



# A disappearing victim: The Account of Amnon and Tamar

Source Sheet by David Rosenberg

## II Samuel 13

(1) This happened sometime afterward: **Absalom** son of **David** had a beautiful sister named **Tamar**, and **Amnon** son of David became infatuated with her. (2) Amnon was so distraught because of his [half-]sister Tamar that he became sick; for she was a virgin, and it seemed impossible to Amnon to do anything to her. (3) Amnon had a friend named **Jonadab**, the son of David's brother Shimah; Jonadab was a very clever man. (4) He asked him, "Why are you so dejected, O prince, morning after morning? Tell me!" Amnon replied, "I am in love with Tamar, the sister of my brother Absalom!" (5) Jonadab said to him, "Lie down in your bed and pretend you are sick. When your father comes to see you, say to him, 'Let my sister Tamar come and give me something to eat. Let her

## שמואל ב י"ג

(א) ויהי אחרי־כן ולאבשלום בן־  
דוד אחות יפה ושמה תמר  
ויאהבה אמנון בן־דוד: (ב) ויצר  
לאמנון להתחלות בעבור תמר  
אחלתו כי בתולה היא ויפלא בעיני  
אמנון לעשות לה מאומה: (ג)  
ולאמנון רע ושמו יונדב בן־  
שמעה אחי דוד ויונדב איש חכם  
מאד: (ד) ויאמר לו מדוע אתה  
ככה דל בן־המלך בבקר בבקר  
הלוא תגיד לי ויאמר לו אמנון  
את־תמר אחות אבשלם אחי אני  
אהב: (ה) ויאמר לו יהונדב שכב  
על־משכבה והתחל ובא אביך  
לראותך ואמרת אליו תבא נא  
תמר אחותי ותברני לחם ועשתה  
לעיני את־הבריה למען אשר  
אראה ואכלתי מינה: (ו) וישכב  
אמנון ויתחל ויבא המלך לראתו  
ויאמר אמנון אל־המלך תבוא־נא  
תמר אחתי ותלגב לעיני שתי

prepare the food in front of me, so that I may look on, and let her serve it to me.” (6) Amnon lay down and pretended to be sick. The king came to see him, and Amnon said to the king, “Let my sister Tamar come and prepare a couple of cakes in front of me, and let her bring them to me.” (7) David sent a message to Tamar in the palace, “Please go to the house of your brother Amnon and prepare some food for him.” (8) Tamar went to the house of her brother Amnon, who was in bed. She took dough and kneaded it into cakes in front of him, and cooked the cakes. (9) She took the pan and set out [the cakes], but Amnon refused to eat and ordered everyone to withdraw. After everyone had withdrawn, (10) Amnon said to Tamar, “Bring the food inside and feed me.” Tamar took the cakes she had made and brought them to her brother inside. (11) But when she served them to him, he caught hold of her and said to her, “Come lie with me, sister.” (12) But she said to him, “Don’t, brother. Don’t force me. Such things are not done in Israel! Don’t do such a vile thing! (13) Where will I carry my shame? And you, you will be like any of the scoundrels

