

WONDER-WORKING AND THE RABBINIC  
TRADITION:  
THE CASE OF HANINA BEN DOSA

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Hanina ben Dosa, a first-century prerabbinic figure known from later rabbinic sources, is characterized by M. Soṭah 9:15 as the last of the *anshe ma'aseh* or "men of deed," a type of wonder-worker. This image of Hanina accords with the fact that the Mishnah, Tosefta, Babylonian and Palestinian Talmuds, and several later midrashim narrate his wonder-working activities but attribute to him no halakhic teachings. Scholars have noted that changes occur in the portrayal of Hanina and in the attitude to other wonder-workers, but they have not fully explained the significance of these changes. The present paper treats these variations, discussing why rabbinic culture did not initially employ such charismatic individuals as models of religious piety and then, once it did employ them, why it used them in different ways.

We extensively analyze one set of traditions describing Hanina's encounter with a deadly lizard or snake. We focus on how the traditions have been molded to fit their literary contexts and how they convey different images of Hanina, reflecting changes in people's attitudes toward access to the divine and toward religious leadership<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>) The major studies include Adolph BÜCHLER, *Types of Jewish Palestinian Piety. The Ancient Pious Men* (1922; reprint ed., New York, 1968), esp. pp. 81-102; Shmuel SAFRAI, "Teaching of Pietists in Mishnaic Literature," *JJS* 16 (1965):15-31; G. B. SARFATTI, "Pious Men, Men of Deeds and the Early Prophets," *Tarbiz* (1956-57):126-53; Geza VERMES, "Hanina ben Dosa," *JJS* 23 (1972):28-50, and 24 (1973):51-64, idem *Jesus the Jew* (London, 1973); and Sean FREYNE, "The Charismatic," in *Ideal Figures in Ancient Judaism*, ed. W. E. NICKELSBURG and J. J. COLLINS (Chico, 1980), pp. 223-58. VERMES, "Hanina," and FREYNE systematically present all the traditions concerning Hanina. See also W. S. GREEN, cited in n. 10.

The basis of understanding the portrayals of a figure like Hanina is to be sensitive to both the literary and historical aspects of the sources. The stories comprise literary creations conveying literary truths and not first-hand, accurate reports of what is described. Moreover, since rabbinic literature uses stories for *didactic* functions, recasting them to fit into a larger context, the original point of a story may differ from the purposes for which it is later cited and shaped. Because the stories were composed and retold in specific historical situations to serve specific purposes, it is legitimate to try to understand those purposes, their relationship to the historical context, and—and since we deal with a religious literature—their correlation with overall religious developments in late antiquity<sup>2</sup>.

At the outset, it is worth reviewing aspects of these developments. They include the formation of rabbinic Judaism in the first and second centuries and its expansion in the third to sixth centuries. Early rabbinic Judaism, in overcoming the loss of the Jerusalem Temple, was still somewhat tied to Temple notions and

In treating the three primary versions of the tradition that are in T. Berakhot 3:20, y. Berakhot 5:1, 9a and b. Berakhot 33a, we do not discuss the secondary ones in: *Midrash Tanhuma Va'era*<sup>3</sup> 4, *editio princeps* (Constantinople, 1520-22; reprint ed., Jerusalem, 1971), p. 57; *Midrash Yelamdu*, in Jacob MANN, *The Bible As Read and Preached in the Old Synagogue*, vol. 1 (Cincinnati, 1940; reprint ed., Israel, 1970), Hebrew p. 98; and *Midrash Haggadol On the Pentateuch: Genesis*, ed. Mordecai MARGULIES (Jerusalem, 1967), p. 613. The secondary are dependent on the primary. See Jonah FRAENKEL, "Remarkable Phenomena in the Text-History of the Aggadic Stories" [Hebrew], in *Proceedings of the Seventh World Congress of Jewish Studies. Studies in the Talmud, Halacha and Midrash* (Jerusalem, 1981), pp. 57-58; and esp. Saul LIEBERMAN, *Tosefta Ki-fshutah* [henceforth: *TK*], 8 vols. to date (New York, 1955-), 1:46, and Marc BREGMAN, "Review," *JAOS* 10 (1980):169, 170, n. 8.

<sup>2</sup>) For a survey and analysis of recent research see David GOODBLATT, "The Babylonian Talmud," *ANRW* 2. 19.2 (1979):281-318, 329-330, and idem, "Towards the Rehabilitation of Talmudic History," in *History of Judaism: The Next Ten Years*, ed. Baruch M. BOKSER (Chico, 1980), p. 35, discussing "the debiographization of rabbinic literature." See, in particular, Geza VERMES, *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism* (Leiden, 1961, 1973); Jacob NEUSNER, *Development of a Legend* (Leiden, 1970), and "Story as History in Ancient Judaism," in *History of Judaism*, ed. BOKSER, pp. 3-29; Joseph HEINEMANN, *Aggadah and its Development* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem, 1974); Ofra MEIR, "The Acting Characters in the Stories of the Talmud and Midrash" (Ph.D. diss., Hebrew University, 1977); Jonah FRAENKEL, "Hermeneutic Problems in the Study of the Aggadic Literature" [Hebrew], *Tarbiz* 47 (1978):139-72, and *Studies in the Spiritual World of Aggadic Story* [Hebrew] (Tel Aviv, 1981); Moshe BEER, "Korah's Revolt—its Motives in the Aggadah" [Hebrew], in *Studies in Aggadah, Targum, and Jewish Liturgy in Memory of Joseph Heinemann*, ed. J. J. PETUCHOWSKI and Ezra FLEISCHER (Jerusalem, 1981) Hebrew pp. 9-33.

institutions and sought to lend weight to extra-Temple rites in cultic terms. It argued that everyone could find religious fulfillment in these extra-Temple rituals, and it provided models of piety that people could emulate. Subsequently, however, a different orientation appears. Post-Mishnaic literature indicates that the Temple's loss no longer posed an urgent problem and that people accepted a religious life not contingent on a central Temple. We find that rabbis do not necessarily interpret rites in cultic terms but refer to alternative sets of values—for example, that of the community of Israel<sup>3</sup>). Similarly, rabbis no longer appear antipathetic to personalities with special religious traits, and we find numerous stories of biblical figures, earlier masters, and contemporary amoraim with extraordinary qualities and special access to God<sup>4</sup>).

The new attitude to the portrayal of religious virtuosos is tied to a change in the role and image of rabbis. Amoraic authorities made up a clearly visible elite group that tried to influence Jewry at large. Because of their devotion to and excellence in Torah, rabbis were believed to be wise and to have special intimacy with God, and, frequently, wondrous qualities. People expected their leaders to exhibit these special traits, and rabbis apparently cultivated this image<sup>5</sup>). With this background we analyze the Hanina traditions to see whether we can trace such changes in piety in the accounts of Hanina.

## ii

The Hanina traditions appear in the context of M. Berakhot 5:1:

- A. They do not stand up to pray the tefillah except in a serious manner.

<sup>3</sup>) See, e.g., Baruch M. Bokser, "Ma'al and Blessings Over Food: Rabbinic Transformation of Cultic Terminology and Alternative Modes of Piety," *JBL* 100 (1981):557-74; and n. 127 below.

<sup>4</sup>) See Baruch M. Bokser, *Post Mishnaic Judaism in Transition: Samuel on Berakhot and the Beginnings of Gemara* (Chico, 1980), esp. pp. 1-3, 461-67; Jacob Neusner, *History of the Jews in Babylonia*, 5 vols. (Leiden, 1966-70), esp. 2:147-50; 3:102-126; and 4:347-370; Saul Lieberman, "Martyrs of Caesarea," *Annuaire de l'Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales et Slaves* 7 (1939-44):395-445; Lee Levine, *Caesarea Under Roman Rule* (Leiden, 1975), pp. 86-106; and below.

<sup>5</sup>) See Neusner, *Babylonia*, as cited in n. 4; Goodblatt, "Babylonian Talmud," p. 329; and esp. Morton Smith, in Moses Hadas and Morton Smith, *Heroes and Gods* (London, 1965):101-02, concerning deliberate following of aretalogical patterns and conscious cultivation of the figure of a sage.

- B.1. The early pious (ḤSYDYM HR'ŠWNYM) used to tarry for a time and then pray,  
 B.2. so that they might direct their hearts to the PLACE.  
 C. Even [if] a king greets him, he should not respond.  
 D. Even [if] a snake is coiled around his heel, he should not interrupt (L' YPSYQ<sup>6</sup>).

The Mishnah comprises three parts: A gives the general principle concerning proper composure for saying the tefillah; B illustrates the principle with reference to the "early pious"; and C-D provides additional rules to emphasize the importance of concentration<sup>7</sup>).

The Mishnah creatively uses the example of the "early pious," *ḥasidim harishonim*. In rabbinic literature the pious appear as individuals who exhibit or advocate extreme forms of religious or moral behavior. Dennis Berman, having examined all the sources, concludes that the term "early pious" denotes not an "organized group of pietists" but apparently "the pious folk of times past in general, from biblical times up to the destruction of the Temple (end I CE), whose great piety has become legendary"<sup>8</sup>). While in tannaitic sources the "pious" are clearly distinct from the "men of deed"<sup>9</sup>), some amoraic sources have been construed to associate the two, and several scholars have incorrectly followed this tendency, as Berman demonstrates<sup>10</sup>). In M. 5:1 the "pious" are presented as taking extreme measures to achieve concentration, but, according to B.2, they are motivated by what is expected of everyone. Tannaitic authorities required proper composure and concentration in the shema<sup>c</sup> and tefillah, which, they asserted,

<sup>6</sup>) For textual variants see Nisan Zacks, ed., *Mishnah Zera'im. 1*, Makhon-HaTalmud (Jerusalem, 1972), pp. 40-41.

<sup>7</sup>) Some writers (e.g., Safrai, pp. 28-29) suggest that C-D goes along with B and represents the extreme—hence "non-normative"—position of the early pious. Whether or not this was true in an early stage of the tradition, C-D employs a different formulation than B. Moreover, since it conveys a point relevant to the Mishnah as a whole, it—like the recast story of the pious—forms part of the overall emphasis on concentration.

<sup>8</sup>) Dennis Berman, "Hasidim in Rabbinic Tradition," in *Society of Biblical Literature 1979 Seminar Papers*, ed. Paul J. Achtemeier, 2 vols. (Missoula, 1979), p. 18.

<sup>9</sup>) See, e.g., M. Sotah 9:15 and T. Sotah 15:5, p. 240, ls. 49-54; M. Sukkah 5:4 and T. Sukkah 4:2, p. 272, ls. 4-5; and Berman, p. 24, n. 38.

<sup>10</sup>) Berman, esp. p. 17, who cites the earlier literature. See also W. S. Green, "Palestinian Holy Men: Charismatic Leadership and Rabbinic Tradition," in *ANRW* 2. 19.2 (1979):631-32; Freyne, "Charismatic," pp. 224-46; and Arthur Green, "The Zaddiq as Axis Mundi in Later Judaism," *JAAR* 45 (1977):328.

would enable an experience of divine nearness and assure one that God will heed the prayer, for the ability to achieve the proper frame of mind is a sign that God has heard the prayer. They thus suggested that prayer constitutes an *effective* replacement for Temple cult. We can therefore see how M. 5:1 reshapes the reference to the pious to make them models that everyone can emulate. The authority behind the Mishnah chooses the example of the pious because of the popular belief in the effectiveness of their piety<sup>11</sup>).

Tosefta Berakhot 3:20 makes a related point through the example of Hanina ben Dosa:

- A. [If] one was standing and praying in a street or broad way—  
Lo, he passes [= steps aside] before an ass, an ass driver, or a wagon driver and does not interrupt (WL<sup>3</sup> MPSYQ).
- B.1. They said concerning R. Hanina that [once] he prayed,  
B.2. and an *arvad* [= a deadly lizard or snake] bit him and he did not interrupt (WL<sup>3</sup> HPSYQ).
- C. His students went and found it dead on the mouth of the hole.  
D. They said, "Woe to the person whom an *arvad* has bitten. Woe to the *arvad* that has bitten ben Dosa"<sup>12</sup>).

A supplements and qualifies M. 5:1. The term "interrupt" (MPSYQ), links it with Mishnah 5:1D. B-D presents a Hanina story in three parts. B provides the background and likewise uses the term HPSYQ. Since Hanina neither interrupts nor steps aside, he acts in accord with clause D of the Mishnah but not A of the Tosefta. C confirms Hanina's action, and D, supplying a saying

<sup>11</sup>) On the notion of "intent" see M. Berakhot 2:1,4; 4:4, 5:5; and T. Berakhot 2:2, p. 6, ls. 3-4; and LIEBERMAN, *TK*, 1:15, 32; E. E. URBACH, *The Sages*, English trans. of 2d rev. ed. in 2 vols. (Jerusalem, 1979), 1:396-97; E. P. SANDERS, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism* (Philadelphia, 1977), pp. 107-09; and BOKSER, *Post Mishnaic Judaism*, pp. 2-3, 10, n. 5. On the significance of proper intent T. Berakhot 3:4, p. 12, ls. 15-16 is quite clear: "One who prays is required to direct his heart. Abba Shaul says, The sign (SYMN) of prayer [LIEBERMAN, *TK*, 1:28-29, that is, that it be accepted] is "[You will listen to the entreaty of the lowly, O LORD,] You will make their hearts full [taken as "prepared"]; You will incline your ear" (Ps. 10, 17). On the popular acceptance of the belief that a person's prayer would be answered see JAVIER TEIXIDOR, *The Pagan God: Popular Religion in the Greco-Roman Near East* (Princeton, 1977), pp. 6-11; on the Christian teaching, JAROSLAV PELIKAN, *The Christian Tradition*, vol. 1, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition* (Chicago, 1971), pp. 139-40; and on the rabbinic treatment of regular prayer as service of God and an experience of divine nearness, BARUCH M. BOKSER, "The Wall Separating God and Israel," *JQR* 78 (1983): 349-74.

<sup>12</sup>) T. Berakhot 3:20, pp. 16-17, ls. 80-84, on which see LIEBERMAN, *TK*, 1:46-47.

that sums up the event, provides the people's response. Here Hanina is called simply "ben Dosa," while in B.1, the title "Rabbi" is anachronistically given to him. The saying probably represents the oldest element of the story, as Rudolf BULTMANN and Armand KAMINKA independently suggest<sup>13</sup>), and could circulate in other contexts, as we shall see.

By noting the nature of the *arvad*, we can understand the projected image of Hanina. The *arvad* is a deadly reptile—some sort of black snake or lizard, referred to in various sources as either *arvad* ('RWWD) or *havarbar* (HBRBR)<sup>14</sup>). Midrash Sifra *Shemini*, 6 [5]:7, to Leviticus 11, 29, mentions it in its explanation of the creature "the great lizard" (WH\$B):

"Great lizards" (\$B)—this means the great lizards of every variety, to include [different] types of great lizards: *havarbar*, *ben hanefilim*, and the salamander<sup>15</sup>).

This baraita also appears in b. Hullin 127a, where we find the word *arvad* instead of *havarbar*<sup>16</sup>). The gemara recounts the creature's unusual origins in a series of stories concerning the sins or degenerate ways of certain towns:

<sup>13</sup>) Rudolf BULTMANN, *History of the Synoptic Tradition* (New York, 1963, 1976), pp. 55-61, esp. 55-56; Armand KAMINKA, *Studies in Bible and Talmud and Rabbinic Literature* [Hebrew], vol. 2, *Studies in Talmud* (Tel Aviv, 1951), pp. 38-39. See also Jacob NEUSNER, *The Rabbinic Traditions About the Pharisees Before 70*, 3 vols. (Leiden, 1971), 1:395. On the anachronistic ascription of the title "Rabbi" see VERMES, "Hanina" (1973), p. 61; FREYNE, "Charismatic," p. 224; and Sean FREYNE, *Galilee From Alexander the Great to Hadrian* (Wilmington, Delaware, 1980), pp. 315-16; and below.

<sup>14</sup>) See JASTROW, s.v. \$B; Immanuel Löw, *Fauna und Mineralien der Juden* (Hildesheim, 1969), pp. 39-40; esp. LIEBERMAN, *TK*, 1:46-47, and Menahem MORESHET, "Further Studies of the Language of the Hebrew Bārāyōt in the Babylonian and Palestinian Talmudim" in *Archive of the New Dictionary of Rabbinic Literature*, vol. 2, ed. Menahem Z. KADDARI (Ramat-Gan, 1974), p. 66; and *Encyclopaedia Miqrāit* [henceforth: *EM*], 6:649, s.v. "\$B," by Yair AḤITOV; E. Y. KUTSCHER, *Hebrew and Aramaic Studies* (Jerusalem, 1977), pp. 349-50; and Ramona and Desmond MORRIS, *Men and Snakes* (New York, 1965), pp. 167-68, in which the characteristics of lizards and snakes are compared.

<sup>15</sup>) Ed. I. H. Weiss, *Sifra D'Be Rav* (Vienna, 1862; reprint ed., New York, 1946), p. 52b. *Ben hanefilim* is some sort of water lizard. See Alexander KOHUT, *Aruch Completum*, 2d ed., 8 vols. (Vienna, 1926), 2:117; Samuel KRAUSS et al., *Additamenta ad Librum Aruch Completum* (Vienna, 1937; reprint ed., New York, 1955), p. 94; and esp. Löw, pp. 84, 95.

<sup>16</sup>) See Raphaelo RABINOVICZ, *Diqduq Sofrim* [Hebrew] (1867-86; reprint ed. in 12 vols., New York, 1960), 12:17a, n. 100.

