

TROUBLE IN THE VINEYARD  
DEVORA STEINMETZ  
JUNE 18, 2013

תלמוד בבלי בבא מציעא דף נט עמוד א - עמוד ב

תנן התם: חתכו חוליות ונתן חול בין חוליא לחוליא, רבי אליעזר מטהר וחכמים מטמאין.  
וזה הוא תנור של עכנאי.

מאי עכנאי? - אמר רב יהודה אמר שמואל: שהקיפו דברים כעכנא זו, וטמאוהו.

תנא: באותו היום השיב רבי אליעזר כל תשובות שבעולם ולא קיבלו הימנו.

אמר להם: אם הלכה כמותי - חרוב זה יוכית.  
נעקר חרוב ממקומו מאה אמת, ואמרי לה: ארבע מאות אמה:

אמרו לה: אין מבאיין ראייה מן החרוב.

חזר ואמר להם: אם הלכה כמותי - אמת המים יוכיחו.  
חזרו אמת המים לאחוריהם.

אמרו לה: אין מבאיין ראייה מאמת המים.

חזר ואמר להם: אם הלכה כמותי - כותלי בית המדרש יוכיחו.  
הטו כותלי בית המדרש ליפול.

גער בהם רבי יהושע,  
אמר להם: אם תלמידי חכמים מנצחים זה את זה בהלכה - אתם מה טיבכם?

לא נפלו מפני כבודו של רבי יהושע, ולא זקפו מפני כבודו של רבי אליעזר,  
ועדין מטין ועומדין.

חזר ואמר להם: אם הלכה כמותי - מן השמים יוכיחו.

יצאתה בת קול ואמרה: מה לכם אצל רבי אליעזר שהלכה כמותו בכל מקום!

עמד רבי יהושע על רגליו ואמר: לא בשמים היא.

מאי לא בשמים היא?

אמר רבי ירמיה: שכבר נתנה תורה מהר סיני, אין אנו משגיחין בבת קול, שכבר כתבת בהר סיני בתורה אחרי רבים להטות.

אשכחיה רבי נתן לאלהו, אמר ליה: מאי עביד קודשא בריך הוא בהאי שעתא?

אמר ליה: קא חייך ואמר נצחוני בני, נצחוני בני.

אמרו: אותו היום תביאו כל טהרות שטיהר רבי אליעזר ושרפום באש, ונמנו עליו וברכוהו.

ואמרו: מי ילך ויודיעו?

אמר להם רבי עקיבא: אני אלך, שמא ילך אדם שאינו הגון ויודיעו, ונמצא מחריב את כל העולם כולו.

מה עשה רבי עקיבא? לבש שחורים, ונתעטף שחורים, וישב לפניו בריחוק ארבע אמות.

אמר לו רבי אליעזר: עקיבא, מה יום מיומים?

אמר לו: רבי, כמדומה לי שחבירים בדילים ממך.

אף הוא קרע בגדיו וחלץ מנעליו, ונשמט וישב על גבי קרקע. זלגו עיניו דמעות.

לקח העולם שלישי באיתים, ושליש בחטים, ושליש בשעורים. ויש אומרים: אף בצק שבידי אשה טפת.

תנא: אך גדול היה באותו היום, שבכל מקום שנתן בו עיניו רבי אליעזר נשרף.

ואף רבן גמליאל היה בא בספינה, עמד עליו נחשול לטבעו.

אמר: כמדומה לי שאין זה אלא בשביל רבי אליעזר בן הורקנוס.

עמד על רגליו ואמר: רבונו של עולם, גלוי וידוע לפניך שלא לכבודי עשית, ולא לכבוד בית אבא עשית, אלא לכבודך, שלא ירבו מחלוקות בישראל.

נח הים מזעפו.

אימא שלום דביתו דרבי אליעזר אחתיה דרבן גמליאל הואי.  
מהחוא מעשה ואילך לא הוה שבקה ליה לרבי אליעזר למיפל על אפיה.

ההוא יומא ריש ירחא הות, ואיחלף לה בין מלא לחסר.  
איכא דאמרי אתא עניא וקאי אבבא, אפיקא ליה ריפתא. אשכחתיה דנפל על אנפיה,

אמרה ליה: קום, קטלית לאחי.

אדהכי נפק שיפורא מבית רבן גמליאל דשכיב.

אמר לה: מנא ידעת?

אמרה ליה: כך מקובלני מבית אבי אבא: כל השערים ננעלים חוץ משערי אוטאה.

