

Royal Garments and Ground of Shame: Body and Soul in Rabbinic Literature

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1. בבלי שבת, קנב ע"ב

A parable of a king of flesh and blood who distributed *royal garments* to his servants. The wise ones folded them and placed them in a box; the foolish ones went and worked in them. After a period of time the king requested his garments back. The wise ones returned them to him clean; the foolish ones returned them dirty. The king was happy with the wise ones and angry with the foolish ones. With regard to the wise ones, he said: My garments shall be given to the storehouse, and let them go to their homes in peace. And with regard to the foolish ones, he said: My garments shall be given to the launderer, and they, will be locked up in prison.

So also the Holy One, Blessed be He: With regard to *the bodies* of the righteous, it says: "He enters into peace, they rest on their beds each one that walks in his uprightness" (Isaiah 57:2). And with regard to *their souls*, it says: "And the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life" (I Samuel 25:29). And with regard to *the bodies* of the wicked, it says: "There is no peace, says the Lord, for the wicked" (Isaiah 57:21), and with regard to *their souls*, it says: "And the souls of your enemies He shall sling out in the hollow of a sling" (I Samuel 25:29).

Soul (ψυχή), considered collectively, has the care of all that which is soulless, and it traverses the whole heaven, appearing sometimes in one form and sometimes in another; when it is perfect [246c] and fully winged, it mounts upward and governs the whole world;

but the soul which has lost its wings is borne along until it gets hold of something solid, when it settles down, *taking upon itself an earthly body* (σῶμα γήϊνον λαβοῦσα)

Plato, Paidros 246ξ. (trans. H. N. Fowler).

משל למלך בשר ודם שחילק בגדי מלכות לעבדיו. פקחין שבהם קיפלום והניחום בקופסא, טפשיין שבהם הלכו ועשו בהם מלאכה. לימים בקש המלך את בגדיו. פקחין שבהם החזירו לו כשהן מגוהצין, וטפשיין שבהם החזירו לו כשהן מלוכלכין. שמח המלך על הפקחין וכעס על הטפשיין. על הפקחין אמר: כלי ינתנו לאוצר והם ילכו לבתיהם לשלום, ועל הטפשיין אמר: כלי ינתנו לכבוסה והם יחבשו בבית האסורין.

אף הקב"ה על גופן של צדיקים אומר "יבוא שלום ינוחו על משכבותם הולך נכוהו" (יש' נז,ב). ועל נשמתן הוא אומר "והיתה נפש אדוני צרורה בצרור החיים" (שמו"א כה,כט). ועל גופן של רשעים הוא אומר "אין שלום אמר יי' לרשעים" (יש' מח,כב). ועל נשמתן הוא אומר "ואת נפש אויביך יקלענה בתוך כף הקלע".

And all your actions should be for the sake of Heaven - like Hillel. When Hillel left for a place, they would ask him, "where are you going?" - "I am going to do a mitzvah." - "What is the mitzvah?" - "I am going to the bathroom." - "And is this a mitzvah?" - "Yes, so that the body is not damaged." "where are you going?" - "I am going to the bathhouse." - "And is this a mitzvah?" - "Yes, in order to clean the body. Know that if someone is appointed to polish and clean the *statues (Icons)* of kings they are paid every year, and also respected among the great kings. *So we*, who are created in the image of God, how much more so?"

Shamai did not say so, instead, he said: We will do our duties with this body.

Let no one represent the likeness as one to a bodily form; for neither is God in human form (ἀνθρωπόμορφος), nor is the human body (σῶμα) God-like. No, it is in respect of the Mind, the sovereign element of the soul (τῆς ψυχῆς ἡγεμόνα νοῦν), that the word "image" is used; Philo. *On the Creation* (Trans. F. H. Colson)

וכל מעשיך יהיו לשום שמים - כהלל. כשהיה הלל יוצא למקום היו אומרים לו. לאיכן אתה הולך? לעשות מצוה אני הולך. מה מצוה הלל? לבית הכסא אני הולך. וכי מצוה היא זו? אמר לו הין, בשביל שלא יתקלקל הגוף. להיכן אתה הולך הלל? לעשות מצוה אני הולך. מה מצוה הלל? לבית המרחץ אני הולך. וכי מצוה זו? אמר להן הין, בשביל לנקות את הגוף. תדע לך שהיא כן. מה אם **איקוניות** העומדות בפלטיות של מלכים הממונה עליהן להיות שפן וממרקן, המלכות מעלה לו סלדיה בכל שנה ושנה, ולא עוד אלא שהוא מתגדל עם גדולי המלכות, **אנו** שנברינו בצלם ובדמות, שנאמר "כי בצלם אלהים עשה את האדם" (בראשית ט,ו), על אחת כמה וכמה.

שמאי לא היה אומר כן, אלא: נעשה חובותינו מן הגוף הזה.

one who vows that his wife may not derive benefit from marital relations with him, *Beit Shammai say*: up to two weeks. *Beit Hillel say*: one week.

Students who leave to learn Torah without their wives' permission may do so for up to thirty days, and laborers up to one week.

