

Case Report

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On Certain Aspects of The Relationship Between Judaism, Psychology, And Sexology

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Case report

Judaism as Context for Behavioural Approaches

Three Case Reports as Introduction to the Topic

The following three case reports involve sexuality of seniors, which was formerly considered abnormal to a certain extent.

- a) Case report of a seventy-year-old man with erectile dysfunction from the perspective of the Halakhah law: The wife (58) initiated consultations at the Puhah Institute in Jerusalem, as the intensity of sex life in their marriage decreased almost to the point of disappearing during the last decade. The general practitioner prescribed sildenafil citrate to her husband, but the husband refused the treatment with the argument that it is not proper for him as an orthodox Jew to seek sexual pleasure and that ageing is part of the God's plan. In addition, sexual interaction between a husband and wife is recommended during Shabbat, yet taking medicines for less serious illnesses during this time is prohibited. One of the statements voiced in the discussion concerning sildenafil citrate was that treatment of erectile dysfunction is of such importance that it may continue during Sabbath. Applying the Halakhah law, the advisor of the Puhah Institute pointed out that the husband is obliged to take part in sexual activities with his wife in the intensity required by the wife. Sildenafil citrate may be used also during Shabbat.
- b) Case report of a husband and wife and their failing sexuality from the perspective of the Halakhah law: Medication with sildenafil citrate was ineffective for the husband (59), yet when

his penis was manually stimulated by the wife (57), he was able to achieve partial erection and subsequent ejaculation. While the wife is willing to further assist in reaching orgasm, she believes that these practices are in contrast to the strict prohibition of masturbation under the Halakhah law. Applying the Halakhah law, the advisor of the Puhah Institute instructed the couple of acceptability of manual stimulation of the penis in this specific situation, adding the requirement that ejaculation occurs either directly in the vagina or at the vaginal opening. This advice eliminated the feeling of guilt for the couple and had a positive impact on their sexuality.

- c) Case report of a woman with significantly deteriorated dyspareunia and algopareunia during menopause from the perspective of the Halakhah law: A couple (M72, F71) considers their marriage to be good, yet the husband sought expert help due to highly dissatisfying sex life. Long-term dyspareunia and algopareunia with significant deterioration after menopause was identified in the wife's medical history. The wife uses insignificant postcoital bleeding to assert that she is a menstruating woman, i.e. has the "niddah" status, which means prohibition of sexuality between a husband and wife during certain days of the menstrual cycle according to the Halakhah law. The consultant at the Puhah Institute instructed the wife of acceptability of hormonal treatment, including the use of lubricants, according to the Halakhah law. While the Halakhah rules for Shabbat do not allow for the use of creams for any purpose, the addressed rabbis agreed with the use of liquid-based lubricants to im-

prove sex life of the married couple in particular during Sabbath. Postcoital bleeding does not provide the “niddah” status for the woman and the subsequent prohibition of sexuality between the husband and wife [1].

On the Inner Sense of Halakhah

The practical approach to Halakhah is documented in the tractate entitled Pirkei Avot, which says that an action, practice is important rather than study. Halakhah is the traditional Jewish law, the legal and ethical guide to everyday life of the Jewish community, and includes in particular Kashrut (focusing on the topic of kosher and non-kosher foods, blessings, prayers, Shabbat, holidays, fasting, charitable activities, tithing, grief, interpersonal relationships). Rabi Josef Karo, the author of the key Halakhah code Schulchan Aruch, opens the section Orach Chaim with the following words: “The man must be as strong as a lion to rise in the morning and serve his Creator. From the moment a Jew rises in the morning, he serves his Creator and is prepared to loyally uphold all of his Mitzvot. Mitzvot bring the God’s order into our lives, raise us above the materialism of the everyday life to the level of spiritual content and sense [2]” Therefore, Halakhah shows the way for mastering the sense of practical everyday matters from the spiritual point of view and thus bridging the gap between the material and the spiritual.

Key Terms in Judaism Referring to Sexuality

a) The term “Onah”: During the wedding ceremony, the ketubah (marriage contract) is signed by two witnesses and the groom. This document details the obligations and responsibilities the groom assumes in relation to the bride. This must be in line with the three responsibilities the Torah imposes on every husband; “she’er” refers to food for the bride, “kesut” to clothing and “onah” to the right of the bride and wife to sexual intercourse with her husband [3]. Onah describes from the practical point of view the woman’s rights in marriage, including the man’s obligations in sexuality. As regards sexuality between seniors, it has become apparent that onah may take precedence over the key role of sexuality in Judaism – reproduction. While pregnancy is not possible in the case of sexuality of senior couples, sexuality is supported by Halakhah authorities, as it reinforces the sense of love between the husband and wife.

