

## תחיית המתים THE THEME OF

Although the theme of תחיית המתים plays a prominent role within the second ברכה of שמונה עשרה, גבורות as ברכה refers to the תלמוד בבלי, the

מסכת ראש השנה פרק ד' משנה ה'—סדר ברכות אומר אבות וגבורות וקדושת השם וכולל מלכיות עמהן ואינו תוקע קדושת היום ותוקע זכרונות ותוקע שופרות ותוקע ואומר עבודה והודאה וברכת כהנים דברי רבי יוחנן בן נורי. אמר ליה רבי עקיבא: אם אינו תוקע למלכיות למה הוא מזכיר אלא אומר אבות וגבורות וקדושת השם וכולל מלכיות עם קדושת היום ותוקע זכרונות ותוקע שופרות ותוקע ואומר עבודה והודאה וברכת כהנים.

That the גמרא does not describe the second ברכה exclusively as מחיה המתים is surprising in light of the opinion of most scholars that the second ברכה was as a statement of faith by the Pharisees in opposition to the views of the Sadducees in the period that preceded and followed the destruction of the Second בית המקדש:

Bernard Martin, *Prayer in Judaism*, pages-114-115: The second, known as *Gevurot*, speaks of the G-d who reveals himself in the works of nature, particularly in the life of man and even beyond man's earthly existence, in death.

"You are mighty forever, Lord" is explained by the phrase "You revive the dead"; G-d's power is eternal as is his concern for man, a concern which extends beyond the grave. Israel Abrahams believes that originally this prayer may have described G-d's omnipotence in more general terms, but when the Sadducees denied the doctrine of resurrection, the Pharisees (perhaps during the reign of John Hyrcanus, 135-104 B.C.E.) introduced this strong statement into the *Amidah* in order to emphasize it all the more. The resurrection became such a cardinal item of Pharisaic faith that the Mishna excludes from "the world to come" anyone who affirms that "there is no resurrection of the dead" (*Sanhedrin* 10:I).

Ismar Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy*, page 26: One clear mark of identification is the stress on resurrection of the dead in Benediction 2; though in the much simpler Palestinian version of the *Amida* it is not mentioned as frequently as in the current version, there too the eulogy speaks of it, and one senses clearly that the wording of the prayer gives particular stress to the theme. Such emphasis on one of the articles of faith in the prayer cannot have come about unintentionally, for this doctrine was one of the points in dispute between the Sadducees and the Pharisees, and the victorious Pharisaic party demanded acknowledgment of its view in the worship.

The issue grows when we consider the following גמרא:

תלמוד בבלי מסכת ברכות דף כח' עמ' ב' – תנו רבנן: שמעון הפקולי הסדיר שמונה עשרה ברכות לפני רבן גמליאל על הסדר ביבנה. אמר להם רבן גמליאל לחכמים: כלום יש אדם שיודע לתקן ברכת המינים? עמד שמואל הקטן ותקנה, לשנה אחרת שכחה – דף כט' עמ' א' – והשקיף בה שתיים ושלוש שעות ולא העלוהו. אמאי לא העלוהו? והאמר רב יהודה אמר רב: טעה בכל הברכות כלן – אין מעלין אותו, בברכת המינים – מעלין אותו, חיישינן שמא מין הוא! שאני שמואל הקטן, דאיהו תקנה.

רב רבן גמליאל lived five generations after רב רב. רב רב lived one generation after רב יהודה and the establishment of שמונה עשרה. רב רב who resided in בבל was among the first אמוראים. It appears from the above גמרא that רב רב was not concerned that a שליח ציבור who made a mistake in the second ברכה of שמונה עשרה must be considered to be a מין. רב רב was exclusively concerned that a שליח ציבור who made a mistake in the ברכה of ולמלשינים should be considered a מין. Contrast רב רב's position in the תלמוד בבלי concerning the ברכה of תלמוד ירושלמי with the position of the מחיה המתים:

