

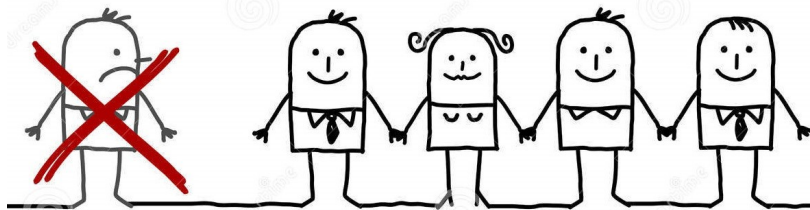
From the Rabbi's Desk
Rabbi Manes Kogan

Hillcrest Jewish Center
183-02 Union Turnpike, Flushing, NY 11366
rabbikogan@hillcrestjc.org

Stories with a Twist [194]

Shall I Go Back So Many Times?

Insights into Babylonian Talmud Yoma 86b-87a



Background to Our Story

Judah the Prince



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judah_the_Prince

Judah the Prince (Hebrew: יהודה הנשיא, Yehudah HaNasi) or Judah I, also known as Rabbi or Rabbenu HaQadosh (Hebrew: רבנו הקדוש, "our Master, the holy one"), was a 2nd-century CE rabbi and chief redactor and editor of the Mishnah. He was a key leader of the Jewish community during the Roman occupation of Judea . According to the Talmud he was of the Davidic line, the royal line of King David, hence the title nasi, meaning prince. The title nasi was also used for presidents of the Sanhedrin. Judah died on 15 Kislev around 217 CE.^[4]

Judah the Prince was born in 135 CE. According to the Midrash, he came into the world on the same day that Rabbi Akiva died a martyr's death. The Talmud suggests that this was a result of Divine Providence: God had granted the Jewish people another leader of great stature to succeed Rabbi Akiva. His place of birth is unknown; nor is it recorded where his father, Shimon ben Gamliel II, sought refuge with his family during the persecutions under Hadrian. He is the only tanna known as Rabbeinu haQadosh, "our holy teacher" due to his deep piety.

Upon the restoration of order in the Land of Israel, Usha became the seat of the academy and Judah spent his youth there. His father presumably gave him the same education that he himself had received, including Greek language. This knowledge of Greek enabled him to become the Jews' intermediary with the Roman authorities. He favored Greek as the language of the country over Syriac (Aramaic). It is said that in Judah's house, only Hebrew was spoken, and even the maids spoke it.

"During Rabbi's career, not only did the scope of rabbinic jurisdiction increase, but the power of the central rabbinic office increased as well. In contrast with his predecessors, Rabbi assumed the responsibilities of a communal functionary by appointing and deposing local leaders and by checking the family purity of Jews in a distant locale. Similarly, he made unprecedented efforts to create a more popular halakhic system. In this vein, he permitted the use of produce immediately following the end of the sabbatical year, the import of produce into the Holy Land, and the acquisition of land from a sikarikon. Thus, while Rabbi strengthened his ties with the wealthy, he also broadened his power base by becoming a more popular figurehead."

According to the Talmud (Avodah Zarah 10a-b), Judah haNasi was very wealthy and greatly revered in Rome. He had a close friendship with "Antoninus", possibly the Emperor Antoninus Pius, though it is more likely his famous friendship was with Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus who would consult Judah on various worldly and spiritual matters.

The Talmud records the tradition that Judah haNasi was buried in the necropolis of Beit She'arim, in the Lower Galilee.

Rav



<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rav>

Abba Arikha (175–247) (Talmudic Aramaic: אבא אריכא; born: Abba bar Aybo, Hebrew: רב אבא בר איבו) was a Jewish Talmudist who was born and lived in Kafri, Sassanid Babylonia, known as an amora (commentator on the Oral Law) of the 3rd century who established at Sura the systematic study of the rabbinic traditions, which, using the Mishnah as text, led to the compilation of the Talmud. With him began the long period of ascendancy of the great academies of Babylonia (Oesterley & Box 1920), around the year 220. He is commonly known simply as Rav (or Rab, Hebrew: רב).

