**The Path of Moses:**

**A Scholarly Essay on the Case of Women in Religious Faith**

By

The least among the sages

the lowly Mózes Salamon of Khust

Rabbi of the Congregation of Thurdossin

in the County of Árva [May God protect her]

In the year Ata SeTeR Li ] year 5660 *anno mundi*]

Price of the booklet - a crown with which to magnify oneself

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My pamphlet, [is pamphlet a positive word?]

Please go forth, for you are sent as a token of friendship, honor, and esteem to the beloved [precious?] man, he whose stature is as tall as the cedars and who is as strong as the oaks

The learned rabbi, our teacher and rabbi Moses who holds the title Dr. Bloch (may his light shine).

The teacher of teachers at the Rabbinical Seminary in the city of

Budapest the capital, may God protect her,

the seminar[[1]](#endnote-1)y whose gates are as white as snow and whose stature is like that of a palm tree. Just as the palm tree is beautiful in all its appearance, and all its fruits are sweet and good, likewise etc. May it be God’s will to prolong his life, and to bless his path in the land together with his soul and the soul of his admirer, from the depth of his heart,

 The author

A word to the readers

Neither the love of novelties nor the desire to make myself a name in the land caused me to take pen in hand to compose this book that I set before you today. For I have grown old and gray, and my love, my hatred, my jealousy have long since perished, and “Shem is the brother of Japheth, the elder".[[2]](#endnote-2) Rather, it is due to seeing the ruin of the daughter of my people. There she was, disheveled and unraveled before the eyes of her ostracizers, and the net was spread wide under her feet in every direction and every corner. They would curse her in her face and shame her like a harlot. In hiding they would prepare an ambush to trap her in their net, taunting her incessantly: “the daughters of Israel are as ownerless property, they are like beasts of the field, in the council of their people they are not counted, even their God is disgusted with them, that is why He banished them and denied them admission into His community ". But women are not light-headed; rather, they justly commune with their heart, and indeed it is truly empty and beyond cure.Who can fathom where they will wander to find peace and quiet for their spirit, which beats within them like the [hammer?] pounding on an anvil. That is why I thought in my heart to search in our literature for the source of Woman’s disgrace, where it came from, who has swept her away without justification, and why. Will I be able to restore things to their proper place, point by point, as they were in the beginning, or must she always be disgraced? And now, what I have found, I will humbly set before my brethren, may God protect them. I beg you, if only you would take heed of my words and then decide to go right or left, for I am not the sort who comes to hack away with a hatchet and pike. I only ask and beg, not as an inspired man, all my words are just a warning call. Since I desire goodness, not disgrace, those who hear me should not hastily slander me without thought. And this shall be peace.

This essay was completed here in Thurdossin, may God protect her, in the county of Árva, on the day of mourning of my honored mother, modest in her deeds, Madame Yenta, rest her soul, 4 Kislev in the year 660 ([*anno mundi*] excluding the thousands).[[3]](#endnote-3)

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The man said: the woman You put at my side - she gave me of the tree, and I ate[[4]](#footnote-2) (Gen 3:12). “It was taught: R. Meir used to say,[[5]](#footnote-3) A man is bound to say the following three blessings daily: [Blessed art thou] who hast made me an Israelite, who hast not made me a woman,[[6]](#footnote-4) who hast not made me a brutish man” (b.Menachot43b).—

The woman that God gave us here in the world[[7]](#footnote-5) was created as a "[conjoined] twin", according to one of our ancient sages, rest their souls, on the day the Lord God created Adam on the earth; therefore, the same instruction and the same rule shall apply to her along with him. Even though ever since their separation they have been

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individuals, she has become his fitting helpmate[[8]](#footnote-6) to fill in the requisites that he lacks. While he has the greatness and the might, she has the majesty and the splendor, and against the wisdom and the knowledge that God put in him, she has the advantage of understanding[[9]](#footnote-7). From both of them the whole world spread out ... And if this is a truly established fact and has been proven, it is in the eyes of everyone who seeks truth in their heart: why did our ancient sages of blessed memory decide to push her away with both hands from the Sanctuary of Faith, to the point that today she has almost no part in the worship of God, blessed be He? And who was responsible for this great evil? It seems that Man subdued her in a "permitted war" [*milhemet reshut*][[10]](#endnote-4) and made her his toiling serf[[11]](#footnote-8) after he had prevailed over her and slandered her by saying that it is not becoming for a woman to go out to battle towards calamities and the hazards of time[[12]](#footnote-9), because “all the glory of the daughter of a king is within”. But surely, in an obligatory war [*milhemet hovah*], who [who is she if he pledged his heart] ערב לבו – רש"י לשון ערבון would dare take upon himself/presume in his heart to banish her from having a share in the inheritance of the Lord, before Whom all people are equal[[13]](#footnote-10)?

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And why did they do all this to the mistress of the house? Are not most of the acts of faith in her hands,[[14]](#footnote-11) and her heart is like malleable sealing-wax molding to the impressions of what is in the heavens above, in sacred awe…

Know, all those who honor God, and take it to heart, behold the whole land is before you, see for yourselves how a noble vine turned into a base, an alien vine, and learn to do good (Isa 1:17). Abraham had a daughter whose name was Ba-kol.[[15]](#footnote-12) One day she arose within her nation and stood upright, and after many days her hand prevailed (Judg 3:10). She, through an image, turned Man and God into three. She did this indeed through skillful craftsmanship. Women who seek the closeness of God have always surrounded her like a wall; the night has been for sentry-duty for them, for the guarding of her sanctuary, and in the day they have worked on everything pertaining to the altar, because she has never ignored them. Therefore, her prayer houses are full, from end to end, at all times and seasons, and she will not hurt her worshippers [Isa 58:3] And who holds the lead? Women are the ones who lead.[[16]](#endnote-5) Her faithful will gather at all times, the princes of men that neither the rain nor the snow will stop. Proudly will they advance, although they are captives, in irons. Like a reed they will bow their head before the man of faith, even if he has seven abominations in his heart. Whereas we call on the name of the Lord our God, but we are not heard. Our Lord is One and we will worship Him in pure heart, even if we do not know what to do in order to restore the Covenant that He made with us at Horev. Why do we bury our heads in the sand and say, “He does not see us”?

God will surely search it out, for He knows the secrets of the heart, and He knows that Israel is like a swallow that flies away: thousands of them will be ready at any time to leave our camp, when all goes well with them, and to assimilate with the Gentiles.[[17]](#footnote-13) —Their places of prayer are empty, no one leaves or enters. New moon and sabbath, or Torah reading will gather ten people at most, if there is no lion roaming in the streets [Prov. 26:13], and there is no one in the city to say *Yishtabach*.[[18]](#endnote-6) But here we are a large congregation of God[[19]](#footnote-14) and God is with us, because there are within us ten people who do not know how to do good and bad, and they are ready at every time and season to do the work of the duties of service for the sake of a monetary payment and a loaf of bread [I Sam 2:36].[[20]](#footnote-15) All this has come upon us because Woman has been kept away from us and nobody has taken her into His house to take her part in sacred offerings that the people of Israel may consecrate to the Lord. —

Come, let us return to the subject of our investigation and pursue it to know its origin and reason. If we find its source, we will proceed slowly to the streambed from which it began to grow into rivers flowing into the sea of our times.

