

תנו רבנן: לעולם יהא אדם ענוותן כהלל ואל יהא קפדן כשמאי. מעשה בשני בני אדם

Since the Gemara discussed the forbearance of Sages, who remain silent in the face of nonsensical comments, it cites additional relevant examples. The Sages taught in a baraita: A person should always be patient like Hillel and not impatient like Shammai. The Gemara related: There was an incident involving two people

שְׁהִמְרוּ זֶה אֶת זֶה, אָמְרוּ: כָּל מִי שְׂיִלַךְ וַיְקַנִּיט אֶת הַלֵּל יִטּוֹל אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת זִז. אָמַר אֶחָד מֵהֶם: אֲנִי אֶקְנִיטוּ. אוֹתוֹ הַיּוֹם עָרַב שָׁבַת הָיָה, וְהַלֵּל חָפַף אֶת רֹאשׁוֹ. הָלַךְ וְעָבַר עַל פֶּתַח בֵּיתוֹ, אָמַר: מִי בָּאן הַלֵּל, מִי בָּאן הַלֵּל? נִתְעַטֵּף וַיֵּצֵא לַקְּרֵאתוֹ. אָמַר לוֹ בְּנֵי, מָה אַתָּה מְבַקֵּשׁ? אָמַר לוֹ: שְׂאֵלָה יֵשׁ לִי לְשֹׂאֵל. אָמַר לוֹ: שְׂאֵל בְּנֵי. שְׂאֵל: מִפְּנֵי מָה רִאשִׁינָה שֶׁל בַּבְּלַיִים סְגֻלָּוֹת? אָמַר לוֹ: בְּנֵי, שְׂאֵלָה גְדוֹלָה שְׂאֵלָת. מִפְּנֵי שְׂאִין לָהֶם אַחֲיוֹת פְּקֻחוֹת.

who wagered with each other and said: Anyone who will go and aggravate Hillel to the point that he reprimands him, will take four-hundred zuz. One of them said: I will aggravate him. That day that he chose to bother Hillel was Shabbat eve, and Hillel was washing the hair on his head. He went and passed the entrance to Hillel's house and in a demeaning manner said: Who here is Hillel, who here is Hillel? Hillel wrapped himself in a dignified garment and went out to greet him. He said to him: My son, what do you seek? He said to him: I have a question to ask. Hillel said to him: Ask, my son, ask. The man asked him: Why are the heads of Babylonians oval? He was alluding to and attempting to insult Hillel, who was Babylonian. He said to him: My son, you have asked a significant question. The reason is because they do not have clever midwives. They do not know how to shape the child's head at birth.

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That man went and waited one hour, a short while, returned to look for Hillel, and said: Who here is Hillel, who here is Hillel? Again, Hillel wrapped himself and went out to greet him. Hillel said to him: My son, what do you seek? The man said to him: I have a question to ask. He said to him: Ask, my son, ask. The man asked: Why are the eyes of the residents of Tadmor bleary [terutot]? Hillel said to him: My son, you have asked a significant question. The reason is because they live among the sands and the sand gets into their eyes.

הָלַךְ וְהִמְתִּין שָׁעָה אַחַת, חָזַר וְאָמַר: מִי בָּאן הַלֵּל, מִי בָּאן הַלֵּל? נִתְעַטֵּף וַיֵּצֵא לַקְּרֵאתוֹ, אָמַר לוֹ: בְּנֵי, מָה אַתָּה מְבַקֵּשׁ? אָמַר לוֹ: שְׂאֵלָה יֵשׁ לִי לְשֹׂאֵל. אָמַר לוֹ: שְׂאֵל בְּנֵי. שְׂאֵל: מִפְּנֵי מָה רַגְלֵיהֶם שֶׁל אֲפְרָקַיִם רְחִבוֹת? אָמַר לוֹ: בְּנֵי, שְׂאֵלָה גְדוֹלָה שְׂאֵלָת. מִפְּנֵי שְׂדָרִין בֵּין בְּצֵי הַמַּיִם —

Once again the man went, waited one hour, returned, and said: Who here is Hillel, who here is Hillel? Again, he, Hillel, wrapped himself and went out to greet him. He said to him: My son, what do you seek? He said to him: I have a question to ask. He said to him: Ask, my son, ask. The man asked: Why do Africans have wide feet? Hillel said to him: You have asked a significant question. The reason is because they live in marshlands and their feet widened to enable them to walk through those swampy areas.