His surname, Arikha (English, "Long"—that is, "Tall"; it occurs only once—Hullin 137b), he owed to his height, which, according to a reliable record, exceeded that of his contemporaries. Others, reading Arekha, consider it an honorary title, "Lecturer" (Weiss, Dor, iii. 147; Jastrow, Dictionary under the word). In the traditional literature he is referred to almost exclusively as Rav, "the Master", (both his contemporaries and posterity recognizing in him a master), just as his teacher, Judah I, was known simply as Rabbi. He is called Rabbi Abba only in the tannaitic literature (for instance, Tosefta, Beitzah 1:7), where a number of his sayings are preserved. He occupies a middle position between the Tannaim and the Amoraim, and is accorded the right, rarely conceded to one who is only an 'amora, of disputing the opinion of a tanna (Bava Batra 42a and elsewhere).

Rav was a descendant of a distinguished Babylonian family which claimed to trace its origin to Shimei, brother of King David (Sanhedrin 5a; Ketubot 62b). His father, Aibo, was a brother of Chiyya, who lived in Palestine, and was a highly esteemed scholar in the collegiate circle of the patriarch Judah I. From his associations in the house of his uncle, and later as his uncle's disciple and as a member of the academy at Sepphoris, Rav acquired such an extraordinary knowledge of traditional lore as to make him its foremost exponent in his native land. While Judah I was still living, Rav, having been duly ordained as teacher—though not without certain restrictions (Sanhedrin 5a)—returned to Babylonia, where he at once began a career that was destined to mark an epoch in the development of Babylonian Judaism.

Concerning the social position and the personal history of Rav we were not informed. That he was rich seems probable; for he appears to have occupied himself for a time with commerce and afterward with agriculture (Hullin 105a). He is referred to as the son of noblemen (Shabbat 29a) but it is not clear if this is an affectionate term or a true description of his status. Rashi does tell us that he is being described as the son of great men. That he was highly respected by the Gentiles as well as by the Jews of Babylonia is proved by the friendship which existed between him and the last Parthian king, Artaban (Avodah Zarah 10b). He was deeply affected by the death of Artaban (226) and the downfall of the Arsacid dynasty, and does not appear to have sought the friendship of Ardeshir, founder of the Sassanian dynasty, although Samuel of Nehardea probably did so. Rav became closely related, through the marriage of one of his daughters, to the family of the exilarch. Her sons, Mar Ukba and Nehemiah, were considered types of the highest aristocracy. Rav had many sons, several of whom are mentioned in the Talmud, the most distinguished being the eldest, Chiyya. The latter did not, however, succeed his father as head of the academy: this post fell to Rav's disciple Rav Huna. Two of his grandsons occupied in succession the office of exilarch (resh galuta) (Hullin 92a).

Rav died at an advanced age, deeply mourned by numerous disciples and the entire Babylonian Jewry, which he had raised from comparative insignificance to the leading position in Judaism (Shabbat 110a, Mo'ed Katan 24a).

Hiyya the Great



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hiyya_the_Great

Rabbi Hiyya or Hiyya the Great (Hebrew: רבי חייא הגדול, or רבי חייא) was a Jewish sage of the Land of Israel during the transitional generation between the Tannaic and Amoraic Jewish sages eras (1st Amora Generation). He is accounted as one of the notable sages of these times, and was the son of Abba Karsala from Kafri in Babylon.

Bar Kappara



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bar_Kappara

Shimon Bar Kappara (Hebrew: בר קפרא) was a Jewish rabbi of the late 2nd and early 3rd century CE, during the period between the tannaim and amoraim. He was active in Caesarea in the Land of Israel, from around 180 to 220 CE. His name, meaning "Son of Kapparah", was taken from his father, Eleazar ha-Kappar. He was one of the students of Rabbi, and an Amora of the first generation.

He was a talented poet and storyteller, and it is said that at the wedding feast of Simeon, the son of Rabbi, he kept the guests captivated with fables until their food got cold. The Jerusalem Talmud contains a prayer he wrote and included in the repetition of the 18th section of Thanksgiving in the Amidah. However, his satirical wit (he once ridiculed the son-in-law of Rabbi by telling him to ask Rabbi a riddle that really was an insulting criticism of Rabbi's household), lost him the chance to be ordained.

