

SUMMARIES

Abraham Shammah

Virginity Claims and Libels: “And They Shall Spread the Garment” – Competing Tannaitic Homilies, Preferential Editing, and Amoraic Adaptation

The Tannaim offered two distinct homiletic interpretations of the Biblical account of the slanderer who claims his wife was not a virgin. The dominant reading uprooted the plain sense, describing a husband bringing witnesses – subsequently shown to be perjurers – that the wife had been unfaithful after betrothal. The second approach, apparently authored by Rabbi Eliezer and only partially represented in the sources, adopts the literal meaning, in which the husband claims to have discerned that his woman had previous sexual encounters, spreading a garment in evidence. The article presents the two approaches, in detail, examining how they are expressed in Tannaitic literature (including conjectural reconstruction of some elements), as well as their Scriptural roots.

Despite their disparities, both views were ultimately maintained in Tannaitic literature as far as possible, as two separate legal frameworks: one punitive, dealing with the penalty of the slanderer; the other serving as the civil framework for ruling in cases of virginity claims.

Nevertheless due to their disparities as well as other factors, one approach sidelined the other, and in the final Tannaitic rendering, the Scriptural contours of the law of the virginity suit faded progressively, leaving their in pact on primarily the civil law aspects of the case.

This process, along with others, led the early Amoraim to conceive the virginity suit as a paradigmatic legal dispute between husband and wife, devoid of Scriptural background, bearing as well strict religious ramification regarding the woman’s permissibility. Later Amoraim understood this ramification in different ways: while in Babylonia it was applied to a limited extent, the later strata of the Palestinian Talmud apply it quite extensively.

Brachi Elitzur

**Factionalism During Second-Temple, Mishnaic and Talmudic
Periods As Reflected in Homilies on Korah's Rebellion**

The image of Korah underwent numerous transformations over the generations. The article presents Korah as a reflection of opposition factions engendered by feelings of discrimination. Tracing perceptions of Korah aids in sketching the nature of opposition groups from the period of the second Temple until the Mishnah and Talmud, which were perpetuated in literary traditions composed either by the targets of the opposition or by its supporters.

The choice of the figure of Korah in the various traditions stemmed from a view common to homiletic expounders of different periods, that the Korah story is the best paradigm for delegitimizing opposing views, and for conveying the folly and ultimate doom of those who oppose the ruling authorities.

The article's governing assumption is the existence of a homiletic "correspondence" surrounding the figure of Korah which is trans-generational and trans-sectarian. It seems that the use of Korah to symbolize illegitimate protest groups was inherited by later homilists from their predecessors, with whom they dialogue by recasting the figure to accord with the acute controversy of their own time. In each period Korah served as a two-way figure, each group characterizing its rival as the embodiment of Korah, a rabble-rouser, seeking to undermine the unity and fortitude of the society.

Bat-Sheva Vardi

**"From when one can distinguish between light blue and white" –
Reading the Time for Reading the Morning *Shema* as a Borrowed
Biblical Usage**

In tractate Berakhot of the Mishnah the Sages seek to clarify the precise moment from which the morning *Shema* may be recited. The Mishnah opens with the question "From when...?", offering two answers. The wording of the first answer "when they can distinguish between light blue and white", is of particular interest: 1. From a semantic point of view the particular connotation of the verb NKR in the *hiph'il* (causative) conjugation; 2. The syntactic structure in which

the verb appears. The article presents the connotations of this verb form in the Mishnah (as compared to its usage in Scripture), and the ways in which the Mishnah generally uses them when it wants to convey distinction between similar items – which is the verb’s intent in our case.

Investigation reveals that our verbal sequence is unique, and accordingly I suggest reading it as a unique borrowing of a special biblical usage.

Yishai Glasner

On the Use of ‘Mishnayot’ Tamid in Mishnah Yoma

The article examines the inclusion of ‘mishnayot’ from tractate Tamid within tractate Yoma, in and around the second chapter. The article’s claim is that the editor of tractate Yoma added ‘mishnayot’ from tractate Tamid to the Yom Kippur Temple service presented in the earlier Mishnah collection he had before him. This was done in order to fill a lacuna in the presentation of the Temple service (raising up the ashes), to resume the sacrificial order (the slaughtering of the daily sacrifice) after departing from it, and to present a subject which arose incidentally (the casting of lots). This interpretation opposes that of Abraham Goldberg, who regarded this section of tractate Yoma as a ‘Tosefta’ to tractate Tamid.

Yosef Marcus

***Zizit* As a Marker of Identity: Analyzing the Story of the Fringe-Wearer and the Harlot in its Broad Literary Context**

This article seeks the meaning of the story of the fringe (*zizit*)-wearer and the harlot in Sifrei Bemidbar 115 and in the Babylonian Talmud tractate Menahot 44a, examining the plot and details of the story, as well as its context in the adjacent Talmudic passage. I contend in this article that the aggadic pericope preceding the story leads the reader to interpret the *zizit* as a royal garment given by a king to his servants, and this alone ought to remind a Jew of his duty to observe the commandments due to his special status. This idea relates directly to the story that describes a Jew who seeks to flee his identity and join another culture – in this case Roman culture – and the fringes on his

garment intended to remind him of his princely status, remind him of his place and origin, ultimately drawing even the harlot to adopt a new identity.

