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## Babylonian Talmud: Tractate Gittin

### Folio 57a


What is your punishment [in the other world]? He replied: What I decreed for myself. Every day my ashes are collected and sentence is passed on me and I am burnt and my ashes are scattered over the seven seas. He then went and raised Balaam by incantations. He asked him: Who is in repute in the other world? He replied: Israel. What then, he said, about joining them? He replied: *Thou shalt not seek their peace nor their prosperity all thy days for ever.*<sup>1</sup> He then asked: What is your punishment? He replied: With boiling hot semen.<sup>2</sup> He then went and raised by incantations the sinners of Israel.<sup>3</sup> He asked them: Who is in repute in the other world? They replied: Israel. What about joining them? They replied: Seek their welfare, seek not their harm. Whoever touches them touches the apple of his eye. He said: What is your punishment? They replied: With boiling hot excrement, since a Master has said: Whoever mocks at the words of the Sages is punished with boiling hot excrement. Observe the difference between the sinners of Israel and the prophets of the other nations who worship idols. It has been taught: Note from this incident how serious a thing it is to put a man to shame, for God espoused the cause of Bar Kamza and destroyed His House and burnt His Temple.


'Through a cock and a hen Tur Malka was destroyed'. How? — It was the custom that when a bride and bridegroom were being escorted a cock and a hen were carried before them, as if to say, Be fruitful and multiply like fowls. One day a band of Roman soldiers passed by and took the animals from them, so the Jews fell on them and beat them. So they went and reported to the Emperor that the Jews were rebelling, and he marched against them. There came against them one Bar Daroma<sup>4</sup> who was able to jump a mile, and slaughtered them. The Emperor took his crown and placed it on the ground, saying, Sovereign of all the world, may it please thee not to deliver me and my kingdom into the hands of one man. Bar Daroma was tripped up by his own utterance, as he said, Hast not thou, O God, cast us off and thou goest not forth, O God, with our hosts.<sup>5</sup> But David also said thus? — David wondered if it could be so. He went into a privy and a snake came, and he dropped his gut [from fright] and died. The Emperor said: Since a miracle has been wrought for me, I will let them off this time. So he left them alone and went away. They began to dance about and eat and drink and they lit so many lamps that the impress of a seal could be discerned by their light a mile away from the place. Said the Emperor: Are the Jews making merry over me? And he again invaded them. R. Assi said; Three hundred thousand men with drawn swords went in to Tur Malka, and slaughtered for three days and three nights, while on the other side dancing and feasting was going on, and one did not know about the other.


The Lord hath swallowed up all the habitations of Jacob and hath not pitied.<sup>6</sup> When Rabin came he said in the name of R. Johanan; These are the sixty thousand myriads of cities which King Jannai had in the King's Mountain.<sup>7</sup> For R. Judah said in the name of R. Assi: King Jannai had sixty myriads of cities in the King's Mountain, and in each of them was a population as large as that of the Exodus, save in three of them which had double as many. These were Kefar Bish,<sup>8</sup> Kefar Shihlayim,<sup>9</sup> and Kefar Dikraya.<sup>10</sup> [The first was called] Kefar Bish [evil village] because they never gave hospitality to visitors. The second was called Kefar Shihlayim because they made their living from shihlayim [watercress]. Kefar Dikraya [village of males] according to R. Johanan, was so called because women used to bear males first and finally a girl and then no more. 'Ulla said: I have seen that place, and it would not hold even sixty myriads of reeds. A certain Min said to R. Hanina: You tell a lot of

lies.<sup>11</sup> He replied: Palestine is called *land of the deer*.<sup>12</sup> Just as the skin of the hind cannot hold its flesh,<sup>13</sup> so the Land of Israel when it is inhabited can find room but when it is not inhabited it contracts.

Once when R. Manyumi b. Helkiah and R. Helkiah b. Tobiah and R. Huna b. Hiyya were sitting together they said: If anyone knows anything about Kefar Sekania of Egypt<sup>14</sup> let him say. One of them thereupon said; Once a betrothed couple [from there] were carried off by heathens who married them to one another. The woman said: I beg of you not to touch me, as I have no *Kethubah*<sup>15</sup> from you. So he did not touch her till his dying day. When he died, she said Mourn for this man who has kept his passions in check more than Joseph, because Joseph was exposed to temptation only a short time, but this man every day. Joseph was not in one bed with the woman but this man was; in Joseph's case she was not his wife, but here she was. The next then began and said: On one occasion forty bushels [of coin] were selling for a *denar*, and the number went down one, and they investigated and found that a man and his son had had intercourse with a betrothed maiden on the Day of Atonement, so they brought them to the *Beth din* and they stoned them and the original price was restored. The third then began and said: There was a man who wanted to divorce his wife, but hesitated because she had a big marriage settlement. He