תלמוד ירושלמי מסכת ברכות פרק ה' דף ט' טור ג' / ה"ג – רבי אחא ורבי יודה בן פזי יתבין בחד כנישתא אתי עבר חד קומי תיבותא ואשגר חד ברכה. אתון ושיילון לרבי סימון. אמר לו רבי סימון בשם רבי יהושע בן לוי: שליח ציבור שהשגיר שתיים שלש ברכות אין מחזירין אותו. אשכח תניי ופליג: לכל אין מחזירין אותו חוץ ממי שלא אמר מחיה המתים ומכניע זדים ובונה ירושלים, אני אומר מין הוא. שמואל הקטן עבר קומי תיבותא ואשגר מכניע זדים בסופה שרי משקיף עליהון אמרין ליה לא שיערו חכמים כך.

מחיה מתים: מינות as rebukes of שמונה עשרה in ברכות viewed three ארץ ישראל in חז"ל ברכות שליח ציבור who made a mistake in any of those ברכות and ולמלשינים was to return to those ברכות and to recite them properly. If he refused to do so, he was to be considered to be a מין. This means that ארץ ישראל in חז"ל viewed the ברכה of מחיה המתים as centered on the theme of תחיית המתים. They further viewed the ברכה as a statement of faith in opposition to the Sadducees. The difference in opinion between the תלמוד ירושלמי and the תלמוד בבלי on this issue demonstrates that Jews living in בבל in the era of רב רב did not face the same challenges as those faced by the Jews who lived in ארץ ישראל. The Pharisee versus the Sadducees conflict can therefore be viewed as primarily a ארץ ישראל problem. We can also conclude that the text of the second ברכה of שמונה עשרה may have been different in בבל. In addition, the definition of who was a מין may have differed in the two places. We will return to consider the definition of a מין when we study the ברכה of ולמלשינים.

## TRANSLATION OF SOURCES

'משנה ה' מ-SHNAH. THE ORDER OF BLESSINGS IN THE MUSAF 'AMIDAH' IS AS FOLLOWS: THE READER SAYS THE BLESSING OF THE PATRIARCHS, THAT OF MIGHTINESS AND THAT OF THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE NAME AND INCLUDES THE KINGSHIP-VERSES WITH THEM AND DOES NOT BLOW THE SHOFAR. HE THEN SAYS THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE DAY AND BLOWS, THE REMEMBRANCE-VERSES AND BLOWS, AND THE SHOFAR-VERSES AND BLOWS; AND HE THEN SAYS THE BLESSING OF THE TEMPLE SERVICE AND THE ONE OF THANKSGIVING AND THE BLESSING OF THE PRIESTS. THIS IS THE VIEW OF R. JOHANAN B. NURI. SAID R. AKIBA TO HIM: IF HE DOES NOT BLOW THE SHOFAR FOR THE KINGSHIP-VERSES, WHY SHOULD HE SAY THEM? NO; THE RULE IS AS FOLLOWS. HE SAYS THE BLESSING OF THE PATRIARCHS AND OF THE RESURRECTION AND OF THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE NAME, AND SAYS THE KINGSHIP-VERSES ALONG WITH THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE DAY AND BLOWS THE SHOFAR, THEN HE SAYS THE REMEMBRANCE-VERSES AND BLOWS, AND THE SHOFAR-VERSES AND BLOWS. THEN HE SAYS THE TEMPLE SERVICE BLESSING AND THE THANKSGIVING AND THE BLESSING OF THE PRIEST.

