

The Talmudic Texts:

Text 1

Bava Metzia 58b:

מתני' כשם שאונאה במקח וממכר כך אונאה בדברים לא יאמר לו בכמה חפץ זה והוא אינו רוצה ליקח אם היה בעל תשובה לא יאמר לו זכור מעשיך הראשונים אם הוא בן גרים לא יאמר לו זכור מעשה **MISHNA: Just as there is a prohibition against exploitation [ona'a] in buying and selling, so is there ona'a in statements, i.e., verbal mistreatment.** The mishna proceeds to cite examples of verbal mistreatment. **One may not say to a seller: For how much are you selling this item, if he does not wish to purchase it.** He thereby upsets the seller when the deal fails to materialize. The mishna lists other examples: **If one is a penitent, another may not say to him: Remember your earlier deeds. If one is the child of converts, another may not say to him: Remember the deeds of your ancestors, as it is stated: "And a convert shall you neither mistreat, nor shall you oppress him" (Exodus 22:20)**

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Bava Metzia 59b-60a:

§ Apropos the topic of verbal mistreatment, **we learned** in a mishna **there (Kelim 5:10): If one cut an earthenware oven widthwise into segments, and placed sand between each and every segment, Rabbi Eliezer deems it ritually pure.** Because of the sand, its legal status is not that of a complete vessel, and therefore it is not susceptible to ritual impurity. **And the Rabbis deem it ritually impure,** as it is functionally a complete oven.

וזה הוא תנור של עכנאי מאי עכנאי אמר רב יהודה אמר שמואל שהקיפו דברים כעכנא זו וטמאוהו תנא **And this is known as the oven of akhnai.** The Gemara asks: **What is the relevance of akhnai, a snake, in this context? Rav Yehuda said that Shmuel said:** It is characterized in that manner due to the fact **that the Rabbis surrounded it with their statements like this snake,** which often forms a coil when at rest, **and deemed it impure.** The Sages **taught: On that day,** when they discussed this matter, **Rabbi Eliezer answered all possible answers in the world to support his opinion, but the Rabbis did not accept his explanations from him.**

אמר להם אם הלכה כמותי חרוב זה יוכיח נעקר חרוב ממקומו מאה אמה ואמרי לה ארבע מאות אמה אמרו לו אין מביאין ראיה מן החרוב חזר ואמר להם אם הלכה כמותי אמת המים יוכיחו חזרו אמת המים אמרו לו אין מביאין ראיה מאמת המים After failing to convince the Rabbis

logically, Rabbi Eliezer **said to them: If the *halakha* is in accordance with my opinion, this carob tree will prove it. The carob tree was uprooted from its place one hundred cubits, and some say four hundred cubits. The Rabbis said to him: One does not cite halakhic proof from the carob tree. Rabbi Eliezer then said to them: If the *halakha* is in accordance with my opinion, the stream will prove it. The water in the stream turned backward and began flowing in the opposite direction. They said to him: One does not cite halakhic proof from a stream.**

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 Rabbi Eliezer **then said to them: If the *halakha* is in accordance with my opinion, the walls of the study hall will prove it. The walls of the study hall leaned inward and began to fall. Rabbi Yehoshua scolded the walls and said to them: If Torah scholars are contending with each other in matters of *halakha*, what is the nature of your involvement in this dispute? The Gemara relates: The walls did not fall because of the deference due Rabbi Yehoshua, but they did not straighten because of the deference due Rabbi Eliezer, and they still remain leaning.**

חזר ואמר להם אם הלכה כמותי מן השמים יוכיחו יצאתה בת קול ואמרה מה לכם אצל ר"א שהלכה Rabbi Eliezer **then said to them: If the *halakha* is in accordance with my opinion, Heaven will prove it. A Divine Voice emerged from Heaven and said: Why are you differing with Rabbi Eliezer, as the *halakha* is in accordance with his opinion in every place that he expresses an opinion?**

עמד רבי יהושע על רגליו ואמר (דברים ל, יב) 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 (שמות כג, ב) אחרי רבים להטות אשכחיה רבי נתן לאליהו א"ל מאי עביד קוב"ה בהיהא שעתא א"ל קא חייך ואמר נצחוני בני **Rabbi Yehoshua stood on his feet and said: It is written: "It is not in heaven"** (Deuteronomy 30:12). The Gemara asks: **What** is the relevance of the phrase "It is not in heaven" in this context? **Rabbi Yirmeya says: Since the Torah was already given at Mount Sinai, we do not regard a Divine Voice, as You already wrote at Mount Sinai, in the Torah: "After a majority to incline"** (Exodus 23:2). Since the majority of Rabbis disagreed with Rabbi Eliezer's opinion, the *halakha* is not ruled in accordance with his opinion. The Gemara relates: Years after, **Rabbi Natan encountered Elijah the prophet and said to him: What did the Holy One, Blessed be He, do at that time, when Rabbi Yehoshua issued his declaration? Elijah said to him: The Holy One, Blessed be He, smiled and said: My children have triumphed over Me; My children have triumphed over Me.**

