

Pereq Heleq (Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Sanhedrin)

H. Freedman, translator, I. Epstein, editor, *Sanhedrin: Translated in English with Notes, Glossary, and Indices*. Volume 2. London: Soncino, 1935.

MISHNAH. ALL ISRAEL¹ HAVE A PORTION IN THE WORLD TO COME,² FOR IT IS WRITTEN, THY PEOPLE ARE ALL RIGHTEOUS; THEY SHALL INHERIT THE LAND FOR EVER, THE BRANCH OF MY PLANTING, THE WORK OF MY HANDS, THAT I MAY BE GLORIFIED.³ BUT THE FOLLOWING HAVE NO PORTION THEREIN: HE WHO MAINTAINS THAT RESURRECTION IS NOT A BIBLICAL DOCTRINE,⁴ THE TORAH WAS NOT DIVINELY REVEALED, AND AN EPIKOROS.⁵ R. AKIBA ADDED: ONE WHO READS UNCANONICAL BOOKS.⁶ ALSO ONE WHO WHISPERS [A CHARM] OVER A WOUND AND SAYS, I WILL BRING NONE OF THESE DISEASES UPON THEE WHICH I BROUGHT UPON THE EGYPTIANS: FOR I AM THE LORD THAT HEALETH

¹ This is not a dogmatic assertion that only Israel has a portion in the world to come, but is closely connected with the preceding chapters, and asserts that even those who were executed by Beth din are not shut out from the future world, as is stated in VI, 2.

² The conception of what is to be understood by the future world is rather vague in the Talmud. In general, it is the opposite of [H], this world. In Ber. I, 5, 'this world' is opposed to the days of the Messiah. Whether the Messianic era is thus identical with the future world, and these again with the period of resurrection, is a moot point (v. infra, 91b). The following quotation from G. Moore, 'Judaism' (Vol. 2, p. 389) is apposite: 'Any attempt to systematize the Jewish notions of the hereafter imposes upon them an order and consistency which does not exist in them.'

³ Isa. LX, 22.

⁴ Lit., 'that resurrection is not intimated in the Torah.' The doctrine of resurrection was denied by the Sadducees and the Samaritans. It was to oppose these that the doctrine was emphatically asserted in the second of the Eighteen Benedictions (v. W.O. Oesterley. *The Jewish Background of Christian Liturgy*, Oxford, 1925, 60ff.). According to the present text, however, the reference is not to one who denies the fact of resurrection, but that it is intimated in the Torah. (On the importance of conceding the Biblical origin of this tenet, v. p. 604, n. 12.) But D.S. omits the phrase as interpolated, and he is supported by the Tosef. XIII, 5.

⁵ In the first place, the word denotes an adherent of the Epicurean philosophy, and then, one who lives a licentious and dissolute life. The word has also been derived from [H] (cf. [H]) to be unbridled, and it is frequently used as a synonym of min (q.v. p. 604, n. 12), heretic. The Gemara defines it as one who speaks disparagingly of the Bible and its disciples.

⁶ Lit., 'the external books'. Graetz, *Gesch.* IV, p. 99, regards this as referring to un-Jewish, particularly Gnostic literature. Weiss takes a similar view. The pernicious influence of Gnosticism, particularly as it impaired the pure monotheism of Judaism, made the Rabbis very anxious to stem its spread, and hence R. Akiba's dictum. (Weiss maintains that Elisha b. Abuia's revolt against the Rabbis was in some measure occasioned by the influence of Gnosticism.) On this view, ordinary reading is referred to. There are indications, however, that something more is meant. The J. Tal. a.l. adds: 'E.g., the books of Ben Sira and Ben La'anah. But the reading of Homer and all subsequent books is as the reading of a letter.' In spite of the fact that the Bab. Tal. forbids the books of Ben Sira, it is evident from the discussion that all its contents were well-known, and Sira's wisdom is frequently quoted by the Talmudists. It is also difficult to see why greater exception should be taken to Sira than to Homer. To obviate these difficulties the theory has been put forward that the prohibition is against reading these uncanonical works publicly, treating them as the Scripture and expounding them to the community. Private reading, however, would on this theory not come within the ban. (V. Krochmal *More Nebuche ha-Zeman*, XI, 5.)

