

## English Abstract

### **Sugya 1: Point of Departure (Berakhot 2a)**

*Sugya* 1 has been attributed by scholars to the *sabora'im*, sixth or seventh century Babylonian sages who added a post-editorial layer to the Talmud, predominantly in the form of introductory *sugyot* at the beginnings of tractates and chapters.

*Mishnah* Berakhot 1:1, the first in the entire mishnaic corpus, opens with a question: "When do we begin reciting the *Shema* in the evenings?" Our *sugya* consists of a series of questions regarding the wording and "missing" context of this question. Close reading indicates an element of artificiality in these questions: they single out our *mishnah* either because it opens with a question, or because it does not define its terms, and because it assumes that day follows night – phenomena that are not in the least surprising, and in fact reflect standard mishnaic or rabbinic usage. The proposed answers are respectively either obvious or equally artificial, or they make use of selective citation in order to establish a chiasmic structure in the *mishnayot* of the first chapter of Berakhot.

Analysis indicates that each and every question and type of answer found in the *sugya* is found elsewhere in the Talmud, in other *sugyot* that have been attributed by scholars to the *sabora'im*. In each and every case the *saboraic* question or answer or formulation is less artificial and more appropriate in its other locus than it is in our *sugya*. It would thus seem that this entire *sugya* is the work of single late *saboraic* author, who pieced together a collection of typical *saboraic* comments from other places and applied them to the very first *mishnah*, in order create a "flagship" *saboraic* introductory *sugya* at the very beginning of the Talmud.

### **Sugya 2: "When the Sun Sets" (2a-b)**

*Sugya* 2, like *sugya* 1, has been attributed by scholars to the *sabora'im* because of *saboraic* terms that appear therein. This is despite the fact that it contains tannaitic and amoraic material, unlike most *saboraic sugyot*. The *sugya* begins (section A) by questioning, in a manner typical of the *sabora'im*, the *mishnah's* choice of the term "when the priests enter to eat their *terumah*", instead of the simpler "when the stars come out". (It should be noted that despite the assumption of our *sugya*, the simple meaning of both Leviticus 22:7 and the tannaitic material is that the priests are eligible to eat *terumah* not when the stars come out, but at sunset, and this is the original meaning of the *terminus a quo* for the evening *Shema* cited in our *mishnah*.) The answer given is that the *mishnah* means to teach us, incidentally, that the priests eat their *terumah* when the stars come out.

The remainder of the *sugya* questions this very assertion, deliberating whether the *terumah*, which according to Leviticus 22:6-7 is eaten the evening after the priest immerses to cleanse his body from his impurity "when the sun sets/comes" [*uva hashemesh*], is in fact eaten "when the sun sets" [*bi'at hashemesh*] or "when its light comes (or: 'sets')" [*bi'at oro*]. This deliberation is presented in two forms: the first (section B) is a comment by the Babylonian *amora* Rabbah bar Shila, while the second (section C) purports to be an anonymous Palestinian discussion of the same issue, culminating in the citation of a relevant *baraita*, according to which "when the stars come out" is a sign of the time that the priests are eligible to eat *terumah*.

The deliberation as to the time *terumah* is eaten (sections B and C), whether at *bi'at hashemesh* or *bi'at oro*, is interpreted in two completely different manners by medieval commentators. Rashi understands the deliberation to be whether the priests eat their

*terumah* at night, when the sun sets and the stars come out, or the following morning, when the sun's light "comes out". According to Tosafot, the question is when precisely at night the priests are eligible to eat their *terumah*, "when the sun sets [completely]" [=when the stars come out and it is completely dark] or "when its light [begins to] set" [=sunset]. Note that these terms would make more sense if their definitions were reversed.

Each interpretation engenders textual and/or contextual difficulties. Analysis indicates that the text underwent an unusually complex history. The *sabora'im* inherited an amoraic *sugya* consisting of an earlier version of section B, in which the deliberation was whether *terumah* could be eaten on the morning of the immersion [*bi'at oro*], or only later that evening [*bi'at hashemesh*], resolving the law in favor of the latter. This reading is close to Rashi's interpretation of the current *sugya*; however, Rashi understands *bi'at oro* as referring to the morning following immersion, rather than the morning of immersion. The original amoraic *sugya* is a polemic against an early ruling of the House of Hillel, according to which *terumah* may be eaten on the morning of immersion itself, immediately upon immersion. The view of the House of Hillel was completely forgotten by saboraic times, leading the *sabora'im* to emend and reinterpret the earlier *sugya*, section B of the current *sugya*, yielding a *sugya* to be interpreted in accordance with the view of Tosafot. The difficulties with Tosafot's interpretation disappear when we realize that a variant Geonic reading of the *sugya*, preserved also in Geniza fragments, reflects the true saboraic version of the *sugya*, while the received version reflects the original amoraic reading of section B. Tosafot, who had the received version, has trouble fitting the meaning of the saboraic *sugya* into the received text.

The saboraic reinterpretation necessitated the addition of section A, which is typically saboraic in form and content. Section C was also added during saboraic times to the *sugya* as preserved in the Geonic works and Geniza fragments; the Palestinian deliberation referred to therein is to be identified as Palestinian Talmud [=PT] Berakhot 1:1, 2b-c. Difficulties with section C fall away when we realize that it, too, was emended in the received texts, in order to conform to the version of section B in the received texts as interpreted by Rashi.

### ***Sugya* 3: Pauper (2b)**

*Mishnah* Berakhot 1:1 rules that the *terminus a quo* for the evening *Shema* is "when the priests enter to eat their *terumah*". Our *sugya* cites three *baraitot* containing alternate *termini* and alternate formulations of the *mishnah's terminus*. The Talmud deliberates the relative position of the times discussed in the *baraitot*. The third *baraita* lists five times, and this list is considered exhaustive by the *sugya*; the times mentioned in the *mishnah* and in the other *baraitot* are included therein. These times, as understood at the close of the *sugya*, can be summed up as follows (according to Rashi and most commentators), from earliest to latest: (1) When the day becomes holy on Sabbath eve (=sunset); (2) When the priests immerse to eat their *terumah* (=twilight, see next *sugya*); (3) When the priests enter/are purified/are worthy to eat their *terumah* (=when the stars come out, see previous *sugya*); (4) When the pauper enters to eat his bread and salt/when people enter to eat on Sabbath eve (shortly after the stars come out; paupers, and everyone on Sabbath eve, are home when the stars come out, and have no need to cook; they can therefore eat almost immediately. Moreover, the *amora'im* were accustomed to attend synagogue services Friday night, thus delaying

their meal until shortly after the stars come out); (5) When most people enter to dine (on weekdays, after arriving home at the end of the day and cooking a meal).

This is indeed the way the Babylonian Talmud [=BT] understood these *termini a quo*. However, analysis indicates that the *tanna'im* themselves knew of only three possible *termini a quo* for the recitation of the evening *Shema*, and the last *baraita*, which lists five times, knows that some of these formulations overlap, and are different indications of the same point in time. These three times are (1) shortly **before** sunset: this is when the unemployed or urban pauper enters to eat his bread and salt (having no need to return home from the fields), and when the priests immerse themselves in anticipation of sunset, and when people arrived home to eat their Sabbath meal before the onset of the Sabbath, as was customary in tannaitic times, when the Sabbath meal often began Friday afternoon; (2) sunset: this is when the priests are eligible to eat *terumah* according to the simple meaning of Leviticus 22:7 and *Mishnah* Negaim 14:3, and this is when the day becomes holy on Sabbath eve; (3) when the stars come out, which is also when most people enter to dine on weekdays, having put in a full work day.

In our reading the words *siman ladavar tset hakokhavim*, "a sign of the matter is when the stars come out", quoted as part of the second *baraita* in the *sugya*, reflect an independent view as to the *terminus a quo* for the evening *Shema*, and are not a continuation of the *baraita* referring to the priests eligibility to eat *terumah*. Although these words follow the view regarding the priests eligibility not only in the *baraita* as quoted in our *sugya*, but also in *Tosefta* Berakhot 1:1, they are in fact to be read as an independent answer to the question "When do we begin reciting the *Shema* in the evenings?", and indeed this reading is confirmed by the presentation of the same material in PT Berakhot 1:1, 2a-b. However, our *sugya* reads these words as qualifying the time of the priests' eligibility to eat *terumah*. The reading in our *sugya* resulted in a new interpretation of *Mishnah* Berakhot 1:1, and engendered the previous saboraic *sugya*, which assumed that *Shema* should be recited only after the stars come out. This was also Babylonian synagogue practice.

The *sugya* also assumes that no one would recite the evening *Shema* before sunset, since this can in no way be considered "evening". In fact, however, most of the times cited in these *baraitot* are phrased so as to indicate that the evening *Shema* may be recited before sunset, just as are other "night activities", such as the Sabbath meal, the pauper's supper and the priests' immersion, take place shortly before sunset. In fact, this is original purpose of these numerous formulations of the same time: the *tanna'im* did not expect that time be *measured* by these events, but these events are cited as *precedents* for evening activities conducted before sunset, or at sunset, before it is completely dark. This was the controversial practice in Palestinian synagogues with regard to the *Shema* (see below, *sugya* 8), and these formulations are a polemic justifying the practice.

#### ***Sugya* 4: Twilight (2b-3a)**

This *sugya* consists of an explanatory elaboration of a discussion recorded between Rabbi Judah and Rabbi Meir in the third *baraita* cited in the previous *sugya*. Rabbi Judah had challenged Rabbi Meir's position that the *Shema* may be recited from the time the priests immerse themselves, saying that this hour was still daytime. The Talmud says that Rabbi Judah would respond by saying that he was referring to twilight according to the position of Rabbi Yose, *viz.* that there is no twilight to speak

of, and evening begins when the stars come out. The priests immerse themselves before the stars come out and after sunset, and although this is daytime according to Rabbi Yose, it is twilight according to the accepted halakhah, and *Shema* may be recited. The Talmud says that if this is Rabbi Meir's position in the third *baraita*, it contradicts his position in the second *baraita*, according to which the evening *Shema* may be recited from the time of the Sabbath eve meal, which is understood by BT to mean after the stars come out. The Talmud replies that these are indeed two conflicting reports of Rabbi Meir's position. Finally and incidentally, the Talmud says that Rabbi Eliezer's position in the third *baraita*, that *Shema* may be recited from the time of the onset of the Sabbath, sunset, contradicts his position in *Mishnah* Berakhot 1:1, according to which the recitation may begin only when the priests are eligible to eat *terumah*, understood to mean when the stars come out. The Talmud says that either these, too, are two conflicting reports of Rabbi Eliezer's position, or else that the *terminus a quo* in *Mishnah* Berakhot 1:1 is not that of Rabbi Eliezer, but an anonymous view.

Analysis indicates that the formulation of the reconstructed conversation between Rabbi Meir and Rabbi Judah was suggested by a *sugya* in BT Pesahim 35a, which accounts for the anomalous emphasis on "twilight", when in fact it is not twilight, but sunset, that is at issue. The problems the *sugya* has with the tannaitic positions are predicated entirely on BT's later readings of these positions. According to the original meanings of the tannaitic positions, Rabbi Meir indeed believed that the *Shema* may be recited before sunset, when the priests immerse themselves (see previous *sugya*). This is consonant with the original meaning of his position in the second *baraita*, since the tannaitic Sabbath eve meal also began before sunset. Rabbi Eliezer believed the *Shema* may be recited from sunset on, this is the meaning of his position in the third *baraita* of the previous *sugya*, and is consonant with the meaning of *Mishnah* Berakhot 1:1, since the priests were originally considered eligible to eat *terumah* from sunset on. However, it would seem that this is coincidence, since there is evidence that the conclusion of the *sugya*, according to which the *terminus a quo* in *Mishnah* Berakhot 1:1 is not the formulation of Rabbi Eliezer, is correct.

### ***Sugya* 5: Night Watch (3a)**

This *sugya* and the next two *sugyot* concern the position of Rabbi Eliezer in *Mishnah* Berakhot 1:1, according to which the evening *Shema* may be recited until the end of the first watch of the night. The *sugya* begins with the assumption that the night consists of either three watches of four hours each or four watches of three hours each, an issue disputed by later *tanna'im* in a *baraita* cited in *sugya* 7 below, which predates our *sugya* at least in part. The Talmud asks which reckoning Rabbi Eliezer followed, and why did he not formulate his view in terms of a number of hours, so that it would be clear whether he means three or four hours into the night. The answer given is that Rabbi Eliezer reckoned according to the three-watch system, and the end of the first watch is four hours into the night. In using the terminology of "night watch" Rabbi Eliezer wished to teach us that which he made explicit in a *baraita* cited in the *sugya*: *viz.*, that there are heavenly and earthly signs of the change of night watch: God roars like a lion at each watch, and this roar is paralleled by animal sounds: the sign of the first watch – donkeys braying; the sign of the second – dogs barking; the sign of the third – a baby nursing as its parents converse. Since the beginning of the first watch and the end of the third are indicated by the onset of night and day, respectively, and need no external signs, the Talmud says that these animal sounds indicate either the end of the

first watch, the middle of the second watch, and the beginning of the third watch, or the end of each watch, since daybreak is not always apparent in a dark house. The *sugya* concludes with an amoraic statement specifying the content of the divine roar: God mourns the destruction of the Temple and the exile of the Jews.

The use of animal noises to identify the watches of the night, taken so seriously in our *sugya*, has no scientific basis. Moreover, at the root of the *sugya* and the *baraita* cited therein lies a more basic halakhic question: how did Rabbi Eliezer expect one to calculate the end of the first night watch? It is suggested here that Rabbi Eliezer's "animal sounds" *baraita* originally referred to a rudimentary star clock, whose use is attested elsewhere. The circumpolar constellations, which rotate around the North Star all year round every twenty-four hours, can be used to divide a twenty-four hour period into four roughly equal parts. After twelve hours, the two constellations opposite one another change places. Thus during a given night of approximately twelve hours, three of these four constellations will, in rotation, be found at a given point in the sky. If one fixes one's eyes on the spot in the sky in which Ursa Major is found at the beginning of the night, one will note that Hercules will have moved there by the middle of the night (together with the neighboring constellation, Ophiuchus), and Cassiopeia will have moved there by daybreak (together with the neighboring constellations representing her husband Cepheus and her daughter Andromeda). Now Ursa Major is called *agalah* ("wagon") by the Rabbis, on the basis of the Akkadian and Greek names for the constellation, *eriquu* and *hamaxa*, respectively, meaning "wagon". But *agalu* in Akkadian means donkey, and thus it would seem that the "donkeys braying" of our *baraita* refer to Ursa Major; moreover, the Greek *hamaxa* has been understood as relating to the pair (*hama*) of donkeys that lead the wagon. Hercules and Ophiuchus are called in Akkadian *kalbu* and *uridummu*, "dog" and "wild dog", respectively, and thus are the "dogs barking" of the middle watch, according to our *baraita*. Finally, the Ethiopian queen Cassiopeia, her husband Cepheus and her daughter Andromeda, are the couple with the nursing baby of the third watch.

The original meaning of the *baraita* was forgotten by the time the final redactional layer was added to the *sugya*, and these signs, which were original celestial, were seen as earthly. God's roar was added to the *baraita* at this point, on the basis of the later amoraic statement at the end of the *sugya*, because an earlier reference to celestial signs paralleling the changing of the watch in the earthly armies – originally, the astral host of heaven – was reinterpreted as referring to God's crying in tandem with the animal noises signifying the changing of the guard on earth. The questions regarding when exactly during each watch these signs "take place" are also the result of this reinterpretation of the astral signs as animal noises.

### **Sugya 6: Ruin (3a-b)**

This *sugya* consists essentially of two *baraitot*, both of which concern ruins. The first *baraita* (sections A-C) is a monologue by the *tanna* Rabbi Yose concerning his mystical experience upon entering a ruin in a Jerusalem in order to pray, whereupon he heard a divine cry, and the prophet Elijah revealed to him that a heavenly voice mourns the destruction of the Temple thrice daily (see previous *sugya*; this is the reason that our *sugya* is brought here). The second *baraita* (section D) prohibits entry into any ruin, for three reasons: fear of suspicion [of illicit sexual encounter], fear that the ruin will cave in, and fear of *maziqin* (which the *sugya* takes to mean "demons", but may originally have referred to dangerous animals). This second *baraita* is

followed by a discourse, probably of saboraic origin, on the necessity of citing three reasons for the ban (section E).

