last day of the holiday. If the holiday passed and he did not offer the holiday offering, he is not obligated for it.*
- J. *Rav Ashi said: One may postpone the holiday offering and the time of any holiday offering; one may postpone even [that of] Pentecost [Shavu`ot], which is [only] one day; as we have learned: [All] agree that if Pentecost falls on the Sabbath, that the day of slaughtering [the sacrifice] is [the day] after the Sabbath.*

**III.2** A. Said R. Eleazar, said R. Hanina: R. [Judah the Patriarch] did planting on Purim, [5b] and washed in the public fountain of Sepphoris on the Seventeenth of Tamuz, and tried to abolish the Ninth of Av, but they [i.e., the rabbis] did not agree with him.

B. Said R. Abba bar Zavda before him: My master, the incident did not occur this way, but rather it was [a year] when the Ninth of Av fell on the Sabbath, and they postponed it until after the Sabbath. And R. said: Since it has been postponed, let it be canceled. But the sages did not concur.

C. He [Rabbi Eleazar] applied to it [the verse]: “Two are better than one” (Ecc. 4: 9).

**III.3** A. *But how could R. [Judah the Patriarch] plant something on Purim? For Rav Joseph has taught: “...rejoicing, and drinking, and holiday [celebration]...” (Est. 9:19); “rejoicing” teaches that they [i.e., the days of Purim] are prohibited as a time of mourning; “drinking” teaches that it [Purim] is prohibited as a time of fasting; “and holiday [celebration]” teaches that it is prohibited [as a time] of doing work.*

B. *Rather, R. was required [to read the Megillah] on the fourteenth [of Adar], but when he planted, it was the fifteenth.*

C. *Really? R. lived in Tiberias, and Tiberias has been surrounded by a wall since the time of Joshua bin Nun.*

- D. *Rather, R. was required [to read the Megillah] on the fifteenth, but when he did the planting, it was on the fourteenth.*
- E. *And was it obvious to him [i.e., to R. Judah the Patriarch] that Tiberias has been surrounded by a wall since the time of Joshua bin Nun? For Hezekiah read [the Megillah] in Tiberias on [both] the fourteenth and the fifteenth; he was uncertain if it was surrounded by a wall since the time of Joshua bin Nun or not.*
- F. *Hezekiah was uncertain; R. [Judah the Patriarch] was certain.*
- G. *And if he was really so certain, who permitted [working]? For it is written in Megillat Ta'anit: "...('et) the fourteenth and the fifteenth [of Adar]" (Est. 9:21) are days of Purim, on which it is prohibited to mourn [cf. Meg. **Ta'an. 31**], [and, presumably, work was prohibited together with eulogizing the dead]. And said Rava: This is needed only to prohibit those obligated to observe one particular day [from doing the prohibited act] on that day, and vice versa.*
- I. *These words apply only to mourning or to fasting, but work [is prohibited] one day and no more.*
- J. *Is that so? And yet Rav saw a certain man who was planting flax on Purim; he cursed him, and his flax did not grow.*
- K. *There he was required [to abstain from work] on that very day.*
- L. *Rabbah son of Rava said: Even if you say it was his day, [one might argue that] they accepted upon themselves [the prohibition against] mourning and fasting; they did not accept upon themselves [the prohibition against] working, for at first is written, "...rejoicing, and drinking, and holiday [celebration]..." (Est. 9:19), while later is written, "...to observe them as days of drinking and rejoicing" (Est. 9:22); but "holiday [celebration]" is not written [in the second, and presumably binding description].*
- M. *And, [if so,] why did Rav curse the man [in JJ]?*
- N. *It was a case of **Things that are permitted but others accustom themselves to prohibit them [you are not allowed to permit them in their presence] (Sifrei, Deu. 33:19).** And in the locale of R., they did not accustom themselves that way.*
- O. *If you wish, say: They did accustom themselves this way [i.e., not to work], but R. planted something connected with rejoicing; as we have learned: **If these [days of praying for rain] passed, and they were not answered, one should reduce [the amount of] business, building and planting, betrothals and marriages (M Ta'an. 1: 7).** And one taught regarding it: "Building" [means] building in connection with rejoicing; "planting" [means] planting in connection with rejoicing.*
- Q. *What is "building in connection with rejoicing"? One who builds a marriage house for his son.*

- R. What is “planting in connection with rejoicing”?  
One who plants a royal park.

**III.4** A. Reverting to the body of the foregoing: Hezekiah read [the Megillah] in Tiberias on [both] the fourteenth and the fifteenth [of Adar]; *he was uncertain if it was surrounded by a wall since the time of Joshua bin Nun or not:*

- B. *And how could the status of Tiberias be uncertain to him? For it is written, “...and the fortified cities Ziddim-zer, and Hamat, and Raqat, and Kinneret...” (Jos. 19:35). And it is established for us: “Raqat is Tiberias.”*
- C. *This is the reason he was uncertain: Because one side is walled in by the sea.*
- D. *If so, why was he uncertain? It is undoubtedly not a wall, as is taught, “...which has a [real city] wall...” (Lev. 25:30), not a wall formed by the roofs [of the buildings at the edge of the city, following Rashi], to the exclusion of Tiberias, whose sea is its wall.*
- E. *Regarding [the laws of] houses situated in a walled city, he was not uncertain; he was uncertain [only] about the Megillah reading, [i.e.,] which were [described in the Bible] as unwalled or walled with respect to the Megillah reading; whether [the distinction is that] these are open, and the others are not open, and this [Tiberias] is also open, or that these are protected and the others are not protected, and this [Tiberias] is also protected. Therefore he was uncertain.*

**III.5** A. Rav Asi read the Megillah in Husal on the fourteenth and on the fifteenth; he was uncertain whether it was surrounded by a wall since the time of Joshua bin Nun or not.

- B. One [person] said: Said Rav Asi: The Husal of Beit Benjamin was surrounded by a wall since the time of Joshua.

**III.6** A. *Said R. Yohanan: When I was a child, I said something [regarding the interpretation of part of Jos. 19:35, about which] I asked the elders, [6a] and it was found to be as I said: Hammat is Tiberias. And why was its name called Hammat? Because of the hot springs of Tiberias. Raqat is Sepphoris. And why was it called Raqat? Because it is high like a river bank. Kinneret is Gennosar.*

*And why is it called Kinneret? Because its fruit are as sweet as the sound of a harp.*

- C. *Said Rava: Who agrees with the one who said Raqat is not Tiberias? For when a man dies here [in Babylonia], there [in Tiberias] they eulogize him in this way: He is great in Sheishakh. And He has a [great] name in Raqat. And when they bring the coffin there, they eulogize him in this way: Lovers of the remnants, dwellers of Raqat, Go out and receive the dead of Omeq.*
- D. When R. Zeira died, a certain eulogizer began thus: The land of Shinar conceived and gave birth, The land of beauty [i.e., Israel] raised her precious ones, Woe to her, said Raqat, For she has lost the object of her pleasure.
- E. Rather said Rava [in opposition to R. Yohanan, in A]: Hamat is the hot springs of Gerrar; Raqat is Tiberias; Kinneret is Gennosar. And why is it [Tiberias] called Raqat? For even the empty ones there are full of mitzvot like a pomegranate [is full of seeds].
- F. R. Yermiah said: Raqat is its name; and why is it called Tiberias? Because it sits on the navel of the Land of Israel.
- G. Rabbah said: Raqat is its name; and why is it called Tiberias? Because its view is good.
- H. Said Zeira: Qitron is Sepphoris. And why is it called Sepphoris? Because it is situated at the top of a mountain like a bird.
- I. *And is Qitron really Sepphoris? Qitron is in the territory of Zebulun, as is written, "Zebulun did not take over [the territory of] the inhabitants of Qitron and the inhabitants of Nahalof" (Jud. 1:30).*
- J. And Zebulun complained about its borders, as is said, "Zebulun is a nation that belittles itself to the death" (Jud. 5:18). D. What is the reason?
- K. Because "Naftali is on the heights of the field (steppe)" (ibid.).
- L. Said Zebulun before The Holy One, Blessed Be He: Master of the World, To my brothers You gave fields and

vineyards, [i.e., arable lands], and to me You gave mountains and hills. To my brothers You gave lands (*aratzot*), and to me You gave seas and ocean currents.

M. He [God] said to him [Zebulun]: They all need you [for] the *hilazon*, as is said, "...and the hidden things buried in the sand" (Deu. 33:19).

N. Taught Rav Joseph: "Hidden" (*sefunei*) is the *hilazon*; "buried" (*temunei*) is the sardine (*tarit*); "sand" (*hol*) is white glass.

O. He [Zebulun] said before Him: Master of the World, who will tell me [when they are taking my merchandise from the sea]?

P. He [God] said to him: "There they will offer pious offerings..." (ibid.). You will have this sign. Anyone who will take [these possessions] from you without payment will not profit from his endeavors at all.

Q. *And if you think that Qitron is Sepphoris, why is it complaining about its borders? Sepphoris is a highly desirable place.*

R. *And if you say that it does not fulfill [the Biblical promise of] "flowing with milk and honey" [found in over a dozen verses, e.g., Exo. 3:8], has Resh Laqish not said: I personally saw the "flowing of milk and honey" of Sepphoris, and it was [an area] sixteen mil square.*

S. *And if you say that it was not as desirable as that of his brothers, said Rabbah bar Bar Hanna, said R. Yohanan: I personally saw the "flowing of milk and honey" of all of the Land of Israel, and it was approximately [as large as the area] from Bei Kobi to Aqra of Tulbaqni, twenty-two parasangs long and six parasangs wide.*

T. *Even so, fields and villages are preferable to him. Pay careful attention also to what is written: "And Naftali is on the heights of the field (steppe)" (Jud. 5:18).*

U. *Learn from this.*

**III.7** A. Said Rav Abahu: “And Ekron will be uprooted (*te`aqer*)” (Zep. 2: 4) this is Caesarea, daughter of Edom [i.e., Rome], which is situated between the sands, and it was a stake stuck in Israel in the days of the Greeks.

B. And when the kingdom of the House of Hashmonai arose and overcame them, they used to call it Ahidat Migdal Shir.

**III.8** A. Said R. Yosé bar Hanina: What is [the meaning of] that which is written, “And I will remove its blood from its mouth and its abominations from between its teeth; and it, too, will remain for our God [and it will be like a clan in Judah; and Ekron, like Jebus]” (Zec. 9: 7)?

B. “And I will remove its blood from its mouth” is their temple; “and its abominations from between its teeth” is their house of rocks; “and it too will remain for our God” refers to the synagogues and schools in Edom [Rome]; “and it will be like a clan in Judah; and Ekron, like Jebus,” these are the theaters and circuses in Edom [Rome], in which the officials of Judah will teach Torah in public.

**III.9** A. Said R. Isaac: “Leshem” (Zep. 2: 4) is Pamlas; “Ekron will be uprooted” (ibid.) is Caesarea, daughter of Edom [Rome], which was the capital of kings [cf. XXI.1A).

B. *There are some who say that they raise kings there; and some who say that they appoint the kings from there.*

C. [Regarding] Caesarea [i.e., Rome?] and Jerusalem: If someone will tell you: that both of them have been destroyed, do not believe; that both of them have been inhabited, do not believe; that Caesarea has been destroyed and Jerusalem has been inhabited, or that Jerusalem has been destroyed and Caesarea has been inhabited, believe, as is said, “I will fill the destroyed” (Eze. 26: 2) [meaning] if this one is full, the other is destroyed; if the other is full, this one is destroyed.

D. *Rav Nahman bar Isaac said: [One can prove the statement in C] from here: “And one nation will be stronger than the other” (Gen. 25:23).*

**III.10** A. And said R. Isaac: *What [is meant by that which] is written, “The evil doer will be*



favoured, but he will never learn righteousness” (Isa. 26:10)?

- B. Said Isaac before The Holy One, Blessed Be He: Master of the World, “Will Esau be favoured”?
- C. He [God] said to him: “He is wicked.”
- D. He [Isaac] said to Him: “Will he never learn righteousness” (Isa. 26:10)?
- E. He [God] said to him: “In the land of uprightness, he will sin” (Isa. 26:10).
- F. He [Isaac] said to Him: “If so he will not see the glory of God” (ibid.).

**III.11** A. And said R. Isaac: What [is meant by that which] is written, “Grant not, O Lord, the desires of the evildoer; do not allow his plans to succeed, so they do not exalt themselves, *selah*” (Psa. 140: 9)?

- B. Said Jacob before The Holy One, Blessed Be He: Master of the World, do not give Esau the wicked his strongest wishes; “Do not allow his plans to succeed” is [6b] Germamia of Edom, without whom they would go out and destroy the entire world.
- C. *And said R. Hama bar Hanina: There are 300 associates of the crown in Germamia of Edom, and there are 365 officials in Babylonia. And every day they go out opposite each other and kill one of them, and they argue about choosing a king.*

**III.12** A. And said R. Isaac: If someone says to you: I have studied and not found [what I was looking for], do not believe [him]; I did not study and I found [what I was looking for], do not believe [him]; I studied and found [what I was looking for] believe.

- B. *This applies to words of Torah; but in business, it [i.e., finding success] is [due to] support from heaven.*
- C. *And [even] regarding words of Torah they said [this] only to sharpen [the mind]; but [the ability] to remember the teaching is support from heaven.*

**III.13** A. And said R. Isaac: If you have seen a wicked person whom the hour favours, do not strive with him, as is said, “Do not strive with evildoers” (Psa. 37: 1).

- B. Moreover, his ways are successful, as is said, “his ways will be prosperous at all times” (Psa. 10: 5).
- C. Moreover, he will be victorious in judgment, as is said, “Your judgments are above and beyond him” (ibid.).
- D. Moreover, he will see [the downfall of] his enemies, as is said, “he will blow at his false accusers” (ibid.).
- E. Is that so? For has R. Yohanan not said in the name of R. Shimon bar Yohai: It is permissible to strive with wicked persons in this world, as is said, “Those who leave the Torah will praise the wicked, while those who observe the Torah will strive against them” (Pro. 28: 4)?
- F. *And it is taught:* R. Dostai bar Maton said: It is permissible to strive with wicked persons in this world.
- G. And if someone whispers to you saying, “Do not compete with evildoers, and do not be jealous of sinners” (Psa. 37: 1), [only] someone demented speaks this way.
- H. Rather, “Do not compete with evildoers” [means] to be like evildoers, “and do not be jealous of sinners” [means] to be like sinners.
- I. But it says, “Let your heart not be jealous of sinners...” (Pro. 23:17).
- J. *There is no contradiction. This [i.e., the suggestion not to compete] applies to his [own personal] matters; the other applies to Heaven’s matters.*
- K. *And if you wish, say: Both apply to his [own personal] matters, and there is [still] no contradiction. This applies to a completely righteous person; the other applies to an incompletely righteous person.*
- L. *As Rav Huna said: What [is the meaning of what] is written, “Why look at traitors or be silent when the wicked devours the person more righteous than he is” (Hab. 1:13)? He may devour someone more righteous than he; he cannot devour a completely righteous person.*
- M. *And if you wish, say: [A case where] the hour favours him is different.*

**III.14** A. Said Ulla: Italy of Greece (*Magna Graecia*) is a large city of Rome.

B. *And it is 300 parasangs square and contains 365 marketplaces, like the number of days in a solar year. The smallest of them is the fowl sellers', and it is 16 mil square.*

C. Every day the king dines in one of them, and [every] resident, even if not born there, receives a gift.

D. And [similarly] everyone born there, even if not in residence, receives a gift from the palace.

E. There are 3000 bathhouses in it and 500 windows emitting smoke outside the city wall.

F. One side is [bordered by] the sea; one side is [bordered by] the mountains and hills; one side is an iron wall; and one side is rocks and swamp.

