

This Paper is a Work in Progress

On the Road Again! The Traveling Rabbis.

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Introduction

In Late Antiquity, a window looking out onto the roads and sea lanes, would have revealed crowds of travelers of all sorts: couriers, members of the Imperial family, administrators, military units, academics, merchants, laborers, pilgrims, and ecclesiastics.¹ As part of the *Travel and Religion in Antiquity* Seminar, I would like to discuss one specific group of Jewish travelers: the rabbis.² Their own literature³, as well as archaeology, reveals a significant amount of regional and cross-regional, short and long distance travel. This life experience found its expression in legal (*halakhic*), non-legal (*aggadic*) interpretations,⁴ maxims, anecdotes, parables,⁵ and legends. The language of our sources might be specific and say that Rabbi X “traveled on a road,” or it might be general and say, “one who travels on the road” (*hamehalech baderekh*). It signifies travel when we read, that Rabbi X went from place A to place B, when Rabbi X became a student of Rabbi Y who teaches in another town, or when Rabbi X’s cognomen is the name of a place other than where he presently lives (e.g. Yose the Galilean).

As a point of departure, we will take examples of early Palestinian Amoraim and trace their movements, reviewing their reasons to be on the road. Then we will present some of the rabbis’ perceptions of and response to travel, and their actual preparations and mode of travel. Our ultimate focus will be the intersection between travel and religion. How does travel as a human experience and activity influence the religious life of a member of the rabbinic circles? How important is the aspect of communication among the rabbis of Roman Palestine and of the Diaspora?

1. Palestinian Amoraim on the Road

An initial survey of the biographies of rabbinic personages in Late Antiquity yielded hundreds of men who took their walking stick for all sorts of reasons, personal as well as communal.⁶ Our examples are important Torah scholars who were active in Roman Palestine from the beginning of the third century to the beginning of the fourth century. This stretch of time encompasses three generations.

1.1. Examples of Travelers

1.1.1 First generation (c.220-250 CE)

Joshua ben Levi was born in Lydda in the coastal plain of Palestine. He spent his youth in the Galilean city of Sepphoris under the tutelage of Judah I (ha-Nasi). He involved himself in the Jewish community’s relations with the Roman authorities. As a member of various missions, Joshua paid a visit to the Roman proconsul in Sepphoris, and traveled to the authorities in

Caesarea and in Rome.⁷ Once he was sent to Rome by the Patriarch Judah II to collect funds in support of the Patriarchate.

Landing in Acco upon his return, Joshua was greeted by his older colleague **Hanina bar Hama**,⁸ who had come from Sepphoris to welcome him. Hanina, a native Babylonian, had come a long way to Palestine to learn, like Joshua, under Judah I. His activity is one of many examples of cross-boundary travel for the sake of learning under a master scholar or in a renowned institution. Joshua's and Hanina's personal contact with Hiyya brought them to Tiberias. Occasionally they came together with other renowned scholars in Hammath Gader (south-east of the Lake Kinneret) to enjoy the hot springs in the company of the Patriarch.

Both colleagues shared part of the travel routes, but unlike Joshua, Hanina was opposed to leaving the Land of Israel and thus their ways parted. Later in life Hanina bar Hama would become head of the Patriarch's Council in Sepphoris, while Joshua ben Levi would return south to his native town of Lydda to head the local academy; he was now a well known *halachist* and *aggadist*.

How much travel effects one's life and enters one's mind becomes apparent, when we read R. Joshua's stories about his journeys to the Garden of Eden and Gehinnom, but such fantastic journeys might be the subject of another "travel" paper.

At that time, the above mentioned Hiyya had already put a good distance behind him. With his learned twin sons, **Hiyya "Rabba"** had immigrated from Cafri (near Sura) in Babylonia⁹ to Palestine. In Tiberias he established a silk business. For his scholarly activity he went to Sepphoris to study under Judah I and to attend his Bet Midrash. Soon the "Babylonian"¹⁰ became an outstanding scholar and was appointed a judge. In his own Bet Midrash, Hiyya transmitted a collection of *baraitot* to his student by the name of Hoshai ben Hama. He, himself, however, did not stay put. Rather, the scholar traveled regularly to towns that lacked instructors for the small children, teaching them the Pentateuch. He encouraged his gifted nephew Rav to establish an academy in Sura, and the latter emulated his uncle and also traveled great distances. Hiyya's pronouncements can be found in both Talmuds, the *Jerushalmi* and the *Bavli*,¹¹ a fact to which we shall return later.

Hoshaiah ben Hama¹² was born in Southern Palestine.¹³ When he was still a child, his father left the family for twelve years in order to study Torah. Hoshaiah - a fuller by trade - initially learned under Bar Kappara (a disciple of Judah I) and Hiyya. Subsequently he became the latter's assistant. Like other scholars from the south, Hoshaiah was close to the Patriarch Judah I.

The significant proclamation of the New Moon had just been newly regulated in the days of Judah I. Hoshaiah, a member of the Council in Sepphoris, was entrusted with hearing the witnesses of the New Moon¹⁴ before messengers were promptly dispatched to convey this

important information to the Jewish communities around the country.¹⁵ Apparently, Hoshaiiah traveled to En Tov for the sanctification of the New Moon. After the Patriarch's death, Hoshaiiah established his own academy in Caesarea.¹⁶ He was renowned for his collection of baraitot not only in the Palestinian academies, but also in Babylonian schools, just like Hiyya.¹⁷

1.1.2 Second Generation (250-290 CE)

Yohanan ben Nappaha was born in Sepphoris. Here, the handsome young orphan spent his student years learning, for a short time, with Judah I, but mainly he studied with the above mentioned scholars, Hanina ben Hama and Hoshaiiah Rabbah, as well as with Yannai Rabbah, the head of the academy at Akbarah. He maintained his ties to the patriarchate and later became principal assistant to Judah II.

After a short interruption due to business engagements, Yohanan returned to the scholarly world. He was a brilliant lecturer and soon gained in popularity, so much so, that he could successfully open his own academy in Tiberias. It attracted the most talented students of that generation, among whom were Abbahu, Ammi, Assi II, Eleazar ben Pedat, and Hiyya b. Abba. These disciples would spread Yohanan's teachings, and his authority was accepted even in Babylonia. When he contemplated going there to visit Rav Samuel, he asked to be spared the hardships of a long journey.¹⁸ He certainly had previous experience traveling as he had visited localities outside Tiberias, e.g. Bet Maon, where he determined halakhic questions.¹⁹

Yohanan's family life was filled with tragedy. During his lifetime he buried ten sons. Towards the end of his life he suffered a mental breakdown brought on by deep mourning over his brother-in-law and friend, Simeon ben Lakish, for whose death he blamed himself.

Simon ben Lakish or **Resh Lakish** was born in Bostra, the capital of the Saracens. The gladiator-turned-scholar²⁰ married Yohanan's sister and henceforth devoted himself to Torah study. Resh Lakish spent most of his years in Sepphoris, where he learned under Yohanan and in time became his leading disciple and colleague. When Yohanan opened his academy in Tiberias, Resh Lakish joined him as an assistant principal. Supposedly, Resh Lakish had visited Caesarea with Abbahu,²¹ and undertaken a long voyage to Bostra in order to collect money, and to help the Jews there find a leader for their community.²²

The Babylonian²³ scholar **Elazar ben Pedat** immigrated to Palestine and accepted ordination there.²⁴ Tiberias was the place where he married. Initially he was a disciple-associate of Yohanan, and after the latter's death he was appointed head of the council.²⁵ It was due to his studies that he had changed his residence several times. In Sepphoris he studied under Hanina (the Av Bet Din)²⁶ and in Caesarea he studied under Hoshaiiah Rabbah. Elazar was one of the great exponents of the tannaitic literature. It will be of further interest to note that Elazar, on many occasions, sent halakhic rulings to the exilarch in Babylonia via messengers, called *nehutei*,²⁷ to whom we shall return below.

Simon ben Pazzi, born into a family from Tiberias, moved south to Lydda where he studied under Joshua ben Levi. In order to maintain close contact with scholars of Tiberias, i.e. with Elazar ben Pedat, Abbahu, and Ammi, Simon occasionally traveled to the north. He may have lectured in Babylonia on halakhic matters.

Also **Simlai**, a native Babylonian from Nehardea,²⁸ resided most of his life in Lydda.²⁹ He spent some time in the Galilee, ministering to Yannai.³⁰ In Sepphoris, he was the associate of young Judah III,³¹ and was a prominent member of Judah II's entourage.³² Simlai "the Lyddaeon", was sent to Nisibis in Babylonia to present a controversial decision made by the Patriarch.³³ Apparently, he also traveled to Antioch in Syria, and gave a ruling there.³⁴

Samuel ben Nahman was born in Lydda.³⁵ In his youth he paid a short visit to Babylonia, and after his return to Palestine, he lived in Sepphoris. There he learned under Joshua ben Levi³⁶ and Jonathan ben Elazar.³⁷ He was very close to Judah II and both journeyed to Tiberias in order to bathe in the hot springs there.³⁸ Samuel made two more official trips to Babylonia. The first case dealt with the intercalation of the calendar,³⁹ and the other instance concerned a petition to the Empress Zenobia, Queen of Palmyra, to pardon a young political criminal.⁴⁰

Simon ben Abba was born into a priestly family in Babylonia⁴¹ and immigrated to Palestine. He studied under Joshua ben Levi in Lydda, and partly under Hanina ben Hama of Sepphoris, but mainly he was a student of Yohanan in Tiberias. Yohanan was not able to ordain his disciple, which ordination would have entitled the latter to sit in judgement by himself. As a consequence, Simon was unable to receive high office and establish himself and so he left for Damascus. Eventually, upon the request of his colleague Abbahu, who had received the appointment which Simon had desired, Simon returned to Palestine.

