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**ŚATAN THE NEMESIS:
THE TALMUD'S CURRICULUM ON GOD'S ATTRIBUTE OF JUSTICE**

by

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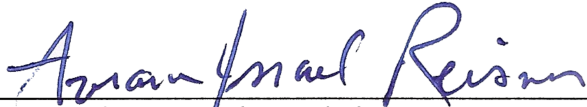
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DISSERTATION APPROVAL PAGE**

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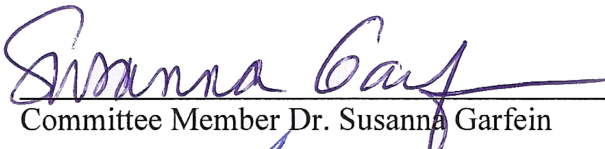
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Abstract

ŚATAN THE NEMESIS:

THE TALMUD'S CURRICULUM ON GOD'S ATTRIBUTE OF JUSTICE

Alexander Seinfeld

The motif of ŚATAN appears in thirty-nine passages in the Talmud, clustered into eighteen *sugyot*. Historically, most of these statements are attributed to various sages who lived over a period of some four centuries. But the Talmud is not a mere historical record, it is a text crafted by a later group of rabbinic scholars. Although they chose to remain anonymous, much is known about their cultural orientation and motives for selecting and arranging these specific statements at the exclusion of all others. Similar to their choices of halachic sugyot, their selection of aggadot appears to reflect a deliberate sifting in order to create a theological curriculum.

Based on the redactors' likely interpretation of the ŚATAN source narratives in Tanach, and based on a close reading of the Bavli's thirty-nine ŚATAN passages, the rabbis conceived of ŚATAN as metaphorical. Applying a synchronic interpretation to the Bavli's eighteen ŚATAN *sugyot* reveals a consistent didactic message about divine justice which may be called *a theology of nemesis*. This theology conceptualizes the mechanics of divine justice as a didactic process of hindering a person on their present path of hubris in order to correct the path or learn a lesson.

The Bavli's ŚATAN curriculum reflects an agenda that was likely responding to cultural influences, including theologies which may have impacted Talmudic redaction such as Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, Gnosticism and Greco-Roman paganism.

The methodology expands on Jacob Neusner's research on Talmudic halachah, on the work of Moulie Vidas in uncovering the agenda of the Talmud's redactors on the scholarship of Yaakov Elman, Shai Secunda and others on the redactors' cultural setting, and synthesizes the scholarship of Richard Hidary, Daniel Boyarin and Stephen Fraade to demonstrate how Talmudic dialectics and disputes may be understood as a type of oral performance, projecting the rabbis' self-understanding as transmitters of oral texts.

The thirty-nine ŚATAN passages in the Talmud present an exceptional laboratory for studying rabbinic theology. In addition, the Bavli emerged as a peak of a long period of rabbinic creativity that spans the entire period of early Christianity and therefore might provide clues to the ideas and cultures that spawned it. Ultimately, this dissertation will also contribute to the emerging consensus among scholars today that there is something called "the Bavli's perspective" which is the ideology and agenda of the Stammaite redactors.

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1. Introduction

The figure of ŠAṬAN¹ appears in the Talmud in numerous guises, seldom more colorfully than Qid. 81a:

R. Meir used to scoff at transgressors [of sexual immorality]. One day [a] ŠAṬAN appeared to him in the guise of a woman on the opposite bank of the river. As there was no ferry, he seized the rope and proceeded across. When he had reached half way along the rope, he [ŠAṬAN] released him [R. Meir] saying: “Had they not proclaimed in Heaven, ‘Be careful with R. Meir and his Torah,’ I would have valued your life at two nickels.”

Did the rabbis who immortalized R. Meir’s moment of temptation intend the reader to imagine an independent demonic Satan or a divine emissary? If the latter, did they imagine this ŠAṬAN a real figure or is his manifestation to R. Meir figurative, representing God’s response to hubris? Given the Talmud’s halachic structure, many scholars have doubted or discounted any broad non-halachic agenda beyond adding some color to its main dialectical program. Moreover, if the redactors did have a non-halachic agenda, the Gemara’s sheer size and its inconsistencies are obstacles to forming any firm conclusions about it.

Yet when considered in the context of the entire Talmud, R. Meir’s anecdote does not appear merely tangential within its local context nor an outlier, for it is one of dozens of ŠAṬAN references in the Bavli (and of hundreds in in rabbinic literature). Nevertheless, while the ŠAṬAN and the larger topic of good and evil have long been core topics for theologians and

¹ The transliteration of ŠAṬAN in small-caps is intended to avoid lending any *a priori* preference to either the personified Satan or the impersonal satan. In discussing Christian texts, however, I use the personified Satan. Other transliterations in this dissertation are generally following the standards of rabbinic philology, with exceptions when an alternative transliteration has already become commonplace, such as “halacha” as opposed to halakhah. Thus, ŠAṬAN indicates a leading *sin* while SAṬAN indicates a leading *samekh*.

continue to inspire new assessments,² the ŠATAN of rabbinic literature appears to be a significant hermeneutic source or set of sources that has received only cursory attention. Rabbinic ŠATAN texts are often quoted *ad hoc* in order to support a thesis but have never been the subject of a systematic hermeneutical study.³ This gap becomes more pronounced when one considers that while early Christianity was creating its literature with its demonic, dualistic (i.e., independent of God) ŠATAN, this competing group within the same social-geographical space, informed by the same Tanach, was producing its own genres of texts with their own ŠATAN narratives. Rabbinic literature therefore offers a potentially fertile source for understanding the development of the concept.⁴

In their own right as well, rabbinic ŠATAN texts should be of interest for their sheer volume: in contrast to the ŠATAN's appearance in eight primary and two secondary Tanach

² One can look at least as far back as Augustine's *Enchiridion* and as recently as Henry Kelly, *Satan: A Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

³ Some scholars distinguish between exegesis and hermeneutics, usually citing Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1985). As articulated by Cass Fisher, exegesis "makes the biblical text cohere with itself" while hermeneutics "makes the biblical text cohere the cultural and theological horizon of the interpreter;" *Contemplative Nation: A Philosophical Account of Jewish Theological Language* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), 96. Accordingly, Talmudic aggadah is hermeneutical; however, I do not find the distinction presently pertinent and use the terms interchangeably.

⁴ The earliest rabbinic texts appeared in Palestine in the third century CE; the Babylonian Talmud was composed later and hundreds of miles away, yet is a layered composition utilizing earlier rabbinic materials. Such an investigation was proposed by Wilhem Beuken, "A Review," in *Tradition in Transition: Haggai and Zechariah 1–8 in the Trajectory of Hebrew Theology*, ed. Mark Boda and Michael Floyd (London: T & T Clark, 2008), 306. Similarly, Ryan Stokes concludes his survey of Tanach ŠATAN scholarship, "If שטן does not mean 'accuser' in the Hebrew Scriptures, then how and when did the *šatan* become 'the Accuser' [ὁ κατηγορ] of our comrades' (Rev 12:10)?" ("Satan, YHWH's Executioner," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 133, no. 2 [2014], 269 n. 42).

contexts,⁵ about two dozen New Testament texts⁶ and a few places in the apocrypha and pseudepigrapha,⁷ the various rabbinic texts mention ŠAṬAN in one of its forms in 195 different contexts.⁸ Among these, the thirty-nine ŠAṬAN passages in the Talmud Bavli (Gemara) present an exceptional laboratory for studying the rabbinic view or views of the concept.

Within the parameters defined in Chapter 1, my survey of ŠAṬAN in the Talmud will demonstrate three conclusions:

1. Theology of Nemesis

With one sole exception, every Talmudic ŠAṬAN text can most plausibly be read as allegory for a form of divine justice which may be conveyed by the term “nemesis”.⁹ Nemesis

⁵ (1) 1 Sam 29:4 and (2) 2 Samuel 19:23; (3) 1 Kin 5:18, 11:14, 11:23, 11:25; (4) Ps 38:21, 71:13, 109:2-20; (5) 1 Chron 21:1; (6) Zech 3:1-2; (7) Job 1 and 2; (8) Num 22:22 and 22:32; plus (9) two related texts, Gen 26:21 and Ezr 4:6; and a set of grammatically-related passages, Gen 27:41, Gen 49:23, Gen 50:15, Ps 55:4 and Job 16:9. The total number of distinct passages is twenty-eight.

⁶ Matthew 4:10, 12:26, 16:23, Mark 1:13, 3:23, 3:26, 4:15, 8:33, Luke 4:8, 10:18, 11:18, 13:16, 22:3, 22:31, (1 Peter 5:8), John 13:27, (12:31), Acts 5:3, 26:18, Rom 16:20, 1 Cor 5:5, 7:5, 2 Cor 2:11, (11:3), 11:14, 12:7, 1 Thess 2:18, 2 Thess 2:9, (3:5), Rev 2:9, 2:13, 2:24, 3:9, 12:9, 20:2, 20:7, (Ephes 2:2), (Heb 2:14). While the total number of distinct passages is thirty-four, most scholars group them according to chapter: see Appendix for full citations. As noted there, the Satan phrase of Luke 4:8 is not found in all manuscripts. Bracketed sources are Satan-like figures and should be included according to Kelly, *Satan*, 233.

⁷ Wisdom 2:24, Sirach 21:27, 1 En. 40.7 and 54, Slav Enoch 29.4 and 31.3, Mart Isa 2.2, (Apoc Zeph 3:8-9, 6:8), Jub x:11 (but in additional passages if “Mastema” is included; see Ch. 2 and note 47 below), Lat Life 14-16, Gr Life 16-18.

⁸ A simple search results in 333 actual instances; my estimate of 195 contexts includes several repetitions of a text in a different context. Moshe Gross, *Otzer Ha'aggada* (Jerusalem: Mosad HaRav Kook, 1976 v. 3) narrows this list to fifty-five primary occurrences.

⁹ See Daniel Boyarin's *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), where he critiques Yizhaq Heinemann's exposition of Maimonides's discussion of the nature of rabbinic midrash in *Guide of the Perplexed*. Boyarin suggests that the Rambam's true intent is “that the midrashim are philosophical allegories” (*ibid.*, 131 n. 10). For a survey of the various definitions of “midrash”, both ancient and modern, see Gary Porton, “Defining Midrash,” in *The Study of Ancient Judaism I*, ed. Jacob Neusner (New York:

is a type of opponent — as opposed to a mere “enemy” — with a persistent role, the antagonist that defines the protagonist. In literature, in sport and in life, competition is vital: the ideal well-matched challenger finds and exploits weaknesses, leading to a corrective strengthening, without which one cannot reach one’s potential.¹⁰ In American literature, such a perfect opponent or antagonist is a nemesis.¹¹ Functionally, this modern idiom is not a radical departure from the original Hellenistic myth, in which Nemesis delivers divine retribution for a

Ktav, 1981), 55-103. He makes the useful distinction between “expositional” midrash (which “follows the text of a given biblical book” and homiletical midrash, which includes everything else (*ibid.*, 78). See a continued discussion in note 129 below.

¹⁰ Consequently, without a well-matched opponent, not only the fans of a game but the players themselves lose interest.

¹¹ The OED lists four definitions. Their order is evidently chronological, not of prominence: “1a. Usu. in form Nemesis. Originally in classical mythology: the goddess of retribution or vengeance, who reverses excessive good fortune, checks presumption, and punishes; (hence) a person who or thing which avenges, punishes, or brings about someone’s downfall; an agent of retribution; **1b. orig. and chiefly *N. Amer.* In extended use: a persistent tormentor; a long-standing rival, an arch-enemy;** 2a. Usu. in form Nemesis. Retributive justice; (also) an instance of this; the downfall brought by it; 2b. An unavoidable consequence of (or occas. for) a specified activity or behaviour; an inevitable penalty or price.” (<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/00322782> access date=4/24/2008; emphasis added.). The term appears in both English and American literature and in the scholarship thereof, in both the human and moral senses. See James Froude’s 1849 novel, *The Nemesis of Faith*, described by William McKelvy as “one of the most talked-about books of the late 1840s” (*The English Cult of Literature: Devoted Readers, 1774-1880* [Charlottesville, Virginia: University of Virginia Press, 2007], 11). In the following century, prominent American playwright Eugene O’Neill frequently employed the theme, per Chester Clayton Long, *The Role of Nemesis in the Structure of Selected Plays by Eugene O’Neill* (*Studies in American Literature Vol. 8*) (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1968). O’Neill’s British contemporary Joseph Conrad created protagonists who have been described as “stalked by a brooding nemesis, the threat of moral failure or the loss of rational control” (Elleke Boehmer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature: Migrant Metaphors* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005]). The literary theme of nemesis arguably reached a certain climax with the publication of Philip Roth’s 2010 novel *Nemesis*, which itself has inspired numerous critical studies, such as Emily Budick’s “Roth’s Fiction from Nemesis to Nemesis,” *Comparative Literature and Culture* 16, no. 2 (2014), in which she finds the novel “the culminating work of a career in which one nemesis or another has afflicted almost all of the author’s protagonists.... Roth restores the word nemesis to its classical meaning: Nemesis, as the goddess of revenge and cosmic balance” (quoted from the abstract); presumably, then, the nemesis in Roth’s previous thirty novels was of the ideal-antagonist sort.

person's hubristic defiance of the gods. Catalogs of mythology tend to generalize the goddess Nemesis for both Greeks and Romans as one who "rewards the humble, punishes crime, and humiliates the overbearing and proud."¹² Bernard Dietrich's survey of the histories and varieties of Nemesis cults concludes that "Nemesis is the last important figure that has a bearing on the question of the significance of the early Greek concept of fate"¹³ and it seems likely that rabbinic tradition was aware of at least the broad outlines of how Greek and other

¹² Berens, E. M., *Myths & Legends Of Ancient Greece & Rome* (New York: Maynard, Merrill, & Co. 1880), 8. See also Margaret Miles, "A Reconstruction of the Temple of Nemesis at Rhamnous," *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* 58, no. 2 (Apr-Jun, 1989), 133-249. In Greek mythology, Nemesis seems to have been related to "daughter of Zeus, distributor of rewards and punishments, from Greek Adrasteia, literally 'she from whom there is no escape'" (www.etymonline.com/index.php?search=nemesis; access date May 29, 2015). "The word itself is derived from the root *nem/nom*, which has to do with distribution or apportionment.... to the ancient Greeks, the road to ruin ran along the following route....prosperity...excess.... hubris....nemesis....ruin," Deborah Lyons, "Nemesis," in *God and Goddesses of Greece and Rome* (New York: Cavendish Square Publishing, 2011), 201-202. These sources speak of Nemesis as a developed concept; its origins are subject to much speculation due to fragmentary evidence (Bernard Dietrich, *Death, Fate, and the Gods: The Development of a Religious Idea in Greek Popular Belief and in Homer* [London: Athlone Press, 1967], 173). Yet by Hellenistic times it appears universally accepted that nemesis comes as a response to *hybris* (hubris). The definition of *hybris* has itself been much debated; Douglas Cairns ("Hybris, Dishonour, and Thinking Big," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 116 [1996] makes somewhat of a synthesis between Douglass MacDowell, "'Hybris' in Athens," *Greece & Rome* 23, no. 1 (Apr., 1976); and N. R. E. Fisher, "'Hybris' and Dishonour: I," *Greece & Rome* 23:2 (Oct., 1976) and *Hybris: A Study in the Values of Honor and Shame in Ancient Greece* (Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 1992); concluding that it means "self-aggrandizement at the expense of others." Fisher (*Hybris: A Study*) shows nuances of Nemesis in Homer (indignation), Hesiod (social constraint on hubris), Aeschylus (divine envy at success), Sophocles (divine outrage), Herodotus (divine revenge) and Euripides (divine punishment for over-confidence). Fisher points out that Plato is the first to define the *hybris* against which Nemesis reacts as potentially inward and not necessarily directed at others (*ibid.*, 453). The rabbinic view that will emerge here may thereby be categorized as neo-Platonic: the ŠATAN is a nemesis-response to self-aggrandizement even when not at the expense of others.

¹³ Bernard Dietrich, *Death, Fate, and the Gods*, 173. For a full review of the development of Nemesis through Roman sources, see Michael Hornum, *Nemesis, the Roman State and the Games* (New York: E.J. Brill, 1993), Ch. 1.

non-Jewish traditions addressed this topic, particularly Imperial Rome.¹⁴ This dissertation will argue that authors of rabbinic texts interpreted the ŠAṬAN of Tanach as ideologically analogous to the Greek Nemesis, presumably appealing to the same human sense of (and desire for) justice. Yet the ŠAṬAN-as-nemesis that emerges from the present study is more than a religious

¹⁴ The Romans adapted Nemesis to idealize and inspire state power; see Michael Hornum, *Nemesis*, Ch. 2, for the widespread appearance of Nemesis on Imperial Roman architecture, coins, jewelry, etc. For the widespread use of Nemesis in Roman amphitheaters, see Alison Futrell, *Blood in the Arena: The Spectacle of Roman Power* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000), 110-119. For the persistence of the myth as late as the twelfth century CE, see Hornum *op. cit.*, Appendix 1 and 2, which consists of catalogues of literary and epigraphic evidence. He quotes, for instance, the following excerpt from the sixth century CE Athenian Neo-Platonist Damascius, whom the Justinian persecutions drove to live in Persia: “Nemesis is the Goddess who curbs the excesses of the soul, and her wrath more manifestly visits the boastful, because the humble are more clearly aware where they fall short of the standard...” (translation by L.G. Westerink, *ibid.* 138).

Dozens of cultic statues and inscriptions of Nemesis from the third century CE have been found in Israel, Syria and Egypt. For Israel and Syria, see Henri Seyrig, “Antiquités Syriennes: 4. Monuments Syriens du Culte de Némésis,” *Syria* 13, no. 1 (1932) and Hornum, *op. cit.*, 20; for Egypt, see Joseph Leibovitch, “Le Griffon d’Erez et le Sens Mythologique de Némésis” (*Israel Exploration Journal* 8 [1958]), 143. For the geographic extent of the Nemesis cults in the rabbinic era, see Hadrien Bru, “Némésis et le Culte Impérial dans les Provinces Syriennes” (*Syria* 85 [2008]: 293-314). Inscriptions at Roman amphitheaters indicate the worship of Nemesis idols by gladiators, who would offer their personal nemesis idol clothing and earrings; see Louis Robert, *Les Gladiateurs dans l’Orient Grec* (Paris: Champion, 1971), 307. In his *Roman History*, Appian of Alexandria (d. 165 CE) mentions a sanctuary (*temonos*) dedicated to Nemesis that was destroyed by the Jews of Alexandria during their uprising; see *Roman History II: Books 8.2-12* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1912), §2.90; see also Hornum, *op. cit.*, 16. Although the Code of Theodosianus banned pagan cults across the Roman Empire beginning 439 CE, the belief in a supernatural law of retribution was so widespread in the ancient world, including in Zoroastrianism, per Jenny Rose, *Zoroastrianism: An Introduction* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011); Buddhism, per Jonathan Silk, “Good and Evil In Indian Buddhism: The Five Sins of Immediate Retribution” (*Journal Of Indian Philosophy*, 35, 253-286) and Confucianism, per Joseph Schultz, *Judaism and the Gentile Faiths: Comparative Studies in Religion* (East Brunswick, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1981); that it was probably universally accepted in its broadest sense. Mathias Schmoekel suggests an early Christian Nemesis-awareness in the title of his article, “*Nemesis: a Historical Glimpse into the Christian Reasons for Punishment*” (*Tijdschrift voor Rechtsgeschiedenis* 81 [2013], 159-197) but does not seek any historical connections between the ancient cults and Christianity other than a hint in his conclusion (pp. 196-7).

idea; the breadth of the Talmud's presentation of ŠATAN reveals a nuanced ideology that may be rightly called a *theology of nemesis*.¹⁵

The choice of a Hellenistic motif to describe and frame rabbinic ideology may superficially appear ironic but is in fact quite appropriate in this case. For the Talmud emerged from a landscape heavily influenced by Greco-Roman culture. Within that cultural context, the Talmud presents itself as a comprehensive, authoritative theological text to the exclusion of any and all other texts, on all matters of theology.¹⁶ Since the questions of divine justice and human fate are universal, and since the Greco-Roman ideas and cults of Nemesis were a prominent response to such questions, it would be precisely there that the rabbis would want to broadcast, “Let us tell you how Providence, including divine justice, works — the true meaning of ‘nemesis’.”¹⁷

¹⁵ In response to this basic human need to answer questions of divine justice, Hellenism developed a detailed Nemesis mythology. Aristotle began to rationalize the mythology without turning it into a detailed philosophy: “Envy means being pained at people who are deservedly prosperous, while the emotion of the malicious man is itself nameless, but the possessor of it is shown by his feeling joy at undeserved adversities; and midway between them is the righteously indignant man, and what the ancients called Righteous Indignation — feeling pain at undeserved adversities and prosperities and pleasure at those that are deserved; hence the idea that Nemesis is a deity,” Eud. Eth. 3.1233b, from *Aristotle in 23 Volumes*, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1981).

Building on — or perhaps reacting to — these precedents, a full theology of nemesis (i.e., personalized divine justice) emerges through the lens of rabbinic texts. But Talmudic theology is not presented systematically as one expects from a theological system. Talmudic theology is like Talmudic philosophy – it emerges from analysis. For a presentation of interpreting the Talmud as a source of philosophy, see Hyam Maccoby, *The Philosophy of the Talmud* (New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002), who shows how both halachic and aggadic parts of the Talmud teach rabbinic philosophy, which, in contrast to Western philosophy, “is primarily about morality, rather than about the nature of reality” (*ibid.*, 31).

¹⁶ See Cass Fisher, *Contemplative Nation*, who makes a parallel theological study of the *Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael*.

¹⁷ There is a body of scholarship that considers direct influences of Greco-Roman philosophy and particularly dialectics on rabbinic thought. I lean towards the minimalist position of Seth Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society, 200 B.C.E-640 C.E.* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 163.

2. Unified curriculum

The ŠAṬAN texts show great theological consistency throughout the Bavli, supporting the thesis that the Bavli's redaction created a unified curriculum – that is a synchronic text – its redactional history notwithstanding.

3. Pedagogical strategies

The Bavli's ŠAṬAN texts reflect a pedagogical (and at times possibly polemical) agenda that was likely responding to cultural influences.

Chapter 1 will situate the investigation within scholarship of non-rabbinic theologies which may have impacted Talmudic theology, including Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, Gnosticism and Greco-Roman paganism, including the Roman cult of Nemesis. While direct impacts have yet to be proven, I will argue that the Talmud's redactors were aware of these competing ideologies and some rabbinic passages may be regarded as polemics against such ideologies.

Chapter 2 will argue for a holistic ("synchronic") approach to Talmudic aggadah, expanding on Jacob Neusner's research on Talmudic halacha. Following Moulie Vidas, who himself builds on the work of Shamma Friedman, David Halivni et al., I understand that the Talmud's redactors had an agenda, which appears to be an intentional, crafted curriculum and can, as Yaakov Elman, Shai Secunda and others have begun to demonstrate be better understood within its cultural setting. In addition to considering the cultural setting, I will pursue a fuller anthropological approach, examining the beliefs and assumptions of the authors. Thus I will synthesize the scholarship of Richard Hidary, Daniel Boyarin and Stephen Fraade to demonstrate how Talmudic dialectics and disputes may be understood as a type of oral performance, projecting the rabbis' self-understanding as transmitters of oral texts. This

anthropological approach to the Bavli will enable the hypothesis of a comprehensive Talmudic theology of ŠAṬAN.

Building on this anthropological foundation, Chapter 3 will delineate the probable rabbinic understanding of the ten ŠAṬAN-related texts and contexts of Tanach, using as evidence the Bavli itself and the targums, and to a lesser extent other midrashic collections.¹⁸

¹⁸ It has been well established that the targums are midrashic, presenting much more than a literal translation. For example, see Roger Syrén, “The Targum as a Bible Reread, or, How Does God Communicate With Humans?” *Journal for the Aramaic Bible* 2, no. 2 (2000). On the status of Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, see note 291 below. In rabbinic Babylonia, Onkelos “became the authoritative text, which in the official literary Aramaic, established the correct Jewish understanding of every passage of the Torah, and was regarded as of the highest authority among the Jews” (Bernard Grossfeld, “Targum Onkelos, Halakha and the Halakhic Midrashim,” in *The Aramaic Bible: Targums in their Historical Context*, ed. DRG Beattie and MJ McNamara [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994], 245). The status of Onkelos (and Jonathan to the Prophets) in the Bavli is attested on Meg. 3a, where the Gemara calls this translation “Targum” and attributes it to Onkelos. The Gemara there proceeds to declare that this official Targum is actually Sinaitic but had been lost, Onkelos merely having restored it: שִׁכְחוּם וְחָזְרוּ וַיִּסְדּוּם. Note that this expression is in the plural: “they forgot it and they reestablished it.” That is, Onkelos is not held to be an independent creative author, rather an agent of a previous generation of rabbis. In other words, the Stam of the Bavli had an official Pentateuchal Targum (which elsewhere in the Bavli is always called “Targum”), and Onkelos gets credit for the labor of penning it. (Grossfeld [*ibid.*, 241-5], lists the numerous views of the dating of Onkelos from the first to the fifth centuries CE; nonetheless, based on Paul Kahle’s *The Cairo Geniza* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959], he assumes that the surviving version of Onkelos was edited under the influence of the same schools of thought as the Stammaim.) Onkelos is therefore arguably more important than Pseudo-Jonathan to the present discussion. Moreover, Josep Ribera demonstrates that the deviations of Onkelos from the simple translation follow the same hermeneutic rules as the halachic and aggadic midrashim (“The Targum: From Translation to Interpretation,” in *The Aramaic Bible: Targums in Their Historical Context*, ed. DRG Beattie and MJ McNamara [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994]. See also Shinan, “The Aggadah of the Palestinian Targums of the Pentateuch and Rabbinic Aggadah,” 204-212). The authoritative status of Onkelos is confirmed by Alexander Samely’s taxonomic research (“The Targums Within a New Description of Jewish Text Structures in Antiquity,” *Aramaic Studies* 9, no. 1 (2011).

Yet despite its hermeneutical status, scholars investigating Rabbinic or Stammaitic hermeneutics often ignore Onkelos, perhaps due to Alexander Sperber’s admonition that to consider the Targums that we have today as historically older than their oldest surviving manuscript is “utterly unscientific” (*The Bible in Aramaic, Based on Old Manuscripts and Printed Texts: Volume IV B The Targum and the Hebrew Bible* [Leiden: Brill, 1973], 2). Yet Sperber himself allows that the Targums may be “interesting material” for any student of rabbinic midrash and aggadah (*ibid.*, 3), and his vast research finds consistently that “the

Targum reveals a great familiarity with the Jewish Tradition, as represented both in the Bible and in the Oral Law” (*ibid.*, 42). For instance, Moulie Vidas contrasts a passage from Heichalot literature with biblical verses Exod 19:19 and 20:15 (which he references as 20:14), but his analysis would be enriched by considering Onkelos there, who in 19:19 interprets the words “וְהָאֵל הַיִּם יַעֲנֵנוּ” as “וּמִן קֶדֶם יִּמְתַּעֲנֵי לִיָּהּ” suggesting that it is not God’s actual voice that Moses hears rather an act of ventriloquism to make it seem like God’s voice (Vidas, *Tradition and the Formation of the Talmud*, 179). Similarly, Steven Fraade might have brought useful data from Onkelos in his discussion of *Sifre* to Deut 33:2 in his *From Tradition to Commentary: Torah and Its Interpretation in the Midrash Sifre to Deuteronomy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 28-49, and generally ignores Onkelos outside of footnotes; Onkelos would have a useful primary source in sections of his recent *Legal Fictions: Studies of Law and Narrative in the Discursive Worlds of Ancient Jewish Sectarrians and Sages* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2011), such as the discussion of Exod 24:10 (p. 504). Sometimes the failure to connect Targum to other rabbinic sources occurs in the other direction, such as Roger Syrén’s conclusion (“Ishmael and Esau in Jubilees and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan,” in *The Aramaic Bible: Targums in their Historical Context*, ed. DRG Beattie and MJ McNamara [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994], 315) that Pseudo-Jonathan’s portrayal of Ishmael’s repentance in Gen 25:8-9 is based on logic, without considering the fact that Gen. Rab. says the same thing.

Pinkhos Churgin’s careful comparisons of Onkelos to the Pentateuch and Jonathan to the Prophets show convincingly that they “originated in one and the same time; in one and the same way, under one and the same circumstances and share a common history” (*Targum Jonathan to the Prophets [Yale Oriental Series – Researches XIV]* [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1907], 35. David Golomb’s analysis (“A Liar, A Blasphemer, A Reviler: The Role of Biblical Ambiguity in the Palestinian Pentateuchal Targumim,” in *Targum Studies: Textual and Contextual Studies in the Pentateuchal Targums, Vol 1.*, ed. Paul V. M. Flesher [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992]) shows a method to their midrashic exegesis, based on ambiguities in the text and certain theological assumptions. Importantly, see Paul Flesher’s introduction to the Targums where he concludes that “most seem to have more in common with the Babylonian Talmud and later midrashim than they do with the earlier halakhic and midrashic writing of Palestine” (Paul V. M. Flesher and Bruce D. Chilton, *The Targums: a Critical Introduction* [Waco: Baylor University Press, 2011], 260), even though the Bavli and the Targums use different dialects of Aramaic (*ibid.*, 277). Nonetheless, there may be an alternative to Flesher’s assumption that an ancient congregation hearing the targum recited “usually could not distinguish the differences and that when they could, they did not know the Hebrew text’s meaning, but only the Targums” (*ibid.*, 228) and that “for those who do not know the Hebrew text intimately or immediately bring it to recall, the entire Targum functions as translation” and “whatever group or type of people composed the Targums, their interpretations cannot serve to lend them status” (*ibid.*, 338). It seems more likely that most people knew the Hebrew text well enough to recognize when the Targum deviates or embellishes. Therefore there may be no basis to his conclusion that “the standing of the interpretation is the same as the standing of Scripture because it is seen as Scripture” (*ibid.*). The rules he cites for reciting the Targum in synagogue likely *did* succeed at reminding people that Targum is not Scripture.

This examination will show that the rabbis understood most ŠAṬANS of Scripture as a theurgical metaphor for divine didactic justice (and the others as a generic term for a human adversary).¹⁹

Chapter 4 will examine the thirty-nine unique ŠAṬAN texts of the Bavli and demonstrate their consistency with the rabbinic understanding of the Scriptural ŠAṬAN, including the rhetorical use of both Scriptural terms, ŠAṬAN and HAŠAṬAN. This exposition will argue that the rabbis conceived of ŠAṬAN as metaphorical and support the present hypothesis that the Talmud itself presents a deliberate and unequivocal theology of ŠAṬAN.²⁰

Ultimately, this dissertation will also contribute to the emerging consensus among scholars today that there is something called “the Bavli’s perspective” which is the ideology and agenda of the Stammaitic redactors. I employ David Halivni’s term “Stammaitic” as a

¹⁹ I use the term “didactic justice” specifically to distinguish this conclusion from Peggy Day (and others) who interprets the ŠAṬAN of Tanach as representing “retributive justice”; see Peggy Day, *An Adversary in Heaven: šatan in the Hebrew Bible* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988). See also OED definition 2a (note 11 above).

²⁰ My theurgical conclusion is somewhat consistent with the thesis of Ishay Rosen-Zvi in *Demonic Desires: Yetzer Hara and the Problem of Evil in Late Antiquity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011). He argues that:

The rabbinic concept of *yetzer hara* has been incorrectly contextualized, as part of the ancient discourse of self-control and self-fashioning. It should be understood instead as part of the biblical and post-biblical search for the sources of human sinfulness. Rabbinic *yetzer* should therefore not be read in the tradition of the Hellenistic quest for control over the lower parts of the psyche, but rather in the tradition of ancient Jewish and Christian demonology” (pp. 5-6).

Regardless of his conclusions about the *yetzer hara*, the term “demonology” appears too strong for contextualizing the rabbinic ŠAṬAN; I believe the rabbis sought to explain the relationship between human behavior and divine response; I also believe — and this point cannot be overstated — that the rabbis sought to explain the meaning of Scripture, which they saw as flawlessly projecting a cohesive system of thought.

convenient convention for the anonymous redactors, in acknowledgment that the term has become *nearly* universally accepted.²¹

Scholarship on the social and historical contexts in which the layers of the Bavli were formed at times disregards a vital intellectual context, namely canonized scripture (Tanach). Since Tanach forms the foundational intellectual context of every Bavli *sugya* (literary or curricular unit) whether halachic or aggadic, without exception, it is a crucial detail of the Bavli's context that might be added to the contextual menu of future scholarship.²²

In addition, the Bavli emerges as a peak of rabbinic creativity that spans the entire period of early Christianity and might provide clues to the ideas and culture that spawned the

²¹ See David Halivni, *Midrash, Mishnah, and Gemara: The Jewish Predilection for Justified Law* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), 76-104. In defense of the term, see Jeffrey Rubenstein, *The Culture of the Babylonian Talmud* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003). Yaakov Elman has hesitated to embrace the term as representing a significant group differing from the Amoraim and Saboraim; see his "Orality and the Redaction of the Babylonian Talmud," *Oral Tradition* 14:1 (1999): 58. He explains his caution in his review of Rubenstein: "Individual scholars will differ on this matter in accord with their notions of just how heavy-handed these redactors were and, indeed, whether there was a uniform redactional style in this regard and in many others, including some or all of the following: the language of the redactional interventions (Aramaic or Aramaic/Hebrew), the question of oral composition and redaction and its affect on the redactional product, the question of whether the final redactors had earlier, partial compilations before them, and so on;" Yaakov Elman, "The Culture of the Babylonian Talmud," *Journal of Religion* 86, no. 4 (October, 2006). For additional discussion and sources, see notes 123 and 195 below. For a broad survey of the issues surrounding the Bavli's redaction and the major approaches of scholarship, see David Goodblatt, "The Babylonian Talmud," in *The Study of Ancient Judaism*, Vol. 2, ed. Jacob Neusner, (New York: Ktav, 1992), 167-181.

²² Indeed, as Avigdor Shinan notes (*The World of the Aggadah* [Tel Aviv: MOD Books, 1990], 682), the point is true of the entire rabbinic canon, which suggests an avenue for classification of "rabbinic" according to a given text's assumptions about Tanach; for evidence and argument of this point, see note 200 below. Stuart Miller would likely expand that definition to include laity as well, for "the biblical tradition was the common inheritance of Jews and made more than a sufficient case for ritual purity and for any other practices that the rabbis undoubtedly shared, although in their own interpretation and variation, with others" (*Sages and Commoners in Late Antique 'Erez Israel: A Philological Inquiry into Local Traditions in Talmud Yerushalmi* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006], 12 n. 41). He designates this tradition, "complex common Judaism"; for a further discussion of the relationship between this conception of Judaism and competition for authority, see notes 99 and 153 below.

ontological (dualistic) Christian *Satan*. Because early Christianity found a basis for its dualism in the same ŠAṬAN texts of Scripture, the Bavli's Scripture-informed ŠAṬAN narratives are fertile ground for this exploration. Finally, the holistic and cultural methodologies of this study suggest avenues for investigating the content and construction of other rabbinic texts.

2. Scholarship of the Theology of ŠATAN

Solomon Schechter's stated purpose for writing *Aspects of Rabbinic Theology* is to address a major gap in scholarship, for Talmudic theology has received systematic under-attention. He attributes this lack of attention to the Talmud's lack of a standard theological plan, namely "logically demonstrated dogmas."²³ Subsequent scholars have framed Talmudic theology within its greater non-Jewish cultural context and presumed that its redactors needed to distinguish the Gemara's Judaic orientation from competing ideologies, including Christianity.²⁴ This assumption would appear reasonable, for even though the Talmud itself never states such an agenda, given the great extent to which the dualism of early Christianity was a polemic against the Jews,²⁵ one might expect to find a counter-trend in Jewish teachings.²⁶

²³ Solomon Schechter, *Aspects of Rabbinic Theology: Major Concepts of the Talmud* (New York: Schocken Books, 1961), 17.

²⁴ Avigdor Shinan, *World of the Aggadah*, 19-22; Steven Fraade, *Legal Fictions*, 494-496.

²⁵ Elaine Pagels, "The Social History of Satan, Part II: Satan in the New Testament Gospels," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 62.1 (1994): 17-58.

²⁶ According to Daniel Boyarin, anti-dualism is "the primary, perhaps sole, focus of rabbinic heresiology" ("Beyond Judaisms: Metatron and the Divine Polymorphy of Ancient Judaism," *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods* 41 [July, 2010]: 330). He may be right that the heresy of dualism was significantly present among Jews as well but I do not see a good reason to limit rabbinic polemics to "an inner-polemic directed against 'Jewish' readings of the Bible and older Jewish theological traditions" (ibid., 364), at least insofar as the Talmud goes. Indeed, he elsewhere says as much: "in the Babylonian Talmud, the term *min* no longer refers to a difference within Judaism, an excluded heretical other, but has come to mean Gentiles and especially Gentile Christians" ("The Christian Invention of Judaism: The Theodosian Empire and the Rabbinic Refusal of Religion" *Representations* 85 [Winter, 2004]: 46). Nonetheless, his emphasis on "inner-polemic" resonates with the present dissertation's thesis that the Talmud's audience is Jewish. See the continued discussion in note 80 below.

However, despite the historical and (alleged) social relationship between early Christianity and early rabbinic Judaism²⁷ (and granted the difficulties and uncertainties in dating rabbinic texts), no scholarship of the Christian Satan has systematically looked for evidence of an ontological *Satan* in rabbinic texts, other than noticing occasional parallels.²⁸ Henry Kelly's first study cites the Bavli, Jubilees, Genesis Rabbah and Job to shed light on the NT Satan *ahistorically*, as if all sources are historically- and theologically-equivalent.²⁹ Kelly more recently notes that "there are some striking parallels to Matthew's little debate from later

²⁷ See, for instance, Acts 5:34-39: "34 But a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law, who was honored by all the people, stood up in the Sanhedrin and ordered that the men be put outside for a little while. 35 Then he addressed the Sanhedrin: "Men of Israel, consider carefully what you intend to do to these men. 36 Some time ago Theudas appeared, claiming to be somebody, and about four hundred men rallied to him. He was killed, all his followers were dispersed, and it all came to nothing. 37 After him, Judas the Galilean appeared in the days of the census and led a band of people in revolt. He too was killed, and all his followers were scattered. 38 Therefore, in the present case I advise you: Leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin, it will fail. 39 But if it is from God, you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God" (New International Version). A scholarly consensus on the question remains elusive: Wayne Meeks concludes that the actual quotidian interactions were probably minimal and that the notion of a great social clash of ideologies may be a figment of the modern imagination; see *In Search of the Early Christians: Selected Essays* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 115-138. See also Reuven Kimelman, "Late Antiquity," in *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition, Vol. 2: Aspects of Judaism in the Graeco-Roman Period*, ed. E. P. Sanders (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), 226-44, upon which Meeks's argument relies. For a counter-argument, see Shai Secunda, *The Iranian Talmud: Reading the Bavli in Its Sasanian Context* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 141-2.

²⁸ E.g., see Joachim Korn, *Peirasmos: die Versuchung des Gläubigen in der Griechischen Bibel* (Suttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1937); Mary E. Andrews, "Peirasmos: A Study In Form-Criticism," *Anglican Theological Review* 24 (1942); and Kelly, *Satan: A Biography*, 88. See also G. R. Evans, ed., *The First Christian Theologians: An Introduction to Theology in the Early Church (The Great Theologians)* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2004), where dozens of essays on early Christian theology all ignore rabbinic theology. This silence is especially surprising among those, like Henry Kelly (*Satan: A Biography*, Ch. 4), who find that the existentially independent (ontological, dualistic) *Satan* of Christian legend developed with the emergence of Christianity, i.e., in the 2nd century CE.

²⁹ Henry Kelly, "Devil in the Desert," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 26:2 (1964), 197-203. Kelly's study is largely based on Joachim Korn, *Peirasmos*).

Jewish literature,”³⁰ but other than referencing rabbinic parallels,³¹ he leaves them unexplored.

Derek Brown’s survey of ŠATAN scholarship notes only one instance of significant attention to rabbinic texts, in 1909.³² Others have completely ignored the rabbinic sources.³³

³⁰ *Satan: A Biography*, 88.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 95, 125, 129.

³² Derek Brown, “The Devil in the Details: A Survey of Research on Satan in Biblical Studies,” *Currents in Biblical Research* 9, no. 2 (2011), 202.

³³ For instance, Neil Forsyth’s innovative work, *The Old Enemy: Satan and the Combat Myth* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987); the omission can lead to errors: see for instance Rachel Adelman, “The Poetics of Time and Space in the Midrashic Narrative — The Case of *Pirkei deRabbi Eliezer*” (doctoral dissertation, The Hebrew University, 2008), 165-167, who assumes that the ŠATAN of 1 Chr is a proper name (see Ch. 4§B.4 below). The gap in scholarship may be due to a genuine lack of data. The state of scholarship does not appear to have advanced significantly since Beryl Smalley rued the lack thereof in the introductory comments to his *Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1970), xii. There seems to be no question that Hugh of St. Victor knew of rabbinic exegesis, but as Rebecca Moore underscores, it cannot be determined how he came to know it, directly or via contact with Jewish scholars (Rebecca Moore, “Jewish Influence On Christian Biblical Interpretation: Hugh of St Victor and ‘The Four Daughters of God,’” in *Of Scribes and Sages: Early Jewish Interpretation and Transmission of Scripture. Volume 2, Later Versions and Traditions* [New London: T&T Clark, 2004], 148-173). Smalley is thereby cautious: “Hugh refers to his teachers as *Hebraei*; perhaps he only meant that one particular Jew was giving him various opinions, traditional in some cases, taught by contemporary scholars in others: ‘my people say . . .’ The identity and number of his *Hebraei* must remain obscure” (*op. cit.*, 104). Moore makes a very interesting and significant discovery that Hugh “works this [rabbinic] midrash into a commentary on Psalm 85” (*op. cit.*, 148) without quoting Hugh’s alleged borrowing. Thus it is difficult to accept her assumption that Hugh could not have arrived independently at the same interpretation as the midrash, or for him to have derived it from some other source, causing Moore’s interesting thesis to become even more mired than she avers in what she calls “the difficulty of tracking down ‘influence’” (*ibid.*, 151). In other words, Smalley’s conclusion that “they [the Victorines] display their debt by quotation, acknowledged and unacknowledged, by imitation and by criticism” (*op. cit.*, 365), leaves unanswered whether or not any given instance of similarity is quotation or mere imitation. Smalley accepts the evidence that Hugh could read Hebrew (*op. cit.*, 102) but per his statement quoted above, we do not know if Hugh had direct access to Jewish texts beyond the Tanach or scholars. Similarly, Smalley’s demonstration that Hugh’s student Andrew also learned Jewish exegesis (*ibid.*, 110) merely reinforces the question: with whom did he communicate, Jewish scholars or laity? Did he see any rabbinic manuscripts? Moore notes that Hugh “was living in Paris” without exploring the social implications of his geographic location, for the great Jewish scholars that we know of were notably *not* in Paris. It would be interesting to test the hypothesis that primary contact and influence of Jewish exegesis on Christianity from the

Going the other direction, there have been hypotheses that aggadic midrashim were influenced indirectly by Christianity, created as anti-Christian polemics. For instance, Philip Davies and Bruce Chilton propose that the rabbinic expansion of the Akeida story (Sanh. 89b; see Ch. 5§11.xxvii below) might be a response to Christian use of the story to promote the sacrificial narrative of Christ, and that the midrashic ŠAṬAN added to the story appears to be mimicry of Christian texts.³⁴ While some find their proposal too conjectural — based on only superficial similarities³⁵ — there may be more to be discovered by looking more broadly at

Stammaitic period throughout the Medieval was primarily oral, as Smalley finds for Andrew of St. Victor (*ibid.*, 154-171).

³⁴ Phillip Davies and Bruce Chilton, “The Aqedah: a Revised Tradition History,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 40, no. 4 (1978).

³⁵ E.g., C.T.R. Hayward, “The Sacrifice of Isaac and Jewish Polemic Against Christianity,” *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 52, no. 2 (1990). See Oded Irshai, “The Christian Appropriation of Jerusalem in the Fourth Century: The Case of the Bordeaux Pilgrim,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 99, no. 4 (2009), who notices some parallel traditions but is skeptical about direct influence in either direction. (Irshai mentions Matthew 4:10 where Jesus and Satan spar, but unfortunately he misses – or is not sensitive to – the patent similarity of Matthew to the conversation between Abraham and the ŠAṬAN on Sanh. 89b, complete with proof-texts on both sides. The similarity is likely evidence that the aggadah about Abraham is older and the Matthew 4:10 narrative is mimicking it.) Irshai’s argument should be examined in light of the population estimates of Keith Hopkins, “Christian Number and Its Implications,” *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 6 no. 2 (1998), who concludes that Christianity was an extremely minor movement until the fourth century; accordingly, one should see little or no anti-Christian polemics in before then and an increase later; that is, in Babylon where Christianity never achieved hegemony. (In contrast, paganism was widely and persistently embraced in Palestine, including by Jews. One might thereby expect to find in the Bavli at least some traces of polemic against pagan beliefs and rituals such as magic and charms; see John Gager, *Moses in Greco-Roman Paganism* [Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series 16], ed. Robert A. Kraft [New York: Abingdon. 1972], 60.)

There is archaeological support for this proposal that Babylonian rabbinic anti-Christian polemics would have been minor or invisible prior to the fourth century and after the fourth century even in Palestine where Christianity had gained the power of the Roman empire and army (see Isadore Epstein, *Judaism: A Historical Presentation* [London: Wyman & Sons, 1959], 126: artistic representations of the Akeida in ancient synagogues and churches show comparable approaches to Biblical interpretation, per Edward Kessler, “The Sacrifice of Isaac (the Akedah) in Christian and Jewish Tradition: Artistic Representations,” in *Borders, Boundaries and the Bible*, ed. Martin O’Kane [London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002]). These archaeological revelations, along with the past two decades of historical criticism

Christian theology rather than focusing on hermeneutics. For instance, Mathias Schmoeckel shows how Church Fathers grappled with the contradiction between Old Testament statements of retaliatory justice (e.g., Ex 20:5, 21:4 and Nah 1:2) and New Testament emphasis on mercy (Mat 5:45, 5:38, Rom 12:17).³⁶ He points out that Clemens of Alexandria (ca. 200 CE), Cyprian of Carthage (ca. 250) and Jerome (ca. 400) all addressed this theological issue and he

showing how the Bavli contains layers influenced by non-Babylonian sources, suggest a revision of Shinar's conclusion (*World of the Aggadah*, 19 and echoed in Phillip Alexander, "'The Parting of the Ways' from the Perspective of Rabbinic Judaism," in *Jews and Christians: the Parting of the Ways A.D. 70 to 135*, ed. James D. G. Dunn [Tübingen: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1999], 1-25) based on demographic data and assumptions, that anti-Christian polemics in rabbinic midrash must be limited to those that originate in Palestine and that there can be no anti-Christian polemics in the Bavli. Yet while Alexander (*ibid.*, 19-20) argues that Acts 7:54-60 is likely representative of most Jews' negative attitudes towards "such outlandish ideas" as demigods including Christology, see James Dunn, "The Question of Anti-Semitism in the New Testament Writings of the Period," in *Jews and Christians: the Parting of the Ways A.D. 70 to 135*, ed. James D. G. Dunn (Tübingen: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1999), who points out that the Jewish laity were still vulnerable (in rabbinic eyes) to Christian proselytization; these factors suggest an environment ripe for anti-Christian polemic. See Daniel Stökl Ben Ezra, "'Christians' Observing 'Jewish' Festivals of Autumn," in *The Image of Judaeo-Christians in Ancient Jewish and Christian Literature*, ed. Peter Tomson and Doris Lambers-Petry (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), who argues that some Syria-Palestinian Gentile Christians celebrated Yom Kippur as late as the fourth century, by which time any Christians who continued to celebrate Yom Kippur "were conceived of as 'dangerous ones in between' by orthodox Christianity and rabbinic Judaism alike, threatening the distinct identity of each by blurring the boundaries and proposing an alternative to the ideology of mutual exclusion" (73). Trevor Ling compares Lk 4:9 (the devil tests Jesus, demanding a sign from heaven) and 11:16 (people test him, demanding a sign from heaven), showing here and elsewhere in NT "the idea that the activities of the Jewish leaders are to be seen as the characteristic activities of Satan;" *The Significance of Satan* (New York: AMS Press, 1984), 62. While the Bavli was redacted much later and in a significantly different cultural context, its historical layers include many traditions inherited from rabbis of the West (that is living with Christian competition and eventual hegemony); and, as I argue from other evidence below (see notes 85 and 86 & *antec.*) the redactors of the Bavli were likely quite conscious of Christianity despite its minor presence in their society.

³⁶ Mathias Schmoeckel, "*Nemesis*."

argues that Augustine's (ca. 400) famous thesis of New Testamental mercy is limited to the human realm; Augustine's God remains as vengeful as his Old Testament appearance.³⁷

The very fact that early Christians speculated deeply about such theological topics, even if the lack of data prevents firm conclusions about direct influence, strengthens Avigdor Shinan's call for comparative research. He argues that the contemporaneity of many Christian texts to rabbinic ones make them a potentially ripe source for improving our understanding of the midrashim and contributing to a richer picture of the world of the Sages.³⁸ Responses to Shinan's call began with Moshe Bernstein's demonstration that the pre-rabbinic apocrypha, especially Jubilees, already show signs of dualism.³⁹ He therefore proposes that the Bavli's rendition of the Akeida has a polemical agenda that is responding to a longer ideological trend of which Christianity appears as one stage.⁴⁰ Howard Wettstein similarly — but differently — frames the ŠATAN of the rabbinic midrashim and Talmud within a trajectory of Jewish texts

³⁷ See Schmoeckel, "Nemesis," 168, who cites Augustine, *In Joannis Evangelium Tractatus* XIV.13.1.6: "Omnes qui nascuntur mortales habent secum iram Dei" — *All who are born mortal have God's wrath*.

³⁸ *World of the Aggadah*, 136.

³⁹ Moshe Bernstein, "Angels at the Aqedah: A Study In the Development of a Midrashic Motif," *Dead Sea Discoveries* 7:3 (2000).

⁴⁰ Menahem Kister is nonplussed by this early dualism: "Remarkably, it seems that the ancient tradition was more dualistic than the present midrash in *Genesis Rabbah*" ("Observations On Aspects Of Exegesis, Tradition, and Theology In Midrash, Pseudepigrapha, and Other Jewish Writings," in *Tracing the Threads: Studies in the Vitality of Jewish Pseudepigrapha*, ed. John C. Reeves, 1-34 [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994], 20). He evidently assumes that dualism is a later development — from Christianity — but Bernstein's hypothesis resolves his bewilderment; Reuven Kimelman ("The Rabbinic Theology of the Physical: Blessings, Body and Soul, Resurrection, and Covenant and Election," in *The Cambridge History of Judaism Volume 4: The Late Roman-Rabbinic Period*, ed. Steven T. Katz [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006], 953) agrees.

from the earliest apocrypha through the latest midrashim, and the New Testament and early Christian Satan writings as a parallel but completely separate trajectory.⁴¹

Bernstein's distinction between ideologies (pre-Rabbinic dualism and Rabbinic anti-dualism) suggests one amendment to Wettstein's argument. Although the Bavli post-dates the apocrypha, and although in the apocrypha and Qumran literature "there are signs of conflict with Persian and Hellenistic myths with which Judaism came into contact,"⁴² the assumption of direct descent or influence is purely speculative and logically erroneous (*post hoc ergo propter hoc*).⁴³ On the contrary, the Bavli often voices an anti-dualism message.⁴⁴ For instance, the Gemara states:

⁴¹ Howard Wettstein, "Against Theodicy," *Judaism* 3 (2001). Regarding his interpretation of Job, see note 278 below. Martin Goodman created a graphical summary of how various groups perceived these separate and often competing trajectories: "Modeling the 'Parting of the Ways'," in *The Ways that Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Adam Becker and Annette Reed (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 119-129.

⁴² Bilha Nitzan, "Evil and its Symbols in the Qumran Scrolls," in *The Problem of Evil and its Symbols in Jewish and Christian Tradition* (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 366), ed. Henning Graf Reventlow and Yair Hoffman (London: T&T Clark International, 2004), 83.

⁴³ Philip Alexander identifies two logical errors in such assumptions: anachronism and "parallelomania" ("Rabbinic Judaism and the New Testament," *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 74:3/4 [1983], 244-6). Doering and others make the same point in extended critiques: see Lutz Doering, "Parallels without 'Parallelomania': Methodological Reflections on Comparative Analysis of Halakhah in the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Rabbinic Perspectives: Rabbinic Literature and the Dead Sea Scrolls Proceedings of the Eighth International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, 7-9 January, 2003* (Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah Vol. 57), ed. Steven Fraade, Aharon Shemesh & Ruth Clements, 3-42. Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2006; and Steven Fraade and Aharon Shemesh, eds., *Rabbinic Perspectives: Rabbinic Literature and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 44-47. Solomon Schechter (*Aspects*, 5) is confident that the rabbis had little contact with apocrypha which "contributed....little or nothing towards the formation of Rabbinic thought."

⁴⁴ Jeffrey Russell sees the rabbinic anti-dualism as "consciously rejecting the dualistic tendency of the apocalyptic writers" and indeed anyone not strictly monotheistic; *Satan: The Early*

בשלמא מודים מודים דמיחזי כשתי רשויות, ועל טוב יזכר שמך נמי, דמשמע: על
טוב אין, ועל רע לא, ותנן: חייב אדם לברך על הרעה כשם שהוא מברך על הטובה.

We understand [the prohibition of praying] “We give thanks, we give thanks”, because he seems [to be addressing] two Powers; also of “May Your name be mentioned for well-doing”, because this implies, for good, yes, for evil, no, and we have learned [in a Mishna, (Ber. 60b)], “A person must bless for evil in the same way as he blesses for good” (Meg. 25a⁴⁵)

This passage exemplifies the Bavli’s consistent anti-dualistic message. The Gemara’s theology is therefore most plausibly framed as a rabbinic response to a non-rabbinic trajectory of texts (and probably oral culture) that includes the apocrypha, New Testament and early Christian writings (as well as other non-rabbinic theologies that will be discussed below). Rather than place its aggadic passages on a “Jewish” trajectory that begins with the apocrypha, the evidence is consistent with an equally ancient parallel tradition that simply was not written down until later.⁴⁶

This distinction is fundamental to the present thesis. While a “Talmudic” ŠAṬAN appears in some apocryphal texts, a very non-Talmudic ŠAṬAN appears in others, including

Christian Tradition (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), 27-28 and Ch. 3. Daniel Boyarin, quoted in note 26 above, echoes this view.

⁴⁵ This explanation is repeated nearly verbatim in Ber. 33b. See there for the view that even saying the “Shema” prayer twice in succession made one suspect of dualism and see the Mishna quoted here (mBer. 5:3) and Gemara there (Ber. 60b). Similarly, in the famous story of the “Four Who Entered Paradise” in Hag. 15a, Aḥer is guilty of dualism. Louis Ginzberg argues (*Jewish Encyclopedia* V:138-139) that this version of Aḥer’s apostasy is a complete fabrication (he prefers the Jerusalem Talmud’s version); if so, then the Bavli’s anti-dualism message is even more pronounced.

⁴⁶ If Bilha Nitzan is correct that Jubilees, Qumran and other apocrypha have “borrowed Zoroastrian and other symbols, imparting to them Jewish characteristics and ideology for the religious-philosophic contest with polytheistic ideologies that spread in the Persian and Hellenistic periods” (“Evil and its Symbols,” 96), then it is not hard to imagine the Jewish and pagan meanings of those symbols becoming conflated over the centuries, giving the later rabbis an additional reason to create anti-dualistic polemics. For a rebuttal of attempts to find polytheism in Jewish sources, see Gershom Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1960), Appendix A.

Jubilees. At least one of the many mentions of ŠAṬAN in Jubilees is overtly equated with “Mastema” (Jub x:8-11).⁴⁷ As the root of Mastema is STM, some scholars consider it a cognate of ŠAṬAN.⁴⁸ In fact, this Mastema does resemble the midrashic ŠAṬAN in interesting ways. For example, consider the Jubilees and rabbinic retelling of the Akeida:

Jubilees Ch. 17:16-18:12	Talmud Sanh. 89b ⁴⁹
<p><u>Mastema instigates the test:</u> And the prince Mastema came and said before God, “Behold, Abraham loves Isaac his son, and he delights in him above all things else; bid him offer him as a burnt-offering on the altar, and You will see if he will do this command, and You will know if he is faithful in everything wherein You test him.</p> <p>....</p> <p><u>In the end, Mastema is silenced:</u> And I called to him from heaven, and said unto him: “Abraham, Abraham;” and he was terrified and said: “Behold, (here) am I.” And I said unto him: “Lay not your hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything to him; for now I have shown that you fear the Lord, and have not withheld your son, your first-born son, from me.” And the prince Mastema was put to shame; and Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold a ram caught . . . by his horns....</p>	<p><u>ŠAṬAN instigates the test:</u> ŠAṬAN said to the Almighty; “Sovereign of the Universe! To this old man You did graciously vouchsafe the fruit of the womb at the age of a hundred, yet of all that banquet which he prepared, had he not one turtle-dove or pigeon to sacrifice before you?” He answered, “He has done nothing but in honor of his son, and were I to say to him, ‘Sacrifice your son before Me’, he would do so without hesitation.”</p> <p>....</p> <p><u>In the end, ŠAṬAN is silenced:</u> Seeing that he would not listen to him, he [ŠAṬAN] said to him, “Now a thing was secretly brought to me [Job 4:12]: thus have I heard from behind the Curtain, ‘The lamb for a burnt-offering but not Isaac for a burnt-offering.’” He [Abraham] replied, “It is the penalty of a liar, that even should he tell the truth, he is not listened to.”</p>

In Jubilees, Mastema urges God to test Abraham (17:16), after which “the prince Mastema was put to shame” (18:12). Like ŠAṬAN in the rabbinic version (Sanh. 89b), Mastema of Jubilees instigates the test that God then carries out. In the rabbinic version, however, ŠAṬAN goes a step further. Having instigated the test, he then attempts to foil Abraham’s success as a voice of doubt in his head. As I will argue in Ch. 4§12 below, context matters. Out of context this ŠAṬAN may appear as an external demonic opponent. In context of the Gemara’s *sugya*,

⁴⁷ See R. H. Charles, *The Book of Jubilees, or the Little Genesis* (London: A. and C. Black, 1902), note 11.

⁴⁸ For a further discussion of etymologies, see note 288 below.

⁴⁹ For the original text and full discussion of it, see Ch. 5§12.xxxi below.

however, it represents Abraham's internal struggle, imparting a lesson about the precision of divine justice.⁵⁰ Thus, while there is an unmistakable similarity between the two versions, their ultimate view of the instigator of the Akeida is quite different: in Jubilees, the instigator Mastema is an independent being that can be "put to shame"; in the Talmud, the ŠAṬAN-instigator represents a divine test.⁵¹

Elsewhere, this difference between Mastema and the rabbinic ŠAṬAN is even more pronounced:

And the prince Mastema exerted himself to do all this, and he sent forth other spirits, those which were put under his hand, to do all manner of wrong and sin, and all manner of transgression, to corrupt and destroy, and to shed blood upon the earth (Jub 11:5).

No rabbinic text describes the ŠAṬAN as committing "wrong", "sin" or "transgression". On the contrary, as Ch. 5 below will show, even the most anthropomorphic ŠAṬAN passages in the Bavli cast him as acting with God's permission, if not explicitly doing God's bidding.

In a third example which highlights the subtle difference between the Jubilees Mastema/ŠAṬAN and the Bavli's ŠAṬAN, both are presented as the attacker of Moses en route to Egypt (Ex 4:24).⁵² Both versions are responding to the same ambiguity in the referent verse:

וַיְהִי בַדֶּרֶךְ בַּמֶּלֶךְ וַיִּפְגְּשֵׁהוּ יְהוָה וַיִּבְקֶשׁ הַמֵּיתוֹ:

And it was on the way, at the inn, and God met him and he sought to kill him (Ex 4:24).

⁵⁰ See Rivkah Kluger, *Satan in the Old Testament*, trans. Hildegard Nagel (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1967), 28, who notes this parallel but does not develop it.

⁵¹ According to Charles (*Jubilees* xvii.16), this Jubilees midrash is coming to exonerate God from "conduct which he deems unworthy of God but which is ascribed to Him." However, the actual impetus behind this midrash may be identical to that which drives the Talmudic version, namely explaining the purpose of Abraham's test (Gen 22:1).

⁵² Jub 48:2-3; the Bavli's ŠAṬAN version is in Ned. 31b-32a, discussed in Ch. 4§16 (xxxvii.) below.

Why does God meet him? Is God the one who tries to kill him? If not, who? In either case, why? In Jubilees, the attacker is Mastema/ŠATAN:

And you yourself know what He spoke to you on Mount Sinai, and **what prince Mastema desired to do with you when you were returning into Egypt on the way when you did meet him at the lodging-place**. Did he not with all his power seek to slay you and deliver the Egyptians out of your hand when he saw that you were sent to execute judgment and vengeance on the Egyptians? (Jub 48:2-3)⁵³

Mastema here appears to be an independent demonic being with the historic and perhaps even eschatological purpose of thwarting God's plans for the Exodus.⁵⁴ This exegesis within Jubilees stands in contrast to the Talmudic midrash (including the Jerusalem Talmud's version; see Ch. 5§16.xxxvii. below), where it is God who attacks Moses in order to teach Moses a lesson regarding circumcision. In the Talmud, this Godly attack is called ŠATAN.

This contrast between the two exegetical sources is far from trivial. While the Jubilees exegesis is the epitome of dualism, this Talmudic ŠATAN is not an independent being; it represents God's purpose and instructs the reader about the purpose of the attack. The dualism of the Jubilees "midrash" highlights the apocryphal status of Jubilees and the unlikelihood that it had any direct influence on the Talmud.⁵⁵ Rather, the significant similarity between the two

⁵³ Translation of R. H. Charles, *Book of Jubilees*, with modernized pronouns.

⁵⁴ God's role in the scene is not explained; perhaps he serves as a lure for Mastema: God is meeting him there, so Mastema has an opening to attack, for perhaps he can only attack when the victim has a fighting chance.

⁵⁵ This divergence of aggadic opinion adds a third inconsistency to Yehoshua Grintz's demonstration that Jubilees is inconsistent with both the Masoretic text of Scripture and the halachot of the Mishna (Yehoshua Grintz, "Jubilees," in *Encyclopedia Judaica* Vol. 10, 326. [New York: Macmillan, 1970]). William Adler notes "inexplicable" aggadic "oddities" in Jubilees, such as stating Abraham's age of migration from Haran as 77 although Gen 12:4 says that he was 75 (William Adler "Jacob of Edessa and the Jewish Pseudepigrapha in Syriac Chronography," in *Tracing the Threads: Studies in the Vitality of Jewish Pseudepigrapha*, ed. John C. Reeves [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994], 146-164). The explanation may simply be that the author of Jubilees did not such consistency relevant, and the number seventy-seven may

versions of the story probably indicates that they derive from a common vorlage.⁵⁶ When the rabbinic version uses the name ŠATAN and adds the details about Abraham's interaction with the

have been important for eschatological reasons. The fact that he was able to take such liberties with the narrative is in fact consistent with the present hypothesis that the Mastema of Jubilees represents dualism. This conclusion would resolve one issue left unresolved in James VanderKam's masterful analysis, *The Book of Jubilees* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001). VanderKam notes that Jubilees portrays God as omniscient and omnipotent, "yet permits the forces of evil to exercise their nefarious influence.... There is no entity who is a counterpart to God in this scenario, only a host of evil spirits who have their own commander and who work through idols to mislead humanity" (*ibid.*, 127). Perhaps the distinction is merely semantic; however, the idea of a power that does the will of God seems very different from a power that opposes God, which in my understanding is the essence of dualism. VanderKam proposes that the author of Jubilees wrote it in part to combat post-Maccabean assimilation (*ibid.*, 129-130). If so, this agenda may in fact provide a motive for the book's dualistic thread. For if Jubilees in fact served as a polemic against Hellenistic assimilation (and occasional hegemony), to portray God as the victor over forces of evil may have provided meaningful symbolism to the anti-assimilationists. (Jubilees may also provide evidence of the degree to which the Jewish populace embraced Hellenistic culture in the centuries prior to the rabbinic period; see Isadore Epstein *Judaism: A Historical Presentation*, 90). If the Mastema of Jubilees is indeed inconsistent with later rabbinic theology, then the book's popularity at Qumran may in fact reflect the sect's divergence from the ideology to which later rabbinic thought claims allegiance.

⁵⁶ Martha Himmelfarb makes a similar observation about Jubilees *vis-à-vis* Midrash Aggadah; see "Some Echoes of Jubilees in Medieval Hebrew Literature," in *Tracing the Threads: Studies in the Vitality of Jewish Pseudepigrapha*, ed. John C. Reeves (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1994), 122. Similarly, James VanderKam concludes that vorlage is a plausible hypothesis for the material shared between Jubilees and the Medieval *Testament of Judah*; see his *The Book of Jubilees*, 139. Yet writing in the same volume as Himmelfarb, while Menahem Kister allows that such "striking parallels" between Jubilees, Qumran and rabbinic versions of the Akeida "demonstrate the antiquity of this Amoraic midrash" ("Observations On Aspects Of Exegesis," 20) he does not seem prepared to hypothesize a vorlage (see note 40 above and the following note). It seems to me that an hypothetical vorlage that is limited to a single aggadic thread answers Phillip Alexander's caution about *Urtext* assumptions when working with rabbinic texts ("Rabbinic Judaism and the New Testament", 239). Yet Fraade's warning may apply here: "Complex cultural-historical phenomena, especially when comparatively viewed, do not submit to singular explanations, as convenient and satisfying as they may be" (*Rabbinic Perspectives*, 63).

ŠAṬAN, which I will argue below to be pure allegory, it underscores the antagonist's non-ontology.⁵⁷

Jubilees seems to have been an important text to the Qumran community⁵⁸ and yet from approximately the same period, an apocryphal Qumran psalm seems to relegate ŠAṬAN to God's, or even humanity's, domain:

Pardon my sins, Lord
and cleanse me from my iniquity.
Bestow on me a faithful and knowing spirit;
May I not be disgraced in the calamity.
May ŠAṬAN not rule over me [or: "no ŠAṬAN should rule over me"]
nor an unclean spirit
may neither pain nor evil purpose
take possession of my bones (11Q5p400, lines 396-405)

If one reads this psalm outside its Qumranic context, one might interpret its ŠAṬAN as allegorical and possibly (according to my parenthetical alternative translation) merely functional. Similarly, the Scrolls also have several instances of ŠAṬAN as verb or generic noun.⁵⁹ However, given the popularity of Jubilees at Qumran, and given the overt ontology of Mastema in Jubilees, one must consider the possibility that the ŠAṬAN of this psalm is indeed dualistic.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ That the rabbis could reject a book as heretical (as they must have, assuming that they knew of it) but simultaneously reiterate some of its contents implies ideas that were widely accepted. This contrast between midrashim recalls the Talmudic precept that not all midrash is equally good (Ḥag. 14a, Sanh. 67b). I would therefore qualify Kister's conclusion that "the more one looks closely at the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, the more one discovers that in this aspect the difference between them and rabbinic literature is only in the shape given to ancient exegetical material" ("Observations On Aspects Of Exegesis," 21 note 1), to include semiotic *meaning* as the essence of his aggadic "shape" (which is perhaps essential enough to strike his word "only" from the quote above).

