POST THE TALMUD / DISCUSSION GUIDE

Hillel and Shammai

Eruvin 13b:10-11 | Beta teaching adaptation

THE CORE QUESTION

Can two positions have value when a community must follow one ruling?

THE ARGUMENT IN FOUR MOVES

1. Beit Hillel and Beit Shammai dispute for three years whose rulings should govern.

2. A heavenly voice affirms the value of both schools' teachings, while ruling that practice follows Beit Hillel.

3. The Gemara asks why Beit Hillel receives that distinction if both teachings have standing.

4. It points to their humility and their practice of studying both positions and presenting Beit Shammai's view before their own.

WHERE THIS GOES NEXT

Read Eruvin 13b:10-11 and compare the heavenly voice here with Bava Metzia 59b. Tosafot takes up the tension; the passages do not offer a simple universal rule about all disagreements.

DISCUSS

1. What is the difference between valuing a position and following it in practice?

2. Can you explain a view you disagree with in terms its supporters would recognize?

3. Why might the way someone argues affect whether we trust their judgment?

TEACHING NOTE

These are schools of thought, not merely a conversation between two individual rabbis. Avoid reducing the passage to 'everyone is equally right.'

Source: https://www.sefaria.org/Eruvin.13b.10-11

Classroom thread: https://postthetalmud.com/hillel/?mode=study&classroom=1

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