

## CHAPTER II.

### REGULATIONS CONCERNING PUBLIC LECTURES WHICH ARE AND WHICH ARE NOT ALLOWED.

MISHNA: One should not discuss illegal unions unless there were three besides him, nor the creation unless there were two besides him, nor the divine chariot with one individual, unless he was a wise man and had much knowledge of his own. Every one who tries to know the following four things, it were better for him if he had never come into the world, viz.: What is above and what is beneath, what was before creation, and what will be after all will be destroyed. And every one who does not revere the glory of his Creator, it were better for him he had not come into the world.

GEMARA: In the first part it is said: "The divine chariot with an individual" (because he may deviate from the tradition and add out of his own mind, and there will be nobody to remind him), and afterwards it is said: "Unless he is a wise man and will understand by himself?" (from this we infer, that no tradition is necessary). The Mishna meant to say thus: One must not lecture about illegal unions even to three, nor about the creation even to two, and not about the divine chariot even to one, unless the lecturer was a wise man and will understand himself to answer, if they will question him about something. Why so? Said R. Ashi: One must not lecture about illegal unions not mentioned in the Bible (*e.g.*, his daughter of a forced woman, or the mother of his father-in-law, which is drawn only from an analogy of expression?) And why not to three? This is common sense. If there are only two, the Master speaks to one, and the other listens to him. But if there are three, one listens, and the other two discuss it between them, and can err and come to a wrong conclusion to permit an unlawful thing. If it is so, why only about unlawful unions, the case should be the same with the whole Law? In case of unlawful unions it is different, because the Master says: Robbing and vice a man desires. If so, why only in case of illegal unions, let him not lecture about robbery

also to three? Robbery one desires when the thing to be robbed is in his presence, but this is desired in the party's absence also.

"*And not about creation to two.*" Whence do we deduce this? As stated in the following Boraitha: It is written [Deut. iv. 32]: "For do but ask of former days" (this is in the singular). From this we may infer, that *one* may ask, not *two*. Lest one assume that a man can ask, What was before the creation? therefore it is written [ibid.]: "Since the day that God created man from the earth"; but lest one assume, a man must not ask even what was done in the six days of creation? therefore it is written [ibid.]: "Which were before thee" [*i.e.*, the six days before]; lest one ask, What is above and what is beneath, what was before creation and what will be after it? therefore it is written [ibid.]: "From one end of the heavens unto the other end of the heavens,"

"but not what is beyond." [If we infer this from what is written: "From one end of the heavens unto the other end," why is needed the verse further: "Since the day that God created man upon the earth"? This is according to R. Elazar, who said that Adam was tall from the earth up to heaven, and after he had transgressed, the Holy One, blessed be He, laid His hand upon him, and made him lower, as it is written (Ps. cxxxix. 5): "Behind and before hast thou hedged me in, and thou placest upon me thy hand."]

R. Jehudah in the name of Rabh said: Ten things were created on the first day, and they are: heaven and earth; chaos and desolation; light and darkness; wind and waters; the measures of the day and those of the night--heaven and earth, for it is written [Gen. i. 1]: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth"; chaos and desolation, for it is written [ibid. i. 2]: "And the earth was without form and void (chaos)"; light and darkness--darkness, for it is written [ibid., ibid.]: "And darkness was upon the face of the deep"; light, for it is written [ibid. i. 3]: "And God said, Let there be light"; wind and water, for it is written [ibid. i. 2]: "And the spirit (wind) of God was waving over the face of the waters"; the measures of the day and those of the night, for it is written [ibid. i. 5]: "And it was evening; and it was morning, the first day."

We have learned in a Boraitha: Chaos is a green line compassing all the world, and from it darkness springs, as it is written [Ps. xviii. 12]: "He made darkness his hiding place, round about him." Desolation--this means the stones covered

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with mud, which are sunk in the deep, from which waters come forth, as it is written [Is. xxxiv. 11]: "And he shall stretch out over it the line of destination and the weights of desolation."

Was light created on the first day? Is it not written [Gen. i. 17]: "And God set them in the expansion of the heaven," and also [ibid. i. 19]: "And it was evening and it was morning the fourth day"? This is as R. Elazar said: The light which the Holy One created on the first day, Adam saw by its means from one end of the world to the other. When the Holy One considered the generation of the flood and the generation of the dispersion, and that their works were vain, He took it from them and concealed it for the upright in the world to come. In this, however, the following Tanaim differ, as we have learned in a Boraitha: The light which the Holy One, blessed be He, created on the first day, Adam observed and saw by its means from one end of the world' to the other. So said R. Jacob. But the sages said. These are the luminaries which were created on the first day, but were not hung up until the fourth day.

R. Zutra bar Tobiah in the name of Rabh said: By ten things the world was created: by wisdom and by understanding; by knowledge and by strength; by rebuke and by might; by righteousness and by judgment; by mercy and by compassion. 1 R. Jehudah in the name of Rabh said: At the time that the Holy One, blessed be He, created the world it went spreading on like two clews of shoot and warp, until the Holy One, blessed be He, rebuked it and brought it to a standstill, as it is written [Job xxvi. 11]: "The pillars of heaven tremble greatly, and are astounded at his rebuke." And this is what Resh Lakish also said: What is meant by [Gen. xvii. 1]: "I am the Almighty God"? (••) It means: I am He *Who* (•) said to the world, "*Enough*" (••) Resh Lakish said again: At the time the Holy One, blessed be He, created the sea, it went spreading on, until the Holy One, blessed be He, rebuked it and made it dry, for it is written [Nah. i. 4]: "He rebuketh the sea and maketh it dry; and all the rivers he dried up."

The rabbis taught: The School of Shammai say: The heavens were created in the beginning, and afterwards the earth was created, for it is written [Gen. i. 1]: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." But the School of Hillel say: The earth was created in the beginning, and afterwards the

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heavens, for it is written [Gen. ii. 4]: "On the day that the Lord God made *earth* and heaven." Said the School of Hillel to the School of Shammai: According to your words, a man builds an upper story, and afterwards builds a house; and the heavens are the upper story, as it is written [Amos ix. 6]: "That buildeth in the heavens his steps, and hath founded his vault over the earth." Said the School of Shammai to the School of Hillel: According to you, a man makes a footstool, and afterwards makes a throne, as it is written [Is. lxvi. i]: "Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool." The sages say: Both were created together, as it is written [ibid. xlviii. 13]: "My hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned out the heavens. I call unto them, they stand forward together."

