

## II

# BAVLI NIDDAH CHAPTER TWO

## FOLIOS 13A-21A

### 2:1A

**A. Any hand which makes many examinations — in the case of women is to be praised and in the case of men is to be cut off.**

**I.1** A. *What is the difference between women and men?*

B. *Women, who are not [sexually] sensitive to the examination, are to be praised, while men, who are sensitive to the examination, are to have the hand cut off.*

C. *If that is the case, then why condemn having many such examinations. Even when a man does not have many examinations, he should be condemned.*

D. *When the Tannaite framer of the passage made reference to **makes frequent examination**, under discussion were women, not men.*

**I.2.** A. *A Tannaite authority [stated]:*

B. **Under what circumstances? With reference to seminal emission.**

C. **But if it is with reference to flux — any hand that makes many examinations, lo, it is to be praised [T. Nid. 2:7G-J] as much as the woman.**

D. *And even as to the matter of semen, if one comes to make an examination by means of a splinter or a potsherd, he does so.*

E. *But not with a rag? And has it not been taught on Tannaite authority:*

F. *One may examine himself with a rag or with anything that he wants.*

G. *The formulation accords with the position of Abbayye, “With a thick rag.”*

H. *Here too, one examines himself with a thick rag.*

I. *And where was that statement of Abbayye made?*

J. *It is in connection with that which we have learned in the Mishnah: [If] one was eating heave offering and felt his limbs tremble, he holds on to the penis and swallows the heave offering [M. Nid. 5:2A-B].*

K. *He takes hold of his penis? And has it not been taught on Tannaite authority:*

L. *R. Eliezer says, “Anyone who holds onto his penis when he urinates is as though he brought the flood upon the world.”*

- M. Said Abbayye, “[One may nonetheless do so] with a thick rag.”
- N. *Raba said, “You may even maintain that it is with a soft rag, since, once the semen has been detached, it is ejaculated [and the subsequent touch does no longer matter (Slotki)].”*
- O. *And Abbayye? He takes account of the possibility that through improper handling one may add to the flow.*
- P. *And Raba does not take account of the possibility that through improper handling one may add to the flow.*
- Q. *Does he not now? And has it not been taught on Tannaite authority:*
- R. Lo, to what may this be compared? To one who puts one’s finger in his eye. So long as the finger is in the eye, the eye continues to tear and flow.
- S. *And Raba? [He takes the position that] cases in which one gets aroused and again gets aroused in the same instant are uncommon.*

**I.3.** A. *Reverting to the body of the prior text:*

- B. R. Eliezer says, “Anyone who holds onto his penis when he urinates is as though he brought the flood upon the world.”
- C. They said to R. Eliezer, “But would not the spray splatter on his feet, so he would appear to be one who suffers from a hole in his scrotum, and so would cast doubt on the legitimacy of his children?”
- D. He said to them, “It is better to slander his own children, making them appear to be illegitimate, but let him not for a single moment make himself into a wicked man before the Omnipresent.”
- E. *There is a further Tannaite version of the matter:*
- F. Said R. Eliezer to sages, “It is possible for someone to stand in an elevated place and urinate, or to urinate on loose earth, but let him not for a single moment make himself into a wicked man before the Omnipresent.”
- G. *Which did he say to them first? If I should say that it was the initial statement that he made to them first, after he has spelled out for them the prohibition [that is ubiquitous] would he then go back and set forth for them the remedy?*
- H. *Rather, the latter is the one that he said to them first. And when they asked him, “If he has no elevated place or loose dirt,” then what? And then he said to them, “It is better to slander his own children, making them appear to be illegitimate, but let him not for a single moment make himself into a wicked man before the Omnipresent.”*

## **Appendix on the Prohibition of Masturbation**

**I.4.** A. And why all this?

- B. It is because he purposelessly emits semen.
- C. For, said R. Yohanan, “Whoever emits semen purposelessly is liable to the death penalty, as it is said, ‘And the thing that he did was evil in the sight of the Lord, and he slew them also’ (Gen. 38: 9).”
- D. *R. Isaac and R. Ammi say, “It is as though he himself shed blood, as it is said, ‘You that inflame yourselves among the terebinths, under every leafy tree, that slay*

the children in the valleys under the clefts of the rocks' (Isa. 57: 5). Read the letters that spell 'that slay' as though they were given vowels that year, 'that press out.'"

- E. R. Assi said, "He is as though he worships idols. Here it is written, 'under every leafy tree', and elsewhere, 'upon the high mountains, and under every leafy tree' (Deu. 12: 2)."

**I.5.** A. R. Judah and Samuel were standing on the roof of the synagogue of Shaf-veyatib in Nehardea. Said R. Judah to Samuel, "I have to urinate."

- B. He said to him, "Sharpy, hold your penis and urinate over [the side of the parapet]."

- C. How could he do so, for has it not been taught on Tannaite authority: R. Eliezer says, "Anyone who holds onto his penis when he urinates is as though he brought the flood upon the world."

- D. Said Abbaye, "He classified the case within the category of a marauding troop, as we have learned in the Mishnah: **A band of gentile [raiders] which entered a town in peacetime — open jars are forbidden, closed ones, permitted. [If it was] wartime, these and those are permitted, because there is no time for making a libation [M. A.Z. 5:6A-D].** It follows that, since they are harried, they are not going to make a libation-offering. Here too, since he is harried, one will not have inappropriate thoughts."

- E. So here what sort of harassment is taken into account?

- F. If you wish, I shall say, the concern for the night and the situation on the edge of the roof [from which one might fall; and that is not conducive to erotic arousal].

- G. And if you prefer, I shall say, concern on account of the presence of his master.

- H. And if you prefer, I shall say, concern for the presence [in the synagogue below] of God.

- I. And if you prefer, I shall say, concern for the Lord affected him, for Samuel once said of him, "This man is no mere mortal."

- J. And if you prefer, I shall say, that it is because he was married, for R. Nahman said, "If one was married, he is permitted to do so."

- K. And if you prefer, I shall say, it was the following that he gave him as instruction, specifically, what R. Abba b. R. Benjamin b. Hiyya taught as a Tannaite statement: "But he may hold on to his testicles from below."

- L. And if you prefer, I shall say, it was the following that he gave him as instruction, specifically, what R. Abbahu said R. Yohanan said, "There is a limit: from the crown and beneath, it is permitted to take hold; **[13B]** from the crown and above, it is forbidden to take hold."

**I.6.** A. Said Rab, "He who deliberately makes himself hard should be excommunicated."

- B. Why not say, "it is forbidden to do so"?

- C. It is because he incites his evil inclination himself.

- D. And R. Ammi said, "He is called a sinner, for that is the craft of the inclination to do evil: today it says to him, 'do this,' and tomorrow it says to him, 'do that,' and

the next day it says to him, ‘worship an idol,’ and he goes along and carries out an act of worship.”

- E. *There are those who say, R. Ammi said, “Anyone who indulges in sexual fantasies is not admitted within the precincts of the Holy One, blessed be he. Here it is written, ‘was evil in the sight of the Lord’ (Gen. 38:10), and elsewhere, ‘for you are not a God that has pleasure in wickedness; evil will not sojourn with you’ (Psa. 5: 5).”*

**I.7.** A. And said R. Eleazar, “What is the meaning of the verse of Scripture, ‘Your hands are full of blood’ (Isa. 1:15)? This refers to those who commit adultery with their hand.”

- B. *A Tannaite authority of the household of R. Ishmael [said], ““You will not commit adultery’ (Exo. 20:13) — you will not be subject to adultery, whether committed by hand or by foot.”*

**I.8.** A. *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:*

- B. Proselytes and those who “play” with children postpone the coming of the Messiah.
- C. *Now the statement with respect to proselytes poses no problems, since it is in accord with what R. Helbo said. For said R. Helbo, “Proselytes are as hard for Israel as a scab.” But what is the point of the reference to those who “play” with children?*
- D. *If I should say that what is at stake is pederasty, such men are subject to the death penalty by stoning. If it is those who masturbate by contact with the limbs, they are deserving of destruction by flood! Rather, the statement refers to those who marry young girls who are not yet ready to bear children.*
- E. For R. Yosé said, “The son of David will not come until all of the souls that are in the body [that is, the souls of the unborn] have been used up [and brought to birth], as it is said, ‘for the spirit that enwraps itself is from me, and the souls that I have made’ (Isa. 57:16).”

**II.1** A. **and in the case of men is to be cut off:**

- B. *The question was raised: “Have we learned this teaching of the Mishnah as a law to be carried out, or have we learned it as a mere curse?”*
- C. *Have we learned the Mishnah’s law as a law to be carried out, as in the case in which R. Huna had a hand cut off, or is it a mere curse?*
- D. *Come and take note of that which we have learned on Tannaite authority:*
- E. **R. Tarfon says, “It should be cut off while lying on his belly button.” They said to him, “Lo, his belly will be split open.” He said to them, “Indeed, I intended exactly that.” It is better that his belly be split but that he not go down into the pit of destruction** [T. **Nid. 2:8B-D**].
- F. *Now if you maintain that we have learned the rule of the Mishnah as a law to be enforced, that is in line with that which they said to him, “Lo, his belly will be split open.” But if the rule of the Mishnah refers to a mere curse, then what is the relevance of the statement, “Lo, his belly will be split open”?*
- G. *Then what is the conclusion, that the law was learned to be enforced? But then why not do it on his belly?*

- H. *This is the sense of the statement of R. Tarfon: "Whoever puts his hand below his belly button — his hand should be cut off."*
- I. They said to R. Tarfon, "If a thorn stuck in his belly, should he not remove it?"
- J. He said to them, "No."
- K. They said to him, "But lo, his belly will be split!"
- L. He said to them, "It is better that his belly be split but that he not go down into the pit of destruction."

I.1 provides a minor gloss, and No. 2 proceeds to Tosefta's complement to the rule. No. 3 deals with a detail of No. 2. No. 4 serves the entire antecedent composition, setting forth in explicit terms why the rule of the Mishnah has been made. No. 5 then provides pertinent cases to amplify the foregoing. Nos. 6, 7, 8 present a thematic potpourri to supplement No. 5. II.1 proceeds to the same kind of rather prolix amplification of the Mishnah's rule. In fact, as we see, much of the the composite forms a topical appendix, not a systematic inquiry into the law and its logic.

## 2:1B-C

- B. The [woman who is] a deaf-mute, and imbecile, or blind, or a woman who is deranged —**
- C. if there are women of sound senses, they care for them, and they eat heave offering.**

- I.1 A.** *As to the deaf-mute, let her make her own examination, in line with that which has been taught on Tannaite authority:*
- B. Said Rabbi, "There was a deaf-mute woman living in our neighborhood, and not only did she examine herself, but her women-friends would produce drops of blood and show them to her [for inspection and classification]."
- C. *There we deal with the case of a woman who could speak but not hear, while here we deal with a woman who can neither hear nor speak.*
- D. *That is in accord with what we have learned in the Mishnah:*
- E. **A deaf-mute of whom sages speak in all passages is one who neither hears nor speaks [M. Ter. 1:2].**

### **II.1 A. the blind:**

- B. *Let her examine herself and show the result to her woman-friend.*
- C. *Said R. Yosé b. R. Hanina, "The reference to 'the blind' does not belong in the Mishnah."*

### **III.1 A. the woman who is deranged:**

- B. Are not the imbecile and the woman who is deranged the same thing?
- C. This refers to an imbecile who is deranged on account of illness.

