

TOPICS AND THEMES IN RABBINIC LITERATURE

TORAH

1. Abot de-Rabbi Natan (A) 41

- [A] Rabbi Simeon (fl. ca. 140-170) says: There are three crowns [granted Israel], and these are they: the crown of Torah, the crown of priesthood and the crown of kingship.
- [B] --and the crown of a good name rises above these.
- [C] The crown of priesthood, how is it? Even if one gives [all] the silver and gold in the world they do not give him the crown of priesthood, as it is written: "It shall be for him [Phineas] and for his sons after him, an eternal covenant of priesthood" (Num. 25:13).
- [D] The crown of kingship: even if one gives all the silver and money in the world they do not give him the crown of kingship, as it is written: "And David my servant is prince for them forever" (Ezek. 37:25).
- [E] But the crown of Torah is not so: the work of Torah [is such that] anyone who wishes to take it up may come and take it up, as it is written, "O all who thirst get yourselves water" (Isaiah 55:1).

2. Abot de-Rabbi Natan (A) 41

- [A] Labor in the words of Torah (*dibre torah*), and do not engage in wasteful things (*dibre battalah*).
- [B] An event happened regarding R. Simeon b. Yohai (same as preceding) who was visiting the sick and found one man swollen and laid down do to a disease of his innards, and he was saying blasphemous things before the Holy One blessed be He.
- [C] He [R. Simeon] said to him: Good for nothing! You should be asking mercy for yourself, and you are saying blasphemous things?
- [D] Said he, May the Holy One blessed be He himself remove [my malady] from me and put it upon you.
- [E] Said he, The Holy one Blessed be He has done properly with me for I left the words of Torah and was engaged in wasteful things. (Reading follows Oxford MS)

3. Abot de-Rabbi Natan (A) 11 (p. 46)

- [A] And hate mastership (or: rabbinate) (m. Abot 1:10)
- [B] How? It teaches that one should not place a crown upon one's own head, but others may place it upon him, as it is written: "Let a stranger praise you, but not *your* mouth, a foreigner, but not *your* lips" (Prov. 27:20).
- [C] Said R. Aqiba (fl. ca. 100-130): Anyone who elevates himself upon [the basis of] words of Torah, what his he like? Like a carcass (*nebelah*) thrown on the road: every passerby puts his hand to his nose and proceeds to get far away from it. As it is written: "If you have been foolish in exalting yourself, if you have schemed put your hand to your mouth." (Prov. 30:32).

- [D] Ben Azzai (fl. ca. 100-130) said: Interpret it (i.e. Prov. 30:32) from its own context.
(This clause is missing in manuscripts and early editions.)
- [E] If a man disgraces (*menabel*) himself upon [the basis of] words of Torah, and eats dates and carob and wears filthy clothing and sits and keeps watch at the door of the sages, every passerby says: perhaps this is an imbecile. In the end you find all of the Torah with him
- [F] R. Yose (fl. ca. 140-170) says: Go down [and thereby go] up; up [and thereby] down:
- [G] Anyone who elevates himself upon [the basis of] words of Torah, his end is that they cast him down; and anyone who casts himself down upon [the basis of] words of Torah, his end is that they

4. Ex. Rabbah 6:2

- [A] *And God spoke to Moses [and said to him I am the Lord]* (Exodus 6:2).
- [B] This [corresponds to] what is written “For oppression (root: ‘shq) will confuse a wise man, and a gift will destroy the heart (=soul, mind, etc)” (Eccl. 7:7).
- [C] When a sage engages (root ‘sq) in many things they distract him from wisdom,
- [D] *and a gift will destroy the heart*, [i.e. will distract him] from Torah which is given as a gift in the heart of man.
- [E] Another interpretation: *For oppression will confuse a wise man*, a sage who engages in the needs of the community will forget what he has studied.
- [F] Said R. Joshua b. Levi (Pal. I): R. Judah b. Pazi (Pal. IV?) taught me sixty laws connected with [the impurity resulting from] plowing over a grave, and I have forgotten all of them because I engaged in the needs of the community.

5. Babli Yoma 86a

- [A] How does the desecration of the [divine] Name come about?
- [B] Said Rab (Babyl., I): I for instance, if I buy meat from a butcher and don’t pay immediately.
.....
- [C] Said R. Yohanan: I, for instance, when I walk without Torah and without tefillin.
- [D] Yishaq of the house of R. Yannai said: Anyone whose fellows are embarrassed about his reputation.
- [E] Rab Nahman b. Yishaq (Babyl. IV)): For instance when people say: May his master permit (i.e. forgive) so and so.
- [F] Abbaye (Babyl. IV) said: As was taught in a baraita:
- [G] *And you shall love the Lord your God*, that the name of Heaven be loved by your agency:
- [H] that he read [Torah] and recites [Mishnah], and that he serve sages, and that his dealings with people be with a calm spirit.
- [I] What do people say about him? Happy is his father who taught him Torah, his master who taught him Torah. Woe unto those who have not studied Torah. So and so, who has studied (?) Torah, see how beautiful are his ways, how proper his actions. About him the Scripture says: “And he [God] said to me: You are my servant Israel in whom I shall glory” (Isaiah 49:3).

- [J] But he who reads and recites and serves sages, but his dealings with people are not honest, and his speech is not with people calm,
- [K] What do people say about him? Woe to the father who taught him Torah, woe to the teacher who taught him Torah. So and so, who has studied Torah, see how crooked are his deeds, how ugly are his ways. And about him Scripture says: “[And they (Heb. sing.) came to the gentiles [as exiles] and [thereby (?)] profaned my name, [for the nations] will say regarding them: These are the people of the Lord, and they have come out from his land” (Ezek. 36:20).

6. Babli Ta’anit 20b

- [A] The disciples of Rab Ada bar Ahaba (Babyl. II or IV) asked him: How did you live a long time?
- [B] He said to them: All my days I did not get angry in my house, and did not walk ahead of one greater than me, and I did not think [polluted thoughts (?)] in polluted alleyways, and I did not walk four cubits without Torah or without tefillin, and I did not sleep either fixed sleep or casual sleep in the study house, and I did not call my fellow by a nick name [given by me]; some say: [I did not call my fellow] by a by-name [given by others]. (Last sentence follows ‘Aruk.)

STATUS

7. Abot de-Rabbi Natan (A) 41

- [A] An event happened regarding R. Simeon b. Eleazar (fl. ca.170-200), who was coming from Migdal Eder, from his master’s house, and who was riding an ass and was travelling along the coast of the sea. He saw a man who was very ugly.
- [B] He said to him: Good for nothing! How ugly you are! Perhaps the inhabitants of your town are as ugly as you are!
- [C] He [the man] said to him: What shall I do? [You] go to the craftsman who made me and tell him, How ugly is this vessel which you made.
- [D] Since R. Simeon b. Eleazar knew that he sinned he got off his ass and spread out before him.
- [E] He [R. Simeon b. Eleazar] said to him, I submit myself to you, forgive me.
- [F] Said he, I will not forgive you until you go to the craftsman who made me and tell him, How ugly is this vessel which you made.
- [G] He [R. Simeon] ran after him for three miles.
- [H] The residents of the town came out to greet him and said: Peace unto you, master (*rabbi*).
- [I] Said he [the ugly man] to them: Whom do you call master?
- [J] Said they: The one travelling behind you.
- [K] Said he: If this is a master (i.e. a *rab*), may [others] like him not multiply (*yirbu*) in Israel.
- [L] Said they to him: Heaven forbid! What did he do to you?
- [M] Said he to them: Thus and so did he do to me.
- [N] Said they to him: Even so, forgive him.

- [O] Said he to them: I hereby forgive him on condition that he not be of the habit of behaving thus.
- [P] On that day R. Simeon entered his great study house and taught:
- [Q] May a man forever be soft as a reed and not hard as a cedar:
- [R] What is this reed? All the winds come and blow on it and it goes to and fro with them, but after the winds have quieted the reed returns [and] stands in its place. And what is the end of this reed? This reed has merited that a pen be taken from it to write the book of the Torah.
- [S] But a cedar, when a southerly wind blows it uproots it and turns it on its face. And what is the end of this cedar? [Wood] choppers come and chop it up and roof over houses with it, and the rest they throw into the fire.
- [T] From here did they say: May a man forever be soft as a reed and not hard as a cedar.