לְבַבּוֹת וְאַבְרָה מִיָּדָה: (ז) וַיִּשְׁלַח  
דָּוִד אֶל-תָּמָר הַבִּיתָה לֵאמֹר לְכִי  
נָא בֵּית אֲמִנוֹן אַחִיךָ וְעֲשִׂי-לוֹ  
הַבֵּרִיָּה: (ח) וַתֵּלֶךְ תָּמָר בֵּית  
אֲמִנוֹן אַחִיהָ וְהוּא שָׁכַב וַתִּקַּח  
אֶת-הַבֶּצֶק וְתִלוּשׁ [וַתֵּלֶשׁ] וַתִּלְבֵּב  
לְעֵינָיו וַתְּבַשֵּׁל אֶת-הַלֶּבְבֹת: (ט)  
וַתִּקַּח אֶת-הַמִּשְׁרֵת וַתִּצֶק לִפְנֵיו  
וַיִּמְאֵן לֶאֱכֹל וַיֹּאמֶר אֲמִנוֹן הוֹצִיאוּ-  
כָּל-אִישׁ מֵעַלַי וַיֵּצְאוּ כָּל-אִישׁ  
מֵעַלָיו: (י) וַיֹּאמֶר אֲמִנוֹן אֶל-תָּמָר  
הַבָּיֵא הַבֵּרִיָּה הַחֹדֶר וְאַבְרָה  
מִיָּדָךְ וַתִּקַּח תָּמָר אֶת-הַלֶּבְבֹת  
אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂתָה וַתָּבֵא לְאֲמִנוֹן אַחִיהָ  
הַחֹדֶרָה: (יא) וַתִּגַּשׁ אֵלָיו לֶאֱכֹל  
וַיִּחְזַק-בָּהּ וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ בָּוְאִי נְשֻׁכִי  
עִמִּי אַחֹתִי: (יב) וַתֹּאמֶר לוֹ אֵל-  
אָחִי אֵל-תַּעֲנֵנִי כִּי לֹא-יַעֲשֶׂה כֵן  
בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל אֵל-תַּעֲשֶׂה אֶת-הַנְּבִלָה  
הַזֹּאת: (יג) וַאֲנִי אָנֹכִי אוֹלִיךָ אֶת-  
חַרְפְּתִי וְאַתָּה תַהְיֶה כְּאֶחָד  
הַנְּבִלִים בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל וְעַתָּה דַבֵּר-נָא  
אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ כִּי לֹא יִמְנַעֲנִי מִמֶּךָ:  
(יד) וְלֹא אָבָה לִשְׁמַע בְּקוֹלָהּ  
וַיִּחְזַק מִמֶּנָּה וַיַּעֲנֶה וַיִּשְׁכַּב אֹתָהּ:  
(טו) וַיִּשְׁנָאָה אֲמִנוֹן שְׁנָאָה גְדוֹלָה  
מְאֹד כִּי גְדוֹלָה הַשְׁנָאָה אֲשֶׁר  
שְׁנָאָה מֵאַהֲבָה אֲשֶׁר אָהַבָהּ  
וַיֹּאמֶר-לָהּ אֲמִנוֹן קוּמִי לְכִי: (טז)  
וַתֹּאמֶר לוֹ אֵל-אוֹדֹת הַרְעָה  
הַגְּדוֹלָה הַזֹּאת מֵאַחֲרַת אֲשֶׁר-

in Israel! Please, speak to the king; he will not refuse me to you.” (14) But he would not listen to her; he overpowered her and lay with her by force. (15) Then Amnon felt a very great loathing for her; indeed, his loathing for her was greater than the passion he had felt for her. And Amnon said to her, “Get out!” (16) She pleaded with him, “Please don’t commit this wrong; to send me away would be even worse than the first wrong you committed against me.” But he would not listen to her. (17) He summoned his **young attendant** and said, “Get that woman out of my presence, and bar the door behind her.”— (18) She was wearing an ornamented tunic, for maiden princesses were customarily dressed in such garments.—His attendant took her outside and barred the door after her. (19) Tamar put dust on her head and rent the ornamented tunic she was wearing; she put her hands on her head, and walked away, screaming loudly as she went. (20) Her brother Absalom said to her, “Was it your brother Amnon who did this to you? For the present, sister, keep quiet about it; he is your brother. Don’t brood over the matter.” And Tamar

