



Judges 19

שִׁפְטִים יט

וַיְהִי בַיָּמִים הֵּם וּמִלֶּדֶד אֵין בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל
וַיְהִי | אִישׁ לְוִי גָר בִּירְכַתֵי הַר-אֶפְרַיִם
וַיִּקַּח-לוֹ אִשָּׁה פִלְגֶשׁ מִבֵּית לָחֶם יְהוּדָה:

וַיְהִי בַיָּמִים הֵהֵם וּמְלֹךְ אֵין בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל
 וַיְהִי | אִישׁ לְוִי אֵישׁ לְוִי גָר בִּירְכַתֵּי הַר־אֶפְרַיִם
 וַיִּקַּח־לוֹ אִשָּׁה פִילָגֶשׁ מִבֵּית לָחֶם יְהוּדָה:

[Anchor]

a man, a Levite. Conscious contrast (narrative inversion) to the preceding story of “a young Levite” (18:3). This one resides in the north and acquires a concubine from the south, a partial antithesis of Micah’s “priest” (17:7–12).

Judges 17:7-8

וַיְהִי־נַעַר מִבֵּית לָחֶם יְהוּדָה מִמְשַׁפַּחַת יְהוּדָה וְהוּא לְוִי וְהוּא גֵר־שָׂם:
 וַיֵּלֶךְ הָאִישׁ מִהָעִיר מִבֵּית לָחֶם יְהוּדָה לְגֹר בְּאֶשֶׁר יִמְצָא
 וַיָּבֵא הַר־אֶפְרַיִם עַד־בֵּית מִיכָה לַעֲשׂוֹת דְּרָכָו:

Judges 18:3

הָמָּה עַם־בֵּית מִיכָה וְהָמָּה הִפְּרִיּוּ אֶת־קוֹל הַנַּעַר הַלְוִי
 וַיִּסְּרוּ שָׂם וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ מִי־הֵבִיאָךְ הַלֵּם וּמָה־אַתָּה עֹשֶׂה בְּזֶה וּמָה־לְךָ פֶּה:

וַיְהִי בַיָּמִים הֵּם וּמִלֶּדֶד אִין בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל
 וַיְהִי | אִישׁ לְוִי גָר בִּירְכַתִּי הַרְאֲפָרִים
 וַיִּקַּח-לוֹ אִשָּׁה פִלְגֶשֶׁת מִבֵּית לָחֶם יְהוּדָה:

[Anchor]

a man, a Levite. Conscious contrast (narrative inversion) to the preceding story of “a young Levite” (18:3). This one resides in **the north** and acquires a concubine from **the south**, a partial antithesis of Micah’s “priest” (17:7–12).

Judges 17:7-8

וַיְהִי-נָעַר מִבֵּית לָחֶם יְהוּדָה מִמְשַׁפַּחַת יְהוּדָה וְהוּא לְוִי וְהוּא גֵר-שָׂם:
 וַיֵּלֶד הָאִישׁ מִהָעִיר מִבֵּית לָחֶם יְהוּדָה לְגֹר בְּאֲשֶׁר יִמְצָא
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Judges 18:3

הָמָּה עַם-בֵּית מִיכָה וְהָמָּה הִפְּרִו אֶת-קוֹל הַנָּעַר הַלְוִי
 וַיִּסְוֶרוּ שָׂם וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ מִי־הֵבִיאָךְ הַלֵּם וּמָה-אַתָּה עֹשֶׂה בְּזֶה וּמָה-לָּךְ פֶּה:

וּתְזַנֶּה עָלָיו פִּילְגֶשֶׁת׃
וּתְלַךְ מֵאֵתוֹ אֶל-בַּיִת אָבִיהָ אֶל-בַּיִת לֶחֶם יְהוּדָה
וּתְהִי-שָׁם יָמִים אַרְבַּעַה חֳדָשִׁים׃

וַתִּזְנֶה עָלָיו פִּילְגָשׁוֹ
 וַתִּלְךְ מֵאִתּוֹ אֶל-בֵּית אָבִיהָ אֶל-בֵּית לֶחֶם יְהוּדָה
 וַתְּהִי-שָׁם יָמִים אַרְבַּעַה חֳדָשִׁים:

[NET]

⁵ **tn** Or "**was unfaithful to him.**" Many have understood the Hebrew verb וַתִּזְנֶה (*vattizneh*) as being from זָנָה (*zanah*, "to be a prostitute"), but it may be derived from a root meaning "to be angry; to hate" attested in Akkadian (see *HALOT* 275 s.v. II זנה).