THEE.’⁷ ABBA SAUL SAYS: ALSO ONE WHO PRONOUNCES THE DIVINE NAME AS IT IS SPELT.⁸

THREE KINGS AND FOUR COMMONERS HAVE NO PORTION IN THE WORLD TO COME: THE THREE KINGS ARE JEROBOAM, AHAB, AND MANASSEH.⁹ R. JUDAH SAID: MANASSEH HATH A PORTION THEREIN, FOR IT IS WRITTEN, ‘AND HE PRAYED UNTO HIM, AND WAS INTREATED OF HIM, AND HE HEARKENED TO HIS SUPPLICATION AND THEY RESTORED HIM TO JERUSALEM, TO HIS KINGDOM.’¹⁰ THEY [THE SAGES] ANSWERED HIM: THEY RESTORED HIM TO HIS KINGDOM, BUT NOT TO [HIS PORTION IN] THE WORLD TO COME. FOUR COMMONERS, VIZ., BALAAM, DOEG, AHITOPHEL, AND GEHAZI.¹¹

GEMARA. And why such [severity]? — A Tanna taught: Since he denied the resurrection of the dead, therefore he shall not share in that resurrection, for in all the measures [of punishment or reward] taken by the Holy One, blessed be He, the Divine act befits the [human] deed.¹² ...

Queen Cleopatra¹³ asked R. Meir, ‘I know that the dead will revive, for it is written, *And they [sc. the righteous] shall [in the distant future] blossom forth out of the city [Jerusalem] like the grass of the earth.*¹⁴ But when they arise, shall they arise nude or in their garments?’ — He replied, ‘Thou mayest deduce by an *a fortiori* argument [the answer] from a wheat grain: if a grain of wheat, which is buried naked, sprouteth forth in many robes, how much more so the righteous, who are buried in their raiment!’

An emperor said to Rabban Gamaliel: ‘Ye maintain that the dead will revive; but they turn to dust, and can dust come to life?’ /91a/ Thereupon his [the emperor’s] daughter said to him [the Rabbi]: ‘Let me answer him: In our town there are two potters; one fashions [his products]

⁷ Ex. XV, 26.

⁸ Lit., ‘according to its letters’.

⁹ Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who is frequently stigmatised in the Bible as having ‘sinned and caused Israel to sin’. Ahab, the son of Omri, a later King; v. I Kings. XXI, 21. Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, King of Judah; v. II Kings. XXI.

¹⁰ II Chron. XXXIII, 13.

¹¹ Balaam: v. Num. XXXI. 8, 16; Doeg the Edomite: v. I Sam. XXI, 22; Ahitophel: v. II Sam. XV; Gehazi: v. II Kings V, 20.

¹² Lit., ‘Measure for measure’.

¹³ [Not of ‘Anthony and Cleopatra’ fame. Bacher, *Agada der Tanaiten*, I, 68, n. 2, regards [H] (Cleopatra, the Queen) as a corruption of [H] the Patriarch of the Samaritans (v. Gen. Rab. XCIV, 6). Cp. Koh. Rab. V, 12, where the disputant of the belief of the resurrection of the dead with R. Meir is a Samaritan, [H].]

¹⁴ Ps. LXXII, 16: the bracketed addition gives the sense according to Rabbinic interpretation; v. Keth. 111a.

from water, and the other from clay: who is the more praiseworthy?’ ‘He who fashions them from water, he replied.¹⁵ ‘If he can fashion [man] from water,¹⁶ surely he can do so from clay!’¹⁷

The School of R. Ishmael taught: It can be deduced from glassware: if glassware, which, though made by the breath of human beings,¹⁸ can yet be repaired when broken;¹⁹ then how much more so man, created by the breath of the Holy One, blessed be He. ...

Antoninus²⁰ said to Rabbi: ‘The body and the soul can both free themselves from judgment. Thus, the body can plead: The soul has sinned, [the proof being] that from the day it left me I lie like a dumb stone in the grave [powerless to do aught]. Whilst the soul can say: The body has sinned, [the proof being] that from the day I departed from it I fly about in the air like a bird [and commit no sin].’ He replied, ‘I will tell thee a parable. To what may this be compared? To a human king who owned a beautiful orchard which contained /91b/ splendid figs. Now, he appointed two watchmen therein, one lame and the other blind. [One day] the lame man said to the blind, “I see beautiful figs in the orchard. Come and take me upon thy shoulder, that we may procure and eat them.” So the lame bestrode the blind, procured and ate them. Some time after, the owner of the orchard came and inquired of them, “Where are those beautiful figs?” The lame man replied, “Have I then feet to walk with?” The blind man replied, “Have I then eyes to see with?” What did he do? He placed the lame upon the blind and judged them together. So will the Holy One, blessed be He, bring the soul, [re]place it in the body, and judge them together, as it is written, *He shall call to the heavens from above, and to the earth, that he may judge his people.*²¹

...

