

NJPS basin, and apply some of the blood that is in the basin to the lintel and to the two doorposts. None of you shall go outside the door of his house until morning. ²³For when the LORD goes through to smite the Egyptians, He will see the blood on the lintel and the two doorposts, and the LORD will pass over the door and not let the Destroyer enter and smite your home.

²⁴"You shall observe this as an institution for all time, for you and for your descendants. ²⁵And when you enter the

RASHI not "threshold" as it more often means. The phrase is repeated to prevent you from thinking that one could apply blood to the two doorposts and the lintel by dipping the bunch just once. Rather, each of the three applications of blood had to be made directly from "the blood that is in the basin," one dip for each application. None of you shall go outside. This tells us that once the Destroyer is given permission to harm, he does not distinguish between the righteous and the wicked. And night intrinsically gives permission to those who cause harm: "You bring on darkness and it is night, when all the beasts of the forests stir" (Ps. 104:20).

23 The LORD will pass over. Will take pity. Of course, it also means "pass over." [Q]

25 When you enter the land. The observance of Passover was made dependent on their entering the land. The only passover offering they were obligated to make during the [Q] See Rashi's comment to v. 13.

NAHMANIDES our Sages. None of you shall go outside the door of his house until morning. This is why they were commanded to put the blood on the lintel, so they would be protected inside; see v. 13. I do not understand Rashi's citation of Ps. 104:20; he would seem to be saying that this verse prohibits people from going out of their homes on any night. He should have said that the Destroyer was given permission to harm on this night, and they were therefore warned against him. But Rashi did not see his way clear to saying this, because it was the Holy One Himself who struck the blow on this particular night. The same comment is given in the Mekilta, but somewhat differently. According to the Mekilta, the Israelites in Egypt were warned not to go out of their houses that night because the Holy One was passing through Egypt like a king preceded by armed guards to make sure that no one would meet him or see him. Similarly, when Moses asked to see God, he was put "in a cleft of the rock" (33:22) to protect him from the seraphim and the rest of the heavenly retinue. Since we have found that once the Destroyer is given permission to harm he does not distinguish between the righteous and the wicked, people are not permitted to violate the custom of the Patriarchs (described in rabbinic literature) and go out at night, because that is the time when beasts, who cannot distinguish between the righteous and the wicked, are given permission to hunt. But it is not this verse that prohibits going out at night.

23 The Destroyer. The angel who causes destruction in the world at a time of plague, e.g., the angel who "extended his hand against Jerusalem to destroy it" (2 Sam. 24:16) after David took a census. But it was not he who would destroy the Egyptians, for it was the Holy One Himself who would strike that blow. [L]

24 You shall observe this. "This" refers to the passover offering mentioned in v. 21, even though it is somewhat remote, and not to the verses that follow it about putting blood on the doorposts, which was commanded only for the original passover in Egypt.

25 This rite. This, too, refers to the passover sacrifice. Deut. 15:17, "Do the same with your female slave," provides another example where a shorthand reference refers not to what immediately precedes it but to something farther back.

[L] But the Destroyer would be present, and the Israelites would need protection from him.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS priest's right forefinger (Gersonides). **To the lintel and to the two doorposts.** They are given in reverse order from v. 7 to show that the exact order does not matter (Hizkuni). None of you shall go outside. As our Sages said in B. BK 60b, "When there is an epidemic in town, keep your feet inside the house" (Bekhor Shor). Some think this was meant to keep them from being scattered hither and yon at the moment the exodus was to start (Abarbanel).

23 Not let the Destroyer enter. The rabbinic comment "I and not an angel," etc., means that God Himself came down and accompanied the destroying angels (Hizkuni). In my opinion, this "Destroyer" was a kind of moldy air that was inhaled into the body and went straight to the heart; naturally this air would have no way to discriminate between the righteous and the wicked (Abarbanel).

OJPS blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two side-posts with the blood that is in the basin; and none of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning. ²³For the LORD will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when He seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side-posts, the LORD will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you.

²⁴And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever.

