

“Chakuko’oh”

חקוקאה –

OVERVIEW

The גמרא relates an episode concerning יוחנן חקוקאה who went to see how the crops were faring in the outlying villages. רש"י explains that חקוקאה was a epithet¹. תוספות offers two alternate interpretations.²



פירש רבינו חננאל סופר ורבינו יצחק פירש מעיר חקוקה היה בספר יהושע (יט"ז):

The ר"י explains that he was called 'חקוקאה', meaning a scribe.⁴ And the ר"י explained that he was from the city [חוקקה] (חקוקה) which is mentioned in ספר יהושע.

SUMMARY

He was called חקוקאה either because he was a scribe or he came from the city חוקקה.

THINKING IT OVER

What are the merits of each of these interpretations?

¹ Perhaps 'חקוקאה' was an endearment of the name יוחנן.

² Others maintain that תוספות does not disagree with רש"י; he is merely explaining why he was given this epithet.

³ נִשְׁבַּח הַגְּבוּל יָמָּה אֶזְנוֹת תְּבוּר וְיָצָא מִשָּׁם חֻקָּה. פסוק לד.

⁴ The ר"י cites the פסוק in ישעיה י' where ירמיהו decries the scribes who produce false documents. חקוקה is from the term חקיקה, to engrave, which is (similar to) the work of a סופר. Perhaps חקוקאה was chosen to catalogue the crops (to know what type of harvest there will be), because he was a scribe and would know how to write an adequate report.