

STUDIES IN JUDAISM
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VOLUME ELEVEN

THE FATHERS
ACCORDING
TO RABBI NATHAN

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(ABOT DE RABBI NATHAN)

VERSION B

A TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY BY

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LEIDEN
E. J. BRILL
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Poor Quality Original

CHAPTER NINE

"Bone of my bones (Gen. 2:23)."¹ Why is it hard for a woman to be reconciled and easy for man to be reconciled? Because woman was created from bone and man was created from earth. Even as bone, though you submerge it in water, does not soften,² so is woman who is created from bone. Man is created from earth. Even as earth becomes soft when you put a drop of water on it, so is man.

Why does woman adorn herself and man not adorn himself? Because the woman was created from the man and the man was created from the earth. Even as flesh will go bad if you do not put in the spices it needs, so is woman. If she is not adorned, she goes bad.³ But earth does not go bad, and man is the same way.

Why does woman's voice travel and man's voice not travel? A parable. To what can this be compared? To a pot which is full of meat; people do not know what is in the pot. Had there been bone in it, the p. 25 sound would travel and people would know what is in it. In the same way woman's voice travels.⁴

Why does the man deposit (his sperm) in the woman and the woman not deposit in the man? A parable. To what may this be compared? To a person who was holding onto a deposit. He kept seeking someone to give it back to.⁵

Why does the man make demands of the woman and the woman not make demands on the man? Because man seeks that part of him which was lost, but the part of him which was lost does not seek him out.⁶

¹ Gen 2:23 is the only Scriptural verse quoted in this chapter. The chapter continues the theme of male-female relations which closed Chapter 8. Their respective origins in earth and in bone or flesh are made the basis for a series of contrasts with a common pattern: Why does a woman such and such and a man not. Many of these contrasts are found in BerRab 17:8 (T.A., pp. 158-60); see Tan, *Tzafad*, 8 for the contrast of earth and bone; see also *Legrada*, I, p. 67 and V, pp. 89-90, n. 45.

² *Arik* literally means "to disintegrate; fall apart."

³ "To go bad" in reference to a woman must here mean "prove unattractive."

⁴ A solid object (bone) would cause a high pitched sound; soft flesh would cause only

a dull, muffled sound. See BerRab 17:8 (T.A., p. 159).

⁵ See BerRab 17:8 (T.A., p. 159) for more explicit terminology: *mugyad zr'*. See also Schechter, n. 7. The man is compared to a person keeping something not his. He is responsible and is eager to return the deposit to the person to whom it belongs.

⁶ See BerRab 17:8 and also a similar thought in A p. 4 (G p. 10); Kidd 2b. This is a

CHAPTER NINE

Why does the woman look at the man and the man look at the earth? Because the woman looks at the stuff out of which she was created and the man looks at the stuff out of which he was created.⁷

Why does woman cover her head and man not cover his head?⁸ A parable. To what may this be compared? To a woman who disgraced herself and because she disgraced herself, she is ashamed in the presence of people. In the same way Eve disgraced herself and caused her daughters to cover their heads.

Why do women march first in front of the bier? What is it they say? We caused all the inhabitants of the world to come to this.⁹

For three offenses women die when they are giving birth: For carelessness in regard to menstrual purity, the dough offering and lighting the sabbath lamp.¹⁰

Why were the commandments of menstrual purity given to woman and not to man? Because Adam was the blood of the Holy One, blessed be He; Eve came and spilled it. Consequently, the commandments of menstrual purity were given to her so that (the sin involved) the blood which she spilled might be atoned for.¹¹

(This, of course, refers to the usual position taken in sexual intercourse. See BerRab 17:8.)

Gen. 3:16 speaks of the woman's desire for the man euphemism for sexual intercourse. Gen. 3:16 speaks of the woman's desire for the man and would fit the pattern in other paragraphs here where the woman is usually the first one mentioned and the man second. But the parallel supports ARNB and the reverse order, as in the text.