Said R. Huna b. Torta<sup>17</sup>), Once I went to Zoar<sup>18</sup>) and I saw a snake coiled around a great lizard (SB). After several days an *arvad* went out from them and when I came and told Simeon the Pious, he said to me, "The Holy One, Praised by He, said, 'They [= humans]<sup>19</sup>) brought [forth] a creature which I did not create in my world [a reference to a hybrid produced by human crossbreeding]. So I shall bring [forth] upon them a creature which I did not create in my world.'"

The mythological background of the *arvad* or *havarbar* is even clearer in a Palestinian text found in Genesis Rabba 82.4 and y. Ber. 8:6, 12b. One portion of the passage assumes that hybrids were originally not part of the divine creation and provides a story to explain their existence. Building upon the negative stereotype of the descendents of Seir, the text treats Gen. 36:24's mention of Anah, one of the children of Zibeon, "who found the Yemin (HYMM) in the wilderness while pasturing the asses of his father Zibeon." HYMM is understood to refer to mules<sup>20</sup>). In suggesting that Anah was the first to produce a crossbreed of a she-ass and a horse, the text projects Anah as a sinner. God, in turn, exacting a punishment that fits the crime, produces another crossbreed:

A. The Holy One, Praised be He, said to him [to Anah]<sup>21</sup>), I did not create something harmful and you created something harmful! By your life, I shall create a harmful thing for you. What did He do? He

<sup>17</sup>) "Huna b. Torta" = printed editions, but the name appears only here [see Benjamin Kosowsky, *Thesaurus Nominum*, 5 vols. (Jerusalem, 1976-83), 2:401] and hence we should follow the reading of "Yohanan b. Torta" found in the Rome MS and other witnesses cited by RABBINOVICZ, 12:171b, n. 7. See also Aaron HYMAN, *Toldot Tannaim veAmoraim*, 3 vols. (Jerusalem, 1964), 1:357.

<sup>18</sup>) Printed editions have WW<sup>c</sup>D, a "meeting," a corruption, for the context requires the name of a place. See RABBINOVICZ, 12:171b, n. 7, which lists citations and MSS that read SW<sup>c</sup>R or ZW<sup>c</sup>R [N.B., pace RABBINOVICZ, *Haggadoth HaTalmud* [Aucture Anonymo Hispaniens] (Constantinople, 1511; reprint ed., Jerusalem, 1961), p. 135b has SW<sup>c</sup>R and not SY<sup>c</sup>R]. See Gedalyahu ALON, *Studies in Jewish History* [Hebrew], vol. 2 (Tel Aviv, 1958), pp. 93-95; and Eusebius, *The Onomastikon of Eusebius*, trans. E. Z. MELAMED (Jerusalem, 1966), nos. 810, 815, p. 74.

<sup>19</sup>) See below the story in Genesis Rabbah and ALON, p. 94, n. 5.

<sup>20</sup>) The reference to mules may have been made on the basis of the Greek word. See J. THEODOR and Ch. ALBECK, *Bereschit Rabba*, 2d, ed., 3 vols. (Jerusalem, 1965), p. 995 and esp. EM, 3:702-03, s.v. "YYM," by N. H. TUR-SINAI.

<sup>21</sup>) In Genesis Rabbah and Vatican MS to y. Berakhot the single pronoun would refer to Anah, but the other readings of y. Berakhot have "to them," i.e., to Anah and Zibeon.

brought a viper (HKYNH) and bred it with a lizard (HRDWNH)<sup>22</sup>) and the result was a *harvarbar*.

B. Never did a person say that a *harvarbar* bit him<sup>23</sup>) and he lived, that a mule kicked him and he lived—[that is] concerning the blow of a white mule<sup>24</sup>).

B explains how harmful the *harvarbar* and the mule were considered to be, underscoring the peril posed by the reptile that Hanina ben Dosa supposedly encountered. These several texts indicate that the creature had a dangerous reputation in both Palestine and Babylonia.

Ancient Near Eastern, Egyptian, classical, and Christian sources mention deadly scorpions, snakes, and other reptiles. They suggest many devices to ward off these creatures or to save a person from their bite or sting, and they tell how certain individuals helped the animals' victims. As we shall see below, such assistance became one of the signs of a holy man<sup>25</sup>).

Biblical sources also mention special experts to protect people from these threatening forces. Moses aids the Israelites bitten by poisonous snakes (Num. 21, 4-9). While Deut. 18, 10-11 prohibits Israelites from relying on snake charmers or chanters of incantations, other verses indicate that these individuals were known in

<sup>22</sup>) HRDWNH is the Aramaic word used by several Aramaic Targums to translate the word SB in Lev. 11, 29. See EM, 6:649, s.v. "SB," by Yair AHITOV.

<sup>23</sup>) Genesis Rabbah has NSK and y. Berakhot 'QS.

<sup>24</sup>) In y. Berakhot, the saying in B includes the additional reference to a "mad dog." This three-part version of the saying appears in y. Yoma 8:5, 45b. On this passage see Louis GINZBERG, *Legends of the Jews*, 7 vols. (Philadelphia, 1959), 5:322-23.

<sup>25</sup>) See J. F. BORGHOOTS, *Ancient Egyptian Magical Texts* (Leiden, 1978), which points to the large number of charms against scorpions, crocodiles, and other reptiles; J. J. FINKELSTEIN, "Hebrew HBR and Semitic \*HBR," *JBL* 75 (1956):328-31; Michael C. ASTOUR, "Two Ugaritic Serpent Charms," *JNES* 27 (1968):13-36, esp. pp. 17-18 and the references in n. 14; Morton SMITH, *Jesus the Magician* (New York, 1978), pp. 107 and esp. 196, citing instances of cures and spells in classical literature and papyri. Note in particular Lucan, *Pharsalia*, 9:619-945, ed. and trans. Robert GRAVES (Baltimore, 1957), pp. 212-20; Pliny, *Natural History*, 28.4:17, 29.19-23: 66-76, Loeb Classical Library, trans. H. Rackham, et al. in 10 vols. (Cambridge, 1938-62), vol. 8, pp. 12-13, 224-33; and R. and D. MORRIS, pp. 83-88, surveying the precautions taken against poisonous snakes and observing that "wherever poisonous snakes have been found, primitive men have tended to assume that all [emphasis in original] snakes are venomous" (p. 83).

Israelite society<sup>26</sup>). Rabbinic sources likewise refer to such measures dealing with poisonous reptiles. T. Shabbat 7:23 thus reads:

[On the Sabbath] they say incantations against (LWHŠYN 'L) an evil eye, and against a snake, and against a scorpion, and they do not say an incantation against *shedim* [= demons]<sup>27</sup>).

Jews and non-Jews, as Saul LIEBERMAN emphasizes, believed in the efficacy of these incantations and rabbis and ancient sages shared in these beliefs<sup>28</sup>).

Considering the known danger of the *arvad*, it is clear that the "Woe" saying projects Hanina as an unusual personality. Not everybody—indeed few—could be expected to accomplish what Hanina did. Though we can only speculate on what might have been the original occasion for the "Woe" saying, we can see how the Tosefta employed it, placing it in the context of rabbinic

<sup>26</sup> See, e.g., Is. 3, 3; Ps. 58, 5-6; Jer. 8, 17; Kohelet 10, 11; Ben Sira 12, 13 (16); FINKELSTEIN; and JULIUS PREUSS, *Biblical and Talmudic Medicine*, trans. and ed. Fred ROSNER (New York, 1978), pp. 195-200.

<sup>27</sup> T. Shabbat 7:23, pp. 28-29, ls. 42-43, on which see LIEBERMAN, *TK*, 3:102-04. While a somewhat different position may be found, as in T. Makkot 5:6, ed. ZUCKERMANDEL, *Tosefta*, 3d printing (Jerusalem, 1963), p. 444, l. 13, and *Sifrei Deut.* 172, ed. Louis FINKELSTEIN, *Sifre on Deuteronomy*, 2d ed. (New York, 1969), p. 210, T. Shabbat 7:23's attitude towards snakes and scorpions is well documented elsewhere as well: M. Shabbat 16:7, b. Shabbat 121b, and y. Shabbat 14:1, 14b (on killing scorpions and other dangerous animals on the Sabbath); M. Sanhedrin 1:4; M. Mo'ed Qatan 1:4 and T. Bava Qamma 1:4, ed. ZUCKERMANDEL, p. 346, l. 19; b. Nedarim 41a; and M. Avot 5:5. Healers or snake charmers are mentioned in T. Hullin 2:22, ed. ZUCKERMANDEL, p. 503, ls. 13-16; and Genesis Rabbah 10.7, pp. 80-81, and Leviticus Rabbah 22.4, ed. Mordecai MARGULIES, *Midrash Wayyikra Rabbah*, 5 vols. (Jerusalem, 1953-60), pp. 503-06 and notes, containing a series of stories exemplifying the notion that God carries out His purposes through everything—even snakes, deadly scorpions, etc.; see Dov Noy, "Sipure 'am Gelilim" [Galilean Folk Tales], *Mahanayim* 101 (1965):18-25, esp. 20-22. See PREUSS, *ibid.*; *Encyclopaedia Judaica* [henceforth: *EJ*], 15:14-15, s.v., "Snakes" by Yehuda FELIKS; *EM*, 6:339, s.v. "QRB" by Editor, 5:821-22, s.v. "NHŠ" by Yair AHITOV and Samuel LOEWENSTAMM, and 4:350-51, s.v. "KŠPYM," and the picture, col. 353, by Pinhas ARTZI.

<sup>28</sup> LIEBERMAN, *TK*, 3:103-04, and Saul LIEBERMAN, *Greek in Jewish Palestine*, 2d ed. (New York, 1965), pp. 97, 100-114; and see Ludwig BLAU, *Das Altjüdische Zauberwesen* (Budapest, 1898; reprint ed., Westmead, 1970), p. 72; PREUSS, pp. 144-49; and M. J. GELLER, "Jesus' Theurgic Powers: Parallels in the Talmud and Incantation Bowls" *JJS* 28 (1977): 141-55. The belief in these matters explains why Jews and other ancients would respect those who could effectively wield these "skills." See below.

prayer<sup>29</sup>) and thereby making Hanina a model of proper concentration. It is implied that whoever fulfills the rabbinic rule should not be afraid. The Hanina story may respond to an individual's fear that in concentrating he will become too oblivious to step out of the way of danger, as A of the Tosefta suggests<sup>30</sup>). A tradition concerning Hanina has thus been revised, making Hanina into a model to be emulated. Moreover, since Hanina is presented from the perspective of rabbinic concerns, it is not surprising that he is called "rabbi" in the introductory clause, B.1, and he appears as a master with a circle of students, in C.

The Tosefta's image of Hanina accords with his portrayal elsewhere. For example, M. Berakhot 5:5 ties Hanina's reputed ability to pray for the sick with his ability to achieve fluency in prayer, thereby emphasizing the importance of fluency<sup>31</sup>). The Mishnah and Tosefta thus rework popular stories about Hanina, placing them in a context of fixed rabbinic prayer.

### iii

The Palestinian and Babylonian Talmuds include the Tosefta baraita, though each presents it in a different context to accomplish different purposes. In y. Berakhot 5:1, 9a, the account of Hanina closes a larger sugya made up of comments on the Mishnah and a series of stories. We can divide this section into seven parts. In the first (I), the comments directly relate to M. Berakhot 5:1C, limiting the rule concerning a king. The next six (II-VII) present stories—ostensibly relating to the Mishnah's reference to a king—about pious individuals, several involved in study or prayer, and all divinely protected from danger. The last part, VIII, reverting to the Mishnah, comments on clause D and includes the reworked toseftan material. In order to see the Hanina tradition in its literary context, we first cite and briefly analyze the preliminary material (I-VII) and then treat the portion concerning Hanina (VIII).

<sup>29</sup> See, e.g., VERMES, "Hanina" (1972), pp. 29-30, and BERMAN, pp. 233, 234. When we say "Tosefta" we mean the Tosefta or its source.

<sup>30</sup> Cp. VERMES, "Hanina" (1972), p. 35, and NEUSNER, *Pharisees*, 3:60.

<sup>31</sup> On the Mishnah see Zacks, ed. *Mishnah Zetaim*, pp. 46-47.

## I

- A. Even if a king greets him, he should not respond [= M. 5:1C].
- B. Said R. Aḥa, This which you say [in Mishnah<sup>32</sup>] applies to kings of Israel, but concerning kings of the nations of the world—he returns a greeting.
- C. 1. It is taught, [If] one was writing the names [of God], even if a king greets him, he should not respond to him.
2. [If] he was writing two or three names [of God],
3. for example EL ELHYM, Y'Y (Jos. 22, 22)<sup>33</sup>,
4. lo, he finishes one of them and returns a greeting.

## II

- A. R. Yoḥanan [once] sat reading [Shema?] before the Babylonian synagogue in Sepphorus.
- B. An *archōn* [= magistrate] passed and he [= Yoḥanan] did not rise up before him [= the *archōn*]<sup>34</sup>.
- C. They wanted to strike him [= Yoḥanan].
- D. He [= the *archōn*] said to them, Leave him alone, he is engaged in the laws of his creator.

<sup>32</sup> We selectively cite variants to the text of PT from *Talmud Yerushalmi, Codex Vatican 133* [henceforth "V" MS] (Jerusalem, 1971); *Palestinian Talmud: Leiden MS Cod. Scal 3* [henceforth "L" MS] (Jerusalem, 1971); Louis GINZBERG, *Yerushalmi Fragments from the Geniza* [henceforth "GYF"] (New York, 1909; reprint ed., Jerusalem, 1969), pp. 16-19, 322; *Talmud Yerushalmi* (Venice p. e., 1522-23; reprint ed., N. p., n. d.) [henceforth "Ven"]; the text of PT that accompanies the Commentary of Solomon ben Joseph Sirillo [henceforth "S" MS], to tractate Berakhot, in *Masekhet Berakhot min Talmud Yerushalmi*, ed. Hayim Yosef DINKELS (Jerusalem, 1967), and in British Museum MSS 403, 404, and 405 = Or. 2822, 2823, 2824, and in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Supplement Hebre MS 1389.

In B, <sup>3</sup>H<sup>3</sup>, "Aḥa" = L, Ven, and S; <sup>3</sup>B<sup>3</sup> = V, GYF. See J. N. EPSTEIN, *Introduction to Amoraitic Literature* [henceforth "IAL"] (Jerusalem, 1962), p. 358, nn. 5, 6, 8.

<sup>33</sup> C.3, though found in the MSS, may be a marginal gloss that entered the text. It is not found in the Toseftan version of the baraita, T. Berakhot 3:22, p. 17, ls. 88-90, and it poses certain difficulties. See A. M. LUNCZ, *Talmud Yerushalmi*, vol. 1 [to Berakhot chs. 1-5] (Jerusalem, 1899), p. 51b, nn. 1-2; Mordechai Yehudah Leb SACKS, *Diqduq Sofrim laTalmud haYerushalmi*, vol. 1, *Berakhot* (Jerusalem, 1943), p. 28, n. 1; LIEBERMAN, *TK*, 1:47-49; and in general Dov Bear RATNER, *Ahawath Zion We-Jerusholaim. Berakhot* (Vilna, 1901; reprint ed., Jerusalem, 1971), ad loc.

<sup>34</sup> On archon see JEAN JUSTER, *Les Juifs dans L'Empire Romain*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1914), 1:444, n. 1; and Saul LIEBERMAN, *Texts and Studies* (New York, 1974), p. 131; J. H. MOULTON and George MILLIGAN, *The Vocabulary of the Greek Testament* (1930; Grand Rapids, 1974), p. 83; and Walter BAUER, W. F. ARNDT, F. W. GINGRICH, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Chicago, 1957), p. 113.

## III

- A. R. Ḥanina and R. Yehoshua b. Levi came in before the proconsul of Caesarea.
- B. He saw them and rose before them.
- C. They [= his associates] said to him, Before these Jews you rise?
- D. He said to them, I saw the faces of angels [when I saw the Jews enter]<sup>35</sup>.

## IV

- A. R. Yonah and R. Yose came in before Ursicinus in Antioch.
- B. He saw them and rose before them.
- C. They said to him. Before these Jews you rise?
- D. He said to them, In battle I see the faces of these and I win<sup>36</sup>.

## V

- A. R. Avun entered before the government [officials].
- B. On exiting he turned his back.
- C. They [= government officers] came and were about to kill him.
- D. And they saw two darts of fire coming out of his neck,
- E. and they left him,
- F. to fulfill what is said, "And all the peoples of the earth shall see that the Lord's name is proclaimed over you [or "called upon you"] and they shall stand in fear of you" (Deut. 28, 10).
- G. Teaches R. Simeon b. Yoḥai, "And all the peoples of the earth shall see the Lord's name is proclaimed over you." "All"—even spirits, even demons.

## VI

- A. R. Yannai and R. Yonathan were walking in the streets<sup>37</sup>.
- B. One [person] saw them and greeted them,

<sup>35</sup> E.g., their faces shone brilliantly like angels (so LUNCZ). GYF opens the proconsul's response with "By your life," <sup>3</sup>HYYKWN, a reading corrupted in V MS to HYYBYN.

<sup>36</sup> On this common motif see text to n. 49 below.

