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The Talmud with English Translation and Commentary [excerpts] and Reflections on a Year of Liberal Judaism

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Part of the BL's Judaica Collection. BL started his work on a new way to read Talmud, and started with the very beginning from vol 1., MISHNA. MISHNA is estimated to have been written around 200 CE, and the Gemara commentary from 400-500 CE.

However, BERAIHOTI is the traditional starting point when the student begins to study the TALMUD. What RT and BL realized after beginning their Talmudic study is that although the Talmud is regarded as a work of law, the very story that most students encounter is an account of getting around the law, not an account of the law itself.

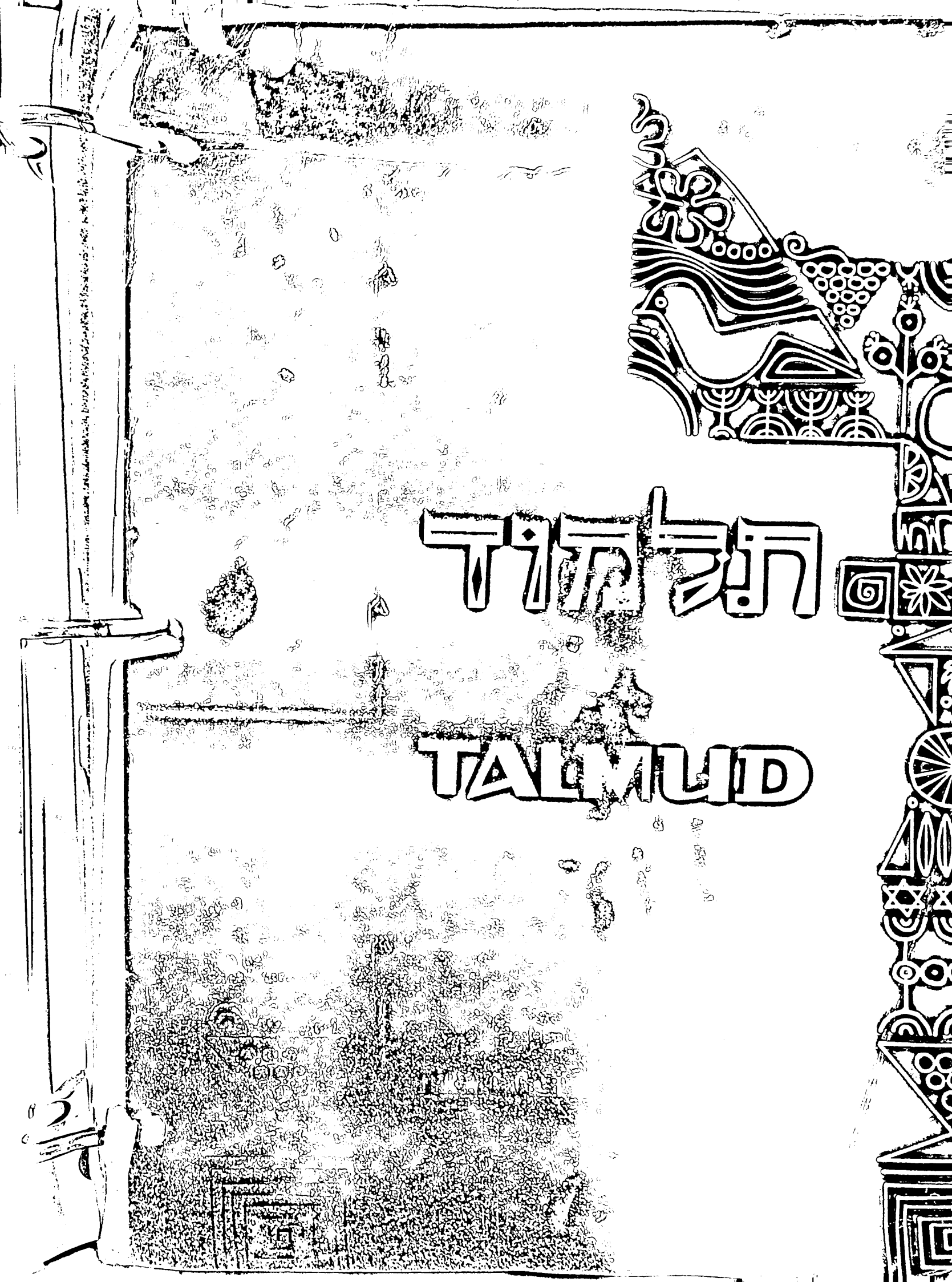
The first MISHNA question is about when one can recite Sh'ma: the starting and ending timeline point. The rule of law that emerges from the MISHNA is that the end-time is midnight. One day, Rabban Gamaliel's son came home from a party, and told his father that he had not recited the evening Sh'ma. The father replied, that although the rule is until midnight, you could say it until dawn; so, the son recited it.

The Talmud then asks, why was the stated rule so restrictive? Their answer: to keep a person far from transgression.

This is the path RT and BL took in their Talmudic studies. They viewed the Talmud open to this kind of reinterpretation. Of course, they always started with the Talmudic text. (August 7, 2024)

תלמוד

TALMUD



THE TALMUD

WITH ENGLISH TRANSLATION
AND COMMENTARY

Ken Gormley Law Library

OCT 22 2024

Duquesne Kline School of Law

PUBLISHED BY EL-'AM — HOZA'A LEOR ISRAEL

JERUSALEM — TEL AVIV

5725-1965

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WITH ENGLISH TRANSLATION
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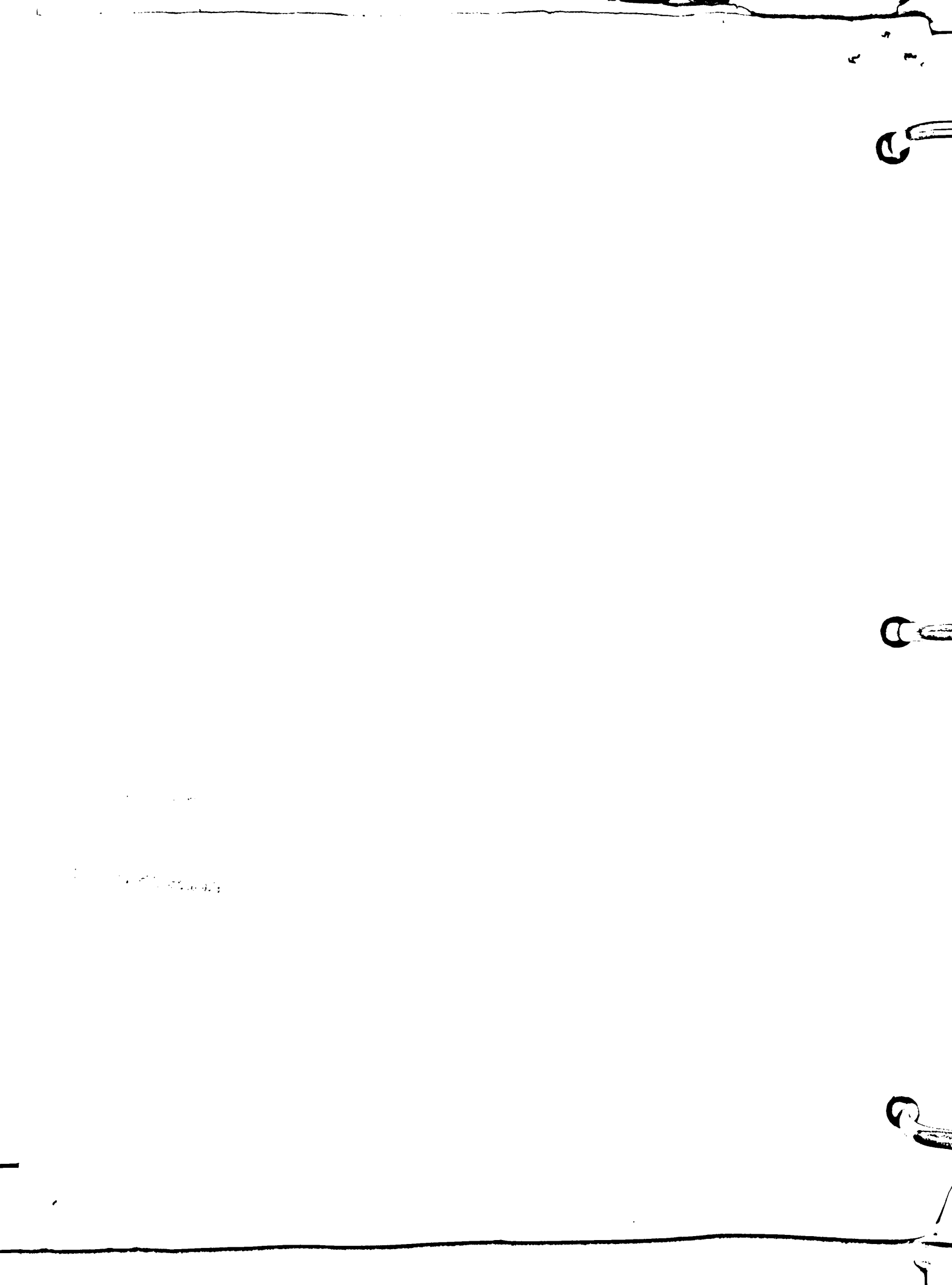
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דבר ההוצאה

התלמוד, הבא ללמד את שהתורה מורה, הוא ספר חתום לגבי רובו של העם היהודי בדורנו, במיוחד לגבי הדור הצעיר הן בישראל הן בתפוצות הגולה.

בדור זה נשתנו תכני הלימוד ודרכיו. בעבר – יהודי, שלא למד תורה, לא למד מאומה. ואילו בימינו לומד היהודי הממוצע את הכל, פרט לתורה. ואם לומד הוא אותה, הרי זו בעיקר תורה שבכתב, ואף היא נלמדת במנות זעומות. השיטה, לפיה למד היהודי בעבר, הקיפה את כל חינוכו כולו. היא לא היתה מוגבלת למספר שנים. היא גועדה לשמש אדם לומד כל ימי חייו, באשר הלימוד לא היה אמצעי, כי אם מטרה.

כיום מורגל הנוער היהודי, ובכללו חלק מהנוער הדתי, בשיטות הלימוד המקובלות בעולם של ימינו, ועד כה לא נמצא גשר מניח את הדעת בין תכנו של הלימוד העתיק לבין שיטות ההוראה החדשות. דבר זה הוא גורם חשוב בתהליך אובדנה של הזהות הלאומית בקרב יהדות העולם, וכן בתהליך ניתוק דורה הצעיר מצור מחצבתו. לנוער זה חסרים יותר ויותר הקשרים, אשר קשרו את דורות ישראל ואת היהודים בכל דור ודור לחטיבה אחת: מסורת אבות, פרי תורת חיים ותלמודה.

מאז ומתמיד היה התלמוד נחלתו של חוג לומדיו ויודעיו, אולם חוג זה מצטמצם והולך בימינו ככל שגובר אותו תהליך ההתפוררות הרוחנית, ככל שפוחתת והולכת תודעת הזהות הלאומית היהודית. ולעומת דלדול זה בתכנה של היהדות גובר בעולם הלא-יהודי הרצון לדו-שיח עמה. אך דו-שיח לא יתכן, כשאין יודעים במה מדובר; לא יתכן דו-שיח על היהדות, כשאין יודעים מהי.

את התשובה לשאלה מהי היהדות אפשר למצוא אך ורק בתלמוד, שביסודו טמונים גרעיני התשובות לשאלות החיים בכל דור ודור. מתוך שאיפה למצוא תשובה זו לבני דורנו קם מפעל הוצאת התלמוד – 'אל-עם', שמטרתו לפתוח את הספר החתום ולהגישו לכל בית יהודי בשפה ובדרכי הסבר המובנים לו, וכן לאפשר לאדם, שאינו יהודי, להכיר את אוצרות תמציתה של היהדות.

'אל-עם' מגישה לקורא חוברות מן התלמוד הבבלי והירושלמי בנות 16 עמודים, שתיכרונה באוגדנים מיוחדים, לפי פרקים או מסכתות.

כל עמוד בחוברת מכיל: טכסט התלמוד המקורי המלא, מנוקד ומפוסק; תרגום אנגלי של הטכסט; פירוש חדיש לכל סוגיה ועניין וכתוספות – ביוגרפיות של חז"ל, ההלכה הפסוקה, ריאליה של התלמוד, תמונות וציורים.

החוברת הראשונה, בת 24 עמודים, כוללת כמו כן: מבואות קצרים למשנה ולתלמוד, רשימת הסדרים והמסכתות, מבוא לסדר ברכות ודגם עמוד מסורתי מהתלמוד.

PUBLISHERS' PREFACE

The Talmud, which enshrines the teaching of the Torah, is nowadays a closed book for the majority of the Jewish people, and in particular for the younger generation, both in Israel and the Diaspora.

The content and methods of education have changed. In the past, it was only Jews of no learning who did not study Torah, whereas in our time Jews tend to learn everything but Torah. If they do study it, then it is mainly the 'written' Torah, that is the Bible, and even that only in small doses. In the past, the study occupied a Jew throughout his whole education; it was not restricted to any given number of years; its object was to serve the student all the days of his life, since to learn was not a means but an end in itself. To-day, much of Jewish youth, even religious youth, is accustomed to generally accepted, modern methods of teaching and, so far, no reasonable bridge has been found between those methods and the requirements of traditional learning. This is an important factor in the sad process taking place within world Jewry; youth is losing its national identity and becoming a stranger to the Rock whence it was hewn. And thus it is loosening the bonds which held together the generations of Israel and the Jews down the ages: the tradition of the forefathers, the product of the living Torah and its precepts.

The Talmud has always been the heritage of those who have sought to study and to comprehend it. But their number is gradually shrinking in our days, as the process of intellectual disintegration spreads and the consciousness of Jewish national identity grows dimmer. At the same time the desire for a dialogue with Judaism is stronger in the non-Jewish world. But such a dialogue cannot be, as long as the essence and meaning of Judaism are not clear, as long as we are cut off from the main source of Jewish knowledge, the Talmud.

Out of this realisation was born the idea of setting up the Talmud Publishing Society EL 'AM, of which the object is to open this sealed volume and to offer it to every Jewish home in a language and in a manner understandable to all; and also to enable one who is not a Jew to acquaint himself with the treasures of Judaism contained in it.

EL 'AM presents the Babylonian and the Jerusalem Talmud to the reader in fascicles of sixteen pages each, to be bound together as Tractates are completed; for this purpose special covers will be provided.

The EL 'AM TALMUD contains, besides the full original text, vocalized and punctuated, an English translation with a modern commentary, short biographies of Tannaim and Amoraim as they occur in the text, halachic notes and Realia (with illustrations where applicable).

In this first fascicle, the reader will find, as well, brief introductory notes of a general nature, comprising information on the use of Talmudic terms, division of the Talmud into Orders and Tractates, an account of the Sages of the Talmud, and a photostat of an original page with explanations.

INTRODUCTION

I. TERMS¹⁾

תורה — TORAH, literally 'teaching', signifies primarily the teaching of Moses, his authoritative instruction laid down in *Torath-Moshe*, the Law of Moses (Pentateuch). Torah, in this sense, is called the Written Law (תורה שבכתב) as distinct from the Oral Law (תורה שבעל פה) which has its origin in the same legislation at Sinai. Thereafter, the Law was handed down through a chain of tradition, as set out at the beginning of *Pirque 'Avoth*, and was then consolidated and systematised in Talmudic literature. The word Torah, in its very widest sense, thus designates the whole body of traditional Jewish literature, Bible, Talmud as well as post-Talmudic rabbinical teaching.

תלמוד — TALMUD is the collective creation of many thousands of scholars, a work of many centuries. Its beginning is generally set in the time of Ezra and the Scribes (*Sopherim*). There are two recensions, the Babylonian (Bavli) and the Jerusalem (Yerushalmi), also called Palestinian. The Babylonian Talmud was concluded in the 5th century CE, the Jerusalem Talmud a century earlier. From the halachic point of view, the Babylonian Talmud is considered superior to the Palestinian and, if there a difference of opinion, the former prevails. There are two components of the Talmud, the Mishna and the Gemara.

משנה — THE MISHNA is the earlier part of the Talmud; it was redacted by Rabbi Judah haNasi in the 2nd century CE. The language is Hebrew.

גמרא — THE GEMARA is the discussion and further elaboration of the Mishna by post-Mishnaic scholars (*Amoraim*). It also frequently quotes sources (called *Baraitha*) contemporary with, though not included in, the Mishna.

Whether a quotation in the Gemara is taken from the Mishna proper or from a Baraitha can be recognised by the particular opening word or words employed: e.g. *tenan* תנן introduces a quotation from the Mishna, *tania* תניא introduces a Baraitha.

The language of the Gemara is Aramaic. There are large parts of the Talmud to which we have no Gemara.

הלכה — HALACHAH (lit. 'going', the way in which one should go) as a technical term means Law, the whole body of religious and civil Law as well as single statements of Law.

אגדה — HAGGADA or AGGADA (lit. 'saying') signifies moral-religious discussions in the form of narratives, parables or proverbs. More current is the negative definition, i.e., any non-halachic passage in the Talmud is called Aggada. This applies to every possible topic: geography, medicine, philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, astrology, etc. Aggadic passages are to be found in all Tractates of the Talmud, more frequently in the Gemara than in the Mishna.

תוספתא — TOSEPHTA (lit. 'supplement') is a distinct literary work outside the strict framework of the Talmud, yet closely related to it, especially to the Mishna. Even in its divisions into tractates and chapters it follows the Talmud. It contains, on the whole, teaching of the Mishnaic period with few later additions.

¹⁾ See p. 15 for system of transliterations followed.

SAGES OF THE TALMUD

מדרש — MIDRASH (lit. 'searching', 'expounding') is the study and exposition of the Holy Scriptures, particularly of the Pentateuch. A very great number of literary works belong to this category: *Yalquṭ Shim'oni*, a kind of comprehensive Midrashic Thesaurus, compiled in the 13th century CE, draws on more than fifty Midrashic works, most of which are still extant. Some Midrashim are as old as any part of the Talmud, others originated in Amoraic or even in Gaonic times. In content, Midrashim are mostly of aggadic character, but some are of considerable halachic interest, especially the distinctive literary works *Mekhiltha*, *Siphre*, *Siphra*, sometimes referred to as the Tannaitic Midrashim.

II. SAGES OF THE TALMUD

תנאים — TANNAIM are, generally speaking, the Sages quoted in the Mishna and in other works of the Mishnaic period. The Aramaic word 'Tanna' is, in fact, etymologically related to the Hebrew word 'Mishna' (Aramaic: *Mathnitha*), the meaning basic to both being 'to repeat', 'to teach' (תנא — שנה), namely repeating and teaching the oral tradition of the Law. Tannaim are thus the bearers of the tradition of Law. The earliest authorities are listed at the very beginning of the Tractate 'Avoth, where the chain of tradition is set out as follows:

"Moses received the Law on Sinai and handed it down to Joshua; Joshua to the Elders; the Elders to the Prophets; and the Prophets handed it down to the Men of the Great Assembly."

Then comes the first of the Sages to be mentioned by name, Simeon the Just (שמעון הצדיק) (circa 300 BCE), referred to as one of the last survivors of the Great Assembly. The next to be mentioned is Antigonus of Sokho (אנטיגונוס איש סוכו) followed by the so-called five 'pairs' (זוגות), the last pair being Hillel and Shammai.

These early Sages are not usually referred to as Tannaim, the term being reserved to designate the teachers of the Mishnaic or Tannaitic period proper, starting with the disciples of Hillel and Shammai (roughly at the beginning of the current era) and ending with Rabbi Judah haNasi. Nearly 300 Tannaim are known to us by name, generally grouped according to generations. Thus, e.g., Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanos (circa 40-115 CE) will be referred to as a Tanna of the second generation.

אמוראים — AMORAIM are the Talmudic sages of the post-Mishnaic period. There is, however, a transition period of semi-Tannaim, consisting mainly of the younger contemporaries and disciples of R. Judah haNasi. These are sometimes listed as a sixth generation of Tannaim, sometimes grouped together with the first generation of Amoraim. The total number of Amoraim known by name, in Palestine and Babylon, amounts to some 3,000, grouped in seven or eight generations.

סבוראים — The Amoraic period ended with the conclusion of the Gemara. A generation of scholars followed, called SAVORAIM, constituting a transition from the Amoraic to the Gaonic period.

Although it is strictly outside the scope of this work, it may be noted briefly that, in Babylon, the Gaonate ended in the 11th century with Rav Hai Gaon (d. 1038). By that time a new era of rabbinical scholarship, particularly rich in Talmud commentaries, condifications and Responsa, had already started in Europe. To what extent the beginning of this period and the end of the

INTRODUCTION

Gaonate overlapped is best illustrated by the fact that Rabbenu Gershon of Mayence (d. 1040), an early Talmud commentator and *Poseq* (halachic authority), was a contemporary of Rav Hai Gaon.

As regards titles, the earliest authorities are mostly mentioned by name, without any title. This honour of being 'titleless' was still accorded, exceptionally, in later periods, to a few prominent scholars. The singular prominence of a scholar would also be indicated by referring to his title only; thus, Judah haNasi is usually referred to by the appellation *Rabbi* and the early Babylonian Amora, Abba Arikha, is simply called *Rav*. The name *Abba* was also considered honorific. *Rabban* was the honorific title accorded to a few prominent Tannaim, mostly descendants of Hillel, who were heads of the Synhedrion.

As a general rule, Tannaim and Palestinian Amoraim are given their proper name preceded by the title *Rabbi*, while Babylonian Amoraim are referred to as *Rav* or *Mar*, followed by their name. The latter were current titles even at the end of the Gaonic period. Looking further ahead, the titles *Rabbi* and *Rabbenu* came to be used again in post-Gaonic times. In our days *Rav* is again widely used, while *Mar* has come to mean simply 'Mister'.

It should be noted that in Amoraic times, and even during the Gaonic period, *Tanna* denoted a particular type of scholar whose task it was to memorise Tannaitic teaching. The function of such Tannaim was to serve as a kind of 'living library' to the Academies, where, though written texts were available to some extent, the Oral Law, i.e. Mishna and Baraitha, was still being studied orally, as a matter of principle.

III. DIVISION OF THE TALMUD

The Talmud is divided into six Orders (*Sedarim*, sing. *Seder*). Each Seder is divided into Tractates (*Massekhtoth*, sing. *Massekheith*, or *Massekhta*), which are, in turn, subdivided into chapters (*Peraqim*, sing. *Pereq*).

The sequence of the Orders, already attested in the Talmud, is: Zera'im (Seeds), Mo'ed (Appointed Time), Nashim (Women), Neziqin (Torts), Qodashin (Holy Things), Toharoth (Cleannesses). A useful mnemonic for this sequence is ZeMaN NaQaT (זמן נקט).

As regards the sequence of the Tractates within the Orders, we find that there was a certain instability. There have even been differences in the placing of a few Tractates into one or other Order. A certain standardisation took place with the introduction of printed works; yet current editions still show differences, especially as between the separately printed editions of the Mishna, the Bavli and the Yerushalmi. We shall here follow the sequence found in current editions of the Mishna.

FIRST ORDER: ZERA'IM (Seeds) — סדר זרעים

With the exception of the first Tractate, this Order is mainly concerned with regulations relating to agriculture and fruits of the field. It contains eleven Tractates, to all of which there is Gemara in the Yerushalmi; the Bavli has Gemara only to the first Tractate.

ברכות — BERAKHOTH (Benedictions): Nine chapters on liturgy — on benedictions and prayers. (A detailed introduction to this tractate will be found below).

DIVISION OF THE TALMUD

- פאה** — PE'A (Corner): Eight chapters on what is due to the poor, in harvesting, particularly as regards the corners of the field, gleanings and forgotten sheaves (Lev. XIX, 9; XXIII, 22; Deut. XXIV, 19 ff.).
- דמאי** — DEMAI (Doubtful): Seven chapters on produce concerning which there is a doubt as to whether it has been duly tithed.
- כלאים** — KIL'AYIM (Mixtures): Nine chapters on the prohibition of mingling seeds in a field, yoking different kinds of animals together and wearing mixtures in cloth (Lev. XIX, 19; Deut. XXII, 9 ff.).
- שביעית** — SHEVI'ITH (Seventh): Ten chapters on regulations for the Sabbatical year, as regards both the land and the release of debts (*Shemitt'a*) (Ex. XXIII, 11; Lev. XXV, 1 ff.; Deut. XV, 1 ff.).
- תרומות** — TERUMOTH (Heave Offerings): Eleven chapters on priests' dues (Num. XVIII, 8 ff.; cf. also Deut. XVIII, 4).
- מעשרות** — MA'ASEROTH (Tithes): Nine chapters on tithes, in particular on the 'first tithe' belonging to the Levites (Num. XVIII, 21, 24; Lev. XXVII, 30-33).
- מעשר שני** — MA'ASER SHENI (Second Tithe): Five chapters on the 'second tithe' to be set aside and consumed by the people themselves in joyful celebration, in Jerusalem (Deut. XIV, 22 ff.).
- חלה** — HALLA (Dough): Four chapters on the heave offering of the dough (Num. XV, 18 ff.).
- ערלה** — 'ORLA (Uncircumcision): Three chapters on the prohibition concerning the use of fruit on young trees in the first three years (Lev. XIX, 23).
- בכורים** — BIKKURIM (First Fruits): Three chapters, mainly on first fruit offerings (Ex. XXIII, 19) and the formulae to be recited ceremonially on the occasion of the offering (Deut. XXVI, 1 ff.).

SECOND ORDER: MO'ED (Appointed Time) — מועד

This Order deals with the Sabbath and with the various feasts and fasts of Israel. It contains twelve Tractates, to all of which there is Gemara in the Palestinian Talmud; only the last three chapters of Pal. Shabbath have none. Gemara is missing to Tractate Sheqalim in the Babylonian Talmud, which now prints the Pal. Gemara to it.

- שבת** — SHABBATH (Sabbath): This Tractate, one of the largest in the Talmud, deals extensively, in twenty-four chapters, with all details of Sabbath observance; it includes also the laws concerning Hanukka (Feast of Lights).
- ערובין** — 'ERUVIN (Blendings): Ten chapters continuing the subject of Sabbath regulations on boundaries set for carrying and walking on the Sabbath, or rather on special arrangements extending these boundaries.
- פסחים** — PESAHIM (Paschal Lambs): Ten chapters on the laws of Pesach (Passover), e.g., destroying leaven (*hamez*), the paschal lamb, the order of the Passover meal (*Seder*) (Ex. XII; XXIII, 15; XXXIV, 18; Lev. XXIII, 5 ff.; Num. XXVIII, 16 ff.; XVI, 1 ff.).
- שקלים** — SHEQALIM (Shekels): Eight chapters on the Shekel tax for the maintenance of the Temple and the Temple service; also on other subjects connected with the Sanctuary.
- יומא** — YOMA (The Day): Eight chapters on the laws of Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) (Lev. XVI).

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סוכה — SUKKA (Booth): Five chapters on the laws to be observed on the Festival of Sukkoth (Tabernacles) (Lev. XXIII, 34 ff.; Num. XXIX, 12; Deut. XVI, 13).

ביצה — BEZA (Egg) (So called because of the initial word in this tractate): Five chapters on the observances of festival days in general; especially on the differences between Sabbath and Festival.

ראש השנה — ROSH HASHANA (New Year): Four chapters, only partly concerned with the actual subject of the New Year's festival; mainly on matters relating to the New Moon, i.e. the authoritative determination of the beginning of the lunar month.

תענית — TA'ANITH (Fast): Four chapters on fasts, public and private; also on statutory fast days.

מגילה — MEGILLA (Scroll): Four chapters on the Scroll of Esther and its reading on the festival of Purim (Feast of Lots); also on matters in some way related, as e.g. liturgical readings on various occasions from the Torah and the Prophets; also on the manner of writing books of Holy Scriptures, including Mezuza and Tephillin.

מועד קטן — MO'ED QATAN (Minor Festival): Three chapters mainly concerning the intermediate days (חול המועד) of Pesach and Sukkoth, i.e. the kind of work it is permitted to perform on these days.

חגיגה — HAGIGA (Festival Offering): Three chapters on observance of the three Pilgrimage Festivals (Pesach, Shavuoth [Pentecost], Sukkoth); also on several unrelated matters.

