



Volume 4. Issue 32

On That Day...

This week we began a new *masechet* – *Eduyot*. Unlike any *masechet* previously studied, *Eduyot* is not dedicated to a particular topic. Instead the *Mishnayot* are tied together by the day on which they were studied. The *Gemara* (*Brachot* 28a) teaches that “*Eduyot* was studied on that day and whenever it states [in a *Tanaic* text] ‘On that day’”. We must therefore learn what happened “on that day”.

The *Gemara* teaches that this was the day that *Rabban Gamliel* was removed from office and *R’ Elazar ben Azarya* was elected to be the *Nasi*. There were significant ramifications in this change of office as it brought with it a change in educational philosophy. *Rabban Gamliel* prevented any student from entering the *Beit Midrash* unless “his inside is like his outside” (*tocho ke’baro*). The *Maharsha* explains that the person studies *Torah* (externally) and also has (internally) the requisite fear of Heaven. Even a guard stationed at the entrance of the *Beit Midrash* to enforce this criteria. When *R’ Elazar ben Azarya* took office, the guard was removed and everyone was allowed to enter the *Beit Midrash*. The influx of students required the addition of between four-hundred and seven-hundred benches. At the tremendous gathering, people brought with them “testimonies” (*Eduyot*) of traditions relating to *halachot*. This, combined with intensive discourse, enabled the clarification and resolution of all outstanding *halachot*.

What was behind this debate? There is a principle that “Whoever teaches an unworthy student is as if he throws a stone at a *Merkulis*” (*Chulin* 133a). The *Merkulis* was a form of idol-worship that was served by throwing stones at it. Therefore if someone, in disgust, threw a stone at such an idol, the would in fact be acting in the very opposite way to which they intended. Similarly one who teaches an unworthy student is actually doing damage. The *Ein Yaakov* explains that *R’ Elazar ben Azarya* however felt that this principle only applies if the teacher knows with certainty that the student is not worthy; in all other cases however, the student should be admitted.¹ Furthermore he held strongly by the principle that “one should always be engaged in *Torah* and *Mitzvot*, even not with pure intentions, for through it they will arrive at performance with pure intentions” (*mitoch she’lo lishma ba lishma*).

The *Ben Yehoyada* asks, where were the rest of the sages in this debate? Had they all disagreed with *Rabban Gamliel* then he would never have been able to institute such a

policy. It must be that they all agree with *Rabban Gamliel* and then after with *R’ Elazar ben Azarya*. What caused the change in heart? He explains that sages were influenced by the miracle experience by *R’ Elazar ben Azarya*. It is well known that *R’ Elazar ben Azarya* was only eighteen years of age when he was elected. Miraculously, on that day he grew eight rows of white hair in his beard. The *Ben Yehoyada* asks that this appears to be a pointless miracle. If someone is old, that should demand respect even if they do not have a white beard. Conversely, if they are young, a coloured beard would not be a device that garners their respect; here everyone knew how old *R’ Elazar ben Azarya* was. He explains that indeed the miracle was a purposeful sign that related to this very debate. It was indeed important that anyone, even though, *ein tocho ke’baro* be admitted because of *mitoch she’lo lishma ba lishma*. Even though *R’ Elazar ben Azarya*’s inside, his true young age, did not resemble his outside, the miracle nonetheless occurred to aid in garnering the required honour, as eventually his inside will catch-up. Similarly, with learning, even if *ein tocho ke’baro* he should be admitted, as the *talmid* will eventually make the transition to learning *lishma* and his “inside” will catch-up.

The *Ben Yehoyada* explains another strange detail in this story. The *Gemara* relates that when *Rabban Gamliel* saw the masses of *talmidim* enter the *beit midrash* he was concerned that maybe his policy resulted in preventing *Torah* from *Am Yisrael*. His mind was set at ease as later he was shown in a dream a white cistern full of ashes. The implication being that even though those now entering appear pristine they were not worthy. The *Gemara* adds that this is not really true, yet *Hashem* wished to set his mind at ease. The *Ben Yehoyada* asks why is “not really true”? Is *Hashem* showing *Rabban Gamliel* a lie just to make him happy? He explains, that there is difference if the cistern was filled with ash (*eifer*) and dust (*afar*). Ash itself will never come to anything. Earth on the other hand may be fashioned into utensils. Really, philosophically, *Rabban Gamliel* was wrong; we do consider *mitoch she’lo lishma ba lishma*. Nonetheless, *Hashem* was showing *Rabban Gamliel* those that entered that day, who he would have rejected, their insides were ashes and would not have made this transition. Nonetheless this is an assessment only *Hashem* can make so – we are not prophets. Therefore *R’ Elazar ben Azarya*’s approach still stands.

David Bankier

¹ See *Rambam Talmud Torah* 4:1, and the *Kesef* and *Lechem Mishnah*.

Revision Questions

שבועות ח' די - ו'

- What is the law if a *shomer* swore that the ox was stolen, and witnesses came and said that the *shomer* stole, slaughtered and sold the ox? (ח' די)
- Regarding the previous question, what is the law if the *shomer* saw the witnesses approaching and quickly admitted that he stole the ox? (ח' די)
- What is the law if a *sho'el* made a *shevuah* stating that the animal he was guarding was lost but in truth it had died? (ח' ה')
- Regarding the previous question, what if the *sho'el* made a *shevu'ah* denying ever having borrowed the ox? (ח' ו')
- What are the two general rules brought at the end of the *masechet*? (ח' ו')

עדיות א' - ג' - א'

- What are the three debates between *Shammai* and *Hillel* brought in the beginning of the *masechet*? (א' - ג' - א')
- What is different about how we rule in these three cases? (א' - ג' - א')
- In the final case, what is strange about the way *Hillel* presents his case? (א' ג')
- What is special about the conclusion in the third case? (א' ג')
- Why does the *Mishnah* mention the opinions of *Shammai* and *Hillel* if the *Halacha* does not follow their opinions? (א' ד')
- Why does the *Mishnah* mention a minority opinion of the *Halacha* follows the majority? Provide two answers. (א' ה' - ו')
- What are the two requirements for a *Beit Din* to overrule a decision of another *Beit Din*? (א' ה')
- What is unique about the debates in *Mishnayot* 7-11? (א' ו')
- What is the debate regarding how *rova atzamot* is calculated and for what law is it important? (א' ו')
- What are the four opinions regarding the treatment of *karshinei terumah*? (א' ח')
- What is the debate regarding exchanging *ma'aser sheni* money? (א' ט')
- Can one transfer the *kedusha* from *ma'aser sheni* fruit and money onto money? (א' ט')
- List all the opinions in the debate regarding exchanging *ma'aser sheni* money in *Yerushalaim*. (א' י')
- What are the two debates between *Beit Shammai*, *Beit Hillel* and *Shammai* regarding chairs? (א' י"א)

Local Shiurim

Sunday -Thursday
Between mincha & ma'ariv
Mizrachi Shul

Friday & Shabbat
10 minutes before mincha
Mizrachi Shul

Audio Shiurim on-line!

- 613.org/mishnah.html
- www.shemayisrael.com/mishna/



Next Week's Mishnayot...

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	שבת קודש
30 th December כ"א טבת	31 st December כ"ב טבת	1 st January כ"ג טבת	2 nd January כ"ד טבת	3 rd January כ"ה טבת	4 th January כ"ו טבת	5 th January כ"ז טבת
Eduyot 1:12-13	Eduyot 1:14-2:1	Eduyot 2:2-3	Eduyot 2:4-5	Eduyot 2:6-7	Eduyot 2:-8	Eduyot 2:10-3:1