He was unusual in his time for recommending the study of Greek, which was commonly rejected as the language of the heathens. He is reported as saying to his disciples (Gen. R. 36:8): "Let the words of Torah be said in the language of Japheth [Greece]." He also encouraged the study of the natural sciences, saying "Whosoever can calculate the

movements of the solstices and planets, but fails to do so, to him is applied the verse 'But they regard not the works of the Lord'." (Shabbat 75a) (Isaiah 5:12)

Rabbi Shimon the son of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi

R' SHIMON BAR REBBI

- in the transitional period between tannaim and amoraim
- son of R' Yehudah HaNassi
- t. R' Yehudah HaNassi
- colleague of R' Chiya; they were partners in a silk business (BR 77:2)
- He was very rich (Men. 86).
- ment. (Yev. 43; BK 111; BM 44; Hor. 13; AZ 19; 52; Yoma 87; Kes. 105 BB 164; MK 16; Meg. 24b; Ked. 33, etc.); once in Mishnah (Mak. 3:15); has halachic debates with R' Chiya (Ber. 35; Shab. 152; Taan. 12, etc.), Bar Kapparah (Ber. 13)
- His father called him "the candle of Israel" (ner Yisroel) (Arch. 10a).
- Before Rebbi died, he appointed his older son Rabban Gamliel as Nassi and his younger son R' Shimon as chacham and he taught R' Shimon "the orders of wisdom" (Kes. 103b).
- R' Shimon was to marry the daughter of R' Chiya, but she died before the wedding could take place (Kes. 62b).

Rabbi Hanina bar Hama



https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hanina_bar_Hama

Hanina bar Hama (died ca. 250) (Hebrew: חנינא בר חמא) was a Jewish Talmudist, halakist and haggadist frequently quoted in the Babylonian and the Jerusalem Talmud, and in the Midrashim.

He is generally cited by his praenomen alone (R. Ḥanina), but sometimes with his patronymic (Ḥanina b. Ḥama), and occasionally with the cognomen "the Great" ("ha-Gadol"; Ta'an. 27b; Pesiq. R. v. 15a). Whether he was a Palestinian by birth and had only visited Babylonia, or whether he was a Babylonian immigrant in Palestine, cannot be clearly established. In the only passage in which he himself mentions his arrival in Palestine he refers also to his son's accompanying him (Yer. Soṭah i. 17b), and from this some argue that Babylonia was his native land. It is certain, however, that he spent most of his life in Palestine, where he attended for a time the lectures of Bar Kappara and Hiyya the Great (Yer. Sheb. vi. 35c; Yer. Niddah ii. 50a) and eventually attached himself to the academy of Judah I. Under the last-named he acquired great stores of practical and theoretical knowledge (Yer. Niddah ii. 50b), and so developed his dialectical powers that once in the heat of debate with his senior and former teacher Hiyya he ventured the assertion that were some law forgotten, he could himself reestablish it by argumentation (Ket. 103b).

Judah loved him, and chose him in preference to any other of his disciples to share his privacy. Thus when Antoninus once visited Judah, he was surprised to find Ḥanina in the chamber, though the patriarch had been requested not to permit any one to attend their interview. The patriarch soothed his august visitor by the assurance that the third party was not an ordinary man (Ab. Zarah 10a). No doubt Ḥanina would have been early promoted to an honorable office had he not offended the patriarch by an ill-judged exhibition of his own superior familiarity with Scriptural phraseology (see Hamnuna of Babylonia). However, the patriarch, on his death-bed, instructed Gamaliel, his son and prospective successor, to put Ḥanina at the head of all other candidates (Yer. Ta'an. iv. 68a; comp. Ket. 103a). Ḥanina modestly declined advancement at the expense of his senior Efes, and even resolved to permit another worthy colleague, Levi b. Sisi, to take precedence. Efes was actually principal of the academy for several years, but Sisi withdrew from the country, at which time Ḥanina assumed the long-delayed honors (ib.; Shab. 59b). He continued his residence at Sepphoris, where he became the acknowledged authority in Halakah (Yer. Shek. i. 46a; Yer. Bezah i. 60a; Yer. Git. iv. 46b), and where also he practised as a physician (Yoma 49a; comp. Yer. Ta'an. i. 64a).