THIRD ORDER: NASHIM (Women) — סדר נשים

This Order deals, in seven Tractates, with family law. Both Yerushalmi and Bavli have Gemara throughout it.

יבמות — YEVAMOTH (Sisters-in-Law): Sixteen chapters mainly on Levirate marriage (Deut. XXV, 5) and prohibited marriages (Lev. XVIII).

כתובות — KETUBOTH (Marriage Settlements): Thirteen chapters on marital matters, particularly on the financial settlement by the husband in the event of death or of divorce.

נדרים — NEDARIM (Vows): Eleven chapters on vows, oaths and bans and their annulment. The inclusion of this tractate in the Order Nashim has apparently little justification, except that women's vows and their annulment by the husband or father seem to have been of particular importance already in biblical times (cf. Num. XXX).

נויר — NAZIR (Nazirite): Nine chapters on the special Nazirite type of vow (Num. VI).

סוטה — SOTA: Nine chapters on 'the woman suspected of adultery', elaborating on Num. V, 11 ff., especially on the ceremonial formulae prescribed there and in other cases, as e.g. that of an untraced murderer (Deut. XXI, 1-9).

גטין — GITIN (Bills of Divorce): Nine chapters on all aspects of the Law of Divorce.

קדושין — QIDDUSHIN (Betrothal): Four chapters on the three modes of acquiring (betrothing) a woman, as distinct from the eventual marriage.

FOURTH ORDER: NEZIQIN (Torts) — סדר נזיקין

This Order is the most clearly juristic part of the Talmud and deals, in ten Tractates, with the wide range of civil and criminal jurisprudence. There is extensive Gemara to its Tractates both in Bavli and Yerushalmi, with the exception of the somewhat extraordinary Tractates 'Avoth and 'Eduyyoth, to which there is no Gemara in either Talmud.

DIVISION OF THE TALMUD

The first tractate was originally called *Neziqin* and was inordinately long, comprising thirty chapters concerned with all aspects of civil (as distinct from criminal) law. It was eventually divided into three parts ('gates') of ten chapters each, which, in current editions of the Talmud, are arranged as three separate tractates, as follows:

בבא קמא — BAVA KAMMA (First Gate)

בבא מציעא — BAVA MEZI'A (Middle Gate)

בבא בתרא — BAVA BATHRA (Last Gate)

סנהדרין — SANHEDRIN (Synhedrion): Eleven chapters on the constitution of law courts, judicial procedure and criminal law.

מכות — MAKKOTH (Stripes): Three chapters on corporal punishment, false witnesses and cities of refuge.

שבועות — SHEVU'OTH (Oaths): Eight chapters on various forms of oath, private oaths as well as those administered in the course of litigation.

עדויות — 'EDUYYOTH (Testimonies): Eight chapters recording a great number of halachic statements made by earlier authorities. Although dealing with a variety of subjects, the statements were collected in one tractate because they are said to have been cited in the Academy on one day, the day when R. Eleazar b. Azaria was elected head of the Academy.

עבודה זרה — 'AVODA ZARA (Idolatry): Five chapters on the festivals of Idolators; regulations on social intercourse with idolators and on objects of idolatrous worship.

אבות — 'AVOTH (Fathers): Five chapters recording maxims and rules of wisdom of the Sages in successive generations, from the Men of the Great Synagogue down to Rabbi Judah haNasi. A sixth chapter, in fact a Baraitha with the same pattern of content, was added for liturgical reasons (see Rashi on the beginning of that chapter).

הוריות — HORAYOTH (Rulings): Three chapters on erroneous rulings made by religious authorities in matters of ritual law.

FIFTH ORDER: QODASHIN (Holy Things) — סדר קדשין

This Order deals, in eleven Tractates, with sacrifices and consecrated things, the Temple and its appurtenances as well as with matters concerning the priests. Gemara is missing to the Bavli Tractates: *Middoth*, *Qinnim*, and parts of *Tamid*; while in the Yerushalmi no part of the Order is extant.

זבחים — ZEVAHIM (Animal Offerings): Thirteen chapters on the procedure for offering animal sacrifices; also on how to determine their fitness or unfitness (Lev. I ff.).

מנחות — MENAHOTh (Meal Offerings): Thirteen chapters on preparation and presentation of meal and drink offerings; the barley sheaf of the waving ('Omer); the wave-loaves; the shewbread (Lev. XXIII, 10, 17; XXIV, 5).

חולין — HULLIN (Unhallowed): Twelve chapters on the slaughtering of animals for ordinary consumption: the whole body of the dietary law.

בכורות — BEKHOROTH (Firstborn): Nine chapters on the firstborn of animals and of men (Ex. XIII, 12, 13; Num. XVIII, 15-17; Deut. XV, 19-23); also on the tithing of cattle (Lev. XXVII, 32-33).

ערכין — 'ARAKHIN (Valuations): Nine chapters elaborating on Lev. XXVII, 2 on dedicating to the Temple the 'worth' or 'market value' of a person, i.e. determining the amount to

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be paid in fulfilment of such dedicatory vows; also on laws relating to the Jubilee year (Lev. XXV, 8 ff.).

תמורה — TEMURA (Substitution): Seven chapters on conditions and consequences of substituting one offering for another (Lev. XXVII, 10).

כריתות — KERITHOTH (Cuttings Off): Six chapters on offences which carry the penalty of *Kareth*, i.e. the divine punishment of being 'cut off' (sudden or premature death) where no human penalty is laid down in the Torah; where a sin-offering is due for sins of this category, if committed inadvertently; also where unconditional or suspensive guilt offerings are due.

מעילה — ME'ILA (Sacrilège): Six chapters on the unlawful use of consecrated things (Lev. V, 15-16).

תמיד — TAMID (Continual, Daily): Seven chapters on continual offerings, i.e. daily morning and evening sacrifices (Ex. XXIX, 38-41; Num. XXVIII, 2-8).

מדות — MIDDOTH (Measures): Five chapters on measurement and description of the Temple, its courts, gates, halls and altars; also on the priestly watches in the Temple.

קנים — QINNIM (Birds' Nests): Three chapters on birds offered in expiation of certain offences and certain conditions of uncleanness (Lev. I, 14; V, 7; XII, 8), also on the possible confusion of birds belonging to different persons and different offerings.

SIXTH ORDER: ṬOHAROTH (Cleannesses) — סדר טהרות

This Order deals, in twelve tractates, with ritual laws of purity. There is Gemara only to tractate *Nidda*; in *Yerushalmi* even that is only fragmentarily extant.

כלים — KELIM (Vessels): Thirty chapters on the uncleannesses of 'vessels', the term being used in a technical sense to denote a wide range of articles, e.g. apparel, sacks, hides, etc. (Lev. XI, 33-35; VI, 20 ff.; XI, 32; Num. XIX, 14 ff.; XXXI, 20).

אהלות — 'OHOLOTH (Tents): Eighteen chapters on the defilement of persons and things by a dead body which happens to be in the same 'tent' (Num. XIX, 14-15).

נעעים — NEGA'IM (Leprosy): Fourteen chapters on leprosy of people, garments and dwellings; its treatment and eventual purification (Lev. XIII, 14).

פרה — PARA (Heifer): Twelve chapters elaborating on the provisions of Num. XIX concerning the Red Heifer.

טהרות — ṬOHAROTH (Cleannesses): Ten chapters on rules of uncleanness of foodstuffs and liquids.

מקואות — MIQWAOth (Ritual Baths): Ten chapters on conditions for fitness of wells and reservoirs used for ritual baths; rules for ritual immersion (Lev. XV, 12).

נדה — NIDDA (Impurity): Ten chapters on the impurity that attaches to menstruation of women and to women in childbirth (Lev. XV, 19-31; XII, 2-8).

מכשירין — MAKHSHIRIN (Predispositions): Six chapters on conditions under which foodstuffs become predisposed to uncleanness, having come into contact with certain liquids (Lev. XI, 34, 38).

זבים — ZAVIM (Those who have an issue): Five chapters on the uncleanness of persons suffering physical secretions.

טבול יום — ṬEVUL YOM (Immersed at day-time): Four chapters on the nature of the uncleanness of a person who has already taken a ritual bath in day-time, though he is, according to biblical provision, 'unclean until even' (Lev. XXII, 6 ff.).

DIVISION OF THE TALMUD

יָדַיִם — YADAYIM (Hands): Four chapters primarily on the ritual impurity and purification of unwashed hands.

עוֹקֶצֶן — 'UQZIN (Stalks): Three chapters on conditions under which stalks of plants and fruits convey uncleanness to the fruit or plant to which they are attached and vice versa.

The following treatises do not strictly belong to the Talmud; they are usually appended to the Fourth Order in the Babylonian Talmud:

אֲבוֹת דִּרְבֵי נֹתָן — 'AVOTH OF RABBI NATHAN: A somewhat lengthy elaboration on the actual Tractate 'Avoth in the style of the Tosephta.

סוֹפְרִים — SOPHERIM (Scribes): On rules for writing Holy Scriptures, especially the Torah and the Scroll of Esther.

שִׁמְחוֹת (אֲבֵל רַבָּתִי) — SEMAHOṬH (Joys) or 'Evel Rabbathi (Great Mourning): On rules for mourning. *Semahoth* is, of course, a euphemism.

כֵּלָה — KALLA (Bride): On chastity in marital relations. Another treatise, related in content to *Kalla*, is called *Kalla Rabbathi*.

דֶּרֶךְ אֶרֶץ — DEREKH 'EREZ: On moral conduct. There are two treatises of this name, a longer one, *D. E. Rabba* (major) and a somewhat shorter one, *D. E. Zuta*. To the latter is added a special chapter called *Pereq haShalom* (chapter on peace).

There are seven further short treatises in this group:

גֵּרִים — GERIM (Proselytes)

כוֹתִים — KUTHIM (Samaritans)

עֲבָדִים — 'AVADIM (Slaves, actually Hebrew servants)

סֵפֶר תּוֹרָה — SEPHER TORAH

תְּפִילִין — TEPHILLIN (Phylacteries)

צִיצִית — ZIZITH (Fringes)

מְזוּזָה — MEZUZA

IV. EXPLANATION TO THE SPECIMEN PAGE

The pagination, in all current editions of the Babylonian Talmud, is standardised and follows the 3rd Bomberg edition, Venice, 1548. Not the pages but the folios are numbered. The sequence of the folios is indicated by Hebrew letters, the first folio bearing the letter כ as the front page counts as א. The letter כ is found at the top left hand corner on our page. For a more exact reference one indicates also whether the first (a) or second (b) side of a folio is being quoted. Thus we would refer to our page as *Berakhoth* 2a.

The heading of the page gives the name of the chapter (מאימתי), the number of the chapter פרק ראשון (first chapter), and the name of the tractate (ברכות).

The Talmud text itself is printed in the centre of the page, in the standard square letters. It is usual to present the opening word of a tractate in an artistically illuminated way, and so here the word מאימתי is set in relief. In the 14th line of the Talmud text we find the letters גמ' (abbreviation for גמרא) in heavy type; they mark the end of the Mishna passage and the beginning of the Gemara to it. The beginning of a Mishna passage is also indicated generally by the letters מתני' (abbreviation for מתנייהא *Mathnita*, the Aramaic for Mishna), but this is unnecessary at the beginning of a chapter.

The Talmud text is surrounded by various commentaries and marginal notes. The most important of these is the commentary by Rashi, which is always printed on the inside column of the page, right of the text on one page, left of the text on the next (here on the right). Rashi (Rabbi Shelomo Yizḥaḳi, Troyes, 1040–1105) was the greatest Bible and Talmud commentator and gives us the plain meaning of the text in a running commentary, indispensable for the study of Talmud. On the outer side of the Talmud text are the *Tosaphoth* (lit. additions), which consist of the glosses of a very great number of eminent talmudic scholars (*Ba'ale Tosaphoth* or Tosaphists) of the 12th and 13th centuries in France and Germany. The first Tosaphists were Rashi's sons-in-law, Meir b. Samuel (RaM) and Judah b. Nathan (RIVaN), and his grandsons Samuel b. Meir (RaSHBaM), Isaac b. Meir (RIVaM) and Jacob b. Meir (Rabbenu Tam). The Tosaphists do not give a running commentary on the text but offer glosses on selected points. The study of the *Tosaphoth* is for well-advanced students; the discussions are subtle, involved and highly argumentative, and there are frequently sharp strictures even on Rashi.

Very useful are the marginal notes compiled by Joshua Boaz in the 16th century, i.e. *Torah 'Or*, indicating biblical sources, *Mesoreth haShas*, giving cross-references to other parts of the talmudic literature and *'En Mishpat* referring to the Codifications of RaMBaM (Moses Maimonides, 1135–1204), SeMaG (Moses of Coucy, 13th century), Tur (Jacob beḥ Asher, 1269–1343) and Shulchan Aruch (Joseph Caro, 16th century).

Other marginal notes on the present page are *Hagahoth haBaḥ* (Joel Sirkes, 1561–1640) and *Gilyon haShas* (Akiva Eger, 1761–1837). These, too, offer variant readings, additional cross-references and other short glosses.

Finally, on the extreme outside of our page, in very small square letters, is printed a commentary by R. Nissim ben Jacob (11th century).

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V. MODES OF REFERENCE

BABYLONIAN TALMUD

It must be borne in mind that not only every Order and every Tractate, but even every chapter, of the Talmud has its own name, the latter being the initial word or words of the chapter. In olden times (i.e. before printed editions of the Talmud were in common use) it was usual, therefore, to refer to a specific chapter without even indicating the Tractate. One would say, for example, that such and such a statement occurred in *Pereq Mi Shemetho* (actually the 3rd chapter of *Berakhoth*). This way of quoting is still liked by certain expert and informed students of Talmud, especially when referring to well-known *peraqim*, as e.g. חזקת הבתים (3rd chapter of *Bava Bathra*).

Nowadays, since all current editions of the Babylonian Talmud have the same, standardised pagination, it is usual to cite simply according to Tractate, folio and page, e.g. *Berakhoth* 4a (see also the explanation to the Specimen Page). It is not necessary to indicate the particular Order, as there are no two Tractates of the same name. Nor is it necessary to indicate that the reference is to the Bavli as that is the Talmud par excellence.

JERUSALEM TALMUD

There is no unified pagination in the Jerusalem Talmud, so if a reference is given according to tractate, folio and page (or column) it would still be necessary to indicate the particular edition. The accepted way of citing the Jerusalem Talmud is therefore rather according to tractate number of chapter and section (Halachah), e.g. *Pal. Berakhoth*, 1, 4.

MISHNA

On principle, a Mishna reference is given according to Tractate, number of chapter and section, e.g. *Berakhoth*, 1, 2. This holds good when the reference is to an edition of the Mishna alone. One should, however, bear in mind that the Mishna text contained in editions of the Talmud may show some differences in the division of its chapters into sections and sometimes even in the exact wording. It is, therefore, advisable, whenever a Mishna quoted has some connection with the Gemara or with a commentary printed in the Talmud, to quote in the manner applicable to the Talmud. The reference to *Berakhoth*, 1, 2 would then appear as *Berakhoth*, 9b.

TOSEPHTA

Tosephta references are given in the same way as Mishna references, i.e. according to Tractate, chapter and section.

MIDRASHIM

Midrashim are quoted by giving the particular midrashic work, followed by the biblical reference in question. Midrashim on the Pentateuch are sometimes simply cited by indicating the *Parashah* (the weekly portion of the Law); e.g. *Siphra*, 'Emor.

VI. TRANSLITERATIONS

א	— 'Aleph	is indicated by an apostrophe (') only where it is intended as a consonant; otherwise it is not transcribed	
ב	— Beth	with dagesh is	B
ב		without dagesh is	V
ג	— Gimmel	with or without dagesh is	G
ד	— Daleth	with or without dagesh is	D
ה	— He	if a consonant, is not transcribed when indicating vowel ending	H
ו	— Waw	if a consonant, is	W
ז	— Zayin	Z
ח	— Heth	H
ט	— Teth	T
י	— Yod	if a consonant, is	Y
כ	— Kaph	with dagesh is	K
כ		without dagesh is	KH
ל	— Lamed	L
מ	— Mem	M
נ	— Nun	N
ס	— Samekh	S
ע	— 'Ayin	indicated by an inverted apostrophe (')	
פ	— Pe	with dagesh is	P
פ		without dagesh is	PH
צ	— Zade	Z
ק	— Qoph	Q
ר	— Resh	R
ש	— Shin	SH
ש	— Sin	S
ת	— Tav	with dagesh is	T
ת		without dagesh is	* TH

For vowels we follow the simple rule of putting:

- a for qamez gadol, pathah and hateph pathah
- e for zere, segol, hateph-segol and sheva mobile (the simple sheva is not transcribed)
- i for hireq (irrespective of length)
- o for holem, qamez qatan and hateph-qamez
- u for shureq and qubbuz

INTRODUCTION

Dagesh forte is indicated by doubling the letter concerned.

Strict rules of transliteration, such as the use of diacritics and other marks to indicate the length of a vowel, raising letters to indicate a sheva compositum, writing GH and DH to indicate a gimmel or a dalet without dagesh, will be applied only where philologically necessary.

The above rules of transliteration will be dispensed with altogether in the case of words, especially names, which have an established English spelling, e.g. Jacob, Jerusalem, Halachah, etc.

The vocalisation of the Aramaic text follows strict rules of grammar, on principle. However, in deference to the traditional text, 'full' spelling (ויקוד מלא) has been retained, notwithstanding the additional vowel signs (e.g. ליה, לעבד, and not לה, עבד). Furthermore, the accepted pronunciation of certain standard Aramaic expressions, sanctioned by long usage, has been respected throughout in the vocalisation, even though it is grammatically incorrect (e.g. not תנו רבנן but תנו רבנן).

VII. ABBREVIATIONS

(Mostly of names of tractates)

'A. Z.	'Avoda Zara	Keth.	Kethuboth	R.H.	Rosh Hashana
b.	bcn, bar: son of	Qid.	Qiddushin	Sanh.	Sanhedrin
Bab.	Babylonian Talmud	Ma'as.	Ma'aseroth	Shab.	Shabbath
B. B.	Bava Bathra	Mak.	Makkoth	Sheq.	Sheqalim
Bek.	Bekhoroth	Meg.	Megilla	Soṭ.	Soṭa
Ber.	Berakhoth	Men.	Menahoth	Suk.	Sukkah
B. Q.	Bava Qamma	M. Sh.	Ma'aser Sheni	Ta'an.	Ta'anith
B. M.	Bava Mezi'a	Naz.	Nazir	Ter.	Terumoth
'Ed.	'Eduyyoth	Ned.	Nedarim	Tosaph.	Tosaphoth
'Er.	'Eruvin	Pal.	see Yer.	Toseph.	Tosephta
Git.	Gittin	Pes.	Pesahim	Yev.	Yevamoth
Hag.	Hagiga	R.	Rabbi	Yer.	Talmud Yerushalmi or Palestinian Talmud
Hor.	Horayoth	Rashi	Commentary of R. Shelomo Yizḥaqi	Zev.	Zevahim
Hul.	Hullin				

NOTE : English Bible translations, even the Jewish ones, frequently differ from the Talmudic exegetists' understanding of the Hebrew text. Scriptural quotations in our text translation follow the Revised Version as closely as possible; the Talmudic understanding of the text is then duly explained in the commentary.

Readers using non-Jewish editions of the Bible should note that our references to chapter and verse follow the Hebrew Bible; where differences occur, the respective scriptural phrase can always be found by looking at the adjacent verses.

It should be pointed out that commentary and marginal notes are the work of several scholars, who take full responsibility for their individual contributions; the reader should, therefore, not look for uniformity of opinion and style.

The Editor wishes to thank all the collaborators of the Publication, and, in particular, Mr. Max Nurock, OBE, MA, Hon. LLD (Dublin), Ambassador of Israel, for his editorial contributions to the English text.

INTRODUCTION TO BERAKHOTH

This Tractate deals with prayers and benedictions. We shall later briefly refer to the reasons for its inclusion in the Order of Zera'im. Here, to begin with, are some details about the content of each of its nine chapters.

CHAPTER I: — מאימתי

The hours during which the *Shema* may be recited in the evening and in the morning. Position of the body (standing, reclining, sitting, etc.) during the recital. Blessings recited before and after the *Shema*.

CHAPTER II: — היה קורא

Permission to interrupt the *Shema* under certain conditions. Whether reading silently counts as recital. Incorrect pronunciation, reading the prayers in the wrong order, making mistakes. A newly wedded person's dispensation from reading the *Shema*.

CHAPTER III: — מי שמתו

Further dispensations from reading the *Shema* (mourners, persons in a state of ritual uncleanness); exemptions for women, slaves, minors.

CHAPTER IV: — תפלת השחר

Daily prayers, morning, afternoon and evening, also additional prayers (מוסף), and especially the 'Amida (*Shemone 'Esre*).

CHAPTER V: — אין עומדין

Continuation of previous subject. Wording of the 'Amida. The reader (*Shelih Zibbur*) who makes a mistake in reciting a prayer, etc.

CHAPTER VI: — כיצד מברכין

Blessings for various kinds of food (fruits of tree and soil, wine, bread, etc.); interesting details on the dietary customs of the Jews in Babylon.

CHAPTER VII: — שלשה שאכלו

Grace after meals (ברכת המזון), in particular *Zimmun* ('invitation' to join in the grace) when three or more have partaken of a meal together.

CHAPTER VIII: — אלו דברים

Differences between the schools of Shammai and Hillel concerning meal time regulations, particularly certain details such as washing the hands; also the order of benedictions in *Qiddush* and *Havdala*. We are given some insight into the dietary customs of Jews in the Holy Land which have similarities with those of the Romans.

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INTRODUCTION TO BERAKHOTH

CHAPTER IX: — הַרְוָאָה

Benedictions for a great variety of occasions (not concerned with food). This chapter is mostly Aggadic and contains among other things an interesting discussion on the interpretation of dreams.

On the reasons for including *Berakhoth* in the Order *Zera'im*, the following should be noted: As regards the subject matter, it is obvious that *Berakhoth* does not fit into *Zera'im*. Why, then, is it included here? One might answer with the question: where else should it be placed? Looking at the other Orders, we soon realise that *Berakhoth* would not easily fit into any of these. There are, in fact, several Tractates, apart from *Berakhoth*, which, at first sight, seem misplaced in their respective Orders, as e.g. *Nedarim* and *Nazir* in *Nashim*, or *'Avoth* in *Neziqin*. It could be argued that *Berakhoth* is more relevant to *Mo'ed* than to any other Order, and indeed in at least one MS edition (Codex Munich) we find it linked with *Mo'ed*. The same edition places the Tractate *Nidda* with the Order *Nashim* and not in *Toharoth* as do the current editions. If we now look at the current Talmud edition, we find that *Berakhoth* and *Nidda* have one thing in common, namely that in their respective Orders they are the only tractates with Gemara. Were these tractates not placed as they are, the two Orders, *Zera'im* and *Toharoth*, would indeed look 'poor', as they would then consist of Mishnayoth only.

Attempts have been made to find an inherent link between *Berakhoth* and *Zera'im*. One is suggested by a passage in *Shabbath* 31a, where in a discussion of Isaiah XXXIII, 6 the term *'Emuna* (Faith) which occurs in the verse, is thought to refer to the Order *Zera'im*, the general subject of which is agriculture. A connection between agriculture and faith is not difficult to see. For the products of the land are divine gifts, and it is with faith in God that man sows, trusting that he will reap. Bearing this in mind, *Berakhoth*, dealing as it does, with prayers and benedictions, is seen as quite appropriately linked with the Order *Zera'im*.

Placed at the beginning of the Order, *Berakhoth* has become the first Tractate of the whole Talmud. It is indeed an excellent and fitting opening, also highly suitable as a 'primer' as it contains a relatively large proportion of Aggadoth.

INTRODUCTION TO BERAKHOTH

CHAPTER IX: — הַרְוָאָה

Benedictions for a great variety of occasions (not concerned with food). This chapter is mostly Aggadic and contains among other things an interesting discussion on the interpretation of dreams.

On the reasons for including *Berakhoth* in the Order *Zera'im*, the following should be noted: As regards the subject matter, it is obvious that *Berakhoth* does not fit into *Zera'im*. Why, then, is it included here? One might answer with the question: where else should it be placed? Looking at the other Orders, we soon realise that *Berakhoth* would not easily fit into any of these. There are, in fact, several Tractates, apart from *Berakhoth*, which, at first sight, seem misplaced in their respective Orders, as e.g. *Nedarim* and *Nazir* in *Nashim*, or *'Avoth* in *Neziqin*. It could be argued that *Berakhoth* is more relevant to *Mo'ed* than to any other Order, and indeed in at least one MS edition (Codex Munich) we find it linked with *Mo'ed*. The same edition places the Tractate *Nidda* with the Order *Nashim* and not in *Toharoth* as do the current editions. If we now look at the current Talmud edition, we find that *Berakhoth* and *Nidda* have one thing in common, namely that in their respective Orders they are the only tractates with Gemara. Were these tractates not placed as they are, the two Orders, *Zera'im* and *Toharoth*, would indeed look 'poor', as they would then consist of Mishnayoth only.

Attempts have been made to find an inherent link between *Berakhoth* and *Zera'im*. One is suggested by a passage in *Shabbath* 31a, where in a discussion of Isaiah XXXIII, 6 the term *'Emuna* (Faith) which occurs in the verse, is thought to refer to the Order *Zera'im*, the general subject of which is agriculture. A connection between agriculture and faith is not difficult to see. For the products of the land are divine gifts, and it is with faith in God that man sows, trusting that he will reap. Bearing this in mind, *Berakhoth*, dealing as it does, with prayers and benedictions, is seen as quite appropriately linked with the Order *Zera'im*.

Placed at the beginning of the Order, *Berakhoth* has become the first Tractate of the whole Talmud. It is indeed an excellent and fitting opening, also highly suitable as a 'primer' as it contains a relatively large proportion of Aggadoth.

MISHNA

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Realia

RITUAL IMMERSION AND THE EATING OF TERUMA

During the 2nd Commonwealth, great stress was placed on ritual immersion, as may be ascertained from halachic and apocryphal literature. The recently discovered ritual bath (*Afikva*) in the Masada excavations emphatically proves the strict observance of these laws of purity, even under the most trying conditions of war and siege. Ritual immersions were not necessarily restricted to those instances where biblical injunction required them (i.e. contact with a corpse, reptile or nocturnal emission etc.). In fact certain sects such as the morning bathers' (Toseph. Yadaim, 2, 20; Bab. Ber. 22a) who are probably identical with the ἡμεροβάπτιστοι mentioned by Eusebius (Hist. Eccl. IV, 22) immersed themselves daily, before morning prayers.

The observance of ritual purity was most strict in all things related to the Holy Temple. Any Israelite wishing to enter the Temple Court was first required to immerse himself (Yoma 3, 3). It goes without saying that each and every priest serving in the Temple was required to immerse himself before he could undertake his task (Tamid, 1, 2). The eating of sacrificial meat (קדשים) for all priests and Israelites was for the ritually clean only, a fact which might explain Temple procedure and practice.

Similarly, observant Jews made it a requirement of the consumption of nonsacrificial meat outside the Temple area. The sources mention the prevalent practice of the association of 'Friends' (*Haverim*) to eat their food 'in purity' (Toseph. Demai, 2, 2; Bab. Git. 61a; Hag. 16b). In other words, the members of the association would immerse themselves before each meal. This can be most vividly illustrated by the practice of the *Essenes*, as recorded by Josephus (*Wars* II, 8, 5).

It is no surprise, therefore, that all members of the priestly class immersed themselves daily before eating their *teruma*. This reality comes to light in several Tannaitic sources which indicate that even

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Without specifying that the Shema is to be recited twice daily ("When thou liest down and when thou risest up", Deut. VI, 7), our Mishna opens with the question: *From which moment on is the (evening) Shema to be recited?* The actual answer is: from the moment the stars appear. This answer is given by the Mishna but in a roundabout way, with the words: *From the moment the priests enter to eat their teruma* (heave offering). This is a reference to the biblical command according to which a priest, who has become ritually unclean, was not permitted to eat teruma until "... he bathe his flesh in water", Then, "*when the sun is down he shall be clean and afterwards he may eat of the holy things*" (Lev. XXII, 4-7). It is obvious that the recital of the Shema has nothing to do with the priests' entering to eat their teruma, except that, incidentally, nightfall is of decisive importance in both cases. As we shall see later, the Gemara discusses the question: why, then, does not the Mishna simply state that the evening Shema may be recited from the moment the stars appear?

