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This thesis, "At the Twilight: An Examination of the Items Created *Bein Hashmashot*" is five chapters in length (not including the front and end materials). The goal of this thesis was to explore the Rabbinic tradition of the items which were created *bein hashmashot*, at the twilight of Shabbat during the week of creation, in order to come up with an idea of why this idea was important to the Rabbis, and what it says about their mindset and way of thinking. The contribution of this thesis is a systematic study of this tradition.

This thesis is divided as follows:

- An examination of each of the items said to have been created at this time, in any of the versions of the enumeration of the list
- A discussion of these items as a collection, and of the idea of this tradition in general
- A discussion of the tradition of the Rabbinic enumeration list, followed by the structure of this Rabbinic enumeration list
- An examination of each version of this enumeration list.
- An overview of the tradition, and what can be learned about the rabbis from this list.

In performing this study, I used the Rabbinic texts in which this list is mentioned, and other texts which discuss any of the items included in the lists; *Otzar Aggadah* and *The Book of Legends*, in order to find the aforementioned information; Wayne Sibley Towner's study of the Rabbinic enumeration list; and a number of pieces which discuss either this tradition or any of the items.

**AT THE TWILIGHT:  
AN EXAMINATION OF THE ITEMS CREATED  
*BEIN HASHMASHOT***

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**Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of  
Requirements for Ordination**

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A final thank you to Rabbi Moshe Zilbershein for suggesting this topic four years ago in his Introduction to Midrash class in Israel. Without his having planted that seed, I may never had thought of this idea, and this thesis would never have grown.

## Introduction

When I began to think about choosing a thesis topic, I immediately began to think about ideas within the realm of midrash. Midrash has always been compelling to me, and has been a part of my studies which I have particularly enjoyed. I appreciate the ability of the Rabbis to use the Hebrew language in such poetic way, and at the same time to play with that language within their writing. We spend so much of our own time attempting to understand the Bible, especially its relationship to our modern lives; midrash is the Rabbis' attempt to do the same. I enjoy being able to utilize their understanding as I develop my own reading of the Bible. Thus, I decided to take on the opportunity to seriously study a tradition within the genre of midrash. The topic of the items created *bein hashmashot*, at the twilight of Shabbat during the week of creation, had always been fascinating to me; for me it seemed like the natural choice of what piece of midrash to study. It was a topic which I hoped would allow me to explore a great deal of texts, both Biblical and Rabbinic, and to delve into the mindset of the Rabbis, as I attempted to understand their interpretations.

This thesis will explore the Rabbinic tradition of *bein Hashmashot*. This tradition was rather common in midrash; the list appears eleven times, in a variety of sources, and each of these versions differs from the others. An examination of these differences, and of all of the items which are included in these lists, demonstrates the apparent polemical and pedagogical nature of this tradition. This enumeration served to allow the Rabbis to rewrite the story of creation in a specifically Jewish way.

This work is divided into five sections. First, I will examine all the items included in these lists regarding their placement in the Bible, and also in terms of their depiction in Rabbinic tradition. Following the description of each of the items, I explore



the meaning of these items as a collection. I will then focus on the enumeration list in general will be discussed, followed by an examination of each of the eleven versions of the *bein hashmashot* enumeration. Finally, I will attempt to draw conclusions about this tradition in general, in order to answer these questions: What can we learn from this tradition about the Rabbis and their world view? What was the Rabbis' purpose in creating this list, and in continuing to include it in their midrashic works?

The process of this study began with a close reading of each of the lists. As each list was explored, I was led to other versions of the list of which I was not initially aware. The chart which appears in Appendix A was then created, as a framework through which to compare the versions, and compile a complete list of the items. Particularly utilizing *Otzar Ha-aggadah* and *The Book of Legends* to locate midrashic interpretation of their nature and symbolism. In addition, the sections of *Midrash Rabbah* that correspond to the relevant Biblical verses, which describe each of the items, was studied, in order to gain more details of the Rabbinic understanding of each item. Finally, this tradition was compared with the pattern of the Rabbinic enumeration list in general, with special notice to Wayne Sibley Towner's study on that topic.<sup>1</sup> Conclusions were then drawn from this mass of materials gathered.

In this thesis, I hope to demonstrate that the Rabbi's intention in utilizing this list was ultimately polemical, as they sought to teach their view of the world *vis a vis* their telling of creation. For the Rabbis, when God created the world, Judaism was the ultimate creation; thus the Jews were the ultimate group which lived in this world. The

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<sup>1</sup> Wayne Sibley Towner, *The Rabbinic "Enumeration of Scriptural Examples": A Study of A Rabbinic Pattern of Discourse with Special Reference to Mekhilta D'R. Ishmael* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1973).

goal of the Jews in this world was to come to the time at which they could lead humanity back to the Garden of Eden, for it was there that all humanity began. Once Adam and Eve had sinned, the Jewish people became necessary, for as they entered into their covenantal relationship with God, they became the redemptive vehicle for all humanity.

Chapter I:  
The Twilight Items

The items which were said by the Rabbis to have been created *bein hashmashot* can be divided into four categories: those which appear in all versions of the list; those which appear in nearly all the versions (9 or 10 times); those which appear in approximately half of the versions (5 to 8 times); and those which are relatively rare (1 to 4 times). The discussion of each of the items will be organized in this way. Each item will be explored in terms of where it appears in the Biblical text and how it is understood in rabbinic literature

### **A. Those Items Which Appear in All Versions of the List**

#### **1. The Rainbow, *ha-keshet***

It is easy to understand why the Rabbis would want to place the rainbow in this category of items which blur the boundary between heaven and earth. The ethereal nature of the rainbow is apparent even on a purely visual level, as it seems to exist both on the earth and in the sky. In addition, without the scientific explanation of light reflecting off of the water particles in the air, one could understand only that the rainbow is something which is brought about by some Divine being. Even with the benefit of scientific knowledge, the rainbow's beauty can still appear as something Divine within the earthly realm.

The original rainbow was placed in the sky by God after the end of the flood, as a sign of God's covenant with all humanity. As far as we know, there was no rainbow before God brought about this bow in the sky—although, as far as we know, there was no rain before the flood. The Book of Genesis tells the reader:

God said, "This is the sign of the covenant that I give between me and you and all the living beings who are with you, for all time. I have given my bow in the cloud, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth, and the bow appears in the clouds, I will remember my covenant with you and with all the living beings of all flesh, and never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all flesh. The bow will be in the clouds, and I will see it in order to remember the eternal covenant between God and all living beings, all flesh that is on the earth." God said further to Noah, "This is the sign of the covenant that I have established between me and all flesh that is on the earth."<sup>1</sup>

In Hebrew, the word for both bow (as in "bow and arrow") and rainbow is *keshet*. It seems that the name was given to the rainbow based on its similarity of appearance to the bow that the archer holds in his hand. The rainbow exists as if it is the tool which God holds.

According to the text, the rainbow serves as a reminder to God of this new eternal covenant. It is possible to understand that the rainbow serves additionally to remind humanity of this covenant, and of the evil which originally brought about God's destruction of the earth by way of the flood. If one sees God's bow in the sky, one can remember that God is holding a potential weapon. When God sees it, God is reminded of the promise not to make use of that weapon; when humanity sees it, humanity is reminded that God does hold that power in His hand.<sup>2</sup>

The Rabbis understood the rainbow as something both earthly and Divine, both by placing it in this category of *Bein Hashmashot* and in other discussions of the rainbow. *Bereishit Rabbah*, interpreted the line from the Genesis text, "I have given my bow," in Hebrew, "את קשתי נתתי" "*et kashti natati*": "קישוטי, *kishuti*: My Likeness,

<sup>1</sup> Genesis 9: 12-17.

<sup>2</sup> I have chosen to use the pronoun He in relationship to God. This choice is not intended to assign a gender to Divinity, but reflects a need for the use of pronouns.

something which is likened to Me. Is this possible? Rather, it resembles God as straw resembles grain."<sup>3</sup> In other words, the rainbow reflects God in some way, but it does not entirely resemble God. In the rabbis' understanding, though, that the rainbow carries a glimpse of Divinity, they demonstrate that the rainbow holds a connection between earth and heaven. The Rabbis furthered this idea in a discussion in Tractate *Hagigah* of the Babylonian Talmud:

R. Judah, son of R. Nahmani, the interpreter of R. Simeon ben Lakish, expounded in a discourse: When a man looks at any one of three things, his eyes become dim: at the rainbow, at the patriarch, and at the priests. At the rainbow, because it is written in the Book of Ezekiel, "As the appearance of the bow in the cloud on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the surrounding radiance around Him, the appearance of the likeness of the Glory of the Eternal." (1:28)<sup>4</sup>

Understanding the Ezekiel verse on a literal level, they interpreted that seeing a rainbow is like seeing a glimpse of God, which causes one's eyes to dim.

Finally, they underscored the semi-Divine nature of the rainbow in their explanation of what one must do upon seeing a rainbow. "R. Joshua ben Levi said: On seeing a rainbow in the clouds, one should fling himself down upon his face, in keeping with the Ezekiel verse, 'I saw it and I fell upon my face.'<sup>5</sup> In the west, they cursed anyone who did this, because it seemed as though he were bowing down to the rainbow; but one may certainly say a blessing. What blessing should one say? Blessed be He who remembers the covenant, is faithful to His covenant, and fulfills His promise."<sup>6</sup> While the simple meaning of the Ezekiel verse is that one should fall on one's face in prostration upon seeing God's presence, they extended Ezekiel's metaphor of the rainbow

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<sup>3</sup> *Bereishit Rabbah* 35:3.

<sup>4</sup> B.T. *Hagigah* 16a.

<sup>5</sup> Ezekiel 1:28.

<sup>6</sup> B.T. *Berachot* 59a.

by explaining that one should do so when seeing a rainbow. They ultimately reject this practice though, so that they do not appear as pagans—the ancient Israelites were not the only group to have understood the rainbow in this way.<sup>7</sup> Thus, the prostration was rejected, but the blessing was preserved, even in modern Judaism.

The rainbow, then, was described as having been created at this time of twilight, because it existed as a most basic example of that which is both heavenly and earthly in its very nature, as an item which serves as visual proof for humanity of God's presence, bridging the gap between the two worlds.

## 2. Manna, *ha-man*

Manna, the food that God rained upon the Children of Israel during their time in the wilderness, is another item which demonstrates a clear connection between the earthly and heavenly realms. Soon after the Israelites' crossing of the Sea of Reeds, they begin to complain that they are hungry. In response to their grumbling:

The Eternal spoke to Moses, "Behold, I will cause bread to rain down to you from Heaven. The people shall come out each day and collect that day's portion, that I may test them, as to whether they follow my instruction or not. But on the sixth day, when they apportion what they have brought, it will be double the daily portion."<sup>8</sup>...And that evening quail appeared, covering the camp, and in the morning there was a mist of dew surrounding the camp, and when the mist of dew lifted, on the service of the wilderness there was a fine and flaky substance, as fine as frost on the ground. And the Israelites saw it and said to each other, "What is this? (*man hu*)" for they did not know what it was. Moses said to them, "This is the bread that the Eternal has given to you to eat."<sup>9</sup>...The house of Israel

<sup>7</sup> For example, the Greek goddess Iris, whose name is a synonym for rainbow in modern parlance, was both the goddess of the rainbow and the messenger of the gods. One could understand that she held this dual role because the rainbow appears as a message from the gods to mortal beings.

<sup>8</sup> Exodus 16:4-6.

<sup>9</sup> Exodus 16:13-14.

named it manna. It was like white coriander seed and tasted like wafers in honey.<sup>10</sup>

The manna, assumedly named as a play on the question of the Israelites upon seeing this new substance, is described to have had certain magical qualities. Each of the Israelites is commanded to gather as much as is needed by that individual, and whatever amount each had taken was exactly the necessary amount. In addition, as they were told that none should be left until morning, those who attempted to save it found that it had become maggot infested and malodorous.<sup>11</sup> The manna is described again in Numbers: "The manna was like coriander seed, and its appearance was like crystal. The people would go around and gather it, grind it with millstones or crush it with a mortar, boil it in a pot, and make it into pies. Its taste was like sweet cakes made with oil. When the dew fell on the camp at night, the manna fell upon it."<sup>12</sup> The Bible also relates that when the Israelites first ate of the harvest upon entering the land, "...the manna ceased...there was no more manna for the Children of Israel."<sup>13</sup>

The Rabbis understood that it was by the merit of their ancestors that the Israelites were given the manna. In *Midrash Tanhuma* one interpretation is, "By the merit of Moses did you eat the manna."<sup>14</sup> Elsewhere, as in *Shemot Rabbah*, it is interpreted, "'Behold (*hineini*), I will cause bread to rain down to you from Heaven'...R. Hanin said: At the time that God called upon Abraham, he answered Him saying, '*hineini*.' God said to him, 'I swear on your life, with the same language I shall pay a reward to your

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<sup>10</sup> Exodus 16:31.

<sup>11</sup> Exodus 16:17-20.

<sup>12</sup> Numbers 11:7-9.

<sup>13</sup> Joshua 5:12.

<sup>14</sup> *Tanhuma, Bamidbar* 2.



children.”<sup>15</sup> In either case, it was not on their own account that the Israelites deserved the manna, but because of what those who had come before them had done.

Given the brief descriptions of a substance that no longer existed, the Rabbis were able to utilize their rich imagination in order to explain this gift from God which fed the people during the wilderness years. Utilizing the conflicting descriptions of the manna, as bread, wafers in honey, and sweet cakes made with oil, the Rabbis explain, “How can these three verses exist together? Young men would taste it as bread, old men tasted honey, and babies tasted oil.”<sup>16</sup> The taste of the manna altered depending on who it was that tasted it. A similar description is given in Tractate *Yoma*, in interpreting Numbers 11:8, “It’s taste was like sweet cake (לֶשֶׁת, *leshad*) made with oil.”

R. Abbahu said: Don’t read it as sweet cake (לֶשֶׁת), but instead as breast (לֶשֶׁת, *shad*). Hence, just as a baby, when he touches the breast, finds many flavors in it, so it was with manna. Whenever Israel ate it, they found many flavors in it. Some understand לֶשֶׁת as לֶשֶׁת-לֵוִי, *le-shed*, of a demon, for just as a demon changes itself into many shapes, so, too, did manna change into many flavors.<sup>17</sup>

In order for one food to have satisfied all of Israel during this time, the Rabbis understood that it had to have been a substance endowed with qualities other than that of usual food. Thus, they interpreted that it was altered for each person who gathered it and for each who tasted it. This manna was a literal gift from God, and served as an example of a miraculous item existing in this world. By enabling God to sustain the people throughout their time in the wilderness, it was proof that God can and does have the power to sustain

<sup>15</sup> *Shemot Rabbah* 25:5.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 25:3.

<sup>17</sup> B.T. *Yoma* 75a.

His chosen people. In that way, it was an easy choice to be included in the *bein Hashmashot* enumeration.

### 3. The Mouth of the Earth, *Pi Ha-arets*<sup>18</sup>

The next item, the mouth of the earth that swallowed Korah and his followers, is in a way an item in opposition to the previous examples, for instead of bridging the earth to the Heavens above, it connects the earth with *Gehinom* below. In the Biblical text of Numbers, Korah gathered the community against Moses and Aaron, and thus against God. In reaction to this:

Moses said, "By this shall you know that the Eternal has sent me to do these deeds, that they are not from my own heart. If they die as all men die, if the lot of all men is allotted to them, then the Eternal did not send me. But, if the Eternal creates a creation, and the ground opens its mouth and swallows them and all that is theirs, and they shall fall into Sheol alive, then you shall know that they have blasphemed against the Eternal." As he finished speaking all of these words, the ground that was beneath them burst open. The earth opened its mouth and swallowed them, their houses, all of Korah's men, and all of their possessions. They, along with all that was theirs, fell into Sheol alive, and the earth closed upon them and they disappeared from the community.<sup>19</sup>

The Biblical text here is interesting in regards to this study, for it cites the opening as something specifically created for this purpose. If this mouth of the earth was indeed a thing which was created, then it has to have been included in this list, for it must have been created during the time of creation, yet is not mentioned in the Biblical account of creation.

