

איִשֵּׁת כֹּהֵן שְׁנֵאֲנָסָה – The wife of a priest who was raped – The Torah places restrictions on the women that a priest can marry. For example, a priest cannot marry a woman who was divorced or who engaged in sexual intercourse with someone to whom she is forbidden by Torah law (Leviticus 21:7). It is permitted for a woman married to an Israelite who was raped to continue living with her husband, since the extramarital intercourse took place against her will. The wife of a priest who was raped, however, is viewed as having engaged in sexual intercourse with someone who is forbidden to her, albeit against her will. For this reason she is now forbidden to her husband and he is obligated to divorce her.

אָמַר רַבָּא: וּמוֹדָה רַב שֵׁשֶׁת שָׂאֵם נִתְאַרְמְלָה שְׂאִינָה אוֹכְלָתָּ. מִיַּדֵּי הוּא טַעֲמָא – אֲלֵא מְשׁוּם תּוֹצִיא לַעֲוֹלָה עַל בְּנֵיהּ, נִתְאַרְמְלָה וְנִתְגַּרְשָׁה – אָמְרִי: הֲשָׂתָא דְאִיתְנִסָּא.

Rava said: And Rav Sheshet concedes that if this wife of the priest who claimed to have been raped was then widowed from him, she may not continue to partake of *teruma*. Why? Isn't the reason that she is permitted to partake of *teruma* only that she should not cast aspersions on her children? This being the case, if she was widowed or divorced, people will say that only now it occurred that she was raped, i.e., the entire incident occurred after she was no longer married to her husband. Therefore, rumors will not circulate that the children that she bore him beforehand are unfit.

אָמַר רַב פַּפָּא: בְּדִיק לָן רַבָּא: אִשֵּׁת כֹּהֵן שְׁנֵאֲנָסָה, יֵשׁ לָהּ כְּתוּבָה אוֹ אֵין לָהּ כְּתוּבָה? בֵּינָן דְּאוֹנָס לְגַבֵּי כֹהֵן כְּרִצּוֹן לְגַבֵּי יִשְׂרָאֵל דְּמִי – אֵין לָהּ כְּתוּבָה. אוֹ דִּילְמָא מְצִי אָמְרָה לִיהּ – אֲנָא הָא חֲזִינָא.

Rav Pappa said: Rava tested us with the following question: As for the wife of a priest who was raped⁸ in the presence of witnesses, is she entitled to receive payment of her marriage contract or is she not entitled to receive payment of her marriage contract? The Gemara explains the two sides of the question: Is the *halakha* that since rape with regard to a woman married to a priest is like willing sexual intercourse with regard to a woman married to an Israelite, as the wife of a priest who was raped is obligated to leave her husband, just as the wife of an Israelite who willingly engaged in sexual intercourse with another man is obligated to leave her husband, she is therefore not entitled to receive payment of her marriage contract? Or perhaps she can say to him: I am fit to continue being married, as, if her husband were an Israelite she would not be forbidden to him after being raped.

Perek XI

Daf 91 Amud a

וּגְבֵרָא הוּא דְנִסְתַּחֲפָה שְׂדֵהוּ. וְאָמְרִינַן לִיהּ: מִתְנַתֵּין הֵיא, הָאוֹמְרַת "טַמְאָה אֲנִי לְךָ" – יֵשׁ לָהּ כְּתוּבָה.

And it is the man, her husband, whose field was flooded. In other words, like one whose field was flooded and destroyed, it is he who has suffered a natural disaster, as it is his status as a priest that forces him to divorce his wife. Therefore, she is entitled to receive payment of her marriage contract. And we said to Rava, in response to his question: The answer to your question is found in the *mishna*, which states: A woman who says to her husband: I am defiled to you, is entitled to receive payment of her marriage contract.

