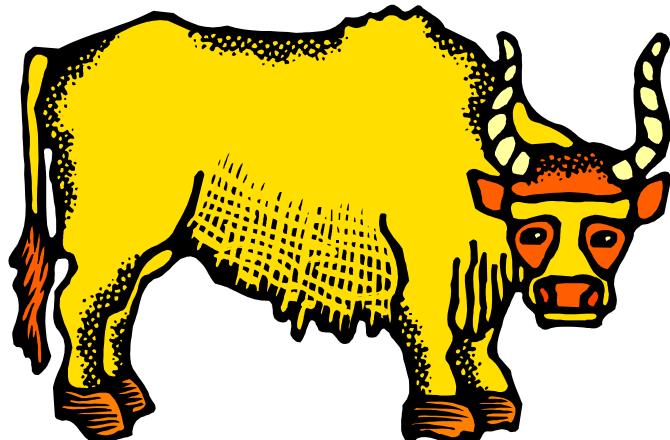


## The Soncino Babylonian Talmud

Book I

Folios 2a-35b



# ‘Abodah Zarah

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH WITH NOTES

FOLIOS 1-35b  
BY A. MISHCON

FOLIOS 35b TO THE END  
BY A. COHEN, M.A., Ph.D.

UNDER THE EDITORSHIP OF  
**RABBI DR I. EPSTEIN** B.A., Ph.D., D. Lit.

*Reformatted by Reuven Brauner, Raanana 5771*  
[www.613etc.com](http://www.613etc.com)

## INTRODUCTION

The name given to this Tractate, 'Abodah Zarrah, means literally 'strange worship', and is the common term in Rabbinical literature for idolatry. The subject treated therein was of vital importance to Jewish life, its gravity being greatly enhanced by the conditions which obtained in the Talmudic age.

In the Bible the newly-formed Israelite nation, after the exodus from Egypt, was solemnly admonished again and again that the alternative before it consisted of the worship of God, which would prolong life, or idolatry which would spell death. A corporate existence was only assured so long as the choice was given to the former, the adoption of heathenish cults involving certain destruction.

Hence from the earliest period of Jewish history, the mode of worship followed by the people was a matter of life and death in the strictest sense of the phrase. Experience soon proved how great was the temptation to imitate the religious practices of surrounding nations, even at a time when the Israelites inhabited a land of their own. The difficulty of resisting alien influences grew much more severe in periods of dispersion when Jews were living in a heathen environment; and the Rabbis had to give serious attention to the problem of how to counteract the forces of assimilation which threatened to submerge the Jewish communities settled in countries where idol-worship was the State religion.

Their method of solving this problem forms, in the main, the subject-matter of this Tractate, and the measures they devised must in fairness be judged in the light of the conditions which prevailed in that era. If some of their regulations appear drastic to the modern mind, displaying an apparent narrowness of view, it should be remembered that they were grappling with a grievous danger which imperiled the very existence of

not only their people, but also of the spiritual heritage of their forefathers. We have to visualize small minorities of monotheists heroically withstanding the law of gravitation which tended to cause their absorption in the mass of the people around them who were polytheists and idolaters. To make their resistance at all possible of success extreme measures were essential. There could not be the slightest compromise, nor must the smallest loophole be left open. In this matter, if anywhere, a fence — and a very high one — had to be made round the Torah. An unscalable barrier must be erected behind which the Jew would be protected against the allurement of his neighbor's rites and beliefs, with their strong appeal to the baser side of human nature.

To achieve this end the Rabbis denounced idol-worship as a cardinal sin. 'The prohibition of idolatry is equal in weight to all the other commandments of the Torah' [[Horayoth 8a](#)], they taught; and conversely, 'So grave is the sin of idolatry, that whoever rejects it is as though he acknowledges the whole Torah' [[Hul. 5a](#)]. Whereas a Jew was permitted to violate the ordinances of the Torah under threat of death, an exception was made of idolatry, immorality and bloodshed [[Sanh. 74a](#)], idolatry ranking first in importance.

In addition to teaching this abstract doctrine, the Rabbis had to formulate practical rules which would have the effect of diminishing the likelihood of a Jew becoming contaminated by heathenism. When engaged upon this task, they kept before them the principle that prevention was better than cure, which they expressed in the aphorism, 'Keep off, we say to a Nazirite; go round the vineyard and come not near to it' [[fol. 58b](#)].

The chief deterrents they elaborated are: [1] An idolatrous object is *asur be-hana'ah*, by

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

---

which was meant that a Jew may not make use of it himself and he may also not derive any benefit from it. He could not dispose of it in any way which would in the slightest degree cause profit to accrue to him. [ii] They allowed a Jew to take possession and utilize such an object after it had been 'annulled', i.e., mutilated by a heathen, because its very appearance would then suggest the idea of its helplessness — 'It could not save itself, so how can it save me!' [\[fol. 41b\]](#). And they added this important proviso: once the object had been in the possession of a Jew, even by his just picking it up, it could never be annulled. [iii] Appreciating the fact that eating and drinking together with heathens must lead to close social intercourse, resulting in mixed marriages and eventually the possible abandonment of Judaism, the Rabbis instituted various regulations for the disqualification of food prepared or handled by them with the purpose of preventing such intimate association. The underlying motive was not exclusiveness or unsociability, but racial and spiritual self-preservation.

It is important to understand that the vehement opposition to idolatry which distinguishes the legislation of the Bible and

later of the Talmud was not merely the antagonism of one theological system to another. Fundamentally it was a conflict of ethical standards. Heathen peoples practiced 'abominations' against which the Scriptures earnestly warned Israel. Idolatry was identified with immoral conduct, an identification which was too often verified by experience [see [fol. 22a et seq.](#)]. The denial of God, therefore, which was implied in polytheism, entailed for the Rabbis an inevitable denial of the morality of the Torah. They maintained that 'whoever acknowledges idolatry denies the Ten Commandments as well as the precepts given to Moses, to the prophets and the patriarchs' [Sifre, Numbers § III ].

Consequently in their aim to save their people from the ravages of paganism, the Rabbis were convinced that they were fighting for ethical purity as well as religious truth. In a world of debased standards of conduct they waged a resolute contest for the preservation of the higher and nobler concepts of human behavior which reflected the will of the God of Israel; and in so doing they rendered a conspicuous service to their own community and also to the advancement of civilization.

A. COHEN

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

'Abodah Zarah 2a

## CHAPTER I

**MISHNAH.** ON THE THREE DAYS PRECEDING THE FESTIVITIES<sup>1</sup> OF IDOLATERS, IT IS FORBIDDEN TO TRANSACT BUSINESS WITH THEM, TO LEND ARTICLES TO THEM OR BORROW ANY FROM THEM, TO ADVANCE, OR RECEIVE ANY MONEY FROM THEM, TO REPAY A DEBT, OR RECEIVE REPAYMENT FROM THEM.<sup>2</sup> R. JUDAH SAYS: WE SHOULD RECEIVE REPAYMENT FROM THEM, AS THIS CAN ONLY DEPRESS THEM;<sup>3</sup> BUT THEY [THE RABBIS]<sup>4</sup> SAID TO HIM: EVEN THOUGH IT IS DEPRESSING AT THE TIME, THEY ARE GLAD OF IT SUBSEQUENTLY.

**GEMARA.** Rab and Samuel [differed]: the one quoting [from this Mishnah] *ed*, while the other quoted '*ed*'.<sup>5</sup> The one who quoted *ed* is not in error, nor is the one who quoted '*ed*' in error.<sup>6</sup> The one who quoted *ed* is not in error, since Scripture says: *For the day of their calamity is at hand*,<sup>7</sup> so also is he who quotes '*ed*' not in error, for Scripture also says: *Let them bring their witnesses [testimonies] that they may be justified*.<sup>8</sup> Why does he who quotes *ed* not have '*ed*'? — He might say, the term *ed* ['calamity'] is more applicable [to idolatry]. Why then does not the one who quotes '*ed*' have *ed*? — He might say: What is it that brings about that *calamity* [if not] their *testimony*? hence the term '*ed*' ['*testimony*'] is more apt.

But does the verse, *Let them bring their witnesses that they may be justified*, refer to idolaters at all? It surely refers to Israel; as R. Joshua b. Levi said: All the good deeds which Israel does in this world will bear testimony unto them in the world to come, as it is said: *Let them bring their witnesses that they may be justified* — that is Israel; *And let them hear and say: It is truth* — these are the idolaters.

Whereupon R. Huna the son of R. Joshua said that the one who quotes '*ed*' derives it from this verse: *They that fashion a graven image are all of them vanity, and their delectable things shall not profit, and their own witnesses see not, nor know.*<sup>9</sup>

R. Hanina b. Papa — some say R. Simlai — expounded [the foregoing verse] thus: In times to come,<sup>10</sup> the Holy One, blessed be He, will take a scroll of the Law in His embrace and proclaim: 'Let him who has occupied himself herewith, come and take his reward.' Thereupon all the nations will crowd together in confusion, as it is said: *All the nations are gathered together*, etc.<sup>11</sup> The Holy One, blessed be He, will then say to them: 'Come not before Me in confusion, but let each nation come in

1. The Hebrew word [H] ED, here used as a metonymy for FESTIVITY, means CALAMITY; in the variant spelling [H] 'ED it means WITNESS OR TESTIMONY — hence the variation discussed in the Gemara which follows.
2. Lest any benefit they may derive from these be made by them a cause for rejoicing before their idols on the day of festivity.
3. The reason for the objection does not therefore exist.
4. Representing the opinion of teachers in general.
5. V. n. 1.
6. As both terms are used in Scripture in connection with idolatry. The letter [H] was frequently confused, especially among the Babylonians, with [H]; and according to Berliner, Beitr. z. Gram. i. Tal. u. Mid., p. 17, it is Samuel the Babylonian who quoted [H] while Rab who was a Palestinian, read [H].
7. Deut. XXXII, 35.
8. Isa. XLIII, 9.
9. Ibid. XLIV, 9.
10. A typical example of consolatory *Aggadah* wherewith the Rabbis sought to sooth the people's present afflictions by depicting the glories which the future had in store for them. A liturgical difficulty is solved thereby. The term consolations [H] in the Kaddish passage: 'Blessed be He above all the blessings and hymns, praises and consolations which are uttered in the world' (P.B., p. 75), which is so puzzling to commentators, is explained by the fact that the Kaddish is in its origin a doxology pronounced after Aggadic expositions, which

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

were generally of a consolatory nature. Cp. [H] (Sot. 49a).  
11. Isa. XLIII, 9.

## ‘Abodah Zarah 2b

with its scribes;' as it is said, *and let the peoples be gathered together*,<sup>1</sup> and the word *le'om* [used here] means a kingdom, as it is written, *and one kingdom [u-leom] shall be stronger than the other kingdom*.<sup>2</sup> (But can there be confusion in the presence of the Holy One, blessed be He? — [No;] it is only that they be not confused, and so hear what He says to them.) Thereupon the Kingdom of Edom<sup>3</sup> will enter first before Him. (Why first? Because they are the most important. Whence do we know they are so important? — Because it is written: *And he shall devour the whole earth and shall tread it down and break it in pieces*;<sup>4</sup> and R. Johanan says that this refers to Rome, whose power is known to the whole world. And whence do we know that the most important comes forward first? — Because R. Hisda said: When a king and a community appear before the [Heavenly] tribunal, the king enters first, as it is said: *That He maintain the cause of His servant [King Solomon] and [then] the cause of His people Israel*.<sup>5</sup> And why is it so? — You may say, because it is not the way of the world that a king shall wait without; or you may say [in order that the king shall plead] before the anger [of the Judge] is roused.)<sup>6</sup> The Holy One, blessed be He, will then say to them: 'Wherewith have you occupied yourselves?' They will reply: 'O Lord of the Universe, we have established many market-places, we have erected many baths, we have accumulated much gold and silver, and all this we did only for the sake of Israel, that they might [have leisure] for occupying themselves with the study of the Torah.' The Holy One, blessed be He, will say in reply: 'You foolish ones among peoples, all that which you have done, you have only done to satisfy your own desires. You have established marketplaces to place courtesans therein; baths, to revel in them; [as to the distribution

of] silver and gold, that is mine, as it is written: *Mine is the silver and Mine is the gold, saith the Lord of Hosts*;<sup>7</sup> are there any among you who have been declaring *this*? And '*this*' is naught else than the Torah, as it is said: *And this is the Law which Moses set before the children of Israel*.<sup>8</sup> They will then depart crushed in spirit. On the departure of the Kingdom of Rome, Persia will step forth. (Why Persia next? — Because they are next in importance. And how do we know this? — Because it is written: *And behold another beast, a second like to a bear*;<sup>9</sup> and R. Joseph learned<sup>10</sup> that this refers to the Persians, who eat and drink greedily like the bear, are fleshly like the bear, have shaggy hair like the bear, and are restless like the bear.)<sup>11</sup> The Holy One, blessed be He, will ask of them: 'Wherewith have ye occupied yourselves?'; and they will reply 'Sovereign of the Universe, we have built many bridges, we have captured many cities, we have waged many wars, and all this for the sake of Israel, that they might engage in the study of the Torah. Then the Holy One, blessed be He, will say to them: 'You foolish ones among peoples, you have built bridges in order to extract toll, you have subdued cities, so as to impose forced labour;<sup>12</sup> as to waging war, I am the Lord of battles, as it is said: *The Lord is a man of war*;<sup>13</sup> are there any amongst you who have been declaring *this*? and '*this*' means naught else than the Torah, as it is said: *And this is the Law which Moses set before the Children of Israel*.<sup>14</sup> They, too' will then depart crushed in spirit. (But why should the Persians, having seen that the Romans achieved naught, step forward at all? — They will say to themselves: 'The Romans have destroyed the Temple, whereas we have built it.')<sup>15</sup> And so will every nation fare in turn. (But why should the other nations come forth, seeing that those who preceded them had achieved naught? They will say to themselves: The others have oppressed Israel, but we have not. And why are these [two] nations singled out as important, and not the others? — Because their reign will last till the coming of the Messiah.) The nations will then contend:

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

'Lord of the Universe, hast Thou given us the Torah, and have we declined to accept it? (But how can they argue thus, seeing that it is written, *The Lord came from Sinai and rose from Seir unto them, He shined forth from Mount Paran?*<sup>16</sup> And it is also written, *God cometh from Teman.*<sup>17</sup> What did He seek in Seir, and what did He seek in Mount Paran?<sup>18</sup>

— R. Johanan says: This teaches us that the Holy One, blessed be He, offered the Torah to every nation and every tongue, but none accepted it, until He came to Israel who received it. [How, then, can they say that the Torah was not offered to them?] Their contention will be this: 'Did we accept it and fail to observe it? But surely the obvious rejoinder to this their plea would be: 'Then why did you not accept it?' — This, then, will be their contention: 'Lord of the Universe, didst Thou suspend the mountain over us like a vault<sup>19</sup> as Thou hast done unto Israel and did we still decline to accept it?' For in commenting on the verse: *And they stood at the netherpart of the mountain.*<sup>20</sup> R. Dimi b. Hama said: This teaches us that the Holy One, blessed be He, suspended the mountain over Israel like a vault, and said unto them: 'If ye accept the Torah, it will be well with you, but if not, there will ye find your grave.') Thereupon the Holy One, blessed be He, will say to them: 'Let us then consider the happenings of old,' as it is said, *Let them announce to us former things,*<sup>21</sup> 'there are seven commandments which you did accept.<sup>22</sup> did you observe them?' (How do we know that they did not observe them? — For R. Joseph learned:<sup>23</sup> *He standeth and shaketh the earth, He seeth and maketh the nations to tremble:*<sup>24</sup> what did He see? He saw that the nations did not observe even the seven precepts which the sons of Noah had taken upon themselves,<sup>25</sup> and seeing that they did not observe them, He stood up and released them therefrom.<sup>26</sup> Then they benefited by it; according to this it pays to be a sinner! — Said Mar the son of Rabina:

1. Ibid.
2. Gen. XXV, 23.
3. Edom, or Esau, generally represents Rome.
4. Dan. VII, 23.

5. I Kings VIII, 59.
6. By the misdeeds of the people for which the king would be held responsible.
7. Hag. II, 8.
8. Deut. IV, 44.
9. Dan. VII, 5.
10. Kid. 72a.
11. Cf. Lewysohn, *Zoologie des Talmuds*, p. 99. The Persians are compared to the bear, which bolts its food, is covered with a girdle of fat, and can stand the winter with but little food. The skin is woolly and thick, and only gets softer with age. He is always rolling about, even if kept in a cage.
12. [G] = angaria.
13. Ex. XV, 3.
14. Deut. IV, 44.
15. Referring to Cyrus's edict. Ezra I, 2 seq.
16. Deut. XXXIII, 2.
17. Hab. III, 3.
18. Seir or Edom representing the predecessors of Rome; Paran, those of Ishmael, Gen. XXI, 21.
19. Lit., 'cask', 'tub'.
20. Ex. XIX, 17.
21. Isa. XLIII, 9.
22. V. n. 6.
23. B.K. 38a.
24. Hab. III, 6.
25. The Rabbis held that God had given Noah seven commandments embracing the whole of natural religion: against (i) idol worship, (ii) blasphemy, (iii) bloodshed, (iv) adultery, (v) robbery, (vi) for the establishment of courts of justice, (vii) against eating the limb torn off a living animal. These were imposed on all men, Jews and non-Jews alike. V. Sanh. 56a ff. Cf. Maimonides' Guide for Perplexed, III, 48.
26. The Heb. word for maketh to tremble, [H], also means, 'he releaseth', cf. [H] permitted.

## 'Abodah Zarah 3a

The release from those commands only means that even if they observed them they would not be rewarded. But why should they not? Is it not taught: R. Meir used to say. 'Whence do we know that even an idolater who studies the Torah is equal to a High Priest? From the following verse: *Ye shall therefore keep My statutes and My ordinances which, if a man do, he shall live by them.*<sup>1</sup> It does not say "If a Priest, Levite, or Israelite do, he shall live by them," but "*a man*"; here, then, you can learn that even a heathen who studies the Torah is equal to a High Priest!' — What is meant,

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

then, is that they are rewarded not as greatly as one who does a thing which he is bidden to do, but as one who does a thing unbidden. For, R. Hanina said: He who is commanded and does, stands higher than he who is not commanded and does.<sup>2</sup>)

The nations will then say, 'Sovereign of the Universe, has Israel, who accepted the Torah, observed it? The Holy One, blessed be He, will reply, 'I can give evidence that they observed the Torah.' 'O Lord of the Universe,' they will argue, 'can a father give evidence in favor of his son? For it is written, *Israel is My son, My firstborn.*'<sup>3</sup> Then will the Holy One, blessed be He, say: 'Heaven and Earth can bear witness that Israel has fulfilled the entire Torah.' But they will [object], saying: 'Lord of the Universe, Heaven and Earth are partial witnesses, for it is said, If not for My covenant with day and with night. I should not have appointed the ordinances of Heaven and Earth.'<sup>4</sup> (And R. Simeon b. Lakish further said: What is conveyed by the phrase. And there was evening and there was morning the sixth day?<sup>5</sup> It teaches us that God made a condition with the works of creation, saying: 'If Israel accept my Law it will be well, but if not, I shall reduce you to a state of chaos';<sup>6</sup> which accords with the comment of R. Hezekiah on the verse, Thou didst cause sentence to be heard from Heaven, the earth trembled and was still:<sup>7</sup> If the earth trembled, how could it be still, and if it was still, how could it tremble? But at first it trembled, and subsequently it became still.)<sup>8</sup> Then the Holy One, blessed be He, will say, 'Some of yourselves shall testify that Israel observed the entire Torah. Let Nimrod come and testify that Abraham did not [consent to] worship idols; let Laban come and testify that Jacob could not be suspected of theft;<sup>9</sup> let Potiphar's wife testify that Joseph was above suspicion of immorality; let Nebuchadnezzar come and testify that Hanania, Mishael and Azariah did not bow down to an image; let Darius come and testify that Daniel never neglected the [statutory] prayers;<sup>10</sup> let Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite, and Eliphaz the

Temanite [and Elihu<sup>11</sup> the son of Barachel the Buzite]<sup>12</sup> testify that Israel has observed the whole Torah; as it is said, Let them [the nations] bring their [own] witnesses, that they [Israel] may be justified.'<sup>13</sup>

The nations will then plead. 'Offer us the Torah anew and we shall obey it.' But the Holy One, blessed be He, will say to them, 'You foolish ones among peoples, he who took trouble [to prepare] on the eve of the Sabbath can eat on the Sabbath, but he who has not troubled on the eve of the Sabbath, what shall he eat on the Sabbath? Nevertheless, I have an easy command which is called *Sukkah*,<sup>14</sup> go and carry it out.'<sup>15</sup> (But how can you say so: does not R. Joshua b. Levi say: What is [the meaning of] the verse, The ordinances which I command thee this day to do them?<sup>16</sup> It is that this day only [the present] is the time to do them,' they cannot be done tomorrow [in times to come]: this day is the time in which to do them, but not in which to be rewarded for them. [Why then should they be offered this observance in the Messianic time?] — Because the Holy One, blessed be He, does not deal imperiously with His creatures.<sup>17</sup> And why does He term it an easy command? — Because it does not affect one's purse.) Straightaway will every one of them betake himself and go and make a booth on the top of his roof; but the Holy One, blessed be He, will cause the sun to blaze forth over them as at the Summer Solstice,<sup>18</sup> and every one of them will trample down his booth and go away, as it is said, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.<sup>19</sup> (But you have just said 'The Holy One, blessed be He, does not deal imperiously with his creatures? — True! but with the Israelites, too, it occasionally happens

1. Lev. XVIII, 5.
2. [The idea underlying this principle is the contrast between the Autonomy of the Will and the Law of God as the Authority to Man. The moral act finds its sure basis only when it is conceived as prompted by the command of God. When man acts in obedience thereto the

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

- merit is thus greater. Cf. Lazarus, M. The Ethics of Judaism (English ed.) 1 pp. 123 ff.]
3. Ex. IV, 22.
  4. Jer. XXXIII, 25 rendered homiletically thus: If not for My covenant (i.e., the Torah, which is to be meditated) day and night, I should not have appointed, etc.
  5. Gen. I, 31.
  6. The phrase is made to read — There was evening and there was morning [only because of] the sixth day of Sivan, the date of the revelation at Sinai.
  7. Ps. LXXVI, 9.
  8. The earth feared that its inhabitants could not abide in the absence of a moral code to serve as the foundation of society; but it was set at rest when sentence was heard from heaven, i.e., when the Divine commandments were proclaimed from Sinai.
  9. Cf. Gen. XXXI, 37.
  10. His windows were open in his upper chamber towards Jerusalem, and he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime. (Dan. VI, 11). This is the earliest record of the practice, still observed by Jews the world over, of offering prayers thrice daily. morning (Shaharith), afternoon (Minhah) and evening (Ma'arib) with face turned towards the Holy City.
  11. A friend of Job; Job XXXII, 2.
  12. Buz, according to Gen. XXII, 21, was a son of Nahor; his descendant Elihu, therefore, being an Israelite, is not to be included here (Rashi); cf. B.B. 15b, where it is discussed whether Elihu was an Israelite or a Gentile.
  13. Isa, ibid.
  14. *Sukkah*, booth, the temporary structure in which Jews dwell during the Festival of Tabernacles (Lev. XXIII, 42).
  15. To test their self-exertion for the sake of a religious observance.
  16. Deut. VII, 11.
  17. [H] [G], sovereignty, despotic rule.
  18. Lit., 'the cycle of Tammuz' which lasts from 21st June to 22nd September. The Jewish Calendar, while being lunar, takes cognizance of the solar system, to which it is adjusted at the end of every cycle of nineteen years. For ritual purposes, the four *Tekufoth* are calculated according to the solar system, each being equal to one fourth of 365 days, viz. 91 days, 7 1/2 hours. T. of Nisan, (vernal Equinox) begins March 21; T. of Tammuz (Summer Solstice), June 21; T. of Tishri (Autumnal Equinox). Sept. 23; T. of Tebeth (Winter Solstice) Dec. 22.
  19. Ps. II, 3.

## ‘Abodah Zarah 3b

that the summer solstice extends till the Festival [of Tabernacles] and they are vexed [by the heat].<sup>1</sup> But does not Raba say: He who is vexed thereby is freed from dwelling in the *Sukkah*?<sup>2</sup> — Granted, they would [in such circumstances] be freed, but would Israelites contemptuously trample it down?) Thereupon the Holy One, blessed be He, will laugh at them, as it is said, He that sitteth in heaven laugheth.<sup>3</sup> Said R. Isaac: 'Only on that day is there laughter for the Holy One, blessed be He!' Some connected that comment of R. Isaac with the following teaching: R. Jose says, In time to come idol-worshippers will come and offer themselves as proselytes. But will such be accepted? Has it not been taught<sup>4</sup> that in the days of the Messiah proselytes will not be received; likewise were none received in the days of David or of Solomon? — Well, they will be self-made proselytes,<sup>5</sup> and will place phylacteries on their foreheads and on their arms, fringes in their garments, and a *Mezuzah* on their doorposts, but when the battle of Gog-Magog will come about<sup>6</sup> they will be asked, 'For what purpose have you come?' and they will reply: 'Against God and His Messiah' as it is said, Why are the nations in an uproar, and why do the peoples mutter in vain, etc.<sup>7</sup> Then each of the proselytes will throw aside his religious token and get away, as it is said, Let us break their bands asunder,<sup>8</sup> and the Holy One, blessed be He, will sit and laugh, as it is said: He that sitteth in heaven laugheth.<sup>2</sup> [It was on this that] R. Isaac remarked that there is no laughter for the Holy One, blessed be He, except on that day. But is there not, indeed? Yet Rab Judah said in the name of Rab: 'The day consists of twelve hours; during the first three hours the Holy One, blessed be He, is occupying Himself with the Torah, during the second three He sits in judgment on the whole world, and when He sees that the world is so guilty as to deserve destruction, He transfers Himself from the seat of Justice to the seat of Mercy;<sup>10</sup> during the third quarter, He is feeding the whole world, from the horned buffalo to the

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

brood of vermin; during the fourth quarter He is sporting with the leviathan,<sup>11</sup> as it is said, There is leviathan, whom Thou hast formed to sport therewith?<sup>12</sup> Said R. Nahman b. Isaac: Yes, He sports with His creatures, but does not laugh at His creatures except on that day.<sup>13</sup>

R. Aba said to R. Nahman b. Isaac: Since the day of the destruction of the temple, there is no laughter for the Holy One, blessed be He. Whence do we know that there is not? Shall we say from the verse, And on that day did the Lord, the God of Hosts, call to weeping and lamentation?<sup>14</sup> But this refers to that day and no more. Shall we then say, from this verse: If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth if I do not remember thee?<sup>15</sup> But this, too, excludes forgetfulness, but not laughter. Hence, [it is known] from the verse, I have long time held my peace, I have been still, and refrained myself, now will I cry.<sup>16</sup> What then does God do in the fourth quarter?<sup>17</sup> — He sits and instructs the school children,<sup>18</sup> as it is said, Whom shall one teach knowledge, and whom shall one make to understand the message? Them that are weaned from the milk.<sup>19</sup> Who instructed them theretofore?<sup>20</sup> — If you like, you may say Metatron,<sup>21</sup> or it may be said that God did this as well as other things. And what does He do by night? — If you like you may say, the kind of thing He does by day; or it may be said that He rides a light cherub, and floats in eighteen thousand worlds; for it is said, The chariots of God are myriads, even thousands shinan.<sup>22</sup> Do not read Shinan, [repeated], but she-enan [that are not];<sup>23</sup> or it may be said, He sits and listens to the song of the Hayyoth,<sup>24</sup> as it is said, By the day the Lord will command His loving-kindness and in the night His song shall be with me.<sup>25</sup>

R. Levi says: He who discontinues [learning] words of the Torah and indulges in idle gossip will be made to eat glowing coals of juniper, as it is said, They pluck salt-wort with

wormwood; and the roots of juniper are their food.<sup>26</sup>

Resh Lakish says: To him who is engaged in the study of the Torah by night, the Holy One extends a thread of grace by day, as it is said, By day the Lord will command his loving-kindness, and in the night his song shall be with me.<sup>27</sup> For what reason will the Lord command his loving-kindness by day? — because His song shall be with me in the night.

Some report the exposition of Resh Lakish thus: To him who is engaged in the study of the Torah in this world, which is likened unto the night, the Holy One, blessed be He, extends the thread of grace in the future world, which is likened unto the day, as it is said: By day the Lord, etc.

Rab Judah says in the name of Samuel: Why is it written, And Thou makest man as the fishes of the sea, and as the creeping things, that have no ruler over them?<sup>28</sup> Why is man here compared to the fishes of the sea? To tell you, just as the fishes of the sea, as soon as they come on to dry land, die, so also man, as soon as he abandons the Torah and the precepts [incurs destruction]. Another explanation: Just as the fishes of the sea, as soon as the sun scorches them, die; so man, when struck by the sun, dies. This can be applied to the present world, or to the future world. You can, in accordance with R. Hanina, apply this to the present world, for R. Hanina says: Everything is in Heaven's hands, except cold and heat, as is said, 'colds and heat-boils are in the way of the froward, he that keepeth his soul holdeth himself far from them;<sup>29</sup> or, according to R. Simeon b. Lakish, it can be applied to the future life, for R. Simeon b. Lakish says: There is no Gehenna in the Future World,<sup>30</sup> but the Holy One, blessed be He, brings the sun out of its sheath, so that it is fierce: the wicked are punished by it, the righteous are healed by it. The wicked are punished

1. The test is therefore not exceptional or harsh.

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

2. Suk. 26a.
3. Ps. II, 4.
4. Yeb. 24a.
5. [Gerim gerurim, lit., 'dragged-in proselytes' a class of converts who Judaize in mass under the impulsion of fear, v. Moore, G. F., Judaism I, 337].
6. In the great drama of the Messianic age there will be a combat with the heathen powers under the leadership of Gog and Magog (Ezek. XXXIX).
7. Ps. II, 1.
8. Ibid. 3.
9. Ibid. 4.
10. I.e., instead of meting out punishment, exercises clemency.
11. [A huge sea monster, real according to some but according to others imaginary. We have here a magnification of God's power in sporting with the mightiest, as men do with their animal pets.]
12. Ps. CIV, 26; hence we see there is laughter before the Lord!
13. [The discomfiture of the nations which sought to rule without the restraints of the moral law will prove the most laughter-provoking sight.]
14. Isa. XXII, 12.
15. Ps. CXXXVII, 5, 6.
16. Isa. XLII, 14.
17. According to the statement that all laughter has been eliminated since the Destruction.
18. [I.e., who died in their infancy (Rashi); the development of their personality that survives death is in the special care of the Eternal.]
19. Isa. XXVIII, 9.
20. I.e., prior to the Destruction.
21. [Metatron: Name of an angel, who is also called [H] Metatron is probably derived from Metator, meaning guide, precursor, he being regarded as the angel who went before the Israelites in the wilderness.]
22. Ps. LXVIII, 18.
23. By altering [H] into [H] the verse is made to mean: The chariots ... are twice ten thousand less two thousand, i.e., eighteen thousand.
24. Hayyoth are angels that surround the heavenly throne (v. Ezek. III), proclaiming the praises and holiness of God.
25. Ps. XLII, 9.
26. Job XXX, 4. By a very slight alteration, the verse — which speaks of the poor who pick vegetables and roots for their food — is made to read: [H] which is rendered thus: They who break away from the table (of the Law) to idle gossip will have roots of juniper as their food.
27. Ps. XLII, 9.
28. Hab. I, 14.
29. Prov. XXII, 5. The Heb, words (צִנְמָה וּפְתַחְמָה) standing for thorns and snares may also be

rendered colds and heat-boils. The underlying idea is that man is not to take a fatalistic view and blame Providence for maladies and other evils which, by care and prudence, he can avert.

30. I.e., the Messianic era.

## 'Abodah Zarah 4a

by it, as it is said: For, behold, the day cometh, it burneth as a furnace; and all the proud, and all that work wickedness, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall set them ablaze, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.<sup>1</sup> It shall leave them neither root — in this world, nor branch — in the world to come. The righteous are healed by it, as it is said, But unto you that fear My name, shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in its wings.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, they will revel therein, as it is said, And ye shall go forth, and gambol as calves of the stall.<sup>2</sup>

Another explanation:<sup>3</sup> Just as among fish of the sea, the greater swallow up the smaller ones, so with men, were it not for fear of the government, men would swallow each other alive. This is just what we learnt: R. Hanina, the Deputy High Priest, said, Pray for the welfare of the government, for were it not for the fear thereof, men would swallow each other alive.<sup>4</sup>

R. Hinena b. Papa pointed to the following contradiction: Scripture says, As to the Almighty, we do not find him [exercising] plenteous power,<sup>5</sup> yet it says, Great is our Lord and of abundant power<sup>6</sup> and also, Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power!<sup>7</sup> [The answer is] there is no contradiction here: the former refers to the time of judgment,<sup>8</sup> the latter refers to a time of war.<sup>9</sup>

R. Hama b. Hanina pointed to another contradiction: Scripture says, Fury is not in me,<sup>10</sup> yet it also says, The Lord revengeth and is furious!<sup>11</sup> But there is really no contradiction: the former refers to Israel, the

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

latter to idolaters.<sup>12</sup> R. Hinena b. Papa [or R. Aha b. Hanina] explains the foregoing verse thus: Fury is not in me, for I already vowed;<sup>13</sup> would that I had not so vowed, then, as the briars and thorns in flame I would with one step burn it altogether.<sup>14</sup>

This<sup>15</sup> accords with the following teaching of R. Alexandri: What is the meaning of the verse, And it shall come to pass on that day that I will seek to destroy all the nations<sup>16</sup> — ‘seek’ among whom? What the Holy One, blessed be He, says is, I will seek their records;<sup>17</sup> if they have any meritorious deeds to their credit, I will redeem them, but if not, I will destroy them. This also accords with what Raba said: What is the meaning of the verse, Howbeit He will not stretch out a hand for a ruinous heap though they cry in his destruction?<sup>18</sup> — The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Israel, ‘When I judge Israel, I do not judge them as I do the idolaters concerning whom it is said, I will overturn, overturn, overturn it,<sup>19</sup> but I only exact payment from them [little at a time] as the hen does her picking.’<sup>20</sup> Another explanation: Even if Israel does before Me but few good deeds at a time, like hens picking in a rubbish heap, I will make it accumulate to a large sum, as it is said, though they pick little they are saved.<sup>21</sup> Another rendering is: As a reward of their crying unto Me, I help them.<sup>22</sup> This is similar to what R. Abba said, What is the meaning of the verse, Though I would redeem them, yet they have spoken lies against Me?<sup>23</sup> I thought I would redeem them by depriving them of monetary possessions in this world, so that they be worthy to merit the world to come, yet they, etc. Which is in agreement with what R. Papi said in the name of Raba: What is the meaning of the verse, Though I have trained [yissarti], strengthened their arms, yet do they imagine mischief against Me?<sup>24</sup> The Holy One, blessed be He, says, I thought I would chastise them<sup>25</sup> with suffering in this world, so that their arm might be strengthened in the world to come, yet they, etc.

R. Abbahu commended R. Safra to the Minim<sup>26</sup> as a learned man, and he was thus exempted by them from paying taxes for thirteen years.<sup>27</sup> One day, on coming across him, they said to him; ‘It is written: You only have I known [or loved] from all the families of the earth; therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities;<sup>28</sup> if one is in anger does one vent it on one’s friend?’ But he was silent and could give them no answer; so they wound a scarf round his neck and tortured him. When R. Abbahu came and found him [in that state] he said to them, Why do you torture him? Said they, ‘Have you not told us that he is a great man? he cannot explain to us the meaning of this verse!’ Said he, ‘I may have told you [that he was learned] in Tannaitic teaching; did I tell you [he was learned] in Scripture?’ — ‘How is it then that you know it?’ they contended. ‘We,’ he replied. ‘who are frequently with you, set ourselves the task of studying it thoroughly, but others<sup>29</sup> do not study it as carefully.’ Said they, ‘Will you then tell us the meaning?’ ‘I will explain it by a parable.’ he replied. ‘To what may it be compared? To a man who is the creditor of two persons, one of them a friend, the other an enemy; of his friend he will accept payment little by little, whereas of his enemy he will exact payment in one sum!’<sup>30</sup>

Said R. Aba b. Kahana: What is the meaning of the verse, That be far from Thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked?<sup>31</sup> What Abraham said is: ‘Sovereign of the Universe, it is profanation to do after this manner.’<sup>32</sup> And does not God act after this manner? Is it not written, And I will cut off from thee the righteous and the wicked?<sup>33</sup> — That refers to one who is not thoroughly righteous. But not to one who is wholly righteous? Is it not written, And begin [the slaughter] with my sanctuary,<sup>34</sup> which, R. Joseph learned, should not be read my sanctuary but my sanctified ones, namely the men who fulfilled the Torah from Aleph to Taw? — There, too, since it was in their power to protest against [the wickedness of

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

the others] and they did not protest, they are not regarded as thoroughly righteous.

R. Papa mentioned the following contradiction: It is written, God is angry every day,<sup>35</sup> while it is also written Who could stand before His anger?<sup>36</sup> But there is really no contradiction; the latter refers to an individual, the former to men collectively.<sup>37</sup> Our Rabbis taught: God is angry every day, but how long does His anger last? — A moment. And how long is a moment? — one fifty three thousand eight hundred forty eighth of an hour is a moment.<sup>38</sup> No creature could ever precisely fix this moment, except Balaam the wicked, of whom it is written

1. Mal. III, 29.
2. Ibid. 20.
3. Of the foregoing verse, comparing men to fishes.
4. Ab. III, 2. Shakespeare's lines, put in the mouth of Marcius (Coriolanus, Act 1, Sc. 1).

What's the matter,

That in these several places of the city  
You cry against the noble senate, who,  
Under the gods, keep you in awe, which else  
Would feed on one another?

5. bear such a close resemblance to R. Hanina's words, that the suggestion has been made that the Poet was cognizant of them through the Latin translation of Aboth by Paulus Fagius which was published in 1541 (see L. Kelner in the Hebrew periodical D'VIR, Berlin, 1923, vol. 1, p. 287). It is, however, quite probable that Shakespeare merely had in his mind the scriptural verse:

If it had not been the Lord who was for us,  
When men rose up against us,  
Then they had swallowed us up alive,  
When their wrath was kindled against us.

Ps. CXXIV, 2, 3.

6. A literal rendering of Job XXXVII, 23.
7. Ps CXLVII, 5.
8. Ex. XV, 6.
9. When the Almighty restrains His power, by tempering Justice with Mercy.
10. When Divine Power is exercised against His enemies.

11. Isa. XXVII, 4.
12. Nah. I, 2.
13. V. nn. 6-7.
14. That I would not be in wrath with thee (Isa. LIV, 9).
15. According to this explanation the whole verse applies to Israel.
16. The statement that in dealing with Israel, God is ever mindful of His oft repeated promise of their eternal preservation.
17. Zech. XII, 9.
18. The reading in editions is [H] which Jastrow connects with the Latin benignae, favorable side. Kohut, however, points out that MSS. have [H] from root [H] which he associates with a Persian word meaning a book.
19. Job XXX, 24.
20. Ezek. XXI, 32.
21. Little at a time; a play on the word [H] (*pid*) which stands here for destruction but which also means picking with the beak.
22. A homiletical rendering of the phrase [H] — by picking they have salvation.
23. [H] conveying the double sense of cry and salvation.
24. Hos. VII, 13, v. RV.
25. Ibid. 15.
26. [H] (Yasser) stands both for training and chastising.
27. Sectaries, dissenters; used generally as a designation for the early (Jewish) Christians. From many places in the Talmud it appears that to taunt Rabbis, particularly about difficult biblical passages, was a favorite practice of the Minim.
28. [As honorarium for his work either (a) as teacher to the Minim (Herford, Christianity in Talmud and Midrash p. 267f) or (b) as assistant collector of imperial revenues (Bacher A. d. Pal. Am., II, 96 ff.) or (c) simply as a scholar, v. B.B. 8b.]
29. Amos III, 2.
30. [I.e., those of Babylonia.]
31. So does God punish Israel only by intermittent visitations.
32. Gen. XVIII, 25.
33. The word Halilah [H] is here connected with [H] *Hol* profane, as secondary root of [H].
34. Ezek. XXI, 8.
35. Ibid. IX, 6.
36. Ps. VII, 12.
37. Nah. 1, 6.
38. As the merits of some may atone for the rest. Cp. *infra* 5a.
39. [The duration of the moment is given variously in different parts of the Talmud. V. Feldman, W. M. Rabbinical Mathematics, etc., p. 188.]

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

## ‘Abodah Zarah 4b

who knew the knowledge of the Most High.<sup>1</sup> Is that possible? He did not know the mind of his animal, how could he have known the mind of the Most High! (What is meant by the words 'he did not know the mind of his animal'? — At the time when he was seen riding on his ass, they said to him, 'Why do you not ride on a horse?'<sup>2</sup> And he replied, 'I consigned mine to the meadow.' Whereupon the ass said,<sup>3</sup> Am I not thy ass — 'Just for carrying burdens,' he interrupted; she continued, upon whom thou hast ridden — 'Only casually' he again Interrupted; but she continued, ever since I was thine? 'What is more [she added] I have carried you by day and have been thy companion by night;' for the word I was wont [hiskanti], used here, is analogous to the word let her be his companion [sokeneth] used elsewhere.)<sup>4</sup> What, then, is the meaning of *He knew the knowledge of the Most High?* — He knew the exact hour when the Holy One, blessed be He, is angry. This, indeed, is what the Prophet is alluding to when he says, O my people, remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam son of Beor answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal; that ye may know the righteousness of the Lord.<sup>5</sup> Said R. Eleazar: The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Israel, O my people, see how many righteous acts I did for you, in that I abstained from anger all those days, for had I been in anger, none would have remained or been spared of Israel's enemies.<sup>6</sup> This, too, is what Balaam refers to when he says, How can I curse, seeing that God doth not curse, and how can I be wrathful, seeing that the Lord hath not been wrathful?<sup>7</sup> And how long does His wrath last? — A moment [Rega']. And how long is a Rega'? Said Amemar (others say, Rabina): As long as it takes to utter this word. And whence do we know that His wrath lasts a moment? — Because it is written, For His anger is for a moment, His favor is for a life-time;<sup>8</sup> or, if you wish, from this verse: Hide thyself for a little moment, until the wrath be past.<sup>9</sup> When is He wrathful? — Said

Abaye: During the first three hours,<sup>10</sup> when the comb of the cock is white. And is it not white at all other times? — At other times it has red streaks, at that time there are no red streaks in it.

R. Joshua b. Levy used to be pestered by a Min [with taunts] about scriptural verses. One day the Rabbi took a cock and, placed it between the legs of the bed and watched it, thinking. 'When that hour will arrive, I shall curse him.' When that hour did arrive, he was dozing. Whereupon he said: You can learn from this that it is not proper to act thus: His tender mercies are over all His works<sup>11</sup> is what Scripture says, and it also says. Neither is it good for the righteous to punish.<sup>12</sup>

It was taught in the name of R. Meir: It is when the kings place their crowns on their heads and bow down to the sun,<sup>13</sup> that the Holy One, blessed be He, at once becomes wrathful.

Said R. Joseph: No one should recite the Prayer<sup>14</sup> of the Additional Service on the first day of the New Year,<sup>15</sup> during the first three hours of the day, in private,<sup>16</sup> lest, since judgment is then proceeding, his deeds may be scrutinized and the prayer rejected. But if that be so, it should apply to congregational prayer also! — The [collective] merits of a congregation are greater. In that case, [the Prayer] of the Morning Service, too, should not be recited in private! — That is not so, since there is sure to be a congregation praying at the same time,<sup>17</sup> the prayer will not be rejected. But have you not said,<sup>18</sup> 'During the first three hours the Holy One, blessed be He, is occupying Himself with the Torah, during the second three He sits in judgment over the whole world'? — You may reverse [the order]; or, if you wish, you may say it need not be reversed: [while occupied with] the Torah, which Scripture designates as 'truth', as it is written, buy the truth and sell it not,<sup>19</sup> the Holy One, blessed be He, will not overstep the line of justice; [but when sitting in] judgment, which is not designated by

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

Scripture as 'truth',<sup>20</sup> the Holy One, blessed be He, may overstep the line of justice [towards mercy].

[To revert to] the above text:<sup>21</sup> 'R. Joshua b. Levi said: What is the meaning of the verse, The ordinances which I command thee this day to do them? It is that this day only is the time to do them; they cannot be done in the time to come: this day is the time in which to do them, but not in which to be rewarded for them'. R. Joshua b. Levi also said:<sup>22</sup> All the good deeds which Israel does in this world will bear testimony unto them in the world to come, as it is said, Let them bring their witnesses that they may be justified; let them hear and say it is truth. Let them bring their witnesses that they may be justified — that is Israel; let them hear and say it is truth — these are the idolaters. R. Joshua b. Levi also said:<sup>23</sup> All the good deeds which the Israelites do in this world will come and flutter before the faces of the idolaters in the world to come, as it is said, Keep therefore and do them, for this, your wisdom and understanding [will be] in the eyes of the peoples.<sup>24</sup> It does not say in the presence of the peoples, but, in the eyes of the peoples; that teaches you that they will come and flutter before the faces of the idolaters in the world to come. R. Joshua b. Levi further said: The Israelites made the [golden] calf only in order to place a good argument in the mouth of the penitents,<sup>25</sup> as it is said, O that they had such a heart as this always, to fear Me and keep all My commandments, etc.<sup>26</sup>

This last statement accords with what R. Johanan said in the name of R. Simeon b. Yohai: David was not the kind of man to do that act,<sup>27</sup> nor was Israel the kind of people to do that act.<sup>28</sup> David was not the kind of man to do that act, as it is written, My heart is slain within me;<sup>29</sup> nor were the Israelites the kind of people to commit that act, for it is said, O that they had such a heart as this always, etc. Why, then, did they act thus?

1. Num. XXIV, 16.

2. As a man of high rank would do when on an urgent errand.
3. Num. XXII, 30.
4. I Kings I, 2 [H] and [H]
5. Micah VI, 5.
6. A euphemistic substitution for Israel.
7. Literal rendering of Num. XXIII, 8.
8. Ps. XXX, 6.
9. Isa. XXVI, 20.
10. Of the day, the day always consisting of 12 hours, from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.
11. Ps. CXLV, 9.
12. Prov. XVII, 26.
13. Generally during the first three hours of the day.
14. I.e., the part called 'Amidah. P.B., 245.
15. Which is also the Day of Judgment.
16. Without a congregation.
17. Though not in the same place; as the Morning Service must be terminated by noon, whereas the Additional Service may be held any time during the day.
18. Supra 3b.
19. Prov. XXIII, 23.
20. Judgment may be modified by equity, but Truth is rigid and unyielding.
21. Supra 3a.
22. Ibid. 2a.
23. 'Er. 22a.
24. Literal rendering of Deut. IV, 6.
25. To rely on the efficacy of repentance, however grievous their sins might be.
26. Deut. V, 26 which shows that they possessed all the self-discipline that could be desired.
27. Relating to Bathsheba.
28. The worship of the golden calf.
29. This literal rendering of Ps. CIX, 22 is taken to mean that David's inclinations had been completely conquered by himself.

## 'Abodah Zarah 5a

[God predestined it so] in order to teach thee that if an individual hath sinned [and hesitates about the effect of repentance] he could be referred to the individual [David], and if a community commit a sin they should be told: Go to the community.<sup>1</sup> And both these instances are necessary; for if [the case of] the individual only were mentioned. [it might have been thought that pardon is granted] because his sin is not generally known, but in the case of a community whose sins are publicly known it might not be so; if, on the other hand, the case of a community

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

only were mentioned, it might have been thought, because they command greater mercy,<sup>2</sup> but with an individual, whose merits are not so numerous, it is not so; hence both are necessary.

This accords with the following saying of R. Samuel b. Nahmani, who said in the name of R. Jonathan: What is the meaning of the verse The saying of David the son of Jesse, and the saying of the man raised on high.<sup>3</sup> [It means this:] The saying of David the son of Jesse, the man who elevated the yoke of repentance.<sup>4</sup>

R. Samuel b. Nahmani in the name of R. Jonathan also said: Every good deed that one does in this world precedes him and walks in front of him in the world to come, as it is said: And thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy rearward.<sup>5</sup> Likewise, every transgression that one commits clasps him and leads him on the day of judgment, as it is said, They clasp him in the course of their way.<sup>6</sup> R. Eleazar said: It is tied on to him like a dog, as it is said, He hearkened not unto her, to lie by her, to be with her;<sup>7</sup> [it is to say that] to lie by her in this world, [would mean for him] to be with her in the world to come.

Said Resh Lakish: Come let us render gratitude to our forebears,<sup>8</sup> for had they not sinned, we should not have come to the world, as it is said: I said ye are gods and all of you sons of the Most High; now that you have spoilt your deeds, ye shall indeed die like mortals, etc.<sup>9</sup> Are we to understand that if the Israelites had not committed that sin they would not have propagated? Had it not been said, And you, be ye fruitful and multiply?<sup>10</sup> — That refers to those who lived up to the times of Sinai. But of those at Sinai, too, it is said, Go say to them, Return ye to your tents<sup>11</sup> which means to the joy of family life?<sup>12</sup> And is it not also said, that it might be well with them and with their children?<sup>13</sup> — It means to those of their children who stood at Sinai. But did not Resh Lakish [himself] say. What is the meaning of the verse This is the book of the

generations of Adam?<sup>14</sup> Did Adam have a book? What it implies is that the Holy One, blessed be He, showed to Adam every [coming] generation with its expositors, every generation with its sages, every generation with its leaders; when he reached the generation of R. Akiba<sup>15</sup> he rejoiced at his teaching, but was grieved about his death, and said, How precious are Thy thoughts unto me, O God!<sup>16</sup> Also, what of the teaching of R. Jose:<sup>17</sup> The Son of David will only come when all the souls destined to [inhabit earthly] bodies will be exhausted, as it is said, For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth, for the spirit should fall before me and the spirits which I have made?<sup>18</sup> — Do not take Resh Lakish's saying to mean that [if our ancestor had not sinned] we should not have come to the world, but that [they would have become immortal and] we should have been [disregarded] as if we had never come to the world. Does that mean then that if they had not sinned, they would have been immune from death? But there are written [in the Torah] the chapter about the widow of a man dying without issue, and the chapter about inheritances!<sup>19</sup> — These were written conditionally. But are conditional passages written [in the Torah]? — Certainly; for R. Simeon b. Lakish said:<sup>20</sup> What is the meaning of the verse, And it was evening and it was morning the sixth day?<sup>21</sup> It teaches us that the Holy One, blessed be He, made a condition with all creation, saying, If Israel will accept the Torah all will be well, but if not, I will turn the world void and without form.