<sup>37</sup> Ven has B<sup>3</sup>SLTYN, which was produced by a misreading of L MS, which has B<sup>3</sup>SWTYN with a line above the W, apparently to make the letter into "R" but mistaken for "L." V has B<sup>3</sup>SRTYN and GYF has B<sup>3</sup>STDYN. While the citation in R. Samuel b. R. Jacob Jama, *Sefer He-Aggur* (1888; reprint ed., Jerusalem, 1978), p. 28 likewise has B<sup>3</sup>STDYN the alphabetical sequence of entries indicates that a scribal error has corrupted an original B<sup>3</sup>STRYN. See Louis GINZBERG,

- C. "Peace be with you, lads (RBY<sup>2</sup>)"<sup>38</sup>.  
 D. They say, We do not have even the appearance of fellows<sup>39</sup> [—for, in C, they are called "lads"].  
 E. —Pejoratively (LR<sup>4</sup>H). [This word is a gloss originally intended to indicate that the rabbis negatively perceived the comment of the greeter in C.]<sup>40</sup>

## VII

- A. Resh Laqish meditated over the Torah a great deal.  
 B. He went out beyond the Sabbath boundary and he did not know [it].  
 C. to fulfill what is said, "In its love you shall continually err" (Prov. 5, 19).

"Some Abbreviations, Unrecognized or Misunderstood, in the Text of the Jerusalem Talmud," in *Students' Annual of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1914* (New York, 1914), p. 139, n. 3; LOUIS GINZBERG, *A Commentary on the Palestinian Talmud*, 4 vols. (New York, 1941-61), 4:146; SAMUEL KRAUSS, *Griechische und Lateinische Lehnwörter im Talmud, Midrasch und Targum*, vol. 2 (Berlin, 1899), p. 97; KRAUSS, *Addimenta Aruch*, p. 45a; the reading in GYF, p. 322 [= reprint of *Yalqut Shimoni* (Salonika, 1506), "Addendum" of PT aggadot]; KOHUT, *Aruch*, 1:176-77, s.v. <sup>2</sup>STRYN, and 1:203, s.v. <sup>2</sup>SRT; and EPSTEIN, *IAL*, p. 358, n. 11; and esp. the identical usages in other instances of rabbis walking, e.g., in y. Shabbat 6:2, 8a and Yebamot 12:2, 12d.

<sup>38</sup>) RBY<sup>2</sup> = L MS; RBY<sup>2</sup>H = GYF, p. 17; RBYH = V and GYF, p. 322. For the rendering "lads" see Meir Marim, *Sefer Nir, Zera'im*, in *Yerushalmi Zera'im* (Jerusalem, 1971), ad loc.; LUNCZ; EPSTEIN, *IAL*, p. 358, n. 12; Targum to Genesis 37, 2; and Chaim Joshua KASOWSKI, *Thesaurus Aquilae Versionis Jerusalem*, 1940, p. 474. GINZBERG, "Abbreviations," p. 139, n. 5, apparently followed by Shraga ABRAMSON, *Kelale haTalmud beDivre haRamban* (Jerusalem, 1971), p. 15, takes the word as the plural of RB<sup>3</sup> [BB: or RB] meaning the "great ones," "rabbis," or "masters." A Jericho synagogue inscription confirms the existence of this form. See Joseph NAVEH, *On Stone and Mosaic* (Jerusalem, 1978), pp. 103-05, ¶ 69, l. 2 (RBYH), and E. Y. KUTSCHER, "Jewish Palestinian Aramaic," in *An Aramaic Handbook*, ed. Franz ROSENTHAL (Wiesbaden, 1967), Part I/2, p. 72.

<sup>39</sup>) On HBR see JASTROW, pp. 421-22, s.v. HBR. The present passage's use of <sup>2</sup>PYLW, "even," implies that there exists a status above "fellow"—e.g., an "elder," ZQN. On TW<sup>2</sup>R see GINZBERG, "Abbreviations," pp. 139-40, esp. n. 6; and Eliczer BEN YEHUDA, *A Complete Dictionary of Ancient and Modern Hebrew*, 8 vols. (1959; reprint ed., New York, 1960), 8:7643-44, for biblical and rabbinic usages (pace *ibid.*, p. 7654, n. 5); and ABRAMSON, p. 15, and his reference to Moses b. Nahman.

<sup>40</sup>) LR<sup>4</sup>H is found in L MS and Ven and GYF, p. 322, but not in GYF, p. 17, V and S MSS and several citations. GINZBERG, in "Abbreviations," pp. 139-41, and *idem*, *Commentary*, 4:146, takes the word as a mnemonic for the elements of the coming pericopae, though to do so he adopts the late reading of LD<sup>4</sup>H, a D for the R. Cp. Meir Marim; EPSTEIN, *IAL*, p. 358, n. 12; Issachar TEMAR, *Ale Temar. Yerushalmi, Seder Zera'im*, vol. 1 (Givataim, 1979), pp. 191-92; and our discussion below.

- D. R. Yudah bir<sup>2</sup> Ishmael meditated over the Torah a great deal.  
 E. His [long] cloak slipped from him, [F-I missing only in L MS and Venice edition:]<sup>41</sup>  
 F. And he did not know [that his cloak slipped],  
 G. to fulfill what is said, "In its love you shall continually err" (Prov. 5, 19).  
 H. R. Eleazer bir<sup>2</sup> Yishmael meditated over the Torah a great deal.  
 I. His cloak slipped from him,  
 J. and a viper watched it<sup>42</sup>.  
 K. His students say to him, "Master, lo, your cloak has slipped."  
 L. He said to them, "Does not that wicked one watch it?"

## VIII

- A. Even if a snake is coiled around his heel, he should not interrupt [= M. 5:1D].  
 B. R. Hunah in the name of R. Yose, We learned [that Mishnah speaks about] only a snake, but [for] a scorpion, one interrupts (MPSYQ).  
 C. Why? Because it repeatedly strikes.  
 D. R. Illa said, They said [= Mishnah speaks of] only "coiled," but if it was agitated and approaching him—lo, this one should turn sideways before it<sup>43</sup>, so long as he does not interrupt (L<sup>2</sup> YPSYQ) his tefillah.  
 E. It is taught, [If] one stood and prayed in the road or broad way, lo he passes before the ass and before the wagon, so long as he does not interrupt (YPSYQ) his tefillah.  
 F. The said<sup>44</sup> concerning R. Hanina ben Dosa that [once] he stood and prayed,  
 G. and a *havarbar* came and bit him<sup>45</sup>, and he did not interrupt (WL<sup>2</sup> HPSYQ) his tefillah.

<sup>41</sup>) C-F is found in V, S, and GYF, pp. 17-18. Cp. GYF, p. 322. See LUNCZ, p. 52b, n. 2; b. Eruvin 54b; GINZBERG, "Abbreviations," p. 141, n. 15; and in general GINZBERG, *Commentary*, 4:146-47.

<sup>42</sup>) HKYNH, "viper," is the word used in Genesis Rabbah 82.4 in the etiological story of the *arvad*, presented above at n. 22.

<sup>43</sup>) See S; LUNCZ, p. 52, n. 6; and GINZBERG, *Commentary*, 4:147.

<sup>44</sup>) <sup>2</sup>MRW, following V, S, and GYF, and not <sup>2</sup>MRY of L MS.

<sup>45</sup>) WHKYŠW = L, S, and R. Machir b. Abba Mari, *Jalkut Machiri zu 150 Psalmen*, ed. Salomon BUBER (1899; reprint ed., Jerusalem, 1964), to Ps. 145, p. 140b [= 280]; WHQWŠW, "knocked against him" = V and GYF.

H. And they went and found that *havarbar* dead lying upon the mouth of its hole.

I. They said, "Woe to the person whom a *havarbar* has bitten, Woe to the *havarbar* that has bitten R. Hanina ben Dosa."

J. What is the nature of this *havarbar*?

K. When it injures a human, if the human reaches water first, the *havarbar* dies. And if the *havarbar* reaches water first, the human dies<sup>46</sup>).

L. His students said to him, "Master (RBY), did you not feel [anything]?"

M. He said to them, "Let [evil] befall me—as my heart was concentrated on the tefillah—if I felt [anything]."

N. Said R. Ishaq b. Eleazar, The Holy One Praised Be He created a spring under the soles of his feet to fulfill that which has been written, "He fulfills the wishes of those who fear Him; He hears their cries and saves them." (Ps. 145, 19).

I-A is a citation of the Mishnah. B, going against the plain sense of the Mishnah<sup>47</sup>), specifies certain exceptions. In these cases a person might be able to respond to the greeting after only a brief moment.

II describes the encounter of R. Yoḥanan, a third-century Amora, with an *archon*, a high Roman official, and the respect Yoḥanan commands by his devotion to God's Torah. The story, seen through rabbinic eyes, portrays Yoḥanan as astute and pious. III, the second story, depicts a proconsul's respect for two Amoraim—a respect apparently induced by a miraculous vision<sup>48</sup>). In IV, the third story of respect, the account echoes the motif elsewhere associated with Alexander the Great and Constantine. In Jewish literature, it is applied to an encounter between the High Priest Simeon the Righteous and Alexander<sup>49</sup>). We therefore have

<sup>46</sup>) J and K are in Aramaic, the significance of which we discuss below.

<sup>47</sup>) See, e.g., SAPPAT, pp. 28-29, and FALK, p. 68.

<sup>48</sup>) See n. 35 and Samuel Jaffe Ashkenazi, "Yefeh Mareh," in *Sefer Ein Ya'aqov*, ed. Israel SHAPIRO (Warsaw, 1898), p. 39b.

<sup>49</sup>) The encounter between Simeon the Righteous and Alexander the Great is found in e.g., Josephus, *Antiquities*, 11:331-35, Loeb Classical Library, ed. H. St. J. THACKERAY, et al., 9 vols. (Cambridge, 1926-35), vol. 6, pp. 474-77 and nn.; b. Yoma 69a; Megillat Ta'anit, scholion to 21 Kislev, ed. H. LICHTENSTEIN, "Die Fastenrolle," *HUCA* 8-9 (1931-32): 340; *Pesikta de Rav Kahana*, ed. Bernard MANDELBAUM, 2 vols. (New York, 1962), 1:75; and Leviticus Rabbah 13, 5, pp. 293, 294, and nn. for additional parallels. The language in IV-D is closest to the versions in Leviticus Rabbah, p. 294 [n. b. variants to 1. 5], *Pesikta de Rav Kahana*, and the scholion to Megillat Ta'anit. On the motif and the application

two elements. Again a miraculous vision presumably protects the masters, whose faces are seen as a good omen. In addition, by association, these rabbis are like the High Priest Simeon and they are able to command the respect of Gentiles even the likes of Alexander. In V, A-F, the fourth story, an Amora who committed an affront before government officials is protected by divine intervention. Deut. 28, 10, cited in F, makes the story's point clear. Deut. 28, 1-14 states that if Israel keeps the commandments and walks in God's ways, it will be blessed and protected from enemies. Verse 10 emphasizes that it is God's name that protects the masters<sup>50</sup>). The incident of Avun—like those concerning the other masters in II-IV—is fulfillment of this prophecy and an example of what is in store for all the faithful, a point that also emerges at the end of the larger sugya, as we shall see. The baraita in G adds that Israel will be protected even from demons, a common concern in late antiquity<sup>51</sup>).

here see Josephus, *Antiquities*, vol. 6, Appendix C; Saul LIEBERMAN, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine* (New York, 1950), p. 125, n. 56; LIEBERMAN, *Texts*, pp. 119-24; NEUSNER, *Pharisees*, 1:33-34, 49-50; Zacharias FRANKEL, *Mevo haYerushalmi* (1870; reprint ed., Jerusalem, 1967), pp. 98b-99a; and Michael AVI-YONAH, *The Jews of Palestine* (Oxford, 1976), pp. 176-81. On Constantine's vision see Ramsay MAC-MULLEN, *Constantine* (1969; New York, 1971), pp. 65-78.

<sup>50</sup>) On Deut. 28 see S. R. DRIVER, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy*, 3d ed. (Edinburgh, 1902, 1960), p. 306 and references. DRIVER observes that the phrase "the LORD's name is called over you" denotes "the fact of ownership...coupled at the same time with the idea of protection [emphasis in original]; and occurs frequently especially with reference to the people of Israel, Jerusalem, or the Temple." N.b. Is. 61, 9: "Their offspring shall be known among the nations, their descendants in the midst of the peoples. All who see them shall recognize that they are a stock the LORD has blessed." See n. 51.

<sup>51</sup>) Our understanding of the use of Deut. 28, 10 is supported by expositions elsewhere. A relatively early understanding of the verse applies it to the future: Mekilta Bo, 12, ed. H. S. HOROVITZ and I. A. RABIN, *Mechilta D'Rabbi Ismael*, 2d ed. (Jerusalem, 1960), p. 41—in conjunction with Joel 3, 5; a notion also developed in Deut. Rabbah 1. 25, *Midrash Rabbah 'al Hamishah Hummshe Torah veHamesh Megillot*, 2 vols. (Vilna, 1884-87; reprint ed., Jerusalem, 1961), 2:100c—KK L'TYD LBW<sup>2</sup>, "so in the future..." Later texts suggest that the verse has found a this-worldly fulfillment in special occasions: e.g., with Jacob (*Midrash Tanhuma haQadum veHayashan*, ed. Salomon BUBER [Vilna, 1885; reprint ed., Jerusalem, 1964] *Vayishlah*, # 22, p. 88a); or later leaders (Exodus Rabbah 15, 17, *Midrash Rabbah* p. 29a—respected by foreign nations, for "God's name is on Israel"—see LIEBERMAN, *Hellenism*, pp. 124-26); or in the exodus from Egypt (Exodus Rabbah 15, 6, p. 26d—feared by the nations, as indicated by Deut. 28, 10, for the Israelites make up God's earthly hosts (SB'WT), as indicated in Ex. 12, 41, and appear like their heavenly counterparts, the angels). The Targum Jonathan to Deut. 28, 10 and several passages in the BT (Berakhot 6a, 57a; Megillah 16b; Soṭah 17a; Menaḥot 35b; Hullin 89a) take the verse literally with reference to the



VI, the fifth story, can be construed in one of two ways. According to the first rendering, a passerby speaks down to R. Yannai and R. Yonathan, calling them "lads" and thus insulting them. This contrast with the preceding stories indicates that Deut. 28, 10 has not yet been fulfilled. Alternatively, though less likely, taking the word RBYY<sup>2</sup> as "masters," the passerby speaks respectfully with them, perhaps identifying them by their appearance, and they react in a modest manner. In this case, the incident fulfills the prophecy in Deut. 28, 10<sup>52</sup>).

VII contains two stories in the Leiden MS and three in the other readings. Each describes a master's preoccupation with the study of Torah, and each apparently occurs on the Sabbath. In the latter two stories, the masters cannot pick up their fallen cloaks. The third story, H-L—or the conflated second story of the Leiden MS and printed editions—indicates that although the obliviousness is to be expected, as Prov. 5, 19 foretells that such things might occur, it will not prove detrimental to the master, for the forces of nature recognize his merit. The mention of the viper, anticipating the account of the *arvad* and Ḥanina's concentration, makes the connection to the larger context obvious<sup>53</sup>).

VIII-A is a citation of M. 5:1D. B limits the Mishnah, asserting that the snake is not an example of all creatures; hence one does interrupt when one encounters a scorpion, whose sting is often fatal<sup>54</sup>). C gives a reason for the exception. Again, the interpretation goes against the Mishnah's plain sense<sup>55</sup>. D in a similar vein interprets the Mishnah in such a way that a person may protect himself from danger: he may step aside if he does not interrupt—a position similar to the one in the Tosefta. The Gemara appropriately presents the baraita at this point.

tefillin which is worn on the head and which contains God's name. Such a this-worldly application of the verse, though, can be projected to the future as well—see b. Berakhot 57a.

On the belief in demons, see n. 28 above to which add: NEUSNER, *Babylonia*, esp. 4:334-41, 440, and 5:183-86, 217-43; SMITH, *Jesus*, pp. 126-29, 202-05. As LIEBERMAN emphasizes, Palestinian and Babylonian Jews alike held these beliefs (*Greek*, pp. 110-11).

<sup>52</sup>) See nn. 37-40.

<sup>53</sup>) The association between the two elements was recognized by Eliahu SHULSINGER, *Yad Eliyahu. Yerushalmi, Seder Zera'im* (Jerusalem, 1971), p. 11b, s.v. RBY YWDN.

<sup>54</sup>) See the references in nn. 25, 27; and SMITH, *Jesus*, p. 196.

<sup>55</sup>) See n. 47 and text thereto.

E-N presents the account of Ḥanina with additions. The portion analogous to the Tosefta is identical except for lexical differences. The additions are J-K and L-N. J-K, an aramaic gloss, provides a folk cure that testifies to the *havarbar*'s deadliness, thereby underscoring Ḥanina's special quality. The comment anticipates Iṣḥaq's comment in N<sup>56</sup>). L-M expands the basic story about Ḥanina and by mentioning his concentration in prayer connects the passage to the Mishnah, further emphasizing Ḥanina's distinctiveness and the overall theme of concentration<sup>57</sup>). L anachronistically places Ḥanina in the master-disciple rabbinic setting, a phenomenon we noted in regard to the Tosefta, line C<sup>58</sup>). But y. gives Ḥanina the title "rabbi" not only in the narrative opening, F (like the Tosefta line B), but also in the "Woe" saying, I (unlike the Tosefta line D).

Iṣḥaq's claim in N, that God miraculously<sup>59</sup>) provided a spring, explains how Ḥanina survived. This comment and the citation of Ps. 145 appropriately close the whole sugya: God protects and fulfills the wishes of those who fear and beseech Him. This notion also relates to the preceding sections, in which gemara presents a series of stories describing masters who are respected or protected from reptiles and potentially hostile non-Jewish officials. Deut 28, 10, cited in V-F, indicates that in the future when people follow God's Torah and His ways, everyone will see God's name over—or "on"—Israel and will respect Israel. The stories suggest that this promise has already been at least partially fulfilled in this world. They accordingly provide a model of how that fulfillment is to come about. Since the masters are distinguished by their piety in study or prayer, by implication it is these activities that will enable all Jews to gain respect and protection<sup>60</sup>).