אמרו אותו היום הביאו כל טהרות שטיהר ר"א ושרפום באש ונמנו עליו וברכוהו ואמרו מי ילך ויודיעו The Sages **said: On that day, the Sages brought all the ritually pure items deemed pure by the ruling of Rabbi Eliezer with regard to the oven and burned them in fire, and**

the Sages reached a consensus in his regard and ostracized him. And the Sages said: **Who will go and inform him of his ostracism? Rabbi Akiva, his beloved disciple, said to them: I will go, lest an unseemly person go and inform him in a callous and offensive manner, and he would thereby destroy the entire world.**

מה עשה ר"ע לבש שחורים ונתעטף שחורים וישב לפניו ברחוק ארבע אמות אמר לו ר"א עקיבא מה יום מיומים אמר לו רבי כמדומה לי שחבירים בדילים ממך אף הוא קרע בגדיו וחליץ מנעליו ונשמט וישב על **What did Rabbi Akiva do? He wore black and wrapped himself in black,** as an expression of mourning and pain, **and sat before Rabbi Eliezer at a distance of four cubits,** which is the distance that one must maintain from an ostracized individual. **Rabbi Eliezer said to him: Akiva, what is different about today from other days,** that you comport yourself in this manner? Rabbi Akiva **said to him: My teacher, it appears to me that your colleagues are distancing themselves from you.** He employed euphemism, as actually they distanced Rabbi Eliezer from them. Rabbi Eliezer **too, rent his garments and removed his shoes,** as is the custom of an ostracized person, **and he dropped from his seat and sat upon the ground.**

זלגו עיניו דמעות לקה העולם שלישי בזיתים ושלישי בחטים ושלישי בשעורים ויש אומרים אף בצק שבידי The Gemara relates: **His eyes shed tears,** and as a result **the entire world was afflicted: One-third of its olives were afflicted, and one-third of its wheat, and one-third of its barley. And some say that even dough kneaded in a woman's hands spoiled.** The Sages taught: **There was great anger on that day, as any place that Rabbi Eliezer fixed his gaze was burned.**

ואף ר"ג היה בא בספינה עמד עליו נחשול לטבעו אמר כמדומה לי שאין זה אלא בשביל ר"א בן הורקנוס עמד על רגליו ואמר רבונו של עולם גלוי וידוע לפניך שלא לכבודי עשיתי ולא לכבוד בית אבא עשיתי **And even Rabban Gamliel, the Nasi of the Sanhedrin at Yavne, the head of the Sages who were responsible for the decision to ostracize Rabbi Eliezer, was coming on a boat at the time, and a large wave swelled over him and threatened to drown him. Rabban Gamliel said: It seems to me that this is only for the sake of Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus,** as God punishes those who mistreat others. Rabban Gamliel **stood on his feet and said: Master of the Universe, it is revealed and known before You that neither was it for my honor that I acted when ostracizing him, nor was it for the honor of the house of my father that I acted; rather, it was for Your honor, so that disputes will not proliferate in Israel.** In response, **the sea calmed from its raging.**

אימא שלום דביתהו דר"א אחתיה דר"ג הואי מההוא מעשה ואילך לא הוה שבקה ליה לר"א למיפל על אפיה ההוא יומא ריש ירחא הוה ואיחלף לה בין מלא להסר איכא דאמרי אתא עניא וקאי אבבא אפיקא The Gemara further relates: **Imma Shalom, the wife of Rabbi Eliezer, was the sister of Rabban Gamliel. From that incident forward, she would not allow Rabbi Eliezer to lower his head and recite the *tahanun* prayer, which includes supplication and entreaties. She feared that were her husband to bemoan his fate and**

pray at that moment, her brother would be punished. **A certain day was** around the day of **the New Moon, and she** inadvertently **substituted a full** thirty-day month **for a deficient** twenty-nine-day month, i.e., she thought that it was the New Moon, when one does not lower his head in supplication, but it was not. **Some say that a pauper came and stood at the door, and she took bread out to him.** The result was that she left her husband momentarily unsupervised.

