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Mishnah

He shall not multiply wives for himself – up to eighteen. Rabbi Yehudah says: He may multiply for himself (*even more*), provided that they do not turn his heart away from God. Rabbi Shimon says, Even one is prohibited if she turns away his heart. If so, why was it written: *He shall not multiply wives for himself*? It teaches us that even wives as Avigayil (*who was a woman of exemplary character – there would still be a limit of eighteen*). (21a1)

The Torah’s Reasons

The *Gemara* notes: Evidently, Rabbi Yehudah expounds the reason behind the Torah’s laws (*and therefore distinguishes between women who will sway his heart and those who won’t*), while Rabbi Shimon does not expound the reason behind the Torah’s laws. But we know that their opinions are exactly the opposite! For it was taught in a *Baraisa*: We do not take a security from a widow, whether she is poor or rich, as it is written: You shall not take the widow’s garment as a security; these are the words of Rabbi Yehudah. Rabbi Shimon said: One may take a security from a wealthy widow, but not from a poor one, for [in the latter case] you are bound to return [the security] to her daily, and [thereby] cause her a bad name among her neighbors. Whereon we asked: What does he mean? [And the answer was:] Since you have taken a security from her, you must return it to her [each evening] and so [by her frequent visits to her] you would cause her to have a bad name among her

neighbors (*for they will see a man come to her house in the morning and in the evening*). It would seem that Rabbi Yehudah does not expound the reason behind the Torah’s laws. (*and therefore does not distinguish between a wealthy widow and a poor one*), while Rabbi Shimon does!?

The *Gemara* answers: In truth, Rabbi Yehudah does not expound the reason behind the Torah’s laws; but here, it is different, because the Torah itself states the reason: *And he shall not multiply wives to himself, and his heart shall not turn away from Hashem*. This is the meaning of the verse: Why shall he not multiply wives to himself? It is so in order that his heart will not turn away from Hashem.

And Rabbi Shimon explains as follows: Let us see. As a general rule, we do expound the reason behind the Torah’s laws. Accordingly, the Torah should have written here: *And he shall not multiply wives to himself*, and it would not be necessary to write: *and his heart shall not turn away from Hashem*, for I would know myself that the reason why he must not marry many wives is that his heart may not turn away from Hashem. Why then does the Torah explicitly state: *and his heart shall not turn away from Hashem*? It must be to teach us that he must not marry even a single one who may turn away his heart. And how do we understand the verse: *he shall not multiply wives to himself*? It teaches us that even [if they are as virtuous] as Avigayil, [he may not marry more than

the prescribed number]. (21a1 – 21a2)

David's Multiple Wives

From where do we deduce the number eighteen? — From the verse: And to David were sons born in Chevron; and his first-born was Ammon of Achinoam the Yizraelite; the second, Cilav of Avigail the wife of Naval the Carmelite; the third Avshalom the son of Maacah; and the fourth, Adoniyah the son of Chagis; and the fifth, Shefatiah the son of Avital; and the sixth, Yisream of Eglah, David's wife. These were born to David in Chevron. And of them the prophet said: And if that were too little, then would I add to you the like of these, [kahennah] and the like of these, [ve-kahennah], each 'kahennah' implying six, which, with the original six, makes eighteen in all.

Ravina objected: Why not assume that 'kahennah' implies twelve, and 've-kahennah', twenty-four? It has indeed been taught in a Baraisa likewise: 'He shall not multiply wives to himself beyond twenty-four.' And according to the one who interprets the redundant 'vav,' it ought to be forty-eight. And it has been taught in a Baraisa even so: 'He shall not multiply wives to himself, more than forty-eight.'

Then what is the reason of the Tanna of our Mishnah? — Rav Kahana said: He parallels the second 'kahennah' with the first; thus, just as the first 'kahennah' indicates [an increase of] six, so does the second.

The *Gemara* asks: Was he not married to Michal as well?

Rav answers that Eglah was in fact Michal, and why was she called Eglah? Because she was beloved to David like a calf. And so it is written: Had you not plowed with my calf etc.

The *Gemara* asks: But did Michal have children (*and yet the verse states that Eglah was the mother of Yisra'am*)? Is it not written: *And Michal the daughter of Shaul had no child until the day of her death*?

Rav Chisda said: She did not have a child until the day of her death, but on the day of her death, she did.