### 1:4

**A. If they read the Megillah in the first Adar, and [subsequently] the year was declared a leap year, they must read it [again] in the second Adar.**

**B. There is no difference between the first Adar and the second Adar except the reading of the Megillah and “gifts to the poor.”**

**I.1** A. But, regarding the order of the [special Sabbath Torah] portions, they are equal.

**I.2** A. *According to whom is our Mishnah [formulated]? Not the first Tannaite authority [of the following baraita] and not R. Eliezer beRabbi Yosé, and not Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel, as is taught:*

**B. If they read the Megillah in the first Adar, and [subsequently] the year was declared a leap year, they must read it [again] in the second Adar, for all commandments that are observed in the second [Adar] are observed in the first [Adar], except for the reading of the Megillah.**

**B. R. Eliezer beRabbi Yosé says: They should not read it [again] in the second Adar, for all commandments that are observed in the second [Adar] can be observed in the first.**

**C. Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel says in the name R. Yosé: They also read it in the second Adar, for all commandments that are observed in the second [Adar] are not observed in the first.**

**D. And they are equal with respect to mourning or fasting, for they are prohibited in both [months] [cf. T 1:6].**

E. *Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel says the same thing as the first Tannaite authority.*

F. *Said Rav Pappa: The order of the [special Sabbath Torah] portions is a difference between them for: The first Tannaite authority thought: Optimally [they should be read] in the second [Adar], and if they did [the readings] in the first [Adar], they have done them [satisfactorily], except for the reading of the Megillah, for even if they have read [it] in the first [Adar], they must read [it] in the second [also]. And R. Eliezer beRabbi Yosé thought: Even the Megillah reading [should be observed] optimally in the first [Adar]. And Rabban Shimon*

*ben Gamaliel thought: [This applies even to] the order of the [special Sabbath Torah] portions. If they read [it] in the first [Adar], let them read it [again] in the second.*

- G. *According to whom is this [taught]? If the first Tannaite authority, the gifts [for the poor] are a problem. If R. Eliezer beRabbi Yosé, the reading of the Megillah is also a problem. If Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel, the order of the [special Sabbath Torah] portions is a problem.*
- H. *Really, it is the first Tannaite authority, and he taught: [as in M 1:4 B]: **[There is no difference between the first Adar and the second Adar except the reading of the Megillah,] and the same applies to gifts to the poor, for one depends on the other.***
- I. *And if you wish, say: It is really Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel, and the Mishnah is lacking a piece, and this is the way he taught: There is no difference between the fourteenth of the first Adar and the fourteenth of the second Adar, except the reading of the Megillah and gifts [for the poor]. Regarding the matter of mourning and fasting, they are equal. And they do not deal with the order of the [special Sabbath Torah] portions.*
- J. *Said R. Hiyya bar Abbin, said R. Yohanan: The halakhah is like [the teaching of] Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel, which he said in the name of R. Yosé.*
- K. *Said R. Yohanan: both of them [i.e., Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel and R. Eliezer beRabbi Yosé] expounded one [same] verse [as the basis of their teachings]: “...in each and every year” (Est. 9:21). R. Eliezer be R. Yosé thought: “...in each and every year” (Est. 9:21) [means] just as in every [other] year [Purim is observed in the] Adar adjacent to [the month of] Shevat, so, here, [Purim should be observed in the] Adar adjacent to [the month of] Shevat. And Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel thought: “In each and every year” (Est. 9:19) [means] just as in every [other] year [Purim is observed in the] Adar adjacent to [the month of Nissan], so, here, Purim should be observed in the] Adar adjacent to the month of Nissan.*
- L. *It is understandable according to R. Eliezer beRabbi Yosé, [for] it makes sense that one should not pass by the [opportunity to perform] commandments; but what is the reason of Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel?*
- M. *Said R. Tavi: The reason of Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel is: It is preferable to juxtapose one redemption to another [i.e., Purim and Passover].*
- N. *R. Eleazar said: The reason of Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel is from here, as is written, “...to fulfill this second epistle of Purim” (Est. 9:29).*
- O. *Now it is necessary to write [7a] “second,” and it is necessary to write “in each and every year,” for if [we derived our interpretation only] from “each and every year,” I would say like our question [i.e., why is it not observed in the Adar adjacent to Shevat]; so it says*

*“second.” And if it would teach us “the second,” I would say, optimally in [both] the first and second [months of Adar]. So it teaches us “in each and every year” [meaning that it is observed only once, as in every other year].*

- P. *And R. Eliezer beRabbi Yosé, what does he do with this “second”? [He would say that] it is needed [to support] the teaching of Rav Samuel bar Judah, for said Rav Samuel bar Judah: Initially they established it in Susa, and later [in a second act of promulgation] throughout the entire world.*

## **The Status of the Scroll of Esther and its Authority**

- II.1** A. **[...except the reading of the Megillah:]** Said Rav Samuel bar Judah: Esther sent to the sages: Establish me for [all] generations.
- B. They sent to her: You are stirring up enmity against us among the nations of the world.
- C. She sent to them: I am already recorded in the chronicles of the kings of Media and Persia [cf. Est. 10: 2].
- D. *Rav, and Rav Hanina, and R. Yohanan, and Rav Haviva repeated the entire Division of Mo`ed, in such a pairing substituting R. Jonathan for R. Yohanan:*
- F. Esther sent to the sages: Record me for [all] generations.
- G. They sent to her: “Have I not written for you thrice” (Pro. 22:20) [means] three times and not four times, until later they found for it a verse written in the Torah: “Write this as a memorial in a book” (Exo. 17:14); “write this” [means] what is written here and in Deuteronomy [in parashat *Zakhor*, Deu. 25:17-19]; “memorial” [means] what is written in the Prophets [1Sa. 15]; “in the book” means] what is written in the Megillah [cf. Mekhilta, a.l.].
- J. *This is along the lines of a tannaitic dispute: “Write this” [means] what is written here; “memorial” [means] what is written in Deuteronomy [Deu. 25:17-19]; “in the book” [means] what is written in the Prophets [1Sa. 15], the words of R. Joshua.*
- K. **R. Eleazar HaModa`i says: “Write this” [means] what is written here and in Deuteronomy; “memorial” [means] what is written in the Prophets; “in the book” [means] what is written in the Megillah [cf. Mekhilta, to Exo. 17:14].**
- II.2** A. Said Rav Judah, said Samuel: [The scroll of] Esther does not defile the hands, meaning that Samuel thinks that Esther was not said through [the inspiration of] the Holy Spirit.
- B. But, said Samuel: Esther was said through [the inspiration of] the Holy Spirit.
- C. It was said to read, but it was not said to write.
- D. *They retorted: R. Meir says: Ecclesiastes does not defile the hands, and there is a dispute regarding the Song of Songs. R. Yosé says: The Song of Songs defiles the hands, and there is a dispute regarding Ecclesiastes. R. Shimon says: Ecclesiastes is of the lenient rulings of the House of Shammai and the*

**strict rulings of the House of Hillel, but Ruth, and the Song of Songs, and Esther defile the hands (M Yad. 3: 5).**

- E. *It is in line with what R. Joshua said.*
- F. *It is taught: R. Shimon ben Menasiah says: Ecclesiastes does not defile the hands, because it is the wisdom of Solomon (T Yad. 2: 6).*
- G. They said to him: Is that all he said? It is already said, "...and he spoke three thousand proverbs" (1Ki. 5:12), and it says, "do not add to his words" (Pro. 30: 6).
- I. *What is [the meaning of] "and it says"?*
- J. *And, if you say: He said many things; what he wanted [written] was written, and what he wanted [not written] was not written, come and here: "Do not add to his words" [means that these and no others were written with divine inspiration].*

**II.3** A. *It is taught on Tannaite authority:*

- A. R. Eliezer says: Esther was said through [the inspiration of] the Holy Spirit, as is said, "And Haman thought to himself" (Est. 6: 6).
- B. R. Aqiba says: Esther was said through [the inspiration of] the Holy Spirit, as is said, "and Esther found favour in the eyes of all who saw her" (Est. 2:15).
- C. R. Meir says: Esther was said through [the inspiration of] the Holy Spirit, as is said "and the thing became known to Mordecai" (Est. 2:22).
- D. R. Yosé son of the Damascene woman says: Esther was said through [the inspiration of] the Holy Spirit, as is said, "and they did not take any of the spoils" (Est. 9:15).
- E. *Said Samuel: If I had been there, I would have said something better than all of them, as is said, "they established and they accepted" (Est. 9:27) [meaning] they established above what they accepted below.*
- F. *Said Rava: There is a refutation for all of them except for the statement of Samuel, for which there is no refutation:*
- G. *The [statement] of R. Eliezer is a logical deduction, because there was no one more important to the king than he; and when he spoke a lot [in a particular verse] he spoke according to what he thought about himself.*
- H. *The proof of R. Aqiba is like R. Eleazar, who said that she appeared to everyone as one of his nation.*
- I. *And the [proof] of R. Meir may be like [the teaching of] R. Hiyya bar Abba, who said: Bigtan and Theresh were two Tarsians (cf. Midrash to Est. 2:21).*
- J. *And the [proof] of R. Yosé son of the Damascene woman [ — perhaps they sent messengers [to find out what happened everywhere].*
- K. *And that of Samuel surely has no refutation.*
  - L. *Said Ravina: That is what people say: One sharp pepper is better than a basket full of pumpkins.*
- M. *Rav Joseph said from here, "and the days of Purim will not pass from among the Jews" (Est. 9:28).*
- N. *Rav Nahman bar Isaac said from here: "and their commemoration will not disappear from their descendants" (ibid.).*

**III.1** A [...and “gifts to the poor:” Taught Rav Joseph: “...and sending portions of food, one to another” (Est. 9:22) [means] two portions of food to one person; “and gifts to the poor” [means] two gifts to two people.

**III.2** A. R. Judah Nesi'ah sent R. Oshiah the thigh of a three year old calf and a sock of wine.

B. He [Rav Oshiah] sent to him: **[7b]** Our Master, you have fulfilled through [your gift to] us “sending portions of food one to another and gifts to the poor” (Est. 9:22).

**III.3** A. Rabbah sent to Mari bar Mar through Abayye a basket full of dates and a bowl full of the flour of dried grain.

B. Abayye said to him: Now let Mari say: “If a farmer becomes king, he does not lower the basket from his neck.”

C. Later he [Mari] sent him [Rabbah] a basket of ginger and a bowl full of long peppers.

D. Said Abayye: Now the master [Rabbah] will say: “I sent him sweets and he sent me spicy things.”

E. Said Abayye: When I left the master's house, I was sated. When I arrived there [at Mari's], they served me sixty plates of sixty types of food, and I ate sixty portions of them. And they called the last food pot roast, and I even wanted to eat the plate afterwards.

F. Said Abayye: That is what people say: “The poor man is hungry, but he does not know [it].”

G. Also, “There is [always] room for [one more] sweet.”

**III.4** A. Abayye bar Abbin and Rav Hanina bar Abbin exchanged meals.

**III.5** A. Said Rava: A man is obligated to drink on Purim until he no longer knows [the difference] between cursed Haman and blessed Mordecai.

B. Rabbah and R. Zeira celebrated the Purim meal together. They got drunk. Rabbah arose and slaughtered R. Zeira. The next day he prayed and revived him.

C. The following year, he [Rabbah] said: Would the Master like to come and we will celebrate the Purim meal together?

D. He [Rabbi Zeira] said to him: A miracle does not occur every hour.

**III.6** A. Said Rava: [Through] a Purim meal eaten at night, one has not fulfilled his obligation.

B. What is the reason?

C. It is written, “...days of drinking and rejoicing” (Est. 9:22).

D. Rav Ashi was sitting before Rav Kahana; it got dark, but the rabbis did not come.

E. He [Rav Ashi] said to him: What is the reason that the rabbis have not come?

F. [He, i.e., Rav Kahana, said:] Perhaps they are busy with their Purim meals.

G. He [Rav Ashi] said to him: Was it not possible to eat it at night?



- H. *He [Rav Kahana] said: Has the master not heard what Rava said? [Through] a Purim meal eaten at night, one has not fulfilled his obligation”?*
- I. *He said to him: Did Rava [really] say that?*
- J. *[He said: Yes.]*
- K. *He [Rav Ashi] learned it from him forty times, and it was like an object in his purse.*

## 1:5

**A. There is no difference between [the behavior prohibited on] a holiday and [that prohibited on] the Sabbath, except the preparation of food.**

**I.1** A. But, regarding the utensils [for the preparation] of food, they are equal [in that, in either case, it is prohibited to prepare one].

**I.2** A. *The Mishnah is not in accord with [the teaching of] R. Judah, as is taught:*

**A. There is no difference between a holiday and the Sabbath except [the preparation of] food;**

**B. R. Judah permits even utensils [for the preparation] of food (T Meg. 1: 7).**

- C. *What is the reason of the first Tannaite authority?*
- C. Scripture says, “It [may be done by [for you]]” (Exo. 12:16), [meaning only the food] and not its utensils.
- D. And R. Judah would say: “...for you” (ibid.) [means] for you [emphasizing “you”], for all your needs.
- E. *And this one also [knows] that “...for you” is written.*
- F. [He takes it to mean:] For you and not for idolaters, for you and not for dogs?
- G. *And the other one also [knows] that “it” is written.*
- H. “It” is written, and “for you” is written. Here it [applies to] utensils that can be prepared prior to the onset of the holiday; here [to] utensils that cannot be prepared prior to the onset of the holiday.

## 1:6

**A. [3] There is no difference between the Sabbath and Yom Kippur, except that intentional violations of one [i.e., the Sabbath] are punished by man and of the other [Yom Kippur] through karet.**

**I.1** A. But, regarding the matter of payments [of damages to property, caused during the violation], they are equal [in that, in neither case, does he pay].

**I.2** A. *According to whom is our Mishnah [formulated]?*

**B. It is R. Nehuniah ben HaQanna, as is taught: R. Nehuniah ben HaQanna used to consider Yom Kippur like the Sabbath regarding payments [etc.], [arguing that] just as [for a violation of the] Sabbath one is guilty of a capital crime and exempt from payments [etc.], so [for a violation of] Yom Kippur, one is guilty of a capital crime and exempt from payments [etc.; cf. T Meg. 1:7].**

C. *We have learned there:*

**All those guilty of crimes punishable by *karet* who have received lashes are exempt from their *karet*, as is said, “and your brother will be beaten before your eyes” (Deu. 25: 3) [meaning] once he has been beaten, he is like your brother, the words of R. Hananiah ben Gamaliel (Sifrei, Deu. 25: 3).**

D. Said R. Yohanan: The associates of R. Hananiah ben Gamaliel disagree with him.

E. *Said Rava, they say in the House of Rav: We have learned: There is no difference between Yom Kippur and the Sabbath, except that intentional violations of one are punishable by man and intentional violations of the other are punishable through being cut off. And if there is [support for the position of R. Hananiah ben Gamaliel], he would be punishable by man.*

F. *Said Rav Nahman: According to whom is this [taught]? It is R. Isaac, who said: There are no lashes for those punishable by *karet*, as is taught: R. Isaac says: Those punishable by *karet* were included in the general rule. Why was *karet* meted out in connection with “his sister” [Lev. 20:17] removed from the general rule? To punish her with *karet*, not lashes.*

G. Rav Ashi said: *You may even say [the Mishnah is according to] the rabbis [who say that one receives both lashes and *karet*]. For one [the Sabbath] the main punishment for intentional violation is in human hands, and for the other [Yom Kippur] the main punishment for intentional violation is through being cut off.*

### 1:7

A. [8a] **There is no difference between one prohibited by a vow from deriving benefit from [anything that belongs to] his friend and one prohibited by a vow from deriving benefit from his food, except passing through [his property] and vessels in which one does not prepare food [both of which are forbidden to the former].**

I.1 A. But, regarding the matter of vessels in which one does prepare food, they are equal.

II.1 A. **passing through [his property...]:** *People do not really worry about this.*

B. *Said Rava: According to whom is this [taught]? It is R. Eliezer, who said: Matters of no significance are forbidden to one who has vowed not to derive benefit [from something].*

### 1:8A-B

A. **There is no difference between vows and gift offerings, except that one is obligated to replace vows [if they are lost or damaged], and one is not obligated to replace gift offerings [if they are lost or damaged].**

I.1 A. But, regarding the matter of not bringing them late, they are equal [in that neither may be brought late].

I.2. A. *It is taught there: What is a vow?*

B. [If] one says: “An offering is upon me.”

C. What is a gift offering?

D. [If] one says: “This [animal] is an offering.”

E. And what is the [practical] difference between vows and gift offerings?

- F. **If [animals designated as] vows died, or were stolen, or were lost, the donor is obliged to replace them; if [those designated as] gift offerings died, or were stolen, or were lost, the donor is not obliged to replace them (M **Qin. 1: 1**).**
- G. *From where [do we derive] these words? As the rabbis taught: "...and it will be acceptable on his behalf to atone for him"(Lev. 1: 4). R. Shimon says: He is responsible for that which is "upon him"; he is not responsible for that which is not "upon him."*
- H. *What does this mean?*
- I. *Said R. Isaac bar Avdimi: Once he says "I am obligated [to bring an offering, it is as if he carried it upon his shoulder.*

### 1:8C-D

- A. **There is no difference between a quarantined leper and a certified leper, except exposing the head and tearing the clothes. Gemara**
- I.1 A. But, regarding the matter of lying, and sitting, and the counting of seven [clean days], they are equal.
- I.2 A. *From where do we derive these words?*
- B. *As the rabbis taught:*
- C. Rav Simai says: Scripture has counted two [spottings] and called them defilement [in Lev. 15: 2] and three [spottings] and called them defilement [in Lev. 15: 3].
- D. How?
- E. Two for [acquiring the status of being] defiled, and three for [requiring] an offering.
- F. And, should I say, two for [acquiring the status of being] defiled, but not [requiring] an offering, three for [requiring] an offering, but not for [acquiring the status of being] defiled?
- G. You would say: He must have seen two [spottings] before he saw three.
- H. And, should I say, two for [requiring] an offering and not for [acquiring the status of being] defiled, three for [acquiring the status of being] defiled, also?
- I. *Do not think so, for it is taught:*
- J. "And the priest will atone for it before God from his flow" (Lev. 15:15) [means] some *zavim* bring an offering and some *zavim* do not bring an offering.
- K. How?
- L. If he saw three [spottings], he should bring [an offering; if he saw] two, he should not.
- M. Or is it that, if he saw two he should bring [an offering]; if he saw three, he should not?
- N. You would say: He must have seen two [spottings] before he saw three.
- O. *The teaching of R. Simai is needed, and the interpretation of "from his flow" is needed. For, if we knew [only] the teaching of R. Simai, I would say as in our question; it teaches us "from his flow." And if we knew only [the interpretation of] "from his flow," I would not know how many spottings [are needed]. So R. Simai teaches [the distinction between men who have had two or three spottings].*

- P. *And now that you have said that “from his flow” is for expounding, how do you expound “and when the zav will be purified from his flow” (Lev. 15:13)?*
- Q. *That is needed for what is taught:*
- R. “And when the zav will be purified” [means] when he will stop having a flow;
- S. “from his flow”[means] from his flow, and not from his flow and his affliction;
- T. “from his flow...and he should count” taught that a zav who sees two spottings requires a counting of seven [clean days].
- U. But is it not logical? If he transfers uncleanness through lying or sitting, should he not be obligated to count seven [clean days]?
- V. **[8b]** [The case of] one who observes one day corresponding to each day of impurity should prove the case, as she transfers uncleanness through lying and sitting, but is not required to count seven [clean days].
- W. And do not be surprised at this, that even though one transfers impurity through lying or sitting, he is not required to count seven [clean days]. The Torah says “from his flow...and he should count” (Lev. 15:13?) [meaning] “from a portion of his flow...and he should count.” This taught that a zav who has seen two spottings requires a counting of seven [clean days; cf. Sifra, a.l.].
- X. *Said Rav Pappa to Abayye: What is the difference between this “from his flow” (Lev. 15:13), which is used to include a zav who sees two spottings, and this “from his flow” (Lev. 15: 3), which is used to exclude a zav who sees two spottings?*
- Y. *He said to him: If you think that this one is to exclude, Scripture would have omitted it. And if you think it could be learned through logical deduction, one who observes one day of impurity at a time should prove the case. And if you think this is required [to teach] “from his flow” and not “from his affliction,” if so, Scripture should have written “and when the zav is purified” and stopped. Why is “from his flow” needed? It teaches that a zav who has seen two spottings is required to count seven [clean days].*

## 1:9

- A. **[7] There is no difference between a quarantined leper [cf. Lev. 13: 5] and a certified leper [cf. Lev. 13: 8], except exposing the head and tearing the clothes.**
- B. **[8] There is no difference between one declared pure after quarantine and one declared pure immediately, except shaving and [the offering of] birds [by the latter].**
- I.1** A. But, regarding the matter of being sent [outside the camp] and defilement, they are equal
- I.2** A. *From where do we derive these words [i.e., M 1:9A]?*

- B. *As Rav Samuel bar Isaac taught in the presence of Rav Huna: "...and the priest will declare him pure, it is a scab; and he should wash his clothes and be pure"* (Lev. 13: 6) [means] *retroactively* pure with respect to tearing the clothes and loosening the hair.
- C. *Rava would say to him: Then what about the following:* Regarding a zav, as is written, "and he should wash his clothes and be pure" (Lev. 15:13). *There, how can "and be pure" mean retroactively [pure]?* Rather [it means] he is pure now with respect to defiling a clay vessel by moving it; even if he sees [a spot] again, he does not defile it retroactively.
- E. *Here, too, he is pure now with respect to retroactively defiling someone through entrance. [So the argument is inappropriate and another proof must be offered.]*
- F. *Rather, Rava would say: From here, "And the leper on whom the affliction is..."* (Lev. 13:45) [means] he whose leprous condition is linked to his body, to the exclusion of one whose leprous condition is not linked to his body, but to the [counting of] days.
- G. *Said Abbaye to him: Then what about the following:* "All the days the affliction are on him, he is defiled" (Lev. 13:46) [means] he whose leprous state is linked to his body must be sent [out of the camp], and he whose leprous state is not linked to his body, need not be sent [out of the camp].
- H. *And if you say this [applies] here too, one teaches: **There is no difference between a quarantined leper and a certified leper, except loosening the hair and tearing the clothes (M 1:9A).***
- B. But regarding the matter of being sent [from the camp] and transferring defilement through entrance, they are equal.
- I. *He [Rava] said to him [Abayye]: [In Lev. 13:46] it could have said] "the days of," [but it says] "all the days of" to include [the notion] that the quarantined leper must be sent [out of the camp].*
- J. *If so, why are shaving and birds not included also? For one teaches: **There is no difference between one declared pure after quarantine and one certified pure [immediately], except shaving and [the offering of] birds (M 1:9B).***
- K. Said Abayye: Scripture said: "And the priest should go outside the camp...and, behold, the leprous affliction will be healed," [meaning] one whose leprous state is linked to [a need for] cures, to the exclusion of one whose leprous state is not linked to [a need for] cures, but to [the counting of] days.