As regards the end of the period allowed for the recital of the evening Shema, we find a difference of opinion among the authorities. It was the interpretation of the words 'when thou liest down' which gave rise to this controversy, i.e. the question of determining what may reasonably be called a time for lying down. Rabbi Eliezer says: *Until the end of the first watch*, which means until the end of the first third of the night (the Gemara later on also mentions a different view according to which the night is divided into four watches). The majority of Sages say: *Until midnight*. A third opinion, Rabban Gamaliel's, is that the evening Shema may be recited *Until the rise of dawn*, which, says Maimonides, is about one and one fifth hour before actual sunrise.

מִשְׁנָה

מֵאֵימָתַי קוֹרֵא אֶת שְׁמַע בְּעֶרְבֵינִי? מִשְׁעָה שְׁהַכְהִינִים וְכִנְסִים לֶאֱכֹל בְּתְרוּמָתָן עַד סוֹף הָאֲשֻׁמוּרָה הָרִאשׁוֹנָה, דְּבַרֵי רַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר; וְחַכְמִים אוֹמְרִים: עַד חֲצוֹת. רַבֵּן גַּמְלִיאֵל אוֹמֵר: עַד שִׁיעוּלָה עֲמוּד הַשָּׁחַר.

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Accordingly, one may almost visualise the priests of each town and village at twilight, making their way to the outskirts. Having dipped themselves, they returned as an organised group and entered the settlement area at the onset of darkness. The sight of the priests returning *en masse* was a definite sign for the entire populace that the evening Shema could now be read. (c)

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משנה

מאימתי קורין את שמע בערבין? משעה שהכהנים נכנסים לאכל בתרומתן עד סוף האשמורה הראשונה, דברי רבי אליעזר; וחכמים אומרים: עד חצות. רבן גמליאל אומר: עד שיעלה עמוד השחר.

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As a Patriarch in the very unsettled times following the destruction of the Temple, he proved to be an able leader of his people; he went repeatedly to Rome to plead his people's cause. In many instances he was required to answer the arguments of heretics and of pagan philosophers. (c)

At this point the Mishna records an incident which shows how Rabban Gamaliel reconciles his opinion with the ruling of the majority. The incident has to be understood as follows. The sons of Rabban Gamaliel coming home late at night (after midnight) from some festivity, probably a wedding feast, have not yet recited the evening Shema and inquire of their father whether they may still do so. Now, it is just as unlikely that the sons were ignorant of their father's view as it is obvious that they were aware of the majority ruling. What they really wanted to know could only have been what the exact interpretation of that majority ruling was: was it that after midnight one may no longer recite the evening Shema at all; or was it that, while one should endeavour to recite it before midnight, if, for some reason, one has not done so, one is still free to recite it, even until dawn? Rabban Gamaliel answers that the majority view in fact agrees with his and that it was only as a safeguard to the law, lest one forget to recite the evening Shema altogether, that the Sages insisted on its recital before midnight. This is in line with the halachic trend that a fence (*seyag*) be made around the law to keep a man far from transgression. Rabban Gamaliel widens the scope of the discussion by pointing out that not only in the case of the Shema, *But whenever the Sages say 'until midnight' the precept may be performed until the rise of dawn.* He adduces examples from the sacrificial service, *the burning of the fat and the limbs* (Lev. VII, 3, 31, 33 and particularly Lev. VI, 2), "... that which goeth up on its firewood upon the altar all night unto the morning". As to that which is to be eaten within one day, the reference is to Lev. VII, 15: "his peace offering for thanksgiving shall be eaten on the day of his offering." Instances where the Rabbis say that these precepts shall be performed 'until midnight' are to be found in Zev. V, 3, 5, 6, 8; VI, 1.

Halachah

EVENING SHEMA

Our Mishna's first halachic ruling as interpreted by the Gemara, is that the evening Shema may be read from when the stars appear. The conclusion one is inclined to draw is that, if the Shema is read before nightfall, it would not count as the evening Shema. Such a conclusion would seem, however, to contradict an old and widely established custom that in synagogues, praying with a minyan, the evening prayer (*ma'ariv*), including the Shema, may be read well before nightfall. This apparent contradiction between custom and Halachah first arises in a Baraitha in Yer. Ber. 1, 1. The Baraitha lays down that he who reads the evening Shema before nightfall has not performed his duty; whereupon the question is raised, why then is it customary to read the Shema in synagogues before nightfall? R. Jose replies that in Synagogues the Shema, if it is read before nightfall, is not read in performance of the obligation of *qeriath-shema*, but as a scriptural lesson preceding the 'Amida. The Yerushalmi passage will be more clearly understood if we remember that in those days, when one spoke of *Tephilla* (lit. prayer) one had in mind primarily the 'Amida (*Shemone 'Esre*) prayer, while *qeriath-shema* was looked upon not as a prayer, but rather as an obligatory recital of certain biblical passages. Although it was sometimes urged that the *Tephilla* be joined to the Shema, or rather to the benedictions following the Shema, yet *Tephilla* and Shema were looked upon as separate units. It should also be made clear that the Biblical passages constituting the Shema may be read, as Biblical lessons, at any time and as often as one wishes; the Halachah is only concerned with the obligatory

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GEMARA

On what does the Tanna base himself that he should say *From which moment on?* Furthermore, why does he discuss the evening first? — he should discuss the morning first. The Tanna bases himself on the Scripture, as it is written: "when thou liest down, and when thou risest up". And this is what he says: the time for reciting the Shema of 'Lying-Down', when is it? — from the moment the priests enter to eat their teruma. And if you wish, I can answer: he learns it from the Creation of the World, as it is written: "and there was evening and there was morning, one day". If that is so, later on, where he says

תָּנָא הֵיכָא קָאֵי דְקִתְּגִי "מֵאִימְתִי" וְתוּ, מֵאִי שָׁנָא דְתִגִּי בְּעֶרְבֵית בְּרִישָׁא, לְתִגִּי דְשַׁחֲרִית בְּרִישָׁא! תָּנָא אֲקָרָא קָאֵי, דְכְתִיב: "בְּשֹׁכְבְךָ וּבְקוּמְךָ", וְהֵי קִתְּגִי: וְזִמְן קָרִיאַת שְׁמַע דְשֹׁכִיבָה אִימְתוּ מִשְׁעָה שְׁהַפְּהִינִים וּנְכַסֵּן לְאָכֵל בְּתֵרוּמְתָן. וְאִי בְּעֵית אִימָא: יְלִיף מִבְּרִיתוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם, דְכְתִיב: "וַיְהִי עֶרֶב וַיְהִי בֹקֶר יוֹם אֶחָד". אִי הֵכִי, סִיפָא דְקִתְּגִי: "בְּשַׁחֲרִית מְבָרַךְ

Halachah (cont.)

recital of the Shema twice a day within certain prescribed time limits. We may also note, in passing, that there was apparently no similar objection to an early reading of the evening 'Amida as such.

Due notice taken of these halachic preliminaries, the above Yerushalmi Baraitha should now be easy to understand. The recital of the evening Shema (*qua* evening Shema) before nightfall is considered invalid. It is, therefore, suggested that whenever the Shema is read before nightfall, i.e. prior to the evening Amida in the Synagogue, the reading has the character of a simple Bible lesson, very much like the reading of certain Biblical verses before the Minha 'Amida, a passage consisting mainly of Psalm 145.

The Yerushalmi Baraitha does, however, leave many questions unanswered. For instance, why did the authorities not resist the custom of praying ma'ariv in the Synagogue before nightfall? Here one must bear in mind that there were strong social reasons in favor of finishing communal prayers before nightfall. Having gathered for the Minha prayer well before nightfall, people did not want to disperse and then reassemble, preferring to continue immediately with ma'ariv. There were probably reasons of security, too, making it desirable that people return to their homes in safety before dark. Besides, in Europe the long summer days made it difficult for people to gather at a late hour. Nor did one want, on Friday evenings, to postpone the Sabbath meal unduly, especially as we are expected

We do not, however, find the burning of fat and limbs in this context (Rashi).

It should be noted that the term Shema is to be taken in its comprehensive sense which, besides Deut. VI, 4, also includes the continuation of the passage, verses 5-9, Deut. XI, 13-21, Num. XV, 37-41, as well as certain benedictions preceding and following this set of biblical texts.

The Gemara opens with a two-fold question: a) what is the biblical source for the command that the Shema has to be recited at all; b) given the biblical source, why should the Mishnaic Rabbi (Tanna) discuss the evening Shema before the morning Shema. Both parts of the question are answered with one biblical reference "when thou liest down and when thou risest up" (Deut. VI, 7). These words are taken to imply the biblical command that the Shema is to be recited twice a day. At the same time the order of the biblical words also answers the second part of the question as to the precedence of the evening Shema over the morning Shema and explains why the Mishna discusses first the Shema of 'lying down'. An alternative answer is also given to this second question, the source being the biblical account of the Creation, where, at the end of every section, evening is mentioned before morning.

With the words *if that is so* the discussion on the preference given to the evening over the morning in our Mishna is continued. Reference is made to a Mishna found later in this chapter (11a), where the question of the benedictions to be recited before and after the Shema is discussed and where the morning

לְמוֹתָיָם מִחוּל עַל הַקֹּדֶשׁ (to add from the weekday to the holy day). Such reasons made the authorities acquiesce in the custom of praying ma'ariv in synagogues before nightfall, an instance which should in no way lead one to assume that social circumstances were sufficient to justify a deviation from Halachah. There were also sound halachic arguments justifying the custom or rather enabling it to be accommodated to the Halachah; we shall speak of this later.

The halachic question was, then, not so much *whether* one may pray Ma'ariv before nightfall, but *how early* one may do so. One insistent opinion is that it should not be before *sheqi'ath hahamma* (the beginning of sunset) which is computed at 1 and 1/4 hours before the stars appear (an hour in this context means the twelfth part of day-time, irrespective of its seasonal length). Yet even here we find the authorities being very indulgent. For example, the leading halachic authority of the 15th century, Israel Isserlein (*Terumath ha-Deshen*, 1) speaks with reluctant approval of praying Ma'ariv 3-4 hours before nightfall on long summer days. Even nowadays we find that in many officially orthodox Synagogues in Britain Ma'ariv is prayed at 7 p.m. on days when nightfall may be as late as 10.30 p.m. (summer time).

There have been, at all times, individuals and certain circles of Chassidim who have insisted on *ma'ariv at its time*, i.e. that ma'ariv be prayed at nightfall proper, and this is the general rule in Israel now, where the problem of long days hardly (*Halachah cont.* p. 23)

שְׁמַיִם לְפָנֶיהָ וְאַחַת לְאַחֲרֶיהָ, וּבְעֶרְבַּי מְבָרְךְ שְׁמַיִם
 לְפָנֶיהָ וְשְׁמַיִם לְאַחֲרֶיהָ" — לְתוֹגֵי דְעֶרְבַיִת בְּרִישָׁא!
 תָּנָא פְּתַח בְּעֶרְבַיִת וְהוֹדַר תּוֹגֵי בְּשַׁחֲרִית, עַד דְּקָאֵי
 בְּשַׁחֲרִית פְּרִישׁ מִלֵּי דְשַׁחֲרִית, וְהוֹדַר פְּרִישׁ מִלֵּי
 דְעֶרְבַיִת:

'In the morning one recites two benedic-
 tions before it and one after it, and in the
 evening two before and two after', — let him
 mention the evening first! The Tanna opens
 with the evening and then comments on the
 morning, but while dealing with the morning
 he enters into details related to the morning,
 and afterwards he likewise discusses matters
 pertaining to the evening.

Shema is dealt with before the evening Shema. The
 questioner here, almost in the manner of a heckler,
 presses his question *אי הכי* 'if that is so': if the pre-
 ference of the evening over the morning in our
 Mishna is to be explained by reference to the biblical
 account of the Creation, where, indeed, evening is
 mentioned before morning, why, then, is the order
 reversed in that other Mishna? The answer given is
 that the reversal of the order in the later Mishna is an
 incidental one. What the Gemara wants to say is this:
 the Tanna of our Mishna, discussing the times for
 reading the Shema, rightly began with the evening
 and went on to speak of the morning Shema. While
 dealing with the morning Shema, he also discussed the
 further question of the benedictions of the morning
 Shema. Having done so, he had to revert to the
 evening in order to deal with the benedictions of the
 evening Shema. The apparent reversal of the order
 does not, therefore, infringe the precedence of the
 evening over the morning.

Students wishing to dwell on this discussion may be
 interested in a gloss made by the Tosaphoth. Recalling
 that the Gemara originally offered alternative explana-
 tions to the fact that our Mishna started with the
 evening Shema, the Tosaphist points to a difference in
 the character of the two explanations.

The first explanation is restricted in scope; it merely
 states that the Tanna of our Mishna, in dealing with
 the particular question of the time for reading the
 Shema, was guided by the wording of the relevant
 biblical provision of Deut. VI, 7, where 'lying down'
 (i.e. evening) is, in fact, mentioned before 'getting up'
 (i.e. morning). The second explanation, on the other
 hand, by making reference to the creation of the
 world, is apparently trying to suggest that a more
 general principle underlies the precedence of evening
 over morning.

Now, according to the Tosaphoth, the correctness of
 the first explanation is not queried in the Gemara,

because it is restricted to the subject of the time for
 reading the Shema, a question dealt with in this but
 not in the later Mishna. The second explanation,
 however, is open to attack on account of the fact that
 the later Mishna deals with the morning before the
 evening; because if the precedence of evening over
 morning is of general significance, as suggested in the
 second explanation, then in the later Mishna, too, the
 evening should have been dealt with before the
 morning. The Gemara, as we have seen, defends the
 correctness of the second explanation by stating that
 the reversal of the order in the later Mishna is an
 incidental one and thus accepts the precedence of
 evening over morning as a general principle.

With the words *the Master said* the Gemara takes up
 another phrase of the Mishna for discussion, namely
From the moment the priests enter to eat their teruma.
 These words indicated the moment from which the
 evening Shema may be recited. The Mishna takes it to
 be common knowledge that priests who have become
 unclean and have taken their ritual bath, enter to eat
 their teruma after the appearance of the stars: famil-
 iarity with the plain words of the Bible is taken for
 granted and Lev. XXII, 7 clearly states, "When the sun
 is down... he may eat...". To say, therefore, as the
 Mishna does, that the evening Shema may be recited
 from the moment the priests enter to eat their teruma
 is almost as good as saying that the evening Shema
 may be read from the moment of the appearance of
 the stars. Yet the Gemara justifiably asks, why, then,
 does the Mishna not simply say that the Shema is read
 from the moment the stars appear; why bring the
 priests into this matter? The answer given is that the
 Mishnaic teacher wanted, in this way, to impart to us
 a certain additional piece of information concerning
 the priests. We shall soon see what this additional
 information was. For the moment we would like to
 make a short comment on this apparent digression,
 form a methodological point of view. The method of

The Master said: *From the moment the priests enter to eat their teruma.* When, then, do the priests eat teruma? From the moment the stars appear. So let him say: from the moment the stars appear. He wanted to teach us something incidentally: When do the priests eat teruma? — from the moment the stars appear; and this, now, is what he wanted to teach us,

Halachah (cont.)

arises. It is interesting to note, however, that the sources often indicate that one should accept the communal custom of praying ma'ariv early lest an individual insistence on *ma'ariv be-zemano* look like *יהרה* (arrogance) towards the community.

Looking again, now, at the Yerushalmi Baraitha, the main halachic question left unanswered is as follows: if the recital of the Shema within a premature Ma'ariv does not count as fulfilling the obligation of reciting the evening Shema, what should a person, then, do? Should he repeat the Shema after nightfall and, if so, should he repeat all the passages of the Shema, including even the statutory benedictions preceding and following it, as instituted in the set Ma'ariv prayer? According to Rav Hai Gaon (d. 1038), it would appear that the whole recital of the Shema must be repeated together with the Berakhoth, but this view found very little support among later halachic authorities (*posqim*). Neither did the view of Rav Amram Gaon (d. circa 870) find favour in the eyes of the *Posqim*; according to his opinion, the repetition of the Shema at bed-time *על המטה* should be preceded by a special benediction of *קריאת שמע* (Blessed art Thou... who hast sanctified us by Thy commandments and commanded us concerning the recital of the Shema). The oppositions in this case reflect the reluctance of the *Posqim* to accept formulae of benedictions not attested in the Talmud.

We now come to the opinion of Rashi who, although primarily a commentator, is yet considered one of the most eminent *Posqim*. Basing himself on the authority of the above passage, he holds that whoever reads the Shema before nightfall, even with a minyan at the Synagogue, has not fulfilled his obligation as regards the recital of the evening Shema, but that the reading of the Shema, even of one chapter only (Deut. VI, 4-9) at bed-time counts as the actual obligatory fulfillment of

of bringing in *en passant* points which obviously have no logical connection with the matter under discussion, is quite common in the whole Talmudic literature. This is partly due to the fact that the Talmud was, basically, an oral form of teaching, even consisting to a large extent of the records of debates conducted in the Academies. One can hardly expect a strict discipline of 'keeping to the point' in such discussions. Besides, grouping together matters which, though disparate, have some feature in common, may well have served the positive, didactic purpose of assisting the memory.

We now revert to the incidental information the Master wanted to teach us concerning the priests. It should be kept in mind that we are speaking of a priest who has become unclean; according to Law, three conditions must be fulfilled before he again attains complete ritual purity: a) he must take a ritual bath (*mikwa*), b) the sun must set, c) he must bring a sacrifice (expiatory offering, *kappara*) the following day.

The Gemara now suggests that the wording of our Mishnaic reference to the priests' entering to eat their teruma, in the context of the evening Shema, signifies, incidentally that the priests need not wait until the last stage of their purification, the *kappara*, before eating teruma; already the fulfilment of the second condition, the setting of the sun after he has taken a ritual bath, suffices. That he has not yet brought the expiatory offering is therefore no bar to his teruma. At this point the Gemara adduces a Baraitha, which expounds on the words *ובא השמש וטהר* (Lev. XXII, 7), and concludes that the intended meaning of the biblical words is that permission to eat teruma is indeed conditional upon the setting of the sun, but not upon bringing the *kappara*.

It is difficult to see at a first glance how the Baraitha arrived at this conclusion. To understand the Baraitha in the simplest possible way (and even this will not be easy), let us look again at the biblical passage. Lev.

אמר מר: "משעה שהכהנים נכנסין לאכל בתרומתן." מכדי כהנים אימת קא אכלי תרומהו משעת צאת הכוכבים, לתני משעת צאת הכוכבים! מלתא אנב אורחיה קמשמע לן, כהנים אימת קא אכלי בתרומהו משעת צאת הכוכבים, והא קמשמע

the command to recite the evening Shema. Rashi is supported in his view by many other eminent authorities. The Tosaphoth, however, strongly reject his view and maintain that the reading of the Shema at the Synagogue, within the Ma'ariv prayer, even before nightfall, is perfectly valid as the evening Shema. This view is based on the profound analysis of Talmudic passages (other than the Yerushalmi passage) and on subtle argument which cannot be set out in detail here. The gist of the Tosaphoth's argumentation (which has some basis in the continuation of the discussion in the Gemara, Ber. 2b, particularly 27b) would seem to be that the notion of 'evening' is not necessarily dependent on the astronomical fact of the appearance of the stars, but may also be determined by the social habits of people. If it is e.g. a constant and generally practised habit to look upon a certain advanced hour of the afternoon as evening for the purpose of the evening meal, then that hour is 'evening' also for the purpose of evening prayers, even though it may not yet actually be nightfall.

Joseph Caro, in *Shulchan Aruch*, Orah Hayyim, 235, 1 (without giving any clear indication whether he is following the view of Rashi or of the Tosaphoth) states simply that the time to read the evening Shema is from the moment when three small stars appear; if one reads it before this, one must repeat the Shema at the proper time, but without benedictions. The ReMA (R. Moses Isserles, 1520-72), whose views are authoritative for Ashkenazi Jewry, points out in an additional note that if one has prayed ma'ariv with a community, even if this was a long time before nightfall (which, in the context, means 3-4 hours), one should not be anxious to repeat the prayers at night. Only — and this may be a concession to Rav Hai Gaon's view — a person who is known to practise exceptional piety may do so without fearing that his act will look like arrogance towards the community. (c)

The Master said: *From the moment the priests enter to eat their teruma.* When, then, do the priests eat teruma? From the moment the stars appear. So let him say: from the moment the stars appear. He wanted to teach us something incidentally: When do the priests eat teruma? — from the moment the stars appear; and this, now, is what he wanted to teach us,

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לן דכפרה לא מעבבא, פדתויא: "ובא השמש וטהר", ביאת שמשו מעבבתו מלאכל בתרומה, ואין כפרתו מעבבתו מלאכל בתרומה.

that the expiatory offering (*kappara*) is no bar. As it has been taught: "And when the sun is down *vetaher*" — the setting of the sun is a bar to his eating teruma, but his *kappara* is no bar to his eating teruma.

NIGHT AND DAY

At first glance, the Gemara's question, why does the Mishna discuss the evening Shema before the morning Shema, seems somewhat surprising, for time-honoured tradition in Judaism has it that day follows night and not vice versa. In the Pentateuch there is no room for doubt that a day is considered from evening until evening' (Lev. XXIII, 32) — this in connection with the most important day in the year, Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement); similar phrasing is found for Passover (Deut. XVI, 6-7). The corresponding Mishnaic tracts (Yoma; Pes.) are chronologically so arranged, and they mention night before day. This order is also followed, on the whole, in tractate Shabbath, although the Pentateuch does not stipulate that the Sabbath begins in the evening (cf. however Gen. I, 31 and *infra*). Tannaitic Halachah was quite explicit on this point, since it was necessary to define a *day* in connection with legal documents. Thus, a 'bill of divorce' (*get*), written at night and signed during the following day, is valid, since night and day are one unit, bearing an identical date, whereas the reverse, a *get* written during the day and signed at night is invalid (Git. 2, 2).

An even more exact definition is to be found in connection with the Biblical injunction against slaughtering "a cow or ewe... and its young, both in the same day" (Lev. XXII, 28). Simeon ben Zoma, a Tanna of the third generation, saw a significance in the use of an expression found both in the above injunction and in connection with the Creation of the world (Gen. I, 5 "there was evening and there was morning"). By virtue of the hermeneutic rule of *gezera shava*, he deduced that day follows night, since this was the order of Creation: night (ערב) , day (בקר) (Hul. 5, 5; Bab. 83a; cf. Toseph. *ibid.* 5, 8; Siphra, 'Emor ch. 8). In spite of this, R. Samuel ben Meir (RaSHBaM), in his commentary to Gen. I, 5, surprisingly explains that ערב-בקר implies just the opposite, namely *day and night*, the former preceding

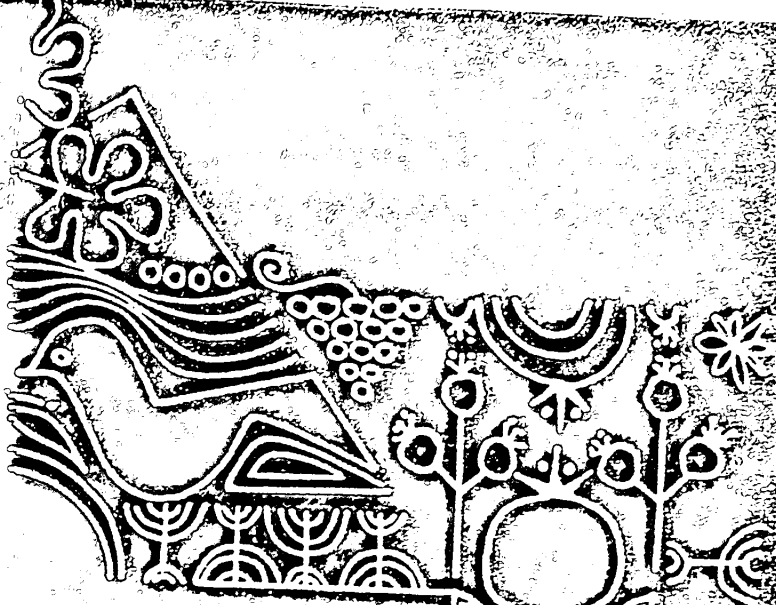
XXII, from the very beginning, deals with the question of the priest and holy things (*qodashim*). Verse 3, becoming more specific, says that whoever approaches *qodashim*, having his uncleanness upon him, shall be cut off. Verses 4 and 5 set out the various forms of uncleanness; verse 6 continues by telling us that any person who has in this way become unclean 'shall be unclean until the evening' and shall not eat of the holy things until he bathe his flesh in water. Then follows the verse quoted, verse 7, which, in the current English translations of the Bible, reads "And when the sun is down he shall be clean and then he may eat of the holy things, because it is his bread". It is clear that, if we take the plain meaning, verse 7 repeats in part the content of verse 6, or rather verse 7 states in positive terms what has already been expressed negatively in verse 6. The words *when the sun is down he shall be clean and then he may eat of the holy things* would therefore seem to be superfluous and, according to rabbinical rules of exegesis, apparently superfluous words always carry a special meaning. Now, it would appear that, according to the Baraita, the repetition is intended to stress that nightfall is in itself sufficient to allow the priests to partake of teruma, without having to wait until the *kappara* is brought the next morning. Furthermore, as the ensuing discussion in the Gemara will show, the word וטהר is not taken to mean that the priest shall be clean, as the English translations render it, but that the *day* is clean, i.e. that the day is cleared away, again stressing the idea that it is nightfall which matters here, the expiatory offering not being an indispensable condition for eating teruma. To sum up, when the Mishna says that the evening Shema may be recited from the moment the priests enter to eat their teruma, it wished to impart to us the information that priests, who have taken their ritual bath on becoming unclean, need not wait until they have brought the *kappara* on the following morning, but may eat teruma on the same day, at nightfall. The Gemara makes it clear that this is only an incidental piece of information, added to the main point, namely that the evening Shema may be read from the moment of nightfall.

the latter. This unorthodox opinion, the antithesis of ben Zoma's exegesis, so enraged the poet and commentator R. Abraham ibn Ezra that he composed a special work (*Iggereth haShabbath*), personifying therein the vehement protest of the Sabbath day against Rashbam's interpretation. Apparently, this also explains why the latter's commentary to the first three sections of Genesis (ch. I—XVII) has remained unpublished and is not to be found in the standard editions of the Pentateuch to the present day.

In truth, Rabbi M. Kasher (Addition to Shulsinger Pentateuch [NY. 1950], Gen., pp. 16-20) has offered a justification of Rashbam's commentary. Since the Bible at this point is dealing with the period which precedes the Revelation on Sinai (מתן תורה), no halachic implications are involved. Moreover, the sequence day-night can be seen in common biblical usage, in phrases such as "and day and night shall not cease" (Gen. VIII, 22) and indeed throughout the Bible (cf. Ex. XIII, 21; Josh. I, 8; Jer. CX, 11 etc.).

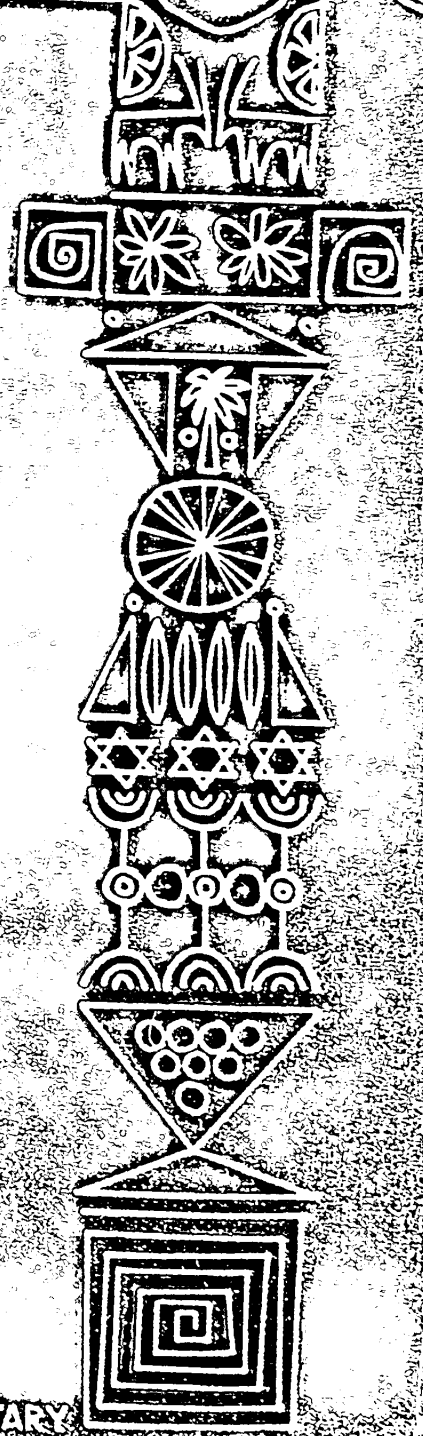
The Mishna, too, contains evidence of this usage which, while not technically correct, apparently reflects common usage and practice, e.g. two meals a day — morning and evening — (Suk. 2, 6; cf. Siphre Num. LXXXVII); day labourers and night labourers (B.M. 9, 11, but cf. *ibid.* 13), in two instances, eating sacrifices in the Temple (Zev. 5, 3, 6; 6, 1) and civil trials (Sanh. 4, 1) the halachah granted official recognition to the appending of night to day, probably on account of the fact that sacrifices and trials may not be begun at night.