R. Hisda opposed [two verses]. It is written, *Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of Hosts shall reign;*²² whilst [elsewhere] it is written, *Moreover the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the*

¹⁵ This being far more difficult.

¹⁶ Vis., the sperm.

¹⁷ I.e., the dust into which the dead are turned.

¹⁸ A reference to the blowing of glass.

¹⁹ By being melted down again.

²⁰ Antoninus has been variously identified: with Marcus Aurelius (Rapport); Severus (Graetz, who, however, assumes that it was the second R. Judah the Prince who was the friend of Antoninus); Caracalla (Jast. and N. Krochmal), and others; v. 'A. Z. 10a, and J. E. I, 656.

²¹ Ps. L, 4.

²² Ibid. XXIV, 23.

*light of seven days.*²³ — It is no difficulty: the latter refers to the Messianic era, the former to the world to come.²⁴ And according to Samuel, who maintained, This world differs from the Messianic era only in respect of the servitude of the Diaspora, it is still no difficulty: the latter refers to the camp of the righteous, the former to the camp of the Divine Presence.²⁵ ...

It has been taught: R. Meir said, Whence do we know resurrection from the Torah? From the verse, *Then shall Moses and the children of Israel sing this song unto the Lord:*²⁶ not *sang* but *shall sing*²⁷ is written: thus resurrection is taught in the Torah.²⁸ Likewise thou readest, *Then shall Joshua build an altar unto the Lord God of Israel:*²⁹ not ‘built’, but *shall build* is written: thus resurrection is intimated in the Torah. If so, *Then did Solomon build an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab:*³⁰ does that too mean that he *shall build*?³¹ But [there] the Writ regards him as though he had built.³²

R. Joshua b. Levi said: Whence is resurrection derived from the Torah? From the verse, *Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they shall ever praise thee. Selah.*³³ Not ‘praised thee,’ but *they shall praise thee* is stated: thus resurrection is taught in the Torah.

R. Joshua b. Levi also said: Whoever uttereth song [of praise to God] in this world shall be privileged to do so in the next world too, as it is written, *Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they shall ever praise thee. Selah. ...*

/92a/ R. Tabi said in R. Josia’s name: What is meant by, *The grave; and the barren womb; and the earth that is not filled by water:*³⁴ now, what connection has the grave with the

²³ Ibid. XXX, 26.

²⁴ Then the sun and the moon shall be ashamed, i.e., fade into insignificance — because of the light radiating from the righteous (Rashi).

²⁵ Both verses referring to the world to come.

²⁶ Ex. XV, I.

²⁷ Lit. rendering of [H] yashir.

²⁸ For the verse implies that they shall sing in the future. As they did not sing a second time in this life, it must mean after their resurrection.

²⁹ Josh. VIII, 30.

³⁰ I Kings XI, 7.

³¹ In the three quotations the imperfect tense is used, which generally, though not always, connotes the future in Heb.

³² The imperfect there denotes that he merely wished to build, but so heinous is even the mere intention, that he is stigmatised as having actually done so. But in the first two verses the imperfect cannot bear that meaning, since Moses did sing, and Joshua did build. Therefore the future meaning must be complementary to the past, and the imperfect implies that as they sang once, so will they again.

³³ Ps. LXXXIV, 5.