אָמַר לוֹ: שְׂאֵלוֹת הַרְבֵּה יֵשׁ לִי לְשֹׂאֵל, וּמַתְּיָרָא אֲנִי שְׂמָא תַבְּעוּס. נִתְעַטֵּף וַיֵּשֶׁב לְפָנָיו. אָמַר לוֹ: כָּל שְׂאֵלוֹת שְׂיֵשׁ לָךְ לְשֹׂאֵל. שְׂאֵל. אָמַר לוֹ אַתָּה הוּא הַלֵּל שְׂקוֹרִין אוֹתָךְ "נְשִׂיא יִשְׂרָאֵל"? אָמַר לוֹ: הֵן. אָמַר לוֹ: אִם אַתָּה הוּא, לֹא יָרְבוּ כְּמוֹתָךְ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל. אָמַר לוֹ: בְּנֵי, מָה? אָמַר לוֹ: מִפְּנֵי שְׂאֵלָתִי עַל יְדֵךְ אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת זִז. אָמַר לוֹ: הֵיוּ זְהִיר בְּרוּחָךְ כְּדִי הוּא הַלֵּל שְׂתַאבֵּד עַל יְדֵי אַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת זִז וְאַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת זִז, וְהַלֵּל לֹא יִקְפִּיד.

That man said to him: I have many more questions to ask, but I am afraid lest you get angry. Hillel wrapped himself and sat before him, and he said to him: All of the questions that you have to ask, ask them. The man got angry and said to him: Are you Hillel whom they call the Nasi of Israel? He said to him: Yes. He said to him: If it is you, then may there not be many like you in Israel. Hillel said to him: My son, for what reason do you say this? The man said to him: Because I lost four hundred zuz because of you. Hillel said to him: Be vigilant of your spirit and avoid situations of this sort. Hillel is worthy of having you lose four hundred zuz and another four hundred zuz on his account, and Hillel will not get upset.

תנו רבנן: מעשה בגוי אחד שבא לפני שמאי. אמר לו: כמה תורות יש לכם? אמר לו: שתים, תורה שבכתב ותורה שבעל פה. אמר לו: שבכתב אני מאמין, ושבעל פה — איני מאמין. גיירני על מנת שתלמדני תורה שבכתב. גער בו והוציא! בבזיפה. בא לפני הלל, גייריה. יומא קמא אמר ליה: א"ב ג"ד. למחר אפיף ליה. אמר ליה: וְהָאֵתְמוּל לָא אָמַרְתָּ לִי הֲכִי אָמַר לִיָּה: לָאוּ עָלַי דִּידִי קָא סְמַכְתָּ? דְדַעַל פְּה נָמִי סְמוּךְ עָלַי.

The Sages taught: There was an incident involving one gentile who came before Shammai. The gentile said to Shammai: How many Torahs do you have? He said to him: Two, the Written Torah and the Oral Torah. The gentile said to him: With regard to the Written Torah, I believe you, but with regard to the Oral Torah, I do not believe you. Convert me on condition that you will teach me only the Written Torah. Shammai scolded him and cast him out with reprimand. The same gentile came before Hillel, who converted him and began teaching him Torah. On the first day, he showed him the letters of the alphabet and said to him: Alef, bet, gimmel, dalet. The next day he reversed the order of the letters and told him that an alef is a tav and so on. The convert said to him: But yesterday you did not tell me that. Hillel said to him: You see that it is impossible to learn what is written without relying on an oral tradition. Didn't you rely on me? Therefore, you should also rely on me with regard to the matter of the Oral Torah, and accept the interpretations that it contains.

