

Interpretation as a Technology of Authority: A Perelmanian Analysis of a Yeshiva Lecture

Supplementary Material 1: Annotated Overview of the *Shiur Kelali*

Opening lecture for Tractate Bava Metzia, delivered by the rosh yeshiva of Yeshivat Yesha Yemino (pseudonym), September 2020.

This table follows the sequence of the lecture and summarizes its principal argumentative and rhetorical movements, segment by segment. Illustrative excerpts are taken from the accompanying English transcript (Supplementary Material 2), which is supplied separately and contains the full lecture; ellipses mark omitted material. The table is intended to help readers situate the passages analyzed in the article within the lecture's overall structure, and to assess the article's rhetorical analysis against the fuller primary material.

Segment	Lecture content	Illustrative excerpt	Rhetorical / argumentative move	Relevant analytical concept
1	Opening remarks on pandemic restrictions and the yeshiva's plan to keep studying together; a brief dedication and a Shabbat-honoring announcement.	"Look my dear friends, I know it's difficult for you, and not simple. ... this allows all of us to continue 'together.'"	Addresses students as "dear friends" rather than subordinates; repeated first-person plural ("we," "all of us") builds identification and shared purpose from the outset, and introduces the "togetherness" motif that organizes the whole lecture.	Communion; audience adaptation
2	A rapid, chapter-by-chapter survey of Bava Metzia within the Order of Damages, moving from lost objects and bailees to interest, craftsmen, and partnership — and gesturing toward a "state-building" dimension behind the details of the laws.	"You know, Tractate Bava Kamma is entirely biblical, the four primary categories of damage in the first six chapters ... Chapter 10 is types of partnership."	The survey is delivered broadly and from memory, displaying command of the textual terrain; this demonstrated expertise connects institutional position with interpretive legitimacy before any substantive claim is advanced.	Presence (of expertise); ethos
3	Frames Bava Metzia against a "secular," purely contractual model of agreements between people (going to a lawyer, writing a contract), setting up bailee law as something deeper than pragmatic arrangement.	"Tractate Bava Metzia is a tractate that — I don't know how much it exists in its secular sense, as it is about agreements between people. And regarding agreements between people — just go to a lawyer, write a contract."	Contrast between a Torah framework and contractual pragmatism establishes a hierarchy of values in which Torah, rather than private agreement, provides the authoritative account of why the laws exist.	Hierarchy of values
4	Anecdote about a great Torah scholar who keeps a drawer of hundreds of forgotten pens, retained for years under the laws of lost property.	"So he opened a drawer for me and said, 'Please' — a drawer with, I think, hundreds of pens, that he keeps until Elijah comes."	A concrete, memorable episode gives presence to an otherwise abstract legal discussion; the scholar functions as an exemplary figure whose conduct models the values the law is meant to embody.	Presence; argument by example
5	A run of rhetorical questions about why the law obligates an unpaid bailee and why lending without interest is required, before the details are worked out sugya by sugya.	"Why should one not lend with interest? He is an adult, and it is not predatory interest, not murderous interest."	The questions are posed and answered by the speaker himself, creating an appearance of shared inquiry while directing the audience toward conclusions the lecturer has already reached.	Audience adaptation