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

- B. **An imbecile priest — they dunk him and feed him with priestly rations in the evening. And they watch him in his sleep, and if he went to sleep and got up, he is forthwith unclean.**

- C. **R. Eleazar b. R. Sadoq says, “They make him a leather bag, and they put it on him and inspect its contents. If inside it semen is found, he is unclean, and if not, he is clean.”**
- D. **They said to him, “You turn out to remove him from a situation of doubt and to put him into a situation of certain uncleanness, because he ends up being heated by the jock strap.”**
- E. **He said to them, “Yes, is it not so that in accord with your opinion that he is unclean anyhow?”**
- F. **They said to him, “You say, ‘if semen is found in the bag, he is unclean, if not he is clean,’ and we say, ‘a drop in any amount exuded from him but was absorbed by the bag’” [T. **Nid. 2:9A-F**].**
- G. *A Tannaite version is as follows:*
- H. **They make him a metal jock strap.”**
- I. **Said Abbaye, “It is of copper.”**
- J. *That is in accord with what is stated on Tannaite authority:*
- K. **R. Judah says, “Buds of hyssop are regarded as though they were made of copper” [M. **Par. 122:5**] [Slotki: as if they did not absorb any water at all, so copper does not absorb liquid].**
- L. *Said R. Pappa, “From this [the prohibition of the bag because it causes heat] that it is forbidden to wear pants.”*
- M. **But is it not written, “And you shall make them linen pants to cover the flesh of their nakedness” (Exo. 28:42)?**
- N. *That is in accord with what has been taught on Tannaite authority:*
- O. **What are the pants that priests wear like? They are like the knickers of horsemen, going up to the loins and down to the thighs; they had laces but no padding back or front [and they hung loose].**
- P. **Said Abbaye, [14A] “Those who ride camels are forbidden to eat priestly rations.”**
- Q. *It has been taught to the same effect on Tannaite authority:*
- R. **Those who ride camels are all wicked. Those who are sailors are all righteous. As to ass drivers, some are wicked and some are righteous.**
- S. *There are those who say, “The one ride with a saddle, the others do not,” and there are those who say, “The one ride straddle the beast, the others do not.”*
- T. *R. Joshua b. Levi cursed anybody who slept on his back.*
- U. **Can this be true? And has not R. Joseph said, “People lying on their back should not recite the Shema”?**
- V. *It is the Shema that they cannot recite, but they may sleep in this manner.*
- V. *In respect to sleeping on one’s back, it is all right if one slightly inclines sideways, and in respect to reciting the Shema, even if one inclines sideways it is forbidden to do so.*
- W. *But did not R. Yohanan recite the Shema while turning slightly on his side?*
- X. *R. Yohanan was in a class by himself, because he was obese.*

The clarification at I.1 is routine; II.1 asks the same question and produces a parallel answer. III.1 differentiates among the Mishnah's apparently identical categories. No. 2 invokes Tosefta's complement to this Mishnah-paragraph.

## 2:1D-E

- D. It is the way of Israelite women to make use of two test rags, one for him and one for her.
- E. The pious prepare yet a third, to take care of the house.

## 2:2

- A. If it [a drop of blood] is found on his, they are unclean and liable for a sacrifice.
- B. If it is found on hers at the time itself, they are unclean [for seven days] and liable for a sacrifice.
- C. If it is found on hers after a while, their uncleanness remains in doubt, and they are exempt from an offering.

## 2:3

- A. What is meant by "after a while"?
- B. Sufficient time that the woman may descend from the bed and wash her face [sexual organs].
- C. And afterward [if a drop of blood appears], she imparts uncleanness [to objects she touched] during the preceding twenty-four-hour period but does not impart uncleanness [as a menstruant for seven days] to him who has had sexual relations with her.
- D. R. Aqiba says, "Also: she imparts uncleanness to him who has sexual relations with her."
- E. And sages agree with R. Aqiba in the case of one who sees a bloodstain, that she imparts uncleanness to him who has sexual relations with her.

**I.1** A. *Should we not take account of the possibility [in connection with the rule, If a drop of blood is found on his, they are unclean and liable for a sacrifice] that it is the blood of a louse?*

- B. Said R. Zira, "That [privy] place is assumed to have been examined for lice."
- C. *There are those who say, "It is too narrow for a louse."*
- D. *What difference do the two explanations make?*
- E. *At issue between them is a case in which a crushed louse is found. In terms of the explanation that holds, "That [privy] place is assumed to have been examined for lice," lo, then this presumably came from somewhere else.*
- F. *In terms of the explanation that holds, "It is too narrow for a louse," it is to be supposed that the attendant [the penis] is what has crushed it [during intercourse].*

**I.2.** A. *It has been stated:*

- B. If the woman examined herself with a testing rag that she had already examined, and she pressed it against her thigh, and on the next day she found blood on it —



- C. said Rab, "She is unclean as a menstruant."
- D. Said to him R. Shimi bar Hiyya, "And lo, the language that you used for us was, 'she takes account of the possibility [that she is unclean as a menstruant.]'"
- E. *It has also been stated:*
- F. said Samuel, "She is unclean as a menstruant, and so do they give instructions in the school house: 'She is unclean as a menstruant.'"

**I.3. A.** *It has been stated:*

- B. If the woman examined herself with a testing rag that she had not already examined, and then left it in a box, and on the next day found on it a drop of blood  
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- C. said R. Joseph, "For R. Hiyya's entire life he declared her unclean in such a case, but at his old age he declared her clean."
- D. *The question was raised, "What is the sense of his statement? 'For his entire life he declared her unclean in such a case,' as a menstruating woman, 'but at his old age he declared her clean,' as a menstruating woman, but unclean on account of the bloodstain, or perhaps the sense of the statement is this: 'throughout his lifetime he regarded her as unclean by reason of her bloodstain,' and 'in his old age he deemed her entirely clean'?"*
- E. *Come and take note of the following, which has been taught on Tannaite authority:*
- F. If the woman examined herself with a testing rag that she had not already examined, and then left it in a box, and on the next day found on it a drop of blood  
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- G. Rabbi says, "She is unclean as a menstruant."
- H. And R. Hiyya said, "She is unclean by reason of a bloodstain."
- I. **[14B]** Said R. Hiyya to him, "Do you not concur that [the blood-mark on the test rag] has to be a bit bigger than a size of a bean?"
- J. He said to him, "True enough."
- K. He said to him, "If so, you have treated it as a bloodstain."
- L. *And Rabbi takes the view that we require that it be a bit bigger than a bean in size, to distinguish it from the blood of a louse, and once that possibility is excluded, the blood must certainly derive from her body.*
- M. *Was this not, then, when he was in his old age, while, when he was young, he declared it unclean on the count of being menstrual blood?*
- N. *That proves it.*

**I.4. A.** Rabbi was praising R. Hama b. Bisa as a great man, commending him to R. Ishmael b. R. Yosé. He said to him, "When he comes to hand, bring him to me."

- B. *When he came, he said to him, "Ask me something."*
- C. *He asked the following question: "If the woman examined herself with a testing rag that she had not already examined, and then left it in a box, and on the next day found on it a drop of blood — what is the law?"*
- D. He said to him, "Shall I give the ruling in accord with the position of my father [Yosé], or should I give it to you in accord with the position of Rabbi?"



- E. He said to him, "In accord with the position of Rabbi, tell me the answer."
- F. Said R. Ishmael, "Is this the one whom they call a great man? How in the world is someone going to abandon the position of the master and instead pay attention to the position of the disciple?"
- G. *And R. Hama b. Bisa took the view that since Rabbi was head of the session, and rabbis were coming and going before him, his traditions were polished.*
- H. *What is the ruling of Rabbi and what is the ruling of R. Yosé*
- I. *Said R. Ada bar Mattena, "A Tannaite version has it as follows: Rabbi declares unclean, and R. Yosé declares clean."*
- J. And when Rabbi declared the case unclean, it was in accord with the position of R. Meir, but when R. Yosé declared her clean, it was on his own account that he declared her clean.
- K. *For we have learned in the Mishnah: The woman who was doing her needs [urinating] and who saw blood [with the urine] — R. Meir says, "If she is standing, she is unclean, and if she is sitting, she is clean." R. Yosé says, "One way or the other she is clean" [M. Nid. 9:1A-C].*
- L. Said R. Aha b. Raba to R. Ashi, "And lo, said R. Yosé b. R. Hanina, 'When R. Meir declared the woman unclean, he declared it unclean only on the count of a bloodstain, while Rabbi declared her unclean by reason of being menstruating.'"
- M. *He said to him, "This is how we say it: when that ruling was set forth, it was that the uncleanness was by reason of menstruation."*

**II.1 A. If it is found on hers at the time itself, they are unclean [for seven days] and liable for a sacrifice.**

- B. *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:*
- C. What is the span of time that encompasses the period 'immediately after intercourse'? This may be compared to the case of an attendant [the penis] and the witness [the test-rag] who stand at the side of the lintel [the vagina]:
- D. the witness goes in as soon as the attendant leaves, and that is the interval that marks the span of time, "immediately after intercourse" concerning which rabbis have said that one must wipe oneself off, but not examine oneself.

**III.1 A. If it is found on hers after a while, their uncleanness remains in doubt, and they are exempt from an offering.**

- B. *It was taught on Tannaite authority:*
- C. And they are liable on account of it to a suspensive guilt offering.
- D. *But what is the reason behind the position of the Tannaite authority before us [who imposes no requirement of an offering at all]?*
- E. He requires that [Slotki: the doubt shall be of the same nature as in the case of the consumption of] one piece of two pieces of [fat, one of which is subject to doubt; that is the case that involves a suspensive guilt offering. But here the doubt concerns only one element of the case.]