<sup>18</sup>In some versions, it is known more specifically as the opening of the mouth of the earth to swallow the wicked

<sup>19</sup>Numbers 16:28-33.

*Bamidbar Rabbah* plays upon this point in part of its discussion of the story of

Korah and his rebellion:

Rabba interpreted: Why does the text read [i.e. why the repetition of the root ברא, *bara*, in the verse] "If the Eternal creates a creation" יְהוָה יִבְרָא "אם בְּרִיָּאָה יִבְרָא" *"im beriah ivra Adonai"*? Moses said, "Master of all worlds, if *Gehinom* is created (בְּרִיָּאָה, *veriah*), it is good—but if not, then 'The Eternal will create (יִבְרָא, *yivra*) it.'" To what does this refer—to its actual creation? No, because Ecclesiastes says, "There is nothing new under the sun."<sup>20</sup> Rather, for the opening to be brought near (to the rebels)...Rabba son of bar Hana said: I was once walking on the way, when an Arab merchant said to me, "Come, and I will show you the spot where Korah's men were swallowed." I went and saw two cracks from which smoke was rising. The Arab took a fleece of wool, dipped it in water, and stuck it upon the tip of a spear and inserted it into that place. The wool was singed and dropped off. He said to me, "Listen, you can hear something." I heard them saying, "Moses and his Torah are true, but they [Korah and his followers] are liars!" He said to me, "Every thirty days *Gehinom* stirs them back to this spot like meat in a pot, and this they exclaim, 'Moses and his Torah are true!' In the time to come, God will bring them out. About them Hannah said, in 1 Samuel, "The Eternal causes death and brings life, He brings people down to Sheol and raises them up." (2:6)<sup>21</sup>

The beginning of this pericope explains part of the reason for the idea of items having been created *bein Hashmashot*. Because of the Ecclesiastes verse, "There is nothing new under the sun," and in the Rabbis' literal reading of it, actual creation necessarily ended during the six days of creation leading up to the first Shabbat. Thus, items such as the mouth of the earth, which seem to have been created at a certain other moment were in fact created earlier, only to be used at a later time. The mouth of the earth, in other words, had been waiting for this time to arrive, so that it could appear in the appropriate spot. From the end of this midrashic text, it is apparent that after its time, the mouth of the earth continued to exist as a memorial of sorts.

<sup>20</sup> Ecclesiastes 1:9.

<sup>21</sup> *Bamidbar Rabbah* 18:20.

The Rabbinic imagination also took on the physicality of this mouth of the earth.

In the description in *Bamidbar Rabbah*, "R. Yehudah said: At the same time, many mouths of the earth were opened... R. Nehemiah said:... The earth became formed like a funnel, and wherever there was one of them, he would roll down with the others."<sup>22</sup>

While according to *Yalkut Reuveni*:

The opening of the earth adjusted itself to the girth of each person. Beginning at a man's soles, it opened slightly to admit the feet, widened for the legs, the thighs, and the abdomen, and then finally narrowed again for the neck. Korah and his company sank slowly bit by bit, and, as the earth was suffocating them, they kept crying in anguish: Moses is the truth, and his Torah is truth.<sup>23</sup>

It is interesting that also in this example does the punishment indeed teach its victims the lesson that was intended. Because no vivid description is offered in Numbers of the mouth itself, the Rabbis were able to bring forth their own descriptions. The mouth of the earth was an item created by God, not as a gift or reward, but as a punishment. As many as the other items, though, it melds the realms of the earthly and the divine.

#### 4. The Mouth of the Ass, *Pi Ha-aton*

This item is one of the most fanciful of those included in the *bein Hashmashot* enumeration. It is particularly interesting that it is the mouth of the ass that is said to have been especially created, and not the ass herself. After Balaam had struck his ass for not moving—for unbeknownst to Balaam, the ass had seen an angel in the way—the Biblical text explains the miraculous portion of Balaam's experience:

<sup>22</sup>*Bamidbar Rabbah* 18:13.

<sup>23</sup>*Yalkut Reuveni* to Numbers 16:31, cit. from H.N. Bialik, Y.H. Ravitzky, eds., William Braude, trans., *The Book of Legends* (New York: Schocken Books, 1992), 93.

The Eternal opened the mouth of the ass, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you, that you have hit me these three times?" Balaam said to the ass, "You have made a mockery of me! If I had a sword in my hand I would kill you." The ass said to Balaam, "Aren't I your ass, upon whom you've ridden all along until this day? Have I been in the habit of doing this to you?" And he said, "No." Then the Eternal uncovered Balaam's eyes, and he saw an Angel of the Eternal standing in the way, his sword drawn in his hand. Then he fell upon his face in prostration.<sup>24</sup>

The Eternal used the ass to communicate with Balaam. While she was an ordinary animal, once her mouth was opened, she becomes miraculous. One must wonder if the speech belongs to the ass herself, or in fact comes from God. This question, though, must remain unanswered.

One midrash teaches that, "When she finished speaking she died, so that people wouldn't say, 'This one spoke!' and revere her... Another interpretation is that God did so to respect the honor of that wicked one, so that people wouldn't say, 'This one endangered Balaam.' And if God respects the honor of the wicked, one need not say anything about the honor of the righteous."<sup>25</sup> This, in other words, is an item which ceased to exist after its utilization. *Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer* makes an interesting point regarding this particular ass, although according to this interpretation it was the actual ass who was created.<sup>26</sup>

Abraham arose early in the morning...and saddled the ass. This ass was the son of the ass who was created at twilight, as it is written, "Abraham arose early in the morning and saddled his ass."<sup>27</sup> He is the ass upon whom Moses rode as he left Egypt, as it is written, "Moses took his wife and his sons and set them to ride on *the* ass."<sup>28</sup> And he is the ass upon whom the Son of David will ride in the future, as it is written in Zechariah,

<sup>24</sup>Numbers 22:28-32.

<sup>25</sup>*Bamidbar Rabbah*, 20:14.

<sup>26</sup>Although in its own version of the list, the phrase "Mouth of the ass" is included, in this discussion it is implied that the ass herself (not its mouth) was created.

<sup>27</sup>Genesis 22:3.

<sup>28</sup>Exodus 4:3.

"Rejoice greatly, Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king comes to you, he is righteous, triumphant, and humble. And he rides upon an ass, a donkey-foal son of a she-ass." (9:9)<sup>29</sup>

It is interesting to note the chronology which is apparent here: the ass who was created at twilight existed from that time until the time of Balaam. Although asses are generally not known for living long, this particular ass was, of course, miraculous; she apparently passed on aspects of her miraculous nature to her offspring, as well. Because the occurrence of the speaking ass is so completely out of the realm of usual animal behavior, it was said that the mouth of this ass was particularly created.

### 5. The Tablets, *ha-lukhot*

The Tablets, upon which were written the Ten Commandments, serve as a symbol of Revelation—of God's having communicated with Israel, through Moses. Revelation can be seen as proof of God's action on earth, and thus the tablets are a symbol of God's presence. They are said, in the Biblical text, to have been fashioned by God, and so were included also in the *Bein HaShmashot* list. The following description of the tablets is found in the Book of Exodus:

And He gave to Moses, when He was done speaking to him on Mount Sinai, two Tablets of the Testimony;<sup>30</sup> tablets of stone, written with the Finger of God... And Moses turned and came down the mountain and the two Tablets of the Testimony were in his hand. The tablets were written on both of their sides, on this side and that side they were written. And the

<sup>29</sup> *Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer*, chapter 31.

<sup>30</sup> The specific term used for the tablets is *lukhot ha-eidut*, translated here as "Tablets of the Testimony." It is interesting to note that the word *eidut* can also be translated as "evidence," which could also be an accurate translation here, for they served as proof of what was said to Moses on Mount Sinai.

tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God,<sup>31</sup>  
inscribed on the tablets.<sup>32</sup>

Once the tablets had been broken by Moses, God instructs him to bring two new tablets  
up the mountain:

The Eternal said to Moses, "Carve two tablets of stone like the first ones,  
and I shall write on them the words that were on the first tablets that you  
broke... So he carved two tablets of stone like the first ones, and Moses  
arose early in the morning and he went up to Mount Sinai, as the Eternal  
had commanded him, and he took in his hand two tablets of stone... He  
was there with the Eternal forty days and forty nights; he did not eat any  
food nor drink any water. And he wrote on the tablets the Commandments  
of the Covenant, the Ten Commandments."<sup>33</sup>

It is unclear who wrote on these tablets, God or Moses, due to the ambiguity of the  
pronoun "he". It seems that it was Moses who wrote upon these tablets, although God  
had said that He would inscribe them. In addition, the text does not state here what was  
written on the first tablets, although it can be assumed that the same text, the Ten  
Commandments, was written on both versions. Both of these ambiguities are answered  
when Moses retells the story in the Book of Deuteronomy, "I made an ark of acacia  
wood, and I carved two tablets of stone like the first ones. And I went up to the  
mountain, with the two tablets in my hand. And He wrote on the tablets like the writing  
of the first ones, the Ten Commandments that the Eternal said to you on the mountain,  
amid the fire on the Day of the Assembly, and the Eternal gave them to me."<sup>34</sup>

According to Moses, at least, it was God who wrote upon the second tablets the same

<sup>31</sup> For a discussion of the translation of "*mikhtav*," see *infra*, p. 12.

<sup>32</sup> Exodus 31:18, 32:15-16.

<sup>33</sup> Exodus 34:1, 4, 28.

<sup>34</sup> Deuteronomy 10:3-4.

words that were on the first.<sup>35</sup> It is clearly the first tablets, which are those which are considered to have been created *Bein HaShmashot*, because the tablets themselves were created by God, while in the second case, it is certainly Moses who carved the stone, and it is the tablets themselves which are considered here, the writing serving as a separate item on the list.

The Midrash, in explaining the reason for there being two tablets, also serves to further the connection between heaven and earth, apparent in this item. In *Shemot Rabbah* we read, "Why two tablets? They correspond to heaven and earth, to groom and bride, to two groomsmen, to this world and the world to come."<sup>36</sup> *Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezar* makes the connection even clearer, "R. Kahana said: The tablets were not created from the earth, but from heaven; they were the work of the hands of God... The tablets were those of the beginning."<sup>37</sup> The latter statement refers to the fact that these tablets were those created at the twilight of Shabbat.

## **B. Those Items Which Appear in Most Versions of the List**

### **1. The Letters, *ha-katav***

The writing that is listed in the *bein Hashmashot* enumeration is ambiguous. Many assume that it is the actual writing that was upon the tablets. Others believe that it refers to the shape of the letters on the tablets. The latter explanation understands that because the tablets could be read from any of their sides, the letters must have been

<sup>35</sup> *Shemot Rabbah* 47:2 disagrees with this assessment. According to that reading, "God said to Moses: The first tablets, I wrote... but the second, you write, and my hand will be attached to it."

<sup>36</sup> *Shemot Rabbah* 41:6.

<sup>37</sup> *Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer*, chapter 46.



magical in appearance. In most variations of the list, both *hakataḅ* and *hamikhtaḅ* are mentioned, and cannot both refer to the same writing. In most translations of our texts, the terms are translated either as “the writing” and “the writing instrument” or as “the shape of the letters” and “the writing.” In those versions of the enumeration list which include only *hakataḅ*, it seems more likely that the writing itself would be that which was created. Additionally, in the version of the listing included in *Targum Yonatan*, this item is cited as “the writing on the Tablets of the Testimony.”<sup>38</sup> One cannot use this in order to understand the meaning of the term in the other versions, though, because of the difference in language, the *Targum* being in Aramaic.

There are other explanations as to what *hakataḅ* may refer. One suggestion is that it refers to the letters not on the tablets, but on the original Torah scroll. According to *Devarim Rabbah*, “Reish Lakish said: The Torah that was given to Moses was a parchment of white fire, and it was written with black fire; it was sealed with fire, and wrapped with fire.”<sup>39</sup> A final possibility is that it is not necessarily either of these examples of writing (that on the tablets or that on the Torah), but the writing itself that was created. According to the Biblical text, there is no account of anything having been written before Moses went up to God on Mount Sinai. It is reasonable to assert that God created the concept of writing during creation, but that this item was not realized until God Himself wrote. It was not the particular letters that appeared on the tablets or on the scroll—it was letters themselves. Based on this final theory, *hakataḅ* will be translated here as “the letters,” for the sake of clarity.

<sup>38</sup> *Targum Yonatan* to Numbers 22:28.

<sup>39</sup> *Devarim Rabbah* 3:12.

## 2. The Writing, *ha-mikhtav*

As explained above, there is some disagreement as to what is meant by this term. One possibility is that it refers to the writing instrument used by God in order to write the tablets. Alternatively, it may be the writing itself that was on those tablets. Grammatically, because the texts are unvocalized, it is difficult to ascertain the form in which the word appears. It is possible to be read it as falling within the *mishkal* (noun form) of tools, and therefore should refer to the instrument, not to the writing itself. It is equally possible that it simply means "writing." It is important to note that *mikhtav* is the term used for writing, not the writing instrument, in the Exodus verse describing the tablets.<sup>40</sup> Because of this usage, it is likely that the item in the enumeration also refers to the writing which was on the tablets. This writing was not like other writing. According to *Bamidbar Rabbah*, "...Between each of the commandments that were written on the tablets, were written the explanations and the details of the Torah."<sup>41</sup> The writing was such that it contained more than it seemed God had written, and was thus miraculous in and of itself.

## 3. Moses' Grave, *k'varo shel Moshe*

According to tradition, God Himself buried Moses. Deuteronomy states, "Moses, the servant of God, died there, in the land of Moab, according to God's word. And He buried him in the valley in the land of Moab, near Beth-peor. And no person knows the place of his grave, even to this day."<sup>42</sup> Because it was apparently God who buried

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<sup>40</sup> Exodus 32:16.

<sup>41</sup> *Bamidbar Rabbah* 15:16.

<sup>42</sup> Deuteronomy 32:5-6.

Moses, it was assumed that his grave must have been a miraculous object, created like the other items in the enumeration list. The Rabbis said that the gravesite disappeared from human sight, so that no one could find it. In one aggadic telling, in Tractate *Sotah*, the impossibility of finding the grave is expanded: "The evil kingdom of Rome once sent a request to the military garrison at Beth-peor, 'Show us where Moses is buried.' When they stood high up, the place seemed to be low down. When they stood low down, the place seemed to be high up."<sup>43</sup>

The question has arisen as to why the burial spot of Moses is hidden from humanity. In *Midrash Lekah Tov* it is asked, "Why is the grave of Moses not known? So that Israel will not go there, offering different types of sacrifices. And, so that the nations of the world will not defile his grave with their idols."<sup>44</sup> They worried that if people knew where Moses was buried, his grave would become a shrine. This would be problematic for a number of reasons, both in Israel, treating him like a deity, and by other nations, bringing their foreign sacrifices to that place. The offering of sacrifices to Moses would be problematic on a number of levels, as is demonstrated in a midrash about Jacob's request to Joseph that he not be buried in Egypt:

Why else might Jacob have asked not to be buried in Egypt? So that he would not be made into an object of idol worship. For just as one is punished for worshipping, so, too, is one punished for being worshipped. After all, "I will execute judgment on all the gods of Egypt."<sup>45</sup> Similarly, what does it say when Daniel interprets Nebuchadnezzar's dream? "Then King Nebuchadnezzar threw himself on the ground, worshipped Daniel, and ordered that sacrifices of food and incense be offered to him."<sup>46</sup> But Daniel refused them. Why? Because just as punishment results from idolatry, so, too, does punishment result from being its object. Similarly,

<sup>43</sup> B.T. *Sotah* 13b-14a.

<sup>44</sup> *Midrash Lekah Tov* to Deuteronomy 32:6.

<sup>45</sup> Exodus 12:12.

