

## MORDECHAI PERICOPE #90

BESB

<sup>42</sup> And whoever brings an occasion before one of these faithful little ones to sin, it is more beneficial for him if he wear a millstone around his neck and for him to be thrown into the sea. <sup>43</sup> If your hand brings an occasion to sin remove it, it is more beneficial enter life crippled than to enter Gehenna in unquenchable fire.<sup>a</sup>

<sup>44</sup> "And they shall go out and see the corpses of the people who rebelled against Me, for their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring for all flesh." <sup>45</sup> If your foot brings an occasion to sin remove it, it is more beneficial enter life lame than to be cast into Gehenna in unquenchable fire having two feet.

<sup>46</sup> "And they shall go out and see the corpses of the people who rebelled against Me, for their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring for all flesh." <sup>47</sup> If your eye brings an occasion to sin cast it out of yourself, it is more beneficial enter the Kingdom of God with one eye than to than be cast into fire of Gehenna with two eyes.

<sup>48</sup> "And they shall go out and see the corpses of the people who rebelled against Me, for their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring for all flesh."

Greek

<sup>42</sup> Καὶ ὅς ἂν σκανδαλίση ἓνα τῶν μικρῶν τῶν πιστευόντων εἰς ἐμέ καλόν ἐστὶν αὐτῷ μᾶλλον εἰ περὶκείται λίθος μύλικός περὶ τὸν τράχηλον αὐτοῦ καὶ βέβληται εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν

<sup>43</sup> Καὶ ἐὰν σκανδαλίζη σε ἡ χεὶρ σου ἀπόκοψον αὐτήν· καλόν σοι ἐστὶν κυλλὸν εἰς τὴν ζωὴν εἰσελθεῖν ἢ τὰς δύο χεῖρας ἔχοντα ἀπελθεῖν εἰς τὴν γέενναν εἰς τὸ πῦρ τὸ ἄσβεστον

<sup>44</sup> ὅπου ὁ σκώληξ αὐτῶν οὐ τελευτᾷ, καὶ τὸ πῦρ οὐ σβέννυται.

<sup>45</sup> καὶ ἐὰν ὁ πούς σου σκανδαλίζη σε ἀπόκοψον αὐτόν· καλόν ἐστὶν σοι εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν ζωὴν χωλὸν ἢ τοὺς δύο πόδας ἔχοντα βληθῆναι εἰς τὴν γέενναν εἰς τὸ πῦρ τὸ ἄσβεστον,

<sup>46</sup> ὅπου ὁ σκώληξ αὐτῶν οὐ τελευτᾷ, καὶ τὸ πῦρ οὐ σβέννυται.

<sup>47</sup> καὶ ἐὰν ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου σκανδαλίζη σε ἔκβαλε αὐτόν· καλόν σοι ἐστὶν μονόφθαλμον εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ ἢ δύο ὀφθαλμοὺς ἔχοντα βληθῆναι εἰς τὴν γέενναν τοῦ πυρὸς,

<sup>48</sup> ὅπου ὁ σκώληξ αὐτῶν οὐ τελευτᾷ καὶ τὸ πῦρ οὐ σβέννυται

### DELITZSCH HEBREW TRANSLATION<sup>i</sup>

42 וְכֹל־הַמְכַשֵּׁל אֶחָד הַקְטַנִּים הַמֵּאֲמִינִים בִּי טוֹב לֹא שִׁיתְלֶה פְּלַח־רֶכֶב עַל־צַוְאָרוֹ וְהוֹשִׁילָהּ בַּיָּם:

43 וְאִם־יָדָךְ תְּכַשִּׁילָךְ קַצֵּץ אֹתָהּ טוֹב לָךְ לְבוֹא לַחַיִּים וְאִתָּהּ קַטַּע מִהַיּוֹת לָךְ שְׁתִּי יָדִים וְתִלָּךְ

אֶל־גִּיהֵנִם אֶל־הָאֵשׁ אֲשֶׁר לֹא תִכְבֶּה: <sup>44</sup> אֲשֶׁר־שָׂם תּוֹלְעָתָם לֹא תָמוּת וְאִשָּׁם לֹא תִכְבֶּה: <sup>45</sup> וְאִם־רַגְלְךָ

