

## Women's Voices in the Talmud

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Rabbi Judith Hauptman, E. Billi Ivry Professor of Talmud and Rabbinic Culture (emerita), JTS

### 1. Using the light of Shabbat Lamps, yShabbat 1:3, 3b (parallel in bShabbat 12b)

תני רבי חייא אבל מסתכל הוא מה שבכוס ומה שבקערה ואינו חושש . . . רב ירמיה סלק לגבי רבסי  
מזג ליה כסא שרי מסתכל ביה **אמרה ליה בני ביתיה חמי מה הוא עביד** אמר לה דהוא נהוג בשיטתיה  
דרבו תני רבי חייא מסתכל הוא מה שבכוס ומה שבקערה ואינו חושש.

Rabbi Hiyya taught: but he may examine [by the light of the Shabbat lamp] what is inside the cup and the bowl without worrying [that he violates the Sabbath by tilting the lamp to get it to burn brighter] . . . R. Jeremiah went to visit R. Assi. He [the host] mixed for him [the guest] a cup [of wine]. R. Jeremiah began to examine it [by the light of the Shabbat lamp]. R. Assi's wife (*b'nei beiteih*) said to him [her husband]: look what he [the visitor] is doing! He [R. Assi] said to her: he acts according to the teachings of his own rabbi, [for] R. Hiyya taught, "he may examine what is inside the cup and the bowl without worrying."

### 2. Betrothing with a Penny, bKiddushin 12a-b

. . . ההוא גברא דאקדיש באבנא דכוחלא, יתיב רב חסדא וקא משער ליה, אי אית ביה שוה פרוטה  
אין, ואי לא, לא. ואי לית ביה שוה פרוטה לא? והא אמר שמואל: חיישינן! רב חסדא לא סבר ליה  
דשמואל. **אמרה ליה אימיה: והא ההוא יומא דקדשה הוה ביה שוה פרוטה! אמר לה: לאו כל**  
**כמינך דאסרת לה אבתרא, לאו היינו דיהודית דביתהו דרבי חייא, דהוית לה צער לידה, אמרה ליה,**  
**אמרה לי אם: קיבל ביך אבוך קידושי כי זוטרת.** אמר לה: לאו כל כמינה דאימך דאסרת לך עילווי.

A certain man betrothed [his wife] with a stibnite stone.<sup>1</sup> [She later received a betrothal gift from a second man.] R. Hisda was trying to determine if [the stibnite stone] was worth a penny, and, if so, the [first] betrothal was valid [and the second is not], or if [the stone] was not worth a penny, and if so the [first] betrothal was not valid . . . R. Hisda's mother said to him: but on the day the first man betrothed her, the stone *was* worth a penny! He said to her: we will not [decide the law] according to you because you would prohibit this woman to a second [husband]. Is this not like the story of Judith, the wife of R. Hiyya, who had [terrible] labor

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<sup>1</sup> Ground stibnite, called kohl, is used to paint the eyes.

pains,<sup>2</sup> and said to [her husband]: Mother told me that "Father accepted a betrothal [gift] for you [i.e. Judith] when you were small." He said to her: we do not decide the law according to your mother because [if we did] she would be prohibiting you to me!

### 3. Scraping on the Sabbath, bShabbat 147b

"אבל לא מתגררין". תנו רבנן: אין גוררין במגררת בשבת. רבן שמעון בן גמליאל אומר: אם היו רגליו מלוכלכות בטיט ובצואה גורר כדרכו ואינו חושש. רב שמואל בר יהודה עבדא ליה אימיה מגררתא דכספא.

. . . One may not scrape [away dirt on Shabbat, mShab 22:6]. A baraita: one may not scrape with a scraper on the Sabbath. R. Simon b. Gamliel says: if his feet were covered with clay or excrement, he may scrape [on the Sabbath] as is his habit [on ordinary days] and not worry [that he has violated the Sabbath]. The mother of R. Shmuel b. Judah made him a scraper out of silver.

### 4. Keeping Wheat Dry for Baking It Into Matzah, bPesahim 40a-b

מר בריה דרבינא, מנקטא ליה אימיה בארבי.

Mar the son of Ravina, his mother stored [grain] for him in a trough [keeping it dry from harvest time until the grain was ground into flour and baked into matzah].

### 5. Eating an Egg That Was Laid on a Festival, yShabbat 13:6, 14b (=yBesah 5:1, 62d)

רבי שמי בעי מהו לכפות עליו כלי? ייבא כהיא דאמ' רבי שמעון בי רבי ינאי: אני לא שמעתי מאבא, אחותי אמרה לי משמו, ביצה שנולדה ביום טוב סומכין לה כלי בשביל שלא תתגלגל אבל אין כופין עליה כלי. שמואל אמר אף כופין עליה כלי.

R. Shimi asked: what is the rule for inverting a utensil over it [an egg laid on the Festival, to keep it from rolling away and getting broken]? Let it be [answered from] that which R. Simon of the house of R. Yannai said: I did not hear [the following halakhah] from Father; my sister told it to me in his name: If an egg was laid on a Festival, one may prop a utensil against it so that it does not roll away but one may *not* invert a utensil over it. Shmuel said: one *may* invert a utensil over it.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> In an episode in bYevamot 65b, Judith, the wife of R. Hiyya, appears to know that rabbis are discussing whether or not women are obligated to procreate. Reference is also made to her severe labor pains.

<sup>3</sup> Amoraim differ on whether a utensil may be moved on the Sabbath for the sake of an object that itself may not be moved. See yShabbat 17:1, 16a.