The Tannaim of blessed memory, who are like water-troughs for the flow of the true oral tradition by which we live, bequeathed to us three short statements, enigmatic and obscure. It is written in the Mishnah: a) “All obligations of the son upon the father, men are bound but women are exempt, but all obligations of the father upon the son, both men and women are bound.” b) “All affirmative precepts limited to time, men are bound but women are exempt;”[[21]](#endnote-7)

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c) “All negative precepts, whether limited to time or not limited to time, are binding upon both men and women excepting Do not round the corners of your head, and: Do not destroy the corners of your beard and Do not contract ritual impurity from a corpse.”[[22]](#footnote-16)

Lo our holy Rabbi [R.Yehudah Hanassi], the editor of the Mishnah, taught statements without indicating their source and omitted the name of their originator, which is a reliable sign of their antiquity and oldness. Nevertheless, they are too “Gihon waters,”[[23]](#endnote-8) because their original source burst out from the *Tosefta* which is more ancient. And it says:

[ST: I think there needs to be an editor’s note here, explaining that Salomon’s footnotes do not provide the sources for the texts he quotes, but rather parallels in the Mishnah that differ from the Tosefta text he quotes, Tosefta Sota 2:9, which he cites only in footnote 27.  
It might also be helpful to add an endnote about the confusing numbering of his footnotes here]

A. “A priest stands and makes offerings at the altar, which is not the case of a priest-girl;[[24]](#footnote-17)

B. A man has control over his daughter and has power to betroth her through money, a writ, or an act of sexual relations, and he controls what she finds, the produce of her labor and the abrogation of her vows, which is not the case of a woman;[[25]](#footnote-18)

C. A man is subject to [punishment for] the transgression of a commandment which has to be performed at a particular time, which is not the case with a woman;[[26]](#footnote-19)

D. A man is subject to the transgression of the commandment not to trim the beard and not to remove the beard and not to contract corpse-uncleanness,which is not the case with a woman;[[27]](#footnote-20)

E. A man is subject to the trial as a rebellious son, but a woman is not subject to trial as a rebellious daughter;[[28]](#footnote-21)

F. A man wraps himself in a cloak and proclaims, but a woman does not wrap herself in a cloak and proclaim;[[29]](#footnote-22)

G. A man may be sold repeatedly, but a woman may not be sold repeatedly.[[30]](#footnote-23)

H. A man is sold as a Hebrew slave, but a woman is not sold as a Hebrew slave;[[31]](#footnote-24)

I. A man is subjected to the ceremony of the awl but a woman is not subject to the ceremony of the awl;[[32]](#footnote-25)

J. A man acquires a Hebrew slave, and a woman does not acquire a Hebrew slave”[[33]](#footnote-26)

These are ten[[34]](#footnote-27) differences between woman and man, and all of them are in the *Tosefta*[[35]](#footnote-28) as one, attached to one another, but our Holy Rabbi separated them and went and planted them in Eden, the garden of his Mishnah, one here and another there, as he saw fit in his work of setting the Mishnah in order... When we look properly into what is in front of us with no blemish in our eyes, we will know the great difference between the language of the Toseftaand that of the Mishnah in the matter in which we are [engaged]. The Tosefta will teach us the right way to understand the Mishnah and according to it this is its interpretation: all affirmative precepts limited to time, men are liable (that is

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they transgress if they do not fulfill them), while women are exempt (they do not transgress if they do not fulfill them),[[36]](#footnote-29) but the precepts were said to both of them even here. The tradition meant only to make things easier for her, to always leave her life in her hands to do or to stop, not to belittle her dignity, God forbid, for this does not increase God's glory …“Blessed be God, Blessed be He, before whom there is no injustice and whose mercy is great for males and females alike.”[[37]](#footnote-30) Also, He knows that man has the means to uphold and to fulfill all the words of His holy Torah.[[38]](#footnote-31) A woman, on the other hand, lacks the means to fulfill them, because she is sick at times and she has menstrual periods; all the household needs are on her, the livelihood of the husband and the hardships of parenthood. How would He, blessed be His name, deal imperiously with her and put the burden of precepts limited to time on her neck, while their weight is unbearable on her…We will study the Scriptures and see how the woman appears in them, whether she is innocent or guilty. First, without paying attention to the *halakhah* as it has been normatively established today, since we are of the opinion that this is a new garment to them, and our predecessors, rest their souls, dressed them that way for some purpose. We will take this Book of the Torah and we will see that it begins with a statement of "procreation": "Be fertile and increase, fill the earth and master it."[[39]](#footnote-32) Whether this verse is a commandment or a blessing,[[40]](#footnote-33) it was said to both of them, to the man and the woman, for "He did not create it a waste, but formed it for habitation" [Isa 45:18].[[41]](#footnote-34)

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The second saying is the one concerned with "eating and touching": "Of every tree of the garden you are free to eat;[[42]](#footnote-35) but as for the tree of knowledge of good and bad, you must not eat of it." Although according to the view that does not seek the deep meaning, this was said to the man alone, almost the whole of the Torah was said in masculine language,[[43]](#footnote-36) [but] it meant females also,[[44]](#footnote-37) so here too the woman was included. For if the Giver of Commandments, Blessed be His name commanded only him and not her, what would be her sin and why would God wish to curse her because of the man? Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly [Gen 18:25], and will bring His charge against all mankind? … Let us take a step further and see *our Matriarch Sarah*, how honorable she was in the eyes of Abraham, her spouse. He immediately yielded to whatever she said, at the command of the Lord.[[45]](#footnote-38) When he wanted to do something that concerned her too, he would ask her as a favor to agree with his will.[[46]](#footnote-39) He even sent away his firstborn, who was just the son of Hagar the Egyptian, and “was mocking*”*[[47]](#footnote-40). . . *Rebeccah the Matriarch* was the lady of the house. Thanks to her wisdom she succeeded to save herself

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and freed her soul and the soul of her beloved son from being subjugated to a man who had a taste for game, which was a regression, [as] Isaac, his father, had already sown in that land and reaped a hundredfold the same year.[[48]](#footnote-41) And God let it happen, because He loved him [Jacob] too.[[49]](#footnote-42) ... Rachel and Leah

were annoyed by their father, because he considered them as strangers and sold them, while Jacob called them to the field unto his flock to consult with them, whether he should set out on his way or stay, even though God had told him: “Return to the land of your fathers”.[[50]](#footnote-43) He did not order them as a master does to his handmaids … Righteous women in Egypt wrought real wonders, according to the reliable tradition. With their skills and diligence they did noble things when they shifted their husbands' attention to redemption and reward so they did not lose hope and did not corrupt their ways in evildoing on the

earth[[51]](#footnote-44) … Miriam the prophetess, Aaron's sister, was standing at a distance to know what would happen to her brother.[[52]](#footnote-45) She had prophesied about him before he was born, that he would redeem Israel.[[53]](#footnote-46) And after seeing with her own eyes the great power that the Lord wielded in Egypt and on the sea, she then took the tambourine in her hand and answered to all the women coming after her with tambourines and dances by “the victory song*.”*[[54]](#footnote-47) She became

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a well of spring water to her people,[[55]](#footnote-48) from which anyone who was thirsty for the words of God would draw, and her image would be precious to them to the end of times… At the special revelation at Mount Sinai, when God descended upon it in fire to teach His people Torah and commandments by the pursuit of which they shall live, He spoke first to the women, for said the Lord: “I cursed the woman in my wrath, but all are running after her.[[56]](#footnote-49) By the pleasantness of her words she will incline their hearts towards whatever she desires, therefore I will win her for Myself, so that she will follow Me, and the men will come after the women to take heed of My words and will always keep My commandments and rules.”[[57]](#footnote-50) … While men soon turned away from God and began seeking “a god who shall go before” them[[58]](#footnote-51), women refused to give the rings in their ears; but they donated them with joy and gladness to the Tabernacle.[[59]](#footnote-52) For women will not choose a new god. They have one heart, and if they give it once, they will neither change their mind, nor trade lightly the bad for the good or the good for the bad.[[60]](#footnote-53) That is why the moon stood still on high [Hab 3:11] and the new month has been dedicated to them to this day.[[61]](#footnote-54) ... Men complained about Moses

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when the spies returned from their scouting the land and spread calumnies about her. Their hearts melted inside them. They said hastily: “Let us headback to Egypt,*”* and took the way that God warned them "You must not go back that way again."[[62]](#footnote-55) Whereas the women said to him: "Give us a

holding."[[63]](#footnote-56) They did not reject the desirable land and they brought their case before the Lord. This time too they did not take part in the sin they [men] committed … At the gathering of the people on the occasion of the sabbatical year at the Feast of Tabernacles,[[64]](#footnote-57) God commanded to call for the women “so that they may hear and so learn to revere" Him, they too.[[65]](#footnote-58) The purpose of this is to make them compete

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[in the task of] raising their sons in the lap of the Torah to always walk in a virtuous way so that their path will always be level. Since the sons are in their care, they will sow the seed of truth and equity in the furrows of their tender and delicate hearts and will yield a fruitful harvest ... Let us advance further on and enquire about the prophets. In their days too we will find women shining with wisdom and all kinds of knowledge. Deborah the prophetess towers above all of them thanks to her fortitude and insight.[[66]](#footnote-59) She judged Israel fairly,[[67]](#footnote-60) when Pinchas the priest was still standing before the Lord in Shiloh.[[68]](#footnote-61) She sat in Ramah like Samuel, who also would be the chosen of the Lord, after her.[[69]](#footnote-62) She herself charged into the battle leading the heroes, while Barak, the one from Kedesh Naftali, followed her only as her armor bearer.[[70]](#footnote-63) Into her hands the Lord delivered Sisera,[[71]](#footnote-64) and it would be his everlasting shame forever. The song of Deborah,[[72]](#footnote-65) which she sang after having defeated him, is the legacy of the congregation of Jacob, like the Song of Moses and the Children of Israel. And yet, she did not take the laurel crown to herself, as she remained the wife of Lapidoth even after that, and took pride in his honor. [[73]](#footnote-66)... “Most blessed of women be Yael, wife of Heber the Kenite.”[[74]](#footnote-67) She was the most righteous woman among women, although she heeded to her husband to behave like "natural soil" with the wicked