The following objection was then raised: 'The verse, O that they had such a heart as this always that it may be well with them and their children<sup>22</sup> cannot obviously refer to the abolition of the angel of death, since the decree [of death] had already been made?<sup>23</sup> It means therefore that the effect of Israel's acceptance of the Torah would be that no nation or tongue could prevail against them, as it is said, that it might be well with them and their children after them'?<sup>24</sup> He [Resh Lakish] may be of the same opinion as the

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

following Tanna, for it is taught: R. Jose said, The Israelites accepted the Torah only so that the Angel of Death should have no dominion over them, as it is said: I said ye are gods [i.e., immortals] and all of you children of the Most High, now that you have spoilt your deeds, ye shall indeed die like mortals.<sup>25</sup> But against R. Jose, too, [it may be argued] that the verse that it may be well with them and their children for ever holds out the promise of well-being but not of deathlessness? — R. Jose may reply: The abolition of death is surely as desirable a kind of well-being as you might wish for. Then how does the first Tanna<sup>26</sup> explain the phrase: Ye shall indeed die? — What may be meant here by dying is to become impoverished<sup>27</sup> for a Master has said:<sup>28</sup> Four [kinds of persons] may be regarded as dead, they are: the poor, the blind, the leprous, and the childless; the poor, for it is said, for all the men are dead which sought thy life<sup>29</sup> — now these 'men' were Dathan and Abiram, and they surely were not then dead, they only became reduced in their material circumstances; the blind, as it is said: He hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead;<sup>30</sup> the leprous, as it is said, Let her not, I pray thee, be as one who is dead;<sup>31</sup> the childless, as it is said, Give me children, or else I die.<sup>32</sup>

Our Rabbis taught: In the verse, If ye walk in my statutes,<sup>33</sup> the word if is used in the sense of an appeal, similar to the verse, O that my people would hearken unto Me, that Israel would walk in my ways... I should soon subdue their enemies;<sup>34</sup> or in the verse, O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments: Then had thy peace been as a river, thy seed also had been as the sand, etc.<sup>35</sup>

Our Rabbis taught: In the verse, O that they had such a heart alway.<sup>36</sup> Moses said to the Israelites, Ye are an ungrateful people, the offspring of an ungrateful ancestor. When the Holy One, blessed be He, said to you<sup>37</sup>. Who might grant that they had such a heart alway<sup>38</sup>, you should have said: 'Thou grant!'

[They proved themselves] ungrateful by saying. Our soul loatheth

1. I.e., the Israelites, in order to be convinced that the gates of repentance are ever open.
2. As their collective merits are greater.
3. II Sam. XXIII, 1.
4. A play on the words 'al, [H] 'on high', and 'ol, [H] 'yoke', i.e., 'duty', 'obligation'. [The way of penitence which he showed to sinners is David's distinct greatness, which set him 'on high'.]
5. Isa. LVIII, 18.
6. Homiletical rendering of Job VI, 18, based on a play on the word lapath [H] which means 'to turn aside' as well as 'to clasp', or 'cling'.]
7. Gen. XXXIX, 10.
8. Who worshipped the golden calf.
9. Ps. LXXXII, 6, which is applied to the Israelites who witnessed the revelation at Sinai.
10. Gen. IX, 7.
11. Deut. V, 27.
12. Which had been interrupted for three days (Ex. XIX, 15).
13. Deut. V, 26.
14. Gen. V, 1.
15. The great sage who died a martyr's death during the persecution of Hadrian.
16. Ps: CXXXIX, 17.
17. Yeb. 62b.
18. Isa. LVII, 16. In face of the foregoing teachings how could it be stated that had it not been for the sin of the golden calf, we should not have come into the world?
19. Which takes the incidence of death for granted.
20. Supra 3a.
21. Gen. I, 31.
22. Deut. V, 26.
23. At the worship of the golden calf.
24. How then could Resh Lakish hold that but for the golden calf worship Israel would have enjoyed physical deathlessness?
25. Ps. LXXXII, 6.
26. Who holds that the Torah was to render Israel proof against attacks by other nations.
27. Through oppression by other nations.
28. Ned. 62b.
29. Ex. IV, 19.
30. Lam. III, 6.
31. Of Miriam, who had become leprous. Num. XII, 12.
32. Gen. XXX, 1.
33. Lev. XXVI, 3.
34. Ps. LXXXI, 14-15. [Cf, the Latin si, o si, and the English 'O if I had!' in which the conditional becomes a desiderative. V. Ges. K. [1910] 151e.]

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

- 35. Isa. XLVIII, 18.
- 36. Deut. V, 26.
- 37. [So MS.M.]
- 38. Lit., rendering of preceding verse.

## ‘Abodah Zarah 5b

this light bread;<sup>1</sup> 'the offspring of an ungrateful ancestor', for it is written, The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the Tree, and I did eat.<sup>2</sup> Yet Moses indicated this to the Israelites only after forty years had passed, as it is said, And I have led you forty years in the wilderness... but the Lord hath not given you a heart to know, and eyes to see and ears to hear, unto this day.<sup>3</sup> Said Raba:<sup>4</sup> From this you can learn that it may take one forty years to know the mind of one's master.

R. Johanan said on behalf of R. Bana'ah: What is the meaning of the verse, Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters, that send forth the feet of the ox and the ass?<sup>5</sup> [It means this: [Blessed is Israel; when they occupy themselves with Torah and acts of kindness their inclination is mastered by them, not they by their inclination,<sup>6</sup> as it is said, Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters. For what is meant by 'sowing' but doing kind deeds, as it is said,<sup>7</sup> Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap according to mercy; and what is meant by 'water' is Torah, as it is said, Oh ye who are thirsty come to the water.<sup>8</sup> [The phrase,] that send forth the feet of the ox and the ass, [was explained in the] Tanna debe Eliyyahu<sup>9</sup> thus: In order to study the words of the Torah one must cultivate in oneself the [habit of] the ox for bearing a yoke and of the ass for carrying burdens.

ON THE THREE DAYS PRECEDING THEIR FESTIVALS IT IS FORBIDDEN TO DO ANY BUSINESS TRANSACTION WITH THEM. Is all this period necessary? Have we not learnt:<sup>10</sup> 'At four periods of the year it is necessary for one, when selling cattle to another for slaughter, to let him know if its dam had been sold or if its young had been

sold to be slain [the same day]:<sup>11</sup> namely, the eve of the last day of the Feast [of Tabernacles],<sup>12</sup> the eve of the first day of Passover, the eve of Pentecost, and the Eve of the New Year,<sup>13</sup> and, according to R. Jose the Galilean, also on the day preceding the Eve of the Day of Atonement, in Galilee'?<sup>14</sup> — In those cases where the animals are bought for consumption, one day is enough, but in the case where these are required for sacrifices, three days are needed.<sup>15</sup> But are three days enough in the case of sacrifices? Have we not learnt':<sup>16</sup> 'The laws relating to Passover should be discussed for thirty days before the Passover; R. Simeon b. Gamaliel says two weeks'? — We, with whom blemishes [disqualifying a sacrifice] abound, since we disqualify an offering even because of a blemish in the eye-lid, require thirty days; but for the heathen, who only take note of a missing limb, three days suffice. And so also R. Eleazar said: How do we know that [an animal] short of a limb is forbidden to Noachides [for use as a sacrifice]? — Because it is written, Of every living thing of all flesh two of every sort shall thou bring into the ark.<sup>17</sup> The Torah thus says, 'Bring such cattle whose principal limbs are living [i.e. sound]'. But is not this phrase needed to exclude such animals as are trefa,<sup>18</sup> so that they were not [brought into the ark]? — Trefa is excluded by the phrase, to keep seed alive.<sup>19</sup> This answer holds good according to the one who is of the opinion that an animal which is trefa cannot bear any young;<sup>20</sup>

1. Num. XXI, 5.
2. Gen. III, 12, wherein Adam, instead of being appreciative of his God-given gift, makes Eve an object of complaint.
3. Deut. XXIX, 3, 4.
4. Some texts have Rabbah.
5. Isa. XXXII, 20.
6. [H] i.e. character, not to be confused with the 'Evil Urge' but 'man's vital and active impulse in general'; Lazarus, M., The Ethics of Judaism II, 107.] Sending forth the ox and the ass is interpreted to mean the banishment of bestial inclinations.
7. Hos. X, 12.
8. Isa. LV, 1.

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

9. The title of a Midrash, containing chiefly Baraitas compiled by R. Anan, Bab. Amora of the 3rd cent.
10. Hul. 83a.
11. So as to avoid slaying an animal and its young on the same day (Lev. XXII, 28).
12. Which was regarded as a 'festival by itself'. On the eve of the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles, the erection of the Sukkah (the booth) did not leave much time for slaying animals.
13. As on these days preceding the respective festivals the animals would be slain for the festivals.
14. From the mention made in Lev. XXIII, 32 of the ninth day of the month Tishri, it is deduced that the partaking of meals on that day, the eve of the Day of Atonement, is as much a religious observance as the fasting on the Day of Atonement, hence the meals on that day were specially lavish. Thus, the assumption is that the animals needed for the festival are slain only on the preceding day: why then extend the prohibition to three days?
15. As they have to be prepared for the purpose beforehand.
16. Meg. 29b.
17. Gen. VI, 19. Some of these animals were intended for the purpose of sacrifices: v. Gen. VIII, 20.
18. Trefa, lit., 'torn' — connotes any animal which is mortally affected and forbidden for consumption.
19. Gen. VII, 3.
20. Zeb. 113a.

## 'Abodah Zarah 6a

but according to the one who holds that a *trefa* animal can bear, what answer would you give? — [This:] The words spoken [to Noah] are, Thou shalt bring with thee, which implies such as are like thyself. But how can we tell that Noah himself was not mortally affected? — Because he is described as perfect.<sup>1</sup> Does this not rather mean that he was perfect in his manners? — That is implied by his being described as righteous.<sup>2</sup> But does not this phrase rather mean 'perfect' in his manners and 'righteous' in his deeds? — It cannot enter your mind [in any case] that Noah himself was mortally affected; for were he so affected, would the Divine Law<sup>3</sup> have bidden him take in animals similarly affected, and keep out whole ones? Well, now that we

deduce this<sup>4</sup> from the phrase with thee, wherefore do we need the phrase to keep seed alive? — 'With thee' might mean such as could just keep him company, even if they be old or castrate, therefore the Divine Law had to indicate 'to keep seed alive.'

The question was asked: Does THREE DAYS mean inclusive of the FESTIVALS or apart from the FESTIVALS? Come and hear: R. Ishmael says: On the three preceding and the three following [days] it is forbidden.<sup>5</sup> Now if it should enter your mind that the numbers given are inclusive of the Festival itself, R. Ishmael must be taken to include the day of the Festival both in the preceding and following days!<sup>6</sup> — [Not at all!] It is only because he uses the words 'three preceding' that he also speaks of the 'three following'.<sup>7</sup>

Come then and hear the comment of R. Tahlifa b. Abdimi in the name of Samuel: According to R. Ishmael, it should always be forbidden [to transact business with idolaters because of] Sunday!<sup>8</sup> Now, were we to take it that the festival is to be included, there would still remain Wednesday and Thursday on which dealing would be permitted! — According to R. Ishmael, there is no question but that the period does not include the festivals themselves. It is only according to the Rabbis' opinion<sup>9</sup> that I ask what [is the law],

Said Rabina: Come and hear [the following Mishnah]: These are the festivals of idolaters, Kalenda, Saturnalia and Kratesis,<sup>10</sup> now R. Hanin b. Raba explained that Kalenda [lasts for] eight days after the [Winter] Equinox, and Saturnalia [is kept on the] eight days preceding the Equinox; as a mnemonic take the verse, Thou hast beset me behind and before. Now, were you inclined to think that the periods are inclusive of the Festivals, then there are [at times] ten days:<sup>11</sup> The Tanna may regard the whole Kalenda as one day.

Said R. Ashi: Come and hear: [Our Mishnah says] ON THE THREE DAYS PRECEDING THE FESTIVITIES OF THE IDOLATERS.

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

Now were it to mean that the period is to include the festival itself, it might have said, 'At the Festivals of the idolaters for three days';<sup>12</sup> or, even if you contend that the words PRECEDING THE FESTIVAL are necessary to avoid [their being applied to] those after the festival, it might still have said, 'At the festivals of the idolaters for three days preceding them';<sup>13</sup> but [from the words actually used]<sup>14</sup> you can only deduce that the period is exclusive of the festival. This is conclusive.

The question was asked: Is it [forbidden] because of the profit, or perhaps because Thou shalt not put a stumbling block before the blind?<sup>15</sup> The difference would affect a case where an idolater has an animal of his own. If you say [one must not sell him one] because of profit, here, too, the profit is derived; if however you say it is because of placing a stumbling block before the blind, here, then, he has [a sacrifice] of his own.<sup>16</sup>

And if he has one of his own does the placing of a stumbling block before the blind not apply? Have we not learnt<sup>17</sup> that R. Nathan said:

1. Gen. VI, 9.
2. Ibid.
3. Lit., 'the All-Merciful One, Whose word Scripture reveals.'
4. I.e., that *Trefa* was to be excluded from the Ark.
5. *Infra* 7b.
6. In which case the days following would have been given as two, and not three.
7. Although apart from the Festival they are, indeed, only two.
8. *Infra* 7b. Each Sunday, which is a festive day, with the three preceding and three following days would rule out the whole week. The passage in editions is obscure, owing to censorial tampering. The interpretation here given is borne out by Rashi. One might suggest the reading [H] instead of [H] 'Sunday would render it permanently forbidden'.
9. Who forbid only the preceding, but not the following days.
10. V. *infra* p. 36, note 9.

11. That is the eight Kalenda together with the two preceding days instead of the three days mentioned in the Mishnah.
12. But not PRECEDING THE FESTIVAL.
13. Implying that the prohibition refers also to the festivals themselves.
14. Which say distinctly, THREE DAYS PRECEDING THE FESTIVALS — a phrase which places the festive days themselves outside the terms of reference of the Mishnah, as too obvious to be stated.
15. Lev. XIX, 14. Is the reason for forbidding business transactions with idolaters near their festivals because any profit they may derive might be made a cause for thanksgiving to the idols, to which an Israelite should not be party, or because of the means or the opportunity that might be thus afforded to the idolater of acquiring and offering an animal for sacrifice to the idols, of the prohibition of which he may be ignorant, the Israelite thus causing him to 'stumble'?
16. The prohibition therefore should not apply.
17. Pes. 22b.

## 'Abodah Zarah 6b

How do we know that one should not hold out a cup of wine to a Nazirite<sup>1</sup> or a limb from a living animal to a Noachide?<sup>2</sup> From Scripture, which says, Thou shalt not put a stumbling block before the blind.<sup>3</sup> Now here, too, were it not held out to him he could take it himself, yet the one [who hands it] is guilty of placing a stumbling block before the blind!<sup>4</sup> Here we may be dealing with a case of two persons on opposite sides of a river.<sup>5</sup> You can prove it, indeed, by the use of the words 'one should not hold out': it does not say, 'one should not hand'. This proves it.

The question was asked: What if one did transact business?<sup>6</sup> — R. Johanan says: [The proceeds of] the transaction are forbidden. R. Simeon b. Lakish says [the proceeds of] the transaction are permitted. R. Johanan cited [the following as] an argument against Resh Lakish: As to the festivals of idolaters, if one transacts any business [the proceeds] are forbidden. Does not this refer to [the period] preceding the festivals? — No, [it refers to] the festival exclusively.

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

Some report it was R. Simeon b. Lakish who cited [this passage] as an argument against R. Johanan: 'As to the festivals of idolaters, if one transacts any business [the proceeds] are forbidden'. During their festivals only it is forbidden, but before their festival it is not? — No, by 'their festivals' the Tanna means the one as well as the other.

There is a Baraitha<sup>8</sup> which is in accordance with the view of Resh Lakish: The prohibition of transacting business with them [before their festivals] only applies to unperishable articles<sup>9</sup> but not to perishable articles; and even in the case of unperishable articles, if the transaction is made, [the proceeds] are permitted. R. Zebid learned out of the Baraitha of R. Oshaia:<sup>10</sup> An article that is perishable may be sold to them, but may not be bought from them.<sup>11</sup>

A certain Min once sent on his festival day a Caesarean *denar*<sup>12</sup> to R. Judah Nesi'a,<sup>13</sup> while Resh Lakish happened to sit before him. Said he, 'What shall I do? if I accept it, he will go and praise [the idols for it]; if I do not accept it, he will be displeased.' 'Take it,' answered Resh Lakish, 'and drop it into a well in the messenger's presence.' 'But this will displease him all the more!' 'I mean you should do it by sleight of hand.'

**TO LEND ARTICLES TO THEM OR BORROW ANY FROM THEM.** It is quite right to forbid lending to them, which benefits them; but surely borrowing from them can only mean deprivation to them! — Said Abaye: We forbid the borrowing from them as a safeguard against lending to them. But Raba said: It is all on account of their going to offer thanks.<sup>14</sup>

**TO LEND THEM MONEY OR BORROW ANY FROM THEM.** It is quite right to forbid lending them money, which profits them, but why not borrow any from them? Abaye said: The borrowing is forbidden as a safeguard against lending. Raba, however, said: Both

are [forbidden] because of their going to offer thanks.

**TO REPAY A DEBT, OR RECEIVE REPAYMENT FROM THEM.** The [forbidding of] repayment is quite right, since it benefits them, but to recover from them, surely, means to deprive them! — Said Abaye: The recovery is forbidden as a safeguard against repayment. Raba said: It is all because of their going to offer thanks.

And all [the instances given in our Mishnah] are necessary; for if it only mentioned transacting business with them, I might have said [it is forbidden] because it profits them and they will go and offer thanksgiving for it, but to borrow from them, which means a deprivation to them, would be quite in order. If [on the other hand] it only mentioned borrowing articles from them, I might have thought it is because the importance that the idolater attaches<sup>15</sup> to it [would induce him to] go and offer thanksgiving for it, but to borrow money from him might only cause him anxiety, as he might think, 'My money may not be returned again.' Were the case of lending money only mentioned, [it might be thought this is] because he might say, 'I can enforce payment,' and he would have good cause for thanksgiving, but to recover from them money which will never return to the lender we might regard as troublesome, so that he would not offer thanks for it — hence all the instances are necessary.

**R. JUDAH SAYS: WE SHOULD RECEIVE REPAYMENT FROM THEM, [AS THIS CAN ONLY DEPRESS THEM; BUT THE RABBIS SAID TO HIM: EVEN THOUGH IT IS DEPRESSING AT THE TIME, THEY ARE GLAD OF IT SUBSEQUENTLY].** Does R. Judah, then, disregard the idea that though it is depressing at the time it is pleasing subsequently? Is it not taught: R. Judah says, A woman must not smear lime on her face on Mo'ed<sup>16</sup> because it disfigures her; R. Judah, however, admits that if the lime can still be scraped off during Mo'ed, it may be applied

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

on Mo'ed for though she is troubled by it for the while, it will eventually please her!<sup>17</sup> — Said R. Nahman b. Isaac: Leave alone the laws relating to [work permitted on] Mo'ed: they are all of the trouble now, pleasure later' kind.<sup>18</sup> Rabina said: To an idolater, the matter of repayment is always irksome.

Our Mishnah is not in accord with [the opinion of] R. Joshua b. Karha. For it is taught: R. Joshua b. Karha says, A loan made against a document, should not be recovered from them,<sup>19</sup> but a loan made against the word of mouth may be recovered from them, since it is, as it were, rescued from their hands.<sup>20</sup>

R. Joseph was sitting behind R. Abba while R. Abba was sitting facing R. Huna who, as he was sitting [and lecturing], stated: [In one instance] the *halachah*<sup>21</sup> is to be decided according to R. Joshua b. Karha and [in another] the *halachah* is according to R. Judah. The law [decided] according to R. Joshua is the one about which we have just spoken; that according to R. Judah refers to what we learnt:<sup>22</sup> If one gives wool to a dyer to be dyed red and he dyed it black, or to be dyed black and he dyed it red,

1. Who is forbidden to partake of any strong drink, Num. VI, 1 seq.
2. *Supra* p. 5, note 7.
3. Lev. XIX, 14.
4. The selling of an animal to an idolater is surely analogous to this and should therefore be forbidden.
5. So that the one could not have attained the prohibited article without the agency of the other.
6. With an idolater before his festival; may he derive any benefit from the proceeds?
7. Hence this teaching is contrary to R. Johanan's ruling.
8. Tosef. A.Z. I.
9. Such as will remain in good condition till the festival.
10. R. Oshaia, and R. Hiyya, both disciples of R. Judah the prince, compiled a collection of Baraitas; v. *infra*, p. 284, n. 6.
11. As the disposal of such an article is gratifying to the idolater.

12. (i) Coined in commemoration of the coronation; or (ii) coined at Caesarea in Cappadocia, the only Greek colony that enjoyed the right of coinage in gold under the Romans; v. Zuckermann, Ueber Talm. Gewich, u. Mun, p. 28.
13. Judah II, lived in Tiberias in the middle of the third century.
14. The lender's dependence on him is also a matter of gratification.
15. The knowledge that the Israelite is in need of his articles, coupled with the certainty of having them safely returned, would give him great satisfaction.
16. Full term, *Hol Hammo'ed* [H] — lit., 'the weekdays of the Festival' — the intermediate days of Passover and the Feast of Tabernacles, when many kinds of work, including those necessary for personal appearance, forbidden on Festivals, are permitted. The lime which remained smeared on the face for some days showed its beautifying effect on its removal.
17. M.K., 8b. Thus R. Judah expresses the very opinion which he seems to oppose in our Mishnah.
18. Such as the slaying of animals for consumption, the preparation of food-articles and the like.
19. From idolaters before their festivals, as the redemption of the bond is a matter of gratification.
20. Tosef. A.Z. Chap. I; v, also B.K. 102a.
21. I.e. 'the regulated law', v. *Glos.*
22. B.K. 100b.

## 'Abodah Zarah 7a

R. Meir says: The dyer should refund to the owner the value of his wool.<sup>1</sup> R. Judah says: If the increase in value [through the dyeing] exceeds the outlay thereon, the owner may refund the outlay, or if the outlay exceeds the increased value, he may offer him the increase in value.<sup>2</sup> Thereupon R. Joseph turned his face away [and remarked]: It was right and necessary [to state] that the *halachah* is according to R. Joshua b. Karha.<sup>3</sup> We might indeed have applied the principle:<sup>4</sup> '[Where the opinions of] an individual and of a majority [conflict] the *halachah* is according to the majority', so we are given to understand that here the *halachah* is according to the individual. But wherefore state that the law is according to R. Judah? It

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

is a commonplace that where differing opinions [are quoted, and one of these is] subsequently quoted anonymously, the law is decided according to the anonymous opinion.<sup>5</sup> Now, these differing opinions are quoted in Baba Kamma, and there is the subsequent anonymous opinion in Baba Mezi'a,<sup>6</sup> where we learn that the party which changes [an agreement] has the lesser right, likewise whichever party alters his mind has the lesser right!<sup>7</sup>

And as to R. Huna?<sup>8</sup> — [His statement is necessary] because the Mishnah has not [retained its original] order,<sup>9</sup> so that it might be said that the anonymous statement was quoted earlier and the differing opinions later. But if that were so, you can apply to every case of differing opinions followed by an anonymous one the argument that the Mishnah has not retained its original order!<sup>10</sup> R. Huna, however, [could reply thus]: The argument that the Mishnah has not its original order could not be admitted in regard to the same Tractate, but it could be used in regard to two Tractates.<sup>11</sup> And as to R. Joseph?<sup>12</sup> — He holds that all [those dealing with] torts<sup>13</sup> are to be regarded as one tractate; or, if you wish, it could be said, because this rule is included among legal and fixed decisions, thus: 'The party which changes an agreement has the lesser right; and whichever party alters his mind has the lesser right.'<sup>14</sup>

Our Rabbis taught:<sup>15</sup> One should not say to another [on the Sabbath], 'We shall see whether you will stay on with me [to do work] this evening.'<sup>16</sup> R. Joshua b. Karha says: One may say to another, 'We shall see whether you will stay on with me this evening.' Said Rabbah b. Bar-Hana in the name of R. Johanan, the *halachah* is according to R. Joshua b. Karha.

Our Rabbis taught: If one consulted a sage who declared [the person or article] as unclean, he should not consult another sage who might declare it as clean; if one sage

declared as forbidden, one should not consult another sage who might declare as permitted. If of two sages present one declares as unclean and the other as clean, one forbids and the other permits, then if one of them is superior to the other in learning and in point of number<sup>17</sup> his opinion should be followed, otherwise, the one holding the stricter view should be followed. R. Joshua b. Karha says: In laws of the Torah<sup>18</sup> follow the stricter view, in those of Soferim<sup>19</sup> follow the more lenient view.<sup>20</sup> Said R. Joseph: The *halachah* is according to R. Joshua b. Karha.

Our Rabbis taught: If they<sup>21</sup> reverted [to their usual practices] none of them should ever be accepted.<sup>22</sup> This is the opinion of R. Meir. R. Judah says: If they reverted in secret matters, they should not be accepted,<sup>23</sup> but if in things done in public they should be accepted.<sup>24</sup> Some say that, if they observed [in their penitent state] even secret things, they should be accepted,

1. In the undyed state, and he has the right to retain the dyed wool, however much its value may have increased.
2. And claim the wool; since, in the case of the dyed wool being worth more than undyed wool plus the cost of dyeing, the dyer will benefit by miscarrying the order.
3. That a loan made on a verbal understanding may be recovered from idolaters, contrary to the opinion of the Rabbis of our Mishnah.
4. Ber. 9a.
5. Yeb. 42b.
6. 15a.
7. And since here the dyer, by miscarrying the order, changed the agreement, it might be taken for granted that he would be placed at a disadvantage in accordance with the ruling of R. Judah.
8. What was the object of his assertion?
9. In which it was originally propounded.
10. And since this principle is generally accepted (v. Yeb 42) R. Huna's explanation is inadmissible.
11. And in this case the differing opinions and the anonymous one are each in a separate Tractate; R. Huna's statement was therefore necessary.
12. Why did he then disapprove of R. Huna's statement?
13. Baba Kamma, Baba Mezi'a, and Baba Bathra.

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

14. It was therefore too obvious to be stated that the decision is according to R. Judah.
15. Shab. 150a.
16. Since he engages him, even though by mere insinuation, on the Sabbath to do work.
17. I.e., of disciples or followers.
18. Laws explicitly stated in Scripture.
19. Laws enacted by the Scribes (sofer-scribe) from the time of Ezra onward.
20. V. Tosef. 'Eduy. I.
21. I.e., 'amme ha-arez — people who are ignorant and careless about religious observances, particularly those relating to the tithe which they would generally withhold from the Levite — their utensils and food articles were consequently held by the Haber (v. note 7) in Levitical uncleanliness. This made them unacceptable to the Haber's society. And the discussion that follows is whether they could be accepted again.
22. Regarded as Haberim (plural of Haber), those particular about religious observances and the giving of the tithe. On Haber v. Weinberg and Krauss, Jeshurun 1929, 1930.
23. They prove themselves hypocrites and are not to be trusted.
24. Their frankness may be taken to show that they give an undertaking to act rightly and will stand by it.

## ‘Abodah Zarah 7b

but if only things done in public they should not be accepted. R. Simeon and R. Joshua b. Karha say: Whether in the one case or in the other they should be accepted, for it is said, Return, O backsliding children.<sup>1</sup> Said R. Isaac, the native of Kefar Acco, in the name of R. Johanan: The *halachah* is according to the latter pair.

**MISHNAH.** R. ISHMAEL SAYS ON THE THREE PRECEDING DAYS AND THE THREE FOLLOWING DAYS IT IS FORBIDDEN;<sup>2</sup> BUT THE SAGES SAY BEFORE THEIR FESTIVITIES IT IS FORBIDDEN, BUT AFTER THEIR FESTIVITIES IT IS PERMITTED.

**GEMARA.** Said R. Tahlifa b. Abdimi in the name of Samuel: According to R. Ishmael it should always be forbidden [to transact business with idolaters because of] Sunday.<sup>3</sup>

BUT THE SAGES SAY, BEFORE THEIR FESTIVITIES IT IS FORBIDDEN, BUT AFTER THEIR FESTIVITIES IT IS PERMITTED. Is not [the opinion of] the Sages identical with that of the first Tanna?<sup>4</sup> — The exclusion of the festivals themselves is the point on which they differ. The first Tanna holds that the period is exclusive of the festival, but these latter Rabbis hold that it includes the festivals. Or it might probably be said that they differ on the question of business transactions carried out,<sup>5</sup> the first Tanna holding that [the proceeds of] such transactions are permissible, while our latter Rabbis hold that [the proceeds of] these transactions are forbidden. It might also be said that this ruling of Samuel is a matter on which they differ. For Samuel said:<sup>6</sup> In the Diaspora<sup>7</sup> the prohibition is limited to their festival day only. The first Tanna accepts Samuel's ruling, while our last Rabbis do not hold with Samuel. You may further say that they differ in the ruling of Nahum the Mede. For it is taught:<sup>8</sup> Nahum the Mede says, The prohibition applies to only one day before their Festivals. The first Tanna does not accept the ruling of Nahum the Mede, and our latter Rabbis do agree with Nahum the Mede's ruling.

To revert to [the above text]: 'Nahum the Mede says: The prohibition applies to only one day before their festivals.' Thereupon they said to him: 'This matter ought to be suppressed and left unsaid.'<sup>9</sup> But are there not our latter Rabbis who hold the same opinion?<sup>10</sup> — Our latter Rabbis may be none other than Nahum the Mede.<sup>11</sup>

Another [Baraita] taught: Nahum the Mede says, One may sell [to idolaters] a male or old horse in war time.<sup>12</sup> Whereupon they said to him: This matter ought to be suppressed and left unsaid. But is there not Ben Bathra who holds the same opinion; for we learnt: Ben Bathra permits [the sale of] a horse?<sup>13</sup> — Ben Bathra makes no distinction between the sale of horses and mares, whereas Nahum the Mede, who does make that distinction will

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

share the opinion of the Rabbis;<sup>14</sup> but according to the Rabbis: This matter ought to be suppressed and left unsaid.<sup>15</sup>

It is [further] taught: Nahum the Mede says: The dill plant is subject to tithe whether [in its state of] seeds, or vegetables, or pods.<sup>16</sup> Whereupon he was told: This matter ought to be suppressed and left unsaid. But is there not R. Eliezer who holds the same opinion; for we learnt: R. Eliezer said: The dill plant is subject to tithe whether in its state of seeds, or vegetable, or pods?<sup>17</sup> — There the garden variety is meant.<sup>18</sup>

Said R. Aha b. Minyomi to Abaye: A great man has come from our place,<sup>19</sup> but whatever he says he is told that it ought to be suppressed and left unsaid. He replied: There is one instance in which we do follow his ruling. It is taught: Nahum the Mede says: One may ask for one's own needs in the course of the Benediction [concluding with] 'Who heareth prayer.'<sup>20</sup> — As to this ruling, he said, an exception had to be made, for it is hanging on strong ropes!<sup>21</sup> It is taught: R. Eliezer says: One should first pray for his own needs and then recite The Prayer.<sup>22</sup> as it is said; A prayer for the afflicted [himself] when he is overwhelmed, and [then] poureth forth his meditation before the Lord;<sup>23</sup> and by 'meditation,' only prayer is meant, as it is said, And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide.<sup>24</sup> But R. Joshua says: One should first recite The Prayer and then ask for his own needs, as it is said, I pour out my meditation<sup>25</sup> before Him [then] I declare my [own] affliction before Him.<sup>26</sup> Now, as to R. Eliezer, what of the verse, I pour out my meditation, etc.? — He interprets it thus, 'I pour out my meditation before Him when I had already declared my [own] affliction.' And as to R. Joshua [how does he explain] the verse, A prayer for the afflicted when he is overwhelmed, etc.? — He explains it thus: When is the [personal] 'prayer for the afflicted' offered? When he had poured forth his meditation before the Lord. Well now, as for these scriptural verses, they prove no

more the statement of the one than they prove that of the other; is there any [principle] underlying their dispute? — It is the one explained by R. Simlai; for R. Simlai gave the following exposition:<sup>27</sup> One should always recount the praises of the Omnipresent and then offer his supplications.<sup>28</sup> Whence do we learn it? From [the prayer of] our Teacher Moses which is recorded thus: O Lord God, Thou hast begun to show Thy servant Thy greatness, etc., and then only, Let me go over, I pray Thee, and see the good land.<sup>29</sup>

1. Jer. III, 14. Thus repentant sinners are to be accepted unconditionally.
2. The prohibitions enumerated in the preceding Mishnah (*supra* 2a) extend to three days before the idolaters' festivities and three days after them.
3. V. p. 24, n. 9.
4. Of the Mishnah *supra* 2a.
5. *Infra* 18b.
6. *Infra* 11b.
7. Lit., 'exile', applied to all places outside Palestine in which Jews resided. Many restrictions as to idolaters were waived outside Palestine, since 'gentiles of the lands other than Palestine are not really idolaters' (Hul. 13b).
8. Tosef. A.Z. I.
9. 'Inadmissible', 'ruled out of court'.
10. According to the reply given last.
11. His opinion being recorded in the Mishnah anonymously in the form of 'the Sages say'.
12. 'Er. 83a. The sale of big cattle to an idolater is forbidden (v. *infra* 14b) out of consideration for the animal: as, being used for labor, it would be deprived of its weekly day of rest. The sale, however, in war time, of a male horse, which is not easily disciplined (V.J. A.Z. I, 640a) or of an old one, to which the general objection of 'placing a weapon in the hand of a heathen' is not quite applicable, might be permitted as a matter of rare occurrence.
13. *Infra* 17a. Since it is used chiefly for riding, and the carrying of a rider is not to be regarded as carrying a burden (on the Sabbath) according to the dictum 'a living being carries itself'.
14. Who prohibit the sale of a horse, v. *infra* 14b and 16a.
15. As the Rabbis prohibit the sale of all kinds of horses, and do not admit the distinction made by Nahum.
16. Vegetables are only subject to tithe when reaching the state in which they are used as

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

- food; in the case of the dill plant, the seeds and the leaves, as well as the pods, are used as such.
17. Ma'as. IV, 5. Bek. 2a.
  18. Which is eaten in the various forms mentioned; but generally, as grown in fields, it is only used as food in its seed-state.
  19. Media, whence Nahum hailed, was also their native place. Weiss Dor. I, 182, sees in this remark a bitter complaint against Palestinian authorities, who are alleged to take up a derogatory attitude towards Sages coming from other lands.
  20. The sixteenth of the Eighteen (now nineteen) Benedictions which are the main part of each of the three daily Services. P. B. p. 30.
  21. An idiom meaning. 'It is based on high authority'. Contrarily, that for which there is but slender authority is characterized as 'a mountain hanging on a hair'; v. Hag. 10a.
  22. I.e. the Eighteen Benedictions, also called Shemone-'Esre, or 'Amidah.
  23. Ps. CII, 1.
  24. Gen. XXIV, 63, which is interpreted that Isaac was then offering the now statutory afternoon Prayer (Minhah), the institution of which tradition ascribes to the second Patriarch (Ber. 26b).
  25. I.e., the statutory Prayer.
  26. Ps. CXLII, 3.
  27. Ber. 32b.
  28. praise is a higher form of Divine worship than supplication. A man should offer thanks for what he has, before he thinks of what he lacks.
  29. Deut. III, 24, 25.

## 'Abodah Zarah 8a

Now R. Joshua holds that we are guided by [the example of] Moses,<sup>1</sup> while R. Eliezer says we should not follow the example of Moses; it is different with Moses whose greatness is so outstanding.<sup>2</sup> The Sages, however, say [the decision is] neither according to the one nor according to the other, but that one should pray for his personal needs at the Benediction [concluding with], 'Who heareth prayer'. Rab Judah in the name of Samuel declared that the *halachah* is that one should pray for his personal needs only at the Benediction [ending with], 'Who heareth prayer'.

Said Rab Judah the son of Samuel b. Shilath in the name of Rab: Even though it was said that one should pray for his private needs

only at 'Who heareth prayer,' nevertheless, if he is disposed to supplement any of the Benedictions [by personal supplications] relevant to the subject of each particular Benediction, he may do so. [So also] said R. Hiyya b. Ashi in the name of Rab:<sup>3</sup> Even though it has been said that one should pray for his own needs only at 'Who heareth prayer', still if [for example] one has a sick person at home, he may offer [an extempore] prayer at the Benediction for the Sick;<sup>4</sup> or if he is in want of sustenance, he may offer a [special] prayer in connection with the Benediction for [Prosperous] Years.<sup>4</sup> R. Joshua b. Levi said: Though it has been decided that private prayers for personal needs only may be inserted in the Benediction 'Who heareth prayer',<sup>5</sup> yet if one is disposed to offer supplication after The Prayer to the extent of the Day of Atonement Service,<sup>6</sup> he may do so.<sup>7</sup>

**MISHNAH. THESE ARE THE FESTIVITIES OF THE IDOLATERS:**<sup>8</sup> KALENDA,<sup>9</sup> SATURNALIA,<sup>10</sup> KRATESIS,<sup>11</sup> THE ANNIVERSARY OF ACCESSION TO THE THRONE AS WELL AS [ROYAL] BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES OF DEATHS. THIS IS R. MEIR'S OPINION. BUT THE SAGES SAY, A DEATH AT WHICH BURNING [OF ARTICLES OF THE DEAD] TAKES PLACE IS ATTENDED BY IDOLATRY, BUT WHERE THERE IS NOT SUCH BURNING THERE IS NO IDOLATRY. HOWEVER, THE DAY OF SHAVING ONES BEARD OR LOCK OF HAIR,<sup>12</sup> OR THE DAY OF LANDING AFTER A SEA VOYAGE, OR THE DAY OF RELEASE FROM PRISON, OR IF AN IDOLATER HOLDS A BANQUET FOR HIS SON — THE PROHIBITION ONLY APPLIES TO THAT DAY AND THAT PARTICULAR PERSON.

**GEMARA.** Said R. Hanan b. Raba: KALENDA is kept on the eight days following the [winter] equinox. SATURNALIA on the eight days preceding the equinox. As a mnemonic take the verse, Thou hast beset me behind and before.<sup>13</sup>

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

Our Rabbis taught:<sup>14</sup> When primitive Adam saw the day getting gradually shorter, he said, 'Woe is me, perhaps because I have sinned, the world around me is being darkened and returning to its state of chaos and confusion; this then is the kind of death to which I have been sentenced from Heaven!' So he began keeping an eight days' fast. But as he observed the winter equinox and noted the day getting increasingly longer, he said, 'This is the world's course', and he set forth to keep an eight days' festivity. In the following year he appointed both<sup>15</sup> as festivals. Now, he fixed them for the sake of Heaven, but the [heathens] appointed them for the sake of idolatry.

This is quite right according to the one who holds that the world was created in Tishri,<sup>16</sup> so that he saw the short days before seeing the longer days; but according to the one holding that the world was created in Nisan, Adam must have seen the long days as well as the short ones!<sup>17</sup> — Still, he had not yet seen the very short days.

Our Rabbis taught: When Adam, on the day of his creation, saw the setting of the sun he said! 'Alas, it is because I have sinned that the world around me is becoming dark; the universe will now become again void and without form — this then is the death to which I have been sentenced from Heaven!' So he sat up all night fasting and weeping and Eve was weeping opposite him. When however dawn broke, he said: 'This is the usual course of the world!' He then arose and offered up a bullock whose horns were developed before its hoofs, as it is said [by the Psalmist], And it [my thanksgiving] shall please the Lord better than a bullock that hath horns and hoofs.<sup>18</sup> Rab Judah said in the name of Samuel: The bullock which Adam offered had only one horn in its forehead, as the verse says, And it shall please the Lord better than a bullock that is horned and hoofed. But does not 'horned' imply two horns? — Said R. Nahman b. Isaac: 'Horned' is here spelt [defectively].<sup>19</sup>

R. Mattena asked: When Rome appoints a Kalend and there are towns in its vicinity subjected to her, is it forbidden or permitted [to transact business, etc.] in those towns?<sup>20</sup> R. Joshua b. Levi said: On the Kalends the prohibition applies to all. R. Johanan said: The prohibition applies only to [the Romans] who celebrate it. A Baraitha is taught which accords with the view of R. Johanan: Even though it was said that when Rome institutes Kalends they extend to all the towns in its vicinity which are subjected to it, yet the actual prohibition is only in regard to those who celebrate it. As to Saturnalia, Kratesis, Royal Celebrations, or the day on which a king is proclaimed, the prohibition applies to the period preceding them, but thereafter it is permitted. If an idolater gives a banquet for his son the prohibition is limited to that day and that man.

Said R. Ashi: We ourselves have learnt likewise. For our Mishnah states<sup>21</sup> [AS TO] THE DAY OF SHAVING ONE'S BEARD OR LOCK OF HAIR, OR THE DAY OF LANDING AFTER A SEA VOYAGE, OR THE DAY OF RELEASE FROM PRISON — THE PROHIBITION ONLY APPLIES TO THAT DAY AND THAT PARTICULAR PERSON. Now, it rightly says. THAT DAY, thereby excluding the preceding and following [days], but what is THAT MAN meant to exclude, unless it excludes those subjected to him? From here then you deduce it!

It has been taught: R. Ishmael says,<sup>22</sup> Israelites who reside outside Palestine serve idols though in pure innocence. If, for example, an idolater gives a banquet for his son and invites all the Jews in his town, then, even though they eat of their own and drink of their own and their own attendant waits on them, Scripture regards them as if they had eaten of the sacrifices to dead idols, as it is said, And he will call thee and thou wilt eat of his sacrifice.<sup>23</sup> But does not this apply to actual eating? — Said Raba: If that were so, the verse would have only said, And thou shalt eat of his sacrifice; why then say, And he

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

will call thee? That extends the prohibition to the time of the participation. Hence

1. Hence the Shemone-'Esre, declaring God's praise, should be recited before any private petition.
2. An ordinary man should proceed direct with his petition; to dilate might be considered as presumptuous.
3. Ber. 31b.
4. P.B. p. 47.
5. Ibid. p. 49.
6. Which may last all day.
7. While the obligatory prayers are necessarily fixed, private extemporary prayers are desirable.
8. Referred to in our Mishnah (*supra* 2a).
9. The Roman New Year which was observed as a day of rejoicing.
10. [G] A Roman festival beginning on the 17th December and lasting several days. 'Feasting and revelry and all the mad pursuits of pleasure are the features which seem to have specially marked this carnival of antiquity' (Frazer, *Golden Bough*, III, p. 138).
11. [G]. A Roman festival commemorating the conquest of Eastern Countries.
12. Which Greek and Roman youths, on arriving at puberty, offered to the gods.
13. Ps. CXXXIX, 5. As an aid to remembering that KALENDA mentioned first in the Mishnah is behind the equinox and SATURNALIA mentioned later is before it.
14. V. ARN ch. VIII.
15. The eight days preceding and following the equinox (v. p. 8, note 2).
16. The Jewish year has two starting points. The New Year begins on the 1st of Tishri (about September) yet in counting months, Nisan (about March) is taken first. Hence the different opinions as to which of these two dates formed the beginning of the year ONE (v. R. H. 10a und 11b).
17. His experience during the spring and summer should have made him familiar with the fluctuation of the days.
18. Ps. LXIX, 32, which is taken to refer to sacrifice offered by Adam, since the animal is described as [H] lit. a bullock-ox, implying an animal which was mature in form though young in age. [H] denotes a mature ox, whereas [H] designated an ox even of the tenderest age; cf. Lev. XXII, 27 (Rashi).
19. [H] ('horned') owing to its defective spelling, instead of [H], may be read [H] (of a horn).
20. Whose inhabitants do not observe the festivity, lest their profit, which generally goes to Rome, be used for procuring offerings to idols.

21. V. *supra* p. 36.

22. Tosef. V and ARN XXVI have 'R. Simeon b. Eleazar'.

23. Ex. XXXIV, 15.

## 'Abodah Zarah 8b

during the entire thirty days [following a marriage celebration] whether it is or it is not mentioned that the banquet is connected with the wedding, [participation in it] is forbidden; from that time onward, however, if it is stated that it is connected with the wedding, it is forbidden, but if its connection with the wedding is not mentioned, it is permitted. And how long [is it forbidden] if it is connected with the wedding? — Said R. Papa: For a twelvemonth thereafter. And how long is it forbidden beforehand? — Said R. Papa in the name of Raba: From the time when the barley is placed in the tub.<sup>1</sup> Is it, then, permitted [to partake of food in the house] after the twelvemonth? Yet R. Isaac the son of R. Mesharsheya, who happened to be in the house of a certain idolater more than a year after a marriage, when he heard that they were feasting [because of that event] abstained from eating there! It is different with R. Isaac the son of R. Mesharsheya who was a highly esteemed man.<sup>2</sup>

KRATESIS, etc. What does KRATESIS mean? Said Rab Judah in the name of Samuel: [the anniversary of] the day on which Rome extended her dominion.<sup>3</sup> But have we not learnt Kratesis and the day on which Rome extended her dominion? — Said R. Joseph: Rome extended her dominion twice; once in the days of Cleopatra<sup>4</sup> the queen [of Egypt] and [once before] in the days of the Greeks. For when R. Dimi came<sup>5</sup> he said: Thirty-two battles did the Romans fight against the Greeks and could not prevail against them until the Romans made an alliance with the Israelites. And these were the conditions made with them: If the kings are [chosen] from among us, the princes should be chosen from your midst, and if the kings are chosen from among you, the princes shall

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

come from our midst. Then the Romans sent word to the Greeks as follows: Hitherto we have been fighting matters out, now let us argue them out: Of a pearl and a precious stone which shall form a setting for which?<sup>6</sup> They sent the reply: 'The pearl for the precious stone.' And of a precious stone and an onyx which shall form a setting to the other? 'The precious stone to the onyx.' was the reply. And of an onyx and the Book of the Law which shall serve as the setting for the other? 'The onyx for the Book of the Law,' they replied. The Romans then sent word: In that case, the Book of the Law is in our possession, for Israel is with us. Thereupon the Greeks gave in.

For twenty-six years did the Romans keep faith with Israel, thereafter they subdued them.

What scriptural support did they have for their former attitude and what for the latter? To the former may be applied the words: Let us take our journey and let us go.<sup>7</sup> And to the latter may be applied the words: Let my lord now pass before his servant.<sup>8</sup>

Whence can it be proved that Rome kept faith with Israel for twenty six years? [From the following:]<sup>9</sup> For R. Kahana said: When R. Ishmael b. Jose was ill they sent word to him: Rabbi, tell us the two or three things which thou hadst told us in thy father's name. He then told them: One hundred and eighty years before the Temple was destroyed did Rome cast her rule over Israel; eighty years before the destruction of the Temple it was decreed that neighboring countries of Palestine<sup>10</sup> were to be regarded as ritually unclean,<sup>11</sup> and likewise all glass vessels.<sup>12</sup> Forty years before the Temple was destroyed did the Sanhedrin abandon [the Temple] and held its sittings in Hanuth.<sup>13</sup> Has this any legal bearing? — Said R. Isaac b. Abdimi: It indicates that [from that time onward] they did not deal with cases of fines.<sup>14</sup> 'Cases of fines'! How can that enter your mind? Has not Rab Judah said [the following] in the name of Rab: Verily that

man, R. Judah b. Baba by name, be remembered for good, for were it not for him the laws of fine would have been forgotten in Israel? 'Forgotten'? Surely, they could be studied? — Nay, they would have been abolished,<sup>15</sup> for the wicked Government of Rome<sup>16</sup> issued a decree that he who ordains a Rabbi shall be slain, likewise he who is ordained shall be put to death, the town in which an ordination takes place shall be destroyed and the tehum<sup>17</sup> in which the ordination is held shall be laid waste. What did R. Judah b. Baba do? He went and sat down between two mountains and between two large towns between two tehums,<sup>18</sup> namely, between Usha and Shefar'am<sup>19</sup> and there he ordained five elders: R. Meir, R. Judah [b. Il'ai]. R. Jose, R. Simeon and R. Eleazar b. Shammua (R. Awia adds also R. Nehemiah). On seeing that they were detected by the enemies, he said to them, 'Flee, my children!' but they said to him, 'And you, O Rabbi, what about you?' 'I,' he replied. 'will lie still before them, even as a stone that is not turned.' It was stated that the Romans did not move from there until they drove three hundred iron spears into his body and made his corpse like a sieve!<sup>20</sup> — But said R. Nahman b. Isaac: Say not that 'cases of fines' ceased, but that capital cases ceased. Why? — Because when the Sanhedrin saw that murderers were so prevalent that they could not be properly dealt with judicially, they said: Rather let us be exiled from place to place than pronounce them guilty [of capital offences] for it is written<sup>21</sup> And thou shalt do according to the sentence, which they of that place which the Lord shall choose shall tell thee, which implies that it is the place that matters.<sup>22</sup>

[Now, it was mentioned above that Rome cast her rule over Israel] one hundred and eighty years prior to the Destruction. Is not the period longer? For R. Jose b. Rabbi<sup>23</sup>

1. Some time prior to a wedding, barley was customarily sown in tubs to sprout forth in time for the wedding, when they were placed

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

- before the bridal pair to symbolize fertility (Rashi).
2. And importance would have been attached to his partaking of the celebration even at a later period.
  3. On conquering the Greeks.
  4. [When Octavian gained the victory over her at the Battle of Actium.]
  5. From Palestine to Babylon.
  6. I.e., which is the inferior of the two.
  7. I.e., as equals; words spoken by Jacob to Esau, Gen. XXXIII, 12.
  8. Ibid, 14. I.e., Rome is to lord it over Israel.
  9. Shab. 15a.
  10. Syria and Asia Minor.
  11. One who went outside Palestine was regarded as defiled and on returning had to undergo the usual process of purification. According to Graetz this measure was intended to stem the migration of the people, and in particular of the priests, from the Holy Land.
  12. [Glass vessels imported from those countries were regarded as unclean; probably to protect the glass industry in Palestine. V. L. Ginzberg's lecture on The Place of the *Halachah*, etc., p. 6. Hebrew University. Jerusalem, 1931.]
  13. [A place on the Temple mount, v. Sanh. (Sonc, ed.) p. 267, n. 4.]
  14. These could only be dealt with by Rabbis ordained in Palestine by the laying on of hands [H] (v. Sanh. 13b-14a). This mode of ordination, first mentioned in connection with the appointment by Moses of Joshua as his successor (Num. XXVII, 20), was continued, according to tradition, unbroken throughout the succeeding generations; it ceased about the 4th century when the academies of Palestine declined. An attempt by Jacob Berab to re-introduce the Semichah in Palestine, in 1538, ended in failure.
  15. For want of properly ordained Rabbis who are qualified to adjudicate such matters; v. B. K 84a-b.
  16. During the Hadrianic Persecutions in 135 C.E.
  17. [H], fuller term [H] a Sabbath limit is an area of 2000 cubits (about 1516 meters) round an inhabited place, forming the limit within which it is permitted to walk on Sabbath (v. Er. 42a).
  18. I.e., in an area adjacent to neither of the two towns, in the meaning of the decree.
  19. Towns in Galilee near Tiberias.
  20. These Rabbis were thus qualified to deal with the imposition of fines some 100 years after the Destruction; how then can R. Isaac b. Abdimi say that cases of fines ceased to be dealt with 40 years before the Destruction?
  21. Deut. XVII, 10.