The set period stated in the Torah: Men of leisure - every day, laborers, twice a week, donkey drivers once a week, camel drivers once every thirty days, sailors once every six months. This is the statement of Rabbi Eliezer.

Mechilta de RI, Nezikin 5 (trans. Sh. Silverstein)

"[And if one strikes his father or his mother] he shall be put to death" (Deut. 21:15): by strangulation. [...] Rabbi says: like the death at the hands of Heaven. Just as death at the hands of Heaven – a death that leaves no sign, so, the death that is said here – a death that leaves no sign.

From here they said: The mitzvah of strangulation — "They would stand him in foliage until his hips and they placed hard scarves in soft ones and twisted it around his neck. One pulled from one side, and the other, from the other, until his soul expired" (Mishna Sanhedrin, 7:3). This is the order of "strangulation."

3. משנה כתובות ה,ו

המדיר את אשתו מתשמיש המיטה – בית שמי אומרין: שתי שבתות, ובית הלל אומרין: שבת אחת. התלמידים היוצאים לתלמוד תורה שלא ברשות. שלושים יום, והפועלין שבת אחת.

העונה האמורה בתורה: הטיילים בכל יום והפועלין שתיים בשבת והחמרים אחת בשבת והגמלים אחת לשלושים יום והספנים אחת לששה חדשים, דברי ר' לעזר.

4. מכילתא דר"י, נזיקין ה

"[ומכה אביו ואמו] מות יומת" (שמות כא,טו) – בחנק [...] רבי אומר: כמיתה שנאמרה בידי שמים: מה מיתה שנאמרה בידי שמים - מיתה שאין בה רושם, אף מיתה שנאמרה כאן - מיתה שאין בה רושם.

מיכן אמרו: מיתת חנק "משקעין אותו בזבל עד ארכובותיו. ונותנין סודרין קשין בתוך הרכין וכורך על צוארו. זה מושך להלן וזה מושך להלן עד שנפשו יוצאה" (משנה סנהדרין ז,ג). זה סדר החנק.

5. Testament of Reuven, chap. 5

For evil are women, my children; and since they have no power or strength over man, they use wiles by outward attractions, that they may draw him to themselves. And whom they cannot bewitch by outward attractions, him they overcome by craft. [...] and in their heart they plot against men; and by means of their adornment they deceive first their minds, and by the glance of the eye instill the poison, and then through the accomplished act they take them captive. [...] Flee, therefore, fornication (πορνεία), my children, and command your wives and your daughters, that they adorn not their heads and faces to deceive the mind: because every woman who useth these wiles hath been reserved for eternal punishment. For thus they allured the Watchers who were before the flood; [...] (Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, R. H. Charles, 1908)

Gen. 6:1-4, JPS.

בראשית ו:

When humankind began to increase on earth and daughters were born to them, the “*sons of God*” saw how pleasing the human women were and took wives from among those who delighted them. — יהוה said, “My breath shall not abide in humankind forever, since it too is flesh; let the days allowed them be one hundred and twenty years.”— It was then, and later too, that the Nephilim appeared on earth—when divine beings cohabited with the human women, who bore them offspring. Such were the heroes of old, the men of renown.

וַיְהִי כִּי-הִחַל הָאָדָם, לְרַב עַל-פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה; וּבָנֹת, יִלְדוּ לָהֶם. ב
וַיִּרְאוּ בְנֵי-הָאֱלֹהִים אֶת-בָּנוֹת הָאָדָם, כִּי טֹבֹת הֵנָּה; וַיִּקְחוּ לָהֶם
נָשִׁים, מִכָּל אֲשֶׁר בָּחָרוּ. ג וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה, לֹא-יִדּוֹן רוּחִי בָאָדָם
לְעֹלָם, בְּשַׁגְם, הוּא בָשָׂר; וְהָיוּ יָמָיו, מֵאָה וְעֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה. ד
הַנְּפִלִים הָיוּ בְּאֶרֶץ, בְּיָמֵם הַהֵם, וְגַם אַחֲרֵי-כֵן אֲשֶׁר יָבֹאוּ בְנֵי
הָאֱלֹהִים אֶל-בָּנוֹת הָאָדָם, וַיִּלְדוּ לָהֶם: הַמָּה הַגִּבּוֹרִים אֲשֶׁר
מְעֹלָם, אֲנָשֵׁי הַשָּׁמַיִם.

6. Philo. *Vita Contemplativa* (Trans. F. H. Colson)

The exposition of the sacred scriptures treats the inner meaning conveyed in allegory (ἐν ἀλληγορίαις), For to these people the whole law book seems to resemble a living creature with the literal ordinances for its body, and for its soul – the invisible mind laid up in its wording.

7. Romans 7

¹⁴ For we know that the law is spiritual (πνευματικός): but I am carnal (σάρκινός), sold under sin. ¹⁵ For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. [...] ¹⁷ Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. ¹⁸ For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh (τῆ σαρκί), dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. ²² For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: ²³ But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. ²⁴ O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body (ἐκ τοῦ σώματος) of this death?