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evildoer. [[75]](#footnote-68) At her feet he sank, an enemy of her people seeking its harm, while she had a mallet in her hand to crush his head.[[76]](#footnote-69) His arrogant heart deceived him and his sin brought death upon him ... Hannah, a deeply unhappy woman, whose rival, in order to make her angry, would taunt her.[[77]](#footnote-70) She kept on praying before the Lord in the bitterness of her soul. Indeed, she was praying in her heart,[[78]](#footnote-71) only her lips moved, while her voice could not be heard. Eli, who was then serving before the Lord at Shiloh, thought she was drunk, while [in fact] she was setting the eternal rules.[[79]](#footnote-72) She taught her people knowledge of how they too should worship the Lord, the worship of the heart.[[80]](#footnote-73) She has been the witness through all time, that the anointed priest may sin, bringing guilt on the people, and behaving as an ordinary man.[[81]](#footnote-74) What she prayed for happened to her, for she conceived and bore a son, who would always be a trustworthy prophet to the Lord.[[82]](#footnote-75) She bore Samuel, who was like Moses and Aaron among the priests, among those who called upon His name.[[83]](#footnote-76) She went on praying, and this prayer too would turn into an example to us, because the order of the prayer that we hold and its form the scribes took from her and did not change her words.[[84]](#footnote-77) ... Huldah was also a prophetess,

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in the days of the king Josiah.[[85]](#footnote-78) Her heart was devoted to the ways of the Lord like that of her sister and because of that she was slandered.[[86]](#footnote-79) However, because her soul was mourning the ruin of her people, the elders came to her to inquire of the Lord[[87]](#footnote-80) instead of turning to the man, who only knew affliction under the rod of His wrath all the days that he lived on the land.[[88]](#footnote-81) ... Queen Esther saved her people from the sword.[[89]](#footnote-82) The story of her life and her acts were recorded in the book that was brought into the Sanctuary,[[90]](#footnote-83) counted as one of the twenty-four Holy Books. As a bride adorns herself with jewelry[[91]](#footnote-84) they are the adornment and pride of the people of Israel. This shall be an eternal memorial to her, a testimony and an everlasting sign that will not be destroyed.

After the gates of the Holy Scripture were sealed at the beginning of the days of the Tannaim, and no one could leave or enter there anymore,[[92]](#footnote-85) still the women of our people known by their names were not swept away completely. During the Hasmonean days, the maiden Judith[[93]](#footnote-86) ascended to the highest virtue. She was a virgin, and no man had known her, and she removed the veil of ??? צעיף הכלמה from upon herself and risked

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her life for the sake of two: her people and her God. She descended to the lion's pit, to the camp of the oppressing enemy outside her town. A fainthearted maiden, she chose the language of the crafty in order to spread the net under his feet. He got caught like a bird in a trap, because she made him drink bowlfuls of wine and his head was soaked with it. She approached him stealthily, cut off his head and put him to death. His men saw that their hero had died and they fled. The name of the cruel was cut off from our mouths, but God remembered her in our midst, Selah ...The mother Hannah, she too was at that time, which was a time of trouble for Jacob, with enemies against him both within and without. The mother and her seven sons were all strong as oaks. The enemy wanted to incite them to idolatry, promised them wealth, honor, and all forms of treasures, if they would heed his words and leave the Lord. While she, the light-minded woman,[[94]](#footnote-87) sealed off her softheartedness, and did not show pity to her children. She built seven altars, she slaughtered her sacrifices, and made them a burnt-offerings to the Lord. She stiffened their spirit and hardened their heart[[95]](#footnote-88) so they did not heed the smooth speeches. Like sheep to the slaughter they were all led before her eyes, and she herself went up to the roof and threw herself to the ground. To the sounds of her wailing people the ground split apart under them and the divine voice [*bat kol*] answered them: "A happy mother of children. Hallelujah” [Ps 113:9][[96]](#footnote-89)…

