



and swallow it, then she is forbidden to her husband until she drinks the bitter waters and the matter is examined.

### 3. Sotah 27b-28a

כְּשֶׁם שֶׁהַמַּיִם בּוֹדְקִין אוֹתָהּ כֵּן הַמַּיִם בּוֹדְקִין אוֹתוֹ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר וּבָאוּ וּבָאוּ

Just as the water evaluates her fidelity, so too, the water evaluates his, i.e., her alleged paramour's, as it is stated: "And the water that causes the curse shall enter into her" (Numbers 5:24), and it is stated again: "And the water that causes the curse shall enter into her and become bitter" (Numbers 5:27). It is derived from the double mention of the phrase "and...shall enter" that both the woman and her paramour are evaluated by the water.

נִפְקָא לִיה מִדְּתַנְיָא לְצַבּוֹת בֶּטֶן וְלִנְפֹל יֶרֶךְ בֶּטֶן וִירִיכּוֹ שֶׁל בּוֹעֵל אֶתָּה אוֹמֵר בֶּטֶן וִירִיכּוֹ שֶׁל בּוֹעֵל אוֹ אֵינוֹ אֶלָּא בֶּטֶן וִירִיכָה שֶׁל נִבְעֵלֶת כְּשֶׁהוּא אוֹמֵר וְצַבְתָּה בֶּטֶן וְנִפְלָה יֶרֶךְ הָרִי בֶּטֶן וִירִיכָה שֶׁל נִבְעֵלֶת אֲמֹר וְמָה אֲנִי מְקַיֵּים לְצַבּוֹת בֶּטֶן וְלִנְפֹל יֶרֶךְ בֶּטֶן וִירִיכּוֹ שֶׁל בּוֹעֵל

The Gemara answers: He derives it from that which is taught in a baraita, that the verse: "And cause the belly to swell and the thigh to fall away" (Numbers 5:22), is referring to the belly and thigh of the paramour. Do you say that the intention is the belly and the thigh of the paramour, or is it only the belly and the thigh of the adulteress? When it says later: "And her belly shall swell, and her thigh shall fall away" (Numbers 5:27), the belly and thigh of the adulteress are explicitly stated. And therefore, how do I realize the meaning of the former verse: "And cause the belly to swell, and the thigh to fall away"? Clearly, it is referring to the belly and thigh of the paramour.

### 4. Bamidbar 5:31

{ וְנִקְיָה הָאִישׁ מֵעֵוֹן וְהָאִשָּׁה הִיא תִשָּׂא אֶת־עוֹנָהּ }

The man\* shall be clear of guilt; but that woman\* shall suffer for her guilt.

Sifrei Bamidbar 5:31

למה נאמר ונקה האיש מעון כשהאיש מנוקה מעון האשה ההיא תשא את עונה, ולא כענין שנאמר לא אפקוד על בנותיכם כי תזנינה, ועל כלותיכם כי תנאפנה כי הם עם הזונות יפרדו ועם הקדשות יזבחו ועם לא יבין ילבט. אמר להם הואיל ואתם רודפים אחר זנות אף המים לא יבדקו את נשיכם, לכך נאמר ונקה האיש מעון מעון ההוא

Why is it written "and the man will be clean of sin"? (To teach that) "when the man is clean of sin, that woman will bear her sin" — as opposed to (Hoshea 4:14) "I shall not punish your daughters when they commit harlotry, nor your brides, when they fornicate. For they (themselves) betake themselves with the whores and sacrifice with the harlots, and a people that does not understand will fall!" He said to them: If you yourselves pursue harlotry, the waters, too, will not prove your wives. This is the intent of "and the man will be clean of sin" — Of that sin itself!

#### 5. Gitten 6b

אמר רב חסדא לעולם אל יטיל אדם אימה יתירה בתוך ביתו שיהרי פילגש בגבעה הטיל עליה בעלה אימה יתירה והפילה כמה רבבות מישראל

Rav Hisda says: A person should never impose excessive fear upon the members of his household, as the husband of the concubine of Gibeah imposed excessive fear upon her and this ultimately caused the downfall of many tens of thousands of Jews in the resulting war

אמר רב יהודה אמר רב כל המטיל אימה יתירה בתוך ביתו סוף הוא בא לידי שלש עבירות גילוי עריות ושפיכות דמים וחילול שבת

Rav Yehuda says that Rav says: Anyone who imposes excessive fear upon the members of his household will ultimately come to commit three sins: Engaging in forbidden sexual intercourse, (as the wife will be so fearful of her husband that she will sometimes tell him that she has immersed in a ritual bath after her menstruation has ended when she has not done so); and he will also end up committing bloodshed, (as she is likely to run away from him and expose herself to dangers); and desecration of Shabbat, (as she will cook for him on Shabbat because she is scared that he will be angry with her for neglecting to do so beforehand.)

## 6. Rashi Bamidbar 5:12

איש איש כי תשטה אשתו. מה כתוב למעלה מן הענין? "ואיש את קדשיו לו יהיו", אם אתה מעכב מתנות הכהן, חייך שתצטרך לבא אצלו להביא לו את הסוטה:

What is stated above, immediately before this section? ואיש את קדשיו לו יהיו: If you withhold the gifts due to the priest, by your life, you will have to come to him in order to bring him your faithless wife for the ordeal by the waters

## 7. Bamidbar 5:15

והביא האיש את-אשתו אל-הכהן והביא את-קרבנה עליה עשירת האפה קמח שערים לא-יצק עליו שמן ולא-יתן עליו לבנה כי-מנחת קנאת הוא מנחת זכרון מזכרת עון:

that party shall bring his wife to the priest. And he shall bring as an offering for her one-tenth of an ephah of barley flour. No oil shall be poured upon it and no frankincense shall be laid on it, for it is a meal offering of jealousy, a meal offering of remembrance which recalls wrongdoing.