### 1:10

- A. [9] **There is no difference between scrolls [of biblical books] (sefarim) [on the one hand] and Tefillin and Mezuzot [on the other], except that scrolls may be written in any language [i.e., script or tongue], while Tefillin and Mezuzot may not be written other than in Ashurit.**
- B. **Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel says: Even regarding scrolls, they did not permit that they be written in other than Greek [in addition to Ashurit].**

### Gemara

- I.1** A. But, regarding [the rules about] sewing them with sinews and defiling the hands, they are equal.

- II.1 A. ...except that scrolls may be written in any language [i.e., script or tongue], while Tefillin and Mezuzot may not be written other than in Ashurit.**
- B. *An objection was raised: [Hebrew] scriptural passage that one has written [in] Aramaic, or an Aramaic [scriptural] passage that one has written as [Hebrew] Scripture, or [a Hebrew passage written in paleo-]Hebraic script, does not defile the hands, until it is written in Ashurit,"on a scroll, and with ink" (Jer. 36:18)[cf. M Yad. 4:5].*
- C. *Said Rava: There is no contradiction [between this and M 1:10A, which says that scrolls may be written in any language]; [9a] one is [speaking about a text written] in our script; the other is [speaking about one written] in their script.*
- D. *Said Abayye to him: How did you substantiate this? Through [the answer of] "their script"? What is the difference between [Hebrew] Scripture written [in] Aramaic and Aramaic [Scripture] written [as] Hebrew? [The same should apply to Hebrew] Scripture written as [Hebrew] Scripture and Aramaic written [as] Aramaic, also. For one teaches: ....until he writes it in Ashurit on a scroll with ink.*
- E. *Rather there is no contradiction. This is [formulated according to] the rabbis, and this is [formulated according to] Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel.*
- F. *If [according to] Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel, there is [the matter of] Greek.*
- G. *But there is no contradiction. This one speaks of scrolls, while the other speaks of Tefillin and Mezuzot.*
- H. *What is the reason behind Tefillin and Mezuzot?*
- I. *For regarding them it is written "and they should be" (Deu. 6: 6) [understood to mean] they should be as they are.*
- J. *What Aramaic that one has written [as Hebrew] Scripture" is there?*
- K. *It is understandable [that this claim is made] with regard to the Torah, for there is [the Aramaic phrase] yegar sahaduta (Gen. 31:47), but what Aramaic is here [in Tefillin and Mezuzot]?*
- L. *Rather there is no contradiction. One speaks about a Megillah and the other speaks about scrolls (sefarim).*
- M. *What is the reason regarding the Megillah?*
- N. *For it is written regarding it: "...according to their script and according to their language"(Est. 8: 9).*
- O. *What "Aramaic that one has written [as Hebrew] Scripture" is there [here in Esther]?*
- P. *[Said Rav Pappa: "And the word (pitgam) of the king will be heard..." (Est. 1:20).*
- Q. *[Rav Nahman bar Isaac said: "...and all the women will pay homage (yeqar) to their husbands" (ibid.).*
- R. *Rav Ashi said: What was taught applied to other scrolls, and it is [according to the teaching of] R. Judah, as is taught: Tefillin and Mezuzot may not be written other than in Ashurit. And our rabbis permitted Greek [also].*
- S. *But it is written, "and they should be" [understood above to mean in their original form].*

- T. *Rather, say:* [Torah] scrolls may be written in any language, and our rabbis permitted Greek [also].
- U. “They permitted,” *so obviously the first Tannaite authority prohibited it.*
- V. *Rather say:* Our Rabbis permitted that they be written [only] in Greek [other than in Ashurit].
- W. *And it is taught:* Said R. Judah, even though our rabbis permitted Greek, they permitted [it] only in a Torah scroll and that was because of the episode of King Ptolemy.

**II.2** A. *As is taught:* An episode about Ptolemy, who gathered 72 elders and cloistered them in seventy-two buildings, and did not tell them why he had gathered them:

- B. He entered to [speak with] each and every one and said to them: Write for me the Torah of Moses your master.
- C. The Holy One, Blessed Be He, advised each and every one of them, and they all agreed to one position [on a number of problematic passages], and they wrote for him:
- D. “God created in the beginning” (Gen. 1: 1);
- E. “I will make man in a form and likeness” (Gen. 1:26);
- F. “And He finished on the sixth day...and He rested on the seventh day” (Gen. 2: 2);
- G. “...male and female He created him,” (Gen. 1:27 or 5: 2), but they did not write “He created them” [as in scripture];
- H. “I will go down, and I will confuse their speech” (Gen. 11: 7);
- I. “And Sarah laughed among her relatives” (Gen. 18:12);
- J. “...for in their anger they slew an ox, and they willfully hamstrung a bull” (Gen. 49: 6);
- K. “And Moses took his wife and his children, and he mounted them on a people-carrier” (Exo. 4:20);
- L. “And the length of time that the Israelites dwelled in Egypt and in other lands was 400 years” (Exo. 12:40);
- M. “And he sent the Israelite youth” (Exo. 24: 5);
- N. “And, against the Israelite youth, he did not extend his hand” (Exo. 24:11);
- O. **[9b]** “Not one precious thing of theirs did I take” (Num. 16:15);
- P. “...that the Lord your God distributed them to enlighten all of the nations” (Deu. 4:19);
- Q. “...and he went and worshipped other gods, which I have not commanded to worship” (Deu. 17: 3)
- R. [15] And they wrote for him “the short-legged one” (Lev. 11: 6), and they did not write for him “the hare” (*arnevet*), because the wife of Ptolemy is named Arnevet, in order that he not say: The Jews have made a joke of me and put my wife’s name in the Torah.

**III.1** A. Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel says: Even regarding scrolls, they did not permit that they be written in other than Greek [in addition to Ashurit]:



- B. Said R. Abahu, said R. Yohanan: The law is according to [the teaching of] Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel.
- C. And, said R. Yohanan: *What is the reason of Rabban Shimon ben Gamaliel?* Scripture said: “God will beautify Jepheth, and he will dwell in the tents of Shem” (Gen. 9:27) [means] the words of Jepheth will be in the tents of Shem.
- D. *Should I say:* This refers to [the language(s) of] Gomer and Magog?”
- E. *Said R. Hiyya bar Abba: This is the reason that* “God will beautify Jepheth [and he will dwell in the tents of Shem]” is written; the beauty of Jepheth [i.e., the most beautiful language of Jepheth, Greek] will be [spoken] in the tents of Shem.

## 1:11

- A. **[10] There is no difference between a priest anointed with anointing oil and one who wore [only] the full priestly costume, except the bull offered for all commandments [the violation of which brings a penalty of karet and regarding which he ruled incorrectly; cf. Lev. 4:3]].**
- B. **[11] There is no difference between a priest who serves [is rendered unfit, is replaced, and subsequently returns to service] and a priest who has temporarily replaced him, except the bull of Yom Kippur and the tenth of the Ephah.**
- I.1 A. But, regarding the matter of the bull of Yom Kippur and the tenth of the Ephah, they are equal
- I.2 A. *This is a Mishnah that is not according to R. Meir, for if it were [according to the teaching of] R. Meir, it is taught:* A fully costumed priest may offer the bull brought [for an incorrect ruling] regarding any of the commandments, the words of R. Meir. And the sages say: He may not offer [it].
- B. *What is the reason of R. Meir?*
- C. *As is taught:* “Anointed” (Lev. 4: 3) [means] I know only one who has been anointed with anointing oil; whence do I know about one who is [only] fully costumed? The Torah says, “the anointed one.”
- D. *How can we substantiate this? [By assuming that the law is] not according to R. Meir. Then note what follows:* **There is no difference between a priest who serves and a priest who has [temporarily] replaced him, except the bull of Yom Kippur and the tenth of an Ephah;** but for all their [other] matters they are equal.
- E. *We have arrived at [the opinion attributed] to R. Meir, as is taught:* If some disqualifying thing happened to him, and they appointed another priest in his place, [when the disqualification has been removed] the first [priest] returns to his service; the second one, all the commandments of the high priesthood apply to him, the words of R. Meir. R. Yosé says: The first returns to his service; the second is not fit to be either high priest or a regular priest. And said R. Yosé: An episode about R. Joseph ben Ulam of Sepphoris: Some disqualifying thing happened to the high priest, and they appointed him in his place. And the matter came before the sages and they said: The first returns to his service; the second is not fit to be either high priest or a regular priest, [not] high priest because of

jealousy, [and not a] regular priest because “one should raise [the status of] a sacred thing, not lower [it].”

- F. *Is the first statement [the teaching of the] rabbis and the last one [that of] R. Meir?*
- G. *Said Rav Hisda: Yes; the first statement is [the teaching of] the rabbis, and the last one is [that of] R. Meir.*
- H. *Rav Joseph said: It is R. [Judah the Patriarch], and he formulated it by combining the teachings of [two] Tannaite authorities.*

## 1:12

- A. **[12] There is no difference between a large bamah and a small bamah, except Pascal sacrifices.**
- B. **This is the generalization: Anything that is vowed or given [as an offering] may be offered on a bamah; and anything that is neither vowed nor given may not be offered on a bamah.**

**I.1** A. “Pascal offerings” and nothing more?

B. Say: [Things] like Pascal offerings [should be permitted on a bamah, also].

**I.2** A. *According to whom is this [i.e., M 1:12A formulated]?*

B. *It is R. Shimon, as is taught:* R. Shimon says: No group of worshipers ever offered [anything on a large bamah] other than Pascal offerings and obligatory offerings that have a set time.

C. *But obligatory offerings that do not have a set time, in neither case [large or small bamah] were they offered.*

## 1:13

A. **[13] There is no difference between Shilo and Jerusalem, except that, in Shilo, one could eat minor holy things and second tithe [in any area] within sight [of the city], while in Jerusalem [this was permitted only] within the [city] wall.**

B. **And in both places, minor holy things may be eaten within the curtains/walls.**

C. **The sanctification of Shilo [10a] [was temporary and not exclusive,] in that it was accompanied by permission [to offer at the bamot after its destruction]. The sanctification of Jerusalem [was permanent in that it was exclusive, and] was not accompanied by [such] permission.**

**I.1** A. Said R. Isaac: I have heard that: One may sacrifice in the Temple of Onias nowadays.

B. *This bears the implication that he maintains,* the Temple of Onias is not a place of idolatry; *and that he thinks that* the initial sanctification [of Jerusalem] sanctified it for that time, but not for the [indefinite] future, as is written, “For you have not come until now to the resting place and to the permanent acquisition” (Deu. 12: 9); “resting place” is Shilo, “permanent acquisition” is Jerusalem. It [the text] juxtaposes “permanent acquisition” to “resting place.” Just as there is permission [to offer on the bamot] after [the sanctification of Shilo as] the “resting place,” so is there permission to offer on the bamot after [the sanctification of Jerusalem as] the “permanent acquisition.

- C. *They said to him: Did you say this?*
- D. *He said to them: No.*
- E. *Said Rava: God! He said it, and I learned it from him.*
- F. *And what is the reason that he abandoned this position?*
- G. *Because of the question of Rav Mari, for Rav Mari retorted: The sanctification of Shilo [was temporary and not exclusive] in that it was accompanied by permission [to offer at bamot after its destruction]. The sanctification of Jerusalem [was permanent in that it was exclusive, and] was not accompanied by [such] permission (M 1:13C). And, furthermore, we have learned: From the time they arrived at Jerusalem, the bamot were banned, and there was no further permission [to use them], and it [Jerusalem] became the “permanent acquisition” [M Zev. 14:8].*
- H. *This is a tannaitic dispute, as we have learned: Said R. Eliezer: I have heard that when they were building in the sanctuary (heikhal), they made curtains for the sanctuary and curtains for the courtyard, except that they built the sanctuary from the outside, and they built the courtyard from within. And, said R. Joshua: I have heard that [1] one may offer [sacrifices in Jerusalem] even though there is no Temple; [2] one may eat major holy things, even though there are no curtains; and [3] [one may eat] minor holy things and second tithe, even though there is no wall, because the initial sanctification sanctified it for that time and for the [indefinite] future [M. Ed. 8:7]. From which one may conclude that R. Eliezer thinks that it was not sanctified for the [indefinite] future.*
- I. *Said Ravina to Rav Ashi: Why? Perhaps everyone thinks that “its initial sanctification sanctified it for that time and sanctified it for the [indefinite] future”; and this master said what he had heard, and the other master said what he had heard. And if you ask: Why, according to R. Eliezer were there curtains? [He might answer:] Only for privacy.*
- J. *Rather it is according to these Tannaite authorities, as is learned:*
- K. *Said R. Ishmael beRabbi Yosé: Why did the sages count these [cities]? For when the people of exile returned, they found these [cities], and they sanctified them, but the earlier ones were desanctified when the land was left idle. So, we see that he thinks the initial sanctification sanctified it for that time, but did not sanctify it for the [indefinite] future. By way of contradiction, [showing the Tannaite dispute at hand:] Said R. Ishmael beRabbi Yosé: Were these the only ones that were there? For it was already said: “...sixty cities, the entire string of Argov” (Deu. 3: 4), and it is written: “all of these are cities fortified with a high wall” (ibid.). So, why did the sages count these? For when the people of the exile returned, they found these and sanctified them.*
- L. *They sanctified them? We just said that there is no need to sanctify them.*
- M. **[10b]** *Rather, they found these and counted them.*
- N. *And not these alone, but every place that, according to the tradition you have from your ancestors, had a wall since the time of Joshua bin Nun, all these commandments are observed there, because the initial sanctification sanctified it for that time and sanctified it for the [indefinite] future.*

- O. *There is a contradiction between the two statements of R. Ishmael.*
- P. *[These are really the statements of] two Tannaite authorities of the school of R. Ishmael beRabbi Yosé.*
- Q. *And, if you wish, say: R. Eleazar bar Yosé said this, as is taught: R. Eleazar beRabbi Yosé said: "Which has no wall"(Lev. 25:30) [means] even though it has none now, but it had one formerly.*

## Commentary on the Book of Esther

### Interpretation of Esther Chapter One

- I.1** A. **"And it was in the days of Ahasuerus...:"** Said R. Levi and, if you wish, say R. Jonathan: This matter is a tradition that we have from the Men of the Great Assembly: Every place where "and it was" (*wa-yehi*) is said is an expression connoting suffering.
- B. "And it was in the days of Ahasuerus" (Est. 1: 1) — there was Haman;
  - C. "And it was in the days when the judges judged" (Rut. 1: 1) — there was a famine;
  - D. "And it was, when man began to multiply...and the Lord saw that man's evil was great" (Gen. 6:1, 5);
  - E. "And it was, when they traveled from the east...Let us build a city" (Gen. 11: 2, 4);
  - F. "And it was, in the days of Amraphel...they made war" (Gen. 14: 1, 2);
  - G. "And it was, when Joshua was in Jericho...and his bared sword was in his hand" (Jos. 5:13);
  - H. "And it was that God was with Joshua...but the Israelites took something sacred" (Jos. 6:27, 7: 1);
  - I. "And there was a man from HaRamataim...for he loved Hannah, but God had closed her womb" (1Sa. 1:1, 6);
  - J. "And it was, when Samuel grew old...but his sons did not walk in his paths" (1Sa. 8: 1, 3);
  - K. "And it was that David was wise in all his ways, and God was with him...but Saul hated David" (1Sa. 18:14, 9);
  - L. "And it was, when the king sat in his palace...But you will not build the Temple" (2Sa. 7: 1, 2Ch. 6: 9);
  - M. ["And it was" also appears in positive contexts:]
  - N. But is it not written, "And it was on the eighth day" (Lev. 9: 1)?
  - O. *And it is taught:* On that day was as [great] a joy before The Holy One, Blessed Be He, as the day on which the heavens and earth were created.
  - P. *Here is written,* "And it was on the eighth day" (Lev. 9: 1); *and there is written* "...and it was morning, one day" (Gen. 1: 5).
  - Q. But Nadav and Avihu died [at precisely that time].
  - R. And it is written, "And it was, in the 480th year..." (1Ki. 6: 1);
  - S. And it is written, "And it was, when Jacob saw Rachel..." (Gen. 29:10);
  - T. And it is written, "And it was evening, and it was morning, one day" (Gen. 1: 5);
  - U. and there is the second [day];

- V. and there is the third [day];
- W. *and there are more.*
- X. [Rather,] said Rav Ashi: Every “And it was” — there are some this way [negative] and some the other way [positive]. Only “And it was in the days of...” is an expression connoting suffering.
- Y. There are five [instances of] “And it was in the days of:”
- Z. “And it was in the days of Ahasuerus...” (Est. 1: 1);
- AA. “And it was in the days when the judges judged...” (Rut. 1: 1);
- BB. “And it was in the days of Amraphel...” (Gen. 14: 1);
- CC. “And it was in the days of Ahaz...” (Isa. 7: 1);
- DD. “And it was in the days of Jehoiakim...” (Jer. 1: 1).