According to Hanina, 99% of fatal diseases result from colds, and only 1% from other troubles (Yer. Shab. xiv. 14c). He therefore would impress mankind with the necessity of warding off colds, the power to do so, he teaches, having been bestowed upon man by Providence (B. M. 107b). But neither his rabbinical learning nor his medical skill gained him popularity at Sepphoris. When a pestilence raged there, the populace blamed Ḥanina for failing to stamp it out. Ḥanina heard their murmurs and resolved to silence them. In the course of a lecture, he remarked, "Once there lived one Zimri, in consequence of whose sin twenty-four thousand Israelites lost their lives (see Num. xxv. 6-15); in our days there are many Zimris among us, and yet ye murmur!" On another occasion, when drought prevailed, the murmurs of the Sepphorites again became loud. A day was devoted to fasting and praying, but no rain came, though at another place, where Joshua ben Levi was among the suppliants, rain descended; the Sepphorites therefore made this circumstance also to reflect on the piety of their great townsman. Another fast being appointed, Ḥanina invited Joshua b. Levi to join him in prayer. Joshua did so, but no rain came. Then Ḥanina addressed the people: "Joshua b. Levi does not bring rain down for the Southerners, neither does Ḥanina keep rain away from the Sepphorites: the Southerners are soft-hearted, and when they hear the word of the Law, they humble themselves, while the Sepphorites are obdurate and never repent" (Yer. Ta'an. iii. 66c).

The Text: Babylonian Talmud Yoma 86b-87a

רַב הוּוּ פָּסִיק סִדְרָא קָפִיָּה דְרַבִּי עֵייל
 אָתָּא ר' חֵיָּא - הֵדֵד לְרִישָׁא, עֵייל פִּר קַפְרָא -
 הֵדֵד לְרִישָׁא אָתָּא רִישׁ בְּרַבִּי - הֵדֵד לְרִישָׁא.
 אָתָּא ר' חֵיָּא (*בֵּר) הָמָא, אָמַר: פִּילֵי הָא
 נֵהָדֵד וְנִיזִיל? לָא הֵדֵד. אִיקְפִּיד ר' חֵיָּא, אֲזַל רַב
 לְגַבִּיָּה תְּלִיסַר מַעְלֵי יוֹמֵי דְכַפּוּרָה, וְלָא אִיפִּיֵס.

Rav was reciting the Torah portion before Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi.

Rabbi Hiyya, Rav's uncle and teacher, came in, whereupon Rav returned to the beginning of the portion and began to read it again. Afterward, Bar Kappara came in, and Rav returned to the beginning. Then Rabbi Shimon, son of Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi, came in, and he returned again to the beginning of the portion.

Then Rabbi Hanina bar Hama came in, and Rav said to himself: Shall I go back so many times? He did not return but continued from where he was.

Rabbi Hanina was offended.

Rav went before Rabbi Hanina on Yom Kippur eve every year for thirteen years to appease him, but he would not be appeased.



Explaining the Structure of the Story

What is the sequence of events in the story?

Comprehension and Analysis Questions

? Who is the foremost teacher in this story? How do we know it?

? Why was Rav reciting the portion?

Bonus ? Why was Rav reciting the portion?

Answer 1 _____

Answer 2 _____

? Why did Rav go back to the beginning of the portion when Rabbi Hyya came in?

Answer 1 _____

Answer 2 _____

Answer 3 _____

? Why did Rav go back to the beginning of the portion when Bar Kappara came in?

Answer 1 _____

Answer 2 _____

Answer 3 _____

? Why did Rav go back to the beginning of the portion when Rabbi Shimon, the son of Rabbi came in?

Answer 1 _____

Answer 2 _____

? Why didn't Rav go back to the beginning of the portion when Rabbi Hanina came in?

Answer 1 _____

Answer 2 _____

Answer 3 _____

Bonus ? What could have Rav done differently in our story?

Answer 1 _____

Answer 2 _____

Answer 3 _____

Answer 4 _____

Bonus ? It seems that what Rav did wasn't so terrible. Why was Rabbi Hanina so hurt to the extent of refusing to be appeased?

Answer 1 _____

Answer 2 _____

Answer 3 _____

Answer 4 _____

"The Twist" – Or the Lessons We Can Learn from the Text

! The long-term, unforeseen consequences, and high price of hurting, offending, embarrassing, and excluding others!

Shall I Go Back So Many Times?