8. Babli Shabbat 114a

And a Tanna of the house of R. Ishmael [taught]: [“And he [Aaron] shall take off his clothes and wear other clothes” (Lev. 16:23)] has taught you general behavior (*derek ’eres*): clothing in which he has cooked a pot for his master, let him not pour a cup for his master.

9. Babli Shabbat 114a

Said R. Hiyya b. Abba, said R. Yohanan: It is demeaning for a sage to go out to the market place in patched shoes.

10. Babli Shabbat 114a

- [A] And said R. Hiyya b. Abba, said R. Yohanan: Every sage who has a grease stain on his garment is liable to death,
- [B] as it is written: “All who hate me loved death” (Prov. 8:36)
- [C] do not read “who hate me” (*mesan’ai*) but “who cause [others] to hate me” (*masni’ai*)

11. Babli Shabbat 114a

- [A] And said R. Hiyya b. Abba, said R. Yohanan: Why is it written: “As my servant Isaiah went about naked and barefoot [it is a sign and evidence for Egypt and Ethiopia]”?
- [B] *Naked*, with worn clothing;
- [C] *and barefoot*, with patched shoes.

12. Babli Shabbat 114a

And said R. Yohanan: Who is the [type of] sage to whom they return lost objects by [mere statement of] recognition (i.e. without having to prove ownership by giving its distinguishing characteristics)? He who is particular about his garment, turning it [nice side out].

13. Babli Shabbat 114a

And said R. Yohanan: Who is the sage whom they appoint an administrator over the public? The one whom they ask any question from what ever place and he answers, even from tractate Kalah

14. Babli Shabbat 114a

And said R. Yohanan: Who is the sage for whom the town residents are required to do his work? The one who leaves his own work and takes up the work of heaven

15. Babli Gittin 59b-60a

- [A] The Galilleans sent to R. Helbo (Pal. III): After them [the priest and levite] who is called [to the Torah?].
- [B] He did not know.
- [C] He came and asked R. Yishaq Napaha (Pal. III).
- [D] He [R. Yishaq] said: (1) After them they call sages who are appointed administrators over the community; (2) and after them sages who are worthy of being appointed administrators over the community; (3) and after them sages whose fathers served as administrators over the community, (4) and after them heads of synagogues and (5?) every man.

THE ACADEMY

16. Tosepta Sanhedrin 7:8

- [A] When the Nasi (Prince) enters the entire nation stands on their feet, and they do not sit until he tells them: Sit.
- [B] When the 'Ab Bet Din (Father of the Court) enters they make two lines on this side and that until he enters and sits in his place.
- [C] When the Sage enters one stands up and one sits down until he enters and sits in his place.
- [D] Sages and disciples of sages, when the public has need of them "jump over" even the heads of the people.
- [E] Even though they have said: "It is not to the praise of a sage that he has come in last, if it was necessary that he leave (perhaps: if he needed to go to the bathroom) he may enter and sit in his place

17. Tosepta Sanhedrin 7:9

- [A] The sons of Sages and the disciples of sages, while they have the knowledge to listen, face their fathers; while they do not have the knowledge to listen, they face the people.
- [B] R. Eleazar b. R. Sadoq (fl. ca. 170-200): At the house of a (wedding) party we wedge them in [among the adults (Jastrow)].

18. Tosepta Sanhedrin 7:10

- [A] A sage who has entered, they do not ask him until his mind is settled;
- [B] and so also a disciple of a sage who has entered does not ask until his mind is settled.

- [C] If he came in and found them dealing with halakah, let him not jump in to the conversation until he sits and knows the issue they are dealing with.
- [D] And if he did thus, concerning this it was said: “Seven things were said with regard to sages, and seven with regard to a lump [... (2) and he does not enter the words of his fellows.... And the reverse of these [hold for] the lump)” (m. Abot 5:7).

19. Babli Sota 22a

- [A] It was taught [in a baraita]: The reciters [of the Mishnah and other tannaitic material in (Babylonian) academies] destroy the world.
- [B] Might you think that? (i.e. how can you possibly mean that!)
- [C] Said Rabina (Babyl., several by this name): [That is, reciters] who make legal rulings on the basis of what they have learnt.
- [D] It was also taught thus [in a baraita]:
- [E] Said R. Joshua (fl. ca. 70-100): are they destroyers of the world? Lo, they set the world in order!, as it is said: “The ancient ways (*halikot ‘olam*) are his (God’s)” (Habakuk 3:6; reading *halakot*, Mishnaic traditions, for *halikot*, and interpreting *‘olam* as “the world” this tradition derives the reading “[the one who teaches] *halakot* the world is for (i.e. because of?) him).

20. Babli Ta’anit 20a

- [A] Said Raba (Babyl. IV; founded academy in Mahoza) to Rapram b. Pappa (Babyl. IV): Let sir tell me what kinds of good deeds Rab Huna (Babyl. II; head of the Sura academy).
- [B] Said he to him: In his youth I do not remember,
- [C] But in his old age I remember that every cloudy day they would take him out in a golden carriage and he would travel over the whole territory, and every frame-wall that was weak, he would take it down; if it was possible for the owner to build it he would build it, but if it was not possible for the owner he would build it from his own [pocket]; and every Friday afternoon he would send a messenger to the market, and all the vegetables that were left over to the gardeners he would buy and throw into the river ((aside:) let him give them to the poor! sometimes they depend on produce being available and won’t buy their own (and sometimes there will be none left over); let him give them to animals! he held that human food they do not feed to animals); and if he had some kind of medicine he would fill a container with it and hang it at the rear of his house and say: All who wish let them come and take (there are some who say: In the case of a demon (*shibta’*) he would decide and leave out a container of water and hang it and say: All who wish let them come and enter so as not to be endangered); and when he would hold a meal he would open his gates and say: Anyone who needs, let him come and eat.
- [D] Said Raba: All these things I have done too, except this last one, because there are many people in Mahoza.

VIEW OF NON-RABBIS

21. Lev. Rabba 9:3

Note the formality with which R. Yannai addresses “well dressed stranger,” E, and the familiarity of the stranger towards him, I. Next note the rabbi’s tone in J. How might this add to dramatic tension in the story?

- [A] Another interpretation: [*He who slaughters a thank-offering honors me*] and *he who places (sam) on the road (i.e. sets him self on the correct path?) [to him I shall show the salvation of God]* (Psalms 50:23).
- [B] Said R. Yannai: *Sham* (not *sam*) is written: it is like one who evaluates his ways (lit. roads) much. (or: the evaluation of one’s ways is worth much).
- [C] It happened with respect to R. Yannai that he was walking on the road.
- [D] He met a man who was quite well dressed.
- [E] He [R. Yannai] said to him: Would sir deign to be received at my house?
- [F] He said to him: Whatever pleases you.
- [G] He [R. Yannai] brought him into his house, he examined him in Scripture, and did not find him [educated]; he examined him in Mishnah and did not find him [educated]; in *talmud* and did not find him educated; in *haggadah* and did find him educated.
- [H] Said he [R. Yannai] to him: Say the blessing [after the meal].
- [I] Said he to him: Let Yannai bless in his own house.
- [J] Said he [R. Yannai] to him: Are you capable of saying what I say to you?
- [K] Said he to him: Yes.
- [L] Said he to him: Say: “A dog has eaten the bread of Yannai.
- [M] He [the guest] got up;
- [N] said he [the guest] to him: What is your claim to my inheritance that you are trying to deprive me of?
- [O] Said he [R. Yannai] to him: What inheritance of yours am I holding?
- [P] Said he to him: That which the children say: “God has commanded us a Torah, [an inheritance for the congregation of Jacob]” (Deut. 33:4).
- [Q] “The congregation of Yannai” is not written here, but “the congregation of Jacob.”
- [R] When they had become reconciled to one another he [R. Yannai] said to him: Why did you merit to eat at my table?
- [S] Said he to him: All my days I have never heard a bad word that I did not return to its owner (the implication is that he did not participate in gossip, but the expression is a bit obscure), and I never saw two who were fighting one with another and did not make peace between them.
- [T] Said he [R. Yannai] to him: You have all this proper behavior (lit. way of the land), and I called you a dog!