<sup>56</sup>) The need to examine the role of the individual elements within the whole pericope thus militates against VERMES, "Ḥanina" (1972), pp. 35-36, and BERMAN, p. 253, n. 25. That J and K are in Aramaic may reflect the fact that they are later explanatory glosses.

<sup>57</sup>) See MEIR, p. 263.

<sup>58</sup>) See n. 11. In y., line H, the subject is "they" and not "students," the reading in the Tosefta analogue. The change may be intentional to preserve the mention of the "students" for clause L, where it is appropriate to contrast the "master" with the "students."

<sup>59</sup>) Commentators to b. Berakhot 33a who cite the y. pericope refer to the appearance of the spring as a "miracle," a *nes*. See e.g., Rashi. On the belief in the efficacy of water see BLAU, p. 159 and n. 1.

<sup>60</sup>) See n. 51. Cp. the use of Ps. 145, 18-19 in Leviticus Rabbah 17, 1, pp. 368-69, and Midrash Pesiqta Rabbati 43, ed. M. FRIEDMANN, *Pesikta Rabbati* (Vienna, 1880; reprint ed., Tel Aviv, 1963), pp. 179a-b.

The Palestinian Talmud, like the Tosefta, depicts Ḥanina concentrating in prayer. But PT alters the purpose of the portrayal by altering its context. By placing it within the larger sugya and by juxtaposing it with the adjoining traditions, especially Iṣḥaq's in N, the account treats the rules and effectiveness of prayer now no longer as ends in themselves, but as a means to gain divine protection and a special relationship with God.

iv

The Babylonian Talmud, like the Palestinian, recasts the Ḥanina material and presents it at the close of a long section; but BT totally transforms Ḥanina's image, depicting him as a master who "comes to the rescue" of a community in danger<sup>61</sup>). In its treatment of the first clause of the Mishnah, BT emphasizes the effectiveness of prayer and adapts how it helped Israel in time of need. The gemara cites and adapts numerous traditions that depict Ḥannah's, Elijah's, and especially Moses's pleading before God in behalf of the Israelites, highlighting the intercessory role of the biblical prophet<sup>62</sup>). This veritable treatise on prayer<sup>63</sup>) shapes the reader's view of a leader and teacher. When one comes to the account of Ḥanina, one perceives him also as a leader who acts in behalf of others and is not merely involved in his own piety, albeit as if a model for others.

Since it is necessary to refer to the complete bavli on M. Berakhot 5:1 to understand the wider patterns in the reworking of the account of Hanina, we shall outline the gemara, setting forth the structure and major themes of the first two sections and including two examples of the exposition. We shall then cite and explain the sections on M. 5:1C-D that contain the account of Hanina.

<sup>61</sup>) Below we discuss the characteristics of this genre of miracle story.

<sup>62</sup>) See Ezek. 13, 4-5, and 22, 28-30; esp. Ps. 106, 19-23; Sheldon BLANK, *Prophetic Faith in Isaiah* (New York, 1958), pp. 196-208; Yochanan MUFFS, "His Majesty's Loyal Opposition: A Study in Prophetic Intercession," *Conservative Judaism* 33 (1980):25-37; Moshe GREENBERG, "Moses' Intercessory Prayer," *Ecumenical Institute for Advanced Theological Studies Yearbook* (1977-78), pp. 21-35; idem, "'You have Turned Their Hearts Backward' (I Kings 18:37)," in *Studies in Aggadah*, ed. PETUCHOWSKI and FLEISCHER, Hebrew pp. 52-66; and Arnold B. RHODES, "Israel's Prophets as Intercessors," in *Scripture in History and Theology. Essays in Honor of J. Coert Rylaarsdam*, ed. A. L. MERRILL and T. W. OVERHOLT (Pittsburgh, 1977), pp. 107-28, for a survey of biblical sources and modern secondary literature.

<sup>63</sup>) See Abraham WEISS, *Studies in the Literature of the Amoraim* (New York, 1962), pp. 251-56, on the whole section and its parts; and below.

BT TO M. BERAKHOT 5:1, presented on b. Berakhot 30b-33a

A. Gemara (b. Berakhot 30b-32b) to M. Berakhot 5:1A:

1. (b. Berakhot 30a-31a). A discussion of and supplementary material to M. Berakhot 5:1A's prescription to have proper composure in prayer<sup>64</sup>).

2. (b. Berakhot 31a). Citation of a baraita, a version of T. Berakhot 3:4-6, pp. 12-13, lines 15-28, that provides proof texts, including one from 1 Samuel using Ḥannah's prayer, to support several rules concerning the tefillah. The first part deals with proper intention and the remaining parts with other requirements including the place in the tefillah where one may appropriately express one's personal needs<sup>65</sup>).

3. (b. Berakhot 31a-b). Additional rules derived from or connected to the prayer of Ḥannah. Gemara depicts a strong-willed and pious Ḥannah defending herself before Eli and outspoken in her pleas for a child<sup>66</sup>).

4. (b. Berakhot 31b-32a). The reproach of God. A set of three traditions attributed to R. Eleazer, with interpolated material between the second and third<sup>67</sup>):

a. Ḥannah reproached God (1 Samuel 1, 10).

b. Elijah reproached God (1 Kings 18, 37).

c. Interpolated material on Elijah and an exposition on the theme that God is responsible for people's evil inclinations and therefore people cannot be held solely responsible for their sins.

d. Moses reproached God (Numbers 11, 2).

5. (b. Berakhot 32a). A defense of Israel over the sin of the golden calf. Exegetical comments, especially on Exodus 32, supply Moses with various arguments that he might have used in Israel's defense<sup>68</sup>). The following two comments convey the tenor of the section.

<sup>64</sup>) See GINZBERG, *Commentary*, 4:8-19.

<sup>65</sup>) On the sequence of the expositions see LIEBERMAN, *TK*, 1:28-31.

<sup>66</sup>) See Benjamin Z. BACHER, *Aggadot Amora'e Ereṣ Yisrael*, 3 vols. (Tel Aviv, 1926-30), 2/1:54-55 and nn.

<sup>67</sup>) See RABINOVICZ, 1:167, n. 3. On the Elijah pericope see GREENBERG, "You Have Turned their Hearts," Hebrew pp. 54-55.

<sup>68</sup>) See BACHER, 1/2:186 (n. 2), 294; 2/1:53 (n. \*), 65-66 (nn.). On the background of these comments see Arthur MARMORSTEIN, *Studies in Jewish Theology* (London, 1950), pp. 183, 198-206; and Leivy SMOLAR and Moshe ABERBACH, "The Golden Calf Episode in Postbiblical Literature," *HUCA* 39 (1968):91-116, esp. 112-15.

"The LORD spoke to Moses, 'Hurry, descend (LK RD), [for your people, whom you brought from the land of Egypt, have acted basely]'" (Ex. 32, 7). What is "hurry, descend"?<sup>69</sup>) The Holy One, Praised be He, said to Moses, "Descend from your greatness. Did I not give you greatness only for the sake of Israel, and now, since Israel has sinned, why do I need you?..."

"TheLORD further said to Moses, 'I see that this is a stiffnecked people. Now let Me be, that My anger may blaze forth against them and that I may destroy them, and make of you a great nation'" (Ex. 32, 9-11)... "And make of you a great nation" etc.—Said R. Eleazar, Moses said to the Holy One, Praised be He, "Master of the Universe, And just as a chair with three legs [= Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob]<sup>70</sup>) cannot stand in Your presence when you are angry, a chair with one leg [= I and the promise to my descendants] all the more [cannot stand]<sup>71</sup>). And moreover, I am embarrassed before my ancestors. They will say, 'See how a leader (PRNS) whom [God] appointed over them sought greatness for himself and did not request mercy for them, and He killed them'"<sup>72</sup>).

6. (b. Berakhot 32a). Concluding comment on prayer based on the model of Moses.

7. (b. Berakhot 32b). Comments attributed to R. Eleazar and other masters on the power of prayer, restricting apparent biblical limitations on prayer's effectiveness post-70 to straight petitionary prayer and suggesting that individuals should pray in faith and patience. The section assumes that regular prayer provides people with an experience of divine nearness while special entreaties are the task of the giants of faith<sup>73</sup>). The concluding pericope states that tefillah is one of four things that need extra reinforcement.

8. (b. Berakhot 32b). Israel is not forsaken. While God has totally forgotten the sin of the golden calf, God has not forgotten the event of Sinai<sup>74</sup>).

<sup>69</sup>) For the readings that lack, at this point, the attribution to R. Eleazar, see RABBINOVICZ, 1:168, n. 60.

<sup>70</sup>) See BACHER, 2/1:53, n. \*; Rashi, ad loc. N.b. the mention of the three patriarchs in Ex. 32, 13.

<sup>71</sup>) See RABBINOVICZ, 1:169, n. 400.

<sup>72</sup>) See RABBINOVICZ, 1:169, nn. 1-2, for several slight variations, e.g., instead of "a leader whom [God] appointed over them" some witnesses have "a leader who stood up for Israel." While the last phrase, "and He killed them," is missing in the printed editions, it is found in various witnesses, including the Florence MS (*Babylonian Talmud Codex Florence. Florence National Library II I 7-9*, 3 vols. [Jerusalem, 1972]), which otherwise differ.

<sup>73</sup>) See BOKSER, "Wall."

<sup>74</sup>) See n. 68; and URBACH, 1:536-37.

B. Gemara (b. Berakhot 32b) to M. Berakhot 5:1B:

Comments on the biblical basis for the practice of the early pious and on the custom of tarrying before praying.

C. Gemara (b. Berakhot 32b-33a) to M. Berakhot 5:1C:

Comment and a story on responding to a king and government officials. See below.

D. Gemara (b. Berakhot 33a) to M. Berakhot 5:1D:

Material dealing with the principle of the coiled snake and ending with the account of Hanina. See below.

The outline demonstrates the extensive treatment of the institution of prayer, its effectiveness, and its use by leaders on behalf of the community. The pericopae containing the interchange between God and Moses show a leader as a person whose greatness depends on the community he leads. He does not draw close to God merely to gain stature for himself<sup>75</sup>).

<sup>75</sup>) Several Palestinian Amoraim, especially Eleazar—a Babylonian, though, who emigrated to Palestine—play a prominent role in the sugya, and their comments provide the framework for the individual units, as A. WEISS suggests. While the discussion may therefore reflect Palestinian notions, the selection and sequence of material and its very use and position within the Babylonian Talmud gives it a "recycled" Babylonian meaning. Significantly, the Palestinian Talmud lacks such a sustained collection of materials. Since below we rely on BT's portrayal of leaders to explain its distinctive shaping of the account of Hanina, we must determine if indeed these teachings are distinctive to amoraic Babylonia. First, the image of Moses, Elijah, and Hannah as intercessors or figures who are forthright in speaking to God is not novel. The Bible itself portrays them in this way and even conceptualizes this dimension of their role (e.g., Ezekiel and Psalms, as cited in nn. 62, 67). The Assumption of Moses 11, 16-19 extends this characteristic of Moses (see GREENBERG, "Moses," p. 22). A similar trait of Jeremiah, e.g., in Jer. 6, 27, is picked up by 2 Macc. 15, 14 ("This is a man who loves the brethren and prays much for the people and the holy city, Jeremiah, the prophet of God"); 2 Bar. 2, 2; and 4 Bar. 2, 3 (ed. R. A. KRAFT and Ann-Elizabeth PURINTON, *Paraleipomena Jeremiou*, [Missoula, 1972], pp. 14-15).

Second, Mekilta *Bo (Pisha)*, 1 provides the only extensive tannaitic analogue concerning the nature of a prophet. Following the biblical paradigm of Jeremiah in particular, it asserts that a prophet should speak up for Israel (ed. HOROVITZ, p. 4, esp. 1s. 1-2). A pericope based on a tradition attributed to R. Nathan, a Babylonian (see p. 4, variants to 1. 10, and NEUSNER, *Babylonia*, 1 [2 ed.]:79, 81-85, 136-44), emphasizes that a prophet should even be willing to give up his life for Israel—a posture exemplified by Moses in Ex. 32, 32. On the other hand, the prophet's unique role is deemphasized. Several traditions state that while Moses was accorded special recognition and respect, his prophet abilities were not unique

We now present the gemara on M. Berakhot 5:1C-D. The Amoraim limit the rules of the Mishnah, going against the text's

to him (e.g., p. 1). A long section, which closes the introductory section of tractate *Bo* (and thus of the Mekilta as a whole) and which is built on traditions attributed to R. Aqiba and R. Simeon b. Azzai (pp. 5-6), expressly denies the prophets' unique role, for God communicates with them only because of the merit of Israel. Accordingly, while Mekilta shares certain perceptions concerning the role of Moses and other prophets, the overall context and structure differ. In addition, in light of our suggestion that BT may represent a distinct point of view, it is noteworthy that this analogue comes from one of the two tractates of the Mekilta that may have been based on teachings transmitted in second-century Babylonia. See NEUSNER, *Babylonia*, 1:192-96, 199-200.

Third, later rabbinic sources develop the intercessory role of noted biblical figures. In treating Exodus 32 and Deut. 9, Exodus Rabbah 42-45 and Deut. Rabbah 3, 11.15 deal with this dimension of Moses. But this interest is not surprising, considering the biblical tradition and the form of these comments as expansions or responses to the biblical text. These two considerations explain why the Midrashim develop other aspects of Moses and issues in the biblical text and do not focus merely on Moses' speaking out. On these and other references see BACHER, as cited in n. 68; GINZBERG, *Legends*, 6:55; and Wayne MEEKS, *The Prophet King* (Leiden, 1967), index, s.v. "Moses, as intercessor." On Hannah's prayer see n. 66 and GINZBERG, *Legends*, 6:215-17, 219. The references, for example in the early medieval Midrash Pesiqta Rabbati 43, pp. 179a-b, portray Hannah arguing with God. But they are used to exemplify the notion that God answers the prayers of the especially righteous. On Elijah's activity see GREENBERG, "You Have Turned," pp. 55-58; GINZBERG, *Legends*, 6:320; and Pesiqta Rabbati 4, pp. 13a-b, esp. 13b, wherein Elijah is compared to Moses.

Fourth, the theme that God and not Israel is at fault for the sin of the golden calf, prominent in the b. sugya, is not unique to BT. The notion that the Israelites sinned because God gave them too much gold develops a teaching found in a tannaitic source and attributed to Aqiba (T. Yoma 4:14, p. 255, ls. 15-16). However, according to LIEBERMAN (*TK*, 4:833), the specific mention of the gold and silver is an addition to the text and therefore is first attested in the gemarot's versions and glosses to the toseftan baraita (y. Yoma 8:9, 45c; b. Berakhot 86b; Deut. Rabbah, ed. Saul LIEBERMAN, *Midrash Debarim Rabbah*, 2d ed. [Jerusalem, 1964], 9, p. 7; and Genesis Rabbah 28.7, to Gn. 6, 6, p. 266; and see b. San. 102a). An alternative explanation is found in the claim that Israel erred because it had too much food, i.e., life had become too easy, found in the tannaitic text Sifrei Deut. 318, pp. 361-62. (See also Sifrei Deut. 43, pp. 92-93, 98-99.) The notion that in creating the evil inclination (*yezer hara'*), God must take responsibility—which is found in the b. passage—appears in y. Ta'anit 3:4, 66c.

Our review of b. Berakhot indicates that the theme of biblical figures who intercede for Israel and find excuses for its sin is important not in tannaitic sources but in third-century and later materials. This accords with the observation that in the third century rabbis took up the battle to respond to Christian polemics concerning Israel's merit. See SMOLAR and ABERBACH; and esp. MARMORSTEIN, pp. 193, 198-206, and Nahum N. GLATZER, "A Study of the Talmudic-Midrashic Interpretation of Prophecy," *Review of Religion* 10 (1946): 133-36; and Reuven KIMELMAN, "R. Yohanan and Origen On the Song of Songs: A Third-Century Jewish-Christian Disputation," *HTR* 73 (1980): 567-98. Moreover, BT undertakes these efforts single-mindedly, focussing on the combative apologetic for the golden

plain sense<sup>76</sup>). The discussion includes a story concerning "a certain ḥasid." This belongs to a genre of tales describing the exceptional behavior of a ḥasid, a paragon of zealous fulfillment of the Torah. As we shall see, while the ḥasid may inspire others, he does not serve as a model that everyone is expected to emulate<sup>77</sup>). We divide the gemara on M. Berakhot 5:1C into two parts:

[“C,” in the outline of BT to M. Berakhot 5:1]

## I

A. Even [if] a king greets him, he should not respond [= M. Berakhot 5:1C]<sup>78</sup>).

B. Said R. Yosef, We learned [= Mishnah speaks of] only Israelite kings, but [in response to] kings of the nations of the world, he interrupts (PWSQ).

C. They retored [challenging B]: [Concerning] one who prays and sees a *hegemon* [= a prefect]<sup>79</sup>) approaching him—

he should not interrupt (MPSYQ) and go up [from his prayer], but he should abbreviate [his prayer] and get up.

