

## English Abstracts: Bavli *Sukkah* Chapter IV

### Chapter IV, *Sugya* 1: “Rabbah” (42b-43a)

According to Mishnah *Sukkah* 4:1-2, the *lulav* is not taken up on the Sabbath of the intermediary days of *Sukkot*; if, however, the *first* day of *Sukkot* falls on the Sabbath, the *lulav* is taken up on that day. Our *sugya* begins by probing the reason for the ban on taking up the *lulav* on the intermediary Sabbath. It cites the famous statement of Rabbah, according to which the Sages prohibited taking up the *lulav* on the Sabbath lest one come to carry it in the public domain. The Talmud’s assumption is that this prohibition applied even in the Temple, where taking up the *lulav* is considered scripturally mandated both on the first day of *Sukkot* and on the intermediary days, and it is puzzled by the discrepancy between the ruling regarding the first day of *Sukkot* and the ruling regarding the intermediary Sabbath. A number of suggestions are offered as to the reason for the discrepancy, the final one being that since the mitzvah on the first day of *Sukkot* is scripturally mandated not only in the Temple but all over, the Sages decided that it should override the fear of carrying a *lulav* into the public domain. The Talmud then asks why the *lulav* is not taken up on the first day of *Sukkot* today when it falls on the Sabbath; the answer given is that the *lulav* is taken up under such circumstances in the land of Israel; it is only in Babylonia that *lulav* on the first day does not override the Sabbath, because of the doubt as to which is the first day of the festival. Finally, a halakhic *midrash* to Leviticus 23:40 is cited which proves that *lulav* is scripturally mandated on the first day of *Sukkot* even outside of the Temple precincts. This *baraita* also provides the source of the notion that *lulav* on the first day of *Sukkot* overrides the Sabbath.

Among the conclusions drawn in the analysis are the following: (1) Leviticus 23:40 originally mandated that the four species be brought on the first day of *Sukkot* from the mountains to the Temple, where they were kept for the entire week and used in various types of celebration. The seven day celebration with the species in the Temple did not require abrogation of the Sabbath in any way. However, the commandment to bring the species to the Temple on the first day necessarily involved overriding the Sabbath, since the commandment itself required carrying the species from domain to domain, and probably even harvesting them on the Sabbath. The earliest versions of Mishnah *Sukkah* 3:13 and Mishnah *Sukkah* 4:4, preserved in the best manuscripts of the Mishnah, reiterated the basic scriptural commandment that the *lulav* be brought to the Temple or synagogue on the first day of *Sukkot*, whether this day falls on Sabbath or weekday; in this sense taking up the *lulav* on the first day of *Sukkot* overrode the Sabbath. These *mishnayot* were later emended in some editions to reflect their meaning as now understood: the *lulav* is taken up on the first day of *Sukkot* even on the Sabbath, but the Sabbath may not be desecrated in order to do so; the *lulav* must be brought to Temple or synagogue on Friday afternoon. (2) Towards the end of the Second Temple period, the ritual of the four species was moved from the Temple to the home for the last six days of the festival. At this point the Sages decreed that when the first day of the festival falls on the Sabbath, the species should be brought to the Temple, but once set down inside the Temple after the fulfillment of the ritual they may not be taken up or even moved on the Sabbath, lest they be carried into the public domain. At this point the fulfillment of the ritual was suspended entirely on the Sabbath of the intermediate days of the festival, and the rabbinic decree against moving the *lulav* on

the Sabbath applied for the entire intermediate Sabbath. These developments are reflected in Mishnah *Sukkah* 4:4, and in Rabbi Yose's statements preserved in Mishnah *Sukkah* 3:14, Tosefta *Sukkah* 2:11, and Yerushalmi *Sukkah* 3:14 (54a). (3) Rabbah's statement explaining that the *lulav* is not taken up on the intermediate Sabbath lest it be carried into the public domain evolved from these sources. Contrary to the scholarly consensus, according to which Rabbah's statement was originally made with regard to the shofar and was transferred to our *sugya* from Bavli *Rosh Hashanah* 29b, our analysis indicates that Rabbah's statement was originally made in our context, and was applied to the shofar by the *amora* Rava.

#### **Chapter IV, *Sugya* 2: "On the First Day" (43a-b)**

According to the halakhic *midrash* cited at the end of the previous *sugya*, from the word *bayom* ("on the [first] day") in Leviticus 23:40 we derive that the four species are taken up on the first day of the festival, even when it falls on the Sabbath. According to our *sugya*, no such halakhic *midrash* is necessary to justify the actual mitzvah of *lulav*, since taking up the *lulav* is not a violation of the Sabbath law. Rather, says the *amora* Rava, the scriptural prooftext is necessary in order to justify the opinion of Rabbi Eliezer, who says that not only is the *lulav* taken up on the first day of the festival which falls on the Sabbath, but one may do whatever is necessary in order to prepare for the ritual, including harvesting the species and carrying them in the public domain. According to the Sages, however, the word *bayom* comes to teach us that the ritual of the four species is performed only during the day, and not at night. A lengthy halakhic *midrash* cited in a *baraita* at the end of the *sugya* discusses how we know that the commandment to dwell in the *sukkah*, regarding which the word "days" is used in Leviticus 23:42, is to be observed both during the day and at night.

Analysis indicates that Rava's statement at the beginning of the *sugya* originally followed a shorter version of the previous *sugya*, in which the halakhic *midrash* served to explain Rabbah's statement at the beginning of that *sugya*. Rava's statement was originally designed to explain a redundancy in the *midrash*, which has two exegeses deriving the law that *lulav* supersedes the Sabbath on the first day of *Sukkot*: "'On the first day' – even on the Sabbath; 'the first' – teaches that *lulav* does not supersede the Sabbath except on the first day". The *sugya* in Yerushalmi *Shabbat* 19:1 (16d) is clearly unaware of Rava's interpretation, and does not believe there is a specific verse permitting the violation of the Sabbath law in order to prepare the *lulav* according to Rabbi Eliezer. It is Rava who introduced this concept in our *sugya* with reference to *lulav*, and the editor of a parallel *sugya* in Bavli *Shabbat* 131b expanded upon Rava's concept, and expounded similar exegeses in support of Rabbi Eliezer's view, allowing for the violation of the Sabbath in order to prepare the rituals of *sukkah*, *matsah*, and shofar.

#### **Chapter IV, *Sugya* 3: "Willow" (43b-44a)**

This *sugya* and the next three deal with the various questions concerning the willow ceremony, observed according to Mishnah *Sukkah* 4:1 for six or seven days during the festival – is it a commandment or mere custom? If it is a commandment, is it scripturally mandated or of rabbinic origin? If it has the status of a scripturally mandated commandment, is this because it is actually derived from verses in Scripture, or was it dictated to Moses at Sinai without being recorded in Scripture? And what exactly is the ritual of the willow? Taking up the willow, standing willows

up alongside the altar in the Temple, or beating the willow? Is it a Temple ritual only, or is it performed nowadays as well? If it performed nowadays, is it the ritual observed today on the seventh day of the festival, or is it observed when the willow is taken up along with the other four species each day of the festival? If it is a Temple ritual, what is the status of the contemporary willow ritual observed on the seventh day of the festival? A more apt place for discussion of these issues would have been in the context of Mishnah *Sukkah* 4:5-7, in which the Temple willow ritual is described in detail. However, according to Mishnah *Sukkah* 4:3, the ritual of the willow is not performed on the Sabbath unless the Sabbath is the seventh day of the festival, known as “the seventh of the willow”, and since the editor of our *sugya* began with a discussion of this ruling, which involves many of these issues, the main discussion of the willow ritual and its status is found in this section of the chapter.

Our *sugya* opens with Rabbi Yohanan’s explanation, that the willow supersedes the Sabbath on the seventh day of the festival in order to publicize the fact that the ritual of the willow is a scripturally mandated commandment. The choice of the seventh day for this purpose is said to be arbitrary; the first day of the festival was not chosen since the ritual of *lulav* supersedes the Sabbath on that day, and so the message that the willow ritual in particular is scriptural would be lost if both rituals were performed on that day in violation of the Sabbath. Thus the last day of the festival was chosen instead. The Talmud asks why the ritual of the willow is no longer performed on the seventh day of the festival when it falls on the Sabbath, and a number of answers are proposed: according to some, the seventh day never falls on the Sabbath, but others claim that this is not the case. According to Rav Yosef, the ritual of the willow that is scripturally mandated is the placement of willows alongside the walls of the altar, which is no longer applicable today. However, definitive tannaitic support is cited for Abaye’s contrary opinion, that the scripturally mandated commandment is the taking up of the willow. Since no altar is required, the willow should theoretically be taken up even after the destruction of the Temple if and when the seventh day of *Sukkot* falls on the Sabbath; however, in Babylonia there is doubt as to which day is the seventh day of the festival, and the land of Israel follows the Babylonian custom in this regard as well as with regard to the taking up the *lulav* on the first day of the festival that falls on the Sabbath (contrary to the statement in the first *sugya*, that in Israel the *lulav* is taken up on that day). Finally, Abaye asks why the ritual of taking up the willow is performed nowadays only on the seventh day of the festival, and not all seven days, as is the ritual of *lulav*. Rabbah answers that the willow is actually taken up all seven days, in the bundle of the four species. Rav Zevid answers in the name of Rava that the ritual of the willow in the Temple was only of rabbinic origin; when this is challenged in light of the position espoused by Rabbi Yohanan in the beginning of the *sugya* and another source, the answer is emended to read that the ritual of the willow outside the Temple has no basis in scripture, while the ritual of *lulav* is mandated by scripture on the first day of the festival even outside the Temple.

Our analysis opens with a history of the complex development of the willow ritual. On the basis of Second Temple sources, it is argued that the ritual of the willow began as the observance of the commandment in Leviticus 23:40 to take up “willows of the brook” and rejoice with them in the Temple for seven days, along with the palm branch, the citron and the leafy branch. The willow ritual was separated at some point during the Second Temple period from the other three for two reasons: (1) according to the plain meaning of Scripture and early *halakhah*, the willow must be taken from

the brook, while according to Nehemiah 8:14-15 the other species were taken from the mountains of Jerusalem and Judea. (2) The palm branch, citron and leafy branch can last seven days, and thus can be brought to the Temple on the first day and kept there for ritual purposes in accordance with the scriptural mandate. Willows, on the other hand, must be replenished daily or almost daily in order to be kept fresh.