⁵⁸ Fourteen copies were found there per Henry Kelly (*Satan: A Biography*, 42), in addition to Qum. 4Q225, the so-called "Pseudo-Jubilees".

⁵⁹ 1Q28b; 1Qha.; 4Q504, Frag 1; 2Q20.

⁶⁰ Bilha Nitzan's survey of "symbols of evil" in the Scrolls ("Evil and its Symbols") does not mention this passage among the many that portray evil through symbols borrowed from

It is important to note that Henry Kelly, one of the most prominent scholars of early Christianity, sees Mastema as “God’s Satanic minister”⁶¹ and acknowledges the inherent dualism both here and in other apocryphal texts.⁶² Moreover, the Mastema of Jubilees seems to fit a larger theme throughout the apocrypha regarding the damaging actions of various devilish beings. The theme also appears in the New Testament (NT) where the term διαβολος appears thirty-eight times⁶³: thirty-five as a devilish being and thrice denoting a “malicious gossip” or “slanderer”.⁶⁴ The great predominance of the “devil” denotation there shows the currency of the ontology of evil in the early rabbinic period. The fact that NT

Tanach and Apocrypha as well as non-Jewish traditions; evidently, she sees this ŠATAN as allegorical.

⁶¹ *Satan: A Biography*, 40.

⁶² Yet he concludes that prior to Christianity, “there is no Satan here” (*ibid.*, 50). I am thus inclined to agree with J. Edward Wright (“Henry Ansgar Kelly, *Satan: A Biography*” [Review], *Catholic Bible Quarterly* 71 [2009]) that Kelly is pushing the development of a full dualistic Satan too late, for dualistic Satan seems plainly present in Jubilees; see note 40 above.

⁶³ Per *Strong’s Concordance*, 1228.

⁶⁴ 1 Tim. 3:11, 2 Tim. 3:3, Tit. 2:3; See also Matthew Easton, *Easton’s Bible Dictionary* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, 2000), 643. This connotation is upheld in all the translations that I checked (KJV, ASV, NIV, Darby, and YLT, *inter alia*). This latter usage shows that early Christianity was not unsympathetic to the non-ontological approach and that the Christian notion of Satan as an ontology may have fully jelled only later. While these three instances suggest that the 35 devilish examples were not *necessarily* intended as literal ontologisms, certainly by the Middle Ages Christianity’s Satan had gained a life of his own in contrast with rabbinic Judaism; see Joshua Trachtenberg, *The Devil and the Jews: The Medieval Conception of the Jew and Its Relation to Modern Anti-Semitism* (Philadelphia: JPS, 1983), 19. Some attempt to explain this theological dispute as a result of different interpretations of the snake in *Gen.* 3; see, for example, Alan Avery-Peck, “Sin in Judaism,” in *The Encyclopedia of Judaism* Vol. III, ed. Jacob Neusner *et al.* (New York: Continuum, 1999), 1321.

promotes this theology may have itself been an impetus for rabbinic authors to distance themselves from this view by emphasizing their allegorical interpretation.⁶⁵

Both the Jubilees and Talmudic midrashim are responding to the same questions about the Biblical text in similar but ultimately incompatible ways. The Jubilees version was evidently known to the authors of NT and other Christian writings. The named author of the Talmudic midrash (the Tanna R. Simeon b. Gamliel, ca. 130 CE) and the later Babylonian Stammaite redactors may have known this Jubilees midrash and have been consciously reacting to it.⁶⁶ If we regard the Talmud as a construct formed from raw materials that took centuries to develop orally, then it is plausible that the Talmudic midrash represents a parallel trajectory to what became Christian theology, both pointing to a vorlage predating Jubilees, which itself may be as old as 200 BCE.⁶⁷ By the time of the Tannaic midrashim, the Jubilees

⁶⁵ Regarding the Babylonian rabbis' awareness of Christianity and hypothetical mutual influence, see note 35 above. In addition to the NT, numerous apocryphal books, written by Jewish authors, grapple with evil; they are summarized by Paolo Sacchi, *Jewish Apocalyptic and its History* (JSP Sup, 20), trans. W. J. Short (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990), Ch. 10, who paints a picture of a popular topic for discussion in Jewish circles, perhaps ultimately inspiring the rabbis to provide an official rabbinic narrative on the ŠATAN, evil and divine providence.

⁶⁶ Kelly concludes from the fact that fourteen copies of Jubilees were found at Qumran that Jubilees was a "best-seller" and probably considered as authoritative prior to 70 CE (Kelly, *Satan: A Biography*, 42-43). For a contrary view, see John Endres, "Prayers in Jubilees," in *Heavenly Tablets: Interpretation, Identity and Tradition in Ancient Judaism* (Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 119), ed. Lynn LiDonnici and Andrea Lieber (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 34, who grants that Jubilees was clearly important to the Qumran community, but does not go so far as to call it authoritative; he rather sees it as an obvious source of inspiration for that community. For a stronger voice of dissent, see Robert Herford, *Talmud and Apocrypha: A Comparative Study of the Jewish Ethical Teaching in the Rabbinical and Non-Rabbinical Sources in the Early Centuries* (New York: Ktav, 1971), 225, who is skeptical that the rabbis were conscious of it, let alone influenced by it negatively.

⁶⁷ See Yair Hoffman, "Jeremiah 50-51 and the Concept of Evil in the Hebrew Bible," in *The Problem of Evil and its Symbols in Jewish and Christian Tradition* (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 366), ed. Henning Graf Reventlow and Yair Hoffman (London: T&T Clark International, 2004), 26, who observes that Mastema passages in Jubilees "indicate that the existence of evil was considered a theological problem," which may originate

version would have been around for some three hundred years and by the time of the Bavli's redaction both versions may have been in circulation for over eight hundred years. Yet if the two versions do represent trajectories from a vorlage text or tradition, then it is certainly possible that the Tannaim, Amoraim and Stammaim did not know the Jubilees version *per se*, but it also seems probable that they were aware of the popular belief in a dualistic Mastema-ŚAṬAN.⁶⁸

This evidence for two co-existent parallel traditions, one rabbinic and one apocryphal, supports the emergent scholarly trend to interpret Jewish oral reciters within their local cultural

in the Biblical period. Moreover, this theological concern was likely shared by multiple cultures, as Bernard Bamberger proposes:

These ideas were not altogether new. They drew upon a common store of mythological notions which have spread from people to people. Different scholars have found the sources of these myths in Babylonia, Persia or Greece. It is almost impossible to decide the matter finally, for there must have been constant interchange of such legendary coin among the nations" (*Fallen Angels* [Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1952], 7).

On the universality of such theological topics, see the nemesis discussion above (in particular note 14).

⁶⁸ While Bamberger is certain that "they must have been familiar with these [dualistic] notions" (*Fallen Angels*, 90), the lack of evidence leaves the point speculative. As mentioned above (note 66), Jubilees was apparently authoritative or at least important in some circles prior to 70 CE. Post-70, however, and even more so post-135 (Bar Kochba), the amount of turmoil and upheaval in Jewish communities may have limited the circulation of Jubilees and other apocryphal/pseudepigraphic works. Moreover, Kelly himself admits that the popularity of Jubilees at Qumran may reflect local authorship and not indicate broad popularity at all (*Satan: A Biography*, 43). However, see Paolo Sacchi (*Jewish Apocalyptic and its History*, Ch. 10), whose historical analysis of apocrypha concludes that "Satan...has become, in this era spanning the first century BCE and the first century CE, the common name [among Jews] indicating the devil, and cannot in any way be identified with the angel of Job's heavenly court" (*ibid.*, 228). As Sacchi points out, the conception of the devil in the writings of Qumran is essentially consonant with the general Qumranic theology (Paolo Sacchi, *The History of the Second Temple Period*, trans. Thomas Kirk [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000], 351). This can be seen in the notion that God, in his omnipotence and predetermined will, created two spirits to rule over humanity: the Prince of Light (1QS 3.20) and the Angel of Darkness (1QS 3.20-21) who, according to Sacchi, is "yet another interpretation of the devil" (*ibid.*; see also Sacchi, *Jewish Apocalyptic*, 226). Nevertheless, see my discussion of Stuart Miller's argument in note 99 below.

context.⁶⁹ Reading within cultural context would mean that (for example) when one encounters the Bavli's declaration that the ŠATAN, the Angel of Death and the *yetzer hara* (evil inclination) are the same phenomenon,⁷⁰ that statement is being made, repeated and ultimately recorded in

⁶⁹ See, for instance, Yaakov Elman, "Orality," Jeffrey Rubenstein, *Culture of the Babylonian Talmud*; Moulie Vidas, *Tradition and the Formation of the Talmud* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), Ch. 5. Within this theme, Ishay Rosen-Zvi's comprehensive book (*Demonic Desires*) on the evil inclination (*yetzer*) has the potential to make an important contribution to ŠATAN studies, given the Bavli's equating the *yetzer* with the ŠATAN (B. Bat. 16a). In his study, "based on a systematic and comprehensive analysis of *all* of the some hundred and fifty appearances of the evil *yetzer* in classical rabbinic literature" (*ibid.*, 8), he highlights a fascinating parallel between the Talmudic advice on conquering one's *yetzer* (Ber. 5a) and that of Church Father Evagrius (345-399 CE). However, I do not share his conclusion that since the Christian notion of evil is clearly ontological and dualistic, the rabbinic ŠATAN is as well (*ibid.*, 86). Thus when he encounters the Bavli's statement that the ŠATAN and the *yetzer* are the same phenomenon (B. Bat. 16a), Rosen-Tzvi calls this the "most explicit statement" of rabbinic dualism; however, Bernard Bamberger argues the opposite in *Fallen Angels*, 95, and my analysis in Ch. 4 supports the latter view (see Ch. 5§10.xxiii below).

The statement on B. Bat. 16a comes at the end of a long exposition of the second chapter of Job and it seems that the reason Rosen-Tzvi reaches such a diametrically opposite reading of the *sugya* is rooted in his lack of interest in the historical-critical method which distinguishes between Tannaitic, Amoraic and Stammaitic voices of the Talmud and avoids sweeping generalizations that span many centuries of rabbinic culture (e.g., "the distinctiveness of rabbinic enterprise of identity construction", 100). In Ch. 6, he does apply form-criticism to the Bavli's *yetzer* of sexuality narratives and makes a plausible case for a polemical agenda, which I will address in Ch. 2, and he makes a very interesting comparison between the midrashic encounters of Abraham and ŠATAN of Sanh. 89b and that of Jesus and Satan of Mat 4:1-10 and Luk 4:1-12 (which also has a counterpart in Evagrius [*ibid.*, 96-97]). Yet there does not seem to be sufficient evidence to conclude that "in all these cases, the *yetzer* does not simply appear as a lowly seducer, but represents a serious discursive threat on the rabbinic worldview, designating real conflicts in rabbinic law or ideology" (*ibid.*, 97). What he declares for all of rabbinic literature, that it knows "only one *yetzer*", I believe is true about the Bavli's view of ŠATAN; and he is probably right that "it should be understood instead as part of the biblical and post-biblical search for the sources of human sinfulness" (*ibid.*, 6) but possibly wrong that it "should therefore not be read in the tradition of the Hellenistic quest for control over the lower parts of the psyche, but rather in the tradition of ancient Jewish and Christian demonology" (*ibid.*). In fact, it may be both. While I do not share his fundamental assumption that the rabbinic ŠATAN is a cosmic being (which creates a bit of a straw man to contrast with his conclusions about the *yetzer*), some of his insights are so compelling that it would be interesting to revisit them from the perspective of the present thesis, especially given the fact that *yetzer* and *yetzer hara* appear in the Bavli with nearly the same frequency as ŠATAN, by my count.

⁷⁰ B. Bat. 16a, in the name of Reish Lakish; see below, Ch. 4§10.xxiii.

Roman and Persian cultural contexts where angelology is a vitally important topic, not only during the rabbinic period but dating as early as Qumran and as late as into the (post-)rabbinic period in the form of the *Heichalot* literature.⁷¹ Yet broad cross-sectional studies of angelology nearly inevitably reach an impasse in defining the relationship between God and angels,⁷² a problem that might be minimized by placing the Talmud on a separate trajectory. For the Bavli seems to present angels quite clearly and adamantly as symbolizing God's power. While a complete survey of the Bavli's hundreds of angelic references would require a separate treatise, perhaps two examples will suffice to illustrate the point. The first is an exegesis of Ex 23:20-21, one of only two Pentateuchal angels discussed in the Talmud: "Behold, I am sending an angel before you.... Beware of him and hear his voice...."⁷³ The Gemara identifies this angel as "Metatron" and goes to considerable length to emphasize that he has no independent power:

אמר ההוא מינא לרב אידי: כתיב (שמות כ"ד) ואל משה אמר עלה אל ה', עלה אלי מיבעי ליה! אמר ליה: זהו מטטרון, ששמו כשם רבו, דכתיב (שמות כ"ד) כי שמי בקרבו. אי הכי ניפלחו ליה! כתיב (שמות כ"ג) אל תמר בו אל תמירני בו. אם כן לא ישא לפשעכם למה לי? אמר ליה: הימנותא בידן, דאפילו בפרוונקא נמי לא קבילניה, דכתיב (שמות כ"ג) ויאמר אליו אם אין פניך הלכים וגו'.

Once a heretic said to R. Idith: It is written, *And unto Moses He said, Come up to the Lord* (Ex 24:1). But surely it should have stated, "Come up unto me!" — He [R. Idith] replied, "It was Metatron, whose name is similar to that of his Master, for it is written, *For my name is in him* (Ex 23:21)." "But if so, [the heretic retorted,] we should worship him!" R. Idith replied, "The same passage, however, says: *Be not rebellious against him*, i.e., exchange Me not for him." [The heretic replied,] "But if so, why is it stated: *He will not pardon your transgression*? He answered: "We believe that we would not accept him even as a messenger, for it is written, *And he said to him, If Your [personal] presence go not etc.* (Ex 33:15) (Sanh. 38b).

⁷¹ Rachel Elior, *The Three Temples: On the Emergence of Jewish Mysticism* (Portland, Ore., Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2004), Ch. 10.

⁷² See, for instance, *ibid.* 238-9, where Elior concludes that in *Heichalot* literature the relationship between God and angel is "not entirely clear."

⁷³ Even absent the Talmudic interpretation, Bernard Bamberger (*Fallen Angels*) argues that there is no clear basis for dualism in the Tanach, which, I will argue in Ch. 4 below, is the foundational constitution of rabbinic thought.

Similarly, according to Elisha ben Avuyah's mistake in the well-known story of the "four who entered the Orchard,"⁷⁴ Metatron is unequivocally not an independent being:

חזא מיטטרון דאטיהבא ליה רשותא למיתב למיכתב זכוותא דישראל, אמר:
גמירא דלמעלה לא הוי לא ישיבה ולא תחרות ולא עורף ולא עיפוי, שמא חס
ושלום שתי רשויות הן.

He saw that permission was granted to [the angel] Metatron to sit and to record the merits of Israel. Said [Elisha]: It is taught as a tradition that [in Heaven] 'there is no sitting and no emulation, and no back, and no weariness'...perhaps (God forbid!) — there are two divinities! (Hag. 15a)

Based on Elisha's apostasy, I take the expression "God forbid" to be a Talmudic (Stammaitic) interjection rather than part of his speech.⁷⁵ The narrative and its context of apostasy give the *sugya* the unmistakably anti-dualistic message that angels symbolize God and are not independent forces, putting the rabbinic tradition – or at least the Talmudic version of that tradition – on a separate trajectory from others, especially religions that espouse dualism.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ I am translating פֶּרֶדֶס based on Cant. 4:13. Jastrow has "enclosure" for this instance but "garden" for every other, and does not mention Cant. 4:13. (All translations in this dissertation, unless otherwise noted, are personal.)

⁷⁵ Daniel Boyarin rejects this interpretation of "God forbid", based on its typology in the Talmud ("Beyond Judaism," 354-5). However, he is then left with the problem that Elisha's narrative runs against every other instance of the formulaic, "perhaps, God forbid." Elsewhere, the phrase leads to a correction of the heretical thought; only here does it lead to unrepentant heresy. On the contrary: if this narrative is paradigmatic of heresy (see the following note), then it would be expected for the redactors to interject a "God forbid" at the moment of the heresy.

⁷⁶ See Alan Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven: Early Rabbinic Reports About Christianity and Gnosticism* (Leiden: Brill, 1977), 62, who casts this narrative as a paradigmatic study of the genesis of heresy. This approach to reading the Bavli's theology demonstrates the usefulness of limiting analysis of a rabbinic idea to individual opera, as David Everson has done in his study of the angelology of Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, "A Brief Comparison of Targumic and Midrashic Angelological Traditions," in *Aramaic Studies* 5, no. 1 (2007). Everson notes that "the amount of angelic material found in rabbinic literature is staggering" (*ibid.*, 75) forcing him to judiciously select midrashic sources to shed light on Ps.-J, rather than attempt a comprehensive study of rabbinic angelology. In contrast, Rosen-Tzvi's book (*Demonic Desires*, cited in notes 20 and 69 above and 261 below) attempts to synchronize much material from many sources, with somewhat inconclusive results. A narrower study of the *yetzer*, from just the Bavli, or only the Targums, might yield firmer conclusions. Similarly, it would be

Until now, this search for the counter-point to rabbinic polemics has been limited to Christianity and Zoroastrianism, and given their hegemony in Western Asia, they appear to be rabbinic Judaism's most likely rivals.⁷⁷ But a more complete picture of the cultural landscape that produced the Tannaic, Amoraic and Stammaic texts includes other ideologies, such as Manichaeism, Hellenistic and Roman paganism,⁷⁸ Greek mystery cults⁷⁹ and various forms of

interesting to assess how limiting the study to the Bavli impacts Yair Lorberbaum's critique of scholarship of rabbinic anthropomorphisms, as he himself suggests: "A comprehensive frontal examination of the issue of anthropomorphism in Talmudic literature is still missing" ("Anthropomorphisms in Early Rabbinic Literature: Maimonides and Modern Scholarship," in *Traditions of Maimonideanism (IJS Studies in Judaica 7)*, ed. Carlos Fraenkel. [Boston: Brill, 2009], 348).

However, it is just as easy to go to the other extreme with a data set that is too small. For instance, Alan Segal (*Two Powers*, 103) makes a forceful argument that the rabbis are anti-dualistic and do not see the ŠAṬAN as a separate power. He also perceives the entanglement of the topic of ŠAṬAN with the problem of angelology but he does not untangle it (*ibid.*, 192-193), perhaps due to his complete avoidance of the ŠAṬAN of Job. Similarly, Alexander Kulik searches for rabbinic sources of the horned devil motif and speculates that the rabbinic idea of a demonic *sa'ir* (Lev Rabbah 22.7 from Lev 17:7 and Deut 32:17; Ber. 62ab) may have been conflated with pagan traditions; however, he admits his argument is speculative and based on scant evidence; see Alexander Kulik, "How the Devil Got His Hooves and Horns: The Origin of the Motif and the Implied Demonology of 3 Baruch," *Numen* 60, nos. 2-3 (2013). He does not mention the Targums, which may be a fruitful avenue to expand his study; e.g., Onkelos to Lev 17:7 renders *sa'irim* as *shaydim*, which is especially interesting in light of Shinan's observation that Onkelos generally avoids anthropomorphisms (*World of the Aggadah*, 106). (One also would like him to consider the numerous eponymous places and persons in Genesis, such as Gen 36:20 where Seir is the father of Lotan, a name that appears in Ugaritic texts as a form of Leviathan; see James Pritchard, ed., *The Ancient Near East: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011], 265; and is perhaps a two-letter cognate of ŠAṬAN.) His study could benefit from a more comprehensive theory of rabbinic demonology or angelology as Bernard Bamberger outlines (*Fallen Angels*, Ch. 16); perhaps the present theological study will contribute towards such a theory.

⁷⁷ Supporting of this conclusion, Khusro of Persia is said to have admonished one of his subjects, "Go write letters to them that if every rebel does not have the goodness to keep quiet, I shall go up against them with sword, bow and arrow, and I shall kill every man who persists in his insubordination against me – be he a good Zoroastrian, a Jew or a Christian" (Peter Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity: AD 150-750* [London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971], 166).

⁷⁸ Peter Schäfer makes a strong argument that Jewish assimilation of Hellenism remained an issue for rabbis at least until Hadrianic times (the second century C.E.), and there seems to be

Gnosticism.⁸⁰ The rabbinic class that emerged post-70 must have regarded all such creeds as heresies, as Steven Katz argues, long before the creation of the Talmud.⁸¹ One might therefore assume that the redactors of the Bavli, receiving some four centuries of halachic and aggadic

no reason to assume the issue every disappeared; see Peter Schäfer, “Hadrian’s Policy in Judaea and the Bar Kokhba Revolt: A Reassessment,” in *A Tribute to Géza Vermès: Essays on Jewish and Christian Literature and History*, ed. Philip R. Davies & Richard T. White (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990). Jonathan Goldstein speculates that this cultural struggle persisted much longer and that the rabbinic “avoidance of philosophical vocabulary was not necessarily hostile. Very likely the purpose was to prevent Greeks from making the charge that Jews had plagiarized from the philosophers” (“Jewish Acceptance and Rejection of Hellenism,” in *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition: Volume Two, Aspects of Judaism in the Graeco-Roman Period*, ed. E.P. Sanders, with A. I. Baumgarten and Alan Mendelson [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981], 64-87.

⁷⁹ See Stephanie Dalley, “The Tale of Bulūqiyā and the *Alexander Romance* in Jewish and Sufi Mystical Circles,” in *Tracing the Threads: Studies in the Vitality of Jewish Pseudepigrapha*, ed. John C. Reeves (Atlanta: Scholars Press), 262: “Many parallels are agreed to exist between Greek theurgy and the theurgy of the Merkabah mystics.” Her implied consensus may be overstated, as she cites only two sources (Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ* [3 vols. in 4], ed. G. Vermes, F. Millar, and M. Goodman [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1987]; and David Halperin, *The Faces of the Chariot: Early Jewish Responses to Ezekiel’s Vision* [Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1988]), but the point does not appear controversial.

⁸⁰ Or “biblical demiurgicism,” the neologism suggested by Michael Williams, in *Rethinking “Gnosticism”: An Argument for Dismissing a Dubious Category* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 265. See James McGrath, *The Only True God: Early Christian Monotheism in its Jewish Context* (Urbana and Chicago: University Of Illinois Press, 2009), 85, who argues that Mishna Sanh. 4:5 appears to be a polemic against “two powers” which “does not appear to identify the sort of Logos doctrine held by Philo and the early Christians as heretical; it is more likely aimed at beliefs which were moving in a Gnostic direction. Beliefs of this sort were an issue for Christians in the second century, and may well have been for Jews as well.”

⁸¹ Steven Katz, “The Rabbinic Response to Christianity,” in *The Cambridge History of Judaism Volume 4: The Late Roman-Rabbinic Period*, ed. Steven T. Katz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006). Gedaliahu Stroumsa, citing attacks of patricians such as Origen, Basil the Great and others, concludes that anthropomorphism among Jewish people “seems to have been notorious in the first centuries CE” (“Form(s) of God: Some Notes on Metatron and Christ: For Shlomo Pines,” *Harvard Theological Review* 76, no. 3 [Jul., 1983]: 271). Thus began, he speculates, an intra-rabbinic struggle against anthropomorphism traceable through the centuries until Maimonides’s introduction to the *Guide* (*ibid.*, 277 n. 38). This struggle, he believes, stems from “dialectic confrontation of problems raised by the biblical text” (*ibid.*, 288).

traditions, inherited a like consciousness.⁸² By the time of the Bavli's redaction, some 400-500 years later, Christianity had become the official religion of the Roman Empire and several stages of anti-pagan legislation had probably neutralized any significant influence of the old cults of Nemesis.⁸³ But the Bavli's Stammaitic redactors were fashioning the Talmud's aggadah out of material created during earlier times when paganism and Nemesis cults were still widely embraced.⁸⁴ Due to the new Christian hegemony in the West (that is, west of Babylonia), there would have been no need to mention the pagan Nemesis cult directly (indeed, even though Christianity had not become prominent in Sassanian Babylon, the Amoraim and Stammaim were possibly sensitive to the fact that many of their brethren were living in the Christian empire next door).⁸⁵ The Sassanian emperor under whom some of the

⁸² Josephus mirrors this cultural consciousness: Daniel Levine ("Hubris in Josephus' 'Jewish Antiquities' 1-4," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 64 [1993]) finds that Josephus describes a particular person or action as hubristic 232 times, including 46 times in his retelling of the Bible, and importantly, retelling Deut 32:47 as God's punishment for hubris (*Hist.* 4:319). Levine speculates that Josephus wanted to capitalize on a late First Century vogue of eros; hubris in this context meaning overindulgence ("Hubris," 58). Josephus may have also had an apologetic agenda, as if to declare that Jews are aware of such hubris and the greatest of us (namely Joseph, the epitome of sexual control) have conquered it (*ibid.*, 80-1). This theory is plausible, especially when one considers anti-Jewish writers such as Tacitus (a contemporary of Josephus), who accuses Jews of promiscuity (*Hist.* 5:5:2). If so, Josephus, who presents himself as a Pharisee (*Autobio.*, Ch. 2), sets a precedent for writing with a consciousness of the broader culture in which, throughout the rabbinic period, ideological competition increased from non-rabbinic (including non-Jewish) ideas. Whether or not Josephus himself influenced rabbinic discourse is irrelevant; the point is that he shows the kind of polemical or apologetic rhetoric that was not only possible in the culture of the Roman Empire, but probably considered necessary for any Jewish author.

⁸³ Major pro-Christian legislation includes the Theodosius I's anti-pagan decrees from 341-391, Theodosius II's *Code Theodosius* of 438 and Justinian's *Code Justinian* of 529; see Lee 2013, 52 and 264. For specific examples, see *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.13 and *Cod. Iust.* I.11.

⁸⁴ For evidence of the popularity of the Nemesis cult, see note 14 above.

⁸⁵ Fraade is confident that Christianity was influential in Babylonia, "however direct or indirect" (*Legal Fictions*, 473), albeit surely much less than in Palestine. Yet there, as Steven Katz argues, early Christianity must have seemed somewhat threatening, at the very least leading to branding its adherents as apostates by their fellow Jews, and "the causes for friction

redactors or editors may have lived, Khusro I (531-579), was an ardent Zoroastrian and perpetual enemy of Christian Rome, then led by emperor Justinian who was himself a zealous Christian.⁸⁶ Some report that the Jews under Khusro were persecuted.⁸⁷ Yet even had he been tolerant of Judaism, the rabbis must have been acutely aware that the long-term religious climate was no more certain than the political one and that Christian Rome's European-Mediterranean hegemony might eventually expand to Persia and Babylonia. At least one Talmudic anecdote alludes to such awareness:

between Christians and other Jews were therefore manifold" (Steven Katz, "The Rabbinic Response to Christianity," 266). Given the extent of the Oral traditions transmitted from Israel to Babylon, one can assume that antagonism towards Christianity's theology must have likewise been transmitted, *a fortiori* if he is right that "*Gilyonim*" in Tos. Shab. 13(14).5 means the Gospels (*ibid.*, 278, citing Lawrence Schiffman, "At the Crossroads: Tannaitic Perspectives on the Jewish-Christian Schism," in *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition (Volume 2)*, ed. E. P. Sanders, A. I. Baumgarten and Alan Mendelson [Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981]: 115-56). Schäfer, however, argues that the Bavli's alleged anti-Christian passages represent a polemic inherited from diaspora Jewish communities in Asia Minor; see *Jesus in the Talmud* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 128-9. He is also confident that the Talmud's redactors themselves saw Christian texts (*ibid.*). (For other views, see note 96 below.)

⁸⁶ A. D. Lee, *From Rome to Byzantium AD 363 to 565: The Transformation of Ancient Rome* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), Ch. 12-13. Justinian tolerated Jews and Judaism but was open in his disdain for them and/or their religion (*ibid.*, 277). Consider, for instance, the clause in his code, copied from Theodosius II (*Cod. Theod.* 16.8.7) in the name of Constantine: "If anyone, having become a Christian according to the canons of the church, becomes a Jew and joins sacrilegious assemblies, and the accusation has been proved, his property shall be turned over to the public treasury" (*Cod. Just.* 1.7.1; translation follows Fred H. Blume, *Annotated Justinian Code* [Laramie: University of Wyoming, 2008]). It seems to me that Daniel Boyarin may overly-minimize the penetration of Christian anti-Jewish rhetoric and politics into rabbinic thought; *Border Lines: The Partition Of Judaeo-Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 214-20.

⁸⁷ Judah Goldin, "The Period of the Talmud," in *The Jews: Their History, Culture and Religion* ed. L. Finkelstein (New York: Harper, 1960), 181. Based on R. Sherira Gaon's *Epistle*, Julius Kaplan identifies the year 473 as a peak of the Persian government's persecution of Babylonian Jewry, when the government closed the rabbinic academies at Pumbeditha and Sura and the dean of the Sura academy, Rabbah Tosfaah, died (Julius Kaplan, *The Redaction of the Babylonian Talmud* [New York: Mylod Printing Co., 1933], 294).

אתא ההוא חברה, שקלה לשרגא מקמייהו, אמר: רחמנא! או בטולך או בטולא דבר עשו.
למימרא, דארומאי מעלו מפרסאי, והתני רבי חייא, מאי דכתיב: (איוב כ"ח) אלהים הבין
דרכה והוא ידע את מקומה? ידע הקב"ה בישראל שאין יכולין לקבל גזירת ארומיים, עמד
והגלה אותם לבבל! לא קשיא: הא מקמי דניתו חברי לבבל, הא לבתר דאתו חברי לבבל.

A certain [Persian] fellow came and took away a lamp from their presence.⁸⁸ Rabba bar bar Ḥana said, “O Merciful! Either [protect us] in your shadow or the shadow of Esau’s children!” [The Stam voice of the Gemara responds,] Is this to say that Roman’s are better than Persians? But Rabi Ḥiya taught a beraita, “WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THE VERSE, *GOD UNDERSTOOD THE WAY AND HE KNEW ITS PLACE (JOB 20:8)*? THE HOLY ONE, BLESSED IS HE, KNEW THAT ISRAEL COULD NOT WITHSTAND THE ROMAN’S DECREE; HE ROSE AND EXILED THEM TO BABYLONIA.” That is not a difficulty; this one is before the Persians came to Babylonia, that one is after the Persians came to Babylonia (Git. 17a).

Note that the challenge, “Is this to say that Romans are better than Persians,” is brought from a Tannaitic source and not from logic or direct experience. This appeal to Tannaitic authority is very interesting. Surely the redactor could have chosen from many examples found throughout the midrashim of Roman anti-Jewish decrees to make his point. The beraita seems to lend a level of authority to the negative view of Rome that is more authoritative than mere historical memory. Nevertheless, the passage reveals a view of Persians as religiously zealous and oppressive and further reveals an awareness of the rivalry between Rome and Persia and perhaps cynicism about Persian hegemony in Babylonia.⁸⁹ It also suggests ambivalence about the comparative oppression of Persia and Rome.⁹⁰

⁸⁸ According to Rashi, possibly based on logical deduction, the day was a pagan holiday and it was forbidden to have any lights burning outside of pagan temples.

⁸⁹ For a summary of the fluctuating relationship between Rome and Persia, see Jacob Neusner, *A History of the Jews in Babylonia, Part V: Later Sasanian Times* (Eugene, OR, Wipf and Stock, 1999), xiv (Table III).

⁹⁰ In addition to the experience and memory of official persecution, the Talmud’s authors were undoubtedly also aware of the spread of Manichaeism and Mandaeism in Sassanian Persia and elsewhere, especially if it was as anti-Judaism as some have proposed: Michel Tardieu concludes that rejection of “Jewish legalism” to be the prime inspiration of Manichaeism (Michel Tardieu, *Manichaeism*, trans. M. B. DeBevoise [Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008], 19. See also Wolf-Peter Funk, “Mani’s Account of Other Religions According to the Coptic Synaxeis Codex,” in *New light on Manichaeism: Papers from the Sixth International Congress on Manichaeism, Organized by the International Association of*

The rabbis were thus aware of both Persia's Zoroastrian dualism and Rome's Christian eschatology, in addition to the various beliefs in pagan nemesis and apocryphal demons, which all came to answer the same theurgical questions. While some scholars see the earliest rabbinic texts as reflecting "a Jewish consolidation against a messianic Tanak as employed by the Christians,"⁹¹ the Talmud is somewhat laconic in its anti-Christianity polemics. As Peter Schäfer has demonstrated, its anti-Christianity passages are all written in a tone of denigration and parody rather than a serious theological debate.⁹² If Christianity were a primary object of Talmudic polemic, one might expect a direct attack on Christian theology, yet on this major point the Talmud is silent, despite the Bavli's "proud and self-confident message that...was possible only under the specific historical circumstances in Sasanian Babylonia, with a Jewish community that lived in relative freedom, at least with regard to Christians—quite different from conditions in Roman and Byzantine Palestine, with Christianity becoming an ever more visible and aggressive political power."⁹³ In other words, had they felt safe doing so, the Bavli's redactors may have made a similar mockery of Persian religions; indeed, it seems logical to assume that they would have.⁹⁴

Manichaean Studies (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2009). He reports that unnamed "colleagues more competent than myself in the history of Aramaic communities assured me that there are good reasons to assume that the Mandaean made up a substantial part of the people who inhabited Babylonian Mesopotamia around the third century, possibly as much as one third of the entire population" (*ibid.*, 125-6).

⁹¹ Michael Shepherd, "Targums, the New Testament, and Biblical Theology of the Messiah," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 51, no. 1 (March 2008): 47-48.

⁹² Schäfer, *Jesus in the Talmud*.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁹⁴ The fact that Mani, the founder of Manichaeism, came from a strong Judeo-Christian background further underscores the significance of the Talmud's silence, for their immediate perspective would have likely made Manichaeism a far greater rival and threat than

Therefore, the Bavli's treatment of Christianity, like every other topic in the Talmud, must be examined under two deferent lenses. The first lens is that of the ideas themselves: whence did the information about Christianity and the critique thereof come? The second lens is, what motivated the formation of the text into its final form? Even though Christianity was a very minor religion and a non-threat in Sassanian Babylonia, and even though the Bavli's anti-Christian passages are quantitatively mere drops in the Talmudic sea, as Schäfer stresses,⁹⁵ its critique of Christianity is nonetheless far more substantial than that of other non-rabbinic traditions. This fact underscores the Bavli's reliance on older material.⁹⁶

Therefore, while the Bavli's greater attention to Christianity may also reflect, as Schäfer suggests, the political reality of Zoroastrian Babylon where the rabbis might have used critiques of Christianity in order to distinguish themselves from Christians and curry favor with their Sassanian overlords,⁹⁷ the Talmud's backward-looking perspective reminds us that it is written for a Jewish audience and one would be hard-pressed to prove that its critique of

Christianity; see Tardieu, *Manichaeism*, Ch. 1. For a the geography of Mani's missionizing travels, including specific Babylonian towns where he was influential, see *ibid.*, 19-30.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 10: "The Jesus passages in the Talmud are the proverbial drop of water in the ocean, neither quantitatively significant nor presented in a coherent manner nor, in many cases, a subject of their own."

⁹⁶ Although Schäfer concludes that the Babylonian amoraim had copies of the New Testament before them, Richard Kalmin argues cogently that the evidence for this is inconclusive: see Richard Kalmin, "Jesus in Sasanian Babylonia," *Jewish Quarterly Review* no. 1 (2009): 112. Moreover, given the centrality of Jerusalem to rabbinic liturgy, the Christian appropriation of Jerusalem, already evident in the fourth century, would have been well known to sixth-century rabbis of Babylonia; see Oded Irshai, "Christian Appropriation," and note 35 above. For an exploration of the possibility and ramifications of Jewish contact with Christians of the East, see Adam Becker, "Beyond the Spatial and Temporal *Limes*: Questioning the 'Parting of the Ways' Outside the Roman Empire," in *The Ways that Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Adam Becker and Annette Reed (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007).

⁹⁷ Schäfer, *Jesus*, 120-122. For a reading list on the status of Jews in Sasanian Babylon, see *ibid.*, 182 n. 76.

Christianity was intended for a non-Jewish reader.⁹⁸ For all of these reasons, to the extent that the Talmud's theology can be called polemics, it seems appropriate to frame it as a response to *all* potential rival ideologies.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Moreover, no one has yet (to my knowledge) made a comprehensive study, comparable to Schäfer's work on Christianity, of the Bavli's critique of non-Jewish sectarians, often generically labeled *minim* but easily conflated with Jewish and Christian *minim*.

⁹⁹ Including, perhaps, certain trends within the Jewish world. For instance, Rachel Elior wonders about the significance of a Talmudic *sugya* in Suk 28a which calls the study of *Maaseh Merkava* (the "function of the chariot" of Ezekiel 1) greater than that of halachah, calling the former "a great matter" (*davar gadol*) and the latter "a small matter" (*davar katan*), a statement which seems to run counter to the Talmuds halachic focus (*Three Temples*, 265). Yet the Talmud there is not merely contrasting the two topics; they are just two of eight items in a well-educated scholar's curriculum. Due to that great value placed on mysticism, Elior's observation that "the variety of traditions in Heikhalot and Merkavah literature proves that many studied and observed the Merkavah for the first centuries after the destruction of the Second Temple" (*ibid.*) provides an additional motivation for the Talmud's redactors to include mysticism in their curriculum: the simple need to clarify such matters.

This framework for the Talmud's agenda is bolstered by Stuart Miller's argument that rabbinic Judaism represents a broader "complex common Judaism" culture that he believes "did not come about because of external forces, although they may have played a role, but rather was more directly the result of a shared religious tradition that, remarkably, was understood and applied by most Jews in a way that bore identifiable similarities" (*Sages and Commoners*, 24). (See Seth Schwartz, *Imperialism*, 49-99 for a similar model.) Miller further argues against scholars who, "in comparing and contrasting rabbinic Judaism to early Christianity...overemphasize the theological dimension of the rabbinic enterprise, a dimension that was much more characteristic of the writings of the Church Fathers than those of the rabbis" (*ibid.*, 465). The present argument agrees with his assessment of the level of rabbinic responsiveness to Christianity, but disagrees with his broader statement about rabbinic theology. While the phenomenon of "complex common Judaism" may have given the rabbis a high level of comfort and security among their brethren, they were likely fully conscious of (and to some extent conscientious of) the broader cultural competition for theological veracity and authority. For a summary of the scholarship on delineating definitions of "Jewish," "Christian," "Judaism," and "Christianity" throughout the rabbinic period, see Megan Hale Williams, "No More Clever Titles: Observations on Some Recent Studies of Jewish-Christian Relations in the Roman World," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 99, no. 1 (Winter 2009).

Daniel Boyarin has proposed that the very structure and spirit of Talmudic dialectics is a reflection of the decline of "true dialectics" in the Greco-Roman-Christian world. He states that the Bavli's dialectics "almost never" reaches a resolution and therefore is "a pseudo-dialectical practice, a devotional – or even liturgical – act (known as 'enlarging the Torah and making it wonderful') and not truly an intellectual one. Better put, perhaps, it is a devotional (as opposed to teleological) use of the intellect;" "Dialectic and Divination in the Talmud," in *The End of Dialogue in Antiquity*, ed. Simon Goldhill (Cambridge: Cambridge University

Summary of Chapter 2

While neither Christianity nor other competing ideologies can be shown to have directly influenced rabbinic thought, there is evidence that the Bavli's theological program is at least in part a response to such broad cultural-historical trends. One such trend is the apocryphal Jewish texts portraying a dualistic view of ŠAṬAN which may have inspired early Christianity and which join Christianity, the Greco-Roman Nemesis and Persian dualism in providing a possible motive for the Talmud's message of anti-dualism. Yet despite this shared cultural-historical landscape, little scholarship has considered rabbinic texts for evidence of the origins and development of Christian theology. Likewise rabbinic scholarship: as I will argue in the next chapter, the Talmud's general theology and of ŠAṬAN in particular has yet to be fully elucidated.

Press, 2009),” 227. It seems to me he overstates the Bavli's lack of resolution, which in my judgment is true of only a tiny minority of *sugyot*.

3. Scholarship of Rabbinic Theology and of the Talmud

In this chapter I will define Talmudic discourse as a redacted curriculum within a cultural setting. Building on the work of Jacob Neusner and Moulie Vidas, I will argue that there are good reasons for approaching the Bavli with the assumption that it represents a unified overall agenda and ideology which projects a message of continuity with the past. Richard Hidary, Daniel Boyarin and Stephen Fraade have laid the foundation for framing Talmudic dialectics and disputes in the genre of oral performance, projecting the rabbis' self-understanding as transmitters of oral texts. This anthropological approach to the Bavli will enable the hypothesis of a comprehensive Talmudic theology of ŠATAN.

Similar to scholarship of Christianity, scholarship of rabbinic theology in general and of the rabbinic ŠATAN in particular typically takes an eclectic approach to the gamut of canonical rabbinic texts, due perhaps to the sheer volume of material. Much of the scholarship follows either a philosophical or psychological track, perhaps epitomized by Kierkegaard's and Jung's divergent expositions of the Akeida.¹⁰⁰ Kierkegaard interprets the Akeida philosophically as a "teleological suspension of the ethical"¹⁰¹ and Jung decodes it as a representation of humanity becoming conscious of and conquering a subconscious dark side.¹⁰² These philosophical and psychological approaches to rabbinic ŠATAN (typically) deliberately disregard theology, as

¹⁰⁰ I.e., the Binding of Isaac, Gen 22.

¹⁰¹ Søren Kierkegaard, "Fear and Trembling," in *A Kierkegaard Anthology*, ed. Robert Bretall (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1946), 134. His theme of the psychology of evil is repeated in *The Journals*, "1837", *ibid*, 8; *Either/Or*, "Vol. II: Equilibrium: Between the Aesthetical and the Ethical in the Composition of Personality", *ibid.*, 102; *Works of Love*, "Love Covereth a Multitude of Sins", *ibid.* 306.

¹⁰² Carl G. Jung, "Transformation Symbolism in the Mass," in *Psychology and Religion: West and East, Collected Works*, Vol. 11 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), 217 (first published in 1941).

Gustav Dreifuss explains:

When I use the term ‘God’, it has no metaphysical character, but relates to the archetypal image of God in the collective psyche at the time when the Bible or the legends were written. Yet, when discussing, for instance, the numinous experience of Abraham with God, I mean the working of the constellated archetype of the self in Abraham’s soul.... Psychologically, we can know nothing about the archetype *per se*, so we must leave assertions about God to those who have the charisma of belief and the formulation of this belief to the theologians of the different religions and confessions.¹⁰³

One notable exception to the psychological trend is Meir Weiss’s 1969 monograph *The Story of Job’s Beginning*.¹⁰⁴ His theological study harmonizes rabbinic sources, leaving the reader with a taste of what might be achieved through a comprehensive investigation of the rabbinic literature.

Comprehensive studies remained elusive, it was claimed, simply due to the vast amount of data, much of which is fragmentary. Solomon Schechter, who possessed an encyclopedic knowledge of the literature, warned rather ruefully, “Any attempt at an orderly and complete

¹⁰³ Gustav Dreifuss, “The Figures of Satan and Abraham (In the legends on Genesis 22. The Akedah),” *Journal of Analytical Psychology* 17, no. 2 (1972), 166. Dreifuss’s essay is the second of a pair (see “Isaac, the Sacrificial Lam: A Study of Some Jewish Legends,” *Journal of Analytical Psychology* 16, no. 1 (1971)), which together seem to mark the peak of the philosophical and psychological scholarship of ŠATAN, although the true peak may have been the Kluger’s influential *Satan in the Old Testament*. By 1977, Jeffrey Russell was still framing the ŠATAN as a psychological concept, yet he himself recognized a theological facet; see Jeffrey Russell, *The Devil: Perceptions of Evil from Antiquity to Primitive Christianity* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987), 222. Yet the psychological trend persists in works such as David Miller, *Jung and the Interpretation of the Bible* (New York: Continuum, 1995) and Jacob van Belzen, *Towards Cultural Psychology of Religion: Principles, Approaches, Applications* (New York: Springer Science & Business Media, 2010). For cautions about hidden agendas in psychological approaches, see Jacob Belzen, “Studying the Specificity of Spirituality: Lessons from the Psychology of Religion,” *Mental Health, Religion and Culture* 12.3 (2009). With a perhaps more overt agenda, evangelical publishers have embraced the trend with publications such as Wayne Rollins, *Soul and Psyche: The Bible in Psychological Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999) and J. Harold Ellens, Wayne Rollins et al., eds., *Psychology and the Bible: A New Way to Read the Scriptures* (4 volumes) (Westport, CN: Praeger, 2004).

¹⁰⁴ Meir Weiss, *The Story of Job’s Beginning: Job 1-2: a Literary Analysis* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1983).

system of Rabbinic theology is an impossible task.”¹⁰⁵ His caveat notwithstanding, Schechter initiated the endeavor (under the modest title, *Aspects of Rabbinic Theology*), painting a picture of a rather consistent system of thought. His claim of impossibility may have been in consideration of the gamut of rabbinic literature as a single corpus. By limiting the present examination to the Bavli, as I will argue below, it may be possible to map the orderly and complete system that eludes broader surveys.¹⁰⁶

An additional reason why no such study has been undertaken, particularly of the Talmud, is the priority given for decades to complex questions such as, “What is rabbinic literature? Where does it come from?” which accelerated when Jacob Neusner,¹⁰⁷ Shamma Friedman, David Halivni and others began to apply source-critical methods to discern historical layers of authorship and argue for the late “Stammaitic” redaction of the Bavli. In reaction to the Stammaitic hypothesis which stresses the evidence for late redaction, others¹⁰⁸ have pointed out the considerable linguistic evidence for earlier authorship, and a third,

¹⁰⁵ *Aspects*, 16.

¹⁰⁶ This limited ambition was anticipated by Phillip Alexander’s caution that “there is little to be gained at the moment from talking globally about the teachings of early Judaism.” Rather, he avers, “the way forward in the study of early Judaism lies in isolating the individual systems and in describing them in their own terms” (“Rabbinic Judaism and the New Testament”, 246). See note 76 above for related comments on Ishay Rosen-Tzvi’s *Demonic Desires*, and Yair Lorberbaum’s “Anthropomorphisms.”

¹⁰⁷ Jacob Neusner, “The Use of the Later Rabbinic Evidence for the Study of First-Century Pharisaism,” in *Approaches to Ancient Judaism: Theory and Practice (Brown Judaic Studies No. 1)* (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1978), 215-228; “Scripture and Tradition in Judaism, With Special Reference to the Mishnah,” in *Approaches to Ancient Judaism 2*, ed. W. S. Green (Chico, Calif: Scholar's Press, 1980), 173-193.

¹⁰⁸ Notably Martin McNamara, *Targum and Testament: Aramaic Paraphrases of the Hebrew Bible: A Light on the New Testament* (Shannon, Ireland: Irish University Press, 1972); Stephen Kaufman, “Dating the Language of the Palestinian Targums and their Use in the Study of the First Century CE Texts,” in *The Aramaic Bible: Targums in their Historical Context*, ed. DRG Beattie and MJ McNamara (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994); and Menahem Kister, “Observations On Aspects Of Exegesis”.

synthesizing approach accepts the later redaction or editing of texts which themselves reflect earlier traditions.¹⁰⁹ It appears that the field is coming to terms with the fact that rabbinic texts, by definition, originate in earlier texts, and among them oral “texts” or traditions. One of the earliest to stress this point is Margarete Schlüter’s demonstration that Sherira Gaon studiously avoided referring to the Mishna as a “written” composition and stressed that Mishna and Talmud as oral texts existed long before their literary redaction.¹¹⁰ Yaakov Elman and Elizabeth Alexander have made significant advancements to our understanding of Sherira’s basic assertion, tracing the oral nature of rabbinic culture and scholarship from the Tannaim¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ In particular, Meir Weiss, *The Bible From Within: The Method of Total Interpretation* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1984); Josep Ribera, “The Targum,” Leivy Smolar and Moses Aberbach, *Studies in Targum Jonathan to the Prophets* (New York and Baltimore: Ktav Publishing House and Baltimore Hebrew College, 1983); Avigdor Shinan, *World of the Aggadah*; and Avigdor Shinan, “The Aggadah of the Palestinian Targums of the Pentateuch and Rabbinic Aggadah: Some Methodological Considerations,” in *The Aramaic Bible: Targums in their Historical Context*, ed. DRG Beattie and MJ McNamara (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 203-217. Major conclusions of this research are summarized in Burton Visotsky, “The Literature of the Rabbis,” *From Mesopotamia to Modernity: Ten Introductions to Jewish History and Literature*, ed. Burton Visotsky and David Fishman (Boulder: Westfield, 1999); and Chaim Milikowsky, “Rabbinic Interpretation of the Bible in Light of Ancient Hermeneutical Practice: The Question of the Literal Meaning,” in “*The Words of a Wise Man's Mouth are Gracious*” (*Qoh 10,12*): *Festschrift for Günter Stemberger on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday* (Studia Judaica), ed. M. Perani (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2005).

¹¹⁰ Margarite Schlüter, “Was the Mishnah Written? The Answer of Rav Sherira Gaon,” in *Rashi 1040-1990: Hommage à Ephraïm E. Urbach: IV^e Congrès européen des Études juives*, ed. Gabrielle Sed-Rajna (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1993), 217.

¹¹¹ By “Tanna” (capitalized) I refer to the masters of Talmud (teaching), as distinguished from a “tanna” who was a master of memorizing Mishna. Birger Gerhardsson calls the former (greater) tannaim “masters” and the latter (lesser), “traditionists” (*Memory and Manuscript: Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity; with, Tradition and Transmission in Early Christianity* [Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1998], Ch. 9; see in particular pp. 94-99). Yet despite making this distinction, he asserts that “it is a most significant fact that it is impossible to draw a clear distinction between these *tannaim* and other teachers and pupils in the colleges” (*ibid.*, 100), a view that I do not share. See also Moulie Vidas, *Tradition and the Formation of the Talmud*, 205, who casts the “masters of *talmud*” v. “masters of *mishnah*” as “a debate over the definition of scholarship.” He may be historically correct; however, the Bavli’s redactors, even without the benefit of capitalization,

through the Stammaim, and the transition from oral to written.¹¹² These three (nearly four) decades of redactional historiography have enabled anthropological scholarship to search the texts for clues to the beliefs, values and behaviors of the rabbis and their audiences.¹¹³ An anthropological approach is particularly important for a full understanding of the text when modern biases can distort interpretation, as Meir Bar-Ilan has demonstrated¹¹⁴ and as several books have exemplified.¹¹⁵

From this foundation of the redactional history of the Bavli and the anthropological approach to its interpretation, the debate has recently seen two interesting developments

plainly cast a “tanna” as a master and a “Tanna” as a greater master. See, for instance, Sot. 22a where “tannaim” are called “destroyers of the world” because they render legal rulings based on the memorized Mishna alone. My sense is that the Gemara considers any named tanna to be a [Gerhardsson “master”] “Tanna”.) This distinction is consistent with a broader Medieval awareness of a hierarchy of oral memory; see the end of note 197 below.

¹¹² See Yaakov Elman, “Orality”; Elizabeth Alexander, “The Fixing of the Oral Mishnah and the Displacement of Meaning,” *Oral Tradition* 14, no. 1 (1999); and Elizabeth Alexander, *Transmitting Mishnah: The Shaping Influence of Oral Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006). These studies suggest a slight correction to the conventional dating of certain midrashim. For instance, Visotzsky states that PdRE evidence “firmly date the midrash in the first third of the ninth century” (“The Literature of the Rabbis,” 90) yet he notes that R. Eliezer b. Hyrcanos – an early Tanna – is mentioned at the beginning. According to Elman’s and Alexander’s advances, it now seems plausible to frame PdRE as an oral tradition that began with R. Eliezer, was memorized by several centuries of scholars who occasionally added and edited, and finally written down in the ninth century. Hence, others refer to the “editing” of PdRE’s in the ninth century.

¹¹³ I am using Clifford Geertz’s definition of anthropology as the study of human “webs” of meaning; *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

¹¹⁴ Meir Bar-Ilan, “The Hand of God: A Chapter in Rabbinic Anthropomorphism,” in *Rashi 1040-1990: Hommage à Ephraïm E. Urbach: IV^e Congrès européen des Études juives*, ed. Gabrielle Sed-Rajna (Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1993), 321-335.

¹¹⁵ See, for instance: Ran Zadok, *The Jews in Babylonia During the Chaldean and Achaemenian Periods According to the Babylonian Sources* (Haifa: University of Haifa, 1979); Lee Levine, *The Rabbinic Class of Roman Palestine in Late Antiquity* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1989); Avigdor Shinan, *World of the Aggadah*; and Ishay Rosen-Zvi, *Demonic Desires*.

relevant to the present thesis. Previously, Neusner argued that what he calls the “composite” aggadic hermeneutics of the Bavli seems to have a different agenda than the “collection” aggadah of the books of Midrash.¹¹⁶ More recently, he has searched for this putative Bavli agenda.¹¹⁷ I would like to address two of his conclusions. First, he argues that the Bavli as a whole has an overriding agenda, noting that “the orderly and well composed character of most of the Bavli points toward a relatively brief period of formation and formulation.”¹¹⁸ Second, he finds the “secondary” parts of the Bavli superfluous to its halachic program:

All the secondary and autonomous compositions and composites in the Bavli whatever their topical program bear a single definitive trait, a negative one. Were we to remove from the Bavli these free-standing compositions or composites our capacity for understanding the Bavli’s portrait of the Mishnah and its law would be totally unaffected. It follows that whoever wrote these anomalous compositions followed a plan for writing his composition and assembling his composite that ignored the Bavli and its program of Mishnah- and law-exegesis.¹¹⁹

Further, when considering the Bavli’s hermeneutical agenda, he concludes that it must be different from the Bavli’s halachic agenda:

¹¹⁶ Jacob Neusner, *The Bavli’s One Voice: Types and Forms of Analytical Discourse and Their Fixed Order of Appearance* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1991).

¹¹⁷ Jacob Neusner, “The Priority of Documentary Conventions in the Rabbinic Canon: the Case of the Bavli,” *The Review of Rabbinic Judaism* 12, no. 1 (2009). Regarding the midrashic collections, Neusner does not find a consistent agenda; in his words, “The theology or hermeneutics that those compilations realized in their collection of exegesis is not to be defined just yet” (*ibid.*, 72). Moreover, by comparing the exegesis of Esther in the Bavli side-by-side with that of Esther Rabba, Neusner shows convincingly how the content and form of these two midrashic compositions — based on the same biblical verses — can be so different that they appear to represent completely independent agendas. This indeterminate hermeneutics may simply be due to what Avigdor Shinan calls an apparent lack of planning and composition of these collections (*World of the Aggadah*, 685); if so, our knowledge about the deliberate compositional nature of the Bavli should further underscore the hypothesis that its aggadic midrashim carry a consistent agenda.

¹¹⁸ Neusner, “Priority,” 73-4. Echoing his words, Shai Secuda similarly sees the Bavli as the “culmination of the classical rabbinic project” (*Iranian Talmud*, 9)

¹¹⁹ Neusner, “Priority,” 11.

The presence of a massive if subordinate collection of topical expositions of various kinds which take a second place in the Bavli's composite points toward another sort of literary activity beside the exegetical one of Mishnah- and law-exposition. But this activity left on the Talmud no indelible marks and failed to guide the analytical program of the Bavli, which accorded a primary position to its own analytical program and to that alone.¹²⁰

While I do not agree with his assessment that the Bavli's halachic discourse is "totally unaffected" by its aggadic passages, it is true that most of its aggadot are tangential. But that very fact undermines his conclusion that the composition of the aggadic passages "ignores the Bavli and its program of Mishnah- and law-exegesis." On the contrary, the opposite appears true: while the composition of an halachic *sugya* often seems independent of its adjacent aggadah, the typical aggadic *memra* or *sugya* often seems linked to, tangential to or inspired by the halachic *sugya* where it appears. In fact, while some of the aggadic passages of the Bavli appear tangential to the halachic discourse, others support and sustain it. One such example, quoted in the introduction to this essay and discussed in detail in Ch. 5 below, is the appearance of the ŠAṬAN to entice R. Meir and R. Akiva. The context (Qid. 81a) is the halachic rules governing *yichud*, or seclusion of men and women together who are not related and not married. The aggadic passage serves as a warning that even a great, pious person is at risk of temptation should *yichud* occur. The aggadah in this instance thereby contributes to the halachic discourse.

While this example from Qid. 81a may be the exception that proves the rule, it suggests that, while his observation is plainly right that "when they expounded topics not covered by the Mishnah and its law, they rarely imposed upon that topical exercise the analytical program that dictated the lines of exposition of the Mishnah and the law,"¹²¹ the critique seems to be more of

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 74.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

style than of substance. Substantively, and therefore significantly, there may indeed be what Neusner calls a “canonical consensus upon issues of law, theology, and hermeneutics of the late antique Rabbinic literature.”¹²² While including all of “Rabbinic literature” may be too broad a brush, such a “canonical consensus” is plausible for the more limited yet still quite vast literature of the Bavli.¹²³ Now, in Neusner’s view, the main agenda of the Bavli is to expound the Mishna, what he calls the Bavli’s “forest”; and the aggadic portions of the Bavli follow some as-yet unknown agenda that is evidently different from the aggadic agenda of the midrashic compositions.¹²⁴ Where should one seek that agenda? Given Neusner’s admission that the aggadic portions of the Bavli are “massive,”¹²⁵ it seems to me that he too easily discounts them as a “subordinate collection of topical expositions of various kinds which take a

¹²² Jacob Neusner, “The Rabbis and Prophecy,” *Review of Rabbinic Judaism* 17 (2014): 4-5.

¹²³ Secunda also amalgamates all of Rabbinic literature, yet he emphasizes that the Bavli is “the pinnacle” (*Iranian Talmud*, 143), completed by the anonymous stratum: “More significant, it was suggested that the authors of this stratum were responsible for the collection, arrangement, and interpretation of the Talmud’s earlier material. In other words, the rabbis who contributed the Bavli’s anonymous layer—in contemporary academic parlance, the Stam (literally, ‘anonymous’)—essentially gave us the Talmud as we recognize it today” (*ibid.*, 28-29). We know this, he explains, because “the research of Shamma Friedman, David Halivni, and their scholarly progeny has sufficiently demonstrated the centrality and far-reaching effects of the anonymous editorial project of the Bavli’s redactors. Readers must be alert for potential re-interpretations of Amoraic material, usually but not always located in the Talmud’s anonymous layer. Finally, scholars should focus their attention on the way the Stam assembles, organizes, and occasionally reworks its material in an effort to consider, beyond individual Amoraic views, the Bavli’s broader positions and ideologies” (*ibid.*, 31). As far as I can tell, this is Neusner’s basic position, and Secunda admits that a “large part of the debate between proponents of the Stam and Neusner is about whether it is possible to conduct any sort of textual archaeology across the Bavli’s layers” (*ibid.*, 29). (I therefore do not understand why Secunda declares that “the Bavli, or any rabbinic document for that matter, does not speak with ‘one voice’—as Neusner has tried to put it” [*ibid.*, 30]). I therefore assume that Secunda would agree that this distinction between Neusner and his detractors is not relevant to the present effort to understand the message of the Bavli *as redacted*.

¹²⁴ Secunda makes this exact distinction (see note 123 above).

¹²⁵ According to Isadore Epstein (*Judaism: A Historical Presentation*, 127), they comprise a full third of the Bavli’s content.

second place” to the halachic portions of the Bavli.¹²⁶ To him, these “secondary compositions and composites of the Bavli belong somewhere else than to the Bavli, where, by the governing criteria of the documentary program, they do not belong at all.”¹²⁷

Neusner’s impasse apparently stems from his assumption that the main agenda of the Bavli is exposition of the Mishna. Alternatively, perhaps the halachic and the aggadic portions of the Bavli *both* represent a common broader pedagogical agenda. Based on Neusner’s own evidence and logic, there is no obvious reason to assume a separate agenda for the aggadic parts of the Bavli, and three reasons to assume otherwise:

- (1) The Bavli is a literary creation;
- (2) Its aggadot are crafted with an agenda that is demonstrably different from that of the aggadic collections and therefore not merely a random sampling of such *au courant* aggada;
- (3) Neusner’s own observation that “the orderly and well composed character of most of the Bavli points toward a relatively brief period of formation and formulation”.¹²⁸

Therefore, it is a reasonable hypothesis that the Bavli’s aggadic sections represent the same agenda as the halachic agenda.¹²⁹

¹²⁶ Neusner, “Priority of Documentary Conventions,” 74.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 73-74.

¹²⁹ This cultural orientation towards midrash allows me to avoid Phillip Alexander’s distinction between bona fide “midrash” and “folklorist *aggadot*” (“The Rabbinic Hermeneutical Rules and the Problem of the Definition of Midrash,” *Proceedings of the Irish Biblical Association* 8 [1984]: 11). Alexander may accuse me of inappropriately placing the Bavli’s *aggadot* in the former category even when they do not overtly meet his standard of “the tightly controlled and closely argued character of midrash” (*ibid.*, 10). However, their presentation in the Bavli defines them as midrash under the Bavli’s general interpretive agenda. For the different developmental histories of “aggada” and “Midrash Aggada”, see Marjorie Lehman, *The En Yaaqov: Jacob ben Habib’s Search for Faith in the Talmudic Corpus* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2012), 52-53; see also the references in note 9 above. Howard Schwartz takes a comparable approach to aggadah when he labels aggadic midrash “Jewish mythology” which he then qualifies to mean allegory (*Reimagining the Bible: The Storytelling of the Rabbis* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1998], 87-9).

Such a broader agenda may be simply characterized as Scriptural interpretation. In

Dalia Hoshen's words:

Midrashic ontology means an exegesis of Scripture, which acts within the epistemology of the inexhaustible text. Namely, the textual and semantic potential of Scripture is never to be reached by the exegetic process.

This textual theory of Midrash is not merely literary but mainly philosophical. It concerns the view of the divine simultaneous logic in contrast to linear human logic, both of which are reflected in Scripture.¹³⁰

In other words, my hypothesis is that the Bavli's aggadic agenda resembles its halachic agenda: just as its halachic agenda is to present a definitive discussion and conclusion in areas of praxis, its aggadic agenda is to present a definitive discussion and conclusion in areas of belief. In Alexander Samely's words: "The Talmudic text presents itself as preserver and purveyor of that tradition...and as a kind of gatekeeper or filter."¹³¹ This hypothesis arises from the Bavli's redactional history, the Stammaite hypothesis and Neusner's work on the redactors' halachic agenda.¹³²

An additional justification for this hypothesis — and its first identifying feature — comes from the historical scholarship itself, for there is now an emerging scholarly consensus that the Stammaim did exist as a distinct cohort with a distinct agenda.¹³³ In defining their

¹³⁰ Dalia Hoshen, "Story Is (Not) a *Sugya* in the *Gemara*: On S.Y. Agnon's Novels," *Review of Rabbinic Judaism* 14 (2011): 189. I do not think that she uses the term exegesis to exclude eisegesis; however, in order to avoid misunderstanding, I use the term "interpretation" to include both possibilities.

¹³¹ "Meta-Textual Structuring of Texts," in *Profiling Jewish Literature in Antiquity: An Inventory, from Second Temple Texts to the Talmuds*, ed. Alexander Samely, Philip Alexander, Rocco Bernasconi, and Robert Hayward (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 228.

¹³² In this context, I mean "exposition", not necessarily to exclude eisegesis; see Moshe Halbertal, *People of the Book: Canon, Meaning, and Authority* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1997), 127.

¹³³ To the point where the Bavli's lack of named author, introduction or any overt statement of origin or audience as one expects from a work of literature leaves some of its faithful readers like Jeffrey Rubenstein unsatisfied with the "shadowy, elusive" redactors' anonymity (*Stories*

agenda, Moulie Vidas has stressed the distinction between historical studies and what he calls the scholarship of “the Talmud itself”:

The choice to focus on these acts of composition rather than others derives, in part, from the interest of earlier scholarship not in the Talmud itself, but in the earlier Tannaitic and Amoraic traditions that it preserves, and more generally in its reliability as a witness for the periods prior to its composition....[and] to excavate the Amoraic material that is really worthy of investigation.¹³⁴

In his challenge to turn from the historicity of the Tannaitic and Amoraic layers of the Gemara towards the redactors’ agenda, Vidas interprets their anonymity as a function of their redactive process:

The Bavli’s creators themselves are not hiding: they are there in almost every *sugya*, structuring the discussion and leading the reader (or listener) through the sources, expressing their voice in the anonymous discussion that organizes most of the Talmud.¹³⁵

His inductive approach is, it seems to me, unassailable: the redactors project themselves through their structure and conclusion of every *sugya*. In Halivni’s words, “Their hands were everywhere in the Talmud, and everything derives from them.”¹³⁶ However, I do not share

of the Babylonian Talmud, [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010], 17) and Shai Secunda (*Iranian Talmud*, 9) notes that this lack of a Preface is unusual in late antiquity. Rubenstein’s anti-post-structuralist eagerness to identify the authors evidently drives his efforts at reconstructing both who the Stammaim were and how they created the Talmud (*ibid.*, 18). Some earlier scholarship referred to the redactors with the traditional name, “Saboraim”; see, for instance, Julius Kaplan, *Redaction*; Judah Goldin, “Period of the Talmud,” 180.

¹³⁴ *Tradition and the Formation of the Talmud*, 9. It may be worth bearing in mind that one who practices such Amoraic excavation may excuse himself for merely following the example of the Amora R. Yoḥanan who said, “An anonymous Mishna is R. Meir, an anonymous Tosefta is R. Nehamia, an anonymous Sifra is R. Yehudah, an anonymous Sifre is R. Shimon, and all of them are according to R. Akiva” (Sanh. 86a). But to fully appreciate R. Yoḥanan’s statement requires interpreting why he said it in the first place, why the Bavli redactors chose to quote it, and why they placed it in this particular *sugya*; the quotation is presumably more than a mere history lesson.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹³⁶ David Halivni, *Megorot Umesorot Vol. 3* (New York: Jewish Theological Society, 1982), 3; see also Jeffrey Rubenstein, “Introduction,” in *Creation and Composition: the Contribution of*

Vidas's view that the Stammaim, in redacting the *sugyot*, necessarily aimed to *distance* themselves from their Amoraic forebears. While true that the Talmud at times presents the reader with a tension between an earlier tradition and the Stam's ultimate conclusion, it does not follow that their message is "a commitment to preserving and maintaining tradition with a move to distance or undermine it."¹³⁷ Despite the many times the Stam rejects the position of a given Amora, the overarching agenda is clearly *not* to create an entirely new hermeneutic. The Stammaitic objection, "*lama li kra – hilkata gamiri la*" ("why do I need a verse [to prove the point] – it's an [established] oral tradition")¹³⁸ indicates their self-understanding as recipients and redactors as much as (or more than) innovators. When the Gemara does portray a novel Amoraic ruling (for instance on Bech. 3b), it is novel in that it could not be logically derived from a mishnah, but not that it contradicts a mishnah. They likewise often project the Amoraim as following the same hermeneutical agenda as the Tannaim, *viz.* the 164 times the Bavli employs the "כתנאי" motif — i.e., "the present Amoraic dispute reflects an older Tannaitic dispute".

Thus, Vidas's important observation of the Stammaim's intentional anonymity appears to be primarily a message of *continuity*: a commitment to tradition and an adherence to the same

the Bavli Redactors (Stammaim) to the Aggada, ed. Jeffrey Rubenstein (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 1.

