

ENGLISH SUMMARIES

The two central fourth-century rabbinic schools represented in the *Bavli* are those of Mahoza and Pumbedita. These two Jewish communities differed in geography, economy, culture, and attitudes, and, consequently, the rabbinic elite of each center differed in policy and approach both to matters of rabbinic study and of social policy.

Mahoza was a suburb of Ctesiphon, the winter capital of the Persian Empire, and hosted both a large Jewish and Christian community. Both the exilarch and the bishop of Ctesiphon had their residences and their bureaucracies there. It was part of the larger central metropolis of the Empire, and was an economic, cultural and religious center. On the other hand, Pumbedita was located 100 km west of Ctesiphon, in a mostly agricultural and much more insular area. Thus the two communities differed in their degree of exposure to Persian culture and the challenges that such exposure brought with it.

In “A Woman’s Rights in Her Property in the Law of Mahoza”, **Yaakov Elman** examines the two communities’ differing approaches to the issue of a wife’s control of her property. Elman has shown in a series of studies that the Mahozan Jewish community was wealthier and far more cosmopolitan and open to outside influences than the community of Pumbedita. Here he shows, through a series of decisions in *Ketubot* 83a by Abaye of Pumbedita and Rava of Mahoza, that the Mahozans and their precursors quite consistently gave husbands a preponderant control of their wives’ property. According to Abaye, a wife’s financial authority was equal to that of the husband; according to Rava, his authority took precedence over hers.

Elman suggests that these two differing rabbinic policies were rooted in the Jewish match-making crisis that the cosmopolitan Mahozans faced. A variety of alternatives to a traditional Jewish marriage was available to bachelors: they could take a concubine, contract a temporary marriage as the Persians did, and — as at least two prominent rabbis are reported to have done (*Yoma* 18b, *Yevamot* 37b) — they could resort to the “red light district” of nearby Mabrakta (*Ketubot* 10a). Finally, the more acculturated among them could intermarry. It may be that the policies of the Mahoza rabbinate were intended to create financial incentives for encouraging bachelors to marry through traditional Jewish *kiddushin* and *nissuin*.

* Edited by Dr. David Mescheloff.

The phrase “approaching a sage” (ילך אצל חכם, אזיל לגבי חכם) in tannaitic and amoraic literature refers primarily to the process of applying to a sage for the dissolution of a vow. This was both an important role of the sage and a widespread opportunity for contact between sages and laypeople in the Talmudic period. In “‘Approaching a Sage’: Dissolution of Vows and Dissolution of Commandments”, **Moshe Benovitz** traces the roots of the authority vested in the sages to dissolve dedicatory and prohibitive vows and the concurrent sin of *me’ilah*, i.e., sacrilege, trespass against temple property. He also explains a curious suggestion that is raised and immediately rejected in *Berakhot* 35a, according to which the power vested in the rabbis to annul the sin of sacrilege could be used to annul, retroactively, the sin incurred when one derives benefit from the fruits of the earth without reciting the appropriate blessing beforehand.

In a previous article, **Robert Brody** attempted to demonstrate that a significant number of Talmudic *sugyot* can be understood best as recording the responses of named *amoraim* to substantive discussions which had been transmitted anonymously. “On Dating the Anonymous Portions of the Babylonian Talmud” is a sequel, in which Brody focuses on a modest textual sample (chapters 5–7 of tractate *Ketubbot*) and broadens the scope of inquiry to include responses to more rudimentary anonymous discussions. The anonymous discussions to which *amoraim* appear to respond are divided into three categories: questions arising from a single source, real or apparent contradictions between two sources, and more elaborate discussions. The *amoraim* who respond to discussions belonging to each of these categories are then classified chronologically, and it is shown that a different profile emerges in each case: questions arising from a single source are responded to by *amoraim* of earlier generations, contradictions by later generations as well, and more elaborate discussions by the latest generations of *amoraim*. These findings correspond nicely to the expectation, suggested by other research and heuristically plausible, that Talmudic discussions evolved in the direction of increasing complexity over time. This in turn provides additional support to the contention that when *amoraim* appear to respond to anonymous discussions this is not necessarily the result of later attempts to reconstruct imagined discussions or construct artificial ones, but — after appropriate critical precautions have been taken — may be assumed to reflect historical reality.

