

I.

BABYLONIAN TALMUD

SOTAH

CHAPTER ONE

FOLIOS 2A-14A

1:1-2

- A. [2A] He who expresses jealousy to his wife [concerning her relations with another man (Num. 5:14)] —
- B. R. Eliezer says, “He expresses jealousy before two witnesses, and he imposes on her the requirement of drinking the bitter water on the testimony of a single witness or even on his own evidence [that she has been alone with the named man].”
- C. R. Joshua says, “He expresses jealousy before two witnesses, and he requires her to drink the bitter water before two witnesses.” — M. 1:1
- A. How does he express jealousy to her?
- B. [If] he stated to her before two witnesses, “Do not speak with Mr. So-and-so,” and she indeed spoke with him,
- C. she still is permitted to have sexual relations with her husband and is permitted to eat heave-offering.
- D. [If] she went with him to some private place and remained with him for sufficient time to become unclean,
- E. she is prohibited from having sexual relations with her husband and [if the husband is a priest,] she is prohibited from eating heave-offering.
- F. And if he [her husband] should die, she performs the rite of halisah [removing the shoe, which severs her relationship to the childless husband’s surviving brother, in line with the law of Deu. 25:5-10] but is not taken into levirate marriage. — M. 1:2

There are two stages in the process of requiring the accused wife to undergo the ordeal. First, the husband expresses jealousy, warning the wife not to get involved with someone (as spelled out at M. 1:2B). Second, he brings evidence against her for having gotten involved with someone. Eliezer accepts the testimony of a single witness at this second stage. Joshua requires two witnesses at both stages, one set

to ascertain that the wife has been warned, the second to testify that she has indeed done what she was told not to do. M. 1:2A links M. 1:2B-F to the foregoing, but the interest of the set is in the status of the woman at these two stages, not in the definition of the issues of M. 1:1, so M. 1:2A is awkward joining-language. The point is clear in the contrast of B-C and D-E, with F concluding the triplet. At the stage of expressing jealousy, the wife is still validly married. At the stage of being forced to undergo the ordeal, she is separated from the husband, E, and deemed in an unsure status in relationship to him, F.

From the perspective of a commentary on the Mishnah, the most fundamental question must be the explanation of the order of tractates. Since the tractates are formed around their topics, the question takes the shape of asking how one topic relates to another, and why a given topic is given priority over another. Since Scripture treats the Nazirite vow at Numbers 5 and the wife accused of adultery at Numbers 6, the question concerns not only the Mishnah's but also Scripture's sequence of topics.

- I.1.A.** [The following inquiry concerns the relationship between the Mishnah-tractates in their present order, which proceeds from Nazir, on the one who vows to abstain from wine, to the present tractate.] *Now that the Tannaite authority has completed tractate Nazir, why is it that he now proceeds to teach the tractate of Sotah?*
- B. *[His reasoning accords with] the view of Rabbi [Judah the Patriarch, author of the Mishnah].*
- C. *For it has been taught on Tannaite authority:*
- D. Rabbi says, "Why is the biblical passage concerning the Nazirite joined to the biblical passage concerning the accused wife [at Numbers 6, 5, respectively]?"
- E. "It is to indicate to you that whoever sees an accused wife in her disgrace should take a Nazir's vow not to drink wine."
- F. *[If that is the operative reasoning], then the Tannaite authority should first go over the rules governing the accused wife [at Sotah] and only then repeat the rules governing the Nazirite vow.*
- G. [Referring to the order of still prior tractates, Ketubot, on the marriage-settlement, and Nedarim, on vows, the Talmud's voice replies:] *Since the Tannaite authority presented the rules of marriage-settlements in tractate Ketubot, including reference to one who imposes a vow on his wife, he repeated the rules of vows in tractate Nedarim. Then, being engaged in the repetition of the rules on vowing in Nedarim, he went on to deal with the special vow of the Nazir, which is in the same classification of vows in general.*
- H. *And it was at that point that he introduced the matter of the accused wife in tractate Sotah, in line with the reasoning of Rabbi.*

We proceed to the analysis of the language of the Mishnah.

I.1 A. He who expresses [M. 1:1A]:

- B. *[The formulation, "he who expresses," contains the implication that the act of expressing jealousy has taken place, so we propose the inference that if one has done so,] then after the fact, that indeed is the rule, but, to begin with, one should not do so.*

C. *It follows that the Tannaite authority at hand maintains that it is forbidden to [inaugurate the rite that serves] express jealousy.*

II.2. A. *Said R. Samuel bar R. Isaac, “When R. Simeon b. Laqish would commence the study of tractate Sotah, he would say this: ‘They match a woman up to a man only in accord with his deeds, as it is said, “For the scepter of wickedness shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous” (Psa. 125: 3).”*

B. *Said Rabbah bar Hannah said R. Yohanan, “And it is as difficult to match people up as it is to split the Red Sea, as it is said, ‘God sets the solitary in families, he brings prisoners into prosperity’ (Psa. 68: 7).”*

C. *Is that really the accepted view? And did not Rab Judah say Rab said, “Forty days prior to the formation of the foetus, an echo goes forth and proclaims, ‘The daughter of Mr. So and so is assigned to such-and-such, the house of Mr. So-and-so is assigned to Mr. Such and such, the field of Mr. So-and-so is assigned to Mr. Such and such.’ [The foreordained marriage cannot be dependent on the man’s conduct, which, prior to birth, is unknown (Cohen)].”*

D. *There is no contradiction between the implications of the cited views. The former refers to the first marriage, the latter to the second.*

Clarification of the rule of the Mishnah follows, with special attention to the rules of evidence.

III.1 A. **R. Eliezer says, “He expresses jealousy before two witnesses etc. [M. 1:1B]:**

B. *To this point, the dispute [between Eliezer and Joshua] concerns [a case] in which there is an act of expressing jealousy followed by an act of going aside [with the man to some private place]. But in regard to evidence that an act of uncleanness has taken place, the testimony of a single witness suffices.*

C. *And so we have learned in the Mishnah itself: **If one witness testifies, “I saw that she was made unclean,” she does not drink the water [since the ordeal is moot] [M. 6:1].***

III.2. A. *How do we find evidence in the Torah that a single witness’s testimony may suffice?*

B. *It is in accord with that which our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:*

C. *“[If a man lies with her carnally and it is hidden from the eyes of her husband...] and there is no witness against her, [since she was not caught in the act]” (Num. 5:13).*

D. *Scripture speaks of two witnesses.*

E. *Or is it the case that it speaks even of the case of a single witness?*

F. *Scripture states, “A single witness shall not prevail against a man for any crime” (Deu. 19:15).*

G. **[2B]** *Since it is said, “A witness shall not prevail against a man,” do I not know that it is a single witness that is under discussion? Why then does Scripture specify, “a single” one?*

H. *It serves to lay the foundations for a generative principle: In any passage in which “witness” is stated, lo, under discussion are two, unless Scripture itself makes it explicit for you that a single witness is sufficient in a given context.*

- I. *Now in the present case, Scripture indicates that not two but only one witness [is at hand] against the woman, “and she has not been caught in the act” (Num. 5:13), [for] she is forbidden to her husband. [Since she has not been caught in the act — that is, by an adequate corps of witnesses — why should she be forbidden to her husband? It is only because a single witness has sufficed. This will now be made explicit.]*
- J. [To continue the proof:] Now the reason [that “witness” at Num. 5:13 refers to two witnesses, and not one] is that it is written, “A single witness shall not prevail against a man” (Deu. 19:15).
- K. *If it were not for that fact, I should have maintained the view that the witness in the context of the accused is a single witness.*
- L. *And [as explained a moment ago], if there were not even one witness, on what basis would the wife have been forbidden? [Clearly, it is assumed that a single witness has reported what he saw.]*
- M. *[Phrasing matters as they are] was necessary. [How so]? It might have entered your mind to say that “there is no witness against her” means that a witness is not believed [if he testifies against her].*
- N. *He is not believed [if he testifies against her]?! What then [does the Author] want? If it is that he [wishes to rule that she is convicted] only if there are two witnesses, then let Scripture remain silent on that point.*
- O. *The rule of evidence then would derive from the “matter” of a monetary trial for monetary matters, and I should have known that the rule accords with the one prevailing in all “matters” of testimony that are specified in the Torah.*
- P. *No, it was nonetheless necessary to phrase matters [as they are], for it might have entered your mind to maintain the view that the case of the accused wife is different, for here there is a foundation to the accusation against her.*
- Q. For lo, the husband already has expressed jealousy against her, and she has nonetheless gone in private [with the specified man]. So one witness should be believed when he testifies against her.
- R. *And is it possible to maintain that, when a single witness cannot testify against her, the consequence is that she is permitted to her husband?*
- S. *Lo, since it is written, “And she has not been caught in the act” (Num. 5:13), would it not follow that she is forbidden [to her husband]? [Whatever happened was with her consent, since, otherwise, she would have protested and would have been caught in the act.]*
- T. *It was necessary [to make the matter explicit] because otherwise it might have entered your mind to say that a witness is believed against her only if there are two.*
- U. *And [the point of the verse] is that she has not been caught in the act by two witnesses.*
- V. *So we are informed [that one witness is believed].*

Turning to Joshua’s statement, we once more ask how Scripture sustains his view.

IV.1 A. R. Joshua says, “He expresses jealousy before two witnesses” [M. 1:1C]:

- B. What is the Scriptural basis for the position of R. Joshua?

- C. Scripture has said, "...against her..." (Num. 13) — [a single witness suffices] against her [as to what she does] but not ["against her"] in regard to the expression of jealousy against her nor in regard to her going aside in secret [in both of which cases two witnesses are required]. [A single witness serves only in regard to the woman's actions, not in regard to the expression of jealousy or the going aside.]
- D. And R. Eliezer?
- E. Scripture says, "'...against her...,' — and not in the matter of expressing jealousy."
- E. *And may I maintain that "against her" excludes the matter of going aside as well [in which case a single witness would suffice]?*
- F. *"Going aside" is classified with the actual act of uncleanness, as it is written, "And she goes aside...and made unclean" (Num. 5:13), [thus treating the two as equivalent. Hence in both these matters, in Eliezer's view, only a single witness suffices.]*
- G. *But the act of expressing jealousy also is treated as part of the same category as uncleanness, for it is written, "And if he expresses jealousy of his wife and if she is defiled" (Num. 5:14).*
- H. *The All-Merciful excluded [that matter] by the use of "...against her...," [which deals with misconduct].*
- I. *But why do you maintain that view [that "against her" excludes the comparison of warning to misconduct, so that only the going aside with the named man is comparable to misconduct (Cohen)]?*
- J. *[The answer is that] it is self-evident that the going aside [with the named man] is more serious, for that act renders the woman prohibited [to her husband] as does an act of uncleanness itself.*
- K. *No, quite to the contrary, the act of expressing jealousy is more serious, for it is the basis of what has caused her [to be subject to the process that ends with the ordeal]. [Without the warning, the other steps in the process cannot take place.]*
- L. *[To the contrary again], were it not for an act of going aside, would there be need for an expression of jealousy anyhow? [She did it before her husband became jealous.]*
- M. *But if it were not for the act of expressing jealousy, what difference would the act of going aside have made anyhow?*
- N. *Nonetheless, the actual deed of going aside is the more serious, since it represents the beginning of the woman's uncleanness.*

We now compare our Mishnah-paragraph with intersecting Tannaite rulings on the same subject.

IV.2. A. *The Mishnah-paragraph does not accord with the following Tannaite teaching, which has been taught on Tannaite authority:*

- B. **R. Yosé b. R. Judah says in the name of R. Eliezer, "He expresses jealousy before a single witness or even on his own evidence, and he imposes on her the requirements of drinking the bitter water before two witnesses" [vs. M. 1:1B].**

C. **They replied to the opinion of R. Yosé b. R. Judah, “The matter has no limit” [T. Sot. 1:31].** [The version of Eliezer’s view at B contradicts M. 1:1A].

We now conduct a reprise of the scriptural proof for Eliezer’s position, now in its new formulation.

- D. *What is the Scriptural basis for the view of R. Yosé b. R. Judah [regarding Eliezer’s position]?*
- E. Scripture has said, “...against her...,” [meaning], against her and not in the matter of going aside.
- F. *But may I say, “Against her,” and not in the matter of expressing jealousy?*
- G. *The expressing of jealousy is in the same classification as her becoming unclean, for it is written, “And she goes aside...and is made unclean” (Num. 5:13).*
- H. *But the act of expressing jealousy also is treated as part of the same category as uncleanness, for it is written, “And if he expresses jealousy of his wife and if she is defiled” (Num. 5:14).*
- I. *That refers to [the question of whether] the amount of time involved in an act of going aside is sufficient to become unclean.*

We revert to the analysis of the passage, now spelling out the position of sages.

J. **They replied to the opinion of R. Yosé b. R. Judah, “The matter has no limit” [T. Sot. 1:1].**

K. *How so?*

L. *There may be times that he did not warn her, but he claimed that he did warn her.* [So we require more adequate testimony.]

M. *But in regard to the formulation of our Mishnah-paragraph itself, is there an end to the matter? For here too there may be times that she did not go aside with the named man, while the husband claims that she did go aside with him. [Why ever accept two husbands’ testimony?]*

N. [Reframing the matter, then], said R. Isaac bar Joseph said R. Yohanan, ““Even in the view of R. Yosé b. R. Judah, there is no limit to the matter.””

O. *Even in respect to the view of R. Yosé b. R. Judah, and one does not raise the question to our Mishnah-paragraph?! To the contrary, in the formulation of our Mishnah-paragraph, there is a basis for the charge, while here there is no basis for the charge.*

P. *Rather, if the matter was laid down as a formal statement, this is how it had to have been laid down:*

Q. Said R. Isaac bar Judah said R. Yohanan, “In the view of R. Yosé b. R. Judah, also in respect to our Mishnah-paragraph there is no limit to the matter.”

IV.3. A. Said R. Hanina of Sura, “A man at this time [after the destruction of the Temple] should not say to his wife, ‘Do not go aside with Mr. So-and-so.’”

B. The reason is that he concurs with the view of R. Yosé b. R. Judah, who has said, “One may express jealousy on the evidence of his own testimony.”

- C. In consequence should a woman go aside [with the named man], [she would be subjected to the ordeal]. But these days there is no ordeal of testing through water the accused wife.
- D. The result is that the husband will impose upon the wife a permanent [and indissoluble] prohibition [against remaining wed to him].

May a husband express jealousy solely on the strength of his own testimony, as Yosé b. R. Judah has said Eliezer maintains?

- IV.4.** A. Said R. Simeon b. Laqish, "What is the meaning of the language 'expression of jealousy'? It refers to something that puts jealousy [or hatred] between the woman and other people."
- B. *Accordingly, he is of the view that a man may express jealousy on the strength of his own testimony. [How so?] Since nobody knows that he has given such a warning of jealousy to her, they will say, "Why does this one remain aloof?"*
 - C. *So they will turn out to hate [practice jealousy against] her.*
 - D. And R. Yemar bar R. Shelamia in the name of Abayye said, "[The language refers] to something that puts jealousy between him and her [only, but does not necessarily involve others]."
 - E. *Accordingly, he is of the view that one expresses jealousy on the testimony of two witnesses. It will follow that everybody knows that he has expressed jealousy to her, and he is the one who has brought jealousy [hatred] in her regard.*
 - F. **[3A]** *It follows that both parties maintain that it is forbidden to express jealousy [just as No. 3 has maintained, since both parties explain the word to invoke the sense of jealousy or hatred].*
 - G. *And in the view of one who maintains that it is permitted to express jealousy, what is the meaning to be imputed to the word "express jealousy"?*
 - H. Said R. Nahman bar Isaac, "The language 'express jealousy' bears the sole meaning of 'warn.'"
 - I. "And so does Scripture say, 'Then the Lord expressed jealousy [by warning] his land' (Joe. 2:18)."

The foregoing has introduced the conception that jealousy is provoked by actions taken in secret, of which God is informed. God then makes the husband feel the sentiments that lead to the action taken by the husband against the wife. In more general terms we now draw the consequences of that conviction.

IV.5. A. *It has been taught on Tannaite authority:*

- B. R. Meir would say, "If a person oversteps the bounds in secret, the Holy One, blessed be he, makes the matter public.
- C. "For it is said, 'And the spirit of jealousy overstepped him' (Num. 5:14).
- D. "And the word 'overstep' bears only the meaning of public display,
- E. "as it is said, 'And Moses commanded and they brought the report about the camp' (Exo. 36: 6)."
- F. R. Simeon b. Laqish said, "A person commits a transgression only if a spirit of foolishness enters him."
- G. For it is said, 'If a man's wife goes aside' (Num. 5:12).
- H. "The word for 'go aside' is written so that it can be read 'act foolishly.'"

We now revert to the basic exposition of our theme: why a single witness suffices in this case.

IV.6. A. *It was taught on Tannaite authority of the house of R. Ishmael:*

- B. “On what account did the Torah accept the probative testimony of a single witness alone in the case of the accused wife?
- C. “It is because there is a foundation for [what the lone witness reports],
- D. “for lo, [the husband] expressed jealousy of her, and nonetheless she went aside [with the named man].
- E. “So a single witness may testify that she has, in fact, been made unclean.”
- F. *[Commenting on this passage,] said R. Papa to Abayye, “And lo, Scripture’s account places the act of expressing jealousy only after the act of going aside with the named man and being made unclean.”*
- G. *He said to him, “[When Scripture says, ‘And a spirit of jealousy] passes [over him],’ the meaning is that this has already happened [on account of her having gone aside with the named man].”*
- H. *[If that meaning is imputed to the word, “pass,,”] then how to deal with the following: “And every armed man of you shall pass over” (Num. 32:21)? [Here too is the meaning that the passage has already taken place? Surely not.]*
- I. *In that case, since it is written, “And the land will be subdued before the Lord, and then you will return” (Num. 32:22), the clear implication is that the passage speaks of what will come about in the future.*
- J. *But in the present case, should it enter your mind that [the sense of the passage accords with the sequence in which its verbs] are written, so that [“pass” speaks of the future,] then after the wife has become unclean and gone aside with the man, what point is there in expressing jealousy in any event? [Surely the spirit of jealousy comes prior to any actions on the part of the wife. Papa’s objection thus is sustained.]*

IV.7. A. *It was taught on Tannaite authority of the house of R. Ishmael:*

- B. “A man expresses jealousy to his wife only if a spirit [from God] enters him.
- C. “For it is said, ‘And a spirit of jealousy passed upon him, and he is jealous of his wife’ (Num. 5:14).”
- D. *What is the meaning of the word “spirit” [in this context]?*
- E. *Rabbis say, “It is an unclean spirit.”*
- F. *R. Ashi said, “It is a clean spirit.”*
- G. *And logically the facts should accord with the view of him who said that it is a clean spirit.*
- H. *For it has been taught on Tannaite authority:*
- I. “And he expresses jealousy to his wife” (Num. 5:14) —
- J. “It is an optional matter,” the words of R. Ishmael.
- K. *R. Aqiba says, “It is obligatory.”*
- L. *Now if you maintain the view that it is a clean spirit, there is no problem. But if you take the view that it is an unclean spirit, is it a matter either of option or*

obligation for a man to bring an unclean spirit upon himself? [Surely it is forbidden on either score.]

We now revert to the dispute on whether or not expressing jealousy is obligatory, and we pursue that topic in the broader context of what is obligatory or voluntary. The composition stands on its own, having been put together to deal with the theoretical issue, but it is inserted here to amplify the prior discussion. On that basis I treat it not as a free-standing composition but as subordinate to the foregoing.

IV.8. A. *Returning to the main text [just now cited only in part]:*

- B. (1) “And he expresses jealousy to his wife” (Num. 5:14) —
- C. “It is an optional matter,” the words of R. Ishmael.
- D. R. Aqiba says, “It is obligatory.”
- E. (2) “For her [his wife] [a priest] may contract corpse uncleanness” (Lev. 21: 3) —
- F. “It is an optional matter,” the words of R. Ishmael.
- G. R. Aqiba says, “It is obligatory.”
- H. (3) “You shall take your slaves from them for ever” (Lev. 25:46) —
- I. “It is an optional matter,” the words of R. Ishmael.
- J. R. Aqiba says, “It is obligatory.”
- K. *R. Papa said to Abayye — and some say it was R. Mesharsheya who said it to Raba — “May we conclude that R. Ishmael and R. Aqiba maintain the same dispute throughout the entirety of the Torah? For one master will everywhere maintain that something is a matter of option, the other, that it is a matter of obligation?”*
- L. *He said to him, “[No,] in the present instance the dispute concerns the meaning of verses.” [This will now be spelled out in detail.]*
- M. “And he expresses jealousy to his wife” (Num. 5:14) —
- N. “It is an optional matter,” the words of R. Ishmael.
- O. R. Aqiba says, “It is obligatory.”
- P. *What is the reasoning behind the position of R. Ishmael? He accords with the logic of the following Tannaite authority.*
- Q. *For it has been taught on Tannaite authority:*
- R. R. Eliezer b. Jacob says, “Since the Torah has stated, ‘You shall not hate your brother in your heart,’ (Lev. 19:17), is it possible to suppose that that principle applies even in such a case as this [in which there is the possibility of unfaithfulness]?”
- S. “The Torah states, ‘And a spirit of jealousy will pass over him, and he [wishes to] express jealousy to his wife’ (Num. 5:14) [as an optional matter].”
- T. *And R. Aqiba? [How does the other party read the same matter?] The word “jealousy” is written yet a second time in the verse [bearing the implication that it is an obligation.]*
- U. *And R. Ishmael? [How does he deal with the second occurrence of the word?] Since the Author wished to write [two times], “And she*

is made unclean,” “and she has not been made unclean,” *he further wrote*, “And he will express jealousy to his wife.”