בְּמַאי עֲסָקִינַן? אֵילִימָא בְּאִשֵּׁת יִשְׂרָאֵל, אֵי כְרִצּוֹן – כְּלוּם יֵשׁ לָהּ כְּתוּבָה? וְאֵי בְּאוֹנָס – מִי קָא מִיתְסָרָא עַל גְּבֵרָא? וְאֵלֵא בְּאִשֵּׁת כֹּהֵן, אֵי כְרִצּוֹן – כְּלוּם יֵשׁ לָהּ כְּתוּבָה? מִי גְרָעָה מֵאִשֵּׁת יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּרִצּוֹן? אֲלֵא לֹא – בְּאוֹנָס, וְקִתְנֵי: יֵשׁ לָהּ כְּתוּבָה.

The Gemara analyzes the *mishna*: With what are we dealing? If we say the *mishna* is speaking of the wife of an Israelite, consider the following: If she claims that she engaged in sexual intercourse willingly, does she have any right to receive payment of her marriage contract?⁹ And if she says it was by force, i.e., she was raped,¹⁰ is she thereby forbidden to the man, i.e., her husband? But rather, the *mishna* must be referring to the wife of a priest. Again, what are the circumstances? If she claims that she engaged in sexual intercourse willingly, does she have any right to receive payment of her marriage contract? Is her law any less stringent than that of the wife of an Israelite who willingly engaged in sexual intercourse with another man? Rather, is it not that the sexual intercourse was by force? And the *tanna* teaches that she has a right to receive payment of her marriage contract.¹¹ This answers Rava's question.

HALAKHA

If willingly, does she have any right to her marriage contract – אי בְּרִצּוֹן כְּלוּם יֵשׁ לָהּ כְּתוּבָה: If a woman informed her husband that she engaged in sexual intercourse with another man, she is not believed with regard to being forbidden to her husband. She does, however, forfeit payment of her marriage contract, both the basic amount as well as the additional sum. She also forfeits all the entitlements due her as part of her marriage contract, as she confessed to the deed (Rambam *Sefer Nashim*, *Hilkhot Ishut* 24:18; *Shulhan Arukh*, *Even HaEzer* 115:6).

The wife of an Israelite who was raped – אִשֵּׁת יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׁנֵאֲנָסָה: If the wife of an Israelite was raped, whether by a Jew or by a

gentile, or she unwittingly committed adultery, she is permitted to her husband (Rambam *Sefer Nashim*, *Hilkhot Ishut* 24:19).

And the *tanna* teaches that she has a right to receive payment of her marriage contract – וְקִתְנֵי יֵשׁ לָהּ כְּתוּבָה: A woman who was raped does not forfeit payment of her marriage contract, even if she was married to a priest. Her husband is obligated to pay her the basic sum as well as the additional amount. If her husband is a priest, he is coerced to grant her a divorce and to make payment of her marriage contract, in accordance with the opinion of Rav Pappa (Rambam *Sefer Nashim*, *Hilkhot Ishut* 24:22; *Shulhan Arukh*, *Even HaEzer* 115:6).

If she said to her husband: You divorced me – אָמְרָה לְבַעֲלָהּ גֵּרְשָׁתִי: If a woman said to her husband: You divorced me and I have lost my bill of divorce, and he replies that he never divorced her, she is believed, for a woman would not be so brazen as to lie in this manner, as stated by Rav Hamnuna. Some authorities say that she is believed only to the extent that she requires a divorce from any subsequent betrothal. She is not, however, permitted to marry another man, nor does she receive payment of her marriage contract. Others maintain that her claim is entirely accepted. The Rema contends that nowadays impudence and licentiousness have increased, and therefore she is believed only to her detriment, so that she does not receive payment of her marriage contract, but she is not permitted to marry another man, as the presumption that she would not be so brazen as to lie in this manner has been undermined (Rambam *Sefer Nashim*, *Hilkhot Geirusin* 12:4; *Shulhan Arukh*, *Even HaEzer* 17:2, and in the comment of Rema).