Analysis indicates that the second *baraita* is authentic. The first is a Babylonian reworking of a Palestinian tale about an encounter between Elijah and the *tanna* Rabbi Nehorai after an earthquake. The essence of the encounter is preserved in PT Berakhot 9:2, 13c, although the narrative framework is missing, and must be reconstructed on the basis of another Babylonian parallel, found in BT Berakhot 59a, in which the protagonist is the Babylonian *amora* Rav Qetina. In both PT and BT Berakhot 59a, the divine cry takes the form of an earthquake; in our *sugya* this was transformed into an actual heavenly voice in the wake of the statement in the previous *sugya* that God cries thrice nightly over the destruction of the Temple. After reconstructing what we believe to be the original Palestinian narrative framework, we suggest that our *baraita* and the story in BT Berakhot 59a are two independent Babylonian developments of the Palestinian story. In our *sugya* the better-known Rabbi Yose was substituted for his colleague/disputant Rabbi Nehorai.

The Babylonian story of the encounter between the *tanna* Rabbi Yose and Elijah was written in a first-person autobiographical style and was therefore designated a *baraita*. It originally consisted of sections A and C of our *sugya*. However, the editor of our *sugya* objected to Rabbi Yose's entrance into the ruin in Jerusalem on the basis of the ban found in the second *baraita*; in fact, he cited the second *baraita* in conjunction with the first in order to indicate the halakhic problem with Rabbi Yose's behavior. Rather than explicitly questioning Rabbi Yose's action on the basis of the second *baraita*, he added section B to the first *baraita*, subtly weaving his own objection into the discussion between Elijah and Rabbi Yose, and cited the second *baraita* afterwards without comment, allowing it to speak for itself. The editorial addition to the original story (section B) makes use of uniquely Babylonian halakhic material.

In the context of his discussion with Rabbi Yose in the version of the story found in our *sugya* (section C), Elijah tells Rabbi Yose that God cries over the destruction of the Temple thrice daily, as well as every time the doxology *yehe shemeh rabbah mevarach* is recited in the synagogue. In the contemporary synagogue service this doxology is the focal point of the Kaddish, recited a number of times during public prayer and following the homily. Scholars often cite our *sugya* as evidence for the antiquity of the Kaddish and its recitation as part of the prayer service, "thrice daily". However, analysis indicates that in Talmudic times *yehe shemeh rabbah mevarach* [*le'alam ul'olmei olmaya*] was recited in the context of the homily, and not as part of the prayer service, and there is no evidence that it was embedded in the Kaddish. A number of different customs have been preserved in the literature with regard to the original use of this doxology. *Sifre* Deuteronomy 306 indicates that the preacher would declare at [the opening or close of] the homily "May the Great Name be blessed", to which the assembled would respond "Forever and Ever", while the late Midrash *Tanna deVe Eliyahu* indicates that the entire line was the communal response to the use of God's name in the homily itself. The Kaddish began as a post-Talmudic framework for this doxology in the context of the homily, which was at some point incorporated into several places in the public prayer service and following the Torah reading.

### ***Sugya* 7: David (3b-4a)**

This *sugya* concerns a number of issues that spin off one another. *Mishnah* Berakhot 1:1 mentions "the first watch of the night", and section A in our *sugya* begins with a

*baraita* concerning the number of watches in a night: Rabbi Nathan says there are three and Rabbi Judah the Patriarch says there are four. (As many scholars have noted, Rabbi Nathan's view reflects biblical and ancient near eastern chronometry, while Rabbi Judah the Patriarch's view is based on Roman practice.) The *baraita* is followed by an amoraic discussion of the relative merits of the two views, and in particular, how they can each be reconciled with Biblical evidence. The final word in the discussion, supporting Rabbi Nathan, is given to Rav Ashi. According to Rav Ashi, King David arose at midnight to sing psalms (see Psalm 119:62), and midnight is termed "watches of the night [before dawn]" (Psalm 119:148), despite the fact that it is only one and one half watches of the night before dawn. In the course of the discussion in section A, a statement is cited by Rabbi Zeriqa in the name of Resh Laqish (in the printed editions in the name of Rabbi Joshua ben Levi). Section B, a *non sequitur*, consists of another statement cited by Rabbi Zeriqa in the name of Resh Leqish (or Rabbi Joshua ben Levi) concerning funeral etiquette, and a discussion of two versions of that statement. Presumably this section is found here because the two statements of Rabbi Zeriqa in the name of Resh Laqish were brought to Babylonia as a collection. Sections C, D, and E each deal with ramifications of Rav Ashi's contention, at the close of section A, that David arose at midnight, and each concludes with a statement of Rav Ashi justifying his view. At the end of C, Rav Ashi concludes on the basis of Psalm 119:147 that David was awake at the beginning of the *neshef*, "night", as well, but he spent the time before midnight studying Torah rather than on psalmody. At the end of D, Rav Ashi insists that *neshef* can mean either day or night, defending the view that *neshef* in Psalm 119: 147 means night, despite what is deemed evidence to the contrary in I Samuel 30:17. At the end of E, Rav Ashi defends the notion that David knew when it was midnight despite the fact that Exodus 11:4 would seem to suggest that even Moses could only approximate the time of midnight, by reinterpreting Exodus 11:4. Section F is a miscellany of *aggadot* about King David, the first of which concerns his awakening at midnight.

This structure indicates that Rav Ashi is responsible for the *sugya* in its final form, which was organized as an elaborate apologetic for his view in section A. Pre-Rav Ashi parts of sections A-F have parallels in a Passover homily found in both Pesiqta deRav Kahana and the medieval Pesiqta Rabbati (scholars deliberate whether it was an original part of the earlier Pesiqta deRav Kahana), and PT Berakhot 1:1, 2d, the passage in PT parallel to our *sugya*. Analysis indicates that the pre-Rav Ashi *sugya* here was actually a (Palestinian?) midrash on Psalm 119:62. The proto-*sugya* in BT was similar in structure to the Passover homily, and actually predated the PT parallel. Both the PT parallel and our *sugya* as edited by Rav Ashi are independent developments of this original midrash, and the analysis details the reasons and process by which the divergences between them emerged. Among other issues upon which light is shed in the commentary is the tradition concerning David's magical harp and its development.

### **Sugya 8: Sages (4a-b)**

According to *Mishnah* Berakhot 1:1, the Sages permit the recitation of the evening *Shema* until midnight, unlike Rabbi Eliezer, who gives the first watch (=third) of the night as the *terminus ad quem* for the recitation of the *Shema*, and Rabban Gamliel, who permits its recitation until dawn. In his discussion with his sons at the end of the *Mishnah*, Rabban Gamliel claims that the Sages actually concur with his view, and the midnight ruling is a mere precaution. The *sugya* opens by asking whether the Sages in

fact agree with Rabban Gamliel, as he himself claimed, or alternatively, whether they agree in principle with Rabbi Eliezer. The answer given is that the Sages agree with Rabban Gamliel, as he himself claimed, and the midnight ruling is a mere precaution. As proof of this a *baraita* is cited according to which the Sages ordained that the evening *Shema* be recited very early, in the synagogue on the way home from the fields, as a precautionary measure, lest one fall asleep before reciting the *Shema*. This *baraita*, the focal point of the *sugya*, reads as follows:

The Sages made a fence around their words, lest a person come in from the fields in the evening and say, "I shall go home and eat a bit and drink a bit and sleep a bit, and afterwards I shall recite the *Shema* and pray [the evening *Amidah*]", and he be overpowered by sleep and end up sleeping through the night. Rather, a person comes in from the fields in the evening, and enters the synagogue. If he is used to reading Scripture, he does so; if he is used to studying *Mishnah*, he does so, and then he recites the *Shema* and prays, and eats his bread and says the blessing. And anyone who trespasses the words of the Sages deserves the death penalty.

The Talmud, puzzled by the stringent declaration in the last line of the *baraita*, concludes by saying that the declaration is either meant to counterbalance the overpowering nature of sleep, or else it is a polemic against the view that the evening *Amidah* is optional.

Analysis yields the following conclusions: (1) the question at the beginning of the *sugya* is artificial, since the view of the Sages in the *Mishnah* need not be a variation on either of the more extreme views, and indeed it cannot be a variation on Rabbi Eliezer's view, for if it were, the Sages would be encouraging the violation of the law by allowing an extra two hours for the recitation of the evening *Shema*. The editor of the *sugya* had no interest in challenging Rabban Gamliel's statement that the Sages in fact agreed with him, and the conclusion was foregone. The possibility that the Sages in fact agree with Rabbi Eliezer was a stylistic appendage to the question, for the sake of symmetry. (2) Contrary to the claim of the *sugya*, the *baraita* cited is inconsonant with the view of the Sages in the *Mishnah*; it in fact reflects the view cited in a *baraita* in *sugya* 3 above, according to which the *Shema* must be recited by the time the pauper finishes his supper, i.e. before nightfall. This opinion, which should be attributed to the late *tanna'im* Rabbi Meir and Rabbi Hanina, represents a departure from the original Palestinian practice, in accordance with the simple meaning of Deuteronomy 6:7 as espoused by the houses of both Shammai and Hillel, which was to recite the *Shema* upon retiring (see *Mishnah* 3 below). (3) The warning at the end of the *baraita* indicates that it was an actual proclamation demanding nightly synagogue attendance. Evening services that included the *Shema* were held before nightfall in Palestine, in order to enable farmers to attend services on the way home from the fields and still arrive home before nightfall. This custom is alluded to in four other sources; however, still other sources indicate that this practice aroused opposition, and the custom of reciting the *Shema* upon retiring remained prevalent in late tannaitic and amoraic Palestine. Those who espoused this original custom claimed that the recitation of the *Shema* in the synagogue, far from ensuring the recitation of the *Shema* in case one is overcome by sleep, is actually invalid, because it takes place before nightfall. These authorities claimed that the recitation of the *Shema* in the Palestinian synagogue before nightfall was meant only as a proem to the evening *Amidah*; hence

the need of our *baraita* to polemicize in the other direction. The polemic of our *baraita*, reminiscent of the polemic against Rabbi Tarfon and the house of Shammai in *Mishnah* 3 of our chapter, is designed to taint those who recite the *Shema* upon retiring by associating them with the house of Shammai. In fact, however, the house of Hillel also originally recited the *Shema* upon retiring. They differed with the house of Shammai only in that they did not demand lying down in bed in order to recite the *Shema*.

The end of the *sugya* indicates that this polemic was not fully appreciated by the Babylonians, who recited the statutory evening *Shema* neither in the synagogue before nightfall nor upon retiring, but in the synagogue after nightfall (see *sugyot* 2 and 3 above), and repeated it in bed as an apotropaic measure (see *sugya* 11 below).

### ***Sugya* 9: “He Recites the *Shema* and Prays” (4b)**

The focal point of this *sugya* is a dispute between the Palestinian *amora'im* Rabbi Yohanan and Rabbi Joshua ben Levi as to the correct order of the evening service. Rabbi Yohanan recited the *Shema* and its blessings before the evening *Amidah*, insisting that the juxtaposition of the *Geulah* blessing (which follows the *Shema*) to the evening *Amidah* ensures a place in the hereafter. Rabbi Joshua ben Levi preferred the recitation of the evening *Amidah* before the *Shema* and its blessings, yielding a symmetrical pattern for the morning and evening *Shema* and the three daily *Amidah* prayers: *Shema, Amidah, Amidah, Amidah, Shema* (“Prayers were established in the center”, in the language of the *sugya*). The *baraita* cited in the previous *sugya*, according to which the Sages ordained that the *Shema* and the *Amidah* – in that order – be recited in the synagogue on the way home from work, is adduced as a proof for Rabbi Yohanan.

After offering two justifications of each view, the Talmud challenges Rabbi Yohanan’s view that the *Geulah* blessing should be juxtaposed to the evening *Amidah*, since in fact the *Hashkivenu* blessing comes between the two in the liturgy. In response, *Hashkivenu* is termed an “extension of *Geulah*”. A precedent is then cited: Rabbi Yohanan ordained the recitation of Psalm 51:17 before the *Amidah* (as well as Psalm 19:15 afterwards); this interrupts the juxtaposition of the *Geulah* blessing with both the morning and evening *Amidah*, and it can only be excused if it is labeled an “extension of the *Amidah*”.

Comparison with the parallel in PT Berakhot 1:1, 2d, indicates that the dispute between Rabbi Yohanan and Rabbi Joshua ben Levi is an artificial Babylonian stylization of an authentic amoraic dispute. The original dispute neither involved primarily Rabbi Yohanan and Rabbi Joshua ben Levi, nor dealt directly with the question of the order of the elements of the evening service, or the juxtaposition of *Geulah* with the *Amidah*; rather, it dealt with the question discussed in our analysis of the previous *sugya*: whether the *Shema* should be recited in the synagogue before nightfall, or upon retiring. It is argued that the dispute in the PT parallel, whether or not one may “say words after *Emet Veyatsiv* (=the *Geulah* blessing)”, which hitherto has not been satisfactorily explained, originally referred to this very issue. According to both Palestinian customs *Hashkivenu* was recited in bed upon retiring. Those who “did not say words after *Emet Veyatsiv*” insisted that the *Shema* and its blessings be recited immediately beforehand. The *Amidah*, if recited at all, would have to precede the *Shema*, but this is incidental, since the dominant Palestinian view was that the evening *Amidah* was altogether optional. This is the basis of the view ascribed in BT to Rabbi Joshua ben Levi, but our *sugya* ignores the essence of this opinion, which was

irrelevant in Babylonia (where the *Shema* and all its blessings, including *Hashkivenu*, were recited in the synagogue, after dark, along with the *Amidah*), and concentrates instead upon the corollary, which became relevant in Babylonia, where many ruled the evening *Amidah* obligatory.

The other view in PT, according to which one may “say words after *Emet Veyatsiv*”, allowed for the recitation of the *Shema* before evening or in the early evening, rather than upon retiring. In fact, it is cited in order to justify this very practice: Rabbi Yasa’s instruction to his students to recite the *Shema* and pray before studying in the evening. This lies behind the view ascribed to Rabbi Yohanan (Rabbi Yasa’s teacher) in our *sugya*, that the *Shema* should precede the evening *Amidah* in order to allow juxtaposition of *Geulah* to *Amidah*.

The juxtaposition of *Geulah* to the *Amidah*, so central to the Babylonian *sugya*, is a vague echo of PT’s concept of not saying words after *Emet Veyatsiv*, which, however, is reinterpreted to mean juxtaposition of *Geulah-Hashkivenu* and *Amidah*, rather than *Geulah* and *Hashkivenu*. The reinterpretation requires attributing the position favoring juxtaposition to the other disputant, since those who recited the *Shema* early, and could, theoretically, say the *Shema* before the *Amidah*, *did* say words after *Emet Veyatsiv*! Moreover, the Babylonian notion necessitates viewing *Hashkivenu* as an extension of *Geulah*, despite the altogether different nature and content of the two blessings.

The analysis discusses the reason for the attribution, in our *sugya*, of these revised Palestinian views to Rabbi Yohanan and Rabbi Joshua ben Levi, respectively, as well as the genesis of the phrase used to describe the symmetrical structure of the daily services attributed to Rabbi Joshua ben Levi (“Prayers were established in the center”), the statement attributed to Rabbi Yohanan concerning the juxtaposition of *Geula* to the evening *Amidah*, and the addition of verses before and after the *Amidah*.

### ***Sugya* 10: Rabbi Eleazar bar Avina (4b)**

In the previous *sugya* Rabbi Yohanan was quoted as assuring a place in the hereafter to all who juxtapose the *Geulah* blessing and the evening *Amidah*. At the basis of this *sugya* lies a *qovets* (collection) of two statements by the Palestinian *amora* Rabbi Eleazar bar Avina, the first of which similarly urges the daily recitation of Psalm 145, in order to ensure a place in the hereafter (section A), and the second of which compares the archangels Michael and Gabriel (section C). Each of these statements is followed first by a discussion of the statement itself, and then by additional sources on the same topic.