In “‘The matter is Turned over to Women’ (*Yerushalmi Pesahim* 1:4) — Women and Domestic Religious Ritual”, **Judith Hauptman** argues that women’s role in religious ritual has been incorrectly downplayed. Even though only men could serve in a leadership role in the synagogue, study house, and court, women were

expected to execute religious rituals in the kitchen, both for men and for themselves. Some examples are baking *matzah*, setting an *eruv hazerot* and *eruv tavshilin*, and covering food with insulating material Friday afternoon to keep it hot for the Sabbath. Hauptman argues further that even though many chapters of *Mishna* on domestic topics are articulated in the masculine singular, this is merely a linguistic convention. The people the *tannaim* had in mind who would perform the various kitchen rituals were women and service staff. In addition, the head of the household, usually understood to be a rabbi, would teach newly developed laws to his wife and the members of his household. Hauptman proves her various assertions by focusing on the many halakhic anecdotes that the *Tosefta* and two Talmuds associate with the *Mishna*. It is these small stories, often just a few words long, that show that the people who carried out the prescriptions of the *Mishna* were women and service staff, and that they were informed of new rules by the head of household.

Hauptman also notes that when, on occasion, an anecdote reports that a man executed a ritual that was ordinarily assigned to women — like kneading *matzah* dough — the man was a junior colleague who was performing the task for his senior colleagues. That is, when men live in a masculine environment, household tasks — normally performed by women — fall to junior men. In conclusion, Hauptman shows that, according to the Talmud, women played a more critical religious role than some have heretofore imagined.

There are many expressions in the *Mishna*, *Tosefta* and *Bavli* that signify agreement. They have not yet been collected and had the differences between them explained. In “Agreement”, **David Halivni** has begun that project. It is easy to identify the period when a certain expression was used by identifying its author. However, without an exact definition of each expression it is difficult to explain why the author chose one expression and not another. This is further complicated by the fact that sometimes a late author may use his own vocabulary when quoting an earlier source. For instance, the *Bavli* may quote a *baraita* with the expression *divrei hakol*, although this expression is not found in tannaitic literature. One can assume that time played a role in using different terms, just as time was a factor in the change from tannaitic Hebrew to amoraic Hebrew. Moreover, one can assume that these changes were accompanied by changes in denotation. It is the changes of denotation that Halivni proposes to decipher.

Some of the expressions Halivni examines are *modim* in contrast with *lo nechl'ku*; *modim* in contrast with *v'shavin*; *divrei hakol* in contrast with *hakol modim*; *aimatai*, *ba-meh devarim amurim*, *lo shanu*, and *lo amaran*.

The difficulties presented by the third wedding blessing, “Who has created mankind

in His image” (*Ketubot* 8a), have been discussed in both the commentary literature and in academic research. This blessing has stylistic difficulties, but the major difficulties concern content. At first blush there is no connection between the beginning of the blessing and its conclusion: the fact that Adam was created in the image of God has nothing to do with the fact that his wife was prepared for him “from himself” for the purpose of erecting “an everlasting edifice”. A detailed examination of the solutions that have been proposed for the difficulties presented by this blessing — including its variant readings — shows that the difficulties remain unresolved.

In “‘In the Image of the Form of His Structure’ — Blessing as *Midrash*, with a Comment on Talmudic Anthropomorphism”, **David Henshke** reveals the close connection between the expressions in the blessing and the verses in *Genesis* that tell of the creation of mankind. This makes possible a new solution, which comes from seeing the blessing as a type of *midrash* on these verses. This *midrash* follows the view, whose various sources are presented in the paper, that the word “*Tzalmo*” — “His image” (from the verse, “And God created the person in His image”) — does not refer to God’s image (“His”, with a capital letter), but rather to mankind’s image (“his” with a lower case letter), that is, the form in which he was created. This perspective makes the blessing perfectly clear in its context. It also becomes clear that this blessing is completely unrelated to the question of Talmudic anthropomorphism.