תלמוד ירושלמי מועד קטן פרק ג דף פא עמוד ג - עמוד ד

ביקשו לנדות את רבי ליעזר

אמר אמרין מאן איל מודע ליה

אמר רבי עקיבה אנא איל מודע ליה

אתא לגביה אמר ליה רבי רבי חבירין מנדין לך

נסתיה נפק ליה לברא

אמר חרוביתא חרוביתא אין הלכה כדבריהם איתעוקרין ולא איתעקרת אין הלכה כדבריי איתעוקרין ואיתעקרת

אין הלכה כדבריי חורין ולא חורת אין הלכה כדבריי חורין וחורת

כל הדין שבחא ולית הלכה כרבי אליעזר!!

אמר רבי חנינה משניתנה לא ניתנה אלא אחרי רבים להטות

ולית ר' אלעזר ידע שאחרי רבים להטות!!

לא הקפיד אלא על ידי ששרפו טהרותיו בפניו

תמן תנינן חיתכו חוליות ונתן חול בין חוליא לחוליא רבי ליעזר מטהר וחכמים מטמין זה תנורו של חכמי

אמר רבי ירמיה חכך גדול נעשה באותו היום כל מקום שהיתה עינו של רבי ליעזר מבטת היה נשדף  
ולא עוד אלא אפילו חיטה אחת חצייה נשדף וחצייה לא נשדף

והיו עמודי בית הוועד מרופפים

אמר להן רבי יהושע אם חברים מתלחמים אתם מה איכפת לכם

ויצאה בת קול ואמרה הלכה כאליעזר בני

אמר רבי יהושע לא בשמים היא

רבי קריספי רבי יוחנן בשם רבי אם יאמר לי אדם כך שנה רבי ליעזר שונה אני כדבריו אלא דתניא מחלפין

חד זמן הוה עבר בשוקא וחמת חדא איתא סחותה דבייתא וטלקת ונפלת גו רישיה  
אמר דומה שהיום חבירי מקרבין אותי דכתיב מאשפות ירים אביון

We learned there: If he cut it into segments and put sand between each segment – Rabbi Eliezer declares pure, and the sages declare impure. And this is the oven of Akhmat.

What is Akhmat? Rav Yehuda said Shmuel said: For they surrounded it with words. Like this snake, and they declared it impure.

It was taught: On that day, Rabbi Eliezer brought all the arguments in the world, but they didn't accept [them] from him.

He said to them: "If the law is in accordance with my position, let this carob tree prove it." The carob tree was uprooted from its place a hundred cubits, and some say four hundred cubits. They said to him: "One doesn't bring proof from a carob tree."

He again said to them: "If the law is in accordance with my position, let the stream of water prove it." The stream of water turned backwards. They said to him: "One doesn't bring a proof from a stream of water."

He again said to them: "If the law is in accordance with my position, let the walls of the *beit midrash* prove it." The walls of the *beit midrash* leaned to fall.

Rabbi Yehoshua yelled at them: "If sages contest (*meratzchin*) with each other in law, what is it your business?"

They did not fall on account of the honor of Rabbi Yehoshua, and they did not move upright on account of the honor of Rabbi Eliezer, and they still remain leaning.

He again said to them: "If the law is in accordance with my position, let it be proved from heaven." A *bat qol* came out and said: "What is it for you with Rabbi Eliezer, for the law is in accordance with him in every place?"

Rabbi Yehoshua stood on his feet and said: "It is not in heaven" (Deut 30:12).

What is "It is not in heaven"? Rabbi Yimya said: for the Torah has already been given from Mount Sinai – we do not pay attention to a *bat qol*, for you have already written on Mount Sinai in the Torah: "Lean after the many" (Ex 23:2).

Rabbi Natana saw Elyahu. He said to him: "What was the Holy Blessed One doing at that time?" He said to him: "He was laughing and said: 'My children have defeated (*nitzחנו*) me; my children have defeated me.'"

They said: "That day they brought all of the pure things that Rabbi Eliezer had declared pure and burned them with fire, and they voted concerning him and they blessed him [i.e., they banned him]. And they said: 'Who will go and inform him?' Rabbi Akiva said: 'I will go, lest a person who is not fit go and inform him, and end up destroying the entire world.'"

What did Rabbi Akiva do? He dressed in black and [wrapped himself in black and] sat before him at a distance of four cubits. Rabbi Eliezer said to him: "Akiva, how is this day different from other days?" He said to him: "Master, it seems to me that your colleagues are separating<sup>s</sup> from you."