³⁴ Prov. XXX, 16.

womb? But it is to teach thee: just as the womb receives and brings forth,³⁵ so does the grave too receive and bring forth.³⁶ Now, does this not furnish us with an *a fortiori* argument? If the womb, which receives in silence, yet brings forth amid great cries [of jubilation]; then the grave, which receives the dead amid cries [of grief], will much more so bring them forth amid great cries [of joy]! This refutes those who maintain that resurrection is not intimated in the Torah. [The] Tanna debe Eliyyahu [states]: The righteous, whom the Holy One, blessed be He, will resurrect, will not revert to dust,³⁷ for it is said, *And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem:*³⁸ just as the Holy One endures for ever, so shall they endure for ever. /92b/ And should you ask, in those years during which the Almighty will renew his world, as it is written, *And the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day,*³⁹ what will the righteous do?⁴⁰ — The Lord will make them wings like eagles', and they will fly above the water, as it is written, *Therefore we will not fear when the earth be removed and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.*⁴¹ And should you imagine that they will suffer pain — therefore Scripture saith, *But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint.*⁴² But should we not deduce [the reverse] from the dead whom Ezekiel resurrected?⁴³ — He accepts the view that in the truth [the story of the resurrection of the dry bones] was [but] a parable.⁴⁴ For it was taught: R. Eliezer said: The dead whom Ezekiel resurrected stood up, uttered song, and [immediately] died. What song did they utter? — *The Lord slayeth in righteousness and reviveth in mercy.*⁴⁵ R. Joshua said: They sang thus, *The Lord killeth and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up.*⁴⁶ R. Judah said: It was truth; it was a parable. R. Nehemiah said to him: If truth,

³⁵ The child.

³⁶ The dead are laid there, and will be taken out at the resurrection.

³⁷ In the interval between the Messianic era and the time of the world to come; but their flesh will remain intact upon them until they live again in the future.

³⁸ Isa. IV, 3.

³⁹ Isa. II, 11, i.e., during this era of change the universe will be totally destroyed.

⁴⁰ [Where will they be in this period of complete desolation?]

⁴¹ Ps. XLIV, 3.

⁴² Isa. XL, 31. [For parallel passages in the book as we have it, v. Friedmann's edition, Introduction, p. 46.]

⁴³ Just as they died again, so will the righteous whom God will resurrect also return to dust.

⁴⁴ I.e., a symbol of the revival of the Jewish State.

⁴⁵ Cp. I Sam. II, 6.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

why a parable; and if a parable, why truth? — But [say thus]: In the truth there was but a parable.⁴⁷

R. Eliezer the son of R. Jose the Galilean said: The dead whom Ezekiel revived went up to Palestine, married wives and begat sons and daughters. R. Judah b. Bathyra rose up and said: I am one of their descendants, and these are the *tefillin*⁴⁸ which my grandfather left me [as an heirloom] from them. ...

/97a/ Thus hath R. Johanan said: in the generation when the son of David [i.e., Messiah] will come, scholars will be few in number, and as for the rest, their eyes will fail through sorrow and grief. Multitudes of trouble and evil decrees will be promulgated anew, each new evil coming with haste before the other has ended. ...

[*Wherewith thine enemies have reproached, O Lord, wherewith they have reproached the footsteps of thine anointed.*]⁴⁹ it has been taught, R. Judah said: in the generation when the son of David comes, the house of assembly⁵⁰ will be for harlots, Galilee in ruins, Gablan lie desolate,⁵¹ the border inhabitants⁵² wander about from city to city, receiving no hospitality, the wisdom of scribes in disfavour, God-fearing men despised, people⁵³ be dog-faced,⁵⁴ and truth entirely lacking, as it is written, *Yea, truth faileth, and he that departeth from evil maketh himself a prey.*⁵⁵ ...

It has been taught: R. Nehorai said: in the generation when Messiah comes, young men will insult the old, and old men will stand before the young [to give them honour]; daughters will rise up against their mothers, and daughters-in-law against their mothers-in-law. The people shall be dog-faced, and a son will not be abashed in his father's presence.

It has been taught, R. Nehemiah said: in the generation of Messiah's coming impudence will increase, esteem be perverted,⁵⁶ the vine yield its fruit, yet shall wine be dear,⁵⁷ and the

⁴⁷ I.e., their resurrection did in fact take place, and that was a foreshadowing of the renaissance of the Jewish people.

⁴⁸ Phylacteries, v. Glos.

⁴⁹ Ps. LXXXIX, 52.

⁵⁰ Where scholars assemble.

⁵¹ [Gaulan, E. of the Sea of Galilee and the upper Jordan].

⁵² The Jews living by the borders of Palestine. [H] the men of (the Hall of) Hewn Stones, I.e., the Sanhedrin.

⁵³ Lit., 'the face of the generation.'