  
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accordingly invited his friends<sup>16</sup> and gave them a good feast and made them drunk and put them all in one bed. He then brought the white of an egg and scattered it among them and brought witnesses<sup>17</sup> and appealed to the *Beth din*. There was a certain elder there of the disciples of Shammai the Elder, named Baba b. Buta, who said: This is what I have been taught by Shammai the Elder, that the white of an egg contracts when brought near the fire, but semen becomes faint from the fire. They tested it and found that it was so, and they brought the man to the *Beth din* and flogged him and made him pay her *Kethubah*. Said Abaye to R. Joseph: Since they were so virtuous, why were they punished? — He replied: Because they did not mourn for Jerusalem, as it is written; Rejoice ye with Jerusalem and be glad for her, all ye that love her, rejoice for joy with her all ye that mourn over her.<sup>18</sup>

'Through the shaft of a litter Bethar<sup>19</sup> was destroyed.' It was the custom when a boy was born to plant a cedar tree and when a girl was born to plant a pine tree, and when they married, the tree was cut down and a canopy made of the branches. One day the daughter of the Emperor was passing when the shaft of her litter broke, so they lopped some branches off a cedar tree and brought it to her. The Jews thereupon fell upon them and beat them. They reported to the Emperor that the Jews were rebelling, and he marched against them.

He hath cut off in fierce anger all the horn of Israel.<sup>20</sup> R. Zera said in the name of R. Abbahu who quoted R. Johanan: These are the eighty [thousand]<sup>21</sup> battle trumpets which assembled in the city of Bethar when it was taken and men, women and children were slain in it until their blood ran into the great sea. Do you think this was near? It was a whole *mil*<sup>22</sup> away. It has been taught: R. Eleazar the Great said: There are two streams in the valley of Yadaim,<sup>23</sup> one running in one direction and one in another, and the Sages estimated that [at that time] they ran with two parts water to one of blood. In a Baraitha it has been taught: For seven years the Gentiles fertilised<sup>24</sup> their vineyards with the blood of Israel without using manure.

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Original footnotes renumbered. See [Structure of the Talmud Files](#)

1. Deut. XXIII, 7.
2. Because he enticed Israel to go astray after the daughters of Moab. V. Sanh. 106a.
3. [MS.M. Jesus].
4. Lit., 'Son of the South'.
5. Ps. LX, 12.
6. Lam. II, 2.
7. V. *supra*, p. 251, n. 4.
8. [Identified with Kafarabis in Upper Idumea mentioned in Josephus Wars, IV, 9, 9. V. Buchler *op. cit.* p. 191].
9. [Identified with Sachlin near Ascalon. Klein, D. ZDPV. 1910, 35.]
10. [Dikrin, N. of Beth Gubrin (Eleutheropolis); v. EJ. 9, 1132].
11. Referring to the exaggerated statements about the King's Mountain.
12. E.V. 'glorious', Jer. III, 19; a play on the word [H], which means either 'glorious' or 'deer'.
13. Because after the hind is killed the skin shrinks.
14. [Klein, S. Beitrage, p. 20, n. 1. suggests the reading [H] Nazarenes instead of [H] (Egypt). It is thus the Kefar Sekania (Suchnin) in Galilee (v. A.Z., Sonc. ed. p. 85. n. 1) a place with Nazarene associations. It was probably to contrast theerstwhile loyalty of the place to the then prevailing defection that the incidents that follow were related].
15. According to Rabbinic law it is forbidden or a man to live with his wife unless he made out for her a *kethubah*.
16. 'Shoshbin' 'best men', 'Groomsmen'; v. B.B. (Sonc. ed.) p. 618, n. 10.
17. To prove that they had abused his wife.
18. Isa. LXVI, 10.
19. In Southern Palestine, the centre of the revolt of Bar Cochba.
20. Lam. II, 3.
21. This word is bracketed in the text.
22. [J., reads 'four mils'. The site of Bethar is still uncertain, v. JE. s.v.].
23. [Rappaport, 'Erech Millin refers this to the Roman devastation of the Jewish quarter in Alexandria in the days of Alexander Tiberius. The Valley of Yadayim ('Hands') is thus the Delta of the Nile. Graetz, Geschichte IV, p. 425 places this in the Bar Cochba war and identifies the Valley with Beth Rimmon Valley.]
24. Lit., 'gathered the vintage from.'