b) Biblical story of Onan: Torah, Bereshit, Parshat Vayeshev in chapter 38, subsequent verses says: “7 Now Er, Judah’s firstborn, was evil, in the eyes of the Lord, and the Lord put him to death. 8 So Judah said to Onan. “Come to your brother’s wife and perform the rite of the levirate, and raise up progeny for your brother. 9 Now Onan knew that the progeny would not be his, and it came about, when he came to his brother’s wife, he wasted his semen on the ground, in order not to give seed to his brother. 10 Now what he did was evil in the eyes of the Lord, and He put him to death also.” The Lord punished Onan for the sin of “spilling his seed upon the ground”, which points to masturbation. However, the issue of the “wasted seed” may also point to coitus interruptus, which is considered a traditional form of contraception.

c) The term “niddah”: Niddah is a term encompassing the

ambiguous approach of Judaism to sexuality. Plaskow states: “The heart of Jewish ambivalence toward sexuality is roughly this: The sexual impulse is given by God and thus is a normal and healthy part of Jewish life. Sexual relations are appropriate only within the framework of heterosexual marriage, but within the marriage, they are good, indeed, commanded. Yet sexuality – even within marriage – also requires careful, sometimes rigorous control, in order that it not transgresses the boundaries of marriage or the laws of niddah (the menstruating woman) within it [4].” “The Halakha details strict prohibition of male and female physical contact before marriage, forbidding premarital sexual intercourse and other forms of premarital sexual behaviour. Therefore, once Jewish couples are married, many expect to be able to engage in sexual activity whenever they want. However, explicit rules governing such contact after marriage (which are usually taught to couples once they become engaged) are given by the Halakha as well: Traditional Jewish observance expressly forbids literally any physical contact between spouses during the days of menstruation and for a week thereafter.

According to stipulated ritual, an Orthodox Jewish wife is responsible for ensuring that she is no longer exhibiting vaginal bleeding by swabbing herself carefully with a linen cloth for each of the 7 days following the overt cessation of the menstrual flow. The seven days after menstruation culminate with the wife’s obligation to immerse that night in the Mikvah, a ritual bath. This entire period of time, from the beginning of the „bleeding days“, until the end of the 7 „clean days“, when the woman immerses herself in the ritual bath, is called the „Niddah (ritually unclean) period“. Only once the entire period of Niddah passes, physical sexual contact between the husband and wife is possible [5]. This rather strict regulation of sexuality even within marriage arises from the belief that menstrual blood is unclean from the ritual point of view.

d) Topic of extramarital sexuality: Two different approaches to the issue of extramarital sexuality can be distinguished among medieval Jewish thinkers: Maimonides, a philosopher and one of the main authors of the Halakhah law strictly rejects extramarital sexuality, referring to Torah, Devarim, chapter 23, verse 18: “There shall be no harlot of the daughters of Israel, neither there be a sodomite of the sons of Israel.” However, the philosopher Nachmanides argues that the term “kedeisha” (prostitute) refers to occasional extramarital sex. Torah allows a man to establish a long-term relationship with a woman outside his marriage, referring to this woman as a “pilegish” (concubine). While Maimonides argues that concubinage is the privilege of kings, Nachmanides claims that a long-term extramarital relationship between adults is possible. This polemic reflects the Halakhah topic, according to which sexuality is only admissible within legitimate marriage and no other sexuality except for vaginal sex is permitted.

The status of offspring resulting from connection with forbidden partners is associated with extramarital sexuality. Mamzerim are descendants from connection with forbidden sexual partners. “Mamzerim were impure and posed a threat to the holiness of the land of Israel, especially to the temple. Biblical and postbiblical Jewish legislators emphatically stressed their exclusion: Deut. 23:3 for-

bids them and their descendants, to the tenth generation, from entering the holy assembly of Yahweh [6]. The issue of mamzerim, or more specifically the issue of breaking key prohibitions according to Torah in tense historical moments, albeit only occasional, highlights the movement of Judaism and its followers forward along the spiral of history. If we were to apply Torah literally, the descendants of the forbidden connection between Judah and Tamar should be mamzerim with all its consequences. Perhaps Zerach and Perez are indeed mamzerim, yet it would seem that this status has been revoked, since the lineage of the descendants of Perez leads to the king David.

Reform Judaism, Neo-Hasidism, and Sexuality

The reform movement in Judaism accepts the notion that the Lord gave people responsibility, so that they can interpret the Torah. At the same time, this movement rejects the idea that the traditional Jewish law of Halakhah would be binding for all Jews. Reform Judaism lacks a generally accepted methodology for viewing individual religious issues in a modern manner and in line with the relevant historical practice. This also applies to sexuality. Karen Carpenter and Dana Evan Kaplan state: *“For religious movement that has prided itself on being contemporary and relevant, the Reform movement has said surprisingly little on non-marital sex... There is a tremendous gap between the contemporary hookup culture and traditional morality as expressed in Western monotheistic traditions.”* Those who address the issue of extramarital sexuality in the context of reform Judaism express conservative opinions. As if the principle that the holiness of marriage rests in the legal and moral restrictions surrounding it continued to be applied [7].