What is meant by "heavens"? Said R. Jose bar Hanina: It means, the place where there is water. In a Boraitha it is explained as equivalent to fire and water, thus teaching that the Holy One, blessed be He, brought them and mingled them one with the other, and made from them the firmament. R. Ishmael questioned R. Aqiba when they were on the road: Thou art one who hast served for twenty-two years Na'hum, the man of "Gimzu," the man who expounded the meaning of all the particles "*eth*" (the) which are in the Law. What was his exposition of "Eth-ha-shamayim v'*eth* haaretz"? R. Aqiba answered: If the words had been simply: First created God heaven and earth, I should have said, "Heaven" is another name of God. But as it is now, all know that heaven and earth are to be taken in the literal meaning. And why do I find the expression "*v'eth haaretz*"? To show that heaven preceded the earth.

There is a Boraitha of R. Jose which says: Woe to the creatures which see and know not what they see, which stand and know not upon what they stand. Upon what does the earth stand? Upon the pillars. The pillars stand upon the waters; the waters upon the mountains; the mountains upon the wind; the wind upon the storm; 1 the storm is suspended upon the strength of the Holy One, blessed be He, as it is written [Deut. Xxxiii. 27]: "And here beneath, the everlasting arms." The sages say: It stands upon twelve pillars, as it is

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written [Deut. xxiii. 8]: "He set the bounds of the tribes according to the number of the sons of Israel." According to others, seven pillars, as it is written [Prov. ix. i]: "She had hewn out her seven pillars." R. Elazar b. Shamua said: Upon one pillar, and its name is Zaddik (The Righteous), as it is written [Prov. x. 25]: "But the righteous is an everlasting foundation." R. Jehudah said: There are two firmaments, as it is written [Deut. x. 14]: "Behold, to the Lord thy God belong the heavens and the heavens of the heavens." Resh Lakish said, they are seven, viz.: Vilon, Rakia, Shchakim, Zbul, Maon, Makhon, Araboth. Vilon serves no purpose whatever save this, that it enters in the morning, and goes forth in the evening, and renews every day the work of creation. Rakia is that in which are set sun and moon, stars and constellations. Shchakim is that in which the millstones stand and grind manna for the righteous. Zbul is that in which is the heavenly Jerusalem and the Temple, and the altar is built there, and Michael the great prince

stands and offers upon it an offering. Maon is that in which are companies of ministering angels, who utter His song in the night and are silent in the day for the sake of the glory of Israel. Resh Lakish said: Every one who studied in the Law in this world, which is like the night, the Holy One, blessed be He, stretches over him the thread of grace for the future world, which is like the day, as it is written: "By the day the Lord gives his merciful command, and by night his song is with me." Makhon is that in which are the treasures of hail, and the high dwelling-place of harmful dews and the high dwelling-place of the round drops, and the chamber of the whirlwind and of the storm, and the retreat of noisome vapor; and their doors are made of fire. Araboth is that in which are righteousness and judgment and grace, the treasures of life and the treasures of peace and the treasures of blessing, and the souls of the righteous and the spirits and souls which are about to be created, and the dew with which the Holy One, blessed be He, is about to quicken mortals. There also are celestials and seraphs and holy beings and ministering angels and the throne of glory, and the King, the Living God, high and lifted up, sitting over them among the clouds, and darkness and cloud and thick darkness surround Him. How is there darkness in the presence of the Lord? Is it not written [Dan. ii. 22]: "He is that revealeth what is deep and secret: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him"? This presents no difficulty.

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[paragraph continues] The one refers to that which is within, the other to that which is without. R. A'ha bar Jacob said: There is again a firmament above the heads of the living creatures, for it is written [Ezek. i. 22]: "And the likeness of a vault was over the head of the living creatures, shining like the glitter of the purest crystal." So far thou hast permission to speak. Thenceforward thou hast not permission to speak. For thus it is written in the book of Ben Sira: Seek not out the things that are too hard for thee, and into the things that are hidden from thee inquire thou not. In what is permitted to thee instruct thyself thou must not discuss secret things.

We have learned in a Boraitha: Rabban Johanan b. Zakkai said: What answer did the heavenly voice make to that wicked man at the time when he said [Is. xiv. 14], "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be equal to the Most High"? The heavenly voice said to him: Thou wicked man, son of a wicked man, grandson of Nimrod the Wicked, who led all the world to rebel against Him in his kingdom, how many are the years of a man? Seventy years, as it is said [Ps. xc. 10]: "The days of our years in this life are seventy years, and if by uncommon vigor they be eighty . . ." And is not from the earth to the firmament a journey of five hundred years, and so too the interspace of the firmaments? Above there are the holy living creatures. The feet of the living creatures are of corresponding measure to all the things mentioned above, the ankles of the living creatures are of corresponding measure, the legs of the living creatures are of corresponding measure, the knees of the living creatures are of corresponding measure, the thighs of the living creatures are of corresponding measure, the bodies of the living creatures are of corresponding measure, the necks of the living creatures are of corresponding measure, the heads of the living creatures are of corresponding measure, the horns of the living creatures are of corresponding measure. Above them is the throne of glory. The feet of the throne of glory are of corresponding measure. The throne of glory is of corresponding measure. The King, the Living and Eternal God, high and lifted up, sitteth upon them. And thou didst say: "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be equal to the Most High"? Yet thou, shalt be brought down to bell, to the uttermost parts of the pit.

"*Nor the divine chariot with one.*" R. Hyya taught: But you may impart to him the quintessence

of the chapters. Said

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[paragraph continues] R. Zera: Even that may only be imparted to a chief of the Beth Din, and only then when his heart yearns for knowledge.

