

A Unique Approach to the Seder Night

Source Sheet by Effie Klein

סנהדרין ע"א א"י"ה-כ'

כמאן אזלא הא דתניא בית המנוגע לא היה ולא עתיד להיות ולמה נכתב דרוש וקבל שכר כמאן כר' אלעזר בר' שמעון דתנן ר' אלעזר ברבי שמעון אומר לעולם אין הבית טמא עד שיראה כשתי גריסין על שתי אבנים בשתי כתלים בקרן זוית ארכו כשני גריסין ורחבו כגריס מאי טעמא דר' אלעזר ברבי שמעון כתיב קיר וכתיב קירות איזהו קיר שהוא כקירות הוי אומר זה קרן זוית תניא אמר רבי אליעזר בר' צדוק מקום היה בתחום עזה והיו קורין אותו חורבתא סגירתא אמר רבי שמעון איש כפר עכו פעם אחת הלכתי לגליל וראיתי מקום שמציינין אותו ואמרו אבנים מנוגעות פיננו לשם:

Sanhedrin 71a:18-20

The Gemara asks another similar question: **In accordance with whose opinion is that which is taught in a *baraita*: There has never been a house afflicted with leprosy of the house and there will never be one in the future. And why, then, was the passage relating to leprosy of the house written in the Torah? So that you may expound upon new understandings of the Torah and receive reward for your learning. In accordance with whose opinion is this? It is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Elazar, son of Rabbi Shimon, as we learned in a mishna (*Nega'im* 12:3) that Rabbi Elazar, son of Rabbi Shimon, says: A house never becomes impure with leprosy until a mark about the size of two split beans is seen on two stones in two walls that form a corner between them, the mark being about two split beans in length and about one split bean in width.** It is difficult to imagine that such a precise situation will ever occur.

The Gemara asks: **What is the reason** for the statement of **Rabbi Elazar, son of Rabbi Shimon**, that a house does not become impure unless it has a mark precisely in the corner? The verse states: “And he shall look at the leprous mark, and, behold, if the leprous mark be in the walls of the house, in greenish or reddish depressions, which in sight are lower than the wall” (Leviticus 14:37). In one part of the verse **it is written “wall,”** and in another part of the verse **it is written “walls.” Which wall is like two walls? You must say this is a corner.**

It is taught in a *baraita*: **Rabbi Eliezer, son of Rabbi Tzadok, says: There was a place in the area of Gaza, and it was called the leprous ruin;** that is to say, it was the ruin of a house that had been afflicted with leprosy. Apparently, then, leprosy of the house has existed. **Rabbi Shimon of the village of Akko said: I once went to the Galilee and I saw a place that was being marked off** as an impure place, **and they said that stones afflicted with leprosy were cast there.** This too indicates that a house afflicted with leprosy has existed.

בבא קמא פ"ו ב:כ"ג-פ"ז א:ב'

תניא אידך ר' יהודה אומר סומא אין לו בושת
וכן היה רבי יהודה פוטר מכל דינים שבתורה מ"ט דרבי יהודה אמר
קרא (במדבר לה, כד) ושפטו העדה בין המכה ובין גואל הדם על
המשפטים האלה כל שישנו במכה ובגואל הדם ישנו במשפטים כל
שאינו במכה ובגואל הדם אינו במשפטים
תניא אידך ר' יהודה אומר סומא אין לו בושת וכן היה רבי יהודה פוטר
מכל מצות האמורות בתורה אמר רב שישא בריה דרב אידי מאי טעמא
דר' יהודה אמר קרא (דברים ו, א) ואלה המצות החקים והמשפטים כל
שישנו במשפטים ישנו במצות וחקים וכל שאינו במשפטים אינו במצות
וחקים

Bava Kamma 86b:23-87a:2

The Gemara presents another statement of Rabbi Yehuda: It is taught in another *baraita* that **Rabbi Yehuda says: A blind person does not have humiliation,**

and so did Rabbi Yehuda exempt a blind person from all judgments of civil law that are in the Torah. The Gemara explains: **What is the reasoning of Rabbi Yehuda? The verse states** with regard to an unintentional killing: **“Then the congregation shall judge between the smiter and the avenger of blood, according to these laws”** (Numbers 35:24), to teach that **anyone who is subject to the *halakha* of a smiter and to the *halakha* of an avenger of blood is subject to civil laws, and anyone who is not subject to the *halakha* of a smiter or to the *halakha* of an avenger of blood, including a blind person, is not subject to civil laws.**