8. מגילת ההודיות (1QH-a IX:21—23)

אלה ידעתי מבינתכה כיא גליתה אוזני לרזי פלא.

ואני יצר החמר ומגבל המים סוד הערוה ומקור הנדה כור העוון ומבנה החטאה רוח התועה ונעוה בלא בינה

These things I know

by the wisdom which comes from Thee,

for Thou hast unstopped my ears

to marvelous mysteries.

And yet I, a shape of clay

kneaded in water,

a ground of shame

and a source of pollution,

a melting-pot of wickedness

and an edifice of sin,

a straying and perverted spirit

of no understanding

(Geza Vermes' Dead Sea Scrolls in English, 1962)

9. בבלי נדרים לב ע"ב

ואמר רב אמי בר אבא: מאי דכתיב "עיר קטנה ואנשים בה מעט" (קהלת ט, יד), עיר קטנה – זה הגוף, ואנשים בה מעט – אלו אברים, ובא אליה מלך גדול וסבב אותה – זה יצר הרע, ובנה עליה מצודים גדולים – אלו עוונות, ומצא בה איש מסכן וחכם – זה יצר טוב, ומלט את העיר בחכמתו – זה תשובה ומעשים טובים, ואדם לא זכר את האיש המסכן – דבשעת יצר הרע לא מדכר ליה ליצר טוב.

And Rami bar Abba said: What is the meaning of that which is written: "There was a little city and few men in it, and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it. Now there was found in it a man poor and wise, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that same poor man" (Ecclesiastes 9:14–15)? "A little city," this is the body; "and few men in it," this is the limbs; "and there came a great king against it and besieged it," this is the evil yetzer; "and built great bulwarks against it," these are sins. "Now there was found in it a man poor and wise," this is the good inclination; "and he by his wisdom delivered the city," this is repentance and good deeds. "Yet no man remembered that same poor man" For when the evil inclination rules no one remembers the good inclination.

10. Epictetus. Discourses 4.1 *Fragments* (Trans. W. A. Oldfather)

How, then, is a *citadel destroyed*? Not by iron, nor by fire, but by judgements. For if we capture the citadel in the city, have we captured the citadel of fever also, have we captured that of pretty wenches? Also, in a word, the acropolis within us, and have we cast out the tyrants within us, whom we have lording it over each of us² every day [...] *we must yield up the paltry body*, its members, the faculties, property, reputation, offices, honours, children, brothers, friends—count all these things as alien to us.

10. בבלי ברכות סב ע"א

It was taught that Rabbi Akiva said: I once entered the bathroom after my teacher Rabbi Yehoshua, and I learned three things from observing his behavior: I learned that one should not defecate while facing east and west, but rather while facing north and south; I learned that one should not uncover himself while standing, but while sitting; and I learned that one should not wipe with his right hand, but with his left. Ben Azzai said to him: You were impertinent to your teacher to that extent? He replied: *It is Torah, and I must learn.*

Similarly, **Ben Azzai said: I once entered a bathroom after Rabbi Akiva, and I learned three things from observing his behavior: I learned that one should not defecate while facing east and west, but rather while facing north and south; I learned that one should not uncover himself while standing, but while sitting; and I learned that one should not wipe with his right hand, but with his left. Rabbi Yehuda said to him: You were impertinent to your teacher to that extent? He replied: *It is Torah, and I must learn.***

Rav Kahana entered and lay beneath Rav's bed. He heard Rav chatting and laughing with his wife, and seeing to his needs, i.e., having relations with her. Rav Kahana said to Rav: The mouth of Abba, Rav, is like one whom has never eaten a cooked dish, Rav said to him: Kahana, you are here? Leave, as this is an undesirable mode of behavior. Rav Kahana said to him: *It is Torah, and I must learn.*

תניא. אמר ר' עקיבא: פעם אחת נכנסתי אחרי ר' יהושע לבית הכסא ולמדתי ממנו שלשה דברים. למדתי שלא יפרע עד שישב. ולמדתי שלא יפנה מזרח ומערב אלא צפון ודרום. ולמדתי שלא יקנה בימין אלא בשמאל. אמר לו בן עזאי. עד כן העזת פניך ברבך! אמר לו: **תורה היא וללמוד אני צריך.**

ואף בן עזאי נכנס אחרי ר' עקיבא לבית הכסא. אמר: למדתי ממנו שלשה דברים. למדתי שלא יפרע עד שישב. ולמדתי שלא יפנה מזרח ומערב אלא צפון ודרום. ולמדתי שלא יקנה בימין אלא בשמאל. אמר לו ר' יהודה. עד כאן העזת פניך ברבך! אמר לו: **תורה היא וללמוד אני צריך.**

רב כהנא עאל בתריה דרב לדבר אחר ויתיב תותי פוריה. שמעיה דשח ושחק ועשה צרכיו. אמר: דמי פומיה דרב כמאן דלא טעים תבשילא. אמר ליה: כהנא הכא את? פוק מהכא, דלאו אורח ארעא! אמר ליה: **תורה היא וללמוד אני צריך.**