NOTES

You divorced me, with regard to which he knows... she is believed – גֵּרְשָׁתִי דִּדְעָ בְּהִמְיָנָא: The early authorities disagree over the extent to which her claim is accepted. Some state that she is completely believed and therefore permitted to marry another man, and, as proved by the Ran, she is also entitled to receive payment of her marriage contract. The Rambam accepts this ruling as *halakha*, and the Rashba agrees. Others follow the opinion of the Ra'avad, who maintains that she is not allowed to remarry. However, if she went ahead and betrothed herself, the betrothal might be valid, and she is not forced to leave her new husband. The Ritva concurs, and he adds, citing the Ra'ah, that her mere word, supported by the presumption that she would not utter a barefaced lie to her husband, cannot, if contradicted by her husband, enable her to remarry, which according to her husband's word would involve the transgression of the prohibition against committing adultery. The later authorities note that the Commentary on *Nedarim* writes that she is believed to the extent that she cannot remarry her husband if he is a priest, as a priest is prohibited from marrying a divorced woman. This indicates that her claim serves only to render her prohibited to her husband, but not to permit her to other men.

A woman is not brazen – אִין אִשָּׁה מְעִיזָה פְּנֵיהָ: This presumption is based on the principle that an individual does not lie brazenly when the other side is fully aware of the deception, provided that he has a previous relationship with and commitment to that person. A similar rationale applies to an oath incurred by one who partially admits to a monetary claim. The Rosh in his rulings cites an opinion that this presumption does not apply in all times and places, as some authorities maintain that nowadays women are not ashamed to lie brazenly in front of their husbands.

Hard for her under the man – דִּתְקִיף לָהּ מִן גְּבָרָא: Most commentaries explain that a woman is occasionally moved to making untrue claims out of anger toward her husband (Ran; *Tosefot Rabbeinu Peretz*). According to the first explanation in the Commentary on *Nedarim*, she suffered under the hand of her husband and lied out of pain. His alternative explanation is that she is sometimes gripped hard by her desire for another man, which leads her to speak falsehoods. The court takes her insistence that she is divorced as a sign that she wants to marry someone else.

אִיבַעֲיָא לְהוּ: אָמְרָה לְבַעֲלָהּ "גֵּרְשָׁתִי" מַהוּ? אָמַר רַב הַמְנוּנָא, תָּא שְׁמַע: הָאוּמְרַת "טִמְאָה אֲנִי לְךָ", דְּאִפִּילוּ לְמִשְׁנָה אַחְרֹנָה דִּקְתַּנִּי לָא מְהִימְנָא – הֵתָם הוּא דְּמִשְׁקֵרָה, דִּידְעָה דְּבַעֲלָהּ לָא יָדַע בְּהָ, אֲבָל גְּבִי "גֵּרְשָׁתִי" דִּידְעָ בְּהָ – מְהִימְנָא, דְּחֻזְקָה אִין אִשָּׁה מְעִיזָה פְּנֵיהָ בְּפָנֵי בַעֲלָהּ.

אָמַר לֵיהּ רַבָּא: אֲדַרְבָּא, אִפִּילוּ לְמִשְׁנָה רַאשׁוֹנָה דִּקְתַּנִּי מְהִימְנָא – הֵתָם מְשׁוּם דְּלֹא עִבִּידָא לְבֹאזְיֵי נַפְשָׁה, אֲבָל הֵכָא דִּמְזִמְנִי דִּתְקִיף לָהּ מִן גְּבָרָא – מְעִיזָה וּמְעִיזָה!

מַתִּיב רַב מִשְׁרָשִׁיא: "הִשְׁמִים בִּינִי לְבִינְךָ" דְּמִשְׁנָה רַאשׁוֹנָה תִּיּוֹבְתָא דְּרַבָּא, הֵכָא דְּלִית לָהּ כִּיּוֹפָא, וְקַתְנִי דְּמְהִימְנָא! קִסְבֵּר רַבָּא: הֵתָם, כִּיּוֹן דְּלֹא סָגִי לָהּ דְּלָא אָמְרָה אִין יוֹרָה כַּחֲךְ, אִי לָא אִיתָא בְּדַקְאָמְרָה – לָא אָמְרָה לֵיהּ.

