

NOTES

Moses acted based on his own perception – משה מדעתה – *Tosafot*, *Tosefot HaRosh*, and other commentaries attempt to prove that Moses' *a fortiori* inference with regard to separating from his wife is not irrefutable. Had it been a perfectly valid argument, the Gemara would not have said that he acted based on his own perception, as *a fortiori* inferences are a valid method of deriving *halakha*, and *halakhot* derived in this manner have the same status as those written explicitly in the Torah itself. The Gemara's point here is that the reason it was permitted for Moses to separate from his wife was not because he had already fulfilled the mitzva to be fruitful and multiply. His case was exceptional, and therefore it cannot serve as halakhic precedent with regard to the definition of the mitzva to be fruitful and multiply (Meiri; Rabbi Avraham min HaHar).

He separated from his wife – פירש מן האשה – *Tosafot* ask how the Sages knew that Moses separated from his wife on his own accord; perhaps he did so only once God commanded him: "And you, stand here with Me" (Deuteronomy 5:27). The Ramban (*Shabbat* 87a) explains that this verse is stated after the revelation at Sinai. If God had wanted Moses to separate from his wife but Moses did not do so on his own, God would not have waited until after the revelation at Sinai to issue His command; He would have issued the command when He began to communicate regularly with Moses.

As it is written, The first tablets that you broke [*asher shibbarta*] – דכתיב, אשר שברת – The commentaries are puzzled by this proof, as the word *asher* appears many times in the Torah, and it is not generally understood to indicate approval of an action that a particular individual performed. The Maharsha explains that the phrase "that you broke" is entirely superfluous, as it had already been stated that Moses broke the tablets. Therefore, it must be taken to mean that God affirmed Moses' decision. The Ramban and the Ritva maintain (*Shabbat* 87a) that the proof that God approved of Moses' actions is from the verse in Deuteronomy (10:2) that states *asher shibbarta*, and continues: "And you shall place them in the Ark," which is understood to mean that the broken tablets were placed in the Ark together with the second, whole tablets. The fact that God commanded Moses to preserve the broken tablets demonstrates that He approved of his actions.

משהו אפטר. ובית הלל נמי, לילפו ממשה! אמרי לך: משה מדעתה הוא דעבר. דתניא: שלשה דברים עשה משה מדעתו, והסכימה דעתו לדעת המקום: פירש מן האשה, ושיבר הלוחות, והוסיף יום אחד.

פירש מן האשה, מאי דרש? אמר: ומה ישראל שלא דברה עמהם שכינה אלא לפי שעה, וקבע להם זמן – אמרה תורה "אל תגשו אל אשה", אני שמייוחד לדבור בכל שעה ושעה, ולא קבע לי זמן – על אחת כמה וכמה. והסכימה דעתו לדעת המקום, שנאמר "לך אמור להם שובו לכם לאהליכם ואתה פה עמוד עמדי".

שיבר את הלוחות, מאי דרש? אמר: ומה פסח, שהוא אחד ממש מאות ושלש עשרה מצות, אמרה תורה "כל בן נכר לא יאכל בו", התורה כולה וישראל משומדים – על אחת כמה וכמה.

והסכימה דעתו לדעת המקום, דכתיב "אשר שברת", ואמר ריש לקיש: אמר ליה הקדוש ברוך הוא למשה: יישר כחך ששברת.

הוסיף יום אחד מדעתו, מאי דרש? דכתיב "וקדשתם היום ומחר" היום כמחר, מה מחר לילו עמו – אף היום לילו עמו. ולילה דהאידידנא נפק ליה. שבע מינה: תרי יומי, לבר מהאידידנא. והסכימה דעתו לדעת המקום – דלא שריא שכינה עד שבתא.

from one that is not possible. Mankind was initially created with a male and female because otherwise reproduction would not have been possible. However, this fact cannot serve as a source that the mitzva to be fruitful and multiply is fulfilled only once one has a son and a daughter. The Gemara asks: **And Beit Hillel, let them also learn from Moses. Beit Hillel could say to you: Moses acted based on his own perception<sup>n</sup> when he separated from his wife, but this does not mean that a man is permitted to neglect the mitzva to be fruitful and multiply after fathering two males, as it is taught in a *baraita*: Moses did three things based on his own perception, and his perception agreed with the perception of the Omnipresent: He separated from his wife,<sup>n</sup> he broke the tablets, and he added one day to the days of separation before the revelation at Sinai.**

The Gemara clarifies: When Moses separated from his wife after the revelation at Sinai, what did he interpret that led him to do so? He said: If in the case of Israel, with whom the Divine Presence spoke only temporarily and for whom God set a specific time for revelation, the Torah stated: "Do not approach a woman" (Exodus 19:15), I, Moses, who am set aside for divine speech all the time and for whom God did not set a specific time, all the more so I must separate from my wife. And his perception agreed with the perception of the Omnipresent, as it is stated after the revelation at Sinai: "Go say to them: Return to your tents; and you, stand here with Me" (Deuteronomy 5:26–27). This indicates that whereas others could return to their homes and normal married life after the revelation at Sinai, Moses was to stay with God and not return to his wife.

Moses broke the tablets following the sin of the Golden Calf. What did he interpret that led him to do so? Moses said: If in the case of the Paschal lamb, which is only one of 613 mitzvot, the Torah states: "No alien shall eat of it" (Exodus 12:43), excluding not only gentiles but apostate Jews as well, then here, in the case of the Golden Calf, where the tablets represent the entire Torah and where the Jewish people are apostates, as they are worshipping the calf, all the more so must they be excluded from receiving them.

And his perception agreed with the perception of the Omnipresent, as it is written: "The first tablets that you broke [*asher shibbarta*]"<sup>n</sup> (Exodus 34:1), and Reish Lakish said: The word *asher* is an allusion to the fact that the Holy One, Blessed be He, said to Moses: May your strength be true [*yishar kohakha*] that you broke the tablets.

When Moses added one day to the days of separation before the revelation at Sinai based on his own perception, what did he interpret that led him to do so? He reasoned that since it is written: "And sanctify them today and tomorrow" (Exodus 19:10), the juxtaposition of the words "today" and "tomorrow" teaches that today is like tomorrow: Just as tomorrow the men and women will separate for that day and the night preceding it, so too, today requires separation for the day and the night preceding it. Since God spoke to him in the morning, and the night of that day already passed, Moses said: Conclude from this that separation must be in effect for two days aside from now, i.e., not including the day of the command. Therefore, he extended the mitzva of separation by one day. And his perception agreed with the perception of the Omnipresent, as the Divine Presence did not rest upon Mount Sinai until Shabbat morning, as Moses had determined.

