

Torah in Motion 5786: History of the Korban Pesach - Is Jewish Law about Logic or Tradition

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<u>Talmud Bavli Pesachim 66a</u>	<u>Yerushalmi Pesachim 6:1, 33a</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>Part A: How Hillel Becomes Nasi</p> <p>גמ' תנו רבנן: הלכה זו נתעלמה מבני בתירא. פעם אחת הל ארבעה עשר להיות בשבת. שכחו ולא ידעו אם פסח דוחה את השבת אם לאו. אמרו: כלום יש אדם שיודע אם פסח דוחה את השבת אם לאו? אמרו להם: אדם אחד יש שעלה מבבל, והלל הבבלי שמו. ששימש שני גדולי הדור שמעיה ואבטליון, ויודע אם פסח דוחה את השבת אם לאו. שלחו וקראו לו.</p> <p>Our sages have taught: This law was concealed from Bnei Betera. Once the fourteenth [day of Nisan] fell on the Sabbath. They forgot and did not know whether the Pesach supersedes the Sabbath or not. Bnei Betera said: Is there anyone here who knows whether the Pesach supersedes the Sabbath or not? They said to Bnei Betera: There is one man who came up from Babylonia, and Hillel the Babylonian is his name. He served the two great men of the generation, Shemaya and Avtalion, and he knows whether the Pesach supersedes the Sabbath or not. Bnei Betera sent and called for him.</p> <p>אמרו לו: כלום אתה יודע אם הפסח דוחה את השבת אם לאו? אמר להם: וכי פסח אחד יש לנו בשנה שדוחה את השבת והלא הרבה יותר ממאתים פסחים יש לנו בשנה שדוחין את השבת! אמרו לו: מנין לך? אמר להם: נאמר "מועדו" בפסח ונאמר "מועדו" בתמיד - מה מועדו האמור בתמיד דוחה את השבת, אף מועדו האמור בפסח דוחה את השבת.</p> <p>Bnei Betera said to Hillel: Do you know whether the Pesach supersedes the Sabbath or not? Hillel said to them: Do we only have one Pesach during the year that supersedes the Sabbath? Do we not have many more that</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>Part A: How Hillel Becomes Nasi</p> <p>This law was concealed from the elders of Betera. Once the fourteenth [day of Nisan] fell on the Sabbath, and the elders of Betera did not know whether the Pesach supersedes the Sabbath or not.</p> <p>They said: There is here a certain Babylonian named Hillel, who served Shemaya and Avtalion. He knows whether the Pesach supersedes the Sabbath or not. Perhaps something good will come from him!?</p> <p>Hillel said to the [Elders of Betera]: Do we have but one Pesach alone throughout the whole year that supersedes the Sabbath? Do not many Pesachim throughout the year supersede the Sabbath?</p>

two hundred Pesachim during the year that supersede the Sabbath?"

Bnei Betera said to Hillel: How do you know this?

Hillel said to them: It says "at its appointed time" (Num 29:2) in connection with the Regular [sacrifice], and it says "at its appointed time" (Num 9:3) in connection with the Pesach. Just as "at its appointed time" (Num 29:2) [teaches that] the Regular sacrifice supersedes the Sabbath, so "at its appointed time" (Num 9:3) [teaches that] the Pesach supersedes the Sabbath.

ועוד קל וחומר הוא: ומה תמיד שאין ענוש כרת דוחה את השבת, פסח שענוש כרת אינו דין שדוחה את השבת?

מיד הושיבוהו בראש ומינוהו נשיא עליהם, והיה דורש כל היום כולו בהלכות הפסח.

Also, it can be deduced qal va-homer (קל וחומר): (If the Regular [sacrifice], for which one is not punished with excision (כרת), supersedes the Sabbath, then the Pesach, for which one is punished with excision (כרת) — is it not logical that it supersedes the Sabbath?"

Immediately they seated him at the head and appointed him Nasi over them, and he expounded the laws of the Pesach throughout the day.

They [the elders of Betera] said: **We already said - what good could come from you...**

Hillel started to expound [the law] for them based on a topical analogy (heqesh), an inference [qal va-homer] and a gezeira shava.

[From a topical analogy [היקש]: Since the Regular [sacrifice] is a communal sacrifice that supersedes the Sabbath, so too the Pesach is a communal sacrifice that supersedes the Sabbath.]