- V. *This explanation accords with the principle of the Tannaite authority of the house of R. Ishmael.*
- W. *For a Tannaite authority of the house of R. Ishmael [said], “In any passage in which something is stated and then repeated, it is repeated only so as to make some new point.”*
- X. “For her [his wife] [a priest] may contract corpse uncleanness” (Lev. 21: 3) —
- Y. “It is an optional matter,” the words of R. Ishmael.
- Z. R. Aqiba says, “It is obligatory.”
- AA. *What is the scriptural authority for the position of R. Ishmael?*
- BB. *Since it is written, “Speak to the priests, the sons of Aaron, and say to them, No one shall defile himself for the dead among his people” (Lev. 21: 1), it was necessary to state explicitly, “For her he shall contract corpse uncleanness.” [That is, the exception had to be made explicit, but it was not with the intent of making it obligatory for him to do so.]*
- CC. And R. Aqiba? [How does he deal with the same matter?]
- DD. *He derives [the same exception from the statement], “Except for his kin” (Lev. 21: 2). [That would encompass the wife]. What need, then, was there to write, “For her he shall contract corpse uncleanness”? It was to indicate that it is an obligation.*
- EE. And R. Ishmael? [How does he deal with the same texts?]
- FF. “For her he shall contract corpse uncleanness” — *but he shall not contract corpse uncleanness for her limbs.* [Should her limbs be amputated, he need not deal with burying them.]
- GG. **[3B]** And R. Aqiba?
- HH. *If that were the meaning of the passage, then the All-Merciful should have written the word, “For her,” and then said nothing more. Why does Scripture add, “He should contract corpse uncleanness”? That serves to prove the point [that it is an obligation, not an option].*
- II. And R. Ishmael?
- JJ. *Since He wrote the word, “For her,” he also wrote the word, “he shall contract.”*
- KK. *This explanation accords with the principle of the Tannaite authority of the house of R. Ishmael.*
- LL. *For a Tannaite authority of the house of R. Ishmael said, “In any passage in which something is stated and then repeated, it is repeated only so as to make some new point.”*
- MM. “You shall take your slaves from them for ever” (Lev. 25:46).
- NN. “It is an optional matter,” the words of R. Ishmael.
- OO. R. Aqiba says, “It is obligatory.”

- PP. *What is the Scriptural basis for the position of R. Ishmael?*
- QQ. Since it is written, “You shall save alive nothing that breathes” (Deu. 20:16), *it was further necessary to write explicitly*, “You shall take your slaves from them for ever,” to render permitted to purchase as a slave the offspring of one among all the nations of the land who had sexual relations with a Canaanite woman and produced a son from him.
- RR. *For it has been taught on Tannaite authority:*
- SS. How do we know that, in the case of one among all the nations of the land who had sexual relations with a Canaanite woman and produced a son from her, you are permitted to purchase the offspring as a slave?
- TT. Scripture says, “Moreover of the children of the strangers that sojourn among you, of them you shall buy” (Lev. 25:45).
- UU. Is it possible to take the view that if, further, a Canaanite male had sexual relations with a woman belonging to any of the nations and produced a son from her, you are permitted to purchase the offspring as a slave?
- VV. Scripture says, “Which they have begotten in your land” (Lev. 25:45), meaning, [you shall purchase slaves] of those that are born in your land, and not of those who are resident aliens in your land.
- WW. And R. Aqiba? [How does he prove his point from the same verses]?
- XX. *From the statement, “Of them you shall purchase” he derives the basic rule. What need do I find for the statement, “You shall take your slaves from them for ever”?* It serves to indicate that this is an obligation.
- YY. And R. Ishmael? [How does he read the additional language cited by Aqiba?] “Among them” and not “among your brothers” [should you purchase your slaves].
- ZZ. *And R. Aqiba derives the rule that you should not purchase slaves among your brothers from the concluding words of the same verse: “But over your brothers the children of Israel you shall not rule, one over another, with rigor” (Lev. 25:46).*
- AAA. *And [how does] R. Ishmael [interpret the same language]? Since it was written, “Among your brothers,” it also was written “among them.”*
- BBB. *This explanation accords with the principle of the Tannaite authority of the house of R. Ishmael.*
- CCC. *For a Tannaite authority of the house of R. Ishmael said, “In any passage in which something is stated and then repeated, it is repeated only so as to make some new point.”*

Faithfulness; the Power of Sin; the effects of a Single Action

- IV.8.** *Said R. Hisda, “Unfaithfulness in the house is like a worm in a sesame plant.”*
- B. *And R. Hisda said, “Temper in the house is like a worm in the sesame plant.”*
- C. *Both of these statements apply to a woman, but in a man there is no objection [to either].*
- D. *And R. Hisda said, “In the beginning, before the Israelites sinned, the Divine Presence rested upon every one of them, as it is said, ‘For the Lord your God walks with you in the midst of the camp’ (Deu. 23:15).*
- E. *“Once they had sinned, the Divine Presence went away from them, as it is said, ‘That he see no unclean thing in you and turn away from you’ (Deu. 23:15).”*
- IV.9.** A. *Said R. Samuel bar Nahmani said R. Jonathan, “Whoever does a religious duty in this world — that deed goes before him to the world to come, as it is said, ‘And your righteousness shall go before you’ (Isa. 58: 8).*
- B. *“And whoever commits a transgression in this world — that act turns aside from him and goes before him on the Day of Judgment, as it is said, ‘The paths of their way are turned aside, they go up into the waste and perish’ (Job. 6:18).”*
- C. *R. Eliezer says, “It attaches to him like a dog, as it is said, ‘He did not listen to her to lie by her or to be with her’ (Gen. 39:10).*
- D. *“‘To lie by her’ in this world*
- E. *“‘Or to be with her’ in the world to come.”*

The power of a single witness’s testimony, set forth in our Mishnah-paragraph, has now to be explained in its own terms. We therefore turn to an intersecting Mishnah-paragraph, in which a single witness’s power is examined. This then has to be juxtaposed with our passage’s convictions on the same matter. But in a moment we shall note a different view of why the following passage of the Tosefta is included here, in which case Nos. 10-11 serve as a set-piece formulation, inserted here in particular because they include an exposition of the next clause of the Mishnah.

- IV.10.** A. *We have learned in the Mishnah there [M. 6:2-3:] [If one witness said, “I saw that she was made unclean,” she would not undergo the ordeal of drinking the bitter water. And not only so, but even if it was a boy-slave or a girl-slave, lo, these are believed even to invalidate her [from receiving payment of] her marriage-contract. As to her mother-in-law and the daughter of her mother-in-law, her co-wife, and the husband’s brother’s wife, and the daughter of her husband, lo, these are believed (cf. M. Yeb. 15: 4) — not to invalidate her from receiving payment of her marriage-contract, but that she should not undergo the ordeal of drinking the bitter water.] For logic might dictate as follows: Now, if in the case of the first kind of testimony [that she has been warned not to get involved with such-and-such a man], which does not impose upon her a permanent prohibition [but only until she has undergone the ordeal of the bitter water], [the accusation] is not sustained by less than two witnesses,*
- B. *in the case of the second kind of testimony [that she has indeed been made unclean], which does impose upon her a permanent prohibition [against*

remaining wed to her husband], surely [the accusation] should not be sustained by less than two witnesses.

- C. But Scripture says, And there is no witness against her (Num. 5:13) — [meaning], any sort of testimony which there is against her.
- D. On these grounds we may now construct an argument from the less to the greater with reference to the first kind of testimony:
- E. Now if the second kind of testimony, which imposes upon her a permanent prohibition, lo, is sustained by a single witness, the first kind of testimony, which does not impose upon her a permanent prohibition, surely should be sustained by means of a single witness.
- F. But Scripture says, Because he has found some unseemly matter in her (Deu. 24: 1), and elsewhere it says, At the mouth of two witnesses shall a matter be established (Deu. 19:15) — just as matter spoken of there requires two witnesses, so matter spoken of here requires two witnesses [M. 6:3].
- G. *[Commenting on the exegetical proof at F, the voice of the Talmud asks:] Now why should [the desired proof] derive from the shared phrase involving “matter,” “Because he has found some unseemly matter in her” (Deu. 24: 1)?*
- H. *It should derive from the phrase [a single witness suffices] “against her,” [along these familiar lines:] “against her” [in what she has actually done] but not “against her” in the matter of expressing jealousy;*
- I. *“against her” [in the matter of what she has actually done] and not in the matter of going aside. [Two witnesses are required for what E has called “the first kind of testimony,” namely, that concerning the expression of jealousy and the going aside.]*
- J. *[The framer of the proof at F, the Talmud now alleges], indeed concurs, phrasing matters as follows:*
- K. Scripture states, “...against her...,” meaning, [a single witness suffices against her in the case of her actual sexual misconduct] but not in the matter of the warning.
- L. “...against her...,” [a single witness suffices for actual sexual misconduct] but not for testimony on her having gone aside.
- M. And how do we know that, where there is a case of uncleanness in general [sexual misconduct], not involving an expression of jealousy, not involving the woman’s going aside], a single witness is not acceptable [but we require two]?
- N. Here it is stated, “Because he has found some unseemly matter in her” (Deu. 24: 1), and elsewhere it says, “At the mouth of two witnesses shall a matter be established” (Deu. 19:15). Just as “matter” spoken of there requires two witnesses, so “matter” spoken of here requires two witnesses.

The reference in the foregoing to “first” and “second” kind of testimony is now explained in its own terms.

IV.11. A. *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:*

- B. What is the meaning of the “first kind of testimony”?
- C. It is testimony that the woman has been warned not to go aside with the named man.
- D. And “the second kind of testimony”?

- E. This is testimony as to the woman's having been made unclean [through sexual relations with the named man] [T. Sot. 1:2].**

This same passage of the Tosefta continues in its own course, but for our purposes, is to be divided, since we now find ourselves expounding our Mishnah-paragraph. Since the Talmud is built around clauses of the Mishnah, one may make the case that IV.10-11 are inserted whole, simply because the complex in which they are located contains an important amplification of a rule of the Mishnah. It is not uncommon for the Bavli's compilers to do just that. But from the perspective of identifying the principal parts of their composite, we still have to take note of the contribution of the complex in its own terms, meaning, its dual function, signified by my division. We begin with an allusion to the Mishnah's language.

- V.1. A. [4A] [Supply: SUFFICIENT TIME TO BECOME UNCLEAN:] And what is the span of time sufficient for going aside?**
- B. Sufficient time for uncleanness [to take place], sufficient time for sexual relations, sufficient time for sexual contact. [And how much is that?]**
 - C. "Sufficient time to walk around a palm tree," the words of R. Ishmael.**
 - D. "Sufficient time to walk around the date-palm," the words of R. Ishmael.**
 - E. R. Eliezer says, "Sufficient to mix the cup."**
 - F. R. Joshua says, "Sufficient to drink it."**
 - G. Ben Azzai says, "Sufficient to roast an egg."**
 - H. R. Aqiba says, "Sufficient time to swallow it."**
 - I. R. Judah b. Paterah says, "Sufficient to swallow three eggs in succession."**
 - J. R. Eleazar b. Jeremiah says, "Sufficient for a weaver to tie a knot."**
 - K. Hanan b. Pinhas says, "Sufficient for her to put her finger into her mouth to remove a chip of wood."**
 - L. Pelimo says, "Sufficient to put out her hand and take a loaf of bread from a basket."**
 - M. Even though there is no clear proof for the proposition, there is at least a hint as to the proposition, since it says, "For on account of a harlot, to a loaf of bread" (Pro. 6:26) [T. Sot. 1:2].**
- V.2. A. Now what need do I have for all of these [specifications at G? Would not one of them have sufficed?]**
- B. Each of them had to be made explicit.**
 - C. For if the framer of the Tannaite teaching had stated, "sufficient time for uncleanness," I might have drawn the conclusion that at issue is sufficient time for making the woman unclean and also for seducing her. So we are informed that at issue is a [brief] span of time sufficient only for the actual act of sexual relations.**
 - D. Had the framer of the passage referred only to sufficient time for sexual relations, I might have reached the conclusion that at issue is only the span of time sufficient for the completion of coition. So we are informed that involved also is sufficient time for sexual contact [without the achievement of orgasm].**

- E. *And if we had been informed that at issue is the span of time needed only for sexual contact, I might have supposed that at issue is time for sexual contact and seduction.*
- F. *Accordingly, we are informed that at issue is the span of time sufficient for making the woman unclean.*

V.3. A. How much is the sufficient span of time for sexual contact? It is sufficient time to walk around a palm tree.

- B. *The following was raised by way of contrast:*
- C. *“And she go aside [with the named man]” (Num. 5:13) —*
- D. *And how much is the span of time sufficient for going aside?*
- E. *We have not heard [the answer to that question made explicit. However], when Scripture says, “And she is made unclean,” one must reach the conclusion that that is sufficient time for the woman to be made unclean, that is to say, sufficient time for sexual relations and sexual contact.*

V.4. A. “Sufficient time for a palm tree to rebound,” the words of R. Eliezer.

- B. **R. Joshua says, “Sufficient time to mix the cup.”**
- C. **Ben Azzai says, “Sufficient time to drink it.”**
- D. **R. Aqiba says, “Sufficient time to swallow an egg.”**
- E. **R. Judah b. Batyra says, “Sufficient time to swallow it.”**
- F. *Now in the assumption that the time sufficient for walking around the palm tree [cited above] is the same as the time required for the palm tree to rebound, [we ask about the diverse formulations:]*
- G. *There R. Ishmael has said, “Sufficient time to walk around a palm tree” and in that setting R. Eliezer differs from him. Here, by contrast, R. Eliezer has said, “Sufficient time for the palm tree to rebound.” [Where is the difference?]*
- H. *Said Abayye, “Walking around the tree is by foot, while the rebound takes place by force of the wind.”*
 - I. *R. Ashi raised the question, “In regard to the rebound in the wind, is it a case in which the wind blows and then reverses direction, or is it a case in which the wind blows and then reverses direction and the tree then returns to its original position?”*
 - J. *The question stands.*
- K. *There R. Eliezer said, “Sufficient to mix the cup,” and here, “Sufficient for the palm tree to rebound.”*
- L. *Each of these definitions speaks of exactly the same span of time.*
- M. *There R. Joshua said, “Sufficient to drink it,” and here he said, “Sufficient to mix the cup.”*
- N. *I propose that his sense is, “sufficient time to mix and to drink it.”*
- O. *And why not allege that each of the definitions refers to the same span of time as the other [as at L]?*
- P. *If so, you would have the same view as R. Eliezer.*

- Q. There Ben Azzai said, "Sufficient time to roast an egg," while here he said, "Sufficient time to drink it."
- R. *Each of these definitions speaks of exactly the same span of time as the other.*
- S. There R. Aqiba said, "Sufficient time to swallow it," while here he said, "Sufficient time to roast an egg."
- T. *I say that in his view it is sufficient time to roast an egg and to swallow it.*
- U. *And why not propose that each span of time is the same as the other [L]?*
- V. *If so, we should come up with the opinion of Ben Azzai.*
- W. There R. Judah b. Batyra said, "Sufficient time to swallow three eggs in succession," while here he said, "Sufficient time to swallow it."
- X. *It was in accord with the view of R. Aqiba that he made his statement, who maintained that we establish the span of time as sufficient to roast and swallow an egg, [and in that context, he said], "I propose that the span of time required for swallowing it by itself is sufficient time to swallow three eggs in succession, and that is the equivalent span of time to that required for roasting and swallowing one egg."*

V.5. A. R. Eleazar b. Jeremiah says, "Sufficient for a weaver to tie a knot:"

- B. R. Ashi asked, "Does it involve a case in which the two ends are far or near [Do we take account of the time needed to bring the threads together?]"
- C. The question stands.

V.6. A. Hanan b. Pinhas says, "Sufficient for her to put her finger into her mouth to remove a chip of wood:"

- B. *R. Ashi asked, "Does it involve one wedged tightly [between the teeth] or not wedged tightly?"*
- C. *The question stands.*

V.7. A. Pelimo says, "Sufficient to put out her hand and take a loaf of bread from a basket:"

- B. *R. Ashi asked, "Do we deal with loaves of bread that are stuck together, is it a new or old [basket], a hot or a cold [loaf], [4B] wheat or barley [bread], soft or hard-baked [bread]?"*
- C. *The question stands,*

V.8. A. Said R. Isaac bar Joseph said R. Yohanan, "Each of the cited sages took the measure by his own [experience of the time it takes for sexual relations]."

- B. *And is there not a citation of the view of Ben Azzai, who was not married?*
- C. *If you want, I may propose that he was married and then divorced.*
- D. *If you want, I shall propose that he had heard a tradition of the matter from his master.*
- E. *If you want, I shall propose that [we invoke the verse], "The secret of the Lord is with those who fear him" (Psa. 24:14). [He derived the information from divine revelation.]*

Sexual Relations That Are Sinful, Especially Adultery

The opening composite is inserted because of the reference to sexual relations with a whore; the main point of the whole concerns sexual relations that are sinful. But Nos. 9 and 10 take shape around their main interest, the washing of hands before meals, and only then have been inserted here within the large composite. No. 11 picks up the proof-text of 9.B, and that is the point at which the interests of our talmud in particular take over.

- V.9.** A. *R. Avira expounded, sometimes saying the matter in the name of R. Ammi, and sometimes stating it in the name of R. Assi*, “Whoever eats bread without washing his hands is as if he had sexual relations with a whore,
- B. “as it is said, ‘For on account of a whore, to a loaf of bread’ (Pro. 6:26). [One sin leads to another.]”
- C. *Raba said, “Instead of reading the matter, ‘For on account of a whore, to a loaf of bread,’ one should read it, ‘On account of a loaf of bread, to a whore.’* [The matter of eating with unwashed hands is less severe than the matter of sexual relations with the whore.]”
- D. Rather, said Raba, “Whoever has sexual relations with a whore in the end will go in search of a loaf of bread.”
- E. Said R. Zeriqa said R. Eleazar, “Whoever neglects the matter of washing the hands will be uprooted from the world.”
- V.10.** A. Said R. Hiyya bar Ashi said Rab, “In the case of washing the hands first [prior to a meal], one has to raise up his hands, but in the case of the latter washing of the hands [after the meal], he has to lower them.”
- B. *We have a teaching on Tannaite authority to the same effect:*
- C. He who washes his hands has to raise his hands upward, lest the water drip beyond the joint [below which point, the unwashed hands are unclean] and then go back and impart uncleanness to the hands.”
- D. Said R. Abbahu, “Whoever eats a loaf of bread without drying his hands is as if he ate bread that is unclean,
- E. “as it is said, ‘And the Lord said, “Even so shall the children of Israel eat their bread unclean”’ (Eze. 4:13).”

We now reach the point at which the present composite takes up the topic of special interest here. The continuity is clear at 11.A, so we see that the whole has formed around the interests of No. 9-10; the process of agglutination was not topical but formal; then the whole was inserted here for topical-propositional reasons.

- V.11.** A. [With reference to Pro. 6:26, cited above] *what does the verse mean*, “And the adulteress hunts for the precious life” (Pro. 6:26)?
- B. Said R. Hiyya bar Abba said R. Yohanan, “Whoever is arrogant in the end will stumble through sexual relations with a married woman,
- C. “as it is said, ‘And the adulteress hunts for the precious life.’”
- D. *Said Raba, “Instead of saying, ‘Precious life,’ what it ought to have said is, ‘haughty life.’ And, furthermore, it should have said, ‘[The haughty soul] hunts [the adulteress].’”*

- E. Rather, said Raba, “Whoever has sexual relations with a married woman, even though he has learned Torah, concerning which it is written, ‘It is more precious than innermost treasures’ (Pro. 3:15), that is, more even than the high priest who enters the innermost sanctum — she will pursue him to the judgment of Gehenna.”
- F. And R. Yohanan said in the name of R. Simeon b. Yohai, “Whoever is arrogant is as if he worships idolatry.
- G. *“Here it is written, ‘Everyone who is arrogant in heart is an abomination to the Lord,’ (Pro. 16: 5), and elsewhere it is written, ‘You will not bring an abomination into your house’ (Deu. 7:26).”*
- H. And R. Yohanan *on his own account* said, “He is as if he denied the very Principle [of the world],
- I. “as it is said, ‘Your heart will be lifted up and you will forget the Lord your God’ (Deu. 8:14).”
- J. R. Hama bar Hanina said, “He is as if he had sexual relations with all of those women forbidden to him on the laws of incest.
- K. *“Here it is written, ‘Everyone who is arrogant in heart is an abomination to the Lord’ (Pro. 16: 5), and elsewhere it is written, ‘For all these abominations...’ (Lev. 18:27).”*
- L. Ulla said, “It is as if he built a high place,
- M. “as it is said, ‘Cease you from man, whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of’ (Isa. 2:22).
- N. “Do not read, ‘wherein,’ but rather, ‘high place.’”