22. Babli Pesahim 49a

- [A] It was taught [in a baraita]: R. Simeon (fl. ca. 140-70) says: Any meal that is not one of *miswa*, no sage is permitted to derive benefit from it.
- [B] Like what? (I.e. what are meals that are not of *miswa*?)
- [C] Said R. Yohanan: like [the feast celebrating] a priest’s daughter marrying an Israelite man, or the daughter of a sage marrying an ‘*am ha-’ares*.

23. Babli Berakot 43b

- [A] Our masters taught [in a baraita]: Six things are disgraceful for a sage:
- [B] Let him not go out to the market place perfumed;
- [C] let him not go out alone at night;
- [D] let him not go out with patched shoes;
- [E] let him not converse with a woman in the market place;
- [F] let him not partake of a meal in an association of *'ame ha-'ares*;
- [G] and let him not come last into the study house.
- [H] There are some who say: Let him not take large steps;
- [I] and let him not stand upright.

24. Babli Berakot 47b

This passage includes both tannaitic traditions (indented), discussion by Amoraim and Stammaitic expansion. Consider what one means when one refers to an *'am ha-'ares* in the various traditions: there is more than one definition! How do you account for this? You should compare the baraita in N-S to the next two passages. Note also that in the final part of the passage, U-Z, the person whose status as an *'am ha-'ares* bears the title Rab. Finally, Rashi explained the expression “served the sages” (S, W) as giving interpretive explanations (as opposed to memorization of traditions). Does this fit the context in S? in W?

Mishnah: One may include a Samaritan (*Kuti*) in a quorum for grace after meals.

- [A] Why? Let him be just like an *'am ha-'ares*,
 - [B] and it is taught [in a baraita]:
 - They do not include an *'am ha-'ares* in a quorum!
 - [C] Abbaye said: The Mishnah is talking about a Samaritan who is a *haber* (lit. a fellow, one who undertook to observe certain priestly purity rules in his everyday life).
 - [D] Raba said: Even if you say [that the Mishnah deals with] a Samaritan who is an *'am ha-'ares*; here (in B, which apparently contradicts the Mishnah) we are dealing with an *'am ha-'ares* as defined by the Rabbis
 - [E] For it was taught [in a baraita]:
 - [F] Who is an *'am ha-'ares*?
 - [G] One who does not eat his regular food in purity,
 - [H] the words of R. Meir.
 - [I] And the Sages say: Anyone who does not tithe his produce,
 - [J] And lo, the Samaritans indeed tithe, as it is pointed out that what is written in the Torah they indeed are careful about.
 - [K] As sir said [in a baraita]:
 - [L] Every commandment that the Samaritans have held to they are much more careful about observing than Israel.
- (We can conclude, according to Raba, that there is no contradiction between the Mishnah and the baraita in B, since the baraita does not exclude Samaritans.)
- [M] Our masters taught [in a baraita]:
 - [N] Who is an *'am ha-'ares*?
 - [O] Whoever does not read *shema* ‘ evening and morning,
 - [P] the words of R. Eliezer (fl. ca. 70-100).

- [Q] R. Joshua (fl. ca. 70-100) says: Anyone who does not put on *tefillin*.
- [R] Ben Azzai (fl. ca. 100-30) says: Anyone who does not have *sisit* on his garment.
- [S] Others say: Even if he read [Torah], and recited [Mishnah] but did not serve sages, lo, this is an '*am ha-'ares*.'
- [T] Said Rab Huna: The law follows the "others"
- [U] Rami b. Hama (Babyl. IV) did not include Rab Menashia b. Tahlifa, who recited Sifra and Sifre and halakot (=Mishnah), in a quorum for grace after meals.
- [V] When Rami b. Hama died Raba said Rami b. Hama died only because he did not include R. Menashia b. Tahlifa in a quorum for grace after meals.
- [W] But was it not taught: Others say: Even if he read [Torah], and recited [Mishnah] but did not serve sages, lo, this is an '*am ha-'ares* (=S, above)?
- [X] Rab Menashia b. Tahlifa is different for he served our masters.
- [Y] It was Rami b. Hama who was not precise (i.e. he did not investigate his qualifications).
- [Z] Another version: Rab Menashia b. Tahlifa heard traditions from the mouths of the sages and memorized them and [therefore] is like a disciple of sages.

25. Babli Sota 22a

- [A] It was stated: He read [Torah] and he recited [Mishnah] but he did not serve the sages:
- [B] R. Eleazar (Pal. III) says: Lo, this is an "*am ha-'ares*;
- [C] R. Samuel b. Nahmani (Pal. III) says: Lo, this is a boor;
- [D] R. Yannai (Pal. II) says: Lo, this is a Samaritan,
- [E] Rab Aha b. Ya'aqob (Babyl. III) says: Lo, this is a magus (!).
- [F] Said Rab. Nahman b. Yishaq (Babyl. IV): Rab Aha b. Ya'aqob makes sense, for people say: The magus mumbles but does not know what he says; the tanna (the reciter in the academy) recites, but does not know what he says.

26. Babli Sota 22a

- [A] Our masters taught [in a baraita]:
- [B] Who is an '*am ha-'ares*'?
- [C] Whoever does not read *shema* ' evening and morning with its blessings,
- [D] the words of R. Eliezer.
- [E] R. Joshua says: Anyone who does not put on *tefillin*.
- [F] Ben Azzai says: Anyone who does not have *sisit* on his garment.
- [G] R. Yonatan b. Yosep says: He who has children and does not raise them to learn Torah.
- [H] Others say: Even if he read [Torah], and recited [Mishnah] but did not serve sages, lo, this is an '*am ha-'ares*.'
- [I] About him did Scripture say: "I shall sow the house of Israel and the House of Judah with the seeds of man and the seeds of beasts" (Jeremiah 31:26). (Apparently "seeds of man" is taken to refer to those raise their children to study, and "seeds of beasts" to those who do not.)

27. Babli Menahot 53a

- [A] Our masters told R. Perida (Pal. III): R. Ezra the grandson of R. Abtolas, the tenth generation from R. Eleazar b. Azariah (fl. ca. 100-130), the tenth generation from Ezra, is standing at the gate.
- [B] He said to them: Why all this [pedigree]? If he is knowledgeable (lit. a son of Torah) it is fitting; and if he is both knowledgeable and has lineage it is fitting; but if he has lineage but is not knowledgeable let flames take him!
- [C] Said they to him: he is knowledgeable.
- [D] Said he to them: Let him enter and come.
- [E] He [R. Ezra] saw that his mind was troubled [so] he opened and said : “(I?) have said to the Lord you are my lord, my good comes from none but you” (Psalms 16:2). The congregation of Israel said to the Holy One blessed be He: Master of the universe, consider it in my favor that I have made known your name in the world as it is said: “(I?) have said to the Lord you are my lord,” Said he to her [Israel] “My good is not upon you” (an adaptation of Psalms 16:2 above) I only hold it in the favor of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob who first made my name known in the world, as it is says: “ For they are the holy ones who are in the world and the mighty in whom is all my [good] will (Psalms 16:3).
- [F] Since he [R. Perita] heard that he said “mighty” he opened and said: Let the mighty one come and save... let the friend [of God] come... let the good one come....
(If I have read F correctly R. Perita begins a series of homiletical interpretations referring in their openings to God, Solomon and Moses respectively, but which at the same time serve as a welcome for R. Ezra)

NOTE: In E-F I have followed the reading of the commentary attributed to R. Gershom. Rashi read the subject of E as R. Perita and of F as R. Ezra. If I have read E-F correctly, in F R. Perita begins a series of homiletical interpretations referring in their openings to God, Solomon and Moses respectively, but which at the same time serve as a welcome for R. Ezra.

WONDER WORKING

28. Mishnah Ta’anit 3:

To the following tradition compare Josephus *Antiquities* 14: 2.1 (22-4), which discusses a miracle wrought by one Onias. What relationship, if any is there between the stories? Two versions of the story of Honi falling asleep for seventy years may be found in Yerushalmi Ta’anit 3:10 (66d) and Babli Ta’anit 23a-b.

