# Sacred Slogans
## Tikkun Olam

### I. Restrictions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1a. M. Gittin 4:2</th>
<th>1b. B. Gittin 33a</th>
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<td>In former times a man was allowed to bring together a beit din (Jewish court) wherever he was and cancel the get (bill of divorce). Rabban Gamaliel the elder, however, laid down a rule that this should not be done, so as for tikkun olam.</td>
<td>FOR TIKKUN OLAM, What is referred to by “for Tikkun Olam?” R. Johanan said: To illegitimacy. Resh Lakish said: To prevent wife-desertion. ‘R. Johanan said to prevent illegitimacy,’ for he held with R. Nahman who said [that the Get could be cancelled] before [a Beth din of] two: [the proceedings] of two are not generally known, so she, not having heard and not knowing [that the Get is cancelled] might go and marry again, and bear illegitimate children. ‘Resh Lakish said to prevent wife-desertion,’ for he again held with R. Shesheth who said [that he has to cancel it] before [a Beth din of] three. The proceedings of three are generally known, so she hearing and knowing [that the Get was cancelled] would remain unmarried, and we have therefore to save her from being a deserted wife.</td>
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<th>2a. M. Gittin 4:6</th>
<th>2b. B. Gittin 45a</th>
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<td>We do not ransom captives for more than they are worth, due to tikkun olam</td>
<td>The question was raised: Does this prevention of abuses relate to the burden which may be imposed on the community or to the possibility that the activities [of the bandits] may be stimulated? — Come and hear: Levi b. Darga ransomed his daughter for thirteen thousand denarii of gold [Meaning concern was on cost to community]. Said Abaye: But are you sure that he acted with the consent of the Sages? Perhaps he acted against the will of the Sages.</td>
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### 3a. M. Gittin 4:6
We do not help captives escape, due to *tikkun olam*. Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel says: "[It is] due to the enactment of the captives.

### 3b. B. Gittin 45a
What practical difference does it make which reason we adopt? — The difference arises where there is only one captive.

### 4. M. Gittin 4:6
We do not buy books of the Bible, *tefillin*, and *mezuzot* from the non-Jews for more than their worth, due to *tikkun olam*

### 5. B. Gittin 49b
Ravina said: We may maintain after all that the Mishnah follows R. Akiva, who said that according to the Torah we assess on the land of the defendant, and it also follows here R. Simeon whose custom it was to expound the reasons of Scriptural injunctions, and its later clause gives the reason for the earlier, thus: *Why is compensation for damage assessed on the best property? Because of* *tikkun olam,* as it has been taught: R. Simeon said: *Why was it laid down that compensation for damages should be paid out of the best land?* As a deterrent to those who plunder or take by violence, so that a man should say to himself, *Why should I plunder or take by violence, seeing that to-morrow the Beth din will come down on my property and take my best field, basing themselves on what is written in the Torah, 'from the best of his field and the best of his vineyard he shall make restitution'?* For that reason they laid down that compensation for damages should be assessed on the best land.

### 6. M. Gittin 5:3
And for the betterment of property [during wrongful tenure] [and payment] for the maintenance [by a man's heirs] of his widow and daughters is not enforced from mortgaged property, for *tikkun olam*

### 7. B. Ketuvot 56b
A woman's *Ketuvah* may not be made [a charge on] movable property because of *tikkun olam*. Said R. Jose: What is the *tikkun olam?* Their [movable object's] price, surely, is not fixed and they deteriorate in value [whereas the *Ketuvah* is fixed].
II. Obligations

8. M. Gittin 4:2
Originally the husband was allowed to give [in the get] an adopted name of himself or of his wife, or an adopted town of himself or of his wife. Rabban Gamliel the elder made a regulation that he should write, 'the man so-and-so or by whatever names he is known,' 'the woman so-and-so or by whatever names she is known,' for tikkun olam.

9a. M. Gittin 4:3
Witnesses sign their names to a bill of divorce for tikkun olam.

9b. M. Gittin 9:4
The following three bills of divorce are invalid but if a woman marries on the strength of them the child [born of such marriage] is legitimate: [one.] if the husband wrote it with his own hand but it was attested by no witnesses; [a second]. If there are witnesses to it but no date; [a third.] if it has a date but the signature of only one witness. These three bills of divorce are invalid, but if she marries the child is legitimate. R. Eleazar, however, says that even though it was not attested by witnesses at all, so long as he gave it to her in the presence of witnesses it is valid, and on the strength of it she may recover her Kethubah from mortgaged property, since signatures of witnesses are required on the get for tikkun olam.

10. M. Gittin 4:9
If a man sells his field to a heathen, he has to buy [yearly] the first fruits from him and bring them to Jerusalem, for tikkun olam.

III. Accommodations

11. T. Terumot 1:13
If a minor tells someone in the marketplace, "feed me from the tithing," we feed him due to tikkun olam.

12a. Ex. 23:11
But during the seventh year let the land lie unplowed and unused. Then the poor among your people may get food from it, and the wild animals may eat what is left. Do the same with your vineyard and your olive grove.

12b. Mekhiltta D.R. Yishmael Mishpatim 20
Variantly: "And the seventh … and you shall leave it": So that you not say: Why did the Torah institute this? Is it not
so that the poor shall eat it? I shall gather it in and
distribute it to the poor! It is, therefore, written "And the
seventh … and you shall leave it," whereby we are taught
that he (must "leave it" even to the extent of) allowing
breaches in the fence; but the sages allowed repairs to be
made for the tikkun olam.

