



Massekhet Ta'anit: Text, Translation, and Commentary (Feminist Commentary on the Babylonian Talmud)

Tal Ilan

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Tal Ilan discusses tractate Ta'anit of the Babylonian Talmud, which deals with ritual fasting, usually in the case of rain failure. In this commentary, the author presents and discusses texts from the tractate which are relevant to women and gender. These include legal proclamations on the participation of women in public fasts, stories on pious men, whose proper conduct toward women make them ideal intermediaries for bringing rain and discussions of gendered rabbinic terms such as Bat Qol, usually translated as 'heavenly voice' but which literally translated means 'a daughter's voice'. The overall impression of this tractate is that it emphasizes the way the relationship between rainfall and the dry ground was imagined by the rabbis in a gendered metaphor of sexual relations in which rain is male and the land is female. This theme repeats itself in the tractate throughout.

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