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Report on the Rabbinic Dissertation Submitted by Michal Bourne
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Ordination

AN INVENTORY OF THE RABBINIC VIEW OF MIRACLES VIS A VIS THE NATURAL ORDER:
MISFIT OR MODEL?

An Inventory of the Rabbinic View of Miracles vis a vis the Natural Order: Misfit or Model? is a delightfully written inquiry into an aspect of rabbinic thinking. The idea of miracle has as its paradoxical correlative the idea of natural order; without some sense of that order, there is no sense in viewing any particular event as a miracle. This paradox leads to others: if all is miraculous, nothing is; if all is natural, then nothing is a miracle; to be 'recognized' as a miracle, an event must be 'extraordinary'; this requires a multiplicity of 'ordinary' events as a backdrop. Miss Bourne describes the rabbinic wrestling with these paradoxes. Faced as they were with the task of the interpretation of Scripture, a text replete with the presentation of past Divine signs and wonders, yet living in a city society whose essential presupposition was a certain level of stability in nature and in human events, the rabbis balanced the idea of miracle to fulfill a Divine purpose against the idea of an ordered world created by an all wise and all benevolent God. Miss Bourne presents the variegated views of the rabbis and the differing contentions of modern scholars as to the balance point of the rabbinic discussions.

Miss Bourne has read carefully, thought critically, and written most gracefully. It is with pride in her accomplishment that I recommend the acceptance of her rabbinic thesis to the Faculty of the College-Institute.

Respectfully submitted,


Dr. Leonard S. Kravitz

April 1979

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The Bible has its Rashi; the Codes their Rif and Shach. But, it is only in the commentaries (social) of contemporary glossator, Erma Bombeck, that one finds a "t'suvah-and-sh'ela" on the extinction of that most endangered of professional species: the corsetier!

In a certain manuscript codexed "Lament for Edith Lances," Ms. Bombeck identifies the culprit which has snatched from the fingers of the corsetier her gussets and her stays, and driven her "out of the business": not unions, not automation but, the one-size-fits-all-rose-petaled girdle.¹

The one-size-fits-all-rose-petaled girdle; on a woman of 110 pounds, the roses on said girdle are in tight little buds; on a woman weighing in at 160, the roses are in full bloom; and at 220, the petals wilt and fall off.

Erma Bombeck's girdle, and the "plight of the Playtex," have vast pragmatic applications for still another body; that corpus of rabbinic literature which deals with miracles, vis a vis the Natural Order.

Other carriers ... the Greek-philosophic, the Christian ... seldom allow for anomalies, contradictions, discrepancies or imperfections.² These carriers tend to tolerate only that which fits perfectly into the Natural Order. They tend to "cut" only for the sample-size "34", upon whom roses can only be in the perfect state of perpetual full bloom.

But, the Rabbinic Carrier shows a "line" even for the "slightly irregular": the petite, the half-sized, the "tall-gal," and Totie Field's favorite: the Junior Plenty. The Rabbinic system "carries", not just for the

perfect ... that which fits perfectly into the Natural Order ... but, also that which proves to be a difficult fit: what appears to lie outside the Natural Order; and this, according to some elements in Rabbinic Society, will often include the Miracle.

The Rabbinic System "carries" the contractible-expandible-one-size-fits-all quality into the dimension of Midrash. The various treatments of the Miracle in a wide variety of Midrashim, express the Rabbinic tensile approach to a problem which may have constricted other systems, but which gives the Rabbinic System its dynamism and strength. That problem? To fit all Miracles into a Natural Order.

It is also this elastic approach, taken by the Rabbis which will allow them to include the entire socio-political-intellectual spectrum of their city-world within their system. And this ability to reckon with and embrace the gamut of their society, will fortify the Rabbis' own power and authority within their world.

Just as the one-size-fits-all-rose-petaled girdle phases out our need for the corsetier, the yielding, malleable quality of their System makes obsolete the Rabbis' need to fit each and every Miracle into the Natural Order. Indeed, one element, perhaps even the tonal element of Rabbinic Society will believe in, and will seek to "publicize" Miracles which occur within the Natural Order. But, we shall also encounter other factions plotted on this spectrum: from those Rabbis who make light of miracles because they are beyond a Natural Order ... to those who give weight to Miracles, regardless of a relativity to a Natural Order. From "put-down" to "hype" ... to the perception of the entire

Natural Order as merely a mosaic of Miracles ... the Midrashic genre on Miracles is fraught with every "size", every "shape"; and, each one a customer in a one-size-fits-all scheme.

Generations of scholars have grappled, nevertheless, with the self-induced dilemma of trying to fit Rabbinic Thought into non-Rabbinic Systems. Or, perhaps their quandry becomes even clearer when broached from the perspective from which it most often comes:³ the inverse perspective. Solomon Schechter, for one, seems to ask in his works: whether it is possible to be systematic in a non-Greek way; and, if Rabbinic Thought lacks linear, logical, hierarchical system, what then is its integrating principle? Such questions, implicit in Schechter's studies, no doubt are appropos to our "problem child," the miracle, since Schechter even cites a pre-1908 endeavor by a student to define Miracles and drew up a complete list of Talmudic-Midrashic wonder-workings of the Rabbis.⁴

One of the most eloquent attempts to respond to these questions comes from Max Kadushin. Rather than be hemmed in by other systems and definitions contingent upon them, Kadushin constructs new ways in which to discuss the Rabbinic Thought System; a way of thinking based on "value-concepts" and replete without definitions.⁵

Kadushin states that no Rabbinic value-concept can be formally defined, but that there is one value-concept, the concept of "nes", which possesses a characteristic which is descriptive in terms of another "abstract concept": that of "sidre bereshit."⁶

Still, Kadushin acknowledges that "nes," regarded as a change in "sidre bereshit" is only one aspect of the concept of "nes." There are, for example, "everyday

nissim" which involve no change in "sidre bereshit."⁷ The "Catch-22" is, of course, that "nes" is still being defined in terms of "sidre bereshit." In fact, so central is "sidre bereshit" to Kadushin's theories, that he uses it to take exception to a central thesis of Alexander Guttman's on Miracles.

Whereas Guttman concludes that during the Rabbinic period there was a "decline" in the miracle, as regards its influence in law and practice, a decline parallel to the growth of Christianity; Kadushin refers us back to "sidre bereshit." Not the immanent danger of a nascent Christianity restricts the concept of "nes," states Kadushin, but the "unique constitution of the abstract phase of the concept, coming in conflict with the quasi-scientific concept of 'sidre bereshit.'"⁸

Other scholars have commented on the relationship between "nes" and "sidre bereshit." Ephraim Urbach, using Shabbat 53b as his example, makes a chronological distinction. According to Urbach, in the Tannaitic period, changes in the order of the universe are not the equivalent of "nissim;" but rather, that express differences in relation to a change in the natural order are not recognized until the Amoraic period.

While Kaufman Kohler writes that "only a primitive age could think of God as altering the order of Nature which He has fixed, it is the Catholic Encyclopedia which can be brought to reinforce our argument that the Rabbinic System is its "own System:"

The Israelite, having no idea of a fixed unchangeable Natural Law governing the physical universe wasn't interested in the intimate nature of a Miracle ... Christian theology (however) attempts to discover the nature of a Miracle defined as an event inconsistent with the constitution of Nature, that is, with the established course of things.

Vive la difference!

No matter how remote, how aloof from other carriers the Rabbinic System might seem to us in retrospect, those other systems have always been in the historical-geographic "neighborhood." To ignore these coincidences, to imply that any system remains pure, would be negligent. Thus, it becomes necessary in the process of examining the Rabbinic views of Miracle and the natural order to touch upon other worlds with which the Rabbinic World comes in contact.

Some 2½ milleniums before it is even "a gleam in Matt Dillon's eye," Law and Order is a "hotbed" of controversy on yet another frontier: that of Graeco-Roman speculation. But, rather than being of "six-guns and rifles," it is of Nature ... of Nature's law, of nature's order ... that this investigation is a classical issue.

Envision for a moment the Acropolis and the Agora of Antiquity. Animate this vision with businessmen, entrepreneurs - daily crossing paths with statesmen, philosophers, thinkers - and all feeding into an evolving new world of "City."

Imagine the flow of challenges, problems, discoveries - all streaming through this burgeoning cosmos: challenges, beckoning responses; problems, summoning solution; and discoveries, demanding to be, not only absorbed, but ordered within this universe of the ancients.

Order also becomes the criterion by which many Greek theoreticians in the 5th century B.C.E. will distinguish themselves from those who dwell

in the "barbaric world."¹⁰ These Greeks will categorize primitive man's existence as disorderly; and Law will become the means by which order could be set in for them.¹¹

By the following century, the term Law seems to be discussed as it contrasts with the term Nature. Indeed, in his use of the term Nature in reference to human behavior, Plato (among others) views Nature as the antithesis of Law. For Plato, Nature becomes the "Healthy", "normal" state ... an expected progression in a pattern which a century earlier attempts to couple Law with barbarism.

What will become an almost indiscriminate use of the term Nature in successive centuries of Graeco-Roman thought, will often lead astray the philosophers' attention: they will tend to focus their arguments on the various meanings of Nature ... to the neglect of focusing in on Nature itself.

Even within the so-called "schools" one finds varying definitions for Nature; so suggests a perusal of the Stoics. But, despite a superfluity of definitions among the Stoics, there seems to evolve from them the peculiar (to them) notion that: nothing takes place except according to Nature. The Stoics develop a concept which states that sown into Nature are "seminales rationes." This concept is harbinger to findings in Judaeo-Christian thought on Nature and Miracles.¹²

The Stoic Cleanthes inspires the contemporary founder of still another "school," Epicurus, to formulate the ethic that, above all, Man is to live "in conformity with Nature."¹³ But, some 4 centuries later the concern with Nature shifts from "Man and

Nature" to "God and Nature" ... hence Galen's upset with what he calls "Moses' opinion": that God is not bound by the orderly processes of Nature.

Does this mean Galen never "talks Talmud" with the authors of Avodah Zarah 54b (Here we find that even God is bound to the orderly processes of Nature)? Ephraim Urbach suggests that Galen's contact seems to be with those tannaim whose primary anxiety is over anything which restricts God's importance.¹⁴

Galen's understanding of the tannaitic Moses is that: for Moses it sufficed to say that God wills (by an irrational will) the ordering of matter, since for this God of Moses, everything is possible. Galen refutes this understanding of said tannaitic view by maintaining that, merely by their nature, certain things are impossible and even God doesn't bother with these by attempting to do them; rather, God chooses the best of creative possibilities. And, it is for us to ask whether there is not another element (even if it be a "fringe" one) among the tannaim who adhere to Galen's argument that "some things even God doesn't bother to set in;" that "the impossible" is not the equivalent of a miracle ... since traces of his view will be detected in some Midrashim with which we shall deal.

Like some "Edgar Cayce of Rabbinic Thought," Galen sees the regularity of natural processes as the real proof of divine providence, and not the monstrosities which sometimes occur.¹⁵ To those who taunt Galen with the problem of these "monstrosities" in a world of regular natural process, he answers: (as well the Rabbis who reflect him, or who he reflects might) "if an artist makes an error it does not prove that there is no art."

But, it is not Galen, but rather Philo who would appear to straddle the Classic and post-Biblical worlds. Is Philo Galen's precursor when he suggests that the order of the universe is governed by immutable laws? Or, is he the "pin-up" of those Lannaim for expressing the notion that the God of the Old Testament has reserved freedom for Himself and can miraculously intervene in the course of Nature?¹⁶

Some insight into Philo's position may be gained by scrutinizing his treatment of Nature with regard to the Biblical Miracle of the manna: in De Vita Mosis II 267, Philo writes that God changes the elements to meet the pressing needs of the occasion:

so that instead of the earth, the air bore food.

And yet, because he is coming from a unique milieu ... Egypt, where it is "normal" to have water come from the earth (the Nile) and not the air ... the traditional interpretation of the manna miracle, (that the food came down and the dew/water went up) becomes confused.¹⁷ The common order of nature in Egypt is not rain. And, because Philo is aware of the differences of the climate of Egypt and other countries, he even occasionally reinterprets haggadic fragments about water from heaven and earth, claiming, "water from earth" refers specifically to Egypt.¹⁸

But, Philo's roots in an ordered, city world are not merely as deep as his ability to reinterpret

the manna Miracle according to Egypt's unique climatic conditions. They go beyond ... to the depths reached in De Congressu Quarendae Eruditionis Gratia 173. Here he writes about God sending this manna, food which costs neither toil nor pain, and Philo concludes thus:

so one should not speak of God as the author of famine and affliction, but rather, the author of thriving, prosperity and secure and ordered living.

Again, this predisposition for an ordered world comes through in Philo's De Praemiis et Poenis 65, where, in describing the Biblical patriarchs he writes

from this household, increased in the course of time to a great multitude, were founded flourishing and orderly cities, schools of wisdom, justice and religion.¹⁹

But, let us for a moment back-step to that other world which Philo straddles, to evaluate the Biblical antecedents for a Rabbinic concept of Natural order and Miracle.

TAKING "BIBLICAL" STOCK

If we go "on location" with the Biblical carrier, we must journey from the "city streets" of the Greeks, out into "the country." Here we discover more than just a change in scenery; for while we have seen now that "the Greeks have a word for it" ... the Biblical world is aphasic when it comes to the words "Nature" and "Order." How then do they manage to express the concepts?

Theodore Gaster is one of several scholars who explains, that, while the Bible has no one term for "Nature," it manages to convey the concept by means of merism: it uses the extremes ... in this case, heaven and earth *שמים וארץ* ... to express the mean, nature. It then falls on us in this investigation to determine whether biblical "sequels," also express concepts merismically; for example, "those things outside the Natural Order" (Miracle) - *hithen* - "all things within the natural order" to express the total concept "Nature."²⁰

There are others who prefer to detect traces of a systematic, even Greek concept, of "Nature", "Miracle", and "Order" within the Biblical text. Robert Grant writes that there is an evolutionary development of the concept of Order within the Old Testament, localized specifically in wisdom literature. Grant directs us to the book of Job for the "oldest affirmation of God as the orderer of chaos."²¹ Grant suggests that this affirmation is analogous to Greek thought of the 5th and 6th centuries B.C.E.

Both Grant and Joseph Reider fix upon The Wisdom of Solomon 19:18 as "the first attempt to

explain Miracles, philosophically, in the Old Testament:

For the elements being changed in order among themselves,
As in a psaltery the notes vary the character of the tune,
Yet always adhering to the sound
Which one may accurately divine from the sight of things
For land creatures were turned into water creatures.²²
that have happened

Reider calls the orderly creation expressed in The Wisdom of Solomon "ktisis." Miracles, Reider explains, do not disturb ktisis because, as God arranged the elements to remain in the same contrast to each other, there is only an "enharmonic transformation" of elements during the occurrence of a Miracle.

Several scholars mention Kohelet as a source of expression of world order in Wisdom Literature. In that they are talking about an expression, rather than a term, there is nothing which really contradicts Gaster's proclamation that the term for this order is missing from biblical thought.

Barton tells us that Qohelet 3:14 implies that man is caught up in an inescapable world order.

Handwritten note:
פסוק זה נראה כהוספה מאוחרת
למקור המקראי

Thomas Tyler discerns within Qohelet's third chapter's famous first 8 lines, and line 17, the very principle of "live in accordance with nature" that is identified with the Greek Stoics. But, Barton doubts the "authenticity" of 3:17, claiming that it is only an interpolation of the "hasid glossator."²³

The fact that all these suggestions of a Natural Order are established in Wisdom Literature commands our attention; particularly as regards the social background of Wisdom Literature.

Robert Gordis reports that wisdom Literature is fundamentally an upper-class product by those who lived principally in the capital city, Jerusalem.²⁴ Gordis proceeds to repeat the well-known cliché that upper classes are conservative, satisfied with the status quo, and opposed to change. To this, however he adds his own insight that not only is this conservatism basic to the upper-classes, but to the "unconventional" wisdom teachers who might have had lower-class origins; such is known as playing by the rules of the one who has the ball.

For the purposes of our investigation, Gordis' assessment of the social milieu of wisdom Literature proves enlightening, for it corroborates our "hunch" that as "city" will necessitate and thrive on order ... even within the writings of the Rabbis' "country uncle" (a generation older than cousin) there is a sense of Nature and Order.

At times this sense may be indistinct, but it stands as an isthmus between a merismic Biblical Nature and a defined Greek one. It foretells of a Rabbinic World which will include many islands of thought; not the least of which is one inhabited by those who believe in emphasizing the natural Order, even in dealing with Miracles.

These islands of thought are not cut-off; they are rather spanned by the stretchable Rabbinic system. And now, having examined the make-up of the Rabbinic System's historical-geographic neighbors, let us take a closer look at the content of Rabbinic Thought itself.

