

May an Amora Disagree With a Tanna?

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Question

A question was raised in our Gemara study group. We were studying Makkos, Daf 17b.

Rava, an Amora, states that everyone should have children like Rabbi Shimon, a Tanna, because he came up with a brilliant way of deducing five prohibited acts from a certain verse. Then Rava ironically goes on to dispute all five conclusions. (Was he being sarcastic?)

Isn't an Amora not supposed to challenge a Tanna? Once we start challenging earlier *rabbonim*, doesn't it all unravel? One member of the study group asked why we now have to observe two days of Yom Tov, for example.

Outline

This paper will: (a) explore the validity of Halachic disagreements between scholars of different generations in general; (b) explain why *Amoraim* do not argue with *Tannaim* and why post-Talmud scholars do not argue with the Talmud; (c) enumerate the circumstances under which exceptions may be made to this rule; and (d) suggest several exceptions to the rule that may apply to the Gemara in question. (e) Provide several explanations to Rava's praise of Rabbi Shimon.

