

Talmud - Mas. Sotah 2a

CHAPTER I

MISHNAH. IF ONE WARNS¹ HIS WIFE [NOT TO ASSOCIATE WITH A CERTAIN MAN]. R. ELIEZER SAYS: HE WARNS HER ON THE TESTIMONY OF TWO WITNESSES,² AND MAKES HER DRINK [THE WATER OF BITTERNESS] ON THE TESTIMONY OF ONE WITNESS³ OR HIS PERSONAL TESTIMONY. R. JOSHUA SAYS: HE WARNS HER ON THE TESTIMONY OF TWO AND MAKES HER DRINK ON THE TESTIMONY OF TWO.

HOW DOES HE WARN HER? IF HE SAYS TO HER IN THE PRESENCE OF TWO, DO NOT CONVERSE WITH THAT MAN, AND SHE CONVERSED WITH HIM, SHE IS STILL PERMITTED TO HER HUSBAND⁴ AND PERMITTED TO PARTAKE OF THE HEAVE-OFFERING.⁵ SHOULD SHE HAVE ENTERED A PRIVATE PLACE WITH HIM AND STAYED WITH HIM A TIME SUFFICIENT FOR MISCONDUCT TO HAVE OCCURRED, SHE IS FORBIDDEN TO HER HUSBAND⁶ AND FORBIDDEN TO PARTAKE OF THE HEAVE-OFFERING. IF [HER HUSBAND] DIED,⁷ SHE PERFORMS THE CEREMONY OF HALIZAH⁸ BUT CANNOT CONTRACT A LEVIRATE MARRIAGE.

GEMARA. Now that the Tanna has finished [Tractate] Nazir, what is his reason for continuing with [Tractate] Sotah?⁹ — It is according to the view of Rabbi; for it has been taught: Rabbi says, Why does the section of the Nazirite adjoin that of the suspected woman?¹⁰ To tell you that whoever witnesses a suspected woman in her disgrace should withhold himself from wine.¹¹ But [the Tanna in the Mishnah] should treat of [Tractate] Sotah first and afterwards that of Nazir!¹² — Since he treated of [Tractate] Kethuboth [marriage-settlements] and dealt with the theme, 'He who imposes in vow upon his wife',¹³ he next treated of [Tractate] Nedarim [Vows]; and since he treated of [Tractate] Nedarim, he proceeded to treat of [Tractate] Nazir which is analogous to Nedarim,¹⁴ and then continues with Sotah for the reason given by Rabbi.

IF ONE WARNS HIS WIFE. As an accomplished fact¹⁵ it is allowable, but as something still to be done it is not. Consequently our Tanna holds that it is forbidden to give a warning.¹⁶

R. Samuel b. R. Isaac said: When Resh Lakish began to expound [the subject of] Sotah, he spoke thus: They only pair a woman with a man according to his deeds;¹⁷ as it is said: For the sceptre of wickedness shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous.¹⁸ Rabbah b. Bar Hanah said in the name of R. Johanan: It is as difficult to pair them as was the division of the Red Sea; as it is said: God setteth the solitary in families: He bringeth out the prisoners into prosperity!¹⁹ But it is not so; for Rab Judah has said in the name of Rab: Forty days before the creation of a child, a Bath Kol²⁰ issues forth and proclaims, The daughter of A is for B;²¹ the house of C is for D; the field of E is for F! — There is no contradiction, the latter dictum referring to a first marriage and the former to a second marriage.

R. ELIEZER SAYS, HE WARNS HER ON THE TESTIMONY OF TWO WITNESSES etc. So far only do [R. Eliezer and R. Joshua] differ, viz. in the matter of warning and seclusion, but in the matter of misconduct [they agree] that one witness is believed.²² We similarly learn in the Mishnah: If one witness says: I saw that she committed misconduct, she does not drink the water.²³ Whence is it derived according to Torah-law that one witness is believed? As our Rabbis taught: And there be no witness against her²⁴ — the text refers to two witnesses.²⁵ But perhaps it is not so and even one [suffices]! There is a teaching to declare, One witness shall not rise up against a man.²⁶

(1) Lit., 'is jealous of, i.e., he gives her a warning because he feels jealous.

(2) There must be two witnesses that he had warned her in their presence; otherwise he cannot require her to drink the water of bitterness.

- (3) That she had secluded herself with the man, after due warning had been given.
- (4) Lit., 'to her house'. Marital relations may continue.
- (5) If her husband is a priest. The heave-offering could be eaten by any member of the priest's household who was ritually clean; Num. XVIII, 8ff.
- (6) Forthwith, before the water is drunk.
- (7) Before she had undergone the ordeal.
- (8) V. Glos.
- (9) What is the association of ideas between the subject of the Nazirite and the woman suspected of infidelity?
- (10) In Num. V and VI.
- (11) Immoderate use of wine is a source of immorality. v. Ber. 63a.
- (12) That being the order in which they are dealt with in Scripture.
- (13) The opening words of Keth. VII.
- (14) A man becomes a nazirite by imposing a vow upon himself.
- (15) This is derived from the addition of the definite article, the literal sense being: he who warns, i.e., he who has given a warning.
- (16) Different views are taken on this question; v. p. 8.
- (17) Only if his actions are righteous does he have a faithful wife.
- (18) Ps. CXXV, 3.
- (19) Ibid. LXVIII, 7. The first clause refers to marriage-making, the second to the release of prisoners. Therefore the two are declared identical as regards difficulty.
- (20) V. Glos.
- (21) Since the marriage is ordained even before birth, it cannot be dependent upon a man's conduct.
- (22) [After due warning had been given and seclusion taken place]. And without drinking the water she leaves her husband's house and does not receive what would normally have been due to her under the marriage-contract.
- (23) Infra 31a.
- (24) Num. V, 13.
- (25) I.e., wherever Scripture uses the word witness, even in the singular, it denotes two.
- (26) Deut. XIX, 15.

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From the fact that it is stated: '[A] witness¹ shall not rise up against a man', do I not know that one is intended? Why is there a teaching to declare 'one witness'?² This establishes the rule that wherever it is stated 'witness', it signifies two unless the text specifies 'one'; and [in the case under discussion] the All-Merciful declares that when there are not two witnesses against her but only one, and she has not been violated,³ she is forbidden [to her husband].⁴ Now the reason for that⁵ is because it is written: One witness shall not rise up against a man. Were it however not so [stated], I might have supposed that 'witness' in the verse relating to a suspected woman means one.⁶ But if there be not even one witness against her, why should she then be prohibited [to her husband]? — [The verse: One witness etc.] is necessary, because otherwise it might have occurred to me to suppose that 'there be no witness against her' means, he is not believed against her. He is not believed against her! What, then, [does the text] want unless there are two witnesses?⁷ Let the Scriptural text be silent on the point [and not mention it at all], since the rule could have been deduced by analogy from the occurrence of the word *dabar*⁸ in the verse relating to civil actions, and I would know that it applies to every case of testimony mentioned in the Torah! — It was necessary [for Scripture to have mentioned it], because otherwise it might have occurred to me to suppose that the matter is different in the case of a suspected woman inasmuch as there was some basis for the charge, seeing that he had warned her and she had been secluded [with the man]; consequently one witness should be believed against her. But how is it possible to say [that if the Torah had not specified that 'witness' always means two, I might have supposed that the intention of 'there be no witness against her' was] that he is not believed against her and she is permitted to her husband? Surely from what is written: 'and she had not been violated⁹, it is implied that she is forbidden to

him! It was necessary [for Scripture to have mentioned this], because otherwise it might have occurred to me to suppose that [the evidence against her] is not believed unless there are two witnesses,¹⁰ and [that the verse means] that she had not been violated on the evidence of two witnesses. We are consequently taught [that one witness is believed].

R. JOSHUA SAYS: HE WARNS HER ON THE TESTIMONY OF TWO etc. What is R. Joshua's reason? Scripture states 'against her' — I.e., 'against her' [in the matter of misconduct]¹¹ but not in the matter of warning, 'against her' [in the matter of misconduct] but not in the matter of seclusion. R. Eliezer, [on the other hand] says: 'Against her' [in the matter of misconduct] but not in the matter of warning only. Perhaps, however, 'against her' does mean, and not in the matter of seclusion! — Seclusion is compared to 'defilement' [misconduct], for it is written, and he kept close and she be defiled.¹² But warning also is compared to 'defilement', for it is written, and he be jealous of his wife and she be defiled!¹³ — The All-Merciful excluded this by the phrase 'against her'.¹⁴ But what leads you to this conclusion?¹⁵ — It is obvious that seclusion is more serious [than warning] because she is forthwith prohibited to her husband as with 'defilement'. On the contrary, warning is more serious since it is the root cause [of her seclusion rendering her forbidden to her husband]!¹⁶ — If there was no seclusion, would there have been any warning?¹⁷ But if there was no warning, what effect would seclusion have? — Nevertheless seclusion is the more serious since it is the beginning of 'defilement'.

Our Mishnah does not agree with the following Tanna. For it has been taught: R. Jose son of R. Judah says in the name of R. Eliezer: He who warns his wife does so on the testimony of one witness or his personal testimony, and makes her drink [the water of bitterness] on the testimony of two witnesses. The Sages replied: According to the view of R. Jose son of R. Judah, there is no purpose in the matter.¹⁸ What is the reason of R. Jose son of R. Judah? — Scripture states 'against her', i.e., 'against her' [in the matter of misconduct] but not in the matter of seclusion. Perhaps, however, 'against her' means: and not in the matter of warning? — Warning is compared to 'defilement', for it is written, and he be jealous of his wife and she be defiled. But seclusion is also compared to 'defilement', for it is written, and he kept close and she be defiled? — That refers to a length of time sufficient for 'defilement' to have occurred.¹⁹

[It was stated above:] 'The Sages replied: According to the view of R. Jose son of R. Judah, there is no purpose in the matter'. What does this mean? — There may be times when he did not warn her and he claims that he did warn her.²⁰ Is there, then, according to our Mishnah any purpose in the matter, since there may be times when she had not been secluded with the man and the husband claims that she had been secluded?²¹ — R. Isaac b. Joseph said in the name of R. Johanan, [Read] also according to the view of R. Jose son of R. Judah, there is no purpose in the matter. 'Also according to the view of R. Jose son of R. Judah' [you say]; is there, then, no question with respect to our Mishnah? On the contrary, according to our Mishnah there is foundation [for the charge], but in the other case [the view of R. Jose son of R. Judah] there may be no foundation!²² — But if the teaching is reported, it must be in this form: R. Isaac b. Joseph said in the name of R. Johanan: 'According to the view of R. Jose son of R. Judah, and also according to our Mishnah, there is no purpose in the matter.'

R. Hanina of Sura said: Nowadays a man should not say to his wife, 'Do not be secluded with So-and-so', lest we decide according to R. Jose son of R. Judah who said: A warning [is effective] if given on [the husband's] personal testimony. If she then secluded herself with the man, since we have not now the water for a suspected woman to test her, the husband forbids her to himself for all time.

Resh Lakish said: What is the meaning of the term *kinnui*?²³ A matter which causes hatred [Kin'ah] between her and others. Consequently he holds that the warning can be on [the husband's]

personal testimony; and since not everybody knows that he gave her a warning and they say: 'What has happened that she holds herself aloof?' they will proceed to cause hatred against her. R. Jemar b. Shelemia said in the name of Abaye: [Kinnui means] a matter which causes hatred between husband and wife. Consequently he holds that the warning must be on the testimony of two witnesses and everybody is aware that he gave her a warning,²⁴ and it is he who proceeds to cause hatred against her.

(1) And not witnesses.

(2) The word one is superfluous if a single witness is intended, since it would have been sufficient to state a witness.

(3) But consented to the act. Num. V, 13. The English Version translates the verb she be not taken in the act; but the Rabbis understood it in the sense that she was not forced to misconduct and was a consenting party. Cf. the use of the same verb in Deut. XXII, 28. If she had been violated, she was exempt from the ordeal.

(4) Infra 31b. [This proves that in the matter of misconduct one witness is believed, as otherwise whence is it known that she was not violated?]

(5) For maintaining that the term witness' in the case of the Sotah denotes two.

(6) 'And there be no witness against her' means not even one.

(7) What is the purpose of the words if the meaning of there be no witness indicates only one and that his evidence is not accepted?

(8) In connection with infidelity the text has he hath found some unseemly matter (dabar) in her (Deut. XXIV, 1), and in connection with civil actions At the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall a matter (dabar) be established (ibid. XIX, 15). By the rule of Gezerah Shawah, analogy of expression, the principle of the latter with regard to the number of witnesses required is also applied to the former.

(9) Therefore it is maintained that misconduct has occurred with her consent.

(10) In a charge of misconduct.

(11) One witness is sufficient; but for warning and seclusion two are necessary.

(12) Num. V, 13.

(13) Ibid. 14.

(14) The phrase 'against her' was explained above as relating only to misconduct.

(15) That 'against her' excludes the idea that warning is to be compared to misconduct, and that only seclusion is to be likened to it.

(16) Without previous warning she would not be prohibited to her husband because of seclusion.

(17) There must have been seclusion to cause jealousy and consequently a warning.

(18) In requiring the husband's personal testimony, since, as the Gemara will explain, it may be false.

(19) So that if the time of seclusion was insufficient, she is not required to drink the water.

(20) So what purpose is there in requiring the husband's unsupported evidence?

(21) The Mishnah compels the woman to drink the water on the unsupported evidence of the husband.

(22) According to the Mishnah there must have been warning on the testimony of two witnesses, so there is some foundation for the charge; but according to R. Jose the husband can give her warning on his uncorroborated testimony which might be groundless.

(23) That is the term used in Num. V, 14, 'he be jealous'.

(24) Since the witnesses are likely to talk of it to others.

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Conclude that they hold that it is forbidden to give a warning;¹ but according to him who says that it is permissible to give a warning, what is the meaning of Kinnui? — R. Nahman b. Isaac said: Kinnui means nothing but 'warning;' and thus Scripture states: Then the Lord warned [wa-yekna] his land.²

It has been taught: R. Meir used to say: If a person commits a transgression in secret, the Holy One, Blessed be He, proclaims it against him in public; as it is said: And the spirit of jealousy came upon him;³ and the verb 'abar [came upon] means nothing but 'proclaiming', as it is said: And Moses gave commandment, and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp.⁴ Resh Lakish

said: A person does not commit a transgression unless a spirit of folly [shetuth] enters into him; as it is said: If any man's wife go aside.⁵ [The word is] written [so that it can be read] sishteh.⁶

The School of R. Ishmael taught: Why does the Torah believe one witness in the case of a suspected woman? Because there was some basis for the charge, seeing that he had warned her and she had secluded herself with the man, and one witness testifies that she had 'defiled' [misconducted] herself. R. Papa said to Abaye, But the warning is mentioned in the text after the seclusion and misconduct?⁷ — He replied to him, We'abar [means] there had already come upon him.⁸ But can that interpretation be also applied to, And every armed man of you will pass over?⁹ — In that passage, since it is written: And the land will be subdued before the Lord, then afterward ye shall return,¹⁰ it follows that the reference is to the future; but here, if it should enter your mind that we follow the order of the text [and we'abar signifies 'will come'], of what use is a warning after misconduct and seclusion had taken place?

The School of R. Ishmael taught: A man does not warn his wife unless a spirit¹¹ enters into him; as it is said: 'And the spirit of jealousy came upon him and he be jealous of his wife'. What is the meaning [of the word] 'spirit'? — The Rabbis declare, It is a spirit of impurity;¹² but R. Ashi declares, It is a spirit of purity.¹³ Reasonable is the view of him who declares that it is a spirit of purity, because it was taught: and he be jealous of his wife — this is voluntary¹⁴ in the opinion of R. Ishmael; but R. Akiba says: It is obligatory. It is well if you say that it means a spirit of purity, then everything is right; but if you say that it means a spirit of impurity, is it voluntary or obligatory for a man to introduce a spirit of impurity into himself!

[To turn to] the main text: And he be jealous of his wife — this is voluntary in the opinion of R. Ishmael; but R. Akiba says: It is obligatory. For her he may defile himself¹⁵ — this is voluntary in the opinion of R. Ishmael; but R. Akiba says: It is obligatory. Of them shall ye take your bondmen for ever¹⁶ — this is voluntary in the opinion of R. Ishmael; but R. Akiba says: It is obligatory. R. Papa said to Abaye — others declare it was R. Mesharsheya who said to Raba: Is this to say that R. Ishmael and R. Akiba differ in this way throughout the Torah, one maintaining that [a precept] is voluntary and the other that it is obligatory? — He replied, They only differ here over texts: And he be jealous of his wife — it is voluntary in the opinion of R. Ishmael; but R. Akiba says: It is obligatory. What is the reason of R. Ishmael? — He holds the same view as that of the following teacher. It has been taught: R. Eliezer b. Jacob says: Since the Torah declares, Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart,¹⁷ it is possible to think that this applies also in such a circumstance;¹⁸ therefore there is a text to say: And the spirit of jealousy came upon him and he be jealous of his wife.¹⁹ And [what is the reason of] R. Akiba? — The word 'jealous' occurs a second time in the verse.²⁰ And [how does] R. Ishmael [explain the repetition of jealous]? — Since it was necessary to write, And she be defiled and afterwards and she be not defiled, the Torah wrote and he be jealous of his wife.²¹ This is in agreement with the teaching of the School of R. Ishmael; for it was taught in the School of R. Ishmael; Wherever a Scriptural passage is repeated, it is only repeated because of some new point contained therein. [Similarly] 'For her he may defile himself — this is voluntary in the opinion of R. Ishmael; but R. Akiba says: It is obligatory. What is the reason of R. Ishmael? — Since it is written: Speak unto the priests the sons of Aaron and say unto them, There shall none defile himself for the dead among his people,²² it was likewise necessary to write, For her he may defile himself. And [from where does] R. Akiba [learn that a priest may so defile himself]? — He derives it from, Except for his kin;²³ what then is the purpose of, For her he should defile himself? [It is to indicate that] it is obligatory. And [how does] R. Ishmael [explain the addition of these words]? — 'For her' he may defile himself but not for any of her limbs.²⁴

(1) Because they explain Kinnui in the sense of hatred, and it is not allowed to create hatred.

(2) Joel II, 18. (E.V. 'Then the Lord was jealous for his land'.)

(3) Num. V, 14.

- (4) Ex. XXXVI, 6.
- (5) Num. V, 12. The word for 'go aside' is sisteh.
- (6) I.e., act in folly.
- (7) The matter of seclusion and misconduct is mentioned in Num. V, 12f, and the warning from jealousy in verse 14.
- (8) [עבר] is treated as pluperfect.]
- (9) Num. XXXII, 21 where the same word, we'abar, occurs.
- (10) Ibid. 22.
- (11) Introduced into him by God to warn him of what had occurred.
- (12) An instigation by Satan.
- (13) Which revolts against immorality.
- (14) The husband can ignore the matter if he so wishes.
- (15) Lev. XXI, 3. Does it mean he may or he should; and similarly with the other instances discussed.
- (16) Ibid. XXV, 46.
- (17) Ibid. XIX, 17.
- (18) That a husband may overlook his wife's seclusion with another man and not warn her.
- (19) He interprets the words as meaning: if the spirit of jealousy came upon him and he wishes to warn his wife.
- (20) He understands the second clause as he should be jealous and warn her.
- (21) The words are repeated because of the two contingencies mentioned and no such deduction is to be drawn as R. Akiba suggests.
- (22) Lev. XXI, 1.
- (23) Ibid. 2.
- (24) An amputated limb of a body defiles in the same way as the whole body. V. Nazir 43b.