For God has appointed me another seed – **כִּי שֵׁת לִי** – **אֱלֹהִים יוֹרֵעַ אַחֵר**: In order to prove that one must have two sons and two daughters this verse is also necessary. If only the first verse had been written, one might have thought that the Torah was merely relating how many children Adam and Eve had. This verse, however, indicates that it was necessary for them to have Seth as a replacement for Abel. Furthermore, one might have thought that one must father two daughters but that one son is sufficient, as a single male can father children through multiple females. The Gemara therefore cites a verse indicating that Adam required an additional son (*Hokhmat Shlomo*; see Maharsha).

**הָיוּ לוֹ בָּנִים** – **אִם הָיוּ לוֹ בָּנִים**: According to the Rambam and other commentaries, Rabbi Yohanan stated his opinion only in a case where the children also converted, so that the father has Jewish offspring. Others, however, maintain that he has fulfilled the mitzva even if his children do not convert (Maharil; see *Tosafot*). This dispute depends upon the meaning of the Gemara's statement that gentiles are subject to the mitzva to be fruitful and multiply.

Gentiles are also subject to the mitzva to be fruitful and multiply – **בְּנֵי פְרִיָה וְרֵבִיָּה נִמְדוּ**: Some commentaries cite this statement as proof that gentiles are commanded to be fruitful and multiply. This is indicated by the Torah as well, as the command to be fruitful and multiply was issued to Adam (Genesis 1:28) and Noah (Genesis 9:1). Others disagree, pointing to the fact that the mitzva to be fruitful and multiply is not listed as one of the seven Noahide mitzvot. This is consistent with the general principle that any mitzva mentioned in the Torah that is not repeated in Deuteronomy was given only to the Jewish people. They interpret the Gemara here as stating that gentiles fulfill the will of God by having children, although they do not fulfill an actual mitzva, as God created the world for it to be inhabited, and therefore it is praiseworthy for them to have children (see Meiri).

## HALAKHA

**הָיוּ לוֹ בָּנִים** – **אִם הָיוּ לוֹ בָּנִים**: If a gentile had children and subsequently converted to Judaism, he has fulfilled the mitzva to be fruitful and multiply through them if his children converted as well, in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yohanan. According to many authorities, he has fulfilled the mitzva even if his children did not convert (Rambam *Sefer Nashim, Hilkhot Ishut* 15:6; *Shulhan Arukh, Even HaEzer* 1:7; Vilna Gaon).

**אִם הָיוּ לוֹ בָּנִים** – **אִם הָיוּ לוֹ בָּנִים**: **בְּבוֹר לְנַחֲלָה** – If a gentile who already had children converted and then fathered another son, the latter is not considered a firstborn with regard to the *halakhot* of inheritance, in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yohanan (Rambam *Sefer Mishpatim, Hilkhot Nahalot* 2:12; *Shulhan Arukh, Hoshen Mishpat* 277:9).

## BACKGROUND

**אִם הָיוּ לוֹ בָּנִים** – **אִם הָיוּ לוֹ בָּנִים**: **בְּבוֹר לְנַחֲלָה** – A father's firstborn son receives an extra share in the inheritance (Deuteronomy 21:17). This privilege is granted even if he is not the mother's firstborn son and even if he is illegitimate. The firstborn son receives a share twice as great as that received by each of the other sons. This double share is, however, given only from property actually possessed by the estate at the time of the father's death, not from property accruing to the estate later. The latter property is divided equally among the heirs.

תנא, רבי נתן אומר, בית שמאי אומרים: שני זכרים ושתי נקבות, ובית הלל אומרים: זכר ונקבה.

אמר רב הונא: מאי טעמא דרבי נתן אליבא דבית שמאי – דכתיב 'ותוסף ללדת את אחיו את הבל' הבל ואחותו, קין ואחותו. וכתיב 'כי שת לי אלהים יורע אחר תחת הבל כי הרגו קין'. ורבנן אודני הוא דקא מודית.

תנא אידך, רבי נתן אומר: בית שמאי אומרים: זכר ונקבה, ובית הלל אומרים: או זכר או נקבה. אמר רבא מאי טעמא דרבי נתן אליבא דבית הלל – שגאמר 'לא תהו בראיה לשבת יצרה' והא עבד לה שבת.

איתמר, היו לו בנים בגוינות ונתגייר, רבי יוחנן אמר: קיים פריה ורביה, וריש לקיש אמר: לא קיים פריה ורביה. רבי יוחנן אמר: קיים פריה ורביה, דהא הוא ליה. וריש לקיש אמר: לא קיים פריה ורביה – גר שנתגייר כקטן שגולד דמי.

ואודו לטעמייהו, דאיתמר, היו לו בנים בגוינות ונתגייר, רבי יוחנן אמר: אין לו בכור לנחלה, דהא הוא ליה 'ראשית אונן'. וריש לקיש אמר: יש לו בכור לנחלה, גר שנתגייר כקטן שגולד דמי.

וצריכא, דאי אשמעינן בההיא קמייתא – בההיא קאמר רבי יוחנן, משום דמעיקרא נמי בני פריה ורביה נינהו, אבל לענין נחלה, דלאו בני נחלה נינהו, אימא מודי ליה לריש לקיש.

ואי איתמר בהא – בהא קאמר ריש לקיש, אבל בההיא – אימא מודה ליה לרבי יוחנן, צריכא.

It is taught in a *baraita* that Rabbi Natan says that Beit Shammai say: The mitzva to be fruitful and multiply is fulfilled with two males and two females. And Beit Hillel say: A male and a female.

Rav Huna said: What is the reason of Rabbi Natan, in accordance with the opinion of Beit Shammai? It is as it is written: "And again she bore his brother [*et ahiv*] Abel [*et Hevel*]" (Genesis 4:2). The use of the superfluous word "et" indicates that she gave birth to Abel and his sister, in addition to Cain and his sister. And it states: "For God has appointed me another seed<sup>N</sup> instead of Abel; for Cain slew him" (Genesis 4:25). This indicates that one must have at least four children. And the Rabbis, how do they understand this verse? In their opinion, Eve was thanking God for granting her another child, but one is not obligated to have four children.

It is taught in another *baraita* that Rabbi Natan says that Beit Shammai say: The mitzva to be fruitful and multiply is fulfilled with a male and a female. And Beit Hillel say: Either a male or a female. Rava said: What is the reason of Rabbi Natan in accordance with the opinion of Beit Hillel? It is as it is stated: "He did not create it a waste; He formed it to be inhabited" (Isaiah 45:18), and one has made the earth inhabited to a greater degree by adding even one child to the world.