- [A] For every trouble that--may it not--comes upon Israel they blow the shofar over it except for overabundance of rain.
- [B] It happened that they came to Honi the circle maker (or: the roof plasterer) and said to him pray that the rains come.
- [C] Said he to them: Go out and bring in the Passover ovens, so that they not be dissolved.
- [D] He prayed, but rains did not fall.
- [E] What did he do? He drew a circle and stood inside it and said: Master of the universe, your children have turned their faces towards me because I am like a

- member of your household. I swear by your great name that I am not moving from here until you have mercy on your children.
- [F] The rains started to drip (i.e. drizzle).
 - [G] He said: Not thus did I ask, but rain to fill cisterns, cavities and caves!
 - [H] They began to fall with violence.
 - [I] He said: Not thus did I ask but rains of [divine] acceptance, blessing and benefaction.
 - [J] They began to fall appropriately until Israel left Jerusalem and went to the Temple mount because of the rains.
 - [K] They came and said to him: Just as you prayed for them to fall, so pray for them to go away.
 - [L] He said to them: Go out and see if the claiming stone (or: lost people's stone***) has been washed away.
 - [K] Simeon b. Shetah sent to him: If it were not that you are Honi I would place you under a ban, but what shall I do if you are imperious before God (lit. the Place***) and he does your will, like a son who is imperious before his father and he does his will, and about you Scripture says: "Let your mother and father rejoice, and the one who bore you be glad" (Prov. 23: 25).

29. Mishnah Berakot 5:5

The following story appears in at least three versions: The version in the Mishnah is given in somewhat longer form in both Yerushalmi Berakot 5:5 (10d) and Babli Berakot 34b. The Babli tradition, which is the most "fabulous" follows immediately after the Mishnah's story below. How do these compare to the stories in Mt. 8:5-13; Lk7:1-10; Jn 4: 46-53.

- [A] They said about R. Hanina b. Dosa that he would pray for the sick and say this one will live, this one will die.
- [B] They said to him: How do you know?
- [C] He said to them: If my prayer is fixed in my mouth I know it was accepted, but if it was not fixed in my mouth I know that it has been dismembered (i.e. not accepted?).

30. Babli Berakot 34b

- [A] It is taught [in a baraita]: It happened that the son of R. Gamaliel was ill.
- [B] He sent two sages to R. Hanina b. Dosa to pray for mercy for him.
- [C] Since he saw them he went up to his upper storey and asked mercy for him.
- [D] When he came down he said to them: Go because the fever has left him.
- [E] They said to him: Are you a prophet.
- [F] He said to them: I am neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet, but I have this tradition that if my prayer is fixed in my mouth I know it was accepted, but if it was not fixed in my mouth I know that it has been dismembered.
- [G] They sat and wrote down the very time.
- [H] When they came to R. Gamaliel he said to them: By the temple worship! You have neither subtracted nor added. At that very hour the fever left him and he requested water.

31. Tosepta Berakot 3:20

- [A] They said about R. Hanina b. Dosa that he was praying and a serpent bit him.
- [B] His disciples went and found it dead at the entrance to its hole.
- [C] They said: Woe to the man whom the serpent has bitten, woe to the serpent who has bitten R. Hanina b. Dosa.

32. Yerushalmi Ta'anit 3:4 (66c)

- [A] Once they needed to make a fast [for rain in Sepphoris] and no rain fell.
- [B] R. Joshua [b. Levi] (Pal. I) made a fast in the south (Lydda) and rain fell,
- [C] and the Sepphorites were saying: R. Joshua b. Levi made rain fall in the south and R. Hanina stopped the rain in Sepphoris. We need to make a fast for a second time.
- [D] [R. Hanina] sent and brought R. Joshua b. Levi.
- [E] He [R. Hanina] said to him: Would my master mind going out with us for a fast?
- [F] The two went out for a fast and no rain fell.
- [G] He [R. Hanina] went in and said to them it is not R. Joshua b. Levi who brings rain to the Southerners, nor R. Hanina who stops the rain for the Sepphorites; rather the Southerners' hearts are soft, and when they hear a word of Torah they are overcome, but the Sepphorites' hearts are hard, and when they hear a word of Torah they are not overcome.
- [H] When he went in he looked and saw bright air.
- [I] He said: Until now thus? (I.e. is it still not rainy out?)
- [J] Immediately the rain fell,
- [K] and he took a vow not to do this again. (Presumably because he did not like to give the impression that he not God but he made it rain.)
- [L] He said: What shall I say to my creditor (i.e. God to whom he had just made an oath) that he not collect his debt?

33. Babli Mo'ed Qatan 28a

After this story a very similar one follows in the Talmud. However, in that story the ghost of the dead Rabbi reports that the pain involved with death was "like drawing a net out of milk, but if the Holy One blessed be He told me: Go [back] to that world as you were, I would not want to since the terror [of the angel of death] is great."

- [A] Rab Se'orim (Babyl. ***) the brother of Raba was sitting before Raba.
- [B] He saw that he was dying.
- [C] He [Raba] said to him: Let sir tell [the angel of death] not to give me pain.
- [D] He said: Is not sir [Raba] his counsellor (to whom the angel of death will listen)?
- [E] He [Raba] said: Since my constellation has been given over he does not listen to me.
- [F] He [Rab Se'orim] said to Raba: Let sir appear to me [when you have died]
- [G] He appeared to him.
- [H] He asked him: Did you have pain?
- [I] He said to him: Like the scab of a cut.

34. Babli Mo'ed Qatan 28a

[The angel of death] appeared before Rab Sheshet (Babyl. III) in the marketplace. He [Rab Sheshet] said to him: In the market place, like a beast? Come to the house!

- [A] [The angel of death] appeared to Rab Ashi (Babyl. VI).
- [B] He said to him [the angel of death] visit me in thirty days.
- [C] He was reviewing his studies, for they say (in heaven?): Happy is he who comes here with his studies in his hand.
- [D] On day thirty he came.
- [E] He [Rab Ashi] said: Why all this (i.e. what's the rush?)
- [F] [He answered:] The foot of bar Natan is pressing (i.e. it is his time to take over the headship of the academy (?)) and no kingdom overlaps with its fellow by even a hair's breadth.

35. Babli Mo'ed Qatan 28a

- [A] [The angel of death] could not overcome Rab Hisda, because he would not silence his mouth from study.
- [B] He [the angel of death] sat on a cedar in the academy.
- [C] He split the cedar, and he [Rab Hisda] was silent, and he [the angel of death] was able to overcome him.

36. Babli Megilah 29a

- [A] The fathers of Samuel (Babyl. I) and Levi ((?) Pal. I) were praying in the Shap we-yatib synagogue (lit. he [God] slipped away and settled [in Babylonia]) in Nehardea.
- [B] They heard a sound of movement.
- [C] They got up and went out.
- [D] Rab Sheshet (Babyl. III) was sitting in the Shap we-yatib synagogue in Nehardea, and did not go out [in response to a noise]
- [E] The ministering angels came and frightened him.
- [F] He [Rab Sheshet] said before him [God]: One who is ill fated (Rab Sheshet was blind) and one who is not ill fated, who gives way before whom?
- [G] He [God] said to them [the ministering angels]: Leave him alone.

SYNAGOGUES

a. Palestinian Traditions

37. Yerushalmi Sheqalim 2:7 (47a) cf. Babli Yebamot 96b

- [A] ... Thus did it happen:
- [B] There is a synagogue of Tarsians which has a bolt at the top of which is a fastener (see Mishnah 'Erubim 10:10), which R. Eleazar (fl. ca. 130-70) and R. Yose (fl. ca. 130-70) debated so much that they tore the Torah.
- [C] Do you mean *they* tore the Torah? Rather [until] the Torah was torn.
- [D] R. Yose b. Qisama (fl. ca. 100-130?) was there and said: I am surprized if this synagogue was not [on the site of former] idol worship.