(This paragraph the theme begins to turn to the subjugation and inferiority of women, and to Eve's responsibility for the sin in the garden of Eden, a theme continued in the following paragraphs. See the New Testament, 1 Cor. 11:2-16 for the covering of a woman's head as a sign of subjugation and its uncovering as a sign of shame equal to baldness. In ARNA p. 15 (G p. 27) and BabKam 8:6 Akiba fines a man 400 zuz for uncovering a woman's head in the market place. See also *Legrada*, V, p. 90, n. 45.

⁸ See A p. 4 (G p. 10); BerRab 17:8. Also below Ch. 42, p. 117, 11. In this paragraph the theme begins to turn to the subjugation and inferiority of women, and to Eve's responsibility for the sin in the garden of Eden, a theme continued in the following paragraphs. See the New Testament, 1 Cor. 11:2-16 for the covering of a woman's head as a sign of subjugation and its uncovering as a sign of shame equal to baldness. In ARNA p. 15 (G p. 27) and BabKam 8:6 Akiba fines a man 400 zuz for uncovering a woman's head in the market place. See also *Legrada*, V, p. 90, n. 45.

⁹ See below, Ch. 42 (p. 117, 1, 12) and Schechter's note 12.

¹⁰ These three commands are the classic ones for women. See ARNB, Ch. 42, p. 117 (bottom); Shab 2:6; Shab 31b-32a; JetShah 2:6; TanBub, *Gen.*, p. 28; *Lez.*, p. 53. See also *Legronka*, V, pp. 89-90, n. 45. For a pictorial representation of these three duties on a small silver box of the fifteenth century in the Bezalel Museum (Jerusalem), see Elian Bickerman, *ITTR* 66 (1965), p. 131.

¹¹ The Mas. read *yekpr*, a masculine form, both here and below; the versions mentioned in the previous note also have this form. The subject be *kt'*, sin.

In BerRab Eve is pronounced guilty because she simply *shul Adlam*'s blood. In R, here, her sin is compounded by the fact that Adlam is himself the blood of God. Further on in this chapter, in B, p. 117 and in Jer Shab 2:6 Adlam is the blood of the world. Licherman (*Yerushalmi Ki Phahuto*, pp. 72-73) proves that in Palestine *dm* (blood)

Why was the commandment of the dough offering given to woman and not to man? Because Adam was the pure dough offering of the Holy One, blessed be He, and she made him impure. Consequently, the commandment of the dough offering was given to her to so that (the sin involved in) the dough offering which she made impure might be atoned for.

Why was the commandment concerned with the Sabbath lamp given to woman and not to man? Because Adam was the light of the Holy One, blessed be He; by him He brought light to all the inhabitants of the world. She extinguished it.¹¹ Consequently, the commandment concerned with the Sabbath lamp was given to her and she was put under obligation to light the lamp so that (the sin involved in) the lamp which she extinguished might be atoned for.

Adam was the blood of the world. Because she caused its spilling, she was put under obligation to observe the law of menstrual purity. Adam was the dough offering of the world. Because she caused him to become impure, she was put under obligation to observe the law of the dough offering. Adam was the lamp of the world. Because she caused the lamp to be extinguished, she was put under obligation to observe the lighting of the (Sabbath) lamp. On the basis of this the Sages said:¹² For three offenses women die when they are giving birth: for carelessness in regard to menstrual purity, the dough offering and lighting the Sabbath lamp.¹³

and 'dm (man; Adam) were pronounced similarly. Hence the identification of Adam as blood.

12 Other sources quote Prov. 20:27: "The spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord." The image of a person as the light of the world is often used of Jesus in the New Testament. See especially the Gospel according to John.

*13 Schechter (p. xxxv, n. 7) says that this introductory phrase (*im k' n' mrr*) is a sign of lateness. But see J. N. Epstein, *Mabot le-Nuam Ha-Mishnah*, p. 72n where the same phrase is used to introduce a mishnah in the halakhic midrashim. Granted that this saying is not strict halaka, the phrase and following saying could easily be an early component of ARNB. See p. 12, l. 15 (Ch. 3, n. 5) for this expression with a halakah.*

14 This paragraph is a doublet of what went before, in a more concise form. See Schechter, n. 28, who attributes it to a scribe's error.