It was stated that *amora'im* disagreed over the following issue: If a man had children when he was a gentile<sup>NH</sup> and he subsequently converted, Rabbi Yohanan said: He has already fulfilled the mitzva to be fruitful and multiply, and Reish Lakish said: He has not fulfilled the mitzva to be fruitful and multiply. Rabbi Yohanan said he has fulfilled the mitzva to be fruitful and multiply, as he already had children. And Reish Lakish said he has not fulfilled the mitzva to be fruitful and multiply, as the legal status of a convert who just converted is like that of a child just born, and it is considered as though he did not have children.

The Gemara comments: And they follow their regular line of reasoning, as it was stated: If one had children when he was a gentile and he subsequently converted, Rabbi Yohanan said: He does not have a firstborn with regard to inheritance,<sup>HB</sup> i.e., the first son born to him after his conversion does not inherit a double portion, as this man already had "the first of his strength" (Deuteronomy 21:17), the Torah's description of the firstborn in this context, before he converted. And Reish Lakish said: He does have a firstborn with regard to inheritance, as the legal status of a convert who just converted is like that of a child just born.

The Gemara adds: And it is necessary to state their opinions in both cases. As, had it only been taught to us with regard to that first case of the mitzva to be fruitful and multiply, one might have said that it is only in that case that Rabbi Yohanan said his opinion, because from the outset, gentiles are also subject to the mitzva to be fruitful and multiply.<sup>N</sup> However, with regard to inheritance, since they are not subject to the *halakhot* of inheritance, one might say that Rabbi Yohanan concedes to Reish Lakish.

And conversely, if their dispute was stated only with regard to this issue of inheritance, I would have said that it is only in this case that Reish Lakish said his opinion, as the *halakhot* of inheritance do not apply to gentiles. But with regard to that case, the mitzva to be fruitful and multiply, one might say that he concedes to Rabbi Yohanan. Consequently, it is necessary for both disputes to be recorded.

A Canaanite slave, that he does not have family lineage – **עֶבֶד שְׂאֵין לוֹ חַיִּים**: If a Canaanite slave and his children were freed and thereby become Jewish, the father has not fulfilled the mitzva to be fruitful and multiply because his children are not halakhically recognized as his offspring. Similarly, if a Jew fathers a son from a Canaanite maidservant, the boy is not considered his son, and therefore the first son born to him from a Jewish mother is considered his firstborn with regard to inheritance (Rambam *Sefer Nashim*, *Hilkhot Ishut* 15:6 and *Sefer Mishpatim*, *Hilkhot Nahalot* 2:12; *Shulhan Arukh*, *Even HaEzer* 1:7 and *Hoshen Mishpat* 277:9).

If a man had children and they died – **הָיוּ לוֹ בָּנִים וּמָתוּ**: If a man's children died without leaving descendants, he has not fulfilled the mitzva to be fruitful and multiply, in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yohanan (Rambam *Sefer Nashim*, *Hilkhot Ishut* 15:5; *Shulhan Arukh*, *Even HaEzer* 1:6).

אֵיתִיבִיהָ רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן לְרִישׁ לָקִישׁ: “בָּעֵת  
הַהִיא שָׁלַח בְּרָאדָךְ בְּלָאָדָן בֶּן בְּלָאָדָן  
מֶלֶךְ בָּבֶל” וְגו’! אָמַר לֵיהּ: בְּגוֹיֹתָן –  
אֵיתִי לְהוֹ חַיִּים, נִתְגַּיְרוּ – לֵית לְהוֹ  
חַיִּים.

אָמַר רַב: הַבֵּל מוֹדִין בְּעֶבֶד שְׂאֵין  
לוֹ חַיִּים, דְּכָתִיב “שָׂבוּ לָכֶם פֶּה עִם  
הַחֲמוֹר,” עִם הַדּוֹמָה לְחֲמוֹר. מִיִּתְבִּי:  
“וְלִצִּיבָא חֲמִשָּׁה עָשָׂר בָּנִים וְעֶשְׂרִים  
עֲבָדִים!” אָמַר רַב אֲחָא בְּרַיְעָב:  
כְּפֶר בֶּן בְּקָר.”

אִי הָבִי, הֲכָא נִמְי! שְׂאֵין הָתָם  
דִּיחֲסִינְהוּ בְּשִׁמְיָהוּ וּבְשִׁמְאָ דְאָבוּהוֹן,  
וְהָכָא לֹא מְפִרְשׁוּ. וְאִיבְעִית אִימָא:  
יִחֲסִינְהוּ בְּדוֹכְתָא אֲחֵרִיתִי בְּאָבוּהוֹן  
וּבְאָבָא דְאָבוּהוֹן. דְּכָתִיב “וַיִּשְׁלַח־  
הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶסָא אֶל בֶּן הַדָּד בֶּן טַבְרִימוֹן  
בֶּן חִזְיוֹן מֶלֶךְ אַרָם הַיּוֹשֵׁב בְּדַמְשֶׁק  
לֵאמֹר.”

אֵיתִמַר, הָיוּ לוֹ בָּנִים וּמָתוּ, רַב הוֹנָא  
אָמַר: קַיִים פְּרִיָה וּרְבִיָה, רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן  
אָמַר: לֹא קַיִים.

רַב הוֹנָא אָמַר: קַיִים – מִשּׁוֹם דְּרַב  
אָסִי, דְּאָמַר רַב אָסִי: אֵין בֶּן דָּוִד בָּא  
עַד שְׂיִכְלוּ כָּל נְשָׁמוֹת שְׂבִיגוֹף, שְׂנַאֲמַר  
“כִּי רוּחַ מִלְּפָנַי יִעֲטוֹף” וְגו’. וְרַבִּי יוֹחָנָן  
אָמַר: לֹא קַיִים פְּרִיָה וּרְבִיָה, “לְשִׁבֶת  
יְצִירָה” בְּעֵינָן – וְהָא לֵיכָא.

מִיִּתְבִּי

Rabbi Yohanan raises an objection to Reish Lakish based upon the verse: “At that time Berodach-baladan, son of Baladan, king of Babylon, sent a letter” (II Kings 20:12), which indicates that gentiles are considered to be the children of their parents. Therefore, when they convert, they should already have fulfilled the mitzva to be fruitful and multiply. Reish Lakish said to Rabbi Yohanan: **When they are gentiles they do have family lineage**, but when they convert they do not have lineage, as they now belong to the family of the Jewish people and their previous lineage is disregarded.

Rav said: Everyone agrees with regard to a Canaanite slave, that he does not have lineage,<sup>1</sup> as it is written that Abraham said to his slaves: “**Remain here with the donkey**” (Genesis 22:5). This verse is interpreted to mean that they are a nation comparable to a donkey,<sup>2</sup> which has no lineage. The Gemara raises an objection based upon a verse pertaining to Jonathan’s Canaanite slave: “**And Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants**” (II Samuel 9:10), which indicates that a slave’s sons are in fact considered his sons. Rav Aha bar Ya’akov said: This is like the expression: **A bullock, son of a bull**. The word son in this context merely denotes progeny, not lineage.