D. It is not a question. Here [in the latter case] he can abbreviate, in the other case he cannot.

calf and the intercessory and argumentative side of prophetic prayer. The imbalance in this approach surprises LEVINSTEIN-LEVY, who notes that rabbinic sources generally castigate or disapprove of those who attempt to reproach God ("Hataḥat Devarim Kelape Ma'alalah," in *Sefer Hashanah. The American Hebrew Year Book*, ed. Menachem RIBALOW, vol. 3 [New York, 1938], pp. 113-27). Since the tannaitic analogues and even the somewhat longer Palestinian parallels differ in their overall thrust from the b. Berakhot sugya, we are justified in treating the latter as a distinctive composition. BT (and not PT) chooses to place this material in its sugya concerning the correct disposition for prayer, associating biblical models of intercession and prayer with rabbinic emphasis on the importance of praying with the proper frame of mind and concentration.

<sup>76</sup>) See n. 47.

<sup>77</sup>) See n. 84 below.

<sup>78</sup>) See RABBINOVICZ, 1:174, n. 30, and Florence MS. We cite only selected variants.

<sup>79</sup>) HGMWN, the reading in MSS and citations, was replaced in printed editions by 'NS. See RABBINOVICZ, 1:174, nn. 40 and 60. Along with the "correction" a gloss appears, "saw a wagon approaching him." Its presence on the margin of the Florence MS indicates that it may represent an actual reading. Cp. the similar clause in T. Berakhot 3:20. On the term *hegemon* see Samuel KRAUSS, *Paras veRomiba Talmud uvaMidrashim* (Jerusalem, 1948), pp. 137-38; MOULTON and MILLIGAN, p. 277; and BAUER, p. 344.

## II

A. Our rabbis taught, A case concerning (M'ŠH B-) a certain ḥasid who prayed in the street,

B. a *hegemon*<sup>80</sup>) came and greeted him, and he did not return the greeting.

C. He [= the *hegemon*] waited until he [= the ḥasid] finished his tefillah.

D. After he finished his tefillah, he [= the *hegemon*] said to him [= the ḥasid], "Empty headed" (RYQ').

E. "And is it not written in your Torah, 'But take utmost care and watch your bodies (NPŠK) [= yourselves] scrupulously' (Deut. 4, 9)? And it is [further] written, 'For your own lives (LNPSWTYKYM) [= for your own sake] be most careful' (Deut. 4, 15)<sup>81</sup>).

F. "When I greeted you, why did you not return the greeting?"

G. "If I would cut off your head with a sword, who would claim your blood from me?"

H. He said to him, "Wait for me until I may explain"<sup>82</sup>).

I. He said to him, "If you had been standing before a king of flesh and blood, and your friend came and greeted you, would you have returned [it]?"

J. He said to him, "No."

K. "And if you had returned [it], what would they have done to you?"

L. He said to him, "They would [have] cut off my head with a sword."

M. He said to him, "And is not the matter a case of an *a fortiori*."

N. "And just as you, if you had stood before a king of flesh and blood who today is here and tomorrow is in the grave, [would not interrupt], so I, when I stood before the king, king of kings, the Holy One, Praised be He, who lives and exists forever, for eternity, all the more so, [should not interrupt]."

O. Immediately that *hegemon* became convinced and that ḥasid went home in peace.

In unit I, C challenges the clarification of the Mishnah, presented in B, by citing a source which introduces the principle of

<sup>80</sup>) See RABBINOVICZ, 1:174, n. 60, Florence MS; and n. 79. Here a censor revised the later printed editions to read ŠR, "an officer."

<sup>81</sup>) The second verse, found in the printed editions but not in many MSS (see RABBINOVICZ, 1:174, n. 70), appears in the Florence MS.

<sup>82</sup>) PYS means to attempt to pacify or convince. See LIEBERMAN, TK, 1:187, n. 38; J. PAYNE SMITH, *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary* (Oxford, 1903, 1967), p. 444, s.v. PYS; and KUTSCHER, *Hebrew and Aramaic Studies*, Hebrew p. 64.

"abbreviation"—that one may abbreviate the prayer instead of interrupting it. D harmonizes that source with the interpretation in B. The principle that emerges, however, is inconsistent with the story in unit II. There the ḥasid neither interrupts nor abbreviates. Since we are interested in the portrayal of ideal figures, we shall more closely examine this account.

The encounter, in II, between a pious, astute ḥasid and a *hegemon*, a Roman prefect, is concerned with a person's proper relationship to God. The dialogue, employing various rhetorical devices<sup>83</sup>) to strengthen the ḥasid's argument, suggests that anyone who interrupts or stops the tefillah should feel guilty. Since the ḥasid remains safe we are to believe that he did not face real danger. But the threat of decapitation in G, added to our knowledge concerning the importance of greeting Roman officials properly, would suggest that danger actually does exist. But the danger theoretically is smaller than that posed by interrupting the prayer. It is significant that the text does not even hint at any supernatural intervention. Rather the ḥasid is apparently saved by the force of his argument and his good politics. BERMAN describes the genre to which this story belongs as follows:

The ḥasid tales usually function as exempla that is anecdotes which point to a moral, illustrate a Scriptural verse or sustain an argument. Stories about the ḥasid's miraculous reward would inspire piety, while tales decrying his guilt of an incredibly trivial sin admonished diligence in the minutiae of rabbinic law. The rabbinic conception of the ḥasid runs through these tales. Indeed, it is unthinkable to relate such stories about "a certain man." Structurally, the core of the tale is the test to which the *exceptional* piety of the ḥasid is put. He usually emerges successfully, but not always. For no man is perfect, not even the ḥasid. Several amusing tales inject an element of hyperbole [e.g., b. Berakhot 32b-33a, cited by BERMAN in a note] or irony. Some have a legendary or supernatural touch, while others may well be "historical" with a bit of embellishment. However, the historical importance of these tales lies primarily in their accurate portrayal of the image of the ḥasid held by the Jews who created and retold them. The character of the ḥasid that emerges from the tales corresponds with that found in the other ḥasid traditions<sup>84</sup>).

<sup>83</sup>) See MARMORSTEIN, pp. 49-57, esp. 50; and the citation of BERMAN, at n. 84 below. Cp. David STERN, "Interpreting in Parables" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1980), esp. pp. 293-94.

<sup>84</sup>) BERMAN, pp. 18-19 (emphasis added) and n. 60.

The next section of gemara deals with M. 5:1D:

### III

A. Even if a snake is coiled around his heel, he should not interrupt (YPSYQ) [= M. Berakhot 5:1D].

B. Said R. Sheshet<sup>85</sup>), We learned [that Mishnah speaks of] only a "snake," but [if it was a] scorpion, he interrupts (PWSQ).

C. They retorted, [If one] fell into a den of lions, they do *not* testify that he is dead [= they do not automatically presume him dead].

[If one] fell into a trench of snakes or<sup>86</sup>) scorpions, they testify that he is dead. [= The snakes and scorpions are automatically considered deadly.]

D. It is different there, on account of crushing [the reptiles] they injure.

### IV

A. Said R. Ishaq the son of R. Yehudah<sup>87</sup>), [If] one saw oxen, [one] interrupts (PWSQ).

B. For, teaches R. Hoshai, They remove themselves from a *tam* ox 50 cubits, and from a *mu'ad* ox [= a "warned" one, known to have gored three times] as far as one can see.

C. [An anonymous authority] taught in the name of R. Meir, A head of an ox in the fodder basket [= eating]—ascend to the roof and throw [down] the ladder from behind you. [Many MSS and readings place C after D.]

D. Said Samuel, In these situations, With a blind ox in the days of Nisan [some texts add: "when it is coming up from the marsh"], because the devil dances between his horns. [D has been transferred and slightly adapted from b. Pesahim 112b.]

<sup>85</sup>) The reading "Sheshet" follows the printed editions, Munich MS, Hananel [printed in Vilna editions of BT] and other citations—and not the alternative reading of "Yosef." See RABINOVICZ, 1:175, n. 300 and Florence MS.

<sup>86</sup>) The text has a disjunctive W-. See Rashi and R. Yom Tov Ashbili, in *Ginze Rishonim, Berakhot*, ed. Moshe HERSHLER (Jerusalem, 1967), p. 378.

<sup>87</sup>) On unit IV, including variants for the name of this master, see Baruch M. BOKSER, "Two Traditions of Samuel: Evaluating Alternative Versions," in *Christianity, Judaism, and Other Greco-Roman Cults. Studies for Morton Smith at Sixty*, ed. Jacob NEUSNER, 4 vols. (Leiden, 1975), 4:52-55; and BOKSER, *Post Mishnaic Judaism*, pp. 202, 236, n. 73. Clause D has been transferred from b. Pesahim 112b and adapted to the new context of Berakhot.

### V

A. Our rabbis taught. A case concerning (M'ŠH B-) a place where there was an *arvad* and it injured the people.

B. They came and informed R. Hanina ben Dosa.

C. He said to them, "Show me its hole."

D. They showed him its hole.

E. He placed his heel over the mouth of its hole<sup>88</sup>).

F. That *arvad* came out, bit him, and died.

G. He took<sup>89</sup>) it on his shoulder and brought it to the house of study.

H. He said to them, "See, my children, it is not the *arvad* that kills, rather sin kills."

I. At that moment they said, "Woe to the person who met an *arvad*, and woe to the *arvad* that met R. Hanina ben Dosa."

III-B limits the Mishnah. C, citing a baraita that we will examine more closely below, challenges B and D resolves the inconsistency. Unit IV provides another restriction on the Mishnah's principle. The snake is not representative of all animals; a person may interrupt prayer when faced with oxen. C likewise suggests the danger of oxen as does D, though the latter limits that danger to certain conditions. D's severe restrictions, added to several textual and chronological factors, led us elsewhere to conclude that D is secondary to this context and has been transferred from b. Pesahim 112b<sup>90</sup>).

The sugya closes with the account of Hanina, in unit V. The saying in V-I differs from the versions in the Tosefta and PT in lexicographical substitutions, including the use of the verb "meet" instead of "bite." This variation fits the change in context and is indicative of the overall change in meaning. The issue is not concentration in prayer but a community in danger. Hanina comes to the rescue, openly taking on the *arvad*. In this case the *arvad* should be afraid of even meeting Hanina. The account exemplifies one type of "miracle story," familiar from the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament, and other literature. Such stories have three elements: (a) a problem that is brought to the attention of a person who can help;

<sup>88</sup>) Reading HWRW, "its hole," and not HHWR, "the hole," follows the Florence and other MSS. See RABINOVICZ, 1:175, n. 3.

<sup>89</sup>) For the use of NTL in the sense of "carry" see HENOKH YALON, *Studies in the Hebrew Language* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem, 1971), p. 479.

<sup>90</sup>) See n. 87 above.

(b) the person's "superhuman" or miraculous response; and (c) the miraculous removal of the problem<sup>91</sup>).

The account is a composite of several elements, some of which seem inconsistent. A-B provides the background; C-F shows Hanina's actions and words. G-H interpolates a routine moralizing point. As Hayyim Joseph David AZULAI noted in the eighteenth century<sup>92</sup>), it breaks the sequence, for H, by purporting to describe the people's immediate response to discovering the dead creature, verifies the miracle. Similarly, it also destroys the plot line of a simple miracle story, for if the problem is caused by people's sins, anyone could rescue the community and Hanina—known for his wondrous actions—is not needed<sup>93</sup>).

Several additional observations are in order. While we have characterized the account as a "miracle story," Hanina does not claim to rely on a miracle. It is the reader, seeing that Hanina is do-

<sup>91</sup>) See Robert C. CULLEY, *Studies in the Structure of Hebrew Narrative* (Philadelphia, 1976), esp. pp. 46-49, 71-96, 110-115; SARFATTI, esp. p. 136, n. 12. See also Robert W. FUNK, ed., *Early Christian Miracle Stories. Semeia*, vol. 11 (Missoula, 1978); Paul J. ACHTEMEIER, "Jesus and the Disciples as Miracle Workers in the Apocryphal New Testament," in *Aspects of Religious Propaganda in Judaism and Early Christianity*, ed. E. S. FIORENZA (Notre Dame, 1976), pp. 149-86; and in general FRAENKEL, *Studies*, pp. 23-40. Cp. Morton SMITH (*Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark* [Cambridge, 1973], p. 147), who divides this class of intercession miracle stories into the following pattern: "situation, intercession, response, miracle." Dan BEN-AMOS (*Narrative Forms in the Haggadah: Structural Analysis* [Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1966; Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1975], pp. 89-97, esp. 89-93) provides a structural pattern for the b. version of the account of Hanina and the *arvad* and for similar legends. Similarly, R. MACH (*Der Zaddik in Talmud und Midrasch* [Leiden, 1957], pp. 108-33) includes this version in his analysis of the work and intercessory role of the *saddiq*.

<sup>92</sup>) Hayyim Joseph David AZULAI, *Sefer Petah Enayim*, 2 vols. (Jerusalem, 1959). 1:28c-d.

<sup>93</sup>) FRAENKEL, *Studies*, p. 24 also recognizes the inconsistency between the moralizing point and the implication of the "Woe" saying. See also *ibid.*, pp. 14-15; MEIR, p. 263; and cp. URBACH, 1:109. The moralizing of the story may go along with its adaptation to the rabbinic context, for, as Jacques LE GOFF suggests in regard to Christian miracle stories, clerical reworking of such stories undermines folkloristic elements: Jacques LE GOFF, "Ecclesiastical Culture and Folklore in the Middle Ages: Saint Marcellus of Paris and the Dragon," in *idem, Time, Work, and Culture in the Middle Ages* (Chicago, 1980), pp. 163, 172. For an additional story in which people solicit Hanina's aid to rescue someone in danger, see b. Baba Qamma 50a = b. Yebamot 121b. Though the stories develop differently, their openings follow a similar pattern. See the discussions by A. KARLIN, "Storytelling Methods in the Two Talmuds, Part One," *Moznayim* 10 (1939-40):407-14, "Part Two," 11 (1940): 339-408, esp. vol. 11, pp. 400-01; VERMES, "Hanina" (1972), pp. 33-34; FRAENKEL, *Studies*, pp. 18-21; and URBACH, 1:107-8, 2:727-28, n. 32.

ing something extraordinary, who makes that deduction. While the text (like the baraita in III-C) does not describe or assume a supernatural intervention, our knowledge of the ancient world's perception of the supernatural and of holy men makes it reasonable to assume that people may have believed that Hanina was protected by some divine intervention or quality. Consequently, in placing himself in danger, Hanina no longer serves as a model for everyone to emulate. He rather illustrates a leader helping the community and teaching an ethical lesson—a posture in accord with the earlier depictions of Hannah, Elijah, and especially Moses<sup>94</sup>). Finally, the "Woe" saying's appearance in this context as well as in PT and the Tosefta indicates that it has an integrity of its own and may be independent of all the extant contexts.

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## V

BT and PT thus present two different portrayals of Hanina. We can better appreciate their distinct natures by correlating them with overall features of each gemara. While each integrates the material into larger units, BT's total transformation of the account accords with its practice of expanding and reworking material to a greater degree than PT<sup>95</sup>). But as we also saw, even in the less worked-over version of PT, the account is shaped by its juxtaposition with other traditions and its location in the larger sugya. Both are therefore illuminated by their contexts. In BT it is the depiction of leaders interceding for other people, while in PT it is the portrayal of pious individuals respected by people and protected, even supernaturally, by God.

summary

The two perspectives on Hanina may be correlated with two larger phenomena. Scholars have noted that BT in general includes

<sup>94</sup>) See SARFATTI, esp. p. 133; FRAENKEL, *Studies*, pp. 24, 25; cp. URBACH, 1:107; and n. 95 below. On Hanina's similarities with Elijah see VERMES, "Hanina" (1973), p. 54; and FREYNE, "Charismatic," pp. 241, 256, n. 48.

<sup>95</sup>) See KARLIN; SARFATTI, esp. 136, n. 2; Abraham GOLDBERG, "The Sources and Development of the Sugya in the Babylonian Talmud," *Tarbiz* 32 (1962-63):143-52; David Weiss HALIVNI, *Meqorot uMesorot* [Sources and Traditions], 4 vols. to date. (Tel Aviv, 1968 and Jerusalem, 1975-82); GOODBLATT, "Babylonian Talmud," pp. 281-318; Baruch M. BOKSER, "An Annotated Bibliographical Guide to the Study of the Palestinian Talmud," *ANRW* 2. 19.2 (1979):188-89; and esp. Shamma FRIEDMAN, "Literary and Historic Issues in the Study of the Aggadah of the Bavli," in *Proceedings of the Eighth World Congress of Jewish Studies, 1981. Divisions* [= vols.] A-D (Jerusalem, 1982), Division C.

more wondrous acts of Hanina than PT<sup>96</sup>). While PT may also present accounts of Hanina's extraordinary activities—as our case of his encounter with a *havarbar* indicates—the BT versions more closely conform to the pattern of an intercessory “miracle story”<sup>97</sup>.

Second, the several accounts of Hanina may reflect different postbiblical attitudes concerning the way God works in the world.

① The Bible assumes that God's presence is manifest in the world in the everyday patterns of nature and periodically on special occasions as well. Each type of manifestation can be understood as a divine sign and miracle, though by definition the latter type entails an unusual instance of divine intervention. A special act of God, however, need not involve an outright violation of nature; by a miraculous coincidence, a “natural” event may intervene. Numbers 11, 31 provides an instance of God working through nature. At Kibroth-hattaavah the Israelites express their craving for

<sup>96</sup> E.g., BÜCHLER, pp. 99-100; VERMES, “Hanina” (1972), pp. 39, and 45; and esp. FREYNE, “Charismatic,” pp. 229-242, esp. 229, 241-42. FREYNE gives the following breakdown for the 17 stories concerning Hanina: 1 in Mishnah; 1 in Tosefta; 3 in PT; 11 in BT; and 1 in Avot deRabbi Nathan. He also notes, pp. 238-39, that the Babylonian Amoraim appear especially interested in the praises of Hanina.