Analysis focuses on the history of the use of Psalm 145 in the liturgy and on rabbinic angelology.

Section A praises Psalm 145 and urge its use in the liturgy. Section B, in our current texts, reads as follows: “Rabbi Yohanan said: Why was the letter *nun* not said in *Ashrei*? Because it has in it the fall of the enemies of Israel, as it is written (Amos 5:2): “She shall fall and never again rise, the virgin Israel”. In Palestine they explained [Amos 5:2] as follows: “She shall fall and never [fall] again. Rise, O virgin Israel!” Rav Nahman bar Yitshak said: “David nonetheless resupported her/them with the Holy Spirit, as it is written: “The Lord supports all those who fall” (Psalm 145:14).

Rabbi Yohanan asserts that there is no *nun* in *Ashrei* because Amos 5:2 begins with *nun*, and that verse is said to describe “the fall of the enemies of Israel” (usually taken as a euphemism for Israel itself). This is puzzling for a number of reasons, among

them: There are many negative verses in the Bible beginning with virtually every biblical letter; Psalm 145 (*Tehillah leDavid*) was not preceded in the original liturgy by verses beginning with *Ashrei* (Psalm 84:5, 144:15), and therefore Rabbi Yohanan's statement referring to *Ashrei* cannot be understood as referring to this psalm; Psalm 145 *does* have a verse beginning with *nun* in texts found in Qumran and in versions which date from Talmudic times. It is suggested that Rabbi Yohanan's statement in our *sugya* be emended to read "Why does it [Psalm 145] not begin with the word *Ashrei*?", a reference to the amoraic statement contemporary with Rabbi Yohanan cited in *sugya* 27 below, according to which David began or ended all his favorite Psalms with the word *Ashrei*. The answer is that David had reservations about Psalm 145 because it refers to the destruction of the (actual) enemies of Israel ("and he shall destroy all the wicked", verse 20, cf. Rabbi Yohanan's similar statement in Sanhedrin 39b, where the phrase "enemies of Israel" is to be taken literally). Rabbi Yohanan's statement was originally followed by an independent discussion of Amos 5:2, linked to Rabbi Yohanan's statement because of the common theme of "fall", and the fact that Rabbi Nahman bar Yitshak in this discussion refers to another verse in Psalm 145, verse 14.

Section C discusses the speed with which Michael and Gabriel descend to earth. Rashi interprets section D, the *baraita* which reads: "Michael in one; Gabriel in two; Elijah in four; and the Angel of Death in eight, but in times of plague in one", in the same light, positing that C is the context of D, and the numbers refer to the amount of jumps in which each angel reaches earth from heaven. However, the text in section D is a *baraita*, which presumably predates the amoraic statements in C. We suggest a new interpretation of D independent of C, according to which "in one... in two... in four... in eight" are positions in the heavenly hierarchy of eight archangels. This hierarchy, and particularly Elijah's position therein, are discussed in the commentary.

### ***Sugya* 11: In Bed (4b-5a)**

This *sugya* consists of a number of quasi-halakhic and aggadic amoraic statements urging the recitation of the *Shema* upon retiring. The four quasi-halakhic amoraic statements in section A, two Palestinian and two Babylonian, respectively establish this practice as a *mitsvah*, cite Psalm 4:5 as a proof text, absolve scholars from this obligation, and urge them to recite any "verse of mercy" instead. Section B is a *qovets* (collection) of two statements of Rabbi Levi bar Hama in the name of Resh Laqish, brought here because the first is an interpretation of Psalm 4:5. Section C consists primarily of two aggadic statements by Rabbi Isaac, a Palestinian *amora* who was active in Babylonia, urging the recitation of the bedtime *Shema*.

In their present context in BT, all of the statements in sections A and C refer to the *Shema* recited without blessings upon retiring, which is considered supplementary to the statutory evening *Shema* recited as part of the evening service. However, the status of this recitation is ambiguous. In the opening statement in the *sugya*, Rabbi Joshua ben Levi says: "Even though a person has recited the *Shema* in the synagogue, it is a *mitsvah* to recite it in bed". The term *mitsvah*, "commandment", in rabbinic literature can either mean "requirement" or be a shorthand reference to the term *mitsvah min hamuwhar*, the preferred way to perform a *mitsvah*. The Babylonian statements following, which free scholars from this obligation, imply on the one hand that there is an obligation, but that it is not very serious. The aggadic statements in section C would seem to be superfluous if the recitation were obligatory.

This ambiguity is understandable if we take into account the difference between Palestinian and Babylonian practice described in the two previous *sugyot*. Palestinian *amora'im* who urge the recitation of the *Shema* upon retiring are referring to the statutory evening *Shema*; in their original context these statements were a polemic against the early recitation of the *Shema* in the synagogue, and urged its recitation or repetition in bed, whether in order to fulfill the literal meaning of the biblical commandment to recite the *Shema* “when you lie down”, or because synagogue recitation before nightfall is deemed too early. In Babylonia, however, it was a given that the statutory *Shema* was recited after nightfall, but in the synagogue, not in bed, and therefore no one argued that an additional recitation was necessary for the fulfillment of the biblical requirement. The Palestinian statements regarding the recitation of *Shema* upon retiring were therefore reinterpreted to refer to the *repetition* of the *Shema* in bed without blessings, as an apotropaic measure. For this reason, scholars, who were not thought to need protection from demons, were not considered obligated to recite the bedtime *Shema*, but were urged to substitute another “verse of prayer” instead. Rabbi Isaac’s statements in section C were polemics used by him in Babylonia, to urge the adoption of the Palestinian bedtime *Shema* by the Babylonians, if only for apotropaic reasons. The second of these statements is actually a reworking of a homily by Resh Laqish on Job 5:7, cited in the next *sugya*.

### **Sugya 12: Suffering (5a-b)**

The *sugya* consists of a collection of material regarding suffering, woven into a long and intricate discourse. Sections A and C are discussions of the relationship between suffering and Torah study, Palestinian and Babylonian respectively. In section A, Torah study is said to forestall suffering as divine punishment, and conversely, suffering serves as a punishment for refraining from Torah study (*bittul Torah*). In section C, suffering is said atone for sin, and if no sin is evident, for the sin of *bittul Torah*; if no time whatsoever was misspent on pursuits other than Torah study, one’s suffering is considered “suffering of [divine] love”. Willing acceptance of such suffering is rewarded with success in Torah study. In the context of Section A, a homily of Resh Laqish on Job 5:7, reworked by Rabbi Isaac in the previous *sugya*, is cited (hence the placement of this *sugya* here). The section ends with a citation of Proverbs 4:2, which leads into the parenthetical section B, another homily on the same verse. In section C Rav Huna refers to “suffering of love”, which he defines as suffering that cannot be attributed to sin; this leads into section D, a Palestinian discussion of “suffering of love”, which however defines “suffering of love” as suffering of atonement proportional to the sin for which it is meant to atone, which does not interfere with Torah study or prayer; this discussion ends with a number of statements regarding the atoning power of suffering, a theme corroborated by a series of *baraitot* cited in section E. In section F, Rabbi Yohanan is said to deny that leprosy and “children” can be considered “sufferings of love”; this statement is challenged and interpreted in a number of ways. Section G consists of four stories regarding suffering, with a short discussion of the second. The first three are tales of illness, all of which involve Rabbi Yohanan as either the sick person or his visitor. All three end with miraculous healing by the visitor of the sick person, after the sick person declares that he does not consider suffering “dear”, despite the homilies cited earlier in the *sugya* concerning the value of suffering. The fourth *sugya* concerns economic “pain”, and the message is the opposite: suffering is valuable as punishment for and reminder of wrongdoing on the part of the sufferer.

Analysis indicates that our *sugya* originally consisted of a stark contrast between two views of suffering: the classic view according to which suffering is valuable as a reminder of wrongdoing, personal atonement, vicarious atonement for Israel as a whole, and a sign of greater reward to come, and the radical view attributed to Rabbi Yohanan, according to which suffering, at least in its most extreme manifestations, is pointless and cannot be seen as beneficial or a sign of divine love. These two points-of-view were originally presented beside one another without comment, an editorial technique typical of the editor of the aggadic *sugyot* in our chapter (cf. especially *sugyot* 18 and 28). However, a later editor commented upon the material and supplemented it in a manner designed to obscure the radical message of Rabbi Yohanan.

### ***Sugya* 13: Abba Binyamin (5b-6a)**

At the heart of this *sugya* is a collection of four *baraitot* citing a *tanna* named Abba Binyamin; the first three *baraitot* are each followed by extensive amoraic discussion. In its current form, the first *baraita* (section A) reads: “Abba Binyamin says: I was distressed about two things my entire life: that my prayer be before my bed, and that my bed be placed from north to south”. In the second *baraita* (section B), Abba Binyamin warns against one who hurries to finish his prayers when praying alongside a friend, and does not wait for that friend. In the third (section C), he describes the multiplicity of demons, bearable only because the demons are invisible. In the fourth (section D), he states that prayers are only answered when prayed in the synagogue. The phrase “I was distressed” in the context of the *baraita* in section A is understood by BT and the commentators in the sense of “I was careful” (but note that this meaning is unattested elsewhere): Abba Binyamin took care to pray not in front of his bed, but “*samukh* [proximate, in time] to his bed[time]”, and there is magical value in placing one’s bed from north to south.

The collection of *baraitot* as it stands is fraught with problems. We have already noted that the phrase “I was distressed” does not mean “I was careful”, and thus the syntax of the first *baraita* in its current form is difficult: how can one be “distressed to” do something? Moreover, the first *baraita* as understood in the *sugya* urges prayer at home, immediately before bed; this is not only a practice unheard of from other sources, but it also contradicts Abba Binyamin’s own statement in the fourth *baraita*, which insists that prayer is heard only in the synagogue. The second *baraita* further complicates the issue: it opens with the phrase, “When two enter to pray, and one hurries to finish before his friend and does not wait for him in prayer”, a scenario that seems appropriate neither to synagogue prayer with a congregation nor to solitary prayer at home before bed. Finally, the third *baraita* seems out of place in that it is neither prescriptive nor does it concern prayer.

In the discussion it is proposed that the original version of the first *baraita* read, “Abba Binyamin says: I was distressed about two things my entire life: my prayer and my bed”. The original explanation of the sources of this distress is found in the second and third *baraitot*, which follow. Abba Binyamin was distressed about prayer, because when two pray the *Amidah* next to one another, and one finishes first, he must wait for his friend to finish before resuming his pre-prayer stance so as not to disturb him, and this is well-nigh impossible in a crowded synagogue setting. He was distressed about going to bed, because of the multiplicity of demons who attack during sleep. Finally, the last *baraita* explains why Abba Binyamin prayed in the synagogue despite his fear of disturbing the prayer of his neighbors: prayer is only heard in the synagogue.

Abba Binyamin's discourse on his distress and its reasons was preserved in the form of a collection (*qovets*) of four independent *baraitot*, rather than as a single *baraita* consisting of an initial statement and elaborations upon that statement. Thus it was not immediately apparent that the second and third *baraitot* explain the distress mentioned in the first, and BT understood that the first *baraita* concerned painstaking care over prayer and bed, in the same sense: fastidiousness regarding the placement of prayer vis-à-vis bed, and regarding the placement of the bed. The *sugya* was thus appended to our chapter, which, in *sugya* 11 above, dealt with the bedtime *Shema*, a form of prayer before bed. Prayer before bed and the placement of the bed were then explained in light of external sources, which were consequently cited in the *sugya*, and the *baraita* was expanded and understood to read: "I was careful to place my prayer before my bed, and my bed from north to south".

#### ***Sugya* 14: Rabin bar Ada in the Name of Rabbi Isaac (6a-b)**

At the heart of this *sugya* is a collection of three statements by the Babylonian *amora* Rabin bar Ada in the name of the Palestinian *amora* Rabbi Isaac. The first two statements are followed by extensive discussion; the last is followed by a similar statement by Rabbi Yohanan. Section A opens with the first of these statements, citing a proof-text showing that God is present in the synagogue. This links the *sugya* with the *baraita* cited at the end of the previous *sugya*, according to which prayer is heard only in the synagogue. In its present form, the statement is supplemented by a series of follow-up statements, which seem to be a continuation of the amoraic statement, showing that God is also present when ten congregate to pray, when three sit in judgment, and even when an individual studies Torah; these supplements in turn engender a layer of editorial discussion. The second statement in the collection, at the beginning of section B, cites proof-texts showing that God wears *tefillin*, and that *tefillin* are a source of strength to Israel. A Babylonian amoraic discussion concerning the contents of God's *tefillin* follows. The third statement, section C, is a homily on Isaiah 50:10 concerning synagogue attendance. Section D consists of a similar homily by Rabbi Yohanan on Isaiah 50:2, on the same theme.

Analysis indicates that the supplementary statements in section A, which in context seem to constitute a continuation of Rabbi Isaac's statement, are actually a citation from the *Mekhilta*. There are parallels to this tannaitic material in the *Mekhilta deRSBI* and *Mishnah* Avot 3:6, and the relationship between them is discussed in the commentary, in light of previous scholarship. The notion that God wears *tefillin*, the subject of the statement in section B, is based upon an earlier amoraic statement of Rabbi Simeon the Pious cited in *sugya* 16 below, according to which God showed Moses the knot of *tefillin*. This is interpreted in our *sugya* and all subsequent tradition to mean that God showed Moses the knot of God's own *tefillin*, which gave rise to the notion that God wears *tefillin*; however, it seems that the original meaning of the earlier statement is that God showed Moses how to tie the knot of Moses' *tefillin*. Rabbi Isaac's homily in section C, which hitherto has not been satisfactorily explained, is shown to be based upon reading the root sh'-n as sh'-l, a substitution found elsewhere in rabbinic literature. The obscurity of this homily may be the reason the editor felt the need to supplement it with Rabbi Yohanan's similar homily in section D.

#### ***Sugya* 15: Rabbi Helbo in the Name of Rav Huna (6b)**

At the heart of this *sugya* is a collection of seven statements by Rabbi Helbo in the name of Rav Huna. The *sugya* is linked to the previous one because the first of these

statements, and the subsequent discussion (section A), deal with the importance of praying in a fixed place, asserting that it was characteristic of our father Abraham; this is reminiscent of the homilies regarding God's concern over absence in the synagogue cited at the end of the previous *sugya*. The second statement of Rabbi Helbo in the name of Rav Huna urges a slow pace upon leaving the synagogue; this is qualified by amoraic discussion, which urges running to the synagogue, and is followed by a secondary collection of amoraic statements with the formula "the reward for x is y", the first of which deals with running to study (section B). The third statement of Rabbi Helbo in the name of Rav Huna, at the beginning of section C, criticizes one who prays "behind the synagogue", citing Psalm 12:9; this is followed by a qualification and a cautionary tale. Section D consists of further homilies on Psalm 12:9. The collection of statements by Rabbi Helbo in the name of Rav Huna is resumed in section E, with a fourth statement urging care in praying the afternoon service; this is followed by further statements urging care in praying the evening and mornings services as well. The fifth statement, at the beginning of section F, criticizes those who do not entertain the bride and groom at a wedding, a theme that is expanded by further discussion in that section. The sixth statement, at the beginning of section G, is a homily on Ecclesiastes 12:13, followed by a discussion (section H). Finally, section I consists of the seventh statement, urging prompt greeting of a friend and the return of a greeting, without discussion.