Since originally the conveyance of these items from their place of origin to the Temple on the first day of the festival was a central component of the ritual, it is argued that two distinct processions developed – the individual brought three of the species from the mountains to the Temple on the first day of the festival, while a procession brought fresh willows from the brook at Motsa each day of the festival. Some of the willows may have simply been taken up by individuals along with the other three species; however, a collective ceremony was also instituted at the altar at the end of the willow procession; this originally involved marching around the altar with the willows and decorating the altar with them each day of the festival, after which the willows were distributed for use by the priests with the other species. According to the reconstruction proposed here of the sources underlying Mishnah *Sukkah* 4:5-7, the closure of the ritual of the four species was marked on the seventh day of the festival with the beating of willows, the eating of citrons, and the throwing down of palm branches. This is the origin of the special connection between the beating of the willow and the seventh day of the festival. Since the willow procession around the altar and placing the willows alongside the altar involve no violation of the Sabbath, and only the beating of the willow on the seventh day actually involved violation of the Sabbath, the Sabbath was said to be superseded by the willow ceremony only on the seventh day.

However, Rabbi Judah the Patriarch, the editor of the Mishnah, reinterpreted these sources. He found the beating of the willow unsuitable to Temple decorum, and, taking advantage of the fact that the verb *ḥbt* can mean both “to beat” and “to lay flat”, he explained that the willows were never beaten, but simply allowed to lie flat on the surface of the altar after being marched around the altar and placed alongside the altar. This reinterpretation led to confusion as to which aspects of the ritual were observed for seven days and which on the seventh day only; which were performed with all four species and which with the willow alone; which superseded the Sabbath on the seventh day of the festival and which did not; which are of scriptural origin and which are custom; which apply nowadays and which do not; and how the ritual is observed nowadays, if at all.

The underlying amoraic stratum of our *sugya* consisted of two discussions – one between Abaye and Rav Yosef and the other between Abaye and Rabbah. Both originally concerned the observance of the willow ritual in contemporary Babylonia, which was seen as a rabbinically ordained ritual or a custom. Abaye originally asked Rav Yosef why the ritual was no longer observed all week long, and Rav Yosef answered, in keeping with the position of the editor of the Mishnah, that the ritual consisted of placing the willows alongside the altar, and thus is inapplicable today. Abaye however argued that the ritual clearly involved a willow procession as well, which could be observed today in the form of a rabbinically ordained ritual or custom in commemoration of the Temple, just as we take up the *lulav* for seven days in commemoration of the Temple. Rabbah argues that the ritual is indeed observed today, when we take up two willows in the bundle of the four species, while Rav Zevid claimed that the original ceremony in the Temple was only of rabbinic origin,

and therefore the willow need not be taken up in a separate ritual after the destruction of the Temple. A later editor reworked this material and other material he had before him into our *sugya*, changing the focus from the observance of the ritual in Babylonia to the question of why the ritual superseded the Sabbath in Temple times and why this is not true today. In his view, the willow ritual is scripturally ordained, and ought to supersede the Sabbath today as well, if not for the fact that the day of the festival is in doubt in Babylonia.

#### **Chapter IV, *Sugya* 4: “Priests with Physical Defects” (44a-b)**

This *sugya* opens with Resh Laqish’s view that a special dispensation was accorded priests with physical defects to enter the altar area for the purpose of the willow ritual. Rabbi Yohanan questions this ruling, to the surprise of the editor of the *sugya*, who identifies the view that the willow ritual has scriptural status with Rabbi Yohanan, and believes he ought to have *avored* broad participation in this ritual. Rabbi Yohanan’s objection is then explained: it is unnecessary to admit defective priests to the altar area in order to take up willows, since although the willow ritual has scriptural status, there is no indication that the willow need be taken up by individual priests at all; it may be that the willows were simply placed alongside the altar by priests without physical defects.

Comparison with the parallel in Yerushalmi *Sukkah* 4:3 (54c) indicates that Resh Laqish’s view is based upon a tannaitic source. The Yerushalmi passage opens with an unidentified source consisting of two words – *uoa’alei mumin*, “and defective [priests]”, from which Resh Laqish infers that priests with defects participated in the willow ritual. It is argued that the source with which the Yerushalmi passage opens is a *baraita*, expanding upon Mishnah Meilah 3:7, according to which elderly priests took the willows from the altar and placed them in their *lulav* bundles; the *baraita* adds that priests with defects did likewise. This leads Resh Laqish to believe that the prohibition of Leviticus 21:23 is not absolute, and priests with defects may enter the altar precinct in order to perform duties that it is permissible for them to perform, such as removing the willows from the altar. Similarly, according to Yerushalmi *Yoma* 2:1 (39 b-c) and Bavli *Yoma* 23b, Resh Laqish interprets a position of the *tanna* Rabbi Eliezer to the effect that priests with defects can remove the ashes from the altar. Rabbi Yohanan takes a more stringent view regarding the participation of defective priests in the removal of ashes and willows from the altar.

#### **Chapter IV, *Sugya* 5: “Prophets” (44b-45a)**

This *sugya* cites three contradictory views of Rabbi Yohanan regarding the origin of the willow ritual: on different occasions he is said to have cited it as an example of unwritten law given to Moses at Sinai with scriptural status; in a dispute with Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi he is said to have described it as a law instituted by the prophets with rabbinic status, as opposed to a custom of the prophets, and finally Rabbi Yohanan is said to have described the willow ritual as a Babylonian custom. The Talmud explains that the *Temple* ritual is of Sinaitic origin, but was forgotten and reinstated by the prophets; Babylonian Jewry had the custom of taking up the willow and beating it even outside the Temple precincts.

Analysis of this *sugya* and the parallel in Yerushalmi *Sukkah* 4:1 (54b) indicates that Rabbi Yohanan indeed distinguished between the Temple ritual, which he considered *halakhah* dictated to Moses at Sinai with scriptural status, and the contemporary

custom of beating willows on the seventh day of *Sukkot*, which he considered a custom of Babylonian origin. Others, however, believed the Temple ritual was instituted by the prophets, and Rabbi Yohanan's students attempted to bridge the gap between the two views with the claim that the ritual was mandated at Sinai, forgotten and reinstated. The term "institution of the prophets" or "institution of the former prophets" refers to Samuel and King David, who are said to have instituted the priestly watches in the Temple according to both I Chronicles 9:22 and Mishnah *Taanit* 4:2. The willow ritual is likewise attributed to David because he is the putative author of the Psalms, and Psalm 118:27 describes tying boughs to the altar. The attribution of other legislation to the former prophets can likewise be linked to Scriptural verses relating to David and/or Samuel.

An appendix to the commentary on this *sugya* deals the relationship of the *sugya* to the parallel in Bavli *Moed Qatan* 3b-4a.

#### Chapter IV, *Sugya* 6: "Aibo" (44b)

This *sugya* is based upon a collection of four traditions concerning a figure from amoraic times named Aibo. The first, a statement containing guidelines for the willow ritual, is attributed in the Bavli to Rabbi Ami, not Aibo, but comparison with the parallel in Yerushalmi *Sukkah* 4:3, 54c-d and internal evidence indicates that it was originally transmitted by Rabbi Ami in the name of Aibo. One of these guidelines, that the willow used in the willow ritual must be different from that used in the *lulav* ritual, is disputed by Rav Hisda in the name of Rabbi Yitshaq. Rav Nahman and Rav Sheshet dispute another of the guidelines, according to which there is a minimum standard for the observance of the willow ritual; Rav Nahman says this is three fresh twigs; Rav Sheshet says even one twig with one leaf. The second Aibo tradition has him reporting that an *amora*, whose identity is the subject of numerous manuscript variants, did not recite a blessing before the willow ritual. In the third tradition, Aibo describes a conversation between an *amora*, probably Rabbi Eleazar, and a man who was particularly strict with regard to observance of the Sabbatical year. The fourth tradition has him cite a ruling of the *tanna* Rabbi Eliezer ben Zadoq, according to which one should not travel far on Fridays; Rav Kahana comments on this ruling, and his comments indicate that the prohibition is to ensure that one has proper provisions for the Sabbath meals.

Among the conclusions drawn in the analysis are the following: (1) The confusion of the transmission of the names of the *amoraim* in the *sugya* is attributed in the analysis to an attempt to disguise the identity of this Aibo. It is proposed that the Aibo of these four traditions is the one placed under some sort of ban by Rava or Rav Nahman for eating the bread of gentiles according to Bavli *Avodah Zarah* 35b, and who aroused the ire of Rabbi Yohanan for observing the opening festival of Passover for one day rather than two in an area outside of Israel according to Bavli *Rosh Hashanah* 21a. In our *sugya* he is considered a reliable *amora*; however, in order to present him as such the editor of the *sugya* took steps to disguise his identity and that of the *amoraim* with whom is associated. (2) The question of the minimum requirement for the ritual originally concerned the length of the willows, as evident from the Yerushalmi parallel; the dispute between Rav Nahman and Rav Sheshet in our *sugya* about the number of branches originally concerned the myrtle, and was transferred by the editor of the *sugya* from its original context, where it no longer appears, to the current one. (3) The story about the *amora* and the man who was scrupulous in the observance

of the Sabbatical year has affinities to a story found in Yerushalmi *Sheviit* 4:2 (35a), in which a reprobate Jew chastises the Jews for laxity in the observance of the Sabbatical year law. It is argued that the purpose of this story is to counterbalance the impression created by that story, that the Jews of the land of Israel were not scrupulous in this observance. (4) The ban on travel on Fridays originally had nothing to do with provisions for the Sabbath; the fear in this and similar sources concerning travel on Fridays is that one would be found on the Sabbath outside the Sabbath limits, and thus unable to return home.

#### Chapter IV, *Sugya* 7: “Stoa” (44b-45a)

According to Mishnah *Sukkah* 4:4, the Temple functionaries arranged the *lulavim* brought by the people to the Temple on the roof [*al gag*] of the Temple Mount stoa, or colonnade. This storage practice is difficult to understand; as the *amora* Rav Yehudah points out in our *sugya*, the storage of the *lulavim* ought to be designed to preserve their freshness, not to expose them to the sun and dry them out. Rav Yehudah therefore emends the text of the *mishnah*: “Say, rather, ‘atop/alongside [*al gav*] the stoa’”, i.e., in the shade of the stoa, alongside its columns.

