

Reish Lakish: May I be an expiation for R. Chiyya and his sons. For in ancient times **when the Torah was forgotten from Israel—**

• **Ezra** came up from Babylon and established it.

• When it was again forgotten **Hillel the Babylonian** came up and established it.

• When it was again forgotten, **R. Chiyya** and his sons came up and established it.

Sukkah 20a

דאמר ריש לקיש: הריני

כפרת רבי חייא ובניו.

שבתחלה כשנשתכחה

תורה מישראל

• עלה **עזרא** מבבל ויסדה,

• חזרה ונשתכחה עלה

**הלל הבבלי** ויסדה,

• חזרה ונשתכחה עלו

**רבי חייא ובניו** ויסדוה.

סוכה כ.

## Torah was forgotten

### Rashi:

- Only a few *Halakhot* were forgotten in the time of Hillel—
  - The Benei Beteira forgot whether the *korban pesach* could be slaughtered on *Shabbat*. Hillel established the law based upon what he had been taught by Shemaya and Avtalyon.

### Ritva:

- There is no indication that the Torah was forgotten in the generation of R. Chiyya. Rather, he saw to it that it was not forgotten.

### *Arukh l'Ner*

- **Ezra** prevented the **Written Torah** from being forgotten
- **Hillel** prevented the **Oral Tradition** from being forgotten
- **R. Chiyya** prevented the **Mishnah** from being forgotten

### Comments

- Hillel was unsuccessful at stemming the tide of *makhloket*
- Why aren't R. Oshiyah and Bar Kappara mentioned as saving the Mishnah?
- Moreover, where is it said that there was a question of the Mishnah being forgotten.

<b>Sinai vs. O'ker Harim</b>		
	<b>Sinai</b>	<b>O'ker Harim</b>
<b>Intelligent</b>	√	√
<b>Diligent</b>	√	√
<b>Analytical Abilities</b>	√	√
<b>Genius</b>	√	√
<b>Originality: Within traditional lines</b>	√	√
<b>Out of the box thinker</b>	<b>X</b>	√

***Reish Lakish, in his remarks, focuses upon those Rabbis who were both—***

- ***Guardians of the Tradition***
- ***Champions of Change.***



## Ezra

- After the Babylonian exile, Ezra was granted permission by Artaxerxes to lead a delegation of Jews to Jerusalem
- He was a *Kohen* who traces his line directly back to Aharon through Pinchas b. Elazar.
- He was the spiritual father of the Second Commonwealth
- His ascension to Israel is equated to that of Yehoshua

עד יעבר עמך ה' זו ביאה ראשונה עד יעבר עם זו  
 קנית זו ביאה שניה אמור מעתה ראויין היו ישראל  
 לעשות להם נס בביאה שניה כביאה ראשונה אלא  
 שגרם החטא (סוטה לו).

• "Until Thy people pass over, O Lord": This alludes to the first advance [of Israel **in the days of Yehoshua**];

• "Till the people pass over which Thou hast Gotten": alludes to the second advance [**in the days of Ezra**].

Conclude from this that the Israelites were worthy that a miracle should be performed on their behalf during the second advance as in the first advance, but sin caused [it to be withheld]. (Sotah 36a)

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- He was the spiritual father of the Second Commonwealth
- His ascension to Israel is equated to that of Yehoshua
  - He sanctified Eretz Yisrael and established *shemita* and *yovelot*
- Ezra assured the purity of Kelal Yisra'el: Two awesome responsibilities —
  - Purify Babylonia
  - Purify Israel
    - “Dissolved” mixed marriages

## Ezra

Had to create a community from scratch

- Yehoshua, First Mikdash Era: Torah knowledge derived from Above to Below
- Ezra, Second Temple Era: Torah knowledge derived from Below to Above.
- Five major spiritual items were lacking in the Second Temple:
  1. *Aron Kodesh*, kaporet, keruvim,
  2. *Eish min haShamayim*,
  3. *Shekhinah*,
  4. Ru'ach haKodesh, and
  5. *Urim v'Tumim*. (Yoma 21b)



