

R A B B I J O H A N A N

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EMANUEL HONIG

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CHAPTER 1

THE LIFE and PERSONALITY of RABBI JOHANAN

When R. Johanan bar Nappaha began his work there had already arisen a group of men who undertook the immense task of interpreting the recently codified Mishnah of Judah 1. To this field of legalistic research, R. Johanan, the leader of the second generation of Palestinian Amoraim, brought an assiduousness of purpose and an eagerness of mind which made him the outstanding halachist and agadist of his era.

Like so many great men before and after him, the adversity which pursued him relentlessly seemed to be the whet-stone on which he sharpened his intellect and perceptions. From birth to death, his life was a concatenation of physical disasters. Born a posthumous son, his mother did not survive the difficult delivery which gave him life.¹ In his later life, he consoled himself with the thought that he had been relieved of the command, "Honor thy father and mother," for how difficult is it to honor them adequately.²

1. Kiddushin 31 b

"When the mother of R. Johanan bore him, his father died, and she gave birth to him, she died."

רבי יוחנן כי עקרנו אמו
אח אביו ילדנו אחר אמו.

2. Kiddushin 31 b

"Happy is he who has not seen them."

אמר רבי יוחנן אשרי מי שלא
ראה.

Little is known of R. Johanan's lineage or forbears. Our sources shed no light on his background or ancestry. However he is dubbed with the cognomen, Bar Nappaha, the smith's son in a number of places in our Talmud.¹ However whether his father was named Nappaha or was actually a smith is a matter of conjecture since the sources are void on this subject. It is also possible that the name may allude to his strength and physical beauty; in that case, נַפְּחָא may be understood, the sense being, inflaming one's desire. However regardless of its possible interpretation, he is ever referred to by that cognomen by his friend, Resh Lakish.

אמר ר' ירמיה ²
בן נפחא
אמר ר' ירמיה

"Resh Lakish said: The smith's interpretation (R. Isaac) is better than that of the son of the smith (R. Johanan)."

His descent however is traced from the tribe of Joseph from a remark uttered by R. Johanan himself.

אמר ר' יוחנן ³
בן נפחא
אמר ר' יוחנן
בן נפחא

1. Baba Mesia 85 b
Yer. Rosh Ha-Shana 2 H. 5 (Wilna edition)

2. Sanhedrin 96 a

Berachoth 20 a

"He said: I am come from the seed
of Joseph against whom the evil eye
had no power."

The grandfather of R. Johanan, either on the paternal or
maternal side, raised him and consecrated him to the study
of the Torah. When he was a little lad riding on the should-
ers of his aged and revered grandfather, he relates that he
overheard words of Torah from the mouth of R. Simson b.
Eleazer and later handed the teaching down to his disciples.

אמר ר' יוחנן רביה הו'נא דל כהנא¹
/ קל'ה דר' שמעון / פ
אלעזר יתב מחנ'.

"R. Johanan said, 'I was riding on the
back of my grandfather and I heard the
voice of R. Simson b. Eleazer who was
sitting occupied in his study.'"

1. Yer. Maasroth 1 H. 2

As a young man, his intense and zealous study occupied his whole time. He had no spare moments for vain pleasures for he found his contentment in his studies. It is recorded that once he was so absorbed in his work that he ignored the presence of an important personage who happened to pass and was almost chastised for his lack of deference.

1

רבי יוחנן הוה יתיב קרי קומ' כגשגא
 דבגל ציפורין צדק ארכולאן וסא
 קמ ידמקמו' אולן קצי"ן מילחונה אמר
 עון ארפוני' דנמוס' דבר"ע הוא עסיק.

"R. Johanan was sitting and reading before the House of Study of Babylon in Sepphoris, a titled personage passed and he did not rise before him. The servants of this leader wanted to beat him. He said to them, 'Leave him be for he is so occupied with the laws of the Creator.'"

1. Yer. Berachoth 5 H.1

To one who so early showed an aptitude and diligence for study of Torah, R. Johanan's lack of material wealth imposed a burden which he keenly felt. For to him, it meant only that he could not devote himself exclusively to study and contemplation. For a time, he subsisted on the proceeds of some arable land, a vineyard and an olive orchard, which he had inherited but finally he was forced to sell even that to obtain an education. However, his love of Torah was so great that as he expressed himself to his pupil, he had only exchanged that substance which God had created in six days for something which had necessitated forty days.

1
 מצאנו ב"ר יוחנן שביה עולה מטבריה לציפורי
 וביה ר' חייא גלמ'דו אב'לו. וביה ר' יוחנן חזן
 כרם. אמר לר' חייא אין אלה רואה כרם נה אהיב
 ש"י ומכרתי אולגו בכך וכך. אנהיב שדה בכה ר'
 חייא דר אבא ואמר לו, לא הנחתי לך שדה
 כלום. איך כי קרע ויין דציניק שמכרתי דבר
 שנקרא בשם ימים וקניתי דבר שנתן למי יום.
 עולם כולו ומלאו נקרא בשם ימים אלה העולם
 ניהנה לארבעים יום.

1. M. Shemoth Rabba 47: 5

Canticles Rabba 8: 4 ; Pesikta 28 -- Source in Aramaic

"It is told that R. Johanan was walking from Tiberias to Sepphoris and his pupil R. Hiyya was with him. R. Johanan noticed a vineyard and remarked to R. Hiyya, 'Do you see this vineyard that was mine but I sold it (to labor in the Torah)'. R. Hiyya bar Abba began to weep and said, 'You did not leave anything for your old age.' To which R. Johanan replied, 'Is it unimportant in your eyes that I sold something that was created in six days and I acquired something that was given in forty days. The world and its expanse was created in six days but the Torah took forty days to be given.'"

But finally, when all his resources were exhausted, he was compelled to enter a business relationship with Ilpha, his friend. The legendary tale of his wondrous return to the study of the Torah after his short occupation in the world of affairs is an interesting sidelight into the life and career of this sage.

¹א"לפא ור' יוחנן הוו זרסי באור"תא דח"קא לכו
מילתא טובא אמרי נקום ונזיל ונצדיז עסקא
ונקיימ דנפשינ' יאסם ב' לון יריה דק אביון. אנלון
אוה"ק' תתי יודא דעיצה. הוו קאן וכר' אולו
תרי מלאכי בשרה. שמעיה ר' יוחנן דאמר חד
לחקריה נשד' ע"ה דו' יודא ונק' ע"ה ממתיין
ח' ע"ה דקא ונעסקין דח' שעה אמר ליה א"ד
שקתו דאויכא דהו' חד דקיימא לכו שעה
ר' יוחנן שמע א"לפא לון שמע. אמר ליה ר' יוחנן
לפ"לפא שמע מ"די אמר לון. אמר מ"ד שמע א"לפא
וא"לפא לון שמע ט"מ לדידי קיימא ל' שעה
אמר ליה ר' יוחנן סקדדר ואוקי דנפשי כ' לא

1. Taanith 21 a

יחזקאל ור' יוחנן נדרש
 אישכא דאן דבר דאישכא אישכא מלך
 ר' יוחנן אמר לו אי איתך מר וקריס
 דאן הוא מלך מר

"Ilpha and R. Johanan studied the Torah together. They were in very poor circumstances and even in want of food. So they said, 'Let us arise and go into business, thereby maintaining what is written: 'indeed, there shall be no needy men among thee (Deut.15:4).' They betook themselves and sat down beneath an unsafe wall and ate their meal. Soon two angels appeared, and R. Johanan heard one of them say to the other, 'Let us throw the wall down upon them and kill them, for they are about to neglect the eternal life (study), and busy themselves with temporary life (business).' But the other angel replied, 'Let them alone; for there is one of them whom the time will succor and who will shortly become great.' R. Johanan heard this, but Ilpha did not, and the former asked, 'Did the master hear anything?' 'nay, I heard nothing,' replied Ilpha. So R. Johanan thought: Because I heard it and Ilpha did not, in all probability I am the one to whom the time will succor. And he said to Ilpha, 'I have considered it and will return to continue the study of the Torah, thus fulfilling another passage: 'For the needy will not cease out of the land (Deut.15:11),' Thus R. Johanan returned to his studies and Ilpha engaged himself in business. By the time Ilpha returned (from a business trip), R. Johanan had become the chief of the college. The scholars afterwards said to Ilpha, 'If thou hadst stayed here with us (and had continued the study of the Torah), we would have made thee the chief of the college.'"

Thus R. Johanan's wisdom and application won him position and renown, in spite of the impediments that life had placed in his path. Veritably though poor in material goods, spiritually he was richer than any about him. For God had endowed him with physical and spiritual gifts, beautiful faculties of mind and body, and the strength to overcome his worldly obstacles.

Of his beauty of body, numerous tales are recounted. They tell of a dazzling beauty which radiated from his features and lit up the souls of those who beheld him.

אליעזר חזק צל עזרה רבי יוחנן¹
 חכה דבורה קאן אל בית אבא, חזק
 ערציה וכל נבואה.

"R. Eliezer was ill and R. Johanan went to visit him. He saw that R. Eliezer was lying in a dark room, so he bared his arm and a brightness radiated therefrom."

1. Berachoth 5 b

Although R. Johanan believed that all that God creates, he creates for his own glorification, from our Talmudic sources, it would seem that he prided himself with his gift of beauty.

1

אמר ר' יוחנן (בבבא מציעא) אלא אהר"י
 משפיר ירושלים. הוי מאן דקצי מיהל
 שופרין דר' יוחנן נ"ח כסא דכסא
 ומלכא דמלכא דמלכא דמלכא
 ונדר ליה כליה דמלכא דמלכא
 למלכא דמלכא דמלכא דמלכא
 דמלכא דמלכא דמלכא דמלכא

"R. Johanan said: I am the only one remaining of Jerusalem's men of out standing beauty. He who desires to see R. Johanan's beauty, let him take a silver goblet as it emerges from the crucible, fill it with the seed of red pomegranate, encircle its brim with a chaplet of red roses and set it between the sun and the shade: its lustrous glow is akin to R. Johanan's beauty."

His vanity seems quite evident when R. Johanan himself expressed the fact that a woman who was with child when gazing upon his beauty of countenance would bear children of grace and handsome appearance.

ר' יוחנן הוה אביז ותיב אשאר
טבילת. אמר כי סלקן בנות ישראל
מטבילת מצוה אפצו ק' כי היכי
דליהו בנ' שבידי כוול.

"R. Johanan used to go and sit
at the gates of the Mikweh.
'When the daughters of Israel
ascend from the bath,' said he,
'let them look upon me (meet me)
that they bear sons as beautiful
and learned as I.'"

Quite interesting is R. Johanan's encounter with Resh
Lakish, where due to his beauty, he saved a soul in Israel.
It was his friend, pupil and later his brother-in-law, Resh
Lakish who repented of his evil ways and became great in the
study of the Torah.

יומא חד הוה קא סחי ר' יוחנן בירצא
חצי' ריש לקיש ואור לירצא אבהרה
אמר ליה חילק לאוריגא. אמר ליה
שופרן לגי. איילא דדרת בק ירקא
לק אלוהי דשבידא מילא. קביל עליה
ב' למידר לאיל" מאילנה ולא מצ'
דבר אקרי"ה ואילנה וסויה אברא רבא.

"One day, R. Johanan was bathing
in the Jordan, when Resh Lakish
saw him and leapt into the Jor-
dan after him. Said he (R. Jo-
hanan) to him, 'Your strength
should be for the Torah (devoted
to study).' 'Your beauty', he
replied, 'should be for women.'
'If you will repent,' said he,
'I will give you my sister (in
marriage) who is more beautiful

כח (רד"ק) נאמר עליו
בן אבא אומר עליו

"R. Johanan was once ascending a staircase, R. Ammi, and R. Assi supporting him, when the staircase collapsed under him. He himself climbed up and brought them up with him. Said the Rabbis to him, 'Since (your strength is) such, why do you require support?' 'Otherwise,' he replied, 'what (strength) will I reserve for the time of my old age.'"

Reference is made in humorous vein to his obesity describing the manner in which he prayed.

1
אמר ר' יוסף ברקדן לא יקרא
קריאת שמע והוא ר' יוחנן וצ"ל וקרי'
עליו ר' יוחנן דבצל דאר רוב

"Rab Joseph said, 'One who lies on his back should not read the Shema.' But R. Johanan inclined to one side and read the Shema. It is different with him because he was corpulent."

However the only factor which marred the complete bodily perfection of R. Johanan was his bad teeth with which he suffered greatly for he was afflicted with scurvy of the gums.²

Thus blessed with physical as well as spiritual gifts and disregarding his material handicaps, R. Johanan sought out the

1. Berachoth 13 b

2. Yoma 84 2 and Abada Zara 28 a
R. Mathiah B. Heresh said: 'R. Johanan was troubled with scurvy (on his gums).

א"ר מתיא ב' ר' יוחנן
על צב"ק ר' יוחנן

foremost teachers of his day to seethe in the cauldron of their burning wisdom. Soon R. Johanan's worth was recognized and he was meritorious enough to be counted among the disciples of R. Judah 1, Ha-Nasi, for R. Johanan was born in Sepphoris, while Rabbi lived there the last seventeen years of his life. This piece of evidence enables us to date the birth of R. Johanan. When Rabbi died, R. Johanan was fifteen years of age and since we know that Rabbi died in 505 Sel. era = 193 C.E., we can assume that R. Johanan was born about 491 Sel. era = 178 C.E.

From an incident revealed in the tractate Yoma, of an encounter of Rabbi with Johanan's mother, we learn that Rabbi became the Patron of R. Johanan even before the latter's birth.

1

בבבא עובדא דאריה אה' לקמ' דרב'
 א"ל צ"ל אהו' לה ד'מא ד'נב' הוא
 אהו' לה וא' אה' קרי צ"ל ד'מא
 אצק ד'מא ד'מא (ירמ' אה) ונב' ק'
 מ'ה ר' יוחנן.

"There was a pregnant woman who smelt ~~of~~ food. They came before Rabbi. He said to them, 'Go and whisper to her that it is the Day of Atonement.' They whispered to her and she was relieved (of her morbid appetite for the fetus was quitted) Rabbi quoted the Scriptural verse, 'Before I yet formed thee in thy mother's body, I knew thee (Jer.1:5).' R. Johanan was born of this woman. (He was the embryo in question.)"

Thus when R. Johanan grew up, Rabbi numbered him among his disciples and his merit was such that he was allowed to sit before Rabbi.

1
בבבב חב' תלמיד' דהוו תל' קמיה
דרב' ואז מניה רב' ויהי.

"There were two pupils who sat before Rabbi and one of them was R. Johanan."

But R. Johanan was very young at the time and as he himself remarks, he was unable to comprehend the depth of Rabbi's erudition.

2
דכירנא כד הוי יתקלא אחר י"ז שנה
אחוריה דרב' ופסקי נקוקין דגור מפומיה
דרב' דפומיה דרב'... ויהי אנא ידע אב
פן אמרין.

"I remember that I was sitting seventeen rows in back of Rabbi and sparks of fire (discussion of Torah) arose out of the mouth of Rabbi to the mouth of Rab, but I did not understand the significance of their sayings."

However the sources in the Talmud Yerushalmi lead to the belief that R. Johanan did not actually learn from the mouth of Rabbi but from his pupils after him, R. Jannai, R. Hannina and R. Hoshaiah. For we do not find R. Johanan expressing a statement in the name of Rabbi directly except for the following saying:

1. Pesahin 3 b

2. Hullin 137 b

אמר ר' יוחנן יפה למדני רב.

"R. Johanan said: Rabbi taught me well."

He himself remarked with subtlety that it was only the slight impetus which contact with Rabbi gave him that started him on his life-long path of consecration to study.

ר' יוחנן ור"ל תר"ק אמרין: אלן לן
זכין לאור"ה לן א"א קלן דהמין
אקצאג'ה דרב' מן תולדותין דידן.

"R. Johanan and R. Simeon ben Lakish said: We merited instruction only because we saw the toes of Rabbi reaching out of his calceoli (Roman Sandals)"

The Rambam in his introduction to his *Sefer ha-Nefukot* includes R. Johanan among the pupils of Rabbi but he explains that R. Johanan was the youngest of them all who later became the pupil of R. Jannai.

After his short apprenticeship under Judah I Ha-Nasi, R. Johanan received instruction from the greatest of the disciples of Rabbi, among whom were R. Hiyya ³ Abba Arika (Rab), ⁴

1. Yer. Aboda Zara 1 H. 1

3. Yer. Sanhedrin 1 H. 1

"R. Johanan went for a judgement before R. Hiyya and sat by one of his pupils."

ר' יוחנן אצל מ'דן קומ'
ר' ח'א' א"ג'ק אק'ה ח'
המ'ד.

2. Yer. Besa V H. 2

4. Berachoth 45 b

"R. Johanan heard it from Rab before he (Rab) left for Babylon."

המ'ד' א' מ'ר'ק מ'ק'
ד'ק'ד' ד'מ'ד'

and Abba bar Abba (Samuel's father).¹

Also numbered among his worthy instructors were R. Jannai² the pupil^{of} R. Hiyya, and Hezekiah, the son of Hiyya.³ Both of these towered above him in knowledge and from them, he gleaned an insight into the code of Judah 1.

