

VII.

BABYLONIAN TALMUD

SOTAH

CHAPTER SEVEN

FOLIOS 32A-42A

7:1-5

- A. These are said in any language: (1) the pericope of the accused wife [Num. 5:19-22], and (2) the Confession of the tithe [Deu. 26:13-15], and (3) the recital of the Shema, [Deu. 6:4-9], and (4) the Prayer, (5) the Grace after Meals, (6) the oath of testimony, and (7) the oath concerning a bailment.

M. 7:1

- A. And these are said [only] in the Holy Language: (1) the verses of the first-fruits [Deu. 26: 3-10], (2) the rite of halisah [Deu. 25: 7,9], (3) blessings and curses [Deu. 27:15-26], (4) the blessing of the priests [Num. 6:24-26], (5) the blessing of a high priest [on the Day of Atonement], (6) the pericope of the king [Deu. 17:14-20];
- B. (7) the pericope of the heifer whose neck is to be broken [Deu. 21:7f.], and (8) [the message] of the anointed for battle when he speaks to the people [Deu. 20: 2-7].

M. 7:2

- A. The verses of the first fruits [M. 7:2A1] — how so?
- B. “And you will answer and say before the Lord thy God (Deu. 26: 5).
- C. And later on it says, “And the Levites will answer and say” (Deu. 27:14).
- D. Just as answering which is said in that later passage is in the Holy Language, so answering which is said here [in reference to the first fruits] is in the Holy Language.

M. 7:3

- A. The rite of removing the shoe [M. 7:2A2] — how so?
- B. “And she will answer and say” (Deu. 25: 9).
- C. And later on it says, “And the Levites will answer and say” (Deu. 27:14).
- D. Just as later on answering is to be in the Holy Language, so there answering is to be said in the Holy Language.

E. R. Judah says, “And she will answer and say, Thus — [so it is not valid] unless she says precisely these words.”

M. 7:4

- A. Blessings and curses [M. 7:2A3] — how so?
- B. When Israel came across the Jordan and arrived before Mount Gerizim and before Mount Ebal in Samaria, near Shechem, beside the oak of Moreh, —
- (C. as it is written, “Are not they beyond the Jordan...” (Deu. 11:30) and elsewhere it says, “And Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem to the oak of Moreh (Gen. 12: 6) — just as the oak of Moreh spoken of there is at Shechem, so the oak of Moreh spoken of here is at Shechem —)
- C. six tribes went up to the top of Mount Gerizim, and six tribes went up to the top of Mount Ebal.
- D. And the priests and Levites and ark of the covenant stood at the bottom, in the middle [between two mountains].
- E. The priests surround the ark, and the Levites [surround] the priests, and all Israel are round about, since it says, “And all Israel and their elders and officers and judges stood on this side of the ark and on that...” (Joshua 8:33).
- F. They turned their faces toward Mount Gerizim and began with the blessing:
- G. “Blessed is the man who does not make a graven or molten image.”
- H. And these and those answer, “Amen.”
- I. They turned their faces toward Mount Ebal and began with the curse:
- J. “Cursed is the man who makes a graven or molten image” (Deu. 27:15).
- K. And these and those answer, “Amen.”
- L. [And this procedure they follow] until they complete the blessings and the curses.
- M. And afterward they brought stones and built an altar and plastered it with plaster.
- N. And they wrote on it all the words of the Torah in seventy languages,
- O. as it is written, “Very plainly” (Deu. 27: 8).
- P. And they took the stones and came and spent the night [32B] in their own place [Jos. 4:8].

M. 7:5

The analysis of the catalogue that the Mishnah has given is standard and predictable: source in Scripture first of all.

- I.1. A. *How do we know [that the Hebrew language need not be used] in the pericope of the accused wife?*
- B. *As it is said, “And the priest shall say to the woman” (Num. 5:21) — in any language that he speaks.*
- C. *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:*
- D. [The priests] inform the woman in any language that she grasps on what account she drinks the bitter water, and in what sort of utensil she drinks it, on what

account she is deemed to have become unclean, and in what circumstances she is deemed to have become unclean.

- E. “On what account she drinks:” Because of the matters of the [husband’s] expression of jealousy and [her] having gone aside [with the named man].
- F. “In what she drinks it:” In a potsherd.
- G. “On what account she is deemed to have become unclean:” Because of matters of lightheadedness and childishness.
- H. “And in what circumstances she is deemed to have become unclean:” Whether inadvertently or intentionally, under constraint or willingness.
- I. And why all this? So as not to bring the bitter water into disrepute.

II.1. A. The confession of the tithe [M. 7:1A2]:

- B. *How do we know that fact? As it is written, “And you will answer and say before the Lord your God, ‘I have removed the holy things from my house’” (Deu. 26:13).*
- C. *Now we draw an analogy on the basis of the use of the word “say” in the pericope of the accused wife, indicating that it is to be stated in any language that [the farmer] speaks.*
- D. *Said R. Zebid to Abayye, “But why not draw the analogy to the meaning of the word ‘speaking’ when used in connection with the Levites (Deu. 27:14, M. 7:4C)? Just as, in that latter passage, the word bears the meaning of ‘using the Holy Language,’ so here too the word should have the meaning of ‘using the Holy Language.’”*
- E. *[He replied to him,] “They derive the meaning of the word ‘saying’ when it is used by itself from that same meaning and context, and they do not derive the meaning of the word ‘saying’ when it is used by itself from a passage in which we find both ‘answering’ and ‘saying.’”*

We turn to thematic composite, amplifying the subject but having nothing to do with the rule of the Mishnah.

I.2. A. It has been taught on Tannaite authority:

- B. R. Simeon b. Yohai says, “A person should speak of what is to his credit [Cohen] in a low voice, and what is to his detriment in a loud voice.
- C. “What is to his credit in a low voice [we learn] from the matter of the confession for the tithes.
- D. “What is to his detriment in a loud voice [we learn] from the declaration made at bringing the first fruits.” [Cohen, p. 160, n. 3: “In the former he tells how he had done his duty, and in that connection the unqualified ‘say’ occurs. In the latter he tells of his humble ancestry, and in that connection ‘answer and say,’ i.e., say aloud, occurs.”]
- E. And should one say what is to his detriment in a loud voice? And did not R. Yohanan say in the name of R. Simeon b. Yohai, “On what account did [sages] decree that the Prayer should be said in a whisper? So as not to embarrass transgressors [when they make confession during the Prayer].
- F. “For lo, Scripture did not distinguish the place of the sin-offering from that of the burnt-offering [but decreed that animals offered for either purpose should be

sacrificed at the same place on the altar. Thus on-lookers will not know why the animal has been sanctified and sacrificed.]"

- G. Therefore do not say [one should recite] what is detrimental to a person [in a loud voice], but rather, what pains him.
- H. *For it has been taught on Tannaite authority:*
- I. "And he shall cry out, 'Unclean,' 'unclean'" (Lev. 13:45).
- J. He must make his anguish known to the community, so that the community will seek mercy for him.
- K. And anyone to whom misfortune happens should inform the community, so that the community may seek mercy in his behalf.
- L. *Returning to the body of the preceding passage:*
- M. Said R. Yohanan in the name of R. Simeon b. Yohai, "On what account did [sages] decree that the Prayer should be said in a whisper? So as not to embarrass transgressors [when they make confession during the Prayer].
- N. "For lo, Scripture did not distinguish the place of the sin-offering from that of the burnt-offering."
- O. *And did it not? And lo, there is the matter of sprinkling the blood [of the sin-offering and the burnt-offering].* The blood deriving from a sin-offering is sprinkling above the red line around the altar, and the blood deriving from a burnt-offering is sprinkled below the line.
- P. *There, it is only the priest who knows [the difference between the one and the other].*
- Q. *And lo, there is the further distinction that the sin-offering is a female beast and the burnt-offering is a male beast.*
- R. *But as to that difference, the fat tail [covers the sexual parts, so it is not readily discerned].*
- S. *That answers serves for a female lamb, but what is there to say in the case of a female goat?*
- T. *In such a case, it is [the sinner himself] who has brought on his own embarrassment, for, if he had wanted to bring a female lamb, he could have done so, yet he brought a female-goat.*
- U. *But as to the sin-offering brought on account of idolatry, in which case only a female-goat is suitable, what is there to say? [Here it is not the sinner's choice.]*
- V. *In such a case let the man indeed feel the embarrassment so that [his shame] may attain atonement for him.*

III.1 A. The recital of the Shema [M. 7:1A3]:

- B. *How do we know it? Since it is written, "Hear, O Israel" (Deu. 6: 4) — in any language that you can hear [with comprehension].*

III.2. A. Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:

- D. "The recitation of the Shema must be in accord with the way it is written [that is, only in Hebrew]," the words of Rabbi.
- E. And sages say, "In any language."

- F. *What is the scriptural basis for Rabbis' position?* Scripture has said, "And they shall be..." (Deu. 6: 4), meaning they are to be just as they are [and that is, in Hebrew].
- G. And sages? Scripture has said, "Hear..." meaning, in any language that you hear with understanding.
- H. *And as to rabbis, lo, it indeed is written, "And they shall be..."*
- I. That serves to teach the lesson that one should not read the Shema in reverse order [backward].
- J. *And how does Rabbi derive the same lesson, that one should not read the Shema in the wrong order [reversing the sequence of the component paragraphs]?*
- K. *They derive that fact from the use of the definite article with "things," [thus, "these things" and hence in this order and no other].*
- L. *And as to rabbis, from the use of the definite article with the word "things" they derive no lesson whatsoever.*
- M. *And confronting Rabbi is yet the question of the use of the word "hear."*
- N. *He requires that usage to make the point that you should make audible to your ear what you are saying with your lips.*
- O. *And rabbis [in this connection] take the position of him who has said, "He who recites the Shema but does not make it audible to his ear nonetheless has carried out his obligation."*
- P. *May I then draw the conclusion that Rabbi takes the view [33A] that it is permitted to read the entire Torah in any language. For, if you think that it may be read only in the Holy Language, then what need do I have for the word, "And they shall be," which the All-Merciful has written?*
- Q. *[From Rabbi's viewpoint], it was necessary [to specify that the words are to be read as they are] because it is written, "Hear..."*
- R. *Then may I propose that rabbis take the view that the entire Torah was stated only in Hebrew, for if you take the view that it was in any language, why did the All-Merciful find it necessary to use the word "hear"?*
- S. *It was necessary to make explicit reference to that word, for, after all, it is written, "And they shall be..."*

IV.1 A. The Prayer [M. 7:1A4]:

- B. *[That is because] it is a prayer for mercy, and one may pray [for mercy in any language].*
- C. *And may the Prayer indeed be said in any language?*
- D. And did not Rab Judah say, "A person should never ask for what he needs in the Aramaic language, for R. Yohanan has said, 'Whoever asks for what he needs in Aramaic language [will be disappointed], for the ministering angels will pay no attention to him, for the ministering angels do not know the Aramaic language.'"
- E. *There indeed is no contradiction. The one view [given first] speaks of the case of an individual, the other, the case of the community.*
- F. And do the ministering angels not know Aramaic?

