Contents

In Place of an Introduction: On Gender Issues and Their Possible	
Significance for Understanding the Spiritual World of the Rabbis	1
"Masculinity" and "Femininity" in the Psychosexual Theory	
of Freud and Nancy Chodorow	1
Lacan's Interpretation of the Freudian Theory	5
The Drawbacks of the Freudian Approach	7
	10
Between Freud and Buber: Between Psychoanalysis	
and Dialogue	11
A Note on the Relationship between "I-Thou"	
· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	18
Phallicism, Humility, and the Tension between	
"Masculinity" and "Femininity" in the Aggadic Narratives .	20
	25

Chapter One

The Woman's Spiritual Place in the Talmudic Story:	
A Reading of the Narrative of Mar Ukba and His Wife	29
An Introduction to the Discussion of the Narrative	29
The Text of the Narrative	31
The Reading of the Narrative	34
Why Was Mar Ukba Insulted?	39
The Leitmotiv of the Heel	45
On the Feminine and Masculine Associations	
in the Narrative	47

Chapter Two

Rabbi Akiva and the Daughter of Ben Kalba Savua:	
On the Conception of Love in the Spiritual World of the	
Talmudic Story	56
The Narrative of Akiva and His Mate, according	
to the Version of Ketubot 62b–63a	56
The Versions of the Narrative	58



The Love of Akiva and His Mate 6	3
Structure of the Narrative	8
The Waves of Opposition and Their Significance 6	9
Inner and Outer	7
Stability and Mobility	1
Is This a Romantic Love Story? 8	3
-	9
Appendix A: On the Nature of Relationship between Akiva	
and His Mate in the Later Versions	94
Appendix B: On the Character of Ben Kalba Savua	
in the Later Versions)2
Appendix C: On the Character of "That Old Man"	
in the Later Versions 10)6
Appendix D: On the Conversation	
with the Women Neighbors in the Later Versions 10)7

Chapter 3	
"Internal Homeland" and "External Homeland": A Literary and	
Psychoanalytical Study of the Narrative of R. Assi and His Aged	
Mother	109
The Complex Relationship between Halakhah and Aggadah,	
as Background to a Reading of the Narrative	109
The Text of the Narrative	111
A Proposed Psychoanalytical Reading	122
On the Transformation of the Text from the Land of Israel	
to Babylonia	126

Chapter 4

The Female Breast and the Mouth Opened in Prayer	. 133
The Narrative of the Intervention by the Mother	
of R. Ahadboi in the Study Hall Quarrel	. 133
A Discussion of the Elements of the Narrative	. 139
Baring One's Breasts as an Act of Protest	. 143
Baring One's Breast as a Spiritual Expression	. 146
Baring One's Breasts as an Act of Entreaty	. 149
Exposing One's Breasts in the Midrashic Picture:	
A Gesture of Love and Giving	. 150
0	

Contents

Chapter Five

A Reading of the Creation Narrative: Femininity	
and Masculinity in the Prism of the Bible and the Midrash	154
The Mythological Background and Gender Aspects	155
In the Beginning God Created	165
Creation Ex Nihilo or Ex Materia?	171
The Midrashic Sources, and Their Relation to the Proposed	
Dialogic Reading	177
On Building God's Palace in the Garbage in Gen. Rabbah .	
On the End of the Creation Passage: The Elements of the	
Sabbath and Sanctity	185
Buber's Comments on the Creation Passage	192
The Gender Significance of the Moderation	
in the Biblical Portrayal	194
The Dialogic Significance of the Creation Episode:	
Love as a Procreative and Creative Force	205
Afterword	214
Bibliography	215