Each statement and discussion is analyzed independently in the commentary. Analysis indicates that the statement at the beginning of section A may have been part of a eulogy, perhaps for a person named Abraham. The statements in section B, when compared to parallel Palestinian material, indicate that the early Babylonian *amora'im* were more stringent with regard to the prohibition against running on the Sabbath than were the Palestinian *amora'im*. The Palestinian leniency spread to Babylonia in the late amoraic period. Analysis of the end of section B indicates that five of the seven statements it contains were part of an original collection of statements with the formula "the reward of x is y". These were originally comments on and examples of the statement in *Mishnah* Avot 4:2: "The reward of a *mitsvah* is a *mitsvah*"; these comments cite secondary *mitsvot* engendered by keeping a more basic *mitsvah*. To these were added two more statements tongue-and-cheek: Abaye says that the added "reward" of attending the *kallah* (public study session) is the crowding, and Rav Papa says that the added "reward" of visiting a mourner is silence, i.e. refraining from Torah study. Analysis of section C and comparison to parallels to the statements therein indicate varying attitudes of the *amora'im* towards public prayer: Rabbi Joshua ben Levi criticized those who pass by a synagogue during services without attending; Rav Huna in our *sugya* is even more strict, criticizing even those who attend services but stand outside the main sanctuary; Abaye qualifies both of the above statements, and insists that these actions are only problematic if perceived as turning one's back upon the community. Analysis of section D indicates that the word *kerum* in Psalm 12:9 was originally interpreted by Palestinian *amora'im* in the sense of Greek *chroma*, "color". Babylonians who were unfamiliar with the Greek word assumed the Palestinian homily concerned the name of a bird called *kerum*. Analysis of section E indicates that Rav Huna and Rabbi Yonatan originally urged care regarding the afternoon service because it is easy to forget. Rav Nahman bar Yitshak felt it necessary to balance this with a statement urging care regarding the morning service, which is equally obligatory; finally the editor emended Rabbi Yonatan's statement so that it referred to the evening service, rounding out the three daily services. Analysis of

section F indicates that it is achronological; it must be restructured and emended in order to reconstruct the original forms of each statement. The last two statements of Rav Huna, in sections G and H, are also explained in the commentary.

### ***Sugya* 16: Rabbi Yohanan in the Name of Rabbi Yose (7a)**

At the heart of this *sugya* lies a collection of five statements of the *amora* Rabbi Yohanan in the name of the *tanna* Rabbi Yose. Some manuscript evidence suggests that this *tanna* may be Rabbi Yose ben Zimra rather than Rabbi Yose ben Halafta, the Rabbi Yose usually cited without patronymic; however, this evidence is inconclusive. Each of the five engenders either an amoraic layer or an editorial layer of discussion. The first statement cites Isaiah 56:7 in order to prove that God himself prays; in the ensuing discussion (section A), the text of God's prayer is cited in the name of the *amora* Rav. A *baraita* is then cited in which Rabbi Yishmael ben Elisha describes a mystical experience in which he found himself offering up incense in the Holy of Holies, whereupon Akatriel Yah the Lord of Hosts appeared to him and asked for a blessing; the text of Rabbi Ishmael's blessing in the second person is identical to the prayer ascribed by Rav to God, except that the latter is, of course, in the first person. The second, fourth and fifth statements of Rabbi Yohanan in the name of Rabbi Yose all concern God's anger and dialogue with Moses after the Golden Calf episode (Exodus 33, Deuteronomy 9). In the second, at the beginning of section B, Exodus 33:14 is interpreted as a request by God to Moses to wait for his anger to cool before proceeding on the journey through the wilderness. The ensuing discussion in section B concerns the very notion of God's anger, which is said to be limited to a fraction of a second each day, which, if known to mortals, can be exploited for the purpose of cursing others, as it was by Balaam. The third statement, in section C, which ostensibly has nothing to do with the Golden Calf episode, concerns the efficacy of a stricken conscience, which is said to be greater than that of corporal punishment. The fourth statement concerns the dialogue between Moses and God in Exodus 33. Moses is said to have asked God to bestow his presence on Israel, to refrain from bestowing his presence upon the nations, and to explain to him the puzzle of theodicy. The ensuing discussion in section D asks which of these requests were granted, and in what way. The fifth statement and section E claim that God's promises, even if conditional and even if the condition is not met, are fulfilled in some way. Thus God's promise to make Moses a great nation instead of Israel (Deuteronomy 9:14) was fulfilled in that Moses descendents were great in number, albeit as part of Israel.

Analysis shows that an earlier form of the collection can be reconstructed, in which the entire collection is connected to the Golden Calf episode; this entails the addition of a sixth statement of Rabbi Yohanan in the name of Rabbi Yose now preserved in BT Rosh Hashanah 17b, and a rereading of the third statement in light of a parallel statement in Canticles Rabbah 1, in which the Golden Calf story is cited. These statements may have been omitted by a later redactor due to theological concerns.

The *baraita* of Rabbi Ishmael ben Elisha is identified as a mystical vision of the post-Temple *tanna* of priestly descent, Rabbi Ishmael, not as an actual account of an episode that occurred on Yom Kippur concerning a high priest before the destruction of the second Temple, as suggested by some scholars, and not as a post-Talmudic addition to the Talmud, as suggested by others. The phenomenon can be compared to the prophecy of Ezekiel in chapters 40-48, which likewise involves mystical transport of a seer of priestly descent to the Temple precincts after the destruction of the

Temple, and an encounter with the divine presence there. This confirms Gershom Scholem's reading of our story as an authentic tannaitic *baraita*.

The discussion of the divine anger in section B is rather artificially linked to the statement at the beginning; it is imported from BT Avodah Zarah 4a-b and Sanhedrin 105b. The reasons for the import are discussed in the commentary, which also includes detailed and novel interpretations of many of the statements cited in this passage and other section of the *sugya*.

### ***Sugya 17: Rabbi Yohanan in the Name of Rabbi Simeon bar Yohai (7b)***

At the heart of this *sugya* lies a collection of seven statements of the *amora* Rabbi Yohanan in the name of the *tanna* Rabbi Simeon bar Yohai, and as such it continues the previous *sugya*, which is based on a collection of five statements of Rabbi Yohanan in the name of Rabbi Yose. The first statement, at the beginning of section A, attributes the initial use of the name *Adon* ("Lord") for God to Abraham; this is followed in the *sugya* by a homily of the *amora* Rav on Daniel 9:17 which builds upon this point. The second statement, the sole constituent of section B, is a variant upon the second statement of Rabbi Yohanan in the name of Rabbi Yose in the previous *sugya*, and concerns Exodus 33:14 and God's anger after the Golden Calf episode. The third statement (section C), is similar to the first: it attributes to Leah the first thanksgiving to God, upon naming her son Judah (Genesis 29:35). This is followed by section D, a collection of homilies on biblical names. The fourth statement (section E) is a homily comparing Psalms 2 and 3. This is followed by another homily, on Psalm 3:1 (section F). The fifth statement, at the beginning of section G, permits the taunting of evildoers in this world; this is followed by a lengthy Talmudic discussion, consisting of tannaitic, amoraic, and editorial material on the same subject. The sixth statement is a homily on II Samuel 7:10 urging prayer in a fixed place; this is followed by a further discussion of the same verse (section H). The seventh statement (section I), a homily on II Kings 3:11, urges personal service of scholars.

Analysis indicates that the original order of the statements in the collection may have been 2, 1, 3, 7, 4, 5, 6; editorial considerations are cited as the reason for the change in the final version. Statement 1 and parallel material may originally have been polemics against Pauline Christian doctrine concerning Adam and Abraham. Rav's statement in section 1, which in context builds upon Rabbi Simeon bar Yohai's statement, can be reconstructed as an independent statement.

### ***Sugya 18: Synagogue (7b-8a)***

This *sugya* seems to be the focal point of the aggadic collection stretching from *sugya* 11 through *sugya* 20. It treats the question of public prayer versus private prayer. It opens with a dialogue in which the Palestinian *amora* Rabbi Isaac rebukes the Babylonian *amora* Rabbi Nahman for not attending synagogue services or praying when the congregation prays (section A); this is followed by a series of homiletic statements urging synagogue attendance (section B), one of which cites Proverbs 8:35. Section C consists of a series of interpretations of Proverbs 8:35 that are at odds with the interpretation in section B, and have nothing to do with synagogue attendance. Section D consists of a series of homiletic statements urging prayer in private, at home or at the place where one studies. The central statement is attributed to Rabbi Hiyya bar Ami in the name of Ulla; according to this statement the only public institution in which the divine presence ever dwelt was the Temple; after the destruction of the Temple the divine Presence can be found only in the private domain, where daily life

is lived in a accordance with *halakhah*, and not in the synagogue or communal house of study. Section E cites two further statements of Hiyya bar Ami in the name of Ulla, with a brief discussion of the second.

Analysis indicates that the *sugya* is a delicately balanced, chiasmically structured, interplay between the two views: one favoring, though not mandating, prayer in the synagogue or public house of study; the other expressing a preference for prayer in the private domain, in the place in which the halakhic life is actually lived, rather than in public institutions such as the synagogue and study house. Although the editor is careful to present the two views side by side, he alludes to his own preference for private prayer in a number of ways, which are spelled out in the commentary. The later halakhic attempt to declare public prayer essential, or even mandatory, is traced in the commentary through the medieval commentators on the *sugya*. It is shown how the statements clearly favoring private prayer were emended and/or reinterpreted to refer solely to a dispensation granted the scholar from synagogue prayer (though not necessarily from public prayer with a quorum of ten), and only if synagogue attendance would entail loss of time to be devoted to Torah study.

### ***Sugya* 19: Torah Reading (8a-b)**

This *sugya* is an outgrowth of the previous one, in which, alongside the view espousing synagogue attendance, a view was presented advocating private prayer at home. In addition to being the venue for public prayer, the synagogue served another major function: it was the place in which the Torah was read. Our *sugya* deals with the implications of the view advocating prayer at home as far as the Torah reading is concerned. While the *Amidah's* dual structure – private prayer followed by the reader's repetition – enables private and public discharge of the obligation to pray, tannaitic halakhah seems to have seen the Torah reading exclusively as a public act. How do those who prefer prayer in the private domain over synagogue prayer deal with this issue? Our *sugya* provides two answers: section A establishes that the individual is not obligated to hear the Torah reading, while section B provides an alternative for the individual: private study of the weekly Torah portion, twice in Hebrew and once in Aramaic. In section A, *amora'im* are said to have left the synagogue before the end of the Torah reading – albeit during breaks in the reading, so as not to demonstrate disrespect for the Torah – and Rav Sheshet is said to have turned his face away from the reading in order to study the oral law. Section B cites a statement of Rabbi Ami urging the private study of the weekly Torah portion in pace with the synagogue reading, twice in Hebrew and once in Aramaic. This is corroborated by an exhortation of Abaye to his sons urging them to keep this practice and two others. While the statements by Rabbi Ami and Abaye are hortatory in nature, and do not seem to carry halakhic weight, Rav Bibi bar Abaye is said to have sought to read a number of weekly portions on Yom Kippur eve, whereupon he was urged to spend the day eating instead; moreover, an old man quoted him a *baraita* warning that the private study of the portion must keep pace with the public reading, and be neither earlier nor later. This implies that the practice of private study of the Torah portion is both obligatory and of tannaitic origin.

In context in our *sugya*, it would seem that this practice is meant to stand in relation to the public reading as the private recitation of the *Amidah* stands in relation to the reader's repetition. However, the practice of reading the Torah portion weekly in private was not considered obligatory until the final redaction of our *sugya*. It was first urged, not mandated, by Rabbi Ami and Abaye (both of whom prayed outside of

the synagogue according to the previous *sugya*), as a substitute for the reading in the synagogue. Synagogue practice in amoraic times was to read the portion in its entirety on Sabbath mornings in Hebrew and Aramaic, but also to complete the entire Sabbath morning portion during the course of Sabbath afternoon, Monday and Thursday; hence one who attended synagogue neither on Sabbaths nor on weekdays would miss two readings of the portion in Hebrew and one in Aramaic. In the original form of the passage no tannaitic material was cited forbidding the individual study before or after that of the congregation; rather, Rav Bibi bar Abaye wished to *eat* early on Yom Kippur eve, and usher the fast in early, and then read a number of portions; the old man cited a *baraita* insisting that *the Yam Kippur fast* be ushered in neither early nor late. The same *baraita* is cited by the same old man in BT Shabbat 23b, in order to teach that the Sabbath candles must likewise be lit on time, neither early nor late. The redactor of our *sugya* altered the text of the story slightly, indicating that Rav Bibi wished to read *the Torah portions* early, rather than ushering in Yom Kippur early, thus implying that the practice of private Torah portion study is tannaitic in origin and obligatory.

### ***Sugya* 20: Rava to his Sons (8b)**

Section A of this *sugya* cites three exhortations of Rava to his sons, in the style of Abaye's exhortation in the previous *sugya*, urging them not to cut meat on the back of their hands, not to sit on the bed of a gentile woman, and not to pass by a synagogue during services. A discussion of each follows; among other issues, three meanings of "not sitting on the bed of a gentile woman" (which can also be read, somewhat ungrammatically, "not sitting on a gentile bed") are cited: not going to bed without reciting the *Shema*, not marrying a convert, and the literal meaning, which a gloss explains as designed to avoid false accusation of murder. In section B two *baraitot* are cited and discussed concerning the behavior of the Medes and the Persians, respectively; one issue is the way in which the Medes cut their meat, on the table.

Analysis indicates that Rava originally exhorted his sons against cutting their meat *with* their hands. He urged them to use a knife. This is the meaning of the Persian custom, as well, as can be seen from an analysis of the parallels, and is meant to ward off the evil spirits who inhabit unclean hands. The origins of, and necessity for, the far-fetched interpretations of not sitting on the bed of a gentile woman, and other features of the *sugya*, are likewise explained in the commentary.

### ***Sugya* 21: Twice (8b-9a)**

This *sugya* begins with a ruling by Rav Yehudah in the name of Samuel in accordance with Rabban Gamliel's position in *Mishnah* Berakhot 1:1: the evening *Shema* may be recited until dawn (section A). A concurring *baraita* is cited in the name of Rabbi Simeon bar Yohai, according to which one may occasionally read the *Shema* twice consecutively just before and after dawn, and fulfill the requirement of the evening and morning *Shema*. After discussion, a ruling of Rabbi Joshua ben Levi is cited by Rav Aha bar Hanina in accordance with this view (section B). However, according to section C, others say that this ruling was not in favor of the above *baraita*, but in favor of a similar *baraita*, according to which Rabbi Simeon bar Yohai quoted Rabbi Akiva as ruling that the evening and morning *Shema* can be recited consecutively just before and after *sunrise*, rather than dawn. Rabbi Zera warns that one following this ruling should not recite *Hashkivenu* after the "evening" *Shema*. In section D, Rav Yitshak bar Yosef argues that Rabbi Joshua ben Levi's ruling was never

made directly, rather it was deduced from his instructions to two drunken students at his son's wedding, according to which Rabbi Simeon's ruling is good enough to be followed in an emergency.

The main question in the redaction history of this *sugya* is the relationship between the two *baraitot* (sections B and C). A parallel to the first *baraita* is found in *Tosefta* Berakhot 1:1. Normally one would expect two such similar versions of the same *baraita* to be treated as alternates and introduced with a formula such as *ikka de'amri* ("there are those that say"). However, in this case the two versions are presented as two distinct *baraitot*; the former being Rabbi Simeon's own opinion and the latter the one he cites in the name of his teacher, Rabbi Akiba. The two are thus regarded as equally authentic; a phenomenon that requires explanation.

Both *baraitot* in their current form are problematic halakhically. The notions of reciting the morning *Shema* just after dawn, according to the first *baraita*, and the evening *Shema* just before sunrise, according to the second, are both unattested elsewhere, and are not cited among the possible times for the evening *Shema* in our *mishnah*, or among the times for the morning *Shema* in the next *mishnah*. If these were indeed the views of Rabbi Simeon bar Yohai and Rabbi Akiva, respectively, they would presumably have received more attention. Moreover, in context in the *Tosefta*, the first *baraita* would seem to be referring to the recitation of the *Shema* in the early evening, since it is brought immediately following the dispute concerning the *terminus a quo* for the evening *Shema*, as follows:

When does one recite the *Shema* in the evening? When people come in to eat their bread on Sabbath eves, according to Rabbi Meir. The Sages say: When the priests are eligible to eat their *terumah*. A sign of the matter is when the stars come out. Even though there is no proof of the matter, there is an allusion to the matter: "And half of them held spears from dawn until the stars came out" (Nehemiah 4:15). Rabbi Simeon says: At times one recites it twice at night, once just before dawn and once just after dawn, and fulfils one's obligation for day and night.