תְּכַשִּׁילָךְ קַצֵּץ אֹתָהּ טוֹב לָךְ לְבוֹא לַחַיִּים וְאִתָּהּ פֶּסַח מִהַיּוֹת לָךְ שְׁתִּי רַגְלִים וְתוֹשִׁילָךְ לְגִיהֵנִם אֶל־הָאֵשׁ

אֲשֶׁר לֹא תִכְבֶּה: <sup>46</sup> אֲשֶׁר־שָׂם תּוֹלְעָתָם לֹא תָמוּת וְאִשָּׁם לֹא תִכְבֶּה: <sup>47</sup> וְאִם־עַיִנְךָ תְּכַשִּׁילָךְ עַקֵּר אֹתָהּ

טוֹב לָךְ לְבוֹא בְּמַלְכוּת הָאֱלֹהִים בְּעַל עֵין אַחַת מִהַיּוֹת לָךְ שְׁתִּי עַיִנִּים וְתוֹשִׁילָךְ לְגִיהֵנִם: <sup>48</sup> אֲשֶׁר־שָׂם

תּוֹלְעָתָם לֹא תָמוּת וְאִשָּׁם לֹא תִכְבֶּה:

<sup>a</sup> Isaiah 66:24

## INDEX

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- [Delitzsch Hebrew Translation](#)
- [Introduction](#)
- [Memorization of the Mishnah](#)
- [Little Ones](#)
- [Millstone Necklace](#)
- [The Millstone](#)
- [The Millstone and the Deep blue sea](#)
- [The Hand the Foot and the Eye](#)
- [The Threefold Cord and Conclusion](#)
- [Connection to Torah Readings](#)
- [Related Mitzvot](#)
- [Related Mishnayot](#)
- [Endnotes](#)

## INTRODUCTION

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*Abot 1:1* Moshe received the Torah from Sinai and transmitted it to Yehoshua; Yehoshua to the Elders; the Elders to the Prophets; and the Prophets transmitted it to the Anshei Knesset HaGedolah (Members of the Great Assembly). They made three statements (taught three things): Be deliberate (patient and restrained) in judgment; establish a large cadre of disciples; and construct a fence around the Torah.<sup>b</sup>

Hakham Tsefet, through his Sofer (Scribe) Mordechai returns to the book of Mordechai (Mark) after having addressed the problems that facing him in the Letters of Hakham Tsefet (1-2 Peter).

Much like the Davidic pattern, which derived materials from the Torah and then wrote his Psalm accordingly? Hakham Tsefet dealt with false teachers and prophets, which were alluring the flock away from the path of Torah. Here in Mordechai we have returned to the place where Hakham Tsefet has left off. However, it is noteworthy to see that Hakham Tsefet picks up with a warning to those who would bring defection or withdraw from their ordination (initiation into the congregation of the Nazarene Jews).

### Memorization of the Mishnah

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The Hebrew root "ShNH" means "to repeat," and refers to memorization by repetition. "Mishnah" therefore has the sense of "that which is memorized by rote," as distinct from the Rabbinic designation for the Bible: "Miqra," that which is read and recited from a written text.

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I am most confident that most of our readers are aware that the Mesorah (Oral Tradition) passed from teacher (Hakham) to his student (talmid). Repetition and memorization were the principal parts of learning the oral traditions.

*There were probably no major differences in teaching methods between the Palestine and Babylonia. Even on this level of education, memorization took absolute precedence; it was accomplished by means of continual vocal recitation of the teaching material in a set manner of cantillation (Meg32a).<sup>c</sup>*

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<sup>b</sup> Maharal M'Prague's Explanations and translation on Pirkei Avos (<http://www.torah.org/learning/maharal/>)

<sup>c</sup> H.L. Strack Gunter Stemberger, Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash, Fortress Press 1996 pg 12

The principle order of learning was memorization. This “learning” would forgo understanding. It was of preeminent importance to memorize and then gain understanding of the memorized materials.