<sup>97</sup> The specific characteristics of the three y. accounts underscore this difference between the b. and y. The first (1), from y. Demai 1:3, 22a, describes not a miracle or feat of Hanina but an extraordinary event that is caused in his behalf—his table collapses to prevent him from eating untithed food. The second story (2), the account of Hanina and the *havarbar*, from y. Berakhot 5:1, 9a, also highlights this divine protection. It depicts Hanina as a model of concentration exemplifying the intimacy with God and divine protection that others may aspire to. The third account (3), from y. Berakhot 5:5, 9d, likewise may reflect this notion. The Mishnah refers to Hanina to emphasize the importance of fluency in prayer. Through his fluency or lack of fluency, Hanina knows whether or not a sick person will get well. BT includes two stories to exemplify Hanina's ability in this regard. He prays for the sons of R. Gamaliel and R. Yoḥanan b. Zakkai. In each case his prayer is fluent and he is able to forecast when the child will recover. PT includes only a version of the first story. Although the surrounding traditions mention that a person's ability to concentrate is a divine sign that the prayer is answered, the Hanina story—in contrast to the BT version—does not even mention prayer, much less Hanina's fluency. FREYNE therefore notes: that PT “highlight[s] instead his personal gift of intimacy with the divine will through prayer” (p. 229). While FREYNE also observes PT's lack of interest in Hanina's miracle-working capacity, he develops this point differently in explaining the variation between PT and BT. BT's focus, on the other hand, is further epitomized by the comment it attributes to Yoḥanan b. Zakkai, in the accompanying story, that Hanina had unusual powers to intercede with God. See n. 137 below and the b. story concerning Hanina, cited in n. 93 above.

meat and Numbers 11, 18.21-23 prepare us for a divine miracle. But according to Numbers 11, 31 when it comes, what actually occurs is a fortuitous act of nature: “A wind from the LORD started up, swept quail from the sea and strewed them over the camp”<sup>98</sup>). Postbiblical sources deal with the character of these “natural” interventions. Hellenistic writers and rabbis, for example, discuss whether they are violations of nature or are programmed into nature from the time of creation. While some try to limit the extraordinary aspect of even the biblically attested special occurrences—for example the fiery furnace that did not kill the friends of Daniel—these interpreters do not necessarily deny the miraculous nature of the events. Authorities naturally also discussed the existence and possibility of special miracles in the postbiblical period. While comments differ on the possibility of such miracles, numerous stories describe how miracles were wrought for specific people. As we noted at the outset, the “men of deed” were individuals believed to be especially blessed in this regard<sup>99</sup>).

While we have hardly presented a comprehensive review of rabbinic attitudes to “miracles,” our discussion suffices to make us appreciate certain details in the accounts of Hanina. The PT account—or the redactor of this section of PT—is more open to direct

<sup>98</sup> See EM, 5:874-79, s.v. “NS, NSYM” by Jacob LICHT, who tries to distinguish a *nes* from other types of divine manifestations; and the stories cited in n. 27 above that describe God miraculously using natural creatures to carry out His plans. Developing notions found in Ps. 8, 148 and elsewhere, some rabbis and Philo suggest that the complexity and order of nature and existence itself constitute miracles. See URBACH, 1:110-12; David WINSTON, *Philo of Alexandria* (Ramsey, New Jersey, 1981), pp. 18-21, 185-87, 308-09; and the additional references in n.99 below.

<sup>99</sup> See M. Avot 5:6; Genesis Rabbah 5.5, p. 35; Isaac HEINEMANN, “Die Kontroverse über das Wunder im Judentum der hellenistischen Zeit,” in *Jubilee Volume in Honor of Professor Bernhard Heller*, ed. Alexander SCHEIBER (Budapest, 1941), pp. 170-91; idem, *Darkhe haAggadah*, 2d ed. (Jerusalem, 1954), pp. 80-82, 227, nn. 25-34; LIEBERMAN, *Hellenism*, pp. 177, 194-99; Max KADUSHIN, *The Rabbinic Mind* (New York, 1952), pp. 143-67; cp. Alexander GUTTMANN, “The Significance of Miracles for Talmudic Judaism,” *HUCA* 20 (1947):363-406; URBACH, 1:102-23; NEUSNER, as cited in n. 4; W. S. GREEN, “Palestinian Holy Men.” Solomon SCHECHTER (*Aspects of Rabbinic Theology* [New York, 1908, 1972], pp. 5-8) already posed the larger questions on the significance of miracles, preparing us to consider the wider context as set forth, e.g., in: Robert M. GRANT, *Miracle and Natural Law in Graeco-Roman and Early Christian Thought* (Amsterdam, 1952), esp. pp. 41-86, 127-208; esp. Peter BROWN, *The Making of Late Antiquity* (Cambridge, 1978), index, s.v. “Supernatural forces,” esp. p. 60; and Ramsay MACMULLEN, *Paganism in the Roman Empire* (New Haven, 1981), esp. pp. 49-52, 73.



divine intervention than BT—or the redactor of the BT section. In BT, Hanina is assumed to possess an immunity or a divine indwelling of some sort that saves him and kills the *arvad*. While we may assume that this occurs through some type of miracle—i.e., divine act or blessing—no such act or endowment is mentioned. Jonah FRAENKEL has analyzed a series of b. miracle stories and repeatedly finds this very phenomenon. Miracles occur without an interruption of nature<sup>100</sup>). But in PT, according to Iṣḥaq b. Eleazar, a spring miraculously bursts forth at Hanina's feet to insure that he will live and the *arvad* will die—and this is the result of a special act of God<sup>101</sup>).

<sup>100</sup>) FRAENKEL, *Studies*, pp. 23-28, 31. The lack of reference to an act which Hanina might have performed may be explained in light of the observation of SMITH, *Jesus*, p. 74: "[A divine man] did his miracles by his indwelling divine power and therefore did not need rituals or spells. This was the critical test by which a divine man could be distinguished from a magician—so at least his adherents would argue." See also pp. 75, 77-78, and idem, *Clement*, pp. 222-23.

<sup>101</sup>) Rashi to b. Berakhot 33a refers to the y. version and aptly calls the appearance of the spring a "miracle." Our comparison of BT with PT is in terms of the present pericopae and the editors of these sections of the two gemarot. The research of FRAENKEL indicates that these characteristics may not be unique to this section. Further work must evaluate the remaining Hanina materials as well as large blocks of PT and BT. For now we may note: (1) the contrast would seem to apply to the account of the call of Hanina, cited in n. 93, and its y. analogue, in y. Demai 1:3, 22a = y. Sheqalim 5:2, 48d, which concerns R. Pinḥas b. Yair. In the story a ditch-digger's daughter is endangered. In b., she falls into a pit and is saved by a ram and an old man. While the reader may associate these with Abraham and Isaac and the merit of the Aqedah (VERMES, "Hanina" [1972], p. 33), in terms of the plot line, they are "natural" creatures. She presumably grabs the ram which likewise had fallen into the hole. In y., the daughter is swept away by a river. While according to some she saves herself by grabbing the branch of a tree, according to others an angel appears in the guise of R. Pinḥas b. Yair and saves her. (2) The contrast would apply to the stories concerning Hanina's prayer for Rabban Gamaliel's son. In mentioning Hanina's fluency and the principle that fluency indicates a prayer's acceptance or a sickperson's recovery, the story follows the Mishnah, where Hanina is blessed with the capacity to pray fluently. In the Mishnah, however, Hanina is presented as a model to motivate others, while in BT his distinctive qualities are heightened. Using the words of Amos 7, 14, he denies that he is a prophet—"I am not a prophet, and I am not a prophet's disciple" (Florence MS supports the reading of the Munich MS and printed editions; see RABBINOVICZ, 1:187, n. 30). Similarly, in the adjacent story concerning R. Yoḥanan b. Zakkai's son, Yoḥanan's comment that he has ready access to God like a "servant before a king" underscores Hanina's special intimacy with God. On these stories see nn. 97 above and 137 below; VERMES, "Hanina" (1972), pp. 30-32; FREYNE, "Charismatic," p. 231; MEIR, p. 200. (4) A wondrous and unnatural dimension is found in the y. story, cited in n. 93, concerning the collapsing and rising dinner table. (5) On the other hand, the stories in b. Ta'anit 24b-25a describe wondrous

This difference between the PT and BT is reflected in the larger sugya as well. As we have seen, the y. stories describe divine or supernatural occurrences such as supernatural visions and blinding bolts of light<sup>102</sup>). BT lacks such fanfare. Even in the tale of "a certain ḥasid," the ḥasid is saved not by God's hand but through his own astute argumentation. In light of this pattern, we should also pay attention to the moralizing interpolation in or reworking of the b. version. The teaching that "it is sin that kills" is a rationalization that would not normally be expected in a simple miracle story of the wondrous Hanina who elicited a divine intervention. A primary concern is therefore not in playing up the miraculous but in other areas—e.g., in portraying Hanina as a leader who helps and teaches others.

In suggesting that the variations between the b. and y. Hanina accounts may reflect distinct attitudes towards the way the supernatural is manifested, we cannot draw firm conclusions. But we may find further support for our hypothesis from a consideration of the several versions of the baraita in BT III-C. The text deals with situations in which we may or may not presume that a person has died. An earlier version of this baraita appears in Tosefta Yebamot 14:4, p. 52, ls. 26-27, 28-30:

- A. [If one] fell into a pit of lions—they do *not* testify concerning him [that he has died];
- B. into a fiery furnace—they testify concerning him.
- C. [If one] fell into a pit full of snakes and scorpions—they testify concerning him.
- D. R. Yehudah ben Betirah says, We fear lest he is a *ḥover* [= a snake charmer and he may be alive].

A and C of Tosefta accord with III-C of BT. We may assume that the snakes and scorpions have killed the person. Yehudah's view in Tosefta D—that one should not automatically make this

events. But these need to be carefully examined. For example, several of the wonders come as a result of Hanina's prayer which, as LIEBERMAN observes (see n. 106 below), may itself be a rationalization. In one account, the printed editions state that a "miracle occurred," but MSS do not contain this clause. See Henry MALTER, *The Treatise Ta'anit of the Babylonian Talmud, Critically Edited* (New York, 1930), p. 110, variants to line 16; and cp. BÜCHLER, pp. 98-100. Further research must relate the traditions to their contexts to determine if they reflect wider redactional concerns. Therefore, in the body of this paper we now turn to the larger contexts of the two amoraic versions of Hanina and the *ḥavarbar/arvad*.

<sup>102</sup>) See n. 48 above.

assumption—is not mentioned in the b. version of the baraita. Interestingly, Yehudah's reservation might have applied to the case of a person like Hanina. But if he were a snake charmer, it would be his snake charming ability and not a supernatural act or divine indwelling that would protect him; as we have already seen, rabbis like other ancients believed in the skills of snake charmers and enchanters<sup>103</sup>). Another possibility, however, is found in y. Yebamot 16:3, 15c:

A. [If one] fell into a pit of lions—they do *not* testify concerning him. I say [perhaps] a miracle occurred for him as [it did for] Daniel.

B. [If he] fell into a fiery furnace—they do *not* testify concerning him. I say [perhaps] a miracle occurred for him as [it did for] Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.

C. [If one] fell into a pit full of snakes and scorpions—they do *not* testify concerning him.

D. R. Yehudah ben Bava says, I say [perhaps] he was a *hover* [= snake charmer]<sup>104</sup>).

According to y., in each of the three dangerous situations we cannot presume that the person is dead. A miracle might have occurred. In the case of the pit of lions and the fiery furnace, the text supplies biblical examples. As LIEBERMAN notes, an analogous biblical incident concerning the pit of snakes readily comes to mind: perhaps a miracle occurred as it did for Joseph who was thrown into a pit that was assumed to contain snakes and scorpions<sup>105</sup>). Considering the view in C, we can see that the reference to a *hover* in D comes from a different or more naturalistic perspective. The b. sugya, including the version of this baraita that denies the possibility of a miracle in regard to a fiery furnace or a pit of snakes and scorpions, may thus reflect an overall attitude towards the way God

<sup>103</sup> See n. 28 and text thereto above; BLAU, p. 72 and n. 2; MORRIS, pp. 138-46 (on snake-charming).

<sup>104</sup> On the name of the master in D see LIEBERMAN, *TK*, 6:173, n. 33; on the rule concerning the fiery furnace see *ibid.*, URBACH, 2:729, n. 43, and cp. b. Pesahim 118a-b; and on the legal issues see URBACH, 1:112-114, and 2:729, and HALIVNI, *Meqorot*, 1:126-27. It has been suggested that the differences in the sources may reflect alternative positions of the "sages" and R. Meir on relying on the possibility of a miracle. Even if this is true, the question remains why the BT pericope presents one view and the PT the other. We therefore build on this variation in conjunction with other observations concerning the sugya.

<sup>105</sup> See LIEBERMAN, *TK*, 6:173 and his reference to M. KASHER.

works in this world—something we pointed to in the tale of the ḥasid and in the account of Hanina<sup>106</sup>).

We have just discussed two ways in which the variations between the b. and y. accounts of Hanina may reflect wider patterns. These differences should not obscure the fact that they agree in making Hanina's special traits prominent in contrast to the Tosefta, which deemphasizes them. We can see how this difference between the tannaitic and amoraic sources is significant by correlating it with two broader sets of observations.

First, the function of stories differs in these sources. In the Mishnah and Tosefta, a story is used to represent a viable legal opinion, either disputing or supporting another position. While the halakhah may not accord with the point of the story, it does not generally provide the idiosyncratic opinion of a given master. In the gemarot, however, stories are not always as programmatic. While some comprise precedents for the law, others serve further didactic ends, for example, illustrating some moral point or providing a polemic against the exilarch<sup>107</sup>). Accordingly, it is not surprising

<sup>106</sup> For a different instance in which a source "rationalizes" something which appeared too surprising, see Saul LIEBERMAN, "Achievements and Aspirations of Modern Jewish Scholarship," *PAAJR* 46-47 (1979-80) [= Jubilee Volume], 1:373-79, esp. 378.

<sup>107</sup> See, e.g., Jacob N. EPSTEIN, *Introduction to the Text of the Mishnah*, 2d ed. (Jerusalem, 1964), pp. 598-609; HALIVNI, *Meqorot*, 1:151, and 2:189 (n. 1), 202-03, 562 (n. 1); KARLIN, MEIR; GOODBLATT, "Babylonian Talmud," pp. 301-02, 329; NEUSNER, *Babylonia*, 2:259, 3:203-213, 4:183-278, 5:244-342; NEUSNER, *Pharisees*, 3:29-39, 43-55, 71, 86-89, 96, 97-98; Shamai KANTER, *Rabban Gamaliel II. The Legal Traditions* (Chico, 1980), pp. 246-61; Joel GEREBOFF, *Rabbi Tarfon: The Tradition, the Man, and Early Rabbinic Judaism* (Missoula, 1979), pp. 337-351, esp. 342, 346-49. While various scholars have observed that stories serve legal functions, they evaluate the data differently. See, e.g., KAMINKA, pp. 1-41; Benjamin DeVRIES, *Taldot haHalakah haTalmudit*, 2d ed. (Tel Aviv, 1966), pp. 169-78 and the additional literature cited there; Menachem ELON, *Jewish Law*, 3 vols. (Jerusalem, 1973), 2:768-89; Ezra-Zion MELAMMED, Ma'asim Collections of Tannaim," in *Proceedings of the Seventh World Congress. Studies in the Talmud*, pp. 93-107; Jonah FRAENKEL, "On the Aggada in the Mishna," in *Proceedings of the Eighth World Congress, Division C. GEREBOFF*, p. 347, is incisive: "Most of the tightly formulated legal materials, the ones that focus upon Tarfon, first surface in M.-Tos. Almost all the nonlegal materials, on the other hand, first appear in later strata. The Tarfon corpus thus consists of two different types of narrative materials. Legal items center upon Tarfon, cite his actions as precedents for specific rules of conduct, and generally first appear in the earliest levels of the corpus. The nonlegal items use Tarfon's name for that of a sage, illustrate general principles, and for the most part first surface in the latest strata." See also p. 349-50, and *idem*, "Storytelling in Early Rabbinic Judaism" (forthcoming).

that the Tosefta molds the Hanina account to make him a model for a rabbinic rule concerning concentration, and that the gemarot put Hanina on a pedestal, PT making his concentration subservient to its purposes and BT totally transforming the portrayal.

Second, the proportion of wonder-working stories varies greatly in the sources. The Mishnah and Tosefta, in contrast to the gemarot, virtually lack stories about wonder-working masters, as Morton SMITH has stressed:

TL [= Tannaitic literature] contains almost no stories of miracles performed by Tannaim, and this not because the authorities behind the literature did not like to talk of them, for when they commented on the stories of the Old Testament—which already contains enough miracles for the average man—they added to their accounts many more miracles of the most miraculous sort, but when they came to tell of the doings of the Tannaim they ceased almost altogether to tell miracle stories...<sup>108</sup>.