The existence of the “House of Love and Prayer” as the connection of the Neo-Hasidic movement with the modern movements of the time, such as hippies is the expression of a significant cultural and social change also affecting Judaism. The Neo-Hasidists Schachter and Carlebach eroded many deeply entrenched stereotypes in the religious practice of Judaism, opened doors to the influence of feministic ideas, and created atmosphere in the House of Love and Prayer that attracted not only Jews, but also members of communities from a wide spectrum of national and religious groups, many of whom subsequently converted to Judaism. As regards sexuality, the House of Love and Prayer was revolutionary. Firstly, premarital sexuality was permitted and practiced. Secondly, Schachter and Carlebach invited members of the homosexual minority to join them and convert to Judaism, despite the biblical texts expressing uncompromising disapproval of sexual minorities. Although certain important representatives of Hasidism in the United States supported Schachter and Carlebach, Hasidism generally keeps to the traditional approach to sexuality based on Halakhah [8].

Comparison of the Principles of Judaism with the Principles of Behavioural Approaches

Specialised literature points to the fact that behavioural psychotherapy approaches do not strive to identify the deeper mental causes of the client’s problems or the patient’s personal history. It is assumed that the causes of the client’s problems will remain more

or less hypothetical. The present time and clearly defined objectives for the future are important. Behavioural approaches focus on specific issues that need to be the centre of attention in the strategy of gradual, although individual changes for the better. The client is expected to increasingly become a therapist for themselves within the context of human autonomy [9]. The general philosophical principle of behavioural approaches and Halakhah is rather similar [10]. The practically inclined Halakhah primarily focuses on one’s behaviour and its change. At the same time, the assumption is that the Halakhah rules imposed from the outside will gradually filter into “mental depths” and subsequently change one’s thinking, i.e. cognitive functions, and their motivation system. Consistency and repetition of the correct behavioural patterns is crucial.

Unlike behavioural approaches, Halakhah or the traditional Jewish law relies on the identified metaphysical basis: the world was created, the Lord from the principle is not a physical being and cannot manifest as a physical being, and the Messiah may be delayed in his arrival. However, in this sense Halakhah confirms to a certain extent the human autonomy in the world order. However, what does Halakhah have to say to behavioural approaches in psychotherapy? You may not want to talk about it, but you perceive the man as a radically historical being. The human being is defined by its history and nothing else. However, a human being is also its future and nothing else. Therefore, what is one’s behaviour and its change that essentially changes the cognitive system and the system of motivation? It is verticality between a human being as exclusively its history and the human being as exclusively its future. While you may not want to talk about it, the assumptions of your theory perceive an autonomous human being and the Lord somewhere in the background as the guarantor of the man’s autonomy.

Reproduction in Judaism versus Malthusian Theory

Reproduction as Mitzva Rabbah

Rabi Eli’ezer (around 270 of the Common Era) said: *“A man that has no wife is no man, because it has been said (Genesis 5:2): Male and female He created them... He called them Adam (the Man).”* As the order to reproduce is preceded in the Bible by the prohibition of killing, rabi Eli’ezer derives from this that a failure to reproduce is the same as spilling blood [11]. In other words, anyone who fails to produce offspring is similar to a murderer. Therefore, contraception is not admissible at all. *The Jewish mysticism understands human sexuality as a way of manifesting the God in the world through the promise of the next generations. In other words, the God needs the mankind to reproduce as the new Genesis is acted out in their bedrooms [12].* The order to reproduce is directed to men and imposes no obligation on women, as the aim of reproduction is to “conquer and dominate” the earth, both of which are naturally attributed to men. Therefore, according to the Jewish law, a woman does not even have the right to file for a divorce due to her husband’s sterility, while a man can use the same argument to banish a wife that “prevents” him from complying with the commandment that he must uphold.

It should be noted that in the context of parashah terumah, which talks about the construction of a portable shrine during the

Israelites' journey through the desert, haftara for parashah *terumah* focuses on the construction of the temple during Salomon's times. Rabi Mendel Dubov describes in his interpretation of haftara that the thirty thousand men chosen to go to Lebanon to chop wood for the construction had an interesting working schedule. Instead of being sent to Lebanon all at once, they were divided into three groups of ten thousand men. Each of the groups spent one month in Lebanon. Then they were to return home for two months, while the other two worked. Some comments provide the explanation that this system was introduced due to the difficulty of the work that was to be accomplished. However, according to the words of rabi Avin in the Jerusalem Talmud, fertility and reproduction is dearer to the Lord than construction of a temple. The workers were to spend only limited time in Lebanon and more time at home, in Israel. This meant that the construction of the temple would take longer time, but as the men stayed at home, more children could be born. Therefore, the mitzva (duty) to marry and have children is classified in Halakhah literature as "mitzva rabbah", the grand mitzva that take precedence over all others [13].