The Gemara presents another statement of Rabbi Yehuda. It is taught in another *baraita* that **Rabbi Yehuda says: A blind person does not have,** i.e., receive, compensation for **humiliation, and so did Rabbi Yehuda exempt a blind person from all mitzvot that are stated in the Torah.** Rav Sheisha, son of Rav Idi, said: **What is the reasoning of Rabbi Yehuda? The verse states: “And this is the commandment, statutes, and laws”** (Deuteronomy 6:1), to teach that **anyone who is subject to civil laws is also subject to the commandments and statutes, and anyone who is not subject to civil laws, including a blind person, is also not subject to the commandments and statutes.**

קידושין ל"א א"י"ב

אמר רב יוסף מריש ה"א מאן דהוה אמר לי הלכה כר"י דאמר סומא פטור מן המצות עבידנא יומא טבא לרבנן דהא לא מיפקידנא והא עבידנא השתא דשמעיתא להא דא"ר חנינא גדול מצווה ועושה יותר ממי שאינו מצווה ועושה אדרבה מאן דאמר לי דאין הלכה כרבי יהודה עבידנא יומא טבא לרבנן

Kiddushin 31a:12

Rav Yosef, who was blind, said: At first I would say: If someone would

tell me that the *halakha* is in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda, who says: A blind person is exempt from fulfilling the mitzvot, I would make a festive day for the rabbis, as I am not commanded and yet I perform the mitzvot. This means my reward is very great. Now that I have heard that which Rabbi Ḥanina says: Greater is one who is commanded to do a mitzva and performs it than one who is not commanded to do a mitzva and performs it, on the contrary: If someone would tell me that the *halakha* is not in accordance with the opinion of Rabbi Yehuda, and a blind person is obligated in mitzvot, I would make a festive day for the rabbis.

פסחים קט"ז ב:ח'-י"ב

אמר רב אחא בר יעקב סומא פטור מלומר הגדה כתיב הכא בעבור זה
וכתיב התם בננו זה מה להלן פרט לסומא אף כאן פרט לסומין
איני והאמר מרימר שאלתינהו לרבנן דבי רב יוסף מאן דאמר אגדתא בי
רב יוסף אמרו רב יוסף מאן דאמר אגדתא בי רב ששת אמרו רב ששת
קסברי רבנן מצה בזמן הזה דרבנן
מכלל דרב אחא בר יעקב סבר מצה בזמן הזה דאורייתא והא רב אחא
בר יעקב הוא דאמר מצה בזמן הזה דרבנן קסבר כל דתקון רבנן כעין
דאורייתא תיקון
לרב ששת ולרב יוסף נמי הא ודאי כל דתקון רבנן כעין דאורייתא תיקון
הכי השתא בשלמא התם מדהוה ליה למיכתב בננו הוא וכתיב בננו זה
שמע מינה פרט לסומין הוא דאתא אבל הכא אי לאו בעבור זה מאי
לכתוב אלא בעבור מצה ומרור הוא דאתא:

Pesachim 116b:8-12

Rav Aḥa bar Ya'akov said: A blind person is exempt from reciting the Haggadah. The proof is that **it is written here**, with regard to the Paschal

lamb: “And you shall tell your son on that day saying, **it is because of this** which the Lord did for me when I came forth out of Egypt” (Exodus 13:8), **and it was written there**, with regard to the stubborn and rebellious son, that his parents say: “**This son of ours** is stubborn and rebellious, he does not listen to our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard” (Deuteronomy 21:20). The Gemara explains the verbal analogy of the word “this”: **Just as there**, in the case of the rebellious son, the Sages expound that the verse **excludes a blind** person, as a blind parent cannot say: This son of ours, for he cannot point to him; **so too here**, in the case of the recitation of the Passover Haggadah, the word “this” **excludes blind** people.

The Gemara asks: **Is that so? But didn't Mareimar say: I asked the Sages from the school of Rav Yosef**, who was blind: **Who recited the Haggadah in the house of Rav Yosef? They said** to him: **Rav Yosef** himself recited it. Mareimar subsequently asked: **Who recited the Haggadah in the house of Rav Sheshet**, who was also blind? **They said** to him: **Rav Sheshet** himself recited it. This indicates that a blind person is obligated to recite the Haggadah. The Gemara answers: **These Sages**, Rav Yosef and Rav Sheshet, **maintain** that **nowadays** the *halakhot* of eating *matza* and the recitation of the Haggadah that accompanies it apply **by rabbinic** law. For this reason, blind people can recite the Haggadah for others.