13. M. Gittin 4:7
If a man divorces his wife because of ill fame, he must not
remarry her. If because she makes a vow, he must not
remarry her. R. Judah says: [if he divorces her] for vows
which she made publicly, he may not remarry her, but if for
vows which she did not make publicly, he may remarry her.
R. Meir says, [if he divorces her] for a vow which requires
the investigation of a sage, he may not remarry her, but if
for one which does not require the investigation of a sage,
he may remarry her. R. Eliezer says that one was only
forbidden on account of the other. R. Jose son of R. Judah
said: a case happened in Sidon of a man who said to his
wife, konam, if I do not divorce you, and he did divorce
her, and the sages permitted him to remarry her for tikkun
olam.

14. M. Gittin 5:3
The finder of a lost article cannot be required to take an
oath, for tikkun olam.

IV. Resolving Competing Interests

15a. M. Gittin 4:3
Hillel the elder also instituted the prosbul for Tikkun
Olam.

15b. B. Gittin 36a
HILLEL INSTITUTED THE PROSBUL. We have learnt
elsewhere: A prosbul prevents the remission of debts [in
the Sabbatical year]. This is one of the regulations made by
Hillel the Elder. For he saw that people were unwilling to
lend money to one another and disregarded the precept
laid down in the Torah, Beware that there he not a base
thought in thine heart saying, etc. He therefore decided
to institute the prosbul. The text of the prosbul is as follows:
'I hand over to you, So-and-so, the judges in such-and-such
a place, [my bonds], so that I may be able to recover any
money owing to me from So-and-so at any time I shall
desire'; and the prosbul was to be signed by the judges or
witnesses.

13. משנה גיטין ד:ז
המוציא את אשתו נשבעין ישים
עד כי חיתו נשוע מדר דר
יחויר ובו חום אמרים כל דר
שועה ובו חום אלו ויתלה
ידעו ובו חום ישים אמרים
אמרו דר דבר שישרו חיות
 повы מקריא חטאי צדק
evity חבירו אומר י
אליעור על אשים זה אשים מפני
יה אומר בראש כי דרך
ממשש יдей בחוסך שארם
לאשון קדוש או איתי מרשיך
ורשה החזון חוכם
שהיותה מספקית חקון
واصل: 13.

14. משנה גיטין אי:ג
הможא מציאהלא ישבע מפני
תקון עולם: 14.

15a. משנה גיטין ע:ד:
הללת חקון פורבוד מפי
תיקון עולם: 15.

15b. ב. גיטין טו:א:
בביל גיסיאו
כן התכו: פרשיב אלי
משל霖, הזה הוא מניח
שחקוןできません, עריאה את
יין באימי מלחולו זה תתן
או ז 그것은Bah מאחרי
+דבירי ת'וי, יешועי על
ייחו ברע בלעב, ולא,
עומד חקון פחרב; הוא זה
גוזר לע הוא של חabort
ופליניידיס, תשכון פלני
שבה בור שיש לא פלני
לידים חכמים להוטה או
וחידוס.
What is the meaning of the word ‘prosbul’? — R. Hisda says: Pru' buli u-but'i. Bu'li means the rich, as it is written, And I will break the pride of your power, and R. Joseph explained: These are the bula'oth in Judah. Buti means the poor, as it is written, Thou shalt surely lend him sufficient (Deut 15:8)

The wealthy and the poor: The wealthy so that they will not lose and the poor so that the door of loans will not be shut in front of them

If a man makes his slave security [for a debt] to another man and he emancipates him, in strict justice the slave is not liable for anything [i.e. to pay for his freedom], but for tikkun olam his master is compelled to emancipate him.

One who is half a slave and half free works for his master and for himself alternate days. This was the ruling of Beth Hillel. Beth Shammai said: you have made matters right for the master but not for the slave. It is impossible for him to marry a female slave because he is already half free. It is impossible for him to marry a free woman because he is half a slave. shall he then remain unmarried? But was not the world only made to be populated, as it says, he created it not a waste, he formed it to be inhabited? For Tikkun Olam, therefore, his master is compelled to liberate him and he gives him a bond for half his purchase price. Beth Hillel thereupon retracted [their opinion and] ruled like Beth Shammai.

Priests who invalidate (offerings) in the Temple intentionally are liable.

Priests who invalidate (offerings) in the Temple by accident are exempt, [if they do so intentionally] they are liable because of tikkun olam.

An agent of the court who hits with the court’s authority and damages (excessively) unintentionally is exempt, if he did so intentionally he is liable because of tikkun olam.
20. T. Gittin 3:8
An expert doctor who heals with the court’s authority and damages unintentionally is exempt, if intentional he is liable because of tikkun olam.

21. T. Gittin 3:9
Someone who cuts the embryo from a woman’s womb under the authority of the court and injures her (in the process), if intentionally he is exempt, if intentionally he is obligated, due to tikkun olam.

III. Tikkun Olam Under the Rules of the Halakhic System

22. B. Gittin 36b
Come and hear: Samuel said: This prosbul is an assumption (term of insolence) on the part of the judges; if I am ever in a position, I will abolish it. "I will abolish it?" How so, seeing that one Beth din cannot annul the decision of another unless it is superior to it in wisdom and numbers? — What he meant was: If ever I am in a stronger position than Hillel, I will abolish it.

R. Nahman, however, said: I would confirm it. Confirm it? Is it not already firmly established? — What he meant was: I will add a rule that even if it [the prosbul] is not actually written it shall be regarded as written.