These considerations lead us to argue that both *baraitot* are in fact expansions of a shorter version, containing only the material common to both, which read as follows: "At times one recites it twice, and fulfills one's obligation for day and night". The meaning is clear in context of the *Tosefta*: one may recite the *Shema* twice in the *early evening*; just before and after nightfall, and fulfill the obligation for day and night, in that order. Rabbi Simeon's view is thus that just as the evening *Shema* can be recited according to Rabban Gamliel until dawn, so the morning *Shema* can be recited until nightfall; thus one who recites the *Shema* just before and after nightfall fulfils both obligations. This is the view cited at the end of *Mishnah* Berakhot 1:2: "He who recites from this point on has not lost out, like a person reading the Torah" (see below, *sugya* 33). Rabbi Simeon is cited in PT Berakhot 1:5 (3d) as saying that the morning and evening *Shema* are merely fulfillments of the requirement to study Torah day and night; presumably, therefore, they need not be limited to the first hours of the day or the first hours of the night. The notion that the morning *Shema* may be recited all day was presented ambiguously in the final redaction of *Mishnah* Berakhot 1:2, and Rabbi Simeon's *baraita* was subsequently assumed to refer to two consecutive recitations in the early morning, in accordance with or in expansion of Rabban Gamliel's view as to the *terminus ad quem* for the evening *Shema*; hence some wording had to be supplied to indicate that the two recitations were in the early morning. The additions were

supplied in two different ways, both of which were considered authentic *baraitot*, and one of which was attributed to Rabbi Simeon's teacher, Rabbi Akiva. The difference between the two versions stems from divergent views as to the proper time for the recitation of the morning *Shema* (see below, *sugya* 26).

This reconstruction resolves certain difficulties regarding Rabbi Joshua ben Levi's ruling to his students as well; for example: if Rabbi Joshua instructed his students to recite the evening *Shema* just before morning, as understood as in the *sugya*, why does he cite Rabbi Simeon's position, rather than that of Rabban Gamliel in the *Mishnah*? These problems are resolved if we assume Rabbi Joshua ben Levi was referring to the daytime *Shema*, and ruled in accordance with the original version of Rabbi Simeon's statement. He was worried that his drunken students would not awaken in time to recite the morning *Shema* by sunrise or the third hour of the day, in accordance with the views cited in *Mishnah* Berakhot 1:2; he therefore informed them that if necessary they could even recite the morning *Shema* just before nightfall, consecutively with the evening *Shema*, in accordance with Rabbi Simeon's view in the original *baraita*.

### ***Sugya* 22: Rabban Gamliel (9a)**

*Mishnah* Berakhot 1:1 cites three views regarding the *terminus ad quem* of the evening *Shema*: Rabbi Eliezer permits the recitation until the end of the first watch of the night, the Sages until midnight, and Rabban Gamliel until dawn. In his discussion with his sons (cited at the end of the *mishnah*), following their arrival home from a wedding after midnight, Rabban Gamliel rules that they should still recite the *Shema*. He says that the midnight ruling of the Sages is a mere precaution, in this as in other cases in which the Sages ruled that a particular religious practice can be done until midnight.

Our anonymous *sugya* expresses surprise that Rabban Gamliel's sons are unfamiliar with his position as stated in the *Mishnah*, and learn of it only when they find themselves in need of a lenient ruling. The explanation given is that Rabban Gamliel's sons were in fact familiar with his position, but they followed the ruling of the Sages, in accordance with the principle that the *halakhah* follows the majority. They were uncertain whether the the Sages position is fundamentally different from that of their father, or a mere precaution. Rabban Gamliel's sweeping statement in the *mishnah*, listing all cases in which a "midnight" ruling is in fact a mere precaution, is paraphrased as though it were a mere confirmation of his sons' second explanation.

This paraphrase does not seem to do justice to the simple meaning of the *mishnah*. It is far simpler to assume that Rabban Gamliel's position was originally formulated in his ruling to his sons, and was subsequently presented at the beginning of the *mishnah* as an independent ruling disputing that of the Sages. In taking pains to indicate that Rabban Gamliel's ruling was obvious, and a mere confirmation of a thought that occurred to them as well, the *sugya* is polemicizing against the view expressed in the parallel passage in PT Berakhot 1:2 (3 b). According to PT, the Sages in fact forbade the recitation of the *Shema* after midnight, and even Rabban Gamliel knew that, and in his ruling to his sons he was merely arguing that *in his view* the Sages' stringent ruling regarding *Shema* and other rituals should be interpreted as a mere precaution.

Analysis indicates that BT is correct in assuming that Rabban Gamliel was explaining to his sons his view of the position of the Sages, and not disputing them; but PT is correct in denying that this is necessarily the *original* view of the Sages. In point of fact, prior to the night of that particular wedding, the *terminus ad quem* of the

evening *Shema* was considered midnight. Rabban Gamliel, in his ruling to his sons, *interpreted* the view of the Sages such that it was a mere precaution; this view was later reformulated by the editor of the *Mishnah* as Rabban Gamliel's view, according to which the *Shema* may be recited until dawn. Whether or not this is in fact the position of the Sages is an open question.

### ***Sugya* 23: And Furthermore (9a)**

This *sugya*, missing in some witnesses and placed in some others before *sugya* 22, is shown to be an alternate version of *sugya* 22.

### ***Sugya* 24: Consumption of Paschal Offerings (9a)**

In the version of *Mishnah* Berakhot 1:1 known to the editors of this *sugya*, "the consumption of paschal offerings" is not listed in Rabban Gamliel's catalogue of cases in which a *terminus ad quem* of midnight is a mere precaution (section A). After establishing that according to a *baraita*, midnight is a mere precaution, and the actual *terminus* is dawn (section B), the *sugya* surveys two further tannaitic sources in which the hour of the Exodus and the concomitant *terminus ad quem* of the consumption of the paschal offering are disputed (sections B and D). In each case, one *tanna* cites midnight as the relevant hour and the other cites dawn. According to Rabbi Abba (section E), all agree that in fact the Redemption took place in the evening, when the Egyptians urged the Israelites to make haste and leave, and the actual Exodus, when the Israelites made haste and left, took place the next day. They differ only as to whether the *terminus ad quem* of the consumption of the paschal offering should be the conclusion of the time of the "Egyptian hastening", at midnight, or the time of the "Israelite hastening", morning. Rabbi Abba's proposed compromise is confirmed by a *baraita*.

A parallel *sugya* in PT Berakhot 1:3 (3a) contrasts two versions of our *mishnah*, with and without "the consumption of paschal offerings" in Rabban Gamliel's catalogue. In fact, the best manuscripts of the *Mishnah* do include the clause, despite the assumption of our *sugya* that the clause is not included. The last word in the PT *sugya* is, however, given to Rabbi Huna, who concludes that the Sages, in decreeing the paschal lamb after midnight unclean, precluded any possibility of its consumption after midnight. This statement would seem to have engendered the deletion of the phrase from the *Mishnah* in both Palestine and Babylonia; hence our *sugya*'s categorical statement that the *mishnah* does not contain the phrase (section A). The editor of our *sugya* was thus unfamiliar with a version of the *mishnah* including the phrase; however, he wished to somehow maintain the content of the PT *sugya*. He therefore sought another rabbinic text that claimed that the paschal lamb can be eaten until morning, and, not finding such a text, emended a *baraita* concerning the Hallel such that included reference to the paschal offering as well; this became the *baraita* cited in section B.

The position according to which the Exodus took place at midnight is attributed to Rabbi Eliezer, the Shammaite, in the *baraita* cited in section D of our *sugya*, and to Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah in sections B and C, and elsewhere in BT. Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah may have followed Rabbi Eliezer on this point, as proposed by J.N. Epstein, but it seems more likely that the attribution, found only in BT, is a Babylonian error for Rabbi Eliezer, as suggested by Shamma Friedman in his work *Tosefta Atiqta*. Friedman further demonstrates in that work that there is ample evidence that this was literally the position of the house of Shammai: the actual Exodus took place at

midnight according to this House, and not merely the beginning of the redemption, as proposed by Rabbi Abba in section F. The *baraita* cited in section G is not a compromise between the two positions, as it is understood in context in the *sugya*, but a reflection of the view of the house of Hillel, that the actual Exodus took place during the day.

### ***Sugya* 25: Exodus (9a-b)**

This *sugya* opens with two amoraic exegeses, of Exodus 11:2 and Exodus 12:36. According to these verses, the Israelites despoiled Egypt by borrowing silver and gold vessels and clothing. The interpretation of Exodus 11:2 has God urging Moses to ask the Israelites to borrow the items; the second has the Egyptians forced the items upon the Israelites. Further amoraic comments describe the degree to which Egypt was despoiled. An exegesis of Exodus 3:14 is cited thereafter. The divine epithet "I am that I am" is said to mean "I was with you in this enslavement and I will be with you in future enslavements of the kingdoms", to which Moses is said to have responded, "Master of the Universe, one trouble at a time", and God responds, "Go and say unto them: 'I am' has sent me to you", the continuation of the verse. This is presumably cited because Moses' reluctance to convey the divine message echoes his reluctance to urge the Israelites to despoil Egypt. The exegesis of "I am that I am" is followed by an interpretation of the structurally similar phrase "Answer me, Lord, answer me" in I Kings 18:37.

It would seem that the main purpose of the *sugya* is to explain the term "Egyptian hastening" used in the previous *sugya* to describe the component of the Exodus that took place "in the evening". The obvious explanation would seem to be the hastening described in Exodus 12:33, according to which the Egyptians urged the Israelites to hurry away after the death of first born at midnight. However, the Egyptian hastening took place, according to the previous *sugya*, in the evening, not after midnight. Our *sugya* therefore cites the *derasha* in section B as an Egyptian "hastening" that took place earlier that night: the Egyptians urged their Israelite neighbors to borrow gold and silver vessels, and clothing. These exegeses are unique in ancient Israelite literature in that they express moral qualms about despoiling Egypt; other rabbinic material, Philo and Josephus all explain that the goods are compensation for the years of slavery.

### ***Sugya* 26: "When One Can Distinguish" (9b)**

*Mishnah* Berakhot 1:2 cites two views as to the *terminus a quo* of the morning *Shema*: the view of the first *tanna*, "When one can distinguish blue from white", and Rabbi Eliezer's view, "When one can distinguish blue from green", and two views as to the *terminus ad quem*: "Until sunrise", and Rabbi Joshua's view, "Until the [end of the] third hour of the day". In section A of our *sugya*, the blue and the white are said to refer not to two balls of yarn, one of each color (which can be distinguished even in the middle of the night), but to "the blue that is in it and the white that is in it". Rashi explains that the reference is to blue and white threads in a single ball of yarn; Tosafot explain on the basis of parallel material in PT Berakhot 1:5 (3a) and BT Menahot 43b that the reference is to the threads of the *tsitsit*. Section B consists of a *baraita* citing three more views as to the *terminus a quo*: "Rabbi Meir says: When one can distinguish a wolf from a dog; Rabbi Akiva says: a domesticated donkey from a wild ass; And others say: When one sees his friend from a distance of four cubits and recognizes him". In section C, Rav Huna rules like the "others"; Abaye rules like the others as far

as the *terminus a quo* for the *Amidah* prayer (or *tefillin*, according to some witnesses) is concerned, but insists that the morning *Shema* be recited immediately before sunrise, and timed to end with the sunrise, in accordance with a view ascribed by Rabbi Yohanan to a group known as *vatiqin*. Rabbi Yohanan's ascription is confirmed by a *baraita*, which also cites the reason for this view: the *Shema* is to be recited immediately before sunrise, and the *Amidah* prayer is to be juxtaposed to it immediately and begun with the sunrise. Rabbi Zera explains that prayer at sunrise is based upon Psalm 72:5: "They shall worship You with the sun".

While Rashi would seem to be correct in explaining the phrase "the blue that is in it and the white that is in it" in context, it is clear from the parallels that the original reference was to the threads of the *tsitsit*, in accordance with Tosafot's explanation. Analysis of the PT parallel indicates that the phrase "between blue and white" in the *Mishnah* was borrowed by the editor of the *Mishnah* from a tannaitic source regarding *tsitsit*, in which the *terminus a quo* for fulfilling that commandment was said to be "when one can distinguish the blue in it from the white in it; Rabbi Eliezer says: blue from green". This source is no longer extant, but in the commentary it is suggested that the phrase was originally part of *Tosefta* Berakhot 6:10, and indicated the time at which one is to recite the blessing over the *tsitsit*. It would seem that it is also in this context that the view of "others" was originally stated; in the PT parallel the phrase "When one's friend is four cubits away and recognized" is presented as an exegesis of Numbers 15:39, a verse concerning *tsitsit*. Moreover, it is proposed here that the other tannaitic views regarding the *terminus a quo* for the recitation of the morning *Shema* are likewise borrowed from other contexts. It is proposed that the phrases "Rabbi Meir says: When one can distinguish a wolf from a dog; Rabbi Akiva says: a donkey from a wild ass" were originally a *baraita* explaining *Tosefta* Yoma 4:4, according to which a sufferer from bulimy (ravenous hunger) can be fed on Yom Kippur until he can distinguish good from bad; these are examples of similar looking species of which one is "good" and one is "bad".

The only authentic tannaitic *terminus a quo* for the morning *Shema* cited in the *sugya* is the opinion attributed to the *vatiqin*: at sunrise. These *vatiqin* are identified in the commentary as *ethikoi*, "habitual [students]" who accompanied the Rabbis at Yavneh. According to *Tosefta* Berakhot 2:6 the Rabbis at Yavneh did not interrupt their discussions to recite the *Shema*; according to our source, the habitual students present at these discussions *did* excuse themselves to recite the *Shema* at the earliest possible time, the *terminus a quo* itself; hence this time is attributed to them.

This explanation contradicts the commonly held view that *sunrise* was the original *terminus ad quem* for the recitation of the morning *Shema*, as suggested in our *mishnah*. Indeed, we propose that that view is the latest, and originated with Rabbi Judah the Patriarch, editor of the *Mishnah*. Rabbi Judah the Patriarch turned what was originally the *terminus a quo* into a *terminus ad quem*, in order to make life easier for the working man who had to be at work from sunrise on, and could only recite the *Shema* and pray before sunrise. He was therefore forced to seek earlier *termini a quo*, which he borrowed from the realm of *tsitsit*.

In a lengthy appendix to our analysis of the *sugya*, it is shown that contrary to the commonly held view, according to which the daily morning offering and the *Shema* service in the Temple were both held before sunrise, the morning offering was actually slaughtered at sunrise and offered upon the altar after sunrise, and therefore during Temple times and throughout most of the tannaitic period the concomitant

*terminus a quo* for the morning *Shema* and *Amidah* was considered sunrise. The *vatiqin* were unique in that they recited the *Shema* and the *Amidah* at the *earliest* possible time, not the latest, and the context in which sunrise was mentioned in tannaitic material that predated the *Mishnah* was in the citation of the view of the *vatiqin*, according to which *Shema* is recited *im hanets hehamah*, “with sunrise”, as a *terminus a quo*, not a *terminus ad quem*. In our *mishnah*, Rabbi Judah the Patriarch changed the word *im* to *ad*, making sunrise the *terminus ad quem*.

