

Summary of Contents

Prof. Yaakov Blidstein's article discusses the talmudic formula, "Scripture Left It to the Sages", which reflects the Sages' self-consciousness regarding their authority as interpreters of the Torah and deciders of halakhah. The article analyzes different contexts in which this formula is utilized by Hazal, as well as its uses and applications by the rishonim.

Yehoram Leshem demonstrates in his article that there was a symbolic act – a kind of ceremony – for abandoning Jewish practices, and that many sources indicate that riding donkeys or horses on Shabbat, often in proximity to a synagogue, served as such an act.

Dr. Mordechai Meir's article shows that use of punctuation of modern editions of the Mishnah is not merely a technical activity, but rather a meaningful exegetical act, and that punctuating the Mishnah involves taking a stand on issues that occupied the commentaries to the Talmud, rishonim as well as aharonim.

Yonatan Feintuch examines the literary and topical connections between the aggadic sections which open tractate Pesahim of the Bavli and conclude the third chapter. The author suggests that these aggadic sections serve as a kind of opening and conclusion that serve as a literary envelope structure which demarcates chapters 1 through 3 as a unit within tractate Pesahim.

Prof. Yitzhak Schlesinger deals with the meaning and significance of two statements that denote the method of mishnaic arrangement: "not only this but also that" and "this and needless to say that". The first statement establishes that a list of cases in the Mishnah are arranged in an ascending hierarchy, from the more obvious to the less readily apparent, whereas the second statement establishes a descending hierarchy, from the less obvious to the more readily apparent. The author discusses different instances of each method, addressing the question as to why the Talmudic Sages chose to employ these methods rather than seeking the unique feature which renders each case necessary.

Rabbi Dr. Yehuda Brandes shows that underlying the commentary of Rav Nissim Gaon, the "Key to the Locks of the Talmud", is the notion that the Talmud Bavli was redacted as a single work, and that

this understanding of the redaction shaped his interpretative method, which establishes close interconnections between different places in the Talmud. According to Brandes, in this regard Rav Nissim anticipated the Tosafists, “who made the entire Shas like a single globe”.

This issue closes with Rabbi Dr. Avraham Walfish’s survey of recent publications in the field of Mishnah, which discusses articles dealing with the form and purpose of disputes in the Mishnah, with the definition of *avodah zarah* (idolatry) and its abolition, and with the purpose of placing the collection of mishnahs of “from where do we derive that...” in the ninth chapter of tractate Shabbat.

The editors