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Mishnah: A man may count (*the number of*) his guests (*that he wishes to invite*) and his dessert portions by word of mouth, but not from a written note.

A man may cast lots with his sons and the members of his household for (*portions of food at*) the table, provided that he does not intend to offset a large portion against a small one. [*The portions must be equal in size, not one larger and one smaller, so that the first drawn by lot shall receive the largest, etc.*] Kohanim may cast lots for sacrifices on festivals, but not for the portions. (148b)

The *Gemora* asks: What is the reason (*that he cannot read a list from a written note*)?

Rav Bibi said: It is a preventive measure, lest he erase. [*He may realize that he did not prepare sufficient food for them, and he will therefore erase some of the names before instructing his servant to invite the guests.*]

Abaye said: It is a preventive measure, lest he read common documents.

The *Gemora* notes that the difference between them would be where it is written high up on the wall. According to the one who says that we are concerned that he will erase (*some names*), we do not fear (*for he cannot reach the list*); but according to the one who says

that we are concerned that he will come to read common documents, we do fear.

The *Gemora* asks: Now, as to the one who says that we are concerned that he will erase (*some names*), let us fear as well that he will come to read common documents? And furthermore, have we no fear that he may erase (*even from a high wall*)? Surely we have learned in a *Mishna*: One may not read by the light of a lamp, and Rabbah said on that: Even if it is as high as twice a man’s stature, and even if it is as high as (*the height of*) two ox-goads, or even (*if it is as high*) as ten houses on top of each other, he must not read (*by its light*)!?

Rather, the difference between them would be where it is written on the wall and it is low down. According to the one who says that we are concerned that he will erase (*some names*), we fear; but according to the one who says that we are concerned that he will come to read common documents, we do not fear, for one will not confuse a wall with a document.

The *Gemora* asks: Now, according to the one who says that we are concerned that he will come to read (*common documents*), let us fear as well that he may erase?

Rather, they differ where it is engraved on a board or a tablet. According to the view that we are concerned that



he will erase, we have no fear; but according to the view that he will come to read (*common documents*), we do fear.

The *Gemora* asks: But according to the one who says that we are concerned that he will erase, let us fear as well that he may come to read? And should you answer that a board and a tablet cannot be confused with a document, surely it was taught in a *braisa* (*to the contrary*): A man may count how many (*guests*) shall be inside and how many outside, and how many portions he is to set before them, from writing on a wall, but not from writing on a board or a tablet. How is it meant? If you will say that it is indeed written (*with ink*), why does one differ from the other? [*What would be the difference between a wall and a tablet?*] Therefore, it must surely mean that it is engraved, yet it states: from writing on a wall, but not from writing on a board or a tablet!?

Rather, in truth they differ where it is written high up on the wall, and as for your difficulty about Rabbah's ruling (*that the Rabbis' decrees are not subject to exceptions*), the ruling of Rabbah is dependent on *Tannaim*, for it was taught in a *braisa*: A man may count (*the number of*) his guests (*that he wishes to invite*) and his dessert portions by word of mouth, but not from a written note. Rabbi Acha permits it from writing on the wall. Now, what are the circumstances? If you will say that it is written low down, then let us be concerned that he will come to erase it? It therefore must surely be referring to a case where it is written high up, which proves that Rabbah's ruling is dependent on *Tannaim*.

The *Gemora* notes: Now these *Tannaim* are arguing in the same manner as the following *Tannaim*, for it was taught in a *braisa*: One must not look in a mirror on the *Shabbos* (*for he may come to cut his hair*). Rabbi Meir permits one to look in a mirror that is fixed to the wall.

Why is one fixed to the wall different? Presumably it is because in the meanwhile (*while he goes to get a scissors*) he will recollect (*that it is Shabbos*); then even if it is not fixed, he will recollect?

The *Gemora* answers: We are referring here to a metal mirror, and the reason is in accordance with that which Rav Nahman said in the name of Rabbah bar Avuha, for Rav Nahman said in the name of Rabbah bar Avuha: Why was it ruled that a metal mirror is forbidden? It is because a man usually removes straggling hairs with it (*for its edge is sharpened*). [*Now the first Tanna forbids all mirrors, drawing no distinctions; while Rabbi Meir does draw a distinction. That is similar to the matter just disputed by the other Tannaim.*]

The *Gemora* cites a *braisa*: The writing under a painting or an image may not be read on the *Shabbos* (*for one may come to read common documents*). And as for the image itself, one must not look at it even on weekdays, because it is written: *Do not turn to the idols*.

Rabbi Chanin explains the derivation: It is interpreted to mean: Do not turn to that which is conceived in your own minds. (149a)

The *Mishna* had stated: A man may cast lots with his sons [*and the members of his household for (portions of food at) the table*].

The *Gemora* infers: Only with his sons and household (*is it permitted*), but not with strangers.

The *Gemora* explains that the reason for this is as Rav Yehudah said in the name of Shmuel, for Rav Yehudah said in the name of Shmuel: eople in a group who are particular with each other (*that if one lends something to the other, it should be paid back in full*) transgress on *Shabbos* and *Yom Tov* the prohibitions against



measuring, weighing, and counting, borrowing, and paying back. According to Hillel, they also transgress *ribbis* (lending with interest).