Reproduction as the Order in Judaism and Reproduction as Anarchy in the Malthusian Theory

Certain imperativeness of reproduction in Judaism is in all aspects guaranteed by the God's presence; sexuality itself is permeated with purposefulness and proportionality guaranteed by the God. Sexuality cannot be avoided in marriage (generally in a stable relationship) and rests on the requirements of marital loyalty. Sexuality, despite being highly intensive, is legitimate, and therefore there is no need to address, for example, celibacy as in Christian teachings, or philosophical paradoxes in the sense of insatiable desire for pleasure and the consequent nonsensical nature of sexuality. Judaism does not accept the pragmatic perception of the Greek and Roman ancient concept that promoted family and fertility for military reasons, and infanticide as a way of regulating excessive growth of population is entirely alien to Judaism. The imperativeness of reproduction in Judaism does not know or fear overpopulation [14]. On the other hand, the following needs to be said. Let's start with the term demographic transition, which is historically unique transformation of the population's reproductive behaviour. Externally, it is expressed in the changes in fertility and mortality and therefore in the change in the population's age structure.

While the demographic reproduction situation was influenced mainly biologically during the times before the demographic transition, reproductive behaviour has been determined by socio-economic factors after the demographic transition. As B. Šprocha and B. Tišliar, the authors of the study entitled *The Demographics of the Jewish Population of Slovakia between the Two World Wars* state: "Religion has long been considered one of the major and most consistent factors impacting fertility. Research has repeatedly shown that Jewish population tend to exhibit lower fertility rates than their Gentile neighbours. Some works have gone so far as to describe the Jewish population as forerunners of fertility limitation and the intentional reduction of family size. This is not a recent phenomenon: lower fertility and smaller family size in Jewish populations were re-

marked upon as early as 1890s and similar conclusions were reached by a number of demographic analyses in 1960s-1980s not only for the United States, but also for Switzerland, Italy and the Netherlands. And so while the fertility of Jewish populations in Western and Central Europe began to undergo a shift as early as the late 1700s, Jews in Eastern Europe and in the Pale of Settlement still exhibited a high intensity of fertility and nuptiality at the end of the nineteenth century.

Interestingly enough, in the 1930s, Jewish populations in a number of Eastern European countries (e.g. Romania, Bulgaria, Poland, Galicia, Lithuania and Hungary) recorded a lower birth rate than their Gentile neighbours [15]. Judaism in its attitude to sexuality and reproduction is a principal antipode to the approaches applied by the Malthusian theory. According to the Malthusian theory, the imperativeness of reproduction is not guaranteed by a supranatural godly power, although the God and His objectives are present in the background, the God emerges from the laws of nature, as if "from the grassroots". Therefore, sexuality is anarchist in its nature and may or may not be exercised within a family, and may or may not be delimited by faithfulness between a husband and wife or between partners. Sexuality is no more than a blind instinct that a human being cannot influence, which is clearly demonstrated according to Malthus in the sexual and reproductive behaviour of the poor [16]. This sexuality, the one that seems to remain out of control, lacks proportionality and therefore needs to be restricted from the inside at the moral level or from the outside in catastrophic events reducing the population, is the factor that promotes the fear of overpopulation as one of the world's central anxieties.

On Interpretation of the Sotah Ritual in Judaism or Chabad Hasidism

On Development of the Sotah Ritual

The sotah ritual is generally classified among Trials by Ordeal, during which the godly power reveals the truth. Its detailed description and interpretation are contained in the core texts of Judaism, and it is practiced with the aim to confirm or disprove a husband's suspicion of his wife's hypothetical infidelity. Most cultures during the biblical times perceived a wife's infidelity a mere transgression against the husband and left potential punishment to the husband. However, the founding texts of Judaism consider infidelity of a woman – wife a violation of the generally religious rules. Therefore, hypothetical infidelity of a wife is among the issues reaching beyond the fate of individual persons, which determine the fate of the community as a whole – and perhaps not the community, but the entire mankind. In biblical texts, Trial by Ordeal is only used in the case of sotah. The Torah pays great attention to the sotah ritual and Mishnah as the core text of the Rabbinic Judaism, which was written during the hard times following the fall of the Second Temple and extinction of the Jewish state in the desolate Palestine, dedicates one entire tractate to the sotah ritual. This will be mentioned in greater detail in the subsequent text of this study.

