

Chapter 1 : Talmud - Wikipedia

In this unique volume Judith Abrams, author of the highly regarded series The Talmud for Beginners, examines the episodes recorded in rabbinic literature that suggest the actions of the women of those times.

There are a lot of shuls in Englewood and Tenafly, and a lot of Jews to give them life. Not as many of either as in Teaneck, true, but that is an extraordinarily high bar. All seem to be thriving. There seems to be no pressing need for one more. But in , a group of Orthodox Jews — all of whom belonged to shuls, most of whom were satisfied with those shuls — realized that there were two things that they could not get from their shuls. Get The Jewish Standard Newsletter by email and never miss our top stories Free Sign Up They wanted women to have the chance to lead parts of the service, within the bounds of halacha — Jewish law — as understood and defined by the Orthodox world, and they also wanted more intimacy than their large shuls could give them. That led to the creation of Minyan Tiferet of Englewood and Tenafly. Tiferet is a partnership minyan, based on the model of Shira Chadashah in Jerusalem and Darchei Noam in Manhattan, one of its co-chairs, Mark Schwartz of Englewood, said. All are in Englewood although Keshet is on the border with Tenafly. Jeffrey Rubenstein It is not a formal synagogue. There is no membership, Mr. Schwartz said; there is no rabbi, and no services beyond religious ones — no counseling, no programming, most of the time no classes. It offers religious services about ten times a year, mostly on Shabbat mornings but occasionally on Friday nights. Women, like men, have the opportunity to read from both of those scrolls at Tiferet. There are no fees and no professionals. Everything is lay-led, and participants are invited to learn to lead, if they do not already know how to do it. The bimah, though, is neutral territory. Women are allowed to read Torah and haftarah, and to lead the parts of the service that do not require a minyan. They are not counted in the minyan, which still requires 10 men. Those things changed me. That synagogue was the Fort Lee Jewish Center, which, when he was there, had mixed seating but did not allow women to lead any part of the service. They are happy and comfortable there. But the idea of having a place where women would have more of a voice appealed to them. The neighborhoods from which it draws are full of big, beautiful houses, with huge rooms that can be configured to hold 50 or so adults, and also have enough space left for children and a babysitter. But those neighborhoods do not include — and are not zoned to include — the sorts of businesses that have space to rent for occasional meetings. So Tiferet can never be too big, and with its relatively small size comes the kind of intimacy, along with the chance for genuine leadership, that many people crave. Last year, Rachel Rosenthal, a doctoral student in Talmud at the Jewish Theological Seminary who is also a gifted teacher, drew crowds. This year, prompted by Ms. Jeffrey Rubenstein, last year, Dr. He, his wife, and their four children belong to Kehillat Keshet, which is Orthodox, and Kol Haneshamah, which is Conservative. He straddles the Conservative and Orthodox worlds; although he works in academia, he is a rabbi, ordained at JTS. Looking for a serious Shabbat community, he and his family frequently find themselves in Orthodox settings. He and his wife have four children. That is the motivation for the talk I will give. We have seen changes in America vis a vis marriage and the role of women. I think that Orthodoxy has been a little slow to really grapple with these issues, and for some reason it is becoming more urgent now. Until now, these were questions [for which] you have to go to library and seek answers. The democratization of the access to knowledge raises a lot of questions about the cohesion of the authority of traditional narrative, and that raises questions about rabbinic authority. I remember having a conversation 30 years ago about whether there would be Orthodox women rabbis, and I said yes, there would be. And you almost have that now. In another 30 years, who knows?

Chapter 2 : The Oral Law -Talmud & Mishna

Beruriah was arguably the most brilliant woman mentioned in the Talmud. She was the daughter of Rabbi Chaninah ben Teradyon, one of the Ten Martyrs killed by the Romans.