Two different primary sources of Jewish chronicles and historiography from the geonic period have contradictory traditions about the sixth generation Babylonian *amora*, Mar Zutra. The way he is listed in *Seder Tannaim v’Amoraim* creates the impression that he served as one of the yeshiva heads in Pumbedita. By way of contrast, the way Mar Zutra is mentioned in *Iggeret Rav Sherira Gaon* implies that he served as a Babylonian exilarch; indeed, his name is absent from the list of yeshiva heads in the *Iggeret*. For several reasons it is unlikely that a sage would have served both as exilarch and as yeshiva head, either simultaneously or in sequence.

It has become accepted in the scholarly world that there is, indeed, a contradiction between the two chronicles on this point. However, in “Did Mar Zutra Really Serve as Exilarch? — Studies in Two Letters of Rav Sherira Gaon”, **Avinoam Cohen** has reexamined Rav Sherira’s two letters, and proposes an alternate, nonconventional interpretation, according to which Rav Sherira never claimed that Mar Zutra served as exilarch. Cohen bases his interpretation on parallel texts, on close readings and linguistic phenomena throughout Rav Sherira Gaon’s letters (and on rabbinic and karaite genealogical lists from the geonic period). In an earlier study Cohen brought an accumulation of proofs negating the possibility that Mar Zutra was head of the

yeshiva in Pumbedita. Cohen proposed that Mar Zutra was head of a local yeshiva, apparently Nersh, near Sura. Thus a possible solution has been found to one of the apparently blatant contradictions between *Seder Tannaim v'Amoraim* and *Iggeret Rav Sherira Gaon* (and between the latter and genealogical lists such as *Seder Olam Zuta*).

The dramatic saga of Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai's escape from beleaguered Jerusalem and his miraculous encounter with the Roman commander, Vespasian, is one of the lengthiest narratives in aggadic literature. There are four major versions and several minor, secondary sources.

In "A Hebrew Adaptation of the Escape of Rabban Yohanan ben Zakkai from Jerusalem under Siege", **Meron Bialik Lerner** has edited the text of an additional secondary version found in a heretofore unknown *Midrash* to Lamentations. The text presented here is based on three Geniza fragments stemming from two different manuscripts, which contain approximately two thirds of the story. One of the fragments was published previously by M. Kister.

The novelty of this version of the saga is the fusion of Aramaic traditions from *Vayyiqra Rabba* and the *Bavli* and their translation into Hebrew. The manuscript tradition of *Vayyiqra Rabba* is apparently based on Recension A (the *editio princeps*; MS Munich 229 *et al*).

First, Lerner introduces the methods of adaptation and translation employed in this text, and some linguistic novelties, *viz.* קציין and הגמון, and their unique meanings in this text. In the appendices, Lerner shows that — contrary to the claims of Ben-Yehuda and Even-Shoshan — the usage of קציין־קצינים to signify wealthy persons is evident in Palestinian sources (*Yerushalmi* and early *piyyut*), but seems to be lacking in medieval Hebrew literature. Its reappearance in *responsa* literature of the nineteenth century is also noted. During the interim period, the title קציין referred to prominent rabbinical scholars who were also recognized as leaders of the community (Ashkenaz); later it was used as an aristocratic title (Provence and Spain).

Numerous tannaitic rulings are interpreted by the *Bavli* as rabbinic proscriptions intended to prevent the generally inadvertent violation of Torah laws. Such rabbinic enactments are generally designated by the terms *gezerah shema / mi-shum / dilma / atu* ("enactments lest ..."). However, these terms do not appear in the *Yerushalmi*, and many of the rulings explained this way in the *Bavli* are explained in different ways in the *Yerushalmi*. Therefore, various scholars — most notably Abraham Goldberg — have argued that not only are the aforementioned terms unattested in the *Yerushalmi*, but this entire mode of explanation is unattested there as well. Thus,

only "internal" concerns (Goldberg's terminology) about violation of the law were proscribed by rabbinic enactment according to the *Yerushalmi*, but not "external" concerns.

