

The Sweet Satirist of Israel:
An Annotated Translation of Gerson Rosenzweig's *Talmud Yankee*

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Gerson Rosenzweig, a Lithuanian-born author, came to America in 1888.

Rosenzweig held a number of jobs over the course of his life. His most concerted efforts were devoted to the editing of a number of Hebrew periodicals in an attempt to foster the growth of American Hebrew literature. Each of these papers was fairly short-lived.

Rosenzweig did, however, manage to develop a talent for Hebrew writing, publishing epigrams and poems, as well as many clever works of satire. Often, his works betrayed his traditional Jewish upbringing, as he was able to use a phrase from a classical text in order to craft a witty remark.

Rosenzweig's most acclaimed project was a clever work which he called the *Yankee Talmud* (New York: A. Ch. Rosenberg, 1907). This collection consists of six tractates: מסכת חדיטות *Masechet Hedyotot*- Tractate Fools, מסכת חנוכה *Masechet Chanukah*- Tractate Chanukah, מסכת נכסים *Masechet Nechasim*- Tractate Property, מסכת מסווה *Masechet Masveh*- Tractate Disguise, מסכת כוזבים *Masechet Chazavim*- Tractate Liars, and מסכת אמריקא *Masechet America*- Tractate America. There is also a Midrash on the Book of Esther and a "Haggadah for Authors."

In all of these works, Rosenzweig shows his command of the Hebrew language and his incisive wit. While mocking the American immigrant, Reform Judaism, and other contemporary institutions and personalities, Rosenzweig is true to his background as a student of the *yeshiva* in Europe, and takes his place as a משכיל *maskil*, a member of the Jewish enlightenment.

Rosenzweig lays out his text similar to a page of Talmud. In the center of the page we find the main "Talmud" text, with a commentary (also by Rosenzweig) flowing around it in the margins. As in most volumes of the Talmud, this commentary appears in the so-called "Rashi" script.

This thesis presents an annotated translation of the entire text of Rosenzweig's *Yankee Talmud*, including his commentary.

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Acknowledgments

My father first became familiar with the work of Gerson Rosenzweig during a session, led by Dr. Gary Zola at the 2001 convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. He suggested that it might form a good basis for my rabbinic thesis. Since I had been seeking a translation-based project, I investigated and soon decided that Rosenzweig's *Yankee Talmud* would be an exciting and challenging document with which to work.

I could not have completed this thesis without the assistance of many individuals:

The translation work required me to have a strong foundation in rabbinic texts. I am thankful to all of my rabbinics teachers at HUC who helped to develop this foundation: Dr. Marc Bregman, Dr. Jonathan Cohen, Dr. Edward Goldman, Dr. Michael Klein ז"ל, Dr. Richard Sarason, and Dr. Mark Washofsky. Thanks are also due to Dr. Jonathan Sarna, who helpfully elucidated two unclear points.

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comments were invaluable to me; without them, this project could never have been completed.

Finally, I wish to dedicate this work to Jody Heather Riches. I am constantly amazed by the way our love for one another has continued to grow. Thank you for being there for me throughout this project. I look forward to sharing my life with you.

A few notes about this translation: As much as possible, I have attempted to render the translation in an idiomatic manner. Footnotes and bracketed insertions are used in an attempt to elucidate any difficult passages.

Rosenzweig often uses his "Rashi" commentary to expand upon the jokes in his main text. Translations of the "Rashi" follow each tractate. **Boldface type** in the main text indicates that there is a corresponding explanation for that phrase in the commentary.

Biblical citations are indicated by *italics*. Occasionally, Hebrew words which have entered the vernacular (such as *challah*), or which are necessary for the proper comprehension of the text, are also rendered in *italics*.

Hebrew and Aramaic words and phrases are offered, where necessary, in Hebrew characters. In such cases, transliteration is also offered. For the most part, I have tried to consistently follow the transliteration standards suggested by Dr. Werner Weinberg.¹

Because of the rarity of the *Yankee Talmud*, the original text is included at the conclusion of the thesis. This will enable the reader who desires to do so to occasionally consult the original document in order to better appreciate the joke being made

1. Weinberg, Werner. *How Do You Spell Chanukah? A General-Purpose Romanization of Hebrew*. Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1976.

Gerson Rosenzweig, an author, epigrammist, and editor of periodicals, was a leader in the genre of Hebrew literature in America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He has been called a “master of parodies”¹ and a “general” among the practitioners of Hebrew literature.² His reputation as נעים סאטיריות ישראל “the sweet satirist of Israel”³ was much deserved, as his gift for word play and sense of humor are evident in all of his work.

Rosenzweig was born in Karachin, a small *shtetl* north of Bialystok⁴ in 1861. His father, Zalman Leib, was a *shamash* and *sofer*, and Gerson was educated in the home at first. Later, he was sent to a yeshiva in Bialystock. It was there that Rosenzweig first began to explore his talents for writing humor, as his first piece was commissioned for the school’s in-house publication, “Chachamot.”⁵

At the age of nineteen, Rosenzweig married and opened a Hebrew school. Eight years later, he came to America, trying his hand at various odd jobs to supplement the meager income he was able to attain through his writing and editorial work. Though the biographical information on Rosenzweig does not indicate his reasons for emigration, we can speculate that he was motivated by the rise in European anti-Semitism and the prospect of making a better living in America.

One of the manners in which Rosenzweig attempted to support himself was

1. Kabakoff, Jacob. *Chalutzei HaSifrut HaIvrit BaAmerika*. Tel-Aviv: Yavneh Publishing House, Ltd., 1966. p. 232

2. *Ibid.*

3. A title found, for instance, in Malachi, A.R. *Masot U'Reshimot*. New York: HaHistadrut HaIvrit BaAmerika, 1937. p. 179.

4. Present-day Poland, although it was Russian (or Lithuanian) territory at the time of Rosenzweig’s birth. See Cohen, Chester G. *Shtetl Finder*. Bowie, Maryland: Heritage Books, Inc., 1989.

5. Kabakoff, p. 214

through the running of a shoe store; this endeavor inspired his essay סוגיא דמנעלים *sugya diM'na'alayim*,⁶ which represents Rosenzweig's first known effort to parody the American scene in a Talmudic style.⁷

Rosenzweig apparently made his debut in the world of American Hebrew literature when some of his articles appeared in the newspaper חקול *HaKol* (*The Voice*), which first appeared in 1888, published by M.L. Rodkinson.⁸ Throughout his life, Rosenzweig clung to the belief that "there is ... a time and a place for one [Hebrew] periodical in this country."⁹ He soon became a frequent contributor to חפסגה *HaPisgah* (*The Summit*) later that same year.¹⁰

Among Rosenzweig's prolific contributions to the Hebrew press were numerous poems and epigrams. These were collected into his first book, שירים ומשלים *Shirim U'Meshalim* (*Songs and Fables*), which was published in 1891.

Also in 1891, Rosenzweig became the editor of the weekly newspaper העברי *Halvri* (*The Hebrew*). This paper, in which he frequently serialized his work, continued sporadically in various incarnations for the next seven years, and was briefly resurrected in 1901. Following its demise, Rosenzweig founded a satirical weekly, named חדבורה *HaDevorah* (*The Bee*) in 1911.¹¹ He was disappointed by the lack of support these

6. "A Pair of Shoes," or, alternatively, "A Chapter on Shoes."

7. The four-page essay was published in New York in 1893. Kabakoff reprints the text on pages 265-266.

8. Kabakoff, p. 215

9. Malachi, p. 183

10. It is difficult to find precise information about the Hebrew periodicals of this time. Many were short-lived. As Michael Gary Brown notes in his article, "All, All, Alone: The Hebrew Press in America from 1914 to 1924" (in *American Jewish Historical Quarterly*, Volume LIX), from 1871 (the publication date of the first Hebrew periodical) to the start of World War I, at least 49 Hebrew periodicals were published. Many of these were short-lived, and publishers had few qualms about appropriating the name of a newspaper which had ceased publication for use as the title of a new, unrelated venture.

11. The definitive work on the Hebrew newspapers of this period is by Fannie M. Brody. See Brody,

endeavors received, and “with a gentle stick he would accuse and reprimand the Jews who [withheld their support] from the Hebrew papers.”¹²

Rosenzweig published a second book of his collected work in 1903, which was called *חמשה ואילף* *Chamishah Ve'Elef* (*One Thousand and Five*). It was a compendium of epigrams which he had published in the margins of various newspapers. He planned a second volume of this work,¹³ but along with many other planned publications, it never came to light.

Rosenzweig did much to contribute to what some have called the “Golden Age” for Hebrew literature in America. He was seen by many as the “Last of the Mohicans” from the writers of the Hebrew *חשכלה* *Haskalah* (“enlightenment”). Upon his death, Mordecai Ze'ev Rubin, a writer for *Halvri*, eulogized Rosenzweig as “one of the lions of Hebrew literature in the ghetto [of American Jewry].”¹⁴

Among Rosenzweig's greatest contributions to American Hebraica were his brilliant parodies. In *Halvri*, Rosenzweig began serializing what would become his master work: a Talmud parody which he called *מסכת עמריקה* *Masechet Amerika* (*Tractate America*).¹⁵ In 1892, he published it as a pamphlet, and in 1894 it was reprinted in Vilna. It enjoyed some degree of popularity, and was excerpted in other periodicals around the world, including the *New York Sun*.¹⁶ Finally, in 1907, he enlarged his work by adding

Fannie M. “The Hebrew Periodical Press in America, 1871-1931: A Bibliographical Survey” *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* Number 33. New York, 1934.

12. Malachi, p. 183.

13. The first and second volumes together would have comprised a total of 1,005 epigrams. However, since volume two never appeared, the title is something of a misnomer.

14. Kabakoff, p. 221

15. In keeping with his penchant for puns, Rosenzweig spelled America in a non-traditional way, to give the word the meaning of “an empty people.” See *Tractate America*, translated herein, for further explanation.

16. Kabakoff, p. 238

other “tractates.” This *תלמוד ינקאי* *Talmud Yankee* (*Yankee Talmud*) is a masterful parody. It closely and cleverly mirrors the style of the Talmud, while also permitting Rosenzweig to comment on the issues of the day. In it, Rosenzweig demonstrates his remarkable mastery of classical Jewish texts, which he learned from the *yeshiva* education of his youth. It is no wonder that he “demanded from authors [and, presumably, readers] a foundational knowledge of the sources;”¹⁷ it would be difficult to fully appreciate the genius of Rosenzweig’s work without such a background.

Rosenzweig continued to publish his work in the various Hebrew papers, and even dabbled in the Yiddish press, though he did not consider that language to be as important and cultured as Hebrew.¹⁸ Among his other well-known work is a series called *ילקוט גרשוני* *Yalkut Gershoni* (*Gerson’s Collection*). Articles in this series were published on Fridays, beginning in 1907, in *Halvri* (and were sometimes reprinted in the Yiddish press). In it, Rosenzweig offered satirical comments upon the weekly Torah portion in the style of a traditional *midrash*.

Rosenzweig bemoaned the fact that Hebraists in America toiled in anonymity. Lamenting the fate of the Hebrew author, he offered the following epigram at a party in honor of his fiftieth birthday:

The writers of our people are abandoned during their lifetime / They seek
bread and are not thought of / Yet in their death they are honored and
esteemed as humorists / Among our people only ghosts are considered giants.¹⁹

Shortly thereafter, Rosenzweig became ill with cancer of the mouth. Prior to his death on February 13, 1914, he was able to look upon his condition with his trademark sardonic

17. *Ibid.*, p. 236

18. Calling it the mixed-up language of Babylonia in his Tractate America.

19. Kabakoff, p. 219. The words rhyme in the original Hebrew.

humor, applying to himself the epigram, "Life and death are in the hands of the tongue."²⁰

For his epitaph, he composed these lines:

Here lies Gerson / The joker among the sages / Who laughed till his last day / And
composed epigrams.²¹

Though Rosenzweig's work seems to have found a niche audience during his lifetime (and enjoyed some popularity following his death)²², today it is little-known. But those who take the time to explore his work will find that it is not only entertaining, but provides tremendous insight into the American Jewish culture of Rosenzweig's era.

Gerson Rosenzweig, of course, did not invent the concept of satirizing classical Jewish texts. As early as the twelfth century, Abraham ibn Ezra (who would become best known for his biblical commentary) composed epigrams which closely parodied well-known texts. He also was among the first to write in the mock-heroic style in Hebrew.²³ In 1170, Judah ben Solomon Al Harizi published a parody which changed the form from "a mere literary toy into an instrument of satire."²⁴ Judah ben Isaac ibn Shabbetai continued to refine Hebrew parody in thirteenth century Spain, while Immanuel of Rome pioneered the art of exegetical parody (offering humorous interpretations of classical texts) in the fourteenth century.²⁵

Parody became a distinct branch of Hebrew literature in the first half of the fourteenth century. The most famous satirical work of this time was *מסכת פורים* *Massekhet Purim* (Tractate Purim), written by Kalonymous ben Kalonymous. This

20. A variation on Proverbs 18:21. Rosenzweig had devoted his life to sharp-tongued satire, and now he was dying due to a disease of the mouth!

21. Kabakoff, p. 220. The epitaph rhymes in the original Hebrew.

22. See, for instance, the memorial tribute in the CCAR Yearbook of 1914.

23. Robuck, Gary J. *Masekhot Purim: An Annotated Translation, Analysis and Background Study of Two Talmudic Purim Parodies* (Rabbinical Thesis). H.U.C.-J.I.R., 1988, p. 21

24. Davidson, Israel. *Parody in Jewish Literature*. New York: The Columbia University Press, 1907, p. 6

25. Robuck, p. 26

represented the first time that the Talmud was subjected to such satire. Kalonymous meant no disrespect for the Talmudic literature; he merely sought to show that it, like any other popular work, was fair game for parody.²⁶

Israel Davidson asserts that there were no [Hebrew] parodies of importance from the mid fourteenth to the mid seventeenth centuries.²⁷ Even as the form began to re-emerge following this period of repose, it was not until the late nineteenth century that it truly began to flourish once again. Davidson notes, "As Jewish literature in general came into closer intimacy with the new life and its problems, Jewish satire likewise assumed a direct bearing on life and reflected the spirit of the times."²⁸ Kabakoff adds, "Parody served as a salvation for different immigrant authors who were disappointed to find here [in America] a "null and void" in Jewish life."²⁹

In light of this, it is not surprising that an author as talented as Rosenzweig should turn to parody as a vehicle for commenting upon the conditions around him. The Talmud provided him with an excellent framework upon which to base his parody: he was intimately familiar with the Talmud as a result of his childhood education, and it "lends itself to parody, due, in part, to the nearly exhaustive scope of topics it assembles."³⁰

In the introduction to his work *Parody in Jewish Literature*, Davidson notes:

Few parodies imitate each and every phrase of the original ... A parody must catch the ring of the original. It must emphasize its mannerisms and peculiarities, its catchwords and favorite tricks of style, so as to strike the ear with the very echo of the original. But imitation of mere externals is not enough. The parody must enter into the spirit and reproduce the intellectual and emotional characteristics of its model.³¹

26. Davidson, p. 19

27. *Ibid*, p. 29

28. *Ibid*, p. 59

29. Kabakoff, p. 232

30. Robuck, p. 13

31. Davidson, p. xvi

By these criteria, Rosenzweig was certainly a successful parodist. His *Yankee Talmud* shows that he has “full command of the Talmudic diction and idiom, and handles all forms of Talmudic hermeneutics with skill.”³²

Rosenzweig's *Yankee Talmud* is divided into six tractates (mirroring the six orders of the traditional Talmud). The volume also includes a satirical *midrash* on the book of Esther, and a “Haggadah for Authors.”

In *מסכת הדיטות Masechet Hedyotot (Tractate Fools)*, Rosenzweig pokes fun at Jewish tailors, authors, and anarchists. The mockery of tailors was due to the fact that many Jews of the time were employed in the needle trades; an 1890 poll by the Baron de Hirsch fund found that sixty percent of Jews in New York who responded to their inquiries were working in the garment industry.³³ That authors are also a subject of ridicule shows Rosenzweig's willingness to engage in self-deprecation; additionally, it enables him to show scorn for the Yiddish literature of the time, which he derides as mere “jargon.” Finally, his focus upon the anarchists gives the reader insight into the culture of New York Jews of the 1880s and 1890s. Many of these immigrants brought with them their European socialist ideals, and formed groups such as the Knights of Freedom, based on the writings of Most, Kropotkin, and Bakunin³⁴ (the very anarchists whom Rosenzweig dubs the “rebbe” of the movement).

מסכת חנוכה Masechet Chanukah (Tractate Chanukah) deals with the problem of

32. Davidson, p. 108

33. Howe, Irving. *World of Our Fathers*. New York: Touchstone Books, 1976. p. 80

34. See Howe, p. 104ff

Jewish gambling. By making reference to the ancient tradition of playing cards on Chanukah,³⁵ Rosenzweig is able to offer social commentary on a contemporary American cultural issue which troubled him.

מסכת נכסים *Masechet Nechasim* (Tractate Property) focuses upon the differences between the rich and the poor, and gives particular attention to the conditions in the tenements. Many of the Jews who had attained wealth in the new world were ignoring the needs of their brethren, and Rosenzweig sought to call attention to the widening gulf between the "haves" and the "have-nots." There were attempts at reforms, such as the Tenement House Act of 1867. Nevertheless, a 1908 census of 250 families found that 25% of them lived with five or more people in one room. At best, those surveyed lived in buildings with two toilet facilities per floor, to be shared by residents.³⁶ Rosenzweig sought to use his satire not only to mock the system, but also, perhaps, to inspire change.

מסכת מסוה *Masechet Masveh* (Tractate Disguise), under the guise of describing the celebration of Purim, speaks of the hypocrisy of rabbis and other religious leaders (who, in Rosenzweig's opinion, hide their true selves from the public). Here, as well as in his *Tractate America*, he engages in "bitter mockery of the 'guiders of the generation': the rabbis, the 'reverends,'³⁷ the *shochtim*,³⁸ the '*melamdin*'³⁹ and other 'holy vessels'."⁴⁰

35. Which is attested to by Sidney B. Hoenig in Goodman, Phillip. *The Hanukkah Anthology* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1976)

36. Howe, p. 148

37. A title frequently adopted by American rabbis, to give themselves an air of Germanic authority.

38. Ritual slaughterers, whom Rosenzweig felt were making unfair profit from their work.

39. Teachers of children. Rosenzweig, who supplemented his income through teaching, had a low opinion of the quality of religious education in America.

40. Malachi, p. 182

Additionally, the tractate deals with the issue of drunkenness. Though at first "saloonkeepers regarded Jews as poor customers," gradually an element of society developed which frequently patronized the numerous bars on the Lower East Side.⁴¹ These individuals then became ready targets for Rosenzweig's wit.

Masechet Chazavim (Tractate Liars) is a treatise on April Fool's Day. Within it, Rosenzweig also manages to poke fun at the Christian doctrine of the virgin birth. The tractate also briefly mocks Isaac Mayer Wise, a leader of Reform Judaism in America, who was a favorite target of Rosenzweig's. In 1892, Rosenzweig had published an article called *Zohar Chadash* (A New Zohar)⁴² in his newspaper *HaPisgah*. There, he compared Wise (whose name means "white" in German) to the biblical character Laban (whose name means "white" in Hebrew).⁴³ Rosenzweig also mocked Wise in his "Haggadah for Authors."

Masechet Amerika (Tractate America) is Rosenzweig's longest tractate. It encompasses eight chapters. The first chapter rejects the idea of America as the promised land, instead suggesting that it is little more than a glorified penal colony. It speaks ill of policemen, and discusses the corrupt political system, in which anything can be acquired through the proper bribe. This was, of course, written in the days of Tammany Hall, when such corruption was rampant. There is a brief section which

41. Howe, p. 209

42. The Zohar is the basic source-book for Jewish mysticism, composed in the thirteenth century in Spain. It is ascribed to Moses ben Shem-Tov de León (1250-1305).

43. Kabakoff, p. 215

focuses upon the poor construction of tenements, and a mockery of those immigrants who have taken on the airs of the *nouveau riche*.

The second chapter mocks the so-called "greenhorns," those new immigrants who tried so desperately (but often unsuccessfully) to blend into their new surroundings. Attention is also given to the peddler's trade, with which many new immigrants were occupied.

The third chapter speaks of the necessity of having the entire family (even children) work in order to put food on the table. It also speaks of labor unions, with which Jews were frequently involved in an effort to improve their working conditions.⁴⁴ In addition, Rosenzweig briefly mocks the newspaper business, which he knew intimately.

In chapter four, Rosenzweig returns briefly to the subject of peddling. But the majority of the chapter focuses on the shoddy state of Jewish education in America. Rosenzweig spent some time as a teacher himself, and even had plans to form an "Organization of Teachers of Israel" to reform the process of religious instruction.⁴⁵

Howe provides some insight into the problems which Rosenzweig observed:

During the [eighteen-] eighties and nineties there were frequent complaints of ignorance, sacrilege, bad manners, and poor teaching; the intellectual, and sometimes the moral, level of a good many of these religious institutions was low ... Indigent *melamdim*, few of them qualified or able to cope with American children, would trudge from floor to floor, peddling Torah 'like other merchandise.'⁴⁶

Frequently, rudimentary instruction was provided, with the goal of making the student just competent enough to conduct his Bar Mitzvah service. Rosenzweig comments on

44. Howe, p. 109

45. Kabakoff, p. 216

46. Howe, p. 95

this as well.

Chapter five deals with fraternal organizations. Rosenzweig "chastises the so-called lodges which are nothing but hot-beds of dissension, and the charitable societies which clamor for money but do little for the poor."⁴⁷

In chapter six, Rosenzweig describes the differences between Orthodox and Reform rabbis in America. It is "complimentary neither to the one nor to the other."⁴⁸ In particular, he "takes to task the Orthodox rabbis for turning their sacred calling into a business, and the Reform rabbis for concentrating all their energies on oratory."⁴⁹ He also mocks Reform rabbis for putting on airs by adopting Germanic titles and wearing formal dress.

Chapter seven bemoans the plight of the Hebrew author in America. As Davidson notes, "beneath the playfulness of Jewish satire an undercurrent of sadness is always present."⁵⁰ Certainly Rosenzweig was disappointed that Hebrew literature in America did not enjoy more widespread support. Rosenzweig's account of the struggle of an author mirrors that outlined by his contemporary, Menachem Mendel Dolitsky:

You know what happens to Hebrew poets in this country: First stage- Hebrew poet. Second stage- Hebrew teacher- or rather, herder, with the children as unwilling cattle. Third stage- you write trashy novels for servant maids. ... Do anything, be anything, peddle candles and matches- sell windbags and bubbles ... be a tailor, a shoemaker, a cobbler- anything but a Hebrew poet in America.⁵¹

The eighth and final chapter finds Rosenzweig once again poking fun at the Yiddish press. Though he did indeed do some work with the Yiddish papers, he felt Yiddish to be a gutter language, much inferior to his beloved Hebrew.

47. Davidson, p. 107

48. *Ibid.*, p. 78

49. *Ibid.*, p. 107

50. *Ibid.*, p. xix

51. Cited in Howe, p. 75

After the six tractates appear two supplements. In the first, מדרש אסתר *Midrash Esther*, Rosenzweig exhibits his talent for exegetical parodies. This is the same format he used in his serialized column *Yalkut Gershoni*. His main purpose is to show his wit in deriving creative interpretations for verses from the Book of Esther. However, he does manage to poke some fun at the laxity in American Jewish observance, newspaper writers and editors, and a few of his other favorite subjects.

The second supplement, הגדה לסופרים *Haggadah LeSofrim* (The Haggadah for Authors), is a brilliant parody of the Passover Haggadah which sharply satirizes the traditional text. Its main topic is the difficult situation of the Hebrew author in America. Rosenzweig does devote a paragraph, however, to a critique of Isaac Mayer Wise and the students of his Reform seminary. He also mocks American materialism with his song ואמרתם זבח כסף *VeAmartem Zevach Chesef* ("And you shall say it is a sacrifice of money") which parodies the traditional Passover song ואמרתם זבח פסח *VeAmartem Zevach Pesach* ("And you shall say it is the Paschal offering").

Gerson Rosenzweig's *Yankee Talmud* is not only a clever parody of the Talmudic style; it also works as a biting social commentary which aids us in understanding the cultural *milieu* in which he lived and worked. In the best of parodies, "all social, religious, and even many of the political questions of the day engaged the attention" of the writer "and called forth either ... ardent support or ... vigorous protest."⁵² As one historian has aptly asserted:

52. Davidson, p. xxii

By means of ridicule and imitation, parody affords us the opportunity to better see ourselves as we truly are. Through grotesque caricature, we learn both about the object being mocked and the spirit, concerns, and conditions of the parodist: and not only about the parodist, but also about the society in which he moves.⁵³

It is hoped that the translation on the pages which follow will serve to re-introduce readers to the genius of Gerson Rosenzweig, who truly understood and perfected the art of the parody, and whose satirical writings shed light on the remarkable American epoch in which he lived.

53. Robuck, p. 9

The Talmud is a work representing the collected efforts of numerous sages, over the course of nearly eight hundred years, to codify and expand upon the laws found in the Torah. The Talmud consists of two components, the *משנה* *Mishnah* and the *גמרא* *Gemara*.¹

According to Jewish tradition, during the revelation on Sinai, Moses actually received two components of Torah. The written Torah (known as *תורה שבכתב* *Torah shebichtav*) was revealed to Moses during the daylight hours. It consists of the text we now know as the Pentateuch. The oral Torah (known as *תורה שבעל-פה* *Torah sheba'al-peh*) was transmitted to Moses at night. By definition, the traditions he learned during the evening were not to be written down, but rather were meant to be passed from one generation to the next. Indeed, Mishnah Avot 1:1 tells us that this chain of transmission began with Moses, who transmitted the teachings to his successor Joshua. Joshua in turn transmitted them to the elders of the people, who taught them to the prophets, who then instructed the men of the Great Assembly. This *mishnah* thus purports to trace an unbroken chain of transmission of the oral law into the post-Temple period.

But a problem began to arise, for a sect known as the Sadduceans had begun to gain popularity. They acknowledged only the written Torah as binding, and refused to accept any of the oral traditions. The rabbis, following a branch of Judaism known as Pharisaism, treated both the Written Torah and the Oral Torah as equally binding

1. Though an introduction to the history of the Talmud follows here, to give an exhaustive account of its compilation would be outside our purview. Many good treatises have been written which can provide more detailed explanations. The premier scholarly work is Mielziner's *Introduction to the Talmud*, while Adin Steinsaltz's *The Essential Talmud* is more accessible to the layperson. This entire chapter owes a great debt to the work of both men.

collections of הלכה *halacha* (Jewish law; literally, “the path [by which to walk]”). They sought to give their accumulated traditions some basis in Scripture. In most cases, they were able to find some tie (however tenuous) between their practice and the Scriptural law. In those cases where this was not possible, they termed the customs הלכה למשה מסיני *halachah leMoshe miSinai* (“laws received by Moses at Sinai”). This is not necessarily an attribution meant to be taken literally, but serves to designate an old tradition and give it some authoritative weight.

There were numerous attempts to take the somewhat amorphous body of oral law and put it into some organized form. In the end, it was Rabbi Judah HaNasi (Judah the Prince) who was credited with fixing its contents around 200 CE. The work ascribed to Rabbi Judah was known as the Mishnah.

The Mishnah derives its name from the root שנה *shanah*, meaning “to repeat” or “to teach.” It consists of a total of sixty-three tractates (known as מסכתות *masechtot*), divided amongst six orders (or סדרים *sedarim*). It is composed in a mixture of Hebrew and Aramaic, reflecting the languages spoken in Israel at the time of its compilation.

There are three periods of sages who are cited in the Mishnah. The first belong to a class known as סופרים *soferim*, or scribes. Ezra, mentioned toward the end of the Hebrew Bible, is said to have been the first scribe; others followed him for a period of about two hundred years. The scribes were succeeded by the זוגות *zugot*, or pairs. These sages, working in groups of two, stood at the head of the Sanhedrin. One held the title of נשיא *nasi*, “president,” while the other served as אב בית דין *av beit din* (literally, “head of the court,” but actually more of a vice-presidential capacity). The period of the *zugot*

also lasted approximately two hundred years. Members of the final generation of Mishnaic sages are known as תנאים *Tannaim* (teachers). The term itself does not appear in the Mishnah, but is of later origin. The period of *Tannaim* is subdivided into a number of generations (authorities disagree over whether there were five or six).² Traditionally, it is understood to end with the death of Judah HaNasi.³

Once the Mishnah ascribed to Judah HaNasi became the authoritative code of Jewish law, it began to be studied and debated in various rabbinic academies. The most significant of these academies were located in Tiberias, Sephoris, and Caesaria in the land of Israel; diaspora Jews established academies in Nahardea, Sura, and Pumbedita (in Babylonia). In these academies, scholars would discuss the meanings of the often elliptical mishnaic teachings, and attempt to reconcile any apparent contradictions in laws. They would also attempt to apply its rulings to new cases which the sages of the Mishnah had not considered, and from time-to-time would bring a ברייתא *baraita*, an “extraneous Mishnah,” back into the discussion.⁴ The discussions of these academies would eventually be recorded, forming the גמרא *gemara* (from the Hebrew גמר *gamar*, meaning “to finish,” implying that these discussions represented the completion of the work begun by the *Tannaim*). The term may also be derived from the Aramaic root גמר *GMR*, equivalent to the Hebrew קבל *KBL*, “received;” thus it would have a meaning of “received, traditional learning”).

2. Those who count a sixth generation of *Tannaim* include in the final generation those younger colleagues and disciples of Judah HaNasi who are not quoted in the Mishnah. They comprise a transitional generation between the sages of the Mishnah and those cited in the Gemara.

3. This synopsis of the development of the Mishnah follows the traditional viewpoint. In actuality, the Mishnah as we have it is the work of the *tannaim*.

4. The ברייתות *baraitot* (plural of *baraita*) were teachings from the same period as the Mishnah which had not been included in Judah HaNasi's collection because they contradicted other teachings or did not represent majority opinion.

Because the debates of the *gemara* took place in two distinct geographical areas, two distinct bodies of text arose. The work of the Palestinian academies was compiled first, beginning in the third century and concluding in the fifth century. The work was done in great haste; as Christianity spread through the land of Israel, teachers of Jewish tradition were being persecuted, and it was feared that the teachings would be lost if they were not put into writing. So, a Talmud (combining the traditional *mishnayot* with the commentaries of the Palestinian academies) was written. It became known as the תלמוד ירושלמי *Talmud Yerushalmi* ("Jerusalem Talmud"), or more accurately as תלמוד ארץ ישראל *Talmud Eretz Yisrael*. ("Palestinian Talmud"). Perhaps as a result of the speed with which it was compiled, the Palestinian Talmud is deficient in a number of ways. Its language is extremely elliptical, and its discussions are very brief. Only thirty-nine *masechtot* of the Mishnah have any *gemara* to accompany them. There is evidence, however, that the missing *gemara* did once exist.

The more popular Talmud is the תלמוד בבלי *Talmud Bavli* ("Babylonian Talmud"), which was compiled beginning in the third century and ending in the sixth or seventh century. The original task of compilation is attributed to Rav Ashi, but others undoubtedly completed the task for him. Though the Babylonian Talmud has *gemara* for only thirty-seven of the *masechtot*, its discussions are so much richer than those of the Palestinian Talmud, and it contains nearly three times as much material. The biggest difference between the two editions is that the Babylonian Talmud contains much more editorial material, known as סתם *stam* material. This makes it easier to follow the discussions of the Babylonian Talmud. The *stam* is responsible for the recognizable

“Talmudic” language.

The sages of the Talmud are known as אמוראים *Amoraim* (from the Hebrew אמר *amar*, “to say”). The *Amoraim* have been divided into six or seven periods,⁵ extending from the death of Judah HaNasi to the compilation of the Babylonian Talmud. The anonymous, *stam* material in the Talmud is generally thought to date from a later period than that of the *amoraim*. The “*stammaim*”⁶ serve, in effect, as the editors and redactors of the Babylonian Talmud.

The layout of the Babylonian Talmud in our printed editions is rather distinctive. Each tractate opens with a Mishnah (indicated by the letters מ'תנ'י or מתני', which is shorthand for מתניתא *matnita*, “our Mishnah.”). This is followed by the Gemara based upon that Mishnah (introduced by the letters גמ' *gemara*). A chapter of Talmud is referred to not only by chapter number, but by the first words of the first Mishnah in that chapter. Thus, the first chapter of the entire Babylonian Talmud (chapter one of Tractate Berachot) is called מאמתי *me'eimatai* (“from what time...”), because the Mishnah begins with the question, “From what time may one begin the recitation of the *Shema*?” The head of each subsequent page in the chapter includes this name, the chapter number, and the tractate name. Gerson Rosenzweig mimics this style in the headings of the pages of his Yankee Talmud.

A feature of the Babylonian Talmud not always maintained in Rosenzweig's parody is the distinctive manner in which pages are numbered. All printed editions of the Babylonian Talmud follow the pagination of the edition printed by Daniel Bomberg in

5. Depending upon whether one counts a sixth generation of *Tannaim*.

6. I.e., Those who composed the *stam* material.

Venice, from 1520 to 1523. Bomberg's edition featured an elaborate title page which was numbered as page one; since that time, no edition of the Babylonian Talmud has had a "page one." Instead, each tractate begins on page two. The pages are folio pages, so that the front and back side share the same number. They are differentiated from one another by labelling the front side "a" and the reverse side "b". Usually, the front side will be labeled with the Hebrew letter (or letters) corresponding to the page number, while the "b" side will have an Arabic numeral. Rosenzweig numbers some of his pages with Hebrew letters, and others with Arabic numerals, but is somewhat inconsistent in his application of this system.

There are a number of commentaries to the Babylonian Talmud, many of which are so integral to effective Talmud study that they are now permanent features of every printed Talmud edition. The most well-known commentary is that by Rabbi Solomon Ben Isaac of Troyes, France. He is best-known by the nickname "Rashi," formed from the initial letters of his name. Rashi lived from 1040 to 1105 and wrote a commentary on almost the entire Talmud (what he did not live to complete was finished by his disciples). His commentary often helps to elucidate difficult passages in the main text. A special font, popularly known as "Rashi script" is used to separate his commentary from that of others (and from the body of the main text). It does not represent Rashi's own handwriting, but is actually an adaptation of the Sephardic style of writing (as distinguished from the familiar Aramaic block letters).⁷ Rashi's commentary is typically printed in a block which adjoins the top and one side of the main body of the text, closest to the spine of the book.

7. See "Alphabet, Hebrew" in the *Encyclopedia Judaica* for a more detailed treatment of the different styles of Hebrew writing.

Rosenzweig also provides a commentary to his Talmud text (written by Rosenzweig himself) which is written in the so-called "Rashi script." It surrounds the main text on both margins. In this commentary, Rosenzweig is able to extend the jokes which he hints at in the main text.

As a final historical note, the reader should remember that the Talmud certainly does not represent the final stage in the development of Jewish law. A number of attempts were made, throughout the second millenium of the common era, to codify the laws of the Talmud (and subsequently developed local customs) in a logical and concise manner. The most well-known of these include the משנה תורה *Mishneh Torah* (literally, "repetition (or reprise) of the Torah") by Moses Maimonides (the "Rambam," twelfth century Spain and North Africa); the ארבע טורים *Arba Turim* ("Four Rows of Laws") by Rabbi Jacob ben Asher (late thirteenth to early fourteenth century Germany and Spain); the compendium of Sephardic Jewish law and custom known as the שולחן ערוך *Shulchan Aruch* ("Set Table") by Rabbi Joseph Karo (sixteenth century Spain, Turkey, and Palestine); and the Ashkenazic annotations to the *Shulchan Aruch* (called the מפה *mapah*, meaning "Tablecloth"), written by Rabbi Moses Isserles (sixteenth century Poland). From time to time Rosenzweig cites these codes.

To fully understand and appreciate Rosenzweig's work, one must also have an appreciation of the hermeneutical tools utilized in talmudic argumentation. The Talmud distinguishes between two ways of interpreting Scripture. One is termed פשט *peshat*, and refers to the most natural, straightforward manner of reading a verse or phrase. The second, called דרש *drash*, derives its name from a word meaning "to search" or "to

investigate.” This method reads the passage in a more creative way, which often deviates from the plain meaning. The result of this method of interpretation is known as מדרש *midrash*.⁸

During the rabbinic period, there were many efforts to establish rules and guidelines for interpretation. The earliest system is attributed to Hillel the Elder (ca. 70 BCE - 10 CE), who listed seven rules of hermeneutics. Those suggested by Rabbi Ishmael ben Elisha (first half of the second century), thirteen in number, were eventually adopted as the authoritative rules of rabbinic interpretation. The brilliance of Rosenzweig’s parody derives from his application of many of these rules in crafting his arguments. Below, I have explained those rules which Rosenzweig utilizes, using examples both from the rabbinic texts⁹ and from Rosenzweig’s work.

קל וחומר *kal vechomer* An inference from something less important to something more important, or *vice versa*. For instance, the rules concerning prohibited labor on Shabbat are more stringent than they are on a holiday. Thus, if a certain kind of work is permitted on Shabbat, one can reasonably infer that it is permitted on the holiday as well.¹⁰

Rosenzweig utilizes the קל וחומר *kal vechomer* argument in chapter six of his Tractate America, in which he discusses those who are required to wear head-coverings. The “*Amoraim*” teach that one who is required to wear a head covering is required to do so on weekdays, and קל וחומר *kal vechomer* on Shabbat.

8. In addition to the *midrashim* found within the Talmud, there are numerous collections of *midrashim*. The one cited most frequently by Rosenzweig is Midrash Rabbah, a verse-by-verse interpretation of the entire Pentateuch and of the five scrolls. Some of the volumes in Midrash Rabbah are contemporaneous with the Talmud, while others are dated much later.

9. Many of the examples which follow, including this one, are suggested by Mielziner.

10. This very principle is taught in Mishnah Beitza 5:2.

גזרה שווה *gezerah shavah* An analogy of expressions. If a word is used in one place in conjunction with a certain principle, the rabbis can infer that any other place where that word occurs, it is understood to still be connected to that principle. So, Leviticus 16:29 teaches that on Yom Kippur, *You shall afflict your souls*. But the manner of affliction is not mentioned. However, in Deuteronomy 8:3 we read, *He afflicted you and made you hungry*. If, in the Deuteronomy passage, hunger is associated with affliction, surely it is also to be associated with affliction in the Leviticus passage. Hence, we learn that we are to fast on Yom Kippur.¹¹

Rosenzweig utilizes גזרה שווה *gezerah shavah* in his Tractate America, chapter two, in order to prove that “greenhorns” are foreigners. He begins with Psalm 37:2 *Like green grass they fade away* (יבולון *yevulun*) and compares it to Psalm 18:46 *Foreign peoples lose courage* (יבולו *yevulu*). Because the same word (or, at least, a derivative thereof) is used in both verses, Rosenzweig can link the two verses and show that green things (such as “greenhorns”) are foreign.

כלל ופרט *klal ufrat* The general and the particular. In the case of general and particular, the general includes only the particular. So, in Deuteronomy 22:11, *You shall not wear mingled stuff, wool and linen together*, “mingled stuff” is a general category, defined by the particular as “wool and linen together.” No other “mingled stuff” is included. However, in the case of particular and general, the general term adds to the content of the particulars. So, in Exodus 22:9, we read *If a man delivers to his neighbor a donkey, or an ox, or a sheep, or any beast...* The sentence begins with particulars (donkey, ox, sheep) but ends with the general (any beast). Thus, the law is applicable to

11. Talmud Yoma 74a.

any creature, including, but not limited to, those mentioned specifically.

Rosenzweig uses a form of כלל ופרט *klal u'prat* in chapter three of Tractate America. The Mishnah provides a list of specific individuals who need to work: men, women, and young ones who have reached the age of education. Rav Destitute, however, offers a more general definition, and asserts, "All who need to eat need to work." The Mishnah has offered the פרט *prat*, Rav Destitute counters with a כלל *klal* which encompasses the פרט *prat*.

Examples of frequently used Talmudic terms which Rosenzweig uses to give his work a Talmudic flavor.

לכתחילה...דיעבד *lekat'chilah...di'avad*. In principle (or, initially) [as opposed to] *ex post facto*. In the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Berachot 15b, there is a discussion about whether an inaudible recitation of the *Shema* is permissible. According to Rabbi Yehudah, it is not permissible in principle (initially),¹² but *ex post facto*, it is accepted.¹³

Rosenzweig's Tractate Property utilizes this terminology in discussing the trustworthiness of one who claims to have wealth. Rav Understanding asks whether such an individual should not be believed לכתחילה *lekat'chilah*, in principle. Rav Destitute counters and teaches that such an individual is only believed בדיעבד *bedi'avad*, after the fact.

פתח ב... וסיים ב... *patach b... v'siyyem b...* It opens with [x] and concludes with [y]. Generally, this phrase introduces an apparent incongruity within the Mishnah,

12. That is, we don't grant blanket permission for such a recitation.

13. If one has already recited the *Shema* in this manner, we accept it.

asking why it begins with one position, but seems to conclude by taking a contrary position. For instance, in the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Chagigah 27a, there is a problem because the Mishnah begins by referring to “the Altar,” but concludes by calling it “the Table.”

Rosenzweig uses the phrase in his Tractate Liars, in which his Mishnah “opens with lying and concludes with the blast of the shofar.”

סלקא דעתך *silka de'atcha* Does it enter your mind to say...? (or, Do you really mean to say...?) This is used as an expression of surprise, to point out that a ruling is subject to misinterpretation. It is usually followed by **אלא אימא *ele eima*** (“rather, say...”) which clarifies the ruling in question. An example is found in the Babylonian Talmud, tractate Berachot 8a. Rav Chisda says that a person should always enter through two doors into a synagogue. The Gemara asks, “Two doors **סלקא דעתך *silka de'atcha***” (i.e., Do you think he literally means “two doors?”) It then determines that Rav Chisda really means a distance equivalent to the width of two doors.

Similarly, in chapter four of Rosenzweig’s Tractate America, there is a teaching that one who has been a “greenhorn” for one day is exempt from prayer. The Gemara questions this: “Do you really mean to say ‘exempt?’” It determines that what is really meant is that such a person exempts himself.

במאי פליגי *bemai peligai*? About what do they differ? Used to investigate the principle underlying a difference of opinion between two (or more) sages. In the Babylonian Talmud, Pesachim 48a, Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua discuss [in the corresponding Mishnah] whether loaves of bread may be baked on a holiday if *challah*

has not yet been separated from them.¹⁴ The Gemara seeks to explore more specifically on what point the two sages differ.

In chapter three of Tractate America, Rosenzweig has Rav Destitute differing with the *stam* Mishnah¹⁵ by stating that all who need to eat must work (while the *stam* Mishnah offers specific categories of those who are required to work). The “Gemara” asks במאי פליגי *bemai peligai* in order to explore the exact point on which Rav Destitute disagrees with the others.

אמרמר amar mar. Literally, “the master said above,” but generally used to mean “furthermore.” Used to make a further comment on something previously discussed in the Gemara. In the Babylonian Talmud, tractate Pesachim 66a, for instance, the phrase is used to introduce a detailed examination of a *baraita* which the Gemara has previously stated.

Rosenzweig uses the phrase in chapter two of his Tractate America to return to the assertion “And they reveal to him the secrets of peddling.” This enables him to explore in more detail exactly what the “secrets of peddling” are.

תא שמה ta shema Come and hear. This phrase is generally used to introduce a Mishnah or Baraita which supports or refutes a previous opinion or answers a question (בעיא *ba'aya*). In the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Berachot 2b, for instance, the possibility is considered that as soon as the sun sets it is considered night, but that the Temple workers continued working after sunset and began their work before dawn. The

14. In Temple times, when bread was baked, a bit of the dough was torn off and burned as a part of the *minchah* offering. In modern Jewish tradition, this ritual is still followed as a reminder of Temple practice.

15. The anonymous, consensus opinion of the other sages of the Mishnah.

Gemara responds, “תא שמע *ta shema* (come and hear)...” and offers a biblical citation to refute that possibility.

Rosenzweig, in his Tractate Disguise, also makes use of the phrase תא שמע *ta shema*. His “Gemara” has previously asserted that rabbis [and presumably only rabbis] wear disguises. The phrase תא שמע *ta shema* introduces an assertion that all religious workers actually wear disguises.

איבעיא להו *ibaya lahu* **They asked.** This phrase generally introduces a statement made by the sages which may present a difficulty (or an issue that was not considered) with regard to a recent ruling. In the Babylonian Talmud, tractate Berachot 21b, the rabbis teach that one should not interrupt his personal recitation of the *Shemonah Esreh* prayer to offer a response (such as “Amen”) to another’s prayer. Then, איבעיא להו *ibaya lahu*, the rabbis ask about a slightly different form of interruption.

Rosenzweig uses this phrase in his Tractate America, chapter two. Having determined the definition of a greenhorn, איבעיא להו *ibaya lahu*, the sages ask, is there such a thing as a female greenhorn?

הכל לאתויי מאי *hakol le’atuyei mai* **“All” includes whom?** This phrase usually serves to add to a category something which was not included in the Mishnah’s list. It appears, for instance, in the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Chagigah 2a. The Mishnah has asserted that “all” are obligated to appear at the Temple on festivals, and has listed those who are included in that category. The Gemara uses the phrase הכל לאתויי מאי *hakol le’atuyei mai* to expand the category.

Rosenzweig uses this term in Tractate America, Chapter Two. His Mishnah has

categorized “all” of the individuals who are considered to be “greenhorns,” and his Gemara begins with this phrase in order to expand upon that categorization.

Other ways in which Rosenzweig utilizes Talmudic style

Frequently the Talmud has a point of difficulty (due to disagreement, incongruity, etc.) which must be resolved. Such a problem is known as a קשיא *kashya*. In the course of the discussion, ultimately a resolution, known as a תירוץ *teirutz* will be reached. Throughout his *Yankee Talmud*, Rosenzweig makes repeated use of this dialectical style in order to parody the Talmud. An example is found in his Tractate Liars. The “Mishnah” asserts that there is a New Year for liars on April first. However, in the “real” Mishnah, Mishnah Rosh Hashanah 1:1 asserts that there are four New Years, and April first is not listed among them. This would appear to be a קשיא *kashya*, but a תירוץ *teirutz* is soon offered to say that this holiday was not incumbent upon Jews until they adopted the Gregorian calendar.

The above examples illustrate just a few of the ways in which Rosenzweig makes his work mirror the style of the Babylonian Talmud. Of course, with his classical Jewish training, he was well-versed in all the traditional texts, and much of the genius of his work is due to his masterful command of both Hebrew and Aramaic.

One need not have Rosenzweig’s level of mastery to appreciate his sense of humor and his gentle, yet insightful, critique of the world in which he found himself. The *Yankee Talmud* shows Rosenzweig’s brilliance on several levels: it succeeds as a work of humor, a social commentary, and a window into the world of Jewish texts.

Talmud Yankee

Including in it six tractates, and they are:

Tractate Fools, Tractate Chanukah, Tractate Property, Tractate Disguise, Tractate Liars,
Tractate America.

And accompanying it at its end

A Midrash on Esther and a Haggadah for Authors

By

Gerson Rosenzweig

Brought out by the bookseller of S. Druckerman

50 Canal Street New York

1907

Published by A. Ch. Rosenberg, 11 Rutgers Street, New York

Introduction to the Talmud

- A) This tractate is completely unsteady¹ and it does not serve to instruct about actual *halacha*², and even in a place where in the explanation it teaches that one is obligated or absolved, forbidden or permitted, the intention therein is that this is what the students in the academies of Yankee rabbis learn: to obligate or to absolve, to prohibit or to permit, and we do not live according to their words.
- B) Tractate America is only given to Israel, for the majority of it speaks about the troubles of Israel, both the troubles that they cling to due to the widespread servitude and pursuit and evil decrees in the places from which they came, and the troubles which come to them now from the atmosphere of America, and these can be divided into two types of troubles, green troubles³ and white troubles⁴.
- C) In the matter of white troubles, these are troubles which are related to the land, and these are considered to be a plague of the country. Therefore, the compiler of this Talmud was occasionally obligated to speak insolently about things with regard to America, as it were, and he does not mean by this, God forbid, to decree that all of it is obligatory, but rather that not all of it is merited. And blessed is the land which enumerates its errors and that grants permission to an author to reprimand it to its face for its errors.

1. Reading perhaps הנדיית for Rosenzweig's הנדיית.

2. Hebrew הלכה, fixed Jewish law.

3. Perhaps a reference to money, and the dreams of newfound wealth which lured people to America.

4. This may be a reference to tuberculosis, which Howe notes was also known as the "white plague." By 1906, twelve out of every one thousand Jews on the East side of New York City were carriers of the disease. See Howe, p. 149.

To the honor of my friend and dear one, the pleasant satirist of Israel

Gerson Rosenzweig

Your letter came to me in which you announced to me that you are ready to bring to light [publish] in a special collection the Tractate America⁵ which you have compiled. I was very happy, my dear friend, with this news. It is fitting among your compositions, both in the aspect of its language and in the aspect of its content to find it among all of our brothers in Europe and America who know how to read many books of quality in the style of the language of the Talmud, if the rest of the tractates in our literature which are written in its style and language are similar and comparable- like the Tractate Purim by Kalonymos bar Kalonymos (compiler of the book *Even Bochan*⁶), the Tractate Poverty by Isaac Meyer Dick⁷, the Tractate Authors in the dawn of the nineties⁸- yet it seems that more glory and more strength are due to Tractate America than to them. True, in Tractate Purim and Tractate Poverty their compilers knew how to write in the style of the language of the Talmud, but their comedy did not bring any benefit⁹ because they came with prattling words and pile up things that never were. In Tractate Authors the compiler

5. Here (and throughout his foreword), Dr. Radin uses the conventional spelling אמעריקא, rather than Rosenzweig's preferred spelling עמיריקא which is a word-pun (explained further in his Tractate America).

6. Hebrew, אבן ברן, *The Touch Stone*, published in 1557 in Cremona. See Davidson, p. 20, n.30. The publication information which Davidson gives makes it appear to be a later edition, since Kalonymos published his *Masechet Purim* in the beginning of the fourteenth century. See also Robuck, p. 29ff, who gives the publication date of *Even Bochan* as 1322-1323.

7. Published in Vilna in 1878. See Davidson, p. 85 n.74.

8. Apparently referring to a parody written by Elijah Chayim Sajontschick, published in Warsaw in 1899. See Davidson, p. 242 n.260a.

9. Reading תולעת *tola'at* as תועלת *to'elet*.

sought to imitate the language of the Talmud and it was not successful¹⁰. But behold, you are an author skilled in the style of the language of the Talmud in a manner very elevated and jesting, pleasing to you in the strength of mockery (satire) which is good for you, on qualities which are not appropriate in this land, and you go forth to battle against teachers who mislead, against boors and scholarly students who have no knowledge, against "cantors" who sing songs with a bad heart at a time when our brothers are drowning in a sea of troubles, against the community leaders who have a box of vermin hanging before them and behind them.

I read Tractate America, paragraph by paragraph, two or three times in order to examine it without partiality, because I know that flattery should not come before you, and your soul hates flattering language. And behold, I found that raising the staff of your acute comedy like arrows and you direct the bow of your comedy only at the ugly deeds and customs which the sons of America are not acquitted of. Your love for this good and dear land does not blind your eyes that you might not see her flaws and her lackings. It is fitting to praise you for your works for you have removed the mask from the faces of the hypocrites, who wear the cloak of righteousness for deceit, who place "furry hats"- "*stove pipes*" in a foreign language- on their heads so that all of the "common folk" may see that they should be called "rabbis" and that they should be in awe of them. It is a fitting matter in its time, your comedy on learned ones such as these who do not know how to read Hebrew correctly and despite having never learned in their life go out to teach and they are hard upon our brothers as a barnacle. Also in heart and soul I give veracity to your words in lifting up on the pillar of disgrace Orthodox rabbis whose needs

10. Literally, it did not arise in his hand.

are not secure and the brokenness of their people does not afflict their souls, and "Reform" rabbis like these terrorists the melting-pot of the house of Israel, whose arrogance- is their wisdom, and whose knowledge- is their insolence, who do not read and do not teach and do not make use of wise students and the language of our fathers is to them a sealed book and they would seek to expel it from the midst of the congregation of God.

In few words I will say to you: in the entire tractate which you compiled with good taste and knowledge from its beginning to its end, I found only useful matters and lofty ideas; what you praise I will praise and what you curse I will curse. It is a great pearl in our literature, and a generation will come- if we do not forget further the language of our fathers and the style of the language of the Talmud- shall praise you¹¹ and grant honor to you when it addresses a lofty and enlightened author of true words like you today; for you have not projected a blemish onto sacred or profane things, and you have given an axe of your comedy against a decaying tree, with dry branches and withered leaves.