¹³⁷ Vidas, *Tradition and the Formation of the Talmud*, 44. Vidas builds his argument on three main points: (1) that the Talmud is staking its independence from tradition (*ibid.*, 43), despite ample evidence of the Bavli's fealty to tradition; (2) that the Talmudic distinction between "*mishnah*" and "*talmud*" (B.Met. 33a) represents a shift from "oral tradition" to "creative study" (*Tradition and the Formation of the Talmud*, 120-121) that is "redrawing the boundaries of rabbinic identity" (*ibid.*, 126), which appears to be Vidas's novel interpretation; and (3) that the *sugya* of Sot. 22a-b in praise of reciters is used to criticize them, which also appears to be a novel interpretation.

¹³⁸ Naz. 28b, Tem. 18a; see also Bech. 16b, Ara. 19b, Yom. 71b.

hermeneutical agenda as the Amoraim, namely, interpreting Scripture. Robert Herford sees this declaration of continuity in the redactors' literary style:

It is a mistake to speak of the 'writers' of the Talmud or of any of the Midrashim. The Rabbinical literature properly so called is the literary precipitate of the collective movement of thought which went on during the centuries since the time of Ezra. What was finally put into writing was so much as had been handed down from the countless teachers in the earlier times, of what they had taught in the Synagogue or debated in the Beth ha-Midrash....But within these collections is found not the work of an individual author but the contributions of many teachers, who, because they were all engaged on the same great task, and were using the same means in dealing with the same general principles, expressed their thoughts — within limits — in much the same style.¹³⁹

Indeed, per tractate Avot, the self-projected authority of the Stam *depends* on the assumption of continuity within the chain of rabbinic tradition.¹⁴⁰ If Neusner is right that the Bavli's innumerable disputes do not undermine its unified *halachic* perspective and agenda, then its *aggadic* message should all the more so be understood to reflect a unified perspective, and its redactional anonymity should be understood as a message of continuity.¹⁴¹

¹³⁹ Robert Travers Herford, *Talmud and Apocrypha*, 166-7.

¹⁴⁰ "Moses received the Torah from Sinai and transmitted it to Joshua, Joshua to the Elders, the Elders to the Prophets etc." (Avot 1:1). The Gemara also quotes rabbis who admit when they have forgotten a halachic or midrashic tradition, such as Hillel on Pes. 66a, and Rav on Zev. 49a. If Hillel and Rav did not believe that the authority of the halachah and the midrash came from tradition, they could have simply invented an halachah or midrash, rather than stating that they had forgotten. The Stammaite redactors, too, prefer to conclude, "teiku" – let it remain unanswered, rather than to invent an answer. They are perhaps following their own teaching that "Moses was not ashamed [to excuse himself] by saying, 'I had not heard it', but said, 'I heard it and forgot' (Zev. 101a). Thus, the redactors are willing to leave a question unresolved, using the expression *teiku* ("let it stand") over three hundred times. Nonetheless, the Bavli embraces a degree of rabbinic creativity; see Cana Werman, "Oral Torah Vs. Written Torah(s): Competing Claims To Authority," in *Rabbinic Perspectives: Rabbinic Literature and the Dead Sea Scrolls Proceedings of the Eighth International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, 7–9 January, 2003* (*Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah Vol. 57*, ed. Steven D. Fraade, Aharon Shemesh & Ruth A. Clements (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2006). It seems to me that the Bavli's level of tolerance of creativity versus received tradition has not been fully clarified.

¹⁴¹ In fact, such hermeneutic authority is arguably a requirement of the Biblical text, as Natalie Dohrman observes, "It takes many human words to translate and communicate the content of

In order to test the present hypothesis of the Bavli's unified aggadic agenda that includes a message of continuity with the Tannaim and Amoraim, my approach will be to analyze the lessons that the Stammaim are apparently teaching with consideration of those contextual issues that might shed light on their pedagogical intent. In asking this alternative set of questions, my thesis will nonetheless bear on the broader ongoing debates regarding the parameters of the Stammaitic contributions and the role of aggadah in the Talmud.

Almost any page of the Talmud could provide fodder for this debate, but the narrative on Taan. 5b seems particularly suitable. R. Nahman and R. Isaac¹⁴² are dining together and the

very few divine words. That is, the rabbis are translating the terse language of God into the profligate language of humans" ("Reading as Rhetoric in Halakhic Texts," in *Of Scribes and Sages: Early Jewish Interpretation and Transmission of Scripture. Volume 2, Later Versions and Traditions*, ed. Craig A. Evans [New London: T&T Clark, 2004], 95). Dohrman is speaking of halachah, but there is no reason not to extend her point to aggadah. On the issue of rabbinic embellishments of received traditions, see note 379 below. When the Gemara quotes two sages expressing divergent aggadic opinions, the intent may not necessarily be to present a disagreement; rather, they may represent different aspects of the topic (which may also be true of some halachic disputes). This assumption of the Bavli's internal logic provides a background historical postulate to Talya Fishman's observation that "the entire tosafist enterprise (which contributed so mightily to the shaping of rabbinic Judaism from the Middle Ages onward) is predicated on the assumption that the Talmud is authoritative because it is, ultimately, logical" ("The Rhineland Pietists' Sacralization of Oral Torah," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 96. no. 1 [Winter 2006]: 14) and suggests revisiting her assumption that "through the activities of Rashi and the tosafists, the Talmud was transformed into a logically coherent corpus" (*Becoming the People of the Talmud* [Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011], 14): if the Talmud's logical consistency is an *inherent* feature, then perhaps the contribution of Rashi and the tosafists was merely to make that logic accessible to a wider audience. I am mindful of the caution expressed by Yaakov Elman and others that "the Bavli's redactors are clearly not of one mind on all questions, and the phenomenon of sugyot *muhlafot* or sugyot *hafukhot*, 'reversed sugyot,' as the Tosafists termed them, indicates that we have independent testimony to various opinions" (Yaakov Elman, "Review: How Should a Talmudic Intellectual History Be Written? A Response to David Kraemer's Responses," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 89:3-4 [1999]: 383 and n. 51). However, Elman is speaking of the exception, not the rule; and he himself prefers "harmonistic interpretations which the redactors could have employed and which constitute the more usual redactional strategy" (*ibid.*, 384).

¹⁴² The Bavli contains hundreds of statements attributed to "R. Isaac" or "Rabi Isaac" and the Gemara on Pes. 114a disambiguates this name: halachic statements are made by R. Isaac b. Aha and aggadic statements by R. Isaac b. Pinhas. According to Aaron Hyman, *Toldoth Tannaim Ve'Amoraim: Comprising the Biographies of all the Rabbis and Other Persons*

former asks the latter to say something (of Torah). The latter responds, “So said R. Yoḥanan: One should not speak during a meal, lest his windpipe open before the gullet and he come to danger (by choking).” One could read this passage as a happenstance snapshot of a conversation that took place, or one could read it as a crafted piece of pedagogical literature; my sense is to lean toward the latter.¹⁴³ But the story continues with R. Isaac citing the midrash that the patriarch Jacob never died, prompting Jeffrey Rubenstein to ask a series of questions:

Indeed, the most enigmatic aspect of the story is Rav Nahman’s confused reaction. Was he not well acquainted with the nature of rabbinic midrash? How could he think that his master meant to assert that the patriarch Jacob was alive? Did he believe that R. Yitshaq did not know the biblical story of Jacob’s death backwards and forwards? Or did he know all this very well but impulsively cried out in surprise, only to immediately realize his own mistake even before the explanation? Or again, was his initial response a (fictional) interpolation by later storytellers for didactic purposes, to clarify to the audience the midrashic mode of R. Yitshaq’s homily? Both Rav Nahman and the audience receive an additional lesson, on the importance of identifying the forms of rabbinic discourse. Our storytellers seem to be extremely adept in their ability to interweave halacha and aggadah, story and midrash, dialogue and quotation.¹⁴⁴

They are indeed so adept at their “sophisticated narrative art” that they manage to employ “numerous literary techniques known from the general study of fiction, including irony, paronomasia, threefold repetitions, keywords, symbolic names, and so forth.”¹⁴⁵ He is echoing

Mentioned in Rabbinic Literature, Compiled from Talmudic and Midrashic Source and Arranged Alphabetically Vol. 2 (London: Express, 1910), 782, both are students of R. Yoḥanan. The R. Isaac here makes both kinds of statements; the facts that he is paired with R. Nahman here and that he quotes R. Yoḥanan suggest that he is R. Isaac b. Aḥa. However, the R. Isaac quoted below (Ch. 3 and 4) is evidently R. Isaac b. Pinḥas.

¹⁴³ Jeffrey Rubenstein is unsure, parenthetically wondering, “If a master teaches his student why he cannot teach him, do we consider that teaching or not?” (*Stories of the Babylonian Talmud*, 229). But others see rabbinic homilies as decidedly pedagogical; see for instance Richard Kalmin, *The Sage in Jewish Society of Late Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 1999); Cass Fisher, *Contemplative Nation*, 71.

¹⁴⁴ Rubenstein, *Stories of the Babylonian Talmud*, 229-230. For an extended description of how the Bavli interweaves halachah and aggadah, see Yona Frankel, *Yad HaTalmud: Darchei HaAggadah veHaMidrash* (Giv’atayim, Israel: 1991), 481-99.

¹⁴⁵ Rubenstein, *Stories*, 8.

Shamma Friedman's observation that, while we can trace aggadah of the Bavli to earlier traditions through other midrashic sources, "only in the Bavli are all these themes and more woven into a continuous narrative."¹⁴⁶

Despite this great praise for the redactors' art, Rubenstein is still unsure of their goals: "Were they trying to instruct their audience in the merits of developing proficiency in both legal and homiletical traditions and the comparable status of the two?"¹⁴⁷ Neusner is less unsure:

The two parts of the Bavli's writing do not fit together into a seamless whole. Primary to the document are the components that carry out the document's program. These undertake the exegesis of the Mishnah and the law. They originate in the processes of the composition of the Talmud's exegetical and legal-expository components. Without the primary compositions and composites we have no Talmud. What is secondary to the Bavli is writing not provoked by the tasks of Mishnah- and law-exegesis. Without the secondary accretions we have the Talmud: its essential program and its purpose fully exposed.¹⁴⁸

Yet it seems to me that Rubenstein hints to the answer to his own question and an alternative to Neusner's hierarchical assumption: these literary-virtuoso redactors, he observes, *intertwined* the Bavli's aggadah with its halacha.¹⁴⁹ Their ability to do so, Avigdor Shinan points out, reflects and results from their aggadah and halacha arising from the same belief system.¹⁵⁰ It was this belief system that not only lead to their halachic and aggadic content, but that also inspired them to fashion this content into the Bavli. The assumption of David Halivni and

¹⁴⁶ Shamma Friedman, "A Good Story Deserves Retelling: The Unfolding of the Akiva Legend," in *Creation and Composition: the Contribution of the Bavli Redactors (Stammaim) to the Aggada*, ed. Jeffrey L. Rubenstein (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 95.

¹⁴⁷ Rubenstein, *Stories of the Babylonian Talmud*, 5.

¹⁴⁸ Neusner, "Priority of Documentary Conventions," 2.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

¹⁵⁰ *The World of the Aggadah*, 120. Hananel Mack, *The Aggadic Midrash Literature* (Tel Aviv: MOD Books, 1989), Ch. 1, traces this intertwining of aggadic and halachic hermeneutics from the Tannaic midrashim through the Bavli.

Steven Fraade that midrash in general has a pedagogical agenda applies *a fortiori* to the Bavli's carefully selected midrash aggada.¹⁵¹ In Fraade's words, "the more immediate concern that our early texts express is a practical one for preserving and transmitting rabbinic oral tradition in such a way as to render it readily accessible;"¹⁵² by "oral tradition" he evidently means both legal and homiletical traditions. Therefore, we should accept all parts of the Talmud, halacha and aggadah, as it presents itself: a masterful pedagogy presenting an intentional curriculum.¹⁵³

¹⁵¹ See Fraade, *Tradition to Commentary* and David Halivni, *Midrash, Mishnah, and Gemara*.

¹⁵² Fraade, *Legal Fictions*, 150.

¹⁵³ This conclusion is relevant to recent debates about the Talmud's status in Gaonic times. For instance, Talya Fishman argues in *Becoming the People of the Talmud*, 2, "We have no way of knowing to what extent, if at all, the 'editors' of the Talmud—as distinct from the authors of the legal dicta embedded within it—intended to create a normative legal work, rather than an academic or literary corpus." According the present argument, the present thesis is evidence that they indeed intended to create a normative *pedagogical* work. Fishman further argues that the Talmud did not achieve its full canonical status as a *written* text until after the Gaonic period (*ibid.*, Ch. 5). Nevertheless, at some point in history, all scholars agree that the Bavli became a canonical, closed work. Whether that occurred in the sixth or the twelfth century, it did occur; it appears to have had no significant editing after the eighth century (and possibly no significant redacting after the sixth century: see discussion and note 195 below); and the present thesis is that its creation, including its aggadic passages, appears to be a deliberate curriculum with a holistic pedagogy and not a randomly-selected collection of *sugyot*.

Other scholarship reflects the ongoing struggle with this holistic picture. See, for instance, Peter Schäfer's argument that "the process of emergence is not to be separated or distinguished without further ado from that of transmission, and the process of transmission from that of redaction" ("Once again the Status Quaestionis of Research in Rabbinic Literature: An Answer to Chaim Milikowsky," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 40 [1989]: 89). See also Marjorie Lehman, *En Yaaqov*, who claims that Sot. 40a "reflects that halakhah and aggadah were not perceived as complementary genres but rather as independent mediums" (*ibid.*, 57), yet simultaneously she allows that "contemporary scholars remain at odds regarding the independence from or interdependence of aggadic passages in the Bavli in regard to their surrounding textual context in Talmudic sugyot" (*ibid.*, 233 n. 28). Stuart Miller observes that Torah study has greater value in the Bavli than in the Yerushalmi, and the denigration of the unlearned more pronounced (*Sages and Commoners in Late Antique 'Erez Israel*, 308-310 and 325). Ignorance of Torah is presented almost as an illness, with the publication of the Bavli itself perhaps as the cure. It would therefore be logical for the redactors to include all aspects of Torah in their program. The Bavli may thus serve as the equivalent of epic stories to the Greeks, "a device for preserving and transmitting the essential information of the group—historical, technical, 'moral,' or in a word the tribal encyclopaedia, its cultural book" (Kevin Robb, "Greek Oral Memory and the Origins of Philosophy," *The Personalist* 51 [1970]: 30).

Therefore, in summary (paraphrasing Rubenstein¹⁵⁴), the Bavli's anonymity itself is a message: the Stammaim hide in anonymity in order to project themselves as curators and teachers but not as creators. The Talmud presents itself as a series of stylized verbal snapshots of the Babylonian yeshiva, letting the reader into the study hall to participate in the teaching and learning of a *sugya*. Since by universal scholarly consensus each *sugya* has been crafted by masterful artists, one must entertain the hypothesis that any seemingly tangential or random aggadic passage was possibly – or even probably – included for a specific didactic reason.¹⁵⁵

This understanding of the Bavli's agenda does not exclude the discovery by Rubenstein *et al.* that the Stammaim added cultural motifs to aggadic material that would have been unknown to the subjects of the narrative.¹⁵⁶ On the contrary: while the origins of these

¹⁵⁴ *Stories of the Babylonian Talmud*, 31.

¹⁵⁵ I am therefore finding a different nuance in Talmudic debates than Daniel Boyarin's distinction between halachic and "fundamental doctrinal" disputes: "When halachic traditions differ, even widely, as did those of the Houses of Shammai and Hillel, then, despite the Torah being made into two Torot (Tosefta Sotah 14:9), heresy has not been produced. When fundamental doctrinal tenets are transduced, however, then we have heresy;" *Border Lines*, 61. Boyarin reiterates and strengthens his point in "Jesting Words and Dreadful Lessons: The Two Voices of the Babylonian Talmud," in *Socrates and the Fat Rabbis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 142-3. While it is indeed true that the Bavli entertains and subsequently rejects the hypothesis that the Houses considered each other heretics, that discussion is merely a clarifying footnote to the Bavli's larger pedagogical hermeneutical agenda (an agenda which is itself borne of theological necessity. (See the reference to Natalie Dohrman in note 141 above.) There is therefore reason to question the common view that "aggadah was valued less than halakhah" (Marjorie Lehman, *The En Yaaqov*, 57-58), which stems from a long-held understanding that the Talmud is essentially "discussions of the Mishna" which "indeed contains materials of the genre *midrash*, but subordinates these materials to the very different agenda set by the Mishna" (David Halperin, *The Faces of the Chariot*, 457-9). Its structure is unquestionably in the form of a Mishna commentary, but its agenda appears broader.

¹⁵⁶ For instance, one of the foundational studies that Rubenstein cites in nearly every book and article is Daniel Sperber's critical study of the narrative of Rav Kahana coming to the yeshiva of R. Yohanan in B. Qam. 117a; Daniel Sperber, "On the Unfortunate Adventures of Rav Kahana: A Passage of Saboraic Polemic from Sasanian Persia," *Irano-Judaica* (1982): 83-100. Sperber argues that the Bavli added literary elements to a "small historical kernel" (*ibid.*, 97). As a proof, Sperber cites the manuscript fragment of the story from Yemenite Midrash where these allegedly Persian motifs are missing: "Could it then be that there were earlier versions

narrative elements matters less, they do contribute anthropological information to the elucidation of the Bavli's pedagogy, similar to Shai Secunda's uncovering of new meanings of aggadah based on the Bavli's Sassanian cultural context.¹⁵⁷ As Rubenstein observes in his critique of historical reductivism, the redactors "did not act as passive conduits, merely recording the traditions they received for posterity, nor did they limit themselves to succinct glosses designed to provide minimal requisite explanations."¹⁵⁸ Rather, they crafted, enabling one to hear in the redacted Bavli a unanimous, unequivocal voice (of the Stam).

Moreover, Yaakov Elman raises an interesting (and as-yet unanswered) difficulty with the late dating of the Stammaim Hypothesis: the lack of any Talmudic mention of the Black Death that raged in the Babylonian area for two centuries beginning in 542 CE.¹⁵⁹ This insight suggests that if the redactors indeed lived post-542, they were consciously framing received materials rather than creating new ones. There are certainly "passages that indicate a cultural context different from that of the Sassanian period,"¹⁶⁰ however, one must separate curriculum

(prior to the VI or VII cent.) which had less of the Babylonian 'coloring', and that these *urtexts* were elaborated in different forms, one of which may be the Hemdat Yamim version?" (*ibid.*, 100). Yet Rubenstein exaggerates this point: "Daniel Sperber has dated this story of Rav Kahana to Saboraic times," Jeffrey Rubenstein, "Criteria of Stammaitic Intervention in Aggadah," in *Creation and Composition: the Contribution of the Bavli Redactors (Stammaim) to the Aggadah*, ed. Jeffrey Rubenstein (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 424. In fact, Sperber has merely dated certain *narrative elements* to Saboraic times and admits himself that the "kernel" of the story is likely historical; Sperber, "Unfortunate Adventures," 97.

¹⁵⁷ Secunda, *Iranian Talmud*.

¹⁵⁸ Rubenstein, "Introduction," in *Creation and Composition: the Contribution of the Bavli Redactors (Stammaim) to the Aggadah*, ed. Jeffrey Rubenstein (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 1.

¹⁵⁹ Yaakov Elman, "The World of the 'Saboraim'," in *Creation and Composition: the Contribution of the Bavli Redactors (Stammaim) to the Aggadah*, ed. Jeffrey L Rubenstein, (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 383-384.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 415.

from pedagogy.¹⁶¹ Consider by analogy the Pythagorean Theorem, which has presumably not changed very much since 500 BCE yet different cultural contexts have surely inspired different ways to teach it. Thus, Avigdor Shinan observes that the rabbis conscientiously used popular language, motifs and legends but for their own agendas; they “lived among the people, and introduced the popular culture into their works. Nachman Levine makes a similar point about pedagogy when he argues that “Rav lived in Sura and Palestine...and was certainly familiar with both systems; his description of a vision need not be historically accurate and in fact anachronism could be a very effective literary quality here.”¹⁶²

Therefore, since Rubenstein *et al.* agree that the Stammaim created a layer of the Talmud, their focus on the historicity of a certain statement does not negate the Talmudic forest for the sake of its trees. The discovery of a “Stammaitic layer” is in fact evidence for the

¹⁶¹ As in the Sperber example in note 156 above.

¹⁶² Nachman Levine, “Reading Crowned Letters and Semiotic Silences in Menachot 29b,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 53, no. 1 (2002): 45 n.62. Avigdor Shinan makes a similar observation when he notes that the rabbis “lived among the people, and introduced the popular culture into their works” (*World of the Aggadah*, 102), which he says, accounts for much of the folk language of Ps.-J. (*ibid.*, 109); see note 291 below. Steven Fraade also makes this distinction between curriculum and pedagogy in his reply to Boyarin: Boyarin finds problems with the origin legends of Yavneh to which Fraade retorts that “while we are unable to locate historically the origins of this ubiquitous feature of rabbinic textuality and pedagogy (e.g., at ‘Yavneh’), we can confidently identify it, even if immaturely, in the earliest editorial strata of rabbinic (that is Tannaitic) literature;” Fraade, *Legal Fictions*, 474.

The distinction I am making between curriculum and pedagogy may be explained in part by the argument of Rachel Anisfeld, *Sustain Me With Raisin-Cakes: Pesikta Derav Kahana and The Popularization of Rabbinic Judaism* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2009), 148-149, that rabbinic midrashic texts represent a shift in rabbinic attitude towards the masses – from aloof and disdain to outreach. Similarly, Isaiah Gafni, in reviewing three studies of Rubenstein, adds, “I wonder if these colorings are not simply reflective of different but more contemporaneous cultural developments in the two rabbinic centers (as noted by Elman), and if the polemical, or at least the adversarial nature of these stories has not been overlooked or downplayed in the quest for a much later Babylonian talmudic culture” (“Rethinking Talmudic History: the Challenge of Literary and Redaction Criticism,” *Jewish History* 25, no. 3-4 [2011]: 363). In other words, the Bavli’s pedagogy may reflect longer cultural and pedagogical trends rather than merely the current social-cultural reality of the redactors.

forest (or the sea, to use the rabbinic metaphor¹⁶³): that the Talmud as a whole represents a single, unified curriculum in Jewish life and belief.¹⁶⁴ Vidas's revision of their hypothesis merely strengthens this view.

Accordingly, even the innumerable Tannaitic disputes may have been preserved for pedagogical reasons alone. For instance, the Mishna's frequent disputes between the House of Shammai and the House of Hillel may not, as some have argued, project a spirit of pluralism.¹⁶⁵ The Mishna itself states that its preservation of multiple opinions is for *anti-pluralistic* reasons. In Eduyot 1:3, the Mishna mentions an opinion of both Hillel and Shammai and then within the same sentence rejects both opinions in favor of an older tradition. The next three mishnas ask three obvious questions:

4. And why do they record the opinions of Shammai and Hillel, only to set them aside? — To teach the following generations that a man should not [always] persist in his opinion, for behold, the fathers of the world did not persist in their opinion.

¹⁶³ Midr. Mishlei 9:2.

¹⁶⁴ Secunda, despite his caution that “the Bavli is quite difficult to pin down on any particular issue, much less to essentialize” (*Iranian Talmud*, 31), shares this understanding of the Bavli's self-projection as a “comprehensive and self-sufficient curriculum of Jewish learning” (*ibid.*, 10). Moreover, this view of the Bavli can be traced back to its earliest commentaries; I obviously do not share Marjorie Lehman's reading of Maimonides that he “did not envision the Talmud as the central text of Jewish theology” (*The En Yaaqov*, 2); she draws that conclusion from the *Mishneh Torah* and from her view that the *Guide* is a “system of thought rooted in Aristotelian philosophy”; however, it seems to me the *Guide* may in fact be a system of thought rooted in the Talmud *expressed in the language* of Aristotelian philosophy.

¹⁶⁵ See for instance Richard Hidary, *Dispute For The Sake Of Heaven: Legal Pluralism In The Talmud* (Providence, R.I.: Brown Judaic Studies, 2010), Ch. 4, where he argues that the Bavli's presentation of these disputes “reveals the Bavli's own conviction that it is possible for pluralism of practice to exist and for the parties to still remain socially unified and living under one roof” (*ibid.*, 232-3). In his conclusion (*ibid.*, 385-393), he admits that the Bavli does appear to be characterized by “monism and negative particular pluralism” (*ibid.*, 390), but argues that the recording of and respect for multiple views (and occasionally multiple practices) proves that the Bavli has a “positive attitude toward diversity” (*ibid.*, 391). Hidary is portraying the Bavli as a naïve record of rabbinic teachings, as opposed to the present model of a carefully crafted pedagogical text.

5. And why do they record the opinion of a single person among the many, when the halacha must be according to the opinion of the many? So that if a court prefers the opinion of the single person it may depend on him. For no court may set aside the decision of another court unless it is greater than it in wisdom and in number. If it was greater than it in wisdom but not in number, in number but not in wisdom, it may not set aside its decision, unless it is greater than it in wisdom and in number.

6. R. Judah said: If so, why do they record the opinion of a single person among the many, only to set it aside? So that if a man shall say, thus have I learnt the tradition,' it may be said to him, 'according to the [refuted] opinion of that individual did you hear it.

In other words, multiple opinions in the Mishna do not reflect a spirit of pluralism. In Stephen Fraade's words, partially quoted above:

We should not presume that what is principally bothering the "authors" of these texts about the multivocality of rabbinic legal teaching is the question of the epistemological or theological grounding of its conflicting opinions. Rather, the more immediate concern that our early texts express is a practical one for preserving and transmitting rabbinic oral tradition in such a way as to render it readily accessible.... The early rabbis were hardly "pluralists" by modern standards, and for all of their preservation of multiple scriptural interpretations and legal rulings, and narratives of debate, they were deeply troubled by the potential of legal contention to socially sunder their world and to undermine the viability of the received oral tradition of which they understood themselves to be the divinely-charged guardians.¹⁶⁶

Fraade provides examples of the misapplication of modern standards of pluralism to texts that superficially appear pluralistic and stresses that examples are available "from *all* strata of rabbinic literature."¹⁶⁷ The present example from Mishna Eduyot is to the contrary: in the words of the Mishna's redactors, who chose to include hundreds of opinions of Beit Shammai in the Mishna, their purpose for doing so and message is unambiguous: to teach surrender (1:4), to honor tradition (1:5) and to strengthen the majority opinion (1:6).¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁶ Fraade, *Legal Fictions*, 450-1.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 451-5. See also Steven Fraade, "Rabbinic Polysemy and Pluralism Revisited: Between Praxis and Thematization." *AJS Review* no. 1 (2007). Cass Fisher reaches a similar conclusion; *Contemplative Nation*, 220.

¹⁶⁸ It seems to me this evidence from Eduyot against rabbinic religious pluralism or tolerance is inescapable and conclusive, short of accusing the redactors of willful or wishful deception here. In addition to this explicit evidence, further arguments and evidence include: the distinction between tolerance for pluralism on the one hand and allowance for variations in

local custom, which the Mishna and Bavli specifically address (e.g., mPes. 4:1, mSuk 3:11, mMeg 4:1, Ber. 17b, RH 27a, Taan. 16b and 30b, etc.), on the other; the fact that the Bavli laments the increase in disputes as leading to a situation where “the Torah became like two Torot” (Sot. 47b, Sanh. 88b); a long *beraita* on Sanh. 88b describing the old procedure for deciding the law and maintaining unanimity and how that broke down; and specific disputes that cast doubt on Hidary’s thesis, such the well-known story on B. Met. 59b of R. Eliezer’s dispute with the rabbis (over the ritual purity of a certain oven). The Bavli affirms time and time again the authority of the majority to impose its will on everyone with no tolerance for nonconformist practice. In Fraade’s words: “The early rabbis were hardly ‘pluralists’ by modern standards, and for all their preservation of multiple scriptural interpretations, legal rulings, and narratives of debate, they were deeply troubled by the potential of legal contention to socially sunder their world and to undermine the viability of the received oral tradition of which they understood themselves to be the divinely charged guardians” (“Polysemy,” 21).

(I am distinguishing practice from opinion; the oven dispute shows the rabbis’ great tolerance for dispute and disagreement, as long as the loser accept the final decision of the majority; the extent of their tolerance for disputation is explored by Hidary and Noam Vered, “Traces of Sectarian Halakhah in the Rabbinic World,” in *Rabbinic Perspectives: Rabbinic Literature and the Dead Sea Scrolls Proceedings of the Eighth International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature*, 7–9 January, 2003 [*Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah* Vol. 57], ed. Steven D. Fraade *et al.* [Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2006]. Tzvi Novick finds Mishnah #4 “enigmatic”; see his “Tradition and Truth: The Ethics of Lawmaking in Tannaitic Literature,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 100, no. 2 [2010]: 234–7. To my ear, it seems intended to be read together with Mishnas 5–6.)

See David Horrell, “Early Jewish Christianity,” in *The Early Christian World*, Vol. 2., ed. Philip Esler (New York: Routledge, 2000), 142 and Seán Freyne, “The Galilean World of Jesus,” in *The Early Christian World*, Vol. 2, ed. Philip Esler (New York: Routledge, 2000), 127 for their sharp critiques of the “often superficial trend in modern scholarship” of framing ancient religious conflicts with modern notions such as pluralism and syncretism. Simply put, the Bavli does not appear to embrace what Fraade calls a “modern” concept of ideological pluralism.

Moreover, it is not at all clear that minority opinions, such as those of the House of Shammai, were always followed in practice. Hidary (*Dispute*, Ch. 4) argues from Yev. 15a–16a that the Bavli (in contrast to the Yerushalmi) does conclude that the House of Shammai acted according to their own view, and there is evidence elsewhere that they did so: see mEd 1.3–4, tEd 1.3 and Tzvi Novick’s discussion (“Tradition and Truth”). However, Hidary misses something quite interesting: the *sugya* he cites shows how the Stammaim (or perhaps the Amoraim) themselves debated this question of the significance of minority opinions in Tannaitic material but does not “conclude that Beth Shammai followed their own opinions” (*ibid.*, 221); the conclusion that they did so is undermined by the very next part of the *sugya* (which Hidary cites), reporting that the practice at the time R. Dosa of following the House of Shammai was *even then* considered renegade and not at all evidence of Talmudic pluralism; on the contrary, it seems to be evidence of renegades. See also Ber. 52b, where a Houses dispute in a mishna (over the order of the Havdala ceremony) is itself contradicted by a *beraita* that teaches a different version of the dispute, followed by the normative statement of R. Yoḥanan: “*na’hagu ha’am k’Beit Hillel aliba d’Rabi Yehuda*” – the people’s custom is according to Beit Hillel in R. Yehuda’s version [in the *beraita*]. It therefore seems to me that any tolerance for

Nevertheless, Richard Hidary does successfully demonstrate the Talmud's *appearance of tolerance* towards dissent and dispute.¹⁶⁹ He takes his cue from Jeffrey Roth:

A question of law that does not elicit differences of opinion among the sages in the Mishnah and Talmud, that finds early and latter-day authorities in agreement, or that is settled definitively by a ruling in a code that satisfies everyone, is the exception, rather than the rule.¹⁷⁰

In the spirit of Roth, Hidary demonstrates the ways in which the Stammaim redacted the dialectical method to achieve their pedagogical goals, which, it must be reiterated, were religious in nature. He argues convincingly that this broad use of dispute and dialectic is a central feature of the Bavli's pedagogy.¹⁷¹

Framed this way, Hidary's perspective would have added a fifth voice to the discussion panel at the 2014 Association for Jewish Studies conference on the topic, "What is the Bavli?"

pluralism that may have existed (outside of the allowance for local custom) was disappearing or had disappeared by the time of the Mishna's redaction (or shortly thereafter) and that the Mishna indeed records Beit Shammai's opinions for the three reasons given in Eduyot and not for historic reasons whatsoever.

¹⁶⁹ Hidary, *Dispute for the Sake of Heaven*.

¹⁷⁰ Jeffrey Roth, "The Justification for Controversy Under Jewish Law," *California Law Review* 76, no. 2 (1988): 350.

¹⁷¹ I am thereby differing from Tzvi Novick's position that the only alternative to Hidary's formulation is to limit the Bavli's idea of practice to "a rhetorical means of regulating study practice;" Novick, "Dispute For the Sake of Heaven: Legal Pluralism in the Talmud" (Review), *AJS Review* 37, no. 1 (2013): 152-156. Roth (*Justification for Controversy*, 378-387) identifies eight benefits of the Bavli's tendency to present topics as controversies. This mission of the Bavli is what Natalie Dohrmann calls "cultural construction and maintenance" ("Reading as Rhetoric," 113). It would be interesting to compare the rhetorical structure of the Bavli to that of the Yerushalmi. Hidary restricts his argument to the Bavli's legal dialectics; I am expanding it to the Bavli's *aggadah*. Moreover, I see no basis for Daniel Boyarin's claim that "the Babylonian Talmud in its latest redaction it is most often the case that such an apparent proof of one view is considered a difficulty (*qushia*) requiring a resolution which, in fact, shows that there is no resolution, for 'These and these are the words of the Living God.'" See "Dialectic," 223. In fact, such "no resolution" conclusions represent a small minority of Talmudic disputes and are an exception to the general Talmudic rule of reaching an authoritative resolution.

The panel's four answers to the question included: performance,¹⁷² poetry,¹⁷³ political power¹⁷⁴ and literature.¹⁷⁵ A Respondent¹⁷⁶ then declared them all equally true and valid, it being more important that we conduct debates about it than we embrace a single perspective.

The present paper will argue for a fifth approach to the Bavli, informed by Hidary's work, that was not represented on the panel and does not appear well represented in current scholarship. The dialectical structure of the Bavli shows that what Vidas perceives as undermining tradition may be the diametric opposite: according to the Talmud's overall traditional message, the message here is one of using the rhetorical system *in order to preserve* traditional pedagogies and conclusions. In other words, the Bavli is a curriculum that the Stammaitic redactors portray as *ideologically* faithful to the halachic and aggadic traditions and the pedagogical system that they inherited from the Tannaim and Amoraim, presented through the filters of the Stammaim's own culture. In short: the Bavli is the Stammaim's way of teaching future generations their understanding of the Oral Torah.¹⁷⁷ The dialectical

¹⁷² Vidas (*Tradition and the Formation of the Talmud*).

¹⁷³ Sergey Dolgopolski; see his *What is Talmud? The Art of Disagreement* (New York, Fordam University Press, 2009); and his *The Open Past: Subjectivity and Remembering in the Talmud*. (New York, Fordam University Press, 2012).

¹⁷⁴ Michal Bar-Asher Siegal (see her *Early Christian Monastic Literature and the Babylonian Talmud* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013]).

¹⁷⁵ Shai Secunda (*Iranian Talmud*); my characterization of his approach is an inference, for while he asks this question on the first page of Ch. 1 (p. 8), he does not directly answer it nor does he use the term "literature".

¹⁷⁶ Christine Hayes; her book, *Between the Babylonian and Palestinian Talmuds* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997) presciently argues against the tide of historical reductionism that was rising in the 1990s and continues to trend today.

¹⁷⁷ I am thus supplying the answer to the question that Secunda asks: "How are all of the Bavli's diverse sources and editorial layers arranged and how do they relate with one another?" (*Iranian Talmud*, 28). Many today seem to have this view of Talmudic all-inclusive perspicacity, but the structure of this curriculum remains to be demonstrated. See for instance

presentation maintains the orality while the conclusion of each *sugya* maintains the Torah authority. I am following Fraade:

Before being forced to choose between hermeneutical or historical positivisms (as the choice is too often posed), we need to consider a third possibility: that these traditions are not so much about the biblical past or contemporary extramural polemics as internal rabbinic self-understandings of the privileged human role of the sage in the performative enactment of Torah law and legal discourse as part of a continual process of revelation from Sinai to the present and beyond.¹⁷⁸

Fraade then somewhat hedges, concluding with a synthesis of his view and that of the hermeneuticians and historical positivists, invoking the three-ply cord metaphor of Eccl 4:12. While a threefold approach may make sense for his eclectic scholarship of all rabbinic (chiefly Tannaitic) midrashim, the present paper has the more limited scope of the Bavli for the reasons stated above, and is therefore oriented according to Fraade's "third possibility" of "performative enactment...of a continual process of revelation from Sinai."¹⁷⁹

What I am calling a fifth approach is an attempt to move beyond the historian's tendency to see rabbinic texts as amalgams and composites and *merely* products of their historical setting, in order to see this vast holistic forest for its trees. Daniel Boyarin is an early advocate for such an integrated approach:

Marjorie Lehman, *The En Yaaqov*, 52 who seeks a delineation between "aggada" and "midrash aggada", while acknowledging that both are components of the Talmudic "curriculum."

¹⁷⁸ Fraade, *Legal Fictions*, 498.

¹⁷⁹ For an elaboration of the performance concept and a vision of its realization in the teacher-student (master-disciple) relationship, see Martin Jaffee, "A Rabbinic Ontology of the Written and Spoken Word: On Discipleship, Transformative Knowledge, and the Living Texts of Oral Torah," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 65, no. 3 (Autumn, 1997): 542-3; and Moulie Vidas, *Tradition and the Formation of the Talmud*, Ch. 2. For a broader overview of the performative nature of the Bavli, see Birger Gerhardsson, *Memory and Manuscript*, 130-6. On the scholarship of interpreting oral traditions, see note 197 below. Daniel Boyarin calls the Bavli "a devotional – or even liturgical – act" ("Dialectic," 227, repeated in "Hellenism in Rabbinic Babylonia," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Talmud and Rabbinic* ed. Charlotte Elisheva Fonrobert and Martin Jaffee [New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007], 347-8).

I am exploring here a third option, one that deconstructs the very opposition between ‘external’ and ‘internal’ approaches, namely positing that precisely the textual, exegetical/hermeneutical, dialectical, redactorial factors are themselves bound up with complex historical, cultural interactions between the Rabbis respectively of Palestine and Mesopotamia and the other communities in which they were embedded.¹⁸⁰

Historical studies of the Bavli have created a foundation with which one may now integrate historical, linguistic and exegetical data.¹⁸¹ Nachman Levine seeks this integrated goal in his attention to an aggadic *sugya*’s many elements:

Reading an Aggadah’s literary or semiotic elements (time, place, motifs, objects) can tell what it says by how it says it: we could perhaps find its meaning in the way its literary elements express the inherent internal oppositions and paradoxes that are its center. Among its devices are imagery, wordplay and word patterns, linguistic reversal, parallelism, chiasmus, narrative structure and structural elements and markers (questions/answers, metonymic/metaphoric locations: Sinai/Heaven, R. Akiva’s *Beit* Midrash, the marketplace, back again).¹⁸²

A major outcome of an integrated approach to the Bavli is that it can guide one’s response to two contradictory statements in two different *sugyot*. While the historical approach seeks the sources of those two statements, the integrated approach assumes that their inclusion in the

¹⁸⁰ Boyarin, “Dialectic,” 218. Where I differ with Boyarin, as I will argue below, is in my assessment of the nature of the broader cultural influences. According to Boyarin, the decline of dialectical culture in the Greco-Roman-Christian world influenced the very nature of Talmudic dialectics, but I feel he is overstating the lack of resolution of *sugyot*; see also note 171 above.

¹⁸¹ My approach may be compared to the “Total Interpretation” biblical method of Meir Weiss (*Bible From Within*) who combines linguistic data, poetic elements, and various literary devices in order to achieve a fuller understanding of the text. His search for meaning leads him to reject historical analysis: Any attempt to reconstitute the biographical and historical background of a psalm or psalmist from linguistic hints and bits of metaphor (perhaps fossilized remains of a much earlier literary period) is bound to be unprofitable. And even if such an effort could succeed — even if we could obtain all the “facts” that Gunkel seeks about the life and times of the psalmist — the knowledge gained by it would not help us to understand the poet’s intentions (*ibid.*, 52). Daniel Boyarin advocates such a method in his “Talmud and ‘Fathers of the Church’: Theologies and the Making of Books,” in *The Early Christian Book*, ed. William E. Klingshirm and Linda Safran (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2007).

¹⁸² Nachman Levine, “Reading Crowned Letters,” 36.

Talmud reflects an editorial decision of the redactors, fully cognizant of the contradiction and expecting the student of the Talmud to ponder and reconcile them, in the same way that the Talmud itself repeatedly ponders and reconciles contradictions within Scripture. In other words, given the Bavli's agenda-driven redactional history, one should not apply Avigdor Shinan's blanket rules that aggadah is how the sages presented teachings to the common people¹⁸³ and can contain contradictions.¹⁸⁴ Unlike the midrashic collections, the Bavli has sharp boundaries and a putative final author or redactor (or group of final authors or redactors). Stammaitic historiography has provided ample evidence that the Talmud represents these redactors' meta-point-of-view, even when presenting contradictory rabbinic voices.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ *World of the Aggadah*, 109.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 122-3. Shinan's rules may be limited to the midrashic collections and not be informed by the Bavli.

¹⁸⁵ What Fraade says about the *Sifre* applies *a fortiori* to the Bavli: "The *Sifre*'s commentary presents itself, implicitly to be sure, as the *collective* and *cumulative* teachings of the class of rabbinic sages" (*Legal Fictions*, 17). This point is probably true about any legal or ethical text in any culture that withstands the test of time. E.g., Findlaw.com presents itself as the collective and cumulative teachings of the class of American jurists, etc. These texts were written, edited and transmitted with an agenda, namely to present rabbinic interpretations of Tanach. Since the Bavli stands out as more consciously redacted than the midrashic collections, its meta-agenda must be assumed. Indeed, Peter Schäfer demonstrates this quality of the Bavli in his sweeping, *Jesus in the Talmud*.

Moreover, they see their act of interpretation as a religiously meaningful act *suo jure*, as opposed to a means of defining religiously normative practice, as shown by Gary Morton ("Rabbinic Midrash," in *A History of Biblical Interpretation: Vol. 1. The Ancient Period*, ed. Alan J. Hauser & Duane F. Watson. [Grand Rapids, Mich. Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2003], 207-8) and observed by Joshua Levinson (*Ha-Sipur she-lo supar*, 312), Fraade ("Literary Composition," 45-46), *inter alia*. Daniel Boyarin makes a similar observation regarding the Talmud's general pattern of presenting disputes, suggesting that this ideology is "the dominant cultural work of all of Tractate 'Fathers' [Avot] and their successors" (*Border Lines*, 79). He extends this view of rabbinic teachings to Talmudic dialectics, "a devotional – or even liturgical – act" ("Dialectic," 227) but I do not share his view that the dialectics "almost never" reaches a resolution and is therefore "a pseudo-dialectical practice...and not truly an intellectual one" (*ibid.*).

Although the Gemara in Ber. 5a (quoted in Ch. 2 below) includes Mishna and Talmud in a list of information "given to Moses at Sinai," scholarship is divided on when the Oral Law became seen as Sinaitic. See Gabriele Boccaccini, "Targum Neofiti as a Proto-Rabbinic

Hearing the redactor's voice does not always mean fully understanding it; their meaning sometimes requires the ablest of Talmudic scholarship to uncover. Consider, for instance, Louis

Document: A Systemic Analysis," in *The Aramaic Bible: Targums in their Historical Context*, ed. DRG Beattie and MJ McNamara (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 255, where, for want of earlier evidence, he dates the origins of the "myth of the eternal law" to the early rabbinic period (*ibid.*, 258). He does not speculate on how the idea, which he calls "a remarkable occurrence", gained traction. See, however, David Brewer, *Techniques and Assumptions*, 187-198, who demonstrates that exegesis at Qumran is based on the same assumption. Nonetheless, when the rabbinic texts were created, there is no doubt that the rabbis, in Steven Fraade's words, "claim for themselves to be the monolinear successors to and inheritors of the Hebrew Bible (old Testament) and its covenantal promises, fulfilled or to be fulfilled through their line" (*Legal Fictions*, 401); see also Jeffrey Roth, "Justification for Controversy," 337-387; Halbertal, *People of the Book*, 127; and Morton, "Rabbinic Midrash," 207-8.

The unstated premise of this debate is that the rabbinic concept of Sinaitic oral law developed at some point after, and perhaps in reaction to, the creation of the written text(s). If so, rabbinic "oral law" would be a notable exception to the rule described by James Cox in his *Introduction to the Phenomenology of Religion* (London: Continuum, 2010), Ch. 7. He presents typical stages of the development of religious texts from "hierophany" (sacred event) to oral tradition to writing. His survey includes Genesis, NT, *Qur'an* and others, but not rabbinic texts; their absence may reflect the view that rabbinic texts are in the category of "interpretation" rather than Scripture. The Gemara's redactors, however, portray their text as phenomenologically equal to the Biblical text. The Gemara itself states that the gaps in the written law imply a contemporaneous oral law (see Yom. 75b and Zev. 38a). See also Moed Qat. 15a and 21a where person's ritual status might render it forbidden for him "to read Torah, Prophets or the Writings or to study Mishnah, Midrash, Talmud (lit., "ס"ש"), halachah or aggadot;" hence, all written and oral traditions have some level of equivalence. In the rabbis' view, then, Sinai was the hierophany for both the written and oral texts (despite Pentateuch and Mishna having greater primacy than the others per Ket. 103b and B.Met. 85b (see an extended discussion of this point in note 293 below).

Based on the Talmud's self-presentation, I am arguing for a phenomenological approach to it, according to Jason Blum's narrow definition of phenomenology as the interpretation of religious experiences while making no claims about the veracity of such experiences; "Retrieving Phenomenology of Religion as a Method for Religious Studies," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 80, no. 4 (Dec 2012). For other definitions of "phenomenology of religion", see Joseph Bettis, "Introduction," in *Phenomenology of Religion: Eight Modern Descriptions of the Essence of Religion*, ed. Joseph Bettis (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 1-4. In the same volume, Maurice Merleau-Ponty traces the philosophical roots of "religious phenomenology", arguing that the term is philosophical and "not the reflection of a pre-existing truth, but, like art, the act of bringing truth into being;" "An Introduction to Phenomenology," in *Phenomenology of Religion: Eight Modern Descriptions of the Essence of Religion*, ed. Joseph Bettis (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 9.

Finkelstein's article on an enigmatic mishna.¹⁸⁶ After his masterful exposition of the mishna as a coded political statement, Finkelstein admits that he learned this *pshat* from the commentary of R. Elijah Kramer, Gaon of Vilna, one of history's legendary Talmudists.¹⁸⁷ Uncovering the meaning(s) of a *sugya* often requires exceedingly careful analysis and even perspicacity.¹⁸⁸

The present integrated model not only integrates historical, linguistic and exegetical data but also the Bavli's two main components, halacha and aggada. Since the Talmud projects itself as a curriculum in the Oral Torah — that is, the hermeneutical response to the implied legal and philosophical lessons of Scripture — it should be interpreted on those terms. To do so is to apply to the Talmud Daniel Boyarin's basic method of midrash interpretation:

I propose a reading of aggadah in which, from the distance of our time, we try to understand how the rabbis read the Torah in their time—taking seriously their claim that what they are doing is reading, and trying to understand how a committed reading of the holy and authoritative text works in the rabbinic culture.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁶ Mishna Avoda Zara 2:5; Louis Finkelstein, "Rabbi Akiba, Rabbi Ishmael, and the Bar Kochba Rebellion," in *Approaches to Ancient Judaism, New Series* Vol. 1, ed. Jacob Neusner (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990).

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 10.

¹⁸⁸ Neusner anticipates this approach in his hierarchical conception of the Bavli. Structurally, there is no doubt that the Bavli has a hierarchy: each chapter opens with a mishna, followed by an exposition of that mishna, followed, on occasion, by some amount of aggadah that may or may not pertain directly to that mishna. This is the Bavli's compositional structure. But compositional hierarchy does not necessarily equal a hierarchy of agenda. See Secunda, *Iranian Talmud*, 28 for a similar critique, although not directed specifically at Neusner. Fraade is more skeptical: he demands greater evidence that "seemingly incommensurate (but not necessarily rhetorically incompatible) expressions within single texts or groups of texts may be editorial expressions of cultural and theological ambivalence...rather than sedimentary layers to be separated and historicized as representations of different historical periods and/or locales" and expresses concern that the search for source causality is usually futile (*Legal Fictions*, 475 and see note 134 there). Neusner opines that "[even] without the secondary accretions [i.e., the aggada] we [nevertheless still] have the Talmud." In fact, we would have *a* Talmud, but would it be *the* Talmud?

¹⁸⁹ *Intertextuality*, 14-15. The present dissertation, focused on the Bavli's aggadah, may thereby respond to the challenge posed by Barry Wimpfheimer in his *Narrating The Law: A Poetics Of Talmudic Legal Stories* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011). Wimpfheimer is correcting the long-standing bias in scholarship that sees the Bavli's primary

Boyarin's approach to aggadic midrash in general emerges as a logical model for interpreting the Talmud as a whole: the Bavli is understood to be a curriculum in Jewish practice *and thought* therefore interpreting it according to Boyarin's model would be the full realization of *Talmud* (literally, "instruction").

purpose as halachic and its aggadic passages as secondary. He demonstrates how aggadic passages can complement and enhance the halachic *sugya*. The present dissertation takes Wimpfheimer's thesis a step forward, proposing that some aggadic passages (including entire *sugyot*), have their own non-halachic *raison d'être*, thereby revealing the Bavli's meta-purpose.

By demonstrating how the redactors of the Bavli use Scripture and midrash aggadah to achieve their pedagogical agenda, the present study will thus apply Philip Alexander's definition of midrash to the Bavli ("Midrash," in *A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*, ed. R. J. Coggins & J.L. Houlden, [London: SCM Press, 1990], 452-459) and complement parallel studies of New Testament literature, such as Philip Alexander, "Midrash and the Gospels;" Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989) and R. L. Brawley, *Text to Text Pours Forth Speech Voice of Scripture in Luke-Acts* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995). I am mindful of Yaakov Elman's sense of tension between multiple theological ideas in two or more *sugyot* on the one hand and "a certain Babylonian consensus" on the other ("Righteousness as Its Own Reward: An Inquiry into the Theologies of the Stam," *Proceedings - American Academy for Jewish Research* 57 [1991]: 66); "on these matters the Bavli's Stam speaks with more or less one voice, but that voice...did not reach fulfillment in a conscious redactional synthesis" (*ibid.*, 67). The present hypothesis is that the consensus that he observes is indeed a conscious synthesis, and the *sugyot* were left as they are (that is, not *overtly* synthesized) in order to enable (or require) the student of the Talmud to create the synthesis, in the same pedagogical fashion that the Mishna and Tosefta require the Gemara to synthesize their various and often contradictory statements. Talya Fishman may dismiss such an hypothesis as reflecting a post-tosafist bias; see note 141 above. I am also mindful of the controversies of the "Textual Reasonings" movement of Peter Ochs *et al.* (see Peter Ochs and Nancy Levene, eds., *Textual Reasoning: Jewish Philosophy and Text Study at the End of the Twentieth Century* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002]; and Peter Ochs, "Scripture," in *Fields of Faith: Theology and Religious Studies for the Twenty-first Century*, ed. David F. Ford, Ben Quash and Janet Martin Soskice [Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2004]). While I do not find their revised definition of Talmudic "Oral Torah" compelling, I believe that the present thesis is consistent with their approach to scholarship, particularly with their understanding that "indigenous practices of text-reading represent indigenous practices of reasoning and that one task of contemporary Jewish thought is to find terms, categories and logics through which such indigenous modes of rationality can be identified and discussed" (Ochs and Levene, *Textual Reasoning*, 5), as well as with the schools of the modern academy and traditional rabbinics they seek to synthesize. If successful, the present study will show a unified redactor's voice in the Bavli and limit Shinan's observation, mentioned above, that "there can be unresolved contradictions in aggada" to extra-Talmudic sources (*World of the Aggadah*, 122-123).

The Bavli's ŠATAN texts are well-suited to test this model. They are overtly theological, they form a manageable data set (thirty-nine distinct units throughout the Talmud) and they are explicitly (and on occasion implicitly) inspired by Scripture. Therefore, to demonstrate whether or not these thirty-nine passages reveal a pan-Talmudic ideology will go a long way towards answering Neusner's challenge to uncover the agenda of the Bavli's non-halachic portions. To test this hypothesis, this study will survey the Bavli's ŠATAN texts to answer two broad questions about them: *What theology or theologies do they represent? What were the influences on their creation?* For if their influences appear to be chiefly Scriptural exegesis (similar to the Mishna's influences), and are not guided by outside issues or agendas, then that fact alone will support the hypothesis that the true forest of the Bavli — its meta-purpose — is a broader Scriptural exposition not limited to the Mishna.¹⁹⁰

Throughout this study, I accept the argument that the bulk of historical attributions in the Talmud (and midrashim) are accurate, following Halivni,¹⁹¹ Lee Levine¹⁹² and others.¹⁹³

¹⁹⁰ The bias towards reading the Talmud as primarily a work of halachah and only secondarily a work of aggadah may be rooted in an older but persistent bias that defines "Torah" as "law" (*nomos*) rather than the more literal, "instructions" or "teaching"; see, for example, Marc-Alain Ouaknin, *The Burnt Book: Reading the Talmud* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 5-9.

¹⁹¹ David Halivni, *Midrash, Mishnah, and Gemara*.

¹⁹² Lee Levine, *Rabbinic Class*, 17-18.

¹⁹³ Such as Richard Kalmin, "The Formation and Character of the Babylonian Talmud," in *The Cambridge History of Judaism: The Late Roman-Rabbinic Period* Vol. 4, ed. Steven T. Katz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 840-76 and Shai Secunda (*Iranian Talmud*); these are all despite Phillip Alexander's three caveats ("Rabbinic Judaism and the New Testament," 241-2). Others, including Halivni, *Midrash, Mishnah, and Gemara* and *The Formation of the Babylonian Talmud* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); Jeffrey Rubenstein, *Talmudic Stories: Narrative Art, Composition, and Culture* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999); Jeffrey Rubenstein, "Criteria"; Shamma Friedman, "A Good Story;" *et al.*; all accept the attributions for their reliability as witnesses to the redactional history of the text, perhaps taking a cue from the Biblical criticism school of Meir Weiss (*Bible From Within*) and Robert Alter (*Putting Together Biblical Narrative* [Tucson: University of

When a Tanna or Amora is quoted by name, it is reasonable to accept the attribution and examine its context. In Bernard Bamberger's words, "the Talmudim and Midrashim are not only compilations; they are compilations of traditional material, which had existed orally for a considerable time before it was written down."¹⁹⁴ I would extend his point to reiterate the above argument that the Bavli should not be seen as a compilation at all. The redactors' decisions about which material to include and the narrative placement of that material plainly reflect the views of the anonymous Stammaitic redactors (ca. 550-750 CE¹⁹⁵). Similarly,

Arizona Press, 1988]). Given the historical inconclusiveness of this topic, it would be useful to apply Edward Greenstein's theory-criticism to the major studies (see Greenstein, *Essays On Biblical Method And Translation*. [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989], Ch. 3, entitled, "Theory and Argument in Biblical Criticism"). Even William Green, who is critical of those who try to reconstruct rabbinic biographies, accepts that the attributions can reveal how "traditions change and develop across documents and through time" (Green, "What's in a Name? — The Problematic of Rabbinic 'Biography'," in *Approaches to Ancient Judaism (Brown Judaic Studies I)*, ed. W. S. Green [Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1978], 90). Louis Jacobs (*Structure and Form in the Babylonian Talmud* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991]) states that the Talmud as a whole "patently is not" pseudepigraphical, but contains some pseudepigraphy; I find his proofs of the latter point unconvincing. In each of his proofs, the Talmud is citing an *overt* pseudepigraphica by a particular sage. It still goes without saying that the redactors intend for the attributions themselves to be understood as accurate. The Bavli makes many assertions that go unchallenged, but one thing it does not accept uncritically is attributions. The expression "but did so-and-so indeed say thus?" appears at least twelve times in the Bavli; therefore, an unchallenged citation is considered accurate by the redactors. Hence I follow Richard Kalman's work (*ibid.*) flushing out Yaakov Elman's principle that "a convincing intellectual history of Babylonian Rabbinism can be written based on the data provided by the Bavli, at least in selected areas where the data is in adequate supply" ("Talmudic Intellectual History," 377). Rubenstein's shares this understanding, his form-criticism notwithstanding; see *Talmudic Stories*, 130. In fact, he may be right about the overall thrust of his seven criteria for determining Stammaitic gloss, (*op. cit.*); however, I will argue below in Chapter 4 that it does not impact the present thesis. See Hayes, *Between*, 14-15 and Hidary, *Dispute*, 36-39.

¹⁹⁴ Bernard Bamberger, "The Dating of Aggadic Materials," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 68 (1949): 116. Bamberger's 1949 article demonstrates this point quite convincingly yet few scholars seem aware of it: I did not find references to it in the works of Boyarin, Fraade or Levinson *inter alia*.

¹⁹⁵ David Halivni, *The Formation of the Babylonian Talmud* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013). Regarding the ongoing debate surrounding Halivni's "Stammaitic Hypothesis" (*Midrash, Mishnah, and Gemara*), while we do know, and have long known, that the Bavli

anonymous statements can usually be assumed to be the view of the redactors within their context but often likely originate in a much older tradition, including what Fraade calls “rhetorical ‘fictions’” which he finds to be “relatively indeterminate in their historical referents” which nevertheless “ring true to the historical setting and social circumstances” of the anonymous author/redactor.¹⁹⁶

This distinction between the historical layers of rabbinic voices and the redactor’s voice is what I call a contextualized middle option. They overlap, but the quotation of a particular Tanna or Amora is not always in itself an independent unit of text. Rather, one must ask what is the pedagogical agenda of the redactor telling that bit in that place and in that way,

continued to be edited after the passing of the last named Amoraim, whether or not there were post-Amoraic editors who were philosophically or theologically distinct from the Amoraim is not directly germane to the current thesis. However, if the present study shows a philosophical consistency (or inconsistency) between Amoraim and redactors then it may contribute to that debate. Elman’s point about the plague of 542 through ca. 740 (“World of the ‘Saboraim’,” 383-384; see note 159 above and *antec.*) suggests that the transition from Amoraim to redactors does not represent a major break or any break at all.

Elman (*inter alia*) has further proposed that one’s starting assumption when confronting a given Talmudic narrative should be that it is faithfully recorded, shifting the burden of proof to those who would argue otherwise (Elman, “The Culture of the Babylonian Talmud,” *Journal of Religion* 86, no. 4 [2006]: 702). Intellectual change — especially in a semi-oral culture — is certainly natural but most likely gradual; indeed, this ongoing debate has until now ignored the role of Tanach and Mishna, as canonized written texts, in anchoring ideology and slowing its evolution; perhaps the present paper will contribute to that direction of research. Regardless of the attribution issue, the purpose of the present paper is not to write Tannaitic or Amoraic history, rather to uncover the ideology or ideologies of the anonymous redactors; see note 378 below for an additional example of this distinction.

It seems to me that Steven Fraade makes a significant step towards addressing this challenge of multiple voices in his distinction between “polysemy” (multi-meanings of a canonical text) and “legal multivocality” (granting a canonical text multiple meanings *within a set of heuristic rules*) and his suggestion that codified rabbinic controversy (what he calls “pluralism”) “may be textually ‘staged’ in the form of disagreements, often rhetorical” (*Legal Fictions*, 430-1). Fraade’s work has been chiefly in legal (halachic) midrashim and I hope that the present aggadic discussion will add a new dimension to these distinctions.

¹⁹⁶ Fraade, *From Tradition to Commentary*, 27. Fraade is speaking here specifically about the *Sifre*, and despite he himself being rather ambivalent about the attribution issue (*Legal Fictions*, 230 n. 5); see the following note.

including, in Fraade's words, "dialectical intertwining of transmission and transformation so central to the self-understanding of the rabbinic sages, who claimed the status of 'words of Torah' for their own teaching discourse, both exegetical and non-exegetical" (1991, 71).¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁷ Therefore, my concept of a "contextualized middle option" follows Fraade's proposal of "a middle ground between those who advocate reading each rabbinic document autonomously of the others as a coherent unity and those who advocate reading all rabbinic texts together as an undifferentiated whole" (*From Tradition to Commentary*, 190 n. 73). Fraade admits that "the process of textual redaction has left such a deep mark on the constituent parts that the extraction of those parts — not to mention the distillation and synthesis of their traditions — for purposes of historical representation of a time much earlier than that of the texts' redaction is fraught with difficulties" (*ibid.*, 71). His primary hesitation is in reconstructing history, or biography, from a redacted text that presents data predating the redaction by generations or centuries. Indeed, historiography has revealed a major distinction between the Talmud's approach to Tanach and its approach to Tannaitic and Amoraic statements. Its approach to Tanach is fully synchronic. Granted that it distinguishes between Mosaic, Prophetic and Non-prophetic texts of Tanach; beyond that broad distinction, it quotes proof-texts freely from multiple sources, disregarding contextual differences of authorship, history and culture. In contrast, its approach to rabbinic texts appears rather diachronic to the point that they "reworked Palestinian material to suit their own ends" (Lee Levine, *Rabbinic Class*, 20). For a continued discussion of this issue, see note 250 below.

Yet Fraade's earlier work may rely too heavily on William Green, "What's in a Name?"; William Green, "Context And Meaning In Rabbinic 'Biography'," in *Approaches to Ancient Judaism [Brown Judaic Studies II]*, ed. W. S. Green [Chico, Calif: Scholar's Press, 1980]; and M. I. Finley (*Ancient History: Evidence and Models*. New York: Viking, 1986). Green epitomizes the minimalist position that "the redacted character of rabbinic materials make unwarranted the supposition that the dicta and rulings of individual rabbinic masters can be lifted whole out of their present documentary contexts and transported to thematic catalogues or the pages of a history book" (*op. cit.*, 110). Rubenstein speculates about the nature of the rabbis' oral tradition (*Talmudic Stories*, 214-215) but he, Green, Finley, Fraade (pre-1999) and others all ignore the theory of oral-formulaic composition pioneered by Milman Parry and Albert Lord and updated as a more general theory of oral transmission; see Milman Parry, "Studies in the Epic Technique of Oral Verse-Making. I: Homer and Homeric Style," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 41 (1930); Eric Havelock, *Preface to Plato* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, Harvard University Press, 1963); Kevin Robb, "Greek Oral Memory"; Tony Lentza, "From Redaction to Reading: Memory, Writing and Composition in Greek Philosophical Prose," *Southern Speech Communication Journal* 51 (Fall, 1985); Ruth Finnegan, *Literacy and Orality: Studies in the Technology of Communication* (New York: Blackwell, 1988, especially pp. 88-90); John Miles Foley and Milman Parry, eds., *Comparative Research on Oral Traditions: A Memorial for Milman Parry* (Columbus, Ohio: Slavica, 1987); Rosalind Thomas, *Oral Tradition and Written Record in Classical Athens* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989, especially pp. 108-123); David Rubin, *Memory in Oral Traditions: The Cognitive Psychology of Epic, Ballads, and Counting-out Rhymes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995). For bibliographies of the extensive research in

this area, including the interaction between oral and literary traditions, see John Foley, *Oral-formulaic Theory and Research: An Introduction and Annotated Bibliography* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1985) and his “‘Reading’ Homer Through Oral Tradition,” *College Literature* 34, no. 2 (Spring 2007). Foley makes a particularly relevant observation about the “continuous present” of oral tradition, in “Reading the Oral Traditional Text: Aesthetics of Creation and Response,” in *Comparative Research on Oral Traditions: A Memorial for Milman Parry*, ed. John Miles Foley and Milman Parry (Columbus, Ohio: Slavica, 1987), 206-207. (Similarly, most of the above sources seem reciprocally unaware of rabbinic oral traditions.)

Only a handful of scholars mention the pioneering work of Birger Gerhardsson (*Memory and Manuscript: Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity* [Uppsala, 1961], republished as, *Memory and Manuscript: Oral Tradition and Written Transmission in Rabbinic Judaism and Early Christianity; with, Tradition and Transmission in Early Christianity* [Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1998]). For a history of the suppression of this seminal work, see Jacob Neusner’s Foreword to the latter.

Elizabeth Alexander (“Fixing of the Oral Mishnah” and *Transmitting Mishnah*) has made significant advancements to our understanding of the oral performative background to the Mishna which is only beginning to impact the field. Fraade (*From Tradition to Commentary*, 188-189 note 69) acknowledges Judaic scholarship on the inter-relationship between oral and written traditions, including Jack Goody, *The Interface Between the Written and the Oral* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987) and Finnegan, *Literacy and Orality*, but in that early work seems unaware of the full extent of Hellenistic scholarship, especially the description of Hellenistic Greece as a “performance culture” where even laypersons were expected to possess strong and accurate oral memories; a lens through which it might be fruitful to examine rabbinic texts. (I am echoing Finley’s critique of Weber in *Ancient History: Evidence and Models*, 100). For a model for beginning such an investigation, see Naoko Yamagata, “Plato, Memory, and Performance,” *Oral Tradition* 20, no. 1 (2005). See, however, Fraade *op. cit.*, 163, who arrives at a similar description of rabbinic culture as seeking “a performative religious experience of divine presence and redemptive expectation” to be performed “dialogically, and hence socially”, and may thereby fit David Rubin’s research into how the linearity of music aids memorization (*Memory in Oral Traditions*, Ch. 8). Lentza’s thesis (“From Recitation to Writing”), that the technology of writing served to augment the oral performance of Greek prose rather than to supplant it, may provide a model for framing the rabbinic transition from orality to writing.

For evidence to the orality of biblical Hebrew culture, see Susan Niditch, *Oral World and Written Word* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996); and for the enduring prominence of orality in Jewish-Christian culture see Akio Ito, “The Written Torah and the Oral Gospel: Romans 10:5-13 in the Dynamic Tension between Orality and Literacy,” *Novum Testamentum*, 48, no. 3 (2006). For a model for a potential research paradigm, see Gary Miller, “A New Model of Formulaic Composition,” in *Comparative Research on Oral Traditions: A Memorial for Milman Parry*, ed. John Miles Foley and Milman Parry (Columbus, Ohio: Slavica, 1987). For a stimulating description of how orality and literacy overlapped in Roman culture see Siobhán McElduff, “Speaking as Greeks, Speaking Over Greeks: Orality and Its Problems in Roman Translation,” *Translation Studies* 8, no 2 (2015). In 1999, Fraade re-examined long-held assumptions about the relationship between orality and textuality in his study, “Literary Composition and Oral Performance in Early Midrashim,” *Oral Tradition* 14,

The redactors had a broad but limited educational agenda which I have characterized as hermeneutical, “presenting the rabbinic interpretation of Tanach,” a very backwards-looking perspective.¹⁹⁸ Pedagogically, however, they necessarily looked as much at the present as

no. 1 (1999), influenced by some of the abovementioned studies, and others (*ibid.*, 35 n. 5). He observes, citing Mekilta, that “Oral interpretation is mythically conceived as being in origin coincidental with oral divine revelation and *prior* to revelatory inscription. It is clear, however, that this representation is not simply of a singular past event, but of a paradigmatic and ongoing experience, whether projected back onto Sinai from present Rabbinic practice or forward from Sinai into the present” (*ibid.*, 43-44).