Common sense suggests that some sort of oral tradition was always needed to accompany the Written Law, because the Torah alone, even with its commandments, is an insufficient guide to Jewish life. For example, the fourth of the Ten Commandments, ordains, "Remember the Sabbath day to make it holy" Exodus. Would merely refraining from these few activities fulfill the biblical command to make the Sabbath holy? Indeed, the Sabbath rituals that are most commonly associated with holiness—lighting of candles, reciting the kiddush, and the reading of the weekly Torah portion—are found not in the Torah, but in the Oral Law. And you shall teach them diligently to your children, and you shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk on the road, when you lie down and when you rise up. And you shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be for frontlets between your eyes. Only in the Oral Law do we learn that what a Jewish male should bind upon his hand and between his eyes are tefillin phylacteries. Finally, an Oral Law was needed to mitigate certain categorical Torah laws that would have caused grave problems if carried out literally. The Written Law, for example, demands an "eye for an eye" Exodus. Did this imply that if one person accidentally blinded another, he should be blinded in return? But the Oral Law explains that the verse must be understood as requiring monetary compensation: Well over a million Jews were killed in the two ill-fated uprisings, and the leading yeshivot, along with thousands of their rabbinical scholars and students, were devastated. Teaching the law orally, the rabbis knew, compelled students to maintain close relationships with teachers, and they considered teachers, not books, to be the best conveyors of the Jewish tradition. But with the deaths of so many teachers in the failed revolts, Rabbi Judah apparently feared that the Oral Law would be forgotten unless it were written down. In the Mishna, the name for the sixty-three tractates in which Rabbi Judah set down the Oral Law, Jewish law is systematically codified, unlike in the Torah. For example, if a person wanted to find every law in the Torah about the Sabbath, he would have to locate scattered references in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. Indeed, in order to know everything the Torah said on a given subject, one either had to read through all of it or know its contents by heart. Rabbi Judah avoided this problem by arranging the Mishna topically. All laws pertaining to the Sabbath were put into one tractate called Shabbat Hebrew for "Sabbath". It records laws concerning different blessings and when they are to be recited. Another order, called Nezikin Damages, contains ten tractates summarizing Jewish civil and criminal law. Another order, Nashim Women, deals with issues between the sexes, including both laws of marriage, Kiddushin, and of divorce, Gittin. A fifth order, Kodashim, outlines the laws of sacrifices and ritual slaughter. The sixth order, Taharot, contains the laws of purity and impurity. Although parts of the Mishna read as dry legal recitations, Rabbi Judah frequently enlivened the text by presenting minority views, which it was also hoped might serve to guide scholars in later generations. Mishna Eduyot 1: In one famous instance, the legal code turned almost poetic, as Rabbi Judah cited the lengthy warning the rabbinic judges delivered to witnesses testifying in capital cases: In case you may want to offer testimony that is only conjecture or hearsay or secondhand evidence, even from a person you consider trustworthy; or in the event you do not know that we shall test you by cross-examination and inquiry, then know that capital cases are not like monetary cases. For thus we find in the case of Cain, who killed his brother, that it is written: Therefore was the first man, Adam, created alone, to teach us that whoever destroys a single life, the Bible considers it as if he destroyed an entire world. And whoever saves a single life, the Bible considers it as if he saved an entire world. Also, man [was created singly] to show the greatness of the Holy One, Blessed be He, for if a man strikes many coins from one mold, they all resemble one another, but the King of Kings, the Holy One, Blessed be He, made each man in the image of Adam, and yet not one of them resembles his fellow. One commentary notes, "How grave the responsibility, therefore, of corrupting myself by giving false evidence, and thus bringing [upon myself the moral guilt of [murdering] a whole world. The rabbis of Palestine edited their discussions of the Mishna about the year More than a century later, some of the leading Babylonian rabbis compiled another editing of the discussions on the

Mishna. By then, these deliberations had been going on some three hundred years. The Babylon edition was far more extensive than its Palestinian counterpart, so that the Babylonian Talmud Talmud Bavli became the most authoritative compilation of the Oral Law. When people speak of studying "the Talmud," they almost invariably mean the Bavli rather than the Yerushalmi. A law from the Mishna is cited, which is followed by rabbinic deliberations on its meaning. The Mishna and the rabbinic discussions known as the Gemara comprise the Talmud, although in Jewish life the terms Gemara and Talmud usually are used interchangeably. In addition to extensive legal discussions in Hebrew, halakha , the rabbis incorporated into the Talmud guidance on ethical matters, medical advice, historical information, and folklore, which together are known as aggadata. For example, Mishna Bava Mezia 7: The case in question is where the employer gave them a higher wage than was normal. Yet throughout Jewish history, study of the Mishna and Talmud was hardly restricted to an intellectual elite. That the men who chopped wood in Berditchev, an arduous job that required no literacy, met regularly to study Jewish law demonstrates the ongoing pervasiveness of study of the Oral Law in the Jewish community. William Morrow and Co. Reprinted by permission of the author.

Chapter 3 : Women in Judaism - Wikipedia

Women in Rabbinic Literature. The rabbis of the Talmud designated specific female roles and activities, and were wary of women's nature, but they also tempered biblical laws that caused hardships for women.

Women in the Bible Relatively few women are mentioned in the Bible by name and role, suggesting that they were rarely in the forefront of public life. A common phenomenon in the bible is the pivotal role that women take in subverting man-made power structures. The result is often a more just outcome than what would have taken place under ordinary circumstances. The Torah relates that both Israelite men and Israelite women were present at Sinai; however, the covenant was worded in such a way that it bound men to act upon its requirements, and to ensure that the members of their household wives, children, and slaves met these requirements as well. In this sense, the covenant bound women as well, though indirectly. For example, a husband could divorce a wife if he chose to, but a wife could not divorce a husband without his consent. Levirate marriage is not performed in our times. Laws concerning the loss of female virginity have no male equivalent. These and other gender differences found in the Torah suggest that women were subordinate to men during biblical times; however, they also suggest that biblical society viewed continuity, property, and family unity as paramount. These included the provision of clothing, food, and sexual relations to their wives. Women as well as men were required to make a pilgrimage to the Temple in Jerusalem once a year men each of the three main festivals if they could and offer the Passover sacrifice. They would also do so on special occasions in their lives such as giving a todah "thanksgiving" offering after childbirth. Hence, they participated in many of the major public religious roles that non- Levitical men could, albeit less often and on a somewhat smaller and generally more discreet scale. Women depended on men economically. Even "in such cases, women would be required to remarry within the tribe so as not to reduce its land holdings". Halacha also provides women with material and emotional protections that most non-Jewish women did not enjoy during the first millennium of the Common Era. The Talmud states that: Greater is the reward to be given by the All-Mighty to the righteous women than to righteous men [6] Ten measures of speech descended to the world; women took nine [7] Women are light on raw knowledge "i. Let me arise before the approach of the divine presence [10] Israel was redeemed from Egypt by virtue of its Israel righteous women [11] A man must be careful never to speak slightly to his wife because women are prone to tears and sensitive to wrong [12] Women have greater faith than men [13] Women have greater powers of discernment [14] Women are especially tenderhearted [15] While few women are mentioned by name in rabbinic literature, and none are known to have authored a rabbinic work, those who are mentioned are portrayed as having a strong influence on their husbands. Occasionally they have a public persona. When Eleazar ben Arach was asked to assume the role of Nasi "Prince" or President of the Sanhedrin , he replied that he must first take counsel with his wife, which he did. Avraham Grossman argues in his book, Pious and Rebellious: Jewish Women in Medieval Europe, that three factors affected how Jewish women were perceived by the society around them: Women probably learned how to read the liturgy in Hebrew. This goes back to ancient times when women could go only as far as the second court of the Temple. The reasoning behind the Halacha was that a woman and her body would distract men and give them impure thoughts during prayer. However, recent research has shown that women actually had a larger role in the synagogue and the community at large. Women usually attended synagogue, for example, on the Shabbat and the holidays. Since the synagogues were large, there would be a designated woman who would be able to follow the cantor and repeat the prayers aloud for the women. Women sitting separately from the men became a norm in synagogues around the beginning of the thirteenth century. One of the main jobs for women was to beautify the building. There are Torah ark curtains and Torah covers that women sewed and survive today. The rise and increasing popularity of Kabbalah , which emphasized the shechinah and female aspects of the divine presence and human-divine relationship, and which saw marriage as a holy covenant between partners rather than a civil contract, had great influence. Kabbalists explained the phenomenon of menstruation as expressions of the demonic or sinful character of the menstruant. At the same time, there was a rise in philosophical and midrashic interpretations depicting women

