

Chavruta:

Dead Sea Scrolls within the Babylonian Talmud? The Rift with the Pharisees

Vered Noam

Josephus, *Ant.* 13.288-298

(288) As for Hyrcanus, the envy (φθόνον) of the Jews was aroused against him by his own successes (εὐπραγία) and those of his sons; particularly hostile to him were the Pharisees, who are one of the Jewish schools, as we have related above. And so great is their influence with the masses that even when they speak against a king or high priest, they immediately gain credence. (289) Hyrcanus too was a disciple of theirs, and was greatly loved by them. And once he invited them to a feast and entertained them hospitably, and when he saw that they were having a very good time, he began by saying that they knew he wished to be righteous and in everything he did tried to please God and them—for the Pharisees profess such beliefs; (290) at the same time he begged them, if they observed him doing anything wrong or straying from the right path, to lead him back to it and correct him. But they testified to his being altogether virtuous, and he was delighted with their praise. (291) However, one of the guests, named Eleazar, who had an evil nature and took pleasure in dissension (κακοήθης ὧν φύσει καὶ στάσει χαίρων), said, “Since you have asked to be told the truth, if you wish to be righteous, give up the high-priesthood and be content with governing the people” (τὴν ἀρχιερωσύνην ἀπόθου, καὶ μόνον ἀρκείτω σοι τὸ ἄρχειν τοῦ λαοῦ). (292) And when Hyrcanus asked him for what reason he should give up the high-priesthood, he replied, “Because we have heard from our elders that your mother was a captive in the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes.” But the story was false, and Hyrcanus was furious with the man, while all the Pharisees were very indignant (καὶ πάντες δ' οἱ Φαρισαῖοι σφοδρῶς ἠγανάκτησαν). (293) Then a certain Jonathan, one of Hyrcanus' close friends, belonging to the school of Sadducees, who hold opinions opposed to those of the Pharisees, said that it had been with the general approval of all the Pharisees that Eleazar had made his slanderous statement; and this, he added, would be clear to Hyrcanus if he inquired of them what punishment Eleazar deserved for what he had said. (294) And so Hyrcanus asked the Pharisees what penalty they thought he deserved—for, he said, he would be convinced that the slanderous statement had not been made with their approval if they fixed a penalty commensurate with the crime-- , and they replied that Eleazar deserved stripes and chains; for they did not think it right to sentence a man to death for calumny, and anyway the Pharisees are naturally lenient in the matter of punishments. (295) At this Hyrcanus became very angry and began to believe that the fellow had slandered him with their approval. And Jonathan in

particular inflamed his anger, and so worked upon him (296) that he brought him to join the Sadducean party and desert the Pharisees, and to abrogate the regulations which they had established for the people, and punish those who observed them. Out of this, of course, grew the hatred of the masses for him and his sons, (297) but of this we shall speak hereafter (περὶ μέντοι τούτων αὐθις ἐροῦμεν). For the present I wish merely to explain that the Pharisees had passed on to the people certain regulations handed down by former generations (ὅτι νόμιμά τινα παρέδωσαν τῷ δήμῳ οἱ Φαρισαῖοι ἐκ πατέρων διαδοχῆς) and not recorded in the Laws of Moses, for which reason they are rejected by the Sadducean group, who hold that only those regulations should be considered valid which were written down (in Scripture), and that those which had been handed down by former generations need not be observed (τὰ δ' ἐκ παραδόσεως τῶν πατέρων μὴ τηρεῖν). (298) And concerning these matters the parties came to have controversies and serious differences, the Sadducees having the confidence of the wealthy alone but no following among the populace, while the Pharisees have the support of the masses. But of these two schools and of the Essenes a detailed account has been given in the second book of my *Judaica*.