1.1.3 Third Generation (290-320 CE.)

Abbahu, a native of Caesarea, went up north to study in Tiberias. He was the disciple of Yohanan who influenced his life. He also studied with Resh Lakish and Elazar ben Pedat. Eventually he returned to Caesarea and became the principal of the academy. He headed a group of scholars known as "the rabbis of Caesarea"⁴² and trained many talented students, among them Yose and Jonah, who later on became the heads of the Sanhedrin in Tiberias. Not only was Abbahu well versed in halakhah and aggada, but he was also knowledgeable in secular subjects. The local Roman authorities held Abbahu in high esteem because of his wealth,⁴³ knowledge, and modesty. Besides lecturing in various places, he undertook many official trips within Palestine and abroad, e.g. to Bostra, due to his honoured position in the community and his connection with the authorities.

As was to be expected and desired, sons often followed in the footsteps of their scholarly fathers. Abbahu's son Hanina was sent from Caesarea to Tiberias to further his education. The news spread however, that instead, the son had engaged in physical labour, performing the noble deed of burying the dead. The outcome of the father-son dispute was: Study must precede practical works!⁴⁴

The colleagues, **Ammi (bar Nathan)** and **Assi**, are frequently mentioned together. They were

native Babylonians of priestly descent and undertook the long journey to Palestine in order to study there. Both became outstanding students of Yohanan,⁴⁵ were ordained together, and together they eventually headed the academy in Tiberias. They are referred to as the “distinguished priests of the Holy Land”⁴⁶ and “judges of the Land of Israel.”⁴⁷

At that time Tiberias was the seat of the Patriarchate. Concerned with education, Judah III (Nesiah II) appointed Hiyya ben Abba, Ammi, and Assi to make a tour to inspect, improve, or found schools. This task meant that the three scholars traveled extensively to various towns and villages throughout the land.⁴⁸ For Ammi, it was also a great honour to be asked to accompany the Patriarch when he visited the hot springs in Hammath Gader.⁴⁹

The aforementioned companion of Ammi and Assi, **Hiyya bar Abba**, came from a similar background.⁵⁰ He immigrated to Palestine at a young age and studied in Tiberias. He became the outstanding disciple of Yohanan in whose name he transmitted halakhot.⁵¹ In order to earn a living, Hiyya lectured in various localities and often dealt with communal needs. He visited Gavla (south of the Dead Sea),⁵² Tiberias,⁵³ Sepphoris,⁵⁴ and Tyre.⁵⁵ Furthermore, he traveled as an officially appointed inspector of education. On another occasion he was commissioned by the Patriarch as his emissary to the Diaspora for the purpose of collecting money for the academy, and of appointing leaders for the various communities.⁵⁶ Thus he traveled extensively to the communities in Syria,⁵⁷ Rome,⁵⁸ and Babylonia.⁵⁹

Our last example from this generation is **Zeira** (Ze'eira), one of the highest authorities among Palestinian amoraim.⁶⁰ Babylonia was his home by birth, but the Land of Israel was to become his home by choice. From him stems the saying: *The very atmosphere of the Land of Israel makes one wise.*⁶¹ In his youth he studied in Sura under the eminent scholars, Huna and Hisdai, and in Pumbedita under Judah ben Ezekiel. However, his special interests lay with the teachings of the Palestinian Amoraim. Zeira would ask people, going to Palestine, to clarify Yohanan's views on halakhic matters. When Zeira became dissatisfied with the teaching method employed in the Babylonian schools, he emigrated to Tiberias and studied under Elazar, Ammi, and Assi. He was ordained and he obtained the title Rabbi. He journeyed once more to Babylonia,⁶² before he died in Palestine.

2. Reasons for Travel

The biographies of rabbinical personages enumerate a number of reasons for their movements, some of which are specific to members of this scholarly group, others are not. Some were personal, and others were community related.

Changing one's abode was for certain scholars a matter of life and death. During certain periods in history, political reasons,⁶³ such as persecution by the governing authorities,⁶⁴ or prosecution for political offences,⁶⁵ forced a number of scholars to leave home and flee abroad. Some were forced to seek employment in another place⁶⁶ in order to earn a livelihood.

Recreation, a more enjoyable reason to journey, was reserved for the elite. A select group of Torah scholars, close to the Patriarchate, were able to visit the hot springs in Tiberias or Hammath Gader.

Understandably, the main purpose for travel was, first and foremost, high-level Torah study under master scholars, following initial training elsewhere. The fame of renowned educational centres, such as Tiberias, Sepphoris, Lydda, and Caesarea certainly attracted dozens of students, who undertook voyages from as far away as Babylonia in order to personally advance in religious discipline. To keep up their level of learning to the standards of other colleagues, rabbis participated in yearly conventions that took place in Babylonia.⁶⁷ Religious leaders had to be ordained before they were allowed to give religio-legal decisions or to perform judicial functions.⁶⁸ Ordination was required, e.g. to intercalate months and years. During the era under study, the Patriarch needed to give his consent before individual rabbis could ordain⁶⁹ their own students who then received the title Rabbi.⁷⁰ In Talmudic times ordination could only be granted by Palestinian scholars to scholars currently residing in the Holy Land. Thus migration from the diaspora to Palestine was necessary in order to become a Rabbi.

For the purpose of disseminating Torah knowledge, the Amoraim taught not only locally but also traveled out-of-town. For the purpose of transmitting teachings, clarifications, or decisions, the Amoraim visited other authorities, frequently over long distances. If they were not able to journey themselves, they would send messengers, as illustrated in such a passage: “Know that X send word in the name of Y that”⁷¹

At the end of the third century CE a new phenomenon started whereby scholars commuted and brought the traditions of the rabbinic schools in Palestine “down” to the Babylonian academies. They are known as *nehutei* (sing. *nehuta*: one who goes down).⁷² The appellation, ‘one who goes down’, was first applied to Ulla ben Ishmael,⁷³ who went down to Babylonia on the invitation of the exilarch to lecture on matters of halakhah that he transmitted in the name of his teachers, Yohanan, Resh Lakish, Elazar ben Pedat, Hoshaiah, and Joshua ben Levi. By the first half of the 4th century, the name *Nehutei* was also given to such commuting scholars, born in Babylonia. They traveled “up and down”, bringing the Palestinian teachings and maxims to Babylonia, and returning with the Babylonian halakhot to Palestine. For example, the *nehuta Rabin* (Abina) from Tiberias emigrated to Babylonia in 337 with Samuel bar Abba. He communicated the Babylonian halakhot to his teacher Jeremiah ben Abba in Palestine.⁷⁴ Best known is **Dimi**, who even acquired the cognomen *Nahota*. His statements are introduced by the phrase: *When Rav Dimi came, he said....* He communicated the rulings of Yohanan, Resh Lakish, and Elazar to scholars of Pumbedita in the days of Joseph and Abbay. He settled permanently in Babylonia, presumably because of the political situation in Palestine.⁷⁵ For this very reason, together with the decrease of Torah study in the homeland, signified the end of the mission of the *nehutei*.⁷⁶

Amoraim sometimes traveled on behalf of their communities. Reasons for such travels included: a) diplomatic missions as far as Rome in order to meet the Jewish community and the

authorities; b) the collecting of money;⁷⁷ c) the establishment, inspection, and evaluation of schools throughout the country; d) clarification of family purity;⁷⁸ e) delivering letters - personally or via messengers, "from one place to another, from one province to another." We read of one case where a *get* (bill of divorce) was delivered.⁷⁹ Another reason would be the redemption of captives,⁸⁰ however, for this period in time, I have found only cases that illustrate this *mitzvah* within city boundaries. Neither have I come across pilgrimages to Jerusalem, as I did in the tannaitic period.⁸¹

Finally, we also encounter Amoraim on their last journey. Coffin after coffin traveled the roads and seaways to the necropolis at Beth She'arim in the Galilee. In the third century CE⁸² Jews began the custom of re-interment in the Land of Israel.⁸³ Since the burial of the revered Rabbi Judah I, his family and his followers, Beth She'arim became a magnet for Jews of importance in Palestine and in the entire Diaspora of the Middle East. Rav Huna (d. 296), for example, principal of the academy of Sura and long-time leader of Babylonian Jewry, requested to be buried in Palestine. Thus, his disciples had to set out on a long voyage, accompanying the coffin to its owner's last resting place, the vault of the Babylonian Hiyya.⁸⁴ Ulla ben Ishmael passed away while in Babylonia, and his remains were brought back home.

