The baraita clarifies: And what is the measure of seclusion, i.e., how is the seclusion of a sota defined? The measure of seclusion is equivalent to the time needed for defilement, which is equivalent to the time needed to perform intercourse, which is equivalent to the time needed to perform the initial stage of intercourse.

The baraita quotes several practical examples of this period of time. This is equivalent to the time needed for circling a palm tree; this is the statement of Rabbi Yishmael. Rabbi Eliezer: This is equivalent to the time needed for mixing a cup of wine with water, with the total volume of a quarter-log. Rabbi Yehoshua: This is equivalent to the time needed to drink that cup of wine.

The baraita quotes several more examples. Ben Azzai says: This is equivalent to the time needed to roast an egg. Rabbi Akiva says: This is equivalent to the time needed to swallow it. Rabbi Yehuda ben Beteira says: This is equivalent to the time needed to swallow three eggs one after another. Rabbi Elazar ben Yirmeya says: This is equivalent to the time needed for a weaver [gardì] to tie a string [nimà].

Hanin ben Pinehas says: This is equivalent to the time that a woman may need to extend her hand into her mouth to remove a wood chip from between her teeth. The Sage Peleimu says: This is equivalent to the time that she may need to extend her hand into a basket in order to take a loaf of bread. He adds: Although there is no explicit proof from the verse for the matter, there is an allusion to the matter from the verse: “For on account of a harlot is a man brought to a roof of a loaf” (Proverbs 6:23).

The baraita stated that the measure of seclusion is equivalent to the time needed for defilement, which is equivalent to the time needed to perform sexual intercourse, which is equivalent to the time needed to perform the initial stage of intercourse, and it added nine practical examples of that length of time. The Gemara asks: And why do I need all these times when one should have sufficed?

The Gemara answers: All three are necessary, as if the baraita taught only: Equivalent to the time needed for defilement, I would say that the measure is equivalent to the time for her defilement and her appeasement, i.e., the amount of time needed to convince her to engage in sexual intercourse. Therefore, the baraita teaches us that the measure is equivalent to the time needed to perform sexual intercourse alone.

And if the baraita taught only: The measure of seclusion is equivalent to the time needed to perform sexual intercourse, I would say that the measure is equivalent to the time needed for the completion of the act of intercourse. Therefore, the baraita teaches us that the measure is equivalent to the time needed to perform the initial stage of intercourse.

And if the baraita taught only: The measure of seclusion is equivalent to the time needed to perform the initial stage of intercourse, I would say that the measure is equivalent to the time needed to perform the initial stage of intercourse and her appeasement. Therefore, the baraita teaches us that the measure is equivalent to the time needed for defilement, which does not include appeasement. The baraita concludes by offering a practical measure: And what is the measure of the equivalent amount of time needed to perform the initial stage of intercourse? It is equivalent to the time needed for circling a palm tree. Other Sages then offered their own practical examples.
And the Gemara raises a contradiction from a different baraita (Tosfia 1:2): The verse states: “And she was defiled secretly” (Numbers 5:13), and we have not heard what is the measure of seclusion. When it says in that verse: “And she was defiled secretly,” you must say that the measure of seclusion is equivalent to the time needed for defilement, which is equivalent to the time needed to perform sexual intercourse, which is equivalent to the time needed to perform the initial stage of intercourse, which is equivalent to the time needed for the returning of a palm tree; this is the statement of Rabbi Eliezer.

The baraita continues: Rabbi Yehoshua says: This is equivalent to the time needed for mixing a cup of wine with water, with the total volume of a quarter-log. Ben Azzai says: This is equivalent to the time needed to drink that cup of wine. Rabbi Akiva says: This is equivalent to the time needed to roast an egg. Rabbi Yehuda ben Betseira says: This is equivalent to the time needed to swallow it.

The Gemara now addresses several contradictions between this baraita and the one quoted earlier. The Gemara first comments: It might enter our mind to say that circling a palm tree is the same as the returning of a palm tree. The Gemara asks: There, in the first baraita, Rabbi Yishmael says it is equivalent to the time needed for circling a palm tree and Rabbi Eliezer disagreed with him, while here, in the second baraita, Rabbi Eliezer himself says it is equivalent to the time needed for the returning of a palm tree; doesn’t this contradict what he stated in the previous baraita?

To resolve this contradiction, Abaye says: These measures are not the same, as circling is referring to the amount of time it takes for one to circle a palm tree by foot, and returning is referring to the amount of time it takes for a palm branch blown by the wind to revert to its prior position.

Rav Ashi asks: This returning of the palm branch by the wind, is this the time only so that it goes forward with the wind and returns to its place one time, not including the time it is still moving back and forth due to the wind? Or perhaps it is the time so that it goes forward with the wind and comes back and returns until it settles in its place. The Gemara states: The question shall stand unresolved.

