The Rabbi and the Werewolf

1. The Rabbi & His Wicked Wife [**Jewish, communal sphere**]
   - A. In [legendary] land of Uz there lived a pious, learned rabbi; **Job** vs. his wicked wife <PROVERB>
   - B. Reversal of fortune: accepts his inscrutable fate
   - C. Hero & his 50 disciples leaves home
   - D. Years of want, wandering
   - E. Finds magic ring [**agent**] while taking a leak
   - F. Reinstated, triumphant return
   - G. Succumbs to wife <DID NOT HEED KING SOLOMON'S WARNING>
   - H. Transformed into a werewolf, disappears
   - I. Rabbi's wife concocts elaborate lie; home transformed

2. The Werewolf & the King's Adviser [**Solitary, fairytale Sphere**]
   - A. Wolf wreaks havoc in the Bohemian Woods
   - B. King issues reward for his death
   - C. King's adviser sets out to kill him
   - D. Aided by Charcoal Burner [**donor**]; 3 attempts to kill the wolf
   - E. Adviser returns, marries princess, becomes king
   - F. The [Hebrew] message in the snow
   - G. The king steals the ring from the wicked wife she grieves its loss like a widow!
   - H. 1ST BANQUET: Wolf turns back into Man; returns home; gathers 50 pupils
   - I. turns wife into donkey; rabbi dissimulates
   - J. 2nd banquet: swears to build a shul—w/help from the donkey
   - K. Donkey's punishment; goes from fat to scraggy; copulates in public
   - L. 3rd banquet: reveals the whole story; refuses to forgive -irreversible
   - M. Moral of the story = "practical direction easily separable"

stages of reinstatement

MOTIF INDEX

1. Man into Beast: D110, D113.1, D113.1.1
2. The Magic Wishing Ring D 1076 (huge entry)
3. Never reveal a secret to your wife
   Medieval misogyny (cf. *Arabian Nights, Decameron, Canterbury tales*)

D861.5 Magic object stolen by hero's wife
D 1470.1.15 Magic wishing ring

GR 67. T5 : Stith Thompson Motif-Index of Folk Literature

Storytelling in its Traditional Settings

I. The Rabbi and the Werewolf (1602) – *Mayse-bukh*
- A. Structure & Meaning
- B. Genre & Meaning

*Max Lüthi, "Aspects of the *Märchen* and the Legend," in *Folklore Genres*, ed. Dan Ben-Amos (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 1981), pp. 17-33.

II. Seyfer, Mayse, Mayse-bukh: stories & storytelling in Ashkenaz
- A. Traditional settings
- B. The medium = message

Topics:

Fairy Tale + Legend = Novella
You call this "Jewish"?
Where's Waldo?

