

CHAPTER II.

A. A suicide must be buried without any ceremony. R. Ishmael said: It may be exclaimed: Alas, suicide! Alas, suicide! Said R. Aqiba to him: Leave him alone. Do not honor nor abuse him. [A1](#) No rending, no removal of shoes, and no lamenting. They may, however, stand in line, [A2](#) and say over

p. 4

him the mourners' benedictions, because it is for the honor of the living. This is the general rule: Whatever is for the honor of the living may be done; but everything which is not for their sake, it is not imperative for the congregation to do for such.

B. Who is to be considered a suicide? If one ascended to the top of a tree or a roof, and he fell down and was killed, [B1](#) he must not be considered a suicide, unless he says previously: "I am going to drop myself!" and immediately afterward it was observed that he did so; then it is to be considered a suicide, and he shall be buried without any religious ceremonies.

C. When one is found hanging on a tree strangled, or lying on a sword killed, he is not to be considered a suicide, and nothing may be withheld from him.

D. It happened to the son of Gornos in Lud, who ran away from school, that his father threatened him. Being afraid of his father, he drowned himself in a pit. When R. Tarphon was inquired about him, he said: Nothing shall be withheld from him.

E. It happened to a lad at the city of Bene-Berak, who broke a glass on the Sabbath, that his father threatened him. Being afraid of his father, he drowned himself in a pit. It was told to R. Aqiba, and he said: Nothing shall be withheld from him. [E1](#)

F. From this the sages declared: One shall not threaten a child. He shall either punish him immediately, or he shall keep silence. Said R. Simeon b. Elazar: Lust, children, and women should be repulsed with the left, and attracted with the right hand. [F1](#)

G. Those who are put to death by the decision of a court must be buried without any ceremonies. Their brothers and relatives may come and greet the witnesses and the judges, to show them that the judgment is considered just, and that they

p. 5

have nothing against them; that they do not mourn for them loudly, but are sorry for them, as sorrow is only in the heart. Rabbi Nathan, however, said: There is no difference between silent sorrow and loud weeping. [G1](#)

H. No funeral meal [H1](#) must be prepared for them, as it is written [Lev. xix. 26]: "Ye shall not eat upon the blood." [H2](#)

I. Whoever separates himself from the congregation, nobody shall have anything to do with him. And when he is dead, his brothers and other relatives may dress and wrap themselves in white, eat, drink, and rejoice that the enemy of the Place [I1](#) is lost [Ps. cxxxix. 21]. This verse, with the following, is to be explained thus: Why do I hate them with the utmost hatred? Because they have separated themselves from me, and become my enemies.

p. 6

J. The same is the case with those who steal the duties, or steal from devoted things, they are considered as shedders of blood; and not merely that, but also as idolaters, adulterers, and intentional violators of the Sabbath. [J1](#)

K. From those who are killed by the government, nothing may be withheld, nor from those who were drowned in the sea or a river, or were eaten by a wild beast. From what time must the day of the mourning for them be counted? Since the time that they have despaired of finding. If separate limbs are found, it cannot be counted till the head and the greater part of the body are found. R. Jehudah said: The backbone and the skull are considered as the greater part of the body.

L. If a husband or wife, or parents, were crucified in the town, the wife, the husband, or the children shall not live in that town, except it be as large as Antioch, and even then they must remove to another part. Until what term are they not allowed to live there? Till the flesh is totally destroyed, and the bones cannot be recognized any longer. [L1](#)

Footnotes

[3:A1](#)

CHAPTER II.

A. With the saying that you lament him, you also blame him that he committed suicide. It is, therefore, better that nothing should be said.

[3:A2](#) When the mourners return from the burial, all those who accompanied them stand in two rows, through which the [p. 4](#) mourners pass, and each one consoles them. So was the custom at that time, and in some congregations it is still extant. The mourners' benediction (Tzidduk Hadin) is said in the cemetery just after the interment.

[4:B1](#) B. Although he said he would do so sometime previous.

[4:E1](#) *E.* According to Rashi, Mishna A is incomplete, and must read thus: But if the suicide was a minor, it is different. He said so, that the decisions of Aqiba and Tarphon should not contradict it.

[4:F1](#) *F.* To all these three, to which human beings are attracted naturally, it is advisable not to be subject, but at the same time, when he attracts them with the right, he shall try to repel them with the left when necessary.

[5:G1](#) *G.* *I.e.*, both are permitted or prohibited.

[5:H1](#) *H.* It is customary that when the mourner returns from the cemetery his consolers bring with them food for the first meal, and in the ancient times they dined together with him. The custom of dining together was abolished because of the poor, who could not afford the outlay for it; so the costly shrouds were also prohibited, as it is explained farther on. Put the bringing of food to the mourner is in vogue even to-day. The reference to the passage mentioned in the text means to say, you shall not dine with such a mourner, whose death occurred for the crime of bloodshed (as the capital punishment by the court was only for bloodshed, as will be explained by us in Tract Sanhedrin). It is self-evident that the literal translation of this passage does not mean so, but the sages took this passage as a support to many things. They take this passage elsewhere as a support that one must not eat before the morning prayers, and they explain it: "Ye shall not eat before ye have prayed for your blood"; but they nevertheless use the language as if it would be so written.

[5:H2](#) The continuation of this Mishna will be found in Tract Sanhedrin in a Mishna in Chap. VI.

[5:I1](#) *I.* In many places the Talmud gives to the Lord the appellation "Place," for the reason which is explained elsewhere, that He, the Lord, is the place of the world (it means that He bears the entire world), but the world is not the place of Him (because He does not merely fill the world, but He also expands out of the world). Others translate it "Omnipotent," which needs no commentary. We will do the same in our further translations. We made an exception here, however, to explain the meaning of this term in the text.

[6:J1](#) *J.* We translate here according to the corrections of Elias Wilna, as we follow his corrections throughout the tract.

[6:L1](#) *L.* It refers to the barbarous times in which, when the government hanged a person, the body was never removed. We conclude this chapter here, as the following Mishna is taken in in Kethuboth, as the proper place.

[Next: Chapter III](#)