1. “’The righteous person shall flourish like a palm tree’ [Psalm 92:13]: Just as the palm tree is beautiful in all its appearance, and all its fruits are sweet and good, likewise is the son of David in his appearance and in his glory, and all of his deeds are good and sweet before the Holy One Blessed be He” [Pirke de R. Eliezer19] {ST: my translation} [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Salamon makes a pun here. The word *name* in Hebrew (Shem) sounds like the biblical personal name Shem. His meaning is that there is no use to self-promotion and seeking publicity for one’s name, because there will always will be someone whose name is more important. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. November 6, 1999. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. According to the literal meaning of this verse it seems that Adam wanted to save himself at the expense of the soul of his wife Eve. He rolled the stone off himself and placed it on the shoulder of his helpmate. And according to this, there is a difficulty: why do the sages not deduce from here that *we do not plead on behalf of an inciter* [*mesit*]. She should have said: "When the words of the teacher and those of the pupil [are contradictory], whose words should be hearkened to…" (see *b.Sanhedrin* 29b). [TRANSLATOR NOTE: Salamon wonders why the sages blamed Eve for inciting Adam to commit a sin. Adam was responsible and should have been punished for his sin because of the halakhic rule *we do not plead* *on behalf of an inciter*: a person cannot blame someone else for inciting him to commit a crime. Eve, on her part, did not defend herself. When Adam blamed her for inciting him, she could have said: why did Adam not listen to his teacher (God), but instead listened to his pupil (Woman)? Salamon points out that this line of reasoning in the Talmud is applied to the snake, but not to Adam and Eve] (One may say that it is not in the nature of Woman [why with a capital?] to save herself by sacrificing her husband or her children). The sages certainly were consistent in their approach when they said (*Gen. Rab.* portion 19): "Said R. Abba: It is not written: 'and I did eat' but it is written 'I did eat and I will eat [*vaokhel*]'". [*Midrash Rabba*, Translated into English with notes, glossary and indices under the editorship of R. Dr. H. Freedman, B.A., Ph.D. and M. Simon, M.A., The Soncino Press, London 1961., v. 1, p. 167.] They meant that Adam said: "I am not surprised by what I have done, but that I continue to eat." And if it is so, he did not seek to defend himself. And this fits with what the sages said (*b.Sanhedrin* 38b): "Adam was a Sadducee"; see there. [TRANSLATOR NOTE: *Sadducee* is understood by Rashi and earlier commentators as one who inclines towards idolatry. In other words, the sages came to the conclusion that Adam was not incited by Eve to sin but was an evildoer in his own right.] [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
5. R. Meir was a disciple of R. Akiba and he lived after Woman had already been stripped of her dignity. There was also a bad incident concerning his wife (see b.Avodah Zarah 18b). [TRANSLATOR NOTE: When speaking of R. Meir’s wife, Salamon probably had in mind the “*Ma’aseh de-Beruriah*” which is told by Rashi in his commentary on b.Avodah Zarah 18b. The story of R. Meir's strange bet and its tragic outcome has attracted considerable scholarly interest. For recent research and current bibliography on the subject, see M. Simon-Shoshan, "The Death of Beruriah and Its Afterlife: A Reevaluation of the Provenance and Significance of Ma’aseh de-Beruriah," *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 2020 (110.3): 383-411.] See also *Seder Hadorot*, letter *Mem* [the book is arranged alphabetically], which brings the terrible story that happened to R. Meir with his hostess, and a word to the wise is sufficient. [TRANSLATOR NOTE: It seems that Salamon had in mind the story of R. Meir’s seduction by his friend's wife. See Y. Halperin, *Seder Hadorot*, Warsaw 1878, part II, 264. The earlier version of the story appears in *Midrash Aseret Hadibrot*, Jerusalem 1955, 40-41. For a feminist interpretation of this story see R. Adler, *Engendering Judaism: An Inclusive Theology and Ethics*, The Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia Jerusalem 1998, 13-16.] And all this was true in those olden days and at that time, when all people lived in darkness and gloom, when [even] the king and the queen did not know how to say the Grace after Meals (b.Berachot 48a) [TRANSLATOR NOTE: *b.Berachot 48a* tells that King Yannai and Queen Salome could not say the Grace after Meals by themselves. The queen suggested calling for her brother Rabbi Simon ben Shetah for this purpose, but she set the condition that the king, known for his ruthless dealing with the sages, would not harm him] and among the qualifications of a scholar was knowing how to write. Rashi, of blessed memory, explains that they had to know how to sign their name in order to sit as a judge or to testify (b.Hullin 9a). If such was the situation with men and scholars in those days, what could be said of Woman? [Is there a reason for writing woman with a capital?] But nowadays when the majority of women know how to pray and to recite blessings, to read, to write, and to sign their name, it is possible that even R. Meir, who ruled that “minority cases should be taken into consideration” (b.Hullin 6a), would admit that this is an unnecessary blessing [ST: I see that in bBerakhot 33a, ברכה שאינה צריכה is translated as “unnecessary”; “redundant” has connotations of being repetitive, which is not relevant here; “obsolete” might have the sense you’re looking for?], and a word to the wise is sufficient. ]TRANSLATOR NOTE: R. Meir’s legal principle *minority cases should be taken into consideration*, means that although rulings are usually based on the majority of cases, rarer cases should also be taken into consideration in the legal process. Salamon seems to say that it is important not to make unequivocal statements based only on the obvious. Such statements do not take into consideration future possibilities.] [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
6. See Tosefta Berakhot ch. 6. The version there reads: “’R. Yehudah says, three blessings etc.’ A gentile [Cuti]—[as Scripture states], ‘All the Cuthim are as nothing before Him’; a woman—[because] women are not obligated in commandments, a boor—because a boor is not afraid of sin and an ignoramus is not pious.” [CHECK NEUSNER’S TRANSLATION ] [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
7. See b.Berakhot61a: “R. Jeremiah b. Eleazar said: God created two countenances [*du-parzufin*] in the first man as it says (Ps 139:5) `Behind and before hast Thou formed me’”; see there. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
8. In *the Book of* *Zohar* on *Genesis* in the section of “The Lord God formed man” (Gen 2:7) two words were added to what is written in the Torah: “but for Adam no helpmate was found (but rather all of them ]*ella kulhu*] were) against him" (Gen 2:19); see there. This is a fine addition, for all the creatures are indeed Man's opponents and enemies because of his and their nature. By making an effort to overpower and to defeat them his strength will grow and he will become a true human being. The Holy One, Blessed be He, later made for him a helpmate opposite to him. Thus Woman is certainly his helper, even as she is his opposite to him, because he will find in her whatever he is lacking, and a word to the wise is sufficient. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
9. b.Niddah 45b: "What is Rabbi's reason? Because it is written in Scripture (*Gen* ch. 2), 'And the Lord God built the rib' which teaches that the Holy One, blessed be He, endowed the woman with more understanding than the man"; see there. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
10. In contrast to the *War by Commandment* (*milhemet mitzvah*), *Permitted War* (*milhemet reshut)* is an expansive war, serving the political and economical interests of its initiator. See Deut 21:10-14; Y. Karo, *Sefer Hachinuch* 527. It seems that Salamon is hinting at the unholy reasons behind the exclusion of women from most rituals. Since the passage in *Deuteronomy* deals with the case of the captive woman, Salamon may be hinting to the powerlessness of Jewish women against the rulings of the sages. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
11. m.Ketubot 5:4: “The following are the kinds of work which a woman must perform for the husband: grinding corn, baking bread, washing clothes, cooking, suckling her child, making ready his bed and working in wool”; see there. Nowadays where is the maidservant that would be willing to do all these? She would be given a generous wage and enthroned in gold filigree. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