אשכחתייה 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 אונאה When she returned, **she found him** and saw **that he had lowered his head** in prayer. **She said to him: Arise, you already killed my brother. Meanwhile,** the sound of a **shofar** emerged from the house of Rabban Gamliel to announce **that the Nasi had died.** Rabbi Eliezer said to her: **From where did you know** that your brother would die? **She said to him: This is** the tradition that **I received from the house of the father of my father: All the gates** of Heaven are apt to be **locked, except for the gates** of prayer for victims **of verbal mistreatment.**

Text 2

Sanhedrin 68a:

והתניא כשחלה ר' אליעזר נכנסו ר' עקיבא וחביריו לבקריו הוא יושב בקינוף שלו והן יושבין בטרקלין The Gemara asks: **And did Rabbi Akiva learn these halakhot from Rabbi Yehoshua? But isn't it taught** in a *baraita*: **When Rabbi Eliezer took ill, Rabbi Akiva and his colleagues came to visit him. He was sitting on his canopied bed [bekinof], and they were sitting in his parlor [biteraklin];** they did not know if he would be able to receive them, due to his illness.

ואותו היום ע"ש היה ונכנס הורקנוס בנו לחלוץ תפליו גער בו ויצא בנוזיפה אמר להן לחביריו כמדומה אני שדעתו של אבא נטרפה אמר להן דעתו ודעת אמו נטרפה היאך מניחין איסור סקילה ועוסקין באיסור שבות **And that day was Shabbat eve, and Rabbi Eliezer's son Hyrcanus entered to remove his phylacteries,** as phylacteries are not worn on Shabbat. His father **berated him, and he left reprimanded.** Hyrcanus **said to his father's colleagues: It appears to me that father went insane,** since he berated me for no reason. Rabbi Eliezer heard this and **said to them: He, Hyrcanus, and his mother went insane. How can they neglect** Shabbat preparations with regard to **prohibitions** punishable by **stoning,** such as lighting the candles and preparing hot food, **and engage in** preparations concerning **prohibitions by rabbinic decree,** such as wearing phylacteries on Shabbat?

כיון שראו חכמים שדעתו מיושבת עליו נכנסו וישבו לפניו מרחוק ד' אמות **Since the Sages perceived** from this retort **that his mind was stable, they entered and sat before**

him at a distance of four cubits, as he was ostracized (see *Bava Metzia* 59b). It is forbidden to sit within four cubits of an ostracized person.

א"ל למה באתם א"ל ללמוד תורה באנו א"ל ועד עכשיו למה לא באתם א"ל לא היה לנו פנאי אמר להן Rabbi Eliezer תמיה אני אם ימותו מיתת עצמן אמר לו ר' עקיבא שלי מהו אמר לו שלך קשה משלהן **Rabbi Eliezer said to them: Why have you come? They said to him: We have come to study Torah**, as they did not want to say that they came to visit him due to his illness. **Rabbi Eliezer said to them: And why have you not come until now? They said to him: We did not have spare time.** **Rabbi Eliezer said to them: I would be surprised if these Sages die their own death**, i.e., a natural death. Rather, they will be tortured to death by the Romans. **Rabbi Akiva said to him: How will my death come about? Rabbi Eliezer said to him: Your death will be worse than theirs**, as you were my primary student and you did not come to study.

נטל שתי זרועותיו והניחן על לבו אמר אוי לכם שתי זרועותיי שהן כשתי ספרי תורה שנגללין הרבה תורה למדתי והרבה תורה לימדתי הרבה תורה למדתי ולא חסרתי מרבתי אפילו ככלב המלקק מן הים הרבה **Rabbi Eliezer raised his two arms and placed them on his heart, and he said: Woe to you, my two arms, as they are like two Torah scrolls that are now being rolled up**, and will never be opened again. **I have learned much Torah, and I have taught much Torah. I have learned much Torah, and I have not taken away from my teachers**, i.e., I have not received from their wisdom, **even like a dog lapping from the sea. I have taught much Torah, and my students have taken away from me**, i.e., they have received from my wisdom, **only like the tiny amount that a paintbrush removes from a tube of paint.**

ולא עוד אלא שאני שונה שלש מאות הלכות בבהרת עזה ולא היה אדם ששואלני בהן דבר מעולם ולא עוד אלא שאני שונה שלש מאות הלכות ואמרי לה שלשת אלפים הלכות בנטיעת קשואין ולא היה אדם שואלני **Moreover, I can teach three hundred halakhot with regard to a snow-white leprous mark [bebaheret], but no person has ever asked me anything about them.** He could not find a student who could fully understand him in those matters. **Moreover, I can teach three hundred halakhot, and some say that Rabbi Eliezer said three thousand halakhot, with regard to the planting of cucumbers by sorcery, but no person has ever asked me anything about them, besides Akiva ben Yosef.**