THE RABBINIC CARRIER

100% silk is soothing to the touch; pure crepe-de-chine, a gossamer delight. But, it is dacron-and-polyester, "cotton-wool" ... the "blend" ... which is durable.

The fabric of Rabbinic Thought is also a blend; it is a blend of attitudes, of postures, of outlooks. To this idiosyncratic "content" of the Rabbinic Thought fabric, Kadushin has attributed the encouragement of development of rich and differentiated personalities.

Kadushin's attribution inverts Lewis Mumford's general comments on the City. According to Mumford, it is the influx of diversified personalities ... the stranger ... into the expanding City World that stimulates and nurtures a large variety of concepts within a value complex; in this case, our case, the value complex is the Rabbinic Value Complex.²⁵

The presence of co-existent elements, elements living almost **sympiotically** within this Rabbinic world, is at times even explicitly expressed through Midrash. It is conveyed by the midrashic theme of the reconciliation of "antithetical elements;" such is the theme of Pesikta Rabbati Piska 6:5. By citing Psalm 92.6 ("how great are your works, O Lord") this Midrash asks us to comprehend that God has created a miraculous world in which there are both demons and angels ... the anti-thetical. But, we also discover in this midrash, that along with demons and angels ... God has created man.

Could the presence of the antithetical demons and angels, be viewed as a merismic way of expressing "man" and even the antithetical aspects and inclinations of man?

Ginzberg refers us to an even more explicit accounting of the reconciliation of diverse elements.²⁶

as a rule fire and water are elements at war with each other; but in the hailstones that smote Egypt they were reconciled.

Could these anti-podal Midrashim be the Rabbis' way of winking at us? are they a trail of breadcrumbs left behind for us to follow in order to get to the world of the Rabbis ... a world in which a full spectrum of attitudes on Miracles exist simultaneously?

Not all scholars have chosen to glean insight from such markings. Some have chosen to ignore a synchronic approach to the Rabbinic universe, and have opted instead to follow the development of Miracles and the Natural Order ... chronologically.

Alexander Guttman is one scholar who would have us take this "vertical" approach; he would have us see Rabbinic Miracles as merely an expansion of biblical Miracles.²⁷ This expansion however is not qualitative, but rather reflective of a lack of originality.

Urbach, as we have already noted, sends us to a calendar to determine when was the "turning point"; when the watershed; when changes in the Natural Order become the focus of the Rabbis' interest in Miracles. Implied in his approach is, there is but a "focus," rather than "foci."

Both Guttman's approach and Urbach's ignore not only the potential clue of the anti-thetical elements midrashim, but other indications from secondary sources of co-existent, though nevertheless, divergent attitudes on Miracles throughout the Rabbinic Period ... which call for a "horizontal tack" to the study of these Miracles.

When Maimonides writes in The Guide For The Perplexed about Rabbinic Miracles, his words imply that we must view the pertinent midrashim synchronically:

Our sages have said very strange things as regards miracles; they are found in Bereshit Raba (5.5) and in Midrash Qohelet, namely that the Miracles are to some extent also natural.²⁸

here, concerning the matter of the Natural Order, Maimonides has lumped the chronological "latter" with the chronological "former;" for Qohelet Raba and Bereshit Raba are generally dated centuries apart.

If we were to take a vertical approach to Miracles, as Guttman would have us do, would we find that the miracle wanes as time goes by? Would we find that they are part of the distant past?²⁹

Kadushin tells us that the Talmud knows of "nissim" which occur down to the last generations of amoraim. In Berakot 54a, for example, we read of a "nes" being performed for Mar bar Rabina, a tudent of the 4th and last generation.

But a still more stunning argument is made by Kadushin (and against a vertical approach) from Berakot 20a. here we find Rav Papa asking Abaye:

30 *לכאן הולך עולם הזה ואלה העולמות
לכאן הולך עולם הזה ואלה העולמות*

The "יעקב" then mentioned by Rav Papa is Rav Judah. Kadushin identifies Rav Judah as Judah bar Ezekiel; not a tanna, but an amora, head ofumbeditha, who lives but two generations before Abaye; thus, almost a contemporary!

This is clarified still further when we read Abaye's answer:

31

יבן יבן יבן יבן יבן יבן יבן יבן
יבן יבן יבן יבן יבן יבן יבן יבן
יבן יבן יבן יבן יבן יבן יבן יבן

Abaye categorizes Rav Judah as "יבן יבן"; to be investigated later on in our study with a potential religio-political label of "יבן יבן -ite": whereas Rav Judah belongs to a group for whom יבן יבן is a pre-eminent concern, Abaye represents a different section of the religio-political spectrum ... in a nearly contemporaneous period. For Abaye's group יבן יבן is not the banner credendum.

Thus, even a preliminary investigation of this one midrash in Berakot 20a, indicates that it is not only justified, but necessary to approach an analysis of Rabbinic postures toward the miracle, vis a vis the Natural Order ... "horizontally." Such an approach will itself properly reflect the "blended content" of the expandable one-size-fits-all Rabbinic System. And, such an approach paves the way onward, now ... to an encounter with the various treatments of miracles and the Natural Order in the Midrash.

THE APPLAUSE:

Ephraim Urbach's "Miracle warrant:"

Most of (the) Miracles take place in order to deliver and save individuals or a community in times of trouble and distress.³²

Urbach's choice of words is "loaded;" terms like "deliver" and "save" are fraught with propitious innuendo. And, such terms reflect one terminus of the Rabbinic Spectrum.

If we choose to begin our examination of various Rabbinic treatments of the Miracle and the Natural Order at this terminus, we come upon Midrashim which laud the Miracle and adulate those individuals or groups for whom Miracles occur.

The Rabbis speak of Miracles which happen to individual and community; in the past and in the (Rabbinic) present.

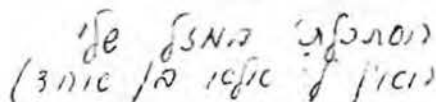
Among those "past individuals" who are deemed worthy of Miracles ... in Midrashim displaying this favorable treatment ... are the "avot." In the Mekilta d. R. Ishmael (.c 1100 20'13 1000N) Eleazar of Modi'im reports: that when God announces in Exodus 16:4 "I'll cause bread to rain from heaven for you" ... the manna Miracle ... it was due to the merit of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob: אברהם יצחק ויעקב.

For Abraham's sake, Shabbat 156b tells us, God moves Zedek (Jupiter) from the west to the east; because as the proof text Isaiah 41:2 asks:

733 '25NN 2'21 'N
1878 101017

Ginzberg interprets the move with a twist: that God causes Jupiter to appear in the east, in order to teach Abraham not to attach any importance to astronomy.³³ Ginzberg takes " /t7 " ... in connection with ... not as Abraham's merit per se ... but certainly, if God takes time out to perform a "miracle" to teach Abraham, then indirectly it is based on Abraham's merit that Jupiter is moved.³⁴

The thrust of Shabbat 156b is that Israel is not subject to planetary influences. We read of this principle again " /t7 " in connection with Abraham ... in Nedarim 32a:³⁵ here, Abraham moans over his "horoscope" that foretells that there will be no Isaac:



God answers Abraham that he should grow away from astrological speculation ... for that is the Natural Order for the "others," but not "you." For "you" there will be God's intervention (a Miracle?)

R. Isaac (either the tanna or Isaac b. Judah) explains that God will perform something special for Abraham because, as indicated from II Samuel 22:26, God deals " א'נ"ן " with the " א'נ"ן " ... and since Abraham perfects himself God will deal mercifully with him.

All in all א'נ"ן 10/10 /2 10/10 5, 11 Miracles are wrought; among them the Exodus, and the parting of the Red Sea. But there are others.³⁶

In Pirke d. R. Eleazar 25 we read of the miraculous rescues of Abraham from "death row" at Nimrod's place. The first part of the Miracle happens when Abraham survives a year without food

no water; the Rabbis explain away the so-called mysterious aspect of the Miracle by saying that an angel provides Abraham with these essentials during his incarceration. "Part 2" of this "duplex" Miracle occurs when the greatly frustrated Nimrod tries to have Abraham's head cut off, but, instead the sword breaks. This time we don't encounter the Rabbis attempting to give a rationale (a sword with a poor consumer report's rating?). The sword that is sundered at the neck of Abraham - because Abraham is "miracable" - ah, that is the nes.³⁷

We shall also come across this "Miracle of the invincible neck vs. the "splitting sword" in Midrashic treatments of another individual who the Rabbis deem "worthy" of Miracles: Moses. It is interesting that although the Bible chooses to repeat some of the "Abraham stories" with Isaac ("the barren wife"; "passing off the wife as the sister" motifs), in the Midrashim on Miracles the Rabbis do not pick up this thread; rather, we get Abraham-miracles duplicated with Moses, or Jacob miracles xeroxed with Moses. But, as least as far as miracles are concerned, Isaac holds little fascination for the Rabbis.

Only one miracle is reported in Bereshit Raba in connection with Isaac: in 53:5 we discover Resh Lakish's comment that "וַיַּיְתָר" - vayyetar - in Genesis 25:21 signifies that Isaac is deserving of a miracle in that Rebekkah's predestined childless state is reversed.

But, whereas Isaac does not seem to capture

the Rabbis' imaginations - as regards miracles - Jacob is a "favorite son". The sun will miraculously rise for him and set for him - literally!

Whereas Genesis 32:32 reports "עָנָה לְיָסַד", R. Berekiyah, 4th century Palestinian amora, uses this text to suggest that ... while ordinarily, for others, the sun rises to give light, for Jacob, "the sun also rises" in order to heal him, post-fisticuffs, in the stream.

The Rabbis expound on "עָנָה לְיָסַד" in Genesis 28:11 ("because the sun was set") by stating:

וְיָסַד לְיָסַד
וְיָסַד לְיָסַד
וְיָסַד לְיָסַד
וְיָסַד לְיָסַד
וְיָסַד לְיָסַד

God arranges for an expected or "premature sunset" - just so He might speak privately with Jacob.

Ginzberg tells us that Jacob, before his death, performs the same 3 Miracles which Moses later will, to prove that he is the promised redeemer. For this, Ginzberg uses as his basis Sh'mot Raba 5:13 and Midrash Shir ha Shirim 76. However, a close inspection of the Sh'mot Raba passage reveals that the subject discussed is the transmission of the "signs" from Jacob, through Joseph and his family, to Moses.

If God sits in heaven and makes matches ... it follows that as the "avot" merit miracles, so too the "imot." In Tanhuma Duber ע"ב ח"ב we find a statement by R. Hama b. R. Hanina that it is for

the merit of mother Sarah - merit she earns by her kneading in Genesis 18:6 - that the manna is given to Israel.

Leah and Rachel become involved in the Rabbis' discussions in Bereshit Raba 72.6 and Berakot 60. The pre-amniocentesis issue is "are prayers of any efficacy in changing the sex of a zygote/embryo/fetus? The Bereshit Raba text reports a statement by R. Abba that Dinah is actually created a male, but is turned into female through Rachel's prayers. The change here seems to be a miracle; a miracle induced, according to R. Hanina b. Pazzi's account, by the fact that Rachel is a matriarch and "matriarchs are prophetesses."

The Berakot 60 text has a different twist: not Rachel's prayers, but Leah's alter Dinah's sex. But, here Rav states:

אין אדם יכול לשנות את המין

This statement comes in response to the Mishnaic statement that such a change would be "לא ידע". So, Rav offers a rationale that reveals the rabbi-knowledge that the embryo is relatively "sexless" for the first 40 days. Nevertheless, a miracle is still implied concerning the matriarchs ... "the prophetesses."

Therefore, it is not surprising that another category of individual for and of whom Miracles occur is the Prophet. And, most prominent in this category will be Moses.

When last we saw the Miracle of "The Neck which breaks the Sword," it was in conjunction with Abraham; but, as has already been indicated, we shall meet this Miracle once again with Moses:

Deuteronomy Raba 2:27 reports that, according to R. Jannai, Palestinian amora of the "transitional generation," Moses when he flees from Pharaoh (מֹשֶׁה בְּעֵת הַיָּצִיט מִמִּצְרַיִם) has already had the executioner's sword put to his neck; it is that close! But at the moment when the sword is put on Moses' neck it slides off, because Moses' neck turns to marble.

Were that not enough, the Midrash continues with R. Abiathar's statement that when the sword slides off Moses' neck, it turns on the executioner. But, there is yet to be more: Bar Kappara adds his mark to what Abiathar has already suggested. A still greater miracle (this is Ginzberg's evaluation) comes to pass. As Bar Kappara tells it, God sends down the angel Michael in the guise of a hangman, while the human hangman, charged by Pharaoh with the execution, is now changed into the form of Moses. The spurious Moses (alias the angel) kills the real executioner; the real Moses flees; and in the words of R. Joshua, affirms that God works miracles for Moses.

A postscript to the events of the Deuteronomy Raba Midrash might be detected in what is written in Berakot 54 about a ... tanna's definition of עֲשֵׂת הַיָּד (the work of the hand) ... they are stones suspended in the air which descend by "Man's" command. The Man is identified as Moses, who, when fleeing Pharaoh extends his hand - and the miracle occurs.

Miracles and Moses ... the rabbis deal with the subject in both the "active" and the "passive:" sometimes Moses performs miracles; and sometimes God performs miracles for the "merit" of Moses.

We find an example of the latter in Beresnit Raba 97:3 which relates through the words of R. Levi that:

the wives of the Israelites conceived 60 myriads of children in one night; they were all thrown into the Nile but came up again through the merit of Moses.

For the sake of Moses, God reverses the Natural Order in the "Miracle of the manna." Ginzberg tells us that God points out to a despondent Moses why he shouldn't feel so badly that he is about to die; did not He (God) reverse the order of heaven and earth at Moses' request to have heaven send down bread and earth bring forth water?³⁸

Moses also reverses the Natural Order; this we discover in Ecclesiastes Raba 3:14. The scenario reads here as a discussion between Resh Lakish and R. Jonathan (as often occurs in Midrash between these 2). R. Jonathan asks Resh Lakish to explain 2 Biblical verses: Exodus 19:3 "Moses went up to God," and Exodus 19:20, "the Lord came down upon Mt. Sinai."

R. Jonathan's problem with the text is: if God decrees that celestial beings should be in heaven and terrestrial below, how do we reconcile the 2 verses? By explaining that Moses' arrival on the scene brings about the inversion: "Moses arose and reverses them." The Midrash continues with 2 other Miracles of order reversal which Moses performs:

God decreed that the terrestrial creatures should eat and drink. Moses arose and made terrestrial creatures not to eat and drink. As it is written, 'he was with God 40 days and nights and did not eat or drink.'

Moses is the "terrestrial creature" who miraculously can survive without food or drink; this part of the Midrash traces the pattern set down in the Miracle

of Abraham surviving a year without food and drink ... only in the Midrash on Abraham an angel is brought in and nearly explains away the Miracle.

R. Jonathan's rhetorical questions continue with: if God decrees that the sea should remain "sea" and "dry land," dry land, how is it that Exodus 14:22 says: *וַיִּשְׁלַח יְהוָה אֶת הַיָּם וַיִּפְּצֵהוּ* For Moses "arose!"

Ecclesiastes Raba 3:14 tells of 2 other prophets who the Rabbis associate with Miracles: Elisha, who made the dry land into sea, and Elijah, who reverses God's original decree that summer be "summer" - and winter, "winter."³⁹

The Miracles of Elisha, Elijah and other prophets are threaded together by a theory of the Rabbis' that prophets (through their works), as tzaddikim represent in this world a microcosm of what will come in the Hereafter. R. Berakiah, in the name of Judah b. R. Simon, states this explicitly in Bereshit Raba 77:1:

You will find that you anticipated in this world ~~this~~ through the agency of the righteous, everything he'd do in the Hereafter.

The examples which R. Berakiah cites are with Elijah and Elisha. Elijah resurrected the dead as God will do; and if we read II Kings 2:19 (Elisha's throwing salt in the water to purify it) alongside Exodus 15:25 (in which the waters at Marah become fresh) then there is evidence that as God will sweeten the bitter, so too has Elisha.

We also know of how the "tzaddikim" are a microcosm from Ecclesiastes Raba 3:15: the proof text states "that which is to be has already been." R. Judah says that, though God will make the sea into dry land, it has already been done with Moses in Exodus 14:29; if in the future God will revive the dead, then we've witnessed this "microcosmically" through the Miracles of 1 Kings 17:17, 11 Kings 4:32 and Ezekiel 37:17 ... where Elijah, then Elisha and then Ezekiel revive the dead.