***

I. The Rabbi and the Werewolf (1602) – *Mayse-bukh*
- A. Structure & Meaning

Cast of Characters

Rabbi
Rebbetzin
50 disciples

Werewolf
Charcoal burner
King
King's adviser

Rabbi
Donkey

Tezchirp copy

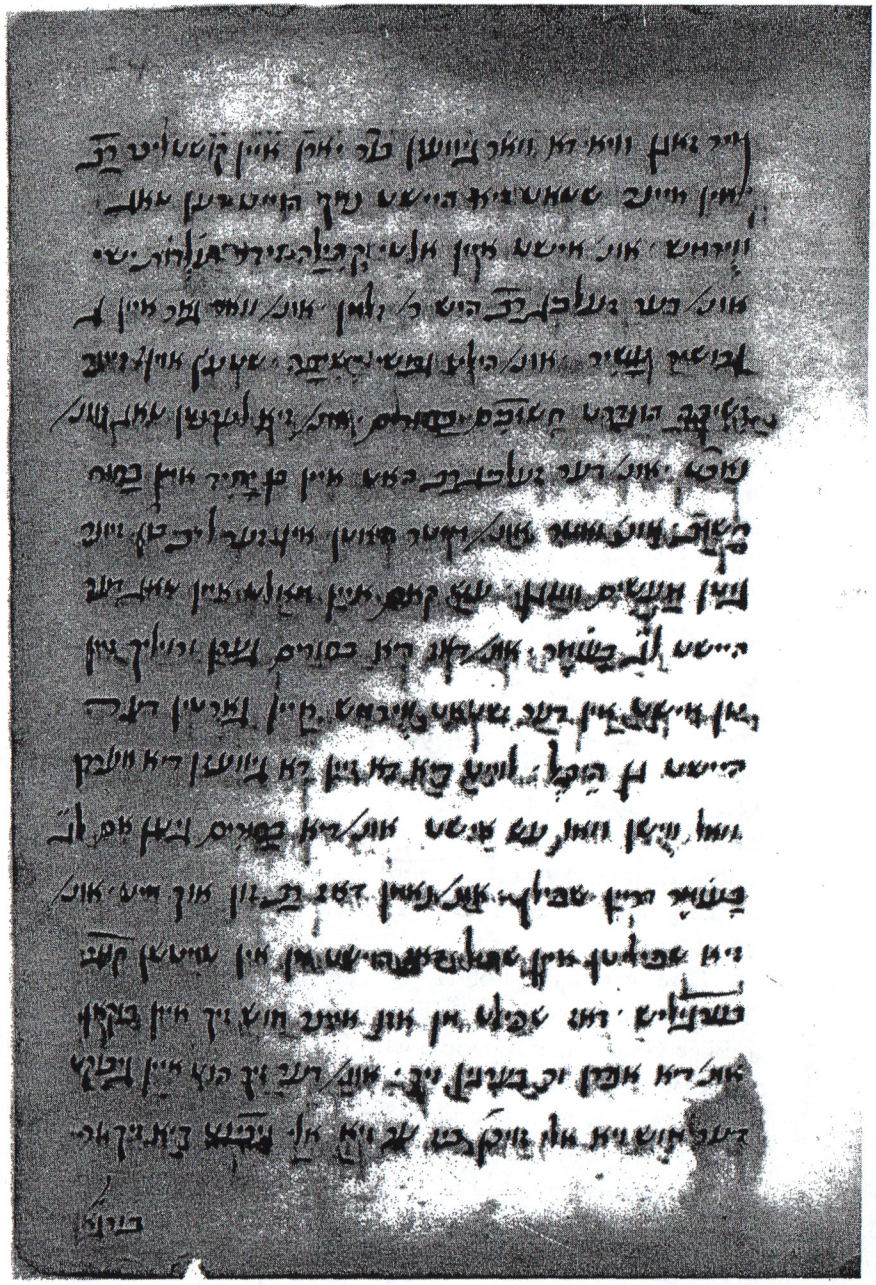
א. "מַעְשֵׂה בֹּון וֶוירמש"

מיר זאגן וויא דא וואר גיוועזן בֹּור יארן איין קושטליכר רַבּ אין איינר שטאט דיא היישט נאך הוייט דען טאג וֶוירמש, אונ׳ אישט איין אלטי קְהִילָה זידר תּוֹלְדוֹת ישי.[1] אונ׳ דער זעלביג רַבּ היש ר׳ זלמן, אונ׳ וואר גאר איין גרושיר עָשִׁיר, אונ׳ הילט גרושי יְשִׁיבָה, שטעץ אויף זיינר יְשִׁיבָה הונדרט חְשׁוּבִים בַּחוּרים, אונ׳ זיא לערנטן טאג אונ׳ נאכט. אונ׳ דער זעלביג רַב האט איין בן יָחִיד איין בָּחוּר חָשׁוּב, אונ׳ ואטר אונ׳ מוטר האטן אין זער ליב בֹּון זיינר גוטן מַעְשִׂים וועגן.

עש קאם איין מאלט איין טאג דער היישט לֹג בָּעוֹמֶר, אונ׳ דאז דיא בחורים גערן ורויליך זיין. נון אישט אין דער שטאט וֶוירמש איין גארטין דער היישט גן הֵיכָל, לויט דיא דא זיין דא גיוועזן דיא ווערדן וואל וֶוישן וואו עש אישט אונ׳ דיא בַּחוּרים גינגן אם לֹג בָּעוֹמֶר דריין שפילן, אונ׳ נאמן דאז רַב זון אוך מיט. אונ׳ זיא שפיליטן איין שפיל דאז הוישט מן אין טויטשן קוגי בערגיליש. דאז שפילט מן אזו: איינר מוש זיך איין בוקאן, אונ׳ דיא אנדרן ור בערגין זיך, אונ׳ דער זיך הוט איין גיבוקט, דער מוש זיא אלי זויכן, ביז ער זיא אלי גיבֵינט דיא זיך ור / בורגאן האבן. אונ׳ דיא בַּחוּרים שפילטן דאז שפיל אזו לאנג, ביז עש קאם אויף דש רַב זון, דש ער זיך מושט איין בוקן. אונ׳ דיא בַּחוּרים בֹּור בורגאן זיך אלי, אונ׳ ער הוב אן צו זויכן, אונ׳ ואנד דיא בַּחוּרים אלי, אן איינן דער היש אנשיל דען קונט ער ניט גיבינדין, אונ׳ זוכיט אין גאר לנג. נון וואר אין דען גארטין ויל בויימר, אונ׳ דעש רַב זון זויכט דען בָּחוּר הינטר אלן בויימר. ביז ער קאם אין איין הולן בויים, דא זאך ער וויא זיך

24 ע״ב

1 מן־הסתם הכוונה לדויד המלך, שכן על־פי המסורת המקומית החלה התיישבות היהודים בוורמס עוד בימי בית ראשון. ראה: **מעשה נסים**, סיפור א.