22. Capital cases were only dealt with by any court of 23 while the Sanhedrin sat in the Hewn-Stone Chamber of the Temple: the abandoning of their seat therefore meant the cessation of judging capital cases. V. Sanh. (Sonc, ed.) p. 267, n. 7.
23. [Read with MS.M.: R. Jose b. Halafta.]

## 'Abodah Zarah 9a

taught: Persian rule lasted thirty-four years after the building of the Temple, Greece ruled one hundred eighty years during the existence of the Temple, the Hasmonean rule lasted one hundred three years during temple times, the House of Herod ruled one hundred three years. Thence onward, one should go on counting the years as from the Destruction of the Temple. Hence we see that it was two hundred six years,<sup>1</sup> yet you say one hundred eighty years! — But for twenty six years the Romans kept faith with Israel<sup>2</sup> and did not subdue them, and therefore those years are not reckoned in the period during which Rome cast her dominion over Israel.

Said R. Papa, if a<sup>3</sup> Tanna is uncertain about the minor figures [of any year] let him ask a notary what year it is according to his reckoning and add twenty thereto; he will then find his solution.<sup>4</sup> As a mnemonic sign take the verse, Thus I have been twenty years in Thy house.<sup>5</sup>

If on the other hand a notary is uncertain, let him ask a Tanna what the year is according to his reckoning and deduct therefrom twenty years and he will find his solution.<sup>6</sup> As a mnemonic [memorize] 'The Scribe is sparing the Tanna is redundant.'<sup>7</sup>

The Tanna debe Eliyyahu taught:<sup>8</sup> The world is to exist six thousand years; the first two thousand years are to be void;<sup>9</sup> the next two thousand years are the period of the Torah, and the following two thousand years are the period of the Messiah. Through our many sins a number of these have already passed [and the Messiah is not yet].

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

From when are the two thousand years of the Torah to be reckoned? Shall we say from the Giving of the Torah at Sinai? In that case, you will find that there are not quite two thousand years from then till now [i.e., the year four thousand after the Creation], for if you compute the years [from the Creation to the Giving of the Torah] you will find that they comprise two thousand and a part of the third thousand;<sup>10</sup> the period is therefore to be reckoned from the time when Abraham and Sarah had gotten souls in Haran<sup>11</sup> for we have it as a tradition that Abraham was at that time fifty-two years old. Now, to what extent does our Tanna encroach [on the other thousand]? Four hundred and forty-eight years! Calculate it and you will find that from the time when they had gotten souls in Haran till the giving of the Torah there are just four hundred and forty-eight years.<sup>12</sup>

Said R. Papa: If the Tanna<sup>13</sup> does not know the exact number of years [of the period of the Messiah] that have passed let him ask a notary what year he uses in his writings, and on adding forty-eight to it he will find his solution.<sup>14</sup> As a mnemonic

1. Before the destruction, i.e., at the end of the Greek dominion, that Rome began, to extend her dominion.
2. V. p. 40.
3. So D.S., a.l.
4. The Eras in use among Jews in Talmudic Times are: (a) ERA OF CONTRACTS [H] dating from the year 380 before the Destruction of the Second Temple (312-1 B.C.E.) when, at the Battle of Gaza, Seleucus Nicator, one of the followers of Alexander the Great, gained dominion over Palestine. It is also termed Seleucid or Greek Era [H]. Its designation as Alexandrian Era connecting it with Alexander the Great (Maim. Yad, Gerushin 1, 27) is an anachronism, since Alexander died in 323 B.C.E. — eleven years

before this Era began (v. E. Mahler, Handbuch der jüdischen Chronologie, p. 145). This Era, which is first mentioned in Mac. I, 10, and was used by notaries or scribes for dating all civil contracts, was generally in vogue in eastern countries till the 16th cent, and was employed even in the 19th cent, among the Jews of Yemen, in South Arabia (Eben Saphir, Lyck, 1866, p. 62b). (b) THE ERA OF THE DESTRUCTION (of the Second Temple) [H] the year 1 of which corresponds to 381 of the Seleucid Era, and 69-70 of the Christian Era. This Era was mainly employed by the Rabbis and was in use in Palestine for several centuries, and even in the later Middle Ages documents were dated by it. One of the recently discovered Genizah documents bears the date 13 Tammuz 987 after the Destruction of the Temple — i.e. 917 C.E. — (Op. cit. p. 152, also Marmorstein ZDMG, Vol. VI, p. 640). The difference between the two Eras as far as the tens and units are concerned is thus 20. If therefore a Tanna, say in the year 156 Era of Dest. (225 C.E.), while remembering, naturally, the century, is uncertain about the tens and units, he should ask the notary what year it is according to his — Seleucid — era. He will get the answer 536 (156 + 380), on adding 20 to which he would get 556, the last two figures giving him the year [1] 56 of the Era of Destruction.

5. Gen. XXXI 41.
6. If in the same year, (225 C.E.) — 536 Seleucid Era — the Scribe, remembering that he is in the 6th century is uncertain as to the exact number of the year to be used by him, he will ascertain from the Tanna that it is the year 156 E. of D., and on subtracting 20 will get 136, the last two figures of which give him the tens and units of his year [5] 36.
7. I.e., in regard to the use of vowel letters the Scribe (of Biblical scrolls) frequently employing the scriptio defectiva, where the Tanna uses the scriptio pleno. Thus, the Scribe has to deduct from, the Rabbi to add to, the given number.
8. V. p. 22, n. 10.
9. I.e., without possessing the Divine Law.
10. The exact number is 2,448 years which is arrived at as follows (v. Gen. Chap. V and XI):

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

---

<b>Age of Adam at birth of Seth</b>		<b>130 years</b>
<b>From birth of Seth</b>	<b>to birth of Enosh</b>	<b>105 "</b>
" " " Enosh	" " " Kenan	90 "
" " " Kenan	" " " Mahalalel	70 "
" " " Mahalalel	" " " Jared	65 "
" " " Jared	" " " Enoch	162 "
" " " Enoch	" " " Methuselah	65 "
" " " Methuselah	" " " Lamech	187 "
" " " Lamech	" " " Noah	<u>182 "</u>
<b>Period from Adam to Noah</b>		<b>1,056 years</b>

<b>Age of Noah at birth of Shem (allowing 2 years from birth of Japhet, Noah's eldest son)</b>		<b>502 years</b>
<b>From birth of Shem</b>	<b>to birth of Arpachshad</b>	<b>100 "</b>
" " " Arpachshad	" " " Shelah	35 "
" " " Shelah	" " " Eber	30 "
" " " Eber	" " " Peleg	34 "
" " " Peleg	" " " Re'u	30 "
" " " Re'u	" " " Serug	32 "
" " " Serug	" " " Nahor	30 "
" " " Nahor	" " " Terah	29 "
" " " Terah	" " " Abraham	<u>70 "</u>
<b>Period from Noah to Abraham</b>		<b>892 years</b>

<b>Age of Abraham at birth of Isaac</b>		<b>100 years</b>
<b>From birth of Isaac to birth of Jacob</b>		<b>60 "</b>
<b>Age of Jacob on arriving in Egypt</b>		<b>130 "</b>
<b>Israelites' sojourn in Egypt</b>		<b>210 "</b>
<b>Period from birth of Abraham to Exodus from Egypt</b>		<b><u>500 years</u></b>
<b>Period from Creation to Exodus and Giving of the Law at Sinai</b>		<b>2,448 years</b>

11. Gen. XII, 5. These words are taken by the *Targum* and other Rabbinic commentators to refer to the heathen men and women whom Abraham and Sarah respectively gained for the worship of God.
12. The birth of Abraham was, as given above, in the year of Creation 1948 (1,056 + 892); add thereto the fifty-two years that passed till his

- proselytizing activity and you get exactly 2,000, i.e. 448 years before the Giving of the Torah.
13. Who said before that 'a number of these have already passed', etc.
14. As the notary uses the Seleucid Era, the year 1 of which corresponds to 380 before the Destruction, and as the year 4,000 of Creation corresponds to 172 after the Destruction, the difference between the two eras is 552 (380 +

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

172), which 48 would bring up to even hundreds.

## ‘Abodah Zarah 9b

take the phrase, Forty-eight cities.<sup>1</sup> If, on the other hand, the notary is uncertain as to his number, let him ask the Tanna how many he counts and deduct therefrom forty-eight and he will find his solution. As a mnemonic, take the phrase, 'The Scribe is sparing, the Tanna is redundant.'<sup>2</sup>

Said R. Huna the son of R. Joshua: If one does not know what the year is in the Sabbatical cycle of seven years,<sup>3</sup> let him add one year [to that in the era of the Destruction] and let him put aside the hundreds as Jubilee Cycles and convert the remainder into Sabbatical Cycles [of seven years each] after adding thereto two years for every complete century; what is left over will give him the number of the given year in the current Sabbatical Cycle. As a mnemonical sign [for adding two years for every century, think of the verse]. For these two years hath the famine been in the land.<sup>4</sup>

Said R. Hanina:<sup>5</sup> From the year four hundred after the destruction onwards, if one says unto you. 'Buy a field that is worth one thousand *denarii* for one *denar*' — do not buy it.<sup>6</sup> In a Baraitha it is taught: From the year four thousand two hundred and thirty-one of the Creation of the World onward, if one says unto you. 'Buy thee a field that is worth a thousand *denarii* for one *denar*', do not buy it. What difference is there between these two [given periods]? — There is a difference of three years between them, the one of the Baraitha being three years longer.<sup>7</sup>

There was [produced in court] a document which was dated

1. Assigned to the Levites. Num. XXXV, 7.
2. V. *supra* p. 43, n. 3.
3. Scripture enjoins that every seventh year is to be kept as a Sabbatical Year, on which there is to be observed: (a) A land release [H] the fields being allowed to lie fallow, and the produce of

the vineyards and olive-yards left ungathered by the owner for his servants, the poor and the strangers, 'and what they leave the beast of the field shall eat' (Ex. XXV, 8 and Lev. XXV, 1, seq.). (b) Monetary release a [H] according to which all debts incurred were forfeited at the end of the Sabbatical Year (Deut. XV, 1, 2) a procedure which was modified by the institution of the *Prosbul* by Hillel the Elder. The Bible does not furnish any fixed data as to the year from which the Sabbatical Cycle is to be counted. There is, however, a Talmudic tradition (Ta'an. 29a) that the Second Temple, as well as the First, was destroyed on the 9th of Ab in the year immediately following a Sabbatical Year. This means that the Sabbatical Cycle began on the year preceding the year 1 of the Era of Destruction. Some authorities, however, (Maim. Yad, Shemittoth X, 4) take the statement in Ta'an. to mean that the Destruction was on the Sabbatical Year itself, so that the Sabbatical Cycle is to begin with the year 1 of that Era. Another matter of dispute is the fixing of the Jubilee Year, i.e. the year following the completion of seven Sabbatical Cycles, in which all slaves were freed and all real estates reverted to their hereditary owners (Lev. XXV, 10). According to the Rabbis (Ned. 61a and R.H. 8b-9a) the fiftieth year was excluded from the Sabbatical Cycles, so that it formed a 'blank' year after every seven cycles. But according to Rabbi Judah it formed both the Jubilee Year and the first of the next Sabbatical Cycle, so that these cycles followed on in uninterrupted succession. (It must be pointed out that the Jewish Encyclopedia in the article 'Sabbatical Year and Jubilee', Vol. X, p. 606, not only designates Rabbi Judah b. Il'ai wrongly as Rabbi Judah Hanasi, but his statement, too, is misrepresented to mean that the Jubilee Year is to be regarded as 'identical with the seventh Sabbatical Year'.) The rule given by R. Huna for computing the year of the Sabbatical Cycle is based on the opinion that (a) the Sabbatical Cycle began with the year preceding that of the Destruction, and (b) that, in accordance with R. Judah's view, the Jubilee Year did not interrupt the succession of Sabbatical Cycles. Applied to the present year, 1934 C.E. — 1865 E. of D. — this process would work out as follows: — 1865 + 1 = 1866. Leaving aside hundreds take 66 and add thereto 2 for every 100: 66 + (18 X 2) = 102. Divide total by 7: 102 / 7 = 14 (remainder 4). Thus the year 1934 is the 4th of the Sabbatical Cycle.

4. Gen. XLV, 6.
5. In the first generation of the third century.

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

6. As the coming of the Messiah will then be imminent, when Israel will be rehabilitated in the Holy Land.
7. The year 1 of Destruction is equal to 3828 of the Era of Creation (4000 — 172, v. p. 42, n. 7 (b)); hence the period given by R. Hanina is 4228 (3828 + 400), while the one given in the Baraitha — 4231 — is three years later. This Baraitha is of particular importance on account of its allusion — the earliest on record and the only one in the Talmud — to the Era of the World (generally designated Anna Mundi) which is now in use by Jews well nigh universally. While familiar to the Rabbis of the Talmud, it is not known to have been used as an Era until long after the close of the Talmud (Azariah de Rossi, Me'or 'Enayim, Vienna, 1829, 152a). Among the earliest evidence of its use are epitaphs dating from 822 and 827 C.E., in the catacombs of Vnosa (Posnanski Encyc. of Rel. and Eth, s.v. Calendar) also a Genizah scroll describing an incident as having occurred on the 3rd Shevat in the year 4772 A.M. (1012 C.E., J. Mann, HUCA. Annual, Vol. 111, 259). The attempt which had been made to ascribe the use of this Era to Sherirah Gaon in his famous Epistle, has been disproved (Posnanski ZDMG, LXVIII, 121). Likewise, an epitaph which the Karaite Firkowitz professed to have discovered in Crimea registering the Era of the World in 151 B.C.E. has been pronounced as spurious by Harkavy (Altjudaische Denkmäler, p. 161). Solomon Ibn Verga's [H] contains a description of the Yom-Kippur Service in the Temple by the Roman Consul Marcus in which mention is made of the Era of the World [H] (Amst. 1709, p. 52b); but 'That description is a late forgery' (Buchler). Dr. F. C. Ewald (Aboda Zara Nürnberg, 1856, p. 68, note) suggests that it was early in the 10th century that the Jews, who were mostly settled in Spain, on dispensing with the Seleucid Era, adopted the A.M. for fear of being compelled to use the Christian era, but this suggestion lacks historical basis. Much better founded is the assertion of Mahler (op. cit. 158) that the C.E., which came into general use in France and Germany in the 10th century, found its way into Spain about two centuries later, and that it was about that time and for that reason that the Era of Creation gained general currency among the Jews. In computing this conventional Era, a number of uncertainties have, naturally, to be compromised (see Jewish Encyclopedia. Vol. IV, p. 68). To convert any given year from A.M. into C.E. — apart from the thousands — 240 is to be added; thus, the

present year A.M. 5694 plus 240 gives [1] 934 C.E. To convert from C.E. into A.M. add 3760: thus,  $1934 + 3760 = 5694$ .

## 'Abodah Zarah 10a

six years ahead.<sup>1</sup> The Rabbis who were sitting before Raba were of opinion that it should be pronounced a post-dated document, which is to be deferred and not executed until the date which it bears. Whereupon R. Nahman said: This document must have been written by a scribe who was very particular and took into account the six years of the Greek Reign in Elam which we do not reckon. The dating is therefore correct, for we have learnt: Rabbi Jose said, Six years did the Greeks reign in Elam and thereafter their dominion extended universally.

R. Aha b. Jacob then put this question: How do we know that our Era [of Documents] is connected with the Kingdom of Greece at all? Why not say that it is reckoned from the Exodus from Egypt, omitting the first thousand years and giving the years of the next thousand?<sup>2</sup> In that case, the document is really post-dated! — Said R. Nahman: In the Diaspora the Greek Era alone is used. He [the questioner] thought that R. Nahman wanted to dispose of him anyhow, but when he went and studied it thoroughly he found that it is indeed taught [in a Baraitha]: In the Diaspora the Greek Era alone is used.

Said Rabina: Our Mishnah also proves this, for we learn,<sup>3</sup> 'The first of Nisan is New Year for reckoning [the reign of] kings<sup>4</sup> and of Festivals,' and to the question 'The reign of kings', what is the practical object of this law? R. Hisda replied: [It affects] the dating of documents.<sup>5</sup> Now, the same Mishnah says. 'The first of Tishri is New Year for [counting] years and sabbatical cycles'<sup>6</sup> and when it was asked: 'What practical significance has this ruling?' R. Hisda [again] replied: [It affects the dating of] documents.<sup>7</sup> [The question was then raised:] Is not this rule of dating documents self-contradictory?<sup>8</sup> And the

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

answer given was: 'The one refers to Jewish kings, the other to kings of Gentile nations — the year of Gentile kings being counted from Tishri, and of Jewish kings from Nisan.' Now, in the present time we count the years from Tishri; were we then to say that our Era is connected with the Exodus it is surely from Nisan that we ought to count.<sup>9</sup> Does this not prove that our reckoning is based on the reign of the Greek kings [and not on the Exodus]? That indeed proves it.

**THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE GENOSIA [ACCESSION] OF HEATHEN KINGS, etc.** What is meant by GENOSIA OF HEATHEN KINGS? — Said Rab Judah: It is the day on which the king is raised [to the throne]. But has it not been taught [elsewhere] 'The day of Genosia and the day of the king's accession'?<sup>10</sup> — There is no difficulty there; the one term indicates the king's own accession, the other that of his son.<sup>11</sup> But do [the Romans]<sup>12</sup> ever appoint a king's son as king? Did not R. Joseph apply [the following verse to Rome]: Behold I made thee small among the nations<sup>13</sup> — in that they do not place the son of a king on the royal throne, — thou art greatly despised<sup>14</sup> — in that they do not possess a tongue or script?<sup>15</sup> What then does GENOSIA mean? — [The King's] birthday. But we learn [elsewhere] 'The Genosia and the birthday.' That, too, is no contradiction. The one refers to the king's own birthday, the other to that of his son. But we have also the wording: 'The king's Genosia and his son's Genosia, his own birthday and his son's birthday'! Then [as said previously] Genosia means indeed the day of the King's accession, but there is no difficulty [raised by the mention of both terms], the one applying

3.

to his own accession, the other to that of his son; and as to your question about their not appointing a king's son as king, such appointment would be made at the [king's] request, as was the case with Asverus the son of Antoninus<sup>16</sup> who reigned [in his father's place].

Antoninus once said to Rabbi: It is my desire that my son Asverus should reign instead of me and that Tiberias<sup>17</sup> should be declared a Colony.<sup>18</sup> Were I to ask one of these things it would be granted while both would not be granted.<sup>19</sup> Rabbi thereupon brought a man, and having made him ride on the shoulders of another, handed him a dove bidding the one who carried him to order the one on his shoulders to liberate it. The Emperor perceived this to mean that he was advised to ask [of the Senate] to appoint his son Asverus to reign in his stead, and that subsequently he might get Asverus to make Tiberias a free Colony.

[On another occasion] Antoninus mentioned to him that some prominent Romans were annoying him. Rabbi thereupon took him into the garden and, in his presence, picked some radishes, one at a time. Said [the Emperor to himself] his advice to me is: Do away with them one at a time, but do not attack all of them at once.

1. Its date was six years later than the time when it was claimed to be due e.g. 516 instead of 510 (Seleucid Era).
2. The Era of Documents, as explained above, (p. 42, n. 7) dates from the dominion of Seleucus which was established in the year 380 before the Destruction. Now, the Exodus occurred in the year 1380 before the Destruction, thus: —

Exodus to building of 1st Temple	480 years
Existence of 1st Temple	410 "
Babylonian Exile	70 "
Existence of 2nd Temple	42 "
Period from Exodus to Destruction of 2nd Temple	1380 years.

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

4. The Exodus was therefore just one thousand years earlier than the Seleucid Conquest, so that the year, say, 510 Era of Contract would be 1510 from the Exodus. R. Aha therefore submits that the year of Contracts may have as its starting point not the Seleucid Conquest but the Exodus, with the omission of the thousand; the year, say, 310 would not mean 310 years after the Sel Con. but [1] 310 after the Exodus.
5. R. H. 2a.
6. The reign of a Jewish King was always reckoned from Nisan, so that even if it began in the preceding month, it would be in its second year in Nisan.
7. The year given in dating legal documents was that of the reign of the present king.
8. V. above note.
9. For the purpose of dating documents Tishri is to be regarded as the beginning of the year.
10. According to the early part of the Mishnah the year should begin with Nisan, while in the latter part it is said to begin with Tishri.
11. Since the Exodus occurred in Nisan.
12. Which proves that the two are not identical.
13. When raised to the throne at the father's wish in his own lifetime.
14. Whose kings do not reign by hereditary right but are elected.
15. Obad. I, 2.
16. Ibid.
17. [Greek remained the spoken and written language throughout the East even after the establishment of the Eastern Roman Empire, to which the allusion here is made, v. Obermeyer, *op. cit.* 263]
18. The bearers of the names given here have been variously identified. S. J. Rappaport [H] s.v. [H]) is of opinion that our Antoninus is Antoninus Pius (138-161) and that Asverus is his adopted son Marcus Aurelius (161-180), who was also called Annus Verus — here contracted into A-S-Verus. According to Jast, however, (Allgem. Gesch. des Isr. Volkes, Berlin 1832, II, 129 and Gesch. d. Israeliten IV, 88 seq.) our Ant. is Caracalla (211-217) and Asverus is his son Alexander Severus (222-235). Z. Frankel [H] (Warsaw, 1923, 203) identifies Ant. with Lucius Verius Antoninus who was co-regent with Marcus Aurelius and is reputed to have issued decrees favorable to Jews. Differing from all the foregoing authorities, Graetz (Geschichte, Vol. IV, pp. 450ff). claiming the support of Origen's Epistola ad Africanum, asserts that Ant. is none other than Alexander Severus who was surnamed Antoninus in the East, and that the

'Rabbi' who is associated with Ant. in the narratives that follow here and in many others is not R. Judah I but his grandson R. Judah II who flourished near the middle of the 3rd century. That he, too, was sometimes called by the title Rabbi alone is, indeed, borne out by the phrase in the Mishnah (*infra* 35b) 'Rabbi and his court' which is taken to refer to R. Judah II.

19. In Galilee whither the Sanhedrin was transferred by R. Judah II.
20. So that its inhabitants should be raised to the rank of libertines — evidently intended as a tribute of regard to Rabbi.
21. The Emperor was seeking Rabbi's guidance without openly taking counsel with an outsider on matters of state. Rabbi, likewise, would not commit himself to more than offering his advice by mere insinuation.

## ‘Abodah Zarah 10b

But why did he not speak explicitly? — He thought his words might reach the ears of those prominent Romans who would persecute him. Why then did he not say it in a whisper? — Because it is written: For a bird of the air shall carry the voice.<sup>1</sup>

The Emperor had a daughter named Gilla who committed a sin,<sup>2</sup> so he sent to Rabbi a rocket-herb,<sup>3</sup> and Rabbi in return sent him coriander.<sup>4</sup> The Emperor then sent some leeks<sup>5</sup> and he sent lettuce in return.<sup>6</sup>

Many a time<sup>7</sup> Antoninus sent Rabbi gold-dust in a leather bag filled with wheat at the top, saying [to his servants]: 'Carry the wheat to Rabbi!' Rabbi sent word to say. 'I need it not, I have quite enough of my own', and Antoninus answered: 'Leave it then to those who will come after thee that they might give it to those who will come after me, for thy descendants and those who will follow them will hand it over to them.'<sup>8</sup>

Antoninus<sup>9</sup> had a cave which led from his house to the house of Rabbi. Every time<sup>10</sup> [he visited Rabbi] he brought two slaves, one of whom he slew at the door of Rabbi's house

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

and the other [who had been left behind] was killed at the door of his own house.<sup>10</sup> Said Antoninus to Rabbi: When I call let none be found with thee. One day he found R. Haninah b. Hama sitting there, so he said: 'Did I not tell thee no man should be found with thee at the time when I call?' And Rabbi replied. 'This is not an [ordinary] human being.' 'Then', said Antoninus, 'let him tell that servant who is sleeping outside the door to rise and come in.' R. Haninah b. Hama thereupon went out but found that the man had been slain. Thought he, 'How shall I act now? Shall I call and say that the man is dead? — but one should not bring a sad report; shall I leave him and walk away? — that would be slighting the king.' So he prayed for mercy for the man and he was restored to life. He then sent him in. Said Antoninus: 'I am well aware that the least one among you can bring the dead to life, still when I call let no one be found with thee.' Every time [he called] he used to attend on Rabbi and wait on him with food or drink. When Rabbi wanted to get on his bed Antoninus crouched in front of it saying. 'Get on to your bed by stepping on me.' Rabbi, however, said, 'It is not the proper thing to treat a king so slightly!' Whereupon Antoninus said: 'Would that I served as a mattress unto thee in the world to come!' Once he asked him: 'Shall I enter the world to come?' 'Yes!' said Rabbi. 'But,' said Antoninus, 'is it not written, There will be no remnant to the house of Esau?'"<sup>11</sup> 'That,' he replied. 'applies only to those whose evil deeds are like to those of Esau.' We have learnt likewise: There will be no remnant to the House of Esau, might have been taken to apply to all, therefore Scripture says distinctly — To the house of Esau, so as to make it apply only to those who act as Esau did. 'But', said Antonius, is it not also written: There [in the nether world] is Edom, her kings, and all her princes.'<sup>12</sup> 'There, too,' Rabbi explained, '[it says:] "her kings", it does not say all her kings; "all her princes", but not all her officers!

This is indeed what has been taught: 'Her kings' but not all her kings; 'all her princes', but not all her officers; 'Her kings', but not all her kings — excludes Antoninus the son of Asverus; 'all her princes'. but not all her officers — excludes Keti'ah the son of Shalom.

What about this Keti'ah b. Shalom? — There was once a Caesar who hated the Jews. One day he said to the prominent members of the government. 'If one has a wart<sup>13</sup> on his foot, shall he cut it away and live [in comfort] or leave it on and suffer discomfort?' To which they replied: 'He should cut it away and live in comfort'. Then Keti'ah b. Shalom addressed them thus: 'In the first place, you cannot do away with all of them, for it is written, For I have spread you abroad as the four winds of the heaven.<sup>14</sup> Now, what does this verse indicate? Were it to mean that [Israel] was to be scattered to the four corners of the world, then instead of saying, as the four winds, the verse would have said, to the four winds? It can only mean that just as the world cannot exist without winds, so the world cannot exist without Israel. And what is more, your kingdom will be called a crippled kingdom.' To this the king replied: 'You have spoken very well; however, he who contradicts the king is to be cast into a circular furnace'.<sup>15</sup> On his being held and led away, a Roman matron said of him: 'Pity the ship that sails [towards the harbor] without paying the tax'.<sup>16</sup> Then, throwing himself on his foreskin he cut it away exclaiming: 'Thou hast paid the tax thou wilt pass and enter [paradise]'. As he was being cast [into the furnace] he said: 'All my possessions [are to go to] R. Akiba and his friends'. This, R. Akiba interpreted according to the verse, And it shall be unto Aaron and his sons<sup>17</sup> [which is taken to mean that] one half is Aaron's and one half his sons'. A bath-kol<sup>18</sup> then exclaimed: 'Keti'ah b. Shalom is destined for [eternal] life in the world to come!' Rabbi [on hearing of it] wept saying:

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

'One may acquire eternity in a single hour, another may acquire it after many years!'

Antoninus attended on Rabbi: Artaban<sup>19</sup> attended on Rab. When Antoninus died, Rabbi exclaimed: The bond is snapped! [So also] when Artaban died, Rab exclaimed:

1. Eccl. X, 20.
2. Presumably adultery.
3. The Aramaic for which is [H] Gargilla, which may be divided into the two words: Gar-Gilla, meaning 'Gilla has gone astray.' Editions give the name of the daughter as Gira and of the herb Gargira [H] by which the meaning is unchanged; Kohut ('Aruch II, 343) prefers the version given here which is found in the best MSS.
4. In Aram. [H] Kusbarta mod. Greek [G], divisible into the two words [H] which has a treble meaning (a) Reprove — the gargilla [H] *Reprove not the fool lest he hate thee* being rendered by Targ. [H] (b) Cover over — cf. Prov. X, 12 [H] love covereth all sins (c) Slay, as in Hul. 37b [H] slay; ib. 15a [H] fit for slaughter. [H] daughter. The message could therefore be taken to mean: 'Reprove' or 'Forgive' or 'Slay the daughter.'
5. Aram. [H] Karethi, which also means 'cut-off.'
6. In Aram [H], hasa, which also means 'compassion'. This clandestine correspondence, deciphered, reads as follows: 'My daughter has gone astray.' — 'Reprove her (or overlook it, or slay her)'. — 'Shall she be cut off?' — 'No, have compassion.'
7. Lit., 'Everyday'.
8. An ironical allusion to the Jews always having to purchase their freedom with gold from their Roman masters.
9. Dr. L. Ginzberg's comments on the conversations between Ant. and Rabbi reported here are as follows (J.E.I., 656): 'Jewish folklore loved to personify the relations of Judaism with heathendom in the guise of conversations between Jewish sages and heathen potentates. Legend has many details concerning the personal relations between the two ... It appears that, owing to political circumstances, the exchange of views between these friends was attended with positive danger although it was arranged that there should be no third person when A. visits R...The friends were also compelled to have recourse to a species of sign language.'

10. So that the visits should not be reported. Tosaf, suggests that the slaves employed for that purpose were traitors who had incurred capital punishment.
11. Obad. I, 18.
12. Ex. XXXII, 29.
13. Editions have [H] but MSS give [H] [G] *nome*, a sore, wart, v. 'Aruch s.v. ob. To regard the Jewish subjects of the State as an irritating appendage of the body politic is characteristic of the Roman attitude to alien races who were unwilling to merge their identity. In complete contrast to this is the emphatic and repeated scriptural injunction to love the stranger and to accord him equal rights and treatment (v. Lev. XIX, 33, etc.).
14. Zech. II, 10.
15. [H], a furnace, pottery kiln, to which K. was consigned.
16. In order to make sure of entering the harbor the tax should be paid. Probably an allusion to the Roman custom of placing a coin in the mouth of the corpse as a kind of passage-money to the other world. Rashi: K., who was laying down his life for the sake of Israel, was going to the hereafter without having conformed to the Jewish rite of circumcision. This Roman matron's assertion, that Paradise would be closed to the uncircumcised, did not express the Jewish view which is that 'The pious of all nations have a portion in the world to come.' Tosef. San. XIII. [H].
17. Ex. XXIX, 28. The bequest is to be interpreted in the same manner; half the property being assigned to Rab and the other half to his friends.
18. A heavenly voice; v. [Glos.](#)
19. Artaban IV, Parthian King, a contemporary of Marcus Aurelius and of his son Ant. Comodus, who is reported to have sent a gift to Rabbi [H] (J. Pes. I) and was an intimate friend of Rab. [Graetz, Geschichte, IV, p. 257, n. 1, rightly maintains that in the latter the reading 'Rabbi' is erroneously given instead of Rab.]

## 'Abodah Zarah 11a

The bond is snapped!

[When] *Onkelos*<sup>1</sup> the son of Kalonymus became a proselyte, the Emperor sent a contingent of Roman [soldiers] after him,<sup>2</sup> but he enticed them by [citing] scriptural verses and they became converted to Judaism. Thereupon, the Emperor sent

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

another Roman cohort after him, bidding them not to say anything to him. As they were about to take him away with them, he said to them: 'Let me tell you just an ordinary thing: [In a procession] the torch-lighter carries the light in front of the torchbearer,<sup>3</sup> the torchbearer in front of the leader, the leader in front of the governor, the governor in front of the chief officer; but does the chief officer carry the light in front of the people [that follow]?' 'No!' they replied. Said he: 'Yet the Holy One, blessed be He, does carry the light before Israel, for Scripture says. And the Lord went before them ... in a pillar of fire to give them light.'<sup>4</sup> Then they, too, became converted. Again he sent another cohort ordering them not to enter into any conversation whatever with him. So they took hold of him; and as they were walking on he saw the *mezuzah*<sup>5</sup> which was fixed on the door-frame and he placed his hand on it saying to them: 'Now what is this?' and they replied: 'You tell us then.' Said he, 'According to universal custom, the mortal king dwells within, and his servants keep guard on him without; but [in the case of] the Holy One, blessed be He, it is His servants who dwell within whilst He keeps guard on them from without; as it is said: The Lord shall guard thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth and for evermore.'<sup>6</sup> Then they, too, were converted to Judaism. He sent for him no more.

And the Lord said to her: Two nations [Goyim] are in thy womb.<sup>7</sup> Said Rab Judah in the name of Rab: Read not Goyim<sup>8</sup> [nations] but Ge'im [lords].<sup>9</sup> This refers to Antoninus and Rabbi<sup>10</sup> from whose table neither lettuce, nor radish nor cucumber was ever absent either in summer or winter; and, as a master has said: Radish helps the food to dissolve, lettuce helps the food to be digested, cucumber makes the intestines expand. But was it not taught in the school of R. Ishmael that cucumbers are called Kishshuin<sup>11</sup> because they are as hard and as injurious to the body as swords? — There is no

contradiction here: that was said of large ones, but our reference is to small ones.

THE BIRTHDAY AND ANNIVERSARIES OF KINGS DEATHS. [THIS IS R. MEIR'S OPINION. THE SAGES SAY IDOLATRY ONLY OCCURS AT A DEATH AT WHICH BURNING OF ARTICLES TAKES PLACE.] This implies that R. Meir is of opinion that at every death, whether there is burning of articles or there is no burning, idol-worship takes place — consequently, the burning of articles is not an [idolatrous] cult. From which is to be inferred that the Rabbis<sup>12</sup> hold that burning [of articles at a funeral] is an [idolatrous] cult; what then of the following which has been taught: The burning of articles at a king's [funeral] is permitted and there is nothing of Amorite usage about it?<sup>13</sup> Now if it is a cult of idolatry how could such burning be allowed? Is it not written, and in their statutes ye shall not walk?<sup>14</sup> — Hence, all agree<sup>15</sup> that burning is not an idolatrous cult and is merely a mark of high esteem [for the deceased]; where they differ is this: R. Meir holds that at every death, whether burning of articles takes place or does not take place, there is idol-worship; but the Rabbis hold that a death at which burning takes place is regarded as important and is marked by idol-worship, but one at which no burning takes place is unimportant and is not marked by idol-worship.

[To return to] the main text.<sup>16</sup> 'The burning of articles at a king's [funeral] is permitted and there is nothing of Amorite usage about it,' as it is said, Thou shalt die in peace and with burnings of thy fathers, the former kings that were before thee, so shall they make a burning for thee.<sup>17</sup> And just as it is permitted to burn at the [funerals] of kings so it is permitted to burn in the case of princes. What is it that may be burnt in the case of kings? — Their beds and articles that were in use by them. In the instance of the death of R. Gamaliel the elder, *Onkelos* the proselyte<sup>18</sup> burnt after him seventy Tyrian *manehs*.<sup>19</sup> But

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

did you not say that only articles in use by them could be burnt?<sup>20</sup> — What is meant is [articles] 'to the value of seventy Tyrian *manehs*.' May other things then not be burned? Yet it has been taught: It is permitted to mutilate [an animal] at royal funerals and there is nothing of Amorite usage about it!<sup>21</sup> — Said R. Papa [that refers to] the horse on which he rode.<sup>22</sup> Are clean animals then not to be included? Yet it has been taught, Mutilation which renders the animal *trefa*<sup>23</sup> is forbidden, but such as does not render it *trefa* is permitted; what kind of mutilation does not render it *trefa*?

1. Git. 56b, where a fuller story of his conversion is given, has 'Onkelos son of Kolonikos son of Titus's sister'. He is often confused with the other proselyte, Aquila, v. Kohut, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, 158 and references given there. For discussion of the identity of Onk. see A. E. Silverstone 'Aquila and Onkelos'.
2. To arrest him.
3. [H] Lexicographers differ about the origin and exact meaning. They are obviously those of dignitaries arranged in ascendant order of rank. The above rendering is based chiefly on Kohut, *op. cit.* s. vv.
4. Ex. XIII, 21.
5. The *mezuzah* whereby the words of God are written on the door-post of every Jewish home (Deut. VI, 9) is meant to remind the occupants, on entering their home and on leaving it to go into the world without, of God's constant watchfulness and guardianship.
6. Ps. CXXI, 8.
7. Gen. XXV, 23, the words were spoken to Rebecca before the birth of her two sons, Jacob and Esau.
8. [H].
9. Plural of [H] lofty, lord, ruler.
10. The respective descendants of Jacob — Israel, and Esau — Rome.
11. [H] from root [H].
12. I.e., the Sages who oppose R. Meir in our Mishnah.
13. Sanh. 52b, Tos. Shab. VIII.
14. Lev. XVIII, 3.
15. Both R. Meir and the Rabbis.
16. Tosef. Shab. VIII, 9. Tos. Sanh. IV.
17. Jer. XXXIV, 5. Spoken to King Zedekiah.
18. V. *supra*.
19. 1 *maneh* of Tyrian weight equals 25 *selas*'s, v. [Glos.](#)

20. Yet from the wording here used it would appear that the coins were burned.
21. Tosef. Shab. ibid. Hence the articles mentioned above are not exclusive.
22. Which comes under the category of articles in use by him.
23. Unfit for use as food, v. *supra*. p. 23, n. 8.

## ‘Abodah Zarah 11b

Trimming the tendons of its hoofs from the ankle downward!<sup>1</sup> — This was explained by R. Papa to refer to a calf [employed for] drawing the royal coach.

**THE DAY OF SHAVING THE BEARD, etc.**  
The question was asked: What does it mean — the day of [the usual] shaving of one's beard when the lock of hair is left, or the [annual] shaving of the beard when the lock of hair is removed? — Come and hear: Both are taught distinctly: [In one Baraitha it is said]: The day of shaving one's beard when one's lock of hair is left; [in another it is said:] The day of shaving one's hair and of removing one's lock of hair.

Said Rab Judah in the name of Samuel: They have yet another festival in Rome [which occurs] once every seventy years. Then a healthy man is brought and made to ride on a lame man; he is dressed in the attire of Adam,<sup>2</sup> on his head is placed the scalp of R. Ishmael,<sup>3</sup> and on his neck are hung pieces of fine gold to the weight of four zuzim,<sup>4</sup> the market places [through which these pass] are paved with onyx stones, and the proclamation is made before him: 'The reckoning of the ruler is wrong. The brother of our lord, the impostor! Let him who will see it see it; he who will not see it now will never see it. Of what avail is the treason to the traitor or deceit to the deceiver!'; and they concluded thus: Woe unto the one when the other will arise.<sup>5</sup> Said R. Ashi: the wording [of the proclamation] defeats their object:<sup>6</sup> Had they said 'Our lord's brother the impostor', it would have accorded with their intention, but when they say<sup>6</sup> The

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

brother of our lord, the impostor, it may be taken to mean that it is their lord himself who is the impostor.

And why does not our Tanna include this [festivity in the preceding Mishnah?] — He only enumerates those which occur year by year, but does not mention such as are not annual ones. Those are the Roman [annual festivals]. Which are the Persian ones? — Mutardi, Turyaskai, Muharnekai, Muharin.<sup>1</sup> These then are those of the Romans and Persians, which are the Babylonian ones? — Muharnekai, Aknayata, Bahnnani and the Tenth of Adar.<sup>2</sup>

Said R. Hanan b. Hisda in the name of Rab (some have it, 'Said R. Hanan b. Raba in the name of Rab'): There are five appointed Temples of idol-worship: they are: The Temple of Bel in Babel,<sup>3</sup> The Temple of Nebo in Kursi,<sup>4</sup> Tar'ata which is in Mapug.<sup>5</sup> Zerifa which is in Askelon,<sup>6</sup> and Nishtra which is in Arabia.<sup>7</sup> When R. Dimi came<sup>8</sup> he said that to these had been added the market-place<sup>9</sup> [with the idol] in 'En-Beki and the Nidbakah of Acre [some call it Nitbara of Acre].<sup>10</sup> R. Dimi of Nahardea gave these in the reversed order: The market place of Acre, the Nidbakah of 'En-Beki.

Said R. Hanan son of R. Hisda to R. Hisda: What is meant by saying that these [Temples] are 'appointed'? — He answered him: This is how your mother's father<sup>11</sup> explained it, 'They are appointed permanently; regularly all the year round worship is taking place in them.'

Said Samuel: In the Diaspora<sup>12</sup> it is only forbidden [to transact business with idolaters] on the actual festival days alone.<sup>13</sup> And is it forbidden even on the actual days of the Festivals, did not Rab Judah declare it permissible to R. Bruna to buy wine and to R. Giddal to buy wheat on the Festival of the Travellers?<sup>14</sup> — The Festival of the Travelers is different, as it is not a fixed one.<sup>15</sup>

**MISHNAH.** WHEN AN IDOLATROUS [FESTIVAL] TAKES PLACE WITHIN A CITY IT IS PERMITTED [TO TRANSACT BUSINESS WITH HEATHEN] OUTSIDE IT; IF THE IDOLATROUS [FESTIVAL] TAKES PLACE OUTSIDE IT, [BUSINESS] IS PERMITTED WITHIN IT. HOW ABOUT GOING THERE? IF THE ROAD LEADS SOLELY TO THAT PLACE, IT IS FORBIDDEN;<sup>22</sup> BUT IF ONE CAN GO BY IT TO ANY OTHER PLACE, IT IS PERMITTED.

**GEMARA.** What may be regarded as OUTSIDE IT? — Said R. Simeon b. Lakish, such as, for example, the bazaar of Gaza.<sup>23</sup> Some report this as follows: R. Simeon b. Lakish asked of R. Hanina, How about the market-place of Gaza?<sup>24</sup> — He replied: Have you never gone to Tyre<sup>25</sup> and seen an Israelite and an idolater

1. Tosef. ibid. This must refer to clean animals which are not generally employed for personal use of the King, which proves that burning is not confined to articles in use.
2. In garments of skin (Gen. III, 21).
3. Ishmael b. Simeon, one of the Ten Martyrs executed by order of Hadrian, who was flayed before his execution (v. Jellinek *Beth Hamidrash*, I, 64 and VI, 19).
4. So [H] also MSS. Editions have 'two hundred zuzim' — an error which evidently arose from mistaking the numeral letter [H] — 4 for [H] — 200.
5. The whole spectacle including the obscure proclamation is explained by Rashi to apply to Jacob, representing the Jews, here impersonated by the lame man (Gen. XXXII, 32 and he halted upon his thigh); and to Esau, representing Rome, impersonated by the healthy man; The reckoning which is pronounced as wrong alludes Jacob's prediction as to what would happen to his descendants at the end of days (Gen. XLIX, 1) the treason being an allusion to Jacob's deceitful gaining of the paternal blessing which was intended for Esau, and the concluding threat is a warning to Israel for whom the rising of Rome would be fraught with trouble. Quite a different interpretation is offered by Rapaport ('Erek Millin s.v. [H]). According to him, Samuel here presents an account which reached him of one of the Ludi Saeculares, the spectacular carnivals and

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

- pompous pageants, of which altogether ten are known to Roman history. This one must have been arranged by the Roman Emperor Philippus, about 247 C.E., who introduced into the pageant the spectacle of a halting dancer ridden upon by a strong man. This was intended to satirize and discredit P's rival, Decius, who pretended to be a friend and 'brother' of the Emperor, yet had accepted the crown which P. fondly hoped would be handed to his own son. The lame dancer with a larva, or kind of mask, tied at his neck (described by the Rabbi as R. Ishmael's scalp), thus impersonated Decius the treacherous 'ruler' whose plans and plottings are declared as wrong. The rider was impersonating Philippus. When he (or his son) rises woe betide his rival. The exclamation 'Let him who will see it, etc.' alludes to the festivity which occurs but once in a lifetime. The fact that Samuel lived till 3 or 13 years after the date of this Game lends added feasibility to this interpretation.
6. Lit., Their own mouth (i.e., words) causes them to stumble.
  7. [H] Names of idolatrous annual festivals. Kohut s.v. [H] cites a Responsum by R. Moses b. Isaac (Responsa of the Geonim ed. Harkavi, Vol. 1, 22, ch. 46) where the names are given as follows: 1. [H] 2. [H] 3. [H] 4. [H] stating that the first and third are no longer kept, but that the second takes place at the beginning of the summer and of the winter, while the last one is celebrated as New Moon, v. Brull's Jahrbuch, Vol. I, 168 and Jeshurun, ed. Kobak, Vol. VIII, 49 seq.
  8. Names of Chaldean Festivals.
  9. Capital of Chaldea, (Gen. XI, 9) called Babylon [The reference is to the Temple of Marduk]
  10. Nebo [H] an Assyro-Babylonian Deity regarded by some as the Chaldean Mercury, v. Sanh. 63a. Kursi is probably Gerasa where ruins of Temples have been discovered. [V. I. Borsip (Borsippa) the sister city of Babylon.]
  11. [Tar'ata, a Syrian deity in Mabug (Hieropolis) v. Perles, Etym. Stud. p. 100].
  12. Ashkelon, on the Mediterranean coast, v. Josh. XIII, 3 and I Samuel VI, 17, [H] probably an adaptation of [H] the burning deity, Venus. [Or, Serapis, Kohut, Aruch.]
  13. An Arabian deity resembling an eagle Heb. [H] Arab. Nasr.
  14. To Babylon from Palestine.
  15. [H], yerid — a yearly fair accompanied by idol-worship. evidently identical with [H] Nidbahah. The two terms are indeed interchanged here in manuscripts. 'En-Bechi [H] assumed to be identical with [H] Baalbek, a place between the Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon mountains, the Greek Heliopolis. Acre [H]; town on Phoenician shore at foot of Mt. Carmel; the 'Ummah [H] of Josh. XIX, 30.
  16. The words in parenthesis are not found in the MS.M.
  17. [R. Hanan b. Raba, the son-in-law of Rab; v. Hyman, Toledoth. p. 517.]
  18. Since the Jews depend for their livelihood on heathens.
  19. V. *supra* 7b.
  20. [H], Tai, traveler, especially Bedouin merchants, the Tai being a name of an Arab tribe applied to all Bedouins, as a part to a whole. Obermeyer, Die Landschaft Babylonien, 234 renders it simply 'Festivals of the Tai', whose festivals were not determined by the calendar and consequently bore no religious character.]
  21. It cannot therefore be cited as a case for establishing a general rule.
  22. As he might be regarded as going to the celebration.
  23. A Philistine city on Mediterranean coast, S.E. of Jerusalem, inhabited by pagans. Its bazaar, though quite close to it, is considered 'outside it'.
  24. Being quite close to the city, should it be termed 'outside it' according to the Mishnah or not?
  25. A Phoenician city.

## 'Abodah Zarah 12a

placing two pots on the same stove? yet the Sages did not mind.<sup>1</sup>

What is it that they did not mind?<sup>2</sup> Said Abaye: The possibility of eating 'flesh of nebelah'.<sup>3</sup> We are not to presume that while the Israelite turned his face, the heathen dropped some *nebelah* into his pot; as a parallel case, here too the Sages should not mind the possibility of receiving money of an idolater.<sup>4</sup> Raba said, what the Sages did not mind there is the cooking by a heathen; the parallel being that here too, the Sages should not object to the transacting of business on account of the festivity.<sup>5</sup> Rabbah b. 'Ulla said: What the Sages raised no objection to is only the splashing,<sup>6</sup> the analogy to our case is

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

[only] that the sages would not object to the period before the festivity.

**WHAT ABOUT GOING THERE?**, etc. Our Rabbis taught: It is forbidden to enter a city while idolatrous worship is taking place therein — or [to go] from there to another city; this is the opinion of R. Meir. But the Sages say, only when the road leads solely to that city is it forbidden; if however the road does not lead exclusively to that place it is permitted. If a splinter has got into his [foot] while in front of an idol, he should not bend down to get it out, because he may appear as bowing to the idol; but if not apparent<sup>7</sup> it is permitted. If his coins got scattered in front of an idol he should not bend and pick them up, for he may be taken as bowing to the idol; but if not apparent it is permitted. If there is a spring flowing in front of an idol he should not bend down and drink, because he may appear to be bowing to the idol; but if not apparent it is permitted. One should not place one's mouth on the mouth of human figures, which act as water fountains in the cities, for the purpose of drinking; because he may seem as kissing the idolatrous figure. So also one should not place one's mouth on a water pipe and drink therefrom for fear of danger.<sup>8</sup>

What is meant by 'not being apparent' — Shall we say that he is not seen? Surely Rab Judah stated in the name of Rab that whatever the Sages prohibited merely because it may appear objectionable to the public, is also forbidden in one's innermost chamber! — It can only mean that if [by bending] he will not appear as bowing to the idol.

And all [three instances given] are necessary. For if we were taught the case of the splinter only, [we would have thought that it is forbidden] because he can well walk away from the idol and take it out, but in the case of the coins where this could not be done, the prohibition does not apply. If, on the other

hand, we were given the case of the coins only [we might say that the prohibition holds good] because only a loss of money is incurred, but in the case of the thorn, where pain is caused, the prohibition is not to be applied. Were we given both these instances, [we might still say that the prohibition applied to them] because there is no danger involved, but in the case of the spring where there is danger, for it may mean dying of thirst, we might say that the prohibition should be waived, hence all the instances are necessary.

1. So also no objection need be raised against transacting business with the idolaters in the bazaar merely because of the festival held at Gaza in proximity to it.
2. What kind of prohibition was disregarded in the case of Tyre, which might offer an analogy to our case?
3. [H], flesh of any animal, even a clean one, which dies of itself, or which is not slaughtered in accordance with ritual law and is forbidden to a Jew.
4. We are not to assume that the money paid by the heathen outside the city for the animal sold to him by the Jew, has been handed to him by an idolater within the city with the express order of procuring a sacrifice for the idolatrous festival. Ye shall not eat of anything that dieth of itself (Deut. XIV 21) being a scriptural injunction, the practice in Tyre may be taken as a parallel for waiving the scriptural prohibition, There shall cleave naught of the devoted thing to thy hand (Deut. XIII, 18) which is applied to things connected with idolatry (v, *infra* 64a). Thus, according to Abaye, even a possible transgression of a scriptural prohibition may be disregarded under the circumstances given here.
5. Raba's contention is that in the case of Tyre there is no Scriptural prohibition involved at all. The possibility of eating forbidden flesh could not have occurred to the Sages, for there is no ground for suspecting the heathen of the offence of tampering with the Israelite's food. What did suggest itself to them is the possibility of the heathen, in the desire to oblige the Israelite, attending in the latter's absence to his cooking, in which case it would become food cooked by an idolater ([H]) which is prohibited by the Rabbis. This case may therefore only be cited as a parallel to transacting business with an idolater, on his

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

- festival, when he is dealing with his own money and not with that appertaining to idolatry — so that only a Rabbinic enactment is involved, in which case the proximity of the Bazaar of Gaza to the town might be overlooked.
6. According to Rabbah b. 'Ulla the case of Tyre does not offer a parallel for disregarding even a Rabbinic prohibition. The possibility of cooking by heathen must here be excluded, this being applicable only to food cooked solely by idolaters without any intervention by the Jew, which is obviously not the case in this instance. All that the Sages could have suspected in that case is the 'splashing' of some of the contents of the heathen's pot into that of the Jew. This being but a light prohibition — as the small quantity of the *Trefa* liquid would become 'nullified' by the much larger quantity of the kasher one — and of rare occurrence, it can only be taken to offer a parallel to the transaction of business in the Bazaar of Gaza prior to, but not during, the idolatrous festival held within the city.
  7. This is explained presently.
  8. I.e., of swallowing an insect, etc. v. *Tosef. A.Z.*, VII.

