



## **What Six Very Short Stories in the Babylonian Talmud Tell Us About Jewish Law and Life**

***Dr. Judith Hauptman***

Judith Hauptman is the E. Billi Ivry Professor Emerita of Talmud and Rabbinic Culture at The Jewish Theological Seminary. Dr. Hauptman's scholarly research focuses on two areas. The first is unraveling the mystery of how the Talmud came into being—i.e., how the many strands of rabbinic teachings coalesced into one coherent document. Her second area of research involves investigating women's roles in Judaic thought, bringing an evaluation of the social and ethical norms of the rabbinic period into dialogue with contemporary issues.

Dr. Hauptman has authored several books in the areas of her research. Her book, *Rereading the Rabbis: A Woman's Voice* is now available at no charge on Sefaria.org. In addition, her newest volume, *The Stories They Tell, Halakhic Anecdotes in the Babylonian Talmud*, is coming out in September. A popular lecturer and writer, Dr. Hauptman has also authored many influential articles.

In 2004, not long after her ordination as a rabbi, she founded Ohel Ayalah, an outreach project to young Jews on the margins, named in memory of her mother. Dr. Hauptman received a degree in Talmud from the Seminary College of Jewish Studies at JTS (now Albert A. List College of Jewish Studies) and a degree in Economics from Barnard College, and earned an MA and a PhD in Talmud from JTS. In May 2003, she was ordained as a rabbi by the Academy for Jewish Religion.

## 1. Babylonian Talmud, Yevamot 37b, Taking a wife-for-a-day when on the road

<p>... יתר על כן אמר ר' אליעזר בן יעקב: לא ישא אדם אשה במדינה זו וילך וישא אשה במדינה אחרת, שמא יזדווגו זה לזה, ונמצא אח נושא את אחותו.</p> <p>איני? והא רב כי איקלע לדרדשיר [מכריז] ואמר, מאן הוא ליומא? ורב נחמן כי איקלע לשכנציב, [מכריז] ואמר, מאן הוא ליומא?</p> <p>שאני רבנן, דפקיע שמיייהו.</p>	<p>... Moreover, R. Eliezer b. Ya'akov said: A man should not take one wife in one province and then go and take [another] wife in another province, lest [the children of the two wives] marry each other and it turns out that a brother marries a sister.</p> <p>[Stam asks:] Is that so [i.e., is that in fact the law]?! For <b>when Rav visited Dardashir he [announced and] said, "who will [marry me] for one day?"</b> and when R. Nahman visited <b>Shekhnaziv, he [announced and] said, "who will [marry me] for one day?"</b></p> <p>[Stam answers:] Rabbis are an exception, for [people] know their names.</p>
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## 2. Babylonian Talmud, Moed Qatan 27b, Exchanging meals on the first day of mourning

<p>אמר רב יהודה אמר רב: אבל יום ראשון אסור לאכול לחם משלו מדאמר ליה רחמנא ליחזקאל (יחזקאל כד:יז) "ולחם אנשים לא תאכל".</p> <p>רבה ורב יוסף מחלפי סעודתייהו להדדי.</p>	<p>R. Judah (BA 2) said that Rav (BA 1) said: A mourner may not eat his own food on the first day [of the mourning period]. As God [literally, the merciful One] said to Ezekiel (24:17), "Do not eat the bread of men."</p> <p><b>Rabbah (BA 3) and R. Yosef (BA 3) exchanged meals with each other [when in mourning].</b></p>
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### 3. Babylonian Talmud, Eruvin 104a, Producing sounds on the Sabbath

<p>עולא איקלע לבי רב מנשה, אתא ההוא גברא טרף אבבא.</p> <p>אמר: מאן האי? ליתחל גופיה דקא מחיל ליה לשבתא.</p> <p>אמר ליה רבה: לא אסרו אלא קול של שיר.</p>	<p>Ulla (JA 3) visited the home of R. Menashe (BA 3) [on a Sabbath]. A man came and knocked on the door.</p> <p>Ulla said: Who is this [who knocks on a door on the Sabbath]? Let his body be desecrated because he has desecrated the Sabbath!</p> <p>Said Rabbah (BA 3) to him: the rabbis have only prohibited musical sounds [on the Sabbath and not the sounds made by knocking on a door].</p>
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### 4. Babylonian Talmud, Yoma 73b; 78a, Wearing shoes on Yom Kippur

<p>יום הכפורים אסור באכילה ובשתיה וברחיצה ובסיכה <u>ובנעילת הסנדל</u> ובתשמיש המטה. . . .</p> <p>רב יהודה נפיק בדהיטני.</p> <p>אביי נפיק בדהוצי,</p> <p>רבא נפיק (בדיבלי) [בדיקולי].</p> <p>רבה בר רב הונא כריך סודרא אכרעיה ונפיק.</p>	<p>Mishnah Yoma 8:1 On Yom Kippur one is forbidden to eat and drink, to bathe, to anoint [one's body], to <u>wear sandals</u>, and to engage in sexual relations. . . .</p> <p>R. Judah (BA 2) went forth in [footgear made of] reeds [on Yom Kippur].</p> <p>Abaye (BA 4) in [footgear made] of palm-branches [on Yom Kippur].</p> <p>Rava (BA 4) in [footgear made of] twisted reeds [on Yom Kippur].</p> <p>Rabbah b. R. Huna (BA 3) tied a piece of cloth around his legs and went out [on Yom Kippur].</p>
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## 5. Babylonian Talmud, Besah 25b, Sedan Chair Transport on a Festival