- G. *And has it not been taught on Tannaite authority: Yohanan, high priest, heard an echo from the house of the Holy of Holies, proclaiming in Aramaic, “The young men who went to make war against Antioch have conquered.”*
- H. *There was the further case of Simeon the Righteous, who heard an echo from the house of the Holy of Holies, proclaiming in Aramaic, “The decree which the enemy planned to bring upon the Temple has been nullified, and [in Hebrew] Gasqalges has been killed and his decrees nullified.” They made a note of the exact hour, and it turned out to be [exactly the hour at which the event took place].*
- I. *Now [as noted], this was said in Aramaic.*
- J. *If you wish, I may reply that the case of an echo is different, since it serves to make the matter well known [and hence it was better to use Aramaic, which is more widely understood].*
- K. *And if you wish, I may propose that it was Gabriel.*
- L. *For a master has said, “Gabriel came and taught [Joseph] seventy languages.” [So Gabriel does know Aramaic, but the other angels do not.]*

V.1 A. Grace after Meals [M. 7:1A5]:

- B. *For it is written, “And you will eat and be satisfied and bless the Lord your God” (Deu. 8:10) —*
- C. *in any language in which you say a blessing.*

VI.1 A. The oath of testimony [M. 7:1A6]:

- B. *As it is written, “And if any one sins, in that he hears an oath of testimony” (Lev. 5: 1) —*
- C. *in any language in which he hears [and understands] it.*

VII.1 A. The oath concerning a bailment [M. 7:1A7]:

- B. *We derive the rule by an argument from analogy based upon the oath of testimony, since the word “sin” occurs in both contexts.*

VIII.1 A. And these are said only in the Holy Language: the verses of the first fruits, the rite of halisah... up to the verses of the first fruits — how so? “And you will answer and say before the Lord your God” (Deu. 26: 5). And later on it says, “And the Levites will answer and say” (Deu. 27:14). Just as answering which is said in that later passage is in the Holy Language, so answering which is said here in reference to the first fruits is in the Holy Language [M. 7:2, 3]:

- B. *And how do we know that that is the case of the Levites themselves?*
- C. *We derive an analogy from the use of the word “voice” in regard to Moses.*
- D. *Here as it is written, “In a loud voice” (Deu. 27:14) and in that other passage it is written, “Moses spoke and God answered him by a voice” (Exo. 19:19).*
- E. *Just as in the latter passage it was in the Holy Language, so here it must be in the Holy Language.*

IX.1 A. The rite of removing the shoe — how so [M. 7:4A]:

- B. *[With reference to the proof-text of Judah, M. 7:4E, which stresses] the appearances of the word, “thus,” as to rabbis, how do they interpret that same usage?*
- C. *They require it to prove that each act is essential to the rite [that is, undoing the shoe, spitting in the husband’s face, and reciting the stated formula].*
- D. *And R. Judah? [Whence does he derive the same lesson]?*
- E. *It is from the use of the word, “thus,” in place of the equally acceptable “in this way” (KKH instead of KH). [The use of KKH indicates a dual lesson].*
- F. *And as to rabbis, they derive no lesson from such a usage.*
- G. **[33B]** *And how does R. Judah interpret the statement of Scripture, “And she will answer and say” (Deu. 25: 9)?*
- H. *He requires that phrase to demonstrate that the Levites make use of the Hebrew language [as we have just seen].*
- I. *And let him derive the lesson from the use of the word, “voice,” in the case of Moses?*
- J. *[Judah] had the tradition that one draws an analogy from the use of the word, “answer,” in two distinct contexts [applying the details of the one to the setting of the other], but he had learned no tradition as to conducting the same form of exegesis based on the appearance of the word, “voice,” in two contexts.*
- K. *There is a teaching on Tannaite authority along these same lines:*
- L. *R. Judah says, “In any place in which we find the words, ‘thus,’ ‘in this manner,’ ‘answering,’ and ‘saying,’ what is required is only the use of the Holy Language.*
- M. *As to “In this way,” we find “Thus you shall bless” (Num. 6:23) [so the priestly benediction must be said in Hebrew].*
- N. *In the case of the word, “thus,” the usage is as in the case of the rite of removing the shoe.*
- O. *In the case of the words, “answering and saying,” it is as in the case of the Levites. We now complement a clause of the Mishnah with the relevant texts in Scripture and Tannaite reading thereof.*

X.1 A. Blessings and curses — how so? When Israel came across the Jordan, etc. [M. 7:5A-B]:

- B. *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority [with reference to Deu. 11:30, “Are they not beyond the Jordan, west of the road, toward the going down of the sun, in the land of the Canaanites who live in the Arabah, over against Gilgal, beside the oak of Moreh”]:*
- C. *““Are they not beyond the Jordan’ — on the other side of the Jordan and beyond,” the words of R. Judah.*
- D. *“West of the road, toward the going down of the sun” — the place where the sun dawns [in the east].*
- E. *“In the land of the Canaanites who live in the Arabah” — this refers to Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, in which Samaritans live.*
- F. *“Over against Gilgal” — near Gilgal.*
- G. *“Beside the oak of Moreh” — [this is] Shechem.*

H. Elsewhere Scripture states, “And Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, to the terebinth of Moreh” (Gen. 12: 6) — just as the oak of Moreh mentioned in this latter verse is at Shechem, so that mentioned here is at Shechem [=M. 7:5C].

X.2. A. *It has been taught on Tannaite authority:*

- B. Said R. Eleazar b. R. Yosé, “In regard to this matter I proved that the books of the Samaritans to be forgeries.
- C. “I said to them, ‘You have forged your Torah and have gained nothing by it. For you say that the oaks of Moreh are Shechem. We too concede that the oaks of Moreh are Shechem. We derive that fact from an argument based on analogy.
- D. ““But as for you [rejecting that mode of argument], how have you derived that same fact?”
- E. R. Eleazar said, “‘Are they not beyond the Jordan’ (Deu. 11:30) — near the Jordan. For if [you wished to maintain that it meant] on the other side of the Jordan and beyond, is it not written, ‘And it shall be when you have passed over the Jordan’ (Deu. 27: 4). [Cohen: This is explained: as soon as you have passed over; therefore it must have been a place close to the Jordan.]
- F. ““West of the road, toward the going down of the sun’ — the place where the sun sets.
- G. ““In the land of the Canaanites’ — the land of the Hivites.
- H. ““Who live in the Arabah’ — but do they not live among mountains and hills?
- I. ““Over against Gilgal’ — But is it not the case that they could not see Gilgal?”
- J. R. Eliezer b. Yosé says, “The verse of Scripture at hand comes only to show them the way during the latter part [of their journey] just as it had shown them the way during the former part of their journey. [Cohen, p. 166, n. 4: When Israel left Egypt, a pillar of fire and cloud directed them; but this ceased on the death of Moses. Scripture therefore gives them directions, and its purpose is not to explain the location of Gerizim and Ebal.]
- K. ““The way’ — ‘Go in the path and not in fields and vineyards.’
- L. ““Who dwell’ — ‘Go in settled territory and not in the wilderness.’
- M. ““In the Arabah’ — ‘Go in the valley and not in hills and mountains.’”

X.3. A. *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:*

- B. **How did the Israelites cross the Jordan?**
- C. **Every day the ark would journey behind two standards, but this day it journeyed first, as it is said, “Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth passes over before you” (Jos. 3:11) [T. Sot. 8:1].**
- D. **Every day the Levites would carry the ark, but this day the priests carried it, as it is said, “And it shall come to pass, when the soles of the feet of the priests that bear the ark of the Lord” (Jos. 3:13).**
- E. *It has been taught on Tannaite authority:* R. Yosé says, “In three places did the priests carry the ark: Once when the Israelites crossed the Jordan, once when they surrounded Jericho, and once when they brought it back to its place” [T. Sot. 8:2].

- F. **[34A]** When part of the feet of the priests was dipped in the water, the water of the Jordan stood still, as it is said, “When those who bore the ark came into the Jordan the waters which came from above stood and rose up in one heap” (Jos. 3:15).
- G. How high was the water?
- H. “Twelve mils by twelve mils was the height of the water corresponding to the camp of Israel,” the words of R. Judah.
- I. Said R. Eleazar b. R. Simeon, “And is man swifter, or is water swifter? You have to say that water is swifter than man. This teaches that the waters were continually driven backward and heaped up higher and higher, stacks by stacks, three hundred mils, until all the kings of the nations of the east and west saw them, as it is said, ‘And it came to pass, when all the kings of the Amorites which were beyond Jordan westward, and all the kings of the Canaanites, which were by the sea, heard how the Lord had dried up the waters, their heart melted, neither was there spirit in them any more, because of the children of Israel’ (Jos. 5: 1)” [T. **Sot. 8:3**].
- J. And so did Rahab say to the messengers of Joshua, “For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea before you... And as soon as we heard it, our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more” (Jos. 2:10, 11) [T. **Sot. 8:4**].
- K. While they were still on the other side of the Jordan, Joshua said to them, “Know that you are entering the Land on condition that you will throw out its inhabitants,
- L. [“as it is said, ‘Then you shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land before you’ (Num. 33:52). ‘But if you do not drive out the inhabitants of the land before you’ (Num. 33:55), ‘then I will do to you as I thought to do to them’ (Num. 33:56).]
- M. “If you do so, well and good.
- N. “But if you do not [accept the task], ‘the water will come and drown you’” [T. **Sot. 8:5**].
- O. *What is the meaning of the spelling of “you”?* Me and you.
- P. While they were still in the Jordan, Joshua said to them, “Take you up, every man of you, a stone upon his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel (Jos. 4: 5), and lay them down in the place where you lodge tonight (Jos. 4: 3), in the place where the feet of the priests bearing the ark of the covenant had stood in the Jordan (Jos. 4: 9).”
- Q. This was a memorial for the children that their fathers had crossed the Jordan.
- R. While they were still in the Jordan, Joshua said to them, “Take twelve stones from here out of the midst of the Jordan from the very place where the priests’ feet stood (Jos. 4: 3)” [T. **Sot. 8:6A-C**].
- S. “Twelve stones, and carry them over with you, and lay them down in the lodging place where you will lodge this night” (Jos. 4: 3).
- T. Is it possible to suppose that they might dwell in any lodging place whatever?
- U. Scripture says, “Where you will dwell this night.”

- V. **R. Judah says, “R. Halafta, Eleazar b. Matia, and Hananiah b. Kina’i stood on those very stones and estimated that each one weighed forty se’ahs” [T. Sot. 8:6D].**
- W. *And we have learned that a person can carry on his shoulder a third of the weight he can carry.*
- X. On this basis you may reckon how much there is in a grapecluster [namely, three times forty seahs or a hundred and twenty per man, hence, with two, two hundred forty],
- Y. for it is said, “And they carried it on a staff between two” (Num. 13:23).
- Z. Now on the basis of the statement that it was carried on a staff, do I not know that it was between two? Why then does Scripture say, “Between two”? The meaning is, “On two poles.”
- AA. R. Isaac said, “It means a series of balancing poles” [Cohen].
- BB. How so?
- CC. Eight men carried one grapecluster, one carried a pomegranate, one carried a fig, and Joshua and Caleb carried nothing.
- DD. *[Why not?] If you want, I may explain that it was because they were important men.*
- EE. *If you want, I may say that it was because they did not share the opinion [of the others about the difficulty of concerning the land].*
- FF. *[Commenting on the cited passage of the Tosefta, above, H], R. Ammi and R. Isaac Nappaha differed.*
- GG. *One of them said, “In accord with the view of R. Judah, [34B] when they crossed the river, it was in the formation of a camp, and, in accord with the statement of R. Eleazar b. R. Simeon, they crossed over one after the other [Indian file].”*
- HH. *The other said, “In the view of both authorities they crossed over in the formation of a camp. One party takes the view that man is swifter than water, the other that water is swifter than man. [Cohen, p. 168, n. 14: For that reason they suggest different heights for the water to enable the people to escape.]”*

The Spies and the Land of Canaan

We now turn to a systematic exegesis of Israel’s first entry into the land, that is, the spies journey. Num. 13:2ff. are read and spelled out. The relevance of the topic to what has gone before is obvious: the prior entry is now contrasted with the one led by Joshua. This is a free-standing composite, made up of quite coherent compositions, Nos. 4-15. At the end we revert to the exposition broken off for the insertion of this massive and important exposition.

- X.4.** A. “Send for yourself men [to spy out the land of Canaan, which I give to the people of Israel]” (Num. 13: 2).
- B. R. Simeon b. Laqish said, “‘Send for yourself’ — on your own volition, for does anybody select a bad portion for himself?
- C. “And that is in line with the following verse of Scripture: ‘And the thing pleased me well’ (Deu. 1:23).”

- D. Said R. Simeon b. Laqish, “It was good ‘in my view’ but not in the view of the Omnipresent.”

X.5. A. “That they may explore the land for us” (Deu. 1:22): Said R. Hiyya bar Ba Abba, “The intent of the spies was only to discredit the land of Israel.

- B. “Here it is written, ‘That they may explore the land for us,’ and elsewhere it is written, ‘Then the moon shall be confounded [using the same root as the word for ‘explore’], and the sun ashamed’ (Isa. 24:23).”

X.6. A. “And these were their names: from the tribe of Reuben, Shammua the son of Zaccur” (Num. 13: 4):

- B. Said R. Isaac, “This matter is a tradition in our possession that derives from our ancestors: the spies received names in accordance with their deeds.
- C. “But, as to us, we have possession [of the meaning] of only one of the names, specifically, ‘Sethur the son of Michael’ (Num. 13:13).
- D. “‘Sethur’ [overturn] for he overturned the deeds of the Holy One, blessed be he. ‘Michael’ because he made himself weak (MK).”
- E. Said R. Yohanan, “We may also point to Nahbi son of Vapsi (Num. 13:14). ‘Nahbi’ because he concealed the words of the Holy One, blessed be he [and the word for concealed comes from the same root], and ‘Vapsi,’ because he passed over the traits of the Holy One, blessed be he [by not telling them honestly].”

X.7. A. “And they came up through the South and he came to Hebron” (Num. 13:22): *It should say*, “They came.”