"מעשה מוורמס", כ״י F.12.45 טריניטי קולג׳, דף 24 ע״א
(המידות הוקטנו ל־72% מן המקור)

* Local tradition. Worms Jew. community dates back to 1st Temple.

ANONYMOUS

The Man Who Married a She-Demon

A Tale of the Town of Worms

I am grateful to Erika Timm for showing me her as yet unpublished transliteration of this text into the Latin alphabet (Trier system). A transliteration into the modern Hebrew alphabet can be found in Sara Zfatman, The Marriage of a Mortal Man and a She-Demon *(Jerusalem: Akedom Press, 1987). According to Zfatman, the story was penned in Northern Italy after 1514 (MS 12.45 Trinity College, Cambridge, fols.2y4r-31r).*

Years ago there lived a wonderful rabbi in the German town that is still known today as Worms. It has an old Jewish community that goes back to the generations of Jesse.* The rabbi, whose name was Zalmen, was a very rich man, and he headed a large yeshiva attended by a hundred distinguished students, who pored over the holy books day and night. Rabbi Zalmen had an only son, likewise distinguished, who also studied at the yeshiva. His father and his mother loved him very much for his good deeds.

Time Place

Now when the holiday of Lag-Baomer rolls around, the students like to have a good time. The town of Worms has a public park called Jubilee Gardens, and people who have been here must know where it is. On that holiday the yeshiva students, taking along the rabbi's son, went to the park, where they played a game called hide-and-seek in our language. One boy has to lean over [and cover his eyes] while the rest conceal themselves, and he then has to look for the others until he finds them all. Finally, the rabbi's son was "it," and he had to lean over. The boys all hid, and then the rabbi's son began his search. Eventually he found everybody except for a boy named Anshel, though he kept looking and looking.

Now the park was densely wooded, and the rabbi's son hunted for Anshel beyond the trees. Soon he came to a hollow tree, and when he

saw an arm sticking out, he figured it must belong to Anshel, who was evidently hidden inside the tree. The rabbi's son shouted: "Anshel, c'mon out, I've found you." But he saw that the hand did not retreat. So the rabbi's son removed a gold ring from his finger, slipped it over a finger on the hand looming from the tree, and said: "Since you won't come out of the tree, I hereby wed thee." He played his prank because he thought that the hand belonged to his friend Anshel. No!

As soon as the rabbi's son married the hand, it vanished with the ring. Upon seeing this, he was alarmed, for the ring was very valuable, and he was afraid of going home to his father and mother without it. When he rejoined his fellow students, he found his friend among them and he said: "Dear Anshel, please give me my ring."

Anshel replied: "I haven't seen your ring, I don't know anything about it."

The rabbi's son retorted: "I slipped it over your finger when you were hiding in that tree."

"All of our fellow students can testify that I wasn't in that tree. I hid somewhere else."

And so the ring was lost.

The boys all went back and told the rabbi the whole story, and upon hearing it, he said: "Go and bring my son home and tell him not to worry. I'm going to give him a lovelier ring." So they went to get him and brought him home. And the ring was forgotten.

A long time later, when the rabbi's son became an adult, a wonderful person, his learning was renowned far and wide. Now a leader of the Jewish community in the town of Speier sent Rabbi Zalmen an inquiry: Would the rabbi let his son marry the leader's daughter? He had heard about how good a student the boy was, and that was why he desired him for a son-in-law. The man was willing to provide a large dowry. And so the wedding took place, a joyous celebration. There were many guests at the ceremony as is customary among wealthy people, and they had a marvelous time. After the nuptials and the banquet, the groom and bride were led very festively to the bedchamber, and the door was then shut according to tradition. 1st bride

No sooner did the groom lie down than he fell asleep. The bride, however, lay awake. And as she lay there, she saw someone coming to the bed: a beautiful woman dressed in gold and silk. The woman said to the bride: "You brazen hussy, why have you lain down with my husband, who married me in a tree?"

The bride retorted: "That's not true! He's my husband! I married him today, so get away from here!"

Upon hearing this, the woman strangled the bride and left her corpse next to the groom.

Past midnight, the groom awakened and he wanted to talk to his bride as is the custom. But then he saw her lying next to him dead. Terrified, he got to his feet and woke the people up. They hurried into the chamber, where they found the bride dead, and they asked him how it happened. He answered: "Unfortunately I was asleep, I don't know."

The bride was buried, and their joy turned into grief. And before everyone went home, there were many people who said that the groom had killed the bride.

So for a good three years the rabbi's son was unable to find a bride despite his great wealth and vast learning, for no father wanted to risk his daughter's life.

2nd bride

Eventually, however, a rich community leader, who was related to the boy, told the Rabbi of Worms: "I'll risk my daughter's life since you're my own flesh and blood. And if a terrible surprise occurred once, I hope it won't happen again."