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[What reply does] R. Akiba [make to this explanation]? — If that were the sole intention, the All-Merciful should have written 'for her' and then stop; what is the purpose of the words 'he should defile himself? Deduce therefrom.¹ [How does] R. Ishmael [meet this argument]? — Since the Torah wrote 'for her', it likewise wrote 'he may defile himself this is in agreement with the teaching of the School of R. Ishmael; for it was taught in the School of R. Ishmael: Wherever a Scriptural passage is repeated, it is only repeated because of some new point contained therein. [And similarly,] 'Of them shall ye take your bondmen for ever² — this is voluntary in the opinion of R. Ishmael; but R. Akiba says: It is obligatory. What is the reason of R. Ishmael? — Since it is written: Thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth,³ it was likewise necessary to write, 'Of them shall ye take your bondmen for ever', in order to indicate that if a man belonging to any other Gentile people has intercourse with a Canaanite woman⁴ and begets a son by her, it is permissible to purchase him as a slave. For it has been taught: Whence is it that if a man belonging to any other Gentile people has intercourse with a Canaanite woman and begets a son by her, it is permissible to purchase him as a slave? There is a text to declare, Moreover of the children of the strangers that do sojourn among you, of them shall ye buy.⁵ It is possible to think that also if a Canaanite had intercourse with a woman belonging to any other Gentile people and he begets a son by her, it is permissible to purchase him as a slave; therefore there is a text to declare, Which they have begotten in your land⁶ — from those born in your land⁷ and not from those who dwell in your land.⁸ And [from where does] R. Akiba [learn this rule]? — He derives it from, 'Of them shall ye buy'; what then is the purpose of, 'Of them ye shall take your bondmen for ever'? [It indicates that] it is obligatory. And [how does] R. Ishmael [explain the addition of these words]? — 'Of them' [he may purchase] but not of your brethren. [From where does] R. Akiba [derive this rule]? — It is deduced from the mention of 'your brethren' at the end of the verse: But over your brethren the children of Israel ye shall not rule, one over another, with rigour.⁹ [How does] R. Ishmael [meet this argument]? — Since the Torah wrote 'But over your brethren', it likewise wrote 'of them'. This is in agreement with the teaching of the School of R. Ishmael; for it was taught in the School of R. Ishmael: Wherever a Scriptural passage is repeated, it is only repeated because of some new point contained therein.

R. Hisda said: Immorality in a house is like a worm in the sesame plant. Further said R. Hisda: Anger in a house is like a worm in the sesame plant. Both these statements refer to a woman, but in the case of a man there is no objection.¹⁰ Further said R. Hisda, At first, before Israel sinned [against morality], the Shechinah abode with each individual; as it is said: For the Lord thy God walketh in the midst of thy camp.¹¹ When they sinned, the Shechinah departed from them; as it is said: That he see no unclean thing in thee and turn away from thee.¹²

R. Samuel b. Nahmani said in the name of R. Jonathan: Whoever performs one precept in this world, it precedes him for the world to come; as it is said: And thy righteousness shall go before thee;¹³ and whoever commits one transgression in this world, it clings to him and precedes him for the Day of Judgment, as it is said: The paths of their way are turned aside; they go up into the waste and perish.¹⁴ R. Eleazar says: It attaches itself to him like a dog; as it is said: He hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, or to be with her¹⁵ — to lie by her in this world, or to be with her in the world to come.

We learn elsewhere: It is a proper conclusion that if the first evidence [that the woman had secluded herself with the man], which does not prohibit her [to her husband] for all time,¹⁶ is not established by fewer than two witnesses, is it not right that the final evidence [that she had misconducted herself] which prohibits her to him for all time, should not be established by fewer than two witnesses! Therefore there is a text to state, ‘And there be no witness against her’, [implying that], whatever [evidence] there may be against her [is believed, even if it be only one witness]. And with respect to the first evidence [about her seclusion with the man, that one witness suffices may be argued by] a fortiori reasoning as follows: If the final evidence [regarding misconduct], which prohibits her to her husband for all time, is established by one witness, is it not proper that the first evidence, which does not prohibit her to him for all time, should be established by one witness! Therefore there is a text to state, Because he hath found some unseemly matter in her,¹⁷ and elsewhere it states: At the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses shall a matter be established;¹⁸ as the ‘matter’ mentioned in this latter case must be confirmed by the testimony of two witnesses, so also here [in the case of the suspected woman] the ‘matter’ must be confirmed by the testimony of two witnesses.¹⁹ Is this deduction to be drawn from the words, ‘Because he hath found some unseemly matter in her’? It ought to be derived from ‘against her’ — i.e., ‘against her’ [in the matter of misconduct] but not in the matter of warning, ‘against her’ [in the matter of misconduct] but not in the matter of seclusion!²⁰ — He also says similarly²¹ [and his teaching is to be cited as follows]: Therefore there is a text to state ‘against her’ [in the matter of misconduct] but not in the matter of warning, ‘against her’ [in the matter of misconduct] but not in the matter of seclusion; and whence is it that merely in a case of misconduct, where there had been no warning or seclusion one witness is not believed? It is stated here, ‘Because he hath found some unseemly matter in her’, and elsewhere it states: ‘At the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall a matter be established’; as in the ‘matter’ mentioned in the latter case two witnesses are required, so also here [where there has been misconduct without warning and seclusion] two witnesses are required. Our Rabbis have taught: Which is the ‘first testimony’? Evidence of seclusion, and the ‘final testimony’ is evidence of ‘defilement’ [misconduct].

(1) That it is obligatory.

(2) Lev. XXV, 46.

(3) Deut. XX, 16.

(4) The woman belonged to the seven nations which had to be exterminated.

(5) Lev. XXV, 45.

(6) Ibid. I.e., the original natives of Canaan.

(7) [Whose father belongs to another land.]

(8) [I.e., the original natives of Canaan]. It is to be noted that descent is traced through the father, whereas in the case of

a Jew descent is traced through the mother.

(9) Lev. XXV, 46.

(10) This opinion is contradicted by popular proverbs quoted in the Talmud, viz., 'He among the full-grown pumpkins and his wife among the young ones' (infra, p. 45), and 'He who gives vent to his anger destroys his house' (Sanh. 102b).

(11) Deut. XXIII, 15.

(12) Ibid.

(13) Isa. LVIII, 8.

(14) Job VI, 18.

(15) Gen. XXXIX, 10.

(16) Because the water may prove her innocent.

(17) Deut. XXIV, 1.

(18) Ibid. XIX, 15.

(19) Infra 31a-b.

(20) V. supra p. 5.

(21) The teacher in the Mishnah accepts the deduction from 'against her' and uses the argument from the occurrence of the word 'matter' for another purpose. He had been quoted wrongly and the Gemara proceeds with the correct form of the teaching.

Talmud - Mas. Sotah 4a

And how long is the duration in the matter of seclusion? Sufficient for misconduct, i.e., sufficient for coition, i.e., sufficient for sexual contact, i.e., sufficient for a person to walk round a date-palm. Such is the view of R. Ishmael; R. Eliezer says: Sufficient for preparing a cup of wine;¹ R. Joshua says: Sufficient to drink it; Ben Azzai says: Sufficient to roast an egg; R. Akiba says: Sufficient to swallow it; R. Judah b. Bathyra says: Sufficient to swallow three eggs one after the other; R. Eleazar b. Jeremiah says: Sufficient for a weaver to knot a thread; Hanin b. Phineas says: Sufficient for a woman to extend her hand to her mouth to remove a chip of wood [from between the teeth]; Pelemo says: Sufficient for her to extend her hand to a basket and take a loaf therefrom. Although there is no proof for this [last opinion] there is an indication, viz., For on account of a harlot, to a loaf of bread.² What is the purpose of all these definitions? — They are necessary; because if we were only taught sufficient for misconduct, I would have thought that it meant sufficient time for her misconduct and her submission;³ therefore it is defined as sufficient for coition.⁴ If, however, it were only taught sufficient for coition, I would have thought that it meant sufficient time for completed coition; therefore it is defined as sufficient for sexual contact. If, further, we had only been taught sufficient for sexual contact, I would have thought that it meant sufficient time for sexual contact and her submission; therefore it is defined as sufficient for misconduct. And how much is the time sufficient for sexual contact? Sufficient for a person to walk round a date-palm.

In contradiction of the above [I quote the following]: And be kept close⁵ — but how long is the duration in the matter of seclusion we have not heard. Since, however, it states 'and she be defiled', deduce that it is time sufficient for misconduct, i.e., sufficient for coition, i.e., sufficient for sexual contact, i.e., sufficient for a date-palm to rebound.⁶ Such is the view of R. Eliezer; R. Joshua says: Sufficient for preparing a cup of wine; Ben Azzai says: Sufficient to drink it; R. Akiba says: Sufficient to roast an egg; R. Judah b. Bathyra says: Sufficient to swallow it.⁷ Now it is assumed that walking round a date-palm and the rebound of a date-palm are identical [in length of time, and the question thus arises:] R. Ishmael said above, 'Sufficient for a person to walk round a date-palm', and R. Eliezer disagreed with him; and here R. Eliezer says: 'Sufficient for a date-palm to rebound'! — Abaye said: 'Walking round' means on foot, and 'rebound' means by the force of the wind. R. Ashi asked: How is 'rebound' to be understood? Does it mean that the palm is blown in one direction and then in its opposite, or perhaps that it is blown in one direction and then in its opposite and finally returns to its original position? — The question remains unanswered.

R. Eliezer said above: ‘Sufficient for preparing a cup of wine’, and here he says: ‘Sufficient for a date-palm to rebound’! — They are alike in duration. R. Joshua said above, ‘Sufficient to drink it’, and here he says: ‘Sufficient for preparing a cup of wine’! — Say [that the correct version is], Sufficient for preparing a cup of wine and drinking it. But why not say rather that they are alike in duration? — If so, he would agree with R. Eliezer's view.⁸ Ben Azzai said above ‘Sufficient to roast an egg’, and here he says: ‘Sufficient to drink [a cup of wine]’! — They are alike in duration. R. Akiba said above, ‘Sufficient to swallow [a roasted egg]’, and here he says: ‘Sufficient to roast an egg’! — Say [that the correct version is], Sufficient to roast an egg and swallow it. But why not say rather that they are alike in duration? — If so, he would agree with Ben Azzai's view. R. Judah b. Bathyra said above, ‘Sufficient to swallow three eggs one after the other’, and here he says: ‘Sufficient to swallow [one roasted egg]’! — He spoke in accordance with the view of R. Akiba who said that we fix as the duration a length of time sufficient to roast and swallow an egg, [and with reference to this he said,] ‘speak rather only of the duration of swallowing’, that is ‘sufficient time to swallow three eggs one after the other’, for that is the same as roasting and swallowing [one egg].⁹

‘R. Eleazar b. Jeremiah says: Sufficient for a weaver to knot a thread’. R. Ashi asked: Does this mean two ends which are distant or near?¹⁰ — The question remains unanswered.

‘Hanin b. Phineas said: Sufficient for a woman to extend her hand to her mouth to remove a chip of wood’. R. Ashi asked: Does this mean wedged tightly [between the teeth] or not? — The question remains unanswered.

‘Pelemo said: Sufficient for her to extend her hand to a basket and take a loaf therefrom’. R. Ashi asked: Is it [a loaf] which is wedged in tightly or not, a new or old [basket],¹¹ a hot or cold [loaf],¹²

(1) By diluting it with water.

(2) Prov. VI, 26. This is the literal rendering of the Hebrew.

(3) I.e., that he should make improper advances and induce her to submit.

(4) Consequently she must have secluded herself with the intention of committing misconduct.

(5) Num. V, 13.

(6) After having been bent by the wind.

(7) Tosef. Sot. I, 2.

(8) That cannot be, because he gives a different definition, and so it is impossible to think them alike in duration.

(9) [Why introduce at all the act of roasting, seeing that the act of swallowing by itself can afford a suitable standard for defining the duration?]

(10) I.e., does it include the time spent in bringing the threads together as well as tying them?

(11) In a new basket the ends of straws protrude and catch in the loaves, so that it takes longer to get one out.

(12) A warm loaf has to be drawn out with greater care and therefore takes longer.

Talmud - Mas. Sotah 4b

wheaten or of barley,¹ soft or hard-baked? — The question remains unanswered.

R. Isaac son of R. Joseph said in the name of R. Johanan: Each of the teachers defined the duration [of coition] from his own experience. But they included Ben Azzai who was unmarried! — If you wish I can say that he had married and separated [from his wife],² or that he had heard it from his master, or that The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him.³

R. ‘Awira expounded sometimes in the name of R. Ammi and at other times in the name of R. Assi: Whoever eats bread without previously washing the hands is as though he had intercourse with a harlot ; as it is said , For on account of a harlot, to a loaf of bread.⁴ Raba said: [On that interpretation] the verse, ‘For on account of a harlot, to a loaf of bread’ should have read: ‘On

account of a loaf of bread, to a harlot'! But, said Raba, [the meaning is:] Whoever has intercourse with a harlot will in the end go seeking a loaf of bread.

R. Zerika said in the name of R. Eleazar: Whoever makes light of washing the hands [before and after a meal] will be uprooted from the world. R. Hiyya b. Ashi said in the name of Rab: With the first washing [before the meal] it is necessary to lift the hands up; with the latter washing [after the meal] it is necessary to lower the hands. There is a similar teaching: Who washes his hands [before the meal] must lift them up lest the water pass beyond the joint,⁵ flow back and render them unclean. R. Abbahu says: Whoever eats bread without first wiping his hands is as though he eats unclean food; as it is stated: And the Lord said: Even thus shall the children of Israel eat their bread unclean.⁶

And⁷ what means, And the adulteress hunteth for the precious life? — R. Hiyya b. Abba said in the name of R. Johanan: Every man in whom is haughtiness of spirit will in the end stumble through an [unfaithful] married woman; as it is said: 'And the adulteress hunteth for the precious life'. Raba said: [On that interpretation] the word 'precious' should have been 'haughty'! Furthermore the verse should have read, [The haughty soul] hunteth [the adulteress]! But, said Raba, [the meaning is:] Whoever has intercourse with a married woman, even though he had studied Torah, of which it is written: It is more precious than rubies,⁸ i.e., above a High Priest who enters into the innermost part of the Sanctuary, she will hunt him to the judgment of Gehinnom.⁹ R. Johanan said in the name of R. Simeon b. Yohai: Every man in whom is haughtiness of spirit is as though he worships idols; it is written here, Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord,¹⁰ and it is written elsewhere, Thou shalt not bring an abomination into thine house.¹¹ R. Johanan himself said: He is as though he had denied the fundamental principle;¹² as it is said: Thine heart be lifted up and thou forget the Lord thy God, etc.¹³ R. Hama b. Hanina said: He is as though he had broken all the laws of sexual morality;¹⁴ it is written here, Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord, and it is written elsewhere, For all these abominations, etc.¹⁵ 'Ulla said: He is as though he had erected an idolatrous altar; as it is said: Cease ye from man whose breath is in his nostrils;¹⁶ for wherein [bammeh] is he to be accounted of?¹⁷ — read not bammeh but bamah [an idolatrous altar].

What means, Hand to hand, he shall not escape punishment?¹⁸ Rab said: Whoever has intercourse with a married woman, though he proclaim the Holy One, blessed be He, to be Possessor of heaven and earth as did our father Abraham, of whom it is written: I have lift up mine hand unto the Lord, God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth,¹⁹ he will not escape the punishment of Gehinnom. The students of the School of R. Shila objected: [On that interpretation] the phrase 'Hand to hand etc.' should have read: 'Of my [God's] hand will not escape punishment'! But, said they of the School of R. Shila, [the meaning is:] Though he received the Torah as did our teacher Moses, of whom it is written: At his right hand was a fiery law unto them,²⁰ he will not escape the punishment of Gehinnom. R. Johanan objected: [On that interpretation] the phrase 'Hand to hand' should have read 'Hand from hand'!²¹ But, said R. Johanan,

(1) A wheaten loaf is smoother and has to be grasped more firmly; and similarly with one which is soft-baked.

(2) The passage in Yeb. 63b does not make it clear whether Ben Azzai was censured for remaining a bachelor or for having married and not begetting children.

(3) Ps. XXV, 14. The knowledge was revealed to him.

(4) Prov. VI, 26. (E.V. 'For on account of a harlot a man is brought to a loaf of bread'). [As much as to say that the disregard of one Rabbinic precept leads to the disregard of another.]

(5) When washing the hands for a meal, the water should reach the second joint of the fingers; Hul. 106a. The hands beyond the joint having been left unwashed are deemed unclean.

(6) Ezek. IV, 13.

(7) The Gemara now continues the discussion of prov. VI, 26 quoted above.

(8) Prov. III, 15. **מפנינים**

(9) **לפני ולפנינים**, a play upon the word **מפנינים** v. n. 4.

- (10) Prov. XVI, 5.
- (11) Deut. VII, 26, the reference being to an idolatrous image.
- (12) Viz., the existence of God.
- (13) Ibid. VIII, 14.
- (14) Enumerated in Lev. XVIII.
- (15) Lev. XVIII, 27.
- (16) Understood in the sense: who is proud.
- (17) Isa. II, 22.
- (18) Prov. XVI, 5.
- (19) Gen. XIV, 22.
- (20) Deut. XXXIII, 2.
- (21) Since the interpretation implies that the adulterer receives from, and does not give to.

Talmud - Mas. Sotah 5a

[the meaning is:] Though he practise charity in secret,¹ concerning which it is written: 'A gift in secret pacifieth anger,² he will not escape the punishment of Gehinnom. Whence is there a prohibition for the haughty of spirit? — Raba said in the name of Ze'iri: Hear ye, and give ear; be not proud.³ R. Nahman b. Isaac said: [It is derived] from this passage, Thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord thy God,⁴ and it is written: Beware lest thou forget the Lord thy God.⁵ This is in accord with what R. Abin said in the name of R. Elai; for R. Abin said in the name of R. Elai: Wherever it is stated 'Beware' 'lest' and 'Do not' the reference is to a prohibition.

R. 'Awira expounded, sometimes he said it in the name of R. Assi and at other times in the name of R. Ammi: Every man in whom is haughtiness of spirit will in the end be reduced in rank; as it is said: They are exalted, there will be reduction of status;⁶ and lest you think that they remain in existence, the text continues, 'And they are gone'. If, however, he changes [and becomes humble], he will be gathered [to his fathers] in his due time like our father Abraham; as it is said: But when they are lowly, they are gathered in like all⁷ — i.e., like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in connection with whom the word 'all' is used.⁸ If not, They are cut off as the tops of the ears of corn.⁹ What means 'as the tops of the ears of corn'? R. Huna and R. Hisda [explain it]. One says that it means like the awn of the grain, and the other that it means like the ears themselves. This is quite right according to him who says that it means like the awn of the grain, since it is written 'as the tops of the ears of corn'; but according to him who says that it means like the ears themselves, what signifies 'as the tops of the ears of corn'? — R. Assi said, and it was similarly taught in the School of R. Ishmael: It is like a man who enters his field; he gleans the tallest ears.

With him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit.¹⁰ R. Huna and R. Hisda [explain it]. One says that it means the contrite is with Me, and the other that I [God] am with the contrite. The more probable view is in accord with him who holds the meaning to be I am with the contrite; for behold, the Holy One, blessed be He, ignored all the mountains and heights and caused His Shechinah to abide upon Mount Sinai, but did not elevate Mount Sinai [up to Himself].

R. Joseph said: Man should always learn from the mind of his Creator; for behold, the Holy One, blessed be He, ignored all the mountains and heights and caused His Shechinah to abide upon Mount Sinai, and ignored all the beautiful trees and caused His Shechinah to abide in a bush.¹¹

R. Eleazar also said: Every man in whom is haughtiness of spirit is fit to be hewn down like an Asherah.¹² It is written here, The high ones of stature shall be hewn down,¹³ and elsewhere it is written: And ye shall hew down their Asherim.¹⁴ Further said R. Eleazar, Every man in whom is haughtiness of spirit, his dust will not be disturbed [for the Resurrection]; as it is said: Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust¹⁵ — it is not said 'ye that lie in the dust', but, 'ye that dwell [shokne]

in the dust', i.e., each one who during his lifetime made himself a neighbour [shaken] to the dust [by his humility]. Further said R. Eleazar: Over every man in whom is haughtiness of spirit the Shechinah laments; as it is said: But the haughty he knoweth from afar.¹⁶

R. Awira expounded, and according to another version it was R. Eleazar: Come and see that the manner of the Holy One, blessed be He, is not like the manner of human beings. The manner of human beings is for the lofty to take notice of the lofty and not of the lowly; but the manner of the Holy One, blessed be He, is not so. He is lofty and He takes notice of the lowly, as it is said: For though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly.¹⁷

R. Hisda said, and according to another version it was Mar 'Ukba: Every man in whom is haughtiness of spirit, the Holy One, blessed be He, declares, I and he cannot both dwell in the world; as it is said: Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I destroy; him that hath an high look and a proud heart will I not suffer¹⁸ — read not 'him' [I cannot suffer], but 'with him'¹⁹ I cannot [dwell]. There are some who apply this teaching to those who speak slander; as it is said, 'whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I destroy'.