Analogous to Greek poetry, the Bavli and many midrashim have a distinct formulaic composition; this fact might be explored in light of the findings of John Seamon *et al.*, “Memorising Milton’s *Paradise Lost*: A Study of a Septuagenarian Exceptional Memoriser,” *Memory* 18, no. 5 (2010): 502, that being “deeply cognitively involved in learning” the material can significantly improve memory. Given this song-like structure and given the high status conferred for oral memory ability, the proper balance that Fraade seeks should be farther to the side of attributional veracity, especially considering our likely modern anti-orality bias; in the words of Bruno Gentili, “It is difficult for the literate imagination to conceive of the mental effort required for mastering and carrying out a piece of epic *mimesis*” (*Poetry and Its Public in Ancient Greece: From Homer to the Fifth Century* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988], 7). Yet the transmitters of Oral Torah were surely, in their minds, doing just that (especially in Amoraic and post-Amoraic Babylon, if Yaakov Elman is correct that “both in the Amoraic period and the later redactional one, even Babylonian elite society was primarily oral, and the only authoritative written text generally available was the Bible, the ‘Written Torah’” [“Orality,” 72]). This emerging understanding of the nature of oral culture suggests a revision is needed of the literary assumptions made by the aggadic form-critical school, such as Rubenstein’s judgment that the phrase “ולא היא” is proof of a later gloss (“Criteria,” 421-423): he is reading these sources as written texts; however, when reimagined as orally-transmitted texts that were eventually put into writing, such phrases do not sound like late additions at all, rather have the sound of an oral narrator and may have always been part of the narration but were simply not included in the earliest *written* versions of the stories. See also Rosalind Thomas (*Oral Tradition*, 6) citing a report by Alan Baddeley on memory in modern oral societies that found relevance and mode of transmission (who, how, why) to be the most significant factors in accurate transmission. Finally, Mary Carruthers presents a Medieval memory hierarchy: “simple retention” versus “the ability to move it about instantly, directly, and securely” (*The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* [Cambridge, UK: University of Cambridge, 1990], 19). This distinction may help investigate the rabbinic distinction between a Tanna-memorizer versus a Tanna-rabbi (see note 111 above). Since my goal is not historical, rather to map the presentation of language and ideology, Fraade’s middle-ground approach makes sense, but without excessive skepticism of attributions; see the previous note.

¹⁹⁸ On the issue of exegetical v. eisegetical interpretation, see note 130 above.

towards the past, and these texts were necessarily influenced by their religious orientation and by their audience.¹⁹⁹

Summary of Chapter 3

Defining Talmudic discourse as a redacted curriculum within a cultural setting positions the present study. Scholarship has identified redactional layers of Gemara and is beginning to consider the agenda or agendas of the Stammaite redactors. I have argued, based on Neusner and Vidas, that there are good reasons for approaching the Bavli with the assumption that it represents a unified overall agenda and ideology. While Neusner sees the agenda as exclusively halachic, I have framed it more broadly as a curriculum for presenting the (Stammaite) rabbinic interpretation of Scripture, both practical (halacha) and theoretical (aggada). While Vidas understands the pedagogical agenda of the Stam to break with tradition, I have argued that the redactors appear to be seeking continuity as much as or more than innovation. Thus, their presentations of dialectics and disputes are, in my modification of Hidary's thesis, an element of their pedagogy. This pedagogy, in my synthesis of Hidary, Boyarin and Fraade, represents as oral performance the rabbis' self-understanding as transmitters of oral texts. This comprehensive, holistic view of the Bavli enables the hypothesis of a comprehensive Talmudic theology in general, and its theology of ŠAṬAN in particular.

¹⁹⁹ I am following the understanding of Jay Harris ("Between Tradition and Wissenschaft: Modern Students of Midrash Halakhah," in *The Uses of Tradition: Jewish Continuity in the Modern Era*, ed. Jack Wertheimer [New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1992]) and Chaim Milikowsky ("Rabbinic Interpretation") that halachic midrash normally employs eisegesis. When Harris concludes in his later study that to the Bavli's redactors "there was little doubt that law generally emerged by means of the application of exegetical techniques, and only rarely are laws identified as traditions," I take him to mean the Talmud's exegetical rhetorical style, not its epistemology; Jay Harris, *How Do We Know This? Midrash and the Fragmentation of Modern Judaism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 48-9.

4. Pre-Rabbinic Sources

The investigation into the Talmudic ŠAṬAN begins with Scripture (Tanach), the Talmud's primary theological source.²⁰⁰ Phillip Alexander's explains how the rabbinic assumption of Biblical veracity leads to "three important deductions" at the foundation of rabbinic midrash:

First, the text of Scripture is totally coherent and self-consistent. This meant that any one part of a Scripture may be interpreted in the light of any other part and harmonized with it. Contradictions in Scripture can only be apparent, not real....Second, the text of Scripture is polyvalent. It contains different levels and layers of meaning....The *darshan* attempts to draw out its various meanings....Third, Scripture is inerrant. It is the *darshan*'s business to explain away any apparent errors of fact.²⁰¹

Therefore, when faced with a difficult verse, the rabbis would never suggest that the Biblical text is erroneous, anachronistic or corrupted; the difficulty must be due to the scholar's imperfect understanding. For instance, the Gemara often²⁰² asks, *mai d'ktiv?* — "What [is the meaning of] that which is written...?" — a rhetorical interpretive question that highlights a difficulty in the text that prompts a resolution. The first such instance in the traditional order of the Bavli makes this very point about the Sinaitic origin of Tanach and other areas of Torah:

²⁰⁰ The rabbinic reliance on a canonized, complete Tanach as proof-text is so well established that it "goes without saying" (Herford, *Talmud and Apocrypha*, 127). Wherever one looks in Mishna, Gemara, Midrash or Targum one finds the paramount sanctity of the Biblical text, considering it true and correct, even when rabbinic exegesis or eisegesis departs radically from the text. Steven Fraade contrasts this point about rabbinic midrash with "varieties of Second Temple Judaism, as we now well know from the evidence of the Dead Sea Scrolls" (*Legal Fictions*, 402). The point is echoed in Herford (*op. cit.*, 226); Phillip Alexander, "The Rabbinic Hermeneutical Rules and the Problem of the Definition of Midrash," in *Proceedings of the Irish Biblical Association* 8 (1984), 97; Arnold Goldberg, "The Rabbinic View of Scripture"; Shinan, *The World of the Aggadah*, 682; and Halbertal, *People of the Book*.

²⁰¹ Phillip Alexander, "Midrash and the Gospels," in *Synoptic Studies (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 7)*, ed. C. M. Tuckett (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984), 1-50.

²⁰² One hundred eighteen times by my count.

ואמר רבי לוי בר חמא אמר רבי שמעון בן לקיש: מאי דכתיב (שמות כ"ד) ואתנה לך את לחת האבן והתורה והמצוה אשר כתבתי להורותם, לחות אלו עשרת הדברות, תורה זה מקרא, והמצוה זו משנה, אשר כתבתי אלו נביאים וכתובים, להרתם זה תלמוד מלמד שכולם נתנו למשה מסיני.

R. Levi bar Ḥama says further in the name of R. Shimon ben Lakish: What is the meaning of that which is written: *I will give you the stone tables and the Torah and the mitzvah that I wrote to teach them* (Ex 24:12)? “Tablets” are the Ten Commandments; “Torah” is Scripture; “the mitzvah” is Mishnah, “that I wrote” are the Prophets and Writings; “to teach them” is Talmud; thus teaching that all of them were given to Moses at Sinai” (Ber. 5a).

The unstated assumption behind the exposition is that the Pentateuch proof-text itself is inerrant or nomological. The exegesis then empowers rabbinic interpretation to extend this Sinaitic assumption of the infallibility and honesty, including its lack of superfluity, to all of Tanach (and to Mishna and Gemara itself²⁰³). Take for instance the Tannaitic claim (from Meg. 7a) that Esther is a prophetic book:²⁰⁴

It has been taught: R. Eliezer said: Esther was composed prophetically, as it says, “And Haman said in his heart” (Esther 6:6). R. Akiva says: Esther was composed prophetically, as it says, “And Esther obtained favor in the eyes of all that looked upon her” (*ibid.* 2:15). R. Meir says: Esther was composed prophetically, as it says, “And the thing became known to Mordecai” (*ibid.* 2:22). R. Yosi b. Durmaskit said: Esther was composed prophetically, as it says, “But on the spoil they laid not their hands” (*ibid.* 9:10).

Each of these proofs (and the Gemara’s subsequent discussion) assumes the absolute veracity of the Biblical text and the honesty of the Biblical authors: each cited verse (2:15, 2:22 and

²⁰³ In Daniel Boyarin’s words, rabbinic hermeneutics “was experienced as revelation itself, and the biblical past became alive in the midrashic present” (*Intertextuality*, 128). For the pre-rabbinic sources of rabbinic “nomological” and “inspirational” approaches to exegesis, see and David Brewer, *Techniques and Assumptions in Jewish Exegesis Before 70 CE* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [P. Siebeck], 1992).

²⁰⁴ This is the Soncino translation, with some modifications in order to compensate for Phillip Alexander’s concern that the Soncino Talmud “relies [too] heavily on Rashi’s commentary” (“Rabbinic Judaism and the New Testament,” 240).

9:10) — if true — could only be known through prophecy. Both the original Tannaitic statement (a *beraita*) and the Amora Rava's subsequent discussion share this assumption.²⁰⁵

It is important to emphasize that their view of Biblical inerrancy applies to the entire Tanach.²⁰⁶ Because they assume the unerring veracity of all canonized Scripture, the rabbis would have found the conclusions of text-criticism irrelevant. In Arnold Goldberg's words:

Scripture is always synchronous with the exegete, and a projection of Scripture into the past cannot change its meaning. Scripture is also—and this has been observed repeatedly — synchronous with itself. The book *Bereshit* (Genesis) and the book Jeremiah share the same time dimension — just as they are given in Scripture simultaneously. Any part of Scripture can be linked with any other part, any sign related to any other sign. Since the signs are independent of any context, interpretation becomes inter-textual: Scripture is interpreted from Scripture, not from the world.²⁰⁷

For instance, Yairah Amit and others cite 1 Sam 13:1 as an “obviously unreasonable” text

²⁰⁵ For a concise yet thorough presentation of this underlying assumption of rabbinic texts in contrast with theology as understood by classical philosophy, see Yonah Frankel, *Midrash v'Aggadah* (Ramat Aviv: Open University of Israel, 1996), 595-599. For longer expositions of this underlying rabbinic assumption, see Jacob Neusner, “Scripture and Tradition,” 182-191 and Alexander Samely, *Forms of Rabbinic Literature and Thought: An Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 85-88. In an interesting parallel, Susan Docherty applies Samely's method to the New Testament text of Hebrews, finding that the same assumption can yield a richer interpretation (*The Use of the Old Testament in Hebrews: A Case Study in Early Jewish Bible Interpretation* [Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2009], Ch. 5). She also makes the helpful emphasis on the ancient author's assumption that “scripture is true, moreover, in its individual words, as well as a whole” (*ibid.*, 196). For other examples of where the Gemara clearly considers all of canonized scripture as prophetically authoritative, see Meg. 3a, Meg. 21b, Meg. 24a.

²⁰⁶ As opposed to sectarians who approached the text differently. See Lawrence Schiffman, “Prohibited Marriages In *The Dead Sea Scrolls*,” in *Rabbinic Perspectives: Rabbinic Literature and the Dead Sea Scrolls Proceedings of the Eighth International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, 7–9 January, 2003* (Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah Vol. 57), ed. Steven D. Fraade *et al.* (Leiden and Boston: Brill). He demonstrates how the Qumranites and Tannaim responded differently to Pentateuchal redundancy, concluding that the Tannaim distinctly “give a distinct halakhic significance to each of the biblical passages” (*ibid.*, 125).

²⁰⁷ Arnold Goldberg, “The Rabbinic View of Scripture,” in *A Tribute to Geza Vermes: Essays on Jewish and Christian Literature and History* (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 100, ed. Philip R. Davies & Richard T. White (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990), 156.

that must have become corrupted:²⁰⁸ בְּרִשְׁנָה שָׂאוּל בְּמָלְכוֹ וּשְׁתֵּי שָׁנִים מָלַךְ עַל-יִשְׂרָאֵל ;

literally, “Saul was a year old in [the beginning of] his reign and he reigned over Israel two years.” While the coronation of young children is not unheard of in the annals of history, in this case the text contradicts an earlier verse which describes Saul as an adult on the day of his anointment:²⁰⁹

וְלֹרֶהָיָה בֶן וּשְׁמוֹ שָׂאוּל בְּחוּר וְטוֹב וְאִין אִישׁ מִבְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל טוֹב מִמֶּנּוּ מִשְׁכָּמוֹ וּמַעֲלָה
גְּבוּהַ מִכָּל-הָעָם:

And he had a son, whose name was Saul, a young man, and handsome; and there was not among the people of Israel a more handsome man than he; from his shoulders upwards he was higher than all of the people (1 Sam 9:2).

The text-criticism approach might judge 13:1 corrupted, presumably after multiple stages of authorship and editing, or simply conclude that 13:1 and 9:2 represent two different traditions about the mythical first king of Israel. In contrast, Rabbinic midrash, according to the principle of Scriptural infallibility, assumes the contradictory syntax of 13:1 to be deliberate and metaphorical, rendering it: “Saul was a one-year-old [in innocence] when he began his reign...”²¹⁰ Authorship, context and redactional history are unimportant: the timeless text has a moral message.²¹¹

²⁰⁸ See Yairah Amit, “Three Variations on the Death of Saul,” *Beit Miqra* 30, no. 1 (1985).

²⁰⁹ A biblical form of coronation; see 1 Sam 10:1 and 2 Sam 5:3, *inter alia*.

²¹⁰ Midrash quoted by Rashi. In contrast, Judg 16:2 is an example of an incomplete phrase that text-criticism interprets the same as rabbinic interpretation: “To the Gazaites saying Samson has come here....” The phrase does not make sense grammatically. Yet there is a consensus that this is expressive language meaning, “It was told to the Gazaites: ‘Samson has come here....’”

²¹¹ Therefore, the conclusions of philology are not germane to the present thesis, such as Alexander Rofé’s argument that through the books of Tanach one can identify a conscious attempt to suppress ontological angelology; see Alexander Rofé, *The Belief in Angels in the Bible and in Early Israel* (Jerusalem, Makor: 1979), 89-146 (numbered in this edition as 289-346).

This understanding of rabbinic hermeneutics is particularly interesting in light of research showing that New Testament hermeneutics shared the same set of assumptions about

The rabbis notably do not extend this status to any books outside of Tanach such as literature that mimic canonized Scripture in style and content. Even texts that might contain wisdom are scrutinized for falsehoods. For instance, despite employing the Book of Ben Sira as a proof-text at least five times,²¹² the Talmud nonetheless bans it from public use.

רב יוסף אמר: בספר בן סירא נמי אסור למיקרי.
אמר ליה אביי: מאי טעמא? אילימא משום דכתב [ביה]....

R. Joseph said: It is also forbidden to read the book of Ben Sira.

Abaye said to him: Why so? Shall we say because there is written.... (Sanh. 100b)

Abaye's question is the first of four attempts to identify something offensive in Ben Sira that would justify R. Joseph's ban. The Gemara defends each suspect Ben Sira verse with a proof that said verse is not inconsistent with legitimate (canonized) verses and rabbinic dicta. Finally, the Gemara identifies a single objectionable passage that justifies the ban. In other words, even one false maxim among many truths is enough to ban a book from public circulation, not to mention canonization. The Gemara's back-and-forth to arrive at this conclusion is also instructive. It has the effect of elevating Ben Sira to a high level of veracity prior to the ultimate conclusion that its single falsehood suffices to ban it.

the pan-Tanach veracity of the text; see note 205 above. It is also worth pointing out Israel Frankel's observation that the rabbis seem perfectly willing to admit interpretive uncertainty (Frankel, *Peshat in Talmudic and Midrashic Literature* [Toronto: LaSalle, 1956], 98), such as regarding Ruth 4:8, "And he drew off his shoe and gave it to the other", to which B. Met. 47a asks, "Who gave to whom?" and answers with both possibilities (Boaz or the kinsman). The point is that the Gemara's *faithfulness* to the text extends to the uncertainties in the text: rather than inventing a *peshat* (basic meaning), or recording only one view, the Gemara informs us when the redactors have received a tradition of uncertainty qua uncertainty (in this case, the uncertainty reinforces an halachic dispute about the proper way to finalize a business transaction). This rabbinic approach to "truth" appears to be the diametric opposite to Greenstein's view "that texts and the phenomena that we find in them do not have any predetermined meaning. Indeed they have no inherent meaning at all, except as a reader chooses to give that text" (see Edward Greenstein, "Reading Pragmatically: Interpreting the Binding of Isaac," in *Words, Ideas, Worlds: Biblical Essays in Honour of Yairah Amit* [Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2012], 122).

²¹² Hag. 13a, Yev. 63b, Ket. 110b, B. Bat. 146a, Nid. 16b.

This skepticism towards even a text they held in high esteem is instructive. It underscores their uncritical acceptance of the books of Tanach, all of which they consider flawlessly true (subject to correct interpretation).²¹³ Moreover, for the Rabbis, Scripture is not merely proof-text; it represents a prime motive of rabbinic intellectual life, what Solomon Wiener poetically describes as a mission to “demonstrate a harmonious fluidity in Tanach” (2015, 23). For instance, when R. Yoḥanan encounters a paradoxical verse in Job, rather than wonder if the author of Job erred, he assumes the text’s correctness and frames the problem as a theological question (see §B.6 below). They also assume that their audience enjoys a similar fluency.²¹⁴

Thus, there is no doubt that the biblical ŠAṬAN is the primary intellectual foundation of all rabbinic ŠAṬAN texts, and a study of the rabbinic ŠAṬAN should begin with a survey of this foundation that informed them. The survey should attempt to deduce *their perspective*, which may be gleaned from their targum translations, various midrashic collections and interpretations within the Bavli itself.

²¹³ Even those who, like James Sanders, speculate that the Biblical Ketuvim/Writings were not fully canonized until after Yavneh (“The Canonical Process,” in *The Cambridge History of Judaism*, ed. Steven T. Katz [New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006], 234) understand that the textual “fractures” of Scripture were preserved without revision out of great respect for the authority of the text (*ibid.*, 239). Phillip Alexander has argued that the rabbinic uncritical allegiance to the Masoretic text is a peculiar aberration and an exception to their treatment of texts in general, due to their “theologizing” it (“Why No Textual Criticism in Rabbinic Midrash? Reflections on the Textual Culture of the Rabbis,” in *The Jewish Ways of Reading the Bible* (Supp. 11) [2000], 175-190).

²¹⁴ Israel Frankel brings evidence that children during rabbinic times were trained with “fluent knowledge of the Bible” (*Peshat in Talmudic and Midrashic Literature*, 93). Even allowing for the likelihood that some anecdotes in the Gemara are exaggerated, the evidence of their great Biblical fluency seems overwhelming (*ibid.*, 93-96).

Prosecutor?

Before examining the texts in depth, a general observation is in order. As mentioned in the introduction, the Rabbinic texts contain hundreds of ŠATAN references. Many of these are accompanied by the verb *mikatreig* – to prosecute. In the various Midrash Rabbah collections I found twenty-one of sixty-nine cases of *mikatreig* associated with the ŠATAN; in Tanhuma, nine of twenty; in the Yerushalmi, two of three.²¹⁵ One typical example (yBer1:1 [2d]):

א"ר יוסי בי ר' בון כל מי שהוא תוכף סמיכה לשחיטה אין פסול נוגע באותו קרבן. וכל מי שהוא תוכף לנטילת ידים ברכה אין השטן מקטרג באותה סעודה. וכל מי שהוא תוכף גאולה לתפילה אין השטן מקטרג באותו היום.

Said R. Yosi student of R. Bun: Whenever one immediately follows *smicha* [laying of the hands on the sacrifice] with slaughtering, no disqualification will occur to that offering; and whenever one immediately follows washing the hands with [the] blessing [over bread], the ŠATAN does not prosecute at that meal. And whenever one immediately follows [the blessing of] “redemption” with [the Amida] Prayer, the ŠATAN does not prosecute on that day.²¹⁶

Similarly, the first instance in Gen. Rab. (38:7) is typical of the midrash collections:

א"ר חלבו בכל מקום שאתה מוצא נחת רוח השטן מקטרג; אמר רבי לוי בכל מקום שאתה מוצא אכילה ושתייה השטן מקטרג.

R. Halbo said, Every place you find a restful spirit, the ŠATAN prosecutes;
R. Levi said, Every place you find eating and drinking, the ŠATAN prosecutes.

This preponderance of prosecutorial ŠATAN references suggests that the rabbis generally viewed ŠATAN in a prosecutorial role (whether literal or metaphorical) and below I will show a

²¹⁵ The Yerushalmi mentions the ŠATAN eight times, but most of these are repetitions within only two *sugyot*: Ber. 1:1 and Shab. 2:6.

²¹⁶ This statement follows a purely halachic introduction, listing the three “immediacies.” The halachic section is also found in the Bavli, Ber. 42a. There, however, R. Bun’s gloss of the consequences of these “immediacies” is absent. R. Bun, also known as R. Avin I (Friedman, 56), a 3rd-4th generation Amora, traveled frequently from Babylon to Israel, bringing with him teachings of the Babylonian sages. The fact that his gloss is not included in the Bavli suggests that it was forgotten there by the time the Bavli was redacted.

likely Biblical source for this view.²¹⁷ Yet in contrast to these midrashic collections, the Bavli's thirty-nine ŠATAN passages make no such connection. This silence suggests that the Bavli's redactors consciously avoided the prosecutorial metaphor.²¹⁸

This departure from the midrashic collections is interesting but by no means a conclusive proof that the Bavli takes a broader view that is not confined to the prosecutorial

²¹⁷ This view was popularized by Rashi, who employs one such statement (“the ŠATAN prosecutes at a time of danger”) in interpreting Gen 42:4, Gen 44:29 and Deut 23:10. In the former, Rashi attributes the comment to R. Eliezer b. Yaakov, making it *appear* that he is quoting Gen. Rab. 91:9, the only instance of the six in the midrashic collections to do so. However, all three of Rashi's citations read, “the ŠATAN prosecutes at a time of danger” which is different from the standard text of Gen. Rab. 91:9 (as well as most of the others) which reads, “the ŠATAN prosecutes *only* at a time of danger”; only Tanchuma Vayigash (Varsha p. 1) states it without the “only”. An investigation of manuscripts may yield clues to Rashi's source material. If Rashi's version of R. Eliezer b. Yaakov is the most authentic, then this would support the present thesis that the rabbinic ŠATAN has a broader scope than prosecutorial. For additional evidence, see note 314 below.

²¹⁸ They were perhaps concerned about the narrowing that occurs when employing a secular metaphor. Certainly, the English term “prosecutor” risks applying an anachronistic stereotype within the broader scope of the midrashic collections. F. Rachel Magdalene has proposed that at least one Biblical ŠATAN be considered within its broadest social context: according to her study of ancient Babylonian and Assyrian legal documents, the ŠATAN of Job acts consistently with those societies' standards of justice; *On the Scales of Righteousness: Neo-Babylonian Trial Law and the Book of Job* (Providence, R.I.: Brown Judaic Studies. 2007), Ch. 5. Others have similarly noted the parallels between biblical images of the Heavenly tribunal, as in Job, and Mesopotamian and Canaanite religions: see Leland Ryken, *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, ed. Leland Ryken *et al.* (Downers Grove, Ill: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 51. More specifically, Magdalene finds that this ŠATAN resembles the king's private prosecutor for “major acts against the king, his property or his government” (*ibid.*, 73). Her argument is a challenge to the common view, after A. L. Oppenheim (“The Eyes of the Lord,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 88 [1968]), that Job's ŠATAN is a *rebellious* slanderer or accuser. While Job is of course only one of eight Biblical sources from which the rabbis would have drawn, we know that Job was a very important book to them, cited frequently in the Talmud (see frequency statistics in note 253 below). We also know from the frequent midrashic gloss of *mikatreig* that it is a dominant association for them. Nonetheless, despite this general orientation, we never see the association explicitly in the Bavli and not only must it not be assumed, the absence of *mikatreig* seems to be a deliberate avoidance.

stereotype.²¹⁹ Investigating the question, *How does the Bavli represent the ŠAṬAN?* may reveal the degree to which the Bavli's redactors are consciously aligning themselves with the midrashic collections versus distinguishing themselves from them.²²⁰ One point of absolute alignment with the midrashim is that the primary source texts for all rabbinic texts are the books of Tanach. These therefore provide the most important background to the Bavli.

The Tanach's ŠAṬAN

The term ŠAṬAN appears in Tanach twenty-eight times in seven distinct narrative contexts, plus an eighth pair of verses that use the same root, STN. These eight groups are inconsistent: some are clearly human, others are non-human and a third group are ambiguous.²²¹ Since the rabbinic authors regarded all Tanach texts as authoritative, they therefore needed to reconcile or explain contradictions between such verses. In their world-view, for instance, it would be difficult to conclude that the authors of Genesis and Zechariah held different views on

²¹⁹ When the Gemara does attach a meaningful verb to the ŠAṬAN it is “לאסטוני” (Yom. 20a, repeated on Ned. 32b; see Ch. 5§7.viii.-ix. and note 319 below). This verb form of STN does not appear in other rabbinic texts. Aside from the metaphorical passages, other verbs that the Bavli attaches to the ŠAṬAN are “ישלוט” – dominate (Ber. 46a, Ch.4§18.xxxix; and “מתעה”, seduces (or causes to err, B. Bat. 16a; see Ch. 5§10.xxi) and “איגרי” – makes quarrel (Git. 52a, Ch.4§15.xxxvi.).

²²⁰ If its ŠAṬAN is indeed prosecutorial, what are the parameters of the prosecutorial role, including the nature of justice that the ŠAṬAN represents? If prosecutorial, is it *limited* to prosecutorial? On the use of anthropomorphisms, see Jack Sasson's discussion of “the difficulty of disassociating the anthropomorphic from our experience of the divine;” “On the Use of Images in Israel and the Ancient Near East: A Response to Karel van der Toom,” in *Sacred Time, Sacred Place: Archaeology and the Religion of Israel*, ed. Barry M. Gittlen (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2002), 65.

²²¹ An additional item of evidence is something that any scholar of Tanach would notice, that the term ŠAṬAN (root STN) has a cognate root, STM. Since the issue is somewhat tangential, I have not addressed it here.

the nature of ŠATAN.²²² Despite these inconsistencies, these seven contexts (plus one related set) all represent ŠATAN as a figure or force of opposition.²²³

A. Human opponent or antagonist (sometimes acting as divine agent)

- (1) 1 and 2 Samuel
 - a. 1 Samuel 29:4 (David toward Philistine princes)
 - b. 2 Samuel 19:23 (Sons of Zeruya toward David)
- (2) 1 Kings 5:18, 11:14, 11:23, 11:25 (enemies toward Solomon)
- (3) Psalms 38:21, 71:13, 109:2-20 (literally, human enemies; poetically, celestial nemesis)

B. Divine force (representing, I will argue, God's response to hubris)

- (4) 1 Chronicles 21:1 (God's enticement of David)
- (5) Zechariah 3:1-2 (angel toward Joshua the High Priest)
- (6) Job 1 and 2 (angel of accusation and seduction)
- (7) Numbers 22:22 and 22:32 (God's angel toward Balaam)

C. Related verses

- (8) Genesis 26:21 and Ezra 4:6 (Šiṭnah – “opposition”)

²²² It is interesting that recent biblical scholarship has made a case for reconciling Tanach's multiple versions of ŠATAN (particularly of Zechariah, Job and Chronicles). The foundation for this work was Peggy Day's philological dissertation (*Adversary in Heaven*) which Derek Brown and others consider “the standard work on the subject” (Derek Brown, “Devil in the Details,” 203). Although she concludes that there are different types of ŠATAN in Tanach (*Adversary*, 15), she nevertheless attempts to unite them ideologically and concludes that ŠATAN and HAŠATAN are equivalent metaphorical terms in Zechariah, Job and Chronicles. Many scholars have embraced her conclusion and Ryan Stokes (“Satan,” 251) posits a “scholarly consensus” around Day; however his sources for that claim are mostly reference works and two of the others are the same scholar and when these are discounted, there appears to be no consensus (for a summary of his thirteen sources, see *ibid.*, n. 2). Dissenters tend to take the skeptical view of Florian Kreuzer who finds the ŠATANs of Tanach sufficiently vague to frustrate any attempt to unite them in a coherent philosophy (“Der Antagonist: der Satan in der Hebräischen Bibel—eine bekannte Größe?”, *Biblica* 86, no. 4 [2005]: 536-44); or of Robert Holmstedt who wonders if any conclusive philology is possible with Biblical Hebrew (“Issues in the Linguistic Analysis of a Dead Language, With Particular Reference to Ancient Hebrew,” *Journal of Jewish Scriptures* 6 [2009]: 2-21). Herbert Niehr is less charitable, accusing her of “weite Ausholen auf Kosten der einschlägigen Informationen zum Thema” — painting with too broad a brush (“Review: An Adversary in Heaven: Satan in the Hebrew Bible,” *Biblische Zeitschrift* 36, no. 2 [1992])). However, the rabbinic view is not predicated on philology. The only present concern is to delineate the ŠATAN source texts of Tanach as the rabbis likely saw them.

²²³ The eight groups of verses in this chapter are listed in a single table in Appendix B.

To reiterate, the goal of the present chapter is to identify how the rabbis who created the Talmud would have understood these ŠAṬAN (and related) narratives. The arrangement into these three categories is only to facilitate analysis; there is no *a priori* reason to assume the rabbis would have used such categories.²²⁴ What will emerge from the exposition is a Biblical ŠAṬAN that plays a nemesis-like role in representing divine didactic justice.²²⁵

A. Human opponent or antagonist

The first set of Tanach “raw materials” that would have informed the rabbinic ŠAṬAN are adversarial human beings. In 1 Sam 29:4 the Philistine generals fear that David will “be a ŠAṬAN” towards them in war, i.e., some sort of antagonist or opponent:

(1) 1 Samuel 29:4 & 2 Samuel 19:23

1a. 1 Sam 29:4 (David toward Philistine princes)

וַיִּקְצְפוּ עָלָיו שָׂרֵי פְּלִשְׁתִּים וַיֹּאמְרוּ לוֹ שָׂרֵי פְּלִשְׁתִּים הֲשֵׁב אֶת־הָאִישׁ וְיָשֵׁב אֶל־מְקוֹמוֹ
אֲשֶׁר הִפְקַדְתּוֹ שָׁם וְלֹא־יֵרֵד עִמָּנוּ בַּמִּלְחָמָה וְלֹא־יְהִי־לָנוּ לְשָׂטָן בַּמִּלְחָמָה וּבַמָּה
יִתְרַצֶּה זֶה אֶל־אֲדֹנָיו הֲלוֹא בְּרָאשֵׁי הָאֲנָשִׁים הָהֵם:

And the princes of the Philistines were angry with him; and the princes of the Philistines said to him, “Make this fellow return, that he may go back to his place which you have appointed him, and let him not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he be L’ŠAṬAN to us; for how does he find favor with his lord — is it not with the heads of those men?”

²²⁴ Meir Weiss also identifies three categories of Tanach ŠAṬAN-texts: generic adversary, HAŠAṬAN the attribute of Justice, and “proper name of the celestial personage who incites men against God” (*Story of Job’s Beginning*, 35-36). He considers the latter dualistic, based on a very different reading of the Talmud than the present dissertation.

²²⁵ In Rivkah Kluger’s words, the broad purpose of ŠAṬAN is a process of “man’s becoming conscious” of one’s own shortcomings vis-à-vis God, which then opens the path to God (*Satan in the Old Testament*, 161).

If this ŠAṬAN means a generic “enemy”, it is a peculiar term to use, for the common term for enemy in Samuel (and throughout Tanach) is O’YEIV (אויב).²²⁶ In contrast, David’s use of a term other than O’YEIV is obviously appropriate:

1b. 2 Sam 19:23 (sons of Zeruya toward David)

כב ויען אבישי בן־צרויה ויאמר התחת זאת לא יומת שמעי כי קלל את־משיח יהוה:
כג ויאמר דוד מה־לי ולכם בני צרויה כִּי־תהִירֵלִי היום לשָׁטָן
היום יומת איש בישראל כי הלוא ידעתי כי היום אני־מֶלֶךְ עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל:

22 But Abishai the son of Zeruyah answered and said, “Shall not Shimi be put to death for this, because he cursed the Lord’s anointed?” 23 And David said, “What (benefit) is there to me or to you, O sons of Zeruyah, that you should be L’ŠAṬAN to me today? Shall any man in Israel be put to death today, for do not I know that I am this day king over Israel?”

The sons of Zeruyah have always been loyal to David and it would make no sense to call them his *enemies*; yet in the aftermath of the bloody rebellion, they might plausibly complain about his leniency towards the former rebels.²²⁷ Note that his strong retort makes their opposition sound like an accusation (perhaps “prosecutorial”), an echo of their earlier conversation when Shimi commits his rebellious act in 16:9-10:

ט ויאמר אבישי בן־צרויה אל־המֶלֶךְ לָמָּה יקלל הַכֶּלֶב הַזֶּה אֶת־אֲדֹנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ
אֲעֲבֹרָה נָא וְאֶסִּירָה אֶת־רֹאשׁוֹ: י ויאמר הַמֶּלֶךְ מַה־לִּי וְלָכֶם בְּנֵי צָרִיָּה כִּי [כֹּה] יקלל...

Then Avishai the son of Zeruiiah said to the king, “Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Please let me go over and take off his head. And the king said, “*What benefit is there to either of us, O sons of Zeruyah? Let him curse....*

Here, in 19:23, David uses the same language, and the sense of the phrase *ma lee v’lachem* — “*What benefit is there to either of us...that you should be L’ŠAṬAN to me today?*” — is that to act L’ŠAṬAN is *potentially* beneficial, but is not so in this case. Perhaps on another day there

²²⁶ There are hundreds of examples in Tanach. In Samuel alone there are thirty-seven, beginning with 1 Sam 2:1. See also 1 Sam 18:29, 19:17, 24:4, 2 Sam 4:8, 22:18, *inter alia*.

²²⁷ Some versions of the rabbinic T. Jonathan render the L’ŠAṬAN here as a verb: *listohn* (ליסטן) while others are vowelized as *listahn*, which may be a noun; on the significance of such variations, see note 283 below.

would be a benefit to David for them to play the role of ŠATAN. In other words, the kind of opposition that ŠATAN represents, while superficially prosecutorial, is not a harmful one of animosity, rather a helpful “challenger”. This use of ŠATAN is consistent with the role of a nemesis.²²⁸

(2) 1 Kings

Solomon’s use of ŠATAN is similar to David’s:

2a. 1 Kings 5:18 – Solomon’s prayer

יִי אֱתָהּ יָדַעְתָּ אֶת־דָּוִד אָבִי כִי לֹא יָכַל לִבְנוֹת בַּיִת לְשֵׁם יְהוָה אֱלֹהָיו מִפְּנֵי הַמִּלְחָמָה
אֲשֶׁר סָבְבָהוּ עַד תַּת־יְהוָה אִתָּם תַּחַת כַּפּוֹת רַגְלֹו [רַגְלָיו]:
יִי וְעַתָּה הַנִּיחַ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי לִי מִסְבִּיב אֵין שָׁטָן וְאֵין פֶּגַע רָע:

17 You knew that my father David could not build a house to the name of the Lord his God because of the war surrounding him, until the Lord put them under the soles of his feet. 18 And now the Lord my God has given me rest on every side: there is neither ŠATAN nor bad occurrence.

The focus on “rest” rather than salvation makes this ŠATAN an opponent rather than an enemy.

His point is that it was impossible for David to build a Temple as long as he was battling various opponents. Only now, at a time of tranquility, is it possible for the king and people to build a Temple. The lack of a ŠATAN-opponent is attributed to God.

Later, when Solomon strays and “God was angry with Solomon” (11:11), God sends him new opponents:

²²⁸ See Aron Pinker (“Satanic Verses-Part II,” *Jewish Bible Quarterly* 25:2 [1997]: 95), who interprets: “The occasion was the return of David to Israel after Absalom’s revolt: clearly a time of relief for David, a time to show good will, and not to be vengeful as was urged by the sons of Zeruiah.” Ryan Stokes demurs, arguing that a more plausible reading is “attacker” or “executioner”; see “The Devil Made David Do It... Or Did He? The Nature, Identity, and Literary Origins of the Satan in 1 Chronicles 21:1,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 128, no. 1 (2009): 91-106.

2b. 1 Kings 11:14, 11:23, 11:25 – Solomon's enemies

יד וַיִּקַּם יְהוָה שָׁטָן לְשִׁלְמָה אֶת הַדָּד הָאֱדֹמִי מִזֶּרַע הַמֶּלֶךְ הוּא בְּאֶדְוֹם:
כג וַיִּקַּם אֱלֹהִים לוֹ שָׁטָן אֶת־רִזּוֹן בֶּן־אֶלְדָּע אֲשֶׁר בָּרַח מֵאֵת הַדּוֹדָעִזֹר מֶלֶךְ־צוֹבָה אֲדָנָיו:
כה וַיְהִי שָׁטָן לְיִשְׂרָאֵל כָּל־יְמֵי שְׁלֹמֹה וְאֶת־הָרָעָה אֲשֶׁר הָדָד וַיִּקַּץ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּמְלֹךְ עַל־אַרָם:

14 And the Lord raised up [a] ŠATĀN to Solomon, Hadad the Edomite; he was of the king's seed in Edom.... 23 And God also raised up [a] ŠATĀN, Rezon the son of Eliadah, who fled from his lord Hadadezer king of Zobah.... 25 And he was [a] ŠATĀN to Israel all the days of Solomon, beside the mischief that Hadad did; and he loathed Israel, and reigned over Aram.

Both in the mouth of Solomon and in the narration, the ŠATĀN of 1 Kin seems to be a generic term for a divinely-sent human opponent, presumably to punish Solomon or stir him to repentance, for Solomon had been described as departing from the ways of God by building idolatrous shrines for his foreign wives (1 Kin 11:1-8). The rabbis interpret this laxity as hubristic:

ואמר רבי יצחק: מפני מה לא נתגלו טעמי תורה שהרי שתי מקראות נתגלו טעמן נכשל בהן גדול העולם. כתיב (דברים י"ז) לא ירבה לו נשים, אמר שלמה: אני ארבה ולא אסור, וכתיב (מלכים א' י"א) ויהי לעת זקנת שלמה נשיו הטו את לבבו. וכתיב (דברים י"ז) לא ירבה לו סוסים, ואמר שלמה: אני ארבה ולא אשיב. וכתיב (מלכים א' י"א) ותצא מרכבה ממצרים בשש וגו'.

R. Isaac also said: Why were the reasons for Biblical laws not revealed? Because in two verses reasons were revealed, and [thereby] the greatest in the world [Solomon] stumbled in them. [First,] it is written: *He shall not multiply wives to himself [so that his heart not stray]* (Deut 17:17), about which Solomon said, "I will multiply [wives] yet not let my heart stray." And Scripture writes, *When Solomon was old, his wives turned away his heart* (1 Kin 11:4). And [second] it is written: *He shall not multiply to himself horses [so that he not return the people to Egypt]* (Deut 17:16), about which Solomon said, "I will multiply them, but will not cause a return [to Egypt]." And Scripture writes, *And a chariot came up and went out of Egypt for six [hundred silver shekels]* (1 Kin 10:29) (Sanh. 21b).

Scripture states explicitly that Solomon sinned, but offers no clues to how the wisest man in the world could stumble over an overt Biblical prohibition. The Talmud provides the missing details: the explicit scriptural rationales for these restrictions triggered Solomon's hubristic self-exemption from them. God's response with a ŠATĀN (v. 11:14, 11:23) is therefore a nemesis-ŠATĀN, a didactic expression of divine justice in response to hubris.

(3) Psalms 38:21, 71:13, 109:2-20 (either human enemies or celestial nemesis)

Psalms takes the ŠATAN concept to a higher level. Recall that in Samuel, the ŠATAN is a purely human opponent and in Kings, it's a human opponent sent by God. In Psalms, it's also a human opponent; however, given the poetic nature of the psalms, it may also be a poetic reference to a celestial opponent:

3a. Ps 38:21

20 וְאִיְבֵי חַיִּים עֲצָמוֹ וְרַבּוֹ שָׁנְאֵי שָׁקֶר:
21 וּמִשְׁלָמִי רָעָה תַּחַת טוֹבָה יִשְׁטְנוּנִי תַּחַת רֹדְפֵי טוֹב:

20 My living enemies are strong and many are those who hate me falsely
21 **Those who repay me evil for good will ŠATAN-me because I pursue good.**

3b. Ps 71:13

י כִּי־אָמְרוּ אוֹיְבֵי לִי וְשֹׁמְרֵי נַפְשִׁי נִוְעָצוּ יַחְדָּו:
יא לֹא־אָמַר אֱלֹהִים עֲזָבוּ רֹדְפִי וְתַפְשׁוּהוּ כִּי אֵין מַצִּיל:
יב אֱלֹהִים אֶל־תִּרְחַק מִמָּנִי אֱלֹהִי לַעֲזֹרְתִּי חִישָׁה:
יג יִבְשׁוּ יִכְלוּ שֹׁטְנֵי נַפְשִׁי יַעֲטוּ חֲרָפָה וְכִלְמָה מִבִּקְשֵׁי רָעָתִי:

10 For my enemies speak against me; and those who watch for my soul consult together, 11 Saying, "God has forsaken him; pursue and seize him; for there is none to save." 12 O God, do not be far from me; O my God, hurry to help me. 13 **Let those who are SOTNAY of my soul be put to shame and consumed; let those who seek my hurt be covered with reproach and dishonor.**

3c. Ps 109:2-20

ב כִּי כִּי רָשָׁע וּפִי־מִרְמָה עָלַי פָּתְחוּ דִּבְרוּ אֹתִי לְשׁוֹן שָׁקֶר:
ג וְדִבְרֵי שִׁנְאָה סָבְבוּנִי וַיִּלְחַמוּנִי חָנָם:
ד תַּחַת־אֲהַבְתִּי יִשְׁטְנוּנִי וְאֲנִי תִפְלָה:
ה וַיִּשְׁמְעוּ עָלַי רָעָה תַּחַת טוֹבָה וְשִׁנְאָה תַּחַת אֲהַבְתִּי:
ו הִפְקִד עָלָיו רָשָׁע וְשָׁטָן יַעֲמִד עַל־יְמִינוֹ:
ז בָּהֶשְׁפֹּטוּ יֵצֵא רָשָׁע וְתִפְלֹתוֹ תִּהְיֶה לַחֲטָאָה....
ח זֹאת פְּעֻלַּת שֹׁטְנֵי מֵאֵת יְהוָה וְהַדְּבָרִים רָעַע עַל־נַפְשִׁי:

2 For the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful are opened against me; they have spoken against me with a lying tongue. 3 They surrounded me with words of hatred; and fought against me without cause. 4 **In return for my love they ŠATANed [yist'nu] me; but I am [a man of] prayer.** 5 **And they have placed upon me evil for good, and hatred for my love.** 6 **Appoint a wicked man over him; and let a ŠATAN stand at his right hand.** 7 **When he shall be judged, let him be condemned; and let his prayer become sin....** 20 **This be the actions of my ŠATANS from God, and those who speak evil about my soul.**

There is little evidence for a specifically rabbinic interpretation of these three Psalms but one may examine their “plain meaning”. In both 38:21 and 71:13 the psalmist is speaking literally of human enemies²²⁹ and the ŠAṬAN of 109:3-4 who fights “without cause” also sounds human. Yet there are two clues to a more nuanced meaning. First, Ps 71 makes a subtle shift from v. 10 to v. 13: v. 10-11 describe “my enemies” and “the guardians of my soul” conspiring against the psalmist, in v. 13 he describes them collectively as *sotnay nafshi* – the adversaries of my soul, as if ŠAṬAN is a hybrid of “enemy” and “friend”, a very intimate challenger.

Ps 109 also contains an interesting subtlety. The “right hand” imagery of 109:6 and the ŠAṬAN of 109:20 recall Zech 3:1-2 (see §B.5 below), giving the figurative meaning of a divine or divinely-sent accuser. Yet Ps 109 recycles the “right hand” metaphor in its conclusion with a poetic declaration of faith that God “will stand at the right hand of the destitute” (v. 31). It is interesting that the same psalm uses the image of “at his right hand” both in the prayer for vengeance (“let a ŠAṬAN stand at his right hand”) and in the prayer for salvation (“God will stand at the right hand of the destitute”). The same imagery appears in the New Testament: “Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven” (Mark 14:62, Matt 26:64).²³⁰ The metaphor indicates a sense of extraordinary intimacy, be it on the side of justice or on the side of mercy, but both express the psalmist’s idealized view of divine justice (both towards his enemy and for himself).²³¹

²²⁹ See Sot. 21a, where the Talmud reads 71:10 as referring to David’s enemies Doeg and Ahitophel.

²³⁰ See also Acts 7:55.

²³¹ The phrase “at his right hand” (*al yemino*) also appears in Nech 8:4, 1 Chr 6:24, 2 Chr 18:18; see similar imagery in Isa 63:12 and Job 30:12. *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* (Ryken 1998, 727-8), interprets the “right hand” metaphor as honor. This may be so; but it stands to reason that the most honorable position would be that which conveys the greatest intimacy

Whether human or celestial, these ŠATĀNS of Psalms resemble those of Samuel and Kings in that they seem more personally-calibrated than a mere enemy, a quality one might poetically call “nemesis-like”; and seem to have a didactic quality in that they prompt the poet’s introspection.

B. Divine force representing God’s response to hubris

The second group of Biblical sources are more explicitly nemesis-like and overtly didactic:

(4) 1 Chronicles 21:1 (God’s enticement of David)

וַיַּעֲמֵד שָׂטָן עַל־יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּסֶּת אֶת־דָּוִד לְמִנּוֹת אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל:

And a ŠATĀN stood up against Israel, and provoked David to make a census of Israel.

The Talmud is fully aware of the well-known contradiction between the present verse and the original version of the story in 2 Sam 24:1, where the incident is attributed directly to God:

וַיִּסַּף אֱלֹהֵי־הַ לַחֲרוֹת בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּסֶּת אֶת־דָּוִד בָּהֶם לֵאמֹר לֶךְ מִנֵּה אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֶת־יְהוּדָה:

And the Lord further got angry at Israel and turned David against them to say, “Go count Israel and Judah.”

Historians typically interpret the Chronicler’s substitution of ŠATĀN for the Lord as an attempt to improve God’s public image.²³² From the rabbinic perspective, 2 Sam 24:1 and 1 Chr 21:1

with the king. Perhaps any image of sitting in the king’s presence conveys intimacy; if so, this would answer Daniel Boyarin’s difficulty: “It is not clear in any case how this contradiction about the postures of angels would lead Aḥer to conclude (or even speculate) that there are Two Powers in Heaven” (“Beyond Judaisms,” 352).

²³² Day here does not contextualize the ŠATĀN of 1 Chr 21: she reads this ŠATĀN as a generic indefinite noun “instead of God prompting David to sin, the Chronicler foists responsibility upon an unnamed celestial accuser” (*Adversary in Heaven*, 150). The basis of her view seems to be the assumption that the Chronicler would find it objectionable that God should cause someone to sin. This may be true, but it may also be true that God’s “turning David against them” is not a *fait accompli*; it still requires David to carry out the action, which he is presumably able to reject as an immoral temptation. As if to emphasize this point — that God

are both canonized authoritative texts and must be reconciled.²³³ In both versions, Israel is the object of the punishment and David is the agent; in the earlier Samuel version, God is causing David to count them and in the later Chronicles version, ŠAṬAN (or A ŠAṬAN) is doing so. Since the rabbis view both verses as prophetic texts of Torah,²³⁴ there could therefore be no question

can only punish if the human agrees to misbehave — the Chronicler changes “God” to “a šaṭan”: i.e., an act of divine justice for Israel’s unspecified sins; see S. Slater, “Peggy L. Day, An Adversary in Heaven: Satan in the Hebrew Bible,” *Religious Studies and Theology* 10, nos. 2-3 (1990): 112. Ryan Stokes reaches a similar conclusion that this ŠAṬAN is an “emissary of the deity, carrying out YHWH’s punishment of Israel” (“Devil Made David Do It,” 106). Josephus (Antiq VII.13.1) solidifies the distancing from an ontological ŠAṬAN and puts the blame squarely on David, who “forgot the commands of Moses”, implicating neither a ŠAṬAN nor God. His midrashic expansion of the story has yet to be fully explained, but according to Louis Feldman, it is consistent with Josephus’s general habit, driven by considerations of his audience, of downplaying miracles (Louis Feldman “Josephus’ Portrait of Jacob,” *JQR* 79 [1988-89], 163); see also C. T. Begg, “Josephus’ Version of David’s Census,” *Henoch* 2-3 (1994): 225.

²³³ This putative rabbinic concept of interdependence between 1 Chr 21 and 2 Sam 24:1 epitomizes Yairah Amit’s argument that Tanach should be read as a sophisticated collection of didactic stories and not tales of naïve narrators (*Hidden Polemics in Biblical Narrative*, trans. Jonathan Chipman [Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2000]). She finds that the audience for Tanach would have regarded it as truthful and real (*ibid.*, 50-51). She also demonstrates remarkable consistency between earlier and later polemics of Tanach and makes a strong case for the approach Robert Alter rejects “as a real narrative continuum, as a coherent unfolding story in which the meaning of earlier data is progressively, even systematically, revealed or enriched by the addition of subsequent data” (*Putting Together*, 11). Of particular interest are Amit’s presentation of the ŠAṬAN of 1 Chr (*op. cit.*, 44) and Job (*ibid.*, 249-251).

²³⁴ But not necessarily a theodicy as many maintain. Day embraces a polemical interpretation of 1 Chr 21; however, she assumes (as others have) that the Chronicler’s polemical goal is to protect God’s public image, as if hoping that the reader of the text would not have access to the Book of Samuel. If so, the PR move must be judged a dismal failure, for the text of Samuel earned an even greater status in the canon (as a book of prophecy) than did Chronicles. Others suggest that the omission of details from the original version by the Chronicler in general may reflect a lack of interest by the Chronicler; see Steven Tuell, *First and Second Chronicles* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 5. Yet this hypothesis does not explain the shift in agency from God to ŠAṬAN. It is more plausible to assume that the book of Samuel was in circulation and that the Chronicler’s change from “God” to “ŠAṬAN” is intended to be noticed for a pedagogical aim: to teach the *reason* for God’s otherwise unexplained anger in 2 Sam 24. (It is not surprising that Maimonides, a philosophically oriented post-rabbinic commentator, links these various scriptural narratives into a coherent theology: see *Guide* III.22.)

— to them — that this difference between the two versions is a *conscious* change in the retelling of the story; the two versions are too similar to conclude otherwise. Therefore, in the eyes of the rabbis, the correct reconciliation must be theological: Since the former *explicitly* implicates God, read the latter as an expression of God’s justice (perhaps angelic).²³⁵ The Talmud thus links the two together seamlessly, in one of only two ŠAṬAN texts from Tanach for which the Bavli provides its own midrash (Ber. 62b).²³⁶ The context of the midrash is a series of anecdotes teaching the proper behavior in a privy. The Talmud then tangentially expounds on the narrative of 1 Sam 24, Saul’s pursuit of David at Ein Gedi, making three points:

(a) In 1 Sam 24:4 (not quoted by the Gemara), Saul enters a cliffside cave to relieve himself, not knowing that David and his men are hiding in that very cave. David’s men want David to dispatch Saul but David demurs; instead he stealthily cuts off the corner of Saul’s garment. After Saul descends, David calls down to him and uses the cut garment to prove that he is not malicious and Saul should cease considering him a threat. Here is where the Talmud begins its exposition with a question:

²³⁵ This rabbinic view that I am inferring is not consistent with Henry Kelly’s reading of Septuagint’s *diabolos* here as a conscious interpretive choice of “the Jews who translated the Hebrew Scripture into Greek...[who] decided that it was not Satan who incited David to sin, but only ‘a satan,’ that is, ‘a devil,’ doubtless intending a merely Human adversary” (Kelly, *Satan: A Biography*, 31). I see no reason to assume that LXX means a human adversary and my argument here about the forms of ŠAṬAN in rabbinic texts supports the probability that this *diabolos* in LXX means a Heavenly ŠAṬAN. However, it is possible that the LXX means a human adversary who was sent by God.

²³⁶ The other is a lengthy exposition of Job in B. Bat. 15b-16a (see source 4B below).

(שמואל א' כ"ד) ואמר להרגך ותחס עליך, ואמר? ואמרתי מיבעי ליה! ותחס? וחסתי מיבעי ליה! אמר רבי אלעזר, אמר לו דוד לשאול: מן התורה בן הריגה אתה, שהרי רודף אתה, והתורה אמרה: בא להרגך השכם להרגו. אלא צניעות שהיתה בך היא חסה עליך, ומאי היא דכתיב (שמואל א' כ"ד) ויבא אל גדרות הצאן על הדרך ושם מערה ויבא שאול להסך את רגליו. תנא: גדר לפניו מן גדר, ומערה לפניו ממערה. להסך אמר רבי אלעזר: מלמד שסכך עצמו כסוכה. (שמואל א' כ"ד) ויקם דוד ויכרת את כנף המעיל אשר לשאול בלט אמר רבי יוסי ברבי חנינא: כל המבזה את הבגדים סוף אינו נהנה מהם, שנאמר (מלכים א' א') והמלך דוד זקן בא בימים ויכסהו בבגדים ולא יחם לו.

And he wanted to kill you, but he spared you (1 Sam 24:11). “And he wanted”? It should be, “And I wanted”? “And he spared”? It should be, “And I spared”!

R. Elazar said: David said to Saul: “According to the law, you deserve to be slain, since you are a pursuer, and the Torah has said, If one comes to kill you rise and kill him first. But the modesty which you have shown has caused you to be spared.” What is this [modesty]? As it is written: *And he came to the fences by the way, where was a cave; and Saul went in le-hasek [to cover his feet]*²³⁷ (1 Sam 24:3). It has been taught: There was a fence within a fence, and a cave within a cave. R. Elazar says: It [the word le-hasek] teaches that he covered himself like a booth [sukkah].

Then David arose and stealthily cut off the corner of Saul's robe (1 Sam 24:4).

R. Jose son of R. Hanina said: Whoever treats garments contemptuously will in the end derive no benefit from them; for it says, *King David was old and stricken in years; and they covered him with clothes, but he could not get warm* (1 Kin 1:1) (Ber. 62b).

In quoting R. Jose, the Gemara is establishing the principle of divine justice: David later cannot be warmed by clothes as a consequence of his cutting off the corner of Saul's robe; he suffers measure-for-measure for something he has done earlier in life.

(b) The Gemara now continues its exposition of Samuel and the life of King David as a vehicle for expanding this principle of measure-for-measure divine justice to include what might otherwise be considered innocent speech:

(שמואל א' כ"ו) אם ה' הסיתך בי ירח מנחה אמר רבי אלעזר: אמר ליה הקדוש ברוך הוא לדוד מסית קרית לי? הרי אני מכשילך בדבר שאפילו תינוקות של בית רבן יודעים אותו, דכתיב (שמות ל') כי תשא את ראש בני ישראל לפקדיהם ונתנו איש כפר נפשו וגו'.

If it be the Lord who has incited you against me, let Him accept an offering (1 Sam 26:19). R. Elazar said: Said the Holy One blessed be He, to David: “You call me an inciter? Behold, I will make you stumble over a thing which even school-children know, namely, that which is written, *When you take the sum of the children of Israel according to their number, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul into the Lord. ... [that there be no plague among them] etc.*” (Exod 30:12) (Ber. 62b).

²³⁷ A euphemism for defecation; in many translations: “to relieve himself”.

Now we know why David is being provoked to conducting the immoral census: he is guilty of referring to God by the indecorous label of “inciter”.²³⁸ It is a critical term, and any criticism of God is hubristic. His punishment is consistent with the measure-for-measure principle of divine justice. The imagined divine rhetoric, “I will make you stumble over a thing which even school-children know,” sounds didactic, as in, “I will teach you a lesson.”

(c) What remains is to make the link explicit between God of 2 Sam 24:1 and the ŠATAN of 1 Chron 22:1:

מיד (דברי הימים א' כ"א) ויעמד שטן על ישראל, וכתוב (שמואל ב' כ"ד) ויסת את דוד בהם לאמר לך מנה את ישראל. וכיון דמניניהו לא שקל מינייהו כופר, דכתוב (שמואל ב' כ"ד) ויתן ה' דבר בישראל מהבקר ועד עת מועד.

Immediately [in response to David’s disrespectful speech, God responded with] *And a ŠATAN stood up against Israel [and provoked David to make a census of Israel]* (1 Chron 22:1) and it is further written, *He stirred up David against them saying, Go, number Israel* (2 Sam 24:1). And when he did number them, he took no atonement [payment] from them and it is written, *So the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the appointed time* (2 Sam 24:15) (Ber. 62b).

The Gemara is making the rabbinic reconciliation of the two versions absolutely clear: this ŠATAN is God; it is not even an angel of God. It is revealing that the Gemara quotes the two texts achronologically: the ŠATAN text of 1 Chron is the major proof-text, teaching the nemesis-like way in which divine justice operates; the verse from 2 Sam comes to prove that this ŠATAN of 1 Chron is really just an expression for the way in which God operates. It seems irrelevant to the Gemara whether or not this ŠATAN is technically an angel or mere metaphor; what matters is that it is an expression of divine justice.

It is furthermore quite telling that the Gemara imagines David being punished for calling God “inciter”, for God surely does incite, per 2 Sam 24:15. It would therefore appear that the Gemara understands David’s punishment is not for stating a falsehood rather for speaking

²³⁸ Even though elsewhere – Job 2:3 – Holy Writ has God calling himself “inciter”.

pejoratively about God's incitement: God indeed sends temptations, but he does so from a perspective of unassailable divine wisdom, therefore one may not disparage this divine quality. God's temptations are in order to teach, not to "incite" which implies maliciousness. Speaking critically about God is surely hubristic.²³⁹

An additional textual detail supports this interpretation of the rabbinic view. The text contains an ambiguity, whether to read this ŠAṬAN as a generic noun ("a šaṭan" – i.e., a function of God) or a proper noun ("Šaṭan" – i.e., a metaphor). The official rabbinic translation of Targum Jonathan²⁴⁰ resolves the ambiguity by repairing to the precedent of 1 Kings (Source 2 above) which favors a generic reading, with (in English) an indefinite article.²⁴¹ The author of T. Jonathan seems to have this exact ambiguity in mind in his rendition, "*V'akaym Hashem*

²³⁹ Steven Tuell similarly argues that the two versions are meant to be reconciled; from the text alone he finds that the Chronicler is teaching that God is holding David accountable for his actions and the ŠAṬAN's temptation is for the purpose of highlighting a weakness, in this case in response to David's pride (*First and Second Chronicles*, 87).

²⁴⁰ The official status of Jonathan to the Prophets (and Onkelos to the Pentateuch) in the Bavli is attested on Meg. 3a; see note 18 above. Pinkhos Churgin demonstrates similarities between the interpretative biases of Jonathan and the Bavli (*Targum Jonathan*, 114), and identifies nineteen quotations of Jonathan in the Bavli itself, at times with attribution and at times without (*ibid.* 146-9). How similar the targums that survive today are to those known to the Bavli's redactors is an unresolved issue (Phillip Alexander calls it intractable ["Rabbinic Judaism and the New Testament", 240-1]) that is certainly relevant to the present thesis. I am cautiously assuming that they are similar enough to justify their use here.

²⁴¹ The Hebrew permits reading ŠAṬAN as a proper noun, as in: "Satan stood up" (without the indefinite article), suggesting a ŠAṬAN who is a fully independent ontological being. This is the approach of Rivkah Kluger (*Satan*, 39), who rejects the indefinite article for the simple reason of a lack of a scriptural precedent. Her conclusion seems too hasty, for neither is there a precedent for ŠAṬAN as a proper name. Others who share her view are Roddy Braun, *I Chronicles* (Waco: Word Books, 1986), 216-217) and it has trickled down into the popular imagination: see T. J. Wray and Gregory Mobley, *The Birth of Satan: Tracing the Devil's Biblical Roots* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 67 and 188ff, who cite Klüger as their primary source of this view. Sara Japhet argues to the contrary that the lack of an article is evidence that the term was *not* being used as a proper noun: see Sara Japhet, *The Ideology of the Book of Chronicles and its Place in Biblical Thought* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1989), 114-116.

sitna” —“God raised a ŠAṬAN”). The lack of the conjunctive *yat* (equivalent to the Hebrew *et*) underscores the indefinite or generic nature of the direct object, *sitna*. For throughout Tanach, whenever the Hebrew indicates a definite direct object, T. Jonathan employs the “yat” (e.g., Gen 8:1, Gen 21:1, Gen 22:1 *inter alia*). Thus, T. Jonathan here is explicitly and unambiguously conveying that the ŠAṬAN of 1 Chron is *not* a proper name of an independent angelic or demonic force, only a generic function of divine justice.²⁴²

There is a nemesis quality of this ŠAṬAN, clearly contained with a strict set of rules of divine justice, treating David measure-for-measure, responding to David’s hubristic statement.

²⁴² See J. Stanley McIvor, “The Targum of Chronicles: Translated, with Introduction, Apparatus, and Notes,” in *The Aramaic Bible* Vol. 19 (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1994), 114, who agrees with T. Jonathan’s interpretation, in contrast to the *Encyclopedia Judaica* article which opines that this ŠAṬAN here has “obviously been secondarily substituted because of doctrinal consideration for ‘the Lord’ who plays this part” of inciting David. Forsythe agrees: “For the first time, then, we find in the Chronicler a Satan who acts independently of divine permission. In this simpleminded theodicy, Satan substitutes for God as the *agent provocateur* in human affairs; indeed he ceases to be an agent of God at all and acts on his own initiative. He has in fact replaced God. We are fortunate that the sources of the story is extant in 2 Samuel for it reveals both the change that had come over the Hebrew tradition in the new context of Judaism and the reason why Satan’s role became necessary – the ethical desire to free God from blame” (Forsyth 1987, 121). The present argument is to the contrary: the fact that T. Jonathan underscores that this is *not* an independent agent implies he is reacting to or anticipating an alternative meaning. If the author of T. Jonathan feels that ŠAṬAN-as-metaphor were firmly and unanimously established in the minds of his audience, there would be no reason for him to stray from the Biblical semantics; he could translate it as “Satan” and everyone would understand that the text means “metaphorical, not ontological, independent being.” As Edward Greenstein argues in his essay on Biblical translation, a straightforward literal (non-idiomatic) translation “may be especially well suited for those who approach the Bible as holy” (*Essays*, 118). If he is right, then T. Jonathan’s rendition here as “a ŠAṬAN” would suggest that there was some degree of popular belief in an independent ŠAṬAN. Similarly, LXX, which was in circulation during the rabbinic period, contains a clue to the mindset of the period. In Esther 7:4 and 8:1, LXX translates *tsar* (enemy) as *diabolos* (*DIABOLOS*; Alfred Rahlfs, *Septuaginta: Id est Vetus Testamentum Graece Iuxta LXX*. [Stuttgart: Württembergischen, 1935]). In context, the reference must be to Haman. Thus, LXX is using *DIABOLOS* to mean a human enemy, like the ŠAṬAN of 1 Sam 29:4. However, LXX uses the same term in 1 Chr 21:1 which, as quoted above, reads either “ŠAṬAN rose up over Israel” or: “a ŠAṬAN rose up....” Thus, the rendition in Esther supports the metaphorical interpretation of ŠAṬAN in Chronicles.

But this justice is not simply retributive. The Talmud understands the role of the ŠAṬAN here as didactic: David is meant to learn a lesson in proper etiquette toward the divine.

(5) Zechariah 3:1-2 (celestial angel toward Joshua the High Priest)

Of all the Tanach's ŠAṬANS, Zechariah's vision appears the most prosecutorial and the least didactic:

א וַיִּרְאֵנִי אֶת־יְהוֹשֻׁעַ הַכֹּהֵן הַגָּדוֹל עֹמֵד לִפְנֵי מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה וְהַשָּׁטָן עֹמֵד
עַל־יְמִינֹו לְשָׁטְנוֹ: ב וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־הַשָּׁטָן יִגְעַר יְהוָה בָּךְ הַשָּׁטָן וַיִּגְעַר
יְהוָה בָּךְ הַבַּחֵר בִּירוּשָׁלַם הֲלוֹא זֶה אִדּוֹ מִצֵּל מֵאֵשׁ:

1 And he showed me Joshua the High Priest standing before the angel of God, and HAŠAṬAN²⁴³ standing at his right hand as his ŠAṬAN.²⁴⁴ 2 And God said to HAŠAṬAN, “May God rebuke you, HAŠAṬAN; God who has chosen Jerusalem will rebuke you: is not this a brand saved from the fire?”

To a rabbinic reader for whom all of Tanach is a unified, self-referential system, the metaphor of a “brand saved from the fire” undoubtedly recalls the one other time it appears in Tanach, in Amos 4:11. There, God is saying that the people escaped total annihilation only through divine mercy. Here then, too, the phrase “may God rebuke you” would be pure allegory for the silencing of divine justice by the voice of divine mercy.²⁴⁵

My assumption about the rabbinic interpretation of Zechariah (ŠAṬAN as allegory) is attested by T. Jonathan, who renders HAŠAṬAN throughout this passage as “חטאה” — sin.

²⁴³ Kelly, it seems to me, misrepresents this text, stating: “In the Hebrew of Zechariah (as in the Hebrew Job) there is only ‘a satan’” (*Satan: A Biography*, 30). This view causes him to read the LXX translation, *HO DIABOLOS*, as an interpretative invention: “we have thus witnessed the Birth of Satan” (*ibid.*, 31); in fact, it may be merely a verbatim translation (see note 235).

²⁴⁴ Many translations render this “to accuse him” (following King James 21C) or “to resist him” (following King James). Grammatically, the verb should be vowelized differently, perhaps *l’šaṭno*, leading Rashi to amend it to *l’hašṭino*. *L’šitno* looks like a masculine form of the noun *šitna* (שִׁטְנָה) of Gen 26:21 and Ezra 4:6, which is followed by American Standard (“to be his adversary”) and others.

²⁴⁵ The strong visual detail of the accusing angel’s location “at his right hand” also appears alongside the ŠAṬAN terminology in Ps 109 (§A.3 and note 231 above).

Joshua's sin "comes back to haunt him" so to speak, opposing him with accusations, but God (in his mercy) silences the accusations of the sin — *HAŠATAN* — in order to treat him and his people with mercy. Similarly, the Talmud is unequivocal that this *ŠATAN* represents divine justice:

אמר רבי יהושע בן לוי, שלשה דברים סח לי מלאך המות: אל תטול חלוקך שחרית מיד השמש ותלבש ואל תטול ידיך ממי שלא נטל ידיו ואל תעמוד לפני הנשים בשעה שחוזרות מן המת, מפני שאני מרקד ובא לפניו וחרבי בידי ויש לי רשות לחבל. ואי פגע מאי תקנתיה? לינשוף מדוכתיה ארבע אמות, אי איכא נהרא ליעבריה, ואי איכא דרכא אחרינא ליזיל בה, ואי איכא גודא ליקו אחורא, ואי לא ליהדר אפיה ולימא (זכריה ג') ויאמר ה' אל השטן יגער ה' בך וגו' עד דחלפי מיניה.

Rabbi Joshua b. Levi says: Three things were told me by the Angel of Death. Do not take your shirt from your attendant when dressing in the morning, and do not let water be poured on your hands by one who has not washed his own hands, and do not stand in front of women when they are returning from the presence of a dead person, because I go leaping in front of them with my sword in my hand, and I have permission to harm. If one should happen to meet them what is his remedy? — Let him turn aside four cubits; if there is a river, let him cross it, and if there is another road let him take it, and if there is a wall, let him stand behind it; and if he cannot do any of these things, let him turn his face away and say, *And God said to HAŠATAN, "May God rebuke you, HAŠATAN etc. (Zech 3:2) until they have passed by (Ber. 51a).*

As above (Source 4), the Gemara's interpretation of this *ŠATAN* might be an actual angel or mere metaphor; T. Jonathan's allegorizing gives a strong reason to read the Talmudic passage as allegory as well. If so, Rabbi Joshua b. Levi would thereby mean to say that he received a prophetic insight into the nature of divine justice, not necessarily that he received an angelic visitor. His insight is that putting oneself in certain situations makes one more susceptible to divine justice.²⁴⁶ The nature of that risk is not explained and subject to speculation;²⁴⁷ but the

²⁴⁶ See Ch. 5§3.iv. below for the full Talmudic treatment of this theme.