The Gemara asks: **If so, here too**, with regard to gentiles, there is no proof from the verse about Berodach-baladan that they have family lineage. The Gemara answers: **There it is different**, as the Bible identified him by his name and by his father’s name,<sup>3</sup> thereby emphasizing the family connection. **But here**, it does not specify the names of Ziba’s children. **And if you wish**, say instead that the Bible identified gentiles elsewhere by their father and their father’s father, as it is written: “**And King Asa sent them to Ben-hadad, son of Tabrimmon, son of Hezion, king of Aram, who dwelled in Damascus, saying**” (I Kings 15:18). This indicates that there is lineage for gentiles.

It was stated that *amora'im* disagreed over the following issue: If a man had children and they died,<sup>4</sup> Rav Huna said: He has fulfilled the mitzva to be fruitful and multiply through these children. Rabbi Yohanan said: He has not fulfilled the mitzva.

The Gemara clarifies the reasons for their opinions: Rav Huna said he has fulfilled the mitzva due to a statement of Rav Asi, as Rav Asi said that the reason for this mitzva is that the Messiah, son of David, will not come until all the souls of the body<sup>5</sup> have been finished, i.e., until all souls that are destined to inhabit physical bodies will do so, as it is stated: “**For the spirit that enwraps itself is from Me**, and the souls that I have made” (Isaiah 57:16). Consequently, once a child has been born and his soul has entered a body the mitzva has been fulfilled, even if the child subsequently dies. **And Rabbi Yohanan said he has not fulfilled the mitzva**, as we require “**He formed it to be inhabited**” (Isaiah 45:18), and this is not fulfilled when the children have passed away and no longer inhabit the earth.

The Gemara raises an objection with regard to the opinion of Rav Huna based upon the following *baraita*:

#### NOTES

**A nation [am] comparable to a donkey – עִם הַדּוֹמָה לְחֲמוֹר**: This interpretation is based on reading the word “with [im]” as though it were vocalized *am*, meaning nation. Furthermore, the Sages often interpret the word *im* in the Bible as indicating that a comparison can be drawn between two items (*Gilyonei HaShas*; see *Kiddushin* 76b).

**By his name and by his father’s name – בְּשִׁמְיָהוּ וּבְשִׁמְאָ**: The *Keren Ora* asks: Why does the Gemara choose the particular example of Berodach-baladan when there are many

other instances where the Torah mentions the name of a gentile and his father, e.g., the list of Edomite kings in Genesis, chapter 37? The Ritva notes that this verse does not merely mention the name of Berodach-baladan’s father, it demonstrates that his father’s name was incorporated into his own name. It may be explained that this fact emphasizes the significance of the father-son relationship.

**The souls of the body – נְשָׁמוֹת שְׂבִיגוֹף**: See NOTES on 63b for an explanation of this term.



בְּנֵי בָּנִים הָרִי הֵן כְּבָנִים! כִּי תִנָּא  
הֵיאָה – לְהַשְׁלִים.

מִיִּתְבִּי: בְּנֵי בָּנִים הָרִי הֵם כְּבָנִים,  
מֵת אֶחָד מֵהֶם, או שְׁנַמְצָא סְרִיס,  
לֹא קִיַּים פְּרִיָּה וּרְבִיָּה. תִּיִּבְתָּא דְרַב  
הוּנָא! תִּיִּבְתָּא.

”בְּנֵי בָּנִים הָרִי הֵם כְּבָנִים”. סָבַר אַבְי  
לְמִימֵר: בְּרָא לְבָרָא וּבְרָתָא לְבָרָתָא,  
וְכָל שְׂכֵן בְּרָא לְבָרָתָא, אֲבָל בְּרָתָא  
לְבָרָא – לֹא. אָמַר לִיה רַבָּא: ”לְשֶׁבֶת  
יִצְרָה” בְּעֵינָא, וְהָא אִיכָא.

דְּכֹלֵי עֲלָמָא מִיְהֵת תִּירִי מַחַד לֹא.  
וְלֹא! וְהָא אָמְרִי לִיה רַבֵּן לְרַב שֶׁשֶׁת:  
נְסִיב אִיתְתָּא וְאוּלִיד בְּנִי וְאָמַר לְהוּ:  
בְּנֵי בְרָתִי בְּנֵי נִינְהוּ.

הָתֵם דְּחֻוּי קַמְדַּחֵי לְהוּ, דְּרַב שֶׁשֶׁת  
אִיעָקַר מִפְּרִיקָיָה דְרַב הוּנָא.

אָמַר לִיה רַבָּא לְרַבָּא בְּרַ מַאֲרִי: מָנָא  
הָא מִלְּתָא דְאָמַר רַבֵּן בְּנֵי בָּנִים הָרִי  
הֵן כְּבָנִים? אִילִימָא מִדְּכַתִּיב ”הַבָּנוֹת  
בְּנוֹתֵי וְהַבָּנִים בְּנֵי” אֶלָּא מִעֲתָדָה,  
”וְהִצְאֵן צֹאֲנֵי הֶכִי נִמְנֵי אֶלָּא – דְּקִנְיַת  
מִינְאֵי, הֶכָּא נִמְנֵי – דְּקִנְיַת מִינְאֵי!

Grandchildren are considered like children.<sup>h</sup> This indicates that if one’s children have passed away, he has fulfilled the mitzva to be fruitful and multiply only if they had children of their own, as they are considered like his own children. The Gemara responds: **When that baraita is taught** it is with regard to **completing** the required number of children, e.g., if he had only a son, but his son had a daughter, he has fulfilled the mitzva to be fruitful and multiply.

The Gemara **raises an objection** to the opinion of Rav Huna from another *baraita*: **Grandchildren are considered like children. If one of a man’s children died or was discovered to be a eunuch,<sup>h</sup> the father has not fulfilled the mitzva to be fruitful and multiply.** This directly contradicts Rav Huna’s statement that one fulfills the mitzva even if his children die. The Gemara concludes: **The refutation of the opinion of Rav Huna is indeed a conclusive refutation.**

It was taught in the *baraita* that **grandchildren are considered like children. Abaye thought to say<sup>n</sup>** that if one’s children die, he fulfills the mitzva to be fruitful and multiply through grandchildren, provided a son was born to his son and a daughter to his daughter, and **all the more so if a son was born to his daughter**, as his grandchildren take the place of his children in these cases. **However, if a daughter was born to his son, no, she cannot take the place of her father. Rava said to him:** We require merely fulfillment of the verse: **“He formed it to be inhabited,”** and there is fulfillment in this case, as the earth is inhabited by his descendants.