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6	States the purpose of the lecture as an introduction that will "clarify" the sugyot and "listen" to the wider world the tractate opens up.	"So these are sugyot we will clarify page by page with God's help, sugya by sugya, and we are trying to listen more ... to the world that opens up before us through Tractate Bava Metzia."	Presents the far-reaching interpretive expansion that follows as legitimate clarification and listening rather than innovation.	Communion; legitimization of interpretation as transmission
7	The opening Mishnah's dispute between two people holding a found garment is expanded into an image of the State of Israel and its contested social and ideological life.	"And this garment — [it] can be the State of Israel ... a garment that two hold and each one says: 'it is all mine.'"	Analogical expansion from a legal dispute to a social vision; the Mishnah becomes a vehicle for authorizing a broader conception of state and society.	Analogical expansion (interpretive scale-shift)
8	Traces "togetherness" back to pre-state forms of belonging — tribes, clans, family and religious identity — before turning to the much larger, more anonymous scale of the modern nation.	"So what builds our 'togetherness'? Why be 'together'? ... We are like a family that is 'together.'"	A historical sketch grounds "togetherness" in kinship and shared identity rather than utility, preparing the contrast with the purely instrumental model of society that follows.	Hierarchy of values; communion
9	Describes an instrumental, self-protective model of society (Hobbes's <i>Leviathan</i> , unnamed) in which individuals cooperate out of self-interest, likened to wolves who band together only because a lone wolf cannot survive.	"You have heard [the expression] 'man to man is a wolf,' right? ... the modern state, some define it like wolves. ... Each cell is busy with itself, but each cell wants to be part of the Leviathan because if it is alone then it will die very quickly."	An extended counter-image is presented, and even granted its own coherence and moral logic, before being subordinated to a deeper vision; the meaning of social cohesion is reconfigured from contractual arrangement to communal belonging.	Dissociation; hierarchy of values
10	Diagnoses the "Leviathan" model as lacking "inner glue" or "soul," then turns to nation-states, European integration and disintegration, and migration as evidence of the deeper role identity plays in holding societies together.	"The starting point in such an approach is that there is no inner glue. There is no essential unity. ... It's without a soul. There is no 'togetherness.'"	Extends the critique of purely instrumental society outward; local Israeli anxieties about cohesion and fragmentation are folded into a wider set of concerns about nation-states and identity already circulating well beyond the yeshiva.	Contextualization; broadening beyond the immediate audience
11	Argues that Torah economic laws (lending, interest, the sabbatical year) express a bond deeper than "how to manage a fair market," then turns to religious coercion, rejected in favor of persuasion, personal example, and gradual growth.	"Why are we against religious coercion? Because we believe that 'Israel and the Torah are one,' and therefore we believe in a process of persuasion, in a process of personal example, in a process of growth."	Dissociates commitment from coercion, presenting influence as a matter of gradual persuasion rather than force — an approach that echoes Perelman's account of argumentation as the securing of adherence rather than the imposition of belief.	Adherence; persuasion versus coercion

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12	Returns to the law of the divided garment: the ruling does not "erase" either claimant, both parties keep their oath and their honor, and the underlying halakhic doubt (<i>drara dmamona</i>) is explained.	"The law says that there are a few people here, and the law does not erase anyone here. ... No — we preserve your honor."	A technical legal rule is translated into a practical model of disagreement: a claim can be adjudicated against without the losing party being stripped of standing or dignity.	Model/exemplary argument; disagreement without erasure
13	Develops the family metaphor at length — economic distress as a brother's problem, guests and partners within the nation, obligations toward hired workers — and closes by insisting that "togetherness" must be actively built, not merely assumed.	"When you see someone in economic distress, it's your problem, because he is your brother. ... if we have common ancestors, then we are family."	Torah laws are read as testimony to a bond of kinship rather than contract; the "brother" and "family" language extends the garment metaphor into a concrete social ethic of mutual obligation.	Hierarchy of values (kinship over contract); presence
14	Diagnoses a "winner takes all" political culture — Israeli coalition politics, US polarization, and debate over the Supreme Court's role — in which each side is certain of its own truth and treats the other as an existential threat.	"'The winner takes all' — that's what it's called. ... if I manage to win a majority, then the whole pot is supposedly mine — the whole pot is mine. ... It's the same in the US: Democratic-Republican struggles."	The critique of majoritarian politics is extended across ideological camps and national contexts, grounding the lecture's abstractions in live, contemporary conflicts the audience already recognizes.	Presence (of contemporary conflict); audience adaptation
15	Closes with the rabbinic model of Beit Hillel and Beit Shammai, asking whether disagreement is a burden to be tolerated or a "purposeful constraint from Heaven," and insisting that the other's truth can "enrich" one's own without ever collapsing into pluralism.	"Does God speak only through the sons of Rachel? ... Only through Beit Shammai? [Or] only through Beit Hillel? ... my truth is great and beautiful, but his truth ... I am not a pluralist! ... his truth will somehow enrich my truth."	Reframes contemporary ideological division through one of the most authoritative models of legitimate disagreement in the rabbinic tradition, relocating disagreement from outside the tradition to within it; certainty is dissociated from domination, and the lecture ends with unresolved questions rather than a directive — questions that remain, nonetheless, entirely the speaker's own.	Adherence; disagreement without relinquishing truth claims