²⁴⁷ Through the lens of modern science he seems to be reacting quite rationally to contagious disease: if possible, create physical distance between yourself and the source of the potential contagion; if this is not possible, pray for divine mercy. Yet Rabbi Joshua b. Levi appears not to follow this advice, for on Ket. 77b he is reported to have relied on his own merit for protection when deliberately exposing himself to infectious disease. For different approaches to theodicy in Babylonian and Palestinian sources, see the examples and argument by Yaakov

main lesson seems to be how to counter that risk: one may invoke divine mercy by quoting Zech 3:2, which refers to divine mercy overpowering divine justice.

(6) Job 1 and 2

Superficially, Job's ŠAṬAN looks like an expansion of Zechariah but to the rabbis it was evidently much more than that. As in Zechariah, the ŠAṬAN is presented as a spiritual being whom God addresses:

וַיְהִי הַיּוֹם וַיָּבֹאוּ בְּנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים לְהִתִּיצֵב עַל־יְהוָה וַיָּבֹאוּ גַם־הַשָּׁטָן בְּתוֹכָם:
וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־הַשָּׁטָן מֵאֵין תָּבֹא

6 It happened one day:²⁴⁸ The angels came to stand before the Lord, and HAŠAṬAN also came among them. 7 And the Lord said to HAŠAṬAN, “Where are you coming from?”

But unlike the silent ŠAṬAN of Zechariah, here he is given a voice to respond as if an independent ontological being:

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־הַשָּׁטָן מֵאֵין תָּבֹא וַיַּעַן הַשָּׁטָן אֶת־יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר מְשׁוּט בְּאָרֶץ וּמִהַתְהַלֵּךְ בָּהֶּ: וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־הַשָּׁטָן הֲשִׁמְתָּ לְבָבְךָ עַל־עַבְדִּי אִיּוֹב כִּי אֵין כָּמֹהוּ בְּאָרֶץ אִישׁ תָּם וְיָשָׁר יִרָא אֱלֹהִים וְסָר מִרָע: ט וַיַּעַן הַשָּׁטָן אֶת־יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר הֲחִנֵּם יִרָא אִיּוֹב אֱלֹהִים:

7 And the Lord said to HAŠAṬAN, “From where are you coming” and HAŠAṬAN answered God and he said, “From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.” 8 And God said to HAŠAṬAN, “Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God, and turns away from evil?” 9 Then HAŠAṬAN answered the Lord, and said, “Does Job fear God for nothing?” etc. (Job 1:7-9)²⁴⁹

The parallel to Zech 3:1-2 extends to the use of the definite article (*HA*-ŠAṬAN) and one is tempted to assume an identical meaning of an allegory for divine justice. Yet it is interesting to

Elman, “The Suffering of the Righteous in Palestinian and Babylonian Sources,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 80:3-4 (1990).

²⁴⁸ For translating Job, I am following Nosson Scherman, ed. *The Tanach* (New York: Mesorah, 1998), 1621-23, which seems to me a superlative rendition of this difficult text.

²⁴⁹ See also the similar language in Job 2:1-7.

note how T. Jonathan treats this ŠAṬAN differently from Zechariah. In Zechariah and elsewhere T. Jonathan renders ŠAṬAN as pure allegory. Here, he never allegorizes: throughout Job he translates HAŠAṬAN simply as שָׂטָן — Satan. For instance, he renders the first two words of v. 9 as אֲתִיבֹ שָׂטָן — “and Satan replied”. I do not believe this could be understood in any other way (i.e., as “a šaṭan” or “the šaṭan”). Assuming that T. Jonathan is consistent, his consistent interpretation of every other ŠAṬAN passage as metaphor or allegorical suggests reading the present narrative — a dialogue between God and HAŠAṬAN — as allegory as well.

There is much evidence consistent with this reading of T. Jonathan.²⁵⁰ In contrast to the other Scriptural passages in the chapter, the rabbis appear particularly interested in this book

²⁵⁰ It is interesting to note that biblical scholars who are *not* looking at rabbinic texts have not reached a consensus as to whether this HAŠAṬAN in Job refers to a literal ontological celestial being or is pure metaphor. This lack of consensus may arise from addressing the question as a linguistic problem rather than a literary one. For instance, Peggy Day concludes, “The book of Job rings the death knell for personal retributive justice, at least for those who subscribe to its message” (*Adversary*, 105). Yet from a purely literary reading, a simple reading of Job’s ŠAṬAN may indeed be a metaphor for personal retributive justice (although I might prefer a different adjective, such as “didactic” rather than retributive, as I will argue in the Conclusion below). How better can Job’s anguish be explained? His suffering only continues as long as he refuses to accept the possibility that he deserves his fate and the resolution comes when he accepts that God’s justice must not have been compromised, despite Job’s inability to understand it. This acceptance brings Job to a new theological level and is thereby redemptive. Indeed, having passed this test, his good fortune returns.

Thus, when the narrator has God inviting HAŠAṬAN to test Job, the reader knows that God is in ultimate control and all-knowing but the HAŠAṬAN motif achieves for the reader what Aron Pinker calls “a more objective consideration of the debate in the Dialogue” (“The Core Story in the Prologue-Epilogue of the Book of Job,” *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 6 [2006]: 11). By being cast as God’s agent, Job’s HAŠAṬAN does not necessarily represent a new development as commonly stated: “The Satan of *Job* has become semi-independent of God, a true, creative power and source of evil in the world and the inveterate, malicious enemy of Man,” Julian Morgenstern, “Satan,” in *Universal Jewish Encyclopedia in Ten Volumes: An Authoritative and Popular Presentation of Jews and Judaism Since the Earliest Times*, ed. Isaac Landman (New York: Universal Jewish Encyclopedia Co.), 380. On the contrary: Job’s HAŠAṬAN chapters may be intended as an allegorical version of the same theurgical ŠAṬAN in other books of Tanach; see Dominic Rudman, “Zechariah and the Satan Tradition in the Hebrew Bible,” in *Tradition in Transition: Haggai and Zechariah 1–8 in the Trajectory of Hebrew Theology*, ed. Mark Boda and Michael Floyd (London: T & T Clark, 2008). While there are many schools of thought in the field of Biblical criticism on the relationships between

and this ŠAṬAN. For instance, Job is the only non-Pentateuchal book of Tanach for which the Mishna itself includes a direct interpretation:²⁵¹

בו ביום דרש ר' יהושע בן הורקנוס: לא עבד איוב את הקב"ה אלא מאהבה, שנא':
(איוב יג) הן יקטלני לו אייחל, ועדיין הדבר שקול, לו אני מצפה או אני מצפה? ת"ל:
(איוב כז) עד אגוע לא אסיר תומתי ממני, מלמד שמאהבה עשה. אמר רבי יהושע: מי
יגלה עפר מעיניך רבן יוחנן בן זכאי, שהיית דורש כל ימך: שלא עבד איוב את המקום
אלא מיראה, שנאמר: (איוב א) איש תם וישר ירא אלהים וסר מרע, והלא יהושע
תלמיד תלמידך למד שמאהבה עשה.

On that day²⁵² R. Joshua b. Hyrcanus expounded: Job only served the holy one, blessed be he, from love: as it is said, *though he slay me, yet will I wait for him* (Job 13:15) and should it be still doubtful whether the meaning is 'I will wait for him' or 'I will not wait' there is another text to declare, *till I die I will not put away my integrity from me* (*ibid.* 27:5) this teaches that what he did was from love. Rabbi Joshua [b. Hananiah] said: who will remove the dust from your eyes, R. Yohanan b. Zakkai, since you have been expounding all your life that Job only served the All-Present from fear, as it is said, *that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil!* (*ibid.* 1:1) did not Joshua, the pupil of your pupil, teach that what he did was from love? (mSot. 5:5)

Echoing this level of interest, the Gemara frequently brings proof-texts from Job.²⁵³ A few of these citations relate directly to the ŠAṬAN (but not necessarily the ŠAṬAN of Job!). First, there is a revealing *beraita* on Ber. 57b about the significance of dreaming about certain books of Tanach:

הרואה ספר תהלים יצפה לחסידות, משלי יצפה לחכמה, איוב ידאג מן הפורענות.

If one sees the Book of Psalms, he may hope for piety; if the Book of Proverbs, he may hope for wisdom; if the Book of Job, let him worry about punishment.

the various books of Tanach, from the rabbinic perspective, regardless of their origins, their redaction into a canonized theological work certainly occurred prior to the rabbinic period, and therefore the entire Tanach can be read from that point onward as representing a single theology. In any event, it is not germane to the present thesis what the authors of Tanach thought they were doing, only the rabbinic understanding of it.

²⁵¹ To my knowledge; as opposed to quoting a verse as a proof-text.

²⁵² The "on that day" teachings in the Mishna were significant midrashic novellae taught in Yavneh when R. Gamliel was demoted and the academy's entrance requirements were relaxed.

²⁵³ Thirty-one times by my count, second only to Psalms; and the exposition of Job in B. Bat. 15a-16b is among the Bavli's lengthiest aggadic discussions of any single book of Tanach.

Similarly, a *beraita* on Taan. 30a rules that Job is one of the few holy books that a person may study on the Ninth of Av, along with other chapters of Scripture and Talmud that tell of Israel's sins that brought about the calamities of destruction and exile. It would appear that the Gemara understands the major theme of Job to be divine punishment.²⁵⁴

Yet neither of these passages explains exactly how the rabbis see Job as representing punishment and in what way they consider it weighty and unhappy. While Job's friends think he is being punished, both Job and God himself declare that he has done nothing wrong, "a blameless and upright man, one who fears God, and turns away from evil" (1:8). Moreover, while Job suffers greatly, the story has a putatively happy ending: Job's family, health and wealth are restored.²⁵⁵ Both of these initial presentations of the figure of Job need elucidation.

The Talmud provides two clues from the Amora R. Yoḥanan:

רבי יוחנן כי מטי להאי קרא בכי: ותסיתני בו לבלעו חנם.
עבד שרבו מסיתין לו וניסת, תקנה יש לה?

R. Yoḥanan wept when he came to the verse, *And you incited Me against him, to destroy him without cause* (Job 2:3), [saying], "A servant whose Master, when they incite him allows himself to be incited – is there any help for him?" (Hag. 5a)

R. Yoḥanan's question is difficult to understand. The context of verse 2:3 is after Job's first test in Ch. 1, which he has passed. If he had failed the test, then the test would have been appropriate, the ŠAṬAN's initial accusation would have been validated. Now that he has passed

²⁵⁴ It is not clear to me whether this statement in the Gemara is really about the interpretation of dreams or whether the passage is merely a rhetorical device for teaching something about the nature of these three books of wisdom.

²⁵⁵ Most modern commentators on Job interpret the intent of this ending to be happy, despite the enormous suffering he has endured. Some even consider the happy ending a literary flaw, blunting the full cathartic potential of Job's tragedy. For instance, James Crenshaw recognizes that the ending is meant to be a happy reiteration of the belief in reward and punishment and is troubled (through his admittedly "modern perspective") by the "strange...return in the epilogue to this dubious belief" (*Defending God: Biblical Responses to the Problem of Evil* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2005], 216 n. 44).

the test, what does God mean, “to destroy him without cause”? Before we encounter R. Yoḥanan’s question, the text seems to be saying that a divine test is only “with cause” if he fails the test; i.e., if the subject is imperfect and the test will reveal his imperfection and therefore justify his punishment. Since Job is perfect, the test is without cause. Now we can understand R. Yoḥanan: he is expressing a theological point, that the notion of God, who knows whether or not a person is perfect, being incited against an innocent person seems inherently unfair. What hope is there for someone who follows the rules, if God is going to punish him anyway? How can this verse be reconciled with our notion of divine justice? R. Yoḥanan’s question is consistent with his view quoted in B. Bat. 16a:

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל הַשָּׁטָן הֲשִׁמְתָּ לְבֶן אֱדִי אִיּוֹב כִּי אֵין כְּמוֹהוּ בָאָרֶץ וְגו' וְעַדֵּנוּ מַחְזִיק בְּתוֹמָתוֹ, וְתִסִּיתֵנִי בּוֹ לְבַלְעוֹ חֲנָם אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן: אֲלֵמַלָּא מִקְרָא כְּתוּב אִי אֲפָשָׁר לֵאמֹר, כְּאָדָם שֶׁמִּסִּיתִין אוֹתוֹ וְנִיסָתָּ.

Then God said to HAŠATAN, have you considered my servant Job, because there is none like him in the earth etc. . . and he still holds fast his integrity, [although] you incited Me against him, to destroy him without cause (Job 2:3). R. Yoḥanan said: Were it not expressly stated in the Scripture, we would not dare to say it, [for it makes God look] like a man who allows himself to be persuaded [against his better judgment].

In other words, adding to the incomprehensibility of God causing a perfect person to suffer, God's conversation with HAŠATAN also does not make sense theologically; in fact it looks like blasphemy: is God capricious?

In reply to R. Yoḥanan, the Gemara brings a series of responses. The first is a brief *beraita*:

בַּמַּתְנִיתָא תַּנָּא: יוֹרֵד וּמַתְעָה וְעוֹלָה וּמַרְגִּיז, נוֹטֵל רְשׁוֹת וְנוֹטֵל נַשְׁמָה.

One [Tanna] taught in a *beraita*: [ŠATAN] comes down to earth and seduces,²⁵⁶ then ascends to heaven and agitates,²⁵⁷ he receives permission and he takes away a soul.

²⁵⁶ Alternatively, “causes to err”.

²⁵⁷ I base this translation on Gen 45:24, Ex 15:14, Deut 2:25, 2 Sam 19:1, *inter alia*, as well as the Talmud itself: “*L’olam yargiz adam yešer tov al yešer hara*” – A person should always agitate his good inclination against his bad inclination” (Ber. 5a).

In quoting this *beraita*, the Gemara's first reply to R. Yoḥanan is that the ŠAṬAN is a function of how God runs the world, by sending people seductive tests and responding to them appropriately. God only acts (i.e., punishes) with cause, namely if the person succumbs to the seduction. Seduction enables a person to sin and therefore God has cause to kill the person. The ŠAṬAN here is an allegory for both divine seduction and justice. Since God himself has declared Job innocent of sin, the incitement cannot be punishment; yet it could be seduction. This distinction answers R. Yoḥanan's question on Ḥag. 5a: Job is not being punished despite his righteousness, he is being tested and even the perfectly righteous are not immune from testing.

Yet how does the *beraita* respond to R. Yoḥanan's point at the beginning of this *sugya*, that God appears capricious? The *beraita* in fact seems to do the opposite: R. Yoḥanan's question was, "How can Scripture imply that God can be persuaded to do what is unjust?" The *beraita* effectively responds that God only reacts after the seduction, when justice requires a punishment. Yet God has entrapped him; had he not sent the seduction, he would have never sinned and never needed the punishment. The entire ordeal appears unjust, therefore the *beraita* seems to strengthen R. Yoḥanan's question rather than resolve it.

In the case of Job, were he to fail the test and blaspheme, the test would appear reasonable, for it would have revealed a character flaw. Yet he passes the test and does not blaspheme, so the test appears (*at first*) unreasonably harsh. In this vein, the Gemara's exposition of Job continues with the next few lines of Job:

ויען השטן את ה' ויאמר עור בעד עור וכל אשר לאיש יתן בעד נפשו, אולם
שלח נא ידך וגע אל עצמו ואל בשרו אם לא (על) (מסורת הש"ס: [אל])
פניך יברכך, ויאמר ה' אל השטן הנו בידך אך את נפשו שמור, ויצא השטן
מאת פני ה' ויך את איוב וגו' אמר רבי יצחק: קשה צערו של שטן יותר משל
איוב, משל לעבד שאמר לו רבו: שבור חבית ושמור את יינה.

And HAŠATAN answered God and said, “Skin for skin, all that a man has for his life. But put forth your hand now and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will blaspheme you to your face.” And God said to HAŠATAN, “Behold he is in your hand: only spare his life.” And HAŠATAN went forth from the presence of God and afflicted Job etc. (2:4-7).

R. Isaac said: ŠATAN’s torment was worse than that of Job; he was like a servant who is told by his master, “Break the cask but do not let any of the wine spill.”

R. Isaac, a student of R. Yoḥanan,²⁵⁸ sympathetic homily follows the idiom “X is worse than Y” which occurs elsewhere in the Talmud.²⁵⁹ Their common denominator is that their comparisons emphasize an instance of severity that one might not have noticed. A casual reader might have supposed the ŠATAN’s job quite easy: afflict Job. But the ŠATAN’s task is in fact more precise than that: the “cask” represents Job’s body and the “wine” his soul: harm Job to the point of death, yet short of death. There is no sense here of injustice; on the contrary, the sense is that justice is strict. Following these examples, R. Isaac’s homily about ŠATAN would mean that God’s function of divine seduction is “severe”, i.e., strict, but not vengeful. This is the Gemara’s second answer to R. Yoḥanan’s question: the test is not “bad”; it is indeed strict and presumably precise. R. Isaac is highlighting the fact that Job is allowed to live; meaning, according to the preceding *beraita*, HAŠATAN at this stage of the process represents divine justice as it is manifest in seduction, not punishment.²⁶⁰

The Gemara’s third point in reply to R. Yoḥanan comes from his student-colleague

Reish Lakish:

²⁵⁸ On the identity of R. Isaac, see note 142 above.

²⁵⁹ B. Bat. 88b: R. Levi said, “The punishment of measures is worse than the punishment of taboo relationships”; *ibid.*: R. Levi said, “Stealing from a commoner is worse than stealing from God”; B. Bat. 116a: R. Pinḥas b. Ḥama expounded, “Poverty in a person’s home is worse than fifty lashes.” In each case, the homily is followed by a proof-text.

²⁶⁰ See Maharal, *Chidushei Agadot* C p. 71, who interprets R. Isaac’s comment in light of the subsequent comment of R. Lakish who equates the ŠATAN with the Angel of Death: since his normal job description is Angel of Death, asking him to punish without killing is a contradiction, figuratively termed his “torment”.

אמר ר"ל: הוא שטן הוא יצר הרע הוא מלאך המות.

Reish Lakish said: ŠAṬAN, the evil inclination, and the Angel of Death are the same (B. Bat. 16a; see Ch. 5§10.xxiii below).

Alone, this statement would be cryptic and possibly even dualistic;²⁶¹ does he mean literally the same, or does he mean they are similar? In the context of this *sugya* what the Gemara seems to mean by quoting Reish Lakish here is that the reason God allows himself to be incited against an individual is because the root cause of the incitement is the individual himself.²⁶² It is as if to say that when God sends a ŠAṬAN-seduction to a person, it puts him in a situation where his knowledge of the right path can be tested against his internal desire to be seduced.²⁶³

²⁶¹ Some therefore read this statement as a complete exception to the rest of the *sugya*: “Reish Lakish, unlike the other opinions voiced in the *sugya*, identifies Satan not as a messenger of God, but as a demonic being” (Ishay Rosen-Tzvi, *Demonic Desires*, 80). This seems to me an error that occurs because Rosen-Tzvi has selectively quoted the text to support his point that the rabbis adopted an ontologically independent ŠAṬAN under the influences of dualism, even while acknowledging their opposition to it (*ibid.*, 63). See Alan Segal *Two Powers in Heaven*, Ch. 5 (especially p. 103) for a compelling anti-ontological view of the rabbinic ŠAṬAN. A similar statement is found on Ber. 51a, however the evil inclination is not mentioned. Daniel Matt links this statement to the Zohar’s dualistic-sounding ŠAṬAN (*The Zohar* [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004], vol. 1, 71 n. 532).

²⁶² Hence I am ignoring the possibility, raised by Rosen-Tzvi, that Reish Lakish’s original statement had a completely different intent than its use here (Rosen-Tzvi, “Two Rabbinic Inclinations,” 537). While entirely plausible, the conjecture has no bearing on the present thesis that the Bavli’s redactors crafted each *sugya* with a conscientious didactic purpose.

²⁶³ I believe that “desire to be seduced” is the intent of the Gemara’s exposition of the *yetzer hara* here and elsewhere; see for instance Qid. 30b where the Gemara interprets Gen 4:7 as “ואם אתה רוצה אתה מושל בו” – you will rule over it if you *want* to. The connection of these two (ŠAṬAN and evil inclination) to the Angel of Death is evidently only as a consequence to following one’s evil inclination and being sinful:

תנו רבנן: מעשה במקום אחד שהיה ערוד והיה מזיק את הבריות, באו והודיעו לו לרבי חנינא בן דוסא. אמר להם: הראו לי את חורו! הראוהו את חורו, נתן עקבו על פי החור, יצא ונשכו ומת אותו ערוד. נטלו על כתפו והביאו לבית המדרש. אמר להם: ראו בני, אין ערוד ממית אלא החטא ממית.

Our Rabbis taught: Once upon a time in a certain place there was once a snake which used to injure people. They came and told Rabbi Ḥanina b. Dosa. He said to them: Show me its hole. They showed him its hole, he put his heel over the hole, and the

Not only is the test a function of the person's own psychology (*yetzer hara* / evil inclination) but it also comes for a constructive, not destructive, purpose. Indeed, the Gemara concludes the first half of our *sugya* with a confirmation of Reish Lakish's dictum:

א"ר לוי: שטן ופנינה לשם שמים נתכוונו. שטן, כיון דחזיא להקדוש ברוך
הוא דנטיה דעתיה בתר איוב, אמר: חס ושלום, מינשי ליה לרחמנותיה
דאברהם....דרשה רב אחא בר יעקב בפפוניא, אתא שטן נשקיה לכרעיה.

R. Levi said: Both ŚAṬAN and Peninah had a pious purpose [in acting as adversaries]. ŚAṬAN, when he saw God inclined to favor Job said, "God forbid that he should forget the compassion of Abraham...." When Rav Aḥa b. Jacob expounded [this exposition] in Papunia, ŚAṬAN came and kissed his feet (B. Bat. 16a).

The purpose of Job's trial is to reveal the truth about Job: prior to the trial his righteousness is legendary, but in truth, he is less righteous than Abraham.²⁶⁴ The contrast is vital to emphasize, for the Gemara likely assumes the reader to be familiar with the mishna in Sotah (mSot. 5:5) quoted above, to which the Gemara adds a *beraita*:

רבי מאיר אומר: נאמר ירא אלהים באיוב ונאמר ירא אלהים באברהם, מה
ירא אלהים האמור באברהם מאהבה, אף ירא אלהים האמור באיוב מאהבה.

It has been taught: R. Meir says: It is declared of Job: *one that feared God* (Job 1:1), and it is declared of Abraham: *you fear God* (Gen 22:12); just as "fearing God" with Abraham indicates from love, so "fearing God" with Job indicates from love (Sot. 31a).

In the eyes of the Mishna and the Talmud, Abraham and Job are highly comparable and the distinction between them must be extremely minute.

Yet from the Bavli's perspective the idea that God may have been unaware of the distinction seems preposterous: it is impossible for the rabbis to think that without the ŚAṬAN's intervention God would not know. Indeed, a few lines later the Gemara, quoting the sage Rava, labels as "sinful" a thought that God is flawed:

snake came out and bit him and it died. He put it on his shoulder and brought it to the study hall. He said to them: See my sons, it isn't the snake that kills, rather it is sin that kills! (Ber. 33a)

²⁶⁴ On Abraham's alleged perfection, see Sanh. 89b and note 344 below.

(איוב ב') בכל זאת לא חטא איוב בשפתיו אמר רבא: בשפתיו לא חטא, בלבו חטא. מאי קאמר? (איוב ט') ארץ נתנה ביד רשע פני שופטיה יכסה אם לא איפו מי הוא, אמר רבא: בקש איוב להפוך קערה על פיה.

In all this did not Job sin with his lips (Job 2:10). Rava said: With his lips he did not sin, but he did sin within his heart. What did he say [to show he had a sinful thought]? *The earth is given into the hand of the wicked, he covers the faces of the judges thereof; if it be not so, where and who is he?* (*ibid.*, 9:24); Rava said: Job sought to overturn the dish (B. Bath. 16a).

Commentators understand the expression “overturn the dish” to mean, “ruin everything”, i.e., to deny either the fundamental value of Creation²⁶⁵ or divine providence itself.²⁶⁶

This explicit rejection (on the same page as R. Levi’s statement) of thoughts of God’s imperfection makes it difficult to read R. Levi’s statement as literally referring to God “forgetting”. Given God’s putative perfection, it is more likely that R. Levi means that God sent the ŠAṬAN to test Job in order to contrast between Job and Abraham. For on the surface, Job appears to be a true disciple of Abraham, walking in the ways of God, taking care of widows and orphans (29:12-13), etc. But beneath the surface, he is evidently less perfect than Abraham and this truth must be revealed. Therefore, this ŠAṬAN is indeed an expression of the divine will.²⁶⁷ To this foundation, Reish Lakish’s equation of ŠAṬAN, evil inclination and Angel of Death adds the idea that the ŠAṬAN’s seduction is a function of (or God’s response to) a person’s *imperfection*, not necessarily his overt sins. This view would seem to provide a general answer to R. Yoḥanan’s question on Job 2:3: “A servant whose Master, when they incite him allows himself to be incited – is there any help for him?” (Ḥag. 5a). Job’s

²⁶⁵ See Rashi *ad loc.* and Joel Sirkis (Bach)’s gloss.

²⁶⁶ Rabeinu Gershom *ad loc.*; see Hananel Mack, “*Ela mashal hayah*”: *Iyov be-Sifrut ha-Bayit ha-Sheni uve-‘ene Ḥazal* (Job and the Book of Job in Rabbinic Literature (Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University Press, 2005), 156-67.

²⁶⁷ See Admiel Kosman, *Masekhet Gevarim: Rav Yeha-Katsav Ye-‘Od Sipurim: ‘Al Gavriyut, Ahavah Ye-Oteniyut Be-Sipur Ha-Aggadah Uva-Sipur Ha-Hasidi: U-Shete He‘Arot ‘Al Yetsirot Kolno‘a* (Jerusalem: Keter, 2002), 106 and his “Pelimo and Satan: a Divine Lesson in the Latrine,” *CCAR Journal: A Reform Jewish Quarterly* 57, no. 1 (2010).

imperfection solves the theological problem. God's statement *And you incited Me against him, to destroy him without cause*, is rhetorical. "Without cause" seems to mean that he did not do anything specific to deserve suffering, but the ŠATAN's accusation and test do reveal a character flaw, a different sort of cause.²⁶⁸

In order to prove that God is not capricious, the Gemara proceeds with a search for the exact nature of Job's imperfection, interrupted briefly in the middle to demonstrate Job's great righteousness in action, as if to underscore the point that his imperfection is entirely internal. In point after point, an Amora proposes a measure-for-measure justification for what Job suffers, based on scattered verses: Rava suggests that Job inwardly denied Providence;²⁶⁹ Rav, that he was proud of himself (Job 6:2), that he challenged God (Job 9:33) and that he gazed at his wife's beauty (Job 31:1); from Rava (again), that he denied the principle of Resurrection of the Dead (Job 7:9); and from Rabbah, that he blasphemed in suggesting God was confused (Job 9:17). In all of these statements, the Talmud is searching for justice in Job's suffering, despite God's initial declaration of his righteousness.²⁷⁰ The unspoken message is that God and his ŠATAN act with justice.

Based on this underlying theme, the Gemara then elaborates on Rabbah's view, explaining God's ultimate justice to Job according to the denouement of the Book of Job: the Whirlwind chapters (Job 38-39) with a series of five examples of God's great precision in

²⁶⁸ God's words here resemble the Gemara's gloss on King David's sin in 1 Sam 26:19 (Source 5 above).

²⁶⁹ Mack ("*Ela masha! hayah*," 166) argues that Rava was "without a doubt" informed by a lesson said in his name on Ber. 5a to regard tribulations as a message from God to examine one's deeds.

²⁷⁰ "Although *yetzer* appears in many different contexts, from frivolousness to hatred to fear to robbery, it has but one basic function, which is to explain why the worship of God is so difficult. The local contexts are for the most part but specific realizations of this basic function, shared by both Tannaim and Amoraim" (Rosen-Tzvi, *Demonic Desires*, 83-4).

creation.²⁷¹ Job has indeed blasphemed in accusing God of confusion. Yet the Gemara then concludes the *sugya* by reaching back several chapters for a final scriptural quotation: *Job speaks without understanding and his words are thoughtless* (Job 34:35), followed by an exonerating statement by Rava: “From here [we learn that] a person is not liable [for words uttered] while he is in pain.” According to this final word of the discussion, the Gemara underscores the conclusion that Job is innocent of actual (spoken) blasphemy, despite the lengthy proofs that his suffering is justified. This conclusion to the Whirlwind suggests a solution to R. Yoḥanan’s challenge: *despite your lack of understanding, God is precise*. That is, Job is righteous in action but errant in thought. His thought, “I was blessed because I am righteous and therefore my current suffering makes no sense,” is erroneous because he sees a simple equation of righteousness and blessing and thinks he understands God’s ways. His test is whether or not he will continue to advocate for God’s righteousness even when his fortune turns sour. At first he does not: in his lament, “He breaks me with a tempest and multiplies my wounds *without cause*” (emphasis added), Job shows that he *does* entertain the mistaken view that a human being can grasp God’s justice. By ultimately accepting that a human being *cannot* grasp it, Job ironically achieves a greater grasp, a higher, more accurate conception of God.²⁷²

If so, then this finale to the long *sugya* sheds new light on the original statements of R. Yoḥanan: “A servant whose Master, when they incite him allows himself to be incited is there any help for him?” (Ḥag. 5a) and “Were it not expressly stated in the Scripture, we would not

²⁷¹ The perfection of the human body, the physics of rain and of lightning, and two examples of interspecies symbiosis.

²⁷² While most editions of the Bavli include Rava’s final rejoinder, Maharsha deletes it as erroneous, leaving 34:35 as the conclusion and therefore a conviction. According to the Maharsha’s version, the resolution to R. Yoḥanan’s problem of God’s capriciousness is that God is not capricious; Job is righteous but God’s side of justice, expressed by the ŠATAN, requires him to be tested to reveal that his righteousness is not absolute and selfless, like that of Abraham. Rather, Job is only righteous to the extent that he is comfortable.

dare to say it.” The real lesson for Job — and for the reader — is to embrace one’s very lack of understanding. R. Yoḥanan is not wondering how to interpret 2:3; he is asking a rhetorical question, teaching that its inscrutability itself is the core message of Job. Job can represent anyone who wonders why a righteous person may suffer, and the answer is: to teach you God’s inscrutability. Until the resolution, Job is not innocent. He is *nearly* innocent, yet guilty of one offence: considering himself innocent. Such lustrous self-appraisal is the epitome of hubris, for to judge *anyone* completely innocent in God’s eyes is to assume one understands God, and one cannot understand God. Therefore, anyone who lives fearlessly because he believes himself innocent is fundamentally mistaken and is exposing himself to the ŠAṬAN – i.e., to God’s just, measure-for-measure test or seduction.^{273, 274}

²⁷³ See Maimonides, *Guide* III.24: “This is the object of the *Book Job* as a whole: I refer to the establishing of this foundation for the belief and the drawing attention to the inference to be drawn from natural matters, so that you should not fall into error and seek to affirm in your imagination that His knowledge is like our knowledge or that His purpose and His providence and His governance are like our purpose and our providence and our governance.” Modern commentaries on Job, while often learned in Medieval rabbinic commentary, often miss this interpretation from the Rambam. Thus Roland Murphy sees the conclusion of Job as “a deliberate impasse.... God is just and cannot allow unjust suffering. From another point of view (Job’s), a human being can be innocent and yet suffer” (*The Tree of Life: An Exploration of Biblical Wisdom Literature* [New York: Doubleday, 1990], 48).... “What kind of a God is this who is willing to prove a point of honor by sorely afflicting a faithful servant?” (*ibid.*, 36). Murphy’s treatment of Ecclesiastes is closer to the present understanding Job: God’s justice “is one of those undeniable factors in Israelite belief....but he [the author of Ecclesiastes] could not draw any consolation from it; the *manner* of divine judgment is wrapped in mystery. *The ways of God are simply inscrutable*” (*ibid.*, 57). James Crenshaw acknowledges that Job and Ecclesiastes both conclude with the same theology but is uncomfortable with these conclusions and prefers to ascribe them to later editors: “By what standard of logic did ancient editors justify the epilogues to the books of Job and Qoheleth, divesting both of their essential thrust?” (Crenshaw, “In Search of Divine Presence: Some Remarks Preliminary to a Theology of Wisdom,” in James L. Crenshaw, *Urgent Advice and Probing Questions, Collected Writings on Old Testament Wisdom* [Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1995], 596. See Roland Murphy, who too rejects the conclusion of Ecclesiastes as inauthentic: “How could Qoheleth have said this? These are not his words. They belong to the epilogist or editor of the entire book, who gave a hermeneutical direction to the book” (*Tree of Life*, 55). His proof is the previous lack of mention of *mitzvot* in the book; but one could just as easily read this fact as an intentional contrast of the author: just when I’ve brought you to the point of greatest despair

at the vanity of everything, including wisdom itself, I'll give you the (only) antidote: fear God and do *mitzvot*. Murphy deletes the climactic line because it is inconsistent with his interpretation of Ecclesiastes (likewise Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom: An Introduction* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998], Ch. 5). However, fear of God is a consistent theme throughout Ecclesiastes, viz.: 3:14, 5:6, 7:18, 8:12, and Murphy is forced in each of these cases to explain away the reference as a reaction to arbitrariness or even as sarcasm.

R. E. Clements goes farther: the fact that Job's fortunes are restored casts doubt on "to what extent the book of Job can properly be classified as a wisdom document at all" ("Wisdom and Old Testament Theology," in *Wisdom in Ancient Israel: Essays in Honour of J. A. Emerton*, ed. John Day, Robert P. Gordon and H. G. M. Williamson [Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1995], 280). That is, he understands the role of Job within Tanach — as I have argued here that the rabbis must have — as consistent with a unified theme of Tanach: "Of all sections of the biblical literature it is the wisdom writings that give pride of place to the presupposition of a world shaped and governed by a single all-wise, all-seeing and all-powerful Creator" (*ibid.*, 271). Murphy ultimately reaches the same conclusion when reading Proverbs 1:7 ("Fear of God is beginning of wisdom"), quoting Gerhard von Rad (*Wisdom in Israel* [Nashville: Abingdon, 1972], 67): This verse "contains in a nutshell the whole Israelite theory of knowledge" to which Murphy adds, "It is surely remarkable that a commitment to God lies at the basis of the wisdom enterprise" (*Tree of Life*, 16). Crenshaw does acknowledge that "fear of the Lord consists of the ancient covenantal obligations, and no genuine conflict exists between wisdom and sacred history" (*Old Testament Wisdom*, 79) and therefore "one could argue that the author of Job defends God's freedom" (*ibid.*, 88 n.69). His view is echoed by Harold Fisch (*Poetry With a Purpose: Biblical Poetics and Interpretation* [Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990], 195 n. 34), Edward Greenstein ("A Forensic Understanding of the Speech of the Whirlwind," in *Texts, Temples and Traditions: A Tribute to Menahem Haran*, 241-253 [Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbraun, 1996], 254-6) and C. L. Seow ("Beyond Them, My Son, Be Warned: The Epilogue of Qohelet Revisited," in *Wisdom, You Are My Sister: Studies in Honor of Roland E. Murphy, O. Carm, on the Occasion of his Eightieth Birthday* [Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series 29], ed. Michael L. Barré, 125-141 [Washington: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1997], 141). Crenshaw adds in his own later book: "God plays by different rules from those projected on the deity by human rationality... Human beings therefore delude themselves in thinking that they can manipulate the deity and thereby achieve happiness" (*Defending God*, 189).

²⁷⁴ This resolution of R. Yohanan is consistent with the one other time that the Bavli quotes 2:3, in Hul. 4b:

אין הסתה בדברים. ולא? והכתיב: (דברים י"ג) כי יסיתך אחיך! באכילה ובשתיה. והכתיב: (איוב ב') ותסיתני בו לבלעו חנם! למעלה שאני.

Persuasion [in Scripture] never means with words. Is this so? Is it not written: *If thy brother persuade you* (Deut 13:7)? — This verse also means, by eating and drinking. But is it not written: **And you did persuade Me to destroy him without cause** (Job 2:3)? With reference to the Most High it is different.

The Gemara's question tries to use 2:3 to prove that persuasion in Scripture can mean words. The proof is rejected because when God talks about being persuaded it is fundamentally

In summary, the entire story of Job according to the Gemara is a parable and its ŠAṬAN is allegory for God's nemesis-like response to hubris — a nemesis-like test or enticement, precisely tuned to one's strengths and weaknesses.²⁷⁵ *In Job's case*, his outward perfection leaves him only one remaining area of growth: to achieve the highest level of divine knowledge, God's inscrutability; therefore, for him the test comes specifically for inscrutable reasons. For other, less righteous people, the test may come for more obvious reasons. In all cases the experience of the test is didactic.

My reading of the Gemara is also supported by two extra-Talmudic midrashim. The first is based on an ambiguity at the beginning of the ŠAṬAN dialog in Job:

וַיְהִי הַיּוֹם וַיָּבֹאוּ בְּנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים לְהִתִּיצֵב עַל־יְהוָה וַיָּבֹא גַם־הַשָּׁטָן בְּתוֹכָם:
וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־הַשָּׁטָן מֵאֵין תָּבֵא...

It happened one day: The angels came to stand before God, and HAŠAṬAN also came among them. And God said to HAŠAṬAN, "Where are you coming from?" (Job 1:6-7)

The Hebrew translated here as "it happened one day" (וַיְהִי הַיּוֹם) could be rendered, "and it was on that day"; whether or not it means a specific day, the narrative would flow smoothly without the word *ha-yom*. Based on this superfluous ambiguity, a rabbinic midrash interprets:

וַיְהִי הַיּוֹם. אוֹתוֹ הַיּוֹם רֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה הִיא, כְּמוֹ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר יוֹם תְּרוּעָה יִהְיֶה (בַּמִּדְבָּר כֹּט, א).

"And it was that day (*ha-yom*)" (Job 1:6). That day (*ha-yom*) was Rosh Hashana, as it is said, "it will be a day (*yom*) of (shofar) *teruah-sound* (Num 29:1) (Batei Midrashot B, 17.2)

different from human persuasion. The Gemara is therefore categorically stating that 2:3 should not be read as literal persuasion the way we normally understand persuasion; it is allegory for something else. My reading of the Gemara is consistent with Ritva. Rashi, however, reads "With reference to the Most High it is different" regarding God's amenability through food and drink, not the actual concept of divine amenability.

²⁷⁵ Genesis Rabbah (57:4) states this interpretation explicitly: "Said Reish Lakish, Job never was and never will be." While cast among many opinions on the historicity of Job, the fact that the midrash preserves his view is an explicit acceptance of the present interpretation that the story is intended as parable.

The use of Num 29:1 to interpret Job 1:6 as a reference to Rosh Hashana appears to be based on a the semantic similarity between the two words in Job, *va'yehi ha-yom* and the two words in Numbers, *yom...yih-yeh*. In addition to this technical parallel, the idea that Job is being judged on Rosh Hashana, the Day of Judgment, makes sense according to the present reading of his suffering as a lesson in divine justice.

The second extra-Talmudic rabbinic source, from Midrash Tanhuma, supports not only the metaphorical reading of Job's ŠAṬAN, but also the nemesis reading of the Bavli's presentation of it:

בשעה שבא השטן לקטרג את איוב כד"א ויען השטן את ה' ויאמר החנם ירא
איוב אלהים א"ל הקב"ה לאיוב מה אתה רוצה עניות או יסורים א"ל אני
מקבל כל היסורים שבעולם ולא עניות היאך אעמוד על המקח בשוק ואין
בידי פרוטה, מיד ויצא השטן את פני ה' ויך את איוב בשחין רע מכף רגלו עד
קדקדו, התחיל צווח מי יתן ידעתי ואמצאהו אבוא עד תכונתו, כנגד מדת
הדין, א"ל אליהוא מה אתה עומד ומונה ולא אתה הוא שבחרת ביסורים יותר
מן העניות שנאמר השמר אל תפן אל און כי על זה בחרת מעני.

When the ŠAṬAN came to accuse Job (as it says, *And the ŠATAN answered God and said, "is it for naught that Job is God-fearing?"* (1:9) God said to Job, "What do you want: poverty or afflictions? He said to him, "I (can) receive all the afflictions in the world but not poverty – how will I go to the market without a penny in my hand?" Immediately: "*And the ŠATAN went out from before God* (1:12)²⁷⁶ and struck Job with bad boils from the sole of his foot until his crown – he began to wail, "*If only I knew where to find him, I would go to his dwelling* (Job 23:3) [to complain] against the divine attribute of justice. Elihu said to him, "What are you doing standing and counting – is it not you who chose afflictions over poverty?" as it says, *Beware not to turn to sin for you chose this [situation] over poverty* (36:21) (Mishp. 11 [Warsaw]).

Here God is envisioned speaking directly to Job. The ŠAṬAN's role is to accuse and conduct the test, but these two functions are completely in God's domain and control. Thus Tanhuma limits this HAŠAṬAN to an allegory for divine justice. While Tanhuma was possibly completed after the Bavli, layers of it are early and it nevertheless did enter the rabbinic canon.²⁷⁷ It supports

²⁷⁶ The Masoretic text of Job has *מַעַם פָּנֵי* in place of *פָּנֵי* את.

²⁷⁷ Marc Bregman, *The Tanhuma-Yelammedenu Literature: Studies in the Evolution of the Versions* (Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias Press, 2003), 173-88.

the present thesis that the HAŠAṬAN of Job is allegorical for the nemesis-like nature of divine justice.²⁷⁸

(7) Numbers 22:22 and 22:32 (God's angel toward Balaam)

כב וַיִּחַר־אַף אֱלֹהִים כִּי־הוֹלֵךְ הוּא וַיִּתְּצַב מִלֶּאךְ יְהוָה בְּדֶרֶךְ לִשְׁטָן לוֹ וְהוּא רֹכֵב
עַל־אֲתָנּוֹ וּשְׁנֵי נֶעְרָיו עִמּוֹ.... לב וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו מִלֶּאךְ יְהוָה עַל־מָה הִכִּיתָ אֶת־אֲתָנֶךָ זֶה
שְׁלוֹשׁ רָגְלִים הִנֵּה אָנֹכִי יֹצֵאתִי לִשְׁטָן כִּי־יִרֹט הַדֶּרֶךְ לְנִגְדִי:

22 And God was angry that he was going, and God's angel stood in the road L'SAṬAN to him; and he was riding on his donkey, and his two servants were with him....

32 And God's angel said to him, "Why did you strike your donkey these three times? Behold, I went out L'SAṬAN, because you have journeyed eagerly."

As an impediment, the term L'SAṬAN is a peculiar, deliberate choice of words for the Torah.

Other available terms include MAN'A (מנע) which appears only six verses earlier (22:16), ACHR

(אחר)²⁷⁹, HFR (הפר)²⁸⁰, and 'ATZAR (עצר)²⁸¹. Therefore, given their approach to 1 Sam 29:4

(Source 1 above),²⁸² and given the translation of Onkelos here which shifts from a noun in v.

22 to a verb in v. 32, a rabbinic translation here might be:

22 And God was angry when he was going, and God's angel stood in the road AS AN
OPPONENT to him.... 32 Behold, I went out TO OPPOSE, because you have journeyed
eagerly."

²⁷⁸ The Talmud therefore reads Job with a perspective diametrically opposite to that of commentators such as Yair Hoffman, who sees the SAṬAN of Job as "a sadistic, cruel, suspicious angel" ("Jeremiah," 27) and Howard Wettstein who finds the concluding message to be that "moral faith need no longer be seen as faith in reality of justice, in its instantiation, but rather in its status as an ideal to which, in partnership with God, we are committed ("Against Theodicy," 346). The Talmudic view is rather that *Moral faith is now a faith in the reality of justice despite the fact that the universe does not appear ethically coherent*.

²⁷⁹ See Gen 24:56.

²⁸⁰ See Lev 26:44.

²⁸¹ See 1 Kin 18:45.

²⁸² Other uses of the root (שטן) and cognates also seem to support this translation; see section C below.

The opposition comes in the form of an accusation (“you have journeyed too eagerly”), giving Balaam the opportunity to respond and correct his error; in other words, this is a divine nemesis: an opponent with a vital role of discovering and exploiting weakness, leading to a correction on the part of the protagonist.²⁸³

This interpretation of Onkelos finds support in two extra-Talmudic commentaries, Midrash Rabbah and Midrash Tanhuma:

ויחר אף אלהים כי הולך הוא ויניצב מלאך ה' בדרך לשטן לו מלאך של רחמי ה'
ונעש' לו שטן

*And God was angry that he was going, and God's angel stood in the road I'satan to him (Num 22:22). It was an angel of mercy, and it was made a ŠAṬAN for him.*²⁸⁴

The message seems to be that this ŠAṬAN episode is for Balaam's own good.

The second verse (22:32) underscores this meaning of ŠAṬAN. Translators grapple with “ירט”, which has no obvious analogs in Scripture. It may be related to “מִרְטָה” (Ezek 21:15-16), which is often translated as “burnish”, as in polishing a sword for battle. The verb is in the third person, implying that the subject is “ha-derech”, not Balaam, leading to a simple translation, “because the [i.e. your] road [was being] burnished against me”, i.e., you have journeyed eagerly.²⁸⁵ Indeed, Onkelos makes Balaam the subject:

²⁸³ Using such changes in the Targum (especially grammatical variations) as evidence must come with the caveat of Alexander Sperber, perhaps the greatest modern Targum authority: “There is no Targum text, no matter whether hand-written or printed, which is either fully revised or entirely free of these ‘corrections’” (*The Bible in Aramaic*, 26).

²⁸⁴ Tanhuma (Num. Balak Var. 8 [Bub. 11]) adds cryptically, “*Behold, I went out to šatan (שלטן)* — you caused me to do a job that is not mine...” and portrays the angel as coming to kill Balaam, who only saves himself by admitting his guilt.

²⁸⁵ Many translations, including Soncino, follow KJV: “because *thy* way is perverse before me;” JPS: “because thy way is contrary unto me;” Stone: “for you hastened on a road to oppose me;” NIV: “because your path is a reckless one before me.” Rashi and Seforno connect ירט to ררט in Jer 49:24, “trembling”. For Rashi, the clause explains why God sent the angel, “because the road trembled against me” (because you journeyed too eagerly). For Seforno, the clause expresses the goal: “so that the road [i.e., you, the traveler] – will tremble.” (I prefer, but have

אֲרִי גִלִּי קִדְמִי דָּאֵת רְעִי לְמַזַּל בְּאַרְחָא לְקַבְּלִי

...For it was revealed before me that you desire²⁸⁶ to go on the road against me.

In other words, the journey alone did not provoke the ŠAṬAN response, rather Balaam's attitude toward the journey.

Extending this theme, Tanhuma adds an interesting additional commentary on this passage:

ויבא אלהים אל בלעם זש"ה (שם איוב לג) בחלום חזיון ליל' בנפול תרדמ' על אנשים וגו' אז יגלה אחזן אנשי' ובמוסר' יחתום להסיר אדם מעש' וגוה מגבר יכסה, מהן מגב' יכסה העלים הקב"ה ממנו שהליכתו מאבדתו מן העולם ומוליכתו לבאר שחת, להשיב נפשו מני שחת לאור באור החיים שיאבד נפשו מן העול' בהליכתו, שבשעה שהולך אדם לחטוא השטן מרקד לפניו עד שהוא עומד לגמור את העבירה כיון שעברו חוזר ומדיעו, וכן הוא אומר (משלי ז) הולך אחריה פתאום כשור אל טבח יבא וגו' עד יפלה חץ כבדו וגו' כך העלים הקב"ה מבלעם עד שהלך ואבד את נפשו משיצא מכבודו והלך ואבד את נפשו וידע במה שהוא בו התחיל לבקש על נפשו לומר תמות נפשי מות ישרים.

*And God came to Balaam etc. (Num 22:20): this [verse can be interpreted] according to Scripture [elsewhere]: in a dream, a night-image when deep sleep falls on people etc. Then he opens the ear of people and with their rebuke he seals [their decree], that a person put away his purpose and that he might hide pride from a man (Job 33:15-17). God departs from someone whose journey is causing him to be lost from the world and he is traveling to destruction, to save his soul from destruction to be enlightened with the light of the living (ibid. 33:30; cf. ibid. 33:18 and Ps 56:14), that his soul will be lost from the world by his going, **for at the time that a person goes to sin, the ŠAṬAN dances before him until he stands to complete the sin**; when he has sinned, he returns and informs him; and similarly it says, *He goes suddenly after her like an ox goes to the slaughterer etc. (Prov 7:22) until an error strike through his liver etc. (ibid. 7:23): as such did God depart from Balaam until he went and caused his soul to be lost; after he had left his honor and he went and lost his soul and he realized his situation, then he began to pray for his soul, saying may my soul die the death of the straight ones (Num 23:10) (Tanhuma Balak, Var. 7 [Bub. 10]).**

In other words, there are three stages of sin: first, a person decides to go on a "journey" to sin.

Then God departs from him and (the ŠAṬAN) entices him to complete the sin. But the judgment is withheld until he completes the sin. This ŠAṬAN, according to Irving Skolnik's argument

not seen anywhere, "in order to change the manner of [your] journeying against me.") Both Rashi and Seforno, citing Midrash Tanhuma, understand this angel and his ŠAṬAN role as a messenger of mercy, to spur Balaam to repent and not perish.

²⁸⁶ Cf. Lev 22:27, 26:34.

(2010) is consistent with other angels in Torah whose role it is to “open the eyes” of a protagonist, and is always a mere mode of prophetic communication, *never an independent being*. Here, too, the ŠATAN plays a nemesis-like role, executing divine didactic justice.

C. Additional evidence

A final mode of imagining the rabbis’ view of a term is to appreciate their sensitivity to Hebrew roots. For instance:

Why were the Egyptians compared to maror? To teach you: just as this maror, the beginning of which is soft while its end is hard, so were the Egyptians: their beginning was soft, but their end was hard! (Pes. 39a)

The comparative verse in question²⁸⁷ is Ex 1:14, *V’yimararu et chayeihem — and they embittered their lives*. The Talmud is relating the word *yimararu* to the *maror* vegetable. The homily only works because of the linguistic comparison of the two words. This type of proof, based on a sensitivity to Hebrew roots, recurs many dozens of times throughout the Talmud.

According to this principle of linguistic sensitivity, the first scriptural ŠATAN text that would have informed the rabbinical view is Gen 26:21, which is generally ignored by scholars.²⁸⁸ As it includes the Hebrew root טש (STN) it is arguably highly significant from a rabbinic perspective.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁷ According to logic and commentators; see Rashi ad loc.

²⁸⁸ Presumably because it doesn’t use the exact term ŠATAN. For instance, while Peggy Day’s chapter on etymology examines numerous cognates from Arabic, Aramaic, Syriac, and Ethiopic, she does not mention this evidence from Hebrew itself (*An Adversary in Heaven*, Ch. 2). Day also rejects plausible Hebrew cognates, such as *sin-tet-hey* (šatah, šotah), “go astray”, as in Num 5:12-29 (or its vocal equivalent *samech-tet-hey* in Ps 101:3); *sin-tet-mem*, “harbor an accusation against,” in Gen 27:41; and *shin-vav-tet*, “wandering,” in Num 11:8, Job 1:7 and 2:2 – this is interesting because it is how the ŠATAN of Job describes his daily activity among humanity. She calls such cognates “tantalizing” and admits that numerous “ancient and modern etymologists” have made such connections, and while she concludes that the *nun* “must be part of the root”, she ignores this first Pentateuchal instance of it (*An Adversary in Heaven*, 17-21).

(8) Genesis 26:21 and Ezra 4:6 (šitnah – “opposition”)

8a. Genesis 26:21 (Isaac’s šitnah well)

19 And Isaac’s servants dug in the valley, and they found there a well of fresh water.
 20 And the herdsmen of Gerar quarreled with Isaac’s herdsmen, saying, “The water is ours.” And he called the name of the well Esek [“Involvement”]; because they got involved (*hitasku*) with him.²⁹⁰ 21 And they dug another well, and they quarreled about that also, and he named it **Šitnah**.

The rabbinic translations of Targum Onkelos and Pseudo-Jonathan (Ps-J)²⁹¹ simply render

Sitnah as *Šitnah*. According to the argument above that ŠATAN of Tanach should be understood

Rivkah Kluger (*Satan*, 26), however, does consider the present instance and Gen 27:41 both to be etymologically related to ŠATAN.

²⁸⁹ According to Maimonides, the correct etymology of ŠATAN is *sin-tet-hey*, to turn astray, as in Num 5:12-29 (see note 288), Prov 4:15, 7:25, Ps 40:5: “It is he who indubitably turns people away from the ways of truth and makes them perish in the ways of error” (*Guide* III.22, 489). The fact that this is also the *first* incident of the root in Tanach may also be significant; to my knowledge, however, no one has yet determined whether or not the rabbis preferred “first occurrence” verses for proof-texts.

²⁹⁰ As mentioned above, all translations in the present paper are personal, unless otherwise noted. Verses that do not pertain directly to the present thesis are included for context but without support or discussion.

²⁹¹ While Ps-J is not mentioned in the Bavli, the consensus of scholarship is that it is rabbinic and that much of it predates the Talmud; see Michael Maher’s Introduction to his *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis: Translated, with Introduction and Notes* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992). Edward Cook is critical of the linguistic studies that have reached this conclusion: see Edward Cook, “A New Perspective on the Language of Onkelos and Jonathan,” in *The Aramaic Bible: Targums in their Historical Context*, ed. Derek Beattie and Martin McNamara, 141-156 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994). Robert Hayward employs “tradition-history” to arrive at a tentative fourth century date “at the latest” (“Red Heifer and Golden Calf: Dating Targum Pseudo-Jonathan,” in *Targum Studies: Textual and Contextual Studies in the Pentateuchal Targums, Vol I*, ed. Paul V. M. Flesher [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992], 32). Using similar methods, Josep Ribera reaches a similar conclusion (“Prophecy According to Targum Jonathan to the Prophets and the Palestinian Targum to the Pentateuch,” in *Targum Studies: Textual and Contextual Studies in the Pentateuchal Targums, Vol I*, ed. Paul V. M. Flesher [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992], 61-74. Hayward acknowledges that his conclusion implies that the text underwent some editing in subsequent centuries.

Maher also cites the work of Gronemann and Maori in analyzing 120 deviations of Ps.-J. from official rabbinic halachah and he identifies numerous places where Ps.-J. inserts aggadic material that are exceptional, either in their language or their critical stance toward

as God's nemesis-like response to hubris, this could be translated as "Nemesis", a nice parallel to Esek: one who does the action of *esek* is an *askan*; one who does the action of *šitnah* is a *šatan*.²⁹² The midrash Bereishit Rabbah adds a gloss:

ויקרא שמה שטנה כנגד ספר ואלה שמות על שם וימררו את חייהם בעבודה קשה

"And he called its name Sitnah" referring to the Book of Exodus because of "and they embittered their lives with hard work" (Ber. Rab. 64:8).

Biblical characters. These facts suggest that Ps.-J. be regarded as apocryphal and thereby not relevant to rabbinic thought (see Joseph Heinemann, "Early Halakhah in the Palestinian Targum," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 25 [1974]: 117-118). Yet, Ephraim Itzhaky reaches a contrary conclusion that these deviations do not suggest apocrypha rather a work intended for a scholarly audience (*Halachah in Targum Jerushalmi I [Pseudo-Jonathan Ben-Uziel' and its Exegetic Methods* (Heb.), Ph. D. diss., Bar-Ilan University 1982, 7-10, cited by Maher, *Targum*, 3); David Everson ("A Brief Comparison") reaches a similar conclusion. While the deviations do indeed point away from a rabbinically-sanctioned popular work, an un-halachic yet homiletic Targum may have found some popularity among the rabbis themselves. Indeed, the author was certainly familiar with rabbinic Targum and appears to have crafted his work to please an audience familiar with it, for Mahler cites studies that find evidence of the influence of Onkelos "at almost every turn" (*ibid.* 9).

However, although it is plausible that the work was considered apocryphal or was composed at a time when the halachah was still evolving in those areas, aside from one instance (inserting Samael into the Eden story), I have not found a single such aggadah in Ps.-J. that is overtly inconsistent with Talmudic and midrashic tradition. Indeed, much of Ps.-J.'s aggadah seems to be based on or from the same tradition as Pirkei d'Rabi Eliezer. (Steven Fraade models this sort of comparison when he shows how the midrashic material of the "Fragmentary Targum" known as *Targum Yerushalmi* is identical to the *Sifre*, albeit using a different literary structure [*From Tradition to Commentary*, 150-153]). Therefore, while it is not yet certain how fully Ps.-J. belongs in the discussion of rabbinic thought, it seems to be *ideologically* rabbinic. Avigdor Shinan sees Ps.-J. as entirely rabbinic, consistent with the fact that the rabbis "lived among the people, and introduced the popular culture into their works" (*The World of the Aggadah*, 102), which he says, accounts for much of the folk language of Ps.-J. (*ibid.*, 109). For an approach to investigating the "Targumic traditions without parallels", see Shinan, "The Aggadah of the Palestinian Targums of the Pentateuch and Rabbinic Aggadah," 213-217.

It is interesting to note that Onkelos, while often deviating midrashically from the text, never mentions Samael. Most scholars consider Onkelos the oldest Targum, yet most also believe that Onkelos, like Ps.-J., originated in Israel and was edited in Babylon (Bernard Grossfeld and Moses Aberbach, *Targum Onkelos to Genesis: A Critical Analysis Together with an English Translation of the Text* [New York: Ktav, 1982], 9; Shinan *The World of the Aggadah*, 105). If the two texts indeed have such a similar provenance, then Ps.-J.'s Samael reference is all the more remarkable.

²⁹² Thanks to Dr. Avram Reisner for this insight.

By linking Isaac's Sitnah well to the Egyptian bondage, the rabbis are making the nemesis theme even clearer. The Egyptian exile, "iron-smelting furnace" (Deut 4:20) that forges the Israelite nation, teaches perseverance and faith, parallel to Isaac's well. Both the well and the Egyptians are playing the role of a nemesis to Isaac and the Israelites, respectively.

8b. Ezra 4:6 (the *sitnah* of accusation)

וּבְמַלְכוּת אֲחַשְׁוֵירוֹשׁ בְּתַחֲלִית מַלְכוּתוֹ כָּתְבוּ שְׁטָנָה עַל־יְיָ שֶׁבִי יְהוּדָה וִירוּשָׁלַם:

And in the reign of Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, they wrote a *ŠITNAH* against the inhabitants of Judah and Jerusalem.

This *ŠITNAH* is an unspecified legal accusation brought to the government in order to impede construction of the Temple in Jerusalem. The author could have chosen a more generic term such as *ריב* or *משפט*. By itself it is unremarkable; however, in the context of all of Tanach, the word choice may be an allusion to divine intervention.²⁹³

²⁹³ See Ibn Ezra here. The term *Šitnah* of Ezra is more significant because it has a precedent in the Pentateuch, for within the hermeneutical boundaries of these Tanach sources, the Bavli also assumes an internal hermeneutical hierarchy, placing the Pentateuch above Prophets and Writings: see Meg. 3a. Examples of the general primacy of Pentateuch include Ber. 8a (the obligation to read the weekly portion even if one is at home); Ber. 55a (shirking an opportunity to read from a Torah scroll will shorten one's life); Shab. 115b, Pes. 117a, and Qid. 49a (the Pentateuch is referred to as "the Torah" even though elsewhere "Torah" refers to the gamut of written and oral tradition: see for instance Shab. 31a; see also the Mishna on RH 32a); Git. 6b and Yev. 106b (the laws of writing Pentateuchal texts are more stringent than for other books of Scripture); Ned. 22b ("had Israel not sinned, only the books of Pentateuch and Joshua would have been given to them"); Qid. 30a (a father's minimal educational obligation to his son is Pentateuch; Rava's comment there reflects the view that in his time, "*mikreh*" generally referred to all of Tanach but there was an earlier usage that used the term only in reference to Pentateuch); B. Qama 92b ("this matter was written in the Pentateuch, repeated in the Prophets, mentioned a third time in the Writings, and also learnt in a mishnah and taught in a *beraita*"); similarly, it is interesting to note that when citing Pentateuch as a proof-text the Talmud frequently uses the term "Talmud", as in "*Talmud lomar*" – "Scripture says". There is a hint on Tem. 14b that the status of the Prophets and Writings may have originally been more on par with Pentateuch, for the strict law is to forbid the oral recitation of any scripture but the practice seems to have become limited to be lenient with non-Pentateuch texts (see Tosafot *ibid.*). While the Gemara also distinguishes between Prophets and Writings (see the Mishna on Shab. 115a and the Gemara's discussion on Shab. 116b; see also Shab. 88a "*אוריין תליתאי*"; see also RH 32a, Mak. 10b, and B. Qam. 92b, cited above), this distinction is not clearly

Summary of Chapter 4

This survey of biblical ŠATAN texts creates a foundation for the study of rabbinic ideology. The Tanach texts are the raw materials available to an author or redactor of rabbinic literature. This ideological (or theological) map reveals two main categories of the root ŠTN and one related category of source material:

1. A divine force representing God
2. Human opponent or antagonist (sometimes acting as divine agent)
3. Grammatically-related forms.

While these categories include multiple forms of the root, the rabbis would have seen all of them as denoting or connoting a quality of divine justice that may be characterized as a kind of nemesis, that comes to test or entice a person in order to teach him about an inner flaw (often hubris) to be corrected.

hierarchical as much as functional. For the equal authority of all parts of the Pentateuch, see Meg. 7a. For the specific question of legal hermeneutics of Pentateuch versus the rest of Scripture, see Ned. 23a.

Nevertheless, since the rabbis would have regarded these source texts of Tanach as phenomenologically equal (notwithstanding the special status of the Pentateuch in relation to the others), they would presumably have been more interested in variations of meaning than in superficial linguistic variations, and even less interested in their comparative chronology. These linguistic variations are striking enough for Florian Kreuzer to argue that the ŠATAN narratives of Zech. 3 and Job 1–2 introduce a new, previously unknown and intentionally anonymous figure (“Der Antagonist,” 542-43). See Brown (*Devil*, 205), who concludes that it is impossible for an historian to define a single Tanach ŠATAN, “for each author who refers to a ‘Satan’ figure does so for their own reasons and to fit their particular literary context and/or theological concerns.” Given the rabbis’ theological relationship to these texts, they would have perhaps agreed but limited those various authors to a narrow theological range.

5. ŚATAN in the Bavli

Just as the rabbis ignore the contextual lines between the texts of Tanach, they also often blur (if not completely obliterate) the distinction that scholars often make between midrashic and aggadic rabbinic texts. Midrash is commonly defined as biblical hermeneutics. Aggadah is commonly understood as any rabbinic narrative that is not midrash. But in many instances — including ŚATAN texts — the line blurs. For instance:

רבי מאיר הוה מתלוצץ בעוברי עבירה, יומא חד אידמי ליה שטן כאיתתא

R. Meir used to mock transgressor (of sexual immorality), and one day ŚATAN appeared to him guised as a woman.... (Qid. 81a).

The passage is using the known term ŚATAN to teach something about the nature of divine justice: R. Meir apparently assumes hubristically that a normal person should be able to conquer sexual temptation and one who does not do so is worthy of contempt, whereupon he is given precisely that sort of temptation, to which he succumbs. What does the author mean by “ŚATAN”? He does not quote a biblical text nor suggest any exercise of hermeneutics, and classic scholarship would call this passage pure aggada. Yet in the world of the rabbis, even non-scholars knew Tanach²⁹⁴ and the author plainly assumes that the reader is familiar with the biblical term ŚATAN. It is therefore clear that the passage should be read as informed by Tanach and there is no doubt that this example should be read as rabbinic hermeneutics.

By this logic, every rabbinic ŚATAN text (in both the Talmud and the collections) should be read as hermeneutical. Given that the rabbis viewed the entire Tanach as prophetic, the question remains whether these rabbinic ŚATAN texts represent a consistent theology or an amalgam of views. Given this hermeneutical agenda of the rabbinic ŚATAN texts and their

²⁹⁴ Frankel, *Peshat in Talmudic and Midrashic Literature*, 93-96; the point was made above: see note 214 and *antec*.

religious orientation toward both Tanach²⁹⁵ and their own interpretive role,²⁹⁶ what are the rabbis telling us about their view(s) of ŠAṬAN? To what extent are the rabbinic ŠAṬAN and HAŠAṬAN texts allegorical?

My hypothesis presented in Chapter 2 above is that the Talmud — i.e., the redacted Stammaitic collection of aggadot that comprise the Bavli — presents a single ideological view.²⁹⁷ Chapter 3 argued that the rabbis understood most Biblical ŠAṬANS as allegory for the nemesis-like nature of divine justice, when God tests a person for didactic reasons.

Chapter 3 further showed that the Tanach, the rabbis' infallible proof-text, gave them two categories of ŠAṬAN data (and one related category) with which to work:

1. A divine force representing God
2. Human opponent or antagonist (sometimes acting as divine agent)
3. Grammatically-related forms.

We should expect the rabbis to regard these three categories as prototypes. Superficially, all three are present in the Bavli. However, *conceptually* Categories 2 and 3 appear absent, with one possible exception: a single Type 2 ŠAṬAN may appear in a Tannaitic prayer in Ber. 46a. There, the Gemara presents the proper way for a dinner guest to show gratitude to his host: when saying grace, he should add a four-fold prayer for the host. The four lines are structured in two parts. First, the basic prayer consists of a single line:

מאי מברך יהי רצון שלא יבוש בעל הבית בעולם הזה ולא יכלם לעולם הבא

How does he bless him? “May it be God's will that our host should never be ashamed in this world nor disgraced in the next world.” (Ber. 46a)

²⁹⁵ See note 205 above.

²⁹⁶ See note 185 above.

²⁹⁷ With exceptions; see note 141 above.

Presented anonymously and plainly inspired by Isa 54:4²⁹⁸, this core prayer reads like an original ancient archetype. To this basic formulation, the Gemara reports that Rabbi (ca. 200) would customarily add four blessings:

ורבי מוסיף בה דברים:
ויצלח מאד בכל נכסיו,
ויהיו נכסיו ונכסינו מוצלחים וקרובים לעיר,
ואל ישלוט שטן לא במעשי ידיו ולא במעשי ידינו,
ואל ידקדק לא לפניו ולא לפנינו שום דבר הרהור חטא ועבירה ועון מעתה ועד עולם

And Rabbi adds words to it:

- i. May he be very successful with all his possessions,
- ii. May his and our investments be very successful and easy to manage,²⁹⁹
- iii. May [a] ŠAṬAN not dominate the actions of his hands or the actions of our hands;
- iv. May there never appear³⁰⁰ before him nor before us any event of thoughts of sin, transgression or willful sin, from now and forever. (Ber. 46a)

Similar to the ambiguous nature of the ŠAṬAN in 1 Chr 21, the idiomatic saying of Rabbi in blessing iii. may mean a proper noun: “May Satan not antagonize....”³⁰¹ Translators appear unanimous that Rabbi means a spiritual ŠAṬAN, Category 1.³⁰² This categorization is consistent with the fact that the Bavli does not contain any other ŠAṬAN passages that reflect Categories 2 and 3 in Tanach.