<sup>46</sup> Daniel 2:46.

in the story of Hiram, when he made himself into a god. What was his fate? "Because of your inflated sense of self, and because you said I am a god."<sup>47</sup> God answered, "You are wiser than Daniel,"—who refused the sacrifices which Nebuchadnezzar wanted to offer him—and yet you make yourself into a god?! What was his fate? God continues, "I have debased you and I have made you the laughingstock of kings."<sup>48</sup>

If it was a worry that Jacob would be made into a deity, then it stands to reason that such a fate could befall Moses as well, especially since Moses is considered the greatest of prophets.<sup>49</sup> Moses was buried outside of the land of Israel, for he was not allowed to enter the land with the rest of the people. In order to protect Moses from this fate, and in order to protect those who would treat him as such from the temptation to act in this way, God hid his grave from all humanity. In order for God to have buried Moses with no help from any people, God must have built, or created, the grave itself. Thus, this became one of the items created *bein Hashmashot*.

#### 4. The Well, *ha-b'er*<sup>50</sup>

The well, by tradition, followed the Children of Israel through the wilderness, providing them with water. There is no true Biblical evidence for this idea, although there is a verse from which it is drawn, "And from there to Beer, which is the well that The Eternal said to Moses: Assemble the people and I will give them water."<sup>51</sup> The word play between the name of the place and the Hebrew for "well" is apparent, and may be part of the reason that the Rabbis stressed that there was one well with the people during the entire journey. The people then sing a song, celebrating the well's existence. The

<sup>47</sup> Ezekiel 28:2.

<sup>48</sup> *Bereshit Rabbah* 96: 5.

<sup>49</sup> Deuteronomy 34:10.

<sup>50</sup> In some versions, this item is listed as the Mouth of the Well, *pi ha-b'er*.

<sup>51</sup> Numbers 21:16.

parallel between this event and the Song of the Sea, which the people sing following the redemption of the people from the hand of the Egyptians, is clear. Even the language used to introduce the song is identical (although in this later version, Moses is not singled out), "Then Israel sang this song."<sup>52</sup> This "Song of the Well" is almost a miniature version of the earlier song; in both instances the people were saved from certain death—once from the Egyptians, and once from thirst in the desert. This event happens directly following the incident in which Moses strikes the rock in order to bring forth water for the thirsty people. Between the telling of that incident and singing the song of the well, there is another verse from which comes the idea that there was one well. As the people are passing into the land of Edom, Moses sends a message to the king, concluding with the verse, "Please let us pass through your land. We will pass through neither field nor vineyard, and we will not drink water from a well...if I or my animals drink from your waters, I will give you payment..."<sup>53</sup> Playing upon the singular of "well," when the plural would be expected, the Rabbis interpreted:

It should say, "water from wells." It is that way to teach the lesson of the way of the land, that when you go through a land that is not yours, and you have with you all that you need, you should not eat from that which you have, but he should leave what is his and buy from the shop-keepers of the area for his pleasures. Thus, Moses said to him, "The well is with us and we eat manna. You shall not say that we are trouble for you; you will make profit for yourself."<sup>54</sup>

The well was given to the people in order to sustain them during their wandering, and it lasted until they arrived at the waters of Tiberias.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Exodus 15:1, Numbers 21:17.

<sup>53</sup> Numbers 20:17, 19.

<sup>54</sup> *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah*, 19:15.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

According to another tradition, probably later, the well was given on account of Miriam, and is thus named for her, as Miriam's Well.<sup>56</sup> According to this tradition, it either disappeared or lost some of its powers upon her death, hence the people's complaining of thirst immediately following her passing away.<sup>57</sup> For instance, according to *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah*:

In the future Messianic Age, God will make you like an orchard of pomegranates. What is this? This is the well. From where did Israel get water to keep their plants alive during all of their forty years in the wilderness? R. Yohanan said: From the well. And from it came most of their enjoyment. Another explanation, R. Yohanan said: The well would water all kinds of herbs for them, all kinds of seeds, and all kinds of trees. You know that it is so, because when Miriam died in the Book of Numbers, the well stopped watering, they said, "This is not a place of seeds, of figs, and of vines." (20:5)<sup>58</sup>

The well was said to have had miraculous qualities, enabling all of the people to draw all the water that they needed from it. It was also extraordinary in that it followed the people during all of the years of wandering. Other than the connection between Miriam and the well, it is also important to note from this passage the connection of the well to the future. Water, a symbol of redemption, was given to the people when they were redeemed from slavery, and will be given at the time of the ultimate redemption. The well serves as a symbol for the redemption which is possible in the future. The possibility must also be mentioned that the well specified is also the very one at which many of the patriarchs met many of the matriarchs. Tradition holds that this was the same well that would, in the future, also provide water for the people.<sup>59</sup> The well was present so that important people could meet; these same people would ultimately bring forth the people who became Israel

<sup>56</sup> *Midrash Petirat Aharon*.

<sup>57</sup> Numbers 20:1-5.

<sup>58</sup> *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah*, 4:12:3.

<sup>59</sup> *Bereishit Rabbah* 70:8.

(the family tree would not have been possible, were it not watered by this well); the well was also present to keep Israel alive, once it became a people.

### 5. The *Shamir*, *ha-shamir*

The *shamir* is a creature which does not appear as such in the Bible itself. The word itself means "thistle," but that is not the sense of the word as it is used in Rabbinic Literature. According to the rabbis, the *shamir* is a small, worm-like creature which is able to cut through the hardest of substances. Tractate *Sotah* offers a detailed description of the *shamir*:

*Mishna*: From the time of the destruction of the Temple, the *shamir* ceased to exist. *Gemara*: The sages taught: The *shamir* was used in Solomon's building of the Temple, as it is written, "When the House was built, only finished stones cut at the quarry were used."<sup>60</sup> The words are as they are written, according to R. Yehuda. R. Nehemia said to him: Is it possible to say this? Didn't it already say, "All these buildings...were of choice stones, according to measure, sawed with saws."<sup>61</sup> If so, why does Scripture state, "No hammer or ax or any iron tool was heard in the House when it was being built"?<sup>62</sup> It means that they were prepared outside and brought within. Rabbi says: The words of R. Yehuda are appropriate for the stones of the Temple, and the words of R. Nehemia for stones of Solomon's house. Nehemia asks: For what did the *shamir* come? It is required, as in the *baraita*: These stones are not written upon in ink, as it is written, "...engraved like seals..."<sup>63</sup> And they cannot be scratched upon with a knife, as it is written, "...in their entirety..."<sup>64</sup> Rather, he wrote upon them in ink, and showed them to the *shamir* from the outside, and then they split at the markings, like a fig that splits in the summer and nothing is lost, or a valley that splits in the rainy season and nothing is lost. The Sages taught: The *shamir* is a creature the size of a barley corn, and was created from the six days of creation. And nothing is hard enough to stand before it. In what do they keep it? They wrap it in tufts of wool, and place it in a lead tube, full of barley-bran.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> 1 Kings 6:7.

<sup>61</sup> 1 Kings 7:9.

<sup>62</sup> 1 Kings 6:7.

<sup>63</sup> Exodus 28:21.

<sup>64</sup> Exodus 28:20.

<sup>65</sup> B.T. *Sotah* 48b.

The *shamir* was originally used for the making of the priestly vestments, particularly for engraving the stones, which are described both as being engraved and as being whole. If both these statements are true, then the stones must have been inscribed in a miraculous manner, as by the *shamir*. The possibility also stands that the *shamir* was used in order to cut stones for the building of the Temple, because iron tools could not have been used; iron, a material used in order to build weapons, could not exist in a place being created in order to bring peace. Despite the debate regarding whether the *shamir* was used to build the Temple, other texts teach that Solomon acquired the *shamir* for this purpose. Immediately following the above tradition is the statement, "Who brought the *shamir* to Solomon? The eagle fetched it from the Garden of Eden, because Solomon '...spoke to animals and to birds...'"<sup>66</sup> He asked the birds, 'Where is the *shamir* hidden?' And the eagle went and fetched it."<sup>67</sup>

It is interesting to note, first of all, that the *shamir* was waiting in the Garden of Eden to be used at its proper time. If we assume that all creation took place within Eden, then it makes sense that the items created *bein Hashmashot* would have remained there, waiting, after the expulsion. Although the pericope, in settling the debate between the two sages, suggests that Solomon did not use the *shamir*, by including this statement it implies that it was, in fact, used. Tractate *Gittin* offers a different explanation for how Solomon procured the *shamir*: he pressed together a male and a female demon, who led him to Ashmedai, the king of the demons. Eventually, he went to the wild cock, who used the *shamir* to split mountains.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> 1 Kings 5:13.

<sup>67</sup> B.T. *Sotah* 48b.

<sup>68</sup> B.T. *Gittin* 68a - b.



The *shamir* is a creature of conflict. Aside from the Talmud's internal disagreement regarding the usage of the organism, the *shamir* itself is used in order to bring about aspects of items which are seemingly impossible, (allowing stones to be cut without iron tools, or stones to be both engraved and whole). Even the instructions for the keeping of the *shamir* are rife with conflict; this creature, which is strong enough to break through any substance, can only be kept in the softest of substances. Softness is needed for this creature of ultimate hardness. While many of the items created *bein hashmashot* are themselves contrary to nature, this one aids people in transforming items in ways that seem contrary.

### C. Those Items Which Appear in Approximately Half of the Versions of the List

#### 1. Demons, *ha-mazikin*

This is the first entry in the enumeration that we come to which is not a specific item, but which is a category of beings. Demons are beings who do not exist at all in the Biblical realm, but who were very much a part of reality for the Rabbis. They offer an explanation for their existence in *Bereishit Rabbah*, in the description of creation on the sixth day:

And God said: Let the earth bring forth the life (נֶפֶשׁ, *nefesh*) of living creatures of all types, cattle, creeping things, and wild beasts of all types. And it was so. And God made wild beasts of all types, cattle of all types, and creeping things of all types.<sup>69</sup> "R. Hamā' ba' Hōshaya said" Souls are spoken of 4 times, but when they are created, it says, "made wild beasts of all types, cattle of all types, and creeping things of all types." Why 3 here and 4 there? Rabbi says: These are the demons. God created their souls, but when He came to create their bodies, He sanctified Shabbat and did not create them.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>69</sup> Genesis 1:24-25.

<sup>70</sup> *Bereishit Rabbah* 7:5.

In other words, Shabbat came, interrupting God's creation of the demons, and thus they were incomplete. They are said to have qualities similar to both humans and angels—like people, they eat, drink, copulate, and die; like angels they have wings, fly from one end of the world to the other, and they can hear what happens behind the curtain (of the Heavens, where only Divinity is present).<sup>71</sup> Because of the timing of their creation, causing their incomplete nature, it follows sensibly that they were among the things that were created at the twilight. At the same time, because they are not of the same nature of many of the list's items, it also makes sense that they are not included in all versions of the list. Demons appear throughout Rabbinic Literature, both in aggadic tales and in warnings about avoiding them (especially when alone, or at night).

## 2. The Cave in Which Moses and Elijah Stood, *ha-m'a'rah she'amad bah Moshe v'Eliyahu*

Both Elijah and Moses had experiences in which God passed before them personally. According to tradition, both happened in the same cave. Again, this item serves as a bridge between the human and the Divine, this time on a more direct level. When Moses is speaking to God, after having broken the first tablets of the Ten Commandments, the following scene is described:

The Eternal said to Moses: Also this thing of which you have spoken I will do, for you have found favor in My eyes and I have known you by name. And he said: Show me your Presence. And He said: All My Goodness I will pass before you and I will call out to you the Name *יהוה*, and I will show the Grace that I show, and I will show the Compassion that I show. Then He said: But you may not see My face. For no person can see My face and live. And the Eternal continued: Here is a place near me, place yourself on that rock, and when My Presence passes, I will place you in

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<sup>71</sup> BT Hagigah 16a.

the crevice of the rock and shelter you with My hand until I have passed. And I will remove My hand and you shall see My back, but My face you shall not see.<sup>72</sup>

It was in this specific place, at this particular rock, that God was able to reveal Himself to Moses. The implication of the text is that were that rock not there, God would not have been able to properly shield Moses, and thus He would not have been able to pass Himself by Moses.

God similarly shows himself to Elijah, after he has fled for his life after having been threatened by Jezebel. Elijah goes into the wilderness and falls asleep under a bush. An angel awakens him, urging him to eat. Strengthened by the food, Elijah walks for forty days and nights, finally arriving to the Mountain of God, at Horeb. When he arrives there, the following description is given:

He came there to the cave, and he spent the night there. And behold, the Word of the Eternal was upon him. He said to him: What are you doing here, Elijah? He said: I am surely zealous towards the Eternal, My God of Hosts. For the Children of Israel have abandoned Your covenant—they have removed Your altars, and have killed Your prophets by sword. But I am left alone. And they are seeking to take my life. He said: Come out, and stand on the mountain before the Eternal. And behold, the Eternal passed. A great, strong wind split mountains and broke rocks before the Eternal. The Eternal was not in the wind. After the wind, a storm. The Eternal was not in the storm. And after the storm, a fire. The Eternal was not in the fire. And after the fire, a still, small voice. And Elijah, as he heard, he covered his face with his garment. He came out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, a voice was upon him.<sup>73</sup>

The literary parallel between Elijah's experience and Moses' is evident: forty days appears in both stories, Elijah also walks through the wilderness, both come to the same mountain, both men's faces are covered, and God comes to both men. In addition, when God appears to both men as individuals, seemingly as a sign of His affection for them, it

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<sup>72</sup> Exodus 33:17-23.

<sup>73</sup> 1 Kings 19:9-13.

is not through a miraculous spectacle, as when He appears to the people—it is much more personal in both cases. For Moses, He passes by, allowing him to see His Back; for Elijah, He comes in a still, small voice. In addition, in the case of Elijah, God is decidedly not in the dazzling sights. The Rabbis, in interpreting these two instances, saw yet another connection, by which they determined that it was the same place where both men stood. In the passage from Kings, Elijah does not arrive at “a cave”, but at “the cave”. Based on the usage of the definite article, the Rabbis understood that it was at a particular cave that Elijah stood; the place where Moses had been in a very similar instance was the logical space where God is able to appear to people in a manner that He does not usually appear.

In Tractate *Sukkah*, the Rabbis state, “We have been taught that R. Yose said: The Presence never came down below, and Moses and Elijah never ascended on high, for the Bible says, ‘The heavens are the heavens for the Eternal; it is the earth that He has given to humanity.’<sup>74,75</sup> Based on that teaching, we can understand that the place at which both of them experienced God was neither heaven nor earth; it was a place that served as a passageway between the two, which allowed for God to temporarily bridge the two realms. The Rabbis further teach about this cave, in Tractate *Megillah*, “R. Hiyya bar Abba said in the name of R. Yohanan, “Had there been a chink no bigger than the eye of a fine needle in the cave in which Moses and Elijah stood, neither of them would have been able to endure the light of the Presence, for the Bible says, ‘No person can see My face and live.’<sup>76,77</sup> This cave, to the Rabbis, was a place that not only enabled God to

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<sup>74</sup> Psalms 115:16.

<sup>75</sup> BT *Sukkah* 5a.

<sup>76</sup> Exodus 33:20.

appear to these two men, but it was also a place that protected those men, so that they could be shielded from the danger of beholding that Presence. Like many of the other items in the enumeration, this item serves to bridge earth and heaven. The other items, though, do so in a more general way, while this item's very purpose was to bring together the two worlds.

### 3. The Ram, *ha-ayil*<sup>78</sup>

The ram which appeared during the binding of Isaac is also included in some versions of the *bein Hashmashot* enumeration. When Abraham was about to sacrifice his son, Isaac, an angel calls out to him, telling him not to raise his hand against the boy. Immediately following that, the text reads, "Abraham raised his eyes and saw, and behold, a ram, behind, caught in the thicket by his horns. Abraham went, and took the ram and sacrificed him as a burnt offering, in place of his son."<sup>79</sup> The *akeidah* was a difficult text for the Rabbis, as it continues to be difficult to modern readers. Questions have arisen particularly regarding this ram: Why didn't Abraham see it in the first place? What was the ram doing on Mount Moriah? Why was it caught in the thicket? The Rabbis had a number of answers for these questions. In one version of the Midrash, they put forth some of their solutions:

R. Eliezer said: The ram came from the mountains, where he had been grazing. R. Joshua differed: An angel brought him from the Garden of Eden, where he had been grazing beneath the Tree of Life and drinking out of the waters that passed under it, and the fragrance of that ram went forth throughout the world...Throughout that day, Abraham saw the ram

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<sup>77</sup> BT *Megillah* 19b.