From a qal va-homer [קל וחומר]: If the Regular [sacrifice], for which one is not subject [to the punishment of] excision, supersedes the Sabbath, then the Pesach, for which one is [subject to the punishment] of excision, — is it not logical that it supersedes the Sabbath?

From a gezeira shava [גזירה שווה]: Just as the Regular [sacrifice], in connection with which it says "at its appointed time" (Num 29:2), supersedes the Sabbath, so too the Pesach, in connection with which it says "at its appointed time" (Num 9:3), supersedes the Sabbath.

They said to him: **Did we think that nothing good would come from a Babylonian!**

The topical analogy that you stated can be refuted: What you say of the Regular sacrifice, which has a limit [of two per day], you cannot say [=apply to] the Pesach, which has no limit

	<p>[in the number that may be offered.]</p> <p><u>The qal va-homer that you stated can be refuted:</u> What you say of the Regular [sacrifice], which is of the Most Holy [class of] sacrifices, you cannot say of the Pesach, which is of the Lesser Holy sacrifices.</p> <p><u>The gezeira shava that you stated</u>—one may not create a gezeira shava from his own study</p> <p>Even though he [Hillel] was sitting and expounding for them the whole day, the Elders of Betera did not accept it [the ruling] from him until he said to them: May [harm] befall me if I did not learn thus from Shemaya and Avtalion.</p> <p>As soon as the Elders of Betera heard that from him they rose and appointed him Nasi over them.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What is it about Hillel that gets him to be the Nasi?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>What is it about Hillel that gets him to be the Nasi?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Part B: Hillel Rebukes</u> <p>התחיל מקנטרן בדברים. אמר להן: מי גרם לכם שאעלה מבבל ואהיה נשיא עליכם? עצלות שהיתה בכם שלא שמשותם שני גדולי הדור שמעיה ואבטליון.</p> <p>Hillel began to rebuke them [Bnei Beteira] with words. He said to them: What caused it that I should come up from Babylonia and that I should be the Nasi over you? Your laziness, that you did not serve the two great men of the generation, Shemaya and Avtalion.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Part B: Hillel Rebukes</u> <p>As soon as they appointed him Nasi over them he began to rebuke them with words, saying: What caused your need for this Babylonian [=me]? Is it not that you did not serve the two great men of the world, Shemaya and Avtalion, who were dwelling with you?</p> <p>As soon as he rebuked them with words the law was concealed from him.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Why do you think Hillel is talking like this to Bnei Betera?</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Why do you think the law was concealed from him?</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Part C: If They Are Not Prophets, They Are the Sons of Prophets</u> <p>אמרו לו: רבי, שכח ולא הביא סכין מערב שבת - מהו? אמר להן: הלכה זו שמעתי ושכחתי אלא הנח להן לישראל אם אין נביאים הן בני נביאים הן.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Part C: If They Are Not Prophets, They Are the Sons of Prophets</u>

<p>למחר מי שפסחו טלה תוחבו בצמרו מי שפסחו גדי תוחבו בין קרניו. ראה מעשה ונזכר הלכה ואמר: כך מקובלני מפי שמעיה ואבטליון.</p> <p>They said to him: Master: If one forgot and did not bring a knife on the eve of the Sabbath, what [is the law]?</p> <p>He said to them: This law I heard and forgot. But leave Israel be. If they are not prophets, they are the sons of prophets.</p> <p>The next day, he whose Pesach was a lamb stuck it [the knife] in its wool. He whose Pesach was a kid [goat], stuck it between its horns.</p> <p>Hillel saw the act and remembered the law and said: Thus I received the tradition from the mouth of Shemaya and Avtalion.</p>	<p>They said to him: What will we do for the people—they did not bring their knives?</p> <p>He said to them: This law I heard and forgot. But leave Israel be. If they are not prophets, they are the sons of prophets.</p> <p>Immediately, he whose Pesach was a lamb stuck it [the knife] in its hair. He whose Pesach was a kid tied it between its horns. It turned out that their Pesachim brought their knives with them.</p> <p>As soon as he saw the event he remembered the law, he said: Thus I learned from Shemaya and Avtalion.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think it means to be the “sons of prophets”? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think it means to be the “sons of prophets”?