## 'Abodah Zarrah 12b

Why then mention the instance of [placing one's mouth on the mouths of the] figures? — That is only because he wanted to teach the instance, which resembles it, of not placing one's mouth on the water-pipe to drink therefrom for fear of danger. What is the danger? — The swallowing of a leech.

Our Rabbis taught: One should not drink water either from rivers or from pools direct with his mouth or [by drawing the water] with the one hand;<sup>1</sup> if he drinks it, his blood shall be upon his head, for it is dangerous. What danger is there? That of [swallowing] a leech.

[This statement] supports R. Hanina: for R. Hanina said: For one who swallows a leech it is permissible to get water heated on the Sabbath.<sup>2</sup>

There was actually a case of one swallowing a leech, when R. Nehemiah declared it

permissible to get water heated for him on the Sabbath. 'Meanwhile', said R. Huna son of R. Joshua, 'let him sip vinegar'. Said R. Idi b. Abin: One who has swallowed a wasp cannot possibly live. Let him however drink a quarter<sup>3</sup> of strong vinegar; perhaps [by this means] he will live long enough to set his house in order.

Our Rabbis taught: One should not drink water in the night;<sup>4</sup> if he does drink his blood is on his head, for it is dangerous. What danger is there? The danger of Shabriri.<sup>5</sup> But if he be thirsty, how can he put things right? — If there is another person with him, he should wake him and say: 'I am athirst for water'. If not, let him knock with the lid on the jug and say to himself: 'Thou [giving his name] the son of [naming his mother], thy mother hath warned thee to guard thyself against Shabriri, briri, riri, iri, ri, which prevail in blind vessels.'<sup>6</sup>

**MISHNAH.** A CITY IN WHICH IDOLATRY IS TAKING PLACE, SOME OF ITS SHOPS BEING DECORATED WITH GARLANDS AND SOME NOT DECORATED<sup>7</sup> — THIS WAS THE CASE WITH BETH-SHEAN,<sup>8</sup> AND THE SAGES SAID: IN THE DECORATED ONES IT IS FORBIDDEN [TO BUY] BUT IN THE UNDECORATED ONES IT IS PERMITTED.<sup>9</sup>

**GEMARA.** Said R. Simeon b. Lakish: This only refers to [shops] decorated with garlands of roses and myrtle, so that he enjoys the odour,<sup>10</sup> but if they are decorated with fruit, it is permissible [to buy in them]. The reason is this: Scripture says, There shall cleave naught of the devoted thing to thy hand;<sup>11</sup> hence it is to derive an enjoyment that is forbidden

1. The drawing of the water with one hand has to be done so rapidly that he would have no time to examine it.
2. The biblical injunction *ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitation upon the Sabbath day* (Ex. XXXV, 3) is to be waived in cases where danger to life is involved; hence the

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

- swallowing of a leech is regarded as dangerous.
3. Of a *Log*.
  4. V. Pes. 112a, where the words 'either from streams or from pools' are added.
  5. [H] Aram. 'blindness'; v. *Targum* to Gen. XIX, 11. Generally taken as a contraction of the words [H] breaker of the eyesight. Kohut, s.v. [H] asserts that the correct reading is shab-khiri, Persian for night blindness. — 'A demon appointed over the affliction of blindness' (Rashi).
  6. So Kohut, who calls attention to the resemblance of this incantation against the demon of blindness to the amulet bearing the inscription Abracadabra reduced by one letter on each succeeding line till the last letter only remains, and used by Romans as an antidote to the influence of evil spirits.
  7. The decoration signified that part of the proceeds in that shop is dedicated to idolatry.
  8. Place in Palestine south of Lake Gennesareth, v. Josh. XVII, 16 and, Judges I, 27. The modern Baisan.
  9. Tosaf. explains that we are here dealing with a market-day that is not a festival, to which the prohibition mentioned in the first Mishnah of this Tractate does not apply.
  10. Of articles which are usually strewn before the idols as part of the worship.
  11. Deut. XIII, 18.

## 'Abodah Zarah 13a

but to confer enjoyment [or profit] is permitted. But R. Johanan said: Even if they are decorated with fruit they are also forbidden, by an induction from the minor to the major, thus: if it is forbidden to enjoy [the odor of idolatrous articles] how much more so should it be forbidden to confer a benefit [which will be applied to such purpose]!

The following question was then asked: R. Nathan says: On the day when remission is made of the usual tax towards idolatrous purpose, the proclamation is made: 'Whosoever will take a wreath and put it on his head and on the head of his ass in honor of the idols, his tax will be remitted;

otherwise his tax will not be remitted!' How should the Jew act who is present there? Shall he put it on? That means that he is enjoying [the odor of idolatrous articles]! Shall he not put it on? Then he confers a benefit [of paying tax towards idolatry]! Hence it was said: If one buys aught in a market of idolaters, if it be cattle it should be disabled, if fruit, clothes or utensils, they should be allowed to rot, if money or metal vessels he should carry them to the Salt Sea.<sup>1</sup> What is meant by disabling? the cutting the tendons of the hoofs beneath the ankle.<sup>2</sup> Here, then, we are taught: 'Shall he put it on? That means he is enjoying! Shall he not put it on? Then he confers a benefit!'<sup>3</sup> Said R. Mesharsheya the son of R. Idi: R. Simeon b. Lakish is of opinion that the Rabbis disagree with R. Nathan, so that [he can reply:] 'I give the opinion of the Rabbis who held the opposite view; whereas R. Johanan<sup>4</sup> is of opinion that the Rabbis do not disagree [with R. Nathan].'<sup>5</sup> But [how could R. Johanan think that] the Rabbis do not disagree? Was it not taught:<sup>6</sup> One may attend a fair of idolaters and buy of them cattle, menservants, maidservants, houses, fields and vineyards; one may even write the necessary documents and deposit them at their courts<sup>7</sup> because thereby he, as it were, rescues [his property] from their hands.<sup>8</sup> If he be a priest<sup>9</sup> he may incur the risk of defilement by going without the [Holy] Land for the purpose of arguing the matter with them and have it tried in court. And just as he may defile himself [by going] without the Land, so he may become defiled by walking on a burial ground ('A burial ground'! How can that enter your mind? this is a defilement forbidden by Scripture! — What is meant is an Unclean Field<sup>10</sup> which is only a Rabbinic prohibition.) Likewise, one may incur similar defilement for the sake of studying the Torah or taking a wife. Said R. Judah: This only applies when he cannot find [a place elsewhere] for studying, but when one can manage to learn [elsewhere] one must not defile oneself; but R. Jose said: Even when

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

one can manage to study [elsewhere] he may defile himself, for no man is so meritorious as to learn from any teacher. Said R. Jose: There is the case of Joseph the Priest who followed his master to Zidon.<sup>11</sup> Whereupon R. Johanan [himself] said: The *halachah* is according to R. Jose. Hence the Sages do disagree!<sup>12</sup> R. Johanan may answer you thus: The Rabbis do not indeed disagree [with R. Nathan], yet there is no difficulty here: The one case<sup>13</sup> refers to purchasing from a dealer, from whom the tax is exacted, the other case refers to purchasing from a private man<sup>14</sup> from whom the tax is not exacted.

The master stated: 'Cattle should be disabled.' But is there not the prohibition of causing suffering to a living being?<sup>15</sup> — Said Abaye: The Divine Law says, Their horses thou shalt hough.<sup>16</sup>

The Master stated: 'What is meant by disabling [cattle]? The cutting of the tendons beneath the ankle.' The following is cited as contradicting it: One should not declare anything as sanctified, or as devoted, or as set value upon<sup>17</sup> at the present time;<sup>18</sup> and if one did declare aught as sanctified or devoted or set value upon, then if it be cattle it should be disabled, if fruit clothes or utensils

1. In the Talmud this refers to the (Mediterranean) Ocean, though it is generally identified with the Dead Sea. They should be disposed of so that no benefit whatsoever is derived from them by anybody.
2. So as not to affect the vitality of the animal, which is forbidden in all circumstances.
3. Which is forbidden. Why then does R.S.b.L. say that to confer benefit on idols is permitted?
4. Who opposes R.S.b.L.
5. He therefore shares R. Nathan's view.
6. M.K. 11a, 'Er. 47a.
7. Regardless of the fact that this recognition of the idolaters' court may be made the subject of praise to the idols.
8. By arming himself with evidence which will establish his ownership.
9. Who must not come in contact with any ritual uncleanness.

10. Beth ha-Peras [H] (lit., 'an area of a square peras'; peras=half length of a furrow) a field which has been plowed together with a grave it contained, which is to be regarded as unclean, on account of the crushed bones carried over it (v. M. K. 5b).
11. In Phoenicia, which, being, outside Palestine, is declared by the Rabbis unclean, like a Beth ha-Peras.
12. With the view of R. Nathan who stated above that it is forbidden to make any purchase at a market of idolaters; nor could R. Johanan have been unaware of this teaching, as he is reported to express an opinion on it.
13. Where purchase is forbidden.
14. [H] lit., 'master of the house', an ordinary, private, man.
15. [H] Causing of suffering to any living being, or leaving a suffering animal unrelieved, is a Scriptural prohibition (v. Shab. 128b).
16. Josh. XI, 6; hence in exceptional cases this biblical command may be waived (Tosaf s.v. [H]).
17. The article, or in the case of a person his value, as set forth in Lev. XXVII, thereby becoming the property of the Sanctuary.
18. After the destruction of the Temple.

## ‘Abodah Zarah 13b

they should be allowed to rot, if money or metal vessels, he should carry them to the Salt Sea. What is meant by disabling? The door is locked in front of it, so that it dies of itself!<sup>1</sup> — Said Abaye: That case is treated differently, so as [to avoid] despising sanctified things.<sup>2</sup> Then by all means let it be slaughtered! — That may lead to transgression.<sup>3</sup> Then let him cut it in twain!<sup>4</sup> — Said Abaye: Scripture says, And ye shall break down their altars ... and ye shall hew down the graven images of their gods ... Ye shall not do so unto the Lord your God.<sup>5</sup> Raba said: [Houghing is here avoided] because it seem like inflicting a blemish upon sanctified things.<sup>6</sup> 'Seems!' This is surely a real blemish! — This could only be so termed while the Temple was in existence, so that the animal is fit for being offered up; but at the present time, since it cannot in any case be offered, the scriptural injunction does not apply.<sup>7</sup> But let it be regarded as inflicting a blemish upon a blemished animal which,

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

even though such animal was not fit for a sacrificial purpose, is forbidden by Scripture.<sup>8</sup> — Granted; an animal which had been blemished cannot itself be used for sacrifice, yet the money obtained for it may be so used;<sup>9</sup> but our case<sup>10</sup> is unlike it, in that neither its equivalent in money nor the animal itself is capable of being used for a sacrificial purpose.<sup>11</sup>

R. Jonah found R. Elai as he was standing at the gate of Tyre; he said to him: It is stated, cattle [bought at a heathen fair] should be invalidated; what about a slave? I am not asking about a Jewish slave; what I am asking about is a heathen slave — what is one to do? — The other replied: Why do you ask at all? It has been taught;<sup>12</sup> As to idolaters and [Jewish] shepherds of small cattle,<sup>13</sup> even though one is not bound to get them out [of a pit], one must not throw them in [to a pit to endanger their lives].<sup>14</sup>

Said R. Jeremiah to R. Zera: It was taught, 'We may buy of them cattle, menservants and maidservants,'<sup>15</sup> — Is this to be applied to a Jewish servant or to a heathen servant also? — Said he in reply: According to common sense, a Jewish servant [is meant]; for were it to apply to a heathen servant, what [meritorious] use could he make of him?<sup>16</sup> When Rabin came,<sup>17</sup> he said in the name of R. Simeon b. Lakish: It may even apply to a heathen servant; because he brings him under the wings of the *Shechinah*.<sup>18</sup> Said R. Ashi: How then could the bringing under the wings of the *Shechinah* be applied to cattle?<sup>19</sup> — It is only because of diminishing [the possessions of the idolaters]<sup>20</sup> that those are permitted; this also is permitted because of its diminishing effect.

R. Jacob once bought sandals, while R. Jeremiah bought bread.<sup>21</sup> Said the one to the other: 'Ignoramus!<sup>22</sup> would your master act thus?' The other rejoined: 'Ignoramus, would your master act thus?' Both in fact had bought of private men,<sup>23</sup> but each one

thought that the other had bought of a dealer; for R. Abba the son of R. Hiyya b. Abba said: The prohibition was only taught in the case of buying of a dealer of whom tax is exacted, but the buying of a private person of whom no tax is exacted is permitted.

Said R. Abba the son of R. Hiyya b. Abba: 'Had R. Johanan been present at the time in that place where taxes were exacted even from private persons he would have forbidden [even such purchase].' How is it then that they made the purchase? — They bought of a private person who was not a permanent resident of the place.<sup>24</sup>

**MISHNAH. THE FOLLOWING THINGS ARE FORBIDDEN TO BE SOLD TO IDOLATERS: IZTROBLIN, BNOTH-SHUAH,<sup>25</sup> STEMS, FRANKINCENSE, AND A WHITE COCK.<sup>26</sup> R. JUDAH SAYS: IT IS PERMITTED TO SELL A WHITE COCK TO AN IDOLATER AMONG OTHER COCKS; BUT IF IT BE BY ITSELF, ONE SHOULD CLIP ITS SPUR AND THEN SELL IT TO HIM, BECAUSE A DEFECTIVE [ANIMAL] IS NOT SACRIFICED TO AN IDOL. AS FOR OTHER THINGS, IF THEY ARE NOT SPECIFIED<sup>25</sup> THEIR SALE IS PERMITTED, BUT IF SPECIFIED<sup>25</sup> IT IS FORBIDDEN. R. MEIR SAYS: ALSO A GOOD-PALM',<sup>27</sup> HAZAB AND NIKOLAUS<sup>25</sup> ARE FORBIDDEN TO BE SOLD TO IDOLATERS.**

1. Shek. 13b. Hence the mode of 'disabling' is different from the one here described!
2. It would be derogatory to an animal which was declared as sacred to be seen in its disabled state, hence a quicker means than hocking is resorted to.
3. Lit. 'stumbling block'. Its flesh might be eaten, which, being sanctified, is forbidden.
4. [H]. From the Aramaic [H] two sides, or parts. The animal killed thus, not according to ritual, would not be used for food.
5. Deut. XII, 3, 4.
6. Which is contrary to the scriptural injunction: Whosoever bringeth a sacrifice ... it shall be perfect to be accepted; there shall be no blemish therein. (Lev. XXII, 21).
7. The prohibition is thus only a Rabbinic one, and is therefore referred to as 'seeming'.

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

8. According to one opinion given in Bek. 33. Why then does Raba describe this case as a 'seeming' prohibition?
9. For purchasing another animal for an offering, so that the scriptural words ... to be accepted, there shall be no blemish therein are still applicable to it.
10. Of an animal declared as sacred, while there is no temple for offering any sacrifices.
11. The houghing of such animal is therefore only a Rabbinic prohibition, justly described by Raba as the 'seeming' infliction of a blemish upon sanctified things.
12. *Infra* 26a. San. 57b.
13. Whether Jews or heathen. Most shepherds were known to practice robbery and theft; hence they were disqualified as witnesses.
14. It is therefore plain that to invalidate a heathen servant is forbidden.
15. *Supra* 13a.
16. Which should justify the opinion of the Rabbis who, in opposition to R. Nathan, permit such purchase.
17. From Palestine.
18. The Divine Presence. The meritorious feature of buying such a servant is his being introduced to the tenets of true religion.
19. The purchase of which is likewise permitted by these Rabbis.
20. I.e., the withdrawal of the animal from their idolatrous service.
21. Of idolaters at one of their fairs.
22. [H], lit., 'orphan', 'untutored'. The remark is obviously to be taken as a friendly reproof. R. Jacob and his younger contemporary R. Jeremiah (b. Abba) were both friends who came from Babylon to study at the Academies in Palestine; both sat at the feet of R. Johanan who (*infra* 13a) forbids all kinds of purchase from which any benefit may accrue to idolatry.
23. Which is permissible, as private persons are not liable to pay part of their profits towards idolatrous purposes (*supra* 13a).
24. As such a person would in no case be liable to pay the tax.
25. Explanation follows in the Gemara.
26. White animals were offered to heavenly deities; the white cock was a regular offering for a poor man to make (v. Elmslie, p. 9 note).
27. Heb. Dekel Tab, a variety of dates.

## 'Abodah Zarah 14a

**GEMARA.** What is IZTROBLIN? — Pine-wood.<sup>1</sup> But this is contradicted [by the following teaching]: 'To these<sup>2</sup> have been

added Alexandrian nuts, iztroblin, moxasin<sup>3</sup> and bnoth-shuah.' Now were you to suggest that iztroblin is pine-wood, has pine-wood anything to do with the Sabbatical Year? Has it not been taught:<sup>4</sup> This is the general rule: Everything which has a [perennial] root is subject to the laws of the Sabbatical Year<sup>5</sup> but anything that has no such root is not subject to the law of the Sabbatical Year. R. Safra then said: It means fruit of the cedar. So also when Rabin came [from Palestine] he said in the name of R. Eleazar [It means] fruit of the cedar.<sup>6</sup>

**BNOT-SHUAH.** Said Raba b. Bar-Hana in the name of R. Johanan, White figs.<sup>7</sup>

**STEMS.** Said Raba b. Bar-Hana 'with their stems' is what the Mishnah intended to teach.<sup>8</sup>

**FRANKINCENSE.** Said R. Isaac in the name of R. Simeon b. Lakish, that is clear-frankincense. A Tanna taught:<sup>9</sup> But of any of these a parcel may be sold.<sup>10</sup> And how much is a parcel? — R. Judah b. Bathra explained, A parcel is no less than three *manehs*.<sup>11</sup>

But we surely ought to fear lest he goes and sells it to others who will burn it [before idols]? — Said Abaye; We should be particular not to [place a stumbling-block] before [the blind]<sup>12</sup> but we need not be so particular as to avoid placing it before one who may place it before the blind.

**AND A WHITE COCK.** Said R. Jonah in the name of R. Zera who said in the name of R. Zebid [Some report, 'Said R. Jonah in the name of R. Zera']: [If an idolater asks,] Who has a cock? it is permitted to sell him [even] a white cock, but if he asks, Who has a white cock? it is forbidden to sell him a white cock.

Our Mishnah states: R. JUDAH SAID: 'ONE MAY SELL HIM A WHITE COCK AMONGST [OTHER] COCKS.'<sup>13</sup> Now what

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

are the circumstances? Shall we say that he was enquiring: Who hath a white cock, who hath a white cock? In that case it must not be sold to him even among others! It can only mean that he was enquiring: Who hath a cock, who hath a cock? and even then according to R. Judah a white one may be sold him only among others but not by itself, while according to the first Tanna it may not be sold even among others!<sup>14</sup> — Said R. Nahman b. Isaac: The case dealt with in our Mishnah is of one asking for various kinds.<sup>15</sup>

It has been taught likewise:<sup>16</sup> Said R. Judah: Only if he asks for 'this [white] cock' [it must not be sold to him], but if he asks for this and another one it is permitted [to sell both together]; and even when he asks for 'this [white] cock', if the idolater is giving a banquet for his son, or if he has a sick person in his house, [its sale] is permitted.<sup>17</sup>

But have we not learnt: 'If an idolater gives a banquet for his son the prohibition [of selling] applies to that day and that man alone', so that as regards that day and that man the prohibition does apply!<sup>18</sup> Said R. Isaac son of R. Mesharsheya: Our statement refers to an ordinary party.<sup>19</sup>

We have learnt: AS FOR OTHER THINGS, IF THEY ARE NOT SPECIFIED THEIR SALE IS PERMITTED, BUT IF SPECIFIED IT IS FORBIDDEN. Now what is meant by 'specified' and by 'unspecified'? Shall we say that 'unspecified' means if he asks [for example] for white wheat, and 'specified' if he states that [he requires it] for idolatry?

1. So Rashi. Tosaf. s.v. [H] renders it 'brimstone', hence 'Kohut, Aruch suggests the reading [H].
2. I.e., to articles enumerated in connection with the laws relating to the Sabbatical Year.
3. A species of figs.
4. Shah. 90a; Nid. 62b.
5. V. *supra* p. 45 n. 7[a].
6. [Cones of pine or fir-trees ([G]) were burned before deities as sweet smelling gifts, v.

Krauss, Talm. Arch. I, 686, and Elmslie, *loc. cit.*]

7. The fruit of the fig-tree was closely associated with phallic worship (Elmslie, a.l.)
8. The word 'stems' is not an additional item but refers to the 'cedar-fruit' and the 'white figs' which precede it. These were usually hanged by their stems as ornaments for idols.
9. Tosef. A.Z. I.
10. Because it is intended for sale and not for idolatrous worship.
11. Weight equal to a hundred ordinary or 50 sacred *shekels*. V. Zuckerman Talm. Mun., p. 7. seq.
12. V. *supra* p. 26.
13. Cf. the slight variations in our Mishnah.
14. This refutes the ruling reported by R. Jonah.
15. Hence R. Judah forbids its sale since it was specified by the idolater; his mentioning those of other colors may have been prompted by his knowledge that if he were to ask for a white one only, it would be withheld from him. It is however permitted to be sold among cocks of other colors, for we may assume that, as the others are not intended for idolatry, neither is this one. The other Rabbis however hold that, since it was specified by the idolater, it must not be sold even among others. When however the idolater asks for cocks without specifying any color both R. Judah and the other Rabbis permit the sale of a white one. There is thus no difference between the opinion expressed in our Mishnah and that held by R. Zera.
16. Tosef. A.Z. I, end; in Zuck. ed. the version is different from ours.
17. For it is required to lend importance to the banquet, or as a remedy for the sick and not for idolatrous purposes.
18. *Supra* 8a, which is contrary to the foregoing statement.
19. [H] — picnic. (v. Pes. 49b) where no idolatry takes place, whereas the statement cited refers to a wedding.

## ‘Abodah Zarah 14b

In that case it is neither necessary to state that the unspecified may be sold,<sup>1</sup> nor is it necessary to state that the specified must not be sold!<sup>2</sup> We must then say that 'unspecified' means if he asks for [say], wheat, [which is permitted] and 'specified' when he asks for white wheat, [which is forbidden]; and this would imply that in the case of a cock it is forbidden even when unspecified!<sup>3</sup> — [No.]

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

We may say, indeed, that 'unspecified' is when he asks for white wheat, and 'specified' is when he states [that it is required] for idolatry; yet it is necessary to state that the 'specified' is forbidden: we might think that that man does not really require it for idolatry; only being very much attached to idolatry, he thinks that all people are likewise attached to it; [he therefore thinks to himself] let me say thus, so that they might readily give it to me; it is therefore necessary to state [that its sale is forbidden].

R. Ashi propounded: [If he asks,] 'Who has a mutilated white cock?' may one sell him a white cock without blemish? Do we say since he asks for a mutilated one, he does not require it for the idols, or perhaps he is merely acting cunningly? And if you should say that this one is acting cunningly, [what if one enquires,] 'Who has a white cock? Who has a white cock?' and when a black one is given to him he accepts it or when a red one is given to him he accepts it, may a white one be sold to him? Do we say, since when he was given a black one or a red one he accepted it, it is proved that he does not require one for idolatry, or perhaps he is merely acting cunningly? This stands undecided.

R. MEIR SAYS, ALSO A GOOD-PALM, etc. Said R. Hisda to Abimi: There is a tradition that the [tractate] 'Abodah Zarah of our father Abraham consisted of four hundred chapters; we have only learnt five, yet we do not know what we are saying. And what difficulty is there? The Mishnah states that R. MEIR SAYS: ALSO A GOODPALM', HAZAB AND NIKOLAUS ARE FORBIDDEN TO BE SOLD TO IDOLATERS [which implies that] it is only a 'good-palm' that we must not sell but a 'bad-palm' we may sell, yet we have learnt:<sup>4</sup> One may not sell to them anything that is attached to the soil! He replied: What is meant by 'good-palm' is the fruit of a 'good-palm'. And so also said R. Huna: The fruit of a good-palm. HAZAB is the species of dates called

Kishba. As to NIKOLAUS, when R. Dimi came<sup>5</sup> he said in the name of R. Hama b. Joseph that it is kuirati.<sup>6</sup> Said Abaye to R. Dimi: We learn 'nikolaus, and do not know what it is, so you tell us it is 'kuriati' which we do not know either, where then have you benefited us? — Said he: I have benefited you this much: were you to go to Palestine and say 'nikolaus'<sup>7</sup> no one would know what it is; but if you say 'kuriati' they will know and will show it to you.

**MISHNAH.** IN A PLACE WHERE IT IS THE CUSTOM TO SELL SMALL CATTLE TO IDOLATERS, SUCH SALE IS PERMITTED; BUT WHERE THE CUSTOM IS NOT TO SELL, SUCH SALE IS NOT PERMITTED.<sup>8</sup> IN NO PLACE HOWEVER IS IT PERMITTED TO SELL BIG CATTLE, CALVES OR FOALS, WHETHER WHOLE OR MAIMED.<sup>9</sup> R. JUDAH PERMITS IN THE CASE OF A MAIMED ONE<sup>10</sup> AND BEN BATHYRA PERMITS IN THE CASE OF A HORSE.<sup>11</sup>

**GEMARA.** Are we to take it that there is no actual prohibition, but that it is only a matter of custom; so that where the usage is to prohibit, it is to be followed, and where the usage is to permit it is to be followed? But this is in conflict with the following [Mishnah]: One should not place cattle in inns kept by heathen, because they are suspected of immoral practices!<sup>12</sup> — Said Rab: In places where it is permitted to sell, it is permitted to leave them together alone, but where leaving them together alone is forbidden [by usage] the sale is also forbidden.<sup>13</sup>

1. As there is no ground for such prohibition, since it is only in the case of cocks that white ones are used for idolatry.
2. Since no article required for idol-worship may be sold.
3. Which is contrary to the ruling reported by R. Jonah above!
4. *Infra* 19b.
5. From Palestine.

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

6. A species of dates. The date-palm was the most sacred of all trees to the Semitic peoples (Elmslie, p. 10).
7. [The Nikolaus dates are named after the Greek philosopher, Nicholas of Damascus, who supplied his friend, the Emperor Augustus, with a variety of dates which grew in Palestine. The Emperors as a mark of appreciation called the dates by the philosopher's name (v.J.E. IX, 11, and Elmslie, p. 11). This name would naturally not be generally known to the people of Palestine.]
8. In Pes. 53, where this Mishnah also occurs, the following words are inserted: let no one alter (local customs) in order to avoid controversy.
9. The sale of big cattle to a heathen is forbidden out of consideration for the animal, as it will be deprived by its master of its rest on Sabbaths and Festivals (v. Ex. XX, 10).
10. As it is sure to be killed for food.
11. This is generally used for riding which is not to be termed as carrying a burden, on the principle that 'the living rider carries himself.' V. *supra* 7b.
12. The Israelite is thus guilty of 'placing a stumbling-block before the blind'. V. *infra* 22a.
13. The prohibition of placing cattle with a heathen in the other Mishnah cited here is also dependent on local usage.

## 'Abodah Zarah 15a

But R. Eleazar said: Even where it is forbidden to leave them together it is permitted to sell, the reason being that the heathen will avoid the risk of having his cattle sterilised.<sup>1</sup> And Rab, too, altered his opinion: for R. Tahlifa said in the name of R. Shila b. Abimi, who said in the name of Rab: A heathen will not run the risk of having his cattle sterilised.<sup>2</sup>

IN NO PLACE, HOWEVER, IS IT PERMITTED TO SELL BIG CATTLE, etc. What reason is there [for this prohibition]? — Though there is no fear of immoral practice,<sup>3</sup> there is the fear of his making the animal work [on the days of rest]. Then let him make it work; since he has bought it, he owns it!<sup>4</sup> — The prohibition<sup>5</sup> is because of lending and because of hiring. [But, surely]

when he borrows it he owns it, or when he hires it he owns it [during that period]!<sup>6</sup> Then said Rami the son of R. Yeba: The prohibition is because of the probability of 'trying'.<sup>7</sup> For he might happen to sell it to him close to sunset on the eve of the Sabbath and the heathen might say to him 'Come now let us give it a trial,' and hearing the owner's voice it will walk because of him, and he indeed desires it to walk, so that he acts as a driver of his burdened beast on the Sabbath and he who drives his burdened beast on the Sabbath is liable to bring a sin-offering.<sup>8</sup>

R. Shisha the son of R. Idi objected:<sup>9</sup> But does hire constitute acquisition? Have we not learnt, 'Even in a place where they pronounced as permitted to let [premises to a heathen], they did not pronounce it in regard to a dwelling house, because he will bring idols into it.'<sup>10</sup> Now, if we were to be of opinion that hiring constitutes acquisition, then whatever this one brings in he brings into his own house! — It is different with bringing in idols, which is a very grave matter, for scripture says, And thou shalt not bring abomination into thy house.<sup>11</sup>

Then R. Isaac the son of R. Mesharsheya objected: But does hire constitute acquisition? Have we not learnt, An Israelite<sup>12</sup> who hires a cow from a priest may feed her on vegetables which are *Terumah*,<sup>13</sup> but a priest who hires a cow of an Israelite, even though he is obliged to feed it, may not feed it on vegetables that are *Terumah*.<sup>14</sup> Now, were we to hold the opinion that hiring constitutes acquisition, why should he not feed her on it? Surely the cow belongs to him! From here then you can deduce that hire does not constitute acquisition.

Now, since you have declared that hire does not constitute acquisition, the prohibition<sup>15</sup> is both because of 'hiring', and because of 'lending' and because of 'trying'.

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

R. Adda permitted to sell an ass [to a heathen] through a [Jewish] agent: As for 'trying', it is not familiar with his voice that it should walk because of him, and as to 'lending' or 'hiring', since it is not his own he will neither lend nor give it on hire; also, lest some fault be discovered in it.<sup>16</sup>

R. Huna sold a cow to a heathen. Said R. Hisda to him: Wherefore have you acted thus? — Said he, I assume that he bought it for slaying.

1. Through immoral practice.
2. *Infra* 22b.
3. For the reason just stated.
4. A heathen is not commanded to let his cattle rest on the Sabbath; the Israelite is therefore not guilty of 'placing a stumbling-block before the blind', as is the case where he affords him an opportunity for an immoral practice which is forbidden to a Noachide (V. *supra* 2b).
5. The permission to sell may lead to lending or hiring cattle to a heathen over the Sabbath.
6. Since he is liable for any accidents that might happen to it.
7. How the animal carries a load.
8. According to an opinion given in Shah. 154a.
9. To the statement above, 'when he hires it, he owns it'.
10. *Infra* 21a.
11. Deut. VII, 26.
12. One who is not of the priestly family or the Levitical tribe.
13. The heave-offering of the produce set aside as the portion of the priests (Num. XVIII, 8ff.), which may not be given to a beast that is not owned by a priest. He is not guilty thereby of robbing the priest of his portion, for having the option of giving it to any priest he chooses, he may consider it as assigned to the one whose cow he had hired.
14. Ter. XI, 9.
15. Pronounced in our Mishnah of selling big cattle to a heathen.
16. Which would be against his interest as an agent charged with selling it.

## 'Abodah Zarah 15b

And whence can it be deduced that one may so assume in a case of this kind? — From [the Mishnah which we learnt:]<sup>1</sup> 'Beth Shammai say: One should not sell a plowing-cow

during the Sabbatical Year;<sup>2</sup> but Beth Hillel permit it, because he may possibly slay it.<sup>3</sup> Said Raba:<sup>4</sup> How can the two be compared: In that other case, one is not commanded to let one's cattle rest on the Sabbatical year,<sup>5</sup> whereas in our case, one is commanded to let one's cattle rest on the Sabbath!<sup>6</sup> Said Abaye to him: Are we to take it then that when one is commanded [concerning a thing] he is forbidden [to sell it to one who may disregard the command]? Take then the case of a field — for one is commanded to let his field lie fallow on the Sabbatical Year. Yet it has been taught: Beth Shammai say: One may not sell a plowed field on the Sabbatical year, but Beth Hillel permit it, because it is possible that he will let it lie fallow [during that year]!<sup>7</sup>

R. Ashi objected: Are we, on the other hand, to take it that a thing concerning which there is no direct command may be sold to one who is likely to use it contrary to that command? Take then the case of implements — for no one is commanded to let one's implements be idle in the Sabbatical year. Yet we have learnt: Following are the implements which one is not allowed to sell in the Sabbatical year: the plow and all its accessory vessels, the yoke, the winnowing-fan and the mattock!<sup>8</sup> But, continued R. Ashi, where there is reason for the assumption [that proper use will be made] we assume it,<sup>9</sup> even though a command is involved, and where there is no reason for such assumption,<sup>10</sup> we do not assume it, even where there is no command involved.

Rabbah once sold an ass<sup>11</sup> to an Israelite who was suspected of selling it to an idolater. Said Abaye to him: 'Wherefore have you acted thus?' said he, 'It is to an Israelite that I have sold it.' 'But,' he retorted, 'he will go and sell it to an idolater!' 'Why' — [argued the other] 'should he sell it to an idolater and not sell it to an Israelite?'<sup>12</sup>

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

He [Abaye] objected to him [from the following Baraitha]: In a place where it is the custom to sell small cattle to Cutheans,<sup>13</sup> such sale is permitted, but where they usually do not sell, such sale is not permitted. Now, what is the reason [for the prohibition]? Shall we say because they are suspected of immoral practices? But are they to be suspected? Has it not been taught: One may not place cattle in inns kept by idolaters even male-cattle with male persons and female-cattle with female persons, and it is needless to say that female-cattle with male persons and male-cattle with female persons [are forbidden]; nor may one hand over cattle to one of their shepherds; nor may one be alone with them;<sup>14</sup> nor may one entrust a child to them to be educated, or to be taught a trade.<sup>15</sup> One may however place cattle in inns kept by Cutheans even male-cattle with female persons and female-cattle with male persons, and it goes without saying that males with males and females with females are permitted; so also may one hand over cattle to one of their shepherds and be alone with them, or hand over a child to them to be educated or to be taught a trade.<sup>16</sup> This shows indeed that they are not to be suspected.<sup>17</sup> And it has further been taught: One should not sell them either weapons or accessories of weapons, nor should one grind any weapon for them, not may one sell them either stocks or neck-chains or ropes, or iron chains — neither to idolaters nor Cutheans.<sup>18</sup> Now, what is the reason?<sup>19</sup> Shall we say because they are suspected of murder? But are they suspect, seeing we have just said that one may be alone with them! Hence it is only because he might sell it to an idolater.<sup>20</sup> Should you, moreover, say that whereas a Cuthean will not repent an Israelite will repent?<sup>21</sup> Surely R. Nahman said in the name of Raba b. Abbuha: Just as it was said that it is forbidden to sell to an idolater, so is it forbidden to sell to an Israelite who is suspected of selling it to an idolater! He [Rabbah] thereupon ran three parasangs<sup>22</sup>

after the buyer (some say one *parasang* along a sand-mount) but failed to overtake him.

R. Dimi b. Abba said: Just as it is forbidden to sell<sup>23</sup> to an idolater, so it is forbidden to sell to a robber who is an Israelite. What are the circumstances? If he is suspected of murder, then it is quite plain; he is the same as an idolater! If [on the other hand] he has never committed murder, why not [sell them to him]? — It refers indeed to one who has not committed murder; but we may be dealing here with a cowardly thief who is apt at times [when caught] to save himself [by committing murder].

Our Rabbis taught: It is forbidden to sell them shields; some say, however, that shields may be sold to them. What is the reason [for this prohibition]? Shall we say, Because they protect them? In that case even wheat or barley should likewise not [be sold to them].<sup>24</sup>  
— Said Rab:

1. Sheb. V, 8.
2. To a fellow-Jew who is suspected of tilling his fields on that year contrary to the Biblical prohibition, as he thereby 'places a stumbling-block before the blind'.
3. R. Hunah's action has therefore the ruling of the Hillelites as its authority.
4. [So Ms.M. Cur. edd. 'Rabbah', v. p. 77 n. 7.]
5. The question of hiring, lending or trying, mentioned in connection with selling cattle to a heathen does not therefore arise; and the comparatively minor objection of 'placing a stumbling-block before the blind' is waived by the assumption that the animal may have been intended for slaughter.
6. The objections mentioned before therefore do apply.
7. Tosef. Sheb. III.
8. Sheb. V, 6.
9. In the case of a field, for example, the fact that it is not often procurable may serve as ground for the assumption that the buyer availed himself of the opportunity of purchasing it, even though he does not intend tilling it till the following year.
10. As, for instance, in the case of the 'implements'.
11. To which case the assumption of buying for slaughter cannot be applied.

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

12. We have a right to assume that he will sell it to an Israelite, so that there is no objection to its being sold to him. [This is contrary to the view expressed above by Rabbah (v. p. 76, n. 9), and supports the reading 'Raba', v. Tosaf. s.v. [H].]
13. Members of the Samaritan sect.
14. As his life would be endangered.
15. Lest he be taught idolatry.
16. Tosef. A.Z. III.
17. Since, however, the sale of small cattle only is governed by custom, it is obvious that big cattle may not be sold in any case to a Cuthean; and as the suspicion of immorality does not exist, the reason for the prohibition can only be the probability of his selling it to an idolater, which is contrary to the view of Raba.
18. Tosef. ibid.
19. For forbidding the sale of these articles to a Cuthean.
20. Who might use them for assailing an Israelite, which refutes Rabbah's view.
21. So that even though he had been addicted to this wrongdoing, he might be taken to have recanted, and this justifies Rabbah's action.
22. Persian miles.
23. The aforementioned articles.
24. Since they protect them against hunger.

## 'Abodah Zarah 16a

If it is possible,<sup>1</sup> these, too, should not.

There are some who say that the reason for not permitting [the sale of] shields is this: When they have no weapons left, they might use these for killing [in battles]. But there are others who say that shields may be sold to them, for when they have no more weapons they run away. Said R. Nahman in the name of Rabbah b. Abbuha: The *halachah* is with 'the Others'.

Said R. Adda b. Ahabah: One should not sell them bars of iron. Why? — Because they may hammer weapons out of them. If so, spades and pick-axes too [should be forbidden]! — Said R. Zebid: We mean [bars of] Indian iron.<sup>2</sup> Why then do we sell it now? — Said R. Ashi: [We sell it] to the Persians who protect us.

**CALVES AND FOALS.** It has been taught:<sup>3</sup> R. Judah permits [the sale of] a maimed one, since it cannot be cured or restored to health.<sup>4</sup> Said they to him: Might she not be fit for breeding purposes, and since she proves fit for breeding purposes, she will be kept?<sup>5</sup> He replied: You wait till she bears. This is to say, An animal [in such a state] will not let the male get near her.

**BEN BATHYRA PERMITS IN THE CASE OF A HORSE.** It has been taught: Ben Bathyra permits [the sale of] a horse, because it is only put to a kind of work which does not involve the bringing of a sin-offering.<sup>6</sup> Rabbi, however, forbids it for two reasons: the one, because it comes under the prohibition of selling weapons,<sup>7</sup> the other, because it comes under the prohibition of big cattle. It is quite right as regards the prohibition of weapons; there are [horses] which [are trained to] kill by trampling, but how does the prohibition of big cattle apply?<sup>8</sup> — Said R. Johanan, when the horse gets old, it is made to work a mill on the Sabbath.<sup>9</sup> Said R. Johanan: The *halachah* is with Ben Bathyra.

The following question was asked: What about an ox that has been fattened?<sup>10</sup> This question applies both to R. Judah<sup>11</sup> and to the Rabbis:<sup>12</sup> It applies to R. Judah, for R. Judah only permits in the case of a maimed one, which can in no case be fit for work, whereas this one, which if kept long enough may be fit for work, might be forbidden; or it might be said that even according to the Rabbis it is only in that case [of a maimed one], which is ordinarily not intended for slaughter, that they forbid, but this one, which is ordinarily intended for slaughter, they might permit?

Come and hear: Rab Judah said in the name of Samuel that the House of Rabbi had to present a fatted ox [to the Romans] for their festival, and a sum of forty thousand [coins] was paid for the concession not to contribute it on the day of the festival but on the morrow; then another forty thousand was

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

paid for the permission to present it not alive but slaughtered; then forty thousand was again expended to be freed altogether from presenting it. Now what is the reason [for not presenting it alive] if not to avoid its being kept?<sup>13</sup> — But if that is the reason, what is the purpose of the concession of offering it on the morrow instead of on the day? Obviously, then, Rabbi was anxious to abolish the thing entirely, but he considered it advisable to do it little by little.<sup>14</sup> But is [a fatted ox] if kept [and slimmed] healthy enough to do work? — Said R. Ashi: Zabida<sup>15</sup> told me that a young bullock when kept [and slimmed] does the work of two.

**MISHNAH.** ONE SHOULD NOT SELL THEM BEARS, LIONS OR ANYTHING WHICH MAY INJURE THE PUBLIC. ONE SHOULD NOT JOIN THEM IN BUILDING A BASILICA,<sup>16</sup> A SCAFFOLD, A STADIUM, OR A PLATFORM.<sup>17</sup> BUT ONE MAY JOIN THEM IN BUILDING PEDESTALS [FOR ALTARS]<sup>18</sup> AND ALSO [PRIVATE-] BATHS. WHEN HOWEVER HE REACHES THE CUPOLA IN WHICH THE IDOL IS PLACED HE MUST NOT BUILD.

**GEMARA.** Said R. Hanin, son of R. Hisda (some report, Said R. Hanan b. Raba in the name of Rab): To big beasts the same rule applies as to small cattle as regards struggling<sup>19</sup> but not as regards selling,<sup>20</sup> but my opinion is that it applies to selling also, so that in such places where it is the custom to sell,<sup>21</sup> such sale is permitted, but where the custom is not to sell, it is forbidden.

Our Mishnah says: ONE SHOULD NOT SELL THEM BEARS, LIONS, OR ANYTHING WHICH MAY INJURE THE PUBLIC. The reason, then, is because they may injure the public, but were it not for fear of injury to the public would it be permitted?<sup>22</sup> Said Rabbah b. 'Ulla: [Our Mishnah may refer] to a mutilated lion

1. To withhold it from them without incurring their animosity.

2. Which is used exclusively for manufacturing weapons.
3. Tosef. A.Z. II.
4. It is therefore only fit for slaughter.
5. And those who see her might think that any other cattle may likewise be sold to a heathen.
6. V. *supra* p. 33, n. 6.
7. A horse being as helpful as a weapon in battle.
8. Since you have stated that a horse is not put to a kind of labor which involves a sin-offering, there is no ground for prohibiting the sale for fear of the animal being tried (v. *supra* ibid.).
9. Which is a 'principal' work.
10. Being unfit for work, may it be sold to an idolater?
11. Who permits in the case of a maimed one.
12. The representatives of the anonymous opinion in our Mishnah.
13. And then put to work; hence it is proved that for this reason a fatted ox may not be sold to idolaters.
14. His action cannot therefore be cited as a proof.
15. Who was an expert in fattening cattle.
16. [A large high building used partly as an exchange and mart and also regularly as a court of law where men might be sentenced to death (Elmslie, p. 12).]
17. [H], used for throwing off victims sentenced to death. [So Rashi. Hoffmann: 'Judge's seat' ([G]); Elmslie: 'judge's tribunal'.]
18. [H] from [G], v. l. [H] ([G]) 'public-baths'.
19. According to Hul. 37a, an animal whose condition is dangerous, must, after being slaughtered, show signs of struggling to be at all fit for food; otherwise it is assumed that it died before being slaughtered and is thus unfit for food. The least extent of struggling is: in the case of small cattle, the stretching out and the bending back of a leg, and in the case of big cattle either stretching or bending is sufficient.
20. Which depends on local custom. V. *supra* 14b.
21. Big beasts to idolaters.
22. E.g., tamed lions and the like. This Mishnah is thus contrary to the opinion of Rab.

## ‘Abodah Zarah 16b

in accordance with the opinion of R. Judah.<sup>1</sup> R. Ashi said: Generally, any lion may be regarded as 'mutilated' in regard to labour.<sup>2</sup>

An objection was raised: Just as it is forbidden to sell them big cattle, so it is forbidden to sell them big animals; and even

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

in such places where they do sell small cattle [to heathen], big animals should not be sold to them.<sup>3</sup> This refutes the opinion of R. Hanan b. Raba!<sup>4</sup> It [admittedly] refutes it.

Rabina referred to the contradiction between our Mishnah and this Baraitha, but adjusted it: We learnt: ONE SHOULD NOT SELL THEM BEARS, LIONS OR ANYTHING WHICH MAY INJURE THE PUBLIC. The reason, then, is because they may injure the public, but apart from such injury they may be sold! This is contradicted [by the following Baraitha]: Just as it is forbidden to sell them big cattle, so it is forbidden to sell them big animals, even in such places where they do sell small cattle [to heathens] big animals should not be sold to them! — He then adjusted it by saying [that our Mishnah] refers to a mutilated lion, in accordance with the view of R. Judah. R. Ashi said: Generally, any lion may be regarded as 'mutilated' as regards labor.

R. Nahman objected: Who told us that a lion is to be regarded as a big animal? Let us regard it as a small animal.<sup>5</sup>

R. Ashi, on examining our Mishnah minutely, deduced therefrom the following refutation: We there learn, ONE SHOULD NOT SELL THEM BEARS, LIONS OR ANYTHING WHICH MAY INJURE THE PUBLIC. The reason is, evidently, that it is injurious, but were it not for the injury, it could be sold; furthermore, the reason why 'lion' is mentioned, is because a lion is generally regarded as 'mutilated' as regards labor, but to any other animal which is fit for labor the prohibition would not apply — this refutes the opinion of R. Hanan b. Raba.<sup>6</sup> It admittedly refutes it.

But to what kind of labor could any big animal be put? — Said Abaye: Mar Judah told me that at Mar Johni's they work mills with wild asses.

Said R. Zera: When we were at the school of Rab Judah<sup>7</sup> he said to us: You may take the following matter from me, for I have heard it from a great man — though I know not whether from Rab or from Samuel: To big beasts the same rule applies as to small cattle as regards struggling.<sup>8</sup> When I came to Korkunia<sup>9</sup> I found R. Hiyya b. Ashi who was sitting [in the academy] and saying in the name of Samuel, 'To a big beast the same rule applies as to small cattle as regards struggling' — Said I, 'That means then that it is in the name of Samuel that this has been stated' — But when I came to Sura I found Rabbah b. Jeremiah who was sitting and saying in the name of Rab, 'To a big beast the same rule applies as to small cattle as regards struggling' — Then said I, 'That means that this has been stated in the name of Rab as well as in the name of Samuel'. Now, when I went up there<sup>10</sup> I found R. Assi sitting and saying, 'Said R. Hama b. Guria in the name of Rab: To a big beast the same rule applies as to small cattle as regards struggling'. Said I to him, 'Do you not hold, then, that the one who reported this teaching in the name of Rab is Rabbah b. Jeremiah?'<sup>11</sup> He answered me: 'You black-pot.<sup>12</sup> Through me and you this report will be completed.'<sup>13</sup> It has indeed been stated so: R. Zera said in the name of R. Assi, in the name of Rabbah b. Jeremiah, in the name of R. Hama b. Guria, in the name of Rab: To a big animal the same rule applies as to small cattle as regards struggling.

**ONE SHOULD NOT JOIN THEM IN BUILDING A BASILICA, AN EXECUTIONER'S SCAFFOLD, A STADIUM OR A TRIBUNE.** Said Rabbah b. Bar-Hana in the name of R. Johanan: There are three kinds of basilica-buildings: those attached to royal palaces, baths, or store-houses. Said Raba: Two of these are permitted and one<sup>14</sup> is forbidden; as a reminder [take the phrase], *To bind their Kings with chains.*<sup>15</sup> Some report, Raba said: All [basilicae] are permitted. But have we not learnt, ONE SHOULD NOT JOIN THEM IN

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

**BUILDING A BASILICA, AN EXECUTIONER'S SCAFFOLD, A STADIUM OR A TRIBUNE?** — This should be taken to mean a basilica attached to an executioner's scaffold, a stadium or a tribune.<sup>16</sup>

Our Rabbis taught:<sup>17</sup> When R. Eliezer<sup>18</sup> was arrested because of *Minuth*<sup>19</sup> they brought him up to the tribune to be judged. Said the governor<sup>20</sup> to him, 'How can a sage man like you occupy himself with those idle things?' He replied, 'I acknowledge the Judge as right.' The governor thought that he referred to him — though he really referred to his Father in Heaven — and said, 'Because thou hast acknowledged me as right, I pardon;<sup>21</sup> thou art acquitted.' When he came home, his disciples called on him to console him, but he would accept no consolation.<sup>22</sup> Said R. Akiba to him, 'Master, wilt thou permit me to say one thing of what thou hast taught me?' He replied, 'Say it.' 'Master,' said he, 'perhaps some of the teaching of the Minim had been transmitted to thee

1. In the Mishnah, 14b.
2. It is unfit for work; hence even according to the other Rabbis its sale should be permitted, as the reasons given in case of cattle are inapplicable here.
3. Tosef. A.Z. II.
4. Who holds that there is no objection to the sale of big animals, where it is customary to do so.
5. There will thus be no contradiction offered by the Baraita which forbids the sale of big animals.
6. V. p. 82, n. 7.
7. Who was a disciple of both Rab and Samuel.
8. V. *supra* p. 81.
9. [Identified with Kirkesium (Circesium) on the Euphrates. This town as well as Sura lay on R. Zera's itinerary from Pumbeditha to Palestine, Obermeyer, *op. cit.* p. 33.]
10. To Palestine.
11. The Rabbis attached great importance to the accuracy of those in whose names anything was reported. V. Ab. VI, 6.
12. The mild rebuke was presumably warranted by R. Zera's attire.

13. [That it was R. Hama who heard it from Rab and from whom Rabbah in turn had heard it reported.]
14. Connected with the royal palace — where men are sometimes sentenced to death.
15. [H] Ps. CXLIX, 8. [H] suggests, prohibition.
16. Otherwise, even one of a royal palace is permitted; the latter being only used as part of the royal residence.
17. The following incident is recorded with considerable variations in Eccl. Rab. I, 8.
18. For the historical significance of this story, v. Klausner's Jesus of Nazareth, p. 37ff and references there given; also T. Herford's, *op. cit.* p. 143 and note.
19. [H] (abstract noun of [H]) — Min, v. *supra*, p. 14, n. 2) 'heresy', with special reference to Christianity. [During the Roman persecution of Christians in Palestine in the year 109 under Trajan (Herford, *loc. cit.*) R. Eliezer b. Hyrcanus was arrested on suspicion of following that sect.]
20. [G].
21. [H], dimissus.
22. He was sorely grieved to have been at all suspected of apostasy.