38. Yerushalmi Sheqalim 5:6 (49b)

- [A] R. Hama b. Hanina (Pal. III) and R. Hosha'ya (Pal. III) were strolling in those synagogues of Lydda.
- [B] Said R. Hama b. Hanina to R. Hosha'ya: How much money did my fathers sink in here!
- [C] He said to him: How many souls did your fathers sink in here,
- [D] for there were no men to labor in the Torah.

39. Yerushalmi Baba' Mesi'a' 2:9 (8d)

Judah be-Rabbi went into a synagogue; he left his shoes and they "went away." He said: had I not gone to the synagogue my shoes would not have gone.

40. Yerushalmi Baba' Mesi'a' 2:9 (8d)

- [A] R. Yohanan (Pal. II) and R. Yonatan (Pal. II) went to make peace among the towns of the south.
- [B] They entered one synagogue (lit. "place") and found a *hazan* saying (i.e. praying): "The great, mighty, awesome, strong, and powerful God, and they silenced him.
- [C] They said: you do not have he power to add to the form (lit. "coin") which sages have formed for blessings.

50. Yerushalmi Sanhedrin 15:2 (26d)

R. Yohanan (Pal. II) went in to a synagogue, and was collecting crumbs and eating. He said: Let my share be among those who consecrated the moon here last night.

51. Yerushalmi Berakot 2:9 (5:d); Shabbat 1:5 (3a)

- [A] R. Mayasha (Pal. III) and R. Samuel b. Rab Yisshaq (Pal. III) were eating (a ritual meal) in one of the upper synagogues.
- [B] The time for prayer arrived, and R. Samuel b. Rab Yisshaq got up to pray
- [C] Said R. Mayasha to him: Did my master not teach us: If they began [to eat] they do not interrupt [to pray]?
- [D] And [further]: Hizqiya taught: Anyone who is exempt from doing something and does it is called ignoble (*hedyot*; cognate with our "idiot").
- [E] He [R. Samuel] said to him: Did we not learn: "A bride-groom is exempt [from reading the Shema']" (Mishnah Berakot 2:9)--[implying that] a bride-groom, if he wants to [ought to]?
- [F] He [R. Mayasha] said to him: Is that not according to R. Gamaliel (i.e. whose view we do not follow)?
- [G] He said to him: I can answer as R. Gamaliel did, for R. Gamaliel said: "I will not listen to you [and thereby] cancel for myself the kingdom of God [which I experience through reciting the Shema']" (Mishnah Berakot 2:9).

52. Yerushalmi Berakot 5:1 (8d)

- [A] Hona (Pal. IV) said: He who prays in the back (or : behind?) of a synagogue is called wicked, as it is said: "The wicked go about all around" (Ps. 12:9).

- [B] Rab Hona said: Any one who is not in the synagogue in this world does not enter the synagogue in the future to come.
- [C] Said R. Yohanan (Pal. II): He who prays in his house is as if he surrounds himself with an iron wall.
- [D] R. Yohanan's view is changed!
- [E] There (i.e. in another context, cf.4:4 (8b)) R. Abba said R. Hiyya said in the name of R. Yohanan: A person must pray in a place that is designated for prayer,
- [F] but here he said thus (i.e. that praying at *home* is a powerful thing)!
- [G] [There is no conflict:] here [the statement deals] with a person alone; there with the public.
- [H] R. Pinhas (Pal. IV) in the name of R. Hosha'ya (Pal. III): He who prays in the synagogue it is as if he brought a pure meal-offering (*minha*) [in the Temple]
- [I] What is the reason (for the above view?): “[And [the nations] shall bring your brothers as an offering (*minha tehora*)... on my holy mountain Jerusalem, says the Lord] just as the children of Israel shall bring the offering (*minha*) with a pure (*tahor*) vessel” (Isaiah 66:20).
- [J] R. Abbahu (Pal. III) in the name of R. Abbahu (?) [said]: “Seek the Lord where he is to be found [call upon him when he is close]” (Isaiah 55:6).
- [K] Where is he to be found? In the synagogues and in the houses of study.
- [L] “Call upon him when he is close” (Isaiah 55:6).
- [M] Where is he close? [In the synagogues and houses of study].
(The words in brackets are absent in the standard editions of the Yerushalmi, but appear in the Vatican manuscript)
- [N] Said R. Yisshaq b. R. Eleazar (Pal. IV)
- [O] Not only this (above H?), but their God stands next to them.
- [P] What is the reason? “God stands in the congregation of God, in the midst God he shall judge” (Ps. 82:1)
- [Q] Rab Hisda said: He who enters the synagogue must enter within the two doors.
- [R] What is the reason? “Happy is the man who hears me, so as to keep watch at my doors daily, [so as to watch the doorposts of my entrances]” (Prov. 8:34):
- [S] [Scripture says:] My doors, not my door, my door posts, not my door post.
- [T] And if he does this [goes within the two doors], what then?
- [U] It is written there: “For he who has found me has found life” (Prov. 8:35).
- [V] Rab Hona said: He who is going to the synagogue must make his feet light (i.e. must hurry).
- [W] What is the reason? “Let us know, let us chase (hence: hurry) to know the Lord”
- [X] And when he leaves he must walk little [by little].
- [Y] What is the reason? “For you [God] shall count my steps” (Job 14:16).

b. Babylonian Traditions

53. Babli Berakot 7b

- [A] Said R. Yisshaq (Pal. III) to R. Nahman (Babyl. III): Why does sir not come to the synagogue to pray?
- [B] I can't take it (Rashi: I am too weak).

- [C] Let them gather for sir ten men and pray [with you]
- [D] Let sir tell the prayer leader (lit. the messenger of the public) to come and inform him (i.e. you, Rab Nahman) at the time that they are praying.
- [E] He said to him: Why all this (i.e. why the fuss)?
- [F] He said to him because R. Yohanan (Pal. II) said in the name of R. Simeon b. Yohai (ca. 140-170): Why is it written: “And I, may my prayer [come] to you [at] at propitious time” (Psalms 69:14)? When is a propitious time? When the public is praying.

54. Babli Baba’ Batra’ 3b

- [A] ... But if one saw a flaw one may tear down [an existing synagogue first] and [then] build [the new one],
- [B] as in the case of Rab Ashi (Babyl. VI), who saw a flaw in the synagogue of Matta mehasia.
- [C] He tore it down and brought in a bed [for his own private use] and did not take it out until he fixed the gutters.

55. Babli Megillah 26a

- [A] Said R. Samuel b. Nahmani (Pal. III) said R. Yonatan (Pal. II): They only taught [the rules of selling a synagogue] in connection with a synagogue of villages,
- [B] but a synagogue of cities are one may not sell, since [people] come to it on their own (i.e. a large number of people are thought to visit and contribute to it, and therefore all own it).
- [C] Said Rab Ashi: This synagogue in Matta mehasia even though they come to it on their own, since they come in accordance with my wishes, if I wish I may sell it. (Does C mean that Rab Ashi determines who may enter? Or (as Tosapot argued) that when people there donated money it was assumed that it would be left to the discretion of Rab Ashi how to use it?)

56. Babli Megillah 26b

Rami b. Abba (Babyl. III) was building a synagogue. There was [there] that old synagogue. He wanted to tear it down and bring the bricks and beams and use them in (lit. put them into) there (the new one). He sat down (?) and had a question about the ruling of Rab Hisda (i.e. that one can’t tear down an synagogue until after the new one is built)....

57. Babli Pesahim 117b

- [A] Said Rabina (Babyl. VII): I happened to be in Sura before Maremar (Babyl. VI) and a prayer leader (lit. the messenger of the public) lead before him and said [the prayer worded according to the rule] of the elders of Pumbedita, and they were all silencing him.
- [B] He [Maremar] said to them: Leave him be [since] the rule is according to the elders of Pumbedita.
- [C] And they did not silence him.