**IV.1 A. What is meant by "after a while"? Sufficient time that the woman may descend from the bed and wash her face [sexual organs]:**

- B. *An objection was raised: And what is the meaning of "after a while"? R. Eleazar b. R. Sadoq explains, "It is sufficient time for her to put out her hand*

**and take the test-rag from under the bolster or from under the chest” [T. Nid. 3:6A-E].**

- C. *Said R. Hisda, “What is the meaning of ‘after’? It is meant the interval that succeeds this interval.”*
- D. *But lo in this regard it has been taught on Tannaite authority: **If it is found on hers after a while, their uncleanness remains in doubt, and they are exempt from an offering. What is meant by “after a while”? Sufficient time that the woman may descend from the bed and wash her face [sexual organs].***
- E. *This is the sense of the matter: **What is meant by “after a while”? “It is sufficient time for her to put out her hand and take the test-rag from under the bolster or from under the chest” [T. Nid. 3:6A-E]. And it is sufficient time that the woman may descend from the bed and wash her face [sexual organs].***
- F. *[Whether or not there is an issue of uncleanness involves] the dispute between R. Aqiba and sages.*
- G. *But lo, the language used is **afterward**.*
- H. *This is the sense of the statement: “and this is the ‘afterward’ concerning which there is a dispute between R. Aqiba and sages.”*
- I. *R. Ashi said, “This and that represent the same span of time. When she has a testing rag in her hand, the requisite span of time is **sufficient time that the woman may descend from the bed and wash her face [sexual organs]**. And if she does not have the rag in her hand, the require time is **sufficient time for her to put out her hand and take the test-rag from under the bolster or from under the chest**.”*
- J. *An objection was raised: What is the meaning of “after a time”? This matter R. Eleazar b. R. Sadoq asked before sages in Usha, saying to them, [15A] “Is it possible that you concur with R. Aqiba, who declares her lover likewise to be unclean [through the prior twenty-four hour period from when she has discovered the drop of blood]?”*
- K. *They said to him, “We have heard no ruling.”*
- L. *He said to them, “This is how sages in Yavneh explained the matter: if the woman did not delay for **sufficient time that the woman may descend from the bed and wash her face [sexual organs]**, that constitutes ‘within the time limit,’ and both are unclean by reason of doubt, but are exempt from an offering as a matter of certain, while subject to a suspensive guilt offering. If she delayed for **sufficient time that the woman may descend from the bed and wash her face [sexual organs]**, that constitutes ‘after the time limit.’ And so too, if she delayed for twenty-four hours, or for a span of time from her present to her last examination of herself, her lover imparts uncleanness by reason of contact with her, but he does not impart uncleanness by reason of having had sexual relations with her.”*
- M. *R. Aqiba says, “He also imparts uncleanness on the count of having had sexual relations with her.”*
- N. *R. Judah son of Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai says, “Her lover can go into the Temple and offer incense.”*

- O. *Now there is no problem from the viewpoint of R. Hisda, since from his viewpoint, that is why the rabbis declare her lover clean [since his requisite interval is the time that it takes to get out of bed, the interval after this interval]. But from the viewpoint of R. Ashi [that the same length of time is represented by both definitions of the span under discussion], why do rabbis declare the lover clean?*
- P. *And should you say that she does not have her test-rag in hand, lo, should there not be an explicitly stated distinction between a case in which she does, and one in which she does not, have the test rag in hand?*
- Q. *That is a problem.*

**IV.2.** A. R. Judah son of Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai says, “Her lover can go into the Temple and offer incense.”

- B. *But should he not be prohibited since he came into contact during the period of twenty-four hours during which she retroactively imparts uncleanness?*
- C. *That is in line with the position of Shammai, who has said, “[For] all women [it is] sufficient for them [to reckon uncleanness from] their time [of discovering a flow].”*
- D. *But then why not exclude him on the ground that he has had a seminal emission?*
- E. We speak of a case in which he did not complete having sexual relations.

**V.1** A. **[And afterward if a drop of blood appears, she imparts uncleanness to objects she touched during the preceding twenty-four-hour period but does not impart uncleanness as a menstruant for seven days to him who has had sexual relations with her. R. Aqiba says, “Also: she imparts uncleanness to him who has sexual relations with her.”] And sages agree with R. Aqiba in the case of one who sees a bloodstain, that she imparts uncleanness to him who has sexual relations with her.**

- B. Said Rab, “This is retroactively, and it accords with the position of R. Meir.”
- C. And Samuel said, “The uncleanness is solely from now on, and it represents the position of rabbis.”
- D. *If the uncleanness is merely from now on, that is perfectly self-evident!*
- E. *What might you have supposed? Since the uncleanness retroactive to the prior twenty-four hours derives from rabbis, and the uncleanness of blood stains derives from the authority of rabbis, just as the retroactively uncleanness for twenty-four hours does not affect her lover, so the uncleanness affecting her bloodstains should not impart uncleanness to her lover. So we are informed that that is not the case.*
- F. But perhaps it is in fact the rule [that the uncleanness affecting her bloodstains *should* impart uncleanness to her lover].
- G. *Not at all, for in the one case, there is no “slaughtered ox” in your presence that is, within the twenty-four hours before she discovered the blood], while in the latter case, there really is “a slaughtered ox” in hand [the bloodstain is right there].*
- H. And so did R. Simeon b. Laqish say, “The uncleanness is retroactive, and it represents the view of R. Meir.”
- I. And R. Yohanan said, “The uncleanness is only from now on, and the ruling accords with the position of rabbis.”

I.1 raises a legitimate question, on why we assume blood can derive only from the couple and not from an outside source. Nos. 2, 3, and 4 include thematically pertinent supplements. II.1 simply cites a Tannaite complement to the Mishnah. III.1 gives a light gloss. IV.1 complements the Mishnah with Tosefta's addition and succeeds in melding the Tosefta's and the Mishnah's definitions. No. 2 picks up a detail of No. 1 and explains it in its own terms. V.1 proceeds to clarify the implications of the Mishnah's rule.

## 2:4A-B

- A. **All women are assumed to be clean for their husbands.**
- B. **Those that come home from a trip — their wives are assumed to be clean for them.**
- I.1 A. *Why did the author of the passage find it necessary to add the detail about **those that come home from a trip — their wives are assumed to be clean for them** [having made the point in general]?*
- B. *One might have supposed that the general rule covers the case in which the husband is there in the same location, in which case the woman takes upon herself to conduct an examination, but in a case in which the husband is not there in town, in which case the woman may not take responsibility for doing so, the same rule would not pertain. So we are informed to the contrary.*
- C. Said R. Simeon b. Laqish in the name of R. Judah Nesiah, “But the rule [that **those that come home from a trip — their wives are assumed to be clean for them**] applies in particular to a case in which the husband came and found the wife during the clean period.”
- D. Said R. Huna, “That rule [that within the clean period no examination is necessary] applies only if she had no fixed period. But if she had a fixed period, it is forbidden to have sexual relations.”
- E. *That is exactly the opposite [of how things should be]! To the contrary, the opposite is more logical! If she has no fixed period, I might suppose that she may produce blood, but if she has a fixed period, then the fixed period should establish the facts of the matter. So if there is any such saying, this is how it must have been set forth:*
- F. Said R. Huna, “That rule [that within the clean period no examination is necessary] applies only if her fixed period to menstruate has not come. But if her fixed period to menstruate has come, it is forbidden to have sexual relations.
- G. *“This rule is made in the premise that the rules governing fixed periods rest on the authority of the Torah.”*
- H. Rabbah bar bar Hanah said, “Even if the time of her fixed period has come, she still is permitted to have sexual relations [assuming she has not actually produced menstrual blood].
- I. *“That is in the premise that the rules governing fixed periods rest on the authority of rabbis [but not of the Torah].*
- J. R. Ashi repeated the passage in the following way: “Said R. Huna, [15B] ‘Said R. Huna, ‘That rule [that within the clean period no examination is necessary] applies if she has no fixed period determined by days alone, but one that was determined by both days and jumping, for, since the period depends on some specific act, one

might suppose that she did not leap and so did not produce any blood. But if she had a fixed period determined by days alone, it is forbidden to have sexual relations, *in the assumption that the rules governing fixed periods derived from the authority of the Torah.*'

- K. "Rabbah bar bar Hannah said, 'Even if she has a fixed period determined by days alone, she still is permitted to have sexual relations [assuming she has not actually produced menstrual blood], *in the assumption that the rules governing fixed periods derived from the authority of rabbis.*'"

**I.2.** A. Said R. Samuel in the name of R. Yohanan, "A woman who has a fixed period — her husband may calculate the days of her fixed period and have sexual relations with her [assuming she has immersed and is now clean]."

- B. *Said R. Samuel bar Yeba to R. Abba, "Did R. Yohanan make this statement even with reference to a young girl, who may be too shy to immerse?"*

- C. *He said to him, "But did R. Yohanan refer to a woman who had certainly seen a drop of blood? I might say that R. Yohanan spoke of a case in which she may or may not have seen a drop of blood. And if you maintain that she did see a drop of blood, I might say that she had immersed. But in a case in which she had assuredly seen a drop of blood, who can say for sure that she has immersed? So you have a case in which there is a matter of doubt and also a matter of certainty [for she surely has produced menstrual blood], and a mere doubt does not set aside the matter of certainty [so the young girl is deemed unclean]."*

- D. *Does it not now? And has it not been taught on Tannaite authority:*

- E. If a fellow [who is meticulous about tithing his produce] died and left a granary full of produce, even though they are only a day old, lo, they are assumed to have been properly tithed.

- F. *Now here we have a case in which the produce is subject to the certainty that it was untithed, and it is a matter of doubt whether or not it has been tithed, and yet, the matter of doubt comes along and sets aside the matter of certainty!*

- G. *There you really have a case of the conflict of two matters of certainty, in line with what R. Hanina of Khuzistan said, for R. Hanina of Khuzistan said, "It is the assumption concerning an associate that he does not release from his possession anything at all that has not been properly prepared through tithing."*

- H. *If you prefer, moreover, I shall say that what you have there is a case of the conflict of two matters of uncertainty, and that is in accord with the statement of R. Oshaia, for said R. Oshaia, "One may undertake a legal fiction with his produce by storing the produce together with the chaff [not winnowing the produce and so subjecting it to the obligation of tithing] so that his cattle may eat it and it will be exempt from tithing."*

- I. *Still, is it really the fact that a matter of doubt does not set aside a matter of certainty? And has it not been taught on Tannaite authority:*

- J. **Said R. Judah, "There was the case of the servant-girl of an olive-farmer in Rimmon, who threw an abortion into a cistern. A priest came and looked to see what she threw in — to ascertain whether it was male or female — [and so may or may not have overshadowed corpse and been made unclean]. The**

**case came before sages, and they declared him clean, on the grounds that the weasel or panther will draw it away forthwith** [T. **Ahilot 16:13A**].