CHAPTER TEN

ANTIGONUS OF SOKO¹ TOOK OVER FROM SIMEON THE RIGHTEOUS. HE USED TO SAY: BE NOT LIKE SLAVES THAT SERVE THEIR MASTER FOR THE SAKE OF REWARD;² BE RATHER LIKE SLAVES WHO SERVE THEIR MASTER WITH NO THOUGHT OF REWARD. AND LET THE FEAR OF HEAVEN P. 26 BE UPON YOU, AND YOU WILL RECEIVE A REWARD, BOTH IN THIS WORLD AND IN THE WORLD TO COME, AS IF YOU HAD DONE (IT YOURSELF).³

He had two disciples, Saddok and Boethus, and when they heard this saying, they taught it to their disciples.⁴ And their disciples quoted

¹ Antigonos is a Greek name, as is Antalyon below (PA 1:10). The presence of such names in a Jewish chain of tradition suggests the influence of Hellenism in Palestine. Soko (Biblical *sudar*) is a place in Judah. BDB (p. 943) distinguishes two Soko's, one in the Shephelah and another in the hill country south of Hebron. The expression "of Soko" in Hebrew is "a man of" ('yf). It seems to mean simply that the person comes from that place, not that he is a notable of the place. See its use in Hal 4:10; Orth 2:5, 12; Git 6:7; Ealyu 6:2; Mid 1:2.

² Originally the maxim of Antigonus referred to the living allowance (*prē*) which a master could grant or not grant to his slaves in Hellenistic times. See Elias J. Bickerman, "The Maxim of Antigonus of Socho," *HTR* 44 (1951), 153-65. When the word *prē* was no longer understood, it came to mean reward or compensation of some kind—it's meaning here.

³ See A p. 26 (G p. 39).⁵ In both A and B the idea of compensation in the future has been added to the maxim of Antigonus. (The maxim's original import was a denial of resurrection from the dead [Finkelstein, *Pharisees*, pp. 153-54].) Least people act only with reference to this life and the immediate fear of God, a later teacher added this final clause to the saying.

The text in Mr. R. is difficult. I have followed Ms. H and P and Schechter. Schechter (n. 2) suggests that this final sentence might have been added by a copyist, imitating (n. 2). Yet, ARNA (p. 26; G p. 39) also adds a sentence with a similar meaning: ArN 1A 2:2. This paragraph is a doublet of what went before, in a more concise form. See Schechter, n. 28, who attributes it to a scribe's error.

⁴ Version A does not explicitly say that Saddok and Boethus were disciples of Antigonus. But it does say that he had two disciples and Saddok and Boethus are mentioned a bit later in the chapter. On the other hand, if we accept Boethus as the founder of the Herodian high priestly family, which opposed the regular (Saddikite) priests of the Temple, it is difficult to believe that the two were not disciples of Antigonus; B states this and A certainly allows of that interpretation. As disciples of Antigonus: B states this and A certainly allows of that interpretation. Yet, Finkelstein (*Pharisees*, pp. 765-68) argues persuasively that A is the earlier version and that according to it Saddok and Boethus were not disciples of Antigonus. The pairs mentioned after Antigonus in PA were actually his disciples and they must be

Adam was lying as a soulless lump (stretching) from one end of the world to the other⁷. God made every generation with its judges pass before him along with every generation with its apostates, diviners, hardened criminals,⁸ and robbers. He was lying as a soulless lump and God made them pass before him like flocks of sheep.⁹ God showed him a just man with things going well for him, a just man with things going badly for him, a wicked man with things going well for him and a wicked man with things going badly for him. In When the Holy One, blessed be He, showed Adam the just who were to be his descendants,¹⁰ he gave him one of his own days, which is equivalent to a thousand years, as Scripture says : "For a thousand years in your sight are but as yesterday when it is past. ... (Ps. 90:4)." God withdrew seventy years from him and gave them to his children and grandchildren until the end of history, as Scripture says : "The years of our life are three score and ten." And so the life which Adam lived was nine hundred and thirty years.

TEN decrees were passed with regard to Adam, ten with regard to Eve, ten with regard to the serpent and ten with regard to the earth.¹¹ The naming of people who passed in front of Adam is more full here than in other versions. This whole paragraph is placed here because it shows us the results of Adam's actions during his first day in the garden which have been just recounted.