I do not hesitate [to say] that all readers of your composition who understand how to praise a thing will enjoy your words as much as I enjoyed them, and they shall call out to you as I do today: "Go with the strength of your people to enrich our literature with other tractates written in the style of 'Tractate America' in structure and in content, and may God grant that there be many more like you in Israel and then our language and our

11. This phrase, יהללך *yehalelcha* in Hebrew, is difficult to read in many editions. I was fortunate to locate on the internet a website with the text of *Masechet America*, in which the word is clearly visible. The site uses a text found in the Bevis Marks Spanish and Portuguese synagogue in London. It is found at http://www.aldgate.freemove.co.uk/interests/religion/bevis/101_0301/amerika.htm

literature will endure forever as the days of the heavens upon the earth.¹²

May your hand not be weakened, may your heart not be timid and do not be dismayed by the voice of critics who are without knowledge and understanding, which turn darkness to light and sweetness to bitter and good to evil.

These are the words of one who loves you, who honors your worthiness, who loves his people and his language until he returns to his earth.

ADOLPH M. RADIN, Ph. Dr.¹³

Rabbi Temple "Gattes"¹⁴ of Prayer

12. This last phrase echoes the words of Deuteronomy 11:21, the closing words of the second paragraph of the *Shema*.

13. Adolph Moses Radin (1848-1909). Born in Lithuania and classically trained, he emigrated to the United States in 1886, becoming rabbi in Elmira, NY. He joined the Central Conference of American Rabbis (the Reform rabbinic union). Later he moved to New York City to become rabbi of Congregation Gates of Hope. He was especially known for his work with Jewish inmates, and was chaplain of all penal institutions in New York and Brooklyn. As a result of this work, he was named rabbi of the People's Synagogue at the Educational Alliance. Radin contributed regularly to Hebrew, German, Polish, and American Jewish periodicals, and was the editor of a periodical called *Der Jüdische Grenzbote* (*The Jewish Border Messenger*).

14. *sic*. The signature line is in English; it is the only English which appears in the entire volume. In the Bevis Marks volume, Radin is listed as "Rabbi Temple 'gates of hope'" (*sic*).

Tractate
Fools
from
The Yankee Talmud
with a brief and sufficient commentary
Compiled and arranged by
Gerson Rosenzweig
New York
1909
Brought out by the bookstore of
S. Druckerman, 50 Canal Street, New York

Mishnah: Three types of fools thrust themselves to the front¹, and these are they: the foolish tailor, the foolish author, and **the foolish heretic.**²

Gemara: It has been learned: Honor may not be bestowed upon ignoramuses, **but honor may be bestowed upon fools**, as it is said: *The wise shall obtain honor [but fools shall obtain disgrace as their portion]* (Proverbs),³ and there are no wise men in America⁴ save for fools who are impetuous and who take the first portion.⁵ What is an ignoramus, and what is a fool? Rav Know-it-all⁶ said: "An ignoramus is anyone whose opinion drives him crazy, a fool is anyone whose opinion drives the public crazy." But the opposite seems more plausible:⁷ an ignoramus is a personal plague⁸ and he is liable for his own honor⁹; a fool plagues the public¹⁰ and he is not liable for his own honor.¹¹

Rav Understand said: "**Because fools do not forgive¹² the honor due to them.**"

1. This phrase is found in the Babylonian Talmud, tractate Megillah 12b.

2. The three terms תופרים *tofrim*, סופרים *sofrim*, and כופרים *kofrim* all rhyme. Rosenzweig evidently enjoyed this sort of word play, since it is frequently present in his work.

3. Proverbs 3:35. Rosenzweig does not cite the entire verse, but would seem to be making reference to it in its entirety. Note that in this tractate, and in Tractate America, Rosenzweig cites parenthetically the names of the books from which his Biblical sources are derived (though he does not provide chapter and verse citations). This is in contrast to the other portions of this work, where no citations are given.

4. Here Rosenzweig uses his alternative spelling for America, a spelling which is otherwise found only in Tractate America. See there for a commentary on this spelling. This feature, along with his aforementioned style of citation, would suggest that this tractate was composed around the same time as Tractate America. Davidson, however, states that Tractate America was first published in 1892, while Tractate Fools' first publication was in 1894. See Davidson, 241.

5. I.e., they take the best things for themselves. Since there are no wise men in America, fools must fill the void. Thus, they receive the honor which would ordinarily be accorded only to the wise, taking the "first portion."

6. Rosenzweig creates names for the rabbis in his Talmud. See appendix A for an explanation of these names.

7. I.e. It would seem that we should grant honor to ignoramuses and not to fools, for reasons which the *Gemara* will now explain.

8. And bothers only himself.

9. He controls whether or not he is deserving of respect.

10. By being a bother to everyone.

11. He has no self-control, so he has no say in whether or not he is deserving of respect.

12. I.e., waive

Rav Questioner raised an objection: "Has Rav Jester not said: 'Forgiveness in America brings one to honor, as it is written: *It is honorable for a man to desist* (Proverbs)?'"¹³ He said: "I did not state this regarding forgiveness to sinners."

Our teacher said: "We do not bestow honor upon ignoramuses," but is it not written regarding Abraham: *And he bowed to the people of the land* (Genesis)?¹⁴ Rav Sage said: "Ephron that very day became a fool. Know this because he was impetuous."¹⁵ As it has been learned: For what reason **did our father Abraham not refuse Avimelech** but refuse Ephron?¹⁶ Because Ephron was a fool, and fools do not fall into the category of forgiveness.¹⁷

Foolish tailors, etc.¹⁸ Our rabbis taught: How do we know that foolish tailors are more implacable than all other fools in the world? For it is said: *The clothes upon you did not wear out, nor did your feet swell* (Deuteronomy).¹⁹ Thus Moses said to Israel, and was it not a great favor that the Holy One, Blessed be He did for you, for all those forty years²⁰ there were not tailors or sandal-makers, and thus the fools and insolent ones of the generation did not rule over you.²¹

Rav Scrivener said: "The most insolent among fools are tailors, and the most

13. Proverbs 20:3. The full verse reads: *It is honorable for a man to desist from a quarrel, but every fool enrages himself.*

14. Genesis 23:7. The words עַם הָאֶרֶץ *am ha'aretz*, translated as "ignoramus" elsewhere in this passage, are more literally translated as "people of the land."

15. I.e., He pushed himself to the front. In Genesis 23, Ephron sells Abraham a field for use as a burial-place. He is considered to have been a bit underhanded in his business dealings.

16. In Genesis 20:15, Avimelech, King of Gerar, tells Abraham, "My land is before you, dwell wherever you please," and Abraham accepts his offer. In Genesis 23, Ephron makes a similar offer to provide Abraham with a burial ground, but Abraham insists on purchasing the land. This is explained a bit further in the "Rashi" commentary.

17. Since they do not waive the honor due to them.

18. Rosenzweig continues with further exegesis of his "Mishnah."

19. Deuteronomy 8:4

20. The passage refers to the forty years the Israelites wandered in the wilderness.

21. I.e., Because God provided for the Israelites in the wilderness, they had no need for tailors or sandal-makers. Thus they did not suffer fools and ignoramuses in their midst.

insolent among tailors are needle-workers, as it has been taught: **The needle came before the awl in the works of creation**, and why is it²² not mentioned in the Torah? **Because it brings impudence into the world.**"

Rav Understanding said to Rav Sage, "Come and see what the difference is between **the needle-workers there**²³ and the needle-workers here. Needle-workers there honor their rabbis and when they go to the synagogue they stand in a low place.²⁴ Needle-workers here disdain wise students and mock them in synagogues by **rubbing themselves against the eastern wall for their own self-aggrandizement.**"

It is taught: At the time that Columbus went to discover America, he said: "Impudence against heaven is legally effective." What did he do? **He took a needle in his hand** and said: "Master of the Universe, I am an impudent needle-worker." Immediately he discovered it²⁵. A voice came forth from the heavens and said: "By your life, future practitioners of your craft shall be the most insolent of the fools in this land."

Rav Scrivener said: "The above was said only regarding the **matter of taking**²⁶, but in the matter of being pushy, foolish authors are like tailors, as it is taught: For what reason did the sages say that a needle-worker does not go out with his needle and the clerk does not go out with his pen?²⁷ And what is the connection between a

22. The needle.

23. In the Babylonian Talmud, "there" is usually a reference to the land of Israel. In his "Rashi" commentary, however, Rosenzweig defines "there" as Europe.

24. I.e., An unassuming spot. In the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Ta'anit 23b, we learn of the habit of Rav Yonah who would pray while standing in a low (or deep) place in keeping with the verse from Psalm 130: *From the depths I called to you*. Additionally, in Leviticus Rabbah 1:5, the rabbis teach that it is better to begin in a lowly position and be called to ascend to a better seat than it is to sit in a choice seat and be told to move to a less important one. Rosenzweig may be referring to either of these teachings.

25. America.

26. As explained in the "Rashi" commentary, this refers to the taking of the first portion.

27. This is discussed in Mishnah Shabbat 1:3.

needle-worker and a clerk²⁸ except that the needle and the pen **became intertwined** in America.²⁹

Our rabbis taught: The wise men identified seven traits among the foolish authors in America, and these are they: **Their inner selves are the same as their external selves³⁰, they behave like Torah scholars, they do not curse a man without reason, they do not flatter even their friends, they are careful not to plagiarize, they give to the printing press the best of their works, and they bring redemption to the world.**³¹

Rav Scrivener expounded: "*A slave girl who supplants her mistress* (Proverbs).³² This is the Babylonian language³³, which drove away and supplanted the holy language of Israel³⁴, in America. And she³⁵ is like a concubine married to the foolish authors, even though **the law of criticism is not habitual for her.**"³⁶

Rav Scrivener further said: "Every Jew is called a man,³⁷ therefore every man among Israel who wishes to obtain a name as an author let him come forth and obtain it, as it is said: *All men are liars* (Psalms).³⁸ **Do not read 'liars,'** but rather 'authors.'³⁹

28. Why does the Mishnah talk about these two individuals together?

29. And both have the power to wound.

30. Ordinarily, this is a compliment, meaning that an individual is not a hypocrite. In his "Rashi" commentary, however, Rosenzweig puts a different spin on the phrase.

31. Though these might seem like compliments, Rosenzweig's "Rashi" commentary interprets them quite differently.

32. Proverbs 30:23

33. In Tractate America, Rosenzweig defines English as the Babylonian language.

34. I.e., Hebrew.

35. English.

36. In Leviticus 19:20, the Torah speaks of a man who has carnal relations with a concubine who is meant to be married to another man. The text prescribes an indemnity בקרת *bikkoret* for the woman involved. The word בקרת can also mean criticism. Rosenzweig seems to mean that English is the "concubine" of Jewish authors in America, even though it doesn't benefit from the critical supervision that other, greater languages receive. Rosenzweig had disdain for any Jewish author who did not compose in Hebrew.

37. In the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate 61a, the Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai teaches that all Jews are considered to be men, while idol worshippers are not.

38. Psalms 116:11

39. The two Hebrew words are alike, save for one letter. כוזב *kozev* means "liar," while כותב *kotev* means

It has been taught: Anyone who is as stupid as an ass, it is certain that his children shall be writers for Jewish newspapers, as it is written: *Issachar*⁴⁰ is a strong-boned ass (Genesis).⁴¹ And it is written: *Issachar, who knew how to interpret the signs of the times.* (Chronicles).⁴²

And foolish heretics.⁴³ What is the meaning of heretics? If you were to say apostates, have not others already acquired them?⁴⁴ **And if you were to say anarchists,** they are not heretics but rather believers. For it has been taught: What is the difference between an apostate and an anarchist? **An apostate denies that which he believes in,** and an anarchist believes in that which he denies. And not only that can be said of anarchists, but also that the deeds of the righteous are in their hands. For they have nothing but what they hear from their teachers, and they say that **Most and Kropotkin and Bakunin**⁴⁵ are truth and their teachings are truth.

Rav Know-it-all said: "Who is an anarchist? Anyone who believes in two authorities,⁴⁶ the private domain and the public domain. In what manner? The private

"author." It is a common hermeneutical tool in rabbinic literature to suggest an alternate reading for a word in order to bolster one's argument. Additionally, in Ashkenazic pronunciation, the *tav* (ת) is pronounced as an "s," so that the two words would be homophones.

40. The name Issachar is derived from the Hebrew words *יששכר ish sachar*, "a man of wealth." In addition to poking fun at newspaper writers and editors, Rosenzweig is mocking the wealthy.

41. Genesis 49:14

42. I Chronicles 12:32 (in some editions, this is verse 33). Using the rabbinic device of *גזירה שווא gezerah shavah*, Rosenzweig links the two phrases which refer to Issachar to imply that one who knows the times (and uses this knowledge to write for newspapers) must be an ass! Rosenzweig makes a play on the words *עֵתִים itim* "times" and *עֵתוֹנִים itonim* "newspapers." Since Rosenzweig himself was a newspaper editor, this is an example of the self-mockery found throughout his work.

43. Rosenzweig picks up the exegesis of the latter part of his "Mishnah."

44. I.e., If they are already Christians, then they are now the concern of the church and we need show them no honor.

45. As Rosenzweig explains in his "Rashi" commentary, these are names of anarchists who were well-known at the time. See the "Rashi" commentary for further information.

46. Usually, this label is used in rabbinic literature to refer to a gnostic, who believes in more than one deity. There is a pun between *רְשׁוּיֹת reshuyot* in its rabbinic context, referring to divine realms, and in its context here, referring to "domains."

domain with regard to his own possessions, and the public domain with regard to the possessions of others.”⁴⁷

Rather, what is the meaning of ‘heretics’? Hypocrites. And why do we call them heretics? Because they are in denial⁴⁸ at internally and externally.

It has been learned: The hypocrites run over and tear apart like wild animals, and they make their living from sacred property,⁴⁹ as it is written: *And he was drenched with the dew of heaven* (Daniel).⁵⁰

Rav Scrivener said: “It is possible for man to be cautious of all fools except for the foolish heretics, for they stand about us like a ditch around a mound.”⁵¹

We Shall Return to You, Chapter “Three Types of Fools”

47. I.e., He believes in private property when it comes to his own possessions, but in public ownership of everything else.

48. Hebrew בכפר *bekafar* “in denial,” is being related to כופרים *kofrim* “heretics.”

49. Likely a criticism of the reformers, a frequent target of Rosenzweig’s satire. He seems to suggest here that the reformers of Judaism are hypocrites.

50. Daniel 4:30. As Rosenzweig explains in his “Rashi” commentary, the word יצטבע *yitztaba* “he was drenched” shares a root with the word צבועין *tzivu'in* “hypocrites.”

51. Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Berachot 6a.

Mishnah:⁵² **And they take the first portion.** In authority over the public and in any argument for the sake of heaven.⁵³ **foolish heretics.** Below in the text it is explained that here heretics are hypocrites.

Gemara: **But honor may be bestowed upon fools.** The Mishnah is speaking of honor due to fear. **And there are no wise men, etc.** For fools, in the language of America, are called wise men. **Because fools do not forgive the honor due to them.** For since they do not waive or forego their honor, therefore their honor is not pardoned. And Rav Questioner, who thinks that we are dealing with actual 'forgiveness', objects to him by using the words of Rav Jester. **It is honorable for a man to desist.** And it this is how the verse is expounded: We do not grant honor except to a man who needs a big house place in which to dwell.⁵⁴ **Our father Abraham did not refuse Avimelech.** And received from him one thousand pieces of silver,⁵⁵ but he refused Ephron and did not wish to buy land worth four hundred pieces of silver.⁵⁶ **The needle came before the awl in the works of creation.** For thus we find regarding the first man: *And He sewed fig leaves for them.*⁵⁷ And the word 'awl' is found in the Torah, but the word 'needle' is not found. **Because it brings impudence into the world.** For immediately after the first man became a needle-worker, he ventured against the heavens and said, "I will eat," and

52. In most of the other "Tractates," Rosenzweig's commentary cites phrases which can be found in the body of the main text. Here, there are occasional discrepancies between what is written in the main text and the way in which it is cited in the commentary.

53. Any important issue or dispute.

54. The word for "desist" is the same as the word for "dwell," שבת *shevet*. Rosenzweig seems to be talking about the wealthy who show off by having large homes while their fellow men reside in tenements.

55. Avimelech offers Abraham a bribe so that he will ignore his inappropriate behavior with Sarah, and Abraham accepts. See Genesis 20, and note 16 above.

56. In Genesis 23, Ephron offers to give Abraham his land, but Abraham insists on purchasing it instead.

57. Genesis 3:7

he ate.⁵⁸ **The needle-workers there.** Who are in the land of Europe. **Rubbing themselves against the eastern wall for their own self-aggrandizement.** For they derive satisfaction from the fact that they have achieved greatness. **He took a needle in his hand.** America was discovered by means of a magnetic needle.⁵⁹ **Matter of taking.** In the matter of taking the first portion, foolish needle-workers come before foolish authors, but in the matter of impetuosity the two of them are equals. **Became intertwined.** And both of these are used to wreak havoc. **Their inner selves are the same as their external selves.** Both of these are bad things. **They behave like Torah scholars.** Who avenge and hold a grudge like a snake. **They do not curse a man without reason.** Unless he first does them a favor. **They do not flatter.** Rather, they curse, act spitefully, and revile. **They are careful not to plagiarize.** Yet they buy articles and poems of others by means of *meshichah*,⁶⁰ and *meshichah* in literature is like purchasing. And Rav Scrivener connected it to Scripture: *They handle the staff of the scribe*,⁶¹ in Tractate Thorns.⁶² **The best.** As we have learned: The best part of a poem is its lies. **They bring redemption to the world.** For they bring closer the steps of the Messiah through their impudence. **The law of criticism is not habitual for her.** As it is written regarding the spiteful concubine, *she shall have criticism*.⁶³

Do not read "liars." That is to say, a liar and an author are the same thing in

58. Presumably, of the forbidden fruit.

59. I.e., a compass.

60. *meshichah*, משיכה, a formal act of acquisition, refers to "taking possession by drawing towards one's self the object to be acquired." See Jastrow, 852.

61. Judges 5:14. The word for "handled," מושכים *moshchim* is related to the same root as *meshichah*.

62. This tractate, which Rosenzweig cited as part of Talmud Ordinai (The Talmud of Orders), dealt with Jewish Lodges. It was published in Rosenzweig's newspaper *Halvri*, volume 4, number 29 (two volumes after the publication of Tractate fool in the same periodical). See Davidson, 241.

63. Leviticus 19:20

America. **And if you were to say anarchists.** For even though they are like a withered limb of the nation, they do not otherwise fit the rule of foolish heretics. **An apostate denies that which he believes in.** That is to say, what he says that he believes in. **Most⁶⁴ and Kropotkin⁶⁵ and Bakunin.⁶⁶** Well known people among the anarchists.⁶⁷ **He was drenched.** "Drenched" is from the same root as "hypocrite."⁶⁸

64. Johann Joseph Most (1846-1906). Editor of German and Austrian socialist newspapers. Member of the German Reichstag from 1874-78. Arrested in England for glorifying the assassination of Czar Alexander II. Emigrated to the United States in 1882, where he became a leader of the American anarchist movement.

65. Prince Piotr Alekseyevich Kropotkin (1842-1921). After serving in the court as a youngster, joined Russian anarchist movement until his arrest in 1874. Escaped to Western Europe, where he was imprisoned in 1883. Pardoned in 1886 due to public clamor, he moved to England and spent the next thirty years as a scholar and author. Following the February revolution of 1917, he returned to Russia, and retired after the Bolshevik victory in the October Revolution.

66. Mikhail Bakunin (1814-76). Took part in revolutions in France and Saxony, after which he was exiled to Siberia. He escaped in 1861 and moved to London, and joined an international gathering of Communist organizations. His military anarchistic views were popular, but conflicts with Karl Marx led to his expulsion. His philosophy advocated violent overthrow of existing states and institutions in order to obtain freedom for the individual.

67. Rosenzweig calls these men בעלי שם טוב *ba'alei shem tov*, making them the "rebbe's" among the anarchists.

68. See note 50, above.

Tractate
Chanukah
from
The Yankee Talmud
with a brief and sufficient commentary
Compiled and arranged by
Gerson Rosenzweig
New York

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Mishnah: Seven days before¹ Chanukah, **one invites a group** and [prepares the] cards², but one does not prepare the room and the coins³, for those two items are not a hindrance to the thing [they do not hinder proper performance of the *mitzvah*]. Rav Cardshark says: "They do not prepare the room, but they prepare the coins."

Gemara: It is taught: One who plays⁴ on Chanukah fulfills a commandment, comparable to drunkenness on Purim.

Yet surely it is a commandment which is achieved through a misdeed.

Rav Cardplayer said: since Israel has adopted this as a custom, it is permissible for them [to partake in card games], and therefore it becomes the equivalent of a commandment, for the custom of Israel⁵ carries the force of law, as it was stated: Israel learned two disgraceful things from the idol worshippers that were permitted to them since these things were observed only once a year and since they were reminders of redemption. When they were redeemed from the Persians, who were drunkards, they [the Jews] established for themselves a drinking festival.⁶ And when they were redeemed from the Greeks, who were inveterate game players, they [the Jews] established for themselves a game-playing festival, and they support it with the proof-text: *By the very schemes which they have done against them.*⁷

1. This mimics the beginning of tractate Yoma, dealing with the holiday of Yom Kippur.

2. In Goodman's *The Hanukkah Anthology* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1976), Sidney B. Hoenig writes about the custom of playing cards on Chanukah. Jews did not study on Christmas (which usually fell close to Chanukah), but spent the evening playing cards, which was known as *klein shas* (small Talmud). See Goodman, p. 269.

3. This refers either to the chips or the money for gambling.

4. As becomes clear later from context, Rosenzweig refers to gambling and card-playing.

5. In this case, card games.

6. Referring to Purim.

7. Exodus 18:11

Rav Know-it-all said: "You can derive from it that one who plays on all other days of the year is forbidden to play on Chanukah, just as we taught regarding drinking on Purim."⁸

Our Rabbis taught, what is the meaning of Chanukah?⁹ *Stay here*,¹⁰ for when the **Greek dynasty** ruled over Israel, the young men of Israel began to participate in the games of the Greeks and to squander their fathers' money on their **stadia and olympics**. What did the sages of Israel who lived in that generation do? They stood and established for themselves games in their houses and school rooms and said to them¹¹: **Stay here**. As the popular proverb says: A little bit of a bad ritual is better than a great deal of it. And when a miracle was performed for Israel and they defeated the Greeks, gaming was established on Chanukah for all generations.

One invites a group, etc.¹² What is the purpose of a group? Rav Gambler said: "To play, for the commandment to play [games] on Chanukah refers to playing in groups, since it is a remembrance of redemption and because it is analogous to the Passover sacrifice."¹³

How many constitute a group? Rav Dice-player taught: "The minimum number for a group is three, for the tradition is that there is no gaming [possible] except **with cash**."¹⁴ And Rav Trump said: "Two are also called a group, as it is written: *I will not*

8. Implying that one may not drink on Purim what one drinks on the other days of the year.

9. This is how the Talmud introduces its discussion of Chanukah. Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Shabbat 21b

10. Breaking the Hebrew word Chanukah חנוכה into two words, חנו *chamu* כה *koh*.

11. The young men of Israel.

12. Rosenzweig continues the explication of his "Mishnah."

13. Which one is obligated to eat in family groups. See Exodus 12:4 and following.

14. The word used here for cash is מזומן *mezuman*. However, this term is also used for the person who leads the preamble to the Grace After Meals. Traditionally, a minimum of three men are required to recite grace.

enter into the company of revelers,¹⁵ and there is only “company” with two. Rav Dice-player raised an objection to Rav Trump, saying: Three who sit and busy themselves with a [card] game can be certain that they will not finish quickly, as it is written: A three-fold cord is not readily broken.¹⁶ Is it not the case that with fewer than three it is not a **valid game**, and [such a game] cannot be called a group? He¹⁷ said to him¹⁸: I have always held that it was learned that two are also called a group, and it implies very good counsel to us, because of a decree **lest one of them be robbed**. And I do not hold to that decree, for if so there is no end to the matter.¹⁹

What is the *halachic* answer which will resolve the above dispute? Rav Player said: “Thus I received the tradition from my teachers: In inviting, one must not invite more or less than three, and in gaming, one fulfills the obligation even with two.” It is sound that we do not reduce [the number of players to less than three], due to the fear that perhaps one of them will be robbed,²⁰ but what is the meaning of not inviting more [than three players]? Rav Idle said: “Because **a friend has a friend**.”²¹ And both views accept that six is a sufficient number.

It has been learned: If one is invited to be part of a group and it [the game] is

15. A misquote of Jeremiah 15:17. Rosenzweig uses the word אָבוֹא *avo* (I will enter into) instead of יָשַׁבְתִּי *yashavti* (I have sat in).

16. Ecclesiastes 4:12

17. I.e., Rav Trump

18. I.e., Rav Dice-player

19. This is derived from Mishnah Yoma 1:1, which speaks of the preparations to ensure that the High Priest is ready to perform his functions on Yom Kippur. There, the sages object to creating too many contingency plans (ordaining a substitute priest, etc.) for fear that there will be no end to the matter. Here, the suggestion is that if we worry so much about having back-up players for the group, there will be no end to the matter.

20. This refers not only to actual robbery, but also to the fact that in a two-player game, as soon as one player loses all his money (is “robbed” of it by another player) the game ends.

21. That is, if you invite a friend, he will typically bring another friend, and the group will continue to grow. This is explained further in the “Rashi” commentary.

interrupted,²² he may go and join a different group, as it is written: *A group in place of another group.*²³ If he searches and does not find another group, he goes and makes a group in his house with his wife, for a man's wife is as good as a member of a gaming group.²⁴

Rav Player said: "From where do we find that a woman may join a group with her husband? As it is written: *He saw Isaac playing with Rebekah, his wife.*²⁵ And that same day was Chanukah, as it is written there: *When his days had lengthened there...*²⁶ And you do not have a time **when the days seem long** except on Chanukah."

And from where do you find that even a child may join a group? As it says:
...*And a boy for my group.*²⁷

And one prepares the cards. What is the meaning of card?²⁸ A playing card. And why are they called at this time *kartin*? Because they are found the entire year with the *neturei karta*,²⁹ and as Rav Understanding says: "At this time the order of creation has

22. I.e., If one is part of a card game that is interrupted

23. This is a retranslation of Exodus 21:25, which, in context, reads, "bruise for bruise." Rosenzweig has taken advantage of the similarity between חבורה *chaburah*, "bruise," and חבורה *chavurah*, "a group."

24. "Group" in this context likely refers to a group for playing a game. The teaching here is derived from a discussion in the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Avodah Zarah 39a. There *chaver* (translated in this context as a member of a gaming group) refers to someone who is particularly meticulous with certain ritual commandments. The assumption is that if the individual himself is meticulous about these acts, his wife (and his servant) can also be trusted to be just as meticulous. By extrapolation, here the teaching is taken to mean that if a man is of the proper character to participate in a gambling session, his wife is likely equally worthy of being included.

25. Genesis 26:8. Rosenzweig has omitted a word in his quotation, but it does not alter the meaning of the text. The word "playing" is usually understood here to be a euphemism for sexual activity.

26. This is the first part of Genesis 26:8, cited above. The expression can be rendered idiomatically as "after a while," but Rosenzweig is making a pun here that is clarified further below in his "Rashi" commentary. Chanukah comes at the time of the winter solstice, when the days are shorter than the nights, but Rosenzweig explains in his "Rashi" that the days *seem* longer.

27. Genesis 4:23. This is usually translated as, "and a boy for wounding me." The word לחברתי *lechaburati* "for wounding me" can also be vocalized as *lechevrati* "for my group."

28. The question is asked because Rosenzweig has used a cognate word for card: קרטה *karta*.

29. Now the name of an ultra-Orthodox anti-Zionist sect, there is a midrash about a group by this name in Lamentations Rabbah (and in Pesikta deRav Kahana). There the *neturei karta* are scholars who study Torah all day and night. Perhaps Rosenzweig is lamenting the lack of studiousness among the Jews of his day. But see also note 31 below.

been changed on us. At first, the angel of death would not come to a town except for crying dogs,³⁰ and now he does not come except for playing dogs. And who are these dogs? The arrogant organizers of the card games³¹ who sit and waste their entire days organizing games, and they uphold the verse: *They make a banquet for revelry; wine makes life merry, and money answers every need.*³²

Mishnah: With what may they play and with what may they not play?³³ They may not play with **checkers**, nor with **chess**, nor with **dice**, nor with **dice**³⁴, nor with goats and the wolf, but only with cards. But we play with balls of lead³⁵ with children in order to educate them regarding commandments.³⁶

Gemara: Rav Playing-card said: "From where is the Scriptural basis for the Rabbis' statement that they do not play with checkers nor with chess, etc.? For it is written: *Who*

30. In the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Bava Kamma 60b, we learn that the Angel of Death is drawn to a town by crying dogs (who presumably wail at the impending demise of their master).

31. Aramaic נטורי דקרתא *neturei dekarta*. Perhaps this is a pun on the religious group mentioned above. Rosenzweig may also be referring to cardsharks, professional players who take advantage of those who only play cards annually on Chanukah.

32. Ecclesiastes 10:19

33. Mimicking the beginning of the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Shabbat, "With what may they kindle and with what may they not kindle?" This phrase is then picked up in Shabbat 21a, which leads to a discussion of the laws of Chanukah.

34. Rosenzweig uses various rabbinic terms for gaming, whose precise meanings are unclear. As will be seen in his "Rashi" commentary below, he provides definitions for some. Here I offer Jastrow's definitions as they pertain to types of games. Each of the first two words appears only once in rabbinic literature: נרדשיר *nardshir* appears in the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Ketubot 61b (spelled נדרשיר *nadr'shir*), אסקונדרא *iskundrei* appears in the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Shavuot 29a (spelled איסקונדרי *iskundrei*). *Pisp'sin* (פיספסין) appears in Tosefta Korbanot 7a and Tosefta Negaim 5i. Only *kubiyot* (קוביות) is used regularly in rabbinic literature (and retains its meaning in modern Hebrew).

35. A possible reference to the game of jacks.

36. The idea of doing things for one's children in order to educate them regarding commandments is derived from the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Rosh Hashanah 29a.

*lurk, like fowlers lying in wait,*³⁷ and it is written: *Do not stand idly by while your neighbor bleeds.*³⁸ And the other³⁹ because fools play them, as it is written: *A fool walks in darkness.*⁴⁰

It has been said: For what reason did the sages say that we may not play on Chanukah except using playing-cards? Since the holiday of Chanukah is a reminder of self-sacrifice, therefore they fixed for it games which involve self-sacrifice. What do they mean by this? Rav Trefa said: "The sacrifice of money, since *damim* has two meanings."⁴¹ Another explanation: Card playing involves real self-sacrifice, since people go crazy to preserve their wealth, and sometimes fights break out. And playing for money with an Israelite, what authority permits it? It is a surety, and a surety is not binding.⁴²

Rav Gambling Hall said: "**With cards there is not a surety**, as it is taught: When a group assembles to play cards, they are all prepared to forfeit their money, and for each and every coin which they throw into the "pot", they say: This is public property for the entire a group. They throw their money into it⁴³ and one of them wins. The winner acquires the pot by pulling it towards himself, and turns it over,⁴⁴ and on the spot he

37. Jeremiah 5:26. Rosenzweig makes his meaning clearer in his "Rashi" commentary.

38. Leviticus 19:16. Again, Rosenzweig makes his meaning clearer in his "Rashi" commentary.

39. Presumably, this refers to the game of "goats and the wolf."

40. Ecclesiastes 2:14. It would seem that the game of "goats and the wolf" is a version of hide-and-go-seek.

41. The two meanings for דמים *damim* are "blood," referring to self-sacrifice, and "money," referring to gambling on Chanukah.

42. This is based upon a principle from the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Bava Batra 168a. The term אסמכתא *asmachta* is used in the Talmud to refer to a commitment that a person makes with the expectation that he will never have to honor it. In Bava Batra, Rabbi Yehudah maintains that such an agreement is non-binding. Here, Rosenzweig raises the question of how card games can be a *mitzvah*, since we don't take them seriously.

43. The meaning of this phrase is unclear, but Rosenzweig seems to be speaking of the players who are attempting to win the money in the pot.

44. Literally, "upon its mouth."

declares the coins ownerless.”

Rav Shpiel said: “With respect to cards, it is forbidden to change the form established by the sages.” Regarding what was this said? Regarding the **cards themselves**, but in gambling all is according to the custom of the state. And as the sages have taught: When you come to a place⁴⁵, follow its customs.⁴⁶ From this statement it seems that Rav Shpiel holds that colors and forms [of the cards] are an absolute requirement for the successful performance of this *mitzvah*.

But they raised an objection to him. They cited Rabbi Laughter the Lazy⁴⁷ who made lots for himself out of a roll of parchment, and wrote upon them with a quill made from a goose, and would play with them on the evenings of Chanukah. He explained this custom by the following midrash: It is explained, “you shall make it,” and not from that which is already made.⁴⁸ There is no objection, for Rav Laughter was lazy, and the average lazy person is a teacher of children.⁴⁹ And why did he play with his students? In order to educate them in the commandments, which is allowed even with balls of lead.⁵⁰

Why do we prepare by inviting the players [seven nights in advance]? Rav Player said: **“Lest they cease to be found in the market.”**⁵¹

But they do not prepare, etc.⁵² We have no difficulty with “room” - it is obvious

45. This could also be read as “When you come to play cards.” A pun is being made on the word קרְתָּא *karta*, which is sometimes read as “city” and sometimes as “cards.”

46. Genesis Rabbah 48:14.

47. רבי צחיקא הבטלן *ravi tzchika habatlan*.

48. This argument is found, among other places, in the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Sukkah where it is used to teach that the *schach* which covers the roof of the Sukkah must not be made from vines or other materials which are still living.

49. I.e., what else can a lazy person do except teach?

50. Thus, there is no need to worry about using the correct form of playing cards when teaching children to follow the *mitzvot*, and Rav Laughter’s makeshift cards are acceptable.

51. People may be invited to other parties, and if one does not plan ahead, he may be unable to find enough players for his game. See the “Rashi” for further explanation.

52. Referring back to the “Mishnah” at the very beginning of the tractate.

that the room is not an absolute requirement, for it is taught "in every place that he is, and even in the parlor or the porch." But in the case of coins, why does the *Tanna Kama*⁵³ hold that they are not an absolute requirement? Do we not have a tradition that no debts are accepted in gaming?

Rav Haughtiness said: **"What is the meaning of 'they are not a hindrance?' To preparation,** since we hold that money is always available for gambling, since the evil inclination is always involved."

And Rav Cardshark explained: "We do not rely upon the above rule on the evenings of Chanukah, since people are quite busy in preparing for the holiday and will sometimes forget [to bring money for gambling]."

We shall return to you, chapter "Seven Days."

53. The earlier authority.

Mishnah: Seven days And whoever is earlier in preparation, certainly this is praiseworthy. **One invites a group** In the Gemara, it explains how many constitute "a group."

Gemara: Surely it is a commandment which is achieved through a misdeed For the one who plays dice- and this is also the law for cards- is forbidden from testimony.⁵⁴ We find that the player disqualifies himself⁵⁵ and intentionally transgresses "if he does not tell."⁵⁶ And it resolves this difficulty in that gaming on Chanukah alone does not disqualify oneself at all, for it is a custom of Israel.⁵⁷ **Greek dynasty** There are variant texts which say the Roman dynasty, and this is the reality.⁵⁸ **Stadia and olympics** Types of games of the Romans. **Stay here** That is to say, do not go to greener pastures.⁵⁹ **With cash** Money is called *mezuman* and a group of three is also called a *mezuman*.⁶⁰ Rav Dice-player holds to the latter expression.⁶¹ **A valid game** For one is fearful lest the deck of cards be scattered. **Lest one of them be robbed** Lest he lose his coins and not be able to play anymore. **A friend has a friend** And when a group of three is invited, they will

54. Because such practices may make one untrustworthy. Thus, gambling came to be seen as a sin.

Mishnah Sanhedrin 3:3 states that the following individuals are disqualified from being witnesses or judges: a dice-player, a usurer, a pigeon-flyer, or one who traffics in produce from the Sabbatical year (whose produce is not meant to be consumed).

55. That is, from testimony.

56. Leviticus 5:1 reads, "If a person incurs guilt- when he has heard a public imprecation and he is able to testify as one who has either seen or learned of the matter- if he does not tell, he is subject to punishment." One who gambles cannot give testimony, and so a gambler can never escape the guilt incurred by not testifying.

57. And there is a rabbinic tradition that a custom of Israel carries the weight of law.

58. In rabbinic literature, Rome is referred to as "Edom," and is used as a code which speaks derisively of the Christians. Rosenzweig may be using "Rome" here as a coded term for Christianity and speaking out about the expansion of Chanukah in response to the popularity of Christmas in America.

59. This implies a hidden meaning of, "Don't assimilate to other cultures!"

60. See note 14, above.

61. This phrase ("holds to the latter expression") appears in the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Bava Metzia 102b.

automatically become six, and six will increase to the whole world, and even in the game of *ba'aka*, which is a game played only by the most observant people. **When the days seem long** Since they are waiting for evening to come so that they may begin to play.

Mishnah: (*nardshir*) Checkers *shech* in a foreign language.⁶² (*iskundrei*) Chess *dahm* in a foreign language.⁶³

Gemara: Who lurk, like fowlers lying in wait The meaning is that it is beneath one's dignity to lurk at a time that men strike⁶⁴ in the game of checkers.⁶⁵ **Do not stand idly by while your neighbor bleeds** For even to stand at a time when they are playing *dahm* is forbidden. **With cards there is not a surety** For those who come to play do not rely at all upon winning, but rather upon losing, and the coins which they prepare for the game they forfeit them at the outset, and all that is won, it is as though it is won from the communal property. **Cards themselves** The forms and colors of them, which shall never ever change. **Lest they cease to be found in the market** Since those who pounce upon them increase on the eve of Chanukah⁶⁶, and one might neglect the commandment. **What is the meaning of "they are not a hindrance?"** **To preparation** But in gaming, even the Tanna Kama admitted to a hindrance.

62. For Rashi, the foreign language which he uses as a reference point is Old French. It is not clear whether Rosenzweig is using a French term or an English term here. It appears that he is referring to checkers, as Jastrow has also translated.

63. Rosenzweig calls this game "*dahm*" in order to make a pun in the main text. See note 41 and the related text.

64. Another meaning of the root נקש *NKSh*.

65. Here again Rosenzweig uses the cognate נקש *shech*, by which he apparently means checkers.

66. Lots of people are looking for last-minute guests to fill their tables and enable them to have a game. If one does not plan ahead in inviting guests, one might find that people have other commitments, and one might therefore be unable to find enough people for a game.

Tractate
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Mishnah: **Despite the fact that¹ our sages said that all are trustworthy concerning poverty, not all are trustworthy concerning wealth,** and even in testimony and under oath, but rather [individuals] only [are considered trustworthy if they provide] **the symbols of wealth.**

Gemara: What is the difference between poverty that inspires trust, and wealth, that does not? Rav Socialist said: "It is because a wealthy person is called wicked, as it is written: *And his grave was set among the wicked.*² And the conclusion of it reads: *And with the rich in his death.*"³ And a man does not purposely place himself amongst the wicked."⁴

In testimony,⁵ because they are concerned about collusion,⁶ and under oath⁷ because he who is suspected of wrong-doing in monetary matters, is also suspected of swearing falsely.⁸

Rav Understanding raised an objection: "Have we not learned: The one who says: 'Behold me, I am wise,' this is a sign that he is a fool. 'Behold me, I am strong,' this is a sign that he is weak. 'Behold me, I am rich,' he is believed, and they check after him." It says at any rate, "He is believed," why does this not mean [that he is believed] even in principle?⁹

1. Mishnah Ketubot 5:1 begins this way, and the chapter of Mishnah is titled according to its opening phrase.

2. Isaiah 53:9

3. The conclusion of the aforementioned verse.

4. This precept is taught in the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Sanhedrin 25a.

5. Continuing with the exposition of the next phrase in the "Mishnah."

6. This concept is found in the Babylonian Talmud, tractate Bava Metzia 13b. In testimony, there is the fear that one's testimony may have been bought.

7. Again, continuing with the next phrase of the "Mishnah."

8. This passage is from the Babylonian Talmud, tractate Bava Metzia 5b. Because he is already known not to be trustworthy in one area, his general trustworthiness is suspect.

9. I.e., According to the law there is no objection to an individual testifying to his wealth.

Rav Businessman said: "What is the meaning of "He is believed?" *Ex post facto*, and following examination.¹⁰ And if you like I can say, there is no difficulty. One case deals with [those] among Israel, and **the other case [operates] among those who are not of Israel.**¹¹ Among those who are not of Israel, one who says: 'Behold me, I am rich,' is believed, for he speaks according to his innocence. Yet even thus he requires investigation for the matter of a loan. But for Israel, they do not believe him, though he speaks according to his innocence, for we maintain the person in his previous status¹² and in the average case, Jews are poor.

And it is as Rav Knowledgeable explained: "*One man pretends to be rich and has nothing, etc.*"¹³ One man pretends to be rich but has nothing, these are the wealthy of Israel, who rely upon commerce. Another professes to be poor and has much wealth, these are the wealthy of the nations of the world, **for they rely upon the land.** And the wealthy of Israel, do you think that they do not rely upon the land? It has been learned that at first they said, a man should always divide his money into thirds: one-third invested in the land, one-third invested in business, and one-third in cash.¹⁴ [This held true] until the children of Israel came to America and reduced it to two divisions, in business and in land, and they sank their money into the land."¹⁵

Is it not the case that they¹⁶, too, relied upon the land? Rav Knowledgeable said:

10. I.e., We don't accept his testimony on principle, but if he has already made such a claim, and we have examined it, then it is permissible.

11. I.e., the contradiction is resolved by saying that one case applies to Jews and one to non-Jews.

12. Babylonian Talmud, tractate Makkot 4a. In other words, once poor, always poor! Or, at the very least, we don't assume anyone has gotten rich until he can prove it.

13. Proverbs 13:7. The full verse reads, "One man pretends to be rich and has nothing; another professes to be poor and has much wealth."

14. This is based upon Babylonian Talmud, tractate Bava Metzia 42a. In the Talmud text, however, the last third is left readily available.

15. A more literal translation of the Hebrew would read, "They buried their cash in the ground."

16. I.e., The wealthy of Israel referred to in the preceding paragraph.

“What is the meaning of ‘on the land?’ **Literally, on the land.** For they are not cautious at the time that they purchase, and do as our father Abraham did, who paid four hundred *shekels* for the cave of Machpelah, and [they] seek a profit like Ephron ben Tzochar.”¹⁷ As it has been learned, the purchaser does not purchase for himself, but rather for others. And the builder, how much will he build? Until he is indebted. And neither has anything but that presumption of ownership.

What is the meaning of “presumption of ownership?” It is as it has been taught: the seller and the buyer become friends, and the presumption about friends is in property, for nothing is found under their hands which is not dangerous. The presumption of the seller is in defrauding for more than one-sixth, and the presumption of the buyer is in purchasing for less than one-sixth.¹⁸ The two of them establish the remainder as a loan intended to be paid off back-and-forth, and they repeat the process- God forbid! The seller becomes a buyer and the buyer becomes a seller, and between this and that, they raise the rent of the neighbors.

It is taught: All the property of Israel is movable property, for there is no man among Israel who can purchase a house for himself without a loan on the basis of a pledge. And this is what the wicked Bilaam said: *How goodly are your tents, O Jacob, your dwelling places, O Israel.*¹⁹

Furthermore: “The seller and the buyer,” why does the statement not include the renter? Rav Lease said: “A renter does not, as a general rule, become a landlord, for this

17. The reference is to Chapter 23 of Genesis.

18. There is a discussion beginning in the Babylonian Talmud, tractate Bava Batra 90a which allows for deviations in pricing equivalent to no more than one-sixth of the value of an item.

19. Numbers 24:5. Rosenzweig is making a pun between *mishkenotecha* מִשְׁכְּנוֹתֶיךָ, meaning “your dwelling places,” and *mashkon* מַשְׁכָּן, meaning “a pledge.” This will be expanded upon in his “Rashi” commentary.

would place him **close to profit** and far from loss.”²⁰

It was learned from the school of Rabbi Builder: These **righteous of our generation**, why are they meritorious? Because they build **tenement houses**, and they say to the Holy One, Blessed be He: “Master of the Universe, it is revealed and known before You that for Your honor we do this. Since You dwell in the heights of the world, we make chambers and cheap rooms²¹ for people. And not only that, but we spare the money of Israel so that it will not be wasted upon furnishings for the home and chattel. Therefore we make the rooms narrow and short like chicken coops, to fulfill what was written: *And you will gaze grudgingly.*”²²

It has been said: Man does not merit housing in America unless he fears God, who compressed His Divine Presence in order to establish in them that the poor should not be cut off. As it is written: *And because the midwives feared God, He established households for them.*²³

But rather only the symbols of wealth.²⁴ What are they? Rav Scrivener said: “Symbols of a swine, who stretches out a leg to those who are in debt and will not lift up

20. This terminology is found in the Babylonian Talmud, tractate Bava Metzia 64b and 70a. In the first case, the sale of a barrel of wine on the stipulation that the sale is only valid if the wine does not turn sour before delivery is prohibited because it places the buyer “close to profit and far from loss” (i.e., he stands to benefit, but is not liable for any loss). In the latter instance, the Talmud says that a venture to benefit orphans should be set up so that the orphans are “close to profit and far from loss” (i.e., they should share in the income from the venture but not be liable for any expenses). Rosenzweig seems to be saying that landlords reap only benefits, but seek to avoid liability when there is a loss. Their tenants, on the other hand, are unable to do so.

21. A pun on the Hebrew word **סוּר** *room*, meaning “heights,” and its English homophone.

22. I Samuel 2:32. This translation is from JPS, which notes that the meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. Rosenzweig probably wishes to connect **צָר** *tsar*, translated here as “grudgingly,” to the adjective “narrow” which he used to describe the tenement rooms. “Narrow” is the common English rendering of the word **צָר**.

23. Exodus 1:21. Rosenzweig uses this as a proof text that God grants housing to those who fear Him.

24. Rosenzweig turns now to an exegesis of the latter part of his “Mishnah.”

for them even one *gerah*.²⁵ And Rav Scrivener said: "In the future, the landlords of Israel will face Divine judgment, for they have not learned a moral lesson from our father Abraham. For at the time when our father Abraham wished to purchase property for himself in Israel, he first went and bought a burial place.²⁶ **But the wealthy among Israel** in America buy property for themselves first, and the payments become rent,²⁷ and they do not consider the day of their death at all, for they will not be buried in the burial-places of others." And Rav Scrivener said: "It is the future of all Israel to be properly dependent upon the earth, as it is written: *And your people, all of them righteous, shall possess the land.*"²⁸

We shall return to you, Tractate Property

25. A *gerah* גרה is a type of coin. Rosenzweig seems to be speaking metaphorically of a landlord who makes his tenant default on his rent and then won't provide him with any assistance.

26. Another reference to Genesis 23.

27. The Hebrew for the phrase "become rent" עובר לשוחר *over lasocher* is a pun on a phrase from Genesis 23:16 עבר לסחר *over lasocher*, which there means "at the going merchants' rate."

28. Isaiah 60:21. Rosenzweig seems to be saying that all people become dependent on the earth when they die (for they need a place to be buried). He suggests that in death, even the most wicked person is considered righteous enough to merit a proper burial.

Mishnah: Despite the fact that our sages said. In Tractate Poverty.²⁹ **Not all are trustworthy concerning wealth.** "All" includes those who buy *aliyot* which are allotted in the synagogue, for they do not do so except for haughtiness and they waste the money of others.³⁰ **The symbols of wealth.** In the *Gemara*, it will be explained to you what is meant by symbols of wealth.

Gemara: And following examination. And the court is not concerned lest it is not a perfect examination, since most examiners examine for clothing, food, and matters of sustenance.³¹ **The other case [operates] among those who are not of Israel.** With the exclusion of the apostate at this time, who is like a complete Israelite in all matters. For it is a legal principle for us that a Jewish man, even if he sins, is still an Israelite.³² **For they rely upon the land.** And they have great fortunes. And despite this, they are impoverished, and complain about Israel, [saying] that they stole their money. **Literally, on the land.** That is to say, they lose everything. **For the cave of Machpelah.** The Talmud utilizes the language of scripture. That is to say, the worst land of the estate.³³ **Seek a profit like Ephron.** In the manner of the travelling merchant. And in another place, it is said: And they seek a reward before them.³⁴ There it refers to hypocrites.

29. A מסכת עניות *Masechet Aniyut*, "Tractate Poverty," by Isaac Meir Dick, was published in Vilna in 1878. It is unclear whether Rosenzweig is referring directly to this text.

30. It was the practice in many synagogues to auction off the honor of being called to the Torah, in order to raise funds for synagogue upkeep. Those who bid "waste the money of others" by driving up the price of such honors.

31. In the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Bava Batra 9a, Rav Yehudah teaches that they examine for clothing and not for food, while Rav Huna teaches that they examine for food but not for clothing.

32. Babylonian Talmud, tractate Sanhedrin 44a. Rosenzweig is mocking assimilation by stating that according to this precept, even the most avowed apostate is still considered a Jew.

33. A cave could not be cultivated, and thus was useless in the agrarian society in which Abraham lived. Nevertheless, he paid the going rate for the land.

34. Otzar HaMidrashim, Rabbeinu HaKadosh, section six.

Your dwelling places, O Israel. Read here *mashkenotecha* with a *patach* under the *mem*,³⁵ connected to the word *mashkon* [a pledge] and surety. And "How goodly" is said euphemistically, or in astonishment. **Close to profit.** This refers to the non-Jewish renter, but a renter from Israel is close to loss. **Righteous of our generation.** They are not truly righteous, or they would show favor and give. Rather, they³⁶ are the ones who suck the money from the poor who rent their apartments. And they are called righteous for they proclaim the justification prayer upon their tenants.³⁷ **Tenement houses.** From the language "give from cubicles."³⁸ That is to say, dark and narrow rooms. **But the wealthy among Israel.** Excluding the societies and lodges which provide land for burial-places to bury the members [of their group] before worrying about the poor whom they have driven from their property,³⁹ and who⁴⁰ have compassion for the land before they have compassion for the creatures.⁴¹ For they are men of truth in this generation, and it is written: *Truth shall grow forth from the earth.*⁴² **And your people, all of them righteous.** Not flawlessly righteous, but righteous with regard to possession of the land.⁴³

35. Rosenzweig suggests revocalizing the word מִשְׁכְּנוֹתֶיךָ *mishkenotecha*, "your dwelling places." See note 14, above. Incidentally, in Numbers Rabbah 12:14, a similar revocalized reading is suggested, albeit with a different end result.

36. The so-called "righteous."

37. Rosenzweig makes a word-play here between the word for "righteous," צַדִּיקִים *tzadikim*, and the word for "the judgment prayer," צִדְדִּיק הַדִּין *tziduk hadin*. The judgment prayer is said by mourners at the graveside, acknowledging God's justice even in death. Landlords are considered righteous, because when their tenants die, the landlords attend the funeral to recite this prayer! Or, Rosenzweig may be saying that when landlords discover that their tenants are unable to pay, they consider them to be dead.

38. This phrase in Hebrew is rendered מִן תַּן מֵן תֵּאִים *ten min ta'im*, which sounds like Rosenzweig's word for "tenements," טֵנֶמֶנְטִין *tenementin*.

39. I.e., The property belonging to the poor is co-opted to bury the members of societies and lodges there.

40. Referring to society and lodge members.

41. I.e., They care more about the land than they do about human beings.

42. Psalms 85:12

43. The implication appears to be that once a person is dead, no matter how bad he was in life, he is still entitled to a burial plot.

Tractate
Disguise
from
The Yankee Talmud
with a brief and sufficient commentary
Compiled and arranged by
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Mishnah: At first, none went out in disguise except for **the poor¹ on Purim**. When the [wearing of] colorful clothing increased in popularity, the rich went out in disguise during the entire year.

Gemara: It was taught: Why did they establish the wearing of disguises for the poor on Purim? So that they would not be embarrassed at the time that they receive charity.