The apparent exception of the Hanina story proves the point. First, as SMITH notes, if there is a miracle in the Tosefta version it is done for Hanina; he does not do it himself. Indeed, he is unaware that it even takes place<sup>109</sup>. Second, whatever the original context of the "Woe" saying might have been, in its present context Hanina's wondrousness is neutralized when he is shown as a person whom others should emulate. The Tosefta mentions Hanina—as M. Berakhot 5:1 mentions the pious—because it needs models to convince people that rabbinic notions of prayer are effective and not dangerous. But to make use of such individuals, the Mishnah and Tosefta had to shape the accounts<sup>110</sup>. On the other hand, the amoraic literature is full of wonder-working stories. Amoraim narrate the wondrous actions of contemporary masters, earlier Tan-

<sup>108</sup> Morton SMITH, *Tannaitic Parallels to the Gospels* (Philadelphia, 1951, 1968), p. 81; see also p. 84. SMITH's conclusion, independently reached by GRANT, pp. 171-72, is supported by A. J. HESCHEL, *A Passion for Truth* (New York, 1973), p. 70; Solomon ZEITLIN, *The Rise and Fall of the Judean State*, vol. 3 (Philadelphia, 1978), pp. 286-89; W. S. GREEN, p. 625; and NEUSNER, "Story," pp. 25, 29, n. 2. See n. 111. Even the account of Honi in M. Ta'anit 3:8 is not an exception since it has been reworked to fit rabbinic interests. See GREEN, ad loc., and NEUSNER, ad loc.

<sup>109</sup> SMITH, *Tannaitic Parallels*, p. 83.

<sup>110</sup> See above; W. S. GREEN.

naim and Pharisees, and even biblical figures<sup>111</sup>). The emphasis on Hanina's special qualities may thus form part of this larger picture.

What is the significance of the literary patterns that we have discerned in the Tosefta, the Babylonian Talmud, and the Palestinian Talmud? Do the backgrounds of these three works help explain their diverse portrayals of Hanina? Can the several depictions illuminate the contexts of those who produced the three works? That the variations are not arbitrary is proved by the fact that they correspond with the overall characteristics of the Mishnah and the two Talmuds. Modern scholars have tried to interpret aggadic and legal teachings against the background of late-antique Judaism<sup>112</sup>). This endeavor is especially valid when there are several versions of a single tradition, giving rise to the supposition that the versions were successively revised to make them meaningful to contemporary audiences<sup>113</sup>).

Do the several versions, then, accord with what we know about the larger historical situation? The answer is yes. In the first and second centuries, early rabbinic Judaism tried to restructure Judaism without a central Temple and to demonstrate that Judaism was available to everyone, everywhere—as we indicated at the outset of this study. It therefore had to be antipathetic to a notion of special access to God and a religious piety limited to certain individuals. It is understandable that early rabbinic authorities, despite their belief—and the belief of Jewry at large—in the existence of miracles, did not focus on wonder-working individuals or on Hanina's wonder-working dimension. It drew on an account of Hanina for its own purposes, molding it and deemphasizing its miraculous elements.

<sup>111</sup> See the literature cited in nn. 4, 10, 108, to which add: H. A. FISCHER, "Martyr and Prophet," *JQR* 37 (1947):265-80, 303-86; SARFATTI; MACH, esp. 86-89, 91, 108-33; NEUSNER, *Development*; FREYNE, "Charismatic"; BOKSER, *Post Mishnaic Judaism*, pp. 2, 10, n. 3; FRAENKEL, *Studies*, pp. 23-40; and David J. HALPERIN, *The Merkabah in Rabbinic Literature* (New Haven, 1980), demonstrating such developments in the sources dealing with the merkabah and related themes.

<sup>112</sup> See, e.g., the literature cited in nn. 2-4, to which add LIEBERMAN, *Hellenism*; and KIMELMAN.

<sup>113</sup> Among the items cited in n. 112, esp. HEINEMANN and NEUSNER, *Development*, demonstrate this point. See also W. S. TOWNER, *The Rabbinic "Enumeration of Scriptural Examples"* (Leiden, 1973); Judah GOLDIN, "Of Change and Adaption in Judaism," *HR* 4 (1965):269-94; and Jacob NEUSNER, "The Study of Religion as the Study of Tradition: Judaism," *HR* 14 (1975): 191-206.

Previous scholars, noting that rabbinic sources indicate a tension between first-century charismatics and rabbis (or rabbinic forerunners such as the Pharisees) generally suggest that the tension arose over the issue of authority<sup>114</sup>). While in antiquity such an issue undoubtedly was significant<sup>115</sup>), rabbis would have also been discomforted by the impact of charismatic notions on their religious program. They surely realized that when individuals believe a select few are endowed with special blessings or charisma, their participation in the group's religious life is affected. As Peter BROWN observes:

What is decisive, and puzzling, about the long term rise of the holy man is the manner in which, in so many ways, the holy man was thought of as having taken into his person, skills that had previously been preserved by society at large. The work of the holy man was supposed to replace the prophylactic spell to which anyone could have had access; his blessing made amulets unnecessary; he did in a village what had previously been done through the collective wisdom of the community<sup>116</sup>).

Accordingly, portraying wonder-workers that have special access to God would have undermined early rabbinic goals. In light of this suggestion, we can appreciate William Scott GREEN's comments concerning Honi, another first-century wonder-worker:

<sup>114</sup>) The tension is reflected in M. Ta'anit 3:8's story of Honi in the comment of Simeon b. Shetaḥ, and in b. Berakhot 34b's second story of Hanina in the comment of R. Yoḥanan b. Zakkai. See e.g., VERMES, "Hanina," esp. (1973), pp. 61-64; FREYNE, "Charismatic," pp. 232-33, 241, 244-45; SARFATTI; and W. S. GREEN, who, however, also mentions the implications concerning religious piety. See text to nn. 117-18.

The term "charisma" is based on the New Testament word meaning "spiritual gifts," as in 1 Cor. 12, 4-11. The modern usage follows MAX WEBER's application of the term to one of three types of authority. Modern sociologists discuss whether it designates an inherent quality in a leader or whether it results from the particular relationship between a leader and a group. See A. R. WILLNER and Dorothy WILLNER, "The Rise and Role of Charismatic Leader," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 358 (1965):77-88; and the papers in Dankwart A. RUSTOW, ed., *Philosophers and Kings: Studies in Leadership* (New York, 1970), esp. D. A. RUSTOW, "The Study of Leadership," pp. 17-22, and R. C. TUCKER, "The Theory of Charismatic Leadership," pp. 82-84, 91.

<sup>115</sup>) See, e.g., Elaine PAGELS, *The Gnostic Gospels* (New York, 1979), pp. 13-14, 33-47.

<sup>116</sup>) Peter BROWN, "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity," *JRS* 61 (1971):100.

As the new masters of holiness the rabbis claimed for themselves and *their piety*, the religious authority which once had belonged to the priests and the cult. Consequently, any Jew who claimed access to God outside the new rabbinic structure would have seemed to them suspect. Charismatic figures who professed supernatural powers—magicians, miracle-workers, or "prophets"—naturally would have presented a challenge to the *emerging rabbinic piety* and claims to authority<sup>117</sup>).

We earlier observed that in the aftermath of the temple's destruction the rabbis claimed that *prayer, pious deeds, and the study of Torah* had replaced the cult and that they had replaced the priests. This means that the power to bring rain, formerly the prerogative of the priests and the cult, now became the function of the rabbi and his Torah. Indeed, later rabbinical figures assumed an integral relationship between the study of Torah and the ability to produce rain. From this perspective, the inclusion in Mishnah of the account of a popular rain-maker and the transformation of him into a rabbi would have been one way of documenting the claim that *the new religion of the rabbis had superseded the old religion of the priests*. The rabbinic appropriation of Honi the Circle-maker, then, is part of the larger rabbinic enterprise: *the application of the holy life of the temple everywhere to all Israel*<sup>118</sup>).

To conclude, early rabbinic Judaism's advocacy of a piety available to all Jews everywhere precluded the use of wonder-workers as religious models. Thus the authorities behind the Mishnah and Tosefta, in using the accounts of Hanina, portrayed him in their own terms—as a "rabbi" with a circle of disciples.

A nineteenth-century analogue to Mishnah's downplaying of wonder-working accounts is Nathan of Nimerov's deletion of miracle stories from his portrayal of Nahman of Bratslav. Nathan states that he does this because he wants people to be able to emulate and identify with Nahman. In Arthur GREEN's words:

<sup>117</sup>) W. S. GREEN, p. 625, emphasis added.

<sup>118</sup>) W. S. GREEN, p. 641, emphasis added. See also David FLUSSER, *Jesus* (New York, 1969), pp. 93-95, and nn. 151-52. Indeed, recent sociological research indicates that we cannot try to understand the function of a charismatic individual without considering his relation to the group's values and myths. As A. R. and D. WILLNER point out: "...charismatic appeal is validated through the perceptions of the followers. Its possession depends upon the leader's ability to draw upon and manipulate the body of myth in a given culture and the actions and values associated with these myths... Through strategies of cultural management, the charismatic leader legitimizes his claims by associating with himself the sacred symbols of the culture" (p. 77).

[Nathan has an] aversion to tales of the miraculous and supernatural in connection with his master....If Nathan's master bears the great soul of Rabbi Simeon himself [= Simeon ben Yohai, reputed author of the *Zohar*], should not this soul manifest itself by some demonstration of such powers?

...Nahman was indeed a unique soul; surely he must have possessed powers greater than those of ordinary mortals. At the same time, however, Nathan takes pains to emphasize the fact that *his master's great spiritual attainments were not to be attributed to any inborn powers which were not also the property of everyone*<sup>119</sup>).

GREEN quotes from Nathan's *Shivhey ha-Ra'N* 26:

He [Nahman] was very cross with those who thought that the main reason for the *zaddiq's* ability to attain such a high level of understanding was the nature of his soul. He said that this was not the case, but that everything depended first and foremost upon good deeds, struggle, and worship. He said explicitly that everyone in the world could reach even the highest rung, that everything depended upon human choice<sup>120</sup>).

GREEN goes on:

Nahman and Nathan were concerned that the *zaddiq* be an *accessible model* to his disciples; *his path must be one that others may follow. If the zaddiq's achievements come about through the uniqueness of his soul, of what use is he as a model for imitation*<sup>121</sup>)?

If this is the Mishnah's position, what made post-Mishnaic sources willing to portray leaders in a different fashion? Why did they include wonder-working stories, in our case giving prominence to Hanina's special qualities<sup>122</sup>? The answer lies in changes in the Jewish and broader late-antique world. In this period of political, social, and economic dislocation, religious and philosophical communities evolved new patterns of perceiving spiritual leaders. It became socially acceptable for leaders to stand out from the rest of society, to appear special, as BROWN and others have noted.

<sup>119</sup>) ARTHUR GREEN, *Tormented Master. A Life of Rabbi Nahman of Bratslav* (University, Alabama, 1979), p. 14, emphasis added.

<sup>120</sup>) Ibid. See p. 22, n. 23.

<sup>121</sup>) Ibid., emphasis added. See also pp. 15-16, and HESCHEL, p. 71.

<sup>122</sup>) See MORTON SMITH, "Review of 'The Charismatic Figure as a Miracle Worker, by D. L. Tiede,'" *Interpretation* 28 (1974):240, which emphasizes the importance of asking why people want to represent their heroes in a new way running counter to the previous tradition.

Religious leaders were seen as "wise," able to perform miraculous feats—as we see from the vivid accounts of Apollonius of Tyana by Philostratus, of Pythagoras by Porphyry and other neo-Pythagoreans, and of various Christian saints and monks by their followers<sup>123</sup>). The change in the rabbinic portrayal of leaders is thus not an isolated phenomenon.

Internal Jewish reasons also contributed to the change. Babylonian and Palestinian Jews experienced significant stresses in the third and fourth centuries. For example, Iranian Jews needed a rabbinic definition of their situation of "exile"—life in Babylonia. The rise of a new world empire, that of the Sasanians, posed religious and political problems. Jews had to accommodate this fact with the prophetic and apocalyptic forecast that the next world upheaval would usher in the kingdom of God. They also had to have religious spokespeople to represent their community as other religious communities were represented. The exilarch and the rabbis, with their overlapping interests, worked out an arrangement in this regard. In Palestine, the Jews faced the economic and agricultural crises that shook the foundations of the Eastern Roman empire. Similarly it had to reckon with the Christianization of the empire and the resulting challenge to legitimacy posed by the Christian claims to represent the true Israel<sup>124</sup>).

To some degree then, Jews and Gentiles alike experienced upheavals and dislocation in this period, and may have looked for leaders who were not like themselves but were endowed with extraordinary skills. It is not surprising that they turned to those devoted to Torah<sup>125</sup>). W. S. GREEN refers to these historical cir-

<sup>123</sup>) See, e.g., GRANT, pp. 61-86, 166-171; MORTON SMITH, "Prolegomena To a Discussion of Aretologies, Divine Men, The Gospels and Jesus," *JBL* 90 (1971):174-99; SMITH, *Jesus*, pp. 84-93; BROWN, "Holy Man"; idem, *Making*; RAMSAY MACMULLEN, *Enemies of the Roman Order* (Oxford, 1967); and ACHEMEIER.

<sup>124</sup>) See the literature cited in nn. 4 and 75; BOKSER, *Post Mishnaic Judaism*, pp. 461-67 and nn.; GOODBLATT, "Babylonian Talmud," p. 329; URBACH, 1:545-54, 601-03; MICHAEL AVI-YONAH, *The Jews of Palestine* (Oxford, 1976); and DANIEL SPERBER, *Roman Palestine 200-400. The Land* (Ramat Gan, 1978); and NAHUM GLATZER, "The Attitude to Rome in the Amoraic Period," in *Proceedings of the Sixth World Congress of Jewish Studies*, vol. 2 (Jerusalem, 1975), pp. 9-19.

<sup>125</sup>) See in particular NEUSNER, *Babylonia*, as cited in n. 4; SPERBER, pp. 119-35 (on patronage); BROWN, "Holy Man," pp. 87, 93, 97-101; WAYNE A. MEEKS and ROBERT L. WILKEN, *Jews and Christians in Antioch* (Missoula, 1978), pp. 25-27; TUCKER, pp. 80-86; and A. R. and D. WILLNER, who discuss the effect of societal distress on the rise of charismatic leaders, and who provide a theoretical framework

cumstances in explaining the changed attitudes reflected in the depiction of Honi:

It is clear that leadership in rabbinic Judaism changed and developed in conformity to the general Greco-Roman background. In accord with its Pharisaic heritage, early rabbinic leadership was specialized. The bulk of the evidence from the first two centuries shows that charismatic types who claimed miraculous powers were antithetical to and played little role in early rabbinism. God might work miracles, but early rabbis could not. Their religious authority was based on mastery of other, less dramatic but no less sacred skills. By the middle of the third century the picture had changed, and supernatural powers were a standard element of rabbinic leadership. Although these two different types of religious authority were combined, the fusion was not balanced. Rabbinic Judaism dealt with the charisma of miracle-working by making its validity depend on knowledge of Torah and controlled it by making it a function of the rabbinic system. The process is illustrated by the traditions of Honi the Circle-maker. Neither healer nor exorcist, he was a relatively easy figure for Tannaitic authorities to "rabbinize," and the powers attributed to him were appropriate and necessary to the new rabbinic religion. The Mishnaic redaction of his tradition represents the beginning of the change in rabbinism from one type of religious leadership to the other. The alteration is completed in the Talmudic accounts. Honi the Circle-maker, first century B.C. Palestinian magician, has become "Rabbi" Honi whose miraculous powers are the result of his piety and mastery of Torah<sup>126</sup>).

Our analysis suggests an additional explanation for the new receptivity to wonder-working accounts of rabbis and others who exemplified rabbinic values. As Jews distanced themselves from the trauma of the Temple's destruction, they came to accept extra-Temple rites as a given and no longer had to resist notions of special access to God<sup>127</sup>). These developments within Judaism joined with

applicable to the changes in Judaism. Those who were devoted to Torah and appeared knowledgeable in it were naturally sought out for advice, and were able to draw on traditional values and sacred symbols to validate their role. NEUSNER, *Babylonia*, traces the specific arguments that rabbis employed in this effort.

<sup>126</sup> W. S. GREEN, pp. 646-47.

<sup>127</sup> See e.g., Nahum GLATZER, "The Attitude Towards Rome in Third-Century Judaism," in Alois DEMPFF et al., eds., *Politische Ordnung und Menschliche Existenz* (Munich, 1962), pp. 243-57; NEUSNER, *Babylonia*, 2:52-57, 64-72, 238-40; Mortimer OSTOW, "The Jewish Response to Crisis," *Conservative Judaism* 33

the political and social changes in the Jewish and general society. As a result rabbis became less resistant, indeed open, to drawing upon the biblical imagery of specially endowed leaders—Moses, Elijah, Elisha, and others—and told stories concerning individuals with miraculous abilities and a special intimacy with God<sup>128</sup>).

Our hypothesis helps explain the changes in the third and fourth centuries. But what are we to make of the variations between the two Talmuds, both deriving from the post-Mishnaic period? These differences too may reflect different religious and historical situations. The lives and roles of spiritual leaders differed in Iran and Palestine. In Iran, perhaps due to their close connection with the exilarch, rabbis played a considerable role in community affairs. In addition to the moral influence they had as teachers of Torah, they wielded limited but real authority in certain areas. For example, they supervised the markets and staffed the lower courts. This active role may be reflected in BT's accounts of Hanina and of Moses, Elijah, and Hannah, the strong-willed biblical pray-ers. Depiction of such individuals could also serve to legitimize rabbinic authority. In Palestine, on the other hand, amoraic masters had a weaker foothold in the community and may have presented themselves primarily as pious students and teachers of the Torah who provide a model for divine protection. As with certain Roman counterparts, they may have been seen as expert interpreters but not administrators of the law. The Patriarch often acted independently of the rabbis, appointing nonrabbis to the local courts. Further, the Christian challenge reinforced the rabbis' need to expound the Bible convincingly and to represent true models of piety. The power of the rich increased during the economic upheavals and, it has been argued, a Roman type of patronage system may even have developed in certain areas. Similarly, the rabbis may have had to compete with descendants of Second-Temple priestly families who tried to maintain their prerogatives and prestige and who may have served on the various municipal councils. The y. accounts of Hanina and the other masters may therefore reflect the Palestinian rabbinic role or provide the ideological basis for

(1980):3-25; BOKSER, "Ma'al"; and idem, *The Passover Rite and Early Rabbinic Judaism* (Berkeley, 1984), esp. pp. 95-100.