The roof of the Temple Mount stoa is mentioned in Mishnah *Pesahim* 1:5 and Mishnah *Sheqalim* 8:4 as well. In Bavli *Pesahim* 13b, Rav Yehudah is said to have emended the text of Mishnah *Pesahim* 1:5 to read *gag* rather than *gav*, the opposite of his emendation in our *sugya*. Analysis indicates that the reading *gag* is original in all cases; Rav Yehudah emended *gag* to *gav* here, for the reason cited in the *sugya*, and the story in *Pesahim* is meant to clarify that the emendation is applicable only in Mishnah *Sukkah* 4:4, and should not be applied erroneously to Mishnah *Pesahim* 1:5.

The original text of Mishnah *Sukkah*, however, had the *lulavim* stored on the roof of the Temple Mount colonnade. This reflects an ancient tradition. According to Nehemiah 8:15-16, the returning exiles in Ezra’s day interpreted Leviticus 23:40 as a commandment to take the species on the first day from the mountains, build booths with them “every one upon his roof, and in their courtyards and in the courtyards of the House of God”, and celebrate inside those booths. The Temple Scroll of Qumran describes a *sukkah* built in the outer courtyard of the Temple, atop a three-story colonnade. The description of this colonnade does not concur with what we know about the structure of the Second Temple, and scholars agree that it does not reflect any historical reality. However, it would seem that it is no coincidence that we find continuity in the descriptions of the booths built on the Temple Mount on *Sukkot*. According to the book of Nehemiah, booths were constructed on *Sukkot* from *lulavim* and the other species “in the courtyard of the house of God”; according to the Temple Scroll, booths were constructed on *Sukkot* atop the columns and beams that stood atop the colonnade surrounding the outer courtyard of the Temple; and according to the Mishnah, *lulavim* were arranged “on the roof of the stoa”, the very same colonnade surrounding the Temple Mount! In Ezra’s time it would seem that there was no permanent structure on the Temple Mount atop which the booths were built. Over time, however, the perimeter of the Temple Mount may have been surrounded with columns and beams, the spaces between which were roofed with palm and other branches taken from the hills on the first day of *Sukkot*. The three-tiered colonnade of the Temple Scroll is an idealization of that reality. Even after the commandment in Leviticus 23:40 was separated from the commandment to build booths, and reinterpreted to refer to the lifting and waving of the four species each day of *Sukkot*,

the people continued to store the *lulavim* atop the columns and beams surrounding the Temple Mount, which created a *de facto sukkah* in the “courtyards of the house of God”. As time went on, the people became less conscious of the connection between the storage of *lulavim* atop the structure on the perimeter of the Temple Mount and the Temple *sukkah*, to the point that even after Herod surrounded the Temple Mount with a permanent *roofed stoa*, they continued storing the *lulavim* atop the roof of this structure, even though in doing so they did not create any kind of *sukkah*.

#### **Chapter IV, *Sugya* 8: “Motsa” (45a)**

According to Mishnah *Sukkah* 4:5, the willows for the ritual were collected each morning from a place called Motsa. The *sugya* identifies Motsa with a Roman *colonia*, and claims the name Motsa means “taken out”, i.e. exempted from taxes, which is precisely the status of the Roman *colonia*. Motsa was in fact a *colonia*, a settlement established for veterans of the Roman army.

The parallel *sugya* in Yerushalmi *Sukkah* 4:3 (54b) considers Colonia the name of the town; it calls Motsa a *mematsiya*. The town is mentioned with the name HaMotsa in Joshua 18:24, so it cannot possibly be called Motsa because of its tax-exempt status under the Romans. On the basis of the use of the term *mematsiya* in other sources, N. Bruell has argued that *mematsiya* means “spring”; however, it is suggested here that winepress is a more accurate translation.

#### **Chapter IV, *Sugya* 9: “Bind the Festival” (45a-b)**

According to Mishnah *Sukkah* 4:5, the willows of the willow ritual were stood up alongside the altar, their tops bent over the surface of the altar. A *baraita* with which this *sugya* opens explains that this would mean willows eleven cubits in length, and a statement by Mar Zutra explains exactly how the willows hugged the contours of the altar; he posits that they stood not on the ground but on the base of the altar. Rabbi Abahu cites Psalm 118:27, which reads literally “bind the festival with leafy branches to the horns of the altar”, as the source of this custom. Two other exegeses of this verse are then cited, equating the merit of one who “binds the festival” with that of one who builds an altar and sacrifices upon it. According to the first, “binding the festival” means proper observance of the ritual of the bound *lulav* and leafy myrtle, according to the second exegesis, the phrase refers to “making a binding for the festival with food and drink”.

Among the conclusions yielded by the analysis are the following: (1) The length of the willows mandated by the *baraita* is based upon the assumption that the altar was ten cubits high, a notion whose development is traced here; the willows stood on the ground and rested loosely against the altar, rather than hugging its contours as proposed by Rabbi Abahu. (2) The link between Psalm 118:27 and the willow ritual echoes an ancient tradition, according to which the leafy branches of Leviticus 23:40 are the willow, rather than the myrtle. (3) The day following a festival is commonly known as *isru hag*, “bind the festival”, because of Rashi’s interpretation of the last exegesis cited in the *sugya*, according to which an extra day is bound to the festival. However, analysis indicates that Rashi was referring to *Shemini Atseret*, not to the weekday following the festival. (4) The actual meaning of the last exegesis had nothing to do with an additional feast day; on the contrary, it praised those who fasted on the festival itself.



#### Chapter IV, *Sugya* 10: “In the Name of Rabbi Simeon bar Yohai” (45b)

This *sugya* consists of three statements attributed to Rabbi Simeon bar Yohai by the *amoraim* Hizqiyah and Rabbi Yirmiyah. According to the first, rituals must be observed “in the manner of their growth”; this is corroborated by a *baraita*. In the second statement, Rabbi Simeon claims that he and his son and King Jotham of Judah have the power to absolve the entire human race from sin for all eternity. In the third statement, Rabbi Simeon claims there are very few souls in heaven; there may only be two – his son and himself. This is challenged on the basis of a number of amoraic statements, and a hierarchy of souls in heaven is established.

The collection is found here because the first statement was connected by the editor of the *sugya* to the vertical placement of the willow branches alongside the altar, with their tips drooping over the surface of the altar; this reminded the editor of the weeping willow in its natural state. The other two statements, which occur together in parallel passages from Genesis Rabbah and the Yerushalmi, originally formed a collection in their own right; they were appended here because of contextual affinities to *Sukkot* and a literary connection with the previous statement. The analysis deals in depth with the meaning of the term “in the manner of their growth” here and elsewhere, and with the development of the second and third statements concerning the world to come and their meaning in their original context and in the *sugya*.

#### Chapter IV, *Sugya* 11: “Upon Leaving” (45b)

This *sugya* opens with a *baraita* which quotes two possible chants recited at the end of the willow ceremony: “Beauty is to you, O altar” and Rabbi Eliezer’s version: “To the Lord and to you, O altar”. The *baraita* has been appended to printed editions of Mishnah *Sukkah* 4:5. The Talmud challenges Rabbi Eliezer’s version of the chant, because it appears to accord the altar divinity along with the Lord, which would be a form of idolatry. The Talmud explains that the Lord is thanked, while the altar is merely admired.

Analysis indicates that the question in the Talmud assumed that Rabbi Eliezer’s chant built upon the first suggestion, and Rabbi Eliezer meant that they chanted “Beauty is to the Lord and to you, O altar”. This equation of the Lord’s beauty with that of the altar is what was considered blasphemous. The Talmud’s explanation is that Rabbi Eliezer’s chant consists solely of the words “To the Lord and to you, O altar”, which in no way involves praising the Lord and the altar in the same sense.

#### Chapter IV, *Sugya* 12: “Palm Branch” (45b)

According to the view of Rabbi Yohanan ben Beroqa cited in Mishnah *Sukkah* 5:6, palm branches were used instead of or in addition to willows during the altar ceremony. Rav Huna explains that the double use of palm branches, as *lulavim* and in the altar ceremony, is derived from the plural *kappot*, “branches”, in Leviticus 23:40. The Sages, on the other hand, who said willows are to be used exclusively, would explain that *kpt* is written with defective orthography, and could just as well be read *kappat*, “branch”. A statement of Rabbi Levi is appended to Rav Huna’s explanation, according to which just as the palm has a single heart, so Israel has a single heart, directed at heaven.

Analysis focuses on the relationship of this *sugya* to a similar discussion of the orthography of *kpt* in Bavli *Sukkah* 32b, and on the meaning of Rabbi Levi’s statement.

It is shown that the single heart of the palm is not a botanical concept, but a play on the word *lulav*, as “*lo lev*”, it has a heart.

#### Chapter IV, *Sugya* 13: “Blessing” (45b-46a)

This *sugya* and the next two deal with the blessings recited over the *sukkah* and *lulav*, a topic that has nothing to do with Mishnah *Sukkah* 4:6, to which these *sugyot* are formally appended, or with the previous *sugyot* in the chapter. It is suggested that these *sugyot* followed *sugya* 17 in the original redaction of our chapter, where our *sugya* was brought to elucidate a point mentioned in that *sugya*. This *sugya*, and the two following *sugyot* which devolved from it, were moved to their current position when *sugya* 17 was expanded with the inclusion of an alternate recension, which interfered with the original placement of these *sugyot*. The current arrangement of *sugyot* 13-18, while leaving *sugya* 13 somewhat rootless, has an internal logic: *sugyot* dealing with the seven days of *Sukkot* only are placed before *sugyot* dealing with both *Sukkot* and *Shemini Atseret*, and these in turn precede *sugyot* dealing with *Shemini Atseret* alone.

This complex *sugya* consists of two parts: the first contains various opinions as to whether the blessings over *lulav* and *sukkah* are repeated throughout the festival or are recited only once, at the first observance of these rituals. The second part is usually interpreted as dealing with the same question with regard to *lulav* alone: some say a blessing is recited only on the first day of the festival, since the ritual of *lulav* on the other days is a rabbinic commandment. According to the prevalent interpretation, a passage cited at the end of the *sugya* from Bavli Shabbat 23a, according to which Rav ordained a blessing over Hanukkah lights, is adduced as proof that a blessing can be recited over the *lulav* on the intermediate days of *Sukkot*, despite the fact that it, like the Hanukkah lights, is a commandment of rabbinic origin.

Comparison with the parallel in Yerushalmi *Sukkah* 3:4 (53d) indicates however that the second part of the *sugya* does not concern the question of *whether* a blessing is recited over the *lulav* on the intermediate days of the festival, but *which* blessing should be recited. It is shown that not only the requirement to recite a blessing over Hanukkah lights, but also the wording of the blessing, should be attributed to Rav, despite confusion over the attribution in the extant witnesses in our *sugya* and in Bavli Shabbat. It is this *wording* that was adduced by the editor of our *sugya* as proof that the same formula used for scripturally based commandments can be used for rituals ordained by the Sages, and it is not necessary to recite a special formula “on the commandment of the elders”.