Nonetheless, in many cases the Mishna is faithful to the rule that night comes before day (R.H. 1, 9; Ta'an. 2, 7; Nidda, 4, 4); and so the first Mishna in Berakhoth opens with the evening Shema. (c)



תלמוד

TALMUD



TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH WITH COMMENTARY
BY RABBI DR. A. EHRLICH

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And how do you know that (this) **ובא השמש** means the setting of the sun and (this) **וטהר** means the clearing away of the day? [2b] Perhaps it means the coming of [day]light and **וטהר** means that the man is clean. Rabba bar Rav Shela says: If so, then the Scripture should say **וויטהר**; what is **וטהר** — the day clears away. As people say: The sun has disappeared and the day has cleared away.

In the West they did not hear this of Rabba bar Rav Shela and asked the question: (This) **ובא השמש**, does it mean the setting of the sun, and is **וטהר** the clearing away of the day?

וממאי דהאי "ובא השמש" — ביאת השמש, והאי "וטהר" — טהר יומא, (ב. ב.) דילמא ביאת אורו הוא, ומאי "וטהר" — טהר גברא? אמר רבה בר רב שילא: אם כן, לימא קרא "וטהר", מאי "וטהר"? טהר יומא, כדאמר ר' אבא: אי ערב שמשא ואדכי יומא. במערבא הא דרבה בר רב שילא לא שמייע להו, ובעו לה מב'ע'א: האי "ובא השמש" — ביאת שמשו הוא, ומאי "וטהר" — טהר יומא, או דילמא

RABBA BAR RAV SHELA

Rabba bar Rav Shela, variously, also, Rabba bar Shela or Rava bar Shela, was a Babylonian Amora of the fourth generation (middle of the 4th century CE). As can be seen from Ket. 104b and 105b, he was an eminent judge. He also excelled in Aggada and in independent biblical interpretation, as here.

(b1)

With the words *and how do you know?* the Gemara now challenges the accepted rabbinical interpretation of Lev. XXII, 7, namely that **וטהר** refers to the day, that is, to the clearing away of day (see above, pp. 23-24). The exact meaning of the challenging query itself forms the subject of a controversy between Rashi and the Tosaphoth. Rashi (whose opinion is reflected in our English translation) understood the challenger's argument to be that **ובא השמש** could mean the rising of the sun on the following morning, and **וטהר** that the person had completed the process of purification by bringing a *kappara*. Indeed, the word **ובא**, literally 'coming' (of the sun) can equally well refer either to the coming *down* of the sun (i.e., sunset) or to the coming *up* of the sun (i.e., sunrise); and **וטהר**, literally 'clean', would, at first glance, seem to refer to the cleanness of a person rather than of the day. Thus, on the face of it, the argument of the challenger, as Rashi sees it, appears to be fairly convincing. Yet the Tosaphoth dismiss outright the possibility that the challenger might have wanted to suggest that **ובא השמש** refers to the rising of the sun; in support of their view they engage in a subtle discussion, adducing proofs from Bible and Talmud, which cannot be set out in any detail here. Briefly, the argument of the challenger, according to the Tosaphoth, is 'How do you know that **ובא השמש** refers to the *completion* of sunset and **וטהר** to the clearing of day, so that both expressions indeed indicate the time of the appearance of the stars, or actual nightfall; might not **ובא השמש** refer to the *beginning* of sunset; and may not **וטהר** simply mean that the person is now clean for the purpose of eating teruma?'

AS PEOPLE SAY

In support of Rabba bar Rav Shela's interpretation of the phrase **ובא השמש וטהר**, the Gemara quotes a popular saying of the time, introduced by the words 'As people say . . .'. (כדאמר ר' אבא). The saying is common in talmudic literature, where it appears more than one hundred and sixty-five times. As it is always followed by some familiar turn of speech, it is of some importance in the comparative study of proverbs, folklore, and so forth. It introduces, for example, the saying **לחל איניס** (cf. Rashi to Ber. 8a), of which the English equivalent is 'walls have ears', or **בירא דסחית מינה לא תסדי ביה** (B.Q. 92b), approximating to 'Do not bite the hand that feeds you!'

Generally speaking, the Sages attributed great significance to the practices and ways of the man-in-the-street. In several instances they advised first-hand investigation of everyday custom before halachic decisions were taken. Such advice is usually prefaced by the words 'Go and see the practice of the people!' (Ber. 45a; Pes. 54a; B.Q. 84b, et. al.). The same applied to current proverbs and to maxims expressing general truths, which the Rabbis used to illustrate conclusions reached after halachic and aggadic discussion.

Here, however, when the preamble 'As people say' appears for the first time in the Talmud, it seems to introduce a well-known variation of a biblical expression. The words **ובא השמש וטהר** (Lev. XXII, 7 — '... the sun is down ... clean') came to mean, colloquially, **אי ערב שמשא ואדכי יומא** — 'the sun has disappeared and the day has cleared away'.

(b1)

בִּיאַת אֹרֹו הוּא וּמֵאֵי "וְטָהַר" — טָהַר גְּבֻרָא? וְהָדָר
 פָּשְׁטוּ לָהּ מִבְּרִיתָא. מִדְּקָתְנֵי בְּבְרִיתָא: "סִימָן לְדַבָּר
 צֵאת הַכּוֹכְבִים", שָׁמַע מִנָּה בִּיאַת שְׁמֵשׁוּ הוּא,
 וּמֵאֵי "וְטָהַר" — טָהַר יוֹמָא:
 אָמַר מֶר: "מִשְׁעָה שֶׁהַכּוֹהֲנִים נִכְנָסִין לְאָכַל בְּתְרוּמָתָן."

From a comment by R. Zerahia haLevi, a leading 12th century scholar, in his *Sepher haMa'or* (cf. *Ma'or to Rif*, beginning of Berakhoth), where he discusses the actual subject of the controversy of Rashi and the Tosaphoth, it would appear that differing versions of our talmudic text may have given rise to it. On the main point at issue here, the Ba'al haMa'or, basing himself on what he calls the version of the Geonim, arrives at the same conclusion as the Tosaphoth. We do not need to enter further into this argument because — whether we follow Rashi or the Tosaphoth — the decisive point in the Gemara discussion remains whether וטהר refers to the person's cleanness or to the clearing away of day.

And now we are given Rabba bar Rav Shela's reply to the query. He argues that, if the Scripture had wanted to refer to the person's cleanness, the expression employed would have been ויטהר; as the form used is וטהר, the reference must be to the clearing away of day. The grammatical point made here, according to Rashi, is this: If the Scripture had intended to refer to the person's cleanness, a form of וטהר implying a command would have been appropriate (i.e., that the priest shall be clean) and this could have been achieved by using the future tense of וטהר, which is יטהר and not וטהר, which would ordinarily be a past tense. One could, of course, argue that וטהר, if the *waw* is taken as conversive, can also signify the future form; indeed, the Scriptures often employ the word וטהר in the sense of 'he shall be clean'. The Tosaphoth, drawing attention to this problem, explain that, despite the ambiguity of the word וטהר, in other biblical passages there is no doubt as to its exact meaning, which is obviously determined by the context. In our case, however, diverse interpretations are equally reasonable. Therefore, if the Bible had wanted to refer to the person's cleanness, it would have employed the more precise form ויטהר; as the word used is

Perhaps it means the coming of [day]light, and וטהר means that the man is clean. They then solved it from a Baraitha. For it is said in a Baraitha: *A sign for the matter is the appearance of the stars.* You may understand from here that it is the setting of the sun, and what is וטהר — the day clears away.

The Master said: *From the moment the priests enter to eat their teruma.* They pointed to a

וטהר, a past tense must be inferred, with the connotation of the day having cleared away. That the word וטהר here indicates a past tense is also borne out by a popular saying quoted in the Gemara, where the word ואדכי (the Aramaic counterpart of וטהר, as found also in the Targum to our verse) is, as Rashi points out, in the past tense. And so the Gemara considers it proved that the words וטהר ובא השמש וטהר refer to the completion of day, determined by the appearance of the stars — which is also the time when the priests may eat their teruma and the evening Shema be recited.

At this point the Gemara records that in the West, i.e., in the Academies of Palestine, unaware of the explanation given by Rabba bar Rav Shela in Babylon, the same query was resolved by basing the argument on a Baraitha. This Baraitha, which we shall meet again, deals with the time when one may begin to read the evening Shema and, as in our Mishna, we are told (though with a slight variation in the wording) that the Shema may be read from the moment the priests are entitled to eat their teruma; it is added that a sign for this is the appearance of the stars. As we shall see, the Baraitha even finds some biblical basis for the proposition that the day ends with the appearance of the stars (Neh. IV, 15-16). In any case, the scholars of Palestine, who simply wanted to know what Lev. XXII, 7 meant by the words ובא השמש וטהר, were satisfied, on the strength of the authoritative teaching of the Baraitha, that the words meant the completion of day, marked by the appearance of the stars; and, as in our Mishna, so in that Baraitha, the time when the priests enter to eat their teruma is the indication for the time when the evening Shema may be recited.

With the phrase *The Master said*, the Gemara once more refers to the beginning of our Mishna, where

contradiction: *From which moment on may one recite the Shema in the evening? As soon as the poor man enters to eat his bread with salt, until the time he actually rises from his meal.* The second part is certainly at variance with our Mishna. Should we say, the first part is also at variance with our Mishna? — No! 'Poor man' and 'priest' are the same [time] indication.

They pointed to a contradiction: *From which moment does one begin to recite the Shema in the evening? From the moment that people enter to eat their bread on Sabbath eves; these are the words of Rabbi Meir. The Sages say: from the moment*

THE BREAD AND SALT OF THE POOR

Referring to the supper-time of poor people, the Baraitha uses the phrase *entering to eat one's bread with salt*; the corresponding phrase for ordinary people reads *enter to recline*. The phrases call for some comment, reflecting, as they do, the dietary habits of the period.

As today, bread was a basic victual; for the poor it was the staple dish. Numerous talmudic sources give us ample information on the varieties of bread, how it was prepared and the manner of partaking of it.

Flour of wheat, barley or spelt was mixed for the dough, which was baked either in an oven or simply on hot coals. As regards quality and shape, one distinguished between *path* (פת), plain, flat bread, and *kikkar* (ככר), the more wholesome loaf. The better quality is occasionally referred to as *path neqiya* (פת נקייה) or *path 'isa* (פת עיסה), 'clean bread' or 'bread of purified flour', as distinct from the less good, coarse kind, made from unrefined bran flour of barley, which was termed *path qebar* (פת קיבר), akin to the Roman *panis cibarius* (or *panis secundus*), the common food of slaves and of the indigent. (Ber. 6, 5; Toseph. Ber. 4, 5; Yer. Halla, 4, 1; Shab. 1, 10; Pes. 10, 3; Toseph. Yom Tov [Beza] 3, 20; Qid. 62a; Shav. 3, 2; Avoth, 6, 4; Hor. 13b; Neg. 3, 9; Makhshirin 2, 8; Siphra Behar ch. 7).

To eat bread with salt was by no means a monopoly of the poor; the beneficial digestive quality of salt was generally recognised (Ber. 40a). The phrase *the poor man entering to eat his bread with salt* suggests, rather, that he had nothing but salt to make ^{to} *qebar* palatable.

the time for the recital of the Shema is determined by the priests entering to eat their teruma. The Gemara now adduces parallel passages, where the time for the recital of the Shema is determined in different ways. It may be useful to list these before we enter into the rather lengthy discussion of the Gemara:

1. (Our Mishna) Priests entering to eat their teruma.
2. (First Baraitha and Rabbi H̄annina in the third Baraitha) Poor man entering to eat his bread with salt.
3. (Rabbi Meir in the second Baraitha) People entering to eat their bread on the eve of the Sabbath.
4. (Sages in the second Baraitha) Moment entitling priests to eat their teruma.
5. (Rabbi Eliezer in the third Baraitha) Moment when the Sabbath is hallowed on its eve.
6. (Rabbi Joshua in the third Baraitha) Priests becoming ritually clean to eat teruma.
7. (Rabbi Meir in the third Baraitha) Priests taking a ritual bath before eating their teruma.
8. (Rabbi Aḥai in the third Baraitha) When most people enter to recline (for the evening meal).

The object of the Gemara's discussion is to clarify if and how far these different statements can be reconciled with each other and, especially, with the statement of our Mishna.

Let us now examine the first Baraitha (poor man entering to eat his bread with salt). It should be pointed out that the text gives no further indication as to the time *when* the poor man is likely to come home for his evening meal. It is, however, assumed (see Rashi) that the poor man cannot afford artificial light in his house and will, therefore, want to come

ורמינהו: מאימתי קורין את שמע בערבין? משעהני נכנס לאכל פתו במלח עד שעה שעומד לפטר מתוך סעדתו. סיפא ודאי פליגא אמתניתין, רישא מי לימא פליגא אמתניתין? לא, עני וכהן חד שעורא הוא. ורמינהו: מאימתי מתחילין לקרות קריאת שמע בערבית? משעה שפני אדם נכנסין לאכל פתו בערבי שבתות, דברי רבי מאיר; וחכמים אומרים:

superior brand with all manner of more costly condiments.

The expression *to recline*, used in the Baraitha in connection with the evening meal of people at large, points to a Roman-inspired practice of the upper classes in Israelite society, taking their places at table in a lounging position, on comfortable couches. The social 'ritual' is discussed in greater detail later in this Tractate (42b). Here, however, we should point out that the word 'recline' (or rather its Hebrew counterpart) need not necessarily be taken literally; it is most unlikely that 'most people' should, every evening, indulge in the luxury. It presumably came to signify merely 'supper-time'. Yet, in speaking of the poor man's supper, the expression 'to recline' was avoided, as it might sound like a mockery of the imppecunious.

(bl)

R. MEIR

According to one talmudic tradition, R. Meir (circa 100-175 CE) was a scion of proselytes, originally of the lineage of the Roman emperor Nero. Curiously enough, his father's name is never recorded in any of the sources, nor is much known about his early background. He is unique in the circumstance that no other sage — Tanna or Amora — bore the name 'Meir', which has been interpreted as 'the enlightener of the sages' (מאיר-אור) in the field of Halachah.

R. Meir, who earned his livelihood as a scribe, was a star pupil of R. Akiba. He eventually occupied the post of Ḥakham (חכם) in the High Court of the Patriarch, R. Simon bea Gamaliel II, in Usha, during the fourth generation of

the re aration

משעה שהכהנים וכו' לאכל בתרומתו. סימן לדבר צאת הכוכבים. ואף-על-פי שאין ראיה לדבר זכר לדבר, שנאמר: "ואנחנו עשים במלאכה וחצאים מחזיקים ברמחים מעלות השחר עד צאת הכוכבים". ואומר: "והיו לנו הלילה משמר והיום מלאכה". מאי, ואומר: וכי תימא, מבי ערבא שמשא ליליא הוא, ואינהו דמחשכי ומקדמי, תא שמע: "והיו לנו הלילה משמר והיום מלאכה". קא סלקא דעתך דעני ובני אדם חד שעורא הוא, ואי אמרת עני וכהן חד שעורא הוא, חכמים הניו

the priests are entitled to eat their teruma. A sign for the matter is the appearance of the stars. And though there is no proof for it, there is mention of it. For it is said: "And we laboured in the work and half of them held the spears from the rise of the dawn till the appearance of the stars." It is also said: "That in the night they may be a guard to us and labour in the day." Why this 'it is also said': — Should you argue that from the moment the sun sets it is night, but that they carried on into darkness and also started earlier, then come and hear: "That in the night they may be a guard to us and labour in the day." Assuming that 'poor man' and 'people' are the same time-indication, if you now say that 'poor man' and 'priest' are the same indication, then the Sages [say] the

of his meal. Does this particular indication of time tally with that of our Mishna? The Gemara, answering this question, distinguishes between the two parts of the Baraitha. The first part determines the moment from which the Shema may be read (from the moment until when the Shema can be recited (until the poor man rises from his meal). The second part certainly contradicts the Mishna, says the Gemara, because the Baraitha's delimitation of the time allowed (the time it takes a poor man to eat his meal) is much shorter than any of those mentioned in our Mishna. The first part of the Baraitha, the Gemara ventures to suggest at this stage, could be reconciled with the Mishna, if one assumes that the time when the poor man enters to eat his meal and the time when the priests enter to eat their teruma are the same. Later, however, the discussion on this point is to be reopened and eventually the Gemara will come to the final conclusion that the poor man's time is later, i.e., a little after the appearance of the stars.

In the meantime, the Gemara proceeds to examine another Baraitha (which the Gemara had already briefly touched upon in a previous discussion), where a controversy is recorded between Rabbi Meir and the Sages. According to Rabbi Meir, the evening Shema is to be recited (during the week) at a time when people usually enter to eat their Sabbath eve meal. The Gemara here gives no indication of the exact time people usually enter to eat that meal. at we learn from Rashi is that people in general

(as distinct from poor people) usually have their evening meal earlier on Sabbath eve than on weekdays, the reason given being that on Sabbath eve people hasten (home) to have their meal because the food was prepared well in advance, before nightfall. The Sages, opposing Rabbi Meir, say that the Shema is to be recited from the time the priests are entitled to eat their teruma.

We should perhaps dwell for a moment on a question which the Gemara itself does not raise, namely: is there any difference between the time the priests enter to eat their teruma (as stated in our Mishna) and the time priests are entitled to eat teruma (as stated by the Sages of this Baraitha)? We venture to suggest, and this is indeed borne out by the later discussion of the Gemara, that there is none, and in this connection we may point out that Rashi, quoting this Baraitha, speaks of priests entering (ובנסים), not of priests being entitled (וכאים) to eat teruma. Although the BaH (Joel Sirkes, 1561-1640), in his glosses, seeks to correct Rashi's wording and to replace ובנסים by וכאים, yet, from the text, as it stands, it is clear that no factual difference was seen between the statement of the Sages of this Baraitha and the parallel statement of the Mishna; this leads us to the conclusion that, regarding the point of time from when the evening Shema is to be read, the Sages of the Baraitha are not at variance with our Mishna.

Examining again the relevant statement of the Mishna and that of the Sages of this Baraitha, one notes that the latter is more explicit, in so far as it gives an

same as Rabbi Meir. Conclude, therefore, that 'poor man' is a separate indication. and 'priest' is a separate indication. No! 'Poor man' and 'priest' are the same indication, but 'poor man' and 'people' are not the same indication.

But are 'poor man' and 'priest' the same indication? They pointed to a contradiction:

From which moment does one begin to recite the Shema in the evening? From the moment the day becomes sanctified on Sabbath eves. These are the words of Rabbi Eliezer. Rabbi Joshua says: From

R. Meir (cont.)

Tannaim. There he passed on the mishnaic traditions which he had received from R. Akiba, traditions that found their way into the codified Mishna on account of the fact that R. Judah haNasi, redactor of the Mishna, was a disciple of R. Meir. This is the explanation offered, as a rule, of R. Johanan's statement that 'an anonymous Mishna is generally to be ascribed to R. Meir' (תנא דמסנה ר' מאיר ... אליבא). He also studied with Elisha ben Abuya, who denounced Judaism and embraced heretic doctrines. Even so, R. Meir remained devoted to his master till the very end, continuously urging him to repentance. He is also known to have had dealings with a Greek philosopher אבנימוס הנריי, whom historians have identified as the Cynic Eunomios of Gadara (in Trans-Jordan). He was noted as a talented lecturer and homilist, his system being to divide each talk into three equal parts: Halachah, Aggadah and parable.

He died in exile in Assia (אסיה), whose exact location is a matter of dispute among scholars. He willed that his bier be placed on the seashore, as indicating his wish to be brought to final rest in Eretz Israel.

Rabbi Meir's wife, Berurya, daughter of R. Hanina b. Teradyon, is highly praised in the Talmud for wisdom and valour; she is even said to have taken part in halachic discussion.

(bl)

R. JOSHUA

Few Tannaim are named Joshua, so that, in the Mishna, R. Joshua always stands for R. Joshua ben Hananya, a leading figure in the second generation of Tannaim (circa 40-130 CE). It is only in the *Pirke Avoth* (Ethics of the Fathers) that we find his father's name recorded.

additional indication of the time, by saying: *A sign for the matter is the appearance of the stars*. It should be recalled that these words of the Baraitha were quoted by the Palestinian Academies to substantiate the view that the scriptural words (Lev. XXII, 7) were to be understood as referring to the complete end of the day and that, consequently, it is the appearance of the stars that is decisive for the priests' eating of teruma as well as for the recital of the evening Shema. The Baraitha now discusses some implications of the words of Neh. IV, 15-16, with a view to finding scriptural support for the proposition that the duration of the setting of the sun and even of twilight is still a part of daytime, and it is the appearance of the stars which marks the complete end of day and the beginning of night. Before entering into the actual analysis of the biblical words concerned, the Baraitha carefully points out that Scripture offers only a certain amount of support, and no complete proof, for the proposition; we shall see why the Gemara found it necessary to make this reservation.

Let us note very carefully, here, *how* the author of our Baraitha quotes the words of Neh. IV, 15-16. First, he quotes in full verse 15, which reads: "*And we laboured in the work and half of them held the spears from the rise of the dawn till the appearance of the stars*"; then, as if the Baraitha exegete had had second thoughts, he makes an additional reference to the end of verse 16, which reads: "*That in the night they may be a guard to us and labour in the day*".

The question arises why should there be any additional reference at all; does not verse 15 clearly bear out the proposition that day ends with appearance of the stars? The answer to this is that verse 15 by itself is not conclusive for the following reason: the fact that those people (as related in the verse) laboured from the rise of dawn until the appearance of the

רבי מאיר! אלא שמע מנה עני שעורא לחד וכהן שעורא לחד. לא, עני וכהן חד שעורא הוא, ועני וכהן אדם לאו חד שעורא הוא. ועני וכהן חד שעורא הוא? ורמינהו: מאימתי מתחילין לקרות שמע בערבין? משעה שקדש היום בערב שבתות, דברי רבי אליעזר; רבי יהושע אומר: משעה שהכהנים

R. Joshua, a Levite, active in the Second Temple ritual as a singer, was a chief disciple of R. Johanan ben Zakkai, and attained prominence in the Academy at Jerusalem even before the destruction of the Temple.

Together with R. Eliezer, he helped his master to escape from the beleaguered capital in 68 CE and became instrumental in establishing the Academy in Yavne.

Under the Patriarchate of Rabban Gamaliel II, he assumed the position of President of the High Court (אב בית דין). He frequently engaged in halachic debate and discourse with R. Eliezer, as in the case of the Baraitha recorded here (2b). In many instances his opinion was accepted as binding (Halachah), and so the redactor of the Mishna struck out his name and substituted the general phrase 'and the Sages say', thereby according his opinion majority status. This is probably so in the first Mishna of Berakhoth, which, quotes the opinions of R. Eliezer and Rabban Gamaliel, contemporaries of R. Joshua. As may be seen from the Baraitha (*ibid.*) and the Mishna (9b), R. Joshua and R. Eliezer were regular disputants on questions concerning the Shema.

R. Joshua had sharp clashes with the Patriarch, Rabban Gamaliel II, who, on three separate occasions, forced him to recant.

As one of the accepted leaders of the Jewish community, he was included in the delegation of Rabbis sent to Rome. Talmud and Midrash speak of philosophical and religious discussions and debates between him and the Roman emperor Hadrian, in which the Tanna invariably gains the upper hand. While in Rome, he was active in the ransoming of Jewish prisoners of war, sold into slavery by their Roman captors.

In his travels, R. Joshua visited Athens and Alexandria, where he proved the superiority of his

מִטְהַרִּים לְאָכַל בְּתְרוּמָתָן; רַבִּי מֵאִיר אָמַר: מִשְׁעָה
שֶׁהַכֹּהֲנִים טוֹבְלִין לְאָכַל בְּתְרוּמָתָן. אָמַר לוֹ רַבִּי
יְהוּדָה: וְהִלָּא כֹהֲנִים מִבְּעוֹד יוֹם הֵם טוֹבְלִים?
רַבִּי חֲנִינָא אָמַר מִשְׁעָה שְׁעֵנִי וְכֹנֵס לְאָכַל פְּתוּ
בְּמַלְחָה. רַבִּי אַחָאי, וְאָמַרִי לֵה רַבִּי אַחָאי, אָמַר: מִשְׁעָה

the moment the priests are clean to eat their teruma. Rabbi Meir says: From the moment the priests bathe to eat their teruma. (Said Rabbi Judah to him: Do not the priests bathe while it is still day-time?) Rabbi H̄annina says: From the moment the poor man enters to eat his bread with salt. Rabbi Aḥai (some say: Rabbi Aḥa) says: From the

wisdom and wit before Gentile savants.

He returned to Eretz Israel, pursuing his scholarly activity and leadership in Yavne for many years and outliving all his contemporaries. When an enraged Jewish populace was prepared to rebel against Roman withdrawal of the permission to rebuild the Temple, it was R. Joshua who counselled restraint. He truly merited his epitaph: 'The death of R. Joshua saw the passing of counsel and reflection'.

(bl)

R. JUDAH

Over sixty Tannaim and Amoraim are known by the name of Judah, but R. Judah ben Il'ai (circa 100-175 CE) is the only Tanna styled Rabbi Judah alone. Incidentally, the title 'Rabbi' distinguishes him from Rav Judah (bar Ezekiel), the Babylonian Amora of the second generation.

R. Judah's opinions and traditions are quoted more than six hundred times in the Mishna and are to be found in all but one of sixty-three Tractates. His voluminous output may be further gauged by the criterion that his name is mentioned more often than that of any other Sage in the Tosephta and Siphra; indeed the Siphra is even ascribed to his authorship. He did much in the sphere of Aggada, and his disputes with R. Nehemiah are cited more than two hundred times in the Midrashim. In the Mishna, we find him in frequent halachic controversy with R. Meir (as in the Baraitha recorded here in 2b) and with R. Simeon ben Yoḥai. In each and every instance, the Halachah has been decided according to R. Judah.

In spite of his eminence, R. Judah led a meagre life, without the wherewithal for the bare necessities of food and clothing. A contemporary of R. Meir and, like him, one of the important disciples of R. Akiba, R. Judah, too, took over earlier traditions from

stars is no proof that a day (meaning the duration of daylight), as a general term for a certain period of time, lasts from the rise of dawn until the appearance of the stars. It should be noted particularly that the word יוֹם (day) does not occur in verse 15, where we are told that they laboured from the rise of dawn till the appearance of the stars. To prove, therefore, that what verse 15 meant was really a day, it was necessary to quote, in addition, the second half of verse 16, which explicitly speaks of the labour of the day, as distinct from the guard duties of the night. It would seem, thus, to be satisfactorily proved that day starts with the rise of dawn and — the main point of concern to us here — that day ends with the appearance of the stars, which naturally also marks the beginning of night.

One may wonder, now, why the Baraitha should at first have had hesitations as to the proof value of this exegetical exercise. In fact, a question to this effect is asked in the Tosaphoth (Meg. 20b), where it is shown that the Talmud (in a different connection) had no hesitation in accepting this very exegetical exposition as a complete proof that day ends with the appearance of the stars. The Tosaphoth, at variance with Rashi, suggest, therefore, that the relevant words of the Baraitha, 'though there is no proof of the matter', refer only to the fact that Neh. IV, 15-16, does not deal with the reading of the Shema, so that no direct proof can be adduced from there that the appearance of the stars marks the time for the reading of the evening Shema. All that can be gained from this particular biblical passage is an indirect proof, or rather a hint or clue, that the appearance of the stars, as there, marks the moment of transition between day and night, which happens to be of decisive importance also for the reading of the evening Shema.

