

Beyond the Text #4: Money Makes the World Go Round

Asia Minor: Tarsus and Cappadocia

“And an incident occurred in which they brought a box that was full of bones to the synagogue of Tarsiyim” (Nazir 52a)

“Rather, the goldsmiths would sit among themselves, and the silversmiths among themselves, and the blacksmiths among themselves, and the Tarsiyyim among themselves, and the Gardiyim among themselves.” (Sukkah 51b)

“Rabbi Yoḥanan said: Bigthan and Teresh were two Tarsians, and they would talk in the Tarsian language. . . But they did not know that Mordecai was of those who sat on the Sanhedrin, which convened in the Chamber of Hewn Stone, and that he knew seventy languages” (Megillah 13b)

“And what will the Babylonians do who only have sesame oil? And the people of Medea who only have nut oil and the Alexandrians who only have radish oil? And what of the people of Cappadocia who have none of those?” (Tosefta Shabbat 2:3)

“Rabbi Akiva said: Once I was traveling on a boat, and I saw a certain boat sinking at sea, and I was grieved over the apparent death of the Torah scholar who was on board. And who was it? Rabbi Meir. But when I disembarked at the province of Cappadocia, he came, and sat, and deliberated before me about *halakha*. I said to him: My son, who brought you up from the water? He said to me: One wave carried me to another, and that other wave to another, until I reached the shore, and a wave cast me up onto dry land.” (Yevamot 121a)

The Sea and Beyond

“There was an incident involving Rabban Gamliel and Rabbi Akiva, who were coming on a ship. Rabbi Akiva arose and established a *sukka* at the top of the ship. The next day the wind blew and uprooted it. Rabban Gamliel said to him: Akiva, where is your *sukka*?” (Sukkah 23a)

“And even Rabban Gamliel, was coming on a boat at the time, and a large wave swelled over him and threatened to drown him. Rabban Gamliel said: It seems to me that this is only for the sake of Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus [who Rabban Gamliel had ostracized for not following majority rule]. Rabban Gamliel stood on his feet and said: Master of the Universe, it is revealed and known before You that neither was it for my honor that I acted, nor was it for the honor of the house of my father that I acted; rather, it was for Your honor, so that disputes will not proliferate in Israel. In response, the sea calmed from its raging.” (Bava Metzia 59b)

Medinat HaYam

- ◆ המביא גט ממדינת הים, צריך שיאמר, בפני נכתב ובפני נחתם. רבן גמליאל אומר, אף המביא מן הרקם ומן החגר.

An agent who brings a bill of divorce [get] from a country overseas, is required to state This bill of divorce was written in my presence and it was signed in my presence. Rabban Gamliel says: Even one who brings a bill of divorce from Rekem or from Heger (Mishnah Gittin 1:1)

What is the reason for this declaration? Rabba says: It is because the people who live overseas are not experts in writing a bill of divorce for her sake. Rava says because there are no witnesses available to ratify it. (Gittin 2b)

a woman who went, she and her husband, overseas, if there was peace between him and her, i.e., the couple were not fighting at the time, and there was also peace in the world, i.e., there was no war at that time, and the woman came back by herself and said: My husband died, she may marry (Mishnah Yevamot 15:1)

In the case of a husband who went overseas, and someone arose and sustained his wife in his absence, (Mishnah Ketubot 13:1)

And these may shave and cut their hair on the intermediate days of a Festival: One who comes from a country overseas (Mishnah Moed Katan 3:1)

ר' עובדיה מברטנורא(המביא גט ממדינת הים. כל חוצה לארץ קרי מדינת הים:

Aspamia/Hispania/Sfarad

Rabbi Yehuda says: [The Sages said that establishing presumptive ownership requires] three years only in order that if the owner will be in Aspamya, and another possesses his field for a year, people will go and inform the owner by the end of the next year, and the owner will come back in the following year and take the possessor to court. (Mishnah Bava Batra 3:2)

And do not wonder [how one can see from one end of the world to the other], as a person can sleep here, in this location, and see a dream in Aspamya. (Niddah 30b)

