

Scroll Lesson 15

More Hagahot

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If you are studying Gemara, Rashi or Tosafot and come across a little *Rashi Writing Letter* in parenthesis [Image, focus on little aleph in parenthesis] It means that **Rabbi Yoel Sirkes**, has left you a note. Rabbi Yoel Sirkes lived about 350 years ago. He served as Rabbi of Krakow, Poland, and wrote a famous commentary to the *Arba'ah Turim*. [a button appears “for more information about the *Arba'ah Turim* click here.” button will lead to unit 5A2] His commentary is called **Bayit Hadash**, which means “A New House.” Here is the reason for the unusual name: Rabbi Yosef Karo’s famous commentary to the *Arba'ah Turim* is called *Bet Yosef* or “The House of Yosef.” [Another link appears connecting the user to unit 5A2 for more information about the Bet Yosef] So Rabbi Yoel Sirkes called his new commentary “A New House.” The *Bayit Hadash* is usually called the “**Bah**” for short. When people talk about Rabbi Yoel Sirkes, they often call him “*the Bah*” after the name of his commentary. His notes on the Gemara are called **Hagahot Habah**. As I said before, sometimes the people who printed the Gemara made little mistakes. These mistakes can be very confusing. *The Bah* wanted to stop confusion, so he wrote down his notes to correct mistakes that got into the words of the Gemara, Rashi and the Tosafot. The *Hagaot Habah* can appear on either the inside or the outside margin. [image highlites]

Sometimes as you study the Gemara, Rashi or the Tosafot, you may find a little *Square Writing Letter* in brackets. [Image focus on the Aleph] this means that **Rabbi Eliyahu, the Gaon of Vilna** has left you a note. He lived in the Lithuanian city of Vilna about 200 years ago. The word **Gaon** means “Great Torah Scholar.” Rabbi Eliyahu was one of the greatest Rabbi’s who ever lived. He is usually called **the Gra** which is short for “The Gaon Rabbi Eliyahu.” His notes are called **Hagaot HaGra**. Even though he was smart enough to create super-complicated ideas, the *Gra* knew that the most important part of learning Gemara is to understand its plain meaning. The *Gra's* notes tell you how to read the Gemara and its commentaries without mistakes. The *Hagaot Hagra* can appear on either the inside or the outside margin [image highlites.]

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Now turn to *Kaf Aleph amud Bet*. [Image moves to next page] Look down the page. Down near the bottom. See the little circle with a line through it? [Image highlights] if you find a circle like that, it means that **Rabbi Akiva Eger** left you a note. Rabbi Akiva Eger lived about 160 years ago. He was the Rabbi of Posen, a Polish city that belonged to Germany at the time. Rabbi Akiva Eger was a very brave person, who helped many people when a terrible sickness came to the city. King Frederick III gave him a medal for bravery! Rabbi Akiva Eger had a very sharp mind, and he discovered many questions on the Gemara and the commentaries. He discovered many answers too, but he wanted people to figure out their own answers. So he wrote his notes and questions on the margins of his Gemara for his students to copy over. A margin is called a **gilayon** in Hebrew. Rabbi Akiva Eger's notes are called **Gilayon HaShas**. One day you may discover an answer for one of Rabbi Akiva Eger's questions! If that happens you will be a very sharp person indeed!

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There is one last thing to mention. At the time the Romm Family was printing their Shas in Vilna, Torah scholars were making exciting discoveries. Many writings by important Torah Sages had been lost for hundreds of years. Suddenly these writings were found hidden away in non-Jewish Libraries. The Romm Family added some of these new-found commentaries to their Shas. Unfortunately, the commentaries were not complete. No one commentary covered the whole Shas. So, different Mesechtot got different commentaries.

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Masechet Bava Metzia got the commentary of **Rabbenu Hananel**. He lived in Tunisian city of Kairwan about 950 years ago. Rabbenu Hananel is special because he had a close connection to the Babylonian Yeshivot where the Gemara had been composed about 500 years earlier. The Babylonian sages received many traditions straight from the Amoraim telling about the Sugyot and how to understand them. Rabbenu Hananel made sure these traditions were remembered. [“ Button appears you have a Message from agent 613”] Rabbenu Hananel's commentary is really a summary of the Sugyot which tries to show you the final Halacha.

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Even today there are forgotten commentaries being rediscovered by Torah scholars in Libraries, manuscript collections and in special places where Jews would put away Seforim that were too old to use. Rooms of this kind are called ***genizot***. A Jew is not allowed to throw away a holy sefer. That is why old sefarim are put in *genizot*.

Just imagine! Wouldn't it be exciting to be a Torah Archeologist, exploring and bringing back forgotten commentaries? There are still important forgotten sefarim waiting to be discovered.