

Rabbi Lauren Tuchman Webinar Series Week 4

matan 

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July 9, 2020

www.rabbituchman.com

Please note:

In this course, we value interactive participation. To make for a more seamless and smooth experience, we ask that folks type in the chat as much as possible and Daniella will read comments throughout. If typing is not accessible, please indicate that in the chat and we will use a stacking method to allow for more voices to be heard. A stacking method is a means of creating an online order for speaking. Step up, step back. If you tend to speak often, step back a bit to allow for other voices to be heard.

Source 1: Babylonian Talmud, Chagiga 3A

לה בני אחתיה דרבי יוחנן דכל אימת דהוה עייל רבי לבי מדרשא
הוּ עיילי ויתבי קמייהו ומניידי ברישייהו ומרחשין שפוותייהו

The Gemara asks: **Is that to say that one who is not able to speak is not able to learn? But** consider the following incident. There were **two mute people who were in the neighborhood of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi. They were the sons of the daughter of Rabbi Yoḥanan ben Gudgeda, and some say that they were the sons of the sister of Rabbi Yoḥanan ben Gudgeda. Whenever Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi would enter the study hall they would also enter and sit before the Sages, and they would nod their heads as if they understood and move their lips.**

Source 1: Babylonian Talmud, Chagiga 3A

ובעי רבי רחמי עלייהו ואיתסו ואשתכח דהוו גמירי הלכתא וספרא
וספרי וכולה הש"ס

And Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi prayed for God to have mercy upon them, and they were healed. And it was discovered that they had learned and were proficient in *halakha*, i.e., Mishna; *Sifra*, the halakhic midrash on Leviticus; *Sifrei*, the halakhic midrash on Numbers and Deuteronomy; **and the entire Talmud**. This shows that those who cannot speak are able to learn.

Rabbi Tuchman's note: This is excerpted from a longer, complex and difficult discussion in the Gemara about whether folks who are deaf are obligated to perform mitzvot and, indeed, whether deaf folks who are nonverbal and unable to hear can learn at all. That discussion is reflective of its time and location and we are not going to unpack that inside. I do wish to acknowledge that it is a very difficult matter.

Source 1: Babylonian Talmud, Kiddushin 31A

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

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.

Source 1: Babylonian Talmud, Pesachim 116B

אמר רב אחא בר יעקב סומא פטור מלומר הגדה כתיב הכא
בעבור זה וכתוב התם בנונו זה מה להלן פרט לסומא אף כאן פרט
לסומין

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.

Source 1: Babylonian Talmud, Pesachim 116B

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

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.