

MTEI COHORT SEVEN –SEMINAR 3
March 27-30, 2016 - Adar Bet 17-20

Professional development: implications of learning *supporting & challenging* as interpretive practices

Background information

For Text # 1 only

R. Shimi bar Ashi: 4th century. Was a close disciple of Abaye. After the passing away of his teacher he attended Rav Papa's yeshiva and classes. Note that the title R. mentioned by the Talmud might indicate that the character became a rabbi later in time, but was still not recognized as rabbi at the time of the story.

Fell on his face: a ritual and usually private practice during which people expressed their personal prayers.

For Text # 1 and 2:

Rav (*stands for Rabbi*) **Papa:** (died 375) was a Talmud scholar and teacher who lived in Babylonia. He was a student of two famous rabbis: Rava and Abaye. He headed the yeshiva (the talmudic academy) in the city of Nehardea and over time he trained many students. Rav Papa was a wealthy man and it is told that whenever he completed the study of a tractate from the Talmud he held a large party at which he invited his ten sons and many other people.

Havruta Text Study

The two major goals of this study are: to practice active listening, supporting and challenging and to develop compelling interpretations.

- a. Perform a close reading of the text you chose.
- b. Explore and discuss what might be possible parts of the story.
- c. Take the time to dwell on the parts of the story that seem to be critical. Pay attention to the characters' motivations and perceptions, literary aspects like dialogues, words that appear many times, characters, scenes, chronology, what is said vs. what is omitted etc. Articulate the *questions* you have while figuring out "what is going on". Discuss what you believe is going on. **Use the guidelines to practice active listening, supporting and challenging.**
- d. *Compelling interpretations:*
I/We believe this story to be about...
Evidences which support this interpretation...
I/we believe the text is trying to teach/show us that....
- e. Again, **practice supporting and challenging** your interpretation(s).
- f. Read and study the text again and explore whether you're coming up with alternative or new insights.