<p> אדאזל להתם נח נפשיה דרבי יעקב בר אידי. כי  סליק, אשכחיה לרבי זריקא, אמר ליה: כסא מה  אתון ביה?  אמר ליה: הכי אמר רבי אממי: ובלבד שלא יכתף.  מאי ובלבד שלא יכתף?  אמר רב יוסף בריה דרבא: באלונקי.  איני? והא רב נחמן שרא לה לילתא למיפק  אלונקי!  שאני ילתא דבעיתא.  אמימר ומר זוטרא מכתפי להו בשבתא דרגלא  משום ביעתותא, ואמרי לה משום דוחקא  דצבורא. </p>	<p> When Hama bar Ada arrived [there], R. Ya'akov bar Idi had died. So he went and encountered R. Zeriqa (JA 3) and said to him: What do you [hold] regarding a sedan chair? He said to him: "Thus said R. Ammi (JA 3): so long as he does not carry it on his shoulders." [Stam asks:] What does "so long as he does not carry it on his shoulders" mean? R. Yosef the son of Rava (BA 5) said: "[not] on a palanquin [which is carried on the shoulders]."  [Stam asks:] Is that so!? Did not <b>R. Nahman permit Yalta to go out on a palanquin [on a festival]?</b>  [Stam answers:] The case of Yalta is an exception because she was afraid.  <b>Amemar (BA 5/6) and Mar Zutra (BA 6) were carried on the shoulders on the Sabbath of the festival because of fear, or some say, because of pressing crowds.</b> </p>
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6.1 Babylonian Talmud, Pesahim 100b-101a, Reciting *kiddush* where one eats the Sabbath meal

<p>ואזדא שמואל לטעמיה, דאמר שמואל: אין קידוש אלא במקום סעודה.</p> <p>סבור מינה: הני מילי מביית לבית, אבל ממקום למקום בחד ביתא לא.</p> <p>אמר להו רב ענן בר תחליפא: זימנין סגי אין הוה קאימנא קמיה דשמואל, ונחית מאיגרא לארעא, והדר מקדש.</p>	<p>And Shmuel is consistent with his own rule, for Shmuel said, one must recite <i>kiddush</i> at the place where one dines.</p> <p>[Stam comments:] They thought this meant from house to house [he must repeat <i>kiddush</i> if he moves from one house to another]. But if he recites <i>kiddush</i> in one place in his own home and then decides to dine in a different place in his own home, he need not [recite <i>kiddush</i> a second time].</p> <p>[Not so!] <b>R. Anan bar Tahlifa said (BA 2): many times I was standing before Shmuel [to serve him or dine with him] and he went down from the roof to the ground [floor] and recited <i>kiddush</i> a second time [after reciting it for the first time on the roof].</b></p>
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6.2

<p>ואף רב הונא סבר: אין קידוש אלא במקום סעודה.</p> <p>דרב הונא קדיש ואיתעקרא ליה שרגא, ועיילי ליה למניה לבי גנניה דרבה בריה דהוה שרגא, וקדיש וטעים מידי.</p>	<p>[Stam says:] And R. Huna (BA 2) also holds, one must recite <i>kiddush</i> at the place where one dines.</p> <p>For R. Huna recited <i>kiddush</i>, and then his lamp went out, and they brought his utensils to his son Rabbah's (BA 3) chambers, where there was light, and he recited <i>kiddush</i> [a second time] and tasted a little bit of food.</p>
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### 6.3

<p>ואף רבה סבר: אין קידוש אלא במקום סעודה.</p> <p>דאמר אביי: כי הוינא בי מר כי הוה מקדש אמר לן: טעימו מידי, דילמא אדאזליתו לאושפיזא מתעקרא (לכו) שרגא (ולא מקדש לכו בבית אכילה), ובקידושא דהכא לא נפקיתו דאין קידוש אלא במקום סעודה.</p>	<p>[Stam says:] And Rabbah (BA 3), too, holds that <i>kiddush</i> must be recited at the place where one eats [the Sabbath] meal.</p> <p>For Abaye (BA 4) said: <b>when we were at the master's home, and he would recite <i>kiddush</i>, he would say to us, taste something [here], for perhaps when you go to your lodgings [to eat the Sabbath meal] the lamp will go out on you and you will not be able to recite <i>kiddush</i> at the place where you [planned to] eat the Sabbath meal. As for the <i>kiddush</i> [that you heard] here, you will not have discharged your obligation, because <i>kiddush</i> must be recited at the place where one eats [the Sabbath] meal.</b></p>
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