2. The Rabbis Perceptions of Travel

Unlike the relative comfort and pleasure of modern-day travel, *in Late Antiquity, travel meant confrontation with land and sea. And land and sea often set limits to the times and places of travel.*⁸⁵ For rabbis, like for all travelers, voyages, particularly long distance voyages, presented challenges.

2.1 Travel means hardship

Benefitting from the Romans, the Amoraim were able to make use of a network of roads throughout the region. Roman roads were built for military use, were paved and well maintained, with milestones as location markers.⁸⁶ Along the Mediterranean coast, between Acco and Ashkalon, rabbis could travel with relative ease by foot,⁸⁷ or ride on donkeys.⁸⁸ Often though, they visited remote villages off the beaten track, in order to teach. Once off the main roads and turning onto byways or trodden paths, journeying became arduous and exhausting. Narrow paths wound through difficult terrain and along cliffs. Paths were either dusty or clogged with mud, were filled with boulders and thorny bushes.⁸⁹ One can just imagine how a traveler would have looked at the end of the day. No wonder the rabbis declared that *through journeying a person becomes despised.*⁹⁰

2.2 Travel means danger

Then, there was the exposure to the elements, the hot sun during the summer, the cold during the winter months accompanied by pouring rain, that made traveling a challenge. Though rain is the spender of life for the land and is prayed for on the Day of Yom Kippur, for the wayfarer it is not a thing to be prayed for. Wayfarers pray for dry weather.⁹¹ Thus the High Priest urged the people, ... *not [to] turn to the prayer of wayfarers.* Rain, for the traveler, means not only discomfort; rain naturally increases the dangers of land and sea travel.⁹² It can cost the traveler

his life, as well as that of his animal, in overflowing wadis or when rivers are in flood. At times it was necessary to ford a stream or river, but the rabbis warn: *do not cross a river that is swollen*.⁹³ Crossing had to be delayed until the water abated in order to avoid drowning.

Travel was slow, between 15 and 20 miles a day by foot,⁹⁴ and journeys may have taken days, weeks, even months. It took two days from Joppa to Caesarea, three days from the Galilee to Jerusalem, and about three months from Susa to the Aegean on the 'Royal Road'.⁹⁵ Sometimes people suffered, during their absence from home, because drinking water was scarce or because the food supply ran out or was not palatable. They suffered because of the weather and because of illnesses.

Extremely dangerous were encounters with wild animals or scorpions, or with evil fellow travelers,⁹⁶ robbers and bandits.⁹⁷ On one of his return trips from Babylonia to Palestine, Ulla feared being murdered by one of his fellow travelers, who had just assassinated another companion.⁹⁸ When the Babylonian Amora Zeira II came to study in Palestine, he was captured by highwaymen. Ammi and Samuel attempted to procure his release. While they were negotiating with the leader of the brigands, news arrived of a neighbouring bloody gang warfare and in the confusion Zeira escaped.⁹⁹ The Amoraim were well aware of the dangers that lurked outside their safe habitations. Hanina asserted: *All roads are presumed to be dangerous*.¹⁰⁰ Therefore, before Yannai would set out on a voyage, he left orders how to dispose of his property in case an accident should occur to him.¹⁰¹

Sea voyages were made impossible by storms from Autumn to Spring.¹⁰² Safe sea journeys ended by September or the beginning of October. Sukkoth was considered the time to stop traveling. Hiyya b. Abba advised his brother, who had asked Hiyya to pray for him: *When you tie your lulav, tie your boat*.¹⁰³ Yet, there were still some who chanced these dangers from the middle of October to the end of December (from Sukkoth until Hanukkah), *when the seas show their might, being storm swept*.¹⁰⁴ Surviving such a trip on a *path in the mighty waters* is perceived to be a gift from God.¹⁰⁵ Over the winter until May (Shavuot),¹⁰⁶ all sea travel and the affiliated fast communication, ceased.

A midrash tells that Joshua b. Tanhum b. Hiyya of Kefar Hagin was traveling in Asia Minor and wanted to undertake a journey by sea between Sukkoth and Hanukkah. He neither heeded the warnings of a Roman matron, nor those of his father, and as a consequence he died at sea without a proper burial.¹⁰⁷ According to one view,¹⁰⁸ sailing on the ocean was perceived to be perilous and was considered to be one of three circumstances under which men die, i.e. they are in danger of death.

One message that we get from the above midrash is, that if you keep on taking risks, eventually you will come to grief. Thus, travel may result in **loss of one's life**. The following examples will demonstrate that in the rabbis' perception, travel meant loss.

2.3 Travel means loss

The 4th c. Palestinian Amora Berekhiah transmits additional examples of the adverse effects of travel, namely the likelihood that it will *diminish procreation, and reduce one's wealth, and one's fame*.¹⁰⁹ We find this maxim repeated:¹¹⁰

*Travel injures a man in three ways, viz. It reduces his procreative activities, diminishes his ready money (lit. powers of expenditure), and obscures his fame.*¹¹¹

2.3.1 Loss of children

Travel interferes with development of the family. It requires absence from home, ie. separation from one's wife, and this works as a 'natural birth control'. This, however, is against the Biblical command to procreate. Nevertheless in professions, such as merchants or seafarers, separation cannot be avoided and the "damage" is done. Under such circumstances, the voyager should at least return home immediately, so that the wife can conceive and bear offspring. R. Aha¹¹² teaches that Adam's continual desire for his wife is *a hint to seafarers to remember their homes and repair thither immediately*.¹¹³

2.3.2 Loss of money

Travel lessens one's substance. Voyages to distant lands are especially costly. Donkeys and donkey drivers may have to be hired; food has to be bought at some point; overnight accommodation at inns has to be paid. All this means extra expenses. Moreover, goods cannot be produced, and services cannot be provided while walking or sitting on donkeys. Income is lost from what could have been sold or traded on market days.

The proverb: *From house to house a garment; from place to place a soul*,¹¹⁴ is further affirmation that a change of abode causes the loss of goods, of health, and possibly of one's life.

2.3.3 Loss of fame

The English saying "out-of-sight out of mind" seems to be closest to the meaning of this concept. But it is not that simple! In the ancient world, honour played a dominant role, and the value of a person depended on the acknowledgment from one's group, for example, one's family, one's town, or one's country. If honour was confirmed, the result was a certain status. By leaving one's town one left the source of one's honour. Extensive traveling, consequently, decreased the acknowledgment and recognition one had enjoyed.

2.3.4 Loss of strength

Tanhum bar Jeremiah states:¹¹⁵

Four things weaken a man's strength, viz. fasting, a journey, sin, and the kingdom of Babylon. 'A journey', as it is written, He weakened my strength in the way.(Ps, CII, 24)

This maxim reads in Lam. R. I.14.43:

*Three things weaken a man's strength, viz. fear, a journey, and fasting.*¹¹⁶

This clearly refers to the sapping of human strength because of the arduous nature of long distance travel. The ensuing loss of one's physical strength may also signify sexual impotence.

2.3.5 Loss of beauty

*Through journeying a person becomes despised*¹¹⁷

The mishna maintains that traveling takes its toll on one's features. In the face of this common knowledge the matriarch Sara¹¹⁸ at the end of her journey, in contrast to an ordinary person, had nevertheless retained her beauty.

Geography, the elements, wild animals, and evil people that rabbis encountered while walking, riding, or sailing, brought about suffering, fear, and loss 1) of life, 2) of children, 3) of money, 4) of fame, 5) of strength, and 6) of beauty. Altogether, a very negative picture of travel.

In conclusion we would like to point out that the Torah scholars, on the one hand, belonged to an elite class, while it cannot be ignored that there were many members who were hardly able to make a living, and some were even extremely poor. These latter rabbis were effected differently by travel from their more affluent colleagues. Yonathan's view on the voyage to Babylonia portrays the elite's disdain for stresses and strains. However, shorter trips could be quite enjoyable. For example, wealthy rabbis, those members of the Patriarch's court, who could afford personal comfort, guards and servants, a short trip to the hot springs of Tiberias or Hamat Gader, in esteemed company might very well have been a pleasurable social event that they delighted in, even before arriving at their destination.

3. Rabbis, the Travelers

The following chapter pertains to travel itself. We look at the course of the event, the steps that according to the rabbis had to be taken, starting with preparations, the time spent on the road, and the return.

3.1 Preparations

The following issues had to be taken care of before leaving for 'the open road.' Taking care of oneself, of the household, and of obligations towards the creator. This involves provisions to be made, obligations fulfilled, and protection requested.

3.1.1 Provisions for one's physical well-being

Rabbis gave the advice: *If a man sets out on a journey without adequate provisions, he will suffer.*¹¹⁹

This involves taking along a sufficient supply of water (in skins),¹²⁰ of food, and of clothing.¹²¹ If the traveler is well supplied, at least there is hope that the journey will be endurable. For a longer journey, money may need to be brought along in order to purchase food. Hiring a donkey to ride and to carry one's supplies,¹²² may ease the journey.