⁵⁴ I.e., brazen, without shame of each other.

⁵⁵ Isa. LIX, 15.

⁵⁶ I.e., none shall esteem another. Another opinion: even the most esteemed shall be perverted and deceitful.

⁵⁷ Everyone will be drunk, so that in spite of the abundant yield, there will be a scarcity.

Kingdom will be converted to heresy⁵⁸ with none to rebuke them. This supports R. Isaac, who said: The son of David will not come until the whole world is converted to the belief of the heretics. Raba said: What verse [proves this]? *it is all turned white: he is clean.*⁵⁹ ...

... Even as R. Zera, who, whenever he chanced upon scholars engaged thereon [I.e., in calculating the time of the Messiah's coming], would say to them: I beg of you, do not postpone it, for it has been taught: Three come unawares:⁶⁰ Messiah, a found article and a scorpion.⁶¹

R. Kattina said: Six thousand years shall the world exist, and one [thousand, the seventh], it shall be desolate, as it is written, *And the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.*⁶² Abaye said: it will be desolate two [thousand], as it is said, *After two days will he revive us: in the third day, he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.*⁶³

It has been taught in accordance with R. Kattina: Just as the seventh year is one year of release in seven, so is the world: one thousand years out of seven shall be fallow, as it is written, *And the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day;* and it is further said, *A Psalm and song for the Sabbath day,*⁶⁴ meaning the day that is altogether Sabbath —⁶⁵ and it is also said, *For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past.*⁶⁶

The Tanna debe Eliyyahu teaches: The world is to exist six thousand years. In the first two thousand there was desolation;⁶⁷ two thousand years the Torah flourished;⁶⁸ and the next two

⁵⁸ [Heb. Minuth. By 'the Kingdom' is meant the Roman Empire, and the statement is a remarkable forecast by R. Nehemia (150 C.E.) of the conversion of Rome to Christianity under Constantine the Great in 313; v. however, Herford, *Christianity in the Talmud*, 207ff.]

⁵⁹ Lev. XIII, 13. This refers to leprosy: a white swelling is a symptom of uncleanness; nevertheless, if the whole skin is so affected, it is declared clean. So here too; when all are heretics, it is a sign that the world is about to be purified by the advent of Messiah.

⁶⁰ Lit., 'when the mind is diverted.'

⁶¹ Hence by thinking of him they were postponing his coming.

⁶² Isa. II, 11.

⁶³ Hosea VI, 2: the 'two days' meaning two thousand years. Cf. Ps. XC, 4. quoted below.

⁶⁴ Ps. XCII, 1.

⁶⁵ I.e., the period of complete desolation.

⁶⁶ Ps. XC, 4; thus 'day' in the preceding verses means a thousand years.

⁶⁷ I.e., no Torah. It is a tradition that Abraham was fifty-two years old when he began to convert men to the worship of the true God; from Adam until then, two thousand years elapsed.

⁶⁸ I.e., from Abraham's fifty-second year until one hundred and seventy-two years after the destruction of the second Temple. This does not mean that the Torah should cease thereafter, but is mentioned merely to distinguish it from the next era.

thousand years is the Messianic era,⁶⁹ /97b/ but through our many iniquities all these years have been lost.⁷⁰

Elijah said to Rab Judah, the brother of R. Salia the pious: 'The world shall exist not less than eighty five jubilees,⁷¹ and in the last jubilee the son of David will come.'⁷² He asked him, 'At the beginning or at the end?'⁷³ — He replied, 'I do not know.' 'Shall [this period] be completed or not?'⁷⁴ — 'I do not know,' he answered. R. Ashi said: He spoke thus to him, 'Before that, do not expect him; afterwards thou mayest await him.'⁷⁵

R. Hanan b. Tahlifa sent [word] to R. Joseph: I once met a man who possessed a scroll written in Hebrew in Assyrian characters.⁷⁶ I said to him: 'Whence has this come to thee?' He replied, 'I hired myself as a mercenary in the Roman army, and found it amongst the Roman archives. In it is stated that four thousand, two hundred and thirty⁷⁷-one years after the creation the world will be orphaned.⁷⁸ [As to the years following,] some of them will be spent in the war of the great sea monsters,⁷⁹ and some in the war of Gog and Magog, and the remaining [period] will be the Messianic era, whilst the Holy One, blessed be He, will renew his world only after seven thousand years.' R. Abba the son of Raba said: The conversation took place after five thousand years. ...