12. b.Yebamot 65b: “R. Ilea replied in the name of R. Eleazar son of R. Simeon: Scripture stated, 'And replenish the earth, and subdue it'—it is the nature of a man to subdue but it is not the nature of a woman to subdue.” And this is only a pretext, because *and subdue* (*vekivshuha*) is plural and it refers to Woman just as for Man. And when the sages of blessed memory said that it was not the nature of a woman to subdue in practice, that is, as it were, to go to war to confront the foe, they spoke only of what they actually witnessed. Nowadays Woman is the angel of peace, but before she got confined to the home to concoct, to cook, and to bake, she too would habitually subdue. So many women have confronted calamities and hazards of time to support their husbands who dedicated their life to the Torah and to tradition. See in *t.Ketubot* ch. 4: “Joshua, the son of R. 'Aqiba married a woman and made an agreement with her that she maintain and support him and teach him Torah." *The Tosefta*, Ketubot, transl. from the Hebrew by J. Neusner, Peabody Mass., ????????? 4.7. See also *b.Yebamot* 65b, and see b.Eruvin 22a: "As was the case with R. Adda b. Mattenah. He was about to go away to a schoolhouse when his wife said to him, ‘What shall I do with your children?’—‘Are there’, he retorted: ‘no more herbs in the marsh?’ Rashi explained: "[kurmi]—vegetables; [another version]: [you can] pull out from the marsh wet reed that is still tender, grind it and make bread."—This is heroes’ food, and she ate and wiped her mouth; and a word to the wise is sufficient. [TRANSLATOR NOTE: *Heroes’ food* [Ps 78:25] has a positive meaning, and is usually understood as “angel’s food”. It is not clear what Salamon has in mind here. [ST: Maybe: Earlier in this note, Salamon said that nowadays women are angels of peace. Here he shows that traditionally they have been involved in “subduing”, like angel-warriors] The problem is it sound that she ate something really bad without complaining (wiped her mouth)][I think there are 2 parts to his note—the heroes/angels food from Psalms, and the mouth-wiping from Proverbs 30:20. Heroes/angels makes sense to me, as subduing. The “wiping her ‘mouth’ is more complicated; In Proverbs, it is about wiping off her genitals after adultery; I can see this as indicating sexual satisfaction, or erasing evidence of the guilt, or both. In Salamon’s use of this verse, I can see 2 directions for thinking about “wiping her mouth”: one is to indicate satisfaction—after a meal, the image of wiping one’s mouth shows that one is full and satisfied; maybe Salomon here means, the woman achieves her objective, she got her job done. Another direction could be the sexual connotation; this would explain why he is being euphemistic and unclear, but I don’t know how to follow that thread]. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
13. *Eliahu Rabba* part 1 ch. 9 "…I call heaven and earth to witness that whether it be a heathen, or a Jew, whether it be a man or a woman, a manservant or a maidservant, the holy spirit will suffuse each of them in keeping with the deeds he or she performs." [TRANSLATOR NOTE: *Tanna debe Eliyahu*, translated from the Hebrew by W.G. Braude and I.J. Kapstein, Jewish Publication Society, Philadelphia 1981, part 1, pp. 152-53.]How sublime are these words to those who understand grace. For if a man says: "Am I to be the loser because I am a male?" (b.Ketubot 108b), a woman also may say: “Is it because I am not a male that I have lost? Surely, my acts are pleasing, and it is said (at the end of the Book of Proverbs): ‘[Extol her for the fruit of her hand, and let her works praise her in the gates.’" [Prov 31:31]. For how can she make her path good and submit to the yoke of the Torah and the commandments if we will not even accept her goodness? How many men have angered and defied God, and how many women did what was good in His eyes? But men are the mighty ones who set the rule and the law as it pleases them. God Blessed be He, goes along with their words, which are against them [the women], and He agrees to them; and a word to the wise is sufficient. [I tried to take the text as it appears, לטובת**ו** in our printed text, to mean that men’s rulings are not what God would want; I see a contrast between the הוטב of the men, and the divine לטובתו; the men’s self-serving preference/benefit is not in accordance with what God sees as good. Maybe, with echoes of Genesis creation, *ki tov*, or like the common טוב בעיני I see how you take this word as לטובת**ן** to mean that it is not to women’s benefit; that’s not my preferred reading, but I agree that it has a stronger basis in the usage of לטובת]. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
14. R. Nissim of Gerona, [*Sefer Hidushei Haran on Tractate Hullin*, Jerusalem 1973, p. 12]: "We say in the first chapter of the Tractate Pesahim concerning the removal of the leaven, that because it is a rabbinic commandment the rabbis trusted her, but if it were a commandment of the Torah they would not trust her. We stated the reason for that in the Jerusalem Talmud: because women are lazy, they barely check. In other words, since usually the leaven is not found there, they tend to say that there is no leaven there and they are lenient in this instance. If it were a commandment of the Torah, they would not be trusted. But in all other matters they are trusted, even if it is a commandment of the Torah. We rely upon them every day, as a matter of course, in salting and deveining meat etc.". See there. [TRANSLATOR NOTE: It seems that Salamon either shortened the citation or had a shorter version of the passage before him.] [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
15. b.Baba Batra 16b: "… there is a difference between Tannaim. [It is written,] The Lord had blessed Abraham in all things [*ba-kol*] (Gen 2). What is meant by 'in all things'? R. Meir said: In the fact that he had no daughter." (R. Meir spoke in accordance with his view; and a word to the wise is sufficient.) “R. Judah said: In the fact that he had a daughter. Others say that Abraham had a daughter whose name was *ba-kol*." Only *others* say that her name was Ba-kol, and a word to the wise is sufficient. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
16. Salamon is very concerned about Christianity’s ability to attract Jewish women rejected by Judaism. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
17. The sages said it beautifully (b.Hagigah 9b): “Elijah said to Bar He-He, and others say, to R. Eleazar: What is the meaning of the verse: ‘Behold I have refined thee but not as silver; I have tried thee in the furnace of affliction’ (Isa 48:10)? It teaches that the Holy One, blessed be He, went through all the good qualities in order to give [them] to Israel, and He found only poverty. Samuel said, and others say, R. Joseph: This accords with the popular saying: Poverty befits Israel like a red bridle on a white horse."—We see with our own eyes and not those of a stranger that unfortunately this is true. As long as our leaders humbly go around the town with their pitchers on their shoulder, we respect them [ST: or the opposite, “we are ashamed of them”, as in Isa 29:22 “No more shall Jacob be shamed, No longer his face grow pale. “] and they are called by the name of Israel. But should they raise their head a little and feel like ordinary people, they will turn their back on us, and will not face us. “The earth is the Lord's,” they will say before the blessing, but after the blessing their mouth will speak lies, "the heavens belong to the Lord, but the earth He gave over to man" (b.Berakhot 35a(. Even the scholars that grew up in our laps will reject/abandon/desert [I think that כ.ז.ב. with prepositional *bet* is to lie about (as in 2Kings 4:16 אַל־תְּכַזֵּ֖ב בְּשִׁפְחָתֶֽךָ); or to go against one’s group (as Radak on Num 23:19: ויכזב - והוא היאך יכזב בו בחנם. ויכזב, how could he renege without cause), or in this context, to leave the group] us.—We have heard many say, “So what? Let them go wherever they want to go. Has not the prophet spoken thus in the name of the Lord: ‘I will leave in Israel only seven thousand—every knee that has not knelt to Baal etc.’ (I Kgs 19:18)?" However, these are not words of wisdom. Let it not be said among the nations, “here is only the God of the poor and the ignorant, not the God of the rich and the wise,” and a word to the wise is sufficient. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
18. *Yishtabach* [God be praised] is a blessing that is said in the morning before the *Amidah* prayer. Salamon means that there are no truly dedicated members of the congregation who will bother to get early in the morning to the synagogue. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
19. m.Megillah 1:3: "What is reckoned a large town? One which has in it ten men of leisure. One that has fewer is reckoned a village." [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
20. Ibid., Gemara [b.Megillah] 81b: "A Tanna taught: The ten unoccupied men who attend synagogue." Rashi of blessed memory explained: "These are men with no craft to exercise and they are supported by the community in order to be available for prayer in the synagogue. And Mar [amora - R. Johanan] says in b.Berakhot 6b: "Whenever the Holy One, blessed be He, comes into a Synagogue and does not find ten persons there etc." see there. I wonder, how do we know that the men of leisure are feed by the community? Is it not because of that it is called a big city that it is full with people, and at all time and season one will easily find among them ten that are not burdened by work, who will be able to come to the house of prayer, and this deserves further investigation? [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