(The Aftermath)

Insights into Babylonian Talmud Yoma 86b-87a

וְהִכִּי עֲבִיד הָכִי? וְהָאָמַר ר' יוֹסֵי בַר חֲנִינָא: כָּל
הַמְבַקֵּשׁ מִמּוֹ מַחְבִּירוֹ אֶל יְבִקֵּשׁ מִמֶּנּוּ יוֹתֵר
מִשְׁלֹשׁ פְּעָמִים! *רַב שְׁאֲנִי וְר' חֲנִינָא הִכִּי
עֲבִיד הָכִי? *וְהָאָמַר רַבָּא: כָּל הַמְעַבִּיר עַל
מְדוּתוֹ - מְעַבְרִין לוֹ עַל כָּל פְּשָׁעָיו! אֶלָּא, ר'
חֲנִינָא חֲלָמָא חָוִי לֵיהּ לָרַב דְּזִקְפוּהוּ בְּדִיקְלָא,
וְגַמְרִי דְכָל דְּזִקְפוּהוּ בְּדִיקְלָא רִישָׁא הוּי.
אָמַר: (b) שָׁמַע מִיָּנָה בְּעֵי לְמַעְבַּד רְשׁוּתָא. וְלֹא
אִיפִיִּים, כִּי הִכִּי דְלִיזִיל וְלִגְמַר אֲוִרִיתָא בְּבַבְלָא.

Rav went before Rabbi Hanina on Yom Kippur eve every year for thirteen years to appease him, but he would not be appeased.



The Gemara asks: How could Rav act this way? Didn't Rabbi Yosei bar Hanina say: Anyone who requests forgiveness from another should not ask more than three times?

The Gemara answers: It is different for his teacher (even though they were contemporaries, Rabbi Hanina was considered like Rav's teacher, and one who sins against his teacher must continue to ask forgiveness until he is forgiven.

The Gemara asks: And how could Rabbi Hanina act this way and refuse to forgive Rav? Didn't Rava say: anyone who suppresses his honor and forgives someone for hurting him, God pardons all his sins?

The Gemara explains: Rather, this is what happened: Rabbi Hanina saw in a dream that Rav was being hung on a palm tree, and he learned as a tradition that anyone about whom there is a dream in which he was being hung on a palm tree will become the head of the yeshiva. He said: Learn from this that he wants to become the head of the yeshiva. Therefore, I will not be appeased, so that he will have to go and study Torah in Babylonia.

He [Rabbi Hanina] was conscious of the principle that one kingdom cannot overlap with another, and he knew that once Rav was appointed leader, he, Rabbi Hanina, would have to abdicate his own position or die. Therefore, he delayed being appeased, so that Rav would go to Babylonia and be appointed there as head of the yeshiva. In this way, the dream would be fulfilled, as Rav would indeed be appointed as head of a yeshiva, but since he would be in Babylonia, Rabbi Hanina would not lose his own position.



Explaining the Structure of the Story

What is the sequence of events in the story?

Comprehension and Analysis Questions

? Why did Rav go thirteen times to appease Rabbi Hanina even though Rabbi Yosei bar Hanina said that anyone who requests forgiveness from another should not ask more than three times?

Answer 1 _____

Answer 2 _____

? "It is different for his teacher" (See below "Rav is different"). How does the fact that Rabbi Hanina was considered like Rav's teacher help us better understand our story?

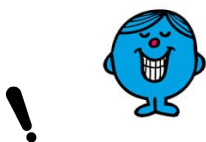
Rav is different - רבא דרבי רבא early commentaries are the following version of the text: It is different for his teacher. Even though they were contemporaries, Rabbi Hanina was considered like Rav's teacher, and one who sins against his teacher must continue to ask forgiveness until he is forgiven.

? Why did Rabbi Hanina refuse to be appeased according to the Gemarah's explanation?

Bonus ? The Gemara's explanation for Rabbi Hanina's refusal to forgive Rav (the symbolism of Rabbi Hanina's dream about Rav hanging from a palm tree) seems a little farfetched. Why do you think the Gemarah is proposing this interpretation?

"The Twist" – Or the Lessons We Can Learn from the Text

MR. PERFECT



Ideal (Perfect) Heroes versus Real (Imperfect) Ones