

II.

BABYLONIAN TALMUD

SOTAH

CHAPTER TWO

FOLIOS 14A-19A

2:1

- A. He [the husband (Num. 5:15)] would bring her meal-offering in a basket of palm-twigs and lay it into her hands to tire her out.
- B. All meal-offerings at the outset and at the end are in a utensil of service.
- C. But this one at the outset is in basket of palm-twigs, and [only] at the end is in a utensil of service.
- D. All meal-offerings require oil and frankincense,
- E. But this one requires neither oil nor frankincense.
- F. All meal-offerings derive from wheat.
- G. But this one derives from barley.
- H. As to the meal-offering of the first sheaf (omer), even though it [too] derives from barley, it would derive from sifted flour.
- I. But this one derives from unsifted flour.
- J. Rabban Gamaliel says, “Just as she acted like a cow, so her offering is food for a cow.”

We begin with an account for the implicit reason behind the Mishnah’s rule.

- I.1.** A. [Supply: He [the husband (Num. 5:15)] would bring her meal-offering in a basket of palm-twigs and lay it into her hands to tire her out:] *It has been taught on Tannaite authority:* Abba Hanin says in the name of R. Eliezer, “It is to tire her out [M. 2:1A], so that she will repent [and, if guilty, confess].
- B. “If in this way does the Torah show pity for those who violate his will, all the more so [will it show pity on] those who carry out his will.”
- C. *And how [do we know that it is] because of showing pity? Perhaps it is so as not to have to blot out [the holy name of God, written] in the scroll.*
- D. *[Eliezer] takes the view [14B] that one administers the bitter water and only then offers up her meal offering.*

- E. *For if the consideration had to do with [not blotting out God's name written in the] scroll, the writing already will have been obliterated. [So the only possible consideration is showing pity. The scroll is blotted out at the time that she drinks the water. She already has drunk it. The name has been blotted out. Then the meal-offering is offered up. Making her hold on to the basket, in order to tire her out and force a confession, thus bears no relationship to the blotting out of the scroll, which has already taken place.]*

Tannaite teachings that intersect on the same detail have now to be harmonized.

II.1. A. All meal-offerings, etc. [M. 2:1B]:

- B. *An objection was raised [by citing the following]: **What is the order of meal-offerings? One would bring it from home in a silver or gold utensil. He put it into a utensil of service and sanctified it in a utensil of service and put its oil and its frankincense on it. He would bring it to the priest. The priest brings it to the altar and offers it up at the southwestern corner of the altar, at the southern side of the corner and that suffices. Then he removes its frankincense from one side and takes up a handful of meal-offering from the place at which the oil is located and puts it into a utensil of service and sanctifies it in a utensil of service. Then he gathers the frankincense and puts it on top of it. And he raises it onto the altar offers it up in a utensil of service and salts it and puts it onto the altar fires. And the residue they give to the priests. The priests are permitted to put into the residue of meal-offerings wine, olive-oil and honey, but are prohibited from allowing it to ferment [T. Men. 1:16-1:17A].***
- C. *[While the Mishnah-passage says that all meal-offerings begin in a utensil of service,] the Tannaite teacher states, in any event, **in a silver or golden utensil.***
- D. *Said R. Papa, "I may interpret the Mishnah to mean that it is put in utensils that are suitable to serve as utensils of service."*
- E. *Does this then imply that a twig basket is not suitable?*
- F. *If so, in accord with whose view is that statement? It does not accord with R. Yosé b. R. Judah.*
- G. *For it has been taught on Tannaite authority:*
- H. *As to a utensil of service which one made of wood—*
- I. *Rabbi declares it unfit.*
- J. *And R. Yosé b. R. Judah declares it fit.*
- K. *[No, that does not necessarily follow.] You may even maintain that the passage at hands accords with R. Yosé b. R. Judah. I may reason that R. Yosé b. R. Judah makes such a ruling [about not using wooden baskets] in the case of important people. But in the case of ordinary folk, has he made such a statement? [Surely not.]*
- L. *[That cannot be so.] For does not R. Yosé b. R. Judah affirm the principle expressed in the verse, "Present it now to your governor" (Mal. 1:8), [which is taken to mean that first rate offerings must be made, not inferior ones. That principle applies also to utensils of service.]*

We proceed to a systematic gloss of the Tannaite rule, treated in its own terms and not in relationship to the Mishnah-passage that is before us.

II.2. A. He put it into a utensil of service and sanctified it in a utensil of service:

- B. *Does that statement [that the donor does both acts] bear the implication that a utensil of service serves to sanctify [its contents] only when that is the intent [of the donor, but no *ex opere operato*]?*
- C. *State matters thus:* He places it into a utensil of service so as to sanctify it in a utensil of service.

II.3. A. And put its oil and its frankincense on it:

- B. As it is said, “He shall pour oil upon it and put frankincense thereon” (Lev. 2: 1).

II.4. A. He would bring it to the priest:

- B. As it is written, “And he shall bring it to Aaron’s sons” (Lev. 2: 2).

II.5. A. And the priest brings it to the altar:

- B. As it is written, “And he shall bring it to the altar” (Lev. 2: 8).

II.6. A. He offers it up at the southwestern corner of the altar, opposite the point of the altar’s horn, at the southern side of the corner, and that suffices:

- B. *How do we know it?*
- C. As it is written, “And this is the law of the meal offering: the sons of Aaron shall offer it before the Lord, before the altar” (Lev. 6: 7).
- D. *And it has been taught on Tannaite authority:*
- E. “Before the Lord”—
- F. Is it possible to say that this is at the western side?
- G. Scripture says, “Before the altar.” [Before the face of the altar, which faces the south].
- H. If it is “before the altar,” is it possible to suppose that that is the southern side?
- I. Scripture says, “Before the Lord.”
- J. How so [do we draw together both specifications of the cited verse]?
- K. **He offers it up at the southwestern corner of the altar, opposite the point of the altar’s horn, and that suffices.**
- L. R. Eleazar says, “Is it possible to suppose that he offers it up on the western side of the horn of the altar, or on the southern side of the horn of the altar?”
- M. “Now could you say so? In any setting in which you find two verses of Scripture, one that makes its own statement but also confirms the statement of its fellow, another that makes its own statement but annuls the statement of its fellow, one ignores the one that makes its own statement and annuls the statement of its fellow and follows the one that makes its own statement and confirms the statement of its fellow.
- N. “When you say, ‘Before the Lord,’ on the western side of the altar, you annul, ‘before the altar,’ on the southern side of the altar.

