

colleagues to demonstrate the soundness of his doctrine, or the truth of a disputed Halachic case, by performing a miracle. Only once do we hear of a Rabbi who had recourse to miracles for the purpose of showing that his conception of a certain Halachah was the right one. And in this solitary instance the majority declined to accept the miraculous intervention as a demonstration of truth, and decided against the Rabbi who appealed to it.¹ Nor, indeed, were such supernatural gifts claimed for *all* Rabbis. Whilst many learned Rabbis are said to have "been accustomed to wonders," not a single miracle is reported for instance of the great Hillel, or his colleague, Shammai, both of whom exercised such an important influence on Rabbinic Judaism. On the other hand, we find that such men, as, for instance, Choni Hammaagel,² whose prayers were much sought after in times of drought, or R. Chaninah b. Dosa, whose prayers were often solicited in cases of illness,³ left almost no mark on Jewish thought, the former being known only by the wondrous legends circulating about him, the latter being represented in the whole Talmud only by one or two moral sayings.⁴ "Signs," then, must have been as little required from the Jewish Rabbi as from the Greek sophist. But if this was the case, we are actually left in darkness about

¹ See *Baba Mezia*, 59 b.

² *Taanith*, 24 b; cp. *Jer. Taanith*, 64 a, 64 b.

³ See *Berachoth*, 35 a, and *Jer. Berachoth*, 10 b.

⁴ *Aboth*, 39. See Bacher, *Ag. Tan.* 1st ed., p. 2.