After this digression into Bible exegesis, the Gemara reverts to the main subject of discussion in the Baraitha, namely the controversy between Rabbi

his father, R. Il'ai, one of the few disciples who continued to study with R. Eliezer ben Hyrcanos. (bl)

R. H̄ANNINA.

The Talmudic name H̄annina frequently interchanges with several close variants: H̄ananya and H̄innana; in many cases, the exact form is not clear.

Among the more than fifty Sages named H̄annina, only two are referred to just by their proper name — the Tanna R. H̄annina and the Amora R. H̄annina (bar H̄amma).

Not much is known of the former, since his name is never mentioned in the Mishna and his opinions are rarely adduced in the Baraitha.

Destined from early childhood to be a Rabbi in Israel, our R. H̄annina was conspicuous in the third generation of Tannaim (circa 115-135) in Yavne, although our Baraitha is one of the few instances where he is mentioned together with members of the fourth generation, R. Judah and R. Meir. L. Ginzberg (A Commentary on the Palestinian Talmud, I, p. 6) holds that he is R. H̄ananya, nephew of R. Joshua (second generation Tanna). (bl)

R. AḤA (AḤAI)

More than twenty-five different sages are known by the name Aḥa — Aḥai, most of them being Babylonian Amoraim.

R. Aḥa, who is named here, in the third Baraitha, is probably a Tanna of the fourth-fifth generations (circa 140-180 CE), never mentioned in the Mishna, and only seldom in the Baraitha.

According to Ginzberg, R. Aḥa was a Babylonian who belonged to the last generation of Tannaim. If this assumption is correct, it may be possible to identify him with R. Aḥai, the son of Yoshiya, a disciple of the School of R. Ishmael. (bl)

moment that most people enter to recline. If you now say that 'poor man' and 'priest' are the same indication, then Rabbi H^annina is [saying] the same as Rabbi Joshua. Conclude, therefore, that the indication 'poor man' is separate, and the indication 'priest' is separate. — Draw this conclusion! Which one is later? It is understandable that 'poor man' is later; because, if you

Meir and the (other) Sages on the time for reading the evening Shema, Rabbi Meir linking it to the time when people would begin their Sabbath eve meal, and the Sages to the time when the priests eat teruma. For the sake of argument, the Gemara now assumes that the poor man's supper-time in the week (mentioned in the previous Baraitha) is the same as ordinary people's meal-time on Sabbath eve, so that Rabbi Meir's view in this Baraitha would tally with the anonymous view of the first Baraitha. The Gemara then recalls that, in the course of the discussion of the first Baraitha, it had been suggested that the poor man's supper-time and the priests' time for eating teruma was the same. Consequently, the ordinary man's time for the Sabbath eve meal and the priests' time for eating teruma would also appear to be the same; but such a conclusion would make nonsense of our Baraitha's controversy, because Rabbi Meir and the Sages would then actually be saying the same thing, only in different words. To resolve this problem, the Gemara had to choose between alternatives, namely that there is a difference either between the poor man's time and the priests' time or between the poor man's time and the ordinary man's time. For a moment the Gemara was inclined to accept the first possibility, but, on second thoughts, accepted the other, thus reverting to its former stand, that 'priest' and 'poor man' indicate the same time.

The Gemara introduces a third Baraitha for discussion, where no less than five different views on the time for reading the Shema are recorded, and from which it will be conclusively proved that, after all, 'poor man' and 'priest' indicate different times.

The Baraitha starts with the question, when does one begin to read the evening Shema? Rabbi Eliezer says that it is from the time the day is hallowed on Sabbath eve. The Sabbath day begins on Friday, somewhat before nightfall, because, as Rashi explains, it is uncertain whether the duration of twilight still belongs to the outgoing day or to the forthcoming night (i.e., to the next day) and, on account of this

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uncertainty, the duration of twilight is subject to the Sabbath laws; in other words, the Sabbath is hallowed from the beginning of twilight. In fact, what Rabbi Eliczer is saying is that the Shema may be read from the beginning of twilight.

Rabbi Joshua says that the evening Shema is read from the time the priests are ritually clean to eat their teruma. Though the Gemara does not say so explicitly, the ensuing discussion clearly assumes that this view of Rabbi Joshua's is identical with the view recorded at the beginning of our Mishna ('the priests *entering* to eat teruma') and also with the view of the Sages in the second Baraitha ('the priests *being entitled* to eat teruma'). Taking into consideration the Gemara's previous discussion of our Mishna and the first Baraitha, Rabbi Joshua would in fact be saying that the evening Shema may be read from the moment of the appearance of the stars.

Rabbi Meir says that the evening Shema may be read from the time the priests take their ritual bath in preparation for the eventual eating of teruma, which — as Rashi explains — must be before twilight, because, according to the biblical injunction in Lev. XXII, 6-7, the sun must go down on the priests *after* they have taken the ritual bath. On the face of it, it would appear that what Rabbi Meir is saying here is that the evening Shema may be read while it is yet daytime, and, if this were so, then his present view would be open to two objections. The first objection is the one indicated in the Baraitha itself, in the form of a query by Rabbi Judah, reported as having said to Rabbi Meir: *Do not the priests bathe while it is yet day?* This query is based on the assumption — as the Tosaphoth point out — that Rabbi Meir accepts the implication of Deut. VI, 7, according to which the evening Shema is to be read at a time of 'lying down', i.e., at night time. In this connection the Tosaphoth also point to the *curiosum* that, while Rabbi Judah expects Rabbi Meir to accept this implication of Scripture, he himself (Rabbi Judah) does not do so in his ruling on the time for the

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רַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר! אֶלָּא לֹא שָׁמַע מִנָּה דְעֵנִי מֵאַחַר, שָׁמַע
מִנָּה:

אָמַר מֶר: "אָמַר לִיהוּדָה רַבִּי יְהוּדָה: וְהִלָּא כְּהֵנִים מִבְּעוֹד
יוֹם הֵם טוֹבְלִים." שְׁפִיר קָאָמַר לִיהוּדָה רַבִּי יְהוּדָה לְרַבִּי
מֵאִיר! וְרַבִּי מֵאִיר? הֲכִי קָאָמַר לִיהוּדָה: מִי סְבַרְתָּ דְאָנָּא

evening Shema, and obviously does not take as binding the injunction apparently implicit in Deut. VI, 7; later on (27a), Rabbi Judah is reported as allowing the reading of the evening Shema late in the afternoon (after *pelag minḥa*), in any case well before nightfall. Be this as it may, the Gemara does not here record Rabbi Meir's reply, but leaves it to a later discussion. The second objection is that the view of Rabbi Meir in this Baraitha would contradict another view by Rabbi Meir, recorded in the second Baraitha; this question, too, is taken up later in the Gemara.

The Baraitha now records the view of Rabbi Ḥannina, according to which the evening Shema is to be read from the time the poor man enters to eat his bread with salt. This view is obviously identical with that of the first Baraitha, and needs no further comment.

The last view is that of Rabbi Aḥai (or R. Aḥa), that the time for reading the evening Shema is when most people enter to recline at their evening meal. Rashi draws attention to the fact that the Baraitha does not make it clear whether Rabbi Aḥai meant the weekday time for supper or the special time for the Sabbath eve meal. Incidentally, from the tenor of the Tosaphoth on 3a it would appear that Rashi was understood to favour the view that Rabbi Aḥai meant the Sabbath eve meal.

It is important for the understanding of the further discussion of the Gemara to note that all five authorities of this Baraitha meant to indicate different times for the reading of the Shema. But the Gemara's primary concern here is only to prove that 'poor man' and 'priest' may not have the same time, otherwise Rabbi Ḥannina would be saying the same thing as Rabbi Joshua, and with this the Gemara at last finds it conclusively proved that the respective times of 'poor man' and 'priest' are different.

The Gemara now asks which of the two would be later, the poor man's time or the priest's, and proceeds to prove that the poor man's supper-time must be

say that 'poor man' is earlier, then Rabbi Ḥannina would be [saying] the same as Rabbi Eliezer. Conclude, therefore, that 'poor man' is later. — Draw this conclusion!

The Master said: 'Rabbi Judah said to him: Do not the priests bathe while it is still day-time?' Rabbi Judah spoke well to Rabbi Meir. Rabbi Meir answered him as follows: Do you

the later because, were it earlier, then the time indication of Rabbi Eliezer and of Rabbi Ḥannina, in this Baraitha, would in fact be one and the same. Rabbi Eliezer, as we have seen, wants the evening Shema to be read from twilight, which is immediately before the appearance of the stars, and, if we were now to assume that Rabbi Ḥannina's 'poor man' preceded Rabbi Joshua's 'priest' (the latter's time coinciding, as we have seen, with the appearance of the stars), then the poor man's supper-time would also be twilight, and there would be no difference between the respective time indications given by Rabbi Eliezer and by Rabbi Ḥannina. Students may note that the Gemara, in concluding the discussion on this point, repeats the words *שמע מנה* (*Draw this conclusion!*), a phrase indicating that the Gemara is fully satisfied that the proposition *the poor man's time is later than the priest's* is finally proved.

With the words *אמר מר* *The Master said*, the Gemara next takes up for discussion Rabbi Judah's objection to the view of Rabbi Meir in the last Baraitha, with which we have dealt above to some extent. The Gemara observes that Rabbi Judah's objection seems to be well founded, wondering how Rabbi Meir would now rebut it. To be able to appreciate how Rabbi Meir defends his case, we must first dwell for a moment on the subject of the duration of twilight. According to Rabbi Judah's definition, twilight lasts for as long as it takes to walk half a talmudic mile (this according to Rashi, making a reference here to Shab. 34b), some ten minutes or so. Another view is that of Rabbi Jose, according to whom twilight does not take a minute ('like the twinkling of an eye'). Rabbi Judah, attacking the view of Rabbi Meir, assumed that the latter agreed with his (Rabbi Judah's) definition of twilight; consequently, considering that priests have to take their ritual bath before twilight, Rabbi Meir's ruling, that the evening Shema may be read when the priests take their bath, would mean that the evening Shema is read ten

think that I accept your 'twilight': I accept the 'twilight' of Rabbi Jose. For Rabbi Jose said: Twilight is like the twinkling of an eye; this enters and that departs and one cannot determine it.

[3a] There is a discrepancy between Rabbi Meir and Rabbi Meir; there are two Tannaim reporting Rabbi Meir. There is a discrepancy between Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Eliezer; there are two Tannaim reporting Rabbi Eliezer. If you wish, I can say that the first part is not by Rabbi Eliezer.

R. JOSE

Although the biblical name Joseph was given to several Rabbis, the shortened form of it, Jose, was far more common. Palestinian scholars, in particular, are always referred to as Jose.

R. Jose, in the Mishna and the Baraitha, is invariably R. Jose ben Halaphta, a chief disciple of R. Akiba, to the fore during the fourth generation of Tannaim (circa 135-165 CE). In fact, his name is among the most frequently found in tannaitic literature.

He also studied under his father, R. Halaphta, an authority in his own right.

Originating from Sepphoris (צפורי), R. Jose, who earned his living as a tanner, settled in Usha, at that time the seat of the Synhedrion. But the Roman authorities forced him to return to his birth-place, since he expressed passive agreement with the attack of R. Simeon ben Yoḥai upon the 'Occupying Power'.

He was considered a recognised authority by the younger generation of his day. In the event of a difference of opinion between him and his contemporaries, R. Meir and R. Judah, his decision was accepted as Halachah. Many ancient rulings and traditions were handed down by him, including a most important description of the Great Synhedrion.

The aggadic treatise *Seder Olam Rabba*, which deals with the chronology of historical events from the biblical period until the destruction of the Second Temple, is generally credited to him.

Not least of his great personal virtues were a sense of humility and candour. Succeeding generations extolled him, and it is of especial interest that he is the first Rabbi to be graced by a 'visit' of Elijah the Prophet and accept

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Similarly, the Gemara finds that there is a contradiction between Rabbi Eliezer's view in this third Baraitha and his view at the beginning of our Mishna. In the Baraitha, the hallowing of the Sabbath on Friday evening is set as the standard of time, whereas in the Mishna it is the priests' entering to eat *teruma*; the two time indications are clearly different, the first being earlier. Again the Gemara suggests that the two Tannaim must have handed down variant views in the name of Rabbi Eliezer. But the Gemara offers an alternative answer here, which is that the first statement in our Mishna does not represent the view of Rabbi Eliezer at all. To understand this, we must go back to a careful reading of the beginning of our Mishna. The Mishna opened with the words *From which moment on may one read*

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Like many of his forerunners, R. Jose engaged in debates with heretics. Particularly intriguing are his conversations with a certain Roman *matrona*.

He was the father of five sons, born to his sister-in-law, whom he wedded in levirate marriage. All of them grew up to be prominent scholars, the most famous being R. Ishmael and R. Elazar.

(bl)

Meir
 p27

 p30

 Eliezer
 p. 29
 orig.

think that I accept your 'twilight': I accept the 'twilight' of Rabbi Jose. For Rabbi Jose said: Twilight is like the twinkling of an eye; this enters and that departs and one cannot determine it.

[3a] There is a discrepancy between Rabbi Meir and Rabbi Meir; there are two Tannaim reporting Rabbi Meir. There is a discrepancy between Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Eliezer; there are two Tannaim reporting Rabbi Eliezer. If you wish, I can say that the first part is not by Rabbi Eliezer.

R. JOSE

Although the biblical name Joseph was given to several Rabbis, the shortened form of it, Jose, was far more common. Palestinian scholars, in particular, are always referred to as Jose.

R. Jose, in the Mishna and the Baraitha, is invariably R. Jose ben Halaphta, a chief disciple of R. Akiba, to the fore during the fourth generation of Tannaim (circa 135-165 CE). In fact, his name is among the most frequently found in tannaitic literature.

He also studied under his father, R. Halaphta, an authority in his own right.

Originating from Sepphoris (צפורי), R. Jose, who earned his living as a tanner, settled in Usha, at that time the seat of the Synhedrion. But the Roman authorities forced him to return to his birth-place, since he expressed passive agreement with the attack of R. Simeon ben Yoḥai upon the 'Occupying Power'.

He was considered a recognised authority by the younger generation of his day. In the event of a difference of opinion between him and his contemporaries, R. Meir and R. Judah, his decision was accepted as Halachah. Many ancient rulings and traditions were handed down by him, including a most important description of the Great Synhedrion.

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THE DETERMINATION OF THE NIGHT HOURS

While the time of day could be readily ascertained by means of a sundial (horologium — אורילובין — cf. R.H. 1, 2), determining the night hours was much more difficult. In the second century BCE, the Romans supplemented their sundials by water-clocks (clepsydra — חלה סידרה, cf. Gen. Rabba XLIX, 12) for use at night or on cloudy days; but this intricate contraption does not seem to have been very common in Jewish households.

In truth, recital of the evening Shema does not require an exact counting of the night hours, nor are the signs given in the Baraita for the division of the three 'watches' of the night — the donkey braying, the dogs barking and so on — to be taken as conventional practice in settling the end of the various watches.

We venture to suggest that, although Rabbi Eliezer lived after the destruction of the Temple, his words in the Mishna ('until the end of the first watch') reflect a phrase current in Temple times, as the word 'watch' (אשמורה) had a very special meaning in respect of Temple-procedure and practice. During the night, priests and Levites were stationed at points in the Temple and the direct vicinity. Their task was to guard the

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So far, the Gemara has only discussed the first statement of the Mishna about the moment *from which* the evening Shema may be read. The discussion, though considerably digressive, was halachic throughout. The Gemara now turns to examine the next statement of the Mishna regarding the *terminal* time for reading the evening Shema; this, according to Rabbi Eliezer, is the end of the first watch. The discussion which follows is mainly aggadic, though a few halachic points are inserted. We do not intend to enter into the deeper philosophical and mystical implications of these aggadic discourses, or to discuss their symbolism, which is often of an esoteric nature. We shall, in fact, refrain from all comment wherever the plain meaning of the text, as rendered in the translation, may be assumed to be sufficiently meaningful to satisfy the reader.

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MIDNIGHT VIGIL

R. Eliezer's description of the Almighty roaring like a lion during the three night watches is a poignant rendering of the wrath and grief of Heaven at the destruction of the Second Temple. This interpretation is borne out by Rav's statements, which elaborate on the image and show God's distress at the tragic consequences. R. Asher ben Yehiel (1250-1328 CE) observes that 'it is proper for every pious Jew to be filled with sorrow at that hour and spill his heart out in supplication over the destruction of the Temple' (*Pisqa Ha-Rosh*, Ber. 3a). He meant to say that the hour when the night watches were changed was a fitting time to entreat the Almighty. Halachah has accepted this ruling and so we find, at the very beginning of the *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orah Hayyim* 1, 2), that great emphasis is placed on the late night prayers that plead for redemption and salvation.

A significant turning-point in the development of this custom occurred in Safad in the sixteenth century. The Kabbalists, in their desire to hasten Redemption, adopted the practice of rising during the night to recite the special supplication, but several important modifications were introduced in the course of time: a) Midnight was accepted as the hour of expediency. b) Rising at night was linked with study of the Law and not with prayer alone. c) Great stress was laid on certain acts of mourning. In fact, some Kabbalists put on black garments and sat upon the ground, wailing and lamenting (cf. text published

point of time Rabbi Eliezer had in mind. It will help us to understand this query if we remember that people in those days were familiar with a division of the day into 'hours', one hour being generally reckoned as the twelfth part of daytime or of the night, irrespective of seasonal length. The Gemara wonders why Rabbi Eliezer did not indicate the time in terms of such 'hours', a justifiable question in view of the fact that there is a difference of opinion among the Sages as to whether the night has three watches of four hours each or four watches of three hours each; at this point, we do not know Rabbi Eliezer's opinion on this subject. The Gemara puts its query in the following way: If Rabbi Eliezer holds that the night has three watches, he should have said 'till four hours'; if he holds the other opinion, let him say 'till three hours'. The answer to this query is that Rabbi Eliezer holds that the night has three watches; he also takes into consideration that people are aware of certain regular occurrences which mark the end of each watch; thus the end of the first watch (the terminal time for reading the evening Shema, according to Rabbi Eliezer) is marked, we are told, by the braying of the ass. The implication apparently is that people at large, particularly during the night, easily recognise the progress of time by such occurrences, whereas the indication of time in terms of hours may have been of little use to them. This answer is not given in the text in the way we have formulated it here; to do justice to the actual words of the Gemara, let us read once more the relevant passage and discuss it step by step.

by S. Schechter in 'Studies in Judaism' II, Phil. 1908, p. 297).

The choice of midnight derives from the Gemara's reference to 'the middle of the middle watch', which meant midnight.

It was supported by the Aggada of King David's nightly midnight rising to study the Law (Ber. 3b). This combination of elements led to the Kabbalistic discipline of midnight prayer (*חוקן חמא*) which is based, in addition, on talmudic principles.

(b)

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MIDNIGHT VIGIL

R. Eliezer's description of the Almighty roaring like a lion during the three night watches is a poignant rendering of the wrath and grief of Heaven at the destruction of the Second Temple. This interpretation is borne out by Rav's statements, which elaborate on the image and show God's distress at the tragic consequences. R. Asher ben Yehiel (1250-1328 CE) observes that 'it is proper for every pious Jew to be filled with sorrow at that hour and spill his heart out in supplication over the destruction of the Temple' (*Plsqe Ha-Rosh*, Ber. 3a). He meant to say that the hour when the night watches were changed was a fitting time to entreat the Almighty. Halachah has accepted this ruling and so we find, at the very beginning of the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Hayyim 1, 2), that great emphasis is placed on the late night prayers that plead for redemption and salvation.

A significant turning-point in the development of this custom occurred in Safad in the sixteenth century. The Kabbalists, in their desire to hasten Redemption, adopted the practice of rising during the night to recite the special supplication, but several important modifications were introduced in the course of time: a) Midnight was accepted as the hour of expediency. b) Rising at night was linked with study of the Law and not with prayer alone. c) Great stress was laid on certain acts of mourning. In fact, some Kabbalists put on black garments and sat upon the ground, wailing and lamenting (cf. text published

point of time Rabbi Eliezer had in mind. It will help us to understand this query if we remember that people in those days were familiar with a division of the day into 'hours', one hour being generally reckoned as the twelfth part of daytime or of the night, irrespective of seasonal length. The Gemara wonders why Rabbi Eliezer did not indicate the time in terms of such 'hours', a justifiable question in view of the fact that there is a difference of opinion among the Sages as to whether the night has three watches of four hours each or four watches of three hours each; at this point, we do not know Rabbi Eliezer's opinion on this subject. The Gemara puts its query in the following way: If Rabbi Eliezer holds that the night has three watches, he should have said 'till four hours'; if he holds the other opinion, let him say 'till three hours'. The answer to this query is that Rabbi Eliezer holds that the night has three watches; he also takes into consideration that people are aware of certain regular occurrences which mark the end of each watch; thus the end of the first watch (the terminal time for reading the evening Shema, according to Rabbi Eliezer) is marked, we are told, by the braying of the ass. The implication apparently is that people at large, particularly during the night, easily recognise the progress of time by such occurrences, whereas the indication of time in terms of hours may have been of little use to them. This answer is not given in the text in the way we have formulated it here; to do justice to the actual words of the Gemara, let us read once more the relevant passage and discuss it step by step.

by S. Schechter in 'Studies in Judaism' II, Phil. 1908, p. 297).

The choice of midnight derives from the Gemara's reference to 'the middle of the middle watch', which meant midnight.

It was supported by the Aggadah of King David's nightly midnight rising to study the Law (Ber. 3b). This combination of elements led to the Kabbalistic discipline of midnight prayer (תיקון חצות) which is based, in addition, on talmudic principles.

(b)

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למאן דעיי בבית אפל, ולא ידע זמן קריאת שמע
אימת, כיון דאשה מספרת עם בעלה ותינוק יונק
משדי אמו - ליקום ולקרי. אמר רב יצחק בר
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if you protest that the last needs nothing, what is the point of it? — For the recital of the Shema in the case of one who sleeps in a dark room and does not know when it is time to recite the Shema — as the woman chats with her husband and the infant sucks its mother's breast, let him get up and recite.

Rav Isaac bar Samuel says in the name of Rav: The night has three watches, and at each watch

A DARK ROOM

The Gemara speaks about a man sleeping in a dark room, who, being unaware of daybreak, may miss the time for reciting the morning Shema. A 'dark room' is also mentioned in Neg. 2, 3, and from the context, it would appear that a *windowless* room is meant, one that never admits daylight. Here, however, the Gemara may equally well be referring to an ordinary room, with windows, and darkened only for the hours of sleep, something like the Roman *cubiculum* (bedchamber), whose windows were fitted with solid shutters. That such shutters were familiar to Jews in those days is evident from Toseph. Neg. 1, 8.

RAV ISAAC BAR SAMUEL

Approximately forty Sages are known by the biblical name Isaac. Rav Isaac b. Samuel, who quotes Rav's opinion regarding the three watches, was not only Rav's disciple, but also a member of his family. Samuel, Isaac's father, was the son of Rav's sister Martha. In fact, manuscript variants to Berakhoth 3a read: Rav Isaac bar Samuel, the son of Martha.

The actual answer of the Gemara begins with the information that Rabbi Eliezer indeed holds that there are three watches in the night and that he wanted to teach us that, just as there are three watches in heaven, so there are three watches on earth (Rashi). The source of this information is a Baraitha, where Rabbi Eliezer is also reported as saying that at each of the three watches God sits and roars like a lion. In support of this saying, reference is made to Jeremiah XXV, 30 where in the Hebrew text the word שׂאן (roaring) occurs three times. Rabbi Eliezer does not, of course, mean that there is a real logical foundation in that biblical verse for his saying. The Sages, especially in homiletical discourses, frequently make reference to a biblical verse in which some point of contact is seen with an opinion put forward.

The Baraitha goes on to say that there is a *sign for the matter*, i.e., for each roaring, at every one of the three watches in heaven, we find a sign on earth: in the first watch the ass brays, in the second the dogs bark and in the third the infant sucks its mother's breast, while the wife chats with her husband.

As the Baraitha did not make clear at which stage of each watch these occurrences take place, the Gemara now asks what it was that Rabbi Eliezer really intended to say; did he mean that these occurrences take place at the beginning of each watch? Surely the beginning of the first watch needs no such sign (braying of the ass), as it is naturally to be recognised by twilight. Did he perhaps refer to the end of each watch? There again, the end of the last watch surely needs no particular sign; it is anyway marked by the beginning of the day. At first, the Gemara suggests that Rabbi Eliezer may have meant to say that the first sign marks the end of the first watch, the second the middle of the second watch (i.e., midnight) and the third the beginning of the last watch. But, on second thoughts, the Gemara offers a more straightforward answer, namely that in all cases

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Rav, whose real name was Abba Arikha, was foremost among the Babylonian scholars.

Just as Rav's master, R. Judah the Patriarch, was singled out among all the Tannaim by the distinction that the title 'Rabbi' served as his name, so Abba Arikha is affectionately referred to as 'Rav', almost everywhere in Talmudic literature. Moreover, the Patriarch's exclusive epithet '*Rabbeinu haQadosh*' (Our holy master) may be paralleled by the allusion to Rav as '*Rabbeinu haGadol*' (Our great master).

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He first settled in Neharda'a, but, owing to difficulties, moved to Sura. The Academy of Sura, founded by him, stood fast as a pillar of Babylonian Jewry for an unbroken period of over eight hundred years. In its glory, twelve hundred full-time students from all parts of Babylon filled its halls. Rav's homecoming marked the beginning of a new epoch in halachic activity and spurred the local Academies on to new dimensions of creativeness and scholarship.

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To sum up the discussion on this subject, it is clear from the Baraitha that, when Rabbi Eliezer said in our Mishna *until the end of the first watch*, he had in mind a watch of four hours' duration; it is also made clear that to indicate the terminal time for the evening Shema by saying *the end of the first watch* (instead of giving the hour) has the advantage that people are aware of this point of time because of a certain daily recurring sign (the braying of the ass).

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We recall that there is a difference of opinion among Tannaim whether the night is divided into three or four watches. The problem of deciding which opinion is to prevail in the case of such controversies is a complex one. There are elaborate rules for this purpose which will be dealt with elsewhere. For the present analysis, it is of importance that the view of Rabbi Eliezer (that the night is divided into three watches) is confirmed, as it were, in an amoraic

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saying. Such support, given by an Amora to one of two possible views, resolves the controversy in favour of that view. This conclusion to the controversy is then reflected in *Shulchan Aruch* (Orah Hayyim, 1, 2), where the praiseworthiness of offering supplications at the 'change' of each watch is dealt with, and where it is stated that the night has three watches. Students who care to glance at the original page of the Talmud in question (3a) will see that, in the marginal note, under 'Ein Mishpat, where reference is made to the passage in the *Shulchan Aruch*, the words of the Amora Rav, not those of the Tanna Rabbi Eliezer, are marked for the reference. The suggestion is that it is on the authority of the words of Rav that the *Shulchan Aruch* accepts the view that the night is divided into three watches; in other words, the *Shulchan Aruch* adopts the view of Rabbi Eliezer *because* that view is confirmed by Rav.

In the story of Rabbi Jose, again, aggadic and halachic points are interwoven. First, as to the incident of R. Jose meeting Elijah, it should be borne in mind that, according to biblical accounts, the Prophet Elijah did not die. He went up to heaven, alive in a whirlwind (2 Kings, II, 1 and 11), and it has been the belief of all ages that he frequently appeared on earth to help people in their distress, or simply to have a friendly conversation with a saintly scholar, say on a point of Halachah, as here. The tenor of this story makes us feel that there was nothing unusual about Rabbi Jose meeting Elijah; indeed, as seen from a very great number of such incidents throughout Talmud and Midrash, Elijah was a frequent visitor, not only of Rabbi Jose but of many other Tannaim and Amoraim. Elijah is also believed to have appeared to deserving men in the post-talmudic period, in and outside the Holy Land; he figures prominently even in the more recent lore of Chassidim.