- H. Said Raba, “This teaches that Caleb took his leave of the counsel of the spies and went and prostrated himself on the graves of the patriarchs.
- I. “He said to them, ‘Seek mercy for me, so that I may be saved from the counsel of the spies.’
- J. “As to Joshua, Moses had already sought mercy for him, as it is said, ‘And Moses called Hoshea the son of Nun Joshua’ (Num. 13:16), [that is to say] ‘may the Lord save you from the counsel of the spies.’
- K. “And that is the meaning of the following verse of Scripture: ‘But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit with him’ [I will bring him into the land wherein he went]’ (Num. 14:24).”

X.8. A. “And there were Ahiman, Sheshai, and Talmai” (Num. 13:22): Ahiman — because he was the strongest among his brothers.

- B. “Sheshai” — because he made the earth like pits [Cohen: through his heavy tread].
- C. “Talmai” — because he turned the land into furrows [by his heavy footsteps].

- D. Another explanation: Ahiman built Anath, Sheshai built Alash, and Talmai built Telbesh.
- E. “The children of Anak” (Num. 13:22) — for they wore the sun as a necklace [Cohen] on account of their height.

X.9. A. “Now Hebron was built in seven years” (Num. 13:22): *What is the meaning of “was built”?*

- B. *If I propose that it means*, “was built” in the ordinary sense, is it possible that a man could build a house for his younger son [Canaan] before building one for his elder son?
- C. For it is written, “And the sons of Ham: Cush and Mizraim” (Gen. 10: 6) [with Canaan as the youngest son, Mizraim as the second].
- D. But it means that it was seven times more productive than Zoan.
- E. Now you have no stony ground in the whole of the Land of Israel more stony than that at Hebron, where [because of the ground’s uselessness] people bury the dead. And you have no ground more productive among all lands than the Land of Egypt, as it is said, “Like the Garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt” (Gen. 13:10).
- F. And you have no more productive place in the entire land of Egypt than Zoan, as it is written, “For his princes are at Zoan” (Isa. 30: 4). Even so, Hebron was more productive than Zoan by seven times.
- G. But was Hebron such stony ground? And is it not written, “And it came to pass at the end of forty years that Absalom said to the king, ‘I ask you, let me go and pay my vow in Hebron’” (2Sa. 15: 7). And in this connection, said R. Avia — and some say, it was Rabbah bar bar Hanan — that he went to get lambs from Hebron.
- H. *And it is taught on Tannaite authority*: “Get your rams from Moab and your lambs from Hebron.”
- I. But from that fact itself [the stony character of the ground is to be shown, for] since the land is stony, it yields pasture, so cattle graze there.

X.10. A. “And they came back from spying out the land... [35A] and they went and they came” (Num. 13:25):

- B. Said R. Yohanan in the name of R. Simeon b. Yohai, “Their going is compared to their coming. Just as the coming was marked by bad counsel, so the going was marked by bad counsel.”

X.11. A. “And they told him and said, ‘We have come...’” and further it is written, “But the people are strong” (Num. 13:28):

- B. Said R. Yohanan in the name of R. Meir, “Any slanderous report which contains no grain of truth to begin with will not stand up in the end.”

- X.12.** A. “And Caleb stilled the people concerning Moses” (Num. 13:30):
Said Rabbah, “He quieted them with words.
- B. *“Joshua began to speak, but they put him down, saying to him, ‘Will this one, with a head cut off [lacking children] speak?’*
- C. *“[Caleb] said, ‘If I speak to them [along these same lines], they will say something [harsh] to me and silence me.’*
- D. “He said to them, ‘Now is this the only thing that Amran’s son has done to us?’
- E. “The people then supposed that he intended to speak ill of Moses, so they were silent. Then he said to them, ‘He brought us out of Egypt, he opened the sea for us, he fed us manna. If he should say to us, “Make ladders and climb up to heaven,” shall we not then obey him?’”
- X.13.** A. “Let us go up and possess it” (Num. 13:30):
- B. “But the men who went up with him said, ‘We shall not be able [to go up against the people, for they are stronger than we are]’” (Num. 13:31):
- C. Said R. Hanina bar Papa, “It was a great thing that the spies said at that time, ‘For he is stronger than we are.’ Do not read, ‘than we are,’ but rather, ‘than he [God] is. It is as if even the master of the house is not able to take his utensils out of there.’”
- X.14.** A. “It is a land that devours its inhabitants” (Num. 13:32):
- B. Raba interpreted the cited passage as follows, “Said the Holy One, blessed be he, ‘I reckoned it for good, and they regarded it as bad. I reckoned it for good *that wherever [the spies] came, the most important man of the place died, so that the people would be taken up with his burial and not ask about [the spies].*’”
- C. *Others say that Job. died and the entire world was involved in his funeral.*
- D. “But they regarded it as evil: ‘It is a land that devours its inhabitants.’”
- X.15.** A. “And we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight” (Num. 13:33):
- B. *Said R. Mesharshia, “The spies were liars. As to their statement that ‘We were like grasshoppers in our own eyes,’ that poses no problem. But how in the world could they have known that ‘so we were in their eyes?’”*
- C. *But that is not the case. For when they ate the funeral meal, they feasted it under cedar trees, and when [the spies] saw the people, they climbed up and sat in the trees. Then they heard the people saying, “We see in the trees men who look like grasshoppers.”*
- X.16.** A. “And all the congregation raised up their voice and wept” (Num. 14:10):

- B. Said Rabbah said R. Yohanan, "That day was the eve of the ninth of Ab.
- C. "Said the Holy One, blessed be he, 'They cried on no account. I shall provide for them an occasion for crying for all generations to come.'"
- D. "But all the congregation said to stone them with stones" (Num. 14:10).
- E. And it is written, "Then the glory of the Lord appeared at the tent of meeting" (Num. 14:10).
- F. Said R. Hiyya bar Abba, "This teaches that the people took stones and through them upward [at God]."

X.17. A. "The men who brought up an evil report of the land died by a plague before the Lord" (Num. 14:37):

- B. Said R. Simeon b. Laqish, "They died an unnatural death."
- C. Said R. Hanina bar Papa, R. Shila of Kefar Tamrata interpreted as follows: "This teaches that their tongues stretched out and reached down to their belly-buttons, and worms came out of their tongues and went into their belly-buttons and from their belly-buttons they went back into their tongues."
- D. R. Nahman b. Isaac said, "They died of croup."

We now resume the exposition of the entry into the land in the time of Joshua.

X.18. A. **And when the last person among the Israelites had gone up from the Jordan, the water of the Jordan went back to its place, as it is said, The waters of the Jordan returned to their place and overflowed all its banks, as before (Jos. 4:18).**

- B. **It turned out that the ark and its bearers and the priests were on one side of the Jordan and the Israelites on the other.**
- C. **So the ark carried its carriers and brought them across the Jordan [T. [Sot. 8:6E-H](#)].**
- D. So it is said, "And it came to pass, when all the people had passed over, that the ark of the Lord passed over, and the priests, in the presence of the people" (Jos. 4:11).

The reference to the carriers of the ark and the miracle that was done when they crossed the Jordan accounts for the intrusion of a small composite on the theme of The Punishment of Uzza for Touching the Ark.

X.19. A. On account of that matter Uzza was punished [not believing that the ark would take care of itself as well as those who carried it], as it is said, "And when they came to the threshing floor of Chidon, Uzza put forth his hand to hold the ark" (1Ch. 13: 9).

- B. The Holy One, blessed be he, said to him, "Uzza, [the ark] bore its carriers. All the more so should it be able to bear its own weight!"
- C. "And the anger of the Lord was aflamed against Uzzah, and God smote him there for his error" (2Sa. 6: 7):

X.20. A. R. Yohanan and R. Eleazar:

- B. One of them said, “[The word for error [shal] means on account of an act of neglect.”
- C. The other said, “He relieved himself before it.”
- X.21.** A. “And there he died by the ark of God” (2Sa. 6: 8):
- B. Said R. Yohanan, “Uzza reached the world to come, as it is said, ‘By the ark of God’ (2Sa. 6: 8). Just as the ark endures forever, so Uzza came to the world to come.”
- X.22.** A. “And David was inflamed [angry] because the Lord had broken forth upon Uzzah” (2Sa. 6: 9):
- B. Said R. Eleazar, “His face turned black like a cake baked in the coals.”
- C. *Is that to maintain that wherever it is written, “was angry,” the meaning is the same?*
- D. *In other contexts, the word “anger” is written, but here it is not explicitly written out.*
- X.23.** A. Raba gave the following exposition: “On what account was David punished? It was because he treated words of Torah as mere songs, as it is said, ‘Your statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage’ (Psa. 119:54).
- B. “Said to him the Holy One, blessed be he, ‘Words of Torah, concerning which it is written, “Will you set your eyes upon it? It is gone” (Pro. 23: 5), you treat as mere songs. Lo, I shall make you stumble in a matter which even school-children know full well.”
- C. It is written, “But to the sons of Kohath he gave none, because they were charged with the care of the holy things [which had to be carried on the shoulder]” (Num. 7: 9). But [David] brought [the ark] in a wagon!
- X.24.** A. “And he slew some of the men of Beth Shemesh, because they looked into the ark of the Lord” (1Sa. 6:19):
- B. Merely because they looked did he smite them!
- C. R. Abbahu and R. Eleazar: One of them said, “They were reaping [their harvest] and prostrating themselves [as they went along, so it was disrespectful].”
- D. *The other said, “They also used words [that were not proper], [35B] namely, ‘Who made you bitter that you were embittered, and who came along and appeased you that you are appeased?’ [‘Why did you not afflict the Philistines when you were there?’]”*
- X.25.** A. “He slew of them seventy men and fifty thousand men” (1Sa. 6:19):
- B. R. Abbahu and R. Eleazar: One said, “They were seventy men, but each one of them was worth fifty thousand men.”
- C. The other said, “They were fifty thousand men, and each one of them was worth a sanhedrin of seventy members.”
- X.26.** A. “And when those who bore the ark of the Lord had gone six paces, he sacrificed an ox and a fatling” (2Sa. 6:13).

- B. And it is written, “Seven bullocks and seven rams” (1Ch. 15:26).
- C. Said R. Papa bar Samuel, “For each step [that they took, they sacrificed] an ox and a fatling, and for each six steps, seven bullocks and seven rams.”
- D. Said to him R. Hisda, “If so, you will have filled up the entire Land of Israel with high places [on which such sacrifices would have taken place].”
- E. Rather, said R. Hisda, “For each six steps [that they took, they sacrificed] an ox and a fatling, and for each set of six steps, seven bullocks and seven rams.”
- F. [The threshing floor] is written as Chidon (1Ch. 13: 9) and also as Nacon (2Sa. 6: 6).
- G. Said R. Yohanan, “At first it was Chidon, and at the end, Nacon.” [Cohen, p. 175, n. 5: Chidon means “a spear,” an appropriate name for the place where Uzzah lost his life; Nacon means “established,” and alludes to the fact that the ark was established there.]

We resume the exegesis of the Tannaite exposition of the entry into the Land, with which this massive composite commenced some pages back.

X.27. A. You turn out to state: There were three sets of stones, one which Moses set up in the land of Moab, as it is said, “Beyond Jordan, in the land of Moab, Moses began to declare [B’R], etc.” (Deu. 1: 5), while elsewhere it is said, “And you shall write upon them all the words of this Torah very plainly [B’R]” (Deu. 27: 8). Since the same word [translated in the one context, “declare,” and in the other, “very plainly”] occurs in both places, [just as we find that in the latter passage there was a column of stones, so in the former, Moses set up stones and wrote out the Torah on them].

- B. **One which Joshua set up in the Jordan,** as it is said, “And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of the Jordan” (Jos. 4: 9).
- C. **And one which he set up in Gilgal,** as it is said, “And those twelve stones which they took” (Jos. 4:20) [T. **Sot. 8:6**].

The topic of setting up stones accounts for the introduction of the following: setting up stones for writing out the Torah.

X.28. A. Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority: How did the Israelites write the Torah?

- B. R. Judah says, “They wrote it on stones, as it is said, ‘You shall write upon the stones all the words of this Torah’ (Deu. 27: 8). Afterward, they plastered them with plaster.”
- C. **Said to him R. Simeon, “In accord with your view, then, how could the nations of the world of that time learn [what is in the Torah]? [The words would be covered up. Rather, they wrote on the plaster.]”**
- D. **He said to them, “This teaches that the Omnipresent motivated every nation and kingdom to send their notaries [scribes], and they translated what was written on the stones into seventy languages.**
- E. **“At that moment the verdict against the nations of the world was sealed for Destruction, for they should have learned [Torah] but did not” [T. **Sot. 8:6N-O**].**

- F. **R. Simeon says, “They wrote it on the plaster. How so? They laid it out and plastered it with plaster, and they wrote on it all the words of the Torah in seventy languages, and they wrote below, ‘That they teach you not to do after all their abominations’ (Deu. 20:18).**
- G. **“Lo, you thus derive the conclusion that if they repented, they would be accepted.”**
 - H. Said Raba bar Shila, “What is the Scriptural basis for the view of R. Simeon? As it is written, ‘And the peoples shall be as the burnings of plaster’ (Isa. 33:12), [that is], on account of the matter having to do with plaster.”
 - I. And R. Judah[’s explanation of the cited proof text]?
 - J. Just as plaster cannot be repaired, and has no remedy but to be burned, so those Samaritans have no remedy except for to be burned.
 - K. *In accord with what master is the following teaching on Tannaite authority:*
 - L. “And you carry them away captive” (Deu. 21:10) serves to encompass Canaanites who are outside of the land, so that, if they repent, they will be accepted.
 - M. **[36A]** In accord with which authority? It is in accord with R. Simeon [G].