3.1.2. Provisions for one's household

*Whenever R. Jannai went out into the open street he first left orders in his house.*¹²³ Thus Yannai set a good example of taking care of one's family by making advance provisions should one have the misfortune of meeting with an accident.

3.1.3 Absolution of marital obligations

For the sake of *Shalom bait* - peace at home - the rabbis felt obligated to the wife to engage in marital relations, otherwise the traveler would be depriving her too much of her rights during his absence. Joshua b. Levi advises: *It is a man's duty to pay a visit to his wife when he start on a journey; for it is said, And you shalt know that thy tent is in peace*¹²⁴

3.1.4 Absolution of religious obligations

Certain religious obligations that would normally be attended to during the time that the person is on the road should be absolved before the onset of a journey. They may otherwise be hard to perform while traveling, either because of the lack of concentration, or because the quorum of men cannot be found. All these obligations pertain to prayer¹²⁵ and to religious rites.

3.1.4.1 Recital of the Shmonei Esrei - Eighteen Blessings

Shmuel's father and Levi, insisted that the *Shmonei Esrei* was to be said at home even before the preferred time arrives. *When they wished to set out on a journey early in the morning, [they] would pray the Shmonei Esrei at home before day, and later on during the journey, when the time for reciting the Shema would arrive, they would recite it.*

3.1.4.2 Performing rites

Rites that require cult objects have to be performed. A Tanna in a baraita said:

If one arose early to set out on the way, they bring him a shofar and he blows; lulav and he waves it; a Megillah and he reads from it. He then begins traveling. When the time for shema arrives, he recites it; [as well as Shmonei Esrei at this point, interrupting his journey while standing still if traveling by foot].

If one arose early to take his place in a wagon or a boat, he prays the Shmonei Esrei at home before setting out. And when the time for Shema arrives, he recites it. [If unable to say Shmonei Esrei due to the motion of the wagon, or for fear of standing in a boat in water, he should pray at home].

If standing up is not feasible, Kamma declares: *a person should pray Shmonei Esrei at home where he can stand and thus enhance concentration, although doing so will cause him to forfeit the redemption blessing to the Shmonei Esrei.* Samuel's father and Levi, who were also traveling in a manner in which standing was not possible, adopted this view.

3.1.5 Provisions for Protection

For the purpose of protection, rabbis made provisions for the traveler to become an agent and for recital of the wayfarer's prayer.

3.1.5.1 Making an agent for charity

*Those with a mission to perform a mitzva are not liable to be harmed*¹²⁶

This adage forms the basis for the practice of making the traveler into an agent before embarking on a journey, to transmit charity for you when he reaches his destination. In this way he is entitled to the Heavenly care.

3.1.5.2 Praying for Protection

In the light of the harm that may befall a traveler, divine protection is sought by means of praying. Apparently, this was already a longstanding tradition among the Tannaim who commanded¹²⁷

And when you set out on the way, beg leave of your Creator and then set out.

This was taken by Hisdai¹²⁸ (cited by Yaakov)¹²⁹ as a reference to the wayfarer's prayer.¹³⁰

Whoever sets out on the road must pray the wayfarer's prayer.

Originally, the text of the wayfarer's prayer - tefillat ha-derek - was as follows:

May it be Your will, Hashem, my God, that You lead me toward peace, emplace my footsteps toward peace, and uphold me in peace. May you rescue me from the hand of every foe and from ambush along the way. May You send blessing in my handiwork, and grant me grace, kindness and mercy in Your eyes and in the eyes of all who see me. Blessed are You, Hashem, Who listens to prayer.

Abaye (Nahmani)¹³¹ emended the text of this prayer by pluralizing it. His logic is that a person (reciting this prayer) should always associate himself with the congregation, and by including others who might be traveling at the same time, his prayer would be more readily accepted.

Thus:

*May it be Your will, Hashem, our God that you lead **us** towards peace ...*

At what point during the trip does the obligation fall upon the traveler? Yaakov said in the name of Hisdai:

From the moment that he travels along the way

This is understood to mean not within the city borders, even though he has already left his house and has begun to leave town.¹³²

The next issue needing clarification was the point in time when the traveler may recite the prayer? Yaakov said in the name of Hisdai:

Until a parsah (= 1 Persian mile i.e. 8,000 amos = 15,000 to 16,000 feet into his journey).

Therefore, once the traveler had traveled more than a parsah, he may no longer recite this prayer.¹³³ For doing so this far along into the journey is no longer considered *begging leave of one's Creator*.¹³⁴

The last clarification pertains to the position in which one prays. While Hisdai said: *Standing in one place*, but Sheshet¹³⁵ said: *Even while traveling*.

To this day, the obligation to recite the wayfarer's prayer is taken extremely seriously. Many Rabbinical scholars have written extensively on the rules as they apply now.¹³⁶

3.2 Rabbis on the Road

At this point we shall present the way that rabbis traveled. We find a number of admonitions that were directed to their a) travel times (day time and seasons); b) mode of walking (pace and mood); c) companionship (kind of travel fellows); d) subject of thought and speech (kind of discussion); e) places of designations.

3.2.1 Times advised to travel

For safety reasons, rabbis advised one should travel only during daytime: *When you travel abroad, set out on your journey with the dawn and turn in for the night before darkness falls*.¹³⁷ In the same sense is the directive to enter the lodging while the sun is still shining: *and enter the city by day*¹³⁸ *at the latest with the going down of the sun*.¹³⁹

Further, at certain times in the year, travel routes that involved water had to be avoided. For example, sea voyages: *When you tie your lulav, tie your boat*.¹⁴⁰ Or, rivers: *Do not cross a river that is swollen*.¹⁴¹

There was no travel on Sabbath. Rabbis prohibited travel on the Sabbath beyond a distance of 2000 cubits from one's own town.¹⁴² Thus, the limit of about half a mile beyond the town's border made longer travel impossible.

3.2.2 Mode of Walking

The traveler is advised *Do not take large (long) strides*.¹⁴³ According to one view, the reason for this injunction is to avoid injury. It is to avoid agitatío, according to another view, since it is maintained that the fast rate of moving, by taking large strides, causes a certain degree of agitation.¹⁴⁴ The traveler is also commanded: *Do not become agitated on the way*,¹⁴⁵ the reason being not to become distracted and lose one's way.¹⁴⁶ The Gemara explains the benefit of the baraita's teaching: *Do not take long strides* for the master said: *A large stride takes away one five-hundredth of the light of a person's eyes*.¹⁴⁷

3.2.3 Food for the road

Hiyya gives the directive (cited by Yehud):

One who is traveling on the road should not eat more than he would in years of famine, when one

must eat very minimally. What is the reason? Here [Babylonia] they explain because of possible disorder of the intestines.¹⁴⁸ - In the West [ie. Land of Israel] they say: Because of food¹⁴⁹

The Gemara asks: What is the practical difference between these two reasons? It is seen in the case of one who sits on a ship. He must be concerned that his food might not suffice for the journey, but since he is not traveling by foot, he need not be concerned that eating his regular portions will cause him harm.¹⁵⁰ Alternatively, a difference between the two explanations is seen in the case of one who travels from a merchants' inn in one village to a merchants' inn in another village. Since food is available at each stop, he need be concerned only about the harmful effects of his regular portions.¹⁵¹

That rabbis in fact stayed at inns in order to eat is seen in the story of Joshua ben Hanania:¹⁵²
Once I was staying at a certain inn and the hostess made me beans.

3.2.4 Activity on the road: Torah study

While part of the directives pertains to common precautions for safety reasons, some others are specific to scholars, whose occupation is learning Torah day and night. Therefore it is not surprising that travel should interfere as little as possible with this primary obligation.

While traveling, a rabbi was expected to make use of the time to learn Torah, meditate, or review what he had studied. The first dictum thus requires:

Do not refrain from religious study¹⁵³

The Gemara questions this statement. But Ilai b. Berekhia said:

Two Torah scholars who are traveling on the road and words of Torah are not spoken between them, deserve to be burned. For it is stated IIKgs 2:11 Elijah and Elisha discussing matters of Torah.

Gemara answers: That ruling by R'Ilai was with regards to reciting and reviewing one's learning. Since this activity does not require great concentration, one must perform it while traveling. However that interpretation of Elazar is that it concerned analyzing teachings of the Torah. Since such contemplation requires great concentration one should abstain from it while traveling lest one becomes distracted and loses ones way.

The second dictum by the Tanna Hanania ben Hakhinai warns basically, not to waste time when one is free (e.g. from work). Idleness in the perception of the rabbis is an obstacle for ever advancing in the spiritual life.

*He who is awake at night, or **travels alone on the road**, and turns his heart to idle thoughts, he incurs guilt to pay with his life¹⁵⁴*

The third dictum, by Elazar, specifically forbids discussing halakhah because this activity takes much concentration and mental occupation. As a result, one can easily get lost and this has dire consequences with regard to one's safety.