- K. *Now here you have a case in which the woman assuredly tossed the abortion, but it is a matter of doubt whether the wild animals dragged it off or did not drag it off, and here a matter of doubt comes along and sets aside a matter of certainty.*
- L. *Do not read the report as “**threw an abortion into a cistern.**” Rather, read it as, “some kind of an abortion.” [We do not know for sure that it was a child at all, so it is doubt against doubt.]*
- M. *And lo, the exact language is, **A priest came and looked to see what she threw in — to ascertain whether it was male or female!***
- N. *This is the required sense of the matter: and the priest came along and looked to see whether she had aborted an inflated object [16A] or a premature child.*
- O. *And if you say that it was a premature child that she aborted, then it was to see whether it was a male or a female.*
- P. *And if you prefer, I shall say, “Since the weasel or the panther are present in the area, they most assuredly dragged it away [and it is not a matter of doubt at all].”*

**I.3.** A. *The question was addressed to R. Nahman: “Are the rules governing fixed periods based on the authority of the Torah or of rabbis [Slotki: so that if a woman failed to make the examination at the proper time, she is deemed to be unclean on the ground that the discharge had appeared at its usual time, even though she observed no blood when she examined herself some time later]?”*

- B. *He said to them, “Since our colleague, Huna, stated in the name of Rab, ‘A woman who has a fixed period whose time for menstruation came and who did not examine herself, and in the end saw a drop of blood, takes account of the possibility of the blood’s having commenced at the beginning of the fixed period but also takes account of the appearance of the discharge as well [for twenty-four hours of retroactive uncleanness].’ It therefore follows that the rules governing fixed periods based on the authority of the Torah.”*
- C. *There are those who state the matter as follows:*
- D. *This is what he said to him, “The operative consideration is that she saw the blood. Lo, had she not seen the blood, we do not take account of the matter. It therefore follows that the rules on the fixed period derive only from the authority of rabbis.”*

**I.4.** A. *It has been stated:*

- B. *A woman who has a fixed period whose time for menstruation came and who did not examine herself, and in the end did examine herself —*
- C. *said Rab, “If she examined herself and found that she was unclean, then she is unclean; if she found herself clean, then she is clean [so we ignore the fixed period and rely solely on the results of the examination].”*
- D. *And Samuel said, “Even if she examined herself and found herself clean, she is nonetheless unclean, since the menstrual period [‘the guest’] comes at the right time.”*



- E. *May we then say that the dispute concerns fixed periods, with one master maintaining that the rules rest on the authority of the Torah and the other that they rest on the authority of rabbis?*
- F. *Said R. Zira, "All parties concur that the rules governing the fixed period rest on the authority of the Torah. On the one side is a case in which the woman examined herself within the period during which her menstrual flow continued [and she discovered no discharge, so we assume there had been none even earlier, when the regular menstrual period had begun], and on the other side [Nahman's initial statement] is a case in which a woman did not examine herself within the period during which her menstrual flow continued."*
- G. *R. Nahman bar Isaac said, "Under dispute between them is the very question of whether or not it is necessary to conduct an examination at the time of the regular appearance of the menstrual flow. And, as before, one master maintaining that the rules rest on the authority of the Torah and the other that they rest on the authority of rabbis."*
- H. *Said R. Sheshet, "The dispute follows the lines of the Tannaite issue, as follows."*
- I. *R. Eliezer [who holds that the requirement of an examination at the beginning of the regular period rests on the authority of the Torah] says, "She is unclean as a menstruating woman [if she failed to make the examination at the time of her regular period]."*
- J. *R. Joshua [who holds that the requirement of an examination at the beginning of the regular period rests on the authority of rabbis] says, "She is to examine herself" [even though the period of menstruation has come; if the examination shows her clean, she is clean, and if she produces blood, the uncleanness is retroactive to the point at which her period ordinarily should have started]."*
- K. *And these Tannaite authorities' dispute follows the lines of the following Tannaite authorities' dispute, as has been taught on Tannaite authority:*
- L. *R. Meir [who holds that the requirement of an examination at the beginning of the regular period rests on the authority of the Torah] says, "She is unclean as a menstruating woman [if she failed to make the examination at the time of her regular period]."*
- M. *And sages [who hold that the requirement of an examination at the beginning of the regular period rests on the authority of rabbis] say, "She is to examine herself" [even though the period of menstruation has come; if the examination shows her clean, she is clean, and if she produces blood, the uncleanness is retroactive to the point at which her period ordinarily should have started]."*
- N. *Said Abbaye, "We too also have a Tannaite version of the same matter, as we have learned in the Mishnah: **R. Meir says, "If she was in hiding and the time of her period came and she did not examine herself, lo, this one is deemed clean, because fright suspends the blood"** [M. **Nid. 4:7H-I**]. The operative consideration, therefore, is that fright is a consideration. Lo, if*



*there is no consideration of fright, she is automatically unclean. It follows that the rules governing fixed periods rest on the authority of the Torah."*

- O. *May we say that the following Tannaite authorities dispute about the same matter, as has been taught on Tannaite authority:*
- P. *"She who produces blood on account of a blow, even though that is in the days of her menstruation, is [on the count of that blood in particular] clean," the words of Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel.*
- Q. *Rabbis says, "If she has a fixed period, then she considers the possibility that the blood has marked her menstrual period."*
- R. *Is it not then the case that at stake here is that the one authority maintains that the rules governing the fixed period derive from the authority of the Torah [that is, Rabbi], while the other master [Simeon] maintains that the rules governing the fixed period derive from the authority only of rabbis?*
- S. *Said Rabina, "Not at all. All parties here concur that the rules governing fixed periods derive only from the authority of rabbis, but here at issue is whether or not the interior of the uterus is unclean [literally: 'as to the source, whether or not the place thereof is unclean' and therefore will impart uncleanness to any clean blood that passes through it (Slotki)]. Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel maintains that the woman is clean, and the blood is unclean since it passes through the uterus, and Rabbi said to him, 'If you take account of the possibility that her usual menstrual flow is taking place, then the woman too should be unclean, and if you do not take account of her usual menstrual flow, then the uterus is clean, and blood passing through it is clean.'"*

I.1 goes over possible complications in the application of the rule for women whose husbands are off on the road. The formulations of the qualifications are carefully revised. No. 2 continues the inquiry of No. 1, though it goes off in its own direction. No. 3 is likewise connected to the foregoing, though it too has its own focus. No. 4 continues No. 3. The issue throughout is the classification of the rule governing the fixed period as the reliable indicator of matters, and that, we now recall, is the very point at which the Bavli-tractate commenced its work on the Mishnah-tractate. It follows that, while the Mishnah's details govern the program of the Bavli, still, the Bavli has an overriding problem that it wishes to investigate through one detail after another.

## **2:4C-E**

- C. **The House of Shammai say, "She requires two test rags for each act of sexual relations.**

- D. **“Or she should have intercourse in the light of a lamp.”**
- E. **And the House of Hillel say, “It suffices for her [to make use of] two test rags for the entire night.”**
- I.1 A. **[16B]** *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:*
  - B. Even though they have said, “He who has sexual relations to the light of a candle, lo, this one is vile,”
  - C. **the House of Shammai say, “She requires two test rags for each act of sexual relations.**
  - D. **“Or she should have intercourse in the light of a lamp.”**
  - E. **And the House of Hillel say, “It suffices for her [to make use of] two test rags for the entire night.”**
  - F. *It has been taught on Tannaite authority:*
  - G. Said the House of Shammai to the House of Hillel, “But in terms of your position, should one not take account of the possibility that the woman may produce a drop of blood the size of a mustard seed during the first act of sexual relations, but semen may then cover it up during the second [or a later] act of sexual relations?”
  - H. Said the House of Hillel to them, “Even in accord with your position, should one not take account of the possibility that, even while ‘the spit’ is in ‘the mouth,’ it was crushed and disappeared?”
  - I. They said to them, “But what is crushed once is not the same thing as what was crushed twice.”
    - J. *It has been taught on Tannaite authority:*
    - K. Said R. Joshua, “I prefer the opinion of the House of Shammai.”
    - L. Said his disciples to him, “My lord, what an expansion of the restrictions you have imposed on us!”
    - M. He said to them, “It is better that I should expand restrictions applying to you in this world, so that they will expand your days in the world to come.”
  - N. Said R. Zira, “From the opinions of both parties we derive the rule that a person of conscience should not have sexual relations twice in succession [without examining to see whether or not menstrual blood has appeared].”
  - O. Raba said, “One may have sexual relations twice in succession. *When that rule [concerning examinations between each act of sexual relations] was taught on Tannaite authority, it concerned the examination in connection with preparation of food in conditions of cultic cleanness [and not the consideration of menstrual blood].*”
  - P. *It has likewise been taught to that effect on Tannaite authority:*
  - Q. Under what circumstances? That is in the case of an examination in connection with preparing food in a state of cultic cleanness. But as to having sexual relations with her husband, she is permitted to do so [without a further examination]. Under what circumstances? That is in the case in which he left her in a condition of assumed cleanness. But if he left her in a condition of assumed uncleanness, she remains thereafter assumed to be unclean until she informs him, “I am clean.”

- I.2.** A. Said R. Abba said R. Hiyya bar Ashi said Rab, "If she examined herself using a testing rag, which then got lost, she is forbidden to have sexual relations until she examines herself again."
- B. *R. Ila objected to this statement, "If the rag were in hand, would she not have sexual relations, even though she did not know whether or not there had been a further discharge? So why should she not now also be permitted to have sexual relations?"*
- C. *Said Raba to him, "In the one case the necessary proof is in hand, in the case before us the necessary proof is not in hand."*

### **Appendix on the Rules for the Correct Conduct of Sexual Relations**

- I.3.** A. Said R. Yohanan, "It is forbidden to have sexual relations by day. What verse of Scripture shows that that is the fact? 'Let the day perish on which I was born, and the night on which it was said, 'a male child has been brought forth' (Job. 3: 3). Thus the Torah has said that for conception the night has been designated as appropriate, but not the day."
- B. *R. Simeon b. Laqish said, "Proof is from this verse: 'He who despises his ways shall die' (Pro. 19:16)."*
- C. *And how does R. Simeon b. Laqish interpret the verse adduced in evidence by R. Yohanan?*
- D. *He requires it to make the point that R. Hanina bar Pappa made in his interpretation. For R. Hanina bar Pappa interpreted as follows: "The angel who is appointed in charge of conception is called 'night,' and he takes a drop of semen and sets it before the Holy One, blessed be he, and says to him, 'Lord of the ages, as to this drop of semen, what will be its fate? Will it produce a strong man or a weak man, a sage or a fool? a rich man or a poor man|?'"*
- E. *But it does not ask whether it will be a wicked man or a righteous man!*
- F. *That is in accord with what R. Hanina said. For R. Hanina said, "Everything is in the hands of Heaven except for the fear of Heaven, as it is said, 'And now Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you but to fear' (Deu. 10:12)."*
- G. And R. Yohanan?
- H. *If matters were as the other has read them, Scripture should have said, 'a male child is brought forth.' Why does it say, 'there has been brought forth a male child'? It is to prove that for conception the night has been designated as appropriate, but not the day."*
- I. *And how does R. Yohanan interpret the verse that has been adduced in evidence by R. Simeon b. Laqish?*
- J. *He requires it to make the point that is written in the book of Ben Sira:*
- K. Three types I hate, and four I do not love: an official who frequents wine-shops, and some say, an official who is a common gossip; a person who calls a session in the high part of town, one who holds his penis when he urinates, and one who appears in his fellow's home without warning.
- L. Said R. Yohanan, "Even one who appears in his own home without warning."