We have completed the secondary exposition of the Tannaite presentation of the entry into the Land, and now we take up yet another Tannaite formulation and spell out its meaning.

- X.29.** **A. Come and see how many miracles were done for Israel on that day! They crossed the water of the Jordan and came to Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal [in Samaria on the side of Shechem, near the oaks of Moreh, as it is said, And are they not on the other side of the Jordan, west of the road, toward the going down of the sun, in the land of the Canaanites who live in the Arabah, over against Gilgal, beside the oak of Moreh (Deu. 11:30) — so traversing a distance of] more than sixty mils.**
- B. **No man stood against them, and whoever stood against them was forthwith panic-stricken, as it is said, “I will send My terror before you, and will discomfort all the people to whom you shall come” (Exo. 23:27). And it says, “Terror and dread fall upon them... until your people pass over, O Lord” (Exo. 15:16).**
 - C. **“Until your people pass over” — this is the first passage.**
 - D. **“Until this people which you have acquired” — this is the second passage.**
 - E. **On this basis you must conclude: The Israelites ought to have had done for them at the Jordan what was done for them at the Sea, but they had sinned [in the meantime] [T. **Sot. 8:7**].**
 - F. **Afterward they brought stones and built an altar and plastered it and wrote all the words of the Torah on them in seventy languages, as it is said, “Very plainly” (Deu. 27: 8).**

- G. And they offered up burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, and sat down and ate and drank, rejoiced, said the blessings and the curses.
- H. And they took the stones and went and spent the night in Gilgal, as it is said, “And carry them over with you and lay them down in the place where you lodge tonight” (Jos. 4: 3).
- I. Might one say, In any lodging place? Scripture says, “In the place in which you lodge tonight.”
- J. And were did they lodge? In Gilgal.
- K. And it says, “And those twelve stones, which they took out of the Jordan, Joshua set up in Gilgal” (Jos. 4:20).
- L. [Thus you learn that in Gilgal they set them up [M. 7:5P] [T. Sot. 8:8].

X.30. A. *A Tannaite statement:*

- B. A hornet did not cross [the Jordan] with them.
- C. Indeed not? And is it not written, “And I shall send the hornet before you” (Exo. 23:28)?
- D. Said R. Simeon b. Laqish, “It stood on the other side of the Jordan and squirted poison which blinded [the Canaanites] eyes on top and castrated them on the bottom.
- E. “For it is written, ‘Yet I destroyed the Amorite before them, whose height was like the height of the cedars, and he was strong as the oaks, yet I destroyed his fruit from above and his roots from beneath’ (Amo. 2: 9).”
- F. *R. Papa said, “There were two hornets, one for Moses, the other for Joshua. The one for Moses did not cross the river, the one for Joshua did.”*

XI.1 A. **Six tribes went up to the top of Mount Gerizim [M. 7:5C]:**

- B. [When, at Jos. 8:33, it says,] “The half of them [in front of Mount Gerizim and the half of them in front of Mount Ebal,]” *what is the meaning of the use of the definite article [the half, which hardly is needed]?*
- C. Said R. Kahana, “Just as they were divided here, so they were divided on the stones [that represented them] on the ephod [of the high priest].” [Cohen, p. 178, n. 2: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin on Mount Gerizim, and Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali, on Mount Ebal, see Deu. 27:12-13.]
- D. *An objection was raised [from the following teaching]:*”The high priest had two precious stones on his shoulders, one on one side, one on the other, and the names of the twelve tribes were written on them, , as it is said, “six on one stone and the names of the six that remain on the other stone, according to their birth” (Exo. 28:10).
- E. [The cited verse then implies that] the names on the first stone were not in accord with their birth, because Judah came first. There were fifty letters, twenty-five on one stone and twenty-five on the other.
- F. R. Hanina b. Gamaliel says, **[36B]** “It is not in accord with the way that they were divided in the Book of Numbers that they were divided on the stones of the ephod. But it was done in the way in which they were divided in the Book of Exodus [Exo. 1: 2ff.].

- G. “How so? The sons of Leah were in accord with the proper order, and as to the sons of Rachel, one was on this side and one was on that side, with the sons of the handmaidens in the middle.” [Cohen, p. 178, n. 7: On the one stone were Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun; on the other Benjamin, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, and Joseph.]
- H. *Then how shall I interpret the language*, “According to the order of their birth”?
- I. [The names were written down] in accord with the spelling of the names as their father [Jacob] had listed them, and not in accord with the spelling of their names as Moses had given them, thus, Reuben and not Reubeni, Simeon and not Simeoni, Dan and not Dani, Gad and not Gadi.
- J. *[The upshot is that we have] a refutation of R. Kahana, [is it not?]*
- K. *It is indeed a refutation.*
- L. What then is the sense of “half of them” [as asked at B, above]?
- M. *A Tannaite statement: The half that was before Mount Gerizim was larger than the half that was before Mount Ebal, because the tribe of Levi was below [the mountain, with the ark] [T. Sot. 8:9C-D].*
- N. *Quite to the contrary, since Levi was down below, they should have been less [than the other tribes, at Gerizim]* [Cohen, p. 179, n. 2: Since Levi should have been among the first six tribes].
- O. *This is the sense of the statement:* Even though Levi was down below, the children of Joseph were [included] with them [and that tribe was numerous].
- P. as it is said, “And the tribe of Joseph spoke to Joshua, saying, ‘Why have you given me but one lot and one portion as an inheritance, although I am a numerous people, since hitherto the Lord has blessed me?’” (Jos. 17:14).
The exposition of the cited verse now continues in its own terms.

- XI.2.** A. “And Joshua said to them, ‘If you are a numerous people, go up to the forest, and there clear ground for yourself’” (Jos. 17:15).
- B. He said to them, “Go and hide yourselves in the forests, so that the evil eye may not rule over you [by reason of your prosperity and numbers].”
- C. *They said to him, “The seed of Joseph is not subject to the rule of the evil eye, as it is written, ‘Joseph is a fruitful bough, a fruitful bough by a fountain’ (Gen. 49:22).”*
- D. In this regard, R. Abbahu said, “Do not read ‘by a fountain’ but ‘overcoming the evil eye’ [which is done by a shift in vowels for the same consonants].”
- E. R. Yosé b. Hanina said, “Proof for the same proposition derives from the following: ‘And let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth’ (Gen. 48:16). Just as fish in the sea are covered by water, so that the evil eye does not rule over them, so the seed of Joseph is not subject to the rule of the evil eye.”
- F. *As to the fifty letters [mentioned above], in fact, there were fifty less one.*
Now we revert to the problem of No. 1, broken of at 1.P.

XI.3. A. Said R. Isaac, “To the name of Joseph they added an additional letter, as it is said, ‘He appointed it in Jehoseph for a testimony when he went out over the land of Egypt’ (Psa. 81: 6).”

B. *To this reply R. Nahman bar Isaac objected, “We require that the names be in accord with the order of their birth. [The name must be as given by Jacob, so the citation at hand is not relevant.] Rather, in the entire Torah, Benjamin is written with only one Y, but here it is written in complete form, with two Ys, as it is said, ‘And his father called him Benjamin’ (Gen. 35:18) [fully spelled out, with two Ys].”*

XI.4. A. Said R. Huna bar Bizna said the name of R. Simeon Hasida, “To Joseph, who sanctified the Holy Name in private, a single letter was added but to the name of Judah, who sanctified the name of Heaven in public, they gave the entire a name of the Holy One (YHWH), blessed be he.

We now expound the story of Joseph and Potiphar’s wife, which is the occasion on which Joseph sanctified the divine name, doing so in private.

B. *How did Joseph [sanctify the Holy Name of God]? As it is written, “And it came to pass about this time, that when he went into the house to do his work” (Gen. 39:11):*

C. Said R. Yohanan, “This teaches that both of them had in mind committing a transgression.”

XI.5. A. “He went into the house to do his work” (Gen. 39:11):

B. Rab and Samuel:

C. One said, “It was actually to do his work.”

D. The other said, “It was to fulfill his [sexual] needs.”

XI.6. A. “And there was none of the men of the house” (Gen. 39:11):

B. Is it possible that in so large an establishment as the house of the evil Potiphar, there was not a single man at home?

C. *A Tannaite authority of the house of R. Ishmael [stated], “That day was a festival day for them, and they all had gone off to their temple. But she had said to him, ‘I am sick.’ She was thinking, ‘I have never had a day such as this, on which Joseph will submit to me.’”*

XI.7. A. “And she caught him by his garment, saying...” (Gen. 39:12):

B.. At that moment the visage of Jacob’s face came to [Joseph] and appeared to him in the window. He said to him, “Joseph, your brothers are destined to be inscribed on the stones of the ephod [of the high priest], and you with them. Do you want your name to be blotted out from among them, and to be called a pimp [lit.: friend (shepherd) of whores], as it is written, ‘He who is a friend [shepherd] of whores hates his substance’ (Pro. 29: 3).”

C. Forthwith: “His bow abode in strength” (Gen. 49:24).

D. R. Yohanan said in the name of R. Meir, “The meaning is that his passion subsided.”

XI.8. A. “And the arms of his hands were made active” (Gen. 49:24):

- B. He pushed his hands into the ground, so that semen came out from between his fingernails.

XI.9. A. “By the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob” (Gen. 49:24):

- B. Who made his name to be inscribed on the stones of the ephod, if not the Mighty One, Jacob?

XI.10. A. “From thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel” (Gen. 49:24):

- B. From that incident he attained merit and was made a shepherd, as it is said, “Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, you who leads like the flock of Joseph” (Psa. 80: 1).

XI.11. A. *It has been taught on Tannaite authority:* Joseph was worthy that from him twelve tribes should come forth, as they had gone forth from Jacob, his father, as it is said, “These are the generations of Jacob, Joseph” (Gen. 37: 2). But his semen had come out of his fingernails.

- B. So they [ten sons, plus Joseph’s two, thus twelve in all] came forth from Benjamin, his brother, and all of them bore [Joseph’s] name, as it is said, “The sons of Benjamin: Bela and Becher and Ashbel” (Gen. 46:21).

C. “Bela” because [Joseph] was swallowed up among the nations.

D. “Becher” — he was first born (bekhor) for his mother.

E. “Ashbel” — For God had sent him into captivity.

F. “Gera” for he dwelled in lodgings [not at home].

G. “Naaman” because he was unusually pleasing [to people].

H. “Ehi and Rosh” He is my brother (ahi) and my head.

I. “Muppim and Huppim” “For” [said Benjamin] “he did not see my marriage canopy and I did not see his marriage canopy.”

J. “Ard” Because [Joseph] went down among the peoples of the world.

K. There are some who say, “Ard” because his face looked rosy [WRD].

XI.12. A. Said R. Hiyya bar Abba said R. Yohanan, “When Pharaoh said to Joseph, ‘And without you no man shall lift up his hand’ (Gen. 41:44), the astrologers of Pharaoh said, ‘Will you hand dominion over us to a slave, whom his master purchased for twenty pieces of silver?’

B. “He said to them, ‘I see royal traits in him.’

C. “They said to him, ‘If so, then let him prove that he knows seventy language.’

D. “Gabriel came and taught him seventy languages. *He could not, however, master them.* So he gave him an additional letter, taken from the name of the Holy One, blessed be he, as it is said, ‘He appointed it in Jehoseph for a testimony when he went out over the land of Egypt, where I [Joseph] heard a language that I knew not’ (Psa. 81: 6).