## Recreation of Revelation

(ז) וְנִשְׁוּעַ וְכִנּוּי וְשִׁהְיָהּ לְמִיּוֹן עֲקוֹב שְׂבַתִּי הַיּוֹדִיָּה מִעֲשֵׂיָהּ קְלִיטָא עֲזָרְיָה יוֹזְבֵד חָנוּ  
 פְּלִאָיָה וְהַלּוּיִם מְבִינִים אֶת הָעָם לְתוֹרָה וְהָעָם עַל עֲמֻדָם: (ח) וַיִּקְרָאוּ בְּסֵפֶר בְּתוֹרַת  
 הָאֵל הֵימָּה מִפִּי רֵשׁ וְשׁוֹם שְׂכָל נְבִינֵי בְּמִקְרָא. (נחמיה ח')



**עזרה התקין לישראל שיהו קורין בתורה  
בשני ובחמישי ובשבת במנחה**

That the Torah be read publicly on Mondays and  
Thursdays and during the Minchah service on Shabbat



**הוא התקין שיהיו בתי דינים יושבין בעיירות בשני ובחמישי**

He decreed that courts be held on Mondays and  
Thursdays



**הוא התקין שיהיו הרוכלין מחזרין בעיירות  
מפני כבודן של בנות ישראל**

He decreed that peddlers be allowed to  
travel between towns to sell cosmetics





**הוא התקין שיהיו אופין פת בערבי שבתות  
שתהא פרוסה מצויה לעני**

**He decreed that housewives rise early to bake bread on  
Fridays so that the poor will find bread for their  
Shabbat meals**

## Ezra

•The populace did not speak Hebrew well; The members of the community were not even able to formulate prayers on their own.

- Ezra instituted a major innovation
- He standardized prayers and blessings.

רמב"ם הלכות תפילה ונשיאת כפים פרק א : הלכה ד  
 כיון שגלו ישראל בימי נבוכדנצר הרשע נתערבו בפרס ויון ושאר האומות ונולדו להם בנים בארצות הגוים ואותן הבנים נתבלבלו שפתם והיתה שפת כל אחד ואחד מעורבת מלשונות הרבה וכיון שהיה מדבר אינו יכול לדבר כל צורכו בלשון אחת אלא בשיבוש שנאמר ובניהם חצי מדבר אשדודית וגו' ואינם מכירים לדבר יהודית וכלשון עם ועם ומפני זה כשהיה אחד מהן מתפלל תקצר לשונו לשאול חפציו או להגיד שבח הקדוש ברוך הוא בלשון הקדש עד שיערבו עמה לשונות אחרות, וכיון שראה עזרא ובית דינו כך עמדו ותקנו להם שמנה עשרה ברכות על א הסדר, שלש ראשונות שבח לה' ושלש אחרונות הודיה, ואמצעיות יש בהן שאלת כל הדברים שהן כמו אבות לכל חפצי איש ואיש ולצרכי הציבור כולן, כדי שיהיו ערוכות בפי הכל וילמדו אותן ותהיה תפלת אלו העלגים תפלה שלימה כתפלת בעלי הלשון הצחה, ומפני ענין זה תקנו כל הברכות והתפלות מסודרות בפי כל ישראל כדי שיהא ענין כל ברכה ערוך בפי העלג.