21. The second statement is quoted incorrectly in the original text. It is certainly a typographical error. I have taken the liberty of emending the text to fix the error, and the translation follows this emendation. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
22. m.Kiddushin 1:7. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
23. The spring [I think his point is that the Gihon water is , not the original main source. This might have to do with Hezekiah blocking the source and redirecting the water, which was not viewed positively by the sages, according to b.Berakhot 10b; I think Salomon is saying that the Mishna is like the diverted water of the Gihon spring—it is the same water as the Tosefta, but it’s not the source) [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
24. A) m*.Zevachim* 1:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
25. B) m.*Ketubot* 4:4. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
26. C) m*.*Kiddushin 1:7. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
27. D) Ibid. and m.*Sotah* 3:3. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
28. E) m.Sanhedrin 8:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
29. F) m.Sotah 3:3. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
30. G) b.Kiddushin 18a. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
31. H) m.Sotah 3:3. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
32. I) b.Kiddushin 15a. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
33. J) b.Baba Meziah 71a. See ]Y. Karo], *Kesef Mishneh*, The Laws of Slaves 1:2, who did not bring this *Tosefta* and this needs investigation. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
34. These ten sefirot are not here for nothingness [TRANSLATOR NOTE: Salamon makes a pun based on the opening sentence of *The Book of Yezirah*], for if the Tanna [in the Tosefta] emphatically counted them, we certainly must/may not read them and leave. Therefore, you should keep them in your heart. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
35. t.Sotah ch. 2:6-2:9 [See Neusner, *Tosefta*, pp. 154-55]. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
36. Based on this it is difficult to understand Rashi, of blessed memory, who explained inb.Eruvin 96a and in b.Rosh Hashanah 33a that a woman transgresses “You shall not add*”* [“You shall not add” is a negative commandment—not to add commandments to the Torah—based on Deut 13:1] if she fulfills positive precepts limited to time; see there. It seems that he, of blessed memory, relies on the *Pesikta* [Ten Commandments, ch. 22 ] brought there by the Tosafists, which said in the name of R. Abahu that Jonah's wife was turned back when she tried to make a festival pilgrimage, and about Michal the daughter of Saul, that the sages were opposed to her laying *tefillin*. [ST: today, “tefillin” is a more widely known term than “phylacteries” in English] Concerning the Tosefta, that of R. Abahu is certainly a *beraita*, [TRANSLATOR’S NOTE: it seems that when claiming that women can perform positive percepts limited to time, Salamon relies on the beginning of the *Pesikta*, which he calls *beraita,* where it is said that Jonah’s wife did made a pilgrimage and Michal did lay *tefillin*.] and although a woman does not transgress if she did not fulfill a positive precept limited to time, she certainly fulfilled a precept if she did perform it, and she should say the appropriate blessing upon its fulfillment. See there, and a word to the wise is sufficient. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
37. *Yalkut Shimoni*, [Gen 15:8] Joshua15:27 [Num 27:73]: “When the daughters of Zelophehad herd that the Land had been divided among the Tribes, but not to the females, they gathered to hold a council. They said: ‘God’s mercy is not like the mercy of humans. Humans’ mercy is more over males than over females, God’s mercy is different, it is on men and women alike, and it is on everyone, as it is said: "Who gives food to every creature” (Ps 136:26) , and it is said “who gives the beasts their food” (Ps 147:40), and it says, “God is good to all and his mercy is upon all his works.” [Ps 145:9]’”; see there. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
38. b.Kiddushin 34b [35a]; "A man, who has the means to do this” is referred to, but [not a woman], seeing that “a woman lacks the means to do this"; see there. There are bundles of precepts that the man also does not have the means to fulfill, such as sending away the [mother bird from the] nest [*shiluah haken*] and the like, such that the man is not obligated to fulfill them unless he happens to come across the opportunity. However, they are not similar to the positive precepts limited to time, because if he did not chance upon them, he is not obligated at all, and a word to the wise is sufficient. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
39. Gen 1:28. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
40. This is what Bar Kafra reckoned in b.Ketubot 5a. See there Rashi's commentary beginning with the words "since on this [day] was pronounced the blessing for the man." See also the Tosafists on b.Yebamot 65b beginning with the words "and not what said"; check it. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
41. We may say that for this reason “Be fertile and increase” was said to him, not to her, because "it is the way of a man to go in search of a woman, but it is not the way of a woman to go in search of a man" (see b.Kiddushin 2b). Since it is impossible for her to marry, she should not be obligated, as we learn from “and master her”—"it is the nature of a man to subdue but it is not the nature of a woman to subdue" (b.Yebamot 65b). If this is true, why did the sages of blessed memory obligate her in "He did not create it a waste, but formed it for habitation"?; for it does obligate her (see b.Yebamot 62a and the Tosafists on b.Gittin 41b beginning with the words "did not create it a waste", and the Tosafists on b.Hagigah 2b beginning with "did not create it a waste") according to the halakhah, and “the words of the later Scriptures are on the same footing as those of the Torah*”* (see b.Rosh Hashanah 19a), and a word to the wise is sufficient. [TRANSLATOR’S NOTE: “The words of the later Scriptures are on the same footing as those of the Torah”: This is a halakhic rule meaning that the precepts whose origin is in the books of the Prophets and the Writings have the same validity as the precepts of the Torah. Salamon hints that the woman is obligated to procreate just like the man, but without the rights that he has.] [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
42. Gen 2:16. I dare not say that 'eat' was also said as a commandment, as Hezekiah taught in the Yerushalmi [y.Kiddushin ch. 4] in the chapter “Ten Marriage Classes,” and it also appears in Yalkut [Shimoni] on Ps 22: "Every person will have to justify himself for everything his eye saw and which he did not eat. Rabbi Eleazar took note of this statement and saved coins from which he ate every kind once a year” [*The Jerusalem Talmud* : Edition, Translation, and Commentary / Tractate Qiddušin / H.W. Guggenheimer, De Gruyter, Berlin, Boston 2014, p. 414.]; see there. Something similar appears in b.Taanit 22b: "R. Jose's reason is because it is written 'And became a living soul’: keep alive the soul which I gave you." However, we do not agree with that, for there is no commandment to eat, except the matzah on Passover and sacrificial offerings, because eating is a bodily pleasure and it is a natural need not a commandment, see [Sh. B. M. HaCohen] *Siftei Cohen* 10 paragraph 341 number 7; check it. [It seems that Salamon’s reference to"touching" is connected with Yalkut Shimoni Gen 25, which states that the Serpent convinced Eve to touch the Tree of Knowledge; see Gen 3:2 “You shall not eat of it or touch it, lest you die.’”] [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
43. See the Tosefists on b.Arachin 2b beginning with the words “including the woman etc.” [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
44. b.Temurah 2b. “Since the whole context speaks only of the masculine gender, as it says: ‘He shall not alter it nor change it’ (Lev 27:10), whence do you derive that the same applies to a woman? The text therefore states: ‘And if he shall at all change’, in order to include a woman.” See Rashi, of blessed memory, who explained [there] "it is written 'shall not exchange' [*lo yahlifenu*], which is the masculine gender; it is not written 'will not exchange' "[*lo tahlifenu*], which is the feminine gender”; see there. I must object, that almost the entire Torah is said in the masculine gender and this needs investigation. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
45. Gen 21:12 and see b.Megillah14a and b.Sanhedrin 69b. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
46. Gen 20:13. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
47. Zohar Vayera: "'Sarah saw the son whom Hagar the Egyptian' Zohar 118b////////////////////////////