- I.4.** A. Said R. Simeon b. Yohai, “There are four sorts that the Holy One, blessed be he, hates, and I don’t love them either: one who appears in his own home without warning, and, it goes without saying, his fellow’s home; one who holds his penis when he urinates; **[17A]** one who urinates naked before his bed; and one who has sexual relations in the presence of any living creature whatsoever.”
- B. Said R. Judah to Samuel, “Even before mice?”
- C. *He said to him, “Sharpy! No, of course not. But it is like the household of so-and-so, who have sexual relations in front of their boy-slaves and girl-slaves. And what verse of Scripture can they have in mind? ‘Stay here with the ass’ (Gen. 22: 5), meaning, a people that is in the classification of asses.”*
- D. Rabbah b. R. Huna would drive away wasps from his [Slotki:] curtained bed.
- E. Raba would chase away even mosquitoes.
- I.5.** A. Said R. Simeon b. Yohai, “There are five things that impose liability to the death penalty upon those who do them, and their blood is on their own head: eating peeled garlic, a peeled onion, or a peeled egg, drinking diluted liquids that were left standing over night, spending a night in a graveyard, clipping one’s nails and tossing them out into the public domain, and having sexual relations immediately after blood-letting.”
- B. “eating peeled garlic:” *that is so even though they are put into a basket, tied up, and sealed, for an evil spirit dwells upon them.*
- C. *But that rule applies only where their roots or peel did not remain with them; but if the roots or peel remained with them, we have no objection.*
- D. “drinking diluted liquids that were left standing over night:”
- E. Said R. Judah said Samuel, “That rule applies if they were left standing in a metal utensil.”
- F. Said R. Pappa, “Utensils made of alum crystals are in the same category as those made of metal.”
- G. And so said R. Yohanan, “That rule applies if they were left standing in a metal utensil. Utensils made of alum crystals are in the same category as those made of metal.”
- H. “spending a night in a graveyard:”
- I. that is done so that a spirit of uncleanness may come to rest on him.
- J. *Sometimes it endangers him.*
- K. “clipping one’s nails and tossing them out into the public domain:”
- L. This is because a pregnant woman may pass over them and miscarry.
- M. *But this rule has been stated only in a case in which one removes the nails with a pair of scissors.*
- N. *And this rule has been stated only in a case in which one clips the nails of both his hands and his feet.*
- O. *And this rule has been stated only in a case in which one did not cut anything after cutting them, but if something was cut immediately after one cut the nails, there is no objection. But that is not the entire story. In all these matters one has to take precautions.*
- P. *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:*

Q. Three statements were made with reference to the disposal of fingernails: one who burns them is pious, who buries them is righteous, who simply tosses them away is wicked.

R. “and having sexual relations immediately after blood-letting:”

S. For a master has said, “He who has a blood-letting and then has sexual relations will have neurasthenic children; if it took place after both the husband and the wife have had a blood-letting, they will have children suffering with *raatan*.”

T. *Said Rab, “But that statement pertains only to a case in which one has eaten nothing, but if one has eaten something, then there is no objection.”*

**I.6.** A. Said R. Hisda, “It is forbidden for someone to have sexual relations by day, as it is said, ‘You will love your neighbor as yourself’ (Lev. 19:18).”

B. *What is the implication of that proof-text?*

C. Said Abbaye, “The husband may discern in the wife some repulsive trait, and she will be revolting to him.”

**I.7.** A. Said R. Huna, “Israelites are holy and do not have sexual relations by day.”

B. Said Raba “But if it was a darkened room, it is permitted, and a disciple may create a dark space with his cloak and have sexual relations.”

C. *But we have learned in the Mishnah: Or she should have intercourse in the light of a lamp.*

D. *Then say as follows: she should conduct an examination in the light of the lamp.*

E. *Come and take note:*

F. Even though they have said, “He who has sexual relations to the light of a candle, lo, this one is vile,”

G. *Say it as follows: he who examines the condition of his bed in the light of a lamp — lo, this one is vile.*

H. *Come and take note:*

I. And the members of the household of King Monobases would do three things, on which account they are remembered for praise: they would have sexual relations by day; and they would inspect their beds with cotton; and they would impose the rules of uncleanness and cleanness in connection with snow.

J. *Now it is stated, therefore, they would have sexual relations by day!*

K. *State it in these terms: they would examine their beds by day. And that stands to reason, for if you think that they had sexual relations by day, would they be remembered for praise?*

L. *Well, as a matter of fact, they would, for since by night sleepiness overtakes the couple, she would be repulsive to him.*

M. “they would inspect their beds with cotton:”

N. *This supports the position of Samuel, for Samuel has said, “The bed is to be inspected only with cotton tufts or with clean, soft wool.”*

O. *Said Rab, “That explains what I heard on the eves of the Sabbaths when I was there: ‘Does anybody need cotton tufts for his “bread,”’ and I did not know what they were talking about.”*

P. *Said Raba, “Old flax garments are the best for making examinations.”*

- Q. *Is that so? And lo, the Tannaite authority of the household of Manasseh [said], “People are not to inspect the bed with a red rag or a black one or with flax, but only with cotton tufts or with clean, soft wool”?*
- R. *That forms no contradiction, the one speaks of flax, the other, flax garments.*
- S. *And if you prefer, I shall say, both speak of flax garments, but the latter refers to new ones, the former, old ones.*
- T. *“and they would impose the rules of uncleanness and cleanness in connection with snow.”*
- U. *There we have learned in the Mishnah: **Snow is neither food nor liquid. If one gave thought to it for use as food, his intention is null [Bavli: it does not impart uncleanness as food]. [Tosefta:] If one thought of it as liquid, it receives or imparts uncleanness as liquid. If part of it is made unclean, the liquid is made unclean. If part of it is made unclean, the whole of it is not made unclean. If part of it is clean, the whole of it is clean [T. Toh. 2:5L-O].***
- V. *Now there is an internal contradiction, for you have said, **If part of it is made unclean, the liquid is made unclean**, and then you have proceeded to say, **If part of it is clean, the whole of it is clean!** The latter then bears the implication that the whole of it has been made unclean!*
- W. Said Abbaye, “It would be a case in which [the snow] had been carried through the air-space of an oven [containing a dead creeping thing], for the Torah has given testimony concerning a clay utensil, that **[17B]** even if it was full of mustard seed [everything in it is unclean].” [Slotki: Even though only those seeds that are actually around the sides of the oven can come into direct contact with the oven, the entire contents are unclean, which proves that in the case of an earthenware oven, uncleanness is imparted to everything in it even though they did not come into direct contact with it].

I.1 cites and expands upon the Mishnah’s rule and language. Since it was taken for granted that marriages took place shortly after puberty, the conception of repeated acts of intercourse routinely performed on the same night is taken for granted. No. 2 complements the Mishnah’s rule. Then No. 3 turns to a topic introduced in the prior Talmudic discussion, namely, having sexual relations in the day-time. This theme forms the common motif in what follows, Nos. 4, 5, 6, 7.

## 2:5

- A. **The sages made a parable in connection with the woman:**
- B. **(1) the room, (2) the front hall, and (3) the room upstairs.**
- C. **Blood in the room is unclean.**
- D. **If it is found in the front hall, a matter of doubt concerning it is deemed unclean, since it is assumed to come from the fountain [uterus].**
- I.1** A. *Rammi bar Samuel and R. Isaac b. R. Judah repeated the Tannaite version of the tractate of Niddah in the household of R. Huna. He found them in session and saying, “**the room** is inside, **the front hall** is on the outside, **and the room upstairs** is built above them, and a channel communicates between the room upstairs and the front hall. If blood is found anywhere from the channel inwards, a*



matter of doubt regarding it is resolved as unclean. If it is found from the channel outwards, a matter of doubt regarding it is resolved as clean.”

- B. *[Rabbah b. R. Huna] came and told this to his father, saying to him, “You, sir, have said to us, ‘A matter of doubt regarding it is resolved as unclean,’ but lo, we have learned in the Mishnah, **since it is assumed to come from the fountain [uterus]!**”*
- C. *He said to him, “This is what I have to say on the matter: If blood is found from the channel and inward, it is certainly unclean; if it is found from the channel outward, then a matter of doubt regarding it is resolved as unclean.”*
- D. *Said Abbaye, “Why is it the case that if blood is found from the channel and outward, a matter of doubt is resolved as unclean? It is because it may be that the woman has bent down, and the blood flowed from there into the chamber. But if the blood is found from the chamber inwards, could the woman not have stumbled backwards, so that the blood derived from the upper chamber?”*
- E. *Rather, said Abbaye, “If we take account of the possibilities, then the uncleanness must be subject to doubt in either case, and if you follow the assumption that blood found anywhere from the channel inwards is unclean beyond doubt, then blood found anywhere from the channel outwards is clean beyond doubt.”*

**I.2. A. It was taught on Tannaite authority by R. Hiyya: blood that is found in the front hall — on its account they burn heave offering and are liable for contamination of the sanctuary and its holy things. [As to blood that exudes from the room, if it is known that it is blood caused by a blow, it is clean, and if not, it is unclean. If it is in doubt whether it is blood of the room or blood caused by a blow, it is unclean [T. Nid. 3:9A-D].**

- B. And R. Qattina said, “People are not liable on its account for coming unclean into the sanctuary and they do not burn priestly rations that have been affected by it.
- C. *Now in the formulation that Abbaye has framed, “If we take account of the possibilities,” that would support the position of R. Qattina, but it contradicts the position of R. Hiyya. But in accord with the other version that you have presented, [“Why is it the case that if blood is found from the channel and outward, a matter of doubt is resolved as unclean? It is because it may be that the woman has bent down, and the blood flowed from there into the chamber”], you find support for the position of R. Hiyya [who then refers to blood found from the channel inwards] [18A] but you find a contradiction to the position of R. Qattina.*
- D. *The position of R. Huna [ If blood is found from the channel and inward, it is certainly unclean; if it is found from the channel outward, then a matter of doubt regarding it is resolved as unclean] presents no contradictions to either, for in the one case we deal with blood found from the channel and inwards [and that is Hiyya’s case], while the other [Qattina] would refer to blood found from the channel and outwards.*
- E. *But from the perspective of Rammi bar Samuel and R. Isaac b. R. Judah, who say, “[the room is inside, the front hall is on the outside, and the room upstairs is built above them, and a channel communicates between the room upstairs and the*



front hall.] If blood is found anywhere from the channel inwards, a matter of doubt regarding it is resolved as unclean. If it is found from the channel outwards, a matter of doubt regarding it is resolved as clean,” *how are we to interpret the matter? Clearly, we must be dealing with blood found from the channel inwards. Then does their position contradict that of R. Hiyya?*

F. *There is no contradiction.* In the one case, we deal with blood that is found on the bottom of the front room, and in the other, it is blood that is found at the roof of the front room.

**I.3.** A. Said R. Yohanan, “In three matters sages have followed the majority rule and treat the matters of doubt as though they were certainties, and these are they: the source, the placenta, and the piece.”