PATRIARCH

58. Babli Ketubot 103a-b

- [A] Our masters taught: (a baraita)
[B] At the time of the death of R. [Judah the Patriarch] he said: I need my sons.
[C] His sons came in to him.
[D] He said to them: Be careful about the honor of your mother: let a light be burning in its place, and a table set in its place, and a bed made in its place; Joseph of Haifa and Simeon of Efrat served me in my life, they shall serve me in my death.
.....
[E] He said to them: I need the sages.
[F] The sages came in to him.
[G] He said to them: Do not eulogize me in the towns (i.e. but only in the cities?), set up a yeshiba after thirty days (i.e. go back to regular business after only thirty days), let my son Simeon be Sage, my son Gamaliel Nasi (patriarch), and Haninah b. Hama the one seated at the head [of the academy]
.....
[H] He said to them: I need my younger son.
[I] R. Simeon came in to him.
[J] He transmitted to him the orders of wisdom (? *sidre hokmah*)
[K] He said to them: I need my older son.
[L] R. Gamaliel came in to him.
[M] He said to him: My son, hold your patriarchy with grandeur (variant: with blood), cast bile upon the disciples.

59. Yerushalmi Ta'anit 4:2 (6a)

- [A] Samuel and those of the house of Shela would greet R. [Judah the Patriarch I] every day,
[B] and those of the house of Shela would enter first [the patriarch] and seat themselves before him.
[C] They deferred to Samuel and seated him first.
[D] Rab came to there (i.e. Palestine; we expect "from there"), and Samuel deferred to him and seated him [Rab] first.
[E] Those of the house of Shela said: We are in the second place (i.e. our deference to Samuel does not extend to our greeting the patriarch third),
[F] and Samuel accepted sitting third.

60. Yerushalmi Shabbat 12:3 (13c)

- [A] There were two families (?) in Sepphoris: the *bouleutai* (Greek; the members of the town council) and the *pagani* (Latin).
[B] They would greet the patriarch (R. Judah II, Pal. II) every day,
[C] and the *bouleutai* would go in first, and go out first.
[D] The *pagani* went and studied Torah (**lit. got possession of (or: merited) Torah).
[E] They came and wanted to go in first.
[F] They asked R. Simeon b. Laqish (Pal. II).

- [G] R. Simeon b. Laqish asked R. Yohanan (Pal. II).
- [H] R. Yohanan went in and expounded it in the study house of R. Benayya: Even [if we compare obligations due to] a bastard who is a sage and a high priest who is an ignoramus, the bastard who is a sage takes precedence
.....

61. Yerushalmi Shabbat 12:3 (13c)

- [A] Those of the house of R. Hosha'ya (from Tiberias in the North) and of Bar Pazi (from Lydda in the South) would greet the patriarch [R. Judah III] each day,
- [B] and those of the house of R. Hosha'ya would go in first and go out first.
- [C] Those of the house of Bar Pazi went and married themselves to the patriarchate;
- [D] they came and wanted to go in first.
- [E] They asked R. Ami.
- [F] Said R. Ami to them: "And you shall erect the Tabernacle according to its proper fashion" (Ex. 26:30). Is there a proper fashion (the same word, *mishpat*, also means justice) for wood?
- [G] Rather: the board that merited being placed in the North is to be placed in the North; in the South, is to be placed in the South.

62. Yerushalmi Sanhedrin 1:2 (19a)

- [A] Said R. Ba (Abba, Pal. IV, V): In the beginning each [teacher] would appoint (i.e. ordain, authorize to teach or judge) his disciples.
- [B] For example: R. Yohanan b. Zakkai appointed R. Eliezer and R. Joshua, R. Joshua [appointed] R. 'Aqiba, and R. 'Aqiba [appointed] R. Meir and R. Simeon.
- [C] R. Meir sat first; R. Simeon's face turned pale (i.e. with jealousy).
- [D] Said R. 'Aqiba to him: It is enough for you that I and your creator recognize your strength.
- [E] They [later] went back and deferred to this [patriarchal] house.
- [F] They said: The court which has appointed [sages] without the approval of the patriarch, its appointment is no appointment;
- [G] the patriarch who has appointed without the approval of the court, his appointment is an appointment.
- [H] They [later] went back and ordained that the court would not appoint without the approval of the patriarch, and the patriarch would not appoint without the approval of the court.

Opposition to the Patriarch

Tosepta Ohalot 18:16-18

63. Yerushalmi Sanhedrin 2:1 (19d-20a)

- [A] ... And Resh Laqish (Pal. II) said: A patriarch who has sinned, they flog him in a court [of only] three.
- [B] (An aside:) Do we reinstate him?
- [C] Said R. Haggai: By Moses! We don't restore him, for he will kill us!

- [D] (Returning to the story:) R. Judah the Patriarch (II) heard [of Resh Laqish' ruling, and was angry.
- [E] He sent a troop (or: a force of Goths) to apprehend Resh Laqish; they attacked (***)).
- [F] He [Resh Laqish] escaped to a certain Migdala--some say, to a certain Kefar Hittayya.
- [G] The next day R. Yohanan (Pal. II) went to the meeting house.
- [H] He [the patriarch] said to him: Why does sir not say a word of Torah.
- [I] He [R. Yohanan] began to clap with one hand.
- [J] He [the patriarch] said: Does one clap with one hand?
- [K] He [R. Yohanan] said: No; and without the son of Laqish [I also] do not [teach]. (The language is somewhat obscure.)
- [L] He [the patriarch] said: But where is he hiding (?)
- [M] He [R. Yohanan] said: In a certain Migdala.
- [N] He [the patriarch] said: Tomorrow you and I are going out to him.
- [O] R. Yohanan sent to Resh Laqish: Prepare (?) a word of Torah because the patriarch is coming out to you.
- [P] He [Resh Laqish] went out before them and said: The your form resembles your creator (i.e. you are doing what God did): When the Merciful one came to take Israel [out of Egypt] he sent neither a messenger, nor an angel, but he himself [came] as it is written: "And *I* shall pass through the land of Egypt [... and *I* shall strike... and *I* shall make judgements... *I* am the Lord"] (Ex. 12:12), he [God] and all his staff.
(Is this as conciliatory as it sounds? Or is this more veiled criticism?)
- [Q] He [the patriarch] said to him: Why did you see fit to say that statement [that you made originally]?
- [R] He [Resh Laqish] said to them: Do you think that I would be scared of you so that I would refrain from the study of Torah (lit: study of God)?
.....

64. Genesis Rabbah 80:1 (20c-d) (cf. Yerushalmi Sanhedrin 9:6)

- [A] Yosi of Ma'on interpreted [Scripture] in the synagogue of Tiberias [as follows]:
- [B] "Hear this O priests and listen O Israel and harken O house of the king for there is a proper action (*mishpat*, or: justice; the same word can also convey "trial" hence the trial in C) upon you." (Hosea 5:1; i.e. you are obligated to act properly).
- [C] He [Yose] said: In the future the Holy One blessed be He will put the priests on trial [saying]: Why do you not work at Torah, do you not receive the 24 priestly gifts?
- [D] They say to him (i.e. the priests are described by Yose as answering the prophet): They don't give us anything.
- [E] "And listen O Israel:" Why have you not given the 24 priestly gifts that I wrote in the Torah?
- [F] They say: Because they of the house of the Patriarch have taken them all.
- [G] "And harken O house of the king for proper action is upon you:" Was it yours [to take]? [After all, it is written:] "And this shall be the proper portion (*mishpat*) for the priests" (Deut. 18:3).

- [H] Therefore, “[*mishpat* (here as judgement)] is upon you,” the [divine] attribute of justice is turned upon you.
- [I] R. [Judah the Patriarch II] heard and was angry.
- [J] Before evening R. Simeon b. Laqish went in to greet him and to appease him about him [Yose].
- [K] He said to him: Master, we have count it to the favor of the nations of the world that they put mimes in their theaters and circuses and they play there, so that [the people] not sit [idly] and talk among themselves. But Yose [although he engaged in buffoonery (?)] was saying words of Torah! Will you then be angry at him?
- [L] He [the patriarch] said to him: Does he know?
- [M] He said to him: Yes.
- [N] He [the patriarch] said to him: And has he received learning?
- [O] He said to him: Yes.
- [P] He [the patriarch] said to him: And if I ask him [a question] will he answer me?
- [Q] He said to him: Yes.
- [R] He [the patriarch] said to him: Let him come.
- [S] He [Yose] came to him.
- [T] He [the patriarch] said to him: Why is it written: “Lo, every maker of proverbs will apply to you the proverb Like daughter like mother” (Ezek. 16:44)?
- [U] He [Yose] said to him: Like daughter like mother, like people like patriarch, like the alter like priests. (The implication is not flattering.)
- [V] (Aside:) Kahana said: Like garden like gardener.
- [W] Said Resh Laqish to him: You have not yet finished appeasing him for one [offense], and you bring him another?
- [X] The main issue [continued Resh Laqish is: Why is it written: “Lo, every maker of proverbs will apply to you the proverb.”
- [Y] He [Yose] said to him [Resh Laqish]: If an ox [habitually] gores, its daughter surely kicks; if a woman prostitutes herself, her daughter prostitutes herself.
- [Z] He [Resh Laqish] said to him: If so, Leah our mother was a prostitute.
- [A’] He [Yose] said to them: Indeed, for it is written: “And Leah went out to meet him” (Gen. 30 16), she went to greet him done up like a prostitute. Therefore it is written: “And Dinah the daughter of Leah went out” (Gen. 34:1). (And so, like mother like daughter.)