R. Alexandri said: Every man in whom there is haughtiness of spirit, even the slightest wind will disturb;²⁰ as it is said: But the wicked are like the troubled sea.²¹ If the sea, which contains so many quarters of a log,²² is ruffled by the slightest wind, how much more so a human being who contains but one quarter of a log.²³

R. Hiyya b. Ashi said in the name of Rab: A disciple of the Sages should possess an eighth [of pride].²⁴ R. Huna the son of R. Joshua said: [This small amount of pride] crowns him like the awn of the grain. Raba said: [A disciple of the Sages] who possesses [haughtiness of spirit] deserves excommunication, and if he does not possess it he deserves excommunication.²⁵ R. Nahman b. Isaac said: He should not possess it or part of it; is it a trifling matter concerning which it is written: Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord!²⁶

Hezekiah said: A man's prayer is not heard unless he makes his heart [soft] like flesh; as it is said, And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, shall all flesh come to worship, etc.²⁷ R. Zera said: Concerning flesh it is written: And it is healed;²⁸ but it is not written concerning man, And he is healed.

R. Johanan said: The word for man [adam] indicates dust, blood and gall;²⁹ the word for flesh [basar] indicates shame, stench and worm. Some declare that [instead of 'stench' we should have the word] Sheol, since its initial letter corresponds.³⁰

R. Ashi said: Every man in whom is haughtiness of spirit will in the end be degraded; as it is said,

(1) He gives from 'hand to hand'.

(2) Prov. XXI, 14.

(3) Jer. XIII, 15.

(4) Deut. VIII, 14.

(5) Ibid. 11.

(6) Job XXIV, 24.

(7) Ibid.

(8) V. Gen. XXIV, 1, XXVII, 33 and XXXIII, 11.

(9) Job loc. cit.

(10) Isa. LVII, 15.

(11) Ex. III, 2. Similarly should man associate with the humble.

(12) An object of idolatrous worship.

- (13) Isa. X, 33.
 (14) Deut. VII, 5.
 (15) Isa. XXVI, 19. 'Ye that lie in the dust' would apply to all mortals.
 (16) Ps. CXXXVIII, 6. The Hebrew word translated knoweth, יָדָע , is understood in the sense of punish, cf. Jud. VIII. 16.
 (17) Ibid.
 (18) Ps. CL. 5.
 (19) Involves a slight change in the vocalization.
 (20) [The smallest disappointment is liable to discomfit him.]
 (21) Isa. LVII, 20.
 (22) A liquid measure, equal to the contents of six eggs.
 (23) This was considered the minimum quantity of blood in the body essential to life.
 (24) He should have a little pride to maintain his self-respect.
 (25) To have too much is bad, and also too little because it prevents a Rabbi from exercising his authority.
 (26) Prov. XVI, 5.
 (27) Isa. LXVI, 23.
 (28) Lev. XIII, 18. Hence only one whose heart is soft like flesh will be healed, and not a man in his full pride.
 (29) The initials of these words in Hebrew form adam.
 (30) The initial of the word for 'stench' is samek, whereas the second letter in basar is similar in form to that of 'Sheol'.

Talmud - Mas. Sotah 5b

For a rising and for a scab,¹ and se'eth ['rising'] means nothing else than elevation, as it is said: Upon all the high mountains, and upon all the hills that are nisaoth [lifted up].² Sappahath ['scab'] means nothing else than attachment; as it is said: Attach me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a morsel of bread.³

R. Joshua b. Levi said: Come and see how great are the lowly of spirit in the esteem of the Holy One, blessed be He, since when the Temple stood, a man brought a burnt-offering and received the reward of a burnt-offering, a meal-offering and he received the reward of a meal-offering; but as for him whose mind is lowly, Scripture ascribes it to him as though he had offered every one of the sacrifices; as it is said: The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit.⁴ More than that, his prayer is not despised; as it continues: A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

R. Joshua b. Levi further said: He who calculates his ways in this world will be worthy to behold the salvation of the Holy One, blessed be He; as it is said: To him that ordereth his way will I show the salvation of God⁵ — read not we-sam [that ordereth] but we-sham [who calculates] his way.⁶

HOW MUST HE WARN HER? etc. This is self-contradictory. You declare, IF HE SAYS TO HER IN THE PRESENCE OF TWO, DO NOT CONVERSE WITH THAT MAN — consequently conversation is the equivalent of seclusion.⁷ He then proceeds to teach: AND SHE CONVERSED WITH HIM, SHE IS STILL PERMITTED TO HER HUSBAND AND PERMITTED TO PARTAKE OF THE HEAVEOFFERING — consequently conversation is nothing! — Abaye said: This is what he means: [If he said to her,] Do not converse, and she conversed with him, Do not converse, and she secluded herself with him, that is nothing; [but if he said to her,] Do not be secluded with him, and she conversed with him, she is still permitted to her husband and permitted to partake of the heave-offering. Should she have entered a private place with him and stayed a time sufficient for misconduct to have occurred, she is forbidden to her husband and forbidden to partake of the heave-offering.

IF [HER HUSBAND] DIED, SHE PERFORMS THE CEREMONY OF HALIZAH. Why so? Let her also contract a levirate marriage! — R. Joseph said: Scripture declared: And when she is

departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife⁸ — she may marry 'another' man but not her brother-in-law.⁹ Abaye said to him, According to your argument, Halizah also should be unnecessary! He replied to him, If the husband is living, is not a Get required?¹⁰ So here likewise Halizah is necessary.¹¹ Another version is: R. Joseph said: The All-Merciful declared: And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife, so as not to destroy his house;¹² and you argue, let her also contract a levirate marriage!¹³ Abaye said to him, According to your argument, she should never marry again so as not to destroy another man's house! — He replied to him,

(1) Lev. XIV, 56 interpreted as: having first been elevated, he will become something superfluous among men, and therefore esteemed as nothing.

(2) Isa. II, 14.

(3) I Sam. II, 36. The Hebrew for the verb attach resembles the word for scab, v. Shebu, 6b.

(4) Ps. LI, 19.

(5) Ibid. L, 23.

(6) He calculates the loss incurred in fulfilling a precept against the reward it will bring him, v. Aboth, II, 1.

(7) Since it justifies a warning from the husband.

(8) Deut. XXIV, 2.

(9) ['Another' excludes the brother-in-law whose marriage to her is but a continuation, so to speak, of her first marriage. The derivation is based on the superfluous word 'another' which is taken to refer to a case where the wife was charged with an 'unseemly thing' and her husband died. The meaning of the verse would accordingly be as follows: If she found no favour . . . because he hath found some unseemly thing, he shall write her a bill of divorcement. When she departs out of his house (whether on his death or on divorce) and she goeth and becometh another man's wife, implying she can become the wife only of another man but not the brother-in-law.]

(10) Despite her misconduct. Ibid. 3 mentions, and write her a bill of divorcement. The technical term for this document is Get.

(11) [The brother-in-law taking the place of the dead husband.]

(12) V. supra p. II where it is taught that the wife's immorality destroys the husband's house.

(13) And perhaps destroy the brother-in-law's house.

Talmud - Mas. Sotah 6a

Do we compel any other man to marry her [as in the case of a brother-in-law where it is a duty]! Another version is: R. Joseph replied: The text calls [the second husband] 'another', because he is not the equal of the first husband, since the latter removes wickedness from his house [by divorcing his wife] whereas the other introduces wickedness into his house [by marrying such a woman]; and you argue, let her also contract a levirate marriage! Abaye said to him, According to your argument, if she does marry another man and he died without issue, she may not contract a levirate marriage since the text calls him 'another'!¹ — While living with the second husband she may have been of spotless reputation! Raba said: It is an a fortiori argument:² if she is forbidden to [her husband] to whom she is [otherwise] allowed, how much more so to [her brother-in-law] to whom she is [normally] forbidden! Abaye said to him, According to your argument, if a High Priest betrothed a widow and he died and had a brother who was an ordinary priest, she may not marry him, since if she becomes forbidden to one to whom she is [otherwise] allowed, how much more so to one to whom she is [normally] forbidden!³ [You say,] 'If she becomes forbidden' — she is actually forbidden;⁴ 'to one to whom she is allowed' — he is forbidden [to marry her]! But [ask rather as follows: According to Raba's argument] if the wife of a priest had been violated and he died, and he had a brother who was disqualified,⁵ she may not marry him, since if she is forbidden to [her husband]⁶ to whom she is [otherwise] allowed, how much more so to one to whom she is [normally] forbidden!⁷ — A woman who had been violated is permitted to a non-priest and the prohibition does not apply in his case.⁸

MISHNAH. THE FOLLOWING⁹ ARE PROHIBITED TO PARTAKE OF THE HEAVE-OFFERING:¹⁰ SHE WHO SAYS, 'I AM UNCLEAN TO THEE';¹¹ WHEN WITNESSES CAME [AND TESTIFIED] THAT SHE HAD MISCONDUCTED HERSELF;¹² SHE WHO SAYS, I REFUSE TO DRINK [THE WATER]'; WHEN THE HUSBAND IS UNWILLING TO MAKE HER DRINK [THE WATER]: AND WHEN THE HUSBAND COHABITED WITH HER ON THE JOURNEY.¹³

GEMARA. R. Amram said: The following did R. Shesheth tell us and enlighten our eyes from our Mishnah:¹⁴ In the case of a suspected woman where the witnesses against her are in a far-distant land,¹⁵ the water does not prove her.¹⁶ What is the reason? Because Scripture states: And be kept close and she be defiled and there be no witness against her¹⁷ — this is when there is nobody who knows anything against her, thus excluding the case when there are men who know something against her.¹⁸ And he enlightened our eyes from our Mishnah where it is taught: WHEN WITNESSES CAME [AND TESTIFIED] THAT SHE HAD MISCONDUCTED HERSELF. When did the witnesses come? If we say that they came before she drank the water, she is an adulteress;¹⁹ consequently they could only have come after she had drunk the water. This is quite right if you say that the water does not prove her,²⁰ then all is clear; but if you say that [in such a circumstance] the water does prove her, the water may demonstrate retrospectively that the witnesses were false!²¹ — R. Joseph said to him, Still I maintain that the water does prove her, and answer that some merit she possesses causes the water to suspend its effect.²² In what do [R. Joseph and R. Shesheth] differ? — In the matter of her becoming ill, according to the teaching of Rabbi. For we learn: Rabbi says: Merit [in the woman] causes the water of bitterness to suspend its effect, and she never bears a child or thrives, but she gradually grows ill and finally dies through that death.²³ R. Shesheth is of the opinion that both in the view of Rabbi and of the Rabbis she grows ill;²⁴ and R. Joseph is of the opinion that in the view of Rabbi she grows ill but in the view of the Rabbis she does not.²⁵

R. Shimi b. Ashi raised an objection: R. Simeon says: Merit does not cause the water of bitterness to suspend its effect; and if you say that merit does cause the water of bitterness to suspend its effect, you discredit the water in the case of all the women who drink it and defame the pure woman who drank it, since people will say: They were unclean, only their merit caused the water to suspend its effect upon them.²⁶ But if it is so,²⁷ then through [the teaching], 'Where the witnesses against her are in a far-distant land', you likewise defame the pure women who drank and people will say: They were unclean, only the witnesses against them are in a far-distant land! — [The reply to R. Shimi is:] You quote R. Simeon; but as R. Simeon holds that merit does not cause the water to suspend its effect, he similarly holds that the existence of witnesses does not cause it to suspend its effect.

Rab raised an objection: The following have their meal-offerings destroyed:²⁸

- (1) [And how can we compel the brother-in-law to marry her?]
- (2) [To forbid her to the brother-in-law.]
- (3) As wife of his brother. The conclusion is false, because such a levirate marriage is permissible.
- (4) A High Priest is not allowed to marry a widow; Lev. XXI, 14.
- (5) From the priesthood because he was the issue of another marriage which was illegal.
- (6) A priest could not continue to live with his wife after she had been violated.
- (7) The argument is false, because the man disqualified from the priesthood could marry his childless brother's widow if she had been violated.
- (8) I.e., a non-priest was not obliged to divorce his wife who was the victim of violation.
- (9) Wives of priests.
- (10) For all time, even if the woman be a priest's daughter (v. Bertinoro).
- (11) She admits misconduct.
- (12) Even if she had successfully come through the ordeal, v. Gemara.
- (13) To Jerusalem, where alone the ordeal was carried out. V. Mishnah p. 30.

- (14) He found support for his teaching in the statement of the Mishnah.
- (15) And unable to appear before a Court to give evidence that she misconducted herself.
- (16) It has no effect, though she be guilty.
- (17) Num. V, 13.
- (18) 'No witness' is now interpreted literally, and not as before, viz., only one witness.
- (19) As the result of their evidence; [consequently she is forbidden to partake of the heave-offering, v. Yeb. 44b].
- (20) If there are witnesses of her misconduct who have not testified.
- (21) Because, if she came through successfully, her reputation is cleared. [Why then should she be prohibited to partake of the heave-offering for all time?]
- (22) This point is discussed immediately. If this view is accepted, the water does not affect her although the witnesses are true.
- (23) Through her belly swelling and her thigh falling (Num. V, 27). The passage is cited from *infra* 22b.
- (24) And the Sages only disagree with him on the question whether she dies. In any case, if she does not grow ill, it cannot be attributed to her merit but to the fact that there are witnesses who have not given evidence.
- (25) So that on either view, if the water has no effect, it is due to her merit.
- (26) Also quoted from *infra* 22b.
- (27) Viz., that the existence of absent witnesses causes the water not to take effect.
- (28) V. Num. V, 15 for this offering. In the cases mentioned, it is not burnt upon the altar or redeemed by payment in money of its value, but destroyed by fire.

Talmud - Mas. Sotah 6b

She who says: 'I am unclean'; and when witnesses came [and testified] that she had misconducted herself.¹ When did the witnesses come? If I say that they came before the offering was hallowed,² then it can become non-holy?³ Consequently they could only have come after it had been hallowed. This is quite right if you say that the water proves her;⁴ consequently she is qualified to have [the flour] hallowed and offered on her behalf, and since it was hallowed from the commencement, it is certainly holy⁵ and for that reason her meal-offering is destroyed. But if you say that the water does not prove her, it becomes evident retrospectively that the hallowing was from the commencement in error,⁶ and therefore [the flour] becomes non-holy!⁷ — Rab Judah of Diskarta⁸ said: Suppose that [after the hallowing] she committed adultery within the Temple-precincts,⁹ since it was hallowed from the commencement, it is certainly holy! R. Mesharsheya objected: But do not the priestly novitiates accompany her?¹⁰ — Rab Judah [meant,] She committed adultery with one of these novitiates. R. Ashi¹¹ said: Suppose it was necessary for her to relieve herself, do you think that the priestly novitiates hang on to her headgear!¹² R. Papa said: The matter is certainly as we originally explained;¹³ and when you argue, [The offering] becomes non-holy, [the answer is that the rule by which the offering is destroyed] is a decree of the Rabbis lest it should be said, we may take [the flour] out of the ministering vessel for secular use.

R. Mari raised an objection: If her offering became ritually defiled before it became hallowed in the vessel, behold it is like all meal-offerings¹⁴ and is redeemed; but if [it became defiled] after it had been hallowed in the vessel, behold it is like all meal-offerings [in such a circumstance] and is destroyed.¹⁵ If the handful of flour¹⁶ was hallowed but there was not sufficient time to offer it before [the husband] died¹⁷ or she died, behold it is like all the meal-offerings and must be destroyed. If the handful had been offered but there was not sufficient time [for the priest] to eat the remainder¹⁸ before [the husband] died or she died, behold it is like all the meal-offerings and is eaten; because it was brought from the commencement in connection with a matter of doubt,¹⁹ it atoned for the doubt which is now ended. If witnesses came [and testified] against her that she had misconducted herself, her meal-offering is destroyed; should the witnesses against her be proved to be perjurers,²⁰ her meal-offering is non-holy?²¹ — You mention perjured witnesses; the fact that they were perjured witnesses is generally known.²²

There is a teaching in accord with the view of R. Shesheth²³ but not for the same reason as his,²⁴ viz., If she be clean²⁵ — [this indicates] there are no witnesses against her in a far-distant land;²⁶ ‘and if she be clean’ — [the addition of and indicates] it is not merit that causes the water to suspend its effect; [‘and if] she [be clean’] — [meaning that she has escaped the effect of the water because she is in fact clean] and not because women who spin by moonlight were discussing her.²⁷ Now as for R. Simeon,²⁸ agreed that he does not expound the conjunction and;²⁹ still there is the case

(1) Quoted from *infra* p. 144.

(2) By the priest placing the flour in one of the ministering vessels.

(3) By being redeemed; so why does the Mishnah say it is destroyed?

(4) And she drank the water before witnesses testified.

(5) Even after the witnesses gave evidence.

(6) Since witnesses proved her guilty and the ordeal was unnecessary.

(7) And does not even have to be redeemed since the hallowing was based on an error.

(8) [Deskarah, 16 miles N.E. of Bagdad; Obermeyer, *Die Landschaft Babylonian*, p. 116.]

(9) And witnesses came to testify concerning this act of infidelity.

(10) So that adultery could not occur there.

(11) Who rejects the thought that she could be guilty with one of the novitiatees.

(12) When she retired to relieve herself. Consequently she could have the opportunity with another than the novitiatees.

(13) That the witnesses came concerning the first act of infidelity.

(14) Which became defiled before being hallowed.

(15) Mishnah, p. 114. What follows is cited in the main from *Tosefta Sotah II*.

(16) Num. V, 26.

(17) In the event of the husband's death she does not drink the water.

(18) Of the flour which is not burnt upon the altar and is the priest's perquisite.

(19) The woman's chastity.

(20) *Zomemim v. Glos.* Before the meal-offering was burnt upon the altar.

(21) Though it has been placed in the vessel; and we do not say, as above, that by a Rabbinic decree, it must be destroyed. This contradicts the view given by R. Papa.

(22) So that it will be recognised that the offering was never holy.

(23) Viz., that the water does not take effect when there are absent witnesses.

(24) Which is based on the phrase ‘No witness against her’ (*v. supra* p. 24). The teaching finds another derivation in support.

(25) Num. V, 28.

(26) The verse is thus explained; if she be really pure and did not escape the effect of the water through the witnesses being far away, then she will conceive.

(27) Women gather together in the moonlight to spin and gossip. To be talked about by them was a sufficient disgrace to suspend the effect of the water.

(28) Who holds that merit does not suspend the effect of the water.

(29) To derive from it a Scriptural basis for his view.