When the rich stopped giving, the disguises were removed from the poor and given to the rich, so that they would not be embarrassed when they do not give. This *baraita* means: The rich, yes, the poor, no.²

Yet do we not have a *baraita* that says: One principle was learned by the rabbis from Moses, our teacher: When they went outside they would not go out unless they were wearing a disguise?³ Yet in the average case, rabbis are poor men themselves, though the first *baraita* teaches that they [the rich] go out in masks.⁴

Rav Scrivener said: "What does this case deal with? With rabbis in America. And as it has been expounded: *One man pretends to be rich and has nothing; another professes to be poor and has much wealth.*⁵ 'One man pretends to be rich and has nothing,' this is the European rabbi, who is rich in knowledge of Torah and who is disgraced by poverty. 'Another professes to be poor and has much wealth,' this is the

1. Rosenzweig was particularly concerned about indigent immigrants from Eastern Europe.

2. I.e., the rich may wear disguises, but the poor may not.

3. This refers to Moses' actions following his descent from Mount Sinai. His face is radiant with the presence of God, and the people are afraid to look at him. Thus, for the remainder of his life, he covers his face with a veil. See Exodus 34:33ff.

4. The first "*baraita*" says that only the rich wear masks, but this argument suggests that the rabbis, although typically poor, should wear masks to emulate Moses. In speaking of rabbis wearing masks, Rosenzweig is also taking a dig at what he feels to be rabbinic hypocrisy. He suggests that they go out in the "costume" of rabbis, but that they are not really what they appear to be.

5. Proverbs 13:7

American rabbi, who is poor in Torah and becomes wealthy through his rabbinate. And if you choose, I might say: 'Reform rabbis are also called "rabbis".' And as Rav Luminaria says: "Every rabbi **who learns the Torah from left to right**,⁶ will one day become be wealthy and honored, as it is written: *And at his left side are wealth and honor.*"⁷

Come and hear: The teachers of children, the ritual slaughterers, the cantors, and all who earn their living from Torah, from *Kashrut*, and from prayer in America do not go outside unless wearing a disguise. This *baraita* mentions teachers of children, and we learn from authoritative tradition that teachers of children are poor.

Rav Scrivener said: "Teachers of children are a different case, for **it is fitting for them to be poor** and they shall never become wealthy."⁸

It is taught: **Avimelech established disguises for the rich**, as it is written: *Behold I have given 1,000 pieces of silver to your brother. Let it be a covering of the eyes for you.*⁹

Rav Scrivener explained: "Why is it written: *I never prayed I would see your face*¹⁰ in reference to the time that Jacob heard that Joseph his son had been made wealthy

6. This refers to reading the Torah in English (from left to right), rather than in Hebrew (which reads from right to left). Rosenzweig was troubled by the fact that Reform rabbis were educated about sacred texts in English (and that they generally had little knowledge of Hebrew or scripture, in his opinion).

7. Proverbs 3:16. Rosenzweig has twisted the phrase just slightly. The biblical text reads "בְּשִׂמְאוֹלָהּ" where Rosenzweig has "וּמִשְׂמָאלָהּ." The basic point Rosenzweig is trying to make is unaffected by this change.

8. This is Rosenzweig's way of saying that teachers do not fit the paradigm established for the other occupations which are mentioned in the *baraita*. Having been a teacher himself, he had a somewhat pessimistic view about the state of Hebrew education in America.

9. Genesis 20:16. Abraham and Sarah pretended to be brother and sister, rather than husband and wife. Avimelech had Sarah brought to him, but was threatened by God not to touch her, because she was married. Avimelech attempted to have the whole incident forgotten by giving Abraham money and asking that it be "a covering of the eyes." That is, Abraham and Sarah should look the other way and ignore the incident. Rosenzweig plays on the language of "covering the eyes" and links it to disguises.

10. Genesis 48:11

in Egypt? He [Jacob] said: 'Perhaps he [Joseph] has adopted the habits of the rich¹¹ and I shall not see his face.'¹² When he came there and saw Joseph's face without a disguise, he was happy and said: 'I never prayed I would see your face.'¹³

The school of Rav Costume taught: The future of disguises is that they will be abolished from all the world, as it is written: *And he will destroy on this mount the shroud that is drawn over the face of all the peoples and the covering that is spread over all the nations.*¹⁴

Another Mishnah states that a man is required to be cheerful with wine on Purim.¹⁵ In the case of Purim which happens to fall on the first day of the week in the city of New York, how can drunkenness take place?¹⁶ Rav Imbiber said: "It is found in the coffee houses and in cups of milk, as it is written: *I drank my wine with my milk.*¹⁷ This is the case even for those who drink from the prepared,¹⁸ for it is the custom of the righteous to drink on Purim from the prepared. And thus Rav Tippler explained: "Drinking on Purim is commanded to be done from the prepared, for Israel did not merit

11. Specifically, the wearing of disguises.

12. For he might be wearing a mask, disguising his true face.

13. This passage shows Rosenzweig's ability to play with text. He builds upon the biblical quote which states: *I never prayed I would see your face* (i.e., I never could have hoped that I would have the opportunity to see you face-to-face). He explains that Jacob feared that Joseph had become so wealthy in Egypt that he had taken to wearing masks. Had this been the case, then Jacob, during his audience with his son, would not have gazed upon Joseph's true visage. However, once Jacob recognized that Joseph was not wearing a mask, he proclaimed, "I never prayed I would see your face," because seeing Joseph face-to-face exceeded all of his expectations.

14. Isaiah 25:7

15. Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Megillah 7b. "Rava taught: man is obligated to drink on Purim until he does not know the difference between 'cursed is Haman' and 'blessed is Mordecai'." Rosenzweig uses language that cites this passage as Mishnaic, rather than Talmudic.

16. Rosenzweig is mocking American blue laws which restricted drinking on Sundays. The "Rashi" commentary expands the joke.

17. Song of Songs 5:1

18. "Prepared," here refers to pre-mixed wine. During Talmudic times, wine was very strong and had to be diluted to make it palatable.

it except through the merit of Haman, and Haman is known as **Memuchan**¹⁹

Rav Lush said: "We never feared any decree of Roosevelt²⁰, for there is no administrator for drinking,²¹ and thus we find regarding Eli, for even though he watched the mouth of Hannah, he suspected her and thought of her as a drunk. As it says: *And Eli watched her mouth and Eli thought of her as a drunk.*"²²

And they made them days of wine-feasts and happiness.²³ You might think this is a wine-feast for Israel. But are Jews drunkards or fools? Rather it is because of emergency decree. For those who are enemies of Israel would tease and scorn Israelites and say to them: "You are Nazirites²⁴ and Nazirites are sinners."²⁵ And from whom did they learn this? From their father the wicked Haman who accused the Jews, saying: *And their laws are unlike that of any other people and they do not obey the laws of the king.*²⁶ As it is written: *And the rule for the drinking was...*²⁷ Therefore, they stood and

19. In Esther 1:14, Memuchan is listed among seven princes of Persia and Media who were trusted advisors to Ahasuerus. Haman is not included in this list. In the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Megillah 12b, the rabbis teach that Haman and Memuchan are the same person.

Memuchan ממוכן is similar to the Hebrew word for "prepared," מוכן (*muchan*), which enables Rosenzweig to make this pun.

20. It is often difficult to decipher cognates, since there is no universal system for rendering English words in Hebrew characters. "Roosevelt" seems to be a good candidate for Rosenzweig's "רוזוילד". On June 23, 1895, when Theodore Roosevelt was police commissioner of New York City, he began enforcing Sunday blue laws which required saloons to close. The enforcement was sporadic, since many officers were apparently willing to look the other way if sufficiently bribed. Many saloons also openly flouted the law, by dispensing their liquor into small containers for consumption at home. See Pringle, Henry Fowle, *Theodore Roosevelt* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1931). Rosenzweig's statement seems to be saying that civil decrees (such as blue laws) are not sufficient reasons to exempt Jews from drinking on Purim.

21. I.e., one must do the drinking on his own; no "stand-in" can do it on his behalf.

22. First Samuel 1:12-13. Hannah prayed fervently but silently. Eli, the high priest, watched her lips moving and thought that she was drunk.

23. Esther 9:22

24. If they were Nazirites, they would have made a vow to abstain from drinking.

25. Numbers 6:11 speaks of a sin-offering made on behalf of a Nazirite who has become defiled due to contact with a corpse. But Rashi, citing Rabbi Eleazar haKappar, states, "His sin consists in that he has afflicted himself by abstaining from wine." In other words, Nazirites are sinners because every person should enjoy alcoholic beverages!

26. Esther 3:8

27. Esther 1:8. The word for "law" in the previous citation is the same as the word for "rule" here. If

established for Israel one day each year for a festival. As it says: *To do according to the law of the day.*²⁸ Today and not yesterday, today and not tomorrow.²⁹

Rav Scrivener said: We learn it [that drinking takes place once a year] from another verse regarding **Yom HaKippurim** *once a year*,³⁰ and it is called "Yom Kippurim." This tells you that the observance of Purim takes place only once a year.³¹

Rav Scrivener said: "It is written: *These are the generations of Noah: Shem, Ham, and Yaphet*,³² and it is later written, *the older brother of Yaphet*.³³ Even though the birthright belonged to Shem, Yaphet took a double portion in the inheritance of his father Noah, because the Holy One Blessed be He anticipated that in the future the children of Yaphet would hate the children of Shem and would not be able to dwell with them in one area. Therefore He persuaded Yaphet to take two portions for himself from the inheritance of his father, and settled the sons of Shem in taverns, and this is what the Scripture says: *May God increase Yaphet, and let Shem dwell in tents*.³⁴ And what is the meaning of tents? They are taverns. Know that Bilaam the wicked, who came to curse Israel, said: *How good are your tents, Jacob*."³⁵

Rav Scrivener said: "All is dependent on luck, even in the case of Haman living in the days of Ahasuerus. For, indeed how many Hamans³⁶ have risen up against Israel in

Haman's accusations were true and the Jews did not obey the king's laws (or rules), then they refused to drink at his parties! So, Rosenzweig claims, the enemies of Israel would tease the Jews and accuse them of being teetotalers. Thus drinking was allowed on Purim to combat such accusations.

28. Esther 9:13

29. I.e., One follows the command to drink on the day of Purim, not the day before or the day after.

30. Exodus 30:10. Yom HaKippurim is a rabbinic term for the holiday of Yom Kippur.

31. The joke which Rosenzweig is making here, a pun between "Purim" and "Yom HaKippurim" is more readily apparent in his "Rashi" commentary, below.

32. Genesis 6:9

33. Genesis 10:21

34. Genesis 10:27

35. Numbers 24:5. Rosenzweig either interprets this as a sarcastic slur against the Israelites, or implies that Bilaam was really praising the quality of the Israelite bars!

36. Throughout rabbinic and post-rabbinic literature, Haman often represents the paradigmatic villain and

every generation and they have not merited that **a great advertisement such as this** be made on their behalf, and that there be a day of drinking and happiness in their name.”

It was taught: Come and see how much greater is the one who does a meritorious act when he is not commanded to do so than one who does it because he is commanded to do so³⁷. For the sons of Yaphet³⁸ are not commanded regarding drinking even once each year, and yet you do not have a day in which you do not find some of them drunk in the streets, and when you do not hear in the newspapers of a punishment for disobedience on account of drinking. And the sons of Shem³⁹ are under a commandment to drink on Purim, yet you do not find a Jew **shamed** in the streets, as it is written: There is no breaching and no sortie, and no wailing in our streets.⁴⁰

We shall return to you, Tractate Disguise

enemy of the Jews.

37. This is the teaching of Rabbi Chanina in the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Bava Kamma 87a. The person who is commanded to perform a *mitzvah* is thinking about the consequences of not performing it (and struggles against an inclination not to perform it), while the one who is not obligated to perform it has nothing to lose.

38. Associated here with non-Jews.

39. That is, the Jews.

40. Psalm 144:14.

Mishnah: Poor on Purim. They would put disguises on their faces when they went from door to door so that the masters of the households would not recognize who were the passersby and they would give everyone a fair donation.

Gemara: One man pretends to be rich and has nothing. And this is how the verse is explained that it should be read: there is a rabbi who becomes wealthy in Torah and does not have much property, and there is a rabbi who becomes impoverished through Torah and has wealth in property. **He learns the Torah from left to right.** Those who do not understand the Torah in the holy language and learn it in other languages which are read from the left.⁴¹ **It is fitting for them to be poor.** And they can be like rich people who go out in disguise. **Avimelech established disguises for the rich.** Our Mishnah teaches that originally the rich would not go out with them.⁴² This refers to the Israelites and not the nations of the world, for we do not find that Sarah received the disguise from Avimelech.⁴³ And Jacob feared that Joseph would come out in a disguise like the rich. He feared that he⁴⁴ had learned the deeds of the rich Egyptians. And the rich at that time were like the rich of Egypt in every manner. **In the land of New York.** For it holds that on the second day of Shabbat of the diaspora⁴⁵, drinking is forbidden, for it is written:

*And the spirit of God hovered over the waters.*⁴⁶ **Memuchan.** The explanation of

41. A dig against the reformers who advocated studying (and reading from) the Bible in the vernacular.

42. That is, with disguises.

43. Though Sarah is asked to ignore the incident, there is no textual attestation that she agreed. See also note nine above.

44. That is, Joseph.

45. It is traditional in the diaspora to add a second day to many of the Jewish festivals. Rosenzweig sarcastically applies this to the celebration of the Christian Sabbath on Sunday. He makes it a second day of the Jewish Sabbath celebrated on Saturday! Rosenzweig may also be referring to the practice of holding Shabbat services on Sunday, which was the custom of many Reform congregations at the time.

46. Genesis 1:2. Perhaps Rosenzweig is trying to make a joke here by noting that God hovered over the waters, but did not drink!

Memuchan is: From the prepared.⁴⁷ **And Eli thought of her as a drunk.** For there is no administrator for drinking. **And the rule for drinking was.** And that same wicked man said that just as they did not establish drinking feasts so they did not establish laws.⁴⁸

Yom HaKippurim. And Rav Scrivener explains that the "*Kaf*" is a "*Kaf*" for similarity: a day which is similar to Purim.⁴⁹ **How good are your tents, Jacob.** But a prophet of Israel defended them for this and cried out about jealousy regarding them: *And you sit in saloons.*⁵⁰ **A great advertisement such as this.** And even though they receive no enjoyment from this, the wicked person's heart is eased to know that their name will be blotted out due to the sanctification of their hatred for Israel. **Shamed.** This is a euphemism for "drunk," and my teacher explained by means of a euphemism: On account of the bad odor which comes from a drunkard.⁵¹

47. Here Rosenzweig explicitly spells out his pun, linking Memuchan ממוכן (from the prepared). The prefix mem מ on Memuchan ממוכן can be shorthand for מן ה- (from the). See also note 19.

48. If they could not follow the "rule" regarding drinking feasts, ostensibly they could not be relied upon to establish other rules and laws and conduct themselves in an orderly fashion.

49. Rosenzweig actually calls the holiday Yom Kippurim (as it is occasionally known in rabbinic literature), in Hebrew יום כיפורים. In Hebrew, the letter "kaf" (כ) can function as a prefix meaning "like" or "as." Thus, Rosenzweig jokes that Yom Kippurim is Yom Ka-Purim יום כ-פורים, a day like Purim.

50. An alteration of Ezekiel 2:6. The actual text reads, **כי סרבים וסלונים אתך ואל-עקרבים אתה יושב** (for thistles and thorns are with you and you sit upon scorpions). Rosenzweig has changed the position of the word סלונים *salonim*. This word, typically translated as "thorns" is used by Rosenzweig as a cognate for "saloons," in order to make a pun.

51. The word used for shamed, *mevusham* מבושם, has the same root as the word for spices, בשמים. Rosenzweig suggests that the word is used because it "covers up" the true odor of a drunkard.

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Liars
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Mishnah: The first of April is the New Year for liars,¹ and it is a commandment to lie on that day, and all the more so **with the blast of the shofar**, this is praiseworthy,² and one who does so is guaranteed to lie throughout the entire year.

Gemara: And surely we have learned that there are four new years,³ and all of them are recounted, and yet the New Year for liars is not recounted.

Bar Kosiba said: "At the time that Jews were counting time according to the creation of the world by the Holy One Blessed be He,⁴ they were exempted from the New Year for liars, as it is written: *God is not a man, that He should lie.*⁵ When they sinned and began to count according to the birth of man,⁶ they were obligated to observe the New Year for liars, as it is said: *All men are liars.*⁷ And what is the meaning of fixing it on the first of April? Because of the secret of pregnancy which has in it **the beginning of lying**, for when you count from April to January, you find nine months."⁸

It was stated by Kosiba: "Lying is not dependent upon the day but rather an obligation of the individual." Rav Liar said: "**All are obligated to lie**, even throughout

1. This opening mimics an introductory verse from the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Rosh Hashanah 2a.

2. In the beginning of the Passover Haggadah, the text teaches that Jews are commanded to speak of the exodus from Egypt. It then adds, "הרי זה משובח, *kol hamarbeh lisaper beyetziat Mitzrayim, harei zeh meshubach.*" "The more one tells about the exodus from Egypt, the more one is praised." Rosenzweig mimics this passage.

3. In the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Rosh Hashanah 2a. They are the first of Elul, the first of Tishri, the fifteenth of Shevat, and the first of Nisan.

4. I.e., when they relied solely upon the Jewish calendar and not the secular calendar.

5. Numbers 23:19

6. I.e., Jesus. This is made clearer in the "Rashi" commentary.

7. Psalms 116:11. The entire verse reads: *I said in my alarm, 'All men are liars.'*

8. This sentence refers to the Christian tenet of the virgin birth. Rosenzweig's meaning is made clearer in the "Rashi" commentary. Rosenzweig has used the term סוד העובר *sod ha'ibur* "the secret of pregnancy," which is a pun on a rabbinic term. In rabbinic literature, it refers to the esoteric knowledge of intercalating months and years. The Hebrew calendar is based on a lunar year, and must be corrected from time to time in order to keep the holidays in their proper season.

the entire year, as it is written: *All men are liars.*"

What is the reason behind the teaching of the first *Tanna*?⁹ He expounds the first part of the verse: *I said in my alarm*,¹⁰ [to refer to the time] after one's alarm or haste has passed. David does not explain it in this manner.¹¹ And Rav Liar responds to this argument: "What is the meaning of 'in my alarm?' In a land of haste."¹² And thus David said: "If you see a land in which all is done in haste, and men live and die in haste, know that all men are liars, for haste will bring you unto lying."¹³

Our teacher said: "Rav Liar said: 'All are obligated to lie.' 'All' is meant to include whom?"¹⁴ To include the matchmakers and the editors. You might have thought that they are exempt from lying in the same way that they are exempt from the obligation to become drunk on Purim."¹⁵

And all the more so with the blast of the shofar.¹⁶ The Mishnah opens with "lying" and concludes with "the blast of the shofar."¹⁷

Rav Deceiver said: "The blast of the shofar is equivalent to lying in its meaning,

9. I.e., What is the meaning of Kosiba's statement that lying is an obligation of the individual?

10. The first part of the verse from Psalms 116:11.

11. That is, David, the reputed author of the Psalms, does not require one to lie.

12. The word for "in my alarm" is *בחפזי bechofzi*. The word for "haste" is *חפזון chipazon*. This may be a reference to Egypt, which the Israelites left hastily. Both Exodus 12:11 and Deuteronomy 16:3 refer to the the hasty departure. However, it is possible that Rosenzweig is referring to America, where (he feels) all is done in haste, and all men are liars.

13. This is not based on any actual text, but rather an attempt to explain how David's words in the Psalm should be interpreted, according to the opinion of Rav Liar.

14. Rosenzweig here uses a common technical phrase from the Talmud *הכל לאתויי מאי hakol le'atuyei mai* "what does 'all' come to include?" This introduces a case in which something is included in a category which one would not typically expect to be included.

15. One would expect to find this teaching in his Tractate Disguise, in which Rosenzweig speaks of drinking on Purim. However, the edition which we have contains no such reference.

16. Rosenzweig continues with further exegesis of his "Mishnah."

17. The text is asking why the same term is not used both times.

as when the men of so-and-so strike at¹⁸ so-and-so. And thus we find regarding Laban¹⁹ the trickster, of whom it is written: *And Laban camped with his kinsmen.*²⁰

Rav Bluffer said: "In America all lie, and their lies are valid, for lying is a sign of freedom, and all the more so do we call one who lies a wise man, and thus we find regarding Yoav, who sent for a wise woman specifically from Tekoah."²¹

Rabbi Denier expounded: "*Truth shall spring forth from the earth.*"²² What is the meaning of 'from the earth?' In the month which we call March- from the earth.²³ For the entire year, the truth is covered in the ground. When March arrives it begins to bloom, therefore they established on the first of April the New Year for liars."²⁴

Bar Kosiba said: "The word March is to be taken literally,²⁵ for all who speak the truth now have no protection, except in the ground."²⁶

We shall return to you, Tractate Liars

18. Hebrew תקע *teka*. The word has multiple meanings, including "fanfare," "strike," and "camp," all of which Rosenzweig relates to deceit.

19. Laban (Hebrew לבן) literally means "White." This is the same as the meaning of the word "Weiss" in German. Rosenzweig thus equates the biblical Laban with Isaac Mayer Wise, founder of the Reform movement in America. Any reference to Laban's trickery should also be regarded as a veiled slur against Wise. See also Rosenzweig's Haggadah for Authors.

20. Genesis 31:25. Because of Laban's deceitful dealings with Jacob, which included promising him Rachel as a bride and delivering Leah on his wedding night, Laban earned a reputation as a deceitful man. The word used here for camped is again תקע *teka*, so the verse could also be read, "And Laban deceived his kinsmen."

21. A reference to II Samuel 14:2. Yoav, the general of David's army and a trusted confidant of David, enlists a "wise woman of Tekoah" to come before David and teach him a lesson. Rosenzweig plays upon the orthographic similarity between Tekoah תקועה and the word for one who sounds a horn, תקוע *t'koa*.

22. Psalms 85:12

23. Rosenzweig puns upon the Hebrew spelling of "March" מארץ which is the same as the spelling of the word for "from the earth" מארץ *me'eret*.

24. Liars can begin anew with their lies on April first (April Fool's Day), when the truth has presumably "reached maturity" and bloomed (and begins to lie dormant once again).

25. I.e. It is to be read as "from the earth."

26. I.e., When they are dead.

Mishnah: With the blast of the shofar. In the *Gemara* it explains that the blast of the shofar here is a lie, and it derives this point from Scripture.

Gemara: All men are liars. The meaning is that even those who do not believe in the divinity of Jesus, since they have begun to count [the years] according to his birth, they are all liars and are obligated to observe the New Year for liars. **The beginning of lying.** For they say that the mother of their God became pregnant in April, not from a man, but from the Spirit of God from on high, and this is the beginning of the lies. **All are obligated to lie.** This comes to include the editors and the matchmakers. For they are obligated literally all of the year, for if they speak the truth no one will listen to them. But the remainder of the people are not exactly obligated, but rather they are permitted to lie throughout the entire year, and are obligated only on the first of April.²⁷

²⁷ I.e., April Fool's Day.

Tractate
America¹
from
The Yankee Talmud
with a brief and sufficient commentary
Compiled and arranged by
Gerson Rosenzweig
New York
1909
Brought out by the bookstore of
S. Druckerman, 50 Canal Street, New York²

“The bee is small among winged creatures, yet her produce takes first place for
sweetness” (Ben Sira 11).³

1. Throughout this tractate, Rosenzweig uses a non-traditional spelling of the word America (עמיריקא). This is due, in large part, to an etymological joke that he makes in the text.

2. Tractate America (מסכת עמיריקא *Massechet Amerika*) was published in Vilna in 1892 as a separate volume. It is perhaps the best-known of Rosenzweig's works. A copy was recently found in the Bevis Marks Spanish and Portuguese synagogue in London, and scans have been posted on the internet. It is found at http://www.alldgate.freemove.co.uk/interests/religion/bevis/101_0301/amerika.htm

In the original publication of Tractate America, several pages appeared which are absent from the text as it appears in *The Yankee Talmud*. They have been included here to provide further insight into Rosenzweig's style. In *The Yankee Talmud*, the title page is followed immediately by the first page of text.

3. Ben Sira 11:3. Ben Sira is an apocryphal book of proverbs. This quote does not appear on the title page of the tractate as printed in *The Yankee Talmud*.

Presented and dedicated in honor of my uncle, Rabbi Samuel the Prince⁴ also known as
"Uncle Sam."

Note to readers in other lands: We jokingly call the United States "Uncle Sam," because the initial letters of "United States" are the same as those for "Uncle Sam." In the same way, we use flowery language to call a wise student a "dream fast," due to the similarity of their initial letters.⁵ Sam is short for "Samuel."⁶

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4. שמואל הנגיד *Shmu'el HaNagid* "Samuel the Governor" was the nickname of Ismail ibn Nagrela, who lived from 993-1055/6. He was a poet, scholar, and military commander who eventually gained prominence as the vizier of Granada.
5. A wise student, תלמיד חכם *talmid chacham* was apparently sometimes called a "dream fast" תענית חלום *ta'anit chalom*. The initial sounds of both phrases are the same.
6. This note appears as a footnote on Rosenzweig's second page.

Announcement!

That I bought the book *Tractate America* from its esteemed compiler at full price, which I have properly verified and confirmed by notaries. The rights [of publication] are mine alone perpetually, and if, God forbid, any man should republish it without my permission or, if my permission is denied, he will surely be punished according to the laws of the exalted government, along with the punishment written in the Torah: "Cursed be he who breaches the boundary of his neighbor."⁷

-The publisher

7. Deuteronomy 27:17

Mishnah: **"There is no difference between America and the rest of the lands except for subjugation to a monarchy"**⁸: the words of Rabbi Greenhorn. **But the sages say that America is like the rest of the lands in every manner.**

Gemara: It has been taught: America was not created except to be a land of refuge, for at the hour that Columbus discovered America, the **three parts of the world**⁹ came before the Holy One, Blessed be He and said before Him: "Master of the Universe, You have written in Your Torah: (Deuteronomy 19) *You shall divide into three parts the territory of the country.*"¹⁰ The Holy One Blessed be He said to them: **"So that any manslayer may have a place to flee."**¹¹

Rav Scrivener said: "Columbus foresaw through his use of astrology that in the future America would become a place of refuge for the empty and the wanton of the entire world and he sought mercy, that it not be named after him, so it was called **Ama Reikah.**"¹²

Can it be so? For has it not been taught: All of the lands are inferior to America, for America stands on the strength of its pedigrees.¹³

Rav Understanding said [in resolving the above contradiction]: "What is the

8. This statement is a parody of a Talmudic dictum found, for instance, in the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Berachot 34b. There, it is taught that the only difference between this world and the Messianic age is the issue of subjugation to a monarchy. Rabbi Greenhorn is thus debating with the sages over whether America is the "promised land" (i.e., the realization of Messianic dreams), or if life in America is just the same as life in other lands.

9. Presumably, the continents Europe, Asia, and Africa.

10. Deuteronomy 19:3. In this tractate, Rosenzweig gives parenthetical citations for the book and chapter to which he is referring (but does not cite the verse).

11. Deuteronomy 19:3. This is the conclusion of the verse.

12. Aramaic אִמָּא רֵיקָא, meaning "the worthless people." Rosenzweig uses this spelling for America throughout this tractate.

13. The pedigrees of America's citizens are presumed to be blemish-free.

meaning of pedigrees? The unfit of the other lands, as it has been taught: Ten genealogical classes came up with Ezra from Babylon.¹⁴ And the list includes Bastards and *Netinim*,¹⁵ etc. It was also taught thus in a *baraita*: that ten genealogical classes **came up at first** to America. And these are they: murderers, thieves, informers, arsonists, check forgers, slave traders, perjurious witnesses, the bankrupt, **transgressors of rules subject to *cherem***¹⁶, and stubborn and rebellious children. And there are those who say even young women who are enticed. And why are they considered to be pedigreed? Because all of the unfit of other lands, when they come to America, they become pedigreed here.”

In a *baraita* it was taught: Why is it called America? Because **she cleanses the sins**¹⁷ of men. Unclean are made pure through her, and unfit are formed into acceptable genealogical classes. And how does she cleanse and create proper genealogical classes? Through money, as it is said: (Job 28) *There is a mine for silver*.¹⁸ And a mine is none other than a pedigree,¹⁹ as it is written: (Micah 5) *Whose origin*²⁰ *is from of old, from ancient times*.²¹

And the sages say, etc.²² **What is their meaning?** Rav Understanding said: “It

14. Discussed in the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Kedushin 69a.

15. *נתינים*, *netinim* those consecrated to the Temple, who were forbidden from certain activities.

16. *חרם* *cherem* refers to a writ of excommunication.

17. Rosenzweig attempts to make a word-play between the word *ממַרְקֶת* *memareket*, “she cleanses” and *עמֵא רִיקָה* *ama reikah*, his name for America. The “מ” *mem* “ר” *resh* and “ק” *kuf* sounds are found in both words.

18. Job 28:1

19. The word *מִוצָא* *motza*, as used in the book of Job, is translated by most sources as “mine.” However, it also means “source” or “lineage,” and in those senses is synonymous with *יוֹחַסִּין* *yochasin*, “pedigree.”

20. The word used here for “origin” is *מוֹצְאוֹתָיו* *motzotav*, related to *מִוצָא* *motza* in the quote from Job above.

21. Micah 5:1

22. Rosenzweig returns to discussing his “Mishnah” passage.

seems to me that **any heads of the people are considered to be kings**, as it is written (Deuteronomy): *Then He became King in Jeshurun,*²³ *when the heads of the people assembled.*²⁴ And Rav Greenhorn would respond to this by saying: **"The verse you cite refers to Israel, who are called 'the children of kings.'"**²⁵

Rav Wiseguy said: "There is a disagreement in the Mishnah regarding subjugation to a monarchy, but even Rav Greenhorn admits that there is subjugation in America to judges and police. For it is taught in a baraita: the sages said to Rabbi Greenhorn: **"Greenhorn, what is the difference between a strap and a staff?"**²⁶ He said to them: "This is not subjugation to a monarchy, but rather subjugation to judges and police."

It is thus also taught, the peddler does not go out with his sack to the public domain unless he has permission, and one who pulls a fruit cart does not stand in one place to sell his fruit, and a man should not walk within four cubits of a police officer because of the danger. He [the officer] will strike him [the man] out of contempt, for he [the man] should walk behind him [the officer]. He [the officer] will strike him [the man] with his staff upon his skull without reason, let him [the officer] place his judgement in the hands of heaven, rather than in the hands of the judge, for a policeman is like a friend to the judge.²⁷

Our masters taught in a *baraita*: [One should walk] **behind the lion** and not

23. Another name for Israel.

24. Deuteronomy 33:5. The word "He" here is read as referring to Moses. Though Moses was never crowned king in a formal sense, the "heads of the people" responded to him as though he were one.

25. I.e., It speaks only of Israel and teaches us nothing about America.

26. I.e., Surely there is "subjugation" in America, because political authority exists there. Rosenzweig uses his "Rashi" commentary to explain the comment of the sages.

27. This speaks of Rosenzweig's feeling that the police (and the judicial system) do not treat immigrants fairly.

behind a woman,²⁸ behind a woman and not behind a child, behind a child and not behind a policeman, as it is written: (Isaiah 4) *My people's rulers are **children**; they are governed by women.*²⁹

An objection was raised: There are four categories of those who do damage:³⁰ the woman, the child, the policeman,³¹ and the drunk. One does not cause damage in the same manner as the others, but the comparable trait of all is that **they are all able to cause damage**, and they are exempt from liability, while others who cause damage to them are liable. It is taught, nevertheless, that there are four.³² There is no difficulty, the first text refers to a city whose residents are "**Nazirites**"³³; the second text refers to a town where the residents are not "Nazirites." And in a city where the residents are Nazirites, do they not get drunk?³⁴ But Rav Saloon has said: "*He shall abstain*"³⁵ from wine and any other intoxicant (Numbers 6).³⁶ The text does not say, 'He shall abstain,' but rather, 'He shall make him abstain.'³⁷ From here we learn that all Nazirites compel

28. A reference to the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Berachot 61a, in which the rabbis discuss the appropriateness of a man walking behind a woman, a lion, an idol, or a synagogue while prayer is taking place (because of the unconscious, potentially inappropriate messages that such acts send). Rosenzweig here seems to be linking this to his previous paragraph, which cautions against walking behind a policeman.

29. Though Rosenzweig cites Isaiah 4, the quotation is actually from Isaiah 3:12.

30. This mimics the beginning of Tractate Bava Kamma in the Babylonian Talmud (Bava Kamma 2a).

31. All of whom were listed in the previous paragraph.

32. I.e., no matter how you count it, there are four groups who cause damage, even though the earlier list counted only three, omitting the drunkards.

33. Rosenzweig uses the term "Nazirite" to refer to a teetotaler, as explained in his "Rashi" commentary. In the Biblical laws for taking a Nazirite oath, one of the conditions is that a Nazirite abstain from drinking alcoholic beverages. According to Matthew 2:23, Jesus was born in Nazareth; he and his followers might therefore be known as Nazirites. Thus Rosenzweig might be referring specifically to Christian teetotalers.

34. I.e., Is it plausible that this is the case?!

35. This is the traditional translation of the verse, though the grammar of the verse suggests a different reading, as explained below.

36. Numbers 6:3

37. The text should read ינצר *yenazer*, since the individual takes the vow upon himself, but actually reads ינצר *yazir*, implying that the vow is imposed upon others.

others to abstain from drinking but do not subscribe to temperance themselves.³⁸ Rather, **drunkards are included in the category of policemen.**³⁹

One who descended [to expound the *halachah*] before Rav Scrivener said: "Three measures of freedom entered into the world and all of them were taken by America, as it is written: *Three open baskets upon my head* (Genesis 40)."⁴⁰ Rav Scrivener replied to him: "That was a dream."⁴¹ Who has not heard what Rav Liberty explained: '*Incised upon the tablets* (Exodus 32).⁴² There is no freedom in America except upon the tablets."⁴³

Mishnah: Gold purchases the president and the judge, and Rav Yankee says, "Even the oppressor."⁴⁴

Gemara: What is the meaning of "purchases?" If you say that it means "bribe," that's obvious!⁴⁵ As it has been taught in a *baraita*: When gold came into the world, **bribery**

38. Rosenzweig is speaking of gentile supporters of the temperance movement (such as the members of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, founded in 1874). He felt that they were often hypocritical, failing to practice what they preached. For instance, the police charged with enforcing "blue laws" which regulated alcohol sales were often the biggest drunkards.

39. I.e., Since we cannot resolve the discrepancy (as to whether there are three or four categories of those who cause damage) by making a distinction between Nazirites and non-Nazirites, we must assume that in the first listing (of only three categories), drunkards were included as a subset under the heading of "policemen." So, in the end, all agree that there are four categories of those who cause damage.

40. Genesis 40:16. The meaning of חֲרִי *chori*, translated here as "open" is uncertain in this passage. Rav Scrivener's intent seems to be to link it to חֲרִי *cherut*, meaning "freedom."

41. The dream of Pharaoh's baker, which Joseph interpreted while in prison in Egypt. In his "Rashi" commentary, Rosenzweig notes that America is later to be compared to Egypt. Hence, he suggests that the "three baskets" dream might apply to America.

42. Exodus 32:16. As seen in the "Rashi" commentary, Rosenzweig suggests revocalizing חֲרִי *charut* (meaning "incised") as חֲרִי *cherut* (meaning "freedom"). This is based on a *midrash* appearing in Mishnah Avot 6:2 and elsewhere.

43. I.e., Freedom in America exists only "on the books" and not in reality.

44. This mimics the Mishnah found in the Babylonian Talmud, tractate Bava Metzia 44a.

45. And the Mishnah would not have needed to make the point.

came into the world. And Rav Judge said: "Gold [means] give this."⁴⁶ Rather, what does "purchases" mean? That gold *makes* the president in the first place.⁴⁷

[But there is a problem.] Has it not been taught in a Mishnah that each and every official who is appointed in America, **he is appointed according to lots?**⁴⁸

What is the meaning of "lots"? Bribe. It says there (Proverbs 16): *Lots are cast into the lap*⁴⁹ and it says there (Proverbs 21): *A present*⁵⁰ *in private*.⁵¹ "Lap" connects to "in private" through means of the comparison of words.⁵²

And Rav Yankee says: "Even the oppressor."⁵³ What is the meaning of this? Rav Scrivener says: "He is expounding Scripture. It is written (Isaiah 14): *The oppressor is vanished, oppression has ended*."⁵⁴

Our rabbis taught: Were it not for gold and silver, no president would be elected in America, as it is said (Psalm 135): *He makes clouds rise from the end of the earth*, and the conclusion of the verse reads: *He releases the wind from His vaults*.⁵⁵ Were it not for gold and silver, no governor would be elected in any city, as it is said (Proverbs 18): *The*

46. Rosenzweig creates an etymology for the word זָהָב *zahav* ("gold"), linking it to the phrase זֶה הָב *zeh hav* ("give this"). This appears to refer to bribery.

47. The word for "purchases," קוֹנֶה *koneh* can also be a synonym for the word "makes," עוֹשֶׂה *oseh*.

48. And not by money. That is, we have learned that officials are elected, not bought!

49. Proverbs 16:33

50. Hebrew שוֹחַד *shochad*, the same word which has been used to mean "bribe" elsewhere in this passage.

51. Proverbs 21:14.

52. The word used for "lap" in the first quote, בִּחְיִיק *bacheik* is the same as the word used for "in private" in the second quote. Rosenzweig then uses the rabbinic tool of גִּזְרָה שׁוּוּהָ *gezerah shavvah* to link the two phrases in order to complete his argument. In this case, he argues that lots are the same as a bribe, for lots are cast בִּחְיִיק (into the lap), and bribes are made בִּחְיִיק (in private).

53. Rosenzweig returns to expound upon the latter part of the Mishnah.

54. Isaiah 14:4. The word מַדְחֵבָה *madhevah*, translated here as "oppression," can also be read as מִזְחָבָה *mizahavah* (the "ד" *dalet* and "ז" *zayin* are interchangeable in Aramaic). So, the verse might be read as "The oppressor is vanished, on account of gold he has gone away." That is, the oppressor will leave, but only if you pay him.

55. Psalm 135:7. The word used here for "clouds," נְשִׂימִים *n'si'im*, also means "officials." Rosenzweig links the greed of America's officials to the "vaults" spoken of in this verse.

*wealth of a rich man is his fortress.*⁵⁶ Were it not for gold and silver, no community leader would ever be elected in a synagogue or a house of study, as it is said (Hosea 2): *I lavished silver on her, and gold- which they used for Ba'al.*⁵⁷

Rav Politico said: **There is nothing desirable except for gold**, as it is said (Psalm 19): *More desirable than gold.*⁵⁸ There is nothing good except for gold, as it is said (Genesis 2): *The gold of this land is good.*⁵⁹ There is nothing pure except for gold, as it is said (Exodus 25): *Pure gold.*⁶⁰ From here [we learn] that everyone who has gold is made desirable and good and pure.

Mishnah: Every custom to which Americans are accustomed, even if it is an absurd custom, there is no shame in it. Any commerce which the **Yankees** support, even if there is robbery and stealing associated with it, there is no claim of fraud allowed against it.⁶¹ A general rule was spoken by the sages regarding commerce, that all fraud is permissible except for self-fraud.

Gemara: Why does the Mishnah teach about customs and why does the Mishnah teach about commerce?⁶² It is necessary [to state both], for if it had taught only about customs

56. Proverbs 18:11.

57. Hosea 2:10. As explained in the "Rashi" commentary, this refers to a בעל בעמי *ba'al be'ami*, a "master over my people."

58. Psalm 19:11

59. Genesis 2:12

60. Exodus 25:11

61. No claim of fraud or price-gouging may be brought against any Yankee commerce, in order that the injured party might have the transaction nullified or be compensated for the money he was swindled out of, because all of Yankee commerce is fraudulent.

62. I.e., Why does the Mishnah find it necessary to state both, rather than stating one and allowing the reader to infer the other?

I might say, "custom" is appropriate, for the custom of a Yankee is law,⁶³ as it is written (Psalm 8): *From the mouths of infants and Yankees⁶⁴ you have founded strength.*⁶⁵ But since commerce is not law, I might not have drawn this conclusion about "commerce." And if we were only taught regarding commerce I might say commerce [is mentioned] because it is called holy, as it is written (Isaiah 23): *But her commerce and her hire shall be holy.*⁶⁶ But since custom is not holy, I would not have drawn the same conclusion concerning it. Therefore, it is necessary to state both.

Every custom, etc.⁶⁷ Such as what? Rav Civilian said: Such as eating in the marketplace **and chewing bitter leaves.**

Any commerce, etc.⁶⁸ Such as what? Rav Businessman said: "Such as **auction houses** and bars, for it has been taught: One who purchases silver vessels from an auction and finds dross, and so too one who purchases wine from a bar and finds that it is water, they have nothing over them."⁶⁹ This man who sold vessels of silver in an auction house for ten *sela'im*⁷⁰, left and investigated and found that it was not actually silver. He went and sold them for one-half a *sela*, then he went up to the store to drink a cup of wine as a diversion from his sorrows. They brought him water, and charged him a half-*sela* for it.⁷¹ He applied to himself the verse (Isaiah 1): *Your silver has turned to dross, your wine has been cut with water.*⁷²

63. Rosenzweig is making fun of the rabbinic precept that a custom in Israel carries the weight of law.

64. According to his "Rashi" commentary, this is the way Rosenzweig intends for the verse to be read, though ינקים *yonkim* is generally translated as "sucklings."

65. Psalm 8:3

66. Isaiah 23:18

67. Rosenzweig begins expounding the Mishnah piece by piece.

68. Continuing the exegesis of the Mishnah.

69. I.e., The purchasers have no way of recouping their losses.

70. A unit of money in Talmudic times.

71. This parable contains many Aramaic phrases which are found elsewhere in rabbinic literature.

72. Isaiah 1:22

Rav Wiseguy said: "Just as there is no valid legal claim of fraud for an individual, so is there no valid legal claim of fraud for the public. For it has been taught: **The contractors and the bondsmen**, whether they receive [money] from an individual or from the public, build temporary structures. Whether **they fall**, are supported, or they kill, they are exempt from [making restitution according to] the laws of man but obligated [to make restitution] according to the laws of heaven. For upon this condition they agreed that nothing would be produced by their hands that would not be dangerous."⁷³

Rav Difficult said: "If the above is so,⁷⁴ then they are also exempt according to the laws of heaven." They said to him: "[We make this ruling] since their buildings "float in the air,"⁷⁵ **and it is the air of the heavens.**⁷⁶ **It is thus also taught** that one who comes from the road must announce it, for the bridges and the canals, the boats and the steam-wagons in America are dangerous, as it is said (Psalm 139): *You have made all my paths dangerous.*"⁷⁷

Except for self-fraud.⁷⁸ **Do you think that we are dealing with fools?**⁷⁹ The Sages are simply giving good advice here,⁸⁰ for anyone who comes to deceive his friend should take care that his friend not deceive him, as it is said (Genesis 27): ***Your brother came with guile.***⁸¹

73. They have no legal liability under earthly law, but Divine law is more stringent.

74. I.e., If they and their customers agreed to the aforementioned condition.

75. I.e., They have no firm foundation and collapse easily.

76. I.e., The air belongs to the heavens, so the law of heaven (Divine law) applies. The builders are held liable on a legal technicality, not because what they've done is immoral and violates a Divine standard of justice.

77. Psalm 139:3. This is how Rosenzweig wants the verse to be read, relating הִסְכַּנְתָּהּ *hiskantah* to סִכָּנָה *sachanah*, "danger." Typically, however, this is translated as, "You [God] are familiar..."

78. This continues the exegesis of the Mishnah.

79. I.e., The prohibition against defrauding oneself seems to make no sense, for one would not take oneself to court for fraud! So, what is the purpose of the Mishnah in making this statement?

80. And not establishing a ridiculous legal ruling.

81. Genesis 27:35

Rav Silver said: "Great is deception, that it digests the flesh of its master, as it is written (Isaiah 49): *I will make those who deceive you eat their own flesh.*"⁸² And Rav Silver said: "The rich in America, by what means are they meritorious?"⁸³ Through deception, for in America, **silver is called 'money.'**⁸⁴"

Rav Wiseguy explained: "What is the meaning of the Scriptural citation (Psalm 104): *There is the sea, vast and wide, etc.*?"⁸⁵ There is the sea [which is] vast; this is America, which is compared to a sea. Just as the sea absorbs all that is cast into it and covers it up, so does America absorb all who come to her and cover up any misdeeds. *With its swarming things without number.*⁸⁶ These are people who are comparable to swarming things, for anyone who is bigger than his fellow swallows up his fellow. *Living beasts, great and small.*⁸⁷ These are the rich people with small fortunes who proceed amassing wealth until they become big. And why are they called beasts? Because anyone who acts like a beast, trampling and devouring, succeeds in establishing wealth in his hand."

Rav Scrivener said: "This new world is comparable to a **wedding feast**, where one grabs and eats, grabs and drinks, as it is said (Psalm 128): *You shall eat of the fruit of your labors, etc.*"⁸⁸ Do not read, "your labors" but rather "your *chaf*" for in Greek, they call stealing *chafka*."

82. Isaiah 49:26

83. How have they acquired their wealth?

84. Rosenzweig spells "money" מוֹנֵה in Hebrew characters, to relate it to the word for "those who deceive you" (מוֹנֵיךְ *monaich*) in the Biblical citation.

85. Psalm 104:25. The continuation of the verse, which Rosenzweig does not spell out here, reads, "...with its swarming things beyond number, living beasts, small and great."

86. Rosenzweig turns his attention to the continuation of the verse.

87. Rosenzweig finishes his exegesis of the verse.

88. Psalm 128:2

We Shall Return to You, "There is No Difference"

Chapter Two

Mishnah: All are greenhorns to America, the tailor and the shoemaker, the cook and the tanner. And all who change their names and their clothes, even though they do not change their language, are excluded.⁸⁹

Gemara: "All" includes whom?⁹⁰ Rav Wiseguy said: "It includes the deaf, the dumb, and the child." Rav Understanding said: "It includes the rabbi, the preacher, and the scholar."

What is the difference between these two interpretations of "all?" They differ over a *rabbiner*, a *prediger*, and a *professor*.⁹¹ For Rav Wiseguy, who said: "The deaf, the dumb, and the child," *rabbiner*, *prediger*, and *professor* are included in the category of rabbi, preacher, and scholar. But for Rav Understanding, who said: "Rabbi, preacher, and scholar"⁹², they are not part of this grouping.⁹³

All are greenhorns.⁹⁴ What are greenhorns? Rav Scrivener said: "Those who sail on water, as we have taught: 'And not with the greenery that is on the surface of the

89. I.e., They are excluded from the label "greenhorn." See Rosenzweig's "Rashi" commentary for his explanation.

90. The Talmudic expression *הכל לאתויי מאי?* *hakol le'atuyei mai?* is a technical phrase. Usually it serves to add to a category something which was not included in the Mishnah's list.

91. Rosenzweig uses Hebrew characters to spell out these English words here. He is mocking the Germanic-sounding titles which American rabbis of this time tended to adopt.

92. Here Rosenzweig returns to the classical Hebrew words for these professions, referring to "authentic" members of these professions.

93. And they have to be spoken of separately. Rav Wiseguy did not speak specifically of rabbis, preachers, and scholars (or their American counterparts). Thus, we can assume that he considers both groups to be equivalent. Rav Understanding, on the other hand, singled out the "true" rabbis, preachers, and scholars, so we must assume that he does not consider the American rabbis to be included in those categories. See Rosenzweig's "Rashi" for more information.

94. Continuing the explication of the "Mishnah" text.

water.”⁹⁵

Rav Difficult disagreed, for if so, even a Yankee who spent time on a boat would be [a greenhorn].

But Rav Scrivener said: “**What are greenhorns? Foreigners.** It is written here (Psalm 37): *Like green grass they fade away*,⁹⁶ and it is written there (Psalm 18): *Foreign peoples lose courage*.⁹⁷ Apply the principle of *gezera shavah*.⁹⁸

They asked: Are there female greenhorns or not? Come and hear: “Esther was of a pale greenish complexion.”⁹⁹ Learn from this [that she was a greenhorn and that women can be greenhorns].

[Furthermore]¹⁰⁰ “Esther was of a pale greenish complexion”. Yet it is written (Esther 2): *Hadassah, that is, Esther*.¹⁰¹ From this we know that she changed her name, and we have learned all who change their names, etc. are excluded [from the category of “greenhorn”].

Rav Tailor said: “She changed her name, but she did not change her clothes.”

Rav Difficult said to him: “But is it not written (Esther 5): *Esther put on royal apparel*?¹⁰² This shows that she also changed her clothes.” He said to him, “Before she changed her

95. The phrase is from the Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 20b. It refers to things which cannot be used as wicks for kindling the Shabbat lights. It is usually considered to refer to sea moss or algae, but here Rosenzweig uses it to speak derisively of greenhorns.

96. Psalm 37:2

97. Psalm 18:46

98. The rabbinic principle of *gezera shavah* says that if an idea is expressed using a certain word in one place in a text, the same idea can be applied elsewhere in the text where the same word appears. Here the word *יבולון yevulun* (“fade away”) and its related form *יבולו yevulu* (“lose courage”) are being tied together. Thus Rosenzweig uses this technique to prove that the “green” are “foreign.”

99. Babylonian Talmud, tractate Megillah 13a.

100. The phrase *אמרמר amar mar* is a technical phrase from the Talmud used to introduce a previously mentioned passage for further discussion.

101. Esther 2:7

102. Esther 5:1

clothing, she was a greenhorn.”

It was taught: At the time that Moses cursed Israel and said (Deuteronomy 28):
*God will curse you with mildew,*¹⁰³ Columbus descended and thrust his staff into the sea,
 and a sandbar grew up upon it and there was built a large metropolis of America and
Yerakon is its name.¹⁰⁴

And all who change their name, etc.¹⁰⁵ Rav Changer said: “Changing the name in
 what manner? [For instance, adopting the name] **‘Charlie’ from Reuben** or **‘Rachel’**¹⁰⁶
 from Dinah. Changing clothing, in what manner? Even the the most beautiful of rags, as
 long as they are made in America.”

And Rav Changer said: **“The beard is included among clothing.”**¹⁰⁷ You know
 that at the time that Chanun ben Nachash cut away the clothing of the servants of David,
 he also shaved half of their beards.”¹⁰⁸

Rav Shaver said: **“A beard has no remedy except for a razor.”** Rav Changer said
 to him: **“Do you think that Yankees are not beard-growers?”** He [Rav Shaver] said to
 him [Rav Changer] **“Every commandment which Israel adopted from the other
 nations, they follow more diligently than the other nations.”**¹⁰⁹

103. An abbreviation of Deuteronomy 28:22. The word for “mildew,” ירקון *yerakon* has in it the root letters ירק meaning “green.” It might also be translated as “the green plague.”

104. As explained in Rosenzweig’s “Rashi” commentary, this is a reference to New York.

105. Continuing the explication of the “Mishnah.”

106. “Charlie” is read for צאלע (more literally read as *“tcholly.”* Rosenzweig is also referring here to the typical English pronunciation of Rachel (“ch” as in “chair”), rather than the Hebrew pronunciation (“ch” as in the Hebrew letter *“chet”*).

107. I.e., When one changes clothing he is also compelled to shave the beard, as the text will now state.

108. The incident occurs in II Samuel 10. Chanun ben Nachash is an Ammonite king who, in order to embarrass David, captures David’s courtiers, cuts their clothing to expose their buttocks, and shaves half of their beards. Rosenzweig is linking the cutting of (i.e. changing of) clothing to the shaving of the beard by citing this passage.

109. This parodies a phrase in the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Berachot 47b (and elsewhere), which teaches that the Samaritans are to be praised for their diligent observance of the commandments in the written Torah (despite the fact that they reject all of the Oral Law). Rosenzweig uses it here to praise

This is what Rav Shaver told Rav Changer: "Greater is the one who is commanded not to do something and does it than the one who is not commanded to do something and does it."¹¹⁰ For from the day that Israel became accustomed to shaving, **they were diligent with them** even to the extent of a hair's breadth."¹¹¹

It was also stated that one hair on a beard is dangerous, as it is written (Judges 20): *All of them could sling a stone at a hair.*¹¹²

Even though they do not change their language, etc.¹¹³ And we have learned that there are seven qualities which our sages ascribed to greenhorns: they eat according to their appetite, they walk in the middle of the street, they curse Columbus, they change their language, they ask about what they already know, they seek advice but do not accept it, and they cheapen the gate.¹¹⁴

It states in any event, "They change their language."¹¹⁵ [The issue is resolved by asking] **What does it mean by "they change?" They stammer.** And it is as Rav Linguist has said: "To what may an Israelite be compared? To a **parrot** which stammers in any language which it hears, as it is said (Deuteronomy 33): *They followed in Your*

the "non-Jewishness" of American Jews.