“All the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him” (Genesis 18:18), it indicates that even ships that come from Galia to Hispania are blessed only due to the Jewish people. (Yevamot 63a)

וגלת החל־הזה לבני ישראל אשר־כנענים עד־צֶרְפֶּת וגלת ירושלם אשר בספרד ירשו את ערי הנגב:

And that exiled force of Israelites [shall possess] what belongs to the Phoenicians as far as Zarephath, while the Jerusalemite exile community of Sepharad shall possess the towns of the Negeb. (Ovadia 1:20)

גלות עמא הדין דבני ישראל דבארעא כנענאי עד צרפת וגלות: תרגום יונתן על עובדיה א' כ':
ירושלים דבאספמאי יחסנן ית קרני ארעא דדרומא:

Money Money Money

“Beit Shammai say that she can be acquired with one dinar or with anything that is worth one dinar. And Beit Hillel say: She can be acquired with one peruta,, or with anything that is worth one peruta.” (Kiddushin 2a)

Roman system: one denarius = sixteen as

Jewish system: one maneh= 100 dinar/ zuz

one dinar/zuz = twenty-four issars

one issar = eight perutot

one hundred and ninety- two perutot = one dinar

Half Shekel Tax

“On the fifteenth of Adar, money changers would sit at tables set up in the rest of the country, outside the Temple, to handle the collection of shekels. On the twenty-fifth of Adar, the money changers sat in the Temple.” (Mishnah Shekalim 1:3)

“Just as there were collection horns in the Temple, so too there were collection horns in the rest of the country,” (Mishnah Shekalim 2:1)

“Rav Yehuda says that Rav Asi says: Every sum of money stated in the Torah is referring to silver dinars of Tyrian coinage, “(Bechorot 50b)

Be the Change

מתני' המפקיד מעות אצל שולחני (Bava Metzia 43a)

“A money changer's nail (מסמר של שולחני) is clean, But Rabbi Zadok says: it is susceptible to impurity.” (Keilim 12:5)

“if the money is bound, the money changer may not use it. Therefore, if it is lost he does not bear responsibility for it. If the money was unbound, the money changer may use it. Therefore, if it is lost he bears responsibility for it.” (Bava Metzia 43a)

“If the one who owes the money transferred his payment by leaving instructions with a storekeeper or with a money changer to pay him” (Bava Metzia 9:12)

“Jesus entered the temple courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those

selling doves. “It is written,” he said to them, “‘My house will be called a house of prayer,’ but you are making it ‘a den of robbers.’” (Matthew 21:12-13)

“‘My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and its horsemen’ (II Kings 2:12). I have many coins, but I do not have a money changer to whom to give them,” (Sanhedrin 68a)

Safe Box or Treasure Hoard?

“a certain man who kicked a safe אֲבִיבָא belonging to another, sending it into the river.” (Bava Kamma 62a)

Taxman

“MISHNA: One may take a vow to haragim, or to ḥaramin; or to tax collectors, that the produce in his possession is *teruma* although it is not *teruma*” (Nedarim 27b)

“But didn’t Shmuel say: The law of the kingdom is the law (דינא דמלכותא דינא)? Rav Ḥinnana said that Rav Kahana said that Shmuel said: The mishna is referring to a tax collector who has no fixed amount. A Sage of the school of Rabbi Yannai said: The mishna is referring to a tax collector who establishes himself as such independently” [and was not appointed by the kingdom.] (Nedarim 28a)

“As when a man did flee from a lion and a bear met him, or went into the house and leaned his arm on the wall and a snake bit him” (Amos 5:19). . . . At a time when a person goes out to the field and is accosted by a guard [*santar*] who demands payment, his situation is similar to that of one who is accosted by a lion. He then enters the city and is accosted by a royal tax collector. His situation is similar to that of one who is accosted by a bear. . . .” (Sanhedrin 98b)

“The collectors of taxes and the customs officials were not disqualified at first, as the Sages initially assumed they would take the set amount they were instructed to take. When they realized that these officials were taking more than that, they disqualified them.” (Sanhedrin 25b)