²⁵And it shall come to pass, when ye be

IBN EZRA interprets *ezov*, the word translated "hyssop," as Arabic *zaatar*, which in Europe is called "oregano"; it is an herb notable for its use in many delicious dishes. But this cannot be. According to 1 Kings 5:13, *ezov* is something that "grows out of the wall." I have no idea what it is, but since it is contrasted in that verse with "the cedar in Lebanon," one must assume that it is not a large plant. **The basin.** Over which the passover was slaughtered. Others interpret the word to mean "the threshold," as in Ezek. 40:6, assuming the passover to be slaughtered at the threshold of the house. **Until morning.** See my comment to v. 31.

24 As an institution for all time. If the commandments were as they appear to us from the text, this would be saying that the application of the blood with a bunch of hyssop was "an institution for all time," especially since the reason given for it in v. 27 is that God passed over the houses. Logically, this would be correct. Our predecessors, however, transmit the utterly true tradition that this expression refers to the passover offering. The children (v. 26) are asking about the unusual meal, unlike that of any other holiday—not about the hyssop.

25 When you enter the land. Only now does the text make clear that the passover offering can only be done in the land of Israel. The passover offered in the wilderness (Numbers 9) was offered on the basis of an explicit divine commandment for that one occasion; it was never again offered in the wilderness. On that occasion, being near settled parts, they had unleavened bread. The rest of the time, when they were

NJPS the country. ²⁰You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your settlements you shall eat unleavened bread.

²¹Moses then summoned all the elders of Israel and said to them, "Go, pick out lambs for your families, and slaughter the passover offering. ²²Take a bunch of hyssop, dip it in the blood that is in the

OJPS the land. ²⁰Ye shall eat nothing leavened; in all your habitations shall ye eat unleavened bread."

²¹Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them: "Draw out, and take you lambs according to your families, and kill the passover lamb. ²²And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the

RASHI prohibition, since the miracle was done for Israel.

20 You shall eat nothing leavened. This is the warning not to eat leaven. [N] It implies that even leaven mixed with something else is included in the prohibition. **In all your settlements you shall eat unleavened bread.** This statement excludes the second tithe (Deut. 14:22-26) and the thanksgiving cakes (Lev. 7:12), because they are not fit to eat "in all your settlements," since they can only be eaten in Jerusalem.

21 Pick out lambs. More literally, "pick out or purchase lambs." [O] Whoever owned sheep must pick out one of his own sheep; whoever did not, would buy one at the market. **For your families.** A lamb for each extended family.

22 A bunch of hyssop. Hyssop is a kind of plant with buds. [P] A bunch is three stalks. **Some of the blood that is in the basin.** "Basin" is correct, as in 2 Kings 12:14, [N] The punishment for doing so has been previously stated in v. 19. It is a principle of Jewish law that one cannot be punished without being warned not to commit the crime. See Special Topics, "Interpreting Biblical Law." [O] See OJPS "take you lambs"; the biblical verb "take" is used in rabbinic Hebrew to mean "purchase." [P] According to M. Par. 11:9, "buds" are an essential part of the hyssop to be used in the ritual.

NAHMANIDES leaven except under our own control. According to a rabbinic ruling, however, we must clear out our own leaven from every place, but leaven that is under a Jew's control but owned by a non-Jew is permissible. Similarly, leaven that is inextricably buried under a pile of debris, and so is lost to him and to everyone else, is permitted—for we can no longer call it "his."

20 Nothing leavened. Again, Rashi's comment is incorrect. The *halakhah* here follows the opinion of the Sages in the discussion at B. Pes. 43a: "For eating leaven there is the punishment of being 'cut off'; for eating a mixture of leaven, the punishment is not recorded."