The Gemara comments: **In any event, everyone** agrees that if one has **two grandchildren from one child, no,** he has not fulfilled the mitzva to be fruitful and multiply, even if he has both a grandson and a granddaughter. The Gemara asks: **And has he not? Didn’t the Rabbis say to Rav Sheshet:<sup>p</sup> Marry a woman<sup>n</sup> and have sons,** as you have not yet fathered any sons, and **Rav Sheshet said to them: The sons of my daughter are my sons?** This indicates that one can fulfill the mitzva through grandchildren even if he did not have a son and daughter of his own.

The Gemara answers: **There, Rav Sheshet was merely putting them off.** The real reason he did not want to get remarried was **because Rav Sheshet became impotent from Rav Huna’s<sup>p</sup> discourse.** Rav Huna’s discourses were so lengthy that Rav Sheshet became impotent after waiting for so long without relieving himself.

Rabba said to Rava bar Mari: **From where is this matter that the Sages stated derived, that grandchildren are considered like children? If we say it is derived from the fact that it is written in Laban’s speech to Jacob: “The daughters are my daughters and the children are my children” (Genesis 31:43),** which indicates that Jacob’s children were also considered to be the children of their grandfather Laban, **if that is so,** does the continuation of Laban’s statement: **“And the flocks are my flocks” (Genesis 31:43),** indicate that **so too,** Jacob’s flocks were considered as belonging to Laban? **Rather, Laban was saying that you, Jacob, acquired them from me. Here too, with regard to the children, Laban was saying: You acquired them from me, i.e., it is only due to me that you have children.**

NOTES

Abaye thought to say, etc. – סָבַר אַבְי לְמִימֵר וכו’: An opinion is cited in the Jerusalem Talmud that limits the possibility of fulfilling the mitzva to be fruitful and multiply through grandchildren to an even greater degree than Abaye had thought to say. According to this opinion, only the daughter of a daughter and the son of a son are counted as one’s own children, but not a son of a daughter or a daughter of a son.

Marry a woman, etc. – נְסִיב אִיתְתָּא וכו’: Rav Sheshet’s response

does not appear to be sufficient, as Rabbi Yehoshua, cited below, holds that even if one has fulfilled the mitzva to be fruitful and multiply he should still have more children. Even according to the Gemara’s statement that Rav Sheshet became impotent, he still should have gotten married, in accordance with the opinion of Shmuel that it is always preferable for a man to be married. It is possible that since he was constantly involved in Torah study it was permissible for him to remain unmarried, similar to the case of ben Azzai (see 63b; Ramban).

HALAKHA

**Grandchildren are considered like children – בְּנֵי בָּנִים** If a man had a son and a daughter and both died, but one of them had a son and one of them had a daughter, since his surviving descendants include a male and a female, he has fulfilled the mitzva to be fruitful and multiply. However, if they were both the offspring of only one of his children, he has not fulfilled the mitzva (Rambam *Sefer Nashim, Hilkhhot Ishut* 15:5; *Shulḥan Arukh, Even HaEzer* 1:6).

**Or was discovered to be a eunuch – או שְׁנַמְצָא סְרִיס** If a man had a son who turned out to be a eunuch, or a daughter who grew up to be a sexually underdeveloped woman, he has not fulfilled the mitzva to be fruitful and multiply through them (Rambam *Sefer Nashim, Hilkhhot Ishut* 15:4; *Shulḥan Arukh, Even HaEzer* 1:5).

PERSONALITIES

**Rav Sheshet – רַב שֶׁשֶׁת** A prominent third-generation Babylonian *amora*, Rav Sheshet was the primary student of Rav Huna, even though he also served and studied under the rest of the Sages of Rav Huna’s generation. Rav Sheshet was famous for his unsurpassed expertise in Mishna and *baraita*. Many of the Sages of his generation came to study under him, as they knew that his teachings were always based on early sources. In his later years Rav Sheshet became blind, but remained involved in all aspects of life and was a frequent visitor to the house of the Exilarch. He was characteristically extremely forceful, hard as steel, and did not defer even to eminent political leaders. Apparently, He supported himself as a garment merchant and earned enough to live comfortably.

**Rav Huna – רַב הוּנָא** One of the great second-generation Babylonian *amora'im*, Rav Huna was most closely associated with his teacher, Rav. Rav Huna was of aristocratic descent, from the house of the Exilarchs, but despite that lineage, he lived in abject poverty for many years. Later in life he became wealthy and lived comfortably, and distributed his resources for the public good. Rav Huna was the greatest of Rav’s students, to the extent that Shmuel, Rav’s colleague, used to treat him deferentially and direct questions to him. After Rav’s death Rav Huna became the head of the yeshiva of Sura and filled that position for forty years. His prominence in Torah and his loftiness of character helped make the yeshiva of Sura the preeminent center of Torah for many centuries. Because of Rav Huna’s extensive Torah knowledge, the *halakha* is almost invariably ruled in accordance with his opinion in disputes with his colleagues and contemporaries. The only exception is in civil *halakha*, where the rulings are in accordance with the opinion of Rav Nahman.

Rav Huna had many students, some of whom studied exclusively with him. Moreover, Rav’s younger students remained to study with Rav Huna, his disciple, after Rav’s death. Rav Huna’s son, Rabba bar Rav Huna, was one of the greatest Sages of the following generation.

**BACKGROUND**

The students of Rabbi Akiva – תלמידי רבי עקיבא: It appears from the Gemara that most of Rabbi Akiva's disciples died in a plague. However, Rav Sherira Gaon explains in his letter that this was a *shemada*, meaning their death was due either to governmental persecution or to war. If so, this would appear to be related to the bar Kokheva revolt, of which Rabbi Akiva was an ardent supporter. It is reasonable to surmise that Rabbi Akiva's students served as soldiers under bar Kokheva and when the Romans suppressed the revolt with great brutality, these students were killed.

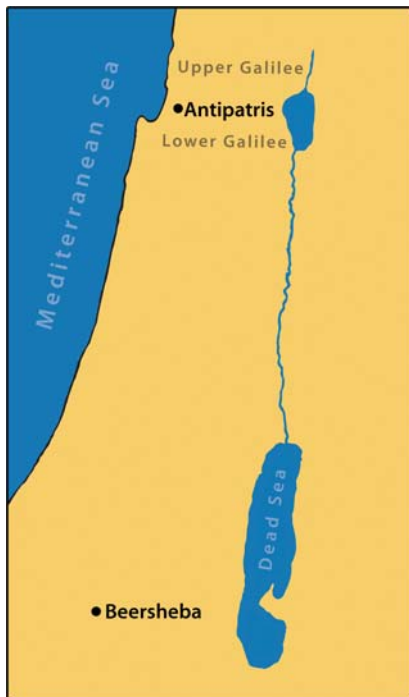
The image depicts an engraving that was prepared by the Roman senate in honor of Hadrian after he succeeded in suppressing the bar Kokheva revolt. It is currently at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem.