<sup>78</sup> Alternatively, Abraham's ram, or Isaac's ram.

<sup>79</sup> Genesis 22:13.

become entangled in a tree, break loose, and go free; then again become entangled in a thicket, break loose, and go free.<sup>80</sup>

The presence of the Garden of Eden here is interesting, other than the fact that some of the items of the enumeration seemed to have existed there, waiting for the time of their purpose to come.<sup>81</sup> According to some traditions, Moriah was the same place as Eden. It is interesting to picture that, while other items had to be brought to their proper place, the ram was in its place already. In another version, the story is extended and slightly changed:

R. Zechariah says: This was the ram that was created *bein Hashmashot*. It ran and came to be offered in place of Isaac, but Sammael stood by, distracting it, in order to nullify the patriarch Abraham's sacrifice. And he got caught by his two horns, between the trees... What did the ram do? It tugged its paw on Abraham's garment. Abraham looked and saw the ram, and took him, setting it free, and he sacrificed it in place of Isaac.<sup>82</sup>

Again, the Garden of Eden connection can be made here, associating the trees in which the ram is caught with the Trees of Knowledge and Life of the Garden. In addition, Sammael's presence, as he attempts to prevent the story from progressing as it has been intended by God, demonstrates that it was known that Abraham was supposed to sacrifice the ram all along; never was it God's intention for Isaac to be sacrificed. The power of the ram, though—and through it the power of God's plan—was greater than any temptations which may block people from performing Godly deeds.

One could argue that the ram was included in the enumeration because the ram allowed Abraham to successfully sacrifice to God, thus making a connection between the human and the divine. The significance of the ram, though, is much greater. The ram,

<sup>80</sup> Bialik, Ravinsky, *Book of Legends*, 42.

<sup>81</sup> See *Infra*, 22.

<sup>82</sup> *Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer*, chapter 31.

for the Rabbinic mind, was a powerful symbol of redemption, more specifically of the Messianic Age. The connection is implied in the connection between the ram and the Garden of Eden, as the World to Come is, in essence, a return to Eden for all humanity. The association, though, is more specific, due to the ram's horn being blown in order to herald the coming of the Messiah. In fact, at least according to the author of *Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer*, that shofar came from this very ram, as is explained, after the ram had been sacrificed:

R. Hanina ben Dosa says: Not a single portion of this ram went to waste. The ashes of the ram were was the foundation upon which was the inner altar, as it is written, "Once a year, Aaron shall perform a purification rite upon its horns."<sup>83</sup> There were ten sinews of the ram, equivalent to the ten strings of the harp upon which David played. The ram's skin was Elijah's loin-cloth, as it is written, "They said to him: He was a hairy man, with a leather loin-cloth."<sup>84</sup> The two horns of the ram were *shofarot*. The left one, God blew on Mount Sinai, as it is written, "And there was the voice of the shofar."<sup>85</sup> And the right horn, which was larger than the left one, in the future will blow for the Messianic Age, at the ingathering of the exiles, as it is written, "And it shall be on that day, the great shofar will be blown."<sup>86 87</sup>

There is an inherent lesson here regarding the use of animals, and the lack of waste involved. The greater lesson, though, is that the ram which was created at twilight, mainly for one purpose—to be sacrificed by Abraham—also had a greater purpose, for each portion of the ram to be used for its own purpose. It is almost as if there is a small collection of items within this one item. While the other items on the list are limited to

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<sup>83</sup> Exodus 30:10.

<sup>84</sup> 2 Kings 1:8.

<sup>85</sup> Exodus 19:19.

<sup>86</sup> Isaiah 27:13.

<sup>87</sup> *Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer* chapter 31.

use only once or twice, this ram was used repeatedly, and will be used in the future.<sup>88</sup>

The importance of the ram is only made greater due to the polemical nature of nearly all Rabbinic Texts dealing with the binding of Isaac, due to the Christian interpretation of the text. Perhaps the Rabbis added the emphasis of the additional uses for this ram because of the need to keep the *akeidah* as a specifically Jewish text, which speaks about the Jewish view of salvation.

#### 4. The Staff, *ha-mateh*

The staff, although not specified as such in most versions of the list which include it, is the one given to Moses by God. This rod enabled Moses to perform God's miracles in Egypt. The rod literally placed God's power in Moses' hand; the rod, in turn, became a part of Moses, like any other limb—an extension of him. While at the Burning Bush, God convinced Moses that he must go free his people from slavery. As a part of the conversation, God endows the rod with His power:

Moses answered, saying: What if they don't believe me, and don't listen to me, but say that the Eternal didn't appear to you?! The Eternal said to him: What is that in your hand? He said: a staff. He said: Throw it on the ground. He threw it on the ground and it became a snake, and Moses fled from it. Then the Eternal said to Moses: Put out your hand and grab its tail. So he put out his hand and held it, and it became a staff in his hand...Take this staff with you in your hand; with it you shall do miracles...When you go to return to Egypt, see all the wonders that I placed into your hand; you shall do them before Pharaoh.<sup>89</sup>

What had been Moses' simple shepherd's staff, became the source and symbol of his power. Later, when Moses needs to get water out of the rock, the text states, "The

<sup>88</sup> A modern mind might perceive that the ram had more than one purpose, because he is killed as soon as his purpose is fulfilled—after all, being killed is its purpose. To the rabbinic mind, though, to be sacrificed is to be given to God—hardly a "wasted" life.

<sup>89</sup> Exodus 4:1-4, 17, 21.



Eternal said to Moses: Take the staff and assemble the community... So Moses took the staff from before the Eternal."<sup>90</sup> Interestingly, in other instances, it is Aaron who performs miracles, such as the ten plagues, with his rod, not Moses. This is particularly interesting in light of the Rabbinic description of the staff, "What are, 'all the wonders that I placed into your hand'? This is the staff, upon which were written the Ten Plagues—that is, an abbreviation for the plagues, *d'tzach a'dash be'ahav*, was written on it. God said to him: These are the plagues that I place in your hand. Do them before Pharaoh with this rod."<sup>91</sup> The idea that there was writing on the staff, and that the writing was initials, comes from the Biblical line, "with it you shall do miracles." Because the word for "letters" looks the same as the word for "miracles," that line could be understood as, "you shall do the letters on it," or, "the miracles on it." From this interpretation, the Rabbis understood that an abbreviation for the plagues was written on the staff. Although it is Aaron who is ultimately told to use his rod to set the plagues in action, it is initially Moses who is given the instruction. Aaron though, in this portion of the text, serves as a mouthpiece for Moses. There is little difference between Aaron performing the actions and Moses performing the actions. It is entirely possible that it is with Moses' rod that Aaron performs these tasks, although Aaron's rod also becomes important, as shall be discussed in the next section.

*Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer* offers a description of the existence of Moses' staff from the time it was created at twilight:

R. Levi says: The staff that was created *bein Hashmashot* was passed on to the first man in the Garden of Eden. Adam passed it to Enoch; Enoch passed it to Noah; Noah passed it to Shem; Shem passed it to Abraham;

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<sup>90</sup> Numbers 20:7-9.

<sup>91</sup> *Shemot Rabbah* 5:6.

Abraham passed it to Isaac; Isaac passed it to Jacob; Jacob brought it down to Egypt and passed it to his son, Joseph. When Joseph died, they pillaged all of his house, and it was given to Pharaoh's palace. Jethro was one of magicians of Egypt and he saw the staff and the letters that were upon it, and he desired it in his heart. He took it, brought it, and planted it in his house's garden. And no one could come near it any more. But when Moses came to his house, he went to the garden of Jethro's house and saw the staff. He read the letters that were on it, and he put out his hand and took it.<sup>92</sup>

Moses demonstrated the proper action which enabled him to take the staff, because it was intended for him; between Joseph and Moses, there was no one to merit its possession.<sup>93</sup>

It is interesting to note that the rod originated in a garden, and was then kept in a garden when no one else could keep it. Ultimately, though, the staff becomes Moses', as was intended when it was created.

### 5. The Tongs, *ha-tsevat*

This item is of a different nature, as compared to the other items of the enumeration. In order for the Rabbis to understand how humanity originally developed tools, they labeled the original tools, tongs in particular, as a created item. Perhaps because this item does not belong to the same category of the other items, it does not appear on half of the lists, and is never included in the main portion of the listing. In about half of its appearances, it is categorized as an additional item, introduced by, "some day (*yesh omrim*)."

In the other cases, it is attributed to R. Yehudah. In those latter cases, it includes an explanation for this item within the enumeration. In *Sifre* they are explained:

<sup>92</sup>*Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer*, chapter 40.

<sup>93</sup>One is reminded also of the similar story of Excalibur in Arthurian legend, and other universal folk tales.

R. Yehudah says: also the tongs. Likewise, he would say: Tongs are made from tongs. What about the first tongs? They were a created item. They said to him: Behold, they could have been cast out of a mold, and cut from it, thus they were not a created item.<sup>94</sup>

The text is slightly amended in the version described in the Talmud,<sup>95</sup> although the idea is the same. When this item is listed in the *Mekhilta d'Rabbi Shimon*, the final objection is not included.<sup>96</sup> This is an item about which the Rabbis had some conflict, being unsure if humanity had the ability to develop tools on their own accord, or if they were Divinely created. If the latter is true, then they would have had to have been created *bein Hashmashot*, for they would not have fit into any of the other descriptions of the days of creation.

#### **6. Aaron's Rod and its Almonds and Blossoms, *makalo shel Aharon shkeideha ufrakheha***

As mentioned in the previous section, it is actually Aaron's staff that brings about the plagues. The focus on his rod though, is not on the miracles that God brought about, but in what happens to Aaron's rod after the incident with Korach and his men. Shortly after the men have been swallowed by the earth, the following is described:

The Eternal spoke to Moses: Speak to the Children of Israel and take from them a staff, a staff for each of the ancestral houses, from all of the chieftans of the ancestral houses, 12 staffs. Each man should write his name on his staff. Place them in the Tent of Meeting, before the Testimony, where I communicate with you. And the staff of the man whom I choose will sprout...And the staff of Aaron was amongst their staffs. Moses placed the staffs before the Eternal, in the Tent of Meeting. The next day, Moses came to the Tent of Meeting and, behold! The staff of Aaron, of the House of Levi, had sprouted. It had brought forth spouts, made blossoms, and grew almonds. Moses brought out all of the staffs

<sup>94</sup> *Sifrei Devarim*, piska 355.

<sup>95</sup> B.T. *Pesachim* 54a.

<sup>96</sup> *Mekhilta d'R. Shimon bar Yochai* to Exodus 16:32.

from before the Eternal, to all the Children of Israel, and each man took his staff. The Eternal said to Moses: Leave Aaron's staff before the Testimony, as reminder to the rebels, so their complaining against Me will end, and they will not die.<sup>97</sup>

It is implied here that this staff of Aaron's was not the same staff that he originally held, for it seems that each chieftan got a new staff to symbolize their tribe. The Rabbis confirm this reading, understanding that Moses took one piece of wood, dividing it into 12 parts, and giving each tribe its portion. According to the text:

He did this so that they would not say that his staff was fresh, and so it blossomed. God decreed about the staff, that there should be found on it the Ineffable Name... That same staff was in the hand of each and every king of Israel, until the Temple was destroyed, and it was hidden. That same staff will, in the future, be in the hand of the Messiah.<sup>98</sup>

Again, the connection is made between an item created *bein Hashmashot* and the Messianic Age. Here, the connection is especially powerful, from the perspective of the Rabbinic period. The Tribe of Levi, and thus Aaron's rod, is a metonymy of the Priesthood in general; in the wake of the destruction of the Temple, the idea of the reestablishment of the Temple was an important idea. Thus, this staff served as a symbol of the reestablishment of the Jewish kingdom, at which point the staff would reappear, and have a Divine purpose again.

#### **D. Items Which are Relatively Rare**

##### **1. The Fire, *ha-or***

The fire as a created item is attributed to R. Nehemiah, and is listed together with the mule. The Talmud includes a rather lengthy discussion of fire's creation at this time,

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<sup>97</sup> Numbers 17:16-25.

<sup>98</sup> *Bamidbar Rabbah*, 18:23.

because it contradicts the assertion, also found in the Talmud, that fire was created at the end of Shabbat.<sup>99</sup> One answer given is that fire, as we know it, was created at Shabbat's departure, but the fire of *Gehinom* was created *bein Hashmashot*. Although *Gehinom* itself was created before the world, its fire was not created until this time. This answer is rejected because the fire of *Gehinom* was created on the second day, according to tradition. The final answer offered is that it was earthly fire that was created *bein Hashmashot*. Together with the mule, it was the other of the two things which were thought of at this time, but ultimately came about at the departure of Shabbat, when God caused Adam to think of the idea of rubbing two stones together, bringing about a spark.<sup>100</sup> *Bereishit Rabbah* offers a slightly different version of Adam's discovery of fire:

When the sun began to set upon the departure of Shabbat, darkness began to set in, and Adam came to be frightened, as it is written, "Surely darkness will cover me."<sup>101</sup> What did God do for him? He made him find two flints and crash them together, and fire came out, and he blessed it, thus it says, "Darkness is light for me."<sup>102</sup> This agrees with Samuel: Why do we bless the candle at the departure of Shabbat? Since it was created then for the first time.<sup>103</sup>

In both versions, God caused Adam to discover fire as soon as Shabbat ended. It was not needed until then, because Eden was always light, and God caused there to be a light for Adam during Shabbat, which was a Day of Complete Light. It was not until he was expelled from the garden, and Shabbat came to an end, that Adam experienced darkness for the first time. While the idea is that this light, or fire, was created before Shabbat, it

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<sup>99</sup> B. T. *Pesachim* 54a

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Psalms 139:11.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> *Bereishit Rabbah* 82:15.

was not actualized until after Shabbat. God helped him to bring light into that darkness. God had the idea that humanity would possess the ability to make an earthly fire at the twilight of the first Shabbat. Then, at the close of Shabbat, humanity used that ability.

## 2. The Mule, *ha-pered*<sup>104</sup>

The mule, in the versions which include it in the enumeration, is always listed in the name of R. Nehemiah; in one version, he mentions it in the name of his father. The mule does not fit easily into any of the categories of the other items, but, like the tongs, the Rabbis felt it had to be explained. Because a mule is a hybrid between a horse and a donkey, the Rabbis had to explain how this creature came to be in the first place, in order to keep to the rule that, "There is nothing new under the sun."<sup>105</sup> If no creature was created after the six days of creation, then the mule must have also been created during that time. In addition, the beings which God created during the six days were brought about in order to populate the earth; since the mule is a sterile animal, it would not fit into the list of the animals God created. Also, the mule—a work animal—would not have been necessary for creation until Adam was expelled from Eden, and then had to work in order to live. Tractate *Pesachim* discusses the mule's creation, "It was taught in a *baraita*: R. Yosi says: Two things came into to Divine Thought to be created on the eve of Shabbat, but they were not created until the departure of Shabbat. And at the departure of Shabbat, God gave an insight to Adam... And he brought two animals and crossbred them. And a mule issued from them."<sup>106</sup> Adam, who had charge of all the animals,

<sup>104</sup> In some versions, this listing is in the feminine, *pereidah*

<sup>105</sup> Ecclesiastes 1:9.

<sup>106</sup> B.T. *Pesachim* 54a.

would never have thought to breed different types of animals together; God thought of the idea of the mule, and caused Adam to bring the horse and the ass together, in order that a mule be born. According to a different version, the mule was not created until much later, at the time of Anah. According to *Bereishit Rabbah*:

Hybrids were not created during the six days of creation, but they arose in the mind of the Creator. When were hybrids created? In the days of Anah, thus it says, "This is Anah, who found the *yamim*<sup>107</sup> in the wilderness."<sup>108</sup> R. Yehudah bar Simon says: *Yamim* means mules. The Rabbis said: it means hybrids, half horse and half donkey...What did Anah do? He brought a she-ass and coupled it with a male horse, and a mule came out of it.<sup>109</sup>

Even in this version, in which the coupling of the two different animals is done by Anah, the idea of the mule came from the time of creation, according to some lists, specifically *bein Hashmashot*.