- O. “But when you say, ‘Before the altar,’ at the south, you confirm, ‘Before the Lord,’ at the west.
- P. “How so? One offers it up at the southern side of the corner.”
- Q. But how do you confirm it? [Cohen, p. 77, n. 10: “If the meal offering is to be brought to the south side of the altar, it is not opposite the entrance of the Sanctuary, which is on the West.”]
- R. *Said R. Ashi, “The Tannaite authority at hand takes the view that the whole of the altar is at the north.”*
- S. *What is the meaning of, **That suffices?***
- T. *Said R. Ashi, “It is necessary to make such a specification. It might have entered your mind to maintain that the meal-offering itself [not in the ministering utensil] must be brought near to the altar.*
- U. *“So we are informed that that is not the case.”*
- V. *And may I take the view that that indeed is the rule [that one must bring the meal-offering itself to the altar] [not in the ministering utensil]?*
- W. Scripture has said, “And it shall be presented to the priest, and he shall bring it to the altar” (Lev. 2: 8).
- X. Just as the act of presenting the meal-offering to the priest is in a utensil of service, so the bringing near of the meal offering to the altar is in a utensil of service.

II.7. A. Then he removes its frankincense from one side:

- B. *This is so that it will not be taken up in a handful along with the meal-offering.*
- C. *This accords with what we have learned in the Mishnah: **If he took a handful and there came up in his hand a pebble or a grain of salt or a grain of frankincense, it has rendered the meal-offering invalid [M. Men. 1:2E].***

II.8. A. He takes a handful of meal-offering from the place at which the oil is located [B.: is abundant]:

- B. *How do we know it?*
- C. *As it is written, “Of its fine flour and of its oil, of its pounded grain and of its oil” (Lev. 2:16).*

II.9. A. He puts it into a utensil of service and sanctifies it in a utensil of service:

- B. *What need is there for this procedure? Lo, he has already sanctified it one time.*
- C. *It is comparable to the case of the blood.*
- D. *As to the blood, even though the knife has sanctified it on the neck of the beast, [the priest] must go and sanctify it again in a utensil of service.*
- E. *Here too there is no difference [in the required, two-step procedure].*

II.10. A. Then he gathers the frankincense and puts it on top of it.

- B. As it is written, “And all the frankincense which is upon the meal-offering” (Lev. 6:8 [15]).

II.11. A. And he raises it [15A] onto the altar and offers it up in a utensil of service:

- B. Do you maintain that he offers it up in a utensil of service?
- C. No, read the matter this way: He raises it up in a utensil of service in order to offer it up.

II.12. A. He salts [the meal-offering-handful] and puts it on the altar fires:

- B. For it is written, “And every offering of your meal-offering you shall season with salt” (Lev. 2:13).

II.13. A. When the part that is offered has been offered up, the residue may be eaten:

- B. *How do we know?*
- C. As it is written, “And the priest shall burn the memorial of it (Lev. 2:16), and it is written, “And that which is left of the meal offering shall belong to Aaron and his sons” (Lev. 2:10).

II.14. A. When the handful has been offered up:

- B. *This is interpreted by one authority in his way, and by another authority in his way.*
- C. *For it has been said:* As to him who offers up the handful of the meal-offering, at what point does that act render the residue of the meal-offering permitted for eating [by the priests]?
- D. R. Hanina said, “When the fire covers [all of] it.”
- E. R. Yohanan said, “When the fire catches over the greater part of it.”

II.15. A. The priests are permitted to put into the residue of the meal-offerings wine, olive-oil, and honey:

- B. *What is the scriptural basis?*
- C. Scripture has stated, “By reason of the anointing” (Num. 18: 8) [at the consecration of priest and king]:
- D. This is as a mark of importance, just as kings eat their food [properly seasoned, so the priests do so].

II.16. A. But they are prohibited from allowing it to ferment:

- B. For it is written, “It shall not be baked with leaven, their portion” (Lev. 6:10).
- C. Said R. Simeon b. Laqish, “Even [the priests’] portion may not be baked with leaven.”

The systematic exposition of the Tannaite formulation has been completed, and we turn to the next clause of the Mishnah-paragraph.

III.1 A. All meal-offerings [require oil and frankincense] [M. 2:1D]:

- B. Do all meal-offerings require oil and frankincense?
- C. *Lo, there is the meal-offering brought by a sinner, concerning which the All-Merciful has said,* “He shall not put oil on it nor put frankincense on it” (Lev. 5:11).

- D. *This is the meaning of the passage:* All meal-offerings require oil and frankincense and derive from wheat and derive from sifted flour, but as to the meal-offering brought by a sinner, even though it does not require oil and frankincense, it derives from wheat and derives from sifted flour.
- E. As to the meal-offering of the first sheaf [omer], even though it too derives from barley, it would derive from sifted flour. But this one derives from unsifted flour.
- F. But [furthermore] this one does not require oil or frankincense, and it derives from barley, and it derives from unsifted flour.

The reason for the rule is now specified: a moral conclusion may be drawn.

- G. *It has been taught on Tannaite authority:*
- H. Said R. Simeon, "In strict logic the meal-offering brought by a sinner should require oil and frankincense, so that the sinner should not profit [by being exempted from these additional costs]."
- I. "Why then does it not require them? So that the offering of a sinner should not be beautifully adorned."
- J. "In strict logic the sin-offering of fat to be burned on the altar should require drink-offerings, so that the sinner should not profit [by being exempted from an expense]."
- K. "Why then does it not require them? So that his offering should not be beautifully adorned."
- L. But that is not the case with the sin-offering of one afflicted by the skin-disease [of Lev. 13-14] and the guilt-offering [of such a person].
- M. They do require drink-offerings, because they do not come on account of sin.
- N. *Is that the case?* And has not R. Samuel bar Nahman said R. Jonathan [said], "The skin-ailment comes on seven counts [of sin]."
- O. *But in such a case [as that of the skin-ailment] the sinner has made atonement through his suffering the skin-ailment.*
- P. *When he brings an offering, it is to permit him to participate in [eating] Holy Things, [and so they are purification-offerings and not sin-offerings at all].*
- Q. *But what about the following:*
- R. The sin-offering of a Nazirite [brought at the end of his spell] should require drink-offerings, because it does not come on account of sin.
- S. *The authority at hand accords with the view of R. Eleazar Haqqappar, who said, "One who takes the oath of a Nazirite also is a sinner."*

IV.1 A. Rabban Gamaliel says, "Just as..." etc. [M. 2:1J]:

- B. *It has been taught on Tannaite authority:*
- C. Said Rabban Gamaliel to sages, "Scribes, allow me to interpret the matter in the manner of the pearl-allegory [which links the substance of the law to the symbolism of the rite]."
- D. **[15B]** *For he had heard the matter interpreted by R. Meir, who said, "She fed [her lover] from the daintiest things of the world, therefore her offering is food for a cow."*
- E. They said to him, "That works all right for a rich woman. But what is there to say about a poor woman?"