- V.12.** A. What is the meaning of the verse, “Hand to hand he shall not escape punishment” (Pro. 16: 5)?
- B. Said Rab, “Whoever has sexual relations with a married woman, even though the man assign possession of heaven and earth to the Holy One, blessed be he, as did Abraham, our father, of whom it is written, ‘I lift up my hand to the Lord, God Most High, who possesses heaven and earth’ (Gen. 14:22),
 - C. “will not escape the judgment of Gehenna.”
 - D. *The members of the house of R. Shila found a problem as follows, “[If that is the case], then ‘Hand to hand’ should read, ‘From [God’s] hand to hand,’ he will not escape punishment.”*
 - E. Rather, said members of the house of R. Shila, “Even if he received the Torah like Moses, our rabbi, of whom it is written, ‘At his right hand was a fiery law unto them’ (Deu. 33: 2), he will not escape the judgment of Gehenna.”
 - F. *The following then troubled R. Yohanan [along the lines of the previous question]: “‘Rather than ‘hand to hand,’ it should say, ‘Hand from hand’!”*
 - G. Rather, said R. Yohanan, “[5A] Even if he carries out the act of giving charity in secret, concerning which it is written, ‘A gift in secret pacifies anger’ (Pro. 21:14), he will not escape the punishment of Gehenna.”

Arrogance Is a Vice, Humility Is a Virtue

The reference to arrogance as a cause of adultery now accounts for the inclusion of a free-standing composite on the proposition that arrogance is a vice and humility is a virtue.

- V.13.** A. Whence [in Scripture] do we derive an admonition against the arrogant?
- B. Said Raba said Zeiri, “‘Listen and give ear, do not be proud’ (Jer. 13:15).”
- C. R. Nahman bar Isaac said, “From the following: ‘Your heart will be lifted up, and you will forget the Lord your God’ (Deu. 8:14).
- D. “And it is written, ‘Beware, lest you forget the Lord your God’ (Deu. 8:11).”
- E. *And that accords with what R. Abin said R. Ilai said.*
- F. *For R. Abin said R. Ilai said, “In every place in which it is said, ‘Beware lest... that you not...,’ the meaning is only to lay down a negative commandment [so that one who does such a thing violates a negative admonition].”*

- V.14.** A. *R. Avira expounded, sometimes in the name of R. Assi and sometimes in the name of R. Ammi, “Whoever is arrogant in the end will be diminished,*
- B. *“as it is said, ‘They are exalted, there will be a diminution’ (Job. 24:24).*
- C. *“And lest you maintain that they continue in the world [alive], Scripture states, ‘And they are gone’ (Job. 24:24).*
- D. *“But if [the arrogant person] repents, he will be gathered up [in death] at the time allotted to him [and not before],*
- E. *“as was the case with our father, Abraham,*
- F. *“as it is said, ‘But when they are lowly, they are gathered in like all’ (Job. 24:24) — like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, concerning whom ‘all’ is written [at Gen. 24: 1, 27:33, 33:11].*
- G. *“And if not: ‘They are cut off as the tops of the ears of corn’ (Job. 24:24).”*
- H. *What is the meaning of “the tops of the ears of corn”?*
- I. *R. Huna and R. Hisda:*
- J. *One said, “Like the awn of the grain.”*
- K. *The other said, “Like the ear itself.”*
- L. *Now in the view of the one who has said, “Like the awn of the grain,” that is in line with that which is written, “Like the tops of the corn.”*
- M. *But in the view of him who has said, “Like the ear itself,” what is the meaning of “like the top of the corn”?*
- N. *Said R. Assi, and so did a Tannaite authority of the house of R. Ishmael teach, “The matter may be compared to the case of a man who went into his field. He gleanes the ears by their height, [the tall ones first].”*

- V.15.** A. “With him also who is of a contrite and humble spirit” (Isa. 57:15).
- B. *R. Huna and R. Hisda:*
- C. *One said, “I [God] am with the contrite.”*
- D. *The other said, “I [God] am the contrite.”*
- E. *Logic favors the view of him who has said, “I [God] am with the contrite,” for lo, the Holy One, blessed be he, neglected all mountains and heights and brought his Presence to rest on Mount Sinai,*
- F. *and he did not raise Mount Sinai upward [to himself].*
- G. *R. Joseph said, “A person should always learn from the attitude of his Creator, for lo, the Holy One, blessed be he, neglected all mountains and heights and brought his Presence to rest on Mount Sinai,*

H. “and he neglected all valuable trees and brought his Presence to rest in the bush.”

V.16. A. Said R. Eleazar, “Whoever is arrogant is worthy of being cut down like an *asherah* [a tree that is worshipped].

B. “*Here it is written*, ‘The high ones of stature shall be cut down’ (Isa. 10:33),

C. “*and elsewhere it is written*, ‘And you shall hew down their Asherim’ (Deu. 7: 5).”

V.17. A. And R. Eleazar said, “Whoever is arrogant — his dust will not be stirred up [in the resurrection of the dead].

B. “For it is said, ‘Awake and sing, you that dwell in the dust’ (Isa. 26:19).

C. “It is stated not ‘you who lie in the dust’ but ‘you who dwell in the dust,’ meaning, one who has become a neighbor to the dust [by constant humility] even in his lifetime.”

D. And R. Eleazar said, “For whoever is arrogant the Presence of God laments,

E. “as it is said, ‘But the haughty he knows from afar’ (Psa. 138: 6).”

V.18. A. R. Avira expounded, *and some say it was* R. Eleazar, “Come and take note of the fact that not like the trait of the Holy One, blessed be he, is the trait of flesh and blood.

B. “The trait of flesh and blood is that those who are high take note of those who are high, but the one who is high does not take note of the one who is low.

C. “But the trait of the Holy One, blessed be he, is not that way. He is high, but he takes note of the low,

D. “as it is said, ‘For though the Lord is high, yet he takes note of the low’ (Psa. 138: 6).”

V.19. A. Said R. Hisda, *and some say it was* Mar Uqba, “Concerning whoever is arrogant said the Holy One, blessed be he, he and I cannot live in the same world,

B. “as it is said, ‘Whoever slanders his neighbor in secret — him will I destroy; him who has a haughty look and a proud heart I will not endure’ (Psa. 101: 5).

C. “Do not read, ‘him [I cannot endure]’ but ‘*with him* [I cannot endure].”

D. *There are those who apply the foregoing teaching to those who slander, as it is said*, “Whoever slanders his neighbor in secret — him will I destroy” (Psa. 101: 5).

V.20. A. Said R. Alexandri, “Whoever is arrogant — even the slightest breeze shakes him,

B. “as it is said, ‘But the wicked are like the troubled sea’ (Isa. 57:20).

C. “Now if the sea, which is so vast [lit.: which has so many quarter-logs (of water)] — the slightest breeze shakes it, a man, who is not so vast — all the more so [that the slightest breeze would shake him].”

V.21. A. Said R. Hiyya bar Ashi said Rab, “A disciple of a sage should have one eighth of an eighth [of pride].”

B. *Said R. Huna son of R. Joshua, “And it serves as his crown, like the fan of a grain.”*

C. *Said Raba, “He is subject to excommunication if there is [arrogance] in him, and he is subject to excommunication if there is no [arrogance] in him.”*

- D. Said R. Nahman bar Isaac, “[He should have] no part of it, nor even of part of part of it.”
- E. “Is it a small thing that it is written in connection [with arrogance], ‘Everyone who is proud of heart is an abomination to the Lord’ (Pro. 16: 5)?”
- V.22.** A. Said Hezekiah, “The prayer of a person is heard only if he makes his heart as soft as flesh,
- B. “as it is said, ‘And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to the next, all flesh shall come to worship’ (Isa. 66:23).”
- C. *Said R. Zira, “In regard to flesh, it is written, ‘And it is healed’ (Lev. 13:18). In regard to man, it is not written, ‘And he is healed.’”*
- V.23.** A. Said R. Yohanan, “The letters for the word Adam stand for dust, blood, and gall.
- B. “The letters for the word for flesh stand for shame, stench, and worm.”
- C. *Some say, “Sheol,” for [Cohen:] its initial letter corresponds” [Cohen, p. 20, n. 12: “The initial of the word for ‘stench’ is samek, whereas the second letter in basar is similar in form to that of ‘Sheol.’”]*
- V.24.** A. Said R. Ashi, “Whoever is arrogant in the end will be diminished,
- B. “as it is said, **[5B]** ‘For a rising and for a scab’ (Lev. 14:56), and rising refers only to elevation, as it is said, ‘Upon all the high mountains and upon all the hills that are lifted up’ (Isa. 2:14).
- C. “Scab means only ‘attachment,’ as it is said, ‘Attach me, I ask you, to one of the priests’ offices, so that I may eat a piece of bread’ (1Sa. 2:36).”
- V.25.** A. Said R. Joshua b. Levi, “Come and take note of how great are the humble in the sight of the Holy One, blessed be he.
- B. “For when the sanctuary stood, a person would bring a burnt-offering, gaining thereby the reward for bringing a burnt-offering, or a meal-offering, and gaining the reward for a meal offering.
- C. “But a person who is genuinely humble does Scripture treat as if he had made offerings of all the sacrifices,
- D. “as it is said, ‘The sacrifices [plural] of God are a broken spirit’ (Psa. 51:19).
- E. “And not only so, but his prayer is not rejected, as it is said, ‘A broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise’ (Psa. 51:19).”
- F. And R. Joshua b. Levi said, “Whoever properly sets his ways in this world will have the merit of witnessing the salvation of the Holy One, blessed be he,
- G. “as it is said, ‘To him who orders his way I will show the salvation of God’ (Psa. 50:23).
- H. “Do not read ‘orders’ but ‘properly sets’ [his] way.” [Cohen, p. 21, n. 6: “He calculates the loss incurred in fulfilling a precept against the reward it will bring him.”]

We now resume the exposition of the clauses of the Mishnah. We revert to the opening lines of M. 1:2, having dealt with 1:2D, turning back to 1:2A. I do not know why the anticipated order of the composites has been revised. The exposition takes up the contradictory premises of successive clauses.

VI.1 A. How does he express jealousy to her? [M. 1:2A]:

- B. *Now the passage at hand contains an internal contradiction.*
- C. *You have said, **If he stated to her before two witnesses, “Do not speak with Mr. So-and-so” [M. 1:2B]...***
- D. *Accordingly, the act of speaking constitutes an act of going aside [in secret with the named man, for doing so justifies the husband’s act of expressing jealousy.]*
- E. *Then the passage goes on to state: **If she indeed spoke with him, she still is permitted to have sexual relations with her husband and is permitted to eat heave-offering [M. 1:2C].***
- F. *Accordingly, the act of speaking is null [and bears no consequences whatever]. [So contradicts E.]*
- G. *Said Abayye, “This is the sense of the passage: ‘Do not speak...and she spoke..., do not speak...and she went aside’ — that is null.*
- H. *“[If he said,] ‘Do not go aside,’ **if she indeed spoke with him, she still is permitted to have sexual relations with her husband and is permitted to eat heave-offering. If she went with him to some private place and remained with him sufficient time to become unclean, she is prohibited from having sexual relations with her husband and is prohibited from eating heave-offering [M. 1:2D-E].**”*

We proceed to the exposition of the next clause, raising the question of why the woman’s status should be treated as subject to doubt.

VII.1 A. [And if her husband] should die, she performs the rite of halisah but is not taken into levirate marriage [M. 1:2F]:

- B. *But why? Let her also enter into levirate marriage? [What is unsure in her status, that she cannot consummate the union with the brother of the deceased, childless cuckold? For it is only because of an uncertain relationship with the deceased that we instruct her to undertake the rite of removing the shoe, Deu. 25: 5-10.]*
- C. *Said R. Joseph, “Scripture has stated, ‘And when she has departed out of his house, she may go and be another man’s wife’ (Deu. 24: 2).*
- D. *“Another man may she marry, but not her brother-in-law. [Deu. 24: 2 specifies that when the wife departs his house, upon the husband’s divorce or death, then she marries someone else, not the brother in law.]”*
- E. *Said to him Abayye, “And in accord with that reasoning, she also should not have to undertake a rite of halisah [removing the shoe]! [In what way is she yet wed to the deceased?]”*
- F. *He said to him, “Now if the husband were yet alive, would she not require a writ of divorce [to be free of that marital tie, even though she was accused of unfaithfulness]? Here too she should undertake the rite of halisah .”*
- G. *And there are those who state the matter as follows: Said R. Joseph, “The All-Merciful has said, ‘And when she has departed out of his house, she may go and be another man’s wife’ — so as not to destroy his house [as her immorality would if she were to remain there].*
- H. *“Now do you really want her to enter into levirate marriage [with his surviving brother in law]? [Surely not!])”*

- I. *Said to him Abayye, "But then she also should not marry anyone else, on the same principle, that [her immorality] not destroy the other man's house either!"*
- J. *He said to him [6A], "Do we force her on [the second husband] against his will? [She may well conduct herself properly in the new marriage]."*
- K. *And there are those who give the following version of the same matter: Said R. Joseph, "Scripture has called [the second husband] 'another,' for he is not the match of the first [husband at all].*
- L. *"For this one [the first husband] put an evil woman out of his house, while that one [the second husband] brought an evil woman into his house. Yet you maintain that she should enter levirate marriage with the deceased brother's surviving brother?!"*
- M. *Said to him Abayye, "If that is the case, then, if she is married to someone else, and the latter should die without children, she should not enter into levirate marriage with his surviving brother,*
- N. *"for Scripture calls him 'another' [and we cannot compel the brother in law to marry her].*
- O. *"No, [that need not follow,] for in this second marriage, she may have maintained a spotless reputation."*
- P. *[Answering the same question with which we began at A,] Raba said, "It is an argument a fortiori that she should not enter into levirate marriage. If she has been forbidden [to remain wed] to the one who had been permitted to her [namely, the original husband, the cuckold], is it not an argument a fortiori that she should not enter marriage with one who had been to begin with forbidden to her [namely, the husband's brother, who now survives]!"*
- Q. *Said to him Abayye, "But how, by that reasoning, would you deal with this case: As to a high priest who betrothed a widow and who died, and who has a brother who is an ordinary priest — the woman should not enter into levirate marriage with the surviving brother. [Why not?] If she had been forbidden to the one who had been permitted to her [namely, the high priest, for the high priest is forbidden to marry a non-virgin, hence a widow], should she not all the more so be forbidden to marry to the one who had in any event been forbidden to her [when her husband-to-be was alive, namely, his brother the ordinary priest? But that is not the case, since she is in fact permitted to marry an ordinary priest. Only a high priest is required to marry a virgin.] [The argument above thus produces an absurdity.]"*
- R. *"If she becomes forbidden" — but she is actually subject to a prohibition anyhow [that is, she was forbidden to the high priest, as a non-virgin, in any event!]*
- S. *"To one to whom she is allowed" — he is forbidden to marry her. [So the premises of the argument are all wrong to begin with!]*
- T. *"Rather, [take the case of] the wife of a priest who had been raped [and so was forbidden to remain wed to her husband], and the husband died, leaving a surviving brother who was a profaned priest [by reason of impaired genealogy. That is, the brother was genealogically disqualified from the priesthood, and so was not subject to the prohibitions affecting the deceased brother, who was not*

subject to those same prohibitions, e.g., two brothers with one father but different mothers].

- U. “In such a case, the widow should not enter into levirate marriage. [Why not?] If she was forbidden to the brother to whom she had been permitted [who has now died], should she not be forbidden to the one who had been prohibited to her from before hand [the surviving brother]? [Now we have a false argument. The disqualified priest certainly is able to marry the deceased’s widow, even though she had been raped].”
- V. *[The other replies:] “A woman who had been raped may marry an Israelite [a non-priest], and no prohibition applies in his case [so the same objection to the argument ad absurdum applies here as it did above, and Abbaye’s rejection of the proposed explanation is null].”*

The Talmud begins the tractate from the most distant perspective, asking about the place of a given tractate in relationship to its neighbors, fore and aft. The exegesis of the Mishnah’s language begins at II.1. Unit III goes on to the substance of M. 1:1A, Eliezer’s view of the sort of testimony that is required. The main point is that in the present case a single witness suffices for part of the procedure, just as Eliezer says. It seems to me that the text of unit III presents some problems of both repetition and sense. At unit IV we proceed to Joshua’s statement, M. 1:1B. The proof-text for his statement is compared to that for Eliezer’s. The proof-text for his statement is compared to that for Eliezer’s. We then proceed to Tosefta’s version of Eliezer’s view and to the difficulty the Talmud’s authorities had in squaring Tosefta’s criticism of Yosé’s position in Eliezer’s name with the Mishnah’s version of Eliezer’s view, since the same criticism applies to both. Since it refers back to Yosé b. R. Judah, the following is continuous. But the main focus is on whether or not the rite of expressing jealousy goes forward beyond the destruction of the Temple, with the secondary issue of the meaning of the word “express jealousy,” and whether that meaning is positive or negative. The construction is neatly balanced and carefully spelled out. Unit V:9-25 places the topic into a broader context of attitude, humility as against arrogance, with arrogance serving to explain adulterous behavior. The redactional program was to deal with the language of the Mishnah-paragraph, then its broader implications where pertinent; then the corresponding materials of the Tosefta; then the larger themes relevant in a general way to both, with long passages of thematically relevant materials assembled to fill out the picture.

1:3A-D

- A. **And these women [married to priests and accused of unfaithfulness] are prohibited from eating heave-offering:**
- B. **(1) She who says, “I am unclean to you,” and (2) she against whom witnesses testified that she is unclean;**
- C. **and (3) she who says, “I shall not drink the bitter water,” and (4) she whose husband will not force her to drink it;**
- D. **and (5) she whose husband has sexual relations with her on the way [up to Jerusalem for the rite of drinking the water].**

We move on to the subject of women who do not undergo the rite of drinking the water and who, if married to priests, no longer may eat priestly rations; the Talmud immediately provides scriptural evidence for that proposition.

- I.1** A. *Said R. Amram, “This teaching did R. Sheshet say to us, furthermore drawing illumination in that regard from the Mishnah-passage before us:*
- B. *“As to an accused wife against whom are witnesses overseas [and not available for testimony] — they do not examine her through the ordeal of the bitter water. [The water will not work.]*
- C. *“What is the Scriptural basis for that view? Scripture has stated, “And if she goes aside and is made unclean, and there is no witness against her” (Num. 5:13).*
- D. *“The ordeal applies, [therefore] to one concerning whom no one knows the facts.*
- E. *“Then excluded is a case such as this one, in which case there is someone who knows the facts of the matter against her.’*
- F. *“And he drew illumination from the Mishnah-passage before us, for it has been taught: **And she against whom witnesses testified that she is unclean [M. 1:3B].***
- G. *“Now when did the witnesses come? If we say that they came before she drank the water [and testified that she had committed adultery], then she is a whore [by their testimony, and does not drink the water at all].*
- H. *“Rather, they came after she drank.*
- I. *“Now to be sure if you say, that the water does not test [whether or not she has sinned], there is no difficulty.*
- J. *“But if you maintain that the water does indeed test [her status and prior actions], then the matter should be clarified through the ordeal retroactively, [and since she was unaffected it must follow] that the witnesses are perjurers.” [It follows that the position announced at B is sustained by the Mishnah-paragraph at hand, as much as by Scripture.]*
- K. *Said to him R. Joseph, “Under any circumstances I say to you that the water does indeed put her to the test.*
- L. *“But in this case I hold that merit [attained on other counts entirely] suspended [the action of the water] for her. [The witnesses need not be perjurers; the water nonetheless affects her.]”*
- M. *Wherein then do [Sheshet and Joseph] differ?*
- N. *In a case in which the woman fell ill [later on], in accord with the teaching of Rabbi.*
- O. *For we have learned in the Mishnah:*
- P. **Rabbi says, “Merit suspends the affects of the water in the case of the bitter water, so that the woman does not [die but also does not] again conceive and give birth or return to her former beauty. On the other hand, she gradually sickens and at the end dies by the same death [as that brought on dramatically by the water itself].”**
- Q. *R. Sheshet maintains the view that [in the case of suspension through merit], both in the position of Rabbi and in that of rabbis, she sickens.*

- R. *R. Joseph takes the view that, in Rabbi's view, she sickens, but in rabbis' view, she does not sicken.*
- S. *R. Shimi bar Ashi objected [to Sheshet], "R. Simeon says, 'Merit will not suspend the working of the bitter water. If you say that merit will suspend the working of the bitter water, then you discredit the water in the case of all women who drink it.*
- T. *"And you give a bad name to the pure women who have drunk it, for people will say, "They were really unclean, but merit suspended the effects of the water."*
- U. *"Now if the rule governing the one against whom there are witnesses overseas [is that the water will not work in their case], then in such a case as this too you give a bad name to clean women who drank the water, for people will say, 'They really were unclean, but there are witnesses against them overseas [so the water did not work against them."*
- V. *Now do you cite R. Simeon? But in the view of R. Simeon, since the matter of merit does not suspend the working of the water, the availability of overseas witnesses also does not suspend the working of the water.*
- W. Rab objected [to Sheshet], **"And these are the ones whose meal-offerings are burned: [6B] The one who says, 'I am unclean to you,' and the one against whom witnesses came to testify that she is unclean [M. 3:6E-F]:**
- X. *"Now when did the witnesses come? If we say that it was before the meal-offering was sanctified [by being placed in a utensil for service], the meal can just as well go forth as unconsecrated. Then it must be after the meal-offering was sanctified.*
- Y. *"Now if you say that the water indeed does examine her [status], then it will follow that the woman is subject to the act of consecrating and offering [her meal-offering], and that the meal-offering was validly consecrated to begin with. [Then the stated law has no problem with the rule], for that is why her meal offering is burned.*
- Z. *"But if you say that the water does not examine [her status], then retrospectively matters are clarified that, when the meal-offering was sanctified, it was sanctified in error [and therefore is not regarded as holy at all] so that it may go forth as unconsecrated meal." [It follows that the water does not work in the case of overseas witnesses. Otherwise the cited rule, W, makes no sense.]*
- AA. Said R. Judah of Disqarta, "[We may deal,] for example, with a case in which the woman committed an act of prostitution in the courtyard of the Temple, [after the meal offering had been consecrated], so that, when the meal to begin with had been consecrated, it had been properly consecrated" [but later on her actions rendered the rite null. That is why in the case in the Mishnah-passage cited by Rab, the meal-offering has to be burned. Rab's objection, Z, is met.]
- BB. R. Mesharsheya said, "[How could an act of prostitution take place in the courtyard?] Do not the assistant priests accompany her?"
- CC. [Judah may reply:] "We deal with a case in which she committed an act of prostitution with the junior priests themselves."