## 'Abodah Zarah 17a

and thou didst approve of it and because of that thou wast arrested?' He exclaimed: 'Akiba thou hast reminded me.' I was once walking in the upper-market of Sepphoris when I came across one [of the disciples of Jesus the Nazarene]<sup>1</sup> Jacob of Kefar-Sekaniah<sup>2</sup> by name, who said to me: It is written in your Torah, *Thou shalt not bring the hire of a harlot ... into the house of the Lord thy God.*<sup>3</sup> May such money be applied to the erection of a retiring place for the High Priest?<sup>4</sup> To which I made no reply. Said he to me: Thus was I taught [by Jesus the Nazarene],<sup>5</sup> *For of the hire of a harlot hath she gathered them and unto the hire of a harlot shall they return.*<sup>6</sup> they came from a place of filth, let them go to a place of filth. Those words pleased me very much, and that is why I was arrested for apostasy; for thereby I transgressed the scriptural words, *Remove thy way far from her* — which refers

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

to minuth — and come not nigh to the door of her house,<sup>7</sup> — which refers to the ruling power.<sup>8</sup>

There are some who apply, 'Remove thy way from her' to minuth as well as to the ruling power, and, 'and come not nigh to the door of her house' to a harlot. And how far is one to keep away? Said R. Hisda: Four cubits. And to what do the Rabbis<sup>9</sup> apply, *of the hire of a harlot?* — To the saying of R. Hisda. For R. Hisda said: Every harlot who allows herself to be hired will at the end have to hire,<sup>10</sup> even as it is said, *And in that thou givest hire, and no hire is given to thee, thus thou art reversed.*<sup>11</sup> This<sup>12</sup> is contrary to what R. Pedath said; for R. Pedath said:<sup>13</sup> Only in the case of incest did the Torah forbid close approach, as it is said, *None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him to uncover their nakedness.*<sup>14</sup>

'Ulla<sup>15</sup> on returning from college used to kiss his sisters on the hand; some say, on the breast. He, then, contradicts himself. For 'Ulla said: Even mere approach is forbidden because we say to a Nazarite,<sup>16</sup> 'Go, go — round about; but do not approach 'the vineyard.'<sup>17</sup>

*The horse-leech hath two daughters:* Give, give.<sup>18</sup> What is meant by 'Give, give'? Said Mar 'Ukba: It is the voice of the two daughters who cry from Gehenna calling to this world: Bring, bring! And who are they? Minuth<sup>19</sup> and the Government.<sup>20</sup> Some report: Said R. Hisda in the name of Mar 'Ukba: It is the voice of Hell crying and calling: Bring me the two daughters who cry and call in this world, 'Bring, bring.'

Scripture says, *None that go unto her return neither do they attain the paths of life.*<sup>21</sup> But if they do not return, how can they attain [the paths of life]? — What it means is that even if they do turn away from it they will not attain the paths of life.<sup>22</sup> Does it mean then that those who repent from minuth die? Was

there not that woman who came before R. Hisda confessing to him that the lightest sin that she committed was that her younger son is the issue of her older son? Whereupon R. Hisda said: Get busy in preparing her shrouds — but she did not die. Now, since she refers to her [immoral] act as the lightest sin, it may be assumed that she had also adopted minuth [and yet she did not die]! — That one did not altogether renounce her evil-doing, that is why she did not die.

Some have this version: [Is it only] from minuth that one dies if one repents, but not from other sins? Was there not that woman who came before R. Hisda who said, Prepare her shrouds and she died?<sup>23</sup> — Since she said [of her guilt] that it is one of the lightest, it may be assumed that she was guilty of idolatry also.

And does not one die on renouncing sins other [than idolatry]? Surely it has been taught: It was said of R. Eleazar b. Dordia that he did not leave out any harlot in the world without coming to her. Once, on hearing that there was a certain harlot in one of the towns by the sea who accepted a purse of *denarii* for her hire, he took a purse of *denarii* and crossed seven rivers for her sake. As he was with her, she blew forth breath and said: As this blown breath will not return to its place, so will Eleazar b. Dordia never be received in repentance. He thereupon went, sat between two hills and mountains and exclaimed: O, ye hills and mountains, plead for mercy for me! They replied: How shall we pray for thee? We stand in need of it ourselves, for it is said, *For the mountains shall depart and the hills be removed!*<sup>24</sup> So he exclaimed: Heaven and earth, plead ye for mercy for me! They, too, replied: How shall we pray for thee? We stand in need of it ourselves, for it is said, *For the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment.*<sup>25</sup> He then exclaimed: Sun and moon, plead ye for mercy for me! But they also replied: How shall we pray for

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

thee? We stand in need of it ourselves, for it is said, *Then the moon shall be confounded and the sun ashamed.*<sup>26</sup> He exclaimed: Ye stars and constellations, plead ye for mercy for me! Said they: How shall we pray for thee? We stand in need of it ourselves, for it is said, *And all the hosts of heaven shall moulder away.*<sup>27</sup> Said he: The matter then depends upon me alone! Having placed his head between his knees, he wept aloud until his soul departed. Then a *bath-kol*<sup>28</sup> was heard proclaiming: 'Rabbi Eleazar b. Dordai is destined for the life of the world to come!' Now, here was a case of a sin [other than *minuth*] and yet he did die! — In that case, too, since he was so much addicted to immorality it is as [if he had been guilty of] *minuth*. Rabbi [on hearing of it] wept and said:<sup>29</sup> One may acquire eternal life after many years, another in one hour! Rabbi also said: Repentants are not alone accepted, they are even called 'Rabbi'!

R. Hanina and R. Jonathan were walking on the road and came to a parting of ways, one of which led by the door of a place of idol-worship and the other led by a harlots' place. Said the one to the other: Let us go [through the one leading] by the place of idolatry

1. The bracketed words occur in MS.M.
2. [Identified with Suchnin, north of the plain of El Battauf in Galilee (v. Klein, *Neue Beitr. z. Geschichte und Geogr.*, 20ff); and this Jacob may have been either James the son of Alphaeus (Mark III, 18) or James the Little (*ibid.* XV, 40).]
3. Deut. XXIII, 19.
4. Who spent the whole night preceding the Day of Atonement in the precincts of the Temple, where due provision had to be made for all his conveniences.
5. V. n. 3.
6. Micah I, 7.
7. Prov. V, 8.
8. Cf. Ab. I, 10, 'Seek not intimacy with the ruling power'; also ib. II, 3.
9. Who do not share the view of Jacob cited above.
10. She will be despised by all.

11. Ezek. XVI, 34.
12. The distance of four cubits prescribed by R. Hisda.
13. Shab. 13a.
14. Lev. XVIII, 6.
15. V. Shab. 13a.
16. Who has vowed to abstain from wine or anything issuing from the vine (v. Num. VI, 1 seq.).
17. *Infra* 58b.
18. Prov. XXX, 15.
19. Which continually lures the unwary to its erroneous teaching.
20. Which constantly imposes fresh taxes and duties.
21. Prov. II, 19, applied to those converted to idolatry.
22. Torment of remorse will shorten their lives.
23. Though her sin was incest and not *minuth*!
24. Isa. LIV, 10.
25. *Ibid.* LI, 6.
26. *Ibid.* XXIV, 23.
27. *Ibid.* XXXIV, 4.
28. 'A heavenly voice', v. [Glos.](#).
29. V. *supra* 10a.

## 'Abodah Zarah 17b

the inclination for which has been abolished.<sup>1</sup> The other however said: Let us go [through that leading] by the harlots' place and defy our inclination and have our reward. As they approached the place they saw the harlots withdraw<sup>2</sup> at their presence. Said the one to the other: Whence didst thou know this?<sup>3</sup> The other, in reply, quoted, She shall watch over thee, *mezimmah* [against lewdness], discernment shall guard thee.<sup>4</sup> Said the Rabbis to Raba: How is this word *mezimmah* to be understood?<sup>5</sup> Shall it be rendered 'The Torah' since the word *zimmah* in Scripture is rendered in the Targum,<sup>6</sup> 'It is a counsel of the wicked';<sup>7</sup> and Scripture has the phrase, wonderful is His counsel and great His wisdom?<sup>8</sup> But in that case the word should have been *zimmah*. This, then, is how it is to be understood, Against things of lewdness — *zimmah* — she [Discernment, i.e., the Torah] shall watch over thee.

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

Our Rabbis taught: When R. Eleazar b. Perata and R. Hanina b. Teradion were arrested, R. Eleazar b. Perata said to R. Hanina b. Teradion: Happy art thou that thou hast been arrested on one charge; woe is me, for I am arrested on five charges. R. Hanina replied: Happy art thou, who hast been arrested on five charges, but wilt be rescued; woe is me who, though having been arrested on one charge, will not be rescued; for thou hast occupied thyself with [the study of] the Torah as well as with acts of benevolence, whereas I occupied myself with Torah alone.

This accords with the opinion of R. Huna. For R. Huna said: He who only occupies himself with the study of the Torah is as if he had no God, for it is said: Now for long seasons Israel was without the true God.<sup>2</sup> What is meant by 'without the true God'? — It means that he who only occupies himself with the study of the Torah is as if he had no God.

But did he not occupy himself with acts of benevolence? Surely it has been taught: R. Eliezer b. Jacob says: One should not put his money into a charity-bag, unless it is supervised by a learned man such as R. Hanina b. Teradion!<sup>10</sup> — He was indeed very trustworthy, but he did not practice benevolence.

But has it not been taught: He<sup>11</sup> said to him [R. Jose b. Kisma]: I mistook Purim-money<sup>12</sup> for ordinary charity money, so I distributed [of my own] to the poor!<sup>13</sup> — He did indeed practice charity, but not as much as he might have done.

When they brought up R. Eleazar b. Perata [for his trial] they asked him, 'Why have you been studying [the Torah] and why have you been stealing?' He answered, 'If one is a scholar he is not a robber, if a robber he is not a scholar, and as I am not the one I am neither the other.' 'Why then,' they rejoined,

'are you titled Master'?<sup>14</sup> 'I,' replied he, 'am a Master of Weavers.' Then they brought him two coils and asked, 'Which is for the warp and which for the woof?' A miracle occurred and a female-bee came and sat on the warp and a male-bee came and sat on the woof. 'This,' said he, 'is of the warp and that of the woof.' Then they asked him,<sup>15</sup> 'Why did you not go to the Meeting-House?'<sup>16</sup> He replied, 'I have been old and feared lest I be trampled under your feet.' 'And how many old people have been trampled till now?' he was asked. A miracle [again] happened; for on that very day an old man had been trampled. 'And why did you let your slave go free?'<sup>17</sup> He replied, 'No such thing ever happened.' One of them then was rising to give evidence against him, when Elijah came disguised as one of the dignitaries of Rome and said to that man: As miracles were worked for him in all the other matters, a miracle will also happen in this one, and you will only be shown up as bad natured. He, however, disregarded him and stood up to address them, when a written communication from important members of the government had to be sent to the Emperor and it was dispatched by that man. [On the road] Elijah came and hurled him a distance of four hundred parasangs. So that he went<sup>18</sup> and did not return.

They then brought up R. Hanina b. Teradion and asked him, 'Why hast thou occupied thyself with the Torah?'<sup>19</sup> He replied, 'Thus the Lord my God commanded me.' At once they sentenced him to be burnt, his wife to be slain, and his daughter to be consigned to a brothel.

(The punishment of being burnt came upon him because he

1. V. Sanh. 64a.
2. Abstaining from solicitation.
3. How could he be so sure of being able to subdue his inclination.
4. Prov. II, 11.

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

5. [H] (E.V. 'discretion'). [H] has the twofold meaning of 'counsel' and 'lewdness'.
6. V. Targum *Onkelos*.
7. Lev. XVIII, 17. [H] — generally rendered, it is lewdness.
8. Isa. XXVIII, 29. 'Counsel' is thus used as a synonym for the Torah; the words quoted from Prov. would therefore be rendered, The Torah shall watch over thee.
9. II Chron. XV, 3.
10. B.B. 10a.
11. R. Han, b. Ter., who was a Charity-Treasurer.
12. Money set aside for distribution among the poor for celebrating the Festival of Purim (v. Esther) which must not be applied by the recipient to any other purpose whatsoever.
13. Having distributed the Purim Funds without specifying their purpose, he distributed his own money as Purim allowances. *Infra* 18a.
14. The third charge.
15. The fourth charge brought against him.
16. [H] Place of Assembly for matters and performances connected with idolatry. Under Hadrian Jews were forced to attend these. V. Shab. 115a, where this is referred to as a place where disputations were held between Jews and the early Christians. [Meaning of the word still obscure despite the many and varied explanations suggested; e.g., (a) House of the Ebonites, (b) Abadan (Pers.) 'forum', (c) Beh Mokedhan (Pers.), i.e., House of the chief magi; v. Krauss, *Synagogale Altertumer*, p. 31].
17. In accordance with the Biblical injunction to free all Jewish slaves after six years, or at the advent of the Jubilee Year — the fifth offence with which he was charged.
18. Without giving the intended evidence.
19. This was forbidden by Hadrian under penalty of death.

## 'Abodah Zarah 18a

pronounced the Name in its full spelling.<sup>1</sup> But how could he do so? Have we not learnt: The following have no portion in the world to come: He who says that the Torah is not from Heaven, or that the resurrection of the dead is not taught in the Torah. Abba Saul says: Also he who pronounces the Name in its full spelling?<sup>2</sup> — He did it in the course of practicing, as we have learnt: Thou shalt not learn to do after the abominations of those nations,<sup>3</sup> but thou mayest learn [about them] in order to understand and to teach. Why

then was he punished? — Because he was pronouncing the Name in public. His wife was punished by being slain, because she did not prevent him [from doing it]. From this it was deduced: Any one who has the power to prevent [one from doing wrong] and does not prevent, is punished for him.<sup>4</sup> His daughter was consigned to a brothel, for R. Johanan related that once that daughter of his was walking in front of some great men of Rome who remarked, 'How beautiful are the steps of this maiden!' Whereupon she took particular care of her step. Which confirms the following words of R. Simeon b. Lakish: What is the meaning of the verse, The iniquity of my heel compasseth me about?<sup>5</sup> — Sins which one treads under heel<sup>6</sup> in this world compass him about on the Day of Judgment.)

As the three of them went out [from the tribunal] they declared their submission to [the Divine] righteous judgment. He quoted, The Rock, His work is perfect; for all his ways are justice.<sup>7</sup> His wife continued: A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and right is He;<sup>8</sup> and the daughter quoted: Great in counsel and mighty in work, whose eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men, to give everyone according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doing.<sup>9</sup> Said Raba: How great were these righteous ones, in that the three Scriptural passages, expressing submission to Divine justice, readily occurred to them just at the appropriate time for the declaration of such submission.

Our Rabbis taught: When R. Jose b. Kisma was ill, R. Hanina b. Teradion went to visit him. He said to him: 'Brother Hanina, knowest thou not that it is Heaven<sup>10</sup> that has ordained this [Roman] nation to reign? For though she laid waste His House, burnt His Temple, slew His pious ones and caused His best ones to perish, still is she firmly established! Yet, I have heard about thee that thou sittest and occupiest thyself with the

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

Torah, dost publicly gather assemblies, and keepest a scroll [of the Law] in thy bosom!"<sup>11</sup> He replied, 'Heaven will show mercy.' — 'I,' he remonstrated, 'am telling thee plain facts, and thou sayest "Heaven will show mercy"! It will surprise me if they do not burn both thee and the scroll of the Law with fire.' 'Rabbi,' said the other, 'How do I stand with regard to the world to come?' — 'Is there any particular act that thou hast done?' he enquired. He replied: 'I once mistook Purim-money for ordinary charity-money, and I distributed [of my own] to the poor.'<sup>12</sup> 'Well then,' said he, 'would that thy portion were my portion and thy lot my lot.'

It was said that within but few days R. Jose b. Kisma died and all the great men of Rome<sup>13</sup> went to his burial and made great lamentation for him. On their return, they found R. Hanina b. Teradion sitting and occupying himself with the Torah, publicly gathering assemblies, and keeping a scroll of the Law in his bosom. Straightaway they took hold of him, wrapped him in the Scroll of the Law, placed bundles of branches round him and set them on fire. They then brought tufts of wool, which they had soaked in water, and placed them over his heart, so that he should not expire quickly. His daughter exclaimed, 'Father, that I should see you in this state!' He replied, 'If it were I alone being burnt it would have been a thing hard to bear; but now that I am burning together with the Scroll of the Law, He who will have regard for the plight of the Torah will also have regard for my plight.' His disciples called out, 'Rabbi, what seest thou?' He answered them, 'The parchments are being burnt but the letters are soaring on high.'<sup>14</sup> 'Open then thy mouth' [said they] 'so that the fire enter into thee.'<sup>15</sup> He replied, 'Let Him who gave me [my soul] take it away, but no one should injure oneself.' The Executioner<sup>16</sup> then said to him, 'Rabbi, if I raise the flame and take away the tufts of wool from over thy heart, will thou cause me to enter into the life to come?' 'Yes,' he replied. 'Then swear unto

me' [he urged]. He swore unto him. He thereupon raised the flame and removed the tufts of wool from over his heart, and his soul departed speedily. The Executioner then jumped and threw himself into the fire. And a bathkol<sup>17</sup> exclaimed: R. Hanina b. Teradion and the Executioner have been assigned to the world to come. When Rabbi heard it he wept and said: One may acquire eternal life in a single hour, another after many years.<sup>18</sup>

Beruria, the wife of R. Meir, was a daughter of R. Hanina b. Teradion. Said she [to her husband], 'I am ashamed to have my sister placed in a brothel.' So he took a *tarkab*-full<sup>19</sup> of *denarii* and set out.<sup>20</sup> If, thought he, she has not been subjected to anything wrong, a miracle will be wrought for her, but if she has committed anything wrong, no miracle will happen to her. Disguised as a knight, he came to her and said, 'Prepare thyself for me.' She replied, 'The manner of women is upon me.' 'I am prepared to wait,' he said. 'But,' said she, 'there are here many, many prettier than I am.' He said to himself, that proves that she has not committed any wrong; she no doubt says thus to every comer. He then went to her warden and said, 'Hand her over to me. He replied, 'I am afraid of the government.' 'Take the *tarkab* of dinars.' said he, 'one half distribute [as bribe], the other half shall be for thyself.' 'And what shall I do when these are exhausted?' he asked. 'Then,' he replied, 'say, "O God of Meir, answer me!" and thou wilt be saved.' 'But,' said he,

1. The Tetragrammaton, the four-lettered Name of God, [H], was fully pronounced only by the Priests in the temple when blessing the people. Everywhere else it was pronounced 'Adonai'. For full treatment of the subject, v.J.E. IX, 162 seq.
2. Sanh. 90a.
3. Deut. XVIII, 9.
4. Shab. 54b.
5. Literal rendering of Ps. XLIX, 6.
6. Regards as insignificant.
7. Deut. XXXII, 4.
8. Ibid.
9. Jer. XXXII, 19. These verses are embodied to this day in the Jewish Burial Service (v.P.B, p.

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

318), the main idea of which is submission to the justice of the Divine judgment — [H] by which Hebrew name the Burial Service is called.

10. Synonym for God.
11. Contrary to the Roman decree.
12. V. *supra* 17a.
13. [The Roman officials in Caesarea where he lived and died.]
14. Scrolls of the Torah may be destroyed, but its spirit is immortal and indestructible.
15. And put an end to his agony.
16. [H], [G] Torturer, executioner.
17. V. Glos.
18. His favorite aphorism. V. *supra* 10b, 17a.
19. [H] a dry measure holding two *kabs*.
20. To release her.

## ‘Abodah Zarah 18b

'who can assure me that that will be the case?' He replied, 'You will see now.' There were there some dogs who bit anyone [who incited them]. He took a stone and threw it at them, and when they were about to bite him he exclaimed, 'O God of Meir answer me!' and they let him alone. The warder then handed her over to him. At the end the matter became known to the government, and [the warder] on being brought [for judgment] was taken up to the gallows, when he exclaimed, 'O God of Meir answer me.' They took him down and asked him what that meant, and he told them the incident that had happened. They then engraved R. Meir's likeness on the gates of Rome and proclaimed that anyone seeing a person resembling it should bring him there. One day [some Romans] saw him and ran after him, so he ran away from them and entered a harlot's house.<sup>1</sup> Others say he happened just then to see food cooked by heathens and he dipped in one finger and then sucked the other. Others again say that Elijah the Prophet appeared to them as a harlot who embraced him. God forbid, said they, were this R. Meir, he would not have acted thus! [and they left him]. He then arose and ran away and came to Babylon. Some say it was because of that incident that he ran to

Babylon; others say because of the incident about Beruria.<sup>2</sup>

Our Rabbis taught: Those who visit stadiums<sup>3</sup> or a camp<sup>4</sup> and witness there [the performance] of sorcerers and enchanters, or of bukion and mukion, lulion and mulion, blurin or salgurin<sup>5</sup> — lo, this is '*the seat of the scornful*,' and against those [who visit them] Scripture says, *Happy is the man that hath not walked in the counsel of the wicked ... nor sat in the seat of the scornful, but his delight is in the law of the Lord.*<sup>6</sup> From here you can infer that those things cause one to neglect the Torah.<sup>7</sup>

The following was cited as contradicting the foregoing: It is permitted to go to stadiums, because by shouting one may save [the victim].<sup>8</sup> One is also permitted to go to a camp for the purpose of maintaining order in the country, providing he does not conspire [with the Romans], but for the purpose of conspiring it is forbidden. There is thus a contradiction between [the laws relating to] stadiums as well as between [those relating to] camps! There may indeed be no contradiction between those relating to camps, because the one may refer to where he conspires with them, and the other to where he does not; but the laws relating to stadiums are surely contradictory! — They represent the differing opinions of [two] Tannaim. For it has been taught: One should not go to stadiums because [they are] '*the seat of the scornful*', but R. Nathan permits it for two reasons: first, because by shouting one may save [the victim], secondly, because one might be able to give evidence [of death] for the wife [of a victim] and so enable her to remarry.

Our Rabbis taught: One should not go to theatres or circuses because entertainments are arranged<sup>9</sup> there in honor of the idols. This is the opinion of R. Meir. But the Sages say: Where such entertainments are given there is the prohibition of being suspected of

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

idolatrous worship, and where such entertainment is not given. the prohibition is because of being in '*the seat of the scornful*'. What is the difference between these two reasons?<sup>10</sup> Said R. Hanina of Sura: There is a difference in the case of calling to do business.<sup>11</sup>

R. Simeon b. Pazi expounded [the foregoing verse as follows]: What does Scripture mean by, *Happy is the man that hath not walked in the counsel of the wicked, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seat of the scornful?*<sup>12</sup> If he did not walk [that way] at all how could he stand there? And if he did not stand there he obviously did not sit [among them], and as he did not sit among them he could not have scorned! The wording is to teach thee that if one walks [towards the wicked] he will subsequently stand with them, and if he stands he will at the end sit with them, and if he does sit, he will also come to scorn, and if he does scorn the scriptural verse will be applicable to him, If thou art wise, thou art wise for thyself, and If thou scornest thou alone shalt bear it.<sup>13</sup> Said R. Eleazar: He who scoffs, affliction will befall him, as it is said, Now therefore do ye not scoff lest your punishment be made severe.<sup>14</sup> Raba used to say to the Rabbis: I beg of you, do not scoff, so that you incur no punishment. R. Kattina said: He who scoffs, his sustenance will be reduced, as it is said, He withdraweth His hand in the case of scoffers.<sup>15</sup> R. Simeon b. Lakish said: He who scoffs will fall into Gehenna, as it is said, A proud and haughty man, scoffer is his name, worketh for arrogant wrath.<sup>16</sup> And by 'wrath' naught but Gehenna is meant; as it is said, That day is a day of wrath.<sup>17</sup> R. Oshaia said: He who is haughty falls into Gehenna, as it is said, A proud and haughty man, scoffer is his name, worketh for arrogant wrath.<sup>16</sup> And by 'wrath' naught but Gehenna is meant; as it is said, That day is a day of wrath.<sup>17</sup> Said R. Hanilai<sup>18</sup> b. Hanilai: He who scoffs brings destruction upon the world, as it is said, Now therefore be ye not scoffers, lest your

affliction be made severe, for an extermination wholly determined have I heard.<sup>19</sup> Said R. Eleazar: It is indeed a grievous sin, since it incurs 'affliction' at first and 'extermination' at last.

R. Simeon b. Pazi expounded [that verse as follows]: 'Happy is the man that hath not walked' — i.e., to theatres and circuses of idolaters 'nor stood in the way of sinners' — that is he who does not attend contests of wild beasts;<sup>20</sup> 'nor sat in the seat of the scornful' — that is he who does not participate in [evil] plannings. And lest one say, 'Since I do not go to theatres or circuses nor attend contests of wild animals, I will go and indulge in sleep.' Scripture therefore continues, '*And in His Law doth He meditate day and night.*'

Said R. Samuel b. Nahmani in the name of R. Jonathan: Happy is the man that hath not walked in the counsel of the wicked — that is

1. So as not to be identified with R. Meir, who naturally would not enter such a place.
2. The incident as related in Kid. 80b is to the effect that when R. Meir's wife taunted him about the familiar Rabbinic adage 'Women are light-minded', [H], he replied that one day she would herself testify to its truth. When, subsequently, she was enticed by one of her husband's disciples, she indeed proved to be too weak to resist. She then committed suicide and the husband, for shame, ran away to Babylon.
3. Arenas for gladiatorial contests.
4. [H], the Roman castra.
5. Names given to various performers and performances. [Krauss, *op. cit.* III, 120, gives the Latin equivalent: bucco, pappus, maccus, morio (kinds of clowns), ludio (mimic), buriae (drolleries), scurrae (buffoons).]
6. Ps. I, 1-2.
7. Tos. 'A.Z. Ch. II.
8. From the animal which might he scared by their abouts. [Rasbi: They might succeed in rescuing the victim by interceding on his behalf.]
9. [[H]] Levy takes it as kakophemism for [H] 'sacrifice'.
10. Since according to the Sages one is forbidden to enter such places in any case, is there any difference between a place where idolatrous

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

- entertainments are present or absent? (V. Tosaf. s.v. [H].)
11. In the absence of idolatrous entertainments the sages would not forbid the going for such purpose, since the purpose is not to *sit in the seat of the scornful*.
  12. Ps. I. 1.
  13. Prov. IX, 12.
  14. Isa. XXVIII, 22. The word [H], here rendered 'your bands', may also stand for 'your affliction', v. *supra*, p. 14, n. 1.
  15. A homiletical rendering of Hos. VII, 5.
  16. Prov. XXI, 24, rendered homiletically.
  17. Zeph. I, 15, referring to the Day of Judgment when the wicked will be sentenced to Gehenna.
  18. Some versions have Tanhum.
  19. Isa. ibid.
  20. [H], [G] contest of wild beasts with beasts or with men; hunt of animals.

## 'Abodah Zarah 19a

our father Abraham who did not follow the counsel of the men of the Generation of the Division<sup>1</sup> who were wicked, as it is said, Come, let us build us a city, and a tower, with its top in heaven,<sup>2</sup> nor stood in the way of sinners — for he did not take up the stand of the Sodomites, who were sinful, as it is said, Now the men of Sodom were wicked and sinful against the Lord exceedingly,<sup>3</sup> nor sat in the seat of the scornful — for he did not sit in the company of the Philistines, because they were scoffers; as it is said, And it came to pass, when their hearts were merry, that they said: Call for Samson that he may make us sport.<sup>4</sup>

Happy is the man that feareth the Lord:<sup>5</sup> Does it mean happy is the 'man' and not the woman? — Said R. Amram in the name of Rab: [It means] Happy is he who repents whilst he is still a 'man'.<sup>6</sup> R. Joshua b. Levy explained it: Happy is he who over-rules his inclination<sup>7</sup> like a 'man'. That delighteth greatly in His commandments,<sup>8</sup> was explained by R. Eleazar thus: 'In His commandments,' but not in the reward of His commandments.<sup>9</sup> This is just what we have learnt. 'He used to say, Be not like servants

who serve the master on the condition of receiving a reward; but be like servants who serve the master without the condition of receiving a reward.'<sup>10</sup>

But whose desire is in the law of the Lord.<sup>11</sup> Said Rabbi: A man can learn [well] only that part of the Torah which is his heart's desire,<sup>12</sup> for it is said, But whose desire is in the law of the Lord.

Levi and R. Simeon the son of Rabbi were once sitting before Rabbi and were expounding a part of Scripture.<sup>13</sup> When the book was concluded, Levi said: Let the book of Proverbs now be brought in. R. Simeon the son of Rabbi however said: Let the Psalms be brought; and, Levi having been overruled, the Psalms were brought. When they came to this verse, 'But whose desire is in the Law of the Lord', Rabbi offered his comment: One can only learn well that part of the Torah which is his heart's desire. Whereupon Levi remarked: Rabbi, You have given me the right to rise.<sup>14</sup>

Said R. Abdimi b. Hama: He who occupies himself with the Torah will have his desires granted by the Holy One, blessed be He, as it is said: He who [is occupied] with the Law of the Lord, his desire [shall be granted].<sup>15</sup>

Raba likewise said: One should always study that part of the Torah which is his heart's desire, as it is said, But whose desire is in the law of the Lord. Raba also said: At the beginning [of this verse] the Torah is assigned to the Holy One, blessed be He, but at the end it is assigned to him [who studies it],<sup>16</sup> for it is said, Whose desire is in the Law of the Lord and in his [own] Law doth he meditate day and night.<sup>17</sup>

Raba also said the following: One should always study the Torah first and meditate in it afterwards,<sup>18</sup> as it is said, '... the Law of the Lord', and then, 'and in his [own] law he meditates.'<sup>19</sup> This, too, did Raba say: Let one

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

by all means learn, even though he is liable to forget, yea, even if he does not fully understand all the words which he studies, as it is said, My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto Thy ordinances at all times.<sup>20</sup> 'Breaketh' is what Scripture says, it does not say 'grindeth'.<sup>21</sup>

Raba pointed to the following contradictions:<sup>22</sup> Scripture says, Upon the highest places,<sup>23</sup> and then it says. On a seat [in the high places]!<sup>24</sup> — At the beginning [the student occupies] any place, but ultimately [he will occupy] a seat.<sup>25</sup> [In another instance] Scripture says, In the top of high places<sup>26</sup> and then it says by the road!<sup>27</sup> — Though at first he is in the [solitary] top in [out of the way] high places, yet ultimately [he will sit as judge] by the road.

'Ulla pointed to the following contradiction: Scripture says, Drink waters out of thine own cistern;<sup>28</sup> and then it says, and running waters out of thine own well!<sup>29</sup> — At first drink from thy cistern, and latterly, running waters from thine own well.<sup>30</sup>

Said Raba in the name of R. Sehorah, who said it in the name of R. Hunah:<sup>31</sup> What is the meaning of the verse, Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished, but he that gathereth little by little shall increase?<sup>32</sup> — If one takes his studies by heaps at a time, he will benefit but little, but if one gathers [knowledge] little by little he will gain much.

Said Raba: The Rabbis know this thing, and yet they disregard it. Said R. Nahman b. Isaac: I have acted up to it and it stood me in good stead.

Said R. Shizebi in the name of R. Eleazar b. Azariah: What is the meaning of the verse, The slothful man shall not hunt his prey?<sup>33</sup> — [It means that] he who is, as it were, a cunning hunter [in matters of learning], will not live or have length of days.<sup>34</sup> R. Shesheth, however, said: [It means that] the cunning

hunter has prey to roast,<sup>35</sup> When R. Dimi came<sup>36</sup> he said: This may be likened to one who is hunting birds; if he breaks the wings of each one in turn,<sup>37</sup> he has made sure that all will remain in his possession, otherwise none will remain with him.

And he shall be like a tree transplanted<sup>38</sup> by streams of water.<sup>39</sup> — Those of the school of R. Jannai said: 'a tree transplanted,' not 'a tree planted' — [which implies that] whoever learns Torah from one master only will never achieve great success. Said R. Hisda to the Rabbinic students: I have a mind to tell you something, though I fear that you might leave me and go elsewhere: 'Whoever learns Torah from one master only will never achieve great success.'<sup>40</sup> They did leave him and went [to sit] before Rabbah, who however explained to them that the maxim only applies to lessons in logical deductions,<sup>41</sup> but as to oral traditions<sup>42</sup> it is better to learn from one master only, so that

1. The builders of the Tower of Babel. Abraham was a younger contemporary of Peleg in whose days was the earth divided. (Gen. X, 25.)
2. Ibid. XI, 4.
3. Ibid. XIII, 13.
4. Judges XVI, 25.
5. Ps. CXII, 1.
6. [Enjoying the full vitality and energy of youthful manhood.]
7. V. *supra* p. 22, n. 8.
8. Ibid.
9. Cf. Ab. IV, 2. 'The reward of a precept is the precept.'
10. V. *Ibid.* I, 3, note (Soncino ed.)
11. Ps. I, 2.
12. I.e., for which he has an aptitude, or to which his mood is attuned.
13. The phrase here used [H], 'expounded a part of scripture', which occurs only in the Babylonian Talmud, is the equivalent of [H] of the Palestinian Talmud, which has the same meaning. Though it refers to Scripture generally, the phrase is mostly applied to the exposition of the Hagiographa. The passage in Shab. 116b, [H], 'In Nehardea a portion of the Hagiographa is expounded at the Sabbath Afternoon Service' has been taken to indicate the custom of reading a Haftarah from the

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

- Hagiographa at those services. This is hardly warranted by the passage in question. V. Bacher Terminologie s.v. [H].
14. From the exposition, as the subject was not of his choice.
  15. Homiletical rendering of the same verse.
  16. Kid. 32b.
  17. By diligent study the student makes the subject his own.
  18. One should make oneself master of a subject before discussing it.
  19. Ber. 63b.
  20. Ps. CXIX.
  21. Comparing the intellect (soul) to a mill, the above verse is made to indicate that it is satisfied just to break up the grain, even though it cannot grind it into fine flour.
  22. Sanh. 38a.
  23. Prov. IX, 3. Wisdom, the subject of this chapter, is taken as a synonym for the Torah.
  24. Ibid. 14.
  25. As an exponent of the Torah to disciples. V. Sanh. 38b.
  26. Ibid. VIII, 2.
  27. Ibid,
  28. Prov. V, 15.
  29. Ibid.
  30. Imbibe the knowledge drawn from other sources, and in time you will become an inexhaustible source of learning.
  31. 'Er. 54b.
  32. Prov. XIII, 11.
  33. Ibid. XII, 27.
  34. He who poses as a man of learning without having acquired any knowledge does not deserve to live. The interpretation is based on a play on the words [H] which is made to read [H] 'He will not live nor have length of days.'
  35. The wise scholar who gathers knowledge little by little will amass good stores.
  36. From Palestine.
  37. Lit., 'of the first one' (and then proceeds to hunt for other birds).
  38. [H] (E.V. planted) is rendered 'transplanted' as distinct from [H] 'planted'. V. Malbim, [H] s.v. [H].
  39. Ps. I, 3.
  40. Lit., 'a sign of blessing.'
  41. [H] dialectic, from [H], 'to hold an opinion', 'to reason'.
  42. [H] Gemara from [H] — 'to complete', a subject that has been completely acquired by means of oral study, v. Bacher, HUCA. 1904, pp. 20 seqq.

## 'Abodah Zarah 19b

one is not confused by the variation in the terms used.

'By streams of water'.<sup>1</sup> — Said R. Tanhum b. Hanilai:<sup>2</sup> [This implies that] one should divide one's years [of study] into three [and devote] one third of them to Scripture, one third to Mishnah,<sup>3</sup> and one third to Talmud.<sup>3</sup> But does a man know the tenure of his life? — What is meant is that he should apply this practice to every day of his life.<sup>4</sup>

That bringeth forth its fruit in its season and whose leaf doth not wither<sup>5</sup> — was explained by Raba thus: If he bringeth forth his fruit in its season, then, his leaf will not wither,<sup>6</sup> otherwise, both to the one taught and to the one who teaches does the scriptural verse apply, Not so the wicked; but they are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.<sup>7</sup>

R. Abba said in the name of R. Hunan, in the name of Rab:<sup>8</sup> The scriptural words, For she hath cast down many wounded,<sup>9</sup> refer to the disciple who gives decisions though he has not reached the age of ordination;<sup>10</sup> yea, a mighty host are her slain<sup>11</sup> refer to the disciple who has reached the ordination age but refrains from giving decisions.<sup>12</sup> And what is the age? — Forty years. But did not Rabbah act as Rabbi?<sup>13</sup> — That was a case of being equal [to anyone].<sup>14</sup>

And whose leaf doth not wither.<sup>15</sup> — Said R. Aha b. Adda in the name of Rab (some ascribe it to R. Aha b. Abba in the name of R. Hamnuna, in the name of Rab): Even the ordinary talk of scholars needs studying, for it is said, And whose leaf doth not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.<sup>16</sup> R. Joshua b. Levi said: The following is written in the Law,<sup>17</sup> repeated in the Prophets and mentioned a third time in the Hagiographa: Whosoever occupies himself with the Torah, his possessions shall prosper. 'It is written in the Law,' — for it says, Observe therefore the

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

words of this covenant, and do them, that ye may make all that ye do to prosper.<sup>18</sup> 'It is repeated in the Prophets,' — for it is written, *This book of the Law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein; for then thou shalt make thy ways prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.*<sup>19</sup> 'It is mentioned a third time in the Hagiographa,' — for it is written, *But his delight is in the Law of the Lord, and in His Law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by streams of water, that bringeth forth its fruit in its season, and whose leaf doth not wither; and in whatsoever he doeth he shall prosper.*<sup>20</sup>

R. Alexandri was once calling out, 'Who wants life, who wants life?' All the people came and gathered round him saying: 'Give us life!' He then quoted to them, *Who is the man who desireth life and loveth days that he may see good therein? Keep thy tongue from evil and thy lips from speaking guile, depart from evil and do good, seek peace and pursue it.*<sup>21</sup> Lest one say, 'I kept my tongue from evil and my lips from speaking guile. I may therefore indulge in sleep,' Scripture therefore tells us, *Turn from evil and do good. By 'good' naught but Torah is meant; as it is said, For I have given you a good doctrine, forsake ye not my Torah.*

WHEN, HOWEVER, HE REACHES THE CUPOLA IN WHICH THE IDOL IS PLACED [HE MUST NOT BUILD]. Said R. Eleazar in the name of R. Johanan: If, however, he did build, the pay he received is permitted. This surely is obvious: it is a case of appurtenances of idols, and appurtenances of idols, whether according to R. Ishmael or according to R. Akiba,<sup>22</sup> are not forbidden till actually worshipped! — Said R. Jeremiah: It is necessary in the case of the idol itself.<sup>23</sup> This would be right according to the one<sup>24</sup> who holds that [to derive any benefit from] the making of an idol for an Israelite<sup>25</sup> is forbidden forthwith, but from the making of

one for an idolater, not until it is worshipped. In that case this is very well; but according to the one who holds that even when made for an idolater [any benefit] is forbidden forthwith, what is there to be said?<sup>26</sup> — But, said Rabbah b. Ulla, the statement is necessary in regard to the last stroke of work; for what is it that makes the idol fit for worship? It is its completion; and when is the completion brought about? With the last stroke.<sup>27</sup> But the last stroke does not constitute the value of a *perutah*.<sup>28</sup> Consequently, he holds the opinion that the wage is earned from the beginning to the end [of the work].<sup>29</sup>

**MISHNAH.** ONE SHOULD NOT MAKE JEWELLERY FOR AN IDOL [SUCH AS] NECKLACES, EAR-RINGS, OR FINGER-RINGS. R. ELIEZER SAYS, FOR PAYMENT IT IS PERMITTED. ONE SHOULD NOT SELL TO IDOLATERS A THING WHICH IS ATTACHED TO THE SOIL, BUT WHEN SEVERED IT MAY BE SOLD. R. JUDAH SAYS, ONE MAY SELL IT ON CONDITION THAT IT BE SEVERED.

**GEMARA.** Whence do we derive these rules? — Said R. Jose b. Hanina:

1. Ibid.
2. V. Kid. 30a.
3. V. Glos.
4. V. Tosaf. S.V. [H]. It is in conformity with this rule that the scriptural verses from Num. XXVIII, the Mishnah from Zeb. Ch. V, and the Baraita de-R. Ishmael have been inserted into the preliminary part of the Morning Service. (V.P.B. pp. 9-14). [The term 'Talmud' when occurring in the Talmud denotes the discussion in the Amoraic schools based on the Mishnah of Rabbi.]
5. Ps. ibid.
6. Only if the student's deeds and conduct are in harmony with the teaching of the Torah will his study be of lasting benefit.
7. Ps. I, 4.
8. V. Sotah 22a.
9. Prov. VII, 26.
10. The word [H] in the original is suggestive of [H] = 'a child of premature birth'.
11. Ibid.

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

12. The original [H] (E.V. mighty host) is rendered those who shut themselves up, or suppress themselves, as [H] 'he closes his eyes'.
13. Though he died on reaching the age of 40 years, (v. R.H. 18b). [On the difficulties involved in this figure v. Halevy Doroth. II, 438 ff. He maintains that Rabbah lived 60 years (40 in the text being a copyist's error), but seeing that he was head of his school for 22 years he must have already acted as Rabbi at the age of 38. Hence the question of the Gemara. Cf. however Funk, Die Juden in Babylonien, II, note 1.]
14. Rabbah, though young in years, was second in learning to none in the town (Rashi). [Tosaf., Sotah 22b, s.v. [H] explains that Rabbah surpassed all other scholars in his town, and the restriction to age applies only where there are others who are equal in learning to the young scholar.]
15. Ps. I, 3.
16. Ps. ibid. Even the table-talk of the learned — here likened to the leaves, the least useful produce of the tree — is instructive,
17. The Pentateuch.
18. Deut. XXIX, 8.
19. Josh. I, 8.
20. Ps. I, 2-3.
21. Ibid. XXXIV, 13-15.
22. V. *infra* 51b, seq.
23. Where an Israelite has been working at the making of an idol, R. Eleazar's statement, permitting the use of the payment for such work, is necessary.
24. The point is under dispute between R. Ishmael and R. Akiba in the reference given above.
25. Probably for selling to idolaters.
26. About the statement of R. Eleazar permitting the payment received.
27. It is therefore necessary for R. Eleazar to state that the payment received even for the completion of the work is not forbidden.
28. Smallest coin (v. [Glos.](#)); it should therefore, in any case, be too insignificant to be forbidden!
29. V. Kid. 48a and B.K. 99a, where it is discussed whether a job-worker is entitled to payment as his work progresses, or only on the completion of the job.

## 'Abodah Zarah 20a

From the scriptural words, nor be gracious unto them — lo-tehannem<sup>1</sup> — [which may be rendered] nor allow them to settle on the soil.

But are not these words needed to convey the Divine command not to admire their gracefulness? — If that alone were intended, the wording should have been *lo tehunnem*;<sup>2</sup> why is *lo tehannem* used? To imply both these meanings. But there is quite another purpose for which this is needed, to express the Divine command not to give them any free gift!<sup>3</sup> — For that purpose the wording should have been *lo tehinnem*,<sup>4</sup> why then is it *lo tehannem*? — So as to imply all these interpretations. It has indeed been taught so elsewhere: *lo tehannem* means, thou shalt not allow them to settle on the soil. Another interpretation of *lo tehannem* is, thou shalt not pronounce them as graceful; yet another interpretation of *lo tehannem* is, thou shalt not give them any free gift.

The giving of free gifts [to idolaters] is itself a matter of dispute between Tannaim, for it has been taught:<sup>5</sup> [The verse], Ye shall not eat of anything that dieth of itself' unto the stranger that is within thy gates thou mayest give it that he may eat it,' or thou mayest sell it unto a heathen,<sup>6</sup> only tells us that it may be given away to a stranger or sold to a heathen. How do we know that it may be sold to a heathen? Because Scripture says, thou mayest give it — or sell it. How do we know that it may be given away to a heathen? Because Scripture says, thou mayest give it that he may eat it or thou mayest sell it to a heathen: hence it may be derived that both giving and selling may be applied to a stranger or a heathen.<sup>7</sup> This is the opinion of R. Meir. R. Judah, however, says: The words should be taken as they are written, giving being applied to a stranger, and selling to a heathen.<sup>8</sup> But R. Meir's interpretation is quite right! — R. Judah may contend thus: Were the divine words to be interpreted according to R. Meir, they would have read: 'Thou shalt give it as well as sell it'; why then does it say 'or' [sell it] if not to convey the particular meaning of the words?<sup>9</sup> And R. Meir? — [He might reply that 'or'] indicates that it is preferable to give it away to a

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

stranger-settler than to sell it to a heathen. And as to R. Judah? — He might say that, since the maintenance of such a stranger is commanded by Scripture<sup>10</sup> and that of a heathen is not so commanded, no scriptural word is needed to give [the stranger] preference.

[It has been stated above.] 'Another interpretation of *lo tehannem* is, Thou shalt not pronounce them as graceful.' This supports the view of Rab. For Rab said: One is forbidden to say, 'How beautiful is that idolatress!' The following objection was raised: It happened that R. Simeon b. Gamaliel, while standing on a step on the Temple-mount, saw a heathen woman who was particularly beautiful, and he exclaimed: How great are Thy works, O Lord.<sup>11</sup> Likewise, when R. Akiba saw the wife of the wicked Tyranus Rufus,<sup>12</sup> he spat, then laughed, and then wept. 'Spat,' — because of her originating only from a putrefying drop;<sup>13</sup> 'laughed,' — because he foresaw that she would become a proselyte and that he would take her to wife; 'wept', that such beauty should [ultimately] decay in the dust. What then about Rab's ruling?<sup>14</sup> [He might say that] each of these Rabbis merely offered thanksgiving. For a Master has said: He who beholds goodly creatures should say. 'Blessed be He who hath created such in His universe.'<sup>15</sup> But is even mere looking permitted? The following can surely be raised as an objection: 'Thou shalt keep thee from every evil thing'<sup>16</sup> [implies] that one should not look intently at a beautiful woman, even if she be unmarried, or at a married woman even if she be ugly,

1. Deut. VII, 2. [H] connected with root [H], to encamp.
2. [H].
3. *Infra* 64a.
4. [H].
5. Hul. 114b.
6. Deut. XIV, 21 — The Hebrew word here rendered 'stranger' is *Ger* [H], a heathen who, for the purpose of acquiring rights of citizenship in Palestine, renounced idolatry

but does not observe Jewish dietary laws. Such a 'stranger' had to be maintained by the state according to the Biblical injunction: a stranger and a settler he shall live with thee (Lev. XXV, 35).

7. The phrasing may be so altered as to make giving and selling applicable to both cases.
8. But to give it as a gift to a heathen is forbidden. Thus the giving of a free gift to a heathen, which is permitted according to R. Meir, is forbidden according to R. Judah.
9. That selling refers to the one case, and giving to the other.
10. V. n. 2, end.
11. Ps. CIV, 24.
12. Tineius Rufus, Governor of Judea, 1st century (C.E.).
13. Ab. III, 1.
14. Who holds that one must not admire the beauty of heathen.
15. V. Ber. 58b, where the prescribed benediction is 'Blessed be He who hath such in His universe.'
16. Deut. XXIII, 10.

## ‘Abodah Zarah 20b

nor at a woman's gaudy garments, nor at male and female asses, or a pig and a sow, or at fowls when they are mating; even if one be all eyes like the Angel of Death! (It is said of the Angel of Death that he is all full of eyes. When a sick person is about to depart, he stands above his head-pillow with his sword drawn out in his hand and a drop of gall hanging on it. As the sick person beholds it, he trembles and opens his mouth [in fright]; he then drops it into his mouth. It is from this that he dies, from this that [the corpse] deteriorates, from this that his face becomes greenish)? — [What may have happened in those cases was that] the woman turned round a corner.<sup>1</sup>

[It was said above.] 'Nor at a woman's gaudy garments!' Said R. Judah b. Samuel: Even when these are spread on a wall. Whereon R. Papa remarked: That is if he knows their owner. Said Raba: This is also proved by the wording which reads, 'Nor at a woman's gaudy garments,' but does not read 'at gaudy garments.'<sup>2</sup> This proves it. R. Hisda said:

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

That can only refer to such as had been worn,<sup>3</sup> but in the case of new ones it does not matter; for were you not to say so, how could women's dresses be handed to a trimmer; he must needs look at them! — And according to your opinion, [how will you explain] the statement of Rab Judah<sup>4</sup> that in the case of animals of the same kind one may bring them together [for mating] in the very closest manner; surely he, too, must needs look!<sup>5</sup> — But, we assume that what he cares about is only his work; so here, too, it is only his work that he cares about.

The Master said: 'From it he dies.' Shall we say, then, that this differs from the statement of Samuel's father?<sup>6</sup> For Samuel's father said: The Angel of Death told me, Were it not for the regard I have for people's honor, I could cut the throat of men as widely as that of an animal [is cut]!<sup>7</sup> — Possibly, it is that very drop that cuts into the organs of the throat. [The above-mentioned statement.] 'From it the corpse deteriorates' supports the view of R. Hanina b. Kahana. For R. Hanina b. Kahana stated: It had been said in the school of Rab that if one wants to keep a corpse from deteriorating, he should turn it on its face.

Our Rabbis taught: The words, Thou shalt keep thee from every evil thing,<sup>8</sup> mean that<sup>9</sup> one should not indulge in such thoughts by day as might lead to uncleanness by night. Hence R. Phineas b. Jair said:<sup>10</sup> Study leads to precision, precision leads to zeal, zeal leads to cleanliness, cleanliness leads to restraint, restraint leads to purity, purity leads to holiness, holiness leads to meekness, meekness leads to fear of sin, fear of sin leads to saintliness, saintliness leads to the [possession of] the holy spirit, the holy spirit leads to life eternal,<sup>11</sup> and saintliness is greater than any of these, for Scripture says. Then Thou didst speak in vision to Thy saintly ones.<sup>12</sup> This, then, differs from the view of R. Joshua b. Levy. For R. Joshua b. Levy said: Meekness is the greatest of them

all, for Scripture says, The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to bring good tidings unto the meek.<sup>13</sup> It does not say, 'unto the saints', but 'unto the meek', from which you learn that meekness is the greatest of all these.

