

Talmudic Sexual Ethics

R. Joseph said: 'Come and hear! A maiden aged three years and a day may be acquired in marriage by coition'.¹

Rab said: 'Pederasty with a child below nine years of age is not deemed as pederasty with a child above that'. Samuel said: 'Pederasty with a child below three years is not treated as with a child above that'.²

Raba said, 'It means this: When a grown-up man has intercourse with a little girl, it is nothing, for when the girl is less than this [that is, less than three-years-old] it is as if one puts the finger into the eye [tears come to the eye again and again, so does the virginity come back to the little girl under three years]'.³

It was taught: R. Simeon b. Yohai stated: 'A proselyte who is under the age of three years and one day is permitted to marry a priest'.⁴

Rabbi sent R. Romanos who conducted an enquiry and found in it the daughter of a proselyte [footnote 38: 'and was married to a priest'] who was under the age of three years and one day, and Rabbi declared her eligible to live with a priest [footnote 39: 'i.e. permitted her to continue to live with her husband'].⁵

What is meant by the Scriptural text, *This is now bones of my bones, and flesh of my flesh*. This teaches that Adam had intercourse with every beast and animal but found no satisfaction until he cohabited with Eve.⁶

'Which proves that unnatural intercourse does not cause a woman to be forbidden to marry a High Priest.'⁷

R. Shimi b. Hiyya stated: 'A woman who had intercourse with a beast is eligible to marry a priest'.⁸

When R. Dimi came he related: 'It once happened at Haitalu that while a young woman was sweeping the floor a village dog covered her from the rear [Footnote 25: 'A case of unnatural intercourse'.], and Rabbi permitted her to marry a priest'. Samuel said: 'Even a High Priest'.⁹

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¹ Sanhedrin, Folio 55b.

² Sanhedrin, Folio 54b. Footnote 24 says, 'Rab makes nine years the minimum; but if one committed sodomy with a child of lesser age, no guilt is incurred. Samuel makes three the minimum.' Footnote 25 says, 'At nine years a male attains sexual matureness.' Footnote 26 says, 'the sexual matureness of women, which is reached at the age of three.'

³ Kethuboth, Folio 11b. Bracketed notes are the original footnotes added to the text.

⁴ Yebamoth, Folio 60b.

⁵ Yebamoth, Folio 60b.

⁶ Yebamoth, Folio 63a.

⁷ Yebamoth, Folio 59a, Footnote 45.

⁸ Yebamoth, Folio 59b. Footnote 17: 'Even a High Priest. The result of such intercourse being regarded as a mere wound, and the opinion that does not regard an accidentally injured hymen as a disqualification does not regard such as intercourse either.'

⁹ Yebamoth, Folio 59b.