<sup>128</sup> See the references in n. 111; and Raphael PATAI, *Man and Temple*, 2d edn. (New York, 1967), p. 224.

legitimizing rabbinic interests in terms acceptable to a Palestinian audience<sup>129</sup>).

Our characterization of Iranian and Palestinian Jewry and Judaism is built upon the research of earlier scholars and more work needs to be done, especially in regard to the situation in Palestine. While our conclusions remain tentative, we have demonstrated that the disparate treatments of Hanina can be related to their wider literary contexts and to overall patterns within each source. Moreover, our analysis may provide an additional means of investigating Babylonian and Palestinian Jewry, especially the role and self-image of rabbis<sup>130</sup>).

## vi

There is one final point to be made regarding the *arvad/havarbar*. The choice of a snake or lizard may be symbolic of the broader meaning of the passage. BROWN suggests that tales of holy men's battles with such creatures are significant in indicating the holy man's powers. While each version mentions the reptile, only BT

<sup>129</sup>) In addition to the items in nn. 4 and 124, see, on Babylonia: NEUSNER, *Babylonia*, passim; Moshe BEER, *The Babylonian Amoraim* (Ramat Gan, 1974); David GOODBLATT, *Rabbinic Instruction in Sasanian Babylonia* (Leiden, 1975), esp. pp. 272-75; and note the observation in LE GOFF, p. 164, on the social role of the *vir sanctus* and the clerical use of a miracle story to indicate how a religious person with spiritual powers intercedes, solving problems of society. On Palestine add, e.g., Saul LIEBERMAN, "Palestine in the Third and Fourth Centuries," *JQR* 37 (1946):31-54; SPERBER, esp. Lee LEVINE, "The Jewish Patriarch (Nasi) in Third-Century Palestine," in *ANRW* 2. 19.2 (1979):649-688, and "The Rabbinic Class of Third-Century Palestine," in *Proceedings of the Eighth World Congress, Division B*; Reuven KIMELMAN, "Rabbi Yohanan of Tiberias" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1977); idem, "The Conflict Between R. Yohanan and Resh Laqish on the Supremacy of the Patriarchate," in *Proceedings of the Seventh World Congress. Studies in the Talmud*, pp. 1-20; esp. idem, "The Professionalization of the Rabbinate in Third-Century Eretz Israel," in *Proceedings of the Eighth World Congress, Division C*; BEER, *Korah's Revolt*, pp. 31-32; D. GOODBLATT, "The Priests after the Temple's Destruction" (in press); and cp. J. NEUSNER, *Judaism in Society* (Chicago, 1983).

<sup>130</sup>) VERMES, "Hanina" (1973), pp. 63-64, and FREYNE, "Charismatic," pp. 241-42, 246, 256 (n. 49), try to explain the disparate b. and y. treatments of Hanina. They assume that PT to some degree reflects a "suppression" of the original role of Hanina, and FREYNE even points to NEUSNER's findings concerning the "elevated" role of the Babylonian rabbi. But they do not discuss the particulars of the amoraic accounts of Hanina nor do they relate their observations to the broader literary contexts—concerns that enable us to build on and refine VERMES' and FREYNE's results. See n. 131 below.

portrays something resembling a battle. Since that account describes Hanina not just as immune but openly taking on the creature, it, as we observed earlier, conforms to the intercession pattern of a "miracle story"—a leader who comes to the rescue. BROWN relates the holy man's battle with demonic beasts to another characteristic: the ability to argue with God. The same combination of abilities appears in BT:

Above all, in a world where the human race was thought of as besieged by invisible demonic powers...the monks earned their reputation through being "prize-fighters" against the devil. They held his malevolence at bay; and they were able—as the average man, with all his amulets and remedies against sorcery, never felt able—to laugh the devil in the face. The holy man's powers were shown in his relations with the animal kingdom, which had always symbolized the savagery and destructiveness of the demons: he drove out snakes and birds of prey, and he would settle down as the benign master of jackals and lions. Above all, the holy man was thought to have arrived at the most enviable prerogative to which an inhabitant of the later empire could aspire: he had gained *parrhesia*, "freedom to speak" before the awesome majesty of God. For the God of the fourth-century Christian was an emperor writ large. Only those of His subjects who had spent their lives in unquestioning and tremulous obedience to His commands might feel free to approach Him, as favoured courtiers, and so have their prayers answered with spectacular results<sup>131</sup>).

The holy man's battle, as depicted by BROWN reminds us of the Ancient Near Eastern, Egyptian, and classical stories concerning a mythological divine figure's battle with a dragon, sea monster, or serpent that threatened disorder and infertility. Ancient and

<sup>131</sup>) Peter BROWN, *The World of Late Antiquity* (London, 1971), pp. 101-02. See, e.g., Luke 10, 19; Acts 28, 3-6; and St. Athanasius, *The Life of St. Anthony*, trans. and annotated R. T. MEYER (Westminster, Md., 1950), 56-64, pp. 68-73, and 124, n. 208. On arguing with God see nn. 62 and 75. On BROWN's reference to "favoured courtiers" see b. Berakhot 34b's second story concerning Hanina, discussed in nn. 97 and 101 above. In that story Yohanan b. Zakkai compares Hanina's ready access to God to a servant's access to his master. Cp. Morton SMITH's comment on this passage, cited in Jacob NEUSNER, *A Life of Yohanan Ben Zakkai*, 2d ed. (Leiden, 1970), p. 53.

BROWN, "Holy Man," pp. 81-84, and esp. *Making*, differentiates between two types of religious, "holy" virtuosos. Additional work is necessary to relate his social, economic, and demographic observations to the Jewish situation. Cp. FREYNE, *Galilee*, pp. 332-33.

medieval literary and artistic works employ this theme in their depictions of holy men and heroic figures, graphically describing or drawing upon details of the battles<sup>132</sup>). The account of Hanina and early stories of Christian saints, however, differ from those of heroic figures in portraying the holy men doing battle without swords, spears, or other weapons. The tales depict divine—and not human or superhuman—power and courage and, at times, teach a religious lesson. In the BT story, it is that sin alone kills; in the Christian saint stories, it is that faith, fortified by prayer, work, and fasting leading to spiritual peace, conquers the demonic forces<sup>133</sup>).

One genre of Christian tales, describing a monk that kills a dragon on the road or a creature that terrorizes a community provides a striking parallel to the BT account. Here is an example from the "History of the Monks of Egypt," attributed to Rufinius of Aquileia, describing the fourth-century holy man Benus, who surpassed everyone in his gentleness:

At one time, a certain beast that is called a hippopotamus was laying waste the neighboring countryside, and the farmer folk asked him and he went to the place, and when he saw the monstrous creature he said to her, "I command thee, in the name of Jesus Christ, lay waste this

<sup>132</sup>) For the primary and secondary sources with special focus on Revelation's identification of the serpent with satan and the demonic forces, see A. Y. COLLINS, *The Combat Myth in the Book of Revelation* (Missoula, 1976), esp. pp. 57-100. See also GINZBERG, *Legends*, 5:94-95, 120-21, 123-24; Joseph FONTENROSE, *Pytho: A Study of the Delphic Myth and Its Origins* (Berkeley, 1959); Mircea ELIADE, *A History of Religious Ideas*, vol. 1, *From the Stone Age to the Eleusinian Mysteries* (Chicago, 1978), pp. 143-45, 252-54, 205-08, 418, 421, 436-38. On heroic uses, e.g., to depict the ordeal by which the hero was tested, see FONTENROSE; Francis KLINGENDER, *Animals in Art and Thought to the End of the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, Mass., 1971), pp. 116-41; and Guitty AZARPAY, *Sogdian Painting* (Berkeley, 1981), pp. 95-108 (esp. concerning the hero Rustam). The motif of Herakles, "the Stoic hero par excellence" [M. E. FRAZER, *Age of Spirituality, Based on the Catalogue to the Exhibition* (New York, 1977), p. 29], was used by Christians, as attested in paintings in a fourth-century Christian Catacomb under Via Latina, Rome. See Andre GRABAR, *Early Christian Art*, trans. Stuart GILBERT and James EMMONS (New York, 1968), pp. 36-37, 92, 225-36. Third-century Jewish knowledge of some aspects of the motif is indicated by the Exodus panel in the Dura Synagogue, which depicts Moses with Herakles' club. See E. R. GOODENOUGH, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period*, 13 vols. (New York, 1953-68), 10:120-25, 131, and 11: plate XIV. For references, discussion, and a critical review of modern literature on the same theme, esp. its adaptation in regard to Christian saints, see LE GOFF, pp. 159-88, 330-41, esp. 165-74 and nn.

<sup>133</sup>) See KLINGENDER, esp. p. 125; and FONTENROSE, p. 517, which notes that the saint stories of St. George and the dragon depict George battling without weapons, while the folk tales add this element. For other differences see LE GOFF.

land no more." And she fled as though an Angel gave chase, and was no more seen. And a crocodile also, they declare, was put to flight by him at another time, in similar fashion<sup>134</sup>).

Although the character of a holy man is particularly highlighted in BT and Hanina is cast as a virtuoso who intercedes for others, special personal qualities and special contact with God are also reflected in the references to Hanina in the Mishnah and Tosefta. In M. Berakhot 5:5 Hanina's prayer for the sick has a special character; and in T. Berakhot 3:20 not only is his concentration in prayer special, but he is also more powerful than a deadly creature. But M. Berakhot 5:5 makes his prayer into the tefillah and asserts that his special quality is his knowledge of someone's fate. He exhibits this trait because he is blessed with the ability to achieve fluency in prayer, which rabbis encouraged all to achieve. In T. Berakhot 3:20, Hanina's extraordinary character is normalized so that he can be a model for all Jews. The accounts prior to their incorporation and recasting in the Mishnah and Tosefta may therefore have projected Hanina as a Jewish holy man with the power, among other things, successfully to intervene with God or to be divinely protected from danger. But this image later becomes obscured so that we can make out only some of its elements.

But the two characteristics of a holy man described by BROWN are more apparent in the PT, which emphasizes the unusual qualities of Hanina and the other masters and which graphically describes the divine intervention. We even find that the forces of nature—here in the form of a viper—are at the beck and call of such figures. These accounts find parallels in the tales of Christian saints depicting the monk's piety and faith in not interrupting his prayer even in the face of threatening creatures. The fifth-century *History of the Monks of Syria*, by Theodoret of Cyrus, describing the late fourth-century monk Marcianos, provides an especially appropriate analogue:

<sup>134</sup>) Helen WADDELL, trans. and intro., *The Desert Fathers* (1936; reprint ed., Ann Arbor, 1957, 1972), pp. 45-46, and cp. pp. 32, 138, 142. See also Theodoret of Cyrus's description of Saint Julian's encounter with a dragon on the road, in his *Historie des Moines de Syrie*, ed., trans., and intro. Pierre CANIVET and Alice LEROY-MOLINGHEN, 2 vols., (Paris, 1977, 1979), 2.6:15-50, vol. 1, pp. 209-211, esp. p. 209, n. 4; and Theodoret's overall description of Julian's "miracles" performed along his journey to Antioch, in *Ecclesiastical History*, trans. Blomfield JACKSON, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, 2d ser., vol. 3 (1892; reprint ed., Grand Rapids, 1979), 4. 24, p. 128.



On another occasion when the great Marcianos prayed in the forecourt of his cell, a dragon that had crept up over the eastern wall stretched from the top of the wall, its open mouth and evil look indicating well his intentions. Eusebios, who found himself there, frightened by the horrifying spectacle and persuaded that his master was completely unaware, cried out to warn him and to urge him to flee. But he [Marcianos] scolded him and begged him to drive away his fear—because it was a pernicious passion. Then with his finger he made the sign of the cross, breathed with his mouth, and finished the ordeal of the ancient enemy. As for the dragon, it withered up from the breath of his mouth as if by fire and as it were to say broke into flames, making it appear a little bit like a reed of straw set afire<sup>135</sup>).

*The Life of Pachomius* provides another interesting parallel:

There was a brother who was spiritually strong, and zealously emulated Pachomius' patience. As he was praying, a scorpion bit him in the foot. So he placed the bitten foot upon the scorpion, and praying he said, "If God will not cure me, who will?" In the beginning as he tested himself to see whether he could bear it, the pain caused by the poison went to his heart and tortured it. Actually he came close to dying. So he bore the pain, and with fortitude he conquered this trial until the hour of the divine office<sup>136</sup>).

Despite the similarities, the stories of the Christian saints also differ from the accounts of Hanina. But the parallels are sufficient to illuminate the broader meaning of Hanina's encounter with the *arvad/ħabarbar*. Moreover, since different types of stories concerning holy men circulated in late antiquity, we should feel confident that Jews would have appreciated the distinctive elements of the several accounts of Hanina<sup>137</sup>).

<sup>135</sup>) Theodoret, *Histoire des Moines de Syrie*, 3.7, vol. 1, pp. 256-59. On the breathing, cp. "The Life of St. Pelagia the Harlot," in WADDELL, pp. 184-85; and in general on the features of this tale and the one cited in n. 134, see Pierre CANIVET, *Le Monachisme syrien selon Théodoret de Cyr* (Paris, 1977), pp. 117-29, esp. 119-21.

<sup>136</sup>) Apostolos N. ATHANASSAKIS, trans. *The Life of Pachomius* (Vita Prima Graeca) (Missoula, 1975), 101, pp. 142-43. See the discussion concerning the demons' attempts to interrupt a person while praying, in "The Sayings of the Fathers," in WADDELL, pp. 111-13. For additional references to saints killing snakes and other creatures see *Dictionnaire d'Archeologie chrétienne et de liturgie*, vol. 3:1, s.v. "Dragon," col. 1538-39, and s.v. "Serpent," col. 1353-54; GINZBERG, *Legends*, 5:120; and esp. LE GOFF, esp. pp. 165-72, and nn. 11, 28.

<sup>137</sup>) In light of these observations see our discussions, nn. 97 and 101 above, of the b. and y. stories on M. Berakhot 5:5. VERMES, *Jesus*, p. 74, notes that the

Historians of the first century will naturally inquire about the original meaning of the Hanina tradition and the role of men of deed in the first century. Individuals with charismatic qualities undoubtedly did exist; Geza VERMES and Sean FREYNE in different ways suggest how we may place them in that early period. For example, Hanina may have provided Galilean Jews with a sense of connection with the divine, just as Elijah or Elisha in biblical days were believed to provide for their community<sup>138</sup>). But as Eric M. MEYERS demonstrates, we must be wary of overinterpreting the evidence and suggesting that this represents a certain type of "lax" Judaism<sup>139</sup>).

While Hanina appears only in rabbinic writings, Honi, another man of deed, is apparently to be identified with the person mentioned in Josephus known for the effectiveness of his curse and for his ability to bring rain<sup>140</sup>). The language of the "Woe" saying and the danger of the *arvad* lizard suggest that Hanina too had the reputation of a person especially blessed. This accords with the general use of such stories to symbolize a holy man's powers. While we can only speculate concerning the exact nature of such virtuosos, we do know that rabbinic circles initially did not present them in their own right as models for a religious life and did not describe the Pharisaic founders or tannaitic masters as men of this sort. Later, however, Amoraim did represent selected figures in this manner. The details of these portrayals therefore tell us primarily

unique powers of certain individuals are expressly implied by Yoħanan's comment, in b., that God listens to Hanina and that even if he imitated Hanina's actions, God would not pay attention to him. Cp. BÜCHLER, pp. 92-95; and see: BLAU, pp. 146-52, esp. 149-50; HESCHEL, p. 70; ZEITLIN, pp. 290-91; and n. 11 above, esp. the reference to Pelikan. The stories of Christian saints indicate that people would believe that a holy man actually had second sight or prophetic powers. See, e.g., John 4, 46-54, on which cp. URBACH, 1:116-18; St. Athanasius, 58-62, pp. 69-73, esp. 61, p. 72, and the reference in p. 122, n. 199; and Theodoret, *Ecclesiastical History*, 3. 19, p. 105.

The BT's portrayal of Hanina provides one of the typologies for later depictions of Jewish saints interceding for other Jews. See MACH; and Arthur GREEN, "Zaddiq."

<sup>138</sup>) VERMES, *Jesus*, p. 79; idem, "Hanina" (1973), pp. 61-64; FREYNE, *Galilee*, pp. 329-33; idem, "Charismatic," pp. 242-49. See also SARFATTI, p. 133.

<sup>139</sup>) Eric M. MEYERS and James F. STRANGE, *Archaeology, The Rabbis and Early Christianity* (Nashville, 1981), pp. 35-47, 178-82.

<sup>140</sup>) Josephus, *Antiquities* 14:22-25, vol. 7, pp. 458-61. See W. S. GREEN, pp. 639-40.

about the recycled Hanina—about the rabbinic authorities that retold and recast the saying concerning Hanina and the *arvad/havar-bar*. We are thus provided with two pictures: in Palestine, that of a pious person's close relationship to God, and of the divine protection that is in store for those who fear the LORD; and, in Babylonia, that of a holy man's active responsibility for others—his intervening in behalf of the community, his vanquishing danger, and his teaching a religious lesson<sup>141</sup>).

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