R. Ami said: The secrets of the Law may be imparted only to the one who has the five prescribed things, viz. [Is. iii, 3]: "The captain of fifty, and the honorable man, and the counsellor, and the skilful artificer, and the eloquent orator." R. Johanan said to R. Elazar: Come, I will fully instruct thee in the subject of the divine chariot. He said to him: I am not old enough. When he was old enough, R. Johanan's soul had passed away. R. Asi said to him: Come, I will fully instruct thee in the subject of the divine chariot. He said to him: If I had been worthy, I should have received full instruction from R. Johanan, thy teacher. R. Joseph was giving full instruction in the subject of the divine chariot. The sages of Pumbeditha were teaching the subject of creation. They said to him: Would the master instruct us fully in the subject of the divine chariot? He answered them: Instruct me in the subject of creation. After they had instructed him, they said to him: Would the master instruct us in the subject of the divine chariot? He answered: In reference to this we have learned in a Boraitha: It is written [Song of Songs iv. 11]: "Honey and milk are under thy tongue." That means, let words sweeter than honey and milk be under thy tongue. R. Abuhu infers the same thing from the following passage [Prov. xxvii. 26]: "The sheep are for thy clothing." That means, things that are the secrets of the world shall be under thy clothes. They said to him: We have worked in them as far as the words [Ezek. ii. 1]: "And he said unto me, Son of man." And he said to them: But this is the real subject of the divine chariot.

The rabbis taught: It happened once that a certain child, who was reading in his teacher's house in the Book of Ezekiel, was pondering over 'Hashmal, and there came out fire from 'Hashmal and burnt him, and they sought in consequence to conceal the Book of Ezekiel. Said Hananiah b. Hezkyah to them: If he was wise, are then all wise?

It is written [Ezek. i. 4]: "And I saw, and behold, a storm wind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a flaming fire, and a brightness was on it round about; and out of the midst of it was like the glitter of amber, out of the midst of the fire." Whither did it go?, Said R. Jehudah in the name of Rabh: It went forth to subdue the whole world under the wicked Nebuchadnezzar. And this was done that the nations might not

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say: The Holy One, blessed be He, delivered His children into the hands of a low nation. The Holy One, blessed be He, said: What forced Me to minister to worshippers of carved images? The iniquities of Israel, they forced me. It is written [ibid. i. 15]: "And I looked on the living creatures, and behold, there was one wheel upon the earth close by the living creatures." Said R. Elazar: It means a certain angel who stands upon the earth, and his head reaches to the level of the living creatures. In a Tosephtha we are taught that his name is Sandalphon, who is higher than his fellows by the space of a journey of five hundred years, and he stands behind the divine chariot and binds crowns for his Creator. This is not so, as it is written [Ezek. iii. 12]: "Blessed be the glory of the Lord from his place." From this we may infer that His place is impossible to know? He utters one of the holy names of the Lord over the wreath, and thereupon he goes and

rests by His head. Rabha said: All which Ezekiel saw Isaiah saw, but Ezekiel was like a villager who saw the king for the first time (and therefore he said all that he has seen); Isaiah, however, was like a townsman who has often seen the king (and therefore he said little).

Resh Lakish said: What is the meaning of the passage [Ex. xv. 1]: "I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously"? It means a song to Him who takes His place proudly above the high, as the Master said: The king among living creatures is a lion; the king among domestic beasts is an ox; the king among birds is an eagle, but man takes his place proudly above them, and the Holy One, blessed be He, takes His place proudly above them all, and above the whole world in its entirety. We have learned in a Boraitha: Rabbi said in the name of Abba Jose b. Dosai: It is written [Dan. vii. 10]: "Thousand times thousands ministered unto him." This is the number of one troop, but *all* his troops cannot be numbered. R. Jeremiah bar Abba, however, said: This passage refers to the fiery stream, as it is written [ibid., ibid.]: "A stream of fire issued and came forth from before him; thousand times thousands ministered unto him; and myriad times myriads stood before him." Whence does it come forth? From the perspiration of the living creatures. And upon what is it poured? Said R. Zutra bar Tobiah in the name of Rabh: Upon the heads of the wicked men in Gehenna, as it is written [Jer. xxiii. 19]: "Behold, the storm wind of the Lord is gone forth in fury; yea, a whirling storm upon the head of the wicked shall it fall grievously." R.

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[paragraph continues] A'ha bar Jacob said: Upon those who were held back, as it is writ. ten [Job xxii. 16]: "Who were shrivelled up before their time, whose foundation was flooded away like a river?" There is a Boraitha to the effect that R. Simeon the Pious said: There are nine hundred and seventy-four generations which were held back from being created. The Holy One, blessed be He, scattered them through all the successive generations, and these are the impudent (•••••) who are in a generation. R. Na'hman bar Itz'hak, however, said: On the contrary, this passage refers to those who are wrinkled for blessing, as it is written: As for these scholars who have become wrinkled over the words of the Law in this world, the Holy One, blessed be He, discloses to them the secrets of the world to come, as it is written [Job xxii. 16]: "Whose foundation was flooded away like a river."

Samuel said to Hyya bar Rabh: Thou son of a scholar, come and I will tell thee something of those noble words which thy father used to say: Every several day ministering angels are created from the fiery stream, and they utter a song and perish, as it is written [Lam. iii. 23]: "They are new every morning; great is thy faithfulness."

When R. Dimi came he said: Eighteen curses did Isaiah pronounce upon Israel, and he was not satisfied, until he had spoken against them this passage [Is. iii. 5]: "The boy shall demean himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honorable."