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אָמַר לִי: שְׁלוֹם עָלֶיךָ, רַבִּי. וְאָמַרְתִּי לוֹ: שְׁלוֹם עָלֶיךָ.
 רַבִּי וּמוֹרִי. וְאָמַר לִי: בְּנִי, מִפְּנֵי-מָה נִכְנסַת לְחַרְבָּה
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said to me: Peace be upon you, my Master, and I said to him: Peace be upon you, my Master and Teacher. And he said to me: My son, why did you enter this ruin: I said to him: to pray. And he said to me: You should have prayed on the road. I said to him: I feared that the passers-by might interrupt me. And he said to me: You should have prayed a short prayer. At the same time I learned from him three things: I learned

As to the actual content of the story, we are told that Rabbi Jose entered a ruin to pray. The words employed in the Hebrew text for 'praying', both here and throughout this story, are *להתפלל*, *תפילה* which refer specifically to a set prayer, the 'Amida (*Shemone 'Esre*), a most solemn prayer, to be said with great devotion, standing. That is why Rabbi Jose left the road and entered a ruin, as indeed he later explains: *I feared that the passers-by might interrupt me.*

Now, Elijah came and waited for him until he had finished his prayer. The Hebrew text has *שמר*, rendered in our translation by 'waited' and not by 'kept guard' or the like; this is in accordance with Rashi, who takes great pains to show that *שמר* also had the connotation of 'waiting'. Some versions of the Talmud have, in addition to *שמר*, the word *המתין*, the latter definitely meaning 'to wait'; if we were to accept this latter version, we would have to take the word *שמר* to mean 'guarding'. The sentence would then read 'Elijah... kept guard at the entrance and waited for me'.

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 רבי ומורי. ואמר לי: בני, מפנימה נכנסת לחרבה
 זו? ואמרתי לו: להתפלל. ואמר לי: הנה לך
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 יפסיקו בי עוברי דרכים. ואמר לי: הנה לך
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said to me: Peace be upon you, my Master, and I said to him: Peace be upon you, my Master and Teacher. And he said to me: My son, why did you enter this ruin? I said to him: to pray. And he said to me: You should have prayed on the road. I said to him: I feared that the passers-by might interrupt me. And he said to me: You should have prayed a short prayer. At the same time I learned from him three things: I learned

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 שגלו מעל שלחן אביהם:
 קנו רבון: מפני שלשה דברים אין נכנסין לחרבה:
 מפני חשד, מפני המפלת, ומפני המזיקין. מפני
 חשד? ומיפוק ליה משום מפלת!—(ג. ב.) בתורת.

mean: *May His name be great (and) be blessed in the worlds to come.* The Tosaphoth's own view maintains that the proper reading of the response would be: *May His great name be blessed in all eternity.* The Tosaphoth find support for their view in the way the response is quoted in our Talmud text, which has only part of it, namely the words *יהא שמו הגדול מבורך* and this definitely means '*May His great name be blessed*'. If we were to try to translate the quotation according to the interpretation of the *Mahzor Vitry* ('*May His name be great...*') then the word *מבורך* would make no sense.

We cannot enter into the merits of these alternatives here; suffice it to say that the Authorized Daily Prayer Book, in common use in Britain, follows (as reflected in its English translation) the view of Tosaphoth.

In a more digressive way, the Tosaphoth also enter here into the question of the language of the *Kaddish* prayer, which is predominantly Aramaic, especially so the congregational response under discussion. The Tosaphoth explain that *Kaddish* used to be said after the *Derasha* (public discourse), which was also attended by uneducated people ('*Ame ha'Arazoth*) who were not familiar with Hebrew and, as a concession to them, parts of the *Kaddish* were arranged in Aramaic, which was then the language of the people.

With the words *תנו רבנן*, the Gemara quotes a Baraitha dealing with the reasons for not entering a ruin. It is interesting to see the chain of digressions which led to this particular subject. The actual object of the Gemara was this discussion of the times for reading the evening Shema, the subject-matter of the Mishna. In fact, the Gemara last dealt with a point arising out of this Mishna when it quoted the words of Rabbi Eliezer concerning the terminal time for the evening Shema, namely '*until the end of the first watch*'. From there, the Gemara went on an excursus into earthly and heavenly 'watches',

His head and says: Happy is the king who is thus praised in his house; what has the father, having banished his children; woe to the children, banished from their father's table! Our Rabbis taught: There are three reasons why one must not enter a ruin: because of suspicion, because of falling masonry and because of evil spirits. 'Because of suspicion': let it be 'because of falling masonry' only, — [3b] in a new

mentioning incidentally that at each of the three watches God 'roars like a lion'. An amoraic saying is then quoted which adds that, when 'roaring like a lion', God says: *Woe to the children on account of whose sins I have destroyed my house*, etc. Then the Gemara proceeds to that profound story about Rabbi Jose; the justification for telling it seems to be that here, too, incidental reference is made to the Divine utterance *Woe to the children, on account of whose sins*, etc. As the story mentions that Elijah 'admonished' Rabbi Jose for 'entering a ruin', the Gemara now adduces this Baraitha which sets out the reasons for not 'entering a ruin'.

The Baraitha gives three: a) suspicion, b) evil spirits, c) falling masonry. As to the first, the suspicion is that a person entering a ruin may be meeting a harlot there. A Jew is expected not only to be clean but also to appear clean; he must, therefore, keep away from even the suspicion of immorality; and, as we shall see, it is not only morally but even halachically wrong for a Jew to be alone with a woman in an isolated place (*איסור יחוד*). As to the second, it was considered that ruins were places haunted by evil spirits which, it was feared, might harm a person entering. As to the third, there is naturally a danger in ruins of falling debris or of caving in, wherefore a person should avoid ruins. The common denominator is the possible harm to a person entering a ruin. The first reason expresses care for his moral integrity, the second shows anxiety for soul and body, the third envisages physical hurt.

The Gemara's discussion opens with the query: Why does the Baraitha need the reason of 'suspicion'? Is 'falling masonry' not reason enough to deter a person from entering a ruin? If we turn to Rashi, we see that his comment on this point starts with the word *כלומר* (lit. *as if saying*), which means that Rashi sees a certain difficulty in explaining the words

ראשו ואומר: אשרי המלך שמקלקסין אותו בביתו
 כך, מה לו לאב שהגלה את בניו, ואוי להם לבנים
 שגלו מעל שלחן אביהם:
 תני רבון: מפני שלשה דברים אין נכנסין לתרבה:
 מפני חשד, מפני המפלת, ומפני המזיקין. מפני
 חשד? ומיפוק ליה משום מפלת!—(ג.ב) בתודתי.

mean: *May His name be great (and) be blessed in the worlds to come.* The Tosaphoth's own view maintains that the proper reading of the response would be: *May His great name be blessed in all eternity.* The Tosaphoth find support for their view in the way the response is quoted in our Talmud text, which has only part of it, namely the words *הוא שמו הגדול מבורך* and this definitely means '*May His great name be blessed*'. If we were to try to translate the quotation according to the interpretation of the *Mahzor Vitry* ('*May His name be great...*') then the word *מבורך* would make no sense.

We cannot enter into the merits of these alternatives here; suffice it to say that the Authorised Daily Prayer Book, in common use in Britain, follows (as reflected in its English translation) the view of Tosaphoth.

In a more digressive way, the Tosaphoth also enter here into the question of the language of the *Kaddish* prayer, which is predominantly Aramaic, especially so the congregational response under discussion. The Tosaphoth explain that *Kaddish* used to be said after the *Derasha* (public discourse), which was also attended by uneducated people ('*Ame ha'Aravoth*) who were not familiar with Hebrew and, as a concession to them, parts of the *Kaddish* were arranged in Aramaic, which was then the language of the people.

With the words *תנו רבנן*, the Gemara quotes a Baraitha dealing with the reasons for not entering a ruin. It is interesting to see the chain of digressions which led to this particular subject. The actual object of the Gemara was this discussion of the times for reading the evening Shema, the subject-matter of the Mishna. In fact, the Gemara last dealt with a point arising out of this Mishna when it quoted the words of Rabbi Eliezer concerning the terminal time for the evening Shema, namely '*until the end of the first watch*'. From there, the Gemara went on an excursus into earthly and heavenly 'watches',

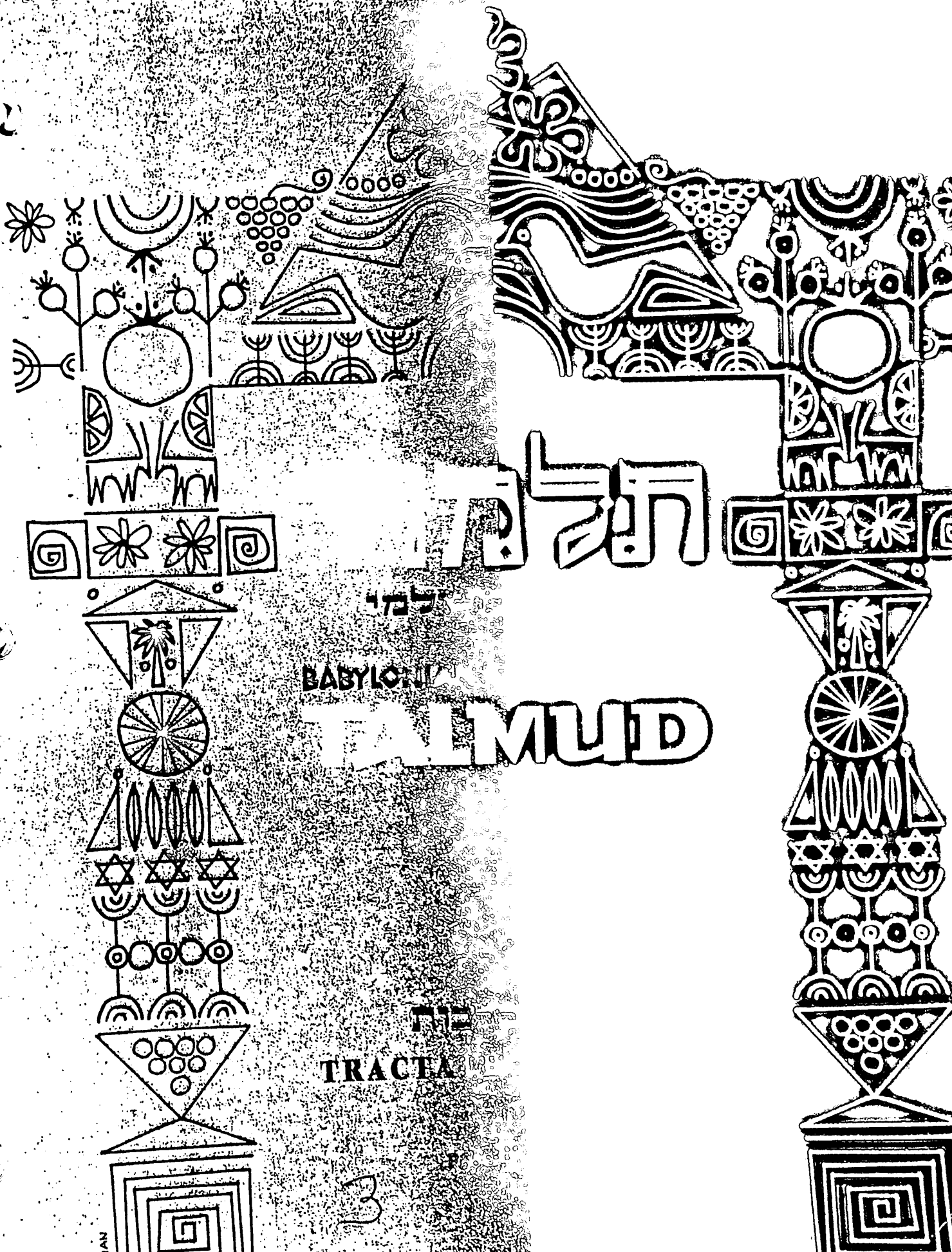
His head and says: Happy is the king who is thus praised in his house; what has the father, having banished his children; woe to the children, banished from their father's table!

Our Rabbis taught: There are three reasons why one must not enter a ruin: because of suspicion, because of falling masonry and because of evil spirits. 'Because of suspicion': let it be 'because of falling masonry' only, — [3b] in a new

mentioning incidentally that at each of the three watches God 'roars like a lion'. An amoraic saying is then quoted which adds that, when 'roaring like a lion', God says: *Woe to the children on account of whose sins I have destroyed my house*, etc. Then the Gemara proceeds to that profound story about Rabbi Jose; the justification for telling it seems to be that here, too, incidental reference is made to the Divine utterance *Woe to the children, on account of whose sins*, etc. As the story mentions that Elijah 'admonished' Rabbi Jose for 'entering a ruin', the Gemara now adduces this Baraitha which sets out the reasons for not 'entering a ruin'.

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תלמוד

BABYLONIAN
TALMUD

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TRACTATES

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[ruin]; let it be then 'because of evil spirits' only, — when there are two [persons]; if two, there would be no 'suspicion' either, — when there are two and they are common persons. 'Because of falling masonry': let it be 'because of suspicion and evil spirits' only, — when there are two and they are virtuous. 'Because

ותיפוק ליה משום מזיקין! בתרי. אי בתרי חשד גמי ליכא. בתרי ופריצי. מפני המפלתו ותיפוק ליה משום חשד ומזיקין. בתרי וכשרי. מפני המזיקין

EVIL SPIRITS

The Talmud refers to 'evil spirits' as מזיקין, which in simple Hebrew could be translated 'harmful elements'. There is evidence that, in early usage, it had its plain meaning. Thus we find מזיקין applied to wild and carnivorous animals (Toseph. B.Q. 8, 10; Sifra, Behukothai, chap. 3; cf. Midrash Ps. XCI), as well as to such domestic pests as fleas and flies (Gen. Rabba 54, 1).

To all intents and purposes, מזיקין in the sense of demons make their first appearance in the Gemara, and there mainly in the Babylonian Talmud (cf. L. Ginsberg, The Palestinian Talmud, N.Y. 1941, pp. XXXIV ff.). It is of some interest that Berakhoth contains more references to them than any other single Tractate.

We have already seen that one danger of a lonely ruin is that evil spirits frequent it (3a-b). The bed-time Shema, according to the prevailing interpretation, is recited to repel the evil spirits, since, as a rule, they are abroad at night-time (Num. Rabba 12, 3). Michael and Gabriel, the guardian angels of Israel, as well as Raphael and the 'Shekhina' are summoned to protect a person in his sleep, an especial purpose of the bed-time Shema (cf. Tanhuma, Mishpatim 19). But the destructiveness of these demons was not limited to the hours of darkness. The pupils of Abaye felt themselves continuously harassed by day (Qid. 29b). In the heat of summer (between 17 Tammuz and 9 Ab — a period marked by great catastrophes in Jewish history), a hideous demon known as the 'Qesef Meriri' (קספ מרירי) is said to attack dangerously, especially defenceless infants and schoolchildren, in daylight hours (Num. Rabba *ibid.*; Lam. Rabba I, 30). As we saw, the name comes from the passage in Deut. XXXII, 24 (cf. Rashi to 5a, alluding to Pes. 111b).

Man is in constant peril of death-dealing evil spirits that lurk everywhere, and it is the 'Shadow of God' on each of us that fends them off (Midrash Ps. CIV, 24); the name of God is also protective (Num. Rabba *ibid.*).

of the Gemara. In fact, he suggests, the actual query was not why this and not that reason, but why should *three* reasons be given and not just *one* (any one of the three); he goes on to say that the very fact that three are given shows that each must be exclusively applicable in certain specific circumstances. More explicitly, there may be a place known to be clear of harlots and evil spirits, so that only the reason of 'falling debris' would apply; there may be a place known to be safe on the score of masonry and evil spirits, and yet a 'suspicion' of immorality might arise; lastly, there may be a place where there is cause for concern in respect of 'evil spirits' only. The Gemara's object now is to determine the particular circumstances where each of the three reasons would apply to the exclusion of the others, and this is achieved by the characteristic method of detailed questions and answers. Thus, as mentioned, the first question is why the Baraita should give 'suspicion' as a reason; does not 'falling debris' apply to all ruins? If so, no other reason should be needed. The Gemara answers that 'falling debris' does not apply to a *new* ruin, i.e., a building where a wall has recently collapsed, while the rest is seen to be firm (Rashi). In such circumstances, the reason of 'falling debris' would not apply. The questioner, dissatisfied with this answer, observes that surely even in such a case the reason of 'evil spirits' would apply and, if so, 'suspicion' would be a superfluous reason. A further qualification is, therefore, made, namely, that of two persons entering a ruin together. In that case, there would be no danger of 'evil spirits' because it is assumed that spirits can do no harm if more than one person is present. The conclusion should now be that, in these special circumstances of a 'new' ruin which 'two' men wish to enter together, the only reason for not entering would be 'suspicion'. But the questioner is still dissatisfied, because, in the event of two men entering a ruin, there should be no cause for suspicion either. Rashi, explaining this last objection, refers to Qid. 80b. There, the Mishna states that one man may not remain alone with two

Not that the belief in demons and their power to destroy was general among Jews in the Middle Ages. The Jewish communities of Northern France and Germany took the talmudic tradition at its face value, but the enlightened Jews of Spain and Provence had a rational approach to the sources. R. Menahem haMeiri of Perpignan (13th century), for instance, author of commentaries on the Talmud which proffer excellent interpretations and summaries, was inclined to interpret מזיקין figuratively: for him, the מזיקין are 'thoughts of heresy and false doctrines', and by recital of the Shema a person fortifies himself against straying in his religious beliefs.

ANTHROPOMORPHISM IN JEWISH TRADITION

In our pages, God is often personified, as at the foot of 3a ('the Holy One, blessed be He, shakes His head...').

The Bible frequently ascribes human form or attributes to the Almighty. Many passages mention 'the hand of God', 'the eyes of God', 'the image of God', 'under the feet of God', or say that 'God was sad' or 'God became wroth'.

On the other hand, there are verses which deny the possibility of attribution of human traits to God: "For you saw no manner of form on the day that the Lord spoke unto you in Horeb in the midst of the fire" (Deut. IV, 15); "For I am God, and not man..." (Hosea XI, 9).

One may thus accept without reservations the conclusion of M. Z. Segal on the basis of Maimonides' third principle: 'all anthropomorphic references to the Deity in the Bible are of a metaphorical nature, i.e., figurative expressions, which the biblical authors were forced to employ due to the limited ability of man to express and comprehend spiritual concepts. This was possible only through the usage of language based on material and physical realities' (Introduction to the Bible [Hebrew], Jerusalem 1955, p. 56). This, then, is the purport of the

ותיפוק ליה מפני חשד ומפלת. בחרבה חדתי ובתרי
 וכשרי. אי בתרי - מויקין נמי ליפא. במקומן חישין.
 ואי בעית אימא: לעולם בחד ובחרבה חדתי דקאי

of evil spirits': let it be 'because of suspicion and falling masonry' only, — when the ruin is new and there are two and they are virtuous; if two, there would be no 'evil spirits' either, — in their [own] place we are afraid. If you like, I will say: Indeed, when there is one [person] but the ruin, which is new, stands in a field.

aphorism: 'The Torah speaks in popular language' (Ber. 31b). The problem of anthropomorphic expressions already occupied the early translators of the Bible; in fact, one major aim of their renderings was to tone down all corporeal references to God. This tendency is evident in the Septuagint (circa 250 BCE) which translates such an expression as "the hand of God" (Jos. IV, 24), by 'the strength of God' or "And they saw the God of Israel" (Ex. XXIV, 10) by 'And they saw the place upon which the God of Israel stood'.

Aquila the Proselyte (circa 100-150 CE), who wished to give an exact Greek version of the Bible and was highly praised by the Tannaim accordingly (Yer. Meg. 1, 9), translated the corporeal expressions literally; Symmachos' translation (circa 150-200 CE) manifests painstaking efforts to eliminate all anthropomorphic phrases.

The Aramaic Targumim of Onkelos and Jonathan (also compiled during the latter half of the tannaitic period, 100-200 CE) were most systematic in their simplification and modification of all human forms and attributes ascribed to the Almighty. Every word or expression denoting a material quality was rendered in a spiritual, intangible style. Thus "And they saw the God of Israel" becomes 'And they saw the glory of the God of Israel' (Ex. *ibid.*); "And the Lord smelled the sweet savour" (Gen. VIII, 21) becomes 'And the Lord accepted his sacrifice willingly'. Very often a paraphrase is used to solve the difficulty; for example, "in the eyes of God" (Gen. VI, 8) is given as 'before God'.

The Rabbis of the tannaitic period were cautious in their approach to descriptions of God. On the one hand they took exception to a complete abstraction of the Deity, which would blur the concept of an omnipresent and omnipotent God whose deeds and actions are everywhere felt. On the other hand, God the Almighty and the Unknown was surely infinitely aloof from the world. Previous attempts to unravel

women, though one woman may remain with two men. To understand this mishnaic ruling, we must know that, according to the prohibition of *yihud*, a man may not stay alone with a woman (except his wife, mother or daughter) in circumstances which would allow them to engage in immoral acts. This prohibition applies primarily to the association of one man with one woman, although, as the Mishna points out, two women may also not stay with one man; in the case of two men with one woman, there is no prohibition. It is assumed that a woman may not be constrained to modesty by the presence of another woman. A man, however, is supposed to be more 'prudish' and to mind the presence of another man.

The mishnaic ruling allowing privacy of two men with one woman is restrictively qualified in the Gemara, as follows: according to Rav, as reported by Rav Judah, it applies only to *kesherim* (virtuous men) and not to *peruzim* (common persons), so that two *peruzim* would not be allowed to remain with one woman.

The Gemara was aware that the terms *kesherim* and *peruzim* are flexible, and, to illustrate this, we are told (Qid. 81a) of an amusing but instructive episode concerning the two Amoraim cited. Rav and Rav Judah, walking together on a road, find themselves alone with a woman. Said Rav to Rav Judah: 'Lift your feet before Gehenna', meaning that they should run away, lest they be tempted into immorality. Said Rav Judah to Rav, protestingly: 'Did you not yourself say that two *kesherim* may be alone with a woman?' — to which Rav replies that by *kesherim* he had not meant people like himself and his present companion, but men such as Rabbi Hannina bar Pappi, Rabbi Zadok and Rav Kahana who, as reported in Qid. 39b, have given proof of their extraordinary integrity in matters of morality. This would mean that men of average integrity are accounted 'common' as regards *yihud* (Maimonides). The prohibition of *yihud* has many qualifications

this metaphysical problem had been made by Jews under the influence of Hellenistic thought: to bridge the gulf between the seemingly contradictory concepts of God in heaven and God on earth, they envisioned such intermediate forces as a demiurge (Gnostics), the 'logos' (Philo) or 'wisdom' ('the Wisdom of Solomon').

The Rabbis preferred to picture the revealed actions of God as the product of the 'Shekhina' or Divine Presence, that is, the manifestation of the Almighty in the earthly world. Even though certain Tannaim, such as R. Jose, objected to this interpretation, and concluded that 'the Divine Glory (Shekhina) had never descended to this world' (Mekhilta, Jethro, Bahodesh, chap. 4; Sukka 5a), yet the presence of the Shekhina in the earthly world became accepted thinking in Judaism.

In spite of this, the Mishna itself has but few references to the Shekhina, and most of them are in Pirke 'Avoth (3; 2, 4).

Because the Rabbis acquiesced in the Shekhina as a divine manifestation on earth, the extreme caution of the Targumim, where the corporeality of the Deity is concerned, is almost totally absent in rabbinic literature. To the Sages, it was clear that the Bible was speaking in human terms since 'the eye is shown what it can see and the ear listens to what it is able to hear' (Av. de R. Nathan chap. 2; Mekhilta *ibid.*). As the Shekhina is everywhere in the whole world, its frequent revelation might certainly be described in everyday language.

Rarely do we find perturbation at an anthropomorphic reference (cf. Mekhilta, Beshalah, Shira, chap. 4, ed. Horowitz, p. 131). On the whole, the simple meaning of the verse was taken as the criterion upon which the Rabbis rested their concept of God and His Shekhina.

Amoraic literature, then, betrays a perceptible tendency towards a sort of *imitatio hominis* on the part of God. The Almighty is endowed with all the qualities and attributes which might make Him accessible

There, no 'suspicion' exists, for a woman is unlikely to be found in a field, but there is [a danger] because of 'evil spirits'.

Our Rabbis taught: The night has four watches, these are the words of Rabbi. R. Nathan says: Three. What is the reason of Rabbi Nathan? — For it is written: "*Gideon and the hundred men*

to man (cf. S. Shechter, *Some Aspects of Rabbinic Theology*, N.Y. 1936, p. 37). For instance, God is the 'best man' at the wedding of Adam and Eve (Gen. Rabba 8, 8). He mourns for seven days over the world's imminent destruction (*ibid.* 27, 4). He visits Abraham on his sick-bed, concedes with Isaac after Abraham's death and attends the burial service of Moses (*ibid.* 8, 13). He prays Himself and teaches Israel how to pray (Ber. 7a; R.H. 17b). In these and similar descriptions, the Amoraim did not seem to evince much concern lest they be charged with anthropomorphism. To bring man closer to God, the Almighty was 'humanised'. Instead of the kingdom of earth being viewed as a diminutive kingdom of heaven (Ber. 58a), the kingdom of heaven was portrayed as a reflection and projection of human existence.

The Bible is, as a rule, the formal basis for such statements, and Rabbis were quick to use them as a means of emphasizing the man-God relationship, especially among the populace.

Subsequent developments in Jewish religious speculation, however, induced a trend of the most disquieting nature toward anthropomorphism. Thus, the 'Merkabah' mysticism of the post-talmudic period gave rise to the *Hekhaloth* tracts, indulging in all kinds of heavenly descriptions, and unprecedentedly provocative picturings of God in anthropomorphic mood.

The *Shiur Qoma* ('Measure of the Body', that is, the body of God) lists the organs of the Shekhina and their secret names (cf. G. Scholem, 'Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism', N.Y., 1954, pp. 63-67). Maimonides' vehement resistance to anthropomorphism, as popularly phrased in the Yigdal hymn: 'He hath neither bodily form, nor substance, we can compare naught unto Him' (Auth. Daily Prayer Book [1962], p. 3), may thus be better understood against the background of the bizarre anthropomorphic literature that had proliferated in Jewish circles and was in vogue in his own day (cf.

in the final Halachah and we need not go further into it here. Our concern was to show what was meant, in our Gemara discussion of the case of 'two' men entering a 'new' ruin, by the terms *keshirim* and *peruzim*.

Let us recall that the Gemara had finally determined the case as referring to two men of doubtful moral integrity entering a new ruin; this gives us the particular case where the reason of 'suspicion' applies; and it applies exclusively because, with a new ruin, there is no danger of falling debris and, as there are two men, none of evil spirits.

The Gemara next determines a case where the reason of 'falling debris' applies exclusively, namely, when an ordinary ruin is entered by two virtuous men. 'Suspicion' is eliminated because the men are virtuous; nor is there a danger of 'evil spirits', as there are two people; but the risk of 'falling debris' is left, as this is an ordinary ruin.

It remains now to construe a case where the exclusive danger would be 'evil spirits', and here the Gemara offers two possibilities: a) two respectable men entering a new ruin, known to be permanently haunted, in which case evil spirits could be harmful even to two persons, because spirits are assumed to be bolder in their own place; b) one man entering a new ruin lying outside a populated area and unlikely to be frequented by harlots, so that there would then be no danger either of 'suspicion' or of 'falling debris' although the risk of harm from evil spirits would remain.

The Gemara now reverts to the subject of the number of watches during the night and quotes a Baraita which records that, according to Rabbi (Rabbi Judah haNasi), the night has four watches (of three hours each), while Rabbi Nathan divides the night into three watches (of four hours each). On what does Rabbi Nathan base his opinion, the Gemara asks; the answer given is that it is written (Judges VII, 19): "*Gideon and the hundred men that were with*

בְּדַבְּרָא, דְּהָתָם מְשֻׁם חָשָׁד לִיפָא — דְּהָא אִשָּׁה
בְּדַבְּרָא לָא שְׂכִיחָא, וּמְשֻׁם מִזִּיקִין אִיפָא:
תְּנֵי רַבְּנָן: אַרְבַּע מְשֻׁמֹת הָיִי הַלַּיְלָה, דְּבָרֵי רַבִּי;
רַבִּי נָתָן אוֹמֵר: שְׁלֹשׁ. מֵאֵי טַעְמָא דְּרַבִּי נָתָן? דְּכֵתִיב:

The Responsa of Maimonides [Hebrew], ed. Freimann, Jerusalem 1934, p. 343). Maimonides, than whom there was hardly a greater admirer of rabbinic Judaism, could not conceive of such works as derived from Jewish sources and assumed that the authors were alien (Greek) homilists (*ibid.*).