[NAC]

The text does not explicitly blame either the man or the woman for this falling out. But in light of the Levite's later conduct and the narrator's portrayal of men in the book as a whole, his sympathies seem to lie with the concubine, though this is not apparent at the outset. In any case, her father accepts her back home. At the same time it should be noted that the quarrel was not so intense that a full reconciliation was precluded. On the contrary, when the Levite arrives at his father-in-law's house, both the young girl and her father receive him gladly.

וַיִּקְרָא אִישָׁהּ
וַיֵּלֶךְ אַחֲרֶיהָ לְדַבֵּר עַל-לְבָבָהּ לְהַשִּׁיבָהּ
וַנַּעֲרוּ עִמּוֹ
וַצִּמְדוּ חֲמָרִים
וַתְּבִיֵּאֵהוּ בֵּית אָבִיהָ
וַיֵּרְאֶהוּ אָבִי הַנַּעֲרָה
וַיִּשְׂמַח לְקַרְאָתוֹ:

וַיִּקַּם אִישָׁה
וַיֵּלֶךְ אַחֲרֶיהָ לְדַבֵּר עַל-לְבָבָהּ לְהַשִּׁיבָהּ
וַנֵּעְרוּ עִמּוֹ
וַצִּמְד חֲמָרִים
וַתְּבִיֵּאֵהוּ בֵּית אָבִיהָ
וַיֵּרְאֶהוּ אָבִי הַנֶּעֱרָה
וַיִּשְׂמַח לְקַרְאָתוֹ:

[Anchor]

The Levite's concern to recover his concubine suggests that she, not he, is the offended party. That he will seek a reconciliation elicits the reader's respect for the Levite at the outset of the story.

[NAC]

The man seems to have waited patiently for her to return, but he waited in vain. Finally, after four months he takes the initiative and heads for Bethlehem himself to fetch her. In the account of the encounter with his father-in-law and the reconciliation, every one of the characters is painted in a positive light. Taking with him a servant and a pair of donkeys, the Levite's aim is to persuade his concubine to return with him.

וַיִּחְזַקְבוּ חֲתָנוּ אֲבֵי הַנְּעֹרָה
וַיָּשֶׁב אֹתוֹ שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים
וַיֹּאכְלוּ
וַיִּשְׁתּוּ
וַיִּלְיֵנוּ שָׁם:

וַיִּחַזְקֵם בּוֹ חֲתָנוֹ אָבִי הַנְּעֻרָה
 וַיֵּשֶׁב אִתּוֹ שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים
 וַיֹּאכְלוּ
 וַיִּשְׁתּוּ
 וַיְלִינוּ שָׁם:

[Anchor]

The double identification at the outset is necessary because of the ambiguity of unpointed **htn** which may be either “father-in-law” or “son-in-law.”

People - Humanity

אָדָם־1	people, humankind (545x)
אָנוּשׁ־1	people, humankind (42x)
אִישׁ	man, husband (2187x)
אִשָּׁה	woman, wife (781x)
זָכָר	male (82x)
נְקֵבָה	female (22x)
גֶּבֶר־1	man, young man, male (66x)
גְּבִירָה	lady, queen, mistress (15x)
גִּבּוֹר	lord, master, warrior (160x)
בָּחוּר	young man (44x)
בְּתוּלָה	virgin (50x)
בְּתוּלִים	adolescence (10x)
עָלָם	young man (2x)
עֲלָמָה	young woman (9x)
עֲלוּמִים	youth (5x)
יוֹנֵק	young child, tender plant (12x)
יָלֵד	boy, child, youth (90x)
יְלֵדָה	girl, damsel (3x)
יְלָדוֹת	childhood, youth (3x)
נֶעֱר	boy, youth (240x)
נְעָרָה־1	girl (76x)
נְעוּרִים	youth (46x)
טַף־1	children (41x)

People - Family

אָב	father (1210x)
אִם	mother (220x)
בֶּן־1	son, grandson (4942x)
בַּת־1	daughter, granddaughter (588x)
אָחִיךָ־2	brother, relative, countryman (629x)
אָחוֹת	sister (119x)
דוֹד	beloved, uncle (61x)
דּוֹדָה	aunt (3x)
חָסֵם־1	father-in-law (4x)
חָמוֹת	mother-in-law (11x)
חָתָן	son-in-law, bridegroom (20x)
כְּלָה	daughter-in-law, bride (34x)
חָתָן	male relative by marriage (21x)
חָתָנָת	female relative by marriage (1x)
בַּעַל־1	master, husband (84x)
שָׂר	flesh, relative (16x)