Engraving in honor of Hadrian after he suppressed the bar Kokheva revolt

**From Gevat to Antipatris – מגבת עד אנטיפטריס:** The location of Gevat is not entirely clear. Some identify it with a hill just north of Beersheba. According to some sources, Gevat is located on the border of the desert. Antipatris is the city of *Ἀντιπατρίς*, built by Herod in northern Judea. The city was located close to the source of the Yarkon River and near modern-day Rosh HaAyin. It served as a landmark, as it was the northernmost point in Judea, with Samaria continuing to the north.

The expression from Gevat to Antipatris means that the area stretched along the entire length of the land of Judea, from its southernmost edge to its northernmost edge.



Location of Antipatris



Antipatris

אֵלֶּא מֵהֵכָּא: וְאַחַר כָּא חֲצֹרֹן אֶל בֵּית מַכִּיר אָבִי גִלְעָד... וְתִלְד לֹא אֶת שֶׁגֹּב, וְכִתִּיב: "מִנִּי מַכִּיר יֵרְדוּ מְחֻקְקִים" וְכִתִּיב "יְהוּדָה מְחֻקְקִי".

מִתְמַנִּין דְּלֹא כְּרַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ. דְּתַנְיָא, רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אָמַר: נִשְׂא אָדָם אִשָּׁה בְּיָלְדוּתוֹ – יִשָּׂא אִשָּׁה בְּזִקְנוֹתוֹ, הָיָה לוֹ בָּנִים בְּיָלְדוּתוֹ – יִהְיוּ לוֹ בָּנִים בְּזִקְנוֹתוֹ, שְׁנָאֵמַר "בְּבֹקֶר זֶרַע אֶת זֶרְעֶךָ וְלָעֶרֶב אֵל תִּנַּח יָדְךָ כִּי אֵינְךָ יוֹדֵעַ אִי זֶה יִכְשֹׁר הַזֶּה אוֹ זֶה וְאִם שְׁנֵיהֶם כְּאֶחָד טוֹבִים".

רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא אָמַר: לָמַד תּוֹרָה בְּיָלְדוּתוֹ – יִלְמֹד תּוֹרָה בְּזִקְנוֹתוֹ, הָיָה לוֹ תַלְמִידִים בְּיָלְדוּתוֹ – יִהְיוּ לוֹ תַלְמִידִים בְּזִקְנוֹתוֹ, שְׁנָאֵמַר "בְּבֹקֶר זֶרַע אֶת זֶרְעֶךָ" וְגו'. אָמְרוּ: שְׁנַיִם עֶשְׂרֵי אֲלֶף זוגִים תַלְמִידִים הָיוּ לוֹ לְרַבִּי עֲקִיבָא מִגְּבַת עַד אֲנִיפַטְרִיס, וְכוּלָן מֵתוּ בְּפִרְק אֶחָד, מִפְּנֵי שֶׁלֹּא נִהְגּוּ כְּבוֹד זֶה לַזֶּה.

וְהָיָה הָעוֹלָם שְׁמֵם, עַד שֶׁבָּא רַבִּי עֲקִיבָא אֶצְל רַבּוֹתֵינוּ שְׂבָדְרוּם וּשְׁנָאֵה לָהֶם: רַבִּי מֵאִיר, וְרַבִּי יְהוּדָה, וְרַבִּי יוֹסֵי, וְרַבִּי שְׁמַעוֹן וְרַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בֶּן שְׁמוּעַ. וְהֵם הֵם הַעֲמִידוֹ תּוֹרָה אוֹתָהּ שְׁעָה.

תָּנָא: כּוֹלָם מֵתוּ מִפְּסַח וְעַד עֶצְרַת. אָמַר רַב חֶמְא בַר אֲבָא וְאִיתִימָא רַבִּי חֵיִיא בַר אֲבִין: כּוֹלָם מֵתוּ מִיְתֵיהּ רַעָה. מֵאִי הִיא? אָמַר רַב נַחֲמָן: אֶסְפֵּרָה.

אָמַר רַב מַטְנָא: הִלְכָה כְּרַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ.

Rather, the proof is from here: "And afterward Hezron went in to the daughter of Machir, the father of Gilead... and she bore him Segub" (1 Chronicles 2:21), and it is written: "Out of Machir came down governors" (Judges 5:14), and it is written: "Judah is my governor" (Psalms 60:9). Consequently, the governors, who were from the tribe of Judah, were also called the sons of Machir, who was from the tribe of Manasseh. This must be because they were the children of Machir's daughter and Hezron, indicating that grandchildren are considered like children.

**S** The Gemara comments: The mishna is not in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehoshua. As it is taught in a *baraita* that Rabbi Yehoshua says: If a man married a woman in his youth, and she passed away, he should marry another woman in his old age. If he had children in his youth, he should have more children in his old age, as it is stated: "In the morning sow your seed, and in the evening do not withhold your hand; for you do not know which shall prosper, whether this or that, or whether they both alike shall be good" (Ecclesiastes 11:6). This verse indicates that a man should continue having children even after he has fulfilled the mitzva to be fruitful and multiply.

Rabbi Akiva says that the verse should be understood as follows: If one studied Torah in his youth<sup>n</sup> he should study more Torah in his old age; if he had students in his youth he should have additional students in his old age, as it is stated: "In the morning sow your seed, etc." They said by way of example that Rabbi Akiva had twelve thousand pairs<sup>n</sup> of students<sup>b</sup> in an area of land that stretched from Gevat to Antipatris<sup>b</sup> in Judea, and they all died in one period of time, because they did not treat each other with respect.

And the world was desolate of Torah until Rabbi Akiva came to our Rabbis in the South and taught his Torah to them. This second group of disciples consisted of Rabbi Meir, Rabbi Yehuda, Rabbi Yosei, Rabbi Shimon, and Rabbi Elazar ben Shamua. And these are the very ones who upheld the study of Torah at that time. Although Rabbi Akiva's earlier students did not survive, his later disciples were able to transmit the Torah to future generations.

With regard to the twelve thousand pairs of Rabbi Akiva's students, the Gemara adds: It is taught that all of them died in the period from Passover until *Shavuot*. Rav Hama bar Abba said, and some say it was Rabbi Hiyya bar Avin: They all died a bad death. The Gemara inquires: What is it that is called a bad death? Rav Nahman said: Diphtheria.

Rav Mattana said: The *halakha* is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehoshua, who said that one must attempt to have more children even if he has already fulfilled the mitzva to be fruitful and multiply.