110. This is a parody on the teaching of Rabbi Chanina in the Babylonian Talmud, Bava Kamma 87a. He says, "Greater is the person who is commanded to do something and fulfills that obligation than the one who is not obligated to do the commandment but does so anyway." The person who is commanded to perform a *mitzvah* is thinking about the consequences of not performing it (and struggles against an inclination not to perform it), while the one who is not obligated to perform it has nothing to lose.

111. The phrase כחוט השערה *k'chut has'arah* "even to the extent of a hair's breadth," appears frequently in Rabbinic literature to illustrate extreme diligence. There is obviously a pun here related to the discussion of shaving in this section.

112. Judges 20:16. The verse is used here to imply that if one leaves even a hair on his beard, he is in danger of being stoned!

113. Rosenzweig returns to further exposition of his "Mishnah."

114. By this, Rosenzweig likely means that they drive down prices.

115. This presents a difficulty, for the sages say that greenhorns change their language, even though the Mishnah says that this is not a necessary quality of greenhorns.

*steps, accepting Your pronouncements.*¹¹⁶

Rav Scrivener said: “[In the case of] a greenhorn, for the first seven days, even his daughter is embarrassed by him, as it is said (Numbers 12): *If her father was excessively “green” before her eyes, would she not bear her shame seven days?*”¹¹⁷ From that point forward, since he changes his name and his clothing he embarrasses other greenhorns. When he **changes his language, too**, behold he becomes like a Yankee in all respects.

Mishnah: With what does a peddler go out?¹¹⁸ With a basket, and a sack, and a bin; **with a valise and a case**. And Rav Poverty says: “Even with needles and matches in his hand.”

Gemara: Our rabbis taught: A greenhorn for whom seven days have passed, and he does not know how to make a living, **they assist him** in becoming a peddler. How? They purchase a sack and some merchandise for him, and they reveal to him the secrets of peddling. And they say to him, “Go from door to door.” And they bless him with two blessings: Blessed be you in your going out, and blessed be you in your coming in.¹¹⁹ “Blessed are you in your going out,” that **the injurers** not overtake him on the road. “Blessed are you in your coming in,” that his comings may be as his goings. If he is meritorious, he bends his shoulders to suffer [the weight of] packages of merchandise like

116. Deuteronomy 33:3. Rosenzweig relates the word “followed” (Hebrew תָּכַח *tuchu*) to the Hebrew word for “parrot” (תֹּכִי *tuchi*). He seems to be reading the proof text as a suggestion of mimicry without understanding.

117. Numbers 12:14. Rosenzweig is punning on the word יָרוֹק *yarok*, which is the Hebrew word for the color green, but can also mean “he spat” (as the Biblical verse is typically translated).

118. This parodies Mishnah Shabbat 5:1, which discusses the types of burdens permitted for animals on the Sabbath.

119. This is a reversal of the phrasing in Deuteronomy 28:6.

a strong-boned ass.¹²⁰ If he is not meritorious, his sacks melts away and he becomes like a servant, as it says (Genesis 14): *He bent his shoulder to the burden and became like a toiling servant.*¹²¹

Furthermore: ““And they reveal to him the secrets of peddling.””¹²² What are these? Rav Peddler said: “Two rules: That any purchaser who pays the peddler what he owes him is a **true righteous person**, and every peddler who pays the salesman what he owes him is a true righteous person,¹²³ as it is said (Isaiah 24): *Glory to the righteous! Secrets for me! Secrets for me! The traitors betray, and they in turn are betrayed.*¹²⁴

“And that his comings may be as his goings.”¹²⁵ Rav Peddler said: “That he may return to his home intact in his body and intact in his merchandise.” Rav Difficult said to him: “In speaking of intactness, intact in his body is a blessing, but intact in his merchandise, is it a blessing?”¹²⁶ He said to him: “It¹²⁷ is the proper time for a blessing.¹²⁸

It is taught: There are three stations of life for a peddler. The first station is a **burdened donkey**, the second is **screaming salesmen**, and the third is a **baby who suckles** and does not suck. And over each station he roars like a lion and says, “Woe is me, for my strength has been destroyed and I have scattered the property of others among

120. In Genesis 49:14, Jacob blesses Issachar, calling him a “strong-boned ass”

121. Genesis 49:15, the conclusion of Issachar’s blessing.

122. The first paragraph of the “Gemara” is now explained in more detail.

123. As seen in his “Rashi” commentary, Rosenzweig means this sarcastically.

124. An excerpt, with ellipses, from Isaiah 24:16. Since the meaning of the Biblical text is unclear, Rosenzweig’s intent is also uncertain. He seems to be playing upon the words צדיק *tzadik* (righteous) and רזי *razei* (secrets), both of which appear in the Biblical verse as well as in the “Gemara” discussion which precedes this citation. The word רזי in the Biblical verse is typically vocalized as רָזִי *razi* (I waste away).

125. This continues the further explanation of the first paragraph of the “Gemara.”

126. For if he returns intact in his merchandise, it would appear that he has not sold anything!

127. I.e., Coming home.

128. Even though having his merchandise with him is *not* a blessing.

the nations.¹²⁹

Rav Scrivener said: **Idleness and poverty that strike a peddler**, it is a miracle that they last. Come and see how much greater is the strength of a peddler than the strength of our forefather Jacob, for of Jacob our forefather it is written (Genesis 32): *And a man wrestled with him.*¹³⁰ But of a peddler it is written (Song of Songs 3): *Of all of the wrestlings of the merchant.*¹³¹

And Rav Scrivener said: There are four types of peddlers: a sponge, a funnel, a strainer, and a sieve.¹³² The sponge, for he sponges up the merchandise from the salesmen; the funnel, for he funnels everything to the buyers, the strainer who lets out the merchandise and takes in what is owed to him, and the sieve, for his shelter is not full, as it is written (Isaiah 30): *To set a misleading sieve upon the nations.*¹³³

We Shall Return to You, "All are Greenhorns"

Chapter Three

Mishnah: These are the ones who are required to work: Men, and women, **and young ones who have reached [the age of] education.** Rabbi Destitute said: "All who need to

129. This entire passage mimics a discussion in the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Berachot 3a, in which the three stations of the night are described.

130. Genesis 32:25

131. Song of Songs 3:6. Rosenzweig seems to be using this proof text to imply that while Jacob wrestled on only one occasion, peddlers wrestle constantly. The word used for merchant, רֹכֵל *rochel* is the common Hebrew word for peddler (though Rosenzweig uses the cognate פֹּדֵל *peddler* typically). Rosenzweig takes advantage of the fact that the word אֲבָקָה *avkat*, which is typically translated as "powders" seems to be related to the verb אָבַק *VK* meaning "to wrestle."

132. This parodies Mishnah Avot 5:15

133. Isaiah 31:28. The meaning of the Biblical passage is uncertain, as is Rosenzweig's meaning.

eat need to work.”

Gemara: Rav Worker said: “This was taught for a **time of plenty**, but at a **time of want**, all are absolved [of their obligation], as it is taught: There are two times for work, a time of plenty and a time of want. The one who takes pains during the time of plenty shall eat during the time of want, and the one who does not take pains during the time of plenty shall starve during the time of want, as it is written (Ecclesiastes 3): *A time for seeking and a time for losing.*¹³⁴ A time for seeking work, and a time for losing strength. And what is the reason that “a time for seeking” is said first? Because of the principle that **when we have something frequent and something infrequent**, the frequent is mentioned first.”¹³⁵

Rav Tailor raised an objection: “Is it not written (Esther 9): *And they did not lay their hand on the plenty?*”¹³⁶ He said to him: “It is different in that case, **for it was in the time of a strike**, as it is written in the beginning of the verse: *and they fought for their lives.*”¹³⁷

Rav Laborer once encountered Mr. Union standing at the entrance to his factory, and saw that he was in a lighthearted mood, and if he [Rav Laborer] were to ask him [Mr. Union] about anything in the world, he would answer him.¹³⁸ He said to him: “What is the reason that workers in America will never gain their reward in their lifetime?” He

134. Ecclesiastes 3:6

135. This principle is first taught in the Babylonian Talmud, tractate Berachot 51b. Here Rosenzweig uses it to suggest that seeking work is a frequent activity!

136. Esther 9:16. The word for “plenty,” *bizah*, may also be translated as “spoils.”

137. This phrase occurs in the earlier part of Esther 9:16

138. This parodies the Babylonian Talmud, tractate Shabbat 77b, where this introduction precedes a passage in which Rav Zeira asks Rav Yehudah a number of seemingly irrelevant questions about the origins of species and words.

said to him: "Because America is filled with troops of greenhorns, and greenhorns make scabs,¹³⁹ and scabs destroy the world."

What is plenty?¹⁴⁰ When workers waste¹⁴¹ their strength freely. Want,¹⁴² when workers depart¹⁴³ from work and die of hunger. Strike, for at the time that they leave their work, their wives and children slap¹⁴⁴ their faces, and compel them to take back their divorced wives.¹⁴⁵

The men and the women.¹⁴⁶ And women are obligated to work? But have we not learned in another Mishnah that for all women in America, what they do in their houses for their husbands, for their children, and for their boarders is sufficient?¹⁴⁷ There is no difficulty, for here [in the latter Mishnah] we are speaking of married women, and **here** [in "our" Mishnah] **of those who are unmarried.**

And if you wish, you may say that it is taught in our Mishnah that housework is also called work.¹⁴⁸ And it is as Rav Understanding said: Great is the work which a woman does in her house, for everything which a Canaanite maidservant¹⁴⁹ would do for her master, a woman in America does by herself. Indeed they [the ancient Rabbis] say: For a woman washes the clothes, scrubs the floors, cooks the food, puts bedding on the beds, and cares for the boarders.

139. The word is used in the sense of those who cross picket lines.

140. Hebrew בִּזָּה *bizah*.

141. Hebrew מְבַזֵּז *mevazezin*, linked to the word בִּזָּה.

142. Hebrew סֵלֶק *selek*.

143. Hebrew מִסְתַּלְקִין *mistalkin*, linked to the word סֵלֶק.

144. Linking the Hebrew cognate for "strike," סִטְרִיק to the root סִטַר *STR* meaning "to slap."

145. Rosenzweig uses euphemistic language to speak of the wives and children forcing their striking husbands to suffer the humiliation of abandoning their strike and going back to work.

146. This continues the exegesis of the "Mishnah" passage.

147. I.e., Doesn't this other teaching present a problem when read in conjunction with our Mishnah?

148. And thus the two Mishnayot do not conflict.

149. "Canaanite" here may refer to the servants employed by wealthy non-Jews.

It is also taught: More work was given to a woman than to a man, for of man it is said (Genesis 3): *By your labor you shall eat of it.*¹⁵⁰ And of woman it is said: *Your labor shall be very great.*¹⁵¹

Our master said: "And cares for the boarders." What are boarders? Rav Scrivener said: Rav Peddler's wife told me that they are manure spreaders, as we learned: The one who encloses cows in his field.¹⁵²

And young ones who have reached [the age of] education. And is there education in America? For has it not been taught in another Mishnah that they do not educate their sons and daughters, and they do not raise them up to Torah or to good deeds, but only that they may enter into marriage?¹⁵³

What is the meaning of education?¹⁵⁴ The time of education. And if you wish, you may say vocational training, as it is taught: [In the case of] a child **who concludes with the prophets,**¹⁵⁵ his father is absolved from any burden¹⁵⁶ and from the duty to educate him in a trade.

And Rabbi Destitute said, etc.¹⁵⁷ About what do they differ?¹⁵⁸ Rav Scrivener

150. Genesis 3:17

151. Genesis 3:16. Because the woman is cursed with "great toil" while the man is only cursed with "toil," Rosenzweig equates the labor of work with the labor of childbearing.

152. This phrase is from the Jerusalem Talmud, Tractate Shevi'it 7b. Rav Peddler's wife is comparing residents of a boarding house to cattle. There is a pun here with the phrase *בָּרֵי דִּיִּרְיָן barei dayyarin* (manure spreaders) which could also mean "those who dwell in apartments."

153. And this presents a difficulty for our Mishnah, which suggests that there is education in America (for young boys who have reached that age are expected to work).

154. A definition of "education" is suggested which will help resolve the apparent conflict between the two Mishnayot.

155. As explained in the "Rashi" commentary, this refers to a boy who has become a Bar Mitzvah.

156. Genesis Rabbah 63:10 attests to a blessing that a father should say once his son attains the age of Bar Mitzvah. It begins, "Blessed is the one who has freed me from obligation..." Now, the son is responsible for observing the *mitzvot*, and he himself is culpable for any transgressions.

157. Continuing the exposition of the Mishnah.

158. I.e., How does Rabbi Destitute's opinion differ from that attributed to the rest of the sages?

said: "Regarding the child whose has not reached [the age of] education."¹⁵⁹ What is the source whereby Rav Destitute derives that a child who has not yet reached [the age of] education is also obligated to work. Scripture, for it is written (Genesis 33): *At the pace of work...and at the pace of children.*¹⁶⁰ Work is mentioned alongside children to teach that they [children] are obligated to work. And the first sage tells you, "Go down to the end of the verse: *Until I come to my lord in Seir.*"¹⁶¹ One is not required to work until [he reaches an age when] he has two hairs.¹⁶²

There is a baraita that supports the opinion of Rabbi Destitute: All are required to work, even young children, as it is said (Exodus 10): *Go and work.*¹⁶³ And it is written later: *Your children shall also go with you.*¹⁶⁴

Rav Wiseguy said: "The one who sends his young sons to sell **newspapers** has fulfilled his obligation, as it is taught: The sale of newspapers with respect to adults is commerce, with respect to children, it is work. For children do not sell them except through running and jumping, and they sweat a great deal in doing this.

And Rav Wiseguy said: "I myself saw that youth who was running like Hormin the son of Lilith¹⁶⁵ in the markets of Mechoza, and he jumped up on cars and wagons and

159. For such a child would, according to Rabbi Destitute's position, be required to work, despite being younger than the age of Bar Mitzvah, since he requires food!

160. Genesis 33:14. The word מלאכה *malachah*, here translated as "work," is usually rendered as "cattle" in its context in this verse.

161. The concluding words of Genesis 33:14. The phrase "my lord" here refers to Esau, and Seir is the place where he resides.

162. As explained in the "Rashi" commentary, Rosenzweig connects שעיר *se'ir*, the place, to שערות *se'arot*, "hairs." This is perhaps not much of a stretch, since Esau, Seir's most well-known resident, was known for being hairy! Here, Rosenzweig is referring to the onset of puberty.

163. Exodus 10:24

164. The conclusion of Exodus 10:24. Rosenzweig takes advantage of the dual meaning of the root עבד *VD*. In the biblical context, it usually means "worship," however, in more contemporary contexts it means "work."

165. The name of a demon. In other words, he was "running like hell!"

leapt back and forth and back and forth, and holding gazettes in his hands and raising his voice [saying] "Who wants *The World and The Sun*?" And that same day was [a day in which] *He tosses down hail like crumbs- who can endure His icy cold?*¹⁶⁶

Our teachers taught: What type of work [fulfills the requirement]? All that is laborious for the entire body, for America is harsher than Egypt, as it is written (Ezekiel 30): *Cush and Put and Lud and all the peoples of the land of the covenant.*¹⁶⁷ And of Egypt it is written (Exodus 1): *All the work at which they made them work laboriously.*¹⁶⁸

It is taught: In any place where it is customary to arise early and to stay up late, one is obligated to arise early and to stay up late; [where it is customary] to do work standing, one is obligated to do work standing; [where it is customary to do work] with one's hands and feet, one is obligated to do work with one's hands and feet; all is according to the custom of the place.¹⁶⁹ And to arise early and to stay up late, does the matter depend upon custom? Has it not been taught in a Mishnah: All workers are required to get up early and to stay up late, as it is said (Psalms 133): *You rise early and stay up late, you who toil for the bread you eat.*¹⁷⁰ And there are none who toil except for laborers at work, as it is said (Genesis 3): *By your toil shall you eat.*¹⁷¹

166. The entire passage is a parody of a story told by Rabbah bar bar Chanah in the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Bava Batra 73a. The final Biblical citation with which the story ends comes from Psalms 148:6. Rosenzweig uses the story to show how fast a newsboy can run.

167. Ezekiel 30:5. Cush, Put, and Lud are generally identified with African countries (specifically, Egypt). The "lands of the covenant" are אֶרֶץ הַבְּרִית *eretz habrit* in Hebrew. In modern Hebrew, the United States is called אֶרֶצוֹת הַבְּרִית *artzot habrit*. Rosenzweig thus equates America with Cush, Put, and Lud, and thus teaches that America is harsher than Egypt.

168. Exodus 1:14

169. This is a parody of Mishnah Bava Metzia 7:1.

170. Psalms 127:2. In the Masoretic Text as we have it, this is Psalm 127, but Rosenzweig cites it as Psalm 133. This is possibly a lapse in memory, but it could be the case that Rosenzweig had a Bible with an alternate numbering system for Psalms.

171. Genesis 3:17. In other words, this is not a matter of custom, but a ruling which can be derived from Biblical proofs.

What is the meaning of "they are accustomed to?" They are accustomed to do so, and they do so.¹⁷²

Rav Scrivener said: America stands on two things: on work and on acts of loving kindness.¹⁷³ "Work," as we have said. "Acts of lovingkindness," as it is written (Proverbs 11): **A kindly man benefits himself.**¹⁷⁴ But Torah, there is not,¹⁷⁵ since it is written (Deuteronomy 30): *And it is not across the sea.*¹⁷⁶

We shall return to you, "These are the Ones Who Are Required..."

Chapter Four

Mishnah: One **who was a peddler but became unfit**, or one who works and is disqualified, the daughters of Israel have pity upon him, and make him a teacher of their children, for teaching in America requires neither labor nor knowledge, and all are capable of it. A parable is told of a wise man whose money was current in Syria,¹⁷⁷ as a teacher, artist, and instructor, and when he came to America they were apprehensive about giving him students, and they allowed him to go about until he became unfit.

172. I.e., They do what they do not because it is a custom, but because it is a law.

173. This parodies Mishnah Avot 1:2, in which Simeon the Just teaches that the world stands on three things: Torah, Worship (Hebrew עבודה *avodah*, which also means "work"), and Acts of Lovingkindness. Rosenzweig is subtly hinting that America is devoid of Torah!

174. Proverbs 11:17. The Hebrew term for "lovingkindness" is גְּמִילוּת חֶסֶדִים *gemilut chasadim*. The verse from Proverbs contains the words גּוֹמֵל *gomel* and חֶסֶד *chesed* which are derived from the same roots as the phrase *gemilut chasadim*.

175. As noted above, while the Mishnah teaches that the world also stands on Torah, Rosenzweig feels that it is absent from America.

176. Deuteronomy 30:13. Torah is not across the sea, hence it does not exist in America!

177. I.e., Whose reputation was well-known.

Gemara: Does the incident contradict the ruling?¹⁷⁸ It is as though [the Mishnah text] is deficient, and this is what it should say:¹⁷⁹ What sort of instance are we talking about? Those whom the daughters of Israel take pity upon. But those whom the daughters of Israel take pity upon, even if his reputation is great as a teacher, artist, and instructor, and [thus we have] a parable of a wise man, etc.

And is the handing over of children to a teacher dependent upon women?

Yes, as it taught: Rav Teacher said: "The women pick out teachers for their children, and not the men, for the commandment of handing over young children to the house of their teacher is a positive, **time-bound** commandment. And every positive, time-bound commandment, **women are obligated to fulfill**. And every commandment which women are obligated to fulfill, men are exempt from."¹⁸⁰

Exempt, what is its meaning? Rav Wiseguy said: "What is [the meaning of] exempt? That they exempt themselves in a similar sense as a one-day-old greenhorn does, for it is taught that a one-day-old greenhorn is exempt from the obligation to pray. Does it enter your mind to say [that they are] exempt? Rather, say that he exempts himself; thus, in this case, too, they exempt themselves."

Furthermore: "For the commandment of handing over young children, etc."¹⁸¹

And the handing over of children to the house of their teacher is a positive, time-bound commandment? But was it not taught in a Mishnah: In America they established that they

178. When the Mishnah cites a ruling, it would seem that the case ought to support the ruling, yet here it contradicts it. Thus, the text continues in an effort to resolve this confusion.

179. The opening of the Gemara mimics a common phrase in the Babylonian Talmud (for instance, Tractate Sukkah 26b).

180. In actual Jewish tradition, this is not the case; women are exempt from all but a few time-bound commandments. Mishnah Kedushin 1:7 explains that women are exempt from time-bound commandments and (like men) obligated to perform those commandments which are time-bound.

181. Returning to an earlier topic begun two paragraphs earlier.

do not hand over children to a teacher except for one month.”

Rav Valet said: “What is the meaning of **time**? American time. And what is it? A month.

Our masters taught: We investigate a cantor’s credentials, but we do not examine a teacher, for a man does not make himself become a teacher unless insanity has entered him, and anyone who is foolish, certainly he is fit for teaching, as it is said (Job 35): *Who gives us more knowledge than the beasts of the land.*¹⁸² We examine an apartment, but we do not examine a classroom, for any house that is similar to a chicken coop is fit as a classroom, as it is said: *He makes us wiser than the birds of the sky.*¹⁸³

The one who hands over his son to a teacher does not hand him over in order to teach him but rather in order to punish him, as it is said (Isaiah 28): *For he punishes him in the right manner, his God instructs him.*¹⁸⁴ “The man who hands over his son...” Is this really “handing over”? Have we not learned that the man who turns his son over to a teacher, this turning over is not truly “turning over”, for a woman is capable of saying, “**I do not want this teacher.**” With what are we dealing here?¹⁸⁵ With “turning over” according to the consent of his wife.

Since teaching...is not labor.¹⁸⁶ How do we know this? Rav Supervisor said that it [teaching] is permitted on the Sabbath.¹⁸⁷

182. Job 35:11

183. The “B” part of Job 35:11

184. Isaiah 28:26. The verse is ordinarily read as two parts, parallel to one another: *He teaches him in the right manner, his God instructs him.* Rosenzweig seems to be using the verse to say that a father turns his son over to a teacher (thus “punishing him”), and God takes care of the instruction.

185. The “sages” try to resolve the question of whether the “turning over” of a child to a teacher is really “turning over.”

186. Returning to the “Mishnah” text to continue its exposition.

187. And thus it cannot be considered a “labor,” which is prohibited on the Sabbath.

It is taught: The categories of labor are forty minus one¹⁸⁸ and which is that one?¹⁸⁹ Teaching, for although it is laborious work, it is permitted on the Sabbath. But why don't we decree against it **on account of wounding**?¹⁹⁰ Rav Tail said, "Because wounding is compared to war, as it is written (Psalms 18): *Who trained my hands for battle*,¹⁹¹ and in 'commanded wars,'¹⁹² it is permitted to cause wounds on Shabbat.

Nor knowledge.¹⁹³ But is it not written: *He who instructs men has knowledge*?¹⁹⁴ Rav Supervisor said: "There is knowledge which is foolishness, as Scripture says (Ecclesiastes 1): *The knowledge of madness and foolishness.*"¹⁹⁵

Rav Know-It-All said: "Every teacher who has knowledge, his classroom is full, as it is written (Proverbs 24): *And by knowledge are classrooms filled.*"¹⁹⁶

Rav Scrivener offered an interpretation: "What does Scripture mean when it writes (Genesis 15): *You shall go to your fathers in peace, etc.*?"¹⁹⁷ At the time that the Holy One, Blessed be He brought Abraham outside and said to him: *Thus shall your offspring be*,¹⁹⁸ He showed him the classrooms and teachers of young children that would be in every generation and in every country. When he arrived at this generation in America, a deep sleep fell upon him, as it is written: *As the sun was about to set, a deep*

188. The beginning of Mishnah Shabbat 7b.

189. I.e., Which is the one which has been subtracted from the forty prohibited labors?

190. I.e., Since it is forbidden to cause wounds on Shabbat, and (as explained in the "Rashi" commentary), teachers frequently wound their students by spanking them.

191. Psalms 18:35

192. I.e., Wars fought for purpose of fulfilling a *mitzvah*. Rosenzweig is arguing that since Torah study is a *mitzvah*, it is equivalent to a "commanded war," and thus any wounding which takes place during instruction is permissible on the Sabbath.

193. Continuing with more exegesis of the "Mishnah" text.

194. Psalms 94:10

195. Ecclesiastes 1:17

196. Proverbs 24:4. חדרים *chadarim* means "rooms," in Biblical Hebrew. In more contemporary Ashkenazic usage, it can refer to "classrooms."

197. Genesis 15:15. This is part of a blessing which God gives to Abraham.

198. Genesis 15:5

*sleep [fell upon Abram] and a great dark dread descended upon him.*¹⁹⁹ Dread, these are the classrooms, as it is said (Lamentations 4): *And from classrooms, terror.*²⁰⁰ Dark, these are the teachers who darken the eyes of their students.

This great one²⁰¹ you raised up by hand, as it is written (Exodus 14): *And Israel saw the mighty hand.*²⁰² Our father Abraham said before the Holy One, Blessed be He, "There is no future but the fires of Gehenna to bring an end to the souls of those who send their children to classrooms and teachers such as these, as it is said: *There was a smoking oven and a flaming torch.*"²⁰³ The Holy One Blessed be He said to him: "This promise [of such a punishment] is reserved for any father who turns over his son to a teacher in order that he might learn to say **Kaddish after his [the father's] death.** In spite of this **only those whose days are lengthened to adulthood and old age** are saved from the judgment of Gehenna, as it is written: *You shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a ripe old age.*²⁰⁴

Mishnah: The one who prepares [a student] for a Bar Mitzvah teaches him to read in the Torah, **and even like a rooster** which crows for men, provided that he gives him a sermon, for Bar Mitzvah sermons **are a plague of the public.**

Gemara: Our rabbis taught: He [the Bar Mitzvah] would go up to the podium, his rabbi

199. Genesis 15:12. During the time that this story takes place, Abraham was still known as Abram.

200. This reference is actually from Deuteronomy 32:25. It is unclear why Rosenzweig cites Lamentations in his text.

201. Meant here to refer to Abraham.

202. Exodus 14:31

203. Genesis 15:17

204. Genesis 15:15. These two paragraphs, ascribed to Rav Scrivener, take the form of a *petihta* sermon, as commonly found in homiletical midrashim.

would go with him and whisper in his ear and say to him, "My man, you are a Bar Mitzvah. Read out loud lest you have forgotten or lest you never learned. I make an oath to you that **you shall not be struck dumb** [with ignorance] and I promise you that you shall descend in peace, **for the children of Israel are your benefactors.**"²⁰⁵

It has been taught: The day of the Bar Mitzvah in America is as great as the day of birth, for just as at the hour of his birth an angel comes and slaps him on his lip, and he forgets all that he learned in his mother's womb,²⁰⁶ so too on the day of the Bar Mitzvah, an angel slaps him on his lip, and he forgets all that he learned from his rabbi. And just as a one-day-old child is exempt from the commandments, so too a Bar Mitzvah is made exempt from the commandments.

Rav Safra said: "Why do we have a Bar Mitzvah conclude with a selection from prophets? Because he is made exempt from the commandments."²⁰⁷ Why do we call him a Bar Mitzvah? Because he is **outside of** [the bounds of] the commandments."²⁰⁸

For the Bar Mitzvah sermon, etc.²⁰⁹ Our rabbis taught: There are four types of sermons: The politician's sermon, the anarchist's sermon, the rabbi's sermon, and the Bar Mitzvah sermon. The politician, what does he preach? *Throw your vote in with us.*²¹⁰ The anarchist, what does he preach? *I will set portents upon the earth: blood and fire and*

205. As explained in the "Rashi" commentary, "your benefactors" means that they are merciful. This entire paragraph parodies Mishnah Yoma 1:5, in which the court elders deliver the High Priest to the elders of the priesthood on Yom Kippur, in preparation for the performance of his duties on behalf of the congregation. The Bar Mitzvah boy is being compared to the High Priest.

206. A Midrash mentioned in the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Niddah 30b, in which the experience of the embryo in-utero is discussed.

207. A play on the fact that the Hebrew words מַפְטִירִין *maftirin*, "conclude," and פֹּטֵר *patur*, "exempt," share the same verb root.

208. As Rosenzweig explains in his "Rashi" commentary, the word בַּר *bar* can mean "outside of."

209. Rosenzweig returns to the exegesis of his "Mishnah."

210. Proverbs 1:14

*pillars of smoke.*²¹¹ The rabbi, what does he preach? *For rabbis, increase the share.*²¹²

The Bar Mitzvah, what does he preach? *I have learned foolishness from all of my teachers.*²¹³

We shall return to you, "One Who Was..."

Chapter Five

Mishnah: What is a society?²¹⁴ Any [group] which has ten members and which has a **place to meet.**

Gemara: Shall we say that our Mishnah is not in agreement with Rav Sandalmaker, who taught: These are the appointed members²¹⁵ of a society: The leader and his lieutenant, three experts, two scribes, an administrator, a dues-collector, and a caretaker? **From here we derive that there is no society less than ten-** the words of Rav Needle-worker, but Rav Sandalmaker says, "Nine plus a minor." In fact, I will tell you that our Mishnah is according to Rav Sandalmaker, and ten is the same as nine plus a minor.²¹⁶

211. Joel 3:3

212. Numbers 26:54. The verse is usually translated, "For larger groups increase the share." Rosenzweig takes advantage of the dual meaning of רב *rav*.

213. Psalms 119:99. The usual translation is: *I have learned more than my teachers*. Rosenzweig uses the homophone הִסְכַּלְתִּי *hiskalti* ("I have become more foolish") to replace the traditional spelling הִשְׁכַּלְתִּי *hiskalti* ("I have learned more"), in order to make his pun.

214. Referring to fraternal orders.

215. Mimicking the beginning of Mishnah Shekalim, chapter five.

216. In Tosafot to Berachot 48a, there is a discussion over whether a minor may be counted to complete a *minyan* (gathering of ten) when nine adults are present. The discussion is carried over to the Tur and Beit Yosef. The leniency is renounced by the *halachic* authorities, but smaller communities seem to have resorted to such a system for many centuries.

In what way do they disagree? Rav Member said: "In [the matter of] appointing the minor." Rav Sewer holds that we do not appoint a minor, for have we not been taught in a Mishnah that we do not appoint anyone to a society unless we can be sure that he will not be a student of Torah all his life? And Rav Sandalmaker holds that in America, even with a minor, we can be certain that he has no Torah instruction. And the *halachah* dictates that we appoint a minor even to the leadership of the society, as it is written (I Samuel 15): *You may look small to yourself, but you are the head of the tribes of Israel.*²¹⁷

And that has a place to meet.²¹⁸ What is a meeting? A "meeting."²¹⁹ What is a "meeting?" Rav Scrivner says, "A gathering." And why is it called a meeting, because it derives its meeting from a gathering of animals, as it is written (Isaiah 34): *Wildcats shall meet hyenas.*²²⁰ And it is as Rav Understanding said: "Every gathering which has food and drink, standing, walking, and spurning, certainly this is a gathering of animals, as it is written (*Ibid* 23)²²¹: *The Philistines had gathered in force where there was a plot of ground full of lentils.*²²² Here [we have] written "lentils" and regarding Esau [we have] written [about lentils]: *And he ate and he drank and he stood up and he walked away and he spurned.*"²²³

217. I Samuel 15:17

218. Continuing the exegesis of the "Mishnah" text.

219. Here, Rosenzweig has spelled out the word "meeting" in Hebrew characters: מִיִּטְוּנָה.

220. Isaiah 34:14

221. This passage actually comes from I Samuel. Rosenzweig seems to have forgotten that he has quoted Isaiah in the interim.

222. I Samuel 23:11

223. Genesis 25:34. Using the rabbinic principle of *gezerah shavah*, two texts, both containing the word "lentils," are linked. The first refers to a gathering taking place in the presence of lentils. The second tells us that in the presence of lentils, Esau ate; drank, stood up, walked away, and spurned [his birthright]. A syllogism is thus implied that whenever there is a gathering, those five things [eating, drinking, etc.] occur!

Rav Strict raised an objection: "Is it not written (Proverbs 17): *Sooner meet a bereaved she-bear, than a fool with his nonsense.*"²²⁴ The meaning is that a fool with his nonsense is not a true meeting." They said to him: "One fool with his nonsense does not constitute a meeting, however several fools with their nonsense is a proper meeting."²²⁵

The previously cited text stated: Every gathering which has food, etc. Rav Wiseguy said: "I grant that this is correct regarding eating and drinking, for we have been taught: The reward of [attending] a meeting is eating and drinking. But from where do we derive standing up, walking away, and spurning?" Rav Member said: "Standing up, **for a man rises up against his compatriot**, walking away, for a man engages in"²²⁶ gossip regarding his compatriot, and spurning, for a man spurns his compatriot."²²⁷

Rav Society said: "Standing up, for they stand up to protest at a time that they need to be giving aid to a poor member. Walking away, for they walk to visit a sick person, but not in order to comfort him. And spurning, for they degrade themselves like *cheder* students.

We have learned in another Mishnah: At what time may a meeting commence? At the time that the appointed members gather to drink, until the liquor has ceased [to flow] from the barrel."²²⁸

On what basis does the *Tanna* of that Mishnah ask "from what time?" The *Tanna* lives in America, and it has been taught: All societies have a time for meeting. Now if this time for meeting is when the appointed members gather to drink while it is still day,

224. Proverbs 17:12

225. I.e., Several fools with their nonsense constitutes the very meaning of a meeting.

226. The verb used here is *חולכין* *holchin*, which can be translated as "they walk."

227. The word for "compatriot" (*חבר* *chaver*) is derived from the word for society (*חברה* *chevrah*).

228. A take-off on the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Berachot 2a, which asks, "At what time may one commence reciting *Shema*?"

let the Mishnah say "while it is still day." The sage of the Mishnah wishes to teach us something in passing- that the appointed members are obligated to drink while it is still day.

From where do we derive these things? Rav Imbiber said: "An analogy can be drawn between an appointed member and an altar. Just as an altar is hollow and made of boards,²²⁹ so too an appointed member of a society is not appointed unless **he is hollow with regard to Torah.**²³⁰ **And an altar requires wine-libations;** from here we derive that an appointed member of a society is obligated to drink. And all who are required to drink are required to drink while it is still day, which we derive according to the law. According to the law, as it is written (Esther 1): *And the drinking was according to the law*²³¹ and it is written (*Ibid* 8): *According to the law of the day.*²³²

It was taught: Every society, once they have established a time for meeting, is required to have a doctor, for **there is no meeting without a complaint.**²³³ And once they have a doctor, they must have land, for most doctors are **partners with gravediggers**, and even though there is no actual proof for this statement, there is an allusion to this statement it is written (Genesis 50): *And the doctors embalmed him and put him in a casket.*²³⁴

Mishnah: **A charitable society** differs from other societies in that all other societies are

229. A reference to the instructions for building the altar in the Tabernacle, Exodus 27:8.

230. I.e., He lacks Torah knowledge.

231. Esther 1:8

232. Esther 8:13

233. And, as Rosenzweig explains in his "Rashi" commentary, complaints are liable to eventually lead to injuries which require a doctor's attention.

234. Genesis 50:26. The word "doctors" actually does not appear in the text, according to the MT.

born in secret and **perish amidst great clamor**. And a charitable society is born amidst great clamor, and when she perishes, she perishes silently.²³⁵

Gemara: Do you think that societies die? Are not societies the same as the public, and we have learned that the public does not perish.

Rav Nationalist said: "Societies are not public but rather public assemblies, and thus they cease and perish."

It is as Rav Scrivener said: "Assemblies are as hard for Israel as psoraisis,"²³⁶ as it is said (Zechariah 12): *The land shall wail, each family from psoraisis.*²³⁷

It was taught: Why was Israel obligated in every generation and in every place to bring a *minchah*-offering to Esau? Because they have separated into various societies, as it is written (Genesis 30): *And Jacob produced separate flocks for himself,*²³⁸ and it is written (*Ibid* 32): *These he put in the charge of his servants, flock by flock.*²³⁹ And what is the meaning of "flocks?" It is the language of societies, as it is written (Song of Songs 1): *Beside the flock of your fellows.*²⁴⁰

235. A reference to the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Berachot 15b. There, the rabbis teach that the womb receives the sperm in silence, but sends forth a baby amidst great clamor, while the grave receives a corpse amid great clamor and releases the corpse (via the eventual resurrection of the dead) amid great clamor.

236. This idea mimics the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Yevamot 47b, which teaches, "Proselytes are as hard for Israel [to endure] as psoraisis."

237. Zechariah 12:12. The verse is traditionally translated, "The land shall wail, each family one by one." The idea of "one by one" is conveyed by repeating the word משפחות *mishpachot* "families." Rosenzweig (as he explains in his "Rashi" commentary) revocalizes the second occurrence of the word, and replaces a ש *shin* with a ס *samech*, thus rendering the word מספחת *misafechet*, "from psoraisis."

238. Genesis 30:40

239. Genesis 32:17. This verse appears to provide Rosenzweig his link to Esau, since the biblical verse refers to Jacob arranging his flocks in order to greet his brother Esau.

240. Song of Songs 1:7. The word for "your fellows" is חברך *chaverecha*, from the same root as the word for "societies," חברות *chavurot*.

And a charitable society, etc.²⁴¹ What is the meaning of “the raising of voices?” Rav Entrepreneur said: “For they shout, and shout in triumph, and shout.”²⁴² As it has been taught: One is not required to do an act of charity unless they announce it in all of the local newspapers and declare it and preach about it in **public assemblies**.²⁴³

Rav Member raised an objection: “The rest of the societies²⁴³ which perish amidst great clamor, in what way do they shout, and shout in triumph, and shout?”

He said to him: “It was also taught there, ‘They shout, and in what way do they shout?’ And it is as we have taught, ‘The one who shouts at his friend.’²⁴⁴”

Our master said: “One is not required to do an act of charity unless they shout in triumph, etc. But has Rav Wiseguy not taught that **alarm is as useful** to the rich as a leech is to a corpse?²⁴⁵ For the rich it is not effective, for the poor, nevertheless, it is effective. As it is taught: Why do they shout regarding a charitable act? Because charity is similar to fasting.”²⁴⁶

And Rav Understanding said regarding this: “That is to say, the poor, who busy themselves with fasts,²⁴⁷ also busy themselves with charity. The rich, who do not busy themselves with fasts, do not busy themselves with charity.”

Rav Charity said to him: “Heaven forbid that you would cut off all the rich on account of charity. Rather [say that] the rich, although they give, give in a manner that is

241. Returning to further exposition of the “Mishnah” text.

242. This phrase appears in rabbinic literature, particularly in the Babylonian Talmud, tractate Ta’anit, 16b. There, it refers to shofar blasts; the sense here is that societies make noise.

243. I.e., the non-charitable ones

244. Mishnah Bava Kamma 8:6. There, the word *התוקע* *hatoke’a*, translated here as “the one who shouts,” is usually understood to mean “the one who slaps.”

245. I.e., Calls for charity are not responded to by the rich, just as a corpse does not respond to a leech.

246. And fasts in ancient times were declared by shofar blasts (to which the loudness of these societies has already been compared).

247. Which they have no choice about; they fast because they have no access to food!

not appropriate²⁴⁸ and give via men who are not appropriate.²⁴⁹ And it is as Rav Wiseguy said: "These²⁵⁰ are the collectors of charity who sit in the Eighth Street market;²⁵¹ they gave to him after **he chided them.**"

It was taught: Two things were instituted by the collectors of charity in the Eighth Street market, and the sages do not agree with them. [First,] that they stood **the angel of death** at their door.²⁵² And that they give charity and not honor, even to a rabbi.

There was a poor man who came to the Eighth Street markets and knocked on the door, and this policeman came out. He fled from before him and shouted, "Woe! Woe!" From this, they argued and explained the verses: It is written: *Charity will save you from death,*²⁵³ and not "**death will save you from charity.**"

Our sages taught: The rabbis counted **three things** which avert the evil decree,²⁵⁴ and the Jews of America have only fulfilled for themselves **two of them**. For at the hour that the Roman empire decreed exile for Israel, the elders went down and decreed a fast. And all the people wailed in sobbing and full voice and when it came to contributing money, they immediately ceased and said: It is revealed and known before the One who spoke and this new world came into being, that we have not come here except in order to

248. I.e., They give less than they should.

249. I.e., Who do not distribute the funds appropriately.

250. I.e., The "inappropriate men" of whom Rav Charity spoke.

251. According to Sarna, "...the first name that pops into every distressed person's head is 'Hebrew Charities' or 'Eighth Street.'" He explains that the offices of the United Hebrew Charities were located on Eighth Street in New York City. Thus, the organization was popularly known as "Eighth Street." See Sarna, Jonathan (trans.) *People Walk on Their Heads: Moses Weinberger's Jews and Judaism in New York* (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, Inc., 1982).

252. I.e., At the door of potential donors, in order to intimidate them.

253. Proverbs 10:2

254. The idea of averting the evil decree is found in the liturgy for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur in the liturgical poem *U'Netaneh Tokef* which immediately precedes the *Kedushah* (prayer for the sanctification of God's name) in *Musaf* (the additional prayers for Sabbath and festivals). There it is taught that repentance, prayer, and charity an individual can dissuade God from pronouncing a negative verdict against him or her.

attain wealth, and that our wealth is more dear to us than our people and our kinsmen, and when we disperse it, we do not disperse it except to **pleasant cantors and pleasant rabbis**, pleasant actors and pleasant actresses. And for any item which we honor, or from which we derive enjoyment, let the myriads of Israel perish before we detract from any of our wealth.

It was taught: Come and account it as merit to those who support auditoriums and orchards, for were it not for balls and picnics, no charitable society in America could exist. For the rich of America do not open their purses except for the sake of happiness.²⁵⁵ Rav Scrivener said: "For this reason it was written (Psalm 30): *You opened my purse and girded me with joy.*"²⁵⁶

We Shall Return to You, "What is a Society?"

Chapter Six

Mishnah: What is the difference between an Orthodox rabbi and a Reform Rabbi? An Orthodox rabbi eats and engages in no profitable labor on weekdays or on Shabbat, and a Reform rabbi eats and does not do anything on weekdays, **but on Shabbat this is not the case**. An Orthodox rabbi **does not preach nicely, but he practices what he preaches nicely**, and a Reform rabbi preaches nicely, but does not practice what he preaches nicely.

255. That is, they will only donate to a charitable cause if they derive entertainment and enjoyment from doing so.

256. Psalm 30:12. The first part of the verse is usually translated as "You loosened my sackcloth."

Gemara: And are there no other [differences between the two types of rabbis]? But there is the forgetting of learning, as it has been taught: Rav Instruction said: "A Rabbi in the days of his rabbinate, what does he do? He sits idle and forgets the teaching which he learned in the days of **his ignorance**."²⁵⁷ Of whom does this speak? Of an Orthodox rabbi, but a Reform rabbi never ever forgets his learning.

[The *Tanna* of the Mishnah] stated some, but omitted others. What did he omit? He omitted this. He omitted the coins of the scribe, for it has been taught: The Orthodox rabbi earns the coins of the scribe because he writes *hechsherim*²⁵⁸ on meat, on carcasses, and on wine. The Reform rabbi does not possess the coins of the scribe, for he certifies as *kosher* all that goes into his mouth.

Returning to the statement: Because he writes, etc.²⁵⁹ But have we not learned that he eats and does not earn anything? [If so,] what is the meaning of "he writes?" By means of others. And it is as Rav Linguist said: **The rabbis have no need** for any language even for the holy language²⁶⁰ and when they write they write as completely righteous individuals, whose work is done for them by others.²⁶¹

Is it so? And have we not learned that the rabbis in America were concerned to protect the welfare of the daughters of Israel? Therefore they hastened and anticipated their religious divorce certificates. If a religious divorce certificate came to their hands they did not reserve judgment about it, but rather they wrote [a bill of divorce] and paid it

257. As Rosenzweig says in his "Rashi" text, this refers to the time prior to a Rabbi's ordination.

258. Seals that certify that a food product is ritually fit for consumption by observant Jews.

259. This was said of the Orthodox rabbi two sentences earlier.

260. I.e., Hebrew.

261. A reference to the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Berachot 35b, which teaches, "At a time when Israel does the work of God, their work is done [for them] by others."

on the spot. Why should we not deduce that "writing" is similar to paying? Just as one is paid²⁶² oneself, so does one write something oneself.

Rav Understanding said: "Religious divorce certificates are different, because they are are written in Aramaic."

Rav Strict differed with him: "But what of Angels who understand all languages, yet we have learned that they do not understand Aramaic language.²⁶³ Rabbis, who understand no language, all the more so do not understand Aramaic."

But Rav Understanding said: "They are paid themselves,²⁶⁴ but they have it written by others. And if you wish, say that it is also paid out by others. And who are these?²⁶⁵ Their wives and their assistants. And it is as Rav Rabbinic said: All rabbis who are living without a wife and without an assistant are living without a blessing.²⁶⁶

Our master said: "But a Reform rabbi never ever forgets his learning."²⁶⁷ Rav Wiseguy said: "That is to say, **he does not forget it for it was not his knowledge.** For if you say that there is forgetfulness without knowledge, how would a Reform rabbi never forget his learning?"

Come and learn: A Reform rabbi who forgets one verse in the holy language must bring a guilt offering of uncleanness for his inadvertent act. But didn't he lack the knowledge in the beginning, and you teach that he forgot it?

Rav Changer said: "Here, what are we dealing with? **With an Orthodox [rabbi]**

262. I.e., One receives money.

263. This is taught in the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Sotah 33a.

264. I.e., They take the money directly.

265. I.e., Who are the ones who pay out the bill of divorce on behalf of the rabbis?

266. A reference to the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Yevamot 62b, in which Rabbi Tanchum teaches in the name of Rabbi Chanilai, "Any man who has no wife lives without joy, without blessing, and without goodness."

267. Referring back to the beginning of the "Gemara."

who has become Reform. And what has he forgotten? He forgets before whom he stands and preaches and he sins inadvertently and recites one verse in the holy language, that one brings a guilt offering of uncleanness because he is concerned for the honor of women.²⁶⁸

What is a guilt offering of uncleanness? Rav Temple said: "For he beats upon his heart and says, 'I beg of you, my dear ladies, forgive me for using **the language of a corpse** in front of you.'"

And a Reform rabbi preaches nicely.²⁶⁹ Have we not been taught that there were three things which the sages condemned in the sermons of the Reform [rabbis]? **They bring one to lowliness**, to sleep, and to vomiting.

Rav Temple said: "Since the *Tanna* first said 'he does not preach nicely,'²⁷⁰ he concludes with similar language about the Reform rabbi.²⁷¹ And if you wish, I may say that it is also pleasant²⁷² as he taught. Just as one says to a pale bride, 'You are a beautiful and charming bride.'²⁷³

And it is as Rav Ancient said: "[In the case of] a preacher²⁷⁴ who preaches, say to him, 'You preached beautifully, your intention was beautiful,' even if he only preached upon the parable of the chariot."²⁷⁵

268. As explained in the next paragraph, he is concerned with their honor because he has spoken "inappropriately" in front of them.

269. Continuing the exposition of the "Mishnah" text.

270. Regarding the Orthodox rabbi.

271. Even though we don't take that statement literally.

272. I.e., "Pleasant" refers here not just to the content of the sermons, but also to the flowery language he uses.

273. In the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Ketubot 17a, it is taught that one praises a bride even if she is blind or lame.

274. Here, Rosenzweig uses a cognate, suggesting the German word for preacher. This is meant to evoke the titles which Reform rabbis took upon themselves.

275. Mishnah Hagigah 2:1 refers to the first chapter of the book of Ezekiel as "the parable of the chariot." The term מרכבה *merkavah*, "chariot" is derived from I Chronicles 28:18. A branch of

What is meant by "the parable of the chariot"? Rav Temple said: "**Specifically upon the chariot.**"²⁷⁶ As in the case of a certain preacher who opened his sermon and spoke thusly: 'There are four ladies: Miss So-and-so the wife of a certain rabbi who went up to the town of Boston to buy new clothing, Miss So-and-so from Cincinnati who went to So-and-so's wedding, and he goes on and counts them all as peddlers until he concludes with "Amen."²⁷⁷

Mishnah: **Three [types of people] are required to have a [head] covering, and these are they: A rabbi, a doctor, and a coachman.**

Gemara: What is a head-covering? Rav Scrivener said: "A cylinder." What is a cylinder? A *kaplusha*. What is a *kaplusha*? A *kalpaka*. What is a *kalpaka*? A **stovepipe**. And why is it called a head-covering? Because all who bear it are as proud of it as a rooster who is proud of his comb²⁷⁸ and calls and cackles and announces to all that he is a rooster.

And a [theoretical] question was raised: Is this head covering private domain or public domain?

Come and learn: The tailors and shoemakers who ascend to greatness and become honorary officers and presidents in societies purchase head-coverings for

mysticism, known as *merkavah* mysticism, concerned with knowing the nature of the divine throne and the chariot upon which it rests, arose during the rabbinic period.

276. Rosenzweig's meaning is made clearer in his "Rashi" commentary.

277. I.e., The rabbi's sermon takes the form of a society gossip column. Rosenzweig says this is typical of the Reform rabbis.

278. The word which Rosenzweig uses for head-covering כרבֿל *kirbel* is related to the word for a rooster's comb, כרבֿלת *karbelet*.

themselves and do not go out with them on weekdays, but rather only on Sabbaths and festivals. Ordinary head-coverings are those at which youngsters throw stones, and ordinary youngsters who throw stones- these are the youngsters of Israel. It is well if you say that head-coverings are in the public domain, then the youngsters are permitted [to throw] from within a distance of four cubits. But if you say that they are in the private domain, then who would permit the throwing of stones?²⁷⁹ If you say **thus, they**²⁸⁰ **transgress [the scriptural dictum] *Do not place a stumbling block before the blind.***²⁸¹

I nonetheless hold that it is the private domain. And what is the meaning of "they go out?" They go out, without the approval of the sages.²⁸²

Come and learn: Three [types of people] are required to have a [head] covering, and these are they: A rabbi, etc. And it was stated about it [by the *Amoraim*]: weekdays, and all the more so on the Sabbath.

Rav Sage said: "Perhaps it"²⁸³ is prohibited to everyone but permitted to rabbis **similar to the High Priest, who is permitted to wear a blend of linen and wool.**²⁸⁴

What is [the resolution of] this? Rav Sage said: "It is neither public nor private, as it is written (Song of Songs 7): *Your head is like a forecourt*²⁸⁵ *a king is held captive in*

279. In the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Shabbat 96a, the rabbis discuss the throwing of objects from the private domain to the public domain (and vice-versa) on the Sabbath, when the carrying of items is traditionally proscribed. The discussion is also referred to in Shabbat 4a. In this section, Rosenzweig parodies the Talmud's discussion.

280. I.e. Those who wear head-coverings

281. Leviticus 19:14. The ruling that they have transgressed this precept is a parody of the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Bava Metzia 90b. Rosenzweig's "Rashi" text explains how those who wear head-coverings have violated this rule.

282. Because in so doing, they encourage children to violate Shabbat.

283. I.e., The wearing of head-coverings.

284. This blend of linen and wool, known as שַׁעֲטָנִי *sha'atnez*, is generally prohibited. However, the instructions for the making of the priestly garments, outlined in Exodus 39, seem to imply that both wool and linen were used in the construction of the priestly vestments.

285. Song of Songs 7:6. A forecourt is neither public nor private domain. The word כֶּרְמֶל *karmel*, usually translated as "crimson wool" is here translated as "forecourt." It is linguistically similar to

the tresses.²⁸⁶ And who are kings? The rabbis.²⁸⁷

Rav Understanding said: "[The wearing of] head-coverings are an obligation of the coachmen. And why did the rabbis of Israel take this requirement upon themselves? Because they ride the assembly of Israel and are sustained by it, as it is written (*Ibid* 1): *I have likened you to a mare in Pharaoh's chariots.*"²⁸⁸

Rav Strict said to him: "You have spoken of rabbis, what will you say about doctors?"

He said to him: "Doctors are certainly comparable to coachmen, as people say: **Potters and physicians are honored according to the distribution of their horses.**"

Rav Sage said: "[The wearing of] head-coverings are an obligation of rabbis. And doctors and coachmen only took this obligation upon themselves because they are also called rabbis. As it is written regarding doctors (Amos 8): *The rabbi of corpses is everywhere.*²⁸⁹ And it is written regarding coachmen (Isaiah 31): *On chariots, because he is a rabbi.*"²⁹⁰

Rav Strict raised an objection to him: "If so, ritual slaughterers, ritual circumcisers, and teachers are also called rabbis, as it is written: *The rabbi of the*

כרמלית *karmelit*, meaning a something that is neither public nor private. Rosenzweig is trying to use the proof text to say that one's head exists in this state of limbo; it is neither public nor private domain!