#### Chapter IV, *Sugya* 14: “Over the Kiddush Cup” (46a)

This *sugya* opens with a *baraita* according to which the *Shehehiyanu* blessing is to be recited over the *sukkah* upon its construction, and if it was standing previously, upon first entering it on the festival, along with the blessing over the *sukkah*. Rav Kahana is said to have recited all the blessings over the Kiddush cup.

Analysis indicates that the version of the *baraita* cited here is an emendation of an earlier version, according to which a special blessing concerning the commandment to make the *sukkah*, not *Shehehiyanu*, was recited at the time of construction. The original reading appears in Yerushalmi *Sukkah* 1:2 (52b) along with somewhat obscure comments by Rav and other *amoraim* concerning *Shehehiyanu*. The Bavli understood that Rav sought to replace the original blessing with *Shehehiyanu*, and emended the *baraita* accordingly. Rav Kahana’s custom is also based upon an interpretation of an

amoraic position recorded in that passage in the Yerushalmi, according to which *Shehehiyanu* is to be recited at night.

#### Chapter IV, *Sugya* 15: “Many Commandments” (46a-b)

This *sugya* opens with a *baraita* recording a tannaitic dispute: the first *tanna* says that a general blessing “and commanded us concerning the commandments” can be recited over several *mitsvot* to be performed consecutively; according to Rabbi Yehudah, a separate blessing must be recited over each commandment. Three amoraic statements, attributed by some to Rabbi Zera and by others to Rabbi Hanina bar Papa follow: the first rules in accordance with Rabbi Yehudah, the second offers a prooftext for Rabbi Yehudah’s view, Psalm 68:20, while the third asserts on the basis of Deuteronomy 28:1 that unlike people, God pours into a filled vessel rather than an empty one: it is the person who hearkens unto God in one instance who has the capacity to do so again.

Analysis yields the following conclusions: (1) The *baraita* with which the *sugya* opens was originally part of a longer *baraita*, parallel to Tosefta *Berakhot* 6:9-15, which included passages cited in the two previous *sugyot*; hence the placement of the *sugya* here. (2) The statements of Rabbi Zera or Rabbi Hanina bar Papa are found both here and with reference to a similar position of Rabbi Yehudah with regard to blessings over vegetables in Bavli *Berakhot* 40a; the *sugya* is original here and was transferred to the other locus by the editor in *Berakhot*. (3) The final statement refers to observance of the commandments, not to the study of Torah as per Rashi’s commentary.

#### Chapter IV, *Sugya* 16: “*Muqtseh*” (46b)

According to Mishnah *Sukkah* 4:7, children in the Temple ate the citrons following the last observance of the ritual of the four species on the seventh day of *Sukkot*. May adults eat the citron as well on the seventh day? This *sugya* contains four amoraic disputes as to the status of the citron during the festival: while all seem to agree that while the commandment is being observed the citron is *muqtseh*, prohibited from common use, the point at which this prohibition ends is the subject of dispute: some say the citron is permitted on the seventh day after the ritual is completed, some say it is forbidden on *Shemini Atseret* as well, and some say it is forbidden even on the ninth day in the Diaspora. Similarly, if one has set aside a different citron for ritual use on each day of the festival, the *amoraim* argue as to whether that citron can be eaten immediately after it is taken up with the *lulav*, or only on the following day. The *sukkah*, however, is said to be *muqtseh* throughout the festival and on *Shemini Atseret* as well.

Analysis focuses on the relationship between the first two amoraic disputes, which seem redundant, and on the history of the idea that ritual items are *muqtseh*. It is argued that the second amoraic dispute is earlier than the first, but a later editor added the first and reworked the second to appear as a continuation of the first. The amoraic notion that ritual items are *muqtseh* developed gradually over time. According to Bavli *Sukkah* 36b, an early *amora*, Rabbi Hanina, is said to have taken a bite out of his citron each day and to have continued using it for the ritual on subsequent days, without worrying about *muqtseh*. It is shown that a tannaitic notion, according to which the *sukkah* and its decoration were prohibited from common use as *muqtseh* on the festival days and the Sabbath, was slowly expanded into a prohibition against using ritual items for secular purposes even on weekdays such as the intermediate days of *Sukkot* or Hanukkah, since this came to be considered disrespectful treatment

of the ritual items. It is possible that some of the opinions in our *sugya* originally reflected the notion that the citron was not *muqtseh* at all, but were edited and contextualized in order to reflect the later notion.

#### **Chapter IV, *Sugya* 17: “The Eighth Day Which May Be the Seventh” (46b-47a)**

This *sugya* opens with a dispute between Rav and Rabbi Yohanan as to whether *Shemini Atseret* in the Diaspora, which may be the seventh day of *Sukkot*, is to be treated as *Sukkot* or as *Shemini Atseret* as far as the concepts of *sukkah* and *berakhah* are concerned. The first recension of the *sugya* explains *berakhah* as prayer: all agree that the prayer services should be those of *Shemini Atseret*. They differ as to *sukkah*, namely whether a blessing should be recited over the *sukkah* on the eighth day of the festival in the Diaspora: Rav says a blessing should be recited and Rabbi Yohanan says it should not. Rav Yosef adduces support for Rabbi Yohanan’s view from a story concerning the practice of Babylonian *amoraim*. An alternative recension of the *sugya* explains that all agree no blessing should be recited, and this is the meaning of *berakhah* in the originally dispute; the *sukkah* dispute is to whether one should sit in the *sukkah* altogether: Rav says one should and Rabbi Yohanan says one should not. Rav Yosef again adduces support for Rabbi Yohanan’s view from the practice of another Babylonian *amora*. The *sugya* concludes with an anonymous ruling, according to which one should sit in the *sukkah* without making a blessing.

Analysis suggests a complex history of the development of both recensions in the *sugya*. There is a simpler way of explaining the dispute between Rav and Rabbi Yohanan, according to which neither believes one should sit in the *sukkah* without a blessing: Rav believes one should sit in the *sukkah* with a blessing, but pray as on *Shemini Atseret*; Rabbi Yohanan believes one should not sit in the *sukkah* at all, and pray as on *Shemini Atseret*. It is argued that Rav Yosef originally adduced both proofs for the view that one need not sit in the *sukkah* at all on *Shemini Atseret* in the Diaspora, which was associated with Rabbi Yohanan in keeping with both this simple explanation and that of the second recension. The explanation in the second recension was introduced as an alternative to the simple explanation, well before the anonymous explanation in the first recension. The anonymous ruling at the end of the *sugya* is not a post-Talmudic development, as is often argued, but an update of Rav Yosef’s ruling made necessary after the alternate recensions were introduced.

#### **Chapter IV, *Sugya* 18: “In Its Own Right” (47a-48a)**

This *sugya* opens with a statement of the *amora* Rabbi Yohanan, according to which *Shehehiyanu* is recited on the *Shemini Atseret*, but not on the seventh day of Passover. Babylonian *amoraim* provide explanations and proofs for this statement; however, a *baraita* in which Rabbi Yehudah states that *Shemini Atseret* requires its own offering, psalm, blessing and overnight pilgrimage is not considered conclusive proof, since “blessing” need not refer to *Shehehiyanu*. After a digression casting doubt as to whether Rabbi Yehudah truly required pilgrims to stay in Jerusalem following *Shemini Atseret*, it is stated that the question of *Shehehiyanu* on *Shemini Atseret* is disputed by Rav Nahman and Rav Sheshet, and a *baraita* is cited explicitly corroborating the view of Rav Nahman, who, like Rabbi Yohanan, required *Shehehiyanu* on *Shemini Atseret*. According this *baraita*, *Shemini Atseret* has its own lottery to determine which priests will serve in the Temple and its own *Shehehiyanu*; it is a pilgrimage festival in its own right with its own offering, its own psalm and its own blessing.

Analysis indicates that an earlier redaction of the *sugya* opened with a dispute between Rabbi Yohanan and Babylonian *amoraim* as to whether *Shehehiyanu* is recited on *Shemini Atseret*. This was followed by proofs for the Babylonian position, according to which *Shehehiyanu* is not recited. Eventually, however, Babylonian Jewry adopted Rabbi Yohanan's position on this issue, and a later editor relegated the dispute to the end of the *sugya*, and reworked the beginning of the *sugya*, which originally challenged the notion that *Shehehiyanu* is recited on *Shemini Atseret*, into a defense of that position. The element of *Shehehiyanu* in the *baraita* cited at the end of the *sugya* is an amoraic gloss, as is clear from the parallel in Yerushalmi *Hagigah* 1:4 (76c) and Yerushalmi *Sukkah* 5:7 (55d), and the *baraita* as a whole may simply be a statement of Rabbi Yohanan himself, according to that same source. However, it would seem that there is no reason to dispute the gloss: from the earliest times *berakhah* in this context meant *Shehehiyanu*, and this is probably the original meaning of *berakhah* in the dispute between Rav and Rabbi Yohanan in the previous *sugya*.

#### Chapter IV, *Sugya* 19: "Only Joyous" (48a)

The commandment to rejoice on the festival applies for eight days, both on *Sukkot* and on *Shemini Atseret*, according to Mishnah *Sukkah* 4:1; according to Mishnah *Sukkah* 4:8 the reference is to honoring the festival with food and drink in the same manner that the other days are honored. Our *sugya* adduces a halakhic *midrash* to prove that *Shemini Atseret* is included in the commandment to rejoice: Deuteronomy 16:13-15 commands rejoicing for the seven days of *Sukkot*, but concludes with the additional commandment to "be only joyous". This additional commandment is said to refer to the night of *Shemini Atseret*, the word "only" qualifying the commandment and limiting it to part of the holy day only, the night.

The commentary deals with the historical development of the commandment to rejoice on the festival and the textual development of the *midrash* cited in our *sugya* and its parallels. It is shown that the meaning of rejoicing, as well as the question of whether the daylight hours of *Shemini Atseret* are included in this commandment, changed over time

#### Chapter IV, *Sugya* 20: "Dishes" (48a)

According to Mishnah *Sukkah* 4:8, the *sukkah* should not be taken down after the meal on the seventh day of the festival; rather, dishes should be taken indoors in honor of *Shemini Atseret*. The *sugya* cites alternative methods of marking the end of the ritual of *sukkah* on the seventh day: removing a patch of the roof of the *sukkah*, lighting a candle in the *sukkah*, and moving dishes into the *sukkah* as a sign that it is being used for storage hereon in, rather than as a dwelling.