### **Sugya 27: Juxtaposition (9b-10a)**

The *sugya* consists of a series of statements concerning the juxtaposition of the blessing following the *Shema* (*Geulah*) with the *Amidah* prayer, a practice ascribed in the previous *sugya* to the *vatiqin* (“regular or habitual students”). In the first discussion (section A), Rabbi Yose ben Eliakim cites a statement of the Holy Congregation of Jerusalem, according to which he who juxtaposes the *Geulah* blessing with the *Amidah* prayer will not be harmed all day. Rabbi Zera insists that although he followed that practice he was seized for government service, and forced to carry bundles of myrtle into the palace, but the Talmud explains that this government service was not harmful but a privilege, citing Rabbi Yohanan’s dictum according to which one should take pains to go see a gentile king. In section B, Rabbi Eleazar sends regards to Rav Brona the Babylonian via Ulla, explaining that he is great man who takes pleasure in the commandments; once, having juxtaposed the *Geulah* to the *Amidah*, he did not stop smiling all day. In section C, Rabbi Yohanan’s dictum according to which one should add Psalm 51:17 before the *Amidah* and Psalm 19:15 after it is said to contradict the notion of juxtaposition, since Psalm 51:17 would be an interruption. After unsuccessful attempts, ascribed to Rabbi Eleazar, to deny the applicability of Rabbi Yohanan’s practice to the morning service, and after it is established that Rabbi Yohanan himself urged the juxtaposition in the evening service as well, Rav Ashi explains that although Psalm 51:17 should be recited before each service, it does not constitute an interruption, having been established by the Rabbis. In section D, it is explained that Rabbi Yohanan urged the recitation of Psalm 19:15 at the *end* of the eighteen benedictions of the *Amidah* because it is found at the end of the eighteenth psalm. When it is pointed out that it is found at the end of the nineteenth psalm, the Talmud explains that Psalms 1 and 2 originally constituted one long psalm. A similar discrepancy in numbering is likewise explained with this contention: In the following aggadic passage, Psalm 104 is labelled 103: “David recited one hundred and three psalms, but did not say Hallelujah until he beheld the defeat of the wicked, as it is written, ‘Let sinners be consumed from the earth, and let the wicked by no more. Bless the Lord, O my soul! Hallelujah!’ (Psalm 104:35)”.

Analysis focuses on the history of the concept of juxtaposition of the *Geulah* blessing and the *Amidah* prayer. It is pointed out that the custom is not considered obligatory in our passage, but it is highly recommended. On the other hand, a parallel passage in PT Berakhot 1:1 (2d) does seem to consider the practice obligatory in the morning service, interpreting a *baraita*, “One may not say words after *Emet Veyatsiv*”, as referring to the necessity of juxtaposing the *Amidah* prayer to *Emet Veyatsiv* (= *Geulah*). It is shown that the Babylonians (BT Berakhot 31a) interpreted this passage differently, and thus the notion of juxtaposition is not considered an absolute requirement. Nonetheless, juxtaposition was urged, as part of the polemic against recitation of the *Shema* in private immediately upon rising and retiring, and in favor of recitation in the synagogue in the context of the prayer service.

Other issues discussed in the commentary include the identity of the Holy Community of Jerusalem, the story of Rabbi Zera's forced labor, and the various numbering systems of the book of Psalms. The Holy Community of Jerusalem is mentioned in citation of Palestinian material in a number of BT passages, but never in PT or independent tannaitic collections. It is argued that this was a Babylonian term designed to highlight the antiquity of the source, rather than an authentic attribution to a specific group of people. The story of Rabbi Zera's *corvee* is compared to the parallel in the PT passage cited above, and differences are explained in the commentary. As far as the numbering of the Psalms is concerned, it is argued that despite the claim of our *sugya*, Psalms 1 and 2 were considered separate psalms in early texts; the confusion in numbering actually results from the fact that Psalms 9 and 10 were originally one psalm.

### ***Sugya* 28: "Bless the Lord, O My Soul!" (10a)**

The previous *sugya* mentioned the confusion in the numbering of Psalm 104, citing a homily on Psalm 104:35. This *sugya* consists for the most part of further rabbinic homilies on Psalms 103 and 104, both of which begin and end with the phrase "Bless the Lord, O my soul!" Section A cites a homily on Psalm 104:35 which Beruriah expounded before her husband, Rabbi Meir, and tells of the context in which she expounded this verse, a conflict between Rabbi Meir and *birioni*, variously translated "ruffians" or "heretics". Section B cites a further homily of Beruriah, on Isaiah 54:1, expounded before a heretic [early Jewish-Christian], and a homily of Rabbi Abahu on Psalm 3:1, also cited in the context of a conversation with a heretic. Sections C and E contain a further homily on Psalms 103-104, cited by Rabbi Yohanan in the name of Rabbi Simeon bar Yohai. Section D interrupts this homily with additional exegeses of Psalm 103:2. Section F consists of a discussion between two *amora'im* concerning these psalms.

Analysis indicates that this *sugya* is brought here because the exegesis of Psalm 104:35 cited at the end of the previous *sugya*, and the exegeses cited in sections C, E, and F of this *sugya*, consisted originally of a single *midrash* on Psalms 103-104, a parallel to which is found in Leviticus Rabbah 4:7-8. In this *midrash*, Psalm 104:35 is said to refer to the destruction of the wicked themselves. Section A of our *sugya*, Beruriah's homily and the story surrounding it, was composed by the editor of our *sugya* by combining motifs found in other passages (stories found in BT Berakhot 7a, BT Sanhedrin 37a, and BT Avodah Zarah 18a-b), and was added to this collection in order to temper the message of the total destruction of the wicked with an alternate interpretation, according to which it is *sin*, and not sinners, that will ultimately be destroyed. In this homily and the story surrounding it, Beruriah is portrayed as a moderate, well-tempered woman, who is ultimately wiser than her husband. However, the dominant picture painted of her in the Babylonian Talmud is far less flattering, and section B, in which Beruriah loses her temper and Rabbi Abahu, when faced with similar circumstances, does not, was apparently added in order to balance the picture of Beruriah painted in section A, and present the dominant view of Beruriah as harsh-tempered.

Other issues discussed in the commentary are the differences between the exegesis of Psalms 103-104 found in our passage and the parallel exegesis found in Leviticus Rabbah, which are explained as theological "corrections" on the part of the editor of our *sugya*, and the etymology of the word *birion*. *Birion* is the title of a Roman official in Rabbinic Hebrew, and a word meaning "heretic" or "ruffian" in Babylonian

Aramaic. While previous scholars sought a single etymology to cover all usages, it is suggested here that separate etymologies be identified for each meaning: the actual meaning in Palestinian Hebrew texts is “palace guard”, derived from Hebrew *birah*, “palace”, as suggested by Jastrow and Loew; the meaning “heretic” in Babylonian Aramaic is derived from Aramaic *bar*, “outside”, and is akin to Syriac *barya*, “outsider, heretic”, as suggest by Lewy. This is the meaning in our passage. The alleged meaning “ruffian” (reflected in Modern Hebrew usage) is an extension of “heretic”, applied in BT to the Zealots of the Jewish War of 70 CE, who were considered “sectarians” (Josephus, *War* II, 118).

### ***Sugya* 29: Hezekiah (10a-b)**

This *sugya* consists of three sources concerning the biblical King Hezekiah: an amoraic homily on his illness and prayer, described in II Kings 20 and Isaiah 38 (section A); a *baraita* listing six of his actions as king; of which the Rabbis approved of three and disapproved of three, and a discussion of the last action on the list (section B); and an amoraic homily comparing Hezekiah’s prayer with that of Moses (section C). It is linked to the two previous *sugyot* by virtue of a number common motifs (including the juxtaposition of *Geulah* and prayer), but it would seem that the editor’s primary motivation in placing the *sugya* here are a number of beautiful statements regarding prayer found in section A.

Parallels to the homily found in section A of our *sugya* are found in PT Sanhedrin 10:2 (28b-c) and Ecclesiastes Rabbah 5:6. In the commentary it is demonstrated that the version found in Ecclesiastes Rabbah is the original. This original legend is theologically problematic for two reasons: (1) Isaiah announces that God decrees immediate death and banishment from the world-to-come for a righteous king, for no reason whatsoever, and (2) Hezekiah rejects the prophecy, and is proven correct in doing so! In order to solve the theological problems inherent in the story, PT Sanhedrin combined it with two originally unrelated traditions, according to one of which Hezekiah sinned by refraining from having children, and Isaiah offered him his daughter as a means of repenting this sin. According to PT, Hezekiah nonetheless preferred the avenue of prayer to the avenue of repentance. Our BT *sugya* takes this a step further and has Hezekiah actually repenting: it is Hezekiah in our version of the story who asks Isaiah for his daughter’s hand, and it is Isaiah who refuses, citing destiny. Only then does Hezekiah turn to the resource of prayer.

Five of Hezekiah’s six actions as described in the *baraita* in Section B are based upon biblical passages. These are analyzed in the commentary and compared with their biblical context, and it is explained why they were characterized as either acceptable or unacceptable to the Rabbis. By contrast, the first item on the list, “He put away the book of treatment(s)”, has no biblical source. The parallel found in PT Pesahim 9:1 (36d) reads “He put away the table of treatment”. It is suggested that this was the original reading; it is a doublet of another item on the list, “He cut down the copper serpent”, the “table of treatment” being a reference to this hanging banner or ornament with healing powers. These doublets were ultimately both included in the list in order to echo the list of six actions of the people of Jericho, divided into two groups of three positive and three negative actions, found in *Mishnah* Pesahim 4:9.

### ***Sugya* 30: Elisha (10b)**

This *sugya* consists of two amoraic homiletic discussions, regarding II Kings 4:10 (section A) and II Kings 4:9 (section B), respectively. The reversal of the order of the

verses can easily be explained: these homilies are cited here in order to bridge *sugya* 29 with *sugya* 31. *Sugya* 29 mentions Hezekiah's turning his face toward the wall (*qir*), and in section A of this *sugya* the Shunamite woman's construction of an *aliyat qir*, an attic structure variously interpreted in the *sugya*, is discussed. Section B of this *sugya* concludes with a homily of Rabbi Yose ben Hanina in the name of Rabbi Eliezer ben Jacob on II Kings 4:9. This forms a bridge to the next *sugya*, in which various statements by these same scholars concerning prayer are cited, prayer being the major focus of this series of aggadic *sugyot*.

Other issues discussed in the commentary are the actual meaning of the phrase *aliyat qir* in II Kings 4:9; the various uses of the loan word *exedra* in Rabbinic Hebrew and Babylonian Aramaic; and the relationship between some of the homilies cited in section B of our *sugya* and their parallels in Leviticus Rabbah 24, PT Yevamot 2:4 (3d), and PT Sanhedrin 10:2 (29a).

### ***Sugya* 31: Rabbi Yose ben Hanina in the Name of Rabbi Eliezer ben Jacob (10b)**

This *sugya* is a collection of four statements by the *amora* Rabbi Yose ben Hanina in the name of the *tanna* Rabbi Eliezer ben Jacob. The first statement is corroborated by a *baraita*. The statements all concern proper behavior during prayer: they express the importance of praying while standing in a low place, straight-legged, and before the morning meal. These ideas are corroborated by biblical verses expounded homiletically. They are quasi-halakhic statements designed to form a transition between the aggadic *sugyot* which preceded and the halakhic *sugyot* which follow.

The discussion in the commentary yields a number of insights into the history of particular prayer practices: it is suggested that the tannaitic material cited in the *sugya* originally urged prayer while standing on the ground, rather than on furniture, because the precarious position is not conducive to proper concentration. In amoraic times this was expanded to exclude prayer on high *ground* as well, because a low position during prayer was considered a sign of humility. Prayer with the feet held together was probably originally a matter of modesty, so as not to expose the genitalia to the floor. In the wake of the development of the *qedushah* and its comparison of human prayer with that of the angels, "straight-legged" prayer was seen as an imitation of the angels. The notion of not eating before prayer is to be understood in light of BT Berakhot 14b, which urges that prayer be made the daily priority, preceding any other activity.

### ***Sugya* 32: Rabbi Joshua (10b)**

In this *sugya* Rav Yehudah rules in the name of Samuel in accordance with Rabbi Joshua's view in *Mishnah* Berakhot 1:2, that the morning *Shema* may be recited until the end of the third hour.

In the commentary, this ruling is compared with parallel rulings in PT Berakhot 1:5 (3b).

### ***Sugya* 33: "He has not Lost Out" (10b)**

*Mishnah* Berakhot 1:2 cites two rulings regarding the *terminus ad quem* of the morning *Shema*. According to the first view, which we attributed to Rabbi Judah the Patriarch, editor of the *Mishnah*, in our analysis of *Sugya* 26 above, the *Shema* must be recited by sunrise. Rabbi Joshua allows recitation until the end of the third hour of the day. A curious, unattributed statement follows Rabbi Joshua's view in the *mishnah*: "He who recites from this point on has not lost out, like a person reading the Torah".

This is usually explained as meaning that one who recites the *Shema* after the third hour has not lost out completely, as he still merits the reward of one who studies Torah, since the *Shema* consists of three Torah passages. Indeed, Rabbi Mani in section C of our *sugya* states explicitly that he must have lost out on something, and concludes on this basis that the recitation of the *Shema* at its proper time is more important than Torah study.

Sections A and B of the *sugya* are two versions of a single passage. According to section A, Rav Hisda in the name of Mar Ukba rules that one who recites the *Shema* after the statutory time may not recite the first blessing before the *Shema*, "Creator of Light", which is specifically a morning blessing; the Talmud challenges and rejects this statement on the basis of a *baraita* which states specifically that the meaning of the phrase "he has not lost out" in the *mishnah* is that he has not forfeited the blessings. According to the second version of the passage, cited in section B, Rav Hisda in the name of Mar Ukba and the *baraita* actually said the same thing: that one who recites the *Shema* after the statutory time has not forfeited the blessings.

Analysis of the *mishnah* indicates that it is best understood as a third view as to the *terminus ad quem* of the morning *Shema*; according to the first view, which we attributed to Rabbi Judah the Patriarch, the *terminus* is sunrise; according to the second, attributed to Rabbi Joshua, it is the third hour of the day; and according to the third, there is no time limit: the recitation of the *Shema* is simply a form of Torah study, and as such can be done all day. The view that *Shema* and Torah study are one and the same commandment, and therefore Torah scholars need not interrupt their study to recite the *Shema*, is attributed in PT Berakhot 1:5 (3b) to Rabbi Simeon bar Yohai; here he takes that view a step further and declines to limit the time of the daily recitation of the *Shema*. Since people in Talmudic times retired shortly after nightfall and awoke well before dawn, the three views in this *mishnah* can be said to correspond to the three views in *Mishnah* Berakhot 1:1 concerning the time for the recitation of the evening *Shema*: Rabbi Judah the Patriarch's view allowing recitation from shortly after dawn until sunrise corresponds to Rabbi Eliezer's view allowing recitation from nightfall until the end of the first watch of the night; Rabbi Joshua's view allowing recitation from sunrise until the third hour corresponds to the Sages' view allowing recitation between nightfall and midnight; and Rabbi Simeon's allowing recitation all day corresponds to Rabban Gamliel's allowing recitation all night. Rabbi Judah the Patriarch attached Rabbi Simeon's view to the *mishnah* without attribution, and without clarifying its status or meaning, for polemical reasons. He wished to associate Rabbi Joshua's late *terminus* with the view rejecting the notion of a *terminus* altogether, in order to argue in favor of his own view, that the *Shema* be recited as close to waking as possible (*bequmekha*), and before sunrise.

It is further explained in the commentary that *both* versions of Rav Hisda's statement in the name of Mar Ukba are accurate; the original statement combined both as follows: "He who recites from this point on has not forfeited blessings, as long he does not say 'Creator of Light'", i.e., he has not forfeited *all* the blessings. This is the explanation of these *amora'im* of the *mishnah*'s phrase "like a person reading the Torah"; just as the public reading of the Torah is preceded and followed by a blessing, the first of which praises God for giving the Torah and the second of which declares the Torah "true", so the reciter of the daytime *Shema*, even after the third hour, may recite the blessings *Ahavah Rabbah* and *Emet veYatsiv*, which correspond to these two blessings in content.

### **Sugya 34: “When thou Sittest in thine House” (11a)**

*Mishnah* Berakhot 1:3 records a dispute between the House of Shammai and the House of Hillel as to the meaning of the phrase, “When thou liest down and when thou risest up” (Deut. 6:7), the verse that forms of the basis of the twice daily obligation to recite the *Shema*. The House of Shammai argue that the words refer to the *position* to be assumed when one recites the evening and morning *Shema*, respectively, while the House of Hillel claim that the verses refer to the two *times* of recitation, upon retiring and upon awaking, respectively. The House of Hillel derive the correct position during recitation from the words “when thou walkest on the way” in the same verse, implying that one should recite the *Shema* in one’s own “way”, in whatever position one happens to find oneself.