However greatest and most noted of all his instructors, under whose tutelage he derived most of his teachings, was R. Hoshaiah, the pupil of Bar Kappara and R. Hiyya, who later founded an academy at Caesarea after his departure from Sepphoris.

אמר ר' יוחנן יב תלמידי ר' אבהו
ברך ויהי ימים ידועים דיניהן כשהיו למדן
תורה אצל ר' אבהו היו יושבין ארבעה
ארבעה באמה.

"R. Johanan said: R. Hoshaiah had twelve pupils and for eighteen years I remained with them. When we learned the Torah from R. Hoshaiah, we would sit four in a cubit."

1. Yer. Pesahim V H. 2

"R. Johanan said: Concerning this point did Abba bar Abba instruct me."

אמר ר' יוחנן: עבדא דאמר
ל' אבהו דר אבהו.

2. Baba Bathra 154 b

"R. Zeira said: If R. Johanan could contradict his disciple R. Eleazer, would he contradict his master R. Jannai?"

אמר ר' זעירא: אם יכפור ר'
יוחנן דר' אלעזר תלמידו
יכפור דר' ינאי רבו.

3. Tosephta Menahoth 23 b

"While Hezekiah, his teacher still lived, R. Johanan was not the head of the Academy."

עד מנ' שחזקיהו רבו היה
ק"מ לא היה ר' יוחנן ריש
ישיבה.

4. Erubin 53 a

Even after R.Johanan had founded his Academy in Tiberias and was recognized as one of the greatest of his generation, he continued to visit R.Hoshaiah to inquire of him the means whereby he might readily resolve his doubts for he esteemed his teacher highly.

1

ב"אמ' קרפ ר' יוחנן ע' דבר צה הל' כל'
אצל ר' הושעיה דרס' זקיסרין (א"ר).

"R.Ammi said in the name of R. Johanan:
Concerning this problem I went to
R.Hoshaiah at Caesarea and he said
to me-."

R.Johanan was also taught by R. Hanina bar Hama who
prided himself for having such an outstanding pupil.

2

רבי חנינא הוה מ'סמ'ך דרבי ח'יה בר
קא ד'צ'כורין. חמ' כל עמא כ"ר. א"ל
חמ' כל עמא כ"ר. א"ל ר' יוחנן יל'יק
דר' קדי' מדרס' דרבי קנ'יה וכל עמא
כ"ר מ'סמ'ך'ה. אמר קריק ר'חמא דמא'
ל' כ'רן ע' דאנא דא"ר.

"R. Hanina was supported by R. Hiyya
in Sepphoris. He saw people running.
R. Hanina asked of him, 'Why are the
people running?' He answered, 'R.
Johanan is discoursing in the House
of Study of R. Bannaia, and all the
people are running to hear him.' R.
Hanina remarked, 'Blessed be the
All-Compassionate One Who showed me
the fruit of my labor while I am
still alive.'"

1. Yer. Halla 1 H. 4 (Wilna)

2. Yer. Horayoth 111 H. 4 (Wilna)

Also among the teachers of R. Johanan may be placed R. Bannaia, R. Simeon Ben Jehozadak and R. Joshua ben Levi. Their sayings were handed down chiefly by R. Johanan and through him their deliverances were preserved. For his teachers, R. Johanan displayed only reverence and undying gratitude for their part in molding his character. He expressed only a great affection for them and in their presence, he walked humbly and modestly.

1
אנא כמלא נקד חמ ס' קי'.

"We are as narrow as the eye of
a needle-(before our teachers)."

Having absorbed the teachings of his worthy masters, R. Johanan on the advice of his two foremost teachers, R. Jannai and R. Hoshaiiah, left Sepphoris and settled in Tiberias where he founded his great Academy. We are told that due to the fact that R. Johanan could not suffer opposition to his views, he was forced to leave the place of his birth to seek his intellectual pursuits in Tiberias. His differences seem to have emanated from his relationship with R. Hanina and since one refused to accept the opinion of the other, a strained feeling arose.

2
נחית ליה כי יוחנן מצבורין
לסגריה אמר מה איתותן ז'
הדין דיןא.

1. Erubin 53 a

2. Yer. Shebiith IX H.I

"R. Johanan went down from Sepphoris to Tiberias. He said, 'Why have you brought me this judge(his decision)'. (He is always contrary to my opinions)."

However a doubt is raised by the scholars. Would R. Johanan, known for his modesty before his teachers dispute with R. Hanina, his master? We find still another source of his quarrel with R. Hanina.

1
אמר ר' יוחנן אבא אית'הו/ ו' חסן סגא
גאנא שרי ופוא אסר ואנא אסר פוא א'

"R. Johanan said: Why have you brought me this old man for when I allow, he forbids and when I forbid, he allows."

It is quite surprising that R. Johanan should refer to his teacher as "That old Man", and differ so radically from him in his views. However we may assume that they who interpret the thought to refer to R. Hanina, the teacher of R. Johanan erred. In reality, the reference is to R. Hanina bar Sisi who was a judge in Sepphoris and who disregarded the authority of R. Johanan forcing him to take up his place of instruction elsewhere, as was mentioned above.

The brilliance of R. Johanan's intellectual light radiated into the far-reaches of Palestine and Babylon and slowly but surely all the sages of that generation gathered unto him and

I. Yer. Besa I H. I

after the death of his teachers, all the disciples of R. Hanina came to acquire knowledge from the erudition of R. Johanan.

The disciples of R. Johanan were many for he was considered the greatest of his generation. The leader and foremost scholar in his great Academy at Tiberias was his close friend and brother-in-law, R. Simeon ben Lakish. He esteemed him so highly that he placed R. Simon ben Lakish as an equal in knowledge of the Torah.

1
מה אעשה כנגד חולק עלי.

"What can I do when one who is corresponding to me (of equal standing) differs from me."

R. Johanan's love of Resh Lakish, and his worth to him was so great that he saved Resh Lakish from dire punishment at the hands of the Nazi.

2
רש לקיש אמר נסיון אשטא מלקין אמת
קדיש של שלש. אמר רבי נסיון נכנס. אמר
למיתבוס ארש לקיש טרפון ערק לרין
מקדא. לאחר סוף ר' יהודה לביה ונצא
והלך רבי נסיון לביה ונצא. אמר לו למה
ליתאמי אמר לו מזה דאורייתא שריטת
בחדא דיה. איך ובגדא טפחין. איך לא ולי
רש לקיש לא.

"Resh Lakish expounded, 'A Nasi who transgresses is flagellated by a Beth Din of three. R. Judah II Ha-Nasi heard of it and became angry with him. He sent a band of soldiers to seize him. They sought to seize him. He fled to a tower. On the morrow, R. Johanan went up to the house of Assembly where R. Judah II Ha-Nasi had gone. R. Judah II said

1. Ketuboth 54 b

2. Yer. Sanhedrin II(19 d) H.1

to him, 'Why does not my Master expound for us a word of the Torah?' R. Johanan made the motion of clapping with one hand. He asked, 'Do people clap with one hand?' R. Johanan replied, 'No, and when Resh Lakish is missing, one can not (Resh Lakish is the other hand)."

Resh Lakish in turn loved his master well and would not appear before R. Johanan unless he had absorbed his studies completely for R. Johanan was a hard task-master. Because of his diligence Resh Lakish was designated as the first leader in the college of R. Johanan.

1
רש לקיש הוה מסדר מתניתא מ' גמין
בגמ' מ' י"א שנתה תורה וד"א לקמיה
דרבי יוחנן.

"Resh Lakish used to arrange his studies forty times corresponding to the forty days during which the Torah was given to Israel before he appeared before R. Johanan."

Second to Resh Lakish and most noteworthy disciple of R. Johanan was R. Eleazer ben Pedath who acted as the substitute of the latter for three years and a half in the principalship of the school in Tiberias. When R. Eleazer ben Pedath came to Palestine, he was the disciple of R. Hanina and later he also served R. Hoshaiiah. However after the death of his teachers, he sat before R. Johanan and was recognized as one of his brightest traditionaries.

2
תלמיד הפסטר מרבו לא יחזיר בניו וילך
אלא מצדד בניו ופולק. כי הוה דרבי
אלעזר כד הוה מיסטר מניה דרבי יוחנן.
כד הוה דרבי ר"י אסקי הוה גמין קיו ר"א
אדמונה דרבי דרבי מיכסי ר"י מניה וכד הוה

1. Taanith 8a

2. Yoma 53B

אמר ר' יהושע בן לוי
אמר ר' יהושע בן לוי

"A disciple when leaving his Master should not turn his face and go but should ~~his~~ turn his face to the side and leave. So R. Eleazer, when he used to part from R. Johanan. When R. Johanan desired to leave first, he bent himself in his place till R. Johanan was out of his sight. When R. Eleazer was to leave first, he walked backwards until he could see him no longer."

R. Johanan esteemed R. Eleazer bar Pedath highly and marveled at his depth of thought and erudition.

אמר ר' יהושע בן לוי
אמר ר' יהושע בן לוי

"R. Johanan remarked to Resh Lakish, 'I observed that the son of Pedath was sitting and making expositions as Moses in the name of the Almighty.'"

As observed above, many of the pupils of R. Hanina and R. Hoshaiah left after the death of their Masters and went to Tiberias to receive instruction from the mouth of R. Johanan. Among them may be listed R. Ammi ben Nathan, R. Asi, R. Hiyya II bar Abba, R. Simeon bar Abba and R. Hiyya bar Joseph. These and many more luminaries served before R. Johanan and were his traditionaries.

However most important was ~~the~~ fact that Rabbi Judah II, the Nasi, the son of R. Gamaliel III, and grandson of Rabbi was numbered among the pupils of R. Johanan. Each found it to his advantage to carry the favor of the other. R. Judah II

not being very learned sought for the protection of his office and his own welfare from R. Johanan, the leader of the Academy at Tiberias, the home of Patriarchate. He realized that the strength of the office of Nasi would be enhanced through his connection with the Master of the principal Academy. He sought in every way to seal his position by acquiring the heart and friendship of R. Johanan. Since he understood that R. Johanan was a man of uneven temper when something concerned his own personal prestige, R. Judah II was cautious lest he offend his sponsor and so he bestowed on him excessive honor. In every way, he aided R. Johanan and even supported him by giving him his livelihood from the House of the Patriarchate.

1
 חנני דוג יבול. ל. אחר צווא לא
 כמחזן אחי עבדיר ולא כר' יואנן
 דב' נשיא אלא כרעל וקנא.

"What means, 'He would utterly be contemned?' Ulla said: Not like Simeon the brother of Azariah nor like R. Johanan of the "Prince's house" but like Hillel and Shebna (who studied in the direst poverty). (Simeon studied while supported by his brother and R. Johanan was subsidized by R. Judah II, the Prince. Each therefore forfeited some of the merit which accrued from his study)."

Through the power of his office of Nasi, Judah II would force the people to accept the teachings and decisions of R. Johanan. All those who refused to hearken were punished by the officers of the Patriarch.

1. Sotah 21 a

1

אגל ר' יוחנן אמרה קמה דרה'
'והרה ליהא ער בלש ואקרה'

"R. Johanan went and told about her to R. Judah, the Nasi, who sent a constable and forced her to leave her (second) husband."

Without doubt, this aided the personal prestige of R. Johanan for thus were his religious decrees made as law and no one could be refractory to his word. He stood out therefore as the guiding spiritual and religious luminary of his times to whom all, both the scholars and the laymen, sounded their love and reverence.

Through the merit of personal activity in his striving to adorn and exalt the Torah, R. Johanan continued to rise in the world of scholarship. His fame for the methodical analysis of the basic Halakhs brought him more and more followers to receive instructions and carry down his teachings. As many scores of his disciples accepted and taught his decisions, his name spread far and wide and was on the lips of scholars more than that of any other teacher. R. Johanan did not confine his labors only to the actual vicinity of the college, but he visited and lectured at other places until he stamped himself upon the hearts and minds of both the intellectual and social worlds.

1
כ' אהלא רב יצחק בר יוסף אמר
עודדא דרבי קאה' דר' יוחנן בן שמואל
דמאון בזה"כ שח' דריות פקע.

"When R. Isaac b. Joseph came he related: Such a case was once submitted to R. Johanan in the Synagogue of Maon (Tell Ma'un, West of Tiberias) on the Day of Atonement which fell on a Sabbath."

2
אמר רבי יצחק בר אידי דורר רב' מן
בבלי.

"R. Jacob the son of Idi said:
' R. Johanan gave us a decision in Zaiden."

In the Diaspora, where his teachings were carried by his disciples, his authority was almost as great as in his native land, and few contemporary scholars in Babylonia opposed him.

3
אמר ר' חסדא אלמלא אמר ר' רבי
יוחנן בריה דר' זיידא.

"R. Hisda said; 'Even if R. Johanan told me that himself I would not have listened to him."

R. Johanan was honored in the eyes of the Babylonian's and all his words were there considered as law, a tribute to his scholarly attainments.

4
רב' רב יהודה מקנא ברבא דב'
רב' רב' קארי כיון דהזא דב' קא
מחר' אמר ר' אהא איזר'א
ממערבא נמיה דר' יוחנן דאמר.

"At the house of R. Jehudah, cabbage was prepared, and in Rabbah's house pumpkins were cleaned. Later on Rabbah noticed that this was being done even before the afternoon prayer so he told them that a message was received from R. Johanan of

At that moment, R. Johanan awoke and said to them: 'youngsters! Have I not warned you (to keep in mind the passage (Proverbs 7:4) 'Say unto wisdom, thou art my sister', which means if a thing is as certain to thee as the fact that thou canst not marry thine own sister, then say it, otherwise thou shalt not say it."

However, R. Johanan recognized no foreign authority except that of Rab (Abba Arika) in Babylonia, his senior colleague under Judah I. With Rab, R. Johanan kept up a correspondence and addressed him as "Our master in Babylonia."

2
כִּי סֵלִיק אִיסִי בַר הִינִי, עָלָיו מֵאֵל מֵאֵל
סָבְרָא דְּמִבְּרַת אֲנִי אֶבְרָא אֶרְכָּא אֶרְכָּא
עָבָא אֶרְכָּא קְרִיָּה לֵיהּ? וְלֹא אֶמְרָא
רַבְנָא דְּבִבְלָא (בְּבִבְלָא - רַבִּי)

"When R. Issi bar Hini came up (to the Academy). (R. Johanan) asked him, 'Who is the head of the college in Babylonia.' He answered 'Abba Arika.' R. Johanan said to him, 'You call him Abba Arika?' (And you do not refer to him as 'our master', as it is fitting to Rab's dignity)."

However after Rab's death, he did not give his successor, Samuel, much respect nor did he heed his authority in legal decisions. R. Johanan condescendingly addressed Samuel as "our colleague in Babylonia." Samuel in order to win the respect of R. Johanan sent him a complete calendar covering the intercalations for a period of sixty years for he thought that R. Johanan would realize the worth of such a personage as he in Babylon. But Samuel was sorely disappointed for R. Johanan

merely admitted that Samuel was a good mathematician. However when Samuel transmitted to him a mass of questions on the dietary laws, Johanan himself erudite in that field, seeing the depth of Samuel's knowledge realized his error and exclaimed, 'I still have a master in Babylonia.' He even resolved to pay Samuel a visit but in the meantime, Samuel passed away.

1

דרש בורה בהג' ליה רבי זחמן לקדש רבנן
 עקב. כי נח נפשיה הורה בהג' לקדש חזירי
 עקב. אמר לא ידע' לי מדי דרבנן אנא.
 בהג' עבר ליה ציבורא דסימון שני. אמר
 בשמא חושבנא דעמא ידע. בהג' עבר ליה
 הלויס זמלי ספקי טריפתא. אמר אהל' ל'
 רב חבב' אינ' אינ' צ"ה. אינ' צינורא
 פסוק ל' פסוקי. אמר ליה 'ושמא' מל'
 ע"מ נח נפשיה דשמא.

"R. Johanan in writing to Rab, addressed him as, 'Our master in Babylon.' When Rab died, he wrote to Samuel, addressing him as 'our colleague in Babylon.' He said, 'He does not know that I am a master.' He wrote and sent him the calendar intercalations for sixty years. He said, 'Now I see only that he understands astronomical calculations.' He wrote and sent him thirteen camel loads of questionable cases of t'refah. He said, 'There is a Master in Babylon; I shall go and see him.' He said to a child, 'tell me thy verse.' He said to him, 'Samuel died.' Thus it seems that ~~Mar~~ Samuel passed away."

After the death of Samuel, R. Johanan was without question or dispute of the scholars, the one and foremost leader of his generation in Palestine as well as Babylonia and the Diaspora.

1
א"ל (ורב אבא בר אבהו) מנא לך
הא מהללך קראי שמע ל' מרה
ושמאל ור' יוחנן.

"Rab Adda bar Ahaba (at Sura)
was asked 'Whence have you this?'
'I heard it from three eminent
Scholars of the Scriptures, Rab,
Samuel and R. Johanan.' (Rashi:
They are so eminent that they
may be relied upon as upon the
Scriptures.)"

Even in Pumbeditha, did the Sages listen to his religious
decrees and accepted his rulings even in place of their own
for R. Johanan was too great a personage with which to contend.