תלמוד בבלי מסכת ברכות דף כח' עמ' ב' - OUR RABBIS TAUGHT: SIMEON HA-PAKULI ARRANGED THE EIGHTEEN BENEDECTIONS IN ORDER BEFORE RABBAN GAMALIEL IN JABNEH. SAID RABBAN GAMALIEL TO THE SAGES: CAN ANY ONE AMONG YOU FRAME A BENEDECTION RELATING TO THE MINIM? SAMUEL THE LESSER AROSE AND COMPOSED IT. THE NEXT YEAR HE FORGOT IT AND HE TRIED FOR TWO OR THREE HOURS TO RECALL IT, AND THEY DID NOT REMOVE HIM. WHY DID THEY NOT REMOVE HIM SEEING THAT RAB JUDAH HAS SAID IN THE NAME OF RAB: IF A READER MADE A MISTAKE IN ANY OF THE OTHER BENEDECTIONS, THEY DO NOT REMOVE HIM, BUT IF IN THE BENEDECTION OF THE MINIM, HE IS REMOVED, BECAUSE WE SUSPECT HIM OF BEING A HERETIC? — SAMUEL THE LESSER IS DIFFERENT, BECAUSE HE COMPOSED IT.

תלמוד ירושלמי מסכת ברכות פרק ה' דף ט' טור ג' /ה"ג' (ARTSCROLL YERUSHALMI BERACHOT DAF 57,2)-RABBI ECHA AND RABBI YUDA SON OF PAZI WERE SITTING IN SYNAGOGUE. SOMEONE CAME FORWARD AND WENT BEFORE THE ARK TO LEAD THE SERVICES AND HE OMITTED ONE BRACHA. THE CONGREGANTS WENT AND ASKED RABBI SIMON WHETHER THE PRAYER LEADER MUST RETURN AND RECITE THE OMITTED BRACHA. RABBI SIMON ANSWERED THEM IN THE NAME OF RABBI YEHOSHUA BEN LEVI: IF A PRAYER LEADER OMITTS TWO OR THREE BRACHOT, WE DO NOT REQUIRE THE PARYER LEADER TO RETURN AND RECITE THOSE BRACHOT. WE FIND A BARAITA THAT CONTAINS A DIFFERENT OPINION: IF A PRAYER LEADER OMITTS A BRACHA, WE DO NOT REQUIRE HIM TO RETURN AND RECITE IT UNLESS THE

BRACHA HE OMITTS IS THE BRACHA OF MICHAYA HAMAISIM, MACHNIYA ZAIDIM (V'LA'MALSHINIM) OR BONEH YERUSHALAYIM BECAUSE FOR OMITTING THOSE BRACHOT WE SUSPECT THAT THE PRAYER LEADER IS A HERETIC. SHMUEL HA'KATAN WAS ONCE THE PRAYER LEADER AND OMITTED THE BRACHA OF MACHNIYA ZAIDIM (V'LA'MALSHINIM). AFTER OMITTING THE BRACHA, SHMUEL WAITED TO SEE IF THE CONGREGATION WOULD REMOVE HIM AS PRAYER LEADER. THE CONGREGATION THEN SAID TO HIM: THE SAGES DO NOT SUSPECT YOU OF BEING A HERETIC.

## SUPPLEMENT

In this week's newsletter we were introduced to the dispute between the Pharisees (who later became the Rabbis in the Talmud) and Sadducees concerning belief in the principle of the resurrection of the dead. The period in question is in and around the time of the destruction of the Second Temple. The following excerpt from the book: *From the Maccabees to the Mishnah* by Shaye J. D. Cohen, a Professor of Hebrew Literature at Harvard University, is being presented to provide more details about that era.

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### **Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes**

The heyday of Jewish sectarianism was from the middle of the second century B.C.E. to the destruction of the temple in 70 C.E. In several passages Josephus describes the three "schools of thought" found among the Jews at that time, the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes. The Josephan evidence about these three groups is supplemented by the testimony of the *New Testament*, the Qumran scrolls, and rabbinic texts. (Philo and one or two pagan writers provide some additional evidence about the Essenes; see below.) I shall survey each body of evidence separately, and then present a synthetic portrait of the three groups.

### **Sources Written in Greek: Josephus**

In order to distinguish the Pharisees from the Sadducees, and the two of them from the Essenes, Josephus highlights three areas in which the sects differed from each other. These areas are philosophy, social standing and politics, and way of life.