What are the eighteen curses? The following [Is. iii. 1-4]: For, behold, the Lord, the Eternal of hosts, doth remove from Jerusalem and from Judah stay and staff, every stay of bread, and every stay of water. The hero and the men of war," etc., etc. "Stay"--these are the learned in the Law. "Staff"--these are the learned in the Mishna; *e.g.*, R. Jehudah b. Tema and his fellows. [R. Papa and the rabbis differ in respect to this: One says, there were six hundred sections of Mishna, and another says, there were seven hundred sections.] "Every stay of bread"--these are the learned in Talmud, as it is written [Prov. ix. 5]: "Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I

have mingled." "And every stay of water"--these are the learned in Agada, who draw a man's heart like water by means of Agada." "The hero"--this is the man versed, in oral tradition. "And the man of war"--this is he who knows how to handle matters in the battle of the Law. "The judge"--this

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is a magistrate who gives decisions faithfully, "And the prophet"--this is in its literal meaning. "The prudent"--this is a king, as it is written [Prov. xvi. 10] "There should be a wise sentence on the lips of the king." "And the ancient"--this is he who is worthy to sit as a teacher presiding over an academy. "The captain of fifty"--this is in accordance with R. Abuhu, who saith: From this we may infer, that an interpreter who is less than fifty years old is not appointed over the congregation. "And the honorable man"--this is he for whose merits his generation is forgiven; by Heaven (*e.g.*, R. Hanina b. Dosa); in this world (*e.g.*, R. Abuhu in the house of Cæsar). "And the counsellor"--one who knows how to intercalate years and to fix months. "And the skilful"--this is the disciple who, by his keenness, sharpens the minds of his teachers. "Artificer"--at the time he is unfolding the words of the Law all are made like deaf men. [1](#) "And the eloquent"--this is he who, having knowledge of one thing, can derive therefrom knowledge of another thing. [2](#) "Orator"--this is he to whom it is fitting to impart the words of the Law, which is given in a whisper (*e.g.*, the subject of the divine chariot. See page [21](#)). "And I will set up boys as their princes"--that is, as R. Elazar said: These are men who are deprived of good works. [3](#) "And children shall rule over them"--as R. A'ha bar Jacob said: These are foxes and sons of foxes. [4](#) And he was not satisfied until he had said to them: "The boy shall demean himself proudly against the ancient," etc. [*ibid.*, *ibid.*]-these are the men who are deprived of good works. They shall demean themselves proudly against the one who is filled with good works as a pomegranate. "And the base against the honorable"--*i.e.*, that one to whom heavy sins are like light ones will demean himself proudly against the one to whom light sins are like heavy ones.

R. Kattina said: Even at the time of the destruction of

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[[paragraph continues](#)] Jerusalem there did not cease from them faithful men. Is that so? Did we not learn: Rabha said: Jerusalem was not laid waste till there ceased from it faithful men, as it is written [Jer. v. 1]: "Roam about through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and notice, and search in its broad places, if ye can find one man, if there be one who executeth justice, that searcheth for truth: and I will pardon it"? This presents no difficulty. The former means, faithful in the study of the Law, and the latter means, honesty in common business.

The rabbis taught: It happened with Rabban Johanan b. Zakkai that he was riding upon his ass and was travelling on the road, and R. Elazar b. Arakh was behind him, as driver. Said the latter to him: Rabbi, teach me a chapter on the subject of the divine chariot. And he answered him: Have I not taught you: Nor the chariot with one individual, unless he was a wise man and had much knowledge of his own? Then he said to him: Rabbi, allow me to say before thee one thing which thou hast taught me. He allowed him. Immediately R. Johanan b. Zakkai dismounted from the ass, and wrapped himself up and seated himself upon the stone under the olive tree. R. Elazar asked him: Rabbi, wherefore didst thou dismount from the ass? He answered him: Is it right that thou shouldst investigate the subject of the divine chariot, and the Shekhina is with us

and ministering angels accompany us, and that I should ride upon the ass? Then R. Elazar b. Arakh entered upon the subject of the divine chariot and lectured: And there descended fire from heaven and encircled all the terebinth trees of the field, which uttered a song. [What was the song which they uttered? [Ps. cxlviii. 7, 9, 14]: "Praise the Lord from the earth, ye sea monsters, and all deeps . . . fruitful trees and all cedars . . . Hallelujah."] An angel answered from the fire: This is the real subject of the divine chariot. R. Johanan arose and kissed him upon his head, and said: Blessed be the Lord God of Israel who hath given to our father Abraham, a son who is able to understand and lecture on this subject. There is one who lectures well, but doth not perform well. There is one who performeth well, but does not expound well. Thou dost expound well and dost perform well. Blessed art thou, Abraham our father, from whose loins bath come forth Elazar b. Arakh.

And when these things were told to R. Joshua, he and R. Jose the priest were travelling on the road. They said: Let us also expound on the same subject. R. Joshua opened his mouth

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and lectured: And it was the day of the summer solstice. The heavens were wrapped in clouds, and there appeared the form of a bow in the cloud, and the angels were assembling and coming to hearken, as the men assemble and come to look at the festivities of bridegroom and bride. R. Jose the priest went forward and related the whole occurrence to Rabban Johanan b. Zakkai, who said: Blessed are ye, and blessed is she that bare you. Blessed are mine eyes, that they have thus seen. And also in my dream I and ye were resting upon Mount Sinai, and a heavenly voice was heard, which said: Come up hither, come up hither. Large banqueting chambers are prepared and fair coverlets are spread for you, you and your disciples and your disciples' disciples, as fitted to attain to the third degree of blessedness.

Is it so? Have we not learned in a Boraitha: R. Jose in the name of R. Jehudah said: There were three consecutive expositions. R. Joshua explained things before R. Johanan b. Zakkai; R. Aqiba explained things before R. Joshua; Hananiah b. Hachinai explained before R. Aqiba. Hence we see that R. Elazar b. Arakh was not mentioned. (This presents no difficulty:) He who teaches and before whom others teach *is* mentioned, while he who teaches and before whom others do not teach is not mentioned. But was not Hananiah b. Hachinai one who taught and before whom others did not teach? And still he was mentioned? Yea, for he taught at least in the presence of one who taught others.