"הִשְׁמִים בִּינִי לְבִינְךָ" דְּמִשְׁנָה אַחְרֹנָה תִּהְיִי תִּיּוֹבְתָא דְּרַב הַמְנוּנָא; וְהָא הֵכָא דִּידְעָה הִיא וּבַעֲלָהּ יָדַע בְּהָ, וְקַתְנִי דְּלָא מְהִימְנָא!

קִסְבֵּר רַב הַמְנוּנָא: הֵכָא נִמִּי הִיא גּוֹפָא אָמְרָה: הִיא דְּבִבְיָאָה יָדַע – בְּיוֹרָה כַּחֲךְ מִי יָדַע? וּמְשׁוּם הֵכָא מִשְׁקֵרָא.

§ A dilemma was raised before the Sages: If a woman said to her husband: You divorced me,^H what is the *halakha*? Is she believed or not? Rav Hamnuna said: Come and hear an answer to this question from what is stated in the mishna about a woman who says: I am defiled to you, that even according to the ultimate version of the mishna that teaches that she is not believed in her claim, it may be argued that it is only there that she is suspected of lying when she claims to have been defiled, as she knows that her husband does not know the truth about her. She is relating an incident that supposedly occurred in his absence. But concerning the claim: You divorced me, with regard to which he knows the truth about whether or not he actually divorced her, she is believed.^N Why? Because the court relies on the presumption that a woman is not brazen^N enough to lie in the presence of her husband and present a claim that he knows is patently false.

Rava said to him: On the contrary, even according to the initial version of the mishna that teaches that the woman is believed in her claim that she is defiled to her husband, it may be argued that it is only there that she is believed, because a woman would not demean herself by claiming she was raped if she were not telling the truth. But here, where it is sometimes hard for her under the authority of the man,^N i.e., her husband, she would be brazen to his face, and therefore the court does not believe her.

Rav Mesharshiyya raised an objection: Let the ruling of the initial version of the mishna, with regard to a woman who says: Heaven is between me and you, be a conclusive refutation of the opinion of Rava, as here she suffers no embarrassment on account of her claim, and yet the *tanna* teaches that she is believed. The Gemara answers: Rava maintains that there, since it is not sufficient for her if she does not state in precise detail her claim that he does not shoot like an arrow,^B i.e., his semen is not emitted forcefully, then, were it not as she said, she would not say it. She would be too ashamed to speak of such things before the court. It is for this reason that she is believed.

The Gemara further comments: Let the ruling of the ultimate version of the mishna, with regard to a woman who says: Heaven is between me and you, be a conclusive refutation of the opinion of Rav Hamnuna, who maintains that a woman who claims that her husband divorced her is believed. But here, as in the case of the alleged divorce, she knows and her husband also knows with regard to her whether or not she is lying, and yet the *tanna* of the mishna teaches that she is not believed.

The Gemara answers: Rav Hamnuna maintains that here too, the woman herself says in her heart: Though he may know whether or not we engaged in sexual intercourse, does he know whether or not he shoots like an arrow? And it is due to that reason that she lies. Since the woman can make a false claim against her husband without having to fear that he will contradict her, she is not believed. A similar point cannot be made in the case of an alleged divorce, as the husband knows whether or not he divorced his wife, and therefore a woman who claims that her husband divorced her is believed.

BACKGROUND

Shoot like an arrow – יוֹרָה כַּחֲךְ: Sperm usually exits the body with great force, described as shooting like an arrow. This is achieved by the contraction of certain muscles. Were these muscles to be damaged, the sperm would not exit with force but rather would trickle out slowly.

turn is dependent both on the secretion of different hormonal fluids as well as their own vitality. If sperm fail to penetrate to the depths of a woman's vagina, the chances of fertilization will be greatly reduced.

The ability of sperm to fertilize an egg is to a large extent dependent on their vitality and power of movement, which in

As described here, it is not always possible for the man to gauge just how the sperm exits, but a woman can possibly sense if it leaves with force.