- I.2** A. And, Said R. Levi: This matter is a tradition that we have from our ancestors: Amoz and Amaziah were brothers.
- B. *What does this teach us?*
- C. [This follows what we have learned] according to what Rav Samuel bar Nahmani said, said R. Jonathan [M: Yohanan]: Every bride who is modest in her father-in-law’s house merits that kings and prophets will descend from her.
- D. *From where do we know this?*
- E. From Tamar, as is written, “And Judah saw her, and he thought her to be a prostitute, because she covered her face” (Gen. 38:15).
- F. Did he think she was a prostitute because she covered her face? Rather, because she covered her face [when she lived] in her father-in-law’s house, and he did not recognize her, she merited that kings and prophets descended from her — kings, from David; prophets, as said R. Levi: It is a tradition that we have from our ancestors: Amoz and Amaziah were brothers [in A]; and it is written, “The vision of Isaiah son of Amoz” (Isa. 1: 1).
- F. And Said R. Levi: This is a tradition that we have from our ancestors: The place of the ark is not included in the measurements [of the Holy of Holies, in which it was housed].
- G. *It is also taught this way [in a baraita]:* The ark that Moses made measured ten cubits on every side, and it is written, “and the inside of the sanctuary (*devir*) was twenty cubits in length...” (1Ki. 6:20); and it is written, “the wing of one cherub was ten cubits and the wing of the other cherub was ten cubits” [cf. 1Ki. 6:24-25!].
- H. *Where did the ark stand? Rather, not this way; learn from this,* it was standing through a miracle.

## **Proems to the Midrashic Interpretation of the Book of Esther**

- I.1** A. “And I will arise against them [- the word of the Lord of Hosts — ] and I will destroy Babylon’s name and remnant and kith and kin, the word of the Lord” (Isa. 14:22). R. Jonathan began his exposition of this portion from here: “And I will arise against them [- the word of the Lord of Hosts — ] and I will

destroy Babylon's name and remnant and kith and kin, the word of the Lord" (Isa. 14:22).

- B. "Name" is the writing; "remnant" is language; "kith" is monarchy; and "kin" is Vashti.

**II.1 A. "In place of the brier will grow a cypress, and in place of a nettle will grow a myrtle [and it will become a memorial to God, an eternal sign that will never be cut down]" (Isa. 55:13):** *R. Samuel bar Nahmani began his exposition of this portion from here:* "In place of the brier will grow a cypress, and in place of a nettle will grow a myrtle [and it will become a memorial to God, an eternal sign that will never be cut down]" (Isa. 55:13).

- B. "In place of the brier: [means] in place of the evil Haman who made himself [an object of] idolatry, as is written, "...and of all the briers and brambles" (Isa. 7:19).
- C. "...will grow a cypress" this is Mordecai, who is called the head of all spices, as is said, "And you should take the main spices: flowing myrrh...", *and we translate "flowing myrrh" (mar deror) (Exo. 30:23) [in Aramaic] as mori dakhi.*
- D. "In place of the nettle" [means] in place of the evil Vashti, granddaughter of the evil Nebuchadnezzar, who burned the apolstery of the house of God, as is written, "its inside is apolstery" (Son. 3:10).
- E. "...will grow a myrtle" this is the righteous Esther, who is called "Myrtle," (*hadassah*), as is said, "And he [Mordecai] raised Hadassah" (Est. 2:10).
- E. "And it will become a memorial to God" — this is the reading of the Megillah.
- F. "As an eternal sign that will never be cut down" — these are the days of Purim.

**III.1 A. "Just as the Lord rejoiced over you to do good to you, so will He rejoice to do evil to you" (Deu. 28:63):**

- B. *R. Joshua ben Levi began his exposition of this portion from here:* "Just as the Lord rejoiced over you to do good to you, so will He rejoice to do evil to you" (Deu. 28:63).
- B. *And does The Holy One, Blessed Be He, rejoice at the downfall of the wicked?*
- C. *And it is written, "...going out before the vanguard; and they say 'Give thanks to the Lord for his mercy lasts for ever'" (2Ch. 20:21).*
- D. And said R. Yohanan: Why is "for he is good" not mentioned in this doxology [as in the similar refrain of Psa. 136]?
- E. Because The Holy One, Blessed Be He, does not rejoice at the downfall of the wicked.
- F. And said R. Yohanan: What [is the meaning of what] is written, "And one did not approach the other all night long" (Exo. 14:20) [applying the description of the confrontation between the Egyptians and the fleeing Hebrews to the angels]?
- G. The ministering angels sought to sing a song.
- H. Said The Holy One, Blessed Be He: My creatures are drowning in the sea, and you [wish to] sing a song?
- I. Said R. Eleazar: He does not rejoice, but "he makes others rejoice" (Deu. 28:16).
- J. And note carefully that it is written, "so *yasis*" [understood as a causative verb meaning "so will He make rejoice"], and it is not written "so *yasos*" ["so will He rejoice"].



K. *Learn from this.*

**IV.1** A. **“To the person who is good before Him, He gave wisdom and knowledge and happiness; and to the sinner He gave the desire to gather and to collect, in order to give it to the one who is good before God...”** (Ecc. 2:26): *R. Abba bar Kahana began his exposition of this portion from here:* [“To the person who is good before Him, He gave wisdom and knowledge and happiness; and to the sinner He gave the desire to gather and to collect, in order to give it to the one who is good before God...” (Ecc. 2:26)].

B. “To the person who is good before Him, He gave wisdom and knowledge and happiness,” this is the righteous Mordecai; “and to the sinner He gave the desire to gather and to collect,” this is Haman; “in order to give it to the one who is good before God,” this is Mordecai and Esther, as is written, “and Esther appointed Mordecai over the House of Haman” (Est. 8: 2).

**V.1** A. **“And I will place my throne in Elam, and I will destroy from there [both] king and officers”** (Jer. 49:38): *Rabbah bar Ophran began his exposition of this portion from here:* “And I will place my throne in Elam, and I will destroy from there [both] king and officers” (Jer. 49:38).

B. “King” is Vashti, and “officers” is Haman and his ten sons.

**VI.1** A. **“for we are slaves, but in our slavery we have not left our God, and He has given us favour before the kings of Persia”** (Ezr. 9: 9): A. [*Rav Dimi bar Isaac began his exposition of this portion from here:* **[11a]** “for we are slaves, but in our slavery we have not left our God, and He has given us favour before the kings of Persia” (Ezr. 9: 9).

B. When? In the time of Haman.

**VII.1** A. **“You have let a man ride on our head, we have come through fire and water, [and you brought us out to plenty]”** (Psa. 66:12): *R. Haninah bar Pappa began his exposition of this portion from here:* “You have let a man ride on our head, we have come through fire and water, [and you brought us out to plenty]” (Psa. 66:12).

B. “Through fire” in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, the evil one; “and through water” in the days of Pharaoh; “and You brought us out to plenty” in the days of Haman. [should be about Abraham]

**VIII.1** A. **“He has remembered his mercy and faith to the House of Israel; all the ends of the earth have witnessed the salvation of our God”** (Psa. 98: 3): *R. Yohanan began his exposition of this portion from here:* “He has remembered his mercy and faith to the House of Israel; all the ends of the earth have witnessed the salvation of our God” (Psa. 98: 3).

B. When did all the ends of the earth witness the salvation of our God? In the days of Mordecai and Esther.

**IX.1** A. **“A roaring lion and a prowling bear is an evil ruler over a weak people** (Pro. 28:15): *Resh Laqish began his exposition of this portion from here:* “A roaring lion and a prowling bear is an evil ruler over a weak people (Pro. 28:15).

B. “A roaring lion,” this is the wicked Nebuchadnezzar, for it is written about him, “The lion has come up from his thicket” (Jer. 4: 7).



- C. “A prowling bear,” this is Ahasuerus, about whom is written, “...and behold [a beast behind me...], the second resembled a bear” (Dan. 7: 5).
- D. *And taught Rav Joseph:* These are the Persians who eat and drink like a bear, and are fleshy like a bear, and have [body] hair like a bear, and have no rest like a bear.
- E. “...an evil ruler,” this is Haman;
- F. “over a weak people,” these are Israel, who are weak from [failure to perform the] commandments.

**X.1 A. “The ceiling (*ha-meqareh*) sags from laziness, and the house collapses from idle hands” (Ecc. 10:18):** *R. Eleazar began his exposition of this portion from here:* “The ceiling (*ha-meqareh*) sags from laziness, and the house collapses from idle hands” (Ecc. 10:18). Because of Israel’s laziness, that they did not study Torah, the “enemy” of The Holy One, Blessed Be He, grows thin (*makh*).

- B. And “sags” (*makh*) means “poor,” as is said, “...and if he is too poor (*makh*) to pay the value” (Lev. 27: 8); and “ceiling” (*meqareh*) is none other than The Holy One, Blessed Be He, as is said, “...the one who places (*ha-meqareh*) the rafters of his lofts in the waters” (Psa. 104: 3).

**XI.1 A. “A Song of Ascents [of David]” (Psa. 124: 2). “Were it not for the Lord, who was with us, may Israel state; were it not for the Lord who was with us, when a man attacked us” (Psa. 124: 2):** *Rav Nahman bar Isaac began his exposition of this portion from here:* “A Song of Ascents [of David]” (Psa. 124: 2). “Were it not for the Lord, who was with us, may Israel state; were it not for the Lord who was with us, when a man attacked us” (Psa. 124: 2).

- B. “A man,” not a king.

**XII.1 A. “From a multitude of righteous people the people rejoices, and from an evil ruler a people groans” (Pro. 29: 2):** *Rava began his exposition of this portion from here:* “From a multitude of righteous people the people rejoices, and from an evil ruler a people groans” (Pro. 29: 2).

- B. “From a multitude of righteous people the people rejoices” this is Mordecai and Esther, as is written, “...and the city Susa was happy and rejoicing” (Est. 8:15); “and from an evil ruler a people groans” this is Haman, as is written, “...and the city of Susa was perplexed” (Est. 3:15).

**XIII.1 A. [Five Partial Proems:]** *Rav Matna said from here:* “And who is such a great nation who has God close to him” (Deu. 4: 7).

- B. *[Rav Ashi said from here:* “Or has any god tried [to go and take for himself one nation from the midst of another...]” (Deu. 4:34).
- C. *Rav said from here:* “...and you will be sold...” (ibid. 28:68).
- D. “And it was (*wa-yehi*) in the days of Ahasuerus...”
- E. Said Rav: Woe and oh (*way we-hi*).
- F. *That is as is written,* “And you will be sold there to your enemies as male and female slaves...” (Deu. 28:68).
- G. And Samuel said: “I will not reject them, nor abandon them to destroy them [voiding my covenant with them, because I am the Lord their God]” (Lev. 26:44).

- H. “I will not reject them” in the days of the Greeks; “nor abandon them” in the days of Nebuchadnezzar; “to destroy them” in the days of Haman; “voiding my covenant with them” in the days of the Persians [i.e., Romans], “because I am the Lord their God” in the days of Gog and Magog [cf. Sifra, a.l.].
- I. *In a baraita one taught:* “I will not reject them” in the days of the Chaldeans, for I appointed Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah;
- J. “nor abandon them” in the days of the Greeks, for I appointed Shimon the Righteous, and Hashmonai and his sons, and Mattathias the high priest;
- K. “to destroy them” in the days of Haman, for I appointed for them Mordecai and Esther;
- L. “voiding my covenant with them” in the days of the Persians [i.e., Romans], for I appointed for them the members of the House of R. [Judah the Patriarch] and the sages of the generations;
- M. “because I am the Lord their God” in the future, for no nation or language-group is able to rule over them.
- N. *R. Levi said from here:* “And if you will not dispossess the inhabitants of the land...” (Num. 33:55).
- O. *R. Hiyya said from here:* “And it will be that what I planned to do to them I will do to you” (Num. 33:56).

### **Further Interpretation of Esther Chapter One 1:1**

- I.1.** A. “...Ahasuerus:” Said Rav: The brother of the head and the colleague of the head.
- B. The brother of the head [means] the brother of Nebuchadnezzar, the evil one, who is called “head,” as is said, “you are the head of gold” (Dan. 2:38). The colleague of the head — he [Nebuchadnezzar] killed, he [Ahasuerus] sought to kill; he [Nebuchadnezzar] destroyed, he [Ahasuerus] sought to destroy, as is said, “And in the reign of Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, they wrote an accusation against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem” (Ezr. 4: 6).
- D. And Samuel said: Because, in his days, the faces of Israel were blackened (*hushharu*) like the sides of a pot.
- E. [And R. Yohanan said: Anyone who remembers him said “woe” to his head.
- F. And R. Hanina said: For everyone was made poor in his days, as is said, “and King Ahasuerus levied a tax.” (Est. 10: 1).
- I.2** A. “...this is Ahasuerus:” [1] “This is Ahasuerus” (Est. 1: 1) — he in his wickedness from beginning to end.
- B. [2] “This is Esau” (Gen. 36:43) — he in his wickedness from beginning to end.
- C. [3] “This is Dathan and Aviram” (Num. 26: 9) — they in their wickedness from beginning to end.
- D. [4] “This is King Ahaz” (2Ch. 28:22) — he in his wickedness from beginning to end.
- E. [5] “Abraham is Abraham” (1Ch. 1:27) — he in his righteousness from beginning to end.

- F. [6] “This is Aaron and Moses” (Exo. 10:26:) — they in their righteousness from beginning to end.
- G. [7] “And David, he is the youngest” (1Sa. 17:14) — he in his youth from beginning to end.
- H. Just as, in his youth, he [David] humbled himself before someone who was greater in Torah than he, so in his reign he humbled himself before someone who was greater in wisdom than he [i.e., Mephiboshet].

## **II.1 A. “...who reigns...”**

- A. Said Rav: He came to power on his own.
- B. *Some say this positively; some say it negatively.*
- C. *Those who say it positively [do so] because there was no one as worthy to be the king as he; those who say it negatively [do so] because he was not worthy of the kingship, but he paid out a lot of money and rose [to power].*

## **III.1 A. “...from India to Kush [i.e., Ethiopia]...”**

- B. Rav and Samuel:
- C. One said: India is at the end of the world and Kush is at the [other] end of the world; and the other said: India and Kush are situated next to each other.
- D. Just as he ruled over India and Kush, so did he rule from one end of the world to the other.
- E. Similarly, you say “...because he rules over all of Trans-Jordan, from Tiphseh to Gaza” (1Ki. 5: 4).
- F. Rav and Samuel:
- G. One said: Tiphseh is at the end of the world and Gaza is at the [other] end of the world; and the other said: Tiphseh and Gaza are situated next to each other.
- H. Just as he ruled over Tiphseh and Gaza, so did he rule over the entire world.

## **IV.1 A. “...seven and twenty and one hundred provinces.”**

- B. Said Rav Hisda: At first he ruled over seven; later he ruled over twenty; and finally he ruled over one hundred.
- C. But if so, how do you expound, “And the years of the life of Amram were seven and thirty and one hundred” (Exo. 6:20)?
- D. *It is different here, because there is an extra scriptural passage. Since it is written “from India to Kush,” why do I need [the statement that this included] “127 provinces”?*
- E. *Learn from this, [it is] for a [special] exposition.*

## **IV.2 The rabbis taught: Three [kings] ruled over the entire world, and they are Ahab, and Ahasuerus, and Nebuchadnezzar.**

- B. Ahab, as is written, “I swear that there is no nation or kingdom to which my master has not sent to fetch you...” (1Ki. 18:10); and if he did not rule over them, how could he extract an oath from them [that Elijah was not there]?
- C. Nebuchadnezzar, as is written, “And it will be that the nation or the kingdom that will not place his neck in the yoke of the king of Babylonia...” (Jer. 27: 8).
- D. Ahasuerus, as we said
- E. **[11b]** *And are there no others?*

- F. *Lo, there is Solomon.*
- G. *He did not complete his reign.*
- H. *Assume like the one who says that he was king and [then] commoner, but according to the one who says he was king and commoner and king [again], what is there to say?*
- I. *Solomon is in another category, for he ruled over the upper and lower [beings], as is said, “and Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord” (1Ch. 29:23).*
- J. *And there was Sennacherib, as is written, “Who are there among all the gods of these lands who have protected their land from me?” (Isa. 36: 2).*
- K. *[No.] There is Jerusalem, which he did not conquer.*
- L. *And there is Darius, as is written, “Darius the king wrote to all the nations, peoples and language-groups who live throughout the entire world: May your peace increase” (Dan. 6:26).*
- M. *But there are seven over which he did not reign, as is written, “It was good in the eyes of Darius, and he appointed 120 satraps over the kingdom” (Dan. 6: 2).*
- N. *And there is Cyrus, as is written, “Thus said Cyrus, King of Persia, the Lord has given me all the nations of the world” (Ezr. 1: 2).*
- O. *There he was merely praising himself.*

## **Interpretation of the Remainder of Esther Chapter One**

- I.1** A. **“In those days, when the king sat...in the third year of his reign:”** Said Rava: What is [the meaning of] “when he sat” (*ke-shevet*)? After he stopped worrying (*she-nityashevah da`ato*).
- B. *He [Ahasuerus] said: Belshazzar calculated and erred; I have calculated and not erred.*
- C. *What is [the meaning of] this?*
- D. *As is written, “...for when Babylonia has completed 70 years, I will remember you” (Jer. 29:10); and [as] is written, “...at the completion of 70 years of the desolation of Jerusalem” (Dan. 9: 2).*
- E. *Add: 45 [years] of Nebuchadnezzar, plus 23 of Evil-Merodoch, plus his 2, equal 70. Thinking that the time of the prophecy had lapsed and that the prophecy could no longer be fulfilled,] he took out the vessels of the Temple and used them.*
- F. *From where do we know that Nebuchadnezzar ruled 45 years?*
- G. *For a master said: They were exiled in [year] 7; they were exiled in [year] 8; they were exiled in [year] 18; they were exiled in [year] 19.*
- H. *They were exiled in [year] 7 of the conquest of Jehoiakim, [during] the exile of Jehoiachin, which is in [year] 8 of Nebuchadnezzar.*
- I. *They were exiled in [year] 18 of the conquest of Jehoiakim [during] the exile of Zedekiah, which is [year] 19 of Nebuchadnezzar.*
- J. *For a master said: His first year, he [Nebuchadnezzar] conquered Ninveh; the second, he conquered Jehoiakim. And it is written, “And it was in the 37th year of the exile of Jehoiachin, King of Judah, in the 12th month, on the 25th of the*

month, Evil-Merodach, King of Babylonia, lifted up the head of Jehoiachin, King of Judah, and removed him from prison” (2Ki. 25:27=Jer. 52:31).

