



From Where I Sit

Elana Stein Hain and Yonah Hain

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Different Dialects

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1. Babylonian Talmud Nedarim 66b

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Our political landscape and personal relationships are rife with misunderstandings and miscommunications. On this episode of TEXTing, Elana Stein Hain and Yonah Hain dive into a story from Nedarim 66b about a series of miscommunications between a Talmudic married couple to understand the difference between miscommunications and conflicting viewpoints and consider how we take responsibility for such differences.

*This source sheet is part of the May 6th, 2024 episode of the podcast **TEXTING with Elana Stein Hain** which delves deeply into Jewish texts to guide and inspire us as we grapple with the concerns and meaning of this moment. Join Elana as she addresses the issues of our day through the lens of classical Jewish texts in conversation with Hartman scholars.*

Dr. Elana Stein Hain is the Rosh Beit Midrash and a senior research fellow at the Shalom Hartman Institute of North America, where she serves as lead faculty, engages in research and curriculum development and consults on the content of lay and professional leadership programs. A widely well-regarded teacher and scholar, Elana is passionate about bringing rabbinic thought into conversation with contemporary life. To this end, she hosts [TEXTing](#), a bi-weekly podcast that considers issues relevant to Jewish life through the lens of classical and modern Torah texts; she also teaches [Talmud from the Balcony](#), an occasional learning seminar exposing the big ideas, questions, and issues motivating rabbinic discussions. She is the author of [Circumventing the Law: Rabbinic Perspectives on Legal Loopholes and Integrity](#) (Penn Press, 2024) which uses loopholes as a lens for understanding rabbinic views on law and ethics. Elana also contributes to [For Heaven's Sake](#), a bi-weekly podcast with Donniel Hartman and Yossi Klein Halevi, exploring contemporary issues related to Israel and the Jewish world. She earned her doctorate in Religion at Columbia University and is an alumna of the Yeshiva University Graduate Program in Advanced Talmudic Studies (GPATS) as well as the Consortium in Jewish Studies and Legal Theory Graduate Fellowship at Cardozo School of Law. She also served for eight years as a clergy member on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, at both Lincoln Square Synagogue and the Jewish Center, has taught at the Wagner School at NYU, and sits on the board of Sefaria: A Living Library of Jewish Texts.

Rabbi Yonah Hain is a faculty member at the Shalom Hartman Institute of North America. He is the Campus Rabbi of Columbia University, where he leads the educational and religious initiatives of Columbia/Barnard Hillel's robust pluralistic Jewish community. Yonah is an adjunct faculty member at YCT Rabbinical School, and he has begun coursework towards a doctorate in Talmud and Rabbinics. With his previous work at the Bronfman Center at NYU, Yonah has been a New York City campus rabbi for fifteen years.

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Shalom Hartman Institute of North America
475 Riverside Drive, Suite 1450
New York, NY 10115
212-268-0300
info@shalomhartman.org | www.shalomhartman.org

Different Dialects

1. Babylonian Talmud Nedarim 66b

ההוא בר בבל דסליק לארעא דישׂראל, נסיב איתתא. אמר לה: בשילי לי תרי טלפי. בשילה ליה תרי טלפי. רתח עליה:

The Gemara cites another incident: There was a certain Babylonian who went up to Eretz Yisrael and married a woman there. He said to her: Cook two lentils, i.e., some lentils, for me. She cooked exactly two lentils for him. He grew angry with her.

למחר אמר לה: בשילי לי גריןא. בשילה ליה גריןא.

On the following day, so that she would not repeat what she had done, he said to her: Cook a *se'a* [*geriva*] for me, intending: A large amount. She cooked an actual *se'a* for him, far more than what one person could eat.

אמר לה: זילי איתי לי תרי בוציני. אזלת ואיתי ליה תרי שרגי.

He said to her: Go and bring me two *butzinei*, intending small gourds, as *butzinei* are small gourds in the Aramaic dialect spoken in Babylonia. She went and brought him two lamps [*sheraggei*], called *butzinei* in the Aramaic dialect spoken in Eretz Yisrael.

אמר לה: זילי תברי תהון על רישא דבבא. הנה יתיב בבא בן בוטא אבבא וקא דאין דינא. אזלת ותברת תהון על רישיה. אמר לה: מה הדין דעבדת? אמרה ליה: כך צינני בעלי. אמר: את עשית רצון בעליך, המקום יוציא ממך שני בנים כבבא בן בוטא.

In anger, he said to her: Go and break them on the head of the bava, intending the gate, as bava means a gate in the Aramaic dialect spoken in Babylonia. She did not recognize this word. At that time, the Sage Bava ben Buta was sitting as a judge at the gate. She went and broke them on his head, as his name was Bava. He said to her: What is this you have done? She said to him: This is what my husband commanded me to do. He said: You fulfilled your husband's desire, may the Omnipresent bring forth from you two sons, corresponding to the two candles, like Bava ben Buta.