

## CHAPTER VI.

A. A mourner must not read the Pentateuch, Prophets, and Hagiographa. He is also not allowed to study Mishna, Talmud, Halakha, and Hagadah. He is also not allowed to wash, to anoint, to wear shoes, or to have sexual intercourse with his wife. He must cover his head and lower his couch. Rabban Gamaliel washed himself when his wife died (see Mishna Berachoth, 166).

[A1](#)A mourner must not study the Law, because the Merciful

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[[paragraph continues](#)] One commanded Ezekiel: "Sigh in silence" [ibid.]. But how is it with one who is under the ban? Said R. Joseph: Come and hear: We have learned: "One who is put under the ban may study for himself and also with others; he may be hired and he may hire others. But the case is otherwise with one who was excommunicated; the latter may, however, study for himself in order not to discontinue his studies. He may also establish for himself a small store in order to earn a living." Rabh said: "He may sell water in the market of Araboth."

[A2](#)A mourner must not wash his clothes, as it is written [II Sam. xiv. 2]: "Then sent Joab to Thekoa, and he fetched thence a wise woman, and said to her," etc., "and anoint thyself not with oil; but be as a woman that hath these many days been mourning for the dead." What is the case with those under the ban? Come and hear: "Those who are under the ban are prohibited from cutting their hair and washing their clothes." Infer herefrom. A mourner must have his garment rent, because the Merciful One commanded the sons of Aaron [Lev. x. 6]: "And your garments you shall *not* rend"; hence others must. A mourner must lower his couch (place the mattress near or on the floor), as Bar Qappara taught: "(God said) I had placed my image among them, and for their sins I upset it (decreed death). Let them now lower their beds." A mourner must not work, for it is written [Amos, viii. 10]: "And I will change your feasts into mourning," As on the feast it is prohibited to do any work, so also is the case with the mourner. May one who is under the ban work? Said R. Joseph: Come and hear (Taanith): "When it was stated that it is prohibited to do work, it referred only to the day-time but not to the evening; and the same is the case with one who is under the ban." A mourner must not wash himself, as it is written [II Sam. xiv, 2]: "And anoint thyself not with oil"; and anointing includes also washing.

[A3](#)And the Halakha prevails that a mourner must not bathe his entire body in either warm or cold water for seven days, but he may bathe his face, hands, and feet with cold water but not with warm. To anoint himself ever so little is prohibited, however, for a mourner; but he may do so for the purpose of removing the dirt from a certain part of his body.

[A4](#)A mourner must not wear shoes, because Ezekiel was commanded

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[paragraph continues] [Ezek. xxiv. 17]; "And the shoes put on thy feet." Hence others must not. A mourner must have no intercourse with his wife, as it is written [II Sam. xii, 24]: "And David comforted Bath Sheba, and he went in unto her, and lay with her." Hence, before comforting it is prohibited.

On the first three days if a mourner is greeted he shall say: "I am a mourner." However, from the fourth day onward he may answer half-heartedly.

*B.* When the death occurs in the same city, he must not accompany the others on the first two days; on the third he may go out and stand in the line for the purpose of being consoled, but he must not console others. All this is only when there are sufficient pall-bearers and burial attendants; otherwise he must accompany the others even on the first day.

The rabbis taught: "A mourner on the first Sabbath [B1](#) must be confined to his house. On the second he may leave the house, but he may not occupy his usual seat (in the prayer-house); on the third he may occupy his usual seat, but he must refrain from conversation; and on the fourth Sabbath he is as any other person." R. Jehudah said: "As to the first Sabbath, it was not necessary at all to state that he must be confined to the house, for it is self-evident, because all come to comfort him on that day. But the above order begins on the second Sabbath; viz., 'On the second he must be confined to his house,' etc., and only on the fifth Sabbath he is as any other person.

*C.* On the first and second days the mourner must not enter the Temple mountain; on the third, however, he is allowed to enter, but must go around to the left. The following must enter to the left: A mourner, one who is under the ban, one who has a sick person in his house, and one who has sustained a loss. "Why do you enter to the left?" (the people standing about ask him). "Because I am a mourner!" And they rejoin: "The One who rests in this house may console thee!" And if he says: "Because I am in ban!" they rejoin: "The One who rests in this house may soften their hearts and they will befriend thee." So says R. Meir. Said R. Jose to him: "If so, you seem to insinuate that they have not judged him rightly? But they rejoin thus: "The One who rests in this

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house, will soften thy heart, that thou mayest listen to their advice, and they will again befriend thee." To the one who had a sick person in his home they rejoined: The One who rests in this house shall have mercy upon him! and if the sick was his only son they should pray: "Shall have mercy upon him immediately!"

*D.* It happened to a woman whose daughter fell ill, that she ascended the Temple mount, turned to the left, and did not stir from there till she was told that her child had recovered.

*E.* To one who has sustained a loss they say: "The One who rests in this house will soften the heart of the finder, and he will return it to thee immediately!" It happened to Elazar b. Hananiah b. Hezekiah b. Gorion that he lost the Holy Scrolls, which cost him a hundred Manah. [E1](#) He ascended the Temple mount, turned to the left, and did not stir till he was told that they were found. And the Temple was built by Solomon only for the purpose that everyone who should have any trouble should come and pray, as it is written [I Kings, viii. 37]: "If there be famine in

the land, if there be pestilence," etc. From this we know only for individuals; when do we know that it is also for the public in general? It is written [ibid., ibid. 38]: "Of all thy people Israel." Lest one say it is also for the one who prays for children, or for riches which may not be good for him, therefore it is written [ibid., ibid. 39]: "As thou mayest know his heart, for thou thyself alone knowest the heart of all the children of men." Whatever is good for him, grant him. Whence do we know that they should not persist in their rebellion? [E2](#) It is written [ibid., ibid. 38]: "When they shall be *conscious* every man of the plague of his own heart, and he then spread forth his hands toward this house." All this concerns the Israelites, but whence do we know that it concerns also the Gentiles? Therefore it is written [ibid., ibid. 41]: "But also to the stranger, who is not of thy people Israel, but cometh out of a far-off country," etc.

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## Footnotes

[23:E4](#) The Talmud explains this passage to refer to the phylacteries.

[23:E5](#) See our "Phylacteries Ritual," pp. 49 and 55.

[23:A1](#)

## CHAPTER VI.

A. *Gemara* from Moed Katan.

[24:A2](#) *Gemara* from Moed Katan.

[24:A3](#) Transferred from Taanith.

[24:A4](#) *Gemara* from Moed Katan.

[25:B1](#) B. It means the first week, etc., even when he goes to prayer-house in the week-days.

[26:E1](#) E. The coin Manah was of the value of a hundred Zuz.

[26:E2](#) This is to be understood thus: Whence do we know, if a rebel comes to pray that he shall be successful in his rebellion, that he shall not be listened to?

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