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## Gittin 57b

R. Hiya b. Abin said in the name of R. Joshua b. Korhah: An old man from the inhabitants of Jerusalem told me that in this valley Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard killed two hundred and eleven myriads,<sup>1</sup> and in Jerusalem he killed ninety-four myriads on one stone, until their blood went and joined that of Zechariah,<sup>2</sup> to fulfil the words, Blood toucheth blood.<sup>3</sup> He noticed the blood of Zechariah bubbling up warm, and asked what it was. They said: It is the blood of the sacrifices which has been poured there. He had some blood brought, but it was different from the other. He then said to them: If you tell me [the truth], well and good, but if not, I will tear your flesh with combs of iron. They said: What can we say to you? There was a prophet among us who used to reprove us for our irreligion, and we rose up against him and killed him, and for many years his blood has not rested. He said to them: I will appease him. He brought the great Sanhedrin<sup>4</sup> and the small Sanhedrin<sup>5</sup> and killed them over him, but the blood did not cease. He then slaughtered young men and women, but the blood did not cease. He brought school-children and slaughtered them over it, but the blood did not cease. So he said; Zechariah, Zechariah. I have slain the best of them; do you want me to destroy them all? When he said this to him, it stopped. Straightway Nebuzaradan felt remorse. He said to himself: If such is the penalty for slaying one soul, what will happen to me who



have slain such multitudes? So he fled away, and sent a deed to his house disposing of his effects and became a convert. A Tanna taught: Naaman was a resident alien;<sup>6</sup> Nebuzaradan was a righteous proselyte;<sup>7</sup> descendants of Haman learnt the Torah in Benai Berak; descendants of Sisera taught children in Jerusalem; descendants of Sennacherib gave public expositions of the Torah. Who were these? Shemaya and Abtalion.<sup>8</sup> [Nebuzaradan fulfilled] what is written, I have set her blood upon the bare rock that it should not be covered.<sup>9</sup>

The voice is the voice of Jacob and the hands are the hands of Esau:<sup>10</sup> 'the voice' here refers to [the cry caused by] the Emperor Hadrian<sup>11</sup> who killed in Alexandria of Egypt sixty myriads on sixty myriads, twice as many as went forth from Egypt. 'The voice of Jacob': this is the cry caused by the Emperor Vespasian<sup>12</sup> who killed in the city of Bethar four hundred thousand myriads, or as some say, four thousand myriads. 'The hands are the hands of Esau': this is the Government of Rome which has destroyed our House and burnt our Temple and driven us out of our land. Another explanation is [as follows]: 'The voice is the voice of Jacob': no prayer is effective unless the seed of Jacob has a part in it. 'The hands are the hands of Esau': no war is successful unless the seed of Esau has a share in it. This is what R. Eleazar said:<sup>13</sup> Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue;<sup>14</sup> this means, thou shalt be protected from the heated contests<sup>15</sup> of the tongue.

Rab Judah said in the name of Rab: What is meant by the verse, By the rivers of Babylon there we sat down, yea, we wept when we remembered Zion?<sup>16</sup> This indicates that the Holy One, blessed be He, showed David the destruction both of the first Temple and of the second Temple. Of the first Temple, as it is written, 'By the rivers of Babylon there we sat, yea we wept'; of the second Temple, as it is written, Remember, O Lord, against the children of Edom<sup>17</sup> the day of Jerusalem, who said, rase it, rase it, even unto the foundation thereof.<sup>18</sup>