The Gemara presents another contradiction. There, in the first baraita, Rabbi Eliezer says: This is equivalent to the time needed for pouring a cup of wine. Here, in the second baraita, he says: This is equivalent to the time needed for the returning of a palm tree. The Gemara answers: This and that are one, i.e., the same, measure.

The Gemara presents another contradiction. There, in the first baraita, Rabbi Yehoshua says: This is equivalent to the time needed for drinking a cup of wine. Here, in the second baraita, he says: This is equivalent to the time needed for mixing a cup of wine. The Gemara answers: Say that he requires both together, i.e., he requires an amount of time equivalent to the time needed to both mix and drink a cup of wine. The Gemara asks: Instead of combining the measures, why not let us say that this and that are one measure? The Gemara answers: If so, this is the same as the opinion of Rabbi Eliezer in the first baraita, with whom Rabbi Yehoshua disagrees.

The Gemara presents another contradiction. There, in the first baraita, Ben Azzai says: This is equivalent to the time needed to roast an egg. Here, in the second baraita, he says: This is equivalent to the time needed to drink a cup of wine. The Gemara answers: This and that are one measure.
The Gemara presents another contradiction. There, in the first baraita, Rabbi Akiva says: This is equivalent to the time needed to swallow an egg. Here, in the second baraita, he says: This is equivalent to the time needed to roast an egg. The Gemara asks: Instead of combining the measures, why not let us say that this and that are one measure? The Gemara answers: If so, this is the same as the opinion of ben Azzai in the first baraita, with whom Rabbi Akiva disagrees.

The Gemara presents another contradiction. There, in the first baraita, Rabbi Yehuda ben Betzira says: This is equivalent to the time needed to swallow three eggs one after another. Here, in the second baraita, he says: This is equivalent to the time needed to swallow an egg, meaning one egg. The Gemara answers: In the first baraita, he did not state his own opinion, but stated his opinion in accordance with the statement of Rabbi Akiva, who stated that one measure according to the time needed for roasting and swallowing. Rabbi Yehoshua responded: Say instead the measure of the time needed for swallowing alone, i.e., an amount of time equivalent to the time needed to swallow three eggs one after another, which is equal to the amount of time necessary for roasting and swallowing, and therefore Rabbi Akiva would not need to include roasting in the measurement.

The Gemara discusses an opinion cited in the first baraita. Rabbi Elazar ben Yirmeya says: This is equivalent to the time needed for a weaver to tie a string. Rav Ashi asks: Is this speaking of where the ends of the string to be tied are far apart from each other, or is it speaking of where they are near to each other? The Gemara states: The question shall stand unresolved.

The Gemara discusses another opinion cited in the first baraita. Hanin ben Pinhas says: This is equivalent to the time that a woman may need to extend her hand into her mouth to remove a wood chip from between her teeth. Rav Ashi asks: Is this speaking of a case where the wood chip is stuck between her teeth, or is it speaking of a case where it is not stuck? The Gemara states: The question shall stand unresolved.

The Gemara discusses another opinion cited in the first baraita. Peleimu says: This is equivalent to the time that a woman may need to extend her hand into a basket in order to take a loaf of bread. Rav Ashi asks: Is this speaking of an occasion where the loaf adheres to the basket, or is it speaking of a case where it does not adhere? Is this speaking of a case where the basket is new, whereby the tips of the shoots forming the basket might restrain the loaf, or this speaking of where the basket is old and smooth, enabling easy removal? Is this speaking of a case where the loaf is hot and therefore softer and may adhere to the basket, or is this speaking of a case where the loaf is cold and easily removed?
As if he engaged in sexual intercourse with a prostitute, etc. – רבי יוסי בר אחא יאמר: רחשי explains this analogy by noting that one who eats without washing his hands fulfills his desire without forethought, as does one who engages in sexual intercourse with a prostitute. The Maharal offers another connection between the two by noting that both eating without washing one’s hands and engaging in forbidden sexual relations are forms of benefiting from the world without first sanctifying oneself, by washing one’s hands in the one case and by betrothal in the other.

Anyone who treats the ritual of washing hands with contempt – דינא דڂא דאלו דאלו מדאלו: Rashi explains this to refer to someone who never washes his hands before eating. This is also indicated in the Gemara in tractate Shabbat (62a), which refers to one who touches the kinyar orchad, as recorded in tractate Hagigah (1b), where it states that upon doing so, ben Azzai glimpsed at the Divine Presence and died. The verse: “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His pious ones” (Psalms 116:15), was quoted in reference to his death.