Talmud - Mas. Sotah 7a

where there are witnesses against her in a far-distant land!¹ — That is uncommon.²

MISHNAH. HOW DOES [THE HUSBAND] DEAL WITH HER? HE BRINGS HER TO THE COURT OF JUSTICE IN THE PLACE WHERE HE RESIDES, AND THEY ASSIGN TO HIM TWO DISCIPLES OF THE SAGES³ LEST HE COHABIT WITH HER ON THE JOURNEY.⁴ R. JUDAH SAYS, HER HUSBAND IS TRUSTED WITH HER.⁵

GEMARA. Two [disciples of the Sages] and he make three. Is this to say that it supports the teaching of Rab? For Rab Judah said in the name of Rab: [The Rabbis] did not teach [that a woman

may be in the company of two men] except in a city; but on a journey there must be three, in case one of them should have need to relieve himself and consequently one of them will be left alone with [the possibility of] immorality!⁶ — No; here the reason is that they should be witnesses against him.⁷ [But the fact that] disciples of the Sages are necessary and not ordinary men, does this not support another teaching of Rab? For Rab Judah said in the name of Rab: [The Rabbis] did not teach [that a woman may be in the company of two men] except in the case of pure men; but in the case of dissolute men not even with ten. It once happened that ten men carried a [live] woman [out of the city] in a coffin [to violate her]! — No; here the reason is that they will know to warn him.⁸

R. JUDAH SAYS, HER HUSBAND etc. It has been taught: R. Judah says: By a fortiori reasoning [it is deduced] that a husband is trusted.⁹ If a husband is trusted in the matter of his wife during menstruation where the penalty is excision,¹⁰ how much more so in the matter of his wife under suspicion in connection with which there is a mere prohibition.¹¹ And [how do] the Rabbis [meet this argument]? — The same reasoning establishes [their view]: in the case of a wife during menstruation where the penalty is excision, since it is so stringent, the husband is trusted; but in the case of a wife under suspicion where [cohabitation] is a mere prohibition, since there is no stringent [penalty] for him, he is not trusted. But does R. Judah derive his view from a fortiori reasoning? He surely derives it from a Scriptural text; for it has been taught: Then shall the man bring his wife unto the priest¹² — according to the Torah it is the husband who has to bring his wife; but said the Sages, They assign to him two disciples of the Sages lest he cohabit with her on the journey. R. Jose says: By a fortiori reasoning [it is deduced] that a husband is trusted with her. If a husband is trusted in the matter of his wife during menstruation where the penalty is excision, how much more so in the matter of his wife while under suspicion in connection with which there is a mere prohibition. [The Sages] replied to him, No; if you argue [that he may be trusted] in the case of his wife during menstruation to whom he will have a right [on her recovery], will you argue so in the case of his wife under suspicion when he may never have a right to her!¹³ It further states: Stolen waters are sweet, etc.¹⁴ R. Judah says: According to the Torah it is the husband who has to bring his wife; as it is said: Then shall the man bring his wife!¹⁵ — At first he argued his view to [the Sages] by a fortiori reasoning; but when they refuted it, he then quoted the text to them. But R. Judah's opinion is the same as that of the first Tanna!¹⁶ — There is a point of difference between them, viz., [the continuation], 'But, said the Rabbis' etc.¹⁷

MISHNAH. THEY BRING HER UP TO THE GREAT COURT OF JUSTICE WHICH IS IN JERUSALEM, AND [THE JUDGES] SOLEMNLY CHARGE HER IN THE SAME WAY THAT THEY CHARGE WITNESSES IN CAPITAL CASES¹⁸ AND SAY TO HER, 'MY DAUGHTER, WINE DOES MUCH, FRIVOLITY DOES MUCH, YOUTH DOES MUCH, BAD NEIGHBOURS DO MUCH.¹⁹ DO IT²⁰ FOR THE SAKE OF HIS GREAT NAME WHICH IS WRITTEN IN HOLINESS SO THAT IT MAY NOT BE OBLITERATED BY THE WATER.'²¹ AND THEY RELATE TO HER MATTERS WHICH NEITHER SHE NOR ALL THE FAMILY OF HER FATHER'S HOUSE IS WORTHY TO HEAR.²² — IF SHE SAID, 'I HAVE MISCONDUCTED MYSELF', SHE GIVES A QUITTANCE FOR HER MARRIAGE-SETTLEMENT²³ AND DEPARTS;²⁴ BUT IF SHE SAYS, 'I AM PURE', THEY BRING HER UP TO THE EAST GATE WHICH IS BY THE ENTRANCE OF NICANOR'S GATE²⁵ WHERE THEY GIVE SUSPECTED WOMEN THE WATER TO DRINK, PURIFY WOMEN AFTER CHILDBIRTH AND PURIFY LEPERS.²⁶ A PRIEST SEIZES HER GARMENTS²⁷ — IF THEY ARE RENT THEY ARE RENT, AND IF THEY BECOME UNSTITCHED THEY ARE UNSTITCHED UNTIL HE UNCOVERS HER BOSOM,²⁸ AND HE UNDOES HER HAIR. R. JUDAH SAYS: IF HER BOSOM WAS BEAUTIFUL HE DOES NOT UNCOVER IT, AND IF HER HAIR WAS BEAUTIFUL HE DOES NOT UNDO IT. — IF SHE WAS CLOTHED IN WHITE, HE CLOTHES HER IN BLACK. IF SHE WORE GOLDEN ORNAMENTS

(1) Which is deduced from Scripture as suspending the effect of the water; consequently there is still the objection that it

causes pure women to be suspected.

(2) It is so rare for witnesses to be far away that no suspicion would be created on that ground.

(3) To accompany him and his wife on the journey.

(4) To Jerusalem where the ordeal takes place.

(5) That he will not cohabit; if he does, the ordeal is not held.

(6) V. Kid. 81a.

(7) In the event of the husband cohabiting with her.

(8) Should he wish to cohabit, so that the ordeal be not held.

(9) In this matter of cohabitation and witnesses are unnecessary.

(10) Kareth v. Glos. Lev. XX, 18. A husband may occupy the same room as his wife while she is in that condition and he is trusted not to cohabit.

(11) Without any penalty attached thereto, v. Yeb. 11b.

(12) Num. V, 15.

(13) If she is proved guilty, he must divorce her. Consequently the temptation is greater in the latter case.

(14) Prov. IX, 17.

(15) [R. Judah thus derives his ruling from a Scriptural text and not from a fortiori reasoning?]

(16) Quoted at the end of the last paragraph who cites Num. V, 15.

(17) With which R. Judah disagrees.

(18) V. Sanh. 37a.

(19) I.e., there may be some excuse for your behaviour.

(20) Confess if you are guilty, and so make the ordeal unnecessary which includes the use of the Divine Name.

(21) V. Num. V, 23.

(22) Instances of persons in Israel's history who confessed their guilt.

(23) I.e., she admits misconduct in writing and the forfeiture of the sum due to her under the marriage-settlement,

(24) After being formally divorced.

(25) Two gates of Corinthian bronze presented to the Temple by an Alexandrian named Nicanor. They were located between the Court of Israelites and the Court of women. V. Nazir (Sonc. ed.) p. 165, n. 11.

(26) I.e., the place where such persons, who are not allowed through uncleanness to enter the Temple-precincts, bring their purificatory offerings.

(27) At the neck.

(28) Lit., 'heart'.

Talmud - Mas. Sotah 7b

AND NECKLACES, EAR-RINGS AND FINGER-RINGS, THEY REMOVE THEM FROM HER IN ORDER TO MAKE HER REPULSIVE. AFTER THAT [THE PRIEST] TAKES A COMMON ROPE¹ AND BINDS IT OVER HER BREASTS.² WHOEVER WISHES TO LOOK UPON HER COMES TO LOOK WITH THE EXCEPTION OF HER MALE AND FEMALE SLAVES, BECAUSE HER HEART IS MADE DEFIANT THROUGH THEM. ALL WOMEN ARE PERMITTED³ TO LOOK UPON HER, AS IT IS SAID, THAT ALL WOMEN MAY BE TAUGHT NOT TO DO AFTER YOUR LEWDNESS.⁴

GEMARA. Whence is this?⁵ — R. Hiyya b. Gamda said in the name of R. Jose b. Hanina: From the analogous use of the word 'law'. It is written here, And the priest shall execute upon her all this law;⁶ and elsewhere it is written: According to the tenor of the law which they shall teach thee.⁷ As in this latter case it is [the Court of] seventy-one,⁸ so also in the former it is [the Court of] seventy-one.

AND [THE JUDGES] SOLEMNLY CHARGE HER etc. I quote in contradiction: Just as they solemnly charge her not to drink,⁹ so they solemnly charge her to drink, saying to her, 'My daughter, if the matter is clear to thee that thou art pure, rely upon thy purity and drink; because the water of bitterness is only like dry powder which is placed upon living flesh. If there is a wound, it penetrates

and goes through [the skin]; and if there is no wound, it has no effect.¹⁰ — There is no contradiction; here [they charge her not to drink] before [the writing on] the scroll is blotted out,¹¹ and there [they charge her to drink] after it has been blotted out.¹²

AND SAY TO HER etc. Our Rabbis have taught: He tells her narratives and incidents which occurred in the early writings;¹³ for instance, Which wise men have told and have not hid it [from their fathers],¹⁴ namely Judah confessed and was not ashamed; what was his end? He inherited the life of the world to come. Reuben confessed and was not ashamed; what was his end? He inherited the world to come. And what was their reward? What was their reward [you ask]! It was as we have just mentioned. But [the meaning is], What was their reward in this world? Unto them alone the land was given, and no stranger passed among them.¹⁵ It is quite right with Judah; we find that he confessed, for it is written: And Judah acknowledged them, and said: She is more righteous than I.¹⁶ Whence, however, is it that Reuben confessed? — As R. Samuel b. Nahmani said in the name of R. Johanan: What means that which is written: Let Reuben live and not die; and this for Judah?¹⁷ All the years that the Israelites were in the wilderness, Judah's bones¹⁸ kept turning in his coffin until Moses arose and begged mercy for him. He said before Him, Lord of the Universe, who caused Reuben to confess? It was Judah,¹⁹ [as it is stated], 'And this for Judah'; immediately [after Moses prayed], 'Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah', each limb entered its socket.²⁰ But [the angels] would not permit him to enter the heavenly Academy;²¹ [so Moses prayed], 'And bring him in unto his people'. He was unable to discuss the theme which the Rabbis were then debating; [so Moses prayed], 'With his hands let him contend for himself.'²² He was still not able to secure a decision in accordance with the traditional practice; [so Moses prayed], 'Be an help against his adversaries'.²³ It is quite right that Judah confessed so that Tamar should not be burnt; but why did Reuben confess? Surely R. Shesheth has declared: Consider him shameless who [publicly] specifies his sins! — [Reuben confessed] so that his brothers should not be suspected [of his offence].

IF SHE SAID, 'I HAVE MISCONDUCTED MYSELF' etc. Is it to be concluded from this that a quittance is written out?²⁴ — Abaye said: Read [in our Mishnah]: [The document of the marriage-settlement] is torn. Raba replied to him, But the Mishnah mentions A QUITTANCE! But, said Raba, we deal here with places where they do not write a document for a marriage-settlement.²⁵

BUT IF SHE SAYS, 'I AM PURE', THEY BRING HER UP TO THE EAST GATE. 'THEY BRING HER UP'?

(1) The Palestinian Gemara explains it as 'an Egyptian cord' which is used because she followed the immoral practices of Egypt. More probably it means a cord made of twisted strips of the bark of the palm-tree. It was the commonest form of rope and used here as a mark of contempt.

(2) To prevent her clothing from falling down.

(3) Interpreted in the Gemara to mean that they should as a duty look.

(4) Ezek. XXIII, 48.

(5) That the water must be administered by the great Court in Jerusalem.

(6) Num. V, 30.

(7) Deut. XVII, 11. The reference is here to the Supreme Court.

(8) V. Sanh. 14b and 86a.

(9) If guilty, but make confession.

(10) Quoted from Tosefta Sotah I, 6.

(11) Num. V, 23, so that the Divine Name may not be obliterated in vain.

(12) To encourage her to go through the ordeal if she is convinced of her innocence.

(13) The Pentateuch.

(14) I.e., they confessed, Job XV, 18. (E.V. 'Which wise men have told from their fathers and have not hid it').

(15) Ibid. 19.

(16) Gen. XXXVIII, 26.

(17) Deut. XXXIII, 6f.

(18) According to tradition, the bones of all Jacob's sons were carried out of Egypt.

(19) When he confessed, Reuben followed his example.

(20) Of the skeleton and ceased rolling about.

(21) Where the Torah is studied.

(22) May he be able to prevail in the debate.

(23) V. B.M. 86a.

(24) The question whether a quittance is given or the document of the marriage-settlement torn is discussed in B.B. 170b.

(25) This was sometimes not done because there was an established rule about the amount due to a wife from her husband, v. B.M. (Sonc. ed.) p. 107, n. 4.

Talmud - Mas. Sotah 8a

But she is already there!¹ — They lead her up² and lead her down, for the purpose of wearying her.³ For it has been taught: R. Simeon b. Eleazar says: The Court causes the witnesses to be taken from place to place that their mind may become confused and they retract [their evidence, if false].⁴

WHERE THEY GIVE SUSPECTED WOMEN THE WATER TO DRINK etc. This is quite right in the case of suspected women; because it is written: And the priest shall set the woman before the Lord.⁵ Likewise is it with lepers; because it is written: And the priest that cleanseth him shall set the man . . . before the Lord.⁶ But why a woman after childbirth? Is it to say because they come to stand by their offerings; for it has been taught: A person's offering is not sacrificed until he stands by it? If so, it should also apply to men and women with a running issue!⁷ — It does indeed also apply to them, and the Tanna [in the Mishnah] only specifies one of them.⁸ Our Rabbis have taught: They do not give two suspected women the water to drink at the same time, so that the heart of one should not become defiant because of the other.⁹ R. Judah says: It is not from this reason, but Scripture declares, [The priest shall cause] her [to swear]¹⁰ — her alone. And for the first Tanna it is likewise written 'her'!¹¹ — The first Tanna is R. Simeon who expounds the reason of Scriptural texts¹² and [here] he states the reason: What is the meaning of 'her'? Her alone, so that the heart of one should not become defiant because of the other. What difference is there, then, between them? — The difference between them is the case of a woman who is trembling.¹³ But even if [a woman] is trembling, may we give her the water to drink [simultaneously with another woman] when, behold, we may not perform precepts in bundles?¹⁴ For we have learnt: They do not give two suspected women the water to drink at the same time, nor purify two lepers at the same time, nor bore the ears of two slaves at the same time,¹⁵ nor break the necks of two calves at the same time,¹⁶ because we may not perform precepts in bundles! — Abaye said, but others declare it was R. Kahana: There is no contradiction; the latter case referring to one priest,¹⁷ the other to two priests.

A PRIEST SEIZES HER GARMENTS. Our Rabbis have taught: And let the hair of the woman's head go loose.¹⁸ I only have here mention of her head; whence is it derived that it applies to her body?¹⁹ The text states: 'the woman's'.²⁰ If so, what is the object of the text declaring, 'And let the hair of the head go loose'? It teaches that the priest undoes her hair.²¹

R. JUDAH SAYS, IF HER BOSOM WAS BEAUTIFUL etc. Is this to say that R. Judah is afraid of impure thoughts being aroused and the Rabbis do not fear this? Behold we have heard the opposite opinion of them; for it has been taught: In the case of a man [who is to be stoned] they cover him with one piece of cloth in front, and in the case of a woman with two pieces, one in front and one behind, because the whole of her is considered nudity. This is the statement of R. Judah; but the Sages say: A man is stoned naked but a woman is not stoned naked!²² — Rabbah answered: What is the reason here?²³ Lest she go forth from the Court innocent, and the priestly novitiates become inflamed through her, whereas in the other case she is stoned. Should you reply that it may

cause them to be inflamed by another woman, Raba²⁴ declared: We have learnt a tradition that the evil impulse only bears sway over what a person's eyes see. Raba asked: Is it, then, that R. Judah contradicts himself and the Rabbis do not contradict themselves? But, said Raba, R. Judah does not contradict himself as we have just explained²⁵

(1) V. Mishnah p. 30.

(2) The Temple-mount to be charged by the judges, then lead her to the bottom, and finally up again.

(3) So that she may be more disposed to confess.

(4) V. Sanh. 32b.

(5) Num. V, 18.

(6) Lev. XIV, 11.

(7) Ibid. XV, 14, 29.

(8) Who do not enter the Temple precincts owing to a condition of defilement, and consequently stand at Nicanor's gate.

(9) One may be guilty and the other not. The first may refuse to confess because the other does not confess.

(10) Num. V, 19. V. Ned. 73a.

(11) So why does he give his own reason?

(12) V. B.M. 115a.

(13) And therefore we cannot say she is defiant, and on the view of the first Tanna, as explained, she might be submitted to the ordeal at the same time with another suspected woman.

(14) Each must have separate attention.

(15) Ex. XXI, 6.

(16) Deut. XXI, 1 ff.

(17) Administering the water to two women, when it would be performing a precept in bundles.

(18) Num. V, 18.

(19) That he uncovers her bosom, as stated in the Mishnah.

(20) And not merely 'the hair of her head'.

(21) And unravels the locks.

(22) V. Sanh. 45a.

(23) That R. Judah is against the exposure of her bosom.

(24) In the parallel passage in Sanh. 45a the name is Rabbah.

(25) The case of a suspected woman is not analogous to that of a woman who is to be stoned.

Talmud - Mas. Sotah 8b

, and the Rabbis likewise do not contradict themselves. What is the reason here?¹ Because [it is written], That all women may be taught not to do after your lewdness.² In the other case [of stoning], however, there cannot be a severer warning than that.³ Should you argue, Let both be inflicted upon her,⁴ R. Nahman said in the name of Rabbah b. Abbuha: The text states: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself⁵ — choose for him [or her] a light death. Is this to say that Mishnaic teachers disagree [with respect to this teaching] of R. Nahman?⁶ — No; everybody is in agreement with R. Nahman's teaching, but they differ here on the following point: [the Rabbis] hold that disgrace is worse than physical pain, and [R. Judah] holds that physical pain is worse than disgrace.⁷ IF SHE WAS CLOTHED IN WHITE etc. It has been taught: If black garments became her, they clothe her in mean garments.

IF SHE WORE GOLDEN ORNAMENTS etc. This is obvious. Since she has to be made repulsive how much more is it necessary to do this!⁸ — What you might have thought is that with these ornaments upon her, the disgrace would be greater; as the proverb declares, 'Stripped naked, yet wearing shoes'. Therefore we are taught [that all ornaments must be removed].

AFTER THAT [THE PRIEST] TAKES A COMMON ROPE etc. R. Abba asked R. Huna, Does [the absence of] a common rope invalidate the ceremony of a suspected woman? If the purpose is

that her garments should not slip down from her, then a small belt would also suffice; or is it perhaps as the Master said: 'She girded herself with a belt [to adorn herself] for him,⁹ therefore the priest takes a common rope and binds it over her breasts', and consequently [its absence] does invalidate the ceremony? — He replied: You have [the reason stated:] After that he takes a common rope and binds it over her breast so that her garments should not slip down from her.

WHOEVER WISHES TO LOOK UPON HER COMES TO LOOK etc. This is self-contradictory! You say: WHOEVER WISHES TO LOOK UPON HER COMES TO LOOK; consequently it makes no difference whether they be men or women. Then it is taught: ALL WOMEN ARE PERMITTED TO LOOK UPON HER — hence women are [permitted] but men are not! — Abaye answered: Explain it¹⁰ as referring to women. Raba said to him, But the Mishnah states: WHOEVER WISHES TO LOOK UPON HER COMES TO LOOK! But, said Raba, [the meaning is:] WHOEVER WISHES TO LOOK UPON HER COMES TO LOOK, it makes no difference whether they be men or women; but women are obliged¹¹ to look upon her, as it is said: 'That all women may be taught not to do after your lewdness.' MISHNAH. IN THE MEASURE WITH WHICH A MAN MEASURES IT IS METED OUT TO HIM. SHE ADORNED HERSELF FOR A TRANSGRESSION; THE HOLY ONE, BLESSED BE HE, MADE HER REPULSIVE. SHE EXPOSED HERSELF FOR A TRANSGRESSION; THE HOLY ONE, BLESSED BE HE, HELD HER UP FOR EXPOSURE. SHE BEGAN THE TRANSGRESSION WITH THE THIGH AND AFTERWARDS WITH THE WOMB; THEREFORE SHE IS PUNISHED FIRST IN THE THIGH AND AFTERWARDS IN THE WOMB,¹² NOR DOES ALL THE BODY ESCAPE. GEMARA. R. Joseph said: Although the measure¹³ has ceased, [the principle] IN THE MEASURE has not ceased.¹⁴ For R. Joseph said, and similarly taught R. Hiyya: From the day the Temple was destroyed, although the Sanhedrin ceased to function, the four modes of execution¹⁵ did not cease. But they did cease! — [The meaning is:] The judgment¹⁶ of the four modes of execution did not cease. He who would have been condemned to stoning either falls from a roof [and dies] or a wild beast tramples him [to death]. He who would have been condemned to burning either falls into a fire or a serpent stings him. He who would have been condemned to decapitation is either handed over to the [Gentile] Government¹⁷ or robbers attack him. He who would have been condemned to strangulation either drowns in a river or dies of a quinsy.¹⁸

It has been taught: Rabbi¹⁹ used to say: Whence is it that in the measure with which a man measures it is meted out to him? As it is said: By measure in sending her away thou dost contend with her.²⁰ I have here only a se'ah;²¹ whence is it to include a trikab and half a trikab, a kab and half a kab, a quarter, an eighth, a sixteenth and a thirtysecond part of a kab? There is a text to state, For all the armour of the armed man in the tumult.²² And whence is it that every perutah²³ reckons together into a great sum? There is a text to state, Laying one thing to another to find out the account.²⁴ Thus we find in the case of a suspected woman that in the measure with which she measured it was meted out to her. She stood at the entrance of her house to display herself to the man; therefore a priest sets her by the Nicanor-gate and displays her disgrace to all. She wound a beautiful scarf about her head for him; therefore a priest removes her headgear and places it under her feet. She beautified her face for him; therefore

(1) That the Rabbis do not scruple to disgrace the suspected woman, whereas in the case of the woman who is stoned they do.

