

Rav went out and proclaimed

נפק רב ודרש –

Overview

The גמרא relates that by this ישוע הבן, a cat came and bit off the baby's hand. רב came out to the public and proclaimed that one is permitted to kill a cat. תוספות corrects our understanding of this גמרא.

לא עתה על זה המעשה תיקן דהא פריך עלה מברייתא¹ אלא דרש דמקודם² נתקן:
רב did not institute this enactment now because of this incident, since the גמרא challenged this enactment from a ברייתא, rather רב proclaimed that it was previously enacted.

Summary

רב was citing a previous enactment to kill cats; it was not a current enactment.

Thinking it over

How can we explain the גמרא as it is simply understood; not like תוספות³?

¹ The ברייתות were written before the time of רב (who was an אמורא), so what is the contradiction between the ברייתא which permitted raising cats (in previous times) and the enactment of רב later, which permitted killing cats (because of this incident). We find many things which were once permitted and later prohibited.

² This incident caused רב to remind the populace that in previous generations we were told to kill cats. Therefore the גמרא asks, 'but in the ברייתא it states that one may raise cats'.

³ See # 5. אוצר מפרשי התלמוד and חי' הרשב"א.