According to H.L. Strack and Gunter Stemberger much of this educational communication took place on Shabbat. This would have forced the talmid to memorize the teachings of his Hakham.<sup>d</sup>

Why have I brought this information into our lesson? This week Mordechai vocabulary gives us a special clue that this was also the practice in the “Mishnah of Mark.” Memorization must have been a key element in learning the Mesorah of Yeshua. This education began with the elaborate system that Hakham Tsefet engineered for educating the early Nazarenes in the Mesorah of Yeshua. (See the endnote where I have included a transliteration of the Greek text of this week’s pericope)<sup>ii</sup>

## Little Ones

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*42 And whoever brings an occasion before one of these faithful little ones to sin, it is more beneficial for him if he wear a millstone around his neck and for him to be thrown into the sea.*

This particular pericope make several analogous connections and comparable illustrations to make the point of Hakham Tsefet.

Here Hakham Tsefet is not talking of children in the literal sense. His use is analogous for younger or weaker members of the Nazarene congregation. The “little ones” can also be recent converts. Hakham Tsefet referred to these “little ones” as “beloved” in his letters. Yeshua takes issue with those who disparage or belittle the “little ones” issuing a stern caveat to those who “bring occasion to sin.”

The Greek word **καλόν** *kalon* is a direct parallel to the Hebrew word **טוֹב** “*tov*.” Consequently, the most appropriate translation should be “more beneficial” not “good” or “better.”

Here we can keep in mind that Yeshua’ words have crossed many boundaries in our present reading. It is plausible that Yeshua is addressing the hierarchy of his talmidim. I do not mean to say that Yeshua was not directing those who would lead astray the “little ones.” However, before Hakham Tsefet could warn the “little ones” about the false teachers and prophets he must first learn all of these principles himself.

Therefore we might have heard the words of Yeshua to Hakham Tsefet, Hakham Yaakov and Hakham Yochanan to say, DO NOT bring before your students an occasion to sin! This would fit well the admonitions of Hakham Tsefet in the precious readings that we have recently read.

## A Millstone Necklace

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Textual variants vary in this passage. We have variants that suggest that the millstone moved by a donkey and other variants simply say “great millstone.” Regardless, we are to imagine something that would not allow the swimmer to be able to carry this enormous load and consequently drown in the sea.

How can we understand what Yeshua is saying here?

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<sup>d</sup> Ibid pgs 12-13

**Sanhedrin 4:5** *How do they admonish witnesses in capital cases? They would bring them in and admonish them [as follows]: “Perhaps it is your intention to give testimony on the basis of supposition, hearsay, or of what one witness has told another; “[for you may be thinking], ‘We heard it from a reliable person.’ “Or, you may not know that in the end we are going to interrogate you with appropriate interrogation and examination. “You should know that the laws governing a trial for property cases are different from the laws governing a trial for capital cases. “In the case of a trial for property cases, a person pays money and achieves atonement for himself. In capital cases [the accused’s] blood and the blood of all those who were destined to be born from him [who was wrongfully convicted] are held against him [who testifies falsely] to the end of time. “For so we find in the case of Cain who slew his brother, as it is said, *The bloods of your brother cry (Gen. 4:10).* “It does not say, ‘The blood of your brother,’ but, ‘The bloods of your brother’—his blood and the blood of all those who were destined to be born from him.” Another matter:—The bloods of your brother—for his blood was spattered on trees and stones. Therefore, man was created alone, **to teach you that whoever destroys a single Israelite soul is deemed by Scripture as if he had destroyed a whole world. And whoever saves a single Israelite soul is deemed by Scripture as if he had saved a whole world.** And it was also for the sake of peace among people, so that someone should not say to his fellow, “My father is greater than your father.” And [it was also on account of the minim,] so that the minim should not say, “There are many domains in Heaven.” And to portray the grandeur of the Holy One, blessed be He. For a person mints many coins with a single seal, and they are all alike one another. But the King of kings of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, minted all human beings with that seal of his with which he made the first person, yet not one of them is like anyone else. Therefore, everyone is obligated to maintain, “On my account the world was created.” Now perhaps you [witnesses] would like now to say, “What business have we got with this trouble?” But it already has been written, *He being a witness, whether he has seen or known, if he does not speak it, then he shall bear his iniquity (Lev. 5:1).* And perhaps you might want to claim, “What business is it of ours to convict this man of a capital crime?” But has it not already been said, *When the wicked perish there is rejoicing (Prov. 11:10).**

