

# Equating/Overturning: Sex, Money, That Which is Not-Fit & Kiddushin

Virginia Avniel Spatz, songeveryday.org. 7/20/22. Svara Summer Bet Midrash.  
Text version follows.

בכספא **שויוה** בביאה  
בעילת זנות

זביניה זביני

Could you imagine a world of women only  
the interviewer asked. Can you imagine

תלמוד לומר לרצונו

a world where women are absent (He believed  
he was joking). Yet I have to imagine

כופין אותו עד שיאמר רוצה אני

at one and the same moment, both. Because  
I live in both. Can you imagine

קדושיו קדושין

the interviewer asked, a world of men?  
(He thought he was joking). If so then,

שויוה רבנן לבעילתו בעילת זנות

a world where men are absent?  
Absently, wearily, I answered: Yes.

גמר ומקנה

ת  
ל

י  
ו

ה  
ו

כופין  
אותו

אונסיה

מצורה

שלא כהוגן

ואפקעינהו

סברא

–Adrienne Rich, from “Natural Resources” 1977

--בבא בתרא מז-מח--

Image/Text Description:

Text is set in seven basic parts, six in Hebrew/Aramaic and one in English, plus citation:

At the top and bottom are two configurations.

1) The top reads שויוה surrounded by the three expressions: -- בעילת זנות -- בכספא -- בביאה -- שויוה is in a lightly shaded green box

2) The bottom reads שלא כהוגן and then ואפקעינהו in gradually darkening green/gradient boxes

3) On the outer edges, placed to give the impression of force, are three magenta boxes reading:

(vertical): תליוהו;

(slanted atop): כופין אות;

(bottom, slanted inward): אונסיה;

4) Centered at top and bottom, just inside #1 and #2, is bold purple text reading:

(top) גמר ומקנה זביניה זביני and (bottom) גמר ומקנה

Main text, at the center intersperses two sources

5) Talmud text (dark/black in blue boxes) reads:

תלמוד לומר לרצונו  
כופין אותו עד שיאמר רוצה אני  
קדושיו קדושין  
שויוה רבנן לבעילתו בעילת זנות

6) Quotation from a poem by Adrienne Rich (lighter/grey text in blue-grey box) reads:

*Could you imagine a world of women only*  
the interviewer asked. *Can you imagine*

a world where women are absent (He believed  
he was joking). Yet I have to imagine

at one and the same moment, both. Because  
I live in both. *Can you imagine*

the interviewer asked, *a world of men?*  
(He thought he was joking). *If so then,*

a world where men are absent?  
Absently, wearily, I answered: Yes.

7) near the bottom are two more boxes reading מצוה and סברא

Final boxes list citations:

Adrienne Rich, from "National Resources," 1977

Baba Batra 47-48 (בבא בתרא מז-מח)

At the heart of the whole thing is a discussion of *mitzvah* and *svara* around the word '*hacham*' which can be about recognition:

On the one hand, the Talmud doesn't recognize the woman as fully human: she barely registers as different from the cow -- *kapparah* -- about which the man's obligations are debated. The man's obligations are not even **to the woman as a fellow human** but about her, as object.

On the other hand, the passage offers, or we can find in it, a logical progression recognizing the institution or system under discussion as based on force and acknowledging potential harm in force.

For every selling-person,  
**were there no force,**  
there would be no sale  
Even still: sales are sales

כל דמזבין איניש  
**אי לאו דאניס**  
לא הוה מזבין  
ואפילו הכי זביניה זביני

Perhaps it's different there  
-- where it's [understood as] commanded to listen to words of recognition --

But, real talk:  
**force is behind**  
acquiescence and acquisition

ודלמא שאני התם  
דברי חכמים דמצוה לשמוע

אלא סברא הוא  
**אגב אונסיה**  
גמר ומקנה

The rabbis equate  
**mastery over** another  
[albeit in guise of respectable relations, within institutions  
purportedly upholding decency between people]  
= whoring  
[not the least respectable or promoting of decency]

שויוה רבנן  
**לבעילתו**  
  
בעילת זנות

So, overturning the kiddushin of someone who does things un-fit is, at heart, recognition that the force/tools of the system should be used to intervene in acts of indecent force.