The marriage took place, and they became man and wife. After taking them to bed, the people left, shutting the door behind them.

Once again, the groom fell asleep, while the frightened bride lay awake. And as she lay there, the beautiful woman dressed in gold came again and said to the bride: "You brazen hussy, I've already killed one girl who lay with my husband, but you weren't warned!" And she killed this bride too.

When the groom awoke, he again found his bride dead. He screamed so loudly that all the people came running. He told them: "My poor bride is dead!"

The bride was buried, and the wedding guests all left in profound grief.

3rd bride

For some ten years the groom stayed put, unable to find another bride. And then he reached thirty.

Time

Dialogue connotative

Now once, on the Sabbath of Repentance [between the start of the new year and the Day of Atonement], the rabbi was sitting with his wife, the rebbetsin, and the rabbi said: "Dear wife, what should we do? We have an only son and great wealth, and if he stays unmarried, all memory of us will be wiped from the face of the earth and our wealth will be divided among strangers. But what father will allow his daughter to marry our son?" And they shared their anguish and misery with each other.

The rebbetsin then said: "Dear husband, I don't think I'm mistaken: No community leader will ever allow his daughter to marry our son.

However, I know of a poor widow from an excellent family—her husband was a rabbi. She has an only child, a beautiful daughter, and they live in a poorhouse. Who knows, my dear husband? What if I go to her and offer to have our son marry the girl? Perhaps she'll be rewarded for her piety: God will see her poverty and allow her to live."

The rabbi then said to his wife: "You're right! Go and talk to the poor widow now and ask her if she'd like to have her daughter marry our son."

The boy's mother, the wealthy rebbetsin, then promptly went and knocked on the door of the poorhouse. The poor rebbetsin, upon seeing the rich one knocking, hurried over to her daughter and said: "Dear daughter, why is the wealthy rebbetsin knocking on our door?"

The daughter replied: "Dear mother, perhaps she's bringing us some food."

So they opened the door and welcomed her very courteously. They invited her to sit and they said: "Dear rebbetsin, why are you honoring us with your visit?"

The wealthy rebbetsin answered: "Let me explain why I've come here. You've probably heard what's happened to our son twice—God help us! So if it's at all possible, I'd like your daughter to marry our son. Who knows? Perhaps she'll be rewarded for her piety and will survive. It will make up for your and your daughter's poverty."

The poor rebbetsin then spoke to her daughter: "Dear daughter, you've heard what the wealthy rebbetsin has said. It's up to you, I won't force you. But I can't supply a dowry. So if you don't accept this offer, you'll remain an old maid."

Her daughter replied: "Dear mother, we're poor, that's true, and a poor person is like a dead man. I'll do it so long as the marriage contract stipulates that if I die, the rabbi will provide for you in his home for the rest of your days. If he agrees, then I'll risk my life and marry his son."

And so another wedding was set to take place.

The wealthy rebbetsin ordered lovely clothes for the poor girl. And when she put them on, she looked so beautiful that no one recognized her when she went about, and she no longer had to go begging. Now that she was a bit adorned and was lovely anyway, everyone talked about her beauty.

Few guests were invited to the wedding, which was not especially joyous, because people said: "If she stays alive, then we'll really celebrate!" They carried out the ceremony and, after the banquet, they took the groom and bride to their bed, as is the custom. The people then left and shut the door behind them. The groom fell asleep while the frightened bride lay awake.

Nadrow 66

At last, when midnight came, the bride saw a beautiful woman in splendid clothes and with golden hair approaching the bed. The woman said to the bride: "You brazen hussy, I've already killed two girls who lay with my husband! You've heard about that and yet you're risking your own life! So I'm going to kill you too!"

Upon hearing that, the bride was terrified and she said: "Dear mother, I've lived in the poorhouse all my life and I've never heard that he lost two wives. So, dear mother, he's your bridegroom. I'll get up and I'll let you lie with him."

When the beautiful she-demon heard that, she said: "Dear child, you must be rewarded for your piety, for speaking to me so piously. This is what you must do to make him your husband: He will vanish from your sight for one hour every day and come to me. So don't say a word to anyone if you value your life and if God is dear to you!"

The bride answered that no one would know but the Good Lord. And the she-demon vanished from her sight.

Less than half an hour later, the husband awoke, terrified, and quickly reached for his bride. He was overjoyed to see that she was still alive. Since it was almost dawn, the people came into the chamber and found the groom and bride still lying together. The groom's parents and the bride's mother were ecstatic, and they all had a wonderful time at the celebration. The poor girl was wealthy now, everything belonged to her. She loved her husband, and he loved her, for she was very modest.

Eventually the couple had three sons.

