

Babylonian Talmud: Yevamot 62b, <i>Source: Sefaria</i>		
V e r s e 9	<p>Rabbi Akiva says that the verse should be understood as follows: If one studied Torah in his youth he should study more Torah in his old age; if he had students in his youth he should have additional students in his old age, as it is stated: “In the morning sow your seed, etc.” 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.</p>	<p>ר"ע אומר למד תורה בילדותו ילמוד תורה בזקנותו היו לו תלמידים בילדותו יהיו לו תלמידים בזקנותו שנא' בבקר זרע את זרעך וגו' אמרו שנים עשר אלף זוגים תלמידים היו לו לרבי עקיבא מגבת עד אנטיפריס וכולן מתו בפרק אחד מפני שלא נהגו כבוד זה לזה</p>
v e r s e 1 0	<p>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. Although Rabbi Akiva's earlier students did not survive, his later disciples were able to transmit the Torah to future generations.</p>	<p>והיה העולם שמם עד שבא ר"ע אצל רבותינו שבדרום ושנאה להם ר"מ ור' יהודה ור' יוסי ורבי שמעון ורבי אלעזר בן שמוע והם הם העמידו תורה אותה שעה</p>
v e r s e 1 1	<p>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 <i>Shavuot</i>. Rav Hama bar Abba said, and some say it was Rabbi Hiyya bar Avin: They all died a bad death. The Gemara inquires: What is it that is called a bad death? Rav Nahman said: Diphtheria.</p>	<p>תנא כולם מתו מפסח ועד עצרת אמר רב חמא בר אבא ואיתימא ר' חייא בר אבין כולם מתו מיתה רעה מאי היא א"ר נחמן אסכרה</p>

- Discussion Questions:
 - What from this text surprised you?
 - What from this text reminds you of today's world?
 - What's different?
 - How can this text inform the way we deal with the aftermath of a terrible plague where so many people died?