The rabbis taught: Four men went up into the heavenly garden, 1 and they were: Ben Azzai and Ben Zoma, A'her and R. Aqiba. Ben Azzai gazed and died; 2 to him the scriptural passage may be applied [Ps. cxvi. 15]: "Grievous in the eyes of the Lord is the death of his pious ones." Ben Zoma gazed and went mad; to him the scriptural passage may be applied [Prov. xxv. 16] Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou consume too much of it, and have to vomit it forth." A'her cut the plants. 3 R. Aqiba departed

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in peace. 1 A'her cut the plants; it is to him that the scriptural passage may be applied [Eccl. v. 6]: "Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy body to sin." There came out a heavenly voice and said [Jer. iii. 14]: "Return, O backsliding children" (except A'her). When he learned it he said:



Inasmuch as that man is excluded from yonder world, let him go and enjoy himself in this world. A'her went forth into evil courses. A'her asked this question of R. Meir, after he had gone forth into evil courses: What is the meaning of the passage [Eccl. vii. 14]: "Also this hath God made in equal measure with the other"? He answered him: Everything which the Holy One, blessed be He, created, He created with its counterpart. He created mountains; He created hills: He created seas; He created rivers. He said to him: R. Aqiba thy teacher did not say so, but he explained it as meaning that He created righteous; He created sinners. He created the Garden of Eden; He created Gehenna. To every individual belongs two shares, one in the Garden of Eden and one in Gehenna. If one is meritorious and righteous, he receives his own portion and also the portion of his neighbor in the Garden of Eden. If he has incurred guilt, he receives his own portion and also the portion of his neighbor in Gehenna. [R. Mesharshia said: What is the Scripture proof? As regards the righteous it is written [Is. lxi. 7]: "Therefore in their hand shall they possess a twofold (portion)"; as regards the wicked it is said [Jer. xvii. 18]: "And strike them with a double breach."]

A'her asked again of R. Meir: What is the meaning of the passage [Job xxviii. 17]: "She cannot be estimated after gold and glass; and not in exchange for her (can) vessels of refined gold (be taken)"? He answered him: These are the words of the Law, which are difficult to buy, as vessels of gold and of pure gold, and are easily lost, as vessels of glass. He said to him: R. Aqiba thy teacher did not say so, but he explained it as meaning that as vessels of gold and vessels of glass, although they are broken, may be mended, so a disciple of the sages, although he have sinned, may be mended. He said to him: Return thyself also. He answered him I have already heard from behind the curtain [Jer. iii. 14]: "Return, O backsliding children" (except A'her).

Also, what happened to Ben Zoma with R. Jehoshua b. Hananiah, as it seems to us the version of the Palestinian Talmud is correct. See note above. }

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The rabbis taught: It happened that A'her was riding upon his horse on the Sabbath, and R. Meir was walking behind him to learn the Law from his mouth. He said to him: Meir, turn thee backwards, for I have already measured by means of my horse's hoofs up to this point the legal limit of the Sabbath. He answered him: Return thyself also. He said to him: And have I not already answered thee what I have heard from behind the curtain? He forced him to enter a place of lecturing. He said to a child: Repeat for me thy verse. He said to him [Is. xlvi. 22]: "There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked." He brought him to another synagogue, until he had brought him into thirteen synagogues. They all repeated to him the same way. In the last one he said to him: Repeat for me thy verse. He said to him [Ps. i. 16]: "But unto the wicked God saith: What hast thou to do to relate my statutes, and why bearest thou my covenant upon thy mouth?" That child was a stammerer. It sounded as if he had said: "And to Elisha said God," etc. <sup>1</sup> And he said: If there had been a knife in my hand I would have cut him in pieces.

When A'her died it was said: Let him not be brought into judgment (because he has studied the Law), but let him not be admitted to the world to come (because he sinned). R. Meir said: It would have been better if he would have been brought to judgment and punished, and then admitted to the world to come. I wish I would die, in order that smoke should go up from his grave (*i.e.*, that he should be brought to judgment). When R. Meir died it was so: smoke went up from the grave of A'her. Said R. Johanan: A mighty deed it was to consign his teacher to the flames. There was one among us, and we should not find a way to save him? If I take him by the

hand, who will snatch him away from me? Would that I might die and extinguish the smoke from his grave. And it was so. When R. Johanan died the smoke ceased from the grave of A'her. The public mourner then uttered this expression over him: Even the keeper of the door of Gehenna stood not his ground before thee, O our teacher!

The daughter of A'her came to Rabbi and asked him for food. He said to her: Whose daughter art thou? She answered:

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[paragraph continues] I am the daughter of A'her. And he said to her: Is there still of his seed in the world? Is it not written [Job xviii. 19]: "He will have neither son nor grandson among his people, nor any that escapeth in the places of his sojourning"? She said to him: Remember his studiousness, and not his deeds. Immediately there came down fire, and consumed the seat of Rabbi. Rabbi wept and said: And if those who disgrace themselves through it, are honored thus, how much more those who obtain praise through their use of it.

How did R. Meir study the Law from the mouth of A'her? Have we not learned (see Tract Moed Katan) that if it is not certain that the rabbi is equal to an angel, no instruction must be received from him? Said Resh Lakish: R. Meir interpreted the following passage thus [Prov. xxii. 17]: "Incline thine ear, and hear the words of the wise, and apply thy heart unto my knowledge." It is not written, "Unto *their* knowledge," but "unto *My* knowledge." R. Hanina said the following passage [Ps. xlv. 11]: "Hearken, O daughter, and look and incline thy ear, and forget thy own people, and thy father's houses," etc. But do not these passages contradict each other? Nay, the one is the case of an adult, the other of a young person (who cannot distinguish between good and evil).

When R. Dimi came he said: They say in the West: R. Meir, while eating the date, he threw away the stone (*i.e.*, he picked out the good and threw away the bad teachings).

Rabha expounded the meaning of the passage [Song of Songs vi. 11]: "Into the nut-garden was I gone down, to look about among the plants of the valley," etc. Why are scholars likened to a nut? It means to say that, as a nut, although soiled, what is within it is clean: so also, although a scholar has sinned, his study of the law is not rejected.