The *Gemara* asks: Let us see then: David's children are enumerated as being born in Chevron, whereas the incident with Michal (*when she was punished with childlessness*) occurred in Yerushalayim, as it is written: *Michal the daughter of Shaul looked out at the window, and saw king David leaping and dancing before God, and she scorned him in her heart*. And Rav Yehudah, or according to others, Rav Yosef, said: Michal received her due punishment (*by becoming barren; so how could she have had a child on the day that she died*)?

The *Gemara* answers: We can say that prior to that incident she did have children, but afterwards, she did not.

The *Gemara* asks: It is written: *And David took more concubines and wives from Yerushalayim*. — These additional wives filled the quota of eighteen.

What constitutes wives and what constitutes concubines? Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: Wives have a *kesuvah* and *kiddushin*; concubines have neither.

Rav Yehudah said further in the name of Rav: David had four hundred children that were all the sons of an "*eishes yefas toar*" (*a woman captured in war that the Torah permits one to take and to marry*). They all had special haircuts with much hair on the back of their necks (*as was customary amongst the pagans*), and would all sit in golden wagons and go out before the

troops to war. They were known as the tough soldiers of the house of David. (21a2 – 21a4)

Rav Yehudah said further in the name of Rav: Tamar (*David's daughter*) was a daughter of a *yefas toar*, as it is written (*when Tamar was speaking to her brother Amnon*): *Now therefore please speak to the king, for he will not withhold me from you.* Now, should you think that she was the offspring of a legitimate marriage (*Tamar's mother with David*), how could his sister have been granted to him in marriage? We must infer therefore, that she was the daughter of a *yefas toar*. [*She was therefore not regarded as David's halachic daughter, and henceforth, she was not Amnon's sister.*]

The *Gemara* cites and discusses several verses which deal with the passage of Tamar and Amnon.

And Amnon had a friend, whose name was Yonadab the son of Shim'ah, David's brother, and Yonadab was a very wise man etc. Rav Yehudah said in Rav's name: 'Wise' to do evil.¹

And he said to him, Why, O son of the king, are you thus becoming leaner And Yonadab said to him: Lie down on your bed and feign illness . . . and she should prepare the food in my sight . . . And she took the pan and poured them [the cakes] out before him. Rav Yehudah in the name of Rav said: She made for him some kind of pancakes.

Then Amnon hated her with exceeding great hatred etc. For what reason? — Rabbi Yitzchak answered: A hair [of hers] became entangled [around his member], rendering him a person with a cut member. - If this happened of

¹ Yonadav, David's nephew, was a wise man in the ways of wickedness, gave advice to Amnon (*as to how to get close to Tamar*).

itself, what was her part in it? — But we might rather say that she entangled it and caused, mutilation. - But is this so? Didn't Rava expound: What is meant by the verse: And your renown went forth among the nations for your beauty. It is that the daughters of Israel had neither underarm nor pubic hair? — It was otherwise with Tamar, for she was the daughter of a *yefas to'ar*.

And Tamar put ashes on her head and tore her garment of fine wool. A Baraisa was taught in the name of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Korhchah: In that hour Tamar set up a great barrier [about chastity]. They said: If this could happen to kings' daughters, how much more to the daughters of ordinary men; if this could happen to modest girls, how much more to the wanton?

Rav Yehudah said in Rav's name: On that occasion, they made a decree that a man cannot be secluded with a married woman, and that he may not cohabit with an unmarried woman.

The *Gemara* asks from a source where we see that seclusion is Biblically forbidden. Rabbi Yochanan says in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yehotzadak: Where do we see a hint to the prohibition against seclusion in the Torah? The verse states, "*When your brother, the son of your mother, will persuade you.*" Is the son of a mother the only one who persuades you, not the son of a father? Rather this teaches us that a son may be in seclusion with his mother, but one may not be secluded with all of those forbidden to him by the Torah.

The *Gemara* answers that the Rabbis decreed that a man cannot be secluded with an unmarried woman.

Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: Adoniyah (*son of David*) attempted to fit the king's crown on his head, but it did not fit (*for he was missing the indentation on his skull which only certain members of the House of David had*).