R. JUDAH THE PRINCE (RABBI)

R. Judah the Prince (or the Patriarch, *haNasi*), redactor of the Mishna, is lovingly called 'Rabbi' throughout talmudic literature. He was the son of Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel II and head of the Synhedrion in the concluding years of the second century CE (165-200).

Legend has it that Rabbi was born on the very day that R. Akiba was led out to his martyr's death, and that his father had circumcised him in spite of the ban of Rome. Only by royal intervention was the infant spared the capital penalty.

He grew up under the tutelage of his father, and studied, as well, with the disciples of R. Akiba, R. Meir and R. Judah. Constrained to quit his native Beth-She'arim, he spent the last seventeen years of his life in the brisk atmosphere of Sepphoris.

As Patriarch, Rabbi was matchless in his combination of the qualities of supreme scholarship and powerful command, so that he was acknowledged by all as the spiritual and political chief of his people.

His talents stood him in good stead in the huge task of editing the Mishna, which, until his time, had been studied disjointedly, each Sage composing his own Mishna. Rabbi assembled all extant versions of the Mishna, arranging them in logical sequence. To edit this enormous store of data meant selecting the most pertinent material and presenting it in a short, concise form. Any reader of the Mishna to-day is bound to admit that Rabbi was successful. It is not surprising that his edition, which underwent two revisions

”וַיָּבֹא וַדְּעוֹן וּמָאָה אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר אָתוּ בְּקֶצֶה הַמַּחֲנֶה
 רֵאשׁ הָאֲשֶׁמֶרֶת הַתִּיכּוֹנָה.” תָּנָא: אֵין תִּיכּוֹנָה אֶלָּא
 שֵׁשׁ לְפָנֶיהָ וּלְאַחֲרֶיהָ. וְרַבִּי מַאי תִיכּוֹנָה – אַחַת מִן
 הַתִּיכּוֹנָה שֶׁבַּתִּיכּוֹנוֹת. וְרַבִּי נְתָן? מִי כְּתִיב תִּיכּוֹנָה

that were with him came to the edge of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch”; to wit, ‘middle’ cannot but be that which is preceded and followed. And Rabbi? What is middle? — One of the middle ones. Now, Rabbi Nathan:

during his lifetime, became the Mishna *par excellence*, the accepted code of tannaitic teaching and the basis for the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmud. All other literary output of the tannaitic period was relegated, as it were, to the status of external teaching (Baraita).

In spite of his high office and authority, Rabbi did not impose his personal views on others, and was wont to defer to the opinions of other Sages even when he himself had a decided viewpoint on the question. A deep sense of humility pervaded his every action.

Many are the discussions recorded in the Talmud and Midrash between Rabbi and a certain Antonius. This interlocutor has been identified by scholars as the benevolent Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius Antonius, and it seems that R. Judah the Prince maintained cordial relations with the powers-that-be in Rome.

Rabbi's riches enabled him to support a host of needy scholars, and his charity and benevolence were widespread. Once, during a severe famine, he provided for the entire citizenry from his granaries.

Before he died, he gave careful instructions regarding the leadership of the Synhedrion by his sons Gamaliel and Simeon, and of the Academy by his pupil R. Hanina bar Hanina; he made a testament concerning his wife's privileges and the arrangements for his own burial.

It was an hour of anguished national mourning when Rabbi was laid to his eternal rest in the burial cave of Beth-She'arim.

R. NATHAN

Of the twenty or so talmudic Rabbis bearing the biblical name of Nathan, the fourth generation Tanna (130-160 cA) is the only Sage designated as R. Nathan without mention of his father.

Son of the Babylonian Exilarch, R. Nathan arrived in the Holy Land at an early age and eventually became leader of the Palestinian community.

him came to the edge of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch”. The term ‘middle watch’ clearly indicates, according to Rabbi Nathan, that the night has three watches, a first, a middle, and a last watch. How, the Gemara now asks, does Rabbi then reconcile his view with the clear implication of this verse? It replies that there are two ‘middle watches’, so that the verse may have referred to one of them. To this, Rabbi Nathan's rejoinder is simply that the verse speaks of the middle watch, not about ‘one of the middle’ watches. It is clear that Rabbi's answer is forced, and the Gemara, therefore, asks for the specific reason that made Rabbi persist in his view that the night has four watches. The reply given is that the implication found in two verses (Psalm CXIX, verses 62 and 148) corroborates it. The first verse says that King David rises at midnight to offer thanks to God, the other, that his “eyes forestalled the watches” (plural), which clearly implies that after midnight there must be at least two watches (of three hours each); if we divide the six hours preceding midnight similarly into two watches, the sum of four watches is evident. It is now Rabbi Nathan's turn to reconcile his view with the scriptural proof adduced in favour of Rabbi. Rabbi Nathan's reasoning is as follows: in a later Mishna (9b), Rabbi Joshua says that the morning Shema may be recited until the beginning of the third hour, i.e., two hours after sunrise, for the reason that kings are wont to get up at about that time, so that the night may be taken as extending to this hour of the late risers. It is now argued that, if you take the six hours of actual night from midnight, together with these two additional hours of late sleeping, they will divide into two equal watches of four hours each, according to the reckoning of Rabbi Nathan. Consequently, King David could properly speak about getting up (two) watches earlier than his royal peers. An alternative answer is suggested by Rav Ashi, of a simplicity which makes it more convincing. Accepting Rabbi Nathan's view that midnight coincides with the middle of the middle watch, there would be one and a half watches until sunrise. Well, says Rav Ashi, one and a half watches can correctly be spoken

Despite his Babylonian origin, so evident in the halachic dispute with Rabbi, where R. Nathan favours three watches, which is the Babylonian system, he was loyal to his adopted homeland. So, with the local scholars, he strenuously resisted the efforts of R. Hananya, nephew of R. Joshua, to have the leap years and the intercalation of months proclaimed in Babylon, a prerogative which till then had been reserved to the religious authorities of the Holy Land. The change would have led to a decentralisation of religious jurisdiction during the crucial period of reorganisation after the rebellion of Bar Kochba.

R. Nathan, who argued again and again on Halachah with R. Judah the Prince, is thought to have played an important role in the redaction of the Mishna, and the talmudic statement: ‘Rabbi and R. Nathan conclude the Mishna’ (B.M. 86a) is often quoted. The explanation of widest acceptance is that R. Nathan arranged the Mishna of the Babylonians, namely, that on which the Babylonian Talmud is based.

In the Synhedrion of Usha, under the Patriarchate of Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel II, Nathan was second in importance, holding the office of *Av Beth Din*. With R. Meir, he led the unsuccessful attempt to depose the Patriarch for his insistence on special honorifics and prestige. For this, R. Nathan was penalized by having his halachic opinions recorded as anonymous or prefaced by the words: ‘There are those who say...’ (יש אומרים). This may explain why his name is never specifically mentioned in the Mishna; the two instances where it happens to appear (one of them at the very end of Berakhoth) are later additions. But his opinions are repeatedly cited in the Tosephta and in the halachic Midrashim.

The aggadic treatise *Avot* de Rabbi Nathan is popularly ascribed to him, because he is named in the opening passage of the first chapter.

Is it written there 'one of the middle ones'? — 'the middle' is written. What is Rabbi's reason? — R. Zeriqa says in the name of R. Ammi in the name of R. Joshua ben Levi: One verse states: "At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto Thee because of Thy righteous judgements". And another verse states: "Mine eyes forestalled the watches". How is this possible? — The night has four watches. And Rabbi Nathan? — He

שפתיכונות? תיכונה פתיב. מאי טעמא דרבי? אמר רבי זריקא אמר רבי אמי אמר רבי יהושע בן לוי, פתוב אָחַד אָמַר: "חצות לילה אקום להודות לך על משפטי צדקך", וכתוב אָחַד אָמַר: "קדמו עיני אשמרות", הָא כִּי־צַד? אַרְבַּע מְשָׁמוֹת הָיוּ הַלֵּילָה. וְרַבִּי נָתָן? סָבַר לָהּ כְּרַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ. דִּתְנִן: רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ

THE DIVISION OF DAY AND NIGHT
In biblical times, day and night were each divided into three equal parts (cf. Judges VII, 19). This division, which was also practised by the ancient Babylonians, is the one accepted by R. Nathan, himself a 'Babylonian', as well as by R. Eliezer.

Several sources indicate that the division was still in vogue in the Second Temple era. The daily *Tamid* sacrifice could be offered until the fourth hour ('Ed. 6, 1), and the evening sacrifice until the eighth hour. An extra half-hour was then added as a safeguard.

'Four hours' and 'eight hours' mean here four twelfths or eight twelfths of the day (or night), that is, one third or two thirds. The apocryphal Book of Jubilees (XLIX, 10-12), in connection with the Passover rituals, explicitly uses the terms 'a third of the day' and 'a third of the night'.

Rabbi's ruling that the night, and consequently the day (cf. Yer. I, 1; Lam. Rabba 2, 19), are to be divided into four and not three sections (or 'watches'), reflects later Roman usage. At the beginning of the third century BC the Romans divided their day into four equal parts: *mane* and *ante meridiem*; *de meridie* and *suprema* (early morning and forenoon; afternoon and evening).

The length of hours fluctuated throughout the year, so that all the 'hours' mentioned in the Mishna are relative. A day, from sunrise to sunset, was divided into twelve equal parts, so that the hours of day and night were equal only twice a year: at the vernal and autumnal equinoxes. In winter, a daytime 'hour' was sometimes no more than forty-five minutes long, while in summer it could be stretched to seventy-five.

The current subdivision of an hour into minutes and seconds, based on units of sixty, is of Alexandrian origin and was unknown in Jewish Palestine.

of (in the plural) as watches. Consequently, David, speaking at midnight of 'watches' still before him, may not necessarily have in mind two *full* watches. To sum up: Judges VII, 19 supports Rabbi Nathan's view that the night has three watches, though the verse cannot be taken as proving Rabbi's view wrong; on the other hand, Psalm CXIX, 62, 148, *prima facie*, supports Rabbi's view that the night has four

According to the sources (Toseph. 1, 1 and Yer.), each hour and minute were subdivided into twenty-four equal parts, which is why the Yerushalmi mentions a 24-hour day of 576 minutes (עונה) or 13,824 seconds (שע).

R. ZERIQA

Even though a R. Zeriqa is mentioned in two tannaitic sources, it is usually the third and fourth generation Palestinian Amora (*circa* 280-340 CE) who is referred to by this name. No other Sage bears the name.

R. Zeriqa was a disciple of the Palestinian Amoraim of the second generation, R. Johanan, Resh Laqish and R. Eleazar, and of the third generation, R. Ammi and R. Ze'ira, whom he quotes profusely. Since he also conveyed the traditions of second generation Babylonian Amoraim, it may be conjectured that he was of Babylonian origin.

R. Zeriqa's interests were mainly halachic, and he was, on the whole, inactive on the subject of Aggada. On our page (Ber. 3b), we do find him offering an explanation to Psalm CXIX, but ultimately it is concerned with the halachic question of the night watches.

Beyond the fact that he studied and taught in Tiberias, we know virtually nothing of his life.

R. AMMI AND R. ASSI

Of the score of Amoraim named Ammi, R. Ammi bar Nathan is by far the most outstanding scholar. With his colleague R. Assi, he was the head of the Academy and Beth Din of Tiberias during the third generation of Palestinian Amoraim (280-310 CE). R. Ammi, whose name is also given as Immi or Imma (אימי, אימא) in the Yerushalmi, was a brilliant pupil of R. Johanan and served his master faithfully.

R. Ammi and R. Assi, who were ordained on the same day, are often mentioned together. They were eulogized with various titles, such as 'the honoured priests of Eretz-Israel' and 'the jurists of Israel'. There are also many halachic disputations between them, and, because of the close relationship and the ambiguity involved in the spelling and pronunciation of their names, the authorship of a given dictum is sometimes in question — for while one text reads Ammi, another may read Assi. Testimony of the close companionship which existed between the two is abundant. They studied and taught together. They went forth together on charitable enterprises and, at the instance of the Patriarch Judah III, made an educational survey of Palestine (in conjunction with R. Hiyya bar Abba) to ascertain whether each town had provided for the minimum demands of elementary schooling.

R. Ammi was chosen to represent the Sages in an expedition to

Palmyra (תדמור), where he had audience of Queen Zenobia. It was an important mission to ransom one of the Rabbis held captive in Palmyra.

As head of the Academy of Tiberias, R. Ammi maintained a solid and steady relationship with the Academy of Caesarea, headed by R. Abbahu, and with the Academies in Babylon no less. These relationships were strengthened by the large number of Responsa sent by R. Ammi and R. Assi to the other communities; all were eager for their guidance.

R. JOSHUA BEN LEVI

Among the Amoraim bearing the biblical name Joshua, the most outstanding personality is undoubtedly R. Joshua ben Levi, a Palestinian Amora of the first generation (*circa* 220-250 CE).

R. Joshua ben Levi, disciple of Bar Kappara and one of the first Sages to be classified as Amoraim, is celebrated in that several of his doctrines were appended to tannaitic literature. The very last paragraph of the Mishna, indeed, records an ethical teaching of his.

His Academy was in Lod, then considered to be in the south, that is, relation to Galilee, and he achieved renown primarily for his productivity and creative ability in the aggadic field.

But, besides his spiritual eminence, he showed energy in communal matters. The sources mention his trip to Rome and his appearance before the Proconsul in Caesarea. And when a certain 'Ula bar Koshav escaped from the hands of the Romans, who demanded his arrest, and chose Lod as his refuge, it was R. Joshua b. Levi who persuaded him to give himself up lest the community suffer; the persuasion was justifiable, for the

אומר: עד שלש שעות, שפן דרך מלכים לעמוד בשלש שעות. שית דליקיא ותרתמי דיממא הוו להו שתי משמרות. רב אשי אומר: משמרה ופלגא גמי משמרות קרו להו. ואמר רבי זריקא אומר רבי אמי אומר רבי יהושע בן לוי: אין אומרים בפני המת אלא דבריו של מת. אומר רבי אבא בר כהנא: לא אמרן אלא בדברי תורה, אכל מילי דעלמא לית לן בה.

shares the opinion of R. Joshua. We have learnt, Rabbi Joshua says: *Until the third hour, for such is the habit of kings to rise at the third hour*; six of the night and two of the day are two watches. Rav Ashi says: A watch and a half can also be called 'watches'.

Further said R. Zeriqa in the name of R. Ammi in the name of Rabbi Joshua ben Levi: One does not speak in the presence of the dead except words relating to the dead. R. Abba bar Kahana says: This applies only to words of Torah, but words of a general nature do not

Romans had threatened to demolish the city unless they were obeyed. Even so, he was bitterly criticized for his intervention by Elijah the Prophet, who had granted him frequent visitations, but did not reveal himself to the Rabbi after the event until thirty days of penitential fasting had gone by. He rebuked R. Joshua for failing to follow the code of the Pious (משנת חסידים); intervention was outwardly correct, yet it was not proper that the pious head of the community should be the man to deliver a Jew into Roman custody.

Most dramatic is the legendary account of R. Joshua's meeting with the Messiah at the outskirts of Rome. Legend has further embellished the Rabbi's passing with an astounding description of his escape from the Angel of Death by a plunge into Paradise - a story borrowed by W. H. Longfellow in his 'Tales from a Wayside Inn'.

RAV ASHI

Few can equal the contributions of Rav Ashi, one of the outstanding Amoraim in Babylon, of the sixth generation, and chief editor of the Babylonian Talmud. Directing the Academy of Sura, which he organized, in Mata Meshasya on the city's outskirts, he supervised the momentous task of compiling and editing the upshot of close on two hundred years of intensive study. Each generation of Amoraim had pondered the teachings of its predecessors and an enormous volume of discussions, debates, dicta, Halachoth, explanations, exegeses and anecdotes had accumulated in the Babylonian Academies of his day.

While principal of Sura, Rav Ashi reviewed the entire Talmud twice, giving half a year to each Tractate, in accordance with the Kalla

watches, although it can reasonably be argued that these verses do not prove conclusively that Rabbi Nathan's view is wrong. It would appear, however, that rabbinical tradition (see above, p. 34) accepted the view that the night is divided into three watches. In any case, our Mishna, which records the view of Rabbi Eliczer that the evening Shema may be read until the end of the first watch, definitely assumes that the night is divided into three watches (see above, p. 35).

The Gemara now proceeds to an entirely different matter, in no way related to the watches or to the primary issue of the recital of the Shema. Yet, as we have shown (see pp. 23 and 30), the Gemara, even in its digressions, is by no means haphazard, and follows certain patterns. The underlying pattern in the present digression is of two unrelated statements, stemming from one and the same authority. In the previous passage, the Gemara had cited a statement by Rabbi Joshua ben Levi (concerning the watches), as handed down by Rabbi Ammi to Rabbi Zeriqa, who reported it in connection with the controversy between Rabbi and Rabbi Nathan. The Gemara now goes on to say that yet another statement by the same Rabbi Joshua ben Levi was handed down in the same way. The content of this statement is that in the presence of the dead one should speak only of matters relating to the dead. Rabbi Abba bar Kahana then specifies that this refers only to words of Torah and not to general conversation. From Rashi (which, by the way, reads: 'words of Halachah' and not 'words of Torah') we learn that it would be a sign of disrespect to the dead (who is thought to hear, though unable to speak) if one engages in a discussion in which he would presumably wish to join. It is the duty of everyone, says Rashi, to discuss religious

study programme (cf. note *infra*). Thus, over thirty years, he could go right through the sixty Tractates of the Mishna. Ravina I, a contemporary and learned colleague, hints at Rav Ashi's accomplishments by mentioning two different 'editions' or 'cycles' (מהדורא קמא, מהדורא בתרא) ni the course of study which he organized.

His great redactive work, indeed, underwent further development; the next two generations of Amoraim, as well as the Saboraim, made their supplements and insertions, but the *magnum opus* of Rav Ashi was always their authoritative starting-point.

The editorship of Rav Ashi is plain in the Talmud. He generally offers the final decision, but his words of explanation are sometimes interpolated into the middle of a discussion as commentary.

Being an independent man of property, he could give all his time to study and research. He was, understandably, the spokesman of his generation, honoured and respected by all, and even by the Exilarch, who abided by his decisions. He was often, also, a guest of the Persian king, Jسدigerd II (400-420 ce).

R. ABBA BAR KAHANA

R. Abba b. Kahana flourished in the third generation of Palestinian Amoraim (circa 280-310 ce). His numerous contributions to Midrash and Aggada have left a marked impression on midrashic literature. He was a preacher (דרשן) whose weekly sermons and homilies enchanted all his listeners. The homilies afford striking insights into the Bible stories; they explained words and passages, and were also designed to educate his listeners and give them moral and

matter. Some say R. Abba bar Kahana said: This applies *even* to words of Torah and how much more to words of a general nature! Did David, then, rise at midnight? He rose at even! For it is written: "I prevented nesheph and cried". And how do you know that this 'nesheph' is evening? For it is written — "At nesheph in the evening of the day, in the blackness of night and darkness". R. Osh'aya says in the name of R. Aha, Thus said David: Midnight never passed me by in my sleep. Rabbi Zera says: Till midnight he

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ethical guidance. He was equally proficient in Halachah, and it is in that context that he first appears in the Babylonian Talmud.

According to one opinion, his father, Rav Kahana, was the prominent second generation Babylonian Amora of that name. This is quite likely, for we know that Rav Kahana was forced to leave Babylon and lived for some time in Palestine.

R. Abba studied under R. Johanan, an early Palestinian Amora, from whom he received much aggadic teaching, most probably including all that was handed down in the name of R. Joshua ben Levi.

RAV OSH'AYA

Two eminent Talmudists bear the name Osh'aya (אושעיא), which often interchanges with the Bible original, Hosh'aya (הושעיא, cf. Jer. XLII, 1). The first was a leading Palestinian Amora of the first generation and the designation 'the great' is commonly appended to his name in the Yerushalmi. The second was born and educated in Babylon during the third generation but went to Palestine and settled there.

The sole differential between the two is the title *Rabbi* borne by the one and *Rav* by the other. Even so, errors of copyists and printers have provoked much confusion. Such is the case in the first mention of R. Osh'aya in the Babylonian Talmud (Ber. 3b), where we find the reading *Rav* Osh'aya, but since he quotes a statement of R. Aha the Tanna there can be no doubt that *Rabbi* Osh'aya is meant. R. Osh'aya, born in southern Palestine, was the son of R. Hamma and the grandson of R. Bisa, both great rabbinic scholars. There is a legend that R. Hamma left his family for a long time to apply himself to the Torah. Returning, he found a young lad

matters, and if these are discussed in the presence of the dead, this, as it were, mocks him, who is unable to participate. General conversation, on the other hand, is allowed, because the dead is presumed to be indifferent to worldly things. But the Gemara records another version of Rabbi Abba bar Kahana's words: not even religious matters, much less other topics, may be discussed in the presence of the dead. Consequently, nothing but solemn words spoken in honour of the dead and whatever it is necessary to say in connection with the burial arrangements should be uttered in his presence.

Tosaphoth observe that Rif (Isaac Alfasi, 1013-1103), following Rav Hai Gaon, decided in favour of the first version of Rabbi Abba bar Kahana, i.e., that only words of Torah (unrelated to the dead) may be spoken. In the Halachah many detailed qualifications are made here, e.g., a distinction is drawn between conversations held before or after the burial, in the immediate presence of the dead or at some distance. We shall consider these questions in the third chapter of Berakhoth which opens with the words 'One whose dead lies before him'.

With the question *Did David, then, rise at midnight?* the Gemara reverts to the passage where David's nightly devotions were mentioned by the way, in connection with the night's watches, and where reference had been made to Psalm CXIX, 62, telling that David rose at midnight. The Gemara now cites another verse in the same Psalm (v. 147) which seems to say that David already rose early in the evening. Current English versions read: "I rose at dawn and cried". The Hebrew word rendered here as *dawn* is *nesheph*, which, however, at the present stage of the Gemara's discussion, is understood to mean *dusk*, beginning of evening. Support for the proposition that the meaning of *nesheph* is evening is

in the local 'house of study', whose fantastic knowledge of Holy Writ amazed him. One may well imagine his exultation on learning that this was his own son, Osh'aya. R. Osh'aya, who became an intimate friend of the Patriarch, studied in the Galilean Academies of the semi-Tannaim, Bar Kappara and R. Hiyya, and, following in their footsteps, was also active in the study and compiling of the extraneous Mishnayoth ('Baraitoth'). The collections of the three Rabbis were the authorized codices of the Academies during the Amoraic period. It is probably on this account that R. Osh'aya is termed 'The father of the Mishna' (that is, the *extraneous* Mishna).

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R. ZERA

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Overcoming a hesitancy which reflects Rav Judah's opposition in principle to quitting Babylon, R. Zera left secretly, and soon became one of the great savants of Eretz-Israel. It is told that he fasted for forty days to free his heart of the teachings and methods of the Babylonian Rabbis; not suprisingly,

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 רַב אָשִׁי אָמַר: עַד חֲצוֹת לַיְלָה הָיָה עוֹסֵק בְּדַבְרֵי
 תּוֹרָה מִכָּאן וְאֵילָף בְּשִׁירוֹת וְתַשְׁבְּחוֹת. וְנִשְׁפָּה אוֹרְתָא
 הוּא? הָא נִשְׁפָּה צִפְרָא הוּא! דְּכְתִיב: "וַיִּבֶם דָּוִד
 מִהַנֶּשֶׁף וְעַד הָעֶרֶב לְמַחְרָתָם", מֵאִי לֹא מִצִּפְרָא
 וְעַד לַיְלָא! לֹא, מֵאוֹרְתָא וְעַד אוֹרְתָא. אִי הָכִי
 לְכַתֵּב "מִהַנֶּשֶׁף וְעַד הַנֶּשֶׁף" אוּ "מִהָעֶרֶב וְעַד
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 רב אשי אמר: עד תצות לילה היה עוסק בדברי
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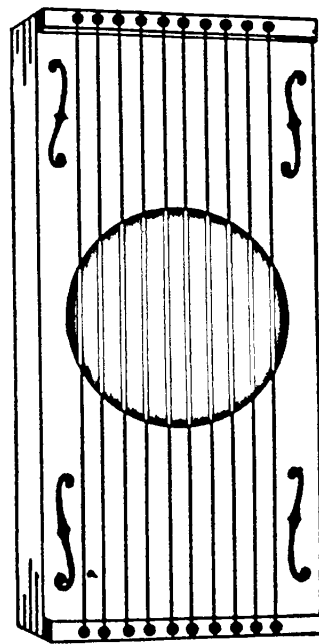
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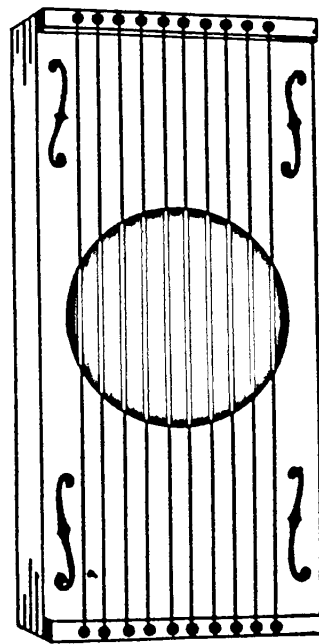
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 חֲצוֹת לַיְלָה — בָּא רוּחַ צְפוֹנִית וְנוֹשְׁבֶת בּוֹ וּמִנֵּן
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above the bed of David and as midnight arrived a northerly wind came and blew upon it and it played of itself. Immediately he arose and occupied himself with Torah until the rise of dawn. And with the rise of dawn the Sages of Israel came in to him. They said to him: Our lord, the king, thy people Israel are in need of sustenance. Said he to them: Sustain ye each other. They said to him: A handful does not satisfy the lion, and a pit cannot be filled from its cavity. Said he to them: Go and stretch out your hands in a troop. They at once consulted Ahitophel, sought the advice of the Synhedrion

time-device, worked by water or air pressure. But he was also ready to explain the phenomenon naturally: the fresh northerly breeze, starting up at midnight, was instrumental in plucking the strings of the harp at the exact hour (Ozar haGeonim, Ber., commentaries p. 4).

This version might find its corroboration in the Yerushalmi and Palestinian midrashic sources which stress that David placed the harp opposite an open window, that he left unshuttered (cf. Pesikta De'Rav Kahana, ed. Buber, p. 63a). An interpretation of that kind lends credence to the theory, first observed by L. Low, that David's harp in aggadic literature is probably to be identified with the Aeolian harp, which is set quivering by the wind. Named after Aeolus, mythical master of the winds and ruler of the floating island of Aeolia, this harp consisted of a long narrow sound-box of wood with ten or twelve strings of varying thickness stretched across it. According to two later Midrashim (Midrash Ps. XCII; Pirkei de R. Eliezer 19), David's harp had ten strings, made of the entrails of Abraham's ram (*ibid.* 31), but earlier sources generally confirm R. Judah's statement (Toseph. 'Arakhiin 2, 7) that the Temple lyre, as well as David's, had seven. That statement, however, most probably refers to the *kithara*, a lyre or lute of triangular shape with seven strings.

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 חֲצוֹת לַיְלָה — בָּא רוּחַ צְפוֹנִית וְנוֹשְׁבַת בּוֹ וּמִנָּן
 מֵאֵלָיו, מִיָּד הָיָה עוֹמֵד וְעוֹסֵק בְּתוֹרָה עַד שֶׁעָלָה
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 יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶצְלוֹ. אָמְרוּ לוֹ: אֲדוּנָנוּ הַמֶּלֶךְ, עַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל
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 אָמְרוּ לוֹ: אֵין הַקֶּמֶץ מִשְׁבִּיעַ אֶת הָאָרֶץ וְאֵין הַבּוֹר
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above the bed of David and as midnight arrived a northerly wind came and blew upon it and it played of itself. Immediately he arose and occupied himself with Torah until the rise of dawn. And with the rise of dawn the Sages of Israel came in to him. They said to him: Our lord, the king, thy people Israel are in need of sustenance. Said he to them: Sustain ye each other. They said to him: A handful does not satisfy the lion, and a pit cannot be filled from its cavity. Said he to them: Go and stretch out your hands in a troop. They at once consulted Ahitophel, sought the advice of the Synhedrion

time-device, worked by water or air pressure. But he was also ready to explain the phenomenon naturally: the fresh northerly breeze, starting up at midnight, was instrumental in plucking the strings of the harp at the exact hour (Ozar haGeonim, Ber., commentaries p. 4).