In "On the 'Gezerah Shema' in the *Yerushalmi*", **Leib Moskowitz** argues — against Goldberg and his followers — that numerous explanations along the lines of the Babylonian *gezerah shema* are also found in the *Yerushalmi*, albeit without such terminology, and some of them very closely parallel *gezerah shema* explanations in the *Bavli*. Various examples of this sort are adduced and analyzed in this paper.

In light of this analysis, Moskowitz tentatively proposes a new interpretation of the types of cautionary enactments unique to the *Bavli*, as opposed to those found in the *Yerushalmi*.

Chanoch Albeck's classic article on *Vayyiqra Rabba* (Louis Ginzberg Jubilee Volume, Hebrew section, AAJR, New York, 1946, pp. 25–43) set the agenda for philological research in the corpus of *midreshei aggada* for his day and since. Albeck dealt with a variety of scholarly questions, with an emphasis on the relationships between *Vayyiqra Rabba* and other rabbinic works, such as the *midreshei halakha*, the *Yerushalmi*, the *Tanhuma*, and others.

Strikingly absent is a full-bodied discussion of the relationship between *Vayyiqra Rabba* and *Bereshit Rabba*, to which Albeck devoted no more than two half sentences. Nevertheless, Albeck stated — both in that article and later, quite emphatically, in his additions to the Hebrew translation of Zunz's *Gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden* — that *Bereshit Rabba* was used as a source by the editor of *Vayyiqra Rabba*. Albeck then used this datum in the context of his conclusions concerning the date of *Vayyiqra Rabba*'s redaction.

The statement that *Bereshit Rabba* was used as a source by the editor of *Vayyiqra Rabba* was proven, according to Albeck, by his prior assertion in the two above-noted half sentences that it can be shown that *Bereshit Rabba* was prior to *Vayyiqra Rabba* with regard to two (!) parallel passages extant in both of these midrashic works.

In "*Vayyiqra Rabba* and *Bereshit Rabba* — Another Look at Passages in Parallel", **Chaim Milikowsky** examines in depth the details of these two parallel passages, and of two more parallel passages which have been used for the same purpose. Milikowsky shows that Albeck's assertions are not at all conclusive. Indeed, a good case can be made for the position that — with regard to two of these passages — it is in fact *Vayyiqra Rabba* which has preserved a more original formulation.

In "Dialectics, Scholastics, and the Early Tosafists", **Haym Soloveitchik** challenges two claims current in contemporary medieval Jewish historiography. First is the

claim that tosafist dialectic arose in the school of Worms in the eleventh century. Soloveitchik shows that neither the writings of the Worms school nor that of any other halakhic school of pre-Crusade Germany evince dialectical thinking. Second is the claim that the school of Worms received its impetus from the scholastic thought of Anselm. Soloveitchik distinguishes between Scholasticism and scholastic method: the former is a school of philosophy that seeks to bring faith to reason; the latter is a technique for reconciling contradictory, authoritative sources, be they theological, legal or of any other kind. Anselm may well have been the father of Scholasticism, but he did not originate the scholastic method. Indeed, it is difficult to see how a thinker — whose greatness lay precisely in his refusal to appeal to any authoritative sources (not to mention reconciling them), and who insisted on basing his defense of Christian dogma solely on reason — could serve as a guide or inspiration to Jewish halakhists of the dialectical method.

Mishna Shabbat (7:2) lists thirty-nine *melakhot* ([forbidden *Shabbat*] activities), the unintentional performance of any one of which on *Shabbat* creates an obligation to bring a sin offering to the Temple. Indeed, one is so obliged upon doing any activity that can be subsumed under the heading of one of the *melakhot* listed in the *mishna*, called “*avot melakha*” (principal categories of *melakha*). Furthermore, “one who performs many *melakhot* that are similar to one *melakha* [named in the *mishna*] is obliged to bring only one [sin offering].” *Tannaim* mentioned series of *melakhot* that are similar to given *avot melakha* in the *mishna*, such that “they are all one *melakha*”.

