

Solomon and Ashmedai: The Ring Given Away

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In a Talmudic story, Solomon releases the restraints on Ashmedai and hands over his ring. The demon's answer strips the king of power and turns royal certainty into wandering and fear.

STATUS	Rabbinic narrative in a late antique text; not a verified royal event
CLASSIFICATION	STR
MATERIAL	Babylonian Jewish textual tradition; legendary Jerusalem
DISPOSITION	PUBLIC / SOURCED STORY
CATEGORY	Strange Files
RECORD TYPE	Ancient stories
STORY HISTORY	Babylonian Talmud compiled approximately 450-550 CE

THE ACCOUNT

Solomon has kept Ashmedai under restraint while the Temple is built. Then the king asks what makes demons greater than human beings. In the account in Gittin, Ashmedai asks for the chain to be removed and the ring bearing God's name to be handed over. Solomon agrees. Ashmedai swallows the ring, expands to a terrifying size and casts the king far away. The man who commanded him must now struggle to make others recognize who he is.

FOLLOWING THE TRAIL

This narrative appears in Gittin 68a-68b of the Babylonian Talmud, a rabbinic collection that Sefaria dates approximately to 450-550 CE. It belongs to a layered religious and literary discussion written down long after Solomon's traditional lifetime. The divine name on the ring and chain matters within this particular account; it should not automatically be replaced with the six-pointed design familiar from later images. The source documents the story, not the recovery of a historical enchanted ring.

WHY IT STAYS WITH US

The reversal begins with a voluntary gesture. No army overcomes the king: he yields the objects that contain another being's strength. Read as a narrative, the episode probes the limits of wisdom and possession. Even restored authority cannot simply erase the memory of being powerless before something the king believed he controlled.

WHERE THIS TELLING COMES FROM

Gittin 68b

Sefaria; William Davidson Talmud

<https://www.sefaria.org/Gittin.68b?lang=bi>

Gittin: About this text

Sefaria

<https://www.sefaria.org/Gittin.57a.4?lang=en&with=About>

RETURN TO THE STORY

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