### 3. The First Man's Clothing, *b'gadav shel Adam ha-Rishon* The Garments, *ha-ketanot*

According to the Biblical account of creation, God provided Adam and Eve with clothing, once they had realized their nakedness, after having eaten from the Tree of Knowledge. The text says, "God made garments of skin, and clothed them."<sup>110</sup> It would seem that this would refer to the garments, included in two versions of the enumeration list. However, in both cases, the garments as well as Adam's clothing are on the list; they cannot refer to the same item. According to one midrashic tradition, "What was the clothing of the first man? A skin of nails...When he ate of the fruit of the tree, the skin of

<sup>107</sup> Usually translated as "hot springs."

<sup>108</sup> Genesis 36:24.

<sup>109</sup> *Bereishit Rabbah* 82:15.

<sup>110</sup> Genesis 3:21.

nails was stripped from him, and he saw that he was naked."<sup>111</sup> Once Adam has sinned, he becomes naked, vulnerable to the world around him. Perhaps the two pieces of clothing that are mentioned in the list were this skin of nails and the clothing that God provides. *Bereishit Rabbah* describes the garment that God creates for Adam and Eve:

In R. Meir's Torah, they found written "garments of light." This is the clothing of the first man, which was similar to a torch, wide on the bottom and narrow on top. R. Yitzhak the Elder said: They were smooth like nails, and beautiful like jewels. R. Yitzhak said: They were like the fine linen garments that come from Beit Shean.

Because this clothing came from a Divine source, it did not look like the clothing that humans are able to make. The change in the reading from "garments of skin" to garments of light" is possible due to the similarity in the sound of the two words. *Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer* explains what happens to these garments:

R. Yehuda said: The garment that God made for the Man and his Wife were with them (Noah and company) in the ark. When they came out from the ark, Noah's son Ham took it and he took it out with him and gave them as an inheritance to Nimrod. When he would wear it, all the living beasts, animals, and birds would come and fall before him.<sup>112</sup>

While in many of the examples the location of the item up to the time of its intended purpose is described, here the location of the item after its use is given. According to one tradition, this cloak that belonged to Nimrod was eventually stolen by Esau, when he was out hunting. The clothing and/or garments of Adam and Eve are the first of any of the *bein Hashmashot* items to be used. As soon as humanity has sinned, God provides those humans with this gift of clothing—the first of many gifts that God will eventually bestow on humanity—which will protect them outside of the Garden, as the Eden itself had protected them before.

<sup>111</sup> *Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer*, chapter 14.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, chapter 24.



#### 4. Clouds *ha-ananim*

The clouds, described more specifically in the *Targum* as clouds of glory,<sup>113</sup> first covered Adam, just as the skin of nails had covered him, until they are removed from him when he ate of the tree.<sup>114</sup> They are more well known, though, for covering the Children of Israel in the wilderness. These clouds are first mentioned shortly after the Israelites flee from Egypt, before they have reached the Sea of Reeds. The text says, "The Eternal went before them, during the day in a pillar of cloud, to guide them on the way, and at night in a pillar of fire, to provide light for them, so they traveled day and night. The pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire did not depart from them, before the people."<sup>115</sup> The clouds served as a visible sign of God's presence for the people, until they reached the Promised Land. The Israelites had just come out of slavery in a culture which had images of their gods. In order for this newly free people to understand God, who would lead them through the wilderness, they needed some sort of visible symbol. The Rabbis describe the clouds of glory:

Due to the merit of Aaron, I encircled you with clouds of glory, as it is said, "He spread a cloud for a screen."<sup>116</sup> How many clouds of glory encircled Israel in the wilderness? R. Hoshaya and R. Yishaya both had answers. R. Yishaya said five: four for the four winds, and one went before them. R. Hoshaya said seven: four for the four winds of heaven, one above them, one below them, and one went before them a distance of three days, and it would strike the snakes, the scorpions, the fiery serpents, and the rocks in front of them. If there was a low place, it would make it higher; and if there was a high place, it would make it lower. It would make them straight, as it is said, "Every valley will be lifted and every mountain and hill shall be brought down."<sup>117</sup>

<sup>113</sup> *Targum Yonatan* to Numbers 22:28.

<sup>114</sup> *Pirkei d'R. Eliezer*, chapter 14.

<sup>115</sup> Genesis 13:21-22.

<sup>116</sup> Psalms 105,3.

<sup>117</sup> Isaiah 40:4.

The clouds served to protect the people while they were in the wilderness, in need of that protection. Like many of the items, they were an extension of the Divine that was visible in the earthly realm.

### 5. The Skin *ha-'or*

As this item only appears in one version of the enumeration, *Avot d'Rabbi Natan*, it is likely that it is either an error, or that it refers to another one of the items. When there are many versions of an enumeration, as in this case, there is generally some agreement between the versions. One might think that due to a scribal inaccuracy, this item is supposed to be *האור*, *ha-or*, the light. Wayne Sibley Towner, in discussing the work of Knut Leistöl, notes the following:

The editor who first sets an oral tradition down in writing and the copyists who follow him will inevitably introduce their own alterations; yet Leistöl believes that such changes can, by careful comparison of different written recensions of the same tradition, be distinguished from variants which arise during the period of oral transmission. The latter characteristically will cluster around words which *sound* (rather than *look*) alike.<sup>118</sup>

It could be seen as possible that this could be an example of such a variation. That theory must be rejected, though, because light is already included in this version of the list.

Therefore, it is probably the latter of the two choices—that this item refers to one of the other items on the list, probably the garments of skin, provided by God to Adam and Eve.

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<sup>118</sup> Towner, *Rabbinic Enumeration*, 87.

Chapter II:  
The Meaning of Twilight

### **A. The Relationship of the Items Created *Bein Hashmashot***

This collection of items, created *bein Hashmashot*, includes a number of common factors. All of these creations do not fit into the regular scheme of nature; they are exceptions to the normal rules of the world. These items are exceptions to the normal rules which exist; they are manifestations of the Divine existence within human life. If God did not create these items, the Rabbis must have asked, how else could these items come to be? Belonging to neither the earthly nor the heavenly realm, they instead bridge the gap between the two. It is only appropriate that these items were created at twilight, a time that is neither day nor night. They are, essentially, twilight items both in their timing and in their nature. Likewise, it is equally appropriate that they were created at the cusp of Shabbat, the moment in time situated between the holiness of Shabbat the mundane week. Shabbat was considered by the Rabbis to be a taste in this world, of the World to Come—Shabbat itself is a bridge between two worlds. At this time of dusk which does not fit into any category, these items were created.

These items are just as difficult to classify, and do not fit in with the rest of creation; they even stand in opposition to the usual state of nature, and thus to the rest of creation. Each piece of creation is created in opposition to another piece. As each step of creation takes place, a new pair comes to exist. As Bernard Och explains:

When we turn to the act of creation itself, we see that it is defined as a series of separations and divisions. The first four acts of creation, wherein the world is ordered into its time and space dimensions, are described as a separation. God separates primordial light from primordial darkness, day from night, the upper waters from the lower, water from dry land, and terrestrial light from terrestrial darkness. As the narrative moves on to the creation of plant and animal life, the verbs of division disappear but the

repetition of the words "according to its/their kind" reinforces the separation theme although the symmetry is looser and less formulaic.<sup>1</sup>

As each of these partnerships is created, the opposing pieces come together in order to create the wholeness of the world. The overriding theme of creation comes to be this opposition. This fits in with the idea of *tikkun olam*, the necessity for the world to eventually be fixed, to eventually find wholeness. Without some sort of bridge, the world remains a series of contrasts.

Then, at the last moment, God creates those items which do not fit neatly into any of these pairs, creating, perhaps, a final pairing between natural and unnatural items. The ultimate pairing is between the *bein Hashmashot* creations and the rest of creation. Conflict is the nature of creation, and thus the nature of the world. Had Adam and Eve never sinned, they would have lived in paradise, never needing to leave the one corner of the world that contained perfect harmony, created by God. Once they were forced to leave, new creations became necessary. A parallel had to exist between paradise and this new, imperfect world; these new additions served to create that parallel. These twilight items were created in order to remind humanity that paradise was a possibility—that there is another realm which exists. It becomes the great task of humanity, therefore, to create harmony within the tensions of the created world.

Another relationship of apparent conflict exists between these items and the rest of creation. Och comments:

There is...another motif which underlies the process of Divine creation, and this is the theme of limitation. Separation implies limitation, for the God who divides and orders the world into its component parts does so through the setting of limits and boundaries. God's infinite power enables

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<sup>1</sup> Bernard Och, "The Garden of Eden: From Creation to Covenant," *Judaism* 37, no. 2 (1988): 145.

Him to establish limits for all of creation, thereby assigning to each separate part its fixed place and proper function within the created world.<sup>2</sup>

The items created immediately following this creation are the exceptions to this rule. The very limits that were set by God, in His fixing the role of each being within nature, are set aside with the items which He chose to create at the last possible moment for creation. While there are many miracles which are apparent in the Biblical text, these items were specifically created for certain purposes. According to Maimonides, the other miracles, such as the parting of the Sea of Reeds, were created in their potential when that piece of nature was created; when God created the sea, He stipulated that the sea should split at the proper time. These miraculous items, though, were themselves created, in their potential existence, so that they could come about at their set time.<sup>3</sup> The miraculous quality of the items created *bein Hashmashot* caused nature to behave unnaturally at certain times. By observing the order of events, one can understand how these seemingly dichotomous ideas can exist within God's one plan.

### **B. The Timing of the Twilight of Shabbat**

According to *Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer*, Adam and Eve sin and were expelled towards the end of the sixth day, after which God creates these items. The text states:

At the seventh hour of the day, on the eve of Shabbat, the first man entered the Garden of Eden. The ministering angels were praising him and bringing him into the Garden of Eden. And at the twilight of the eve of Shabbat, he was sent off and left.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 145.

<sup>3</sup> Maimonides on *Avot* 5:9.

It seems that the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the garden happened simultaneously to the creation of the final items. Louis Ginzberg's *Legends of the Jews* offers a similar chronology:

...Adam and Eve left Paradise, and came upon earth. They had enjoyed the splendors of Paradise but a brief span of time—but a few hours. It was in the first hour of the sixth day of creation that God conceived the idea of creating man; in the second hour, He took counsel with the angels; in the third, He gathered the dust for the body of man; in the fourth, He formed Adam; in the fifth, He clothed him with skin; in the sixth, the soulless shape was complete, so that it could stand upright; in the seventh, a soul was breathed into it; in the eighth, man was led into Paradise; in the ninth, the Divine command prohibiting the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden was issued to him; in the tenth, he transgressed the command; in the eleventh, he was judged; and in the twelfth hour of the day, he was cast out of Paradise, in atonement for his sin... In the twilight, between the sixth day and the Sabbath, ten creations were brought forth...<sup>4</sup>

Assuming that the sixth day began at approximately 6:00 am, and ended at about 6:00 pm, Adam's being sent out from Eden and the twilight creation occurred at the same time in this version, as well. It is possible to conclude that a causal relationship exists between the two events. Because humanity sinned, and would no longer be able to live in paradise, these final creations were necessary in order to complete the world.

Och hints at this idea. In understanding that the close of creation begins the journey towards covenant, once can infer that the possibility for covenantal relationship exists because of Adam's downfall. He notes:

With the expulsion, the garden of Eden story ends and the history of mankind begins. The Creation/garden of Eden prolegomenon has set the stage upon which the drama of human history will unfold within the parameters of Divine command and human response. The Biblical narrative will portray mankind's progressive descent into an abyss of rebellion and destruction out of which God will raise a people to stand

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<sup>4</sup> Louis Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, trans. Henrietta Szold (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1909), 82-83.

before Him in Divine-human reconciliation. The journey which began at Eden now moves, slowly but inevitably, towards Sinai.

Although he does not suggest that the movement towards Sinai is a direct result of Adam and Eve's expulsion, one can assert such an idea. Once God sees that humanity is capable of disobeying His command, God realizes that He must search for a group of people who are willing to obey His commandments. This idea can be confirmed through observing those things which God decided to create concurrent with the removal of the first people from the garden. With few exceptions, each of these items is necessary for the course of Jewish history to proceed. Those exceptions which do exist—the first tongs, the first mule, and fire—all occur in relatively few versions of the list. In addition, those items are necessary for society itself to function; without people in general, there can be no chosen people. Even the rainbow, which came into the sky before God called upon Abraham, is the symbol of God's first true covenant with humanity. Noah serves as a precursor to Abraham—those who survive the flood are analogous to those who become Israel. With Noah, a covenantal relationship becomes possible; with Abraham, the ultimate covenantal relationship eventually comes about between God and the Jewish people. Meiri, in his commentary on *Avot*, had a similar idea: each of the items created at the twilight stood to remind Jews of certain principles of the faith. For example, he said that the mouth of the earth is a reminder to believe in the punishment of the wicked; the mouth of the well, to believe in the reward of the good; the staff is a reminder of all the miracles in Egypt, without which Israel would never have exited Egypt; the *shamir* points to the building of the Temple, which is the focal point of the religion.<sup>5</sup> Upon Adam and

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<sup>5</sup> Meiri on *Avot* 5:8.



Eve's sin, God realized the necessity to establish a chosen people; thus God created those things that would be necessary for that people to come into being.

### C. These Items as the Goal of Creation

By creating this enumeration, the Rabbis set forth the idea that the Jewish people were the ultimate goal of God's plan. The purpose of being for individuals was to reach the World to Come. The purpose for Jews was to act so that the Messiah could come, bringing about the World to Come for all people. In this way, the Jewish people became the vehicle for redemption for all the world. History begins in paradise and will eventually end there. The goal of humanity, after being cast out of Eden, is to return. Because the decision to choose Abraham came within the Six Days of Creation, Judaism was inherent in God's plan for the world. The underlying polemic intrinsic to this idea makes the seemingly universalistic story of creation into a particularistic tale. Humanity moves from the ultimate goal of creation to the penultimate purpose. The Jewish people, as opposed to people in general, becomes God's greatest creation.

Creation was completed only once Shabbat began. This twilight time allowed God to create those things that were necessary for the intended reality to exist, within the scope of creation. Although the *bein Hashmashot* creations seem to be contrary to reality, they were set into place within creation, and thus became a part of the human world. This enumeration list sets forth the notion that all history is Jewish history, for Judaism was a necessary piece of the world that God created. Without God's having created this final piece of the world (by way of His creating these ten items), the world would have been complete. In order for the world to function properly, according to

God's plan, the Jewish people had to come about as a part of that plan. In the first Six Days, leading up to the first Shabbat, God created the entire world, and, in doing so, He also set forth a plan for all history that would follow Eden. In adding these items to His creations at the last possible moment that He could create, God made Judaism a part of that world plan. According to this tradition, Judaism is a necessary piece of the history of the world.

**Chapter III:**  
**Twilight's Structure**

### A. The Rabbinical Enumeration Pattern

In order to fully understand the significance of the list itself, and of the versions, one must first observe the structure of the enumeration, and the structure of rabbinical enumeration lists in general. The most complete study of these lists was done by Wayne Sibley Towner, in *The Rabbinic "Enumeration of Scriptural Examples": A Study of A Rabbinic Pattern of Discourse with Special Reference to Mekhilta d'R. Ishmael*. Towner first explains the importance of lists in ancient culture, particularly one which is at least partially oral in nature. He states, "Both in Egypt and in Israel, lists were used as devices for systematizing observations about nature, geography, and man, and as pedagogical and mnemonic tools for conveying this information to students and posterity."<sup>1</sup> Summarizing the ideas of another scholar in this area, A. Wünche, he comments that, "Numerical sayings are simply one among the many mnemonic devices necessitated by the ever greater mass of materials which the Tannaitic rabbis had to organize and transmit."<sup>2</sup> The Rabbis used such lists pedagogically and mnemonically, in order to successfully transmit ideas that were important to them and to those people whom they lead.