בְּתוּלָה "an ostensibly reputable young girl who is past puberty and is, by default at least, still in the household of her father" (NIDOTTE, Vol. 1, p. 767) (concerns social status)

עֲלָמָה young woman (concerns fertility and childbearing potential)

“A girl ceases to be a בְּתוּלָה when she becomes a wife; she ceases to be an עֲלָמָה when she becomes a mother.” (NIDOTTE, Vol. 1, p. 769)

“A woman ceases to be an עֲלָמָה when she becomes a mother—not when she becomes a wife or a sexual partner.” (NIDOTTE, Vol. 3, p. 415)

“Behold, the עֲלָמָה shall conceive and bear a son...” (Isa 7:14)

וַיִּחְזַקְבוּ חֲתָנוֹ אֲבִי הַנְּעָרָה
 וַיֵּשֶׁב אִתּוֹ שְׁלֹשֶׁת יָמִים
 וַיֹּאכְלוּ
 וַיִּשְׂתּוּ
 וַיְלִינוּ שָׁם:

[NAC]

As for the Levite’s father-in-law, he too rejoices at the arrival of his son-in-law. Why he was so happy we may only speculate. Was he tired of having his daughter back and anxious to recover his “empty nest” status? Or was he simply overjoyed at the reconciliation between his daughter and her husband. In any case, by the end of v. 4 the reconciliation seems complete. The tension expressed in vv. 1–2 has been resolved, and the story seems to have arrived at a happy conclusion. All that remains is for the Levite and his concubine to return home.

[Anchor]

This unit with its concentration upon the father–in-law likewise emphasizes his orthodox behavior. The father will be enormously relieved to see the young woman off with her husband once again. But his lavish hospitality in the meantime will create a new crisis. At the same time emphasis upon his position as father of the young woman prepares for a sharp contrast with the way another one will rise to the occasion amidst lavish hospitality, in vs. 24. In all of the dealings between the Levite and his father–in-law the question of original grounds for the young woman’s anger and her flight home, indeed all interest in the young woman herself, gets lost in the shuffle.

וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם הַרְבִּיעִי
 וַיִּשְׁכְּמוּ בַבֶּקֶר
 וַיִּקְם לַלַּכֶּתֶת
 וַיֹּאמֶר אָבִי הַנְּעִרָה אֶל־חֲתָנִי
 סַעַד לְבֶדֶךָ פַּת־לֶחֶם וְאַחַר תֵּלְכוּ:

וַיֵּשְׁבוּ
 וַיֹּאכְלוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם יַחְדָּו
 וַיֵּשְׁתּוּ
 וַיֹּאמֶר אָבִי הַנְּעִרָה אֶל־הָאִישׁ
 הַזֶּה וְלֹא וְלִי וְיֵטֵב לְבֶדֶךָ:

וַיִּקְם הָאִישׁ לַלַּכֶּתֶת
 וַיִּפְצַר־בוֹ חֲתָנִי
 וַיֵּשֶׁב
 וַיֵּלֶן שָׁם:

וַיִּשְׁכְּמוּ בַבֶּקֶר בַּיּוֹם הַחֲמִישִׁי לְלַכֵּת׃
 וַיֹּאמֶר | אָבִי הַנְּעִרָה
 סֶעַד-נָא לְבַבְךָ וְהִתְמַהְמְהוּ עַד-נְטוֹת הַיּוֹם
 וַיֹּאכְלוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם׃

וַיִּקַּם הָאִישׁ לְלַכֵּת הוּא וּפִילָגְשׁוֹ וַנְּעִרוּ
 וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ חֲתָנִי אָבִי הַנְּעִרָה
 הִנֵּה נָא רָפָה הַיּוֹם לַעֲרֹב לֵינוּ-נָא
 הִנֵּה חֲנֹת הַיּוֹם לֵין פֹּה
 וַיִּיטֵב לְבַבְךָ וְהִשְׁכַּמְתָּם מֵחַר לְדַרְכְּכֶם וְהִלַכְתָּ לְאֵהָלֶךָ׃

וְלֹא-אָבָה הָאִישׁ לָלוֹן
 וַיִּקַּם וַיֵּלֶךְ
 וַיָּבֵא עַד-נֶחֱחַ יְבוֹס הִיא יְרוּשָׁלַם
 וְעָמוֹ צָמַד חֲמוּרִים חֲבוּשִׁים
 וּפִילָגְשׁוֹ עָמוֹ׃