²⁹⁸ “Fear not, for you shall not be ashamed nor be disgraced (אֶל־תִּירָאִי כִּי־לֹא תִבְחָשִׁי וְאֶל־תִּכְלָמִי) etc.”

²⁹⁹ Lit., “May his and our possessions be very successful and close to town”; my translation follows Rashi and others who are apparently bothered by the redundant use of “possessions”.

³⁰⁰ Or, “attack”. See Num 25:8, Jud 9:54, 1 Sam 31:4 *inter alia* for a possible cognate.

³⁰¹ B. Bat. 16a; see note 57 and Ch. 3§B.6 above.

³⁰² Soncino (Maurice Simon, trans. *The Talmud* [New York: Traditional Press, 1947], 46a): “May the Accuser have no influence over the works of his hands;” Schottenstein (Yisroel Schorr and Chaim Malinowitz, eds., *Talmud Bavli* [Brooklyn, NY: Mesorah, 2000], Ber. 46a¹): “May no evil impediment reign over his handiwork;” Steinsaltz (Adin Steinsaltz, *Koren Talmud Bavli, Vol. I: Berakhot, Hebrew/English* [Jerusalem: Koren, 2012], Ber. 46a): “May Satan control neither his deeds nor our deeds.” If not for these translations, I would prefer to read it as “human adversary” which would be consistent with blessing i. in the sense that both are materialistic, and keep it completely distinct from blessing iii. which sounds like the evil inclination that Reish Lakish declares elsewhere to be the same as the ŠAṬAN.

This exclusive preference for Category 1 ŠAṬAN supports the present thesis that the Bavli should be understood as a holistic curriculum in Jewish thought (in addition to the praxis of the Mishnah). Categories 2 and 3 (human antagonists and grammatically-related forms) are simply irrelevant to this agenda. The Bavli's Category 1 ŠAṬAN narratives all represent some kind of celestial justice. Of the thirty-nine times the Bavli mentions "ŠAṬAN", there are thirty-nine distinct statements that may be grouped into eighteen groups, which in turn may be categorized by three rhetorical approaches: **conceptual**, **metaphorical** and **anthropomorphic**.³⁰³ According to the conclusions of Ch. 4 above, the anthropomorphic really belong to the metaphorical category. However, given their distinct style, I will discuss them as a separate category. Finally, this presentation will show that all thirty-nine citations may be grouped into two ideological categories: nemesis-accuser and nemesis-seducer (or tester), both of which are a divine response to hubris.³⁰⁴

³⁰³ I do not double-count verbatim repetitions, such as Suk. 38a and Men. 62a (indicated by parentheses). To be defined as a verbatim repetition the entire passage must be repeated. I do count separately any statements that are verbatim repetitions but set in different contexts or said by different speakers. I have also discovered two ways in which different ŠAṬAN texts may be related. One is simply appearing within the same Talmudic *sugya*. The other is when two sages make the same statement; it is useful both to know that it is recorded twice and also to see them side-by-side even though they may not appear in the same *sugya*. There are therefore two systems of classification: the simple count of 39 citations and the group count of 18 (some of which are assigned the same group because they appear in the same *sugya*). In order to facilitate tracking these two organizational systems, I will arrange them according to type and have added marginal notes to show both systems of classification: Arabic numerals indicate the 18 groups and roman numerals indicate the 39 individual statements.

³⁰⁴ Regarding the issue of manuscript authenticity and variations, Yaakov Elman has observed that Geniza research has thus far revealed that "our texts are remarkably well-preserved" (Yaakov Elman, "The Small Scale of Things: The World Before the Genizah," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 63 [1997-2001]: 73). Thus, while manuscript research may be fruitful, and in some cases needed (see note 217 above), I am relying on Elman's broad assessment whenever it appears reasonable to do so. For a list of known manuscripts and a summary of manuscript and text criticism research (ca. 1979), see Goodblatt, "Babylonian Talmud," 148-164.

a. Conceptual: ŠATAN as symbol of God's justice or (just) enticement

One of the most prominent way that the Gemara portrays the ŠATAN as a symbol of divine justice is in response to hubris. For instance, the Gemara warns three times, “A person should never open his mouth to the ŠATAN.” In one case, Yehuda bar Nahmani is saying words of comfort to a mourner:

l. i. Ket. 8b (Ber. 19a, Ber. 60a)

פתח ואמר: אחינו המיוגעים המדוכאין באבל הזה, תנו לבבכם לחקור את זאת, זאת היא עומדת לעד, נתיב הוא מששת ימי בראשית, רבים שתו רבים ישתו, כמשתה ראשונים כך משתה אחרונים, אחינו, בעל נחמות ינחם אתכם, ברוך מנחם אבלים. אמר אביי: רבים שתו לימא, רבים ישתו לא לימא, משתה ראשונים לימא, משתה אחרונים לא לימא, דאר"ש בן לקיש, וכן תנא משמיה דר' יוסי: לעולם אל יפתח אדם פיו לשטן אמר רב יוסף: מאי קרא? (ישעיהו א') כסדם היינו לעמורה דמינו, מאי אהדר ליה? שמעו דבר ה' קציני סדום וגו'.

He spoke and said: Our brethren, who are worn out, who are crushed by this bereavement, set your heart to consider this: This it is [that] stands for ever, it is a path from the six days of creation. Many have drunk, many will drink, as the drinking of the first ones, so will be that of the last ones. Our brethren, the Lord of consolation comfort you. Blessed be He who comforts the mourners. Said Abaye: ‘Many have drunk’ he should have said, ‘many will drink’ he should not have said; ‘the drinking of the first ones’, he should have said, ‘the drinking of the last ones’ he should not have said; for R. Shimon ben Lakish said, and so one has taught in the name of R. Yosi: **A person should never open his mouth to [the] ŠATAN.** Said R. Joseph: What text [shows this]? *We should have been as Sodom, we should have been like unto Gomorrah* (Isa 1:9). What did He [God] reply unto him [Isaiah]? *Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom, etc.* (Ket. 8b).

In R. Joseph’s proof-text God (through his prophet) calls the Jewish people “rulers of Sodom” in response to their self-comparison to Sodom. In other words, the comparison was invited, so the comparison was made. The Gemara is thus understanding R. Yosi’s expression, “open his mouth to [the] ŠATAN” to be talking about God, not any other entity.³⁰⁵

Without the proof-text, the lesson would sound superstitious — avoid mentioning hypothetical bad tidings (‘the drinking of the last ones’) lest you bring it upon yourself. With

³⁰⁵ The versions in Ber. 19a and Ber. 60a are the same teaching of Shimon b. Lakish/Yosi in different contexts.

the proof-text, the lesson becomes: God often mercifully withholds strict justice, but he does respond to human speech, and calling oneself sinful is akin to asking for judgment. This ŠAṬAN appears to mean simply “divine justice”.

Not only should one avoid “praying” for judgment by opening his mouth to the ŠAṬAN, the Gemara quotes Rabbi’s personal prayer at the end of the liturgical Amida to teach that one should specifically ask for protection against divine justice:³⁰⁶

2. ii. *Ber. 16b*

רבי בתר צלותיה אמר הכי: יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהינו ואלהי אבותינו שתצילנו מעזי פנים ומעזות פנים, מאדם רע ומפגע רע, מיצר רע, מחבר רע, משכן רע, ומשטן המשחית, ומדין קשה ומבעל דין קשה, בין שהוא בן ברית בין שאינו בן ברית.

Rabbi on concluding his prayer added the following: May it be Your will, O Lord our God, and God of our fathers, to deliver us from the impudent and from impudence, from an evil man, from evil hap, from the evil impulse, from an evil companion, from an evil neighbor, and from ŠAṬAN the destroyer, from a hard lawsuit and from a hard opponent, whether he is a son of the covenant or not a son of the covenant (*Ber. 16b*).

This “destroyer” (*ŠAṬAN hamash ’hit*) appears to be a reference to “the destroying angel” of 2 Sam 24:16 (and 1 Chron 21:15) that God mercifully stops from carrying out his full justice against the people.³⁰⁷ Rabbi (or the Gemara) seems to assume that the audience knows what the ŠAṬAN represents (divine justice) and is in effect teaching that the destroying angel of God is the ŠAṬAN, i.e., it represent divine justice. The broad lesson is that one does bring it upon oneself but also that God may suppress it in an act of mercy.

3. iii. *Shab. 32a*

This use of ŠAṬAN as a symbol of divine justice is amplified in a more complex *sugya* in *Shab. 32a*, which begins with a mishna that lists the three transgressions for which a woman

³⁰⁶ See Rabbi’s parallel prayer for one’s dinner host in the Type 1 section, below.

³⁰⁷ The connection between the ŠAṬAN and “angels of destruction (*malachei habbala*) is also found in *Lev. Rab. 6:3* (cited in Ch. 3§B.6 above), which uses *Job 1:7* for a proof-text.

might die during childbirth. The Gemara then seeks to explain why these three are singled out. Each transgression is homiletically linked to an aspect of childbirth. The point is that the Gemara seeks to demonstrate the justness of the punishment: childbirth, being a naturally dangerous experience, makes a woman more susceptible to a punishment that she has already earned.

The Gemara then shifts focus to men, teaching that whenever a man puts himself in danger, such as crossing a bridge, he increasing his vulnerability to divine retribution. The implication is that the retribution would not be for the dangerous activity per se; rather, the danger is natural, but protection from a natural danger requires sufficient spiritual merit. To this point, the Gemara relates a dispute between the Amoraim Rav and Samuel (Babylonia, ca. 250 CE):

רב לא עבר במברא דיתיב ביה גוי, אמר: דילמא מיפקיד ליה דינא עליה, ומתפיסנא בהדיה. שמואל לא עבר אלא במברא דאית ביה גוי, אמר: שטנא בתרי אומי לא שליט.

Rav never crossed a bridge³⁰⁸ that a Gentile was sitting on, for he said, “Perhaps a heavenly judgment will come upon him, and I will be punished with him.” Samuel would only cross a bridge that had a Gentile on it, saying, “*šṭna* doesn’t attack³⁰⁹ two nations³¹⁰ [simultaneously].” (Shab. 32a)

Typical of the disputes between Rav and Samuel,³¹¹ here their views on how to cross a bridge safely appear diametrically opposite. It seems to me they both agree on the principle of not

³⁰⁸ Or “on a ferry”; see Jastrow and §8.xiii. below.

³⁰⁹ Lit., “dominate”.

³¹⁰ Or, “nationalities” per Jastrow.

³¹¹ Samuel’s statement is interesting. He uses the Aramaic *šṭna*, which only occurs one other time in the Bavli (Men. 62a/Suk. 38a, discussed below) and otherwise nowhere else in rabbinic literature. Superficially, his terminology resembles the third Tanach category (grammatically-related forms, Ch. 3§C above); given the centrality of the Biblical text to the life and worldview of a Sage, and the strong orality of his culture, I imagine – yet cannot prove – that he had Gen. 26:21 in mind when using the term. Linguistically, *šṭna* is merely the Aramaic form of ŠAṬAN, found consistently in Onkelos, Pseudo-Jonathan and Jonathan. Yet it was not

putting oneself in danger. Rav, however, evidently considers himself righteous enough to be generally protected from danger, while Samuel regards himself as less than perfectly righteous and therefore vulnerable.³¹² Clearly, the Gemara is effectively defining ŠATAN as “divine judgment”.

Therefore, this *sugya* contains two lessons, one halachic and one philosophical or theological. The halachic lesson is not to endanger oneself.³¹³ With this halachic conclusion, the philosophical lesson from Samuel’s statement about the ŠATAN becomes clear. Samuel apparently means – insofar as the Gemara is employing him in the *sugya* – that putting oneself

uncommon for Amoraim to use the Hebrew ŠATAN while otherwise speaking Aramaic, viz., B. Bat. 16a: “אתא שטן נשקיה לרעיה”. Therefore, his word choice may be a deliberate allusion to Gen. 26:21.

³¹² I have chosen this interpretation of the *sugya* because it seems to me the simplest, and there is circumstantial evidence from elsewhere in the Talmud to these two self-assessments. On three separate occasions (Yev. 21a, Hul. 59a and Nid. 65a) Samuel attributes Rav’s good fortune to the fact that Rav is righteous and therefore protected from error. In the first two cases, Samuel is the agent of Rav’s fortune, but Rav in turn credits his colleague with wisdom rather than righteousness. Note that for a righteous person to speak of his own righteousness is not necessarily boastful or hubristic (see the incident of Hanina b. Dosa in note 263 above), and in any event here Rav does not overtly call himself righteous, he merely acts accordingly.

Alternatively, the dispute may be framed as whether or not an act of divine judgment against an individual can affect an innocent bystander of a different ethnicity: Rav is of the opinion that it can, Samuel is of the opinion that it cannot. Rav’s distinction between Gentile and Jewish companions implies that Gentiles are more prone to acts of divine justice or to the kinds of divine justice that are visited upon travelers. (Elsewhere the Gemara states that righteousness or wickedness of one’s companions can increase or decrease one’s protection from danger; see Sanh. 93a. See also Yaakov Elman, “When Permission is Given: Aspects of Divine Providence,” *Tradition* 24, no. 4 [Summer 1989], who discusses a midrashic interpretation of Deut 32:22 that there can be collateral damage once divine anger has been stirred. See also Maimonides, *Guide* II:48.)

For his part, the fact that Samuel employs his loophole specifically when crossing a bridge implies that a bridge represents a greater-than-usual danger. Rav presumes that the Jew riding (with a Gentile) is himself innocent; for were he guilty, he would bring divine punishment upon himself regardless of who is sharing the ride. Samuel presumes that the Jew may be guilty; hence he should use the loophole in the rules of divine punishment to avoid danger on the road. Nonetheless, the meaning of Samuel’s ŠATAN is still “heavenly judgment.”

³¹³ Codified by Maimonides (*Yad*, Hil. Shm. Hanefesh 12).

at risk in violation of this halacha makes one prone to divine judgment. In this vein, Samuel and the Gemara are putting a Babylonian legal-philosophical spin on a midrashic dictum by the Tanna R. Eliezer b. Yaakov that “*ain HASATAN mikat'reig ela b'sha'at ha'sakana* - HASATAN only accuses in time of danger” (Gen Rab. 91:9³¹⁴).³¹⁵ A similar teaching occurs elsewhere in the Bavli:

³¹⁴ Echoed by R. Levi in Eccl. Rab. 3:3. There is an additional trace of this teaching in Ber. 51a where Rabbi Joshua b. Levi says that the Angel of Death taught him when in a time of danger to pray for divine mercy using the verse from Zech 3:2, “May God rebuke you, O SATAN etc.” discussed in Ch. 3§B.5 above.

³¹⁵ Rav’s view of Gentile sinfulness is mentioned elsewhere in his comment on a *beraita* about Gehenna:

פושעי ישראל בגופן, ופושעי אומות העולם בגופן יורדין לגיהנם, ונידונין בה שנים
עשר חדש, לאחר שנים עשר חדש גופן כלה, ונשמתן נשרפת, ורוח מפזרתן תחת
כפות רגלי צדיקים.... פושעי ישראל בגופן מאי ניהו? אמר רב: קרקפתא דלא מנח
תפילין. פושעי אומות העולם בגופן אמר רב: בעבירה.

Wrongdoers of Israel who sin with their body and wrongdoers of the Gentiles who sin with their body go down to Gehenna and are punished there for twelve months. After twelve months their body is consumed and their soul is burnt and the wind scatters them under the soles of the feet of the righteous.... What is meant by “wrongdoers of Israel who sin with their body”? — Rav said: a cranium which did not³¹⁵ put on the phylacteries. Who are the “wrongdoers of the Gentiles who sin with their body”? — Rav said: This refers to [sexual] sin (RH 17a).

There is nothing to indicate why Rav would consider sexual sin more egregious than the other precepts of the Noahide Code (*b. San* 56a). Perhaps he is thinking of the list of three cardinal sins for which a Jew should rather give his life than to perform (*b. Yoma* 82a; *ibid.* 9b). But murder is also included therein, and is performed with the body. On the Jewish side, there are numerous precepts performed with the body. Therefore it seems to me that Rav is mentioning phylacteries and sexual sin as typical rather than limiting examples: Gentile disregard for sexual taboos is for Gentiles as wicked (and perhaps as prevalent) as Jewish disregard for phylacteries is for Jews (Rav had a reputation for encouraging stricter observance in Jewish communities of Babylonia; see *Eruv*. 100b, *Git.* 6a, *Meg.* 5b). Presumably, then, Gentile disregard for less severe precepts is even more prevalent, hence his extra caution at crossing a bridge with a Gentile on it. Therefore, the *sugya* is perhaps teaching that the principle of divine justice represented by the SATAN is more stringent towards Jews than Gentiles.

3. iv. Ber. 51a

אמר רבי יהושע בן לוי, שלשה דברים סח לי מלאך המות: אל תטול חלוקך שחרית מיד השמש ותלבש ואל תטול ידיך ממי שלא נטל ידיו ואל תעמוד לפני הנשים בשעה שחוזרות מן המת, מפני שאני מרקד ובא לפנייהן וחרבי בידי ויש לי רשות לחבל. ואי פגע מאי תקנתיה? לינשוף מדוכתיה ארבע אמות, אי איכא נהרא ליעבריה, ואי איכא דרכא אחרינא ליזיל בה, ואי איכא גודא ליקו אחורא, ואי לא ליהדר אפיה ולימא (זכריה ג') ויאמר ה' אל השטן יגער ה' בך וגו' עד דחלפי מיניה.

Rabbi Joshua b. Levi says: Three things were told me by the Angel of Death. Do not take your shirt from your attendant when dressing in the morning, and do not let water be poured on your hands by one who has not washed his own hands, and do not stand in front of women when they are returning from the presence of a dead person, because I go leaping in front of them with my sword in my hand, and I have permission to harm. If one should happen to meet them what is his remedy? — Let him turn aside four cubits; if there is a river, let him cross it, and if there is another road let him take it, and if there is a wall, let him stand behind it; and if he cannot do any of these things, let him turn his face away and say, *And God said to HAŠAṬAN, “May God rebuke you, HAŠAṬAN; etc. until they have passed by (Ber. 51a).³¹⁶*

Putting oneself in danger makes one more vulnerable to divine justice. To counter that risk, one should invoke divine mercy by quoting Zech 3:2, which (as presented above in Ch. 3§B.5) refers to divine mercy overpowering divine justice. To the rabbis, this is indeed a nemesis-like ŠAṬAN, but it springs from the divine source and does not represent an independent force or being. Both this *sugya* of Ber. 51a and the previous one (Shab. 32a) are consistent with the concept of ŠAṬAN representing the nemesis-like way in which God responds to hubris: it is the epitome of hubris to endanger oneself needlessly.

A final point about this *sugya* will complete the discussion. It is revealing that Samuel mentions the ŠAṬAN specifically in the context of crossing a bridge. The bridge represents a stereotypical “dangerous place”. The *sugya* is teaching a moral lesson in contrast to fatalism and materialism. A fatalist will not worry about a bridge any more than about getting out of bed in the morning. A materialist won’t worry about the spiritual merits of one’s bridge companions, only about the quality of the bridge. Contrary to such views, both Rav and Samuel — hence our

³¹⁶ This passage was quoted above in Ch. 3§B.5.

sugya — are teaching that divine retribution is just, yet often withheld. Ordinarily, God may withhold punishment due a person but when a person negligently puts himself in danger, then the ŠATAN — i.e., just retribution — may strike.

This theme of justice tempered by mercy is borne out in the conclusion of a *sugya* on RH 16a-18a, regarding the process of divine judgment of Rosh Hashana. After listing various ways a person may tip the metaphorical divine scale away from justice and towards mercy, the Gemara mentions several optimistic homilies of the sages:³¹⁷

רב הונא רמי: כתיב (תהלים קמה) צדיק ה' בכל דרכיו, וכתיב וחסיד בכל מעשיו. בתחלה צדיק, ולבסוף חסיד. רבי אלעזר רמי: כתיב (תהלים סב) ולך ה' חסד, וכתיב כי אתה תשלם לאיש כמעשהו, בתחלה כי אתה תשלם כמעשהו, ולבסוף ולך ה' חסד. אילפי, ואמרי לה אילפא, רמי: כתיב (שמות לד) ורב חסד, וכתיב ואמת! בתחלה ואמת, ולבסוף ורב חסד.

R. Huna contrasted [two parts of the same verse (Ps 145:17)]. It is written, *The Lord is righteous in all his ways*, and then it is written, *and gracious in all his works*. [How is this]? — At first, righteous and at the end gracious.

R. Elazar contrasted [two parts of the same verse (Ps 62:13)]: It is written, *Unto you, O Lord, belongs mercy*, and then it is written, *For you render to every man according to his work (ibid.)* [How is this]? — At first, *You render to every man according to his work*, but at the end, *unto you, O Lord, belongs mercy*.

Ilpi (and some say Ilpa) contrasted [two parts of the same verse (Exod 34:6)]: It is written, *Abundant in kindness* and then it is written, *and truth* — [How is this?] At first, *Truth*, and at the end, *Abundant in kindness* [emphases added] (RH 17b).

These three hermeneutical *drashot* are very interesting as a set. The first, of R. Huna, seems straightforward: the former and latter parts of the verse represent the linearity of divine providence: first judgment, then mercy. The second and third *drashot*, however (R. Elazar and Ilpi) is completely illogical. The linear reading of both verses (Ps 62:13 and Exod 34:6) is mercy followed by judgment. In a classic example of eisegesis, Elazar and Ilpi reverse this order and declare that the verse is teaching judgment followed by mercy. They (and by extension the Talmudic redactor who preserved their statements) are imposing their (rabbinic) views of providence on the Torah. The passage, and its *sugya*, is further significant in that it

³¹⁷ The *beraita* quoted in note 315 above is taken from this *sugya*.

states categorically that judgment and punishment are attributed directly to God. There is no ŠAṬAN here, neither ontological nor metaphorical. The implication here is that when the Bavli elsewhere does describe divine judgment and punishment coming from or through the ŠAṬAN, these other statements and *sugyot* are using the term as mere idiom. This rule applies to both the overtly theurgical ŠAṬAN, such as in Ber. 51a where Rabbi Joshua b. Levi quotes Zech 3:2 (see Ch. 4§B.5 above) and the apparently psychological ŠAṬAN, such as in Yom. 67b where a *beraita* lists five illogical Torah laws that “HAŠAṬAN and the nations of the world object to”:

4. v. Yom. 67b

ואת חקתי תשמרו – דברים שהשטן ואומות העולם משיבים עליהן, ואלו הן: אכילת חזיר, ולבישת שעטנז, וחליצת יבמה, וטהרת מצורע, ושעיר המשתלח. ושמא תאמר מעשה תוהו הם תלמוד לומר (ויקרא יח) אני ה' אני ה' חקקתיו, ואין לך רשות להרהר בהן.

And you will guard my statutes (Lev 18:4) — Things that HAŠAṬAN and the nations of the world object to, namely: [the prohibitions of] eating pork, wearing mixed fibers, the chalitzah of a *yavamah*, the purification of a *metzora* and the goat that is sent away. And perhaps you will say they are empty acts? The Torah [therefore] states: *I am God* (*ibid.*): I, God, decreed it, and you do not have permission to doubt them (Yom. 67b).

The basis of the objection is that these precepts are inherently irrational. HAŠAṬAN in both cases refers to a person’s natural resistance to an irrational commandment. By calling this feeling HAŠAṬAN, the Gemara is clearly using the term to describe a psychological phenomenon. This psychology could be defined as hubristic in the sense that the assumption behind it is “I know better than the Torah”.

This conceptual use of the ŠAṬAN term appears to be the intention of the children who expound the Hebrew alphabet in Rabbi Joshua ben Levi’s study hall. After completing the entire aleph-bet, they expound according to the *atbash* method (first and last letters paired, then second paired with next-to-last, etc.):

5. vi. *Shab. 104a*

מדת צדיקים:
 א"ת ב"ש אם אתה בוש,
 ג"ר ד"ק אם אתה עושה כן גור בדוק,
 ה"ץ ו"ף חציצה הוי בינך לאף,
 ז"ע ח"ס ט"ן ואין אתה מזדעזע מן השטן...

The interpretation for the righteous is:

AT BaSH: If you are ashamed [to sin] [attah Bosh], then

Gar Dak [i.e.,] dwell [Gur] in heaven [Dok].

Hatz Waf there will be a barrier [Hazizah] between you and wrath [af] —

Za' Has Tan nor will you tremble [mizda'aze'a] before HAŠAṬAN... (Shab. 104a).

This ŠAṬAN is a simple expression for “divine justice”, from which the righteous have nothing to fear.

b. Metaphorical

The second category of ŠAṬAN falls somewhere between the purely idiomatic ŠAṬAN that means “divine justice” and the highly-anthropomorphic character who has a voice and personality. The ŠAṬAN statements and expressions in this category are border-line anthropomorphic, often using the proper name form, ŠAṬAN. Therefore, when quoted out of context, they can sound like the Gemara means an independent ontological being. However, when understood in both their local *sugya* and in the greater context of the Bavli, they are clearly without any intention of an independent being.

The epitome of this category is the reported practice of Rav Aḥa bar Jacob:

6. vii. *Suk. 38a (Men. 62a)*

רב אחא בר יעקב ממטי ליה ומייתי ליה ומחוי הכי ואמר: גירא בעינא דשטנא.
 ולא מילתא היא, משום דאתי לאתגרוי ביה.

Rav Aḥa bar Jacob would thrust [his lulav] and wave it and say, “a poke in ŠAṬAN’s eye!” And this is not recommended³¹⁸ because it will come to provoke him/it (Suk. 38a).

³¹⁸ Lit., “not a matter [for imitation]”.

Rav Aḥa's practice is triumphal, as if to say, "I've conquered my ŚAṬAN! I've conquered my *yetzer hara* (evil inclination)!" In recording Rav Aḥa's practice for posterity, the passage teaches an important lesson: waving the lulav is the culmination of the fall festivals, the overriding theme of which is repentance, redirecting one's passions towards divine service. The ŚAṬAN refers to divine justice; its "eye" and poking him/it in the eye is a metaphor: I have repented to the point that divine justice cannot see me. But the Gemara comments: "One should not do this because it will provoke it," meaning that acting hubristically towards one's passions will only arouse them: a person is not static, and while he may have conquered his personal passions at their current level, *declaring* victory is hubristic — precisely the behavior that "provokes the ŚAṬAN", i.e., makes one susceptible to a new round of divine justice.

7. viii.-ix. *Yom. 20a, Ned. 32b*; 7. x. *RH 16b*

Here, as elsewhere, a person's ŚAṬAN is the nemesis-like way in which divine justice responds to hubris. In an elevated state, such as during the triumphal lulav procession of Sukkot, one may feel one has transcended ego and hubris and therefore immune to the ŚAṬAN. Similarly, in *Yom. 20a* (repeated in *Ned. 32b*³¹⁹) Rami bar Ḥama observes that the numerical value of HAŚAṬAN is 364 which the Gemara interprets in the name of Elijah as a homiletical pointer to Yom Kippur, the one day each year when HAŚAṬAN cannot act (לֹא־טוֹנִי), presumably due to the community's elevated state. On Rosh Hashana, the beginning of the Days of Awe holiday season, one needs to work harder to overcome that ŚAṬAN; R. Isaac therefore says to blow the shofar and wail (וּתוֹקְעִין וּמְרִיעִין) in order to "confuse HAŚAṬAN" (*RH 16b*). If the ŚAṬAN

³¹⁹ There it is said in the name of R. Ammi b. Abba. The names are similar enough to suspect it originated as one statement that became corrupted through oral transmission.

represents God's response to hubris, then it is telling that the Talmud advises "confusing" it on Rosh Hashanah; it is as if to say, blowing the shofar will stir you out of your own hubris.³²⁰

8. xi. *Qid. 30a*

The theme of ŠATAN as a term for the nemesis-quality of divine justice is repeated by Rav Ḥisda who declares, "The reason that I am superior to my colleagues is that I married at sixteen, and had I married at fourteen, I would have said to [the] ŠATAN, 'An arrow in your eye'" (*Qid. 30a*). The "in-the-eye" expression's earliest recorded use is by the Tanna Pleemo (ca. 200):

8. xii. *Qid. 81a*

פלימו הוה רגיל למימר כל יומא: גירא בעיניה דשטן. יומא חד מעלי יומא דכיפורי הוה, אידמי ליה כעניא, אתא קרא אבבא, אפיקו ליה ריפתא, אמר ליה: יומא כי האידנא כולי עלמא גואי, ואנא אברא? עייליה וקריבו ליה ריפתא. אמר ליה: יומא כי האידנא כולי עלמא אתכא, ואנא לחודא? אתיוהו אותבוהו אתכא. הוה יתיב מלא נפשיה שיחנא וכיבי עליה, והוה קעביד ביה מילי דמאיס, א"ל: תיב שפיר. אמר ליה: הבו לי כסא, יהבו ליה כסא, אכמר שדא ביה כיחו, נחרו ביה, שקא ומית. שמעו דהו קאמרי: פלימו קטל גברא! פלימו קטל גברא! ערק וטשא נפשיה בבית הכסא, אזיל בתריה נפל קמיה. כי דחזייה דהוה מצטער גלי ליה נפשיה, אמר ליה: מאי טעמא אמרת הכי? ואלא היכי אימא? אמר ליה, לימא מר: רחמנא נגער ביה בשטן.

Pleemo used to say every day, "An arrow in the eye of ŠATAN!" One day on Yom Kippur eve he [ŠATAN] appeared to him like a poor man, he came and called at the door, and they brought him bread; he said to him, "A day when everyone is inside, I should be outside?" [So] they brought him in and brought him bread. He said to him, "A day when all sit at the table, I should sit alone?" [So] they led him and sat him at the table. As he sat, his body was covered with festering sores, and he was behaving repulsively. They said to him: "Sit properly!" He said to him, "Give me a drink," they brought him a drink. He coughed and spat his phlegm into it. They scolded him, he swooned and died. Then they heard people saying, "Pleemo killed a man, Pleemo killed a man!" He [Pleemo] fled and hid in a privy; he [the ŠATAN-beggar] followed him, and he fell before him. Seeing how he was suffering, he [the ŠATAN-beggar] disclosed his identity and said to him, "Why have you spoken thus?" "Then how am I to speak?" "You should say: 'May the Merciful rebuke ŠATAN'" (*Qid. 81a-b*).

³²⁰ See Mayer Abramowitz, "The Satan and Rabbi Yizhak," *Conservative Judaism* 35, no. 1 (1981): 22, who argues that this "confused" ŠATAN of RH 16b originally had the connotation of a human enemy. The present interpretation suggests applying his compelling logic to the hypothesis that the redactors intended *both* meanings.

Superficially, this fanciful legend is pure folklore. Yet one can imagine much of the drama having literally occurred. Pleemo may have actually had a habit of cursing ŠAṬAN and he may have had an embarrassing incident with a beggar on Yom Kippur eve. He may even have had an insight that the beggar incident was divine retribution for his cursing the ŠAṬAN.³²¹

The Talmud thus appears to take the raw material of two historic elements (Pleemo's habit of cursing the ŠAṬAN and his frightful encounter with a beggar) and crafts it into a parable. Had Rav Aḥa bar Jacob known this parable it is hard to imagine him consciously replicating Pleemo's erroneous expression. Separated by a hundred years and hundreds of miles, it is entirely plausible that he had never heard it and invented the expression independently.³²² In either case, the Gemara treats both with the same critique: do not act hubristically towards the ŠAṬAN; rather ask for divine protection or mercy.

The full meaning of the parable becomes evident only in its denouement. Originally he would say, "An arrow in the eye of ŠAṬAN!" We learn at the end that he should rather say, "May God rebuke ŠAṬAN." If ŠAṬAN represents divine justice or enticement, saying "an arrow in the eye of ŠAṬAN" is akin to saying, "divine justice cannot see me." His intent is presumably noble, perhaps akin to a prayer, "May I deserve no enticement today." However, the tone is

³²¹ While one is tempted to classify Pleemo's ŠAṬAN story as anthropomorphic (section c. below), I have assigned it to the metaphorical category due to a small distinction. The metaphorical category includes all ŠAṬAN characters that appear as *real-world beings*, including people and animals where phrases such as "appeared to him as ____" are expressions of providence. The narrator does not intend the reader to think that a veritable shape-changing demon appeared. Rather, a person or animal appeared at precisely the right time and in precisely the right manner to entice the subject — the role of a heaven-sent nemesis.

³²² It is equally plausible that the legend was invented after Rav Aḥa bar Jacob's time. It is quite typical of the Talmud to relate such a fanciful legend about a Tanna but offer no consequence other than a mild rebuke to an Amora who makes the same error. To the writers and redactors of the Talmud, themselves Amoraim, the Tannaim were legendary, almost mythical characters.

presumptuous, and the wording defiant, even triumphant (hubristic), not prayerful. The corrected expression is humble, acknowledging that there is a ŠATAN who has legitimate accusations, but requesting that the divine attribute of mercy overcome the attribute of justice.³²³

Pleemo's story has even greater depth in the broader context of the *sugya*. The *sugya* begins with a mishna presenting the laws prohibiting seclusion (with members of the opposite sex), meant to prevent immorality. After discussing the laws from several angles, the Gemara relates five legendary tales of sages who were tempted by immorality.³²⁴ Like Pleemo, the other two Tannaitic tales in the set include encounters with the ŠATAN, beginning with R. Meir:

8. xiii. *Qid. 81a-b*

רבי מאיר הוה מתלוצץ בעוברי עבירה, יומא חד אידמי ליה שטן כאיתתא בהך גיסא דנהרא, לא הוה מברא, נקט מצרא וקא עבר. כי מטא פלגא מצרא שבקיה, אמר: אי לא דקא מכרזי ברקיעא הזהרו בר' מאיר ותורתו, שויתיה לדמך תרתי מעי. ר' עקיבא הוה מתלוצץ בעוברי עבירה, יומא חד אידמי ליה שטן כאיתתא בריש דיקלא, נקטיה לדיקלא וקסליק ואזיל. כי מטא לפלגיה דדיקלא שבקיה, אמר: אי לאו דמכרזי ברקיעא הזהרו ברבי עקיבא ותורתו, שויתיה לדמך תרתי מעי.

R. Meir used to scoff at transgressors [of sexual immorality]. One day [a] ŠATAN appeared to him in the guise of a woman on the opposite bank of the river. As there was no ferry,³²⁵ he seized the rope and proceeded across. When he had reached half way along the rope, he [the ŠATAN] released him saying: "Had they not proclaimed in Heaven, 'Be careful with R. Meir and his Torah,' I would have valued your life at two nickels." R. Akiva used to scoff at transgressors. One day [a] ŠATAN appeared to him as a woman on the top of a palm tree. He grasped the tree and went climbing up: but when he reached half-way up the tree he released him saying: "Had they not proclaimed in Heaven, 'Be careful with R. Akiva and his Torah,' I would have valued your life at two nickels" (*Qid. 81a*).

³²³ Kosman (*Masekhet Gevarim*, 106) argues that this is the plain meaning of the passage; there is therefore no basis for Adam Silverstein's presentation of this narrative as proof that "some Jews on the eve of Islam believed that Satan could be warded off by pelting him with objects" (Adam Silverstein, "On the Original Meaning of the Qur'anic Term *al-shaytān al-rajīm*," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 133, no. 1 [2013]: 23).

³²⁴ Beginning on *Qid. 80b*: the Amora R. Amram Chasida; the Tannaim R. Meir, R. Akiva, and Pleemo; and the Amora R. Hiyah bar Ashi.

³²⁵ Or "bridge"; see Jastrow and §3.iii. above.

In order to identify this ŠATAN, the Talmudic context is essential: a *sugya* on the laws of seclusion. By inserting this aggadic narrative here, the Gemara implies that violating the laws of seclusion will lead to immoral temptation: divine justice through enticement. To that principle the narrative adds two points: that even a great sage is susceptible to immoral seduction, especially if he acts hubristically toward commoners; and that Torah learning is a prophylactic against this type of retributive seduction. Thus, this ŠATAN is very familiar: it is the principle of divine justice in reaction to hubris, expressed through a nemesis-like measure-for-measure enticement in exactly that area in which the person is guilty of hubris. In both cases of this *sugya* (R. Meir/R. Akiva and Pleemo), the ŠATAN is also presented didactically, explaining himself to the protagonists.³²⁶

This model further helps explain an otherwise cryptic lesson. The Gemara relates that when King Hezekiah fell ill, the prophet Elijah assembled a study session outside the king's home, which the Gemara initially takes, and then retracts, as an example to emulate:

8. xiv. Eruv. 26a

מכאן לתלמיד חכם שחלה שמושיבין ישיבה על פתחו.
ולאו מילתא היא, דילמא אתי לאיגרוי ביה שטן.

From here we learn that when a scholar falls ill, a [Torah study] session is to be held at his door. This, however, is not the [proper] course since ŠATAN might thereby be provoked against him (Eruv. 26a).

The motive for the study session is presumably to ward off the Angel of Death (per Mak. 10a *inter alia*), a noble goal. However, the Gemara advises against the practice because assembling a class at his home may nurture a feeling of superiority on the part of the ill scholar, similar to the “in-the-eye” expression of Pleemo, Rav Aḥa bar Jacob and Rav Ḥisda, thus making him

³²⁶ Schechter (*Aspects*, 246) cites Avot 2:16 and 4:28 as evidence that the primary temptation is lust. The present discussion suggests that those Tannaic sources as well as the Gemara here, are using lust as a stereotypical example of temptation, but not limiting the definition.

susceptible to the nemesis-like response to hubris. This reading of the Gemara gives a plausible solution to the problem created by equating the ŠATAN with the Angel of Death (B. Bat. 16a, 10.xxiii. below). If they are mere synonyms, how could the same action have two opposite results, both warding off and attracting death? And if the practice is inherently dangerous, why would Elijah do so at all?³²⁷ These problems disappear when reading this ŠATAN as a metaphor for the divine force of nemesis in response to the provocation of hubris. The Torah study may be a death-defying merit while the hubris attracts danger. The action is therefore not inherently dangerous, but may be so for many people.

The metaphorical motif of ŠATAN appearing as a worldly creature to entice for a didactic purpose occurs in two parallel texts describing divine tests of King David:

8.xv. *Sanh. 95a*

אמר ליה הקדוש ברוך הוא לדוד: עד מתי יהיה עון זה טמון בידך? על ידך נהרגה נוב עיר הכהנים, ועל ידך נטרד דואג האדומי, ועל ידך נהרגו שאול ושלושת בניו. רצונך יכלו זרעך או תמסר ביד אויב? אמר לפניו: רבוננו של עולם! מוטב אמסר ביד אויב, ולא יכלה זרעי. יומא חד נפק לשכור בזאי. אתא שטן ואידמי ליה כטביא, פתק ביה גירא ולא מטייה. משכיה עד דאמטייה לארץ פלשתים. כדחזייה ישבי בנוב אמר: היינו האי דקטליה לגלית אחי. כפתיה, קמטיה, אותביה ושדייה תותי בי בדייא.

The Holy One, blessed be He said to David, “How long will this crime be unpunished? Through you Nob, the city of Priests, was massacred; through you Doeg the Edomite was banished; and through you Saul and his three sons were slain: would you rather your line to end, or be delivered unto the enemy's hand? He replied: ‘Sovereign of the Universe! I would rather be delivered into the enemy's hand than that my line should end.’ One day, when he [David] ventured forth to Sekhor Bizzae, ŠATAN appeared before him in the guise of a deer. He shot arrows at him, but did not reach him, and was thus led on until he happened upon the land of the Philistines. When Ishbi-benob saw him, he said, ‘It is he who slew my brother Goliath.’ So he bound him, doubled him up and cast him under an olive press (Sanh. 95a).

³²⁷ It has been suggested to me that it is not the sick sage who is prone to hubris, thinking himself worthy of all the attention; rather it is perhaps the students who are prone to hubris, thinking themselves sufficiently worthy to repel the Angel of Death. Their hubris might ironically attract the Angel of Death (and this is different from the putative precedent of Elijah, because he was not susceptible to hubris).

The narrative is explicit: ŠATAN represents God's justice, giving David his due for his role in the massacre of Nob, the banishment of Doeg and the death of Saul and his sons. The image of David being given a choice of punishments is undoubtedly meant to recall 2 Sam 24:12-13, turning the punishment into a test. In this case, the enticement into the dangerous land of the Philistines is represented narratively by the ŠATAN but "historically" in the form of a deer.

Perhaps the question itself is meant as a didactic test. God poses the question as a choice between "a rock and a hard place" with no "right" answer; in fact, other responses may have been offered, such as "neither, please" or "I'll leave it up to you." In other words, perhaps the Gemara's message here is that David has the opportunity to say, "May the Merciful rebuke ŠATAN," as Pleemo is instructed to do, but instead chooses to accept the test, to his detriment.

This interpretation is supported by a parallel aggadah a few pages later in the Gemara:

8.xvi. *Sanh. 107a*

אמר רב יהודה אמר רב: לעולם אל יביא אדם עצמו לידי נסיון, שהרי דוד מלך ישראל הביא עצמו לידי נסיון ונכשל. אמר לפניו: רבונו של עולם, מפני מה אומרים, אלהי אברהם אלהי יצחק ואלהי יעקב ואין אומרים אלהי דוד? אמר: אינהו מינסו לי, ואת לא מינסית לי, אמר לפניו: רבונו של עולם, בחנני ונסני. שנאמר (תהלים כ"ו) בחנני ה' ונסני וגו'. אמר: מינסנא לך, ועבידנא מילתא בהדך, דלדידהו לא הדעתניהו ואילו אנא קא מדענא לך, דמנסנא לך בדבר ערוה. מיד (שמואל ב' י"א) ויהי לעת הערב ויקם דוד מעל משכבו וגו' אמר רב יהודה: שהפך משכבו של לילה למשכבו של יום, ונתעלמה ממנו הלכה: אבר קטן יש באדם, משביעו רעב, ומרעיבו שבע. (שמואל ב' י"א) ויתהלך על גג בית המלך וירא אשה רוחצת מעל הגג והאשה טובת מראה מאד, בת שבע הוה קא חייפא רישא תותי חלתא, אתא שטן אידמי ליה כציפרתא, פתק ביה גירא, פתקא לחלתא, איגליה וחזייה.

Rab Judah said in Rab's name: One should never bring himself to a divine test, since David king of Israel did so, and stumbled. He said unto Him, "Sovereign of the Universe! Why do we say [in prayer] 'The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,' but not 'the God of David?'" He replied, "They were tried by me, but you were not." "Then," he replied, "Sovereign of the Universe, examine and try me" — as it is written, *Examine me, O Lord, and try me* (Ps 26:1). He answered "I will test you, and yet do something for you, for I did not inform them [of the nature of their trial beforehand], yet, I inform you that I will try you in a matter of adultery." Straightway, *And it came to pass in an evening, that David arose from off his bed etc.* (2 Sam 11:2). R. Yoḥanan said: He changed his night couch to a day couch, but he forgot a *halachah*: there is a small organ in man which satisfies him in his hunger but makes him hunger when satisfied. *And he walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon (ibid.).* Bathsheba was cleansing her hair behind a screen, when ŠATAN came to him, appearing

in the shape of a bird. He shot an arrow at him, which broke the screen, thus she stood revealed, and he saw her (Sanh. 107a).

This ŚAṬAN is no ontological trickster metamorphosing into various creatures. This is the Gemara's colorful way of saying, "God responded to his hubris by sending a bird to entice him." The bird becomes his nemesis – a force giving him the exact opposition he needs.

That the Gemara understands the ŚAṬAN as an expression for divine justice through enticement is supported in its comment on the Mishnaic rule that one may not interrupt one's Amida prayer for anything, "even if a snake is wrapped around his leg" (mBer. 5:1, Ber. 30b). The Gemara understands the snake in the Mishna to be a non-lethal species and brings several deadly exceptions to this rule (quoting various Tannaim), among them an ox, which the Gemara immediately qualifies in the name of the Amora Samuel:

9.xvii. Ber. 33a

אמר שמואל הני מילי בשור שחור וביומי ניסן מפני שהשטן מרקד לו בין קרניו.

Said Samuel: this refers to a black ox and in the month of Nisan, because HAŚAṬAN dances for him between his horns (Ber. 33a).

The metaphor is repeated in Pes. 112b, where the order is reversed and the rule appears to be said in the name of Rabbi (Judah ha-Nasi):

9.xviii. Pes. 112b

ואל תעמוד בפני השור בשעה שעולה מן האגם, מפני שהשטן מרקד בין קרניו.
אמר רבי שמואל: בשור שחור וביומי ניסן.

Do not stand in front of an ox when he comes up from the meadow, because HAŚAṬAN dances between his horns. Said R. Samuel: this refers to a black ox and in the month of Nissan.³²⁸

³²⁸ Further manuscript study may or may not indicate that the two versions should be grouped together. In the first version (Ber. 33a), Samuel's description of the ox comes before the ŚAṬAN metaphor, giving him credit for the metaphor. In the second version (Pes. 112b), the ŚAṬAN metaphor is apparently the voice of the Tanna R. Judah the Nasi (Rabbi). While it is possible that both "Samuel" (ca. 200) and "Rabbi Samuel" (ca. 350) said nearly identical metaphors, the similarity suggests that one version is the original and the other contains a scribal erratum. *Dikdukei Sofrim* mentions manuscripts of Pes. 112a that has Samuel without the title "Rabbi".

Both sources use “ŠAṬAN” as a colorful metaphor for “aroused and therefore unpredictable and unusually dangerous”.³²⁹ This metaphor can only make sense to a reader who understands the referent: ŠAṬAN must represent (heaven-sent) enticement.

The dancing ŠAṬAN metaphor is used to explain unpredictably dangerous human behavior as well:

9. xix. *Meg. 11b*

כיון דחזי דמלו שבעין ולא איפרוק, אמר: השתא דאי תו לא מיפרקי, אפיק
מאני דבי מקדשא ואשתמש בהו. בא שטן וריקד ביניהן והרג את ושת.

When he [Ahashueros] saw that seventy [years of Jewish exile] had been completed and they [the Jews] were not redeemed, he brought out the vessels of the Temple and used them [to eat and drink wine] — Then ŠAṬAN came and danced among them and slew Vashti (*Meg. 11b*).

This dancing ŠAṬAN is the same image as that of the ox in heat. The metaphor is consistent, for the death of Vashti in Esther is the climax of a bacchanalian feast, where the power of wine could plausibly render a group of men as unpredictable and dangerous as an ox in springtime. *Bamidbar Rabbah* 10:10 includes a similar homily about the dancing ŠAṬAN:

מני שחת לאור באור החיים שאיבד נפשו בהליכתו שבשעה שהולך אדם לחטוא
השטן מרקד לו עד שגומר העבירה כיון שאיבדו חוזר ומדיעו.

What’s the source of “he destroyed the fire with the living fire”? He destroys his soul by his [mere] going: for at the time that a person goes [intentionally] to sin, HAŠAṬAN dances for him until he completes the sin; as soon as he is lost, he [re]turns and tells him.³³⁰

Yet the change of the internal order of the statements makes this a more complicated question, for in the *Ber. 33a* version, the ŠAṬAN statement is made by an Amora while in the *Pes. 112b* version the statement appears to be made by a Tanna. The metaphor also appears in the form of a bull in *Otzer HaMidrashim Chupat Eliyahu* 7. I will discuss this problem further in Ch. 5.

³²⁹ Compare *Num. Rab. 20:23*: the ŠAṬAN can be aroused by wine.

³³⁰ An almost identical midrash is found in *Tanhuma Balak* (*Varsha* Ch. 7, *Buber* Ch. 10).

The revelation of the Midrash is that even though the person has not yet sinned, his *going* toward sin is reason enough for the ŠAṬAN to begin to entice him. His going toward sin has reveals a certain brazenness, not unlike hubris, making him susceptible to the lesson of enticement.

10. xx.-xxviii. B. Bat. 16a

The final set of Bavli sources employing the ŠAṬAN motif metaphorically to teach a philosophical lesson comprise the Gemara's lengthy exposition of Job in B. Bat. 15b-16a, discussed above (Ch. 3§B.6). Before quoting individual sages on the nature of the ŠAṬAN, the Gemara creates a context based on the opening chapter of Job. The narrative of Job 1:6-8 contains ambiguities that the Gemara will exploit to create its midrash:

6 Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and HAŠAṬAN came also among them. 7 And the Lord said to HAŠAṬAN, "Where are you coming from?" Then the ŠAṬAN answered the Lord, and said, "From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it." 8 And the Lord said to HAŠAṬAN, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a blameless and upright man, one who fears God, and turns away from evil?"

The ambiguities include: what is the significance of the ŠAṬAN's "going to and fro" and what is the connection between this description of the ŠAṬAN's activity and judging Job. The Gemara displays the redactors' great familiarity with Tanach. Traveling the earth is evidently a known activity of certain angels (see Zech 1:10 and 6:7), yet the Gemara connects the verb here (התהלך) to the same word employed in Gen 13:17 to describe Abraham:

Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and the ŠAṬAN came also among them. And the Lord said to the ŠAṬAN, whence do you come? And the ŠAṬAN answered etc. (Job 1:6-7). He addressed the Holy One, blessed be He, thus: "Sovereign of the Universe, I have traversed the whole world and found none so faithful as your servant Abraham." For You said to him, Arise, walk through the land to the length and the breadth of it, for to you I will give it (Gen 13:17) and even so, when he was unable to find any place in which to bury Sarah until he bought one for four hundred shekels of silver, he did not complain against your ways. Then the Lord said to the ŠAṬAN, Have you considered my servant Job? For there is none like him in the earth etc. (Job 1:8).

The underlining indicates the Gemara's midrashic gloss, inserted between 1:7 and 1:8. This connection to Abraham is deliberate and excludes other potential comparisons, notably Noah, who is described as "a righteous man....traveling/going (הַתְּהַלֵּךְ) with God" (Gen 6:9). Further, in Job it is the ŠAṬAN who is described as traveling the earth, yet the Gemara chooses to compare Job to Abraham, not the ŠAṬAN and Abraham. Thus, the Gemara's midrash here is not a mere formulaic construction (a=b), rather it is using the similar words as a clue or an excuse to compare and contrast Job with Abraham.

In doing so, the Bavli is presently framing the ŠAṬAN as a mere metaphor for how God judges the world (as argued in detail above, Ch. 3§B.6). Based on this background, the present *sugya* in B. Bat. 15b-16a includes eight statements:³³¹

1) xx. (the Amora R. Yoḥanan)

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֵל הַשָּׁטָן הֲשֵׁמַת לְבָךְ אֶל עַבְדִּי אִיּוֹב כִּי אֵין כְּמוֹהוּ בָּאָרֶץ וְגו'
וְעוֹדֵנוּ מַחְזִיק בְּתוֹמָתוֹ, וְתַסִּיתָנִי בּוֹ לְבַלְעוֹ חֲנָם אָמַר רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן: אֵלְמֵלָא
מִקְרָא כְּתוּב אִי אֲפָשָׁר לְאוֹמְרוֹ, כְּאָדָם שֶׁמַּסִּיתִין אוֹתוֹ וְנִיסָתָּ.

Then God said to HAŠAṬAN, have you considered my servant Job, because there is none like him in the earth etc. . . and he still holds fast his integrity, [although] you incited Me against him, to destroy him without cause (Job 2:3). R. Yoḥanan said: Were it not expressly stated in the Scripture, we would not dare to say it, [for it makes God look] like a man who allows himself to be persuaded [against his better judgment].

2) xxi. (Anonymous Tanna)

בְּמַתְנִיתָא תַּנָּא: יוֹרֵד וּמַתְעָה וְעוֹלָה וּמַרְגִּיז, נוֹטֵל רְשׁוֹת וְנוֹטֵל נַשְׁמָה.

One [Tanna] taught in a *beraita*: [ŠAṬAN] comes down to earth and seduces, then goes up to heaven and agitates; he receives permission and he takes away a soul.³³²

³³¹ Six of these were presented in Ch. 2. The eighth statement in this group is attributed to two different sages, therefore I have assigned each a separate sequential number.

³³² On the translations "seduces" and "agitates", see notes 256 and 257 above.

3) xxii. (the Amora Rabbi Isaac)

ויען השטן את ה' ויאמר עור בעד עור וכל אשר לאיש יתן בעד נפשו, אולם שלח נא ידך וגע אל עצמו ואל בשרו אם לא (על) (מסורת הש"ס: [אל]) פניך יברכך, ויאמר ה' אל השטן הנו בידך אך את נפשו שמור, ויצא השטן מאת פני ה' ויך את איוב וגו' אמר רבי יצחק: קשה צערו של שטן יותר משל איוב, משל לעבד שאמר לו רבו: שבור חבית ושמור את יינה.

And the ŠATAN answered God and said, "Skin for skin, all that a man has for his life. But put forth your hand now and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will blaspheme you to your face." And God said to the ŠATAN, "Behold he is in your hand: only spare his life." And the ŠATAN went forth from the presence of God and afflicted Job etc. (2:4-7). Rabbi Isaac said: ŠATAN's torment was worse than that of Job; he was like a servant who is told by his master, 'Break the cask but do not let any of the wine spill.'

4) xxiii. (the Amora Reish Lakish)

אמר ר"ל: הוא שטן הוא יצר הרע הוא מלאך המות.

Reish Lakish said: ŠATAN, the evil inclination, and the Angel of Death are the same.

5) xxiv. (the Amora R. Levi)

א"ר לוי: שטן ופנינה לשם שמים נתכוונו. שטן, כיון דחזיא להקדוש ברוך הוא דנטיה דעתיה בתר איוב, אמר: חס ושלוש, מינשי ליה לרחמנותיה דאברהם.

R. Levi said: Both ŠATAN and Peninah had a pious purpose [in acting as adversaries]. ŠATAN, when he saw God inclined to favor Job said, "Far be it that God should forget the love of Abraham...."

6) xxv. (the Amora Rav Aḥa b. Jacob)

דרשה רב אחא בר יעקב בפפוניא...

When Rav Aḥa bar Jacob expounded [the same exposition as R. Levi] in Papunia...

7) xxvi. (Stammaitic gloss on xxv.)

...אתא שטן נשקיה לכרעיה.

...ŠATAN came and kissed his feet.

8) xxvii.-xxviii. (the Amora Abaye and the Tanna Rabbi Joshua)

(איוב ב') בכל זאת לא חטא איוב בשפתיו אמר רבא: בשפתיו לא חטא, בלבו חטא. מאי קאמר? (איוב ט') ארץ נתנה ביד רשע פני שופטיה יכסה אם לא איפו מי הוא, אמר רבא: בקש איוב להפוך קערה על פיה אמר ליה אביי: לא דבר איוב אלא כנגד השטן. כתנאי: ארץ נתנה ביד רשע רבי אליעזר אומר: בקש איוב להפוך קערה על פיה אמר לו רבי יהושע: לא דבר איוב אלא כלפי שטן.

In all this did not Job sin with his lips (Job 2:10). Rava said: With his lips he did not sin, but he did sin within his heart. What did he say [in his heart]? *The earth is given into the hand of the wicked, he covered the faces of the judges thereof; if it be not so, where and who is he?* (*ibid.* 9:24). Rava said: Job sought to turn the dish upside down. **Abaye said: Job was referring only to HAŠAṬAN.** The same difference of opinion is found between Tannaim: *The earth is given into the hand of the wicked.* R. Eliezer said: Job sought to turn the dish upside down. **Rabbi Joshua said to him: Job was only referring to HAŠAṬAN.**

Note that any of these taken out of context might be interpreted as referring to a fully anthropomorphic and even ontological, independent spiritual ŠAṬAN, especially xxii. and xxvi. Indeed, it is plausible that these two sages (R. Isaac and Rav Aḥa b. Jacob) had an ontological ŠAṬAN in mind. However, the redactors of the Bavli combined these seven statements into a *sugya* and that context is the key to unlocking its didactic intent. The *sugya* (presented at length in Ch. 3§B.6 above) is employing the ŠAṬAN motif as metaphor to teach the extreme precision with which divine justice operates. This interpretation is borne by its final step, statement 7 (xxvi.-xxvii). Here, the Gemara's citation of the earlier Tannaitic version of the debate provides the key to decoding it: Rava and Abaye are not arguing about whether or not Job sinned within his heart, rather about the nature of that sin. According to Rava (and R. Eliezer), Job's consideration that "the earth is given into the hand of the wicked" is sinful because it implies that his sufferings are undeserved and therefore denies God's absolute providence: "He sought to turn the dish upside down."³³³ This attitude is pure hubris. According to Abaye (and Rabbi Joshua), "Job was only referring to HAŠAṬAN," meaning that his sin is labeling the test of the ŠAṬAN (i.e., divine justice) as "wicked". Doing so is also hubristic for it is effectively a

³³³ This cryptic phrase does not occur elsewhere in rabbinic literature. I am following Maharal (Loew 1955, §4 and §7) who interprets the metaphor theologically. Rashi's comment here seems to agree: "קורעל כל כבוד", meaning Rava is accusing Job of attempting to "uproot God's honor."

condemnation of God (but it is not as hubristic as Rava's version of Job's error). Job evidently should have accepted the test whole-heartedly.

This part of the *sugya* therefore underscores the consistency of its ŠAṬAN.³³⁴ There is no need to read this ŠAṬAN as a literal (ontological) being: it is a motif that represents divine justice when expressed as an instructive test or enticement. R. Levi (source xxiv. in this *sugya*) is teaching that such a test is sometimes for an even higher objective than the mere correction of the individual; it can have an historic purpose. The comparison to Peninah is significant: just as she appears mean-spirited but has pure and holy intentions, God's test too may appear mean-spirited but is for a holy purpose. That purpose for Job is to demonstrate Abraham's superiority by unmasking Job's hubris.³³⁵

This *sugya* is a model of the Bavli's pedagogy. Its inclusion of a Tanna among the Amoraim underscores the didactic intentionality in the construction of this *sugya*. Their anachronistic clustering is the intentional work of the Stammaitic redactors. Far from a random collection of midrashic statements, B. Bat. 16a is a crafted unit in the Bavli's theological curriculum.

Based on the same logic, the final ŠAṬAN *sugya* of this section is a *beraita* that does not contain an original rabbinic ŠAṬAN quotation. Instead, it quotes a ŠAṬAN-verse from scripture (Zech 3:1-2) and the significance of the *sugya* is the way in which the Gemara employs the verse:

³³⁴ The *sugya* in fact continues onto 16b with additional exegesis from Rava; however, what remains are merely extensions of his theme that Job sinned with his mind only.

³³⁵ See Mack, "*Ela mashal hayah*," 25.

11. xxix. Sanh. 93a

אמר להו: אנא בעינא דאיבדקינכו כי היכי דבדקתינהו לחנניה מישאל ועזריה. אמרו ליה: אינון תלתא הוו, ואנן תרין. אמר להו: בחרו לכוון מאן דבעיתו בהדייכו. אמרו יהושע כהן גדול. סברי: ליתי יהושע דנפיש זכותיה, ומגנא עלן. אחתיוהו, שדינהו. אינהו איקלו, יהושע כהן גדול איחרוכי מאניה, שנאמר (זכריה ג') ויראני את יהושע הכהן הגדול עמד לפני מלאך ה' וגו', וכתוב (זכריה ג') ויאמר ה' אל השטן יגער ה' בך וגו'! אמר ליה: ידענא דצדיקא את, אלא מאי טעמא אהניא בך פורתא נורא, חנניה מישאל ועזריה לא אהניא בהו כלל? אמר ליה: אינהו תלתא הוו, ואנא חד. אמר ליה: והא אברהם יחיד הוה! התם לא הוו רשעים בהדיה, ולא אתיהיב רשותא לנורא, הכא הוו רשעים בהדי ואתיהיב רשותא לנורא. היינו דאמרי אינשי: תרי אודי יבישי וחד רטיבא אוקדן יבישי לרטיבא. מאי טעמא איענש? אמר רב פפא: שהיו בניו נושאים נשים שאינן הגונות לכהונה, ולא מיחה בהן. שנאמר (זכריה ג') ויהושע היה לבש בגדים צואים, וכי דרכו של יהושע ללבוש בגדים צואים? אלא, מלמד שהיו בניו נושאים נשים שאינן הגונות לכהונה, ולא מיחה בהן.

[Nebuchadnezzar said to the false prophets Ahab and Zedekiah³³⁶:] I desire that you be tested, just as Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah were.” “But they are three, whilst we are only two,” they protested. “Then choose whom you wish to accompany you,” said he. ‘Joshua the High Priest,’ they answered, thinking, “Let Joshua be brought, for his merit is great, that he may protect us.” So he was brought, and they were all thrown [into the furnace and burned]. As to Joshua the High Priest, only his garments were singed, for it is said, *And he showed me Joshua the High Priest standing before the angel of God* (Zech 3:1) and it is written, *And God said to HASATAN, may God rebuke you, HASATAN etc. (ibid., 3:2).*... [Thus] said he to him, ‘I know that you are righteous, but why did the flames affect you [given that] they did not affect Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah at all?’ ‘They were three,’ said he, ‘but I am only one.’ “But,” he remonstrated, “Abraham [too] was only one.” “No wicked were with him, so the fire was not empowered [to do any harm]; but here, I had wicked men with me, so the fire was enabled [to do its work],” he rejoined. Thus people say, “If there are two dry billets and one wet one, the former burn the latter.” Now why was he [thus] punished? — R. Papa said: Because his sons married wives unfit for the priesthood; and he did not protest, as it is said, *Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments*. Now, surely it was not his wont to wear filthy garments! But this intimates that his sons married women unfit for the priesthood and he did not forbid them. (Sanh. 93a)

Like the previous ten *sugyot*, this one includes subtle difficulties to be sorted out in order to uncover the Gemara’s intention. When Nebuchadnezzar wonders why Joshua was barely hurt by the fire, Joshua replies that his merits are not strong enough not to be affected at all. The implication is that he did not deserve to have his clothes singed. But the Gemara seems to disagree with Joshua’s self-assessment, wondering what he did to deserve even the slightest singe: “Now why was he [thus] punished?” Moreover, according to the Gemara in Ber. 51a

³³⁶ See Jeremiah 29:21.

(presented above, Ch. 3§B.5), Zech 3:2 refers to divine mercy overpowering divine justice. Here, the Gemara answers its own question with R. Papa's exegesis that portrays Joshua as mostly righteous but with a shortcoming: failing to rebuke his sons for their choices of marriage partners. The singeing of his garments, representing his relationship to his family, therefore represents the precision of divine justice, a measure-for-measure consequence for permitting his sons to marry inappropriately.³³⁷ According to the Gemara, then, this ŠATAN representing divine justice has a nemesis-like quality.

Similarly, a second *sugya*³³⁸ quotes a ŠATAN verse from Tanach and the agenda of the redactor is clear from the context:

11. xxx. Ber. 62b

מיד (דברי הימים א' כ"א) ויעמד שטן על ישראל, וכתיב (שמואל ב' כ"ד) ויסת את דוד בהם לאמר לך מנה את ישראל. וכיון דמנינהו לא שקל מינייהו כופר, דכתיב (שמואל ב' כ"ד) ויתן ה' דבר בישראל מהבקר ועד עת מועד.

Immediately [in response to David's disrespectful speech,] a ŠATAN stood up against Israel [and provoked David to make a census of Israel] (1 Chron 22:1) and it is further written, *He stirred up David against them saying, Go, number Israel* (2 Sam 24:1). And when he did number them, he took no atonement [payment] from them and it is written, *So the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the appointed time* (2 Sam 24:15) (Ber. 62b).

The Gemara here is reconciling 1 Chron 22:1 (where a ŠATAN is the actor) with 2 Sam 24:1 (where God is the actor), teaching that this ŠATAN symbolizes God's justice. The fact that the Gemara quotes the two texts out of order (of their standard order in Tanach) suggests that it is irrelevant to the Gemara whether or not this ŠATAN is technically an angel or merely a metaphor; what matters is that it is an expression of divine justice.

³³⁷ The Gemara does not expound God's rebuke of the ŠATAN. In the scene, Joshua's clothes have already been singed, so it seems a little late to exercise mercy, unless Joshua deserves to be burnt more than he is, which would mean that strict divine justice may be more severe than one experiences it.

³³⁸ Discussed in Ch. 3§B.4 above.

c. Anthropomorphic

The anthropomorphic category includes those passages that portray the ŠAṬAN as an ontological spiritual being with a personality.³³⁹ The epitome of this usage is the legend on Sanh. 89b of a fully anthropomorphic ŠAṬAN — appearing as though fresh from testing Job — engaging God in conversation about one of his most loyal human servants:

12. xxxi. Sanh. 89b

ויהי אחר הדברים האלה והאלהים נסה את אברהם. אחר מאי אמר רבי יוחנן משום רבי יוסי בן זימרא: אחר דבריו של שטן, דכתיב (בראשית כ"א) ויגדל הילד ויגמל וגו', אמר שטן לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא: רבוננו של עולם! זקן זה חננתו למאה שנה פרי בטן, מכל סעודה שעשה לא היה לו תור אחד או גזל אחד להקריב לפניך? אמר לו: כלום עשה אלא בשביל בנו, אם אני אומר לו זבח את בנך לפני מיד זובחו.

“And it came to pass after these things (*devarim*), that God tested Abraham” (Gen 22:1). After what? — R. Yoḥanan said in the name of R. Jose b. Zimra: After the words (*devarim*) of ŠAṬAN, as it is written, “And the child grew, and was weaned [and Abraham made a great feast on the day Isaac was weaned]” (Gen 21:8). Thereupon ŠAṬAN said to the Almighty; “Sovereign of the Universe! To this old man You did graciously vouchsafe the fruit of the womb at the age of a hundred, yet of all that banquet which he prepared, had he not one turtle-dove or pigeon to sacrifice before you?” He answered, “He has done nothing but in honor of his son, and were I to say to him, ‘Sacrifice your son before Me’, he would do so without hesitation.”

Closely following the Job model, the test remains from God but the instigation of the test is attributed to ŠAṬAN, bringing before God an accusation of a shortcoming, flaw or sin and prompting God’s defense. Yet God’s verbal defense does not suffice:

מיד והאלהים נסה את אברהם, ויאמר קח נא את בנך. אמר רבי שמעון בר אבא: אין נא אלא לשון בקשה. משל למלך בשר ודם שעמדו עליו מלחמות הרבה, והיה לו גבור אחד ונצחון. לימים עמדה עליו מלחמה חזקה, אמר לו: בבקשה ממך, עמוד לי במלחמה זו, שלא יאמרו: ראשונות אין בהם ממש. אף הקדוש ברוך הוא אמר לאברהם: ניסיתך בכמה נסיונות ועמדת בכלן, עכשיו עמד לי בנסיון זה, שלא יאמרו אין ממש בראשונים.

[Therefore to prove Abraham’s loyalty to God,] immediately “that God tested Abraham.... And he said, ‘Take, *na*, your son’” (Gen 22:1-2). R. Shimon b. Abba said; “*Na* can only denote entreaty.” This may be compared to a king of flesh and blood who

³³⁹ But not those portrayed with the narrative motif “appeared to him as _____” which I take to be pure allegory; see note 321 above.

was confronted by many wars, which he won by the aid of a great warrior. Subsequently he was faced with a severe battle. Thereupon he said to him, 'I pray you, assist me in battle, that people may not say, there was no substance in the earlier ones.' Similarly did the Holy One, blessed be He, say to Abraham, "I have tested you with many trials and you withstood all. Now, be firm, for My sake in this trial, that men may not say, there was no reality in the earlier ones."

