

Summer Institute 2018

Faculty Electives IV

Thursday, Aug. 23, 9:15 AM

Rabbinic Voices on Sexual Assault: Leadership, Community, Theology
with **Rabbi Aviva Richman**

Again, wish we could've gotten through more text. The session was painful and important. She is an incredible teacher and facilitator but I found that some people had difficulty buying her framework. Not sure this is something that needs to be improved, however.

Rav Aviva's session was once again thought-provoking and inspiring, especially the niggun with which we began. I felt that due to time considerations there was more that we didn't get to and felt a little bit hanging.

I really enjoyed this presentation! Rabbi Aviva gave a really interesting and engaging textual presentation and I love how she opened it up to group discussion.

I thought this shuir was great - I loved R. Richman's beginning comment (about the texts becoming secondary sources compared with the primary source of our own lives). I did walk away with questions about whether texts about punishing women for adultery and rape can be redeemed as models for a more equitable world.

Totally triggering and I needed to leave early. Felt disembodied to me and religious apologetics for the continuation of the subjugation and abuse of women.

I very much enjoyed the text learning here, with its clear relationship to how we approach issues connected to gender, sexual assault, and listening in our society. Thank you.

I struggled with this session. It seemed to me that the obvious logical step after acknowledging the problematic nature of Halakha/ rabbinic culture vis-a-vis the place of women, sexual harassment, misogyny, etc. would be to at least have a discussion about whether those of us who care about gender equity and respecting the right of individuals to define their own sexual identity can, in good faith, continue to subscribe to and support Halakha. The session seemed more about engaging in apologetics and creating space within a Halakhic framework for thinking these issues than on asking tough questions about whether Halakha and rabbinic texts can and should be drawn on to think about questions of gender, sexual harassment, etc. For me, that's the most interesting question; I wish we would have gotten there in this session.

I really appreciated this session, but found much of the material to be upsetting. The texts repeated the idea again and again that a person has not been assaulted if they could have screamed for help. While I appreciate that this was not the argument that Rabbi Richman was constructing, this idea is upsetting to hear repeatedly, and I wish that it could have been constructed differently, as I found it hard to move past what was upsetting in the texts to the argument that Rabbi Richman was constructing. I think that, if one is going to present material that has the potential to be upsetting to many people in the room, perhaps one should either

leave time for that or choose other material, as it felt to me that she acknowledged that it was there, but moved past it more quickly than was comfortable to me.

I found this session to be substantive and thought-provoking. I found it especially valuable that Rabbi Richman's looked to recast our texts as a model to think about issues of consent and sexual harassment -- despite the fact that the context in which the texts were written (and the reasons for which they were written) has its place elsewhere. Also, Richman's a great facilitator -- respectful, open, but also steady. She kept us on course.

This session was a bit slow for me. I felt like R' Richman gave a big warning about how this would hit, but then it didn't seem that we got into the thick of anything that difficult. I would have liked to dive deeper.

Rabbi Aviva was a fascinating session and an insight into a Torah learning community that I did not have a lot of experience with. The way in which Rabbi Aviva handled her classroom was very impressive, and led to an environment where everyone felt comfortable and able to contribute, despite the distinctly Orthodox nature of discussing Halakhic texts as religious imperatives. She was very accessible and compassionate in her teaching, and was a great educator.

Rabbi Richman was thoughtful and sensitive in approaching a topic that raises so much pain. She guided us through the sources, and the emergent discussion, with real kavanah and grace.

It was a mistitled session. It seemed like it would be a survey of Rabbinic voices on sexual assault in the Talmud and it turned out to be a discussion of two verses in the bible. I would have preferred if she covered more ground. We seemed very mired in each and every person's comments. I did appreciate her calm vibe though.

Rabbi Richman's session touched on some difficult material. She did a wonderful job of allowing space for that difficulty and encouraging self care as it related to the material. I thought the group conversation in the session was very fruitful, but wonder if it came at the expense of getting through more material that would have been valuable.

I liked the sources she picked for this and found the text study engaging. I felt though that the discussion was too absorbed in the text, and I would have liked if the conversation had moved more from the historical and theoretical to the present and real-life.

Overall very good -- Sophisticated but also accessible.

Also kind of light on content, but provocative.

The most valuable part was certainly learning from Rabbi Aviva Richman. She is incredibly knowledgeable on this topic and I was really grateful to hear the sources and learn from the innovative ways she approached the text. I think what I still struggled with was figuring how much thousand year old-texts should be the basis of our views on this issues. That was kind of brought up, but not as much as I would have liked.

Very thorough