*Do not discuss Halakic subjects, that you lose not your way*¹⁵⁵

The fourth dictum, by Joshua b. Levi, compares Torah to pleasant company. To study Torah is a requirement:

One who travels on the road without any company should study Torah as it says: For they [the words of Torah] are a gracious accompaniment for your head, and chains around your neck¹⁵⁶

The fifth dictum, by Yaacov,¹⁵⁷ also warns about idleness. Although the beauties of Nature have to be strongly appreciated - for some have special blessings to be said - they cannot take precedence over the study of Torah for which travel time provides a good opportunity.

*He who travels on the road while reviewing what he has studied, and interrupts himself, and says, 'How beautiful is this tree! How beautiful is this field!' Scripture regards him as though he has incurred guilt to pay with his life*¹⁵⁸

3.2.5 Absolution of prayers

A traveler's religious obligations while traveling lie in the recitation of prayers, as well as Torah study. The former include a) the regular prayers that express reference for God to be recited at certain times of a day; and b) a special prayer for a dangerous situation.

3.2.5.1 The Shema and the Shemone Esrei on the road

Should the prayer time arrive while traveling, the Shema and the Amida have to be recited then and there. Shimon ben Eleazar says:

In either case, whether travelling by foot, or in a boat or in a wagon, he recites the Shema and prays, so as to join the redemption blessing to the prayer

Rabbis discussed the question of whether one who is riding on a donkey has to dismount and say the Shmonei Esre (that is commonly said while standing - Amida) The Mishna teaches that the traveller who is riding on a donkey, has to dismount and pray.¹⁵⁹

The Gemara cites a baraita:

If one was riding on a donkey and the time for prayer arrived - if he has someone to hold the donkey while he prays, he should dismount and pray. If not, he sits in his place upon the donkey and prays there.

Thus, under certain circumstances, it was permitted to continue riding along while praying. This scenario is further expounded upon when Rabbi says:

*In either case he sits in his place and prays because his mind is not settled.*¹⁶⁰

R' Yehoshua ben Levi said: the law is in accord with Rabbi. That means one prays in a sitting position while riding an animal.

3.2.5.2 The “Short Prayer”

Under normal circumstances the traveler has to recite the complete Shemone Esrei. However, when he finds himself in unsafe territory infested with bands of wild animals and robbers, he cannot concentrate properly. He is allowed to say a “short prayer.” Yehoshua says:

One who travels in a dangerous place prays a ‘short prayer’ (and says: Save, O Hashem, Your nation, the remnant of Israel).¹⁶¹

This “Short prayer” may be recited while standing or, in case of danger, while riding the donkey.

3.2.5.3 Praise the wonders of the world

The traveler who undertakes long journeys surely encountered many wonderful things. Beautiful trees, seas, deserts, mountains, and valleys, thunderstorms, and rainbows would have inspired awe. He has plenty of opportunities to bless his creator, *who has such [things] in his world*. For trees he says: *Who makes the work of creation*; and for rainbows he says: *Who remembers the Covenant*.¹⁶²

3.2.5.4 Greeting other travelers

To end this part in ‘peace’, I mention Jose ben Kisma, a Tanna in Caesarea, who reports an encounter with a man on the road, who greeted him first as a sign of respect. In accepting each other’s greeting, they both shared “peace.” To greet people on the street or by entering a house was a pleasant rite.¹⁶³

I was travelling on the road when a man met me and greeted me. I returned his greeting.

3.2.6 Companionship during Travel

It was considered a deed of kindness (mitzva) to escort a traveler on his way, or to make arrangements for him.¹⁶⁴ For example, Rav Kahana escorted Rav Shimi bar Ashi from Pumbedra to Bei Tzinyasa of Babylon.¹⁶⁵ The extent of the accompaniment was dependent on one’s status. Thus a teacher walks with a student only to the town limit; a colleague goes with another colleague to the Sabbath walking limit; the pupil accompanies the teacher without limit.¹⁶⁶ The latter was defined by Sheshet as one Persian mile; however, three Persian miles for his main teacher.

We now turn to travel companions, and we shall see who traveled along with whom, who was an acceptable fellow traveler, and who was undesirable.

3.2.6.1 Teacher-Disciple

Often teacher and student traveled together. Their different status afforded rules that did not apply to companions of equal rank, not unlike the relationship between a master and a servant.¹⁶⁷ It was required that a student accompany his teacher on journeys and should attend to his needs - just like at home. In this way, the student honoured his teacher. In the ancient world it was not proper that a master should attend the servant. The proper way to travel was, for the rabbis, confirmed by Balaam, who had his two servants with him.

*This is the proper way, viz. that when a man [of eminence] goes out on a journey two people should attend on him, so that they can afterwards attend on each other.*¹⁶⁸

Thus we find the rule of conduct that a master and servant should not travel alone, but rather in threes. Because, when it becomes necessary to attend the other, the master should not attend the servant, but two equal ranking servants would be responsible for each other. A directive by Aibu mirrors this proper conduct.

*The Torah teaches you a good conduct, to wit, that a man should not set out on a journey accompanied by less than two persons, for if he does he will eventually become a servant to his servant. One servant would he might compelled to wait on that servant if anything should happen to him.*¹⁶⁹

Frequently in our sources we find two rabbis traveling together who were friends, colleagues, or a teacher and his student. A good example is, Ammi and Assi,¹⁷⁰ or Hisdai and Sheshet.¹⁷¹ The evidence is that these are suitable for each other as travel companions. The 'ideal' companion was someone you could relate to because you had the same world view, and particularly, for whom Torah was equally important. They could trust each other and 'spoke the same language'. There were, however, certain kinds of people that were unacceptable or undesirable companions.

3.2.7 Undesirable Travel Companions

3.2.7.1 Ammei haaretz¹⁷²

Already the earlier rabbis had advised that one must not travel along with a so-called *am haaretz*. Eleazar said:

*It is forbidden to accompany an am haaretz on a journey as it is stated (Deut.30:20), for it [the Torah] is your life and the length of your days. Since he lacks regard for his own life, as it is evident from his abandonment of the Torah, how much more so will he lack regard for the life of his fellow man.*¹⁷³

By forsaking the study of the Torah, which - according to the rabbis' view - sustains life, an *am haaretz* shows that he is reckless even with his own welfare. Therefore, he was not believed to have concern for the welfare of others and might even kill them, probably because a journey through uninhabited areas affords opportunities for murder.¹⁷⁴

Another baraita taught:

*Six laws were stated regarding ammei haaretz:..... . We do not accompany them on a journey.*¹⁷⁵

The reason, in some rabbis' view, was that an *am haaretz*, because he was not versed in Torah, fails to observe the mitzvot fully and does not engage in an useful occupation. He might not know the gravity of the obligation to save another person's life. Consequently in case of an attack by beasts or bandits, he might not exert himself sufficiently to rescue his companion.¹⁷⁶ At certain times in history, both groups (learned and *ammei haaretz*) had been very hostile to each other. Then, accompaniment was certainly out of question.

3.2.7.2 Gentiles

Judah I would not take Romans along on his way to the government in Rome. His reason was that Jacob rightfully rejected Esau's company.¹⁷⁷ On one occasion the Patriarch did accept the Romans' company and, *before he reached Acco he had already sold his coat.*¹⁷⁸ Apparently, they had robbed him of everything he had.

It was certainly unavoidable that Jews and non-Jews sometimes walked part of the way together, either on business or by chance. But it appears, according to some teachings,¹⁷⁹ that one should not trust gentiles. It was advised not to bend down, never to turn one's back on the gentile, lest the non-Jew would crack his head open with an axe, nor should one disclose his destination or itinerary, for fear of ambush.

3.3 After the Journey

What do the rabbis tell us of the effects and consequences of travel?

3.3.1 Health

A number of statements link travel to health related problems in the event that the body has not been allowed to recuperate. For example, since travel signifies agitation, this restlessness is allegedly paralleled by the health of one's offspring. Alternatively, the loss of strength was paralleled in weaklings.

*Rabba bar Huna*¹⁸⁰said: *"Returning from a journey, has marital intercourse, his children will be hectic" (or weaklings)*

Another statement acknowledges the fatigue and exhaustion resulting from traveling. Rabbis, in their wisdom, warn that upon his return, a worn-out body would not endure additionally strenuous activities and that immediate death would occur.

*Who comes weary from a journey, lets blood, takes a bath, drinks wine, sleeps on the ground, and has sexual relations, dies immediately.*¹⁸¹

Three things weaken a man's strength, namely anxiety, traveling and sin. ... traveling as it is written, He weakened my strength in the way¹⁸²

Evidently, traveling took a tremendous toll on a body.

