

1. They said by way of example that Rabbi Akiva had twelve thousand pairs of students in an area of land that stretched from Gevat to Antipatris in Judea, and they all died in one period of time, because they did not treat each other with respect. With regard to the twelve thousand pairs of Rabbi Akiva's students, the Gemara adds: It is taught that all of them died in the period from Passover until *Shavuot*.

And the world was desolate of Torah until Rabbi Akiva came to our Rabbis in the South and taught his Torah to them. This second group of disciples consisted of Rabbi Meir, Rabbi Yehuda, Rabbi Yosei, Rabbi Shimon, and Rabbi Elazar ben Shamua. And these are the very ones who upheld the study of Torah at that time. Yevamot 62b

2. As Rabbi Yoḥanan said in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yoḥai: With regard to any Torah scholar in whose name a matter of *halakha* is said in this world, his lips mouth the words in the grave, as though he is talking. Yevamot 97a

3. As it was taught in a *baraita*: Torah scholars, who were engaged in the study of Torah, stop their Torah study for *Shema*, and they do not stop for prayer. Rabbi Yoḥanan said a caveat to this statement: They only taught that they need not stop for prayer with regard to the likes of Rabbi Shimon ben Yoḥai and his colleagues, whose Torah is their vocation and they never interrupt their Torah study. However, for the likes of us, who also engage in other activities, we stop both for *Shema* and for prayer. Shabbos 11a

4. As it was taught in a *baraita*: Torah scholars, who were engaged in the study of Torah, stop their Torah study for *Shema*, and they do not stop for prayer. Rabbi Yoḥanan said a caveat to this statement: They only taught that they need not stop for prayer with regard to the likes of Rabbi Shimon ben Yoḥai and his colleagues, whose Torah is their vocation and they never interrupt their Torah study. However, for the likes of us, who also engage in other activities, we stop both for *Shema* and for prayer. Shabbos 11a

5. The Sages taught: There was an incident involving a student, who came before Rabbi Yehoshua. The student said to him: Is the evening prayer optional or obligatory? Rabbi Yehoshua said to him: Optional.

The same student came before Rabban Gamliel and said to him: Is the evening prayer optional or obligatory? Rabban Gamliel said to him: Obligatory. The student said to Rabban Gamliel: But didn't Rabbi Yehoshua tell me that the evening prayer is optional? Rabban Gamliel said to the student: Wait until the "masters of the shields," a reference to the Torah scholars who battle in the war of Torah, enter the study hall, at which point we will discuss this issue.

That student who asked the original question that sparked this entire incident was Rabbi Shimon ben Yoḥai. Brachos 27b, 28a

those statements continued to spread until they were heard by the monarchy. They ruled and said: Yehuda, who elevated the Roman regime, shall be elevated and appointed as head of the Sages, the head of the speakers in every place. Yosei, who remained silent, shall be exiled from his home in Judea as punishment, and sent to the city of Tzipori in the Galilee. And Shimon, who denounced the government, shall be killed.

Rabbi Shimon bar Yoḥai and his son, Rabbi Elazar, went and hid in the study hall. Every day Rabbi Shimon's wife would bring them bread and a jug of water and they would eat. When the decree intensified, Rabbi Shimon said to his son: Women are easily impressionable and, therefore, there is room for concern lest the authorities torture her and she reveal our whereabouts. They went and they hid in a cave. A miracle occurred and a carob tree was created for them as well as a spring of water.

They emerged from the cave, and saw people who were plowing and sowing. Rabbi Shimon bar Yoḥai said: These people abandon eternal life of Torah study and engage in temporal life for their own sustenance. The Gemara relates that every place that Rabbi Shimon and his son Rabbi Elazar directed their eyes was immediately burned. A Divine Voice emerged and said to them: Did you emerge from the cave in order to destroy My world? Return to your cave. They again went and sat there for twelve months. They emerged. Everywhere that Rabbi Elazar would strike, Rabbi Shimon would heal. Rabbi Shimon said to Rabbi Elazar: My son, you and I suffice for the entire world, as the two of us are engaged in the proper study of Torah.

As the sun was setting on Shabbat eve, they saw an elderly man who was holding two bundles of myrtle branches and running at twilight. They said to him: Why do you have these? He said to them: In honor of Shabbat. They said to him: And let one suffice. He answered them: One is corresponding to: "Remember the Shabbat day, to keep it holy" (Exodus 20:8), and one is corresponding to: "Observe the Shabbat day, to keep it holy" (Deuteronomy 5:12). Rabbi Shimon said to his son: See how beloved the mitzvot are to Israel. Their minds were put at ease and they were no longer as upset that people were not engaged in Torah study. Shabbos 33

10. The Sages taught: Hillel the Elder had eighty students. The greatest of all the students was Yonatan ben Uzziel, and the youngest of them was Rabban Yoḥanan ben Zakkai.

the Sages said of Yonatan ben Uzziel, the greatest of Hillel's students, that when he sat and was engaged in Torah study, the sanctity that he generated was so intense that any bird that flew over him was immediately incinerated. Sukkah 28a

11. And Ḥizkiya said that Rabbi Yirmeya said in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yoḥai: I am able to absolve the entire world from judgment for sins committed from the day I was created until now.

Succah 45b