Now women always want to know a lot more than is useful for them. The wife lost her husband for an hour each day and she didn't know what became of him. She saw him go into the bedchamber, where he would disappear. The good woman saw her husband vanish and she thought to herself: "I'm willing to risk my neck to find out where he goes. I'm going to follow him, even if I have to risk my neck."

Noting where he had left his keys, she took them and unlocked the door. But her husband wasn't in the chamber. She searched every nook and cranny. At last, underneath the bed she found a large rock. As she spotted it, the rock moved from its place. She now saw a large hole with a ladder descending inside it. The wife thought to herself: "Dear God, should I go down? I'm sure my husband is down there."

After pondering for a long time, she finally climbed down the ladder and found herself in a large field. And in the large field she saw an elegant mansion. She entered the mansion and found an open door. She entered the room and found a table set with fine dishes and cutlery. The room had a second open door leading to another room, which she entered. And there she found her husband lying in a silken bed with the beautiful demon, their bodies enlaced. The demon lay in front, with her golden hair hanging down to the floor. Upon seeing this, the wife felt it was a shame for the golden hair to be hanging down to the floor like that. So she took a chair, put it next to the bed, and placed the hair upon it.

Then she went back the way she had come. She rolled the rock on top of the hole, locked the door, and left the keys where she had found them. And she didn't breathe a single word to anyone in the entire house.

When the demon woke up, she began screaming, loudly and bitterly, and she said: "Dear husband, I'm here and I have to die. When your dear wife was here, she touched my feet. If someone touches me, I have to die. Therefore, dear husband, since she did it out of piety, it was good for her that my beautiful hair was hanging down to the floor. You have to be rewarded. Well, dear husband, I've got the gold ring that you gave me when you married me. Take it back and go home through the hole. The hole is going to disappear, and we will be divorced forever."

He did what she told him to do and he returned home. And the hole disappeared. He also remained at home, and he said nothing to his wife, nor did his wife say anything to him.

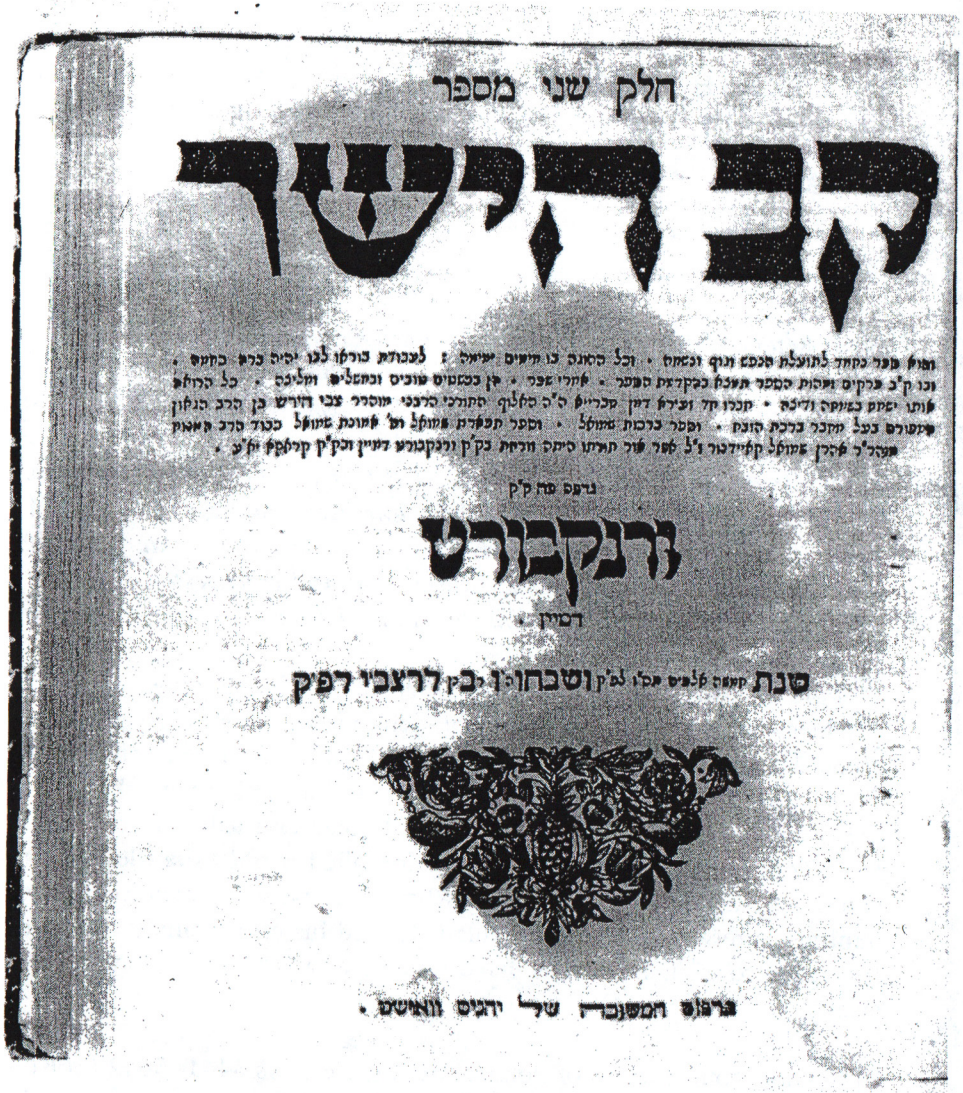
After staying at home for three days, he gave a large banquet for the entire Jewish community. Neither his wife nor his parents knew why. The whole community ate and drank and were going to say their blessings. Thereupon the rabbi's son began: "Dear guests, before saying the blessing, let me explain why I'm giving this banquet. Dear father, here is the ring that I lost in a tree. At that time I married a demon because I thought it was the boy I was looking for. The she-demon murdered my first two brides, but now my dear wife has released me from her." And he told the entire story. And then his wife told her story and described what had happened to her, from the wedding night until his release.