Analysis indicates that two approaches to the *mishnah* are taken by two redactional layers in our *sugya* and in the parallel material in the Yerushalmi. One approach sees the question of honoring *Shemini Atseret* as a symbolic one: a symbolic act must be performed at the end of the final meal on the seventh day of the festival in order to indicate that from hereon in one is moving into the house. Another approach sees the removal of the dishes into the house before *Shemini Atseret* as a practical one: the dishes must be taken indoors so they can be used for the evening meal. According to this interpretation, symbolic acts are necessary only if one has no choice but to eat in the *sukkah* on *Shemini Atseret* as well. The *amoraim* themselves, and the earlier redactional

layer in the Bavli, took the first approach; the editor of the Yerushalmi passage and the editor of the second redactional layer in our *sugya* took the second approach.

#### **Chapter IV, *Sugya* 21: “Sason” (48a-b)**

Mishnah *Sukkah* 4:9 describes the *Sukkot* water libation observed as part of the Temple ritual. Our *sugya* cites Isaiah 12:3, “You will draw water with joy (*sason*)” as a source for this observance. Two stories follow concerning a heretic early Jewish-Christian named Sason; in one he debates a fellow heretic named Simhah, while in the other he debates Rabbi Abahu. Both debates end with the same taunt, according to which Sason will eventually be turned into a skin for drawing water, as per Isaiah 12:3, “You will draw water with Sason”.

The order of the two stories is reversed in some manuscripts, indicating that one was originally a gloss on the other. Analysis indicates that the first story is a sophisticated anti-Christian polemic, in which Sason is a name for Jesus, in accordance with the exegesis of Psalm 45:8 found in the Epistle to the Hebrews 1:4-9. The taunt regarding the water skin is a satire on John 7:35-37. A later editor, who did not understand the story, sought to replace it with an alternate version that turned it into a dispute between Rabbi Abahu and a Christian, a common motif in rabbinic literature. Both versions were ultimately preserved in the witnesses.

A lengthy appendix to the commentary on this *sugya* discusses the origin of the water libation observed as part of the morning offering on each day of *Sukkot*, and the nocturnal *Simhat Bet Hasho'evah* celebration preceding it. It is argued that the water libation was a Herodian innovation designed to establish the newly renovated altar and Temple in Jerusalem as the center of the earth, connected to the subterranean foundation stone and the abyss beneath it, upon which the earth was created. This ritual, which has pagan parallels, was initially opposed in Pharisaic circles, and the nocturnal *Bet Hasho'evah* celebration, drawing “the spirit” rather than actual water for libation, was an attempt to overshadow or replace the original ceremony in the post-Herodian Temple. Although the two ceremonies are presented separately in the Mishnah *Sukkah* chapters 4 and 5, respectively, in accordance with descriptions taken from early sources, they were ultimately seen as a continuum, and were reinterpreted by the *tannaim* as pleas for rain.

#### **Chapter IV, *Sugya* 22: “Left” (48b)**

The priest offering the water libation on *Sukkot* turned left at the top of the altar ramp, according to Mishnah *Sukkah* 4:9. Our *sugya* consists of *baraita* which lists the water libation as one of only three rituals for which the priest turned left upon reaching the altar.

The *baraita* is nearly identical to Mishnah *Zevahim* 6:2-3. The commentary discusses the relationship between the two.

#### **Chapter IV, *Sugya* 23: “Blackened” (48b)**

The cups atop the altar into which wine and water libations were poured were made of silver, according to one view in the Mishnah *Sukkah* 4:9; according to the other they were made of limestone and blackened by the libations themselves. Our *sugya* explains that even the cup meant for water libation turned black because wine could also be poured into it.

Analysis indicates that the *sugya* is an attempt to explain the *mishnah* on the basis of Tosefta *Sukkah* 3:14.

#### **Chapter IV, *Sugya* 24: “Two Protuberances” (48b)**

This *sugya* gives two explanations for the fact that according to Mishnah *Sukkah* 4:9 the protuberance for the wine libation had a wider mouth than the one for the water libation; it is either as a reflection of Rabbi Yehudah’s view that more wine was poured than water, or an accommodation to the fact that wine is thicker than water. Proof is cited that the *mishnah* is not Rabbi Yehudah’s view, since a *baraita* citing Rabbi Yehudah’s view uses different language than the *mishnah*.

Analysis deals with the delineation of the material in Mishnah *Sukkah* 4:9 attributed to Rabbi Yehudah, the original meaning of “wide” and “narrow” in the *mishnah* and in a difficult passage in Yerushalmi *Sukkah* 4:8 (54d) concerning the width of the two protuberances and the meaning of the word *qasva’ot* used by Rabbi Yehudah in the *baraita* cited in our *sugya* instead of *sefalim*, “cups”.

#### **Chapter IV, *Sugya* 25: “Sadducee” (48b-49a)**

According to Mishnah *Sukkah* 4:9, the priest pouring the water libation is told to raise his arm high, because once a priest poured the water on his feet and the people assembled threw their citrons at him. This *sugya* consists of a *baraita* telling a similar tale: a Sadducee priest poured the water on his feet and was pounded with citrons, which broke off one of the horns of the altar. The horn was temporarily replaced with a slab of salt.

Analysis deals with the relationship between the Mishnah’s story, the one told in the *baraita* and the parallels in Tosefta *Sukkah* 3:16 and Yerushalmi *Sukkah* 3:8 (54d). It is argued that according to the Mishnah the priest poured the water on his feet accidentally; this is a reworking of the earlier story found in the *baraita*, according to which the priest was a Sadducee who opposed the water libation. The story in the *baraita* is in turn a reworking of a story told by Josephus regarding Alexander Janneus, which originally had nothing to do with the water libation (*Antiquities* XIII, 372).

#### **Chapter IV, *Sugya* 26: “The Curves of Your Thighs” (49a-b)**

This *sugya* consists of two aggadic interpretations of Song of Songs 7:2, which is understood as “the hidden places of your thighs are like hollows, the work of a craftsman”, and a lengthy discussion of each. According to the first interpretation, the reference is to the foundation stone created by God beneath the altar and the hollowed out passageway running through it, connecting the altar to the primal abyss below – this is the passageway through which the water libation was poured. The ensuing discussion contains two traditions as to the ultimate resting place of the libations: the primal abyss or a nook beneath the altar cleaned out periodically by children of priestly descent, and the status of libation wine found in the nook. The two traditions are harmonized by Resh Laqish with the assertion that the passageway was blocked up when the libations were poured, in order to create a sense of saturation. According to the second interpretation of Song of Songs 7:2, the “hidden places of your thighs” are Torah, best studied or observed in private. There follow a series of statements by the *amora* Rabbi Eleazar and others, asserting the importance of almsgiving and kindness, particularly when offered in private.

Among the conclusions reached in the analysis are the following: (1) The two views of the ultimate resting place of the libations originally reflected polemic surrounding the mythical notion that the libations connect the altar with the primal abyss, a notion with pagan parallels. Some of the Sages opposed this view in principle, and sought a rational explanation of the structure of the altar built by Herod. (2) The second exegesis of Song of Songs 7:2 originally concerned the *study* of Torah, which the Sages of the land of Israel thought of as an enterprise preferably taken up with modesty, in private. This was not considered a value by Babylonian Sages, who therefore reinterpreted the exegesis as referring to Torah *commandments* best performed in secret, namely almsgiving and acts of loving kindness.

#### **Chapter IV, *Sugya* 27: “Unconsecrated” (49b-50a)**

On the Sabbath of *Sukkot*, the water libation was performed with water brought before the Sabbath from Siloam, which was kept in an unconsecrated golden barrel according to Mishnah *Sukkah* 4:10. This *sugya* offers three explanations as to why the barrel had to be unconsecrated.

In the commentary it is demonstrated that the first explanation is uniquely Babylonian. The parallel in Yerushalmi *Sukkah* 4:9 (54d) deliberates between the last two explanations only, with the attributions reversed. The editor of the Yerushalmi seems to be aware of the first explanation, however, and alludes to it obliquely.

#### **Chapter IV, *Sugya* 28: “Strainer” (50a)**

Water that was left uncovered may not be used for libation, according to Mishnah *Sukkah* 4:10. This is in keeping with the prohibition against drinking water left uncovered out of fear that reptiles deposited venom therein. The *sugya* states that even according to the view of Rabbi Nehemiah, who holds that straining the water would remove any venom, strained water would be prohibited for libation, since its use for ritual purposes would be disrespectful.

Differences between this *sugya* and the parallel in Yerushalmi *Sukkah* 4:9 (54d) are accounted for in light of different approaches to the prohibition against drinking uncovered water in the land of Israel and Babylonia. In the land of Israel the prohibition was considered purely a question of safety. Under the influence of Persian culture, however, Babylonian Jews believed that uncovered water was not only infested with snake venom, but rife with demons, making it inappropriate for ritual use even after straining.



## English Abstracts: Bavli *Sukkah* Chapter V

### Chapter V, *Sugya* 1: “Water Drawing” (50a-b)

According to Mishnah *Sukkah* 4:1, the flute played in the Temple for five or six days of *Sukkot*. Mishnah *Sukkah* 5:1 explains that this is the flute of *Bet Hasho'evah*, usually translated “the house of the water drawing”, which did not supersede the Sabbath or the first day of *Sukkot*. The *sugya* cites an alternate reading, the flute of *Bet Hahashuvah*, “the house of consideration” or “the house of importance”, and both readings are explained by the *amora* Mar Zutra; the former in light of Isaiah 12:3 and the latter as a reference to the ceremony having been considered, or planned, from the time of creation.

Analysis focuses on the history of the *Bet Hasho'evah* celebration. It is argued that this was originally a morning procession led by a flute player that accompanied the drawing of the water for libation at Siloam and the conveyance of the water to the Temple. After Herod's death, the ceremony was moved to the Temple and became an all night festive gathering in the Temple courtyard, celebrated with enormous lit candelabra, numerous musical instruments and dancing. At this point some continued to call the festival by its old name, reinterpreting the water drawing as a metaphor for drawing inspiration from the Temple; others called it “the festival of the house of importance”, namely the Temple. Mar Zutra was unfamiliar with the rare use of *hashuvah* as a noun, meaning “importance” or “consideration”, and he interpreted *hashuvah* as a passive participle, meaning “planned” or “considered”.