- K. *[Add:] 8, plus 30, plus 7 equal the 45 [years] of Nebuchadnezzar[‘s reign]; plus [the] 23 [years] of Evil-Merodach a tradition (gemara’); plus his 2 equal 70.*
- L. *He [Belshazzar] said: Now they surely will not be saved any more. He took out the vessels of the Temple and used them.*
- M. *This is what Daniel said to him, “...and you have exalted yourself over the God of Heaven, and they have brought the vessels of his house before you” (Dan. 5:23).*
- N. *And it is written, “On that very night Belshazzar, King of the Chaldeans, was killed” (Dan. 5:30).*
- O. *And it is written, “...and Darius the Mede received the kingdom at the age of 62” (Dan. 6: 1).*
- P. *He [Ahasuerus] said: He certainly erred; I have calculated, but I have not erred.*
- Q. *Is “[70 years] of the kingdom of Babylon” written? “[70 years] of Babylon” is written.*
- R. *What is “of Babylon”? Of the exile of Babylon.*
- S. *How many are lacking? Eight.*
- T. *Add, and include instead of them, 1 of Belshazzar, and 5 of Darius and Cyrus, and his 2 for [a total of] 70.*
- U. *When he saw that the 70 [years] were completed and they were not redeemed, he said: Now certainly they will be redeemed no more. He took out the vessels of the Temple and use them.*
- V. *Along came Satan and danced between them and killed Vashti.*
- W. *Did he calculate correctly?*
- X. *He also erred, for he should have counted from the depopulation of Jerusalem.*
- Y. *In the last analysis, how many were lacking?*
- Z. *Eleven.*
- AA. *How many [years] did he reign?*
- BB. *Fourteen.*
- CC. *In his 14th [year], he should have rebuilt the Temple.*
- DD. *But, we see, it is written, “...then the work of God’s house in Jerusalem was stopped” (Ezr. 4:24).*
- EE. *Said Rava: Those were shortened years.*
- FF. **[12A]** *It is also learned this way [in a baraita]: And there remained another year to [the reign of] Babylon; Darius arose and completed it.*
- GG. *Said Rava: Even Daniel erred in this calculation, as is written, “In the first year of his reign, I, Daniel, studied the books...” (Dan. 9: 2). Since it says “studied,” it is clear that [initially] he erred.*
- HH. *In any case, the verses contradict each other. It is written, “...completion of Babylon[‘s 70 years...]” (Jer. 29:10), and it is written, “...of the destruction of Jerusalem...” (Dan. 9: 2).*
- II. *Said Rava: This is only for [Cyrus’s] order (peqidah). And this is what is written: “Thus said Cyrus, King of Persia, ‘All the kingdoms of the earth has the Lord,*

God of the Heavens, given to me; and He has ordered (*paqad*) me to build Him a temple in Jerusalem” (Ezr. 1: 2).

JJ. *Expounded Rav Nahman bar Rav Hisda: Why is it written, “Thus said the Lord to His anointed (*meshiho*), to Cyrus, whose right hand I have held...” (Isa. 45: 1)? Was Cyrus the anointed [i.e., the Messiah]?*

KK. Rather, said The Holy One, Blessed Be He, to the Messiah: I have a complaint for you against Cyrus. I said: “He should build My Temple, and he should gather My exiles” (Isa. 45:13). But he said, “...whoever of you, from among the entire nation...may go up” (2Ch. 36:33; cf. Ezr. 1: 3).

## **II.1 A. “...the soldiers of Persia and Media, the Parthians...”**

- B. But it is written, “...to the kings of Media and Persia...” (Est. 10: 2) [in reverse order].
- C. *Said Rava: They made an agreement with each other: If the kings are from us, the officials are from you; and if the kings are from you, the officials are from us.*

## **III.1 A. “During his showing the wealth of the glory of his kingdom...”**

- A. Said R. Yosé bar Hanina: This teaches that he put on the priestly garments.
- B. Here is written, “...the glory of the beauty of his greatness...” (Est. 1: 5), and there [in describing the priestly garments] is written, “...for honor and beauty” (Exo. 28: 2).

## **IV.1 A. “And at the end of these days:”**

- B. Rav and Samuel:
- C. One said he was a shrewd king, and one said he was a stupid king.
- D. *The one who said he was a shrewd king [concluded this because] he did a good thing, in that first he brought those far away close [by inviting those from all over the empire before the local people], for he could placate the people of his own place any time he chose to.*
- E. *And the one who said he was stupid [concluded this] because he should have invited the people of his own place first, for, if they rebelled against him, the others would have joined them.*

## **IV.2 A. His students asked R. Shimon ben Yohai: Why were the Jews of that generation worthy of being destroyed?**

- B. He said to them: You say [why].
- C. They said to him: Because they enjoyed the feast of that evil man.
- D. If so, those in Susa should have been killed; those throughout the entire world should not have been killed.
- E. They said to him: You say [why].
- F. He said to them: Because they bowed to the idol [cf. Dan. 3: 1 ff].
- G. They said to him: And is there favoritism in the matter [in that they were saved]?
- H. He said to them: They only did it for show, so The Holy One, Blessed Be He, did it only for show, and that is what is written, “...because he did not afflict from his heart” (Lam. 3:33).

## **V.1 A. “...in the courtyard of the palace garden.”**

- B. Rav and Samuel:



- C. One said: “[A guest] worthy of the courtyard [was received] in the courtyard; one worthy of the garden [was received] in the garden; one worthy of the palace [was received] in the palace.
- D. And one said: He seated them in the courtyard, but it did not hold them, [and] in the garden, but it did not hold them, until he brought them into the palace, and it held them.
- E. *In a baraita one taught:* He seated them in the courtyard and opened two doorways for them, one to the garden and one to the palace.

**VI.1 A. “White (hur), cotton and blue...”**

- A. *What is “hur”?*
- B. Rav said: Netting *hori hori*.
- C. And Samuel said: He spread white wool for them.

**VI.2 A. “...cotton...” (karpas)**

- A. Said R. Yosé bar Hanina: Striped pillows.

**VII.1 A. “...on silver rods and pillars of ivory, couches of gold and silver...”**

- B. *It is taught:* R. Judah says: [A guest] worthy of silver [was assigned] to [a] silver [couch]; one worthy of gold [was assigned] to [a] golden [couch].
- C. Said to him Rav Nehemiah: If so you would cause jealousy at the feast. Rather they [the bodies of the couches] were [made] of silver and their legs of gold.

**VIII.1 A. “...on a floor of marble, alabaster, [mother of pearl, and mosaics].”**

- B. Said Rav Asi: Stones that shine back at their owner, as it says, “...like jewels of a crown sparkling on His land” (Zec. 9:16).

**IX.1 A. “...and shell [mother of pearl] and onyx marble” (dar ve-soharet)**

- B. Rav said: rows by rows (*dari dari*).
- C. And Samuel said: There is a precious stone [found] in seaports, and it is called *dara*. He placed it in the middle of the feast, and it gave them light like the noon [sun].
- D. *One of the house of R. Ishmael taught:* He proclaimed freedom (*deror*) for all merchants.

**X.1 A. “And the serving was in golden vessels, and [the] vessels (kelim) were different (shonim) [from each other].”**

- B. *It should say “strange” (meshunim).*
- C. Said Rava: A small voice called out to them: Your predecessors were destroyed (*kalu*) because of vessels (*kelim*), and you are repeating (*shonim*) with them.

**XI.1 A. “And royal wine, much (rav) [befitting a king.]”**

- B. Said Rav: This teaches that they served each and every person wine that was older than he.

**XII.1 A. “And the drinking was according to law, [there was no compulsion]:”**  
*What is “according to law”?*

- B. Said R. Hannan in the name of R. Meir: According to the the law of the Torah. Just as the law of the Torah is that there is more eating than drinking, so the feast of that evildoer was more eating than drinking.



## **XII.2 A. “...no compulsion...”**

- B. Said R. Eleazar: This teaches that they served each and every one the wine of his own country.

## **XIII.1 A. “...to do according to the desire of each and every man (‘ish va-’ish).”**

- B. Said Rava: [This means] to do according to the desire of Mordecai and Haman — Mordecai, as is written, “A Jewish man (‘ish) [was in the fortress of Susa...]” (Est. 2: 5); Haman [as is written], “an oppressing man (‘ish) and enemy” (Est. 7: 6).

## **XIV.1 A. “Also, Vashti the queen made a party for the women in the royal palace...”**

- B. *It should say* “in the women’s palace” [i.e., separate parties for the men and the women].
- C. Said Rava: Both of them had immoral intentions.
- D. *That is what people say: He with big pumpkins [12b] and his wife with small pumpkins.*

## **XV.1 A. “On the seventh day, when the king’s heart was happy from wine...”**

- B. *Until now was his heart not happy from wine?*
- C. Said Rava: The seventh day was the Sabbath.
- D. When Israel eat and drink, they begin with words of Torah and praises [of God], but when idolators eat and drink, they begin with words of foolishness. Thus was the feast of that evildoer.
- E. Some said: The Median women were the most beautiful; and some said: The Persian women are the most beautiful. Said Ahasuerus to them: The vessel that I use is neither Median nor Persian, but Chaldean. Do you wish to see her? They said to him: Yes, but only if she is naked.
- F. For **With the measure that a man measures do others measure him (M Sot. 1: 7).**
- G. This teaches that evil Vashti used to bring the daughters of Israel and strip them naked and make them work on the Sabbath.
- H. This is as is written, “After these things, when the anger of King Ahasuerus had subsided, he remembered Vashti, and what she had done, and what had been decreed concerning her” (Est. 2: 1); as she had done was decreed concerning her.

## **XVI.1 A. “And the queen Vashti refused...”**

- B. Since she was an immoral woman, as a master said: “Both of them intended to commit an immoral act [cf. Mid. to Est. 1:9B],” why did she not go?
- C. Said R. Yosé bar Haninah: This teaches that leprosy broke out on her.
- D. *In a baraita one taught: Gabriel came and made her a tail.*

## **XVII.1 A. “And the king was very angry, [and his anger burned in him]”**

- B. *Why was it burning in him to such an extent?*

- C. *Said Rava: She sent to him [the following message]: Son of my father's stable boy! My father drank wine with a thousand men and did not get drunk, but you have been rendered a fool by your wine.*
- D. Immediately "and his anger burned in him" (Est. 1:12).

**XVIII.1 A. "And the king said to the sages...:" Who are the "sages"?**

- B. The rabbis.

**XIX.1 A. "...who know the times..."**

- B. *What Times?*
- C. Who know [when] to intercalate the years and [how] to set the months.

**XIX.2 A. He [Ahasuerus] said to them [i.e., the sages]: Judge her for me.**

- B. *They said: What should we do? If we tell him, "Kill her," tomorrow he will become sober, and will require her of us. If we tell him, "Leave her alone," she has disgraced the kingdom [and we will appear implicated].*
- C. They said to him: Since the time when the Temple was destroyed and we were exiled from our land, [the ability to offer sage] advice has been taken from us, and we do not know how to judge capital cases. *Go to Amon and Moab, who dwell in their [ancestral] places like wine that rests on its dregs.*
- D. *And the reason they gave him was that it is written, "Moab has been safe since his youth; and he is settled on his lees. He has not been poured from vessel to vessel, nor has he gone into exile. Therefore his taste (ta'am) [here taken in its popular rabbinic sense, as 'reasoning, advice'] has remained, his fragrance is strong" (Jer. 48:11). Immediately:*

**XX.1 A. "And the closest to him were Carshena, Shetar, Admata, Tarshish, [Meres, Marsena, Memuhan]..."**

- B. Said R. Levi: This entire verse was said about the sacrifices [i.e., each name can be interpreted as a reference to a sacrifice].
- C. "Carshena" — The ministering angels said before The Holy One, Blessed Be He: Master of the World, has anyone offered one year old lambs (*karim benei shanah*) before you as Israel has done?
- D. "Shetar" — Has anyone else offered to you two pigeons (*shetei torim*)?
- E. "Admata" — Has anyone else built you an altar of earth (‘*adamah*)?
- F. "Tarshish" — Has anyone else served before you in the priestly garments, regarding which is written, "...beryl (*tarshish*), lapis lazuli, and jasper" (Exo. 28:20)?
- G. "Meres" — Has anyone else stirred (*mersu*) blood [of the sacrifices] before you?
- H. "Marsena" — Has anyone else stirred (*mersu*) the meal-offering before you?
- I. "Memukhan" — Has anyone else prepared (*hekhinu*) a table before you?

**XXI.1 A. "And Memukhan said..."**

- B. *One taught: Memukhan is Haman. And why is his name called Memukhan? Because he is [always] ready (mukhan) [to be the cause] for suffering.*
- C. Said Rav Kahana: From here [one may conclude that] a fool acts precipitously.

**XXII.1 A. "...that every man should be master in his house..."**

- B. Said Rava: Were it not for the first [set of] letters [that the king sent], not even a tattered remnant of Israel would have remained.
- C. *They said: What is this that he has sent us “...that every man should be master in his house.”? It is obvious; even a weaver should be an official in his own house.*

## Interpretation of Esther Chapter Two

### I.1 A. “And let the king appoint officials...”

- A. *Said Rav: What is meant by “Every shrewd man acts with knowledge, but a fool exposes [his] folly” (Pro. 13:16)?*
- B. “Every shrewd man acts with knowledge” is David, as is written, “His servants said to him: Let them seek a young virgin for my master the king” (1Ki. 1: 2). *Everyone who had a daughter brought her. “But a fool exposes his folly” is Ahasuerus, as is written, “And let the king appoint officials” (Est. 2: 3); everyone who had a daughter hid her from him.*

### II.1 “There was a man of Judah [i.e., Judea] in Susa the capital [and his name was Mordecai son of Yair, son of Shim’i, son of Kish,] a man of Benjamin.”

- B. *What is the point of this saying? If [its purpose is] to establish his lineage, it should have presented his lineage all the way to Benjamin. So why did it do it this way?*
- C. *One taught: All of them are [actually] his [i.e., Mordecai’s] names.*
- D. Ben Yair: Because he lit up (*he’ir*) the eyes of Israel with his prayer;
- E. Ben Shim’i: The son to whose prayer God listened (*shama*’);
- F. Ben Qish: Who knocked (*heqish*) on the gates of mercy, and they were opened for him.
- G. He was called “a man of Judah,” *so we see that he came from Judah; and he was called “a man of Benjamin,” so we see that he came from Benjamin [and this is an apparent contradiction].*
- H. Said Rav Nahman: Mordecai was crowned with his [distinctive] religion.
- I. Said Rabbah bar Bar Hannah, said R. Joshua ben Levi: His father was from [the tribe of] Benjamin, and his mother was from [the tribe of] Judah.
- J. *And the rabbis say: The clans competed with each other. The clan of Judah said: I caused Mordecai to be born, because David did not kill Shim’i ben Gera [cf. 2Sa. 19:16 ff]; and the clan of Benjamin said: He came from me.*
- K. Rava said: The assembly of Israel said it another way: Look at what Judah did for me
- L. And what Benjamin fulfilled for me. “what Judah did for me” [13A], *that David did not kill Shim’i, from whom Mordecai, of whom Haman was jealous, was descended; “And what Benjamin fulfilled for me,” that Saul did not kill Aggag, from whom Haman, who persecuted Israel, was descended.*
- M. *R. Yohanan said: He really came from Benjamin; and why was he called “a man of Judah” [here taken, as is usually the case in post-biblical Hebrew, as Jew]? Because he rejected idolatry, for anyone who rejects idolatry is called a Jew, as is written, “there are Jewish men...” (Dan. 3:12).*

- II.2** A. When R. Shimon ben Pazi began to expound *Chronicles*, he said as follows: All your words are one [probably meaning one with the parallel and seemingly contradictory passages of Scripture], and we know how to explain them:
- B. “And his Jewish wife (*ishto ha-yehudiyah*) bore Yered, father of Gedor, and Heber, father of Sokho, and Yequetiel, father of Zenoah. And these are the sons of Bityah, daughter of Pharaoh whom Mered married” (1Ch. 1:14).
- C. Why was she called “Jewish”? Because she rejected idolatry, as is written, “and Pharaoh’s daughter went down to wash on [the shore of] the Nile” (Exo. 2: 5). And said R. Yohanan: Because she went down to wash [i.e., to purify] herself from the abominations of her father’s house.
- D. “Bore” (1Ch. 1:14)? Actually she raised him. [But Scripture considers her like a parent,] to tell you that anyone who raises an orphan or orphaness in his house, Scripture considers it as if he bore him.
- E. “Yered” is Moses; and why was he called Yered? Because Manna came down (*yarad*) for Israel in his days;
- F. “Gedor,” because he forced in (*gadar*) the breaches of Israel;
- G. “Heber,” because he caused Israel to draw near (*hibber*) to their father in heaven;
- H. “Sokho,” because it was made for Israel like a tabernacle (*sukkah*);
- I. “Yequetiel,” because Israel hoped in God (*qavu yisra’el la-’el*) in his days;
- J. “Zenoah,” because he disregarded (*hizniyah*) the sins of Israel;
- K. “Father of..., father of..., father of...,” [meaning] father in Torah, father in wisdom, father in prophecy.
- L. “And these are the sons of Bityah whom Mered married” (ibid.). And is his name Mered? His name is Caleb.
- M. Said The Holy One, Blessed Be He: Let Caleb, who rebelled against the advice of the spies [and gave a good report about Canaan (Num. 14:30)], come and marry the daughter of Pharaoh, who rebelled against the abominations of her father’s house.