- E. *“On the next day, in whatever language Pharaoh spoke with him, Joseph answered him. Then Joseph spoke to him in the Holy Language, and Pharaoh did not know what he was saying to him. He tried to teach it to him, but Pharaoh could not learn it. Pharaoh said to him, ‘Swear to me that you will not reveal it [my incapacity],’ and he swore to him.*
- F. *“When later on Joseph said to him, ‘My father made me swear, saying,’ (Gen. 50: 5), Pharaoh replied to him, ‘Go and seek remission from your oath.’*
- G. *“He said to him, ‘Then I shall seek remission also from the oath that pertains to you.’*
- H. *“So, even though he did not approve, he said to him, ‘Go up and bury your father, according to the oath that he imposed on you’ (Gen. 50: 6).”*

XI.13. A. [Reverting to 4.A,] *what did Judah do?*

- B. *It is in accord with that which has been taught on Tannaite authority:*
- C. R. Meir says, “When the Israelites stood at the sea, the tribes argued with one another, with this one saying, ‘I shall go down to the sea first,’ and that one saying, ‘I shall go down to the sea first.’”
- D. “The tribe of Benjamin jumped forward [37A] and went down to the sea first, as it is said, ‘There is little Benjamin, their ruler’ (Psa. 68:17). Do not read, ‘their rules’ but ‘descended into the sea.’”
- E. “Then the princes of the tribe of Judah threw stones at them, as it is said, ‘The princes of Judah stoned them’ (Psa. 68:27).
- F. “For that reason Benjamin, the righteous, attained such merit as to be made the host of the All-Mighty, as it is said, ‘He dwells between his shoulders’ (Deu. 33:12). [God, in the temple, dwells in Benjamin’s land.]”
- G. Said R. Judah to [Meir], “That is not how things happened. Rather, this one was saying, ‘I shall not go down to the sea first,’ and that one was saying, ‘I shall not go down to the sea first. Nahshon b. Aminadab jumped forward and went down to the sea first, as it is said, ‘Ephraim compasses me about with falsehood, and the house of Israel with deceit, but Judah yet rules with God’ (Hos. 12: 1).”
- H. In his regard it is explained in tradition, “Save me, O God, for the waters have come into my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing” (Psa. 69: 2-3).
- I. “Let the waterflood not overwhelm me, nor let the deep swallow me up” (Psa. 69:16):
- J. At that time, Moses was praying at his own good time. Said to him, the Holy One, blessed be he, “My dear ones are drowning in the sea, and you are taking your own good time in prayer before me?!”
- K. He said to him, “Lord of the world, what can I do?”
- L. He said to him, “Speak to the children of Israel, that they go forward, and lift up your rod and stretch out your hand” (Exo. 14:15-16).

- M. Therefore Judah attained such merit as to be made ruler in Israel, as it is said, “Judah became his sanctuary, Israel his dominion” (Psa. 114: 2).
- N. What is the reason that “Judah became his sanctuary and Israel his dominion”? Because “the sea saw him and fled” (Psa. 114: 3).

We now revert to our basic problem, the location of the names of the tribes on the stones, with special reference to Levi.

XI.14. *A. It has been taught on Tannaite authority:*

- B. **R. Eliezer b. Jacob says, “You cannot say that Levi was below, for it already has been said that Levi was above, and you cannot say that Levi was above, for already has it been stated that Levi was below.”**
- C. **“On this basis you must say that the elders of the priesthood and the Levites were below, but the rest of the tribe was above.”**
- D. **“Those who were suitable for service stood below, and those who were not suitable for service stood above.”**
- E. **Rabbi says, “Both these and those were down below.”**
- F. **They turned their faces toward Mount Gerizim and began with the blessing: Blessed is the man who does not make a graven or molten image [M. [Sot. 7:5F-G](#)] — an abomination to the Lord, the work of a craftsman, not put away in secret.**
- G. **And these and those answer, Amen. [They turned their faces toward Mount Ebal and began with the curse: Cursed is the man who makes a graven or molten image (Deu. 27:15). And these and those answer, Amen [M. [Sot. 7:5H-K](#)].**

XI.15. *A. What is the meaning [at Deu. 27:12] of the word, “upon”? It means, “near.”*

- B. *So it has been taught on Tannaite authority: “And you shall put pure frankincense near [upon] each row” (Lev. 24: 7).*
- C. Rabbi says, “The word ‘upon’ means [not on top of but] ‘near.’”
- D. You say that it means “near,” but perhaps it means only “upon”?
- E. When Scripture says, “You shall put a veil near [upon] the ark” (Exo. 40: 3), [using the same word] it must be that the word at hand means “near.”

We have reached the conclusion of a long and somewhat complex composite, formed around the theme of the Mishnah-sentence and intersecting themes. We proceed to the next theme provoked by the Mishnah’s program, the blessings and the curses.

XII.1 **A. They turned their faces toward Mount Gerizim and began with the blessing [M. [7:5F](#)]:**

- B. *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:*
- C. **There is a blessing in general and a blessing in particular, a curse in general and a curse in particular.**
- D. **To learn, to teach, to observe, and to do (Deu. 5: 1, 11:19) — lo [\[37B\]](#) four [duties with each commandment]. Four and four are eight, and eight and eight are sixteen [eight blessings and curses with the general commandment, and eight with the particular commandments],**

- E. **with three covenants for each one — lo, forty-eight covenants for each commandment,**
- F. **and so at Mount Sinai, and so in the plains of Moab [T. Sot. 8:10A-D],**
- G. as it is said, “These are the words of the covenant which the Lord commanded Moses” (Deu. 28:69), and it is written, “Keep therefore the words of this covenant” (Deu. 29: 8).
- H. Thus there are forty-eight covenants with each commandment [sixteen in each of the three places (Cohen)].
- I. **R. Simeon excludes the one of Mount Gerizim and of Mount Ebal and includes the one of the Tent of Meeting in the wilderness [T. Sot. 8:11A].**
- J. *Now the dispute of the Tannaite authorities at hand follows the same lines as that of those in the following, as has been taught on Tannaite authority:*
- K. R. Ishmael says, “The general principles were stated at Sinai and the specific details in the Tent of Meeting.”
- L. R. Aqiba says, “The general principles and the specific applications were stated at Sinai and repeated in the Tent of Meeting and then said for a third time on the plains of Moab.”
- M. **[T.’s version:] You have no religious duties for which forty-eight covenants were not made.**
- N. **R. Simeon b. Judah of Kefar Akko says in the name of R. Simeon, “You have nothing whatsoever in the Torah for which six hundred three thousand five hundred and fifty covenants were not made, equivalent to the number of people who went forth from Egypt.”**
- O. **Said Rabbi, “If matters are in accord with the view of R. Simeon of Judah of Kefar Akko which he said in the name of R. Simeon, then you have nothing whatsoever in the Torah on account of which sixteen covenants were not made, and there is with each one of them six hundred three thousand five hundred and fifty” [T. Sot. 8:1].**
- P. *What is at issue between them?*
- Q. *Said R. Mesharsheya, “At issue between them is the question of personal responsibility and responsibility for others.” [Cohen, p. 185, n. 4: If it is held according to the Rabbis that each Israelite is responsible for the conduct of the rest, then the number must be squared to get the total.]*

XII.2. A. R. Judah b. Nahmani, the repeater of traditions for R. Simeon b. Laqish, “The entire passage [of blessings and curses] pertains only to the adulterer and adulteress.

- B. “‘Cursed is the man who makes a graven or molten image’ (Deu. 27:15).
- C. *“Is it really enough to call him [merely] ‘cursed’? [Such a person is put to death.] Rather, it refers to one who has sexual relations with a woman in an incestuous relationship with him and produces a son who goes to live among idolators and worships idolatry. Cursed are the father and mother of this one, who have brought about his sin.”*

XII.3. A. *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority: “You shall set the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse...” (Deu. 11:29):*

- B. What does Scripture propose to say?
- C. If it is to indicate that the blessing should be upon Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal, lo, it already has been said, “These shall stand upon Mount Gerizim to bless the people,” (Deu. 27:12) and further, “And these shall stand upon Mount Ebal for the curse” (Deu. 27:13).
- D. Rather it is to indicate that the blessing must come before the curse.
- E. Is it possible to suppose that all the blessings should precede all the curses?
- F. Scripture says, “...blessing... and curse...” One blessing comes before one curse, but all the blessings do not come before all the curses.
- G. It further serves to draw an analogy between the blessing and the curse, to show to you the following facts:
- H. Just as the curse is to be transmitted by the Levites, so the blessing is to be transmitted through the Levites.
- I. Just as the curse is to be said in a loud voice, so the blessing is to be said in a loud voice.
- J. Just as the curse is to be said in the Holy Language, so the blessing is to be said in the Holy Language.
- K. Just as the curse is stated as a general rule and then given specific applications, so the blessing is to be stated as a general rule and then given specific applications.
- L. And just as the curses are answered, by both parties, by “Amen,” so the blessings are to be answered by both parties with “Amen.”

The oaths of M. 7:1A5 are two. If witnesses are subjected to an oath, in any language, that they give honest testimony and they claim they know nothing but actually do have testimony to offer, they owe an offering (Lev. 5:1, 6). If a bailment is left and the bailiff takes an oath, in any language, that he does not have the item and afterward confesses that he does, he owes an offering (Lev. 5:21-25). The Talmud focuses upon the scriptural foundations of the rule, with a vast amplification, as is set forth in Chapter Ten.

7:6

- A. **The blessing of the priests [M. 7:2A4] — how so?**
- B. **In the provinces they say it as three blessings, and in the sanctuary, as one blessing.**
- C. **In the sanctuary one says the Name [38A] as it is written, but in the provinces, with a euphemism.**
- D. **In the provinces the priests raise their hands as high as their shoulders, but in the sanctuary, they raise them over their heads,**
- E. **except for the high priest, who does not raise his hands over the frontlet.**
- F. **R. Judah says, “Also the high priest raises his hands over the frontlet,**
- G. **“since it is said, ‘And Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them’ (Lev. 9:22).”**

The Tannaite complement supplies scriptural support for the allegation of the Mishnah. A vast composite on the theme of the priestly blessing, of which the following is the opening clause, now follows. The whole should be regarded as a coherent construction. For the purposes of this analysis, however, we have to

treat everything beyond the opening composition as a massive insertion, since the purpose of Mishnah-commentary is served only by I:1.

I.1 A. *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:*

- B. “Thus you shall bless...” (Num. 6:23): in the Holy Language.
- C. You say that it is to be in the Holy Language. But may it be in any language whatsoever?
- D. Here it is said, “Thus shall you bless” (Num. 6:23), and elsewhere it is said, “These shall stand to bless the people” (Deu. 27:12).
- E. Just as, in that other context, the Holy Language [must be used], so here too the Holy Language [must be used].
- F. R. Judah says, “[The proof at hand] is unnecessary. Lo, it say, ‘Thus,’ meaning, [‘the matter is correctly done] only if they say it in this language.’”

The Priestly Blessing. A Topical Miscellany.

I.2. A. *It has further been taught on Tannaite authority:*

- B. “Thus you shall bless...” (Num. 6:23): standing [not sitting down].
- C. You say that it is to be standing. But may it even be sitting down?
- D. Here it is said, “Thus shall you bless” (Num. 6:23), and elsewhere it is said, “These shall stand to bless the people” (Deu. 27:12).
- E. Just as, in that other context, it is to be done standing, so here too it is to be done standing.
- F. R. Nathan says, “[The proof at hand] is unnecessary. Lo, it is said, ‘To minister to him and to bless his name’ (Deu. 10: 8). Just as one serves while standing, so one blesses while standing.”
- G. And how do we know concerning the act of service that that act itself is done standing?
- H. As it is written, “To stand to minister” (Deu. 18: 5).

I.3. A. *A further Tannaite teaching:*

- B. “Thus you shall bless...” (Num. 6:23): by raising the hands.
- C. You say that it is by raising the hands. But is it by not raising the hands at all?
- D. Here it is said, “Thus you shall bless...” (Num. 6:23), and elsewhere it is said, “And Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them” (Lev. 9:22).
- E. Just as, in that other context, it was by raising the hands, so here it is by raising the hands.
- F. *The following problem was addressed to R. Jonathan:* “May we then say, ‘Just as, in that latter context, it was done by the high priest, on the celebration of the new month in the public service, so here too must it be done by a high priest on the celebration of the new month during a public service?’” [Accordingly, the proof just now adduced raises more problems than it solves. We shall now take up a more appropriate deduction.]
- G. R. Nathan says, “[The proof-text is not necessary]. Lo, it says, ‘Him and his sons for ever’ (Deu. 18: 5). The verse at hand thus establishes an analogy between him

and his sons. Just as he [blesses the community by] raising his hands, so his sons do so by raising their hands.

- H. “And it is written, ‘For ever’ (Deu. 18: 5), thus drawing an analogy between the blessing [of the community] and the act of service. [The verse at hand mentions only ministering, not giving a blessing. This further proof then solves that problem.]”