in a negative light, emphasizing a duality between matter and spirit in which femininity was associated, negatively, with earth and matter. For example, it seems that Jews would analyze the modesty of their non-Jewish neighbors before officially moving into a new community because they knew that their children would be influenced by the local gentiles. Crypto-Jewish women would slaughter their own animals and made sure to keep as many of the Jewish dietary laws and life cycle rituals as possible without raising suspicion. Occasionally, these women were prosecuted by Inquisition officials for suspicious behavior such as lighting candles to honor the Sabbath or refusing to eat pork when it was offered to them. The Inquisition targeted crypto-Jewish women at least as much as it targeted crypto-Jewish men because women were accused of perpetuating Jewish tradition while men were merely permitting their wives and daughters to organize the household in this manner. Marriage is an important institution in Judaism see *Marriage in Judaism*. The sages of this period discussed this topic at length. Rabbeinu Gershom instituted a rabbinic decree *Takkanah* prohibiting polygyny among Ashkenazic Jews. The rabbis instituted legal methods to enable women to petition a rabbinical court to compel a divorce. Maimonides ruled that a woman who found her husband "repugnant" could ask a court to compel a divorce by flogging the recalcitrant husband "because she is not like a captive, to be subjected to intercourse with one who is hateful to her". The rabbis also instituted and tightened prohibitions on domestic violence. Rabbi Peretz ben Elijah ruled, "The cry of the daughters of our people has been heard concerning the sons of Israel who raise their hands to strike their wives. Yet who has given a husband the authority to beat his wife? And one who beats his wife is to be excommunicated and banned and beaten. They were taught to read, write, run a household. They were also given some education in religious law that was essential to their daily lives, such as keeping kosher. Although Christian girls may have had a male or female tutor, most Jewish girls had a female tutor. See *Female Education in the Medieval Period*. Middle Eastern Jewry, on the other hand, had an abundance of female literates. The Cairo Geniza is filled with correspondences written sometimes dictated between family members and spouses. Many of these letters are pious and poetic and express a desire to be in closer or more frequent contact with a loved one that is far enough away to only be reached by written correspondence. There are also records of wills and other personal legal documents as well as written petitions to officials in cases of spouse spousal abuse or other conflicts between family members written or dictated by women. Just like Christian women who ran their own business, Jewish women were engaged in their own occupations as well as helping their husbands. Jewish women seem to have lent money to Christian women throughout Europe. A yeshiva, or school for Talmudic studies, is an "exclusively masculine environment" because of absence of women from these studies. She is greatly admired for her breadth of knowledge in matters pertaining to both halachah and aggadah , and is said to have learned from the rabbis halachot on a single cloudy day *Tractate Pesachim 62b*. Her parents were put to death by the Romans for teaching Torah , but she carried on their legacy. Bruriah was very involved in the halachic discussions of her time, and even challenges her father on a matter of ritual purity *Tosefta Keilim Kamma 4*: Her comments there are praised by Rabbi Judah ben Bava. In another instance, Rabbi Joshua praises her intervention in a debate between Rabbi Tarfon and the sages, saying "Bruriah has spoken correctly" *Tosefta Keilim Metziah 1*: In one case, she gave an interpretation of the religious sense to "paskin din" of "klaustra" a rare Greek word referring to a "door-bolt" in the Talmud. However, Rabbi Yehudah Hanassi did not believe women could be credited with "paskining din". This praise was in clear contradiction of the common injunction against women studying the Torah. Maimonides[edit] When Maimonides wrote responsa concerning women, he tended to elevate their status above what was common practice in the Middle Ages. However, if she wants to learn, then not only may she do so on her own, but men may teach her from the start, and she can then teach other women if they so choose. According to Hida, the prohibition of teaching women does not apply to a motivated woman or girl. Other Mizrahi Rabbis disputed this with him.

Chapter 4 : Talmud Laws of Menstruation

Read *"The Women of the Talmud"* by Judith Z. Abrams with Rakuten Kobo. In this unique volume Judith Abrams, author of the highly regarded series *The Talmud for Beginners*, examines the episode.