פעם אחת אני והוא מהלכין היינו בדרך אמר לי רבי למדני בנטיעת קשואין אמרתי דבר אחד נתמלאה כל השדה קשואין אמר לי רבי למדתני נטיעתן למדני עקירתן אמרתי דבר אחד נתקבצו כולן למקום אחד **Rabbi Eliezer described the incident: Once he and I were walking along the way, and he said to me: My teacher, teach me about the planting of cucumbers. I said one statement of sorcery, and the entire field became filled with cucumbers. He said to me: My teacher, you have taught me about planting them; teach me about uprooting them. I said one statement and they all were gathered to one place.**

אמרו לו הכדור והאמוס והקמיע וצרור המרגליות ומשקולת קטנה מהו אמר להן הן טמאין וטהרתן במה
After these comments, the Sages **asked him** questions of *halakha*: **What is the**
halakha, with regard to ritual impurity, of **a ball** made of leather and stuffed with
rags, **and** likewise **a last**, the frame on which a shoe is fashioned, which is made of
leather and stuffed with rags, **and** likewise **an amulet** wrapped in leather, **and a**
pouch for pearls, wrapped in leather, **and a small weight**, which is wrapped in
leather? Rabbi Eliezer **said to them: They are susceptible to impurity, and their**
purification is effected by immersing them in a ritual bath **as they are**, as there is no
need to open them up.

מנעל שעל גבי האמוס מהו אמר להן הוא טהור ויצאה נשמתו בטהרה עמד רבי יהושע על רגליו ואמר
They asked him further: **What is the** *halakha* with regard to **a**
shoe that is on a last? Is it considered a complete vessel, which needs no further
preparation, and is therefore susceptible to impurity? Rabbi Eliezer **said to them: It is**
pure, and with this word, **his soul left him in purity. Rabbi Yehoshua stood on his**
feet and said: The vow is permitted; the vow is permitted; i.e., the ostracism that
was placed on Rabbi Eliezer is removed.

למוצאי שבת פגע בו רבי עקיבא מן קיסרי ללוד היה מכה בבשרו עד שדמו שותת לארץ פתח עליו בשורה
Rabbi ואמר (מלכים ב ב, יב) אבי אבי רכב ישראל ופרשיו הרבה מעות יש לי ואין לי שולחני להרצותן
Akiva was not present at the time of his death. **At the conclusion of Shabbat, Rabbi**
Akiva encountered the funeral procession on his way **from Caesarea to Lod.** Rabbi
Akiva **was striking his flesh** in terrible anguish and regret **until his blood flowed to**
the earth. He began to eulogize Rabbi Eliezer **in the row** of those comforting the
mourners, **and said: “My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and its**
horsemen” (II Kings 2:12). **I have many coins, but I do not have a money changer**
to whom **to give them**, i.e., I have many questions, but after your death I have no one
who can answer them.

Text 3

Berakhot 27b:

תנו רבנן: מעשה בתלמיד אחד שָׁבָא לְפָנֵי רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ. אָמַר לוֹ: תְּפִלַּת עֶרְבֵית רְשׁוּת אוֹ חוֹבָה? אָמַר לִיה: **The Sages taught: There was an incident involving a student, who came before Rabbi Yehoshua. The student said to him: Is the evening prayer optional or obligatory? Rabbi Yehoshua said to him: Optional.**

בָּא לְפָנֵי רַבִּן גַּמְלִיאֵל, אָמַר לוֹ: תְּפִלַּת עֶרְבֵית רְשׁוּת אוֹ חוֹבָה? אָמַר לוֹ: חוֹבָה. אָמַר לוֹ: וְהֲלֹא רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ
The same student **came before Rabban Gamliel and said to him: Is the evening prayer optional or**
obligatory? Rabban Gamliel said to him: Obligatory. The student **said to Rabban**

Gamliel: **But didn't Rabbi Yehoshua tell me that the evening prayer is optional?** Rabban Gamliel said to the student: **Wait until the "masters of the shields,"** a reference to the Torah scholars who battle in the war of Torah, **enter the study hall,** at which point we will discuss this issue.

