



The Story of Moses and the Midianites by [Barbara Griffiths](#) (used with permission)

Moses For #MeToo?*

Sexual abuse is as old as men's concern about paternity — the risk that a man's putative child may not be his biological child. Many rules for assuring paternity are [codified in The Bible](#). One of those rules is that raping virgins is less problematic than raping non-virgins. Virgins cannot be in an early stage of pregnancy, so they cannot give birth to children fathered by victims of genocide when mass rape results in offspring. Moses was keenly aware of this cuckold conundrum, so he precluded the problem by ordering his troops to slaughter all non-virgin Midianite women:

They warred against the Midianites, as the LORD commanded Moses; and they slew all the males ... And the children of Israel took all the women of Midian captives, and their little ones ... And they brought the captives, and the prey, and the spoil, unto Moses ... And Moses was angry with the officers of the army, with the captains over thousands,

and captains over hundreds, who came from the battle. And Moses said unto them, “Have you saved all the women alive? ... kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that has known man by lying with him. But all the young girls, that have not known a man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves (truncated from [Numbers 31:7-35](#)).^[i]

Only 31,968 of the 32,000 captive virgins could be made available to regular troops because 32 of them were given “unto Eleazar the priest, for a heave offering” ([Numbers 31:35-41](#)). To this day, in their daily morning prayer, observant Orthodox Jewish men thank their god for having not made them a non-Jew (‘Baruch shelo asani goy’ – ‘Blessed is He that did not make me a non-Jew’) and for having not made them a woman (‘Baruch shelo asani isha’ – ‘Blessed is He that did not make me a woman’). No wonder.

If there were 32,000 virgins, it seems reasonable to assume that there were a large number of non-virgins. Sorting out whom to keep and whom to kill would have been a major undertaking. In a tale too fanciful to warrant discussion of its plausibility, but one that clearly reveals prevailing attitudes, the rabbis of the Talmud explained how the necessary virginity testing was accomplished. Each woman was forced to straddle a cask of wine so that her vagina covered the hole in the side of the cask. According to Rabbi Kahana son of Rabbi Nathan, a would-be rapist only needed to smell the woman’s breath to decipher whether her hymen was sufficiently intact to prevent a bouquet from rising: “They made them sit upon the mouth of a wine-cask. Through anyone who had had previous intercourse, the odour penetrated; through a virgin, its odour did not penetrate” ([Talmud: Yebamoth 60b](#)).

This simplified matters: smell wine, pull the woman off the cask and cut her throat ... don’t smell wine, pull the girl off the cask and rape her. Putting thousands of women through this process in a reasonable amount of time would have required far more casks of wine than the Israelites would have brought with them on a military campaign, but there was no limit to the imaginations of The Sages of the Talmud.

Hypocrisy is protected by [allegorical interpretation](#) of Bible stories that literally promote depravity. If [Thomas Jefferson](#) has made the #MeToo list of abusers, surely there is room for Moses, his soldiers, and the god he invented to deify Zionism.

Note

^[i] Several sacred texts written subsequent to the compilation of The Bible express second thoughts about the genocide of the Midianites ... not because of the colossal evil of the deed,

but because the sudden influx of so many virgin [shikas](#) was perceived to have had dysgenic effects.

*Also available at: <https://www.foreignpolicyjournal.com/2018/05/17/moses-for-metoo/>