הֵם עִם־יְבוּס וְהַיּוֹם רָד מְאֹד
 וַיֹּאמֶר הַנֶּעֱר אֶל־אֲדָנָיו
 לָכֵה־נָא וְנִסּוּרָה אֶל־עִיר־הַיְבוּסִי הַזֹּאת וְנָלִין בָּהּ:

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹיו אֲדָנָיו
 לֹא נִסּוּר אֶל־עִיר נְכֹרֵי אֲשֶׁר לֹא־מִבְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הִנֵּה
 וְעַבְרָנוּ עַד־גְּבֻעָה:

וַיֹּאמֶר לְנַעֲרוֹ
 לֵךְ וְנִקְרְבִי בְּאֶחָד הַמְּקוֹמוֹת
 וְלָנוּ בַגְּבֻעָה אוֹ בַרְמָה:

הֵם עִם־יְבוּס וְהַיּוֹם רָד מְאֹד
 וַיֹּאמֶר הַנֶּעֱר אֶל־אֲדָנָיו
 לָכֵה־נָא וְנִסּוּרָה אֶל־עִיר־הַיְבוּסִי הַזֹּאת וְנָלִין בָּהּ:

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹיו אֲדָנָיו
 לֹא נִסּוּר אֶל־עִיר נְכֹרִי אֲשֶׁר לֹא־מִבְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הִנֵּה
 וְעַבְרָנוּ עַד־גְּבֻעָה:

Why the second וַיֹּאמֶר when it is the same speaker? —————> וַיֹּאמֶר לְנֶעֱרוֹ
 לָךְ וְנִקְרְבָה בְּאַחַד הַמְּקוֹמוֹת
 וְלָנוּ בַגְּבֻעָה אוֹ בַרְמָה:

הֵם עִם־יְבוּס וְהַיּוֹם רָד מְאֹד
 וַיֹּאמֶר הַנֶּעֱר אֶל־אֲדָנָיו
 לָכֵה־נָא וְנִסּוּרָה אֶל־עִיר־הַיְבוּסִי הַזֹּאת וְנָלִין בָּהּ:

וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהֵי אֲדָנָיו
 לֹא נִסּוּר אֶל־עִיר נְכֹרֵי אֲשֶׁר לֹא־מִבְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הִנֵּה
 וְעַבְרָנוּ עַד־גְּבֻעָה:

Why the second וַיֹּאמֶר when it is the same speaker? —————> וַיֹּאמֶר לְנֶעֱרוֹ
 לָךְ וְנִקְרְבָה בְּאַחַד הַמְּקוֹמוֹת
 וְלָנוּ בַגְּבֻעָה אֹז בְּרִמָּה:

Perhaps because some time has passed(?).

[NAC] In typical Hebrew narrative style the events of the journey are telescoped into a couple of verses. Although vv. 11–13 have the appearance of a single conversation, the comments of v. 13 were obviously made some hours after v. 12.

וַיַּעֲבְרוּ וַיֵּלְכוּ
וַתָּבֵא לָהֶם הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ אֶצְלֵ הַגְּבֵעָה אֲשֶׁר לְבְנֵימִן:

וַיִּסְרוּ שָׁם לָבוֹא לְלוֹן בַּגְּבֵעָה
וַיָּבֵא וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּרַחֲוֵב הָעֵיר וַאֲיִן אִישׁ מֵאֶסְף־אוֹתָם הַבַּיְתָה לְלוֹן:

וַיַּעֲבְרוּ וַיֵּלְכוּ
 וַתָּבֵא לָהֶם הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ אֶצְלֵ הַגִּבְעָה אֲשֶׁר לְבְנֵימִן:

וַיִּסְרוּ שָׁם לָבוֹא לְלוֹן בַּגִּבְעָה
 וַיָּבֵא וַיֵּשֶׁב בְּרַחֲוֹב הָעִיר וַאֲיִן אִישׁ מֵאֶסְף־אוֹתָם הַבַּיְתָה לְלוֹן:

Here we see the *social* outrage of the residents of Gibeah of Benjamin.

In verses 22ff we'll see the *moral* outrage of the residents of Gibeah of Benjamin.

[NAC]

The last clause in v. 15 would have been shocking anywhere in the ancient Near East. But it is especially shocking in Israel. The social disintegration has infected the very heart of the community. People refuse to open their doors to strangers passing through. It makes no difference that these travelers are their own countrymen.