B. *As to the source, that is the rule just now discussed.*

C. As to the placenta, it is as we have learned in the Mishnah: **If there is a placenta in a house, the house is unclean. The reason is not that the placenta is the child, but because there is no placenta which does not contain part of the child. R. Simeon says, “The child was mashed before it [the afterbirth] came out” [M. Nid. 3:4D-E].**

D. *For it has been taught on Tannaite authority:*

E. She who aborts a cut off hand or a cut off foot — the mother is unclean by reason of having given birth, and we do not take account of the possibility that it might have come from a shapeless body.

F. *And are there no other instances [in which sages have followed the majority rule and treat the matters of doubt as though they were certainties]? And lo, there is the case of the nine stores, for it has been taught on Tannaite authority:*

G. If there were nine stores, all of them selling properly slaughtered meat, and one of them selling carrion-meat, and one purchased meat from one of them and does not know from which of them he has made the purchase — his doubt is resolved in favor of a prohibition. But if the meat should turn up, then one follows the status of the majority [of the stores, and it is permitted].

H. *[When we spoke of only three instances in which sages have followed the majority rule and treat the matters of doubt as though they were certainties,] it was with reference only to matters subject to uncleanness, but we did not address the matter of a prohibition [such as the meat would involve].*

I. *And lo there is the following case: **nine frogs and one creeping thing in private domain, and one touched one of them but it is not known which of them he touched — a matter of doubt concerning him is deemed unclean. If one of them separated to private domain, a matter of doubt concerning him is deemed unclean. If it went into public domain, the matter of doubt is deemed clean. And in the case of that which is found, they follow the status of the majority [T. Toh. 6:2J-Q].***

J. *[When we spoke of only three instances in which sages have followed the majority rule and treat the matters of doubt as though they were certainties,] it was with reference only to matters subject to uncleanness, it had only to do with uncleanness affecting a woman, not uncleanness in general.*

- K. *And lo there is the following case:* said R. Joshua b. Levi, “If a woman was crossing a river **[18B]** and produced an abortion, she presents an offering, which may be eaten. We follow the rule covering the majority of women, and the majority of women give birth to perfectly valid fetuses.”
- L. *[When we spoke of only three instances in which sages have followed the majority rule and treat the matters of doubt as though they were certainties,] it was with reference only to Tannaite teachings, but not merely reports of what has been heard.*
- M. *And lo there is the fact that when Rabin came, he said, “R. Yosé b. R. Hanina raised an objection to this statement, but I do not know what contrary evidence he presented in the case of the forgetful woman who does not know on which date she produced the child.” Is this rather not a refutation but support [for Joshua b. Levi’s ruling]? [Slotki: since the answer is affirmative, the ruling in Joshua’s name then derives from a Tannaite tradition and it should have been included by Yohanan on his list.]*
- N. *What then [did Yohanan’s specification] intend to eliminate from consideration?*
- O. *If one says that it was meant to excluded the case in which the rule governing the majority of cases is opposed by the rule governing the presumed status, so that, in such a case, one is not supposed to burn priestly rations on account of an uncleanness that is subject to doubt, then it is to be said that R. Yohanan has already made that point, [as we shall now see, namely, if the rule governing the majority of cases is opposed by the rule governing presumed status, we will not burn priestly rations on account of uncleanness that is subject to doubt] for we have learned in the Mishnah: **A child [who is unclean] who is found at the side of the dough and the dough is in his hand — R. Meir declares clean. And sages declare unclean, for it is the way of the child to slap [dough] [M. Tohorot 3:8A-D].***
- P. *And we said, “What is the operative consideration behind the position of R. Meir? It is that he assumes that the rule governing the majority of children is that most of them slap dough and only a minority does not slap dough. Now this dough is in the presumption of being clean. So we have to combine the matter of the status of the minority with the rule that the prevailing presumption is decisive, and in that case, the rule governing the majority is impaired. Rabbis for their part treat the minority as though it were null, and where majority rule is set against the prevailing presumption, the rule governing the majority takes precedence.” In connection with this, R. Simeon b. Laqish in the name of R. Oshaia stated, “It is on the strength of that presumption that the food in the status of priestly rations is burned,” while R. Yohanan said, “It is not on the basis of a presumption of this sort that the food in the status of priestly rations will be burned.”*
- Q. *[Rather, R. Yohanan’s list was meant to] exclude the rule governing the majority of cases of which R. Judah spoke [Slotki: that in that case the uncleanness that is dependent on the rule governing the majority of cases is*

not regarded as a certainty. It is only one of doubtful character, and in consequence, priestly rulings subject to such uncleanness is not to be burned,] *as we have learned in the Mishnah: She who produces a piece [a shapeless object] — if there is blood with it, she is unclean, and if not, she is clean. R. Judah says, “One way or the other, she is unclean” [M. Nid. 3:1A-B].* And said R. Judah said Samuel, “R. Judah has given a ruling of uncleanness only in case of a shapeless object that had the color of one of the four kinds of blood [described presently], but if it was of any of the other shades of blood, it is clean.” But R. Yohanan said, “If it was the color of one of the four kinds of blood, all parties concur that it is unclean. But if it was the color of any of the other kinds of blood, all parties concur that it is clean. There is a disagreement only in a case in which the one aborted [19A] but it is not known what it is that she has aborted. *In such a case R. Judah takes the view that one follows the rule governing the majority of such pieces, and the majority of pieces are of one of the four specified colors of blood, and rabbis maintain that we do not invoke the principle that we follow the rule governing the majority of such pieces.*”

I.1, 2 provide a fine expansion of the Mishnah's rule, within the framework of the Mishnah's reasoning. No. 3 forms an appendix to the foregoing.

## 2:6-7

### 2:6

- A. Five [colors of] blood are unclean in a woman:
- B. (1) red, and (2) black, and (3) bright crocus color, and (4) [blood] which is like water mixed with earth, and (5) [blood which is] like water mixed with wine.
- C. The House of Shammai say, “Also: (6) blood the color of water in which fenugreek has been soaked, and (7) [blood] the color of gravy from roast meat.”
- D. And the House of Hillel declare clean.
- E. [Blood which is] yellow —
- F. Aqabya b. Mehalalel declares unclean.
- G. And sages declare clean.
- H. Said R. Meir, “If it does not impart uncleanness because it is a bloodstain, it imparts uncleanness because it is a liquid.”
- I. R. Yosé says, “Neither thus nor so.”

### 2:7

- A. What is the red [color]?
- B. Like the blood of a wound.
- C. Black?
- D. Like ink sediment.
- E. If it is deeper than this, it is unclean, but if it is lighter than this, it is clean.
- F. And bright crocus color?

- G. Like the brightest shade in it.
- H. Like earthy water?
- I. [A color like that produced when] over dirt from the valley of Bet Kerem water is made to float.
- J. [A color] like water mixed with wine?
- K. Two parts of water, and one part of wine —
- L. [making use of] wine of Sharon.

- I.1** A. *How on the basis of Scripture do we know that blood that exudes from a woman may be clean? Perhaps all varieties of blood that come from her are unclean [without differentiation]?*
- B. Said R. Oshaia, “Scripture has said, ‘If there arises a matter too difficult for you to judge, in discerning between one blood and another’ (Deu. 17: 8) — between blood that is clean and blood that is unclean.”
- C. *Then how about the next phrase, “between one mark of the skin-disease [described at Lev. 13-14] and another mark of the same disease”? Does this imply that there can be a mark of the skin disease that is unclean and one that is clean? And should you say, Yes indeed! then is there such a thing as a mark of the skin-disease that is in fact clean? [Certainly not!] And should you cite the fact that when “it has all turned white, he is clean” (Lev. 13:13), that is classified as a white scurf [which is clean]. [So the upshot is simple.] The sense of “between one mark of the skin-disease [described at Lev. 13-14] and another mark of the same disease” is between the marks of the skin-disease that pertain to a human being and those that pertain to houses and those that pertain to clothing, all of which are unclean — and all of them are unclean. Here too, the sense is, “between blood of menstruation and blood that marks the flux [of Lev. 15],” but all these varieties of blood are unclean.*
- D. *How now! There the issue implied by the language of Scripture is entirely in order [even though all of the marks of the skin disease are unclean], and one must distinguish among the marks of the skin disease that appear in man. At issue is the dispute of R. Joshua and Rabbis, as we have learned in the Mishnah: A bright spot about the size of a half split bean — and there is nothing in it — a bright spot about the size of a half split bean appeared — and in it are two hairs — lo, this is to be certified [as unclean]. For they have said, If the bright spot preceded the white hair, he is unclean, and if the white hair preceded the bright spot, he is clean. And if there is doubt, he is unclean. And R. Joshua was doubtful [M. Neg. 4:11]. And Rabbah said, “He was doubtful, but he is clean.”*
- E. *And as to afflictions of houses, it is in line with the dispute involving R. Eleazar b. R. Simeon and rabbis, as we have learned in the Mishnah: And how many stones must there be in it? R. Ishmael says, “Four.” R. Aqiba says, “Eight.” For R. Ishmael used to say, “Until [tokens of uncleanness of the size of] two split beans will appear on two stones — or on one stone.” R. Aqiba says, “Until [tokens of uncleanness of the size of] two split beans will appear on two stones-not on one stone.” R. Eleazar b. R. Simeon says, “Until [a spot the size of] two split beans will appear on two stones on two walls in the*

**corner. Its length is two split beans, and its width a split bean” [M. Neg. 12:3].** *What is the scriptural basis for the position of R. Eleazar b. R. Simeon? It is written, “wall” (Lev. 14:37) and also “walls” (Lev. 14:37). Now what is a wall that is made up of two walls? You have to say that it is a corner.*

- F. *And as to afflictions of clothing, it is in line with the dispute involving R. Jonathan b. Abtolemos and rabbis, as it has been taught on Tannaite authority: R. Jonathan b. Abtolemos says, “How do we know that if the marks of the skin ailment spreads over the entirety of garments, they are clean? We find reference to ‘within’ and ‘without’ with respect to garments and also with respect to human beings. Just as, in the case of human beings, if these marks spread over the whole body, the person is clean, so in the case of garments, if these marks spread over the whole garment, it is clean.”*
- G. *So here too, if there is no such thing as clean blood, then concerning what sort of dispute does Scripture make reference?*

**I.2.** A. *So how do we know that some classifications of blood are clean, and others are unclean?*

- B. Said R. Abbahu, “It is because Scripture has said, ‘And the Moabites saw the water as red as blood’ (2Ki. 3:22). *This then implies that* blood is red [Slotki: as red is the usual color of blood, all the blood that has one of the five colors enumerated in our Mishnah, all shades of red, is unclean].”
- C. *May I say, red but no other color?*
- D. Said R. Abbahu, “Scripture has said, ‘her bloods’ (Lev. 12: 7) ‘her bloods’ (Lev. 20:18). Thus reference is made to four classifications of blood.”
- E. *But lo, [in the list before us] are five classifications of blood!*
- F. Said R. Hanina, “Black is red that has deteriorated.”
- G. *So it has been taught on Tannaite authority:*
- H. **Black as ink sediment — if it is deeper than this, it is unclean; if it is lighter than this, even like stibium, it is clean. Not that from the beginning of its formation the blood was black, but when it was discharged it turned black. To what is the matter comparable? To blood caused by a blow. Once it begins to flow, it turns black [T. Nid. 3:11A-E].**

**II.1** A. **The House of Shammai say, “Also: blood the color of water in which fenugreek has been soaked, and [blood] the color of gravy from roast meat:”**

- B. Do not the House of Shammai accept the proof deriving from the demonstration, “Scripture has said, ‘her bloods’ (Lev. 12: 7) ‘her bloods’ (Lev. 20:18). Thus reference is made to four classifications of blood”?
- C. *If you wish, I shall say that they indeed do not accept that proof.*
- D. *If you wish, I shall say that they do accept that proof, but has not R. Hanina said, “Black is red that had deteriorated.” Here too, it is blood that had deteriorated.*

**III.1** A. **And the House of Hillel declare clean:**

- B. *This is precisely the position on these matters that is taken by the Tannaite authority who stands at the commencement of the very same paragraph!*
- C. *At issue between [that authority and the House of Hillel] is [19B] whether or not to suspend [judgment on the status of blood colors other than those listed. Are*

these clean or is it that they may or may not be clean. Hillel holds that they are clean, the initial authority, they may or may not be clean.]