(2) Ezek. XXIII, 48.

(3) Viz., the stoning itself; therefore the Rabbis are against the exposure of the body.

(4) Disgrace as well as death by stoning.

(5) Lev. XIX, 18.

(6) That when R. Judah says a woman is stoned naked except for a loin-cloth in front and behind he evidences disagreement with R. Nahman.

(7) Therefore the former believe that a woman about to die would prefer to be clothed although it may involve a more

protracted death, while R. Judah takes the opposite view, v. Sanh. (Sonc. ed.) pp. 294-5.

(8) Why, then, does the Mishnah mention it?

(9) Her paramour; v. infra p. 38.

(10) The phrase, WHOEVER WISHES etc.

(11) The word **מוֹתְרוֹת**, 'are permitted', is apparently derived here from the root **תרה** 'to warn'; hence 'are warned, obliged'.

(12) V. Num. V, 21 f.

(13) Meted out by a Jewish Court of Justice.

(14) Referring to Divine retribution.

(15) V. Sanh. 90a.

(16) Through Divine intervention.

(17) Which executes him by the sword.

(18) V. Sanh. (Sonc. ed.) p. 236.

(19) [The parallel passage in Sanh. 100a has 'R. Meir'].

(20) Isa. XXVII, 8.

(21) The word for by measure is connected by Rabbi with se'ah, a dry measure of which a trikab (equals three kab) is a half. Se'ah is taken as representing a very serious offence.

(22) Isa. IX, 4, E.V. 5. The Hebrew words for 'armour' **סֵאוֹן** and 'armed man' **סוֹאֵן** are likewise connected with se'ah.

(23) A small coin, here representing a minor offence which is not overlooked for punishment.

(24) Eccl. VII, 27.

Talmud - Mas. Sotah 9a

her face is made to turn green in colour.¹ She painted her eyes for him; therefore her eyes protrude. She plaited her hair for him; therefore a priest undoes her hair. She signalled to him with her finger; therefore her fingernails fall off. She girded herself with a belt for him; therefore a priest takes a common rope and ties it above her breasts. She thrust her thigh towards him; therefore her thigh falls. She received him upon her body; therefore her womb swells. She gave him the world's dainties to eat; therefore her offering consisted of animal's fodder.² She gave him costly wine to drink in costly goblets; therefore a priest gives her water of bitterness to drink in a potsherd. She acted in secret; and He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High³ directed His face against her [to punish her], as it is said: The eye also of the adulterer waiteth for the twilight, saying: No eye shall see me.⁴ Another version is: She acted in secret; the All-present proclaims it in public, as it is said: Though his hatred cover itself with guile, his wickedness shall be openly shewed before the congregation.⁵

Since [the teaching that even the slightest sin is punished] is derived from 'Laying one thing to another to find out the account', why do I require 'For all the armour of the armed man in the tumult'? — That [the punishment is] according to measure. But since that is derived from 'For all the armour of the armed man in the tumult', why do I require 'By measure in sending her away thou dost contend with her'? — It is in accord with the teaching of R. Hinena b. Papa; for R. Hinena b. Papa said: The Holy One, blessed be He, does not exact punishment of a nation until the time of its banishment into exile, as it is said: 'By measure in sending her away, etc'. But it is not so; for Raba has said: Why are three cups mentioned in connection with Egypt?⁶ One which she drank in the days of Moses; one which she drank in the days of Pharaoh-Necho;⁷ and one which she is destined to drink with her allies! Should you reply that they passed away, and these are different [Egyptians],⁸ behold it has been taught: R. Judah said: Minyamin, an Egyptian proselyte, was a colleague of mine among the disciples of R. Akiba; and Minyamin, the Egyptian proselyte, told me: 'I am an Egyptian of the first generation,⁹ and I married an Egyptian woman of the first generation; I will marry my son to an Egyptian woman of the second generation so that my grandson may be permitted to enter the Community'¹⁰ — But if the above statement was made it was made as follows: R. Hinena b. Papa

said: The Holy One, blessed be He, does not exact punishment of a king until the time of his banishment into exile, as it is said: 'By measure in sending her away, etc'. Amemar applied this teaching of R. Hinena b. Papa to the following: What means the text: For I the Lord change not; therefore ye, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed'?¹¹ 'I the Lord change not' — I have not smitten a people and repeated it;¹² 'therefore ye, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed' — that is what is written: I will spend Mine arrows upon them¹³ — Mine arrows will be spent, but [the sons of Jacob] will not cease. R. Hamuna said: The Holy One, blessed be He, does not exact punishment of a man until his measure [of guilt] is filled; as it is said: 'In the fullness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits, etc'.¹⁴ R. Hinena b. Papa expounded: What means the text: Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous; praise is comely for the upright?¹⁵ Read not praise is na'wah ['comely'], but praise is neweh ['a habitation']. This alludes to Moses and David over whose works [in erecting a Sanctuary] their enemies had no power.¹⁶ Of [the Temple planned by] David, it is written: Her gates are sunk in the ground.¹⁷ With regard to Moses the Master said: After the first Temple was erected, the Tent of Meeting was stored away, its boards, hooks, bars, pillars and sockets. Where [were they stored]? — R. Hisda said in the name of Abimi: Beneath the crypts of the Temple.

Our Rabbis have taught: The suspected woman¹⁸ set her eyes on one who was not proper for her; what she sought was not given to her¹⁹ and what she possessed was taken from her;²⁰ because whoever sets his eyes on that which is not his is not granted what he seeks and what he possesses is taken from him.

(1) This, and the protruding of the eyes, are the effect of drinking the water; v. Mishnah 20a.

(2) Barley meal, Num. V, 15.

(3) Ps. XCI, I.

(4) Job XXIV, 15. No eye etc. is explained in the sense, God will not observe me.

(5) Prov. XXVI, 26.

(6) The word 'cup' occurs three times in Gen. XL, 11, and is a symbol of calamity.

(7) When Egypt was defeated by Babylon (Jer. XLVI. 2). The third 'cup' refers to the Messianic era. The conclusion is, therefore, that punishment is not exacted of a nation only at the time of banishment.

(8) The original Egyptians had disappeared and their land was inhabited by a different race.

(9) That means, he had been personally converted to Judaism and was not the son of a proselyte.

(10) V. Deut. XXIII, 9, E.V. 8. This proves that the original Egyptians are considered as still extant.

(11) Mal. III, 6.

(12) The Hebrew word for 'change' שנה also means 'repeat'.

(13) Deut. XXXII, 23.

(14) Job XX, 22.

(15) Ps. XXXIII, 1.

(16) I.e., the enemies of Israel did not profit by any of the materials when the Temple was destroyed.

(17) Lam. II, 9.

(18) Who is guilty.

(19) She is not allowed to marry her lover.

(20) She dies if she drinks the water, and is divorced with loss of her settlement if she confesses.

Talmud - Mas. Sotah 9b

We thus find it with the primeval serpent [in the Garden of Eden] which set its eyes on that which was not proper for it; what it sought was not granted to it and what it possessed was taken from it. The Holy One, blessed be He, said: I declared: Let it be king over every animal and beast; but now, Cursed art thou above all cattle and above every beast of the field.¹ I declared, let it walk with an erect posture; but now it shall go upon its belly. I declared: Let its food be the same as that of man; but now it shall eat dust. It said: I will kill Adam and marry Eve; but now, I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed.² Similarly do we find it with Cain, Korah,

Balaam, Doeg, Ahitophel, Gehazi, Absalom, Adonijah, Uzziah and Haman, who set their eyes upon that which was not proper for them; what they sought was not granted to them and what they possessed was taken from them.

SHE BEGAN THE TRANSGRESSION WITH THE THIGH etc. Whence is this? Shall I say because it is written: When the Lord doth make thy thigh to fall away and thy belly to swell?³ But it is likewise written: Her belly shall swell and her thigh shall fall away!⁴ — Abaye said: When [the priest] utters the curse, he first curses the thigh and then curses the belly; but when the water produces its effect it does so in its normal order, viz., the belly first and then the thigh. But also in connection with the curse, it is written: Make thy belly to swell and thy thigh to fall away!⁵ — That is what the priest informs her, viz., that it affects her belly first and then the thigh so as not to discredit the water of bitterness.⁶

MISHNAH. SAMSON WENT AFTER [THE DESIRE OF] HIS EYES; THEREFORE THE PHILISTINES PUT OUT HIS EYES, AS IT IS SAID, AND THE PHILISTINES LAID HOLD ON HIM, AND PUT OUT HIS EYES.⁷ ABSALOM GLORIED IN HIS HAIR; THEREFORE HE WAS HANGED BY HIS HAIR. AND BECAUSE HE COHABITED WITH THE TEN CONCUBINES OF HIS FATHER, THEREFORE HE WAS STABBED WITH TEN LANCES, AS IT IS SAID, AND TEN YOUNG MEN THAT BARE JOAB'S ARMOUR COMPASSED ABOUT.⁸ AND BECAUSE HE STOLE THREE HEARTS, THE HEART OF HIS FATHER, THE HEART OF THE COURT OF JUSTICE, AND THE HEART OF ISRAEL, AS IT IS SAID, SO ABSALOM STOLE THE HEARTS OF THE MEN OF ISRAEL,⁹ THEREFORE THREE DARTS WERE THRUST THROUGH HIM, AS IT IS SAID, AND HE TOOK THREE DARTS IN HIS HAND, AND THRUST THEM THROUGH THE HEART OF ABSALOM.¹⁰ — IT¹¹ IS THE SAME IN CONNECTION WITH THE GOOD. MIRIAM WAITED A SHORT WHILE FOR MOSES, AS IT IS SAID, AND HIS SISTER STOOD AFAR OFF;¹² THEREFORE ISRAEL WAS DELAYED FOR HER SEVEN DAYS IN THE WILDERNESS, AS IT IS SAID, AND THE PEOPLE JOURNEYED NOT TILL MIRIAM WAS BROUGHT IN AGAIN.¹³ JOSEPH EARNED MERIT BY BURYING HIS FATHER AND THERE WAS NONE AMONG HIS BROTHERS GREATER THAN HE; AS IT IS SAID, AND JOSEPH WENT UP TO BURY HIS FATHER, ETC.,¹⁴ AND THERE WENT UP WITH HIM BOTH CHARIOTS AND HORSEMEN.¹⁵ WHOM HAVE WE GREATER THAN JOSEPH SINCE NONE OTHER THAN MOSES OCCUPIED HIMSELF WITH HIS BURIAL? MOSES EARNED MERIT THROUGH THE BONES OF JOSEPH AND THERE WAS NONE IN ISRAEL GREATER THAN HE, AS IT IS SAID, AND MOSES TOOK THE BONES OF JOSEPH WITH HIM.¹⁶ WHOM HAVE WE GREATER THAN MOSES SINCE NONE OTHER THAN THE OMNIPRESENT OCCUPIED HIMSELF [WITH HIS BURIAL], AS IT IS SAID, AND HE BURIED HIM IN THE VALLEY?¹⁷ NOT ONLY CONCERNING MOSES DID THEY SAY THIS, BUT CONCERNING ALL THE RIGHTEOUS, AS IT IS SAID, AND THY RIGHTEOUSNESS SHALL GO BEFORE THEE, THE GLORY OF THE LORD SHALL BE THY REARWARD.¹⁸

GEMARA. Our Rabbis have taught: Samson rebelled [against God] through his eyes, as it is said: And Samson said unto his father, Get her for me, because she is pleasing in my eyes;¹⁹ therefore the Philistines put out his eyes, as it is said: And the Philistines laid hold on him and put out his eyes.²⁰ But it is not so; for behold it is written: But his father and his mother knew not that it was of the Lord!²¹ — When he went [to choose a wife] he nevertheless followed his own inclinations.²² It has been taught: Rabbi says: The beginning of his [Samson's] degeneration occurred in Gaza; therefore he received his punishment in Gaza. 'The beginning of his [Samson's] degeneration was in Gaza', as it is written: And Samson went to Gaza, and saw there an harlot etc.,²³ 'therefore he received his punishment in Gaza,' as it is written: And they brought him down to Gaza.²⁴ But behold it is written: And Samson went down to Timnah!²⁵ — Nevertheless the beginning of his degeneration occurred in Gaza.²⁶

And it came to pass afterward, that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah.²⁷ It has been taught: Rabbi says: If her name had not been called Delilah, she was fit that it should be so called. She weakened²⁸ his strength, she weakened his heart, she weakened his actions. 'She weakened his strength', as it is written: And his strength went from him.²⁹ 'She weakened his heart', as it is written: And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart.³⁰ 'She weakened his actions' since the Shechinah departed from him, as it is written: But he wist not that the Lord had departed from him.³¹

'And when Delilah saw that he had told her all his heart'. How did she know this?³² R. Hanin said in the name of Rab: Words of truth are recognisable. Abaye said: She knew that this righteous man would not utter the Divine Name in vain; when he exclaimed: I have been a Nazirite unto God,³³ she said: Now he has certainly spoken the truth.

And it came to pass, when she pressed him daily with her words, and urged him.³⁴ What means 'and urged him'? R. Isaac of the School of R. Ammi said: At the time of the consummation, she detached herself from him.

Now therefore beware, I pray thee, and drink no wine nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing.³⁵ What means 'any unclean thing'? Furthermore, had she [Samson's mother] up to then eaten unclean things? R. Isaac of the School of R. Ammi said: [She had hitherto eaten] things forbidden to a Nazirite.

But God clave the hollow place that is in Lehi.³⁶ R. Isaac of the School of R. Ammi said: He [Samson] lusted for what was unclean;³⁷ therefore his life was made dependent upon an unclean thing.³⁸

And the spirit of the Lord began, etc.³⁹ R. Hama b. Hanina said: Jacob's prophecy became fulfilled, as it is written: Dan shall be a serpent in the way.⁴⁰

To move him in Mahaneh-Dan.⁴¹ R. Isaac of the School of R. Ammi said: This teaches that the Shechinah kept ringing in front of him like a bell;⁴² it is written here to move him [lefa'amo] in Mahaneh-Dan, and it is written elsewhere A golden bell [pa'amon] and a pomegranate.⁴³ Between Zorah and Eshtaol⁴⁴ — R. Assi said: Zorah and Eshtaol are two great mountains, and Samson uprooted them and ground one against the other.

And he shall begin to save Israel.⁴⁵ R. Hama b. Hanina said:

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- (1) Gen. III, 14.
 - (2) Ibid. 15.
 - (3) Num. V, 21. 'Thigh' is mentioned first.
 - (4) Ibid. 27. Here 'thigh' is mentioned second.
 - (5) Ibid. 22.
 - (6) If the effects were produced in the reverse order.
 - (7) Judg. XVI, 21.
 - (8) And slew Absalom, II Sam. XVIII, 15.
 - (9) Ibid. XV, 6.
 - (10) Ibid. XVIII, 14.
 - (11) The principle of measure for measure.
 - (12) Ex. II, 4.
 - (13) Num. XII, 15.
 - (14) Gen. L, 7.
 - (15) Ibid. 9.

- (16) Ex. XIII, 19.
 (17) Deut. XXXIV, 6.
 (18) Isa. LVIII, 8. The verb translated 'shall be thy rearward' seems to be taken here in its literal sense, shall gather thee sc. to thy fathers.
 (19) Judg. XIV, 3.
 (20) Ibid. XVI, 21.
 (21) Ibid. XIV, 4.
 (22) And not the will of God.
 (23) Judg. XVI, I.
 (24) Ibid. 21.
 (25) Ibid. XIV, 1.
 (26) He lawfully married the woman in Timnah but not the woman in Gaza.
 (27) Ibid. XVI, 4.
 (28) Dildelah, a play on her name.
 (29) Ibid. 19.
 (30) Ibid. 18.
 (31) Ibid. 20.
 (32) He had previously told her several falsehoods; so how did she know that he had now spoken the truth?
 (33) Ibid. 17.
 (34) Ibid. 16.
 (35) Ibid. XIII, 4.
 (36) Judg. XV, 19.
 (37) Philistine women.
 (38) The ass's jawbone (lehi) out of which he drank in his thirst.
 (39) Ibid. XIII, 25.
 (40) Gen. XLIX, 17. This prophecy alluded to Samson who was of the tribe of Dan.
 (41) The word in Judg. XIII, 25 for 'move' is commonly used of striking a bell.
 (42) To direct him where he was to go.
 (43) Ex. XXVIII, 34.
 (44) Judg. XIII, 25.
 (45) Ibid. 5. The word 'begin' (**הָיָא**) is connected with a similar root (**הָיָא**) meaning become void.

Talmud - Mas. Sotah 10a

The oath of Abimelech became void, as it is written: That thou wilt not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my son's son.¹

And the child grew, and the Lord blessed him.² Wherewith did He bless him? — Rab Judah said in the name of Rab: With his physique which was like that of other men but his manly strength was like a fast-flowing stream.³

And Samson called unto the Lord, and said: O Lord God, remember me, I pray Thee and strengthen me, I pray Thee, that I may be at once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes.⁴ Rab said: Samson spoke before the Holy One, blessed be He, Sovereign of the Universe, Remember on my behalf the twenty⁵ years I judged Israel, and never did I order anyone to carry my staff from one place to another.

And Samson went and caught three hundred foxes.⁶ Why just foxes? — R. Aibu b. Nagari said in the name of R. Hiyya b. Abba: Samson declared: Let [the animal] come which turns backward⁷ and exact punishment of the Philistines who went back on their oath.⁸

It has been taught: R. Simeon the Pious said: The width between Samson's shoulders was sixty

cubits, as it is said: And Samson lay till midnight, and arose at midnight and laid hold of the doors of the gate of the city, and the two posts, and plucked them up, bar and all, and put them upon his shoulders;⁹ and there is a tradition that the gates of Gaza were not less than sixty cubits [in width]. And he did grind in the prison house.¹⁰

R. Johanan said: ‘Grind’ means nothing else than [sexual] transgression; and thus it is stated: Then let my wife grind unto another.¹¹ It teaches that everyone brought his wife to him to the prison that she might bear a child by him [who would be as strong as he was]. R. Papa said: That is what the proverb tells, ‘Before the wine-drinker [set] wine, before a ploughman a basket of roots.’

R. Johanan also said: Whoever is faithless, his wife is faithless to him; as it is said: If mine heart have been enticed unto a woman, and I have laid wait at my neighbour's door¹² and it continues, Then let my wife grind unto another, and let others bow down upon her. That is what the proverb tells, ‘He among the full-grown pumpkins and his wife among the young ones’.

R. Johanan also said: Samson judged Israel in the same manner as their Father in heaven; as it is said: Dan shall judge his people as One.¹³ R. Johanan also said: Samson was called by the name of the Holy One, blessed be He; as it is said: For the Lord God is a sun and a shield.¹⁴ According to this argument, [his name] may not be erased!¹⁵ — The intention is that [his name] was typical of the name of the Holy One, blessed be He;¹⁶ as the Holy One, blessed be He, shields the whole world, so Samson shielded Israel during his generation.

R. Johanan also said: Balaam was lame in one leg, as it is said: And he went shefi;¹⁷ Samson was lame in both legs, as it is said: An adder in the path.¹⁸

Our Rabbis have taught: Five were created after the likeness of Him Who is above, and all of them incurred punishment on account of [the feature which distinguished] them: Samson in his strength, Saul in his neck,¹⁹ Absalom in his hair,²⁰ Zedekiah in his eyes, and Asa in his feet. ‘Samson [was punished] in his strength’, as it is written: And his strength went from him.²¹ ‘Saul [was punished] in his neck’, as it is written: Saul took his sword and fell upon it.²² ‘Absalom [was punished] in his hair’, as we shall have occasion to explain later. Zedekiah [was punished] in his eyes, as it is written: They put out the eyes of Zedekiah.²³ Asa [was punished] in his feet, as it is written: But in the time of his old age he was diseased in his feet;²⁴ and Rab Judah said in the name of Rab, Podagra [gout] attacked him.