He too tore his garments and took off his shoes and removed and sat on the ground. His eyes flowed with tears. The world was smitten in one third of the olives and one third

of the wheat and one third of the barley. And there are those who say: Even the dough in the hands of a woman swelled up.

It was taught: There was great wrath on that day – every place that Rabbi Eliezer put his eyes was burned up.

And Rabban Gamliel too was coming in a ship; a wave stood against him to drown him. He said: "It seems to me that this is not on account of anything other than Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus." He stood on his feet and said: "Master of the world, it is revealed and known before you that I did not do this for my honor, and I did not do this for the honor of father's house, but for your honor, than *machlogot* not proliferate in Israel." The sea rested from its raging.

Ima Shelom the wife of Rabbi Eliezer was the sister of Rabban Gamliel. From that event on she would not allow Rabbi Eliezer to fall on his face. That day was Rosh Chodesh, and she confuted a full and defective [month]. There are those who say: A poor person came and stood at the gate; she brought out bread to him. She saw him that he had fallen on his face. She said to him: "Get up – you have killed my brother!" Meanwhile, a *shofar* blast went out from the house of Rabban Gamliel that he had died.

He said to her: "From where did you know?" She said to him: "Thus I have received (*mequblan*) from the house of father's father: all gates are locked except for the gates of wrongdoing."

(bBava Metza 59a-b)<sup>36</sup>

They sought to ban Rabbi Eliezer.

They said: "Who will go inform him?" Rabbi Akiva said: "I will go inform him."

He came to him; he said to him: "Master, master, your colleagues are banning you."

He took him and brought him outside. He said: "Carob, carob, if the law is in accordance with their words, uproot yourself." And it did not uproot itself. "If the law is in accordance with my words, uproot yourself." And it uprooted itself. "If the law is in accordance with their words, return." And it did not return. "If the law is in accordance with my words, return." And it returned.

All this praise and the law is not in accordance with Rabbi Eliezer? Rabbi Chanina said: Once it was given it was given only to "lean after the many." (Ex 23:2)

And didn't Rabbi Eliezer know that one must "lean after the many"?! He was angered by the fact that they burned in his presence things that he had declared pure.

We learned there: If he cut it into segments and put sand between each segment – Rabbi Eliezer declares pure, and the sages declare impure. This is the oven of Chakhmat.

Rabbi Yimya said: A great disaster happened on that day – wherever the eye of Rabbi Eliezer looked was blasted; and not only that, but even a single grain of wheat, half was blasted and half was not blasted.

And the pillars of the *beit haniv'ad* were shaking. Rabbi Yehoshua said to them: "If colleagues are warning, what does it matter to you?"

And a *bat qol* came out and said: "The law is in accordance with my son Eliezer." Rabbi Yehoshua said: "It is not in heaven."

Rabbi Qetsipai, Rabbi Yochanan in the name of Rabbi said: If someone were to say to me "Thus taught Rabbi Eliezer," I would teach in accordance with his words. But the *tannaim* reverse.

One time, he was passing through the market and he saw a woman cleaning her house, and she threw it down and it fell on his head. He said: "It seems that today my colleagues will bring me near, as it is written: 'he raises the destitute from the refuse heap' (Psalms 113:7)."

We learned there: If he cut it into segments and put sand between each segment – Rabbi Eliezer declares pure, and the sages declare impure. And this is the oven of Akhnai.

What is Akhnai? Rav Yehuda said Shemuel said: For they surrounded it with words like this snake, and they declared it impure.

It was taught: On that day, Rabbi Eliezer brought all the arguments in the world, but they didn't accept [them] from him.

He said to them: "If the law is in accordance with my position, let this carob tree prove it." The carob tree was uprooted from its place a hundred cubits, and some say four hundred cubits. They said to him: "One doesn't bring proof from a carob tree."

He again said to them: "If the law is in accordance with my position, let the stream of water prove it." The stream of water turned backwards. They said to him: "One doesn't bring a proof from a stream of water."

He again said to them: "If the law is in accordance with my position, let the walls of the *beit midrash* prove it." The walls of the *beit midrash* leaned to fall.

Rabbi Yehoshua yelled at them: "If sages contest (*menatichim*) with each other in law, what is it your business?"

They did not fall on account of the honor of Rabbi Yehoshua, and they did not move upright on account of the honor of Rabbi Eliezer, and they still remain leaning.

He again said to them: "If the law is in accordance with my position, let it be proved from heaven." A *bat qol* came out and said: "What is it for you with Rabbi Eliezer, for the law is in accordance with him in every place?"

