

## Saturday night Seder and the making of Hillel's Career

Catriella Freedman

1. Tosefta Pesachim 4:11	תוספתא פסחים ד:יא
<p>One time the fourteenth [of Nissan] fell on the Sabbath and [the people] asked Hillel the Elder, does the Passover offering override the Sabbath? He said to them, "Do we only have one Passover offering a year that overrides the Sabbath? [Rather,] we have more than three hundred 'Passover offerings' (i.e., the various sacrifices that are brought throughout the year) that override the Sabbath." The entire Temple Courtyard crowded around him. He said to them, "Just as the Tamid is a communal sacrifice that overrides the Sabbath, so too the Passover offering is a communal sacrifice that overrides the Sabbath. And another thing, it is said regarding the Tamid (Num. 28:2), 'its appointed time' and it is [also] said regarding Passover offering (Num. 9:2) 'its appointed time'; thus just as the Tamid as to which it is said 'its appointed time' overrides the Sabbath, so too the Passover offering as to which it is [also] said 'its appointed time' must also override the Sabbath. And moreover, [the matter may be further proven by] a <i>kol v'chomer</i> (a logical deduction): If the Tamid, which does not render one liable for excommunication [by failing to perform it] overrides the Sabbath, is it not logical that the Passover offering, which <i>does</i> render one liable for excommunication [by failing to perform it] must also override the Sabbath? And moreover, I received this tradition from my teachers that Passover overrides the Sabbath, and not [just] the first Passover but [also] the second Passover, and not [just] a Passover offering brought by the community, but also a Passover offering brought by an individual." They said to him, "What should be done about the people that did not bring knives or Passover offerings to consecrate [because they did not know that the Passover offering overrides the Sabbath]?" He said to them, "Leave it to them, [since] the Holy Spirit is upon them. If they are not prophets, they are the children of prophets." What the Israelites did at that moment was that whoever brought a lamb for his Passover offering lodged [his knife] in its wool, [and whoever brought a] kid goat, he tied [his knife] between its horns, and thus they brought knives and Passover offerings to consecrate, and they slaughtered their Passover offerings. And on that day, they appointed Hillel as the Nasi and he taught them all the laws of Passover.</p>	<p>פעם אחת חל י"ד להיות בשבת שאלו את הלל הזקן פסח מהו שידחה את השבת אמר להם וכי פסח אחד יש לנו בשנה שדוחה [את השבת] הרבה מג' מאות פסחים יש לנו [בשנה ודוחין] את השבת חברו עליו כל העזרה אמר להם תמיד קרבן צבור דוחה את השבת אף פסח קרבן צבור דוחה את השבת דבר אחר נאמר [בתמיד] (במדבר כח) מועדו ונאמר [בפסח] (במדבר ט) מועדו [מה תמיד שנאמר בו מועדו] דוחה את השבת אף [פסח שנא' בו מועדו] דוחה את השבת ועוד ק"ו ומה תמיד שאין חייבין עליו כרת דוחה את השבת פסח שחייבין עליו כרת אינו דין שידחה את השבת ועוד מקובלני מרבתי שפסח דוחה את השבת [ולא פסח ראשון אלא פסח שני ולא פסח צבור אלא פסח יחיד] אמרו לו מה יהא [על העם] שלא הביאו סכינין ופסחים למקדש אמר להם [הניחו להם רוח"ק עליהן] אם אין נביאים הן בני נביאים הן מה עשו ישראל באותה שעה מי שפסחו טלה טמנו בצמרו גדי קשרו בין קרניו והביאו סכינין ופסחים למקדש [ושחטו את פסחיהן] בו ביום מנו את הלל [נשיא והיה מורה] להם בהלכות הפסח.</p>
2. Tractate Pesachim, Jerusalem Talmud 6:1	מסכת פסחים תלמוד ירושלמי ו:א
<p>HALAKHAH: This question left the Elders of Bathyra at a loss. Once the Fourteenth fell on the Sabbath and they did not know whether <i>Pesah</i> pushes aside the Sabbath or not. They said, we have here a Babylonian who served Shemaya and Avtalion and knows whether <i>Pesah</i> pushes aside the Sabbath or not. It is possible that there be hope from him. They sent and called him. They said to him, did you ever hear, if the Fourteenth falls on the Sabbath, whether <i>Pesah</i> pushes aside the Sabbath or not? He told them, do we have only one <i>Pesah</i> which pushes aside the Sabbath every year? Are there not many <i>Pesahim</i> which push aside the</p>	<p>הלכה: זו הלכה נעלמה מזקני בתיירה. פעם אחת חל ארבעה עשר להיות בשבת. ולא היו יודעין אם פסח דוחה את השבת אם לאו. אמרו. יש כאן בבלי אחד והלל שמו. ששימש את שמעיה ואבטליון. יודע אם פסח דוחה את השבת אם לאו. איפשר שיש ממנו תוחלת. שלחו וקראו לו. אמרו לו. שמעת מימיך. קשהל ארבעה עשרה להיות בשבת. אם דוחה את השבת אם לאו. אמר להן. וכי אין לנו אלא פסח אחד בלבד דוחה את השבת בכל שנה. והלא כמה פסחים ידחו את השבת</p>



for him. They said to him: Do you know whether the Paschal lamb overrides Shabbat or not? He said to them: Have we but one Paschal lamb during the year that overrides Shabbat? Do we not have many more than two hundred Paschal lambs, i.e., sacrifices, during the year that override Shabbat?