כְּשֶׁנִכְנסוּ בְּעֵלֵי תְּרִיסִין, עֹמֵד הַשּׁוֹאֵל וְשָׁאַל: תְּפִלַּת עֶרְבִית רְשׁוּת אוֹ חֻבָּה? אָמַר לוֹ רַבֵּן גַּמְלִיאֵל: חֻבָּה. אָמַר לָהֶם רַבֵּן גַּמְלִיאֵל לְחֻכְמֵיהֶם: כְּלוּם יֵשׁ אָדָם שְׁחוּלֵק בְּדִבְרֵי זֶה? אָמַר לֵיהֶם רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ: לֹא. אָמַר לוֹ: **When the masters of the shields entered, the questioner stood** before everyone present **and asked: Is the evening prayer optional or obligatory? Rabban Gamliel said to him: Obligatory.** In order to ascertain whether or not Rabbi Yehoshua still maintained his opinion, **Rabban Gamliel said to the Sages: Is there any person who disputes this matter? Rabbi Yehoshua said to him: No,** no one disagrees. In deference to the *Nasi*, he did not wish to argue with him publicly (*Tziyyun LeNefesh Hayya*). Rabban Gamliel said to Rabbi Yehoshua: **But was it not in your name that they told me that the evening prayer is optional?**

אָמַר לֵיהֶם: יְהוֹשֻׁעַ, עֹמֵד עַל רַגְלֶיךָ וְנִעִידוּ בָּךְ. עֹמֵד רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ עַל רַגְלָיו וְאָמַר אֶלְמָלֵא אֲנִי חַי וְהוּא מֵת — Rabban Gamliel said to Rabbi Yehoshua: **Yehoshua, stand on your feet and they will testify against you. Rabbi Yehoshua stood on his feet and said: If I were alive and the student were dead, the living can contradict the dead,** and I could deny issuing that ruling. **Now that I am alive and he is alive, how can the living contradict the living?** I have no choice but to admit that I said it.

הָיָה רַבֵּן גַּמְלִיאֵל יוֹשֵׁב וְדוֹרֵשׁ וְרַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ עֹמֵד עַל רַגְלָיו, עַד שֶׁרָגְנוּ כָּל הַעָם וְאָמְרוּ לְחוֹצְפִית הַתּוֹרָה: עֹמֵד! עֹמֵד. In the meantime, **Rabban Gamliel, as the Nasi, was sitting and lecturing, and Rabbi Yehoshua all the while was standing on his feet,** because Rabban Gamliel did not instruct him to sit. He remained standing in deference to the *Nasi*. This continued for some time, **until** it aroused great resentment against Rabban Gamliel, and **all of the people** assembled began **murmuring and said to Hutzpit the disseminator: Stop** conveying Rabban Gamliel's lecture. **And he stopped.**

אָמְרֵי: עַד כַּמָּה נִצְעָרִיהָ וְנִיזִיל, בְּרֵאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה אֲשֶׁתִּקַּד צַעֲרִיהָ. בְּבִכּוֹרוֹת כִּמְעַשָּׂה זְרַבִּי צְדוֹק צַעֲרִיהָ. הָכָא אָמְרֵי: **How long will Rabban Gamliel continue afflicting him? Last year on Rosh HaShana, he afflicted him;** Rabban Gamliel ordered Rabbi Yehoshua to come to him carrying his staff and bag, on the day on which Yom Kippur occurred, according to Rabbi Yehoshua's calculations. **Regarding the firstborn, in the incident** involving the question of **Rabbi Tzadok, he afflicted him** just as he did now, and forced him to remain standing as punishment for his failure to defend his differing opinion. **Here too, he is afflicting him. Let us remove him** from his position as *Nasi*.

מֵאֵן נוֹקִים לֵיהֶם? נוֹקְמִיהָ לְרַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ — בְּעַל מְעַשָּׂה הוּא. נוֹקְמִיהָ לְרַבִּי עֲקִיבָא — דִּילְמָא עֲנִישׁ לֵיהֶם, דְּלִית מֵאֵן נוֹקִים לֵיהֶם? נוֹקְמִיהָ לְרַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ — בְּעַל מְעַשָּׂה הוּא. נוֹקְמִיהָ לְרַבִּי עֲקִיבָא — דִּילְמָא עֲנִישׁ לֵיהֶם, דְּלִית מֵאֵן נוֹקִים לֵיהֶם. It was so agreed, but the question arose: **Who shall we establish** in his

place? Shall we **establish Rabbi Yehoshua** in his place? The Sages rejected that option because Rabbi Yehoshua **was party to the incident** for which Rabban Gamliel was deposed. Appointing him would be extremely upsetting for Rabban Gamliel. Shall we **establish Rabbi Akiva** in his place? The Sages rejected that option because Rabbi Akiva, who descended from a family of converts, would be vulnerable. **Perhaps** due to Rabban Gamliel's resentment he **would** cause **him** to be divinely **punished as he lacks the merit of his ancestors** to protect him.