21 Moses then summoned all the elders of Israel. This section briefly summarizes Moses' repetition of what God commanded at the beginning of the chapter; Moses certainly told them all the details and taught them everything about the subject. It is all included in v. 28, "just as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did." Here we have only the general statement that Moses summoned the elders and they gathered all the people to him, and they (the elders) told the whole congregation of Israel, **Go, pick out lambs for your families** from the flock and bring them into your houses to keep an eye on them from the 10th of the month on. What it literally says is "Draw out and take you lambs" (OJPS), perhaps because their sheep were far away from them, in the land of Goshen, since "all shepherds are abhorrent to Egyptians" (Gen. 46:34). **Pick out lambs for your families**—"a lamb to a family, a lamb to a household" (v. 3). **Slaughter the passover offering** "at twilight" (v. 6), all in accordance with the details given at the beginning of the chapter. In the Mekilta they taught: **Moses then summoned all the elders of Israel.** This tells that he constituted them a court. **And said to them.** The word came from the mouth of Moses, telling it to all Israel—these are the words of R. Josiah. R. Jonathan says: The word came from the mouth of Moses, telling it to the elders, and the elders were to tell it to all Israel. Now, according to R. Josiah, Moses must have "summoned all the elders" to gather the people to him, just as I explained. According to R. Jonathan, "Speak to the whole community of Israel" (v. 3) would have to be addressed to the elders.

22 Take a bunch of hyssop. This verse gives more details about how the blood is to be applied than are given explicitly at the beginning of the chapter, which says merely, "They shall take some of the blood" (v. 7). We learn that whenever the Torah says to "take" blood, it is to be done with a "bunch," and that catching the blood of a sacrifice requires a utensil, in accordance with the interpretation of

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS 21 The elders. Moses worried that the Israelites would be afraid to let the Egyptians see them doing this. He thought they would be more likely to do it if the leaders of the people did it first (Abarbanel). **Pick out lambs for your families and slaughter the passover offering.** "Take a lamb" (v. 3) was to be said to the whole community; this is said only to the elders because of the addition of slaughtering, which the ordinary people might mess up (Hizkuni).

22 Hyssop. There are seven kinds of hyssop; the one meant here is ordinary hyssop (Kimhi). The lowliest of plants, according to 1 Kings 5:13—to denigrate the Egyptians' god, the sheep. When blood is sprinkled on the altar of the Tabernacle, it is done with the

הָאָרֶץ: ²⁰כָּל-מִחְמַצְתָּ לֹא תֹאכְלוּ בְּכָל מוֹשְׁבֵיכֶם תֹּאכְלוּ מִצֹּת: פ

²¹וַיִּקְרָא מֹשֶׁה לְכָל-זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם מִשְׁכוּ וּקְחוּ לָכֶם צֹאן לְמִשְׁפַּחְתֵּיכֶם וְשַׁחֲטוּ הַפֶּסַח: ²²וְלָקַחְתֶּם אֵגֶדֶת אֲזוֹב וְטַבַּלְתֶּם בָּדָם אֶשְׁרֵי-בֶטֶף

ABARBANEL'S QUESTIONS + When Moses summons the elders (v. 21), why does he omit so much of what God told him to say? + Why doesn't Aaron also speak to the elders, as he was commanded? + Why did Moses speak to the elders alone, and not to "the whole community of Israel" (v. 3)?

RASHBAM 20 In all your settlements you shall eat unleavened bread. Even in outlying areas [H] where the passover offering is not slaughtered.

21 For your families. As noted in v. 3, "a lamb to a family."

22 Basin. Rather than "threshold." **None of you shall go outside.** For it is the blood marks on the doorposts that will protect you.

[H] "Outlying areas," corresponding to the word translated "territory" in 13:7, is a term used in rabbinic literature for locations outside Jerusalem, the only place (according to Deut. 16:5-6) where the passover offering could be slaughtered.

IBN EZRA would seem to say that nothing leavened could ever be eaten. In that case, the point of v. 20 would be to add the phrase "in all your settlements," showing that this commandment applied everywhere after they left the wilderness.

20 You shall eat nothing leavened. The warning not to eat leaven occurs here, after the announcement of the punishment for eating leaven, which occurs in v. 19. **You shall eat unleavened bread.** This means you must eat it. It does not mean that you may eat it, as "Six days you shall labor" (20:9) means that you may work six days but you do not have to. It is obligatory to eat unleavened bread for seven days in order to remember the exodus.