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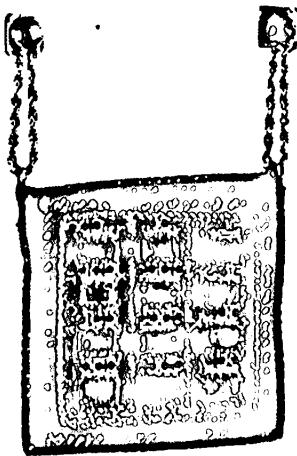
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(folded, as worn by High Priest)
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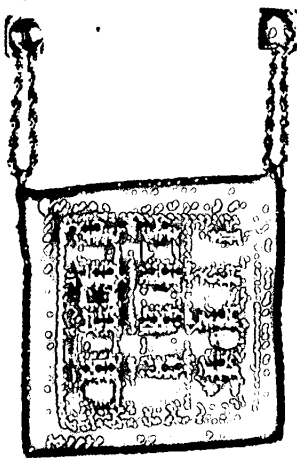
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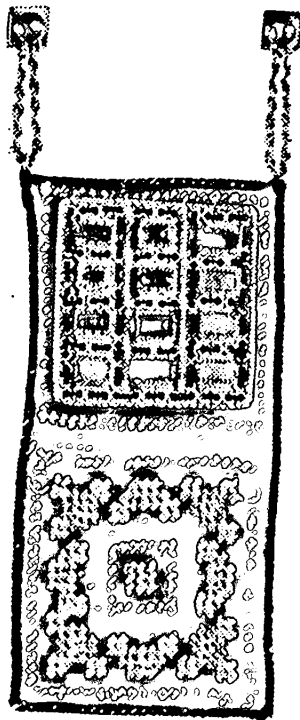
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Jehoiada', that is the Synhedrion, and 'Abiathar', that is the Urim and Thummim. And so it is said: "And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the Kerethi and over the Pelethi". Why was their name called Kerethi and Pelethi? — Kerethi because they made their words incisive and Pelethi because they were excellent in their words. And after them came the captain of the king's host, Joab. Rav Isaac bar Adda says, and

see which of the letters engraved on it were lit up, and he constructed his answer out of them.



THE BREASTPLATE (unfolded)
(Courtesy Mr. Moshe Levin)

All the letters of the alphabet were included in the engravings, so that all conceivable word combinations could be offered.

RAV JOSEPH

The biblical name Joseph appears chiefly among Babylonian Amoraim. Rav Joseph b. Hiyya, the most outstanding bearer of it, has the distinction of being called simply Rav Joseph, without a patronymic. In the Yerushalmi, mention is made of a Rabbi Joseph, but it can be shown that the correct reading there is R. Jose (ר' יוסה), the Palestinian Amora of the fourth generation.

Jehoiada. The Gemara suggests that this Benaiah represented the Synhedrion, and that Abiathar, mentioned after him, represented the High Priest's Urim and Thummim. The Gemara finds support for the identification of Benaiah with the Synhedrion in 2 Sam. XX, 23: "And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the Kerethi and Pelethi". It is suggested that "Kerethi and Pelethi" refers to the Synhedrion, whose words are clear-cut (כרת from כרת) and wonderful (פלא from פלתי). The connection between Abiathar and the Urim and Thummim is not further explained in the Gemara, as it was taken as known that Abiathar was High Priest in the time of David. That 1 Chron. XXVII, 34 indeed refers to preparations for war, as the Gemara suggests, finds support in the fact that the last person to be mentioned in that verse is Joab, chief of the king's hosts.

The Gemara now returns to the story that David's harp was hanging over his bed, waking him in the night, and offers scriptural evidence (Psalm LVII, 9): "Awake, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp: I will awake the dawn."

Once more, the Gemara speaks of David's awareness of the exact moment of midnight. It is suggested here that Moses certainly did know the exact moment of midnight, and so did David (even without the help of his time-signalling harp). The Gemara wants to know: if he did, why should David need the help of his harp? The answer given is that the harp was not there to indicate the time but to awake him from his sleep, or simply to make him alert, if we accept the view previously expressed (see above, p. 48), that David was only lightly slumbering, even before midnight. Of Moses, the Gemara similarly asks: if he knew the exact moment, why did he say 'about midnight'? The reply is that Moses feared lest Pharaoh's astrologers miscalculate the time, making him appear as a liar. As Rashi puts it, the

Rav Joseph was the senior disciple of Rav Judah and, therefore, belonged to the third generation of Amoraim, as did his close friend and colleague, Rabba b. Nahmani; the two often engaged in debates which the Babylonian Talmud preserves.

This frequency of argument may have stemmed from a contrast of qualities. Rabba was endowed with a keen mental perception and the gift of dialectic, and was nicknamed 'the uprooter of mountains'. Rav Joseph, with a phenomenal memory, excelled in encyclopaedic knowledge of the tannaitic and amoraic sources, which earned him the nickname 'Sinai', an allusion to 'Torah from Sinai'.

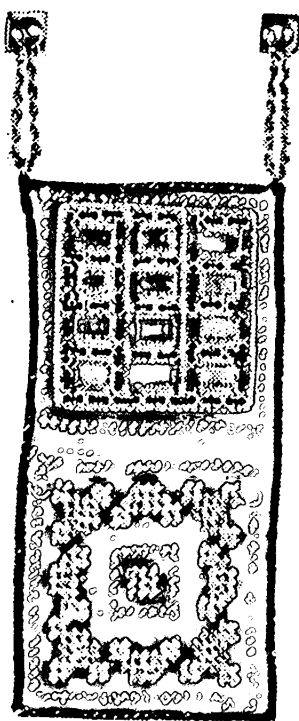
On the death of Rav Judah (298 CE), Pumbeditha was left without a leader. Rabba and Rav Joseph were the most eligible candidates, but the Babylonian electors could not decide between them and addressed the following question to the Palestinian Sages: "Who is preferable — 'the uprooter of mountains' or 'Sinai'?" The reply favoured 'Sinai', but Rav Joseph declined the appointment, since Chaldaean astrologers had predicted that his tenure of it would only last two years. Rabba directed the Academy for twenty-two years, and Rav Joseph gave up any aspirations to greatness all that time, wholeheartedly accepting the authority of his colleague. Strange to say, Rav Joseph enjoyed excellent health during the incumbency of Rabba, but as soon as he succeeded to the principalship after Rabba's death (319 CE), he began to fail and in 322 CE he himself died.

His incredible knowledge of sources showed itself in many instances. We find him often quoting Baraitoth, biblical passages and their Aramaic Targum, as well as amoraic traditions and popular proverbs. His personal philosophy was that study of the Torah is worth more than all else, and at times even more vital than performance of positive precepts or the saving of human life. He underwent three

בן יהודע - זה סנהדרין, ואביהר - אלו אורים ותמים. וכן הוא אומר: "ובניהו בן יהודע על הכרתי ועל הפלתי"; ולמה נקרא שמם "כרתי ופלתי"? "כרתי" - שכורתי דבריהם, "פלתי" - שמפלאים בדבריהם; ואחר כך - "שר צבא למלך יואב". אומר רב יצחק בר אדא, ואמרי לה אומר רב

Jehoiada', that is the Synhedrion, and 'Abiathar', that is the Urim and Thummim. And so it is said: "And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the Kerethi and over the Pelethi". Why was their name called Kerethi and Pelethi? — Kerethi because they made their words incisive and Pelethi because they were excellent in their words. And after them came the captain of the king's host, Joab. Rav Isaac bar Adda says, and

see which of the letters engraved on it were lit up, and he constructed his answer out of them.



THE BREASTPLATE (unfolded)
(Courtesy Mr. Moshe Levin)

All the letters of the alphabet were included in the engravings, so that all conceivable word combinations could be offered.

RAV JOSEPH

The biblical name Joseph appears chiefly among Babylonian Amoraim. Rav Joseph b. Hiyya, the most outstanding bearer of it, has the distinction of being called simply Rav Joseph, without a patronymic. In the Yerushalmi, mention is made of a Rabbi Joseph, but it can be shown that the correct reading there is R. Jose (ר' יוסה), the Palestinian Amora of the fourth generation.

Jehoiada. The Gemara suggests that this Benaiah represented the Synhedrion, and that Abiathar, mentioned after him, represented the High Priest's Urim and Thummim. The Gemara finds support for the identification of Benaiah with the Synhedrion in 2 Sam. XX, 23: "And Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the Kerethi and Pelethi". It is suggested that "Kerethi and Pelethi" refers to the Synhedrion, whose words are clear-cut (כרת from כרת) and wonderful (פלא from פלתי). The connection between Abiathar and the Urim and Thummim is not further explained in the Gemara, as it was taken as known that Abiathar was High Priest in the time of David. That 1 Chron. XXVII, 34 indeed refers to preparations for war, as the Gemara suggests, finds support in the fact that the last person to be mentioned in that verse is Joab, chief of the king's hosts.

The Gemara now returns to the story that David's harp was hanging over his bed, waking him in the night, and offers scriptural evidence (Psalm LVII, 9): "Awake, my glory; awake, psaltery and harp: I will awake the dawn."

Once more, the Gemara speaks of David's awareness of the exact moment of midnight. It is suggested here that Moses certainly did know the exact moment of midnight, and so did David (even without the help of his time-signalling harp). The Gemara wants to know: if he did, why should David need the help of his harp? The answer given is that the harp was not there to indicate the time but to awake him from his sleep, or simply to make him alert, if we accept the view previously expressed (see above, p. 48), that David was only lightly slumbering, even before midnight. Of Moses, the Gemara similarly asks: if he knew the exact moment, why did he say 'about midnight'? The reply is that Moses feared lest Pharaoh's astrologers miscalculate the time, making him appear as a liar. As Rashi puts it, the

Rav Joseph was the senior disciple of Rav Judah and, therefore, belonged to the third generation of Amoraim, as did his close friend and colleague, Rabba b. Nahmani; the two often engaged in debates which the Babylonian Talmud preserves.

This frequency of argument may have stemmed from a contrast of qualities. Rabba was endowed with a keen mental perception and the gift of dialectic, and was nicknamed 'the uprooter of mountains'. Rav Joseph, with a phenomenal memory, excelled in encyclopaedic knowledge of the tannaitic and amoraic sources, which earned him the nickname 'Sinai', an allusion to 'Torah from Sinai'.

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שָׁכַל מַלְכֵי מִזְרַח וּמַעֲרָב יוֹשְׁבִים אֲגִדּוֹת אֲגִדּוֹת
בְּכַבּוּדָם, וְאָנִי — יְדֵי מַלְכָּלְכוֹת בְּדָם וּבְשִׁפְיֵר
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כֹּל מֵה שְׁאֵנִי עוֹשֶׂה אָנִי נִמְלֶךְ בְּמִפְיַבְשֶׁת רַבִּי, וְאוֹמֵר
לוֹ: מִפְיַבְשֶׁת רַבִּי, יָפָה דְנַתִּי? יָפָה חִיבַתִּי? יָפָה
וְכִיתִי? יָפָה טַהַרְתִּי? יָפָה טַמְאֵתִי? וְלֹא בִשְׁתִּי. אָמַר

spoke David before the Holy One, blessed be He: Lord of the universe, am I not pious? While all the kings of the East and of the West sleep until the third hour, I, at midnight I rise and give thanks unto Thee. The other: Thus spoke David before the Holy One, blessed be He: Am I not pious? While all the kings of the East and of the West sit among companies in their glory, I, my hands are soiled with blood, with the foetus and with the placenta, to make the wife clean for her husband. And what is more, in all that I do, I take counsel with my master Mephibosheth, and I say to him: My master Mephibosheth, did I judge well, did I convict well, did I acquit well, did I well declare clean, did I well declare unclean? —

of 'the son of the blacksmith' (R. Johanan ben Nappaha).

In his aggadic discourses, R. Isaac endeavoured to elevate the morale of the downtrodden Jews. The signs of the times in the second half of the third century in Palestine are reflected in allusions to the extreme poverty, the hunger and hardships inflicted by the occupying Romans, which were the lot of most of his coreligionists. This, furthermore, is one of the main reasons why Aggada was so popular in the Holy Land, for, in the words of R. Isaac, 'When people are impoverished and suffer from those who govern them, they turn to Aggada for consolation'.

Difficult economic conditions may, indeed, explain why R. Isaac himself stayed for a while in Babylon, where he attended the Academy of Rav Nahman.

[Rashi, in Pes. 114a, says that the Rabbi Isaac mentioned in Aggadah is Rabbi Isaac ben Phineas. Consequently our R. Isaac might be R. Isaac the Aggadist, a Palestinian Amora, active early in the 4th century CE—Ed.]

KING DAVID — THE RABBINICAL SCHOLAR

The portraits of biblical heroes and personages sketched by talmudic Rabbis and aggadic homilists are strangely divergent from what the Bible and its effervescent narratives delineate.

A classic example of the contrast is King David, who, to judge from the Books of Samuel and Chronicles, rightly earns the epithet of

for I am poor and needy, (2) Keep my soul, for I am pious . . ." In our Talmud edition, the Gemara actually only gives the word לָדוּד (of David) of the first verse and the first half of the second. Different homiletical interpretations are given these words by two Sages. One says that David meant: *Am I not pious? While other kings sleep in comfort, I get up at midnight to serve You with songs and praise.* The other interpretation is similar, but, instead of stressing David's role as a religious poet, it presents him as a 'rabbinical' scholar, as it were, going to great personal trouble to solve halachic problems, and delicate, individual problems, at that. The Gemara singles out for mention that David busied himself with the problem of ritual uncleanness in women (cf. Lev. XII, 2 ff. and XVIII, 19), which entails examining blood and other discharges; this to illustrate that he did not spare himself unpleasant, certainly unroyal, occupations, accepting them as a pious duty towards his people. Still in aggadic style, the Gemara goes on to depict his extreme humility. David is reported as saying that in all matters he took counsel with his master Mephibosheth, without being ashamed to show ignorance. Incidentally, the words '*Did I convict well, did I acquit well?*' show that David was concerned not only with questions of ritual (as that of impurity) but also with civil and criminal law.

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רבונו של עולם! לא חסיד אני? שכל מלכי מזרח ומערב ישנים עד שלש שעות ואני - "חצות לילה אקים להודות לך!" ואיך - כך אמר דוד לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא: רבונו של עולם, לא חסיד אני? שכל מלכי מזרח ומערב יושבים אנדות אנדות בכבודם, ואני - ידי מלכלכות בדם ובשפיר ובשליא כדי לטהר אשה לבעלה! ולא עוד, אלא כל מה שאני עושה אני נמלקה במפיבשת רבי, ואומר לו: מפיבשת רבי, יפה דנתתי יפה חיבתתי יפה זפיתתי יפה טהרתתי יפה טמאתתי ולא בשתי. אמר

spoke David before the Holy One, blessed be He: Lord of the universe, am I not pious? While all the kings of the East and of the West sleep until the third hour, I, at midnight I rise and give thanks unto Thee. The other: Thus spoke David before the Holy One, blessed be He: Am I not pious? While all the kings of the East and of the West sit among companies in their glory, I, my hands are soiled with blood, with the foetus and with the placenta, to make the wife clean for her husband. And what is more, in all that I do, I take counsel with my master Mephibosheth, and I say to him: My master Mephibosheth, did I judge well, did I convict well, did I acquit well, did I well declare clean, did I well declare unclean? —

of 'the son of the blacksmith' (R. Johanan ben Nappaha).

In his aggadic discourses, R. Isaac endeavoured to elevate the morale of the downtrodden Jews. The signs of the times in the second half of the third century in Palestine are reflected in allusions to the extreme poverty, the hunger and hardships inflicted by the occupying Romans, which were the lot of most of his coreligionists. This, furthermore, is one of the main reasons why Aggada was so popular in the Holy Land, for, in the words of R. Isaac, 'When people are impoverished and suffer from those who govern them, they turn to Aggada for consolation'.

Difficult economic conditions may, indeed, explain why R. Isaac himself stayed for a while in Babylon, where he attended the Academy of Rav Nahman.

[Rashi, in Pes. 114a, says that the Rabbi Isaac mentioned in Aggadah is Rabbi Isaac ben Phineas. Consequently our R. Isaac might be R. Isaac the Aggadist, a Palestinian Amora, active early in the 4th century CE—Ed.]

KING DAVID — THE RABBINICAL SCHOLAR

The portraits of biblical heroes and personages sketched by talmudic Rabbis and aggadic homilists are strangely divergent from what the Bible and its effervescent narratives delineate.

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uninterrupted study, we are told, prevented the Angel of Death from seizing his soul, and, in the end, it was only when David's attention was diverted from his learning, that death overtook him. The mystic figure of King David, rising at the midnight hour to the wondrous melody of his harp, whispering in the wind, has adorned Jewish lore and legend for eighteen centuries and longer. It is just this impression of David that has lived on in Judaism, all down that pathway of time, through Talmud, Midrash and Zohar to modern 'fairy tale'.

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Reverting now to the subject of David and Mephibosheth, the Gemara says that the latter is really named Ish Bosheth, but is called Mephibosheth, which means literally 'from my mouth — humiliation', because he humbled David in Halachah, that is, David was made to feel inferior to him in halachic knowledge. The Gemara continues that for this exercise of humility David was rewarded with Kilcab, his son, who was superior even to Mephibosheth in halachic scholarship. This Kilcab, says R. Johanan, was really named Daniel, but he is called Kilcab because he, now, shamed Mephibosheth in Halachah; this is implied by the word *kile'av*, and is explained by Rashi as follows: the word *כלאב*, composed of *כל* and *אב*, carries a phonetic allusion to *מכלים אב*, shaming the father. *Father* here refers not to David, but to Mephibosheth, who was a 'father of teaching'. Be this as it may, Kilcab's superior knowledge was a source of joy to his father, wherefore the Aggada cites appropriate verses from Proverbs (XXIII, 15; XXVII, 11), expressing David's pride in his son's wisdom.

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פני מפיבשת בהלכה, ועליו אמר שלמה בהקמתו:
 "בני אם חכם לך ישמח לבי גם אני", ואומר:
 "חכם בני ישמח לבי ואשיבה חרפי לך".

name but Daniel was his name. Why then is he referred to by the name of Kileab? — Because he shamed the face of Mephibosheth in Halachah. And concerning him Solomon said in his wisdom: "My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine". And he also said: "My son, be wise, and make my heart glad, that I may answer him that reproacheth

Students may wish to have further details on the biblical background of the personalities of Mephibosheth *alias* Ish Bosheth and Kileab/Daniel. If we turn to Rashi for guidance, we see that biblical references are given there only for the person of Kileab/Daniel. And indeed 2 Sam. III, 3 mentions a Kileab as the second son of David by Abigail, wife of Nabal the Carmelite, and 1 Chron. III, 1 mentions a Daniel as the second son of David by Abigail the Carmelitess, which would seem to establish the biblical identity of Kileab/Daniel satisfactorily. On the biblical identification of Mephibosheth and Ish Bosheth, Rashi is silent; this is remarkable, as it is usually true that, where Rashi has no comment, none is needed; the suggestion is that the text in question is sufficiently self-explanatory. It could be said that the identification of Mephibosheth with Ish Bosheth is to some extent self-explanatory, the main element of both names being 'bosheth', a superficial indication that they were the same person; and perhaps this was why Rashi saw no need for comment here, whereas, in the case of Kileab/Daniel, as the names are altogether different, one seemed called for. And yet Tosaphoth do enter into the problems of the identity of Mephibosheth with Ish Bosheth in the Bible; not here, but in Yev. 79a, to which reference is made by an incidental marginal note on our Talmud page. The Gemara there deals with the story of Saul's seven sons, who were handed over by David to the Gibeonites and put to death (2 Sam. XXI, 1-14). As one of the seven, the Bible (*loc. cit.*, verse 8) mentions by name a Mephibosheth who was Saul's son by his concubine Rizpa bath Aiah. Another Mephibosheth, whom David spared from death, is mentioned in the same biblical account; he was a son of Saul's son Jonathan. Tosaphoth, citing the view of Rabbenu Tam, now say that the Mephibosheth mentioned in our Gemara as the teacher of David was the first Mephibosheth (Saul's son by Rizpa bath Aiah, not his grandson). Tosaphoth further

point out that the version of our Gemara text, which has Ish Bosheth as an alternative name for Mephibosheth, is incorrect, and suggests that instead of Ish Bosheth the text should read Eshbaal. Eshbaal is, indeed, mentioned as a son of Saul in 1 Chron. VIII, 33, and IX, 39. Tosaphoth's criticism of the current version of the text is based on the following argument: about Ish Bosheth, a son of Saul, we read in 2 Sam. II-IV, that he challenged David's right to the kingdom, fought against him, and was then murdered early in David's reign. It would thus appear unlikely that he could have been the teacher of David described in our aggadic story. The possibility that Mephibosheth II (Jonathan's son and Saul's grandson) might have been David's teacher is also ruled out by Tosaphoth, on the ground that we find no scriptural support to indicate that this Mephibosheth II was alternatively called Ish Bosheth (as would have to be the case if the current version of the Gemara were correct) or Eshbaal (if Rabbenu Tam was right). From 1 Chron. VIII, 34, and IX, 40, we see that Mephibosheth II had, in fact, the alternative name Merib-Baal (or Meri-Baal); this finds support in 2 Sam. IX, 12, where Mephibosheth II (son of Jonathan) appears as the father of Mica, just as Merib-Baal (or Meri-Baal) in the verses of Chronicles appears as the son of Jonathan and the father of Mica. Nowhere does he appear as Ish Bosheth. And yet MaHaRSha (Samuel E. Edels, 1555-1631) believes that Mephibosheth II was the teacher of David and that our Talmud text should be corrected to read that Mephibosheth was Merib-Baal (or Meri-Baal). It is clear that we are not even near a satisfactory solution to the problem. The student can, of course, continue the search and examine the wider biblical literature, the Septuaginta, the Targumim and the Bible commentaries, for suggestions that might help to settle the probable identification of the Aggada's Mephibosheth, teacher of David. As the Gemara text stands, simply stating that

פְּנֵי מְפִיבֹשֶׁת בְּהִלָּכָה, וְעָלָיו אָמַר שְׁלֹמֹה בְּחֻקְמָתוֹ:
 "בְּנֵי אִם חָכְמָה לְבָד יִשְׁמַח לְבִי גַם אֲנִי", וְאוֹמֵר:
 "חָכְמָה בְּנֵי וְשִׂמְחָה לְבִי וְאֲשִׁיבָה הָרָפִי דְבָר".

name but Daniel was his name. Why then is he referred to by the name of Kileab? — Because he shamed the face of Mephibosheth in Halachah. And concerning him Solomon said in his wisdom: "My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine". And he also said: "My son, be wise, and make my heart glad, that I may answer him that reproacheth

Students may wish to have further details on the biblical background of the personalities of Mephibosheth *alias* Ish Bosheth and Kileab/Daniel. If we turn to Rashi for guidance, we see that biblical references are given there only for the person of Kileab/Daniel. And indeed 2 Sam. III, 3 mentions a Kileab as the second son of David by Abigail, wife of Nabal the Carmelite, and 1 Chron. III, 1 mentions a Daniel as the second son of David by Abigail the Carmelitess, which would seem to establish the biblical identity of Kileab/Daniel satisfactorily. On the biblical identification of Mephibosheth and Ish Bosheth, Rashi is silent; this is remarkable, as it is usually true that, where Rashi has no comment, none is needed; the suggestion is that the text in question is sufficiently self-explanatory. It could be said that the identification of Mephibosheth with Ish Bosheth is to some extent self-explanatory, the main element of both names being 'bosheth', a superficial indication that they were the same person; and perhaps this was why Rashi saw no need for comment here, whereas, in the case of Kileab/Daniel, as the names are altogether different, one seemed called for. And yet Tosaphoth do enter into the problems of the identity of Mephibosheth with Ish Bosheth in the Bible; not here, but in Yev. 79a, to which reference is made by an incidental marginal note on our Talmud page. The Gemara there deals with the story of Saul's seven sons, who were handed over by David to the Gibeonites and put to death (2 Sam. XXI, 1-14). As one of the seven, the Bible (*loc. cit.*, verse 8) mentions by name a Mephibosheth who was Saul's son by his concubine Rizpa bath Aiah. Another Mephibosheth, whom David spared from death, is mentioned in the same biblical account; he was a son of Saul's son Jonathan. Tosaphoth, citing the view of Rabbenu Tam, now say that the Mephibosheth mentioned in our Gemara as the teacher of David was the first Mephibosheth (Saul's son by Rizpa bath Aiah, not his grandson). Tosaphoth further

point out that the version of our Gemara text, which has Ish Bosheth as an alternative name for Mephibosheth, is incorrect, and suggests that instead of Ish Bosheth the text should read Eshbaal. Eshbaal is, indeed, mentioned as a son of Saul in 1 Chron. VIII, 33, and IX, 39. Tosaphoth's criticism of the current version of the text is based on the following argument: about Ish Bosheth, a son of Saul, we read in 2 Sam. II-IV, that he challenged David's right to the kingdom, fought against him, and was then murdered early in David's reign. It would thus appear unlikely that he could have been the teacher of David described in our aggadic story. The possibility that Mephibosheth II (Jonathan's son and Saul's grandson) might have been David's teacher is also ruled out by Tosaphoth, on the ground that we find no scriptural support to indicate that this Mephibosheth II was alternatively called Ish Bosheth (as would have to be the case if the current version of the Gemara were correct) or Eshbaal (if Rabbenu Tam was right). From 1 Chron. VIII, 34, and IX, 40, we see that Mephibosheth II had, in fact, the alternative name Merib-Baal (or Meri-Baal); this finds support in 2 Sam. IX, 12, where Mephibosheth II (son of Jonathan) appears as the father of Mica, just as Merib-Baal (or Meri-Baal) in the verses of Chronicles appears as the son of Jonathan and the father of Mica. Nowhere does he appear as Ish Bosheth. And yet MaHaRSha (Samuel E. Edels, 1555-1631) believes that Mephibosheth II was the teacher of David and that our Talmud text should be corrected to read that Mephibosheth was Merib-Baal (or Meri-Baal). It is clear that we are not even near a satisfactory solution to the problem. The student can, of course, continue the search and examine the wider biblical literature, the Septuaginta, the Targumim and the Bible commentaries, for suggestions that might help to settle the probable identification of the Aggada's Mephibosheth, teacher of David. As the Gemara text stands, simply stating that

Reflections on a Year of Liberal Judaism

I propose a journal-like series of essays loosely grouped by both chronology--the yearly cycle--and by topic. Time and subject will doubtlessly vary. My model will be A Journey in Ladakh by Andrew Harvey. Unlike Harvey, I will not have the structure of physical journey. And, indeed, I will avoid auto-biography and mostly I will avoid telling about my interactions with others. But not altogether. I will chart my course in a year--June 1, 1995 to June 1, 1996. And I will aim to make it a book.

The model of journal helps me to avoid reformism--telling others how to live. This structure also exhibits one of my strengths--the op-ed piece.

The difficulty is sustaining enough organized thought to make any intellectual progress. My growth will be measured not in a deepened inner life alone, but also in a deepened account of my Judaism. Particularly I must come to grips with orthodoxy and Talmud. So arbitrary flakes of insight are not enough.

What I intend is to rewrite over time by topic. The raw material will be more journal-like--the finished product more essay-like.

I begin with a question sparked by the interaction of two books--Journey, above, and The Jew and the Lotus(?) Is there anything in liberal Judaism that can nourish a person? We liberal Jews fear that our children will become Buddhists. Well, are there any reasons beyond nostalgia and a sense of guilt why they should not? I am 43 years old as I begin this journal, relatively

conversant with Jewish learning and practice, and I am skeptical of the answer. Even the way I put the question is evidence of how deteriorated liberal Judaism is. Still, I am going to spend the next year trying hard to find deep value in my tradition.

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