

Wexner Talmud of Leadership: Gamar Gemara, Savar Sevara

Eruvin 13a (Sota 20a)

אָמַר רַבִּי אַחָא בַר חֲנִינָא גְלוּי וַיְדוּעַ לְפָנָי מִי שְׁאָמַר וְהָיָה הָעוֹלָם שְׂאִין בְּדוֹרוֹ
שֶׁל רַבִּי מֵאִיר כְּמוֹתוֹ וּמִפְּנֵי מָה לֹא קִבְּעוּ הַלְכָה כְּמוֹתוֹ שֶׁלֹּא יְכֻלּוּ חֲבֵירָיו
לְעִמּוֹד עַל סוּף דְּעֵתוֹ שֶׁהוּא אוֹמֵר עַל טָמֵא טָהוֹר וּמֵרָאָה לוֹ פָּנִים, עַל טָהוֹר
טָמֵא וּמֵרָאָה לוֹ פָּנִים

Rabbi Aḥa bar Ḥanina said: It is revealed and known before the One Who spoke and the world came into being that in the generation of Rabbi Meir there was no one of the Sages who is his equal. Why then didn't the Sages establish the *halakha* in accordance with his opinion? It is because his colleagues were unable to ascertain the profundity of his opinion. He was so brilliant that he could present a cogent argument for any position, even if it was not consistent with the prevalent *halakha*. **As he would state with regard to a ritually impure item that it is pure, and display justification for that ruling, and likewise he would state with regard to a ritually pure item that it is impure, and display justification for that ruling.** The Sages were unable to distinguish between the statements that were *halakha* and those that were not.

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יַעֲיָקְרָא אֶתְא לְקַמִּיָּה דְרַבִּי עֲקִיבָא כִּיּוֹן דְּלֹא מְצִי לְמִיקָם אֲלִיבִיָּה אֶתְא לְקַמִּיָּה
דְרַבִּי יִשְׁמַעֵאל וּגְמַר גְּמָרָא הֵדֵר אֶתְא לְקַמִּיָּה דְרַבִּי עֲקִיבָא סְבַר סְבָרָא

Originally, Rabbi Meir went to learn with Rabbi Akiva. Since he was not able to grasp his mind, he went to learn with Rabbi Yishmael and gamar'ed his gemara. Then he went back to Rabbi Akiva and savar'd his svara.

Rashi's commentary

לא מצי למיקם אליביה - על עיקרי טעמיה שהיה אומר על טמא טהור
ומראה לו פנים ועל טהור טמא ומראה לו פנים:

grasp his mind: regarding the essence of the reasons and the underlying principles, for he would say permitted on that which was prohibited and show for it many different faces and say prohibited on that which was permitted and show for it many different faces

וגמר גמרא - המשניות סתומות כמו שהן כדגמיר להו מרבו ורבו מרבו:

Gamar'ed his gemara: the plain and simple teachings as they had been taught to him by his teacher and his teacher by his teacher