וְהִנֵּה | אִישׁ זָקֵן בָּא מִן־מַעֲשֵׂהוּ מִן־הַשָּׂדֶה בְּעָרֵב
וְהָאִישׁ מֵהָר אֶפְרַיִם
וְהוּא־גַר בְּגִבְעָה
וְאֲנָשֵׁי הַמָּקוֹם בְּנֵי יְמִינִי:

וַיֵּשֶׁא עֵינָיו וַיֵּרָא אֶת־הָאִישׁ הָאֶרֶח בְּרַחֵב הָעִיר
וַיֹּאמֶר הָאִישׁ הַזֶּקֶן
אָנָּה תֵלֵךְ וּמַאֲיֵן תָּבוֹא:

וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו

עֲבָרִים אֲנַחְנוּ מִבַּיִת-לַחֵם יְהוּדָה עַד-יְרֻכָּתַי הַר-אֶפְרַיִם מִשָּׁם אָנֹכִי
וְאֵלֶּךְ עַד-בַּיִת לַחֵם יְהוּדָה
וְאֶת-בַּיִת יְהוָה אֲנִי הֵלֵךְ
וְאִין אִישׁ מֵאִסְרָף אוֹתִי הַבַּיִתָּה:

וְגַם-תֵּבֶן גַּם-מִסְפּוֹא יֵשׁ לַחֲמוּרֵינוּ
וְגַם לַחֵם וַיִּזַן יֵשׁ-לִי וְלֹא-מָתָךְ וְלִנְעַר עִם-עֲבָדֶיךָ
אִין מִחֲסוֹר כָּל-דָּבָר:

וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו

עֲבָרִים אֲנַחְנוּ מִבַּיִת-לֶחֶם יְהוּדָה עַד-יְרֵכָתִי הַר-אֶפְרַיִם מִשָּׁם אָנֹכִי
וְאֵלֶיךָ עַד-בַּיִת לֶחֶם יְהוּדָה
וְאֶת-בַּיִת יְהוָה אֲנִי הֵלֵךְ
וְאִין אִישׁ מֵאִסְרָף אוֹתִי הַבַּיְתָה:

וְגַם-תָּבֵן גַּם-מִסְפּוּא יֵשׁ לַחֲמוּרֵינוּ
וְגַם לֶחֶם וַיִּזַן יֵשׁ-לִי וְלֹא-מָתָךְ וְלִנְעָר עִם-עֲבָדֶיךָ
אִין מִחֶסֶר כָּל-דָּבָר:

[NAC footnote]

The NIV’s “house of the LORD” follows the MT’s **בית יהוה**, along with Tg, Syr, and Vg, even though this makes no sense in the context. The LXX’s καὶ εἰς τὸν οἶκόν μου, “and to my house,” suits the context better. So most modern translations (NASB, RSV, NRSV, NEB, REB, GNB, JPSV). It is conceivable the Levite’s itinerary would have involved a visit to the central shrine at Shiloh, but in this book this place is called the “house of God” (בית אלהים, 18:31). Presumably the MT, which provides the base for most ancient versions, mistook consonantal ביתי “, my house,” for an abbreviation of בית יהוה. For a discussion see E. Tov, *Textual Criticism*, 256–57; O’Connell, *Rhetoric of the Book of Judges*, 483.

וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו

עֲבָרִים אֲנַחְנוּ מִבֵּית-לֶחֶם יְהוּדָה עַד-יְרֻכָתִי הַר-אֶפְרַיִם מִשָּׁם אָנֹכִי
וְאֵלֶּךְ עַד-בֵּית לֶחֶם יְהוּדָה
וְאֶת-בֵּית יְהוָה אֲנִי הֹלֵךְ
וְאִין אִישׁ מֵאִסְף אוֹתִי הַבַּיְתָה:

וְגַם-תֵּבֶן גַּם-מִסְפּוּא יֵשׁ לַחֲמוּרֵינוּ
וְגַם לֶחֶם וַיִּין יֵשׁ-לִי וְלֹא-מִתָּךְ וְלִנְעַר עִם-עֲבָדֶיךָ
אִין מִחֶסֶד כָּל-דָּבָר:

[NAC]

After complaining in v. 18b that no one in Gibeah will offer lodging for the night, the Levite expands on the seriousness of Gibeah's social dysfunction. He and his party are asking only for a bed. Since they have brought food and wine for themselves and fodder for their donkeys, they are not even expecting an evening meal. ... With his comment the Levite verbalizes the social malignancy in Israel. The mores of the nation have been infected at the most fundamental level—the people of one tribe sense no obligation to the members of another. There is no sense of community.