### **Philosophy**

Josephus calls the three groups *haireseis*, "schools of thought" or "philosophical schools." Each advocates certain doctrines about fate, free will, and immortality--precisely the questions that should be addressed by philosophical schools. Josephus explicitly compares the Pharisees with the Stoics and the Essenes with the Pythagoreans, and implicitly compares the Sadducees with the Epicureans. The Sadducees do not allocate "Fate" any role in human affairs, and they deny both immortality of the soul and resurrection; the Essenes ascribe all human actions to the power of Fate and believe in both immortality and resurrection; the Pharisees adopt a middle course, ascribing power to both Fate and human free will, and believing in immortality and resurrection (but apparently in a way different from the Essenes--this point is not clear).

In all likelihood, as I remarked above, Josephus' presentation of the three groups as "philosophical schools" was for the benefit of his non-Jewish readers, who would have had

little interest either in the real Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes or in the issues that divided them. The three "schools" probably did debate theological and philosophical questions, but we may doubt whether these debates were central to their sectarian identity.

### Social Standing and Politics

These "schools" also engaged in politics. After supporting the Pharisees, John Hyrcanus shifted his allegiance to the Sadducees. On his deathbed Alexander Jannaeus, who had faced revolt from many quarters of the population, counseled his wife and successor, Salome Alexandra, to befriend the Pharisees "because these men have so much influence with their fellow Jews that they can injure those whom they hate and help those to whom they are friendly; for they have the complete confidence of the masses" (*Jewish Antiquities* 13.15.5, §401). Alexandra heeded his advice and gave the Pharisees free reign. They killed many of their opponents, especially the aristocrats who had supported Jannaeus. Salome's son Aristobulus opposed the Pharisees and resented the influence they had over his mother. When Herod came to power, Pollio the Pharisee counseled the people to accept Herod as their leader; as a result Pollio and the Pharisees, who numbered six thousand, were respected by Herod. Josephus further records that the Pharisees had special influence over the women of Herod's court. The last time the Pharisees appear in a political context is in the year 66 C.E., when, just before the outbreak of the revolt, they joined the "principal citizens" and the chief priests in beseeching the revolutionaries not to begin a war that they could not win. Their advice was ignored. During the first year of the war, the Pharisee Simon ben Gamaliel was a member of the revolutionary presidium in Jerusalem, and three other individual Pharisees are mentioned in his company.

Thus "the Pharisees" appear as a "political party" in the time of John Hyrcanus (137-104 B.C.E.), Salome Alexandra (76-67 B.C.E.), Herod the Great (37-34 B.C.E.), and in the first year of the great revolt (66-67 C.E.). Several politically important individuals from the time of Herod and the outbreak of the revolt are called Pharisees. The Sadducees, in contrast, appear only once as a political party, when Hyrcanus joins them and abandons the Pharisees, and only one individual is ever called a Sadducee, a high priest of the first century C.E. The Essenes never appear as a political group, although individual Essenes are occasionally mentioned. One Essene predicted to his disciples the murder of the brother of Aristobulus (104-103 B.C.E.). Another accurately forecast the career of Herod the Great, and a third interpreted a significant dream of Herod's son after the death of his father. John the Essene led some military campaigns in the early phases of the war of 66-70. Three of these four Essenes, then, were "holy men" or "prophets," rather than politicians.

The Pharisees have "the complete confidence of the masses." This idea is expressed even more strongly in another passage. The Pharisees "are extremely influential among the masses; and all prayers and sacred rites of divine worship are performed according to their exposition. . . . Whenever the Sadducees assume some office, though they submit unwillingly and perforce, yet submit they do to the dictates of the Pharisees, since otherwise the masses would not tolerate them." The Sadducees are supported only by "the

people of highest standing" (*Jewish Antiquities* 18.1.3-4, §15-17). The Pharisees, who in the time of Herod numbered six thousand, are the party of the masses, while the Sadducees are the party of the aristocracy. Thus according to Josephus the Pharisees had a great deal of power in Jewish society from the last part of the second century B.C.E. until the outbreak of the great revolt, while the Sadducees did not. It may be significant that these claims of Pharisaic power appear only in the *Jewish Antiquities*, which was completed in 93/4 C.E., and not the Jewish War, which was completed between ten and fifteen years earlier. The Essenes, who numbered only four thousand, were apparently not a political party at all.