**NOTES**

Studied Torah in his youth, etc. – לָמַד תּוֹרָה בְּיָלְדוּתוֹ וְכוּ': The commentaries questioned the necessity of this exposition. Since Torah study is a mitzva that applies at all times, why is it necessary to derive from this verse that even if one studied in his youth he should study more in his old age? The *Keren Ora* suggests that this is referring to the additional toil in Torah that one must undertake in order to weaken his sinful inclinations. It might have been thought that since the evil inclination is not as strong in old age, he does not have to follow such a regimen. The *Iyyun Ya'akov* explains that even if one studied and fully clarified a particular issue in depth when he was young, he should not rely on this but should review the matter when the matter arises in his later years. He might change his mind or add new insights in his maturity.

Twelve thousand pairs, etc. – שְׁנַיִם עֶשְׂרֵי אֲלֶף זוגִים וכו': Most commentaries read this passage in a straightforward manner, offering various reasons for the fate that befell Rabbi Akiva's students. Rav Sherira Gaon, however, writes in a letter that the disciples perished in a time of persecution by the government. According to this opinion, the events are connected to the contemporaneous bar Kokheva rebellion. The Meiri writes that it is customary to observe certain customs of mourning during the period between Passover and *Shavuot* due to the fact that Rabbi Akiva's students died during this time. Following the tradition of the *ge'onim* that the students ceased dying on *Lag BaOmer*, the thirty-third day of that time period, mourning customs are not observed on that day.

A man is obligated to visit his wife when he is about to depart on a journey – חייב אדם לפקוד – את אשתו בשעה שהוא יוצא: One who is about to depart on a journey that does not involve a mitzva must have intercourse with his wife, if she so desires, before he departs. This is permitted even if it is the time when she expects the onset of menstrual bleeding. However, some say that if he can accommodate her in some other manner instead, he is praiseworthy. Some say that if his wife is forbidden to him but will become permitted if he postpones his journey by a day or night, he must delay his departure (*Shulhan Arukh, Orach Hayyim* 240:1 and *Yoreh De'a* 184:10, and in the comment of Rema).

אמר רבי תנחום אמר רבי חנילאי: כל אדם שאין לו אשה שרוי בלא שמחה, בלא ברכה, בלא טובה. בלא שמחה – דכתוב ושמחת אתה וביתך, בלא ברכה – דכתוב להניח ברכה אל ביתך, בלא טובה – דכתוב לרא טוב היות האדם לבדו.

**S** Apropos the discussion with regard to the mitzva to have children, the Gemara cites statements about marriage in general. **Rabbi Tanḥum said that Rabbi Ḥanilai said: Any man who does not have a wife is left without joy, without blessing,<sup>N</sup> without goodness.** He proceeds to quote verses to support each part of his statement. He is **without joy, as it is written: “And you shall rejoice, you and your household”** (Deuteronomy 14:26), which indicates that the a man is in a joyful state only when he is with his household, i.e., his wife. He is **without blessing, as it is written: “To cause a blessing to rest in your house”** (Ezekiel 44:30), which indicates that blessing comes through one’s house, i.e., one’s wife. He is **without goodness, as it is written: “It is not good that man should be alone”** (Genesis 2:18), i.e., without a wife.

במערבא אמרי: בלא תורה, בלא חומה. בלא תורה – דכתוב האם אין עזרתי בי ותושיה נדחה ממני, בלא חומה – דכתוב נקבה תסובב גבר.

**In the West, Eretz Yisrael, they say: One who lives without a wife is left without Torah, and without a wall of protection. He is without Torah, as it is written: “Is it that I have no help in me, and that sound wisdom is driven from me?”** (Job 6:13), indicating that one who does not have a wife lacks sound wisdom, i.e., Torah. He is **without a wall, as it is written: “A woman shall go round a man”** (Jeremiah 31:21), similar to a protective wall.

רבא בר עולא אמר: בלא שלום, דכתוב וידעת כי שלום אהלך ופקדת נדך ולא תחטא.

**Rava bar Ulla said: One who does not have a wife is left without peace, as it is written: “And you shall know that your tent is in peace; and you shall visit your habitation and shall miss nothing”** (Job 5:24). This indicates that a man has peace only when he has a tent, i.e., a wife.

אמר רבי יהושע בן לוי: כל היודע באשתו שהיא יראת שמים, ואינו פוקדה – נקרא חוטא, שנאמר וידעת כי שלום אהלך וגו'. ואמר רבי יהושע בן לוי: חייב אדם לפקוד את אשתו בשעה שהוא יוצא לדרך שנאמר וידעת כי שלום אהלך וגו'.

On the same verse, **Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: Whoever knows that his wife fears Heaven<sup>N</sup> and she desires him, and he does not visit her, i.e., have intercourse with her, is called a sinner, as it is stated: And you shall know that your tent is in peace; and you shall visit your habitation. And Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: A man is obligated to visit his wife for the purpose of having intercourse when he is about to depart on a journey,<sup>H</sup> as it is stated: “And you shall know that your tent is in peace, etc.”**

הא מהכא נפקא? מהתם נפקא: ואל אישך תשווקתך מלמד שהאשה משתוקקת על בעלה בשעה שהוא יוצא לדרך! אמר רב יוסף: לא נצרכה אלא סמוך לווסתה.

The Gemara asks: **Is this last statement derived from here?<sup>N</sup> It is derived from there: “And your desire shall be to your husband”** (Genesis 3:16), which teaches that a wife desires her husband when he is about to depart on a journey. **Rav Yosef said: The additional derivation cited by Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi is necessary only near the time of her set pattern,<sup>N</sup> i.e., when she expects to begin experiencing menstrual bleeding.** Although the Sages generally prohibited intercourse at this time due to a concern that the couple might have intercourse after she begins bleeding, if he is about to depart on a journey he must have intercourse with her.

## NOTES

**Without blessing – בלא ברכה:** The *Beit Yosef* cites this statement as a source for the custom that an unmarried priest does not recite the Priestly Benediction, as one who is without a blessing cannot bless others. The *Zohar* states a similar opinion. Nevertheless, the common practice is that unmarried priests do recite the Priestly Benediction.

**Whoever knows that his wife fears Heaven – כל היודע באשתו שהיא יראת שמים:** The meaning here is that since she is God-fearing she is reluctant to express her desire openly. If he realizes from her behavior that she desires him, it is a mitzva for him to have intercourse with her.

**Is this derived from here – הא מהכא נפקא:** Although the verse “And your desire shall be to your husband” does not refer specifically to a woman whose husband is about to depart on a journey, once it has been established that a woman desires her husband, and it is well known that this desire increases before a departure, no additional verse is necessary to teach that a man must satisfy his wife when she desires him (see *Tosafot*).