וַיֹּאמֶר הָאִישׁ הַזֶּה
 שְׁלוֹם לָךְ
 רַק כָּל־מַחְסוֹרְךָ עָלַי
 רַק בְּרָחוּב אֶל־תֵּלֶן:

וַיְבִיֵּאֵהוּ לְבֵיתוֹ
 וַיְבֹל לַחֲמוֹרִים
 וַיִּרְחֲצוּ רַגְלֵיהֶם
 וַיֹּאכְלוּ
 וַיִּשְׁתּוּ:

הִמָּהּ מִיִּטִּיבִים אֶת־לִבָּם׃
 וְהִנֵּה אַנְשֵׁי הָעִיר אַנְשֵׁי בְנֵי־בְלֵיעַל נָסְבוּ אֶת־הַבַּיִת
 מִתְדַּפְּקִים עַל־הַדָּלֶת
 וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל־הָאִישׁ בְּעַל הַבַּיִת הַזֶּקֶן לֵאמֹר
 הוֹצֵא אֶת־הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־בָּא אֶל־בֵּיתְךָ וְנִדְעֶנּוּ׃

וַיֵּצֵא אֲלֵיהֶם הָאִישׁ בְּעַל הַבַּיִת
וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם

אֶל-אֲחֵי אֶל-תָּרְעוּ נָא
אֲחֵרֵי אֲשֶׁר-בָּא הָאִישׁ הַזֶּה
אֶל-בֵּיתִי
אֶל-תַּעֲשׂוּ אֶת-הַנְּבִלָה הַזֹּאת:

הִנֵּה בְתִי הַבְּתוּלָה וּפִילְגָשָׁהּ
אוֹצִיאה-נָא אוֹתָם וְעַנּוּ אוֹתָם
וַעֲשׂוּ לָהֶם הַטּוֹב בְּעֵינֵיכֶם
וּלְאִישׁ הַזֶּה
לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ דְבַר הַנְּבִלָה הַזֹּאת:

הָמָּהּ מִיִּטְיָבִים אֶת־לִבָּם׃
וְהִנֵּה אֲנָשִׁי הָעִיר אֲנָשִׁי בְּנֵי־בְלֵעַל
נָסְבוּ אֶת־הַבַּיִת

מִתְדַּפְּקִים עַל־הַדָּלֶת
וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל־הָאִישׁ בְּעַל הַבַּיִת הַזֶּקֶן לֵאמֹר
הוֹצֵא אֶת־הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־בָּא אֶל־בֵּיתְךָ

וְנִדְעֵנוּ׃

וַיֵּצֵא אֲלֵיהֶם הָאִישׁ בְּעַל הַבַּיִת
וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם

אֶל־אֲחִי אֶל־תִּרְעוּ נָא

אֲחֵרִי אֲשֶׁר־בָּא הָאִישׁ הַזֶּה אֶל־בֵּיתִי
אֶל־תַּעֲשׂוּ אֶת־הַנְּבִלָה הַזֹּאת׃

הִנֵּה בְּתִי הַבְּתוּלָה וּפִילְגָשְׁהוּ
אוֹצִיָּאה־נָא אוֹתָם וְעִנּוּ אוֹתָם

וַעֲשׂוּ לָהֶם הַטּוֹב בְּעֵינֵיכֶם
וְלְאִישׁ הַזֶּה

לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ דָבָר הַנְּבִלָה הַזֹּאת׃

טָרֶם יִשְׁכְּבוּ׃

וְאֲנָשִׁי הָעִיר אֲנָשִׁי סָדָם

נָסְבוּ עַל־הַבַּיִת

מִנְעַר וְעַד־זֶקֶן כָּל־הָעָם מִקְצָה׃

וַיִּקְרְאוּ אֶל־לוֹט וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ

אֵיךְ הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר־בָּאוּ אֵלֶיךָ הַלַּיְלָה

הוֹצִיָּאם אֵלֵינוּ

וְנִדְעָה אֹתָם׃

וַיֵּצֵא אֲלֵיהֶם לוֹט הַפֶּתַח וְהַדָּלֶת סָגַר אַחֲרָיו׃

וַיֹּאמֶר

אֶל־נָא אֲחִי תִרְעוּ׃

הִנֵּה־נָא לִי שְׁתֵּי בָנוֹת אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יָדְעוּ אִישׁ

