Intro to Talmud – Handout

# Babylonian Talmud – Tractate Berachot 2a – Mishnah 1

From when may one recite the Shema in the evening? From the time that the priests enter in order to eat their terumah until the end of the first watch. These are the words of R. Eliezer. The sages say: until midnight. R. Gamaliel says: until the dawn comes up. Once it happened that his sons came home from a wedding feast and they said to him: we have not yet recited the Shema. He said to them: if the dawn has not yet come up you are still bound to recite. And not in respect to this alone did they so decide, but wherever the sages say “until midnight”, the mitzvah may be performed until the dawn comes up. The burning of fats and limbs is commanded till the dawn comes up. All that are to be eaten within one day is commanded till the dawn comes up. If so, why did the sages say ‘until midnight’? In order to distance a person from transgression.

# Friendly Version – Berachot 2a

From when does one recite Shema in the evening?

From the time when the priests enter to partake of their terumah

Until:

1) Rabbi Eliezer: the end of the first watch. .

2) Rabbis: midnight.

3) Rabban Gamliel: dawn

A story: Rabban Gamliel’s sons returned very late from a wedding hall. They said to him: We did not recite Shema. He said to them: If the dawn has not yet arrived, you are obligated to recite

and not only with regard to the Shema, but wherever the Sages say until midnight, the mitzva may be performed until dawn

* the burning of fats and limbs - until dawn
* all sacrifices that are eaten for one day - until dawn

If so, why did the Sages say until midnight? In order to distance a person from transgression

# Biblical Sources

Deuteronomy 6:6-9

And these words, which I command you this day, shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently unto your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, **and when you lie down, and when you rise up**. And you shall bind them for a sign upon your hand, and they shall be for frontlets between thine eyes. And you shall write them upon the door-posts of your house, and upon your gates.

## Leviticus 22:6-7

The soul that touches any such shall be unclean until the evening, and shall not eat of the holy things, unless he bathes his flesh in water. And when the sun is down, he shall be clean; and afterward he may eat of the holy things, because it is his bread.

## Numbers 18:26

Moreover you shalt speak unto the Levites, and say unto them: When you take of the children of Israel the tithe which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then you shall set apart of it a **gift** for the LORD, even a tithe of the tithe.

## Leviticus 6:2

Command Aaron and his sons thus: This is the ritual of the burnt offering: The burnt offering itself shall remain where it is burned upon the altar all night until morning, while the fire on the altar is kept going on it.

## Leviticus 7:15

And the flesh of the sacrifice of his peace-offerings for thanksgiving shall be eaten on the day of his offering; he shall not leave any of it until the morning.