Ishay Rosen-Zvi summarises the content of the sotah ritual as follows: *Sotah is for a woman suspected of adultery, who must undergo an ordeal that will establish her guilt or innocence. Numbers 5:11-*

31 in detail the ritual, which a priest performs in the Tabernacle to determine whether a woman whose husband suspects her of adultery is indeed guilty. The Torah (Panteteuch) determines that a husband who suffers from „from a spirito of jealousy“ and suspects his wife must bring her to the priest in the Tabernacle. There the priest performs a series of ritual acts: he offers a „meal-offering of jealousy“; an offering of ground barely without the oil or frankincense, unbinds the woman’s hair, makes her swear an oath that she had sexual relations with no man other than her husband, writes the oath in a scroll, and finally makes the woman drink the mixture. The mixture, which the Torah calls „the bitter, curse-causing waters,“ contains the oath and the curses that accompany it, and ultimately determines the woman’s fate. As the woman drinks the potion, the outcome of the trial appears on her body, confirming or refuting her husband’s suspicions: If she is guilty, the water will cause the woman to become infertile (the expressions „her thigh falls“ and „her belly distends“ are probably euphemisms for harm to the sexual organs), but if she is innocent the water will do her no harm and even cause her to become fertile [17].

There is no evidence of the sotah ritual ever being practiced in the form prescribed by the Torah. While there are some mentions in the Mishnah, the Mishnah has clearly ahistoric parameters, meaning that it was written in a universalistic manner, as if for all times. Authors such as Philo of Alexandria or Flavius Josephus mention the practice of the sotah ritual, but the form of the ritual differs from that prescribed by the Torah. If the sotah ritual was ever practiced, it ceased to be used during the times of the Second Temple. One of the potential reasons for this is also mentioned. According to rabbi Yohanan bez Zakkai, adultery was on the rise despite the ritual. Although the sotah ritual was not practiced during the following centuries, its cultural impact remains due to its inclusion in the Talmudic code. In the modern era, i.e. in the times of growing self-awareness among women and intensifying feminist movement, the sotah ritual becomes the centre for critical opinions of the traditional religious patriarchalism. Books and theatre plays working with the topic of the sotah ritual are being written [18].

Extreme Interpretation of the Sotah Ritual in the Mishnah

An expressive and debatable approach is applied to the description and interpretation of the sotah ritual in the Mishnah, the core text of the Rabbinic Judaism originating around year 200 of the Common Era in Palestine. The Mishnah describes the sotah ritual in the Sotah Tractate. Describing some of the circumstances of its creation and the parameters of this text should be described for the purposes of this study. These details can be found in the text by Jacob Neusner, who is the author of the latest translation from Hebrew (the original language of the Mishnah) to English, with the copyright being held by the Yale University since 1988. Neusner builds on the translation from Hebrew to English written by Herbert Danby in 1933 in Great Britain: *“Since the Mishna almost certainly began as a document formulated to facilitate oral repetition and memorization. The Mishna thus moves not only from prose to poetry but also undergoes what I intend to be a move from a realm of visual silence to a world of song on paper...Indeed, the Mishna contains not a hint about what its author conceive their work to be.*

Is it a law code? Is it a school book? Since it makes statements describing what people should and should not do, or rather, do and do not do, we might suppose it is a law code. Since, as we shall see in a moment, it covers topics of both practical and theoretical interest, we might suppose it is a schoolbook...Let me now briefly describe the Mishna. It is a six part code of descriptive rules formulated toward the end of the second century A.D. by a small number of Jewish sages and put forth as the constitution of Judaism under the sponsorship of Judah the Patriarch, the head of the Jewish community of Palestine at the end of that century. The Mishna is important because it forms the foundation for the Babylonian and Palestinian Talmuds. It therefore stands alongside the Hebrew Bible as the holy book upon which the Judaism of the past nineteen hundred years is constructed.” Ishay Rosen-Zvi sums up the extreme interpretation of the Sotah Tractate in the Mishnah as follows: The private ritual under the Torah becomes a public event. The ritual includes elements of the Talmudic law, such as the necessity of the husband’s warning for the wife and the institute of witnesses.

The ritual is furnished with additional procedures that may even result in the woman’s death or mutilation; all of this is carried out in a theatrical manner. The biblical trial by ordeal is transformed into a punishment procedure from the beginning to the end – the woman is a sinner, whose sin only needs to be revealed. A quote from the Mishnah translated by Jacob Neusner documents the above: *“1:4 A. They would bring her up to the high court which is in Jerusalem and admonish her as they admonish witnesses in capital crime. 1:6 E. And all women are allowed to stare at her, since it is said, That all women may be taught not to do after your lewdness (Ezek.23:48) [19].”*