Our *sugya* continues the “dialogue” between the houses begun in the *Mishnah*. The Talmud explains (1) that the House of Shammai refuse to interpret the phrase “when thou liest down and when thou risest up” as referring to time, because the temporal terms would have been “in the evening and the morning” (section A), and (2) that the House of Shammai interpret the phrase “when thou sittest in thine house and when thou walkest on the way” as exempting a bridegroom and one performing a[nother] *mitsvah* from reciting the *Shema* (section B). Section B then cites a *baraita* which derives from this that a bridegroom marrying a virgin is exempt from reciting the *Shema*, though one marrying a widow is required to do so. Rav Papa explains (section C) that in order for a bridegroom to be exempt his marriage must be considered a *mitsvah*, hence the analogy between a bridegroom and one performing a *mitsvah*. The Talmud further explains that he must be preoccupied or agitated by his *mitsvah* in order to earn the exemption; hence only one marrying a virgin is exempted. In the reading adopted here, that of ms. Florence, the *sugya* ends with section D, in which it is explained that the House of Hillel agrees with these rulings, but they imply that “when thou walkest on the way” in the normal fashion, you do discharge the obligation to recite the *Shema*.

The view of Abraham Weiss regarding our *sugya* is adopted in the commentary: the *sugya* originally consisted of sections A-B only, which have a parallel in PT Berakhot 1:6 (3b), and section C has been imported from BT Berakhot 16a-b, from which it was also imported into BT Sukkah 25a. In its original locus, the interpretation of Deuteronomy 6:7 in section C is understood as common to both houses; however, in sections A-B of our *sugya*, the same interpretation is attributed to the House of Shammai only. In order to resolve this contradiction, section D was added, indicating that the House of Hillel also agrees with these interpretation, and his alternate explanation cited in the *mishnah* is derived incidentally, and is not an actual exegesis of the verse.

Other issues discussed in the commentary are textual variants found in the manuscripts of the interpretation of Deuteronomy 6:7 cited in section B, and their origin, and the origin and original meaning of the *baraita* in section B, which distinguishes between marriage to a virgin and marriage to a widow as far as the exemption from *Shema* is concerned.

### **Sugya 35: Rabbi Tarfon (11a)**

According to *Mishnah* Berakhot 1:3, Rabbi Tarfon attempted to follow the House of Shammai in reclining for the recitation of the evening *Shema*, and thereby endangered his life; the Rabbis told him that the fate he narrowly escaped was deserved, because

he defied the ruling of the House of Hillel. Section A of the *sugya* cites a *baraita* in which position during the recitation of the *Shema* serves as the basis for another polemic, between Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah and Rabbi Ishmael. In section B, three views are cited regarding the status of one who follows the House of Shammai rather than the House of Hillel: the *amora* Rav Yehezkel cites a *baraita* according to which the obligation is discharged no matter which view is followed; Rav Yosef argues on the basis of *Mishnah* Sukkah 2:7 that one who follows the House of Shammai has not fulfilled his obligation; and Rav Nahman bar Isaac asserts polemically that one who follows the House of Shammai has not only not fulfilled his obligation, but he is liable for the death penalty, on the basis of the retort to Rabbi Tarfon found in our *mishnah*.

The *baraita* in section A is compared with parallels in *Tosefta* Berakhot 1:4, *Sifre* Deuteronomy 34, and the slightly different version in PT Berakhot 1:7 (3b). It is argued that the PT version is secondary, and reasons for the emendation are cited and evaluated. Shlomo Naeh's interpretation of a metaphor found in the *baraita* is cited and adopted in the commentary. Section B is analyzed in detail in the commentary, and it is shown that the three-way dispute does not concern the recitation of the *Shema* specifically, but the status of the *halakhah* of the House of Shammai in general. The views cited here are compared to other Talmudic passages on this topic, and the development of the attitude toward Shammaitic *halakhah* is traced.

### ***Sugya* 36: Beforehand (11a-b)**

*Mishnah* Berakhot 1:4 requires two blessings before the morning *Shema*. This *sugya*, in its current form, is devoted to identifying these two blessings: section A opens with the question "What does he bless?" and section B opens with the question "And what is the other [blessing]?" The first blessing is identified by Rabbi Jacob in the name of Rabbi Oshaia in section A as "Creator of Light and Maker of Darkness", while the second blessing is identified by Rav Yehudah in the name of Samuel in section B as "Great Love" (*Ahavah Rabbah*). Alternate formulations of passages in the first blessing are rejected in the discussion in section A, while an alternate formulation of the opening words of the second blessing, "Everlasting Love" (*Ahavat Olam*) instead of "Great Love" (*Ahavah Rabbah*) is suggested by "the Rabbis" in section B, and confirmed by a *baraita*.

Analysis indicates that the original *sugya* did not deal with the identification of the first two blessings by name; rather, the *sugya* originally consisted of a series of textual notes and suggestions on the first two blessings, akin to the parallel in PT Berakhot 2:4 (4d). Rabbi Oshaya and Samuel's statements originally proposed or insisted upon specific readings of the opening passages of the two blessings, rather than naming or identifying the blessings as a whole by their opening words. A later editor added the questions at the beginning of each section to the *sugya*, turning a series of textual notes into a commentary on the *mishnah* identifying the first two blessings.

The commonly held notion that *Ahavah Rabbah* and *Ahavat Olam* are the Babylonian and Palestinian versions of the second blessing, respectively, is questioned in the commentary. It is suggested that both versions were known and accepted in both Palestine and Babylonia throughout the amoraic period. Babylonian authorities, who were familiar with both versions, felt the need to rule one way or the other, while in Palestine these formulations co-existed, side by side with many others.

### ***Sugya* 37: “If he Arose Early in order to Study” (11b)**

Section A of this *sugya* consists of a statement of Rav Yehudah in the name of Samuel, according to which Torah study which precedes the morning service requires a blessing beforehand; however, the second blessing preceding the *Shema, Ahavah Rabbah*, can be said to serve as the blessing over subsequent Torah study. Section B consists of an amoraic dispute as to which of the following study texts require a blessing beforehand: Bible, *Midrash*, *Mishnah* and/or *Talmud*. The witnesses to this section of the *sugya* contain numerous textual variants. Rav Hiyya bar Ashi reports that Rav used to wash his hands and recite a blessing prior to the study of the *Midrash* known as *Sifra deVe Rav*. In section C, three texts of the blessing preceding private Torah study in the early morning are cited, attributed to Rav Yehudah (in the printed edition in the name of Samuel), Rabbi Yohanan, and Rav Hamnuna. Finally, Rav Papa proposes reciting all three.

A parallel to sections A and B of our *sugya* is found in PT Berakhot 1:8 (3c); certain differences, additions and qualifications of the material found in our *sugya* are found in the PT parallel. It is argued that BT preserves the original traditions, and can be understood in its own right. PT additions and qualifications are explained in the commentary.

There are numerous textual variants in the various opinions cited in section B as to the type of Torah study which requires a blessing. It is argued that much confusion was engendered by the fact that the term *Talmud* originally referred to what is now termed “halakhic *Midrash*”. After extensive analysis of the traditions in the witnesses, it is argued that the dispute is as follows: Rav Huna required blessing before study of the written Torah alone; Rabbi Eleazar required blessing before study of both the written Torah and the rabbinic traditions associated with the written Torah (formerly termed *Talmud*, and now called *Midrash*); Rabbi Yohanan extended the requirement to include *Mishnah*, purely oral Torah, as well. The views extending the requirement to the Oral Law are confirmed by the report of Rav’s behavior.

Tannaitic tradition knows of blessings before and after the public Torah reading, but Samuel is the first to require a formal blessing before private Torah study. It is suggested that this is because Samuel was instrumental in formalizing the blessings before the observance of the commandments in general; hence his student Rav Yehudah is quoted in section C as providing the classic formulation of a blessing before the observance of this commandment as well. However, the blessing before Torah study is loosely based upon a Palestinian tradition of *personal prayers* before study, which some *tanna'im* and *amora'im* were accustomed to recite (see *Mishnah* Berakhot 4:2, PT Berakhot 4:2 [7d]; and parallel in BT Berakhot 16b-17a). Rabbi Yohanan’s “blessing” in section C in its original form was just such a prayer, and reflects the Palestinian tradition. (It was corrupted in some witnesses and in contemporary practice by the addition of a formal conclusion.) Rav Hamnuna suggests simply adopting the blessing customary before the public Torah reading as the blessing before private Torah study as well.

It is argued that Rav Papa’s proposal to recite all three blessings originally urged the recitation of a single blessing composed of all three amoraic suggestions, in contradistinction to the contemporary practice of reciting the three blessings one after another.

### **Sugya 38: One Blessing (11b-12a)**

This *sugya* opens with a citation from *Mishnah* Tamid 5:1, which describes a daily morning service held in the Temple: “The official said to them: ‘Bless one blessing’, and they blessed, and recited the Ten Commandments, [the first paragraph of the] *Shema*, *Vehayah im Shamo’* [the second paragraph of the *Shema*], *Vayomer* [the third paragraph of the *Shema*], and blessed the people with three blessings: *Emet Veyatsiv*, *Avodah*, and the priestly blessing. And on the Sabbath they would add one blessing for (or: of) the outgoing [priestly] watch” (section A). In section B, the *sugya* asks which “one blessing” the official was referring to, and two answers are suggested: Rav Yehudah reports Samuel as saying that the reference is to the second blessing before the *Shema*, *Ahavah Rabbah*, while Palestinian *amora'im* are cited to the effect that the reference is to the first blessing, *Yotser Or*. The Talmud shows that this second opinion is merely an inference from something else these *amora'im* said, and it may be a mistaken inference. In section C various attempts are reported to institute the daily recitation of the Ten Commandments outside the Temple, both in Temple times and in amoraic Babylonia; these were aborted for fear that this custom would encourage certain sectarians, who apparently claimed that most of the Torah was not the word of God, and thus placed great emphasis on the Ten Commandments, which they did consider the direct word of God. In section D, Rabbi Helbo cites the wording of the blessing “of the outgoing watch” mentioned in *Mishnah* Tamid; he considers it a farewell wish rather than a liturgical blessing.

In the commentary the difficult parallel *sugya* in PT Berakhot 1:8 (3c), which has hitherto been interpreted primarily on the basis of our BT *sugya*, is reconstructed and interpreted. It is shown that the PT *sugya* in fact consists of two separate and similar *sugyot* from different sources, cited one after another. The former predates our BT *sugya*, and some elements of our *sugya* are in fact reinterpretation of material better preserved in the first PT *sugya*; the second PT *sugya* is later, and influenced by the BT form of the material. Most importantly, in the original PT *sugya* Samuel did not say that the “one blessing” is *Ahavah Rabbah*; he said that it is the *Birkat Hatorah*, and it is suggested that the reference was originally to the blessing before the public recitation of the Torah. The recitation of the Ten Commandments and the three paragraphs of the *Shema* by the priestly watches (*mishmarot*) in the Temple should not be seen as the recitation of the *Shema* “when thou risest up” (Deuteronomy 6:7); rather they were a type of oral Torah Reading, akin to the recitation of selections from Genesis chapter 1 by the home watches (*ma'amadot*), described in *Mishnah* Tamid 4:4 as “reading [the Torah] by heart, akin to reading the *Shema*”. Since Samuel himself, however, is quoted in the previous *sugya* by Rav Yehudah as describing *Ahavah Rabbah* as a type of substitute Torah blessing, it is understandable that Rav Yehudah in our BT *sugya* understood Samuel’s use of the term *Birkat Hatorah* in explaining *Mishnah* Tamid 5:1 to refer to *Ahavah Rabbah*.

The blessings following the *Shema* in *Mishnah* Tamid 5:1 should likewise be seen as blessings after Torah reading. *Emet Veyatsiv* only became the blessing of *Geulah*, “redemption [from Egypt]” after the destruction of the Temple, as shown by Ismar Elbogen. The first half of the current blessing was the core from Second Temple times, and it functioned in a manner similar to the blessing following the public Torah reading today, declaring that the previously recited Torah is true. According to *Mishnah* Yoma 7:1 and *Mishnah* Sotah 7:7, the Torah reading in the Temple was followed by eight blessings, the first two of which were blessings on the Torah and the

*Avodah* (divine service). It would seem that these are parallel to, or identical with, the *Emet Veyatsiv* and *Avodah* blessings recited here. The *Avodah* blessing is a transition to the priestly blessing, with which this priestly morning service closed.

It is further suggested that the distinction in *Mishnah* Sotah 7:6 between the priestly blessing in the Temple, said to consist of a single blessing, and the one recited outside the Temple, said to consist of three blessings, be understood in light of *Mishnah* Tamid 5:1, and vice versa. The three blessings of *Mishnah* Sotah 7:6 are not, as traditionally understood, the three verses of Numbers 6:24-26 punctuated by "amen", but rather the three blessings found here: *Emet Veyatsiv*, *Avodah*, and the priestly blessing itself. Scholars have already noted that in Temple times the synagogue functioned primarily as the place in which the Torah was read, hence it stands to reason that the priestly blessing outside the Temple, in the synagogue, was associated with the Torah reading. If the statutory *Amidah*, the contemporary context of the priestly blessing, post-dated the Temple, as argued by many scholars, the "three blessing" form of the priestly blessing described in *Mishnah* Tamid would provide an appropriate alternate context for the priestly blessing in the synagogue: following the Torah reading, the priests recited the blessing *Emet Veyatsiv* declaring the Torah reading true, the *Avodah* blessing as a transition, and finally the biblically ordained priestly blessing of Numbers 6:24-26. In the statutory Temple recitations of the priestly blessing, where the Torah was not read (or recited orally), the blessing consisted solely of the verses from Numbers 6.

In this light it is suggested that the first line in *Mishnah* Tamid 5:1, "The official said to them: 'Bless one blessing', and they blessed", likewise be interpreted not as referring to *Birkat Hatorah* or one of the *Shema* blessings, as suggested in the PT and BT parallels here, but to the "one blessing" Temple form of the priestly blessing. The morning service in the Temple thus began and ended with the priestly blessing: it began with the "one blessing" Temple form of the priestly blessing, and ended with the post-Torah recitation "three blessing" form, otherwise used in synagogues outside the Temple. It is suggested that the opening "one blessing" form with which the service began is in fact the first of the four daily priestly blessings in the Temple, described in *Mishnah* Taanit 4:1 and parallels. The priestly blessing of *Mishnah* Tamid 7:2, usually considered the first of the four, is in fact the second one, described in Taanit 4:1 as *musaf*, since it takes place on weekdays around the same time that the additional sacrifice is offered on festivals. The priestly blessing following the recitation of the *Shema* in the morning Temple service did not count as one of the four, since it was recited as a blessing following the Torah/*Shema* service, in the synagogue format.

Archeological and literary evidence indicates that in Temple times the Ten Commandments were recited along with the *Shema*, and this was not a mere "attempt" in Temple times, as described in section D of our *sugya*. The "sectarians" for fear of whom this custom was abolished are not a specific sect. As Geza Vermes has shown, these were simply Hellenistic Jews who took Scripture at face value: most of the Torah (including the first two *Shema* paragraphs taken from Deuteronomy) is described in the Torah itself as the word of Moses, and not the direct word of God. Moses quotes God directly only in passages such as the Ten Commandments and other legal portions that open with formulae such as "The Lord spoke to Moses...".

It is also suggested in the commentary that Rabbi Helbo's interpretation of the last line in *Mishnah* Tamid does not necessarily reflect the original meaning. The "one

blessing for the outgoing watch" may have been a liturgical blessing "on behalf of the priests" mentioned in *Mishnah Yoma* 7:1 and *Mishnah Sotah* 7:7.