**ONE SHOULD NOT SELL TO IDOLATERS A THING WHICH IS ATTACHED TO THE SOIL.** Our Rabbis taught: One may sell a tree to a heathen with the stipulation that it be felled and he then fells it; this is the opinion of R. Judah. R. Meir, however says: We may only sell to heathen a tree when felled. Likewise, low-growth, with the stipulation that it be cut and he may then cut it; this is the opinion of R. Judah. R. Meir, however, says: We may only sell it to them when it is cut. So also, standing corn, with the stipulation that it be reaped and he may then reap it; this is the opinion of R. Judah. R. Meir, however, says: We may only sell it to them when reaped.<sup>14</sup> And all these three instances are necessary; for were we told of the case of a tree only [we might think that] in that case only does R. Meir oppose, for, since the heathen will not lose by letting it remain in the ground, he might leave it so, but the other case [the standing corn] where he would lose by letting it remain in the soil, we might think that R. Meir would agree with R. Judah. On the other hand, were we told about the tree and the corn only [we might have thought that] it is because it is not obvious that he benefits by leaving them in the soil [that R. Judah permits], but in the case of low-growth where he obviously benefits by leaving it to grow on, we might think that he agrees with R. Meir. Were we again to be told of the case of [low-growth] only, we might have thought that it is only in that case that R. Meir objects [since it pays him not to cut it], but in the other two cases, he shares the view of R. Judah; hence all these are necessary.

The question was asked: How about selling cattle with the stipulation that it be

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

slaughtered? Shall we say that in those other instances the reason why R. Judah permits is because [the articles], not being in the heathen's domain, could not be left there altogether, whereas cattle, which is in his own domain, might be kept by him [unslaughtered], or should no distinction be made? — Come and hear: It has been taught: [We may sell a heathen] cattle with the stipulation that he should slaughter it, and he then slaughters it; this is the opinion of R. Judah. R. Meir, however, says: We may only sell it to them when slaughtered.

**MISHNAH.** ONE SHOULD NOT LET HOUSES TO THEM IN THE LAND OF ISRAEL; AND IT IS NEEDLESS TO MENTION FIELDS. IN SYRIA.<sup>15</sup>

1. Her face thus met the Rabbi's eyes unexpectedly.
2. [H] is used only of feminine wear, as men do not wear highly colored garments (Rashi).]
3. Which may bring to mind the one who had been seen wearing them.
4. B. M. 91a.
5. Which, as stated above, is forbidden.
6. Abba b. Abba, the father of the Babylonian Amora, Samuel (b. about 165), is usually known by the designation of 'The Father of Samuel'.
7. Which implies that an incision, though an imperceptibly small one, is actually made.
8. Deut, ibid.
9. V. Ket. 46b.
10. V. Shek. IV, 6, also Sotah IX, 9, where the version varies from the present one. [For a full discussion of this passage which has been named the Saint's Progress, v. Buchler, A. Types of Jewish Palestinian Piety, pp. 42-67.]
11. [H], Lit., 'resurrection of the dead'. [The phrase may also mean that the possessor of the holy spirit is endowed with the power of restoring life to the dead.]
12. Ps. LXXXIX, 20.
13. Isa. LXI, 1.
14. V. Tosef. A.Z. II.
15. The northern part of Trans-Jordania which King David annexed to Palestine of his own accord; v. II Sam. X, 6 ff.

## 'Abodah Zarah 21a

HOUSES MAY BE LET TO THEM, BUT NOT FIELDS. ABROAD,<sup>1</sup> HOUSES MAY BE SOLD AND FIELDS LET TO THEM; THIS IS THE OPINION OF R. MEIR. R. JOSE SAYS: IN THE LAND OF ISRAEL, ONE MAY LET TO THEM HOUSES BUT NOT FIELDS; IN SYRIA, WE MAY SELL THEM HOUSES AND LET FIELDS; BUT ABROAD, THE ONE AS WELL AS THE OTHER MAY BE SOLD. EVEN IN SUCH A PLACE WHERE THE LETTING OF A HOUSE HAS BEEN PERMITTED, IT IS NOT MEANT FOR THE PURPOSE OF A RESIDENCE, SINCE THE HEATHEN WILL BRING IDOLS INTO IT; FOR SCRIPTURE SAYS, AND THOU SHALT NOT BRING AN ABOMINATION INTO THY HOUSE.<sup>2</sup> NOWHERE, HOWEVER, MAY ONE LET A BATH-HOUSE TO A HEATHEN, AS IT IS CALLED BY THE NAME OF THE OWNER.

**GEMARA.** Why is it 'NEEDLESS TO MENTION FIELDS'? Shall we say because it offers two [objections]: the one, that the heathen settles on the soil, and the other that [the produce] becomes exempt from tithes? If it be that, then houses too offer two objections: the one, that the heathen settles on the soil, and the other that they become exempt from having a *mezuzah*.<sup>3</sup> Said R. Mesharsheya: It is upon the occupant that the observance of *mezuzah* devolves.<sup>4</sup>

IN SYRIA HOUSES MAY BE LET TO THEM, BUT NOT FIELDS. Why is selling [of houses] not allowed — lest it lead to selling [houses] in the Land of Israel? Why then not make a safeguard in the case of letting also? — Letting<sup>5</sup> is in itself a safeguard;<sup>6</sup> shall we then go on making another safeguard to guard it? But is not the letting of a field in Syria a safeguard to another safeguard,<sup>7</sup> and yet it is upheld? — That is not a mere safeguard, it follows the opinion that even the annexation by an individual is to be regarded as annexed [to Palestine];<sup>8</sup> hence, in the case of a field, which offers a twofold objection<sup>9</sup> our Rabbis

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

ordained a safeguard;<sup>10</sup> but in the case of houses, since there is no such double objection, no safeguard was made by our Rabbis.

**ABROAD, HOUSES MAY BE SOLD AND FIELDS LET TO THEM.** Because in the case of a field, which offers a twofold objection, our Rabbis ordained a safeguard;<sup>11</sup> but in the case of a house, since there is no such double objection, no such safeguard was made by our Rabbis.

**R. JOSE SAYS: IN THE LAND OF ISRAEL, WE MAY LET TO THEM HOUSES BUT NOT FIELDS.** What is the reason? — In the case of fields, which offer the twofold objection, our Rabbis ordained a safeguard, but in the case of houses, since there is no such double objection, no safeguard was made by our Rabbis.

**IN SYRIA, WE MAY SELL THEM HOUSES AND LET FIELDS,** What is the reason? — [R. Jose] holds that the annexation made by an individual is not regarded as a proper annexation; hence in the case of fields, which offer the twofold objection, our Rabbis instituted a safeguard, but in the case of houses, since there is no such double objection, no safeguard was made by our Rabbis.

**BUT ABROAD, THE ONE AS WELL AS THE OTHER MAY BE SOLD.** What is the reason? — Because, on account of the distance [from Palestine], the principle of safeguard does not apply.

Said Rab Judah in the name of Samuel: The *halachah* is with R. Jose.<sup>12</sup> Said R. Joseph: Provided he does not make it a [heathen] settlement. And how many [tenants] constitute a settlement? — A Tanna taught that at least three persons constitute a settlement. But should we not fear lest, after this Israelite has sold the property to one idolater, the latter may go and sell a part

thereof to two others?<sup>13</sup> — Said Abaye: We need not be particular overmuch.<sup>14</sup>

**EVEN IN SUCH A PLACE WHERE LETTING HAS BEEN PERMITTED.** This implies that there are places where letting is not permitted —

1. [H], 'outside the Land (of Israel).'
2. Deut. VII, 26.
3. V. *supra* p. 55, n. 5.
4. The house is only liable to have a *mezuzah* if it is occupied by an Israelite; the term exemption cannot therefore be applied to it. V.B.M. 101b, Pes. 4a.
5. Even in Palestine.
6. Against possible sale.
7. Lest it lead to selling in Syria which in turn may lead to selling in Palestine.
8. V. *supra* p. 108, n. 1, and Git. 8b.
9. As explained before.
10. Forbidding letting as against possible sale.
11. As against possible selling in the Land of Israel.
12. That abroad one may sell them both houses and fields.
13. [Retaining a part for himself and thus forming a heathen settlement.]
14. Lit., 'we are particular as regards before, but not before before.' V. *supra* 14a.

## ‘Abodah Zarah 21b

which proves that R. Meir's view is accepted.<sup>1</sup> since according to R. Jose letting is permitted everywhere.

**NOWHERE, HOWEVER, MAY ONE LET A BATH-HOUSE, etc.** It has been taught: Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel said: One should not let his bath-house to a heathen, for it is called by the owner's name, and the idolater will work in it on Sabbath and festivals.<sup>2</sup> It would seem, then, that to a Cuthean<sup>3</sup> it may be let? But might not a Cuthean do work in it on the intermediate Days?<sup>4</sup> — We, too, are permitted to do [such] work on the Intermediate Days.<sup>5</sup> [Again] it would seem that in the case of a field, letting to a heathen is permitted! What is the reason?<sup>6</sup> — Because people will say that he is merely a metayer working for his tenancy.<sup>7</sup> Why then

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

not apply the same principle to a bath-house? — People do not generally let a bath-house on terms of metayage.

It has been taught: R. Simeon b. Eleazar says: One should not let one's field to a Cuthean, for it is called by the owner's name and that Cuthean will do work in it on the intermediate Days.<sup>3</sup> So that to an idolater such letting is permitted? Because it will be said that he is a metayer working for his own tenancy. If so, why should it not be said in the case of a Cuthean, too, that he is a metayer working for his own tenancy?

1. According to which letting in Palestine is forbidden.
2. [And the Jew would appear to desecrate the Sabbath (Tosef. A.Z. II.)]
3. V. Glos. Who abstains from work on Sabbath and Festivals, but not on the intermediate Days of the Festivals.
4. V. *supra* p. 28, n. 2.
5. Heating a bath is permitted on the week-days of the festivals. [Text in cur. edd. difficult. Render with Venice ed. (v.D.S. a.l.): But to a Cuthean it may be sold. (For) when might he do work in it? On the Intermediate days; but on the intermediate days we too are permitted to do such work.]
6. Even though where the objection of letting them settle on the soil does not apply, as for example, outside Palestine, this objection to work being done by a heathen in a property known to be owned by an Israelite still exists! [Venice ed.: But in the case of a field ... permitted, because, etc.]
7. And not by order of the Jewish owner.
8. Tosef. A.Z. ibid,

## 'Abodah Zarah 22a

— R. Simeon b. Eleazar has not in mind the metayage principle at all; but the reason why he permits in the case of an idolater is because, if he is told [to abstain from work on forbidden days] he obeys. But a Cuthean, too, if told would surely obey! — A Cuthean would not obey; he would say: 'I am more learned than thou!' If that is so, why then mention the objection of the field being called by the owner's name; he could have given the

reason of not placing a stumbling block before the blind?<sup>1</sup> — He mentions that reason as an additional one, as if to say: There is the one reason of [not placing a stumbling block] before the blind, and there is also the objection of its being called by his name.

Two<sup>2</sup> saffron-growers, [one of whom was] a heathen who took charge of the field on the Sabbath, and [the other] an Israelite who did so on the Sunday, came before Raba; he declared the partnership as permissible. Rabina, however, cited the following in refutation of Raba's ruling: If an Israelite and a heathen leased a field in partnership, the Israelite must not say subsequently to the heathen, Take as thy share the profit in respect of the Sabbath, and I will take as mine that in respect of a week-day,<sup>3</sup> only when such a condition was made originally is it permitted. [Likewise] if they just calculate the profit<sup>4</sup> it is forbidden! Whereupon he [Raba] blushed. Subsequently, the fact came to light that the partners had indeed laid down that condition originally.

R. Gabiha of Be-Kathil<sup>5</sup> said: That was a case of '*orlah*'<sup>6</sup> plants, the produce of which the heathen was to eat during the forbidden years and the Israelite during [a corresponding number of] permitted years, and they came before Raba who permitted it.<sup>7</sup> But did not Rabina cite a statement in objection to Raba's ruling? — [No,] it was in order to support it.<sup>8</sup> Then why did Raba blush? — That never occurred at all.

The question was asked: What if no arrangements at all were made? — Come and hear [the above passage]: 'Only when such a condition was made originally is it permitted,' hence, if there was no arrangement it is forbidden. Continue, then, with the next part: 'If they calculated the profit it is forbidden,' which implies that, if there was no arrangement it is permitted! —

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

The fact is, no answer can be deduced from this passage.

## CHAPTER II

**MISHNAH.** ONE SHOULD NOT PLACE CATTLE IN HEATHENS' INNS.<sup>2</sup> BECAUSE THEY ARE SUSPECTED OF IMMORAL PRACTICE WITH THEM. A WOMAN SHOULD NOT BE ALONE WITH THEM, BECAUSE THEY ARE SUSPECTED OF LEWDNESS, NOR SHOULD A MAN BE ALONE WITH THEM, BECAUSE THEY ARE SUSPECTED OF SHEDDING BLOOD.

1. Lev. XIX, 14. V. *supra*. 6a.
2. Lit., 'these'.
3. As the partnership was entered into unconditionally, the duty of working the field devolved equally on both partners. The work carried out by the heathen on the Sabbath is therefore done by him, in respect of one half thereof, as the agent of the Israelite.
4. If the Israelite apportions the profits in respect of the Sabbath to the heathen even without telling him explicitly to work on the Sabbath it is likewise forbidden, as in the absence of specific conditions, the assumption is that the heathen is to work on behalf of the Jew on the Sabbath — which is in direct opposition to Raba's ruling.
5. [On the Tigris, north of Bagdad (Obermeyer, *op. cit.* p. 147).]
6. Lit., 'uncircumcised', newly-planted trees, the produce of which is forbidden during the first three years. V. Lev. XIX, 23.
7. This is quite in order since even during the forbidden years, the Israelite is only forbidden to eat of the produce, but is permitted to do the work. There is therefore no objection to the heathen's working even though he does so as the Israelite's agent.
8. The statement in Rabina's citation, that where the prohibition does not extend to the work — as in the case of laying down the conditions originally — the arrangement is permitted, distinctly supports Raba's ruling in regard to produce of '*orlah*' trees.
9. (On the ill-repute of the Greek and Roman inns, v. Elmslie a.l.)

## ‘Abodah Zarah 22b

**GEMARA.** The following was cited in contradiction: One may buy of them cattle for a sacrifice, and it need not be feared lest it committed, or had been used for, an immoral act, or had been designated as an offering to idols, or had been worshipped.<sup>1</sup> Now we are quite right not to fear about its having been designated as an offering to idols or having been made an object of worship, since if it had been so designated or worshipped, its owner would not have sold it; but we surely ought to fear as to committing an immoral act!<sup>2</sup> — Said R. Tahlifa in the name of R. Shila b. Abina in the name of Rab: A heathen would have regard for his cattle, lest it becomes barren.<sup>3</sup> This would indeed hold good in the case of female cattle but what answer would you give in the case of males? — Said R. Kahana: Because it has a deteriorating effect on their flesh. Then what about that [Baraitha] which has been taught: 'One may buy cattle of any heathen shepherd'; ought we not to fear lest he used it for an immoral purpose?<sup>4</sup> — The heathen shepherd would be afraid of forfeiting his fee. What then about this [other Baraitha] which has been taught: 'One should not entrust cattle to a heathen shepherd';<sup>5</sup> why not assume that the heathen shepherd would be afraid of forfeiting his fee? — They fear detection by one another since they know a good deal about it, but they are not afraid of us who do not know much about it. Rabbah said: This is what the popular proverb says. 'As the stylus penetrates the stone so one cunning mind detects another.' In that case, neither should we buy male cattle<sup>6</sup> from women, for fear of their having used them for immoral practice! — She would be afraid of being followed about by the animal. What then about this which R. Joseph learnt: 'A widow should not rear dogs, nor accommodate a student as a guest'? Now it is quite right in the case of a student, as she might reckon on his modesty,<sup>7</sup> but in the case of a dog why not say that she would be afraid

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

of being followed about by it? — Since it would follow about on being thrown a piece of meat, people will say that it is because of being given such pieces that it follows her. Why then should we not leave female animals alone with female heathens?<sup>8</sup> — Said Mar 'Ukba b. Hama: Because heathens frequent their neighbors' wives, and should one by chance not find her in, and find the cattle there, he might use it immorally. You may also say that even if he should find her in he might use the animal, as a Master has said:<sup>9</sup> Heathens prefer the cattle of Israelites to their own wives, for R. Johanan said: When the serpent came unto Eve he infused filthy lust into her.<sup>10</sup> If that be so [the same should apply] also to Israel! — When Israel stood at Sinai that lust was eliminated, but the lust of idolaters, who did not stand at Sinai, did not cease.

The question was asked: How about fowls?<sup>11</sup> — Come and hear: Rab Judah said in the name of Samuel on behalf of R. Hanina: I saw a heathen buy a goose in the market, use it immorally, and then strangle it, roast, and eat it. Also R. Jeremiah of Difti<sup>12</sup> said: I saw an Arab who bought a side [of meat], pierced it for the purpose of an immoral act, after which act he roasted and ate it.

1. Any of which uses would disqualify it for the purpose of sacrifice (Tosef. 'A.Z. II). V. B.K. 40b.
2. The Baraitha which rules out such possibility is therefore in conflict with our Mishnah.
3. Hence the Baraitha does not suspect immoral practice in the case of the heathen's own cattle, while our Mishnah, which deals with other people's cattle left in a heathen's inn, does suspect it.
4. As the cattle does not belong to him.
5. *Supra* 15b, Tosef. A.Z. III.
6. For sacrifices.
7. Which would deter him from making it known.
8. V. *supra*, 15b.
9. Git. 38a.
10. Shab. 146a; Yeb. 103b.
11. Does the suspicion connected with animals apply to them?

12. [Identified with Dibtha below the Tigris, S.E. Babylon, Obermeyer, *op. cit.* p. 197.]

## 'Abodah Zarah 23a

Rabina said:<sup>13</sup> There is really no contradiction; the one teaching [prohibits it] in the first instance; the other [permits it] after it happened.<sup>14</sup> And whence do we know that a difference is to be made in a case between the first instance and where it had happened? — From the following: We have learnt: A WOMAN SHOULD NOT BE ALONE WITH THEM, BECAUSE THEY ARE SUSPECTED OF LEWDNESS; now this seems to be contradicted by the following: A woman who had been imprisoned by heathens in connection with money matters, is permissible to her husband,<sup>15</sup> but if on a capital charge, she is forbidden to her husband.<sup>16</sup> Does this not go to prove that we make a difference in a case between the first instance and where it had happened?<sup>17</sup> — Not at all! It may indeed be that the prohibition applies even after it happened, but here the reason is that the heathen will be afraid to forfeit his money! You can indeed prove it by what is stated in the second clause: 'If on a capital charge, she is forbidden to her husband.' So there is no more [to be said about this].

R. Pedath said: There is no contradiction;<sup>18</sup> the one is [according to] R. Eliezer, the other is [according to] the Rabbis. For we have learnt in connection with the Red Heifer:<sup>19</sup> R. Eliezer says: It must not be bought of a heathen, but the Sages permit it.<sup>20</sup> Is not [the point] on which they differ this: that R. Eliezer holds that we suspect immoral practice whilst the Rabbis hold that we do not suspect immoral practice?<sup>21</sup> — Whence [do you know this]? It may well be said that all agree that immoral practice is not to be suspected, the reason for R. Eliezer's opinion being this: he holds the view presented by Rab Judah in the name of Rab. For Rab Judah said in the name of Rab: [In the case

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

of the Red Heifer]<sup>10</sup> even if a bundle of sacks has been laid on her she becomes ritually unfit, but in the case of the calf,<sup>11</sup> only if she had been made to draw a burden. [It may thus be that] one master<sup>12</sup> is of the opinion that we should suspect,<sup>13</sup> and the other that we should not suspect it! — Do not let this enter your mind; for the sake of a small benefit one would not risk a big loss.<sup>14</sup> Let us then say likewise that for the sake of a little enjoyment<sup>15</sup> one would not risk so big a loss! — In that instance his passion impels him.

But [still] it may be that all agree that immoral practice is not to be suspected, but that the reason for R. Eliezer's ruling is the one given in the teaching of Shila? For Shila learned: 'What is the reason for R. Eliezer's ruling? [It is the scriptural words:] Speak unto the Children of Israel that they bring unto thee,<sup>16</sup> [which imply that] Israelites shall bring, but it should not be brought by heathens'!<sup>17</sup> — Do not let this enter your mind; for it is stated in the second clause: 'R. Eliezer applied this disqualification to all other kinds of sacrifices.' Now were you to adduce the reason as taught by Shila, it would hold good in the case of the [red] heifer, in connection with which Scripture mentions 'bringing', but does Scripture ever mention 'bringing' in connection with other sacrifices? But [still] might we not say, then, that the Rabbis differ from R. Eliezer

1. In reference to the contradiction between our Mishnah and the Baraitha cited above, p. 113.
2. The Mishnah forbids the deliberate placing of an animal with a heathen, while the Baraitha permits the use of such an animal when it had already been so placed.
3. The heathen who has charge of her will not ill-use her for fear of losing the money involved.
4. Keth. 26b.
5. The former being forbidden according to the first teaching, while the latter is permitted according to the second.
6. Between our Mishnah and the Baraitha.
7. [H], Num. XIX, 1 seq.
8. Par. II, 1.
9. Their opinions are thus represented respectively by our Mishnah and Baraitha.

10. Concerning which it is said, upon which never came yoke (Num. XIX, 2).
11. [H], To be brought by the elders of the place in the vicinity of which a murdered person is found (Deut. XXI, 1 seq.), concerning which it is said, which hath not drawn in the yoke.
12. R. Eliezer.
13. The owner, of having placed a bundle on her, and not because of immoral practice.
14. The price paid for a perfectly red heifer being very high.
15. Of committing an immoral act.
16. With reference to the red heifer, Num. XIX, 2.
17. [And since R. Eliezer extends the disqualification to all sacrifices, his reason must be that he suspects immoral practice, and our Mishnah thus represents his view.]

## ‘Abodah Zarah 23b

only in the case of the [red] heifer which commands a high price,<sup>1</sup> but that in the case of other sacrifices they agree with him? — In that case, whose opinion would the [Baraitha] taught [above, viz.]: 'We may purchase from heathen cattle for [ordinary] sacrifices' represent? Neither that of R. Eliezer nor that of the Rabbis! Moreover, it is distinctly taught as follows:<sup>2</sup> What was cited as a refutation to R. Eliezer by his colleagues is, All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto thee ... they shall come up with acceptance on mine altar.<sup>3</sup>

The difference of opinions<sup>4</sup> is only in regard to suspicion, so that where the immoral use is certain, the heifer is unfit. From here then you can deduce that the degree of sanctity of the red heifer is that of animals sacrificed on the altar; for if it had only the sanctity of those [dedicated] to repairs of the temple,<sup>5</sup> immoral use should not render it unfit! — The red heifer may be different [in this respect alone], because it is designated by Divine law as a sin-offering.<sup>6</sup> If that be so, it ought to be unfit if it be a Yoze Dofan.<sup>7</sup> and were you to say that it is so indeed, why then are we taught: If one dedicates a Yoze Dofan as a red heifer, it is unfit, but R. Simeon declares it as fit?<sup>8</sup> Again, were you to say that R. Simeon follows here the opinion he

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

expressed elsewhere that a Yoze Dofan is to be regarded as a properly born child,<sup>9</sup> has not R. Johanan said that R. Simeon admitted, in regard to sacred things, that it is not valid for such sanctity?<sup>10</sup> — But the case of the red heifer is different; since a blemish renders it unfit, immoral use or idolatrous worship also render it unfit;<sup>11</sup> for Scripture says, for their corruption is in them, there is a blemish in them; they shall not be accepted,<sup>12</sup> and the School of R. Ishmael taught:<sup>13</sup> Wherever 'corruption' is mentioned it only means lewdness and idolatry: 'lewdness', as it is said, for all flesh had corrupted their way upon the earth;<sup>14</sup> and 'idolatry', for Scripture says, lest ye deal corruptly, to make ye a graven image,<sup>15</sup> and since a blemish renders the red heifer unfit, immoral use and idolatrous worship also render it unfit.

The above text stated: 'Shila learned, What is the reason for R. Eliezer's ruling? [It is the scriptural words,] Speak unto the Children of Israel that they bring unto thee, [which imply that] Israelites shall bring, but it should not be brought by heathens.' According to this, Speak unto the Children of Israel that they take for me an offering<sup>16</sup> should also mean that Israelites should take and that it should not be taken of idolaters! And were you to say that it does indeed mean so, surely Rab Judah reported in the name of Samuel:<sup>17</sup> R. Eliezer [himself] was asked: To what extent is honoring one's father and mother to be practiced? He answered: Go forth and see how a certain idolater of Ashkelon, Dama the son of Nathina by name, acted towards his father. He was once approached about selling precious stones for the ephod<sup>18</sup>

1. So that the owner would not tamper with her for fear of monetary loss.
2. *Infra* 24a.
3. Isa. LX, 7. This proves that the discussion between the Rabbis and R. Eliezer applies to all sacrifices. [The Rabbis will permit in every case, whereas R. Eliezer will forbid in all cases; the Mishnah thus represents the view of R. Eliezer, and the Baraitha that of the Rabbis, even as is explained by R. Pedath.]

4. Between R. Eliezer and the Rabbis.
5. V. Shebu. 11b.
6. Num. XIX, 9.
7. ipus tmuh 'A fetus extracted by means of the cesarean section' (Jast.) which is, according to Bek. 12a, unfit as sacrifice, of which it is said (Lev. XXII, 27), When a bullock or a sheep or a goat is born ... it may be accepted for an offering.
8. Tosef. Par. I.
9. So that the period of uncleanness and subsequent purification and sacrifice (Lev. XII) are to be observed by the woman (Nid. 40a).
10. Why then should a Yoze Dofan be valid as a red heifer?
11. Though in other respects it does not possess the sanctity of sacrifices brought on the altar.
12. Lev. XXII, 25.
13. Sanh. 27a.
14. Gen. VI, 12, where immorality is meant.
15. Deut. IV, 16.
16. Ex. XXV, 2.
17. Kid. 31.
18. The vestment worn by the high priest, the shoulder piece of which had two onyx stones on which the names of the twelve tribes of Israel were engraved. (Ex. XXVIII, 9.)

## 'Abodah Zarah 24a

at a profit of six hundred thousand [*denarii*] (R. Kahana's version is eight hundred thousand); but the keys were lying under his father's head-pillow, so he would not disturb him!<sup>1</sup> — The words 'onyx stones'<sup>2</sup> are detached from the preceding words.<sup>3</sup> But are they not followed by and stones to be set<sup>4</sup> which again connects them? Moreover, the sequel to the report is:<sup>5</sup> In a subsequent year a 'red heifer' was born in his herd, and some of the Sages of Israel called on him.<sup>6</sup> Said he to them: From what I know of you [I am aware] that if I were to demand of you all the money in the world, you would give it to me, but all I ask of you now is that money that I had lost because of my father!<sup>7</sup> — In that case it was purchased through [the agency of] Israelite merchants.<sup>8</sup>

Does R. Eliezer then hold that immoral use is not to be suspected?<sup>9</sup> Has it not been taught: When the incident was mentioned to R.

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

Eliezer of [a Red Heifer] having been bought of a heathen named Dama — or, as some say, named Ramaz — R. Eliezer replied: What does that prove, seeing that Israelites watched the heifer from the hour of its birth?<sup>10</sup> — R. Eliezer indeed admits both reasons, that of its having to be brought [by an Israelite] as well as the suspicion of immoral use.

The Master said: 'Israelites watched the heifer from the hour of its birth.' But is there not the suspicion that its mother may have been ill-used when she bore her, seeing that Raba said: The young of a goring cow is unfit<sup>11</sup> for it was both the cow and her young that did the goring. Likewise the young of an ill-used animal is unfit, since the animal and the young were ill-used together? — What is evidently meant is that it was watched by Israelites from the time it was first formed. Still, is there not the suspicion of the mother having been ill-used previously, for we have learnt: As to all those which are forbidden to be offered on the altar — their young<sup>12</sup> are permitted.<sup>13</sup> And thereon it was learnt that R. Eliezer forbade. Now, this is all right according to [the exposition of] Raba, for Raba said in the name of R. Nahman: The dispute only applies to a case of an animal being ill-used when already dedicated as a sacrifice; but if when still in an ordinary state, all agree that [the young] is permitted. But how will you explain it according to R. Huna b. Hinena who said in the name of R. Nahman that the dispute applies only to a case of an animal being ill-used while still undedicated, but if when already dedicated all agree that [the young] is forbidden?<sup>14</sup> — Then we must say that the mother, too, was watched by Israelites since the time it was first formed. And why not raise the suspicion of the mother's mother having been ill-used? — We should not let suspicion go so far as all that.

The Master said: 'It was watched by Israelites from the time it was first formed.'

How did they know it?<sup>15</sup> — Said R. Kahana: A red cup is being passed before [the mother] when the male is mating with her.<sup>16</sup> If that is so, why should [a red heifer] be so costly? — Because even two hairs [of another color] render her unfit. Then why [use this means] on their [animals]?<sup>17</sup> — Said R. Kahana: Only with specified breeds [is it effective].

R. Ammi and R. Isaac Nappaha were sitting in the tent of R. Isaac Nappaha when one of them began to cite: Thus R. Eliezer forbade [cattle bought of a heathen] for all sacrifices. Thereupon the other stated that, in refutation of R. Eliezer's opinion, there was cited by his colleagues [the verse], All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered together unto Thee ... they shall come up with acceptance on my altar;<sup>18</sup> to which R. Eliezer replied: All these will become self-made proselytes in the time to come.<sup>19</sup> Said R. Joseph: What is the scriptural authority for this? For then will I turn to the peoples a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord.<sup>20</sup> Abaye asked: perhaps this merely means that they will turn away from idolatry?<sup>21</sup> And R. Joseph answered him: The verse continues, and to serve Him with one consent.<sup>22</sup> This is how R. Papa reported it; but R. Zebid reported thus: Both [R. Ammi and R. Isaac Nappaha] said: Thus, R. Eliezer forbade [cattle bought of a heathen] for all sacrifices, and both of them said: What was cited as a refutation to R. Eliezer by his colleagues is, All the flocks of Kedar shall be gathered, etc., and R. Eliezer said: They will all become self-made proselytes in the time to come, [and it was he who cited] the scriptural authority, For then will I turn to the peoples a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord [and when] R. Joseph objected: Does this not say merely that they will turn away from idolatry? [it was] Abaye [who] answered him that the verse continues, to serve Him with one consent.

An objection was raised: And Moses said: Thou must also give into our hand sacrifices

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

and burnt-offerings.<sup>23</sup> It was different before the giving of the Torah. Then come and hear [this]: And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took a burnt-offering and sacrifices for God.<sup>24</sup> In the case of Jethro, too, it was before the giving of the Torah. This is very well according to the one who says that Jethro's [visit to Moses] preceded the giving of the Torah,<sup>25</sup> but how will you explain it according to the one who says

1. Thus R. Eliezer himself assumes that the onyx stone of a heathen was considered fit for the purpose enacted in the scriptural passage which opens with the very words quoted above, Speak unto the Children of Israel that they take for me an offering. (Ex. XXV, 2 and 7.)
2. [Without the *waw copulativum* which is prefixed to the other enumerated offerings.]
3. So that the words, ... the Children of Israel shall take, do not apply to them.
4. [R. Han. deletes 'to be set', and the reference is to Ex. XXXV, 9; v. Tosaf. s.v. [H].]
5. V. Kid. 31a.
6. With a view to purchasing it for the ritual purpose.
7. Thus a red heifer bought of a heathen was considered fit for the ritual purpose!
8. So that when acquired for the ritual purpose it was the property of an Israelite.
9. According to Shila, who gives as the reason for R. Eliezer's prohibition of a heathen's heifer the wording, the Children of Israel shall bring.
10. Tosef. Par. I. R. Eliezer thus implies that were it not watched, it would not have been fit on account of suspected ill-use.
11. For use as a sacrifice if her mother bore her whilst goring a person fatally.
12. Which are born subsequently.
13. *Infra* 46b.
14. [And thus the suspicion of the mother having been ill-used previously should have disqualified the heifer.]
15. That the cow would give birth to a potential 'red heifer'.
16. Which has the effect of producing a red calf.
17. Of the family of Dama b. Nethina.
18. Isa. LX, 7.
19. The Messianic era, v. *supra* p. 8, n. 8.
20. Zeph. III, 9.
21. [But not from immoral practice.]
22. *Ibid.*

23. Ex. X, 25; so that Pharaoh's cattle were considered fit for sacrifices. This refutes R. Eliezer.
24. *Ibid.* XVIII, 12.
25. V. Zeb. 116a.

## 'Abodah Zarah 24b

that Jethro's [call] was after the giving of the Torah? — In that case [it must be assumed that] Jethro bought it from an Israelite.

Come and hear: And Saul said, They have brought them from the Amalekites; for the people spared the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God!<sup>1</sup> — What is meant by the best is the price of the best.<sup>2</sup> Then why bring the best? — So that they find eager buyers.

Come and hear: And Araunah said unto David, Let my lord the King take and offer up what seemeth good unto him: behold the oxen for the burnt offering and morigim [the threshing instruments] and the furniture of the oxen for the wood.<sup>3</sup> — Said R. Nahman: Araunah was a resident alien.<sup>4</sup> What are morigim? — Said 'Ulla: It is a 'turbil bed'.<sup>5</sup> And what is a 'turbil bed'? — A 'goat with hooks' wherewith one threshes.<sup>6</sup> Said R. Joseph: What is the scriptural [evidence]? — Behold I will make thee a new sharp threshing instrument [Heb. morag] having teeth; thou shalt thresh the mountains, and beat them small, and shalt make the hills as chaff.<sup>7</sup> A [further] objection was raised: And the kine they offered as burnt offering unto the Lord!<sup>8</sup> — This was a special ruling for that occasion.<sup>9</sup> Common sense, indeed, proves it; for had not that been the case, how could a female be used as a burnt offering?<sup>10</sup> What difficulty does this present? We could say that it referred to a private 'high place',<sup>11</sup> in accordance with the opinion of R. Adda b. Ahaba; for R. Adda b. Ahaba said: Whence can it be deduced that a female is fit as a burnt offering on a private high-place? From what is said in Scripture, And Samuel took one sucking lamb and offered it for a burnt

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

offering.<sup>12</sup> [But is not] the wording, and offered him, that is to say a male! — Said R. Nahman b. Isaac: It is written, and offered her.<sup>13</sup>

R. Johanan said:<sup>14</sup> There are limits.<sup>15</sup> Under the age of three years [an animal] becomes mutilated,<sup>16</sup> but from the age of three years it does not become mutilated. When all the above verses were cited to him in refutation, he replied that they referred to animals under the age of three years. Come then and hear: And the kine they offered as a burnt offering unto the Lord!<sup>17</sup> — This, too, refers to those under the age of three years. To this R. Huna the son of R. Nathan strongly objected. In that case the words, and their calves they shut up at home,<sup>18</sup> [refer to those of kine] under three years; but does a cow under three years bear at all? Have we not learnt: In the case of a cow or of an ass which is three years old [the one born] certainly belongs to the priest; from that age upward this is doubtful?<sup>19</sup> — The answers given previously are therefore best.

And the kine took the straight way [wa-yishsharnah] by the way to Beth-Shemesh, etc.<sup>20</sup> What is the meaning of the word 'wa-yishsharnah'? — Said R. Johanan in the name of R. Meir: They rendered song. R. Zutra b. Tobiah said in the name of Rab: They directed their faces towards the Ark and rendered song.<sup>21</sup> And what did they sing? — It was stated in the name of R. Johanan on behalf of R. Meir: [The song beginning with] Then sang Moses and the Children of Israel.<sup>22</sup> R. Johanan, however, gave it as his own opinion that they sang: And in that day shall ye say, Give thanks unto the Lord, call upon His name, make known His doings among the peoples, etc.<sup>23</sup> R. Simeon b. Lakish said: [They sang] the 'Orphaned' Psalm: A Psalm. O sing unto the Lord a new song, for He hath done marvelous things; His right hand, and His holy arm, hath wrought salvation for Him.<sup>24</sup> R. Eliezer said: The Lord reigneth, let the

peoples tremble.<sup>25</sup> R. Samuel b. Nahmani said: The Lord reigneth; He is appareled with majesty.<sup>26</sup> R. Isaac Nappaha said: [They sang:]

Sing, O sing, acacia tree,<sup>27</sup>  
Ascend in all thy gracefulness.  
With golden weave they cover thee,  
The sanctuary-palace hears thy eulogy,  
With diverse jewels art thou adorned.

R. Ashi connected this [song cited] by R. Isaac with the following: [Scripture says,] And it came to pass, when the Ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, O Lord, etc.<sup>28</sup> What did the Israelites say? — Said R. Isaac:

'Sing, O sing, acacia tree, etc.'

Said Rab:<sup>29</sup> What analogy is there for the Persians calling a book 'Debir'?<sup>30</sup> — This: Now the name of Debir before time was Kiriyath-sepher.<sup>31</sup> R. Ashi said: What analogy is there for the Persians calling a menstrual woman 'Dashtana'? This: For the manner of woman is upon me.<sup>32</sup>

1. I Sam. XV, 15.
2. The proceeds of the cattle, which were sold, were intended to be used as offerings.
3. II Sam. XXIV, 22.
4. [H] is a gentile who undertakes to observe the seven Noachide precepts, which include that of morality, v. *supra* p. 5, n. 7.
5. [G], a threshing sledge consisting of a wooden platform studded with sharp pieces of flint or with iron teeth (Jast.).
6. [H]. The phrase is obscure. Krauss, Talm. Arch. II, 57b, suggests tentatively, 'Circassian goats' with reference to the front teeth of the sledge shaped like goats' horns. The rendering adopted is Jastrow's.]
7. Isa. XLI, 15.
8. I Sam. VI, 14, so that the cattle of the Philistine were considered fit for sacrifice.
9. [In celebration of the miracle performed through the cattle (Rashi).]
10. If his sacrifice be a burnt offering of the herd, he shall offer a male. Lev. I, 3.

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

11. A high place (bamah) used either by individuals or communities for offering sacrifices when the tabernacle was not in existence, as at the time in question, when the tabernacle at Shiloh had been destroyed.
12. I Sam. VII, 9.
13. In the Heb. text the word in question is written (Kethib) [H], which refers to a female, while it is to be read (Kere) [H], referring to a male.
14. In reconciliation of our Mishnah and the Baraitha on p. 113.
15. To the permission of using cattle of heathens for sacrificial purposes.
16. By immoral use; it may therefore be assumed that its owner did not ill-use it.
17. I Sam. VI, 14.
18. Ibid. 10.
19. Bek. 19b. Dealing with the young born of an animal bought of a heathen, so that it cannot be ascertained whether the young is a first born one which — either itself or its value — belongs to the priest (v. Num. XVIII, 15), the Mishnah states that if the mother is not more than three years old, the one born is to be taken as a first born; it is thus assumed that a cow does not bear under the age of three years.
20. I Sam. VI, 12.
21. [H] is connected with [H] song.
22. Ex. XV, 1. The song of triumph and thanksgiving at the Red Sea was also rendered as the Ark was being returned from the land of the Philistines, on the downfall of Dagon their idol.
23. Isa. XII, 4.
24. Ps. XCIVIII, called 'orphaned' because, apart from the absence of its author's name, its heading 'A Psalm' has no designation, such as is given to other anonymous psalms, e.g., A Psalm, a Song for the Sabbath Day, XCII A Psalm of Thanksgiving, C.
25. Ibid. XCIX.
26. Ibid. XCIII.
27. And they shall make an ark of acacia wood Ex. XXV, 10).
28. Num. X, 35.
29. Yalkut, Gen. has 'R. Safra.'
30. [H] is the Heb. of 'sanctuary' in the above song, and this provides the connecting link of the statements that follow.
31. Judg. I, 11. Kiriath-Sepher, lit. means, 'the City of the Book'.
32. Gen. XXXI, 35. The Heb. words used [H] bear a similarity to [H].

## 'Abodah Zarah 25a

[The same Rabbis also discuss the following:] And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed until the nation had avenged themselves of their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jashar. What is the book of Jashar? — Said R. Hiyya b. Abba in the name of R. Johanan: It is the book of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,<sup>1</sup> who are designated as righteous,<sup>2</sup> as it is said, Let me die the death of the righteous:<sup>3</sup> And where is this incident hinted at [in Genesis]? — And his seed shall fill the nations:<sup>4</sup> When shall [Ephraim's fame] reach the nations? When the sun shall stand still for Joshua. And the sun stayed in the midst of the heaven and hasted not to go down about a whole day.<sup>5</sup> How long [is daytime said to have lasted]? — Said R. Joshua b. Levi: Twenty four hours: [The sun] moved for six hours and stood still for six, then it moved for six and stood still for six, then it moved for six and stood still for six; the whole incident equaled a whole day.

R. Eleazar said: Thirty-six hours; it moved for six hours and stood still for twelve, it then moved for six and stood still for twelve so that the halt alone equaled a whole day. R. Samuel b. Nahmani said: Forty-eight; it moved for six and stood for twelve, it then moved for six and stood still for twenty-four, for Scripture says, and hasted not to go down about a whole day, which implies that the previous halt did not equal a whole day. Some report that it is the additional hours of daytime which are disputed. R. Joshua b. Levi said: They were twenty-four; it moved for six and stood for twelve, then moved for six and stood for twelve — its halt thus equaled a whole day; while R. Eleazar said: Thirty-six; it moved for six and stood for twelve, then moved for six and stood for twenty-four [which is meant by] and hasted not to go down about a whole day. R. Samuel b. Nahmani said: Forty-eight; it moved for six and stood for twenty-four, then moved for six and again stood for twenty-four; the

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

standing still [at noon] equaled that of setting time; as the one at setting time equaled a whole day, so the standing still [in the midst of the heaven] equaled a whole day.

A Tanna taught:<sup>6</sup> Just as the sun stood still for Joshua, so did the sun stand still for Moses and for Nakdimon b. Gorion. [As to the case of] Joshua, there are the scriptural verses; [that of] Nakdimon b. Gorion is a tradition;<sup>7</sup> whence do we know about Moses?

— It may be derived from the identical [expression] I will begin [used in the two cases]. Here is written, I will begin to put the dread of thee,<sup>8</sup> and there, referring to Joshua, it is written, I will begin to magnify thee.<sup>9</sup> R. Johanan<sup>10</sup> said: It may be derived from the use of the identical word teth<sup>11</sup> ['put'] [in both cases]. Here is written, I will begin to put the dread of thee,<sup>12</sup> and there, concerning Joshua, it is written, In the day when the Lord put the Amorites.<sup>13</sup> R. Samuel b. Nahmani said: You can detect it in the very wording of the verse itself, [The peoples that are under the whole heaven] who shall hear the report of thee, and shall tremble and be in anguish because of thee.<sup>14</sup> When did they tremble and were in anguish because of Moses? When the sun stood still for him.

The question was asked: [Does not Scripture say in the case of Joshua] And there was no day like that before it or after it?<sup>15</sup> [The answer given was,] You may explain this [to mean that] there was none that lasted as long as that one; or, if you wish, you may say it means that there were no hailstones [as in the case of Joshua], of which it is written, And it came to pass, as they fled from before Israel, while they were in the going down of Beth-Horon, that the Lord cast down great stones from heaven upon them unto Azeka and they died.<sup>16</sup>

And he bade them teach the Children of Judah [to handle] the bow, behold it is written in the Book of Jashar.<sup>17</sup> Which is the Book of Jashar? — Said R. Hiyya b. Abba in

the name of R. Johanan: It is the book of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who are designated as righteous and of whom Scripture says, Let me die the death of the righteous and let my last end be like his.<sup>18</sup> And where is this fact referred to?<sup>19</sup> — Judah, thee shall thy brethren praise; thy hand shall be on the neck of thine enemies;<sup>20</sup> what kind of fighting requires the aiming of the hand at the [enemy's neck]? Surely, archery. R. Eleazar said: It is the book of Deuteronomy, which is here called the Book of Jashar, because it contains the words And thou shalt do that which is Jashar ['right'] in the sight of the Lord.<sup>21</sup> And where does it refer [to Judah's archery]? — With his hands he contended for himself.<sup>22</sup> What kind of fighting requires both hands? Surely, archery. R. Samuel b. Nahmani said: It is the Book of Judges, which is here called the Book of Jashar, because it contains the verse, In those days there was no King in Israel; every man did that which was Jashar ['right'] in his own eyes.<sup>23</sup> And where is [Judah's skill in archery] referred to in it? That the generations of the Children of Israel might know, to teach them war;<sup>24</sup> now what kind of warfare requires teaching? Surely, archery. But how do we know that this verse refers to Judah? — From the scriptural verse, Who shall go up for us first against the Canaanites, to fight against them? And the Lord said, Judah shall go up.<sup>25</sup>

[These same Rabbis also discussed the following:] And the cook took up the thigh, and that which was upon it and set it before Saul.<sup>26</sup> — What means, 'that which was upon it'? — R. Johanan [explained it to mean] 'the thigh and the tail': and what does that which was upon it mean? The thigh which is adjoined by the tail; while R. Eleazar said that the thigh and the breast [are here meant]: and what does 'that which was upon it' mean? The placing of the breast upon the thigh when these have to be formally waved.<sup>27</sup> R. Samuel b. Nahmani, however, applied it to the leg and the cap; and what

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

does 'that which was upon it' mean? The cap which is above the leg.

**A WOMAN SHOULD NOT BE ALONE WITH IDOLATERS.** To what circumstances [does this rule apply]? If to one idolater, then even in the case of an Israelite it would not be permitted? Have we not learnt, 'One man should not remain alone even with two women'?

1. I.e., the Book of Genesis.
2. Josh. X, 13. rah, righteous.
3. Num. XXIII, 10, which is taken to refer to the peaceful ending of the Patriarchs.
4. Gen. XLVIII, 19, spoken of Ephraim to whose tribe Joshua belonged.
5. Josh. ibid. The wording implies a double halt by the sun: (a) in the midst of the heaven, i.e., at noon; (b) hasted not to go down, i.e., towards evening.
6. V. Ta'an. 20a.
7. V. Ibid.
8. Deut. II, 25, referring to Moses.
9. Josh. III, 7.
10. In Ta'an. R. Samuel b. Nahmani is given.
11. [H].
12. Deut. ibid.
13. Josh. X, 12.
14. Deut. ibid.
15. Josh. X, 14.
16. Ibid. 11.
17. II Sam. I, 18.
18. V. p. 124, n. 8.
19. In Genesis, that the descendants of Judah were skilled in handling the bow.
20. Gen. XLIX, 8.
21. Deut. VI, 18.
22. Ibid. XXXIII, 7, in the words spoken by Moses of Judah.
23. Judg. XVII, 6.
24. Ibid. III, 2.
25. Ibid. I, 1-2.
26. 1 Sam. IX, 24.
27. V. Zeb. 119b.

## ‘Abodah Zarah 25b

It must therefore refer to three idolaters being present [which would be permissible in the case of Israelites].<sup>1</sup> But would even this be permitted in the case of Israelites of loose manners? Have we not learnt: 'But one woman may be alone with two men', whereon

Rab Judah commented: This only refers to well-mannered men, but as to loose-mannered ones, it is not permitted, even if they be ten; there is indeed the incident of ten men having carried an adulterous woman on a bier [for an immoral purpose]! — Our Mishnah refers to a case where the man's wife is present, and implies [that in the case of] an idolater his wife is no safeguard,<sup>2</sup> though in the case of an Israelite his wife is a safeguard. But is there not, in any case, the fear of her being murdered? — Said R. Jeremiah: We are here dealing with a woman of high repute, so that he would be afraid of killing her.<sup>3</sup> R. Idi replied: Every woman has her weapons on her.<sup>4</sup> Wherein do these two differ? — In the case of a woman who has a high repute among men but not among women.<sup>5</sup> [The following Baraitha] has been taught in agreement with the opinion of R. Idi b. Abin: A woman, even though she can always look after her safety, should not be alone with heathen, because they are suspected of lewdness.

**NO MAN SHOULD BE ALONE WITH THEM.** Our Rabbis taught: If a Jew happens to be overtaken by an idolater while on the road, he should let him walk on his right.<sup>6</sup> R. Ishmael the son of R. Johanan the son of R. Johanan b. Berokah says: [If the heathen is armed] with a sword, he should be let to walk on the right; if with a stick on the left.<sup>7</sup> If they are ascending or descending, let not the Israelite be on the lower level and the heathen on the higher, but the Israelite higher and the heathen lower; nor should the Israelite bend down in front of him, lest he smashes his skull. If the heathen asks him whither he is going, he should say towards a place beyond his actual destination,<sup>8</sup> just as our father Jacob acted towards the wicked Esau; for Scripture says, Until I come unto my lord to Seir,<sup>9</sup> while it records, And Jacob journeyed to Succoth.<sup>10</sup> It once happened to some disciples of R. Akiba that while journeying to Chezib<sup>11</sup> they were overtaken by robbers who asked them whither they

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

were going. They replied, 'To Acco'.<sup>12</sup> On reaching Chezib they stopped.<sup>13</sup> The robbers then said to them, 'Whose disciples are you?' And they replied, 'The disciples of R. Akiba.' Said they, Happy are R. Akiba and his disciples, for no evil man has ever encountered them.

R. Manashi was once going

1. V. Kid. 80b.
2. As she is not particular about her husband's conduct. V. Meg. 12a.
3. One who has influence in government circles, so that murder need not be feared, but the fear of committing immorality, with her consent, still exists.
4. 'Her physical weakness is her protection against murder. (Jast.)
5. One who has influence in high places but who is repulsive in appearance. According to R. Jeremiah both the risks of murder and of adultery are here eliminated; while according to R. Idi, who evidently does not take the woman's unattractiveness into consideration, the prohibition still holds good.
6. Having his right hand close to the heathen, he will find it easier to ward off an attack by his companion.
7. A sword being worn on one's left and a stick on one's right, the Israelite should see that he walks on the side of the weapon, so that it could quickly be got hold of by him in case of a contemplated attack.
8. The heathen may then defer the carrying out of his contemplated attack till the end of the journey, and the Israelite will reach his destination safely.
9. Gen. XXXIII, 14.
10. Ibid. 17, Succoth being before Seir.
11. [The Biblical Achzib' (Judg. I, 31) nine miles N. of Acco (Acre)]
12. [Which was beyond Chezib on their line of journey.]
13. Lit., 'they desisted'.

## 'Abodah Zarah 26a

to Be-Toratha<sup>1</sup> when thieves met him and asked him whither he was going. He said, 'Toward Pumbeditha,' but when he reached Be-Toratha he stopped. Whereupon they exclaimed, 'You are a disciple of Judah the deceiver.'<sup>2</sup> Said he to them, 'Do you indeed

know him [as such]? May it be the [Divine] will that these men be under his ban.' For twenty-two years they went on stealing but did not meet with any success. When they saw this, they all came to ask for the ban to be revoked. Now there was among them one weaver who did not come to have his ban annulled, and he was devoured by a lion. Hence the popular saying: A year's scanty earnings will alter [improve] a weaver if he be not a proud fool.<sup>3</sup>

Come now and see what difference there is between mere thieves of Babylon and robbers of Palestine!<sup>4</sup>

**MISHNAH.** AN ISRAELITE WOMAN SHOULD NOT ACT AS MIDWIFE TO A HEATHEN WOMAN, BECAUSE SHE WOULD BE DELIVERING A CHILD FOR IDOLATRY. A HEATHEN WOMAN, HOWEVER, MAY ACT AS MIDWIFE TO AN ISRAELITE WOMAN. AN ISRAELITE WOMAN SHOULD NOT SUCKLE THE CHILD OF A HEATHEN, BUT A HEATHEN WOMAN MAY SUCKLE THE CHILD OF AN ISRAELITE WOMAN IN HER PREMISES.