## Way of Life

"Philosophical schools" in antiquity were often as conspicuous for the way of life affected by their adherents as for their tenets. In his long descriptions of the Essenes, which were summarized in chapter 4, Josephus emphasizes the ascetic and pietistic character of their communal life. Although he provides no parallel description of the communal life of the Pharisees and Sadducees, Josephus mentions one important point over which the two groups differed (*Jewish Antiquities* 13.10.6, §297-298):

The Pharisees handed down to the people certain regulations from the ancestral succession and not recorded in the laws of Moses, for which reason they are rejected by the Sadducean group, who hold that only those regulations should be considered valid which were written (in Scripture), and that those which had been handed down by the fathers need not be observed. And concerning these matters the two parties came to have controversies and serious differences.

Since the Pharisees follow "the tradition of the fathers," they show deference to their elders, while the Sadducees by contrast are very argumentative with their teachers. Josephus nowhere gives an example or defines the meaning of "the tradition of the fathers," so that it is difficult to know precisely what is intended. It is hard to accept the notion that the Sadducees followed "only those regulations which were written (in Scripture)," since a life lived in accordance with scripture alone is a life filled with obscurities and contradictions (see the next chapter). This problem aside, the passage shows that the Pharisees were known for their dedication to the ancestral tradition which supplemented the written Torah, and that the Sadducees were known for their denial of the Pharisaic tradition. . .

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## Sources Written in Hebrew: Rabbinic Texts

Like the Essenes of Qumran, the group that produced the Mishnah and related works does not give itself an identifying label. Rabbinic texts refer to Pharisees, Sadducees, and assorted other groups (but never to "Essenes"), but at no point do the rabbis explicitly declare that they are, or regard themselves as, the descendants of this or that group of second temple times, and at no point do they refer to any named individual as "X the

Pharisee" or "Y the Sadducee." Nevertheless, virtually all scholars see the rabbis as the descendants of the Pharisees. Like the Pharisees described by Josephus and the New Testament, the rabbis are loyal to the "ancestral tradition" (sometimes called the "oral law") and are punctilious about the observance of the commandments, notably the laws regulating purity, Sabbath, festivals, and marriage. They believe in resurrection and in a combination of destiny and free will. The rabbis claim to be (and to have been) the leaders of the masses, and they look upon the Pharisees of the second temple period as their heroes. The house of Gamaliel, known from Josephus and the New Testament to be Pharisaic, assumed the leadership of the rabbis around the year 100 C.E. Therefore, the pre-70 Pharisees must have had some intimate connection with the post-70 rabbis, but this connection does not mean that the two groups were identical in all respects or that the rabbinic group consisted of Pharisees alone.

The rabbinic evidence about the Pharisees and Sadducees is of two sorts. The first consists of texts that explicitly refer to either of these two groups; the second consists of texts that describe the conditions of the second temple period or attribute sayings to people who lived at that time. I shall survey each of these in turn.

### Explicit Evidence: Pharisees vs. Sadducees

In rabbinic Hebrew the word *parush* (plur. *perushim*), whose literal meaning is "separatist," often is used with a negative valence. For example, the liturgical condemnation of heretics, mentioned briefly in chapter 4 and to be discussed again in chapter 7, is called in one rabbinic document "the blessing against separatists (*perushim*)."<sup>5</sup> Occasionally the word appears with the meaning "pietist" without negative overtones. In other passages, however, the word *perushim* is used as the name of a group, and that group is the same as that which Josephus and the New Testament call Pharisees. Here is an excerpt from the chief mishnaic passage about Pharisees and Sadducees (*Yadayim* 4:6-7):