### ***Sugya* 39: "According to the Ending" (12a)**

In section A of this *sugya*, the following halakhic question is asked: "If a person holds a cup of beer in his hand, and, thinking that it is wine, begins the blessing on wine but ends with the blessing on beer, has he fulfilled his obligation?" The answer to this question is said to be dependent on "whether we go according to the body of the blessing, or according to the ending". In section B, an attempt is made to answer the question on the basis of a *baraita*, according to which, if one began the first blessing of the morning or evening *Shema* with the correct (morning or evening) version and ended with the incorrect version, it is invalid, but if one began inappropriately and ended appropriately, the blessing is valid, "the general rule being: everything goes according to the ending". This *baraita* is rejected as irrelevant to our case, since (a) the ending in that case contains the most important and relevant words, *barukh yotser hame'orot* in full, and (b) Rabbah bar Ulla ordained that both morning and evening be mentioned in both the morning and the evening blessings in any case, and thus even the "wrong" opening has relevance in the case of the first blessing before the *Shema*. In section C, an attempt is made to resolve the problem in section A by recourse to the final line of the *baraita* cited in section B, "the general rule is: everything goes according to the ending". Does this general rule not come to include cases such as the wine and the beer? No, says the Talmud, it comes to include specifically a case in which one began with the grace after bread and ended with the blessing after dates, in which case one has fulfilled one's obligation, since the blessing on bread is applicable to dates, which are filling like bread.

The question upon which the *sugya* is predicated is extremely difficult to understand. Whereas the supposedly parallel cases cited in sections B and C are long blessings, with the dual structure "Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, King of the universe, who... Blessed art Thou O Lord, ...", and in which the "ending" recapitulates the essence of the longer "body" of the blessing, the current blessings on wine and beer are both short formulae, "Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, King of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine" and "Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, King of the universe, who created everything with his word". Unlike in the cases cited in sections B and C, in which the "body" and the "ending" both consist of "Blessed art Thou" formulae, in this case it would seem that the "body" is the opening formula "Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, King of the universe", while the "ending" is the specific ending "Creator of the fruit of the vine" or "who created everything with his word". This usage of the word "ending" (*hatimah*) is anomalous, and the "bodies" of the two blessings are identical, making it difficult to understand the case. Manuscripts and commentators in fact differ both as to the wording and as to the interpretation of the case, but none of the readings or interpretations satisfactorily explain the anomalous usages here, or the vast differences between the question case and the cases proposed in sections B and C as analogous.

In fact, it can be shown that the question case in section A is a later addition to the *sugya*. A partial parallel to section B is found in PT Berakhot 1:8 (3c), and it is clear that the original *sugya* in BT also consisted of the material cited in section B relating to the *Shema* blessings, the subject of our *Mishnah*. Section A, and the material in sections B and C relating to section A, were added later to a pre-existing *sugya*, which was focused on the first blessing before the *Shema*.

It is suggested that the *sugya* as a whole can only be understood if we assume that this Babylonian *sugya* followed the ruling of Rabbi Tarfon in *Mishnah* Berakhot 6:8, according to which the blessing on water, and presumably beer as well, was a long blessing: "Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, King of the universe, who created many souls and their requisite necessities, in order to sustain with those necessities every living soul. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, Sustainer of worlds". There is evidence that at least some Babylonians in fact ruled like Rabbi Tarfon on this issue. The terms "body" and "ending" as applied to the blessings of section A are thus used in the usual sense (the same sense in which they are used in sections B and C): "If a person holds in his hand a cup of beer and, thinking that it is wine, begins the blessing on wine "Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, King of the universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine" but ends with the ending of the blessing on beer "Blessed art Thou, O Lord, Sustainer of the worlds", has he fulfilled his obligation, since the ending is correct, or has he not done so, because the beginning is inappropriate? In section B it is suggested that this case is analogous to one in which a person recited the following combined blessing in the morning, "Blessed art Thou, Lord our God, who bringest on evenings with his word... Blessed art Thou, O Lord, Creator of the lights". The Talmud, however, says this is not analogous because the ending "Blessed art Thou, O Lord, Creator of the lights" captures the essence of the morning *Shema* blessing better than "Blessed art thou, O Lord, Sustainer of worlds" captures Rabbi Tarfon's blessing on beer, and moreover, the evening element is relevant even in the morning *Shema*, unlike the reference to the fruit of the vine in the body of the combined blessing on the beer. In section C it is suggested that the combined wine/beer blessing is analogous to a combined bread/date blessing after the meal; however, the Talmud asserts that in such a case the blessing is valid only because dates are as filling as bread, and therefore that case is *sui generis*.

#### ***Sugya* 40: Rabbah bar Hinena the Elder (12a-b)**

This *sugya* consists of a collection of five statements of Rabbah bar Hinena the Elder in the name of Rav, and discussions of all but the first. The first statement, cited in section A, asserts that one who does not say *Emet Veyatsiv* in the morning *Shema* service and *Emet Ve'emunah* in the evening *Shema* service has not fulfilled his obligation; the reference is to the morning and evening versions of the *Geulah* blessing immediately following the three paragraphs of the *Shema*. In the second statement, cited in section B, Rav gives specific instructions on bowing during the *Amidah*; Samuel cites a proof text for the statement; it is challenged, and the challenge is refuted. A discussion is cited between Samuel and Rav's son Hiyya, in which Samuel quotes the statement of Rav to his son, and the section ends with a description of Rav Sheshet's prostration. In the third statement, cited at the beginning of section C, Rav requires alternate formulations of two *Amidah* blessings between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur; Rabbi Eleazar asserts that the standard formulation may be used during the high holy day season as well, and Rav Yosef and Rabbah rule in accordance with one or another of these views; the *sugya* concludes by ruling in favor of Rabbah, who seems to reassert Rav's position. In the fourth statement, Rav insists that anyone who has an opportunity to pray on his friend's behalf and does not do so is a sinner; Rava goes a step further, insisting that scholars must also fast on their friends' behalf, even to the point of inducing illness (section D). In the fifth statement, Rav asserts that shameful remorse over a single sin remits all sins, citing a proof-text. The Talmud rejects this proof-text in favor of two others.

The commentary focuses on the following issues: 1 – The identity of Rabbah bar Hinena the Elder, mentioned only here, who cites these five statements of Rav: it is shown that he is Rav’s grandson, known in PT as Abba bar Hanan. His father, Rav’s son-in-law, is known as Hanan bar Ba in PT, and two of these five statements are cited in the name of Rav by Hanan bar Ba in PT parallels; apparently both father and son disseminated these statements in the name of Rav. 2 – The meaning of the first statement: it is shown that Rav did not originally mean to distinguish here between the morning and evening forms of the blessing, but rather to mandate the recitation of the blessing following the *Shema* in order to fulfill the requirement of “mentioning the Exodus” (*Mishnah* Berakhot 1:5). This *sugya* was originally part of the Talmud to *Mishnah* Berakhot 1:5, rather than 1:4 as in the present editions. Rav’s statement was emended to make it accord with later Babylonian practice, which distinguished between the morning and evening forms of the blessing, and once the distinction was made, the topic of the statement was deemed to be the formulation of the blessings, and it was thus grouped with the *sugyot* on *Mishnah* Berakhot 1:4. 3 – Comparison of the discussion between Samuel and Hiyya found in section B with the parallel in PT Berakhot 1:8 (3d). 4 – The development of the high holy day formulations found in section C: particular attention is paid to comparison with the parallel in PT Rosh Hashanah 4:5 (59c), which represents an earlier stage of the development of these laws, and the grammatically incorrect formulation *haMelekh haMishpat* attributed to Rav in BT, but which is probably later. It is suggested that originally the year-round formulation was *Ohev haMishpat* and the high holy day version was our year-round version *Melekh Ohev Tsedakah uMishpat*. Popular usage expanded the use of the high holy day formula year-round; since this was not in keeping with the conclusion of the *sugya*, which mandated that the more “royal” forms be limited to the high holy day season, a formula was sought to make the high holy day version more powerful or royal, and thus the ungrammatical *haMelekh haMishpat* was adopted, which should be understood as an exclamation of the total identification of the King with justice.

#### ***Sugya* 41: “Why not Include... Why Include” (12b)**

This *sugya* consists of two parts. Section A cites Palestinian *amora'im* who contend that the biblical passage regarding Balak (Numbers 22:2-24:25) was at one point a candidate for inclusion among the daily *Shema* passages, because Numbers 23:22 mentions lying down and rising up, but was rejected because of its length, since nothing short of an entire biblical passage (*parashah*) can be recited. Section B explains that *Vayomer*, the biblical passage regarding *tsitsit*, was included, because it mentions five things: *tsitsit*, the Exodus, the yoke of the commandments, and warnings against heresy, sinful thoughts, and thoughts concerning idolatry.

On the basis of the parallel in PT Berakhot 1:8 (3 c), it is concluded that section A of this *sugya* was originally part of *sugya* 38, which discusses the rejection of the proposal that the Ten Commandments be recited daily as part of the *Shema*; this was originally followed by a similar discussion regarding the Balak passage. Section B originally stood here alone, and like *sugya* 40 before it, formed part of the Talmud to *Mishnah* Berakhot 1:5, which requires the mention of the Exodus as part of the *Shema* service. An editor combined the two passages by moving the first to our *sugya*.

The Balak passage and the *Vayomer* passage were candidates for inclusion primarily because each contains a brief reference to the Exodus (Numbers 23:22 in the Balak passage; Numbers 15:41 in the *Vayomer* passage). However, in the previous *sugya*, Rav established that the requirement to mention the Exodus is fulfilled in the

*Geulah* blessing. Our Babylonian *sugya* is therefore careful to point out that neither passage is to be included *merely* because of the mention of the Exodus; the Balak passage also contains a reference to lying down and rising up, the times of the daily *Shema* recitation, while the *Vayomer* passage contains the four other important elements. Ultimately, the Balak passage was rejected in favor of the *Vayomer* passage. The combined *sugya* gives two reasons for this: the Balak passage was too long, and the *Vayomer* passage contains a greater number of important themes. In the commentary, two more fundamental reasons are suggested for the preference for the *Vayomer* passage: 1 – It contains an oblique support for the notion implicit in *Mishnah* Berakhot 1:5 that the Exodus be mentioned/remembered daily; Numbers 15:40-41, if read as a unit, suggests the importance of constantly remembering [the commandments, being holy, and] the Exodus. 2 -The second passage of the *Shema*, immediately preceding *Vayomer*, mentions a number of symbolic commandments that are constant reminders: phylacteries, daily recitation of the *Shema*, and the *mezuzah*. *Tsisit*, an obvious companion to these, is missing from that list, and Numbers 15:38 in the *Vayomer* passage completes the list.

The notion that nothing short of an entire *parashah* can be recited is unique this *sugya*; many Talmudic passages assume the recitation of less than a full *parashah* at a time. It is an expansion of a statement that nothing short of an entire *verse* can be recited (see BT Taanit 27b, Megillah 22a).

#### ***Sugya* 42: Ben Zoma (12b-13a)**

*Mishnah* Berakhot 1:5, cited in the Passover Haggadah, cites a dispute between Ben Zoma and the Sages concerning the need to mention the Exodus each night. All agree that the Exodus must be mentioned each day; the dispute is whether it must be mentioned at night as well. While the Sages derive from the seemingly superfluous word *kol* in Deuteronomy 16:3 that the Exodus must be mentioned each day in this world, and in the days of the Messiah as well, Ben Zoma derives from the same word that the Exodus must be mentioned each day *and each night* in this world. A *baraita* cited in section A of our *sugya* explains that Ben Zoma does not believe the Exodus will be mentioned in the days of the Messiah, since the new redemption will replace the Exodus in our consciousness; the Sages, however, believe that just as Jacob was called Jacob and Israel after his name was changed, so, too, both redemptions will be mentioned in the future. The issue of Jacob's name change leads to a comparison of the name changes of Abram, Sarai and Jacob in section B: the former is said to be absolute, and calling Abraham Abram is forbidden after the name change, while the latter two name changes are not considered absolute.

Commentators and scholars are divided as to whether the requirement to mention the Exodus either once or twice daily in the *mishnah* refers to the *Vayomer* passage of the *Shema*, in which the Exodus is mentioned briefly (Numbers 15:41), or to the *Geulah* blessing following the *Shema*, in which the Exodus is mentioned extensively. In the commentary we contend that the former view accurately reflects the tannaitic intent; however, at the close of the tannaitic period, *tanna'im* culminating with the *amora* Rav insisted upon a more expansive "mention" of the Exodus (see *sugya* 40 above), and the *Geulah* blessing became the accepted form of mentioning the Exodus. In fact, we can isolate seven successive stages in the halakhic development of the commandment to mention the Exodus daily: 1 – According to *Mishnah* Tamid 5:1 (see *sugya* 38 above), the priests in the Temple began and ended the *Shema* with references to the Exodus; they began with the Ten Commandments, which begin with mention of the Exodus

(Exodus 20:5), and ended with the *Vayomer* passage, which ends with mention of the Exodus (Numbers 15:41). Although this was followed by the *Emet Veyatsiv* blessing, that blessing did not include reference to the Exodus at that point. 2 – Josephus (*AJ* IV, 212) calls the morning and evening *Shema* “bearing witness before God regarding the gifts he bestowed upon them by freeing them from Egypt”. This is to be seen as a reference to the Second Temple practice of beginning and ending the *Shema* with reference to the Exodus, a practice which by Josephus’s time must have been expanded beyond the Temple precincts and must have become common practice. At this point, the *Vayomer* passage must have been recited at night as well as by day. 3 – In Yavneh the Sages abolished the recitation of the *Vayomer* passage at night, as a polemic against the practice of placing woolen *tsitsit* on linen nightwear. At the same time, the recitation of the Ten Commandments was abolished at night (see *sugya* 38 above), and thus the Exodus was no longer mentioned at all in the evening *Shema*, despite the fact that Josephus saw the Exodus as the essence of the *Shema*. The Sages in our *mishnah* justify this by explaining that the word *kol* does not come to include the night, but rather the days of the Messiah. Ben Zoma, however, explains that the original *Shema* as practiced during Temple times morning and evening, with the Exodus as a major theme, in fact reflects a biblical commandment and may not be dispensed with. 4 – The law was established in accordance with the Sages; thus Rabbi Joshua ben Qorha states unequivocally in *Mishnah* Berakhot 2:2 that the *Vayomer* passage is not recited at night. 5 – Rabbi Judah the Patriarch instituted a compromise between the two positions, whereby the Exodus theme is added into the *Emet Veyatsiv* blessing as a means of mentioning the Exodus day and night without reciting the *Vayomer* passage at night. In order to justify this shift in favor of Ben Zoma, Rabbi Judah the Patriarch reworked a statement of Rabbi Joshua in support of a statement of Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah found in *Mekhilta* Pisha 16 (which originally referred to something else!) into a statement by Rabbi Eleazar ben Azariah in support of Ben Zoma’s notion that the Exodus must be mentioned at night, and incorporated it into his *Mishnah*. 6 – Rav insisted that both by day and by night the revised *Geulah* blessing is the only legitimate means of fulfilling the commandment to mention the Exodus, since the commandment is not merely to “mention” but to actually offer praise and thanksgiving for the Exodus (see *sugya* 40 above). At this point, the Babylonians did not bother reciting the *Vayomer* passage at all at night, relying entirely on the expanded *Geulah* blessing, while the Palestinians recited the first and last verses of the *Vayomer* passage as well as the expanded *Geulah* blessing (PT Berakhot 1:9 [3c]). 7 – Abaye reinstated the recitation of the entire *Vayomer* passage at night in Babylonia (BT Berakhot 14b).

Parallels to our *sugya* are found in *Tosefta* Berakhot 1:10-15; PT Berakhot 1:9 (3c-d), and *Mekhilta* Pisha 16. Comparison indicates a complex history of development. The *Mekhilta* preserves the earliest tradition; this was later expanded in PT as a commentary on *Mishnah* Berakhot 1:5, albeit independent of the *mishnah*. This material was reworked in the *Tosefta* into a direct continuation of the discussion between Ben Zoma and the Sages in *Mishnah* Berakhot 1:5. Our BT *sugya* had recourse to both the PT and *Tosefta* versions of the material, and added Babylonian material as well.