

Midrasha/Madrassa, “Seeing the Other”

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Babylonian Talmud, *Shabbat* 116a-b, according to Ms. Oxford 366 (add. Fol. 23)

Rabbi Meir called it 'aven-gilayon (און גליון)

Rabbi Yohanan called it 'avon-gilayon (עון גליון)

Imma Shalom, Rabbi Eli'ezer's wife, was the sister of Rabban Gamliel.

She had a legal dispute (דינא) with her brother.

She went (אתאי) to face him.

And there was a certain philosopher in her neighborhood,
Who had a reputation of a judge who does not accept bribes.

One day, [Rabban Gamliel] wanted (בעי) to laugh at [the philosopher].

[Rabban Gamliel and Imma Shalom] went to [the philosopher].

Imma Shalom brought [the philosopher] a golden lamp.

She said to him: “I want you to divide the estate of my [late] father.”

[The philosopher] said: “Divide!”

[Rabban Gamliel and Imma Shalom] said to him:

“It is written in the Torah that he gave us (בתורה דיהב לן): ‘If there is a son, the daughter does not inherit’”

[The philosopher] said:

“From the day that you were exiled (גליתון) from your land,
the Torah of Moses was taken away (איתנטלית) from you,
and the Torah of the 'avon-gilayon (אורייתא דעון גליון) was given,
and it is written in it: ‘Daughter and son inherit equally.’”

The next day Rabban Gamliel went back and brought him a Libyan donkey.

[The philosopher] said: “I went down to the end of the Gospel,

and it is written in it: ‘I am the Gospel;

I came (אתיתי) not to reduce the Torah of Moses,
and not to add to the Torah of Moses I came (אתיתי).’

And it is written in it: ‘If there is a son, the daughter does not inherit.’”

[Imma Shalom] said [to the philosopher]:

“Let your light shine with the lamp (נהור נהוריך בשרגא)
Examine the judgment (עיין בדינא)!”

Rabban Gamliel said to him: “A donkey came and knocked down the lamp.”

Gospel of Luke (12.13f), according to the Syriac Peshitta (=Diatessaron 28.33)

Somebody in the crowd said to [Jesus]: “Teacher, tell my brother (*lachi*) to divide (*plg*) the inheritance (*yrtvta*) with me.

But [Jesus] said: “Man, who has set me to be a judge (*dyna*) or divider (*mplgna*) above you?”

Gospel of Matthew (5.15-17), according to the Syriac Peshitta (=Diatessaron 8.46)

“No one after lighting a lamp (*shrga*) puts it under the bushel (*sata*)

but on the lampstand (*mnrta*), and it illuminates the entire house.

Thus let your light shine forth (*nnhr nvhrkhvn*) before the people

so that they see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

Do not think that I have come (*datyt*) to abolish the law or the prophets;

I have not come (*atit*) to abolish but to fulfill.

For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away,

not one letter of the law shall pass away until all is accomplished.”

Deuteronomy 4:1:

So now, Israel, give heed to the statues and ordinances that I am teaching you to observe so that you may live to enter and inherit (וירשתם) the land that G-d, the God of your ancestors, is giving you.

You must neither add anything to it nor take away anything from it

but keep the commandments of G-d your God with which I am charging you.

Further Reading:

Burton L. Visotzky, “Overturning the Lamp,” in idem, *Fathers of the World: Essays in Rabbinic and Patristic Literatures* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995), 75–84.

“Margin of Error: Women, Law, and Christianity in *Bavli Shabbat* 116a–b,” in: Eduard Iricinschi and Holger Zellentin (eds.), *Heresy and Identity in Late Antiquity* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 339-363.

Rabbinic Parodies: Imitation and Subversion in Talmud and Midrash, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, forthcoming 2010).