**GEMARA.** Our Rabbis taught: An Israelite woman should not act as midwife to heathen, because she delivers a child to idolatry; nor may a heathen woman [be allowed to] act as midwife to an Israelite woman because heathens are suspected of murder. This is the opinion of R. Meir. The Sages, however, say: A heathen may act as midwife to an Israelite woman so long as there are others standing by, but not if she is acting on her own.<sup>5</sup> But R. Meir holds: Not even if others are standing by her, for she may find an opportunity of pressing her hand on the [infant's] temples and kill it without being observed; witness the incident of that woman who, on being called by a neighbor 'Jewish midwife, the daughter of a Jewish midwife!' retorted, 'May as many evils befall that woman, as I have dropped [Jewish children] like lumps of wood into the river.' Our

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

Rabbis, however, say: No; she may have merely given her some kind of retort.

**AN ISRAELITE WOMAN SHOULD NOT SUCKLE**, etc. Our Rabbis taught: An Israelite woman should not suckle a child of a heathen, because she rears a child for idolatry; nor should a heathen woman [be allowed to] suckle a child of an Israelite woman, because she is liable to murder it. This is the opinion of R. Meir. But the Sages say: A heathen may suckle a child of an Israelite woman, so long as there are others standing by her, but not if she is on her own. R. Meir, however, says: Not even while others are standing by her, for she may take the opportunity of rubbing in poison on her breast beforehand and so kill the child. And both the above instances are necessary; for if we were told about a midwife only [we might have thought that] only in that case do the Sages permit, since, being observed by others, she could do no harm, but in the case of suckling, where it is possible for her to apply poison to the breast beforehand and so kill the child, they might agree with R. Meir. If [on the other hand] we were told only about suckling, [we might have thought that] only in that case does R. Meir forbid, because she could kill the child by applying poison to her breast beforehand, but in the case of a midwife, where she could do no harm while others are standing by her, he might agree with the Rabbis; [hence both are] necessary.

The following was cited in contradiction: A Jewish woman may act as midwife to a heathen woman for payments but not gratuitously! — Answered R. Joseph: Payment is permitted to prevent ill feeling.<sup>6</sup> R. Joseph had a mind to say that even on the Sabbath it is permitted to act as midwife to a heathen for payment, so as to avoid ill feeling;<sup>7</sup> he was, however, told by Abaye that the Jewish woman could offer the excuse, 'Only for our own, who keep the Sabbath, may we waive it, but we must not waive the Sabbath for you who do not keep it.' R.

Joseph also had a mind to say that even suckling for payment should be allowed because of ill-feeling; but Abaye said to him: She can excuse herself by saying, 'I want to get married,' if she is unmarried; or, if she be married, 'I will not degrade myself before my husband.' R. Joseph further had in mind to say, in regard to what has been taught that in the case of idolaters and shepherds of small cattle one is not obliged to bring them up [from a pit] though one must not cast them in it<sup>8</sup> — that for payment one is obliged to bring them up on account of ill feeling. Abaye, however, said to him: He could offer such excuses as, 'I have to run to my boy who is standing on the roof', or, 'I have to keep an appointment at the court.'

R. Abbahu recited to R. Johanan: 'Idolaters and [Jewish] shepherds of small cattle need not be brought up

1. A place in Babylon unidentified.
2. Rab Judah was indeed R. Manashi's teacher.
3. V. Jast. s.v. izhh.
4. The Palestinian robbers complimented R. Akiba on having outwitted them, while the Babylonian thieves slandered Rab Judah for the same reason.
5. V. Tosef. A.Z. III.
6. As the Jewish midwife could not then offer any feasible excuse for her refusal.
7. It being known to the heathen that the Sabbath is waived in the case of a Jewish woman.
8. V. *supra* [13b](#) and [San. 57a](#).

## ‘Abodah Zarah 26b

though they must not be cast in, but *minim*,<sup>1</sup> informers, and apostates may be cast in, and need not be brought up.' Whereupon R. Johanan remarked: I have been learning that the words, And so shalt thou do with every lost thing of thy brother's [thou mayest not hide thyself],<sup>2</sup> are also applicable to an apostate, and you say he may be thrown down; leave out apostates! Could he not have answered that the one might apply to the kind of apostate who eats carrion meat to

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

satisfy his appetite,<sup>3</sup> and the other to an apostate who eats carrion meat to provoke? — In his opinion, an apostate eating carrion meat to provoke is the same as a min.<sup>4</sup>

It has been stated: [In regard to the term] apostate there is a divergence of opinion between R. Aha and Rabina; one says that [he who eats forbidden food] to satisfy his appetite, is an apostate, but [he who does it] to provoke is a 'min'; while the other says that even [one who does it] to provoke is merely an apostate. — And who is a 'min'? — One who actually worships idols.<sup>5</sup>

An objection was raised: If one eats a flea or a gnat he is an apostate. Now such a thing could only be done to provoke, and yet we are taught that he is merely an apostate! — Even in that case he may just be trying to see what a forbidden thing tastes like.

The Master said: 'They may be cast in and need not be brought up' — if they may be cast in need it be said that they need not be brought up? — Said R. Joseph b. Hama in the name of R. Shesheth: What is meant to convey is that if there was a step in the pit-wall, one may scrape it away, giving as a reason for doing so, the prevention of cattle being lured by the step to get unto the pit. Raba and R. Joseph both of them said: It means to convey that if there is a stone lying by the pit opening, one may cover the pit with it, saying that he does it for [the safety] of passing animals. Rabina said: It is meant to convey that if there is a ladder there, he may remove it, saying, I want it for getting my son down from a roof.

Our Rabbis taught: An Israelite may perform a circumcision on a heathen for the purpose of becoming a proselyte — thus excluding [the purpose of] removing a morana.<sup>6</sup> But a heathen should not [be allowed to] perform circumcision on an Israelite, because he is liable to take his life. This is the opinion of R. Meir. The Sages

said: A heathen may circumcise an Israelite, so long as others are standing by him, but not while he is on his own.<sup>7</sup> R. Meir, however, said: Not even when others are standing by, for he may find occasion to let the knife slip and so sterilize him. Does then R. Meir hold the opinion that a heathen is not [to be allowed to circumcise]? But the opposite is proved by the following: In a town where there is no Jewish physician, but there is a physician who is a Cuthean as well as one who is an idolater, circumcision should be performed by the idolater but not by the Cuthean.<sup>8</sup> This is the opinion of R. Meir. R. Judah, however, said: It should be performed by the Cuthean but not by the idolater?<sup>9</sup> — Reverse [the names]: R. Meir holding that the Cuthean and not the idolater should circumcise, and R. Judah holding the idolater and not the Cuthean. Does then R. Judah hold that it is in order for an idolater to do so? Surely it has been taught: R. Judah said: Whence can it be deduced that circumcision performed by a heathen is invalid? From this verse, And as for thee, thou shalt keep my covenant!<sup>10</sup> — Indeed, do not reverse, but say that we are here dealing

1. Those who act as priests to idols whether they be Israelites or heathen (Rashi).
2. Deut. XXII, 3.
3. When he can get no other meat; but who would avoid eating forbidden food when other food is at hand.
4. And does not require specification.
5. Hor. 11a.
6. A parasite worm (?) which may be lodged in the foreskin; which would mean healing without payment.
7. Tosef. 'A.Z. Ch.III.
8. An idolater does not usually practice circumcision. He would therefore perform it in accordance with the intention of the father of the infant. The Cutheans (Samaritans) however, observe circumcision in the name of some object of worship placed on Mount Gerizim where their Temple stood — for which an Israelite must not afford an opportunity.
9. The heathen being suspected of taking the child's life. (Men. 42a.) Thus R. Meir is said to permit circumcision by a heathen!

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

10. Gen. XVII, 9, spoken by God to Abraham when the rite of circumcision was first enacted, which implies that only one bound to keep the rite is qualified to perform it. R. Judah thus rules that a heathen is not qualified.

## 'Abodah Zarah 27a

with an expert physician.<sup>1</sup> For when R. Dimi came<sup>2</sup> he said in the name of R. Johanan that if [a heathen physician] is recognized as an expert by multitudes, it is permissible [for an Israelite child to be circumcised by him]. Does then R. Judah hold that it is in order for a Cuthean [to circumcise an Israelite]? Surely it has been taught: An Israelite may perform circumcision on a Cuthean, but a Cuthean should not [be allowed to] circumcise an Israelite, because he performs the circumcision in the name of Mount Gerizim,<sup>3</sup> this is the opinion of R. Judah. Said R. Jose to him: Where is it at all to be found in the Torah that circumcision must be performed specifically for its purpose? But he may go on performing it<sup>4</sup> even though he expires in the act!<sup>5</sup> — We must then indeed reverse names as we did before,<sup>6</sup> and as to the opinion cited in the name of R. Judah which contradicts the opinion held here by R. Judah — the former opinion should be ascribed to R. Judah the Prince.<sup>7</sup> For it has been taught: R. Judah the Prince says: Whence can it be deduced that circumcision performed by a heathen is invalid? From the words of Scripture, And as for thee, thou shalt keep my covenant.<sup>8</sup> Said R. Hisda: What reason could R. Judah give?<sup>9</sup> — The scriptural words, Unto the Lord he shall circumcise.<sup>10</sup> And [what scriptural authority has] R. Jose? — [The words are,] must needs be circumcised.<sup>11</sup> But as to the other [R. Jose], is not the phrase unto the Lord he shall circumcise? — The words Unto the Lord refer to the Passover sacrifice.<sup>12</sup> And as to the other [R. Judah] is it not written, must needs be circumcised? — The Torah speaks in the language of men.<sup>13</sup>

It has been stated: Whence could it be deduced that circumcision performed by a heathen is invalid? — Daru b. Papa said in the name of Rab: [From the words,] And as for thee, thou shalt keep my covenant;<sup>14</sup> while R. Johanan [deduces it from the words] Himmol yimmol.<sup>15</sup> What practical difference is there between these two? — The case of a circumcised Arab or a circumcised Gibeonite:<sup>16</sup> According to the one who relies on 'He who is circumcised shall circumcise' [the qualification] is there, but according to the one who relies on Thou shalt keep my covenant, it is not there.<sup>17</sup> But is such a one qualified according to him who relies on He who is circumcised shall circumcise! Have we not learnt: [He who says], I vow not to enjoy anything belonging to uncircumcised persons, may enjoy anything of uncircumcised Israelites, but must not enjoy anything of circumcised heathen.<sup>18</sup> Which proves that heathens who undergo circumcision are still designated as uncircumcised!<sup>19</sup> We must therefore say that they differ in the case of an Israelite whose brothers died in consequence of circumcision, so that he was not circumcised: according to the one who relies on Thou shalt keep my covenant the qualification is there;<sup>20</sup> while according to the one who relies on He who is circumcised shall circumcise, it is not there. And is such a one not qualified according to the one who relies on He who is circumcised shall circumcise? Have we not learnt: [He who says,] I vow not to enjoy anything belonging to circumcised persons, must not enjoy of uncircumcised Israelites, but may enjoy of circumcised heathens;<sup>21</sup> which proves that Israelites who are not circumcised are designated as 'circumcised'! — We must therefore say that the case wherein they differ is that of a woman. According to the one who relies on Thou shalt keep my covenant, the qualification is not there, since a woman is not subject to the observance, while according to the one who relies on He who is circumcised shall circumcise, the qualification is there, for a

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

woman should be classed among the 'circumcised'. But does anyone hold that a woman is not [qualified to perform circumcision]. Does not scripture say, Then Zipporah took a flint?<sup>22</sup> — Read into it, she caused to be taken.<sup>23</sup> But it also says, And she cut off! — Read into it, and she caused it to be cut off, by asking another person, a man, to do it. Or you may say it means that she only began and Moses came and completed it.

**MISHNAH.** WE MAY ALLOW THEM TO HEAL US WHEN THE HEALING RELATES TO MONEY, BUT NOT PERSONAL HEALING;<sup>24</sup> NOR SHOULD WE HAVE OUR HAIR CUT BY THEM IN ANY PLACE.<sup>25</sup> THIS IS THE OPINION OF R. MEIR; BUT THE SAGES SAID, IN A PUBLIC PLACE IT IS PERMITTED, BUT NOT WHEN THE TWO PERSONS ARE ALONE.

**GEMARA.** What is HEALING RELATING TO MONEY and what is PERSONAL HEALING? Shall we say that HEALING RELATING TO MONEY means for payment and PERSONAL HEALING free? Then the Mishnah should have said: We may allow them to heal us for payment but not free! HEALING RELATING TO MONEY must therefore mean where no danger is involved<sup>26</sup> and PERSONAL HEALING where there is danger. But has not Rab Judah said: Even a scar over the puncture caused by bleeding should not be healed by them? — HEALING RELATING TO MONEY therefore relates to one's cattle, and PERSONAL HEALING to one's own body, about which Rab Judah said that even a scar over the puncture caused by bleeding should not be healed by them. Said R. Hisda in the name of Mar 'Ukba: But if [a heathen physician on being consulted] says to one that such and such medicine is good for him and such and such medicine is bad for him, it is permitted [to follow his advice]

1. Who, though a heathen, would not risk his reputation by miscarrying the operation.
2. From Palestine to Babylon.

3. Cf. p. 132, n. 4.
4. [Tosaf: 'in the name of Mount Gerizim'.]
5. Tosef. 'A.Z. III.
6. R. Judah holding that a Cuthean is not allowed.
7. The Redactor of the Mishnah, a younger contemporary of his namesake R. Judah (b. Ilai'i).
8. V. p. 133, n. 2,
9. R. Judah b. Ilai'i, who disqualifies a Cuthean because circumcision must be performed specifically for its purpose.
10. Ex. XII, 48: And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and will make the Passover sacrifice unto the Lord, he shall circumcise, etc. The claimed scriptural authority is thus obtained by the juxtaposition.
11. Gen. XVII, 13. The emphatic wording (indicated in Hebrew by the infinitive before the finite verb) is taken to imply that the stricture of purpose is not to be applied.
12. V. n. 3.
13. An oft quoted dictum. The words are therefore not to be taken to imply anything beyond ordinary emphasis.
14. V. 133, n. 2.
15. Gen. XVII, 13. [H] 'He must needs be circumcised' may be rendered, by a slight alteration in the first word, to read [H], He who is circumcised shall circumcise, excluding a heathen.
16. Instead of [H] in cur. edd. MS.M. and Yalk. Gen. 81, has [H] Gibeonite.
17. As the covenant was only concluded with the Israelites, [or those who join without reservation the congregation of Israel.]
18. V. Ned. 31b.
19. Hence an Arab or Gibeonite should not be considered qualified to practice circumcision.
20. As he is exempted from circumcision by law (V. Maim. Yad. Milah, II, 1. Tur. Y.D. 264, 1).
21. Ned. ibid.
22. Ex. IV, 25.
23. Heb. [H] and [H].
24. Explanation follows in the Gemara.
25. For the heathen is liable to cut his throat with the razor.
26. A case where a misdemeanor by the heathen physician may only result in prolonged illness or intensified pain.

## ‘Abodah Zarah 27b

for he will think that he is merely asking him, and just as he is asking him so he will also ask others, so that that man [by giving wrong advice] would have his reputation spoilt. Said

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

Raba in the name of R. Johanan [some say R. Hisda in the name of R. Johanan]: In the case where it is doubtful whether [the patient] will live or die, we must not allow them to heal; but if he will certainly die, we may allow them to heal. 'Die [etc.]!' Surely there is still the life of the hour [to be considered]?<sup>1</sup> The life of the hour is not to be considered. What authority have you for saying that the life of the hour is not to be considered? — The scriptural words, If we say: we will enter into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there.<sup>2</sup> Now there is the life of the hour [which they might forfeit]! This implies that the life of the hour is not to be considered. An objection was raised: 'No man should have any dealings<sup>3</sup> with Minim, nor is it allowed to be healed by them even [in risking] an hour's life. It once happened to Ben Dama the son of R. Ishmael's sister that he was bitten by a serpent and Jacob, a native of Kefar Sekaniah,<sup>4</sup> came to heal him but R. Ishmael did not let him; whereupon Ben Dama said, 'My brother R. Ishmael, let him, so that I may be healed by him: I will even cite a verse from the Torah that he is to be permitted'; but he did not manage to complete his saying, when his soul departed and he died.<sup>5</sup> Whereupon R. Ishmael exclaimed, Happy art thou Ben Dama for thou wert pure in body and thy soul likewise left thee in purity; nor hast thou transgressed the words of thy colleagues, who said, *He who breaketh through a fence, a serpent shall bite him?*<sup>6</sup> — It is different with the teaching of *Minim*, for it draws, and one [having dealings with them] may be drawn after them.

The Master said: 'Nor hast thou transgressed the words of thy colleagues who have said, *He who breaketh through a fence, a serpent shall bite him?*? But a serpent did indeed sting him! — The bite of the serpent [which is inflicted upon those transgressing the words] of the Rabbis is such as can never be cured.<sup>7</sup> Now, what is it that he might have said?<sup>8</sup> — '*He shall live by them,*<sup>9</sup> but not die by them.' And R. Ishmael? — This is only meant when in

private, but not in public; for it has been taught: R. Ishmael used to say: Whence can we deduce that if they say to one, 'Worship the idol and thou wilt not be killed,' that he may worship it so as not to be killed? because Scripture says, He shall live by them, but not die by them; you might take this to mean even in public, therefore Scripture says, And ye shall not profane my holy name.<sup>10</sup>

Said Rabba b. Bar Hanah in the name of R. Johanan: Any sore for which the Sabbath may be profaned should not be healed by a heathen.<sup>11</sup> Others report that Rabba b. Bar Hanah said: Any

1. The heathen may bring about the end prematurely, and so shorten his life even though by some hours.
2. II Kings VII, 4; where the four leprous men decide to hand themselves over to the besieging enemy saying, If they kill us, we shall but die.
3. Conversational intercourse [v. Tosaf. a.l.).
4. A disciple of Jesus, v. *supra* p. 85, n. 3.
5. [Ms.M. omits 'he died'.]
6. Eccl. X, 8, applied to those who break through 'legal fences' which serve to safeguard the Torah (V. Ab. I, 1). — Thus the above cited opinion of R. Johanan is contradicted by this incident which proves that in cases of extreme danger it is forbidden to be attended by a *Min!* [On this passage v. Herford, *op cit.* pp. 104 ff.]
7. [The fate in the hereafter that meets him who transgresses the words of the wise is *more grievous than the sting of a serpent on earth.*]
8. What scriptural verse might Ben Dama have cited in support of being healed by the *Min*?
9. Lev, XVIII, 5, *Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and mine ordinances, which if a man do he shall live by them.* 'The Rabbis take these words to mean that God's commandments are to be a means of life and not of destruction to His children. With the exception of three prohibitions — public idolatry, murder, or adultery — all commandments of the Law are therefore in abeyance whenever life is endangered'. Lev. edited by the Chief Rabbi (Dr. J. H. Hertz), p. 175.
10. Lev. XXII, 32 (Sanh. 74a).
11. It is to be regarded as serious enough to involve the risk of a misdemeanor by the heathen.

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

## 'Abodah Zarrah 28a

internal sore should not be healed by them. Wherein do these versions differ? — They differ in the case of a swelling of the hand or a swelling of the foot.<sup>1</sup> For R. Adda b. Mattena said<sup>2</sup> in the name of Rab: A swelling of the hand or a swelling of the foot is to be regarded as [serious as] an internal sore, and the Sabbath may be profaned for it. Said R. Zutra b. Tobiah in the name of Rab: Any sore which requires [medical] opinion<sup>3</sup> justifies the profanation of the Sabbath. R. Shaman b. Abba said in the name of R. Johanan: The inflammatory fever is to be regarded as an internal sore for which the Sabbath may be profaned. Which sore is to be termed internal? R. Ammi explained: [Such as are] on the lip and inward. R. Eleazar asked: How about the gums and the teeth: should they, being hard, be regarded as external; or do we say that, since they are placed within [the mouth], they are to be regarded as internal? — Said Abaye: Come and hear: One who is troubled with his teeth must not rinse them with vinegar [on the Sabbath].<sup>4</sup> [Which means that] if he is only 'troubled' he must not [rinse them] but if they hurt him very much it is proper [for him to do it]! — Probably this Tanna would call 'being troubled' even if they hurt very much. Then come and hear this:<sup>5</sup> R. Johanan was troubled with scurvy [on his gums] and he went to a certain [heathen] lady<sup>6</sup> who attended to him on the Thursday and the Friday. Said he: What about to morrow?<sup>7</sup> She replied: You will not need [the treatment]. But what if I do need it? he asked. She replied: Swear unto me that you will not reveal [the remedy]. Said he: I swear, to the God of Israel I will not reveal it. She then divulged it to him and on the morrow he referred to it in the course of lecturing. But did he not swear unto her? — He swore: 'To the God of Israel I will not reveal it,' [implying that] I may reveal it to His people Israel. But is this not a profanation of the Name?<sup>8</sup> He mentioned [that proviso] to her

originally. Now is it not evident then that [a sore on the gum] is regarded as an internal sore?<sup>9</sup> — Said R. Nahman b. Isaac: Scurvy is different, because though starting in the mouth it extends to the intestines. What is its symptom? — If he places anything between his teeth, blood comes from the gums. What brings it on? — The chill of cold wheat-food and the heat of hot barley-food, also the remnant of fish-hash and flour. What did she apply to it? — Said R. Aha the son of Raba: Leaven-water with olive oil and salt. Mar son of R. Ashi said: Geese-fat smeared with a goose-quill. Said Abaye: I did all this but was not cured, until a certain Arab told me to get seeds of an olive not one third ripe and burn them on a new spade and spread [the ashes] on the gums; which I did and was cured. But how came R. Johanan to act as he did: had not Rabba b. Bar Hanah said in the name of R. Johanan: Any sore for which the Sabbath may be profaned should not be healed by a heathen? — It is different with a distinguished man.<sup>10</sup> What about R. Abbahu, who too was a distinguished man,<sup>11</sup> yet Jacob the Min prepared for him a medicine for his leg, and were it not for R. Ammi and R. Asi who licked his leg,<sup>12</sup> he would have cut his leg off? — The one [who attended] R. Johanan was an expert physician. — So too was that of R. Abbahu, an expert physician! — It was different in the case of R. Abbahu, for Minim adopt the attitude of let me die with the Philistines.<sup>13</sup>

Said Samuel: An open wound is to be regarded as dangerous for which the Sabbath may be profaned. What is the remedy? — For stopping the bleeding, cress with vinegar; for bringing on [flesh], scraped root of cynodon and the paring of the bramble, or worms form a dunghill.

Said R. Safra: A berry-like excrescence<sup>14</sup> is a forerunner of the Angel of Death. What is the remedy for it? — Rue in honey, or parsley in strong wine. In the meantime a berry resembling it [in size] should be brought and

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

rolled over it: white [berry] for a white one, and black for a black one. Said Raba: An abscess is a forerunner of fever. What is the remedy for it? — It should be snapped sixty times with the thumb and then cut open crosswise; that is if it has not been brought to a white head, but if its head is white, it matters not.

## R. Jacob was suffering from

1. Which is serious enough to justify the waiving of the Sabbath, yet is not an internal sore.
2. Shab. 109a.
3. As to whether it is fatal or not.
4. Lest he be led to grind ingredients on the Sabbath (Shab. 111a).
5. Yoma 84a.
6. [The daughter of (a certain) Domitian. J. Shab. XIV. v. Preuss, *op. cit.*, p. 196, n. 3].
7. When his Sabbath lecture would prevent him from calling on her.
8. [H], the profanation of the Divine Name by doing anything that may discredit God or Israel was always regarded as a grievous sin, particularly if the misdeed is committed in dealing with a non-Jew. The positive form [H], sanctifying the Name is applied to every act which brings credit upon God and His People (v. p. 137, n. 6).
9. Since he was prepared to have it treated on the Sabbath.
10. Such as R. Johanan was; as the heathen would be afraid to commit any foul play.
11. V. Sanh. 14a and Keth. 17a, where he is spoken of as a familiar figure in the Emperor's court.
12. [To suck the poison out.]
13. Judg. XVI, 30, exclaimed by Samson, who readily jeopardized his own life in order to avenge himself on his enemies.
14. [H], the disease referred to is not clear, Preuss, *op. cit.*, pp. 304 ff.]

## ‘Abodah Zarah 28b

a slit in the rectum and R. Ammi — some say R. Assi — directed him to take seven grains of purple colored alkali, wrap them up in the collar of a shirt, tie it round with a white thread [of cattle-hair], dip it in white naphtha and burn it, and apply [the ashes] to the sore. While preparing this he was to take the

kernel of a bramble nut and apply its split side to the slit. That is if there is a slit externally; what [is one to do] if it is internal? One should take some fat of a goat that has not borne any young, melt it and apply it. Else one should take three melon leaves which have faded in the shade, burn them and apply the ashes. In the absence of these, let one apply snail-shells, or else take olive-oil mixed with wax and let him be covered with rag of linen in the summer and cotton wool in the winter.

R. Abbahu had pain in his ear and he was given some directions by R. Johanan — others say, by those in the House of Study. What were the directions? — Similar to those of Abaye<sup>1</sup> [who said]: My Mother told me that kidneys were only made to [heal] the ear. So also said Raba: Minyomi the physician told me that any kind of fluid is bad for the ear except the juice from kidneys. One should take the kidney of a 'bald-buck', cut it crosswise and place it on glowing coals, and pour the water which comes out of it into the ear, neither cold nor hot, but tepid. Else, one should take the fat of a large-size cockchafer, melt it and drip it [into the ear]. Or else, the ear should be filled with oil, then seven wicks should be made out of green blades of wheat-stalks at the one end of which dry garlic ends and some white thread should be set alight while the other end is placed within the ear, the ear should be exposed to the light but care should be taken that no spark falls on it, each wick [when done with] should be replaced by another. Another version is: One should prepare seven wicks of white thread<sup>2</sup> and dip them in oil of balsam-wood<sup>3</sup> setting light to the one end and placing the other end in the ear, each one, when done with, should be replaced by another, care being taken to avoid any sparks. Or let one take tow cotton which has been dyed but not combed and place it within the ear, which should be placed above a fire, taking precaution against sparks. Another remedy: Take a tube of an old cane [which has been detached from the

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

soil] for about a century and fill it with rock salt, then burn it and apply the ashes [to the sore part]. [Take as] thy mnemonic [to remember how to apply the foregoing,] in liquid form to a dry sore, and in dry form to a wet sore.

Said Raba b. Zutra in the name of R. Hanina: It is permissible to restore the ear into its proper position on the Sabbath. Whereon R. Samuel b. Judah commented: Only with the hand, but not by applying medicines. Some report: By applying medicine, but not with the hand, the reason being that it causes soreness.

Said R. Zutra b. Tobiah in the name of Rab: If one's eye gets out of order, it is permissible to paint it on the Sabbath. He was understood to be of opinion that this only holds good when the medical ingredients had been ground the previous day, but if it is necessary to grind them on the Sabbath and carry them through a public road, it would not be permitted; but one of the Rabbis, R. Jacob by name, remarked to him: It was made plain to me on behalf of Rab Judah that even grinding on the Sabbath and the carrying through the public street are permissible.

Rab Judah declared it as permissible to paint the eye on the Sabbath. Whereupon R. Samuel b. Judah said: He who acts according to Judah profanes the Sabbath. After some time when he himself had a sore eye he sent to ask of Rab Judah: Is it permitted or forbidden? He sent back [the following reply:] 'To everyone else it is permitted — but to you it is forbidden.<sup>4</sup> Was it on my own authority [that I permitted it?] It was on that of Mar Samuel'. It once happened to a maid-servant in Mar Samuel's house that her eye became inflamed on a Sabbath; she cried, but no one attended her<sup>5</sup> and her eye dropped. On the morrow Mar Samuel went forth and propounded that if one's eye gets out of order it is permissible to paint it on the Sabbath,

the reason being because the eyesight is connected with the mental faculties.<sup>6</sup>

What kind [of disorder]?<sup>7</sup> Said R. Judah: Such as discharge, pricking, congestion, watering, inflammation or the first stages of sickness, excluding the last stage of sickness or the brightening of the eyesight in which cases it is not permitted.

Said Rab Judah: The sting of a wasp, the prick of a thorn,<sup>8</sup> an abscess, a sore eye or an inflammation — for all these a bath-house is dangerous. Radishes are good for fever, and beets for cold shivers: the reverse is dangerous. Warm things [are good] for a scorpion [bite] and cold things for that by a wasp: the reverse is dangerous. Likewise warm things for a thorn prick and cold

1. Kid. 31b.
2. [So MS.M. (v. Jast.); according to current edd.: wax tapers.]
3. So according to MSS. and old editions which have [H] instead of [H] (wheat stalks) in current edd.
4. Since, in opposition to Rab Judah, he declared it as forbidden.
5. Thinking that it was not serious enough to warrant disregarding the Sabbath.
6. So Tosaf. a.l. s.v. [H] Rashi's rendering is, The nerves of the eye affect the fat around the heart.
7. Justifies the medical painting of the eye on the Sabbath.
8. Lit., 'he who was stung by a thorn', similarly with the other phrases that follow.

## 'Abodah Zarrah 29a

for an eruption: the reverse is dangerous. Vinegar [is good] after letting blood and small fish in brine after fasting; the reverse is dangerous. Cress [after] blood-letting is dangerous. Fever is [likewise] dangerous for blood-letting; so also are sore eyes dangerous for blood-letting. The second [day] after [eating] fish [may be used] for [the letting of] blood; the second day after bleeding, for [eating] fish; on the third day it is injurious.

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

Our Rabbis taught:<sup>1</sup> One who has his blood let should abstain from HGBSH,<sup>2</sup> milk, cheese, onions and pepperwort. If one has eaten any of these, said Abaye, he should take a quarter<sup>3</sup> of vinegar and a quarter of wine, mix them together and drink; and when he has subsequently to attend to his natural needs, he should retire east of the town to obviate the vitiating smell.

Said R. Joshua b. Levi: It is permitted to lift the Unklai on the Sabbath. What does unklai mean? Said R. Abba: The cartilage [in front] of the heart.<sup>4</sup> What is the remedy for it? — Take cumin, caraway, mint, wormwood, saturera and hyssop.<sup>5</sup> For [curing the cartilage of] the heart, [these should be taken] in wine — as a mnemonic take Wine maketh glad the heart of man;<sup>6</sup> for [defective] breathing, in water. Mnemonic: *The breath of God hovered over the face of the water;*<sup>7</sup> for a woman in childbirth, in beer — mnemonic, her pitcher on her shoulder.<sup>8</sup> R. Aha the son of Rabba ground all these together and took a fist-full [of the mixture] and drank it. R. Ashi ground each one separately and took a full pinch of it with his thumb and little finger. Said R. Papa: I did all these but was not cured till an Arabian traveler told me to take a new jug, fill it with water into which a spoonful of honey, which stood overnight under the stars, should be dropped, and the contents should be drunk on the morrow;<sup>9</sup> this I did and was cured.

Our Rabbis taught: Six things help the sick to recover from sickness and have a real curative effect — they are: cabbage, beets, a decoction of dry sisin,<sup>10</sup> tripe, womb and the lobe above the liver; some say, also small fish; moreover small fish keep the whole human body in a fit condition. Ten things are liable to send the patient back to his illness, and to make his illness severe; these are: to eat ox-meat, fat, roast meat, birds' meat, roast egg, pepperwort, shaving, bathing, cheese or liver. Some say also nuts, others add also melons. In the School of Ishmael it

was taught: Why are they called Kishshuim [melons]? Because they are Kashin [injurious] to the whole human body as swords.<sup>11</sup>

**NOR SHOULD WE HAVE OUR HAIR CUT BY THEM IN ANY PLACE.** Our Rabbis taught: When an Israelite is having his hair cut by a heathen he should be looking in the mirror;<sup>12</sup> and when an Israelite cuts the hair of a heathen he should, on reaching the forelock, leave it alone.<sup>13</sup> The Master said: 'When an Israelite is having his hair cut by a heathen he should be looking in the mirror.' What are the circumstances? If it is done in a public road, what for the mirror?<sup>14</sup> If in a private place, what is the use of looking into it? — [It refers] indeed to a private place, but his using the mirror will make him appear an important person. R. Hana b. Bizna was having his hair cut in the road leading to Nehardea by a heathen who remarked: Hana, Hana, thy throat is fine for the shears. Answered he: I deserve it for transgressing the words of R. Meir. And did he not also transgress those of the Rabbis, for the Rabbis only permit it in a public place but not in a private place? — He thought that the roads leading to Nehardea, where there are usually many [passers by], are to be regarded as a public place.

'When an Israelite cuts the hair of a heathen he should, on reaching the forelock, leave it alone.' How much [of it is he to leave]? — Said R. Malkiah in the name of R. Adda b. Ahaba: Three fingers' length on every side.

Said R. Hanina the son of R. Ika;<sup>15</sup> [The statements about] a Spear,<sup>16</sup> Maid-servants,<sup>17</sup> Depressions,<sup>18</sup> are by R. Malkio; [but those about] Forelock,<sup>19</sup> Vegetable-ashes,<sup>20</sup> and Cheese<sup>21</sup> are by R. Malkiah. R. Papa however said: If referring to a Mishnah or Baraitha, it is R. Malkiah, but if independent statements, it is R. Malkio. Mnemonic — 'The Mishnah is queen.'<sup>22</sup> Wherein do the two differ? — They

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

differ in regard to the statement about Maid-servants.<sup>23</sup>

1. V. Ned. 54b.
2. A mnemonic consisting of the initials of the Hebrew of the words that follow.
3. Of a log.
4. [R. Hananel: 'the stomach'.]
5. MSS. have [H] instead of [H] of current edd.
6. Ps. CIV, 15.
7. Gen. I, 2. The Heb. word [H] used there denotes 'spirit', 'breath', 'wind'.
8. Ibid. XXIV, 15. In the original [H] stands for her pitcher and [H] for her shoulder, while [H] stands for sickness in childbirth and [H] for beer.
9. [MS.M.: fill it with water allowing it to stand overnight under the stars, in the morning drop into it a spoonful of honey.]
10. Sisin, a medicinal herb.
11. V. supra 11a.
12. The study of his appearance will make the barber think that he is an important person whom he will fear to harm (Rashi).
13. As it is dedicated to the idols, V. supra 8a.
14. The heathen will all the same be afraid to harm him.
15. V. Mak. 21a.
16. If it may be straightened on the festival, v. Bezah 28b.
17. Brought by a woman at marriage, Keth. 59b.
18. Nid. 52b.
19. Quoted above.
20. Spread on wounds. Mak. 21a.
21. If that made by a heathen is forbidden. Infra 29b.
22. The one associated with the Mishnah (and Baraita) is Malkiah, which name closely resembles Malkah — queen.
23. According to R. Hanina it is attributed to R. Malkio, while according to R. Papa, since it has reference to a Mishnah, it is attributed to R. Malkiah.

## ‘Abodah Zarah 29b

MISHNAH. THE FOLLOWING THINGS BELONGING TO HEATHENS ARE FORBIDDEN AND THE PROHIBITION EXTENDS TO ANY BENEFIT THAT MAY BE DERIVED FROM THEM: WINE, OR A HEATHEN'S VINEGAR THAT WAS FORMERLY WINE,<sup>1</sup> HADRIANIC EARTHENWARE,<sup>2</sup> SKINS PIERCED AT THE ANIMAL'S HEART.<sup>3</sup> RABBAN SIMEON B.

GAMALIEL SAYS: WHEN ITS RENT IS ROUND, [THE SKIN] IS FORBIDDEN, BUT IF OBLONG IT IS PERMITTED.<sup>4</sup> MEAT WHICH IS BEING BROUGHT IN TO A PLACE OF IDOLS IS PERMITTED,<sup>5</sup> BUT THAT WHICH IS BROUGHT OUT IS FORBIDDEN, BECAUSE IT IS [REGARDED] AS SACRIFICES OF THE DEAD.<sup>6</sup> THIS IS THE OPINION OF R. AKIBA. [WITH IDOLATERS] GOING ON A PILGRIMAGE<sup>7</sup> IT IS FORBIDDEN TO HAVE ANY BUSINESS TRANSACTIONS, BUT WITH THOSE COMING THENCE IT IS PERMITTED. SKIN-BOTTLES OR FLAGONS OF HEATHENS IN WHICH WINE OF AN ISRAELITE IS KEPT ARE FORBIDDEN AND THE PROHIBITION EXTENDS TO ANY BENEFIT THAT MAY BE DERIVED FROM THEM, THIS IS THE OPINION OF R. MEIR. BUT THE SAGES SAY THAT THE PROHIBITION DOES NOT EXTEND TO DERIVING ANY BENEFIT. GRAPE-STONES AND GRAPE-SKINS OF HEATHENS ARE FORBIDDEN, THE PROHIBITION EXTENDING TO ANY BENEFIT, THIS IS THE OPINION OF R. MEIR. BUT THE SAGES SAY, WHEN FRESH THEY ARE FORBIDDEN BUT WHEN DRY THEY ARE PERMITTED. MURIES<sup>8</sup> AND BITHYNIAN CHEESE<sup>9</sup> OF THE HEATHENS ARE FORBIDDEN, THE PROHIBITION EXTENDING TO ANY BENEFIT, THIS IS THE OPINION OF R. MEIR. BUT THE SAGES SAY THAT THE PROHIBITION DOES NOT EXTEND TO ANY BENEFIT.

R. JUDAH SAID: R. ISHMAEL PUT THIS QUESTION TO R. JOSHUA AS THEY WERE ON A JOURNEY, 'WHY,' ASKED HE, 'HAVE THEY FORBIDDEN THE CHEESE OF HEATHENS?'<sup>10</sup> HE REPLIED, BECAUSE THEY CURDLE IT WITH THE RENNET OF A NEBELAH.<sup>11</sup> HE RETORTED: 'BUT IS NOT THE RENNET OF A BURNT-OFFERING MORE STRICTLY FORBIDDEN THAN THE RENNET OF A NEBELAH? [AND YET] IT WAS SAID THAT A PRIEST WHO IS NOT FASTIDIOUS MAY SUCK IT OUT RAW (THOUGH THIS OPINION WAS NOT

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

APPROVED, AND IT WAS SAID THAT NO BENEFIT MAY BE DERIVED FROM IT, ALTHOUGH NO TRESPASS WOULD APPLY THERETO).<sup>12</sup> 'THE REASON THEN,' [R. JOSHUA SAID,] 'IS BECAUSE THEY CURDLE IT WITH THE RENNET FROM CALVES SACRIFICED TO IDOLS.' SAID HE, 'IF THAT BE SO, WHY DO THEY NOT EXTEND THE PROHIBITION TO ANY BENEFIT DERIVED FROM IT?' HE, HOWEVER, DIVERTED TO ANOTHER MATTER, SAYING:<sup>13</sup> 'ISHMAEL, HOW DO YOU READ — FOR THY [MASC.] LOVE IS BETTER THAN WINE OR THY [FEM.] LOVE, etc.'<sup>14</sup> HE REPLIED: 'THY [FEM.] LOVE IS BETTER ...' HE RETORTED: THIS IS NOT SO, AS IT IS PROVED BY ITS FELLOW [-VERSE]: THINE OINTMENTS HAVE A GOODLY FRAGRANCE [WHEREFORE THE MAIDENS LOVE THEE].'<sup>15</sup>

**GEMARA.** Whence do we deduce [the prohibition of] WINE? — Rabbah b. Abbuha said: From the scriptural verse which says, Who did eat the fat of their sacrifices, and drank the wine of their drink-offering,<sup>16</sup> as [heathens'] sacrifice is forbidden as to deriving any benefit, so also their wine is forbidden. But whence do we deduce the prohibition of a sacrifice itself? — From the scriptural words, They joined themselves also unto Baal of Peor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead:<sup>17</sup> as anything appertaining to the dead is forbidden as to any benefit, so [heathen] sacrifices are likewise forbidden. And how do we know this about the dead? — We deduce it from the similar expression 'there' used in connection with the heifer whose neck was to be broken,<sup>18</sup> as well as here [in connection with the dead]. Here it is said, And Miriam died there,<sup>19</sup> and there it is said, And they shall break the heifer's neck there in the valley.<sup>20</sup> As in that other case the heifer was forbidden as to any benefit, so also in our case the prohibition is the same. But how do we know that it is so in that case? — Those of the School of R. Jannai said:

Because forgiveness<sup>21</sup> is mentioned in connection therewith as with sacrifices.<sup>22</sup>

**OR A HEATHEN'S VINEGAR THAT WAS FORMERLY WINE.** This, surely, is obvious! Shall its prohibition cease because it turned sour? — R. Ashi said: The statement serves to imply that vinegar belonging to us when in the keeping of a heathen does not require double sealing;<sup>23</sup> [and for this reason:] as to the fear lest he would offer it to idols — this is generally not offered, and [again] as to the possibility that he might exchange it for his own — since there is one seal, he would not take the trouble to falsify it.

R. Elai said: We have had it stated that a heathen's boiled wine, which was formerly [raw] wine [while in his possession], is forbidden. This, too, is self evident! Does its prohibition cease because it had been boiled? — Said R. Ashi: This, too, enables us to draw the implication that our boiled wine which is in the keeping of a heathen does not require double sealing.<sup>24</sup> For as to the fear lest he would offer it to the idol, it is not offered [in that state]; and as for

1. While it was in the heathen's possession
2. V. infra 32a.
3. It was the practice of the heathen to remove the heart of a living animal for a sacrifice to the idol; thus the whole animal is forbidden as an idolatrous offering.
4. The rounded shape is a sign of the crinkling of the skin on being rent while the animal was still alive; the oblong, or natural, shape of the rent shows that it was made after the animal was dead. V. J. a.l.
5. To derive some benefit therefrom.
6. [Cf. Ps. CVI, 28, and Ab. III, 3. The meat is regarded as idolatrous even though no part of it had actually been offered as sacrifice to the idol. Tosaf. 32b, s.v. [H].]
7. [[H], lit., 'obscenity', a contemptuous designation of an idolatrous cult. Jast. and Elmslie (p. 33) understand the reference to be to the Dyonisian festivals.]
8. 'Fish-brine', often mixed with wine.
9. The reason given (infra 34b) is that in Bithynia many calves were offered to the idols; it is therefore to be suspected that their

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

- rennet is used in preparing the cheese. ['Bithynian cheese was prized as a delicacy,' Elmslie, p. 35.]
10. Why do the Sages forbid the eating of such cheese, seeing it is only made from the milk of 'clean' animals.
  11. An animal which dies of itself (v. [Glos.](#)).
  12. Cf. Lev. V, 15. Which goes to prove that rennet in a burnt-offering was not regarded as part of the animal, but as mere refuse.
  13. The diversion was intentional, as is explained further in the Gemara.
  14. Cant. I, 2. The Heb. word may stand for either gender according to the vocalization: [H]., or [H] fem. The Song of Songs is regarded as a dialogue between God the lover (in the masc.) and Israel His beloved (fem.).
  15. Which obviously is addressed to one of masculine gender.
  16. Deut. XXXII, 38.
  17. Ps. CVI, 28.
  18. Deut. XXI.
  19. Num. XX, 1.
  20. Deut. XXI, 4.
  21. Forgive O Lord Thy people Israel (*ibid.* 8).
  22. From which no secular benefit may be derived.
  23. Lit., 'a seal within a seal,' as is the case with wine, to make sure that part of it is not offered to the idol.
  24. The teaching that it is forbidden to benefit from boiled wine only when it was in the heathen's keeping in a raw state implies that, if the Israelite handed it to the heathen after boiling it, there is no fear of its being offered to the idol, as only raw wine is used for such purpose.

## ‘Abodah Zarah 30a

the possibility that he might exchange it — since there is one seal, he would not take the trouble to falsify it.

Our Rabbis taught: Boiled wine or alontith of a heathen is forbidden, but prepared alontith<sup>1</sup> is permitted. What is alontith? — As it has been taught in connection with Sabbath:<sup>2</sup> We may make anomalin<sup>3</sup> but not alontith.<sup>4</sup> What is 'anomalin' and what is 'alontith'? 'Anomalin' [is a mixture of] wine, honey and pepper; 'alontith', of old wine, clear water and balsam, which is used [as a cooling drink] in the bath-house.

Rabbah and R. Joseph both of them said that diluted wine<sup>5</sup> does not become forbidden through being left uncovered;<sup>6</sup> nor is boiled wine to be suspected of idolatrous use. The question was asked: Is boiled wine rendered forbidden by being left uncovered or is it not so? — Come and hear: R. Jacob b. Idi testified in regard to boiled wine that it is not rendered forbidden by being left uncovered.

R. Jannai b. Ishmael was sick and R. Ishmael b. Zirud and other Rabbis called to enquire about him. As they sat, the question was asked of them: Does the objection to remaining uncovered apply to boiled wine or not? — To which R. Ishmael b. Zirud replied: Thus said R. Simeon b. Lakish on behalf of a great man — namely, R. Hiyya: Boiled wine is not rendered unfit by being left uncovered. On their asking, 'Shall we rely on it?' R. Jannai b. Ishmael motioned [as if to say], 'Upon my responsibility.'<sup>7</sup>

Samuel and Ablet<sup>8</sup> were sitting together when boiled wine was brought up for them and [the latter] withdrew his hand,<sup>9</sup> but Samuel said to him: Behold, it has been said that boiled wine is not to be suspected of idolatrous use! R. Hiyya's maid-servant found that some boiled wine had been left uncovered. She came [to ask about it] of R. Hiyya, who told her that it had been declared that boiled wine is not rendered unfit by being left uncovered. The servant of R. Adda b. Ahaba found that some diluted wine had been left uncovered. [His master] however told him that it had been stated that diluted wine is not rendered unfit by being left uncovered. R. Papa said: This has only been said [of wine] that is well diluted; but if it is only slightly diluted [a snake] might indeed drink it. But does it indeed drink wine that is slightly diluted? — [What about] Rabbah son of R. Huna who was travelling in a boat and had some wine with him? Observing that a snake, cutting through the water, was approaching, he said to his attendant, 'Turn it away,'<sup>10</sup> and the attendant took some water and was pouring it into the wine; whereupon

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

the snake turned back! — [This may only show that] for pure wine [the snake] will even endanger its life, while for diluted wine it will not face danger.<sup>11</sup> And does it not face danger for diluted wine? — What about R. Jannai who was at 'Akbara<sup>12</sup> (some say it was Bar-Hadaya<sup>13</sup> that was at 'Akbara) where people were sitting and drinking diluted wine, and as there was some of it left in the cask they tied a shred over it? He then saw a snake carrying water which it poured into the cask till the cask was so filled that the wine came above the shred, and [the snake then] drank! — It may be said that what [the snake] itself dilutes it will drink, but it will not drink what others dilute. Said R. Ashi (some say, R. Mesharsheya): What an answer [to give in a matter] where danger [to life is involved]!<sup>14</sup>

Raba said: The law is that diluted wine is rendered unfit by being left uncovered and is to be suspected of idolatrous use, but boiled wine does not become unfit by being left uncovered nor is it suspected of idolatrous use.

The attendant of R. Hilkiah b. Tobi [found that] a tank of water had been left uncovered, though he had been sitting and slumbering close to it. He came to [ask about it of] R. Hilkiah b. Tobi, who said to him: It has been stated that snakes are afraid of a sleeping person; this, however, only applies in day time but not at night. But this is not the case; it is not to be assumed that they are afraid of a sleeping person either by day or by night.

Rab did not drink water of an Aramean's house, saying that they do not mind if it is kept uncovered. He, however, drank that of a widow's<sup>15</sup> house, saying: She is sure to follow her husband's practice. Samuel [on the other hand] would not drink water of the house of a widow. In the absence of the fear of a husband, he said, she will not necessarily keep the water covered. He, however, drank that of the house of an Aramean. Even if they are not particular about [the prohibition

relating to] uncovered liquids, they are particular about cleanliness.<sup>16</sup> Some report that Rab would not drink the water of an Aramean's house, but would drink that of a widow's house, while Samuel would not drink the water of either the house of an Aramean or that of a widow.

R. Joshua b. Levi said: There are three kinds of wine to which the prohibition through being left uncovered does not apply, namely: Strong, Bitter, and Sweet. 'Strong' is the acrid tila<sup>17</sup> which makes the wine-skin burst; 'Bitter' is wine made of unripe grapes; 'Sweet' is wine made of grapes sweetened [by the heat of the sun].<sup>18</sup> R. Hama taught [that those three] are improved wines: 'Strong'-is wine mixed with pepper; 'Bitter' — mixed with wormwood; 'Sweet' — is sparkling wine.<sup>19</sup> Said R. Simeon b. Lakish: Karina becomes prohibited through being left uncovered. What is Karina? — Said R. Abbahu: Karina<sup>20</sup> is a sweet wine which comes from Assia.<sup>21</sup> Said Raba: In its own place, however, it is rendered unfit if left uncovered, the reason being that it is the 'local wine.'<sup>22</sup>

Raba said: Wine which has formed a film is made unfit by being left uncovered and is suspected of idolatrous use during the first three days;

1. If when it reached the heathen it was already in its prepared state and not in the form of wine.
2. Shab. 140a.
3. Because it is for drinking purposes, and may be prepared on the Sabbath.
4. Which is for medicinal purposes, and must not be prepared, lest he might be led to grind the ingredients.
5. The usual proportion is 2 water to 1 pure wine.
6. As a snake does not drink it (cf. Ter. VIII, 4).
7. Lit., 'On me and on my neck,' an idiom denoting the assuming of full responsibility.
8. A learned Gentile, mentioned in several places in the Talmud. [E.g., Shab. 129a, 156b.]
9. Wine touched by a heathen is suspected of being manipulated for idolatrous purposes.
10. Lit., 'Blind its eyes.'

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

11. [But not that it will not drink undiluted wine where it can do so without being seen.]
12. A place in Upper Galilee. [R. Jannai had established there a school wherein the study of the Law went hand in hand with agricultural pursuits, v. Halevy, Doroth II, 273 ff.]
13. [A famous interpreter of dreams, v. Ber, 56a.]
14. [The fact that a snake has been seen to drink diluted wine is sufficient warrant to put us on our guard and apply the prohibition to diluted wine that has been left uncovered.]
15. A Jewess; though women are not well versed in laws.
16. They will therefore keep it covered for the sake of cleanliness.
17. A wine with a very pungent taste.
18. The taste of any of these being objectionable, a snake would not drink thereof even if left uncovered.
19. [H] — Borag-water, 'a superior drink' (Rashi). [Krauss, Talm. Arch. II, 241, takes [H] in its Persian sense, meaning 'wine', and renders accordingly 'Barag wine'.] These three are also distasteful to snakes.
20. Cf. L. carenum (Jast.)
21. [H] taken by some to mean Asia Minor or a certain part of it; by others, Essa, a town E. of the Lake of Tiberias. V. Sanh, (Sonc. ed.) p. 151, n. 1.
22. And snakes of that locality drink it.