שוב מעשה בגוי אחד שבא לפני שמאי. אמר לו: גיירני על מנת שתלמדני כל התורה כולה כשאתה עומד על רגל אחת דחפו באמת הבנין שבידו. בא לפני הלל, גייריה. אמר לו: דעלך סני לחברך לא תעביד — זו היא כל התורה כולה, ואיך פירושה הוא, זיל גמור.

There was another incident involving one gentile who came before Shammai and said to Shammai: Convert me on condition that you teach me the entire Torah while I am standing on one foot. Shammai pushed him away with the builder's cubit in his hand. This was a common measuring stick and Shammai was a builder by trade. The same gentile came before Hillel. He converted him and said to him: That which is hateful to you do not do to another; that is the entire Torah, and the rest is its interpretation. Go study.

שוב מעשה בגוי אחד שהיה עובר אחורי בית המדרש, ושמע קול סופר שהיה אומר: "ואלה הבגדים אשר יעשו חושן ואפוד". אמר: הללו למי? אמרו לו: לכהן גדול. אמר אותו גוי בעצמו: אלך ואתגיר בשביל נשיימוני כהן גדול. בא לפני שמאי, אמר לו: גיירני על מנת שתשימני כהן גדול. דחפו באמת הבנין שבידו. בא לפני הלל, גייריה.

There was another incident involving one gentile who was passing behind the study hall and heard the voice of a teacher who was teaching Torah to his students and saying the verse: "And these are the garments which they shall make: A breastplate, and an efod, and a robe, and a tunic of checkered work, a mitre, and a girdle" (Exodus 28:4). The gentile said: These garments, for whom are they designated? The students said to him: For the High Priest. The gentile said to himself: I will go and convert so that they will install me as High Priest. He came before Shammai and said to him: Convert me on condition that you install me as High Priest. Shammai pushed him with the builder's cubit in his hand. He came before Hillel; he converted him.

אמר לו: כלום מעמידין מלך אלא מי שיודע טכסיסי מלכות, לך למוד טכסיסי מלכות. הלא וקרא. בין שהגיע "והזר הקרב יומת", אמר ליה: מקרא זה על מי נאמר? אמר לו: אפילו על דוד מלך ישראל. נשא אותו גר קל וחומר בעצמו: ומה ישראל שנקראו בנים למקום ומתוך אהבה שאהבם קרא להם: "בני בכורי ישראל", כתיב עליהם "והזר הקרב יומת" — גר הקל נשא במקלו ובתרמילו, על אחת כמה וכמה.

Hillel said to him, to the convert: Is it not the way of the world that only one who knows the protocols [takhsisei] of royalty is appointed king? Go and learn the royal protocols by engaging in Torah study. He went and read the Bible. When he reached the verse which says: "And the common man that draws near shall be put to death" (Numbers 1:51), the convert said to Hillel: With regard to whom is the verse speaking? Hillel said to him: Even with regard to David, king of Israel. The convert reasoned an a fortiori inference himself: If the Jewish people are called God's children, and due to the love that God loved them he called them: "Israel is My son, My firstborn" (Exodus 4:22), and nevertheless it is written about them: And the common man that draws near shall be put to death; a mere convert who came without merit, with nothing more than his staff and traveling bag, all the more so that this applies to him, as well.

בא לפני שמאי, אמר לו: כלום ראוי אני להיות בהן גדול? והלא כתיב בתורה: "והזר הקרב יומת". בא לפני הלל, אמר לו: ענוותן הלל, נוחו לך ברכות על ראשי, שקרבתי תחת כנפי השכינה. לימים נדווגו שלשתן למקום אחד, אמרו: קפדנותו של שמאי בקשה לטורדנו מן העולם, ענוותנותו של הלל קרבתנו תחת כנפי השכינה.

The convert came before Shammai and told him that he retracts his demand to appoint him High Priest, saying: Am I at all worthy to be High Priest? Is it not written in the Torah: And the common man that draws near shall be put to death? He came before Hillel and said to him: Hillel the patient, may blessings rest upon your head as you brought me under the wings of the Divine Presence. The Gemara relates: Eventually, the three converts gathered together in one place, and they said: Shammai's impatience sought to drive us from the world; Hillel's patience brought us beneath the wings of the Divine Presence.