**שיטתיה לסבא – The (custom) [myrtle]** was an aid **for the elder**

Overview

When ר"ש בר ר"י passed away a pillar of fire separated him from the rest of the people. ר' זירא commented that this was due to his style of dancing before the כלה. There are three versions as to how ר' זירא actually expressed this thought. The last version was that אהני שיטתיה לסבא. רש"י explains the word שיטתיה to mean his שיטה; his style and approach. תוספות offers a different interpretation.

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**פירש רבינו חננאל מלשון שטה והדס (ישעיה מ"א[[1]](#footnote-1)) -**

**The ר"ח interpreted** the word שיטתיה that it is **from the expression** in a פסוק **‘a שטה** tree **and a myrtle** tree’. He was referring to the הדס (myrtle) as a שטה.

**אף על גב דלא הוי ממש מין אחד מכל מקום שניהם מין ארז[[2]](#footnote-2) -**

**Even though** the שטה and the הדס **are not exactly one species, nevertheless they are both a type of ארז (cedar).** Therefore it is appropriate to refer to the הדס as a שטה.

תוספות asks:

**ואם תאמר ומנא ליה דבשביל כן זכה[[3]](#footnote-3) -**

**And if you will say; how did ר' זירא know that** ר"ש בר"י **merited** the fire surrounding him **on account of the** dancing with theהדס?

תוספות answers:

**ויש לומר דעמוד דנורא היה כעין שיבשא דהדס -**

**And one can say, that the pillar of fire** that surrounded רב שמואל בר רב יצחק **was similar** in appearance **to a myrtle branch –**

**כדאמרינן בבראשית רבה (פרשה סא[[4]](#footnote-4)) נחת שיבשא דנורא ואיתעבידא כעין שיבשא דהדס -**

**As it is stated in** מדרש **בראשית רבה** (concerning the passing of רב שמואל ב"ר יצחק) **a column of fire descended and it became similar** in form **to a myrtle branch –**

**ואפסקת בין דידיה לחברוהי –**

**And it separated between** רשבר"י **and his peers –**

**אמרי חמית הדין סבא דקאי שישבא דנורא קומיה משום דעביד קמוהי דכלתא -**

The peers **said, ‘see this elder that a pillar of fire is standing before him**. This is **because of what he did in front of the כלה’;** that he danced before her with the myrtle branches.

Summary

The term שיטתיה refers to the שטה tree which is a type of ארז similar to the הדס tree. They knew that the pillar of fire that separated רשבר"י was on account of his dancing with הדסים, because the fire was shaped as a הדס branch.

Thinking it over

1. How can one explain the dispute between רש"י and the ר"ח concerning the meaning of שיטתיה?

2. According to the ר"ח that שיטתיה refers to the הדס (which is similar to שטה) what is the difference between the first לשון of ר' זירא (which is אהני לו שוטיתיה, referring to the שוט של הדס [see רש"י ד"ה שוטיתיה]) and this לשון of שיטתיה (since they both refer to a הדס)?![[5]](#footnote-5)

1. פסוק יט. The נביא is enumerating the various trees with which הקב"ה will populate the dessert. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The גמרא in ר"ה (כג,א) states that there are ten types of ארז, including שטה והדס. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. It would seem that תוספות question is appropriate according to all versions of sר' זירא' statement. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. In our texts it is in נט,ד. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. See שטמ"ק בשם הריטב"א. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)