### **III.1 A. “...who had been exiled from Jerusalem...”**

- A. Said Rava: Who had been exiled willfully.

### **IV.1 A. “And he raised Hadassah...”**

- B. She was called Hadassah, and she was called Esther.
- C. *It is taught:* R. Meir says: Esther is her name. And why is she called Hadassah? Because of the righteous who are called myrtles (*hadassim*), as it says, “...and he stands among the myrtles” (Zec. 1: 8).
- D. R. Judah says: Her name is Hadassah, and why was she called Esther? Because she conceals (*masteret*) her words, as is said, “Esther would not reveal her people [or her birthplace]” (Est. 2:20).
- E. R. Nehemiah says: Hadassah is her name, and why is she called Esther? Because the nations of the world called her by the name of Istahar.

- F. Ben Azzai says: Esther was neither tall nor short, but of medium height, like a myrtle.
- G. R. Joshua ben Qorha said: Esther was of greenish complexion, and a thread of grace [*hesed*; a play on *hadas*?] was spread over her.

**V.1 A. “...because she had neither father nor mother; [and when her father and mother died, Mordecai took her to him as a daughter].”**

- B. *Why do I need* “...and when her father and mother died...” [these words appear redundant]?
- C. Said Rav Aha: [Right] after her mother conceived her, her father died; [right] after she bore her, her mother died.

**VI.1 A. “...and when her father and mother died, Mordecai took her to himself as a daughter.”**

- B. *One taught in the name of R. Meir*: Do not read [it] “as a daughter” (*le-vat*), but rather as a wife (*le-vayit*).
- C. And similarly it says, “and the poor man had nothing except one small lamb that he owned and fed, and it grew up together with him and with his children; it ate from his bread, and drank from his cup, and lay in his bosom, and it was like a daughter” (2Sa. 12: 3). Because it lay in his bosom is it called a daughter (*bat*)? Rather [it should be called] a wife (*bayit*).
- D. Here, too, [in Esther, the word “as a daughter” (*bat*) should be understood to mean] “as a wife” (*bayit*).

**VII.1 A. “...and the seven maidservants...”**

- B. Said Rava: She used to count the days of the week through them [one for each day].

**VIII.1 A. “...and he changed her and her maidservants...”**

- B. Rav said that he fed her Jewish food.
- C. And Samuel said that he fed her *qodelei de-haziri*.
- D. And R. Yohanan said [that he fed her] seeds; and similarly it says, “and the waiter removed their food and gave them seeds” (Dan. 1:16).

**IX.1 A. “...six months in myrrh oil...”**

- B. *What is myrrh oil?*
- C. R. Hiyya bar Abba said: Satchet.
- D. Rav Huna said: Oil of olives that have not grown one-third [of their expected size].
- E. *It is taught*:
- F. R. Judah says: *Anpaqinon* is oil of olives that have not grown one-third [of their expected size].
- G. And why is it used for anointing? Because it removes the hair and softens the flesh.

**X.1 A. “She would go at night and return in the morning...”**

- B. Said R. Yohanan: We have learned a positive quality about this evil man from his negative behavior, for he did not engage in sexual intercourse during the day.

**XI.1 A. “...and Esther found favour [in the eyes of all who saw her.]”**

- B. Said R. Eleazar: This teaches that Esther appeared to everyone like a member of his own nation.

**XII.1 A. “And Esther was taken to King Ahasuerus, to his royal palace, in the tenth month, which is the month of Tebet...”**

- B. A month in which one body enjoys another.

**XIII.1 A. “And the king loved Esther more than any of the [other] women, and she found favour before him more than all the virgins...”**

- B. Said Rav: If he wished to experience (*li-te`om ta`am*) a virgin he did so; if he wished to experience a non-virgin, he did so.

**XIV.1 A. “And the king made a great party...”**

- B. He made a party, but she would not tell him [her nation or birthplace]; he removed taxes, but she would not tell him; he sent gifts, but she would not tell him.

**XV.1 A. “And when the virgins were assembled again...”**

- B. He [Ahasuerus] went and consulted Mordecai. He [Mordecai] said: A woman is made jealous only by the thigh of her rival. But even then she would not tell him, as is written, “Esther would not reveal her birthplace [or her nation]” (Est. 2:20).  
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**XV.2 A. Said R. Eleazar: Why is it written [13b] “He does not withhold his eyes from the righteous” (Job. 36: 7)? As a reward for Rachel’s modesty, she merited that Saul descended from her; and as a reward for Saul’s modesty, he merited that Esther descended from him.**

- B. *What modesty did Rachel demonstrate?*  
C. As is written, “And Jacob told Rachel that he was her father’s brother” (Gen. 29:12).  
D. Now was he really her father’s brother? He was actually the son of her father’s sister.  
E. *Rather he said to her: Marry me.*  
F. *She said to him: Yes; but my father is deceitful, and you will not be able to stand up to him.*  
G. *He said to her: I am his brother in deceit.*  
H. *She said to him: And is a righteous man permitted to increase deceit?*  
I. *He said to her: Yes, [it says], “Be pure with the pure, but be sly with the crooked” (2Sa. 22:27).*  
J. *He said to her: And what is the deceit?*  
K. *She said to him: I have an older sister, and he will not marry me off before her.*  
L. *He gave her signs [to identify herself to him on the wedding night].*  
M. *When the [wedding] night came, she said: Now my sister will be disgraced. She gave her the signs.*  
N. *That is why it says, “And behold in the morning it was Leah” (Gen. 29:25). Does this mean that until now it was not Leah? Rather, because of the signs that Rachel passed on to Leah, he did not know until now.*  
O. Therefore she merited that Saul descended from her.  
P. *And what modesty did Saul demonstrate?*

- Q. As is written, "...and the matter of [his having been appointed to] the kingship he did not tell him, as Samuel had said" (1Sa. 10:16); [therefore] he merited that Esther descended from him.

**XV.3** A. And said R. Eleazar: When The Holy One, Blessed Be He, designates greatness for someone, he designates it to his children and grandchildren to the end of the generations, as is said, "...and he seats them forever" (Job. 36: 7). But if he becomes haughty, The Holy One, Blessed Be He, brings him down, as is said, "If they are tied with [ropes...He tells them what they have done...]" (Job. 36: 8-9). ]

**XVI.1** A. "...and Esther did what Mordecai said..."

- B. Said R. Yermiah; [This means] that she used to show menstrual stains to the sages.  
C. "...as when she was in his care."  
D. Said Rabbah bar Lima in the name of Rav: [This means] that she use to rise from the bosom of Ahasuerus, immerse herself [in a mikveh to purify herself], and sit in the bosom of Mordecai.

**XVII.1** A. "In those days, while Mordecai was sitting at the king's gate, Bigthan and Teresh became angry..."

- B. Said R. Hiyya bar Abba, said R. Yohanan: The Holy One, Blessed Be He, made a master angry with his servants [just] to fulfill the desire of a righteous person. *And who is it?* Joseph, as is said, "And there with us was a Hebrew youth" (Gen. 41:12).  
C. ... servants angry with with their masters, [just] to perform a miracle for a righteous person. *And who is it?* Mordecai, as is written, "...and the thing became known to Mordecai" (Est. 2:22).  
D. Said R. Yohanan: Bigthan and Teresh were two Tarsians, and they were speaking Tursian and saying: Since the day that this woman [Esther] arrived, we have not seen any sleep in our eyes. Come and let us place a poison in his dish in order that he will die.  
E. But they did not know that Mordecai was of those who sat in the hewn chamber and knew 70 languages.  
F. He said to him [to the other]: But my watch is not the same as yours.  
G. He said to him: I will cover my watch and yours. And that is as is written, "...and the matter was examined and he [alone, not "it," as the Hebrew is usually understood] was found" (Est. 2:23) [means] that they were not [both] found on their [respective] watches.

### Interpretation of Esther Chapter Three

**I.1. A. "After these things..."**

- B. *After what?*  
C. Said Rava: After The Holy One, Blessed Be He, created the cure for the illness.  
D. For said Resh Laqish: The Holy One, Blessed Be He, does not smite Israel unless he creates for them a cure first, as is said, "When I cure Israel, the sin of Ephraim will become clear" (Hos. 7: 1).



- E. But this is not true of the nations of the world. [First] He smites them, and afterwards he creates for them the cure, as is said, “And the Lord will smite Egypt, smiting and then curing them” (Isa. 19:22).

**II.1 A. “And it seemed worthless in his eyes to harm Mordecai alone...”**

- A. Said Rava: At first [he plotted] against Mordecai alone, and subsequently against Mordecai’s people. *And who are they?* The rabbis. And finally, against all the Jews.

**III.1 A. “...he cast the pur, which is the lot...”**

- B. *One taught:* When the lot fell on the month of Adar, he rejoiced greatly. He said: The lot fell for me in the month in which Moses died.  
C. But he did not know that he died on the seventh of Adar and was born on the seventh of Adar.

**IV.1 A. “There is (yeshno) one nation [scattered and dispersed (meforad) among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom]”**

- B. *Said Rava: No one knew evil speech like Haman.*  
C. *He [Haman] said to him [Ahasuerus]: Let us destroy them.*  
D. *He [Ahasuerus] said to him: I fear from his God, lest he do to me what he did to my predecessors.*  
E. He [Haman] said to him: They have slept (yashenu) from [performing] the commandments [playing on the Hebrew yeshno].  
F. *He [Ahasuerus] said to him: There are rabbis among them.*  
G. He [Haman] said to him: They are “one people.”  
H. Lest you say I am causing a bald spot in your kingdom, “they are scattered among the peoples.”  
I. *Lest you say I will derive benefit from them, [they are] like a mule (pereidah), which bears no fruit [playing on meforad].*  
J. *And lest you say there is a country of them, Scripture says, “...in all the provinces of your kingdom” (Est. 3: 8).*

**V.1 A. “...and their laws are different from [those of] every [other] nation...”**

- B. *For they do not eat from our food, nor do they marry our women, nor do they marry their women to us.*

**VI.1 A. “...and they do not obey the king’s laws ...”**

- B. *For they spend all the time with foolishness [M+ and do not pay their taxes].*

**VII.1 A. “...and it is not worthwhile for the king to tolerate them.”**

- B. *For they eat and drink and deprecate the kingdom.*  
C. For even if a fly falls in the cup of one of them, he throws it away and drinks it; but if my master the king [even] touches the cup of one of them, he throws it on the ground and does not drink it.

**VIII.1 A. “If it is good for the king, let it be written to destroy them; and 10,000 talents of silver...”**

- B. Said Resh Laqish: It was clearly known to the one who spoke and made the world come into being that Haman would pay sheqels for Israel. Therefore He advanced their sheqels to his.
- C. *And that is as we have taught: On the first of Adar, one should announce about the sheqels and mixed crops (M Sheq. 1: 1).*

**IX.1 A. “And the king said to Haman: The money is given to you and [also] the people, to do with it as is good in your eyes.”**

- B. Said R. Abba: [14A] To what are Ahasuerus and Haman comparable? To two people, one of whom had a mound in his field and one of whom had a trench in his field.
- C. The owner of the trench said: Would that someone would sell me this mound. The owner of the mound said: Would that someone would sell me this trench.
- D. After a time, the two were paired up. The owner of the trench said to the owner of the mound: Sell me your mound. He [the owner of the mound] said to him: Take it for free, gladly.

**X.1 A. “And the king removed his signet ring...”**

- B. Said R. Abba bar Kahana: Removing the signet ring was greater [i.e., had a greater impact] than 48 prophets and 7 prophetesses that prophesied to Israel, for all of them [together] failed to make them [i.e., Israel] return to their proper state, while [Ahasuerus'] removing the signet ring made them return to their proper state.

**X.2 A. *The rabbis taught:* Forty-eight prophets and seven prophetesses prophesied to Israel, and they did not delete from or add to what was written in the Torah, except the reading of the Megillah.**

- B. *What did they expound [to permit this]?*
- C. Said R. Hiyya bar Abbin, said R. Joshua ben Qorha: Since we recite a song [in order to commemorate passage] from slavery [in Egypt] to freedom, is it not more logical to do so [in order to commemorate passage] from death to life?
- D. *If so, we should also recite Hallel [on Purim].*
- E. [This is not correct,] because one does not recite Hallel to commemorate a miracle [that occurred] outside Israel.
- F. *Then why do we recite a song [to commemorate the exodus, which is a miracle that occurred] outside Israel, as it is taught:*
- G. Until Israel entered the [promised] land, all lands were deemed proper for the recitation of song [if a miracle occurred there]. After Israel entered the [promised] land, all [other] lands were deemed improper for the recitation of song [under such circumstances].
- I. *Rav Nahman said: The reading [of the book of Esther on Purim] is the [equivalent of its] Hallel.*
- J. *Rava said: It is correct there [that the text says] “Praise, O servants of God...,” [implying] but not the slaves of Pharaoh; but does it mean here, “Praise, O servants of God...,” [implying] but not the slaves of Ahasuerus?*
- K. *We are still the slaves of Ahasuerus.*

- L. *It is contradictory, whether according to Rava or according to Rav Nahman.*
- M. *And it is learned: ...after Israel entered the [promised] land, all [other] lands were deemed improper for the recitation of song [under such circumstances].*
- O. When they were exiled, they [all of the other lands] returned to their prior state of propriety .

**X.3** A. *And are there no more [prophets in addition to the forty eight]?*

- B. Now, it is written: “And there was a man from HaRamatayim Tzofim (*‘ehad min ha-ramatayim tzofim*)” (1Sa. 1: 1), [which is taken to mean] one of two hundred prophets (*‘ehad mi-matayim tzofim*) that prophesied to Israel.
- C. *There really were more, as is taught:* Many prophets appeared on behalf of (*‘amedu lahem le-*) Israel, double the number who left Egypt [twice 600,000]; but a prophecy that was needed forever was recorded, and one that was not needed [forever] was not recorded.
- D. R. Samuel bar Nahmani said: [This phrase from 1Sa. 1:1 means] “a man who comes from two heights that face each other.”
- E. R. Hanin said: A man who comes from people who stand at the top of the world. *And who are they?* the sons of Korah, as is written, “And the sons of Korah did not die” (Num. 26:11).
- G. It is taught in the name of Rabbeinu [i.e., R. Judah the Patriarch]: A place was built up (*nitbatzer*) for them in hell, and they stood on it.

**X.4** A. Seven prophetesses *Who are they?* Sarah, Miriam, Deborah, Hannah, Abigail, Huldah, and Esther.

- B. Sarah, as is written, “...the father of Milkah and the father of Yiskah” (Gen. 11:29).
- C. And said R. Isaac: Yiskah is Sarah; and why was she named Yiskah? Because she saw (*she-sakhatah*) [the divine will] through the holy spirit, as is said, “...all that Sarah says to you, obey her voice” (Gen. 21:12).
- D. Another explanation: Yiskah [means] that all look at (*sokhin*) her beauty.
- E. Miriam, as is written, “And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took...” (Exo. 15:20).
- F. Was she not the sister of Moses?
- G. Said Rav Nahman, said Rav: She used to prophesy when she was [only] the sister of Aaron and say, “My mother will bear a son who will save Israel.”
- H. When he was born, the entire house filled up with light.
- I. Her father stood up and kissed her on the head. He said to her: My daughter, your prophesy has been fulfilled.
- J. And when they threw him [Moses] into the Nile, her father stood up and tapped her on the head and said to her: My daughter, where is your prophecy?
- K. That is as is written, “And his sister stood at a distance to know...” (Exo. 2: 4) [meaning] to know what would be the outcome of her prophecy.

- L. Deborah, as is written, “And Deborah, a prophetess, was the wife of Lapidot [she judged Israel at that time. And she sat under the palm of Deborah]” (Jud. 4:4-5).
- M. What [is meant by] “the wife of Lapidot”?
- N. That she used to make wicks for the sanctuary.
- O. “And she sits under a palm” (Jud. 4: 5). What is special about [that she sat] “under a palm”?
- P. Said R. Shimon ben Absalom: To avoid isolation [with male visitors].
- Q. Another explanation: Just as this palm has only one heart, [i.e., trunk or pith] so, too, in that generation, did Israel have only one heart for their father in heaven.
- R. Hannah, as is written, “Hannah prayed and said, ‘My heart rejoices in God, my horn is raised through God’” (1Sa. 2: 1). [The text says:] “My horn (*qarni*) is raised,” and not “My flask (*pakhi*) is raised”[in order to teach:] The kingship of David and Solomon, who were anointed with a horn, continued; The kingship of Saul and Jehu, who were anointed with a flask, did not continue.
- S. “There is no holy one like God, because there is none besides you” (1Sa. 2: 2).
- T. Said Rav Judah bar Menasiah: Do not read *biltekha*, “[there is none] besides you,” but *le-valotekha*, “[there is none] to wear you out.”
- U. For the quality of man is not like the quality of The Holy One, Blessed Be He. The quality of man is that his creations wear him out; but The Holy One, Blessed Be He, wears out his creations.
- V. “And there is no rock (*tzur*) like our God” (ibid.) [means] there is no sketcher (*tzayyar*) like our God.
- W. A man sketches a shape on the wall and is unable to place in it breath or spirit, innards or entrails; but The Holy One, Blessed Be He, sketches a sketch within a sketch and places in it breath and spirit, innards and entrails.
- X. Abigail, as is written, “And she was riding on a donkey and descended the mountain in secret” (1Sa. 25:20).
- Y. “[Descended] the mountain in secret”? *It should say* “[Descended] from the mountain...”
- Z. Said Rabbah bar Samuel: Regarding blood that flows from secret places.[i.e., descended the mountain regarding the secret matter (*be-seter*)]
- AA. She took a blood [stain] and showed it to him [David].
- BB. He said to her: Is it proper to show one a blood [stain] at night?
- CC. She said to him: Is it proper to render capital decisions at night?
- DD. He said to her:**[14b]** He is a rebel against the king and need not be judged [formally].
- EE. She said to him: Saul is still alive, and your situation has not become known.
- FF. He said to her: “And blessed is your thinking, and blessed are you, who who has prevented me [this day] from entering blood (1Sa. 25:33). *Blood (damim)* [has] two meanings [hers and her husband’s].