In other words, this test is not an ordinary test at all; it is not to bring out a latent potential. Its purpose is to reveal Abraham's greatness to the world. This interpretation echoes R. Levi in B. Bat. 16a (source 10.xxiv above and quoted in Ch. 3§B.6 above) that the ŠATAN's purpose in Job's trial was merely to protect Abraham's public image. Since Abraham has become God's representative (per Gen. 12:3, 17:5, 18:17), God has a stake in making sure he takes the ultimate loyalty test (which he is sure to pass); hence the "*na*" of entreaty. The Gemara then turns the command of Gen 22:2 into a conversation:

את בנך שני בנים יש לי. את יחידך זה יחיד לאמו וזה יחיד לאמו, אשר אהבת
תרוייהו רחימנא להו. את יצחק. וכל כך למה כדי שלא תטרף דעתו עליו.

"[Take] your son,"

"I have two sons!"

"your only one,"

"Each is the only one of his mother!"

"whom you love,"

"I love them both!"

"Isaac...."

And why all this conversation? So that he should not be distraught about him.³⁴⁰

The latter comment seems to mean that if God had skipped the preliminaries and simply said, "Take Isaac", Abraham's feelings for Isaac might have overwhelmed him. The preliminaries

³⁴⁰ I base this translation including the brackets on the three occasions the Gemara uses the phrase *sheh lo titareif da'ato* elsewhere: (a) In Yoma 87b the phrase is used to explain why a person should not confess his sins until just before sunset on Yom Kippur eve, lest he be distraught during the prior festive meal; (b) in MK 26b a severely ill person is not told the news that a close relative has died, lest he be distraught; (c) in B. Bat. 147b a gift made orally by a dying person is not binding biblically, but is binding by rabbinic legislation out of fear that he might become distraught should there be any resistance to his instructions.

allow a gradual build-up to enable him to remain mentally steady. Is this weakness in the same category as the hubristic flaws seen in other ŠAṬAN incidents?

The full measure of the ŠAṬAN's role becomes revealed when he confronts Abraham during the journey, engaging him in a scripture-laden verbal duel (with all of the verses taken from Job and Psalms):

קדמו שטן לדרך, אמר לו: הנסה דבר אליך תלאה; הנה, יסרת רבים וידיים רפות תחזק כושל יקימון מליך, כי עתה תבוא אליך ותלא. אמר לו: אני בתמי אלך. אמר לו: הלא יראתך כסלתך. אמר לו: זכר-נא מי הוא נקי אבד. כיון דחזא דלא קא שמיע ליה, אמר ליה: ואלי דבר יגנב, כך שמעתי מאחורי הפרגוד: השה לעולה ואין יצחק לעולה. אמר לו: כך עונשו של בדאי, שאפילו אמר אמת אין שומעין לו.

ŠAṬAN met him on the way, saying to him, “If he tests you with one thing, will you become wearied? Who can withhold his words now? Behold, you have rebuked many, and have strengthened weak hands. Your words would stand up one who stumbles; you would brace buckling knees? And now when it befalls you, you become weary? [It touches you and you are bewildered!]” [Job 4:2-5]³⁴¹

He [Abraham] replied, “I will walk in my innocence” [Psalm 26:11].

[ŠAṬAN:] “Behold, was your fear [of God] not your foolishness [and so too your hope and the wholesomeness of your ways]?” [Job 4:6]³⁴²

[Abraham:] “Remember, please, whoever perished, being innocent?” [*ibid.* 4:7]

Seeing that he would not listen to him, he [ŠAṬAN] said to him, “Now a thing was secretly brought to me [Job 4:12]: thus have I heard from behind the Curtain, ‘The lamb, for a burnt-offering but not Isaac for a burnt-offering.’”

He [Abraham] replied, “It is the penalty of a liar, that should he even tell the truth, he is not listened to.”

The verses chosen to be put into the mouths of protagonist and antagonist are highly revealing and need to be unpacked.³⁴³ First, the ŠAṬAN quotes Job 4:2-4 — like Eliphaz's speech to Job, this is an accusation: “You claim piety, but you're not so pious!” Yet how is this meant to affect Abraham? He is going to the Akeida because he was commanded. The Gemara seems to be using the ŠAṬAN to reveal Abraham's self-doubts. He is going to do the unthinkable because

³⁴¹ The Gemara leaves out the bracketed words.

³⁴² Again I have added the remainder of the verse in brackets.

³⁴³ On my translation, see note 248 above.

of his unwavering dedication to God. But perhaps his dedication is not so perfect, in which case he will fail at his mission?

To this challenge Abraham replies, “I’m innocent.” This is a fascinating verse to put in Abraham’s mouth, because it echoes v. 1 of the same psalm, “in my innocence I have walked”, which is followed by a self-confident, “Examine me, Lord, and test me....” In other words, he is answering his own self-doubt: my loyalty to God is perfect, I will not hesitate, I am ready for this test. But that retort might be hubristic, and the voice in Abraham’s head quotes 4:6: “You are trusting too much in your own piety.” Abraham answers the challenge with 4:7, reaffirming his piety: “it is truly innocent piety, not at all hubristic.” Using 4:7 is ironic, for it is the next part of Eliphaz’s rebuke. In the original, Eliphaz means it critically, “Since you are suffering, you must be guilty;” Abraham states it in self-defense.³⁴⁴ By giving Abraham this retort, the Gemara conveys a meta-message: this ŚATAN is the voice of self-doubt in a person’s head when he is headed to do a good deed and the way to vanquish that doubt is to turn the ŚATAN’s own words against it, expressing one’s simple faith.

Yet this ŚATAN makes one last attempt: he tries to spoil the test by revealing the truth that the Akeida command is only a test. If Abraham fails to follow-through with the sacrifice, he will not be able to reveal his complete dedication to God.³⁴⁵ So the ŚATAN voice in his head

³⁴⁴ There is a fascinating Targum to v. 7. Most translations render the Hebrew (as above), “Remember, please, whoever perished, being innocent?” The Targum, however, interprets: *Adkar k’dun man d’zakay k’Avraham – Remember who is meritorious [or innocent] like Abraham*. Together, the Gemara and the Targum seem to be pointing to a rabbinic tradition stressing Abraham’s complete righteousness (see B. Bat. 16a, source 10.xxiv and quoted above in Ch. 3§B.6: “ŚATAN, when he saw God inclined to favor Job said, ‘Far be it that God should forget the love of Abraham....’”). If so, it would seem that the Gemara considers self-doubt – i.e., the lack of hubris – to be a characteristic of righteousness.

³⁴⁵ Thus the Talmud refutes commentaries that argue that God never intended him to kill Isaac, merely “bring him up” (verse 22:2).

says, “It’s only a test, God is not going to want you to go through with it.” After so many years of dedication to God, after God’s promises that his mission on Earth will be fulfilled through Isaac “as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him” (Gen 17:19), it is a logical conclusion that this must be merely a test, as the reader of course knows from 22:1. This internal voice creates a great tension in the narrative for it contradicts the prophetic voice he heard in 22:2. The tension is not explicit in the biblical narrative and many commentators suppose that Abraham is acting mindlessly. In adding this dialog with the ŠAṬAN, the Gemara creates greater tension, even though the reader knows that he will act correctly (according to 22:12) and allow the prophetic voice to trump the internal voice of doubt. His calculation in that moment of final judgment between the two voices is significant: he calls the ŠAṬAN a *badai* (בדאי), usually translated as liar. In fact, everything that the ŠAṬAN has said until now has been truthful. The term appears three other times in the Bavli:

1. Ber. 4a – The Gemara explains why Moses predicts the Plague of the First Born will occur at “about midnight” (Exod 11:4) when in fact it will occur at (exactly) midnight (12:29): lest the imprecise calculations of Pharaoh’s astronomers lead them to accuse Moses of being a *badai*.
2. Shab. 89a – When the ŠAṬAN asks Moses if he has the Torah, Moses replies, “Who am I that I should have the Torah” and God asks, “Moses, are you a *badai*?”
3. Qid. 49a – R. Yehuda says, one who translates a verse literally³⁴⁶ is a *badai*.

The common thread here seems to be using words imprecisely or carelessly (but not absolutely falsely), with a deceptive result (but not necessarily the intent to deceive). By having Abraham call the ŠAṬAN *badai*, the Gemara seems to mean that when one is dissuaded from following God’s commandment – even if the dissuasion is based on factual information – the dissuasion itself is a form of deception. Note that the Gemara does not continue with the internal dialogue all the way up the mountain to the sacrificial altar; it ends here. Thus, from the Gemara’s

³⁴⁶ “כצורתו” – lit., “like its appearance”.

perspective, Abraham's judgment between the two voices, not the sacrifice itself, is the true climax of the test: once you have heard the prophetic voice, are you able to shut down the inner voice of doubt that looks for excuses not to follow-through?³⁴⁷

In summary, this *sugya* reaffirms the link between the ŠATAN and hubris. Abraham is accused, and defends himself, of hubris. Hubris seems to be the main catalyst of a ŠATAN-seduction or test. The Gemara portrays Abraham as the exception that proves the rule – he has no hubris and the closest thing he has to a flaw is the voice in his head wondering, “Perhaps this is only a test and God doesn't want me to follow-through,” which he quells through logic: after all, whether or not a mere test, there is a command: God does want me to proceed.³⁴⁸

Abraham's trial necessarily and simultaneously becomes a test for Isaac. The Gemara presents an additional view that Isaac's test is also in response to apparent hubris:

רבי לוי אמר: אחר דבריו של ישמעאל ליצחק. אמר לו ישמעאל ליצחק: אני גדול ממך במצות, שאתה מלת בן שמנת ימים ואני בן שלש עשרה שנה. אמר לו: ובאבר אחד אתה מגרה בי? אם אומר לי הקדוש ברוך הוא, זבח עצמך לפני אני זובח. מיד והאלהים נסה את אברהם.

R. Levi said: After Ishmael's words to Isaac. Ishmael said to Isaac: ‘I am greater than you in good deeds, for you were circumcised at eight days, but I at thirteen years!’ He [Isaac] said, “On account of one limb you tease me?” Were the Holy One, blessed be He, to say to me, Sacrifice yourself before Me, I would do so.” Immediately, “And God tested Abraham” (Gen 22:1).

While lacking the dialogue with the ŠATAN, this test follows the same pattern. Isaac appears hubristic about his own piety and the test is to reveal the truth of his self-assessment.

³⁴⁷ See Yona Frankel, *Yad HaTalmud*, 301, who (quoting Wittgenstein!) interprets Abraham's rejection of the Satan's truthful words to be essential to his test in a different way: not knowing the future is a requirement of complete faith. Joshua Levinson revisits the theme; see *Ha-Sipur she-lo supar: omanut ha-sipur ha-Mikra'i ha-murhav be-midreshe Hazal* [Jerusalem: Y.L. Magnes Publishers, Hebrew University, 2005], 230).

³⁴⁸ Yona Frankel interprets the ŠATAN's phrase, “The lamb for a burnt-offering but not Isaac for a burnt-offering” as a subtle indication of Abraham's silent hope that the Akeida is, indeed, merely a test (*Yad HaTalmud*, 301).

By casting Isaac's test as a response to hubris, and attributing it directly to God without mentioning ŠAṬAN, this conclusion to the *sugya* underscores the symbolic — not independent/ontological — meaning of the ŠAṬAN. Cast as a speaking character in dialog with the protagonist, this ŠAṬAN appears to have stepped straight out of the book of Job, with borrowed (and recycled) language from Job no less.³⁴⁹ I argued above (§10.xx-xxvii.) that Talmud's major exposition of Job in B. Bat 16a is teaching that Job's ŠAṬAN is metaphorical and this borrowed literary motif highlights the fact that my three categories (conceptual, metaphorical and anthropomorphic) are only stylistic distinctions, for here we see that ideologically they are the same. In this case, in rendering the Akeida as Abraham's having to overcome an inner conflict, the Gemara has transformed it into a more compelling test than him simply following orders.³⁵⁰ In describing the inner conflict as the voice of the ŠAṬAN, the

³⁴⁹ If read as an independent text, out of the broader Talmudic context, it would not be fully clear whether the rabbis meant to portray an ontologically independent ŠAṬAN or the psychology of Abraham, perhaps because here, unlike in Job 1-2, he is called ŠAṬAN and not HAŠAṬAN, which may be incidental; see Yaakov Elboim, "More on the 'Akedah Legends,'" *Jerusalem Studies in Hebrew Literature* 9 (1986); Jonathan Jacobs, "Willing Obedience with Doubts: Abraham at the Binding of Isaac," *Vetus Testamentum* 60 (2010): 547 n.2; and see Ch. 4 below. Historical scholarship often points out the parallels (discussed in Ch. 2 above) between this midrash of Sanh. 89b and Qum. 4Q225, Jub. 17.15-18.1 and Gen. Rab. 55.4-56.4; see for instance Charles, *The Book of Jubilees*, 120 n. 16 (see also *ibid.* 80 n. 8); Kister, "Observations On Aspects Of Exegesis;" James VanderKam, "The Aqedah, Jubilees, and Pseudojubilees," in *Quest for Context and Meaning: Studies in Intertextuality in Honor of James A. Sanders* (Biblical Interpretation Series 28), ed. Craig Evans, 241-267 (Leiden: Brill, 1997); Bernstein, "Angels at the Aqedah," 266-267.

³⁵⁰ Rashi portrays Abraham as having real emotions and potential for hesitation that he has to overcome in order to pass the test of the Akeida. In a recent study, Jonathan Jacobs suggests that there is a consensus among modern and Medieval commentators that the passage is meant to praise Abraham for "journeying to perform the binding with no doubts or misgivings" ("Willing Obedience," 547 and n. 3). He cites two comments of Rashi as proof. First: "*And [Abraham] arose early in the morning—he made haste to perform God's command; and saddled—he himself; he did not command one of his servants. This shows that love blurs logic*" (*ibid.*). I believe this is an erroneous reading of Rashi. Rashi says that love *m'kalkelet hashura* – "interrupts the correct order". My translation here follows Yisrael Herczeg, *The Torah: With Rashi's Commentary Translated, Annotated, and Elucidated* (New York: Mesorah, 1995), 232.

Talmud again portrays the ŠATAN as an allegory for the principle of a didactic divine test in response to hubris.³⁵¹

I do not believe the authors or redactors of this Talmudic midrash expected their audience to read the passage as an historically accurate dialogue.³⁵² The quotations from Job and Psalms are an explicit anachronism. This midrashic style serves a dual purpose. First, it teaches an interpretation of scripture; we now have a reading of five lines of Job and three verses in Genesis that were previously obscure. More important, when ŠATAN is understood as

In contrast, A. Cohen, *The Soncino Chumash: The Five Books of Moses with Haphtaroth (Hebrew Text and English Translation with an Exposition Based on the Classical Jewish Commentaries)* (London: Soncino, 1969) renders, “disregards normal rules of conduct.” A. J. Rosenberg, *Genesis: A New English Translation* (New York: Judaica Press, 1993), renders, “causes a disregard for the standard [of dignified conduct];” he also points out that Rashi’s phrase is a quotation of Gen Rab 55:8; from there it is impossible to sustain Jacobs’s translation. Similarly, Gen Rab 55:4 puts words of doubt directly into Abraham’s mouth. This comment says nothing about Abraham’s doubts or lack thereof, only that he is eager to fulfill the commandment.

Jacobs then cites a second Rashi citation: “*On the third day*—Why did [God] wait and not show it [the place] to him immediately? So that [the heretics] would not say, ‘He shocked him and mixed him up, all at once, and he lost his mind. Had he had time overcome his emotions, he would not have done it’” (*ibid.*). It seems to me that this comment of Rashi shows the *opposite* of what Jacobs is arguing – that Abraham *does* have emotions and an inclination to hesitate, but that he overcomes them. Therefore I do not agree that “Rashi himself, in his commentary on this chapter, presents Abraham as being decisive and unwavering” (*ibid.*).

Similarly, Jacobs avers that all of the Medieval commentators understand Abraham to have been unhesitant in his readiness to perform the Akeida, inviting the reader to “see also the commentaries of Rabbi David Kimhi (Ber.) and Rabbi Josef Bekhor Shor on verse 1.” Doing so I discovered that Radak indeed says that Abraham’s love for God was so great that it superseded his love for Isaac. However, on verse 2 Radak adds that the Akeida was a real test because “even though the matter is difficult, for any son, all the more so your only one, all the more so when he is beloved, because he is a child of your old age.” Regardless of these issues, Jacobs has shown how the scriptural text lends itself to the midrashic interpretation in Sanh. 89b (as well as Rashi *inter alia*).

³⁵¹ See Targum Ps-J. to 22:1 for the identical midrash on Isaac.

³⁵² While Day (*Adversary*, 77) and others interpret Job as pure allegory with no pretense of historicity, the Talmud itself, after considering the possibility, concludes that Job is indeed based on an historical figure (B. Bat. 15a). Nevertheless, the historical discussion there seems tangential to the exegesis of the book, the Gemara’s primary interest.

an agent of God, the midrash establishes a theological point: doubts that arise in fulfilling a Divine command are part of the test. Further, this midrash is plainly allegorical, employing a familiar rabbinic literary motif of anachronistically putting verses in the mouth of a particular character.³⁵³ The fact that it specifically puts the words of Job in the mouth of this ŠATAN suggests an allegorical view of Jobian ŠATAN as well (as already demonstrated in B. Bat. 16a, source 10.xxiv. here and Ch. 2 Source 6 above). The Gemara's self-reference goes both ways: the fact that the Gemara's exposition of the Akeida *here* uses a ŠATAN personality quoting verses from Job implies that they saw the Akeida as a Jobian test, even though the Job-quoting ŠATAN here is not obviously the Jobian ŠATAN.³⁵⁴

13. xxxii.-xxxiv. *Shab. 89a, Sanh. 26b, Shab. 89a*

In a similar Talmudic midrash on *Shab. 89a*, Rabbi Joshua b. Levy tells a tale set immediately after Moses completes his sojourn on Mt. Sinai. The context is a series of midrashim by Rabbi Joshua, mostly connected to the Sinai theophany:

ואמר רבי יהושע בן לוי: בשעה שירד משה מלפני הקדוש ברוך הוא, בא שטן ואמר לפניו: רבונו של עולם, תורה היכן היא? אמר לו: נתתיה לארץ. הלך אצל ארץ, אמר לה: תורה היכן היא? אמרה לו: (איוב כח) אלהים הבין דרכה וגו'. הלך אצל ים ואמר לו: אין עמדי. הלך אצל תהום, אמר לו: אין בי, שנאמר: (איוב כח) תהום אמר לא בי היא וים אמר אין עמדי, אבדון ומות אמרו באזנינו שמענו שמעה. חזר ואמר לפני הקדוש ברוך הוא: רבונו של עולם, חיפשתי בכל הארץ ולא מצאתיה. אמר לו: לך אצל בן עמרם. הלך אצל משה, אמר לו: תורה שנתן לך הקדוש ברוך הוא היכן היא? אמר לו: וכי מה אני שנתן לי הקדוש ברוך הוא תורה? אמר לו: הקדוש ברוך הוא למשה: משה, בדאי אתה? אמר לפניו: רבונו של עולם, חמדה גנוזה יש לך שאתה משתעשע בה בכל יום. אני אחזיק טובה לעצמי? אמר לו הקדוש ברוך הוא למשה: הואיל ומיעטת עצמך תקרא על שמך, שנאמר (מלאכי ג) זכרו תורת משה עבדי וגו'.

³⁵³ E.g., *Shab. 30a*, where God is portrayed as quoting Ps 44:11 as a retort to Solomon; *Sanh. 43a* has the disciples of Jesus quoting Scripture in self-defense: while not anachronistic, the statements are puns on their names and not meant to be taken literally, hence it follows the same literary pattern; the same may be said for conversations between a sage and the prophet Elijah, such as *Ber. 3a*. See also *Yal. Korah 16*, where anachronistic verses are put in the mouth of Korah; and *Pes. 117a* where Moses and the Israelites are imagined to have recited the Hallel (Ps 113-118).

³⁵⁴ This midrash is thus a confirmation of Joshua Levinson's theory of "intratextual and intertextual gaps" (*Ha-Sipur she-lo supar*, 45-58).

Rabbi Joshua b. Levi also said: When Moses descended from before the Holy One, blessed be He, ŠATAN came and asked Him, “Sovereign of the Universe! Where is the Torah?” He [God] said to him, “I have given it to the earth.” He went to the earth and said to her, “Where is the Torah?” She said to him, “*God understands the way thereof, etc.*” (Job 28:23). He went to the sea and it told him, ‘It is not with me.’ He went to the deep and it said to him, “It is not in me,” for it is said. *The deep said, It is not in me: And the sea said, It is not with me* (Job 28:14). *Destruction and Death say, We have indeed heard a report [about wisdom]*³⁵⁵ (Job 28:22). He went back and declared before Him, ‘Sovereign of the Universe! I have searched throughout all the earth but have not found it!’ He [God] said, “Go to the son of Amram.” [So] he went to Moses and asked him, “Where is the Torah which the Holy One, blessed be He, gave you?” He [Moses] said, “What am I that the Holy One, blessed be He, should give me the Torah?” Said the Holy One, blessed be He, to Moses, “Moses, are you a liar?” He [Moses] said, “Sovereign of the Universe! You have a stored-up treasure in which You take delight every day: shall I keep the benefit for myself?” Said the Holy One, blessed be He, to Moses, “Moses, since you have minimized yourself, it shall be called by your name, as it is said, *Remember the Torah of Moses my servant*” (Mal 3:22).

A clue to understanding the intent of this ŠATAN midrash may be its allusion to Job 1-2, where the ŠATAN reports that he has been wandering the earth.³⁵⁶ Insofar that the ŠATAN has something to do with divine justice, his wandering there recalls Gen 6:5-7 and 18:21 where God renders judgment only after explicitly examining human activity. A second clue to the intent of this ŠATAN may be a summary of this aggadah on Sanh. 26b:

³⁵⁵ Literally, “with our ears we have heard a report” — the context is the location of wisdom and seems to mean here that one cannot find wisdom in death and destruction; cf. Ps 44:2. Presumably Rabbi Joshua is equating wisdom with Torah; however, the absence of a question posed to Death and Destruction makes this citation seem to break the flow of the *aggadah* and may be a later insertion.

³⁵⁶ Parsing this passage has several enigmas and contradictions. For instance, why is the ŠATAN in the dark in the first place? Why does God appear to lie to him (or at the least mislead him) by saying “I have given it to the earth?” What is the significance of the earth’s and Death and Destruction’s replying with verses from Job? (The quote from Death and Destruction is further enigmatic in that the ŠATAN never queries them.) “The Torah” cannot mean the tablets because these were custom-made for Moses on the spot; ŠATAN, whatever the reason for his recent absence, would have no knowledge of these tablets. Rather, “the Torah” in question is information that was taught to Moses. The fact that Moses received the information and then departed from Heaven does not follow that this information no longer remains in Heaven. Therefore, he must be referring to the Torah *curriculum*, which wasn’t physically taken from Heaven but was intellectually and perhaps legally given to humanity. So ŠATAN is asking, in effect, “To whom did you, God, give ownership of the Torah?” God could simply answer his question; instead he tells him to go searching for it.

13. xxxiii. Sanh. 26b

(ישעיהו כ"ח) הפלא עצה הגדיל תושיה. אמר רבי חנן: למה נקרא שמה תושיה מפני שהיא מתשת כחו של אדם. דבר אחר: תושיה שניתנה בחשאי מפני השטן.

Wonderful is His counsel and great his tushiyah [wisdom] (Isa. 28:29). R. Hanan said: Why is the Torah called *tushiyah*? — Because it weakens (מתשת) the strength of man [through constant study or through many precepts]. Another interpretation: *Tushiyah* because it was given in secret on account of the ŠAṬAN.

The Gemara here (Sanh. 26b) does not elaborate on what it means to be “given in secret on account of the ŠAṬAN”. The similarity to Shab. 89a is instructive, and both of these recall a related aggadah that the angels were given advance-notice of the Torah being given to Moses, and in fact objected:

כשבא הקדוש ברוך הוא ליתן תורה התחילו מלאכי השרת משליכים פירקם לפני הקב"ה מה אנוש כי תזכרנו ובן אדם כי תפקדנו (תהלים ח' ה') ה' אדונינו מה אדיר שמך בכל הארץ אשר תנה הודך על השמים (שם שם תהלים ח' ב'), אמר רבי אחא אמרו לו המלאכים אישורך הוא שתתן הודך על השמים ותתן לנו תורתך, אמר להם הקדוש ברוך הוא אין תורתך נמצאת אצליכם לא תמצא בארץ החיים.

When God came to give the Torah, the ministering angels began to toss their verse before God [in protest], “*What is Man that you should remember him, and human that you should recall him?*” (Ps. 8:5). *Lord our God, your name is wondrous in all the earth that you placed your grace above Heaven* (*ibid.*, 8:2). Said Rabbi Aḥa, “The angels said to him, it would be proper for you to place your majesty on Heaven and give *us* your Torah.” God said to them, “My Torah is not found among you; it is not found in the Land of the Living” (Pes. Rab. 25.4).

The ŠAṬAN of this group (12) is an expression of strict divine justice: strict justice dictates that the heavenly Torah stay in Heaven. By telling the ŠAṬAN to wander the world and search for it, ultimately not to find it, the message is that the Torah ought to have been within the ŠAṬAN’s normal purview but now is not. At last, the Torah’s new location is revealed to be *within a person* (Moses) and kept “secret from the ŠAṬAN”. If one assumes that the Gemara here is consistent with elsewhere, the ŠAṬAN represents God’s just response to a person’s hubris or innate desire to be seduced. The Torah affords protection from that ŠAṬAN, either as a

prophylactic to temper the hubris or desire, or as an antidote to pass the inevitable test of seduction or enticement.

This interpretation of Rabbi Joshua b. Levy's story explains the *sugya*'s next passage, also in his name:

13. xxxiv. *Shab. 89a*

רבי יהושע בן לוי: מאי דכתיב (שמות לב) וירא העם כי בשש משה, אל תקרי בושש אלא באו שש. בשעה שעלה משה למרום אמר להן לישראל: לסוף ארבעים יום, בתחלת שש, אני בא. לסוף ארבעים יום בא שטן ועירבב את העולם, אמר להן: משה רבכם היכן הוא? אמרו לו: עלה למרום. אמר להן: באו שש ולא השגיחו עליו. מת ולא השגיחו עליו. הראה להן דמות מטתו. והיינו דקאמרי ליה לאהרן (שמות לב) כי זה משה האיש וגו'.

Rabbi Joshua b. Levi [said]: What is the meaning of that which is written; *And when the people, saw that Moses delayed [bosheish] [to come down from the mount]* (Ex 32:1)? Read not *bosheish* [delayed] but *ba'u sheish* [the sixth hour had come]. When Moses ascended on high, he said to Israel, "I will return at the end of forty days, at noon." At the end of forty days ŠAṬAN came and confused the world. He said to them: "Where is your teacher Moses?" "He has ascended on high," they answered him. He [ŠAṬAN] said to them, "Midday has come," but they disregarded him. [ŠAṬAN said,] "He died" — but they disregarded him. [Thereupon] he [ŠAṬAN] showed them a vision of his [Moses's] bier, and this is [what they meant] when saying to Aaron, "*For this man Moses etc. [we do not know what became of him]*" (*ibid.*) (*Shab. 89a*).

In context of the *sugya* and the entire Bavli, this ŠAṬAN apparently represents God's precise response to a human shortcoming. In this case, the Gemara of course assumes that the reader is completely familiar with the sin of the Golden Calf (Ex 32), a sin which the Gemara considers so severe that it reverberates among all future generations:

אמר רבי יצחק: אין לך כל פורענות ופורענות שבאה לעולם שאין בה אחד מעשרים וארבעה בהכרע ליטרא של עגל הראשון.

R. Isaac said: No retribution whatsoever comes upon the world which does not contain a slight fraction³⁵⁷ of the first calf (*Sanh. 102a*).

Given its severity, the Golden Calf sin is a conundrum in the Pentateuch narrative: a few weeks after the theophany of Sinai (Ex 20), while Moses is on the mountain to receive the Torah (Ex

³⁵⁷ Lit., "one twenty-fourth of the excess for a *litra*" ("the excess for a *litra*" is a very small amount, defined in B. Bat. 88b).

24:18), he learns that “your people that you brought up from Egypt have become corrupt etc.” (Ex 32:7). The fact that the present exposition of Rabbi Joshua b. Levi resorts to implicating the ŠAṬAN may be a reflection of the difficulty in reconciling a sin of such magnitude with the miraculous Exodus and theophany that precede it. In Rabbi Joshua b. Levi’s midrash, ŠAṬAN resembles the ŠAṬAN that attempts to dissuade Abraham on San. 89b (11.xxviii above), here testing Israel with a Jobian test: would they maintain their faithfulness despite three arguments that Moses will not return: their “confusion” begins with an intellectual error in calculating the time of Moses’s promised return, which they initially disregard; however this suggestion leads to emotional confusion (perhaps he has died), which they also initially disregard; until they witness a phenomenon that appears to validate their fear. But by employing the ŠAṬAN, Rabbi Joshua is not claiming entrapment. As a Jobian test, this ŠAṬAN represents God’s way of either responding to hubris or drawing out one’s desire to be seduced: their confusion does not merely cause them to build a Golden Calf as a substitute for Moses (32:1): they then take advantage of Moses’s alleged demise to revel (לצחק) (Ex 32:6). This ŠAṬAN is thereby a highly precise, nemesis-like seducer, tempting them in exactly that area where they are inclined to be seduced (see above, Ch. 2 Source 6³⁵⁸), revealing a flaw.

This contextualizing of Rabbi Joshua b. Levi’s two ŠAṬAN *drashot* (searching for the Torah and instigating the Golden Calf) gives a framework for interpreting the metaphorical ŠAṬAN expression used by the sage Dosa ben Harkenos to describe his brother:

14. xxxv. Yev. 16a

אח קטן יש לי בכור שטן הוא ויונתן שמו והוא מתלמידי שמאי...

“I have a younger brother, who is ‘ŠAṬAN’s firstborn’, his name is Jonathan and he is one of the students of Shammai....” (Yev. 16a)

³⁵⁸ For further discussion of this inclination toward seduction, see also note 263 above.

Ben Harkenos is explaining that an erroneous teaching allegedly said in his name was in fact said by his brother Jonathan ben Harkenos, a subversive follower of the minority House of Shammai school. This colorful metaphor makes sense if one understands “ŠAṬAN” to be a nemesis-like antagonist (whether Ben Harkenos merely means, “My brother is a rebel” or a deeper meaning of “My brother came to you like a heaven-sent test”). Moreover, the fact that Ben Harkenos could use this term (perhaps tongue-in-cheek) about his brother reinforces the allegorical meaning of the ŠAṬAN. For one who truly believes in a menacing, ontologically-real evil satanic force would probably not refer to his brother as “ŠAṬAN’s firstborn”, especially considering the continuation of the *sugya* where said brother appears as a genuine scholar who bests the great R. Akiva in debate.

Even the Bavli’s ŠAṬAN narratives that seem the most ontologically independent lose that appearance under scrutiny. Consider, for instance the seductive force that “makes people quarrel”:

15. xxxvi. *Git. 52a*

הנהו בי תרי דאיגרי בהו שטן, דכל בי שמשי הוו קא מינצו בהדי הדדי, איקלע רבי מאיר להתם, עכבינהו תלתא בי שמשי עד דעבד להו שלמא, שמעיה דקאמר: ווי, דאפקיה ר' מאיר לההוא גברא מביתיה.

There were two men who, being egged on by ŠAṬAN, quarreled with one another every Friday afternoon. R. Meir once came to that place and stopped them from quarrelling three Friday afternoons, until he had finally made peace between them; he [then] heard ŠAṬAN say: “Alas for R. Meir has driven that man [i.e., ŠAṬAN] from his house!” (*Git. 52a*³⁵⁹)

While colorfully told, there is no reason to read this ŠAṬAN as an independent spiritual being.

The *sugya* concerns the laws of guardianship of orphans’ property and includes a second R’ Meir narrative³⁶⁰ where he confronts a guardian who was mismanaging the property in his

³⁵⁹ See also *Num Rab. 21:7*.

³⁶⁰ The two narratives appear in the Gemara in the opposite order of their presentation here.

charge, ignoring a voice in his dream that tries to dissuade him. With both tales, the Gemara is teaching a moral lesson, that extra exertion to help others can be successful. The “ŠAṬAN” here is not a menacing independent angel; here it represents the instigation of quarreling, which through persistence (and, presumably, tact) can be overcome. The moral lesson of this ŠAṬAN appears to be a continuation of 13.xxxiii. above, that one is enticed in an area where one desires to be enticed (the *yetzer hara*). One assumes that a quarreler could choose not to quarrel with or without R. Meir’s intervention. Therefore their quarreling is simply following a harmful desire or inclination (*yetzer*). R. Meir is successful because his persistence helps them overcome that desire.

Similarly, a Tannaitic statement on Ned. 32a superficially reads as an angelic being. The *sugya* brings proofs for the previous *mishna* (on 31b) that declares the great significance of circumcision. The paramount proof is an interpretation of Ex 4:24-26, which reads:

כד ויהי בדרך במלון ויפגשוהו יהוה ויבקש המיתו:
כה ותקח צפרה צר ותכרת את־עַרְלַת בְּנֶהּ ותגע לרגליו ותאמר כי חתן־דמים אתה לי:
כו וירר ממנו אז אמרה חתן דמים למולת:

24 And it was on the way at the inn, and God encountered him and he sought to kill him.
25 And Zipporah took a flint and cut off the foreskin of her son and she touched his feet and she said, “For you are a *hatan* of blood to me.”
26 And he released him, then she said, “*Hatan* [of] blood to the *mulot*.”

A *beraita* supplies the Gemara’s exegesis of the passage:

16. xxxvii. Ned. 31b-32a

תניא, ר' יהושע בן קרחה אומר: גדולה מילה שכל זכויות שעשה משה רבינו לא עמדו לו כשנדרשל מן המילה, שנאמר: (שמות ד) ויפגשוהו ה' ויבקש המיתו. אמר רבי: ח"ו שמשה רבינו נדרשל מן המילה, אלא כך אמר: אמול ואצא סכנה היא, שנאמר: (בראשית לד) ויהי ביום השלישי בהיותם כואבים וגו'. אמול ואשהא שלשה ימים, הקב"ה אמר לי (שמות ד) לך שוב מצרים! אלא מפני מה נענש משה? מפני שנתעסק במלון תחלה, שנאמר: (שמות ד) ויהי בדרך במלון. רשב"ג אומר: לא למשה רבינו בקש שטן להרוג אלא לאותו תינוק, שנאמר: (שמות ד) כי חתן דמים אתה לי, צא וראה מי קרוי חתן? הוי אומר: זה התינוק.

It was taught: R. Joshua b. Karḥa says, Great is circumcision, for all the meritorious deeds performed by Moses our teacher did not protect him when he was tardy in [performing the commandment of] circumcision, as it is written, *and the Lord met him*,

and sought to kill him (Ex 4:24). Rabbi³⁶¹ said, God forbid that Moses should have been apathetic towards circumcision, but he reasoned thus: ‘If I circumcise [my son] and [straightway] go forth [on my mission to Pharaoh], I will endanger his life, as it is written, *and it came to pass on the third day, when they were sore* (Gen 34:25). Should I circumcise him and tarry three days? — but the Holy One, blessed be He, said to me: *Go, return unto Egypt* (Ex 4:19). Why then was Moses punished? Because he busied himself first with the inn, as it is written, *And it came to pass by the way, in the inn* (Ex 4:24). **R. Simeon b. Gamaliel said: ŠAṬAN did not seek to kill Moses, rather the infant**, for it is written, *[Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, and cast it as his feet, saying,] for you are a bloody ḥatan to me* (Ex 4:25). Go out and see: who is called a ḥatan? Surely the infant [to be circumcised] (Ned. 31b-32a).

There are two angles to understanding R. Simeon’s ŠAṬAN: its significance in relation to the *sugya* and his hermeneutical meaning in interpreting the Pentateuch. His placement here in comes in contrast to R. Joshua b. Karḥa’s exegesis, who takes the Pentateuch at face value, that the source of Moses’s suffering is God (Ex 4:24). The redactor is presenting both R. Joshua and R. Simeon as interpreting v. 24. Therefore, R. Simeon’s ŠAṬAN is synonymous with God.

Yet hermeneutically, R. Simeon’s interpretation is a somewhat radical departure from Joshua b. Karḥa and Rabbi (and, as presented in the Gemara, with other voices who follow), and his given reason is because “ḥatan” happens to be a term for a child. Indeed, the Gemara elsewhere describes a newborn baby boy as כַּחַתֵּן שָׁלֵם – “like a perfect”³⁶² bridegroom” (Nid. 44a). Yet surely his proof-text (Ex 4:25) might refer to Moses as well, given that the meaning of ḥatan (חַתָּן) throughout Tanach is consistently and unequivocally “bridegroom”; e.g., Gen 19:12-14, Exod 3:1, 4:18, Judg 15:6, 19:5, 1 Sam 18:18. However, the Jerusalem Talmud (Yerushalmi) offers a different version of his statement with additional elucidation:

ואמר רשב"ג חס ושלום לא ביקש המלאך להרוג למשה אלא לתינוק. בוא וראה מי קרוי חתן משה או התינוק. אית תניי תני חתן. אית תניי תני חתן. אית תניי תני חתן. מאן דאמר משה קרוי חתן. חתן דמים מתבקש מידך. ומאן דמר התינוק קרוי חתן. חתן דמים את עומד לי.

³⁶¹ R. Yoel Sirkash (published as “Bach” marginal notes in the Vilna Talmud) emends this to “R. Yose”, which was evidently the version Rashi had per his comment to Ex 4:24.

³⁶² Alternatively, “full” or “complete”, as in נזק שלם - full damages.

And **R. Simeon b. Gamliel said, God forbid! The angel did not seek to kill Moses, only the infant.** Come and see: who is called “*hatan*”, Moses or the infant? There is a Tannaitic tradition that Moses is called “*hatan*” and there is [an alternate] Tannaitic tradition that the infant is called “*hatan*”. The one who says that Moses is called “*hatan*” [interprets the words of Zipporah,] “Bridegroom (*hatan*)! Blood is being demanded of you!” And the one who says that the infant is “*hatan*” [interprets,] “You are now prepared by me as an infant (*hatan*) of blood” (yNed. 3:9).

In both versions, R. Simeon b. Gamliel makes the radical proposal that the victim of “he sought to kill him” (v. 24) is the child. The proof in both versions revolves around the meaning of Zipporah’s use of the term *hatan*. In the Bavli version, the proof comes directly from v. 25, “*for you are a bloody hatan to me*” which linguistically could mean a child. In the Yerushalmi version, the proof is less clear. Here, the latter interpretation (supporting R. Simeon’s opinion that *hatan* refers to the child), is fairly close to her words in v. 25, *hatan damim atah li*, interpreted by this Tanna as *hatan damim at omed li*. The former interpretation, however, that *hatan* refers to Moses, is *hatan damim mitvakesh m’yadach*, which is difficult to reconcile with either of her statements. The key may be found in the targums: both Onkelos and Ps.-J. interpret her words in v. 26 as (effectively), “you were saved by blood of circumcision.” If so, then the two Tannaitic opinions of the Yerushalmi are based on the fact that Zipporah uses the word “*hatan*” twice, the first time in apparent reference to the infant and the second time in apparent reference to Moses, which then becomes the putative basis of R. Simeon’s opinion. Moreover, the phrase “go out and see” (צא וראה) in the Bavli version sounds very much like the Yerushalmi’s idiom.³⁶³ The Yerushalmi’s version has R. Simeon speaking about “the angel”,

³⁶³ Or, more precisely, like a parody of the Yerushalmi, which only uses the phrase when it literally means to go and see something, as opposed to “come and see” which is a figurative expression. Here the phrase may be a scribal error, as the letters צ and ב appear graphically similar (this is the unique occurrence of the expression in the Bavli and it is relatively rare in the Yerushalmi, and more frequent in the midrashic collections but less so than with a ב); if so, we may here have evidence that transmitted aggadic statements such as this one were written down prior to their inclusion in the Bavli. For a detailed analysis of the implications of a comparable Yerushalmi-Bavli correspondence, see Yaakov Elman, “Orality,” 87-92.

not “ŚAṬAN”. In consideration of these details, and that the Yerushalmi predates the Bavli, it would appear that the Yerushalmi version of his statement is the original and that the term “ŚAṬAN” in the Bavli version is a later interpolation³⁶⁴ that occurred at some point between the death of Simeon ben Gamliel ca. 150 and the redaction of the Bavli.

However, a third version of this aggadah suggests that R. Simeon’s “ŚAṬAN” here is a far older tradition:

And you yourself know what He spoke to you on Mount Sinai, and **what prince Mastema desired to do with you when you were returning into Egypt on the way when you did meet him at the lodging-place**. Did he not with all his power seek to slay you and deliver the Egyptians out of your hand when he saw that you were sent to execute judgment and vengeance on the Egyptians? (Jub 48:2-3)³⁶⁵

The apocryphal Jubilees predates both Talmuds by centuries. Like the Akeida comparison in Ch. 2 above, this Mastema is similar to the ŚAṬAN of the rabbinic version with one significant difference: unlike R. Simeon’s ŚAṬAN, Mastema of Jubilees appears to be a demonic being independent of God, to the extent that he sought to kill Moses and save Egypt “with all his power”.

To account for the similarity between Jubilees and the rabbinic interpretations, it is important to note three facts. First, the biblical verses themselves (v. 24-25) imply an angelic intervention: “God encountered him and he sought to kill him” (v. 24); “she touched his feet” (v. 25, according to the view that it refers to the angel’s feet). Second, as demonstrated in Ch. 2 above, Jubilees explicitly equates Mastema with the ŚAṬAN. Third, we know that Jubilees was in circulation in Israel but we have no evidence that it was known in Babylonia. Therefore, it seems to me that what may have occurred is that the Yerushalmi version of R. Simeon’s

³⁶⁴ Simeon is presumably R. Simeon b. Gamliel II, the fourth-generation Tanna known for his aggadic lessons.

³⁶⁵ Translation of R. H. Charles (*The Book of Jubilees*), with modernized pronouns.

exegesis is the original version: he uses “that angel” instead of “ŚAṬAN” to avoid supporting, even indirectly, the exegesis in Jubilees. Centuries later when the Stammaim created their new curriculum called the Bavli, they included the citation of R. Simeon with the interpolated term ŚAṬAN in place of “angel”, which should therefore be considered Stammaitic.³⁶⁶ These three contextualizing facts — the Yerushalmi precedent, the larger historical picture, and the broad view of the Bavli — merely support the basic reading of the ŚAṬAN of this *sugya* as a synonym for God. These three contextualizing facts help sharpen the image of the Bavli here, presenting ŚAṬAN as the personal expression of divine nemesis *as opposed to Mastema*.³⁶⁷

Further, immediately following this *beraita* the Gemara cites a related Amoraic teaching, which perhaps clarifies what R. Simeon’s “ŚAṬAN” represents:

דרש רבי יהודה בר ביזנא: בשעה שנתרשל משה רבינו מן המילה, באו אף וחימה ובלעוהו ולא שיירו ממנו אלא רגליו, מיד: ותקח צפורה צור ותכרת את ערלת בנה, מיד: וירף ממנו. באותה שעה ביקש משה רבינו להורגו, שנאמר: (תהלים לז) הרף מאף ועזוב חמה, ויש אומרים: לחימה הרגו, שנא': (ישעיהו כז) חמה אין לי. והכתיב: (דברים ט) כי יגורתי מפני האף והחמה! תרי חימה הוו. ואיבעית אימא: גונדא דחימה.

R. Judah b. Bizna lectured: When Moses was lax in [the performance of] circumcision, Af [Anger] and Hemah [Wrath] came and swallowed him up, leaving only his legs. Thereupon immediately Zipporah *took a sharp stone and cut off the foreskin of her son* (Ex 4:25), straightway *he let him alone* (Ex 4:26). In that moment Moses desired to slay them [but could not], as it is written, *Cease from Af and forsake Hemah* (Ps 37:8). Some say that he did slay Hemah, as it is written, *I have not Hemah* (Isa 27:4). But is it not written, *For I was terrified of Af and Hemah* (Deut 9:19)? — There were two [angels

³⁶⁶ See Jacob Neusner, *The Peripatetic Saying: The Problem of the Thrice-told Tale in Talmudic Literature* [Chico, California: Scholars Press], Ch. 11, whose argument that the Bavli has “reworked and improved earlier materials” uses the specific example of an older tradition of R. Simeon b. Gamliel.

³⁶⁷ Comparing the wording of the Jubilees and Yerushalmi versions sound as though R. Simeon was conscious of it and disagreed with its exegetical conclusion derived from the ambiguities of Ex 4:24-25. But see Moshe Bernstein, “Angels at the Aqedah,” 290, who concludes that “an argument could be made that the ‘demonic accusing angel, Mastema or Satan, might have been created independently by different interpreters who shared an insight into the parallels between the Aqedah story and Job.” (See also note 40 above.)

named] Hemah. An alternative answer is this: [he slew] Hemah's troop [but not Hemah himself]³⁶⁸ (Ned. 32a).

Af and Hemah appear to be personifications of divine justice which Moses was forbidden to destroy (Ps 37:8); that is, Moses wanted to remove these aspects of divine justice from the world but could not.³⁶⁹ While the passage is esoteric, its placement immediately after R. Simeon's *beraita* seems retroactively to underscore the view that his ŠAṬAN merely represents divine justice, responding to Moses's failure to circumcise his son on time.

A similarly obscure ŠAṬAN *sugya* in Tamid unfortunately does not have such contextual clarification.³⁷⁰ It relates a verbal sparring match between the conquering Alexander the Great and the anonymous "elders of the South":

17. xxxviii. Tam. 32a

אמר להן: מה דין אתריסתון לקבלי? אמרו ליה: סטנא נצח.

He [Alexander] said to them [the elders]: Why do you resist me? They replied: ŠAṬAN is powerful (Tam. 32a).

Their retort seems to mean, "Rationally, we should accept you, but the temptation to resist is very strong."³⁷¹ Thus this ŠAṬAN is a synonym for the *yetzer hara* – the evil inclination; I have argued above (§6.vii., §10.xxiii; also Ch. 3§B.6) that the Gemara understands this equation

³⁶⁸ Alternatively: "[He feared] Hemah's troop [coming after him for slaying Hemah]."

³⁶⁹ Or according to the "Some say that he did slay Hemah", he was perhaps able to remove one aspect of divine justice from the world, symbolized by the angel Hemah. The present interpretation is found in Maharal (Chidushei Agadot B) who also discusses Af and Hemah in *Netivot Olam* and elsewhere. The names also appear in Tanhuma Ki Tisa (Buber p. 13), Midr. Ps. 6:3 and 7:6. Elsewhere in rabbinic tradition, Af represents God's general anger at the world which threatens the righteous along with the wicked (Sifre 320).

³⁷⁰ There is evidence that tractate Tamid continued to be edited in the Gaonic period and therefore the possibility that this passage is post-Stammaitic; see Simon Arazi, "Two Earlier Editions of the Tractate Tamid," *Tarbiz* 76, no. 1/2 (Winter/Spring 2007).

³⁷¹ Alternatively, "Your power does not come from your worthiness, rather because we are deserving this subordination," which would render this ŠAṬAN as a divinely-sent challenge.

(ŠAṬAN = *yetzer*) to mean that God responds to a person's weakness in this area, his seducibility (which must contain some level of desire to be seduced), by sending him a test or seduction in order to enable him to increase his self-awareness and self-control.

The final ŠAṬAN *sugya* was quoted in the introduction to the current chapter, Rabbi's four blessings for his dinner host:

18. xxxix. Ber. 46a

וּיצַלַח מְאֹד בְּכָל נִכְסָיו,
וְיִהְיוּ נִכְסָיו וְנִכְסֵינוּ מוֹצְלָחִים וְקְרוּבִים לַעִיר,
וְאֵל יִשְׁלוֹט שָׁטָן לֹא בַּמַּעֲשֵׂי יָדָיו וְלֹא בַּמַּעֲשֵׂי יָדֵינוּ,
וְאֵל יִדְקַר לֹא לַפְּנֵינוּ וְלֹא לַפְּנֵינוּ שׁוֹם דְּבַר הַרְהוּר חֲטָא וְעִבְרִיה וְעוֹן מַעֲתָה וְעַד עוֹלָם.

- i. May he be very successful with all his possessions,
- ii. May his and our investments be very successful and easy to manage,³⁷²
- iii. May [a] ŠAṬAN not dominate the actions of his hands or the actions of our hands;
- iv. May there never appear³⁷³ before him nor before us anything [that causes] thoughts of sin, transgression or willful sin, from now and forever (Ber. 46a).

Translators are unanimous that Blessing iii. refers to a spiritual ŠAṬAN.³⁷⁴ Assuming that Rabbi means the same spiritual entity that represents divine justice as in source 2.ii above, here his idiom “ŠAṬAN” instead of “the ŠAṬAN” (or “the destructive ŠAṬAN” as in 2.ii), is an anthropomorphic metaphor, creating a poetic homily: “May we act without hubris” or perhaps, “May the Divine attribute of Justice not hinder.”³⁷⁵

³⁷² Lit., “May his and our possessions be very successful and close to town”; my translation follows Rashi and others who are apparently bothered by the redundant use of “possessions”.

³⁷³ On this translation, see note 300 above.

³⁷⁴ On this translation, see note 302 above: the three translations cited there are not unreasonable given the similar ambiguity to the ŠAṬAN in 1 Chr 21; however, as mentioned there, if not for this consensus I would prefer to read this ŠAṬAN as “human adversary”.

³⁷⁵ The latter possibility recalls R. Ishmael b. Elisha's blessing to God: “May it be Your will that Your mercy may suppress Your anger and Your mercy may prevail over Your other attributes, so that You may deal with Your children according to the attribute of mercy and may, on their behalf, stop short of the limit of strict justice” (Ber. 7a). These interpretations of

On the surface, Rabbi's distinction between ŠAṬAN in Blessing iii. and "sinful thought" in Blessing iv. seems to contradict previous sources, including 10.xxiii: if the ŠAṬAN and evil inclination are synonymous, then Blessing iii. is redundant. However, I have argued (here in §6.vii., §10.xxiii, §13.24, §17.xxviii and Ch. 3§B.6) that the Gemara is using the Reish Lakish quote to teach a theurgical lesson: that the idea of a ŠAṬAN-seduction is God putting a person in a situation where his knowledge of the right path can be tested against his internal desire to be seduced. Therefore, the ŠAṬAN and evil inclination are the same in the sense that they work in tandem (along with the Angel of Death should the person fail the test).

Approaching Rabbi's blessings with this holistic Talmudic perspective makes further connections plausible. For instance, he may have had in mind a pair of *beraitot* that use similar wording and contain the same contradiction (B. Bat. 16b-17a):

ת"ר.... שלשה לא שלט בהן יצר הרע אלו הן: אברהם, יצחק ויעקב....
ת"ר: ששה לא שלט בהן מלאך המות ואלו הן: אברהם, יצחק ויעקב, משה, אהרן ומרים....

The Rabbis taught: There were three [people in history] whom the evil inclination did not dominate, namely Abraham, Isaac and Jacob....

The Rabbis taught: There were six whom the Angel of Death did not dominate, namely Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron and Miriam....

Plainly, for the two *beraitot* to be reconciled, the evil inclination and the Angel of Death must be different entities. According to my reading of Reish Lakish's ŠAṬAN-*yetzer* equation,

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob may have been free of the Angel of Death because they were free of the evil inclination, while Moses, Aaron and Miriam were free of the Angel of Death for some other reason. Hence, if Rabbi's ŠAṬAN of Blessing iii. is distinct from the evil inclination of Blessing iv., he is creating a progressive pattern in his four blessings:

- i. Give him material success
- ii. Give him physical comfort
- iii. Keep him free of divine seduction/test
- iv. Keep him free of the kinds of thoughts that might trigger such a seduction/test.³⁷⁶

His blessing uses the personified Jobian ŠAṬAN as a reference for divine seduction or test.

This conscientious reference to a Tanach motif brings the Gemara back full-circle to the scriptural foundation upon which all of these rabbinic ŠAṬAN texts are constructed (Ch. 2 above) and underscores the Bavli's aggadic agenda of presenting a theological curriculum. The curriculum consistently presents ŠAṬAN as either metaphorical, symbolizing the nemesis-quality of divine justice, or allegorical for how that justice operates. Even the most anthropomorphic of the Bavli's ŠAṬAN texts³⁷⁷ fit this interpretation.³⁷⁸ Working from the curricular model of the Bavli, the spectrum of these thirty-nine Talmudic ŠAṬAN midrashim appear to be a highly consistent curriculum, presenting the redactors' understanding of how the Torah deals with the ancient concepts of hubris and nemesis. The ŠAṬAN of the Bavli represents how God responds to hubris and reflects a decidedly non-ontological view of evil. While these eighteen groups of lessons overlap, the present chapter has shown that they teach

³⁷⁶ Alternatively, if Blessing iii. is interpreted as "Keep him free of hubris (internal)" then Blessing iv. may mean, "keep him free of external tests".

³⁷⁷ E.g., Ned. 32a, source 16.xxxvii. above.

³⁷⁸ These examples are also a microcosm of the challenge of unpacking any rabbinic text. All are Amoraic or post-Amoraic documents (with the qualifications of Note 195 above), yet all quotations are given in the name of Tannaim and Amoraim who lived centuries before the redaction of the Talmud. If, for example, the last source (18.xxxix. from Ber. 46a) represents mere pseudepigraphy on the part of the redactor, why does the redactor choose Rabbi for the attribution? If, on the other hand, the attribution is accurate (Rabbi really did make such a blessing), why does the redactor choose Rabbi's particular blessings and prayers at the exclusion of others? The simplest solution is that the attribution represents a confluence of two factors: the redactor had this quotation from Rabbi at hand, and decided that it should be normative law; perhaps the redactor received both traditions simultaneously (Rabbi's blessings and the normative law). In any case, I interpret the quoting of Rabbi as the Talmud's authoritative way of stating normative law.

at least 10 different facets of the ŠATAN concept:

- a. God's basic rule of justice is to respond strictly measure-for-measure, so be careful even with speech (1)
- b. A common way to invite divine justice is hubristically putting oneself in danger (3)
- c. Another hubris is to reject a commandment on grounds that it is irrational (4)
- d. The righteous need not fear divine justice (5, 15, 18)
- e. but beware speaking or acting (hubristically) self-righteous (6, 8)
- f. and therefore pray for protection (mercy) against divine justice (2, 16);
- g. Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur are times of greater and lesser risk of hubris (7)
- h. External enticements are heaven-sent (9, 13 and possibly 17)
- i. and internal enticements and doubts are heaven-sent (10-11)
- j. and the way to conquer the self-doubt is to reaffirm one's simple faithfulness (11)
- k. Torah protects from hubris or from divine justice in response to hubris (12)
- l. One is tempted according to one's "desire" to be tempted (*yetzer hara*) (12, 14 and possibly 17).

Thus (returning to the paradigm of Ch. 3), while all three ŠATAN forms from Tanach are superficially present in the Bavli, and while other rabbinic texts often associate the ŠATAN with prosecution, the contextual study of the Talmud shows that the redactors included the term only when meaning the hand of God acting with perfect justice.

Ideologically, some of these exegeses are quite daring departures from the Tanach narrative, such as the Akeida of San. 89b (12.xxxi). This observation perhaps provides an answer to a question posed by Jeffrey Rubenstein in his review of Levinson's *Twice-Told Tale*:

Yet one wonders if the Sages' conviction that they were interpreting a supernatural document impacted their willingness to expound and receive exegetical narratives. Levinson wrestles with the issue of the authority behind such creative narrative reworkings, but I suspect that they result, at least in part, as a function of the Bible's divine status, not simply the Foucauldian principle that all commentary derives its authority from the underlying text (Rubenstein 2009, 96).

The fact that the rabbis were willing to provide both intertextual and intratextual commentary projects a self-image as participating in the prophetic revelation of the text.³⁷⁹ In the words of

³⁷⁹ As argued above; see note 185 and *antec*. We are thus presented with a contradiction: on the one hand, scholarship points to rabbinic authors who see themselves as fulfilling a sacred duty which (at least insofar as the halachah goes, but presumably in all parts of the Bavli) includes truthfulness (including quoting sources accurately); on the other hand, scholars such as

Howard Schwartz (citing the famous dispute between the Rabbis and R' Eliezer on B. Met.

59b), "the rabbis regarded the very act of explication of the Torah as a Divine injunction and their decisions so inviolate that not even God could overrule them."³⁸⁰

Rubenstein, Levinson, Boyarin, Halivni *et al.* interpret an expanded version of a story in the Bavli compared to an earlier version as evidence of fictitious embellishment.

It seems to me there are two reasonable resolutions to this contradiction: either the inventors of such embellishments meant for them to be understood as creative literary embellishments (and hence not subject to the ordinary rules of truth and honesty) or what we perceive to be embellishments were for them simply the full details of the story that earlier versions told more succinctly. Indeed, the evidence for purely fictitious embellishment seems thin. For instance, Rubenstein in a typical such proof states: "In light of the lack of mention of the academy in the (more) original Palestinian versions, the references should be taken as Babylonian reworking and hence evidence of the Babylonian reality" (*Talmudic Stories*, 299n. 108). Much of his argument relies on a single speculative chapter by Daniel Sperber (Sperber 1982 83-100), which Rubenstein has cited repeatedly in numerous papers and chapters. Boyarin then accepts the speculative baton from Rubenstein uncritically (with nary a reference to its source in Sperber) and casts it forward toward what he calls post-Amoraic rabbinic pluralism ("perhaps its most striking feature"), hinging his thesis on a single argument by Keith Hopkins that "Admittedly, individual leaders claimed that their own individual interpretation of the law was right, and that other interpretations were wrong. But systemically, at some unknown date, Jewish rabbis seem to have come to the conclusion, however reluctantly, that they were bound to disagree, and that disagreement was endemic" ("Christian Number," 217; Boyarin *op. cit.*, 155-6), although he later backtracks and declares himself "thoroughly skeptical of accounts that seek to find and celebrate in rabbinic Judaism, even in its latest Babylonian avatar, a model of democratic pluralism and interpretative freedom" (*ibid.*, 200). Besides the issue of their supporting sources, Rubenstein, Levinson, Boyarin, Halivni *et al.* are arbitrarily selecting one of two equally plausible alternatives. The other possibility is that when a Talmudic *aggadah* appears expanded from an earlier version, the Babylonian version may in fact be the unembellished, orally-received version, and the lack of this detail in the earlier printed versions may reflect those redactors' editorial policies and processes (for instance, the view mentioned in yShab. 16:1 against writing down any aggadic midrashim may have led to a compromise: write, but not everything). Given the emphasis throughout the Bavli on the value of rabbinic accuracy and truthfulness, this is really a case of "a lack of evidence is not evidence." In the realm of *midrash aggadah*, at least, it seems to me these scholars are understating the fact that oral traditions by definition get retold using the storyteller's current language and cultural references, as Rubenstein does acknowledge (*Talmudic Stories*, 129). For a critical discussion of the distinction between rabbinic midrash, where synchronism is "apt", and scholarship, which should be "unapologetically diachronic", see Zipora Talshir, "Synchronic and Diachronic Approaches in the Study of the Hebrew Bible: Text Criticism within the frame of Biblical Philology," *Textus* 23 (2007): 23; the latter expression is borrowed from Patricia Tull, "Intertextuality and the Hebrew Scriptures," *Currents in Research: Biblical Studies* 8 (2000): 76.

³⁸⁰ Howard Schwartz, *Reimagining the Bible*, 33.

This portrait of the Bavli offers a response to David Stern's call for a new perspective on the broader topic of anthropomorphism:

Virtually no one has approached the question of anthropomorphism on its own terms: that is, how these expressions likening God to man are used in a positive, constructive form in order to personalize God and to affirm His presence. To consider anthropomorphism from this perspective is to view it as trope and figure, a turning of creative language to express truth (rather than to obscure or obstruct it, as the philosophical view of anthropomorphism implicitly claims). Viewed from this perspective, anthropomorphism is less a matter of metaphysics or semantics than of the construction of divinity: the intentional, conscious use of language to represent God's character.³⁸¹

While Stern is referring to direct anthropomorphisms of God (in particular God's emotions), it seems to me the Bavli's presentation of ŠAṬAN as an anthropomorphic metaphor for God's nemesis-like justice adds a level of meaning to the presentation of God's character.

In addition to answering Stern's proposal, the present taxonomy of ŠAṬAN in the Talmud supports Daniel Boyarin's thesis that the distribution of certain aggadic midrashim "is not completely accidental or random but represents an important layer of both literary and ideological work that informs the Bavli as a whole;"³⁸² i.e., a curriculum. Thus, the Talmud presents itself as a unified curriculum to be unpacked by its students.

Summary of Chapter 5

The present chapter has attempted to unpack the Talmud's ŠAṬAN motifs in order to derive the didactic intent of the curriculum. Its eighteen groups of thirty-nine ŠAṬAN statements together teach why and how God tests people with trials and tribulations. The ŠAṬAN teaches that God responds to individual moments of hubris as a kind of nemesis, to enable them to confront their own shortcomings and to learn from them.

³⁸¹ David Stern, *Parables in Midrash: Narrative and Exegesis in Rabbinic Literature* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991), 98.

³⁸² Boyarin, *Border Lines*, 155.

6. The Stammaitic Voice

The selection and arrangement of the Talmud's eighteen ŠATAN *sugyot* is itself the voice of the Stam. The redactors distilled hundreds of available statements (per what are preserved in the midrashic collections), selecting a mere thirty-nine to create their ŠATAN curriculum. Their basic message is that divine justice is highly personalized and nemesis-like, responding to a person's hubris in order to teach him humility. Even when a tanna's or amora's original context and intent is unknown, the Talmudic context reveals this pedagogical intent of the Stammaitic redactors. In addition to this ideological analysis of the redactors' curriculum, an historical, form-critical analysis can provide clues to the development of the ŠATAN concept and thereby of Stammaitic ideology.

Chapter 2 argued that this intent is firmly rooted in Tanach, where there are eight groups of ŠATAN texts which the rabbis would have considered of equal prophetic veracity. These source texts alternate between ŠATAN and HAŠATAN and philological studies simply assume the terms equivalent within Tanach.³⁸³ However, looking toward the Tanach as the rabbis' primary source, the biblical ŠATAN that appears most like the rabbinic texts is that of Job and Zechariah — i.e., HAŠATAN with the definite article. Now, the thirty-nine ŠATANS of the Bavli (as well as of the hundreds of other rabbinic texts) do mimic this biblical variation between ŠATAN and HAŠATAN but these variations have also never been studied per se to determine if the variation is random or reflects cultural or ideological differences.

³⁸³ E.g., Avi Hurvitz, "The Date of the Prose-Tale of Job Linguistically Reconsidered," *Harvard Theological Review* 67, no. 1 (1974): 19. There has been no comprehensive study of these semantic variations aside from encyclopedic entries and footnotes; scholars have suggested that the HAŠATAN of Job and Zechariah reflects a later use, but no one has explained why the change occurred.

In the aggregate, I found a nearly equivalent use of ŠAṬAN and HAŠAṬAN in the Bavli.³⁸⁴ This fact, as well as the lack of any internal rabbinic distinction, implies the equivalence of the terms. Indeed, there are Amoraim who use the terms interchangeably. For instance, R. Joshua b. Levi tells the allegorical legend about ŠAṬAN looking for the Torah (13.xxxiv [10])³⁸⁵ and also states the theological idea that HAŠAṬAN (of Zech 3:2) is the Angel of Death (3.iv. [5]). His word choice may very well be functional, for the proper name Satan fits the allegorical genre, while the functional HAŠAṬAN seems better suited for the theological statements. However, his contemporary Reish Lakish (whether or not they knew each other is unknown) expresses the same theology using ŠAṬAN (10.xxiii [29]), and elsewhere warns allegorically about not “opening one’s mouth to [HA]ŠAṬAN”³⁸⁶ (1.i. [6]). The Amora Samuel (Shmuel) speaks theologically about ŠAṬAN (using the Aramaic ŠIṬNA) not attacking two nationalities simultaneously (3.iii. [8]) and metaphorically about HAŠAṬAN “dancing between the horns” of an ox in heat (9.xvii. [3]). The Amora R. Isaac, a contemporary of the above Amoraim, speaks allegorically about blowing the shofar to confuse HAŠAṬAN (7.x. [16]) and metaphorically about ŠAṬAN’s pain during the ordeal of Job (B. Bat. 16a). From these examples alone it is readily apparent why most Talmudic scholarship has assumed that the rabbis use the terms interchangeably.

Yet the data, while a necessarily small sample size, seem to show a pattern. All named Tannaim use ŠAṬAN (Dosa b. Harkenos, Rabbi Joshua, R. Shimon b. Gamliel, Pleemo, R. Yosi, Rabbi), and only one Tannaic voice (the anonymous speaker in beraita of 4.v. [15]) uses

³⁸⁴ When sorted by individual statements, the ratio of ŠAṬAN to HAŠAṬAN is about 3:2 (and in various midrashim I surveyed, the ratio is about 1:2). However, when sorted by individual speakers, the gap narrows to 5:4. In the manuscripts, I have found no significant departure from this pattern (see note 304 above for Yaakov Elman’s general observation about manuscripts and also note 392 below).

³⁸⁵ These catalog numbers refer to the order presented in Ch. 3 and Appendix A (in brackets).

³⁸⁶ The word “לשטן” may be vowelized L’ŠAṬAN (“to Šaṭan” or “to a šaṭan”) or LAŠAṬAN (to the ŠAṬAN) and it is therefore impossible to determine his intent conclusively.

HAŠAṬAN.³⁸⁷ This Tannaic preference for ŠAṬAN is important for several reasons. First, it creates a precedent for all later rabbinic comments. Second, the precedent appears strong; see for instance Rabbi Joshua’s comment, “Job was only speaking about ŠAṬAN” (10.xxviii. [34]). Since he is discussing to the ŠAṬAN of Job, one might expect him to follow Job’s HAŠAṬAN terminology. His terminology therefore appears to be a deliberate change from Scripture and shows both that he considers the terms equivalent and his preference for ŠAṬAN. The other Tannaic statements all could have used HAŠAṬAN without any loss of meaning and their choice of ŠAṬAN also appears deliberate.

This Tannaic preference for ŠAṬAN makes the HAŠAṬAN of Rabbi (Judah the Nasi) an anomaly: beware an ox from the meadow “because HAŠAṬAN dances between its horns” (Pes. 112b; 9.xviii [13]). In addition to breaking the Tannaic trend of his peers (including his own ŠAṬAN statement, 2.ii [1]), his dancing metaphor would seem a natural scene for the metaphorically personified ŠAṬAN. For these two reasons, combined with the argument above,³⁸⁸ this statement was likely either not said by him or the definite article represents later editing. For the same reason, I would suggest that the Tannaitic beraita’s use of HAŠAṬAN (4.v. [15]) reflects post-Tannaic editing. The corollary to this point would be to resolve the uncertainty in reading R. Yosi’s statement (1.i. [2]), “A person should never open his mouth to [the] ŠAṬAN” without the proposed definite article, thus: “A person should never open his mouth to ŠAṬAN.” Similarly, Rabbi’s prayer for his host may be plausibly translated as, “May ŠAṬAN not dominate the actions of his hands” (18.xxxix. [4]). Thus the Tannaim may be plausibly interpreted to speak with a uniform voice when mentioning the ŠAṬAN.

³⁸⁷ Manuscript New York (JTS) has “*yetzer hara*” in place of “HAŠAṬAN”.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*; see also note 328.