The Sadducees say, We cry out against you, O Pharisees, for you say "The Holy Scriptures render the hands unclean but the writings of Homer do not render the hands unclean." . . . The Sadducees say, We cry out against you, O Pharisees, for you declare pure an unbroken stream of liquid (which connects a pure vessel to an impure). The Pharisees say, We cry out against you, O Sadducees, for you declare pure a channel of water which flows from a burial ground. The Sadducees say, We cry out against you, O Pharisees, for you say, "If my ox or my ass have done an injury, I (the owner) am culpable, but if my bondman or bondwoman have done an injury I (the owner) am not culpable."

This passage (as well as related ones) illustrates the rabbinic perspectives on the Pharisees and the Sadducees. (1) The position attributed to the Pharisees is always that of the rabbis themselves. In these debates the Pharisees are always the victors, the Sadducees always the losers.



(2) The topics of debate are always legal, sometimes (as here) of the most technical and trivial sort, and for the most part center on temple cult and purity. Nowhere do the rabbinic texts posit a fundamental principle that separates the two groups; they do not even support Josephus' contention that the Sadducees deny the ancestral traditions affirmed by the Pharisees. One rabbinic passage, which purports to give a history of the origins of the Sadducees and Boethusians (a mysterious group mentioned only in rabbinic literature), asserts that these groups "broke away from the Torah" because they erroneously concluded that there is no reward and punishment in the next world and no resurrection of the dead. The perspective of this passage is close to that of the New Testament, which sees the Sadducees primarily as a "philosophical" school that denies immortality and resurrection, but everywhere else the rabbis see not theology but law as the focal point of the disputes between the groups. The "Sadducees" who participate in some of these legal debates are not always the priestly aristocrats known to the Greek sources but sometimes are the Zadokite priests of the Qumran community (see below).

(3) The Pharisees are not a "sect" but the exponents of authentic Judaism to whom even the Sadducees (and the Boethusians) must yield. Public rituals in the temple were performed in such a way as to flout the rulings of the Sadducees and the Boethusians. Three stories tell of the deaths of high priests (in two cases by supernatural means, in one by an angry mob) who refused to follow the practices enjoined by the rabbis-Pharisees and endorsed by the masses. Thus the rabbis confirm the report of Josephus: the Sadducees are powerless because they must submit to the rulings of the Pharisees. (But the rabbis go even further than Josephus. They claim that the sanhedrin was constituted of, and controlled by, rabbinic sages, whereas the New Testament and Josephus say that it was constituted of members of diverse groups and controlled by the high priests.)

## **Implicit Evidence: The Rabbinic Version of the Past**

The mishnaic tractate Chapters of the Fathers opens with a chain of tradition that links Moses to the rabbis of the second and third centuries. Rabbinic tradition was transmitted through the generations from masters to disciples. The first master was G-d and the first disciple was Moses. Moses in turn was Joshua's teacher, and so on. Since the Mishnah regards rabbinic Judaism as the only authentic form of Judaism that ever existed, it imagines that it had proponents in every generation and that these proponents were the nation's leaders. The Mishnah (and rabbinic tradition generally) knows very little about the pre-rabbinic sages who are alleged to have lived during the second temple period. Some of them, notably Hillel and Shammai (approximately the time of Herod), are the heroes of anecdotes of dubious historicity, but none of them, not even Hillel and Shammai, figures prominently in the legal tradition that forms the core of the Mishnah. Hillel, Shammai, and all the rest are disembodied names whose function is to bridge the gap between the prophets of the Bible and the rabbis of the Mishnah. Although no rabbinic text ever calls any of these people Pharisees, it is striking that some of the individual Pharisees who appear on the pages of Josephus and the New Testament can be identified with links in the

rabbinic chain of tradition. The Pharisee Gamaliel known to the New Testament and the Pharisee Simon ben Gamaliel known to Josephus are certainly identical with the rabbinic figures of the same names.