All this is further expounded upon by R. Aha in the name of R. Halafta:

all that God will do or renew in His world in the Messianic future, He's already done in part through the medium of a prophet in this world.⁴⁰

This Midrash, with one variation, appears in both Tanhuma texts. As in Ecclesiastes Raba, the tradents in Tanhuma Buber III 90-91 and Tanhuma Midpas III 9 are the same R. Judah and R. Nehemia, a tanna who was a contemporary of Meir. But the third tradent, R. Aha, speaks in the Ecclesiastes' text in the name of R. Halafta, while the Tanhuma texts report he speaks in the name of the third century amora, R. Samuel b. Nahman. Perhaps this can be explained: in the Tanhuma texts we read "God goes in miniature - אֲפֻרָה - through the tzaddikim; while the Ecclesiastes text says "in part" through the prophet.⁴¹

Yet another "class" of individual becomes the subject of the Rabbis' "positive" treatment of miracles: the category? the "righteous gentile;" and, specifically, Jethro as its representative.⁴²

Because, as Sifre Numbers 78 reports, Jethro loves Torah, is pious and excels above all proselytes, for his sake, and on his arrival at "camp" at noon enough manna for 60 myriads of Israelites descend. And since Jethro is righteous, he does not have to exert himself to gather the manna. It comes to him ... "all over his body," so that all he has to do is carry his hand to his mouth in order to partake of it.

With some slight differences this Midrash about the Miracle performed for Jethro, shows up in Midrash Psalms 78:4 (Braude). It reads as follows:

R. Aibu taught that for Jethro's sake, when he arrived at the 6th hour, enough manna for every organ of every body of the 60 myriads of Israel came down.

But, Midrashim which give favorable treatment to Miracles concerning individuals are not limited to the "Past" (that is, the Past from the rabbis' "rear view mirror"). We find Miracles happening with more contemporary figures as well. Alexander Guttman might seize on our use of "as well" and read it literally - only to then respond "not as well;" for according to Guttman, while the Talmud continues to recognize the continuance of revelation in its own time, it emphasizes the inferior quality of post-prophetic revelation.⁴³ Does it then follow from this statement that as the revelation is inferior, it will follow suit in other related categories ... such as the Miracle?

George Foot Moore would appear to answer our question. Writes Moore: "since Miracles manifest God's goodness they could not be seen just as 'past' ...

individual Miracles continue, if on a less frequent basis, since (as Berakot 20a suggests) in the present "they" are less worthy.⁴⁴ Schechter however doesn't seem as bothered as Moore about the quantity of Miracles for individuals in the Rabbinic present; in fact, in these numerous stories about nissim, in which the Rabbis themselves figure, nissim involving changes in the natural order are also encompassed.

Certain tannaim are specifically singled out as being accustomed to Miracles. In Sanhedrin 108b-109a we learn of the Jews sending a gift to the emperor, not "Federal Express," but by Nahum of Gimzo since "יְהוֹנָתָן בֶּן־נָחֻם" he was well versed in Miracles.

In Megillah 17b we read of another who is well-versed in Miracles; "יְהוֹנָתָן בֶּן־נָחֻם יְהוֹנָתָן": R. Simeon b. Yohai; and R. Phineas b. Yair, from the "transitional generation," must have been an "old hand" at Miracles since Hullin 7a tells us that he cause the waters to divide on 3 occasions.

That Miracles are in "our times" (the Rabbis' "our times") within the expected order of things, is certainly reinforced by the fact that, not just a righteous "individual" but his righteous wife can be accustomed to Miracles. And the quintessential "Modern Mrs." in this regard, is the wife of Hanina b. Dosa.⁴⁵

Hanina himself is a meritorious individual; this is attested to by the mid-3rd century head of Pumbeditha, Rav Judah b. Ezekiel in Hullin 86a: daily a "bat kol" proclaims that for Hanina, impoverished needle-making 2nd generation tanna, the whole world

is provided with food; but not Hanina himself ... who manages to subsist on a measure of carobs a week.⁴⁶ Hanina's wife is also drawn into this ascetic diet (being that it's so hard to cook for one).

Nevertheless, in Taanit 25a we find Mrs. Hanina, standing over a hot stove, throwing twigs inside; twigs representing the bread she does not have. She plays the game of pretend baking for the sake of *for shchein*; appearances. She does not wish to be put to shame by her impoverished state in front of her neighbors.

A nosy neighbor comes to check out the smoke from the "baking." Mrs. Hanina arrives at the door with a shovel (large spatula with which to flip over the mythical baking bread). A Miracle happens: the neighbor sees an oven full of bread. But, it is the shovel in her hand which captures the interest of a tanna who teaches - she brings the shovel because she is "accustomed to Miracles;" Miracles are a part of her "natural order." Just in case the bread miracle is not enough proof of Mrs. Hanina's involvement in the "family business" of Miracle making, Taanit 25a proceeds to relate how afterwards, Hanina's wife urges him to pray for something to be given to him to end their suffering: martyrdom has its limits, even for such a meritorious couple.⁴⁷

Hanina's prayers are answered by the appearance of the leg of a golden table. Alas, however, through a dream Hanina sees himself

eating at 3-legged tables. The dream brings them back to their senses ... of ascetic, and Hanina's wife asks him to pray for the golden leg to be taken away, so that he might eat at a perfect table in the next world ... rather than trade it in for a brief indulgence in this world.

Hanina and his wife's suffering helps lock them into "the pious" category; and they are miracled for their pioussness.

According to Ephraim Urbach, Hanina is "vouchsafed" a Miracle in Berakot 33a when he places his heel over a hole in which there is a venomous lizard; the lizard bites Hanina, but because Hanina will not interrupt his prayer, the lizard and not Hanina dies; an inversion of the expected Natural Order.⁴⁸

Urbach describes how Miracles are vouchsafed for certain individuals who give their lives for " *לען לעיצן* " ... the sanctification of God's name.

George Foot Moore defines " *לען לעיצן* " as "doing things that lead men to acknowledge God." Abraham's survival of Nimrod's furnace works out *לען לעיצן*, as does Daniel's deliverance from Nebuchadnezzar's furnace; for by the Miracle God's name is acknowledged.

In Berakot 20 we have already encountered an allusion to *לען לעיצן*: according to Abaye, that is the distinguishing factor between "us" and "them:"

*לען לעיצן דאס איז דאס וואס מיר האבן
לען לעיצן דאס איז דאס וואס מיר האבן*

A cursory explanation might say that the early generations used to be ready to sacrifice their lives for the sanctity of God's name, but not us; however, we have analyzed Kadushin's hypothesis that the chronology between Abaye and the k'dush ha-shemite he refers to, R. Adda b. Ahava is too close to signify a vertical change. Thus, some element of k'dush ha-shemites must live in Abaye's time; and therefore we must understand the passage as saying "us" and the "other group."⁴⁹

Another instance of *לעיל לעיל* arises in Taanit 10b (and paralleled in Sifra Ahare Perek 13), here Trajan taunts the brothers Lulianus and Rappus: let your God rescue you from execution as He was supposed to have saved Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. But, so prepared are the brothers to die for *לעיל לעיל* that they reply to Trajan: Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah were righteous and worthy of a Miracle; and Nebuchadnezzar a king worthy to be one through whom Miracles are wrought ... but not, you, Trajan. The Miracle is indeed here viewed as something very precious, very positive, and not to be wasted on the wicked ... even should the brothers have to die.

In Pirke d. R. Eliezer Chapter 42 (Friedlander edition) we are presented with R. Eliezer's statement that when, Moses said on the third day, "let the waters be gathered together," the waters congealed and were made into 12 valleys through which each tribe was to walk and between each were walls of water with windows through which each tribe could look at each other. However,

Akiba reports that when they reach the waters the Israelites are afraid and so turn back, until one tribe rouses courage and takes the lead. The tribe which is willing to take a chance? Judah. And, as Judah enters the sea, the entire tribe sanctifies God's name; verbally and by act, there is *לעו ארז*.

This Midrash provokes questions: what are the implications of Judah's association with *לעו ארז*? Does a certain faction of Rabbinic Society identify itself with both the concept of *לעו ארז* and the tribe of Judah?

While the other Midrashim we have studied indicate that there is an element of k'dush-ha-shem-ites within the Rabbinic Society; Pesachim 118b provides us with an answer to the second part of our question. Here we find it written that not Judah, but Benjamin, took the plunge first; therefore we have no evidence from which to conclude there is any significance to the coupling of Judah and *לעו ארז* in Pirke d. Rabbi Eliezer.

Sifre Deuteronomy (Friedmann 306) on Deuteronomy 32:3 proposes that *לעו ארז* is the consummate reason for Israel's going down to Egypt: "only in order that God might work Miracles and do mighty works, for the purpose of hallowing His holy name in the world."⁵⁰

The Midrash has brought us to a well-known principle in the study of Miracles: *דאזי 'מ'עו*; as we find repeated in the Mekilta d. R. Simeon b. Yohai, God works *ל'עו* and *ל'עו* and His name

grows in the world.⁵¹ Or, in the Mekilta d. R. Ishmael, Moses is quoted as telling Israel, "whenever you argue with me God performs for you Miracles and mighty deeds, and His name becomes great in the world."⁵²

However, God's name can not grow - can not become known in the world unless these Miracles and mighty deeds get some "P.R." We find a discussion of the importance of publicizing the Miracle in Shabbat 70. It devolves around the issue of whether maintaining a house lamp on Shabbat or the Hannukah lamp (when both can not be afforded) is more important.

According to Raba, the house lamp wins out because of the concept of *אין אור* : without the house lamp we'd all be tripping over things or doing things by accident in the dark which might violate the Sabbath. But, between affording the wine for the "kiddush ha yom" or the maintenance of the Hannukah lamp, Raba is unsure, since the Hannukah lamp " *אין אור* " - makes known the Miracle.

The fact that *אין אור* in this instance does not clearly "win out" and that, although well-known, it doesn't appear as frequently as other principles suggests that it is part of a minority plank. And, most logically, that minority would have been those who are predominantly concerned with *אין אור*.

If we continue to search the Midrash for signs of other individuals who in the rabbinic "now" are concerned with and involved with miracles, we come upon the term " *אין אור* ".

In a Rabbinic thesis (not tannaitic or amoraic but) of 1951, entitled "The Masid in Talmudic Literature"

Shalom Singer expresses confusion over Kaufmann Kohler's various definitions of "צ'דן;" and in particular as "men of works."⁵³ George Foot Moore, however suggests that there is a valid connection between the צ'דן and "men of good deeds." He bases his assumption on the use of the term "צ'דן" in conjunction with Hanina b. Dosa in Mishna Berach 9:13. Thus, we find a line drawn from "the last of the Miracle workers, to "צ'דן" to the צ'דן; from miracle to Hasid.

By Singer's own reckoning the Hasidim were:

scholars who displayed great devotion to the commandments and their fulfillment ... They were almost certainly an accepted part of the warp and woof of Rabbinic Society, consorting with the Sages (צ'דן), engaging with them in study and highly regarded by them.⁵⁴

Once again we find Rabbinic Society portrayed as a conglomerate of elements; an inclusive, all-fitting world!

Discussions involving Hasidim and Miracles appear in the Talmud mainly in the masechta of Shabbat. In Shabbat 121a 3rd century Palestinian Amora, R. Ammi, responds to the Mishnaic statement:

צ'דן ד'א ד'א ד'א ד'א
 ד'א ד'א ד'א ד'א ד'א
 ד'א ד'א ד'א ד'א ד'א
 ד'א ד'א ד'א ד'א ד'א

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Says Ammi: in the case of conflagration (ד'א ד'א) the Rabbis permitted each other to announce 'whoever extinguishes it won't lose from it.'

Our attention is drawn however to what follows R. Ammi's statement; for the text next relates that a fire breaks out in the courtyard of one Joseph b. Simai. when the Sepphoris garrison comes to extinguish it, in honour of the Sabbath, Joseph won't let them extinguish it. A Miracle happens: rain descends and extinguishes the fire.⁵⁶

That evening Joseph sends a reward to each man in the garrison. when the sages hear about this they repeat the Mishnaic statement. From this we deduce that, according to the midrash, up through the occurrence of the miracle, Joseph acts appropriately; but by paying them for not putting out the fire, this Hasid is overprotecting the Sabbath.

The issue in Shabbat 121b is whether one can kill a snake on the Sabbath. In this midrash we learn that a tanna recited before 4th century amora (and one-time head of Sura) Rabbah b. R. Huna, "if you kill a snake or scorpion on the Sabbath you upset the pious."

Rabbah answers "concerning these *שׂוֹרְפוֹת*, the *שׂוֹרְפוֹת* are displeased."⁵⁷ The discussion continues: when R. Huna, 2nd generation amora and another one-time head of Sura, sees a man kill a wasp, he sarcastically asks "have you killed them all?" Rabbah disagrees with the fatalistic Huna; he suggests that if one comes upon snakes and scorpions and kills them, it's apparent that it was fated (because for them to kill him would have been the Natural Order - but here the order is upset!) But, if one does not

kill him it is apparent that they should have killed him; however, in this case a Miracle is performed on the man's behalf - and even though this basid doesn't kill the snake or scorpion on Shabbat, they don't kill him: therein lies the Miracle.

This Midrash reveals much about the tension between *Y'oon* and *Le'oon*. It also expresses a view of the Sabbath as a time when we withdraw and let God fill the space. The Miracle comes into play in that sometimes, for the sake of one who is overzealous about the Sabbath, a Miracle occurs (on the Sabbath!) However, were all of Rabbinic Society *Le'oon* there could be no order and so *Le'oon* exist by virtue of *Le'oon* and vice versa - together - on the Rabbinic spectrum.

Shabbat 150b tells us that a breach was made in the field of a *Y'oon*; he is about to put a fence around it when he remembers it is the Sabbath. Because he refrains, a miracle is performed for him: a cedar bush grows up where the breach was - and from this bush the *Y'oon* and his house derive their livelihood;⁵⁸ according to "Dov," the motif of an extraordinary tree or bush supporting the pious is a frequent one. Again, the *Y'oon* is to receive favorable treatment ... a Miracle ... for his extreme stance.

Implicit in these Midrashim concerning the *Y'oon* and the Miracle is the notion that this particular segment of Rabbinic Society could depend on Miracles.⁵⁹ In fact, Shabbat 35b tells us,

Miracles are thought of by the *3'at* as more dependable than certainly women (as we've learned elsewhere: women are light-headed and fickle).

In this Midrash we find 2nd century Tanna, Simeon bar Yohai, hiding with his son from the Romans in the *213N/1 A'2*. While they hide out there, Simeon's wife sneaks in with bread and water. But, once their execution decree becomes even more severe, Simeon tells his son "women are unstable; the Romans may torture your mother and she'll give us away." So Simeon and his son leave and hide for 12 years in a cave. This time they subsist, not through the graces of some undependable woman, but the yield of a carob tree and water from a well; both of which were created for them by a miracle. An undercurrent in this Midrash, as well as the other Midrashim in which *A'3'ed* are mentioned in connection with miracles is that there's an expectation and a faith that a miracle will be wrought for the pious, the miracle awaits just around the corner ... it is part of his natural Order.

We have thus far encountered several individuals who appear in "Miracle" Midrashim: prophet, nasid, "av" and "righteous gentile." But, there remains yet another variety of Midrashim which discusses miracles: Midrashim which are performed by and/or for "tout le monde."

Perhaps the most striking aspect of the favorable Rabbinic treatment of "Collective miracles" is its lack of quantity; they are not nearly as

numerous as Miracles concerning individuals. Let us plant the question "why" (do we encounter fewer collective Miracles) in the back of our minds, as we proceed to take inventory of those collective miracles which do exist.⁶⁰

One "group" for whom Miracles might seem to occur is the "Flood Generation." Sanhearin 108b reports that in order that this generation would repent, God has the sun rise for them in the west and set in the east:

*השמש קמה למערב וישיב
השמש למזרח 130*

Urbach maintains that this change in the order of the universe, does not constitute a Miracle. And, although he lays down no distinguishing criteria between Miracle and Order change here, Urbach holds, that in the days of the amoraim, changes in the Natural Order are coming to the fore; but Miracles vis a vis Natural Order still present no conflict for the Sages.

Can we decipher with any less controversy, Collective Miracles (as opposed to Natural Order change) which take place concerning the Rabbis' ultimate "collective:" Israel?

For Israel, all other creatures were instructed to change their nature, if Israel should need their help in the course of history.⁶¹

That God implants the possibility of "changes" for Israel's sake is reiterated in the Mekilta of R. Simeon b. Yohai 106:14. Says R. Simeon b. Gamliel, when God causes bread to come down and

dew to go up (in the manna miracle) ... changing
for them the works of creation: פנִי הַיָּם

נֶסֶם ; it attests to how special Israel is to God.

however, the term "nes" is found with another
"collective" Midrash: Ecclesiastes Raba 1:11 asks:
how many Miracles are worked for Israel, after
they left Egypt and before they went out?"⁶³

Could not one of these pre-departure Miracles
be that which is reported by R. Shila in Pirke
d. R. Eliezer 58b (page 332) even though the
specific term nes never appears?