<p>Tosefta Pesachim 4:11</p>
<p>פעם אחת חל י"ד להיות בשבת שאלו את הלל הזקן פסח מהו שידחה את השבת אמר להם וכי פסח אחד יש לנו בשנה שדוחה [את השבת] הרבה מג' מאות פסחים יש לנו [בשנה ודוחין] את השבת חברו עליו כל העזרה אמר להם תמיד קרבן צבור דוחה את השבת אף פסח קרבן צבור דוחה את השבת דבר אחר נאמר [בתמיד] [במדבר כח] מועדו ונאמר [בפסח] [במדבר ט] מועדו [מה תמיד שנאמר בו מועדו] דוחה את השבת אף [פסח שנא' בו מועדו] דוחה את השבת ועוד ק"ו ומה תמיד שאין חייבין עליו כרת דוחה את השבת פסח שחייבין עליו כרת אינו דין שידחה את השבת ועוד מקובלני מרבתי שפסח דוחה את השבת [ולא פסח ראשון אלא פסח שני ולא פסח צבור אלא פסח יחיד] אמרו לו מה יהא [על העם] שלא הביאו סכינין ופסחים למקדש אמר להם [הניחו להם רוה"ק עליהן] אם אין נביאים הן בני נביאים הן מה עשו ישראל באותה שעה מי שפסחו טלה טמנו בצמרו גדי קשרו בין קרניו והביאו סכינין ופסחים למקדש [ושחטו את פסחיהן] בו ביום מנו את הלל [נשיא והיה מורה] להם בהלכות הפסח.</p>
<p>One time the fourteenth [of Nissan] fell on the Sabbath and [the people] asked Hillel the Elder, does the Passover offering override the Sabbath? He said to them, "Do we only have one Passover offering a year that overrides the Sabbath? [Rather,] we have more than three hundred 'Passover offerings' (i.e., the various sacrifices that are brought throughout the year) that override the Sabbath." The entire Temple Courtyard crowded around him. He said to them, "Just as the Tamid is a communal sacrifice that overrides the Sabbath, so too the Passover offering is a communal sacrifice that overrides the Sabbath. And another thing, it is said regarding the Tamid (Num. 28:2), 'its appointed time' and it is [also] said regarding Passover offering (Num. 9:2) 'its appointed time'; thus just as the Tamid as to which it is said 'its appointed time' overrides the Sabbath, so too the Passover offering as to which it is [also] said 'its appointed time' must also override the Sabbath. And moreover, [the matter may be further proven by] a kol v'chomer (a logical deduction): If the Tamid, which does not render one liable for excommunication [by failing to perform it] overrides the Sabbath, is it</p>

not logical that the Passover offering, which *does* render one liable for excommunication [by failing to perform it] must also override the Sabbath? And moreover, I received this tradition from my teachers that Passover overrides the Sabbath, and not [just] the first Passover but [also] the second Passover, and not [just] a Passover offering brought by the community, but also a Passover offering brought by an individual."

They said to him, "What should be done about the people that did not bring knives or Passover offerings to consecrate [because they did not know that the Passover offering overrides the Sabbath]?" He said to them, "Leave it to them, [since] the Holy Spirit is upon them. If they are not prophets, they are the children of prophets." What the Israelites did at that moment was that whoever brought a lamb for his Passover offering lodged [his knife] in its wool, [and whoever brought a] kid goat, he tied [his knife] between its horns, and thus they brought knives and Passover offerings to consecrate, and they slaughtered their Passover offerings. And on that day, they appointed Hillel as the Nasi and he taught them all the laws of Passover.

Haggadah of Pesach, Maggid

In each and every generation, a person is obligated to see himself as if he left Egypt, as it is stated (Exodus 13:8); "And you shall tell to your son on that day: For the sake of this, did the Lord do [this] for me in *my* going out of Egypt."

הגדה של פסח, מגיד, פסח מצה ומרור ז'

בְּכָל־דּוֹר וָדוֹר תִּזְבֹּר אֶת־עַצְמוֹ כְּאִלּוּ הוּא יֵצֵא
מִמִּצְרַיִם, שְׂנַאֲמַר: וְהַגַּדְתָּ לְבִנְךָ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לֵאמֹר, בַּעֲבוּר
זֶה עָשָׂה ה' לִי בְּצֵאתִי מִמִּצְרַיִם