I.4. A. *A further Tannaite teaching:*

- B. “Thus you shall bless the children of Israel (Num. 6:23): using the Unique Name [of God].
- C. You say that it is using the Unique Name of God, but perhaps it refers only to the use of a euphemism?
- D. Scripture states, “So they shall place my name...” (Num. 6:27), meaning, the name that is unique to me.
- E. Is it possible to maintain that the same name is used in the provinces [cf. M. 7:6C]?
- F. Here it is said, “So they shall place my name...” (Num. 6:27), and elsewhere it is stated, “To put his name there” (Deu. 12: 5).
- G. Just as that other verse refers specifically to the chosen house [of the Temple], so here too the context is the chosen house.
- H. R. Josiah says, “It is not necessary [to offer that proof]. Lo, it says, ‘In every place where I shall cause my name to be remembered I shall come to you’ (Exo. 20:24).
- I. “*Could it enter your mind that the meaning is ‘every place’?* But the verse at hand is to be reorganized in this way: ‘In every place in which I shall come to you and shall bless you, there shall I cause my name to be remembered.’ Now where is it that ‘I come to you and bless you’? It is in the chosen house. There ‘I shall cause my name to be remembered, in that chosen house.’”

I.5. A. *A further Tannaite teaching:*

- B. “Thus you shall bless the sons of Israel” (Num. 6:23):
- C. I know that included in the blessing are only the sons of Israel. How do I know that included are also proselytes, women, and freed slaves?
- D. Scripture says, “Say to them” (Num. 6:23), meaning, to all of them.

I.6. A. *A further Tannaite teaching:*

- B. “Thus you shall bless” (Num. 6:23): face to face.
- C. You say that it is face to face. [The priests are to face the community.] But perhaps it means face to back [with the priests’ faces toward the peoples’ backs]?
- D. Scripture says, “Say to them” (Num. 6:23), meaning, as a person says something to his fellow.

I.7. A. *A further Tannaite teaching:*

- B. “Thus you shall bless” (Num. 6:23): in a loud voice.
- C. Or perhaps it means only in a whisper?
- D. Scripture says, “Say to them” (Num. 6:23), meaning, as a person says something to his fellow.

- I.8.** A. *Said Abayye, “We have a tradition that [in calling the priests to say the blessing], to two [priests, the prayer-leader] calls out, ‘Priests,’ but to one alone he does not call out, ‘Priest.’*
 B. *“For it is said, ‘Say to them,’ (Num. 6:23), meaning, ‘to two’ [but not to one].”*
 C. *And R. Hisda says, “We hold a tradition that [if the prayer-leader is] a priest, then he calls out, ‘Priests,’ but if he is an Israelite, he does not call out, ‘Priests.’*
 D. *“For it is said, ‘[You in particular] say to them,’ (Num. 6:23), meaning, the act of saying [38B] must come from their own group.”*
 E. *Now the law accords with the position of Abayye, but the law does not accord with the position of R. Hisda.*

Joshua b. Levi’s Sayings on the Priestly Blessing

A subset of the composite now begins, comprising Joshua b. Levi’s sayings on the topic at hand.

- I.9.** A. *Said R. Joshua b. Levi, “How do we know that the Holy One, blessed be he, yearns after the blessing of the priests?*
 B. *“As it is said, ‘And they shall put my name on the children of Israel, and I shall bless them’ (Num. 6:27).”*
- I.10.** A. *And R. Joshua b. Levi said, “Every priest who says a blessing is blessed, and every priest who does not say the blessing is not blessed,*
 B. *“as it is said, ‘And those who bless you will I bless’ (Gen. 12: 3).”*
- I.11.** A. *And R. Joshua b. Levi said, “Any priest who does not go up to the platform [to bless the community] violates three affirmative religious commandments: ‘Thus shall you bless’ (Num. 6:23), ‘Say to them’ (Num. 6:23), and ‘They shall place my name...’ (Num. 6:27).”*
 B. *Rab said, “[In such a case] they take account of the possibility that he is the son of a divorcee or of a woman who has undergone the rite of removing the shoe.”*
 C. *Now there is no dispute [between Joshua and Rab]. The one speaks of a case of a priest who goes up from time to time, and other of a priest who never goes up from time to time [and the latter is subject to doubt as to his genealogy].*
- I.12.** A. *And R. Joshua b. Levi said, “Any priest who does not go up during [the prayers said in commemoration of] the sacrificial service may not go up again [at some later time, in the service],*
 B. *“as it is said, ‘And Aaron lifted up his hands toward the people and blessed them, and he came down from offering the sin-offering and burnt-offering and peace-offering’ (Lev. 9:22).*
 C. *“Just as the passage at hand speaks of the priestly blessing during the sacrificial service, so in the context [of the synagogue], the priestly blessing must take place during the prayer in commemoration of the sacrificial service.”*
 D. *Is this so? And lo, R. Ammi and R. Assi went up [at a later time in the prayer-service]. To be sure. But R. Ammi and R. Assi to begin with had*

moved [their feet], but did not get there [to the platform in time so they said the blessing later on].

- E. *And that accords with what R. Oshaia taught as a Tannaite statement, “The rule at hand applies only to a case in which the priest to begin with had not moved his feet, but if he had moved his feet, he goes up [later on, and blesses the people when he gets there].”*
- F. *It has been taught along these same lines on Tannaite authority: If [the priest] is certain that he can lift up his hands [and say the priestly blessing] and then go back to his Prayer, he is permitted [to do so]. Now in this regard we proposed that while he has not moved his feet, [if] he only moves a little to the side, [that suffices]. [The answer was therefore given] that here too we deal with a case in which he shifted his feet a little.]*

Joshua ben Levi's Sayings on Generosity

- I.13.** A. And R. Joshua b. Levi said, “They hand over the cup of blessing [in the Grace after meals] only to someone who is generous,
 - B. “as it is said, ‘One who is generous will be blessed, for he gives of his bread to the poor’ (Pro. 22: 9).
 - C. “Do not read, ‘will be blessed’ but rather, ‘will say the blessing.’”
- I.14.** A. And R. Joshua b. Levi said, “How do we know that even the birds in the skies can spy out a niggardly person?
 - B. “As it is said, ‘For in vain is the net spread in the eyes of any bird’ (Pro. 1:17). [Pro. 1:19: So are the ways of everyone who is greedy of gain.]”
- I.15.** A. And R. Joshua b. Levi said, “Whoever derives benefit from a niggardly person violates a negative commandment, as it is said, ‘Do not eat the bread of one who is niggardly [nor desire his dainties]. For as he reckons within himself, so he is; “eat and drink,” he says to you, but his heart is not with you’ (Pro. 23: 6).”
 - B. R. Nahman bar Isaac said, “Such a one violates two negative commandments.
 - C. ““Do not eat,’ and “Do not desire.”
- I.16.** A. R. Joshua b. Levi said, “The occasion for going through the rite of breaking the neck of a heifer [when a neglected corpse turns up] comes only on account of [prior] niggardliness.
 - B. “For it is said, ‘They shall answer and say, ‘Our hands have not shed this blood’ (Deu. 21: 1).
 - C. “Now would it have entered your mind that the elders of the court are murderers?! Rather, what they are saying is, ‘This man did not come to our hands, so that we dismissed him, and we did not see him and neglect him.’ ‘He did not come to our hands so that we dismissed him’ without food, and ‘we did not see him and neglect him,’ without providing a guard [for his trip to the next village].”

We now revert to the topic of the priestly benediction, continuing from No. 8.

- I.17.** A. Said Adda said R. Simlai, "In a synagogue all the members of which are priests, all of them go up to the platform."
- B. Whom then do they bless?
- C. Said R. Zira, "They bless their brethren who are out in the fields."
- D. *Is that so? And has not Abba, son of R. Minyamin bar Hiyya, repeated the following Tannaite teaching: "The people who stand at the back of [behind] the priests are not covered by the blessing." [Since the people in the fields are not present, therefore, how can they gain the benefit of it?]*
- E. *There is indeed no difficulty. The one rule speaks of a case in which people are absent under constraint [but would like to be present], the other of a case in which they are not absent under constraint, [since no one has to stand behind the priests, rather than in front of them].*
- F. *And has not R. Shimi of the Fort of Shihori repeated as a Tannaite tradition: "In a synagogue made up entirely of priests, part of them go up onto the platform [to say the blessing] and the other part of them reply, 'Amen.'"*
- G. *There is no contradiction. In the one case [Shimi's], if part of them come up, there will remain a quorum of ten, in the other case [Adda's], if part of the priests come up, there will not be a quorum made up of the remainder. [So they do not do so.]*
- I.18.** A. *Returning to the body of the matter: Abba, son of R. Minyamin bar Hiyya, repeated the following Tannaite teaching: "The people who stand at the back of the priests are not covered by the blessing."*
- B. *It is self-evident that the tall people do not create a barrier before the short ones [Cohen, p. 192, n. 1: Although the latter are shut out from the view of the priests, they are not excluded from the benediction.] Furthermore, the ark itself does not create an obstruction.*
- C. *But what about a partition [within the synagogue]?*
- D. *Come and hear [the following relevant statement:] Said R. Joshua b. Levi, "Even a partition made of iron will not create an obstruction between Israel and their father in heaven."*
- E. *The following question was raised: What about the people standing along the sides [of the priests, not in front of them, not behind]?*
- F. *Said Abba Mar, son of R. Ashi, "Come and hear. For we have learned [in the Mishnah, M. Par. 12:2]: If a person who was sprinkling [39A] the purification-water intended to sprinkle the water before him but sprinkled it behind, behind him and sprinkled it in front, his act of sprinkling is null. If he intended to sprinkle it before him but sprinkled it toward the sides in front of him, his act of sprinkling is valid, [and the same is so here]."*
- The statement in the foregoing, Even a partition made of iron will not create an obstruction between Israel and their father in heaven, accounts for the inclusion of the following, on the prohibition of talk when the Torah is open. Such chatter will create a barrier between God and the people. On that basis, I treat what follows as a secondary insertion.

- I.19.** A. Raba, son of R. Huna, said, "Once a Torah-scroll has been opened [and unrolled], it is forbidden to chat, even in regard to a matter of law,
- B. "as it is said, 'And when he opened it, all the people stood up' (Neh. 8: 5).
- C. "Standing indicates silence, as it is said, 'And I will wait because they speak not, because they stand still and do not answer any more' (Job. 32:16)."
- D. *R. Zira said in the name of R. Hisda, "[Proof of the same proposition derives] from here: 'And the ears of all the people were attentive to the scroll of the Torah' (Neh. 8: 3)."*

Now we revert to the established topic, the priestly benediction and the rules that govern it. We note that the following in Joshua b. Levi's name is not included in the composite of his sayings on the topic but finds a natural position in the composite of rules on the topic.

- I.20.** A. And R. Joshua b. Levi said, "Any priest who has not washed his hands should not raise his hands [and say the priestly benediction],
- B. "as it is written, 'Lift up your hands in holiness and bless the Lord' (Psa. 134: 2)."
- I.21.** A. The disciples of R. Eliezer b. Shammua asked him, "On what account have you lived so long?"
- B. He said to them, "I never turned a synagogue into a short cut, I never stepped over the heads of the holy people [when the people were seated before a master]. I never raised my hands [in the priestly benediction] without saying a blessing."
- C. *What is the blessing a priest should say?*
- D. Said R. Zira said R. Hisda, "...who has sanctified us [priests] with the sanctity of Aaron and commanded us to bless his people Israel with love."
- E. *When a priest takes a step [to ascend the platform], what should he say?*
- F. "May it please you, Lord our God, that this blessing, with which you have commanded us to bless your people, Israel, should bear no cause for stumbling nor sin."
- G. *When [the priest] turns away from the congregation, what does he say?*
- H. R. Hisda brought R. Uqba forward, and the latter expounded: "'Lord of the world, we have done what you decreed for us to do. Now do for us **[39B]** what you promised us, and look down from your holy dwelling in heaven,' etc."
- I.22.** A. Said R. Hisda, "The priests are not permitted to bend their fingerjoints [which have been stretched as they said the blessing] until they have turned away from the congregation."
- I.23.** A. Said R. Zira said R. Hisda, "The one who leads the prayer is not permitted to call, 'Priests!' [at the beginning of the priestly benediction] until the word 'Amen' has been completely expressed by the congregation.
- B. "The priests are not permitted to begin to say the priestly blessing until the address ['Priests'] has been completed by the one who leads the worship.
- C. "The congregation is not permitted to say, 'Amen,' until the blessing has been completed by the priests.

- D. “The priests are not permitted to begin to say another blessing until the congregation has completed saying the word ‘Amen.’”
- E. And R. Zira said R. Hisda said, “The priests are not permitted to turn their faces away from the congregation [at the end of the priestly benediction] until the prayer-leader begins to say, ‘Grant peace.’
- F. “And they are not permitted to pick up their feet and go their way until the leader of the congregation completes saying the prayer, ‘Grant peace.’”
- G. And R. Zira said R. Hisda said, “The congregation is not permitted to say, ‘Amen,’ until the leader of the prayers has completed saying the blessing,
- H. “The one who leads the prayers is not permitted to read the Torah until the word, ‘Amen,’ has been completely stated by the congregation.
- I. “The one who translates the verses of the Torah into Aramaic is not permitted to begin his translation until a verse has been completely read by the one who reads the Torah.
- J. “The one who reads the Torah is not permitted to begin reading a new verse until the one who does the translating has completed the translation of the verse at hand.”