A certain woman – **הָיָה אִיתָא**: Although the Gemara does not say so explicitly, it appears that this woman was the wife of a priest, for her claim that she mistakenly thought the man was her husband makes her the victim of circumstances beyond her control, and in such a case the wife of an Israelite would not be forbidden to her husband (Rambam's Commentary on the Mishna; Rashba; *Tosefot Rabbeinu Peretz*; Ran). The Rashba adds that it is possible that she was married to an Israelite, but the husband suspected that it was no innocent mistake but rather she engaged in sexual intercourse willingly. He therefore felt that if she is believed, he ought to divorce her.

הָיָה אִיתָא דְּכָל יוֹמָא דְּתַשְׁמִישׁ מִקְדָּמָה מְשִׁיבָא יְדִיהָ לְגַבְרָא. יוֹמָא חַד אִתְיָא לִיהָ מֵיָא לְמַשְׁשָׁא. אָמַר לָהּ: הָדָא מִיִּלְתָּא לָא הוּת הָאִידְנָא! אָמְרָה לִיהָ: אִם כֵּן חַד מִן נְכָרִים

It is related that there was a certain woman,^N who on every day of engaging in sexual intercourse with her husband, would rise early in the morning and wash her husband's hands. One day she brought him water to wash his hands, in response to which he said to her: This matter, i.e., sexual intercourse, did not occur now. She said to him: If so, it may be that one of the gentile

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אֶהְלוּי דְּהוּוּ הִכָּא הָאִידְנָא, אִי אַנְתָּ לָא – דְּלָמָא מְנַהוּן. אָמַר רַב נַחֲמָן: עֵינֵיהּ נִתְנָה בְּאַחַר, וְלִית בָּהּ מְשִׁשָּׁא בְּמַלְהָ.

aloe^B merchants [*ahaloyei*]¹ who were here just now should be blamed; if it was not you, perhaps it was one of them. The case came before Rav Nahman, who said: There is reason to suspect that she might have cast her eyes upon another man, and therefore there is no substance to her words. She lacks credibility and her statement is unreliable, and so she remains permitted to her husband.

הָיָה אִיתָא דְּלָא הוּהּ בְּדִיחָא דְּעֵתָהּ בְּהַדִּי גְבָרָא. אָמַר לָהּ: הָאִידְנָא מֵאִי שְׂנָא? אָמְרָה לִיהָ: מֵעוֹלָם לָא צְעַרְתָּן בְּדַרְךְ אַרְץ כִּי הָאִידְנָא. אָמַר לָהּ: לָא הוּהּ הָדָא מִיִּלְתָּא הָאִידְנָא. אָמְרָה לִיהָ: אִם כֵּן הֲלִין נְכָרִים נְפִטוּי דְּהוּוּ הִכָּא הָאִידְנָא, אִי אַנְתָּ לָא – דְּלָמָא חַד מְנַהוּן. אָמַר לָהּ רַב נַחֲמָן: לָא תַשְׁגִּיחוּן בָּהּ, נוֹתְנַת עֵינֵיהּ בְּאַחַר הוּאִי.

It is further related that there was a certain woman who was displeased^N with her man. He said to her: What is different now? What have I done to make you angry? She said to him: I am upset because you never hurt me while we were engaged in proper relations as you did just now. He said to her: This matter did not occur now. She said to him: If so, it may be that one of the gentile oil merchants [*naftoyei*]¹ who were here just now should be blamed; if it was not you, perhaps it was one of them. Rav Nahman said to them: Take no notice of her; she has cast her eyes upon another man, and her words are therefore unreliable.

הוּוּוּ גְבָרָא דְּהוּוּ מְהַרְזִיק בְּבֵיתָא הוּא וְאִינְתָּתָא. עַל אֲתָא מְרִיבָה דְּבֵיתָא, פְּרִטְיָה נֹאֲף לְהוּצָא וְעַרְק. אָמַר רַבָּא: אִיתָא שְׂרִיָּא, אִם אִיתָא דְּעֵבֵד אִיסוּרָא – אַרְכּוּסִי הוּוּ מִיִּרְכָּס.