21 Moses then summoned all the elders of Israel. He told them everything that God had commanded him, from v. 3 on. The elders repeated it to all of Israel. **Pick out lambs.** On the 10th, as God had commanded. [V]

22 Take a bunch of hyssop. These are the instructions about how to do it, not a command to do it right away. Saadia

[V] The time when vv. 21-28 takes place is not specified in the text. Ibn Ezra is making clear that these events happened in accordance with the instructions in vv. 3-6.

NOTES

Calamity befalls the world only, etc. – אין פורענט באה – The Meiri writes that this serves to teach the proper attitude toward life. Righteous people should not think that it makes no difference to them that others are wicked. Rather, they must be aware that calamity comes as a result of the actions of the wicked and afflicts the entire world. Suffering afflicts both the righteous and the wicked, and moreover, it begins with the righteous.

אמר רבי שמואל בר נחמני אמר רבי יונתן: אין פורענט באה לעולם אלא בזמן שהשנים בעולם, ואינה מתחלת אלא מן הצדיקים תחלה, שנאמר: "כי תצא אש ומצאה קצים, אימתי אש יוצאה? בזמן שקוצים מצוין לה. ואינה מתחלת אלא מן הצדיקים תחלה, שנאמר: "וְאָכַל גְּדִישׁ", "וְאָכַל גְּדִישׁ" לא נאמר, אלא "וְאָכַל גְּדִישׁ", שנאכל גדיש קבר.

תאני רב יוסף: מאי דכתיב: "ואתם לא תצאו איש מפתח ביתו עד בקר"? בין שניתן רשות למשחית אינו מבחין בין צדיקים לרשעים; ולא עוד, אלא שמתחיל מן הצדיקים תחלה, שנאמר: "וְהָכַרְתִּי מִמֶּנּוּ צְדִיק וְרָשָׁע."

בבי רב יוסף, כולי האי נמי לאין דומיון אמר ליה אבמי: טיבותא הוא לגבייהו, ודכתיב: "כי מפני הרעה נאסין הצדיק."

אמר רב יהודה אמר רב:

§ The Gemara cites an aggadic midrash based on this verse: Rabbi Shmuel bar Nahmani says that Rabbi Yonatan says: Calamity befalls the world only¹⁴ when wicked people are in the world, but the calamity begins only with the righteous first, as it is stated in the verse: "If a fire breaks out, and catches in thorns, so that a stack of grain, or standing grain, or the field, is consumed" (Exodus 22:5). When does the fire, i.e., calamity, emerge? At a time when the thorns, i.e., the wicked, are found with it. But calamity begins only from the righteous first, as it is stated in the continuation of the verse: "And a stack of grain is consumed [vene'ekhal]." It is not stated: If a fire breaks out, and catches in thorns, and consumes [ve'akhal] the stack of grain; rather, it states: "A stack of grain is consumed," meaning that the stack, i.e., the righteous, has already been consumed before the thorns.

Rav Yosef taught a *baraita*: What is the meaning of that which is written with regard to the plague of the firstborn: "And none of you shall go out of the opening of his house until the morning" (Exodus 12:22)? If the plague was not decreed upon the Jewish people, why were they not permitted to leave their homes? Once permission is granted to the destroyer to kill, it does not distinguish between the righteous and the wicked. And not only that, but it begins with the righteous first, as it is stated in the verse: "And will cut off from you the righteous and the wicked" (Ezekiel 21:8), where mention of the righteous precedes the wicked.

Rav Yosef cried and said: Are all these righteous people also compared to nothing when calamity strikes? Abaye said to him: It is goodness for the righteous that they die first, as it is written: "The righteous is taken away because of the evil to come" (Isaiah 57:1), so that he will not have to endure the suffering that will befall the people.

Rav Yehuda says that Rav says:

Perek VI

Daf 60 Amud b

NOTES

Outside the sword will bereave – מוצץ תשכל תרוב: Rashi explains that this does not refer to the sword of battle but to the sword of the Angel of Death.

