Rabbi Aḥa bar Ḥanina said: It is revealed and known before the One Who spoke and the world came into being that in the generation of Rabbi Meir there was no one of the Sages who is his equal. Why then didn’t the Sages establish the halakha in accordance with his opinion? It is because his colleagues were unable to ascertain the profundity of his opinion. He was so brilliant that he could present a cogent argument for any position, even if it was not consistent with the prevalent halakha. As he would state with regard to a ritually impure item that it is pure, and display justification for that ruling, and likewise he would state with regard to a ritually pure item that it is impure, and display justification for that ruling. The Sages were unable to distinguish between the statements that were halakha and those that were not.

Originally, Rabbi Meir went to learn with Rabbi Akiva. Since he was not able to grasp his mind, he went to learn with Rabbi Yishmael and gamar’ed his gemara. Then he went back to Rabbi Akiva and savar’d his svara.

Rashi’s commentary
לך מתים אלהים - על עיקרי סעימה שיחה אומר על טמא טהור
ומראות על פנים ועל טהור טמא ומראה על פנים:

**grasp his mind:** regarding the essence of the reasons and the underlying principles, for he would say permitted on that which was prohibited and show for it many different faces and say prohibited on that which was permitted and show for it many different faces

וגמר גמרא - המשניות סתומות כמי שישו רבינו ליה מרב ורב מרב:

**Gamar'ed his gemara:** the plain and simple teachings as they had been taught to him by his teacher and his teacher by his teacher