

CURRENT TALMUD PASSAGE

Posted April 12, 2007, by Rabbi Judy Abrams. Please refer to Maqom's home page for information about previous passages.

BH

JERUSALEM OR DIVORCE

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The very last mishnah in tractate Ketubot ends on a symbolic note about the marriage between the Jewish people and the land of Israel.

A man can compel everyone in his household to go up to the land of Israel but no one can be compelled to leave it.

Everyone in a household can be compelled to go up to Jerusalem but no one may be compelled to leave it. This applies to both men and women. (Mishnah on B. Ketubot 110b)

The gemara goes on to outline how reluctant spouses can be divorced without financial detriment if their spouses do not allow them to make aliyah. A man can divorce his wife without paying her her ketubah (i.e., her divorce settlement) and a woman can divorce her husband and receive her ketubah.

Discussion Questions:

1. This is just one example of how the sages are extraordinarily protective of women's rights. A married woman who wants to go to Israel, or to Jerusalem from someplace else in Israel cannot be prevented by her spouse from doing so. Are you surprised at how protective of a woman's rights the sages are?
2. Why do you think the sages wanted to foster aliyah to Israel and, specifically, Jerusalem? Should such rules apply today?
3. What might happen, do you imagine, when all those newly single adults met up in Jerusalem?