The following composition is inserted as a gloss on 23:J.

- I.24.** A. Said R. Tanhum said R. Joshua b. Levi [said], “He who completes the Torah-lection with the reading of a prophetic passage first of all has to read in the Torah.”
- B. And R. Tanhum said R. Joshua b. Levi said, “The one who is to read the prophetic passage is not permitted to begin to read the prophetic passage until the scroll of the Torah has been rolled up [and put away].”
 - C. And R. Tanhum said R. Joshua b. Levi [said], “The one who leads the worship is not permitted to strip the ark bare in the presence of the congregation because of the honor owing to the congregation.”
 - D. And R. Tanhum said R. Joshua b. Levi [said], “The congregation is not permitted to go out [of the synagogue] until the Scroll of the Torah is taken and placed in its proper place.”
 - E. And Samuel said, “... until [the one who leads the prayer] goes forth.”
 - F. *But there is no point at issue between them. The one [Joshua] speaks of a case in which there is another door, the other [Samuel] of a place in which there is no other door.*
 - G. *Said Raba, “Bar Ahina explained to me [the basis in Scripture for the preceding rule:] ‘You shall go after the Lord your God’ (Deu. 13: 5).”*

We now revert to our established topic.

- I.24.** A. When the priests are saying the priestly blessing for the people, what do the people say?
- B. Said R. Zira said R. Hisda, “Bless the Lord, you angels of his, you mighty in strength... Bless the Lord, all you his hosts, you minister of his who do his will. Bless the Lord, all you, his works, in all places of his dominion. Bless the Lord, O my soul’ (Psa. 103:20ff).”

The next compositions carry forward the problem of the foregoing and form an integral part of the composite. However, because of the basic structural interest in the topic of the priestly blessing, I treat them as subordinate. Clearly, the composite was complete before insertion, whole, in its present position.

I.25. A. *During the additional services on the Sabbath, what do they say?*

- B. Said R. Assi, “A song of ascents. Behold, bless you the Lord, all you servants of the Lord. Lift up your hands in holiness and bless the Lord. Blessed be the Lord out of Zion, who dwells in Jerusalem. Praise you the Lord’ (Psa. 135:21).”
- E. *And should one not also say, “May the Lord bless you from Zion,” which occurs in that same passage?*
- F. Said Judah son of R. Simeon b. Pazzi, “Since one begins by blessing the Holy One, blessed be he, he should finish by blessing the Holy One, blessed be he.”
- G. *At an afternoon service on a fast day, what do people say?*
- H. Said R. Aha bar Jacob, “‘Though our sins testify against us, act for your name’s sake... O hope of Israel, their savior in the time of trouble, why should you be as a sojourner in the land... why should you be as a man astonished, as a mighty man that cannot save?’ (Jer. 14:7ff.)”
- I. **[40A]** *At the concluding service on the Day of Atonement, what does one say?*
- J. *Said Mar Zutra, and some say that it was taught in a Tannaite teaching, “Behold, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the Lord. The Lord shall bless you out of Zion, and you shall see the good of Jerusalem all the days of your life. Yes, you shall see your children’s children. Peace be upon Israel’ (Psa. 138:4ff.).”*

We now revert to the topic broken off at No. 25.

I.26. A.. At what point in the service does one say these verses?

- B. R. Joseph said, “Between each blessing.”
- C. R. Sheshet said, “When the divine name is mentioned.”

I.27. A. *R. Mari and R. Zebid differed on this matter. One said, “One verse by the congregation is said along with a verse of the priests.”*

- B. The other said, “A whole [verse] for each verse [by the priests].”
- C. Said R. Hiyya bar Aba, “Whoever says these verses in the provinces only errs.”
- D. *Said R. Hanina bar Papa, “You should know that even in the sanctuary it is not necessary to say them. Do you have a case of a slave whom people bless and who pays no attention? [Surely not!]”*
- E. *Said R. Aha bar Hanina, “You should know that in the provinces it also is necessary to say them. Do you have a case of a slave whom people bless, and whose face does not brighten?”*
- F. *Said R. Abbahu, “To begin with I would say them. Now that I have seen R. Abba of Akko, who does not say them, I too will not say them.”*

- I.28.** A. *And R. Abbahu said, "At the beginning I held that I was humble. When I saw R. Abba of Akko, who gave one viewpoint, and whose Amora [who would repeat the rabbi's teaching out loud for the students] stated a different position, and who then did not take exception to that fact, I reached the conclusion that I am not really humble." [Abba was truly humble.]*
- B. *And what was the evidence of the humility of R. Abbahu himself?*
- C. *The wife of the Amora of R. Abbahu said to the wife of R. Abbahu, "Our [husband] really does not need yours, and as to his bending low and then standing up straight in his [your husband's] presence, it is a mere act of routine courtesy that he pays him."*
- D. *R. Abbahu's wife went and told him. He said to her, "What difference does it make to you? Through me and him the Most-High is praised."*
- E. *Furthermore, rabbis determined to appoint [Abbahu] head. When he saw that R. Abba of Akko had many creditors, he said to them, "There is a greater [choice for the office. Choose him.]"*
- F. *R. Abbahu and R. Hiyya bar Abba came to a certain place. R. Abbahu gave a public exposition of lore. R. Hiyya bar Abba gave a public exposition of legal traditions. Everybody neglected R. Hiyya bar Abba and came to hear R. Abbahu. [Hiyya] was distressed.*
- G. *[Abbahu] said to him, "Let me make a parable for you. To what may the matter be compared?*
- H. *"To the case of two men, one who sold precious gems, the other who sold this and that. To whom do people go running? To the one who sells odds and ends."*
- I. *Every day R. Hiyya bar Abba would accompany R. Abbahu to his inn, because he was respected by the house of Caesar. On that day, however, R. Abbahu accompanied R. Hiyya bar Abba to his inn, but even so, [Hiyya's] mind was not placated.*

Yet another composite is inserted, now reverting to the general inquiry of broken off at No. 25.

- I.29.** A. While the leader of the congregational prayer says, "We give thanks...", what do the people say?
- B. Said Rab, "'We give thanks, O Lord, our God, because we [are able to] give thanks to you.'"
- C. And Samuel said, "'God of all flesh, for which we give you thanks...'"
- D. R. Simai says, "'Our creator, creator of the works of creation, for which we give you thanks...'"
- E. *The Nehardeans say in the name of R. Simai, "'Blessings and praise to your great name, because you have kept us in life and sustained us, for which we give you thanks.'"*
- F. R. Aha bar Jacob concludes the prayer as follows: "So too may you keep us in life and show us favor and bring us together and gather up our exiled

peoples to your sacred courts, there to keep your statues and do your will with a whole heart, on which account we give you thanks.”

G. *Said R. Pappa, “On that account we should say all of them.”*

Once more we revert to the structural topic of the composite.

- I.30.** A. Said R. Isaac, “At all times let the awe of the community be upon you, for lo, [the importance of the community is shown in the fact that] as to the priests, their face is toward the people, and their backs toward [the ark that represents] the presence of God.”
- B. *R. Nahman said, “[Proof of the same view derives] from here: ‘Then King David stood up upon his feet and said, “Here me, my brothers and my people”’ (1Ch. 28: 2). If they are ‘my brothers,’ why ‘my people’? And if ‘my people,’ why ‘my brothers’?”*
- C. *Said R. Eleazar, “This is what David said to Israel, ‘If you obey me, you are “my brothers,” and if not, you are “my people,” and I shall rule over you with a staff.”’*
- D. *Rabbis said, “[Proof of the same proposition derives] from this fact: the priests are not permitted to go up onto the platform with their sandals on their feet. [As a sign of humility in blessing the people, they have to remove their shoes.]”*
- E. That is one of the nine ordinance that Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai ordained.
- F. *What is the reason for the rule? Is it not on account of the honor owing to the community?*
- G. *Said R. Ashi, “No. The reason for the stated rule is that the thong of [a priest’s] sandal may become untied, and the priest may then go and tie it, and [this undignified act of stooping down to retire the lace (Cohen, p. 198, n. 1) will lead people to suppose that] he is disqualified from the priesthood as the son of a divorcee or the son of a woman who has performed the rite of removing the shoe.”*

II.1 A. And in the sanctuary as one blessing [M. 7:6B]:

- B. **[40B]** And why so?
- C. Because people do not respond by saying, “Amen,” in the sanctuary.
- D. *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:*
- E. How do we know on the basis of Scripture that the people do not respond with, “Amen,” in the sanctuary?
- F. As it is said, “Stand up and bless the Lord your God from everlasting to everlasting” (Neh. 9: 5).
- G. And how do we know that, for every blessing, there must be a word of praise?
- H. As it is said, “And blessed be your glorious name which is exalted above all blessing and praise” (Neh. 9: 5),
- I. that is, for every blessing give him praise.

While, as always, the Talmud makes the impression of a certain prolixity, it also follows a simple and intelligible program. This is spelled out in Chapter Ten.

- A. The blessing of the high priest [M. 7:2A5] — how so?
- B. The minister of the assembly takes a scroll of the Torah and gives it to the head of the assembly, and the head of the assembly gives it to the prefect, and the prefect gives it to the high priest.
- C. And the high priest stands and receives it and reads in it: “After the death...” (Lev. 16: 1ff.) and “Howbeit on the tenth day” (Lev. 23:16-32).
- D. Then he rolls up the Torah and holds it at his breast and says, “More than I have read for you is written here.”
- E. “And on the tenth...” which is in the Book of Numbers (Num. 29: 7-11) did he recite by heart.
- F. And afterward he says eight blessings: (1) ... for the Torah, (2) and... for the Temple-service, (3) and... for the Thanksgiving, (4) and for the forgiveness of sin, (5) and for the sanctuary, (6) and for Israel, (7) and for the priests, (8) and the rest of the Prayer.

- I.1. A. *Does the rule [at M. 7:7B: The minister of the assembly takes a scroll of the Torah and gives it to the head of the assembly, and the head of the assembly gives it to the prefect, and the prefect gives it to the high priest] bear the implication that people pay respect to the disciple where the master [is present, since the scroll is passed first to the lesser figures and only then to the high priest]?*
- B. *Said Abayye, “All of the stated procedures are on account of the honor owing to the high priest.”*

II.1 A. And the high priest stands and receives it and reads [M. 7:7C]:

- B. **He stands up:** *does this then imply that beforehand he was sitting down?*
- C. And has not a master said, “The right of sitting down in the courtyard extends only to the kings of the house of David alone,
- D. “for it is said, ‘Then King David went in and sat down before the Lord and said, “Whom am I?”’ (2Sa. 7:18)”?
- E. *The answer accords with that which R. Hisda said, “That took place in the Women’s Court [where it was permitted to sit down], and here too the rite takes place in the Women’s Court.*
- F. *The following objection was raised:*
- G. **And where do they read in [the Torah]? R. Eliezer b. Jacob says, “On the Temple mount, as it is said, [41A] ‘And he read therein before the broad place that was before the water gate’ (Neh. 8: 3) [T. [Sot. 7:13](#)].**
- H. Said R. Hisda, “It was in fact in the Women’s Court.”

III.1 A. And he reads in it “After the death” and “Howbeit on the tenth day” [M. 7:7C]:

- B. *The following objection was raised: People may skip around in the public reading of a prophetic book, but they may not skip around in the public reading of the Torah. [Why then do we permit so much jumping around among passages of the Torah here?]*

- C. *Said Abayye, "There is no difficulty. The teaching just now cited applies to a case in which [the skipped passage is so long that] the translator would be interrupted, while [the Mishnah speaks of a case] which is not so long that the translator would be interrupted. [Cohen, p. 200, n. 3: While he is translating the last passage from Lev. 16 it would be possible to turn to Lev. 23]."*
- D. *But in this regard it has been taught on Tannaite authority: They skip [from passage to passage] in the public reading of the Torah. To such an extent that the translator will not be interrupted [as just now explained].*
- E. *That statement then bears the inference that, as to the Torah, in no event may one skip around at all.*
- F. *Rather, said Abayye, "There is no contradiction in any event. Here [where one may skip around], we deal with a single topic, but there [where we may not skip around], we deal with two [or more] topics."*
- G. *For so it has been taught on Tannaite authority: They skip around in the Torah while dealing with a single topic, and in the prophetic lection even when dealing with two [or more topics]. But under both circumstances it must be so arranged that the translator will not be interrupted [in his translation of what has been read]. And they may not skip around from one prophetic book to another, but from a prophetic book among the twelve minor prophets they do skip around, so long as one does not skip from the end of a scroll to the beginning of that same scroll.*

IV.1 A. Then he rolls up the Torah and holds it at his breast [M. 7:7D]:

- B. Why so?
- C. So as not to bring the scroll of the Torah in disrepute. [Cohen, p. 200, n. 8: The people should not imagine that it was a defective scroll and for that reason he read a portion by heart.]