- F. Rather: **Just as she acted like a cow, so her offering is food for a cow [M. 2:1J].**

The Talmud works its way through the Mishnah at hand. What happens in-between is a systematic exegesis of the passage of Tosefta cited for the purposes of Mishnah-exegesis. Clearly, we deal with a ready-made construction, II:2-16, inserted whole because of the pertinence of one of the parts — a standard principle of organization in this Talmud. The work on the Tosefta-passages follows exactly the same modes of exegesis and exposition as that on the Mishnah. The version of Tosefta before us conforms to the text in our Talmud. The version of Tosefta now in the Tosefta as we have it, by contrast, exhibits some variations. But, since the Talmud discusses the version as it is printed here, it is clear that the framers of the Talmud had before them a slightly different wording for the passage at hand. It does not seem to me possible that the wording of the Tosefta has been revised to accommodate the Talmud's discussion; the Talmud's framers, rather, worked out the passage on the basis of an available version of the Tosefta-passages. When I considered the equivalent problem in Yerushalmi, I noted numerous passages at which the Talmud of the Land of Israel printed one version of the Tosefta but commented on a slightly different version, specifically the version as it is now printed in, and as, the Tosefta. None of this seems to me to present us with sharply variant versions of a given teaching; usually the differences are trivial and present matters of mere detail. From our present perspective, what is more interesting is how closely the Talmud adheres to the program of the Mishnah (together with its Tannaite amplification in the Tosefta).

2:2

- A. **He [the husband] would bring a clay bowl and put in it a half-log of water from the laver.**
- B. **R. Judah says, "A quarter-log."**
- (C. **As he [Judah] calls for less writing, so he calls for less water [M. 2:3H].)**
- D. **And he [the priest] goes into the hekhal and turns to his right.**
- E. **Now there was a place, an amah by an amah, with a marble flagstone, and a ring was attached to it.**
- F. **And when he raised it [the stone], he took the dirt from under it and put it [into the bowl of water],**
- G. **sufficient to be visible on the water,**
- H. **since it says, "And of the dust that is on the floor of the tabernacle the priest shall take and put it into the water" (Num. 5:17).**

We begin by defining the character of the bowl required by the Mishnah's law.

- I.1** A. **[He would bring a clay bowl:]** *It has been taught on Tannaite authority: "A new clay bowl,"* the words of R. Ishmael.
- B. *What is the Scriptural basis for the position of R. Ishmael?*
- C. He derives the rule from the use of the word "utensil" in the case both of the [purification of the person afflicted with] the skin-ailment [and the present context].

- D. Just as, in that latter case, the requirement is for a new clay utensil, so here the requirement is for a new clay utensil.
- E. *And whence do we know that fact in the cited instance?*
- F. As it is written, “And the priest shall command to kill one of the birds in an earthen vessel over running water” (Lev. 14: 5).
- G. Just as it is running water with which no extraneous act of labor [work] has been done, so it must be a utensil with which no work of has been done. [The object must have been preserved uniquely for the present purpose.]
- H. May we further argue, just as in that other setting, we require running water, so here too we should require running water?
- I. *That indeed is the view of R. Ishmael.*
- J. For R. Yohanan said, “As to the water of the laver [used to make up the bitter water], R. Ishmael says, ‘It must be spring water.’
- K. “And sages say, ‘It may come from any sort of water.’”
- L. [But if we do not wish to invoke Ishmael’s view on running water or the bitter-water, we may distinguish the two cases — the purification rite of the one afflicted with the skin-ailment, and the mixture of dust and water, as follows:] *One may raise the following question of the proposed analogy:* In the case of the one afflicted with the skin-ailment, what differentiates the case of the mixture [of running water] is that there is the requirement of cedar wood, hyssop, and red thread [none of which is required for the bitter-water-mixture]. [So there is no analogy after all, vs. H-I.]
- M. Said Rabbah “Said Scripture: ‘An earthen utensil’ (Num. 5:17). That is, in a utensil to which I made previous reference.” [Cohen, p. 81, n. 9: “In the law of the leper (that vessel had been referred to). Hence it is established that a new vessel is also necessary in the ceremony of the water of bitterness.”] [This proof obviates the need to draw the exegetical analogy proposed at C.]

We proceed to yet another clarification of the character of the clay utensil to which the Mishnah has made reference.

- I.2.** A. Said Raba, “[The rule of the Mishnah about the clay bowl] has been taught only with regard to one, the outside of which has not been blackened. But if the outside of the utensil is blackened [by smoke], it is not fit.
- B. *“What is the reason for such a view? It is to be comparable to the water. Just as the water must be such that its basic appearance has not been wholly altered, so the utensil must be such that its appearance has not been wholly altered.”*
- C. *Raba asked, “If the outside surface of the utensil had been blackened, and one put the utensil back into the kiln, so that the surface was whitened, what is the law?*
- D. *“Do we rule that, since the utensil has been rejected, it is permanently rejected?*
- E. *“Or perhaps, since it has been restored, is it regarded as restored [and so suitable]?”*
- F. Come and hear [a relevant parable]: R. Eleazar says, “Cedar wood, hyssop, and scarlet thread, which one twisted to place in his bundle on his back, are unfit.”
- G. *Now lo, in that case, he afterward goes and smooths them out [and so makes them usable again, yet they remain unusable, so too here].*

- H. *In that case [to differentiate between the cases of C and F], some of the materials peeled off [so they become unfit on that account, since they are not fully restored to their former condition].*

II.1 A. He goes into the hekhal and turns to his right [M. 2:2D]:

- B. *What is the operative consideration?*
C. *A master has stated, "Any act of turning which you carry out [in the Temple] may be only to the right."*

III.1 A. Now there was a place, a cubit by a cubit, etc. [M. 2:2E]:

- B. *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:*
C. "And of the dust that is on the floor of the tabernacle" (Num. 5:17)
D. Is it possible to suppose that one may prepare the dirt outside and bring it in?
E. Scripture says, "On the floor of the tabernacle."
F. If it is to come from the floor of the tabernacle, is it possible to suppose that one should dig it up with shovels?
G. Scripture says, "...that is..."
H. How so? If there is dirt there, take it. If there is not any dirt there, put some there [and then use it].
I. *It has been taught further in a Tannaite teaching:*
J. "And of the dust that is on the floor of the tabernacle" (Num. 5:17):
K. This teaches that he prepares the dirt outside the tabernacle and brings it in [vs. D-E].
L. "On the floor of the tabernacle":
M. Isi ben Judah says, "This serves to encompass the ground [16A] of the tabernacles at Shiloh, Nob and Gibeon, as well as the house of the ages [the Temple of Jerusalem]."
N. Isi b. Menahem says, "It is not necessary [to prove that the dirt of the Jerusalem temple will serve]. Now if in the case of an uncleanness of a minor order, Scripture has not made a distinction between [temporary tabernacles and the permanent Temple], in the case of the uncleanness of a married woman [which is most severe], is it not an argument *a fortiori* [that no such a distinction would be called for]?"
O. "If so, then why does Scripture state, 'On the floor of the tabernacle'?"
P. "This teaches that one should not take the dirt from its pile [but only from dirt scattered on the floor]."

III.2. A. The following question was raised:

- B. If there is no dirt there [in the tabernacle], what is the law about putting in ashes instead?
C. *From the viewpoint of the house of Shammai the question is null, for they take the position that we do not find ashes called dirt. [Hence the one is not equivalent to the other.]*
D. *But from the viewpoint of the house of Hillel, who do maintain that we find ashes called dirt, what is the law?*

- E. [May we propose that], even though it may be called dirt, in the present case, “on the ground of the tabernacle” is what is written [and hence we may not substitute ashes for dirt]?
- F. *Or perhaps this reference to “the ground of the tabernacle” accords with the position of Isi b. Judah and of Isi b. Menahem, [who would regard it as suitable, since the meaning of Scripture is not such as to necessitate dirt from the floor of the tabernacle in particular]?*
- G. *Come and take note [of the following relevant information]:*
- H. Said R. Yohanan in the name of R. Ishmael, “In three contexts the law crushes a verse of Scripture under heel [in the translation of Cohen].
- I. “The Torah has said, ‘With dirt’ (Lev. 17:13) while the decided law permits [blood of a slaughtered beast to be covered up] with anything.
- J. “The Torah has said, ‘With no razor’ (Num. 6: 5) [may a Nazirite shave during his spell], while the law does not permit shaving with any sort of instrument at all [the prohibition is not only of a razor].
- K. “The Torah has said, ‘A book’ (Deu. 24: 1), while the law permits [the writ of divorce to take any form whatsoever, and does not require only the formal writ specified at Deu. 24: 1].”
- L. *Now if it were [in fact the case that ashes may substitute for the dirt,] then in the present context, such an exception should come into consideration [as something acceptable for mixing with the water. Thus the Torah specified dirt, but the law permits ashes as well. So the proposal of E would appear to be sound.]*
- M. *The Tannaite authority [cited by Yohanan] listed some items and left out others.*
- N. *And what evidence is there that he left out other items, [along with the one under discussion here]?*
- O. *He also omitted reference to the [purification rite of the one afflicted by] the skin-disease.*
- P. *For it has been taught on Tannaite authority:*
- Q. “And it shall come to pass on the seventh day that he shall shave all his hair” (Lev. 14: 9). That statement serves as a generalization.
- R. “Off his head, his beard, and his eyebrows” (Lev. 14: 9). This statement constitutes a particularization.
- S. “Even all his hair he shall shave off” (Lev. 14: 9). Here we have yet another generalization.
- T. We therefore have a generalization, followed by a particularization, followed by yet another generalization. You may therefore draw conclusion [about what is stated generally] from what is specified in particular.
- U. Just as in the case of the particularizations you find that what is made explicit is a place on the body on which there is a collection of hair which is visible, so every place on the body on which there is a collection of hair that is visible [is subject to the law].
- V. *What then is encompassed [by this mode of formulation]? It is the hair of the private parts [so Cohen]. What is excluded? Excluded is the hair of*

the arm pits [which is not visible] and of the body in general [which is not collected together].

W. *But the decided law is that one shaves the body as smooth as a pumpkin [including the specified excluded places].*

X. *For we have learned: **He came to shave the leper. He passed a razor over all of his flesh [M. Neg. 14:2C-D]. And, later in the same passage, it is taught on Tannaite authority: **On the seventh day he shaves a second time as in the manner of the first act of shaving [M. 14:3A].*****

Y. *[Rejecting the view that the case at hand has been omitted from Yohanan's catalogue,] said R. Nahman bar Isaac, "When we take into account cases in which the decided law crushes a verse of Scripture under heel, [at hand are instances where the law is of scriptural origin], while the present instance is one which rests upon authority of rabbis [and not of Scripture. Hence the omission is appropriate, and the original list is complete]."*

Z. *R. Papa said, "When we take into account cases in which the decided law crushes a verse of Scripture under heel, at hand are cases in which the decided law crushes a scriptural verse's formulation and reverses it, but here the formulation crushes the biblical version under heel while then adding to it." [The upshot is the same as with Nahman bar Isaac's explanation.]*

AA. *R. Ashi said, "In accord with the principle of which authority is the Tannaite teaching [about shaving only visible parts of the body]? It is R. Ishmael, who effects exegesis along the lines of generalizing statements limited by particularizing ones [as we saw above]. **[16B]** [But the view that the person afflicted by the skin-disease must be shaved] like a pumpkin accords with R. Aqiba, who interprets [strings of language such as we have at hand] in terms of amplifications and exclusions."*

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

CC. *"And it shall be on the seventh day that he shall shave all his hair" (Lev. 14: 9). This is an encompassing statement.*

DD. *"His head, his beard, and his eyebrows" serves as a limitation of the former.*

EE. *"All his hair he shall shave off" once again serves to encompass.*

FF. *We therefore have the case of an encompassing, a limiting, and an encompassing statement. The net effect is to encompass the entirety [of what is subject to discussion].*

GG. *What then is subject to inclusion? The formulation of Scripture serves to include the whole of the body.*

HH. *What then has been subject to exclusion?*

II. *Excluded is [only] the hair in the nose.*

JJ. *[In any event], what is the final thinking on the issue at hand [concerning use of ashes instead of dirt]?*

KK. *Come and take note that R. Huna bar Ashi said Rab said, "If there is no dirt there, one brings decayed vegetable matter and sanctifies it [for the present purpose]."*

LL. *But that hardly serves, for decayed vegetable matter falls into the classification of vegetable, and it may be called dirt, but not ashes.*

IV.1 A. Sufficient to be visible on the water [M. 2:2G]:

- B. *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:*
- C. **Three substances have to be visible: the dirt used for the water drunk by the accused wife, the ashes of the red cow used for mixing with the water of purification, and the spit of the levirate wife at the rite of removing the shoe [T. Sot. 1:8A-D].**
- D. In the name of R. Ishmael they said, “Also the blood of the bird [used in the purification-rite of the one afflicted with the skin-disease, Lev. 14: 1ff.]”
- E. *What is the scriptural basis for R. Ishmael’s view?*
- F. It is written, “And he shall dip them in the blood of the bird” (Lev. 14: 6).
- G. *In this regard it has been taught on Tannaite authority:*
- H. “In the blood” (Lev. 14: 6). Is it possible that one must dip [the hyssop and scarlet thread] in the blood but not in the water?
- I. Scripture says, “...over the running water” (Lev. 14: 6).
- J. If it must be in the water, is it possible that it need not be in the blood?
- K. Scripture says, “In the blood.”
- L. How so? [The priest] brings sufficient water so that the blood of the bird will be visible. And how much is that? It is a quarter-log.
- M. *And as to rabbis [who differ with Ishmael’s view, D]? That verse is needed to make its own point [and not to make the additional point that the blood of the bird must be visible in the water]. This [in rabbis’ view] is the sense of the passage as the All-Merciful has stated it “Dip in blood and in water.”*
- N. *And R. Ishmael? [How does he derive that simple point]? If that were the case, the All-Merciful should have written, “And he will dip in them” [without further specification]. Why then say more specifically, “In the blood and in the water”? It serves the purpose of indicating that the blood must be visible.*
- O. *And rabbis? If the All-Merciful had written, “And he will dip in them,” I should have reached the false conclusion that the priest dips the hyssop in this [the water] by itself and in that [the blood] by itself. By writing, “In the blood and in the water],” the All-Merciful has indicated that one has to make a mixture of the two.*
- P. *And R. Ishmael? The rule that one has to make a mixture of the two derives from a different verse of Scripture altogether. It is written, “And he shall kill one of the birds in a clay utensil over running water” (Lev. 14: 5). [That indicates that the blood and water are to be mixed.]*
- Q. *And rabbis? If it were necessary to derive proof from that verse’s statement, I should have reached the conclusion that the priest should slaughter the bird near a utensil and press the jugular vein and receive the blood in yet another utensil. So we are informed [that the blood and water must be mixed together in a single utensil only by the verse as we have read it.]*

IV.2. A. R. Jeremiah asked R. Zira, “What is the law if the bird was so large that its blood obscured the water, or so small that the water obscured the blood?”

- B. *He said to him, “Did I not tell you not to go beyond the decided law? The rabbis made their estimate on the basis of the size of the wild bird. There is none so large that the flow of blood will obscure the water or so small that the water will obscure the blood.”*

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

- B. **If one put in the ash [of the red cow, for making a mixture of purification-water] and only afterward put in the water, it is unfit. But R. Simeon declares it fit [T. Par. 6:3C-D].**
- C. *What is the scriptural basis for the view of R. Simeon?*
- D. It is written, “And for the unclean they shall take of the dirt of the burning of the purification-offering” (Num. 19:17).
- E. *And it has been taught on Tannaite authority:*
- F. Said R. Simeon, “Now is it dirt? And is it not ashes? The Scripture thus has used an unusual formulation [calling ashes dirt], so as to provide, by implication, the occasion to derive from the case at hand an argument by analogy, specifically: Here ‘dirt’ is stated, and elsewhere, ‘dirt’ is stated [in regard to the rite of the accused wife]. Just as in that later case, ‘dirt’ is put into the water, so in the present case, ‘dirt’ is put into the water [and that is the correct procedure for mixing ash into water for making purification-water].
- G. “Just as in the present case, however, if one put the dirt into the water, the mixture is valid, so in that other case, if one put dirt into the water [to be drunk by the accused wife], it is a valid mixture.”
- H. And in that other case [in the case of the red cow], [how do we know that that is the rule]?
- I. *There are two verses of Scripture at hand. It is written, “...on it...” [running water shall be put on it] (Num. 5:17). Therefore the ashes come first [into the vessel, the water added afterward to make the mixture for the accused wife].*
- J. And it is written, “Running water into the utensil” (Lev. 14: 6). So the water is put into the utensil first.
- K. How so? If one wanted, he puts this in first, and if he wanted, he puts in that, [and the order does not matter].
- L. *And rabbis?* “In a utensil” — specifically [the water comes first]. “On it” — indicating that one must make a mixture.
- M. *But may I say that “in it” means specifically [that the water must be poured onto the ashes]; “into a vessel” means that the water must flow directly from the spring into the utensil? [The water must not be poured from one utensil into another].*
- N. Just as we find in all other contexts that that which renders something valid must be on top, so in the present case, that which renders the whole valid must be on top. [In the case of the dirt and water mixture for the accused wife, and in the case of the blood and water mixture for the leper, the dirt and the blood must go on top, so Num. 5:17, Lev. 14:6. Here too, the ashes of the red cow must go on top.]

The order of the Talmud corresponds to that of the Mishnah, but the intent of the units of discourse, particular at the end, is far broader than mere Mishnah-exegesis. What we have, rather, is a sophisticated effort to join together a number of parallel cases in a systematic account of how the laws for each case, and the scriptural foundations for those laws, intertwine and contribute to a common corpus of rules governing the entire lot. Unit I signals what is to follow, since it introduces the three principal themes of the Talmud as a whole, namely, bitter water given to the accused wife, the water-blood mixture used for the purification-rite for the one afflicted with the skin-disease of Lev. 13-14, and the mixture of the ashes of a red cow and water used for purification from corpse-uncleanness. Perhaps the larger thesis is that the rite at hand, that of the accused wife, constitutes a purification-rite just as much as do the others, since the language of “uncleanness” figures here as much as elsewhere. Then the whole, not merely the parts, constitutes a substantial statement on the law at hand. In any event the organization of the Talmud in accord with the Mishnah’s clauses in the present instance belies the larger conception of the framer of the whole, which is to speak to the theme, not solely to the details.

2:3

- A. [17A] He came to write the scroll.
- B. From what passage [in Scripture] did he write?
- C. From “If no man has lain with thee... but if thou hast gone aside with another instead of thy husband...” (Num. 5:19f.).
- D. But he does not write, “And the priest shall cause the woman to swear” (Num. 5:21).
- E. And he writes, “The Lord make thee a curse and an oath among thy people... and this water that causeth the curse shall go into thy bowels and make thy belly to swell and thy thigh to fall away.”
- F. But he does not write, “And the woman shall say, Amen, Amen!”
- G. R. Yosé says, “He made no break.”
- H. R. Judah says, “He writes, in fact, only, The Lord make thee a curse and an oath... and this water that causeth the curse shall go into thy bowels...”
- I. “And he did not write, ‘And the woman shall say, Amen, Amen!’”