65. Babli Qiddushin 33a

- [A] ... But lo, R. Hiyya (Pal. I) was sitting in the bath house and R. Simeon b. R. [Judah the Patriarch I] passed by and he did not get up before him, and he [R. Simeon] was angry, and went and said to his father: I taught him two fifths of the book of Psalms, and he did not get up before me!
- [B] And moreover: Bar Qappara (Pal. I)--others say it was R. Samuel b. R. Yose--was sitting in the bath house and R. Simeon b. R. [Judah the Patriarch I] passed by and he did not get up before him, and he [R. Simeon] was angry, and he went and said to his father: I taught him two thirds of a third of Leviticus and he did not get up before me!
- [C] He [the patriarch] said to him: Maybe he was sitting and thinking there [and did not notice you].

The Patriarch and Rome

66. Mekilta Beshalah 6 (ed. Horovitz p. 137)

- [A] Antoninus (i.e. Caesar) asked our holy master (=R. Judah the Patriarch I) I would like to go to Alexandria lest a king arise and defeat me
- [B] He said to him: I do not know. At any rate, it is written among us that the land of Egypt is not capable of raising either a king or an officer,
- [C] for it is said “And there will be no more prince from the land of Egypt” (Ezek. 30:13); “From the kingdoms it [Egypt] shall be cast low, and it shall no longer exalt itself among the nations. And I shall reduce them so that it shall no longer rule among the nations” (Ezek. 29:15).

67. Yerushalmi Shebi'it 6:1 (36d)

... Antoninus gave R. [Judah the Patriarch I] two thousand rich fields in tenancy, therefore [the produce of the field in the seventh year] is eaten, but [the field] is not worked.

68. Yerushalmi Megillah 3:1 (74a)

- [A] R. Hiyya (?) in the name of R. Yohanan (Pal. II): If the name of the donor was engraved upon them [gifts to the synagogue] they are like things the names of whose owners have not been forgotten (and therefore they cannot be removed from the synagogue; if the owner has been forgotten donated objects may be removed),
- [B] like that Antoninus who gave R. [Judah the Patriarch I] a lamp for the synagogue.
- [C] When R. [Judah] heard he said Blessed is God who put it into his heart to make a lamp for the synagogue.
- [D] R. Samuel b. Yisshaq (Pal. III) asked: What did R. [Judah] say: “Blessed is God” [or] “Blessed is our God”?
- [E] If he said “Blessed is God” this says that Antoninus did not convert; if he said “Blessed is our God” this says that Antoninus did convert.
- [F] There are versions that Antoninus converted, and there are versions that he did not convert.

.....

69. Genesis Rabbah 63:8

- [A] Diocletian the king (the emperor 284-305) used to raise pigs around Tiberias. When he used to pass near the study house, the children would go out and would hit him.
- [B] Some time later he was made king.
- [C] He stayed in a certain Pania and sent letters to Tiberias before evening on Friday.
- [D] He said I command (this word is in Greek!) that the masters (or: Rabbis) of the Jews stand before me on Sunday.
- [E] He commanded his messenger and said: Do not give them to them until sunset on Friday.
- [F] R. Samuel b. Nahman (pal. III) went down to bathe. He saw R. [Judah the Patriarch III] standing before the study house with a pale (?) face.

- [G] He said to him: Why is your face pale.
- [H] He said to him: Thus and so was sent to me from Diocletian the king.
- [I] He [R. Samuel b. Nahman]: Go and bathe, for our creator will do miracles for you.
- [J] He went to bathe and a certain Argantin came and played and danced before him.
- [K] R. [Judah the Patriarch] wanted [R. Samuel b. Nahman] rebuke him.
- [L] R. Samuel b. Nahman let him be, for sometimes he appears for miracles.
- [M] He said to him: Your master is in distress and you play?
- [N] He said to them: Go, eat, and make a good Sabbath for you creator is doing miracles and I will put you in the place that you wish on Sunday morning.
- [O] When the Sabbath, after the prayers (?) he carried them and placed them before the gates (Greek, *pylai*) of Panias.
- [P] They [the guards] went up and said: Lo, they are standing at the gates.
- [Q] He [Diocletian] said: "Close the gates."
- [R] He [the spirit] carried them and placed them on the city walls.
- [S] They [the guards] went up and said to him [...].
- [T] He [Diocletian] said: I command (again the word is in Greek) that [the baths] be heated for three days and that they [the Rabbis] go up and bathe and come to me.
- [U] They went and heated [the baths] for three days, and Argantin went up and mixed [cool water in] before them, and they went up and bathed and came before him.
- [V] He [Diocletian] said to them: It is because you know that your God performs miracles for you that you belittle the king.
- [W] They said to him: The Diocletian who raises pigs do we belittle; however, Diocletian the king we are subordinate to.
- [X] He said to them: Nevertheless, do not belittle either a small (i.e. petty) Roman or a small servile person.

EXILARCH

70. Babli Gittin 31b

- [A] Raba and Rab Nahman b. Yisshaq (both Babyl. IV) were sitting
- [B] Rab Nahman b. Ya'aqob (a member of the exilarch's retinue) passed by seated in a golden litter, and there was spread upon him a green cloak.
- [C] Raba went to him;
- [D] Rab Nahman b. Yisshaq did not go to him.
- [E] He [Rab Nahman b. Yisshaq] said: Perhaps he is of the men of the exilarch, and Raba has need of him, but I have no need of him. (Rashi explains that Rab Nahman b. Yisshaq was the son in law of the patriarch in Palestine according to another tradition.)
- [F] When he [Rab Nahman b. Yisshaq] saw that he [Rab Nahman b. Ya'aqob] was coming to him he exposed his arm; he said: "The east wind blows."

71. Babli Baba' Qama' 58b

- [A] A certain person cut a date tree belonging to his fellow.
- [B] The case came before the exilarch.

- [C] He [the exilarch] said: I saw [the place in question], there were three trees in a cluster (lit. a nest), and they were worth one hundred zuz. Go pay him thirty three and a third zuz (since you cut down one tree).
- [D] He [the thief] said: Why do I need [to go] to [the court] of the exilarch, who judges [using] the law of the Persians?
- [E] He came before Rab Nahman (Babyl. III).
- [F] He said: Pay sixty zuz.
- [G] Said Raba to him [Rab Nahman]: If they said [that one should be lenient] in the case of damage done by his property (e.g. an animal) let them say it also in the case of damages done by his property.
(A dispute on the legal complications of the case follows.)

72. Babli 'Erubin 11b

- [A] [A tanna'] taught [a baraita' (!):] The form of a doorway for which they said: It needs a reed on this side and a reed on this side and a reed on top (i.e. in order to permit carrying in the space enclosed in a partition)--do they need to touch or do they not need to touch (i.e. is it sufficient for the upper reed to be suspended above the upright reeds)?
- [B] Rab Nahman (Babyl. III) said they do not need to touch;
- [C] Rab Sheshet (Babyl. III) said they do need to touch.
- [D] Rab Nahman went and acted in accordance with his ruling in the house of the exilarch.
- [E] Rab Sheshet said to his servant Rab (!) Gada: Go take off his [Rab Nahman's] garment.
- [F] He went and took off his garment.
- [G] Those of the house of the exilarch found him and imprisoned him [Rab Sheshet].
- [H] Rab Sheshet stood at the gate and said: Gada (the servant's name) go out and come, and he went out and came. (The gates opened due to the Rabbi's power.)
- [I] Rab Sheshet found Rabbah b. Samuel.
- [J] He said: Has sir recited anything in connection with the form of a doorway?
- [K] He said to him: Yes....
(There follows a traditon which implies that Rab Nahman's view was the correct one.)
.....
- [L] He [Rab Sheshet] said to him: Don't say anything to those of the house of the exilarch about the tradition [you just told me] about the vault.