לעולם יבנים אדם בדי טוב ויצא בדי טוב, שנאמר: "ואתם לא תצאו איש מפתח ביתו עד בקר".

תנו רבנן: דבר בעיר – בנים וגליל, שנאמר: "ואתם לא תצאו איש מפתח ביתו עד בקר", ואומר: "לך עמי בא בתודריך וקצור דלתך בערד", ואומר: "מחוצ תשכל תרוב ומתדרים אימה".

מאי "ואומר"? וכי תימא: הני מילי גליליא, אבל ביממא לא – תא שמע: "לך עמי בא בתודריך וקצור דלתך".

A person should always enter an unfamiliar city at a time of good, i.e., while it is light, as the Torah uses the expression "It is good" with regard to the creation of light (see Genesis 1:4). This goodness is manifest in the sense of security one feels when it is light. And likewise, when one leaves a city he should leave at a time of good, meaning after sunrise the next morning, as it is stated in the verse: "And none of you shall go out of the opening of his house until the morning" (Exodus 12:22).

§ The Sages taught: If there is plague in the city, gather your feet, i.e., limit the time you spend out of the house, as it is stated in the verse: "And none of you shall go out of the opening of his house until the morning." And it says in another verse: "Come, my people, enter into your chambers, and shut your doors behind you; hide yourself for a little moment, until the anger has passed by" (Isaiah 26:20). And it says: "Outside the sword will bereave," and in the chambers terror" (Deuteronomy 32:25).

The Gemara asks: What is the reason for citing the additional verses introduced with the term: And it says? The first verse seems sufficient to teach the principle that one should not emerge from one's house when there is a plague. The Gemara answers: And if you would say that this matter, the first verse that states that none of you shall go out until morning, applies only at night, but in the day one may think that the principle does not apply, for this reason the Gemara teaches: Come and hear: "Come, my people, enter into your chambers, and shut your doors behind you."

דָּבָר בְּעִיר – דָּבָר בְּעִיר: One must be careful to avoid any dangerous situation. Therefore, the Sages said that one should flee from a city where there is a plague. One should flee as soon as the plague begins, before it takes hold in the city (*Shulhan Arukh, Yore De'a 116:5*, in the comment of Rema).

NOTES

As the Angel of Death leaves his utensils there – שְׁמֵי הַמָּוֶת הַמְּקִיר שָׁם בְּעִיר: In the time of the Talmud the synagogues were located far from the city, and people went there only for prayers. Therefore, the Sages held that a synagogue was considered like other uninhabited places and was potentially dangerous.

וכי תימא: הֲגַם מִיֵּלִי [הִיכָא] דְּלִיבָא אִימָה מְנָא, אֲבָל הִיכָא דְּאִיבָא אִימָה מְנָא, כִּי נִפְקִי רַעֲב בֵּינָא אִינְשֵׁי בְּצִוְתָא בְּעָלְמָא טַיִם מְעַל – תָּא שְׁמַע: "מִחוּץ תִּשְׁכַּל תָּרֵב וּמִתְנַדְרִים אִימָה", אֲף עַל גַּב דְּמִתְנַדְרִים אִימָה – מִחוּץ תִּשְׁכַּל תָּרֵב.

רַבָּא בְּעִידָן רַחֲמָא הוּי סָבַר בְּרֵי, דִּכְתִּיב: "כִּי עָלָה מוֹת בְּחֹלּוֹתֶינָא."

תַּנּוּ רַבְנֵי: רַעֲב בְּעִיר – פֻּר וְגַלְיָה, שְׁנָאמֵר: "וְהָיָה רַעֲב בְּאֶרֶץ וְיָרַד אֲבָרָם מִצְרִימָה [לְגֹר] (וְיָגֵר) שָׁם", וְאָמַר: "אִם אֲמָרְנָא נִבְּוֵא הָעִיר וְהָרַעֲב בְּעִיר וְנִתְּנָה שָׁם."