In Judaism, G-d is neither male nor female The Talmud says both good and bad things about women Women are not required to perform certain commandments Certain commandments are reserved specifically for women The first of the month is a minor festival for women Men and women sit separately in traditional synagogues The idea of Lilith as a feminist hero is based on a questionable source The role of women in traditional Judaism has been grossly misrepresented and misunderstood. The position of women is not nearly as lowly as many modern people think; in fact, the position of women in halakhah Jewish Law that dates back to the biblical period is in many ways better than the position of women under American civil law as recently as a century ago. Many of the important feminist leaders of the 20th century Gloria Steinem, for example, and Betty Friedan are Jewish women, and some commentators have suggested that this is no coincidence: In traditional Judaism, women are for the most part seen as separate but equal. The equality of men and women begins at the highest possible level: In Judaism, unlike traditional Christianity, G-d has never been viewed as exclusively male or masculine. Judaism has always maintained that G-d has both masculine and feminine qualities. As one Chasidic rabbi explained it to me, G-d has no body, no genitalia, therefore the very idea that G-d is male or female is patently absurd. Both man and woman were created in the image of G-d. According to most Jewish scholars, "man" was created in Gen. According to traditional Judaism, women are endowed with a greater degree of "binah" intuition, understanding, intelligence than men. The rabbis inferred this from the fact that woman was "built" Gen. Women did not participate in the idolatry regarding the Golden Calf. See Rosh Chodesh below. Women have held positions of respect in Judaism since biblical times. Miriam is considered one of the liberators of the Children of Israel , along with her brothers Moses and Aaron. One of the Judges Deborah was a woman. Seven of the 55 prophets of the Bible were women they are included in the list of biblical prophets. The Ten Commandments require respect for both mother and father. Note that the father comes first in Ex. There were many learned women of note. The Talmud and later rabbinical writings speak of the wisdom of Berurya, the wife of Rabbi Meir. In several instances, her opinions on halakhah Jewish Law were accepted over those of her male contemporaries. The wife of a rabbi is referred to as a rebbetzin, practically a title of her own, which should give some idea of her significance in Jewish life. There can be no doubt, however, that the Talmud also has many negative things to say about women. Various rabbis at various times describe women as lazy, jealous, vain and gluttonous, prone to gossip and particularly prone to the occult and witchcraft. It is worth noting that the Talmud also has negative things to say about men, frequently describing men as particularly prone to lust and forbidden sexual desires. Women are discouraged from pursuing higher education or religious pursuits, but this seems to be primarily because women who engage in such pursuits might neglect their primary duties as wives and mothers. The rabbis are not concerned that women are not spiritual enough; rather, they are concerned that women might become too spiritually devoted. The rights of women in traditional Judaism are much greater than they were in the rest of Western civilization until the 20th century. Women had the right to buy, sell, and own property, and make their own contracts, rights which women in Western countries including America did not have until about years ago. In fact, Proverbs Women have the right to be consulted with regard to their marriage. Men do not have the right to beat or mistreat their wives, a right that was recognized by law in many Western countries until a few hundred years ago. In cases of rape, a woman is generally presumed not to have consented to the intercourse, even if she enjoyed it, even if she consented after the sexual act began and declined a rescue! This is in sharp contrast to American society, where even today rape victims often have to overcome public suspicion that they "asked for it" or "wanted it. There is no question that in traditional Judaism, the primary role of a woman is as wife and mother, keeper of the household. However, Judaism has great respect for the importance of that role and the spiritual influence that the woman has over her family. The Talmud says that when a pious man marries a wicked woman, the man becomes wicked, but when a wicked man marries a pious woman, the man becomes

pious. See Who Is a Jew? After all, a woman cannot be expected to just drop a crying baby when the time comes to perform a mitzvah. It is this exemption from certain mitzvot that has led to the greatest misunderstanding of the role of women in Judaism. First, many people make the mistake of thinking that this exemption is a prohibition. On the contrary, although women are not required to perform time-based positive mitzvot, they are generally permitted to observe such mitzvot if they choose though some are frustrated with women who insist on performing visible, prestigious optional mitzvot while they ignore mundane mandatory ones. Second, because this exemption diminishes the role of women in the synagogue, many people perceive that women have no role in Jewish religious life. This misconception derives from the mistaken assumption that Jewish religious life revolves around the synagogue. Nerot, Challah and Niddah In Jewish tradition, there are three mitzvot commandments that are reserved for women: If a woman is present who can perform these mitzvot, the privilege of fulfilling the mitzvah is reserved for the woman. Two of these mitzvot can be performed by a man if no woman is present. The third, for reasons of biology, is limited to the woman. All of these mitzvot are related to the home and the family, areas where the woman is primarily responsible. The lighting of candles officially marks the beginning of sacred time for the home; once candles are lit, any restrictions or observances of the holiday are in effect. The lighting of candles is a rabbinical mitzvah, rather than a mitzvah from the Torah. Jewish Law for an explanation of the distinction. This mitzvah comes from Num. This mitzvah is only in full effect in Israel; however, the rabbis determined that Jews throughout the world should be reminded of this mitzvah by separating a piece of dough before baking it and burning the dough. You may have noticed that on boxes of matzah at Pesach, there is usually a notation that says "Challah Has Been Taken," which means that this mitzvah has been fulfilled for the matzah. Note that this mitzvah has little to do with the traditional Shabbat bread, which is also called "challah. Challah for more information about the Shabbat bread. For more information about this practice, see Kosher Sex: Some sources point out that the name Chanah is an acronym of the names of these three mitzvot Challah, Niddah, and Hadlakat HaNer. In the Bible, Chanah was the mother of Samuel and a prophetess. She is considered in Jewish tradition to be a role model for women. Rosh Chodesh Rosh Chodesh, the first day of each month, is a minor festival. There is a custom that women do not work on Rosh Chodesh. The midrash notes that Exodus 32 says that "the people" came to Aaron and asked him to make an idol. Aaron told them to get the golden rings from their wives and their sons and their daughters. The bible does not say that they got the gold from their wives and sons and daughters; rather, it says that "the people" i. The midrash explains that the men went back to their wives and the wives refused to give their gold to the creation of an idol. As a reward for this, the women were given the holiday that was intended to represent the tribes. The Role of Women in the Synagogue To understand the limited role of women in synagogue life, it is important to understand the nature of mitzvot commandments in Judaism and the separation of men and women. In addition, the mitzvot that were given to the Jewish people are regarded as a privilege, and the more mitzvot one is obliged to observe, the more privileged one is. Because women are not required to perform certain mitzvot, their observance of those mitzvot does not "count" for group purposes. The same is true of boys under the age of 13, who are not obligated to perform any mitzvot, though they are permitted to perform them. In addition, because women are not obligated to perform as many mitzvot as men are, women are regarded as less privileged. The second thing that must be understood is the separation of men and women during prayer. According to Jewish Law, men and women must be separated during prayer, usually by a wall or curtain called a mechitzah or by placing women in a second floor balcony. There are two reasons for this: Second, many pagan religious ceremonies at the time Judaism was founded involved sexual activity and orgies, and the separation prevents or at least discourages this. Interestingly, although men should not be able to see women during prayer, women are permitted to see men during prayer. This seems to reflect the opinion that women are better able to concentrate on prayer with an attractive member of the opposite sex visible. The combination of this exemption from certain mitzvot and this separation often has the result that women have an inferior place in the synagogue. This has improved somewhat in recent years, but men: But as I said before, this restriction on participation in synagogue life does not mean that women are excluded the Jewish religion, because the Jewish religion is not just something that happens in synagogue. Judaism is something that permeates every aspect of your life,