“One may not exchange larger coins for smaller ones from the trunk of customs collectors nor from the purse of tax collectors, and one may not take charity from them,” (Mishnah Bava Kama 10:1)

Weights

“You shall not have in your pouch alternate weights, larger and smaller. You shall not have in your house alternate measures, a larger and a smaller.” (Devarim 25:13-14)

“You shall have an honest balance, honest weights, an honest ephah, and an honest hin. I the LORD am your God who freed you from the land of Egypt.” (VaYikra 19:36)

“The charge for sharpening was a pim. for plowshares, mattocks, three-pronged forks, and axes, and for setting the goads.” (Samuel I 13:21)

Measures

Rav was appointed market overseer by the Head of the Diaspora; he intervened about measuring vessels but not prices. The Head of the Diaspora jailed him. (Jerusalem Talmud Bava Batra 5:5)

The Sages taught : “You shall not have,” teaches that the court appoints market inspectors to supervise the accuracy of measures. But the court does not appoint market inspectors for prices. (Bava Batra 89a)

Judah the agronomos (Greek inscription found in Jaffa)

“There was an incident involving Abba Shaul ben Botnit, who would fill his measures on the eve of a Festival and give them to his customers on the Festival. Abba Shaul says: He would do this even on the intermediate days of a Festival because of the clarity of the measures. And the Rabbis say: Even on a weekday it is proper to do so, because of the draining of the measures.” (Betzah 29)

Work

“Shemaiah used to say: love labor,” (Pirkei Avot 1:10)

Beloved is work because of all His creations, God only gave man work (Midrash Tannaim Devarim 5:14)

Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar says: Have you ever seen a beast or a bird that has a trade? And yet they earn their livelihood without anguish. But all these were created only to serve me, and I, a human being, was created to serve the One Who formed me. Is it not right that I should earn my livelihood without anguish? But I, i.e., humanity, have committed evil actions and have lost my livelihood. ;(Kiddushin 82a)

When Rabbi Yehuda would go to the study hall he would carry a pitcher [*gulefa*] on his shoulder, saying: Labor is great, as it brings honor to the laborer. (Nedarim 49b)

As Rav said to Rav Kahana, his student: Skin a carcass in the market and take payment, but do not say: I am a great man and this matter is beneath me. (Bava Batra 110a)

Rabbi Meir says: A person should always teach his son a clean and easy trade and pray to the One to Whom wealth and property belong, as there is no trade that does not include both poverty and wealth, . . . Abba Guryan of Tzadyan says in the name of Abba Gurya: A person may not teach his son the trades of a donkey driver, a camel driver, a pot maker, a sailor, a shepherd, or a storekeeper. The reason for all these is the same, as their trades are the trades of robbers;(Kiddushin 82a)

A Woman's Work Is Never Done

“And these are tasks that a wife must perform for her husband: She grinds wheat into flour, bakes, and washes clothes, cooks, and nurses her child, makes her husband's bed, and spins wool”

“If she brought him one maidservant the wife does not grind, and does not bake, and does not wash clothes. If she brought him two maidservants, she does not cook and does not nurse her child. If she brought him three maidservants, she does not make his bed and does not spin wool. If she brought him four maidservants, she may sit in a chair [*katedra*] (Ketubot 59b)

“Rav Yitzhak bar Hananya said that Rav Huna said: Although they said that she may sit in a chair she should still pour his cup; and make his bed; and wash his face, hands, and feet,” (Ketubot 61a)

Spinning

“Rabbi Eliezer says: Even if she brought him a hundred maidservants, he can compel her to spin wool, since idleness leads to licentiousness” (Ketubot 59b)

“And all the skilled women spun with their own hands, and brought what they had spun, in blue, purple, and crimson yarns, and in fine linen.” (Shmot 35:25)

“He [Rabbi Eliezer] said to her: There is no wisdom in a woman except weaving with a spindle,” (Yoma 66b).

“While a woman is engaged in conversation she also holds the spindle,” (Megillah 14b)