2
אמרי חריבי דבומדיתא אין
ערבה בחוצה לארץ. גלחה רב
יהודה לקמה דר' יוחנן. גלח
לע סגום ספיקה ואבד דאבא
והכרז על פירותיהן שטענדיג
גניזה וכל האומר אין ערבה
בחוצה לארץ לא יהי לו נין
וכד.

-
1. Aboda Zara 40 a
2. Kiddushin 39 a

"The Keen scholars of Pumbeditha said: There is no orlah in the Diaspora. When Rab Judah sent (this ruling) to R. Johanan, he sent back: Conceal (the law of) doubtful (orlah) destroy certain (orlah) and proclaim that these fruits must be hidden and whoever maintains that there is no orlah in the Diaspora, will have no offspring or posterity."

R. Johanan's character was marked by a profound morality as evidenced by his ~~mundane~~ affairs. His treatment of the despised pagans and the Samaritans portrays a benevolent and enlightened personality.¹ His servant was allowed to partake of that which the master, R. Johanan, feasted so was his liberality and munificence apparent.

2

שתי חמור ויהא לעצמו וקר
אנשיה הלא קבלו אשני עשר.

"He drank wine and gave to his servant and proclaimed, 'Did not my Maker create him in the womb.'"

With all his shining virtues, R. Johanan became in his old age afflicted with a spirit of arrogance that led to his undoing. R. Johanan was by nature a man of uneven temper but the passing of years brought him a haughtiness which caused

1. See Pages 47 & 48

2. Yer. Baba Kamma 8 H b

these?' They replied that the Holy One, blessed be He, would in time to come set them up in the gates of Jerusalem. (When) he came (again) before R. Johanan he said unto him: 'Expound, O my master, it is becoming to you to expound, as you said, so have I seen.' He replied unto him, 'Raca, had you not seen would you not have believed? You are sneering at the words of the Sages! He set his eyes on him and (the student) turned into a heap of bones."

R. Eleazar ben Pedath, who many times was extolled by his teacher for his wisdom, in turn felt the onus of shame heaped upon him by the arrogance of R. Johanan. For at times R. Eleazar taught to his students laws in his own name without attributing them to R. Johanan.

כַּסְפָּא רִ"ל עַל ר' עֲלָזָר אֵיל שְׁמַיָא¹
מֵי דְבַר לְבָא וְלֹא אִמְרֵי ר' עֲלָזָר

"When Resh Lakish was angered at R. Eleazar, he said to him, 'You have heard something from the smith's son and you did not tell it to us in his name."

R. Johanan, therefore, humiliated his pupil R. Eleazar by disputing the authoritativeness of his decisions. R. Eleazar, ashamed, feared to face his teacher and hid from his sight.

רַבִּי יוֹהָנָן הָיָה מְסִיתֵמֵי עַל ר' יֶעֱקֹב
פֶּר אֵילֵי וְהִיָּה ר' אֵילֵי עַל ר' עֲלָזָר
וְאִמְרֵי מִן קְדָמֵי. אִמְרֵי הָא רַבִּי
מֵיִלִּין דְּבִין דְּבִי עֲלָזָר בִּי חֲזָא דְּלֹא
לֵאמֹר דְּלֹא וְחֲזָא דְּלֹא אִמְרֵי שְׁמַיָא

1. Ketuboth 25 b

2. Yer. Berachoth II(4 b) H.1

"R. Johanan was supported by R. Jacob b. Idi and when R. Eleazar saw them, he hid from before them. He said: Two things this Babylonian did to me; one is that he did not ask my peace, and the other is that he said a law without attributing it to my name."

Rab Kahana, a pupil of Rab, who was sent by his master in Babylon to sit in the circle of R. Johanan, also came to grief because he was unfortunate enough to contend with R. Johanan and raise his ire, though unwittingly. For Rab Kahana raised many questions of an exposition delivered by R. Johanan. R. Johanan thinking that Rab Kahana had merely posed the problems as a slight to his erudition, became angry with him and shamed him.

רבי יוחנן חשד דבריהם שבוהבין¹
 מהר אלוך קמח"ק ביה. חלף דמיה
 ונח נבאיה

"R. Johanan saw that Rab Kahana's lips were parted and thought that he was laughing at him. He felt aggrieved and in consequence the soul of R. Kahana went to rest."

Even Resh Lakish, the brother-in-law and close friend of R. Johanan about whom R. Johanan glorified himself for bringing him back under the wings of the Divine Presence, felt the lash of his haughtiness and quick temper. He could not bear any opposition to his views and whenever Resh Lakish disputed with him, R. Johanan would slyly insult him. He bore a grudge against Resh Lakish which led to the death of his friend and his own

1. Saba Kamana 117 a

finished? R. Johanan ruled:
 When they are tempered in a furnace. Resh Lakish maintained:
 When they have been furbished with water. Said he to him, 'a robber understands his trade.' Said he to him, 'And wherewith have you benefited me: there (as a robber) I was called Master and here I am called Master (Hebrew "Rabbi" is equally applicable to a captain of a gang and a Master-Rashi) 'By bringing you under the wings of the Shechinah,' he retorted. R. Johanan therefore felt himself deeply hurt (by the remark of Resh Lakish that he had not benefited him) (as a result of which) Resh Lakish fell ill. His (R. Johanan's sister) the wife of Resh Lakish came and wept before him; 'Forgive him for the sake of my son', she pleaded. He replied, '(Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive (Jer. 49:11))' 'For the sake of my widowhood them!' And let thy widows trust in me,' he assured her. Resh Lakish died and R. Johanan was plunged in deep grief. Said the Rabbis, 'Who shall go to ease his mind?' Let R. Eleazar b Pedath go, who disquisitions are very subtle.' So he went and sat before, but he did not ease his mind. Thus R. Johanan went on rending his garments and weeping, 'Where are you, O son of Lakisha, where are you, O son of Lakisha; and he cried thus until his mind was turned. Thereupon the Rabbis prayed for him, and he (R. Johanan) died.

A small error seems to have crept into the above source. It is told that R. Johanan's sister came to beg of him forgiveness so that her husband Resh Lakish might live. Since R. Johanan was almost a hundred years old when he died, it seems improbable that his sister, who was older than he, would come with a nursing child to beg compassion for the sake of her orphans. Without

doubt in Baba Mesia, it should have said, 'וַהֲלֵךְ' his (Resh Lakish's) wife instead of 'וַהֲלֵךְ' his (R. Johanan's) sister for R. Johanan's sister had already died and Resh Lakish married another who bore him children. Thus when Resh Lakish died, he could have left small sons from his second wife.

As has been shown, the grief over the loss of his boon companion, left R. Johanan, a broken man, and for three and a half years he could not attend to the duties of his college.

מִן הַיָּמִים הַהֵם שֶׁלֹּא
הָיָה הוֹשֵׁיָא בְּבֵית הַמִּדְרָשׁ
בְּשָׁלְשֵׁי שָׁנִים וַחֲמִישֵׁי יָמִים¹

"R. Johanan did not attend his college for three and a half years, because of sorrow.

Although, it seems that he finally recovered his health and resumed his labors in the college, it was but in the waning days of his life.

The last years of his life were as unfortunate as his early life. Bereft of parents at birth, in his later years he was deprived of his ten sons. Although his wife bore him ten sons, he was not considered meritorious enough to see them grown to manhood. He however preserved a bone, (probably a tooth) of the last son to show to people who had suffered bereavement for the purpose of inducing them to evidence the same spirit of resignation as himself.

אֶלְעָזָר הָיָה חָלֵל וְר. יוֹחָנָן
הָיָה דְּבִיר קָאן בְּבֵית הַמִּדְרָשׁ
אֶלְעָזָר הָיָה חָלֵל וְר. יוֹחָנָן
הָיָה דְּבִיר קָאן בְּבֵית הַמִּדְרָשׁ²

"R. Eleazar was ill and R. Johanan went in to visit him. He noticed that R. Eleazar was weeping. He said to him 'Why do you weep? Is

1. Yer. Megilla I H-11 (Wilna)

2. Berachoth 5 b

it because of (my) childlessness..
This is the bone of my tenth son."

However R. Johanan was blessed with daughters who he attempted to marry off with noted sages in order to be granted descendants who would be learned in the Torah and a glory to his name.

1
זעירי הוה קא משהמט מנה דר'
יוהנן דהוה אחר ליה נסיב דרתי' ונחא
חזי הוה קאנז' באורחא מלו לעורקא
דמאן ארכביה דר' יוהנן אכתיביה
יקא מציר ליה א"ל אורייתא כשרה
בנתין לא כשרה

"Ze'iri was ~~urging~~ R. Johanan, who was urging him, 'Marry my daughter.' (Ze'iri being a Babylonian whilst R. Johanan was only a Palestinian, he did not wish to marry his daughter, since the former are of purer birth) One day they were travelling on a road when they came to a pool of water. Thereupon he placed R. Johanan on his shoulder and carried him across. Said he to him: 'Our learning is fit but our daughters are not?'"

Thus did R. Johanan live, the long and full life of a great sage. Born in 178 C.E., nurtured without the advantage of parental care, he met the vicissitudes of life armed with love and knowledge of Torah. Without the means of a livelihood, he dispensed with all worldly cares to assume the meager existence of a student of the Law. Striving for wisdom, he sought out the greatest scholars of his time to sit amidst the dust of their feet, so that he might be nourished by their teachings.

Slowly but securely, he ascended to scholarly heights, until at fifty he was recognized as dean of the college of Tiberias. His shining light pervaded Palestine and the Diaspora, and to him flocked the sages of his generation. Finally, bereft of sons to bear his name and perpetuate his heritage, he died a sick, broken old man, bemoaning his friend and colleague, R. Simeon ben Lakish whose death he had unwittingly caused. He was succeeded by his disciple R. Eleazar ben Pedath as head of the Academy at Tiberias.

The date of R. Johanan's death is but a conjecture. However we may accept the correctness of Sherira's communication that R. Johanan died in the year 591 ~~3~~¹ 279 C.E. According to Sherira, he presided over the college eighty years. On account of the word "melek", this number can not refer to the duration of his life but must actually refer to ~~the~~ his years at the college. Yet on the other hand, his activity at Tiberias could not have covered over fifty to sixty years since he was almost fifty years of age when he went to Tiberias as head of the college. However, we may assume that the statement that he presided over the college eighty years included the time he taught at Sepphoris. Thus the date 279 C.E. being approximately correct would make R. Johanan, about 101 years of age at the time of his death.

Halevy has endeavored to show that R. Johanan who certainly must have reached an old age was born between 175 and 180 C.E. and died about 290. However another source¹ places R. Johanan's death approximately three and one half years after Resh Lakish's death which points to the correctness of the date 279 C.E.

As a lasting tribute to the genius of R. Johanan, Abraham Ibn Daud in his Sepher ha-kabbala and Maimonides in his Introduction to his Commentary on the Mishnah, ascribe to him the composition of the Talmud Yerushalmi. However this view seems untenable for although he was its projector, the one who laid the foundations for the work which was continued by succeeding generations, it appears erroneous to credit him with its entire composition. For as a matter of fact, almost a century and a half elapsed after the death of R. Johanan (279 C.E.) before this Talmud received its present form, and it was approximated to this form, toward the end of the fourth century, by Jonah and Jose II, the two directors of the Academy of Tiberias. We also meet with sayings and discussion by two other scholars, Mani II bar Jonah, master of a school in Sepphoris and Jose bar Abin who are of a still later date. Thus one can not logically assume the complete composition of the Talmud Yerushalmi by R. Johanan.

However what prompted two such great scholars as Maimonides and Ibn Daud to make what seems to be an erroneous conclusion? We may give answer to this question in one of two possible explanations. Frankel in his *מסכתא דאורייתא* frames a cogent argument for the attribution to R. Johanan of this most signal honor. He interprets the thought of the Rambam and Ibn Daud to refer to R. Johanan's Academy at Tiberias rather than R. Johanan himself. From the time of R. Johanan till the completion of the Talmud Yerushalmi, the seat of learning was at Tiberias, the school of R. Johanan. The very fact that many sayings are attributed to R. Johanan in the Talmud Babli, yet mentioned

anonymously in the Yerushalmi¹, points to the fact that the Babli itself referred to the Academy of Tiberias as R. Johanan's. Thus the statement that R. Johanan composed the Yerushalmi actually referred to the fact that it was redacted at the Academy of Tiberias which bore R. Johanan's name.

However a more logical explanation can be adduced if we compare the compilation of the Mishnah and the Talmud Babli. In Baba Mezia 86a, it is written, " Rabbi and R. Nathan conclude the Mishnah, R. Ashi and Rabina conclude authentic teaching." Rashi interprets the above statement to mean that until the time of Rabbi and R. Nathan, the Tannaim in their respective schools taught their sayings through word of mouth without definite arranged tractates to guide them or their disciples. Rabbi and R. Nathan collected and compiled these laws, admitting only those they considered authentic, and concludes Rashi, " those who followed them added but little." In course of time, discussion on the Mishnah grew to very large dimensions and it was the work of R. Ashi and Rabina to compile this huge mass of accumulated material and give it an orderly arrangement. Thus they are credited with the redaction of the Talmud Babli.

In the same manner, R. Johanan assembled and arranged the discussions and interpretations on the Mishnah that were taught in the Academies of Palestine. His Academy at Tiberias being the outstanding school of learning in Palestine, we find ~~the~~ the Talmud Yerushalmi replete with his sayings and those of his disciples.

1. Babli Succah 53a
Yer. Succah V H. 2

However the presence of Jonah and Jose II in the Talmud is evidence that this compilation did not remain static but was enhanced and enlarged at a later time. We may thus conclude that R. Johanan was the impetus which set the wheels in motion for the redaction of the Talmud Yerushalmi, a work posthumously consummated, and on this basis , was designated as its composer.

HIS ACHIEVEMENTS AND INFLUENCES IN THE RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL WORLDS

The lengthy span of years in the life of R. Johanan enabled him to devote himself to the pursuit of the many and variegated branches of intellectual endeavors. His insatiable thirst for knowledge led him into the fields of science, mathematics, and astronomical calculations which left him no small place in the scholarship of his day. These studies in addition to the Talmudic lore in which he delved, were the stepping stones to the position of authority which he held as the leader of the Academy in Tiberias.

As the foremost scholar of his day and as the recognized authority in questions of law, R. Johanan was able to realize many reforms, in the fields of religion and social affairs. A brief survey into the attainments of R. Johanan will give us the key to the many-sided personality of this great sage. I have therefore arranged this chapter into the following order: 1. His knowledge of science 2. His social crusade against the evil practices of his day 3. His religious reforms as evidenced by his consolidation of synagogal worship and liturgy 4. His liberal social outlook on the narrow and confining views of his day as indicated by his legal enactments.

R. Johanan's scientific erudition may be ascertained by the many sayings in the field of medicine attributed to him. Although he was not a physician, nevertheless his knowledge of many cures and aids in various treatment shows his broad view of the sciences of his time. The following are some of his sayings in respect to contemporary medical activity.

¹
 דאמר רבי מאן דבליע חי'יא לובליה
 בשותא במילחא ולרעה תלתא מילי.

"R. Johanan said: The man bitten by a snake should eat cuscuta with salt and to run three miles."

²
 אמר ר' יוחנן הרוצה שיסרו תרנגולו
 יטול כרבולתו ומסחרס מאלי.

"R. Johanan said: 'If one desires to emasculate a cock, let him take off his comb and he will thereby by emasculated (without an operation.)'"

³
 רבי אבדו חש באובדניה ואירי ליה
 ר' יוחנן.

"R. Abbahu was troubled with his ear and R. Johanan gave him instructions (for its cure)."

⁴
 אמר אביי מ' שאינו בקי בדברך ארץ
 לית' ל' קפיצי קורטא' האוילנדק'נבו
 ונשק'נבו בחמרא ולישת. אמר רבי
 יוחנן ל' ב' הח'רמ' לנצרות.

"Abaye said: One who is not conversant with the way of the world (a euphemism for marital intercourse) should take three kifizi (a small measure) of sunflower and grind it and boil it in wine, and drink it. R. Johanan said: This is just what restores me to my youthful vigour."

His knowledge of various elements and their chemical properties which have theropeutic value, is evident from the following source

-
1. Sabbath 109 b
 2. Sabbath 110 b
 3. Aboda Zara 28 b
 4. Gittin 70 a

which speaks of a compound of root tea, as a relief from too frequent menstruation and a cure for jaundice.

1

מאי כמ עקרון? אמר ר' יוחנן ולי
מחלקי שוש קומא אובסגריא ומחלק
שושא זביא זילא ומחלק שושא בורכמא
ריסקא ולישחקיבו בהדי הדדי. לנדה
תלמא דמחרא ולא מיצקרא. לירקונא
תרין קשיכרא ומיצקא.

"What is root tea?" Said R. Johanan: It is made of Alexandrian gum, alum and garden saffron, each the weight of one zuz and ground together. To one who suffers with too frequent menstruation, three cups of this tea should be given in wine and she will not be barren. For jaundice, two cups are to be administered in beer but the patient will be barren ever after."

Also in the field of esoteric doctrine, the mystic speculation on the divine chariot, did R. Johanan pursue a great deal of study. Having completed his endeavor in that field he divulged to his disciples the discoveries of his intellectual pursuits.

אייל ר' יוחנן דר' אבא עזר תא
אמרוק דמצע דמרכבה.