### Chapter V, *Sugya* 2: “Flute” (50b-51a)

This *sugya* opens with a *baraita* recording a dispute between Rabbi Yose ben Yehudah, who says that the flute supersedes the Sabbath, and the Sages, who say it does not. Two interpretations of this dispute are suggested. According to Rav Yosef, this dispute does not concern the flute of the water drawing mentioned in our *mishnah*, which does not supersede the Sabbath according to anyone, but the flute that accompanied the psalms recited during festival offerings. According to Rabbi Yirmiyah bar Abba, the dispute does concern the flute of the water drawing, but all agree that the flute accompanying the offerings superseded the Sabbath. Rav Yosef's view is emended on the basis on tannaitic sources, and it is suggested that according to Rav Yosef, both types of flute playing were subject to the tannaitic dispute, but even this version is ultimately rejected in favor of Rabbi Yirmiyah's position. This dispute is connected in the *sugya* to another dispute, as to whether the music of the Levites in the Temple was primarily vocal or instrumental, and support is cited for both positions from verses in II Chronicles.

Analysis of the *sugya* and comparison with parallel material in Tosefta *Sukkah* 4:14, Tosefta *Arakhin* 1:13, Mishnah *Arakhin* 2:3 and Yerushalmi *Sukkah* 5:1 (55a) indicate that the original dispute between Rabbi Yose ben Yehudah and the Sages concerned the flute of the water drawing, in accordance with Rabbi Yirmiyah's view and the conclusion of our *sugya*. The flute accompanying the festival offerings is an invention of the editor of the Mishnah, Rabbi Judah the Patriarch. He believed the light accompaniment of the flute was preferable to the heavy accompaniment of harps, lyres and cymbals, the usual Temple instruments, on every occasion on which the *hallel* was recited in conjunction with the Temple offerings, since the *hallel* was recited responsively by the Levites and the public, unlike the other psalms of the

Temple service, which were recited by the Levites alone in unison. This corresponds to the distinction between Greek lyric poetry, recited by a single person to the accompaniment of a lyre, and the choral music of the Greek theater, sung in antiphony, which was accompanied by the flute.

### **Chapter V, *Sugya* 3: “Whoever Has Not Seen” (51a-b)**

According to Mishnah *Sukkah* 5:1, whoever has not seen the *Simhat Bet Hasho'evah* has never seen rejoicing in his life. A *baraita* cited at the beginning of this *sugya* cites this tradition along with two similar ones, concerning the beauty of Jerusalem and the splendor of the Temple. The Talmud explains that the Temple mentioned is the building built by Herod, built of rows of white and blue stone set at alternate depths, which looked like the waves of the sea; Herod sought to overlay the building with gold, but the Sages dissuaded him from doing so. Finally, another *baraita* is cited with describing the beauty of the synagogue at Alexandria, which also opens with the phrase “whoever has not seen”; this *baraita* is attributed to Rabbi Yehudah. Abaye comments that the Jewish community of Alexandria and its synagogue were destroyed by Alexander the Great; the Talmud explains that this was because they violated the prohibition against returning to Egypt (Deuteronomy 17:16).

Analysis shows that the tradition regarding the wave-like architecture of the Temple actually reflects Babylonian architectural technique, while the tradition regarding Herod's wish to overlay the Temple in gold fuses a number of events mentioned in the works of Josephus and Philo. According to Josephus, the front of the Temple was *actually* overlaid with gold (*War* V, 203-211, 222-224), and the Sages objected to the placement of a gold *eagle* at the entrance to Herod's Temple (*Antiquities* XVII, 149-163; *War* I 648-655). According to Philo, the residents of Jerusalem objected to the placement of plain gold shields on the walls of Herod's *palace* in Jerusalem (*Embassy to Gaius*, 299-305). The traditions regarding the destruction of Alexandrian Jewry are corruptions of a tradition cited as a *baraita* in the parallel in *Yerushalmi Sukkah* 5:1 (55b), according to which the Roman emperor Trajan was responsible.

### **Chapter V, *Sugya* 4: “A Great Improvement” (51b-52b)**

According to Mishnah *Sukkah* 5:2, a *tiqqun gadol* was made in the Temple courtyard on the second night of *Sukkot*. The phrase *tiqqun gadol* probably refers to the major *preparation* required for the *Bet Hasho'evah* festivities described further on in the Mishnah. Rabbi Eleazar at the opening of our *sugya*, however, understands *tiqqun* as “improvement” and explains that the reference is to the balcony for women built to ensure segregation of the sexes at the festivities. He cites Mishnah *Middot* 2:5, according to which such a balcony was in fact added at some point to the walls of the courtyard. A *baraita* is then cited according to which this was the last of a number of attempts to segregate the sexes without such a balcony. A balcony was finally added, despite the fact that it was not part of the original Temple plans, which had divine sanction, in keeping with Zechariah 12:12, according to which at a future funeral the sexes will be segregated. A dispute follows as to whether this is the funeral of the Messiah son of Joseph or of the evil inclination, both of which will be destroyed at the opening of the messianic era. There follow a number of traditions about the Messiah son of Joseph and the evil inclination, intertwined with one another.

Analysis deals in depth with the history of the tradition concerning the Messiah son of Joseph and the development of the notion of the evil inclination. Contrary to

the scholarly consensus, it is argued that the tradition regarding a Messiah from the house of Joseph who will be killed before the coming of the Messiah son of David is not an authentic Second Temple tradition, or even a tannaitic one; it was developed in this locus as an anti-Christian polemic based on Zechariah 12:7-13:3. According to Zechariah 13:1-3, the spirit of impurity and false prophecy will be wiped away at once when parents stab their own son, a false prophet; the funeral for this son described in Zechariah 12:7-14 is seen as the occasion of the death of the evil inclination and the beginning of the messianic era. On the basis of parallels, it is demonstrated that tannaitic sources regarding the Messiah son of Joseph cited in our *sugya* have in fact been reworked and reinterpreted to refer to this false prophet, or Messiah. At a later date this figure was reinterpreted in a positive light. However, it is the equation of the spirit of impurity and the false prophet/Messiah in Zechariah 13 that is responsible for the interchange of the evil inclination and the Messiah son of Joseph in our *sugya*.

The development of the notion of the evil inclination is also traced in the analysis of the *sugya*. It is argued that all Second Temple sources reflect variations on a deterministic notion of human behavior, according to which some or all of mankind is essentially evil and given over from birth to Satan or the evil inclination; this doctrine, reflected in the Christian notion of original sin, holds sway in some rabbinic material as well. However, the doctrine of a good inclination alongside the evil one was developed by the *tannaim* and *amoraim* to counterbalance this notion and allow for free will.

#### **Chapter V, *Sugya* 5: “Candelabrum” (52b)**

According to Mishnah *Sukkah* 5:2, four candelabra were used in the *Bet Hasho'evah* celebration. This *sugya* consists of a *baraita* according to which each was fifty cubits high.

Analysis deals with the origin of this tradition and another, more miraculous tradition found in Yerushalmi *Sukkah* 5:2 (55b), according to which each candelabrum was one hundred cubits high.

#### **Chapter V, *Sugya* 6: “Children of the Priesthood” (52b)**

According to Mishnah *Sukkah* 5:2, four children from priestly families carried one hundred and twenty *log* of oil up ladders in order to light the candelabra at the *Bet Hasho'evah* celebration. Our *sugya* cites a *baraita* according to which the four children carried thirty *log* of oil each, making them more praiseworthy than the son of Martha daughter of Boethus, who carried enormous quantities of sacrificial meat up the ramp of the altar, until his colleagues prevented him from doing so. The Talmud explains that this is because ladders are vertical and thus much steeper than the altar ramp.

The Bavli's citation of this *baraita* is a second example of its tendency to minimize the miraculous nature of the *Bet Hasho'evah* ceremony. Comparison of the report on the son of Martha daughter of Boethus in this *baraita* and the one in Mishnah *Yoma* 2:7 and Tosefta *Yoma* 1:13 indicates that a critique of Martha's son was added here, in order to make the children who carried the oil look more praiseworthy in comparison.

#### **Chapter V, *Sugya* 7: “Courtyard” (52b-53a)**

This *sugya* consists of a *baraita*, according to which the light of the candelabra at the *Bet Hasho'evah* celebration was so bright that women in Jerusalem were able to use it in order to pick out chaff from wheat kernels.

Comparison with a parallel *baraita* in Yerushalmi *Sukkah* 5:3 indicates that the Bavli preserved an earlier version. The version in the Yerushalmi was expanded in light of a halakhic ruling of the *amora* Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi.

#### **Chapter V, *Sugya* 8: “Pious” (53a)**

This *sugya* is essentially a collection of tannaitic reports concerning the ways in which various sages and pious men celebrated at the *Bet Hasho'evah* festivities, some of which have been developed with the addition of related amoraic and editorial material. These reports consist of several anonymous sayings recited by pious men during the festivities and those attributed to Hillel; the acrobatics of Rabban Simeon ben Gamliel; and the busy *Sukkot* schedule of Rabbi Joshua ben Hananiah, who is said not to have slept on *Sukkot* because of its nocturnal festivities and daytime ritual obligations. One of Hillel's sayings is expanded with the addition of a related saying by Rabbi Yohanan, and a story attributing that same saying to King Solomon. The description of Rabbi Simeon ben Gamliel's acrobatics is enhanced with a discussion of acrobatics performed by various *amoraim*, and a discussion qualifies Rabbi Joshua ben Hananiah's claim not to have slept during the festival.

The commentary traces the development of these traditions by comparing them with parallel material found in Tosefta *Sukkah* 4:2-3, Yerushalmi *Sukkah* 5:4 (55 b-c) and Avot deRabbi Natan A, chapter 12, and B, chapter 27. The anonymous traditions of the pious men concerning repentance are traced to back to the very origin of the *Bet Hasho'evah* celebration, which was designed to replace or overshadow the water libation, because the libation of water in the direction of the primal abyss found beneath the altar was considered to have pagan mythical overtones: those who participated in that ceremony repent that participation in favor of the spiritual experience of the *Bet Hasho'evah* celebration. The sayings ascribed to Hillel, whose complex textual history is traced in depth, are also said to reflect the importance of the Temple as a font of spiritual inspiration for pilgrims who come to encounter God – as opposed to its importance as the location of the mythical abyss that lies at the base of the earth, which is celebrated in the water libation – and the traditional participation of the individual in the rite of pilgrimage as part of the community.