## Ezra changed the Torah font

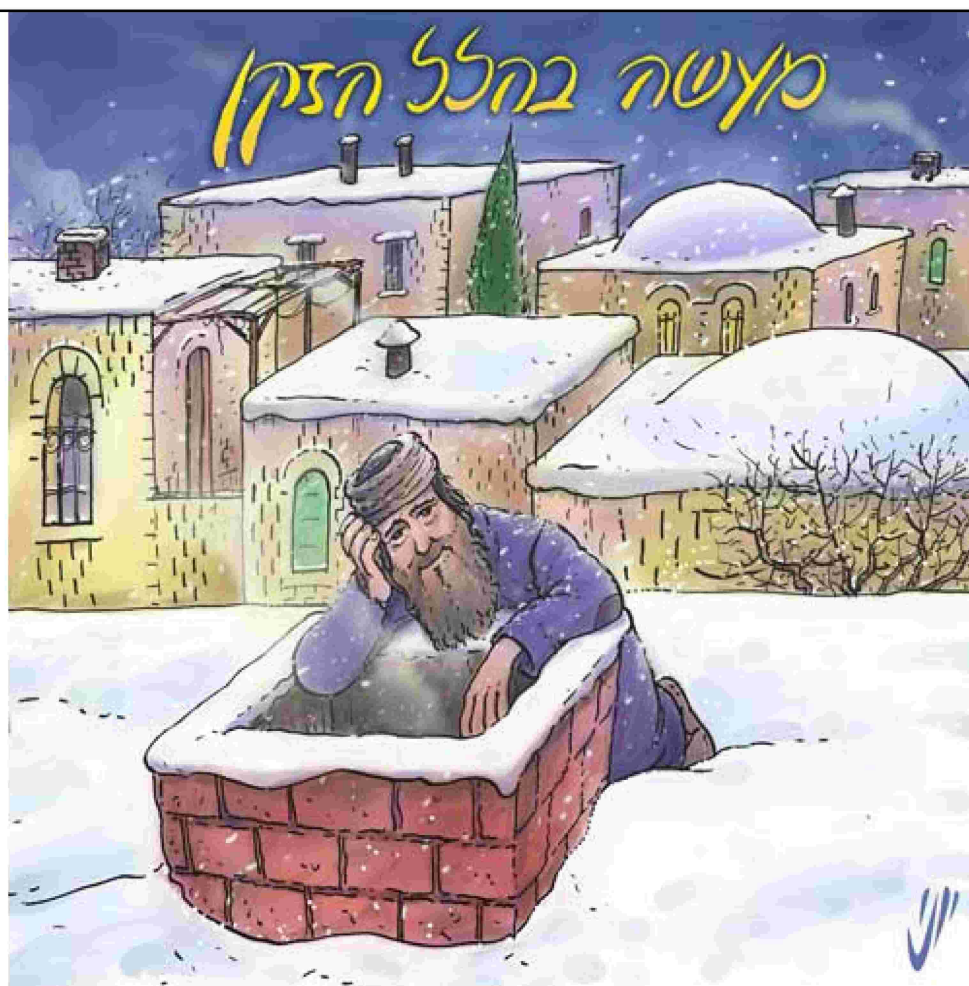
תניא רבי יוסי אומר ראוי היה עזרא שתינתן תורה על ידו לישראל  
אילמלא (לא) קדמו משה במשה הוא אומר ומשה עלה אל האלהים  
בעזרא הוא אומר הוא עזרא עלה מבבל מה עלייה האמור כאן תורה אף  
עלייה האמור להלן תורה במשה הוא אומר ואותי צוה ה' בעת ההיא  
ללמד אתכם חקים ומשפטים בעזרא הוא אומר כי עזרא הכין לבבו  
לדרוש את תורת ה' (אלהיו) ולעשות וללמד בישראל חוק ומשפט ואף  
על פי שלא ניתנה תורה על ידו נשתנה על ידו הכתב. (סנהדרין בא:)

ר"ן : בגלות בבל שכחו את הכתב והלשון הקודמים והתרגלו לכתב  
אשורי שהיה מקובל שם.

R. Yossi: Had Moshe not preceded him, Ezra would have been worthy of receiving the Torah for Israel. Of Moses it is written, And Moses went up unto God, and of Ezra it is written, He, Ezra, went up from Babylon. As the going up of the former refers to the [receiving of the] Law, so does the going up of the latter. Concerning Moses, it is stated: And the Lord commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments; and concerning Ezra, it is stated: For Ezra had prepared his heart to expound the law of the Lord [his God] to do it and to teach Israel statutes and judgments. **And even though the Torah was not given through him, its writing was changed through him.**

### צורת האותיות העבריות

א	ב	ג	ד	ה	ו	ז	ח	ט	י	כ
כ	ל	מ	נ	ס	ע	פ	צ	ק	ר	ש
ת										



פעם אחת היו מסובין בעליית בית גוריה ביריחו ונתנה עליהם בת קול מן השמים יש כאן אחד שראוי שתשרה עליו שכינה (כמשה רבינו) אלא שאין דורו זכאי לכך נתנו חכמים את עיניהם **בהלל הזקן** וכשמת אמרו עליו **הי חסיד הי עניו תלמידו של עזרא** (סנהדרין יא.)