If I am correct that Rabbi's statement was edited later, that editing may have occurred early in the Amoraic period, for the earliest Amoraic source, R. Joshua b. Levi, already uses both terms (3.iv [5], 5.vi. [11], 13.xxxii. [9], 13.xxxiv. [10]). Some of his successors prefer ŠAṬAN (R. Isaac, R. Yehuda, R. Yoḥanan, Reish Lakish) Samuel uses both (3.iii. [8], 9.xvii. [3]) and R. Ḥanan (13.xxxiii [35]) too says HAŠAṬAN, but after him, later Amoraim seem to return to the Tannaic preference of ŠAṬAN except when there is a specific reason to use HAŠAṬAN (e.g., Rami bar Ḥama's homily on the *gematria* of HAŠAṬAN; his lesson would fail without the definite article).³⁸⁹ In short, ŠAṬAN appears to be the dominant term for both Tannaim and Amoraim. The Amoraic instances of HAŠAṬAN may reflect an ideological shift but perhaps merely represent rhetorical expediency.

With this background, the subsequent historical layer of the Stam comes into focus. While they constructed the bulk of the ŠAṬAN curriculum from Tannaic and Amoraic raw materials, using Jeffrey Rubenstein's criteria of Gemara form-criticism there is evidence of a Stammaitic voice in five of the thirty-nine individual passages.³⁹⁰ According to Rubenstein, these five are told anonymously and therefore hold the greatest potential for original Stammaitic glosses:³⁹¹

- Meg. 11b (9.xix. [18]), ŠAṬAN came and danced among them and killed Vashti
- Git. 52a (15.xxxvi. [21]), ŠAṬAN made 2 quarrel, R Meir made peace, heard him say 'woe'
- Qid. 81a (8.xii. [23]), One day [a] ŠAṬAN appeared to him disguised as a woman
- B. Bat. 16a (10.xxvi. [31]), ŠAṬAN kissed the feet of Rav Aḥa b. Jacob in Papunia

³⁸⁹ In Tables 1-3 in the Appendix, I have noted with a ^ those instances of HAŠAṬAN that probably reflect context not personal preference and I have put the article "HA-" in brackets for those cases where I believe the intent is ŠAṬAN without the article but where the grammar makes it uncertainty (e.g., the word is written with a *lamed* prefix, which may mean "to" or "to the").

³⁹⁰ Rubenstein, "Criteria". He frames his criteria as a consolidation of Shamma Friedman's fourteen criteria, outlined in his "Pereq Ha'Isha Rabba Babavli," in *Mehqarim umeqorot*, ed. H. Dimitrovksi (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1977), 301–308, viz.: (1) vocabulary and Geonic forms; (2) use of Aramaic; (3) kernel and explanatory, dependent clause; (4) reference to material further on in the *sugya*; (5) significant textual variations; (6) removing text produces a smoother reading; (7) excessive length.

³⁹¹ Rubenstein, "Criteria," 419.

- Ber. 62b (11.xxx. [37]), Quotes 1 Chron 22:1, taking ŠAṬAN as a symbol of divine justice.

It is notable that the first four of these five are the most anthropomorphic ŠAṬAN aggadot in the Bavli: they describe the ŠAṬAN as dancing, murdering, expressing woe, appearing in drag and kissing a rabbi's feet. If these five are indeed the overt voice of the Stam, and if (following Vidas) the final editing of the Bavli should be regarded as the implicit voice of the Stam, then it is quite interesting that these five all happen to use the metaphorical personified ŠAṬAN.³⁹² This choice of terms strengthens their connection to their Tannaic and Amoraic predecessors, reinforces the Bavli's pedagogy and underscores their metaphorical understanding of the proper name Šaṭan, and reminds us that the Bavli's is very much a Stammaitic Babylonian oeuvre.

A case may be made for expanding this list of five likely Stammaitic texts to include Pleemo's story (8.xiii. [25]). For although an historical person named Pleemo may have indeed uttered the statement attributed to him, the ensuing narrative has the ring of a legend that developed later. It is a lengthy narrative, which meets Rubenstein's seventh Stammaitic criterion. It is also told anonymously, which Rubenstein suggests may be a secondary indicator of Stammaitic authorship.³⁹³ Moreover, there are three additional reasons to consider it either late-Amoraic or Stammaitic. First, Pleemo's hubristic story seems plainly didactic, as a critical response to his daily declaration, "An arrow in ŠAṬAN's eye!" We can interpret this phrase by Rav Ḥisda's use of it: "I married at age 16; had I married at age 14, I could have said 'an arrow' etc." (8.xi. [23]) — i.e., I would have been immune from illicit sexual temptations. His contemporary

³⁹² Vatican, Munich, Florence, Paris and London manuscripts are all consistently ŠAṬAN (never HAŠAṬAN) in these five passages. In Qid. 81a, the Vatican manuscript is lacking the word ŠAṬAN altogether, reading "a woman appeared to him"; in the space above the text a different hand has added "ŠAṬAN"; this correction appears to provide a necessary referent for the next line of the text, which states, "he released him." In the Paris manuscript of B. Bat. 16a there is a noteworthy variation: in place of Rav Aḥa b. Jacob it reads R. Naḥman, and in place of ŠAṬAN it has "the angel of death," which is consistent with the *sugya* but an apparent corruption.

³⁹³ *Ibid.*

Rav Aḥa bar Jacob himself used to say “an arrow” etc. (6.vii. [39]). The fact that these two Amoraim are quoted using Pleemo’s expression verbatim suggests that the expression was well known but the story of Pleemo was not known. For had they known what befell Pleemo as a result of his saying “an arrow” they presumably would have avoided his hubristic error. Even though Pleemo was a Tanna living in Israel and the others were Amoraim living in Babylonia, R. Ḥisda may have traveled to Israel, as he quotes teachings in the name of R. Yoḥanan³⁹⁴ and he appears frequently in the Jerusalem Talmud where his teachings are usually attributed directly to him (as opposed to “X said in the name of R. Ḥisda”) but are occasionally stated by a named Amora who lived there³⁹⁵ and at other times mentioned in the same discussion as Reish Lakish³⁹⁶. Clearly, whether or not R. Ḥisda himself traveled, scholars carried many teachings back and forth. It is therefore unlikely that they had heard Pleemo’s expression but not the unusual story attached to it of his infelicitous Yom Kippur eve. Second, Aḥa bar Jacob’s version of Pleemo’s expression is followed by a Talmudic comment, “*v’lo milta hee*” — i.e., it is not recommended you try this at home — just the sort of comment that Rubenstein considers evidence of Stammaitic gloss. In other words, it sounds as though the Stammaim have taken an explicit editorial position against using this expression. Third, the story appears to match two other incidents of Tannaic hubris in the same sugya (8.xii. [23]) that, per the above argument, appear to be the voice of the Stam —

³⁹⁴ See Pes. 117a.

³⁹⁵ Such as R’ Yona (yBer. 1:4), R. Abahu (yOrl. 1:3), R. Aḥa (yShab. 2:1), R. Yosi b. R. Bun (yEruv. 6:3 *inter alia*). See also his mention in yḤal. 1:1.

³⁹⁶ yTer. 10:3, yShab. 7:1.

together the three appear to form the classic triplet structure described by Shamma Friedman,³⁹⁷ Louis Jacobs³⁹⁸ and others, an apparent signature of the Stammaitic redactors.

The parallel with Pleemo's story therefore suggests that his story is a Stammaitic gloss, an extended version of "v'lo milta hee". An historical-critical analysis might speculate that there was a time in rabbinic history when "an arrow in the eye" was occasionally heard but it fell out of favor. However, a broader Talmudic view suggests that these passages are teaching something very different. Rav Ḥisda had a reputation for exceptional saintliness³⁹⁹ and R. Aḥa bar Jacob was known as particularly sage.⁴⁰⁰ It therefore sounds as though the Gemara is using the "arrow in the eye" motif to teach an additional lesson about the type of temptation known as ŠAṬAN: while saintly people can conquer it, the average person should avoid acting hubristically towards it. Pleemo's story thereby is a colorful example of how the redactors not only selected historic raw materials to create the Bavli, but also how they occasionally shaped those materials ahistorically in order to achieve their pedagogical purpose.⁴⁰¹

Summary of Ch. 6

The construction of the Bavli is the implicit voice of the Stam and their five (or six) putatively original texts represent their explicit voice, where their terminology mimics the Tannaic preference for the explicit metaphorical ŠAṬAN instead of the allegorical Jobian HAŠAṬAN. The Amoraim too followed this precedent, with some exceptions. While some of their

³⁹⁷ Shamma Friedman, "Mivneh Sifruti be-Sugyot ha-Bavli," *Proceedings of the Sixth World Congress of Jewish Studies* 3 (1973).

³⁹⁸ "The Numbered Sequence as a Literary Device in the Babylonian Talmud," *Hebrew Annual Review* 7 (1983).

³⁹⁹ Tan. 23b, M. Qat. 28a.

⁴⁰⁰ B. Qam. 40a, B. Bat. 14a.

⁴⁰¹ In the chronological list of sources, Appendix A, Table C, I have listed Pleemo's narrative twice, the first time attributed to him ca. 200 CE and the latter attributed to Stam, ca. 500.

HAŠAṬAN exceptions merely reflect context, others have no ready explanation. Given the importance of the book of Job to them, their occasional choice of HAŠAṬAN may be an intentional nod to the semantics of Job. For any use of HAŠAṬAN among scholars would presumably recall the HAŠAṬAN of Job who is the only Biblical ŠAṬAN with both voice and personality,⁴⁰² and thereby underscore the ŠAṬAN's allegorical and sublimated role. Given the cultural pressures on the Jews of the 5th and 6th centuries C.E. discussed in Ch. 2 above, such emphasis may have been pedagogically imperative.

⁴⁰² I understand the L'ŠAṬAN of the angel of Num 22 as a verb; see Ch. 4§B.7 above.

7. Conclusion

This study has sought to uncover the meaning of eighteen ŠAṬAN *sugyot* in the Bavli. The investigation began by framing the Talmud as informed by the rabbis' understanding of Tanach as an inerrant text of which they were the authoritative interpreters and teachers. Over centuries, several generations of rabbis revised their interpretations until their final redaction into a formal curriculum called Talmud.⁴⁰³ In constructing their curriculum, the redactors naturally drew on the Tanach as a proof-text and source of idiom, even absent exegesis.

The theology of the ŠAṬAN *sugyot*

Given the ŠAṬAN “raw materials” of Tanach presented in Ch. 2 and the preponderance of the prosecutorial-ŠAṬAN in non-Talmudic rabbinic midrashim, and given the great deliberateness with which the redactors appear to have constructed the Talmud, the absence of even a single prosecutorial ŠAṬAN in the Bavli appears significant. This absence appears to reflect a nuanced, sophisticated theology which conceptualizes the mechanics of divine justice as a process of hindering a person on their present path of hubris in order to correct the path or learn a lesson. In all of the Talmud's eighteen ŠAṬAN *sugyot*, the ŠAṬAN is *the representation of divine didactic justice in response to hubris, expressed as a test or enticement*. Thus the Bavli's lesson is that the “evil” which befalls a person and for which the ancients of all cultures attempted to explain through mythologies such as Nemesis is, in fact, not evil at all but a divine intervention to guide the person toward the correct course.

⁴⁰³ Indeed, the very word “talmud”, literally translated as “learning”, may be better rendered as “curriculum”.

The structure of the ŠATAN sugyot

While this set of aggadot are at times presented as disagreements, they may be seen as “textually staged,” parallel to Fraade’s model for the interpretation of halachic texts.⁴⁰⁴ That is, an aggadic dispute is not necessarily a mere transcript of a disagreement, but may be understood as a deliberate, often complex philosophical theme crafted from complimentary aspects (expressed in the selective quotation of Amoraic and Tannaic sages, along with the occasional Stammaitic editorial gloss). Fraade limits his model of a deliberately crafted Talmud to individual halachic *sugyot*. The expansion of his model to pan-Talmudic aggadah is facilitated by choosing a relatively narrow theme, which its thirty-nine ŠATAN texts provide. The analysis of Ch. 4 finds that the Bavli indeed presents the theological meaning of biblical ŠATAN as a coherent theme. Therefore, the hypothetical model is supported: the Bavli’s presentation of ŠATAN appears to be an intentional, crafted curriculum.

Curriculum

The investigation has found that the redactors selected and arranged texts, most of which are the voices of earlier sages, presenting the ŠATAN as the figurative expression of a particular theurgical concept: God responds to human behavior and thought with a highly-personalized, perfectly just program in order to teach individuals lessons. The ŠATAN’s chief lesson is one of humility — an appropriate nemesis-like response to hubris. Thus the Bavli’s eighteen *sugyot* form *a curriculum in divine justice or in the theology of nemesis*.

Pedagogy

While the connection of this rabbinic view to the Tanach is fundamental to the redactors’ Talmudic curriculum, the lines of heuristic development are not always straight, as Fraade explains: “Scriptural exegesis is not a linear, mechanical process whose course can be simply

⁴⁰⁴ *Legal Fictions*, 430-1.

reversed back from midrashic interpretation to its scriptural origins as if anesthetized from historical, social, and cultural intrusions along the way.”⁴⁰⁵ What I have shown is that the historical, social and cultural intrusions impact the *pedagogy* of the curriculum but not necessarily its meaning.

Performance

Fraade attributes the success of rabbinic pedagogy largely to “its performative pairing of fixed and fluid, timeless and timely, written and oral (even long after the latter was consigned to writing), legal and narrative media;” in short, the Bavli appears to be a kind of performance.⁴⁰⁶ To succeed as performance, however, the Bavli requires an audience who are able to appreciate its sophistication. This sophistication includes both depth and breadth, and reading a given ŚATAN *sugya* without a background in rabbinic *Weltanschauung* or hermeneutics, or without the cross-references to the other seventeen *sugyot*, may lead to a diametrically opposite understanding. Accordingly, the findings of this dissertation suggest a reassessment of the common generalizations that the Bavli is primarily an halachic commentary on the Mishna and that the study of halacha was usually restricted to expert sages while aggadah was also written for a popular audience.⁴⁰⁷ This latter generalization is sometimes “proven” with the oft-quoted story from Sot. 40a of R. Abahu and R. Hiyah. The former comforts the latter by claiming (paraphrased), “The people flocked to me because I’m teaching aggadah, but your halacha is something more precious that laity fail to appreciate.” Yet this general statement about aggadah does not mean that the Bavli’s redactors selected and edited its aggadot for an unsophisticated audience. On the contrary: the Bavli’s halachic agenda implies a scholarly audience, wherefore

⁴⁰⁵ Fraade, *Legal Fictions*, 494.

⁴⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 581; as argued in Ch. 3 above; see note 179 above.

⁴⁰⁷ Avigdor Shinan, *World of the Aggadah*, 124.

its vast aggadot are included to instruct that same audience.⁴⁰⁸ Nor does it mean that any rabbinic aggadah is unsophisticated and can be understood without exposition. In fact, the anecdote of Sot. 40a may mean that one should expect *more* coherency in aggadah than halacha. For discrepancies in halacha would presumably be resolved by the experts but discrepancies in aggadah carried the risk of popular misunderstanding.⁴⁰⁹

Implications for rabbinics

This dissertation's theurgical interpretation of the Bavli's ŠATAN may also inform scholarship of other rabbinic texts⁴¹⁰ and investigations of related subjects such as rabbinic angelology. Maimonides, a self-described adherent to the Talmud,⁴¹¹ firmly maintains that angels are not independent beings. In the words of George Moore, "His Memra and Shekinah may be called intermediary agencies, not intermediate beings, if there be any profit in labeling them at all."⁴¹² Writing specifically about the angel Metatron, Moore argues:

⁴⁰⁸ I am thus hesitant to accept Daniel Boyarin's assessment that the Bavli's purpose is "largely to convince folks that the way of life of the oral Torah, the way of the Rabbis, is the only way toward appropriate behavior toward God and humankind" ("Jesting Words," 144); it seems to me written for folks who are already convinced. Moreover, as I pointed out in Ch. 2 and note 125 above, the aggadic sections account for about a third of the Bavli's total content — a minority but by no means a tiny one.

⁴⁰⁹ Hence, the present study affirms Arthur Marmorstein's critique of the "folk literature" thesis that relegates rabbinic aggadah to the unsophisticated masses: Arthur Marmorstein, *The Doctrine of Merits in Old Rabbinical Literature* (New York: Ktav, 1968), 322.

⁴¹⁰ Cass Fisher finds in *Mekhilta of Rabbi Ishmael* a "rational reflection on the divine, often combined with hermeneutic engagement with Scripture, was a vital source for rabbinic theology;" *Contemplative Nation*, 97.

⁴¹¹ See his Introduction to *Mishneh Torah*. David Hartman observes that Maimonides defines "Talmud" as theological (what Hartman calls "philosophical") as opposed to halachic: "the study of nature, and of God as manifest in nature, which leads to love of God;" David Hartman, *Maimonides: Torah and Philosophic Quest* (New York: Jewish Publication Society, 1977), 309, citing *Mishneh Torah Hil. Talmud Torah* 1:12.

⁴¹² George Foot Moore, "Intermediaries in Jewish Theology: Memra, Shekinah, Metatron," *Harvard Theological Review* 15, no. 1 (Jan., 1922): 43.

In all this, from the metaphor in which he begins to the metaphysical myth in which he ends, whatever else Metatron may be or do, whether he is an individual created angel or an emanation from the Absolute, he is neither in function, nor in essence an 'intermediary,' or 'mediator,' in the sense in which that word is generally understood and in which it is intended by those who write about him in that category.⁴¹³

One might substitute “ŠAṬAN” for “Metatron” to have an accurate summary of the Talmudic presentation of its eighteen *sugyot* of thirty-nine passages.

Implications for rabbinic history

Despite the Bavli’s unquestionable reliance on Tanach, the Talmudic ŠAṬAN is a notable departure from purely Tanach-based definitions⁴¹⁴ and from the Midrashic prosecutorial representation.⁴¹⁵ The Gemara’s theological ŠAṬAN is an aggadic peculiarity and its genesis remains to be explained. Avigdor Shinan speculates that the failure of Bar Kokhba led the sages to de-emphasize the value of physical might and “stress the spiritual and religious values of Judaism” (e.g., midrashically, Samson becomes a pious yeshiva student and Jacob’s “sword and bow” becomes prayer).⁴¹⁶ Since the target of the failed Bar Kokhba revolt was the Roman army and given the importance of the cult of nemesis in Roman military and state ideology and propaganda, it is plausible that the rabbis cultivated a contrarian ideology, promoting a theosophical view that comes directly from their reading of Tanach: ŠAṬAN as nemesis.

Yet the solution may be more basic. The Bavli’s avoidance of the prosecutorial terminology is so pronounced in contrast to the midrashic collections that its theological ŠAṬAN

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*, 79.

⁴¹⁴ Rivkah Kluger, *Satan in the Old Testament*, 29, interprets the biblical ŠAṬAN as “persecution by hindering free forward movement.” For an additional note about Kluger, see note 50 above. Peggy Day, *Adversary in Heaven*, defines the ŠAṬAN as an expression of divine retributive justice. For a brief analysis of Day’s conclusions, see note 288 above.

⁴¹⁵ See Ch. 4 above, and notes 217, 218, 219, and 220.

⁴¹⁶ Shinan, *World of the Aggadah*, 30.

curriculum appears to be a calculated circumvention of the prosecutorial convention. Such a move would make sense in an increasingly theologically-polarized world, where Christianity, Zoroastrianism and other dualistic theologies had become significant religious competitors. The New Testament Satan may have been a particularly important counter-point, given its echo of the midrashic prosecutorial ŠATAN, where Satan is called *ο κατήγορ* – “accuser” (Rev 12:10).⁴¹⁷ The Talmud’s intolerance of dualism is well established; therefore, the Bavli’s avoidance of the rabbinic prosecutorial metaphor and shift towards a more purely theurgical ŠATAN curriculum may reflect the rabbis’ self-image as authoritative interpreters of Tanach.⁴¹⁸ In other words, making statements of biblical exegesis, and moreover creating a full curriculum in biblical exegesis, appears to be a fundamental practice of rabbinic identity-construction.⁴¹⁹

More broadly, perhaps such identity-construction through filtering textual traditions may be regarded as a process of “Judaization,” per Michael Satlow’s definition of Judaization as a process of isolating a sphere of activity by “filtering of traditions, whether textual or ritual, through the lens of their political, cultural, and social location.”⁴²⁰ If so, then the present study

⁴¹⁷ For a summary of possible interpretations of *κατήγορ*, see Brian Stokes, “Satan,” 269 n. 42. Stokes notes the discrepancy between the ŠATAN of Tanach and the Satan of Revelations, wondering how the latter developed.

⁴¹⁸ The specific influence of Christianity on rabbinic thought must be considered in context of the fact that the Bavli was formulated in Sassanian Babylonia, not Imperial Rome; see note 85 above.

⁴¹⁹ And does not *only* consist of defining normative practice as some claim; see for example Jordan Rosenblum, “Food and Identity in Early Rabbinic Judaism,” in *Meals in Early Judaism: Social Formation at the Table*, ed. Susan Marks and Hal Taussig (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014). Daniel Boyarin, citing Gerald Bruns (1990), makes this point: “Multi-mindedness, *within the confines of the rabbinic system and the rabbinic institution*, produces absolute authority, an authority which leaves nowhere (or so it seems) from whence to challenge it,” “Dialectic,” 228.

⁴²⁰ Michael Satlow, “A History of the Jews or Judaism? On Seth Schwartz’s ‘Imperialism and Jewish Society, 200 B.C.E. to 640 C.E.’,” *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 95, no. 1 (Winter, 2005), 162.

may contribute to the emergent Talmudic sub-field of Sassanian studies as well. For it can inform research into the extent to which the redaction of the Bavli was an outcome of the Judaism of its time versus an architect of it.

Implications for the scholarship of Christianity and other emergent identities

Theological dialectics are of course not unique to Judaism, and since the theological questions are universal, and given the Bavli's position at a pinnacle of rabbinic creativity that spans the entire period of early Christianity until nearly the dawn of Islam, perhaps this exposition of rabbinic theology will contribute to the study of early Christian theology as well. In particular, it would be interesting to explore Gerhard von Rad's observation that rabbinic Judaism and early Christianity parted ways in their approach to Job:

The theological impact of the book [of Job] on the teaching of the church has obviously always been slight.... One is faced with the fact that neither Job's questions nor his theology were really taken up and used by the church. One may even ask whether the church, if it had also remained open over the centuries to the theological perspectives of the book of Job, might not have been able to confront the fierce attacks of modern man more effectively and more calmly.⁴²¹

Von Rad's hypothesis and the present dissertation suggest several avenues of inquiry: does the rabbinic pursuit of Job's theology represent their confrontation of attacks by their contemporary societies? Does early Christianity's lack of interest in Job's theology perhaps reflect their sense of hegemony?⁴²² If so, did later challenges to that hegemony inspire more openness to the

⁴²¹ Gerhard von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel*, 238-239.

⁴²² For a summary of current scholarship on Christian and Rabbinic heresiology contexts and goals, see Amram Tropper, "Tractate *Avot* and Early Christian Succession Lists," in *The Ways that Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Adam Becker and Annette Reed (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007), 159-188. He argues for a tempering of the "growing revisionist trend" (*ibid.*, 183) that portrays the early rabbinic authors as competing for legitimacy among many alternative Judaisms, giving greater weight to early Christianity's self-perceived need for legitimization than that of the rabbis. See also James Cox's summary of what he calls the "Chicago School" of religious studies as promulgated by Jonathan Smith, who contends that much of religious studies scholarship is subject to a strong Christian

theology of Job?⁴²³ Does the rabbinic interpretation of ŠAṬAN inform a broader discussion of the interplay between ideology and hegemony? What is the role of canonization in the formation of rabbinic and Christian theologies?⁴²⁴

A parallel set of questions may be asked about other theologies with which the Talmud's redactors were undoubtedly familiar, especially various forms of Gnosticism, including Manichaeism and Mandaism. Given the Bavli's Sassanian context, Zoroastrian, Manichaean and Mazdakist dualism may have been as important if not more important a foil for the rabbis' ŠAṬAN polemics.⁴²⁵ As our understanding of the Talmud's Sassanian context develops, it will be increasingly interesting to explore hypotheses of cross-pollination.⁴²⁶ The most promising investigations for discovering sociological and cultural evidence may be, in the words of Megan Williams, those which reveal the "internal dynamics of Jewish and Christian literary traditions and the ways of thinking that take shape within them."⁴²⁷

theological bias; Cox, *A Guide to the Phenomenology of Religion: Key Figures, Formative Influences and Subsequent Debates* (London: T & T Clark, 2006), 187-191.

⁴²³ Exploring some aspects of this theme, Adam Becker proposes an historical narrative that Jewish and Christian discourse ebbed and flowed for centuries until it included Muslim voices and influences as well, to the extent that one should consider that "there were, in fact, many 'partings,'" and therefore "in the end, it seems, they were ways that never parted" ("Beyond the Spatial and Temporal Limes," 392).

⁴²⁴ For a graphical summary of multiple ancient narrative approaches to the "parting of the ways," see Martin Goodman, "Modeling," mentioned in note 41 above.

⁴²⁵ For a comprehensive discussion of the relationship between Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism and current state of research, see Wolf-Peter Funk, "Mani's Account". For a summary of the topic, see Wendy Doniger et al., *Britannica Encyclopedia of World Religions* (Chicago, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc, 2006), 689-90. It would be interesting to investigate intersections between the rabbinic polemics and Christian Fathers' disputes with Gnosticism; see Jeffrey Russell, *Satan*, Ch. 3; and to compare the presentation of rabbinic theology with the Platonic influences on early Christian theology (*ibid.*, Ch. 4).

⁴²⁶ As Funk proposes; see "Mani's Account," 126.

⁴²⁷ Williams, "No More Clever Titles," 43.

Methodological implications

Any hypothesis, it seems to me, would be wise to consider that the dialectical rabbinic mind, informed by the dialectics of Scripture, thinks in terms of “God versus all other gods”. Any appearance of deviation from monotheism presumably falls in the latter category. However, early Jewish mysticism and Medieval Kabbalah seem to challenge that assumption. Is the Talmud’s allegorical ŠAṬAN, then, a precautionary anchor against a rising tide of Jewish mysticism, or some forms of it? One might begin approaching some of these questions with an examination of other aggadic Talmudic themes, especially those that relate to good and evil and to theurgy: the *yetzer hara* (evil inclination),⁴²⁸ angels and demons,⁴²⁹ reward and punishment, etc. Perhaps the holistic and cultural methodologies of the present study will contribute to such investigations; such investigations would, in turn, confirm (or not) the methodology and conclusions of this dissertation.

Orality and textuality

The present synchronic methodology derives from the fact that, regardless of its historical layers of oral transmission, today one confronts a “closed” Talmud that became canonized as a written text at some point after its completion.⁴³⁰ This approach to the Talmud as a unified, synchronic text (or set of texts) challenges standard notions of authorship. For the fact of

⁴²⁸ On the rabbis’ primary agenda, see note 20 above; on the Bavli’s treatment of the *yetzer hara*, see note 69 above.

⁴²⁹ On the difficulties in studying rabbinic angelology, see note 76 above.

⁴³⁰ This fact creates a certain authorial border around the Bavli that may perhaps challenge the notion in literary criticism that scholarship “should be unapologetically diachronic;” Zipora Talshir, “Synchronic and Diachronic,” 23. It challenges the modern mind to consider a text synchronic that was composed by a committee who did not live at the same time let alone sit in the same room. Yet despite manuscript variations, which are as far as we know minor (see note 304 above), there was at some point a final editorial process that resulted in the Bavli as we know it.

historical redactional layers of the Bavli does not necessarily mean that such layers are diachronic in nature. Such an assumption, similar to the search for a precise date of written composition, reflects a bias in scholarship towards *written* composition and misunderstands the very nature of the Bavli's synchronic *oral* textuality, as Yaakov Elman argues:

The Stammaim of the fifth and sixth centuries, and the Saboraim of the sixth and perhaps seventh, coming on the heels of the pervasively oral culture of the Amoraic period and continuing, as we have seen, the same Amoraic mind-set, are *creating*, and not copying, an oral literature. As I noted earlier, the ideology of oral transmission of the Babylonian Talmud continued into the book culture of the Geonic period, as late as the tenth century. Why then assume a period of written composition or compilation in Babylonia for which there is absolutely no evidence?⁴³¹

If oral composition can be considered composition, then the anonymous *oral* redactors may be regarded as authors. The historical fact of the final written composition and dissemination of the Bavli does not define its authorship and those who published the Bavli, even if they introduced minor changes into the text (wittingly or unwittingly), were not “authors.” Even if they were scholars, their redaction was a self-conscious act of transcription of an oral text and their historical act of composing a written text does not grant them any more authorship status than would a modern day printing press. Therefore, the redaction of the Bavli, hence its synchronic authorship, can remain in the transition period between Amoraim and Saboraim (ca. 550 BCE⁴³²) regardless of evidence of later editorial activity. This understanding of the Bavli offers scholars of the emergence of written textuality a detailed model of that transition.⁴³³

Implications for Medieval Jewish thought

A proof of this synchronic oral textuality of the Bavli is the fact that this issue of its synchronic versus diachronic interpretation never appears in Medieval rabbinic discourse. The

⁴³¹ Yaakov Elman, *Orality*, 87.

⁴³² See note 195 above.

⁴³³ Regarding manuscript variations, see notes 304 and 392 above.

assumption of its synchronicity appears in the very earliest commentators and there is no evidence in their commentaries that they were waging a synchronic-diachronic battle. Rather, the Medieval battles that can be inferred appear as continuations of the same issues addressed by the Bavli itself. If so, the present dissertation may offer a new approach to investigating the emergence of Medieval Jewish thought.

For instance, some scholars of Maimonides find in his *Guide of the Perplexed* evidence of an intra-rabbinic struggle against anthropomorphism.⁴³⁴ If so, can the Rambam's theology be sourced in his reading of the Bavli's ŠAṬAN *sugyot*? Similarly, one might ask how the present reading of the Bavli impacts scholarship on the appearance of dualism in Medieval Kabbalah. For instance, the *Zohar*'s ninety ŠAṬAN passages often *appear* dualistic and yet Daniel Matt considers them informed by one of the very ŠAṬAN *sugyot* shown here to be allegorical, Shab. 89a (Ch. 4§13 above).⁴³⁵ Does the dualistic imagery of Kabbalah in fact represent a break from Talmudic tradition (hence the early attempts to suppress it), or is it a symbolic, easily-misunderstood continuation of Talmudic tradition (hence the early attempts to suppress it)?⁴³⁶

⁴³⁴ Gedaliahu Stroumsa, "Forms of God," 277 n. 38. He brings evidence that this struggle may be traced back to the first centuries CE (*ibid.*, 271); see note 81 above.

⁴³⁵ Daniel Matt, trans., *The Zohar* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004-2016), I: 71 n. 532.

⁴³⁶ Michael Fishbane rhetorically suggests that the latter option must be correct: "Were there a cultural break of the nature or magnitude presumed by certain scholars, it would be equally difficult to understand how theological material of such a presumably alien and dangerous nature (with stark emotional and erotic valences) could have entered the conservative mentality of rabbinic Judaism, have been thoroughly absorbed into its ritual life, and have been presented publicly as a most sacred and primordial truth to scholars and lay persons alike. Is it really conceivable that the circles responsible for the creation and diffusion of the *Zohar* could have passed off an utterly non-existent mythic tradition as the most authentic truth of Judaism, were there no precedent and no continuity to support the claim?" (*Biblical Myth and Rabbinic Mythmaking* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2003], 11.). While he ultimately concludes that the *Zohar* indeed presents a "radical transformation" of rabbinic midrash (*ibid.*, 313), he leaves the reader with one pertinent question: "Where...does [rabbinic] myth end and [kabbalistic] mysticism begin?" (*ibid.*) His own answer is quite intriguing: kabbalistic mysticism begins when the individual internalizes the rabbinic myth. Accordingly, there may be complete

Implications for social history

The Sot. 40a anecdote above also recalls the tension and even chasm often mentioned in the Talmud between scholar – that is, elite producer of the culture – and laity.⁴³⁷ Yet the path to elite culture becomes slightly more accessible when it can be learned from a book. The Talmud converts that elite culture from oral to written, forming a bridge between these two social groups,

continuity between Talmud and Kabbalah. His suggestion might be tested by investigating whether or not the present dissertation's "mythological" conclusions about the Talmud are thusly transformed in kabbalistic mysticism.

If it is correct that they understood the ŠATANS of Tanach to be symbols of divine providence and not independent ontological beings and that their intent was the same when creating the ŠATANS of the aggadah, then this analysis suggests an alternative to Meir Bar-Ilan's literal interpretation of rabbinic anthropomorphisms, in his "Hand of God". He cites *Mekilta d-Rabbi Ishmael* to show that "R. Akiba's opinion (in rabbinic, not in mystic sources), was that God has a finger" (*ibid.*, 325). Yet he admits that the midrash itself calls this anthropomorphism "a great secret" and that there is a strong relationship between the "mundane" measurements of the Talmud and the "mystic esoteric" *Shiur Qoma* (*ibid.*, 330). It seems more likely that the rabbinic anthropomorphisms were not intended to be literal.

However, Bar-Ilan also points out that, due to Karaite and Muslim criticism, Gaonic and later commentators were "made to withdraw from this religious belief, especially when it was not considered fundamental to Jewish belief" (*ibid.*, 332). While it seems implausible that they withdrew from a belief, a widespread misunderstanding or misconstruing of that belief might certainly motivate them to de-emphasize it, as seen in the 985 CE letter from Samuel ben Hofni, who refers to halachic analysis as "fine flour" and the aggadah of his predecessors as "chaff" (Simhah Assaf, *Teshuvot Ha-Geonim Me-Kitve Yad Shebe-Ginze Kambridg' □im Mevo'ot Ve-He□arot* [Jerusalem: Mosad ha-Rav Kook 1942], 283). For Yair Lorberbaum, this quotation bolsters the thesis that there was a systematic "disengagement of halackhah from aggadah" ("Anthropomorphisms," 316 n. 8). To the extent that he is correct to assume that ben Hofni's isolated statement is representative of a general trend, the trend indicates that the earlier approach – namely that of the Talmud – was to give great and perhaps equal importance to the aggadah. According to the present thesis, this new distancing from rabbinic aggadah would have been for pedagogical or political reasons, not ideological ones. Indeed, Medieval rabbinic commentators such as Rashi do not hesitate to employ the Talmudic or midrashic ŠATAN (see note 217 above), perhaps due to the term's currency in Christian and Muslim texts and societies. Thus began a period of rationalistic Talmudic studies that was so successful at ignoring the mystical teachings of the Talmud that the emergence of 14th Century Kabbalah appears to be a radical new development when in fact it may have been a revitalization of an ancient rabbinic thread.

⁴³⁷ For instance, R. Akiva's disclosure, "When I was unlearned, I said, 'Let me have a scholar and I will maul him like an ass'" (Pes. 49b); and the tannaitic ruling, "An unlearned man is not counted for a *zimmun* blessing" (Ber. 47b).

and historically between two eras. The earlier era was dominated by the elite culture-producers and the later era saw increased access to Jewish intellectual culture. Redacting the written Talmud therefore became an irreversible step towards democratizing the transmission of culture. Peter Brown describes a similar process occurring in the Christian world:

The most important feature of the ancient world, in its Late Antique phase especially, had been the existence of a sharp boundary between aristocratic and popular culture. In the late sixth century, the boundary was all but obliterated: the culture of the Christian man in the street became, for the first time, identical with that of the élite of bishops and rulers.⁴³⁸

The present framework of the Talmud-as-curriculum may provide a starting-point for exploring this apparent cultural parallel. Yet in the Talmud's case, the democratization process also simultaneously froze or slowed the production of that culture by codifying the oral performance as a written text, and it would be interesting to compare how Christian elites reacted to the democratization process. The comparison may shed light on the question of whether the writing of the Bavli was a catalyst of increased cultural access or a reaction thereof.

Regardless of the resolution of that question, the sages who composed the Bavli certainly upheld the “sage” as a role model of wisdom and piety. One example, the text that introduced the present study, from Qid. 81a (Ch. 4§8.xiii. above), may now be revisited in light of this dissertation's pan-Talmudic perspective:

R. Meir used to scoff at transgressors [of sexual immorality]. One day [a] ŠAṬAN appeared to him in the guise of a woman on the opposite bank of the river. As there was no ferry, he seized the rope and proceeded across.

According to the present conclusion, the passages appears to mean:

The famous Tannaic sage R. Meir used to scoff at transgressors of sexual immorality. In order to show him the error of his hubris, one day God arranged for a woman whom R. Meir would find overwhelmingly attractive to appear to him on the opposite bank of a river. Overcome with lust, R. Meir displayed his moral weakness by the zealous and almost superhuman feat of traversing the river by rope.

⁴³⁸ Peter Brown, *World of Late Antiquity*, 174.

Measure-for-measure, R. Meir has been tempted in exactly the area in which he exhibited hubris – the hallmark of a true nemesis. Yet the passage continues:

When he had reached half way along the rope, he released him saying: “Had they not proclaimed in Heaven, ‘Be careful with R. Meir and his Torah,’ I would have valued your life at two nickels.”

The meaning of “he released him” seems to be that God released R. Meir from the grip of lust (perhaps by causing the attractive woman to leave?). He was only proffered this release due to his scholarly status (consistent with the Talmud’s common dictum that Torah learning provides protection from the Angel of Death⁴³⁹). But would reaching the woman have resulted in R. Meir’s death? Perhaps sinning with her would have indeed made him liable to such a penalty.⁴⁴⁰

Here, as throughout the Bavli, the redactors prove themselves quite deliberate in the writing (and placement⁴⁴¹) of non-halachic matters. This ŠATAN is certainly an expression of the divine and not an intermediary⁴⁴² and is consistent with the overall Rabbinic concern, in Steven Katz’s words, to define the “relationship between human beings and God, rather than the being

⁴³⁹ See Mak. 10a.

⁴⁴⁰ This interpretation departs from those who interpret the passage as a moral allegory about human inadequacy in the face of (and hence the forgivability of) sexual temptation; see for example Howard Schwartz, *Reimagining the Bible*, 58-64, who identifies the satanic woman with the mythical Lilith. This R’ Meir parable recalls a common ancient motif of the shape-shifting demon tempting the holy man. In the early Christian versions, the Devil is trying to stop the monastic from approaching God; see Rufinus (ca. 400 CE), *Historia Monachorum*, 1 (quoted in Russell, *Satan* 173).

⁴⁴¹ That is, in addition to the occasional halachic purpose of an aggadah, to which this example is a case in point. As shown in Ch. 4§8.xiii. above, in addition to the aggadic lesson, R. Meir’s anecdote also serves an halachic purpose, providing a great incentive for even a holy sage to observe the laws of seclusion.

⁴⁴² To interpret this ŠATAN otherwise would in fact be ironic, considering Solomon Schechter’s observation of rabbinic theology that “every separation from God, though not with the intention of sin, but with the purpose of establishing an intermediary, is...considered as the setting up of another God, who is the cause of sin” (*Aspects*, 292). In other words, to blame mistakes or troubles on an independent ŠATAN is akin to idolatry, the very antithesis of Talmudic theology.

of God alone.”⁴⁴³ This rabbinic perspective on Providence may explain their exceptional interest in the book of Job⁴⁴⁴ and contrast their reading of Job with modern scholars like James Crenshaw who judge the book’s primary theme to be personal piety (serving God without hoping for a reward), relegating theology (how does God operate) to secondary importance.⁴⁴⁵ For the Talmud, theology is the foundational issue on which piety stands or falls. Every book of Tanach, beginning with the first chapters of Genesis, speaks to piety. Few books, however, achieve Job’s intellectual depth in probing the mystery of God’s ways.⁴⁴⁶ The Talmudic instructions (“Torah”) on how to think about the ŠATAN of Job and in general thereby become guidance on how to think about God and the age-old problem of evil and theodicy. Taking a cue from Admiel Kosman’s interpretation of the ŠATAN as *God’s way of teaching one lessons about oneself*,⁴⁴⁷ the present study would add: *and one’s relationship to God*.

The greatest challenge in taking any of these implications forward is the Bavli’s sheer magnitude. Given its size and frequent opaqueness, any synchronic Talmudic study is such an enormous endeavor, fraught with the two great risks of misunderstanding and omission, that the attempt itself might with justification be considered hubristic. Yet perhaps the present

⁴⁴³ Steven Katz, “Man, Sin and Redemption in Rabbinic Judaism,” in *The Cambridge History of Judaism Volume 4: The Late Roman-Rabbinic Period*, ed. Steven T. Katz (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 943.

⁴⁴⁴ For statistics, see note 253 above.

⁴⁴⁵ Crenshaw, *Defending God*, 184.

⁴⁴⁶ This theological approach to Job also answers a problem that bothers Crenshaw: he accuses the author of “hubris in the extreme” for putting words into God’s mouth and for supposing that God would “laud a human as perfect in every way” (*ibid.*, 187). If Job is a book about piety, Crenshaw’s point is well taken. However, if it is book of theology, which is a branch of philosophy, then setting up an idealized situation or straw man, as it were, is standard rhetoric throughout the Talmud and indeed throughout philosophical literature.

⁴⁴⁷ Kosman, *Masekhet Gevarim*, 107.

demonstration of a synchronic ŠAṬAN curriculum has established the feasibility, relevance and rewards of probing the Talmud for its elusive wisdom.

Appendix A — Tables of Bavli ŚAṬAN Texts

Table 1 – Bavli ŚAṬAN Texts According to Tractate
(includes duplicates)

סדר	GROUP	#	SOURCE	QUOTE	WHO	WHN	WHR	TERM ^a
1	2	ii	Ber 16b	Prayer for protection from the "destructive ŚAṬAN." ¹	Rabbi	200	EY	ŚAṬAN
2	1	i	Ber 19a ^b	"A person should never open his mouth to the ŚAṬAN."	R. Yosi	200	EY	[HA]ŚAṬAN ²
3	9	xvii	Ber 33a	Black ox in spring dangerous "bcs the ŚAṬAN dancing between its horns."	Samuel	240	Bav	HAŚAṬAN
4	18	xxxix	Ber 46a	"May [a] ŚAṬAN not dominate the actions of his hands."	Rabbi	200	EY	ŚAṬAN
5	3	iv	Ber 51a	The ŚAṬAN = Angel of Death; threatens when one puts oneself in danger	R. Josh. b. Levi	220	EY	HAŚAṬAN
6	1	i	Ber 60a ^b	"A person should never open his mouth to the ŚAṬAN."	Reish Lakish	250	EY	[HA]ŚAṬAN ¹
7	11	xxx	Ber 62b	<i>Quotes 1 Chron 22:1, taking ŚAṬAN as a symbol of divine justice.</i>	Stam*	500 ^c	Bav	
8	3	iii	Shab 32a	[A] "SITNA" doesn't go after two nationalities simultaneously	Samuel	240	Bav	ŚAṬAN
9	13	xxxii	Shab 89a	[A] ŚAṬAN came and asked "where is the Torah?"	R. Josh. b. Levi	220	EY	ŚAṬAN
10	13	xxxiv	Shab 89a	[A] ŚAṬAN came and confounded the world.	R. Josh. b. Levi	220	EY	ŚAṬAN
11	5	vi	Shab 104a	Nor will you tremble before the ŚAṬAN	R. Josh. b. Levi	220	EY	HAŚAṬAN
12	8	xiv	Eruv 26a	"Perhaps it will provoke [a] ŚAṬAN"	R. Yoḥanan	250	EY	ŚAṬAN
13	9	xviii	Pes 112b	Beware ox from meadow "bcs the ŚAṬAN dancing between its horns."	Rabbi	200	EY	HAŚAṬAN
14	7	viii	Yom 20a	HAŚAṬAN = 364 so cannot act on Yom Kippur	Rami bar Ḥama	340	Bav	HAŚAṬAN^
15	4	v	Yom 67b	"statutes that the ŚAṬAN objects to"	<i>beraita</i>	200	EY	HAŚAṬAN
16	7	x	RH 16b	Blow shofar and wail while standing "in order to confuse the ŚAṬAN"	R. Isaac	270	EY/Bav	HAŚAṬAN
17	9	xix	Meg 11b	"ŚAṬAN came and danced among them and killed Vashti"	Anon.*	500 ^c	Bav	ŚAṬAN
18	14	xxxv	Yev 16a	"I have a younger brother, who is ŚAṬAN's firstborn"	Dosa b. Harkenos	100	EY	ŚAṬAN
19	1	i	Ket 8b ^b	"A person should never open his mouth to the ŚAṬAN."	Abaye	340	Bav	[HA]ŚAṬAN ¹
20	16	xxxvii	Ned 31b-32a	ŚAṬAN didn't want to kill Moses, only that child...	R. Shim b Gamliel	140	EY	ŚAṬAN
21	7	ix	Ned 32b	Gematria of HAŚAṬAN = 364	R. Ammi b. Abba	400	Bav	HAŚAṬAN^

¹ Does not appear in some manuscripts.

² On the grammar of this transliteration, see note 386 above.

22	15	xxxvi	Git 52a	ŚAṬAN made 2 quarrel, R Meir made peace, heard him say 'woe'	Stam*	500 ^c	Bav	ŚAṬAN
23	8	xi	Qid 30a	Had I married at 14, I would have told [the] ŚAṬAN, 'arrow in your eye'	Rav Ḥisda	300	Bav	[HA]ŚAṬAN
24	8	xii	Qid 81a	One day [a] ŚAṬAN appeared to him disguised as a woman	Stam*	500 ^c	Bav	ŚAṬAN
25	8	xiii	Qid 81a-b	Pleemo said every day: an arrow in ŚAṬAN's eye!	Pleemo	200	EY	ŚAṬAN
26	10	xx	B. Bat 16a	<i>God's conversation w Śaṭan doesn't make theological sense</i>	R. Yoḥanan	250	EY	<i>Reference without term.</i>
27	10	xxi	B. Bat 16a	<i>Comes down, seduces, ascends, agitates, gets permission, takes soul</i>	Tanna	200	EY	<i>Reference without term.</i>
28	10	xxii	B. Bat 16a	ŚAṬAN's pain was greater than Job's	R. Isaac	270	EY/Bav	ŚAṬAN
29	10	xxiii	B. Bat 16a	ŚAṬAN = yetzer hara = malach hamavet	Reish Lakish	260	EY	ŚAṬAN
30	10	xxiv	B. Bat 16a	ŚAṬAN had a pious purpose	R. Levi	300	EY	ŚAṬAN
31	10	xxv	B. Bat 16a	ŚAṬAN had a pious purpose	Rav Aḥa b. Jacob	300	Bav	ŚAṬAN
32	10	xxvi	B. Bat 16a	ŚAṬAN kissed the feet of Rav Aḥa b. Jacob in Papunia	Stam*	500 ^c	Bav	ŚAṬAN
33	10	xxvii	B. Bat 16a	Job was only speaking against the ŚAṬAN	Abaye	340	Bav	HAŚAṬAN^
34	10	xxviii	B. Bat 16a	Job was only speaking about ŚAṬAN	Rabbi Joshua	100	EY	ŚAṬAN
35	13	xxxiii	Sanh 26b	Why is Torah called "Toshia"? It was given in secret bcs of the ŚAṬAN	R. Ḥanan ^d	250	EY	HAŚAṬAN
36	12	xxx	Sanh 89b	Akeida was a result of the words of ŚAṬAN.	R. Yoḥanan	250	EY	ŚAṬAN
37	11	xxix	Sanh 93a	<i>Quotes Zech 3:2, taking ŚAṬAN as a symbol of divine justice.</i>	Tanna	200	EY	HAŚAṬAN^
38	8	xv	Sanh 95a	ŚAṬAN came and appeared to him like a deer.	Rav Yehuda	230	Bav	ŚAṬAN
39	8	xvi	Sanh 107a	ŚAṬAN came and appeared to him like a bird.	Rav Yehuda	230	Bav	ŚAṬAN
40	6	vii	Suk. 38a/ Men 62a	An arrow in the eye of ŚIṬNA.	Rav Aḥa b. Jacob	300	Bav	ŚAṬAN
41	17	xxxviii	Tam 32a	"Siṭnah is powerful."	Elders of South	333 BCE ^e	Bav	SAṬAN

Excluded: several citations in B. Bat. 15b which quote ŚAṬAN verses from Job as a formality to create the *sugya* numbered here (and Ch. 3) as *sugya* 10.

* Indicates a statement not directly attributed to a named sage, and hence may be attributed to Stam.

^ Indicates a use of the term HAŚAṬAN that is necessary due to context.

^a When the term as a leading adverbial letter (e.g.,), it may be read as either “l’śaṭan” (to/for a ŚAṬAN or to/for Satan) or “laśaṭan” (to/for the ŚAṬAN). In this column HAŚAṬAN means that the text is explicit; [HA]ŚAṬAN means that the context seems to indicate the definite article but is uncertain.

^b These three sources (Ber 19a, 60a, Ket 8b) each has all three attributions; I separated them to facilitate data sorting.

^c Date chosen as approximately Stammaitic; however, may be earlier.

^d Probably the R. Hanan in Suk 16b *inter alia* where he is quoted with Rav Yehuda and R. Sheshet and in Ber. 56b where he is quoted alongside R. Hanina.

^e The Elders of the South are responding to Alexander the Great, ca. 333 BCE. The origin of this legend is unknown and may be Stammaitic (ca. 500 CE).

Table 2 – Bavli ŚAṬAN Texts According to Group and Number
(excludes duplicates)

SEQ	GROUP	#	SOURCE	QUOTE	WHO	WHN	WHR	TERM
2	1	i	Ber 19a	"A person should never open his mouth to [the] ŚAṬAN."	R. Yosi	200	EY	[HA]ŚAṬAN
6	1	i	Ber 60a	"A person should never open his mouth to [the] ŚAṬAN."	Reish Lakish	250	EY	[HA]ŚAṬAN
19	1	i	Ket 8b	"A person should never open his mouth to [the] ŚAṬAN."	Abaye	340	Bav	[HA]ŚAṬAN
1	2	ii	Ber 16b	Prayer for protection from the "destructive ŚAṬAN".	Rabbi	200	EY	ŚAṬAN
8	3	iii	Shab 32a	[A] "ŚIṬNA" doesn't go after two nationalities simultaneously	Samuel	240	Bav	ŚAṬAN
5	3	iv	Ber 51a	HAŚAṬAN = Angel of Death; threatens when one puts oneself in danger	R. Josh. b. Levi	220	EY	HAŚAṬAN
15	4	v	Yom 67b	"statutes that HAŚAṬAN objects to"	<i>Tannaitic beraita</i>	200	EY	HAŚAṬAN
11	5	vi	Shab 104a	Nor will you tremble before the ŚAṬAN	R. Josh. b. Levi	220	EY	HAŚAṬAN
39	6	vii	Suk. 38a/ Men 62a	An arrow in the eye of ŚIṬNA.	Rav Aḥa b. Jacob	300	Bav	ŚAṬAN
14	7	viii	Yom 20a	HAŚAṬAN = 364 so cannot act on Yom Kippur	Rami bar Ḥama	340	Bav	HAŚAṬAN^
21	7	ix	Ned 32b	Gematria of HAŚAṬAN = 364	R. Ammi b. Abba	400	Bav	HAŚAṬAN^
16	7	x	RH 16b	Blow shofar and wail while standing "in order to confuse the ŚAṬAN"	R. Isaac	270	EY/Bav	HAŚAṬAN
23	8	xi	Qid 30a	Had I married at 14, I would have told [the] ŚAṬAN, 'arrow in your eye'	Rav Ḥisda	300	Bav	[HA]ŚAṬAN
24	8	xii	Qid 81a	One day [a] ŚAṬAN appeared to him disguised as a woman	Stam*	500 ⁱ	Bav	ŚAṬAN
25	8	xiii	Qid 81a-b	Pleemo said every day: an arrow in ŚAṬAN's eye!	Pleemo	200	EY	ŚAṬAN
12	8	xiv	Eruv 26a	"Perhaps it will provoke [a] ŚAṬAN"	R. Yoḥanan	250	EY	ŚAṬAN
38	8	xv	Sanh 95a	ŚAṬAN came and appeared to him like a deer.	Rav Yehuda	230	Bav	ŚAṬAN
39	8	xvi	Sanh 107a	ŚAṬAN came and appeared to him like a bird.	Rav Yehuda	230	Bav	ŚAṬAN
3	9	xvii	Ber 33a	Black ox in spring dangerous "bcs the ŚAṬAN dancing between its horns."	Samuel	240	Bav	HAŚAṬAN
13	9	xviii	Pes 112b	Beware ox from meadow "bcs the ŚAṬAN dancing between its horns."	Rabbi	200	EY	HAŚAṬAN
17	9	xix	Meg 11b	"ŚAṬAN came and danced among them and killed Vashti"	Stam*	500 ⁱ	Bav	ŚAṬAN
26	10	xx	B. Bat 16a	<i>God's conversation w ŚAṬAN doesn't make theological sense</i>	R. Yoḥanan	250	EY	<i>Reference without term.</i>

27	10	xxi	B. Bat 16a	<i>Comes down, seduces, ascends, agitates, gets permission, takes soul</i>	Tanna	200	EY	<i>Reference without term.</i>
28	10	xxii	B. Bat 16a	ŚAṬAN's pain was greater than Job's	R. Isaac	270	EY/Bav	ŚAṬAN
29	10	xxiii	B. Bat 16a	ŚAṬAN = yetzer hara = malach mamavet	Reish Lakish	260	EY	ŚAṬAN
30	10	xxiv	B. Bat 16a	ŚAṬAN had a pious purpose	R. Levi	300	EY	ŚAṬAN
31	10	xxv	B. Bat 16a	ŚAṬAN had a pious purpose	Rav Aḥa b. Jacob	300	Bav	ŚAṬAN
32	10	xxvi	B. Bat 16a	ŚAṬAN kissed the feet of Rav Aḥa b. Jacob in Papunia	Stam*	500 ⁱ	Bav	ŚAṬAN
33	10	xxvii	B. Bat 16a	Job was only speaking against HAŚAṬAN	Abaye	340	Bav	HAŚAṬAN^
34	10	xxviii	B. Bat 16a	Job was only speaking about ŚAṬAN	Rabbi Joshua	100	EY	ŚAṬAN
37	11	xxix	Sanh 93a	<i>Quotes Zech 3:2, taking ŚAṬAN as a symbol of divine justice.</i>	Tanna	200	EY	HAŚAṬAN^
7	11	xxx	Ber 62b	<i>Quotes 1 Chron 22:1, taking ŚAṬAN as a symbol of divine justice.</i>	Stam*	500 ⁱ		
36	12	xxx	Sanh 89b	Akeida was a result of the words of ŚAṬAN.	R. Yoḥanan	250	EY	ŚAṬAN
9	13	xxxii	Shab 89a	[A] ŚAṬAN came and asked "where is the Torah?"	R. Josh. b. Levi	220	EY	ŚAṬAN
35	13	xxxiii	Sanh 26b	Why is Torah called "Toshia"? It was given in secret bcs of HAŚAṬAN	R. Ḥanan ⁱⁱ	250	EY	HAŚAṬAN
10	13	xxxiv	Shab 89a	[A] ŚAṬAN came and confounded the world.	R. Josh. b. Levi	220	EY	ŚAṬAN
18	14	xxxv	Yev 16a	"I have a younger brother, who is ŚAṬAN's firstborn"	Dosa b. Harkenos	100	EY	ŚAṬAN
22	15	xxxvi	Git 52a	ŚAṬAN made 2 quarrel, R Meir made peace, heard him say 'woe'	Stam*	500 ⁱ	Bav	ŚAṬAN
20	16	xxxvii	Ned 31b-32a	ŚAṬAN didn't want to kill Moses, only that child...	R. Shimon b Gamliel	140	EY	ŚAṬAN
41	17	xxxviii	Tam 32a	"Siṭnah is powerful."	Elders of South	333 BCE ⁱⁱⁱ	Bav	SAṬAN
4	18	xxxix	Ber 46a	"May [a] ŚAṬAN not dominate the actions of his hands."	Rabbi	200	EY	ŚAṬAN

* Indicates a statement not directly attributed to a named sage, and hence may be attributed to Stam.

ⁱ See note c. above.

ⁱⁱ See note d. above.

ⁱⁱⁱ See note e. above.

Table 3 – Bavli ŚAṬAN Texts According to Chronology
(excludes duplicates)

SEQ	GROUP	#	SOURCE	QUOTE	WHO	WHN	WHR	TERM
41	17	xxxviii	Tam 32a	"Siṭnah is powerful."	Elders of South	333 BCE ⁱⁱ	??	ŚAṬAN
18	14	xxxv	Yev 16a	"I have a younger brother, who is ŚAṬAN's firstborn"	Dosa b. Harkenos	100	EY	ŚAṬAN
34	10	xxviii	B. Bat 16a	Job was only speaking about ŚAṬAN	Rabbi Joshua	100	EY	ŚAṬAN
20	16	xxxvii	Ned 31b-32a	ŚAṬAN didn't want to kill Moses, only that child...	R. Shimon b Gamliel	140	EY	ŚAṬAN
25	8	xiii	Qid 81a-b	Pleemo said every day: an arrow in ŚAṬAN's eye!	Pleemo ⁺	200	EY	ŚAṬAN
2	1	i	Ber 19a	"A person should never open his mouth to [the] ŚAṬAN."	R. Yosi	200	EY	[HA]ŚAṬAN
1	2	ii	Ber 16b	Prayer for protection from the "destructive ŚAṬAN".	Rabbi	200	EY	ŚAṬAN
13	9	xviii	Pes 112b	Beware ox from meadow "bcs the ŚAṬAN dancing between its horns."	Rabbi	200	EY	HAŚAṬAN
4	18	xxxix	Ber 46a	"May [a] ŚAṬAN not dominate the actions of his hands."	Rabbi	200	EY	ŚAṬAN
27	10	xxi	B. Bat 16a	<i>Comes down, seduces, ascends, agitates, gets permission, takes soul</i>	Tanna	200	EY	<i>Reference without term.</i>
37	11	xxix	Sanh 93a	<i>Quotes Zech 3:2, taking ŚAṬAN as a symbol of divine justice.</i>	Tanna	200	EY	<i>Biblical</i>
15	4	v	Yom 67b	"statutes that HAŚAṬAN objects to"	<i>Tannaitic beraita</i>	200	EY	HAŚAṬAN
5	3	iv	Ber 51a	HAŚAṬAN = Angel of Death; threatens when one puts oneself in danger	R. Josh. b. Levi	220	EY	HAŚAṬAN
11	5	vi	Shab 104a	Nor will you tremble before HAŚAṬAN	R. Josh. b. Levi	220	EY	HAŚAṬAN
9	13	xxii	Shab 89a	[A] ŚAṬAN came and asked "where is the Torah?"	R. Josh. b. Levi	220	EY	ŚAṬAN
10	13	xxxiv	Shab 89a	[A] ŚAṬAN came and confounded the world.	R. Josh. b. Levi	220	EY	ŚAṬAN
38	8	xv	Sanh 95a	ŚAṬAN came and appeared to him like a deer.	Rav Yehuda	230	Bav	ŚAṬAN
39	8	xvi	Sanh 107a	ŚAṬAN came and appeared to him like a bird.	Rav Yehuda	230	Bav	ŚAṬAN
8	3	iii	Śab 32a	[A] "ŚAṬAN" doesn't go after two nationalities simultaneously	Samuel	240	Bav	ŚAṬAN
3	9	xvii	Ber 33a	Black ox in spring dangerous "bcs the ŚAṬAN dancing between its horns."	Samuel	240	Bav	HAŚAṬAN
35	13	xxxiii	Sanh 26b	Why is Torah called "Toshia"? It was given in secret bcs of HAŚAṬAN	R. Ḥanan ⁱ	250	EY	HAŚAṬAN
12	8	xiv	Eruv 26a	"Perhaps it will provoke [a] ŚAṬAN"	R. Yoḥanan	250	EY	ŚAṬAN

26	10	xx	B. Bat 16a	<i>God's conversation w Śaṭan doesn't make theological sense</i>	R. Yoḥanan	250	EY	<i>Reference without term.</i>
36	12	xxxi	Sanh 89b	Akeida was a result of the words of ŚAṬAN.	R. Yoḥanan	250	EY	ŚAṬAN
6	1	i	Ber 60a	"A person should never open his mouth to [the] ŚAṬAN."	Reish Lakish	250	EY	[HA]ŚAṬAN
29	10	xxiii	B. Bat 16a	ŚAṬAN = yetzer hara = malach mamavet	Reish Lakish	260	EY	ŚAṬAN
16	7	x	RH 16b	Blow shofar and wail while standing "in order to confuse HAŚAṬAN"	R. Isaac	270	EY/Bav	HAŚAṬAN^
28	10	xxii	B. Bat 16a	ŚAṬAN's pain was greater than Job's	R. Isaac	270	EY/Bav	ŚAṬAN
30	10	xxiv	B. Bat 16a	ŚAṬAN had a pious purpose	R. Levi	300	EY	ŚAṬAN
31	10	xxv	B. Bat 16a	ŚAṬAN had a pious purpose	Rav Aḥa b. Jacob	300	Bav	ŚAṬAN
39	6	vii	Suk. 38a / Men 62a	An arrow in the eye of ŚAṬAN.	Rav Aḥa b. Jacob	300	Bav	ŚAṬAN
23	8	xi	Qid 30a	Had I married at 14, I would have told [the] ŚAṬAN, 'arrow in your eye'	Rav Ḥisda	300	Bav	[HA]ŚAṬAN
19	1	i	Ket 8b	"A person should never open his mouth to [the] ŚAṬAN."	Abaye	340	Bav	[HA]ŚAṬAN
33	10	xxvii	B. Bat 16a	Job was only speaking against HAŚAṬAN	Abaye	340	Bav	HAŚAṬAN^
14	7	viii	Yom 20a	HAŚAṬAN = 364 so cannot act on Yom Kippur	Rami bar Ḥama	340	Bav	HAŚAṬAN^
21	7	ix	Ned 32b	Gematria of HAŚAṬAN = 364	R. Ammi b. Abba	400	Bav	HAŚAṬAN^
7	11	xxx	Ber 62b	<i>Quotes 1 Chron 22:1, taking ŚAṬAN as a symbol of divine justice.</i>	Stam*	500 ⁱⁱⁱ	Bav	
22	15	xxxvi	Git 52a	ŚAṬAN made 2 quarrel, R Meir made peace, heard him say 'woe'	Stam*	500 ⁱⁱⁱ	Bav	ŚAṬAN
24	8	xii	Qid 81a	One day [a] ŚAṬAN appeared to him guised as a woman	Stam*	500 ⁱⁱⁱ	Bav	ŚAṬAN
32	10	xxvi	B. Bat 16a	ŚAṬAN kissed the feet of Rav Aḥa b. Jacob in Papunia	Stam*	500 ⁱⁱⁱ	Bav	ŚAṬAN
17	9	xix	Meg 11b	"ŚAṬAN came and danced among them and killed Vashti"	Stam*	500 ⁱⁱⁱ	Bav	ŚAṬAN
25	8	xiii	Qid 81a-b	Pleemo said every day: an arrow in ŚAṬAN's eye!	Stam ⁺	500	Bav	ŚAṬAN

* Indicates a statement not directly attributed to a named sage, and hence may be attributed to Stam.

⁺ Indicates a kernel statement that is probably authentic but a story that is likely edited and embellished by Stam; hence list twice.

i. See note d. above.

ii. See note e. above.

ii. See note e. above.

iii. See note c. above.

Appendix B — ŠATAN in Tanach

A. Human opponent or antagonist (sometimes acting as divine agent)		
A1a.	1 Sam 29:4	David toward Philistine princes
A1b.	2 Sam 19:23	Sons of Zeruya toward David
A2.	1 Kin 5:18, 11:14, 11:23, 11:25	Enemies toward Solomon
A3.	Ps 38:21, 71:13, 109:2-20	Literally, human enemies; poetically, celestial nemesis
B. Divine force (representing God's response to hubris)		
B1.	1 Chron 21:1	God's enticement of David
B2a	Zech 3:1-2	Angel toward Joshua the High Priest
B2b	Job 1 and 2	Angel of accusation and seduction
B3.	Num 22:22 and 22:32	God's angel toward Balaam
C. Related verses		
C1.	Genesis 26:21 and Ezra 4:6	<i>Šitnah</i> – “opposition”

Appendix C — Satan in the Christian Bible¹

1.	Mat 4:10	Jesus said to him, “Away with you, Satan! For it is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.’”
2.	Mat 12:26	If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then will his kingdom stand?
3.	Mat 16:23	But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.”
4.	Mark 1:13	He was in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan; and he was with the wild beasts; and the angels waited on him.
5.	Mark 3:23	And he called them to him, and spoke to them in parables, “How can Satan cast out Satan?”
6.	Mark 3:26	And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but his end has come.
7.	Mark 4:15	These are the ones on the path where the word is sown: when they hear, Satan immediately comes and takes away the word that is sown in them.
8.	Mark 8:33	But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, “Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things.
9.	Luke 4:8	Jesus answered him, [and said to him, “Get behind me, Satan: for] “it is written, ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve only him.’”**
10.	Luke 10:18	He said to them, “I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning.
11.	Luke 11:18	If Satan also is divided against himself, how will his kingdom stand? — for you say that I cast out the demons by Beelzebul.
12.	Luke 13:16	And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the sabbath day?”
13.	Luke 22:3	Then Satan entered into Judas called Iscariot, who was one of the twelve;
14.	Luke 22:31	[And the Lord said,] Simon, Simon, listen! Satan has demanded [<i>alt.</i> obtained permission] to [to have you that he may] sift all of you like wheat.**
15.	John 13:27	After [he received] the piece of bread, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, “Do quickly what you are going to do.”**
16.	Acts 5:3	“Ananias,” Peter asked, “why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the proceeds of the land?”

¹ Following Henry Kelly, *Satan*, 6, I am using the “grammatically conservative” New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) translation.

** Some mss. omit bracketed text.

17.	Acts 26:18	to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.”
18.	Rom 16:20	The God of peace will shortly crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.
19.	1 Cor 5:5	you are to hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.
20.	1 Cor 7:5	Do not deprive one another except perhaps by agreement for a set time, to devote yourselves to prayer, and then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.
21.	2 Cor 2:11	And we do this so that we may not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.
22.	2 Cor 11:14	And no wonder! Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.
23.	2 Cor 12:7	even considering the exceptional character of the revelations. [Therefore,] to keep me from being too elated, a thorn was given me in the flesh, a messenger of Satan to torment me, [to keep me from being too elated].**
24.	1 Thess 2:18	For we wanted to come to you – certainly I, Paul, wanted to again and again – but Satan blocked our way.
25.	2 Thess 2:9	The coming of the lawless one is apparent in the working of Satan, who uses all power, signs, lying wonders.
26.	1 Tim 1:20	among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have turned over to Satan, so that they may learn not to blaspheme.
27.	1 Tim 5:15	For some have already turned away to follow Satan.
28.	Rev 2:9	I know your afflictions and your poverty – yet you are rich! I know about the slander of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan.
29.	Rev 2:13	I know where you are living, where Satan’s throne is. Yet you are holding fast to my name, and you did not deny your faith in me even in the days of Antipas my witness, my faithful one, who was killed among you, where Satan lives.
30.	Rev 2:24	But to the rest of you in Thyatira, who do not hold this teaching, who have not learned what some call ‘the deep things of Satan,’ to you I say, I do not lay on you any other burden;
31.	Rev 3:9	I will make those of the synagogue of Satan who say that they are Jews and are not, but are lying – I will make them come and bow down before your feet, and they will learn that I have loved you
32.	Rev 12:9	The great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world – he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.
33.	Rev 20:2	He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years,
34.	Rev 20:7	When the thousand years are ended, Satan will be released from his prison.

** Some mss. omit bracketed text.

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