Here the Mishnah of tractate Sanhedrin is adamant **“whoever destroys a single Israelite soul is deemed by Scripture as if he had destroyed a whole world.”** Why/how, does this pericope of Mordechai parallel the reading of B’midbar 1:1-54? Here I think the answer should be obvious. The destruction of one Jew is tantamount to the destruction of the whole populace of Jews. We should also learn from this pericope and Mishnah that each of us has a very special place in this world; the individual designated to occupy that specific place can only occupy that place. The talents and gifts G-d has given each of us is suited to our particular mission.

Therefore, Yeshua teaches us how grave a sin it is to bring occasion for one of these “little ones” to stumble. Each individual bears the value of the whole. Some scholars suggest that the damage inflicted here **σκανδαλίση skandalioe** is an irreparable damage inflicted on the soul.

*This applies equally to little children whose souls are ruined by the bad example of those whom they look up to, or the weak believers, who are perverted from the truth into heresy, or some form of false religion, by the persuasion of those who seem to speak with more confidence.<sup>e</sup>*

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<sup>e</sup> Rev. M. F. Sadler, *The Gospel According to St Mark*, London: George Bell and Sons 1892, pg 200

## The Millstone

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The Gemara to Moed Katan 1:9 tell us that the donkey was often employed to turn a mill. It seems evident that this is the mill referred to here.

*Moed Katan 1:9* They set up an oven or double stove or a hand mill on the intermediate days of a festival. R. Judah says, "They do not rough the millstones for the first time."<sup>f</sup>

This mill is not the mill used by the woman in the home as she cooked, which is normally called a hand mill. This mill is the larger mill, which employed the donkey to turn it. The type of mill is important to understand in this case. Here we can learn that the millstone is such that it absolutely will result in drowning if a person were cast into the sea.

## The Millstone and the DEEP blue sea

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Yeshua draws on the imagery of one who is cast into the sea unable to swim or float because the enormous millstone is hanging around their neck. The imagery of punishment is contrasted to burning in an unquenchable fire. Therefore, it is "more beneficial" for the one causing the "little ones" to stumble to be cast into the sea with a millstone around his neck. Alternatively, we might phrase the sentence to read...

*"it is more beneficial to be cast into the sea with millstone about the neck than to be cast into Gehenna and unquenchable fire."*

## The Hand, the Foot and the Eye

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<sup>43</sup> *If your hand brings an occasion to sin remove it, it is more beneficial enter life crippled than to enter Gehenna in unquenchable fire.*

Here we have a shift in thought. Perhaps this shift moves from the "little ones" to those who responsible for their own soul. This does not infer not being under the authority of a Hakham. Here I believe the shift implies maturity and being responsible for personal actions and activity.

The three sentences focusing on the particular members, the hand, the foot and the eye all bear a great deal of symmetry and similarity. Hakham Tsefet has worded these verses in such a way to expedite memorization as mentioned above.

*If your hand brings an occasion to sin remove it...*

Certainly this cannot be taken literally so how are we to read this verse? Hakham Shaul uses synonymous language in his Letter to the Romans.

*Roman 8:13 for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.*

Here we will not delve into the Remez of the verse. We will look at it through the eyes of P'shat. Yet, we are forced to ask the question of how we are to "put to death" any member of our body?

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<sup>f</sup> Moed Katan 10a-b One [may] scrape millstones during the festival [week]'. In the name of our Master<sup>14</sup> they said: One [may] trim the hoofs of the horse he rides or the ass he rides during the festival week; but not those of the ass turning the mill.<sup>1</sup> Rab Judah<sup>2</sup> declared it permissible to trim the hoofs of the ass turning the mill or to set up the mill or build a mill, or to construct a base for the mill or build a horse stable.

Hakham Shaul suggests that the “Spirit” controls the deeds of the flesh (body) which is actually the yetzer hara or evil inclination. Herein is the most simple of answers. While I am certain this will not sit well with some “Scholars” and “theologians” I suggest that what Hakham Shaul was purporting was subjection to the Bet Din. The Spirit entered the Bet Din that they might have the power to mandate halachic fences that would corral the yetzer hara. Consequently, I believe that this is what Yeshua is saying. If your yetzer hara presents you with an opportunity to sin, “cut it off.” How? By following and practicing, the halachic mandates of the Hakhamim and Bet Din.