every thing that you do, from the time you wake up in the morning to the time you go to bed, from what you eat and how you dress to how you conduct business. Prayer services are only a small, though important, part of the Jewish religion. Lilith Lilith is a character who appears in passing in the Talmud and in rabbinical folklore. She is a figure of evil, a female demon who seduces men and threatens babies and women in childbirth. She is described as having long hair and wings Erub. It is said that she seizes men who sleep in a house alone, like a succubus Shab. She is also mentioned in midrashim and kabbalistic works, in which she is considered to be the mother of demons. Her name probably comes from the Hebrew word for night laila. She is similar to and probably based on a pagan demon named Lulu or Lilu that appears in Gilgamesh and other Sumerian and Babylonian folklore. In recent years, some women have tried to reinvent Lilith, turning her into a role model for women who do not accept male domination or a rival goddess to the traditions that they think are too male-biased. For example, a number of female musical artists participated a concert tour called "Lilith Fair" a few years ago, and the name "Lilith" was clearly chosen to represent female empowerment. Lilith was replaced with Eve, a more submissive second wife. The complete story is presented here. Many modern commentators describe this as part of the Talmud or midrash, or at least a traditional Jewish source, and claim that this story reflects the traditional rabbinical understanding of the roles of men and women. They claim Lilith was a hero who was demonized by male-chauvinist rabbis who did not want women to have any sexual power.

Chapter 5 : Talmud Definition and Meaning - Bible Dictionary

The women of the Talmud. [Judith Z Abrams] -- In this unique volume Judith Abrams, author of the highly regarded series The Talmud for Beginners, examines the episodes recorded in rabbinic literature that suggest the actions of the women of.

Baraita In addition to the Mishnah, other tannaitic teachings were current at about the same time or shortly thereafter. The Gemara frequently refers to these tannaitic statements in order to compare them to those contained in the Mishnah and to support or refute the propositions of the Amoraim. All such non-Mishnaic tannaitic sources are termed baraitot lit. The baraitot cited in the Gemara are often quotations from the Tosefta a tannaitic compendium of halakha parallel to the Mishnah and the Midrash halakha specifically Mekhilta, Sifra and Sifre. Some baraitot, however, are known only through traditions cited in the Gemara, and are not part of any other collection. Gemara In the three centuries following the redaction of the Mishnah, rabbis in Israel and Babylonia analyzed, debated, and discussed that work. The Gemara mainly focuses on elucidating and elaborating the opinions of the Tannaim. The rabbis of the Gemara are known as Amoraim sing. The starting point for the analysis is usually a legal statement found in a Mishnah. The statement is then analyzed and compared with other statements used in different approaches to Biblical exegesis in rabbinic Judaism or - simpler - interpretation of text in Torah study exchanges between two frequently anonymous and sometimes metaphorical disputants, termed the makshan questioner and tartzan answerer. Another important function of Gemara is to identify the correct Biblical basis for a given law presented in the Mishnah and the logical process connecting one with the other: Minor tractate In addition to the six Orders, the Talmud contains a series of short treatises of a later date, usually printed at the end of Seder Nezikin. These are not divided into Mishnah and Gemara. Bavli and Yerushalmi[edit] The process of "Gemara" proceeded in what were then the two major centers of Jewish scholarship, Galilee and Babylonia. Correspondingly, two bodies of analysis developed, and two works of Talmud were created. The older compilation is called the Jerusalem Talmud or the Talmud Yerushalmi. It was compiled in the 4th century in Galilee. The Babylonian Talmud was compiled about the year , although it continued to be edited later. The word "Talmud", when used without qualification, usually refers to the Babylonian Talmud. While the editors of Jerusalem Talmud and Babylonian Talmud each mention the other community, most scholars believe these documents were written independently; Louis Jacobs writes, "If the editors of either had had access to an actual text of the other, it is inconceivable that they would not have mentioned this. Here the argument from silence is very convincing. Jerusalem Talmud A page of a medieval Jerusalem Talmud manuscript, from the Cairo Geniza The Jerusalem Talmud, also known as the Palestinian Talmud, or Talmuda de-Eretz Yisrael Talmud of the Land of Israel , was one of the two compilations of Jewish religious teachings and commentary that was transmitted orally for centuries prior to its compilation by Jewish scholars in the Land of Israel. It is written largely in Jewish Palestinian Aramaic , a Western Aramaic language that differs from its Babylonian counterpart. Because of their location, the sages of these Academies devoted considerable attention to analysis of the agricultural laws of the Land of Israel. It is traditionally known as the Talmud Yerushalmi "Jerusalem Talmud" , but the name is a misnomer, as it was not prepared in Jerusalem. It has more accurately been called "The Talmud of the Land of Israel". By this time Christianity had become the state religion of the Roman Empire and Jerusalem the holy city of Christendom. In , Constantine the Great , the first Christian emperor, said "let us then have nothing in common with the detestable Jewish crowd. The compilers of the Jerusalem Talmud consequently lacked the time to produce a work of the quality they had intended. The text is evidently incomplete and is not easy to follow. The apparent cessation of work on the Jerusalem Talmud in the 5th century has been associated with the decision of Theodosius II in to suppress the Patriarchate and put an end to the practice of semikhah , formal scholarly ordination. Some modern scholars have questioned this connection: Place and date of composition. Despite its incomplete state, the Jerusalem Talmud remains an indispensable source of knowledge of the development of the Jewish Law in the Holy Land. It was also an important resource in the study of the Babylonian Talmud by the Kairouan school of Chananel ben Chushiel and Nissim ben Jacob , with the result that opinions ultimately