286. The conclusion of the aforementioned verse. The meaning of the word רהטים *rehatim*, here translated as "tresses," is uncertain.

287. In the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Gittin 62a, it is taught that rabbis are called kings. This is based on a proof text from Proverbs 8:15: *Through me kings reign.* "Me" in this context is understood to mean "Torah," since rabbis work with Torah, they are kings.

288. Song of Songs 1:9

289. Amos 8:3. Rosenzweig takes advantage of the dual meaning of רב *rav*. In this verse from Amos, it is usually translated as "many," but Rosenzweig wishes it to be read as "rabbi." His "Rashi" commentary helps explain the link between this proof text and doctors.

290. Isaiah 31:1. The verse is ordinarily read as "[...]they place their trust in] many chariots." Here, as above, Rosenzweig puns on the multiple meanings of the word רב.

slaughterers,²⁹¹ *the rabbi of the castrated*,²⁹² and *the rabbi of the beaten*.²⁹³

He said to him: "That is true."

But our Mishnah has taught "three", meaning: and no more."

He said to him: "For these people are surely included in the category of 'rabbis.'

For we have learned that a mixed multitude are like rabbis themselves. And those whom we call *arvei rabanin*²⁹⁴ are cantors and ritual slaughterers, ritual circumcisers, teachers, matchmakers, and jesters, and why are they called this?²⁹⁵ Because they are able to perform their arts interchangeably and make use of intermingling.²⁹⁶

It was taught: Come and see how great is the power of a head-covering in America, for even a complete commoner can be made a rabbi by means of one. You might think [they are made an actual] rabbi, rather say they are made an *erev rav*. Rav Scrivener said: "What is the scriptural source for this statement? It is written (Exodus 5):

For now the common people are rabbis.²⁹⁷

A *Tanna* stated (a *baraita*) before Rav Scrivener: Editors are obligated to wear head-coverings, for it is the practice of authors and those who write articles for newspapers that **they preface and call** their editors their rabbis.

291. The term *רב טבחים* *rav tabachim*, which Rosenzweig puns upon by translating literally, is a title which appears in II Kings 25 and the latter chapters of the book of Jeremiah. It is usually translated as "the chief of the guards."

292. Again, Rosenzweig makes a pun on this title *רב סריס* [ים] *rav saris[im]* by translating literally. The word in its biblical context is usually taken to be an Assyrian official title which has no known translation. It appears in II Kings 18:17, Jeremiah 39:3 and Jeremiah 39:13.

293. A pun upon the title *רב החובל* *rav hachovel*, achieved through literal translation. The term, which appears in Jonah 1:6, refers to the captain of a ship.

294. *ערבי רבנין*, "a mixed multitude." A reference to Exodus 12:38

295. Why do they fit into the category *ערבי רבנין* *arvei rabanin*?

296. The word for "intermingling" *ערבוביא* *arvuvya* is related to the term *ערבי רבנין* *arvei rabanin*.

297. Exodus 5:5. Again, Rosenzweig puns upon the dual meaning of the word *רב* *rav*. The scriptural verse is commonly translated as: "Now the common people are numerous."

Rav Scrivener disagreed with this: **"We do not impose an obligation upon a person without his informed consent."**²⁹⁸

They said to him: "Because they publish all the words of their authors in their newspapers and newspapers are before them."

Is it so?²⁹⁹ Rav Reader has said: "These editors, how have they achieved merit? Because they shorten the lengthy articles of the writers, and they cut the beginnings of letters and skip over the epithets which are in them."

Rav Sage said: "We learn that that they do not skip over them, except for the epithets of reproach that are in them, and not over the epithets of praise, for you do not have any editor who will curtail his praise."

Rav Understanding said: "Now that you have come to this, writers are also obligated to wear head-coverings, for those who write commendations, even the minimal ones which are in their compilations, is called a rabbi."

We Shall Return To You, "What is the Difference Between..."

Chapter Seven

Mishnah: Who is an author? Every one who goes from door to door **with his books in his hands**: the words of Rav Editor. And the sages say: "Anyone who has no shoes for his feet."

Gemara: Rav Scrivener said: "This was not taught except regarding the authors of Israel.

298. This is taught in the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Ketubot 11a.

299. That writers call their editors "rabbi?"

But for authors from the other nations of the world, those who purchase their books **anticipate them at their**³⁰⁰ **doors** and when they go outside, they go out in good and pressed shoes. And the authors of Israel, this also does not teach us about, except for those who write their books in the holy language,³⁰¹ but those who write in all other languages, **even in the Babylonian language**, it is considered proper [for them to do so].³⁰²

We learned elsewhere in a Mishnah: **The one who vows [to bar] peddlers and handicapped people** from his home is forbidden [to receive] authors [at his home].³⁰³

They had a *halachic* problem: Is an author like a peddler or like a handicapped person? **What is the *halachic* difference between these two? The ability to sell his books.**³⁰⁴

Come and learn: And the sages say: "Anyone who has no shoes for his feet."³⁰⁵ And we have already learned in a *baraita* that a man will always sell all that he has and buy shoes for his feet. With this in mind, it is all right if you say that an author is comparable to a handicapped person, for a handicapped person has nothing to sell. But if you say that he is similar to a peddler, a peddler has merchandise, and merchandise is offered for sale. Let him sell it and purchase shoes for himself.

An author is nonetheless like a peddler, yet his merchandise is not offered for sale, **because he has none who demand it.**

Come and learn: Who is the author who is called wise? The one who makes

300. I.e., The authors'.

301. I.e., Hebrew

302. In order to imitate Gentile authors.

303. For authors are automatically included in such a vow.

304. Rosenzweig explains this further in his "Rashi" commentary.

305. Referring back to the "Mishnah" text.

himself mute; they embarrass him, but he does not become embarrassed, as it is written (Psalms 58): *Like a deaf [one]...who stops up his ears...is the wise author of compilations.*³⁰⁶ Derive from it that an author is comparable to a handicapped person.

It was taught: All who write books in America, or one who comes from overseas with a book in his hand, behold he is crazy.³⁰⁷ An inference may be drawn between this minor example and the example of David, the king of Israel.³⁰⁸ And if David, the king of Israel, who only wrote a few unnecessary marks, was thought of as crazy,³⁰⁹ all the more so for one who writes or brings an unnecessary book.

Rav Wiseguy said: "[I would accept] all aches except for the headaches of authors, all illnesses except for the illness of narcoleptics, all infirmities except for the infirmities of writers. They could not get along in America without a tailor, but they would be possible without an author."³¹⁰ Praise to one who is a tailor, woe to one who is an author!

And the sages say: "Anyone who has no," etc.³¹¹ About what do they differ?³¹²

Rav Shoemaker said: "About the shoemaker who has become an author."³¹³ Rav Editor

306. Psalms 58:5-6. This is an excerpted citation, and Rosenzweig has twisted its meaning slightly in order to use it as a proof-text. The actual verses might be translated as "Their venom is like that of a snake, *a deaf viper that stops its ears* so as not to hear the voice of charmers or *the expert mutterer of spells.*" (The italicized text refers to those portions of the verses which Rosenzweig has used).

307. *הרי זה משוגע harei zeh meshuga* "Behold, he is crazy," is a sound-pun on *הרי זה משובח harei zeh meshubach*, "Behold, he is praiseworthy."

308. This sort of argument is known as a *קל וחומר kal vechomer*, which draws an inference from a law of lesser consequence to one of greater consequence (or vice-versa).

309. This refers to I Samuel 22:13ff. David, a fugitive from Saul, comes into the presence of King Achish of Gath. In order to protect himself from Achish (who might have viewed David as a threat and had him killed), David feigns madness by scratching marks on the gates of the city.

310. A play on the linguistic similarities between *תופר tofer*, a tailor and *סופר sofer*, an author.

311. Returning again to the text of the "Mishnah."

312. I.e., How does the opinion of the sages differ from that of Rav Editor, whose opinion the Mishnah also cites?

313. Because the shoemaker who has become an author should be capable of providing shoes for himself, which would go against the assertion that authors have no shoes.

held: "A man is regarded as remaining in his present state. If he is a shoemaker, certainly he would not have shoes for his feet, as it has been said: Men who are shoemakers travel barefoot, and without a sign that he has gone from door to door with his book in his hand they do not know that he is an author."

And the sages say: "A man is not kept in his present state. For since he has become an author, he revealed of himself that **he was not a shoemaker.**"

Rav Strict said: "And who is there [who is] like this?"³¹⁴

They said to him: "There are such. As Rav Reader says: 'The majority of books published in America have the **stench of tar spreading** from them.'"

There was a man who sat at the shoemaking block for forty years and it was not effective for him.³¹⁵ He went up to America and wrote books which have a patch on top of another patch.³¹⁶ He travels from town to town and from house to house and sell and collect much money, when the matter came before Rav Scrivener, he said: "This is the meaning of what is written (Ecclesiastes 12): *Like nails planted by those who collect.*"³¹⁷

Rav Reader said: "I myself saw a book which had nothing but a long introduction and it was **surrounded by rabbinical endorsements like a cobbled shoe.**"

We Shall Return to You, "Who is an Author..."

Chapter Eight

314. I.e., Is there anyone to whom this case applies?

315. I.e., He cannot make a living at it.

316. A reference to the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Berachot 43b. There, it refers to shoes which are unbecoming for a scholar to wear. Here, Rosenzweig undoubtedly means to evoke the "shoe" imagery, but at the same time he is suggesting that the shoemaker who becomes an author publishes books which are not appealing to the public.

317. Ecclesiastes 12:11. The meaning of the verse in its Biblical context is uncertain. See the "Rashi" commentary for elucidation of Rosenzweig's use of the citation.

Mishnah: [In the case of] all Babylonian³¹⁸ newspaper articles, **one does not save them** from a fire³¹⁹ and they require a *geniza*.³²⁰

Gemara: The Babylonian newspaper articles in America, what are they?³²¹ Rav Understanding said: "They are Jewish newspaper articles, and why are they called Babylonian? Because **they are written in a mixed-up language by mixed-up authors.**"³²²

And as Rav Linguist taught: "Israel is more wretched than all the other nations, for all the other nations who were only given a mixed-up language now make use of a clear language, but Israel, which was given a clear language now makes use of a mixed-up language. And not only that, but their mixed-up authors mix up its literature and spoil its meaning, as it is written (Job 12): *He deprives trusty men of speech, and takes away the reason of elders.*"³²³

And they require a *geniza*.³²⁴ A *geniza* for what purpose? If we say, a *geniza* in order that one might read them at a future time, has not Rav Reader said: "All newspapers are sufficient for their time"³²⁵ and if their time has past their interest is lost. And in the case of the Babylonian newspapers, their interest is lost even in their own

318. "Babylonian" is the term which Rosenzweig uses for English, as noted in Chapter Seven above.

319. In Mishnah Shabbat 16:1, there is a discussion about what objects may be saved from a fire on the Sabbath. The discussion is expanded in the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Shabbat 115a.

320. A *geniza* is a storage facility for sacred texts which are no longer usable.

321. Literally, "How can one have Babylonian newspapers in America?"

322. As noted in the "Rashi" commentary to Chapter Seven, there is a linguistic link between בבל *bavli* "Babylonian," and בלול *bilul* "mixed up." The text of Genesis 11:9 explains the etymology of בבל *bavel* (Babylonia) by linking it to בלל *balal* "He [God] mixed up."

323. Job 12:20

324. Returning to the text of the "Mishnah" to further elucidate its meaning.

325. I.e., They lose their relevance quickly.

time. Rather, this *geniza* is comparable to leavened foods which are stored up for burning.³²⁶ And as it has been taught, our sages judged that the Babylonian newspaper articles may be burned because they are full of vanity and emptiness and it is written (Habakuk 2): *So that people have had to toil for the fire, and nations to weary themselves for emptiness.*³²⁷

Rav Strict raised an objection to him: "Has it not been taught in our Mishnah that we do not save them? After the fact, yes, **but in the first place [such a procedure is] not [done].**"³²⁸

Rav Compassionate said: "The ordinary 'fire'³²⁹ is one that is started in the first place, as scripture says (Exodus 22): *When a fire is started...he who started the fire must make restitution.*³³⁰ From here we learn that fire does not come from the heavens unless it is brought forth by a commoner.

It was taught: They place the Babylonian newspaper articles in a *geniza* away from the women and children because they are full of sneering and disgraceful speech.

Another *baraita* taught: Israel received two things from the nations and went forth with them by means of sneering and disgraceful speech, and these are they: newspapers and theaters.

Rav Sage said: "The punishment for authors who engage in disgraceful speech is

326. Tractate Pesachim of the Talmud explains that any leavened food must be gathered prior to Passover and removed from the home. There is a ritual known as *biur chametz* ביעור חמץ, "the burning of leaven," which takes place the evening preceding the start of Passover. Ostensibly, one should have cleaned his home by then. So, in order that the ritual not be performed in vain, a few crumbs of leaven are reserved for use in this ritual. Rosenzweig compares this practice to the practice of putting "Babylonian" periodicals in a *geniza*.

327. Habakuk 2:13

328. I.e., If they are already burning, we don't save them, but we shouldn't actively throw them into the fire. This is explained in the "Rashi" commentary.

329. I.e., A fire that is not otherwise qualified by other conditions.

330. Exodus 22:5

greater than that for actors, **because hearing is not comparable to seeing.**"

Rav Scrivener said: "You do not have a thing which is held in pride by a nation more than their newspapers, and you do not have a nation overflowing with newspapers as America does, and you do not have a people in America whose newspapers are uglier than those of Israel, and who causes this? Editors who are not fit."

It was taught: Seven qualities of talented editors were counted by the sages, and these are they: **patient in his spirit**, standing upon his word and his deeds, loving peace, loving truth and receiving it from one who speaks it, being **a servant to his readers**, a master to his writers, and humble before those who are greater than he, and the reverse is true for editors who are not fit.

Regarding editors who are not fit, scripture says (Jeremiah 9): *I will take note of every publisher as one who is not circumcised.*³³¹ Regarding fit editors, scripture says (Isaiah 33): *Faithfulness to your pen was her wealth, wisdom and devotion her triumph.*³³²

We Shall Return to You, "All Articles..."

And Tractate America is Concluded

331. Jeremiah 9:24. The Hebrew abbreviation for publisher, מוציא לאור *motzi la'or*. is מ"ל *MVL*.

The text of Jeremiah contains the word מול *mul* meaning "one who is circumcised." In an unvocalized text, the two words have the same spelling, and thus Rosenzweig can make his pun.

332. Isaiah 33:6. The meaning of the word עֵתֶךָ *itecha* in the Biblical context is uncertain, but Rosenzweig here links it to the word עֵת *et*, meaning "pen."

Chapter One

Mishnah: There is no difference between America. This speaks of perfection.

Except for subjugation to a monarchy. Which does not exist in America. **But the sages say.** There is also subjugation to monarchy in America. For all subjugation to judges and police is considered by the sages to be subjugation to a monarchy.

Gemara: Three parts of the world. For prior to the discovery of America there were only three parts of the world. **So that any manslayer may have a place to flee.** For the fourth section was only created to be a land of refuge. **Ama Reikah.** After the name of³³³ all of the empty and wanton of other lands who came there. **Came up at first.** Excluding those who immigrate now, who are not all pedigreed. **Transgressors of rules subject to cherem.** This is the *cherem* of Rabbeinu Gershom.³³⁴ **She cleanses the sins.** On the basis that there they become rich and their sins are automatically cleansed. **There is a mine for silver.** The verse is explained thus: that there is a pedigree for silver, and there is a place where by means of gold, men are made refined and pure. **What is their meaning?** For saying that subjugation to a monarchy also exists in America, for in a place where there is no king, how can there be subjugation to a monarchy? **Any heads of the people are considered to be kings.** And subjugation to them is a form of subjugation to a monarchy. **The verse you cite refers to Israel, etc.** And regarding

333. I.e., "On account of..."

334. Rabbeinu Gershom ben Judah enacted a ban against bigamy and polygamy (unless permitted in a specific case when divorce is impossible by at least one hundred rabbis). His ruling also prohibited a man from divorcing his wife against her will.

Israel there is a difference, for they are children of kings.³³⁵ And "heads of the people" should not be understood literally, but rather even the commoner he is like a king, as the verse concludes: *The tribes of Israel together.*³³⁶ **Greenhorn.** "Green Horn" in a foreign language. **Between a strap and a staff.** What is the difference between the policeman's strap in Syria, and the policeman's staff in America? They both imply the Angel of Death; what's the difference between here and there? **Behind the lion.** For a woman, a child, and a policeman all are bad luck [if they encounter you] in America.³³⁷ **Children.** Derived from the word "children." "Loafer" in a foreign language. **They are all able to cause damage.** There are editions which say: Their manner is to cause damage, and this is the preferred reading. **Nazirites.** "Temperance" in a foreign language. **Drunkards are included in the category of policemen.** And our Mishnah, which teaches of three groups which cause damage,³³⁸ does not consider drunks, for policemen are drunks by definition. **Three open baskets upon my head.** As it is explained further on, America is compared to Egypt.³³⁹ And Scripture teaches: Kush, Put, Lud...and the inhabitants of the allied countries.³⁴⁰ **Incised upon the tablets.** As we taught, do not read "*charut*" (incised), but rather "*cherut*" (freedom). And he concludes that there is no freedom in America except upon the tablets. That is to say, freedom exists in writing, but not in

335. In Mishnah Berachot 1:2, Rabbi Joshua teaches that the recitation of the *Shema* should be completed before the third hour, because such is the manner of the "children of kings." Israel thus becomes identified as the "children of kings."

336. The conclusion of Deuteronomy 33:5.

337. A similar phrase is found in Mishnah Bava Kamma 8:4, where it is said of an imbecile, a deaf-mute, or a minor.

338. This is not in the "Mishnah" which Rosenzweig provides, nor in actual rabbinic literature.

339. The biblical citation about the open baskets refers to the dream of Pharaoh's baker, which took place in Egypt.

340. Ezekiel 30:5. The phrase used for "allied countries" is אֶרֶץ חִבְרִית *eretz habrit*. The United States is known as אֶרֶצוֹת חִבְרִית *artzot habrit*. The quote comes from a prophecy in which Ezekiel predicts the destruction of all of these nations along with Egypt.

reality.

Mishnah: Even. I.e., "This as well as that."³⁴¹

Gemara: Bribery came into the world. And since the matter is a custom in the entire world, it is not a plague of America, and so what does it come to tell us? **Gold [means] give this.** He is of the opinion that the name of the thing determines its meaning. **He is appointed according to lots.** You might think that because of the lack of lots, the notion of "bribery" is irrelevant; therefore the Talmud defends against the difficulty [by saying] that a "lottery" implies bribery as well, for they bribe those who come to cast lots and they cast lots over the coins. **I lavished silver.** This is how the verse should be interpreted: The gold and silver which I lavished [upon them], they have made it like a Ba'al³⁴² amongst my people. **There is nothing desirable except for gold, etc.** This returns to what our rabbis taught above that an official and a governor and a community leader are not desirable, good, or pure except for those who have gold to disperse to the political bosses.

Mishnah: Yankees. The citizens who suckle³⁴³ upon the law of America from their birth and are exacting regarding the studies of their youth³⁴⁴ so that it will not be forgotten by the mouths of their offspring.

341. I.e., An oppressor is not also a president or a judge.

342. I.e., A political leader.

343. The verb for "suckle", נק is connected via a pun to the cognate term for Yankees, ינקים *yankim*.

344. This phrase is drawn from Shabbat 21b. "Of their youth" in Aramaic is דינקותא *diyankuta* which thus continues the pun on the root נק.

Gemara: You have founded strength. And we have been taught in a *baraita* that there is no strength except in Torah. **And chewing bitter leaves.** "Chew tobacco" in a foreign language. **Auction houses.** For they sell merchandise there by means of declaration and all who increase the price of the merchandise win by taking it. And there is in this great fraud, for the sellers come amidst the buyers and increase the price and deceive the buyers who are inexperienced. **The contractors and the bondsmen.** Who contract to build houses, to establish roads, to make bridges, and to dig wells, pits, and caves. **They fall.** Even by means of an ordinary wind.³⁴⁵ **And it is the air of the heavens.**³⁴⁶ Therefore they are obligated according to the laws of heaven, but according to the laws of man they are exempt. **It is thus also taught.** That there is no deception of the public. **Do you think that we are dealing with fools?** Who deceive themselves. **Your brother came with guile.** And the one who came to deceive must fear lest he find his brother through guile and he deceives him. **Silver is called "money."** From the same language as "deception."³⁴⁷ **A wedding feast.** In America, they put the food on the table for all diners together, and anyone who can snatch more, he has the upper hand.³⁴⁸

345. רוח מצויה *ruach metzuyah*. This term appears, among other places, in Tractate Sukkah, where it is used to define how sturdy a *sukkah* must be. If even a temporary dwelling such as a *sukkah* is able to withstand such a wind, the buildings being described here must be very ramshackle to be at risk of being toppled by "an ordinary wind."

346. I.e., Air belongs to heaven.

347. As noted in the notes to the main text, "money," spelled מוֹנֶה in Hebrew characters, is related by Rosenzweig to the same root as the word for deception אִונָה.

348. Rosenzweig appears to be referring to communal dining tables in boarding houses.

Chapter Two

Mishnah: All are greenhorns. Below it is explained what "greenhorns" are. **And all who change, etc.** Exit the category of "greenhorns" and we do not make fun of them among their brethren or relatives.

Gemara: What is the difference between. Rabbi, preacher, and scholar³⁴⁹ are the same as deaf, dumb, and child. The Talmud explains: An ordinary rabbi or ordinary ignoramus who changes his name to "*rabbiner*" and an ordinary preacher who changes his name to "*prediger*" and an ordinary teacher who changes his name to "*professor*"³⁵⁰ behold, their change of name is efficacious according to the opinion of the one who calls them doctor, rabbi, and scholar.³⁵¹ But for the one who says deaf, dumb, and child, they are all grouped together.³⁵² **What are greenhorns? Foreigners.** Who do not know the laws of America and its customs. ***Yerakon* is its name.** New York is *Yerakon* if you rearrange the letters.³⁵³ **"Charlie" from Reuben.** But deriving the name "Charlie" from Betzalel³⁵⁴ is not considered a real change. **The beard is included among clothing.** And requires changing.³⁵⁵ **Except for a razor.** With which they can shave it all. **Do you think that**

349. Rosenzweig here uses the classical Hebrew terms for these professions. He distinguishes between these names and the German names for these jobs, which the reformers adopted.

350. The italics refer to the German names.

351. I.e., Rav Wiseguy did not speak specifically of rabbis, preachers, and scholars (or their American counterparts). Thus, we can assume that he considers both groups to be equivalent.

352. This refers to Rav Understanding, who singled out the "true" rabbis, preachers, and scholars. Thus we must assume that he does not consider the American rabbis to be included in those categories.

353. The anagram works only in Hebrew (with the omission of an *alef* א) as ניו יארק *New York* becomes ירקון *Yerakon*.

354. The Hebrew spellings of the two names are similar; Rosenzweig spells "Charlie" צאלע and Betzalel is spelled בצלאל. Thus, with common letters, "Charlie" might be a nickname for Betzalel.

355. That is, one tends to shave the beard when coming to America and assimilating into its culture.

Yankees are not beard-growers? And everybody agrees that Yankees are not "greenhorns." **Which Israel adopted from the other nations.** Which Israel learned from other nations to do as they do. **They were diligent with them.** The injurers were exacting only with Israelites, who are beard growers, and not with Yankees. **What does it mean by "they change?"** **They stammer.** For they learn a few English words and utter them improperly, and this is a sign of recognition that they are greenhorns.

Parrot.³⁵⁶ "Parrot" in a foreign language. And this is a type of bird which learns to speak many words yet does not learn a single language well. **If her father was excessively "green".** This is explained by means of the language of "greenhorns". **He changes his language, too.** For he merits the speaking of English.

Mishnah: With a valise and a case. Leather sacks in which merchandise is carried.

Gemara: They assist him. His relatives and acquaintances, and it is not an obligation, but rather a permissible option. **The injurers.** Little ones who are counted among the four major causes of damages,³⁵⁷ and every place in the *Gemara* where it mentions an "injurer", it means a child. **True righteous person.** For if he does not pay, he is not wicked, for the one who pays goes beyond the the minimum standard.³⁵⁸ **And they in turn are betrayed.** The meaning is that those who the betrayers betrayed will come to betray them [the betrayers]. **Burdened donkey.** He carries packages on him like a

356. Rosenzweig here uses the Hebrew word תוכי *tuchi*.

357. In Mishnah Bava Kamma 1:1, the four causes of damages are listed as "the ox," "the pit," "the crop-destroying beast," and "the outbreak of fire." Rosenzweig jokingly includes "children" among these categories.

358. For payment is viewed as a supremely meritorious act, not a legal obligation.

strong-boned ass. **Screaming salesmen.** Some texts read: They scream, but are not answered. **A baby who suckles.** A peddler is made to be like a baby who suckles from shriveled breasts, who cannot suck what he needs for his food. **Idleness and poverty that strike a peddler.** For he is continually poor.

Chapter Three

Mishnah: And young ones who have reached [the age of] education. Below it is explained as, the time of education.

Gemara: Time of plenty. When work is plentiful. Time of want. When no work at all is to be found. When we have something frequent and something infrequent. For want is more frequent than plenty. For it was in a time of a strike. For the workers left their work on their own, and not at the will of their employers. Here of those who are unmarried. For they are certainly obligated to work in the factories and in the stores. Who concludes with the prophets. Who has become a Bar Mitzvah.³⁵⁹ Seir. The explanation of Seir is that it is from the same language as *se'arot*, hairs. Newspapers. Periodicals. *The World and The Sun.* Two periodicals which are the most widely sold since they frequently exaggerate. And all the peoples of the land of the covenant. This is America.³⁶⁰ A kindly man benefits himself. For he does acts of lovingkindness for

359. And thus has read a *haftarah* selection from the prophetic literature.

360. America is known as ארצות הברית *Artzot HaBrit*, literally "the land of the covenant." The Ezekiel quote appearing in the main Talmud text uses the phrase ארץ הברית *Eretz HaBrit*. Traditionally, this is understood to mean "allied countries" in the Biblical context, but Rosenzweig takes advantage of linguistic similarities.

himself.

Chapter Four

Mishnah: Who was a peddler but became unfit. Who continued until he was unfit, for he has no talent for sales; or he was working and he was disqualified, for he has no talent for work either, the daughters of Israel make him a teacher, for this requires no talent at all.

Gemara: Time-bound. The time for education is half a year. **Women are obligated to fulfill.** For all women's cosmetics depend on time.³⁶¹ **Time.** "Season" in a foreign language. **He makes us wiser than the birds of the sky.** That is to say, for a *cheder* which is like a chicken coop, when those who sit in it fly away from there, they become wiser. **For he punishes him in the right manner.** The teacher is only obligated to punish and to lay down the law with his students, but the instruction of Torah is something which is turned over to the heavens.³⁶² **I do not want this teacher.** For he does not know how to behave in such a way as to please her. **On account of wounding.** For it is commonly encountered that teachers wound their students. **Every teacher who has knowledge.** That is, foolishness, for he is able to increase conversation with the mothers of youngsters and to flatter them.³⁶³ **To say Kaddish after his death.** With the intention of saving him from the judgment of Gehenna. **Only those whose days are lengthened to adulthood and old age.** That their children have learned to read Hebrew

361. I.e., It takes time for a woman to put on her makeup!

362. I.e., It isn't the job of the teacher.

363. In Mishnah Avot 1:5, Rabbi Yose ben Yohanan teaches that this is not a good thing! He states, "Do not have much conversation with women."

only after many years of instruction.

Mishnah: And even like a rooster, etc. That is to say, he teaches him to read by heart. **Are a plague of the public.** They are similar to a plague upon the public, for they need to delay on account of him and to miss mealtime on Shabbat.³⁶⁴

Gemara: You shall not be struck dumb. Even though you do not know how to read properly. **For the children of Israel are your benefactors.** And they always say to the parents of the Bar Mitzvah that he read beautifully and he preached beautifully. **Outside of [Bar].** This is based on the language of "outside."

Chapter Five

Mishnah: A place to meet. In the Gemara, it explains what a meeting is.

Gemara: Experts. "Trustees" in a foreign language. **From here we derive that there is no society, etc.** For the appointed officers are an obligation of the society.³⁶⁵ **Than a fool with his nonsense.** The meaning is that a meeting with a bereaved bear is a true meeting, whereas a meeting with a fool is not a true meeting, and the Talmud responds that a meeting with several fools is indeed a meeting. **For a man rises up against his compatriot.** For at the time that they gather together, they rise up and argue and gossip,

364. Rosenzweig suggests that sermons are so lengthy that they delay the end of the service so long that one is unable to have a meal on Shabbat!

365. I.e., Any valid society must see to it that they have the proper number of appointed members.

and each man denigrates his compatriot. **He is hollow with regard to Torah.** For boards³⁶⁶ and Torah are one and the same! **And an altar requires wine-libations.**

Therefore, appointed officers of a society also require wine-libations, which is the same as drinking. **There is no meeting without a complaint.** And when they come to the point of "complaint" they are bound to include beatings and they will need a doctor.

Partners with gravediggers. For doctors provide dead people for them to bury.

Mishnah: A charitable society. Which busies itself in matters of charity. **Perish amidst great clamor.** In quarrels and beatings.

Gemara: Each family from psoriasis. The second occurrence [of the word "Mishpachot" should be read] like "from psoriasis."³⁶⁷ **Public assemblies.** "Mass Meetings," in a foreign language. **Alarm is as useful.** The shout which they sound regarding a charitable act deceives, and acts in the hearts of the rich as leeches to the dead. **He chided them.** The poor, via words. **The angel of death.** The policeman. And the staff of beatings³⁶⁸ which is in his hand. **Death will save you from charity.** For a beating by a policeman is sufficient to kill. **Three things.** Fasting, voices, and wealth. **Two of them.** For they fast and they make their raised voices heard, but they have not given their wealth. **Pleasant cantors and pleasant rabbis.** Not really, but because he³⁶⁹ wanted to say "pleasant" with respect to actors and actresses, he used the same language

366. The word used for boards, לוחות *luchot* can also mean "tablets," as in the tablets of the covenant.

367. See the footnote in the main text for further explanation.

368. Apparently referring to an officer's billy club.

369. The *Tanna*.

with respect to rabbis and cantors.

Chapter Six

Mishnah: But on Shabbat this is not the case. To the case of where he does not do anything this applies, but not to eating, for in the case of eating, do Reform [rabbis] fast on Shabbat? **Does not preach nicely, but he practices what he preaches nicely.** There are versions which say that he does not practice what he preaches nicely.³⁷⁰

Gemara: His ignorance. Before he became a rabbi. **The rabbis have no need.** Adopt this principle as your guide: Any time that "rabbis" are mentioned without any other qualification, it means the Orthodox. **He does not forget it for it was not his knowledge.** For a man cannot forget something unless he indeed had the knowledge to begin with. **With an Orthodox [rabbi] who has become Reform.** And he had knowledge to begin with but forgot it, as the text states: He forgot before whom he stood and preached. **The language of a corpse.** For so the reformers call the holy language "the language of a corpse," the Aramaic for "a dead language." **They bring one to lowliness.** For one needs to sit a long time in one place in order to hear their sermons. **Specifically upon the chariot.** In that he speaks about women who ascend to or descend from the chariot, and it is as it continues and explains.

370. In the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Hagigah 14b, Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai praises Rabbi Elazar ben Arach for his ability to expound upon the chariot (which Rosenzweig mentions later in this chapter). In his praise, Rabbi Yochanan says, "There are those who expound well but do not practice what they preach well; there are those who practice what they preach well but do not expound well; but you, Rabbi Elazar ben Arach, are one who expounds well and practices what you preach well." This entire section of Rosenzweig's *gemara* is meant to mimic the talmudic passage in Hagigah.

Mishnah: Three [types of people] are required to have a [head] covering. Further on, it explains what a [head] covering is. **And a coachman.** "Driver" in a foreign language. For he drives the horses in carts and in covered wagons. And they are like the masters of the place.

Gemara: Stovepipe. *Scaroblush* in a foreign language. Thus, they³⁷¹ transgress [the scriptural dictum] *Do not place a stumbling block before the blind.* Those who go out in head-coverings transgress the ruling *Do not place a stumbling block before the blind*, for they cause the youngsters to stumble in causing them to transgress the Sabbath.

Similar to the High Priest, who is permitted to wear a blend of linen and wool.

Which is prohibited for the entire world, but permitted for the High Priest. **Potters and physicians are honored according to the distribution of their horses.** Coachmen and doctors are honored in the eyes of other creatures according to their horses.³⁷² **The rabbi of corpses is everywhere.** In every place, this is certainly to be read as a doctor, for it speaks of [the fact that] there is an increase in the number of dead corpses due to his [attempted] cures. **The rabbi of the castrated.** Because the majority of the ritual circumcisers in America are not experts and masters of their art and occasionally castrate the children. **The rabbi of the beaten.** This is the teacher, who beats his students. **For now the common people are rabbis.** Interpret the word רבים *rabim* as related to the word רבנים *rabanim*, "rabbis." **They preface and call.** For they write a sort of introduction to their articles and speak of the praiseworthiness and greatness of the editor

371. I.e. Those who wear head-coverings

372. I.e., The more horses they have, the more honor they receive.

and call him mighty³⁷³ and great among Israel. **We do not impose an obligation upon a person without his informed consent.** And how can we require the editor to wear a head-covering because of the fact that foolish authors call him rabbi and we know full well that he is not a rabbi.

Chapter Seven

Mishnah: With his books in his hands. For he goes to request a donation and clutches his book in his hand in order to make known that he is an author and is worthy of receiving a substantial donation. And also so that the demons may be deterred when he goes out alone at night, and they might recognize by means of his book that he is not a scholar.

Gemara: Anticipate them at their doors. And the authors do not need to go from door to door. **Even in the Babylonian language.** The language which the children of Israel speak. And it is called Babylonian because it is a mixture of seventy languages³⁷⁴, and in a foreign language it is called "jargon."³⁷⁵ **The one who vows [to bar].** For he writes on the door of his home, "Peddlers and handicapped people should not come to the house."

373. Hebrew, רב *rav*, again playing on the dual meaning of the word. The phrase might also be read as "...and call him rabbi..."

374. In the Biblical account of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11), we read that the land became known as Babel בבל *bavel*, because there God mixed-up בלל *balal* the world's languages. The Bible makes a pun on the two words, based upon their similar spelling. The empire of Babylonia was associated with Babel. Rosenzweig makes reference to this story by using the word בלול *bilul* (related to בלל) to refer to "a mixture."

375. This may be a reference to Yiddish, which Rosenzweig and his compatriots viewed as inferior to Hebrew.

Handicapped people. Not really [handicapped people], but rather any poor person who goes from door to door, and he used the normal manner of expression. **What is the halachic difference between these two? The ability to sell his books.** For if you say that an author is like a peddler, it is also taking and selling. But if he is like a handicapped person, it is a contribution and is not taking and selling. **Because he has none who demand it.** There are none who pounce upon the merchandise of an author and thus he is unable to sell it and buy shoes for himself. **He was not a shoemaker.** For if he was a shoemaker he would be busy at his work. **Stench of tar spreading.** For their words are spread with tar, a known sign that their writers dirtied their hands with tar, and this is the manner of shoemakers. **Like nails planted by those who collect.** For all who busy themselves in the planting of nails in shoes collect money by becoming authors. **Surrounded by rabbinical endorsements like a cobbled shoe.** The endorsements of rabbis surrounded it and it looked like a shoe which is surrounded by nails.

Chapter Eight

Mishnah: One does not save them. This only deals with those that need not be bought.

Gemara: They are written in a mixed-up language. This is the language of "jargon"³⁷⁶ which is a mixture of all the other languages. **Mixed-up authors.** For they have no knowledge. **But in the first place [such a procedure is] not [done].** The meaning is that one is not obligated in the first place to burn them, but if a fire should occur after the

376. Again, this may be a reference to Yiddish.

fact, we do not save them. **Because hearing is not comparable to seeing.** For in theaters one hears the sneering and the disgraceful language and does not see it written, as in the newspapers. And seeing is more grave than hearing. **Patient in his spirit.** In that he does not enter into an argument with everyone who offends his honor. **A servant to his readers.** In that he does not think of himself as the master of his newspaper, to write in it whatever he sees fit, but rather he is like a servant to his readers and writes only what will bring them benefit.

Midrash¹ Esther
by
Gerson Rosenzweig

brought out by the bookseller
S. Druckerman, 50 Canal Street, New York

1. A midrash מדרש is an interpretive story used to elucidate or elaborate upon Biblical text. There is no good English translation for this word.

Who ruled from *Hodu* to *Kush*.² That is to say, he took for himself all of the glory³, and to his people he gave only sticks⁴, according to the custom of despotic⁵ and stupid emperors of these times.⁶

White curtains and violet.⁷ Why was the word *Chur*⁸ written with a large *chet*?⁹ Rav Bun¹⁰ said: It is because the scoffers of the generation gossiped about Ahasuerus and said that he was a thief, for before his reign he had been poor and immediately upon his ascension to the throne he became wealthy. What did he do? He commanded that *Chur* be written for them with a large *chet*, in order to say, the mouse is not the thief, but the hole.¹¹

And the drinking was according to law, there was no compulsion.¹² That is to say, there was no compulsion in drinking, for he who began under compulsion, ended

2. Esther 1:1. *חודו* *Hodu* is usually identified as India, while *כוש* *Kush* is often identified with Ethiopia. There is rabbinic disagreement on the actual locations, however. Rosenzweig's jokes also require that these words be left untranslated.

3. Hebrew *הוד* *hod*.

4. Hebrew *כוש* *kush*.

5. Rosenzweig's meaning is uncertain. His word *דיספּיטאַן* has no meaning, but he appears to be using it as a cognate.

6. I.e., of today.

7. Esther 1:6.

8. Hebrew *חור*, meaning "white."

9. Following Masoretic tradition, in most copies of Esther, the Hebrew letter *chet* which begins the word is written enlarged.

10. This is the actual name of several *amoraim*.

11. A proverb from the Babylonian Talmud, Kiddushin 56b. Rosenzweig plays on another meaning of *חור*, "hole." The proverb is generally understood to mean that if the temptation for theft is not there, the theft will not take place. If the mouse did not have the hole in which to conceal his theft, he would not take anything. Ahasuerus seems to be arguing that if he had not been given the opportunity to take all this wealth for himself, he would never have done so. It is not his fault that he acquired his wealth through questionable means; the fault lies in those who tempted him. Rosenzweig may also be alluding to the traditions found in Midrash Esther 2:11 (and elsewhere) which allege that he used furnishings in his palace which had been taken from the Temple in Jerusalem.

12. Esther 1:8.

willingly.¹³

But the queen Vashti refused.¹⁴ She was the first among women to stand up for her rights and to demand freedom for woman. But what she sought she did not find.

Then the king said to the wise men, who knew the times.¹⁵ This is definitive proof that he was stupid, for he ruled according to those who knew the times, the editors and reporters of the times.¹⁶ And he did not know that these men have nothing but sensationalism in their world. And at the time that the Israelites needed to send a goat into the wilderness they did not send it except by the hand of a man of the times.¹⁷

And speak according to the language of his people.¹⁸ For what purpose is this idea here? It is of this that scripture says: *And the eyes of the fool range to the ends of the earth.*¹⁹ Ahasuerus foresaw through his astrological speculation that in the future the laws decreed in America would cancel his first decree and establish the rulership of a woman over her husband. He said to them, "By your lives, you shall stumble in my latter

13. This is a play on the Talmudic expression תחילתו בפשיעה וסופו באונס, usually understood as "there is negligence at the beginning and accident at the end." The phrase is found in the Babylonian Talmud, in Tractate Bava Kama 56a and elsewhere.

14. Esther 1:12

15. Esther 1:13

16. This may also be a reference to *The Times*, such as *The New York Times*. Rosenzweig enjoyed making fun of the popular press, as seen in his other tractates.

17. This is a reference to Leviticus 16:21ff, which speaks of the procedure for the Day of Atonement, in which a goat "for Azazel" is sent into the wilderness to atone for the sins of the people. The phrase איש עתי *ish itti*, which is variously translated as "a designated man" or "a man who is waiting ready," is linked by Rosenzweig to the phrase יודעי העתים *yodei ha'ittim*, "those who know the times." Again, Rosenzweig may mean *The Times*.

18. Esther 1:22

19. Proverbs 17:24

decree. I said, 'And speak according to the language of his people,' and you shall decree to the strangers that they may speak and write in the language of their people. I decreed regarding the males and you shall decree even regarding the females. You said to me, 'Remove the splinter,' and I say to you, 'Remove the log.'²⁰

The son of Yair the son of Shim'i the son of Kish.²¹ Three nicknames for Israel, one to praise and two to find fault with them. Yair, for they enlighten all the nations of the world.²² Shim'i and Kish for it is their practice to deceive.²³

And he had become support to Hadassah.²⁴ Every place where scripture says, "*Vayehi*"²⁵ it is an expression of trouble,²⁶ as here where scripture speaks of the education of a daughter of Israel. It anticipated that in the future, Israel would disdain and become negligent in the education of its daughters and would exempt them from the study of Torah and their language and literature, and since it foresaw this, it began by screaming

20. The latter part of this imagined conversation between Ahasuerus and his advisors utilizes a quote from the Babylonian Talmud, Bava Batra 15b (and repeated elsewhere in rabbinic literature). The complete proverb states that if a judge were to say, "Remove the splinter from between your teeth," a defendant might reply, "Remove the log from before your eyes." The splinter and the log are generally interpreted to be metaphors for types of transgressions; a splinter is a minor transgression, while a log is a major one. Thus the proverb teaches that one should not be overzealous in pointing out minor offenses, for one might in the process overlook a major one.

21. Esther 2:5

22. יָאִיר *Yair*, Mordecai's ancestor, has a name whose root is derived from the verb meaning "to enlighten."

23. שִׁמְעִי *Shim'i*, identified as a member of Saul's clan, first appears in II Samuel 16. He insults David for usurping the throne from Saul, then later ingratiates himself to David so that his life will be spared. Kish is the father of Saul, first mentioned in I Samuel 9. When Samuel comes to anoint Saul as king, Kish brings his other sons forward, but Saul is nowhere to be found. It would appear that these are the incidents which Rosenzweig has in mind when he brands these two men as deceptive.

24. Esther 2:7

25. Hebrew וַיְהִי, here translated as "he had become."

26. Midrash Genesis Rabbah 42:3 teaches this, based on the fact that the word וַיְהִי *vayehi* "and it came to pass" can also be read as וַיִּי וַיִּי *vai yehi* "there will be woe." The concept is repeated elsewhere in rabbinic literature.

with woe: "*Vayehi Omen.*"²⁷

For Mordecai had commanded her that she not tell.²⁸ Mordecai, of whom it is written: *he told [them] that he was a Jew,*²⁹ what did he see which caused him to command Esther that she not tell? Mordecai said, "I know the custom of those who hate Israel is that just as they distance themselves from the Jews, they draw themselves close to their daughters. It is better for Esther that they not know that she is a daughter of Israel."

And Haman sought³⁰ **to force them to abandon Judaism.**³¹ Why is "to force them to abandon Judaism" written here and not "to murder and to destroy?" Since the way of those who hate Israel is to begin with forced conversion. Thus scripture says: *And he sought*, for those who hate Israel, even at the time that they think to uproot Israel, first decree forced conversion. And at the time that they make this decree, they seek and force them to abandon their faith "willingly." They begin with language of request at first, as it is written: *And Haman sought.*³²

In the first month, which is the month of Nisan.³³ That same wicked man³⁴ foresaw,

27. Hebrew ויחי אמן, "he had become support" (i.e., he had adopted).

28. Esther 2:10

29. Esther 3:4

30. The word ויבקש *Vayevakesh* can also be rendered as "he requested." Rosenzweig's joke hinges on this dual meaning.

31. Esther 3:6. The verb להשמיד *LeHashmid* means "to destroy." In later midrashic usage, the root שמד *ShMD* came to have the meaning of forced conversion, as Rosenzweig uses it here.

32. I.e., He requested. See note 30, above.

33. Esther 3:7

34. That is, Haman.

yet he did not foresee appropriately. He saw that in the future many of the children of Israel would stumble in this month with regard to a prohibition punishable by excommunication.³⁵ Yet he did not foresee appropriately, for if he had foreseen appropriately, he would have discovered the approval of rabbis on all of the stores, and even on all things which are forbidden because they are definitively leavened goods.³⁶ Yet rabbis are not afraid of excommunication, for they do work for the sanctification of heaven, and they are like priests in every manner, and scripture says: *Do not cut off³⁷ the tribe of the family of Kohath.*³⁸

And if the matter is *kosher* (fitting) to the king.³⁹ At the time that Esther spoke the word "*vekasher*,"⁴⁰ a voice came forth from heaven and said, "By your life, my daughter, in the future a store for *kosher* products in America shall be called by your name." And this is the Store of Esther that is located in greater New York.⁴¹

And many of the people of the land became Jews.⁴² Scripture is speaking of the common people among Israel, for when they saw that even though they did not know that

35. As becomes evident further on, Rosenzweig refers here to the eating of leavened goods on Passover, which is punishable by excommunication (known in Hebrew as כרת *karet*).

36. Rosenzweig is here being critical of American Jews, particularly rabbis, who he feels are lax in their observance of the laws of Passover.

37. I.e., Do not punish with כרת.

38. Numbers 4:18. The Kohathites are one of the families of Levi, charged with helping the priests in the Temple service. Since they are not to be cut off (from the same root, כרת *krt*, referring to excommunication), we might assume that no priest, and none who acts as a priest, need worry about excommunication!

39. Esther 8:5

40. Hebrew וכשר, "fitting."

41. Apparently, a well-known store for Kosher food at the time when Rosenzweig was writing.

42. Esther 8:17

they were Jews, they were Jews for the purpose of punishment and persecution.⁴³ They returned in penitence and became proper Jews. And so scripture concludes: *For the fear of the Jews had fallen upon them.*⁴⁴

Complete and Finished⁴⁵

43. Even though they themselves have no clue as to what Judaism means, the anti-Semites regard them as Jews, so that they are swept up in the fate of the Jewish people. Thus "the fear of the Jews" [that fear that all Jews have because they are subject to persecution] "fell upon them," for they realized that they share the same destiny with all other Jews, regardless of their own level of identification with Judaism.

44. Esther 8:17; this is the latter part of the verse. While this is indeed the conclusion of the verse (and the chapter), there are actually two more chapters of the book of Esther for which Rosenzweig has no commentary.

45. Hebrew **תם ונשלם** *tam venishlam*, a typical way of concluding rabbinic texts.

Haggadah¹ for Authors

by

Gerson Rosenzweig

published by

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1907

1. A *Haggadah* *הגדה* is the traditional text used at the Passover festival meal, known as a *סדר seder*. The word *seder* refers to an order of service. There is no real English translation for the term *Haggadah*.

This is the bread of affliction² which the authors of Israel eat in the new land. All who are writers will starve, all who are composers [of text] will be in need.³ This year we are editors, next year we will peddle in this land; this year we are writers, next year we will be tailors.⁴

What is the difference⁵ between the Hebrew author and all other authors in the world?

For all other authors in the world eat from their books [earn revenue from their books so that they may eat] leavened and unleavened bread; the Hebrew author does not eat from his books [does not earn enough revenue from his books to eat] leavened bread, and gets nothing from it except unleavened bread.⁶

For all other authors in the world are bestowed with honor and glory and even if they only write vegetable residue [i.e., garbage]⁷; the Hebrew writer, even if he is among the most excellent, is bestowed only with disgrace from honor, and his world is complete

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2. This paragraph parodies the opening paragraph of the *מגיד* *Maggid* portion of the *seder*. For the full traditional text of those passages which Rosenzweig parodies, see Appendix B. Traditionally, the formula would be recited over the unleavened bread. As with Rosenzweig's parody, the traditional text is in Aramaic.
 3. The traditional text here reads: "Let all who are starving, *דכפין* *dichfin*, come and eat, let all who are in need, *דצריך* *ditzrich*, partake of the Passover meal". Rosenzweig uses related verbs: *יכפן* *yachfin* and *יצריך* *yatzrich*.
 4. A number of jokes are being made here. Rosenzweig mocks the traditional text which says, "Now we are here, next year may we be in the land of Israel. Now we are slaves, next year may we be free." He turns the tables by suggesting that the freedom authors have this year to work at their chosen profession will not last into the next year, as they run out of money and become peddlers or tailors. There is a word pun between the similar-sounding *סופרין* *sofrin*, "writing" and *תופרין* *tofrin*, "sewing".
 5. This parodies the *מה נשתנה* *mah nishtanah*, a series of four questions traditionally asked by the youngest child at the *seder*. The traditional formula is first found in Mishnah Pesachim 10:4.
 6. Mocking the traditional first question, which asks why only unleavened bread, *מצה* *matzah*, is eaten on Passover. As noted above, unleavened bread (such as the Hebrew author eats) is known as the "bread of affliction!"
 7. A play on the traditional second question which asks about other varieties of vegetables *שאר ירקות* *she 'ar yerakot* eaten on other nights of the year.

bitterness?⁸

For all other authors in the world do not dip their pens freely [do not write things without being paid] even one time; the Hebrew writer dips his pen freely every day?⁹

For all other authors in the world sell their books and their newspapers whether they sit or whether they recline [at ease in bookstores]; the Hebrew author must go with his books to the doorways [door to door], and if he is a publisher he needs to send his newspaper one year entire year, and after that they will not pay him even with bran flour.¹⁰

We are slaves¹¹ to Hebrew literature and the Lord our God brought us out from the midst of all of the other authors of the world. And even if we all were wise, we all had understanding, we all knew the Torah and life, we would still be commanded to be poor and to be paupers and to bring forth our books from poverty; the more one is poor and wretched the more he is praiseworthy.¹²

It happened that some wise men and great authors were reclining all of their days and

8. Rosenzweig here uses the phrase *כלו מרור* *kulo maror* to mean "complete bitterness", whereas in the Haggadah text it means "only bitter herbs".

9. During the *seder*, food is dipped twice, leading to a question about this unusual practice.

10. The leisurely style with which the non-Jewish authors can sell their works parallels our dining style during the majority of the year. We dine *בין יושבין ובין מסובין* *bein yoshvin uvein mesubin*, either sitting straight or reclining. Rosenzweig also makes a pun between *מסובין* *mesubin*, which describes the reclining done during the *seder*, and *סובין* *subin*, the inexpensive bran flour which is not even cheap enough to give to Hebrew writers as payment.

11. Mimics the traditional formula "We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt..."

12. The phrases "And even if we were all wise..." and "The more one...the more he is blessed" are found in the *Haggadah* text.

all of their nights and were writing good and useful books for their people and when the day of their death arrived, there did not remain for their wives and children even enough for the morning meal.¹³

Rav Scrivener said: I am nearly seventy years old and I have not merited that the exodus of Hebrew authors to America be discussed until Ben Chachima¹⁴ explained, it is written, "The Lord will make you... be abused and downtrodden all the days."¹⁵ "The days" refers to the old world, "all the days" refers to the new world.¹⁶

Blessed is He who gave the Hebrew newspapers to his people Israel in this place, blessed is He.¹⁷ Concerning four sons we were given: one wise, one wicked, one simple, and one who does not know how to read.¹⁸

The wise son, what does he do? He pays and then reads.

The wicked son, what does he do? He reads, but does not pay.

The simple son, what does he do? He reads and then pays.

And the one who does not know how to read, he does not read and he does not pay.

13. The original text tells of some sages who recline at the Passover *seder* and are so engrossed in discussing the Exodus all night that they are late for the morning prayers.

14. This name may be translated as, "the wise son" or "the son of the wise one".

15. This quote combines phrases from Deuteronomy 28:25 and 28:33.

16. The *Haggadah* tells the story of Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah. See Appendix A for the complete text.

17. The *Haggadah* praises God for giving the Torah to Israel.

18. The fourth son in the *Haggadah* does not know how to ask a question.

One might think that the Hebrew publisher is a landlord and takes rent on apartments beginning with the first of the month, but scripture teaches "on that day." But "on that day" could be understood to mean that his payment is made ready for him while it is yet daytime. Scripture teaches, "on account of this." "On account of this" is written only to tell you that he receives from the Jew only matzah, the bread of affliction, and much bitterness is placed before him.¹⁹

It is this one (the Jew)²⁰ who has stood for our holy language, that it may not be forgotten amongst the Jews in this land. For not only one enemy has risen against it, but rather in every city they rise against it to annihilate it, and the Holy One, Blessed be He saves it from their hand.²¹

Come and learn what Laban the Cincinnatian²² sought to do to our language, for he decreed against the males that they have no portion or inheritance in the Hebrew

19. This parodies a passage from the Haggadah which discusses whether the telling of the Exodus story begins on the first day of the month or takes place only on Passover itself. Rosenzweig, following the traditional text, uses citations from Deuteronomy 13:8. He mimics the step-by-step arguments made in the traditional text in order to build up his joke.