Towner divides Rabbinic enumeration lists into two categories. As he explains, "...The 'rabbinic enumeration pattern' ...has two major sub-types in midrashic literature...namely the 'proverbial' enumeration, and the exegetical enumeration. The former lists entities, names, ideas; the latter organizes biblical texts in one way or another."<sup>3</sup> He further explains the importance in creating a distinction between the two, "The distinction is necessary because it has both formal and functional implications; the

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<sup>1</sup> Towner, *Rabbinic Enumeration* 4.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 15.

lists which employ or systemize Scripture are actually performing tasks different from those performed by enumeration pericopes of a more non-technical, popular character."<sup>4</sup> As Towner places the *bein Hashmashot* list into the category of proverbial, or non-exegetical, enumerations, this study will focus on his ideas regarding the proverbial enumeration pattern. He viewed these enumerations as having three main functions, each falling into one of these categories: first, the expression of "...natural or human realia...to systematize diverse experience and wisdom, to render it memorable, to make it available for homiletical uses, and to preserve it for the instruction of future generations;"<sup>5</sup> second, "to systematize law or moral admonition;"<sup>6</sup> and third, "to systemize 'historical' experience...teachings which are not, of course, historical accounts as we know them."<sup>7</sup>

*Bein Hashmashot* falls into the third category of historical experience. About this category, Towner states:

It is also possible to find enumeration traditions which never actually make explicit their relation to scripture, whether because the entities which they include are too well-known to need any scriptural basis, or because the traditions had assumed fixed form before any need to identify the scriptural antecedents was felt, or because some of the entities listed are in fact only pseudo-scriptural."<sup>8</sup>

The entities apparent in the *bein Hashmashot* list fall in either the first or the third categories. Those which are pseudo-scriptural, incidentally, are items which are relatively rare or which appear in about half of the versions. In the latter category fall the tongs and the demons, both of which have traditions outside of this listing, of having

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 65.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 65.

been created. Thus, it makes sense that they would occur more often than the other non-scriptural items. Because the proverbial enumerations did not have to rely on Biblical proof texts, they were able to be of a more imaginative nature, as with our example.

Again citing Wünche, Towner notes that rabbinical enumerations generally used numbers between two and ten. He comments further though, that, "it is significant that it is not the number but the entities enumerated which have primary significance in the rabbinic lists."<sup>9</sup> The use of small numbers made the lists more functional, making them easy to remember, but for the most part, the numbers had little meaning in themselves. Regarding the structure of the Rabbinic enumeration form, Towner observes that the format is standard, and varies little. He notes:

The rabbinic enumeration pattern, like the biblical numerical saying before it, is made up of an interpretive remark together with a list of entities or proof-texts which support it. Although the interpretive remark is not characterized by any single stereotyped rubric, it is nevertheless immediately recognizable because it specifies the exact number of examples about which it intends to make an affirmation. The number of the entities or proof-texts which follow should correspond to the number of instances specified in the interpretive remark... This structure lends a fixity of scope to the form...<sup>10</sup>

Because this pattern is standard for nearly all rabbinical enumerations, and because many of the traditions appear in more than one place within Rabbinical Literature, it is possible to determine much by comparing versions. As Towner explains, "Knowledge of the normative pattern of the enumeration provides an effective means of detecting glosses, homiletic expansions, intrusions of other stereotyped patterns, and errors in particular

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 14-15.

recensions of individual traditions."<sup>11</sup> Such comments will be made on the *bein Hashmashot* in the following chapter.

Towner summarizes the generalized patterns regarding the structure of the proverbial enumerations:

The interpretive rubric tends to be haggadic in character and invites entries which may be hyperbolic, apocryphal, even playful; traditions rendered in the "proverbial" enumeration pattern are well suited for parenetic purposes, especially when the list exhibits climactic logic...; the mnemonic function would appear to be marginal, for, as the tradition-histories show, the tradents expanded and altered the lists of data quite freely; the interpretive remark remains the most stable element in the course of transmission; the numerical element is the most stable part of the interpretive remark, but still cannot prevent some fluidity of detail in the recensions (weaker elements being always subject to alteration); this fluidity may have been enhanced in part by the absence of proof-texts.<sup>12</sup>

Such fluidity is certainly apparent in the recensions of the *bein Hashmashot* tradition, as we shall soon see.

### B. The Structure of the *Bein Hashmashot* Enumeration

Specifically observing this tradition, Towner comments that, "The absence of inhibiting [biblical proof-] texts in the tradition, plus the inherent interest and consequent popularity of the tradition seem to have encouraged the *darshanim* to engage fairly freely in substitution of items for consideration."<sup>13</sup> It is this same interest and popularity which caused not only the substitutions, but also so many statements of the tradition to exist. The idea of the creation of these items captured the imaginations of the Rabbis, and apparently of those for whom these texts were written or delivered. The eleven

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid. 248.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 75-76.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 71.

occurrences of the enumeration itself appear in texts which are diverse in both time and nature: Mishnah *Avot*,<sup>14</sup> the *Mekhilta d'R. Ishmael*,<sup>15</sup> *Midrash Tannaim*,<sup>16</sup> *Sifrei Devarim*,<sup>17</sup> the *Mekhilta d'R. Shimon bar Yochai*,<sup>18</sup> twice in tractate *Pesachim*,<sup>19</sup> *Avot d'R. Natan B.*,<sup>20</sup> *Targum Yonatan*,<sup>21</sup> *Pirkei d'R. Eliezer*,<sup>22</sup> and *Midrash Lekah Tov*.<sup>23</sup>

An interesting pattern is apparent in the development of this tradition. Within the scope of exegetical enumeration lists, Towner observes, "The general development of form which emerges over the course of oral transmission is toward a more 'normative', terse, simplified, and stereotyped pattern. This finding is one of the more controversial ones of this essay, for it runs counter to the 'law of embellishment' to which most students of oral literatures subscribe."<sup>24</sup> According to this "law of embellishment," texts generally tend to become more complicated over time, largely as a result of the development of story telling combined with the development of each tradition as a story in and of itself. Over time, what may once have been a simple idea becomes a more detailed description of that idea, as tends to happen with most oral traditions. Even in a modern context, if a man catches a fish, that fish will become larger and the struggle to catch that fish will become more complicated each time that man tells the story.

<sup>14</sup> Mishnah *Avot* 5:6.

<sup>15</sup> *Mekhilta d'R. Ishmael*, *Vayassa*, 6.

<sup>16</sup> *Midrash Tannaim* to Deuteronomy 33:21.

<sup>17</sup> *Sifrei Devarim*, *piska* 355.

<sup>18</sup> *Mekhilta d'R. Shimon bar Yochai* to Exodus 16:32.

<sup>19</sup> B.T. *Pesachim* 54a.

<sup>20</sup> *Avot d'R. Natan B.*, Chapter 37.

<sup>21</sup> *Targum Yonatan* to Numbers 22:28.

<sup>22</sup> *Pirkei d'R. Eliezer*, Chapter 19.

<sup>23</sup> *Midrash Lekah Tov* to Genesis 2:3.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 248-249.



While Towner's comment about the simplification of enumeration lists, despite this general rule, was made not about the proverbial examples, Towner implies that the pattern exists in those as well. In our own example, both rules—the move toward simplification and the law of embellishment—are true, perhaps because of the long redaction period of these texts. Looking at all eleven versions of the *bein Hashmashot* lists, the tradition begins simply with the Mishnah; moves towards complexity, especially in *Sifrei Devarim* and the *Mekhilta d'R. Shimon*; and then returns to a simple form by the final example found in *Midrash Lekah Tov*. The length of the lists, in fact, operates in a nearly symmetrical pattern.<sup>25</sup> The symmetry works to the point that the most simple listing on both sides is two from the earliest and latest examples.

Similarly, Towner suggests that the versions of the list that he studied fall into three families: the first consisting of the lists in *Avot*, *Mekhilta d'R. Ishmael*, *Pirkei d'R. Eliezer*, and the second list of the Talmud—in these there is the general portion of the list, followed by *yesh omrim* additions; the second family includes the versions in *Mekhilta d'R. Shimon*, *Sifrei Devarim*, and the first list of the Talmud—in these, tradents are credited with naming additional items; and finally, in separate categories of their own, are the enumerations in *Avot d'R. Natan B* and in the *Targum*.<sup>26</sup> Towner's structure of families and the idea of symmetry suggest basically the same information, that different versions of the enumeration list have different structures, some of which loosely resemble one another.

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<sup>25</sup> See Appendix B.

<sup>26</sup> Towner, 68-71.

**Chapter IV:**  
**Versions of Twilight**

### A. Mishnah *Avot* 5:6

Ten things were created on the eve of Shabbat at twilight. They are: the mouth of the earth, the mouth of the well, the mouth of the ass, the rainbow, the manna, the staff, the shamir, the letters, the writing, and the tablets. There are those who say, also the demons, Moses' grave, and the ram of Abraham our Patriarch. And there are those who say, also the tongs—tongs are made by tongs.

The Mishnah contains the first example in Rabbinic Literature of the enumeration of the items created *bein Hashmashot*. It is quite appropriate that the list appears in what has become known as *Pirkei Avot*, as it contains many such enumerations, both exegetical and proverbial. Towner notes that, "Although enumerations are scattered throughout the haggadic portions of the Halakhic Midrashim, the Mishnah, *Tosefta*, and *Talmudim*, they are found especially frequently in certain collections. Chief among these is the Mishnah tractate *Pirke Avot*."<sup>1</sup> Because this is the earliest recension of the list, it is tempting to view this as the original listing. Because the tradition was most probably oral before being recorded in the Mishnah, it is likely that this is not the case. By the time the Mishna was compiled in approximately 200 C.E., the tradition had likely existed for some time.

Structurally, this list utilizes the basic introductory statement, including the number ten, followed by a listing of ten items, which seem to be organized almost by rubric: first the three "mouth" items, followed by the three items which were items which were physically given by God to people, the *shamir*, and finally the three items which are connected to Sinai. The *shamir* serves as a bridge; it does not fit into any of the categories, but is in some ways connected to both categories that surround it. It is something which is utilized by people in order to create items, the Priestly garments and

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<sup>1</sup> Towner, *Rabbinic Enumeration*, 15.

the Temple, which bring humanity closer to God; the first items could be viewed as being utilized by God in order to bring Himself closer to humanity; the final items serving as God's instructions to humanity for bringing Israel and God closer to each other. This organization suggests that the list served mnemonically, as it is easier to remember a few sections than it is to remember ten individual items. After the ten, there are four items added, all of which are introduced by, "*yesh omirim*." Some of these items are later attributed to particular sources, but at this point in the tradition, they are introduced generally. In addition, all of the items included in this version appear in at least six versions of the list. Because they all appear frequently, these items seem to be somewhat standard; it is not until later that the truly rare items are introduced. Because of these aspects, this early version of the enumeration list appears quite simple, especially when compared to some of the other versions.

#### **B. *Mekhilta d'R. Ishmael, Vayassa, 6*<sup>2</sup>**

This is one of the ten things that were created on the eve of Shabbat at twilight. They are: the rainbow, the manna, the staff, the letters, the shamir, the tablets, the mouth of the earth to swallow the wicked, the opening of the mouth of the ass, the grave of Moses, and the cave where Moses and Elijah stood. There are those who say, also the clothes of the first man and Aaron's rod and its almonds and blossoms.

The *Mekhilta* version of the list is introduced within the discussion of the manna.

The final redaction of this midrash is difficult to date, but probably took place around the third or fourth century CE; there are many earlier traditions, though, which the compilation includes. Although it includes much *aggadic* material, such as this enumeration list, it is an example of halakhic midrash, falling into the category of the

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<sup>2</sup> The Horowitz-Rabin edition was used.

Ishmaelite school. Like the version in the Mishna, this early midrash includes a somewhat simple form of the enumeration list, beginning with the introductory phrase, offering the ten items, and then adding two additions, introduced by "*yesh omrim*." This version is, in fact, shorter than its predecessor, as it only includes two additional items, as compared to the Mishnah's four. One of those items, the first man's clothing, is relatively rare; a few of the items are less rare, although still fairly common: the staff, the cave, and Aaron's rod; while the other items appear in most versions of the list.

Towner notes an important manuscript variation, "The Munich MS adds the word *veha-mikhtab*... immediately after *ha-katab*... in the list proper. Apparently the strong tradition for the inclusion of the [former] in the list overcame the stipulation of the interpretive remark that there be only ten."<sup>3</sup> There is evidence for this idea, in that this is the only version of the enumeration list that does not include the writing. Most text witnesses of the *Mekhila*, though, do not include this item, adhering to the rule that the number of items must agree with the number included in the introduction.

The organization of this version does not follow the same structure as the earlier recension; here, there seems to be little organization, although there is some sense of following the order in which the items are mentioned, or implied, in the Biblical text. Not all the items, though, fall completely into this order; for instance, if this is the intended order, then the staff should come before the manna, and the *shamir* should follow the tablets. Because of this lack of order, the purpose of this version seems to be less mnemonic and perhaps more pedagogical, focusing on the importance of these objects to the history of Israel.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 66.

### C. *Midrash Tannaim*, to Deuteronomy 33:21

This is one of the ten things created on the eve of Shabbat at twilight. They are: the rainbow, the manna, the staff, the shamir, the letters, the writing, the tablets, the opening of the mouth of the earth that swallowed the wicked, the opening of the mouth of the ass, the cave where Moses and Elijah stood, and Moses' grave, that it was of the ten things created on the eve of Shabbat at twilight.

While the date of this midrash is unsure, I placed it following the *Mekhilta d'R.*

*Ishmael*, according to most scholarly opinion that it dates to the late Amoraic Period. D. Hoffman theorized that there was an Ishmaelite *halakhic* midrash on Deuteronomy, and brought together sources, mainly *Midrash HaGadol*, which implied its existence, in order to recreate what that work might have been; his idea, and the midrash, were later supported by Genizah fragments. Because this midrash was largely pieced together from other sources, and is likely incomplete, it makes sense that this list largely resembles the *Mekhilta d'R. Ishmael* version, as there would have been internal borrowing and/or they would have drawn from the common sources. It differs only in the fact that it includes no additions to the general statement of the items (this is, in fact, one of only two versions of the list which do not append any items), that the order is slightly different, and that it includes the writing. This last difference, the inclusion of the writing, is quite relevant, because it causes the number of items enumerated to conflict with the introductory phrase. Perhaps in piecing together different traditions (especially in light of the manuscript variation in the *Mekhilta*) it was felt that "the writing" was important enough to be included, despite the error it created. It is also possible that this item was added to the list later, during the process of redaction. The other differences also make sense due to the nature of this midrash. Because it was compiled as a whole much later, the

ordering of the items would have no longer have had much, if any purpose. The shortening of the list could be due to the fact that pieces of the original text have not been found. Alternatively, it is possible that this is a more original text than other versions of the enumeration, due to the fact that there are no additions. This listing appears within the discussion of Moses' death and of his sepulcher, which is then described as being one of the items.

#### **D. *Sifrei Devarim*, piska 355**

This is one of the things that were created at the eve of Shabbat at twilight. They are: the rainbow, the manna, the well, the letters, the writing, the tablets, the mouth of the ass, the mouth of the earth, Moses' grave, the cave where Moses and Elijah stood, and Aaron's rod and its almonds and blossoms. There are those who say, also the clothes of the first man. There are those who say, also garments and the demons. R. Yoshiah says, in the name of his father: also the ram and the shamir. R. Nehemiah says: also the fire and the mule. R. Yehudah says: also the tongs. And thus he says, tongs are made from tongs. How were the first tongs made? They were a created thing. They said to him, it could have been made with a mold, and thus was not created.

*Sifrei Devarim* is the Akiva-ite *halakhic* midrash on Deuteronomy, compiled in around the fourth century. The *aggadic* sections of the text do not belong to any particular school, and come from a variety of sources.<sup>4</sup> It is with this midrash that the enumeration pattern becomes considerably more complex, adding many more items than had been previously added, and attributing some of the additions. It is also here that the rare items are first introduced into the list. As compared to the three earlier versions, there are several key differences: here, items have disappeared, other items have been added, and the structure has become both more complex and longer.