3.3.2 Ablution of Blessing: Gomer¹⁸³ (He who bestows)

If it happens that a traveler crosses the sea or a desert then he is obligated to pronounce a blessing to his Creator¹⁸⁴ as thanks for having escaped great danger. The blessing should be said in the "assembly of the people."¹⁸⁵

Blessed is He who bestows loving kindness

3.3.3 State of Impurity

Lastly, I would like to mention one more consequence of travel, that is impurity. Near the end of the Second Temple period, there was a great concern for purity. Impurity, contracted for example by corpses, could only be removed by "consecrated water" containing the ashes of the red heifer. With the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE new ashes could no longer be prepared. By the time of the Bar Kokhba Revolt, it became clear that many of these laws could no longer be observed. And yet, the notion of purity was so all-pervasive that people still tried to avoid any further occasion for contracting this condition. The issue of journeys to non-Jewish, i.e. polluted, countries was still under discussion among the Amoraim.¹⁸⁶ The rabbis discussed whether a priest was allowed to contract impurity by visiting such places. It was ruled that it was permissible for the purpose of conducting legal business, for marriage purposes, and to learn Torah. The latter, in spite of the fact that one could learn Torah at home. But Yose replied that it is permissible since it is normal that one cannot learn from just anybody. He relates the story that the priest Joseph followed his teacher to Cajdan (a place of non-Jewish town festivals)¹⁸⁷ to study Torah. Yohanan confirmed the halakhah as stated by Yose.

4. Epilogue - travelogue

We conclude this paper with a couple of adventure stories. Certain rabbis who traveled extensively by land and sea encountered many wondrous phenomena that were unknown to others. They may have reported what they saw, or what they think they saw in big cities,¹⁸⁸ deserts or at sea. Travel entered their imagination, and fantastic stories of sea monsters and fish abound. Yochanan, for example, related the story of a sea voyage where they saw a fish emerging from the water with eyes like moons. Water gushed from its two nostrils like the two rivers of Sura.¹⁸⁹ Rabbah bar Bar Hana, a Babylonian, who studied for some time in Yohanan's academy, became famous for his stories related by seafarers and other travelers.¹⁹⁰ One of his sea stories is the following:¹⁹¹

Once we were going in a ship and we saw a certain fish. Sand settled on its back and a meadow sprouted on it. We thought that it was an island of dry land and we went up

and we baked and cooked on it. When its back became hot it turned over, and if not for the fact that the ship was nearby we would have drowned (bB.B.73b)

Were these tales believed? Contemporary scholars spoke out sharply against Rabbah bar Bar Hana,¹⁹² and yet, with time these stories have been explained as allegories or dreams.

5. Conclusion

I would like to conclude this paper by demonstrating the connection between travel and religion from the rabbis' perspective. This brief survey shows that the rabbis were very much on the road, mostly for reasons associated with the study and teaching of Torah. The whole dynamic can be summarized as follows:¹⁹³

Interpreting Jud.5:10, the ones riding on red she-asses are the scholars who travel from town to town and from province to province to study Torah, to elucidate the latter, and judge justly; the ones walking on the road are the scholars versed in Scriptures, who are knowledgeable in the Mishna; and those who speak are those knowledgeable in the Talmud, whose talk is always Torah.

The rabbis traveled for the purpose of advancing their own knowledge under master scholars, to gain knowledge of the teachings of earlier rabbis, as well as that of the masters of their own generation. In going from place to place, and academy to academy, they took with them the learning of their own teachers and disseminated it among the scholars and the Jewish community at large, much like bees transporting pollen from flower to flower.

We can classify the three main consequences of these travels in terms of the effects they had on the rabbis themselves, on their students and on future generations.

1. The rabbis advanced their personal development in religious studies under expert teachers to ever higher standards than would otherwise have been impossible. They broadcast this increased knowledge to others, in much the same way as modern university academics do.
2. The rabbis influenced education and strengthened Jewish life everywhere in many lands, by raising the standard of religious, moral and ethical behaviour. They brought knowledge of the Jewish way of life and of *halachot* into little towns that would otherwise not have had experience of any learned leadership. They answered questions posed by the people concerning religious procedures, in the manner prescribed by God, thus keeping the public's allegiance.
3. Since Torah learning and practice was such an all-encompassing driving force for the rabbis, it is little wonder that the major Torah statute:¹⁹⁴ "You shall be Holy, for I your God am Holy," manifested itself in all aspects of life, including travel. As an example, the need to acquit oneself as holy, is what led rabbis to promulgate such edicts as the manner of travel and the attendant prayers and liturgy. In particular, a new prayer at the start of a voyage, newly abridged versions of prayer to be said during travel, as well as a new prayer to be recited upon one's return from a journey, were all formulated and have prevailed to this day. Even nowadays, in modern times, we still experience the legacy of the *nehutei*, as they traveled "up and down,"

bringing the Palestinian teachings and maxims to Babylonia, and the Babylonian *halakhot* back to Palestine.

As a result of the connections established by the *nehutei* between the academies of Eretz Israel and Babylonia, the mutual knowledge of these two large communities was increased, and the Oral Law was prevented from developing separately, with the two communities becoming two nations, alien one to another.¹⁹⁵

NOTES

¹See the editors' introduction to *Travel, Communication and Geography in Late Antiquity. Sacred and profane* (ed. Linda Ellis and Frank L. Kidner; Ashgate, 2004)

²Rabbis here signify Jewish scholars and teachers versed in written and oral tradition. According to the time they were active and their function, they are known as a) Tannaim (to c.200-220 CE, who expounded and recited the law, eventually reciting tannaitic literature orally in the amoraic academies); and b) Amoraim (c.220 CE to the completion of the Talmuds, who interpreted the mishnah).

³*The Talmud of the Land of Israel: a Preliminary Translation and Explanation. Talmud Yerushalmi.* Trans. by Jacob Neusner. 35 vols. Chicago: University Press, 1982 - ; *Talmud Bavli: the Gemara: the classic Vilna ed. with an cannot., interpr.. elucidation, as an aid to Talmud study/under the general editorship of Hersh Goldwurm and Nosson Sherman.* Brooklyn, NY: Menorah Publications, 1990-; *Babylonian Talmud, Midrash Rabbah.* Trans. into English with Notes, Glossary and Indices under the Editorship of Rabbi Dr. H. Freedman et al. New Compact Ed. in 5 vols. London: The Soncino Press, 1977; *Ethics from Sinai.* An eclectic, wide-ranging commentary on Pirke Avoth. Ed. Irving M. Bunim, Philipp Feldheim: NY, 1964.

⁴In interpreting Ps 75:7 the rabbis ask for the implication of the expression 'For neither from the east nor from the west'? It is not from the fact that a man goes out and works hard to do business, going from east to west, that he becomes rich. Nay, even when he sails away in ships and travels from east to west, going backwards and forwards in the deserts and on the mountain, he does not become rich. It teaches the Scripture that God is judge; He puts you down, and lifts up another.

⁵R. Isaac (to Gen. XII, 1): "...a man who was travelling from place to place when he saw a building in flames." (Gen. R. XXXIX.1); R. Simeon b. Halafta (to Ex. 32:8): "A man on a journey after walking two or three miles may begin to wander from his path in the third, but surely it is not usual for him to stray in the very first mile, is it?" Ex. R. XLII. 8); Abin (to Num.28:1): "... a king who was journeying in the desert. (Lev. R. VII. 4).

⁶Initial information on the individual rabbis are found in Alfred J. Kolatch, *Who's Who in the Talmud*, New York: Jonathan David Publishers, 1981; Gershom Bader, *Encyclopedia of Talmudic Sages*, 1988; *Encyclopedia Judaica*. Jerusalem: Macmillan, 1971; see further, W. Bacher, *Aggadot Amorai Eretz Israel, I/I.* Tel-Aviv, 1929. (Hebrew).

⁷With his colleagues Hanina bar Hama, Rav, and Jonathan (jBerakhot5:1, 9a)

⁸Gen. Rabbah 78:5.

⁹bSukka 20a.

¹⁰As he was referred to, see Gen. Rabba 26:4.

¹¹The former are the collected discussions in Palestinian academies, the latter those from Babylonia.

¹²Sometimes written Oshaiah.

¹³jNidda 3:2; bKetuvim 62b.

¹⁴jNedarim 6:8.

¹⁵jRosh Hashanah 2:1, 58a. The transmission of information by messengers continued until 350 CE.

¹⁶jTeruma 10:2.

¹⁷Hullin 141a-b.

¹⁸bHullin 95b.

¹⁹bKetuvoth 7a; bYevamot 64 b.

²⁰He also worked as a plantation guard, see jMk 3:1,81d.

²¹Eccles. R. 1:6.

²²Lev. R. V.4; jShevi'it 6,1, 36d. see Levine, *Rabbinic Class*, 102, for religious authority..

²³bBerakhot 2:1, 4b.

²⁴His profession was a coin tester

²⁵bSanhedrin 118b; bBaba Batra 135b.

²⁶ie. vice-president of the court; bKil. 9:4, 32c.

²⁷bSanhedrin 63b.

²⁸JPessahim 5:3, 52a.

²⁹bAvoda Zara 36a.

³⁰bBaba Batra 111a. Intercalating seven leap months over the course of a nineteen-year cycle solved the discrepancy of 11 days per year between lunar and solar calendar.

³¹bBerakhot 36b.

³²Bavoda Zara 37a.

³³bAvoda Zara 36a.

³⁴jKiddushin 3:15, 66d.

³⁵Leviticus Rabbah 35:12.