R. Hiyya, a first generation *amora*, noted three *melakhot* similar to ploughing — one of the *avot melakha* listed in the *mishna* — and called them “*toladot*” (subcategories; literally “descendants” of the “*avot*”=“fathers”) of ploughing. R. Yohanan and R. Shimon b. Lakish, based on a “written *midrash*”, sought thirty-nine *toladot* for each *av melakha* listed in the *mishna*. The *Yerushalmi* attests that they worked on this for two and a half years, until they found all of the *toladot* for each *av melakha*.

In order to associate many *toladot* with one *av*, the *amoraim* of the Land of Israel had to define each *av melakha* broadly, or with an abstract definition based on some fundamental principle. As a result of the abstraction there were *toladot* that were quite different from the *avot* with which they were associated, so that sometimes a *tolada* might correspond in principle to more than one *av melakha*. In such cases *amoraim* decided that one who performed such a *melakha* would be obliged to bring more than one sin offering. There are long lists in the *Yerushalmi* of *toladot* of one *av* or another, based on the broad definitions of *avot melakhah*, as well as a list of *toladot* for which one is obliged to bring more than one sin offering.

In the *Bavli* there is no mention of the words *tolada* and *toladot* in the discussion on the list of *avot melakha*. In the *Bavli* they referred to *toladot* of an *av* with the same terminology that the *tannaim* used, viz., “they are all one *melakha*”. The term *toladot* in relation to *avot* appears in the *Bavli* — but in other places — in eight *sugyot*.

In “*Avot and Toladot in Melakhot of Shabbat*”, **Noah Aminoah** examines those eight *sugyot* in detail. He finds that the term *toladot* was much used in the Land of Israel. From there it was transferred to Babylonia, but not before Rava’s time. In Babylonia it was used only a little, and that in later *sugyot*.

In “*R. Meir of Rothenburg and His Father: On the Metamorphosis of One Responsum*”, **Simcha Emanuel** deals with a long, detailed discussion by R. Meir (Germany, d. 1293) about a father who had made a matrimonial match for his son. We have two very different versions of this discussion. Version A consists of three separate *responsa*. In the first R. Meir ruled one way; later he changed his mind and wrote a second *responsum* to his questioners, in which he explained why he changed his mind. The third part is a *responsum* that R. Meir wrote to his father, in which he discussed the additional information about the case that had come to his attention only later.

Version B of the discussion consists of only two *responsa*. The first is a hybrid of the first two *responsa* in Version A, with R. Meir’s final view in place. The second *responsum* in Version B deals with the new details of the case that R. Meir learned later, but it completely contradicts R. Meir’s ruling in the third *responsum* of Version A.

Emanuel proposes that R. Meir saw his *responsa* as being of long-range value, not only as resolving the problem of a certain concrete case. Thus he brought it up to date at every opportunity. Version A preserves R. Meir’s *responsa* as they were written originally, while Version B reflects the final formulation of the *responsa*, as R. Meir updated them in his personal notebook.

In “*From Jewish Neo-Aramaic to Talmudic and Geonic Aramaic (The Dialect of Zakho)*”, **Moshe Assis** examines the possibility that Jewish Neo-Aramaic as spoken in Zakho (Iraqi Kurdistan) might contribute to our understanding of Talmudic and geonic Aramaic. He found, *inter alia*, that one *hapax legomenon* in the *Bavli* and two rare words in geonic literature are preserved in Jewish Neo-Aramaic as common words. These are: אַיָּה (= yes), יוֹם דַּיְנָא (weekday) and אַרְבָּן (expensive). Further research revealed some words and expressions common to Jewish Neo-Aramaic and Galilean Aramaic which do not exist in Babylonian Aramaic. Assis concluded

that Jewish Neo-Aramaic should also be consulted when facing linguistic problems in both Talmuds and in geonic literature.