מֵאִי "וְאָמַר"? וְכִי תִימָא: הֲגַם מִיֵּלִי הִיכָא דְּלִיבָא סָפֵק נִפְשׁוֹת, אֲבָל הִיכָא דְּאִיבָא סָפֵק נִפְשׁוֹת לֹא – תָּא שְׁמַע: "לְכוּ וְנַפְלָה אֶל מַחְנֵה אֲרָם אִם יִחְיֶינָא נִחְיֶינָא."

תַּנּוּ רַבְנֵי: דָּבָר בְּעִיר – אֵל יִחְלֹךְ אָדָם בְּאַמְצַע הַדֶּרֶךְ, מִפְּנֵי שְׁמֵי הַמָּוֶת מִיֵּלִי הִיכָא דְּלִיבָא סָפֵק נִפְשׁוֹת, דְּכִינּוּ דִּיהִיבָא לֵיהּ רְשׁוּתָא מִסְּמֵי הַמָּוֶת: שְׁלוֹם בְּעִיר – אֵל יִחְלֹךְ בְּצִדֵּי הַדֶּרֶךְ, דְּכִינּוּ דְּלִית לֵיהּ רְשׁוּתָא מִסְּמֵי חַבְיִי וּמִסְּמֵי.

תַּנּוּ רַבְנֵי: דָּבָר בְּעִיר – אֵל יִכְנֵס אָדָם יָחִיד לְבֵית הַבְּנֵי, שְׁמֵי הַמָּוֶת מִפְּקִיד שָׁם בְּעִיר, וְהָיָה מִיֵּלִי הִיכָא דְּלִיבָא קְרוּ בֵּית דִּרְדָּקִי, וְלֹא מִצְלוּ בֵּית עֲשָׂרָה.

תַּנּוּ רַבְנֵי: בְּלִבִּים בּוֹכִים – מִלֵּאן הַמָּוֶת בָּא לְעִיר, בְּלִבִּים מְשֻׁקִּים – אֵלֵיהּ הִנְבִּיא בָּא לְעִיר, וְהָיָה מִיֵּלִי דְּלִית בְּהוּ מִקְרָה.

יָתִיב רַב אָמִי וְרַב אָסִי קַמֵּיהּ רַבִּי יִצְחָק נַפְחָא מִרְּאִי לֵיהּ: לִימָא מִרְּשָׁמִיתָא, וְיָמֵר אָמִי לֵיהּ: לִימָא מִרְּאִי לֵיהּ: לִימָא מִרְּשָׁמִיתָא, וְיָמֵר אָמִי לֵיהּ: לִימָא מִרְּשָׁמִיתָא, וְיָמֵר אָמִי לֵיהּ: לִימָא מִרְּשָׁמִיתָא.

אָמֵר לָהֶם: אֲמַשׁוּל לָכֶם מִשָּׁל, לְמָה הַדְּבָר דִּמְחָה? לְאָדָם שֵׁשׁ לוֹ שְׁנֵי נָשִׁים, אֶחָת יֹלְדָה וְאֶחָת זָקֵנָה, יִלְדָה מִלְּקֻשָּׁתָא לוֹ לְבָנוֹת, זָקֵנָה מִלְּקֻשָּׁתָא לוֹ שְׁחֹרֹת, נִמְצָא מִרְּחַם מִכָּאן וּמִכָּאן.

And if you would say that this matter applies only where there is no fear inside, which explains why it is preferable to remain indoors, but where there is fear inside, one might think that when he goes out and sits among people in general company it is better, therefore, the Gemara introduces the third verse and says: Come and hear: "Outside the sword will bereave, and in the chambers terror." This means that although there is terror in the chambers, outside the sword will bereave, so it is safer to remain indoors.

At a time when there was a plague, Rava would close the windows of his house, as it is written: "For death is come up into our windows" (Jeremiah 9:20).