... R. Samuel b. Nahmani said in the name of R. Jonathan: Blasted be⁸⁰ the bones of those who calculate the end.⁸¹ For they would say, since the predetermined time has arrived, and yet he has not come, he will never come. But [even so], wait for him, as it is written, *Though he tarry, wait for him*. Should you say, We look forward [to his coming] but He does not: therefore Scripture saith, *And therefore will the Lord wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore*

⁶⁹ I.e., Messiah will come within that period.

⁷⁰ He should have come at the beginning of the last two thousand years; the delay is due to our sins.

⁷¹ Of fifty years. [4250 years]

⁷² [Messiah. The belief in his Davidic descent is already mentioned in the Psalms of Solomon XVII, 21.]

⁷³ Of the last fifty years.

⁷⁴ I.e., if at the end of the jubilee, shall it be at the beginning of the fiftieth year or at the end thereof?

⁷⁵ He will certainly not come before then, but may delay a long time afterwards.

⁷⁶ The square character of Hebrew letters is so called on account of the great resemblance it bears to Aramaic writing, the name Assyria being here used in the widest sense to include the countries on the Mediterranean inhabited by the Arameans; v. *supra*, 22b and 22a and notes.

⁷⁷ So the Wilna Gaon; v. A.Z. 9b; our editions have ninety.

⁷⁸ In great distress, as an orphan who has none to take care of him.

⁷⁹ Maharsha explains this as a figurative reference to the great nations.

⁸⁰ [H] The verse is rendered, 'he will blast him who calculated the end.'

⁸¹ I.e., Messiah's advent.

*will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you.*⁸² But since we look forward to it, and He does likewise, what delays [his coming]? — The Attribute of Justice delays it.⁸³ But since the Attribute of Justice delays it, why do we await it? — To be rewarded [for hoping], as it is written, *blessed are all they that wait for him.*⁸⁴ ...

Rab said: All the predestined dates [for redemption] have passed, and the matter [now] depends only on repentance and good deeds. But Samuel maintained: it is sufficient for a mourner to keep his [period of] mourning.⁸⁵

R. Johanan also said: The son of David will come only in a generation that is either altogether righteous or altogether wicked. 'in a generation that is altogether righteous,' — as it is written, *Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever.*⁸⁶ 'Or altogether wicked,' — as it is written, *And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor;*⁸⁷ and it is [elsewhere] written, *For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it.*⁸⁸

R. Alexandri said: R. Joshua b. Levi pointed out a contradiction. It is written, *in its time* [will the Messiah come], whilst it is also written, *I [the Lord] will hasten it!*⁸⁹ — if they are worthy, I will hasten it: if not, [he will come] at the due time. R. Alexandri said: R. Joshua opposed two verses: it is written, *And behold, one like the son of man came with the clouds of heaven*⁹⁰ whilst [elsewhere] it is written, *[behold, thy king cometh unto thee ...] lowly, and riding upon an ass!*⁹¹ — if they are meritorious, [he will come] with the clouds of heaven;⁹² if not, lowly and riding upon an ass. ...

R. Joshua b. Levi met Elijah standing by the entrance of R. Simeon b. Yohai's tomb. He asked him: 'Have I a portion in the world to come?' He replied, 'if this Master desires it.'⁹³ R.

⁸² Isa. XXX, 18.

⁸³ I.e., because we are not yet worthy of it.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Israel's sufferings in the Galuth in themselves sufficiently warrant their redemption, regardless of repentance.

⁸⁶ Ibid. LX, 21.

⁸⁷ Ibid. LIX, 16.

⁸⁸ Ibid. XLVIII, 11.

⁸⁹ Ibid. LX, 22: The verse reads, I the Lord will hasten it in its time. The two phrases are contradictory, since 'hasten it' implies before its proper time.

⁹⁰ Dan. VII, 13.

⁹¹ Zech. IX, 7.

⁹² 'Swiftly' (Rashi).

⁹³ He referred to the *Shechinah*, which was with them (Rashi). Maharsha renders: when thou art worthy thereof.