בבלי קידושין סו ע"א

דתניא

- 1 מעשה בינאי המלך שהלך לכוחלית שבמדבר וכבש שם ששים כרכים
- 2 ובחזרתו היה שמח שמחה גדולה וקרא לכל חכמי ישראל <אל> ואמ' להם,
- 3 אבותינו היו אוכלים מלוחים בזמן שהיו עוסק <ים> בביניין בית המקדש
- 4 אף אנו נאכל מלוחי <ם> זכר לאבותינו
- 5 והעלו מלוחין על שולח <נות> של זה <בן> ואכלו
- 6 והיה שם אדם אחד לץ רע ובליעל ואלעזר בן פוערא שמו
- 7 ויאמר אלעזר בן פוער' לינאי המלך ינאי המלך <לבם> של פרוש <ים> עליך
- 8 ומה אעשה, א'ל הקם להם בציץ שבין עיניך, הקים להם בציץ שבין עיניו
- 9 היה שם זקן אחד ויהוד' בן גדירא שמו ויאמר יהוד' בן גדירא <לינאי המלך>
- 10 <ינאי המלך> רב לך כתר מלכות הנח כתר כהונה לזרעו של אהרן
- 11 שהיו או' <אמו נשבית> במודעית
- 12 ויבקש הדבר ולא נמצא ויבדלו חכמי ישראל <אל> בזעם
- 13 ויאמר אלע <זר> בן פועירא לינאי המלך
- 14 ינאי המלך הדיוט שביש' כך הוא דינו ואתה מלך וכהן גדו' כך הוא דינך
- 15 אמ' לו ומה אעשה אמ' לו אם את שומ' לעצתי רומסם
- 16 אמ' לו ותורה מה תהא עליה

17	אמ' לו והלא היא כרוכה ומונחת בקרן זוית וכל הרוצה ללמ<וד> יבא וילמד
18	ותיו(ע)[צ]ץ הרעה על ידי אלעזר בן פוערא ועל ידי יהודה בן גודגדא
19	ויהרגו כל חכמי ישר' והיה <העולם משתומם>
20	עד שבא שמעון בן שטח והחזיר את התורה ליושנה

B. Qiddushin 66a

... it was taught: It once happened that King Yannai went to Kohalith (כוחלית) in the desert and conquered sixty towns there. On his return he rejoiced exceedingly and invited all the Sages of Israel. Said he to them, 'Our forefathers ate mallows (מלוחים) when they were engaged in the building of the [second] Temple; let us too eat mallows in memory of our forefathers.' So mallows were served on golden tables, and they ate.

Now, there was a man there, frivolous, evil and a scoundrel (לץ רע ובליעל), named Eleazar son of Po'irah. Said he to them (ויאמר) Eleazar Ben Po'irah to King Yannai. 'O King Yannai, the hearts of the Pharisees are against thee (לבם של פרושים עליך)'. 'Then what shall I do?' He said to him: 'Make them swear (הקם להם) by the plate (בציץ) between your eyes.' [So] he made them swear by the plate between his eyes.

Now, an elder, named Yehudah son of Gudgeda, was present there. Said he (ויאמר) to King Yannai. 'O King Yannai! let the royal crown suffice thee (רב לך כתר) (מלכות), and leave the crown of priesthood to the seed of Aaron.' For it was rumored that his mother had been taken captive in Modi'im. [Accordingly,] the matter was investigated, but not sustained (ויבוקש הדבר ולא נמצא), and the Sages of Israel separated themselves in anger (ויבדלו חכמי ישראל בזעם).

Then said Eleazar b. Po'irah to King Yannai: 'O King Yannai! That is the law even for a commoner in Israel, and thou, a King and a High Priest, shall that be thy law [too]?' 'Then what shall I do?' He told him: 'If thou wilt take my advice, trample them down (רומסם)'. 'But what shall happen with the Torah?' 'Behold, it is bound up and lying in the corner (כרוכה ומונחת בקרן זוית), whoever wishes to study, let him come and study!' [...]

Straightway, the evil burst forth (ותוצץ הרעה) through Eleazar son of Po'irah and through Yehudah Ben Gudgeda. All the Sages of Israel were massacred (ויהרגו כל) (חכמי ישראל), and the world was desolate until Simeon b. Shetah came and restored the Torah to its pristine [glory].

Questions:

1. Read the two versions of the *aggada*. Divide it into scenes. Who are the dramatis personae? What is the role of each protagonist? Who are the "bad guys" and who are the "good guys" in the story? What is the message of this legend? To which Jewish circle would you ascribe it?
2. Compare the Josephan and the rabbinic versions. What is the shared kernel? Where are the differences? Can you explain these differences?