"R. Johanan said unto R. Eleazar 'Come and I shall instruct thee in the secret of the vision of Ezekiel (I).'"

R. Johanan did not cease his intellectual strivings with the above but he also sought to become erudite in the field of

1. Sabbath 110 a

2. Hagiga 13 a

mathematics and astronomical calculations. From his very youth, he followed those who intercalated the calendar so that he might be informed of that science.

1

רבי יוחנן בצפרין סוב נחת לכתוב
והוא מלקט פירותין ואכיל ויומר
יהא חלקי עשרין קאכל דכאן רחמישית.

("When the Beth Din used to sanctify the new moon, they would make a feast; R. Johanan, on the morrow, would go to gather the fruit and eat thereof. He would say, 'May my portion be among those who ate here last night.'")

His prayers to be counted among those who intercalated the time of the moon was answered for he was accepted as one of them, though he was a very young man, the youngest of them all.

כאנכסן לציבור שנה (ר' יוחנן הוה)
דקטן שקדח, אמרו לו אמור הרי השנה
מקודשת בציבורה. אמר הרי השנה
מקודשת בציבורה.

(When they neared to intercalate the year and) R. Johanan was the youngest amongst them, they said to him, 'Say, Behold the year is sanctified in its intercalation.' 'He said, 'Behold the year is sanctified in its intercalation.'")

Later when he was in Tiberias, Samuel sent him the calendar intercalation for sixty years to impress him for Samuel knew him to be an authority in that field. ³

1. Moed Katan II H 3

2. Yer. Rosh Hashana II E 6

3. Hullin 95 b

However even more than that which he accomplished for his own intellectual satisfaction, were his achievements in the every day world of affairs. There were certain confining attitudes and conditions of his day which needed wither correction or complete eradication. In the resolving of these problems, the liberal and administrative hand of R. Johanan is evident.

In his day, a social evil existed which R. Johanan attempted to combat. In his fight against this custom of his time, we find R. Johanan a valiant social crusader who dared to attack the guilty though they were of most influential position. To R. Johanan, one who considered himself a sage had to be able to fight what he termed the battle of the Torah, to fight for the glorification and enhancement of their divine heritage. However, first, the individual had to possess knowledge of the Torah to succeed in his attempt to exalt it.

1

א"ר אבהו בר חנינא א"ר אסי א"ר
 יוחנן: דמי אבהו מנחמיה
 חורב דמי עי' חזקיהו ע' מנחמיה

"R. Aha B. Hanina said in the name of R. Assi in R. Johanan's name: In whom do you find (skill to conquer in) the battle of the Torah? Only in him who possesses bundles of Mishnah."

Thus R. Johanan established as a standard a list of qualifications that a man must possess before he could presume to be considered

a פסח'א •

1

אמר ר' יוחנן איצטו תלמידי חכמי אמרין איהו
 פרנס על הצבור זה ששאלין אמרין דבר הדין
 דבר מקור ואמר ואפילו דמסכת כלה
 אמר ר' יוחנן איצטו תלמידי חכמי עבדי צדו
 מצוין לעולם או מלכותו, זה שמנה חסד
 וצדק דאבא שמע' פ' אמר יוחנן איצטו תלמידי חכמי כל שאלין אמר
 הדין דבר מקור.

"R. Johanan said: Who is the scholar worthy of being made the president of a congregation? The one who when asked concerning an ordinance bearing on any subject knows exactly what to answer, even such ordinances as are found in the Tract Kalah."

"R. Johanan said: Who is the scholar who is deserving of having his work performed by his fellow citizens? The one who neglects his own affairs to attend to religious affairs."

"R. Johanan said: Who can be called a scholar? One who can give the interpretation of any ordinance in whichever chapter that may be shown him."

But irrespective of their value, men who did not possess the virtues enumerated by R. Johanan were elevated to the high places of intellectual life on the basis of their wealth and station. This evil practice even penetrated into the court of the Nasi where the wealthy sought favor and even the mediocre of the scholars received high positions in preference to their senior colleagues because they brought presents or overwhelmed the Prince and his followers with flattery.

Against this unethical practice, R. Johanan expressed his extreme disfavor. Ignoring the wrath of those of high caste and station, he lectured in public in the Academy of R. Bannaia, making the people to this evil of lack of knowledge and condemning those, ^{who} aspired high but did not possess the necessary qualifications.

In this crusade for social reform, R. Johanan's voice was favorably received for he maintained that only the Torah was the measure of man's merit and not wealth or geneology.

1

ר' יוחנן דרש קרי מדרשאי קרי
בני ר. ממנר תלמידי חכמי קורא
לכהן קדוש עז הארץ.

"R. Johanan expounded in the Academy of R. Bannaia, 'A bastard who is a Talmud chacham is to be preferred to a High Priest who lacks knowledge."

R. Johanan achieved much in the field of religious reforms. As has been mentioned in a previous chapter, his friendship and close relationship with the Nasi, Judah II, enabled him to further his desires and cause his plans to materialize. He was thus able to effect an important improvement in the arrangement of public and congregational worship. The laws commanding attendance at the synagogues were weak and uninforced. R. Johanan strengthened the bands of synagogal worship and made the subject of prayer an important consideration in the life of the people. For to him, prayer was a necessary spiritual uplifting from the daily mundane cares, as he often remarked in his reverence for this means of salvation.

2

ואמאי יהיבא ארץ כל היום כולו.

"Would that man could pray the whole day long."

1. Yer. Sabbath X II H. 3

2. Berachoth 2I a

He therefore attempted to teach the people how great was the merit of those who prayed together with the congregation and the punishment for abstaining from worship.

1

אמרו ליה לרי יוחנן איכא סדי דקדן
כיון דאמרי ליה מקדמי ומחסי לדי
בגלגל אמר הינו דאורי ליהו.

"It was said to R. Johanan: There are old men to be found in Babylon. When they told him that (the old men) are in the synagogue early and late, he said: It is this which helps them (to live long.)"

2

אמר קי צדיק בל תעמק לאורו.
"Who will inherit the world to come?
He who joins the Geullah to the evening Tefillah (for he fulfills the service as ordained in the congregation.)"

3

אמר לו לאדם שקדי תולגו להלל דבור.
"Man is forbidden to anticipate the congregational Tefillah by praying alone."

Thus after having achieved his purpose of uniting the people in a public and congregational worship by showing them the merit and reward thereof, R. Johanan instituted various prayers of his own in order to make a concrete order and arrangement of the service.

4

על הפסוק אמר רב יהודה מוסיף
אחמם זקן על כל טפה שחורגת
לגו ורבי יוחנן מסייף דף הכי, אילו
פנו מלא שירה כיון וכו' אין אנו
מסיקין להודות זקן על אלהינו עד
השחרית.

1. Berachoth 8 a

2. Berachoth 4 b

3. Berachoth 28 b

4. Berachoth 59 b

"Benediction for rain: Rab Judah said: we give thanks unto Thee for every drop of which Thou has caused to descend on us; R. Johanan concluded it thus: Though our mouths thank Thee, oh Lord, our God,---etc---, until "shall prostrate itself before thee."

1
 ר' יוחנן קטר דמסי' ב'לוה' אחר
 ב'י' ר'י ר'יון מ'פני' ב' א'פני'
 ב'יון ק'רמ' ו'ת'י' ד'רמ' ו'ת'י'
 ב'רמ' מ'ת'ס' ב'צ'ן ו'ת'י'
 ב'רמ' ו'ת'י' ב'רמ' ו'ת'י' ב'רמ'
 א'פני' מ'ר'ט' ו'ת'י' ו'ת'י'.

"R. Johanan used to add at the conclusion of his prayer. May it be Thy will, oh Lord our God, to glance at our shame and look upon our evil plight, and do Thou clothe Thyself in Thy mercy, cover Thyself with Thy might, enfold Thyself with Thy piety and gird Thyself with Thy grace and may Thy attribute of goodness and gentleness come before thee."

2
 מאי ק'רמ' ב'י' ? אחר ר' יוחנן.
 נ'מ' ב' ח'!

"What is the song of praise? R. Johanan said: It is (the prayer) 'the Breath of Every Living Being.'"

Besides his many achievements, and victories in his attempt to consolidate religious observances, R. Johanan through religious and legal decisions succeeded in changing the existing social attitudes of his day. The attitude of the people was but that of the early sages toward apostates and pagans. The early sages

1. Berachoth 16 b

2. Pesahim 118 a

embittered the lives of these apostates and instituted stringent decrees against them but R. Johanan although he revered these scholars of old, differed from them in their treatment of the sect. In a question brought up by R. Abbahu, joining the apostates with the sinners, R. Johanan showed his own liberalism in his social views.

1

הני רבי אבהו קמיה בר' נחמן העובדי
 כוכדים ורועי בהמה דקה לא מציין
 ולא מורידין אבל המינין ופסוסות
 ופסוסות פיו מורידין ולא מציין. א"ל
 אנה ילכו אביהא אחיק לרעתא אה פסוסות

"R. Abbahu recited to R. Johanan: Idolaters and (Jew.) Shepherds of small cattle may not be brought up though they must not be cast in but minim, informers and apostates may be cast in and need not be brought up. Whereupon R. Johanan remarked, 'I have been learning that the words, 'And so shalt thou do with every least thing of thy brothers' (thou mayest not hide thyself) are also applicable to an apostate.'"

Even more were the Samaritans despised by the Jews, who considered their testimony unworthy of belief. R. Johanan turned the weight of his gracious and trusting nature in their behalf and acknowledged the kashruth of their shechita.

2

תאמר ר"נ בר' יצחק א"ר יוסי א"ל
 ראיתי את ר' נחמן אכיל פסוסות אה

"R. Nahman bar Issa said in the name of R. Jose: I saw R. Johanan eating of that which a Samaritan had slaughtered.

1. Aboda Zara 26 a & b

2. Hullin 5 b

Also in reference to the oil of the pagan, we find R. Johanan aiding Judah II in the repeal of its prohibition in direct opposition to the prevalent view. Since oil was one of the staple products of Palestine, the trade in it was of vital importance so that it became difficult to observe the existing laws.

1
 (שמן: ר' יהודה הנשיא ומתא' ז"ל) אלא
 לבידק באמרת דניאל זכר עזי, דניאל
 זכר ואמא ר' יהודה הנשיא ומתא' ז"ל
 אמר ר' שמאי בר אבא אמר ר' יוחנן,
 יטו דרומינו ודקרו על השמן לא פס
 איסורו דרוד ישראל וסמכו דרומינו על
 דברי רבי' וזל דברי רבי אלעזר
 בר שביק שהיו אמרי' אן גורין
 זכרה על הצדור א"כ רוד הצדור
 יכולין למצוריה.

"As regards oil, R. Judah and his court took a vote and declared it permitted.) But according to your statement that (it is prohibited because) Daniel decreed against it, (can it be thought that) Daniel made a decree and R. Judah, the Prince then came and annulled it? But R. Samuel b. Abba said in the name of R. Johanan: Our masters (R. Judah II and his court) sat and made investigation concerning (the use of heathens) oil (and found) that its prohibition had not spread among the large majority of Israelites; they accordingly relied upon the dictum of Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel and R. Eliezer b. Zadok who declared: We make no decree upon the community unless the majority are able to abide by it.

In similar vein, we find that R. Johanan permitted the Israelites to use the services of a pagan doctor if he is competent¹ and also to allow the Jews to transact business with the pagan even on his festival.²

1

ר' יצקב בר אבא ר' יוחנן
א"ר ר' יוחנן רובא א"ר.

"R. Jacob Bar Aha in the name of R. Johanan: It is permissible (to use) a (pagan) physician if he is competent.

2

ה"ר יצקב ור' יוחנן ור' יוס' ר' יוחנן
'עקב בר אבא, ר' יוס' ר' יוחנן
'א"ר ר' יוחנן רובא א"ר.

"It was taught: If he passed and transacted business, it is permissible. R. Jacob. b. Aha and R. Jose in the name of R. Johanan: Even on the very day of his festival."

In his day, many Israelites compelled by need of earning a livelihood, left the Holy Land and went to distant parts. To stop this exodus, it was decreed to ostracize them from the Jewish community but R. Johanan arose and ppppsed this harsh measure.

3

ה"ר יצקב ור' יוחנן ור' יוס' ר' יוחנן
'עקב בר אבא, ר' יוס' ר' יוחנן
'א"ר ר' יוחנן רובא א"ר.

"One who goes out of Palestine should not be separated from his colleagues."

-
1. Yer Aboda Zara II H. 2
 2. Yer. Aboda Zara I H. 1
 3. Yer. Demai II H. 3

R. Johanan also permitted emigration from Palestine in case of being appointed by the Romans to their assembly.

1

אמר רבי יוחנן הנכירין לדול' יבא
בירדן דאל' יבולק.

"If thou art mentioned (nominated by the Romans) for office make the Jordan thy boundary friend (escape over the Jordan.)"

His liberalism was again evident in his departure from the existing condition to allow both male and female to study Greek;² and the further and more surprising radicalism of permitting the painting of decorative figures.³

1. Yer. Moed Katan II(81 b) H.3

2. Yer. Peah I 15 c

3. R. Abbahu said in the name of R. Johanan: It is permissible to teach your daughter Greek because it is an adornment to her." "R. Hiyya Bar-Abba in the name of R. Johanan: It is permissible to study Greek because of the informers."

רבי אבהו בשם רבי יוחנן:
מותר לאדם ללמד את בתו
יונית מפני שהוא תכשיט לה.
רבי חי'א בר' יוחנן מילתא
לאדם ללמוד יונית מפני
המסורות.

3. Yer. Aboda Zara III (42 d) H:3
"In time of R. Johanan^{mi} allowed decorations on the wall and^{hu} made no protest."

ד'ש'רבי יוחנן און ציירין צו
כותל ואל' מל' ב'ר' ירו.

I believe that the greatest contribution effected by R. Johanan was a product of his social liberalism as expressed by his legal decisions in the Talmud. His knowledge in mathematical sciences and allied fields was limited by the time in which he lived. But where he concerned himself with human relationships and problems, he was far in advance of his age. R. Johanan was not only the possessor of a great legal mind, but he was practical enough to apply his views for the common good, for the Jew and those who lived beside him. He saw no value in strife between the Jew and the Samaritan; the Jew and the pagan, and his efforts were directed to resolve their differences and harmonize their existences by a better understanding. Thus R. Johanan stood out as an exponent of racial amity.

CHAPTER III

R. JOHANAN'S ATTITUDE to the MISHNAH OF RABBI

To more fully comprehend, the relation and attitude of R. Johanan to the compilation and subject matter of the Mishnah, we must first delve into the origin and essence of Rabbi's work.

In order to remedy the confusion in the religious world due to the teachers who gave halachic decisions according to their own mishnaic collections, Rabbi sought to restore uniformity of teaching. He undertook to collect, arrange and redact the Mishnah as an authoritative norm. He followed his own method as far as the selection and presentation of the material was concerned but adopted the systems of Akiba and Meir in regard to the division and arrangement. Rabbi made of Akiba's and Meir's Mishnahs the groundwork of his own code. R. Johanan sums up the work of Rabbi by his statement on the composition of this book of statutes.

1
אמר ר' יוחנן הלך חתניתו ר' אשר
הלך תוספתא ר' נחמיה, הלך סברא
ר' יהודה הלך סברא רבי שמעון
ובולדו ארץ יבן דבר ע.

"Our mishnah, whenever an opinion is reported anonymously, rests on

1. Sanhedrin 86 a

Meir; an anonymous Tosephta on R. Nehemiah; an anonymous dictum in the Sifra on R. Judah ben Elai; in the Sifre on R. Simeon ben Johai but all of them are taught according to the views of R. Akiba."

Thus according to R. Johanan, Rabbi in compiling the Mishnah drew upon earlier collections of which each noted Tanna possessed one. However, the greatest insight into R. Johanan's attitude to the Mishnah is his statement that although Rabbi used various collections, their foundation rested on R. Akiba. As R. Johanan regarded R. Akiba as the foremost Tanna whose word, he at times considered as *כְּלֵב רַבִּי אֶלֶּיָּהוּ*, could he but respect that teaching which was merely a compilation of God-given truths. The halachoth of the Mishnah were but as the words given down to Moses from Sinai, so remarked R. Johanan to his disciples.

1

אִם קָאָם בְּלֵב אֶחָד מֵהֶם יִדָּק
וְאֵין אֵלָּהּ יוֹדֵעַ מִה טִיבָה אֵל
לְפָנֶיךָ לְדַבֵּר אֶחָד מֵהֶם כִּמְה
הַכּוֹת לְאִמְרוֹ לְמַעַן מִסִּינַי וְכֵן
מִיִּקְצוֹת דְּמִנְיָהּ.

"If you come across a halachah whose significance you do not comprehend, do not divert it to another matter (regard it not lightly) for there are many laws given to Moses from Sinai and all are stamped in our Mishnah."