**IV.1 A. [Blood which is] yellow — Aqabya b. Mehalalel declares unclean. And sages declare clean:**

- B. *Does not Aqabya b. Mehalalel accept the proof deriving from the demonstration, “Scripture has said, ‘her bloods’ (Lev. 12: 7) ‘her bloods’ (Lev. 20:18). Thus reference is made to four classifications of blood”?*
- C. *If you wish, I shall say that he indeed does not accept that proof.*
- D. *If you wish, I shall say that he does accept that proof, but has not R. Hanina said, “Black is red that had deteriorated.” Here too, it is blood that had deteriorated.*

**V.1 A. And sages declare clean:**

- B. *This is precisely the position on these matters that is taken by the Tannaite authority who stands at the commencement of the very same paragraph!*
- C. *At issue between them is whether or not to suspend [judgment on the status of blood colors other than those listed. Are these clean or is it that they may or may not be clean.]*

**VI.1 A. Said R. Meir, “If it does not impart uncleanness because it is a bloodstain, it imparts uncleanness because it is a liquid:”**

- B. *Said R. Yohanan, “R. Meir penetrated into the theory of Aqabya b. Mehalalel and declared [yellow discharge] unclean [as menstrual blood]. And this is the sense of what he had to say to rabbis: ‘While, to be sure, when a woman finds a yellow blood stain on her garment, you have not declared her unclean, in a case in which she has actually produced a drop of yellow blood from her body itself, you should declare her unclean.’”*
- C. *If so, then the language that should be used should not be, “If it does not impart uncleanness because it is a bloodstain, it imparts uncleanness because it is a liquid,” but rather, because she has produced a drop of blood!*
- D. *Rather, this is the sense of what he had to say to rabbis: while, to be sure, when a woman finds a yellow blood stain to begin with, you have not declared her unclean, in a case in which she produced a drop of red blood and then she produced a drop of yellow blood, you should indeed declare her unclean, for it falls into the category of the excretions of a male- or a female-Zab [afflicted with the uncleanness of Lev. 15].*
- E. *And the rabbis? [Their argument is as follows:] the analogy is to be drawn to spit: just as spit forms into globules when it is discharged, so any other liquid that is unclean will be one that forms into globules when it is charged; the liquid at hand is excluded, since when it is discharged, it does not form globules.*
- F. *If that is the case, then have not rabbis replied persuasively to R. Meir?*
- G. *Rather, this is the sense of what he had to say to rabbis: it is in the status of liquid in having the power to impart to dry stuffs susceptibility to receive uncleanness [in line with Lev. 11:34, 37].*
- H. *And the rabbis? They require that it be like the blood of those who are slain [Num. 23:24, that is, blood that gushes], and that is not the case here.*
- I. *If that is the case, then have not rabbis replied persuasively to R. Meir?*



- J. *Rather, this is the sense of what he had to say to rabbis: Derive the rule [that yellow discharge imparts susceptibility to dry stuff] by means of an argument based on the appearance of the same root in two distinct contexts and imposing the rule governing one upon the other: here it is written, “your shoots are a park of pomegranates” (Son. 4:23), and elsewhere, “and sends [using the same root] water upon the fields” (Job. 5:10). [Slotki: as the water referred to in Job. renders seed susceptible to uncleanness, so does a woman’s discharge alluded to in Song].*
- K. *And the rabbis?* While one may on one’s own account infer a ruling a fortiori, one may not on his own infer a ruling by means of an argument based on the appearance of the same root in two distinct contexts and imposing the rule governing one upon the other.

### **VII.1 A. R. Yosé says, “Neither thus nor so:”**

- B. *This is precisely the position on these matters that is taken by the Tannaite authority who stands at the commencement of the very same paragraph!*
- C. *What the passage tells us is this: who is the initial authority? It is R. Yosé.*
- D. For one who states a matter in the name of the person who originally said it brings redemption to the world.

### **VIII.1 A. What is the red [color]? Like the blood of a wound:**

- B. *What is the meaning of like the blood of a wound?*
- C. Said R. Judah said Samuel, “Like the blood of an ox that has been properly slaughtered.”
- D. *Then why not say, “Like the blood of an ox that has been properly slaughtered”?*
- E. *Had the passage stated, “Like the blood of an ox that has been properly slaughtered,” I would have supposed like the blood that exudes throughout the whole process of slaughtering. So we are told, like the blood of a wound, that is, like the blood of a wound that is caused at the initial stroke of the knife.*

A further sequence of answers to the same question now commences.

- F. [What is the meaning of **like the blood of a wound**?] Ulla said, “Like the blood of a living bird’s wound.”
- G. *The question was asked: is the reference to “living” meant to exclude the blood of a slaughtered bird, or perhaps the sense is, to exclude the blood of an emaciated bird?*
- H. *The question stands.*
- I. [What is the meaning of **like the blood of a wound**?] Zeiri said R. Hanina [said], “Like the blood of a head-louse.”
- J. *It was objected: [And she blames it on any thing on which she can blame it:] If she killed a louse, lo, this one blames it on it [M. Nid. 8:2E-F]. Does this not refer to a louse on any part of her body?*
- K. *No, it refers to one on her head.*
- L. [What is the meaning of **like the blood of a wound**?] Ammi Vadrinaah said R. Abbahu [said], “Like the blood of the little finger on the hand that was wounded, healed, and was wounded again. And not that of just anybody, but of a boy who has never been married. To what age? To twenty.”



- M. *It was objected: [And she blames it on any thing on which she can blame it:] And [it may be attributed to a louse] even though she did not kill it. And she blames it on her son or her husband [M. Nid. 8:2I].*
- N. *Now, with respect to her son, there can be such a case, but how can this be the case with her husband [who after all has been married]?*
- O. Said R. Nahman bar Isaac, "For instance, if she entered the marriage-canopy but had not yet had sexual relations."
- P. [What is the meaning of **like the blood of a wound**?] R. Nahman said, "Like the blood of the arteries opened in bloodletting."
- Q. *It was objected: there was a case, and R. Meir assigned the source of the blood to [20A] collyrium, and Rabbi assigned the source of the stain to the sap of a sycamore. Now did these rulings not pertain to red blood?*
- R. *No, they pertained to other kinds of blood.*

**VIII.2.** A. *Amemar, Mar Zutra, and R. Ashi were in session before a cupper. When he took the first cupping horn off Amemar, he looked at it and said to them, "The red of which we have learned in the Mishnah is like this."*

- B. *When he took the second cupping horn off, he looked at it and said to them, "This is different."*
- C. *Said R. Ashi, "Someone like me, who does not know the difference between one and the other, ought not to examine and make rulings concerning blood."*

**IX.1** A. **Black? Like ink sediment. If it is deeper than this, it is unclean, but if it is lighter than this, it is clean:**

- B. Said Rabbah bar R. Huna, "The black of which they have spoken is ink."
- C. *So too it has been taught on Tannaite authority:*
- D. **Black as ink sediment [T. 3:11A].** And the black of which they have spoken is that of ink.
- E. *Then why not just say, "ink-black."*
- F. *Had the passage said, "ink-black," I might have supposed that it was like the watery part of the ink, so we are informed that it is like the black of the ink-sediment.*

**IX.2.** A. *The question was raised: is it liquid-ink or dry-ink?*

- B. *Come and take note: R. Ammi used to split a grain of dry ink and with it would perform the required examination.*

**IX.3.** A. Said R. Judah said Samuel, "[If the discharge is the color of] black wax, black ink, or a black grape, she is unclean, and this is what is meant by the language, **If it is deeper than this, it is unclean.**"

**IX.4.** A. Said R. Eleazar, "If it is as black as a black olive, pitch, or a raven, it is clean, and this is what is meant by the language, **but if it is lighter than this, it is clean.**"

**IX.5.** A. *Ulla said, "It is as black as a Siva-cloak."*

- B. *Ulla happened to visit Pumbedita. He saw a Tai-Arab dressed in a black cloak. He said to them, "The black of which we have learned in the Mishnah is of that shade."*

C. *They pulled the cloak off the man bit by bit and paid him four hundred zuz.*

**IX.6.** A. R. Yohanan said, "It is of the color of those garments for the court that come from overseas."

B. *Does this then imply that they are black?* But did not R. Yannai say to his sons, "My sons, do not bury me either in black clothing or in white clothing; black, lest I prove to have merit and turn out to be like a mourner at a wedding, or white, lest I not have merit and turn out to look like a bridegroom among mourners. Rather, it should be in the court clothes that come from overseas." *It follows that they are not black!*

C. *That poses no contradiction, the one reference [Yannai's] is to cloaks, the other, to clothes worn at the table.*

**IX.7.** A. Said R. Judah said Samuel, "And in the case of all of them [the five kinds of blood listed in the Mishnah], they are to be examined only on a white strip of cloth."

B. Said R. Isaac bar Abodimi, "And in the case of black, it is tested on red."

C. *Said R. Jeremiah of Difti, "There is no contradiction between these two statements, for the one refers only to black, and the other to the rest of the colors of blood."*

D. *An objection was raised by R. Ashi, "If that were so, then Samuel should say, 'except for black.'"*

E. *Rather, said R. Ashi, "The dispute concerns black itself."*

**IX.8.** A. Said Ulla, "And in the case of all of them [the five kinds of blood listed in the Mishnah], if the shade is deeper than the specified ones, the blood is unclean, but if it is lighter than the specified shades, it is clean, as is the case with black [as the Mishnah states explicitly: **If it is deeper than this, it is unclean, but if it is lighter than this, it is clean**]."