And that was how the poor girl became rich and respected through her great piety and modesty.

That is why everyone should follow her example.

And that is the end of the tale of Worms.

Moral addressed to women
but what is its wider applicability?



חלק שני מספר

קב הישר

ומה שפר נתחד לתועלת הנפש ונוף ונשמה • וכל הסוגה בו חשוים ישיאל : לעבודת בורקו לבו יהיה כרוא כחוש •
וכו ק"ב ערכים ומהות הספר תעכת כבקדמת הפתר • אחרי אבר • אין כמעטים עוכים ומחלים ומליצה • כל החלק
אותו ישתע בשמעה ודיבה • תכנו חק ועדיל דמן מכריעל ה"ב הלוף תתולי הרבני מוסרי צבי הירש בן הרב הגאון
מעשרים בעל מחבר ברכת הזבח • ופסר ברכות שמואל • והפסר תפארת שמואל וה' אמונת שמואל ככוד הרב האמת
מעה"ר אהרן שמואל קלאיידער ז"ל אבר שור תאתו הקיה ורחת בק"ק ורנקבורט דמיין הק"ק קלאקא יל"ע •

נדפס פה ק"ק

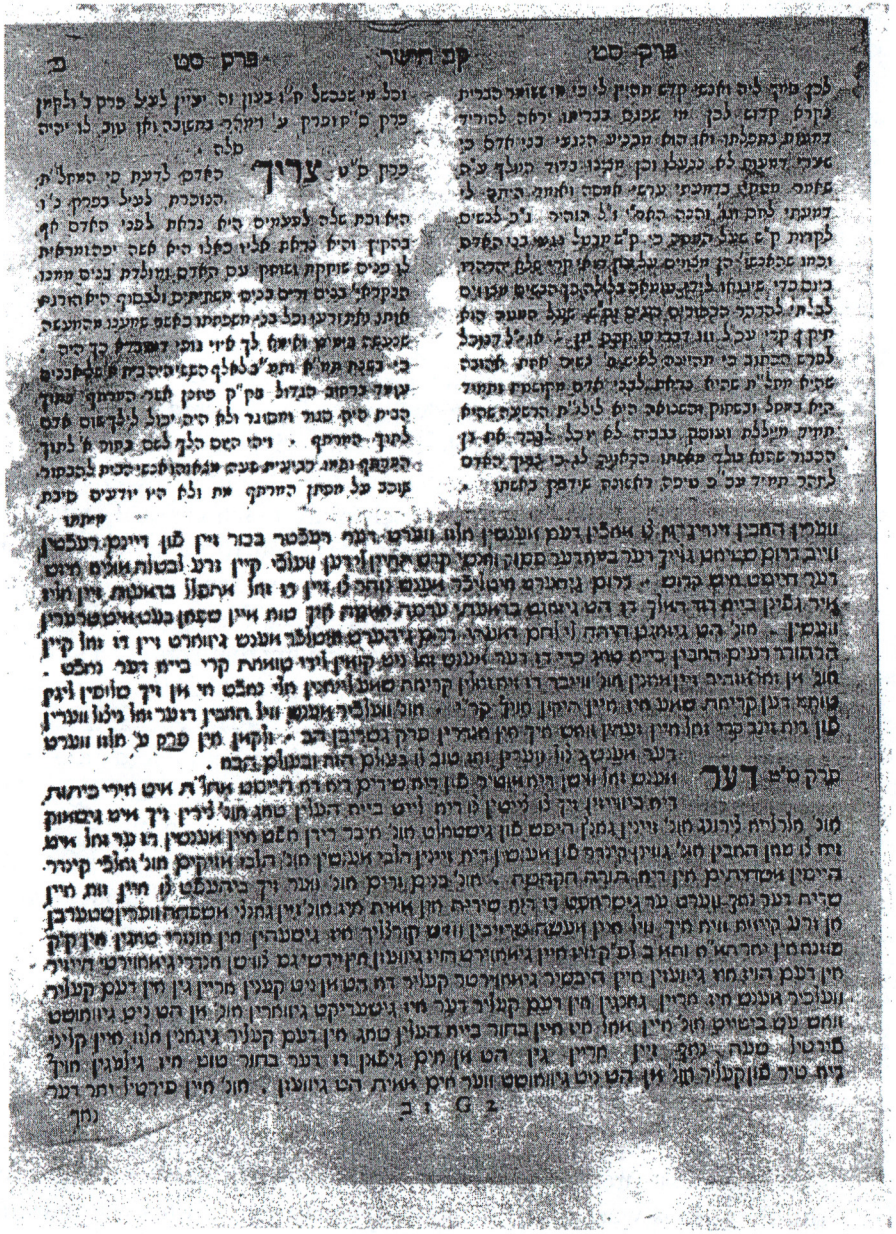
פראנקפורט

דסיין •

שנת קשה אלפים אלו לפ"ק ושבחו יבא לרצני רפ"ק

ברוש המשגחים של יהגים וואישש •

ס' קב הישר, פראנקפורט על נהר מיין תס"ה–תס"ו,
חלק שני, עמוד השער



"מעשה פחנא", ס' קב הישר, פראנקפורט על נהר מיין תס"ה–תס"ו,
חלק שני, פרק סט

ter days, you went around the streets barefoot and half-naked, and it didn't harm you at all. But now, ever since I left you, you've been bedridden with a tormenting illness. If you remove the amulets and talismans, I'll enter your body immediately, you'll recover completely and you'll never feel pain again!"

The sick boy continued: "I asked the dybbuk: 'Why won't you keep your word? After all, we pray for you, we're studying the Talmud according to the letters of your name, we say Kaddish for you. Don't our prayers have any power? Haven't they accomplished anything for you?' And he replied:

"'It's true that your praying, your studying, your Kaddish repetitions have made a deep impact. They've worked partly and they've cut my sufferings in half because the celestial court originally condemned me to suffer four times every day. But now, because of your efforts, I suffer only twice a day, and the torments themselves are much easier. I realize that through your prayers and Kaddish repetitions, my torments will soon stop altogether. However, the celestial court also sentenced me to spend a whole seventy years floating in the Valley of Darkness behind the Mountains of Darkness. And your prayers can't nullify that verdict. Thirty years have already worn by, but that leaves forty more, which I'll have to spend among demons and devils, under the control of Ashmedai and Lilith. I'll have to look at their