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<sup>4</sup> H. L. Strack and Günter Stemberger, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, trans., Markus Bockmuehl (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 273.

The list appears in the same context as in *Midrash Tannaim*, and is, in fact, even attached to the same Biblical verse, Deuteronomy 33:21. The structure of this version is slightly amended from the previous written versions, even in the introductory statement. Here, the number ten is not specified, and in fact the general portion of the list includes eleven items. It seems likely that the number was removed at some point in order to keep from breaking the rule that the number mentioned in the introductory statement must correspond with the number of items mentioned in the list. In the Munich Manuscript, the number ten is included. The listing of the items themselves here follows the general order of the Biblical narrative to much more of an extent than that found in the *Mekhilta d'R. Ishmael* version. In fact, the only item which is out of order is Aaron's rod, the last item enumerated in the general section. In addition, this rod is the least common of the items mentioned in this first section. It is possible that there was a tradition which did not originally include this item, but by the time it was written down, the item had become a part of the tradition, and had become important enough to be included in the main portion. After the main items, other additional items are mentioned, introduced first by "yesh omrim" and then by the names of the tradents to whom these traditions are attributed. One of the "yesh omrim" items, the garments, is mentioned only here and in the identical version in *Mekhilta d'R. Shimon*. This is the first example which attributes certain of the items, and in all versions which cite Rabbinic tradents, the same pattern is followed: the nameless additions are given first, followed by those items which are associated with a certain name.

The first two items of this section, the ram and the shamir, are attributed to R. Yoshaiah, in the name of his father. It is interesting to note that both of these items had



been mentioned in previous lists, without a name attached—the former being a “*yesh omrim*” item, the latter belonging to the general section. The question remains open as to how these items came to be assigned to this fifth generation *Tanna*. Those items attributed to R. Nehemiah are new to this version. One can assume that it was these Rabbis who either created the idea of these particular items, or who, at least, popularized their inclusion. It is also possible that the attribution to them was simply a later tradition. The tongs, which are the final item mentioned, are attributed here to R. Yehudah, although this item was mentioned anonymously in the *Mishnah* version. This is the first time that the full text is included with the mentioning of the tongs. In fact, the text is always included when credited to R. Yehudah, and is never included when his name is not attached. It is likely that the riddle belonged to him, and thus the item began to be associated with his name, and thus the entire item—and not just the attached text—became “his” item. This version of the enumeration list seems to mark a transition between the simple versions of the list and those that are more complex.

#### **E. Mekhilta d'R. Shimon bar Yochai to Exodus 16:32**

This is one of the things that were created at the twilight on the eve of Shabbat. They are: the rainbow, the manna, the well, the letters, the writing, the tablets, the mouth of the ass, the mouth of the earth, Moses' grave, the cave where Moses and Elijah stood, and Aaron's staff and its almonds and blossoms. There are those who say, also the clothing of the first man. There are those who say, also the garments and the demons. R. Yoshiah says, in the name of his father: also the ram and the shamir. R. Nehemiah says: also the fire and the mule. R. Yehuda says: also the tongs. He would say: tongs are made from tongs. How were the first tongs made? They were a created thing.

This text is identical to the *Sifrei Devarim* text which it follows, including the introductory phrase. There are only two differences between the two. The first is that

this version omits the final statement about the tongs, "They said to him, it could have been made with a mold, and thus was not created." As much as the list itself was malleable, this appended riddle, we can assume, would have been subject to change to an even greater degree, (especially as the riddle is not always mentioned when the tongs are a part of the list). Comparing the different versions of the riddle demonstrates that indeed the riddle is often changed. The second difference is the context in which the list is mentioned; here it is mentioned during the discussion on the manna. The context is necessarily different for the two *midrashim*, though, since they are exegesis on different books of the Bible. Their identical nature is not surprising, as both works are *halakhic midrashim* of the school of Akiba, and are from the same approximate time period, although this one is probably slightly later in date. No discussion is warranted here of the text itself, for the structure is fully described above.

#### F. Babylonian Talmud, *Pesachim*

The *bein Hashmashot* enumeration list appears twice in the Talmud, both times on the same page, although the two versions are not entirely the same. The discussion of both sections will follow the two translations.

##### 54a, top

Wasn't it taught in a *baraita*<sup>5</sup> that ten things were created on the eve of Shabbat at twilight? They are: the well, the manna, the rainbow, the letters, the writing, the tablets, Moses' grave, the cave where Moses and Elijah stood, the opening of the mouth of the ass, and the opening of the mouth of the earth to swallow the wicked. R. Nehemiah says in the name of his father: also the fire and the mule. R. Yoshiah says in the name of his father: also the ram and the shamir. R. Yehudah says: also the tongs. He would say: tongs are made from tongs. How were the first tongs

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<sup>5</sup> A *baraita* is a Talmudic term for an extramishnaic Tannaitic teaching.

made? They were created by the hands of Heaven. He said to him: It is possible that they were made with a mold, and thus they were made by the hands of man.

#### 54a, bottom

It was taught in a *baraita*: Ten things were made on the eve of Shabbat at twilight. They are: the well, the manna, the rainbow, the letters, the writing, the tablets, Moses' grave, the cave where Moses and Elijah stood, the opening of the mouth of the ass, and the opening of the mouth of the earth to swallow the wicked. There are those who say, also Aaron's staff and its almonds and blossoms. There are those who say, also the demons. There are those who say, also the clothing of the first man.

Both versions on this page of the Talmud attribute the enumeration list to having been taught in a *baraita*, and then go on to list the ten items. Both versions designate the same creations in this general portion. All of the items listed in this section, apart from the cave, appear in all or nearly all versions of the list. The cave, too, is a common enough tradition, appearing in seven of the versions, and it appears in the main portion of all versions of the list from the time of *Mekhilta d'R. Ishmael* up until the time of *Avot d'R. Natan*; it is earlier than and later than that period that the cave is not included. During the period between the *Mekhilta d'R. Ishmael* (around the third or fourth centuries) and *Avot d'R. Natan* (between the seventh and ninth centuries), it seemed to have been considered one of the standard items. In fact, all of the items included in the Talmudic versions of the general portion of the list seem to be more or less the excepted version of the list during that middle period.

Following the general listing, the two versions part ways completely. The first attributes all of the four additional items to specific tradents, while the second lists its three additions with "*yesh omrim*." None of the additions are the same in either list. Those items which are attributed, the fire, the mule, the ram, the *shamir*, and the tongs,

are attributed to the same sources as those in the *Sifrei Devarim* and *Mekhilta d'R. Shimon* versions. At this time, at least, it seems as if these items were closely associated with these Rabbis. Or, alternatively, the authors of the text wanted to add weight to the importance of these items through attribution. The only difference is that in this, the Talmudic, version, the mule is masculine instead of feminine, certainly a minor variation.

The second version on the page is the only listing that falls between *Sifrei Devarim* and *Avot d'R. Natan* which does not include any items attributed to specific Rabbis. Similarly, the first version on the page is the only list, of any of the versions, that adds items to the general list, which does not include a "*yesh omrim*" statement. One can view these two versions of the Talmud as one list, part of which is given each time. By combining them, keeping in mind that the general portion of the list is identical, one finds a list which better fits the pattern that has been established by the other versions: that which includes the general statement, followed by the "*yesh omrim*" additions, followed by the attributed additions.

Between the two versions on the page is a discussion which involves the difficulty of claiming that the tongs, the fire, and the mule were created at twilight, because of other texts which offer different explanations for their creation. Although all the dissention is ultimately resolved, the second version on the page could also be viewed as an alternative answer to the first version. Rejecting the suggestions of these specific Rabbis for additional items, these unattributed items are offered instead. Either of these explanations, that they are part of the same version of the list, or that the second is a response to or is corrective to the first, can perhaps explain why two different versions of the same tradition appear on one page of the Talmud. A third possibility exists that the

list is presented twice in order to frame the discussion between the two; they are different simply because this enumeration pattern was always essentially changeable.

### **G. *Avot d'R. Natan B*, Chapter 37**

Ten things were created at twilight: the rainbow, the demons, the clouds, the well, the manna, the staff, the mouth of the earth, the mouth of the ass, Aaron's staff, and the cave. There are those who say: also Moses' grave and the ram of our Patriarch Abraham. R. Natan says: also the letters, the writing, and the tablets. R. Yehoshua says: also the skin and the shamir. R. Nehemiah says: also the fire and the mule.

The version in *Avot d'R. Natan* functions in much the same way as the one found in *Pirkei Avot*, and is, in fact, often considered to be a commentary *Avot*. While the tradition of such a work began quite early, not long after the compilation of the Mishnah itself, it was probably not completed until much later, probably between the seventh and ninth centuries.<sup>6</sup> The pericope is given in the context of a number of enumeration lists, of either five or ten items. This list is offered as one of those lists. This version of the enumeration list is the most unique, bearing the least resemblance to the other versions, other than the basic structure.

It begins with the basic introductory statement, followed by ten items, as designated. While many of the usual items are included, there are a number of items which generally appear in this portion of the list, which in this case do not appear until the appended sections. Likewise, there are a number of items which generally appear as an appended item, or which are comparatively rare, which here are given in the generally stated section. The demons, for instance, usually appear only in the "*yesh omrim*" sections, except for here and in the *Targum*, the latter of which does not have any

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 227.

appended sections (see below). Similarly, the clouds appear only in the same two versions. This is the only text in which the relatively rare items appear not in an appended section, but rather in the general, main section of the listing. Another irregularity is that this is the only version in which the cave is not specifically designated as the cave in which Moses and Elijah stood; it is simply referred to as "the cave."

After the general section, the basic structure of the "*yesh omrim*" items followed by the tradents' items appears. Within this portion of the structure, there are irregularities other than those already mentioned, with items that usually appear in the main section emerging here instead. This is the only version, for instance, in which the letters, the writing, and the tablets appear as appended items, not in the main section. It is important to note, though, that they are attributed to R. Natan, who does not appear in any other version of the list, for whom this work is named. Giving the author ownership over these three major items makes a certain amount of sense, either in terms of raising the importance of this Rabbi—assuming that the list was a known tradition—or by raising the importance of these items by attributing them to the author. Another tradent who does not appear in any other version is R. Yehoshua, who is credited with naming the skin and the *shamir*. First, this is the only place where the skin is mentioned.<sup>7</sup> Second, in all the other versions in which the *shamir* is attributed to a tradent, it is assigned to R. Yoshiah. It is possible that this is an error of transmission of an oral nature. The two names are very similar in sound, and could easily be confused with one another if heard and not read. This version of the *bein Hashmashot* enumeration, while it does follow the same general structure as the others, seems to suggest that there is some sort of difference

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<sup>7</sup> See *infra.*, 39.

in transmission between it and the other versions. In addition, there also exists the possibility that the tradition simply became more flexible as time passed; at this late date, the rabbis were able to alter the text more freely than at earlier times.

#### **H. *Targum Yonatan* to Numbers 22:28**

Ten things were created after the world was established, with the coming of Shabbat at twilight: the manna, the well, Moses' staff, the shamir, the rainbow, the clouds of glory, the mouth of the earth, the writing of the tablets of the covenant, the demons, and the mouth of the speaking ass.

The *Targum* is the one text which includes this listing, which does not fit into the same category as the other works. Because it served as a translation of the Biblical text, its main purpose was to interpret the text only in order to fully communicate an understanding of the text, not to embellish the ideas to the extent that true *aggadic* literature does. At the same time, though, there is a great deal of midrashic interpretation included. In addition, it is written in Aramaic, not Hebrew, which makes it somewhat difficult to compare some of its items with items in other versions of the list, as is evident in the listing of the "writing of the Covenantal Tablets" instead of listing "the writing" and "the tablets" separately, or instead of listing them in a less specified way (if they meant the writing, they could have just said "the writing"). Because the function of the *Targum* is so different, its structure is also somewhat different, and is much more simplified. In the telling of the incident with Balaam's ass, it mentions, almost as an aside, that these ten things were created. As the mouth of that ass is included in every version of the list, it is sensible that the enumeration list would be appended here. The list of ten has no additions, as is appropriate to the nature of the text. As mentioned above, this and *Avot d'R. Natan* are the only two examples which include demons in the

general section of the text, and which include clouds at all, here specified as "the clouds of glory." Here, these two items do not seem as strikingly different as they do in *Avot d'R. Natan*, as this entire text is of an essentially different nature. It is not surprising to find items which are not common to many versions of the list. Additionally, because there are no additional sections, any item that is included in this enumeration must be placed in the main section of the text.

### I. *Pirkei d'R. Eliezer*, Chapter 19

Ten things were created at the eve of Shabbat at twilight. They are: the mouth of the earth, the mouth of the well, the mouth of the ass, the rainbow, the manna, the staff, the shamir, the letters, the writing, and the tablets. There are those who say: also demons, Moses' grave, and Isaac's ram. There are those who say: also the tongs.

The version of the list, from the eighth century midrash, *Pirkei d'R. Eliezer*, here returns to the original, early pattern, found in the Mishnah, in which the ten items are listed, followed by only the "*yesh omrim*" items, with no tradents included. As opposed to its predecessors, the list here is presented in the context of telling the story of creation itself, not in relation to an item which is a part of the list or as an enumeration list among other enumeration lists. This narrative midrash, in describing the order of creation and the first Shabbat, offers this as one of the things that happened during that time. The enumeration functions here more as a story telling device than as a structure in and of itself.

The list itself is nearly identical to the version of the list in the Mishnah. The only difference is that this version uses Isaac's ram, while the other uses Abraham's ram as one of the items. That slight difference is hardly important, as both are the same ram. It



seems likely that the author of this narrative midrash utilized the earlier text in order to include this tradition.

Gerald Friedlander's translation of this midrash offers another variation of the text. In the manuscript that he uses, the staff is not mentioned, and the list ends with the ram of Abraham, following the tablets. In his version, there are no addenda to the list of ten.<sup>8</sup> His version would place this as the only "full" midrash which states only the ten items (*Midrash Tannaim* being a partial text and the *Targum* not being midrash).

### **J. *Midrash Lekah Tov* to Genesis 2:3**

These are the ten things that were created on the eve of Shabbat at twilight: the mouth of the earth, the mouth of the well, the mouth of the ass, the rainbow, the manna, the letters, the writing, the tablets, Moses' grave, and the ram of our Patriarch Abraham. There are those who say: also the demons. There are those who say: also tongs, which are made with tongs. That God made tongs that they would be forever.

*Midrash Lekah Tov* is a late midrashic anthology, dating from later than the eleventh century. Like *Pirkei d'R. Eliezer*, the second latest piece which includes the *bein hashmashot* enumeration, it places the list in the context of creation, as opposed to the context of one of the items and is a simple form of the list, which also resembles the earliest forms of this tradition. Following an introductory statement, ten items follow, with two additional items, added with "*yesh omrim*." The only difference between this and the early versions being the brief comment which follows the tongs, which was probably placed there for clarification. All of the items are relatively common, especially in the main portion of the text, in which the most rare item occurs in nine versions of the

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<sup>8</sup> Gerald Friedlander, trans., *Pirkei de Rabbi Eliezer: The Chapters of Rabbi Eliezer the Great* (New York: Sepher-Hermon Press, 1981), 124-125.

list. In addition, the only extremely common item which is not included in this version is the *shamir*. Its exclusion here is not entirely surprising; the symbolism of the Temple (to which the *shamir* alluded) would not have been as powerful at this time, or in the Diaspora community in which this was written. According to Zunz, the author was originally from Mainz and later lived in the Orient, while S. Buber believed that the author resided in Bulgaria.<sup>9</sup> Because this is such a late addition to the collection, it is possible to view this as what came to be considered the standard version of the list. Structurally, this piece seems to demonstrate a return to the original tradition, which did not attribute any of the items to particular tradents.