Rabba bar Shila met Elijah and said to him: What is the Holy One, blessed be He, doing? He answered him: He had uttered doctrine in the name of all other rabbis, but in the name of R. Meir He had not uttered. He said to him: Why? Because he learned doctrine from the mouth of A'her. He said to him again: Why? R. Meir found a pomegranate. He ate its inside and cast away its husk. He answered him: He is at this moment saying: Meir my son is speaking and says: At the time that men were afflicted, the Shekhina used the following language: My head and my arm are heavy on me (*i.e.*, I am sorry that the men I have created have to die for their sins). If the

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[paragraph continues] Holy One, blessed be he, is thus grieved when the blood of wicked men is poured out, how much more when the blood of the righteous man is poured out.

Samuel found R. Jehudah when the latter was swinging upon the bolt of a door and weeping. He said to him: Is it a small thing that is written concerning the rabbis [Is. xxxiii. 18]: "Where is he who wrote down? where is he that weighed? where is he that counted the towers"? "Where is he that counted?" for they counted all the letters that are in the Books of the Law. "Where is he that weighed?" for they weighed the light and the heavy things which are in the Law. "Where is he that counted the towers?" for they taught three hundred doctrines concerning the tower which flies in the air. And R. Ami said: Three hundred questions were treated by Doeg and Ahithophel concerning the tower which flies in the air. And we learned, however, in a Mishna (Tract Sanhedrin, chap. xi. 1): Three kings and four private persons have no position in the world to come, and we--what will there be for us? He said to him: Oh, clever one, there was uncleanness in their hearts.

It was said about A'her: Greek melody ceased not from his mouth, as it was said of him (A'her), that at the time when he stood up to go out of the college many books of the Minim used to fall from his lap.

Nimus of Gardi 1 asked R. Meir: Does all wool which goes down to the dyeing-vat come up with the right color? He answered him: All which was clean on its mother's (sheep's) back does so come up; all which was not clean on its mother's back does not so come up.

It is said above: R. Aqiba went into the heavenly garden in peace and came down from it in peace. And it is to him that the scriptural passage may be applied [Song of Songs i. 4]: "Oh, draw me! after thee will we run." Nevertheless R. Aqiba was also in danger of being thrust away by the angels, but the Holy One, blessed be He, said to them: Leave this elder, for he is worthy to avail himself of My glory.

What kept R. Aqiba from being misled, as was A'her? The passage [1 Kings xix. 11, 12]: "But not in the wind was the Lord; and after the wind was an earthquake, but not in the

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earthquake was the Lord; and after the earthquake was a fire, but not in the fire was the Lord; and after the fire was the sound of a soft whisper. And, behold, the Lord passed by" (*i.e.*, from the whisper he understood that there was the Shekhina).

The rabbis taught: Six things are said with regard to demons, three in which they are like the angels: they have wings, they float from one end of the world to the other, and they know what is about to be; and three in which they are like men: they eat and drink, they are fruitful and multiply, and they are mortal.

Six things are said with regard to men, three in which they are like angels: they have knowledge like the angels, they go with stature erect, and they speak in the holy language; and three like the beasts: they eat and drink like beasts, and they are fruitful and multiply, and they relieve nature.

"*Every one who does not respect the glory,*" etc. What is meant by this? Said R. Joseph: This is the man who commits a transgression secretly. This is in accordance with R. Itz'hak, who said: Every one who committeth a transgression secretly is as though he jarred the feet of the Shekhina, as it is written [Is. lxvi. i]: "Thus hath said the Lord, The heaven is my throne and the

earth is my foot-stool." But this is not so, for R. Alea the Elder said (in Tract Moed Katan), that in such a case he may go to a place where he is not known? (as it will be explained in Moed Katan). This presents no difficulty. The former is the case of a man who has found a means of checking his evil nature; the other, of one who is not able to do so.

R. Jehudah in the name of R. Na'hmani, the interpreter of Resh Lakish, lectured: Every one who gazes upon three things, his eyes grow weak, viz.: upon the bow, and the prince, and the priests. Upon the bow, for it is written [Ezek. i. 28]: "Like the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud on the day of rain . . . this was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord." Upon the prince, for it is written [Num. xxvii. 20]: "And thou shalt put some of thy greatness upon him." 1 He that gazeth upon the priests--this has to do with the time that the Temple was in existence, when they stood upon their platform and blessed Israel in the ineffable name.

The same lectured again in the name of the same authority:

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[paragraph continues] It is written [Mic. vii. 5]: "Trust ye not in a friend, put ye not confidence in a confidant." It means, if the evil imagination say to thee, Do thou sin and the Lord will forgive, be not persuaded, as it is written: "Trust ye not in an evil one"; 1 and "an evil one" is nothing but the evil imagination, as it is written [Gen. viii. 21]: "The imagination of a man's heart is evil"; and there is no "guide" but the Lord, as it is written [Jer. iii. 4]: "My father, the guide of my youth art thou." Perhaps one might say, Who witnesseth against me? The stones of a man's house and the timbers of his house, these witness against him, as it is written [Hab. ii. 11]: "For the stone will cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the wood (work) will answer it." The sages say: The soul of a man witnesseth against him, as it is written [Mic. vii. 5]: "From her that lieth in thy bosom guard the doors of thy mouth." What is this that lieth in a man's bosom? Say, it is the soul. R. Zerika said: The two angels which lead him, these witness against him, as it is written [Ps. xci. 11]: "For his angels will he give charge concerning thee, to guard thee on all thy ways." Others say: The limbs of one's body testify against him, as it is written [Is. xliiii. 12]: "And ye are my witness, saith the Lord, and I am God."

MISHNA: Jose b. Joezer says that one must not lay on his hand (on a sacrifice on a biblical festival), but Joseph b. Johanan says that one may. Joshua b. P'ra'hia says that one must not lay it, but Mathai the Arbelite says that one may. Jebudah b. Tabbai says that one must not, but Simeon b. Sheta'h says he should. Sh'maia says he must, but Abtalian says he must not. Hillel and Mena'hem. did not differ. Mena'hem went out (left the Sanhedrin); Shammai entered it. Shammai says one must not; Hillel says one may. The first of the several pairs were princes, the second to them were chiefs of the court.

GEMARA: The rabbis taught: In the three former pairs, which say that a man is not to lay, and in the two latter pairs, which say that a man is to lay, the first were princes and the second chiefs of the court. So said R. Meir. But the sages say: Jehudah b. Tabbai was a chief of the court and Simeon b. Sheta'h was a prince.