Since R. Johanan was for a brief period under the guiding spirit of Rabbi and as he was later taught by the disciples of Rabbi, he could not but be influenced by their teachings. However, fortunately for R. Johanan, his teachers differed in their approach to the code of Rabbi and thus he was able to select the path which better suited his logical reasoning. Some of R. Johanan's teachers occupied themselves merely in the study of Rabbi's Mishnah for its better comprehension. But others sought to pursue the study of other sources to bring to scholarly light a collection which would be a worthy equal to the work of Rabbi. R. Hiyya and R. Hoshaiiah were of the latter who gathered invaluable compilations of their own. R. Johanan selected the kernels in each and chose a path which deviated but slightly from that of Rabbi. For R. Johanan esteemed highly the Mishnah of Rabbi and he often remarked:

אני אין לי אלא משנה¹

"I have naught but Mishnah"

לאנוה קבירו אהם ראנץ
אין ראוי דגרייב אפוסף צאיהם²

"The terms which the former
sages have selected, man
has not the right to add to
them."

1. Yer. Terumoth II H. 3; Kiddushin I H. 2

2. Yer. Nazir I H. I

His erudition in the Mishnah served R. Johanan well for he often showed his teacher, R. Jannai, that a thought which he had uttered was already expressly stated in Rabbi's Mishnah.

1

אמר ר' יוחנן לר' ינאי ולא מלמדיה
 דיאן ודבר ר' ינאי מלמדיה דר' ינאי
 אל ילכו מעיקר הין מלמדיה ויהי
 דא דאמר חכא ויוסי דאמר חכא.

"R. Johanan said to R. Jannai;
 Is it not a Mishnah! R. Jannai
 extolled him: My son, regard it
 not lightly, give to the wise one
 that he may be wiser, let the wise
 man hear that he may increase
 knowledge."

The advice of his teacher to pursue his study of the Mishnah was heeded by R. Johanan. After having delved into and investigated its subject matter, he was able to clarify the diverse meanings for a complete elucidation. He omitted and at times corrected the errors found therein and appended that which was lacking to its proper understanding.

Following are several cases selected to illustrate the minute interpretation given by R. Johanan to the various mishnahs and his changing even of words for better clarity.

1. Yer Baba Bathra IX 17 a
 Yer. Yebamoth I E. I

המחלל (המחלל) (המחלל) (המחלל)
 מורסא קדש אפ' (המחלל) (המחלל)
 חייב אפ' (המחלל) (המחלל) (המחלל)
 פטור אמר רבי יוחנן (המחלל) (המחלל)
 פטור אמר רבי יוחנן.

"If a man cut open an abscess on
 The Sabbath in order to make an
 opening, he is culpable but if it
 was to let out pus, he is not
 culpable. R. Johanan said, it
 should not be written, 'he is not
 culpable,' but 'it is permissible.'"

In the following case, R. Johanan explains the use of a
 definite term by the Mishnah although he suggests that another
 term should have been used.

(א) האמר לקנין דרני שחט את הפסח
 על מנת מ' שיצא מכס ראשון
 לירושלם. כיון שהכנס הראשון ראשון
 ירושן זכה בחלקו ומכסה אחיו צמח.
 (ב) אמר ר' יוחנן לית כאן דרני שחט
 אלא דרני מפרים ואמר חטאתא
 דרני שחט קדש לזכרון.

Mishnah: "If a man said to his
 son, 'I will slaughter the Pas-
 sover offering for whichever of
 you shall first come up to Jer-
 usalem; so soon as one has put his
 head and the greater part of his
 body inside (Jerusalem) he had
 gained his portion, and he must
 grant portions to his brothers.
 Gemara: "R. Johanan said: It
 should not have said, 'I will
 slaughter,' but 'I will set aside,'
 and the reason it was written, 'I
 will slaughter,' was to urge them
 on (the sons to complete their ap-
 pointed task.)"

1. Yer Sabbath XI 13 a

2. Yer. Pesahim VIII H. 3

At times, opinions attributed to one sage were corrected by R. Johanan and assigned to its proper source.

1

(מ) ר' יהודה אומר אשה אשמה
 ר' יודן אומר לא יחזיר
 וחכמים אומרים יחזיר.
 (ז) אמר ר' יוחנן לית כאן ר' יודן
 'פודה אלא ר' מאיר.

Mishnah: 'If a man put away his wife because she was barren, R. Judah says, he may not take her back; the Sages say, he may take her back.

Gemara: R. Johanan said: It should not state, R. Judah but R. Meir."

R. Johanan also corrected the meaning by omitting letters. In the following mishnah, he omits the "Vav" from the word to give a different significance to its content.

2

(א) ר' יהודה אומר יבנה ויהא ח"י?
 ר' יודן אומר ב' שווא. והמסכת והמכה
 רבט' וכו'
 (ב) קצא חניה ר' יהודה אומר
 מרבי' ווחן מסת' משום ח"י?
 אחי' ל' ר' יהודה אומר חכה רבט'
 ורבאן חנן ר' יהודה אומר חכה רבט'
 אלא ר' יהודה אומר חכה רבט'.

Mishnah: "What is the least amount of building which will make a man culpable? The least possible amount. The same applies to stone masonry, smoothing with a hammer, etc."

1. Yer. Gittin IV E. 8

2. Sabbath 102 b

Gemara: R. Nathan, son of Hoshaiiah propounded a question to R. Johanan: Under what category of labor is stone-masonry to be placed? "R. Johanan answered him by making the sign of hammering with his hand. But we learned in our Mishnah, 'stone-masonry and smoothing with a hammer'. Say instead, 'the stonemason who smooths with a hammer.'"

When R. Johanan found a contradiction in the Mishnah, he would not hesitate to change either the contradictory saying or the one who uttered the saying.

1

רבי יוחנן ר' יהודה אגרי
יהודה ומי... ומי ר' יוחנן
מחלבת השיטה

"R. Johanan found R. Judah contradicting himself---R. Johanan answered about this contradiction by saying: the statement (of the Mishnahs) must be reversed, (the authorities for the two opinions must be exchanged.)

R. Johanan's knowledge of the Mishnah was so profound that he knew the abstruse meanings of the terms which he believed might either be misconstrued or might be unknown to those who were students of the Mishnah. The following words were defined and explained (a) Shetiyah (b) Minor (c) Epicurean (d) Shitin (e) Golden ornament.

2

א.
משנעל הארון אין ביה פ
מחילת הנביאים הראשונים וה"ה
ביה נקראת. אמר ר' יוחנן לא
נקרא שם אין ה"ה? אמר
הושלת בצופה

1. Besa 3 a

(A) 2. Yem Yoma V 1. 3

"after the ark was taken away,
a stone remained there from the
time of the early prophets and
it was called Shetijah (Foundation)."
R. Johanan said, 'Why was it
called 'Shetijah', because from
it the world was founded."

B.

1
(א) נשים ועבדים וקטנים פטורים מן הסוכה
(ב) אי צדק קטן, ר' יוחנן אמר כן שפוא
נצור משנתו וקורא אימא.

Mishnah: "Women, slaves and minors
are free of the obligations of the
Succah."

Gemara: "What is a minor; R.

Johanan said: He who awakens from
sleep and calls in fear."

C.

2
(א) אינו שאין עמו חלק לעולם הבא -
אפיקורות וכו'
(ב) אפיקורוס: ר' יוחנן אמר, כהן דאמר
אמן סגרא או כהן דאמר אין דגמין.

Mishnah: "The following have no
portion in the world to come: the
Epicurean etc."

Gemara: "The Epicurean R. Johanan
says: A priest who said, 'these
books or these rabbis', in a
derogatory manner."

D.

3
שיתין--אמר רבה בר בר חנה א"ר יוחנן
מין תאנים.

"Shitin--Rabbah b. Bar Hannah said
in the name of R. Johanan; they are
a species of figs."

E.

4
(א) לא תצא אשה בעיר על צדק וכו'
(ב) מאי בעיר על צדק? אמר רבה בר בר
חנה אמר ר' יוחנן, יושבים בגרמא.

Mishnah: "A woman shall not go out
with a golden ornament" etc.

Gemara: "What was this golden
ornament? Said Rabbah b. Bar

1. B. Yer Succah II H. 9

4. B. Sabbath 59a

2. C. Yer Sanhedrin X H. 1

3. D. Berachoth 40 b

Hannah in the name of R. Johanan:
A golden (ornament with an engraving
of the city of) Jersualem."

Many texts of the Mishnah which needed no correction
either in words, or in meaning, nevertheless came under the
hands of R. Johanan whose erudition was necessary for the
elucidation and clarification of its recondite significance.
For R. Johanan was not willing to accept an obvious inter-
pretation but he profoundly sought to discover the true
meaning of Rabbi in his code of laws. This true meaning,
R. Johanan felt could be found by limiting the scope of a
law's application. The following two cases are illustrative
of R. Johanan's attempt to modify the meaning of the Mishnah
by applying it to singular conditions.

1
(מ) טעם ולא הזכיר של ר"ח בברכה
אין מחזירין אותו מפני שיכול
לאומרו בחרית, בחרית אין
מחזירין אותו מפני שיכול לאומרו בחרית
(ט) א"ר יוחנן דצדור גלו.

Mishnah: "If a man erred and omitted
the reference to the New Moon in the
evening Tefillah, we do not require
him to repeat it, because he can say
it in the morning. If he omitted it
in the morning, we do not require him
to repeat it, because he can say it
in the afternoon."

1. Berachot 30 b

Gemara: "R. Johanan declared that this teaching applies only to a Congregation." (If he omitted the reference when praying with the congregation, he does not repeat the tefillah because he will hear it said by the Precentor¹)

(א) דרך צד ה"ן סלבי האמן פטר אור ה"ן
 (ב) אמר רב דר חנה א"ר יוחנן לא שנו
 אלא דשלתא וימ"פ סובי"ן הו"ל ואבן קמח
 סלבי צד ה"ן.

Mishnah: "If a man said a benediction over wine before the meal he is exempt from saying it over the wine after the meal."

Gemara: "Rabbah, B. Bar Hannah said in the name of R. Johanan: The teaching applies only to Sabbaths and Festivals for then a man arranges his meal with wine." (he knows beforehand he will linger at the table and drink several dups.)

Through his dialectic reasoning, he very soon derived from the Mishnah of Rabbi many new halachoth. In the following case we find R. Johanan explaining a mishnah to Resh Lakish and deducing from it a new ruling in relation to levirate marriage.

²
 א"ל ר"ל דרבי יוחנן ז"ל דאמר גא'
 נמי קמי' אורי' בחול' ל'במ'ן
 וזכר וקדש ונח' קא' קני' דמין
 דא"ל אסורה צרת' נח' אסורה
 א"ל ז"ל א"ל דצרת' צרה.

1. Berachoth 42 a 2 b

2. Yebamoth 10 b

"Resh Lakish said to R. Johanan: According to Levi who maintains that an 'if' is included (by R. Judah in the Mishnah) let our Mishnah also include the case of a levir who gave halizah to his sister-in-law (whom he is in consequence forbidden to marry) and later betrothed her and died without issue, for since (the widow of such a one) is forbidden, her rival also is forbidden (to the brothers; Why then was not this case added to the fifteen?) The other replied: Because in this case the law of the rival cannot be applied (to our Mishnah)"

In the following source, we find R. Johanan deriving 39 subdivisions to each main class mentioned in the Mishnah.

1

(מ) אבות מלאכות ארבעים וארבע
 בנדרים --- המכה קטע וכו'
 (ה) רבי יהודה ור"ש בן זקני ערין רוח
 קרבא פירקא תלף שני וכו'
 אקון מנייה ארבעין חסר אהל
 תולדות ז' כל חבא וחבא מ
 דאשכחון מ'מין סמכון בא דא אשכחון
 מ'מין ערין מ'מין סמכון בא דא אשכחון

Mishnah: "The main classes of work are forty save one; sowing;----- striking with a hammer; etc.

Gemara: "R. Johanan and R. Simeon b. Lakish occupied themselves with this chapter three and one half years. They deduced from it forty save one secondary classes for each one. That which they found to support (the main class) they applied (as a secondary class) to (the main class of) striking with a hammer."

The high esteem in which R. Johanan regarded the Mishnah did not prevent him from expressing his own opinion although it was contrary to that of the mishnaic halachah. The following two cases expressly state an opinion held by R. Johanan diverse from that of the Mishnah.

¹
 מתינתא פלגין על רבי יוחנן: שני
 אומרין נשקית ודיא טהרה וסני
 אומרין נשקית ודיא טמאא לא תנשא
 ואר נישא לא תשא.

"The Mishnah is contrary to R. Johanan's view: Two state that she was captured but she is pure and two say that she was captured but she is unclean, she can not marry but if she is married, she must not go out (the marriage is not annulled)."

²
 אמר רבי יוחנן סאה תרומה שגפלה
 למאה חולין כל שסן מבעלין אינה.
 מתינתא פלגין על רבי יוחנן אינה
 מנחית אלא פסי השקול.

"R. Johanan said: A Seah of Heave-offering fell in a hundred of common produce, all this makes of naught the others. Our Mishnah is contrary to the view of R. Johanan. For it says: It may render it subject to the law of Heave-offering only if it is in the prescribed proportion."

Thus we find that although R. Johanan revered the Mishnah as the divinely endowed work of the early Sages, he did not hesitate to correct, elucidate, interpret, and deduce, and finally to bring forth views contrary to that expressed by the Mishnah itself.

However, in one light, a deviation in purpose from that of Rabbi can be seen in the plan of R. Johanan. In his compilation, Rabbi set down the opinion of each and every scholar although it might be opposed by a majority view. His express

1. Yer. Yebamoth X H. 4

2. Yer. Terumoth V H. 5

purpose was to be a legal aid to the generations that would follow. Since he understood the vicissitudes of life and the changing conditions that time might bring, he enabled the Beth Din of a later generation to select that decision which might be considered more expedient in the light of existing conditions though it were the view of the minority rather than that of the majority. Thus all the opinions of scholars were included in the Mishnah with the selection of the more preferable and more expedient ruling left to the wisdom of the Beth Din.

But in this, we find that R. Johanan differed from Rabbi. R. Johanan believed that a Beth Din could not invalidate the ruling of a Beth Din which preceded it.

1
אין דין יכול לבטל דין קודם

"One Beth Din can not void the
ruling of another Beth Din."

This above quotation is interpreted to mean that a ruling which was decided by an early Beth Din could not be changed to suit the opinion of a later Beth Din.

However that which really set awry the purpose of Rabbi in his compilation were the rules established by R. Johanan to decide which halachoth were to be accepted and the rulings of which Tannaim were to be favored. A discussion of these legal rules will be taken up in the next chapter. Thus through

1. Yer. Shebiith I H. 1

His basic set of rules, the Mishnah was transformed from a loosely woven group of halachoth which permitted the use and disuse of divergent opinions, into a code of fixed permanent statutes.

CHAPTER IV

THE HALACHIC RULES OF R. JOHANAN

As has been observed in the preceding chapter, R. Johanan attempted to define and establish a basis for legal decisions. He wished the Mishnah of R. Judah I to be considered a legal code from which one could readily select the applicable halachah out of the many diverse Tannaitic opinions quoted. He thus set up rules concerning the manner of arriving at a definite decision in those cases where two or more Tannaim were of different opinions.

His approach to the intricacies of the Mishnah was simplified by his proximity in time to its compiler and redactor, Rabbi, and thus he was able to comprehend the reasoning of his predecessors in their legalistic dialectics without need for further interpretation or elucidation of their views. We will discover at times in his rules but a restatement of that which he had been taught by Rabbi and his numerous teachers whose legal decisions he accepted as authoritative.

The first basic rule referred to those mishnahs which were quoted anonymously and we find numerous sources which mention that authoritative norm.

1

אמר רבי יוחנן
בשם רבי
בשם רבי

1. Sabbath 46a, 81b, 112b
Yebamoth 16a, 42a
etc.

"R. Johanan said: The halachah is according to the anonymous mishnah."

How did R. Johanan arrive at this principle? His reasoning is based on the rule of majority opinion, as expressed by our sources:

1
וְחִי' וְרִי' הֵלָכָה כְּרִי'.

"Where an individual opinion differs from the many, the Halachah is in accord with the many."

Since an anonymous mishnah is not ascribed to any particular authority, nor has any contrary opinion been considered worthy of record, the anonymous mishnah may logically be assumed to be the view of the majority and on the basis of the rule quoted above, authoritative.

We further follow R. Johanan's reasoning when we consider his two subsidiary rules concerning anonymous mishnahs. The first of these is a modification, stating that where an anonymous mishnah follows a dispute, it is to be accepted as authoritative. The second, an apparent contradiction, states that where a dispute follows an anonymous mishnah, the halachah is not in accord with the anonymous mishnah.

1. Berachoth 9a, 37a
Yebamoth 40a
etc.

מ' אמר רבי יוחנן הלכה כרבי
 יוסי והאמר ר' יוחנן הלכה כסגל
 משנה אמר ליה דרמא לך הן
 לא חש לקמחיה, סגל ואח"כ
 מחלוקת הן ואין הלכה כסגל
 דאמר רב פפא ואית' מא רבי
 יוחנן מחלוקת ואחר כך סגל
 הלכה כסגל, סגל ואחר כך
 מחלוקת אין הלכה כסגל.