Modern East European Hasidism and Chabad

The term Hasidism is used in Judaism to refer to multiple religious groups. The modern East European Hasidism is a people’s movement occurring in Judaism among other reasons as a reaction to the extensive pogroms and the general poverty during the war at the beginning of the second half of the 18th century in the territory of then existing Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The Jewish mysticism and the Lurianic Kabbalah are some of the major sources of this type of Hasidism. The worship is rather ecstatic, with spectacular accompanying movements. The modern Eastern European Hasidism emphasises the social opinion, tight bond within communities and the so-called Tzadik, charismatic religious leaders play a major role there. This type of Hasidism is thought to have been founded by Isra’el ben Eli’ezer called Ba’al Shem Tov, who was probably a member of Chavurot, mystic religious groups operating in the territory of Poland and Lithuania in the 18th century. The basic form of Hasidism as a decentralised movement only appeared in the third generation of Tzadik. Since then, Hasidism has not been a uniform movement. Instead, it is characterised by various chasidim groups lead by their Tzadik existing alongside each other [20].

As regards the main theoretical aspects of the Chabad Hasidism established by Schneur Zalman of Liadi, who was a member of the third generation of the Tzadik, the movement’s direction is as follows: while chasidim were against the traditional Talmudic

education and placed emphasis on a strong religious emotion, the first Tzadik Chabadu supports a religious journey based on cultivation of mainly rational virtues. These are represented by the Sefirot Chochma, Bina and Da'at, and Chabad is conceived as an acronym of these three terms. Beinoni, the intermediate one is at the centre of the teachings of Schneur Zalman; this person is neither wilful, nor righteous. This character represents the ideal model within every person's reach. All they need to do is resist the evil under all circumstances, overcome the evil with the good instinct, and maintain self-discipline and morals. Schneur Zalman of Liadi is the author of Likutei Amarim, i.e. a Tanya that plays a key role in Chabad. Rather than being a comment on Torah, the text focuses on mystical psychology, ethics and theosophy. It motivates people to study the Holy Writ and cultivate their rational abilities [21].

During the 20th century, Chabad Lubavitch becomes a major force building bridges between the messages of the East European Hasidism and the secular Jewish community. The philosopher and writer Martin Buber is a major personality explaining the world of Hasidism to the outside world. The following quote from his work is typical for the thinking of the modern East European Hasidism: *"The tradition talks about one Talmudic master that the heavenly pathways were illuminated for him as clearly as the streets of his hometown Nehardea. Hasidism turns this statement around: it means more if the streets of one's hometown are illuminated for him as clearly as the heavenly pathways. As it is of utmost importance that we let the hidden divine life shine here, where we are [22]"*.

M. M. Schneerson and his Interpretation of the Sotah Tractate in the Mishnah as the Basis for Summarising the Study

Menachem Mendel Schneerson is the last descendant in the male line of Schneur Zalman of Liadi and the seventh Tzadik of the Chabad Lubavitch movement. He became such prominent personality of the conservative thinking of the 20th century that Chabad Lubavitch chose not to elect a new Tzadik after his death. In the following text, M. M. Schneerson reveals the inner dialectics of the sotah ritual as described in the Sotah Tractate in the Mishnah. The unique tradition of the modern East European Hasidism and Chabad Hasidism as a global religious phenomenon after World War II is clearly reflected here: *"The Sotah woman is estranged from her husband, like the Jewish people during our long exile; Tractate Sotah, which is customarily studied between Passover and Shavuot, discusses the laws concerning a woman who is suspected of infidelity by her husband. The last folio of the Tractate discusses the onset of the Jewish people's long exile, which is compared to the separation between husband and wife, God and the Jewish people. Fortunately, the tractate also presents an opinion that this separation is the result of the husband's intense love for his wife, giving our exile an entirely new dimension [23]"*.

Let's quote the final folio of the Sotah Tractate in the Mishnah: *"9:15 Y. And the government turns to heresy. Z. And there is no reproof. AA. The gathering place will be for prostitution. BB. And Galilee will be laid waste. III. MM. R. Pinchas b. Yair says, "...abstinence leads to holiness, holiness leads to modesty, modesty leads to the fear of sin,*

the fear of sin leads to piety, piety leads to the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit leads to the resurrection of the dead, and the resurrection of the dead comes through Elijah, blessed be his memory, Amen".

Summary

Slave Societies in the Ancient History and Woman

The body of rabbinic literature does not contain any call for eradicating slavery as such, although its impact on sexual morality is immense. The rabbinic literature focuses on the ethics of a slave society without making a single attempt to break this major limitation, as it is seen from the modern perspective. No strict prohibition of uncontrolled sexual contact between an unmarried man and slave women, who are his property, can be found in the rabbinic literature. However, this also influences the construction of female sexuality, which is intensely studied in rabbinic literature. Their key notion in the rabbinic literature is that a woman's honour (unlike man's) is defined by sexuality. However, how can a woman maintain her honour or chastity in a slave society? Gail Labovitz in his text "More Slave Woman, More Lewdness" states: *"The bodily boundaries of the slave may be invaded by the free, not only through forced labour but also by physical violence and/or sexual assault; the slave has at best severely restricted rights of self-protection. Particularly for the free woman, then, her honor granted her some degree of reassurance that her body was protected from random assault. By the same token, however, honor for the free woman is typically defined by social and legal obligations to guard the inviolability of her body – as the slave could not – and her success or failure to do so repercussions both for her own status and for that of the male authority figures in her life [24]"*.