Rav Yehudah said in the name of Rav: Adonaiyah's runners (*who ran before him during his rebellion*) were missing spleens and had carved soles (*in order to run faster and avoid pain*). (21a5 – 21b1)

Mishnah

The king shall not multiply horses for himself only enough for his chariot. Neither shall he greatly multiply for himself silver and gold only enough to provide wages for his soldiers. He shall write for himself a Torah scroll; if he goes out to war, he takes it out with him; when he returns, he brings it with him; when he sits in judgment, it is with him; when he reclines to eat, it faces him, as it is written: *And it shall be with him, and he shall read in it all the days of his life.* (21b1 – 21b2)

Multiple Horses

Our Rabbis taught in a Baraisa: He shall not multiply horses for himself [lo]: I might think, [this meant] not even such as are required for his horsemen and chariots. Scripture therefore states: 'lo' - for himself he may not multiply, but he may multiply as many as are required for his chariots and horsemen. - How then am I to interpret the word horses? — As [referring to] horses that stand idle. - And from where do we know that even a single idle horse comes under such a prohibition? — Scripture states: that he should multiply *sus* [a horse]. - But if even

a single idle horse involves [the prohibition,] he shall not multiply, why state horses [plural]? — To show us that with each single idle horse he transgresses anew the prohibitory command.²

[Reverting to chariot horses:] Thus, it is only because Scripture wrote 'lo' [for himself]: but otherwise, might we have thought that even those necessary for his chariots and horsemen are forbidden? — It is necessary here to permit a large number. (21b2)

The Mishnah had stated: Neither shall he greatly multiply for himself silver and gold etc.

Our Rabbis taught in a Baraisa: And silver and gold he shall not multiply 'lo' [for himself]: I might think [this meant] even for paying for the wages of his soldiers. Therefore, Scripture writes, 'lo'; only for himself [i.e., his own use] may he not multiply silver and gold, but he may do so for the wages. Thus, it is only because Scripture wrote 'lo,' but otherwise, might we have thought that the prohibition extended even to money for the wages? — [The word] is necessary here only to permit him a more generous provision.³

Now that you say that 'lo' [to him] is for purpose of exegesis, how will you interpret: He shall not multiply wives 'lo' [for himself]? — As excluding commoners.

Rav Yehudah raised a point of contradiction [in the following passages:] It is written: And Shlomo had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots. But elsewhere we read: And Shlomo had four thousand stalls for horses

² The *Gemara* cites a *Baraisa* which teaches us that a king may multiply horses for his chariots and cavalry, and even a surplus of horses is permitted (*as long as it is for his cavalry*), but he may not have even a single idle horse. He violates this prohibition with each and every extra horse.

³ The *Gemara* cites a *Baraisa* which teaches us that a king may accumulate gold and silver in order to pay his soldiers' wages. He may even keep more in case he wants to expand his army.

and chariots. How are these [to be reconciled]? Thus: If he had forty thousand stables, each of them must have contained four thousand lines of horse stalls; and if he had four thousand stables, each of them must have contained forty thousand stalls.

Rabbi Yitzchak raised the following point of contradiction: It is written: Silver was nothing accounted for in the days of Shlomo, and further: And the king made silver to be in Jerusalem [as plentiful] as stones. [Hence it had some value?] But these verses present no difficulty; the former refers to the period before he married Pharaoh's daughter; the latter, to the period after he married her.⁴

Rabbi Yitzchak said: When Shlomo married the daughter of Pharaoh, Gavriel (*the angel*) descended and stuck a reed in the sea, which formed a sandbank around it, on which was built the great city of Rome.

Rabbi Yitzchak said further: Why were the reasons of some of the Biblical laws not revealed? It is because in two verses, reasons were revealed, and they caused the greatest in the world (Shlomo) to stumble over them. It is written: *He shall not multiply wives for himself (so that his heart will not turn away from God)*. Shlomo said, "I will multiply wives, and yet my heart will not turn away from Hashem." At the end, it is written: *When Shlomo was old, his wives swayed his heart*. Again it is written: *He shall not multiply for himself horses (so he will not return the nation to Egypt)*. Shlomo said, "I will multiply them, but will not return the nation to Egypt." At the end, it is written: *And a chariot left Egypt worth six hundred shekels of silver.* (21b2 – 21b4)

⁴ Rabbi Yitzchak said: Before Shlomo married the daughter of Pharaoh, he was so wealthy that silver had no value, but after he

The Mishnah had stated: And he shall write in his own name a sefer torah.

