

Summary of Contents

The meaning of the *ukimta* (limiting Mishnah to specific cases) is one of the best-known problems in the study of the *Talmud*. Rav Dr. Yehudah Brandes examines this question in light of his analysis of the *sugya* regarding "the poor man extended his hand" (Shabbat 4b-5a). Several approaches are suggested in the article for understanding the role of the *ukimta* in the *sugya*. The article also notes important ramifications of this discussion for methods of teaching *Talmud*.

Yossi Ziv discusses the question of whether women may perform circumcision. The common practice today is that women do not perform circumcision; however, in the Ethiopian Jewish community, only women perform circumcision. In light of this, Ziv examines the history of the custom that women do not perform circumcision and searches for the roots of the custom of Ethiopian Jews.

The prohibition of bringing *bikkurim* (firstfruits) prior to *Shavuot* is mentioned in several *mishnayot*. According to some of these *mishnayot* even *bedi'aved* (if it has already been performed) the firstfruits may not be accepted, whereas according to m. *Menahot* 10:6, it is accepted *bedi'aved*. Rav Dr. Yehudha Felix discusses this contradiction and suggests a new understanding of the *mishnah* in *Menahot*, according to which this *mishnah* refers to the *bikkurim* meal offering rather than to the *bikkurim* which are brought as priestly gifts. In this issue a great deal of space is devoted to discussions and reactions to ideas published previously. Prof. Jonah Fraenkel criticizes Prof. Berachyahu Lifshitz's proposal that rabbinic literature differentiates between *aggadah* and *haggadah*. Fraenkel argues in favor of the ancient understanding that *aggadah* in rabbinic literature denotes anything that is not *halachah*, offering along the way novel analyses of rabbinic sources. Prof. Lifshitz responds to Prof. Fraenkel, emphasizing the advantages of his view that differentiates between *aggadah* - mystical traditions - and *haggadah* - interpretation of biblical verses in matters other than commandments.

Another matter discussed in this issue is Rav Elyakim Krumbein's article regarding the *Brisker* method of study published in *Netuim* 9. Rav Dr. Avraham Walfish broadens the discussion by means of hermeneutic concepts, in light of which he reveals interpretative

aspects of the *Brisker* method, as opposed to the conceptual aspect emphasized by Rav Krumbein. In the course of his discussion the author explains and analyzes several passages from the writings of leading practitioners of the *Brisker* method. In his response, Rav Krumbein offers further justification of his position.

In the Translation Section, we present the first section of the monumental article by Nechemia Brüll, "The History of the Establishment of the Babylonian Talmud as a Literary Work" which was published in German in 1876. The second section of the article, including appendices, will be published, God willing, in the next issue.

The editors