- DD. *R. Ashi said, “We may speak of a case in which she had to make use of the toilet facilities. Would the junior priests come along suspended in her bonnet? [She could have done something with someone other than a priest anyhow.]”*
- EE. *R. Papa said, “In the end matters are as we originally said [that we deal with overseas witnesses]. And as to your objection that the meal offering in that case should go forth as unconsecrated food,*
- FF. *“in fact we deal with a rabbinical decree, to prevent people from saying that [the priests] take out of the [Temple] utensil [something that has been consecrated and treat it as] unconsecrated.”*
- GG. [Citing Tannaite rules to the contrary,] *R. Mari objected [to Papa], “If her meal-offering was made unclean before it was sanctified in a utensil, lo, it is in the status of all other such meal-offerings and is to be redeemed. And if this takes place after it is sanctified in a utensil, lo, it is in the status of all other such [contaminated] meal-offerings and is to be burned [M. 3:6A-D].*
- HH. *“If the handful of meal had been consecrated, but the priest did not have a chance to offer it up before the husband died or before the wife died, lo, that is in the status of all equivalent meal-offerings and is to be burned. If the handful of meal-offering had been offered up, but the priest did not have a chance to eat the residue before the husband died or before the wife died, lo, that is in the status of all meal-offerings [in an equivalent situation], and it may be eaten. For to begin with the meal offering was offered on account of a doubt. The matter of doubt affecting the woman has been atoned for and goes its way. If witnesses came to testify against her that she was unclean, her meal-offering is burned. If they turned out to be conspiring witnesses, one way or the other the meal-offering is treated as unconsecrated [T. Sot. 2:4, 2:5A-C]. [This contradicts Papa’s view that we are concerned people not think what has been consecrated is removed as unconsecrated food.]”*
- II. *Now you have made mention of perjured witnesses, and in such a case, there is public knowledge of the matter [and hence, in such a case, people also will understand the disposition of the meal-offering].*

I.2. A. A Tannaite teaching accords with the view of R. Sheshet [A], but not on the basis of the verse that he cited [at C]:

- B. “She is clean” (Num. 5:28) — and not one who may be subject to testimony by overseas witnesses.
- C. “And she is clean” and merit does not suspend the effects of the water.
- D. “[And if] she [is clean]” — and not [the water is null because] women spinning in moonlight gossip about her.
- E. *And R. Simeon [who maintains merit does not suspend the water’s effect]? While he does not interpret the and [as in the cited Tannaite teaching], lo, there is [7A] the matter of one against whom are overseas witnesses.*
- F. *Such a case is not commonplace.*

The supplement to M. 1:2 takes up the question of wives of priests who are subject to the rule of not eating heave-offering. These are, B, women who certainly have had sexual relations with other men; C, women who will not clarify the matter through the ordeal; and D, women who, similarly, have sexual relations en route to the

ordeal, in which case there will be no ordeal — five in all. E-G then work out the matter of D. The Talmud pursues its own interest and is placed here only because it makes reference to the Mishnah-paragraph at hand. In fact the Talmud investigates the issue of whether or not a woman's merit, accumulated from ancestry or good deeds of her own, may suspend the working of the bitter water. That issue clearly has no bearing on the Mishnah's rule. The Talmud's discussion is sustained and well carried out. I do not see a single interpolation, and the two components, Nos. 1, 2, form a single composition.

1:3E-G

- E. What should he do in respect to her?**
- F. He brings her to the court in that place [in which they live], and [the judges] hand over to him two disciples of sages, lest he have sexual relations with her on the way.**
- G. R. Judah says, "Her husband is trustworthy in regard to her [not to have sexual relations in this circumstance]."**

We begin with a minor gloss of the Mishnah's language and its implications.

I.1 A. Two [disciples of sages (M. 1:3E)] and he — lo, there are three!

- B.** *May I then propose that this supports the view of Rab.*
- C.** For R. Judah said Rab said, "[The statement that a woman may be alone with two men] pertains only to a town. But as to a trip, there must be three. Perhaps one of them will have to attend to his natural needs, and it will turn out that one of the men [the remaining one] will be left alone with a woman forbidden to have sexual relations with him.
- D.** *No, [that is not the case]. Here the reason is so that there will be two witnesses in her regard.*
- E.** *[We give the passage a further close reading and note that] disciples of sages indeed [are sent along], but ordinary people are not.*
- F.** *May I then propose that this supports the further view of Rab.*
- G.** For R. Judah said Rab said, "[The statement that a woman may be alone with two men] pertains only to honorable men, but as to licentious ones, [a woman may] not [be alone] even with ten of them.
- H.** "[Continuing Rab's statement:] There was a case in which ten men took a woman out [of town] in a bier [to have sexual relations with her]."
- I.** *No, that is not the operative reason. Here the reason is that sages will have knowledge of how to give an appropriate admonition to [the husband, not to have sexual relations with his wife until her status has been properly tested.]*

We proceed to the next clause, complementing it with a Tannaite argument in support of Judah's position.

II.1 A. R. Judah says, "Her husband..." [M. 1:3G]:

- B.** *It has been taught on Tannaite authority:*
- C. R. Judah says, "Her husband is trustworthy in regard to her [not to have sexual relations in this circumstance] [M. Sot. 1:3G] —**
- D. "on the basis of an argument a fortiori:**

- E. “Now if in the case of a menstruating woman, on account of sexual relations with whom one incurs the penalty of extirpation, her husband is trustworthy in regard to her, in the case of an accused wife, on account of which the husband violates a negative commandment [but does not incur the penalty of extirpation], is it not logical that her husband should be deemed trustworthy in regard to her?” [T. **Sot. 1:25-V**].
- F. *And rabbis? [That very argument] supplies [proof of their view, namely:] [the prohibitions of sexual relations with] a menstruating woman, violation of which is subject to extirpation, is a strict matter to him, so he is believed.*
- G. *[The violation of the prohibition against having sexual relations with] one’s accused wife, which is subject merely to a negative prohibition [and violation is penalized in a less severe way] is not a strict matter to him, so he is not to be believed.*
- H. *And does R. Judah bring proof for his position merely from an argument a fortiori? Lo, R. Judah derives the required proof from verses of Scripture. For it has been taught on Tannaite authority:*
- I. “And the husband shall bring his wife to the priest” (Num. 5:15).
- J. On the basis of the law of the Torah it is the husband who brings his wife. But it is sages who have said that **they hand over to him two disciples of sages, lest he have sexual relations with her on the way** [M. **1:3F**].
- K. **R. Yosé says, “Her husband is trustworthy in regard to her, on the basis of an argument a fortiori: Now if in the case of a menstruating woman, on account of sexual relations with whom one incurs the penalty of extirpation, her husband is trustworthy in regard to her, in the case of an accused wife, on account of which the husband violates a negative commandment — is it not an argument a fortiori [that he should be believed in her regard]?”**
- L. They said to him, “No. If you have said the rule in the case of the menstruating woman, who becomes permitted after she is prohibited, will you state the same rule in regard to the accused wife, who will never be permitted once she is prohibited?”
- M. “And so Scripture says, Stolen water is sweeter (Pro. 9:16).” [T. **Sot. 1:2V-X**].
- N. **R. Judah says, “Scripture has expressed its trust in him with regard to her, since it says, And the husband shall bring his wife to the priest (Num. 5:15).” [T. **Sot. 1:3**].**
- O. *He first argued with them in terms of the argument a fortiori. When they overturned it, he went and offered a Scriptural proof.*
- P. *And R. Judah [at M. **1:3G**] offers the same opinion as the first authority [who cited Num. 5:15, that is, at M. **1:3F**: **He brings to her....**].*
- Q. *The difference between them is represented by the paragraph beginning, **But sages have said** [M. **1:3F**].*

Unit I compares the law at hand with theories of Rab on a parallel issue. In both exercises the framer differentiates the case at hand from Rab’s. Unit II then extensively goes over Tosefta’s complement, at which an argument is supplied to Judah/Yosé (names commonly interchanged).

1:4-6

- A. They would bring her up to the high court which is in Jerusalem and admonish her as they admonish witnesses in a capital crime.
- B. They say to her, “My daughter, much is done by wine, much is done by joking around, much is done by kidding around, much is done by bad friends. For the sake of the great Name which is written in holiness, do it so that it will not be blotted out by water [Num. 5:23].”
- C. and they tell her things which neither she nor the family of her father’s house should be hearing. — M. 1:4
- A. [Now] if she said, “I am unclean,” she gives a quittance for her marriage-contract [which is not paid over to her], and goes forth [with a writ of divorce].
- B. And if she said, “I am clean,” they bring her up to the eastern gate, which is at the entrance of Nicanor’s Gate.
- C. There it is that they force accused wives to drink the bitter water,
- D. and they purify women after childbirth and purify lepers.
- E. And a priest grabs her clothes — if they tear, they tear, and if they are ripped up, they are ripped up — until he bares her breast.
- F. And he tears her hair apart [Num. 5:18].
- G. R. Judah says, “If she had pretty breasts, he did not let them show. And if she had pretty hair, he did not pull it apart. — M. 1:5
- A. [If] she was clothed in white clothing, he puts black clothes on her.
- B. [If] she had gold jewelry, [7B] chains, nose-rings, and finger rings on, they take them away from her to put her to shame.
- C. Then he brings a rope made out of twigs and ties it above her breasts.
- D. And whoever wants to stare at her comes and stares, except for her boy-slaves and girl-slaves, since in any case she has no shame before them.
- E. And all women are allowed to stare at her, since it is said, That all women may be taught not to do after your lewdness (Eze. 23:48). — M. 1:6

We begin by asking for a scriptural foundation for the rule. The usual exegetical program follows: contrast to other Tannaite sayings, Scripture’s demonstrations of the Mishnah’s propositions, and the like.

- I.1** A. [They would bring her up to the high court which is in Jerusalem and admonish her as they admonish witnesses in a capital crime:] *What is the source of the opinion [that the ordeal takes place at the high court of seventy-one in Jerusalem]?*
- B. *Said R. Hiyya bar Gamda said R. Yosé bar Hanina, “We draw an analogy through the appearance of the word ‘Torah’ in two contexts.*
- C. *“Here it is written, ‘And the priest shall do to her in accord with this Torah’ (Num. 5:30).*
- D. *“And in another context it is written, ‘According to the Torah which they will teach you’ (Deu. 17:11) [with reference to the high court].*

- E. *“Just as, in the latter case, we speak of the court of seventy-one, so here we speak of the court of seventy-one.”*

II.1 A. And they admonish her, etc. [M. 1:4A]:

- B. *The objection [to the formulation of the Mishnah, urging the woman not to drink] was raised on the basis of the following:*
- C. **And just as the court admonishes her to drink, so they admonish her not to drink.**
- D. **Thus they say to her, “Now my daughter, if it is perfectly clear to you that you are clean, stand your ground and drink.**
- E. **“For these waters are like a dry salve which is put on living flesh and does no harm.**
- F. **“If there is a wound, it penetrates and goes through the skin; if there is no wound, it has no effect” [T. *Sot.* 1:6A-D].**
- G. *There is no contradiction [between the two formulations]. The one [in the Mishnah] is prior to the blotting out of the divine name in the scroll, the one [in the Tosefta] is after the blotting out of the divine name in the scroll. [At that point the Mishnah’s emphasis is moot.]*

III.1 A. And they tell her things... [M. 1:4C]:

- B. *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:*
- C. He tells her lessons of narrative and events that took place [and are recorded] in the earlier writings [of the Pentateuch].
- D. For example “Which wise men have told and have not hid from their fathers [by confessing their sin]” (Job. 15:18).
- E. Specifically: Judah confessed and was not ashamed to do so.
- F. What was his destiny? He inherited the world to come.
- G. Reuben confessed and was not ashamed to do so.
- H. What was his destiny? He inherited the world to come.
- I. What was their reward? What was their reward?! *It was as we have stated [F, H].*
- J. Rather, what was their reward in this world?
- K. “To them alone the land was given, and no stranger passed among them” (Job. 15:19).

III.2. A. Now we find no problem in the case of Judah, for we find that he confessed, as it is written, “And Judah acknowledged them and said, She is more righteous than I” (Gen. 38:26).

- B. *But how do we know that Reuben confessed?*
- C. *It is in accord with what R. Samuel bar Nahmani said R. Yohanan said, “What is the meaning of that which is written: ‘Let Reuben live and not die, and this for Judah’ (Deu. 33: 6-7)?*
- D. *“All those years that the Israelites were in the wilderness, the bones of Judah were rolling around in the coffin, until Moses went and sought mercy for him, saying before him, ‘Lord of the ages, who caused Reuben to confess? It was Judah [who set the example].’*

- E. “‘And this for Judah.’ Forthwith: ‘Hear, O Lord, the voice of Judah’ (Deu. 33: 7).
- F. “Each limb then entered its socket [and stopped rolling about].
- G. *“But they did not bring him up into the Torah-session in the firmament.*
- H. “[Moses then prayed], ‘And bring him in to his people.’
- I. *“But he could not follow the give and take of the argument [that rabbis were discussing concerning the law].*
- J. “[Moses prayed]: ‘With his hands let him contend for himself’ (Deu. 33: 7).
- K. *“He had no tradition in hand pertinent to what was under discussion in the law.*
- L. “[Moses prayed:] ‘Be a help against his adversaries’ (Deu. 33: 7).”
- M. *Now Judah confessed, so that Tamar should not be burned, but why did Reuben confess? [What justified his doing so?]*
- N. *Did not R. Sheshet say, “I regard as impudent somebody who in public counts out his sins one by one”?*
- O. *It was so that his brothers should not be suspected [of what he had done].*

The next clause is asked to answer a tangential question on the disposition of the quittance to which reference is made.

IV.1 A. If she said, “I am unclean” [M. 1:5A]:

- B. *[At issue is whether, when a marriage-settlement is paid off or nullified, one gives a quittance, that is, a receipt, or whether the original document of the marriage-settlement itself is ripped up.] That then implies that they write out a quittance.*
- C. *Said Abayye, “Repeat [the Mishnah as follows]: ‘They rip it up.’”*
- D. *Said to him Raba, “And lo, the framer of the Mishnah states explicitly, ‘A quittance.’”*
- E. *Rather, said Raba, “We deal with a context in which, to begin with, they do not write out a marriage-settlement [but treat it as an unstated stipulation, everywhere applicable]. [In such a case there would be a quittance, since there is no document of a marriage settlement to rip up.]”*

The systematic exposition of the Mishnah’s language now points out an anomaly in the wording.

V.1 A. And if she said, “I am clean,” they bring her up to the eastern gate [M. 1:5B]:

- B. **They bring her up? [8A]** *But she is standing there!*
- C. *[The point is that] they bring her up and take her down so as to tire her out.*
- D. *This is in line with the following Tannaite teaching:*
- E. R. Simeon b. Eleazar says, “The court moves witnesses from place to place so as to confuse them, so that [if their testimony is false] they will retract.”

From the known, which the Mishnah’s rule now makes explicit, we move to the unknown, a case not covered by the Mishnah but subject to the same rule.

VI.1 A. There it is that they force accused wives to drink the bitter water [M. 1:5C]:

- B. *There is no problem [in deriving scriptural evidence for that allegation] in the case of accused wives, for it is written, “And the priest shall set the woman before the Lord” (Num. 5:18).*
- C. *Likewise for those afflicted with the skin-ailment, for it is written, “And the priest who cleanses him shall set the man... before the Lord” (Lev. 14:11).*
- D. *But what is the basis for including in that rule women who have given birth [that the woman stands at the location at which her rite is performed]?*
- E. *If we say that it is so that they may come and stand alongside their offerings, as it is taught, in Tannaite teaching: “A person’s offering is brought forward only if that person is standing beside it,”*
- F. *if that is the operative principle, then male and female Zabs likewise [should come and stand at the eastern gate, alongside their sacrificial animals].*
- G. *That indeed is the case.*
- H. *[The male and female Zabs are not mentioned in the Mishnah-paragraph at hand because] the Tannaite authority who framed the passage selected only some of those [who are subject to the rule].*

The next entry takes up a question not covered by the Mishnah-paragraph but introduced in Tosefta’s complement. It may be that the next clause of the Mishnah, And a priest grabs her clothes, rests on Num. 5:16, that is, the priest draws near and tears the woman’s clothing, and the same verse is invoked in what follows. If that is the case, then the insertion of the following at just this point follows the program of Mishnah-exegesis; then VI:2 really should be VII.1. I do not see much at stake in the question, and prefer to retain what seems to me the clear signals of the document on its relationship to the Mishnah.

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

- B. **Two accused wives are not made to drink simultaneously**
- C. **so that one not be shameless before the other.**
- D. **R. Judah says, “That is not the reason, but because it is said, And the priest will draw her near (Num. 5:16) — her alone, and he does not draw two women near [at the same time] [T. Sot. 1:6E-H].**
- E. *And as to the first authority [behind B-C, who does not concur with Judah’s view that they do the rite one at a time], is not “her” written?*
- F. *The first authority in fact is R. Simeon, who expounds the reasoning behind a biblical verse.*
- G. *“Now what is the reasoning for the verse at hand” — that is what he intends to spell out.*
- H. *What is the reason that it is “her” by herself? It is so that **one may not be shameless before the other.***
- I. *What then is at issue between [Simeon and Judah]?*
- J. *At issue between them is the case of a woman who is shaking [in fright]. [Simeon would allow such a one to be tested along with another woman, because in this case she is not going to be arrogant toward the other woman. She already is humble. The stated reason does not apply.]*

- K. And do the priests administer to two women the water as an ordeal even in the case where one woman is trembling in fright? And lo, people are not supposed to carry out religious duties in bunches [but should do each one by itself].
- L. *For we have learned in Tannaite authority:*
- M. They do not administer the water to two accused wives at once, nor purify two persons afflicted with the skin ailment at once, nor pierce the ears of two slaves at once, nor break the necks of two heifers at once, for they do not carry out religious duties in bunches.
- N. *Said Abayye, and some say that it was R. Kahana, "There is no contradiction. Here [where we do it only to one woman at a time], we deal with a single priest, but there [where we may do it to two women at a time], we have two priests [available to carry out the rite, one for each woman]."*

The citation of Tannaite complements to the Mishnah's statements continues, now with the interplay between Scripture and the Mishnah's rule.

VII.1 A. And a priest grabs her clothes [M. 1:5E]:

- B. *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:*
- C. "And let the hair of the woman's head go loose" (Num. 5:18).
- D. I know only that that applies to her head. How do I know that it pertains also to her body?
- E. Scripture says, "The woman..."
- F. If so, why does Scripture say, "And let the hair of the head go loose"?
- G. It indicates that the priest undoes her hair.

The obvious premise of the next phrase is called into question.

VIII.1 A. R. Judah says, "If she had pretty breasts..." [M. 1:5G]:

- B. *Does this then imply that R. Judah takes account of licentious thoughts [which he wishes to forestall], while rabbis do not?*
- C. *And lo, we have heard a tradition that reverses those two positions, as it has been taught on Tannaite authority:*
- D. [When the court administers the death penalty by stoning], "in the case of a man, they cover him with a piece of cloth in front, and in the case of a woman, with two pieces of cloth, one in front and one behind, because all of her is in the category of nudity," the words of R. Judah.
- E. And sages say, "A man is stoned naked, and a woman is not stoned naked."
- F. *Said Rabbah, "The reason for the rule at hand is this: the woman may go forth vindicated in court, and [if beforehand they saw her nude] the junior priests will lust after her. In that other case, lo, the woman is stoned. [No one takes account of necrophilia.]"*
- G. *And should you maintain that by looking at her nude, the men will think lustful thoughts about some other woman [which we should want to forestall], has not Rabbah stated, "We have learned that the sexual desire is aroused only by what the eyes actually see."*

VIII.2. A. Said Raba, "[Shall we then say that] the statement by R. Judah contradicts another statement of R. Judah [A, D], while the statement of rabbis at hand does not contradict another statement of rabbis? [Surely not!]