B. *Then why did the Mishnah make explicit reference only to black?*

C. Since R. Hanina has said, "Black is red that had deteriorated," *I might have thought that, therefore, even if it is lighter than that shade, it also would be unclean. So we are informed to the contrary.*

**IX.9.** A. R. Ammi bar Abba said, "And in the case of all of them [the five kinds of blood listed in the Mishnah], if the shade is deeper than the specified ones, the blood is unclean, but if it is lighter than the specified shades, it is also unclean, except for the matter of black."

B. *Then what good are the specified standard shades that are described by rabbis?*

C. *They serve to exclude one that is very faint.*

D. *There are those who say:*

E. R. Ammi bar Abba said, "And in the case of all of them [the five kinds of blood listed in the Mishnah], if the shade is deeper than the specified ones, the blood is clean, but if it is lighter than the specified shades, it is also clean, except for the matter of black."

F. *And it is for that purpose that the specified standard shades that are described by rabbis are set forth.*

**IX.10.** A. Bar Qappara said, “And in the case of all of them [the five kinds of blood listed in the Mishnah], if the shade is deeper than the specified ones, the blood is unclean, but if it is lighter than the specified shades, it is also unclean, except for the matter diluted wine, in which a darker shade is clean, a lighter one also clean.”

B. *They showed Bar Qappara a lighter shade, and he declared it clean, and they showed him a darker one, and he declared it clean.*

C. *Said R. Hanina, “How great is a man who practices what he preaches.”*

**X.1** A. **And bright crocus color? Like the brightest shade in it:**

B. *A Tannaite version had it as: a wet but not a dry crocus [T. Nid. 3:11G].*

C. *One Tannaite version stated: like the bright color that is on top and not on the bottom [T. Nid. 3:11G].*

D. *And another one stated, like the bright color that is on the bottom and all the more so on the top.*

**X.2.** A. *Said Abbaye, “The crocus has three rows of leaves, with three leaves in each row; stick to the middle row and the middle leaf of that row.*

**X.3.** A. *When they came before R. Abbahu, he said to them, “We have learned that the color refers to the crocus when it is still attached to its clods.*

**XI.1** A. **Like earthy water? A color like that produced when over dirt from the valley of Bet Kerem water is made to float:**

B. *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:*

C. **Like earthy water — how so? “One brings dirt from the valley of Bet Kerem and floats water over it,” the words of R. Meir. And R. Judah says, “From the valley of Sikhni.” And R. Yosé says, “From the valley of Jotapata.” And R. Simeon b. Eleazar says in the name of R. Meir, “Also from the valley of Gennosar and the like” [T. Nid. 3:11H-L].**

D. *It has further been taught on Tannaite authority:*

E. **And like earthy water:** one brings fertile soil from the valley of Beth Kerem and causes water to float on it until it forms a layer as thin as the husk of garlic, and just as there is no fixed quantity for the earth, so there is no fixed volume for the water.

F. **And they do not examine the water when it is turbid and they do not examine it when it is clear. If they became clear, they [Tosefta: do not] go and make them turbid a second time, [Tosefta: for there is no limit to water and dirt] [T. Nid. 3:11M-O]. [Bavli:] If they became clear, they are to be made turbid again, and when one makes them turbid, it must be done not by hand but with a utensil.**

G. *The question was raised: Is the meaning of the rule, “when one makes them turbid, it must be done not by hand but with a utensil,” so as not to put in his hand and stir it, but if it is in a utensil, it is all right for him to stir it with his hand, or is the meaning that one must not stir it with his hand but only with a utensil?*

H. *Come and take note: When one examines them, one examines them only in a cup.*

I. *Still the question stands: if the examination is in a cup, how is one to stir it?*

J. *That question stands.*

- XI.2.** A. *When they came before Rabbah bar Abbuha he said to them, "What we have learned is that the dirt is what is located in one's own place."*
- B. *R. Hanina would break a piece of potter's clay and carry out the examination.*
- C. *R. Ishmael b. R. Yosé would curse with an attack of croup anybody who did it that way.*
- D. **[20B]** *[It was his view that] R. Hanina is smart enough to do it that way, but nobody else is smart enough to do it that way.*
- E. *Said R. Yohanan, "The smarts of R. Hanina made me stop examining blood, for when I said it was unclean, he said it was clean, and when I said it was clean, he said it was unclean."*
- F. *Said R. Eleazar, "The humility of R. Hanina is what caused me to undertake the examination of blood. For if R. Hanina, who was humble, would get involved in matters of doubt and so examined blood, should I too not examine blood?"*
- G. *Said R. Zira, "The coinage of Babylonia caused me not to be willing to examine blood, for I made the argument, if I can't understand the coins of the locale, am I going to understand the character of blood?"*
- H. *Does this then imply that the whole matter depends on whether or not one can understand the coins in circulation? But is it not the fact that it is Rabbah himself who understood the coinage system perfectly well, but he did not understand the character of blood!*
- I. *It was an argument a fortiori that he set forth: "if Rabbah, who did understand the coinage, declined to examine blood, should I, who do not understand the coinage, examine blood?"*
- XI.3.** A. *Ulla happened to come to Pumbedita. They brought some blood before him, but he would not examine it. He said, "Now if R. Eleazar, who is the master of the Land of Israel, when he visited the place of R. Judah, would refuse to examine the blood submitted to him, should I then examine blood?"*
- B. *And why did they call him the master of the Land of Israel?*
- C. *For a woman once brought blood before R. Eleazar. R. Ammi was in session before him. He smelled it and said to her, "This is the blood of lust [discharged by reason of sexual desire]."*
- D. *After she had left, R. Ammi joined her, and she said to him, "My husband was away on a trip, and I desired him."*
- E. *He recited in his [Eleazar's] regard, "The counsel of the Lord is with those who fear him" (Psa. 25:14).*
- XI.4.** A. *Ifra Hormiz, the mother of King Shapur, sent blood before Raba. R. Obadiah was in session before him. He smelled it and said to her, "This is the blood of lust [discharged by reason of sexual desire]."*
- B. *She said to her son, "Come see how smart the Jews are."*
- C. *He said to her, "Maybe its like a blind man with a window [a mere accident]."*
- D. *So she went and sent [Raba] sixty different kinds of blood, and all of them he correctly classified, except the last one, which was the blood of lice, and he did not know what it was. But matters worked out well for him, for he sent her a*

*comb that combs out lice. She said, "Jews, you live in the inner chamber of the heart."*

**XI.5.** A. *Said R. Judah, "I used to examine blood. But since the mother of my son Isaac told me, 'This first drop of blood we do not bring before rabbis because it is dirty,' I decline to examine blood. But if it is to distinguish what is unclean from what is clean, I certainly examine the blood."*

**XI.6.** A. *Yalta [Nahman's wife] brought blood before Rabbah bar bar Hana and he declared it unclean. Then she went and brought it before R. Isaac b. R. Judah and he declared it clean for her.*

B. *How could he have done such a thing, for it has been taught on Tannaite authority:*

C. *A sage who declared something unclean — his fellow does not have the right to declare it clean. If he prohibited something, his fellow has not got the right to permit it.*

D. *To begin with, he declared it unclean. But when she told him, "On every other occasion you have declared clean for me blood of this sort, but last time you had a pain in the eye, so he ruled that it was clean."*

E. *And are women believed in such circumstances?*

F. *Indeed so, and for it has been taught on Tannaite authority:*

G. *A woman is believed to testify, "Blood like this I have seen, but I lost it."*

**XI.7.** A. *The question was raised: "Blood of this kind has Mr. So-and-so, a sage, declared clean" — what is the law?*

B. *Come and take note: A woman is believed to testify, "Blood like this I have seen, but I lost it."*

C. *That case is different, for the blood itself is not in hand.*

D. *Come and take note: Yalta [Nahman's wife] brought blood before Rabbah bar bar Hana and he declared it unclean. Then she went and brought it before R. Isaac b. R. Judah and he declared it clean for her. How could he have done such a thing, for it has been taught on Tannaite authority: A sage who declared something unclean — his fellow does not have the right to declare it clean. If he prohibited something, his fellow has not got the right to permit it. To begin with, he declared it unclean. But when she told him, "On every other occasion you have declared clean for me blood of this sort, but last time you had a pain in the eye, so he ruled that it was clean." It follows that R. Isaac bar Judah did believe her testimony.*

E. *He relied on his own learning.*

**XI.8.** A. *Rabbi examined blood by night and declared it unclean. He examined it by day and then he declared it clean. He waited a while and then he went and declared it unclean. "Woe is me," he said, "Maybe I made a mistake!"*

B. *"Maybe I made a mistake"?! He most assuredly made a mistake somewhere along the line.*

C. *For it has been taught on Tannaite authority:*

D. *A sage should not say, "If it were wet, it would certainly have been unclean," but he says, "The judge has in hand only what his eyes see."*

- E. *To begin with he assumed that it was certainly unclean. When he saw it in the morning, with a changed color, he said, "It is certainly clean, but at night it was not possible to see it properly." Then, when he saw that it changed again, he said, "This is unclean blood, but the color is fading gradually."*

**XI.9.** A. Rabbi examined blood by the light of a lamp.

- B. *R. Ishmael b. R. Joseph inspected blood on a cloudy day, standing between the pillars.*
- C. Said R. Ammi bar Samuel, "And all kinds of blood do people examine only between sunshine and shade."
- D. R. Nahman said Rabbah b. Abbuha [said], "In the sunshine it may be done in the shade of one's hand."

**XII.1** A. [A color] like water mixed with wine? Two parts of water, and one part of wine — [making use of] wine of Sharon:

- B. *A Tannaite version stated: [21A] Sharon-wine that is diluted is equivalent to Carmel-wine that is fresh and undiluted, new and not vintaged [cf. T. Nid. 3:11Q-R].*
- C. Said R. Isaac bar Abodimi, "And all of them are examined only in a plain cup from Tiberias."
- D. *What is the operative consideration?*
- E. Said Abbayye, "A cup from anywhere else that contains a log of liquid in volume is made of a maneh, of two hundred zuz, but a plain Tiberian cup, even if it contains a volume of two log, is made of one maneh, *and since it is so thin, [the color of the wine] is easier to recognize.*"

I.1 begins with the familiar inquiry into the scriptural basis for the premises of the Mishnah's rule. The extended analysis deals with a negative judgment upon the proposed demonstration that some classifications of blood are clean, others unclean, so No. 2 renews the demonstration. II.1 raises a question on the interpretation of the Mishnah in the context of our prior proof, and III.1 follows suit. That a single conception governs the articulation of the whole is shown at IV.1, V.1. VI.1 accomplishes the necessary exegetical task of showing how Meir's position relates to the foregoing. VII.1 reverts to the earlier inquiry. It further provides amplification for the Mishnah's definition of color. No. 2 continues the foregoing but is a free-standing item. The whole of units VIII, IX, X, XI, and XII continue the work of Mishnah-amplification and glossing. I see no more complex program than systematic explanation of the details of the law.