Therefore, a woman as a slave, a woman as someone's property without any rights and with a status close to a domestic animal is unavoidably directed towards sexual looseness and impurity. Mentions in the rabbinic literature of the ideal slave, who is capable of maintaining her chastity even in extreme situations and refrain from occasional sexual contact do very little to alleviate this. On the other hand, the rabbinic literature sees the entry of a free woman into marriage as a certain kind of trade, becoming the man's property and therefore materialisation of the woman, although there are statements asserting that "the daughters of Israel should be like ownerless property". The complexity of this situation and its moral and ethical aspect is compounded by the fact that the rabbinic literature is aware of the sexual vulnerability of female slaves and requests that a woman – slave is not left unprotected by her owner. This is reflected for example in the fact that the owner grants one of his slaves an exclusive right to a sexual contact with the female slave. Whether a slave or a free woman, a woman in the rabbinic literature is always subjected to a man – owner, who may be her husband or her owner from the legal point of view.

Morality or Immorality in Sexuality is Reflected in Justification or a Lack of Justification of the World's Being

As mentioned previously, there is little evidence suggesting that the sotah ritual would actually be practiced in the past, but it is a living part of Judaism in the form of a religious text. From the

modern perspective, it is seen as an exemplary evidence of gender inequality between the man and the woman and justly criticised for this. On the other hand, the view of the sotah ritual from the conservative religious point of view is not as unambiguous. In the specific interpretation of the Holy Writ, the sotah ritual points to the woman's responsibility, which has an almost ontological dimension, as it concerns the basic questions of being. Even from the private space of her marriage and morality, a woman decides on the basic questions of the world's being. The sotah ritual articulates the foundation of Judaism: morality or immorality is sexuality is not limited to sexuality itself but is reflected in being as a whole and its meaning. This concept is especially apparent in the story of Lot and his two daughters. While this study cannot aim to map this story and its interpretation in the Jewish tradition in detail, its architecture including its moral message is apparent. The daughters had – let's say by the means of deception – sexual intercourse with their father, which means a sexual encounter strictly prohibited by Judaism. This connection, being forbidden and immoral, gave rise to the Ammonites and Moabites, both nations resisting the ways of the Providence. In addition, there is the moral and logical connection between this forbidden and immoral sexual contact and the fact that Lot offered his daughters as a ransom to the Sodomite mob without scruples.

Labyrinths of the Differences between the Man and the Woman and Origination of Jealousy

The sotah ritual points to complex and often to a certain extent tabooed topics: general jealousy, jealousy in sexuality, potential difference between male and female jealousy, and the character of male and female sexuality. Let's look at jealousy in sexuality in greater detail. The sotah ritual is not a ban listed among the numerous bans concerning sexuality in the Torah. Instead, it is a discursive space defining the characteristics of jealousy in sexuality as such and its consequences. The Torah describes the ways along which Israel follows the Lord. Therefore, the way is a key term and the decisive aspect that forms a man. The Torah does not pay much attention to the complex set of motivations and emotions of the main characters. The sotah ritual is an exception in this sense, as the Torah extensively studies jealousy and its existence. The main aspect, at least according to this study, is the fact that jealousy is very difficult to manage with purely human means and abilities. As if the man was innocent, but at the same time as if the woman was also innocent. Yet, jealousy in sexuality arises here, perhaps from the differences between the man and the woman and the differences between the male and female sexuality. Jealousy always gets out of the man's control to some extent, as the sotah ritual shows, overcoming the man to the point of creating the delusion of jealousy [25], which escalates jealousy further, while at the same time paradoxically gaining at least partial control of the emotion. This means that clarification of suspected jealousy requires the divine instance. However, this clarification in the labyrinth of differences between the man and the woman may acquire monstrous dimensions.