They said to him: From where do you know this? He said to them: "Its appointed time" is stated with regard to the Paschal lamb and "its appointed time" is also stated with regard to the daily offering. Just as the expression "its appointed time," which is stated with regard to the daily offering, indicates that it overrides Shabbat, so too "its appointed time," which is stated with regard to the Paschal lamb, indicates that it overrides Shabbat.

And furthermore, it is an *a fortiori* inference: If the daily offering, the neglect of which is not punishable by *karet*, overrides Shabbat, is it not right that the Paschal lamb, the neglect of which is punishable by *karet*, should override Shabbat?

After Hillel brought these proofs, they immediately seated him at the head and appointed him *Nasi* over them, and he expounded the laws of Passover that entire day. In the course of his teaching, he began rebuking them [*mekanteran*] them with words. He said to them: What caused this to happen to you, that I should come up from Babylonia and become *Nasi* over you? It was the laziness in you that you did not serve the two most eminent scholars of the generation living in Eretz Yisrael, Shemaya and Avtalyon.

They said to Hillel: Our teacher, if one forgot and did not bring a knife on the eve of Shabbat and cannot slaughter his Paschal lamb, what is the law? He said to them: I once heard this *halakha* from my teachers but I have forgotten it. But leave it to the Jewish people; if they are not prophets to whom God has revealed His secrets, they are the sons of prophets.

The next day, on Shabbat that was the eve of Passover, one whose Paschal offering was a lamb took the knife and stuck it in its wool; and one whose Paschal offering was a goat, which does not have wool, stuck it between its horns. Hillel saw the incident and remembered the *halakha* that he had once learned and said: This is the tradition I received from the mouths of Shemaya and Avtalyon

וְהָיָה הָרִבָּה יוֹתֵר מִמֵּאֲתָיִם פָּסְחִים יֵשׁ לָנוּ בַּשָּׁנָה שְׁדוּחִין אֶת הַשַּׁבָּת.

אָמְרוּ לוֹ: מִנֵּין לָךְ? אָמַר לָהֶם: נֹאמַר "מוֹעֵדוֹ"

בַּפֶּסַח, וְנֹאמַר "מוֹעֵדוֹ" בַּתֵּמִיד: מָה "מוֹעֵדוֹ"

הָאָמֹר בַּתֵּמִיד דּוּחָה אֶת הַשַּׁבָּת, אִף "מוֹעֵדוֹ"

הָאָמֹר בַּפֶּסַח דּוּחָה אֶת הַשַּׁבָּת.

וְעוֹד, קָל וָחוֹמֶר הוּא: וּמָה תֵּמִיד שְׁאִין עֲנוּשׁ כָּרַת

דּוּחָה אֶת הַשַּׁבָּת, פֶּסַח שְׁעֲנוּשׁ כָּרַת — אִינוּ דִּין

שְׁדוּחָה אֶת הַשַּׁבָּת.

מִיָּד הוֹשִׁיבוּהוּ בְּרֹאשׁ, וּמִינוּהוּ נְשִׂיא עֲלֵיהֶם, וְהָיָה

דּוֹרֵשׁ כָּל הַיּוֹם כּוֹלּוֹ בְּהִלְכוֹת הַפֶּסַח. הַתְּחִיל

מִקְנָטְרֵן בְּדִבְרִים. אָמַר לָהֶם: מִי גָרַם לָכֶם שְׂאֲעֵלָה

מִבְּבֶל וְאֶהְיֶה נְשִׂיא עֲלֵיכֶם — עֲצָלוּת שְׁהִיְתָה בָּכֶם,

שֶׁלֹּא שְׂמַשְׁתֶּם שְׁנֵי גְדוּלֵי הַדּוֹר, שְׂמַעְיָה וְאַבְטָלְיוֹן.

אָמְרוּ לוֹ: רַבִּי, שָׂכַח וְלֹא הֵבִיא סִכִּין מִעֶרֶב שַׁבָּת,

מָהוּ? אָמַר לָהֶם: הֲלָכָה זֹאת שְׂמַעְתִּי וְשָׂכַחְתִּי, אֲלֹא

הִנֵּחַ לָהֶן לְיִשְׂרָאֵל, אִם אֵין נְבִיאִים הֵן — בְּנֵי

נְבִיאִים הֵן.

לְמַחֵר, מִי שְׁפָסְחוּ טֹלָה — תּוֹחֲבוּ בְּצִמְרוֹ, מִי

שְׁפָסְחוּ גָדִי — תּוֹחֲבוּ בֵּין קֶרְנָיו. רָאָה מַעֲשֵׂה וְנִזְכָּר

הֲלָכָה, וְאָמַר: כֹּה מְקוּבָּלָנִי מִפִּי שְׂמַעְיָה וְאַבְטָלְיוֹן.