אוֹצִיָּאה־נָא אֶתְהֶן אֲלֵיכֶם

וַעֲשׂוּ לָהֶן כַּטּוֹב בְּעֵינֵיכֶם

רַק לְאֲנָשִׁים הָאֵל

אֶל־תַּעֲשׂוּ דָבָר

כִּי־עַל־כֵּן בָּאוּ בְּצֵל קָרְתִּי׃

טָרַם יִשְׁכְּבוּ
 וְאִנְשֵׁי הָעִיר אֲנָשֵׁי סְדָם
 נָסְבוּ עַל-הַבַּיִת
 מִנְעַר וְעַד-זֶקֶן כָּל-הָעָם מִקְצָה:
 וַיִּקְרְאוּ אֶל-לוֹט וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ
 אֵיךְ הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר-בָּאוּ אֵלֶיךָ הַלַּיְלָה
 הוֹצֵאם אֵלֵינוּ
 וַיִּדְעָה אֹתָם:
 וַיֵּצֵא אֱלֹהִים לוֹט הַפֶּתַח וְהַדְּלַת סָגַר אַחֲרָיו:
 וַיֹּאמֶר
 אֶל-נָא אַחֵי תָרְעוּ:

הִמָּה מִיְטִיבִים אֶת-לִבָּם
 וְהִנֵּה אֲנָשֵׁי הָעִיר אֲנָשֵׁי בְנֵי-בְלֵעַל
 נָסְבוּ אֶת-הַבַּיִת
 מִתְדַפְּקִים עַל-הַדְּלַת
 וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל-הָאִישׁ בְּעַל הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה לֵאמֹר
 הוֹצֵא אֶת-הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר-בָּא אֵל-בֵּיתְךָ
 וַיִּדְעֵנוּ:
 וַיֵּצֵא אֱלֹהִים הָאִישׁ בְּעַל הַבַּיִת
 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים
 אֶל-אֲחֵי אֶל-תָּרְעוּ נָא
 אַחֲרֵי אֲשֶׁר-בָּא הָאִישׁ הַזֶּה אֶל-בֵּיתִי
 אֶל-תַּעֲשׂוּ אֶת-הַנְּבִלָה הַזֹּאת:

[NAC]

The narrator follows Gen 19:5, 8 in deliberately using an ambiguous term *yāda*, “to know.” Under normal circumstances, where the proper standards of hospitality would be operative, the expression could reflect a positive desire to get to know a new person in town, to establish social relations with the person. But here as elsewhere the verb serves euphemistically for “to engage in sex.” (Cf. Gen 4:1; 19:5, 8; Num 31:17; 1 Kgs 1:4.) Although they later concede to receive a woman, the fact that they ask for the man betrays their homosexual orientation. Accordingly, their demand represents a violation of three fundamental social/moral laws: the law of hospitality, the proscription on intercourse outside of marriage, and proscription on heterosexual intercourse.

[NAC]

There are actually two dimensions to the crime intended by the men of Gibeah.

- First, their action is *něbālâ* because it violates sexual norms. These men have come to commit a perverse homosexual act.²⁴³
- Second, their action is *něbālâ* because it violates customary norms of hospitality.²⁴⁴

²⁴³ The disposition of the Torah toward male homosexual acts is explicitly declared in Lev 18:22; 20:13. In the sight of God this is a capital crime to be punished by execution.

²⁴⁴ Cf. the application of the word to the violation of the customs of holy war (Josh 7:15) and to paying tribute (1 Sam 25:25).

[NAC]

As intimated earlier, the narrator places great emphasis on the timing of events in this chapter. The stage for this tragic sequence of incidents was set in v. 10, when the Levite had finally extricated himself from his father-in-law. But he had no idea how dark the coming night would be. The narrator keeps the reader's attention on the timing of episodes with repeated chronological references that beat ominously throughout the narrative. (1) When "the day had withered/collapses to setting" and at "the decline of the day," the Levite decides to leave (v. 9). (2) "When the day had gone down," he was faced with the reality that he would not make it home, hence the need to find a place to spend the night (v. 11). (3) Refusing to seek the hospitality of the Jebusites, "as the sun was setting" the Levite and his companions arrive at the outskirts of Gibeah, which should provide a safe haven (v. 14). (4) "At evening" the old man who would be his host arrives and invites them to his house (v. 16). (5) The plot reaches its nadir when the wicked men of the city rape and torture the Levite's concubine "all night" (v. 25). (6) The addition of "until the morning" in v. 25b invites the reader to await a new day, but this is a ruse. The horrors have not yet ceased. (7) "At dawn" (haššāḥar) the mob discards her (v. 25c). (8) "At the turn of the morning" the pitiful victim collapses on the doorstep of the host's house (v. 26a). (9) There she remains "until the light" (v. 26b).