אָלָא נוקמיה לרבי אלעזר בן עזריה, דהוא חכם, והוא עשיר, והוא עשירי לעזרא. הוא חכם — דאי מקשי ליה, מפרק ליה. והוא עשיר — דאי אית ליה לפלוחי לבי קיסר, אף הוא אזל ופלח. והוא עשירי לעזרא — דאית ליה זכות אבות, ולא מצוי עניש ליה. אתו ואמרו ליה: ניקח ליה למר דליהני ריש מתיבתא? אמר **Rather**, suggested the Sages, **let us establish Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya** in his place, his outstanding characteristics set him apart from the other candidates. **He is wise, rich, and a tenth generation descendant of Ezra**. The Gemara explains: **He is wise, so if Rabban Gamliel raises a challenge** in matters of Torah, **he will answer it** and not be embarrassed. **And he is rich, so if the need arises to pay homage to the Caesar's court** and serve as a representative of Israel to lobby and negotiate, he has sufficient wealth to cover the costs of the long journeys, taxes, and gifts, so **he too is able to go and pay homage**. **And he is a tenth generation descendant of Ezra, so he has the merit of his ancestors, and Rabban Gamliel will be unable to cause him to be punished. They came and said to him: Would the Master consent to being the Head of the Yeshiva? He said to them: I will go and consult with my household. He went and consulted with his wife. She said to him:**

דלקא מעברין לך. אמר לה: לשתמש אינש יומא חדא בכסא דמוקרא, ולמחר ליתבר. אמרה ליה: לית לך חינרתא. ההוא יומא בר תמני סרי שני הנה, אתרחיש ליה ניסא ואהדרו ליה תמני סרי דרי חינרתא. היינו דקאמר רבי אלעזר בן עזריה: הרי אני כבן שבעים שנה. ולא "בן שבעים שנה" There is room for concern. **Perhaps they will remove you** from office just as they removed Rabban Gamliel. **He said to her**, based on the folk saying: **Let a person use an expensive goblet one day and let it break tomorrow**. In other words, one should take advantage of an opportunity that presents itself and he need not concern himself whether or not it will last. **She said to him: You have no white hair**, and it is inappropriate for one so young to head the Sages. The Gemara relates: **That day, he was eighteen years old, a miracle transpired for him and eighteen rows of hair turned white**. The Gemara comments: **That explains that which Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya said: I am as one who is seventy years old and he did not say: I am seventy years old**, because he looked older than he actually was.

תנא אותו היום, סלקוהו לשומר הפתח ונתנה להם רשות לתלמידים ליכנס. שקהי רבן גמליאל מכריו תנא: **It was taught: On that day** that they removed Rabban Gamliel from his position and appointed Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya in his place, there was also a fundamental change in the general approach of the study hall as **they dismissed the guard at the door and permission was granted to the**

students to enter. Instead of Rabban Gamliel's selective approach that asserted that the students must be screened before accepting them into the study hall, the new approach asserted that anyone who seeks to study should be given opportunity to do so. **As Rabban Gamliel would proclaim and say: Any student whose inside, his thoughts and feelings, are not like his outside, i.e., his conduct and his character traits are lacking, will not enter the study hall.**

ההוא יומא אתוספופי כמא ספסלי. אמר רבי יוחנן: פליגי בה אבא יוסף בן דוסתאי ורבנן. חד אמר: אתוספוי ארבע מאה ספסלי. וחד אמר: שבע מאה ספסלי. הנה קא חלשה דעתיה דרבן גמליאל, אמר: דלמא חס ושלום מנעתי תורה מישראל. אחזו ליה בחלמיה חצבי חיוגרי דמליין קטמא. ולא היא, ההיא ליתובי דעתיה, הוא דאחזו ליה. The Gemara relates: **On that day several benches were added to the study hall to accommodate the numerous students. Rabbi Yohanan said: Abba Yosef ben Dostai and the Rabbis disputed this matter. One said: Four hundred benches were added to the study hall. And one said: Seven hundred benches were added to the study hall.** When he saw the tremendous growth in the number of students, **Rabban Gamliel was disheartened. He said: Perhaps, Heaven forbid, I prevented Israel from engaging in Torah study. They showed him in his dream white jugs filled with ashes** alluding to the fact that the additional students were worthless idlers. The Gemara comments: **That is not the case, but that dream was shown to him to ease his mind** so that he would not feel bad.