In “Moses’ *Ashera*”, **Jose Faur** discusses the relationship between the concepts “Moses’ *Ashera* (a palm tree that was worshipped as a pagan goddess at the time Moses brought the Israelites to the Land of Israel)”, “idols in Israelite possession”, and “its minimal required measure [(the size of the *lulav* that must be taken on *Sukkot* in fulfillment of the commandment) is as if it] has been thoroughly crushed”. Faur noticed that there were variant readings of *Sukkah* 31b, that omitted the sentence “[The *lulav* of an *ashera*, mentioned in the *mishna* as disqualified for taking on *Sukkot*, is illustrated by] Moses’ *Ashera*, for its minimal required measure [is as if it] has been thoroughly crushed ... this is our accepted conclusion.” Similarly, the Talmud had said nothing about the *mishna* that spoke of disqualifying “the *lulav* of ... an *ashera*”. Based on correct variant versions of this type (which the authors of the *Tosafot* had), Maimonides changed his mind from what he had written originally in his Commentary to the *Mishna*.

The scholarly dispute about the *amora* Mar Zutra continues unabated. Some hold that he was an exilarch; some hold he was the head of the yeshiva in Pumbedita; some hold that neither was that his place of residence nor was that one of his positions. In “On the Quality of the Text of *Iggeret Rav Sherira Gaon*”, **Harry Fox** brings new proofs from chronicles that attest to his having been the head of the yeshiva in Pumbedita, and additional proofs that he was the exilarch. Furthermore, an examination of *Bavli* manuscripts also points to his having been referred to by both titles — *Mar* and *Rav*. The importance of examining chronicles that supplement and that oppose *Iggeret Rav Sherira Gaon*, such as *Seder Tannaim v’Amoraim*, is also discussed.

The phrase **השני מתקיע** (“the second one orders the blowing”) in *Mishna Rosh ha-Shana* 4:7 is the only instance of the **הפעיל** causative form of **תקע** in mishnaic Hebrew. The Talmud understood “the second one” to be the prayer leader for *musaf*. Manuscripts of *Rosh Hashana* 32b contain two separate paraphrases of **מתקיע**, one reflecting the causative quality of the verb form; the second conveying that the prayer leader for *musaf* recites the additional benedictions, after which the *shofar* was blown.

R. Hai Gaon, too, identified “the second one” as the *musaf* prayer leader, and ruled in a *responsum* that it is customary and proper to have the *shofar* blown by someone else. He understood that **מתקיע** had a causative quality and probably took this to be the recitation of the additional benedictions that occasioned the *shofar*

blowing. R. Abraham of Montpellier, on the other hand, cited an interpretation according to which *השני מתקיע* means that the prayer leader for *musaf* blows the *shofar* and thereby enables the congregants to fulfill their obligation.

In “The Second One Orders the Blowing”, **Mordechai A. Friedman** analyzes three modern interpretations of the phrase: (1) Ben Yehuda: the prayer leader for *musaf* prompts the *shofar* blower by calling out the names of the blasts; (2) M. Bar-Ilan: the prayer leader’s accompanist (‘the second’) blows the *shofar*; (3) D. Golinkin: the phrase means that the prayer leader for *musaf* blows the *shofar*.

Friedman suggests that the causative quality of the verb in the phrase *השני מתקיע* is comparable to that of the verb in the corresponding phrase in the other part of the *mishna*, *הראשון מקרא את ההלל*. Just as the latter expression denotes the prayer leader’s *hallel* recitation, which elicited the congregants’ response, similarly the former denotes the prayer leader’s blowing of the *shofar*, which was to be followed by the individual congregants blowing their own *shofars*. Several passages in Talmudic literature suggest that blowing the *shofar* was not performed customarily by the prayer leader only. The most telling is R. Isaac b. Joseph’s description (*Rosh Hashana* 31a) of the deafening sound of the individual congregants’ *shofar* blowing in Yavne.

Friedman closes with an analysis of Rabba’s statement (*Rosh Hashana* 29b): “The obligation of the *shofar* blowing binds all, but not all are proficient in blowing the *shofar*.” This does not prove that most people were unable to blow the *shofar*. Indeed, the *Yerushalmi* affirms that “Everyone knows how to blow the *shofar*.”