based on the Jerusalem Talmud found their way into both the Tosafot and the Mishneh Torah of Maimonides. Following the formation of the modern state of Israel there is some interest in restoring Eretz Yisrael traditions. The work begun by Rav Ashi was completed by Ravina, who is traditionally regarded as the final Amoraic expounder. The question as to when the Gemara was finally put into its present form is not settled among modern scholars. Some, like Louis Jacobs, argue that the main body of the Gemara is not simple reportage of conversations, as it purports to be, but a highly elaborate structure contrived by the Savoraim roughly 400 CE, who must therefore be regarded as the real authors. On this view the text did not reach its final form until around 500. Some modern scholars use the term *Stammaim* from the Hebrew *Stam*, meaning "closed", "vague" or "unattributed" for the authors of unattributed statements in the Gemara. See *eras within Jewish law. Comparison of style and subject matter* [edit] There are significant differences between the two Talmud compilations. The language of the Jerusalem Talmud is a western Aramaic dialect, which differs from the form of Aramaic in the Babylonian Talmud. The Talmud Yerushalmi is often fragmentary and difficult to read, even for experienced Talmudists. The redaction of the Talmud Bavli, on the other hand, is more careful and precise. The law as laid down in the two compilations is basically similar, except in emphasis and in minor details. The Jerusalem Talmud has not received much attention from commentators, and such traditional commentaries as exist are mostly concerned with comparing its teachings to those of the Talmud Bavli. Neither the Jerusalem nor the Babylonian Talmud covers the entire Mishnah: The reason might be that most laws from the Order Zeraim agricultural laws limited to the land of Israel had little practical relevance in Babylonia and were therefore not included. The Jerusalem Talmud does not cover the Mishnaic order of Kodashim, which deals with sacrificial rites and laws pertaining to the Temple, while the Babylonian Talmud does cover it. In both Talmuds, only one tractate of Tohorot ritual purity laws is examined, that of the menstrual laws, Niddah. The Babylonian version also contains the opinions of more generations because of its later date of completion. For both these reasons it is regarded as a more comprehensive collection of the opinions available. On the other hand, because of the centuries of redaction between the composition of the Jerusalem and the Babylonian Talmud, the opinions of early amoraim might be closer to their original form in the Jerusalem Talmud. The influence of the Babylonian Talmud has been far greater than that of the Yerushalmi. In the main, this is because the influence and prestige of the Jewish community of Israel steadily declined in contrast with the Babylonian community in the years after the redaction of the Talmud and continuing until the Gaonic era. Furthermore, the editing of the Babylonian Talmud was superior to that of the Jerusalem version, making it more accessible and readily usable. *Language* [edit] Within the Gemara, the quotations from the Mishnah and the Baraitas and verses of Tanakh quoted and embedded in the Gemara are in either Mishnaic or Biblical Hebrew. The rest of the Gemara, including the discussions of the Amoraim and the overall framework, is in a characteristic dialect of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic. Overall, Hebrew constitutes somewhat less than half of the text of the Talmud. This difference in language is due to the long time period elapsing between the two compilations. During the period of the Tannaim rabbis cited in the Mishnah, a late form of Hebrew known as Rabbinic or Mishnaic Hebrew was still in use as a spoken vernacular among Jews in Judaea alongside Greek and Aramaic, whereas during the period of the Amoraim rabbis cited in the Gemara, which began around 400 CE, the spoken vernacular was almost exclusively Aramaic. Hebrew continued to be used for the writing of religious texts, poetry, and so forth. Almost all printings since Bomberg have followed the same pagination. In 1763, after an acrimonious dispute with the Szapira family, a new edition of the Talmud was printed by Menachem Romm of Vilna. Known as the Vilna Edition Shas, this edition and later ones printed by his widow and sons, the Romm publishing house has been used in the production of more recent editions of Talmud Bavli. The convention of referencing by daf is relatively recent and dates from the early Talmud printings of the 17th century, though the actual pagination goes back to the Bomberg edition. Earlier rabbinic literature generally refers to the tractate or chapters within a tractate e. It sometimes also refers to the specific Mishnah in that chapter, where "Mishnah" is replaced with "Halakha", here meaning route, to "direct" the reader to the entry in the Gemara corresponding to that Mishnah e. However, this form is nowadays more commonly though not exclusively used when referring to the Jerusalem Talmud. Increasingly, the symbols "a:b". These references always refer to the pagination of the Vilna Talmud. In the Vilna