תנא: עדינות בו ביום נשנית. וכל היכא דאמרינן "בו ביום", ההוא יומא הנה. ולא היתה הלכה שהיתה תלויה תנא: בבית המדרש שלא פירשוהו. ואף רבן גמליאל לא מנע עצמו מבית המדרש אפילו שעה אחת **It was taught:** There is a tradition that tractate *Eduyyot* was taught that day. **And everywhere** in the Mishna or in a *baraita* **that they say: On that day, it is referring to that day. There was no halakha whose ruling was pending in the study hall that they did not explain** and arrive at a practical halakhic conclusion. **And even Rabban Gamliel did not avoid the study hall for even one moment,** as he held no grudge against those who removed him from office and he participated in the halakhic discourse in the study hall as one of the Sages.

As we learned in a mishna: **On that day, Yehuda, the Ammonite convert, came before the students in the study hall and he said to them: What is my legal status in terms of entering into the congregation of Israel, i.e., to marry a Jewish woman?**

אמר לו רבן גמליאל: אסור אתה לבא בקהל. אמר לו רבי יהושע: מותר אתה לבא בקהל. אמר לו רבן גמליאל: וקלא פבר נאמר "לא יבא עמוני ומואבי בקהל ה'?" אמר לו רבי יהושע: וכי עמוני ומואבי במקומן הן יושבין? פבר עלה סנהריב מלך אשור ובלבל את כל האומות, שנאמר: "ואסיר גבלות עמים ועתודותיהם שושתי ואוריד פביר יושבים", וכל דפריש — מרובא פריש **Rabban Gamliel said to him: You are forbidden to enter into the congregation. Rabbi Yehoshua said to him: You are permitted to enter into the congregation. Rabban Gamliel said to Rabbi Yehoshua: Wasn't it already stated: "An Ammonite and a Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord; even to the tenth generation shall none**

of them enter into the congregation of the Lord forever” (Deuteronomy 23:4)? How can you permit him to enter the congregation? **Rabbi Yehoshua said to Rabban Gamliel: Do Ammon and Moab reside in their place? Sennacherib already came and**, through his policy of population transfer, **scrambled all the nations** and settled other nations in place of Ammon. Consequently, the current residents of Ammon and Moab are not ethnic Ammonites and Moabites, **as it is stated in** reference to Sennacherib: **“I have removed the bounds of the peoples, and have robbed their treasures, and have brought down as one mighty the inhabitants”** (Isaiah 10:13). **And** although it is conceivable that this particular convert is an ethnic Ammonite, nevertheless, there is no need for concern due to the halakhic principle: **Anything that parts from a group parts from the majority**, and the assumption is that he is from the majority of nations whose members are permitted to enter the congregation.

אמר לו רבן גמליאל: והלא כבר נאמר “ואתרי כן אשיב את שבות בני עמון נאם ה’”, וכבר שבו! **Rabban Gamliel said to Rabbi Yehoshua: But wasn’t it already stated: “But afterward I will bring back the captivity of the children of Ammon, says the Lord”** (Jeremiah 49:6) **and they have already returned** to their land? Therefore, he is an ethnic Ammonite and he may not convert.

אמר לו רבי יהושע: והלא כבר נאמר “ושבתי את שבות עמי ישראל”, ועדיין לא שבו. מיד התירוהו לבא בקהל. **Rabbi Yehoshua said to Rabban Gamliel: That is no proof. Wasn’t it already stated in another prophecy: “And I will turn the captivity of My people Israel and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them”** (Amos 9:14), **and they have not yet returned?** In rendering the ruling, only proven facts may be taken into consideration. **They immediately permitted him to enter the congregation.** This proves that Rabban Gamliel did not absent himself from the study hall that day and participated in the halakhic discourse.