20. Rosenzweig has placed this parenthetically in his original text.

21. In the Haggadah text, this passage speaks not of enemies who have risen against the Hebrew language, but those who have risen against the Jews themselves.

22. An attack on Isaac Mayer Wise, founder and (at the time) president of the Reform seminary Hebrew Union College, in Cincinnati, Ohio. Wise, in German (and Yiddish) was known as Weiss, meaning "white." The Hebrew word for "white" is לבן, *lavan*. Coincidentally, this is also the name of Jacob's father-in-law, viewed by the Haggadah as a wicked man whose actions almost led to the destruction of the Israelite nation.

Rosenzweig was probably not the first to make the Wise/Laban pun. It is also found in other literature of the period. See, for instance, the epigram quoted by Zvi Hirsch Bernstein in his "A Few Words" (in Radin, Adolph M. and Rosenthal, Herman (eds.), *Yalkut Ma'aravi* (New York: A. Ch. Rosenberg, 1904)).

language and he exempted even his rabbinic students from it, as it is written, "And they became there a great and mighty *goy*²³ - and rabbis [who are big *goyim*]!"²⁴

And they descended -the writers- to America, compelled by Divine decree, and they dwelled there, teaching in Torah-study academies.²⁵ And the Jews did evil to them and afflicted them, and imposed hard labor upon them.²⁶ And God saw their affliction, their burden, and their oppression.²⁷ "And He saw their affliction," this is the forced separation of husband and wife²⁸ imposed by managers and supervisors.²⁹ "And their burden," this is the children. "And their oppression," this is the poverty which is in their households.³⁰

And these are the ten plagues which the Holy One, Blessed be He, brought upon Jewish writers.

Grammar

Language troubles

23. A derogatory term for a non-Jew. Rosenzweig suggests that Wise and other Reform Jews might as well be non-Jews.

24. Rosenzweig did not like the fact that much of the study at the Hebrew Union College was conducted in the vernacular, and not in Hebrew. He uses a quote from Deuteronomy 26:5 (also found in the text of the Haggadah), but makes a pun with the word רב *rav*. In the typical reading of the verse, the word is translated as "numerous."

25. This appears to be a reference to the *cheder* and other types of supplementary schools.

26. This paraphrases Deuteronomy 26:6, used as a proof text in the Haggadah.

27. A paraphrase of Deuteronomy 26:7, also used in the Haggadah.

28. This is derived directly from the traditional Haggadah text. It is understood that Pharaoh forced his Israelite slaves to abstain from sexual relations.

29. The term מַשְׁגִּיחַ *mashgiach* is traditionally used for one who inspects food for ritual purity. However, here Rosenzweig appears to be referring to bosses and supervisors who overwork authors so much that they are forced to refrain from marital relations.

30. This portion of the Haggadah speaks of the suffering which the Israelites endured at the hands of the Egyptians, and their ultimate redemption by God.

Book louses³¹

Poverty

Young children

Wretchedness

Wealthy illiterates

Educated poor men

The beating of the printing press

The plague of criticism³²

(Up to here, they read in America)³³

And you shall say: This is the sacrifice of silver³⁴

Your mighty powers You displayed in silver,

Above all pleasures You elevated silver,

You revealed to Columbus this land of silver,

31. Such as "bookworms," for instance. This is a pun on the term קנאת סופרים *kin'at sofrim*, meaning "jealousy among scholars;" now, instead of intellectual struggles among real authors, all we have is lice!

32. All of Rosenzweig's plagues begin with the same Hebrew letter as their counterparts in the Haggadah. In the final plague, Rosenzweig is able to make a pun between the biblical מכת בכורות *makat bechorot*, "the plague of the firstborn," and his מכת בקורת *makat bikoret*, "the plague of criticism."

33. This is apparently Rosenzweig's attempt to parody those editions of the Haggadah which include traditions from various rites.

34. A parody of a song traditionally sung on the second night of Passover, "And You Shall Say it is the Sacrifice of Passover." The title of the song, from Exodus 12:27, is also the refrain. The song is an alphabetical acrostic (though the letter ש *sin* is substituted for ס *samech*). Rosenzweig's skill can be seen in the way that he retains all but three of the acrostic-words used in the original, but still manages to make his jokes. Further, the sounds in the word פסח *pesach*, meaning "Passover," can be rearranged to form the word כסף *chesev*, meaning "silver" (though this word is usually pronounced *kesev*).

And you shall say: This is the sacrifice of silver.

Israel knocked upon its doors, wandering without silver,
He satiated his hand with shiny things and forgot the point of silver,
And to the herd our rabbis turned the price of silver,

And you shall say: This is the sacrifice of silver.

They provoked faith and knowledge, and silver burned like Sinai,
The veil³⁵ was removed from them- the mask of silver,
They swept well the merchandise from their home, for silver

And you shall say: This is the sacrifice of silver.

Woe,³⁶ the first of all evil men, Esau, was drawn out by silver,
They built for him tremendous palaces overlaid with silver,
Without giving him permission to go from door-to-door without silver,

And you shall say: This is the sacrifice of silver.

The Torah of God has been securely enclosed in an ark of silver,
The prayers of Israel have been destroyed as though they despise silver,
The holy laws have been burned in a foundry for silver,

And you shall say: This is the sacrifice of silver.

35. Hebrew, הלוט *haLot*, a parody on לוט *Lot*, Abraham's nephew referred to in the song in the Haggadah.

36. The Hebrew יה *Yah*, is an abbreviation of the tetragrammaton and serves as a nickname for God. But, revocalized as *Yoh*, it can be an epithet meaning "woe." It is unclear which reading Rosenzweig intends here.

Still today the craftsman is proud of his idols of silver,
His hand inscribes a destruction chosen from silver,
He commands the holy language to pass away needlessly without silver,
And you shall say: This is the sacrifice of silver.

Torn from deceitful decrees whitewashed by silver,
Reform and Orthodox, their sorrow is silver,
These two are disconnected from their people by the snare of silver,³⁷
Let the hand of hypocrisy be strengthened and curse the one who has silver-
And you shall say: This is the sacrifice of silver.³⁸

37. I.e., Reform and Orthodox leaders alike are so enchanted by money that they ignore the true essence of Judaism.

38. This is the end of Rosenzweig's Haggadah for authors as it appears in *Talmud Yanki*. Davidson notes that Rosenzweig also published a parody of the Passover song *אֶחָד מִי יָדוּעַ echad mi yode'a* ("Who Knows One?") in an 1899 Passover collection. See Davidson, p. 240. An alternate version of that song was published in 1903. See Davidson, p. 242. As with other works collected in *Talmud Yanki*, this Haggadah had previously been published separately, though not necessarily in the exact form found here.

With the exception of an advertisement for S. Druckerman Booksellers found in some editions, this is the end of the *Talmud Yanki*.

Names Appearing in *Talmud Yanki*

אבידן *Aveidan*. Gambling Hall. The word refers to a place of gathering for performances and games associated with idolatrous practices. There was also an *amora* of this name in the late second and early third centuries. He was a contemporary of (and student of) Rabbi Judah the Prince. The name first appears in Tractate Chanukah.

אולפא *Ulpa*. Instruction. From the Hebrew root אָלַף 'LF, meaning "teach." The name first appears in Tractate America.

בון *Bun*. Comprehension. From the root בִּין BVN, meaning "to understand." It is also the actual name of several *amoraim*. The name appears in Rosenzweig's Midrash Esther.

ביזנא *Bizna*. Businessman. A cognate of "business." There is a Rabbi Bizna mentioned in the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Berachot 55b. An alternate translation might be "shame," based on reading ביזנא *bizyona* for Rosenzweig's ביזנא. The name first appears in Tractate Property.

בלופאי *Blufai*. Bluffer. Apparently an Aramaic-style cognate based on the English word "bluff." First appears in Tractate Liars.

בנאי *Banai*. Builder. Based on the root בָּנָה BNH meaning "to build." There is an actual Amora by this name in the Babylonian Talmud, appearing, for instance, in tractate Ketubot 50b. First appears in Tractate Property.

בר כוזיבא *Bar Kosiba*. This was the given name of Simon Bar-Kochba, the leader of a Jewish uprising against the emperor Hadrian in the second century. Rosenzweig is making a pun on his name and the root כָּזַב *kzv*, meaning "liar." Graetz,

however, makes clear that this name derived from the town of Kosiba, and was not a nickname meaning "son of lies." See Graetz, vol. II, 409. This name appears in Tractate Liars.

גיימא *Geima*. Haughtiness. First appears in Tractate Chanukah. May be a printer's error for גיימא.

גלחא *Gilcha*. Shaver. From Hebrew גלח *galach*, meaning "shave." First appears in Tractate America.

גמבליאל *Gambaliel*. Gambler. A parody on the many well-known rabbis by the name of Gamliel גמליאל. First appears in Tractate Chanukah.

דחקן *Dachkan*. Poverty. From Hebrew דחק *dachak*, meaning "poverty." First appears in Tractate America.

דעתן *Da'atan*. Know-it-all. From the root דעת *da'at*, meaning "knowledge." First appears in Tractate Fools.

דוראי *Derorai*. Liberty. From the Hebrew דרור *deror*, meaning "liberty." The name first appears in Tractate America.

זנבא *Zenava*. Tail. From the Hebrew זנב *zanav*, meaning "tail." The name first appears in Tractate America.

חברן *Chavran*. Member. From the Hebrew חבר *chaver*, meaning "a member [of a group]." The name first appears in Tractate America.

חדרן *Chadran*. Valet. From the Hebrew word חדרן *chadran*, meaning "valet." First appears in Tractate America.

חייטא *Chayta*. Needle-worker. From the Hebrew חייט, meaning "tailor." The name first

appears in Tractate America.

חכימא *Chachima*. Sage. From the Hebrew root חכם *chacham*, meaning “wise.” First appears in Tractate Fools.

חלפּתא *Chalifta*. Changer. From Hebrew חלף *chalaf*, meaning “a change.” There is a third-generation *tanna* by this name, as well as a number of *amoraim* mentioned throughout the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmudim. The name first appears in Tractate America.

חנוּנאי *Chanunai*. Compassionate. From Hebrew חנן *chanun*, meaning “compassionate.” The name first appears in Tractate America.

טמּפּלאי *Templai*. Temple. A cognate of the word “temple.” The name first appears in Tractate America.

טרונּפּאי *Tronpai*. Trump. A possible pun on the name of Rabbi Tarfon, a second or third generation *tanna*, who was a teacher and colleague of Rabbi Akiva. The name first appears in Tractate Chanukah.

טרפּן *Treifan*. Trefa (not Kosher, not fit for consumption). The verb root טרף *trf* can refer to seizing due to debt. This certainly can happen to one who gambles (as in Tractate Chanukah, where this name first appears)! But see note above.

ידע *Yad'an*. Knowledgeable. Derived from the root ידע *YD'* meaning “knowledge.” First appears in Tractate Property.

ידעא *Yedi'ah*. Wiseguy. Derived from the root ידע *YD'* meaning “knowledge.” First appears in Tractate America.

ינקא *Yanka*. Yankee. An Aramaic cognate of “Yankee.” First appears in Tractate

America.

ירקא *Yarka*. Greenhorn. From Hebrew ירוק *yarok*, meaning “green.” The name first appears in Tractate America.

כחשאי *Kechashai*. From Hebrew כחש *kachash*, “deceit.” First appears in Tractate Liars.

כלפאי *Klapai*. Cardplayer. A Hebrew word for playing card is קלף *klaf*, spelled with a “kuf” (ק). Jastrow also cites a word קלפי *kalpi*, based on the Greek word χαλπη, meaning “an urn for drawing lots.” Perhaps Rosenzweig used a non-standard spelling, intending one of these meanings. The name first appears in Tractate Chanukah.

כספא *Kaspa*. Silver. From the Hebrew כסף *keseif*, meaning “silver.” The name first appears in Tractate America.

כפרא *Kefara*. Denier. from the Hebrew root כפר *KFR*, meaning “to deny.” First appears in Tractate Liars.

לאומיאל *Le'umi'el*. Nationalist. From the Hebrew לאומי *le'umi*, meaning “national.” The name first appears in Tractate America.

ליסאי *Lisai*. Lease. An Aramaic cognate based upon the word “lease.” First appears in Tractate Property.

לצינאי *Leitzinai*. Jester. From the Hebrew לוצן *leitzan*, “clown.” First appears in Tractate Fools.

לנגאי *Lingai*. Linguist. An Aramaic cognate for “language.” First appears in Tractate America.

מבינא/ה *Mevina*. Understanding. Rosenzweig uses two spellings for the name of this

“sage.” Both are derived from the Hebrew root *בין* *BYN* “to understand.” The name first appears in Tractate Fools.

Mechabriel. Editor. From the Hebrew *מחבר* *mechaber*, meaning “editor.” The name first appears in Tractate America.

Melamdiel. Teacher. From the Hebrew *מלמד* *melamed*, meaning “teacher.”

Also a sound-parody on the names of rabbis such as Gamaliel. The name first appears in Tractate America.

Makshan. Difficult. From Hebrew root *קשה* *KShH*, difficult. The name first appears in Tractate America.

Mar Union. Mr. Union. A cognate of the words “Mr. Union.” Rosenzweig uses this name in Tractate America in a parable about a union boss.

Nehora. Luminaria. The name of a fourth-generation *tanna*. May have been a nickname for Rabbi Nechemiah or Rabbi Elazar ben Arach, since their decisions “enlightened the eyes of [their] colleagues,” or Rabbi Meir, since his name also means “light.” Rosenzweig, however, may be using this name to refer to the supposedly enlightened views of the reformers whom he disparages. The name first appears in Tractate Disguise.

Niyyama. Idle. This translation takes Rosenzweig’s *ניימא* *niyyama* as parallel to *ניימא* *niyuma*, meaning “idle.” The name first appears in Tractate Chanukah.

May be a printer’s error for *גיימא*.

Sabai. Tippler. From the root *סבא* *SB*, “to drink to excess.” First appears in Tractate Disguise.

סוצילאי *Sotzilai*. Socialist. An Aramaic cognate based on the word "Socialist." First appears in Tractate Property.

סוסיטי *Society*. Society. A cognate of the word "society." The name first appears in Tractate America.

סלונאי *Salonai*. Saloon. An Aramaic cognate of the word "saloon." First appears in Tractate America.

סנדלאי *Sandlai*. Sandalmaker. A cognate of the word "sandal." The name first appears in Tractate America.

ספרא *Safra*. Scrivener. From the Hebrew root ספר *SFR* relating to books and writing. This character most likely represents Rosenzweig's own voice. I have followed the pattern of Davidson and others, who translate this name with the word "scrivener" or some synonym thereof. But there is an *amora* of the third and fourth generation by this name. The name first appears in Tractate Fools.

עובדן/עובדה *Ovdan*. Laborer. From the verb עבד *avad*, meaning "to work." The name first appears in Tractate America.

עניא *Onya*. Destitute. From the word עני *oni*, meaning "poor." First appears in Tractate America.

עשקן *Askan*. Entrepreneur. From the Hebrew word עשק *esek*, meaning "business." The name first appears in Tractate America.

עתיקתא *Atikta*. Ancient. From the Hebrew עתיק *atik*, meaning "ancient." The name first appears in Tractate America.

פוליטיקי *Politiki*. Politico. A cognate of the word "politic." The name first appears in

Tractate America.

פעלן *Po'olan*. Worker. From the verb פעל *pa'al*, meaning "to work." The name first appears in Tractate America.

פקיחא *Pekicha*. Supervisor. From the root פקח *PKCh*, meaning "to supervise." First appears in Tractate America.

צחיקא הבטלן *Tzechika HaBatlan*. Laughter the Lazy. From צחק *tzachak*, meaning "laughter" and בטל *batal*, meaning "idle." The name appears in a parable in Tractate Chanukah.

ציבילאי *Tzivilai*. Civilian. A cognate of the word "civilian." First appears in Tractate America.

צריטא *Tz'arita*. Charity. A cognate of the word "charity." The name first appears in Tractate America.

קוביאי *Kubi'ai*. Dice-player. The name first appears in Tractate Chanukah.

קושטא *Kushta*. Costume. Related to Hebrew קשט *KShT*, "costume." Could also be read as "Righteous," related to Aramaic קשט *keshot*, "righteousness." First appears in Tractate Disguise.

קראן *Kar'an*. Reader. From the Hebrew verb קרא *kar'a*, meaning "read." The name first appears in Tractate America.

קרטן *Kartan*. Playing-card. The name first appears in Tractate Chanukah.

קרטיאל *Karti'el*. Cardshark. Rosenzweig perhaps intends a meaning along the lines of, "cards are my god." This assumes that he intends the cognate קרת *kart* to mean "card." The name first appears in Tractate Chanukah.

רבינאי *Rabinai*. Rabbinic. A cognate of the word “rabbinic.” The name first appears in Tractate America.

רביא *Revaya*. Lush. From the Aramaic for “to be filled with wine.” First appears in Tractate Disguise.

רוכלא *Rochla*. Peddler. From the Hebrew רוכל *rochel*, meaning “a peddler.” First appears in Tractate America.

רצעני *Reztani*. Shoemaker. From the Hebrew רצען *retz'an*, meaning “leatherworker.” The name first appears in Tractate America.

שואל *Sho'el*. Questioner. From the Hebrew root שאל *sha'al*, “to ask.” First appears in Tractate Fools.

שופטא *Shofta*. Judge. From the Hebrew שופט *shofet*, “a judge.” The name first appears in Tractate America.

שחקן *Sachkan*. Player. From the Hebrew שחק *sachak*, “play.” The name first appears in Tractate Chanukah.

שפילאי *Shpielai*. Shpiel. From the Yiddish word for “play.” First appears in Tractate Chanukah.

שקרן *Shakran*. From Hebrew שקר *sheker*, “lie.” First appears in Tractate Liars.

שתיא *Shtiya*. Imbiber. From the root שתה *ShTH* meaning “to drink.” First appears in Tractate Disguise.

תופרא *Tofra*. Tailor. From the Hebrew תופר *tofer*, meaning “tailor.” The name first appears in Tractate America.

Haggadah Passages Parodied in the "Haggadah for Authors"

הא לחמא עניא די אכלו אברהםנא בארעא דמצרים. כל דכפין ייתי ויכול, כל דצריך ייתי
ויפסח. השתא חכא, לשנה הבאה בארעא דישׂראל. השתא עבדי, לשנה הבאה בני חורין:

This is the bread of affliction which our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt. Let all who are hungry come and eat, let all who are in need come and [partake of] the Passover offering. Now we are here, next year [may we be] in the land of Israel. Now we are slaves, next year [may we be] free people.

מה נשתנה הלילה הזה מכל הלילות?
שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין חמץ ומצה. הלילה הזה כלו מצה:
שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין שאר ירקות הלילה הזה מרור:
שבכל הלילות אין אנו מטבילין אפילו פעם אחת. הלילה הזה שתי פעמים:
שבכל הלילות אנו אוכלין בין יושבין ובין מסבין. הלילה הזה כלנו מסבין:

What is the difference between this night and all other nights?

On all other nights, we eat leavened bread and *matzah*, on this night only *matzah*.

On all other nights, we eat a variety of vegetables, on this night we eat only bitter herbs.

On all other nights, we do not dip [our foods] even once, on this night [we dip] twice.

On all other nights we eat either sitting or reclining. On this night, we all recline.

עבדים היינו לפרעה במצרים. ויציאתנו יי אלהינו משם, ביד חזקה ובזרוע נטויה, ואלו לא
 הוציא הקדוש ברוך הוא את אבותינו ממצרים, הרי אנו ובנינו ובני בנינו, משעבדים היינו
 לפרעה במצרים. ואפילו בלנו חכמים, בלנו נבונים, בלנו זקנים, בלנו יודעים את התורה,
 מצוה עלינו לספר ביציאת מצרים. וכל המרבה לספר ביציאת מצרים, הרי זה משובח:

We were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt. And God brought us out of there with a mighty
 hand and an outstretched arm. And had the Holy One, Blessed be He, not brought our
 ancestors out of Egypt, certainly we and our children and our children's children would
 be enslaved to Pharaoh in Egypt. And even if we all were wise, if we all were intelligent,
 if we all were elders, if we all knew the Torah, [it would still be] a commandment
 [incumbent] upon us to tell of the Exodus from Egypt. And all who increase the telling
 of the Exodus from Egypt, certainly this is praiseworthy.

מעשה ברבי אליעזר, ורבי יהושע, ורבי אלעזר בן-עזריה, ורבי עקיבא, ורבי טרפון, שהיו
 מסבין בבגי-ברק, והיו מספרים ביציאת מצרים, כל-אותו הלילה, עד שבאו תלמידיהם
 ואמרו להם: רבותינו, הגיע זמן קריאת שמע, של שחרית:

A parable of Rabbi Eliezer, and Rabbi Joshua, and Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah, and Rabbi
 Akiva, and Rabbi Tarfon, who were reclining [and dining] in B'nei Brak, and were
 telling of the Exodus from Egypt, all on that same night, until their students came to them
 and said, "Our teachers, the time has arrived for the recitation of *Shema*, for the morning
 prayers."

אמר רבי אלעזר בן-עזריה. הרי אני בן שבעים שנה, ולא זכיתי, שתאמר יציאת מצרים
 בלילות. עד שדרשה בן זומא. שנאמר: למען תזכר, את יום צאתך מארץ מצרים, כל ימי חייך.
 ימי חייך חיים. כל ימי חייך הלילות. וחכמים אומרים: ימי חייך העולם הזה. כל ימי חייך
 להביא לימות המשיח:

Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah said, "I am nearly seventy years old, and I have never
 succeeded [in understanding why] one should speak of the Exodus from Egypt in the
 evening, until Ben Zoma explained it to me. For it [Scripture] says: *So that you may
 remember the day of the Exodus from Egypt all the days of your life.*¹ 'The days of your
 life' [refers to] the daytime, [while] 'all the days of your life' [includes] the evening.
 And the sages say: 'The days of your life' [refers to] this world, 'all the days of your life'
 [refers to] the bringing about of the days of the Messiah.

ברוך המקום. ברוך הוא. ברוך שנתן תורה לעמו ישראל. ברוך הוא בנגד ארבעה בנים דברה
 תורה. אחד חכם, ואחד רשע, ואחד תם, ואחד שאינו יודע לשאול:

Blessed is God. Blessed is He. Blessed is the One who gave Torah to His people Israel.
 Blessed is He. The Torah speaks of four [types of] sons. One is wise, one is wicked, one
 is simple, and one who does not know how to ask.

1. Deuteronomy 16:3

חכם מה הוא אומר? מה העדות ומחוקים וממשפטים, אשר צוה יי אלהינו אתכם? ואף אתה
אמר-לו בהלכות הפסח: אין מפטירין אחר הפסח אפיקומן:

The wise son, what does he say? *What are the laws and the precepts and the commandments, which Adonai our God commanded you?*² And so shall you tell him the laws of the Passover offering. We do not conclude with an *afikoman*³ following the eating of the Passover offering.⁴

רשע מה הוא אומר? מה העבדה הזאת לכם? לכם ולא לו. ולפי שהוציא את-עצמו מן הכלל,
כפר בעשר. ואף אתה הקנה את-שני, ואמר-לו: בעבור זה, עשה יי לי, בצאתי ממצרים, לי
ולא-לו. אלו הנה שם, לא הנה נגאל:

The wicked son, what does he say? *What is [the meaning of] all this service to you?*⁵ [He says] "To you" and not to himself. And since he has removed himself from the group, he is a heretic. And thus you dull his teeth⁶ and say to him, *Because of this, which God did for me when I went forth from Egypt.*⁷ "For me" and not for him. Had he been there, he would not have been redeemed.

תם מה הוא אומר? מה זאת? ואמרת אליו: בתוך יד הוציאנו יי ממצרים מבית עבדים:

2. Deuteronomy 6:20

3. *Afikoman* has been variously translated as "dessert" or "after-dinner entertainment."

4. Mishnah Pesachim 10:8

5. Exodus 12:26

6. i.e., You negate his argumentative stance.

7. Exodus 13:8

The simple son, what does he say? *What is this?*⁸ And you shall say to him: *With a mighty hand God redeemed us from Egypt, from the house of slavery.*⁹

וְשִׂאֵינוּ יוֹדֵעַ לְשֵׂאוֹל, אֶתְּ פִתְחָ לוֹ. שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ, בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר: בַּעֲבוּר זֶה עָשָׂה יי
לִי, בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרָיִם:

And the one who does not know how to ask, you must begin for him. As it [Scripture] says: *And you shall tell it to your child on that day, saying: [I do this] because of this, which God did for me when I went forth from Egypt.*¹⁰

יָכוֹל מֵרֵאשׁ חֹדֶשׁ, תִּלְמֹד לומר בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא. אִי בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא. יָכוֹל מִבְּעוֹד יוֹם. תִּלְמֹד לומר.
בַּעֲבוּר זֶה. בַּעֲבוּר זֶה לֹא אֶמְרָתִי, אֶלָּא בְּשַׁעַת שִׁישׁ מִצָּה וּמְרוֹר מְנַחִים לִפְנֵיךָ:

It is possible [that one might think that we are commanded to speak about Passover] from the beginning of the month. Scripture says: *On that day.*¹¹ On that very day. It is possible [that one might think we should speak of it] while it is still day. Scripture says, *Because of this.*¹² I would not say, “because of this” except at the moment when *matzah* and bitter herbs are placed before you.

8. Exodus 13:14

9. *Ibid.*

10. Exodus 13:8

11. *Ibid.*

12. *Ibid.*

והיא שעמדה לאבותינו ולנו. שלא אחד בלבד, עמד עלינו לבלותנו. אלא שבכל דור ודור,
עומדים עלינו לבלותנו. והקדוש ברוך הוא מצילנו מידם:

And it is this [promise] which has stood for our ancestors and for us. For not one
[enemy] alone has stood against us to destroy us. Rather, in every generation they stand
against us to destroy us. But the Holy One, Blessed be He, saves us from their hand.

זא ולמד, מה בקש לבו הארמי לעשות ליעקב אבינו. שפרעה לא גזר אלא על הזכרים, ולבו
בקש לעקר את-הכל, שנאמר: ארמי אבד אבי, ויגד מצרימה, ויגר שם במתי מעט. והי שם
לגוי גדול, עצום ורב:

Come and learn what Laban the Aramean sought to do to our ancestor Jacob. For
Pharaoh only decreed against the males, but Laban sought to uproot everything, as it
[Scripture] says: *An Aramean betrayed my father, and he went down to Egypt and dwelt
there in meager numbers. And there he became a great, numerous, and mighty nation.*¹³

ויגד מצרימה, אנוס על פי הדבור. ויגר שם. מלמד שלא יגד יעקב אבינו להשתקע במצרים,
אלא לגור שם, שנאמר: ויאמרו אל-פרעה, לגור בארץ פאנו, כי אין מרעה לצאן אשר
לעבדי, כי כבד הרעב בארץ כנעו. ועתה, ישבי-נא עבדי בארץ גשן:

13. Deuteronomy 26:5

“And he went down to Egypt.” He was compelled to do so by God. “And he dwelled there.” This teaches that our ancestor Jacob did not go down in order to settle, but rather to dwell there [temporarily], as it [Scripture] says: *And they said to Pharaoh, we have come to dwell in the land, for there is no pasture for the flocks which belong to your servants, for the famine is heavy in Canaan. And now, let your servants dwell in the land of Goshen.*¹⁴

וַיֵּרָא אֶת-עֲנִינֵנוּ: זֶה פְּרִישׁוֹת דֶּרֶךְ אֶרֶץ. כְּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל. וַיַּדַּע אֱלֹהִים:

“And God saw our affliction.”¹⁵ This is an explanation of the way of the land. As it [Scripture] says: *And God saw the children of Israel. And God knew.*¹⁶

וְאֶת-עַמְלָנוּ אֱלֹהֵי הַבָּנִים. כְּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: כָּל-הַבֵּן הַיּוֹלֵד הַיָּאֵרָה תִּשְׁלִיכֶהוּ, וְכָל-הַבִּת תִּחַיֶּיךָ:

“And our toil.”¹⁷ These are the sons. As it [Scripture] says: *Any son who is born you shall cast into the river, and every daughter you shall allow to live.*¹⁸

וְאֶת לַחֲצֵנִי. זֶה הַדְּחִק. כְּמָה שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר: וְגַם-דָּאִיתִי אֶת-הַלֶּחֶץ, אֲשֶׁר מִצָּרִים לַחֲצִים אַתֶּם:

14. Genesis 47:4

15. Deuteronomy 26:6

16. Exodus 2:25

17. Deuteronomy 26:6

18. Exodus 1:22

"And our distress."¹⁹ This is pressure. As it [Scripture] says: *And I have also seen the distress with which Egypt distresses them.*²⁰

אלו עשר מכות שהביא הקדוש ברוך הוא על המצרים במצרים, ואלו הן:

These are the ten plagues which the Holy One, Blessed be He, brought upon the Egyptians in Egypt, and these are they:

דם. צפרדע. כנים. ערוב. דבר. שחין. ברד. ארבה. חשך. מכת בכורות:

Blood. Frogs. Lice. Wild beasts. Cattle disease. Boils. Hail. Locusts. Darkness. The slaying of the firstborn.

ויבכו "ואמרתם זבח פסח".

And thus "You shall say it is the sacrifice of *Pesach*."²¹

אמץ גבורותיך הפלאת בפסח, בראש כל מועדות נשאת פסח, גלית לאזרחי חצות ליל פסח,

ואמרתם זבח פסח.

19. Deuteronomy 26:6

20. Exodus 3:9

21. Exodus 12:27

Your mighty powers were displayed wondrously on Passover, above all other festivals
 You elevated Passover, You revealed to the Oriental²² the future midnight [events] of
 Passover, and thus "You shall say it is the sacrifice of *Pesach*."

דלתיו דפקת כחם היום בפסח, הסעיד נוצצים עגות מצות בפסח, ואל תפקר רץ זכר לשור
 ערד פסח, ואמרתם זבח פסח.

You knocked at his door in the heat of the day on Passover,²³ He satisfied the sparkling
 ones²⁴ with cakes of *matzah* on Passover, to the herd he ran- as a remembrance of the
 offering on Passover, and thus "You shall say it is the sacrifice of *Pesach*."

זעמו סדומים ולקטו באש בפסח, חלץ לוט מהם, ומצות אפה בקץ פסח, טאטאת אדמת
 מף ונף בעברד בפסח, ואמרתם זבח פסח.

The Sodomites provoked [God] and were consumed by fire on Passover, Lot was
 withdrawn from them and baked *matzah* at the end of Passover, You swept clean the land
 of Moph and Noph²⁵ when you passed through on Passover, and thus "You shall say it is
 the sacrifice of *Pesach*."

יה, ראש כל און מחצת בליל שמור פסח, בביר, על בן בכור פסחת בדם פסח, לבלתי תת

22. i.e., Abraham

23. cf. Genesis 18. "His" refers again here to Abraham.

24. i.e., the angels

25. Identified with Egypt in Hosea 9:6 and Jeremiah 46:19, respectively.

משחית לבא בפתחי בפסח, ואמרתם זבח פסח.

God, the firstborn of all of On²⁶ You crushed on the watchful night of Passover, Mighty One, You skipped over your firstborn son due to the blood of Passover, Not allowing the Slaughterer to enter my doors on Passover, and thus "You shall say it is the sacrifice of *Pesach*."

מסגרת סגרה בעתותי פסח, נשמדה מדגן בצליל שעורי עמר פסח, שרפו משמני פול ולוד
ביקוד יקוד פסח, ואמרתם זבח פסח.

The beleaguered walled-city²⁷ was besieged on Passover, Midian was destroyed by a barley-cake²⁸ from the *omer*²⁹ of Passover, the nobles of Pul and Lud³⁰ were burned in a fiery conflagration on Passover, and thus "You shall say it is the sacrifice of *Pesach*."

עוד היום בנב לעמוד, עד נעה עונת פסח, פס יד כתבה לקקק צול בפסח, צפה הצפית
ערוך השלחו, בפסח, ואמרתם זבח פסח.

He would still have stood today at Nob, were it not for the arrival of Passover³¹ A hand

26. Identified with Egypt in Genesis 41:50

27. i.e., Jericho

28. Judges 7:13 ff tells of a dream of a barley-cake which presages an Israelite victory.

29. An *omer* is a measure of grain. From the second day of Passover, one "counts the *omer*" for forty-nine days until arriving at the harvest festival of Shavuot.

30. Two nations referred to in Isaiah 66:19

31. This appears to refer to Sennacherib's assault on Judah, referred to in 2 Kings 18-19 and Isaiah 36-37.

inscribed the destruction of Tzul³² on Passover, as the watch was set and the table laid out on Passover,³³ and thus "You shall say it is the sacrifice of *Pesach*."

קָהַל בְּנֵי־הַדָּסָה צוֹם לְשִׁלֵּשׁ בַּפֶּסַח, רֹאשׁ מִבֵּית רָשָׁע מִחֲצֵת בַּעֲץ חֲמִשִּׁים בַּפֶּסַח, שְׁתֵּי אֲלֵה
רָגַע, תָּבִיא לַעֲוִיזִית בַּפֶּסַח, תַּעֲזוּז יָדָךְ וְתִרְוִים יְמִינְךָ, כָּלִיל הַתְּקִדֹּשׁ חֵג פֶּסַח, וְאַמְרָתָם זָבַח
פֶּסַח.

Hadassah³⁴ gathered the people for a three-day fast on Passover, the head of the evil family³⁵ was hanged on a fifty-cubit gallows on Passover, You will bring a double-dose of this upon Utzit on Passover, let Your hand be strong and Your right arm exalted as it was on the night that You consecrated the holiday of Passover. And thus "You shall say it is the sacrifice of *Pesach*."

32. This refers to the writing on the wall in Daniel 5. Tzul is therefore to be identified with Babylonia.

33. Isaiah 21:5

34. i.e., Esther

35. i.e., Haman

תלמוד ינקא

מביל בקרבו שיש מסכתות וכלא הננה

מסכת הדיוטות, מסכת חנוכה, מסכת נבשים,

מסכת מסוה, מסכת בוכים, מסכת עמודקא

וגלות בסופו

מחדש אסתר ויהודה לסופרים,

מאת

גרשון ראזענצווייג



הוצאת בית מחדש הספרים ש"נ

ש. דוקערמאן, 60 מאנעל סטריט, ניו יארק.

מבוא התלמוד.

(א) המסכת הזאת היא כלה הנדיית ואין מורין על ידה הלכה דמעשה ואפילו במקום שבפירוש אתמר בה חייב או פטור. אסור או מותר, הבונה בזה שכך למדו התלמידים בבי מדרשא של רבי ינקא לחיוב או לפטור לאיסור או להיתר ולא מפיהן אני חייך.

(ב) לא נתנה המסכת עמיריקא אלא לישראל כי רובה כבדה מדברת בנגעים של ישראל, בין בנגעים שדבקו בהם על ידי רוב שעבוד ורדיפות ונזירות רעות בהמקומות שבאו משם ובין בנגעים שבאו להן עכשו מאורא דעמיריקא והם שמתחלקים לשני מיני נגעים, נגעים ירקרקים ונגעים לבנים. (ג) בהיות שהנגעים הלבנים הם נגעים התלויים בארץ ונחשבים במכת מדונה, לכן נאנס מסדר התלמוד הזה לפעמים להטות דברים בדפי עמיריקא כביכול, ואינו מתכון בזה חלילה לדין שכולה חייבת אלא שאינה כולה זכאית ואשרי הארץ שמומיה ספורין ושיש רשות לסופר להוכיח מומיה בפניה.

אל כבוד יידי ויקיר נעים פטירות ישראל
נרשון ראזענצווייג

באני מכתבך בו הודעתני כי נכון אתה להוציא לאור במחברת מיוחדת את מסכת אמעריקא אשר חברת. שמחתני מאד יקירי, בבשורה הזאת, ראוי היא מחברתך, הן ספאת שמתה והן ספאת תוכנת, למצא לה מחלבים בין כל אחינו באיירומא ובאמעריקא חידועים לקרא כפרים רבי האיכות בסגנון לשון התלמוד, אם נדמה ונשוה אליה שאר המסכתות בספרותנו חנכתבות בסגנונה ולשונה, כמון מסכת פורים מאת קלונימוס בר קלונימוס (מחבר של ספר אבן נחן), מסכת עניות מאת אייזיק מאיר דיק, מסכת סופרים בהשחר שנה השיעית, אז נראה כי יתר שאת יתר עז למסכת אמעריקא עליהן. הן במסכתות פורים ועניות ידעו מחבריהן לכתוב בסגנון לשון התלמוד, אך מהתלותיהם לא הביאו שום תועלת, כי באו בסמפוטי מלין וינכבון על דברים שלא היו מעולם. במסכת סופרים הפץ המחבר לחקות את לשון התלמוד ולא עלתה בידו, אך אתה הנך סופר חרוץ בסגנון לשון התלמוד באופן מאד נעלה ולצון חמדת לך בכח ההתול (סאטירא) הטוב עליך על מדות שאינן מהוננות בארץ הזאת ותצא לריב נגד מורים כחעים, נגד בורים ותלמידי חכמים שאין בהם דעה, נגד "חזנים" חשרים בשירים על לב רע בעת אחינו מובעים בים צרה, נגד פרנס' העדה אשר קומה של שרצים תלויה להם מפניהם ומאחריהם. אנכי קראתי את מסכת אמעריקא, פרק אחר פרק, פעמים ושלוש על מנת לבקרה בלי פשוט פנים, בידעי כי לא לפניך חנף יבוא ושפת חלקות שנאה נפשך, והנה ראה זה מצאתי כי הניפות שבט מהתלוחיך השנונים כחצים ותדרך קשת הלצותיך רק על המעשים והמנהגים המכוערים אשר לא נקו מהם בני אמעריקא. אהבתך לחארץ הטובה והיקרה הזאת לא קלקלה את השורה לעור את עיניך מבלי ראות מומיה וחסרונותיה, לך נאווה תהלה בעד מפעלך כי הסירת את המסוה מעל פני הצבועים, חלובשים אדרת החסירות למען כחש, השמים "פארי מגבעות"—שטיפ פייפ כלע"ז—על ראשם למען כל "עמי הארץ" יראו כי שם "רבנים" נקרא עליהם וייראו מהם, כדבר בעתו היו

מתחזקת על מלמדים כאלה אשר לא ידעו קרוא עברית על נכון ומתוך שלא
למדו מעולם יצאו ללמד וקשים המה לאחינו בספחת. גם בלב ונפש אתן צדק
דבריהך בהצמידך על עמוד הקלון, רבנים אורטודוקסים שלא בשלו כל צרכם
ושבר עמם לא נגע עד נפשם, ורבנים „מתקנים“ כאלה המחבלים כרם בית
ישראל, אשר גאותם—חכמתם, ובינתם—עזותם, אשר לא קראו ולא שנו ולא
שמשו תלמידי חכמים ושפת אבותינו היא להם כספר החתום ויחפצו לגרשה,
מתוך סהל ד'.

במלים מעטים אמר קר: בכל המסכת אשר חברת בטוב טעם ודעת
סתתלתה ועד סופה מצאתי רק ענינים נעלים ורעיונים נשגבים; את אשר תהלל
סתכל ואת אשר תחלל סחלל. היא מרגלית טובה בספרתנו, וגם דור יבוא—אם לא
ישכח עוד את שפת אבותינו וסגנון לשון התלמוד—ללך וישים כבוד לך כאשר
יאתה לסופר נעלה ומשכיל על דבר אמת כמוך היום; הן לא המלת מום בקדשים
אך בחולין, ותנף גרין מהתלותיך על עץ רקוב, ענפים יבשים ועלים נובלות.
לא אשונה כי כל קוראי מחברתך המבינים דבר לאשורו יתענגו על
דבריהך כאשר התענגתי אני ויקראו אליך כאשר אקרא אני היום; לך בכח
עמך זה להעשיר את ספרתנו במסכתות אחרות הנכתבות בסגנון של „מסכת
אמריקא“ בתבניתה ובחוכנה, ומי יתן וירבו כמותך בישראל ואז תהיה שפתנו
וספרותה לעולמי עד כימי השמים על הארץ.

בל תרפינה ידיך, בל ירך לבבך ובל תחת מקור מבקרים בלי דעת
ותבונה השמים חשך לאור ומחוק למר וטוב לרע.

אלה דברי אוהבך מוסיר ערכך האוהב עמו ושפתו עד שובו לארצתו.

ADOLPH M. RADIN, Ph. Dr.
Rabbi Temple „Gates of Hope“

מ ס כ ת

הדין שות

מן

תלמוד ינקאי

עם פרוש קצר ומספיק.

מחבר ומסדר מאת

גרשון ראזענצווייג

ניו יארק.

1909.



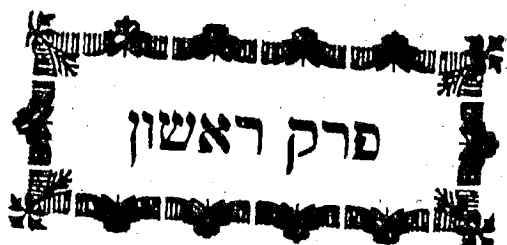
הוצאת בית מסחר הספרים שר
ש. דרוקערמאן, 50 סאנעל סטריט, ניו יארק.

מסכת שלשה הדיוטות פרק ראשון הדיוטות א

מתני' ונוטלין חלק בראש. בשררה משום דהדיוטות לאו בני מחילה
על הניצור וזכל מחלקת כינסו. דאין מוחלין על כבודן לפיכך
אין כבודן מחולי

ורצ שאל דסדר
דמחילה ממש
קמייירי מחילת
מהא דרצ
ליצינאי: כבוד
לאיש שנת. והכי

דרש ליה אין
חולקין כבוד
אלא לאיש שריר
מקום רחצ לשנת
עליו: לא סדר
אברהם אבינו
לאבימלך. ושקל
מיניה אלף כסף



פרק ראשון

מתני' שלשה הדיוטות קופצין
בראש, ואלו הן, הדיוטי
תופרים הדיוטי סופרים והדיוטי
כופרים:

גמי' תניא אין חולקין כבוד לעם
הארץ אבל חולקין כבוד להדיוט,
שנאמר, כבוד חכמים ינחלו (משלי)

לשם שמים:
דיוטי כופרים.
לקמיה מברש
דכופרים דהכא
סיינו מצועים:

גמי' חזל חולקין
כבוד להדיוט.
כבוד מוכני
סיראס קמייירי
מתניתא: ואין
חכמים. וכול',
שכן קורין
להדיוטות זלשון
אמיריק חכמים:

ואין חכמים בעמיריקא אלא הדיוטות שקופצין בראש ונוטלין
חלק בראש. מאי עם הארץ מאי הדיוט. אמר רב דעתן, עם הארץ
כל שדעתו מטורפת עליו, הדיוט כל שדעתו מטורפת על
הצבור. והא אפכא מסתברא עם הארץ דמכה דנפשיה הוא
נחייב בכבודו הדיוט דמכת צבור הוא בכבודו לא נחייב אחר
רב מבינא, משום דהדיוטות לאו בני מחילה נינהו. מתקיף ליה
רב שואל והאמר רב ליצינאי מחילה בעמיריקא מביאת
לידי כבוד. דכתיב כבוד לאיש שבת (משלי) אמר ליה
אנא במחיקה לחטאים לא קאימנא: אמר מר אין חולקין
כבוד לעם הארץ. והא כתיב גבי אברהם וישתחו לעם הארץ
(בראשית) אמר רב חכימא עפרון באיתו יום נעשה הדיוט
תדע שקפץ בראש, וכדתניא מפני מה לא סרב אברהם אבינו
לאבימלך וסרב לעפרון משום דעפרון הדיוט הוה והדיוטות לאו
בני מחילה נינהו: הדיוטי תופרים וכו' ת"ר מנין שהדיוטי
תופרים קשים מכל ההריוטים שבעולם שנאמר, שמלתך לא
בלתה מעליך ורגלך לא בצקה (דברים), כך אמר משה לישראל

2 מסכת שלשה הדיוטות פרק ראשון הדיוטות

ולעפרון סרצ ולא רצה ליקח ארץ שזכו לגדולה: לקח טחט צידו.
 ארבע מאות שקל: מחט קדש למרצע ע"י מחט מנכטי גלה קלומצוס את
 צמעשה בראשית שכן מנינו צאדס אמירקא: לענין נטילה. לענין נטילת
 הראשון ויתכרו עלה תאנה, ושם חלק צראש הדיוטי תוכרין קודמין
 מרצע כ מ ז א
 בתורה ושם מחט לא נמנא: משום
 שהציף חונכה לעולם. שמיד
 שמיד כשנעשה אהיר חייט העין
 כניו צלכי מעלה ואמר אכלתי
 ואוכל: חייטי דהתם, שצארן
 אירופא: מתחכין
 נכותלא דמזרח להנאתן. שם
 להן הנאה מזה

ולא טובה גדולה עשה עמכם
 הקביה שכל אותן ארבעים שנה
 לא היו בכם חייטים וסנדלרים
 ולא שלמו בכם הדיוטות ועזי
 פנים שברור: אמר רב ספרא
 עזים שבהדיוטות הדיוטי תופרים,
 ועזים שבתופרים חייטים,
 כדתניא מחט קדש למרצע
 במעשה בראשית ומפני מה לא
 נזכר בתורה משום שהביא
 חוצפא לעולם: אמר ליה רב
 מבינא דרב חבימא תא חזי מה

בין חייטי דהתם לחייטי דהבא, חייטי דהתם מוקירין רבנן וכי
 אתין לבי כנשתא אזלין וקאין בדוכתא עמיקתא, חייטי דהבא
 יאונאין תיח ומלגלגין עליהן ובבי כנשתא מתחכבין בכותלא
 דמזרח להנאתן: תנא בשעה שהלך קלומבוס לגלות את עמיריקא,
 אמר חוצפא כלפי שמיא מהניא, מה עשה לקח מחט בידו
 ואמר רבישע חייט חציף אנא, מיד נגלה, יצאה בת קול ואמרה
 חייך שעתידים בני אומנתך להיות עזים שבהדיוטות בארץ
 הזאת: אמר רב ספרא לא אמרן אלא לענין נטייה אבל לענין
 קפיצה הדיוטי סופרים כחופרים כדתניא מפני מה אמרו חכמים
 לא יצא החייט במחטו והלבלר בקולמסו וכי מה ענין לבלר אצל
 חייט אלא משום דמחט וקולמס ירדו כרוכים לעמיריקא: ת"ר
 שבע מדות מנו חכמים בסופרים הדיוטים שבעמיריקא, ואלו
 הן, תוכם כברים, מתנהגים כתלמידי חכמים, אין מקללין אדם
 תנם, אין חונפין אפילו לחבריהן נזהרים מגנבת דברים, נוהגין

מסכת שלשה הדיוטות פרק ראשון הדיוטות ג

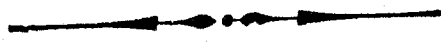
מקללן מחרטין ומגדפין: נזסרין דין זקרת נוהג צה, כדכתיב נצי
מגננת דזרים, אלל קניין מאמרים שפחה חרופה זקרת תהיה לה:
וסירים מ ש ל אל תקרא כוזב
אחרים נמשיכה לדפוס מן המיטב, ומביאין גאולה
דמשיכה נספרות לעולם: דרש רב ספרא, ושפחה
קניא כדילף כי תירש גבירתה (מסלי) זו לשון
רז ספרא הבבלית שנרשה וירשה את לשון
מקרא ומושכים הקדש מ ישראל שבעמיריקא
זשזט סוכר והיא כשפחה חרופה לסופרים
נמסכתא עוקנין: מן המיטב, כמו
ששנינו מיטב הדיוטים, אף על פי שאין דין
ה שיר כזנב: בקרת נוהג בה. ואמר רב ספרא
מזיאין גאולה כל ישראל קרואין אדם לפיכך
לעולם שמקצין כל אדם מ ישראל הרוצה ליטול
עקני דמשיחא שם סופר בא ונוטל שנאמר כל
נחלפתן: שאין האדם כוזב (תהלים) אל תקרא

האדם כוזב (תהלים) אל תקרא
כוזב אלא כותב. תניא כל שהוא
שומה כחמור מובטח שיהיו בניו סופרים בעתונים של ישראל
דכתיב, יששכר חמור גרם (בראשית) וכתיב, ובני יששכר יודעי
בינה לעתים (דה"י). והדיוטין כופרים. מאי כופרים אילימא מומרין
והא כבר זכו בהם אחרים, ואילימא אנרכין והא לאו כופרים
אלא מאמינים הן, דתניא מה בין מומר לאנרכי, מומר כופר
במה שהוא מאמין ואנרכי מאמין במה שהוא כופר, ולא זו
בלבד אמר באנרכין אלא שמעשה חסידים בידיהם, שאין להם
אלא מה ששומעין מרביהן ואומרין מוסט חרופטקין ובקונין אמת
ותורתן אמת. ואמר רב ידען איזהו אנרכי כל שמאמין בשתי
רשויות ברשות היחיד וברשות הרבים, כיצד, רשות היחיד
בממונו, ורשות הרבים בממון של אחרים. אלא מאי כופרים
צבועים ומאי טעמא קרי להו כופרים לפי שהם מבית ומחוץ בכפר.

4 מסכת שלשה הדיוטות פרק ראשון הדיוטות

וזקונין. זעלי
שס טוז של
סלנרכין: ינטנע
מלשון זציעות:
חניא הצבועין דורסין ומורפין כחיות
ומתפרנסין מקדשי שמים כדכתיב וממל שמיא
יצטבע (דניאל) אמר רב ספרא אפשר לאדם
להזהר מכל ההדיוטות חוץ מהדיומי צבועים
משום דקיימי עלן כי כסלא לאוגיא.

הדרן עלך פרק שלשה הדיוטות.



מסכת

ח נ ו פ ה

מן

תלמוד ינקאי

עם פרוש קצר ומספיק.

מחבר ומסדר מאת

גרשון ראזענצווייג

ניו יארק.

1909.



הוצאת בית מסחר הספרים של
ש. דרוקערמאן, 50 מאנעל סטריט, ניו יארק.

מסכת שבעת ימים פרק ראשון חנוכה א

מתני שבעת ימים. וכל המקדים כוסל את עצמו ועוזר צמתכון על צהכנה הרי זה משונה: אם לא יגיד. ומתוך שהמשחק בחנוכה



פרק ראשון

כלל את עצמו כלל, שמנהג ישראל הוא: מלכות יון. יש גורסין מלכות רומא וזה עיקר: א ס ט ד א ו ת ו א ל י מ פ י א ו ת.

מיני שוקות של הרומאים: חנו כה. כלומר

מתני שבעת ימים קודם

החנוכה מזמנין את

החבורות ואת הקרתין אבל אין

מכניין המקום ואת המעות, לפי

מזמנין את החבורות, נגמ' מפרש כמה היא חצורה:

נמי ואל מלוא ה צ א ה

נענדה דהמשחק

צקוציא וסול

הדין נכרטיסין

כסול לעדות

נמלא שהמשחק

שאין שניהן מעכבין בדבר. רבו פרתיאלי אומר אין מכניין

את המקום אבל מכניין את המעות:

גמ' תניא משחק בחנוכה עושה מצוה, דומיא שכרות בפורים

והא מצוה הבאה בעברה היא. אמר רב כלפאי, ביון

שנהנו בה ישראל הותרה להם והרי היא כמצוה, שמנהג

ישראל תורה היא, כדאיתמר, שני דברים מנונים למדו ישראל

מן העכו"ם והותרו להם לפי שלא קבעום אלא לפעם אחת

בשנה ומשום שהם זכר לנאולה, כשנגאלו מן הפרסיים שהיו

שטופין בשתיה עשו להם יום טוב של שתיה, וכשנגאלו מן היוונים

שהיו שטיפין במשחק עשו להם יום טוב של משחק, וסמכו אקרא

כי בדבר אשר זדו עליהם. אמר רב דעתן שמע מינה דהמשחק

בכל ימות השנה אסור לשחק בחנוכה וכוותה ששנינו גבי

שתיה בפורים: תנו רבנן מאי חנוכה, חנו כה, דכששלטה

מלכות יון על ישראל התחילו בחוריהם של ישראל להשתתף

במשחקיהן של היונים ולבזבזו ממנם של אבותיהם על אסמאאות

ואלימפאות שלהם, מה עשו חכמי ישראל שבאותו דור, עמדו

והתקינו להם שחוקות בבתייהן ובחדרייהן ואמרו להם חנו כה,

כדאמרי אנשי טבא בישא זכורתא מרביתא, וכשנעשה נס

לישראל ונצחו את היונים קבעו משחק בחנוכה לדורות.