horrible faces, dance their demonic dances, never have any rest or peace, and I'll be driven and driven day and night. How can I endure all those things? That's why I've come to plead with you: Take pity on me and redeem me from their hands! Let me back into your sacred body. But this time you'll let me in voluntarily, of your own free will. And I beg you to promise me that you'll never allow anyone to drive me out of your body.'"

The trembling boy then reported that the dybbuk had held out his right hand. Overwhelmed by a sudden terror, the boy had started shouting: "Help! Help! Hear, Oh Israel!" The moment the dybbuk heard those words, he vanished.

From that night on the boy started regaining his strength. The dybbuk never appeared to him again. The boy fully recovered right after the thirty days were over. He soon got married, and his wife bore him sons and daughters. And he named his first boy Shmúel in memory of Shmúel, son of Rivke.

Sháya lies buried in the old cemetery of Khmélnik. The cemetery keeper showed us his grave. By now the headstone was half-buried in the ground, and its inscription was totally rubbed off and washed off.

Makhlat

TSVI HIRSH KAIDANOVER

A Tale of Poznan

From: Sefer Qav ha-Yashar, *vol. 2, chap. 69 (Frankfurt-am-Main, Germany: 1706). A facsimile of the manuscript with a transliteration into the modern Hebrew alphabet can be found in Sara Zfatman,* The Marriage of a Mortal Man and a She-Demon *(Jerusalem: Akedom Press, 1987).*

While in the majority of cases the victim of a possession is female, the flip side occurs when a she-demon seduces and even marries a mortal man. The underlying distress may partly derive from anxiety about Jews who leave the Jewish fold to marry Christians. This and other sexual transgressions are certainly attacked in this story and in the next.

People should know that the mother of all the demons is named Makhles. She has whole gangs of she-demons, who appear to people in broad daylight. They adorn themselves with all kinds of gems and jewels and are very beautiful. Often they talk a man into being with them and they bear his children, who are thus half-human and half-demon. In the Holy Torah such illegitimate offspring are called *mashkhísim* (destroyers, demons of destruction). The man who mates with a female demon is punished afterwards, when she kills him, and his entire family dies out. In regard to such matters, I have written down a story about recent events.