"Mena'hem went out," etc. Whither did he go out? Said Rabha: He went out from the service of the king. We have

learned in a Boraita: Mena'hem went out from the service of the king, and there went out with him eighty pairs of disciples clothed in Syrian robes. Said R. Shaman bar Abba in the name of R. Johanan: Let a rabbinical decree concerning the Sabbath not be a light thing in thine eyes, for the laying on of the hand is only a rabbinical prohibition, and the greatest men of the different generations were divided upon this matter. Is this not self-evident? He comes to teach us that even a rabbinical prohibition which is seemingly contrary to a positive command of the Bible must also not be light in thine eyes. But this is also self-evident from the teachings of our Mishna? This is needed to object to those who say that they differ not as to the rabbinical prohibition, but as to the laying on of the hand itself, because they maintain that the laying on of the hand is necessary only in case of a voluntary peace-offering, but not in that of an obligatory peace-offering. [1](#)

Said Rami bar Hama: Infer from this that the laying on of the hands must be with all one's strength, because if we would imagine that all the strength is not necessary, what labor is it or what is he doing to the animal that the rabbis prohibited it on the festival?

An objection was raised: We have learned elsewhere It is written [Lev. i. 2-4]: "Speak unto the children of Israel . . . and he shall lay his hand." *He*--the males, but not the females of Israel. R. Jose and R. Simeon, however, said that the females of Israel, if they wish, they may lay on their hands (although it is not obligatory for them); and R. Jose added to this: My father Elazar told me that it happened once that we had a calf of peace-offering, and we brought it to the department of the women, and the latter laid their hands on it. It was not because the laying on of the hands belongs to women, but so as to gratify them. Now, if you think that the laying on of the hand must be with all one's strength, would it be right, in order to gratify the women, to allow them to do labor with the holy things? Infer, therefore, from this that it is not necessary to use all the strength. Nay, maybe it *is* necessary, but in that case it was told to the women to lay on their hands lightly. If so, why does R. Jose say: Not because the laying on of the hands belongs to women, etc. Let him say, because it was not considered

laying on at all? Said R. Ami: he meant both, firstly, because it was not considered laying on the hands at all; and, secondly, in order to gratify the women.

**MISHNA:** The House of Shammai say: A peace-offering may be brought without laying the hands on them, but not burnt-offerings. But the House of Hillel say: Both peace-offerings and burnt-offerings may be brought, and also lay the hands on them.

In the case of Pentecost, which falls upon the eve of a Sabbath, the House of Shammai say: The day for sacrificing is after the Sabbath. But the House of Hillel say: There is no day for sacrificing after the Sabbath. Both, however, admit that if it fall upon a Sabbath the day for sacrificing is the day after the Sabbath. And on that day (which is called the day of sacrificing) a high-priest is not to clothe himself in his costly garments, unless in case of a mourning or of a fast. The prohibition was in order not to confirm the words of those who say, Pentecost is after the Sabbath (only).

GEMARA: (The Gemara begins with the saying of R. Elazar in the name of R. Oshiyah, that the Pentecost-offering is transferable to all the six succeeding days, and repeats here all the statement contained in Tract Rosh Hashana, p. 6, lines 15-29.)

*"In the case of Pentecost which falls on the eve of a Sabbath,"* etc. Does that not mean that there is no day at all for sacrificing? Nay, it means that a substituted day is necessary for this. But what does it come to teach us--that it shall be sacrificed on the very day of the festival? Was this not discussed already in the beginning of our Mishna? It is needed. For if the statement would be in the latter paragraph only, one might say that the School of Shammai hold so because it can be done on the morrow, but if it fall on the eve of a Sabbath, when it cannot be done on the morrow, they agree with the School of Hillel; and if the statement would be in the first paragraph only, one might say that the School of Hillel allow it to be sacrificed on the very day of the festival because it cannot be done on the morrow, but when the Pentecost falls on the Sabbath day, they agree with the House of Shammai; therefore both statements are needed. (An objection was raised:) Come and hear: He who has not kept the feast for the seven days of the Passover, and the eight days of the Feast of Tabernacles, and the first day of Pentecost, he cannot afterwards keep the

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feast. Did this not include also the day of Pentecost, that it has no compensation? (*i.e.*, if not sacrificed on the very festival, it cannot be done soon any other day). Nay, it means the last day of compensation.

The disciples of R. Eliezer b. Jacob taught It is written [Lev. xxiii. 21, 22]: "And ye shall proclaim." "And when ye reap." What is the feast in which thou makest proclamation and reapest? Thou must say, it is the Feast of Pentecost. Now, let us see. When is it? If I am to say on the holiday itself, how is reaping lawful on a holiday? We must then say, it means the completion days. Resh Lakish, however, said: It is inferred from the following passage [Ex. xxiii. 16]: "And the feast of the harvest." What is the feast on which thou featest and reapest? Thou must say, it is the Pentecost. When is it? If I am to say, on the holiday itself, how is reaping lawful on a holiday? We must then say, it means the completion days. Said R. Johanan: According to thee, the Feast of Ingathering. What is the feast in which there is an ingathering? Thou must then say, it is the Feast of Tabernacles. When is it? Shall I say, on the holiday itself? How is work lawful on a holiday? And if you will say, that it means on one of the middle days? But even then is work allowed on those days? Therefore we must say, that it means the feast that falls during the time of the gathering in. Say, also, this is the case here.

We see from this that both are of the opinion that on the middle days the doing of work is forbidden. Whence do we deduce this? From the following Boraitha: It is written [Lev. xxiii. 8]: "No servile work shall ye do." That means, that on the middle days the doing of work is forbidden. So said R. Jose the Galilean. R. Aqiba says: It was not necessary, because it is written [ibid. 4]: "These are the feasts of the Lord," etc. With reference to what is the Scripture speaking? If to the first day, it has been already called a Sabbath day; if to the seventh day, it has also been already called a Sabbath day. We must therefore say, it refers to the middle days, to teach that doing of work is forbidden thereon.