This midrash also offers its readers something very helpful, which is lacking in all of the other versions (again, probably because this is a late work, of a somewhat different nature); it gives a reason for the idea that there were items that were created at the twilight of the first Shabbat. Immediately after the list, the text states:

Because God created every thing, to make miracles and mighty deeds, blessed be His Kingdom forever and ever, in order to establish that which is stated, "There is nothing new under the sun."<sup>10</sup> This, as the Bible says, "The Eternal founded the earth with wisdom, established the heavens with reason."<sup>11</sup>

It is only appropriate that the final example concludes with a statement which summarizes the ideas inherent in the tradition itself—that these items had to have been created during the week of creation in order to exist. And it was all a part of the Divine plan.

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<sup>9</sup> Strack and Sternberger, *Introduction*, 356.

<sup>10</sup> Ecclesiastes 1:9.

<sup>11</sup> Proverbs 3:19.

**Chapter V:**  
**Overview of Twilight**

### A. Summary of List Comparisons

An examination of the eleven versions of the *bein hashmashot* enumeration demonstrates a number of patterns. In the early versions of the list, found in the Mishnah and the *Mekhilta d'R. Ishmael*, the structure is simple: the general section of the list is followed by additional items, introduced by "*yesh omrim*." The versions of the list which were written down later, found in *Sifrei Devarim*, *Mekhilta d'R. Shimon*, the Talmud, and *Avot d'R. Natan*, follow the "law of embellishment", becoming more complicated as time progresses, mainly by first listing the additional items introduced with "*yesh omrim*," followed by the addition of even more items attributed to Rabbinic tradents. Finally, in the latest versions of the list, those found in *Pirkei d'R. Eliezer* and *Midrash Lekah Tov*, the structure of the list seems to become less complicated once again, following Towner's observation that list enumerations tend to simplify over time. The exceptions to this pattern are *Midrash Tannaim* and the *Targum*. These texts both follow the most simplified pattern of all the lists, listing the general sequence of items with no additions. Both of these works are of a different nature than the other midrashic works which include this enumeration.

Other patterns are evident in regards to the placement of certain items in the enumeration. As a general rule, those items which are common to the majority of the versions are included in the general section of the list. There are, though, exceptions to this rule, most of which occur in *Avot d'R. Natan*. In that version of the list, the tablets, the letters, and the writing all are found as attributed to R. Natan. As mentioned above, this could be an effort to increase the importance of the items, by attributing them to the

text's author, or it could be an effort to increase the importance of that tradent, but attributing these items to him.

Additionally, that midrash, along with the Mishnah and *Pirkei d'R. Eliezer*, all place Moses' grave in the section introduced by "yesh omrim." That both *Avot d'R. Natan* and the Mishnah append that item in the same way makes sense, given that the former is considered to be a commentary on the latter. Since *Pirkei d'R. Eliezer* is a later work than *Avot d'R. Natan*, it is possible to conclude that Moses' grave came to be considered an additional item, and perhaps a less important item, as time progressed. Supporting this idea is the fact that the *Targum*, the only list dated between *Avot d'R. Natan* and *Pirkei d'R. Eliezer*, does not include Moses' grave in its recension; it is, in fact, the only compilation which excludes this item. Because the earliest version of the list, in the Mishnah, also places this item as an addition, it is possible that the item became more important with time, before losing its importance. The changing importance of this item is likely not connected to the importance of Moses himself, but is perhaps linked to the reason which was expressed for its location to be hidden from humanity. It is possible that the idea of his grave becoming a shrine was less of a concern during the time of the Mishnah and the later texts, while during the time between the Mishnah and *Avot d'R. Natan* this was a greater worry.

The *shamir* is the other item which appears in nearly every version of the list, which is not exclusively included in the general section of the list; this item appears in about half of the versions which include it in that general section and in the other half it is attributed to a tradent. The *shamir* follows a similar pattern to that of Moses' grave. In the earliest versions of the list, the Mishnah, *Mekhilta d'R. Ishmael*, and *Midrash*

*Tannatim* place it in the general section; the next collection of midrashim include it as an attributed item: *Sifrei Devarim*, *Mekhilta d'R. Shimon*, the Talmud, and *Avot d'R. Natan*, and the latest recensions again place it in the general section: the *Targum* and *Pirkei d'R. Eliezer*.<sup>1</sup> It makes sense that the *shamir* would have been considered important during the time of the earlier texts, those which were written in the immediate aftermath of the destruction of the Temple, as the *shamir* is directly linked to that structure. By placing the item as an attributed item, its importance is not lost, as when it is placed in the "yeshev omrim" section. By setting off certain items, attributing them to certain tradents, the items are instead stressed to a greater extent, especially when each Rabbi is cited in conjunction with only a few items. The Temple was an important symbol throughout Jewish history; as time progressed and the time of the Temple became farther removed, perhaps the authors of these texts desired to remind the people of its importance, and thus stressed the *shamir* by attributing it. Another explanation for the changing placement of this item is related, more simply, to the structure of the lists themselves. The earliest and latest recensions of the list do not include any attributed items; thus, the only way to express the importance of an item was to place it in the general section, while in the other versions, the sections of attributed items was possible to especially stress certain items.

Another pattern apparent in the lists is that those items which are the rarest are generally not included in the general section. The one exception to this rule is the clouds, which is in the general section in both versions which include them as a created item, *Avot d'R. Natan* and the *Targum*. Again, *Avot d'R. Natan* seems to be the midrash which

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<sup>1</sup> *Midrash Lekah Tov* does not include this item at all, but because it is an anthology, this work had the ability to edit the text to a greater extent than the other items.

tends to break these general rules, so it is not surprising that there is an exception in this matter. It is also not surprising to find in the *Targum* this item in its general section because there is no other section in which to append items.

## **B. Conclusions Regarding the *Bein Hashmashot* Enumeration List**

The idea of items having been created at the twilight of the first Shabbat is one which was quite common during the Rabbinic Period. For the list to appear in so many different texts of quite a diverse nature, attests to the fact that this was a popular tradition. Aside from these eleven recensions of the list, the idea itself is mentioned in other midrashim as well, including *Bereishit Rabbah*, *Pesikta d'R. Kahana*, *Tanhuma*, and *Seder Rabbah di'Bereshit*. The reason for this tradition's popularity could be that it explained aspects of history which were mysterious. The ancient Jews, in hearing the biblical text, would have desired an understanding as how some of the strange substances or events described came to be. While the modern mind describes such things through science or through deeming them as fiction, the ancient mind understood them as having been due to actions of God. The Rabbis used this tradition pedagogically in order to emphasize this idea. By teaching that these items were created, and were thus a part of God's original plan, they were able to imply that the collective life of the Jewish people was preordained, as well. Particularly in times of persecution, this idea was powerful, as it allowed the people to find comfort in their suffering. The fact that many of these items were used in order to save the Israelites, or to sustain them, would have only added to this sense of comfort. In addition, the idea that God created the items which enabled the Jews to become a people during the Six Days of Creation would have enforced a sense of

national pride. The Jewish people are so important, that not only does God sustain them, but He created them at the last moment that He could create anything. Another possible reason for this tradition's popularity could be connected to the idea that to question matters of creation was forbidden. This list allowed a glimpse of those matters to the common people, giving them a taste of that which was not normally allowed.

The polemical nature of this tradition would also explain why it is included so often in Rabbinic Literature. With this list of created items, the Rabbis were able to express a view of creation as being particular to the Jews. If God created all of these items, then the entire early history of the Jews was a part of God's original plan. Christianity used the creation story to define original sin; this tradition allowed the Rabbis to reclaim the text. Creation did not, then, belong to the Christians, or even to the world; creation belonged, in fact, to the Jews alone. Adam and Eve were expelled from Eden; the goal of humanity following this event was to find its way back to the Garden. By stating that these items were created at the same moment of the expulsion implied that the Jews were God's chosen vehicle for that return. Following God's rules was the way to bring the Messiah, who would lead the people to the World to Come, the equivalent of a return to Eden. The fact that this list is included in a number of works which are generally *halakhic* in nature supports this idea. The same texts which explained God's laws also described the fact that these laws were a part of God's plan for the world, long before these laws were given. After all, the tablets, the main symbol for God's law, is one of the items which is indisputably a part of this list. From the time of Adam, long before the laws were expressed, these laws were in God's mind; just as the items themselves were created at this time, the results of these items were also brought into



being, for their effect was inevitable. Again, this lesson is basically polemical in nature: the sinful nature of humanity was not the lesson to be learned from Adam; instead, the lesson became the potential for humanity, by way of the Jewish people, to be good.

### C. The Tradition of the *Bein Hashmashot* Enumeration List

This tradition of *bein hashmashot* spans the history of post-Biblical Jewish texts. It seems to have originated early, most likely in an oral form. The earliest written version of the list, preserved in the Mishnah, seems to be the version, the organization of which suggests that it was remembered mnemonically. Instead of ordering the numbers chronologically, or apparently not at all, this version of the list seems to place the items in sections, each of which could have been easily remembered. The latest versions of the list echo this early form. It seems likely that these versions based themselves on this early form. Perhaps this version came to be viewed as the most accurate list. Because the latest version of the list is in *Midrash Lekah Tov*, a midrashic anthology, this seems likely. The author of this anthology would probably have wanted to put forth what he considered to be the essential list—the most accurate version. Instead of including every item that could have been included, he recorded the items of the list which he believed to be the quintessential version of the list. Indeed, with the exception of the ram, all of the items that he included in the main portion of the list are items that appear in at least nine of the versions. His addition of the ram could have been due to Christianity's emphasis on the Binding of Isaac in their own tradition. Christianity was more powerful at the later date of *Midrash Lekah Tov* and thus the polemic of this being essentially a Jewish text perhaps was seen as more necessary. In terms of commonality, the ram seems to replace

the *shamir*, an item which is the most imaginative (especially as it is not included at all in the Bible), and which symbolized the Temple, a structure which had not existed for a long time prior to this anthology. By that time, the Temple had been transformed from a distant memory to a symbol for the future, the building of a new Temple at the time of the Messiah. The ram, then, is the most sensible replacement for the *shamir*, as it serves as a symbol for the World to Come.<sup>2</sup>

Looking at all eleven versions of the list, we can determine what is essentially the most accurate version of the list by observing what items appear in the highest number of versions. In fact, there are exactly ten items which are found in nine or more of the versions. In a modern midrashic telling of this tradition, one might find the following:

Ten things were created on the eve of Shabbat at twilight. They are: the rainbow, the manna, the mouth of the earth, the mouth of the ass, the tablets, the letters, the writing, Moses' grave, the well, and the *shamir*. There are those who say, also demons, the ram, the cave where Moses and Elijah stood, the staff, Aaron's rod, the first man's clothing, the garments, and the clouds of glory. R. Nehemiah says: also the fire and the mule. R. Yehudah says: also the tongs. He would say: Tongs are made from tongs. How were the first tongs made? They were a created thing.

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<sup>2</sup> See *infra*, 29.

## Conclusion

Within this thesis, I hope that I succeeded in answering the questions that I set out to answer. I learned from my research and writing that the Rabbis set out to understand their world from a Jewish perspective. They did so not only by interpreting the texts for their own time, but also by writing Judaism into world history, by way of entering these items into the Biblical account of Creation. Their purpose in creating and repeating this list was ultimately polemical and pedagogical. They sought to teach the people that the Jews and all of their history were all a part of God's original plan for the world; ultimately, everything that comes to pass was conceived of at the beginning of time. In addition, they sought to understand those parts of nature, particularly as described in the Bible, which seem impossible were in fact a reality. What seemed to them to be miracles were in fact creations, put into this world at the last moment that God could create them, before Shabbat began.

Had there been more time for this project, I would have expanded the breadth of my research. I would have delved into manuscript work, in order to explore variations in the list within each midrash. I would also have included not only the Rabbinical understanding of this tradition, but also later repetitions of this tradition, specifically in Jewish mysticism, where this idea became quite important. I would have also utilized later traditions in relation to each of the items, particularly exploring modern understandings of each of them, in both scholarly writings and in fictional literature. In addition, I would have sought to explore to a greater extent the motivations of the Rabbis who compiled specific texts, based on the historical context of each midrash.

Even without these additions, I learned a great deal from the process of writing this thesis. I discovered a lot about the purpose of the Rabbis in repeating this list, and I discovered even more from exploring the Biblical and Rabbinic literature about each of the twenty-two items. With this thesis as my own introduction to the idea of *bein hashmashot*, I look forward to further exploring the tradition of twilight in the future.

## Appendices

## Appendix A

**Comparison of the Versions of the *Bein Hashmashot* Enumeration**

On the following page is a chart which compares the eleven versions of the enumeration lists. For the sake of space, many of the items' titles are shortened. Below is a key in order to understand the shaded portions of the list. These shades demonstrate the sections of list version.

General Statement
<i>Yesh omrim</i>
R. Yoshiah in the name of his father
R. Nehemiah/R. Nehemiah in the name of his father
R. Yehudah
R. Natan
R. Yehoshua

Mishna	Mekhilta	Midrash Tannaim	Sifrei Deut.	Mekhilta d'R. Shimon	BT 1	BT 2	ARNB	Targum	PRE	Lekach Tov
Mouth of earth	Rainbow	Rainbow	Rainbow	Rainbow	Well	Well	Rainbow	Manna	Mouth of earth	Mouth of earth
Mouth of well	Manna	Manna	Manna	Manna	Manna	Manna	Demons	Well	Mouth of well	Mouth of well
Mouth of ass	Staff	Staff	Well	Well	Rainbow	Rainbow	Clouds	Moses' staff	Mouth of ass	Mouth of ass
Rainbow	Letters	Shamir	Letters	Letters	Letters	Letters	Well	Shamir	Rainbow	Rainbow
Manna	Shamir	Letters	Writing	Writing	Writing	Writing	Manna	Rainbow	Manna	Manna
Staff	Tablets	Writing	Tablets	Tablets	Tablets	Tablets	Staff	Clouds of glory	Staff	Letters
Shamir	Mouth of earth	Tablets	Mouth of ass	Mouth of ass	M's grave	M's grave	Mouth of earth	Mouth of earth	Shamir	Writing
Letters	Mouth of ass	Mouth of earth	Mouth of earth	Mouth of earth	Cave	Cave	Mouth of ass	Writing of cov. tablets	Letters	Tablets
Writing	M's grave	Mouth of ass	M's grave	M's grave	Mouth of ass	Mouth of ass	A's rod	Demons	Writing	M's grave
Tablets	Cave	Cave	Cave	Cave	Mouth of earth	Mouth of earth	Cave	Mouth of ass	Tablets	Ram
Demons	Clothing	M's grave	A's rod	A's rod	Fire	A's rod	M's grave		Demons	Demons
M's grave	A's rod		Clothing	Clothing	Mule	Demons	Ram		M's grave	Tongs
Abraham's Ram			Garments	Garments	Ram	Clothing	Letters		Ram	
Tongs			Demons	Demons	Shamir		Writing		Tongs	
			Ram	Ram	Tongs (w/text)		Tablets			
			Shamir	Shamir			Skin			
			Fire	Fire			Shamir			
			Mule	Mule			Fire			
			Tongs (w/text)	Tongs (with text)			Mule			



## Appendix B

The Items Contained in the *Bein Hashmashot* Enumeration

The following chart lays out all of the items which are included in any of the versions of the enumeration list. The total number of appearances is given; that total is then separated: the number of times that item appears in the general statement is given, and then the number of times it is introduced by "*yesh omrim*," and the number of times it is introduced by a specific tradent.

Name	Total	General Statement	Yesh Omrim	Tradent
Rainbow	11	11		
Manna	11	11		
Mouth of Earth	11	11		
Mouth of Ass	11	11		
Tablets	11*	10*		1
Letters	10	9		1
Writing	10*	9*		1
M's grave	10	7	3	
Well	9	9		
<i>Shamir</i>	9	5		4
Demons	8	2	6	
Cave	7	7		
Ram	7		7	
Staff	6	6		
Tongs	6		3	3
A's rod	5	3	2	
Fire	4			4
Mule	4			4
First Man's Clothing	4		4	
Garments	2		2	
Clouds	2	2		
Skin	1			1

\* Included in the *Targum* is "the writing of the Tablets of the Covenant" which implies both the writing on the tablets and the tablets themselves, thus it has been included in both categories.

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