Chizkuni:

מזכרת עון אחד משתיים או חטא האשה או חטא בעלה החושדה.

it reminds G-d of the guilt of either of the two parties concerned, either the woman who had sinned or her husband who had suspected her.

## 8. Rambam Hilchos Sotah 1:7

בעל שמחל על קנאיו קדם שתסתר קנאיו מחול וכאלו לא קנא לה מעולם. אבל אם מחל אחר שתסתר אינו יכול למחל.

When a husband forgoes a warning before his wife enters into privacy with [the man in question], the warning is nullified, and it is as if he had never issued a warning to her [regarding him]. If, however, he forgoes the warning after she enters into privacy with him, the warning cannot be nullified

2:1

אִשָּׁה שֶׁקָּנָא לָהּ וְנִסְתַּרָה אֵין כּוֹפִין אוֹתָהּ לְשִׁתּוֹת. אֶלָּא אִם רָצְתָה וְאָמְרָה הֵן נִטְמָאתִי תִצָּא בְּלֹא כְּתֻבָּה וְנִאֲסָרָה עַל בְּעֵלָהּ לְעוֹלָם וְאִינָה שׁוֹתָה. וְכֵן אִם אָמְרָה אֵינִי טְמֵאָה וְאֵינִי שׁוֹתָה אֵין כּוֹפִין אוֹתָהּ לְשִׁתּוֹת וְתִצָּא בְּלֹא כְּתֻבָּה. וְכֵן אִם אָמַר בְּעֵלָהּ אֵינִי רוֹצֶה לְהִשְׁקוּתָה אוֹ שֶׁבְּעֵלָהּ בְּעֵלָהּ אַחַר שֶׁנִּסְתַּרָה הָרִי זֹז אִינָה שׁוֹתָה וְנוֹטְלַת כְּתֻבָּתָה וְיִוצֵאָה וְהִיא אֲסוּרָה [עֲלִיּוֹן] לְעוֹלָם:

When a woman is given a warning and enters into privacy [with the man in question], she is not compelled to drink the bitter water. Instead, if she says, "I committed adultery," she is not required to drink the waters, but she must be divorced without receiving [the money due her by virtue of] her ketubah, and she is forbidden to her husband forever.

Similarly, if she says: "I did not commit adultery, but I will not drink the waters,"<sup>1</sup> she is not forced to drink, but she must be divorced without receiving [the money due her by virtue of] her ketubah.

And if her husband says, "I don't want to have her drink," or if he engaged in relations with her after she entered into privacy [with the man in question], she should not drink [the bitter water].<sup>2</sup> Instead, she is given [the money due her by virtue of] her ketubah<sup>3</sup> and departs; she is forbidden to him forever.

#### 9. Ramban Bamidbar 5:20

והנה אין בכל משפטי התורה דבר תלוי בנס זולתי הענין הזה שהוא פלא ונס קבוע שיעשה בישראל בהיותם רובם עושים רצונו של מקום כי חפץ למען צדקו ליסר הנשים שלא תעשינה כזמת יתר העמים ולנקות ישראל מן הממזרות שיהיו ראויים להשרות שכינה בתוכם ולפיכך פסק הענין הזה משעה שנתקלקלו בעבירות כמו שאמרו (סוטה מז) משרבו הנואפים פסקו מי סוטה

Now there is nothing amongst all the ordinances of the Torah which depends upon a miracle, except for this matter, which is a permanent wonder and miracle that will happen in Israel, when the majority of the people live in accordance with the Will of G-d; for He was pleased for His righteousness' sake to teach the women that they do not do after the lewdness of the other nations, and to purify Israel from adulterous offspring, so that they are worthy that the Divine Presence

dwell among them. Therefore this matter [i.e., the effect of the water on the sotah] stopped from the time that the people became debauched with [sexual] sins, as the Rabbis have said: “When adulterers became frequent, the water of sotah ceased

#### 10. Yerushalmi Sotah 1:4

Rebbi Zevadiah, the son-in-law of Rebbi Levi, reported the following happening. Rebbi Meïr used to preach in the synagogue of Ḥamata every Friday evening. There was a woman who used to hear him. Once he extended his sermon. She went and wanted to come to her house but found the light had gone out. Her husband asked her, where have you been? She said to him, to hear the preacher’s voice. He said to her, so and so, that this woman will not enter here into her house unless she went and spat into the preacher’s face. Rebbi Meïr saw this in the holy spirit and faked pain in his eyes. He said, any woman who knows charms for the eye should come and do the charm. Her neighbors said to her, this answers your needs. Go to your house, represent yourself as a sorceress and spit in his eye. She came to him; he asked her, do you know to make a charm for the eye? In her fear of him, she said no. He said to her, if you spit into it seven times, he will feel better. After she had spat, he said to her: Go, and tell your husband, you said to me once, but she spat seven times! His students said to him, so does one denigrate the Torah? If you had ordered about him, would we not have brought him, whipped him on the footstool, and make him agree to make up with his wife? He said to them, the honor of Meïr should not be greater than that of his Maker. Since the verse says that the Holy Name, written in holiness, should be erased by the water in order to make peace between husband and wife, the honor of Meïr not so much more?