"Could R. Johanan have said,
 'The halachah is in agree-
 ment with R. Jose, seeing
 that he stated elsewhere,'
 the halachah is in agree-
 ment with the anonymous
 mishnah (Sabbath 46a). 'The
 other replied, 'The one who
 pointed out to you this con-
 tradiction did not care much
 for (the quality of) flour
 (what flour he grinds) (he
 was careless in his argu-
 ments).' This is an anon-
 ymous mishnah which was
 followed by a dispute where
 the halachah does not agree
 with the anonymous mishnah,
 for R. Papa and some say
 R. Johanan stated: 'When
 a disputed ruling is follow-
 ed by an anonymous one (in
 the same tractate or in
 the same order), the hal-
 achah is in agreement with
 the anonymous ruling; anon-
 ymous ruling followed by a
 dispute, the halachah is not
 in agreement with the anon-
 ymous mishnah'."

Both these subsidiary rules are also based on the prin-
 ciple that the majority view prevails. A logical insight into

the Mishnah of Rabbi will clarify this contention. The anonymous mishnah, as observed above, was not stated in the name of any particular authority, so that it may be regarded as the view of the majority. However this does not hold true completely, for in many cases we find that the anonymous mishnah was but the minority opinion. For whenever Rabbi concurred with the decision of a Tanna he quoted it anonymously, whether it was the majority or minority opinion, so that it might not be said that since it was but an individual view it should not be relied upon. Thus, logically, it can be contended that since many minority opinions, as against the majority, were quoted as anonymous, when a dispute followed the anonymous mishnah, it showed definitely that the anonymous mishnah was but the opinion of the minority which did not have the concurrence of the majority and thus the halachah could not be as the anonymous mishnah.

On the basis of the same reasoning, the proof of the converse, "that when an anonymous mishnah follows a controversy, the halachah is according to the anonymous mishnah," is logically comprehensible. For when the dispute is resolved by the quotation of an anonymous mishnah, it seems evident that the dispute was but that of individual opinions which in turn is settled by the presence of the anonymous mishnah which is the view of the many.

Thus an understanding of R. Johanan's first rule and its subdivisions must be based on a critical analysis of the Mishnah as instituted by the Nasi, Judah I, and its logical concomitance.

However, more important, were the principles favoring the opinion of one Tanna in preference to another Tanna, that is, the relative validity R. Johanan assigned to the dictums of the disputing Tannaim.

1

אמר ר' יצחק בר אידי אמר ר' יוחנן
 ר' מאיר ור' יהודה הלכה כר' יהודה
 רבי יהודה ורבי יוסי הלכה כר' יוסי
 ואצל ר"מ ור' יוסי הלכה כרבי יוסי
 בשלש במקום ר' יהודה לילך במקום
 רבי יוסי מיקצא, אמר יוסי אף אני
 לומר רבי יוסי ור' שמעון הלכה כרבי
 יוסי דאמר אלא אמר רבי יוחנן, רבי
 יהודה ורבי שמעון הלכה כר' יהודה
 בשלש במקום רבי יהודה לילך במקום
 רבי יוסי מיקצא. איצטא לכו רבי
 מאיר ור"ט מאיר ותיקו.

"R. Jacob bar Idi in the name of R. Johanan: (a) In all instances where R. Meir and R. Jehudah differ, the halachah prevails according to R. Jehudah, wherever R. Jehudah and R. Jose differ the halachah is according to R. Jose and so much more when (b) R. Meir and R. Jose differ, the halachah prevails according to R. Jose

for, if R. Jehudah is given preference over R. Meir and R. Jose over R. Jehudah, then certainly R. Jose has preference over R. Meir. Said R. Assi, 'From this I can infer that where R. Jose and R. Simeon differ the halachah prevails according to R. Jose, for R. Abba said in the name of R. Johanan (c) that wherever R. Simeon and R. Jehudah differ, the opinion of R. Jehudah prevails. As a matter of course, if R. Jehudah is given preference over R. Simeon, R. Jose is certainly more competent authority than R. Simeon.' How is it when R. Meir and R. Simeon differ? This question is not decided."

It can be contended that in the establishment of this rule, R. Jochanan borrowed from the prejudices and followed closely the opinions of the early sages. For R. Johanan may be truly considered a traditionalist who exalted the early sages over all the scholars of his day, as he often remarked:

1

אמר רבי יוחנן שיש טוב ללמוד
האמוראים מן רבותא של אמוראים.

"R. Johanan said: The nail of the former sages is better than viscera of the later ones."

It seems incongruous on the basis of a legal system that one should select the decision of one Tanna in all cases where he disputes with another, and in turn select the latter in preference to a third. The only foundation for such a selection can be found in accepted tradition which is largely prejudicial. For of all the pupils of R. Akiba, R. Meir, known for his brilliance of thought and profundity of reason, was not considered authoritative although he excelled his colleagues in his erudition and depth of dialectics. On the other hand, R. Jose, in all cases where he differed with his contemporaries, it was his decision that was adopted. It cannot be supposed that in the cases of the above two Tannaim, there could be an underlying legal system which disqualified per se R. Meir's views and accepted R. Jose's. My contention is that R. Johanan, without having recourse to a legalistic basis, in certain cases of Tannaitic disputes, borrowed from the prejudicial considerations of the early sages, especially those of Judah I.

In the life of R. Meir, there were certain contributing factors which may have disqualified him personally, and thus his views, in the eyes of his contemporaries. The rabbis of his time looked upon the association with heathens as a religious violation, as has been shown above¹. R. Meir, contrary to the existing view, is said

1. Cf. p. 49

to have lived on friendly terms with heathen scholars with whom he had religious controversies. He was especially intimate with the Greek philosopher, Anonymus of Gadera, to whom he paid a visit of condolence on the death of the latter's parents.¹

Again in his association with the apostate Elisha ben Abuyah (Aher) did R. Meir arouse the wrath of his contemporaries. For of all Elisha's former colleagues and friends, he alone, perhaps in the hope of reclaiming him to Judaism, continued to foster his friendship and discuss with him scientific treatises, not heeding the remonstrances of some pious rabbis who regarded this association with severe suspicion. R. Meir's love for this apostate was so great that on his death he spread his mantle over his friends grave as if consorting with the powers that be to spare this great sage, condemned by the rabbis of that time.²

Still another and possibly a more important factor was his controversy with R. Simeon ben Gamaliel II. He was even induced to leave Palestine because of the conflict which arose between him and the Patriarch. R. Simeon wished to institute

1. Ruth Rabba 2:13

2. Hagiga 15b

a change in the ceremonial of the Sanhedrin which would give more honor to himself than to the judge and reader. R. Meir and R. Nathan, the judge, felt offended at this new arrangement and determined to show R. Simeon's unfitness for his office by confounding him with difficult halachic questions which he would be unable to answer. Informed of this conspiracy, R. Simeon expelled them from the Sanhedrin but he could not prevent them from writing difficult questions and distributing them among the members. Compelled to readmit both R. Nathan and R. Meir, he contrived that their names should not be recorded in the ordinances enacted by him. R. Nathan submitted but R. Meir continued to embarrass the Patriarch by addressing to him difficult questions. When at last the Patriarch threatened excommunication, he answered, "I do not care for your sentence unless you can prove to me on whom, on what grounds, and under what conditions excommunication may be imposed," and he then left the Sanhedrin.¹

Thus we may conjecture that due to the influence of the Patriarch, R. Simeon ben Gamaliel II, who degraded R. Meir before his colleagues, and added to the fact of his association with personalities scorned by these colleagues, R. Meir's legal decisions were placed under suspicion and his authority questioned.

1. Yer. Moed. Katan 11i H.1 (Wilna) & Horayoth 13b

A still further insight into this question is shown by the following source which offers an explanation for the disqualification of R. Meir by his contemporaries, though it seemingly has no logical basis.

1

איך אהא דר חנינא זלוי וידוע לפני
 מ' שאמר ויבדעו שאלו דבורו
 של רבי מאיר כחולו, מפני מה לא
 קדצו הלכה כחמא? שלא יכלו לקריו
 לעמוד על סוף דעתו. שהוא אומר
 על טמא טהור ומראה לו פנים,
 על טהור טמא ומראה לו פנים.

"R. Aha bar Hanina said: It is known to Him, Who said one word and the world was created, that in the generation of R. Meir there was not one who was his equal; but why do not the halachahs prevail according to his decisions? Because his colleagues could never arrive at the conclusion of his decrees. If he decided that a thing which was unclean was clean, he proved it to them by a reason, and if he decided that a thing which was clean was unclean, he proved it also by reasoning."

The proof that R. Johanan followed the predilection of the early sages, and the fact that he was aware of their

view concerning R. Meir, is seen in the following comparison which he makes between R. Hoshaiah and R. Meir.

1

אמר יוחנן, רבי אנושין דבורו כרבי
 מאיר דבורו, מה רבי מאיר דבורו
 לא יכלו חבריו לעמוד על סוף
 דעתו אף רבי אנושין לא יכלו
 חבריו לעמוד על סוף דעתו.

"R. Johanan said: As was R. Meir in his generation, so was R. Hoshaiah in his day. As with R. Meir, the colleagues of his day could not arrive at his final decisions, so it was with R. Hoshaiah. His colleagues could not fathom his ultimate conclusions."

The question then arises, if the halachah is not in accord with R. Meir, how can the halachah be in accord with the anonymous mishnah,² since R. Johanan states that "an anonymous mishnah rests on R. Meir."³ However this contradiction may be resolved since we are aware that R. Meir was but the compiler of the anonymous mishnahs and that they all do not rest on his own view. Many anonymous mishnahs are even later than R. Meir, and many even oppose his system.

1. Erubin 53a

2. Sabbath 46a

3. Sanhedrin 86a

(נ) שהט ברה ואח"כ ע"י קנ"ה
 סוף מנחת... שהט ואח"כ ק
 קנה ואח"כ כן שהט קנה סוף
 את ארבעים. סומכוס אמר
 PRN רבי מאיר סוף מנחת.

"If a man slaughtered a cow and then two of its offspring, he incurs eighty stripes---; if he slaughtered the cow, then its offspring's offspring and then he afterward slaughtered the cow's offspring he incurs forty stripes. Symmachos says in the name of R. Meir: He incurs eighty stripes."

R. Jose, in direct comparison to R. Meir, was exalted over his contemporaries and because of his sharpness of mind was meritorious of being considered the authority of his period, a designation attributed to him while he was still alive. Even more convincing is the fact that R. Simeon ben Gamaliel II, though an intimate friend of R. Jehudah, nevertheless taught the halachah as R. Jose, in all places where he disputed with his colleagues, even in preference to R. Jehudah.

1
 מצאנו ברש"ן פירוש יהודה ורבי
 יוסי שהיו מסובין קצבו וקצו עליהם
 היום. אמר רש"ן לרבי יוסי רבי
 רבונק נבטיק וליהוש לרבי יהודה
 חביריו. אמר לו רבנן יוס ויוס אמר
 מהבד דרבי לפני רבי יהודה
 ולכיון אמר מהבד דרבי רבי
 יהודה בפני. הן זכור אור
 המלכ צמי דגיל. אמר איכ לא
 נבטיק שמי יראו הללמידין וקצו
 הלכב לדורו. אמרו לא נב
 משן עד שקדעו הלכב רבי יוסי.

"It once happened that R. Simeon ben
 Gamaliel, R. Jehudah and R. Jose
 were sitting on the eve of Sabbath
 and partaking of a meal in the
 city of Acco and when the Sab-
 bath was about to set in, R. Sim-
 eon ben Gamaliel said to R. Jose
 the Great: 'Wouldst thou des-
 ire that we clear off the table
 and act in conformity with the
 opinion of our colleague, R.
 Jehudah?' Replied R. Jose: 'Or-
 dinarily thou wouldst favor my
 decrees in preference to those
 of R. Jehudah, now thou favorest
 his decree in preference to mine.
 'Will he even do violence to the
 queen before me in the house?'
 (Esther 7:8) Rejoined R. Simeon
 ben Gamaliel: True! Let us rather
 not interrupt the meal, for if
 the disciple should observe this,
 they might establish the ordin-
 ance for future generations.
 It was said that they did not
 leave their places until it was
 decided that the halachah
 should prevail according to
 R. Jose's opinion."

Thus R. Jochanan, who, as will be shown below,¹ respected R. Simeon ben Gamaliel for his wisdom and thus established the halachah as him, again accepted his view and that of the other sages, in preferring R. Jose.

The following sources add to the causes which can be cited as the basis for the selection of R. Jose as the authority of his period. For according to the rabbis, R. Jose made no legal decision without careful consideration of the issues.

2

וְלֹא דִּינָא. לֹא הִלְכָּא לֹא כֹר יוֹסֵ
אִלָּא כִּי הִיכִי דְּלִיקָן לֹה מִלְּפָנֵי
מִשְׁנֵי דְּרַבִּי יוֹסֵ נִמְיָקוּ זִנְיָ

"In truth, this is not so; R. Jose never said this. But (Rabba) asserted this in the name of R. Jose so that (R. Joseph) should listen to him; for it was known that they applied to R. Jose, 'his depth is with him'. (He has deep reasons for whatever he says and so he was final authority and the halachahs prevailed according to his opinion.)"

Even Rabbi, the teacher of R. Jochanan, states his preference of R. Jose over the other Tannaim, including R. Meir, because of his faculty of profound reasoning.

1. See page 63

2. Erubin 51a

1

אמר לפניו ר"ש ברבי אומר ברבי
 אמר וחננא איש אלה חזקין על רבי
 יוסי מה ראוי רבי אומר הלכה ברבי
 יוסי? אמר לו שמואל קני שמואל לא
 ראית את ר' יוסי. איהו מתי ראיתו נחמין
 עמי, עמיא ר' יוסי נחמין עמי.

"R. Simeon, son of Rabbi, said to him: seeing that R. Meir and R. Hanina of Ono take a different stand from R. Jose, what was Rabbi's reason for saying that the halachah follows R. Jose? He replied: say nothing my son, say nothing; you have never seen R. Jose. Had you seen him (you would know) that he always had good grounds for his views (his depth is with him). For so it has been taught^{1a}: R. Jose always had his reasons."

Since all the early sages almost unanimously concurred in the belief of R. Jose's supremacy over his colleagues, and particularly since Rabbi, the teacher of R. Jochanan's youth, himself believed this, it is not surprising that R. Jochanan would establish R. Jose's primacy in legalistic dialectics as a principle.

In the rule which favors R. Jehudah in preference to R. Simeon, we again find R. Jochanan basing his selection on the opinion of those sages who preceded him. But here we can derive the above preference on deductive reasoning. We have seen

above¹ that the halachahs do not prevail according to R. Meir; thus when R. Meir and R. Jehudah dispute, the halachah is in accord with R. Jehudah. We then are aware of the source which mentions the fact that R. Akiba himself ranked R. Simeon after R. Meir.

2

א"ר קא קראכונא פיר כ"א אה
 ואחז מחנה א"ר תלמידו בר עקיבא
 א"ר רבי מאיר וא"ר רבי שמעון. א"ר
 רבי רבי מאיר תלמיד.

"R. Ba said: Formerly, everyone would rank his students as did R. Akiba with R. Meir and R. Simeon. He said: R. Meir sat first."

Thus on the basis of syllogistic reasoning, if R. Jehudah is preferred over R. Meir, and R. Meir is favored over R. Simeon by Akiba himself; would not R. Jehudah be favored over R. Simeon? I do not feel that I have overstepped the bounds of logic in my proof of the above, since our Talmudic source³ borrows of its use in the deduction of some of its rules.

However a contradiction seems evident. If according to the principles that one does not establish the halachah as R. Meir in disputes with his contemporaries⁴, how can R. Meir be

1. See page 74

2. Yer. Sanhedrin 1, 19a

3. Erubin 46b, cf page 70

4. See page 74

favored over R. Simeon. But since he was ranked over R. Simeon by R. Akiba, the Rabbis of that time were loath to establish the halachah as R. Simeon, they therefore left it undecided

1

אָנאָדאָ אָבן רבי מאיר ורבי שמעון
 מאי? תיקו!

"A question was posed: How is it when R. Meir and R. Simeon differ? This question is not decided."

Still in the establishment of these rules, we do not find complete agreement, for as I have contended, a principle cannot be so generalized and yet be so dogmatic in its essence. For in the same source quoting these Tannaitic preferences, R. Mesharshia brings in the contention that Rab did not act according to such rules.

אָמַר רב מרשיא ליתבין לרבי כלי,
 חנא ליה רבי מרשיא? דא אמיאן
 חנא דתמן ריש אמר חנא דבבב
 חנא דל' חצרות הפחיות בן לז
 ובתחומי לרשות בריק, צריך טעין
 פתחנות צפ פאמציא פיא חתרת
 צמין וכן חולרת צמח וטלין בחצונות
 אסורות בן צפ בן, ואמר רב חנא דר
 זורא אמר רב בלכ כר שמעון חנא
 בלכ צליב ר' יודק ופא אחרת רב
 יודק ור' שמעון בלכ כר יודק אלא
 לאו שיה ליתבין

1. Erubin 46b

2. Erubin 46b

"R. Mesharshia said: All these rules are of no account. (Decisions should be made according to the dictates of ones own understanding). What does R. Mesharshia use as proof? Shall we say, as we have learned:¹ To what can it be likened? It is like three courtyards opening one into the other and also opening into the public domain. If the two (outer) courtyards made Erub with that in the middle, it is permitted access to them and they to it; but the two outer courtyards are forbidden access one to the other. R. Hama bar Gur² said in the name of Rab:² The halachah is as R. Simeon. And with whom does he dispute? With R. Jehudah! And did we not learn³: R. Jehudah and R. Simeon--- the halachah is in accord with R. Jehudah. Thus it comes to teach us that we decide according to our understanding (not rules)."