The Gemara relates another incident about a certain man^N who was secluding himself [*meharzeik*]^{1H} in a house, he and a certain married woman. When the owner of the house entered, the adulterer burst through the wall of palm branches^N and fled. Rava said: The woman is permitted to her husband. The assumption is that she did not sin, for if it is so that the man had committed a transgression, he would have hidden himself in the house instead of revealing his identity by escaping in the open.

NOTES

Who was displeased – **דְּלָא הוּהּ בְּדִיחָא דְּעֵתָהּ**: Rabbi Avraham min HaHar cites a version of the text that clarifies that she usually greeted her husband with a pleasant countenance, but on this occasion she did not. When asked about her change in manner, she replied that he had hurt her during sexual intercourse. Rabbi Yitzhak Tzarfati explains the case in the opposite manner: She was usually disagreeable, as her husband was unable to satisfy her. On that day, however, she was happy, and told her husband it was because she had enjoyed their recent intercourse. According to this opinion, the statement: You hurt me, is a euphemism.

A certain man – **הוּוּוּ גְבָרָא**: The early authorities ask: But they were merely secluded together, and the principle is that a woman is not rendered forbidden to her husband due to seclusion alone. One answer is that the husband was particular about such matters and wanted to be stringent even with regard to a mere suspicion of adultery (Rashba; Ran). The *Shita Mekubbetzet* writes that although generally a woman is not rendered forbidden to her husband merely for secluding herself with another

man, here it has the appearance of a meeting for the purpose of sin, and in an inexcusable situation of this kind it is proper for the husband to divorce his wife, despite the lack of clear evidence of actual adultery. The Rosh, commenting on *Tosafot* in tractate *Yevamot*, and *Tosefot Rabbeinu Peretz*, citing the Ri, explain that the woman herself said she was defiled. Yet others maintain that this refers to a husband who had previously warned his wife with regard to this man. The principle is that if a husband has warned his wife, she is thereby rendered forbidden to him by seclusion alone. Here, however, there are grounds for saying that this seclusion did not lead to adultery, and therefore she is not forbidden to her husband even if he had previously warned her (Rabbi Avraham min HaHar).

The adulterer burst through the wall of palm branches – **פְּרִטְיָה**: Some commentaries understand that the adulterer broke the door down and ran away. An alternative version states that he pushed the husband forcefully outside (*Shita Mekubbetzet*). *Tosafot* explain that it was the husband who fled from the adulterer.

BACKGROUND

Aloe – **אָהַל**: Certain plants known as *ahal* are indigenous to Eretz Yisrael. One of them, known as the common ice plant or *Mesembryanthemum crystallinum* L., is an annual plant that grows in the Sharon and Shefeila regions of Eretz Yisrael. It is found in rocks and walls that face the sea. The surface of these plants is covered in small, translucent vesicles that appear like ice crystals, which gives it its name. This plant contains a considerable amount of raw soda and was used for laundering clothes and for bathing.



Common ice plant

LANGUAGE

Aloe merchants [*ahaloyei*] – **אֶהְלוּי**: *Ahaloyei* were people who dealt in aloe and similar plants used to make soap and various cosmetics.

Oil merchants [*naftoyei*] – **נַפְטוּי**: From the Greek *νάφθα*, *nafta*, which is itself derived from the Persian *naft*. The term means dealers in oil. Some scholars assert that it has a Semitic root in the Akkadian term *naptu*.

Secluding [*meharzeik*] – **מְהַרְזִיק**: This root is found in Mandaic. It is possibly derived from a different language, in which it bore the similar meaning of jail.

HALAKHA

A certain man who was secluding himself, etc. – **הוּוּוּ גְבָרָא דְּהוּוּ מְהַרְזִיק וְכוּ'**: A married woman who secluded herself with a man is always believed if she claims to be pure, even if they secluded themselves with sinful intentions. If she says: I am defiled, some say she is pure only if there is circumstantial evidence in her favor, e.g., if the adulterer fled or saved the husband from death after the seclusion, as explained in the stories related in the Gemara dealing with a woman who claims she was defiled (*Helkat Mehokek*). The *Beit Shmuel*, citing *Tosafot*, maintains that she is believed if she admits to her sin, as the Gemara is referring to incidents in which she claims her innocence (*Shulhan Arukh, Even HaEzer* 115:6, 178:6).