*It is more beneficial enter life crippled than to enter Gehenna in unquenchable fire.*

Hakham Shaul uses the analogy of life and death in a similar mode to what Yeshua states here. It would appear that the statements are synonymous. It is better to enter life crippled than to die in unquenchable fire. The Greek word for “life” used is ζωήν *zoen* from ζωή *zoe* and thereby indicating higher life. The “higher life” is a life of Torah observance. Therefore, it is better to practice the Torah fencing off certain practices in order to control the yetzer hara.

## The Hand

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The hand is often used as an analogy for acts of righteousness and works. Therefore, the hand that is “cut” off is a hand that learns to occupy itself with these ventures rather than personal endeavors. The Mishnah below talks of those who involve themselves in Torah study and how important it is.

**Abot 3:6** *R. Halafta of Kefar Hananiah says, “Among ten who sit and work hard on Torah the Presence comes to rest, “as it is said, God stands in the congregation of God (Ps. 82:1). “And how do we know that the same is so even of five? For it is said, And he has founded his group upon the earth (Am. 9:6). “And how do we know that this is so even of three? Since it is said, And he judges among the judges (Ps. 82:1). “And how do we know that this is so even of two? Because it is said, Then they that feared the Lord spoke with one another, and the Lord hearkened and heard (Mal. 3:16). “And how do we know that this is so even of one? Since it is said, In every place where I record my name I will come to you and I will bless you (Ex. 20:24).”*

The case cited in this Mishnah tells us that the individual who follows the Torah is endowed with the Spirit (Presence). Following Hakham Shaul’s words, he is able to master his yetzer hara and thereby enter the higher plane of life of Torah living as prescribed by the Hakhamim.

His sentence mirrors what is said in the Mishnah

**Niddah 2:1** *Any hand which makes many examinations— in the case of women is to be praised and in the case of men is to be cut off.<sup>iii</sup>*

Here the reference dealing with men, according to Rabbinic thought is masturbation. The woman is understood to be inspecting for blood in association with her monthly cycle. She is being very careful to follow the halachic norms of the Hakhamim.

While P’shat is usually very literal, there is nothing to forbid analogy in literal speech. We follow these practices every day. The hand is not strictly “cut off” כַּף־כַּף which means **the end**. The noun כַּף is frequently used in the context of judgment.<sup>§</sup> Consequently, we are brought back to what Yeshua taught and our thoughts concerning the **judgments of the Hakhamim**. Therefore,

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<sup>§</sup> Gen 6:13, Ezek 7:2-3 and Isa 9:7

the conduct that is evil in the hand, foot and eye must be brought to an “end.” The Rabbinic fences (judgments) of the Hakhamim bring about this “end.”

## The Foot

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The foot often represents the conduct of an individual in relation to Torah, much like the hand. Hakham Shaul used the word “walk” repetitively. His use of “walk” should be understood as Halacha. Therefore, if your foot finds an occasion to sin “cut it off.” Here we reiterate what we have elaborated upon above. The idea of cutting off relates to applying the Halacha of the Hakhamim, which will enable us to master the *yetzer hara* and keep it in balance.

## The Eye

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Today we place a great deal of emphasis on what we look at and what we see. Our eyes are filled with violence and depravity. In the time of Yeshua, this was not the case. Therefore, the eye has a different connotation. The eye was related to generosity and stinginess. The evil eye is one who is tightfisted. The good eye is one who is generous.