#### **Chapter V, *Sugya* 9: “Ascents” (53a-b)**

This *sugya* consists of an amoraic discussion, in the course which two versions of a tale of King David's encounter with the primal abyss are told. This encounter is said to be the experience that led to the composition of the fifteen “Songs of Ascent” in the book of Psalms, in whose honor the fifteen steps in the Temple courtyard were built according to Mishnah *Sukkah* 5:4.

The commentary compares the traditions found here with the parallels found Yerushalmi *Sanhedrin* 10:2 (29a) and Bavli *Makkot* 11b. It is argued that the story is brought here in order to suggest that King David dug the passageway beneath the altar through which the libations flowed. Bavli *Sukkah* 49a and other sources allude to two notions regarding the nature and origin of that passageway, said to have been built by “the one who built the Temple” in Tosefta *Sukkah* 3:14: some saw it as part of creation, designed by God to connect the abyss with the altar via the foundation stone of the universe; others saw it as an architectural innovation built by King Herod. The tradition according to which David encountered the abyss upon digging the Temple foundations is used here to suggest a third option: that the phrase “he who built the

Temple” in Tosefta *Sukkah* 3:14 refers neither to God nor to Herod, but to David, who laid the foundation of the first Temple completed by his son Solomon. However, it is clear from the parallels that the reference is not to this passageway, but to the foundations of the Temple as a whole.

#### **Chapter V, *Sugya* 10: “Tenth” (53b)**

According to Mishnah *Sukkah* 5:4, two priests blew trumpets upon reaching the tenth of fifteen steps leading from the Court of the Israelites to the Court of Women, in the course of the procession they held as part of the *Bet Hasho'evah* festivities. Rabbi Yirmiyah in this *sugya* asks whether this is the tenth step from the top or the tenth step from the bottom. The question is left unresolved.

This question, left unresolved in the parallel in Yerushlami *Sukkah* 5:5 (55c) as well, is based upon the fact that steps are usually counted from the bottom up, but in this case the procession led down the steps, and thus the tenth step encountered by the priests themselves was the fifth from the bottom.

#### **Chapter V, *Sugya* 11: “Their Backs” (53b)**

According to Ezekiel 8:16, cited in Mishnah *Sukkah* 5:4, there were renegades in the Temple courtyard who would stand “with their backs to the Temple of the Lord, facing east”, rather than prostrating westward, in the direction of the holy of holies. This *sugya* consists of a *baraita* that explains that “with their backs to the Temple” is not a mere redundancy, but it comes to teach that they would expose their backsides and defecate in the direction of the Temple.

Analysis indicates that the *baraita* is authentic, despite the fact that the explanation found therein is cited in Bavli *Yoma* 77a and Bavli *Qiddushin* 72b, but not in the form of a *baraita*. This exegesis of the word “their backs” is compared with similar exegesis concerning the name of the pagan deity Baal Peor, found in Mishnah *Sanhedrin* 7:6 and other sources.

#### **Chapter V, *Sugya* 12: “Modim, Modim” (53b)**

According to Mishnah *Sukkah* 5:4, the *Bet Hasho'evah* ceremony ended with the priests' chant, “And as for us, toward the Lord are our eyes”; Rabbi Yehudah has them repeating the word “toward the Lord”. Rabbi Yehudah's view is challenged in the *sugya* on the basis of a prohibition against repeating words in prayer found in Mishnah *Berakhot* 5:3, which prohibits saying “*Modim, Modim*,” and Rabbi Zera's comment thereon, which prohibits saying “*Shema, Shema*”. Rabbi Yehudah's chant is thus explained as “And we thank the Lord, and our eyes long for the Lord”.

The commentary deals with the affinity between this *sugya* and Chapter IV, *sugya* 11, above, and the reason for the particular concern with repetition found here.

#### **Chapter V, *Sugya* 13: “Trumpet Blasts” (53b-54a)**

According to Mishnah *Sukkah* 5:5, the number of trumpet blasts sounded in the Temple ranged from twenty-one on a regular weekday to forty-eight on the Friday of *Sukkot*. This *sugya* opens with a *baraita* in which Rabbi Yehudah suggests an alternate reckoning of seven to sixteen blasts, which the Talmud explains is actually the same: Rabbi Yehudah counts every three blasts (*teqi'ah, teru'ah, teqi'ah*) as a unit. Each system of reckoning is provided scriptural support on the basis of verses in Numbers chapter

10, and an anonymous *baraita* is said, after deliberation, to accord with Rabbi Yehudah's system.

Analysis indicates that the Talmud's exegeses in support of the two systems of reckoning are based upon a tannaitic *midrash* found in Sifre Numbers 73 and Bavli Rosh Hashanah 34a. There is some indication in Sifre Numbers that Rabbi Yehudah's original position was different than the one ascribed to him by the Talmud; he may have believed that one trumpet sounded a single *teqi'ah* while the other sounded a single *teru'ah* simultaneously, as opposed to the view of the Sages that three blasts, *teqi'ah*, *teru'ah*, and *teqi'ah*, were sounded consecutively by the two trumpets in unison.

#### **Chapter V, *Sugya* 14: "At the Altar" (54a)**

According to Mishnah *Sukkah* 5:5, four sets of special trumpet blasts were sounded on the mornings of *Sukkot*: "three for the upper gate, three for the lower gate, three for the drawing of the water and three at the altar". However, in three other *mishnayot* in the tractate we learn of special sets of three trumpet blasts in the Temple, and it is difficult to reconcile these traditions with the list in Mishnah *Sukkah* 5:5. According to Mishnah *Sukkah* 4:5 blasts were sounded when the willows were placed alongside the altar; according to Mishnah *Sukkah* 4:9 blasts were sounded when the water from Siloam was brought through the Water Gate into the Temple; and according to Mishnah *Sukkah* 5:4 a number of sets of three blasts were sounded in the middle of the night during the water-drawing procession, at the upper gate at cockcrow, on the tenth step, and at the bottom of the steps, followed by continual blasts until the lower gate was reached. Our *sugya* is concerned with this last *mishnah* only: it identifies the blasts at the upper and lower gates in *mishnah* 5 with the blasts at the upper gate at the top of the steps at cockcrow and at the bottom of the steps in *mishnah* 4; the blasts at the altar of *mishnah* 5 are said to be Rabbi Eliezer ben Yaakov's alternative to the blasts at the tenth step of *mishnah* 4 and missing in *mishnah* 5, and a *baraita* is cited to this effect. Rabbi Eliezer ben Yaakov is said to reject the blasts of the tenth step since there is no gate involved; the Sages of *mishnah* 4 are said to reject the blasts at the altar, since blasts were already sounded in honor of the water libation when the water was drawn.

It is suggested in the commentary that there is no connection between the blasts in *mishnah* 5 and those of the *mishnayot* detailing the willow ceremony and the *Bet Hasho'evah* celebration. The blasts at the upper and lower gates of *mishnah* 5 are not the nighttime blasts of *mishnah* 4, as suggested in the *sugya*, but blasts accompanying the water carried from Siloam to the Temple in the morning. The blasts of *mishnah* 4 were far more than three sets of three; the trumpets were blown in continuous sets of three throughout the procession on the floor of the Women's Court.

#### **Chapter V, *Sugya* 15: "According to the *Musaf* Offerings" (54a-55a)**

According to Mishnah *Sukkah* 5:5, nine trumpet blasts accompanied the *musaf* offerings. This *sugya* opens with a *baraita* brought to Babylonia by Rabbi Aha ben Hanina, according to which the number of trumpet blasts sounded depends upon the number of *musaf* offerings. The Talmud challenges this notion on the basis of a number of sources, including Mishnah *Sukkah* 5:5, which does not seem to take into account separate sets of blasts for each *musaf* offering when more than one is offered. While an answer is provided for the challenge from the *mishnah*, *baraitot* according to which one psalm was sung per day, even in the case of multiple *musaf* offerings, are adduced to

prove that nine blasts accompanied the *musaf* offerings, no matter how many there were. Rabbi Aha's tradition is then reinterpreted as referring not to the number of blasts but their length, or the number of trumpets that participated. The *sugya* ends with a discussion of the offerings mentioned in the *musaf* service recited on *Sukkot* in Babylonia, where there is an extra day.

Among the conclusions yielded by the analysis are the following: (1) On the basis of the parallel *sugya* in Yerushalmi *Sukkah* 5:6 (53c-d), it is argued that Rabbi Aha ben Hanina originally claimed that the nine blasts for the *musaf* offerings were sounded *lifne hamusafin*, "before the offerings, not *lefi hamusafin*, "according to the offerings". Neither this position nor the implied alternative, according to which the blasts were sounded *during* the offerings, necessarily implies that the numbers of blasts increased with the increase in the number of offerings, as suggested in our *sugya*. (2) The editor responsible for transmitting this tradition in Babylonia believed that the number of blasts increased with the number of offerings because of his interpretation of Mishnah *Tamid* 7:3, according to which the nine blasts were sounded during the psalm sung at the libation; hence they must have been repeated with each libation at each offering. However, it is argued here that the trumpet blasts of Mishnah *Tamid* 7:3 were special blasts sounded only when the high priest himself chose to officiate at an offering. (3) Contrary to scholarly consensus, according to which the phrase "And no more than forty-eight" appearing in the middle of this *sugya* (line 15) is a new *pisqa* from the *mishnah*, introducing a *sugya* within a *sugya*, it is argued that the passage introduced by line 15 is in fact an integral part of the *sugya*, a further challenge to Rabbi Aha ben Hanina's position. The scholarly consensus is based on the notion that all agree that the slaughter of the paschal lamb was accompanied by twenty-one or more blasts; however, it is shown that according to Mishnah *Pesahim* 5:5 there were three (or possibly six or nine) blasts only. The large number of blasts is in keeping with Rabbi Aha ben Hanina's position as recorded in the *sugya*, according to which each offering required its own blasts; this would imply triple the number of blasts at the paschal offerings, which were slaughtered in three rounds. (4) The *baraita* listing the psalms recited on the various days of *Sukkot* (line 33) was originally an alternative list of psalms for weekdays.

#### **Chapter V, *Sugya* 16: "Bulls" (55b)**

A lottery was held in order to determine which priests would offer the single bull of the *musaf* offering of *Shemini Atseret*, according to Mishnah *Sukkah* 5:6. The *sugya* cites a dispute between the Sages, according to whom one of the two priestly watches which offered only two bulls (rather than three) on *Sukkot* would offer the *Shemini Atseret* offering, and Rabbi Judah the Patriarch, who believed a new lottery was held. Attempts to determine that the *mishnah* and a *baraita* cited necessarily reflect Rabbi Judah the Patriarch's position are refuted. Finally, amoraic statements are cited to the effect that the seventy bulls offered on *Sukkot* represent the seventy nations, while the single bull offered on *Shemini Atseret* represents Israel, and to the effect that the sins of the gentiles in Temple times were atoned through the offerings on the altar.