³⁶jRosh Hashanah 4:4, 59b.

³⁷bPessah 24a.

³⁸jTeruma 8, 110, 46b; Genesis Rabba 63:8.

³⁹jBerachot 2:1, 2d

⁴⁰Zeira bar Hanina, see jTeruma 8:10, 46b. Samuel went together with Ammi, but interceded to no avail.

⁴¹jBikkurim 3:3, 65d.

⁴²Lev. R.20:4.

⁴³He earned his livelihood in trade.

⁴⁴How much to, or if at all, engage in any occupation other than Torah study was always under dispute in rabbinic circles. There is enough evidence for both scenarios. Of interest is R. Yannai's academy where students also physically worked at the principle's estate to earn their livelihood. Other professions of rabbis discussed here were fuller, blacksmith, traders, coin testers, and traders in honey.

⁴⁵bShabbat 119a; bGittin 40a. Ammi studied as well with Resh Lakish, who once redeemed him from captivity (jTeruma 8:10, 46b).

⁴⁶bMegilla 22a.

⁴⁷bSanhedrin 17b.

⁴⁸jHagiga 1:7, 76c.

⁴⁹jAvoda Zara 2:2, 40d; 5:5, 45b.

⁵⁰jBerakhot 3:1,6a.

⁵¹bShabbat 105b; bErubin 54a.

⁵²bYevamot 46a.

⁵³jPessah, 4:4, 31a.

⁵⁴jTa'anit, 4:9, 69b.

⁵⁵jAvoda Zara, 2:9 42a; jBerakhot, 3:1,6a.

⁵⁶jPeah, 8:7, 21a.

⁵⁷jMegilla 3:1, 74a.

⁵⁸jMa'aser Sheni 4:1,54d.

⁵⁹bBerakhot 15a.

⁶⁰His name is the most frequently mentioned in both Talmudim

⁶¹bBaba Batra, 158b.

⁶²bShabbat, 14a-b.

⁶³Because of a dispute with Juda (Nesiah) I and because of infringement of Roman Law, Resh Lakish was compelled to flee (jSanhedrin 2:1).

⁶⁴Previously, in the second century, upon the martyrdom of R. Akiva, seven disciples fled to Babylonia; some of them returned at a later point. In the fourth century, Dimi, and Rabin emigrated in 337 from Tiberias to Babylonia together with Samuel bar Abba. In the fifth century: Hanina II moved from Tiberias to Sepphoris and then migrated to Babylonia.

⁶⁵eg. Ulla bar Kosher, who fled to Joshua b. Levi in Lydda.

⁶⁶eg. the Babylonian born Amora Abba Bar Zevina earned his livelihood in Rome as a tailor after having studied under Zeira I in Tiberias.

⁶⁷Presumably from the 3rd c. on, seasonal gatherings in the months of Adar and Elul called "Kalla" took place in Babylonia (Sura and Pumbedita). They attracted large study crowds, see "Kallah, month of" in EJ 10 (1974) 710-12.

⁶⁸bSanhedrin 5b.

⁶⁹Ordination: *minnui* ("appointment" to the office of judge). In Babylonia the term *semikhah* was retained.

⁷⁰The Babylonian scholars adopted the alternative title "Rav".

⁷¹bGittin 9b.

⁷²M.BE. EJ 12(1971) 943: "Through their activity, the texts of the Mishna and the *beraitot* and their exact meaning were established, and the halakhic and aggadic sayings of the first *amora'im* of Eretz Israel, such as Hanina, Johanan, Eleazar, and Simeon b. Lakish in Tiberias and Abbahu in Caesarea, and of the first *amora'im* of Babylonia, such as Rav and Samuel, Huna and Hilda, and others, were elucidated. By their activities the *nehutei* contributed to the cross-fertilization of the academies of Eretz Israel and Babylonia. Their words were tested in the academies and compared with parallel traditions and in this way they attempted to arrive at the precise implication of their statements, their truth, and their reliability. In this way the *nehutei* made their contribution to the formation and elucidation of many topics in the Babylonian Talmud. "

⁷³Jkil 9:3, bBer 38b; see EJ 12 (1971) 942-3.

⁷⁴Jeremiah was an immigrant from Babylonia. He studied under Abbahu, Resh Lakish, and Zeira.

⁷⁵Oppressive edicts under Constantine (327-330) and persecutions in the days of Gallus and Ursicanus (351).

⁷⁶EJ 12 (1974) 942-3.

⁷⁷eg. Joshua b. Levi. Previously, the second century Tannaim Eliezer, Joshua, and Akiva, traveled to Abba Judan, a philanthropist in Antioch, to collect donations for their academies.

⁷⁸Jacob ben Idi said in the name of Joshua b. Levi that R. Judah sent Romanus to check family purity in a certain distant place (jYev. 8,2, 9b; jBik. 1,5,64a; jQid. 4,6,66; bYev. 60b).

⁷⁹See bGittin 2b, ff. Rav Hanina related the incident that Rav Kahana was bringing a get from Sura to Nehardea or from Nehardea to Sura, 6b.

⁸⁰Phinehas b. Jair, who lived in the 2nd c., is reported as traveling to redeem captives (jYevamot7:3).

⁸¹Rabban Gamaliel II, Elazar ben Azariah, Akiva, and Joshua b. Hananiah, bMa'aser Sheni 5:9; bEruvin 4:1; bMakkot 24a-b.

⁸²See Isaiah Gafni, "Reinterment in the Land of Israel: Notes on the Origin and Development of the Custom." In *Jerusalem Cathedral: Studies in the History, Archaeology, Geography, and Ethnography of the Land of Israel* (ed. L.I. Levine, Jerusalem: Yad Izaak Ben-Zvi Institute; Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1981, vol.1) 96-105.

⁸³Gen. R. 96.5, gives the reason for the Patriarchs' wish to be buried in Eretz Israel, that is, the dead in Eretz Israel will be the first to be resurrected.

⁸⁴jKil. 9,4,32b; jKet. 12,3,35a; bMoed Qatan 25a.

⁸⁵See Ellis and Kidner, *Travel*, XIII.

⁸⁶B. Isaac and I. Roll, *The Roman roads in Judaea I: The Legio-Scythopolis Road*, (BAR Int. Ser.141; Oxford, 1982), 91-8, find that in Palestine milestones were only concentrated in inhabited areas and not in desert regions.

⁸⁷eg. Yishmael bar Yosi walked along the road (bBaba Mezia 30b).

⁸⁸There are many mention made that rabbis ride donkeys, eg. bTa'anit 20a: Elazar b. Simon was coming from Migdal Gedor from his teachers house. He was riding on a donkey and traveling along a river bank.

⁸⁹See also The Anchor Bible Dictionary 6 (1992) 644-653 "Travel and Communication."

⁹⁰Gen. A 40:4.

⁹¹Lev. Rabbah 20:4.

⁹²Gen. Rabbah 6: 5.

⁹³See Ginsberg, IV, 137-138, and VI:287 n.33, presents Salomon's wisdom. His proverb states, "he who throws himself against a wave is overthrown by it."

⁹⁴ABD 6 (1992) 650.

⁹⁵ABD 6 (1992) 649.

⁹⁶The midrash brings the story of a trader and his son, who overheard the voices of the sailors, saying that, once out on the high sea, would kill them, throw them overboard and take their merchandise. (Eccl. R.3:1).

⁹⁷Num. Rabbah 11:5. mBerakhot 1.3.

⁹⁸bNedarim 22a.

⁹⁹tTeruma, 8:10, 46b. Zeira taught Palestinian traditions in Nehardea.