edition of the Talmud there are 5, folio pages. Goldschmidt Talmud â€”, and German translation[edit] Lazarus Goldschmidt published an edition from the "uncensored text" of the Babylonian Talmud with a German translation in 9 vols. In the early 20th century Nathan Rabinowitz published a series of volumes called Dikduke Soferim showing textual variants from early manuscripts and printings. In work started on a new edition under the name of Gemara Shelemah complete Gemara under the editorship of Menachem Mendel Kasher: This edition contained a comprehensive set of textual variants and a few selected commentaries. Some thirteen volumes have been published by the Institute for the Complete Israeli Talmud a division of Yad Harav Herzog , on lines similar to Rabinowitz, containing the text and a comprehensive set of textual variants from manuscripts, early prints and citations in secondary literature but no commentaries. Modern editions such as those of the Oz ve-Hadar Institute correct misprints and restore passages that in earlier editions were modified or excised by censorship but do not attempt a comprehensive account of textual variants. One edition, by Rabbi Yosef Amar, [32] represents the Yemenite tradition, and takes the form of a photostatic reproduction of a Vilna-based print to which Yemenite vocalization and textual variants have been added by hand, together with printed introductory material. Collations of the Yemenite manuscripts of some tractates have been published by Columbia University. The main ones are as follows. The Steinsaltz Talmud , which contains the text with punctuation, detailed explanations and translation. The Steinsaltz Edition is available in two formats: It is available in modern Hebrew first volume published , English first volume published , French, Russian and other languages. Opened as a Hebrew book, this edition preserves the traditional Vilna page layout and includes vowels and punctuation; the Rashi commentary too is punctuated. Opened as an English book, this edition breaks down the Talmud text into small, thematic units and features the supplementary notes along the margins. The Schottenstein Talmud , published by ArtScroll: Each page is printed in the traditional Vilna format, and accompanied by an expanded paraphrase in English, in which the translation of the text is shown in bold and explanations are interspersed in normal type. The Metivta edition, published by the Oz ve-Hadar Institute. This contains the full text in the same format as the Vilna-based editions, with a full explanation in modern Hebrew on facing pages as well as an improved version of the traditional commentaries. See also under Translations , below.

Judith Z. Abrams is a woman with a mission: she wants to bring the beauty of Talmud to as many people, and with as much depth, as possible. To that end, she has published three books on the Talmud (The Talmud for Beginners, volumes I and II, and w.

While using testing rags, she should push them into the depressions and folds of her vagina. Rab Judah citing Samuel ruled: A testing-rag used before marital intercourse does not reduce [the doubtful period of retrospective uncleanness] as an examination. What is the reason? Because the woman is in a hurry to do her marital duty. But what matters it even if she is in a hurry to do her marital duty? The following account involves a woman who miscarried. The Sage Samuel examined the foetus and found it to be 41 days old. How did the Sage know her last Mitweh was 40 days in the past? We are not told. Neighborhood Watch The Jews of the Talmud report each other to the authorities for Niddah violations, or suspected Niddah violations. In the first excerpt from Tractate Kethuboth, we learn that a man is flogged because neighbors report he had sexual intercourse with his wife when she was niddah. Slotki amplifies the text with footnotes: By her habit or the like. If he had intercourse with her after he had been duly cautioned. Our Mishnah would thus refer to a case where the neighbours informed the husband of the facts after the event. Slotki The reader might wonder how the neighbors know the wife is menstruating. Slotki refers us to Kiddushin 80a for an explanation see his footnote Here is the relevant passage from Kiddushin 80a: Abba said in R. We flagellate on the strength of presumption, we stone and burn on the strength if presumption, but we do not burn terumah on the strength of presumption. We flagellate on the strength of presumption, as Rab Judah. For Rab Judah said: If a woman is presumed a niddah by her neighbours, her husband is flagellated on her account as a niddah. Freedman amplifies the text with this footnote: If he cohabits with her, though there are no actual witnesses of her menstruation. Freedman The answer is, then, that the neighbors are not certain the wife is menstruating: They presume she is, report the couple, and on the strength of this report, the husband is flogged. Rabbis Judge Vaginal Discharges For most of us, the concept of our clergymen taking an interest in the color of our menstrual blood is foreign, but rabbis make rulings on the colors of menstrual blood: The High Priest is frightened that he had been defiled "perhaps the Sadducee has had sexual intercourse with his menstruous wife. It once happened that a Sadducee was conversing with a High Priest in the market place when some spittle was squirted from his mouth and fell on the clothes of the High Priest. The face of the High Priest turned yellow and he hurried to his wife who assured him that although they were wives of Sadducees they paid homage to the Pharisees and showed their blood to the Sages. We know them better than anybody else [and can testify] that they show their menstrual blood to the Sages. There was only one exception, a woman who lived in our neighborhood who did not show her blood to the Sages but she died. This passage from Niddah 14a is attached in the Appendix: Menstruation Frightens Snakes Talmud passages suggest that the rabbinic horror of menstrual fluids is not merely religious, but genuine and visceral. For example, in the following from the Tractate Shabbath, the possibility is considered of a woman attempting to drive away a snake. The ultimate weapon, according to the Sages, is for the woman to tell the snake, "I am menstruous. What can she do? She should cohabit [with her husband] in front of it. Others say, That will even strengthen its instincts. But what threat does the snake offer the woman? They should take a pair of tongs in their hand, for when it smells the fragrance it will come out, so that it can be seized and burnt in the fire, as otherwise it will re-enter. Jung once wrote that "a full understanding of the Jewish origins of psychoanalysis would carry us beyond Jewish Orthodoxy into the subterranean workings of Hasidism and then into the intricacies of the Kabbalah which still remain unexplored psychologically. Epstein, editor of the Soncino Talmud, offers two theories for these interesting laws. The first is the hygiene theory: Graver in its consequence and in full force to the present day is the law of Niddah. The reasons for the Niddah ordinances are many and varied. They promote sexual hygiene, physical health, marital continence, respect for womanhood, consecration of married life, and family happiness. Epstein 2 Rabbi Dr. Epstein wrote those words in Menstruation is not a communicable disease. No one in medical history has been infected with it by contact with a carrier.