All the children of the Israelites whom the
Egyptians cast into the river did not die.
The river cast them up and threw them into
the desert of Egypt.

Or, could it be anything but a collective miracle
when Sefer Aggadan 45a tells us: when the Egyptians
come to kill the Israelite babies, the ground
swallows up the babies and their mothers. Then
the Egyptians bring in oxen and plough over them.
But, once the Egyptians leave, the Israelite
mothers and children break through the earth and
come out "like the grass of the field."

These babies grow up to become the first to
recognize God when he reveals himself at the Red
Sea. At work here then is using the experience of
Miracle as the criterion of formation of an elite
even within the collective itself. Does such a
notion of an elite within an elite manifest a

"political situation: of those favoring a laudatory treatment of miracles dubbing their group and those who identify positively with miracles ... as superior?

That there is a view of "gradations" even within the experience of collective miracle is expressed in a *Midrash* which appears in *Ioma* 75a, and *Sifre* numbers 89's explanation of the logistics of the collective miracle of the manna:

For the righteous the manna fell in front of their homes; ordinary men had to go to the field and gather it; but the wicked found it only after a laborious search.

What appears here then is an idea of individuals within a collective; us within "all of us;" but, nevertheless all profiting from the wonderful, marvelous, isn't-it-just-great Miracle.

Are there miracles which make us "quevel" and miracles which make usrown? No, more likely, in the *Midrash*, there are just those Rabbis who quevel over miracles and those whorown about them; and even some who may prove ambivalent.

Having dealt with favorable rabbinic treatments of the miracle, it is now time to turn our attention to the other end of the pendulum; to those *Midrashim* which express a put-down of miracles and treatments which make light of miracles.

The motivations for deprecating the Miracle are varied. One such motive is embodied in the notion among some Rabbis that miracles connote dependence.

THE MIRACLE DEPICTION:

The Rabbis who are responsible for Leviticus Raba 34:14 write that even the "weak" deprecate Miracles.⁶⁴ In this text R. Jose the Galilean brings home Eleazar b. Azariah one night as a dinner guest. R. Jose's impudent wife (known around-town for insulting him in the presence of his disciples) has been cooking something on the stove.

When R. Jose asks "what's cooking?" Mrs. Jose answers "vegetarian mash." But, R. Jose uncovers the pot, and ... lo and behold ... it's chicken! When R. Jose asks her to explain her lie, his wife answers, it must have been a Miracle. If the weak can ridicule Miracles, then to a certain element, the Miracle is by no means sacred!

From the Miracle's association with weakness, it is but a short distance to the Miracle as emblem of the diminished state; and, therefore one does not live in "great expectations" of the Miracle. This is the message of Shabbat 32a.

In this Midrash we find R. 'U' (Yannai) stating a position which negates both a reliance on Miracles, and the valuation of Miracles when he says:

אין אנו צריכין לנסות
אין אנו צריכין לנסות
אין אנו צריכין לנסות
אין אנו צריכין לנסות

When R. Hanin challenges Yannai for a proof text, Yannai cites Genesis 32:10:

אין אנו צריכין לנסות
אין אנו צריכין לנסות

Shabbat 32a makes an interesting choice of words, especially in light of our previous findings concerning favoring stances on Miracles. Whereas among the "favorable" Midrashim it is "for the merit" of past and present "worthies" that Miracles occur, in this text there is a "deduction of merits". And, whereas a particular group associated with Miracles has already been identified as "אֲזִיזִין", the Rabbis in Shabbat 32a choose to use the proof text containing the very term אֲזִיזִין in such a way as to "shoot down" the Miracle. We go from "wonderful Miracle!" to "what profit Miracle?"

Points or demerits for Miracles; this may be the issue of Shabbat 53b (may be because also at issue here is whether Miracle and chance of the Natural Order are one and the same.)

In Shabbat 53b a man's wife has died, leaving him with a child who has to be suckled. This man cannot afford to pay a wet-nurse; whereupon a Miracle is performed for him: his breasts fill with milk and he suckles the child. (68)

The controversy which ensues is over whether this man is a superior individual in that a Miracle is performed for him or an inferior one. R. Joseph b. Hiyya, 4th century philanthropist, vineyard owner and Merkavah Mystic, takes the position that the man is a great man. (69) Abaye, however, says the man is inferior ... *אֲזִיזִין* ... because the natural order is changed for him. There is an interchange here of the terms *אֲזִיזִין* and *אֲזִיזִין* *אֲזִיזִין* *אֲזִיזִין*.

Rashi, in support of Abaye, writes that the man's inferiority is indicated by the fact that he doesn't "merit the gates of remuneration"; Rashi uses his yardstick ... money ... to measure if the man is *אֲזִיזִין* or *אֲזִיזִין*. Several centuries after Rashi, this text still bothers Urbach, with regard to the aforementioned switch of terms *אֲזִיזִין* and *אֲזִיזִין* *אֲזִיזִין* *אֲזִיזִין*. Urbach concludes that because we don't hear of any act of the man's which would warrant him getting a Miracle, this is a breach in the natural order,

but not a miracle.

Urbach's bias is showing; he applies his own positive perspective of Miracles (he belongs to our Chapter I) to what should have been a more objective evaluation. By this Urbach has created his own set of distinctions: the Miracle is something "good", a change in the natural order something "bad".

Back in the Rabbinic world ... some Rabbis are frowning on the Miracle because they associate it with danger. We have already encountered the principle stated by R. Yannai in Shabbat 32a that one doesn't stand in a place of danger;⁽⁷⁰⁾ a place of danger for Yannai being a bridge, for R. Zera "out among the palm trees on a day with a strong southwind", and for Rashi - commenting on Shabbat 32 - an inclined wall.

The case of the leaning wall, place of danger, is found in Taanit 20b. There was a dilapidated wall standing in Nehardea for some 13 years. Rav and Samuel always go around it. But, one day they pass the wall when in the company of Adda b. Ahava ... and this time Rav decides there is no need to take precautions because Adda's merit is so great, nothing will happen to them. Not only Rav but R. Huna "leans on" Adda b. Ahava's merit. R. Huna has a cache of wine in a dilapidated house. He brings R. Adda there so that the house won't fall until all the wine is removed. As soon as R. Adda leaves, the house does collapse. R. Huna may have gotten the wine out, but he incurs R. Adda's wrath since it is said that he agrees with R. Yannai's "never stand in a place of danger" principle (and he probably doesn't like being used either.)

The principle of *לֹא יִשְׁתָּכַח מִן הַחַיִּים* ... in the deflationary treatment of Miracles ... is extended from the physical to the spiritual realm: one should not place oneself in spiritual danger; temptation should be avoided and resisted.

Avodah Zarah 18b relates how this extension into the spiritual realm came about in a situation involving R. Meir-and-Family. We learn how Beruriah's sister has been placed in a brothel, and how Rabbi Meir sets out to ransom her. Meir thinks: if she hasn't been subjected to anything wrong, a Miracle will be wrought for her. On arriving at the brothel R. Meir puts her to the test. He disguises himself and pretends to be a customer. But his sister-in-law turns him down saying she's *na'at* *na'at* ("in woman's way".) His testing continues ... he replies "I'll wait." This time she suggests he go to one of the prettier girls. Now Rabbi Meir knows she "hasn't been subjected to anything wrong", she has resisted temptation. Could the Miracle be ... being in a place of danger and not having anything happen? Or does this tell us that only one who has not been tarnished is worthy of a Miracle?

The warden accepts Rabbi Meir's bribe (so there is no Miracle involved in her obtaining freedom.) The irony of course is that we know Beruriah dies - having not resisted temptation. She commits suicide after being seduced by one of Meir's students (at least so reports Rosh Hashonah 18.)

The thread of this Midrash is picked up in a series of "vignettes" which "turn the tables" - men being seduced by Roman matrons as reported in Kiddushin 39b and 40a.

A *na'at* tries to seduce Rabbi Hanina b. Pappi. To defend his honor he pronounces a certain formula so that boils and scabs will cover his body (strains of Beruriah's sister saying there are prettier ones.) But the matrona is not easily turned off; she does something that heals him. Hanina flees to the bathhouse (men's room?) The next morning the Rabbis assess the situation and pronounce the following conclusion: "perhaps you were tempted with immorality and successfully resisted

(למאן אפ'3'5) because it was taught "He who is tempted with immorality and successfully resists, a Miracle is performed for him." (71)

In Kiddushin 40a Rabbi Zadok resists the advances of a matrona by coming up with that typical woman's excuse "I've got a headache." More precisely Rabbi Zadok says *אין לי כח* (72) - and I'm unable. And finally Rabbi Kahana avoids seduction by asking that he be allowed first to adorn himself (another "woman's excuse: "let me powder my nose".)

למאן אפ'3'5

So committed is Kahana to resisting temptation that he goes to throw himself off the roof. Fortunately, Elijah catches him and he is saved (in two ways.)

It is interesting that not only are these stories of resisting temptation associated with the "weaker sex" but the Rabbis who withstand temptation even use women's defense tactics in fighting off seduction. And since these Miracles of being saved are so intertwined with the "weak", it would be difficult not to categorize them as having come from a segment of the Rabbinic world which is sceptical about the notion of "purely wonderful Miracles."

Still other Rabbis who harbor negative attitudes toward the Miracle develop the dictum *אין לי כח* / *אין לי כח* / *אין לי כח* And this evolves as the crux in Pesachim 64a.

Here we find Abaye and Raba arguing about who locks the doors after the first division of priests enter the Holy of Holies. Raba, the Mehoza academy amora says the priests lock the doors while Pumbeditha's Abaye replies that the doors lock themselves:

אין לי כח / *אין לי כח* / *אין לי כח*

They differ in respect to relying on Miracles.

At first glance we conclude Abaye relies on Miracles.

But if we temper our observations with some "political savvy", we can detect that it isn't that Abaye wants so much for us to rely on Miracles, he just doesn't want to "rely on" priests. Although there are priests on this "transitional generation" amora's family tree, Abaye would be anti-priest (a not uncommon position among the Rabbis.) Since we have already observed his hostility to the Miracle in Shabbat 53b, it becomes necessary to reconcile these factors with the "first-glance stance" of relying on the nes in Pesachim 64b. The only possible conclusion therefore is to interpret Abaye's answer in 64b with this inflection: "even relying on a Miracle is preferable to relying on (or crediting) a priest!

The principle of *אין סתם לומר נס* again comes to fore in Kiddushin 39b.⁽⁷³⁾ Rabbi Eleazar warns against standing near a rickety ladder because injury is likely to occur; and where injury is likely:

אין סתם לומר נס

Urbach has suggested that underlying the principle of *אין סתם לומר נס* is a tendency to limit Miracles to the past; while we can recognize *אין סתם לומר נס* as a deflating principle, neither Kiddushin 39b nor Pesachim 64a lend much support to Urbach's hypothesis.

If Miracles are not to be relied on, it would then follow that they are not to be taken into account in halachic discussions (there is no citing or mentioning them.)

אין סתם לומר נס

Guttman defines this principle as an anonymous one, which appeared first among the 3rd generation of tannaim; specifically, Guttman thinks, it makes its debut in Yevamot 121b. Here, the principle is used in a baraita against Rabbi Meir - he doesn't intend to introduce/cite a Miracle when referring to a man who remains alive in a pit for 3 days.⁽⁷⁴⁾

in nullin 43a /'v'v'sv /'v'c is quoted by the 4th generation tanna, Rabbi Jose b. Judah (a contemporary of Judah ha nasi) against his opponent's use of the biblical verse Job 16:13, on the subject of "trefah" as far as piercing the gall bladder (Job continues to live past "he pours out my gall on the ground."⁷⁵ R. Isaac b. R. Joseph continues "you can't cite miracles in support of an argument because then the end of the Job verse ("he cleaves my reins asunder and doesn't spare") could also be used - and how then could he live:"

It is Urbach's contention that the sages develop the dictum of /'v'v'sv /'v'c to express the following notion: "even though a miracle may occur it may not be cited for the purpose of establishing the halacha, because it doesn't belong to the permanent order."⁷⁶

In Berakot 60, Abaye's teacher, Rabbi Joseph uses the term /'v'v'sv /'v'c in what might be viewed as a more colloquial fashion: Leah's prayer that her child be a girl so that Rachel's can be the boy, can - because of the rabbis' astonishing, precocious knowledge of embryology - be almost rationally explained; hence "no miracle has to be cited." However, even though Kadushin is probably correct that /'v'v'sv /'v'c is a dominant trend among the Rabbis, it is necessary to cite Ginzberg's report (and Yoma 75a's) that in a previous setting /'v'v'sv /'v'c not only doesn't apply but is inverted; the miracle of the manna is used to decide lawsuits: if a married couple appeared before Moses accusing each other of inconstancy, Moses would say "tomorrow judgement will be given." If the manna then descended for the wife before her husband's house, he was in the right. But, if her share of the manna fell before her parents' house, she was in the right.

/'v'v'sv /'v'c, /'v'v'sv /'v'c ... these are means with which certain of the Rabbis attenuate the miracle - upfront! But, we know that in our own times writers and thinkers do

not always take the direct path; sometimes they subtlety ... innuendo, nuance.

In our survey of Rabbinic reports of Miracles we have come upon a good number of Miracles which take place in "gray areas": by modern standards, Miracles which occur in places where corroboration would be difficult; Miracles which occur at doubtful times ... limbo area Miracles. The question evolves - whether the Rabbis who seek to put-down the Miracle, could also be using the more indirect devices? Let us first go on reconnaissance of where Miracles occur.

The Rabbis have little room for "moving around" Biblical Miracles. Up through Moses, they must for the most part take place "מִן־הַשָּׁמַיִם".

From Ginsberg, however, we learn of even Biblical city cave dwellers⁽⁷⁷⁾, before God sends down the manna:

they murmured: for they said they were taken from a well-known land to an uninhabited one.

Rabbi Eleazar of Modim (in the Mekilta of Rabbi Simeon b. Yohai 20:127) describes how the Jews in Egypt are sent by their masters to the "shock" to do grocery shopping.

According to urban theorist Henri Pirenne, the ancient city is a "community of merchants." Conversely, as the city symbolizes man's attempt to provide for his own, the city is condemned by the "prophets" who want man to depend on God.⁽⁷⁹⁾

But while Rabbi Eleazar of Modim may seem to be suggesting some nostalgic reminiscing for those Egyptian city flesh-pots of old, the prevalent Biblical view is that city equals sin. Citing Josephus Act 1:22, Ginsberg writes:⁽⁸⁰⁾

When Genesis 4:17 says 'and Cain built a city' - the building of cities was a godless deed, for he surrounded them with a wall. He also introduced a change in the ways of simplicity. Wherein men had lived before ... he changed the world

into cunning craftiness.

But since the Biblical world is the *Midbar*, this can hardly come as a surprise. The Rabbis may well be saying - with the figures of Bible rooted as they are in the wilderness - a disdain for city by the "good" or association with city and "the bad" is appropriate. But what of the individuals who experience Miracles in contemporary Rabbinic times, what is their relationship to the city?

We recall that in Ta'anit 25a Mrs. Hanina sends Rabbi Hanina b. Dosa out to pray for sustenance. In a Midrash on Psalm 92:8 much the same thing occurs with R. Simeon and his wife.⁽⁸¹⁾ Only this occurs on Passover eve rather than Shabbat. Rabbi Simeon goes outside the city to prayer - and behold, a precious stone appears in his hand. Does this mean he struck a rich "lode"? Or does it mean Miracles happen in the wilderness where there are no witnesses to challenge them? For one who does not hold a propitious attitude toward the Miracle, the device of placing it in a setting as dubious as the *Midbar*, is certainly an option.

According to Micca Eliade "water in cosmogony and myth fills the same function, no matter what type of cultural pattern. It precedes all forms and upholds all creation."⁽⁸²⁾

Many Miracles are seen by the Rabbis as having been worked through water. Deuteronomy Raba III:8 even states:

the Rabbis say "look at how all the Miracles
God has worked for Israel, He worked only
through water."⁽⁸³⁾

This Midrash continues by reciting how the Egyptians drink from the river blood, but the Israelites water (Exodus Raba 9:10); how when the Israelites leave Egypt, the sea sees the tetragrammaton on Moses' staff and (based on Psalm 114:3, according to Rabbi Nehora) it flees;⁽⁸⁴⁾

or how, when the Israelites come to the bitter waters at Marah, a Miracle is worked for them and the water becomes fresh.