- GG. Rather this teaches that she revealed her thigh, and he walked in its light for [a distance of] three parasangs.
- HH. He said to her: Listen to me. [Submit to me sexually.]
- II. She said to him: “May this not be a stumbling block for you” (1Sa. 25:31).
- JJ. *“This” from which one may conclude that there would be another; and what is it? The episode of Bathsheba.*
- KK. *And the conclusion was this way [i.e., because she knew that David would sin with Bathsheba, she was a prophetess].*
- LL. [Continuing the exposition of the passage in 1Sa. 25:] “And may the soul of my master be bound up in life” (1Sa. 25:29).
- MM. When she departed from him, she said to him: “When God grants good to my master, ...? may you remember your handmaiden” (1Sa. 25:31).
- NN. *Said Rav Nahman: That is what people say, “While a woman [holds] the spindle she talks” [i.e., women work at one thing while scheming at another].*
- PP. *Some say: “The duck walks with its head down, but its eyes are cast aloft.”*
- QQ. Huldah, as is written, “And Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam, and Achbor went [to Huldah the prophetess] (2Ki. 22:14).
- RR. *And how did she [dare to] prophesy in a place where Jeremiah was living?*
- SS. The house of Rav say in the name of Rav: Huldah was Jeremiah’s relative, and he did not worry about her.
- TT. *And Josiah himself, how did he leave Jeremiah and approach her?*
- UU. Those of the house of Rav Shelah say: Because women are merciful.
- VV. *R. Yohanan said: Jeremiah was not there [at the time], because he had gone to retrieve the ten [exiled] tribes.*
- WW. *And from where [do we know that] they returned?*
- XX. As is written, “Because the seller will not return to the sold [object]” (Eze. 4:13).
- YY. Is it possible that the Jubilee was null, and the prophet prophesied that it would be nullified?
- ZZ. Rather, this teaches that Jeremiah had retrieved them.
- AAA. And Josiah ben Amon ruled over them, as is written, “And he said: What is this distinctive marking I see? And the men of the city said to him: It is the grave of the man of God who came from Judah. And he proclaimed these things, which you did against the altar in Beth El” (2Ki. 23:17).
- BBB. And what is the relationship between Josiah and the altar in Beth El?
- CCC. Rather this teaches that Josiah ruled over them.
- DDD. *Rav Nahman said: [This is learned] from here: Judah also will bring in the harvest, when I cause my people to return from captivity (Hos. 6:11).*
- EEE. Esther, as is written, “And on the third day, Esther dressed up royally (*malkhut*)” (Est. 5: 1).

FFF. *It should say "...Esther dressed up in royal garb (bigdei malkhut)," [Rather, it means that] the holy spirit clothed her. Here is written, "...and she dressed up" (va-tilbash), and there is written, "And the spirit enveloped (lavesah) Amasai... (1 Chron. 12:18).*

- II.6** A. *Said Rav Nahman: Haughtiness is not appropriate for women. There were two haughty women, and their names are offensive. One was named Ziburta [i.e., "bee," Deborah], and one was named Carcushta [i.e., "weasel," Huldah].*
- B. *Regarding Ziburta is written, "She sent and summoned Barak" (Jud. 4: 6); but she did not go to him.*
- C. *Regarding Carcushta is written, "Tell the man" (2Ki. 22: 15); but she did not say, "Tell the king."*
- D. *Said Rav Nahman: Huldah was a descendent of Joshua. Here is written, "...son of Harhas (ben harhas)" (2Ki. 22:14), and there it is written, "...in Timnat Heres (be-timnat heres)" (Jud. 2: 9).*
- E. *Rav Eina Saba retorted to Rav Nahman: Eight prophets who are priests descended from Rahab the prostitute, and they are: Neriah, Barukh, and Serayah, Mahsaiah, Jeremiah, Hilkiah, Hanamel, and Shalum.*
- F. *R. Judah says: Huldah the prophetess was also a descendent of Rahab the prostitute. Here it says "Son of Tikvah" (ben tiqvah), and there it says "the line (tiqvah) of the red thread" (Jos. 2:18).*
- G. *He said to him: Old Eye [playing on his name, Eina Saba]; and some say "Black Pot" [suggesting that he was accustomed to study, as a blackened pot is well used]! From me and from you [together] the matter is finalized, for she converted, and Joshua married her.*
- H. *And did Joshua have children? And it is written, "Non his son, Joshua his son..." (1 Ch. 7:27).*
- I. *He did not have sons; he had daughters.*
- J. **[15a]** *It is reasonable [to claim] that they [i.e., Jeremiah, Barukh, Hanamel, and Serayah] are prophets; they are mentioned [as prophets or as students of prophets].*
- K. *But from where [do we know that this is also true of] their fathers [i.e., Neriah, Mahasiah, Hilkiah, and Shalum]?*
- L. *According to [the teaching of] Ulla, for Ulla said: Any place where his name and his father's name [appear] in a prophetic context, it is known that he is a prophet, the son of a prophet; [if] his name [appears] without his father's, it is known that he is a prophet, but not the son of a prophet. [If] his name and the name of his city are mentioned, it is known that he is from that city; [if] his name [appears]*

without the name of his city, it is known that he is from Jerusalem.

- M. *In a baraita one learned:* Any time one's [own] acts and the acts of his fathers are unqualified, and Scripture specifically praised one of them, like "The word of God which was to Zephaniah ben Cushi ben Gedaliah" (Zep. 1: 1), it is known that he is a righteous person, the son of a righteous person. And any time Scripture specifically criticized one of them, like "And it was, in the seventh month, Ishmael ben Nethaniah ben Elishama came..." (Jer. 41: 1), it is known that he is an evil person, the son of an evil person.

**X.7** A. Said Rav [delete with DS: Nahman]: Malachi is Mordecai; and why is he named Malachi?

B. Because he was second to the king.

C. They retort: Barukh ben Neriah and Seraiah ben Mahseiah, and Daniel, and Mordecai Bilshan, and Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi — all of them prophesied in the second year of Darius [so Mordecai and Malachi are two people].

D. *This is a valid response.*

E. *It is learned:* Said R. Joshua ben Qorhah: Malachi is Ezra. And the sages say: Malachi is his [proper] name.

F. *Said Rav Nahman [DS: + bar Yitzhaq]: It makes sense according to the one who said "Malachi is Ezra," as is written regarding the prophecy of Malachi, "Judah has rebelled, and abominations have been done in Israel and in Jerusalem, for Judah has desecrated the beloved sanctuary of God, and has taken the daughter of a foreign god" (Mal. 2:11).*

G. *Who separated the foreign women?* Ezra, as is written, "And Shechaniah ben Yehiel of the children of Elam spoke up and said to Ezra: We have rebelled against our God and have taken foreign women" (Ezr. 10: 2).

**X.8** A. *The rabbis taught:* There were four beautiful women in the world: Sarah, Rahab, Abigail, and Esther.

B. *And according to the one who said, "Esther was greenish," remove Esther and insert Vashti.*

C. *The rabbis taught:* Rahab prostituted herself through her name; Yael, with her voice; Abigail, with mention of her; Michal, daughter of Saul, by her appearance.

D. Said R. Isaac: Anyone who says "Rahab, Rahab" immediately ejaculates.

E. *Said Rav Nahman to him: I have said "Rahab, Rahab," and nothing happened to me.*



- F. *He [Rabbi Isaac] said to him: When I spoke, [I spoke] of one who knows her well.*

## Interpretation of Esther Chapter Four

**I.1 A. “And Mordecai knew all that had happened, [and Mordecai rent his garments, and he put on sack cloth and ashes, and he went out into the city, and cried a great and bitter cry.]”**

B. *What did he say?*

C. Rav Said: Haman has become higher than Ahasuerus.

D. And Samuel said: *The upper king [God] has been conquered by the lower king [Ahasuerus].*

**II.1 A. “And the queen became upset...” A. What is [meant by] “became upset”?**

B. Said Rav: She became menstrual.

C. And R. Yermiah said: She needed to relieve herself.

**III.1 A. “And Esther called to Hathak”**

B. Said Rav: Hathak is Daniel. And Why is he called Hathak? Because they cut him down from his greatness.

C. And Samuel said: Because all royal matters are decided (*nehtakhin*) according to him.

**IV.1 A. “...to learn what this is (mah zeh), and why this is (ve-`al mah zeh)”**

B. Said R. Isaac: She sent to him [to Mordecai]: Perhaps Israel has violated the five parts of the Torah, in which is written, “from this side and that (*mi-zeh u-mi-zeh*) they are written” (Exo. 32:15).

**V.1 A. “And they told Mordecai the words of Esther”**

B. *And he [Hathak?] did not go to him.*

C. From here [one learns] that one does not return negative information [and they, i.e., others, told him].

**VI.1 A. “Go gather all the Jews [in Susa, and fast for me; do not eat or drink for three days, day or night, and I and my maidens will do likewise, and in this manner I will approach the king unlawfully...”**

B. Said R. Abba: This [approach to the king] was unlawful, because every single time [she approached the king until now], she was forced; now [she did so] willfully.

**VII.1 A. “...and if I am to be lost, I will be lost.”**

B. Just as I am lost to my father’s house, so will I be lost to you.

**VIII.1 A. “And Mordecai passed...”**

B. Said Rav: [This means] that he passed the first day of Passover in fasting.

C. And Samuel said: [It means] that he passed over a river [in order to inform people what was happening].

## Interpretation of Esther Chapter Five

**I.1 A. “And on the third day Esther wore royal...”**

- A. *It should say* “[Esther] wore royal garb.”
- B. Said R. Eleazar, said R. Hanina: This teaches that the Holy Spirit clothed her. Here is written, “and she wore” (Est. 5: 1), and there is written, “and the spirit clothed (*laveshah*) Amasai” (1Ch. 12:18)
- I.2** A. And said R. Eleazar, said R. Hanina: The blessing of a commoner should never be treated lightly by you, because two commoners blessed two leaders of the generation, and it was fulfilled.
- B. And who are they?
- C. David and Daniel.
- D. David, whom Arauna blessed, as is written, “And Arauna said to the king...” (2Sa. 24:23).
- E. Daniel, whom Darius blessed, as is written, “Your God, whom you worship continually, will save you” (Dan. 6:17).
- I.3** A. And said R. Eleazar, said R. Hanina: The curse of a commoner should never be treated lightly by you, because Abimelekh cursed Sarah [saying], “here is an eye covering for you” (Gen. 20:16), and it was fulfilled in her children, “and behold when Isaac was old, his eyes dimmed” (Gen. 27: 1).
- I.4** A. And said R. Eleazar, said R. Hanina: Come and see that the quality of humans is not like the quality of The Holy One, Blessed Be He. The quality of humans is that one first places a pot on the fire and then puts water in it; but The Holy One, Blessed Be He, places the water [in the pot first] and then places the pot on the fire, in order to fulfill what is said, “...to the sound of his placing much water in the heavens” (Jer. 10:13).
- I.5** A. And said R. Eleazar, said R. Hanina: Anyone who repeats something in the name of the one who said it brings salvation to the world, as is said, “and Esther said [it] to the king in Mordecai’s name” (Est. 2:22) [cf. Avot 6:5].
- I.6** A. And said R. Eleazar, said R. Hanina: A righteous person who is lost is lost to his generation. This is comparable to a man who lost a pearl. Wherever the pearl is, it is; it is lost only to its owner.
- II.1 A. “And all this is of no value to me...”**
- B. And said R. Eleazar, said R. Hanina: When Haman saw Mordecai sitting at the king’s gate, he said, “...all this is of no value to me” (Est. 5:13).
- C. [This is] like the teaching of Rav Hisda, for Rav Hisda said: One came as a member of the senate, and one came **[15b]** as a legate [following Jastrow].
- D. *Said Rav Pappa: They called him a slave that is sold for bread.*
- II.2 A. “And all this is of no value to me...”**
- B. This teaches that all [the contents of] this evil man’s treasures [i.e., of those of Haman] were always on his mind; and when he saw Mordecai sitting at the king’s gate, he said: “And all this is of no value to me” (5:13).
- II.3** A. And said R. Eleazar, said R. Hanina: The Holy One, Blessed Be He, will be a crown on the head of every righteous person, as is said, “On that day will the Lord of Hosts be a crown of glory (*zvi*), and a diadem of (*tzefirat*) beauty to the remnant

of his people, [and a spirit of judgment for the one who sits in judgment, and (a spirit) of bravery for those who fight a war at the gate]" (Isa. 28: 5-6).

- B. *What is [meant by]* “a crown of glory and a diadem of beauty”? For those who do his bidding (*tzivvyono*) and who anticipate (*metzappin*) his glory.
- C. It could mean for everyone. The text says “to the remnant of (*she`ar*) his people,” [meaning] to those who renders themselves like remnants (*shirayyim*).
- D. “And to the spirit of judgment” (Isa. 28: 6), this is one who judges his [own] inclination. “And to the person who sits at judgment” (ibid.), this is one who renders a thoroughly true judgment. “And for bravery” (ibid.) this is one who overcomes his [evil] inclination [cf. M. **Avot 4:1**]. “Those who fight a war” [means those] who give and take in the wars of Torah; “at the gate” these are scholars who frequent synagogues and academies in the morning and at night.
- E. Said the quality of law before The Holy One, Blessed Be He: Master of the World, how do these differ from these?
- F. Said The Holy One, Blessed Be He to her [the law]: Israel has studied the Torah; the nations of the world have not studied the Torah.
- G. He said to him [her?]: “These, too, have erred with wine and gone astray through beer...they fall (*paqu*) in judgment (*pelilah*)” (Isa. 28: 7). *Paqu* means “hell,” as is said, “and let this not be for you a stumbling block (*puqah*)” (1Sa. 25:31), and *pelilah* means judges, as is said, “and he will pay according to [the decision of] the judges (*pelilim*)” (Exo. 21:22).

### **III.1 A. “And she stood at the inner court of the palace”**

- B. Said R. Levi: When she reached the idol room, the divine presence left her.
- C. She said: “My God, My God, why have you abandoned me?” (Psa. 22: 2).
- D. Do You perhaps judge an involuntary violation like an intentional one, or a forced sin like a willful one?
- E. Or perhaps [You are angered] because I called him a dog, as is said, “Save my life from the sword, my only [life] from the dog” (Psa. 22:21)?
- F. She changed and called him a lion, as is said, “Save me from the mouth of the lion” (Psa. 22:22).

### **IV.1 A. “And when the king saw Esther the queen”**

- B. Said R. Yohanan: Three ministering angels were made available to her at that time, one who lifted her neck, and one who draped a thread of grace around her, and one who extended the scepter.
- C. And how far?
- D. Said R. Yermiah: It was two cubits long, and he extended it for twelve.
- E. And some say: For sixteen.
- F. And some say: For twenty-four.
- G. *In a baraita one taught:* For sixty.
- H. And thus you [also] find regarding [the arm of] Pharaoh’s daughter’s servant.
- I. And thus you [also] find regarding the teeth of the evildoers, as is written, “You smashed the teeth of the evildoers” (Psa. 3: 8). And

said Resh Laqish: Do not read [the word] *shibarta*, “You smashed,” but *she-ribavta*, “You extended.”

- J. Rabbah bar Ofran said in the name of R. Eliezer, who heard it from his teacher, and his teacher from his teacher: [The scepter was extended] two hundred [cubits].

**V.1 A. “And the king said to her: What do you want, Queen Esther, and what is your request; up to half the kingdom will be given to you.”**

- B. Half the kingdom, but not all of the kingdom.  
C. And nothing that divides the kingdom.  
D. And what is that? The building of the Temple.

**VI.1 A. “Let the king and Haman...come to the party”**

- B. *The Rabbis taught:* What did Esther see [i.e., what was she thinking] that she invited Haman?  
C. R. Eliezer says: She set traps for him, as is said, “let their table be a trap for them” (Psa. 69:23).  
D. R. Joshua says: She learned from her father’s house, as is said, “if your enemy is hungry, give him food...” (Pro. 25:21).  
E. R. Meir says: In order to prevent his taking counsel [in the king’s absence] and rebelling.  
F. R. Judah says: In order that they would not recognize that she was a Jewess.  
G. R. Nehemiah says: So that Israel would not say “we have a sister in the palace” and be distracted from [praying for] mercy.  
H. R. Yosé says: In order that he would be near her at all times.  
I. R. Shimon ben Menasiah says: [She thought:] Perhaps God will sense [the danger] and perform a miracle for us.  
J. R. Joshua ben Qorha says: [She thought:] “I will be nice to him” [thereby making the king jealous], so that he [Haman] and she would [both be killed].  
K. Rabban Gamaliel says: The king was fickle.  
L. [Said R. Gamaliel: We still need [the interpretation of R. Eleazar] HaModa`i, as is taught: R. Eleazar HaModa`i says: [Esther thought:] I made the king jealous of him, I made the officials jealous of him.  
M. Rabbah said: “Pride goes before the fall” (Pro. 16:14).  
N. *Abbaye and Rava, who both said:* “With their poison I will prepare their feast...” (Jer. 51:39).  
O. *Rabbah bar Avuha found Elijah. He said to him: According to whom did Esther think, that she did what she did?*  
P. *He [Elijah] said to him: Like all of the Tannaite authorities and like all of the cited Amoraim.*

**VII.1 A. “And Haman told them of the glory of his wealth and his many sons...”**

- B. And how many is “his many sons”?  
C. Said Rav: Thirty. Ten died, ten were hanged, and ten are beggars.