- B. *Rather, said Raba, "The statement of R. Judah does not contradict another statement of R. Judah, as we have just explained [F], [8B] and the statement of rabbis likewise does not present a contradiction to another statement of rabbis.*
- C. *"Here what is the scriptural basis [for rabbis view that one has to humiliate the woman, even if she is not unclean]? 'So that all women may be taught not to do after your lewdness' (Eze. 23:48)." [Accordingly, there is no consideration shown to the accused woman.] But in that other instance, [namely, stoning the woman to death], you have no greater warning than that."*
- D. *Now should you wish to propose that both be done to her [namely, humiliation prior to the stoning],*
- E. *said R. Nahman said Rabbah bar Abbuha, "Said Scripture, 'You will love your neighbor as yourself' (Lev. 19:18). Select for him a praiseworthy form of death [and do not needlessly humiliate him in the process]."*
- F. *May I propose that Tannaite authorities differ with regard to the view of R. Nahman?*
- G. *No, all parties concur with the view of R. Nahman. But here the dispute at hand is that one authority [rabbis] holds the position that humiliation is worse than the pain of death, and the other party [Judah] holds that the pain of death is worse than humiliation.*

IX.1 A. If she was clothed in white clothing [M. 1:6A]:

- B. *A Tannaite authority [taught]: If the black garments look nice on her, they cover her with dirty ones.*

X.1 A. If she had gold jewelry, etc. [M. 1:6B]:

- B. *That rule is self-evident. Now if the woman is going to be made repulsive anyhow, is there any question about these ornaments?*
- C. *[Indeed there is. For] what might you have maintained? With ornaments such as these on her, it would be still more humiliating, as people say, "Stripped naked, yet wearing shoes" [Cohen].*
- D. *Accordingly, we are informed [that that is not the case].*

XI.1 A. Then he brings a rope, etc. [M. 1:6C]:

- B. *The question was addressed to R. Abba by R. Huna, "As to the rope of twigs, is it essential to the rite of the accused wife?*
- C. *"If the reason for specifying it is that her clothing not slip down, then it is a mere refinement, for using a small belt would also do as well.*
- D. *"Or if the reason is in accord with what a master said, namely, 'She put on a belt for him, therefore the priest brings a twig rope and ties it to her above her breasts,' then it is essential to the rite [and part of its symbolism]."*
- E. *He said to him, "You have learned to repeat the Tannaite tradition as follows: **And then he brings a rope made out of twigs and ties it above her breasts** so that her clothing may not slip down. [So the former reason is correct, with the obvious consequence.]"*

XII.1 A. And whoever wants to stare at her comes and stares [M. 1:6D]:

- B. *Now there is a contradiction in the passage itself.*

- C. *You have said, “Whoever wants to stare at her comes and stares, so there is no difference whether it is men or women.*
- D. *Then the passage goes on: And all women are allowed to stare at her [M. 1:6E]: [Which carries the implication that] it is all right for women, but not for men.*
- E. *Said Abayye, “Explain the former sentence as referring [only] to women.”*
- F. *Said Raba to him, “And lo, it is taught, **Whoever wants to stare at her comes and stares!**”*
- G. *Rather, said Raba, “Whoever wants to stare at her comes and stares, and there is no difference whether it is men or women.*
- H. *“But women are obligated to come and stare at her, as it is said, ‘That all women may be taught not to do after your lewdness’ (Eze. 23:48).”*

The Talmud systematically works its way through the phrases of the Mishnah, taking up various problems as they come. But the thrust of the Talmud is a phrase-by-phrase clarification and expansion of the Mishnah-paragraph. I see practically no intrusions or secondary developments of any kind.

1:7

- A. **By that same measure by which a man metes out [to others], do they mete out to him:**
- B. **She primped herself for sin, the Omnipresent made her repulsive.**
- C. **She exposed herself for sin, the Omnipresent exposed her.**
- D. **With the thigh she began to sin, and afterward with the belly, therefore the thigh suffers the curse first, and afterward the belly.**
- E. **But the rest of the body does not escape [punishment].**

- I.1 A. *Said R. Joseph, “Even though [with the end of the Jewish court system] the ‘measure’ has ceased, [the fundamental law] **by that same measure** [of divine retribution] [M. 1:7A] has not ceased.*
- B. *For R. Joseph said, and so too did R. Hiyya teach: “From the day on which the house of the sanctuary was destroyed, even though the sanhedrin ceased to be, the four forms of inflicting the death penalty did not cease to be.”*
- C. *Lo, they surely have ceased!*
- D. *Rather, “the law governing the four forms of the death penalty has not ceased to be.*
- E. *“He who became liable to the death penalty through stoning either falls from the roof or is trampled by a wild beast.*
- F. *“He who became liable to the death penalty through burning either falls into a fire or is bitten by a snake.*
- G. *“He who became liable to the death penalty through decapitation either is handed over for execution by the government, or thugs attack him [and cut off his head].*
- H. *“He who becomes liable to the death penalty through strangulation either drowns in a river or dies by a quinsy [Cohen].”*

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

- B. Rabbi [=Judah the Patriarch] [T.: R. Meir] did say, “On what basis in Scripture do you rule that by the same measure by which a man metes out, do they mete out to him [M. 1:7A]?”
- C. “Since it is said, ‘By measure in sending her away thou dost contend with her’ (Isa. 27: 8). I know only that he measured out with a se’ah. How do I know that [if] he measured out with a qab, a half-qab, a third-qab, a half-third-qab, a quarter-qab, a half-quarter qab, an eighth-qab, twentieth-qab [the same rule applies]?”
- D. “Since it says, ‘For all the armor of the armed man in the tumult’ (Isa. 9: 4), lo, you have here many measures.
- E. “I know only that this applies to something which comes by measure.
- F. “How do I know that perutot add up to a large sum?
- G. “Since it is said, Laying one thing to another to find out the account (Qoh. 7:27)” [T. Sot. 3:1].
- H. And so you find that with regard to the accused wife, with the measure with which she measured out, with that measure do they mete out to her.
- I. She stood out before him at the door of her house so as to be pretty before him, therefore a priest stands her in front of everybody at Nicanor’s gate, to display her shame, as it is said, And the priest will set the woman before the Lord (Num. 5:18) [T. Sot. 3:2].
- J. She wrapped a beautiful scarf for him on her head, therefore a priest takes her cap from her head and puts it under foot.
- K. She painted her face for him, therefore [9A] her face is made to turn yellow.
- L. She put blue on her eyes for him, therefore her eyes bulge out.
- M. She braided her hair for him, therefore a priest loosens it [T. Sot. 3:3].
- N. She signalled to him with her finger, therefore her finger-nails fall off.
- O. [She showed her flesh, therefore a priest tears her cloak and shows her shame in public.]
- P. She tied a belt for him, therefore a priest brings a rope made out of twigs and ties it above her breasts, and whoever wants to stare comes and stares at her [M. 1:6C-D].
- Q. The pushed her thigh at him, therefore her thigh falls.
- R. She took him on her belly, therefore her belly swells.
- S. She fed him goodies, therefore her meal-offering is fit for a cow.
- T. She gave him the best wines to drink in elegant goblets, therefore the priest gives her the bitter water to drink in a clay pot [T. Sot. 3:4].
- U. [Following T.:] She acted in secret, as it is said, “The eye also of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying, No eye shall see me” (Job. 24:15),
- V. and she does not know that He who is enthroned in the secret place of the world directed his face against her, since it is said, “And he disguises his face” (Job. 24:15).
- W. This teaches that the Omnipresent brings her secret out into the open, since it is said, Though his hatred cover [itself with guile, his wickedness shall be openly showed before the congregations] (Pro. 26:26) [T. Sot. 3:5].

- X. *[Undertaking the analysis of the foregoing, we revert to C:] Since the besought principle is derived from the verse, “By measure in sending her away thou dost contend with her” (Isa. 27: 8), what need is there for “For all the armor of the armed man in the tumult” (Isa. 9: 4)?*
- Y. The latter indicates that the punishment is by measure.
- Z. *And since that principle derives from “For all the armor of the armed man in the tumult,” what need is there for “By measure in sending her away thou dost contend with her”?*
- AA. *The answer accords with what R. Hinena bar Pappa said, for R. Hinena bar Papa said, “The Holy One, blessed be he, exacts punishment of a nation only when it goes forth into exile, as it is said, ‘By measure in sending her away thou dost contend with her’ (Isa. 27: 8).”*
- BB. *Is this really so [That all the punishment comes at the time of exile]? And did not Raba say, “What is the meaning of the three cups mentioned with reference to Egypt [at Gen. 40:11]?*
- CC. *“One that Egypt drank in the times of Moses, one that Egypt drank in the time of Pharaoh Neccho, and one that Egypt is destined to drink with her allies.” [So not all this punishment has yet been administered at the time of exile.]*
- DD. *Now if you wish to say that these [Egyptians, to whom reference is made] have gone their way, and the ones [around later on] are different ones [which accounts for the difference in punishment administered even after exile],*
- EE. *has it not been taught on Tannaite authority:*
- FF. **Said R. Judah, “Benjamin, an Egyptian proselyte, was my colleague among the disciples of R. Aqiba. Said Benjamin, ‘I am an Egyptian proselyte of the first generation, and I married an Egyptian proselyte of the first generation. Lo, I am planning to arrange a marriage for my son with a woman who is the daughter of an Egyptian proselyte woman, thus of the second generation, so that the son of my son will be permitted to enter into the congregation’” [T. Qid. 5:4G-H]. [So the Egyptians of the present day are the same ones of times past.]**
- GG. *[It follows that not all the punishment was administered at the time of exile of the Egyptians. So] if such a statement was made, this is how it had to have been formulated:*
- HH. Said R. Hinena bar Papa, “The Holy One, blessed be he, exacts punishment of a king only when he goes forth into exile, as it is said, ‘By measure in sending her away thou dost contend with her’ (Isa. 27: 8).”
- II. *Amemar repeated the teaching of R. Hinena bar Papa in regard to the following:*
- JJ. *“What is the meaning of the verse, ‘For I the Lord change not, therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed’ (Mal. 3: 6).*
- KK. *“‘I the Lord change not’ — ‘I have never punished a nation and gone and done it a second time.’*

LL. “‘And you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed’ — This is in line with the following verse of Scripture: ‘I will spend my arrows on them’ (Deu. 32:23). ‘My arrows are spent, but they are not consumed.’”

I.3. A. Said R. Hamnuna, “The Holy One, blessed be he, exacts punishment from a man only when his seah-measure has been filled [with guilty acts],

B. “as it is said, ‘In the fullness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits’ (Job. 20:22).”

I.4. A. R. Hinena bar Papa expounded, “What is the meaning of the verse, ‘Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous, praise is comely for the upright’ (Psa. 33: 1)?

B. “Do not read ‘praise is comely’ but ‘praise is a habitation.’

C. “This refers to Moses and David, over whose works their enemies did not rule. [This is explained.]

D. “David: As it is written, ‘Her gates are sunk in the ground’ (Lam. 2: 9).

E. “Moses: A master has said, ‘After the first sanctuary was built, the tent of meeting, its boards, hooks, bars, pillars, and sockets, were stored away.’ [So in both cases, no one profited by the materials of the sanctuary and the tent of meeting when the Temple was destroyed.]”

F. Where were they stored away?

G. Said R. Hisda said Abimi, “Underneath the crypts of the Temple.”

I.5. A. *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:*

B. **The accused wife set her eyes on someone who was not available to her.**

C. **What she wanted was not given to her, and what she had in hand was taken away from her [T. [Sot. 4:16](#)].**

D. **For whoever sets his eyes on what is not his own — what he wants is not given to him, and what he has is taken away from him.**

E. **[9B] So we find in the case of the snake of olden times, who set his eyes on one who was not appropriate for him. What he wanted was not given to him, and what he had in hand was taken away from him.**

F. **The Holy One, blessed be he, said, “I said that you should be king over all beasts and wild animals. Now that you did not want things that way, ‘You are more cursed than all the beasts and wild animals of the field’ (Gen. 3:14).**

G. **“I said that you should walk straight-up like a man. Now that you did not want things that way, ‘Upon your belly you shall go’ (Gen. 3:14).**

H. **“I said that you should eat human food and drink human drink. Now: ‘And dust you shall eat all the days of your life’ (Gen. 3:14).**

I. **“He had wanted to kill Adam and marry Eve. ‘And I will put enmity between you and the woman’ (Gen. 3:15).”**

J. **And so you find in the case of Cain, Korah, Balaam, Doeg, Ahitophel, Gahazi, Absalom, Adonijah, Uzziah, and Haman, all of whom set their eyes on what they did not have coming to them.**

K. **What they wanted was not given to them, and what they had in hand was taken away from them [T. [Sot. 4:17-19](#)].**

II.1 A. **With the thigh she began to sin, etc. [M. [1:7D](#)]:**

- B. *What is the scriptural basis for this view?*
 - C. *If one might wish to propose that it is on the count of the following verse of Scripture, “When the Lord makes your thigh to fall away and your belly swell” (Num. 5:21) [so mentioning the thigh, then the belly],*
 - D. *has it not been written [in reverse order], “Her belly shall swell and her thigh fall away” (Num. 5:27)?*
 - E. *Said Abayye, “When [the priest] states the curse, he curses the thigh first and then the belly.*
 - F. *“When the water imposes the ordeal, it tests the belly first and then it reaches the thigh.”*
 - G. *In connection with the curse, however, it also is written, “Make your belly swell and your thigh fall away” (Num. 5:22).*
 - H. *That is what the priest tells her, that the belly comes first, then the thigh, so as not to bring the bitter water into disrepute [should the effects come in a different order].*
- The Talmud draws mainly upon Tosefta in its exegesis of the Mishnah. Its own contribution is modest.

1:8-9

- A. **Samson followed his eyes [where they led him], therefore the Philistines put out his eyes, since it is said, And the Philistines laid hold on him and put out his eyes (Jud. 16:21).**
- B. **Absalom was proud of his hair, therefore he was hung by his hair [2Sa. 14:25-26].**
- C. **And since he had sexual relations with ten concubines of his father, therefore they thrust ten spear heads into his body, since it is said, And ten young men that carried Jacob’s armor surrounded and smote Absalom and killed him (2Sa. 18:15).**
- D. **And since he stole three hearts — his father’s, the court’s, and the Israelite’s — since it is said, And Absalom stole the heart of the men of Israel (2Sam. 15: 6) — therefore three darts were thrust into him, since it is said, And he took three darts in his hand and thrust them through the heart of Absalom (2Sa. 18:14). — M. 1:8**
- A. **And so is it on the good side:**
- B. **Miriam waited a while for Moses, since it is said, And his sister stood afar off (Exo. 2: 4), therefore, Israel waited on her seven days in the wilderness, since it is said, And the people did not travel on until Miriam was brought in again (Num. 12:15).**
- C. **Joseph had the merit of burying his father, and none of his brothers was greater than he, since it is said, And Joseph went up to bury his father...and there went up with him both chariots and horsemen (Gen. 50: 7, 9).**
- D. **We have none so great as Joseph, for only Moses took care of his [bones].**
- E. **Moses had the merit of burying the bones of Joseph, and none in Israel was greater than he, since it is said, And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him (Exo. 13:19).**

- F. We have none so great as Moses, for only the Holy One blessed he Be took care of his [bones], since it is said, And he buried him in the valley (Deu. 34: 6).
- G. And not of Moses alone have they stated [this rule], but of all righteous people, since it is said, And your righteousness shall go before you. The glory of the Lord shall gather you [in death] (Isa. 58: 8). — M. 1:9

The Mishnah's propositions pertaining to various biblical heroes now defines the program of a systematic topical exposition.

I.1. A. *Our rabbis have taught:*

- B. Samson rebelled by using his eyes, as it is said, "Then Samson said to his father, I saw one of the daughters of the Philistines at Timnah, now get her for me as my wife for she is upright in my eyes" (Jud. 14: 3).
- C. Therefore the Philistines blinded his eyes, as it is said, "And the Philistines seized him and put out his eyes" (Jud. 16:21) [T. Sot. 3:15].
 - D. *Is that so [that Samson sinned by wanting that woman]? And was it not written, "And his father and mother did not know that it was of the Lord" (Jud. 14: 4)?*
 - E. *Nonetheless, when he went, he followed his own wishes.*

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

- B. Rabbi says, "The beginning of his downfall took place in Gaza, so his punishment took place only in Gaza" [T. Sot. 3:15C].
- C. The beginning of his downfall took place in Gaza, as it is written, "And Samson went to Gaza and saw there a harlot" (Jud. 16: 1).
- D. Therefore his punishment took place in Gaza, as it is written, "And they brought him down to Gaza" (Jud. 16:21).
- E. But lo, it is written, "And Samson went down in Timnah" (Jud. 14: 1).
- F. Nonetheless, the beginning of his downfall took place in Gaza.

Now begins an exegesis of the verses that deal with the story of Samson. These are not cited sequentially, but formally, each of the compositions commences with a relevant verse.

I.3. A. And it came to pass afterward that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah" (Judg. 16: 4).

- B. *It has been taught on Tannaite authority:*
- C. Rabbi says, "If her name had not been Delilah, it should have been Delilah, for she weakened (DLDL) his strength, his heart, his deeds.
- D. "She weakened his strength, as it is written, 'And his strength left him' (Jud. 16:19).
- E. "She weakened his heart, as it is written, 'And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart' (Jud. 16:18).
- F. "She weakened his actions, *since the Presence of God departed from him*, as it is written, 'But he did not know that the Lord had departed from him' (Jud. 16:20).
- G. "And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart: *how did she know?*
- H. Said R. Hanina said Rab, "Truthful statements are readily discerned."

- I. Abayye said, “She knew that that righteous man would not use the Name of heaven in vain.
- J. “When he said, ‘I am a Nazir of God,’ (Jud. 16:17) *she said, ‘Now he is most certainly telling the truth.’”*
- I.4.** A. “And it came to pass, when she pressed him daily with her words and urged him” (Jud. 16:16):
- B. *What is the meaning of “urged him”?*
- C. Said R. Isaac, A member of the house of R. Ammi, “When they had sexual relations, she pulled out from underneath him.”
- I.5.** A. “Now therefore take care, I ask you, and do not drink wine or strong drink and do not eat any unclean thing” (Jud. 13: 4):
- B. *What is the meaning of “any unclean thing”?*
- C. *And, further, up to this point had [Samson’s mother] been eating unclean things?*
- D. Said R. Isaac, a member of the house of R. Ammi, “It refers to things that are forbidden to a Nazirite.”
- I.6.** A. “But God broke the hollow place that is in Lehi” (Jud. 15:19):
- B. Said R. Isaac, a member of the house of R. Ammi, “[Samson] lusted for an unclean thing [Philistine women], so his life was made to depend upon an unclean thing.
- I.7.** A. “And the spirit of the Lord began” (Jud. 13:25):
- B. Said R. Hama bar Hanina, “The prophecy of Jacob, our father, came to term, as it is written, ‘Dan shall be a serpent in the way’ (Gen. 49:17).”
- I.8.** A. “To strike him in Maheneh-Dan” (Jud. 13:25):
- B. Said R. Isaac, a member of the house of R. Ammi, “This teaches that the Presence of God was striking like a bell before him.
- C. *“Here it is written, ‘To strike him in Mahaneh-Dan,’ and elsewhere it is written, ‘A golden striker and a pomegranate’ (Exo. 28:34).”*
- D. “Between Zorah and Eshtaol” (Jud. 13:25):
- E. Said R. Assi, “Zorah and Eshtaol are two great mountains, and Samson uprooted them and ground them together.”
- I.9.** A. “He began to save Israel” (Jud. 13: 5):
- B. R. Hama b. Hanina said, **[10A]** “The oath of Abimelech became void, as it is written, ‘That you will not deal falsely with me nor with my son or grandson’ (Gen. 21:23). [So ended the alliance of the Philistines and the Israelites].”
- I.10.** A. “And the youth grew up and the Lord blessed him” (Jud. 13:24).
- B. With what did he bless him?
- C. Said R. Judah said R., “He blessed him as to his ‘height.’ While his ‘height’ was like that of other men, but his semen flowed like a river.”
- I.11.** A. “And Samson called to the Lord and said, ‘O Lord God, remember me, please, and strengthen me, please, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes’” (Jud. 16:28).

- B. Said R. Judah, "Said Samson before the Holy One, blessed be he, 'Lord of the ages, Remember in my favor the twenty years that I judged Israel, and I never said to a single one of them, 'Carry a staff [for me] from this place to that place.''"

I.12. A. "And Samson went and caught three hundred foxes" (Jud. 15: 4):

- B. *Why foxes in particular?*
C. Said R. Aibu bar Nagedi said R. Hiyya bar Abba, "Said Samson, 'Let [the sort of animal] that turns backward [and does not run a straight course] come and exact vengeance of the Philistines, who went backward from their oath [to me].'"