Psalm 114.7, quoted by R. Nehorai, is also the subject of one of several Midrashim which tell of 10 Miracles which God performs on the sea for the sake of Israel; besides Midrash Psalms 114.7, we find variant versions in the Midrash on Psalms 136.7, in Midrash HaGadol on *16 nifol*, and Ginzberg's version which he takes partly from the Mekilta of R. Simeon 64, partly from Avot de R. Nathan 99 and partly from Tanhuma *nifol* 10.

Mentioned in the 10 of Midrash on Psalms 114.7 are the following:

- 1) God draws the sea waters into walls; based on Exodus 14:29, "the waters were like a wall to them."
- 2) God made a tunnel through the waters (Habbakuk 3:14) for the sake of his tribes.
- 3) God flattens the water into a level highway, Zechariah 2:8 Jerusalem shall be stretched as the flat countryside.
- 4) God makes sweet water out of the sea's salt rock, Psalm 78:16: he brought streams out of the rock.
- 5) God turns the sea into clay; Habbakuk 3:15: "You've made the waters into clay."
- 6) God dries the sea as straw in a heap, Exodus 15:8: "the floods stood upright as in a heap."
- 7) God breaks the sea's surface, Psalm 74:13, "you break the sea in pieces."
- 8) God divides the sea into separate paths for each tribe, Psalm 136:13, "He who divided the sea into paths."

- 9) God turns the sea into dry land, Exodus 14:19, 'they walked on dry land.'
- 10) God makes the sea into a valley which sprouts grass, Isaiah 63:14, 'as the cattle who go down into the valley.'

Of these 10 sea miracles, 2,4,9,5,7,8,6 are included on Psalm 136.73 Midrash's list; in place of 1,3 and 10 we find that:

- 1) the waters are turned into rocks; Psalm 74:13
- 2) the waters are gathered in masses (to be distinguished from "heaps"), Exodus 15:8.

The Midrash ha Gadol version follows the Psalm 136:7 version but uses as a proof text for the last (the sea was made into glass) Samuel 22:12 "he made darkness pavillions around him."

Ginzberg expands on the divisions for each tribe Miracle and adds 2 Miracles of his own. He writes that the sea yielded the Israelites what they wanted as they passed through during the Exodus:⁸⁵

if a child cried as it lay in its mother's arms, she only had to stretch out her hand and pluck some fruit and quiet it.⁸⁶

Ginzberg also reports on who the cheerleaders are - at the crossing of the sea; in itself this is a Miracle. They are the 3 patriarchs and 6 matriarchs (Jacob's 4 and Sarah and Rebekkah) whom God has fetched out of their graves to serve as witnesses.

The authors of Exodus Raba ~~21:10~~ 21:10 worry about 2 things in connection with these water miracles: how do you explain the contradiction that the children of Israel (as Exodus 14:22 reports) go into the sea on dry ground and what is the significance of the mothers plucking fruit for the children during the passage?

To the first question they answer that the "contradiction" is erased when it is understood that the sea is divided only after the Israelites step into it and only after the waters reach their noses does it become dry land. (87)

The 2nd issue is attached to R. Nehorai who suggests a relationship between the text and Psalm 106.7: (He) led them through the depths as He did through a wilderness; meaning as they lacked for nothing in the wilderness, so too here...*1'N!*

Yoma 38a takes a look at the "sea Miracles" associated with the doors of Nicanor. (88) Nicanor, having fetched the doors for the great eastern gate of the Temple court, is on his way home from Alexandria. A gale arises on the sea to drown him. He throws one of the doors into the sea, but the sea doesn't stop its rage. It only does when he prepares to cast the other door in, saying "cast me in with it." He even retrieves the first lost door in the end.

A Miracle "at sea" which doesn't come about - this is a situation very close to home for the Rabbis. In the year 45, the Jewish prophet Theudas assembles many of his followers at the Jordan River and tells them, as it did for Joshua it will do for us.

But the Roman procurator either doesn't know his Joshua or is too impatient to wait for the Miracle. He sends in his cavalry, beheads Theudas and kills many of his followers. (89)

It is not just "by the sea" or "down by the riverside" that water Miracles occur, but also "by the well."

There is a Midrash in Tunhuma Euber (Hukkat 61b) which tells of how when the Israelites come to Edom they ask to be let through the land, promising "not to drink the waters of the well" (Numbers 20:14.)

What does this mean? The account continues:

the Torah teaches good manners; if one is traveling through a land, even if he has enough provisions, he must put them aside and buy from the local shopkeepers. Moses does not mean "we won't drink from your well - but rather the Miraculous well." (90)

Here we have an overt rejection of the Miraculous in favor of *life* and *good* *provisions*

When the texts refer to "the Miraculous well" of which well are they talking? The Zohar 2:12b ponders, for instance, over Exodus 2:15 "he sat down by a well." Is the well seen by Jacob and Moses, the same well which Abraham and Isaac dug?

R. Isaac answers "no, the well associated with Abraham and Isaac was created at the same time that the world was created, while the one seen by Moses and Jacob (as reported in Avot 5:9) was formed at twilight on Shabbat Eve of the creation week" (one of the Miracles.)

There is also a water Miracle in Tauteronomy Raba (Ekeb 5.3) which tells of a man who digs cisterns for the benefit of the community. While his daughter is on a trip, she tries to cross a river but is washed away. R. Phinehas b. Jair says, since this man by providing the community with water does God's will, therefore God won't destroy his daughter by water (the body, as yet, had not been found!)

As soon as Rabbi Phinehas gets through speaking, an angel descends and draws the daughter out of the water - alive!

According to Ecclesiasties Raba 1:7, before rain was created, the earth used to drink from the Nile (and other such rivers.) But then for 4 reasons, says Rabbi Samuel b. Nahman, 1st generation Palestinian amora, in the name of

Rabbi Hanina of Sepphoris, God makes a change so that the earth would only drink "from above;" because men of violence might have deprived each other of the water supply, God takes it **out** of their hands; because it is necessary to wash away injurious dew from plants; because one who lives on dry land should have drink as much as the one in the lowland; and, because we all should turn our eyes toward heaven (Job 5:11: so that those who are low may turn their eyes upward.)

It has become apparent that water Miracles are abundant in midrash. Perhaps Eliade's anthropological analysis is pertinent to these midrashim, but water can also have another significance:

When we try to open our eyes underwater, we cannot see clearly; it is a murky, unreliable vision that we get. Therefore water is also a "shady, limbo area." Placing so many Miracles "in water" may be a very subtle way for some Rabbis to say "these doubtful miracles should not be lauded."

A yet more obviously ambiguous area in which to "stage" a miracle would be one delineated by time, that most shady segment of time. night.

Certain miracles will occur in the dark, they will come while "we" are asleep ... and certainly that is a condition which connotes doubts. from "whence" do we know that night-time is miracle-hour? we know it from Numbers Raba (Balak on 22:20).

And God came to Balaam at night: it was a night of watching unto the Lord. All the miracles which were wrought for Israel and the punishment of the wicked on their behalf took place at night!

The miracle most apparently night-timed is the manna miracle. The Mekilta of Simeon b. Yohai *after* reports that

God gives us sustenance while we are sleeping.

Nothing derogatory about Miracles is evinced in the Numbers Raba or Simeon b. Yohai texts. Likewise, the water Midrashim afford us only a positive view of Miracles. Perhaps dark, sleep and water are doubted areas by analytical 20th century standards. But our sampling has shown that there are no such subtleties made in these 2 areas by the Rabbis.

However, the setting of certain Miracles in the wilderness -as with Simeon b. Halafta - could reflect the tension within the Rabbinic world of cutting the cord from the Biblical wilderness past, and those members of the Rabbinic world nostalgic for the good-old-days. Thus these city-wilderness Midrashim reflect the diversity of attitudes within that one Rabbinic world.

MIRACLES AS PART OF THE NATURAL ORDER:

While the Night of the Rabbis feels no shadows, casts no aspersions on Miracles, Twilight has a featured role in a collection of Midrashim which seems to reflect still another distinctive posture toward the Miracle; that posture which expresses Miracles as part of the Natural Order.

The "Primitive Mind," Mircea Eliade writes, has always given time a hierophanic dimension: the time of sunset notable as a lucky time.⁸⁸ But for a portion of the "Rabbinic Mind" it is more appropriate to dub sunset "an ordered time:" a time which from "the beginning" has belonged to the ordered world.

Numerous Midrashim report of God - having come through ordering all things during the first 6 days of Creation Week - at twilight on the eve of Shabbat setting into the Natural Order ... Miracles. Pieces de resistance: Afterthoughts: At least 10 "Miracles" these Midrashim suggest are natural and foreordained.

"עשר נברא" are listed in Mishna Avot 5:9 as having been created "עשר נברא":

- (1) the mouth of the earth, mentioned in connection with Korah in Numbers 16:30
- (2) the mouth of "the well": either the well identified with Miriam from Numbers 21:16 or the well Moses opens by striking the rock in Numbers 20:7
- (3) the (talking) mouth of Balaam's ass, out of Numbers 22:28
- (4) the rainbow from Genesis 20:7
- (5) the manna from Exodus 16

- (6) Moses' rod in Exodus 4:17
- (7) the shamir to cut stone; from I Kings 6:7 and Exodus 20:22
- (8) the "text" mentioned in connection with Exodus 24:12⁸⁹
- (9) the "writing" from Exodus 32:16
- (10) the tablets from Exodus 32:16

Mishna Avot 5:9 also mentions a list of 4 alternates (based on *ל' חלוקה*):

- (a) Moses' sepulchre; Deuteronomy 34:6
- (b) the ram from the Akaddan - to be heker until the time Abraham would need it
- (c) the spirits from Esther 2:4 and Daniel 6:3⁹⁰
- (d) the tongs which held the iron from which the first man-made tongs were forged; Pesachim 54a

Since the Avot list cites Pesachim 54a, the original list may be from that text. Pesachim's "Big ten" substitutes for the shamir on the main list, the cave in which Moses and then Elijah stand. The shamir shows up as an alternate suggested by R. Josiah.

Sifrei on Deuteronomy 33 (355) follows Pesachim 54a in including the cave, but it also substitutes on the "first string" Moses' sepulchre for the mouth of the earth; and Aaron's rod in place of Moses (could this have political overtones?) Still another listing appears in Pirke d. R. Eliezer 21a (Friedlander edition page 124). Here the ram of the Akaddah appears on the primary list rather than the rod.

Ginzberg reports that all in all, 10 rabbinic sources carry this aggadah, and that no 2 correspond exactly as to the enumeration of the 10 things.⁹¹

Bruce Malina hypothesizes that this Midrash is probably pre-tannaitic since by the 3rd generation of tannaim, of which Josiah is a member, mentions still older sources. Malina also theorizes that

the common denominator of the items on the Big Ten lists are that they are "miraculous in the course of Israel's history" or "necessary as a prototype or instrument in human history."

Malina's emphasis with the "10" is that they demonstrate the principle that God's works are finished from the time of the foundation of the world ... and that "since that time there is nothing new under the sun."

Malina reflects the same concern we have seen previously as an issue between Galen and some of the tannaim: how could an all-knowing creator allow for alterations or deviations in an order which he has fixed? The solution lies in developing the notion that right from Creation God provides - He planned even the ostensibly unplanned - for certain extraordinary events. Therefore, many inexplicable occurrences will begin to make sense if we uphold this view.

It explains ... in Exodus Raba 3:15 why Moses is " $\rho\theta$ $\beta\alpha\beta$ ": God makes Moses inarticulate, in order that he might perform with him the nes of: "God will be his mouth when Moses speaks." Or, it explains where the fire and brimstone which destroy Sodom and Gomorrah come from: they are stored in heaven from "the beginning" to come down and destroy evildoers. Like prepared frozen bakery products, these Miracles are ready-to-go; all that's needed is the "baking" ... that is, the right circumstance to transport them from "posse" to "esse."

The "consummate" Midrash on this subject is Bereshit Raba 5:5; Maimonides uses it as the basis for his statement on Miracles in his Guide (2:29). Here we find R. Jonathan's declaration that God made a stipulation - le'ethano - with the sea that, at the proper time (Exodus 14:27 being the proper time) it would divide for Israel. R. Jeremiah b. Eleazar amends R. Jonathan's statement to include not just "with the" sea, but with all creation is this condition made: then ... the sun and moon were commanded to stand still before Joshua ... at the later appropriate moment, the ravens to feed Joshua; the fire not to hurt Misha'el, Hananiah and Azariah; the lions not to harm Daniel; the heavens to open before Ezekiel; the fish to vomit forth Jonah.

The view that Miracles are foreordained elicits the response from Grant that "even so" God is still at work. Grant is concerned about the impression made by such attitudes as R. Jose's in Genesis Raba 68:4: when a Roman matron asks R. Jose what has God been doing since then, if during the 6 days of Creation He created everything, R. Jose replies "He sits and makes matches." Grant would like God's work "since then" to have less "levity" than then Midrash about R. Jose conveys.

Grant proceeds to "jump the problem" of a "retired God" by heading for the following definition of Miracles: "Miracles are the representative occasions on which God's activity especially impresses human consciousness. But, this does not mean that there is no underlying order."⁹² Perhaps this might be expressed in another way: that miracles are foreordained,

it's only that they seem to man to be "something new." God knows and sees the (continuous) Miracles ... but Man doesn't always.

This is the posture taken in the midrash on Psalms 106.1 by Eleazar b. Pedath, contemporary of Simeon b. Lakish:

Many miracles and wonders do you perform for us everyday and no man knows. God knows. He alone knows. To He who divided the Red Sea in pieces as the piece of bread. Just as the world cannot do without the piece of bread, so it is impossible for the world to do without miracles. A man was lying on his bed and a serpent was near him, but the man does not know, when the serpent flees, just before the man has put his foot on the ground, what a miracle God has performed for him.

The thread of this Midrash is picked up in Niddan 31a in which there are 2 "traveling salesmen" on "the road." One gets a thorn in his foot and starts to curse because his injury forces him to delay his trip. But, a short-time later, when he hears that the "salesman" who was able to continue on, died when the snip they were both to have taken, sinks - the thorned salesman praises God ... for the miracle he did not immediately recognize.

R. Tanhuma of Caesera in Exodus Raba 24:1 brings still another example of the unconscious Miracle phenomenon, in R. Rifa's name; specifically:

Come and see how many miracles God performs for man and man doesn't know it. If man ate dry bread (without being moistened) it would go down into his bowels and scratch him, but God created a well in the throat (saliva) which safely conducts the bread down.

That we cannot see or comprehend God's ways -

as manifest in the Miracle - emphasizes the distinctions between God's ways and man's.

R. Himeon b. Gamliel in the Mekilta 4. R. Ishmael (Vayassa on 15:22) explains the connection between Miracles and God's unique powers. While men use the sweet to cure the bitter, God cures the bitter with bitter. God puts what spoils within a thing that has been spoiled in order to perform a miracle; cited is Isaiah 38:21 in which a miracle is performed via a cake of flies laid on raw flesh.

Or, the distinctions between man and God are pointed out by Resh Lakish in Exodus Raba 25:1; whereas God can store 3 different kinds of "liquids" in a storage bin and have each come out individually ... fire-pistone, dew and manna ... man cannot. Exodus Raba 25:3 also comments on the difference between God's ways and man's as expressed by Miracles:

man's ways and God's differ; a scone held by a man only drips water when he shuts his hand, but not when it is open; but with God it is the opposite. If he shuts it no water descends.

Or, in Exodus Raba 25:6 we find this comment based on Psalm 86:8's "There is none like thee among the gods:"

a man can carve out for himself a way on a road, but is unable to do so on the sea, as God can ... among mortals the master sleeps while the slave stands by; but God is Israel's guardian (Psalm 121:4: he who keeps Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps ...) Among mortals the water comes from above and the bread from below, but in the case of God we read that the water came from below, namely the well (Numbers 21:17): "spring up of well."

And, yet even though miracles point out that God's ways and man's are different, by placing miracles within the natural order, man's and God's "ways" are made analogous. To emphasize the importance of the natural order, this element of rabbinic society writes that even God is bound by his own laws:

Avodah Zara 54b relates how the "philosophers" in Rome asked the Jewish *ḥakamim* why God doesn't blot out idolatry if he doesn't want it. The elders answer: if they worship something for which the world has no need (a pet rock perhaps) God would abolish it. But, since people worship the sun, moon, stars and planets ... should God destroy the world on account of the *ḥakamim*?

So, the elders continue, for

עוֹלָם יִבְנוּ וְעוֹלָם יִפְּסוּ

regarding the *ḥakamim*, they'll get theirs" in the future when they have to stand judgement.

The Avodah Zara text proceeds with a more practical illustration through "דורו יבנה ודורו יפסד": A man steals a measure of wheat and then sows it. By right the wheat should not grow, but it does because ... back to the chorus ... the world pursues its customary/ natural course.