    Text, letter

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     [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
48. There are four periods in the history of man: the period of hunting, the period of pasturing and breeding of domestic animals, the period of agriculture, and the period of building towns and villages. Thus Abraham lived at the end of the period of hunting and the beginning of the period of pasturing and he was a shepherd. Isaac lived at the end of the period of pasturing and the beginning of the period of [agricultural] work. Jacob already built a home. (Perhaps this is what the sages meant when they called Abraham 'mountain', Isaac – 'field', and Jacob - 'home'. See b.Pesachim 88a.) As to Esau, after he had been a hunter and a man of the field, he went back [to hunting]. He trapped Isaac through his sense of taste, as his eyes were too dim to see, but Rebecca loved Yaakov, and a word to the wise is sufficient. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
49. Mal 1:2. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
50. Gen 31. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
51. b.Sotah11b: "R. Awira expounded (in Yalkut [Shim'oni] Shemot ch. 1 –'said R. Akiba‘): As the reward for the righteous women who lived in that generation were the Israelites delivered from Egypt." In the *Yalkut* (ibid) it is said in the name of *Midrash Abkir*: "And all kinds of labor in the fields" [Ex 1:14]. *Yalkut* Shemot [163]. In the field and not in the town, for they [the Egyptians] decreed that men would sleep in the field, while women – in the town, in order to decrease procreation. Then women boiled water and brought to their husbands all kinds of food and drink, and they [the women] were consoling them by saying: “They will never enslave us, in the end God will redeem us etc.”, see there. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
52. Exod 2:4 [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
53. b.Megillah 14a: "R. Nahman said in the name of Rab: [She was so called] because she prophesied when she was the sister of Aaron [only] and said, ‘My mother is destined to bear a son who will save Israel.’" When he was born the whole house was filled with light, and her father arose and kissed her on the head, saying, ‘My daughter, thy prophecy has been fulfilled.’ But when they threw him into the river her father arose and rapped her on the head, saying, ‘Daughter, where is thy prophecy?’ So it is written, ‘And his sister stood afar off to know’ (Ibid) - to know, what would come of her prophecy in the end"; see there. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
54. Exod 15:2. The sages of blessed memory said (b.Sanhedrin 104b): "’All your enemies have opened their mouths against you’ (Lam 3:46).  Rabbah said in R. Johanan's name: Why did he place the [letter] *pe* before the [letter] *'ayin*?  Because of the Spies who spoke with their mouths [*pe*] what they had not seen with their eyes [‘*ayin*]." This is the order of things with women, but Miriam saw first and then took the tambourine, and all the women came after her with tambourines; and a word to the wise is sufficient. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
55. b.Ta'anit 9a: "Three good leaders had arisen for Israel; namely, Moses, Aaron and Miriam. And for their sake three good things were conferred [upon Israel]; namely, the Well, the Pillar of Cloud and the Manna: the Well, for the merit of Miriam; the Pillar of Cloud for the merit of Aaron; the Manna for the merit of Moses.” [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
56. b.Yoma 75a: "R. Jose said, Come and see how different the action of human beings is from that of the Holy One, blessed be He. If one of flesh and blood is angry with his neighbor he persecutes him even as far as depriving him of his livelihood, but it is different with the Holy One, blessed be He. Although He cursed the serpent, yet when he goes up to the roof, there is his food; if he goes down, there is his food. He cursed Canaan: yet he eats what his master eats and drinks what his master drinks. He cursed the woman, all are running after her etc."; see there. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
57. Genesis Rabbah [TRANSLATOR’S Note :Exodus Rabba], Jethro portion28:2] ]: ‘’’So shall you say to the House of Jacob’ [Exod 19 :3]—these are the women [TRANSLATOR’s NOTE : the printed text reads ‘’men,” which is an error]. He said to him: ‘Tell them the main points that they can understand’; ‘So shall you say to the House of Israel’—these are the men. He said to him: ‘Tell them the details that they can understand.’ Another explanation. Why were things said first to the women? Because they are diligent in fulfilling commandments. Another explanation. Because they groom their sons for the Torah. Rabbi Tachalifa of Caesarea said: ‘Said The Holy one Blessed be He: “When I created the world I commanded the First Man, and only afterwards Eve. She transgressed and spoiled the world. This time if I do not call women first, they will abolish the Torah etc.”; see there. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
58. Exod 32:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
59. Exod 35:22. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
60. Yalkut [Shimon, Samuel 1:78] Samuel 1:1, in the name of the preacher: “’Hannah was praying in her heart’:Why were women joined together with minors and slaves with regard to commandments?  Because they only have one heart. As it is said: ‘And Hannah was speaking in her heart’; ‘I find woman more bitter than death; she is all traps, her hands are fetters and her heart is snares’ (Eccl7*:*26); “And her husband arose and went after her, to speak to her heart” (Judg 19:3). And also “Folly settles in the heart of a child” (Prov 22:15). Also a slave’s heart is attached only to his master”; see there. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
61. *Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezer* ch. 25 [45]: "Aaron argued with himself, saying: If I say to Israel, Give ye to me gold and silver, they will bring it immediately; but behold I will say to them, Give ye to me the earrings of your wives, and of your sons, and forthwith the matter will fail, as it is said, ‘And Aaron said to them. Break off the golden rings. The women heard (this), but they were unwilling to give their earrings to their husbands; but they said to them: Ye desire to make a graven image and a molten image without any power in it to deliver. The Holy One, blessed be He, gave the women their reward in this world and in the world to come. What reward did He give them in this world? That they should observe the New Moons more stringently than the men, and what reward will He give them in the world to come? They are destined to be renewed like the New Moons." [ST: The translation style does not match the style in the rest of the translation; especially “ye”. I can translate, or seek another published translation] See also Rashi on b.Meg 22b, on the words beginning with "New months"; and a word to the wise is sufficient. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
62. Num 13 and 14, and Deut 17:16. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
63. Genesis [TRANSLATOR’S NOTE: Numbers] Rabbah, Pinchas [portion 10]: “’The daughters of Zelophehad came forward’ [Num 27:1]: In that generationwomen mended what men had destroyed. Thus, one can see that Aron told them: ‘Take off the golden earrings that your wives… are wearing’ [Ex 32:2], but women did not want to and they protested, as it is said: ‘So all the people took off their earrings’ [Exod 32:3]. This means that women did not take part with them in the sin of the calf. Also in the case of the Spies, who had spread calumnies and ‘came back and caused the entire congregation to complain against him’ [Num 14:36], they were punished, for they said: ‘We cannot enter the Land,’ but the women did not take participate with them in that counsel, as it is said prior to that passage: ‘For the Lord had said of them, ”They shall die in the wilderness.”’ ‘Not one man of them survived, except Caleb son of Jephuneh’ [Num 26:65], *man* not woman. They were punished because they did not want to enter the Land, whereas women came out to ask for a portion of the Land. This is the reason that this story is written close to the death of the generation of the desert, in which men destroyed and women mended.” [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
64. Deut 31:12. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
65. See b.Hag 3a: "Our Rabbis taught: Once R. Johanan b. Beroka and R. Eleazar Hisma went to pay their respects to R. Joshua at Peki'in. Said he to them: What new teaching was there at the *beit midrash* today? They replied: We are thy disciples and thy waters do we drink. Said he to them: Even so, it is impossible for a beit midrash session to pass without some novel teaching. Whose sabbath was it? — It was the sabbath of R. Eleazar b. ‘Azariah, [they replied]. And what was the theme of his Haggadic discourse today? They answered: The section *Assemble*. And what exposition did he give thereon? ‘Assemble the people the men and the women and the children’ [Deut 31:12]. If the men came to learn, the women came to hear, but wherefore have the little ones to come? In order to grant reward to those that bring them. Said he to them: There was a fair jewel in your hand, and you sought to deprive me of it." We do not know what was it and for what reason R. Joshua praised so firmly R. Eleazar's homily. However, if one wants to be accurate he will find that R. Eleazar reversed the order, for in the Scripture it said: "that they may hear and so learn" [Deut 31:12]. He put the men before the women, which is not the order of the Torah, that spoke of the women first. Also, he gave them only the hearing and not the learning, which means that he wanted to belittle the value of the women. R. Joshua was satisfied with this, because by then began the denigration of the women; and a word to the wise is sufficient. [The verse says "Assemble the people: the men, and the women, and the children, and your stranger in your cities, in order that they hear, and in order that they learn and fear the Lord, your God’ (Deut 31:12). Since men are mentioned first in this verse, either the verb 'hear' should be related to them, or both verbs should be addressing men and women alike. However, the sages associated learning with men, while women were automatically allocated the passive hearing.] [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
66. Judg 4:4. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
67. A woman Is qualified to judge as deduced from “that you shall set before them*”* [Exod 21:1]; see b.Kiddushin 35a: "…the School of R. Ishmael taught likewise. The verse says ‘that you shall set before them’ (Exod 21:1). Scripture equalized woman and man in respect of all civil laws in Scripture." Thus Deborah judged Israel, but to testify— a woman is not qualified. See b.Niddah 49b, on the mishnah, "Whosoever is eligible to act as judge is eligible to act as witness." Keep all this in your mind because it is significant and see the Tosafists on b.Niddah at the beginning of page 50a; and a word to the wise is sufficient. And see the Tosafists on b.Baba Kamma 15a, beginning with the words "you shall set before them." And see the Tosafists on b*.*Yebamot 45b, beginning with the words "Did she not bathe." But the Jerusalem Talmud [y.Yoma32a ch. 6 halakhah 1] does not say the same, but [says rather that] after she had been disqualified to testify they disqualified her for judging as well. This is turning one's back on [God]; check it. And see the Tosafists on b.Sanhedrin 24b beginning with the words "and these"; but the old version speaks about slaves, not the woman. Rabbi Moses [Maimonides] of blessed memory completely omitted the halakhah and this needs investigation. [Salamon is annoyed by the rabbinic ruling that created a nexus between judging and testifiying in the case of women. Women’s right to judge was retroactively taken from them on the bases of a rather arbitrary ruling that banned them from testifying. The question of women’s judging and testifying has been one of the most discussed topics in connection with women’s place in Judaism. For a historical overview and an undated bibliography see O. Malka, “*Edut shel Ishah veEdut shel Ed Echad beTorat Hatannaim*”, *Dinei Israel* v. 3 (2020), pp. 227-270 “The Testimony of a Woman and the Testimony of a Single Witness in the Law of the Tannaim.”] [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
68. *Tanna debe Eliyahu,* part 1, p. 152: "Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidot…judged Israel at that time. … Pinchas, the son of Eleazar, was still serving Israel in Deborah's time as judge and prophet. Hence it may be asked: What was the special character of Deborah that she, too, judged Israel and prophesied concerning them etc."; see there.