I.1. A. In what matter do [the authorities of C-F, G-H] dispute?

- B. *Their dispute concerns the following verse of Scripture: “And the priest shall write these curses in a scroll.”*
- C. *R. Meir [the authority behind the anonymous statements C-F] takes the view that, when the verse says, “curses,” it indicates that we include passages which really are curses [that is, Num. 5:20]. When it says “these curses,” it serves to encompass curses that come on account of blessings [“e.g., If no man has lain with you... be free...” means that “if you have gone aside, do not be free...”]. When, further, it says, “these,” it serves to exclude curses that are listed in the book of Deuteronomy. When it adds the definite article to the word “these,” it further eliminates the instructions and responses [the instructions of the priest,*

the responses of] Amen [made by the woman]. [None of these items is to be written in the scroll.]

- D. *R. Yosé concurs with matters just as they have been stated. But he furthermore interprets the inclusion of the accusative particle to encompass the instructions [of the priest] and the acceptances [through saying Amen] of the woman]. [Those items are to be written.]*
- E. *R. Meir [for his part] does not interpret meanings to be assigned to the appearance of the accusative particle.*
- F. *R. Judah interprets [the various traits of the formulation at hand] in such wise that they limit [the matter of what is to be written]. Thus “curses” speaks of passages which really are curses. “The curses” excludes curses that result from blessings. “These” excludes the curses in Deuteronomy. The addition of the definite article to “these” excludes the [priest’s] instructions and [the woman’s] responses.*
- G. *Now why is it that R. Meir interprets the addition of the definite article to encompass [things omitted], on the one hand, and at the same time interprets the addition of the definite article to exclude [things included], on the other. [When the definite article appears with “curses” it amplifies, and when it occurs with “these” it limits.]*
- H. *When the definite article occurs with a phrase meant to encompass [a number of unstated matters], it serves to encompass them. But when it appears with a phrase meant to limit matters, it bears an exclusionary meaning.*
- I. *But does R. Meir then not concur that, when we have a negative, it bears affirmative implications? [Cohen: “How then does he consider verse 20 (Num. 5:20) to imply a curse?”]*
- J. *R. Tanhum said, “It is written, ‘Be free,’ (Num. 5:19).” [Cohen, p. 89, n. 2: “Since the word is defectively spelled, without the mater lectionis, and the Hebrew letter he closely resembles the letter heth, it might be taken to mean ‘be strangled,’ and so an imprecation is mentioned, and it has not to be deduced as a corollary.”]*

The Role of Merit [Zekhut] in Rites of the Torah

- I.2.** A. *R. Aqiba expounded, “When a man and woman have merit, the Presence of God is among them. When they do not have merit, [the word for man loses a letter and so turns into the word for] fire, [which] consumes them.”*
- B. *Said Raba, “That [fire] which comes from the woman is more severe than that which comes from the man. How so? In the case of the woman, [the letters for fire] are consecutive, but not for the man. [Since the first two letters for the word of woman, by themselves, spell fire, the rest follows.]”*
- C. *Said Raba, “Why is it that the Torah has said to bring dirt for the accused wife? Because if she merits [a decree of innocence, surviving the ordeal], a son will come forth from her like Abraham, our father, concerning whom it is written, ‘Dirt and ashes’ (Gen. 18:27). If she does not emerge meritorious, she will return to the dirt.”*

- D. Raba interpreted, "On account of the merit of Abraham, our father, who said, 'And I am dirt and ashes' (Gen. 18:27), his children gained the merit of two religious duties: the ashes of the red cow, and the dirt used for the accused wife."
- E. *But is there not also the matter of the dirt used for covering up the blood [of a beast one has slaughtered]?*
- F. *That sort of dirt is used only for the preparation of the doing of a religious duty [but itself does not constitute dirt through which a religious duty is carried out] and there is no advantage [to the one who does it].* [Cohen, p. 89, n. 9: "Whereas the dust in the ceremony of the ordeal helps to restore the confidence of a husband in his wife or punishes immorality and the ashes of the red heifer serve to cleanse the unclean."]
- G. Raba expounded, "On account of the merit of Abraham, our father, who said, 'I will not take a thread nor a shoe-latchet' (Gen. 14:23), his children had the merit of two religious duties [involving a thread], the thread of blue [used in the show-fringes] and the strap of the phylacteries."
- H. *Now to be sure, the strap of the phylacteries [poses no problem], for it is written, "And all the peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the Lord" (Deu. 28:10). In this connection it has been taught on Tannaite authority: R. Eliezer the Great says, "This refers to the phylactery used on the head."*
- I. *But what is the pertinence of the thread of blue [of the show-fringes]?*
- J. *It is as has been taught on Tannaite authority: R. Meir would say, "Why was blue singled out among all colors? It is because blue is similar to the color of the sea. The sea is similar to the color of the firmament. The firmament is similar to the color of the throne of glory."*
- K. "As it is said, 'And they saw the God of Israel, and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and as it were the very heaven for clearness' (Exo. 24:10), and it is written, 'The likeness of the throne as the appearance of a sapphire stone' (Eze. 1:26)."

I:1 provides a scriptural basis for the dispute at M.2:3C-F, G, and H-I. I assume that I:2 is inserted because of C, D. That statement is relevant only in a very general way to the passage at hand.

2:4

- A. **He writes (1) neither on a tablet, (2) nor on papyrus, (3) nor on [17B] unprepared hide, but only on [parchment] scroll,**
- B. **since it is written, In a book (Num. 5:23).**
- C. **And he writes (1) neither with gum, (2) nor with coppera, (3) nor with anything which makes a lasting impression [on the writing-material], but only with ink,**
- D. **since it is written, And he will blot it out—**
- E. **writing which can be blotted out.**

The following composition stands on its own and has no specific bearing on the statements of the Mishnah-paragraph but addresses the general theme of rules for the writing of the scroll.