V.1 A. The passage "And on the tenth" which is in the book of Numbers did he recite by heart [M. 7:7E]:

- B. *But why not leave the scroll rolled up and recite the passage by heart? [Why leave the scroll open, if the reader is not going to read from it?]*
- C. Said R. Huna bar Judah said R. Sheshet, "It is because they do not roll up the scroll of the Torah in the presence of the congregation, [so as not to keep the people standing too long]."
- D. *And let them bring another scroll of the law and read from that one? [Why recite from memory at all?]*
- E. R. Huna bar Judah said, "It is on account of the disgrace of the first [scroll read, again because people would imagine it was defective and so had to be replaced]."
- F. R. Simeon b. Laqish said, "It is because people do not say a blessing that is not required, [that is, for the second scroll]."
- G. *And do we take account of the disgrace of a Torah-scroll? And did not R. Isaac Nappaha say, "When the celebration of the new month of Tebet coincides with the Sabbath, one brings out three scrolls of the Torah, reading in the first on the topic of the Sabbath-day, in the second, on the matter of the new month, and in the third, on the matter of Hanukkah [which coincides with that date as well]."*

- H. *Where there are three individual men reading in three scrolls, there is no consideration of disgrace, but where there is one man reading in two scrolls, there would be the consideration of disgrace.*

VI.1 A. And afterward he says eight blessings [M. 7:7F]:

- B. *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:*
C. They say a blessing for the Torah as they say the blessing in the synagogue, and for the Temple service, for the Thanksgiving, for the forgiveness of sin, as they ordinarily do;
D. for the sanctuary by itself, for the priests, by themselves, for Israel, by themselves, and for Jerusalem, by itself.

VII.1 A. And the rest of the Prayer [M. 7:7G8]:

- B. *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:*
C. The rest of the Prayer [is as follows:] petition, song, and beseeching that your people Israel need to be saved.
D. And he concludes with the blessing, "...who hears prayer."
E. From that point onward [when the high priest finishes], each person brings a scroll of the Torah from home and recites in it.
F. Why so?
G. To show off its beauty in public.

The Talmud consists of a phrase-by-phrase gloss of the Mishnah-paragraph, each unit in accord with the sequence of the Mishnah's sentences.

7:8

- A. **The pericope of the king [M. 7:2A5] — how so?**
B. **At the end of the first festival day of the Festival [of Sukkot],**
C. **on the eighth year, [that is] at the end of the seventh year,**
D. **they make him a platform of wood, set in the courtyard.**
E. **And he sits on it,**
F. **as it is said, "At the end of every seven years in the set time" (Deu. 31:10).**
G. **The minister of the assembly takes a scroll of the Torah and hands it to the head of the assembly, and the head of the assembly hands it to the prefect, and the prefect hands it to the high priest, and the high priest hands it to the king, and the king stands and receives it.**
H. **But he reads sitting down.**
I. **Agrippa the King stood up and received it and read it standing up, and sages praised him on that account.**
J. **And when he came to the verse, "You may not put a foreigner over you, who is not your brother" (Deu. 17:15), his tears ran down from his eyes.**
K. **They said to him, "Do not be afraid, Agrippa, you are our brother, you are our brother, you are our brother!"**
L. **He reads from the beginning of "These are the words" (Deu. 1: 1) to "Hear O Israel" (Deu. 6: 4), "Hear O Israel" (Deu. 6: 4), "And it will come to pass, if you hearken" (Deu. 11:13), and "You shall surely tithe" (Deu. 14:22), and "When you have made an end of tithing" (Deu. 26:12-15), and the pericope**

of the king [Deu. 17:14-20], and the blessings and the curses [Deu. 27:15-26], and he completes the whole pericope.

- M. With the same blessings with which the high priest blesses them [M. 7:7F], the king blesses them.
- N. But he says the blessing for the festivals instead of the blessing for the forgiveness of sin.

- I.1. A. [At the end of the first festival day of the Festival [of Sukkot], on the eighth year, [that is] at the end of the seventh year:] *Is it on the eighth [day] that you suppose [the event takes place]? I should rather say, at the end of the eighth year.*
 - B. *And why all of [the details of the timing of the event, at Deu. 31:10]?*
 - C. *It was indeed necessary to make mention of each detail [of the verse].*
 - D. *For if the All-Merciful had written only, "At the end...", I might have reached the false conclusion that the counting was to begin from the time [at which Moses spoke, the fortieth year after the exodus], and that would be the case even though the sabbatical cycle had not yet begun.*
 - E. *So the All-Merciful made explicit reference to the Sabbatical cycle.*
 - F. *If the All-Merciful had written only, "the Sabbatical cycle," I might have reached the false conclusion that reference is to the end of the year of release.*
 - G. *So the All-Merciful made explicit reference to "the set time" [thus to the festival in the eighth year after the end of the year of release].*
 - H. *If the All-Merciful had written only, "the set time," I might have reached the false conclusion that it was to be at the New Year festival [and not at the Festival, namely, Tabernacles].*
 - I. *So the All-Merciful had to make explicit reference to the Festival of Tabernacles.*
 - J. *And if the All-Merciful had referred only to the Festival of Tabernacles, I might have reached the false conclusion that it could be even on the last festival day of the festival.*
 - K. *Accordingly, the All-Merciful wrote, "When all Israel comes together..." (Deu. 31:11), [41B] indicating the beginning of the festival.*

II.1 A. The minister of the assembly takes a scroll of the Torah and hands it over to the head of the assembly [M. 7:8G]:

- B. *Does the rule at hand bear the implication that people pay respect to the disciple where the master [is present, since the scroll is passed first to the lesser figures and only then to the high priest]?*
- C. Said Abayye, "All of the stated procedures are on account of the honor owing to the king."

III.1 A. And the king stands and receives it, but he reads sitting down. Agrippa the King stood up and received it and read it standing up [M. 7:8G-I]:

- B. *[Since the Mishnah states that] he stands, it leads to the inference that he had been sitting.*
- C. But has not a master said, "The right of sitting down in the courtyard extends only to the kings of the house of David alone,

- D. “for it is said, ‘Then King David went in and sat down before the Lord and said, ‘Who am I?’” (2Sa. 7:18)?”
- E. *The answer accords with that which R. Hisda said, “That took place in the Women’s Court,” and here too the rite takes place in the Women’s Court.*

IV.1 A. Sages praised him [M. 7:8I]:

- B. *Since they praised him, it leads to the inference that he did the right thing.*
- C. *But has not R. Ashi stated, “Even in accord with the opinion of him who said, ‘If a patriarch forgoes the dignity owing to him, that dignity may be given up, a king who forgoes the dignity owing to him in any event may not give it up, ‘as it is said, ‘You shall surely place a king over you’ (Deu. 17:15), meaning, that awe of the king should be upon you?’”*
- E. *But a case involving the carrying out of a religious duty is different [and here the king may indeed give up the dignity owing to him].*

V.1 A. And when he came to the verse, “You may not put...” [M. 7:8J]:

- B. *It was taught on Tannaite authority in the name of R. Nathan, “At that hour those who hate Israel [that is to say, Israel itself] became liable to utter destruction, for they flattered [curried favor with] Agrippas” [T. Sot. 7:16]:*
- C. *Said R. Simeon b. Halapta, “From the day on which the power of flattery became strong, the laws were perverted and deeds corrupted, and no one can say to his fellow, ‘My deeds really are greater than yours.’”*

Composite on the Topic, Flattery

- V.2.** A. R. Judah, the Westerner, and some say, R. Simeon b. Pazzi, expounded, “It is permitted to flatter the wicked in this world, as it is said, ‘The vile person shall no longer be called generous, nor the churl said to be bountiful’ (Isa. 32: 5). *That reference [to what is no longer to be done] indicates that in this world, it is permitted [to do just that].*”
- B. *R. Simeon b. Laqish said, “[Proof of that fact derives] from here: ‘As one sees the face of God, and you were pleased with me’ (Gen. 33:10) [this being what Jacob said by way of flattery to Esau].”*
- C. *That statement differs from what R. Levi said, for R. Levi said, “To what may one compare the case of Jacob and Esau? To a man who invited his friend but realized that he wanted to kill him. He said to him, ‘Taste this dish which I am tasting. It is like the dish I tasted when I was at the king’s house.’”*
- D. *“The other party said, ‘The king knows him?!’ He thereupon became afraid [of the host] and did not kill him.”*
- V.3.** A. R. Eleazar said, “Whoever practices flattery brings anger upon the world, as it is said, “But they who are flatterers at heart lay up anger’ (Job. 36:13).
- B. “Not only so, but the prayer of such a person is not heard, as it is said, ‘They cry not for help when he chastens them’ (Job. 36:16).”
- C. R. Eleazar said, “Whoever practices flattery — even foetuses in their mother’s womb curse such a person,

- D. “as it is said, ‘He says to the wicked, “You are righteous” — peoples shall curse him, nations shall abhor him’ (Pro. 24:24). Now the word for ‘abhor’ means only ‘curse,’ as it is said, ‘Whom God has not cursed’ (Num. 23: 8). The word for nation refers only to foetus, as it is said, ‘And the one nation [in context, foetus in the womb] shall be stronger than the other’ (Gen. 25:23).”
- E. R. Eleazar said, “Whoever practices flattery goes to Gehenna, as it is said, ‘Woe to those who call evil good and good evil’ (Isa. 5:20).
- F. “What follows that verse? ‘Therefore as the tongue of fire devours stubble and as the dry grass sinks down in the flame...’ (Isa. 5:20).”
- G. And R. Eleazar said, “Whoever flatters his fellow in the end will fall into his power; if he does not fall into his power, he will fall into the power of his sons; and if he does not fall into the power of his sons, he will fall into the power of his grandson,
- H. “so it is said, ‘And Jeremiah said to Hananiah, “Amen. The Lord do so, the Lord perform your words”’ (Jer. 28: 6).
- I. “And it is written [\[42A\]](#) immediately afterward, ‘And when he was in the gate of Benjamin, a captain of the guard was there, whose name was Irijah, son of Shelemiah, son of Hananiah [grandson of the one Jeremiah had flattered], and he laid hold on Jeremiah the prophet, saying, “You go over to the Chaldeans.” Then Jeremiah said, “It is false, I am not going over to the Chaldeans”’ (Jer. 37:13). And it is written, ‘So he laid hold of Jeremiah and brought him to the princes’ (Jer. 37:14).”
- J. And R. Eleazar said, “Any congregation in which there is flattery is to be avoided as a menstruating woman, as it is said, ‘For the community of flatterers is separated’ (Job. 15:34), and overseas they call a menstruating woman ‘separated’ [using the same word].
- K. *“What is the meaning of the word for barren? She is separated from her husband.”*
- L. And R. Eleazar said, “Any community in which there is flattery in the end will go into exile.
- M. “For here it is written, ‘For the community of flatterers is barren’ (Job. 15:34), and elsewhere it is written, ‘Then you shall say in your heart, “Who has gotten me these, since I have been bereaved of my children, and I am barren, an exile, and wandering to and fro”’ (Isa. 49:21).”

V.4. A. Said R. Jeremiah bar Abba, “There are four categories who will not receive the face of the Presence of God:

- B. “The category of scoffers, flatterers, liars, and slanderers.
- C. “The category of scoffers, as it is written, ‘He has stretched out his hand against scorners’ (Hos. 7: 5).
- D. “The category of flatterers, as it is written, ‘For a flatterer shall not come before him’ (Job. 13:16).
- E. “The category of liars, as it is written, ‘He who speaks lies shall not be established in my sight’ (Psa. 101: 7).
- F. “The category of slanderers, as it is written, ‘For you are not a God who has pleasure in wickedness; evil will not dwell with you’ (Psa. 5: 5). ‘You are

righteous, O Lord, and evil will not dwell in your house.’ [Psa. 5 addresses slander.]”

M. 7:8 bears some obvious interpolations at I, J-K. It also is supplied with its own glosses, F for C, and M-N are inserted to link this passage to the foregoing, the model of which it follows, e.g., at G. The king reads at a great gathering of the people, as specified at Deu. 31:10. Once the Mishnah’s sentences have been systematically expounded, we conclude with an appropriate topical composition.