Rabbi Yehoshua stood on his feet and said: "It is not in heaven" (Deut 30:12).

What is "It is not in heaven"? Rabbi Yirmiya said: for the Torah has already been given from Mount Sinai – we do not pay attention to a *bat qol*, for you have already written on Mount Sinai in the Torah: "I can after the many" (Ex 23:2).

Rabbi Natan saw Elyahu. He said to him: "What was the Holy Blessed One doing at that time?" He said to him: "He was laughing and said: 'My children have defeated (*nitzchim*) me; my children have defeated me.'"

They said: That day they brought all of the pure things that Rabbi Eliezer had declared pure and burned them with fire, and they voted concerning him and they blessed him [i.e., they banned him]. And they said: "Who will go and inform him?" Rabbi Akiva said: "I will go, lest a person who is not fit go and inform him, and end up destroying the entire world."

What did Rabbi Akiva do? He dressed in black and [wrapped himself in black and] sat before him at a distance of four cubits. Rabbi Eliezer said to him: "Akiva, how is this day different from other days?" He said to him: "Master, it seems to me that your colleagues are separating<sup>5</sup> from you."

He too tore his garments and took off his shoes and removed and sat on the ground. His eyes flowed with tears. The world was smitten in one third of the olives and one third

of the wheat and one third of the barley. And there are those who say: Even the dough in the hands of a woman swelled up.

It was taught: There was great wrath on that day – every place that Rabbi Eliezer put his eyes was burned up.

And Rabban Gamliel too was coming in a ship, a wave stood against him to drown him. He said: "It seems to me that this is not on account of anything other than Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus." He stood on his feet and said: "Master of the world, it is revealed and known before you that I did not do this for my honor, and I did not do this for the honor of father's house, but for your honor, than *machilogot* not proliferate in Israel." The sea rested from its raging.

Ima Shalom the wife of Rabbi Eliezer was the sister of Rabban Gamliel. From that event on she would not allow Rabbi Eliezer to fall on his face. That day was Rosh Chodesh, and she confused a full and defective [month]. There are those who say: A poor person came and stood at the gate; she brought out bread to him. She saw him that he had fallen on his face. She said to him: "Get up – you have killed my brother!" Meanwhile, a *shofar* blast went out from the house of Rabban Gamliel that he had died.

He said to her: "From where did you know?" She said to him: "Thus I have received (*mequblan*) from the house of father's father: all gates are locked except for the gates of wrongdoing."

(Bava Metzra 59a-b)<sup>6</sup>

They sought to ban Rabbi Eliezer:

They said: "Who will go inform him?" Rabbi Akiva said: "I will go inform him."

He came to him; he said to him: "Master, master, your colleagues are banning you."

He took him and brought him outside. He said: "Carob, carob, if the law is in accordance with their words, uproot yourself." And it did not uproot itself. "If the law is in accordance with my words, uproot yourself." And it did not uproot itself. "If the law is in accordance with their words, return." And it did not return. "If the law is in accordance with my words, return." And it returned.

All this praise and the law is not in accordance with Rabbi Eliezer? Rabbi Chanina said: Once it was given it was given only to "I can after the many." (Ex 23:2)

And didn't Rabbi Eliezer know that one must "I can after the many"? He was angered by the fact that they burned in his presence things that he had declared pure.

We learned there: If he cut it into segments and put sand between each segment – Rabbi Eliezer declares pure, and the sages declare impure. This is the oven of Chakhnai.

Rabbi Yirmiya said: A great disaster happened on that day – wherever the eye of Rabbi Eliezer looked was blasted, and not only that, but even a single grain of wheat, half was blasted and half was not blasted.

And the pillars of the *beit harva'ad* were shaking. Rabbi Yehoshua said to them: "If colleagues are warring, what does it matter to you?"

And a *bat qol* came out and said: "The law is in accordance with my son Eliezer." Rabbi Yehoshua said: "It is not in heaven."

Rabbi Qeispai, Rabbi Yochanan in the name of Rabbi said: If someone were to say to me "Thus taught Rabbi Eliezer," I would teach in accordance with his words. But the *tannaim* reverse.

One time, he was passing through the market and he saw a woman cleaning her house, and she threw it down and it fell on his head. He said: "It seems that today my colleagues will bring me near, as it is written: 'he raises the destitute from the refuse heap' (Psalms 113:7)."

(YMo'ed Qatan 3:1/81d)