**Abot 2:9** He said to them, (R. Eleazar [b. Arakh]) “Go and see what is the straight path to which someone should stick.” R. Eliezer says, “A generous spirit.” (**good eye**)<sup>h</sup> R. Joshua says, “A good friend.” R. Yose says, “A good neighbor.” R. Simeon says, “Foresight.” R. Eleazar says, “Good will.” He said to them, “I prefer the opinion of R. Eleazar b. Arakh, because in what he says is included everything you say.” He said to them, “Go out and see what is the bad road, which someone should avoid.” R. Eliezer says, “Envy.” R. Joshua says, “A bad friend.” R. Yose says, “A bad neighbor.” R. Simeon says, “Defaulting on a loan.” (All the same is a loan owed to a human being and a loan owed to the Omnipresent, blessed be he, as it is said, The wicked borrows and does not pay back, but the righteous person deals graciously and hands over [what he owes] [Ps. 37:21].) R. Eleazar says, “Bad will.” He said to them, “I prefer the opinion of R. Eleazar b. Arakh, because in what he says is included everything you say.”

**2:10** And they said (each) three things. R. Li'ezer said, Let the honour of thy friend be dear unto thee as thine own ; and be not easily provoked ; and repent one day before thy death. And warm thyself before the fire of the wise, but beware of their embers, perchance you may be singed, for their bite is the bite of a fox , and their sting the sting of a scorpion, and their hiss the hiss of a fiery-serpent, and all their words are as coals of fire (Jer. v. 14).

**2:11** R. Jehoshua' said, An evil eye, and the evil nature and hatred of the creatures put a man out of the world.

**2:12** R. Jose said, Let your fellow's money (Luke xvi. 11, 12) be as precious to you as your own.; set thyself to learn Torah, for it is not an heirloom unto thee ; and let all thy actions be to the name of Heaven.

**2:13** R. Simeon says, “Be meticulous in the recitation of the shema and the Prayer. “And when you pray, don't treat your praying as a matter of routine. But let it be a [plea for] mercy and

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<sup>h</sup> "He that hath a bountiful eye (**ayin tov**) shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor" (Prov. xxii. 9). On **tov lev** (Prov. xv. 15) see Sanhedrin 100 b. [Aboth R. N. xiv. ]

*supplication before the Omnipresent, blessed be he. "As it is said, For he is gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and full of mercy, and repents of the evil (Joel 2:13).*

**2:14** *R. Eleazar says, "Be constant in learning of Torah. "And know what to reply to an Epicurean. "And know before whom you work, "for your employer can be depended upon to pay your wages for what you can do."*

**Mordechai 9:48** *"And they shall go out and see the corpses of the people who rebelled against Me, for their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring for all flesh."*

I have cited this Mishnah in length. I believe that it is well suited to the thoughts that Yeshua is trying to say in the present pericope. Good characteristics are developed. They are not just happenstance; we must develop equitable virtues. These virtues are the result of having a good teacher (Hakham) and following his mandates.

**D'varim 17:8** *If a matter is too hard for you in judgment, between blood and blood, between plea and plea, and between stroke and stroke, matters of strife within your gates, then you shall arise and go up to the place which L-rd your G-d shall choose. <sup>9</sup> And you shall come to the priests of the Levites, and to the judge that shall be in those days, and ask. And they shall declare to you the sentence of judgment. <sup>10</sup> And you shall do according to the sentence, which they declare, to you from that place which L-rd shall choose. And you shall be careful to do according to all that they tell you. <sup>11</sup> According to the sentence of the law which they shall teach you and according to the judgment which they shall tell you, you shall do. You shall not turn aside from the sentence, which they shall show you, to the right hand or the left.*

In our present times this process and responsibility is past to the Hakhamim. These men are the guardians of our spirituality. This responsibility is to guarantee that our adherence to the mitzvot does not weaken. Therefore, they are to enact legislation and create barriers to ensure that we comply with the laws of the Torah<sup>i</sup>

### **Threefold cord and Conclusion**

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**Ecc 4:12** *And if one overthrows him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.*

This pericope plays on two sets of three, and the final verse is wrapped up in the first of opening of this pericope.

**Mordechai 9:42** *And whoever brings an occasion before one of these faithful little ones to sin, it is more beneficial for him if he wear a millstone around his neck and for him to be thrown into the sea.*

**48** *"And they shall go out and see the corpses of the people who rebelled against Me, for their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring for all flesh."*

The consequences of causing a "little one" to stumble as well as bringing an occasion to sin for one's self are not without consequences. Verse 47 ties the whole thought process together with the ending perfectly. This set of passages demonstrates how organized and methodic Yeshua's teachings were.