⁷ ARNB reads : *mazayaf*. This is literally one who plans evil and no one who pre-meditates what he does.

⁸ This sentence seems to begin the subject of this paragraph again, and so it probably comes from another source. For the expression *bay' mervin*, see II 1:2. According to Albeck it should be *bay'merim*, the Latin word *numeris*. The traditional commentator interprets *bay' mervin* as flocks of sheep (see Berthine). The phrase could also mean "rebels". What the original form in ARNB was is not clear from context.

⁹ In the same four categories are in Ch. 22 (p. 40), "They do not cover themselves in connection with Adam's soulless lump."

¹⁰ The theme of showing Adam the future links this paragraph with the previous one. However, the interpretation of one of God's days as a thousand years and the application of it to Adam solves a problem with Gen. 2:17 (see note 3 above). God says that Adam will die on the very day that he eats of the fruit. Since Adam died at an age of 930 years (Gen. 5:3-4), he did die on the same day he committed the sin (see NumRab 5:5; BerRab 19:8 [T.A., p. 178]; and PesRab 40:2 [Friedmann, 167n; Brände, p. 704]). Perhaps this paragraph at one time bore a more direct relation to Gen. 2:17 as quoted earlier in this chapter.

¹¹ For these four lists of ten see *Perek Adam Ha-Hishbon* in Finkenstein, I, pp. 9-11. It occurs in two versions, the first of which is almost exactly the same as Alzani. See T.R.E. 14 for the cursives on Adam, Eve and the serpent; and see NumRab 5:5 for reference to the forty curse.

TEN decrees were passed with regard to Adam.¹²

The first was that he was clothed in precious garments, but the Holy One blessed be He stripped them off him.¹³

The second is that he must toil to live.

The third is that he eats good things but expels foul things.

The fourth is that his children wander from city to city.

The fifth is that he has a sweaty smell.¹⁴

The sixth is that he has the evil impulse.

The seventh is that the worm and maggot will have power over him.¹⁵

The eighth is that he is given over to a wild beast to be killed by it.

The ninth is the brevity of life and abundance of trouble, as Scripture says : "Man that is born of woman is of few days and full of trouble (Job 14:1)."

The tenth is that man is destined to stand for judgment, as Scripture says : "Rejoice, O young man, in your youth, and let your heart cheer you in the days of your youth; walk in the ways of your heart and the sight of your eyes. But know that for all these things God will bring you into judgement (Qoh. 11:9)."

TEN decrees were passed with regard to Eve.¹⁶

The first is menstruation, when she is driven from her house and banned from her husband.¹⁷

The second is that she gives birth after nine months.

The third is that she nurses for two years.¹⁸

In See A p. 7 (G pp. 13-14) for three curses against Adam. The list of curses in T.R.E. is different from that in B. For different sources which speak of curses, see *Lagenda*, 1, p. 70; V, p. 102, n. 87.

¹² See JerTarg I to Gen. 3:7 and Yalkut, I, 34.

¹³ See Ch. 34, p. 74. Mas. P and N have *ryh*. Mas. R has *ruch* and *Mm ruch rk.*

¹⁴ See Ms. P (Schechter, p. 173) for the future tense.

¹⁵ See note 12 above. A p. 4 (G pp. 9-10) refers to ten curses of Eve, but gives only three additional ones. NumRab 10:2 says that there are seven curses; A p. 6 (O p. 14) has three curses. B Ch. 9 mentions a number of the curses and disadvantages associated with being a woman. See *Lagenda*, I, p. 78; V, pp. 101-02, nn. 86-88.

¹⁶ When a woman is having her menstrual period she may not have intercourse and can easily transmit Levitical uncleanness to things and people. For variations in the text, see Finkelstein, *Mahb.*, pp. 196-97.

¹⁷ For the confused texts of the second and third curses, see Finkelstein, *Mahb.*, pp. 116-17. From Mas. set. pregnancy at seven months; see NumRab 4:4 where the visibility of a baby after seven months is recognized.

The fourth is that her husband rules over her.
The fifth is that he is jealous of her if she speaks with any other man.

The sixth is that she ages quickly.

The seventh is that she ceases to give birth while men never cease being able to beget children.