Another principle pertained to Rabban Simeon be Gamaliel of whom R. Jochanan said, "The halachah is in accord with him except in three cases, that of surety,⁴ of Sidon⁵, and the latter proof⁶."

1. Mishnah Erubin 45b

2. Erubin 49b

3. Erubin 46b, cf page 70

4. Baba Bathra 174a

5. Gittin 75a

6. Sanhedrin 31a

אמר רבא בר בר חנה אמר ר' יוחנן
כל מקום שנה רש"ן בשנתו
הוא כחמא, חוץ מצד וצידן וראש
אחרונה.

"Rabbah b. Bar Hanah stated
in the name of R. Jochanan
that wherever R. Simeon b.
Gamaliel records a state-
ment in our Mishnah, the hal-
achah is in accordance with
him except in matters of surety,
of Sidon, and of the latter
proof."

In order to ascertain the underlying cause of this legal
preference, it is necessary to progress by negative anal-
ysis and deduce first of all why the halachah was not in
accord with R. Simeon ben Gamaliel in the aforementioned
three cases. We find that R. Jochanan laid down the prin-
ciple that wherever you find an individual who was lenient
and the many who are stringent, the halachah is in accord
with the stringent viewpoint which is that of the majority.

אמר רבא בר בר חנה אמר ר' יוחנן
כל מקום שנה שאלה מוצא ח"ט מיקל
ורבים מחמירין הוה כבדרי מחמירין
המקובל חוץ מן שא"כ שר' עקיבא
מיקל והכחא מחמירין הוה כבדרי עקיבא.

"Rabbah b. Bar Hanah stated in
the name of R. Jochanan that
wherever you find an individual
who is lenient, and the many
who are stringent, the halachah

is according to the stringent
 many except in the following,
 that even though R. Akiba is
 lenient and the sages are strin-
 gent, the halachah is with R.
 Akiba."

By investigation of the three cases in which the halach-
 ah does not follow R. Simeon ben Gamaliel, according to the
 rule of R. Jochanan, we can readily observe the above principle
 at work. The full citation of these cases and their explanation
 will clarify and prove my contention that whenever R. Simeon
 ben Gamaliel was lenient and disputed with the sages who were
 more stringent, the halachah was in accord with the sages.

1
 אן אמן ל' ר' יוסף ע' מנחם אהרן
 ו' איצטליי ווארד איצטליי, איצטליי
 דיקא קאמער ז' ר' מנחם ב' מנחם אהרן
 מ' ל' א' ד' א' ווארד ר' מנחם אהרן
 נ' ב' ד' ד' א' א' א' א' א' א' א'
 א' א' א' א' א' א' א' א' א' א'
 א' א' א' א' א' א' א' א' א' א'

"If a man says to his wife, 'Here
 is your Get, on condition that
 you give me my robe;' and his
 robe was lost, we rule that he
 meant his particular robe and
 nothing else. R. Gamaliel says
 that she can give him the money
 value; and (in confirmation)
 R. Simeon ben Gamaliel further
 said that a case happened in Bidon
 where a man said to his wife,
 'This is your Get on condition
 that you give me my robe;' and
 his robe was lost, and the sages

said that she should give him
the money value of it."

In this first case, we find the halachah in accord with
the Sages where they are more stringent, since they declare
that the wife must return the robe only, if she wishes to be
divorced; while R. Simeon ben Gamaliel states that she may
give as a substitute the money value of the garment.

Let us now look into the second case, of the latter
proof, where again R. Simeon ben Gamaliel is more lenient, when
he declared the validity of the evidence produced late, and
the halachah follows the Rabbis, who made late testimony or
documentary proof void.

1
אמר לו הקדש צדיק ואמר אין לי צדיק
צדיק הקדש ראיה ואמר אין לי ראיה
ואמר צדק הקדש ראיה ואמר אין לי ראיה
זה אינו כלום. אמר לבקש מה יצא
שלא היה יודע שיש לו צדיק ואמר צדיק
לא היה יודע שיש לו ראיה ואמר ראיה.

If they (the judges) have said
to him (the litigant) 'Bring
witnesses'; and he answered,
'I have none'; or 'Bring proof';
and he replied, 'I have none'.
Yet subsequently he produced
proof or found witnesses; it is

of no value. Said R. Simeon ben Gamaliel, 'What is he to do that did not know that witnesses were available, but found them afterwards; or that there was proof, yet discovered it later.' "

Finally, in the last case of R. Jochanan's principle dealing with the guarantor, we can ascertain more conclusively the contention that R. Simeon ben Gamaliel being more lenient to the guarantor than the Sages, the halachah was declared in favor of those disputants who were in the majority and who were more strict in their decisions.

1
במלוא את חירו צו יבי ערק לא ערץ
מן הערק. אק אחר צו מלך שאפרע
ממי שארצו יברע מן הערק. בנה
דבריו אמורים בשאין לבסיס ולזה
אין יש לבסיס ולזה לא ערע מן הערק;
יקרן אף צו פי שיש לבסיס ולזה יברע
מן הקרן. דן שמעון בן זמאיאל אומר
אק יש לבסיס ולזה ארצ נה וארצ נה
לא ערע מן.

"If (a man) lends (money) to another on a guarantor's security, he (must) not exact payment from the guarantor. if, however, he said, 'On the condition that I may exact payment from whom I will;' payment may be exacted from the guarantor. This law applies only to the case where the debtor has property; payment from the guarantor may not be exacted.

And (in the case of) a kabbelan (a guarantor who accepts unconditional responsibility), even though the debtor has property, payment must be exacted from the kabbelan. R. Simeon ben Gamaliel said, 'If the borrower has property, payment may be exacted neither from the ~~owner~~ from the other.'

Thus from the three cases cited and their evident conclusion, it is ascertainable that in forming his rule concerning R. Simeon ben Gamaliel, R. Jochanan made use of a previous principle of his own which favored the decisions of the stringent majority over the view of the individual which showed more leniency.

However on the other hand, when we examine at random those cases where R. Simeon ben Gamaliel is accepted, we find his opinion to invariably coincide with the stricter view, and the scholars are those who hold the lenient opinion.

1

האיש שנולד לו מומין אין כופין אותו
לדוץ. ואמר רבין קרא ר' אבהו
הקאמיין אתה מומין קראמיין כופין
איהם לדוץ.

"A man, in whom bodily defects have arisen, cannot be compelled to divorce (his wife). R. Simeon b. Gamaliel said: This applies only to minor defects, but in respect to major defects he can be compelled to divorce her."

In the above case, R. Simeon ben Gamaliel requires the divorce if bodily defects arise while the Rabbis contend that a man cannot be compelled to divorce his wife. Thus R. Jochanan, following his set principle, selected the decision as R. Simeon ben Gamaliel.

Other cases may be cited to further the proofs for the rules of R. Jochanan. However, I believe that enough sources were mentioned to first illustrate the rule and then give its underlying reason and purpose. We can observe in these rules, especially in those which gave a preference to the decisions of certain Tannaim, the methodical and analytical brain of R. Jochanan, who attempted to leave for future generations a key to the interpretation and selection of the halachahs of our Mishnah. Now one could not be lost in the maze of opinions presented by Rabbi in the redaction of the Mishnah, for R. Jochanan carefully formulated his rules to offset any misapprehension as to whose views were acceptable, and which were to be disregarded. For these principles R. Jochanan has been exemplified as the guiding spirit who gave to the world of scholarship a scientific formula for the better comprehension of the Mishnah and its halachahs.

CHAPTER V

THE THEOLOGY OF R. JOCHANAN

R. Jochanan, although a prolific halachist whose legal decisions regulated the life of his time, was a prominent agadist. By means of a vast Agadic literature scattered through the numerous Talmudic and Midrashic sources, R. Jochanan developed a philosophical system lying within the moral and spiritual sphere of theology. His plan in Agada was to start a portion with a Biblical verse and then progressing from that point to its spiritual conclusion. His fertile mind through his Agadic sayings dealt with such subjects, as God and His love for man; as Israel and its relation to God; as righteousness and sin; the world to come and numerous other questions akin to that sphere of thought. Since the subject of Rabbinic theology is a broad one, I can venture but to touch on a few of its aspects as seen through the eyes of R. Jochanan.

To R. Jochanan, as to the other Rabbis, God was not to be reached through metaphysical deduction but through the personal experience of His revelations and His continuous operations in the world. The thought of God could not be removed from His connections with man, nor could He be confined to a particular region. R. Jochanan did not make use of the many appellatives applied to God but continually spoke of "The Holy One", "Blessed be He", with occasional usage of "The Creator of the World". The names attrib-

uted to Him will be shown in the sources quoted later. He was a God whose attributes were seen in all He had wrought, as R. Jochanan remarked in his axiom that every place where "thou findest the greatness of God mentioned, there thou findest also His humility".

God, in His heavenly abode, is surrounded by His ministering Angels singing His praises, exalting Him for the miracles which He had wrought.

1

אמר רבי יוחנן מאי דכתיב: ולא קרב
 צה אל זה כל הילל (אמנ' דכ"א) דקרא
 מלאכי השרה ואמר שירה. אמר רבקה
 מצלם יד' טוקצין דין נאמן אמרין שירה.

"R. Jochanan said: Why is it written:
 'and one did not come near un-
 to the other all the night'?
 (Exodus 14:20) The Ministering
 Angels wish to sing praises.
 The Holy One, blessed be He
 said: the work of my hands are
 drowned in the sea, and you
 wish to sing praises."

However R. Jochanan takes an Anti-gnostic view of creation. He contends that the Angels were created by God on the second day and thus, since they did not exist eternally, could not have aided Him in the act of creation.

2

אמתי נקראו המלאכים? ר' יוחנן
 אמר קב' נקראו המלאכים ב"ד
 (גמ' ד' ק') במקרה באים עליהם מן
 וכלה עזרה מלאכיו רחוק.

"When were the Angels created?
 R. Jochanan said: On the second day were the Angels created. As it is written (Psalm 104:3): 'Who frameth the waters into the beams of His upper chambers, etc;' and it is further written (Psalm 104:4): 'Who maketh the winds His messengers.' "

Although He is on high, that does not prevent Him being at the same time on earth, visiting His houses of prayer and His creatures, rebuking them in their laxity in adherence to His commands.

1

אמר רבי יוחנן בשם ר' זעורה
 קבית הכלב ולא מצא קר עזרה
 מיד הוא כועס עליו (ירמיה' ל, ג)
 מדוע בארץ וזין א"י.

"R. Jochanan said: When the Holy One, blessed be He, enters a synagogue and does not find there ten, He is immediately filled with wrath; as it is said: 'Wherefore, when I came was there no man? When I called, was there none to answer.' (Isaiah 40:2)"

He is a God who is omniscient and omnipotent, to whom all dieties come to worship and prostrate themselves before His heavenly throne.

א"ר יוחנן און חתמה שכינה דקד"ר
 קס"ו נתן כח דצב"ר ופשחוהו לו.
 אמר רב חמל'פא, ופכתק מ"צו
 (ת"ר 33) ופשחוהו לו בן אלהים,
 'לחשוהו לו' אין בניה כאן אלא
 'לחשוהו לו' עבד פשחוהו לו קס"ו.

"R. Jochanan said: Do not be surprised, for when God descended upon Sinai, He gave strength to the idolators that they may prostrate themselves before Him. Rab Tachlipha said: A scriptural verse supports him: (Psalms 97:7) 'Bow down to Him all ye gods.' 'They will bow down to Him', is not written but 'Bow down to Him', which implies that they had bowed down to Him at Sinai."

He is, as called by R. Jochanan, "The Creator of all the World", who created the World on righteousness out of the nothingness, out of chaos; and who can return it to its former state if perverseness prevails.

צב"ר: ר' יוחנן אמר קצ"ר
 ששיתא און דלמי על קבלת
 את תורת שאלוהא קבלת את
 תורת הי"י מצד אלהא אלהא
 וכו'.

1. M. Shohar Tob 31:2

2. Proem Ruth Rabba 1

"Righteousness: R. Jochanan said: With the righteousness with which you created My world because you received My Torah, for if you would not have accepted My Torah, I would have returned it to a state of chaos."

God then creates man upon the world as the center of creation for through him the world comes into full expression. In the beginning there is no divided love, for God loves all His creatures equally.

1

אמר ר' יוחנן מאן דבגין (הבין מן),
 ב' יתן אמר המאמר דגא דב. כ'
 דיקור ודיבור שיצא מפי הקד"ה
 נחלק לעדדים לשונות.

"R. Jochanan said: It is written: the Lord gave (happy) tidings; they are published by female messengers, a numerous host (Psalm 68:12). This implies that every word emanating from the mighty God was heralded in seventy languages."

God stands as the Shield, the Watchman, over the world and its creatures.

2

משון מעין מה של הקד"ה שומר
 (הבין פד"ה) כי שם ומן אלהים מה
 הקד"ה מעין על העולם כ'ו אין
 משון מעין דבורו על ישראל.

"R. Jochanan said: Samson was typical of the name of the Holy One, blessed be He, as it is written: 'For the Lord God is a Sun and a Shield' (Psalm 84:12); just as the Holy One, blessed be He, shields the whole world, so Samson shielded Israel during his generation."

Even after He chose Israel as an adornment to Him, did God feel a close attachment to His creatures. It was a universalism of God that R. Jochanan preached, as we have seen above, when God admonishes his ministering Angels, "The work of My hands are drowned, and you sing praises".¹

However, the election of Israel is not due to ~~any~~ inherent virtue on its part, nor to the thought that Israel's creation preceded the creation of the world, and thus it was predestined. Israel was chosen only because it accepted the Torah, the instrument of God on earth to regulate the life of His people.

2

(דברים ל"ב) ה' מסתבא וזרח
משציר ומו וכתיב אלוה מתימן
יבא וזן. מתי דצי משציר ומא
דצי דבאקן. אייר יומן מלמד
שמחירה דקד"ה על כל אומה
ולשן ולא קדמוה עד שבא אצל
שרא וקדמוה.

1. See page 91

2. Aboda Zara 2b

"The Lord came from Sinai and rose from Seir unto them, He shined forth from Mount Paran' (Deuter. 33:2). It is also written, 'God, cometh from Teman'. What did He seek in Seir, and what did He seek in Mount Paran? R. Jochanan says: This teaches us that the Holy One, blessed be, offered the Torah to every nation and to every tongue, but none accepted it, until he came to Israel, who received it."

The Torah, thus becomes an inheritance for Israel, and not for the other nations around, because they have refused to accept its luminous teachings.

1

אמר ר' יוחנן עולם כוכדים שצחק
בתורה הרי הוא חייב מאד, שניאמר
(בבבבב) תורה זוה ענו משה,
מורה ענו וזאן ערפ.

"R. Jochanan said: A heathen who studies the Torah deserves death, for it is written: 'Moses commanded us a law for an inheritance (Deuter. 33:4)' It is our inheritance, not theirs."

Israel, being the "Chosen People" of God, becomes the fence around the world to define its ethical limits.

2

(שמות א, כ) וירא וברך הסנה. רבי
יוחנן אמר מה הסנה הלבד עושין
אותו עדר עקנו, כך ישראל עדר
עצופ.

" 'Moses looked and behold a thorn bush! ' (Exodus 3:2). R. Jochanan said: just as a thorn bush is made a fence around a garden, so is Israel the fence around the world."

God becomes the Protector of Israel, calling it endearing names, and endowing it with strength to combat its enemies. The nations, jealous of Israel's chosenness, attempt to pervert it, but Israel is like a wild beast who will subjugate them, by their own will, to God and His service.

1

אמר ר' יוחנן: אמר הקב"ה, קורא
אני לישראל יונה, דבליה (הפס' יא)
ויבי אבריו כונה בונה. אצלי במ
כימה אכל אצל אומות העולם כמו
חיות, דבליה (בראשית מט, ט) וקורא
יהודה; נבליה אילנה שלמה; יחי' ען
נחש צלי דרך; דנמין צאק יטריס.
וכן ייד שגס משוליים כליות, לפי
שבאומות נלחמן בישראל ואומות
לישראל מה אלה כושים מן העל
ומן בעלמה? והקב"ה מקרב לישראל
ונצטין דפני האומות כליות להכניען
לפי הקב"ה ולפי ישראל אכל אצל
הקב"ה נצטין כיונה תמנה ושומעין
לו דבליה (שמות ג, לא) ויאלץ העם
וישמעו כי בקר ה'.

"R. Jochanan stated: The Holy One, blessed be He, said, 'I call Israel dove, as it is written; and Ephraim is become like a silly dove' (Hosea 7:11). To Me, they are a dove; but to the Nations of the world, they are

like beasts, as it is written: Judah is like a lion's whelp; Naphtali is a fleet hind; Dan shall be a serpent, by the way; Benjamin shall be a wolf that rendeth' (Genesis 49:9,17,21,27) The tribes, all twelve of them are like wild beasts, because the nations fight against Israel and say to them, 'What do you need of the observances of the Sabbath and of circumcision?' The Holy One, blessed be He, strengthens Israel and makes them like wild beasts before the nations, so that they may subjugate them before the Holy One, blessed be He, and Israel itself. But before the Holy One, blessed be He, they are as a simple dove and obey Him; as it is written: 'And the people believed and when they heard that the Lord had visited etc. (Exodus 4:31)' "

The Torah is then the connecting link between God and Israel, for if Israel had not had the Torah as a solace from their afflictions, they would forget their Lord and Protector. The following source, though long, must be quoted to give an insight into the parables of R. Jochanan, for it depicts Israel and God as wed, with the Torah, Israel's ketubah.