A Tanna taught: And he must not take credit for one belonging to his ancestors.

Rabbah said: Even if one's parents have left him a Sefer Torah, yet it is proper that he should write one of his own, as it is written: Now therefore write for yourselves this song.

Abaye raised an objection: 'He [the king] shall write a Sefer Torah for himself, for he should not seek credit for one [written] by others.' [Surely, this implies] only a king [is thus enjoined], but not a commoner? — No, it is necessary here to teach the need for two Torah scrolls [for the King], even as it has been taught in a Baraisa: And he shall write for himself the repetition of this law, [i.e.,] he shall write for himself two Torah scrolls, one which goes in and out with him and the other to be placed in his treasure-house. The former which is to go in and out with him, [he shall write in the form of an amulet and fasten it to his arm, as it is written: I have set God always before me (surely He is at my right hand, I shall not falter). He may not, while wearing it, enter the bathhouse, or the lavatory, as it is written: And it shall be with him and he shall read in it — in places appropriate for reading it.

Mar Zutra or, as some say, Mar Ukva said: Originally the Torah was given to Israel in Ivri script and in the sacred [Hebrew] language; later, in the times of Ezra, the Torah was given in Ashshuris script and Aramaic language. [Finally], they selected for Israel the Ashshuris script and Hebrew language, leaving the Hebrew characters and

married her (*he lost some of his wealth*), his silver was valued as stones.



Aramaic language for the commoners. – Who are meant by the ‘commoners’? — Rav Chisda answers: The Cutheans. - And what is meant by Hebrew characters? — Rav Chisda said: The Libonaah script. (21b4 – 21b5)

HALACHAH ON THE DAF

Writing a Sefer Torah

The *Gemara* teaches us that it is a *mitzvah* for every person to write a Sefer Torah, even if he inherited one from his parents. The Shulchan Aruch (Yoreh De’ah 270:1) rules in accordance to this *Gemara*.

There are several points that are dealt with in the *poskim*.

1) **Does a woman have this *mitzvah* of writing a Sefer Torah as well?** The Rambam clearly rules that a woman is not included in this *mitzvah*. However the Shaagas Aryeh has difficulty understanding where the Rambam based his ruling from.

2) **Can one fulfill his obligation through a partnership - by participating with others in a joint writing of one Sefer Torah?** The Bais Efraim is in doubt if one can be *yotzei* through *shitfus*. The Pardes David is as well, and he is astonished at the general custom which allows one to be *yotzei* his *chiyuv* through *shitfus*. But he concludes that there is a bit of proof that one may be *yotzei* through *shitfus*.

3) **May one give his Sefer Torah to a Shul?** Interestingly, the Toras Chaim is of the opinion that if one does so, then he must write another one. He proves his ruling with simple logic. Since when he gave it to the Shul he consecrated it, then it belongs to *hekdesh* so to speak, and it's not his any longer. And even though he wrote a Sefer Torah, that does not absolve him from this *mitzvah*,

for it is not dependent on merely writing one. The biggest proof to that is, if he lost his Sefer Torah, he would have to write another one. Therefore he concludes that one should only give away a Sefer Torah to a Shul if he has another one with him.

However the B’nei Yonah argues that it is dependent on writing alone, and if it got lost, he is still *yotzei* his *chiyuv*. Furthermore, even if it *chas v’shalom* got burned and it’s entirely gone, he is most probably *yotzei* his *chiyuv*. Nevertheless, he concurs that one should not be *makdish* his Sefer Torah to the Shul, rather it should still remain his. The Pardes David and the Toras Nesanel also argue on the Toras Chaim and maintain that even if it got lost, one is *yotzei* his *chiyuv*.

DAILY MASHAL

Do not take as surety the garment of a widow - Our Rabbis say: If one person of a group dies, all the remaining members of the group should be concerned. The common understanding of this maxim is that each and every one of the group should be concerned over the death of this close member of the group, as it indicates that there is a greater likelihood that one of them will shortly die as well. This understanding is corroborated by the Rabbis saying that this is similar to a stone slipping out of place in a row of stones that create a wall. When one rock is dislodged there is a likelihood that other stones will shortly follow. The holy Admor of Satmar zt"l adds that this also carries the following message: All surviving members of this group should concern themselves for the welfare of the widow and the orphans.