The Sages taught: If there is famine in the city, spread your feet, i.e., leave the city, as it is stated in the verse: "And there was a famine in the land; and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there" (Genesis 12:10). And it says: "If we say: We will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there; and if we sit here, we die also, now come, and let us fall unto the host of the Arameans; if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die" (II Kings 7:4).

What is the reason for citing the second verse, introduced with the term: And it says? And if you would say that this matter, the principle of leaving the city, applies only where there is no uncertainty concerning a life-threatening situation, but where there is uncertainty concerning a life-threatening situation this principle does not apply, come and hear: "Come, and let us fall unto the host of the Arameans; if they save us alive, we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die."

The Sages taught: If there is a plague in the city, a person should not walk in the middle of the road, due to the fact that the Angel of Death walks in the middle of the road, as, since in Heaven they have given him permission to kill within the city, he goes openly in the middle of the road. By contrast, if there is peace and quiet in the city, do not walk on the sides of the road, as, since the Angel of Death does not have permission to kill within the city, he hides himself and walks on the side of the road.

The Sages taught: If there is a plague in the city, a person should not enter the synagogue alone, as the Angel of Death leaves his utensils there, and for this reason it is a dangerous place. And this matter, the danger in the synagogue, applies only when there are no children learning in the synagogue, and there are not ten men praying in it. But if there are children learning or ten men praying there, it is not a dangerous place.

The Sages taught: If the dogs in a certain place are crying for no reason, it is a sign that they feel the Angel of Death has come to the city. If the dogs are playing, it is a sign that they feel that Elijah the prophet has come to the city. These matters apply only if there is no female dog among them. If there is a female dog nearby, their crying or playing is likely due to her presence.

§ Rav Ami and Rav Asi sat before Rabbi Yitzhak Nappaha. One Sage said to Rabbi Yitzhak Nappaha: Let the Master say words of *halakha*, and the other Sage said to Rabbi Yitzhak Nappaha: Let the Master say words of *aggada*. Rabbi Yitzhak Nappaha began to say words of *aggada* but one Sage did not let him, so he began to say words of *halakha* but the other Sage did not let him.

Rabbi Yitzhak Nappaha said to them: I will relate a parable. To what can this be compared? It can be compared to a man who has two wives, one young and one old. The young wife pulls out his white hairs, so that her husband will appear younger. The old wife pulls out his black hairs so that he will appear older. And it turns out that he is bald from here and from there, i.e., completely bald, due to the actions of both of his wives.

What is the dilemma that David is raising — מאי קא — King David was faced with this practical question and did not know the answer. His uncertainty was with regard to the matter that was later subject to a dispute between Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi and the Rabbis. The Maharsha explains that although the verse does not seem to allude to this question at all, it is possible that the Gemara derived it from a contradiction between the verses. One verse states: "A plot of ground full of lentils" (II Samuel 23:11), and another verse states: "A plot of ground full of barley" (I Chronicles 11:13). The Gemara derives from this that the lentils were concealed inside a stack of barley, or vice versa, which led to the question of liability for the concealed produce.

You are king, etc. — מלך אתה וכו'. One of the principles of kingship is that the king has permission to perform certain actions, e.g., building a road, without taking into account the rights of the people who live there, provided he is not doing so to take the property for his own personal use. Although he is required to subsequently appease those who have suffered loss due to his actions, he does not have to first receive their permission. The Rambam indicates that this *halakha* applies only at times of war and for the sake of the war (Rambam *Sefer Shofetim*, *Hilkhot Melakhim* 5:3).

אמר להן: אי הכי, אימא לכו מלתא דשויא לתרוויכו: "כי תצא אש ומצאה קצים" — תצא מעצמה, "שלם ושלם המבער את העצמה" — אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא: עלי לשלם את המבער שנהבערתי.

אני הציטת אש בציון, שטאמך: ויצאת אש בציון ותאכל יסודותיה, ואני עתיד לבנותה באש, שטאמך: ואני אהיה לה... דומות אש קבית ולכבוד אהיה בתוכה;

שמעתתא, פתח הכותב בנקי ממונו וסיים בנקי גופו, לומר לך: אשו משום תצא.