1
אנכי אנכי רחמן מנחמכם (א' נא' יק' ר' י)
אקרא קר בכם דא' ר' יוחנן: אמרן יקרא
מאנונה וכתב לה בלשון חרובה, כך וכך
אני גותן לך, כך וכך תבטיחין אני עושה לך
כך וכך תיסקראות (ואוצרות) אני גותן לך
והנחה ואלך לו לעדיתא פ' י', ושבה א' שנים
פרדה. ופ' חרבותיה מונות לה ואמרת לה

ער מתי אה יתבאר? ס"ק לך קצת ער
 דאמל ט"א, ער דת"לך ע"ל. ודינה נכנסת
 בתוך ביתה, ונוטלת בתורה וקורא בה
 ומתחממת. ואמר ימ"ס בא דמלך ממדינת
 פ"ס. איך התיחמה אל היאך ממלכת פ"ס
 כל השנים הללו? איך אדוני דמלך, אלוני
 בתורה מרובה שבחתי פ"ס כדר פ"ס דמלך
 מאקדוה אולי ממך. וכן דעולס דצה אומות
 דעולס מנין לישראל ואומרים להם, ער מתי
 מתי אה ממלכתי ע"ל אלהיכם, ונוטלין
 לבשתיכם ע"ל ונהרין ע"ל? כמה צער
 הוא מתי ע"ל! כמה דע"ל! כמה דע"ל! הוא מתי
 ע"ל, כמה יסורין פוא מתי ע"ל! הוא
 ע"ל אדוני וזמן אה אהב דמלך ואמר
 ואיסרתי. וזמן אה נכנסין אה נכנסין
 ולבן מדרשו, ונוטלין סבר חורה וקדוה
 בה (יקרא כ"ט) ופ"ס אהב דמלך אהב
 ודמלך אהב, ודמלך אהב דמלך אהב;
 ומלמלך. כע"ל פ"ס, דמלך אהב
 ע"ס אה, דמלך אהב אל פ"ס דמלך אה
 כל השנים הללו? וישראל אומרים לפני דמלך
 דמלך דע"ל, איזו סבר חורה שבחתי
 ע"ל, כדר פ"ס אומות דע"ל מאדן אה
 ממך. דמלך (א"כ, פ"ס) דמלך אהב אה
 ע"ל ע"ל בן אה, וכן ע"ל אהב (תהיקי, ע"ל)
 ע"ל חורה ע"ל אה אהב קצ"ל.

" 'I, even I am He, that com-
 forteth thee (Isaiah 51:12).'
 R. Abba bar Kahana stated in
 the name of R. Jochanan: A king
 married a woman and wrote for her
 a ketulah in which he stated
 all the things he would give
 her, so many adornments, so
 many treasures. Then he left
 for a distant land and remain-
 ed there many years. Her friends
 counted (the days) and said,
 'How long will you wait? Mar-
 ry while you are still young,
 while you still have strength.'
 She would go to her home, take
 the ketuba and read in it and
 then she was consoled. After
 a time, the king returned from
 the distant land. He said to
 her, 'My daughter, I wonder
 how you could have awaited me

all these years.' She said to him, 'My lord king, if not for the ketubah, my friends would have made you lose me.' So it is in this world; the nations say to Israel, 'How long will you wait for your God, and are martyred for his sake? How much pain, shame and affliction has He brought upon you! Come to us and we will make generals, leaders and commanders of you.' Israel enters its houses of study, takes the Torah and reads in it; 'And I will turn myself unto you, and make you fruitful and multiply you, and I will establish my Covenant with you (Lev. 26:9).' They become consoled. When the end comes, the Holy One, blessed be He, says to Israel, 'My sons, I wonder how you have waited for me all these years.' Israel says before God, 'If not for the scroll of Torah, You would have lost us because of the nations.' As it is written: 'This answer will I give to my heart, therefore will I wait (Lam. 3:21);' also David said: 'Unless thy law had been my delights, I should long since been lost in my affliction.' (Psalm 119:92)."

Israel, having accepted the Torah becomes responsible for it. They are rewarded if they adhere, but if they neglect its study they receive a double punishment, an other-worldly one in Gehinnom and this-worldly one under kingly subjugation.

1

שמעון בר אבא בשם ר' יוחנן אמר, ארבע
דברים הראו לן הקב"ה (לאברהם): ג'הנמ
ומלכות, ומתן תורה, וקבלת התורה. אמר
לן בן אבא שנין עוסקין בשלש, הן
ג'הנמ, מלכות, תורה; ברשע מלכות, בן נדונים
בשלש.

"Simeon b. Abba in the name
of R. Jochanan said: Four
things did God show to Abraham:
Gehinnom, kingly subjugation,
the giving of the Torah, and
the Holy Temple. He said to
him, 'At the time when your
children are occupied with two,
they are saved from two; but
if they separate from two, they
are punished with two.' "

Israel, thus, will be chastised for its sins, even more severely
than other nations for theirs, but this is only another proof of God's
fatherly love. For it is God's belief that Israel can only be brought
to righteousness, which for Israel is the Torah and its doctrines,
by castigation. For it was only through suffering that Israel was
forgiven for its sins and obtained the greatest gifts from heaven
for its penitence.

2

אמר ר' יוחנן אמר ר' שמעון
לצדק, ולומר לך מה צדק אלו
חובות שאלו אלו על ד' בלילה,
אין ישראל אלא חובותין לחובות
אלו על ד' יסורים.

"R. Hoshanan said: 'Why is Israel like an olive. To inform you that just as an olive does not produce its oil except by means of pounding, so Israel can return to good only through affliction.'"

The question of "good and evil" or "righteousness and sin", together with the concomitant features of "reward and punishment", plays an important part in the Agadic system of R. Hoshanan. Righteousness can be achieved through man's ethical behavior to God and his altruistic and moral relationship to his neighbor. For to deal righteously is to observe the moral and ethical code as ordained in the Torah. Righteousness and human kindness are the basis for ethical living.

1

אין אנו יודעין איזה מן חביב, אלו
 דבריהם אלו חמילת חסדים : שדאן אומר
 (חבילים קטנים) ואם זה ממשל ד' עולם
 וכן וצדקה וחסד חביב ב' פ. חבילת אלה
 אלה חמילת חסדים חביבה יותר מן צדקה
 (שם-ממשל ד' עולם, וכן- רק לשם
 דורות).

"We do not know which is better, righteousness or kindness? As it is written: 'But the kindness of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting, and his righteousness unto children's children (Ps. 103:17). ' One claims that kindness is better than righteousness (for one is forever and ever, and the other is but for three generations). "

God loves the righteous and exalts them even above his ministering angels.

1

אמר ר' יוחנן גדולים צדיקים יותר
ממלאכי שמיא שמיא (דניאל, כה)
ענה ואמר הא אנה חנה יודין
אורחא שרין מהלכין בזוא נורא והלך
לם אית' בהן נורא ד' רביעא דאמר לך
אלהן (מלאכים) "גדולין" ואמ"כ "בר אלהין".

"R. Jochanan said: 'The righteous are greater than the ministering angels, for it is said, 'He answered and said, Lo I see four men loose, walking in the midst of fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the son of God (Daniel 3:25)'. (Thus the angel is mentioned last as being least esteemed)."

The pious man is the foundation of the world, for one cannot perish, without the creation of another of equal stature.

2

אמר ר' יוחנן אין צדיק נפטר מן
העולם עד שיהיה צדיק כמותו שמיא
(קדושתא, וברא השם וברא השם;
עד שלא כהנה אדם של עול' ברא
שמו של שמואל הכהן. ר' יוד' ור' יוד'
שצדיקין מוצאין עמך ומלכין בנ' דור
ודור, שמיא (ש"א, ח) כי לך מצוק
אלו ויש עולם לך - אלו קבלי
צדיקא דאמר מלכין שמיא (ש"א, ח)
וצדיק יסוד עולם.

1. Sanhedrin 93a

2. Yoma 38b

"R. Jochanan said: A pious man does not perish from the world until another pious man as he, is created. As it is written: 'The sun also riseth, and the sun also goeth down.' (Ecc. 1:5) Before the sun had set on Eli, the sun of Samuel, the Ramathite shone forth. The Holy One, blessed be He, saw that the pious were lessened, he stood and planted them in every generation. As it is written: 'For the Lord's are the pillars of the earth, on which he had set the world (Sam. I 2:8)'. Even for one pious man does the world exist, as it is written: 'The righteous is an everlasting foundation.' (Proverbs 10:25). "

Evil as opposed to righteousness, also can be divided into two classes: man's relation to God and his social behavior. To God, the true evil is pagan worship, which is the first of the cardinal sins. The punishment for this sin is eternal condemnation to the fiery abyss of Gehinnom.

1
מ"ל ר' נחמן לר' יצחק מא' דב"ל
(י"א, ח) ודאמח ידערו ויכסו. א"ל
כ"י אמר ר' יוחנן, אמח היא פמאדא
רש"י ק"ל פ"א. מא' היא ? דב"ל
ז"ל ! כ"ל ר' הכה (ח, פ"א, פ"א) אמר ח"ל
ז"ל פ"א. וכל"ל (י"א, פ"א, פ"א) ר' ח"ל.

"R. Nahman said to R. Isaac:
 'Why is it written: But at once
 they shall be shown to be brut-
 ish and foolish (Jer. 10:8).
 He said to him, "R. Jochanan
 said thus: 'There is one thing
 which causes the evil-doers to
 burn in Gehinnom. What is it?
 Idolatry! ' It is written: It
 is a doctrine of vanities. it
 concerneth but wood (Jer. 10:8)
 and it is written: They are van-
 ity (Jer. 10:15)."

To man, we find that the two remaining cardinal sins, that
 of immorality, spilling of blood together with robbery are the
 main corruptive elements.

1

ר' זרן קר ר' יוחנן, גזל-סל לבי
 אדם שהיו דבן עובד' עקובד גרר,
 ומקלי עריות, ואובד' דמא; וזל שקול
 כגלד רכל.

"R. Judan in the name of R. Jo-
 chanan: Robbery: tis like men
 who have among themselves, id-
 olators, adulterers, and mard-
 erers, but robbery is equal to
 them all."

The reward for the good and the punishment for evil are paid
 both in this world and in the world to come through Divine retri-
 bution. On this earth the good are endowed with God's beneficence,
 while evil brings only poverty and famine.

1

אמר ר' יוחנן שלשה דברים מכריז
 עליהם הקד"ה קצמנו ואלו הן: רעב,
 ושוע, ופרגסו. רעב: דביתא (מ"ה)
 ח, א) כי קרה ה' לרעב, שוע: דביתא
 (יחזקאל א, ב) וקראת' אל ביתן וברית'
 אולת', פרגסו: דביתא (שמיט' א, א)
 נא קראת' דש' דצמא.

"R. Jochanan said: There are three things which the Holy One, blessed be He, Himself proclaims, viz: famine, plenty, and a good leader. 'Famine'; for it is written: 'The Lord hath called a famine (II Kings 8:1). 'Plenty': As it is written: 'I will call for the corn and will increase it (Zek. 38:29). 'A good leader': for it is written: 'See I have called by name Besalel' (Exodus 31:1)."

"Death", too, plays an important role in R. Jochanan's system of divine retribution. For death brings peace to the righteous, while for the wicked, it is a cessation for God from having to bear their perversities.

2

רבי יוחנן אמר, חסדי מר נאמר מנה
 על הרשעים? אלא כן נאמר להרשעים
 חיים הם מכריזים להקד"ה, רה"ה
 (מלאכי א, ב) הוזהרם ה' דדריכס,
 כיון שפס מתיים הם פוסקים מלהכריז
 להקד"ה שנאמר (איוב א, ב) ש' ש' ש'
 חזרו נא, ש' חזרו מלהכריז להקד"ה
 חסדי מר נאמר מנה על הרשעים?
 אלא כן נאמר שהצדיקים חיים הם נאמין
 ע' יצח, כיון שפס מתיים הם נאמין רה"ה
 (איוב א, ב) ונא יחזרו יקיע' כח, ד"ה
 מר ש' ש'.

1. Berachoth 55a

2. Bereshith Rabbah 9:5

"R. Jochanan said: Why was death decreed against the evil-doers? Because while the evil-doers still live, they anger the Holy One, blessed be He: as it is written: 'Ye have wearied the Lord with your words (Mal. 2:17).' But as soon as they are dead, they cease to anger the Lord: as it is written: 'There the wicked cease from troubling (Job 3:17).' There they cease from troubling the Holy One, blessed be He. Why was death decreed against the righteous? Because while the righteous are living, they battle with their inclinations, but as soon as they are dead, they are at rest; as it is written: 'There the exhausted weary are at rest (Job 3:17).' It is enough that we have wearied ourselves."

However, although transgression is punishable by dire catastrophe, the hand of God in compassion is always extended to the penitent. For only prayer and adherence to the divine ordinances will avert the evil decree against the sinner, though he even be an idolator.

1

דב חייאן דר אבא א"ר יוחנן, בם
העונה יאמן יבא שמה דבא דבא
בא אביו י י דא שח' על עבדא
דר ממשין לו. כג' פבא (אבא יפח)
דברו דרמא יראן (ד' יאן) בורא דא
ר' (ר' דרמא ד' דרבו ד', וכג' ד'
הא (שח' ד', ד') כ' פרו' ד' יאן
(ד' ד' ד' ק' ד')

"R. Hiyya b. Abba said in the name of R. Jochanan: 'anyone who answers, 'Amen, May His Name Be Exalted', with all his strength, even though there be in him a bit of idolatry, he is forgiven. It is written: 'When depravity had broken out in Israel, then did the people offer themselves willingly: therefore praise ye the Lord (Judges 5:2).' And it is written: 'That it (the people) had become unruly (Exodus 32:25).' (There it referred to idolatry)".

Observance of the ordinance of the sabbath is considered by God as a definite sign of repentance and thus although a man be steeped in the abomination of idol worship, he can still find salvation.

1

אמר ר' חייא בר אבא א"ר יוחנן,
כל המעמידי את השבת כהלכה
אפילו עובד עבודה זרה כדור
אנו מוחלים לו שנאמר (ישעיהו
א"ר) אנו מעמידי את השבת
אמר ר' חייא בר אבא א"ר יוחנן
אמר ר' חייא בר אבא א"ר יוחנן

"R. Hiyya b. Abba said in the name of R. Jochanan: 'All who observe the Sabbath in its fulfillment, although they be idol-worshippers, as the generation of Enosh, they are forgiven: as it is written: 'Happy is the mortal that ever doth this (Isaiah 56:2).¹ -- 'Every one that keepeth the Sabbath by not violating it (Isa. 56:5).' Do not read, 'by not violating it', but, 'it is forgiven him.'"

Finally as has been seen above, R. Jochanan envisi ns a two-fold life after death. One, the blessed world-to-come, for the righteous, and the other the fiery Gehinnom for the unrepenting wicked. For according to R. Jochanan, death is a blessing for God and man. It brings rest and contentment to the righteous and peace to God from the ravages of the evildoers.¹

I have attempted by delving into a number of agadic sayings and parables attributed to R. Jochanan to unearth and then outline briefly a visible theology as was the wont of the Rabbis of that time. The subject of this chapter is inexhaustible and I was able but to touch, though fleetingly, on a few of its more interesting and enlightening aspects.

1. Cf page 107

CHAPTER VI
EVALUATION AND CONCLUSION

This is but a brief sketch of the wayé and accomplishments of R. Jochanan. If we consider them well, we will realize that he was a true founder of the science of the Talmud, for he made new rules in Mishnah which were the keys to its teachings. He was the exacting grammarian in the language of the Mishnah in giving to it a singular characteristic style which differed from the language of the Torah. He paved the way for its examination and interpretation. He made lucid many mishnaic points and fixed them in the minds of the scholars. By collecting a number of sayings of the Tannaim, he left behind a cherished heritage for generations to come. His disciples profited by his research into the many sciences of the day. His scholarship widened the boundaries of the Oral Law to increase its practical use in Palestine and the Diaspora.

For all his accomplishments, he was cherished by all who knew him. Not only was he praised by the Sages who listened avidly to his teachings and projected themselves into his dialectic discourses, but also by a majority of the people who cared little for hair-splitting controversies. Their only desire was to hear a parable, to derive a lesson from its narrative, and secure consolation from their mundane cares. Their eyes, too, were

raised in reverence to R. Jochanan, a master of Agada, who was blessed with the power to instill into the oppressed people a spirit of hope and comfort. His righteous dealings with mankind, his love of Torah, and his battle against the worldly sorrows which fell to his lot, were all stamped in his sermons. His words, a product of years of experience, thus fell upon ears eager to receive them, and were sweet in the hearing of his listeners.

Thus loved by all for his guiding spirit and intellectual light, he died, a shining example of a tradition existing forever in the hearts of his people.

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