Mar Zutra, son of R. Nahman, asked R. Nahman, What is Podagra like? — He answered: Like a needle in living flesh. How did he know this? — Some say he suffered from it himself; others say that he heard it from his teacher;²⁵ and others declare, The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will shew them His covenant.²⁶

Raba expounded: Why was Asa punished? Because he imposed forced labour²⁷ upon the disciples of the Sages, as it is said: Then King Asa made a proclamation unto all Judah; none was exempted.²⁸ What means ‘none was exempted’? — Rab Judah said in the name of Rab: Even the bridegroom from his chamber and the bride from her canopy.

It is written: And Samson went down to Timnah,²⁹ and it is written: Behold, thy father-in-law goeth up to Timnah!³⁰ R. Eleazar said: Since in the case of Samson he was disgraced there, it is written in connection with it ‘went down;’ but in the case of Judah, since he was exalted in it,³¹ there is written in connection with it ‘goeth up’. R. Samuel b. Nahmani said: There are two places named Timnah; one [was reached] by going down and the other by going up. R. Papa said: There is only one place named Timnah; who came to it from one direction had to descend and from another direction had to ascend, as, e.g., Wardina, Be Bari and the market-place of Neresh.³²

She sat in the gate of Enaim.³³ R. Alexander said: It teaches that she [Tamar] went and sat at the entrance [of the hospice] of our father Abraham, to see which place all eyes [‘enaim] look. R. Hanin said in the name of Rab: It is a place named Enaim, as it states: Tappuah and Enam.³⁴ R. Samuel b. Nahmani said: [It is so called] because she gave eyes to her words.³⁵ When [Judah] solicited her, he asked her, ‘Art thou perhaps a Gentile?’ She replied: ‘I am a proselyte’. ‘Art thou perhaps a married woman?’ She replied: ‘I am unmarried’. ‘Perhaps thy father has accepted on thy behalf betrothals?’³⁶ She replied: ‘I am an orphan’. ‘Perhaps thou art unclean?’ She replied: ‘I am clean’.

And he planted a tamarisk tree in Beer-sheba.³⁷ Resh Lakish said: It teaches that he [Abraham] made an orchard and planted in it all kinds of choice fruits. R. Judah and R. Nehemiah [differ in this matter]; one said that it was an orchard and the other that it was a hospice. It is right according to him who said that it was an orchard, since it is written ‘and he planted’; but according to him who said that it was a hospice, what means ‘and he planted?’ — It is similarly written: And he shall plant the tents of his palace, etc.³⁸

And he called there on the name of the Lord, the Everlasting God.³⁹ Resh Lakish said: Read not ‘and he called’

(1) Gen. XXI, 23. The alliance between the Israelites and Philistines ended in the time of Samson.

(2) Judg. XIII, 24.

(3) The point underlying this piece of Rabbinic hyperbole is that it was through Samson's inordinate passion for Philistine women that he came in contact with their people and brought about Israel's release from their power.

(4) Ibid. XVI, 28.

(5) Some edd. read ‘twenty-two’ in error; v. *ibid.* 31.

(6) Judg. XV, 4.

(7) When a fox is hunted, it does not run ahead but in a roundabout course.

(8) Between Isaac and Abimelech; v. *supra*.

(9) Ibid. XVI, 3.

(10) Ibid. 21.

(11) Job XXXI, 10.

(12) Ibid. 9.

(13) Gen. XLIX, 16, the One being God.

(14) Ps. LXXXIV, 12, E.V.11 The word for sun is shemesh which is the basis of Samson's name, Shimshon.

(15) As it is forbidden to erase the Divine Name.

(16) The word sun is not God's Name but a simile.

(17) Num. XXIII, 3. (E.V. ‘To a bare height’). The Hebrew word is explained as ‘lame’.

(18) Gen. XLIX, 17. The word for adder is shefifon which looks like a duplicated form of shefi from the root שׁוּף , ‘to dislocate’.

(19) Cf. I Sam. X, 23.

(20) Cf. II Sam. XIV, 26. There is no Biblical reference in connection with Zedekiah and Asa.

(21) Judg. XVI, 19.

(22) I Sam. XXXI, 4. The sword passed through his neck.

(23) II Kings XXV, 7.

(24) I Kings XV, 23.

(25) His teacher was a Rabbi named Samuel who was a physician.

(26) Ps. XXV, 14. The information was revealed to him by God.

(27) In the public service.

(28) I Kings XV, 22.

(29) Judg. XIV. I.

(30) Gen. XXXVIII, 13. Why does one text say ‘down’ and the other ‘goeth up’?

(31) Perez was born there from whom David was descended.

(32) Towns in Babylonia situated on mountain slopes on the east bank of the Euphrates, v. Obermeyer, op. cit., p. 309.

(33) Gen. XXXVIII. 14.

(34) Josh. XV, 34. Enam is identified with Enaim.

(35) Tamar gave convincing replies to Judah's questions as to whether she was permitted to him.

(36) [And thou thus belongest to another man.]

(37) Gen. XXI, 33. The explanation 'hospice' is obtained by taking each letter of the word **אָסוֹן** 'tamarisk-tree', and making them the initials of three Hebrew words meaning 'eating, drinking, lodging'.

(38) Dan. XI, 45.

(39) Gen. l.c.

Talmud - Mas. Sotah 10b

but 'and he made to call', thereby teaching that our father Abraham caused the name of the Holy One, blessed be He, to be uttered by the mouth of every passer-by. How was this? After [travellers] had eaten and drunk, they stood up to bless him; but, said he to them, 'Did you eat of mine? You ate of that which belongs to the God of the Universe. Thank, praise and bless Him who spake and the world came into being'.

When Judah saw her, he thought her to be an harlot; for she had covered her face.¹ Because she had covered her face he thought her to be an harlot! — R. Eleazar said: She had covered her face in her father-in-law's house;² for R. Samuel b. Nahmani said in the name of R. Jonathan: Every daughter-in-law who is modest in her father-in-law's house merits that kings and prophets should issue from her. Whence is this? From Tamar. Prophets [issued from her], as it is written: The vision of Isaiah the son of Amoz,³ and kings [issued from her] through David; and R. Levi has said: This is a tradition in our possession from our fathers that Amoz and Amaziah⁴ were brothers.

When she was brought forth.⁵ Instead of muzeth the verb should have been mithwazzeth!⁶ R. Eleazar said: [The verb in the text implies] that after her proofs⁷ were found, Samael⁸ came and removed them, and Gabriel⁹ came and restored them. That is what is written: For the Chief Musician, the silent dove of them that are afar off. Of David, Michtam¹⁰ — R. Johanan said: At the time when her proofs were removed, she became like a silent dove. 'Of David', 'Michtam' — [that means] there issued from her David who was meek [mach] and perfect [tam] to all. Another explanation of 'Michtam' is: his wound [makkah]¹¹ was whole [tammah], since he was born already circumcised. Another explanation of 'Michtam' is: just as in his youth [before he became king] he made himself small in the presence of anyone greater than himself to study Torah, so was he the same in his greatness.¹²

She sent to her father-in-law, saying: By the man whose these are, am I with child.¹³ She ought to have told [the messenger] plainly!¹⁴ — R. Zutra b. Tobiah said in the name of Rab — another version is, R. Hama b. Bizna said in the name of R. Simeon the Pious; and still another version is, R. Johanan said in the name of R. Simeon b. Yohai: Better for a man to cast himself into a fiery furnace rather than shame his fellow in public. Whence is this? From Tamar.¹⁵

Discern, I pray thee.¹⁶ R. Hama b. Hanina said: With the word 'discern' [Judah] made an announcement to his father, and with the word 'discern' an announcement was made to him. With the word 'discern' he made an announcement — Discern now whether it be thy son's coat or not;¹⁷ and with the word 'discern' an announcement was made to him — Discern, I pray thee, whose are these.¹⁶ The word 'na' ['I pray thee'] is nothing else than an expression of request. She said to him, 'I beg of thee, discern the face of thy Creator and hide not thine eyes from me'.¹⁸

And Judah acknowledged them, and said: She is more righteous than I.¹⁹ That is what R. Hanin b. Bizna said in the name of R. Simeon the Pious: Joseph who sanctified the heavenly Name in

private²⁰ merited that one letter should be added to him from the Name of the Holy One, blessed be He, as it is written: He appointed it in Joseph for a testimony.²¹ Judah, however, who sanctified the heavenly Name in public merited that the whole of his name should be called after the Name of the Holy One, blessed be He.²² When he confessed and said: She is more righteous than I, a Bath Kol²³ issued forth and proclaimed, 'Thou didst rescue Tamar and her two sons from the fire. By thy life, I will rescue through thy merit three of thy descendants from the fire'. Who are they? Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.²⁴ 'She is more righteous than I' — how did he know this?²⁵ A Bath Kol issued forth and proclaimed, 'From Me came forth secrets.'²⁶

And he knew her again no more.²⁷ Samuel the elder, father-in-law of R. Samuel b. Ammi said in the name of R. Samuel b. Ammi: Having once known her,²⁸ he did not separate from her again. It is written here, 'And he knew her again no more [Yasaf], and elsewhere it is written: With a great voice increasing [Yasaf].'²⁹

ABSALOM GLORIED IN HIS HAIR etc. Our Rabbis have taught: Absalom rebelled [against his father] through his hair, as it is said: There was none to be so much praised as Absalom for his beauty . . . And when he polled his head, now it was at every year's end that he polled it because the hair was heavy on him therefore he polled it, he weighed the hair of his head at two hundred shekels, after the king's weight.³⁰ It has been taught that [the king's weight] was the weight with which the men of Tiberias and Sepphoris weigh. Therefore he was hanged by his hair, as it is said: And Absalom chanced to meet the servants of David. And Absalom rode upon his mule, and the mule went under the thick boughs of a great oak, and his head caught hold of the oak, and he was taken up between the heaven and the earth,; and the mule that was under him went on.³¹ He took a sword and wished to cut himself loose;³² but it was taught in the School of R. Ishmael, At that moment Sheol was split asunder beneath him.³³

And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept; and as he went, thus he said: O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son.³⁴ And the king covered his face, and the king cried with a loud voice, O my son Absalom, O Absalom my son, my son.³⁵ Why is 'my son' repeated eight times? Seven to raise him from the seven divisions of Gehinnom; and as for the last, some say to unite his [severed] head to his body and others say to bring him into the World to Come.

Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken and reared up.³⁶ What means 'had taken'? — Resh Lakish said: He had made a bad purchase for himself.³⁷ The pillar which is in the king's dale, etc. — R. Hanina b. Papa said: In the deep plan of the King of the Universe;³⁸

(1) Ibid. XXXVIII, 15.

(2) So that Judah had never seen it and did not recognise her.

(3) Isa. I, 1.

(4) King of Judah, and since he was a descendant of David and Amoz was his brother, it is true that prophets and kings issued from Tamar.

(5) Gen. XXXVIII, 25.

(6) The verbal form used in the text could be translated 'was found', and the alternative suggested would have clearly indicated 'brought forth'.

(7) The signet, cord and staff.

(8) Angel of evil, later identified with Satan.

(9) One of the four Archangels.

(10) Ps. LVI, I.

(11) I.e., the place where there should have been a wound after circumcision.

(12) After he became king, he humbled himself to study. So he was meek and perfect.

(13) Gen. XXXVIII, 25.

- (14) That Judah was the father of her child. Why the circumlocution?
- (15) She risked being burnt to death rather than publicly shame Judah.
- (16) Ibid.
- (17) Ibid. XXXVII, 32.
- (18) That is how 'Discern, I pray thee' is explained.
- (19) Ibid. XXXVIII, 26.
- (20) When he resisted Potiphar's wife.
- (21) Ps. LXXXI, 6, E.V. 5. Here in the Hebrew the letter 'he', one of the letters of the Tetragrammaton, is added to Joseph's name: יהוסיף.
- (22) The four letters of the Tetragrammaton occur in Judah's name יהודה.
- (23) V. Glos.
- (24) See Dan. III.
- (25) Since she might have cohabited with other men.
- (26) V. Mak. 23b.
- (27) Gen. XXXVIII, 26.
- (28) That she was righteous.
- (29) Deut. V, 19. The two verbs are really distinct, but the Rabbi connected them both with the root אסף and accordingly explained the phrase in Gen. as 'and he knew her again without ceasing', v. Sanh. 17a.
- (30) II Sam. XIV, 25f.
- (31) II Sam. XVIII. 9.
- (32) The first half of this sentence is omitted in some edd.
- (33) So that had he cut through his hair he would have fallen into Sheol.
- (34) Ibid. XIX, 1. E.V. XVIII, 33.
- (35) Ibid. 5, E.V. 4.
- (36) Ibid. XVIII, 18.
- (37) The verb signifies both took and purchased. The meaning appears to be that his conduct resulted in his having to buy a monument to preserve his memory instead of his succeeding his father; hence it was a bad bargain for him.
- (38) The word 'dale' means 'deep', and 'king' is applied to God Who had decided that this should happen as a punishment for his sin with Bathsheba.

Talmud - Mas. Sotah 11a

as it is written: I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house.¹ Similarly it is stated: So he sent him [Joseph] out of the vale of Hebron.² R. Hanina b. Papa said: [The meaning is:] It was through the deep plan of that righteous man [Abraham] who had been buried in Hebron; as it is written: Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs.³

For he said: I have no son.⁴ Had he, then, no sons? Behold it is written: And unto Absalom there were born three sons and one daughter!⁵ — R. Isaac b. Abdimi said: [His meaning was] that he had no son fit for the kingship. R. Hisda said: There is a tradition that whoever burns his neighbour's produce will not leave a son to succeed him; and he [Absalom] had burnt [the produce] of Joab, as it is written: Therefore he said unto his servants, See, Joab's field is near mine, and he hath barley there; go and set it on fire. And Absalom's servants set the field on fire.⁶

IT IS THE SAME IN CONNECTION WITH THE GOOD. MIRIAM etc. Is this like [the other cases mentioned]? There she waited a short while [for Moses], here [the Israelites waited for her] seven days?⁷ — Abaye said: Read that in connection with the good [the principle of measure for measure] does not apply. Raba said to him, But the Mishnah teaches IT IS THE SAME IN CONNECTION WITH THE GOOD! But, said Raba, the Mishnah must be understood thus: It is the same in connection with the good that there is the same measure; nevertheless the measure in the case of the good is greater than the measure in the case of punishment.⁸

And his sister stood afar off.⁹ R. Isaac said: The whole of this verse is spoken with reference to the Shechinah: 'and stood', as it is written: And the Lord came and stood etc.¹⁰ 'His sister', as it is written: Say unto wisdom, thou art my Sister.¹¹ 'Afar off, as it is written: The Lord appeared from afar unto me.¹² 'To know', as it is written: For the Lord is a God of knowledge.¹³ 'What', as it is written: What doth the Lord require of thee?¹⁴ 'Done', as it is written: Surely the Lord God will do nothing.¹⁵ 'To him', as it is written: And called it Lord is peace.¹⁶

Now there arose a new king etc.¹⁷ Rab and Samuel [differ in their interpretation]; one said that he was really new, while the other said that his decrees were made new. He who said that he was really new did so because it is written 'new'; and he who said that his decrees were made new did so because it is not stated that [the former king] died and he reigned [in his stead]. Who knew not Joseph — he was like one who did not know [Joseph] at all.

And he said unto his people, Behold the people of the children of Israel.¹⁸ A Tanna taught: He [Pharaoh] originated the plan first, and therefore was punished first. He originated the plan first, as it is written: And he said unto his people; therefore he was punished first, as it is written: Upon thee, and upon thy people, and upon all thy servants.¹⁹

Come, let us deal wisely with him²⁰ — it should have been with them! — R. Hama b. Hanina said: [Pharaoh meant,] Come and let us outwit the Saviour of Israel. With what shall we afflict them? If we afflict them with fire, it is written: For, behold the Lord will come with fire,²¹ and it continues, For by fire will the Lord plead etc.²² [If we afflict them] with the sword, it is written: And by His sword with all flesh.²³ But come and let us afflict them with water, because the Holy One, blessed be He, has already sworn that he will not bring a flood upon the world; as it is said: For this is as the waters of Noah unto Me, etc.²⁴ They were unaware, however, that He would not bring a flood upon the whole world but upon one people He would bring it; or alternatively, He would not bring [the flood] but they would go and fall into it. Thus it says: And the Egyptians fled towards it.²⁵ This is what R. Eleazar said: What means that which is written: Yea, in the thing wherein they zadu [dealt proudly] against them?²⁶ In the pot in which they cooked were they cooked. Whence is it learnt that 'zadu' means cooking? — Because it is written: And Jacob sod [wa-yazed] pottage.²⁷

R. Hiyya b. Abba said in the name of R. Simai: There were three in that plan,²⁸ viz. Balaam, Job²⁹ and Jethro. Balaam who devised it was slain; Job who silently acquiesced was afflicted with sufferings; Jethro, who fled, merited that his descendants should sit in the Chamber of Hewn Stone,³⁰ as it is said: And the families of scribes which dwelt at Jabez; the Tirathites, the Shimeathites, the Sucathites. These are the Kenites that came of Hammath, the father of the house of Rechab;³¹ and it is written: And the children of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law etc.³²

And fight against us and get them up out of the land³³ — it should have read 'and we will get us up!'³⁴ — R. Abba b. Kahana said: It is like a man who curses himself and hangs the curse upon somebody else.

Therefore they did set over him taskmasters³⁵ — it should have read 'over them'! — It was taught in the School of R. Eleazar b. Simeon, It indicates that they brought a brick-mould and hung it round Pharaoh's neck; and every Israelite who complained that he was weak was told, 'Art thou weaker than Pharaoh?'

Missim ['taskmasters'] — i.e., something which forms [mesim].³⁶ 'To afflict him with their burdens'- it should have read 'them'! — The [meaning is] to afflict Pharaoh with the burdens of Israel.³⁷

And they built for Pharaoh store cities [miskenoth]. Rab and Samuel [differ in their

interpretation]; one said, [They were so called] because they endangered [mesakkenoth] their owners,³⁸ while the other said because they impoverished [memaskenoth] their owners,³⁹ for a master has declared that whoever occupies himself with building becomes impoverished.⁴⁰

Pithom and Raamses³⁵ — Rab and Samuel differ [in their interpretation];⁴¹ one said: Its real name was Pithom, and why was it called Raamses? Because one building after another collapsed [mithroses]. The other said that its real name was Raamses, and why was it called Pithom? Because the mouth of the deep [pi tehom] swallowed up one building after another.

But the more they afflicted him, the more he will multiply and the more he will spread abroad⁴² — it should have read ‘the more they multiplied and the more they spread abroad!’ — Resh Lakish said: The Holy Spirit announced to them. ‘The more he will multiply and the more he will spread abroad’.

And they were grieved [wa-yakuzu] because of the children of Israel⁴² — this teaches that they were like thorns [kozim] in their eyes.

And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve

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- (1) Ibid. XII, 11.
 - (2) Gen. XXXVII, 14. Here ‘vale’ is also explained as deep plan.
 - (3) Ibid. XV, 13.
 - (4) II Sam. I.c.
 - (5) Ibid. XIV, 27.
 - (6) II Sam. 30.
 - (7) So how does the principle of measure for measure apply?
 - (8) The reward for a good deed exceeds the actual merit of an action and is not merely a quid pro quo as with a wrong deed.
 - (9) Ex. II, 4.
 - (10) I Sam. III, 10.
 - (11) Prov. VII, 4. Wisdom is an emanation from God.
 - (12) Jer. XXXI, 3.
 - (13) I Sam. II, 3.
 - (14) Deut. X, 12.
 - (15) Amos III, 7.
 - (16) Judg. VI, 24. The Hebrew word ‘it’ is the same as ‘to him’.
 - (17) Ex. I, 8.
 - (18) Ex. 9.
 - (19) Ibid. VII, 29.
 - (20) Ibid. I, 10. The Hebrew is literally with him.
 - (21) Isa. LXVI, 15.
 - (22) Ibid. 16.
 - (23) Ibid. Some edd. quote as the proof text: With his sword drawn in his hand (Num. XXII, 23).
 - (24) Isa. LIV, 9.
 - (25) Ex. XIV, 27. So the Hebrew literally.
 - (26) Ibid. XVIII, II. The verb ‘they dealt proudly’ resembles in form another with the meaning ‘they cooked’ **אָפְּנוּ**.
 - (27) Gen. XXV, 29.
 - (28) To destroy Israel through the decree: Every son that is born ye shall cast in the river, Ex. I, 22.
 - (29) Various opinions are expressed in the Talmud regarding the age in which he lived. According to one view he was born in the year that Jacob settled in Egypt and died at the time of the Exodus, v. B.B. 15a-b.
 - (30) In the Temple where the Sanhedrin met.
 - (31) I Chron. II, 55. The various names are understood in the sense that they were eminent scholars.