Once when the Rabbis were met in the upper chamber of Gurya's house at Yericho, a *Bat-kol* was heard from Heaven, saying: 'There is one amongst you who is worthy that the Shechinah should rest on him as it did on Moshe, but his generation does not merit it.'

The Sages present set their eyes on **Hillel the Elder**. And when he died, they lamented and said: 'Alas, the pious man, the humble man, **the disciple of Ezra** [is no more].' (Sanhedrin 11)

## Hillel

- Hillel was from a poor family
- He studied Torah under adverse conditions
  - He “ascended” from Bavel, having studied there under Shemaya and Avtalyon
- He was a revolutionary: *O’ker Harim*: Completely changed perspective of *Halakhah*
- He built Torah from Below
- His major antagonist was Shammai
- They founded the Houses of Shammai and Hillel
- **Shammai’s essence is Din**
  - The punctilious application of the law
  - Man must meet Heavenly standards
- **Hillel’s essence is Chesed**
  - Ruled on behalf of the populace
  - Heaven will adjust to man
  - Humanity is empowered to rectify the world
- Examples:
  - Treatment of the converts
  - Attitude towards *Gezeirot*
- Shammai: Kabbalist; Hillel: Rationalist



### R. Chiyya

Whenever R. Chaninah and R. Chiyya were in a dispute, **R. Chaninah** said to R. Chiyya: 'Would you dispute with me? **If, Heaven forbid! the Torah were forgotten in Israel**, I would restore it by my argumentative powers.' To which R. **Chiyya** rejoined: 'Would you dispute with me, **who achieved that the Torah should not be forgotten in Israel?**

What did I do? I went and sowed flax, made nets [from the flax cords], trapped deers, whose flesh I gave to orphans, and prepared scrolls [from their skins], upon which I wrote the five books [of Moshe]. Then I went to a town [which contained no teachers] and taught the five books to five children, and the six orders [of the Mishnah] to six children And I bade them: "Until I return, teach each other the Chumash and the Mishnah;" and thus I preserved the Torah from being forgotten in Israel.'

This is what Rabbi [meant when he] said, 'How great are the works of Chiyya!'

Bava Metzia 85a







## Reish Lakish

**What was the legacy of Reish Lakish?**

- He was a *chozer biteshuvah*
- He was an *O'ker Harim*
- He had a fierce love for *Eretz Yisra'el*

•The greatest legacy of Reish Lakish was that he taught Israel how great is **the power of love** when worshiping HaShem.

•*Reish Lakish said: Whoever occupies himself with [the study of] the Torah by night, the Holy One, blessed be He, draws over him a chord of lovingkindness by day, for it is said: 'By day the Lord doth command His lovingkindness'? Because 'by night His song is with me'. (Chagigah 12b)*

•*Reish Lakish said that repentance is so great that premeditated sins are accounted as though they were mitzvot. (Yoma 86b)*

•A *chozer biteshuvah* is like a newborn

•A *chozer biteshuvah* can attain a higher level of spirituality than can one who never sinned

•Never give up on an individual

•The community must be welcoming

•Israel will be redeemed only if every one of its members draws close to HaShem

•While he is extremely demanding, he demonstrated faith in Israel's ability and commitment

Reish Lakish was marking the burial vaults of the Rabbis. But when he came to the grave of R. Chiyya, it was hidden from him, whereupon Reish Lakish experienced a sense of humiliation. 'Sovereign of the Universe!' he exclaimed, 'did I not debate on the Torah as he did?' Thereupon a Heavenly Voice cried out in reply: 'You did indeed debate on the Torah as he did, **but did not spread the Torah as he did.**'

Bava Metzia 85b