Rab Judah said in the name of Samuel, or it may be R. Ammi, or as some say it was taught in a Baraitha; On one occasion four hundred boys and girls were carried off for immoral purposes. They divined what they were wanted for and said to themselves, If we drown in the sea we shall attain the life of the future world. The eldest among them expounded the verse, The Lord said, I will bring again from Bashan, I will bring again from the depths of the sea.<sup>19</sup> 'I will bring again from Bashan,' from between the lions' teeth.<sup>20</sup> 'I will bring again from the depths of the sea,' those who drown in the sea. When the girls heard this they all leaped into the sea. The boys then drew the moral for themselves, saying, If these for whom this is natural act so, shall not we, for whom it is unnatural? They also leaped into the sea. Of them the text says, Yea, for thy sake we are killed all the day long, we are counted as sheep for the slaughter.<sup>21</sup> Rab Judah, however, said that this refers to the woman and her seven sons.<sup>22</sup> They brought the first before the Emperor and said to him, Serve the idol. He said to them: It is written in the Law, I am the Lord thy God.<sup>23</sup> So they led him away and killed him. They then brought the second before the Emperor and said to him, Serve the idol. He replied: It is written in the Torah, Thou shalt have no other gods before me.<sup>24</sup> So they led him away and killed him. They then brought the next and said to him, Serve the idol. He replied: It is written in the Torah, He that sacrifices unto the gods, save unto the Lord only, shall be utterly destroyed.<sup>25</sup> So they led him away and killed him. They then brought the next before the Emperor saying, Serve the idol. He replied: It is written in the Torah, Thou shalt not bow down to any other god.<sup>26</sup> So they led him away and killed him. They then brought another and said to him, Serve the idol. He replied: It is written in the Torah, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.<sup>27</sup> So they led him away and killed him. They then brought the next and said to him, Serve the idol. He replied: It is written in the Torah, Know therefore this day and lay it to thine heart that the Lord He is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is none else.<sup>28</sup> So they led him away and killed him. They brought the next and said to him, Serve the idol. He replied: It is written in the Torah, Thou hast avouched the Lord this day ... and the Lord hath avouched thee this day;<sup>29</sup> we have long ago sworn to the Holy One, blessed be He, that we will not exchange Him for any other god, and He also has sworn to us that He will not change us for any other people. The Emperor said: I will throw down my seal before you and you can stoop down and pick it up,<sup>30</sup> so that they will say of you that you have conformed to the desire<sup>31</sup> of the king. He replied; Fie on thee, Caesar, fie on thee, Caesar; if thine own honour is so important, how much more the honour of the Holy One, blessed be He! They were leading him away to kill him when his mother said: Give him to me that I may kiss him a little. She said to him: My son, go and say to your father Abraham, Thou didst bind one [son to the] altar, but I have bound seven altars. Then she also went up on to a roof and threw herself down and was killed. A voice thereupon came forth from heaven saying, A joyful mother of children.<sup>32</sup>

R. Joshua b. Levi said: [The verse, 'Yea, for thy sake we are killed all the day long'] can be applied to circumcision, which has been appointed for the eighth [day]. R. Simeon b. Lakish said: It can be applied to the students of the Torah who demonstrate the rules of shechitah on themselves; for Raba said: A man can practise anything on himself except shechitah,<sup>33</sup> and something else. R. Nahman b. Isaac said that it can be applied to the students who kill themselves for the words of the Torah, in accordance with the saying of R. Simeon b. Lakish; for R. Simeon b. Lakish said: The words of the Torah abide only with one who kills himself for them, as it says, This is the Torah, when a man shall die in the tent etc.<sup>34</sup>

Rabbah b. Bar Hanah said in the name of R. Johanan: Forty se'ahs  
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*Original footnotes renumbered. See [Structure of the Talmud Files](#)*

1. V. II Kings XXV, 8ff.
2. The son of Jehoiada the high priest. V. II Chron. XXIV, 22.
3. Hos. IV, 2.
4. The high court of 71 members.
5. The lesser court of 23 members.
6. One who merely abstains from idolatry but does not keep the commandments.
7. Who accepts all the laws of Judaism with no ulterior motive.
8. The predecessors of Hillel and Shammai. V. Aboth I.

8. The predecessors of Hillel and Shammai. V. Abot, 1.
9. Ezek. XXIV, 8.
10. Gen. XXVII, 22.
11. [Graetz, Geschichte, IV, p. 426, on the basis of parallel passages emends; 'Trajan', the reference being to the massacre of Alexandrian Jews by Trajan as a result of an insurrection. V. Suk. 51b.]
12. This seems a mistake here for Hadrian. [V. J. Ta'an. IV.]
13. The remark made above that through malicious speech the Temple was destroyed etc. (Rashi). [Maharsha refers it to the efficacy of the 'voice of Jacob'.]
14. Job V, 21.
15. Apparently this means 'slander'. [According to Maharsha render: 'Thou shalt be protected (find refuge) in the heated contests of the tongue', i.e., prayer'.]
16. Ps. CXXXVII, 1.
17. Stands for Rome.
18. Ibid. 7.
19. Ps. LXVIII, 23.
20. [H] of which [H] is taken as a contraction.
21. Ibid, XLIV, 23.
22. The same story is related of Antiochus Epiphanes in the second book of the Maccabees.
23. Ex. XX, 2.
24. Ibid, 3.
25. Ibid, XXII, 19.
26. Ibid, XX, 5.
27. Deut. VI, 4.
28. Ibid, IV, 39.
29. Deut. XXVI, 17, 18.
30. The seal had engraved on it the image of the king and by stooping down to pick it up he will make it appear as if he is worshipping the image (Rashi).
31. Lit., 'accept the authority'.
32. Ps. CXIII, 9.
33. For fear that he might accidentally cut his throat.
34. Num. XIX, 14. The meaning in the context is of course quite different.

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