## ‘Abodah Zarah 30b

thence onwards neither the suspicion of idolatry nor the objection to being uncovered applies to it;<sup>1</sup> those in Nehardea, however, said that even after the three days the objection to being uncovered still holds good, the reason being that occasionally even such wine is drunk [by snakes].

Our Rabbis taught: Wine in the first stage of fermentation is not subject to the rules relating to uncovered [liquids]; and how long does that stage last? Three days. Cress-dish<sup>2</sup> is not subject to the rules relating to uncovered [liquids]. Those in the Diaspora<sup>3</sup> made a practice of forbidding it [if left uncovered]; but only if there was no vinegar in it; for the vinegar that is in it deters<sup>4</sup> serpents [from tasting it]. Babylonian Kutah,<sup>5</sup> too, is not rendered unfit if left uncovered, though those in the Diaspora have

the practice of forbidding it. R. Manashi said: If it has traces of biting we must suspect [it of being bitten by a serpent]. Said R. Hiyya b. Ashi in the name of Samuel: Water that drips into a vessel is not subject to the rules in regard to uncovered [liquids].<sup>6</sup> R. Ashi said: That is if the dripping is continuous. R. Hiyya b. Ashi said in the name of Samuel: The opening of a fig<sup>7</sup> does not come under the rules relating to [liquids] left uncovered. This view accords with that of this Tanna: For it has been taught:<sup>8</sup> R. Eliezer says, One may eat grapes and figs at night without suspecting any harm,<sup>9</sup> for Scripture says, The Lord guardeth the simple.<sup>10</sup>

R. Safran said in the name of R. Joshua of the South: There are three kinds of venoms [of serpents]: that of a young one sinks to the bottom; that of one not quite young drops to about the middle; while that of an old one floats on top. Are we to take it that the older a serpent gets the more his strength diminishes? Has it not been taught:<sup>11</sup> There are three whose strength increases as their age advances, these are: a fish, a serpent and a swine! — Its strength may indeed increase, but its venom becomes weaker.

'The venom of a young one sinks to the bottom'. — What practical application has this? — That of the following teaching: If a barrel was uncovered, even if nine persons drank of its contents with no fatal consequence, the tenth person is still forbidden to drink thereof. It happened indeed that nine people drank of such and did not die but the tenth one died; and R. Jeremiah said: It was a case of the venom sinking to the bottom. Likewise if a [cut] melon was left uncovered and nine persons partook thereof without fatal consequences, it is forbidden for a tenth person to partake thereof, for it once happened that nine persons ate of such a one and did not die and the tenth one who ate it died; and Rab said that it was a case of venom that sank to the bottom.

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

Our Rabbis taught: Water which had been left uncovered should not be poured out in a public road, or used for sprinkling the floor of a house, or for kneading mortar; nor should one give it to his animal or to his neighbor's animal to drink; nor should one wash one's face, hands or feet therewith. Others said: Only a part of the body that has an opening<sup>12</sup> must not [be washed therewith] but where there is no opening it is permitted. Do not the 'Others' hold the same opinion as the first Tanna?<sup>13</sup> — They differ in regard to the back part of the hand and of the foot, or the upper part of the face.<sup>14</sup>

The Master said: 'Nor should one give it to his own animal or to his neighbor's animal to drink'. But has it not been taught: One may, however, give it to his own animal to drink? — That teaching refers to a cat.<sup>15</sup> Why then not to his neighbor's? — Because it deteriorates it. Then his own, too, would deteriorate? — But it subsequently recovers. Then his neighbor's would likewise recover? — It might so happen that he might wish to sell it and would suffer loss through it.<sup>16</sup>

R. Assi said in the name of R. Johanan who said it on behalf of R. Judah b. Bathrya: There are three kinds of wine: [i] Libation-wine,<sup>17</sup> from which it is forbidden to derive any benefit, and of which a quantity of the size of an olive causes grave defilement;<sup>18</sup>

1. As its taste is then completely changed.
2. Chopped cress mixed with wine.
3. [H], All countries outside Palestine, with special reference to Babylonia, v. [Glos.](#) s.v. *Golah*.
4. Lit., 'attacks'.
5. A mixture consisting of sour milk, crusts of bread and salt (Jast.).
6. As the noise caused by the dripping would frighten a serpent.
7. Freshly plucked and left overnight.
8. B.K. 116b.
9. Though liquids must not be had in the dark.
10. Ps. CXVI, 6.
11. Shab. 77b.
12. Where the poisonous matter would be retained and subsequently penetrate into the body.

13. He too forbids the parts of the body, such as the face, hands and feet, which are liable to retain the poison.
14. Parts which are smooth, which the others permit, but the first Tanna forbids.
15. To which such drink is not injurious, v. Pes. 112b.
16. He has a right to risk a loss to himself, but not to his neighbor.
17. Yen Nesek, wine from which libation had been poured before an idol. V. [Glos.](#)
18. Anyone coming in contact with it, or being in premises in which it is found, becomes ritually unclean, as in the case of a dead body. (V. *supra* 29b).

## 'Abodah Zarah 31a

[ii] Ordinary wine of heathens, from which it is likewise forbidden to derive any benefit whatsoever,<sup>1</sup> and a quarter [of a *log*] of which renders drinks [or edibles] unclean;<sup>2</sup> [iii] Wine [of an Israelite] that had been deposited with an idolater, which must not be drunk, but the benefit of it is permitted. But have we not learnt:<sup>3</sup> 'If one deposits his fruit with an idolater it is considered as if it were the idolater's own fruit as regards tithes or Sabbatical year's produce'?<sup>4</sup> In our instance he assigned a separate corner to it.<sup>5</sup> In that case it should be permissible for drinking also! For when R. Johanan happened to be in Parud<sup>6</sup> he enquired if there was any Mishnah of Bar-Kappara [available], and R. Tanhum of Parud quoted to him [the following]: Wine which had been deposited with an idolater is permissible for drinking. Applying the verse, In the place where the tree falleth, there shall it be<sup>7</sup> — [he commented:] How can it be assumed that there it shall be? But it means that there shall its fruit be!<sup>8</sup> — R. Zera said: There is no contradiction here: the one is according to the opinion of R. Eliezer and the other according to that of the Rabbis, For it has been taught: If one buys or hires a house in a court of an idolater and stores wine therein, the key or seal of the place being in the charge of an Israelite, [such wine] is permitted by R. Eliezer but the Sages forbid it.<sup>9</sup> R. Hiyya the son of R. Hiyya b. Nahmani said in the name of R. Hisda [who said it] in

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

the name of Rab (some say that R. Hisda said it in the name of R. Ze'iri, while others report that R. Hisda said, I was told by Aba b. Harina that Ze'iri said it): The *halachah* rests with R. Eliezer.

R. Eleazar said: Everything is sufficiently guarded by one seal, except wine, which is not considered guarded by one seal. R. Johanan however said: Even wine is sufficiently guarded by one seal. And the one is not in conflict with the other, as the one follows the opinion of R. Eliezer, and the other, that of the Rabbis.<sup>10</sup> Some have the following version: Said R. Eleazar: Everything is sufficiently guarded by a seal within another seal,<sup>11</sup> except wine which is not guarded even by such double seal. R. Johanan however said: Even wine is guarded by a seal within a seal. Both these follow the opinion of the Rabbis, the one holding that the Rabbis only differ from R. Eliezer where there is but one seal, but if there is a seal within another seal they, too, permit it; while the other holds that even in the case of a double seal they forbid.

What, for example, is a seal within another seal? — Raba said: A basin placed over the opening of a barrel and joined to the barrel with a seal on it, is a seal within another seal, otherwise it is not so; or a basket fastened [over the stopper] is a seal within a seal, but if it is not fastened it is not a seal within a seal; a skin bottle within a bag with the closed opening of the skin bottle inside, is a seal within a seal, but if the opening is without, it is not a seal within a seal; if he bends in the closed opening of the skin bottle within and then ties the bottle up again and seals it, it is likewise considered a seal within a seal.

Our Rabbis taught: Formerly the ruling was that wine of En-Kusi<sup>12</sup> is forbidden because of Birath-Sirika,<sup>13</sup> that of Borkata<sup>14</sup> is forbidden on account of Kefar-Parshai, and that of Zagdar is forbidden because of Kefar-Shalem;<sup>15</sup> subsequently however this

was altered thus: If in open barrels it is forbidden, but if in closed ones it is permitted. What was the opinion held formerly and what was the later opinion? — At first the opinion was held that a Cuthean is not particular about an idolater's coming in contact [with the wine] whether the barrels be open or closed; but subsequently they formed the opinion that only in the case of open ones they are not particular, but in the case of closed barrels they are very particular indeed.

Is it then permitted in the case of open barrels? But the following contradicts it:

1. [This is an extension of the prohibition of 'libation-wine'.]
2. [V. Tosaf. Pes. 14a, for various explanations as to the necessity of a minimum quantity to communicate defilement. Maim. Yad, Aboth ha-Tume'oth, VII, 8, makes no mention of this reservation.]
3. Dem. III, 4; Bek. 11b.
4. It is not liable to tithe, etc., as the idolater may have exchanged it for his own. Why, then, is the wine deposited with an idolater not regarded as such?
5. The Israelite has thus made sure that it was not exchanged.
6. Where Bar-Kappara, who was already dead, had resided. [Identified with El-Faradije, S.W. of Saffed, v. Klein, S. *op. cit.* p. 40.]
7. Eccl. XI, 3.
8. The teachings of the wise are preserved in the place where they had lived. According to him wine deposited with an idolater is thus permissible even for drinking, which is contrary to the ruling given above!
9. For drinking only. V. Shab. 122a.
10. The Sages. [For each Amora the matter had already been settled by a Tanna whom he followed, so that there was no need for him to make it a point of controversy with the other, so Tosaf.]
11. V. *infra*.
12. A place inhabited by Cutheans.
13. A place in Samaria, whose inhabitants were idolaters, in close proximity of the former place. The same applies to each of the cases that follow.
14. [Probably Borkeos on the boundary between Samaria and Judaea mentioned in Josephus, Wars, III, 3, 5, v. Montgomery, The Samaritans, p. 146.]

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

15. [Perhaps Salem on the Jordan, south of Beth-Shean, Montgomery, *loc. cit.*.]

## ‘Abodah Zarrah 31b

If one sends a cask of wine by the hand of a Cuthean, or of brine<sup>1</sup> or muries<sup>2</sup> by the hand of an idolater if he can identify his seal and the [spot and manner of] his closing up, it is permitted, but if not it is forbidden!<sup>3</sup> — R. Zera said: There is no contradiction: The one refers to the town,<sup>4</sup> the other to the open road.<sup>5</sup> R. Jeremiah demurred to this: But did not that of the town come by road? — But, said R. Jeremiah: Our teaching only refers to [barrels closed in] the vicinity of the wine presses; since all the people are about there, he would be afraid [to let an idolater touch it] lest it be detected and he lose thereby.

It has been stated: Why has beer of heathens been forbidden? Rami b. Hama said in the name of R. Isaac: Because of marriages.<sup>6</sup> R. Nahman said: Because it might have been left uncovered. 'Uncovered' when? If while in the vat — we also keep it uncovered;<sup>7</sup> and if while in the barrel, in that state, too, we keep it uncovered!<sup>8</sup> — It may only refer to a place where the water is allowed to settle.<sup>9</sup> In that case it should be permitted when it matures, for Rab said:<sup>10</sup> [Liqueur which is] matured is permitted, for [the venom] would not allow it to mature; [so also wine which is] fermented is permitted, for it would not have allowed it to ferment! — Matured is forbidden as a safeguard against the fresh. R. Papa used to drink beer when it was brought out to him to the door of the shop; R. Ahai used to drink it when it was brought to his house. Both of them held that the reason [for the prohibition] is intermarriage, but R. Ahai insisted on extraordinary precaution.

R. Samuel b. Bisna happened to be in Marguan;<sup>11</sup> they brought him wine but he would not drink it, they then brought him beer which he did not drink either. It is quite correct as to the wine, as there is a suspicion,

but what objection is there to the beer? There is the suspicion of a suspicion.<sup>12</sup> Said Rab: 'Beer of an Aramean is permitted, still I would not allow my son Hiyya to drink it'. Which way will you have it? If it is permitted then it should be permitted to all; if [on the other hand] it is forbidden, it should be forbidden to all! — Rab suspects it of being left uncovered; but the bitter taste of the hops counteracts any venom that might be in it, so that it can only prove injurious to one who is an invalid, and his son Hiyya, being an invalid, should therefore abstain from drinking it.

Samuel said: All reptiles have poisonous venom; that of a serpent is fatal, while that of other reptiles has no fatal effect. Said Samuel to Hiyya b. Rab: O son of a scholar,<sup>13</sup> come let me tell you a good thing which your father Rab used to say. Thus said your father: The reason why those swollen Arameans who drink what is kept uncovered suffer no fatal consequences is because, through eating abominable and creeping things, their bodies become immune from it. R. Joseph said:

1. Which the heathen might exchange for brine of unclean fish.
2. [H] a kind of pickle sometimes mixed with wine.
3. Though a Cuthean is not suspected of making idolatrous use of wine, it is feared that he might let an idolater get in contact with it even though it is in a sealed casket — which is contrary to the opinion here given.
4. Where a Cuthean, fearing that he might be noticed by a Jew, would not allow an idolater to get in contact with the wine and thus be unable to dispose of it among Israelites.
5. Where there is no-one to notice him.
6. To avoid intimacy with heathens which might lead to intermarriage.
7. As it is assumed that serpents do not drink beer. [According to R. Han. this had to be done in order to allow the fumes to escape.]
8. [As otherwise the barrels would burst as a result of the fermentation, R. Han.]
9. Before being used for making beer; there is thus the danger of the water having been exposed. [R. Han. explains: Where water is added to the beer to make it settle, there being thus no fermentation.]

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

10. V. *infra* 35a, where the name given is R. Hanina.
11. The Jewish inhabitants of which place were not particular about using wine of idolaters. [Neubauer, p. 380, identifies it with the province of Margiana between the Oxus and Aria.]
12. The drinking of beer may lead to drinking wine.
13. [H] Ms.M. has [H] some versions have [H] — son of a lion. V. Ber. 12a and Kohut s.v.

## ‘Abodah Zarrah 32a

The vinegar which the Arameans make of beer is forbidden because they mix yeast of idolatrous wine with it. R. Ashi said: If however it had been in store it is permitted, for if it contained such admixture it would have got spoilt.

**HADRIANIC EARTHENWARE.** What does HADRIANIC mean? — Said Rab Judah in the name of Samuel: Earthenware of King Hadrian.<sup>1</sup> When R. Dimi came [from Palestine] he said: Virgin soil, which had not been tilled before, used to be tilled by [the Romans] and planted with vines; the wine [produced] they used to pour into white jugs<sup>2</sup> which absorbed the wine. These vessels they broke into fragments which they used to carry, and wherever they came they soaked them [in water] and drank of it. R. Joshua b. Levi said: Our first [quality wine] is only equal to their third [soaking].

The question was asked: How about placing these shards as supports of the legs of a bedstead? Is this intention to preserve a [forbidden thing]<sup>3</sup> for some other purpose allowed or forbidden? — Come and hear! For R. Eleazar and R. Johanan [argued about it], one pronouncing it as forbidden and the other as permitted. An objection was raised: Wine kept in barrels or leather bottles belonging to idolaters is forbidden for drinking but permitted for deriving benefit. Simeon b. Gudda testified in the presence of R. Gamaliel's son<sup>4</sup> that R. Gamaliel<sup>5</sup> drank of such in Acco, but this was not accepted. As to flagons belonging to idolaters, R. Simeon

b. Gamaliel says in the name of R. Joshua b. Kapusai that it is forbidden to make of them covers for an ass. Now in this latter case there is an intention to preserve [the forbidden thing] for some other purpose and yet we are taught that it is forbidden! — According to your opinion then, the sale of [earthenware] flasks of heathens should also be forbidden, for what difference is there between [leather] flagons<sup>6</sup> and [earthenware] flasks? But Raba said: There is this risk: if his flask be split he might take the one of the heathen and patch his own with it.<sup>7</sup> Now according to the one who holds that the intention to preserve [a forbidden thing] for some other purpose is forbidden, why is the use of [earthenware] flasks allowed? — His answer might be: In that case the forbidden matter is not there in substance,<sup>8</sup> whereas in the other case<sup>9</sup> the substance of the forbidden matter is there.

[It has been stated above:] 'But this was not accepted.' A contradiction was raised: Wine contained in leather bottles of heathens is forbidden for drinking but permitted for deriving benefit. Simeon b. Gudda' testified in the presence of R. Gamaliel's son that R. Gamaliel drank of such in Acco, and it was accepted! — What is meant there is that it was not accepted by the whole company, but it was the son who did accept it. Or, if you wish, it may be said that Gudda is one and Gudda' is another.<sup>10</sup>

**SKINS PIERCED AT THE ANIMAL'S HEART.** Our Rabbis taught:<sup>11</sup> What is [the sign of] such a heart-rent skin? If it is rent opposite the heart and is round like a circular aperture, and there is a drop of coagulated blood on it, it is forbidden,<sup>12</sup>

1. [Which Hadrian took with him on his journeys with his troops (Rashi)]. Elmslie, A.Z. p. 31, quoting Lewy, Philologus, 52 p. 571, explains it as earthenware jars coming from the Adriatic coast.
2. [I.e., of unburnt clay.]
3. [By putting these shards to such use there is incidentally evidence of a desire to preserve them, though not for the sake of the wine they contain, but for some other purpose. Any act

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

- which involves the preservation of idolatrous wine is forbidden. V. *infra* 73b.]
4. [Hanina b. Gamaliel II (Tosaf.)]
  5. [Gamaliel II, v. Buchler, gal. 'Amh. p. 313, n. 1.
  6. [Which as stated do not render prohibited for use the wine kept in them, cf. Tosaf. The passage is, however, difficult and does not occur in Ms.M. and several other texts.]
  7. In which case the idolatrous wine will actually flavor the contents of his flask.
  8. The flavor only is retained.
  9. Of Hadrianic wine which is absorbed and emitted by the vessel.
  10. The name given in the first report is Gudda [H] while that in the second is Gudda' [H]. [While they may not have accepted the report of one, when reported by the other too they accepted it.]
  11. Tosef. A.Z. Ch. V.
  12. It proves that the skin was rent while the animal was alive.

## ‘Abodah Zarah 32b

but if it has no such drop of blood it is permitted. R. Huna said: That is only if it has not been treated with salt, but if salt has been applied to it, it is forbidden in either case, as the salt may have removed it.

**R. SIMEON B. GAMALIEL SAYS WHEN ITS RENT IS ROUND [THE SKIN] IS FORBIDDEN, BUT IF OBLONG IT IS PERMITTED.** Said R. Joseph in the name of Rab Judah who said it in the name of Samuel: The *halachah* rests with R. Simeon b. Gamaliel. Said Abaye: 'The *halachah* [rests with him]' implies that the matter is disputed!<sup>1</sup> But what difference does it make to you? retorted the other. To which he replied: Is the learning of Gemara, then, to be like the singing of a song?<sup>2</sup>

**MEAT WHICH IS BEING BROUGHT INTO AN IDOLATROUS PLACE IS PERMITTED.** What Tanna's opinion might this represent? — Said R. Hiyya b. Abba in the name of R. Johanan: Not that of R. Eliezer; for were it R. Eliezer's, surely he holds the opinion that an idolater has generally idolatry in his mind.<sup>3</sup>

**BUT THAT WHICH IS BROUGHT OUT IS FORBIDDEN, BECAUSE IT IS REGARDED AS SACRIFICES OF THE DEAD.** What is the reason? Because it is impossible for some idolatrous sacrifice not to have taken place. Whose [opinion might this represent]? — That of R. Judah b. Bathyra; for it has been taught: R. Judah b. Bathyra says: Whence can we deduce that idolatrous offerings defile by overshadowing?<sup>4</sup> From the verse, They joined themselves unto Ba'al-Peor, and ate the sacrifices of the dead<sup>5</sup> — as a dead body defiles by overshadowing, so also an idolatrous sacrifice causes such defilement by overshadowing.<sup>6</sup>

**WITH IDOLATERS GOING ON A PILGRIMAGE IT IS FORBIDDEN TO HAVE ANY BUSINESS TRANSACTIONS.** Samuel said: With idolaters going on a pilgrimage it is forbidden [to transact business] on their journey there, for they will go and offer thanks to the idols; but on their return journey it is permitted, for bygones are bygones. If an Israelite however goes on such a pilgrimage [to idols], it is permitted [to deal with him] on his journey there, for he may change his mind and not go; but on his return it is forbidden, for as

1. Whereas no other opinion is mentioned at all.
2. Where precision is of no consequence.
3. He must have therefore appointed it in his mind for idolatry already at the time of the slaughtering of the animal.
4. [H] cf. Num. XIX, 14. Whatever is overshadowed by the same roof or object that is over a corpse.
5. Ps. CVI, 28.
6. Hul. 13b.

## ‘Abodah Zarah 33a

he has already become attached to it he will go again and again. But has it not been taught: It is forbidden [to do any business transactions] with an Israelite going on a pilgrimage of idolatry either on his journey

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

there or back? — R. Ashi said: That refers to an apostate Israelite, who is sure to go.

Our Rabbis taught: With an idolater going to a market-fair<sup>1</sup> it is permitted to deal both on his journey there and back; but in the case of an Israelite going to such a fair, it is permitted on his journey thither but forbidden on his return journey. Now, how is it that in the case of an Israelite it is forbidden on his return journey? Because we say that he may have been selling articles of idolatry and has thus idolatry-money with him! Should we not likewise say in the case of an idolater that he may have sold articles of idol-worship and carries idolatry-money on him? It appears therefore that in the case of an idolater we say that he may have sold such things as a garment or wine. [If so] let us then say in the case of an Israelite, too, that it may have been such things as a garment or wine that he was selling! — If he had such things only he would have sold them here.

**BUT WITH THOSE COMING THENCE IT IS PERMITTED.** R. Simeon b. Lakish said: This teaching applies only if they do not form one band, but if they<sup>2</sup> are keeping closely together it is forbidden, for we are to assume that each one has a mind to return again.

**SKIN BOTTLES AND [EARTHENWARE] FLAGONS OF HEATHENS.** Our Rabbis taught: 'Skin bottles of heathens, if stripped,<sup>3</sup> are permitted while new,<sup>4</sup> but if old or pitch-lined<sup>5</sup> they are forbidden. If an idolater pitched<sup>6</sup> and lined and put the wine<sup>7</sup> into it while an Israelite was standing by him there is no cause for suspicion.'<sup>8</sup> But since it is the heathen who puts the wine into the bottles, of what avail is it that an Israelite does stand by him? — R. Papa said: What is meant is that if a heathen pitched and lined them and an Israelite poured wine into them while another Israelite was standing by there is no cause for suspicion. But if it is an Israelite that is pouring the wine into them, what need is

there for another Israelite to stand by? — Lest while the Israelite is engaged in the pouring, the heathen pour some of it for idolatry without being detected by him.

R. Zebid said: The original wording can indeed stand, but here the reason is that when wine is poured into the fresh pitch it is as water that is poured in mortar.<sup>9</sup> R. Papi said: From what was said by R. Zebid it may be deduced that if a heathen poured wine into the salt cellar of an Israelite [the salt] is permitted. R. Ashi demurred to this: How can these be compared? In that case the wine has disappeared, while in our case it has not disappeared!<sup>10</sup>

A certain Arab, Bar 'Adi, once seized a wine-skin from R. Isaac b. Joseph, and after keeping wine in it returned it to him. He came and asked about it in the House of Learning and R. Jeremiah said to him: Thus was the decision given by R. Ammi in a specific case:<sup>11</sup> [The vessels] are to be filled with water for three days and then emptied; whereon Raba said: The water should be emptied every twenty-four hours. This was taken to apply to our<sup>12</sup> [vessels if used by heathens] but not to theirs; when, however, Rabin came [from Palestine] he said in the name of R. Simeon b. Lakish: [It applies to] either ours or theirs. R. Aha b. Raba, sitting before R. Ashi, was of opinion that this only applies to skin-bottles but not to earthenware ones;<sup>13</sup> but R. Ashi said to him: It makes no difference whether they be skin-bottles or earthenware ones.

Our Rabbis taught: Earthenware bottles of idolaters, if new and stripped, are permitted, but if old and pitched they are forbidden. If an idolater kept wine in them, the Israelite should put water into them;<sup>14</sup> but though an idolater kept wine in them an Israelite may [immediately] put bran, or Muries<sup>15</sup> into them without any scruples.<sup>16</sup> The question was asked:

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

1. [The markets were associated with idolatrous festivals, v. Elmslie, p. 33.]
2. [Those who come back and those who go there].
3. Having no pitch coating.
4. Not having been long in use, the skin would not have absorbed any wine: skin being more dense than earthenware.
5. [Wine soaks into pitch.]
6. [He poured the molten pitch into them (Rashi).]
7. [While the pitch was still hot, wine was poured into it to remove its bitterness (Rashi).]
8. Tosef. Ch. V.
9. The reason why wine poured into a bottle freshly lined with pitch by a heathen is permitted is because the wine which first comes in contact with the pitch soaks thoroughly into it, like the water in the mortar, and does not exude again when the pitch hardens.
10. [The flavor it imparted to the salt remains.]
11. [H], lit., 'a decision for practice'.
12. As in R. Isaac's case, where the vessel originally used by an Israelite had already absorbed a large quantity of permissible wine, while the absorption of the prohibited wine would be scant.
13. Which absorb more.
14. As above — on three days, changing the water every 24 hours.
15. V. p. 156, n. 2. The sharpness of these annuls the taste of the wine.
16. [Having regard to the question that follows, read with MS.M., 'and it is permissible.]

## ‘Abodah Zarrah 33b

[Does this apply to] deliberate action or to an act committed?<sup>1</sup> — Come and hear: For R. Zebid b. Oshaia learned: If one buys earthenware bottles of an idolater, if they be new he may put wine into them; if old, he may use them for bran and Muries deliberately.

R. Judah Nesi'a<sup>2</sup> asked of R. Ammi: What if he put them back into a furnace, so that they became heated? — He replied: If bran has a cleansing effect on them, how much more so fire! It has likewise been stated: R. Johanan said (according to others R. Assi said it in the name of R. Johanan):

Flagons of heathens which had been placed back in the furnace, as soon as the pitch thereof has dropped off, are permitted. Said R. Ashi: You need not say 'until it has dropped off'; if it has only been loosened, even though it has not dropped off [it is enough]. [Where the pitch is removed by means of] lighted chips this is a matter of dispute between R. Aha and Rabina, the one forbidding [the use of the flask], while the other permitted. The law rests with the one who forbids.<sup>3</sup>

The question was asked: How about putting beer into such a vessel?<sup>4</sup> — R. Nahman and Rab Judah forbid, but Raba permits it. Rabina declared it permissible to R. Hiyya the son of R. Isaac to pour beer into such a vessel, so he went and put wine into it; still he had no scruples about it, saying: It was only done casually.

R. Isaac b. Bisna had some vessels of heathens, made of boxwood;<sup>5</sup> he filled them with water and let them stand in the sun,<sup>6</sup> and they split. Said R. Abba to him: You have indeed rendered them forbidden for good!<sup>7</sup> All that our Rabbis said is that such are to be filled with water; has it been said they should be left in the sun?

Said R. Yosna in the name of R. Ammi: A vessel of natron<sup>8</sup> can never be rendered ritually clean. What is a vessel of natron? — Said R. Jose b. Abin: A vessel made of crystals coming from an alum-mine. Some of the men of the field-marshall Parzak<sup>9</sup> seized some [earthenware] wine-casks from [Jews in] Pumbeditha, kept wine in them and then returned them. [The owners] came to ask Rab Judah about these, and he said: This is a case of vessels taken for temporary use, let them be rinsed with water and they will be permitted for use. R. 'Awira said: Those jugs of Arameans made of dark clay, since they do not absorb much, are permitted for use on being rinsed in water. R. Papa said: Those earthenware vessels coming from Be-Mikse<sup>10</sup> may be used after being rinsed in water, as

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

they do not absorb much.<sup>11</sup> Cups<sup>12</sup> are forbidden by R. Assi, but permitted by R. Ashi. If an idolater drank from it the first time it was used, no one disputes that it is forbidden,<sup>13</sup> the dispute only arises if it was the second time. Some say that if it is the first or second time it is indisputably forbidden and that the dispute only arises if it is the third time. The law is, if it is the first or second time it is forbidden, if the third time it is permitted.

R. Zebid said: Vessels which are glazed, if white or black are permitted, but if green are forbidden because it contains crystals of alum;<sup>14</sup> and if they have any cracks [in the glazing] they are all forbidden.

Meremar stated in his exposition<sup>15</sup> that glazed<sup>16</sup> vessels, whether black or white or green, are permitted. But why should this case be different from that of leaven on Passover? For Meremar [himself] was asked: How about using glazed vessels<sup>17</sup> on Passover; we do not ask [they said] about green glazing which contains alum crystals which absorbs and thus [renders the vessel] forbidden; what we are asking about is white or black glazing; nor do we ask even about these if there are any cracks, for such unquestionably absorb and are forbidden; it is about smooth ones that we are asking you what [the law is]? — He answered

1. Is it permitted ab initio or only as an accomplished fact?
2. [The prince, Judah II.]
3. [As the pitch in this case melts even before the fire could exercise a cleansing effect on the flasks themselves.]
4. Is this to be forbidden as a safeguard against wine or not?
5. [H], v. l. [H], 'Boxwood'; according to Rashi: made of clay and ordure.
6. [As an additional precaution.]
7. [I.e., you have destroyed them for no reason.]
8. If used for wine by idolaters.
9. [Funk, Die Juden in Babylonien, I, 105, renders: 'the great field marshal,' taking Parzak not as nom. prop., but as Persian [H], 'great,' v. *infra* p. 301, n. 3.]

10. [Be-Mekse was a frontier town between Babylon and Arabia. V. Obermeyer, *op. cit.*, 334.]
11. The clay of this place was particularly hard.
12. Earthenware cups which are used for drinking, but not keeping, wine.
13. As it would absorb idolatrous wine while new and in a receptive state.
14. Which absorb liquid freely.
15. V. Pes. 30b.
16. Kovia, 'powdered lime'.
17. Which had been used for leaven.

## 'Abodah Zarah 34a

them: I observed that such vessels exude, and being porous they certainly absorb and are therefore forbidden, the reason being that the Torah testified that an earthenware vessel can never be rid of its defect.<sup>1</sup> Why then should this be different from wine used for idolatry concerning which [we are told] Meremar expounded that all glazed vessels [which had been used for it] are permitted? And should you say that leaven [on Passover] is forbidden by the Torah, whereas idolatrous wine is merely a Rabbinic prohibition, [surely it is an established principle] that whatever is instituted by the Rabbis is [treated] as [that which is ordained] by the Torah!<sup>2</sup> [The difference is this:] In the one case [the use of the vessel, is for hot things,<sup>3</sup> while in the other only for cold.

R. Akiba<sup>4</sup> happened to come to Ginzak;<sup>5</sup> he was asked: Is fasting by hours considered a fast, or is it not considered a fast?<sup>6</sup> He had no answer to give them. [They then asked him:] Is the use of bottles of idolaters ever permitted? Again he had no answer. In what garments [he was then asked] did Moses minister during the seven days of consecration?<sup>7</sup> He had no answer to this either. He then went and enquired at the House of Learning and they said to him: The law is: Fasting by hours is considered a fast, so that if he completed the day, he may say the prayer for a fast; as to bottles of heathens, the law is that they are permissible for use after twelve months;<sup>8</sup> and as to the

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

garment in which Moses ministered during the seven days of consecration, [he ministered] in a white frock without border.<sup>9</sup>

**GRAPE-STONES AND GRAPE-SKINS OF HEATHENS, etc.** Our Rabbis taught: Grape-stones and grape-skins of heathens are forbidden while fresh but permitted when dry. Which are considered fresh and which dry? — Said Rab Judah in the name of Samuel: They are considered moist during the first twelve months, and dry after the twelve months. It has been stated that Raba b. Bar-Hana said in the name of R. Johanan: When they are forbidden, the prohibition extends to any benefit to be derived from them, and when they are permitted, they are permitted even as food. Said R. Zebid: Yeast made of wine of Arameans is permitted after a full year. R. Habiba the son of Raba said: Jugs are permitted after a complete year. R. Habiba said:

1. V. Pes. 30b, where instead of [H] the word is [H] which MSS. have also here.
2. And the earthen vessel shall be broken, Lev. XV, 12, thus, the same Meremar pronounced glazed vessels forbidden on Passover on account of the leaven they may have absorbed.
3. In the case of a vessel which had been used all the year for leaven its prohibition on the Passover is based on the fact that it had been used for hot matter which is more liable to penetrate.
4. [Ta'an, 11a: Mar 'Ukba, which appears to be the proper reading.]
5. [Ganzaka, identified with Shiz, S.E. of the Urmia lake, N.W. of Persia. V. Obermeyer, *op. cit.* p. 10.]
6. If one undertakes to fast part of a day and happens to abstain from food during the rest of the day, is he entitled to say 'Anenu, the prayer which is appointed for a fast day (Rashi). V. Ta'an. 11b.
7. Lev. VIII, 33.
8. Without any special cleansing.
9. [To indicate that it was for temporary ministration only (Tosaf.).]

## 'Abodah Zarah 34b

Travelers' wine-bags are permitted after a twelve-month. Said R. Aha the son of R. Ika: Kernels sold by Arameans are permitted after a twelvemonth. R. Aha the son of Raba said: Those red or black jugs are likewise permitted after twelve months.

**MURIES<sup>1</sup>, etc.** Our Rabbis taught: Muries made by an expert is permitted.<sup>2</sup> R. Judah b. Gamaliel says in the name of R. Hanina b. Gamaliel: [Brine of] heilek<sup>3</sup> prepared by an expert is likewise permitted. Abimi the son of R. Abbahu learned that muries of an expert is permitted; while he had learnt it thus, he however explained that only the first and second [extracts] from this fish are permitted, but the third is forbidden, the reason being that these first and second [extracts] are quite fat and require no admixture of wine; after these, however, wine is put into it.

Once a ship-load of muries reached the port of Acco<sup>4</sup> and R. Aha of Acco placed a guard by it.<sup>5</sup> Said Raba to him: And who watched the ship till now? — Till now, he replied, there was no cause for suspicion: as to mixing the brine with wine, a xestos<sup>6</sup> of muries cost<sup>7</sup> a luma<sup>8</sup> while a xestos of wine cost four lumas. Said R. Jeremiah to R. Zera: Might they not have come by the way of Tyre where wine is cheap? — He replied: There are narrow bays and shallow waters.<sup>9</sup>

**AND BITHYNIAN CHEESE, etc.** Said R. Simeon b. Lakish: The reason why Bithynian cheese has been forbidden<sup>10</sup> is because the majority of calves of that place are slaughtered [as sacrifices] to idols.<sup>11</sup> Why say 'the majority of calves'? Even if it were the minority it would have sufficed, since R. Meir always takes the minority into consideration!<sup>12</sup> — When we say the majority [of calves] we really have only a minority [of cattle],<sup>13</sup> but were only a minority of calves slain for idolatry — seeing that there would have been a majority of calves not slain for

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

idolatry to which would have to be added all other cattle that are not slaughtered for idolatry — they would really have formed a minority of a minority, and even R. Meir does not take a negligible minority into consideration. Said R. Simeon b. Eliakim to R. Simeon b. Lakish: What matters it if they are slaughtered for idolatry, seeing that you yourself permit [something similar]? For it has been stated:<sup>14</sup> If one slaughters an animal with the intention of sprinkling its blood for idolatry, or offering its fat for idolatry, R. Johanan says that the animal is forbidden, as in his opinion the one sacrificial process is to be connected with the other process,<sup>15</sup> and the slaughtering without the sanctuary is deduced from that within it;<sup>16</sup> R. Simeon b. Lakish, however, says it is permitted! — He replied: You are to be congratulated<sup>17</sup> [on your acumen; but in our case we assume that] he<sup>18</sup> declares that he worships [the idol] with the completion of the slaughtering.<sup>19</sup>

**SAID R. JUDAH:** R. ISHMAEL PUT A QUESTION, etc. Said R. Ahdaboi in the name of Rab: If one acquires<sup>20</sup> a woman with the dung of an ox which is to be stoned<sup>21</sup> she becomes 'consecrated' to him; but if with dung of calves used for idolatry, she does not become 'consecrated' to him. You can say that this can be proved by common sense, or, you may prove it from Scripture: As a matter of common sense — in the case of calves to be offered to idols it pleases [the owner] that they be stout,<sup>22</sup> whereas in the case of the ox to be stoned there is no pleasure to him in its being stout. And as to Scripture-here the verse says, There shall cleave naught of the banned thing to thy hand,<sup>23</sup> while there the words are, The ox shall be surely stoned and its flesh shall not be eaten<sup>24</sup> — its flesh only is forbidden, but its dung is permitted [to profit by]. Raba said: We have learnt both these cases [in our Mishnah]. The fact that when R. Joshua replied:<sup>25</sup> BECAUSE THEY CURDLE IT WITH THE RENNET OF A NEBELAH AND R. ISHMAEL RETORTED, BUT IS NOT THE RENNET OF A BURNT OFFERING MORE STRICTLY

## FORBIDDEN THAN THAT OF A NEBELAH?<sup>26</sup>

1. Fish-brine.
2. As no unclean fish is used in its preparation, the only objection is offered by its being mixed with wine; an expert, however, will avoid such practice (Rashi).
3. L. Alec, halec, alex — a small fish not easily distinguished from unclean ones; an expert will, however, take care to use the genuine kind only.
4. Acre, a town and harbor on the Phoenician coast.
5. To watch lest wine be mixed with the brine.
6. [H], Sixtarius, a measure of about the size of a log.
7. In the place from where the cargo came.
8. [H], Luma, corrupt from a nummus (-sesterius) (Jast.), a small coin.
9. Between the ports of Tyre and Acco; and the pilot would not risk taking that course.
10. Even as to deriving any benefit according to R. Meir.
11. And the rennet of these calves is used in preparing the cheese.
12. *Infra* 40b.
13. Whose rennet might be used in preparing cheese.
14. V. Hul. 38b; Sanh. 60b.
15. The sprinkling of the blood or the offering of the fat affects also the slaughtering.
16. The Biblical injunction (Lev. VII, 18) which is taken to declare any sacrifice offered within the sanctuary with an improper intention as 'an abhorred thing' ([H]) is to be applied also to ordinary slaughtering without the sanctuary.
17. [H], lit., 'may the hour of thy birth prove lucky.'
18. Whoever slaughters a sacrifice to an idol.
19. In such a case I, too, forbid.
20. Lit., 'Consecrates'. One of the ways of effecting a betrothal is the handing by the man to the woman of a coin or an article of some value (a *perutah*, a small coin), pronouncing at the time the formula: 'Behold, thou art consecrated unto me by this... according to the law of Moses and of Israel.' V. Kid. I, 1, Ter. 30b.
21. From which animal no benefit may be derived.
22. He would therefore give them extra food on that account, so that even the dung is associated with idolatry.
23. Deut. XIII, 18, referring to things connected with idol worship.

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

24. Ex. XXI, 28.
25. To the question as to why heathen's cheese is forbidden.
26. And yet benefit may be derived from the rennet of a burnt offering, though the animal itself, like an ox which is to be stoned, is forbidden as to any benefit.

## ‘Abodah Zarrah 35a

proves that the dung of an animal from which no benefit may be derived is permitted. Again, since when R. JOSHUA GAVE AS THE REASON, BECAUSE THEY CURDLE IT WITH THE RENNET OF CALVES SACRIFICED TO IDOLS, R. Ishmael replied: IF THAT BE SO, WHY DO THEY NOT EXTEND THE PROHIBITION TO ANY BENEFIT DERIVED FROM IT, — this proves that the dung of animals used for idolatry is forbidden as to the derivation of any benefit.

Could he not, in reply, have given the reason that the forbidden matter is not present in substance? For take the case of Muries; is not the reason why the Rabbis did not forbid the derivation of any benefit from it because the forbidden matter is not there in substance? — I will tell you: Since it is [the rennet] that keeps the milk curdled it must be regarded as though the prohibited matter is there in substance.

DIVERTED TO ANOTHER MATTER, etc. What is the meaning of the words, For thy love is better than wine?<sup>1</sup> When R. Dimi came [from Palestine] he explained it thus: The Congregation of Israel declared to the Holy One, blessed be He: Master of the Universe! The words of thy beloved ones<sup>2</sup> are more pleasant to me than the wine of the Torah.<sup>3</sup>

Why did he ask him just about this verse? Said R. Simeon b. Pazi (some say R. Simeon b. Ammi): He hinted at the beginning of this verse: Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth,<sup>4</sup> [saying]: 'Ishmael, my brother, press thy lips one to the other and do

not be eager to ask for an answer.<sup>5</sup> For what reason? — Said 'Ulla (some say R. Samuel b. Aba): This is a new ordinance about which one should not particularize. What [then] is the reason for this ordinance? — Said R. Simeon b. Pazi in the name of R. Joshua b. Levi: [The probability of its] having been bitten [by a serpent]. Then why not tell him that the reason is the probability of its having been bitten? — Because of 'Ulla's ruling; for 'Ulla said: When an ordinance is made in Palestine, its reason is not revealed before a full year passes, lest there be some who might not agree with the reason and would treat the ordinance lightly. This<sup>6</sup> was ridiculed by R. Jeremiah. If that be so [said he] then hard [cheese] should be permitted, and old [cheese], too, should be permitted. for R. Hanina said: [When any matter becomes] dry, it is permitted, because the [serpent's venom] would not let it get dry; [so also] when matured it is permitted,<sup>7</sup> as it would not have allowed it to mature! — Said R. Hanina: [The reason for forbidding cheese is] because it is impossible for it not to have particles of milk.<sup>8</sup> Samuel said: Because it is set in the skin of the rennet of a *nebelah*.<sup>9</sup> This implies that the rennet itself is permitted — how could Samuel have stated so? Have we not learnt, 'The rennet of heathen's animals or of a *nebelah* is forbidden'?<sup>10</sup> And when the question was asked, Is then any [slaughtered] animal of a heathen not a *nebelah*? it was Samuel himself who answered: These are meant to be taken together thus: The rennet of an animal slaughtered by heathens, which is *nebelah*, is forbidden! — There is no contradiction here.

1. Cant. I, 2.
2. The Heb. word here used, [H], stands for thy beloved ones as well as thy love.
3. The verbal expositions of the sages are more precious than the written words of the Torah. [For it is the unwritten Law that supplements the written Law and completes it.]
4. Ibid.
5. To the question why heathen's cheese is forbidden.

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

6. The reason given in the name of R. Joshua b. Levy.
7. V. *supra* 31b.
8. It is assumed that the milk out of which cheese is made is of clean animals, as milk of unclean ones does not curdle. There may however have been an admixture of milk of an unclean animal which would remain in the holes of the cheese.
9. And though the rennet being mere 'refuse' is permitted, the skin is forbidden.
10. Hul. 116a.

## ‘Abodah Zarah 35b

The former [represents R. Joshua's opinion] before it was reversed;<sup>1</sup> the latter after it was reversed, and the Mishnah was allowed to remain as it was.

R. Malkiah in the name of R. Adda b. Ahaba said: [Cheese is forbidden] because its surface is smeared with fat of swine. R. Hisda said: Because it is curdled with vinegar.<sup>2</sup> R. Nahman b. Isaac said: Because it might be curdled with the sap of '*Orlah*'.<sup>3</sup> Whose opinion does this [last answer] represent? — That of the following Tanna; for we learnt: R. Eliezer says: If milk is curdled with sap of '*Orlah*' it is forbidden because it is considered fruit!<sup>4</sup> — You may even say that it also represents the opinion of R. Joshua,<sup>5</sup> for R. Joshua only differs from R. Eliezer as regards the sap of the tree, but as regards that of the fruit he agrees with him, even as we learnt: R. Joshua said: I have heard explicitly that milk curdled with the sap of the leaves or with the sap of the root is permitted; but if with the sap of unripe figs it is forbidden, because this is a fruit.<sup>6</sup>

Whether the reason be the one given by R. Hisda, or by R. Nahman b. Isaac the prohibition ought surely to extend to the derivation of any benefit!<sup>7</sup> — This indeed is a difficulty.

R. Nahman the son of R. Hisda gave the following exposition:<sup>8</sup> What is the meaning of the verse, Thine ointments have a goodly fragrance [thy name is as ointment poured

forth]? To what may a scholar<sup>9</sup> be compared? To a flask of poliatum:<sup>10</sup> When opened,<sup>11</sup> its odour is diffused, but if covered up its odour does not diffuse; moreover things that are hidden become revealed to him, as it is said, Therefore do the maidens love thee:<sup>12</sup> which may be read to mean 'the hidden [love thee].' What is more, even the Angel of Death loves him for the words may be read to mean, 'The one [appointed] over Death [loves thee];' still more, he inherits both worlds — this world and the world to come — for the words may be read to mean, worlds [love thee].'

**MISHNAH.** THE FOLLOWING ARTICLES OF HEATHENS ARE PROHIBITED BUT THE PROHIBITION DOES NOT EXTEND TO ALL USE OF THEM:<sup>13</sup> MILK WHICH A HEATHEN MILKED WITHOUT AN ISRAELITE WATCHING HIM, THEIR BREAD AND OIL — RABBI<sup>14</sup> AND HIS COURT PERMITTED THE OIL — STEWED<sup>15</sup> AND PRESERVED<sup>16</sup> FOODSTUFFS INTO WHICH THEY ARE ACCUSTOMED TO PUT WINE OR VINEGAR, PICKLED HERRING WHICH HAD BEEN MINCED,<sup>17</sup> BRINE IN WHICH THERE IS NO KALBITH-FISH<sup>18</sup> FLOATING, HELEK,<sup>19</sup> DROPS OF ASAFOETIDA<sup>20</sup> AND SALCONDITUM.<sup>21</sup> BEHOLD THESE ARE PROHIBITED BUT THE PROHIBITION DOES NOT EXTEND TO ALL USE OF THEM.

**GEMARA.** Why should we feel concern about milk [that it is prohibited]? If on account of the possibility that there may have been a substitution [of animals], [the milk of] a clean animal is white and of an unclean animal greenish in color! If, on the other hand, it is on account of the possibility of a mixture [of a clean animal's milk with that of an unclean animal], let him curdle it, because a Master has declared: The milk of a clean animal curdles but that of an unclean animal does not! — [This test is all right] if he required [the milk for the purpose of making] cheese; but with what circumstance are we dealing here? When he requires it as a diet! Then let him take a small quantity and

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

curdle it! — [This test would not be conclusive], because even with the milk of a clean animal there is the whey which does not curdle, so nothing can be proved thereby. Or if you wish I can say that even should you maintain that the milk is intended for cheese [the test is not conclusive because drops of milk] remain between the holes.<sup>22</sup>

**THEIR BREAD.** R. Kahana said in the name of R. Johanan: Their bread was not permitted by the Court.<sup>23</sup> Is it to be deduced from this statement that anybody does allow it? — Yes, because when R. Dimi came [from Palestine] he said: On one occasion Rabbi went out into the field, and a heathen brought before him a loaf baked in a large oven from a *se'ah* of flour. Rabbi exclaimed: How beautiful is this loaf; why should the Sages have thought fit to prohibit it! 'Why should the Sages have thought fit to prohibit it?' As a safeguard against intermarriages! — No, what he meant was: Why should the Sages have thought fit to prohibit it in a field!<sup>24</sup> [As the result of this remark] people imagined that Rabbi permitted the loaf [of a heathen] but it was not so; Rabbi did not permit it. R. Joseph — according to another version, R. Samuel b. Judah said: The incident was not so;<sup>25</sup> but it is said that Rabbi once went to a certain place and observed that his disciples experienced difficulty in obtaining bread; so he asked, 'Is there no baker here?' people imagined that his inquiry was for a Gentile baker, but he really intended an Israelite baker. R. Helbo said: Even according to those who maintain [that he inquired for] a Gentile baker, [the permission] would only apply where there was no Israelite baker and not where such was to be found. R. Johanan, however, said: Even according to those who maintain [that he inquired for] a Gentile baker, [the permission] only holds good in a field, and not in a city as a safeguard against intermarriages. Aibu used to bite and eat [Gentiles'] bread at the boundaries [of the fields];<sup>26</sup> but Raba-according to another version, R. Nahman b. Isaac-said to the

people, 'Hold no converse with Aibu because he eats the bread of Gentiles.'<sup>27</sup>

**AND THEIR OIL.** As regards oil Rab said: Daniel decreed against its use; but Samuel said:

1. The Mishnah in Hul. 116, stating that the rennet of a *nebelah* is forbidden, represents the opinion of R. Joshua in our Mishnah before he retracted in deference to the objection raised by R. Ishmael.
2. Of wine that turned sour, which is forbidden; v. *supra*.
3. Produce of a tree during its first three years.
4. *'Orlah* I, 7.
5. V. *ibid.* \* [The translation from here to the end of the Tractate is by the Rev. Dr. A. Cohen.]
6. *Ibid.*
7. Since vinegar and '*Orlah*' are both so forbidden.
8. Of Cant. I, 3, following the verses cited above.
9. [H], lit., 'a disciple of a sage.'
10. [G], a fragrant ointment.
11. [Applied to the scholar it means that he does not keep his knowledge to himself.]
12. *Ibid.* The Heb. word here used for maidens, [H] may be read: 'Alummot-hidden ones'; 'Al-Maweth — upon death; 'Olamoth-worlds.
13. They may not form part of the diet of a Jew, but he is allowed to dispose of them to Gentiles.
14. The reference is to R. Judah II, the grandson of the R. Judah who compiled the Mishnah. The parenthesis must therefore be a later interpolation.
15. The prohibition is not caused by the presence of *yen nesek* (v. [Glos.](#)), but is due to the fear of close social intercourse resulting in mixed marriages (Rashi).
16. Lit., 'pressed', viz. in brine.
17. Since it is minced, the identity of the fish is in doubt and it may have belonged to an unclean species.
18. The kalbith was a kind of stickleback which was supposed to breed only in brine formed with the clean species of fish.
19. Probably the Latin allec, a sauce made from small fish; and there is a doubt whether the fish of which it was made is allowed.
20. The bark from which it was obtained was presumably cut with a knife which had been used for prohibited food.
21. Traditionally explained as salt used by the Romans as a condiment which was mixed with fat. But Krauss (TAI p. 500) suggests that the

# AVODOH ZOROH – 2a-35b

---

word salkundith is a corruption of istroknith, i.e., Ostracena, a town on the border between Palestine and Egypt where salt was produced.

22. Even when the milk is derived from a clean animal. So it is not possible to determine with certainty whether forbidden milk was mixed in the cheese-making.
23. Of R. Judah the Prince, although they permitted the oil.
24. As distinct from an inhabited area like a city where the reason, viz. the danger of mixed marriages, could not apply.
25. As related by R. Dimi.
26. To take advantage of the rule which allows the bread to be eaten outside the city.
27. [Ran reads: Do not report (any teaching) in the name of Aibu.]