**Near the time of her set pattern – סמוך לווסתה:** According to Rashi and others, this Gemara indicates that although it is generally

forbidden to have intercourse at a time when a woman expects the onset of menstrual bleeding, in this case it is permitted. This is based upon the assumption that the general prohibition is by rabbinic decree, and the Sages did not apply this decree in cases where it would cause the woman suffering. However, other commentaries assert that intercourse at this time is forbidden even under these circumstances. *Tosafot* explain that the term visit referred to in the Gemara does not refer to intercourse, but to spending time together.

A different explanation is cited by the Ritva and the *Nimmukei Yosef*. They claim that this passage does not address the case of a woman who expects the onset of menstrual bleeding. Rather, the case is where the woman has already experienced menstrual bleeding, and the time for her to immerse herself in the ritual bath, and thereby become permitted to her husband, has almost arrived. In this case, the traveler must wait to leave home until it is permitted for him to have intercourse with his wife. It is with regard to this *halakha* that the Gemara states that the period of waiting is a night or a day, meaning that he must delay his trip if all he will have to wait is this amount of time. The next statement of the Gemara would then be understood as saying that if he is departing to fulfill a mitzva he should not delay his journey.



וְכַמָּה? אָמַר רַבָּא: עוֹנָהּ. וְהֵי מִלֵּי –  
 לְדַבֵּר הַרְשׁוּת, אֲבָל לְדַבֵּר מַצְוָה –  
 מִיִּטְרִידֵי.

The Gemara asks: **And how much** before the expected onset of menstrual bleeding is considered near the time of her set pattern? **Rava said: An interval of time,**<sup>H</sup> i.e., half a daily cycle, either a day or a night. The Gemara comments: **And this** statement that a man must have intercourse with his wife before he departs on a journey **applies** only if he is traveling for an **optional matter**, but if he is traveling in order to attend to a **matter** pertaining to a **mitzva**, he is not required to have intercourse with his wife so that he not become **preoccupied** and neglect the mitzva.

תִּנּוּ רַבָּנֵי: הָאֹהֶב אֶת אִשְׁתּוֹ כְּגֹפוֹ,  
 וְהַמְכַבֵּדָה יוֹתֵר מִגּוֹפוֹ, וְהַמְדִּירֵךְ בְּנֵיו  
 וּבָנוֹתָיו בְּדֶרֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְהַמְשִׂיאֵן סְמוּךְ  
 לְפִירְקָן – עָלָיו הַבְּתוּב אֹמֵר “וַיִּדְעַת  
 כִּי שְׁלוֹם אֶהְלֵךְ”. הָאֹהֶב אֶת שְׂכִינֵיו,  
 וְהַמְקָרֵב אֶת קְרוֹבָיו, וְהַנּוֹשֵׂא אֶת בֵּית  
 אָחוֹתוֹ,

**The Sages taught:** One who loves his wife as he loves himself,<sup>H</sup> and who honors her more than himself,<sup>N</sup> and who instructs his sons and daughters in an upright path, and who marries them off near the time when they reach maturity,<sup>HN</sup> about him the verse states: **And you shall know that your tent is in peace.** As a result of his actions, there will be peace in his home, as it will be devoid of quarrel and sin. One who loves his neighbors, and who draws his relatives close, and who marries the daughter of his sister,<sup>NH</sup> a woman he knows and is fond of as a family relative and not only as a wife,

**HALAKHA**

**Separating from one’s wife for an interval of time – פְּרִישַׁת – עוֹנָה:** It is prohibited for a husband and wife to have intercourse at the time when the onset of menstrual bleeding is expected to occur. If this is expected to occur during the night they are forbidden to each other from the beginning of the night, and if it is expected to occur during the day they are forbidden to each other from the beginning of the day (Rambam *Sefer Kedusha*, *Hilkhot Issurei Bia* 4:12; *Shulḥan Arukh*, *Yoreh De’a* 184:2).

man, he should provide for her in accordance with his means (Rambam *Sefer Nashim*, *Hilkhot Ishut* 15:19).

**One who loves his wife as he loves himself – הָאֹהֶב אֶת אִשְׁתּוֹ – כְּגֹפוֹ:** The Sages said that a man should love his wife as he loves himself and honor her more than himself. If he is a wealthy

**Marries them off near the time when they reach maturity – מְשִׂיאֵן סְמוּךְ לְפִירְקָן:** The Sages advised a man to marry off his sons and daughters near the time when they reach maturity so that they not be tempted by sinful thoughts (Rambam *Sefer Kedusha*, *Hilkhot Issurei Bia* 21:25; *Tur*, *Even HaEzer* 1).

**The daughter of his sister – בֵּית אָחוֹתוֹ:** The Sages counseled that a man should marry his sister’s or his brother’s daughter (Rambam *Sefer Kedusha*, *Hilkhot Issurei Bia* 21:14; see *Mishne LaMelekh*).

**NOTES**

**And who honors her more than himself – וְהַמְכַבֵּדָה יוֹתֵר – מִגּוֹפוֹ:** With regard to all matters of honor a man must put his wife before himself. An example is with regard to clothing; a husband must make sure that his wife is dressed in a more respectable manner than himself (*Nimmukei Yosef*). Rabbi Yehuda al-Madari explains that the shame felt by a woman when her dignity is not upheld is greater than that of a man, and therefore upholding her dignity takes precedence.

**And who marries the daughter of his sister – וְהַנּוֹשֵׂא אֶת בֵּית אָחוֹתוֹ:** Some commentaries claim that this does not refer only to his sister’s daughter but includes a brother’s daughter as well (Rambam; *Tosafot*, citing Rashbam). The *Mishne LaMelekh* explains that family affection is a more natural feeling than the contingent, albeit stronger, love for a woman, and therefore a combination of these two emotions will ensure the success of the marriage.

**Who marries them off near the time when they reach maturity – הַמְשִׂיאֵן סְמוּךְ לְפִירְקָן:** Most commentaries explain that this means that he marries them off before they reach adulthood. See *Tosafot*, who discuss how it is possible for a boy to get married at this age. Some say that the *baraita* is referring to a father who makes sure his son gets married as soon as he reaches the age of thirteen (see *Yam shel Shlomo*). The Meiri cites a different interpretation according to which the *baraita* is referring to a father who ensures that his son gets married near the usual age of marriage, eighteen.

Rabbeinu Tam and the Meiri maintain that this statement applies only to the daughter of a sister, because she is likely to be more compatible with him than the daughter of his brother. Rashi states that a man has stronger feelings for a sister than for a brother, and therefore he is closer to her daughter. Others contend that he should not marry his brother’s daughter, as she would be unable to fulfill the mitzva of levirate marriage (*Tosafot Yeshanim*; Rivan). Yet others suggest that this is referring to a case of a sister’s daughter who is fatherless, and it is a particular mitzva to marry her as an act of kindness, in order to provide for her (Rid). The *Yad Rama* explains in a similar fashion.