A second "earthy" illustration is given. A man has intercourse with his neighbor's wife. By right, she shouldn't conceive, but again,

עוֹלָם יִבְנוּ וְעוֹלָם יִפְּסוּ.

This midrash tells us that God does not walk away. He also is trapped in the agreements He makes. And He won't overturn the Order He

established, even to root out evil. So, if God must abide by the natural order, so too his Miracles.

if the implications from Avodah Zara 54b proved to be problematic for the rabbis, they temper it with this attitude: God does not interrupt the Natural Order, even for the evil. Evil and good are exposed to the same occurrences ... even the same miracles; only the outcome is different; sometimes in this world as well.

An example of this attitude would be what the Mekilta d. R. Ishmael (Vayassa 46) tells us happened when the people ate the quail: the good people ate it and passed it off immediately, but the wicked people ate it and suffered 30 days. Similarly, the manna had many wonderful tastes for the Israelites (the good guys) but Numbers Raba 19:22 informs us, the "bad guy" serpent can eat many kinds of gourmet treats and still tastes only the taste of dust in his mouth. The proof text is found with Isaiah 65:25 "dust is the serpent's food."

Whether God locks even himself into the ordered system is played out in counterpoint in the Midrashim. In Sifre Deuteronomy 32 R. Meir supports the notion that since creation, there have been no new creatures. R. Meir uses as his proof text Kohelet 1:5's "there's nothing new under the sun:"

Hullin 127a brings in the "variation." Here R. Huna b. Iorta reports on witnessing the "miscegenation" of a snake and a toad. Says

nuna, "R. Simeon the pious (a hasid and therefore perhaps the minority viewpoint) told me that concerning this, God said, ' the snake and the toad produced a new creature which I didn't create in my world, so I'll bring them a new creature I did not create.'" Rab comments then, "it was a ' *ou p'na ou* ' that 1) each should 'go for' a different species and 2) that there should be conception from it."

The Midrash concludes with a discussion of whether God performs a miracle for chastisement; a discussion which devolves around the issue of what *ou p'na ou* means.

The Munich Codex of the Talmud reports that *ou p'na ou* , as used in Hullin 127a means a nes for the purpose of punishment

ICIN KMSBIBB OU P'NA OU

the standard version of the text however reads as follows:

*ICIN KMSBIBB 'OU' (OU P'NA OU)
KMSBIBB OU P'NA OU 'OU'*

an examination of *OU P'NA OU* 3/3 200 clarifies it by explaining: while in the regular text *ou p'na ou* means punishment, only in the case of hullin 127a, the Munich manuscript suggests it signifies punishment wherever it is used; a negation of a miracle performed outside the natural order.

Ginzberg disagrees with the Munich text's concept of *ou p'na ou* ; he defines it instead positively, as a miracle which points to Israel's redemption in general, while teaching a specific lesson.

The "legend" which most readily comes to Ginzberg's mind and to other scholars when defining and describing *ot p'nu ot* Miracles is that found in Shabbat 97a; cross-referenced in Pirke d. R. Eliezer 67a ... of how Moses puts his hand into his bosom - a first time - and it becomes leprous; a second time and his hand is healed. The Pirke d. R. Eliezer text implies that even magicians can do the first miracle, but the second, on top of the first, is out of the magician's league.

Sefer Aggadah (*ot p'nu ot*) offers another example of *ot p'nu ot* based on Exodus 9:24: fire in the midst of hail represents *ot p'nu ot* ; but it seems here the is singular.

A more revealing explanation of *ot p'nu ot* is made in Sefer Aggadah 50 from Exodus Raba 9. It describes Aaron's rod swallowing up Pharaoh's as *ot p'nu ot* . Then we have a statement by R. Yosi b. Hanina that the *ot p'nu ot* here is *ot p'nu ot* .

None of these examples of *ot p'nu ot* typify the Munich manuscript's interpretation; or really brings us to the issue of the natural order. However, despite Ginzberg's earlier treatment of *ot p'nu ot* , he recounts an example of *ot p'nu ot* based on the Mekilta (B'shallach 6:33) - and this has overtones for the treatment of miracles vis à vis the natural order.⁵⁵

In this instance, the Egyptians have performed magic (or is it a miracle?) and momentarily are

saved at the Red Sea (a first inversion of the natural order). But, immediately the sea asks itself, how can I allow the pledge entrusted to me by God to be taken from me? Thereupon there is an inversion of the inversion - hence we get back to the Natural order through this $\omega \text{ פלג } \omega$ - and the water rushes in and kills all the Egyptians except Pharaoh. Pharaoh is saved because he acknowledges God.

One scoop or two, miracles are categorized as part or beyond the natural order. Grant believes that in order to justify their acceptance of the miraculous, theologians are compelled to see them in harmony with nature, even when supernatural. Guttman however feels that it's okay to include the natural as miracles as long as something unusual and spectacular is involved.

there is a dominant trend among those Rabbis concerned with making miracles part of the natural order, to emphasize the "everyday" over the "unusual" Miracle. in Nedarim 41a we encounter a statement by R. Alexandri, in the name of Hiyya b. Abba, "greater is the miracle wrought for the sick, than the one for Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah.

Guttman thinks Hiyya's view represents an extremist opinion which overemphasizes the "Miracles in ordinary life." However, there are too many examples of miracles which glorify daily sustenance - that which maintains the "regular" Natural order - to support Guttman.

Ephraim Urbach reports that some amoraim look to the problem of livelihood, as greater than that of redemption" or the parting of the Red Sea."⁹⁶

but, while other scholars may point to an economic decline in the 3rd century (the so-called "transitional period") Urbach thinks this thrust - concentrated as it is on daily sustenance - is yet more complicated. It is an inherent quality in a certain segment of rabbinic society.

This quality, this thrust is why, for instance, we get so many different versions of the story about Mrs. Hanina b. Dosa on the miracle which occurs when there is no bread on the Sabbath. One version, Taanit 24b's, is even prefaced by this prayer by R. Aba b. Raba in the name of Rab Judah:

May a ruler never cease from the house of Judah and Israel never be in need of sustenance one from another, nor from another people.

Sustenance is tangible proof to God's infinite powers; and daily sustenance of our dependence on Him - so attests the miracle of the manna.

Shifre Numbers 89 explains why the manna did not come down all at once, but rather daily. According to R. Simeon, it is so that the hearts (and eyes?) of the Israelites be turned to God in Heaven. R. Simeon offers a parable:

A king supplies his son with food for the entire year just once in the year; therefore the son only visits him the one time; so the king changes this 'allowance' system and decides to feed his son once a day. As a consequence, the king gets to see his son daily and the son becomes more dependent on his father.

Kadushin speculates that this certain segment of rabbinic society who believe in the daily occurrence

of Miracles ... " *ל'א נ'ס'ן* " is
 the term used in Midrash Tehillim (Psalm 106:2)
 ... might say that miracles of daily sustenance
 are just not always perceived on the conscious
 level; "only a few of us are sensitive to them."

This line of thinking might be posed in
 direct contrast to the line of reasoning used
 by those rabbis who formulated " *ל'א נ'ס'ן* " *ל'א נ'ס'ן*
ל'א נ'ס'ן : " Miracles do not occur every day.
 This is represented by Resachim 50b's assertion
 that it is dangerous to transport coins by ship
 because:

ל'א נ'ס'ן ל'א נ'ס'ן ל'א נ'ס'ן

However, our Rabbis who assert that daily
 sustenance is the greatest Miracle, might offer
 Lamentations 4:9 as reason to support their view.
 Both in the Mekilta d. Rabbi Ishmael (2:53) and
 Yalkut Shimon (*ל'א נ'ס'ן* 352) we find R. Joshua's
 statement that the worst death is death by hunger
 since (Lamentations 4:9):

ל'א נ'ס'ן ל'א נ'ס'ן ל'א נ'ס'ן
ל'א נ'ס'ן ל'א נ'ס'ן ל'א נ'ס'ן

The continuing satisfaction of hunger in
 a society calls for some "vehicle" which promotes
 regularity and order. So it is that "sustenance
 miracles" are a favorite with those Rabbis who
 wish to view Miracles within the Natural Order.

Nevertheless there will be some Miracles
 which ostensibly present a challenge to the
 "ordered Miracle." How did these Rabbis handle
 the "tough ones;" are they able to fit into the
 Natural Order, Miracles which involve inversions

of sex, species, time?

Shabbat 53b, as we have already observed, tells of a man who is able to suckle his child when the child's mother has died. Can such a Miracle be explained as occurring within the Natural Order?

The means by which they fit this Miracle into "the system" is: to relate it to a legend about a famous biblical figure ... in such a way that the Miracle of a man suckling a child can be taken, not only literally, but figuratively - without negating the authenticity of the Miracle.

In Esther Raba 2.7 we read that, as Esther's birth has caused the death of her mother, and, as her father is already dead, she is an orphan. A Miracle is performed and Mordecai's breasts supply milk for the orphaned Esther.

However, the Rabbis who refer to this Miracle in Midrash Tehillim 22 explain it in a more figurative fashion: Mordecai and his wife take an interest in Esther. His wife nurses the baby and Mordecai himself does not hesitate, when there is a need for it, to do services for the child which are usually performed only by women.⁹⁷ Thus, by making Mordecai a feminist, willing to change diapers and get up with the baby for the 3 a.m. bottle-feeding, the Rabbis slip this miracle within the Natural Order, with more finesse than they might have with only a literal interpretation.

Still other rabbis from this "set" look to this miracle with a different interpretation. A certain tanna, who doesn't like miracles implying a

change in the Natural Order, teaches in the name of R. Meir that where Esther 2:7 reads "when her father and mother died, Mordecai took Esther for his own daughter," the text should have read, not "וְשֶׁ" but rather "וְאִשָּׁה" ... not for a daughter, but a wife. The Tanna continues to tear down the notion that Esther is like a daughter to Mordecai, by refuting a connection between Esther 2:7 and 11 Samuel 12:3's "It (the child, if applied to Esther) ate of his own morsel and drank of his own cup and lay in his bosom and was unto him a daughter."

Lest none of us connect a child laying in a man's bosom with the recurring story of a man - Mordecai - suckling a child, does not this Tanna in Megillah 13a write was it like a daughter to him because 11 Samuel 12:3 says it lay in his bosom? No, rather it means Esther was like a wife to him." Therefore, a technical device is also used to bring the "man suckles child" motif into the Natural Order.

In Baba Bathra 119b the rabbis are troubled by a suspension of the natural aging process: we learn that the daughters of Zelaphod were not married until they were at least 40. and yet, they will conceive even though 3rd generation Amora and wealthy brewer R. Hisda states. "if a woman marries before she is 20 she can beget until she is 60; if she marries at 20, she'll beget until 40; but if she marries at 40, she will not beget." According to R. Hisda (a member of a priestly family)

a miracle happens for Zelaphed's daughters since, like Jochabed, they were virtuous.

R. Judah b. Rebiba appears to be one of our Rabbis whose concern is with fitting miracles within the natural order; in this case, a time-suspension miracle. In discussing Jochabed's vitality and fertility, he prefers to place it in the "rational realm" by explaining that she has a youthful appearance.

Not only are there midrashim which deal with a suspension of the aging process of people, but with a suspension of the aging process of foods. This too might be seen as an interruption of the natural order. In Raanit 5a we learn of a miracle in which grain which should take 6 months to ripen does so in 11 days. Here however there are no "rational" explanations offered.

Similarly there is no overt attempt to "explain away" a change in the expected timing of things in this midrash from midrash ha gadol on Genesis 24:42:

For 7 the road miraculously contracted:
Abraham (Genesis 14:15); Eliezer (Genesis 24:42); Jacob (Genesis 28:10); Moses (Exodus 2);
Israel (Exodus 12:35); David (Psalm 60:4);
and Sennacherib (Isaiah 10:28).

In each case a goal seems to have been reached in record time; a journey of more than a day (normally) is made in less than a day. So, then this is not impossible, and therefore, implicitly lies within the natural order.

Within the text of Bereshit Raba 4:5 we get an explicit "rational." Here R. Jonah admonishes

us not to wonder at the miracle of the firmament exuding water into salt water and yet waters not combining; Jonah states "don't wonder at it for the Jordan passes through Lake Tiberias, yet does not mingle with it. Jonah chooses a known - natural occurrence - as his image. Either both the firmament and the Jordan/Tiberias become miracles within the natural order, or neither are miracles.

in an adjoining sphere this "branch" of Rabbis will be concerned with natural order; with etiquette; maintaining proper societal roles and behavior falls within the jurisdiction of maintenance of a natural societal order;" an order indicative of city!

the rabbis will comment in Avot d. R. Nathan (20), how there is an inversion of the normal etiquette when Moses waters Jethro's daughters' flocks. man usually draws water and woman gives it to the flocks; but there has to be an inversion and Moses will have to water the flocks because there is a "perversion of justice" (the women have to be protected!)

from 2 sources in particular do we have statements on the importance of etiquette; of upholding the societal mores. Baba mezia 66b quotes R. Tannhuma b. Hanilai (3rd century Palestinian amora and "defender of the poor" - and not the R. Tannhuma) as saying:

His statement comments on Moses going up for 40 days and eating no bread, since it is as if he went up to heaven - no eating done here; with conversely the 3 angels Abraham feeds, following earthly etiquette (when in Rome, do as the Romans).

The other text which gives a parallel account to R. Tannuma's statement is Exodus Raba (Ki thissa 47:5). Here we find, however, R. Tannuma making the statement, "in the name of R. Eleazar, son of R. Abin in the name of R. Meir." The text varies from the Baba Mezia text by saying, "if you go into a city you must act according to its customs."

Finally, the Exodus Raba version includes this "rationale" from R. Johanan: "it only seemed as if the angels ate."

Etiquette, fitting everything, including miracles within the Natural Order and City; somehow they all converge here!

A "STAYING-IN-BUSINESS" SALE:

One key to urban development should be plain:
it lies in the widening of the circle of those
capable of participating in it, until in the
end all men will take part in the conversation.⁹⁷

These words were written by Lewis Mumford in
this century. But, the "conversation" and the
"widening circle" - they are but another way of
describing the elastic system of the Rabbis of
so many centuries ago.

We have been "eavesdropping" on a conversation
about Miracles; a conversation which has run the
gamut from lauding to put-down; from exclusion to
embracing the Natural Order.

We have been encountering the "widening circle:"
the majority, the minority, the fringe. It has been
a widening circle which expands to survive and
perpetuate itself. It has been a widening circle
which has used many devices to promulgate its own
legitimacy.

One such method is to establish a system
which expresses their major area of concern; the
concern which conversely, upholds their legitimacy.
In the case of the Rabbis there is a desire to
establish a system which expresses their investment
in the Oral Law; Oral Law being that which legiti-
matizes the Rabbis.

There is a Midrash which articulates this desire:
Ecclesiastes Raba 84b. This Midrash comments on

Ecclesiastes 3:14: "I know that whatever God does it shall be forever." R. Simeon b. Lakish relates the Ecclesiastes' text to Deuteronomy 13:1:

All this word which I command you to observe you shall not add to nor diminish from it; (R. Lakish) But the righteous do add and do not diminish from it.

Now that such texts as Ecclesiastes Raba grant sanction to the Rabbis, they can proceed to establish their own legitimacy as "ins" by undermining or discrediting the "outs." The immediate "outs" to be dealt with by the Rabbis are the priests and the institutions of the priests.

Midrashim about Miracles reveal that there is always some vestige of support for the priests, the Temple and all that is identified with them. Certainly, if Jerusalem may be associated with the Temple and the Priests, Midrash Psalms 137:7 is pro-priest when it yields R. Dosa, 2nd century Palestinian Tanna's interpretation of "if I forget thee O Jerusalem let my right hand forget her cunning;" says R. Dosa, "if Jerusalem is forgotten, never again will Miracles be performed.

And from Yoma 21a we learn of 10 Miracles even "wrought in the Temple:"

- 1) no woman miscarried from the scent of the holy flesh
- 2) the holy flesh never became putrid
- 3) no fly was seen in the slaughter house
- 4) no pollution ever befell the high priest on the Day of Atonement
- 5) no rain ever quenched the fire of the wood-pile on the altar
- 6) nor did the wind overcome the column of smoke that arose from it
- 7) nor was there ever found any disqualifying defect in the omer

- 8) nor in the shewbread
- 9) no serpent or scorpion ever injures anyone in Jerusalem
- 10) no man ever said to another the place is too narrow for me to stay overnight in Jerusalem.'

But, there is no way of determining whether the Rabbis evaluate the miracles described in this text; no way of knowing whether it may be part of an attack on a system which stands in the way of establishing the Rabbis; such as we have in Berakot 34b.