In the holy congregation of Poznan, during the years 5441–5442 (1681–1682), there was a brick house among other brick houses in the Jewish ~~district~~ street. Inside the house there was a lovely brick cellar, but no one could enter it, for whoever did so was harmed, and no one knew why. Once, a boy entered the cellar in broad daylight. A mere fifteen minutes later they found his corpse by the cellar door, but they couldn't tell who had killed him.

Three months later, the *khitsónim* (dissenters), the children of the half-demons, the *mashkhísim,* moved into the porch of the house. Any

food placed on the stove or in the oven became full of ashes and filth; it was completely inedible. Several weeks later, the *mashkhisim* moved into the rooms. There they grabbed the tin utensils out from the cupboard and threw them down and they took the lamps and candlesticks and hurled them to the floor. When the tenants sat down to eat, the invaders tossed the food and the tablecloth on the floor, but they broke no dishes and hurt no one. However, the human occupants couldn't bear it, they had no peace day or night, and finally they all had to move out.

There was great lamenting; everyone was deeply upset that such a lovely house should be so dreadfully haunted in such a holy congregation as that of Poznan. The community leaders held council and decided to send for some renowned Gentile wizards and Christian priests, but these men failed to accomplish anything.

Next the Jews sent for a baal-shem (wonder worker) named Yoyl. He was very pious and very skillful, and the instant he arrived in Poznan he implored the demons to leave the house, for their true home was either a forest or a desert or a swamp, and no demon has the power to live among human beings. The demons replied that they had a claim to seniority in the ownerless house and they called for a judicial procedure. They would appeal to a Jewish court and prove the merits of their case. The Poznan judges and Yoyl the baal-shem entered the house and sat down in one of the rooms. There the judges heard the arguments made by the demons, who, however, remained invisible.

The demons maintained that the house in question had once been inhabited by a Jewish goldsmith who lived with a she-demon. "They had several children, and we are those children. The goldsmith loved our mother, the she-demon, he could never leave her for even an hour—they were virtually joined at the hip, and he did whatever she wanted him to do. Even when the goldsmith was in synagogue, he had to take off his prayer shawl and prayer thongs and hurry over to her. As for his real wife, he lived badly with her. She must have sensed that there was a good reason for his failure to perform his conjugal duties.

"One evening, on the first night of Passover, the goldsmith was at his seder. And when it was time to eat the afikomon [the piece of matzoh hidden for the children to steal and hold ransom], the goldsmith threw off his white linen smock and went to the ~~demon's~~ house, where he spent a long time.

"His legal wife also left the Passover feast and followed him in order to find out what was keeping her husband at that house. When she peered through a crack in the door, she saw a beautiful room with many candles, gold and silver vessels, and a bed decorated with gold. A naked woman was in the bed, she was very lovely, and the husband was lying

with the woman, who was actually a demon. The wife was scared, too scared to say anything. So she went back home and waited until her husband returned from the demon's house.

"The wife held her tongue all that night and did nothing in regard to her husband, for she had seen that he was involved with a demoness. In the morning, she went to the town rabbi, who was known as Gaon Sheftl, the eldest of the Tribe of Levi, and she complained to him that her husband—God help us!—had been seduced by a she-demon.

"The rabbi sent for the goldsmith and ordered him to tell the truth on pain of excommunication. The goldsmith promptly confessed that a female demon had come and clung to him when he had been washing himself in a river. The rabbi then wrote some words for an amulet, which would drive the she-demon away.

"When the goldsmith lay dying, the she-demon came to him with the children he had fathered and she began to weep because he was leaving her and their offspring. She fell upon him and kissed him and coaxed him to allow her to live somewhere. The goldsmith promised to give her a cellar in his house, and then he died.

"Now for several years a war was fought in Poland, from 5408 to 5418 (1648–1658). The goldsmith died and so did all his legitimate children and all his heirs, and now there is no one to inherit the house."

The demons argued that they should inherit it.

To which the people who lived in the house replied: "We bought the house from the goldsmith's legitimate children, and you are half-demons and not part of the people of Israel." They then added that the she-demon had forced herself upon the goldsmith and compelled him to live with her.

The court decreed that the half-demons had no claim on the house, for their home was in the desert and not in a human dwelling. After this judgment was handed down, Yoyl, the baal-shem, implored the half-demons to leave the house and the cellar, and he sent them to the wild forest.

This story shows what happens to a human being who gets involved with the followers of Lilith or Makhles, the mothers of the demons: Such a man is extirpated together with his family, and they all perish. Every man should therefore be warned against going with harlots, for sometimes a she-demon appears in the guise of a harlot and mates with a man, causing him and his family to perish. Each man must therefore take care to mate only with his wife and not waste his seed. And if, willingly or not, he does waste his seed, he should immediately do penance.