HALAKHA

Anyone who takes the ritual of washing hands with contempt – דינא דڂא דאלו דאלו מדאלו. One must be careful with washing hands, as one who treats this ritual with contempt is uprooted from this world. The Sages also said that such a person should be punished by excommunication, and he will eventually become impoverished (Shu’han Arukh, Ohah Hayyim 158:9).

Anyone who eats bread without wiping his hands – לֹא תְנוּ לַזָּרָה מִשְׁכֵּךְ יָדַיִם After washing one's hands for bread, one must dry them before eating. One who eats without drying his hands is considered as if he were eating impure bread, as noted in the Gemara. In the Shulchan Arukh it states that if one would wash his hands in a manner where there is no possibility of his hands becoming impure, e.g., if he dipped them in a ritual bath or poured on them a large amount of water, equal to or greater than a quarter-log, then there is no need to dry one's hands afterward. The Maharal, however, disagrees, explaining that the primary reason one must dry his hands is not due to concerns of impurity but to the repulsiveness of eating wet bread. Therefore, the requirement to dry one's hands applies even when there is no possibility of the hands becoming impure. See the discussion of this issue in the Mishna Berura (Rambam Sefer Avoda, Hilkhos Bevakhot 6:20; Shulchan Arukh, Orach Hayyim 158:12–13).

NOTES

As if he were an idol worshipper – זָרָה רַבִּי יָוָן בֶּן יְוחָנָן. Rather, Rashi explains that touching bread with wet hands causes the food to become repulsive, which is akin to impurity. Rabbeinu Hananel adds that wet hands moisten the food and consequently make it susceptible to contracting ritual impurity, as food does not contract impurity unless first moistened by one of the seven liquids, one of which is water.

It should have stated: An arrogant life – אֲמַר לַמַּעֲבַד מְמַעֲבַד. The Maharsha explains that an arrogant person is one who is excessively concerned with his appearance, who dresses in fancy clothing, and who adorns himself with jewelry. This type of person eventually entraps women, as exemplified by the biblical narrative about Joseph (see Rashbi on Genesis 39:6).

As if he built a personal altar – דֶּקֶנָן הָאָדָם. The Maharal explains that the arrogant individual separates himself from others, as he places himself on a pedestal, and he is therefore likened to one who has built an altar to himself. The Maharsha notes that the word used here for altar, bama, is used in the Bible in reference to a high place, and therefore is used here as a metaphor for one who views himself as higher than others.

BACKGROUND

As if he built a personal altar – דֶּקֶנָן הָאָדָם. While some early commentators interpret this to refer to an altar for idol worship, Rashbi in tractate Yevamot (19b) understands it to mean building an altar to worship God at a time when such altars are forbidden.
Against forgetting God, as arrogance is a trait that results in being punished.

This interpretation poses a difficulty to the Sages of the school of Rabbi Sheila: This phrase: “Hand to hand, he shall not be unpunished,” is not how the verse would present this idea. It should have stated: My hand, as that is the term employed in the verse with regard to Abraham.

Rather, the Sages of the school of Rabbi Sheila say: This teaches that even if one who engages in sexual intercourse with an adulteress had received the Torah from the hand of God like Moses our teacher did, that it is written with regard to him: “At His right hand was a fiery law unto them” (Deuteronomy 33:2), i.e., God gave the Torah from His right hand into the hands of Moses in order to give to the Jewish people, the sinner will not be unpunished from the judgment of Gehenna.

This interpretation also poses a difficulty to Rabbi Yoḥanan: This phrase “hand to hand” is not how the verse would present this idea. It should have stated: Hand from hand, as that is the term employed in the verse with regard to Moses.

Rather Rabbi Yoḥanan says:

Even if the one who committed adultery performs charitable deeds secretly, as alluded to in the phrase “hand to hand,” and even if one might think that one who does so will go unpunished, as it is written with regard to charity of this kind: “A gift in secret pacifies wrath” (Proverbs 21:14), nevertheless, he will not be unpunished from the judgment of Gehenna.

The Gemara previously discussed the impropriety of the trait of arrogance. Now the Gemara discusses the source of its prohibition.

From where is the warning derived, i.e., what is the source prohibiting the behavior of the arrogant? Rava says that Ze’erī says: The source is from the verse: “Hear, you, and give ear, be not proud, for the Lord has spoken” (Jeremiah 13:15). Rav Nahman bar Yitzḥak said the warning is from here: “Then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the Lord your God” (Deuteronomy 8:14), and it is also written in that same passage: “Beware lest you forget the Lord your God” (Deuteronomy 8:11).

The Gemara explains: And these sources are in accordance with a statement that Rabbi Avin says that Rabbi Ile’a says, as Rabbi Avin says that Rabbi Ile’a says: Wherever it is stated in a verse “beware,” “lest,” or “not,” this is nothing other than a prohibition. Since these verses employ these terms in the context of one who is arrogant, they serve as sources for the prohibition.