I.13. A. *It has been taught on Tannaite authority:*

- B. Said R. Simeon the Pious, "The breadth between Samson's shoulders was sixty cubits, as it is said, 'And Samson lay until midnight, and arose at midnight and laid hold of the doors of the gate of the city and the two posts, and plucked them up, bar and all, and put them on his shoulders' (Jud. 16: 3).
C. *"And we have as a tradition that the doors of Gaza were no less than sixty cubits broad."*

I.14. A. "And he did grind in the prison house" (Jud. 16:21):

- B. Said R. Yohanan, "Grinding refers only to transgression.
C. "And so Scripture says, 'Then let my wife grind for another' (Job. 31:10) [meaning, have sexual relations].
D. "This teaches that each man brought his wife to the prison so that she should conceive a child with him."
E. *R. Papa said, "This is the meaning of what people say: 'Set wine before the wine-drinker, set a basket of roots before a ploughman.'"*
F. And R. Yohanan said, "Whoever neglects his wife — his wife will neglect him,
G. "as it is said, 'If my heart has been enticed to a woman and I have laid wait at my neighbor's door' (Job. 31: 9), and the same verse continues, 'Then let my wife grind for another, and let others bow down upon her.'
H. *"That is in line with what people say: He among the big pumpkins, and his wife among the little ones."*
I. And R. Yohanan said, "Samson judged Israel like their Father who is in heaven,
J. "as it is said, 'Dan shall judge his people as One' (Gen. 49:16)."
K. And R. Yohanan said, "Samson was called by the name of the Holy One, blessed be he,
L. "as it is said, 'For the Lord God is a sun and a shield' (Psa. 84:12) [and the name Samson and the Hebrew word for sun derive from the same root]."
M. But if so, then may his name not be blotted out?
N. Rather, his name was like the name of the Holy One, blessed be he.
O. Just as the Holy One, blessed be he, is shield for the whole world, so Samson was the shield for his generation over Israel.
P. And R. Yohanan said, "Balaam was crippled in one leg, as it is said, 'And he went dislocated' (Num. 23: 3).
Q. "Samson was lame in both legs,

R. “as it is said, ‘A double dislocation in the path’ (Gen. 49:17).”

The exposition of the relevant verses concluded, we proceed to a set of personalities who form a class onto themselves, and each one of the specified names is expounded. Because Samson is on the list, the whole is inserted in one piece, as we should expect.

I.15. A. *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:*

- B. Five were created in accord with the paradigm of the upper [world], and all of them were punished through that [remarkable feature]:
- C. Samson in his strength, Saul in his neck, Absalom in his hair, Zedekiah in his eyes, Asa in his feet.
- D. Samson [was punished] in his strength, as it is written, “And his strength went from him” (Jud. 16:19).
- E. Saul in his neck, as it is written, “Saul took his sword and fell upon it” (1Sa. 31: 4).
- F. Absalom in his hair, *as will be explained.*
- G. Zedekiah in his eyes, as it is written, “They put out the eyes of Zedekiah” (Jud. 25: 7).
- H. Asa in his feet, as it is written, “But in his old age, he had a disease in his feet” (1Ki. 15:23).
 - I. Said R. Judah said Rab, “He was afflicted with gout.”
 - J. *Said Mar Zutra, son of R. Nahman, to R. Nahman, “What is gout like?”*
 - K. He said to him, “Like a needle in living flesh.”
 - L. *How did he know?*
 - M. *Some say he had it himself.*
 - N. *Some others he heard it from his teacher.*
 - O. *Still others say, “The secret of the Lord is with those who fear him, and he will show them his covenant” (Psa. 25:14).*

I.16. A. Raba expounded, “On what account was Asa punished? Because he imposed the labor-tax on disciples of the sages.

- B. “For it is said, ‘Then King Asa made a proclamation to all Judah, none was exempted’ (1Ki. 15:22).”
- C. *What is the meaning of, “None was exempted”?*
- D. Said Rab Judah said Rab, “Even a bride groom from his chamber and a bride from her marriage canopy.”

Judah and Tamar: The Comparison of Judah and Samson

I.17. A. It is written, “And Samson went down to Timnah” (Jud. 14: 1), but it also is written, “Behold, your father-in-law goes up to Timnah” (Gen. 38:13).

- B. Said R. Eleazar, “In the case of Samson, who was disgraced there, Scripture refers to ‘going down,’ while in the case of Judah, who was exalted there, Scripture speaks of ‘going up.’”
- C. R. Samuel bar Nahmani said, “There were two Timnahs, *one reached by going down, the other by going up.*”

- D. *R. Papa said, "There was only one Timnah. If you come from one direction, you go down, and if you come from another direction, you go up,*
- E. *"as in the instance of Vardina, Be Bari, and the Market of Neresh."*

I.18. A. "She sat in the gate of Enaim [eyes]" (Gen. 38:14):

- B. Said R. Alexandri, "This teaches that she went and sat down at the gate of our father, Abraham, the place to which all eyes turn."
- C. R. Hanin said Rab [said], "There is a place called Enaim, and so Scripture says, 'Tappuah and Enam' (Jos. 15:34)."
- D. R. Samuel bar Nahmani said, "It [was called 'Eyes'] because she gave eyes to her replies [making them credible]."
- E. "When [Judah] solicited her, he asked her, 'Might you be a gentile?' She replied, 'I am a convert.'"
- F. "'Might you be a married woman?' She said to him, 'I am unmarried.'"
- G. "'Might your father have accepted a token of betrothal for you?' She said to him, 'I am an orphan.'"
- H. "'Might you be unclean [by reason of menstruation]?' She said to him, 'I am clean.'"

Because of the comparison of Tamar and Abraham, 18.B, the following brief exposition of Abraham's comparable action, that is, running an inn, is inserted. The passage is relevant because of the conclusion, just as Abraham brought about the sanctification of God's name through running an inn, so did Tamar, as is spelled out further on.

I.19. A. "And he planted a tamarisk tree in Beer Sheba" (Gen. 21:33):

- B. Said R. Simeon b. Laqish, "This teaches that he prepared an orchard and planted in it every sort of desirable tree."
- C. R. Judah and R. Nehemiah — One said, "It was an orchard."
- D. The other said, "It was an inn."
- E. *From the viewpoint of him who said, "It was an orchard," that is in line with the language of the verse, "He planted."*
- F. *But in the view of the one who said that it was an inn, what is the meaning of, "He planted"?*
- G. *It is in accord with the usage in the following verse: "And he shall plant the tents of his palace" (Dan. 11:45).*

I.20. A. "And he called there on the name of the Lord, the everlasting God" (Gen. 21:33):

- B. Said R. Simeon b. Laqish, "Do not read, 'He called,' [10B] but rather, 'He caused [another] to call.'"
- C. "This teaches that Abraham, our father, put the name of the Holy One, blessed be he, into the mouth of everyone who passed by."
- D. "How so? After they had eaten and drunk, they arose to say a blessing [to Abraham, by way of thanking him]."

- E. “He said to them, ‘Now did you eat what was mine? You ate what belongs to the God of the world.’ They gave thanks and praise and blessed Him who spoke and brought the world into being.”

Now we revert to our story about Tamar.

I.21. A. “When Judah saw her, he thought she was a harlot, for she had covered her face” (Gen. 38:15):

- B. Because she covered her face, he thought she was a harlot?! [He should have reached the opposite conclusion.]
- C. Said R. Eleazar, “It was because she had covered her face in her father-in-law’s house [so Judah had never seen her face].”
- D. That accords with what R. Samuel bar Nahman said R. Jonathan said, “Every daughter in law who behaves modestly in her father-in-law’s house gains such merit that from her go forth kings and prophets.
- E. “How do we know that from Tamar came forth prophets? As it is written, ‘The vision of Isaiah, son of Amoz’ (Isa. 1: 1).
- F. “And kings came forth from her through David.”
- G. And [in this regard] R. Levi said, “It is a tradition in our possession from our ancestors that Amoz and Amaziah were brothers.”

I.22. A. “When she was brought forth” (Gen. 38:25):

- B. *What the text should have said is*, “When she was found.”
- C. Said R. Eleazar, “After her evidence [the signet, cord, and staff] were found, [proving her innocence], Samael came and put them away. Gabriel came and brought them back.
- D. “That is in line with what is written in Scripture: ‘For the chief musician, the silent dove of them that are far off. Of David, Michtam’ (Psa. 56: 1).”
- E. Said R. Yohanan, “When the evidence in her behalf was taken away, she became as silent as a dove.”

Because the reference to the stolid behavior of Tamar, the word for “meek” and “innocent” is expounded: *miktam*.

- F. “Of David, Michtam:” This refers to the fact that David came forth from her, who was meek (MK) and innocent (TM) to everyone.
- G. Another explanation of Michtam: His wound (MKH) was unblemished (TMH), for he was born circumcised.
- H. Another explanation of Michtam: Just as, in his youth, he humbled himself before him who was greater than himself to study Torah, so in his greatness [he did the same].

I.23. A. “She sent to her father-in-law, saying, By the man whose these are am I with child” (Gen. 38:25):

- B. *And why did she not say it explicitly to him? [She did not want to embarrass him by naming names.]*
- C. Said R. Zutra bar Tobiah said Rab, and there are those who say that R. Hana bar Bizna said R. Simeon the Pious [said it], and there are those who say that R. Yohanan said it in the name of R. Simeon B. Yohai, “It is better

for a person to throw himself into a hot furnace but not embarrass his fellow in public.”

- D. How do we know that from Scripture? We learn it from the case of Tamar [who did not want to embarrass Judah by saying directly that he had fathered her child].

v24. A. “Recognize, please...” (Gen. 38:25):

- B. Said R. Hama b. R. Hanina, “By an act of recognition did he inform his father and by an act of recognition did others inform him.”
- C. “By an act of recognition he informed [his father]: “Recognize, please, whether this is the cloak of your son” (Gen. 37:32).
- D. “By an act of recognition others informed him: “Recognize, please, whose are these” (Gen. 38:25).”
- E. The word “please” carries the sense of pleading. So she said to him, “By your leave, recognize the face of your Creator and do not hide your eyes from me.”

I.25. A. “And Judah recognized them and said, ‘She is more righteous than I’” (Gen. 38:26):

- B. That is in line with what R. Hanina bar Bizna said R. Simeon the Pious [said], “Because Joseph sanctified the name of heaven in secret [with Potiphar’s wife], he had sufficient merit so that a single letter of the name of the Holy One, blessed be he, was added to his name, as it is written, ‘He appointed it in Jehoseph for a testimony’ (Psa. 81: 6). [So the H of YHWH was given to Joseph].
- C. “But because Judah sanctified the name of heaven in public [with his confession about Tamar], he had sufficient merit so that the entire set of letters of the name of the Holy One, blessed be he, was added to his name [for YHWH all occur in the name YHWDH].”
- D. When he confessed, saying, “She is more righteous than I,” an echo came forth and said, “You have saved from [death through] flame Tamar and her two offspring. By your life! On account of her merit I shall save three of your sons from the flame.”
- E. *And who were they?* They were Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah [Dan. 3].
- F. “She is more righteous than I”:
- G. How did he know? An echo came forth and said, “From Me came forth secrets.”

I.26. A. “And he did not know her again” (Gen. 38:26):

- B. Samuel the elder, father-in-law of R. Samuel bar Ammi in the name of R. Samuel bar Ammi [said], “Once he knew her, he did not again stop knowing her [true character].
- C. “Here it is written, ‘He did not know her again,’ and elsewhere: ‘With a great voice, that did not cease’ (Deu. 5:19). [Thus: He knew her again, without ceasing” (Cohen)].”

II.1 A. Absalom was proud of his hair, etc. [M. 1:8B]:

- B. *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:*
- C. **Absalom rebelled through his hair, as it is said: “There was none so to be praised as Absalom for his beauty. And when he cut off his hair — for it was at every year’s end that he cut it, because the hair was heavy on him,**

therefore he cut it — he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels after the king's weight" (2Sa. 14:25f.).

- D. *It has been taught on Tannaite authority: The sort of weight that the people of Tiberias and of Sepphoris use.*
- E. **Therefore he was hung by his hair, as it is said, "And Absalom happened to meet the servants of David. And Absalom rode on his mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between heaven and earth, and the mule that was under him went on" (2Sa. 18: 9).**
- F. **He took a sword to cut himself loose [Cf. T. [Sot. 3:16](#)].**
- G. *A Tannaite authority of the house of R. Ishmael [stated], "At that moment Sheol opened up underneath him."*
- H. *"And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept, and, as he went, he said, 'O my son, Absalom, my son, my son, Absalom, would God I had died for you, O Absalom, my son, my son'" (2Sa. 19: 1) [18:33]. "And the king covered his face, and the king cried with a loud voice, 'O my son, Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son'" (2Sa. 19: 5) [4].*
- I. *Why these eight references to "my son"?*
- J. *Seven served to raise him up from the seven levels of Gehenna, and as to the eighth — some say it was to bring his severed head to his body, and others say it was to bring him into the world to come.*

II.2. A. "Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken and reared up" (2Sa. 18:18):

- B. *What is the meaning of "taken"?*
- C. Said R. Simeon b. Laqish, "He had made a poor purchase for himself."
- D. "The pillar which is in the king's valley" (2Sa. 18:18):
- E. Said R. Hanina bar Pappa, "It was in the deep plan of the King of the world."
- F. **[11A]** So it is written, "Lo, I shall raise up evil against you out of your own house" (2Sa. 12:11).
- G. Along these same lines, you find in Scripture:
- H. "So he sent [Joseph] out of the valley of Hebron" (Gen. 37:14):
- I. Said R. Hanina bar Papa, "It was on account of the deep plan of him who was buried in Hebron, as it is written, 'Know with certainty that your descendants shall be strangers in a land that is not theirs'" (Gen. 15:13).

II.3. A. "For he said, 'I have no son'" (2Sa. 18:18):

- B. Did he really have no sons? And has it not been written, "And to Absalom were born three sons and a daughter" (2Sa. 14:27)?!
- C. Said R. Isaac bar Abedimi, "The meaning is that he had no son worthy of the throne."
- D. R. Hisda said, "We have learned that whoever burns the grain of his fellow will not leave a son to inherit him. And [Absalom] had burned the produce of Joab, for it is written, 'Therefore he said to his servants, See, Joab's field is near mine, and he has barley there. Go and set it on fire. And Absalom's servants set the field on fire'" (2Sa. 30).

III.1 A. And so it is on the good side: Miriam, etc. [M. 1:9A]:

- B. *But are the matters proportionate? There [she waited] one hour, while here [all Israel waited] seven days! [Surely we do not see the application of the principle of measure for measure.]*
- C. *Said Abayye, "I propose that, as to the good side, it is not the case. [Measure for measure does not apply.]"*
- D. *Said to him Raba, "And lo, **And so it is on the good side** is what the Mishnah-framer has stated."*
- E. *Rather, said Raba, "This is the sense of the passage: **And so it is on the good side** that with that same measure [do they mete out]. But under all circumstances the measure on the good side is greater than the measure of punishment."*

III.2. A. "And his sister stood afar off" (Exo. 2: 4):

- B. *Said R. Isaac, "This entire version of Scripture is stated with reference to the Presence of God:*
- C. *"And stood,' as it is written, 'The Lord came and stood' (1Sa. 3:10).*
- D. *"His sister,' as it is written, 'Say to wisdom, you are my sister' (Pro. 7: 4).*
- E. *"Afar off,' as it is written, 'The Lord appeared from afar to me' (Jer. 31: 3).*
- F. *"To know,' as it is written, 'For the Lord is a God of knowledge' (1Sa. 2: 3).*
- G. *"What,' as it is written, 'What does the Lord require of you' (Deu. 10:12).*
- H. *"Done,' as it is written, 'Surely the Lord God will do nothing' (Amo. 3: 7).*
- I. *"To him,' as it is written, 'And called it [him] Lord is peace' (Jud. 6:24)."*

The Story of Pharaoh and Israel at the Time of the Birth of Moses Exposition of the Verses that Lay Out the Narrative

Exodus 1:8-2:9

The vast thematic-exegetical composition that follows is included not only because it intersects with the Mishnah's topic, Miriam and Moses, but also because it includes an explicit statement of the Mishnah's proposition concerning the exact character of divine justice: He was the first to undertake to conspire against Israel, therefore he was smitten first. But there can be no doubt that the composite has taken shape around its own exegetical program, the cited verses of Scripture.

III.3. A. "Now there arose a new king..." (Exo. 1: 8):

- B. *Rab and Samuel:*
- C. *One said, "He actually was new."*
- D. *The other said, "He renewed his decrees."*
- E. *He who said, "He actually was new," refers to the verses as written: "New."*
- F. *And the one who said, "He renewed his decrees" points out that it is not written, 'And he died... and there ruled [in his place]...'"*

III.4. A. "Who did not know Joseph" (Exo. 1: 8):

- B. *He was as if he did not know him at all, [having never heard of him].*

III.5. A. "He said to his people, 'Behold the people of the children of Israel'" (Exo. 1: 9):

- B. *It was taught on Tannaite authority: He was the first to undertake to conspire [against Israel], therefore he was smitten first.*

- C. He undertook to conspire against Israel first, as it is written, “And he said to his people...”
- D. Therefore he was smitten first, as it is written, “Upon you, upon your people, and upon all your servants” (Exo. 7:29).

III.6. A. “Come, let us deal wisely with him” (Exo. 1:10):

- B. *It should have said*, “With them.”
- C. Said R. Hama b. Hanina, “‘Come and let us deal wisely with the Savior of Israel [the Lord God]. With what shall we inflict judgment on them.
- D. “‘If we should inflict judgment with fire, it is written, “For lo, the Lord will come with fire” (Isa. 56:15). And it is written, “For by fire the Lord will plead...” (Isa. 56:16).
- E. “‘If we should inflict judgment on them with the sword, it is written, “And by his sword with all flesh” (Isa. 56:16).
- F. “‘Rather, come, let us inflict judgment on them with water, for the Holy One, blessed be he, has already restricted himself by an oath not to bring a flood on the world [so he does not manipulate that form of judgment], as it is said, “For this is as the waters of Noah to me...” (Isa. 54: 9).’
- G. “But they did not know that, while he would not bring a flood on the entire world, he was prepared to bring a flood on a single nation.
- H. “Or, further, while he would not bring a flood, they, for their part, may come and fall into one, and so it says, ‘And the Egyptians fled towards it’ (Exo. 14:27).”
- I. *And that is in line with what R. Eleazar said, “What is the meaning of that which is written, ‘Yes, in the thing wherein they dealt proudly against them’ (Exo. 18:11). In the pot in which they cooked they were stewed.”*
- J. *“How do I know that the word for ‘dealt proudly’ stands also for ‘cooked’? As it is written, ‘And Jacob cooked pottage’ (Gen. 25:29).”*
- K. Said R. Hiyya bar Abba said R. Simai, “Three participated in that conspiracy [of Exo. 1:22, to destroy the Israelites in the river], Balaam, Job, and Jethro.
- L. “Balaam, who gave the advice, was slain. Job, who kept silence, was judged through suffering. Jethro, who fled, had the merit that some of his sons’ sons would go into session [as judges] in the Hewn Stone Chamber,
- M. “as it is said, ‘And the families of scribes which dwelt at Jabez, the Tirahites, the Shemathites, the Sucathites. These are the Kenites that came of Hammath, the father of the house of Rehab’ (2Ch. 2:55). And it is written, ‘And the children of the Kenite, Moses’ father-in-law...” (Jud. 1:16).”

III.7. A. “And fight against us and leave of the land” (Exo. 1:10):

- B. *It should have said*, “And we will leave...”
- C. Said R. Abba bar Kahana, “It may be compared to a man who cursed himself and then blamed his curse on his fellow.”

III.8. A. “Therefore they set over him taskmasters” (Exo. 1:11):

- B. *It should say*, “Over them.”
- C. *A Tannaite member of the house of R. Eleazar b. R. Simeon*: “It teaches that they brought a brick-mold and hung it on Pharaoh’s shoulders, and when any Israelite

said to them, 'I am weak,' they would say to him, 'Are you any weaker than Pharaoh?'"

- D. "Taskmasters" (Exo. 1:11):
- E. Something which forms [the task, namely, a mold for the bricks].
- F. "To afflict him with their burdens" (Exo. 1:11):
- G. *It should have said, "To afflict them."*
- H. [The meaning is:] to afflict Pharaoh with the burdens of Israel.

III.9. A. "And they built for Pharaoh store-cities" (Exo. 1:11):

- B. Rab and Samuel: One of them said, "It was because they endanger their owners."
- C. And the other said, "It was because they impoverished their owners."
- D. *For a master has said, "Whoever gets involved with building [loses his money and] becomes poor."*

III.10. A. "Pithom and Raamses" (Exo. 1:11):

- B. Rab and Samuel:
- C. One of them said, "The name of the store-city was Pithom, and why was it called Raamses? Because the buildings collapsed one by one in the order in which they were built."
- D. The other said, "The name of the store-city was Raamses, and why was it called Pithom? For the Mouth of the Great Deep swallowed up the buildings one by one, in the order in which they were built."
- E. "But the more they afflicted him, the more he will multiply, and the more he will spread abroad" (Exo. 1:12):
- F. *It should have said, "They will spread abroad..."*
- G. Said R. Simeon b. Laqish, "The Holy Spirit thereby informed them of the good news that he would multiply and spread abroad."