The eighth is that she stays in the house and does not show herself in public like a man.²⁰
The ninth is that when she goes out to the marketplace²¹ her head has to be covered like a mourner. That is why women precede the bier, saying : We have brought death upon all the inhabitants of the world.²²

The tenth is that if she was upright, her husband buries her. For we find that this was the case with our ancestors : our father Abraham buried Sarah our mother. Isaac buried Rebecca our mother. Jacob buried Rachel and Leah.²³

TEN decrees were passed with regard to the serpent.²⁴

The first is that his mouth was stopped up.

The second is that his hands and feet were cut off.

The third is that he eats dust.

The fourth is that he sheds his skin and is in pain like a woman giving birth.

The fifth is that "I will put enmity between you and the woman... (Gen. 3:15)."

The sixth is that though he eats delicacies and drinks all sweet things they turn to dust in his mouth, as Scripture says : "And dust shall be the serpent's food (Is. 65:25)."

The seventh is that he begets only once in seven years.

The eighth is that when a man sees a domestic animal, he does not pay attention to it, but when he sees a serpent, he becomes angry and tries to kill it.

²⁰ See Ms. H and MbM, IV, p. 76 for this reading : *mipzam*, meaning "shows herself in public." This reading is accepted by Ginzberg in *Legends*, V, p. 101, n. 85. Ms. R (followed by Schechter) reads : *mipres*, meaning "is a breadwinner."

²¹ For this reading, see Ms. H, P and N and Finkelstein, *Mabs*, pp. 205-206.

²² These two stanzas, the woman covering her hair and preceding the bier, occur in this order in Ch. 9 (p. 25). See note 8 there. Ms. R reads *gram*; correct the imprint in Schechter.

²³ See Genesis 23 : 35:16-20 ; 49:31.

²⁴ For the marvelous properties of the serpent, which are taken away by these curses, see Ch. 1, note 39; *Legends*, I, p. 98; V, p. 213, n. 131.

The ninth is that all other creatures are subject to blessing, but he remains under his curse.²⁵

As for the tenth, Rabbi Meir used to say in regard to him, according to the prophetic tradition, "I will remove evil beasts from the land (Ex. 34:25)."²⁶

TEN decrees were passed with regard to the earth.²⁷

The first is that it used to drink waters out of its own resources, (but) henceforth : "But a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground. ... (Gen. 2:6)."²⁸

The second is that its fruits are blighted.

The third is that it is afflicted with blast and mildew.

The fourth is that stony ground and rough places²⁹ were created on the earth.

The fifth is that mountains and hills were created on the land.³⁰

The sixth is that barren trees grew on it.

The seventh is that thistles and thorns³¹ will grow on it.

The eighth is that much is sown and it produces little, as Scripture says : "You have sown much but harvested little (Hag. 1:6)."

The ninth is that it is destined to stand and give witness concerning its slain, as Scripture says : "And the earth will disclose the blood shed upon her, and will no more cover her slain (Is. 26:21)."³²

²⁵ See BerRab 20:5 (T.A., p. 186); 95:1 (T.A., pp. 118-87); TanBab, *Ler*, p. 47; *Tan., Mezon*, 2.

²⁶ See Finkelstein, *Mabs*, p. 204. MbM, IV, p. 77 adds : "This refers to the serpent." This may be the original text.

²⁷ Yeruk Adam Ha-Rishon, Version R (see note 12), has only nine decrees, making a total of forty minus one. Several are similar to the ones in ARNB. Perck, Version A, is virtually identical to ARNB. In ARNB four of the decrees have Scriptural verses with them.

²⁸ BerRab 13:9 (T.A., p. 110) and QohRab 1:7 discuss how the earth was watered, first from below and then from above. According to BerRab one of the reasons God settled on rain was lawless men. The verse quoted here tells how the earth was first watered, not how it is now watered after the curse. The passage in ARNB does not really say how the earth is watered after the curse.

²⁹ I read *tzayim* with Ms. P, MbM, N and Schechter's emendation and not *tzayim* with Ms. R, Yeruk Adam Ha-Rishon, Version A, reads with Ms. P, etc. *tzayim* means stuhle and so can mean rough places (Aruch, VII, p. 221b, 90).

