

Concepts of Marriage and Divorce among Gentiles

Among the Jewish People the bond between a man and his wife is not engendered by sexual relations alone. Sexual relations may be the culmination of the process of Kiddushin but prior to that are entire stages which lead up to it: First *Erusin* in which a woman is designated to the man while still living in her father's house. Then, *Nissuin*, the first stage of which is Huppah. Only at the very end do sexual relations come into play.

Gentiles, however have only sexual relations with which to realize their marriage. The concept of Kiddushin is meaningless in their world.

In Kiddushin (1:1) the Talmud Yerushalmi states:

רבי אבהו בשם ר' אלעזר כתיב "הנך מת על האשה אשר לקחת והיא בעולת בעל" (בראשית כ:ג). על הבעולות הן חייבין ואינן חייבין על הארוסות. (ב"ר 166) (קידושין א:א)

Rabbi Abahu in the name of Rabbi Elazar said: It is written "behold you will die on account of the woman that you have taken which has had sexual relations with a husband" - They are liable for woman with which they had sexual relations but are not liable for the *arusoth*.

Gentiles, as perceived by the Halakha are only held accountable for having sexual relations with women who formed a marital bond with another man by means of sexual relations, but not for those who are in the status of *Arusah*. Marriage among Gentiles is recongnized as a binding social institution not as legal a process known as Kiddushin.