III.11. A. "And they were grieved because of the children of Israel" (Exo. 1:12):

- B. This teaches that [the Israelites] were like thorns in their eyes.

III.12. A. "And the Egyptians made the children of Israel serve **[11B]** with rigor (PRK)" (Exo. 1:13):

- B. R. Eleazar said, "[Enticing them] with tender speech" ("a soft mouth").
- C. R. Samuel bar Nahmani said, "By hard work."
- D. "And they made their lives bitter with hard work, in mortar and in brick" (Exo. 1:13):
- E. Said Raba, "At the outset, with mortar and with brick, but at the end, with all sorts of hard work in the field."
- F. "All their work that they had made them do with rigor" (Exo. 1:14):
- G. R. Samuel b. Nahman said R. Jonathan [said], "They would trade the work of men for that of women and the work of women for that of men."
- H. *And in the view of him who earlier said that "with rigor" means "with tender speech," in the present instance the word certainly means "with rigor."*

III.13. A. R. Avira expounded, "It was as a reward to the righteous women who were in that generation that the Israelites were redeemed from Egypt."

- B. “When the women would go to draw water, the Holy One, blessed be he, would provide little fishes for their jars, and they would draw half water and half fish and come and heat up two pots, one to warm the water, the other for the fish. These they would bring to their husbands in the fields, and they would wash them and anoint them and feed them [fish] and give them water to drink, and then have sexual relations with them among the sheepfolds.
- C. “So it is said, ‘When you lie among the sheepfolds’ (Psa. 68:13).
- D. “As a reward for ‘When you lie among the sheepfolds,’ the Israelites enjoyed such merit as to plunder Egypt, as it is said, ‘As the wings of a dove covered with silver and her pinions with yellow gold’ (Psa. 68:13).
- E. “When the women conceived, they came to their houses, and, when the time to deliver had come, they would go and give birth in the field under an apple tree,
- F. “as it is said, ‘Under the apple tree I brought you forth from your mother’s womb’ (Son. 8: 5).
- G. “The Holy One, blessed be he, sent from the highest heaven someone to wash and straighten the babies’ limbs, just as a midwife straightens the baby’s limbs,
- H. “as it is said, ‘And as for your birth in the day you were born your navel was not cut, and you were not washed in water to be cleaned’ (Eze. 16: 4).
- I. “And he collected for them two cakes, one of oil and the other of honey, as it is said, ‘And he made him suck honey out of the rock, and oil...’ (Deu. 32:13).
- J. “But when the Egyptians became aware of them, they would come to kill them. A miracle was done for them, and they were swallowed up into the earth. So the Egyptians brought oxen and ploughed on top of them, as it is said, ‘The plowers plowed upon my back’ (Psa. 129: 3).
- K. “When they had gone their way, [the women and babies] broke through and sprouted up like the plants of the field, as it is said, ‘I caused you to multiply as the bud of the field’ (Eze. 16: 7).
- L. “When the babies had grown up, they came in herds to their houses, as it is said, ‘And you increased and became great and came with ornaments’ (Eze. 16: 7).
- M. “Do not read ‘with ornaments’ but ‘in flocks.’
- N. “When the Holy One, blessed be he, revealed himself at the sea, they [babies, having seen him before] recognized him first of all [among the Israelites], as it is said, ‘This is my God, and I shall praise him’ (Exo. 15: 2).”

III.14. A. “And the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives” (Exo. 1:15):

- B. Rab and Samuel: one of them said, “It was mother and daughter.”
- C. The other said, “It was a daughter-in-law and mother-in-law.”
- D. The one who said that it was a mother and her daughter points to Jochebed and Miriam.
- E. The one who said it was a daughter-in-law and her mother-in-law points to Jochebed and Elisheba.
- F. *There is a teaching on Tannaite authority in accord with the one who said that it was a mother and her daughter, for it has been taught on Tannaite authority:*
- G. “Shiphrah” is Jochebed (Exo. 1:15), and why was she called “Shiphrah”? Because she would straighten (SPR) [the limbs] of the baby.

- H. Another explanation: “Shiphrah” — for the Israelites were numerous and multiplied in her time.
- I. “Puah” refers to Miriam. And why was she called “Puah”? Because she would cry out to the child [in the womb] and bring it out.
- J. Another explanation: “Puah” for when she would cry out through the Holy Spirit, saying “My mother is destined to bring forth a son who will save Israel.”

III.15. A. “And he said, ‘When you bring forth the Hebrew girls...’” (Exo. 1:16).

- B. *What is the meaning of the word used for birthstool (obnayim)?*
- C. Said R. Hanan, “It was an important omen that he handed over to them. He said, ‘When the women bend over to give birth, their thighs grow cold like stones (abanim).’”
- D. *And there is he who said,* “It is in accord with that which is written, ‘Then I went down to the potter’s house and behold, he wrought his work on the wheels’ (Jer. 18: 3) [the word for ‘wheels’ being the same as the word used for ‘birthstool’].
- E. “Just as, with the potter[’s wheel] there is a thigh on one side, a thigh on the other side, and a wooden block in-between, so the woman has a thigh on one side, a thigh on the other side, and the baby in-between.”

III.16. A. “If it is a son, you shall kill him” (Exo. 1:16):

- B. Said R. Hanina, “He handed over to them an important omen.”
- C. “In the case of a son, his face is downward, and in the case of a daughter, her face is upward.”

III.17. A. But the midwives feared God and did not do as the king of Egypt had instructed to them” (Exo. 1:17):

- B. *Instead of “to them,” it should say simply, “them.”*
- C. Said R. Yosé b. R. Hanina, “This teaches that he enticed them to do a transgression [of a sexual character with him], but they were not to be enticed.”

III.18. A. “But they saved the males alive” (Exo. 1:17):

- B. *It was taught on Tannaite authority:* It was not sufficient for these women that they did not kill the boys, but they provided them with water and food.

III.19. A. “And the midwives said to Pharaoh, ‘Behold the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women...’” (Exo. 1:19):

- B. [When the verse refers to the liveliness of the Hebrew women], what is the meaning of “lively” [which, in Mishnaic Hebrew, bears the sense of “midwives”]?
- C. *If one wishes to say that it means they actually were midwives, does not a midwife require another midwife to help her give birth?*
- D. Rather, they said to him, “This nation has been compared to a wild animal [the same Hebrew word bearing that meaning as well].
- E. “Judah: ‘Judah is a lion’s whelp’ (Gen. 49: 9).
- F. “Dan: ‘Dan shall be a serpent’ (Gen. 49:17).
- G. “Naphtali: ‘A hind let loose’ (Gen. 49:21).
- H. “Issachar: ‘A strong ass’ (Gen. 49:14).
- I. “Joseph: ‘A firstling bullock’ (Deu. 33:17).

- J. “Benjamin: ‘A wolf that tears’ (Gen. 49:27).
- K. *“Concerning those of whom a verse of Scripture explicitly speaks, that verse suffices. Concerning those concerning whom a verse of Scripture does not explicitly speak, there is the following encompassing statement: ‘What was your mother? A lioness, she crouched among lions’ (Eze. 19: 2).”*

III.20. A. “And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, he made them houses” (Exo. 1:21):

- B. Rab and Samuel: one of them said, “Houses of the priestly and Levitical castes.”
- C. And one of them said, “Houses of the monarchy.”
- D. *As to the one who said, “They are the houses of the priestly and Levitical castes,” this refers to Aaron and Moses.*
- E. *As to the one who said, “This refers to the houses of kingship,” David also came forth from Miriam,*
- F. For it is written, “And Azubah died, and Caleb took to him Ephrath, who bore him Hur” (1Ch. 2:19), and it is written, “Now David was the son of that Ephrathite (1Sa. 17:12).

III.21. A. “And Caleb, the son of Hezron, produced children with Azubah his wife and with Jerioth, and these were her sons: Jeshar and Shobab and Ardon” (1Ch. 2:18).

- B. “The son of Hezron”? “He was the son of Jephunneh” (Num. 13: 6).
- C. It is because he turned (PNH) from the conspiracy of the spies.
- D. *And still [there is a problem, for] he was the son of Kenaz, as it is written, “And Othniel, the son of Kenaz, Caleb’s younger brother, took it” (Jud. 1:13).*
- E. *Raba said, “He was step-son of Kenaz.”*
- F. **[12A]** *Take note, for it is written, “And Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kennizite” (Jos. 14: 6) [and not the son of Kenaz in particular].*
- G. *That then indicates that Azubah was the same as Miriam, and why was she called Azubah? Because at first she was abandoned by all men [as an invalid].*
- H. “Gave birth” [“Caleb begat Azubah” (1Ch. 2:18)]? *But he was married to her!*
- I. R. Yohanan said, “Whoever marries a woman for the sake of Heaven is credited by Scripture as if he had given birth to her.”
- J. “Jerioth” — because her face was like curtains [pale].
- K. “And these were her sons” (2Ch. 2:18): Do not read “her sons” but “her builders.”
- L. “Jeshar” — because he set himself right [Cohen: Caleb escaped the error of the other spies].
- M. “Shobab” — because he turned his inclination aside [Cohen].
- N. “Ardon” — because he ruled over his inclination to do evil.
- O. *There are those who say, “Because his face was as red as a rose.”*

III.22. A. “And Ashhur the father of Tekoa had two wives. Helah and Naarah” (1Ch. 4: 5):

- B. Ashhur is the same as Caleb, and why is he called Ashhur? Because he blackened (SHR) his face with fasts.
- C. “The father” — because he became a father to her [Miriam].
- D. “Tekoa” — because he fixed his heart upon his Father in heaven.
- E. “Had two wives” — that is, Miriam became like two wives.
- F. “Helah [invalid] and Naarah [damsel]” — It was not that she was both Helah and Naarah, but at the beginning she was Helah [an invalid], and at the end she was Naarah [a damsel].
- G. “and the sons of Helah were Zereth, Zohar, and Ethnan” (1Ch. 4: 7):
- H. “Zereth” — [Miriam] was so because she was a rival [zarah] for her contemporaries [in beauty] (Cohen).
- I. “Zohar” — because her looks were as beautiful as the noon.
- J. “Ethnan” — because whoever saw her brought a present to his wife.

III.23. A. “And Pharaoh ordered all his people” (Exo. 1:22):

- B. R. Yosé b. R. Hanina said, “He even made a decree against his own people.”
- C. And R. Yosé b. R. Hanina said, “He made three decrees. At the outset, ‘If it is a son, then kill him.’ Then: ‘Every son who is born you shall throw into the river.’ And, at the end, he made the same decree even against his own people.”

III.24. A. “And a man of the house of Levi went...” (Exo. 2: 1):

- B. Where did he go? Said R. Judah bar Zabina, “He went in the counsel of his daughter.”
- C. *It has been taught on Tannaite authority:*
- D. Amram was the most influential man of his generation. When Pharaoh, that wicked man, made a decree, saying, “Every male child who is born will you throw into the river,” (Exo. 1:16), he concluded, “We labor in vain.”
- E. He went and divorced his wife. All of [the other Israelite men] went and divorced their wives.
- F. His daughter said to him, “Father, your decree is more harsh than Pharaoh’s. For Pharaoh made a decree only against the males, but you have made a decree against both the males and the females [who may be born]. Pharaoh made a decree only in this world, but you have made a decree covering both this world and the world to come. As to that wicked Pharaoh, there is a matter of doubt whether or not his decree will be carried out. But as to you, you are a righteous man, so your decree certainly will be carried out, as it is said, ‘You will also decree something and it will be carried out for you’ (Job. 22:28).”
- G. He went and took his wife back, and all of the others went and took their wives back.
- H. “And he took [as a wife]” (Exo. 2: 1). *[In light of the preceding story,] it should say, “He took back....”*

- I. Said R. Judah bar Zabina, "He treated the matter as if it were a first marriage. He seated her in a palanquin, with [their children] Aaron and Miriam dancing before her.
- J. "The ministering angels said, 'A joyful mother of children' (Psa. 113: 9)."

III.25. A. "A daughter of Levi" (Exo. 2: 1):

- B. *Is it possible that she was a hundred and thirty years old and yet [Scripture] calls her a daughter?* [Proving her advanced age], R. Hama b. Hanina said, "This refers to Jochebed, who was conceived on the way [to Egypt] and born between the walls [of the Egyptian town], as it is said, 'Who was born to Levi in Egypt' (Num. 26:59). That indicates that her birth was in Egypt, but her conception was not in Egypt."
- C. Said R. Judah, "The meaning is that tokens of girlhood reappeared in her [looks]."

III.26. A. "And the woman conceived and bore a son" (Exo. 2: 2):

- B. *But she had been pregnant only for three months. [This is clarified presently.]*
- C. Said R. Judah bar Zabina, "Scripture treats as comparable the condition of her giving birth and of her conceiving.
- D. "Just as she became pregnant without pain, so she gave birth without pain.
- E. "On this basis [we may conclude that] righteous women were not subjected to the decree against Eve."

III.27. A. "When she saw him, that he was good" (Exo. 2: 2):

- B. *It has been taught on Tannaite authority:*
- C. R. Meir says, "His name was 'Good.'"
- D. R. Judah says, "His name was 'The Lord is good' [Tobiah]."
- E. R. Nehemiah says, "He was worthy of prophecy."
- F. Others say, "He was born circumcised."
- G. And sages say, "When Moses was born, the whole house was filled with light. *Here it is written, 'And when she saw him, that he was good' (Exo. 2: 2), and elsewhere it is written, 'And God saw the light, that it was good' (Gen. 1: 4)."*

III.28. A. "She hid him three months" (Exo. 2: 3):

- B. *It was because the Egyptians counted only from the time that she had regained her girlish features, while in fact she had already been pregnant with him for three months.*

III.29. A. "And she could no longer hide him" (Exo. 2: 3):

- B. Why? Let her go on hiding him!
- C. *Whenever the Egyptians would hear that a child had been born, they would bring another child there, so that the infant would hear the other crying and cry along with him,*
- D. as it is written, "Take us the foxes, the little foxes" (Song 2:15).

III.30. A. "She took an ark of bulrushes for him" (Exo. 2: 3):

- B. *Why bulrushes in particular?*
- C. Said R. Eleazar, "This shows that, for righteous people, their property is more valuable to them than their persons. [Bulrushes are cheap.]"

- D. Why so? So that they should not venture to steal.
- E. [Explaining the same matter differently,] R. Samuel bar Nahmani said, "It was a soft thing, that could stand before soft as well as hard material."

III.31. A. "And she pitched it with slime and pitch" (Exo. 2: 3):

- B. *It was taught on Tannaite authority:* Slime on the inside and pitch on the outside,
- C. so that that righteous infant should not have to put up with a bad smell.

III.32. A. "And she put the child in it and laid it in reeds" (Exo. 2: 3):

- B. R. Eleazar says, "It was in the Sea of Reeds [the Red Sea]."
- C. R. Samuel bar Nahmani said, "[12B] It means reeds, as it is written, 'The reeds and flags shall wither away' (Isa. 19: 6)."

III.33. A. "And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river" (Exo. 2: 5):

- B. Said R. Yohanan in the name of R. Simeon b. Yohai, "This teaches that she came down to wash off her body the filth of her father's idols.
- C. "And so Scripture says, 'When the Lord will have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion' (Isa. 4: 4)."
- D. "And her serving girls walked along" (Exo. 2: 5):
- E. Said R. Yohanan, "This 'walking' refers only to death,
- F. "and so Scripture says, 'Lo, I am walking towards death' (Gen. 25:32)."

III.34. A. "And she saw the ark among the reeds" (Exo. 2: 5):

- B. *When [her companions] saw that she wanted to save Moses,* they said to her, "Our mistress, it is customary in the world that, when a mortal king makes a decree, even though everyone in the world may not carry it out, his sons and the members of his household carry it out.
- C. "But you are going to violate the decree of your father!"
- D. Gabriel came along and beat them into the ground.

III.35. A. "She sent her serving girl to get it" (Isa. 2: 5):

- B. R. Judah and R. Nehemiah:
- C. One said, "She sent forth her hand."
- D. The other said, "She sent forth her serving girl."
- E. *The one who said, "She sent forth her hand," [cites] that which is written [in the verse at hand], "Her arm."*
- F. *The one who said, "She sent forth her serving girl" points out that the word hand is not written.*
- G. *But in the view of him who said that it was her serving girl, has it just now not been stated that Gabriel came and beat them into the ground? [So where would her serving girl come from?]*
- H. *[The answer is] that he left her one, since it is not appropriate that a princess should stand all by herself [unattended].*
- I. *And according to the one who said, "Her hand," should not Scripture have written, "Her hand"?*
- J. *In this way we are informed that her arm was lengthened.*

- K. *For a master has said*, “And so you find in the case of the arm of the daughter of Pharaoh, and so you find in the case of the teeth of the wicked.
- L. “For it is written, ‘You have broken the teeth of the wicked’ (Psa. 3: 8).
- M. “In this connection, R. Simeon b. Laqish said, ‘Do not read, ‘you have broken,’ but, ‘you have lengthened.’”

III.36. A. “She opened it and saw him, the child” (Exo. 2: 6):

- B. *The text should have said simply*, “*She saw [the child], [omitting “him”]*”.
- C. Said R. Yosé b. R. Hanina, “She saw the Presence of God with him.”

III.37. A. “And behold, the boy wept” (Exo. 2: 6):

- B. The text refers to him as a boy and also as a youth.
- C. *It was taught on Tannaite authority*: “He was a baby, but he had the voice of a youth,” the words of R. Judah.
- D. Said to him R. Nehemiah, “If so, you have portrayed Moses, our rabbi, as blemished.
- E. “Rather, it teaches that his mother had made for him a youth’s wedding canopy in the ark, saying, ‘I may not have the merit of attending his wedding.’”

III.38. A. “And she had compassion on him, saying, ‘This one is of the children of the Hebrew’” (Exo. 2: 6):

- B. *How did she know?*
- C. Said R. Yosé b. R. Hanina, “She saw that he was circumcised.”
- D. “This one”:
- E. R. Yohanan said, “This usage teaches that she unwittingly prophesied that while ‘this one’ fell [into the river], no other one will fall [into the river].”
- F. *That is in line with what R. Eleazar said*, “*What is the meaning of that which is written*, ‘And when they will say to you, “Seek unto them that have familiar spirits and wizards who chirp and mutter”’ (Isa. 8:19)? They chirp and do not know what they are chirping, they mutter and do not know what they are muttering.
- G. “They foresaw that the savior of Israel will be smitten on account of water [namely, at the water of rebellion], so they went and made a decree that every son who is born will be thrown into the river.
- H. *“When they had thrown Moses [into the river], they said, ‘We do not see that omen any longer.’ They therefore annulled their decrees.*
- I. “But they did not know that it would be at the water of rebellion that he would be smitten.”
- J. *That is in line with what R. Hama b. R. Hanina said*, “*What is the meaning of the verse of Scripture*, ‘These are the waters of Rebellion, because they strove’ (Num. 20:13)?
- K. “These are the waters concerning which the astrologers of Pharaoh foresaw, and in which they erred.
- L. “That is in line with what Moses said, ‘Six hundred thousand footmen...’ (Num. 11:21).
- M. “Moses said to the Israelites, ‘On my account all of you have been saved.’”

- N. R. Hanina bar Papa said, "That day [when Moses was put into the river] was the twenty-first of Nisan. The ministering angels said before the Holy One, blessed be he, 'Lord of the world, should he who is destined [on this very day] to proclaim the Song at the Sea on this very day be smitten on this very same day?'"
- O. R. Aha bar Hanina said, "That day was the sixth of Sivan. The ministering angels said before the Holy One, blessed be he, 'Lord of the world, should he who is destined [on this very day] to receive the Torah at Mount Sinai on this very day be smitten on this very same day?'"
- P. *Now with regard to the view of him who says that it was on the sixth of Sivan, we account for the date, three months after [Moses'] birth.*
- Q. *For a master has stated, "On the seventh of Adar [Moses] died, and on the seventh of Adar he was born."*
- R. *Now from the seventh of Adar to the sixth of Sivan are three months.*
- S. *But in the view of him who said that it was on the twenty-first of Nisan, how do we find [the three months to account for Moses' remaining with his mother for three months]?*
- T. That year was intercalated [and had an extra month], so we deal with the larger part of the first month [the first Adar], and the larger part of the last month [Sivan], and the entire middle month [the second Adar].

III.39. A. "Then his sister said to Pharaoh's daughter, 'Shall I go and call you a nurse from among the Hebrew women?'" (Exo. 2: 7):

- B. *Why did she make particular reference to Hebrew women?*
- C. This shows that [prior to the present transaction] they had circulated Moses among all the Egyptian women, and he would not suck from any one of them.
- D. Said the Holy One, blessed be he, "Should the mouth that is destined to speak with the Presence of God suck something that is unclean?"
- E. *That is in line with what is written, "Whom will he teach knowledge" (Isa. 28: 9).*
- F. To whom will he teach knowledge, and to whom will he make tradition accessible? "To them who are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts" (Isa. 28: 9).