Menstrual discharges are far less septic than excretory discharges, but we do not have entire tractates devoted to urination and defecation. Western literature indicates that maintaining feminine daintiness during menstruation has never been an overwhelming cultural problem. Under ordinary circumstances, we would expect that would be a little hard on the self-esteem. Epstein does not explain how this degrading designation could promote respect for womanhood and we are left puzzled. Epstein gives another reason why niddah laws are seemly. But over and above these weighty reasons, they concern the very being of the soul of the Jew. They safeguard the purity of the Jewish soul, without which no true religious moral and spiritual life "individual or corporate" as Judaism conceives it, is attainable. Just prior to making the above statement, Rabbi Dr. Epstein elucidates his reasoning. Here are the major points, but it behooves the reader to study the original text. Epstein offers us a tautology: But even so, we can all agree that the Bill of Rights of the United States of America guarantees the freedom of religion. Every religion embraces beliefs that seem strange or even bizarre to those outside the circle of believers. Judaism, too, has its unique aspects. After all, the menstruation laws are just a Jewish thing, right? There is a reason we should all take this personally. It is possible that those laws may be applied to all Americans in the near future. Under Noahide Law regulations, idolaters which includes Christians by definition are put to death. In , the Supreme Court agreed to consider an amicus brief based wholly on Talmudic law see Sentence and Execution. The purpose of the Institute is to introduce Talmudic laws into the US legal system and law schools. It is thus the clear civic duty of every American to become intimately acquainted with the Talmud. In his book, *Kosher Sex*, Rabbi Boteach speaks glowingly of the Talmudic prohibition of married sex for two weeks every month. He states that the Bible did mankind a favor by inventing a way to improve a marriage. For two weeks, the couple avoids "monotony" in their marriage by observing abstinence. Instead, Rabbi Boteach tells his readers: While husband and wife are permitted to indulge in sex for two weeks, they will forge deep emotional bonds. They unite physically and feel close emotionally. Their passionate physical life deepens their emotion and feeling for each other. They must separate for the five days of menstruation and for seven days thereafter and maintain a strict period of sexual abstinence. Rather, they allow their nonphysical communication to build up into an intense longing. Their libidinous reserve replenishes itself until, twelve days after they have separated, their love for each other reaches its crescendo, when their inner fire and passion, which have been escalating, leap out like the eruption of a volcano, and they united together in fiery physical bliss. His treatment of the Niddah laws does not meet The Rudin Standard. On the other hand, how can we ever achieve understanding between people of different faiths if we are not open and trusting with each other? *Niddah and Blood Ritual In Animal Sacrifice and the Third Temple* , we learned that after Temple priests kill the sacrificial animal, the priests dismember it, drain the blood, and dip their fingers in the blood to smear and sprinkle it around the Temple. Specially built channels that look like "nostrils" drain the blood into nearby streams. The Temple, then, and the priests are awash with the blood of slaughter and death. That ritual, called *mezizah*, is practiced today, despite the knowledge of Jewish leadership that it can and has spread fatal diseases. But the blood of menses, which is passed without death, infliction of pain, or mutilation, causes revulsion and restriction. *Visible and Invisible Burqas* The notorious burqa, the head to toe face-and-body hiding gown of Afghanistan, has become a symbol of the suppression of women in Islam. Let us review the Talmud law of Niddah: When not menstruating, she is using testing rags. If she and her husband violate the law, they are subject to arrest and punishment. When menstruation is complete, she must take a ritual bath. If a woman took the Talmudic laws of menstruation seriously, it would be impossible for her to have a career. A menstruating female doctor would contaminate every patient and every instrument she touched; a menstruating lawyer would contaminate everything she handled in her law office: Some Muslim women wear cloth burqas, but not all burqas are made of cloth.

Chapter 7 : The Women of the Talmud by Judith Z. Abrams

"Women have to keep studying Talmud, because Talmud is the basis of modern Halacha," Anton says. "Talmud scholars in black coats sit around a table and debate how modern times relate to the Talmud, and if enough women learn enough Talmud, they can get a seat at that table."

Chapter 8 : Women, the Talmud, and Tiferet | The Jewish Standard

Another order, Nashim (Women), deals with issues between the sexes, including both laws of marriage, Kiddushin, and of divorce, Gittin. A fifth order, Kodashim, outlines the laws of sacrifices and ritual slaughter.

Chapter 9 : Women of the Talmud: Yalta

The role of women in traditional Judaism has been grossly misrepresented and misunderstood. The position of women is not nearly as lowly as many modern people think; in fact, the position of women in halakhah (Jewish Law) that dates back to the biblical period is in many ways better than the position of women under American civil law as recently as a century ago.