2 מסכת שבעת ימים פרק ראשון חנוכה

אל תלכו צדקה אחר: צמזמן. כסף אית ליה. וכשחמין חצורה של שלשה
 אקרי מוזמן וחצורה של שלשה נמי ממילא יהיו ששה וששה סגני לכולי
 אקרי מוזמן
 ורז קוצאי תפס
 לשון אחרון:
 שחוק של קיימא.
 ויש לחוש שמא
 תתפרד הסנילה:
 שמא יאנס אחד
 מהם. שמא יאצד
 את מעותיו ולא
 יוכל לשחוק עוד
 דחזרף חזרף
 מזמנין את החבורות. וכו'.
 חבורות למאי. אמר רב גמבליאל,
 למשחק, דמצות משחק בחנוכה
 בחבורה היא, לפי שהוא זכר
 לגאולה ומידי דהוה קרבן פסח
 וכמה היא חבורה. אמר רב
 קוביא מיעוש חבורה בשלשה
 דגמרא שאין שחוק אלא במזמן
 נרדשיר.

ורב מרנפי אמר שנים נמי מקרי חבורה דכתיב לא אבוא בסוד
 משחקים ואין סוד אלא בשנים. מתקיף ליה רב קובאי לרב
 מרנפי האיתמר, שלשה שיושבין ועוסקין במשחק במזמין שלא
 יפסיקו במהרה, שנאמר, והחוש המשולש לא במהרה ינתק,
 מאי לאו דבפחות משלשה לאו שחוק של קיימא הוה,
 ולא מקרי חבורה. אמר ליה, לעולם סבירא ליה להאי
 תנא דבשנים נמי מקרי חבורה, ועצה טובה קא משמע לן.
 משום גזרה שמא יאנס אחד מהם, ואנא לא סבירי לי להאי
 גזרה דאם כן אין לדבר סוף. מאי הוה עלה. אמר רב שחקן, כן
 קבלתי מרבתי, בהזמנה אין פותחין ואין מוסיפין משלשה
 ובשחוק יוצאין אפילו בשנים. בשלמא אין פותחין משום חששא
 דשמא יאנס אחד מהם, אבל אין מוסיפין מאי טעמא. אמר רב
 גיימא משום דחברא חברא אית ליה. ושית לכולי עלמא סגי:
 תניא הזמין חבורה ונתבטלה הוה ומצטרף לחבורה אחרת,
 דכתיב חבורה תחת חבורה, פשפש ולא מצא אחרת הוה ועושח
 חבורה בביתו עם אשתו, דאשת חבר כחבר דמיא. אמר רב
 שחקן מנין דאשה מצטרפת לחבורה עם בעלה, שנאמר, וירא
 את יצחק מצחק את רבקה אשתו, ואותו היום חנוכה הוה
 דכתיב שם, ויהי כי ארכו לו שם הימים, ואין לך זמן שהימים

מסכת שבעת ימים פרק ראשון חנוכה ג

שאך זלע"ז: אסקונדרא. דאס זכרטיסין אסמכתא ליכא. שהנאין
 זלע"ז: ישור כשך יקושים. משמע לשחוק אינס סומכין כלל שירותו
 שגנאי הוא לשור אלא שיכסידו, והמעות שהם
 זשעה שזני אדם נראין כארובין אלא בחנוכה, מכינים למשחק
 נוקשין זשחוק ומנין שאפילו ילד מצטרף הס מפקירין
 ה ש א ד: לא לחבורה, שנאמר, וילד לחבורתי: אותן תחלס
 תעמוד על דם. ומבינין את הקרתין מאי קרתא וכל הזוכה
 שאפילו לעמוד זשעה שמשחקין ברמוסא של משחקין, ואמאי הוא כזוכה
 זדאס אסור: קורין להן האידנא קרתין משום מן הספקר:

דשכיחי כולא שתא נבי נמורי קרתא, וכדאמר רב מבינא, כזמן
 הזה נשתנו עלינו סדרי בראשית, בראשונה לא היה מלאך המות
 בא לעיר אלא בשביל כלבים בוכים, ועכשו אינו בא אלא בשביל
 פלבים שוחקין, ומאן נינהו הני כלבי דחציפין נמורי דקרתא
 שיושבין ומבלין כל ימיהן בשחוקות, ומקיימין, לשחוק עושים
 לחם ויין ישמח חיים והכסף יענה את הכל: **מתני'** במה משחקין
 ובמה אין משחקין, אין משחקין לא בנרדשיר, ולא באסקונדרי,
 ולא בפספסין, ולא בקוביאות ולא בעזין וזאבא, אלא בקרתא
 בלבד, אבל משחקין עם התנוקות בעגולין של אבר כדי לחנכן
 במצוות. **גמ'** אמר רב קרתן מנין להא דתנו רבנן אין משחקין
 לא בנרדשיר ולא באסקונדרי וכו', דכריב, ישור כשך יקושים,
 וכתיב, לא תעמוד על דם רעך, ואידך משום דהוי שחוק הפסילים,
 כדכתיב, כסיל בחשך הולך: אתמר, כפני מה אמרו חכמים
 אין משחקין בחנוכה אלא בקרתין בלבד, משום שיום טוב של
 חנוכה הוא זכר למסירת נפש הלכך קבעו בו שחוק דאית ביה
 מסירת נפש. מאי ניהו. אמר רב טרפן, מסירת ממון דדמיס
 תרתי משמע, אי נמי מסירת נפש מביש, דאדם בהול על
 ממונו וזמנין דאתו ביה לידי הבאה. וכשחק בממון לישראל
 מי שריא והא אסמכתא היא, ואסמכתא לא קניא. אמר רב אבין
 בקרתין אסמכתא ליכא, כדתניא, בני חבורה שנוכסין לשיבה
 הכל מפקירין בלבן את מעותיהם, ועל כל פרוטה ופרוטה

צטופסי דקרתי. הנורות והנצעים שנהם שאינם משתנים לעולם: שמא יכלו מן השוק, משום שירצו הקופלין עליהן צער חנוכה וינטל מן המזה: מאי חן מעכבין צטכנס. חן צטחוק חפילו ת"ק מודה דמעכבין:

שזורקין לקערה אומרין, הרי זו הפקר לכל החבורה, מרפו בכלפי וזכה אחד מהם, חנוכה קונה במשיכה את הקערה ומהפכה על פיה, ומפקיר את הפרומות לאלתר: אמר רב שפילאי, אסר לשנות בקרתא ממטבע שטבעו בהן חכמים, במה דברים אמורים, בשופסי דקרתי אבל בשחוק הכל כמנהג המדינה, וכדאמרי אינשי, עלת לקרתא הלך בנמוסיה. למיכרא דסבר רב שפילאי דצבעים וצורות מעכבין, ורמינהו, אמרו עליו על רבי צחקא הבטלן שהיה עושה לו פתקאות של גיד, וכותב עליהם מספרים בקולמס של אוז, והיה משחק בהן בלילי חנוכה, דרריש תעשה ולא מן העשוי. לא קשיא, דרבי צחקא בטלן היה וסתם בטלן מלמד, ומאי משחק עם תלמידיו, כדי לחנכן במצוות, דשרי אפילו בעגולין של אבר. הכנה בקרתין למה לן. אמר רב שחקן, שמא יכלו מן השוק. אבל אין מכינין וכו', בשלמא מקום פשיטא לן דלא מעכב, דתנן בב"מ שהוא ואפילו באבסדרא ומרפסת, אבל מעות מאי מעמא דתנא קמא דסבר דלא מעכבין, והא נמירא דליכא הקפה במשחק. אמר רב גיימא מאי אין מעכבין, בהכנה, משום דקיימא לן דממונא למשחק משכח שכיחא שיד היצר הרע באמצע. ורבן קרתיאל סבר אין סומכין עליו בערפי חנוכה משום דמריד ביותר וזמנין דשכח.

הדרן ערך פרק שבועת ימים.

מ ס כ ת

נ כ ס י ם

מִן

תלמוד ינקאי

עם פרוש קצר ומספיק.

מחבר ומסדר מאת

גרשון ראזענצווייג

ניו יארק.

1909.



הוצאת בית מסחר הספרים של
ש. דרוקערמאן, 50 סאנעל סטריט, ניו יארק.

מסכת אף על פי פרק ראשון נכמים א

מתני' אף על פי שאמרו חכמים, ולא חיישינן שמא לאו צדיקה
 צמסכת עניות; אין הכל מעלייתא היא מכני כי רונן
 נאמנין על העשירות. הכל לאתויי של צודקין צודקין לכסות ולמזונות
 סקונים עליות שמנות צנית הכנסת ולכל מילי דחיי : כאן צשאינו
 ל פי שאינס ישראל, לאפוקי
 עושין א לא מ ו מ ר צמון
 ליוסרל ומאצדין הזה שהוא
 מעות אחרים: כישראל נמור
 צסימני עשירות: לכל דצר
 צנמי מפרש לה ד ק י י מ א לן
 מאי ניכח איש יהודי אף
 סימני עשירות. על פי שחטא
 גמי. ולאחר ישראל הוא.



לפי
 חכמים הכל נאמנים
 על העניות; אין הכל נאמנים
 על העשירות; ואפילו בעדות
 ובשבועה; אלא בסימני עשירות בלבד.

מתני' אף על פי שאמרו
 חכמים הכל נאמנים
 על העניות; אין הכל נאמנים
 על העשירות; ואפילו בעדות
 ובשבועה; אלא בסימני עשירות בלבד.

נמי מאי שנא אעניות דנאמנין ואעשירות דלא. אמר רב
 מוצילאי משום דעשיר נקרא רשע בדכתיב ויתן את
 רשעים קברו; ומסיים לו קרא ואת עשיר במותו; ואין אדם
 משים עצמו רשע; ובעדות משום דחיישינן לקנוניא; ובשבועה
 משום מנו דחשוד אממונא חשוד נמי אשבועתא. מתיב רב
 מבינא; והתנן, האומר הריני חכם סימן שהוא כסיל; הריני
 גבור סימן שהוא חלוש; הריני עשיר נאמן ובודקין אחריו;
 קתני מיהת דנאמן מאי לאו דלכתחלה. אמר רב ביונא, מאי
 נאמן בדיעבד ולאחר בדיקה. ואיבעית אימא לא קשיא; כאן
 בישראל כאן בשאינו ישראל; שאינו ישראל האומר הריני
 עשיר נאמן במסיח לפי תומו ואפילו הכי צריך בדיקה לענין
 הלואה; אבל ישראל אינו נאמן במסיח לפי תומו דאוקי נברא
 אחוקתיה וסתם ישראל עניים הן, וכדריש רב ידען יש מתעשר
 ואין כל וגו' מתעשר ואין כל אלו עשירים של ישראל

2 מסכת אף על פי פרק ראשון נכחים

לפי שמוכין על הקרקע' והון המכסלים' לישנא דכתוב נקט' כלומר
 רצ להם. ואף על פי כן סמם זינורית. מנזקים שזר כעכרו
 מתרוששים על שמוכין על המסחר מתרושש ונזוכתאסחריהא
 וקנוליס על והון רב אלו עשירים של אומות קאמר ומנזקים
 ישראל שהם העולם לפי שמוכין על הקרקע. שזר כפינחס
 גוליס את ממונס. נקרקע ועשירים של ישראל אמו לאו
 ממש, כלומר ממוכין על הקרקע ניהו, והא
 מפסידין לגמרי. תניא בראשונה אמרו לעולם
 צעד מערת י שלישי אדם את מעותיו, שלישי

בקרקע שלישי בפרקמטיא שלישי בכספים, עד שבאו בני
 ישראל לאמריקא והעמידו על שתיים על הפרקמטיא ועל
 הקרקע, ומשקיעין את הכספים בקרקע. מאי לאו
 דסמוכין על הקרקע גמי. אמר רב חכימא מאי בקרקע בקרקע
 ממש, משום שאינם נזהרין בשעת קנייתם, ועושים מעשה
 אברהם אבינו, שמשלמין ארבע מאות שקל בעד מערת
 מכפלה, ומבקשים שזר כעפרון בן צחר, וכדתניא, הקונה אינו
 קונה לעצמו אלא בשביל אחרים, והבונה עד כמה יבנה, עד
 שיהא חייב, ואין לזה ולזה אלא חזקת הבתים בלבד. מאי
 חזקת הבתים, כדאתמר, המוכר והקונה נעשים חברים, וחזקה
 לחברים בנכסים שאין מוציאין מתחת ידיהם דבר שאינו
 מסוכן, חזקתו של המוכר באונאה יותר משתות, וחזקתו של
 הקונה בפריעה פחות משתות, ושניהם זוקפין את השאר
 במלוה על מנת פרעון לסידונין וחוזרין חלילה, המוכר
 נעשה קונה והקונה נעשה מוכר ובין כך ובין כך מעדיפין
 שזר דירה לשכנים. תניא כל הנכסים של ישראל נכסי דניידי
 חן, לפי שאין אדם מישראל קונה לו בית בלא מלוה על נבי
 משכון, וזה שאמר בלעם הרשע, מה טובו אוהליך יעקב
 משכנותיך ישראל. אמר מר המוכר והקונה, מאי שנא
 שוכר דלא קחשיב, אמר רב ליסאי. שוכר לאו בכלל

נכסים ב

מסכתותיך צפתח המ"ס מלשון משכון ועצומי ומס טונו צלשון סני נהור
 נא מרי לו
 צתמיה. קרונ
 לשכר, נשוכר
 מעכו"ס משחעי
 אצל שוכר
 מישראל קרונ
 לספסד, נדיקים
 שצדורנו, לאו
 נדיקים ממס
 שמונים וכותנים
 אלא אלו
 שמוצין ממונס
 של עניינים
 ששוכרים
 דירותים,
 ונקראים נדיקים
 לפי שאומרים
 נדיק הדין על
 לנדלורד הוי, לפי שהוא קרוב
 לשכר ורחוק מהפסד. תנא רבי
 רבי בנאי, הני צדיקים שבדורנו
 במה זכין, בשביל שהם בונין
 בתי מנמנשין ואומרים לו
 להקב"ה, רבונו של עולם גלוי
 וידוע לפניך שדכבודך אנו
 עושים בך, לפי שאתה יושב
 ברום עולם אנו עושים חדרים
 ורומים זלות לבני אדם, ולא עוד
 אלא שאנו חסים על ממונם
 של ישראל שלא יתבזבו על
 כלי בית ומטלטלים, לפיכך
 אנו עושים את החדרים צרים

וקצרים כלולים של תרנגולים, לקיים מה שנאמר והבטת
צר מעון. אתמר, אין אדם זוכה לבתים באמריקא אלא
אם הוא ירא אלהים שדוחק את שכניו כדי לקיים בהם
לא יחדל אביון, כדכתיב, ויהי כי יראו המילדות את
האלהים ויעש להם בתים. אלא פסימני עשירות בלבד.
מאי נינהו. אמר רב ספרא סימני דחזירא דפושט את
הרגל לבעלי חובות ואינו מעלה להם אפילו גרה. ואמר
רב ספרא עתידים לנדלורדים של ישראל ליתן את הדין,
לפי שאין למדים מוסר מאברהם אבינו, שבשעה שבקש
אברהם אבינו לקנות לו נכסים בארץ ישראל הלך וקנה
לו בית הקברות תחלה, ועשירים של ישראל באמריקא
קנים להם נכסים תחלה ומשלמים עובר לשוכר ואינם

4 מסכת אף על פי פרק ראשון נכסים

ועמד כל ס זוכרים את יום המיתה כלל שלא יקברו
 צדיקים לא בבתי קברות של אחרים. ואמר רב ספרא
 צדיקים גמורים עתידים כל ישראל באמריקא להיות סמוכין
 אלא צדיקים על הקרקע כדבעי דכתיב, ועמד כלם צדיקים
 לענין ירושם לעולם ירשו ארץ.

הדרן עלך מסכת נכסים.



מ ס כ ת

מ ס ו ה

מן

תלמוד ינקאי

עם פרוש קצר ומספיק.

מחבר ומסדר מאת

גרשון ראזענצווייג

ניו יארק.

1909.



הוצאת בית מסחר הספרים של
ש. דרוקערמאן, 50 מאנעל סטריט, ניו יארק.

מסכת בראשונה פרק ראשון מסוה א

מתני' עניים צבורים שזמו מסוה ויש לו הון נחמון שלומד את
 על פניהם צמזרס על התורה משמאל לימין שאינו מנין
 הכתמים שלא
 יכירו צע"ז מי
 ומי הסולכים
 ויתנו לכל אחד
 כדזה הגונה:
 גמי יש מתעשר
 ואין כלי
 וסכי דריש קרא
 יש רצ מתעשר
 צתורה ואין כל
 נחמון ויש רצ
 מתרשש צתורה
 העשירים בכל השנה כולה.

פרק ראשון

מתני' בראשונה לא היו יוצאין
 במסוה אלא עניים בפורים
 משרבו הצבועין יוצאין בה
 העשירים בכל השנה כולה.

גמ' תניא מפני מה התקינו מסוה לעניים בפורים כדי שלא יתביישו
 בשעה שמקבלין צדקה, משפסקו העשירים מליתן נשלה מסוה מעניים
 ונתנה לעשירים כדי שלא יתביישו בשעה שאינם נותנין. עשירים
 אין עניים לא, והתניא מדה אחת למדו רבנים ממשנה רבינו
 שבשלהם יוצאין לחוץ אינם יוצאין אלא במסוה והא סתם רבנים עניים
 גינהו וקתני יוצאין במסוה. אמר רב ספרא הכא במאי עסקין
 ברבנין עמיריקאין וכדדריש ההוא מדרבנן יש מתעשר ואין כל,
 מתרושש והון רב, יש מתעשר ואין כל, זה רב אירופאי, שהוא
 עשיר בתורה ועניותו מנוולתו, מתרושש והון רב זה רב עמיריקאי
 שהוא רש בתורה ומתעשר מרבנותו. ואבעית אימא רבנים
 רפורמין נפי רבנים קרי להו וכדאמר רב נהורא כל רב
 שלומד את התורה משמאל לימין סופו שמתעשר ומתכבד
 דכתיב ומשמאלה עשר וכבוד. תיש המלמדים השוחטים והחזנים
 וכן כל המתפרנסין מן התורה מן הכשרות ומן התפלה בעמיריקא
 אינם יוצאין לחוץ אלא במסוה קתני מיהת מלמדים וגמירא
 דמלמדים עניים הן. אמר רב ספרא מלמדים שאני דיאה להם
 עניותא ולא מתעשרין עולמית. תניא אבימלך תקן מסוה לעשירים

2 מסכת בראשונה פרק ראשון מסוה

צראשונה לא היו יונאין זה כעשירי המזרים לכל דבר: צמח
עשירים, ישראל קאי ולא צאומות דנויארק. דסנירל לה דנצנת
העולם שלל מנינו שקנלה דכתיב: הנה נתתי אלף כסף
שרס מאנימלך לאחיך הנה לך כסות עינים. אסור צמתי
את המסוה ויעקב שחד את דרש רב ספרא מאי דכתיב, ראות
יוסף שיוצא הוא פניך לא פללתי בשעה ששמע
צמסוה כעשירים יעקב שנעשה יוסף בנו עשיר
קשדהו שלמד במצרים אמר שמא מעשה עשירים
מעשים של בידו ואין אני רואה את פניו, עשירי המזרים
ועשירים צומן כיון שבא לשם וראה את פניו
הזה סמח בלא מסוה שמח ואמר: ראות
פניך לא פללתי. תנא דבי רבי

קושטא עת ידה מסוה שתבטל מכל העולם שנאמר: ובלע בהר הזה
פני הלום הלום על כל העמים, והמסכה הנסוכה על כל הגוים. תנן
החם חייב אינש לבסומי בפוריא וכו' פורים שחל להיות באחד בשבת
במחא דנויארק בסומי היכי משכחת לה? אמר רב שתיא משכחתלה
בבתי קפא ובכוסות של חלב, וכדכתיב שתיית ייני עם חלבי,
אי נמי במשקין מן המוכן שמנהג חסידים הוא לשתות בפורים
מן המוכן, ובהא דדריש רב סבאי, השתיה בפורים מצותה מן
המוכן, לפי שלא זכו לה ישראל אלא בזכותו של המן והמן נקרא
ממוכן. רב רויא אמר, משום גזרת רוזוילד לא חיישינן, דאין
אפטרופס לשתיה, שכן מצינו אצל עלי שאה על פי ששמר את
פיה של חנה חשדה וחשבה לשכורה שנאמר ועלי שומר את
פיה ויחשבה עלי לשכורה. ועשו אותם ימי משתה ושמחה. משתה
לישראל סלקא דעתך, אמי ישראל שותים או שותים ניהו אלא
הוראת שעה הוה משום שישנאיהם של ישראל היו מלגלגין
ומונין את ישראל ואומרין להם נזירים אתם, ונזירים חושאין הן,
וממי למדו זאת מאביהן המן הרשע, שקטרג ואמר, ודתייהם

מסכת

בראשונה פרק ראשון

מסורה ב

וְהַשְׁתִּים כִּדְתָהּ, וְאָמַר אֹתוֹ רַשָּׁע מִנֵּהם אֹתוֹן צִשְׁצִיל כִּךְ וְקוֹרָא תַנְדֵּר
 שְׂכֵסֶם שְׁלִינֶם מִקִּימִין אֶת הַשְׁתִּים עַל יֵהָן וְאֵל סְלוֹנִים אֶתָּה יוֹשֵׁב.
 כִּךְ אֵינֶם מִקִּימִין אֶת
 שׁוֹנוֹת מִכָּל עִם וְאֶת דְּתֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ
 סִדְתָּ יוֹסֵם עוֹשִׂים בְּרַכְתִּיבִי, וְהַשְׁתִּיה
 כְּמוֹרִים. וְסִנִּיר רַב סִפְרָא דְכָף
 הַדְמִיוֹן הוּא יוֹסֵם שְׁחָא דוֹמָה
 לְכְּמוֹרִים. מֵהָ עוֹזֵר אֶחָדִיק
 יַעֲקֹב. אֵל צִלֵּי כִנִּיאַל שֶׁל יִשְׂרָאֵל
 כְּמוֹרִים לֵאמֹר לֵךְ דַּעֲבוּדַת פּוֹרִים

אחת בשנה היא. דריש רב ספרא, כתיב, אלה תולדות נח, שם חם ויפת, וכתיב בתריה אחי יפת הגדול, אף על פי שהבכורה היתה לשם, לקח יפת פי שנים בנחלת נח אביו, משום שצפת חקביה שעתידים בניו של יפת לשנוא לבניו של שם ולא יוכלו לדור עמם בכפיפה אחת, לפיכך פתה את יפת ליקח לו פי שנים בנחלתו של אביו, והושיב את בניו של שם בבתי משקין, וזו היא שאמר הכתוב יפת אלהים ליפת וישכון באהלי שם. ומאי משמע דאהלים בתי משקין הן תדע שבלעם הרשע שבא לקלל את ישראל אמר מה טובו אהליך יעקב. ואמר ר' ספרא הכל תלוי במזל ואפילו המן שהיה בימי אחשורוש, שהרי כמה המנים קמו על ישראל בכל דור ודור ולא זכו שתיעשה להם אדוירטיון גדולה כזאת ושתיעשה יום משה ושמחה עד שם. תניא בוא וראה כמה גדול שאינו מצוה ועושה מהמצוה ועושה, שבניו של יפת אינם מצוים על השתיה אפילו פעם אחת בשנה ואין לך יום שאין אתה מוצא מהם שכורים ברחובות, ושאין אתה שומע מכת מרדות מחמת שכרות בעתונין, ובניו של שם מצוין ועומדין על השתיה בפורים

4 מסכת בראשונה פרק ראשון מסות

מנוסס, לשון נקיס כלומר שכור, ומורי פירש כלשון סגני נסור על שם סריח רע שיוצא מהשכור.

ואי אתה מוצא יהודי מבושם ברחוב, בדכתיב: אין פרץ ואין יוצאת ואין צותה ברחובותינו.

הדרן עלך מסכת מסות.



מ ס כ ה

כ ז ב י ם

מן

תלמוד ינקאי

עם פרוש קצר ומספיק.

מחבר ומסדר מאת

גרשון ראזענצווייג

ניו יארק.

1909.



הוצאת בית מסחר הספרים של
ש. דרוקערמאן, 50 סאנעל סטריט, ניו יארק.

מסכת באחד פרק ראשון כזבים א

<p>מתני' נתקיעה נגמ' מפרש כי כי אומרים שאנו של אלהיסן תקיעה כאן כוזבא הוא נתעזרה באפריל לא מנן אדם כי אם מרוח אל מחרס וסוף א ת ת ל ת א דכזבא. הכל קייצין נכזבא לאתויי רדקטרין וסדכנין. שהמה קייצין ממש כל השנה כלה שאם יאמרו אמת אין שומעין לכן אנל שאר</p>	 <p style="font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold;">פרק ראשון</p>	<p>ויליף לה מקרא. גמ' כל אדם כ ו ז 3. משמע אפילו אותן שאינם מ א מ י כ י ס נאלהותו של ישו מאחר שמונין ללידתו כוזבין הן ונתחייבו צר'ם לכזבין. אתחלתא דכזבא</p>
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מתני' באחד באפריל ראש השנה לכזבים ומצוה לכזב בו וכל המרבה בתקיעה הרי זה משובח ומובטח שיכזב

כל השנה כולה.
גמ' והא תנן ארבעה ראשי שנים הן, וחשיב להו לכולהו
 ואילו רה"ש לכזבין לא קא חשיב. אמר בר כוזבא בזמן
 שהיו ישראל מונין לבריאת עולמו של הקב"ה היו פטורין מרה"ש
 לכזבין דכתיב לא איש אל ויכזב, משקלקלו והתחילו למנות
 ללידתו של אדם נתחייבו אף ברה"ש לכזבין שנאמר כל האדם
 כוזב. ומאי מעמא קבעוהו באחד באפריל משום סוד העבור
 שבו דהוה אתחלתא דכזיבא שכשאתה מונה מאפריל עד יאנואר
 אתה מוצא מ' חדשים. אתמר כוזבא לאו חובת יומא הוה
 אלא חובת גברא, רב שקרן אומר הכל חייבים בכזיבה ואפילו
 בכל השנה כולה דכתיב כל האדם כוזב. מאי מעמא דתנא
 קמא, הריש רישא דקרא אני אמרתי בחפזי, מכלל דבתר כן
 לא סבירא ליה לדוד הכי, ורב שקרן אומר לך מאי בחפזי בארץ
 של חפזון. וכך אמר דוד אם ראית ארץ שהכל נעשה בה
 בחפזון ואנשיה חיין ומתין בחפזון דע כי כל האדם כוזב,
 דפזיזות מביאה לידי כזבנות. אמר מר רב שקרן אומר הכל
 חייבין בכזיבה, הכל לאתויי מאי לאתויי שדפנין ורדקטירין,
 מהו דתימא פטורין מידי דהוה אשכורין בפורים. וכל המרבה

כל אדם לאו
 סייזין ממש אלא
 עומרים נכזיזא
 נכל השנה כלה
 וסייזין אך
 נרשון לאכריל.
 בתקיעה, פתח בכזיבה ומסיים בתקיעה, אמר רב
 בחשאי תקיעה נמי כזיבה במשמע כדאמרי
 אנשי פלוני תקע לפלוני וכן מצינו אצל לבן
 הרמאי דכתיב ביה ולבן תקע את אחיו. אמר
 רב בלופאי באמעריקא הכל תוקעין ותקיעתן
 כשרה לפי שתקיעה הוא סימן לחירות וכל
 המרבה לתקוע נקרא חכם שכן מצינו ביואב שלא שלח אחר
 אשה הבמה אלא לתמועה. דריש רבי פפרא אמת מארץ תצמת,
 מאי מארץ בחדש דמקרי מארץ, דכל השנה כולה האמת כבושה
 בקרקע כיון דממי מארץ מתחלת לצמוח לפיכך התקינו באחד
 באפריל דה"ש לכזבין; בר כזיבא אומר ארץ ממש דכל האומר
 אמת עכשו אין לו שמירה אלא בקרקע.

הדחן עלך מסכת כזבים.

מ ס כ ח

עמירקא

מן

תלמוד ינקאי

עם פרוש קצר ומספיק.

מחבר ומסדר מאת

גרשון ראזענצווייג

ניו יארק.

1909.

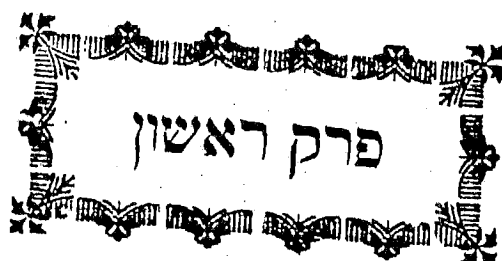


הוצאת בית מסחר הספרים של
ש. דרוקערמאן, 50 סאנעל סטריט, ניו יארק.

מסכת אין בין פרק ראשון עמיריקא א

מתני' אין בין עמיריקא. למעלותא. שלשה חלקי ישו: והיה לנו שמה. קמייירי: אלא שעצוד מלכות. שהחלק הרצעי לא נצרא אלא לאחר מקלט: עמא

ריקה. על שם רקים וכוחזים אשאר ארצות שצאו זה: עלו צראשונה. לאכוקי העולין עכשו דלאו כלן יוחסין: עוזרי חרם. היינו חרם דרצנו גרשון: שהיא ממרק' עונותיהן. על ידי שנעשו שם עשירים וממילא עונותיהן



פרק ראשון

מתני' אין בין עמיריקא לשאר ארצות אלא שעבוד

מלכות בלבד דברי רבי ירמיה וחסמים אומרים עמיריקא כשאר ארצות לכל דבר:

גמ' תניא לא נבראה עמיריקא אלא לארץ מקלט, שבשעה

דלית צעמיריקא: וחכמים אומרי'. דשעצוד מלכות צעמיריקא נמי איכא, דכל שעצודא דשופטי' ושוטרים לחכמי' שעצוד מלכות הוה:

גמ' שלשה חלקי ה' ש' ו' דקודם שנולדה עמיריקא לא היו צעולם אלא

שנלה קלומבוס את עמיריקא באו שלשה חלקי הישוב לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא ואמרו לפניו רבונו של עולם כתבת בתורתך (דברים י"א) ושלשת את גבול ארצך, אמר להם הקדוש ברוך הוא והיה לנו שמה כל רוצח. אמר רב ספרא צפה קלומבוס באצטגנינות שלו שעתידה עמיריקא שתיעשה ארץ מקלט לרקין ופוחזין של כל העולם כלו ובקש רחמים שלא תקרא על שמו, קראה עמא ריקה. איני והא תנן כל הארצות עיסה לעמיריקא שעמיריקא בחזקת יוחסין עומדת. אמר רב מבינא מאי יוחסין פסולין של שאר ארצות כדתנן עשרה יוחסין עלו עם עזרא מבבל וקחשיב ממזרים ונתנינים וכו' תניא גמ' הכי עשרה יוחסין עלו בראשונה לעמיריקא. ואלו הן רוצחים, גנבים, מוסרים, מדליקי בתים, מזיפי שמרות, מוכרי נפשות, עדים זוממין, פושטי רגל, עובדי חרם, ובנים סורדים ומורים, ויש אומרים אף נעדרות שנתפתתו, ולמה נקראין יוחסין לפי שכל הפסולין של שאר ארצות כיון שבאין לעמיריקא נעשין בה יוחסין. במחניתא תנא מפני מה היא נקראת עמיריקא, משום שהיא ממרקת עונותיהן של

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ומתמרקין: כי יש לכסף מוצא. דהכי הדיוט הרי הוא כמלך כדמסיים קרא דריש להאי קרא יש יחוס לכסף ויש יחד שצטי ישראל: קרנא ירקא. מקום שעל ידי זה נעשין צני אדם גרין הארץ צלע"ז: צין רצועה למקל. מזוקקין וטורין: מה צין רצועה מאי טעמיהו. של שוטר צטוריין דאמרי דשעצוד מלכות נמי איכא צעמיריקא והא צאתרא דליכא מלך שעצוד מלכות סיכי משכחת לה: ראשי עס צכלל מלכים נינהו. ושעצודן מעין שעצוד מלכות הוא: האי קרא צישראל וכו'. וצישראל שאני דצני מלכים הן ולאו דוקא ראשי עס אלא אפילו

בני אדם, ממאין נעשו בה מהורין, ופסולין נעשין בה יוחסין, ובמה היא מטהרת ומיחסת אותן בכסף שנאמר (איוב כ"ח) כי יש לכסף מוצא, ואין מוצא אלא יוחסין כדכתיב (מכילת) ומוצאותיו מקדם מימי עולם: וחכמים אומרים וכו'. מאי טעמיהו. אמר רב מבינא סברי ראשי עם בכלל מלכים נינהו דכתיב (דברים) ויהי בישראל מלך בהתאסף ראשי עם. ורב ירקא אמר לך האי קרא בישראל קא משתעי דבני מלכים נינהו. אמר רב

ידעיה מחלוקת בשעבוד מלכות, אבל שעבוד שופטים ושוטרים אפילו רב ירקא מודה דאיכא, דתניא אמרו לו חכמים לרבי ירקא קרנא ירקא וכי מה בין רצועה למקל, אמר להם האי לאו שעבוד מלכות אלא שעבוד שופטים ושוטרים הוא. תניא נם הכי, לא יצא הרוכל בסלו לרשות הרבים אלא אם יש לו רשות, ולא יעמוד המושך בקרון של פירות על מקום אחד למכור פירותיו, ולא ילך אדם בד' אמותיו של שוטר מפני הסכנה, פנע בו מנוול זה יפסע לאחוריו, הבה במקלו על קדקדו חנם ימסור את דינו לשמים ואל ימסרנו לשופט לפי ששוטר ברעא דשופט הוא: ת"ר אחורי ארי ולא אחורי אשה, אחורי אשה ולא אחורי קטן, אחורי קטן ולא אחורי שוטר, שנאמר (ישעיה ד') ננשיו מעולל ונשים משלו בו. מיתיבי ארבעה אבות נזיקין הם,

מסכת אין בין פרק ראשון עמיריקא ב

נזירים. טעמכערעק זלע"ז: שכור זכלל שוטר. ומתניתא דקתני שלשה מזיקין לא חשיב שכור לפי ששוטר אף שכור זמשמע: שלשה סלי חורי כו'. כדמפרש לקמן דהוקסה עמיריקא למזרים ויליף מקרא כוש וכוט ולוד וזני

אין הנזירות: חרות על הלוחות. כמו

שנינו אל תקרא חרות אלל חרות

ומסיק דאין חרות נעמיריקא אלל על

הלוחות. כלומר זכתז ולל זכועל

ממש:

מתני' אף חת. לא זו אף זו:

גמ' זא שוחד לעולם. וכיון שהדזר נוהג

זכל העולם ללו מכת מדינה דאמי-

ריקא היא ומאי קמשמע לן: זהז זה

הז. קסזר דשחל גרים: ע"פ הגורל

ממנין וכו'. קל ס"ד דזאתרא דליכא

גורל לא שייך שוחד ומתק דגורל נמי

האשה, הקמן, השומר והשכור, לא הרי זה

כהרי זה, הצד השווה שבהם שכלם יכולין להזיק

והם שחבלו באחרים פטורין ואחרים שחבלו

בהם חייבין, קתני מיהת ארבעה. לא קשיא

כאן בעיר שיושביה נזירים וכאן בעיר שאין

יושביה נזירים. ובעיר שיושביה נזירים לא

משתכרי והא אמר רב סלונאי, מיין ושכר יזיר

(בסדכר י') ינזר לא כתיב אלא יזיר, מכאן שכל

הנזירים מזירין לאחרים ואינם מזירין לעצמם,

אלא שכור בכלל שומר הוא: ההוא דנחית קמיה

דרי' ספרא ואמר שלשה קבים חירות ירדו לעולם

וכלם נמלה עמיריקא דכתיב (בראשית ט') שלשה

סלי חרי על ראשי, אמר לי' רב ספרא הא

חלמא הוה, מי לא שמעית זה דדריש רב דרוראי

(שמות לב) חרות על הלוחות אין חירות בעמיריקא

אלא על הלוחות בלבד: מתני' הזהב קונה את

הנשיא ואת השופט ורי' ינקא אומר אף את העונש:

גמ' מאי קונה אי' נימא משוחד פשיטא דתניא בא זהב לעולם

בא שוחד לעולם ואמר רב שופטא זהב זה הב. אלא

מאי קונה עושה. והתנן כל נשיא ונשיא שממנין בעמיריקא על

פי הגורל ממנין אותו. מאי גורל שוחד נאמר כאן (משלי ט"ז) בחיק

ופל את הגורל ונאמר שם (שם כ"א) ושוחד בחיק, חיק חיק לגזרה

שוה: ורב ינקא אומר אף את העונש. מאי מעמיה א"ר ספרא דריש

קרא דכתיב (ישעיה י"ד) שבת נוגש שבתה מדהבה: ת"ר אלמלא

בספ זהב לא נתמנה כל נשיא בעמיריקא שנאמר (תהלים ס"ה)

שוחד צמטונע שמעדין את הצאין לכיים ומכיסין על השקלים : וכסף
הרציתי. וככי דריש לקרא. הכסף והזהב שהרציתי עשו אותו לזעל צעמי :
אין נחמד אלא זהב כו'. מוסב על תיר דלעיל דאין נשיא ונליצ ופרנס נחמד
עוז וטהור אלא מי

מעלה נשיאים מקצה הארץ ומסיים ליה קרא
מוצא רוח מאוצרותיו. אלמלא כסף וזהב לא
נתמנה כל נציב בשום עיר ועיר שנאמר (משלי יח)
הון עשיר קרית עזו, אלמלא כסף וזהב לא
נתמנה כל פרנס על הצבור בבתי כנסיות
ובתי מדרשות שנא' (הושע ב) וכסף הרביתי להם
וזהב עשו לבעל : אמר רב פוליטיק, אין נחמד
אלא זהב שנאמר (תהלים יט) הנחמדים מזהב, אין
טוב אלא זהב שנאמר (בראשית ב) וזהב הארץ
ההיא טוב, אין טהור אלא זהב שנאמר (שמות כה)
זהב טהור, מכאן שכל מי שיש לו זהב נעשה
נחמד טוב וטהור :

מתני' כל מנהג שנהגו בעמיריקא ואפילו
הוא מנהג של שמות אין בו משום
בזיון, כל מסחר שהחזיקו בו הינקים ואפילו יש
בו גנבה וגזלה אין בו משום אונאה, כלל

גדול אמרו חכמים במסחר כל אונאה מותרת חוץ מאונאת עצמו :
גמ' למה לי למתני מנהג ולמה לי למתני מסחר. צריכא דאי תנא
מנהג הוה אמינא מנהג אין משום דמנהג ינקים תורה הוא
דכתיב (תהלים ח) מפי עוללים ויונקים יסדת עוז אבל מסחר דלאו
תורה היא דאי תנא מסחר הוה אמינא משום דנקרא קדש
דכתיב (ישעיה כג) והיה סחרה ואתננה קדש אבל מנהג דלאו קדש
הוא לא, צריכא : כל מנהג וכו' כגון מאי אמר רב ציבילאי כגון
לאכול בשוק ודלעום עלי מרורים : כל מסחר וכו' כגון מאי אמר
רב ביזנא כגון בתי אוקשין ובתי משקין בדתנן הקונה כלי כסף
מן האוקשין ונמצאו סיגים וכן הקונה יין מבית המשקין ונמצאו

שיש לו זהב לכזר
לזעלי הכוליטיקין :
מתני' הינקים.
האזרחים שינקו
מורת עמיריקא
צילדותם ומדקדקין
גירסא דינקותא
שלהם דלא תשתכח
מכי זרעם :
גמ' יסדת עוז.
ותנינא אין עוז
אלא תורה : וללעום
עלי מרורים טעמי
טאצאקא צלע"ז : צמי
אוקשין. שמוכרין
שם סחורה על ידי
הכרוז וכל המרצה
צומחיר הסחורה זכא
צמקסה. ויש צזה
אונאה גדולה שנאין

מסכת אין בין פרק ראשון עמיריקא ג

גם המוכרים צין הקונים ומיקרין לפיכך צדיני שמים חיצים אצל
 את השער ומוכין את הקונים שאין צדיני אדם פטורים: תניא נמי
 מצעלי הנסיון: הקבלנים והערבים הכי דאין אונאה לרבים: אטו
 שוקצלים עליהם שיונו את עצמם. נברא דזבין מאני דכספא בביתא
 לזנות צתים, דאוקשין בעשר סלעין נפק דק
 לתקן דרבים לעשות גשרים ולחפור צורות
 ואשבח דלא כספא הוא, אזיל ומכיר יתהון בפלגא דסלע, סליקו
 לחנותא למשתי כסא דחמרא לאפוני צערא יהבו ליה מיא ובעו
 לשמים הוה. דוקמנויה: ואוירא לשמים הוה.

מיניה פלגא דסלע קרי אנפשיה (ישעיה א') כספך היה לסינים סבאך
 מהול במים: אמר רב ידעיה כשם שאין אונאה ליחיד כך
 אין אונאה לרבים דתניא הקבלנים והערבים בין שקבלו מן
 היחיד בין שקבלו מן הצבור בונין בנינים שר עראי, נפלו
 והזיקו או המיתו פטורים מדיני אדם והייבים בדיני שמים,
 לפי שעל כנת כן קבלו שלא יוצאו מתחת ידיהן דבר שאינו
 מסוכן. אמר רב מקשן אי הכי בדיני שמים נמי לפברי.
 איל משום שבניניהם פורחין באויר ואוירא לשמים הוא. תניא
 נמי הכי הבא מן הדרך צריך להודות לפי שהנשרים והתעלות
 הספינות ועגלות של קיסור שבעמיריקא בחזקת סכנה הן שנאמר
 (תהלים קל"ט) כל דרכי הסכנתה: חוץ מאונאת עצמו. אטו
 בשופמני עסקינן, הכמים עצה טובה קא משמע לן שכל הבא
 להונות את חברו יזהר שלא יונה חברו אותו שנאמר (בראשית כ"ז)
 בא אחיך במרמה: אמר רב כספא גדולה אונאה שמאכלת
 בשר לבעליה דכתיב (ישעיה מ"ט) והאכלתי את מוניך את בשרם:
 ואמר רב כספא עשירים שבעמיריקא כמה הן זוכין בשביל
 אונאה שכן בעמיריקא קורין לכסף מונה: דריש רב ידעיה מאי
 דכתיב (תהלים ק"ד) זה הים גדול ורחב ידים וגו' זה הים גדול וזו

6 מבכה אין בין פרק ראשון עמיריקא

מלשון חונאה. לני הלולא. לני הלולא שעשין צעמיריקא שנותנין את המאכלים על השלחן לכל המסובין צימד וכל מי שיכול למטוף יותר ידו על העליונה.

עמיריקא שנמשלת לים מה הים קולט כל מה שזורקין לתוכו ומכסה עליו, כך עמיריקא קולטת כל הבא אליה ומכסה על כל פשעיו. שם רמש ואין מספר, אלו בני האדם שדומים לרמש שכל הגדול מחברו בולע את חברו. חיות קטנות עם גדולות, אלו העשירים הקטנים שהולכים ומתעשרים עד שנעשו גדולים, ולמה נקראים בשם חיות לפי שכל המשים עצמו כחיה שדורסת ואוכלת ממונו מתקיים בידו: אמר רב ספרא האי עלמא חדתא לבי הלולא דמיא חטוף ואכול חטוף ושתה שנאמר (תהלים קכ"ה) יגיע כפיך כי תאכל וגו' אז תקרא כפיך אלא חפיד שכן בלשון יונית קורין לחטיפא חפקא:

הדרן עלך אין בין

מסכת הכל ירוקים פרק שני עמיריקא ד

מתני' הכל ירוקים. לקמן מפרש ששנה את שמו לרצינור ומניד פשוט מאי ירוקים: וכלל ששנו ששנה את שמו לפרדינור ומלמד פשוט וכו'. יצאו מכלל ירוקים ואין שנוי השם למאן מלגלגין עליהן זין אחיהן וקרוביהן:

מתני'

הכל ירוקים הם לעמיריקא, החיש יהסנדלר הטבח והבורסקי. וכלם ששנו את שמם ואת בנדיהם אע"פ שלא שנו את לשונם יצאו:

נמ' הכל לאתויי מאי. אמר רב ידעיה לאתויי חרש שומה וקטן רב מבינא אמר לאתויי רב מניד ומלמד. מאי בינייהו

רבינור פרידינור ופרופיסור איכא בינייהו, לרב ידעיה דאמו חרש שומה וקטן רבינור פרידינור ופרופיסור בכלל ולרב מבינא דאמר רב מניד ומלמד הני לאו בכלל נינהו: הכל ירוקים הם. מאי ירוקים, אמר רב ספרא נחותי ימא כאותה ששנינו ולא בירוקה שעל פני המים. מתקיף ליה רב מקשן אי הכי אפיזו ינקא ששהה בספינה נמי. אלא אמר רב ספרא מאי ירוקים נכרים, כתיב הבא (תהלים ל"ז) וכירק דשא יבולון וכתיב התם (שם י"ח) בני נכר יבולו לנזרה שוה: אבעי' להו נשים ירוקות הן או לא. תא שמע, אסתר ירקרקת היתה שמע מינה. אמר מר אסתר ירקרקת היתה, והא כתיב (אסתר ב') הדסה היא אסתר מכלל ששנתה את שמה ותנן וכלם ששנו את שמם וכו' יצאו. אמר רב תופרא שנתה את שמה ולא שנתה את בנדיה אמר ליה רב מקשן והא כתיב (שם ה') ותלבש אסתר מלכות, מכלל ששנתה את בנדיה נמי, א"ל קודם ששנתה את בנדיה ירקרקת היתה: תנא בשעה שקלל משה את ישראל ואמר (דברים כ"ה) יכבה ה' בירקון ירד קלומבום ונעץ קנה בים והעלה עליו

ומכאן: וירקון שמים. כוויארק בחלוק
אותיות הוא ירקון: צאלע מראובן. אצל
צאלע מצלאל לאו שינוי מעליא הוא:

הזקן ככלל בגדים

הוא ונריך שנוי:

אלא צתער.

שיגלחנו כלו: אטו

ינקים לאו מגדלי

זקן ניכסו וצינקין

כולי עלמא מודי

דלאו ירוקין הן:

שהחזיקו ישראל

שלמדו מן העמים

לעשות כמותם:

מדקדקין אף

עמם. המזיקין

מדקדקין רק עם

ישראל מגדלי זקן

רב חלפתא אטו ינקים לאו מגדלי זקן ניגהו. אמר ליה כל מצוה

שהחזיקו בה ישראל מן העמים מדקדקין בה יותר מן העמים. איבא

דאמרי הכי אמר לו גדול המצוות שלא לעשות ועושה משאינו מצווה

ועושה, שמיום שנהגו ישראל בתגלחת מדקדקין אף עמהם

כחוש השערה: אתמר נמי שער אחד בזקן סכנה דכתיב (שופטים ב')

כל זה קולע באבן אל השערה: אף על פי שלא שנו את לשונם וכו'.

והא אנן תנן שבע מדות מנו חכמים בירוקים, אוכלים לתיאבון,

הולכים באמצע הדרכים, מקללים את קלומבוס, משנים את

לשונם, שואלים מה שיודעים, מבקשים עצה ואינם מקבלים,

מזילים את השער. קתני מיהת משנים את לשונם, מאי משנים

מנמנמין וכדאמר רב לנגאי, ישראל למה הוא דומה לתוכי

שמנמנם בכל לשון שהוא שומע שנאמר (דברים ל"ג) והם תכו לרגלך

ישא מדברותיך: אמר רב ספרא ירוק בשבעת ימים הראשונים

אפילו בתו מתביישת בו שנאמר (במדבר י"ב) ואביה ידע ירם

והא אנן תנן שבע מדות מנו חכמים בירוקים, אוכלים לתיאבון,

הולכים באמצע הדרכים, מקללים את קלומבוס, משנים את

לשונם, שואלים מה שיודעים, מבקשים עצה ואינם מקבלים,

מזילים את השער. קתני מיהת משנים את לשונם, מאי משנים

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ישא מדברותיך: אמר רב ספרא ירוק בשבעת ימים הראשונים

אפילו בתו מתביישת בו שנאמר (במדבר י"ב) ואביה ידע ירם

מסכת הכל ירוקים פרק שני עמיריקא ה

ירוק ירק. דרש מלשון ירקון. שנה גם את לשונו. שזכה לדבר אנגלית:
מהני' נחפסא ונדלוסקמא. שקיס של עור שנושאלן צהן סחורה.
גמ' מסייעין איתו. קרוציו ומכיריו ולאו חונה היל אלא רשות: המזיקין.

בפניה הלא תכלם שבעת ימים, מכאן ואילך
כיון ששנה את שמו ואת בגדיו הוא מתבייש
בירוקים אחרים, שנה גם את לשונו הרי הוא
ינקא לכל דבר:

מתני' במה פדלר יוצא בסל ובשק ובארגו

בחפסא ובדלוסקמא ורב דחקן אומר

אף במחטים ובעצי גפרית שבידו:

גמ' תנו רבנן ירוק שעברו עליו שבעה ימים

ואינו יודע במה להתפרנס מסייעין אותו

להיות פדלר. כיצד, קונין לו סל ומעט סחורה

ומגלין לו רזי דפדלנותא, ואומרין לו כך חזור

על הפתחים, ומברכין אותו בשתי ברכות ברוך

אתה בצאתך וברוך אתה בבואך, ברוך אתה

בצאתך שלא ישלמו בו המזיקין בדרך וברוך אתה בבואך, שתהא

ביאתו כיציאתו, זכה ימה את שכמו לסבול חבילות של סחורה

כחמור גרם, לא זכה ימם סלו ויהיה לעובד שנאמר (בראשית מ"ט)

ויש שכמו לסבול ויהי למס עובד: אמר מר ומגלין לו רזי דפדלנותא,

מאי נינהו, אמר רב רובלא, שני רזים, שכל קונה המשלם לפדלר

סח שהוא חייב לו הוא צדיק גמור, וכל פדלר המשלם לחנוני

מה שהוא חייב לו הוא צדיק גמור שנאמר (ישעיה כ"ד) צבי לצדיק

רזי לי רזי לי בוגדים בגדו ובגד בוגדים בגדו: ושתהא ביאתו

כיציאתו. אמר רב רובלא שישוב לביתו שלם בגופו שלם

בסחורתו. אמר ליה רב מקשן בשלמא שלם בגופו ברכה

היא אבל שלם בסחורתו אמו ברכה היא. אמר ליה זימנא

דברכה מעלייתא היא: תניא שלש משמרות לפדלר משמרה

קטנים שנחשבו
צארצעה אבות
מזיקין וכן נכל
מקום שמזכיר
גמ' מזיק קטן
נחשמה: הולאדיק
גמור. דאי לא
משלם לאו רשע
הוא שהמשלם
עושה לכנים
מחורת הדיו:
ונגד נוגד' נגדו:
משמע שאלה
שנגדו זה ס
הנגדים ינגדו
גם הם:
חמור

10 מַסַּכַת הַכֵּל יְרוּקִים פֶּרֶק שְׁנִי עֲמִירִיקָא

חמור סוגל. נושא הצילות של סחורה עליו כחמור גרס: חנונים צועקים.
 אית דגרסי צועקים ואינו נענים: תינוק יונק: סכדלר נעשה כתינוק שיונק
 משדים צומקות
 שאינו מוכן כמה ראשונה חמור סובל, שניה חנונים צועקים,
 שהוא צריך שלישית תנוק יונק ואינו מוצץ, ועל כל משמר
 למאכלו: פה הוא שואג בארי ואומר אוי לי שהחרבתי את כחי
 וריש סכדלר. ופזרתי ממון של אחרים לבין האומות: אמר רב
 שהוא דל תמיד.
 ספרא פה וריש שבפדלר בנס הן עומדין, בא וראה
 כמה גדול כחו של פדלר מכח יעקב אבינו שאילו
 ביעקב אבינו כתיב (בראשית ל"ב) ויאבק איש עמו, ובפדלר כתיב
 (שה"ש ג') מכר אבקת רוכל: ואמר רב ספרא ארבע מדות בפדלר,
 ספוג ומשפך משמרת ונפה, ספוג שהוא סופג את הסחורה מן
 החנונים, משפך ששופך את הכל אל הקונים, משמרת שמוציא
 את הסחורה וקולט את החובות, ונפה שאינו מתמלא מקליטתו
 כדכתיב (ישעיה ל') להנפה גוים בנפת שוא:

הדרן עלך הכל ירוקים

מסכת אלו חייבים פרק שלישי עמיריקא ו

מתני' וקטנים שהגיעו לחינוך. לקמיה מפרש לזמן חנוך.
גמ' בשעת הצדקה. ששכיחא עבודה: בשעת הסלק. שאין עבודה מנויה
כלל: דתדיר

מתני'

אלו חייבים בעבודה האנשים והנשים וקטנים
שהגיעו לחנוך. רבי עניא אמר כל שהוא
חייב באכילה חייב בעבודה:
גמ' אמר רב פעלן לא שנו אלא בשעת הבזה
אבל בשעת הסלק הכל פטורין, דתניא
שתי עתים לעבודה עת בזה ועת סלק, מי
שטרח בבזה יאכל בסלק ומי שלא טרח בבזה
ירעב בסלק, דכתיב (קהלת ג') עת לבקש ועת לאבד, עת לבקש
עבודה ועת לאבד כחו, ומאי מעמא נאמר עת לבקש תחילה
משום דתדיר ושאינו תדיר תדיר קודם. מתקיף ליה רב תופרא
והא כתיב (אסתר ט') ובבזה לא שלחו את ידם א"ל התם שאני
דבשעת הסמריק הוה דכתיב ברישא דקרא ועמד על נפיש:
רב עובדא אשכח למר יונין דהוה קאי אפתחא דבי
פקטורא וחזיה דהוה בדיחא דעתיה ואי בעי מיניה כל חללי
עלמא הוה אמר ליה, א"ל מאי מעמא העובדין בעמיריקא אינם
רואין עולמן בחייהן. א"ל משום דעמיריקא מרובה באוכלסין
של ירוקין, וירוקין נעשו סקבין, וסקבין מבלי עולם הן. מאי
בזה, שמבזוין העובדין את כחן בחנם. סלק, שמסתלקין
מעבודה ומתין ברעב. סמריק, שבשעה שמניחין את עבודתן
נשיתין ובניהן סומריין על פניהן וכופין אותן להחזיר את גרושתן:
האנשים והנשים. ונשים חייבות בעבודה, והתנן כל הנשים
בעמיריקא דיין מה שהן עושות בביתן לבעליהן לבניהן
ולברדריהן. לא קשיא כאן בנשואות כאן בשאינן נשואות.