The juxtaposition of Mt. Sinai and the detailed laws of the sabbatical year (*sh^emita*) in *Vayyiqra* 25, and Rashi’s famous comment (based on the *Sifra*) *מה עניין שמיטה אצל הר סיני* “what does *sh^emita* have to do with Mt. Sinai”, have yielded a plethora of serious studies bent on discovering the deep-rooted connection of *sh^emita* to Sinai.

In “What Does Mt. Sinai Have to Do with the Sabbatical Year?”, **Shamma Friedman** rejects that approach in favor of a reading of the *Sifra* which sees the wording of the adage as a rhetorical reversal of its true intended meaning. Friedman examines why Mt. Sinai is mentioned as the locus of God’s delivering the laws of *sh^emita* to Moses.

Indeed, why is Mt. Sinai mentioned at all as a locus of revelation in the book of *Vayyiqra*? After all, the completion of the Tabernacle described at the end of *Sh^emot* occasions the opening verse of *Vayyiqra*, which switches the venue of revelation from Mt. Sinai to the Tabernacle. The generating *datum* for *Sifra*’s determination that the mention of Sinai in *Vayyiqra* 25 is superfluous — thus justifying its homiletical use — is the fact that the laws of *sh^emita* are already laid down in *Sh^emot* (=

“Sinai”). The thrust of the *Sifra* is then clear: just as the *sh^emita* commandment harks back to Sinai — witness *Sh^emot* 23:11 — so each and every commandment was laid down in its entirety at Sinai.

How are we to explain the mention of Sinai four times in *Vayyiqra*? A *baraita* repeated three times in the *Bavli* is to be seen as addressing this question. R Yishmael taught that only general principles were given at Sinai, their details spelled out later in the Tabernacle; according to R. Akiva both general principles and their detailed application were given at Sinai, then repeated in their entirety in the Tabernacle, and finally promulgated a third time in the plains of Moab. Friedman argues that the positions in this *baraita* are creative and complex expansions of the *Sifra* passages. The Akivan position in the *baraita* is based on the *Sifra*, but is far from identical with it. Multiplication by three was a response to the repetition of laws throughout the Pentateuch, largely within three separate groupings. Using the voice of R. Akiva, the *baraita* claimed that the triple presentation in the Torah is simply a varying series of different chance abbreviations of the one full Sinaitic revelation, which was communicated to Moses in full three times.

A divorce-related procedure called “*pesuka d’gitta*” (= the divorce declarations) appears for the first time during the geonic period. This procedure, which preceded the delivery of the *get*, consisted of a formal recitation of declarations by the husband. It included: a. invalidating any possible *moda’a* (=declaration that the *get* is disqualified on account of coercion); b. granting authorization for writing the *get*; c. granting authorization for delivering the *get*. *Pesuka d’gitta* does not appear frequently in halakhic literature. It appears in geonic literature, in documents from the Cairo Geniza, and in some *responsa* of *rishonim*. We know of the components of the formula from the Talmudic period. Why, then, was an enactment created requiring the reading of the formula in the course of the delivery of the *get*?

In “*Pesuka d’gitta* and Invalidating a *Moda’a*”, **Joseph Rivlin** examines the circumstances under which this procedure is mentioned and points to a connection between the procedure and an event in which a man was coerced to deliver a *get* to his wife. Nevertheless, since coercion to divorce existed in the Talmudic period as well, one may ask what transpired during the geonic period that called for creating a special enactment of reading a fixed formula. Rivlin proposes an answer based on social considerations. The sources he discusses indicate that there was also a popular perception that the reading of the divorce declarations effected the act of divorce itself. In light of the causes proposed as background to the creation of the document, one can also understand its disappearance, although the components of the formula continue to exist.

In “The Laws of Incest in the Dead Sea Scrolls and the History of *Halakhah*”, **Aharon Shemesh** surveys the relationship between two lists of forbidden marriages found at Qumran and their biblical origins. He further analyzes some of the unique halakhic stances adhered to by the sect, by comparing them both to the plain meaning of Scripture and to rabbinic *halakhah*. Finally, Shemesh draws some conclusions about the history of the development of *halakhah* that emerge from these discussions.