(32) Judg. I, 16; v. Sanh. (Sonc. ed.) p. 722.

(33) Ex. I, 10.

(34) I.e., we will be driven out of the land.

(35) Ibid. 11, the text is literally him.

(36) Viz., bricks, referring to the brick-mould which Pharaoh had to wear.

(37) He had to carry the brick-mould as the pattern for the Israelites to work upon.

(38) Led to the destruction of the Egyptians.

(39) When they were spoiled by the Israelites before the Exodus.

(40) [According to this dictum the interpretation 'memaskenoth' is general in its application and has no particular reference to the Egyptians. Some edd. accordingly omit the last sentence.]

(41) They agreed that only one store city was built.

(42) Ex. 12. So the Hebrew literally.

Talmud - Mas. Sotah 11b

with rigour [parek].¹ R. Eleazar said: [It means] with a tender mouth [peh rak];² R. Samuel b. Nahmani said: [It means] with rigorous work [perikah]. And they made their lives bitter with hard service, in mortar and in brick etc. Raba said: At first it was in mortar and in brick; but finally it was in all manner of service in the field. All their service wherein they made them serve with rigour.³ R. Samuel b. Nahmani said in the name of R. Jonathan: They changed men's work for the women and the women's work for the men; and even he who explained [parek] above as meaning 'with tender mouth' admits that here it means 'with rigorous work'.

R. Awira expounded: As the reward for the righteous women who lived in that generation were the Israelites delivered from Egypt. When they went to draw water, the Holy One, blessed be He, arranged that small fishes should enter their pitchers, which they drew up half full of water and half full of fishes. They then set two pots on the fire, one for hot water and the other for the fish, which they carried to their husbands in the field, and washed, anointed, fed, gave them to drink and had intercourse with them among the sheepfolds, as it is said: When ye lie among the sheepfolds etc.⁴ As the reward for 'When ye lie among the sheepfolds', the Israelites merited the spoliation of the Egyptians, as it is said: As the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her pinions with yellow gold.⁵ After the women had conceived they returned to their homes; and when the time of childbirth arrived, they went and were delivered in the field beneath the apple-tree, as it is said: Under the apple-tree I caused thee to come forth [from thy mother's womb] etc.⁶ The Holy One, blessed be He, sent down someone from the high heavens who washed and straightened the limbs [of the babes] in the same manner that a midwife straightens the limbs of a child; as it is said: And as for thy nativity, in the day thou wast born thy navel was not cut, neither wast thou washed in water to cleanse thee.⁷ He also provided for them two cakes, one of oil and one of honey, as it is said: And He made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil etc.⁸ When the Egyptians noticed them, they went to kill them; but a miracle occurred on their behalf so that they were swallowed in the ground, and [the Egyptians] brought oxen and ploughed over them, as it is said: The ploughers ploughed upon my back.⁹ After they had departed, [the Israelite women with their babes] broke through [the earth] and came forth like the herbage of the field, as it is said: I caused thee to multiply as the bud of the field;¹⁰ and when [the babes] had grown up, they came in flocks to their homes, as it is said: And thou didst increase and wax great and didst come with ornaments¹¹ — read not with ornaments [ba'adi 'adayim] but in flocks [be'edre 'adarim]. At the time the Holy One, blessed be He, revealed Himself by the Red Sea, they recognised Him first, as it is said: This is my God and I will praise Him.¹²

And the king of Egypt spake to the Hebrew midwives etc.¹³ Rab and Samuel [differ in their interpretation]; one said they were mother and daughter, and the other said they were daughter-in-law and mother-in-law. According to him who declared they were mother and daughter,

they were Jochebed and Miriam; and according to him who declared they were daughter-in-law and mother-in-law, they were Jochebed and Elisheba.¹⁴ There is a teaching in agreement with him who said they were mother and daughter; for it has been taught: ‘Shiphrah’¹⁵ is Jochebed; and why was her name called Shiphrah? Because she straightened [meshappereth] the limbs of the babe. Another explanation of Shiphrah is that the Israelites were fruitful [sheparu] and multiplied in her days. ‘Pu’ah’ is Miriam; and why was her name called Puah? Because she cried out [po’ah] to the child¹⁶ and brought it forth. Another explanation of Pu’ah is that she used to cry out through the Holy Spirit¹⁷ and say: ‘My mother will bear a son who will be the saviour of Israel’.

And he said: When ye do the office of a midwife to the Hebrew women etc.¹⁸ What means ‘obnayim’?¹⁹ R. Hanan said: He entrusted them with an important sign and told them that when a woman bends to deliver a child, her thighs grow cold like stones [‘abanim’].²⁰ Another explains [the word ‘obnayim’] in accordance with what is written: Then I went down to the potter’s house, and, behold, he wrought his work on the wheels.²¹ As in the case of a potter, there is a thigh on one side, a thigh on the other side and the wooden block in between, so also with a woman there is a thigh on one side, a thigh on the other side and the child in between.

If it be a son, then ye shall kill him.²² R. Hanina said: He entrusted them with an important sign, viz., if it is a son, his face is turned downward and if a daughter, her face is turned upward.²³ But the midwives feared God, and did not as the king of Egypt spoke to them.²⁴ Instead of alehen [‘to them’] we should have had ‘lahen’!²⁵ — R. Jose son of R. Hanina said: It teaches that he solicited them for immoral intercourse,²⁶ but they refused to yield. But saved the men children alive — A Tanna taught: Not only did they not put them to death, but they supplied them with water and food.²⁷ And the midwives said unto Pharaoh, Behold the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women etc.²⁸ What means hayoth?²⁹ If it is to say they were actually midwives,³⁰ do you infer that a midwife does not require another midwife to deliver her child! — But [the meaning is] they said to him, This people are compared to an animal [hayyah] — Judah [is called] a lion’s whelp;³¹ of Dan [it is said] Dan shall be a serpent;³² Naphtali [is called] a hind let loose;³³ Issachar a strong ass;³⁴ Joseph a firstling bullock;³⁵ Benjamin a wolf that ravineth.³⁶ [Of those sons of Jacob where a comparison with an animal] is written in connection with them, it is written: but [in the instances where such a comparison] is not written, there is the text: What was thy mother? A lioness; she couched among lions etc.³⁷

And it came to pass, because the midwives feared God, that He made them houses.³⁸ Rab and Samuel [differ in their interpretation]; one said they are the priestly and Levitical houses, and the other said they are the royal houses. One who says they are the priestly and Levitical houses: Aaron and Moses; and one who says they are the royal houses: for also David descended from Miriam, as it is written: And Azubah died, and Caleb took unto him Ephrath, which bare him Hur,³⁹ and it is written: Now David was the son of that Ephrathite etc.⁴⁰

And Caleb the son of Hezron begat children of Azubah his wife and of Jerioth,’ and these were her sons: Jeshar and Shobab and Ardon.⁴¹ ‘The son of Hezron’? He was the son of Jephunneh!⁴² — [It means] that he was a son who turned [panah] from the counsel of the spies. Still, he was the son of Kenaz, as it is written: And Othniel the son of Kenaz, Caleb’s younger brother, took it!⁴³ — Raba said: He was the stepson of Kenaz.

(1) Ibid. 13.

(2) They induced the Israelites to work by using smooth words to them.

(3) Ibid. 14.

(4) Ps. LXVIII, 14, E.V., 13.

(5) Ps. LXVIII, 14, E.V., 13. The dove is often used by the Rabbis as a symbol of Israel.

(6) Cant. VIII, 5. That is how the verb is interpreted here.

- (7) Ezek. XVI, 4. There was no midwife present to cut the navel-string, nor was ordinary water used.
- (8) Deut. XXXII, 13.
- (9) Ps. CXXIX, 3.
- (10) Ezek. XVI, 7.
- (11) Ibid.
- (12) Ex. XV, 2. The word 'this' implies that He had been previously seen; therefore it must have been by the former babes.
- (13) Ibid. I, 15.
- (14) She was Aaron's wife (Ex. VI, 23).
- (15) Ibid. I, 15.
- (16) Rashi explains: she uttered soothing words which induced the child to come forth. She blew a charm into the mother's ear and brought forth the child (Jast.).
- (17) I.e., the prophetic gift.
- (18) Ibid. 16.
- (19) This word in the verse is translated birthstool.
- (20) By means of this symptom they would be able to detect a mother who tried to conceal a birth.
- (21) Jer. XVIII, 3 . The word for wheels is 'obnayim'.
- (22) Ex. I, 16.
- (23) At the time of birth (Nid. 31a).
- (24) Ibid. 17.
- (25) The latter is the more usual form since no direct speech follows.
- (26) The preposition 'el, which occurs in the text, is employed in this sense.
- (27) The text does not state, 'they did not kill'; therefore 'saved alive' is so explained.
- (28) Ex. I, 19.
- (29) The word in this verse translated lively.
- (30) That is the significance the word has in Rabbinic Hebrew.
- (31) Gen. XLIX, 9.
- (32) Ibid. 17.
- (33) Ibid. 21.
- (34) Ibid. 14.
- (35) Deut. XXXIII, 17.
- (36) Gen. XLIX, 27.
- (37) Ezek. XIX, 2.
- (38) Ex. I, 21.
- (39) I Chron. II, 19.
- (40) I Sam. XVII, 12.
- (41) I Chron. II, 18.
- (42) V. Num. XIII, 6.
- (43) Judg. I, 13.

Talmud - Mas. Sotah 12a

There is also evidence for this, since it is written, [And Caleb the son of Jephunneh] the Kenizzite.¹ Conclude, therefore, that Azubah is identical with Miriam; and why was her name called Azubah? Because all men forsook her [‘azabuhah] at first.² ‘Bogat!’³ But he was married to her! — R. Johanan said: Whoever marries a woman for the name of heaven,⁴ the text ascribes it to him as though he had begotten her. ‘Jerioth’ — [she was so named] because her face was like curtains.⁵ ‘And these were her sons’ — read not baneha [her sons] but boneha [her builders].⁶ ‘Jesher’ [he was so called] because he set himself right [yishsher].⁷ ‘Shobab’ — [he was so called] because he turned his inclination aside [shibbeb].⁸ ‘And Ardon’ — [he was so called] because he disciplined [radah] his inclination. Others say: Because his face was like a rose [wered].

And Ashhur the father of Tekoa had two wives, Helah and Naarah.⁹ Ashhur is identical with Caleb; and why was his name called Ashhur? Because his face was blackened [hushheru] through his fasts.¹⁰ ‘The father’ - he became a father to her.¹¹ ‘Tekoa’ - he fixed [taka] his heart on his Father in heaven.¹² ‘Had two wives’ — [this means] Miriam became like two wives. ‘Helah and Naarah’ — she was not both Helah and Naarah, but at first she was Helah [an invalid] and finally Naarah [a young girl].¹³ And the sons of Helah were Zereth, Zohar and Ethnan.¹⁴ ‘Zereth’ — [Miriam was so called] — because she became the rival [zarah] of her contemporaries [in beauty]. ‘Zohar’ — because her face was [beautiful] like the noon [zoharayim]. ‘Ethnan’ — because whoever saw her took a present [‘ethnan] to his wife.¹⁵

And Pharaoh charged all his people.¹⁶ R. Jose son of R. Hanina said: He imposed the same decree upon his own people.¹⁷ R. Jose son of R. Hanina also said: He made three decrees: first, ‘if it be a son, then ye shall kill him’; then ‘every son that is born ye shall cast into the river’; and finally he imposed the same decree upon his own people.

And there went a man of the house of Levi.¹⁸ Where did he go? R. Judah b. Zebina said that he went in the counsel of his daughter. A Tanna taught: Amram was the greatest man of his generation; when he saw that the wicked Pharaoh had decreed ‘Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river’, he said: In vain do we labour. He arose and divorced his wife.¹⁹ All [the Israelites] thereupon arose and divorced their wives. His daughter said to him, ‘Father, thy decree is more severe than Pharaoh’s; because Pharaoh decreed only against the males whereas thou hast decreed against the males and females. Pharaoh only decreed concerning this world whereas thou hast decreed concerning this world and the World to Come.²⁰ In the case of the wicked Pharaoh there is a doubt whether his decree will be fulfilled or not, whereas in thy case, though thou art righteous, it is certain that thy decree will be fulfilled, as it is said: Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee!²¹ He arose and took his wife back; and they all arose and took their wives back.

And took to wife¹⁸ — it should have read ‘and took back’!²² R. Judah b. Zebina said: — He acted towards her as though it had been the first marriage; he seated her in a palanquin, Aaron and Miriam danced before her, and the Ministering Angels proclaimed, A joyful mother of children.²³

A daughter of Levi.¹⁸ How is this possible! She was one hundred and thirty years old, and he calls her ‘a daughter’! (For R. Hama b. Hanina said: This²⁴ refers to Jochebed whose conception occurred during the journey [to Egypt] and her birth between the walls;²⁵ as it is said: Who was born to Levi in Egypt²⁶ — her birth occurred in Egypt but her conception did not occur there.)²⁷ — Rab Judah said: [She is called ‘a daughter’] because the signs of maidenhood were reborn in her.²⁸

And the woman conceived and bare a son.²⁹ But she had already been pregnant three months!³⁰ — R. Judah b. Zebina said: It compares the bearing of the child to its conception; as the conception was painless so was the bearing painless. Hence [it is learnt] that righteous women were not included in the decree upon Eve.³¹

And when she saw him that he was good.²⁹ It has been taught: R. Meir says: His name was Tob [good]; R. Judah says: His name was Tobiah; R. Nehemiah says: [She foresaw that he would be] worthy of the prophetic gift; others say: He was born circumcised; and the Sages declare, At the time when Moses was born, the whole house was filled with light — it is written here, And when she saw him that he was good, and elsewhere it is written: And God saw the light that it was good.³²

She hid him three months.²⁹ [She was able to do this] because the Egyptians only counted [the period of her pregnancy] from the time that she was restored [to youth], but she was then already pregnant three months.

And when she could not longer hide him³³ — why? She should have gone on hiding him! — But whenever the Egyptians were informed that a child was born, they would take other children there so that it should hear them [crying] and cry with them; as it is written: Take us the foxes, the little foxes etc.³⁴

She took for him an ark of bulrushes³³ — why just bulrushes? R. Eleazar said: Hence [it is learnt] that to the righteous their money is dearer than their body;³⁵ and why so? — That they should not stretch out their hand to robbery.³⁶ R. Samuel b. Nahmani says: [She selected them] because they are a soft material which can withstand both soft and hard materials.³⁷

And daubed it with slime and with pitch³⁸ — A Tanna taught: The slime was inside and the pitch outside so that that righteous child should not smell the bad odour.

And she put the child therein and laid it in the reeds [suf]³⁸ — R. Eleazar said: In the Red [suf] Sea; R. Samuel b. Nahmani said:

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- (1) Josh. XIV, 6, and not the son of Kenaz.
 - (2) She was an invalid so that nobody would marry her.
 - (3) The Hebrew text could be translated: and Caleb begat Azubah.
 - (4) From a pious motive, as in this case where through illness Miriam remained unmarried.
 - (5) She also is identified with Miriam. Through illness her face was pale like the colour of curtains (yeri'oth).
 - (6) Through them she attained the dignity of motherhood.
 - (7) Viz., Caleb escaped the error of the other spies.
 - (8) From following the rest of the spies.
 - (9) I Chron. IV, 5.
 - (10) He mortified himself to resist joining the other spies.
 - (11) To Miriam who, on account of illness, required constant attention.
 - (12) For will-power not to join in the evil report.
 - (13) I.e., she recovered and became young in appearance.
 - (14) I Chron. IV, 7.
 - (15) His passion was aroused by the sight of Miriam.
 - (16) Ex. I, 22.
 - (17) To kill the male children, because the astrologers had warned him that a boy was soon to be born who would overthrow him.
 - (18) Ex. II, 1.
 - (19) Since all the male children to be born would be killed, and the primary object of marriage was the procreation of sons.
 - (20) The drowned babes would live again in the Hereafter; but unborn children are denied that bliss.
 - (21) Job XXII, 28.
 - (22) His wife, according to the story just related.
 - (23) Ps. CXIII, 9.
 - (24) 'The daughter of Levi'.
 - (25) I.e., just as the caravan arrived at Egypt.
 - (26) Num. XXVI, 59. The Torah mentions that the Israelites numbered seventy who came to Egypt, whereas there are only sixty-nine names in the list. Hence this statement about Jochebed.
 - (27) From that time one hundred and thirty years had elapsed.
 - (28) Although so old, she became young in form and appearance.
 - (29) Ex. II, 2.
 - (30) Viz., before she was restored to youth, as will be explained.
 - (31) That she would bear children in pain (Gen. III, 16).
 - (32) Gen. I, 4.

(33) Ex. II, 3.

(34) Cant II, 15.

(35) She selected bulrushes because of their cheapness, although hard wood would have been better for the welfare of the child.

(36) They are frugal in expenditure upon their comforts so as not to be tempted to dishonesty for the gratification of their needs.

(37) Hard wood would be more easily split, whereas bulrushes yield under pressure.

(38) Ex. II, 3.

Talmud - Mas. Sotah 12b

It means reeds, as it is written: The reeds and flags shall wither away.¹

And the daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river.² R. Johanan said in the name of R. Simeon b. Yohai: It teaches that she went down there to cleanse herself of her father's idols;³ and thus it says: When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion etc.⁴ And her maidens walked along etc.⁵ R. Johanan said: The word for 'walk' means nothing else than death; and thus it says: Behold I am going to die.⁶ And she saw the ark among the reeds.² When [the maidens] saw that she wished to rescue Moses, they said to her, 'Mistress, it is the custom of the world that when a human king makes a decree, though everybody else does not obey it, at least his children and the members of his household obey it; but thou dost transgress thy father's decree!' Gabriel came and beat them to the ground.

And sent her handmaid to fetch it² — R. Judah and R. Nehemiah [differ in their interpretation]; one said that the word means 'her hand' and the other said that it means 'her handmaid'. He who said that it means 'her hand' did so because it is written *ammathah*;⁷ he who said that it means 'her handmaid' did so because the text has not *yadah* [her hand]. But according to him who said that it means 'her handmaid', it has just been stated that Gabriel came and beat them to the ground!⁸ — He left her one, because it is not customary for a king's daughter to be unattended. But according to him who said that it means 'her hand', the text should have been *yadah*! — It teaches us that [her arm] became lengthened; for a master has said: You find it so⁹ with the arm of Pharaoh's daughter and similarly with the teeth of the wicked, as it is written: Thou hast broken [*shibbarta*] the teeth of the wicked,¹⁰ and Resh Lakish said: Read not *shibbarta* but *shirbabta* [thou has lengthened].¹¹

She opened it and saw the child¹² — it should have been 'and saw'. R. Jose b. R. Hanina said: She saw the Shechinah with him.¹³

And, behold, the boy wept¹² — he is called a 'child' and then a 'boy'! — A Tanna taught: He was a child but his voice was like that of a grown boy; such is the view of R. Judah. R. Nehemiah said to him, If so, you have made our master Moses into one possessed of a blemish;¹⁴ but it teaches that his mother made for him a canopy [such as is used at the marriage] of boys¹⁵ in the ark, saying: 'Perhaps I may not be worthy [to be present at] his marriage-canopy'.