אמר רבן גמליאל: הואיל והכי הוה, איזיל ואפייסיה לרבי יהושע. פי מטא לביתיה, תזינהו לאשיתא דביתיה דמשחרן. אמר ליה: מכותלי ביתך ניכר שפחמי אתה. אמר לו: אוי לו לדור שאתה פרנסו, שאי אתה יודע בצערן של תלמידי חכמים, במה הם מתפרנסים ובמה הם נזונים. **Rabban Gamliel said to himself: Since this is the situation, that the people are following Rabbi Yehoshua, apparently he was right. Therefore, it would be appropriate for me to go and appease Rabbi Yehoshua. When he reached Rabbi Yehoshua’s house, he saw that the walls of his house were black.** Rabban Gamliel said to Rabbi Yehoshua in wonderment: **From the walls of your house it is apparent that you are a blacksmith**, as until then he had no idea that Rabbi Yehoshua was forced to engage in that arduous trade in order to make a living. **Rabbi Yehoshua said to him: Woe unto a generation that you are its leader as you are unaware of the difficulties of Torah scholars, how they make a living and how they feed themselves.**

Rabban Gamliel said to him: **I insulted you, forgive me.** Rabbi Yehoshua paid him no attention and did not

forgive him. He asked him again: **Do it in deference to my father, Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel, who was one of the leaders of Israel at the time of the destruction of the Temple. He was appeased.**

אמרו: מאן ניזיל ולימא להו לרבנן. אמר להו ההוא פובס: אנה אוןלנא. שלח להו רבי יהושע לבי מדרשא: מאן דלביש מדא — ילבש מדא, ומאן דלא לביש מדא ימר ליה למאן דלביש מדא: שלח מדא ונאנה אלקשיה!? אמר להו רבי עקיבא לרבנן: טרוקו גלי דלא ליתו עבדי דרבן גמליאל ולצערו לרבנן. Now that Rabbi Yehoshua was no longer offended, it was only natural that Rabban Gamliel would be restored to his position. **They said: Who will go and inform the Sages?** Apparently, they were not eager to carry out the mission that would undo the previous actions and remove Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya from his position as *Nasi*. **This launderer said to them: I will go. Rabbi Yehoshua sent to the Sages to the study hall: The one who wears the uniform will continue to wear the uniform, the original Nasi will remain in his position so that the one who did not wear the uniform will not say to the one who wears the uniform, remove your uniform and I will wear it.** Apparently, the Sages believed that this emissary was dispatched at the initiative of Rabban Gamliel and they ignored him. **Rabbi Akiva said to the Sages: Lock the gates so that Rabban Gamliel's servants will not come and disturb the Sages.**

אמר רבי יהושע: מוטב דאיקום ואיזיל אנה לגבייהו. אהא טרף אכבא. אמר להו: מנה בן מנה נה. ושאינו לא מנה ולא בן מנה יאמר למנה בן מנה מימיה מי מערה ואפרה אפר מקלה. אמר לו רבי עקיבא: רבי יהושע, נתפייסת? כלום עשינו אלא בשביל כבודך, למחר אני ואתה נשכים לפתחו. When he heard what happened, **Rabbi Yehoshua said: It is best if I go to them. He came and knocked on the door. He said to them** with a slight variation: **One who sprinkles pure water on those who are ritually impure, son of one who sprinkles water shall continue to sprinkle water.** And it is inappropriate that he who is **neither one who sprinkles nor son of one who sprinkles will say to one who sprinkles son of one who sprinkles: Your water is cave water** and not the running water required to purify one exposed to ritual impurity imparted by a corpse **and your ashes are burnt ashes** and not the ashes of a red heifer. **Rabbi Akiva said to him: Rabbi Yehoshua, have you been appeased? Everything we did was to defend your honor.** If you have forgiven him, none of us is opposed. **Early tomorrow you and I will go to Rabban Gamliel's doorway** and offer to restore him to his position as *Nasi*.

אמרי: היכי נעביד, נעבריה — גמירי מעלין בקדש ואין מורידין. נדרוש מר קדא שבתא ומר קדא שבתא — אתי למנאווי. אלא: לדרוש רבן גמליאל תלתא שבתי ורבי אלעזר בן עזריה קדא שבתא. והיגו דאמר מר שבת של מי היתה — של רבי אלעזר בן עזריה היתה. ואותו תלמיד רבי שמעון בן יוחאי הנה. The question arose what to do with Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya? **They said: What shall we do? Remove him** from his position. That is inappropriate as we **learned a halakha** through tradition: **One elevates to a higher level of sanctity and does not downgrade.** Therefore, one who was the *Nasi* of the Sanhedrin cannot be demoted. **Let one Sage lecture one week and the other Sage one week, they will come to be jealous** one of another, as they will be forced to appoint one as the acting head of the

Sanhedrin. **Rather, Rabban Gamliel will lecture three weeks and Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya will lecture as head of the yeshiva one week.** That arrangement was adopted **and that is** the explanation of the exchange in tractate *Hagiga*: **Whose week was it? It was the week of Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya.** One final detail: **That student** who asked the original question that sparked this entire incident **was Rabbi Shimon ben Yoḥai.**