The Torah states, “A man’s utensils shall not be on a woman, and a man shall not wear a woman’s garment, for all that do so are an abomination to the Lord your God” (Devarim 22:5). In “The Prohibition ‘Shall not wear’ During a Joyous *Mitzvah* Celebration and a Manuscript *Responsum* of R. Yehiel Bassan”, **Yaakov Shmuel Spiegel** demonstrates that there were rabbis who permitted such wearing during times of the joyous celebration of *mitzvot*. This study consists of two parts. In the first part Spiegel presents various printed sources that mention the views of those who permit this, and their reasoning. The second part contains the first publication of a manuscript letter by R. Yehiel Bassan, Chief Rabbi of the Ottoman Empire during the first quarter of the seventeenth century, who was one of the Turkish sages who permitted this.

R. Judah ben Eliezer ha-Levi Minz, rabbi of Padua, is known to have permitted this already in the sixteenth century. In his book of *responsa* he discussed the question “about wearing masks that young and old — men and women — wear on Purim.” He permitted it, because it was done in the context of the joy of performing a *mitzvah*.

In another case of the joy of a *mitzvah*, that is, on the holiday of *Simchat Torah*, the rabbis of Italy disagreed about permitting this behavior. The question was brought to the rabbis of Turkey, and they, too, disagreed about it. The names and books in which their views were recorded are listed in this article.

Those who forbade this relied — *inter alia* — on the authority of a section in *Sefer Yereim* by R. Eliezer of Metz, who forbade wearing clothes of the opposite sex even at *mitzvah* celebrations. Spiegel proves that this section was added to *Sefer Yereim* by R. Binyamin, the brother of R. Zedekiah b. Avraham, author of *Shibbolei Haleket*, who adapted the book.

In the course of time, those who forbade this practice outnumbered those who permitted it, whose voice became barely audible. Spiegel lists all of the rabbis to this day who nevertheless permitted this practice at a *mitzvah* celebration.

In “*Minora*”, **Daniel Sperber** addresses four issues in Talmudic literature. First he shows that the term אָבִי=Bi appears in *Bereshit Rabba* (93:6, 1155) in the less than

usual meaning — found in Egyptian papyrological sources — of “loss of liberty.” Similarly, in *Vayyikra Rabba* (17:7, 387), it means “dispossession.”

Second, Sperber deals with the story in the *Yerushalmi* (*Sota* 1.4) that tells how R. Meir spat in the eye of a certain woman seven times. Sperber shows — on the basis of Roman sources — that this was thought to be a means of curing eye diseases. A variety of additional testimonies from different cultural localities is brought as evidence that this was a superstitious means of averting harm.

Third, the *Bavli* (*Berakhot* 5b) reports that R. Yohanan used to keep a bone of his tenth dead child with him. Sperber discusses the halakhic problems involved in such a practice — lack of burial and constant impurity, *inter alia* — and suggests a possible parallel with an ancient Roman custom mentioned in the Twelve Tables. He further suggests a connection with the “*luz*” legend.

Finally, the idea of the aged eagle’s return to its youth — found in rabbinic literature — is related to the well-known phoenix motif found in classical sources. It mutated subsequently into the salamander motif — or converged with it — and entered into the world of mediaeval bestiary folklore.

The Greek expansions of the biblical text of Esther were translated by Jerome (d. 420) as an appendix to his translation of the Hebrew text. In “Yefet in the House of Shem: The Influence of the Septuagint Translation of the Scroll of Esther on Rabbinic Literature”, **Joseph Tabory** examines the history of these expansions. They were utilized by Josippon for his presentation of the Purim story, a version which was much different from the biblical version. Some of Josippon’s material was used to expand midrashic material. Josippon’s version was apparently incorporated into the liturgy, and it became — in some manuscripts — part of the Aramaic translation of the story of Esther. In medieval France, Jerome’s translation was used, apparently, in an attempt to restore these passages to Jewish literature. In modern times, resource was had to the original Greek, notably in a manuscript found in an Indian synagogue.