Uri Zur

Halakhic Principles in Triplet Formation in the Babylonian Talmud (Eruvin 46b)

Some passages in the Babylonian Talmud appear in triplet form, a popular literary structure already in earlier periods. The expression “triplet form” denotes a pericope with three interconnected parts, such as a word or expression repeated three times in three sentences, or three sayings attributed to a certain sage.

The article presents a uniquely structured pericope in tractate Eruvin (46b), in which the triple structure comprises three dicta regarding halakhic principles in the name of different sages, each dictum containing three different halakhic principles (the third dictum is doubtful), thus creating “three within three” structure.

Ephraim Bezalel Halivni

Who Instituted Multiple *Shofar* Soundings on Rosh Hashanah?

The basic duty of the commandment of sounding the *shofar* is “three times three”. From two passages in the Gemara it emerges that the number of soundings should be multiplied for different reasons. One reason is the enactment of R. Abbahu to sound different types of *teru'ah*. A second reason is R. Yitzhak's requirement of two sets of blasts: one before *Musaf* (the additional service) and one during *Musaf*. In addition the custom in most communities is to sound the *shofar* again after the service to complete a total of one hundred sounds. This article deals with the different strata of these passages and with the stages of development of the practice of multiplication of sounds.

The first chapter of the article demonstrates from the Gemara that the idea of different kinds *teru'ah* preceded R. Abbahu. The second chapter demonstrates that although the enactment of two sets of *shofar* blasts appears only in the Stam (anonymous) section of the pericope, nevertheless it refers to a custom that was current in his time and was independent of R. Abbahu's enactment. The third chapter shows that

according to the custom of producing one hundred sounds as practiced today, there are actually far fewer than one hundred sounds.

Yosaif Mordechai Dubovick
**The First Folio of Rav Hai Gaon's Commentary
on Tractate Berakhot**

The commentary of Rav Hai Gaon (= RHG) on the Babylonian Talmud tractate Berakhot was preserved only in Cairo Genizah fragments and citations by medieval commentators (*Rishonim*). This article presents the first folio of this commentary, based upon several Genizah fragments. The title page, preserved in only one fragment, is of particular importance. This title page teaches us: (a) when the commentary was composed – RHG served as head of rabbinical court between 985 and 1004; (b) the aim of the commentary – to explicate “difficult passages”; (c) the fact that the commentary was written in response to a request by an eminent Torah scholar and leader of the Kairouan community, R. Yehudah b. R. Yosef Resh Kallah. Joining this fragment with others enables the identification of additional fragments throughout the tractate, while ruling out several doubtful ones.

Simcha Emanuel

Did Rabbi Meir of Rothenburg Refuse Redemption from Prison?

R. Meir of Rothenburg (Maharam) was imprisoned in 1286 after an attempt to flee Germany and he died in prison in 1293. In the sixteenth century R. Shelomo Luria (Maharshal) wrote on the basis of an oral tradition that the communities of Germany wanted to redeem him from prison, but Maharam forbade them to do so. On the other hand R. Yehudah son of Rabbenu Asher wrote that his father – the most notable disciple of Maharam – reached an agreement with the king to release Maharam in return for a high sum, but the agreement was not carried out due to Maharam's sudden death. R. Yehudah's account appears to contradict the account of Maharshal, and this matter has been discussed by many scholars.

The article suggests that the report of Maharshal is inaccurate, originating as a mistaken reworking of a discussion by R. Itzhak the

Elder regarding an important unnamed scholar who died in prison in France in the twelfth century.

The appendix discusses the book by Marcus (Meir) Lehmann on Maharam, and it emerges that it was not written by Lehmann, but by Ludwig Philippsohn, one of the leaders of the Reform movement in Germany in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Arye Olman

Weekly Mishnah Study – Evidence from the Genizah

Documents from the Middle Ages (thirteenth to sixteenth centuries) indicate the existence of a custom of weekly Mishnah study, linked to the weekly Torah portion and the festivals. Genizah fragments reveal three variations of this custom: 1. two chapters of Mishnah every week, in which the beginning or end of the selection relates to the weekly Torah portion; 2. several mishnayot every week, related to the Torah portion, along with selected passages from Prophets and Writings; 3. one or two tractates a week – the contents related to the weekly portion, together with passages from Prophets, Writings, Maimonides (Mishneh Torah) and Arba‘ah Turim.

Uziel Fuchs

In Search of the Redactor: The Scholarly Contribution of Prof. Abraham Goldberg to Talmudic Research

The article surveys the scholastic *oeuvre* of the late Professor Abraham Goldberg, focusing on his contribution to understanding the redaction of rabbinic literature. In many of his studies Goldberg sought to shift the focus from source criticism to study of redactorial methods. Unlike previous scholars who focused on “higher criticism” and investigation of the sources incorporated into rabbinic literature, Goldberg focused on the work of the rabbinic redactors. He claimed that rabbinic literature was not assembled from earlier collections, but rather carefully structured by the redactors of the different compositions. Even though these redactors used the sources that were available to them, the compositions they created were designed on the basis of stylistic, halakhic and didactic principles.