With these chronological notes the narrator has given his verdict on the spiritual and moral state of Israel. The light of the knowledge of Yahweh and "doing what is right in his [Yahweh's] eyes" have been eclipsed by the depravity of the human soul expressed in "doing what is good in one's own eyes."

וְלֹא־אָבוּ הָאֲנָשִׁים לְשָׁמֵעַ לוֹ
 וַיַּחֲזֹק הָאִישׁ בְּפִילִגְשׁוֹ
 וַיֵּצֵא אֵלֵיהֶם הַחוּץ
 וַיִּדְעוּ אֹתָהּ
 וַיִּתְעַלְלוּ־בָהּ כָּל־הַלַּיְלָה עַד־הַבֹּקֶר
 וַיִּשְׁלַחוּהָ בַעֲלוֹת כַּעֲלוֹת הַשַּׁחַר:

וַתֵּבֵא הָאִשָּׁה לַפְּנוֹת הַבֹּקֶר
 וַתִּפְּלֵ פֶתַח בַּיִת־הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־אֲדוֹנֶיהָ שָׁם עַד־הָאֹר:

וַיִּקָּם אֲדֹנֶיהָ בַּבֹּקֶר
 וַיִּפְתַּח דַּלְתוֹת הַבַּיִת
 וַיֵּצֵא לִלְכַת לְדַרְכוֹ
 וְהִנֵּה הָאִשָּׁה פִילִגְשׁוֹ נִפְלֵת פֶּתַח הַבַּיִת וַיִּדְיָה עַל־הַסָּף:

וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלֶיהָ
 קוּמִי וְנִלְכֶה וְאִין עִנָּה
 וַיִּקְחֶהָ עַל־הַחֲמֹר
 וַיִּקַּם הָאִישׁ
 וַיֵּלֶךְ לְמִקְמוֹ:

וַיָּבֹא אֶל־בֵּיתוֹ
 וַיִּקַּח אֶת־הַמַּאֲכָלֹת
 וַיַּחֲזֵק בְּפִילִגְשׁוֹ
 וַיִּנְתְּחֶהָ לְעַצְמֶיהָ לְשָׁנַיִם עֶשֶׂר נִתְחִים
 וַיִּשְׁלַחֶהָ בְּכָל גְּבוּל יִשְׂרָאֵל:

וְהָיָה כָּל־הָרְאָה וְאָמַר
לֹא־נָהִיתָה וְלֹא־נִרְאָתָה כִּזְאת
לְמִיּוֹם עֲלוֹת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה
שִׁימוּ־לָכֶם עֲלֵיהָ
עֲצוּ וְדַבְּרוּ:

וְהָיָה כָּל־הָרְאָה וְאָמַר
 לֹא־נִהְיִיתָה וְלֹא־נִרְאִיתָה כִּזֹּאת
 לְמִיּוֹם עֲלוֹת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה
 שִׁימוּ־לְכֶם עֲלֵיהָ
 עֲצוּ וְדַבְּרוּ:

[NET Bible]

⁶⁶ **tc** Codex Alexandrinus (A) of the (original) LXX has the following additional words: "And he instructed the men whom he sent out, 'Thus you will say to every male Israelite: "There has never been anything like this from the day the Israelites left Egypt till the present day.'""

The evidence of his skill is there to be seen in the compounded dramatic ironies. It is the hospitable and courteous urgings of the Levite's father-in-law [Judg, p. 278] which cause the delay in departure that prevents the party from reaching the safety of Ephraim by nightfall. The servant's advice to stop for the night in Jebus (a city outside the Israelite alliance) would if followed have averted the calamity. The disgraceful lack of hospitality by the Benjaminites is repaired through the offer of possibly the one man in town the sanctity of whose hearth and board is not protected by fear of reprisal through blood-kinship and political ties within the city. (S. D. Currie, "Biblical Studies for a Seminar on Sexuality and the Human Community," *Austin Seminary Bulletin* 87 [1971], 14.)

Robert G. Boling, *JUDGES* (The Anchor Yale Bible; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 277-278.