LANGUAGE

Cress [tahlei] – תחלי: This is the Aramaic term for the plant *Lepidium sativum*, or garden cress, called *shahalim* in Hebrew. It is a garden herb used in salads.

BACKGROUND

A snake had tasted of it – טעמינו חוּיָא: The concern is that this might have been a poisonous snake, some of whose venom may have been left on the food it ate, which would endanger the life of anyone who subsequently partakes of the food. This would be possible if the snake eating the food was of a species that transfers its venom through its fangs, such as a rattlesnake.



Rattlesnake with dripping venom

NOTES

They have committed adultery and blood is on their hands – נָאֲפוּ וְדָם בְּיַדֵּיהֶן: This does not mean that every adulterer is suspected of murder, as the Gemara in tractate *Sanhedrin* indicates otherwise. Rather, the assumption is that at the very least, an adulterer would not actively try to save the life of his paramour's husband (*Shita Mekubbetzet*).

ההוא נואף דעל לגבי דההיא אנתתא, אַתָּא גְבָרָא. סְלִיק נואף איתבי [בבְּלֵאי] בְּבָא. הוּא מַחְתֵּן תַּחְלֵי תַמְן וְטַעְמִינוּן חוּיָא. בְּעָא מְרִי דְבִיתָא לְמִיכַל מִן הַנְּהוּ תַחְלֵי בְּלָא דְעֵתָא דְאִנְתָּתָא. אָמַר לִיהּ הֵהוּא נואף: לָא תִיכּוּל מְנַהוּן, דְטַעְמִינוּן חוּיָא.

אָמַר רַבָּא: אִינְתָתֵיהּ שְׂרִיָא, אִם אִיתֵיהּ דְטַעַב דְאִסוּרָא – נִיחָא לִיהּ דְלִיכּוּל וְלִימוֹת, דְכָתִיב "כִּי נָאֲפוּ וְדָם בְּיַדֵּיהֶן".

פְּשִׁטָא! מהו דתימא: אִסוּרָא עֲבַד, וְהָאֵי דְאָמַר לִיהּ – דְנִיחָא לִיהּ דְלָא לִימוֹת בְּעַל, דְתַהוּי אִינְתָתֵיהּ עֲלוּיָהּ "מִים גְּנוּבִים יִמְתְּקוּ וְלָחֶם סִתְרִים יִנְעֶם" – קָא מְשַׁמַּע לֵן.

הדרן עלך ואלו נדרים
וסליקא לה מסכת נדרים

The Gemara concludes with one final incident about a **certain adulterer who entered the house of a certain married woman**. When the man, i.e., her husband, came home, the adulterer went and sat himself behind the door, so that the husband would not know that he was there. There was some cress [tahlei]¹ lying there in the house, and the adulterer, but not the husband, saw that a snake had come and tasted of it,² perhaps thereby contaminating it with its venom. The master of the house wanted to eat from that cress, without the woman's knowledge. The adulterer said to him: Do not eat from the cress, as a snake has tasted of it.

The case was brought before Rava, who said: His wife is permitted to him, for were it so that the adulterer had committed a transgression, it would have been preferable for him that the husband should eat the cress and die. This is because one who commits adultery is also suspected of bloodshed, as it is written: "For they have committed adultery and blood is on their hands" (Ezekiel 23:45),³ indicating that adultery leads to murder.

The Gemara comments: It is obvious that this is the case. What then does Rava come to teach us? The Gemara answers: Rava's ruling is necessary, lest you say that the man did in fact commit a transgression with the other man's wife, and the reason that he said to the husband that he should not eat and saved his life is because it is preferable for him that the husband should not die. This is in order that his wife should be to him as it says in the verse: "Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant" (Proverbs 9:17). That is to say, a person derives greater pleasure from forbidden fruit. Rava therefore teaches us that this is not a concern. Rather, the assumption is that he had not yet actually sinned and therefore acted in the proper manner.