Berakot 34b tells us that Hanina b. Dosa's prayers override (are heard over) those of the high priest Jonathan b. Zakai (Hanina, being as we've already learned, the "last of the miracle workers").

It is also possible to speculate that the tension between (main line) Rabbinical and priestly elements are expressed in the miracle midrashim, by examining the interplay between traditions in Kiddushin 29b.

In this text R. Aha b. Jacob is "pitted" against Abaye. R. Aha, acting upon the statement that a man who cannot afford to educate both himself and his son, must educate himself first (unless, as R. Judah adds, the son is a child protege; Aha's son isn't), goes to educate himself at Abaye's "schoolhouse." Abaye hears that Aha is on his way and orders that no one offer Aha a motel room, "so that Aha will be forced to sleep in the schoolhouse ... where demons hang out at night. That night a 7-headed dragon demon appears to Aha in the schoolhouse.

the following morning, Aha complains to Abaye:
 "if a miracle had not occurred, you would have
 endangered my life."

Who are Aha and Abaye? where do they stand
 in the "religio-political spectrum?"

Aha b. Jacob is a 4th century Palestinian
 amora; it is reputed that he studied halakha under
 Joshua b. Hanina and aggadah under Ranhuma b. Hiyya.
 Not much is known about his "roots, but from
 various statements made by Aha in the Talmud, it is
 generally acknowledged that a major concern of his
 is the rebuilding of the Temple.

On the other hand, we have a great deal of
 information on the eclectic background of Aha's
 Babylonian contemporary, Abaye. Although Abaye is
 of priestly descent, his is an oratio Alger story.
 His father dies before he is born and his mother
 in childbirth. Abaye's statement in Shabbat 53b -
 denegrating the miracle of the man suckling the
 child, and the association of the man in the Midrash
 with Mordecai - is curious in that the orphaned
 Abaye is raised by his uncle and "אמ" - his foster
 mother (or nanny). Nevertheless, since Abaye goes
 from being so poor he must do fieldwork at night
 - as he "works his way through college - to being
 a well-off vineyard owner ... we may hypothesize,
 as Rashi does, that Abaye's disdain for the
 "wetnurse" father in Shabbat 53b is based on the
 father's having been a "loser" who never makes it
 enough financially to ever being able to afford
 to pay a woman to nurse his child.

From Shabbat 53b and Pesachim 64b, which tells

us it's preferable to rely on even Miracles than priests, we ascertain that Abaye is both anti-priest and anti-miracle.

Thus, based upon what we know of the backgrounds of Abaye and Aha and their respective positions on the priesthood and miracles, we may deduce that Kiddushin 29b reveals something about "pro and "anti priestly elements and their attitudes on miracles.

But, certainly as important, if not more, to the rabbis in their treatment of miracles, than discrediting their predecessor-opposition, is emphasizing the "platform" which is most palatable to the populous; and which therefore will cement the rabbis' own position.

Kadushin writes that the concept of *Ma'at* (מִצְחָה) is far from being an academic concept, is one which has "popular" origins: "in the rabbinic period the people at large possess a general idea of regularity and order in the world. that general idea is conveyed by the concept of *Ma'at* (מִצְחָה) and by its alternate *Shalom* (שָׁלוֹם)." ⁹⁰

Orbach would modify Kadushin's association of a doctrine of the Natural order with the "populous." ⁹¹ Orbach suggests that the "common folk" are interested in the result of the miracle (that is, the act itself), while the interest of the scholars, the sages, is focused on emphasizing the fact that it is God who works the Miracle.

Here we find the term " *Ma'at* (מִצְחָה) " ... it was taught in a tradition ... applied to several miracle stories, including: God sends ants to make a hole in a stone so that it falls around Og's neck and prevents him from striking back; the sinking of the wall of Jericho; and a legend

recorded in Numbers 21:14's mysterious "book of the wars of God," of how lepers named Eth and Heb are able to warn the Israelites about the descending Amorites.

If the "rational" amoraim tell of these "popular folk miracles" they must have some purpose in relating these legends; and popular acceptance would be a fair guess.

Besides, it is not so difficult for the rabbis to relate to the "people;" for rather than estrange themselves from the people, the rabbis live among them! They come from and live in "our world."

Bernard Bamberger reports that the rabbis are recruited from all classes; and, "some of the greatest" were of plebian stock which must have made them the more acceptable.¹⁰⁰

This view is "seconded" by Kadushin's investigations of the Rabbis. He writes that the rabbis are neither a cloistered group nor a separate professional class. There is no "gap" between them and the "folk."

The rabbis are bound up with the lives of the people as a whole, and members of every economic group are to be found among them. Ginzberg in his Students, Scholars and Saints (Philadelphia, 1928) notes that more than 100 scholars mentioned in the Talmud are artisans, a considerable number tradesmen and other various professionals. For them, Rabbinism is moonlighting. They are at heart businessmen!

Joshua b. Hanina is a blacksmith (Shabbat 97a); Johanan a shoemaker. R. Hiyya, who writes on miracles in Berakot 14a, trades in silk (Baba Kama 99b) and Simeon b. Lakish, important to Avodah Zara 54b, could play "what's my line?" anytime; he is both

circus gladiator and plantation guard.¹⁰¹

True, there are rabbis who are termed "ascetics," ... but they are not the mainstream. And, even the "ascetics" of the Rabbinic World often has one foot in this world. For example, R. Simeon, the 2nd century tanna who lives in a cave, is also a one-time emissary to Rome; and we have witnessed his input to Miracles vis a vis the Natural Order in Hullin 127a (the miscegenation of the snake and toad Midrash).

Not only are the rabbis related to "the People" and to "this world" economically and physically - but also, emotionally. They express the practical, the "haymish." And often, this expression comes through in what they have written about miracles.

Bamberger associates the rabbis' immersion in the world of practical affairs with a quality of the Rabbinic World which he describes as its "sanity" ("little short of miraculous considering the catastrophic events of the age."¹⁰²)

Among the most charming expressions of the rabbis' practicality and "sanity" is revealed by this midrash about the miracle of the manna, found in the Mekilta of R. Ishmael (va yassa 3) and which also appears in Talmud Shimon (356) and Ginzberg's Legends (Volume III page 43).

here the rabbis explain why the manna falls everyday - rather than all at once: so that it shouldn't be " לִּצְרֹק " ... they shouldn't have to "snipe" the manna around in their wanderings; and so they should receive it and eat it daily hot; no cold buffet, no sandwich -

but a good, hot meal. Is this not the pragmatic strain that we have come to associate with the Rabbis? Is this not their unique talent ... to speak to the People in the idiom of the People?

It is this unique ability that brings Mumford's "conversation (anachronistically) to the world of the Rabbis. Not capricious chameleons but versatile "survivors" who know well how to wield the "widening circle" ... these are the Rabbis we have encountered while investigating their various treatments of the Miracle vis a vis the natural order in the Midrash. And the "widening circle" which Mumford identified with the City ... this is the expandable system of the Rabbis; ordered, so that within it all may fit - even, and perhaps pre-eminently ... the Miracle!

AND SO ... THE JEW:

Most of us are familiar with a certain apocryphal tale about a Khuzari king who embraces Judaism (we have even "bought it" into a best-seller: Arthur Koestler's the thirteenth tribe). But, there is a less-well-known apocryphal story about the ruler of another kingdom; his perspicacity and wisdom are put to the test by the following riddle, posed by one of his subjects.

Said the subject: "Sire, name a miracle."
Answered the king: "The Jews."

To the king, the Jews are a miracle because their survival seems to go beyond all logic. It obviates a history which pursues a natural course.

Within this contemporary world of ours there is a proclivity toward the logical; the orderly; toward all that signifies cosmos. Therefore, when we encounter other worlds with different proclivities than our's, we often become disturbed that they appear to, not only function, but thrive on what we term "the illogical," "the disorderly," "the chaotic."

Because we seem to need to put all things into terms of monochromatics: all blacks and all whites; we become perplexed by worlds that operate as a kaleidoscope of mottled, dappled hues.

Perhaps this explains why most contemporary studies of the rabbinic milieu have been frustrating. We have been unable to appreciate the rabbis' unique

ability to make out of what we might call chaos ... their own original cosmos. They are able to create a spectrum which encompasses most of the diverse elements of their society from a plethora of ideas and opinions.

we have difficulty in our society in understanding this. Why? because we tend to think of the Rabbis' world as a city world ... and since city worlds demand order (orderly streets, orderly garbage collections ...) ... how can this be?

By their treatment of the various postures on Miracles vis a vis the Natural Order, the Rabbis have made our question a futile one to answer. We must not approach the Rabbinic milieu bearing the perspective of our own milieu; we must instead, recognize the originality of the Rabbis: to incorporate the unconventional and the conventional; the "Bohemian" and the Establishment; the miracle with the Natural Ordering ("Natural Order" but according to their terms). And, it is this quality, that talent, that makes the Rabbis' world into Erma Bombeck's one-size-fits-all-rose-petaled girdle!

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Edith Lances was once the leading name in corsets.
- 2 In the Christian carrier, the fate of Giordano Bruno would verify this analysis. According to Daniel Brinton and Thomas Davidson's studies on Bruno, it is the priest's belief in unceasing change and his understanding of an imperfect world, that leads him to the stake.
- 3 The terminology to be used being not non-Rabbinic, but non-Greek.
- 4 In his Studies in Judaism (2nd series page 122) Schechter reports the student's frustration at both listing and defining.
- 5 Even Kadushin, however, is using definitions. Most relevant to our discussion is Kadushin's definition of regularity as "habitual adjustment;" a definition adaptable to our own "elastic scheme."
- 6 Kadushin (on page 152 of the Rabbinic Mind) uses as his example in which a change in "sidre bereshit" is characteristic of "nes" ... Shabbat 53b. here, in an exchange between R. Joseph and Abaye. a man is deemed by the former to be great because a miracle is performed for him, but unworthy by the latter, because the sidre bereshit was changed in his case.
- 7 while recognizing that the biblical and rabbinic meanings of "nes" differ, Kadushin cites Psalm 106:22 as the source for the notion of a God responsible for both "changes" and "everyday miracles."
- 8 Kadushin, max the Rabbinic Mind page 166.
- 9 the Catholic Encyclopedia page 894.
- 10 Ironically, the issue by which the Greeks distinguish themselves from the "barbarians," Order, is the very issue by which the rabbinic system can distinguish itself from the Greek. Like the Cabots-and-Lodges, the Greeks "look down on" the barbarians for being disorderly and needing law; and a certain rabbinical element seems to look down then on the Greeks for needing any order.
- 11 according to Robert Grant, those from the "schools" of cynicism and stoicism will modify, at a later time, this postulate by regarding the advent of Law as merely a step in the civilizing process.
- 12 Grant explains that St. Augustine adopts, then adapts, these seminales rationes; theorizing that at creation, God inserted these causal principles which govern

FOOTNOTES

all subsequent events, miraculous or not, while the Stoics will say that these seminales rationes are in matter, Augustine sees them as being "in the soul of the universe." In midrash a similar notion would be the miracles God sows into nature at the twilight of the Sabbath of Creation Week.

- 13 Thomas Tyler suggests that later, the Sadducees will come to represent the Epicureans, and the Pharisees, the Stoics.
- 14 Urbach, Ephraim The Sages: Their Concepts and Beliefs page 119.
- 15 "The greatest things in the world are seldom spectacular. Hurricanes are spectacular, but soft rain makes things grow." ... Adlai Stevenson.
- 16 On page 23 of The Miracle and Natural Law Grant writes: "The few explanations of miracles which Philo gives, seem to reflect the ideas of the Stoic philosopher Posidonius."
- 17 Borgen, Peder Bread From Heaven page 8.
- 18 In De vita Mosis 1 201 Philo asks: "what is the river of Egypt when it overflows every year, but a rainpour from beneath?"
- 19 Borgen, Peder Bread From Heaven page 110.
- 20 Benjamin Kosovsky in his "Otzar" for Sifra, page 1274 defines "nes" as: "נִסִּים מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם מִן הַיָּד הַיְּמִינִית"
- 21 Both Grant and Urbach cite Chapter 37 as an example of this.
- 22 Reider, Joseph The Book of Wisdom page 223.
- 23

נִסִּים מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם מִן הַיָּד הַיְּמִינִית
נִסִּים מִן הַיָּד הַיְּמִינִית מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם
- 24 Gordis, Robert "The Social Background of Wisdom Literature" H.U.C.A. Volume 18 (1944) page 81.
- 25 Mumford's studies focus on the city, rather than the Rabbinic world.
- 26 Ginzberg, Louis Legends of the Jews Volume 11 page 356.
- 27 In his article, "The Significance of Miracles for Talmudic Judaism" (page 403) Guttman writes that in the late Pharisaic period, miracles are restricted to the domain of individually experienced miracles within the laws of Nature.
- 28 Maimonides, Moses Guide for the Perplexed 11 Chapter 29.

FOOTNOTES

- 29 Montefiore and Loewe (page 692) relegate Miracles to the past, while Grant (page 163) writes: "though some Miracles are possible in the present, the truly stupendous Miracles (a qualitative analysis) do not now occur."
- 30 "How is it that Miracles were performed for former generations but not for us?"
- 31 (Abaye) said: "because the early generations used to be ready to sacrifice their lives for the sanctity of God's name, but we are not." Critical to a definitive study of this text would be a proper understanding of the terms "rishonim" and "k'dushet ha shem".
- 32 Urbach, Ephraim The Sages: Their Concepts and Beliefs page 33
- 33 Ginzberg, Louis Legends of the Jews Volume V page 175.
- 34 The ever-present dilemma: is this a Miracle and/or a change in the Universal Order?
- 35 *היה זה פסוק*
- 36 Moore, George Foot, Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era (page 539) takes this from the Yalkut on Joshua 15:16.
- 37 Although this Miracle has 2 parts, nevertheless it does not seem to be an example of "עושה נס" which will be dealt with further on.
- 38 Ginzberg, Louis Legends of the Jews Volume III page 428.
- 39 The verse with elisha is II Kings 2:6 and the elijan verse is I Kings 17:1; ... as it rains in Palestine only in winter, this is viewed as a reversal of the Natural Order.
- 40 The other prophet mentioned is Abraham.
- 41 The "Microcosm" passage is also found in "פירוש חזקוני" 64.
- 42 For did not Joshua b. hananish say that "the pious of all people have a share in the world to come?"
- 43 Guttman, Alexander "The Significance of Miracles for Rabbinic Judaism" H.U.C.A. volume XX (1947).
- 44 Moore's interpretation of Berakot 20a fails to lock into our earlier analysis of Berakot 20a where the "present" and the "past" are too close to be different.
- 45 Of Hanina, Mishna Sotah 9:15 says "he was the last of the miracle workers." It is left for us to question the significance of this title.

FOOTNOTES

- 46 The text of Hulin portrays the worthy individual as a true "catalyst:" with Hanina or R. Hiyya their merits change for the better the whole world, but not themselves.
- 47 The Midrash appears in variation about Simeon b. Malafa.
- 48 This is one of the few cases where dependence on the occurrence of a miracle results favorably; perhaps a reflection of Hanina's superior merit.
- 49 R. Adda b. Abava is a 3rd century Babylonian amora who is an aesthete: the Talmud reports he stays at synagogue longer than anyone else; he doesn't sleep regularly! Most reports on Abaye, on the other hand, portray him as in the mainstream of life." In Berakot 35b we find a statement that Abaye thinks one should not study so much as to exclude all else.
- 50 an example and definition of " *לען לעבן* ."
- 51 Mekilta of R. Simeon b. Johai (D'shetach 17)
- 52 Mekilta of R. Ishmael (Massa 7)
- 53 according to Singer, Kohler also variously identifies the nasiim as Pharisees, Essenes and the men of the Great Synagogue.
- 54 Singer, Sholom The Nasid in Rabbinic Literature page 90.
- 55 One cannot tell a gentile who comes to extinguish the light 'do it or don't.' ... because it's not our obligation.
- 56 this midrash is also found in Sefer ha Aggadah (: 59)
- 57 we have an unusual situation here in that usually a tanna is a more authoritative tradent. but, Raba, interestingly, is also often described as "very pious."
- 58 we find a similar account in ,ayikra Raba 34:16.
- 59 this dependence will not be advocated by the mainstream;" we shall examine this under " *לען לעבן* / *לען* ."
- 60 Guttmann, writes (on page 403, that in the late Pharisaic period, miracles are restricted to individually experienced miracles; but that where collective miracles do appear, they are basically an expansion of individual ones.