If the individuals of the pre-70 period are bare names for the Mishnah, the "house of Hillel" and the "house of Shammai" are substantial entities that are cited frequently. The word "house" is probably the equivalent of "school," although no rabbinic text describes the social organization behind this term. The two houses are cited numerous times in the Mishnah, almost always in tandem, and almost always in debate. The major focal points of the debates between the houses were the laws of purity, Sabbath, festivals, and table fellowship (What is the proper procedure for the eating of a meal? Which blessings must be recited and in what order? What are the rules of etiquette that must be observed? How should the purity rules be implemented during a meal?). In all these matters, if the house of Shammai says "impure" or "forbidden," the house of Hillel can be counted on to say "pure" or "permitted."

Most scholars view the two houses as wings or factions of the Pharisees, because the profile of their interests is consistent with what is known elsewhere of the Pharisees specifically and of Jewish sects generally (with the notable addition of table fellowship and near omission of temple law). But the very identity of these interests is a serious problem, for how can the Pharisees disagree among themselves on the same issues over which sects disagree? If the Pharisees reject the purity rules of the Sadducees, how can the house of Hillel reject the purity rules of the house of Shammai without engendering further sectarian division? The Mishnah assures us that the houses did not split into separate factions (*Yebamot* 1:4):

Although these forbid what the others permit, and these declare ineligible (for marriage) those whom the others declare eligible, yet (the men of) the house of Shammai did not refrain from marrying women from the house of Hillel, nor did (the men of) the house of Hillel refrain from marrying women from the house of Shammai. Despite all the disputes about what is pure and impure, wherein these declare pure what the others declare impure, neither refrained from using anything that pertained to the others in matters concerned with purity.

Although each of the houses advanced its own marriage and purity laws, nevertheless, the Mishnah insists, they lived together as one big happy family. How were the houses able to accomplish this? Why did the disputes between the Pharisees and the Sadducees create social barriers while those between the houses did not? What was the relationship between the houses and the Pharisees? None of these questions is addressed, much less answered, by the Mishnah or any other rabbinic text. Rather than repeat the oft-repeated assertion that the Pharisees consisted of two schools or wings, one progressive or liberal (the house of Hillel) and the other conservative or strict (the house of Shammai), I prefer to admit ignorance. We know neither the social reality that the houses represent nor the relationship

of the houses to the Pharisees.

## **The Rabbinic Evidence**

The rabbis of the second century and later did not look upon themselves as members of a sect, either because they were not, or because members of a sect never see themselves for what they really are. Nor did the rabbis see their ancestors as sectarians, but as the legitimate leaders of the Jewish people and as the exponents of authentic Judaism. The *haberim*, "associates," that group of pietists who carefully observed the laws of tithing and purity (see chapter 4), is nowhere in rabbinic tradition connected with the Pharisees or regarded as a sectlike organization. The Sadducees and the Boethusians "break away from the Torah" and debate the rabbis on various legal matters, mostly concerning purity and temple cult, but have little impact because they flail helplessly against the masses and their leaders, the rabbis. In the debates with the Sadducees and the Boethusians, the Pharisees represent the position that the rabbis themselves accept as correct. To some extent, therefore, the rabbis identify themselves with the Pharisees of second temple times. This identification is confirmed by implicit evidence (the rabbis of the Mishnah have many features in common with the Pharisees described by Josephus and the New Testament) and by the prominence in both traditions of Gamaliel and his son.

If the rabbis really were the descendants of the Pharisees, it is remarkable that they know (or choose to reveal) so little information about their ancestors. Few legal opinions and few narratives of any historical value are attributed by rabbinic tradition to the individual masters of the second temple period. Virtually all modern scholars agree that much of rabbinic Judaism derives from second temple times, but the rabbis are not interested in documenting this fact.

Only the houses of Hillel and Shammai are cited abundantly, and these shadowy groups debate primarily the laws pertaining to purity, Sabbath and festivals, and meals.