The Sotah Ritual as Humiliation of a Woman and Humiliation of a Man

It should be noted that while the sotah ritual humiliates a

woman, at the same time it is also humiliating for a man and a husband, who cannot help himself and cannot manage his anxiety arising from his wife's potential infidelity. Instead, he opens purely private topics in the public space and before the divine authority. Even if the divine authority seemingly confirms that the woman is not guilty of adultery, the man's prestige has been harmed. Another question one might ask is whether the marriage itself the man tried to save (or destroy for no reason) through the sotah ritual is beyond repair. On the one hand, the attitude of Judaism to sexuality is positive, as long as it is closely connected to reproduction and family planning and is carried out faithfully, within the solid legal framework of marriage. On the other hand, the sotah ritual seems to represent a corrective instrument for everything that has been said before. As if this ritual introduced an element of distrust to sexuality in the Jewish perception of sexuality. While sexuality is not contrary to the rules of the Torah, it would seem that the belief documented in the sotah ritual is that sexuality is not manageable on a morally acceptable basis.

However, if this were the case, maximum sexual restraint bordering on complete sexual abstinence would be the only solution. Alternatively, sexuality may be limited to a purely reproductive act, which would mean, for example, omitting any tenderness in sexuality, including any foreplay. This is in line to a certain extent with the opinion of Judi Kesnet-Orr: *"The paradox of healthy sexuality is that it's very liberation and openness creates potential vulnerability"*. The above-mentioned story of Lot and his two daughters is a deeply defective sexuality burdened with guilt. However, it seems that even healthy sexuality presents for Judaism the mankind's central battlefield with significant implications for other than sexual areas. It should be reiterated in this context that based on the lessons learnt from the biblical sotah ritual, this intimate area is influenced mainly by the woman. As if the sotah ritual indicated to the man that he should not yield to the waves of emotions, including potential jealousy. Men and women should keep certain distance also in love, including the physical love. However, this should be religious distance, instead of one based on reflection. The love to Israel and the Lord comes before the love between a man and a woman.

The Sotah Ritual as the Initial Step towards the Attitude of the Halakhah Law to Sexual Minorities

It should be reiterated that the sotah ritual is not a simple ban. Instead, it is a discursive space containing topics to a certain extent kept under taboo. This is why it represents the initial step towards deliberation on the topic of sexual minorities. Halakhah is a multifaceted and highly complex world and this study simplifies the situation greatly by saying that there are currently two opinions based on the Halakhah law from the environment of orthodox Judaism concerning the inclusion of male and female homosexuality in Jewish synagogal communities. Steve Greenberg describes these as follows: *"The first of these halakhic resolutions employs the legal principle of o'ness rahmana patrei (literally: the Merciful One absolves anyone who acts under duress). Individuals under duress are not considered culpable for their actions. According to the law, no person can be held responsible for an act over which she or he has no control."* These individuals should have the opportunity to at least

observe Judaism to the maximum possible extent in the relevant situation and requirements that are not principally realistic should not be imposed on them.

The principle of o'ness develops, opinions within the principle differ to a certain extent, yet the principle as a whole allows orthodox rabbis to create conditions for accepting homosexual individuals in Jewish synagogal communities. The second opinion based on the Halakhah law rejects the justification of potential inclusion of homosexuality on the basis of acts "under duress". Instead, it asserts the opinion that sexually active gay Jews fall under the category of tinok shenishbah ben haakum, i.e. Jews who have been abducted by gentiles in their childhood (people of non-Jewish origin), raised by them, and as a result are victims of improper education. This category under the Halakhah law was elaborated on in the past by Maimonides, who generally calls for leniency towards children of heretics. Therefore, according to Maimonides, children of Karaites, i.e. members of a sect that refused the oral Torah and the rabbinic normative rules for living in Jewish communities and practicing the Jewish faith, are perceived as jako captives of their Karaite parents [26].

The Man as a Broken Existence

The sotah ritual represents one of the potential frameworks for analysing a highly eroticised society, which legitimises eroticism or vulgar eroticism and poses it as a source of prestige in the society. The sotah ritual represents a certain framework, albeit based on clearly conservative thinking, which stems from live legacy of Judaism and allows for the following analysis: love and jealousy create equilibrium. According to Judaism, sexuality is not unproblematic and cannot be idyllic. This study believes that in a highly eroticised culture, and in particular in the porn culture, especially in the current western societies, the possible existence love as such in the traditional moral sense of the Halakhah law is strongly doubted. On the other hand, he who loves also experiences jealousy and thus is gradually robbed of the security he once enjoyed – the security that something is possible but many things are not possible. Jealousy grows into a terrifying power. Even creating a delusional system is no longer sufficient for keeping it under control.

A man longing for love in the traditional sense including physical love finds himself in a vacuum. He becomes an ungrounded and easily manipulated existence. Such person must unavoidably find themselves in the outbursts of unmanageable suspicion of their partner's infidelity. They may yield to this suspicion and succumb to a series of situations leading to the sotah ritual and the consequent loss of any self-respect. Alternatively, they are forced to reduce love to biological sexuality in order to survive and follow the model of the practices in the highly eroticised social milieu. Whichever path they choose, the individual becomes a broken existence.

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Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest.

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