FOOTNOTES

- 61 Ginzberg reports (Volume 1 page 50) the sentiments
of pereshit Raba 5.5 that Israel was taken into
special consideration at the time man was made.
- 62 Similarly stated in Yalkut Sh'moni *7160* page 356.
- 63 Ecclesiastes Raba 1:11 concerns itself with a
discussion of miracles of "latter" and "former" times.
- 64 A parallel text appears in Sefer Aggadah *177A* and
Ta'anit 20b.
- 65 The strategic principle of 'don't stand in a place
of danger will be discussed shortly.
- 66 'A man should not stand in a place of danger and
say a miracle was done for him; perhaps it won't
be. And (even) if a miracle is performed for him,
it is deducted from his merits.'
- 67 Genesis 32:10: 'I become diminished because of
all the deeds of kindness and truth.'
- 68 Later on we shall pursue allusions to Mordecai and
Esther concerning this miracle.
- 69 We have already encountered R. Joseph in Berakot 60,
taking a pro-nes stance.
- 70 Kadushin views the principle, when associated with
the performance of a mitzvot, as an attempt to modify
R. Eleazar's dictum in Hullin 142a that persons
engaged in mitzvot are kept from harm.
- 71 *101 110 111 112 113 114 115 116 117 118 119 120 121 122 123 124 125 126 127 128 129 130 131 132 133 134 135 136 137 138 139 140 141 142 143 144 145 146 147 148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158 159 160 161 162 163 164 165 166 167 168 169 170 171 172 173 174 175 176 177 178 179 180 181 182 183 184 185 186 187 188 189 190 191 192 193 194 195 196 197 198 199 200 201 202 203 204 205 206 207 208 209 210 211 212 213 214 215 216 217 218 219 220 221 222 223 224 225 226 227 228 229 230 231 232 233 234 235 236 237 238 239 240 241 242 243 244 245 246 247 248 249 250 251 252 253 254 255 256 257 258 259 260 261 262 263 264 265 266 267 268 269 270 271 272 273 274 275 276 277 278 279 280 281 282 283 284 285 286 287 288 289 290 291 292 293 294 295 296 297 298 299 300 301 302 303 304 305 306 307 308 309 310 311 312 313 314 315 316 317 318 319 320 321 322 323 324 325 326 327 328 329 330 331 332 333 334 335 336 337 338 339 340 341 342 343 344 345 346 347 348 349 350 351 352 353 354 355 356 357 358 359 360 361 362 363 364 365 366 367 368 369 370 371 372 373 374 375 376 377 378 379 380 381 382 383 384 385 386 387 388 389 390 391 392 393 394 395 396 397 398 399 400 401 402 403 404 405 406 407 408 409 410 411 412 413 414 415 416 417 418 419 420 421 422 423 424 425 426 427 428 429 430 431 432 433 434 435 436 437 438 439 440 441 442 443 444 445 446 447 448 449 450 451 452 453 454 455 456 457 458 459 460 461 462 463 464 465 466 467 468 469 470 471 472 473 474 475 476 477 478 479 480 481 482 483 484 485 486 487 488 489 490 491 492 493 494 495 496 497 498 499 500 501 502 503 504 505 506 507 508 509 510 511 512 513 514 515 516 517 518 519 520 521 522 523 524 525 526 527 528 529 530 531 532 533 534 535 536 537 538 539 540 541 542 543 544 545 546 547 548 549 550 551 552 553 554 555 556 557 558 559 560 561 562 563 564 565 566 567 568 569 570 571 572 573 574 575 576 577 578 579 580 581 582 583 584 585 586 587 588 589 590 591 592 593 594 595 596 597 598 599 600 601 602 603 604 605 606 607 608 609 610 611 612 613 614 615 616 617 618 619 620 621 622 623 624 625 626 627 628 629 630 631 632 633 634 635 636 637 638 639 640 641 642 643 644 645 646 647 648 649 650 651 652 653 654 655 656 657 658 659 660 661 662 663 664 665 666 667 668 669 670 671 672 673 674 675 676 677 678 679 680 681 682 683 684 685 686 687 688 689 690 691 692 693 694 695 696 697 698 699 700 701 702 703 704 705 706 707 708 709 710 711 712 713 714 715 716 717 718 719 720 721 722 723 724 725 726 727 728 729 730 731 732 733 734 735 736 737 738 739 740 741 742 743 744 745 746 747 748 749 750 751 752 753 754 755 756 757 758 759 760 761 762 763 764 765 766 767 768 769 770 771 772 773 774 775 776 777 778 779 780 781 782 783 784 785 786 787 788 789 790 791 792 793 794 795 796 797 798 799 800 801 802 803 804 805 806 807 808 809 810 811 812 813 814 815 816 817 818 819 820 821 822 823 824 825 826 827 828 829 830 831 832 833 834 835 836 837 838 839 840 841 842 843 844 845 846 847 848 849 850 851 852 853 854 855 856 857 858 859 860 861 862 863 864 865 866 867 868 869 870 871 872 873 874 875 876 877 878 879 880 881 882 883 884 885 886 887 888 889 890 891 892 893 894 895 896 897 898 899 900 901 902 903 904 905 906 907 908 909 910 911 912 913 914 915 916 917 918 919 920 921 922 923 924 925 926 927 928 929 930 931 932 933 934 935 936 937 938 939 940 941 942 943 944 945 946 947 948 949 950 951 952 953 954 955 956 957 958 959 960 961 962 963 964 965 966 967 968 969 970 971 972 973 974 975 976 977 978 979 980 981 982 983 984 985 986 987 988 989 990 991 992 993 994 995 996 997 998 999 1000*
- 72 'My heart is faint.'
- 73 The Aramaic is used here: *101 110 111 112 113 114 115 116 117 118 119 120 121 122 123 124 125 126 127 128 129 130 131 132 133 134 135 136 137 138 139 140 141 142 143 144 145 146 147 148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158 159 160 161 162 163 164 165 166 167 168 169 170 171 172 173 174 175 176 177 178 179 180 181 182 183 184 185 186 187 188 189 190 191 192 193 194 195 196 197 198 199 200 201 202 203 204 205 206 207 208 209 210 211 212 213 214 215 216 217 218 219 220 221 222 223 224 225 226 227 228 229 230 231 232 233 234 235 236 237 238 239 240 241 242 243 244 245 246 247 248 249 250 251 252 253 254 255 256 257 258 259 260 261 262 263 264 265 266 267 268 269 270 271 272 273 274 275 276 277 278 279 280 281 282 283 284 285 286 287 288 289 290 291 292 293 294 295 296 297 298 299 300 301 302 303 304 305 306 307 308 309 310 311 312 313 314 315 316 317 318 319 320 321 322 323 324 325 326 327 328 329 330 331 332 333 334 335 336 337 338 339 340 341 342 343 344 345 346 347 348 349 350 351 352 353 354 355 356 357 358 359 360 361 362 363 364 365 366 367 368 369 370 371 372 373 374 375 376 377 378 379 380 381 382 383 384 385 386 387 388 389 390 391 392 393 394 395 396 397 398 399 400 401 402 403 404 405 406 407 408 409 410 411 412 413 414 415 416 417 418 419 420 421 422 423 424 425 426 427 428 429 430 431 432 433 434 435 436 437 438 439 440 441 442 443 444 445 446 447 448 449 450 451 452 453 454 455 456 457 458 459 460 461 462 463 464 465 466 467 468 469 470 471 472 473 474 475 476 477 478 479 480 481 482 483 484 485 486 487 488 489 490 491 492 493 494 495 496 497 498 499 500 501 502 503 504 505 506 507 508 509 510 511 512 513 514 515 516 517 518 519 520 521 522 523 524 525 526 527 528 529 530 531 532 533 534 535 536 537 538 539 540 541 542 543 544 545 546 547 548 549 550 551 552 553 554 555 556 557 558 559 560 561 562 563 564 565 566 567 568 569 570 571 572 573 574 575 576 577 578 579 580 581 582 583 584 585 586 587 588 589 590 591 592 593 594 595 596 597 598 599 600 601 602 603 604 605 606 607 608 609 610 611 612 613 614 615 616 617 618 619 620 621 622 623 624 625 626 627 628 629 630 631 632 633 634 635 636 637 638 639 640 641 642 643 644 645 646 647 648 649 650 651 652 653 654 655 656 657 658 659 660 661 662 663 664 665 666 667 668 669 670 671 672 673 674 675 676 677 678 679 680 681 682 683 684 685 686 687 688 689 690 691 692 693 694 695 696 697 698 699 700 701 702 703 704 705 706 707 708 709 710 711 712 713 714 715 716 717 718 719 720 721 722 723 724 725 726 727 728 729 730 731 732 733 734 735 736 737 738 739 740 741 742 743 744 745 746 747 748 749 750 751 752 753 754 755 756 757 758 759 760 761 762 763 764 765 766 767 768 769 770 771 772 773 774 775 776 777 778 779 780 781 782 783 784 785 786 787 788 789 790 791 792 793 794 795 796 797 798 799 800 801 802 803 804 805 806 807 808 809 810 811 812 813 814 815 816 817 818 819 820 821 822 823 824 825 826 827 828 829 830 831 832 833 834 835 836 837 838 839 840 841 842 843 844 845 846 847 848 849 850 851 852 853 854 855 856 857 858 859 860 861 862 863 864 865 866 867 868 869 870 871 872 873 874 875 876 877 878 879 880 881 882 883 884 885 886 887 888 889 890 891 892 893 894 895 896 897 898 899 900 901 902 903 904 905 906 907 908 909 910 911 912 913 914 915 916 917 918 919 920 921 922 923 924 925 926 927 928 929 930 931 932 933 934 935 936 937 938 939 940 941 942 943 944 945 946 947 948 949 950 951 952 953 954 955 956 957 958 959 960 961 962 963 964 965 966 967 968 969 970 971 972 973 974 975 976 977 978 979 980 981 982 983 984 985 986 987 988 989 990 991 992 993 994 995 996 997 998 999 1000*
- 74 George Root Moore (page 481) places Meir in the
4th generation of Tanna'im.
- 75 *101 110 111 112 113 114 115 116 117 118 119 120 121 122 123 124 125 126 127 128 129 130 131 132 133 134 135 136 137 138 139 140 141 142 143 144 145 146 147 148 149 150 151 152 153 154 155 156 157 158 159 160 161 162 163 164 165 166 167 168 169 170 171 172 173 174 175 176 177 178 179 180 181 182 183 184 185 186 187 188 189 190 191 192 193 194 195 196 197 198 199 200 201 202 203 204 205 206 207 208 209 210 211 212 213 214 215 216 217 218 219 220 221 222 223 224 225 226 227 228 229 230 231 232 233 234 235 236 237 238 239 240 241 242 243 244 245 246 247 248 249 250 251 252 253 254 255 256 257 258 259 260 261 262 263 264 265 266 267 268 269 270 271 272 273 274 275 276 277 278 279 280 281 282 283 284 285 286 287 288 289 290 291 292 293 294 295 296 297 298 299 300 301 302 303 304 305 306 307 308 309 310 311 312 313 314 315 316 317 318 319 320 321 322 323 324 325 326 327 328 329 330 331 332 333 334 335 336 337 338 339 340 341 342 343 344 345 346 347 348 349 350 351 352 353 354 355 356 357 358 359 360 361 362 363 364 365 366 367 368 369 370 371 372 373 374 375 376 377 378 379 380 381 382 383 384 385 386 387 388 389 390 391 392 393 394 395 396 397 398 399 400 401 402 403 404 405 406 407 408 409 410 411 412 413 414 415 416 417 418 419 420 421 422 423 424 425 426 427 428 429 430 431 432 433 434 435 436 437 438 439 440 441 442 443 444 445 446 447 448 449 450 451 452 453 454 455 456 457 458 459 460 461 462 463 464 465 466 467 468 469 470 471 472 473 474 475 476 477 478 479 480 481 482 483 484 485 486 487 488 489 490 491 492 493 494 495 496 497 498 499 500 501 502 503 504 505 506 507 508 509 510 511 512 513 514 515 516 517 518 519 520 521 522 523 524 525 526 527 528 529 530 531 532 533 534 535 536 537 538 539 540 541 542 543 544 545 546 547 548 549 550 551 552 553 554 555 556 557 558 559 560 561 562 563 564 565 566 567 568 569 570 571 572 573 574 575 576 577 578 579 580 581 582 583 584 585 586 587 588 589 590 591 592 593 594 595 596 597 598 599 600 601 602 603 604 605 606 607 608 609 610 611 612 613 614 615 616 617 618 619 620 621 622 623 624 625 626 627 628 629 630 631 632 633 634 635 636 637 638 639 640 641 642 643 644 645 646 647 648 649 650 651 652 653 654 655 656 657 658 659 660 661 662 663 664 665 666 667 668 669 670 671 672 673 674 675 676 677 678 679 680 681 682 683 684 685 686 687 688 689 690 691 692 693 694 695 696 697 698 699 700 701 702 703 704 705 706 707 708 709 710 711 712 713 714 715 716 717 718 719 720 721 722 723 724 725 726 727 728 729 730 731 732 733 734 735 736 737 738 739 740 741 742 743 744 745 746 747 748 749 750 751 752 753 754 755 756 757 758 759 760 761 762 763 764 765 766 767 768 769 770 771 772 773 774 775 776 777 778 779 780 781 782 783 784 785 786 787 788 789 790 791 792 793 794 795 796 797 798 799 800 801 802 803 804 805 806 807 808 809 810 811 812 813 814 815 816 817 818 819 820 821 822 823 824 825 826 827 828 829 830 831 832 833 834 835 836 837 838 839 840 841 842 843 844 845 846 847 848 849 850 851 852 853 854 855 856 857 858 859 860 861 862 863 864 865 866 867 868 869 870 871 872 873 874 875 876 877 878 879 880 881 882 883 884 885 886 887 888 889 890 891 892 893 894 895 896 897 898 899 900 901 902 903 904 905 906 907 908 909 910 911 912 913 914 915 916 917 918 919 920 921 922 923 924 925 926 927 928 929 930 931 932 933 934 935 936 937 938 939 940 941 942 943 944 945 946 947 948 949 950 951 952 953 954 955 956 957 958 959 960 961 962 963 964 965 966 967 968 969 970 971 972 973 974 975 976 977 978 979 980 981 982 983 984 985 986 987 988 989 990 991 992 993 994 995 996 997 998 999 1000*
- 76 What Urbach mentions on page 113 of the pages,
will be expanded upon in our discussion on
Natural Order and Miracles in the next chapter.
- 77 Ginzberg, Louis Legends of the Jews Volume 111 page 18.
- 78 Frick, Frank The City in Ancient Israel page 231:
'Finkelstein sees the prophets as representatives
of peasantry.'

FOOTNOTES

- 79 The relevance of "sustenance" to "City" and the
 80 Rabbinic milieu will be discussed in the next chapter.
- 81 Ginzberg, Louis Legends of the Jews Volume I page 115.
 82 Similarly in Sefer Aggadah and Exodus Raba Pekude 111:3.
 83 Eliade, Mircea Patterns in Comparative Religion page 187.
 84 The context here is the justification for a special
 benediction upon drinking water.
- 85 Exodus Raba 21:6 reports differently; that the sea
 saw God put his arm on Moses' right hand (when the
 sea had given Moses a hard time), and it flees.
- 86 This is similar to the manna Miracle where the manna
 assumes a different "favorite taste" according to the
 individual.
- 87 Ginzberg, Louis Legends of the Jews Volume VI page 6.
 Many, including Erich Fromm, have adopted this "leap
 of faith interpretation:" only after the first Jew
 steps in, does the Miracle happen:
 1728 1728 32 24 202 212 142
- 88 also in Sefer Aggadah 20p.
- 89 Grant (page 166) takes this account from Josephus' Antiquities XX 97-98. See also "way-station" Miracles
 in the following chapter to explain an unripe Miracle.
- 90 : perhaps souls as yet unfinished.
- 91 Ginzberg, Louis Legends of the Jews Volume V page 109.
- 92 Grant, Robert Miracle and Natural Law page 153.
- 93 Grant, Robert Miracle and Natural Law page 157.
- 94 Ginzberg, Louis Legends of the Jews Volume II page 321.
- 95 Ginzberg, Louis Legends of the Jews Volume III page 28.

FOOTNOTES

- 96 Urbach, Ephraim The Sages page 112; Urbach also quotes R. Hiyya bar Abba and R. Abbahu as saying 'The way of rain is greater than that of the resurrection of the dead.'
- 97 Ginzberg, Louis Legends of the Jews Volume IV page 383.
- 98 Mumford, Lewis The City in history page 117.
- 99 On page 147 of the rabbinic mind, Kadushin proposes that Sifre to Deuteronomy 32:1 exemplifies the natural order miracles when it speaks of the fact that natural objects and domesticated animals don't change their rule or "middah:" one doesn't get wheat if barley is sown.
- 100 Bamberger, Bernard the story of Judaism page 113.
- 101 Avodah Zarah 54b, from which *על כבוד שמים* comes.
- 102 Bamberger, Bernard the story of Judaism page 126.

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