And she had compassion on him and said: Of the Hebrews' children is this.¹² How did she know it? — R. Jose b. R. Hanina said: Because she saw that he was circumcised. 'Is this' — R. Johanan said: It teaches that she unwittingly prophesied that 'this' one will fall [into the river] but no other will fall.¹⁶ That is what R. Eleazar said: What means the text: And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits and unto the wizards, that chirp and that mutter?¹⁷ They foresee and know not what they foresee; they mutter and know not what they mutter. They saw that Israel's saviour would be punished through water; so they arose and decreed, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river.¹⁸ After they had thrown Moses [into the water], they said: 'We do not see that sign any longer';¹⁹ they thereupon rescinded their decree. But they knew not that he was to be

punished through the water of Meribah.²⁰ That is what R. Hama b. Hanina said: What means the text: These are the waters of Meribah, because they strove?²¹ These are [the waters] about which Pharaoh's magicians saw and erred; and concerning this Moses said: Six hundred thousand footmen etc.²² Moses said to Israel, 'On my account were all of you delivered [from drowning by the edict of Pharaoh]'

R. Hanina b. Papa said: That day²³ was the twenty-first of Nisan,²⁴ and the Ministering Angels spoke before the Holy One, blessed be He, 'Lord of the Universe! Shall he who will utter a song to Thee by the Red Sea on this day be punished on this day?' R. Aha b. Hanina said: That day was the sixth of Sivan,²⁵ and the Ministering Angels spoke before the Holy One, blessed be He, 'Lord of the Universe! Shall he who will receive the Torah on Mount Sinai on this day be punished on this day?' It is quite right according to him who said that it was the sixth of Sivan, for then it occurred three months [after his birth]; for a master has said: Moses died on the seventh of Adar²⁶ and was born on the seventh of Adar, and from the seventh of Adar to the sixth of Sivan is three months. But according to him who said that it was the twenty-first of Nisan, how could it have been?²⁷ — That year was a leap year;²⁸ the greater part of the first [Adar] and the greater part of the last [Nisan] and a full month in between.²⁹

Then said his sister to Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and call thee a nurse of the Hebrew women?³⁰ Why just 'of the Hebrew women'? — It teaches that they handed Moses about to all the Egyptian women but he would not suck. He³¹ said: Shall a mouth which will speak with the Shechinah suck what is unclean! That is what is written: Whom will He teach knowledge etc.³² — To whom will He teach knowledge and to whom will He make the message understandable? To them that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breasts.

And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Go etc.³³ R. Eleazar said: It teaches that she went quickly like a young woman.³⁴ R. Samuel b. Nahmani said: [She is called] the maid ['almah] because she made the words secret.³⁵

And Pharaoh's daughter said unto her, Take this child away.³⁶ R. Hama b. Hanina said: She prophesied without knowing what she prophesied — Heliki ['take away'] — behold what is thine [ha sheliki].

And I will give thee thy wages.³⁶ R. Hama b. Hanina said: Not enough that the righteous have their loss restored to them but they also receive their reward in addition.

And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took etc.³⁷ The 'sister of Aaron' and not the sister of Moses! — R. Amram said in the name of Rab, and according to others it was R. Nahman who said in the name of Rab: It teaches that she prophesied while she yet was the sister of Aaron only³⁸

(1) Isa. XIX, 6.

(2) Ex. II, 5.

(3) Since immersion is part of the ceremony of conversion, it is assumed that she became a proselyte.

(4) Isa. IV, 4.

(5) Ex. II, 5.

(6) Gen. XXV, 32.

(7) The text could be read either as amatah 'her maid' or 'ammatah 'her arm'. The Targum of Onkelos renders by 'her arm'.

(8) Therefore they were all dead; so how could the princess send her handmaid?

(9) [The lengthening of a limb, v. Meg. 15b.]

(10) Ps. III, 8.

(11) [The reference is to Og, King of Bashan, v. Ber. 54b.]

- (12) Ex. II, 6. The text is literally: she saw him the child.
- (13) The suffix hu (him) is explained as God and the particle eth as 'with' and not the sign of the accusative: she saw Him with the child'.
- (14) His voice would be abnormal, and this disqualified a Levite from the Temple-ministry.
- (15) [Or. 'canopy of youth', i.e., a bridal canopy.]
- (16) Because on that day the decree to drown the males was rescinded.
- (17) Isa. VIII, 19.
- (18) Ex. I, 22.
- (19) Indicating that the peril to Pharaoh was averted by this action.
- (20) [And that this was the meaning of the sign they had seen.]
- (21) Num. XX. 13.
- (22) Ibid. XI, 21. Footmen is in Hebrew ragli which can also mean 'for my sake'.
- (23) [On which Moses was cast into the Sea.]
- (24) The first month in the Jewish year. It was on that day later on that the Egyptians were drowned.
- (25) The third month, the date of the Revelation.
- (26) The twelfth month.
- (27) The difference between the two dates is only one month and fourteen days.
- (28) When a thirteenth month is inserted between Adar and Nisan.
- (29) This gives in round figures the three months required.
- (30) Ex. II, 7.
- (31) Some authorities explain 'He' as referring to God.
- (32) Isa. XXVIII, 9.
- (33) Ex. II, 8.
- (34) The word in the verse 'almah 'maid' is connected with its analogous root in Aramaic which means 'to be vigorous'.
- (35) 'Alam means 'to hide'; she did not disclose her relationship to the child.
- (36) Ex. II, 9.
- (37) Ibid. XV, 20.
- (38) Before Moses' birth.

Talmud - Mas. Sotah 13a

and said: 'My mother will bear a son who will be the saviour of Israel'. When Moses was born, the whole house was filled with light; and her father arose and kissed her upon her head, saying 'My daughter, thy prophecy has been fulfilled'; but when they cast him into the river, her father arose and smacked her upon her head, saying: 'Where, now, is thy prophecy!' That is what is written: And his sister stood afar off to know what would be done to him¹ — what would be the fate of her prophecy.

JOSEPH EARNED MERIT etc. Why the difference that first it is written: And Joseph went up to bury his father, and with him went up all the servants of Pharaoh etc.,² followed by, And all the house of Joseph, and his brethren, and his father's house,³ and in the sequel it is written: And Joseph returned into Egypt, he and his brethren,⁴ followed by, And all that went up with him to bury his father? — R. Johanan said: At first, before [the servants of Pharaoh] beheld the glory of the Israelites, they did not treat them with respect;⁵ but in the sequel, when they beheld their glory, they treated them with respect. For it is written: And they came to the threshing-floor of Atad;⁶ but is there a threshing-floor for brambles? — R. Abbahu said: It teaches that they surrounded Jacob's coffin with crowns like a threshing-floor which is surrounded with a hedge of brambles, because the sons of Esau, of Ishmael and of Keturah also came. A Tanna taught: They all came to wage war [against the Israelites]; but when they saw Joseph's crown hanging upon Jacob's coffin, they all took their crowns and hung them upon his coffin. A Tanna taught: Sixty-three crowns were hung upon Jacob's coffin.

And there they lamented with a very great and sore lamentation.⁷ It has been taught: Even the

horses and asses [joined in the lamentation]. When [the cortege] arrived at the Cave of Machpelah, Esau came and wished to prevent [the interment there], saying to them, Mamre, Kiriath-arba, the same is Hebron⁸ — now R. Isaac has said: Kiriath-arba [is so called] because four couples [were buried there], viz. Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, and Jacob and Leah — [Jacob] had buried Leah in his portion and what remains belongs to me'. They replied to him, 'Thou didst sell it'. He said to them, 'Granted that I sold my birth-right, but did I sell my plain heir's right!' They replied: 'Yes, for it is written: In my grave which I [Jacob] have digged for me',⁹ and R. Johanan has said in the name of R. Simeon b. Jehozadak: The word kirah [dig] means nothing else than 'sale' [mekirah], and thus in the coast-towns they use kirah as a term for 'sale'. — He said to them, 'Produce a document [of sale] for me'. They replied to him, 'The document is in the land of Egypt. Who will go for it? Let Naphtali go, because he is swift as a hind'; for it is written: Naphtali is a hind let loose, he giveth goodly words¹⁰ — R. Abbahu said: Read not 'goodly words' [imre shefer] but imre sefer [words of a document]. Among those present was Hushim, a son of Dan, who was hard of hearing; so he asked them, 'What is happening?' They said to him, '[Esau] is preventing [the burial] until Naphtali returns from the land of Egypt'. He retorted: 'Is my grandfather to lie there in contempt until Naphtali returns from the land of Egypt!' He took a club and struck [Esau] on the head so that his eyes fell out and rolled to the feet of Jacob. Jacob opened his eyes and laughed; and that is what is written: The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance; he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked.¹¹ At that time was the prophecy of Rebekah fulfilled, as it is written: Why should I be bereaved of you both in one day?¹² Although the death of the two of them did not occur on the one day, still their burial took place on the same day. — But if Joseph had not occupied himself with [Jacob's burial], would not his brethren have occupied themselves with it? Behold it is written: For his sons carried him into the land of Canaan!¹³ — They said [among themselves], 'Leave him [to conduct the interment]; for the honour [of our father] will be greater [when it is conducted] by kings than by commoners'.

WHOM HAVE WE GREATER THAN JOSEPH etc.? Our Rabbis have taught: Come and see how beloved were the commandments by Moses our teacher; for whereas all the Israelites occupied themselves with the spoil, he occupied himself with the commandments, as it is said: The wise in heart will receive commandments etc.¹⁴ But whence did Moses know the place where Joseph was buried? — It is related that Serah, daughter of Asher, was a survivor of that generation. Moses went to her and asked: 'Dost thou know where Joseph was buried?' She answered him, 'The Egyptians made a metal coffin for him which they fixed in the river Nile so that its waters should be blessed'. Moses went and stood on the bank of the Nile and exclaimed: 'Joseph, Joseph! the time has arrived which the Holy One, blessed be He, swore, "I will deliver you", and the oath which thou didst impose upon the Israelites¹⁵ has reached [the time of fulfilment]; if thou wilt shew thyself, well and good; otherwise, behold, we are free of thine oath'. Immediately Joseph's coffin floated [on the surface of the water]. Be not astonished that iron should float; for, behold, it is written: As one was felling a beam, the axe-head fell into the water etc. Alas, my master, for it was borrowed. And the man of God said: Where fell it? And he shewed him the place. And he cut down a stick and cast it in thither, and made the iron to swim.¹⁶ Now cannot the matter be argued by a fortiori reasoning — if iron floated on account of Elisha who was the disciple of Elijah who was the disciple of Moses, how much more so on account of Moses our teacher! R. Nathan says: He was buried in the sepulchre of the kings; and Moses went and stood by the sepulchre of the kings and exclaimed. 'Joseph! the time has arrived which the Holy One, blessed be He, swore "I will deliver you", and the oath which thou didst impose upon the Israelites has reached [the time of fulfilment]; if thou wilt shew thyself, well and good; otherwise, behold, we are free of thine oath'. At that moment, Joseph's coffin shook, and Moses took it and carried it with him. All those years that the Israelites were in the wilderness, those two chests, one of the dead and the other of the Shechinah,¹⁷ proceeded side by side, and passersby used to ask: 'What is the nature of those two chests?' They received the reply: 'One is of the dead and the other of the Shechinah'. 'But is it, then, the way of the dead to proceed with the Shechinah?' They were told,

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- (1) Ibid. II, 4.
(2) Gen. L, 7.
(3) Gen. L, 8.
(4) Ibid. 14. The order of the procession is now reversed.
(5) And proceeded in front of them.
(6) Ibid. 10. As a common noun 'atad' means 'brambles'.
(7) Gen. L, 10.
(8) Ibid. XXXV, 27. Kiriath — 'arba is literally 'the burial of four'. He claimed that only four couples were to be buried there, and demanded the one remaining sepulchre for himself. The explanatory remark of R. Isaac is interpolated into Esau's words.
(9) Ibid. L, 5.
(10) Gen. XLIX, 21.
(11) Ps. LVIII, 11.
(12) Gen. XXVII, 45.
(13) Ibid. L, 13. It is not stated that Joseph did this.
(14) Prov. X, 8.
(15) To carry Joseph's bones out of Egypt (Exod. XIII, 19).
(16) II Kings VI, 5f.
(17) Aron means in Hebrew both an ark and a coffin. It here refers to the Ark of the Covenant.

Talmud - Mas. Sotah 13b

'This one [Joseph] fulfilled all that was written in the other'.¹ But if Moses had not occupied himself with him, would not the Israelites have occupied themselves with him? Behold, it is written: And the bones of Joseph which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt buried they in Shechem!² Furthermore, if the Israelites had not occupied themselves with him, would not his own sons have done so? And, behold, it is written: And they became the inheritance of the children of Joseph!³ — They⁴ said [to one another], 'Leave him; his honour will be greater [when the burial is performed] by many rather than by few'; and they also said: 'Leave him; his honour will be greater [when the burial is performed] by the great rather than by the small'.

Buried they in Shechem.³ Why just in Shechem? — R. Hama son of R. Hanina said: From Shechem they stole him,⁵ and to Shechem we will restore what is lost. The following verses are contradictory: it is written: And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him,⁶ and it is written: And the bones of Joseph which the children of Israel brought up⁷ etc.! — R. Hama son of R. Hanina said: Whoever performs a task without finishing it and another comes and completes it, Scripture ascribes it to the one who completed it as though he had performed it. R. Eleazar said: He⁸ is likewise deposed from his greatness; for it is written: And it came to pass at that time that Judah went down.⁹ R. Samuel b. Nahmani said: He also buries his wife and children; for it is written: Shua's daughter, the wife of Judah, died etc.,¹⁰ and it is written: But Er and Onan died.¹¹

Rab Judah said in the name of Rab: Why was Joseph called 'bones' during his lifetime?¹² Because he did not interfere to safeguard his father's honour when [his brothers] said to him, Thy servant our father¹³ and he made no reply to them. Rab Judah also said in the name of Rab, and others declare that it was R. Hama son of R. Hanina: Why did Joseph die before his brothers? Because he gave himself superior airs.

And Joseph was brought down to Egypt.¹⁴ R. Eleazar said: Read not 'was brought down' but 'brought down', because he brought Pharaoh's astrologers down from their eminence.¹⁵ And Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh's bought him, Rab said: He bought him for himself;¹⁶ but Gabriel came and castrated him,¹⁷ and then Gabriel came and mutilated him [pera'], for originally his name

is written Potiphar but afterwards Potiphera.¹⁸

WHOM HAVE WE GREATER THAN MOSES etc. And the Lord said unto me, Let it suffice thee.¹⁹ R. Levi said: With the word 'suffice' [Moses] made an announcement and with the word 'suffice' an announcement was made to him. With the word 'suffice' he made an announcement: 'Suffice you';²⁰ and with the word 'suffice' an announcement was made to him: 'Let it suffice thee'. Another explanation of 'Let it suffice [rab] thee' is, Thou hast a master [rab], viz., Joshua.²¹ Another explanation of 'Let it suffice thee' is, That people should not say: How severe the Master is and how persistent the pupil is.²² And why so? In the School of R. Ishmael it was taught: According to the camel is the burden.²³

And he said unto them, I am an hundred and twenty years old this day.²⁴ Why does the text state 'this day?' [The meaning is], This day are my days and years completed.²⁵ Its purpose is to teach you that the Holy One, blessed be He, completes the years of the righteous from day to day, and from month to month; for it is written: The number of thy days I will fulfil.²⁶ I can no more go out and come in²⁴ — what means 'go out and come in'? If it is to be understood literally, behold it is written: And Moses was an hundred and twenty years old when he died; his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated;²⁷ it is also written: And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto mount Nebo;²⁸ and it has been taught: Twelve steps were there, but Moses mounted them in one stride! — R. Samuel b. Nahmani said in the name of R. Jonathan: [It means] to 'go out and come in' with words of Torah, thus indicating that the gates of wisdom were closed against him. And Moses and Joshua went, and presented themselves in the tent of meeting.²⁹ A Tanna taught: That was a Sabbath when two teachers [gave discourses] and the authority was taken from one to be transferred to the other. It has further been taught: R. Judah said: Were it not for a Scriptural text, it would be impossible to utter the following. Where did Moses die? In the portion of Reuben, for it is written: And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto mount Nebo, and Nebo was located in the portion of Reuben, for it is written: And the children of Reuben built . . . and Nebo etc.³⁰ — It was called Nebo because three prophets [nebi'im] died there, viz. Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. — And where was Moses buried? In the portion of Gad, for it is written: And he provided the first part for himself etc.³¹ Now what was the distance between the portion of Reuben and that of Gad? Four mil.³² Who carried him those four mil? It teaches that Moses was laid upon the wings of the Shechinah, and the Ministering Angels kept proclaiming, He executed the justice of the Lord, and His judgments with Israel,³³ and the Holy One, blessed be He, declared: Who will rise up for Me against the evil-doers? Who will stand up for Me against the workers of iniquity?³⁴

Samuel³⁵ said [that God declared], Who is as the wise man? and who knoweth the interpretation of a thing?³⁶ R. Johanan said [that God declared], Where shall wisdom be found?³⁷ R. Nahman said [that God announced], So Moses died there etc.³⁸ Semalyon³⁹ said: So Moses died there, the great Sage of Israel.⁴⁰

It has been taught: R. Eliezer the Elder said: Over an area of twelve mil square, corresponding to that of the camp of Israel, a Bath Kol made the proclamation, 'So Moses died there', the great Sage of Israel. Others declare that Moses never died; it is written here, 'So Moses died there', and elsewhere it is written: And he was there with the Lord.⁴¹ As in the latter passage it means standing and ministering, so also in the former it means standing and ministering.

And He buried him in the valley in the land of Moab over against Beth-peor.⁴² R. Berechyah said: Although [Scripture provides] a clue within a clue, nevertheless no man knoweth of his sepulchre.⁴² The wicked Government once sent to

(1) The Ark contained the tables of the Decalogue.

(2) Josh. XXIV,32.

- (3) Josh. XXIV, 32.
- (4) Joseph's sons.
- (5) His brothers. Cf. Gen. XXXVII, 12.
- (6) Ex. XIII, 19.
- (7) Josh. XXIV, 32.
- (8) Viz., he who does not finish his undertaking.
- (9) Gen. XXXVIII, 1, i.e., descended from his greatness, because he began to rescue Joseph but did not complete it.
- (10) Ibid. 12.
- (11) Ibid. XLVI, 12. They were Judah's sons.
- (12) Cf. L, 25.
- (13) Ibid. XLIV, 31.
- (14) Ibid. XXXIX, 1.
- (15) He interpreted the dreams which baffled them.
- (16) For an immoral purpose, being inflamed by Joseph's beauty.
- (17) The word Hebrew for 'officer' also means eunuch.
- (18) . Cf. Gen. XLI, 45.
- (19) Deut. III, 26.
- (20) Num. XVI, 3.
- (21) The meaning is that his leadership was coming to an end and Joshua was about to succeed him.
- (22) Do not petition Me more, lest the people make reflections on My nature.
- (23) God is stricter with the righteous because their faith will stand the test.
- (24) Deut. XXXI, 2.
- (25) It was his birthday.
- (26) Ex. XXIII, 26.
- (27) Deut. XXXIV, 7.
- (28) Ibid. 1.
- (29) Deut. XXXI, 14.
- (30) Num. XXXII. 37f.
- (31) Deut. XXXIII, 21. It continues, For there was the lawgiver's portion reserved.
- (32) A mil equalled 2,000 cubits, or 3,000 feet.
- (33) Ibid.
- (34) Ps. XCIV, 16. I.e., now that Moses is dead.
- (35) The Rabbi of that name.
- (36) Eccl. VIII, 1.
- (37) Job XXVIII, 12.
- (38) Deut. XXXIV, 5.
- (39) Rashi explains it as the name of a wise man. Others take it as the designation of an angel who made the proclamation, v. Aruch.
- (40) [**ספרא רבא** . Lit., 'the Great Scribe'. Moses is so designated because he wrote the Torah (Maharsha). Krauss, S., (Hagoren, VII, p. 32ff) attempts to connect this appellation with the mythological idea of a heavenly Scribe by the side of the Deity determining the fate of nations and individuals].
- (41) Ex. XXXIV, 28. The word there is common to both verses.
- (42) Deut. XXXIV, 6.

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the governor¹ of Beth-peor [the message], 'Shew us where Moses is buried'. When they stood above, it appeared to them to be below; when they were below, it appeared to them to be above. They divided themselves into two parties; to them who were standing above it appeared below, and to those who were below it appeared above. This is in fulfilment of what is said: 'No man knoweth of his sepulchre'. R. Hama son of R. Hanina said: Even Moses our teacher does not know where he is buried; it is written here, 'No man knoweth of his sepulchre', and it is written elsewhere, And this is