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- ¹⁰⁰Eccl. R.3:2 - R. Simon b. Abba in the name of R. Hanina (to Eccl. 3:2: A time to be born, and a time to die.)
- ¹⁰¹Freedman, IV, 75 n. 7 Eccl. R. 3: 2.
- ¹⁰²See also ABD 6 (1992) 650, the Roman sources give a safe time frame between March and September.
- ¹⁰³Gen. Rabbah 6:5. The lulav, or palm branch, was used during the holiday of Sukkoth.
- ¹⁰⁴Gen. Rabbah 6:5, so Isaac b. Marion.
- ¹⁰⁵Gen. Rabbah 6:5. Freedman, I:45 n.1
- ¹⁰⁶Gen. Rabbah 6:5.
- ¹⁰⁷Gen. Rabbah 6:5; Eccl. R. 3:2.
- ¹⁰⁸Eccl. R. III. 2. R. Samuel b. Nahman (to Eccl. III, 2) expounds on R. Levi, who said: In three circumstances is Satan present to accuse: when a man dwells in a dilapidated house, when he travels by road alone, and when he sails on the ocean.
- ¹⁰⁹Gen. Rabbah 39:10-11. Danger of traveling did not apply to Abraham, God gave Abraham counter assurance.
- ¹¹⁰Num. Rabbah 11:2.
- ¹¹¹See Ginsberg, Louis, *The Legend of the Jews*, (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1968), I: 218: Evil consequences of travel follow emigration, for travelling from place to place interferes with the growth of the family, it lessens one's substance, and it diminishes the consideration one enjoys."
- ¹¹²R. Abba b. Judan in the name of R. Aha
- ¹¹³Gen. R. 23:5 (to Gen.IV.25).
- ¹¹⁴Num. R. XI.2.
- ¹¹⁵A 4th c. Palestinian Amora
- ¹¹⁶bGittin70a.
- ¹¹⁷Gen. Rabbah 40: 4.
- ¹¹⁸Gen. 12:11
- ¹¹⁹Gen. Rabbah 40:11.
- ¹²⁰bBaba Metzia, 79a.
- ¹²¹bBaba Metzia, 79a.
- ¹²²The one who rents may take the full supply to last the journey, if it means that it is difficult to buy food in between the inns. The guide, however, has to go through this trouble and take only a day's supply.
- ¹²³Eccl. R. 3: 2.
- ¹²⁴bYevamot 62b.
- ¹²⁵The obligation to offer up prayer is stated in bBerakhot21.
- ¹²⁶bPesahim 8a.
- ¹²⁷According to the Mishna, Elijah the Prophet commands the prayer, bBer. 29b.
- ¹²⁸A Babylonian Amora (c. 217- 309 CE), principal of the academy in Sura. He spent some years in Palestine which may be the reason why he cites many Palestinian traditions (bPes. 117a; bYevamot 25b)
- ¹²⁹A Palestinian Amora of the fourth century.
- ¹³⁰The wayfarer's prayer is not to be confused with the "short prayer" recited when one finds himself in dangerous places and therefore when one cannot concentrate on the lengthy daily Shemoneh Esrei prayer recited three times a day. Rather, it is recited once a day whenever a person travels, even if the area being traversed is considered safe. It is independent of the Shemoneh Esrei, which one recites also, as on normal days.
- ¹³¹A Babylonian Amora (280-339 CE), principal of the academy in Pumbedita
- ¹³²The halachic compendium, Mishnah Brurah 110:29, expounds that one recites the prayer only after one reaches the town perimeter which extends approximately 70 amos beyond the last houses of the town.
- ¹³³According to Rashi.
- ¹³⁴Meiri. Others explain that the Gemara is describing the minimum distance a person must travel - at least a parsah (Bahag) - in order to be obligated in this prayer. (The Mishnah Brurah 10:30 explains that the territory within a parsah of the city limits is not considered dangerous.)
- ¹³⁵A 4th c. Babylonian Amora in Nahardea.

¹³⁶ See, for example, Donneal Epstein, *Halachos for the Traveler*, Feldheim, Jerusalem, 2000, for references.

¹³⁷ Ginzberg, IV: 137

¹³⁸ Ber. R. 94:2 (to Gen. 45: 25).

¹³⁹ bTa' anit 10b.

¹⁴⁰ Gen. Rabbah 6:5.

¹⁴¹ Ginzberg, IV: 137

¹⁴² bEruvin 61a, keeping with Ex. 16: 29. The Gemara comments on the baraita: And gather the light into the city, according to that which Rav Yehud taught in the name of Rav..... A person should always depart on the road with that it is good, - and should enter the city at the end of the day with that it is good, for it is said (Gen.44:3) *The morning dawned, and the men were sent off*. Thus go to your lodging before the light ceases.

¹⁴³ A baraita in the Gemara with Joseph's instructions to his brothers. Ber. R. 94.2 (to Gen. 45:4: 25); also Ginzberg, II:115

¹⁴⁴ or of one who travels after sunset, see above)

¹⁴⁵ Interpretation of an admonition received by the sons of Jacob (to Gen 45:24)

¹⁴⁶ bTaanis 10b. R. Elazar said: Josef was in fact telling his brothers: do not engage in discussing a halachic matter during the journey lest you excite the way upon yourselves"

¹⁴⁷ (N.22 - "Tosafos explains that only the first large stride causes this amount of damage. Subsequent ones each take away 1/500 of the *remaining* eyesight, causing progressively smaller amounts of damage, or, alternatively, do not affect the eyesight at all. For the average-sized person, a regular stride measures one *amah*, which is approximately 45cm-60cm. Anything more is considered a "large stride" and should be avoided (Mishna Berura 301:1,3)"

¹⁴⁸ Eating copiously during a journey affects the intestines, due to rigors of travel (see n.29) If Rav Pappa (bTaanis 11a) ate one loaf of bread every parsah he held that the reason for the stricture is the intestines. He was a heavy man with a large stomach who could withstand the rigors of travel without limiting his food intake, large stomache, see n.4 in the Bavli.

¹⁴⁹ Should eat small portions to ensure that his provisions would last for the duration of the journey. see n.30

¹⁵⁰ N.1 - no limitation of food intake is necessary according to other explanation one must ration his food in order to guarantee that it will suffice for his journey.

¹⁵¹ N.2 Restriction to avoid intestinal disorder. According to the other explanation he may eat freely, because he can always purchase food in the villages.

¹⁵² bEruvin 53b.

¹⁵³ Ber. Rabbah 94:2 (to Gen. 45: 25).

¹⁵⁴ *Ethics of the Fathers* 3:5.

¹⁵⁵ bTa'anit 10b; Ber. R. 94:2.

¹⁵⁶ bSota 46b; bEruvin 54a. Proverbs 1:9 One traveling alone, in particular, needs to find grace in the eyes of those he meets on the highway, so they will not harm him. Thus the traveler's prayer: and give us grace in the eyes of all who see us. Torah study provides this grace.

¹⁵⁷ A second century Tanna,

¹⁵⁸ *Ethics of the Fathers* 3:9

¹⁵⁹ bBerakhot 30a.

¹⁶⁰ Rashi's comment to this: If he dismounts, his worry over the loss of travel time will disturb his concentration.

¹⁶¹ The Gemara cites alternative versions of the "short prayer." What is the text of this short prayer"? R' Eliezer says: Do your will in the Heavens above, and grant peace of mind to those that fear you below. (Grant that the composure of those that fear You not be disturbed by such creatures as robbers and wild animals). And what is good in your eyes, do (to them):(If they must be punished let it be You and You alone Who does so.

¹⁶² bBerakhot 58b.

¹⁶³ See Luke 10:4

¹⁶⁴ bSota 46b. The Tanna Meir (Sota XI, V, Vi) had declared that accompanying and to be accompanied is crucial and could save lives. This idea was perpetuated by Yohanan (bSota 46b).

¹⁶⁵bSota 46b. Also R. Mordecai escorted R. Shimi b. Ashi from Hagronja to Bei Kephe, possibly to Bei-Dura (bBerakhot 31a).

¹⁶⁶bSota 46b.

¹⁶⁷See L.Levine, *The Rabbinic Class of Roman Palestine in Late Antiquity* (Yad Izaak Ben-Zvi:Jerusalem, 1989) 59-60.

¹⁶⁸Num. R. 20:13 (to Gen.22:22)

¹⁶⁹Lev. R. 26:7 (to 1Sam 28: 8).

¹⁷⁰In the previous century, Eliezer and Joshua traveled together on the great sea (Gen. R. 23:9)

¹⁷¹They went often on journeys together, accompanied by servants, see bBerakhot 30a.

¹⁷²A non-rabbinic person who did not spend his time studying Torah.

¹⁷³bPesahim 49b.

¹⁷⁴P.98 ,n.14

¹⁷⁵bPesahim. 49b.

¹⁷⁶P98, n.34

¹⁷⁷(to Gen. 23:15); Esav was a metaphor for Rome.

¹⁷⁸Gen. Rabbah 28: 13-15.

¹⁷⁹bAvoda Zara 25b.

¹⁸⁰A Babylonian Amora of the 3rd/ 4th century. Studied in Sura under his father, principle of the academy. His body was brought to Judaea were he had wanted to be buried, in the vault of Hiyya, another Babylonian.

¹⁸¹bGittin 70a.

¹⁸²bGittin 70a.

¹⁸³"Gomel, Blessing of" EJ 7 (1971) 768.

¹⁸⁴bBerakhot 54b.

¹⁸⁵EJ 7 (1971) 768.

¹⁸⁶bAvoda Zara 13a.

¹⁸⁷bAvoda Zara 12a. In this context it is note mention that there had been the rabbis restriction in place that forbade going to towns where pagan temples and worship taking place, or else, going there at the times of pagan festivals.

¹⁸⁸Joshua b. Levi visited Rome and he tells that pillars were covered with tapestry, in winter so that they should not contract, and in summer that they should not split (Midrash 33:1).

¹⁸⁹bBava Batra74a.

¹⁹⁰"Aggadot of Rabba bar Bar Hana and foremost found in bBava Basra 73a-74a. See Abraham Arzi,"Rabbah Bar Bar Hana" in EJ 13 (1974) 1440-1.

¹⁹¹Kolatch, *Who is who*, 277.

¹⁹²Brava Batra 74: "Every Abba is an ass and every bar Bar Hana is a fool."

¹⁹³bEruvin 54b.

¹⁹⁴Lev. 19:2

¹⁹⁵Moshe Beer, "Nehutei" in EJ 12 (1971) 943.