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<sup>i</sup> The Kosher Kitchen: A Practical Guide : feliereisen Edition (Artscroll Halachah; the Kosher Kitchen) pg 256



The contrast of verse 42 and 48 is the sea versus the fire Gehenna. Then the punishment of Gehenna' fire is reiterated three times. However, there is a most profound lesson in all of this. The lesson is noted when we realize that the hand, foot, and the eye are personal responsibilities. Regardless of the false teachers and prophets, we are responsible for a life of Torah obedience ourselves. We are NOT able to blame other for our lack of Torah obedience. The way to circumvent the fire of Gehenna is to listen to and adhere to the teachings of the Hakhamim!

BS"D (B'Siyata D'Shamaya)  
Aramaic: With the help of Heaven  
Dr. Eliyahu ben Abraham

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## CONNECTIONS TO TORAH READINGS

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### Torah Seder

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I believe the thoughts of Sanhedrin capture how Hakham Tsefet through his Scribe Mordechai connected with the Torah Seder.

**Sanhedrin 4:5** ...whoever destroys a single Israelite soul is deemed by Scripture as if he had destroyed a whole world. And whoever saves a single Israelite soul is deemed by Scripture as if he had saved a whole world.

But the King of kings of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, minted all human beings with that seal of his with which he made the first person, yet not one of them is like anyone else. Therefore, everyone is obligated to maintain, "On my account the world was created.

The value of one "little ones" is tantamount to the whole. Rashi's commentary to verse one explains that G-d counted them, the Bne Yisrael often because he loved them. I would also state that the comments of Rashi are not his own. His thoughts are the thoughts of the Sages from antiquity. Therefore, Rashi projects thoughts that very well may have been prevalent during the first century.

### Ashlamatah

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The sand of the Sea must have been very inspirational to Hakham Tsefet. Hosea 2:1 Mordechai 9:42

*Hosea2: 1. And the number of the people of Israel shall be as the **sand of the sea**, which cannot be measured nor counted; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said to them, You are not my people, there it shall be said to them, You are the sons of the living God.*

וְהָיָה מִסְפַּר בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּחֹל הַיָּם אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִמָּד וְלֹא יִסְפָּר וְהָיָה בְּמִקּוֹם  
אֲשֶׁר־יֹאמַר לָהֶם לֹא־עַמִּי אַתֶּם יֹאמַר לָהֶם בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים:

And...

**Hosea 2:8** “Behold therefore, I will hedge your way.”<sup>j</sup>

לָכֵן הִנְנִי שׂוֹדֵךְ אֶת־דַּרְכְּךָ בְּסִירִים וְגִדְרֹתַי אֶת־גְּדֹרְךָ וְנִתְיַבֹּוּתְיָהּ לֹא תִמְצָא:

## Tehillim

I am certain that the thought of the flood played well into the idea of casting the scandalizers into the sea with a millstone about their neck Mordechai 9:42 It also seems evident that the thoughts of being taught to seek and acquire wisdom were prevalent in Hakham Tsefet’s mind as he wrote. (v12)

*Tehillim 90:5. You carry them away as a **flood**: they are like a sleep; in the morning, like grass it passes away. 12. So teach the number of our days, so that we shall acquire a heart of wisdom.*

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### RELATED MISHNAYOT

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See Mishnayot above

## Endnotes

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<sup>i</sup> The Delitzsch Hebrew New Testament was translated from the Elzevir 1624 Received Greek Text by the 19th century German scholar Franz Julius Delitzsch (1813 to 1890), co-author of the well-known multi-volume Keil and Delitzsch Commentary of the Old Testament. Delitzsch's New Testament was first published in 1877. Since the first publication his work has been republished with only minor revisions, and it has maintained its literal style for the Hebrew of Delitzsch's day. This was before Modern Hebrew was created, and consequently the Hebrew leans heavily on the Tanakh for vocabulary, words and expressions. Students of the Tanakh should therefore be able to understand Delitzsch's translation without much difficulty.

The current text was entered by Ewan MacLeod and proofread against a printed copy of Delitzsch's work. As Delitzsch's work goes back to 1877, it is now in the public domain.