73. Babli 'Erubin 39b

- [A] A certain deer that came to the house of the exilarch--
- [B] It was caught (presumably by gentiles) on the "first day of festival for the exiled" and was slaughtered on the "second day of festival for the exiled." (Outside of the Land of Israel it is customary to observe an extra day of each festival, since the date of the festival depends on the first day of the month (corresponding to the new moon) which occurred after either the twenty ninth or the thirtieth of the preceding month. The logic is that outside of Palestine communities might not

- receive timely information about the date of the new moon from the centers there which set the calendar.)
- [C] Rab Nahman and Rab Hisda ate;
 - [D] Rab Sheshet did not eat.
 - [E] Said Rab Nahman: What shall I do to Rab Sheshet who does eat deer meat?
 - [F] Said Rab Sheshet to him: How can I eat? For 'Isi taught [a baraita].... (A discussion of the topic ensues).
 - [G] Said Rab Sheshet to Rab to Rabbah b. Samuel: Has sir recited anything in connection with holy things?
 - [H] He said to him: Yes.... (The tradition which Rabbah b. Samuel cites supports Rab Nahman)
 - [I] He said to him: If you should find them [Rab Nahman and Rab Hisda] don't say anything.

74. Babli Shabbat 56b

- [A] ... For Rab (Babyl. II) said: There is no greater penitent than Josiah (the king of Judea) and one in our generation. And who is he? Abba the father of R. Jeremiah b. Abba (Pal. II)--and some say Aha the brother of Abba the father of R. Jeremiah b. Abba--and one other in our generation, and who is he? 'Uqban b. Nehemiah the exilarch, who is the same as Nathan of Susita (?).
- [B] Said Rab Yosep (Baby. III): I was sitting in the study house and was dozing and I saw in a dream that [a heavenly creature] reached out his hand and accepted him.

MYSTICISM AND THEOLOGY

75. Tosefta Hagigah 2:1-7

Note: Passages 2:1 [A-C] and 2:7 [A-B] recite material in Mishnah Hagigah 2:1. Note the aspects of power and danger associated with certain kinds of speculation. If rabbis have a special theological doctrine that cannot be taught to just anyone, does this make them a sect within the greater society? Why or why not?

2:1

- [A] One may not interpret [the Biblical sections dealing with] forbidden sexual unions by means of midrash in a group of three [people], but one may interpret it by midrash in a group of two,
- [B] nor the account of creation (Genesis 1-2) in a group of two, but one may interpret it by midrash alone,
- [C] nor the account of the [Divine] chariot (Ezekiel 1, 8, 11), unless he is a wise man who understands from his own mind.
- [D] A case happened to R. Yohanan b. Zakkai, who was riding an ass, and R. Eleazar b. Arak (i.e. his disciple) walking behind it guiding it.
- [E] He said to him: Master, recite for me a lesson from the account of the chariot.
- [F] He said to him: Did I not say to you previously that: "One may not recite [traditions about] the chariot alone unless he is a wise man who understands from his own mind" (cf. C).
- [G] He said to him: Now I will speak before you (i.e. and prove that I am eligible).

- [H] He said to him: Speak.
- [I] R. Eleazar b. Arak opened and interpreted by midrash the account of the chariot.
- [J] R. Yohanan b. Zakkai got down from his ass, and covered himself with his garment (or: *talit*, prayer shawl),
- [K] and the two of them sat upon the stone under the olive tree and he [R. Eleazar b. Arak] spoke before him.
- [L] He [R. Yohanan] got up and kissed him on his head and said: Blessed is the Lord the God of Israel who gave a son to Abraham our patriarch who know how to understand and to interpret the Glory of the his father in heaven by Midrash,
- [M] There are some who interpret by midrash well, but do not uphold [the commandments (?)] well, [or] who uphold well, but do not interpret by Midrash well; Eleazar b. Arak interprets wby midrash well and upholds well.
- [N] Happy are you, Abraham, for Eleazar b. Arak emerged from your loins for he knows to understand and to interpret the Glory of the his father in heaven by Midrash.

2:2

R. Yose b. Yehudah says: R. Joshua recited before R. Yohanan b. Zakkai, R. Aqiba recited before R. Joshua, Hananiah b. Kinai (or: Hakinai) recited before R. Aqiba.

2:3

- [A] Four went into the orchard (Heb. *pardes*, cf. paradise): Ben ‘Azzai, and Ben Zoma, Aher, and R. ‘Aqiba.
- [B] One looked and died, one looked and was struck, one looked and cut down the plants, and one went up in peace and went down in peace.
- [C] Ben ‘Azzai looked and died. Concerning him Scripture says: “The death of his pious is precious in his eyes” (Psalms 116:15).
- [D] Ben Zoma looked and was struck. Concerning him Scripture says: “If you have found honey eat what is enough for you [lest you satiate yourself with it and vomit it up].”
- [E] Elisha b. Abuya (=Aher in A) looked and cut down the plants. Concerning him Scripture says: “Do not let your mouth cause your flesh to sin” (Eccl. 5:5).

2:4

R. ‘Aqiba went up in peace and went down in peace. Concerning him Scripture says: “Draw me after you, let us run; [the king has brought me into his chambers; let us rejoice and be joyous about you” (Song of Songs 1:4).

2:5

- [A] An analogy: to what is the matter similar?
- [B] To the orchard of a king with an upper storey (i.e. some kind of watch tower) built over it.
- [C] What should a man do? Look at it, so long as he does not feed his eyes on it.
- [D] Another analogy: to what is the matter similar?
- [E] To a road that goes between two paths: one of fire and one of ice.

[F] [If] he turned this way he is destroyed in the fire; [if] he turned this way he is destroyed in the ice.

[G] What should a man do? Walk in the middle, so long as he does not turn this way or that.

2:6

[A] A case happened to R. Joshua who was walking on the road and Ben Zoma was coming towards him.

[B] He reached him, and he [Ben Zoma] did not greet him.

[C] He said to him: Ben Zoma, from where to where [are you going]?

[D] He said to him: I was looking at the account of creation, and there is not even a handbreadth between the upper waters and the lower waters,

[E] for it is said: “And the spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters” (Gen. 1:2),

[F] and it says: “As an eagle wakes its nest, [as it hovers over its young]” (Deut. 32:11):

[G] just as this eagle flies over its nest, touching and not touching it, so there is not even a handbreadth between the upper waters and the lower waters.

[H] R. Joshua said to his disciples: Ben Zoma was already outside.

[I] There were only a few days and Ben Zoma died.

2:7

[A] Whoever looks at four things, it is fitting for him that he not have come into this world:

[B] What is above, what is below, what is before, what is after.

[C] It might be that [one may inquire about the time] before the account of creation?

[D] Scripture teaches: “[Ask, please, about the first days which were before you:] from the day on which God created man upon the earth, [from the end of the heavens to the end of the heavens was there anything like this great thing or was anything like it heard?]” (Deut. 4:32).

(I.e. one may not ask from before creation.)

[E] It might be that [one may inquire about the time] before the orders of the seasons were set?

(Since the verse can be taken to empower people to ask about the extent of the heavens, might it not also imply that one may inquire also about the period before the seasons were set?)

[F] Scripture teaches: “From the end of the heavens to the end of the heavens.”

(I.e. one may only inquire from the time the heavens were put in order, the second or fourth day of creation.)

[G] Why does Scripture teach: “From the day on which God created man upon the earth”?

[H] [To teach that] you may investigate (or: study by midrash) from the day on which God created man upon the earth, but you may not investigate what is above and what is below, what was, and what will be.