ושאינו תדיר.
וסלק תדיר הוא
לצדקה. בשעת
הסמריק הוא.
שצטלו העובדין
ממלאכתן ע"י
עמון ושלל צדקה
זעלים: כאן
זשאין נשואות:
שהן ודאי חייבות
בעבודה צפקטרי
ונקטיות

מסכת אלו חייבים פרק שלישי עמיריקא

ועתה נאמר: נרי דיירין. ל פי שמדיירין ומרזין זלל צצית: שהפטייר צנציל. שנעשה צר מלוא: שעירה. דרש שעירה מלשון שערות עתונים. מכתני

נאמר (בראשית י') בעצבון תיכלנה ולאשה נאמר הרבה ארבה עצבונך: אמר מר ומשמשת את הברדרין, מאי ברדרין, אמר רב ספרא אמרה לי מיסית דביתהו דרב רובלא ברי דיירין, כאותה ששנינו המדייר את שדהו: וקטנים שהגיעו לחנוך. ואיכא חנוך בעמיריקא והא תנן אין מחנכין את הבנים ואת הבנות ואין מגדלין אותן לתורה ולמעשים טובים אלא לחופה בלבד. מאי חנוך זמן חנוך. ואיבעית אימא חנוך מלאכה כדתניא הקטן כיון שהצמיר בנביא, אביו פטור מעונשו ומחנכו לעבודה: ורבי עניא אומר וכו' במאי פלגי, אמר רב ספרא בקטן שלא הגיע לחנוך. מנא ליה לרב עניא דקטן שלא הגיע לחנוך חייב נמי בעבודה. מקרא דכתיב (בראשית י"ג) לרגל המלאכה ולרגל הילדים, נאמר מלאכה אצל ילדים ללמד שחייבים במלאכה. ותנא קמא אמר לך שפיל לסיפא דקרא, עד אשר אבוא אל אדוני שעירה, אינו חייב בעבודה עד שביא שתי שערות. תניא כותית דרבי עניא, הכר חייבים בעבודה ואפילו ילדים קטנים שנאמר (שמות י') לכו עבדו וכתיב בתריה גם טפכם ילך עמכם: אמר רב ידעיה השולח את בניו הקטנים למכור עתונים יצא, כדתניא מכירת עתונים לגבי גדולים מסחר, לגבי קטנים מלאכה, לפי שהקטנים אינן מוכרין אותן אלא ע"י ריצה וקפיצה ומוזיעין בה הרבה: ואמר רב ידעיה לדידי חזי לי ההוא ינוקא דהוה קא רהים

מסכת אלו חייבים פרק שלישי עמיריקא ז

מכתני עתים: כי הורמין בר ליליתא בשוקי דמחוזא וסליק
 עלמא ושמשא. לברין וצבין ושורר מהאי דהאי ומהאי להאי ונקים
 שני מכתני עתים שני מכרין ציזתר
 שני מכרין ציזתר משום דענידין
 לאנזומי: וצני ארץ הנזרית. היינו
 אמיריקא: גומל נפשו איש חסד.
 שמקיימין גמולו חסדים נכשן:
 כי הורמין בר ליליתא בשוקי דמחוזא וסליק
 לברין וצבין ושורר מהאי דהאי ומהאי להאי ונקים
 גזיסי בידיה ורמיה קלא מאן בעי עלמא ושמשא
 ואותו היום, משליך קרחו כפתים לפני קרתו
 מי יעמוד הוה: תנו רבנן איזה עבודה, כל
 שהיא מערכת את כל גופו של אדם לפי
 שהוקשה עמיריקא למצרים, דכתיב (יחזקאל י')
 כוש ופוש ולוד ובני ארץ הברית, ובמצרים
 כתיב (שמות א') כל עבודתם אשר עבדו בהם
 בפרך: תניא מקום שנהגו להשכים ולהעריב חייב להשכים
 ולהעריב, לעשות מלאכה מעומד חייב לעשות מעומד, בידים
 וברגלים חייב לעשות בידיו וברגליו, הכל כמנהג המקום.
 ולהשכים ולהעריב במנהג תליא מלתא והתנן כל העובדים
 חייבים להשכים ולהעריב שנאמר (תהלים קל"ג) משכימי קום
 מאחרי שבת אוכלי לחם העצבים ואין עצבים אלא עובדי
 עבודה שנאמר (בראשית ג') בעצבון תאכלנה. מאי נהנו נהנו
 ועושין כן: אמר רב ספרא על שני דברים עמיריקא עומדת
 על העבודה ועל גמילות חסדים, עבודה כדאמרן, גמילות
 חסדים כדכתיב (משלי י"א) גומל נפשו איש חסד, אבל תורה
 לא משום דכתיב (דברים ל') ולא מעבר לים היא:

הדרן עלך אלו חייבים

14 מסכת מי שהיה פרק רביעי עמיריקא

מתני' שהיה פדלר ונסתאז. שהלך עד שהסתאז שאין לו כשרון למסור
והיה עובד ונכסל שאין לו כשרון גם למלאכה צנות ישראל עשות אותו

למלמי שלזה אינו

לריק כשרון כלל:

גמ' שהזמן גרמ'.

זמן תלמידים

הוא קני שנה:

נשים חייבות.

לפי שכל תכשיטי

אשה צומן תליא:

זמן. סיואן צלע"ז:

ומעוף

מתני'

מי שהיה פדלר ונסתאב, היה עובד ונפסל,

בנות ישראל מרחמות עליו ועושות אותו

למלמד לבניהן, לפי שהמלמדות בעמיריקא

אינה לא מלאכה ולא חכמה והכל כשרין לה,

מעשה בחכם אחד שיצאו מוניטון שלו בסוריא

למורה אמן ופדגוג וכשבא לעמיריקא חששו למסור לו תלמידים

והניחו לו שילך עד שיסתאב:

גמ' מעשה לסתור. חסורי מחסרא והכי קתני במה דברים

אמורים במי שבנות ישראל מרחמות עליו, אבל מי שאין

בנות ישראל מרחמות עליו אפילו הוא חכם שיצאו מוניטון שלו

למורה אמן ופדגוג אין מוסרין לו תלמידים, ומעשה בחכם אחד

וכו'. ומסירת בנים למלמד בנשים תליא מלתא, אין כדתניא

רב מלמדיאל אומר הנשים בוררות מלמדים לבניהם ולא האנשים

לפי שמסירת תינוקות לבית רבן מצות עשה שהזמן גרמא היא

וכל מצות עשה שהזמן גרמא נשים חייבות בה וכל מצות עשה

חייבות בה אנשים פטורין ממנה. פטורין מאי טעמא, אמר רב

ידעיה מאי פטורין שפוטרין את עצמן מידי דהוה אירוק בן יומו

דתניא ירוק בן יומו פטור מן התפלה, פטור סלקא דעתך אלא

אימא שפוטרי את עצמו הכא נמי שפוטרין את עצמן. אמר

מר לפי שמסירת תינוקות וכו' ומסירת תינוקות לבית רבן מצות

עשה שהזמן גרמא היא והתנן בעמיריקא התקינו שאין מוסרין

תלמידים למלמד אלא לחדש. אמר רב חדרן מאי זמן זמן

דעמיריקא ומאי ניהו חדש: תנו רבנן בודקין לחון ואין בודקין

למלמד לפי שאין אדם משים עצמו למלמד אלא אם כן נכנס בו

מסכת מי שהיה פרק רביעי עמיריקא ח

ומעוף השמים יחבמנו. כלומר מחדר מכוני שלא ידע להסתנה שיהא רוחה
 שסוף כלול שיושבים בו עופות משם נוחה הימנו: משום כוונת. דמלתא
 יחבמנו: ויסרו דשכיחא הו"א
 למשפט. המלמד רוח שמות וכל שהוא שומה
 אינו חייב אלא הרי זה כשר למלמד שנאמר
 ליסר ולעשות (איוב ג"ה) מלפנו מנהמות ארץ.
 משפט בתלמידיו בודקין לדירה ואין בודקין
 אצל ללמדו תורה לחדר לפי שכל בית שהוא
 הוא דצר המסור כלול של תרנגולים הרי זה כשר
 לגזיה: אי אפשי לחדר שנאמר (שם) ומעוף השמים
 צמלמד זה.
 יחבמנו. המוסר את בנו למלמד אינו מוסרו על מנת ללמדו
 תורה אלא על מנת ליסרו שנאמר (ישעיה ב"ח) ויסרו למשפט
 אלהיו יורנו. המוסר את בנו למלמד אטו מסירתו מסירה
 והתנן האיש שמסר את בנו למלמד אין מסירתו מסירה לפי
 שיכולה אשה שתאמר אי אפשי במלמד זה. הכא במאי
 עסקינן במוסר מדעת אשתו: לפי שהמלמדות אינה לא מלאכה.
 מגלן, אמר רב פקיחא שמותרת בשבת. תניא אבות מלאכות
 ארבעים חסר אחת ואיזה היא מלמדות שאף על פי שעבודת
 פרך היא מותרת בשבת. ואמאי נגזור עליה משום פוצע. אמר
 רב זנבא משום דהוקשה למלחמה דכריב (תהלים י"ח) מלמד ידי
 למלחמה ובמלחמת מצוה פציעה מותרת בשבת: ולא חכמה.
 וזה כתיב (שם צ"ד) המלמד אדם דעת. אמר רב פקיחא יש דעת
 שהיא סבלות דאמר קרא (קהלת א') דעת הוללות וככלות. אמר
 רב ידעיה כל מלמד שיש בו דעת חדרו מתמלא דכתיב (משלי ב"ד)
 ובדעת חדרים ימלאו. דרש רב ספרא מאי דכתיב (בראשית ט"ו)
 תבוא אל אבותיך בשלום וגו' בשעה שהוציא הקב"ה את
 אברהם אבינו החוצה ואמר לו כה יהיה זרעך, הראה לו
 חדרים ומלמדי תינוקות שבכל דור ודור מדינה ומדינה כיון
 שהגיע לחדרים ומלמדים של דור זה בעמיריקא נפלה עליו

מסכת מי שהיה פרק רביעי עמיריקא ט

אמר ר' חנן. נר ומשכיתו כל מה שלמד מרביו, וכשם שתינוק
לשון חן היל: בן יומו פטור מן המצות אף הבר מצוה
חדון עלך מי שהיה נעשה פטור מן המצות: אמר רב ספרא
מפני מה מפטירין בנביא לבר מצוה מפני
שנעשה פטור מן המצות, ומפני מה קורין לו בר מצוה
משום שנעשה בר מצות: לפי שדרשת בר מצוה וכו'. תיר
ארבע דרשות הן, דרשת פוליטיקון, דרשת אנארכין, דרשת רב
ודרשת בר מצוה. פוליטיקון מה הוא דורש, גורלך תפיל
בתוכנו. אנרכי מה הוא דורש, ונתתי מופתים בארץ דם
ואש ותמרות עשן. רב מה הוא דורש, לרב תרבה נחלתו. בר
מצוה מה הוא דורש, מכל מלמדי הסכלתי:

הדרן עלך מי שהיה

18 **מסכת איזה היא חברה פרק חמישי עמיריקא**

מתני' מקום פנישה. נגמרק מכרש מאי פנישה :
 גמ' מנינים. טרוסטין זלע"ז מכאן שאין חברה וכו'. לפי שהממונין חונת
 החברה היא: ואל

מתני'

איזה היא חברה כל שיש בה עשרה חברים ושיש
 לה מקום פנישה :

גמ' לימא מתניהן דלא כרב סנדלאי דתנן אלו הן
 הממונין בחברה, הראש וסגנו, שלשה מבינים שני
 סופרים, סוכן, נבאי, ושמש, מכאן שאין חברה
 פחותה מעשרה דברי ר' חיישא, רב סנדלאי אומר

תשעה וקטן. לעולם אימא לך מתניתן כרב סנדלאי ועשרה חברים
 נמי תשעה וקטן קתני. במאי פליגי, אמר רב חבורן בממנין לקטן,
 רב חיישא סבר אין ממנין לקטן משום הא דתנן אין ממנין
 ממונה בחברה אלא למי שבטוחין בו שלא יהיה בן תורה כל
 ימיו, ורב סנדלאי סבר בעמיריקא אפילו בקטן מוכטחין שלא
 יהיה בן תורה. והלכתא ממנין לקטן אפילו לראש החברה דכתיב
 (ש"א מ"ו) הלא אם קטן אתה בעיניך ראש שבטי ישראל אתה :
 ושיש לה מקום פנישה. מאי פנישה מיטינגא, מאי מיטינגא
 אמר רב ספרא אסיפה, ומאי קרי לה פנישה משום דלשון
 פנישה חיות במשמע דכתיב (ישעיה ל"ד) ופגשו ציים את איים
 וכדאמר רב מבינא כל אספה שיש בה אכילה ושתיה, קימה,
 הליכה ובזיון הרי זו אסיפה של חיות, דכתיב (שם כ"ב) ויאספו
 פלשתים לחיה ותהי שם חלקת השדה מלאה עדשים כתיב הכא
 עדשים וכתיב גבי עשו עדשים ויאכל וישת ויכס וילך ויבז.
 מתקיף לה רב מקשן והא כתיב (ספרי י"ז) פגוש דוב שכול באיש
 ואל כסיל באולתו, משמע דכסיל באולתו לאו פנישה היא.
 א"ל כסיל אחד באולתו לאו פנישה היא אבל כסילים רבים
 באולתם פנישה מעדיתא הוא: גופא כל אסיפה שיש בה אכילה

כו'

צדקה

20 מסכת איזה היא חברה פרק חמישי עמיריקא

גמ' משפחות משפחות. השני כמו משפחות: חסיפות של כומצו. מאסמיטינגע
זלע"ז: מהני יצאל. התרעה שמתריעין על דבר שזלדקה מועלת ופועלת

זלזות העשירים
כעלוקו למתים צדקה נולדת בקולי קולות וכשהיא מתה
דמקנתרין. את
העניים צדקרים:

גמ' אמו חברות מתין והא חברות היינו הך
מלאך

דצבור וגמירא דאין צבור מתין, אמר רב לאומיאלי
חברות לאו צבור אלא צבורין צבורין הן וכלין ומתין מאליהן.
כדאמר רב ספרא קשין צבורין לישראל כספחת שנאמר (זכריה י"ב)
וספדה הארץ משפחות משפחות: תניא מפני מה נתחייבו
ישראל בכל דור ובכל מקום להביא מנחה לעשו משום שנתפרדו
לחבורות חבורות, בדכתיב (בראשית ל') וישת לו יעקב עדרים
לבדו, וכתיב (שם כ"ב) ויתן ביד עבדיו עדר עדר לבדו, ומאי
משמע דעדרים לשון חברות הוא דכתיב (שה"ש א') על עדרי חבריך:
וחברה של צדקה וכו' מאי בקולי קולות אמר רב עסקן שתוקעין
ומריעין ותוקעין, כדתניא אין נזקקין לדבר צדקה אלא אם
בן מתריעין עליו בכל העתונים שבעיר ומכריוזין ודורשין עליו
באספות של פומבי. מתקיף ליה רב חברן שאר כל החברות
שמתות בקולי קולות מאי תוקעין ומריעין ותוקעין איכא. איל
התם נמי תוקעין ותוקעין איכא וכאותה ששנינו התוסע לחבירו.
אמר מר אין נזקקין לדבר צדקה אלא איב מתריעין וכו' והא
אמר רב ידעיה מהניא יבבא לעתירי כי בינא לשכבי, לעשירים
לא מהניא לעיניים מיהת מהניא, כדתניא מפני מה מתריעין על
דבר שבצדקה משום דצדקה דומיא דתענית היא, ואמר רב
מבינא עלה זאת אומרת עניים דעבידי בתענית עבידי נמי בצדקה.
עשירים דלא עבידי בתענית לא עבידי בצדקה. אמר ליה רב
צרימא חס ושלום פסקת את כל העשירים מן הצדקה אלא
עשירים אף על פי שנותנים נותנים אותה שלא כהוגו ועל
די אנשים שאינם מהוגנים וכדאמר רב ידעיה הני גבאי צדקה
די יתבון בשוקא תמניא יהבין בתר דמקנתרין. תנא שני דברים

התקינו

מסכת איזה היא חברה פרק חמישי עמיריקא 21

מלאך המות. שוטר ומקל חוצלים שצידו: מות מציל מדקה. דהכא
שוטר כדי להמית היא: שלשה דברים. לוס קול וממון: שנים מסן.
ש ש ר ו צ ת ע נ י ת

התקינו נבאי צדקה בשוקא תמניא ולא הודו להן
חכמים. שהעמידו מלאך המות על פתחן, ושחולקין
צדקה ולא כבוד ואפילו לרב. ההוא עניא דאתא
לשוקא תמניא טרף אבבא, נפק האי פליסמנא,
נגדיה ערק וצוות ווי ווי שמסרסין ודורשין בבאן
את הפסוקים, צדקה תציל ממות כתיב, מות
מציל מצדקה לא כתיב: תיר שלשה דברים מנו
חכמים שמעבירין רוע הגזרה, וישראל שבעמיריקא
לא קיימו בעצמן אלא שנים בלבד, שבשעה שגזרה
מלכות רומנין גירוש על ישראל ירדו זקנים
וגזרו תענית וגעו כל העם בבכיה ובכול וכשהגיע

והשמיעו קולי
קולות אנל ממון
לא נתנו: חזנים
נאיו ורצני' נאים.
לאו דוקא אלא
אירי דצעי
למנקט נאיו אלא
א ק ט ו ר י ס
ואקטוריות נקט
נמי אלא רצנים
וחזנים:

הדרן עלך איזה
היא חברה

לממון מיד פסקו ואמרו גלוי וידוע לפני מי שאמר והיה
העולם החדש הזה שלא באנו לכאן אלא בשביל ממון, ושממוננו
חביב עלינו מעטנו ומאחינו, וכשאנו מפזרין אותו אין אנו
מפזרין, אלא על חזנים נאים רבנים נאים אקטורים נאים
ואקטורות נאות, ועל כל דבר שיש לנו כבוד או תענוג
מזה, יאברו אלפי ישראל ולא יחסר מאלפי שקלינו כלום:
תנא בואו ונחזיק טובה למחזיקי אילמין ופרדסין שאלמלא
בלין ופיקניקין לא היתה כל חברה של צדקה בעמיקריא יכולה
לעמוד, לפי שאין עשירים שר ישראל פותחין את שקיהן אלא
לשם שמחה, אמר רב ספרא מאי קרא (תהלים ל') פתחת שקי
ותאזרני שמחה:

הדרן עלך איזה היא חברה

מתני' בחול אכל לא צצת. אינו עושה קאי אכל לא אכול דאילו לענין אכילה אטו רפרמיין מתענין צצת נינהו: אינו נאה דורש ונאה מקיים. יש גורסין ואינו נאה מקיים:

מתני'

מה בין רב ארמדקסי לרב רפרמי, רב ארמדקסי אוכל ואינו עושה בחול ובשבת ורב רפרמי אוכל ואינו עושה בחול אבל לא בשבת. רב ארמדקסי אינו נאה דורש ונאה מקיים ורב רפרמי נאה דורש אבל אינו נאה מקיים:

גמ' הדיטותו . קודם שנעשה רב: הרבנים אינן נזקקין. כלל זה נקוט צידך כל מקום שנקט רבנים סתם ארמדקסים צמחע.

גמ' ותו ליכא והאיכא שכחת תלמוד דתניא רב אולפא אומר רב בימי רבנותו מה הוא עושה, יושב במל ושובח תלמודו שלמד בימי הדיטותו במה דברים אמורים ברב ארמדקסי אבל רפרמי אינו שוכח תלמודו לעולם. תנא ושייר. מאי שייר דהאי שייר, שייר פשיטי דספרא דתניא רב ארמדקסי יש לו פשיטי דספרא לפי שהוא כותב הכשרים על הבשר על הכרכשאות ועל היין, רב רפרמי אין לו פשיטי דספרא לפי שהוא כבשיר את הכל בפיו, גופא לפי שהוא כותב וכו' והא תנן אוכל ואינו עושה. מאי כותב על ידי אחרים וכדאמר רב לננאי הרבנים אינן נזקקין לכל לשון אפילו ללשון הקדש וכשהן כותבין כותבין בצדיקים גמורים שמלאכתן נעשית על ידי אחרים. איני והתניא חישו רבנים בעמיריקא לתקנת בנות ישראל, לפיכך הן זריון ומקדיסין לגטין, בא גט לידן אין מחמיצין אותו אלא כותבין ומשתלמין לאלתר, מאי לאו דכותבין דומיא דמשתלמין מה משתלמין ע"י עצמן אף כותבין ע"י עצמן. אמר רב מבינא שאני גטין שנכתבין בלשון ארמית. מתיב ליה רב מקשן והא מלאכים שנוקקין לכל לשון גמירא שאינן נזקקין ללשון ארמית, רבנים שאינן נזקקין לשום לשון ללשון ארמית לא כל שכן. אלא

אמר

דליכא שכחה שלא מדעת. שאין מתה: מציאין לידי תחתונות.
 אדם שוכח דבר אלא אם כן היה לו שזכרון לשכח זמן רב על מקום אחד
 ידיעה תחלה:
 זארתדקסי אמר רב מבינא משתלמין מרכזה מייש.
 שנעשה רפרמי. שמספר נגשים
 והיה ליה ידיעה ע"י עצמן וכותבין על ידי אחרים
 תחלה ושכח ואבעית אימא משתלמין נמי ע"י
 דקתני ששכח ממי הוא ומאן נינהו נשיה:
 לפני מי הוא עומד ודורש:
 עומד ודורש: לשכח דשכח.
 כד קורין ספרהמין ללשון סקדש שכח
 נלשון ארמית דאי אמרת יש שכחה שלא מדעת רב רפרמי אמאי אינו שוכח
 תלמודו. תא שמע רב רפרמי ששכח פסוק אחד בלשון הקדש
 מביא אשם מרפות על שננתו והא לא היה ליה ידיעה בתחלה
 וקתני שכת. אמר רב חזקתא הבא במאי עסקין בארמדקסי
 שנעשה רפרמי ומאי שכת ששכח לפני מי הוא עומד ודורש ושנג
 והזכיר פסוק אחד בלשון הקדש שמביא אשם מרפות משום דחייש
 ליקרא דנשי. מאי אשם מרפות אמר רב שמפלאי שמורה על
 לבו ואומר במסותא מנייכו נשין יקירין דתמחלין לי דאשתמשית
 בלשנא דשכבא באודנייכון. ורב רפרמי נאה דורש והתנן
 שלשה דברים מנו חכמים בדרשות של הרפרמין, מביאין לידי
 תחתונות, לידי שינה ולידי הקאה. אמר רב שמפלאי אידי
 דקתני רישא אינו נאה דורש קתני סיפא נאה דורש. ואבעית
 אימא נאה נמי דקתני כאותה שאומרין לכלה ירקרוקת כלה נאה
 וחסודה וכדאמר רב עתיקתא פרידינור שדרש אומרין לו נאה
 דרשת נאה כונת ואף על פי שלא דרש אלא במעשה מרכבה בלבד.
 מאי במעשה מרכבה אמר רב שמפלאי מרכבה ממש כההוא
 פרידינאי דפתח בדרשה ואמר הכי, ארבע מיסות הן, מיסית
 פלונית

מתני' שלשה חייזין זכרנל. גמ' סתיו פיפא סקרוזלוש זל"עז :
 לקמיה מפרש מאי ניהו וקא עזרי על לפני וכו'. הנה
 זכרנל: ועגלון.
 דריור זלע"ז
 שמונה את
 הסוסים זעגלות
 וזכרנל וסוס
 כמרס דאתרס:
 פלונית דביתהו דרבי פלוני סלקת
 למתא בופתנא למזבן לה לבושין
 חדתיין, מיסית פלונית מסנסנתא
 אתת להכי לבי הלולא של פלונית
 ואזיל וחשיב להון כי רוכלא עד דסיים באמן:
 מתני' שלשה חייבין בכרבל ואלו הן רב רופא
 ועגלון:

גמ' מאי כרבל אמר רב ספרא צילינדרא, מאי
 צילינדרא כפלושא מאי כפלושא כלפקא מאי כלפקא סתיו
 פיפא ואמאי קרי ליה כרבלא משום שכל הנושא מתנאה בו
 כתרנגול הזה שמתנאה בכרבלתו וקורא ומקעקע ומודיע לכל
 שתרנגול הוא. איבעיא להו כרבל רשות היחיד או רשות הרבים
 הוה. תא שמע החייזין והסנדלרין שעלו לגדולה ונעשו גבאין
 ופרזיזנטיין בחברות קונין להם כרבלין ואינן יוצאין בהן בחול
 אלא בשבתות וימים טובים בלבד והא סתם כרבלין קטנים זורקין
 בהן אבנים, מרשות הרבים, וסתם קטנים שזורקין אבנים,
 קטנים של ישראל גינהו, אי אמרת בשלמא כרבל רשות הרבים
 הוה שרי להם לקטנים בפחות מד' אמות, אלא אי אמרת רשות
 היחיד זריקת אבנים מי שרי וקא עברי על לפני עור דא תתן מכשול.
 לעולם אימא לך רשות היחיד ומאי יוצאין, יוצאין שלא ברשות
 חכמים. תיש שלשה חייבין בכרבל ואלו הן רב וכו' ואתמר עלה
 בחול וקז בשבת. אמר רב חבימא דלמא לכולי עלמא אסור
 ולרבנן שרי מידי רהוה אשעטנו לכהן גדול. מאי הוה עלה.
 אמר רב חבימא ברמית הוא דכתיב (שה"ש י') ראשך עליך ככרמל
 מלך אסור ברהמים ומאן מלכי רבנן: אמר רב מבינא
 כרבל

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קדרון ואסיין. עגלונין ורופאין מתכזדין ומסרסין את הילדים לפעמים
 צעיני הצרור' לפי סוסיאן: רב הסגר צכ"מ ורב הסוגל היינו מלמד שחוגל
 האי קרא ודאי
 צרופא קא
 משתעי שמרנה
 פגרים מתים ע"י
 סמני הרפואות
 שלו: רב סריסים.
 לפי שרוב
 סמוס לים
 שצעימיריקא
 אינן מומחין
 ונקיין צאומתן

ברבל חובת עגלונין היה ומפני
 מה נתחייבו בו רבנין של ישראל
 משום דרובבין על כנסת ישראל
 ומקיימים בה הא דכתיב (שם א')
 לסוסתי ברכבי פרעה ונ' אמר

רזיס עתה וכו'
 דרש רזיס מלשון
 רזני: שמקדימין
 וקורין. שכותצין
 כמין הקדמה
 למאמריהן

ליה רב מקשן אמרת ברבנין מה תאמר ברופאין,
 אמר ליה רופאין וודאי דומיא דעגלונין נינתו
 כדאמרי אינשי קדרין ואסיין לפום סוסיא מתכבדין.
 רב חבימא אמר ברבל חבת רבנין היא ולא נתחייבו בו רופאין
 ועגלונים אלא משום דמתקריין נמי רבנין דכתיב גבי רופא (עמוס ה')
 רב הפגר בכל מקום וגבי עגלון כתיב (ישעיה ל"א) על רכב כי רב.
 מתקיף ליה מקשן אי הכי שוחז מוהל ומלמד נמי רבנן
 מתקריין דכתיב רב טבחים. רב סריסים ורב החובל. א"ל אין
 הכי נמי והא קתני מתני' שלשה ותו לא, אמר ליה משום
 דבהני מלתא דפשיטא היא דבכלל רבנין הן דתנן ערבי
 רבנין ברבנין, ואלו שנקראין ערבי רבנין, החזונים והשוחטין
 המוהלין המלמדין השדכנין והבדחנין, ומפני מה נקראין כן
 משום דעבידי לאחלופי אומנותיהן זו בזו ומשתמשים בערבוביא.
 תנא בא וראה כזה גדול כוחה של ברבל בעמיריקא שאפילו עם
 הארץ נמיד נעשה על ידו לרב, לרב סלקא דעתך, אלא אימא
 לערב רב. אמר רב ספרא מאי קרא דכתיב (שמות ה') הן רבים
 עתה עם הארץ:

תני תנא קמיה דרב ספרא הרדקטורין חייבין בכרבלין משום
 שכך דרכן של סופרין וכתבין מאמרים לעתונים
 שמקדימין וקורין לרדוקטוריהן רבנין. מתקיף ליה רב ספרא
 והא

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למאמריהן ומסכרין נשמתו וגדולתו של רדקטור וקורין לו רב וגדול ציטראל:
 וסא אין חזין וכו'. והסיד מחייצין את רדקטור נכרצל נשזיל סוכרין
 סוכטנין קורין לו
 רב ולכן ידעין והא אין חבין לאדם שרא בפניו. אמר דיה
 צודלאו רב סא: משום שמדפיסין כל דברי סופריהן בעתונים
 חדרן עלך מה בין רב: שלהן ועתונים בפניהן הן. איני והאמר רב קראן
 הני רדקטורין במה זכין בשביל שמקצין
 מאמריהן של סופרים מאריכין ושפוסקין ראשיהן של מכתבים
 ומדלגין על הכנויין שבהם. אמר רב הכימא גמירא שאינם
 מדלגין אלא על הכנויין של גנאי שבהן ולא על הכנויין של
 שבח שאין לך רדקטור שמקצר בשבתו: אמר רב מבינא השתא
 דאתית להכי מחברין נמי חייבין בכרבלין הן משום שכותבי
 הסכמות קורין אפילו לפתית שבמחברים רב:

הדרן עלך מה בין רב

מתני' וספרו צידו. שהולך לזקש המדיר את ציתו. שכותנעל דלת
נדנות ואוחז ספרו צידו משום ציתו, רוכלין ונעלי מומין לא יצאו

אל הצית: ונעלי

מומין. לאו דוקא

אלא כל עני

שחז' על הסתח'.

זמזמע ואורחא

דמלתא נקיט:

למאי ניה למקח

וממכר. דאי

אמרת מ ח צ ר

כרוכל דמי מקח

וממכר נמי איכא

ואי כזעל מוס

דמי כדנא איכא

מ ק ח וממכר

ליכא: לפי שאין

לה תוצעים.

אין

בלשון הקודש אבל כותבין בשאר כל לשון ואפילו

בלשון הבבלית שפיר דמי: תנן התם המדיר

את ביתו מרוכלין ומבעלי מומין אסור במחברין

איבעי להו מחבר כרוכל או כבעל מוס דמי

למאי נפקא מינה למקח וממכר. ת"ש וחכמים אומרים כל שאין

לו מנעלים לרגליו ותנינא לעולם ימכור אדם כל מה שיש לו

ויקנה מנעלים לרגליו אי אמרת בשלמא מחבר כבעל מוס דמי מומין

לאו למכירה נתנה אלא אי אמרת כרוכל דמי הא רובל סחורה

אית ליה וסחורה למכירה נתנה ימכור ויקנה ליה מנעלים. לעולם

מחבר כרוכל דמי וסחורתו לאו למכירה נתנה לפי שאין לה

תובעים. ת"ש איזה מחבר שנקרא חכם זה שמשים את עצמו

בחרש מביישין אותו ואינו מתבייש דכתיב (חזקיה נ"ח) כמו חרש

יאמם אוננו חובר חברים מחכם ש"מ דמחבר כבעל מוס

דמי

גלוי דעת שמחבר

הוא וראוי לנדב'

הגונה. ופעמים

כדי שמזיקין יסו

נדילין הימנו

כשינא יחיד

צלילה ומכירין

ע"י ספרו שאינו

מן הסת"ס:

גמ' משכימין

לפתחן. ואין

צריכין המחזרים

לסחור על

הסתחים: ואפילו

לשון הסבלית.

לשון שני ישראל

מדצדין זה

ונקראת צלית

משו' שהיא צלול'

משצעים לשון

ונלע"ז קורין

להרגו"ן:

מתני'

איזה הוא מחבר כל שהוא חוזר

על הפתחים וספרו בידו דברי

רב מחבריאלי, וחכמים אומרים

כל שאין מנעלים לרגליו:

גמ' אמר רב ספרא לא שנו אלא

במחברין של ישראל אבל מחברין

של אומות העולם קוני ספריהן

משכימין לפתחן וכשהן יוצאין

לחוץ יוצאין במנעלים טובים

ומנוהצים, ובמחברים של ישראל

נמי לא שנו אלא בכותבין ספריהן

מסכת איזהו מחבר פרק שביעי עמיריקא 28

אין קופטין על סחירתו של מזנר ולא יוכל למכור אותה ולקנות לו מנעלים:
דלאו סנדלר הוה. דאי הוה סנדלר הוה עוסק במלאכתו: ריח של זפת נודף.

דנריסון נודפין
זפתוסיון ניכר
הוא שכותניסון
היו ידיו
מלוכלכות זפת
וזו דרכו של
סנדלרים:
וכחם מרות
נטועים עלי
אסופות. שכל
מי שעסק
בנטיעת

דמי שים: תניא כל המחבר ספר בעמיריקא או
שבא ממדינת הים וספרו בידו הרי זה משוגע
קל וחומר מדוד מלך ישראל, ומה דוד מלך ישראל
שלא כתב אלא תוין אחדים שלא לצורך נחשב
למשגע זה שכתב או שהביא ספר כלו שלא לצורך
לא בל שכן. אמר רב ידעיה כל כאב ולא כאב
ראש של מחברין, כל חילי וקא חולי הדרוקו, כל
מיתוש וקא מיתוש של סופרין אי אפשר לה
לעמיריקא בלי תופר אבל אפשר לה בלי סופר.

אשרי למי שהוא תופר או למי שהוא סופר: וחכמים אומרים כל
שאין לו וכו' במאי פליגי אמר רב רצעני בסנדלר שנעשה מחבר
רב מחבריא סבר אוקמינן גברא אחזקתיה כיון דסנדלר הוה
ודאי אין לו מנעלים לרגליו כדאמרי אינשי סנדלרין יחפין אזלין
ובלאו סמנא דחוזר על הפתחים וספרי בידו לא ידעינן בודמחבר
הוא, וחכמים סברי לא אוקמינן גברא אחזקתיה דהואיל דנעשה
למחבר גלי אנפשיה דלאו סנדלר הוה. אמר ריה רב מקשן ומי
איכא כהאי גוונא. אמר ליה אין כדאמר רב קראן רובו של
ספרים שנדפסו בעמיריקא ריח שזפת נודף מהן. ההוא גברא
דיתב אסדנא דמסאנא ארבעין שנין ולא אסתעיא ליה מלתא סליק
לעמיריקא וחביר ספרא דהוה ביה מלאי על גבי מלאי יאזיל מקרתא
לקרתא ומביתא לביתא וזבין ואסיף ממון הרבה, כי מטא הדבר
לרב ספרא אמר היינו דכתיב (קהלת י"ב) וכמסמורות נטועים
בעלי אסופות. אמר רב קראו לרדי חזי לי האי ספרא דלא

סוס

מסכת איזהו מחבר פרק שביעי עמ' ריקא

זנטיעת זממרו' הוה ביה אלא הקדמה אריכתא בלבד
זסנדלס זמאסף והוה מוקף הסכמות של רבנין כסנדל
זמון על ידי שניעה למחצת:
מוקף הסכמות כסנדלר זמסומ'

המסומר :

הדרן עלך איזהו מחבר

הסכמות של רבנין הקיפוסו וסוי חזי כסנדל שמוקף זמסמרו:

הדרן עלך איזהו מחבר



מתני אין מצילין אותן. זשאינו זריק לקנות קמיירי :
במי שנכתבין בלשון זלולה . לשון זרגון שזלולה מכל הלשונות : סופרים

מזולבלין. שאין
זהו דעה : זטל
ענין אכיל
זמנן ולמה לי
לגנון : לכתחלה
לא. משמע דאינו
חייב לכתחלה
בשריפתן אלא
אם אירע דליק'
בדיעבד אין מצילין
שאינו

מתני

כל כתבי העתים הבבליים אין מצילין אותן
משני הדריקה ומעונין גניזה :

במי כתבי העתים הבבליים בעמיריקא מאי
עבדתהון. אמר רב מבינא כתבי העתים של
ישראל. ואמאי קרי להן בבליים משום שנכתבין
בלשון בלולה ועיי סופרין מבולבלין. כדתנא רב
לננאי עלובין ישראל מכל האומות. שכל האומות
שלא נתנה להן אלא לשון בלולה משמשות עכשו בלשון ברורה,
וישראל שנתנה לו לשון ברורה משמש עכשו בלשון בלולה.
ולא עוד אלא שסופרין מבולבלין בלבד את ספרותו וקלקלו את
מעמו הדא הוא דכתיב (אויב י"ב) מסיר שפה לנאמנים ומעם זקנים
יקח: ומעונין גניזה. גניזא למאי אי נימא גניזה כדי לקרות בהן
לאחר זמן. הא אמר רב קראן כל העתונין דין שעתן ואם עבר
זמנן בטל ענינן. ועתונין הבבליין בטל ענינן אפילו בזמנן.
אלא גניזה דומיא דחמץ לשריפה. וכדתניא דנו חכמים את
העתונין הבבליין בשריפה משום שמלאין הבל וריק וכתיב (הבקוק ב')
וייגעו עמים בדי אש ולאומים בדי ריק יעפו. מתקיף לה
רב מקשן והא תני מתניתן אין מצילין. בדיעבד אין לכתחלה
לא. אמר רב חנונאי סתם דליקה לכתחלה היא דאמר קרא
(שמות כ"ג) כי תצא אש וגו' שלם ישלם המבעיר את הבערה מכאן
שאין אש יוצאה מן השמים אלא אם כן מביאין אותה
מן ההדיוט : תניא גונזין העתונין הבבליין מלפני הנשים
והקטנים משום שמלאין לצנות ונבול פה. תניא אידך שני
דברים קבלו ישראל מן העמין ויוצאין בהן על ידי לצנות
ונבול

מסכת כל כתבי פרק שמיני עמיריקא 81

שאינו דומי שמיעי לראי. שצטיאטרלות לקוראיו. שאינו חושב את עצמו כאלון
 שומעין את הלכות והכזול פה ואין לעתון שלו לכתוב צו מה שחכן.
 רואין אותן מעל ונבול פה בלבד ואלו הן עתונין לקוראיו וכותנ
 הכתב כמו וציאמראות. אמר רב חבימא גדול רק מה שמציא
 צעתונין וראים חמורי משמיעה: להם תועלת:
 מתון צרוחו: עונשן של סופרים שמנבלין את הדרן ערך כל כתבי
 שאינו יוצא לריצ פיהן מעונשן של אקטורין לפי ומליקא לה מסכת
 עם כלמי שפגע שאינה דומה שמיעה לראיה: עמיריקא
 3717: ע3

אמר רב ספרא אין לך דבר העומד ברומי של
 עם כעתוננים ואין לך ארץ השמופה בעתונין בעמיריקא ואין לך
 עם בעמיריקא שעתוניו מכוערין כישראל ומי גרם לזאת רדקטורים
 שאינן מהונגין: תנא שבע מדות מנו חכמים ברדקטור מהונג
 ואלו הן: מתון ברוחו, עומד בדעתו ובדבורו, אוהב את השלום,
 אוהב את האמת ומקבלה ממי שאמרה, הוה עבד לקוראיו, אדון
 לספריו ושפל רוח בפני כל מי שנדוד ממנו וחלופיהן ברדקטור
 שאינו מהונג. על רדקטור שאינו מהונג הכתוב אומר (ירמיה ט')
 ופקדתי על כל מל בערלה, ועל רדקטור מהונג הכתוב אומר
 (ישעיה ל"ג) והיה אמונת עתיך חסן ישועות חכמת ודעת:

הדרן עלך כל כתבי:

ומליקא לה מסכת עמיריקא.

מדרש אמת

מאת

גרשון ראזענצווייג



הוצאת בית מסחר הספרים של
ש. דרוקערמאן, 50 סאנעל סמריט, ניו יארק.

מדרש אמרתי

המולך מהודו ועד כוש. כלומר שלקח לעצמו את כל יהודי ולעמו נתן את כל יושי באורחא דקסרין דיספיטאין ומפשאין בזמן הזה.

חור ברפת ותכלת. מפני מה נכתבה תיבת חור בחית גדולה. אמר רב בון משום שהיו לצני הדור מרגנין אחרי אחשורוש ואומרים שגנב הוא, מפני שקודם מלכותו היה עני ומיד אחד נשיאותו נתעשר, מה עשה, צוה לכתוב להם חור בחית גדולה, כלומר לא עכברא גנב אלא חורא גנב.

והשתיה כדת אין אונס. אתמר אין אונס בשתיה לפי שמי שתחלתו באונס מופו ברצון.

ותמאן המלכה ושתי. ראשונה שבנשים שעמדה על זכויותיה ושררשה הפשיות לאשה, ומה שבקשה לא מצאה.

ויאמר המלך לחכמים יודעי העתים ראה נמורה שטפש היה שנמלך ביודעי העתים הרדקסורין והרפורטורין שבדור. ולא ידע דהני גוברין אין להם בעולמן אלא סנסציאות בלבד. ובשעה שצרכו ישראל לשלוח שער המדברח לא שלחו אותו אלא ביד איש עתי.

ומדבר ברשון עמו. וכי מה ענין זה לכאן אלא זה שאמר הכתוב, ועיני כסיל בקצה הארץ. צפה אחשורוש באצטגנינות שכו שעתידים דייני נזרות באמיריקא לבסל את נזרתו הראשונה ולקיים מצות שלטון אשה על בעלה, אמר להם חייכם שתכשלו בנזרתי האחרונה. אני אמרתי ומדבר כלשון עמו ואתם גוזרים על הגרים שיהיו יכולים לדבר ולכתוב כלשון

עמם. אני גזרתי על הזכרים ואתם גוזרים אפילו על הנקבות.
אתם אומרים לי מול קיסם ואני אומר לכם מולו קורה.

בן יאיר בן שמעי בן קיש. שלשה כנויים
לישראל אחד לשבח ושנים לפגם. יאיר על שם שהאיר ככל
אומות העולם. שמעו וקיש על שם שדרכו להונת.

ויהי אומן את הדסה. כל מקום שנאמר ויהי משמש
צרה, לפי שבחנוכה של בת ישראל הכתוב כאן מדבר, וצפה
שעתידין בני ישראל קולל ולהתירשל בחנוכה של בנותיהן
ולפוטון מתלמוד תורה ולשונן וספרותן, וכיון שראה כך התחיל
צוח וי ויהי אומן.

כי מרדכי צוה עליה אשר לא תגיד.
מרדכי דכתיב עליו הגיד אשר הוא יהודי מה ראה שצוה
לאסתר אשר לא תגיד, אלא אמר מרדכי יודע אני שדרכם של
שונאיהם של ישראל שכשם שהם מתרחקים מן היהודים כך
הם מזקרים אל בנותיהם, מוטב לה לאסתר שלא ידעו בה
שבת ישראל היא.

ויבקש המן להשמיד. מפני מה נכתב כאן
להשמיד ולא כתיב להרוג ולאבד לפי שדרכם של שונאיהם של
ישראל שמתחילין בשמר תחלה, וזהו שאמר הכתוב ויבקש,
שישונאי ישראל אפילו בשעה שחושבין לעקור את ישראל גוזרין
עליהן שמר תחלה, ובשעה שהם גוזרין הם מבקשין ואונסין
אותם ברצון על דתן, ומתחילין בלשון בקשה תחלה, כדכתיב,
ויבקש המן.

בחדש הראשון הוא חדש ניסן. ראה אותו
רשע ולא ראה כהונן, ראה שעתידים רבים מבני ישראל להכשל
בחדש זה באיסור כרת, ולא ראה כהונן, שאיך ראה כהונן היה
מוצא הכשרים של רבנים בכך החניות ואפילו על כל דבר

מדרש אסתר

האסור מפני שהוא חמץ גמור / והרבנין אינם יראים מכרת
דעוסקין בקדשי שמים הן, וככהנים הם לכל דבר, והכתוב
אומר אל תכריתו שבט משפחות הקהתי.

וכשר הדבר לפני המלך. בשעה שאמרה
אסתר מלת וכשר, יצאה בת קול ואמרה, חייד בתי שעתידה
שוק של כשרות באמעריקא להקרא על שמך ודא היא שוקא
דאסתר דבמתא דנויארק רבתי.

ורבים מעמי הארץ מתייהדים. בעמי
הארץ של ישראל הכתוב מדבר, שכיון שראו שאף על פי
שאינם יודעים שיהודים הם, יהודים הם לפורעניות, חזרו
בתשובה ונעשו יהודים כשרים, כדמסיים ליה קרא, כי נפל
פחד היהודים עליהם.

תם ונשלם.



הגדה לסופרים

מאת

גרשון ראזענצווייג



הוצאת בית מסחר הספרים של
ש. דרוקערמאן, 50 סאנעל סטריט, ניו יארק.

הגדה לסופרים.

הא לחמא עניא די אכלין סופריא דישראל בארעא
חדתא. כל דאיהו כופר יכפן, כל דאיהו מחבר יצרף, השתא
מחברין לשנה הבאה רוכלין בהאי ארעא, השתא סופרין
לשנה הבאה תופרין.

מה נשתנה הסופר העברי מכל הסופרים שבעולם,
שכל הסופרים שבעולם אוכלים מספרותם חמץ ומצה, הסופר
העברי איננו אוכל מספרותו חמץ ואין לו ממנו אלא מצה?
שכל הסופרים שבעולם נוחלין כבוד ותפארת ואפילו לא
כתבו אלא שאר ירקות, הסופר העברי ואפילו הוא מן המצוינים
נוחל רק קלון מכבוד ועולמו פלו מדור?

שכל הסופרים שבעולם אין מטבילין את עמיהם בחנם
אפילו פעם אחת, הסופר העברי טובל את עמו בחנם כל הימים?
שכל הסופרים שבעולם מוכרין את ספריהם ועתוניהם בין
יושבין ובין מסובין, הסופר העברי צריך לחזור עם ספרו על
הפתחים, ואם מו"ל הוא צריך לשלוח את עתונו שנת תמימה
ואחר כך אין משלמין לו אפילו בסובין?

עבדים אנחנו להספרות העברית ויוציאנו ה' אלהינו
מכלל כל הסופרים שבעולם, ואפילו אנו חכמים, אנו נבונים, אנו
יודעים אה התורה ואת החיים מצוה עלינו להיות עניים ואביונים
ולקיים את ספרותנו מעני, וכל המרבה להיות עני ואביון
הרי זה משובח.

מעשה בחכמים וסופרים גדולים שהיו מסובין כל ימיהם וכל לילותיהם והיו כותבין ספרים טובים ומועילים לבני עמם וכשהגיע יום מותם לא השאירו לנשיהם ובניהם אפילו למעודה של שחרית?

אמר רב ספרא הרי אני כבן שבעים שנה ולא זכיתי שתאמר יציאת סופרים עברים לאמעריקא עד שדרשה בן חכימא, שנאמר יתנך ה' עשוק ורצוץ כל הימים, הימים בעולם הישן כל הימים בעולם החדש.

ברוך שנתן מכתב עתי עברי לעמו ישראל במקום הזה, ברוך הוא כנגד ארבעה בנים נתנו, אחד חכם, ואחד רשע, ואחד תם, ואחד שאינו יודע לקרוא.

חכם מה הוא עושה, משלם וקורא.

רשע מה הוא עושה קורא ואינו משלם.

תם מה הוא עושה, קורא ומשלם.

ושאינו יודע לקרוא, אינו קורא ואינו משלם.

יכול שמול העברי הוא בעל-בתים ונוטל שכר דירות מראש חדש, תלמוד לומר ביום ההוא, אי ביום ההוא יכול שפרנסתו מוכנת לו מבעוד יום, תלמוד לומר בעבור זה, בעבור זה לא נאמר אלא לומר לך שאין לו מהעברי אלא מצה לחם עני, ומרורים הרבה מונחים לפניו.

והוא (העברי) שעמד לשפת קדשנו שלא תשכח מישראל בארץ הזאת, שלא אחד בלבד עמד עליה, אלא שבכל עיר ועיר עומדים עליה לבלותה והקדוש ברוך הוא מצילה מידם.

צא ולמד מה בקש רבן הסינסינאמי לעשות לשפתנו.

הגדה לסופרים

שנזר על הזכרים שאין להם חלק ונחלה בשפת עבר ופטר
ממנה אפילו את תלמידיו הרבנים שנאמר ויהיו שם לפני גדול
עצום — ורב!

וירדן סופרים לאמעריקא, אנוסים עד פי הרבור, וינח
שם מלמדים בבתי תלמוד תורה, וירעו אותם העברים ויענום
ויתנו עליהם עבודה קשה, וירא ה' את ענים ואת עמלם ואת
לחצם. וירא את ענים זו פרישות דרך ארץ של מנהלים
ומשגיחים, ואת עמלם אלו הבנים, ואת לחצם זו הרחק
אשר בביתם.

ואלו עשר מכות שהביא הקב"ה על סופרי ישראל.

דקדוק
צרות הלשון
כנת סופרים
עניות
דרדקות
שפלות
בורים גבירים
אביונים משכילים
חבוט הדפוס
מכת בקרת.

(עד כאן אומרים באמעריקא.)

ואמרתם זבח כסף.

אומץ נבחרותך הפלאת כסף, בראש כל חפצים נשאת כסף,
נלית לקלומבוס זאת ארץ הכסף,
ואמרתם זבח כסף.

דלתיה דפק ישראל נודד אין כסף, הסעיד ידו בנעצים

הגדה לסופרים

4

ושבח נקדות הכסף, ואל הבקר הושיב רבניו מקנת כסף.
ואמרתם זבח כסף.

זועמו דת ודעת ולוהמו כסגני כסף, חליץ מהן הלוש — מסכת
הכסף, מאמאי מביתם מוב סחרה מכסף.
ואמרתם זבח כסף.

יה ראש כל אונים עשו מוצא לכסף, כביר בנו לו היכלות
כצפים כסף, לבלתי תת לבא בפתחיהם מבלי כסף.
ואמרתם זבח כסף.

מסגרת סגרה תורת אל בארון כסף, נשמדו תפלות ישראל כבו
נמאם כסף, שורפו חקי קדש במצרף הכסף.
ואמרתם זבח כסף.

עוד היום געה חרש אלילי כסף, פס ידו כתבה לסעקע נבחרת
מכסף, צוה לשפת קדש לצאת חנם אין כסף.
ואמרתם זבח כסף.

קרועה לגורים ינה נחפה בכסף, רפורמים ואורמדוקסים עצביהם
כסף, שתי אלה נתקו בעמי חבל הכסף, תעוז יד החנופה וחלל
אשר לו הכסף —

ואמרתם זבח כסף.

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