עֲשִׂיתָ עִמִּי לְשִׁלְחָנִי וְלֹא אָבָה  
לְשִׁמְעָ לָהּ: (יז) וַיִּקְרָא אֶת־נַעֲרוֹ  
מִשְׂרָתוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁלַח־נָא אֶת־  
זֹאת מֵעָלַי הַחוּצָה וַנַּעַל הַדָּלֶת  
אַחֲרֶיהָ: (יח) וְעָלֶיהָ כְּתַנַּת פְּסִים  
כִּי כֵן תִּלְבַּשְׁןָ בְּנוֹת־הַמֶּלֶךְ  
הַבְּתוּלוֹת מְעִילִים וַיֵּצֵא אוֹתָהּ  
מִשְׂרָתוֹ הַחוּץ וַנַּעַל הַדָּלֶת  
אַחֲרֶיהָ: (יט) וַתִּקַּח תָּמָר אֶפֶר  
עַל־רֹאשָׁהּ וַכְּתַנַּת הַפְּסִים אֲשֶׁר  
עָלֶיהָ קָרָעָה וַתִּשֶׂם יָדָהּ עַל־  
רֹאשָׁהּ וַתִּתֵּלֶךְ הַלוֹךְ וְזַעֲקָה: (כ)  
וַיֹּאמֶר אֶלֶיהָ אֲבִשְׁלוֹם אָחִיהָ  
הָאֲמִינוֹן אַחִירָהּ הִיָּה עִמָּךְ וְעַתָּה  
אַחוֹתִי הַחֲרִישִׁי אַחִירָהּ הוּא אֶל־  
תִּשְׁתִּי אֶת־לִבְךָ לְדַבֵּר הַזֶּה  
וַתִּשָּׁב תָּמָר וַשְׂמֵמָה בֵּית  
אֲבִשְׁלוֹם אָחִיהָ: (כא) וְהַמֶּלֶךְ דָּוִד  
שָׁמַע אֵת כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה  
וַיַּחַר לוֹ מְאֹד: (כב) וְלֹא־דִבֶּר  
אֲבִשְׁלוֹם עִם־אֲמִינוֹן לְמַרְעֵ וְעַד־  
טוֹב כִּי־שָׁנָא אֲבִשְׁלוֹם אֶת־אֲמִינוֹן  
עַל־דְּבַר אֲשֶׁר עָנָה אֶת תָּמָר  
אַחֲתוֹ: אֲמִינוֹן כִּי־מֵת: (כג)

remained in her brother  
Absalom's house, forlorn. (21)  
When King David heard about  
all this, he was

greatly upset. (22) Absalom  
didn't utter a word to Amnon,  
good or bad; but Absalom hated  
Amnon because he had violated  
his sister Tamar.

### **Pirkei Avot 5:16**

All love that depends on a  
something, [when the] thing  
ceases, [the] love ceases; and  
[all love] that does not depend  
on anything, will never cease.  
What is an example of love that  
depended on a something?  
Such was the love of Amnon for  
Tamar. And what is an example  
of love that did not depend on  
anything? Such was the love of  
David and Jonathan.

### **Mishneh Torah, Forbidden**

#### **Intercourse 22:3**

When the matter of Amnon and  
Tamar transpired, (King) David  
and his court decreed  
concerning isolation (*yichud*)  
with an unmarried woman. Even  
if she is not one who is  
considered forbidden (to a  
particular man), she is included

### **משנה אבות ה':ט"ז**

כָּל אֲהָבָה שֶׁהִיא תְּלוּיָהּ בְּדָבָר ,  
בְּטֵל דָּבָר , בְּטֵלָה אֲהָבָה . וְשֵׂאִינָה  
תְּלוּיָהּ בְּדָבָר , אִינָה בְּטֵלָה  
לְעוֹלָם . אִיזוֹ הִיא אֲהָבָה הַתְּלוּיָהּ  
בְּדָבָר , זֹאת אֲהָבַת אֲמִנוֹן וְתָמָר .  
וְשֵׂאִינָה תְּלוּיָהּ בְּדָבָר , זֹאת אֲהָבַת  
דָּוִד וַיהוֹנָתָן :

### **משנה תורה, הלכות איסורי**

#### **ביאה כ"ב:ג'**

כְּשֶׁאֲרַע מֵעֵשָׂה אֲמִנוֹן וְתָמָר גָּזַר  
דָּוִד וּבֵית דִּינּוֹ עַל יְחִיד פְּנוּיָהּ .  
וְאָף עַל פִּי שֵׂאִינָה עֲרוֹה בְּכָלֵל  
יְחִיד עֲרִיּוֹת הִיא . ...

in the category of isolation with forbidden women.

### Questions for reflection

What roles do the different characters in this passage play?

What conditions must be met before it becomes possible for Amnon to rape Tamar?

Which values are violated in this passage?

How do the characters in this passage react to the rape of Tamar?

What becomes of Tamar?

How does the Jewish tradition react to the rape of Tamar?

What are some enduring takeaways from this story?

*Source Sheet created on Sefaria by David Rosenberg*