III.40. A. "And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Go'" (Exo. 2: 8):

- B. Said R. Eleazar, "This teaches that she went quickly, like a maid."
- C. R. Samuel bar Nahmani said, "'...maid...,' because she kept the matter quiet."

III.41. A. "And Pharaoh's daughter said to her, 'Take this child away'" (Exo. 2: 9):

- B. R. Hama bar Hanina said, "She prophesied unwittingly, [when she said], 'Take away,' [meaning] 'behold, what is your own.'"

III.42. A. "And I will pay your wages" (Exo. 2: 9):

- B. Said R. Hama bar Hanina, "It is not sufficient for the righteous that people give back to them what they have lost,
- C. "but they even pay them a fee [for doing so]."

III.43. A. "And Miriam the prophetess, sister of Aaron, took..." (Exo. 15:20):

- B. Was she sister of Aaron but not sister of Moses?
- C. Said R. Amram said Rab, and there are those who state R. Nahman said Rab said, "This teaches that she prophesied when she was Aaron's sister alone [before

Moses had been born] [13A], saying, ‘My mother is destined to give birth to a son who will save Israel.’

- D. “Now when Moses was born, and the entire house was filled with light, her father stood up and kissed her on the head, saying to her, ‘My daughter, your prophecies have been fulfilled.’
- E. “But when they threw [Moses] into the river, he went and tapped her on the head, saying to her, ‘My daughter, where have your prophecies gone?’
- F. “Now this is the meaning of that which has been written, ‘And his sister stood afar off, to know what would be done to him’ (Exo. 2: 4) — [that is to say], to know what would come of her prophecy.”

IV.1 A. Joseph had the merit [M. 1:9C]:

- B. *Why the difference [in formulating matters in two different ways, as we shall now see].*
- C. To begin with, it is written, “And Joseph went up to bury his father, and with him went up [1] all the servants of Pharaoh” (Gen. 50: 7), and then, “And [2] all the house of Joseph and his brethren and his father’s house,” and, at the end [of the funeral proceedings]: “And Joseph returned to Egypt, he and [2] his brothers” (Gen. 50:14), followed by, “And [1] all that went up with him to bury his father” (Gen. 50:14). [So in the first formulation, Joseph comes, followed by Pharaoh’s court, and, finally, brothers. On the trip back, Joseph is followed by his brothers, and only then comes reference to the court of Pharaoh.]
- D. Said R. Yohanan, “In the beginning, before [Pharaoh’s court] much had seen the glory of Israel, they did not treat them with much dignity. But in the end, after they had seen the glory of Israel, they treated them with respect.”
- E. For it is written, “And they came to the threshing floor of Atad” [= brambles] (Gen. 50:10).
- F. Now is there such a thing as a threshing floor for brambles?
- G. Said R. Abbahu, “This teaches that they surrounded the bier of Jacob with crowns, just as someone with a hedge of brambles.
- H. It was because the children of Esau and Ishmael and Keturah came.
- I. *A teacher taught on Tannaite authority:* All of them came to make war. When they saw the crown of Joseph suspended from the bier of Jacob, all of them took their crowns and hung them on Jacob’s bier.
- J. *A teacher taught on Tannaite authority:* Thirty-six crowns were hung on the bier of Jacob.

IV.2. A. “And there they lamented him with a very great and sore lamentation” (Gen. 50:10):

- B. *It has been taught on Tannaite authority:* Even the horses and the mules [mourned].
- C. When they reached the cave of Machpelah, Esau came to prevent [the burial there]. He said to them, “‘Mamre, Kiriath Arba, the same is Hebron’ (Gen. 36:27). [Cohen, p. 66, n. 6: Kiriath Arba is literally ‘the burial of four.’ He claimed that only four couples were to be buried there and demanded the one remaining sepulchre for himself.]”

- D. And R. Isaac said, “Kiriath Arba means that four couples [were buried there], Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and Leah. *He had buried Leah with his own hands, and then [said], ‘What remains belongs to me.’*”
- E. They replied to [Esau, reverting to C], “You sold it.”
- F. *He said to them, “Granted that I sold my birthright as firstborn, but did I sell my ordinary rights of inheritance?”*
- G. *They said to him, “Indeed you did, as it is written, ‘In my grave which I [Jacob] have dug for myself’ (Gen. 50: 5).”*
- H. And R. Yohanan said in the name of R. Simeon b. Yehosedeq, “The word ‘dig’ bears the meaning of ‘selling,’ for in the cities by the sea they call a sale ‘digging.’”
- I. [Reverting to G, above:] *He said to them, “Show me a document of sale.”*
- J. *They said to him, “The document of sale is in the land of Egypt.”*
- K. *“Who will go for it? Let Naphtali go for it, for he is as fast as a gazelle, as it is written, ‘Naphtali is a hind let loose. He gives goodly words’ (Gen. 49:21).”*
- L. Said R. Abbahu, “Do not read, ‘goodly words,’ but ‘words of a document.’ [He brings the document of sale.]”
- M. *Hushim, son of Dadan, was there, and [since] his ears gave him trouble, he said to them, “What is going on?”*
- N. *They said to him, “This one [Esau] is holding matters up until Naphtali will come from the land of Israel.”*
- O. *He said to them, “And until Naphtali comes from the land of Egypt, will my father’s father lie in disgrace?” He took a club and hit Esau on the head so that his eyes fell out and rolled over to the feet of Jacob. Jacob opened his eyes and laughed.*
- P. *That is in line with what is written, “The righteous shall rejoice when he sees the vengeance, he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked” (Psa. 58:11).*
- Q. At that moment the prophecy of Rebecca was fulfilled. For it is written, “Why should I be bereaved of you both in one day” (Gen. 27:45).
- R. Now even though the death of the two of them [Jacob and Esau] did not take place on one day, the burial of the two of them in fact did take place on one day.

IV.3. A. *And if Joseph had not taken care of Jacob’s burial, would not the other [brothers] have taken care of it [so why should Joseph be singled out for credit, at M. 1:9C]?*

- B. And has it not been written, “For his sons carried him into the land of Canaan” (Gen. 50:13)?
- C. They said, “Leave it to him [to do it, namely, to Joseph]. Greater honor accrues if it is done by kings than if it is done by ordinary men.”

V.1 A. We have none so great as Joseph [M. 1:9D]:

- B. *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:*
- C. **[T.’s version:] Joseph has the merit of [burying] his father, so it was only Moses who took the trouble to care for his bones, as it is said, “And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him” (Exo. 13:19) [M. 1:9C-E].**

- D. This teaches that while all of the people were occupied with plunder, he was busy with the doing of a commandment, as it is said, “The wise of heart will heed commandments” (Pro. 10: 8) [T. [Sot. 4:7A-B](#)].
- E. How did Moses know where Joseph had been buried?
- F. They tell:
- G. Serah, daughter of Asher, was a survivor of the generation of Joseph, and she went and said to Moses, “In the River Nile Joseph is buried. And the Egyptians made for him metal spits and affixed them with pitch [to keep him down].” Moses went and stood at the Nile River and said, “Joseph, Joseph, the time has come for the Holy One, blessed be he, to redeem Israel.
- H. “Lo, the Presence is held up [and waiting] for you, and the Israelites are held up for you, and the clouds of glory are held up for you. If you show yourself, well and good, and if not, we are free of the oath which you have imposed upon our fathers.”
- I. Then the coffin of Joseph floated to the surface, and Moses took it and went his way.
- J. And do not be surprised [that metal should float], for lo, Scripture says, “As one was felling a beam the axe-head fell into the water... Alas, my master, for it was borrowed. The man of God said, Where did it fall? And he showed him the place. And he cut down a stick and cast it in, and made the iron to float” (2Ki. 6:5-6).
- K. Now is it not a matter of an argument a fortiori:
- L. Now if Elisha, disciple of Moses, could do things in such a way, Moses, master of Elijah, master of Elisha, all the more so [should be able to do such things]!
- M. R. Nathan says, “Joseph was buried in the royal cemetery: “Moses went and stood at the graves of the kings and said, “Joseph, Joseph! the time has come for the Holy One, blessed be He, to redeem Israel. Lo, the Presence is held up [and waiting] for you, and the Israelites are held up for you, and the clouds of glory are held up for you. If you show yourself, well and good, and if not, we are free of the oath which you have imposed upon our fathers.”
- N. At that moment the coffin of Joseph shook, and Moses took it and went along.
- O. Now there were two coffins traveling with them, one the holy ark, one the ark of the corpse. And everyone who passed by would remark, “What in fact is the character of these two arks?”
- P. They would then reply to them, “One is of a corpse, and one is the ark of the Presence of God.”
- Q. They would say to them, “But is it possible that a corpse should go along with the Presence of God?”
- R. They replied [\[13B\]](#), “The corpse which is kept in this ark carried out what is written in that which is lying in the other ark [T. [Sot. 4:7 I-P](#)].”
- S. [T.’s version:] But if Moses had not taken care of him, would the Israelites not have taken care [of Joseph]?

- T. [Yet] Scripture says, “And the bones of Joseph which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt they buried in Shechem” (Jos. 24:32).
- U. But since the Israelites saw Moses taking care of him, they said, “Leave him be. His honor will be greater if his rites will be performed by great men rather than by unimportant ones.”
- V. Now if Moses and the Israelites had not taken care [of Joseph], would not his own children have taken care of him?
- W. Scripture says, “And they became the inheritance of the children of Joshua” (Jos. 24:32).
- X. But when his children saw Moses and the Israelites taking care of [Joseph], they said, “Leave him be. His honor will be greater if his rites will be performed by many rather than by few” [T. **Sot. 4:7C-H**].

V.2. A. They buried him in Shechem.

- B. *Why in Shechem in particular?*
- C. Said R. Hama bar Hanina, “[They reasoned,] ‘From Shechem they stole him away. And to Shechem we shall return what it has lost.’”
- D. *The following verses contradict one another.*
- E. It is written, “And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him” (Exo. 13:19).
- F. And it is written, “And the bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up” (Jos. 24:43).
- G. Said R. Hama b. R. Hanina, “As to someone who started to do something which someone else came along and finished, Scripture regards the one who completed the task as if he had done [the whole of it].”
- H. R. Eleazar says, “They even remove [someone who does not finish the work] from the position of greatness.
- I. “For it has been written, ‘And it came to pass at that time that Judah went down’ (Gen. 38: 1) [from his greatness, because he began to rescue Joseph but did not complete it (Cohen)].”
- J. R. Samuel bar Nahmani said, “He even buries his wife and children.
- K. “For it is written, ‘Shua’s daughter, the wife of Judah, died’ (Gen. 38:12). And it is written, ‘But Er and Onan died’ (Gen. 46:12).”

V.3. A. Said R. Judah said Rab, “On what account was Joseph called ‘bones’ while he was yet alive [cf. Gen. 50:25]?”

- B. “Because he did not interfere to protect his father’s dignity when they said to him, ‘Your servant, our father,’ and he said nothing whatever in reply.”
- C. And R. Judah said Rab said, and some say it was R. Hama b. R. Hanina, “On what account did Joseph die before his brothers? Because he lorded it over them.”

V.4. A. And Joseph was brought down to Egypt” (Gen. 39: 1):

- B. Said R. Eleazar, “Do not read, ‘was brought down,’ but ‘brought down [Egypt],’ for he brought Pharaoh’s astrologers down from their eminence.”

V.5. A. “And Potiphar, a eunuch of Pharaoh, bought him” (Gen. 39: 1):

- B. Said Rab, “He bought him for himself. Gabriel came along and castrated him.

- C. “In the beginning it is written, ‘Potiphar [in the masculine]’ but at the end, ‘Potiphara [feminine].’”

VI.1. A. We have none so great as Moses [M. 1:9F]:

- B. “And the Lord said to me, ‘Let it be enough for you’” (Deu. 3:26):
- C. Said R. Levi, “With the word ‘enough’ did Moses bring news, and with the word ‘enough’ did others bring news to him.
- D. “With the word ‘enough’ he brought news: ‘Enough for you’ (Num. 16: 3).
- E. “With the word ‘enough’ did they bring news to him: ‘Let it be enough for you’ (Deu. 3:26).”
- F. Another matter: “You have a master” (Deu. 3:26) [RB LK may be translated in this way]:
- G. You have a master, and who is it? It is Joshua.
- H. Another matter: “It is enough for you” (Deu. 3:26):
- I. “[Do not petition me any more], so that people should not say, ‘How harsh is the master, how stubborn is the disciple.’”
- J. And why all this? A Tannaite authority of the house of R. Ishmael [stated], “In accord with the camel is the burden.” [God demands more of the righteous.]

VI.2. A. “And he said to them, ‘Today I am a hundred and twenty years old’” (Deu. 34: 7):

- B. Why does Scripture say, “Today”?
- C. “Today my days and years are completed [since it is my birthday].”
- D. This serves to teach you that the Holy One, blessed be He, completes for the righteous the fulness of their days and their months [so that they die on their birthday].
- E. For it is written, “The number of your days I will complete” (Exo. 23:26).

VI.3. A. “I cannot go out or come in any more” (Deu. 31: 2):

- B. What is the meaning of “go out and come in”?
- C. If one should wish to propose that it means literally to go out and to come in, has it not been written, “And Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died; his eye had not dimmed, and his natural power had not abated” (Deu. 34: 7)?
- D. It is further written, “And Moses went up from the plains of Moab to mount Nebo” (Deu. 24: 1).
- E. *In this regard it has been taught on Tannaite authority:* There were twelve steps and he would leap them in a single stride.
- F. Said R. Samuel bar Nahmani said R. Jonathan, “‘To go out and to come in’ in teachings of Torah.
- G. “This teaches that the gates of wisdom were closed to him.”

VI.4. A. “And Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves in the tent of meeting” (Deu. 31:14):

- B. *A Tannaite statement:* That was a Sabbath for two teachers [one to finish, the other to commence teaching]. The right of discourse was taken from this one and given to that one.”

- VI.5.** A. Said R. Judah, [cf. T. **Sot. 4:8**] “Were it not that it is a verse of Scripture fully written out, it would not be possible to make this statement:
- B. “Where did Moses die? In the territory of Reuben, for it is written, ‘And Moses went up from the plains of Moab to mount Nebo’ (Deu. 34: 1), and Nebo was in the territory of Reuben, for it is written, ‘And the children of Reuben built... Nebo’ (Num. 32:37f.).
- C. “Now where was Moses buried? It was in the territory of Gad, for it is written, ‘And he provided the first part for himself... For there was the lawgiver’s portion reserved’ (Deu. 33:21).
- D. “Now from the territory of Reuben to that of Gad is how much of a distance? It is four mils.
- E. “Now who brought [Moses] across those four mils?
- F. “This teaches that Moses was laid out on the wings of the Presence of God.”
- G. The ministering angels sang, “He executed the justice of the Lord and His judgments with Israel” (Deu. 33:21), and the Holy One, blessed be he, said, “Who will rise up for me against the evil-doers? Who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?” (Psa. 94:16).
- H. Samuel said, “[God said], ‘Who is the wise man? and who knows the interpretation of a thing’ (Qoh. 8: 1)?”
- I. R. Yohanan said, “[God said,] ‘Where will wisdom be found?’ (Job. 38:12).”
- J. R. Nahman said, “[God said,] ‘So Moses died there...’ (Deu. 34: 5).”
- K. Samilion said, “‘And Moses died there’ the great scribe of Israel.”
- L. *It was taught on Tannaite authority:* R. Eliezer the Great says, “Over a space of twelve mils by twelve mils, corresponding to the dimensions of the camp of Israel, an echo sounded, saying, ‘So Moses died there, the great scribe of Israel.’”
- M. And some say, “Moses never died. Here it is written, ‘He died there,’ and elsewhere it is written, ‘And he was there with the Lord’ (Exo. 34:28).
- N. “Just as in the latter context the meaning [of there] is that he was standing and serving, so here too he continues to stand and serve [God].”
- VI.6.** A. “And [God] buried him in the valley in the land of Moab over against Beth-peor” (Deu. 34: 6):
- B. Said R. Berekhiah, “[The text thus provides] one clue within another, and nonetheless: ‘No one knows where he is buried’ (Deu. 34:16).”
- C. The evil kingdom sent word to **[14A]** the camp of Beth Peor: “Show us where Moses is buried.”
- D. When they stood above, it appeared to them to be below, and when they stood below, it appeared to them to be above.
- E. They split into two camps. Those who stood above thought it was below, and those who stood below thought it was above.
- F. This serves to carry out the verse: “And no one knows where he is buried” (Deu. 34: 6).
- G. R. Hama b. R. Hanina said, “Even Moses, our master, himself does not know where he is buried.

- H. “Here it is written, ‘And no man knows where he is buried’ (Deu. 34: 6), and elsewhere it is written, ‘This is the blessing which Moses, the man of God, offered’ (Deu. 33: 1).”
- I. And R. Hama b. R. Hanina said, “On what account was Moses buried near Beth Peor? It was so as to atone for the incident of Peor.”

VI.7. A. And R. Hama b. R. Hanina said, “What is the meaning of the following verse of Scripture: ‘You shall walk after the Lord your God’ (Deu. 13: 5).

- B. “Now is it possible for a person to walk after the Presence of God? And has it not been said, ‘For the Lord your God is a consuming fire’ (Deu. 4:24)?”
- C. “But the meaning is that one must walk after the traits of the Holy One, blessed be he.
- D. “Just as he clothes the naked, as it is written, ‘And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife coats of skin and clothed them’ (Gen. 3:21), so should you clothe the naked.
- E. “[Just as] the Holy One, blessed be he, visited the sick, as it is written, ‘And the Lord appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre’ (Gen. 18: 1), so should you visit the sick.
- F. “[Just as] the Holy One, blessed be he, comforted the mourners, as it is written, ‘And it came to pass after the death of Abraham that God blessed Isaac his son’ (Gen. 25:11), so should you comfort the mourners.
- G. “[Just as] the Holy One, blessed be he, buried the dead, as it is written, ‘And he buried him in the valley’ (Deu. 34: 6), so should you bury the dead.”
- H. [Reverting to the exegesis of verses cited in the preceding:] “Coats of skin” (Gen. 3:21):
- I. Rab and Samuel: one said, “Something that comes from hide [= wool].”
- J. “The other said, “Something from which the skin [of a human being] gets pleasure [= linen].”
- K. R. Simlai expounded, “The Torah starts with acts of loving kindness and ends with acts of loving kindness.
- L. “It begins with acts of loving kindness, as it is written, ‘And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife coats of skin and clothed them’ (Gen. 3:21).
- M. “And it ends with acts of loving kindness, as it is written, ‘And he buried him in the valley’ (Deu. 34: 6).”

VI.8. A. R. Simlai expounded, “On what account did Moses yearn to enter the land of Israel?

- B. “Now could it have been that he needed merely to eat its fruit? Or did he need merely to be sated from its goodness?
- C. “But this is what Moses said, ‘Many religious duties have been commanded to Israel which may be carried out only in the land of Israel. Let me enter the land so that all of them may be carried out by me.’
- D. “Said to him the Holy One, blessed be he, ‘Do you want nothing more than to receive the reward [for carrying out these religious duties attached to the land]? Lo, I credit it to you as if you had carried them out.’

- E. “As it is said, ‘Therefore I will divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out his soul unto death and was numbered with the transgressors; he bore the sins of many and made intercession for transgressors’ (Isa. 53:12).”
- F. “Therefore I will divide him a portion with the great”:
- G. Is it possible to suppose that this [portion] will be in accord [merely] with the [reward of the] latter and not [of] the former generations [which is much greater]?
- H. Scripture says, “And he will divide with the strong,” that is, such heroes as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who are strong in Torah and in the practice of religious duties.
- I. “Because he poured out his soul unto death”:
- J. Because he offered himself to death, as it is said, “And if not, blot me out, I pray you...” (Exo. 32:32).
- K. “And he was numbered with the transgressors”:
- L. Because he was counted with those who were to die in the wilderness.
- M. “He bore the sins of many.”
- N. For he atoned [by offering his own life], for the deed of the golden calf [= I-J].
- O. “And he made intercession for transgressors.”
- P. For he sought mercy for the sinners of Israel, so that they would return in repentance.
- Q. And “intercession” refers only to prayer, as it is said, “Therefore do not pray for this people, and do not lift up a cry or a prayer for them, and do not make intercession to me” (Jer. 7:16).

In general, therefore, the materials follow the thematic order dictated by the Mishnah-paragraph. But they are laid out in terms of their own interests. The prevailing impression of extreme prolixity derives from two facts. First, the framer of a given set of units deals not only with his primary texts, e.g., about Samson, but also with secondary ones, e.g., Judah and Tamar. The theme of Miriam draws in its wake, second, a very long and systematical exegetical exercise on the verses of Exo. 1-2 in which Miriam plays some part. The focus, of course, is scarcely on Miriam in particular; it is on the verses in general. Where the sort of massive secondary accretion does not figure, as with Joseph and Moses, we see a clearer picture of the framers of the original thematic units as they did their work. The net effect of the construction as a whole may be only called tedious. There is no large-scale goal or direction. I discern no organizing point, beyond that stated by the Mishnah itself. But the materials of which the Talmud is constructed have not been selected because of the Mishnah’s proposition, only because of its theme. The treatment of Moses, at the end, produces a sublime conclusion.