- I.1.** A. Said Raba, “A scroll for an accused wife[’s ordeal] which one wrote by night is unfit.
- B. *“What is the scriptural basis for that view? We compare the meaning of the word, ‘Torah,’ as it occurs in two settings.*
- C. *“Here it is written, ‘And the priest shall carry out on her all of this Torah’ (Num. 5:30).*
- D. *“And elsewhere it is written, ‘In accord with the Torah which they shall teach you and in accord with the judgment’ (Deu. 17:11).*
- E. *“Just as ‘judgment’ must be laid down by day, so the scroll for the accused wife must be prepared by day.*
- F. *“If one wrote it backward [not in its proper order] it is not valid.*
- G. *“For it is written, ‘And he shall write these curses’ (Num. 5:23) — just as they are written down [in the text of Scripture itself].*
- H. *“If one wrote it before the woman took upon her the oath [which she takes], it is invalid.*
- I. *“For it is written first, ‘And he shall impose an oath on her,’ and only then it is written, ‘He shall write’ (Num. 5:19, 23).*
- J. *“If one wrote it as a letter, it is invalid. [A letter is written freehand, without tracing lines to provide for an even script].*
- K. *“‘In a scroll’ is what the All-Merciful has said.*
- L. **[18A]** *“If one wrote it on two folios, it is invalid.*
- M. *“One ‘scroll’ is what the All-Merciful has said, and not two or three scrolls.*
- N. *“If one wrote one letter and blotted out one letter and repeated the process, it is invalid,*
- O. *“as it is written, ‘And the priest shall carry out upon her all of this Torah’ (Num. 5:30).”*

Having laid out the facts, we proceed to interstitial problems, with special attention to the principle, that the scroll must be written for the particular occasion.

- I.2.** A. *Raba raised the following question: “[If] one wrote out two scrolls, for the ordeal of two accused wives, but then blotted them out in a single cup [of water], what is the law?*
- B. *“Is it that we require the writing of the scroll for the sake of a given woman [and not for two or more], and that we have?*
- C. *“Or perhaps do we require in addition that the blotting out be for the sake of a given woman?*
- D. *“And if, further, you wish to rule that we require the blotting out for the sake of a given woman, if one indeed blotted out the two scrolls in two separate cups of water, but then went and mixed the contents of the two cups together, what is the law?*
- E. *“Is it that we require blotting out for the sake of a given woman, and that we have?*
- F. *“Or perhaps, in the present case, since the woman has not drunk the water that belongs to her in particular, [it is invalid].*

- G. *"[If, moving onward] we rule that the woman has not drunk the water that was prepared for her in particular, then if the priest then went and divided up the cup of water into two, what is the law?"*
- H. *"Do we maintain that there is such a thing as retrospective differentiation [Cohen] or not?"*
- I. *The questions stand over.*

- I.3.** A. *Raba raised the following question: "What is the law governing the administration of the drink through a straw or a tube?"*
- B. *"Is this regarded as the usual way of drinking or not?"*
- C. *The question stands over.*

- I.4.** A. R. Ashi raised the following question: *"If part of the water was poured out and some remained, what is the law?"*
- E. *The question stands over.*

- I.5.** A. Said R. Zira said Rab, *"As to the two oaths that are noted in the passage dealing with the accused wife, what [is their place]? [Reference is made to Num. 5:19, 21.]"*
- B. *"One comes prior to the blotting out of the scroll, and one after the blotting out of the scroll."*
- C. *[To this thesis] Raba objected, "Both of them are prior to the blotting out of the scroll in the Scriptural [account of the matter]."*
- D. Rather, said Raba, *"One covers the oath that is accompanied by a curse, and the other covers the oath that is not accompanied by a curse."*
- E. *What is the character of the oath that is accompanied by a curse?*
- F. Said R. Amram said Rab, *"I impose a curse on you that you have not been made unclean, so that, if you have been made unclean, [the curse] will come upon you."*
- G. *[That formulation is inappropriate,] said Raba, "[for in it] the curse stands by itself and the oath by itself."*
- H. Rather, said Raba, *"I impose an oath on you so that, if you have been made unclean, [the curse] will be realized in you."*
- I. *Said R. Ashi, "[In this formulation] there is a curse but no oath."*
- J. Rather, said R. Ashi, *"I impose an oath on you that you have not been made unclean, and if you have been made unclean, may [the curse] come upon you."*

I:1 adds to the rules supplied in M. 2:4 on the writing of the scroll. But no one pays close attention to the text of the Mishnah-paragraph itself. So we have a complement to the topic introduced by the Mishnah, but no exegesis of the Mishnah. No. 2 provides a discursive expansion on the established theme, and No. 5 moves to the limits of that theme. The whole clearly is the composition of a trend originating in the circle of Raba.

2:5-6

- A.** **To what does she say, Amen, Amen?**
- B.** **(1) "Amen to the curse" [Num. 5:21], (2) "Amen to the oath" [Num. 5:19].**

- C. (3) “Amen that it was not with this particular man” (4) “Amen that it was with no other man.”
- D. (5) “Amen that I have not gone aside while betrothed, married, [18B] awaiting Levirate marriage, or wholly taken in Levirate marriage.”
- E. (6) “Amen that I was not made unclean, and if I was made unclean, may it [the bitter water] enter into me.”
- F. R. Meir says, “‘Amen that I was not made unclean, Amen that I shall not be made unclean.’” — M. 2:5
- A. All concur that he [the husband] may make no stipulation with her about anything which happened before she was betrothed or after she may be divorced.
- B. [If after she was put away], she went aside with some other man and became unclean, and afterward he [the first husband] took her back, he makes no stipulation with her [concerning such an event].
- C. This is the general principle: Concerning any situation in which she may have sexual relations in such wise as not to be prohibited [to her husband], he [the husband] may make no stipulation whatsoever with her. — M. 2:6

We raise a theoretical problem not deriving from our Mishnah-paragraph. This is a free-standing theoretical discussion, not an effort at Mishnah-clarification. The composition is located here because our Mishnah-paragraph contributes important facts to the solution of the problem.