- D. And the rabbis say: Those who beg were seventy [in number], as is written, “formerly sated people (*seve'im*) are hired with bread” (1Sa. 2: 5); do not read *seve'im* (“formerly sated”), but *shive'im* (“seventy”) [so there were 90 sons].
- E. And Rami bar Abba said: Their total was 208, as is said, “and his many sons” (*ve-rov banav*); and the numerical value of the word *rov* [spelled *w-rwb*] is 208.
- F. But the numerical value of *w-rwb* [suggests that] there were 214!
- G. Said Rav Nahman bar Isaac: *Ve-rov* is [actually spelled] *w-rb* [without the medial Wav].

## Interpretation of Esther Chapter Six

- I.1 A. “On that night the sleep of the king was disturbed”**
  - B. Said R. Tanhum: [This means] the sleep of the king of the world was disturbed.
  - C. And the rabbis said: The upper [figures] were disturbed, and the lower [ones] were disturbed.
  - D. *Rava said: [This refers to] the sleep of King Ahasuerus himself. Something occurred to him. He said [to himself]: What is this before us, that Esther invited Haman? Perhaps they are consulting regarding a certain person [i.e., me], to kill him. Later he said: If so, is there no man who loves me, who would inform me? Later he said: Perhaps there is a man who has done some favour for me, and I have not rewarded him, [and] for that reason people are holding back and not telling me. Immediately...*
- II.1 A. “...and he ordered to bring the book of records, the chronicles; and that they be read...” (ve-yiheyu niqra'im), “...and it was found written...”**
  - B. This teaches that they were read by themselves [i.e., they read themselves].
  - C. “...and it was found written...”
  - D. *It should say* [“and] a document [was found...” or, perhaps, “he found a document,” reading the Hebrew as if it said, “And he found it really written”].
  - E. This teaches **[16A]** that Shimshai [cf. Ezr. 4:17] erased [the record of Mordecai’s having saved the king], and Gabriel [re]wrote it.
  - F. Said R. Asi: R. Shelah, a man of Kefar Timrata expounded: Since the writing below, which is to the credit of Israel, was not erased, is this not even more correct of the writing above.
- II.1 A. “Nothing has been done for him”**
  - B. Said Rava: Not because they love Mordecai, but because they hate Haman.
- IV.1 A. “Prepared for him”**
  - A. One taught: [This means] “prepared for himself.”
- V.1 A. “...and do so to Mordecai”**
  - B. He [Haman] said to him [Ahasuerus]: Who is Mordecai?
  - C. He [Ahasuerus] said: “...the Jew.”
  - D. *He [Haman] said to him: There are many Mordecai’s among the Jews.*
  - E. He [Ahasuerus] said to him: “**the one who sits in the king’s gate.**”

- F. He [Haman] said to him: One village is enough for him, or one river [to use as a royal land grant for income].
- G. He [Ahasuerus] said to him: Give him that, too; **“do not omit anything of what you have mentioned”** (Est. 6:10).

**VI.1 A. “And Haman took the garments and the horse...”**

- B. *He [Haman] went and found the rabbis sitting before him [Mordecai], and he was telling them the rabbinic laws of the handful [of flour used for certain offerings].*
- C. *When Mordecai saw him approaching, and holding [the reins of] his horse in his hand, he trembled. He said to the rabbis: This evildoer is coming to kill me. Depart from me, so that you will not be singed with his coal.*
- D. *Then Mordecai wrapped himself and rose for prayer.*
- E. *Haman came and sat before them [i.e., the rabbis] and waited until Mordecai finished his prayer.*
- F. *He [Haman] said to them: What were you studying?*
- G. *They said to him: When the Temple is in existence, one who donates a minchah-offering brings a handful of grain, and it atones for him.*
- H. *He [Haman] said to them: Your fist full of grain comes along and pushes aside my ten thousand talents of silver.*
- I. *He [Mordecai] said to him: Evil one! If a slave acquired possessions, to whom does the slave belong, and to whom do the possessions belong?*
- J. *He [Haman] said to him: Get up and put on these clothes, and mount this horse, for the king wants you.*
- K. *He [Mordecai] said to him: I cannot, until I go to the bath house and have a haircut, because it is not proper to wear the king's things in this condition.*
- L. *Esther had sent and ordered all the bath houses closed, and all [shops of] the craftsmen [who could serve as barbers].*
- M. *He [Haman] took him [Mordecai] to a bath house and washed him, and went and brought a pair of scissors from his house, and gave him a haircut.*
- N. *While he was cutting his hair, he was pained and sighed.*
- O. *He [Mordecai] said to him: Why did you sigh?*
- P. *He [Haman] said to him: A man who was more important to the king than all of his officials, now should he become a bath attendant and barber?*
- Q. *He [Mordecai] said to him: Evil one! Were you not the barber of Kefar Qartzum?*
- R. *One taught: Haman was the barber of Kefar Qartzum for twenty-two years.*
- S. *After he cut his hair, he dressed him in the clothes.*
- T. *He [Haman] said to him: Mount up.*
- U. *He [Mordecai] said to him: I cannot, because I am weak from days of fasting.*
- V. *He [Haman] bent down, and he [Mordecai] climbed up.*
- W. *While he was climbing up, he [Mordecai] kicked him.*
- X. *He [Haman] said to him: Is it not written for you, “Do not rejoice at the downfall of your enemy” (Pro. 24:17)?*

Y. *He [Mordecai] said to him: These words apply to Israel, but regarding you is written, "...and you will tread on their backs"*(Deu. 33:29).

**VII.1 A. "And he [Haman] called before him: Thus shall be done to the man whom the king wishes to honor."**

B. *When he went along the road on which Haman's house was [located], his [i.e., Haman's] daughter, who was standing on the roof, saw him. She thought the one riding [to be] her father, and the one walking before him [to be] Mordecai. She took the chamber pot and dumped it on her father's head.*

C. *He [Haman] looked up, and she saw that it was her father. She fell from the roof to the ground and died. And that is as is written, "And Mordecai returned to the king's gate"* (Est. 6:12) [i.e., alone, without Haman].

D. Said Rav Sheshet: [This means] that he returned to his sackcloth and and to his fasting.

**VIII.1 A. "and Haman returned mourning and downcast to his house"**

B. "Mourning" for his daughter and "downcast" over what happened to him.

**IX.1 A. "And Haman told Zeresh his wife and all those who loved him"**

B. It [Scripture] called them "those who loved him," and it called them "his sages."

C. Said R. Yohanan: Anyone who says anything wise, even [a member] of the nations of the world, is called a sage.

**X.1 A. "If Mordecai is descended from the Jews (yehudim)..."**

B. *They [Haman's family and friends] said to him: If he comes from the other tribes, you can vanquish him; if [he comes from] the tribes of Judah, or Benjamin, or Ephraim, or Menasseh, you cannot vanquish him.*

C. Judah, as is written, "Your hand will be on your enemy's neck" (Gen. 49: 8); the others, as it is written, "before Benjamin, and Ephraim, and Menasseh arouse your strength" (Psa. 80: 3).

**XI.1 A. "...because you will surely fall (nafol tippol) before him"**

B. R. Judah bar Ilai expounded: Why are these two words of falling needed? They said to him: This nation is compared to dust and is compared to the stars. When they descend, they descend to the dust; and when they ascend, they ascend to the stars.

**XII.1 A. "...and the king's eunuchs arrived; and they hustled..."**

B. This teaches that they brought him [to Esther's chamber] in a great confusion.

## **The Interpretation of Esther, Chapter Seven**

**I.1 A. "For we have been sold, I and my people...because the enemy is not worth the damage to the king."**

B. She said to him: This enemy does not take into account the damage [he causes] to the king.

C. *He [Haman] was jealous of Vashti, and killed her; now he is jealous of me, and wants to kill me.*

**II.1 A. "And King Ahasuerus said, and he said to Esther the queen."**



- B. Why does it say: “And he said” twice?
- C. Said R. Abahu: At first [he said it] through a spokesman (*turgeman*).
- D. *When she said to him: I come from the house of Saul, immediately* “he spoke to Esther the queen” [himself].

### **III.1 A. “And Esther said: A man, a foe, and an enemy is this evil Haman”**

- B. Said R. Eleazar: This teaches that she was [about] to indicate Ahasuerus, but an angel came and pushed her hand toward Haman.

### **IV.1 A. “And the king arose in his anger...and the king returned from the palace garden”**

- B. [The text] juxtaposes rising with returning. Just as the rising [from the party] was in anger, so the returning [from the garden] was in anger, for he went and found that the ministering angels, who appeared to him as men, had torn up the trees of his garden.
- C. *And he said to them: What are you doing?*
- D. *They said to him: As Haman ordered us.*
- E. *He [Ahasuerus] entered his house...*

### **V.1 A. “and Haman was falling on the couch...”**

- B. “Falling”? It should say “had fallen.”
- C. Said R. Eleazar: This teaches that an angel came and knocked him on it/her.
- D. He [Ahasuerus] said: Woe inside, woe outside. “[Do you intend] also to seize the queen from me [right here] in the house (Est. 7: 7)?

### **VI.1 A. “And Harbonah said...”**

- B. Said R. Eleazar: Even Harbonah was an evildoer in the conspiracy [against the Jews], but when he saw that his suggestion had failed, he immediately fled. And that is as is written “[The east wind...] hurls itself at him and shows no mercy, he flees from its strength into the wind” (Job. 27:22).

### **VII.1 A. “And the king’s anger quieted down (shekhakhah)”**

- B. Why are these two *shekhakhah*’s [found in the verse]?
- C. One [quieting down] is [that] of the king of the world, and one is [that] of Ahasuerus.
- D. And some say regarding this: One is [that] of Esther, and one [is that] of Vashti.

## **Interpretation of Esther Chapter Eight**

### **I.1 A. “To all of them, to a man, he gave changes of clothes, and to Benjamin he gave...five changes” (Gen. 45:22):**

- B. Is it possible that that righteous man would err through the same thing that caused him so much pain?
- C. **[16b]** For said Rava bar Mehasiah, said Rav Hama bar Guria’, said Rav: Because of the weight of two sela`im of wool that Jacob added to Joseph[’s portion] over [that of] the rest of his brothers, it evolved that our forefathers descended to Egypt,

- D. Said R. Benjamin bar Yefet: [The reason Joseph gave Benjamin this particular gift was] that he hinted to him that a son who would go forth from before the king in five royal garments would descend from him, as is said, “and Mordecai went out...in royal garb, blue [and white, a large golden crown, and a cloak of linen and purple]” (Est. 8:15).
- E. **“And he fell on the neck of Benjamin his brother” (Gen. 45:14):**
- F. *How many necks did Benjamin have? [Heb. tzavararei is inflected in the plural.]*
- G. Said R. Eleazar: He wept over the two Temples that were destined to be [built] in the territorial portion of Benjamin, and were destined to be destroyed.
- H. **“And Benjamin wept on his neck” (Gen. 45:14):**
- I. [In like manner,] he [Benjamin] wept over the shrine at Shilo that was destined [to be built] in the territorial portion of Joseph, and was destined to be destroyed.
- J. **“And, behold, your eyes see, and the eyes of my brother Benjamin” (Gen. 45:12):**
- K. Said R. Eleazar: He said to them: Just as I harbor no desire for vengeance toward my brother Benjamin, who did not share in my sale, I harbor no desire for vengeance toward you.
- L. **“...because the mouth of the speaker is [sincere] toward you”**
- M. My heart is [just] like my mouth.
- N. **“And to his father he sent accordingly ten asses loaded with the best of Egypt...” (Gen. 45:23 )**
- O. *What is “from the best of Egypt”?*
- P. Said R. Benjamin bar Yefet said R. Eleazar: He sent him [old] wine, which finds favor with the elders.
- Q. **“And his brothers also went and fell before him” (Gen. 50:12 ):**
- R. Said R. Benjamin bar Yefet said R. Eleazar: *That is what people say: A fox in his time, bow to him.*
- S. *A fox? What is his shortcoming, relative to his brothers?*
- T. *Rather, if it was said, it was said in this way: “And Israel bowed at the head of the bed” (Gen. 47:31) — Said R. Benjamin bar Yefet said R. Eleazar: “A fox in his time, bow to him.”*
- U. **“And he consoled them and spoke to their hearts:” (Gen. 50:21 ):**
- V. Said R. Benjamin bar Yefet said R. Eleazar: This teaches that he said to them words that are received [well] by the heart, [namely], just as ten lamps could not extinguish one lamp, how can one lamp extinguish ten?

## **II.1 A. “To the Jews there was light, and joy, and happiness, and honor”**

- B. Said Rav Judah: “Light” is Torah, and thus it says. “because commandment is light and Torah is light” (Pro. 6:23); “joy is a holiday, and thus it says, “you shall rejoice on your festival” (Deu. 16:14); “happiness” is circumcision, and thus it says, “I am happy over your word” (Psa. 119:162); “and honor,” these are Tefillin, and thus it

says, “and all the nations of the world will see that God’s name is read on you and will fear you” (Deu. 28:10).

C. R. Eliezer the Great says: These are the Tefillin on the head.

## **Interpretation of Esther, Chapter Nine**

### **I.1 A. “and Parshandata...ten sons of Haman”**

B. *Said Rav Ada from Jaffo: [The reader] must read the [names of] Haman’s ten sons and the [subsequent word] “ten” in one breath.*

C. *Why? Their life-breaths came out at the same time [as the reader’s will appear to do].*

D. *Said R. Yohanan: The [letter] Waw of Vaizata [the tenth son] must be elongated like a pole, like a steering oar of a liburnian.*

E. *Why? They were all hanged on one pole.*

F. *Said R. Hanina bar Papa: R. Shela, a man of Kefar Temarta expounded: All the “songs” are written brick over space and space over brick, except for this “song” and the [list of the] kings of Canaan [Jos. 12: 9-24], which are written brick over brick and space over space.*

G. *Why? Because there will be no recovery from their downfall.*

### **II.1 A. “And the king said to Esther the queen: In the fortress of Susa the Jews killed...”**

B. *Said R. Abahu: This teaches that an angel came and slapped his mouth.*

### **III.1 A. and through her coming before the king, he said with a book...”**

B. *“He said”? It should say, “she said.”*

C. *Said R. Yohanan: She said to him: Let what is written in the book be said aloud.*

### **IV.1 A. “...words of peace and truth”**

B. *Said R. Tanhum, and some say said R. Asi: This teaches that it [the scroll of Esther] requires scratching [of the guide lines for scribes], like the truth [of the lines] of the Torah.*

### **V.1 A. “And the word of Esther was fulfilled”**

B. *The “word of Esther” yes, and the “words of the fasts” (Est. 9:31) no?*

C. *Said R. Yohanan [reading the end of verse 31 with verse 32]: “words of the fasts...and the word of Esther was fulfilled, these days of Purim”*

## **Interpretation of Esther, Chapter Ten**

### **I.1 A. “Because Mordecai the Jew was second to King Ahasuerus, and great for the Jews, and wanted by most of his brothers”**

B. *“[...and wanted] by most of his brothers,” but not by all his brothers. This teaches that some of the [members of the] Sanhedrin separated from him.*

**I.2** A. *Said Rav Joseph: Torah study is greater than saving lives, for at first Mordecai was counted after four and subsequently after five. At first is written, “...who came with Zerubavel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai Bilshan”*

(Ezr. 2: 2), *and subsequently is written*, “...who came with Zerubavel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Azariah, Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai Bilshan” (Ezr. 2: 2).

- B. Said Rav, and some say Rav Samuel bar Marta: Torah study is greater than building the Temple, because throughout the time that Baruch ben Neriah was alive, Ezra did not abandon him and go up [to the holy land].
- C. Said Rabbah, said Rav Isaac bar Samuel bar Marta: Torah study is greater than honoring [one's] father or mother, because Jacob was not punished for all those years [he spent studying] in the house of Eber.
- D. As a master said: **[17a]** Why were the years of Ishmael numbered [in the Bible]? In order to relate to them the years of Jacob[’s life], as is written, “and these are the years of the life of Ishmael, 137 years” (Gen. 25:17). How much older was Ishmael than Jacob? Fourteen years, as is written, “and Abraham was 86 years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abraham (Gen. 16:16); and [as] is written, “And Abraham was 100 years old when Isaac his son was born” (Gen. 21: 5). And it is written, “and Isaac was 60 years when they were born” (Gen. 25:26). How old was Ishmael when Jacob was born? 74. How many years remain? 63.
- E. *And it is taught:* Our father Jacob was 63 when he was blessed by his father, and Ishmael died at the same time, as is written, “and Esau saw that...blessed...and Esau went to Ishmael, and he married Mahalat daughter of Ishmael, the sister of Nevayot” (Gen. 28: 6-9).
- F. Since it says “daughter of Ishmael,” do I not know that she was the sister of Nevayot?
- G. This teaches that Ishmael arranged the marriage and died, and her brother Nevayot married her off.
- H. 63, and 14 [years] until Joseph was born are 77.
- I. And it is written, “And Joseph was 30 years old when he stood before Pharaoh” (Gen. 41:46).
- J. This is 107; 7 of the [years of] plenty, plus 2 of the famine this totals 116.
- K. And it is written, “And Pharaoh said to Jacob: How old are you? And Jacob said to Pharaoh: I have lived 130 years” (Gen. 47: 8-9). [But according to our calculation they total 116.]
- L. *Learn from this:* The 14 years that he was [studying] in the house of Eber did not count, as is taught: Jacob was hidden in the house of Eber for 14 years. Eber died 2 years after our father Jacob descended to Aram Naharaim. He left there and went to Aram Naharaim. Thus when he stood at the well [he was] 77.
- M. And how do we know that he was not punished [for ignoring the responsibility of honoring his parents]?
- N. *As is taught:* It is apparent [that] Joseph separated himself from his father for 22 years, just as our father Jacob separated himself from his father.
- O. For Jacob was away for 36 [years].
- P. Rather, the 14 [years] that he spent in the house of Eber were not counted for him.
- Q. In the last analysis, [this means that] he spent 20 years in Laban’s house [not 22].
- R. Rather, [this is] because he tarried on the road for two years, *as is taught:* He left Aram Naharaim and arrived at Sukkot, and spent 18 months there, as is said, “and

Jacob traveled to Sukkot, and he built himself a house, and he made shelters [sukkot] for his cattle” (Gen. 33:17). And he spent 6 months in Beth El, and offered sacrifices.