<sup>ii</sup> Greek Transliteration of Mark 9:42-48

<sup>42</sup> *kai os an skandalisē ena tōn mikrōn - toutōn tōn pisteuontōn - eis eme kalon estin - autō mallon - ei perikeitai mulos onikos peri ton trakhēlon - autou kai beblētai eis tēn thalassan*

<sup>43</sup> *kai ean skandalisē se ē kheir sou apokopson autēn kalon estin se kullon eiselthein eis tēn zōēn ē tas duo kheiras ekhonta apelthein eis tēn geennan eis to pur to asbeston*

<sup>44</sup> *opou o skōlēx autōn ou teleuta kai to pur ou sbennutai*

<sup>45</sup> *kai ean o pous sou skandalizē se apokopson auton kalon estin se eiselthein eis tēn zōēn khōlon ē tous duo podas ekhonta blēthēnai eis tēn geennan*

<sup>46</sup> *opou o skōlēx autōn ou teleuta kai to pur ou sbennutai*

<sup>47</sup> *kai ean o ophthalmos sou skandalizē se ekbale auton kalon se estin monophthalmon eiselthein eis tēn basileian tou theou ē duo ophthalmous ekhonta blēthēnai eis VAR2: tēn geennan*

<sup>48</sup> *opou o skōlēx autōn ou teleuta kai to pur ou sbennutai*

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<sup>j</sup> My translation

"In a manner of speaking, I believe that this

"hedge" is what Hakham Tsefet has been speaking about all through this particular pericope.

I have broken apart the first verse so into a format that would have aided and expedited the memorization process.

42 Καὶ ὡς ἂν **σκανδαλίση** ἓνα τῶν μικρῶν τῶν πιστευόντων εἰς ἐμέ **καλόν** ἐστὶν αὐτῷ μᾶλλον εἰ περικείται λίθος μύλικός περὶ τὸν τράχηλον αὐτοῦ καὶ βέβληται εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν

43 Καὶ ἔὰν **σκανδαλίζη** σε ἡ χεὶρ σου **ἀπόκοψον** αὐτήν· **καλόν** σοι ἐστὶν κυλλὸν **εἰς τὴν ζωὴν** εἰσελθεῖν ἢ τὰς δύο χεῖρας ἔχοντα ἀπελθεῖν **εἰς τὴν γέενναν** εἰς τὸ πῦρ τὸ ἄσβεστον

44 ὅπου ὁ σκώληξ αὐτῶν οὐ τελευτᾷ, καὶ τὸ πῦρ οὐ σβέννυται.

45 καὶ ἔὰν ὁ πούς σου **σκανδαλίζη** σε **ἀπόκοψον** αὐτόν· **καλόν** ἐστὶν σοι εἰσελθεῖν **εἰς τὴν ζωὴν** χωλὸν ἢ τοὺς δύο πόδας ἔχοντα **βληθῆναι** εἰς τὴν γέενναν εἰς τὸ πῦρ τὸ ἄσβεστον,

46 ὅπου ὁ σκώληξ αὐτῶν οὐ τελευτᾷ, καὶ τὸ πῦρ οὐ σβέννυται.

47 καὶ ἔὰν ὁ ὀφθαλμός σου **σκανδαλίζη** σε **ἐκβαλε** αὐτόν· **καλόν** σοι ἐστὶν μονόφθαλμον εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ ἢ δύο ὀφθαλμούς ἔχοντα **βληθῆναι** εἰς τὴν γέενναν τοῦ πυρός,

48 ὅπου ὁ σκώληξ αὐτῶν οὐ τελευτᾷ καὶ τὸ πῦρ οὐ σβέννυται (Mar 9:42-48 STE)

I have color coded some of the words that are repetitive. This will also show the aid for memorization.

iii Niddah 2:1

מסכת נדה פרק ב

א כל היד המרבה לבדוק בנשים, משבתת. ובאנשים, תקצץ. החרשת והשוטה והסומא ושיטרה דעתה, אם יש להן פקחות, מתקנות אותן והן אוכלות בתרומה. דרך בנות ישראל, משמשות בשני עדים, אף לו ואף לה. הצנועות, מתקנות להן שלישי לתקן את הבית