Joshua b. Levi said, 'I saw two, but heard the voice of a third.'⁹⁴ He then asked him, 'When will the Messiah come?' — 'Go and ask him himself,' was his reply. 'Where is he sitting?' — 'At the entrance.'⁹⁵ And by what sign may I recognise him?' — 'He is sitting among the poor lepers: all of them untie [them]⁹⁶ all at once, and rebandage them together,⁹⁷ whereas he unties and rebandages each separately, [before treating the next], thinking, should I be wanted, [it being time for my appearance as the Messiah] I must not be delayed [through having to bandage a number of sores].' So he went to him and greeted him, saying, 'peace upon thee, Master and Teacher.' 'peace upon thee, O son of Levi,' he replied. 'When wilt thou come Master?' asked he, 'To-day', was his answer. On his returning to Elijah, the latter enquired, 'What did he say to thee?' — 'peace Upon thee, O son of Levi,' he answered. Thereupon he [Elijah] observed, 'He thereby assured thee and thy father of [a portion in] the world to come.' 'He spoke falsely to me,' he rejoined, 'stating that he would come to-day, but has not.' He [Elijah] answered him, 'This is what he said to thee, *To-day, if ye will hear his voice.*'⁹⁸

The disciples of R. Jose b. Kisma asked him, 'When will the Messiah come?' — He answered, 'I fear lest ye demand a sign of me [that my answer is correct].' They assured him, 'We will demand no sign of you.' So he answered them, 'When this gate⁹⁹ falls down, is rebuilt, falls again, and is again rebuilt, and then falls a third time, before it can be rebuilt the son of David will come.' They said to him, 'Master, give us a sign.' He protested, 'Did ye not assure me that ye would not demand a sign?' They replied, 'Even so, [we desire one].' He said to them. 'if so, let the waters of the grotto of Paneas turn into blood;' and they turned into blood. When he lay dying he said to them, 'place my coffin deep [in the earth], /98b/ for there is not one palm-tree in Babylon to which a Persian horse will not be tethered, nor one coffin in Palestine out of which a Median horse will not eat straw.'¹⁰⁰ ...

⁹⁴ I.e., he saw only himself and Elijah there, but heard a third voice — that of the *Shechinah*.

⁹⁵ Cur. edd. read '... of the town:' The Wilna Gaon deletes this and substitutes 'of Rome.'

⁹⁶ The bandages of their sores for dressing.

⁹⁷ I.e., if they have many leprous sores, they first take off all the bandages, and treat each sore, then replace them together.

⁹⁸ Ps. XCV, 7, thus he made his coming conditional-the condition was unfulfilled.

⁹⁹ [The gate of Caesarea Philippi, the home of R. Jose. Its fall would be a symbol of the destruction of the Roman power by the Parthians. Bacher, AT, I, p. 402.]

¹⁰⁰ This was a forecast of the future. Babylon and Palestine would be overrun with Persians, Medes and Parthians and their horses would dig up the dead, whose coffins would serve as cribs.

‘Ulla said; Let him [The Messiah] come, but let me not see him.¹⁰¹

Rabbah said likewise: Let him come, but let me not see him. R. Joseph said: Let him come, and may I be worthy of sitting in the shadow of his ass’s saddle.¹⁰² Abaye enquired of Rabbah: ‘What is your reason [for not wishing to see him]? Shall we say, because of the birth pangs [preceding the advent] of the Messiah?’¹⁰³ But it has been taught, R. Eleazar’s disciples asked him: ‘What must a man do to be spared the pangs of the Messiah?’ [He answered,] ‘Let him engage in study and benevolence; and you Master do both.’ He replied: ‘[I fear] lest sin cause it,¹⁰⁴ ...

/99a/ R. Hiyya b. Abba said in R. Johanan’s name: All the prophets prophesied [all the good things] only in respect of the Messianic era; but as for the world to come ‘*the eye hath not seen, O Lord, beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.*’¹⁰⁵ Now, he disagrees with Samuel, who said: This world differs from [that of] the days of the Messiah only in respect of servitude to [foreign] powers.

¹⁰¹ V. n. 103.

¹⁰² [Following the reading in Yalkut (v. Levy,) [H]. Our texts read: [H], 'dung'.]

¹⁰³ These troubles are generally referred to as birth pangs, being the travail which precedes the birth of a new era.

¹⁰⁴ That sin may neutralise the other two, and so I will suffer after all.

¹⁰⁵ Isa. LXIV, 3.