Comparison with the parallel in Yerushalmi *Sukkah* 5:7 (55d) indicates that the position identified with the Sages in the Bavli is actually that of Rabbi Nathan, who did not believe that any lottery was held on *Shemini Atseret*. The editor of our *sugya* was unfamiliar with the original material found in the Yerushalmi.

## Chapter V, *Sugya* 17: “The Specified Sacrifices of the Festivals” (55b)

According to Mishnah *Sukkah* 5:7, all the priestly watches shared equally in the *emurim* of the three pilgrimage festivals. Since the word *emurim* often refers to the parts of the sacrifices burned on the altar, the Talmud has trouble understanding how they can be distributed among the priests; *emurim* is therefore explained by Rav Hisda in the sense of “the sacrifices specified (*amur*) for the festivals”. The *sugya* concludes with a halakhic *midrash* on Deuteronomy 18:6-7, proving that all priests shared equally in the festival sacrifices.

The commentary surveys various suggestions that have been made as to the etymology of the word *emurim*; it is argued that Rav Hisda’s etymology is probably accurate, and the word should probably be vocalized *amurim*. However, the word *emurim* in our *mishnah* can easily be interpreted in the usual sense of the parts of the sacrifice burned on the altar: the equal participation of the priests is not necessarily a reference to the distribution of the meat, but rather to the role the priests played in offering the sacrifices.

## Chapter V, *Sugya* 18: “Showbread” (55b-56a)

According to Mishnah *Sukkah* 5:7, all the priestly watches shared equally in the *emurim* of the three pilgrimage festivals (see previous *sugya*) and in the showbread on those festivals, but not in the other sacrifices brought during the festival whose offering is a matter of course, such as the daily *tamid* sacrifice and public votive offerings. This *sugya* cites a *baraita* in which we find a *midrash* on Deuteronomy 18:8 supporting this distinction.

Analysis consists of comparison of the version of the *midrash* found here with parallels in Sifre Deuteronomy 168 and Yerushalmi *Sukkah* 5:8 (55d). It is argued that the version in Sifre Deuteronomy is the original. The word *emurim* in that passage means the parts of offerings burned on the altar, as per our explanation in the analysis of the previous *sugya*. The editor responsible for transmitting the *midrash* in Babylonia, who interpreted the word *emurim* in the sense of meat distributed among the priests in the previous *sugya*, was forced to restructure the *midrash* in a manner that raises a number of questions.

## Chapter V, *Sugya* 19: “*Sukkah*, Then *Zeman*” (56a)

This *sugya* opens with an amoraic dispute as to the order in which the blessing over the *sukkah* and the *Shehehiyanu* blessing are recited on the first night of Sukkot: Rav claims the *sukkah* blessing should have precedence, while Rabbah bar bar Hannah claims the *Shehehiyanu* blessing should have precedence. According to the editor of the *sugya*, their reasoning is based on the fact that the *sukkah* blessing is more uniquely related to the day, but the *Shehehiyanu* blessing is more common. After unsuccessful attempts to link the dispute with that of the houses of Hillel and Shammai concerning the order of the blessings in the *qiddush*, and an attempt to adduce proof for the view that *Shehehiyanu* is recited first from the fact that in Mishnah *Sukkah* 5:7 it is said that on *Shavuot* the common showbread was distributed before the special *bikkurim* bread (the formal reason the *sugya* is placed here), various halakhic rulings are cited, the final one being in accordance with Rav’s view, that the special *sukkah* blessing has precedence.

Analysis indicates that the editor of the *sugya* based the reasoning cited for the two views loosely on Bavli *Menahot* 49a-b, even though the usage there would lead to a different conclusion than the one he brought here. Other more plausible reasons can



be cited for the two views based upon evidence from Bavli *Sukkah* 46a and Bavli *Eruvin* 40b: Rav may have believed the *Shehehiyanu* blessing refers, *inter alia*, to the newly built *sukkah*; hence it should be recited after the blessing on the *sukkah*, while Rabbah bar bar Hannah believed the *Shehehiyanu* blessing ought to have been recited earlier, upon construction of the *sukkah*, and therefore should be recited as early as possible.

#### **Chapter V, *Sugya* 20: "To Add What?" (56a)**

According to Mishnah *Sukkah* 5:7, the priestly watch assigned the week of the festival was responsible not only for the daily *tamid* offering and votive offerings, but also for "all other public offerings – and it sacrificed everything". These two extra phrases are said to add special sin offerings brought by the community on rare occasions and special votive offerings offered by the community in case the altar was idle during the festival.

Comparison with Tosefta *Sukkah* 4:19 indicates that the superfluous phrases in the *mishnah* are actually summaries of various items mentioned in the Tosefta passage. The author of our *sugya* was unaware of the Tosefta passage.

#### **Chapter V, *Sugya* 21: "Before or After" (56a)**

According to Mishnah *Sukkah* 5:7, if the Sabbath fell immediately before or after the festival all the priestly watches shared equally in the showbread, as they did on the Sabbath that fell on the festival. The Talmud at first misunderstands this to mean that the Sabbath falls on the first or last of the intermediary days, creating a redundancy with the first part of the *mishnah*, according to which the priests shared equally in the showbread of the Sabbath that falls on the festival itself. The correct explanation is then offered, and the Talmud explains that the priests are allowed to share in the bread of the Sabbaths immediately preceding or following the festival by rabbinic decree: since all the priests are present in Jerusalem for the festival in any case, they ought to be allowed to eat together.

In the commentary it is suggested that this *sugya* is based upon the fact that in *Sugya* 19 above scriptural support was cited for the fact that all the priests should share the showbread on the Sabbath that falls in the middle of the festival, as payment for services rendered on the festival. This reasoning would not apply to the Sabbaths before and after the festival, therefore the author of the *sugya* seeks to reinterpret the *mishnah*. When this proves impossible, he is forced to explain this as a rabbinic enactment.

#### **Chapter V, *Sugya* 22: "These Two" (56a-b)**

According to Mishnah *Sukkah* 5:8, on a regular Sabbath the incoming and outgoing priestly watches shared the twelve loaves of showbread equally: six and six. Rabbi Yehudah gives seven loaves to the incoming watch and five to the outgoing. The amora Rabbi Yitshaq explains in our *sugya* that the two extra loaves are the reward given the incoming watch for closing the doors on Saturday night, despite the fact that these doors were opened by the outgoing watch on Saturday morning. Even though over time this would even out, since every incoming watch is outgoing the following week, Abaye explains that a squash is better than a pumpkin, a metaphor that is variously explained by the commentators.

In the commentary it is argued that Abaye originally came to explain the position of the Sages, rather than that of Rabbi Yehudah. Although the incoming watch ought

to be rewarded for closing the doors on Saturday night, people would rather receive a smaller quantity of bread evenly distributed, than receive more bread than they can eat at once.

### **Chapter V, *Sugya* 23: “And They Share in the *Musafin*” (56b)**

At the beginning of this *sugya*, Rav Yehudah comments enigmatically on the discussion of the distribution of showbread in Mishnah *Sukkah* 5:8: “And they share in the *musafin*”. This statement, usually understood to mean that the incoming and outgoing watches share not only in the showbread but also in the *musaf* offering, is challenged on the basis of two *baraitot*, in both of which the outgoing watch is assigned the *musaf* offering – the second is considered a conclusive refutation of Rav Yehudah.

The usual interpretation is problematic, since the *musaf* offering was not distributed among the priests at all; it was a whole offering. Rashi is forced to explain that the reference is to the hides of the offerings which were not burned on the altar, but this is problematic, and other commentators attempt to deal with the issue in various ways. A new interpretation is suggested in the commentary: Rav Yehudah meant that the *showbread* is distributed *at the time* of the *musaf* offering. This is refuted on the basis of the two *baraitot*, which do not list the distribution of the showbread in the schedule of the offerings, indicating that it was distributed at the end of the day, after the sacrificial order was completed, and not during the *musaf* offering.

### **Chapter V, *Sugya* 24: “In the North” (56b)**

According to Mishnah *Sukkah* 5:8, the incoming watch distributed the showbread amongst themselves in the north of the court, while the outgoing watch did so in the south. Our *sugya* consists of a short *baraita* explaining the reason for this: in order that all may see that the former are incoming and the latter are outgoing.

The *baraita* can be understood in one of two ways: either it simply explains why the watches distributed the bread in separate areas of the Temple court, or else there is an intrinsic connection between incoming and the north and outgoing and the south which is not explained here. Other explanations are found in Tosefta *Sukkah* 4:25 and Yerushalmi *Sukkah* 5:8 (55d) – these may be based upon the explanation found in our *baraita*; however, they seek to explain the intrinsic connection between incoming and the north: According to the Tosefta, the north is closer to where the service took place; according to Rabbi Hananiah ben Hillel in the Yerushalmi, the north is more honorable; and according to Rabbi Yose ben Bon in the Yerushalmi the normal way to enter was via the north and the normal way to exit was via the south.

### **Chapter V, *Sugya* 25: “Bilgah” (56b)**

According to Mishnah *Sukkah* 5:8, the watch called Bilgah was punished in that it was always accorded the less honorable southern side of the court for the distribution of the showbread, even when incoming. A *baraita* cited in the beginning of our *sugya* gives two reasons for this: either the watch was once late for work, or it was a punishment because a daughter of that family intermarried and kicked the altar and blasphemed when the Temple was defiled by the Greeks. Abaye explains the collective punishment for the latter crime with two adages: according to the first, parents are responsible for the talk of their children; according to the second, neighbors can be a good or a bad influence.

Analysis indicates that Abaye's comments were originally a commentary on the *baraita*, and the context of the second statement was slightly different than the one furnished by the editor of the *sugya*. Following groundwork laid by other scholars, it is suggested that both reasons cited for the discrimination against Bilgah reflect the fact that the Hellenistic priests against whom the Hasmoneans rebelled, Simeon and Meneleus, were from the family of Balgeah (see the Latin and Armenian versions of II Maccabees 4:23), i.e. Bilgah. The tale of the intermarried daughter is a reflection of this reality, and the tardiness refers not to a specific occasion but to the reluctance of the Hellenistic priests to rejoin the Temple service after the rededication of the Temple under Judas Maccabeus.