- I.1. A. Said R. Hamnuna, “A woman awaiting Levirate marriage who committed an act of fornication [with some other man] is forbidden to enter into a consummated marriage with her Levir.
- B. *“On what basis? Because it is taught in the Mishnah-passage at hand: .awaiting Levirate marriage or wholly taken in Levirate marriage [M. 2:5D].*
- C. *“Now, if you say that she is forbidden, on that account [the husband] may make a stipulation [in the oath] in this regard [just as the cited passage states].*
- D. *“But if you maintain that she is not forbidden [to marry the Levir], how can the husband make such a stipulation with her?”*
- E. *“And we have learned in the Mishnah passage at hand: **This is the general principle: Concerning any situation in which she may have sexual relations in such wise as not to be prohibited to her husband, the husband may make no condition whatsoever with her [M. 2:6C].** [Reasoning backward, it follows that, because the Levir may make such a stipulation, in the case described at A, the woman may not enter into Levirate marriage.]”*
- F. *In the West [in the Land of Israel] authorities rule, “The law is not in accord with R. Hamnuna.”*
- G. *But in accord with what authority is the Mishnah-passage framed when it includes reference to the woman awaiting Levirate marriage and the woman who is now in a consummated Levirate marriage?*
- H. *It accords with R. Aqiba, who has said, “An act of sanctification [betrothal] does not take effect in the case of those who, by marriage, violate a negative commandment.” [Aqiba] treats the woman [who has committed an act of fornication] as one who stands in an incestuous relationship to the Levir [Cohen,*

p. 94, n. 3: “and therefore forbidden to her brother-in-law just as a wife who misconducted herself is forbidden to her husband.”] [The law does not accord with Aqiba, so it also cannot accord with Hamnuna.]

II.1 A. [Supply: **To what does she say, Amen, Amen? (1) “Amen to the curse” [Num. 5:21], “Amen to the oath” [Num. 5:19]. “Amen that it was not with this particular man” (4) “Amen that it was with no other man.” “Amen that I have not gone aside while betrothed, married, awaiting Levirate marriage, or wholly taken in Levirate marriage.” “Amen that I was not made unclean, and if I was made unclean, may it [the bitter water] enter into me.”]** *R. Jeremiah raised the following question:*

- B. “May a man make a stipulation concerning the woman’s conduct during his first marriage to her [when he was married to her, divorced her, and then remarried to her]?”
- C. “May he make a stipulation concerning her conduct with his brother [while the woman was married to the brother, before he took her as his levirate wife after his brother died childless]?”
- D. Come and note the following: **This is the general principle: Concerning any situation in which she may have sexual relations in such wise as not to be prohibited to her husband, the husband may make no condition whatsoever with her [M. 2:6C].**
- E. *Accordingly, if she is forbidden to him [on account of such an action] he may stipulate. That proves it.* [In both cases she would be prohibited to him if she had done what he claimed. The stipulation therefore applies. Had she committed adultery during the first marriage, or during the marriage to the brother, she could not have remained wed to him. The stipulation applies.]

III.1 A. *R. Meir says, “Amen that I was not made unclean, etc.” [M. 2:5F]:*

- B. *It was taught on Tannaite authority: It is not that when R. Meir has said, “[She says,] ‘Amen that I shall not be made unclean,’” the result is that, if she should become unclean, the water will test her as if from the present moment.*
- C. **Rather, when she [later on] shall become unclean, the water [then] will be stirred up and will test her [even ten years later, as of that time]. [Cf. T. *Sot.* 2:2A-D].**

IV.1 A. [Supply: **All concur that the husband may make no condition with her about anything which happened before she was betrothed or after she may be divorced. If after she was put away, she went aside with some other man and became unclean, and afterward the first husband took her back, he makes no stipulation with her concerning such an event:]** *R. Ashi raised the following question:*

- B. “What is the law as to a man’s making a stipulation concerning a later marriage [with her]? [May he stipulate that, should he divorce her and then remarry her, the water will test alleged unfaithfulness committed during the remarriage?]”
- C. *“Do we reason that, here and now, at any rate, she would not be forbidden to him [so such a stipulation does not apply]?”*
- D. *“Or perhaps there really may be a case in which he will divorce her and then go and remarry her?”*

- E. *Come and note [the following datum, which settles the question:] All concur that the husband may make no condition with her about anything which happened before she was betrothed or after she may be divorced. If after she was put away, she went aside with some other man and became unclean, and afterward the first husband took her back, he makes no stipulation with her concerning such an event [M. 2:6A-B].*
- F. *Lo, if he should remarry her and she should become unclean, in such a case he may make a stipulation. That proves [that such a stipulation may apply even now, as D suggests.]*

IV.2. A. *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority: “This is the Torah of jealousies” (Num. 5:29).*

- B. *[Use of Torah of and the plural] teaches that a woman may drink once and then a second time.*
- C. *R. Judah says, “‘This’ [stated in the singular] indicates that a woman does not drink the bitter water and then go and do it again.”*
- D. *Said R. Judah, “There was a case in which Nehunia, the ditch-digger, gave testimony before us that a woman may drink the bitter water and go and drink it again.*
- E. *“We accepted his testimony [as to the decided law] so far as two different men are concerned [if the woman is subjected to the ordeal by successive husbands], but not by one husband [alone].”*
- F. *Sages say, “A woman may not drink the bitter water and go through the rite a second time, whether it is on account of the accusation of one husband or of two successive husbands.”*
- G. *Now, so far as the first authority of the passage is concerned [at A-B], is not the word “this” written [indicating that the rite is singular and not repeated]? [That is evidence against B.]*
- H. *And as to the latter rabbis [C], is not the word “the Torah of...” also written? [Would not the latter formulation indicate a second ordeal is undertaken, where appropriate?]*
- I. *Said Raba, “In a case in which one husband and one alleged lover are involved, all parties concur that the woman drinks only one time and does not repeat [the ordeal].*
- J. *“[19A] For it is written, ‘This,’ [indicating that the ordeal is done only one time.]*
- K. *“Where we deal with two husbands and two alleged lovers, all parties concur that the woman drinks the water and repeats the operation, since it is written, ‘the Torah of...’*
- L. *“Where there is a dispute, it involves a case where there is one husband but two alleged lovers, or two husbands and a single lover.*
- M. *“The first authority maintains that the formulation ‘Torah of...’ serves to encompass all parties, while ‘This is...’ serves to exclude [only] the case of one husband and one lover.*
- N. *“The latter rabbis take the view that ‘This is...’ serves to exclude all [other] cases, while ‘Torah of...’ serves to encompass the case of two husbands and two lovers [alone].”*

- O. *And R. Judah takes the view that the word “This is...” serves to exclude [a double ordeal] in two cases [lovers], while “Torah of...” serves to encompass two cases. “This” serves to limit the matter in the case of two, namely, one husband and one lover, one husband and two lovers. [In such a case the woman undergoes the ordeal only one time.]*
- P. *“Torah of...” serves to encompass two cases, namely, two husbands and one lover, two husbands and two lovers.*

Unit I raises its own theoretical question, as noted. Unit II goes on to the opening clause of the Mishnah-paragraph, raising a theoretical question that extends the limits of the Mishnah's basic rule. III:1 has a Tannaite amplification of Meir's statement. IV:1 then asks another theoretical question generated by the Mishnah's statement.