³⁰ Even though mountains and hills are pleasant to look at and hike through, they obstruct farming and travel, both of which are much easier on level ground.

³¹ Ms. R reads *hatzayim* *tegrim*, which is translated here. Ms. H, N and Perck Adam Ha-Rishon read *hatzayim* (*Hatzyayim*) *tegrim*. Ms. P and MbM have further variants.

³² The earth's giving witness, in itself, does not seem to be a curse. Perhaps the curse

The tenth is that it is destined to wear out like a garment, as Scripture says: "The earth will wear out like a garment. . . (Is. 51:6)." Why were these forty decrees passed? Corresponding to the forty days during which the embryo is formed. And in addition when man enters the judgement and is guilty, he is punished with forty (punishments) corresponding to these forty.³³

Adam was the blood of the world.³⁴ Because woman brought death upon him, she was put under obligation (to observe the law) of the blood of menstrual purity. Man was the dough offering of the world. Because she made him unclean, she was put under obligation (to observe the law) of the dough offering. Man was the light of the world. Because she caused him to be extinguished, she was put under obligation (to observe the lighting) of the (Sabbath) lamp. From this the Sages, blessed be their memory, said: For three offenses women die when they are giving birth: For carelessness in regard to menstrual purity, the dough offering and lighting the Sabbath lamp.

is in the fact that the earth had to swallow the slain. In Mech to 15:12 (Lauterbach, II, pp. 87-88) the earth will not swallow the Egyptians until God promises not to hold it accountable.

³³ Here it assumed that the forty cures fall on mankind, rather than partly on the serpent and the earth. This comment must have been originally independent of what precedes.

³⁴ See Ch. 9 (p. 25) and the notes there for the material contained in the rest of this chapter. These punishments meted out to women are suggested by the ten judgments decreed against Eve earlier in this chapter.

CHAPTER FORTY-THREE

TEN people prophesied and did not know that they were prophesying.¹ Abraham prophesied and did not know what he was prophesying, as Scripture says: "Then Abraham said to his young men, 'Stay here with the ass; I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and we will come again to you (Gen. 22:5)." It does not say, "I will come again to you" but "we will come again to you." He prophesied that Isaac our father would actually return.²

Laban prophesied and did not know what he was prophesying, as Scripture says: "And they blessed Rebekah, and said to her, 'Our sister, be the mother of thousands of ten thousands: and may your descendants possess the gate of those who hate them'" (Gen. 24:60). Thus they were actually cursing themselves while blessing Rebecca their sister.³

Jacob prophesied and did not know what he was prophesying, as Scripture says: "May he send back your other brother and Benjamin (Gen. 43:14)." "Your brother" refers to Simeon; "other" refers to Joseph; "and Benjamin" refers literally to Benjamin.⁴

The tribes prophesied and did not know what they were prophesying as Scripture says: "Behold the youngest is this day with our father, and one is no more (Gen. 42:13)." They prophesied that Joseph was standing among them.⁵ Joseph prophesied and did not know what he was prophesying, as Scripture says: "For the best of all the land of Egypt is yours (Gen. 45:20)." He prophesied that they were destined to despoil Egypt.⁶

¹ The groups of ten continue from the last chapter through part of this chapter. This list occurs only here, but some of its entries occur elsewhere individually.

² See PeRab 40:6 (Friedmann, p. 170b; Braude, p. 716).

³ Rebekah's brother and family send her away with a blessing that falls upon Israel. The blessing leaves Rebekah's family, who are Arameans (Gen. 28:5), subjugated to Israel in later years under David.

⁴ Jacob thinks that Joseph is dead but the "superfluous" word "other" in his statement is a prophetic reference to Joseph who is indeed alive. PeRab 92:3 (T.A., p. 1140) interprets "other" as a reference to Joseph, too.

⁵ "And one is no more" (*וְהַאֲזָד *פְּנֵינוּ*) is literally, in Hebrew, "And one is not (with our father)," that is, he is here in Egypt with us.

⁶ The Hebrew despoiling of Egypt refers to their taking of the Egyptian valuables before they left with Moses (Ex. 12:35-36).