    Text, letter

    Description automatically generated [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
69. Ibid. "And she sat under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Beth el [Judg. 4:5]. The sages said: As Samuel, sat in Ramah, so Deborah sat in Ramah." (p. 155) [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
70. Judg 4:8: "If you go with me, I will go." [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
71. Ibid. 4:9. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
72. Ibid. 5:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
73. *Tanna debe Eliyahu* part I, p. 153: "…Deborah's husband was completely illiterate. So his wife said to him: "Come on, make wicks [ST query: in Salamon’s footnote, the text is in first person,   
    ואעשה לך[

    , and take them to the Holy Place in Shiloh. Your portion may thus be with men of worth, and you will have life in the world-to-come etc,"; see there. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
74. Judg ibid. [5:24]. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
75. *Tanna debe Eliyahu* part 1, ch. 9 [ p. 157]. Thus said the sages: "Yael was a woman of worth who did her husband's will. Indeed it is well said [ST: this is quite different from מכאן אמרו חכמים, which is Salamon’s text?] that no woman is to be regarded as worthy unless she does her husband's will."—But God forbid, that a woman who is considered to be of worth would be one that would do her husband's will by commiting adultery (for our days are not like former days). But Esther and Yael made themselves [as] “natural soil” in order to save their people's life from the hands of the foe (See b.Ketuboth 3b, in the Tosafists, beginning with "and to explain"), and they did so only with the consent of the husband, for if they did it without his consent, they would have been called "unfaithful to her husband", and the husbands would have been allowed to divorce them even according to the House of Shammai (b.Gittin 90a). This is, I think, also the opinion of Rabbenu Tam (Tosafists on b.Sanhedrin 74a). [Some commentators understood from Rabbenu Tam's words that having intercourse with a gentile is not adultery, because of Ezek 23:20, but Salamon does not think that this was his opinion.] And in that case there is no problem with the question in the Jerusalem Talmud (Tosafists on b.Gittin, ibid., beginning with the words "What is further" [*mah lehalan*]); one needs the verse "the first husband who divorced her etc." [Deut 24:4] for a case in which she made herself “natural soil“ without her husband's consent and he divorced her. She is not forbidden to him on account of [the prohibition of] a wayward wife/infidelity/adultery [*sotah*] because “the All Merciful declared their children to be legally fatherless*”* ]b.Yebamot 98a] [TRANSLATOR’S NOTE: because the semen of the gentile is like the semen of an animal, and having intercourse with an animal is not an adultery]. In any case he is permitted to divorce her. A word to the wise is sufficient. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
76. Judg 4:21. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
77. 1 Sam 1:6. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
78. Ibid. 1:13. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
79. b.Berachot 31a: "R. Hamnuna said: How many most important laws can be learnt from these verses relating to Hannah! etc."; see there. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
80. b.Ta'anit 2a: "… to serve Him with all your heart. What is service of the heart? You must need say, prayer"; see there. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
81. b.Berachot 31b: "’And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord. ‘ Ulla, or as some say R. Jose b. Hanina, said: ‘She said to him: “Thou art no lord in this matter, nor does the Holy spirit rest on thee, that thou suspect me of this thing.’" [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
82. 1 Sam 3:20. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
83. b.Berachot ibid.: "R. Johanan said: Seed that will be equal to two men, namely, Moses and Aaron"; see there. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
84. Yalkut [Shim'oni] Shmuel 61: "We learn from this that women are obligated to pray one daily prayer, because Hannah said Eighteen Blessings.” See there because he quotes all the blessings as they are arranged before us in the prayer (only the blessing “and to Jerusalem*”* is missing) [ST query: should this be “blessings…are” or “blessing…. is”? I presume the vav, plural, in berakhot is an error, given the singular of *hasera* & the single blessing named] and it contains even the blessing [against] the *minim* [heretics] that was introduced at the end of the Second Temple, may it be rebuilt soon. See b.Berachot28b where the sages said: "To what do these Eighteen Benedictions correspond? R. Hillel the son of Samuel b. Nahmani said: To the eighteen times that David mentioned the Divine Name etc."; and see there. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
85. 2 Kgs 22:14. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
86. b.Megillah 14b: "R. Nahman said: Haughtiness does not befit women. There were two haughty women, and their names are hateful, one being called a hornet and the other a weasel. Of the hornet it is written [Judg 4:6] "And she sent and called Barak, instead of going to him". Of the weasel it is written (2 Kgs 22): "Say to the man", instead of ‘say to the king.’"—How did R. Nahman dare speak in an irreverent language of two prophetesses that saw the vision from the Almighty? This is a sign of the times, and a word to the wise is sufficient. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
87. 2 Kgs 22:14. b.Megillah ibid.: "But if Jeremiah was there, how could she prophesy? — It was said in the school of Rab in the name of Rab: Hulda was a near relative of Jeremiah, and he did not object to her doing so. But how could Josiah himself pass over Jeremiah and send to her? — The members of the school of R. Shila replied, because women are tender-hearted"; see there. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
88. Lamentations 3:1. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
89. Esther [9:32]. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
90. b.Megillah 7a: "Esther sent to the sages saying: ‘Write an account of me for posterity.’ They sent back answer, ‘Have I not written for you three times’ (Prov 22:20), three times and not four?’ [And they refused] until they found a verse written in the Torah etc.”; see there. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
91. Exodus Rabbah 41: "Said Rabbi Levi, said Rabbi Simeon ben Lakish: Just as this bride adorns herself with twenty-four kinds of jewellery (Isa 3), the students of wisdom should be diligent with the twenty-four Books”; see there. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
92. b.Shabbat 13b and 115b [?] [ST query: Salamon’s text reads 30b; shabbat 30b deals with the canonical status of the book of Ecclesiastes, which seems just about as appropriate as 115b. There certainly are more relevant texts he could have chosen, but I think it could be fine to retain 30b?[ [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
93. She was mentioned in the book of Judith*,* the fifth of the eleven apocryphal books which are not accepted by us as holy. It tells the story of the deliverance wrought by a maiden by the name of Judith during the war of the Jews against the Greeks in the days of the Hasmoneas. See that she is mentioned by her name in the *krovetz* for the first Sabbath of Hanukkah, but in the *krovetz* for the second Sabbath the entire piyyut revolves around Hannah’s name, only at the end it brings up also the name of Judith. It seems that the author confused the two women, and he was inconsistent there. A word to the wise is sufficient. [TRANSLATOR’S NOTE: *krovetz*[*krovot*] are piyyutim—liturgical poems—written for the repetition of the Prayer Leader. See both *piyyutim* in *Seder Avodat* *Israel*, Rodelheim 1901, 629-39.] [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
94. b.Kiddushin 80b: "Tanna debe Eliyahu [states]: Because women are temperamentally light-headed." See b.Shabbat 33b where R. Simeon said: "Women are temperamentally light-headed, she may be put to the torture and expose us"; see there. It is simple to understand that [ST: alternatively: It is difficult for me! For] this is not light-headedness if they cannot withstand torture. The sages said in b.Ketubot 33b: "If they had lashed Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, they would have worshipped the [golden] image"; see there. Concerning R. Simeon bar Yohai see b.Berachot 28a and b.Pesahim 112b. You will see there that the words of the Torah are poor in one place and rich in another; and I need say no more [ST: I see that a translation of Radak translates hamevin yavin nicely: “those who are attuned will understand”] and a word to the wise is sufficient. [TRANSLATOR’S NOTE: “The words of the Torah are poor in one place and rich in another”– a halakhic [ST: hermeneutical?] rule meaning that certain facts are withheld until later. It is difficult to understand what Salamon is alluding to in these two texts. [ST: I think that Salamon’s use of “light-minded” in his text is somewhat ironic, and that in his note he brings rabbinic sources about men’s susceptibility to torture; so I think the “poor & rich” statement means that while the kiddushin and shabbat texts tell one part of a story—women’s susceptibility to torture—other texts fill in a gap and describe men’s susceptibility to torture; or maybe, in the case of berakhot 28a, simply men’s susceptibility to speaking when they ought to keep their mouths shut.] [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
95. Eicha Rabbati 8] *Midrash Eicha Rabbati*, Vilnie I Grodnie 1829, p. 34a, portion 1 sign 53]. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
96. Eicha Rabbati, ibid. The *Yafeh Anaf* raised a question concerning Hannah's saying "Kill me first!". And these are his words: "If this [suicide] is forbidden by the Torah, how was she permitted to put herself to death by her own will?" [TRANSLATOR’S NOTE: *Yafeh Anaf* is a commentary on *Eicha* Rabbati. Shmuel ben Yitzchak Yafeh, Yafeh Anaf, Frankfurt 1696, 27b-29a.] He suggested that perhaps life was more bitter to her than death, so she was permitted to kill herself. He also raised a question about Zedekiah of whom it is said that “he did not think to knock his head against a wall until he died” [Eicha Rabbati 51]. How could he have been permitted to injure himself in order to be spared the gouging of his eyes? He explained in a usual way, but he could have explained like [in the case of] Saul, that it was permitted to the king to injure himself in order to spare himself abuse; see there. [Ibid.]See also the Tosafists on b.Ketubot 103b beginning with the words "destined to the life of the world to come," who raise a query: is it not true that all Israel have a portion in the world to come? One can reply to their wondering: do all Israel injure themselves like that fuller? [TRANSLATOR’S NOTE: b,Ketubot 103b tells the story of a fuller that threw himself from the roof hoping to get to the world to come as soon as possible. Although he misunderstood the heavenly message, he was still granted a portion in the world to come.] This needs investigation. — The main reason for the prohibition of deliberate suicide comes from the beraita b.Baba Kamma 91b: "We learn ‘But your blood, of your souls I will demand’ (Gen 9:5), [upon which] R. Eleazar remarked [that] it meant, ‘I will demand your blood’”; see there. It seems that R. Eleazar's colleagues disagreed with him, because it is said in the mishnah (ibid., 90b): "They taught: Where one injures oneself, though forbidden, he is exempt” [ST: this is not in Salamon’s text: do you want to add it? [yet, were others to injure him, they would be liable."]. ]I might have argued[: “not necessarily ‘injured’, for what difference can there be whether one was slain completely or partially?” [b.Hullin 35b[ [Salamon seems to be writing ironically here: what difference does it make whether someone who committed suicide is exempt or not, once he is dead. ST: but I do not see how this works with the Hullin example since the expression partly-killed there seems to be used to distinguish between injury and death]. (The Tosafists raise queries there (b.Baba Kama 91b) beginning with the words "the injurer". [ST: I do not see a translation for לק״מ here? I am not familiar with the acronym, but my internet search tells me it can be לא קיימא לן, so this might be something like: I do not hold with the Tosafists’ query there]. If one is exempt, does this mean that he is exempted even from the judgement of Heaven? A word to the wise is sufficient). As the *Yafeh Anaf* said, and is also clear from *Tanna debe Eliyahu* part 1 chapter 29 [p. 339]: "Thus also David said: Had not words of Torah reconciled me to my lot when affliction came upon me, I would have rooted myself out of the world, as is says: ‘Unless Thy Torah had been my delight, I should then have perished because of mine affliction (Ps 119:92)"; see there. Still, R. Hanina b. Teradion in b.Avodah Zara 18a said: "Let Him who gave me [my soul] take it away." He did not want to injure himself, and he said this out of the measure of piety [*midat haHasidut*], because according to the majority opinion one is not allowed [to injure oneself], and a word to the wise is sufficient. See ibid., the Tosafists on the words beginning with "should not injure." From their answer it seems that one is allowed to injure himself, as it seems from b.Avodah Zarah 17a, from the story of R. Eleazar b. Dordia. [It is not clear why Salamon attributes R. Eleazar b. Dordia’s death to suicide.] See also [?] [It seems that Salamon mistakenly sends his readers to *Shitah Mekubetset* on b.Ketubot end of ch. Hanos'im.] And this is strange. I wrote all this according to the halakhah, but perhaps one should rely in extreme cases on the minority opinion, in contradiction to the *Shulchan Aruch* [Yoreh Deah] 345 which is based on the *Treatise Semachot* [Mishnah]. In today's reality nowadays many injure themselves even among the righteous and important people, and sometimes it is somewhat blasphemous to prevent them from [doing so], even if it is said so in the *Shulchan Aruch*. A word to the wise is sufficient. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)