There is another Boraitha: It is written [Deut. xvi. 8]: "Six days shalt thou eat unleavened bread, and on the seventh day shall be a solemn assembly to the Lord thy God: thou shalt do no work."

As on the seventh day work is prohibited, so also on the six days. But one might say, as on the seventh day no work at all is to be done, so also on the six days; therefore it is

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written [ibid.]: "And on the seventh day shall be a solemn assembly . . . thou shalt not work," thus indicating that on the seventh day no work at all shall be done, but on the six days there is not a prohibition from *all* work. Consequently, the Scripture has communicated only to the sages that they can decree on which days work is and on which work is not allowed, and what labor may and what labor may not be done, etc.

*"But it is allowed in case of a mourning or of a fast after the Sabbath."* But have we not learned in a Boraitha: It happened that Alexis died in Luda, and all Israel assembled to mourn him, and R. Tarphon had not allowed them because it was the festival? Now, if it was the festival itself, how did they come to assemble at all? We must therefore say, it was on the day of sacrificing, and hence we see even on those days it is not allowed to mourn? The Mishna refers to a case when the Pentecost falls on a Sabbath. And the case of Alexis was when it fell on the first day of the week.

MISHNA: One may wash his hands for common food and for second-tithes and for heave-offerings, but for hallowed things they must be bathed legally. For the sin-offering, if one's hands be defiled, his whole body is defiled.

If he have dipped for common food, he has credit as clean for common food, but is forbidden tithe; if for tithe, he has credit for tithe, but not for heave-offering; if for heave-offering, he has credit for heave-offering, but not sacred things; if for sacred things, he has credit for sacred things, but not sin-offering. If for a weightier thing (more rigorous), he is free for a lighter thing (lenient). If he have dipped without any intention for cleanness, it is as though he had not dipped.

The garments of a common person are defiled by pressure (*i.e.*, are looked upon as affected by uncleanness arising from pressure) for Pharisees; the garments of Pharisees are defiled by pressure for those that eat heave-offering; the garments of those that eat heave-offering are defiled by pressure for those that partake of sacred things; the garments of those that partake of sacred things are defiled by pressure for those that partake of sin-offering. Jose b. Joezer was the most pious among the priests, and yet his apron was defiled by pressure for those that partake of sacred things. Johanan b. Gudgodah was one who ate his ordinary food all his days with observance of the laws of purification which belong to sacred things, and yet his apron was defiled by pressure for those that partake of sin-offering.

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GEMARA: Is, then, for common food and tithes, washing of hands needed? (Have we not learned elsewhere that it is not needed?) This presents no difficulty: The one has to do with bread, the other with fruit. For R. Na'hman said: Every one who washes his hands for fruit is overscrupulous and affected.

*"He that dips for common food and has credit for common food,"* etc. According to whom is our Mishna? Shall we say it is according to the rabbis, for they make a distinction between common

food and tithes? According to whom, then, would be the latter part of the Mishna: The garments of a common person are defiled by pressure for Pharisees; the garments of Pharisees are defiled by pressure for those that eat heave-offering? which is certainly in accordance with R. Meir, who says, common food and tithes are exactly the same? Then this conclusion would be that the former part is according to the rabbis, and the latter part according to R. Meir? Yea, it is so. R. A'ha bar Ada, however, teaches in the latter part five orders, and establishes it all according to the rabbis.

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## Footnotes

[23:1](#) All these are deduced from passages. See foot-note further on.

[24:1](#) There are here adduced biblical passages for every statement, but we omitted them, as they are not in point.

[30:1](#) The Hebrew term is פֶּה־שָׁמֵט, and is explained to have the same meaning as פֶּה־שָׁמֵט, a deaf man.

[30:2](#) The Hebrew terms are פֶּה־שָׁמֵט, the literal meaning of which is "the instructed whisperer," but we give in the text Loesser's translation.

[30:3](#) The Hebrew term is פֶּה־שָׁמֵט, which means also "to shake off, to be deprived," as in (Judges xvi. 20) פֶּה־שָׁמֵט.

[30:4](#) The Hebrew term is פֶּה־שָׁמֵט and is interpreted here as derived from the Aramaic פֶּה־שָׁמֵט, a fox; *i. e.*, men who are shrewd as a fox, but deprived of any good qualifications.

[32:1](#) The Hebrew term is *Pardes*, meaning "a garden"; the commentaries explain it to mean "heavenly." Tosaphoth states: "They did not go up literally, but appeared to them as if they went up." See Streane's "Hagigah," p. 83.

[32:2](#) In the Palestinian Talmud it reads: Ben Zoma gazed and died, Ben Azzai gazed and was injured. This seems to be the more correct, as can be seen many other places in the Babylonian Talmud and Tosephtha. See our "Eben Harosha," at the end.

[32:3](#) These terms are used because he speaks of a garden; *i. e.*, in some way made bad use of his learning.

[33:1](#) We have omitted here a question put to Ben Zoma, for the reason that the same was inserted in the Talmud not by the Talmudists. See our "Eben Sapir," p. 50.

[34:1](#) The Hebrew term is "Ul'rosha" ("to the wicked"), and because of the stammering it sounded as "Ul'Elisha," which was the true name of פֶּה־שָׁמֵט this latter meaning "another"--*i. e.*, not



Elisha, because it was not believed that the great Tana Elisha should have deserted the true teachings.

[36:1](#) Nimus of Gardi was a Gentile, and it is stated of him in Midrash that he was one of the greatest men that ever lived among the nations. The modern writers differ very much as to who he was, but we showed in our "Saneiger," p. 193, that he was one of the judges of the Supreme Criminal Courts of Gardum.

[37:1](#) Such hagadical statements must not be taken literally, merely in their allegorical sense. Some of them we will explain in our introduction to the Hagadah.

[38:1](#) The Hebrew term is •••, which is here read as ••, "evil."

[39:1](#) What is a voluntary and what is an obligatory peace-offering will be explained in Tract Mena'hoth.

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[Next: Chapter III: In What Cases Sacred Things Are More Rigorous Than Heave-Offerings,  
And Vice Versa](#)