The Gemara asks: Does this prove **by inference** that **Rav Aḥa bar Ya'akov maintains** that eating *matza nowadays* applies **by Torah** law? **But isn't Rav Aḥa bar Ya'akov the one who said** that eating *matza nowadays* applies **by rabbinic** law? Rav Aḥa bar Ya'akov apparently contradicts himself. The Gemara answers: Rav Aḥa bar Ya'akov **maintains** that **everything the Sages instituted** through their decrees, **they instituted similar** to the model established **by Torah** law. In other words, although the obligations to eat *matza* and recite the Haggadah are rabbinic, the stringencies and restrictions that apply to Torah mitzvot apply here as well. Therefore, a blind person is exempt from reciting the Haggadah.

The Gemara asks: **According to** the opinion of **Rav Sheshet and Rav Yosef too, certainly everything the Sages instituted** through their decrees, **they instituted similar** to the model established **by Torah** law. Why, then, did these blind Sages recite the Haggadah themselves?

The Gemara rejects this difficulty: **How can** these cases, the verses dealing with rebellious son and the Passover Haggadah, **be compared? Granted, there**, in the case of the rebellious son, **as** the verse **could have written: He**

is our son, and instead it is written: “This son of ours,” I can learn from it that the parents must point to a finger to their son, **which comes to exclude blind parents. However, here,** if the verse did **not** use the phrase **“because of this,”** **what** could it have **written** in reference to *matzot* and bitter herbs? **Rather,** this verse **comes because of the matza and bitter herbs.** Consequently, there is no need to actually to point with one’s finger in this instance, and therefore the blind are also obligated to recite the Haggadah.

שמות י"ג:ח'

(ח) וְהִגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר בְּעִבּוֹר זֶה עָשָׂה יְהוָה לִי בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרָיִם

Exodus 13:8

(8) And you shall explain to your son on that day, ‘It is because of what the LORD did for me when I went free from Egypt.’

דברים כ"א:כ'

(כ) וְאָמְרוּ אֵל-זַקְנֵי עִירוֹ בָּנֵנוּ זֶה סִנְרַר וּמָרָה אֵינָנוּ שְׂמַעְבְּקֵלְנוּ זוּלָל וְסָבָא

Deuteronomy 21:20

(20) They shall say to the elders of his town, “This son of ours is disloyal and defiant; he does not heed us. He is a glutton and a drunkard.”

ברכות כ' ב:י"א

אמר ליה רבינא לרבא נשים בברכת המזון דאורייתא או דרבנן למאי נפקא מינה לאפוקי רבים ידי חובתן אי אמרת (בשלמא) דאורייתא אתי דאורייתא ומפיק דאורייתא אלא אי אמרת דרבנן הוי שאינו מחוייב בדבר וכל שאינו מחוייב בדבר אינו מוציא את הרבים ידי חובתן מאי

Berakhot 20b:11

Ravina said to Rava: We learned in the mishna that **women** are obligated in the mitzva of **Grace after Meals**. However, are they obligated **by Torah law** or merely **by rabbinic law**? **What difference does it make** whether it is by Torah or rabbinic law? The difference is regarding her ability **to fulfill the obligation of others** when reciting the blessing on their behalf. **Granted, if you say that** their obligation **is by Torah law**, one whose obligation **is by Torah law can come and fulfill the obligation** of others who are obligated **by Torah law**. **However, if you say** that their obligation is **by rabbinic law**, then from the perspective of Torah law, women **are** considered to be **one who is not obligated**, and the general principle is that **one who is not obligated** to fulfill a particular mitzva **cannot fulfill the obligations of the many** in that mitzva. Therefore, it is important to know **what** is the resolution of this dilemma.

משנה אבות א'ג'

(ג) אַנטִיגֶנוֹס אִישׁ סוֹכוֹ קִבֵּל מִשְׁמֵעוֹן הַצְּדִיק. הוּא הָיָה אוֹמֵר, אֶל תְּהִיֶּינּוּ כַעֲבָדִים הַמְשַׁמְשִׁין אֶת הָרֵב עַל מְנַת לְקַבֵּל פְּרָס, אֶלֹא הָיוּ כַעֲבָדִים הַמְשַׁמְשִׁין אֶת הָרֵב לְשֵׁלָא עַל מְנַת לְקַבֵּל פְּרָס, וַיְהִי מוֹרָא שָׁמַיִם עֲלֵיכֶם:

Pirkei Avot 1:3

(3) Antigonus a man of Socho received [the oral tradition] from Shimon the Righteous. He used to say: do not be like servants who serve the master in the expectation of receiving a reward, but be like servants who serve the master without the expectation of receiving a reward, and let the fear of Heaven be upon you.