The *Gemora* asks: If so, the same should apply to his sons and household?

The *Gemora* answers: As for his sons and household, the reason is as Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav, for Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: A person may lend to his sons and the members of his household with interest, in order to give them a (painful) taste of what *ribbis* is like. [It is noteworthy that the *Gemora* there concludes that this is incorrect, as this will possibly make them want to sin and lend to others with interest.]

The *Gemora* asks: If so, offsetting a large portion against a small portion should be permitted as well?

The *Gemora* answers: That indeed is so, and it is as if there are missing words in the *Mishna*, and the following is what was taught: A man may cast lots with his sons and the members of his household for (portions of food at) the table, even if he intends to offset a large portion against a small one. What is the reason? It is as Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav. Yet, it is only for his sons and household, but not for strangers. What is the reason? It is as Rav Yehudah said in the name of Shmuel: 'a large portion against a small portion is forbidden even on weekdays in the case of strangers'. What is the reason? — On account of gambling. (149a – 149b)

And [Kohanim] may cast lots for, etc. What does 'but not for the portions' mean'? — Said Rabbi Yaakov the son of the daughter of Yaakov: But [one must not cast lots] for the portions of weekday [sacrifices] on the Festivals. That is obvious? You might argue, since it is written, for your people are like the Kohanim that quarrel, even the

portions of weekdays too: therefore he informs us [that it is not so]. (149b)

Rabbi Yaakov the son of the daughter of Yaakov also said: He through whom his neighbor is punished is not permitted to enter within the barrier [precincts] of the Holy One, Blessed be He. How do we know this? Shall we say, because it is written, And Hashem said, Who shall persuade Achav, that he may go up and fall at Ramos-Gilead? And one said on this manner; and another said on that manner. And there came forth a spirit and stood before Hashem, and said, I will persuade him. And he said, I will go forth and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his Prophets. And he [Hashem] said, You shall entice him, and shalt prevail also: go forth, and do so. Now we discussed, What spirit is meant? And Rabbi Yochanan answered: The spirit of Navos. And what does 'go forth' mean? Said Rav, Go forth from within My precincts! But perhaps there this is the reason, [viz.] because it is written, He that speaks falsehood shall not be established before my eyes? Again, [if] it is derived from here: You are filled with shame rather than glory; you drink as well, and be as one uncircumcised, etc.; and it is maintained: 'You are filled with shame rather than glory' refers to Nevuchadnezzar: [while] 'you drink as well, and be as one uncircumcised', refers to Tzidkiyah, — one [objection] is that the whole verse is written in reference to Nebvuchadnezzar; and further, what could the righteous Tzidkiyah have done to him, for Rav Yehudah said in Rav's name: When that wicked man [Nevuchadnezzar] wished to do thus to that righteous man [Tzidkiyah]. etc.? Rather [it follows] from this: Also to punish the righteous is not good. Now, 'is not good' can mean nothing but [that he is] evil, and it is written, For You are not a God that has no pleasure in wickedness, evil shall not sojourn with You, [which means,] You are righteous, therefore evil shall not sojourn in Your habitation. (149b)

How is it implied that 'chalashim' connotes lots? — Because it is written, How you have fallen from heaven, O shining one, son of the morning! You have been cut down to the ground you cholesh [the one who casts lots] over the nations, etc. Rabbah son of Rav Huna said: This teaches that he [Nevuchadnezzar] cast lots over the royal chiefs to ascertain whose turn it was for sodomy.

And it is written, All the kings of the nations, all of them, [sleep in glory. etc.]. Rabbi Yochanan said: That means that they rested from sodomy.

Rabbi Yochanan also said: As long as that wicked man lived laughter was never heard in the mouth of any living being, for it is written, the whole world is at rest, and is quiet: they break forth into singing: from there it follows that until then there was no singing.

Rabbi Yitzchak also said in Rabbi Yochanan's name: One may not stand in that wicked man's palace, for it is said, and demons shall dance there.

Rav Yehudah said in Rav's name: When that wicked man [Nevuchadnezzar] wished to do that to that righteous one [Tzidkiyah] thus, his foreskin was extended three hundred cubits and wagged in front of the whole company [of captive kings]. For it is said, You are filled with shame rather than glory; you drink as well, and be as one uncircumcised [he'orel]: the numerical value of 'orel' is three hundred.

Rav Yehudah also said in Rav's name: When that wicked man descended to Gehinnom, all who had [previously] descended thither trembled, saying, Does he come to rule over us, or to be as weak as we [are], for it is said, Have you also become weak as we? or are you to rule over us? A Heavenly voice went forth and declared,

Whom do you pass in beauty? go down with, and be laid to rest with the uncircumcised.

How has the oppressor ceased! the golden one [madheivah] has ceased. Rav Yehudah said in Rav's name: This people has ceased, that demanded, Measure out [tribute] and bring [medod vehavei] it [to us]; others interpret: that demanded, Bring ever more and more, without measure.

And excellent greatness was added to me: Rav Yehudah said in Rabbi Yirmiyah bar Abba's name: This teaches that he rode upon a male lion to whose head he had tied a snake [for reins]. In fulfilment of what is said, and the beasts of the field also have I given him to serve him. (149b – 150a)