"ויתאנה דוד ואמר מי ישקני מים מבאר בית לחם אשר בשער ויבקעו שלשת הגבורים במחנה פלשתים וישאבו מים מבאר בית לחם אשר בשער" [גרי].

מאי קא מיבעיא ליה? אמר רבא אמר רב נחמן: ממונו באש קמיבעיא ליה, אי קרבי יהודה אי קרבענו, ופשוטו ליה מאי דפשוטו ליה.

רב הונא אמר: גדישים דשעורים דישאל הוה דתו משמרי פלשתים בדור, וקא מיבעיא ליה: מהו להאיל עצמו במקומו חבירו?

שלחו ליה: אסור להאיל עצמו במקומו חבירו, אבל אתה מלך אתה [ומלך] פורץ לעשות לו דרך ואין מוחין בידו.

Rabbi Yitzhak Nappaḥa continued and said to them: If so, I will say to you a matter that is appropriate to both of you, which contains both *halakha* and *aggada*. In the verse that states: "If a fire breaks out, and catches in thorns" (Exodus 22:5), the term "breaks out" indicates that it breaks out by itself. Yet, the continuation of the verse states: "The one who kindled the fire shall pay compensation," which indicates that he must pay only if the fire spread due to his negligence. The verse can be explained allegorically: The Holy One, Blessed be He, said that although the fire broke out in the Temple due to the sins of the Jewish people, it is incumbent upon Me to pay restitution for the fire that I kindled.

I, God, kindled a fire in Zion, as it is stated: "The Lord has accomplished His fury, He has poured out His fierce anger; and He has kindled a fire in Zion, which has devoured its foundations" (Lamentations 4:11). And I will build it with fire in the future, as it is stated: "For I, says the Lord, will be for her a wall of fire round about; and I will be the glory in her midst" (Zechariah 2:9).

There is a *halakha* that can be learned from the verse in Exodus, as the verse begins with damage caused through one's property: "If a fire breaks out," and concludes with damage caused by one's body: "The one who kindled the fire." This indicates that when damage is caused by fire, it is considered as though the person who kindled the fire caused the damage directly with his body. That serves to say to you that the liability for his fire damage is due to its similarity to his arrows. Just as one who shoots an arrow and causes damage is liable because the damage was caused directly through his action, so too, one who kindles a fire that causes damage is liable because it is considered as though the damage were caused directly by his actions.

§ The Gemara continues with another statement of *aggada* on a related topic: The verse states: "And David longed, and said: Oh, that one would give me water to drink of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate! And the three mighty men broke through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, that was by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David; but he would not drink it, but poured it out to the Lord" (II Samuel 23:15-16). The Sages understood that David was not simply asking for water, but was using the term as a metaphor referring to Torah, and he was raising a *halakha* dilemma.

What is the dilemma that David is raising? Rava says that Rav Nahman says: He was asking about the *halakha* with regard to a concealed article damaged by a fire.¹⁸ He wanted to know whether the *halakha* is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda, who holds that one is liable to pay for such damage, or whether the *halakha* is in accordance with the opinion of the Rabbis, who hold that one is exempt from liability for damage by fire to concealed articles. And the Sages in Bethlehem answered him what they answered him.

Rav Huna stated a different explanation of the verse: There were stacks of barley belonging to Jews in which the Philistines were hiding, and David wanted to burn down the stacks to kill the Philistines and save his own life. He raised the dilemma: What is the *halakha*? Is it permitted to save oneself by destroying the property of another?¹⁹

They sent the following answer to him: It is prohibited to save oneself by destroying the property of another. But you are king,²⁰ and a king may breach the fence of an individual in order to form a path for himself, and none may protest his action, i.e., the normal *halakhot* of damage do not apply to you since you are king.

HALAKHA

להציל עצמו במונו — Is liable to pay compensation (Rambam *Sefer Nezikin*, *Hilkhot Hovel UMazik* 8:2-4; Shulḥan Arukh, *Hoshen Mishpat* 388:2-4).

One who saves himself by using the property of another