

V

THE STRUCTURE AND SYSTEM OF BAVLI TAANIT

Whether or not the Talmud of Babylonia is carefully organized in large-scale, cogent structures and is guided by a program that we may call systematic forms the principal question addressed by an academic commentary. The question can be answered only by an inductive inquiry: are we able to explain in accord with a simple plan the selection and arrangement of the completed units of discourse (“sentences”) and compositions and even complex composites of said units (“paragraphs”, “chapters” in ordinary language). The preceding chapters have pointed toward the presentation set forth here. They make possible an outline of the whole, and the traits of the outline yielded by the Talmud definitively answer the questions before us. The outline allows us to infer the plan of the Talmud for the Mishnah-tractate before us.

At the outset, let me say, I have studied tractate Taanit, beginning to end, at a number of points in my life, in the Mishnah, Tosefta, and Talmud of the Land of Israel, as well as the Talmud of Babylonia, and have studied the Bavli-tractate Taanit perhaps five or six times whole. Among the Bavli’s tractates, I have always found it truly exceptional; but that impression now requires explanation and articulation in data. So here I answer the question, what makes Bavli Taanit a truly remarkable re-presentation of the Mishnah-tractate and its topic, even when measured against the numerous other tractates of the Bavli that lay claim to our admiration. I take up this question at the end of my account of the structure and system of the document.

These key-words, “structure” and “system,” require definition. By “structure” I mean, a clearly-articulated pattern that governs the location of fully-spelled out statements. “Structure” pertains to how is a document organized. By “system,” I mean, what do the compilers of the document propose to accomplish in producing this complete, organized piece of writing? “System” pertains to a well-crafted and coherent set of ideas that explain the social order of the community addressed by the writers of a document, a social philosophy, a theory of the way of life, world view, and character of the social entity formed by a given social group. The analytical work now complete and requiring systematization, the answers to both questions derive from a simple outline of the tractate as a whole, underscoring the types of compositions and composites of which it is comprised. Such an outline tells us what is principal and what subordinate, and — more important — how each unit, each composition formed into composites, composites formed into a complete statement, holds together and also fits with other units, fore and aft. The purpose of the outline then is to identify the character of each component of the whole, and to specify its purpose or statement. The former information permits us to

describe the document's structure, the latter, its system. I see a collective, anonymous, and political document, such as the one before us, as a statement to, and about, the way in which people should organize their lives and govern their actions.

At issue then in any document such as the remarkable one before us is simple: does this piece of writing present information or a program, facts to whom it may concern, or a philosophically and aesthetically cogent statement about how things should be? But can a piece of writing permit us to move from structure to system? The connection between structure and system is plain to see. From the way in which people consistently frame their thoughts, we move to the world that, in saying things one way rather than in some other, they wish to imagine the world in which they wish to live, to which they address these thoughts. For if the document exhibits structure and sets forth a system, then it is accessible to questions of rationality. We may ask about the statement that its framers or compilers wished to make by putting the document together as they did. But if we discern no structure and perceive no systematic inquiry or governing points of analysis, then all we find here is inert and miscellaneous information, facts but no propositions, arguments, viewpoints.

Now the questions just now set forth jar. Conventional learning does not prepare us for them, for the Talmud commonly finds itself represented as lacking organization and exhibiting a certain episodic and notional character. That view moreover characterizes the reading and representation of the document by learned and experienced scholars, who have devoted their entire lives to Talmud study and exegesis. It must follow that upon the advocate of the contrary view — the one implicit in the representation of the document for academic analysis — rests the burden of proof. But in the academic commentary now in hand for the tractate, that proof has already been laid out and now requires explication. I maintain that through the normal procedures of reasoned analysis we may discern in the tractate a well-crafted structure. I hold that the structure made manifest, we may further identify the purpose and perspective, the governing system of thought and argument, of those who collected and arranged the tractate's composites and put them together in the way in which we now have them.

While the idea of simply outlining a Talmud-tractate beginning to end may seem obvious, I have never made such an outline before, nor has anyone else.* Yet, as we shall now see, the character of the outline dictates all further analytical initiatives. Specifically, when we follow the layout of the whole, we readily see the principles of organization that govern. These same guidelines on organizing discourse point also to the character of what is organized: complete units of thought, with a beginning, middle, and end, often made up of smaller, equally complete units of thought. The former we know as composites, the latter as compositions.

*I have provided complete outlines for the Mishnah and for the Tosefta in relationship to the Mishnah, and, not always in outline form, for the Midrash-compilations of late antiquity as well.

Identifying and classifying the components of the tractate — the composites, the compositions of which they are made up — we see clearly how the document coheres: the plan and program worked out from beginning to end. When we define that plan and program, we identify the facts of a pattern that permit us to say in a specific and concrete way precisely what the compilers of the tractate intended to accomplish. The structure realizes the system, the program of analysis and thought that takes the form of the

presentation we have before us. From what people do, meaning, the way in which they formulate their ideas and organized them into cogent statements, we discern what they proposed to do, meaning, the intellectual goals that they set for themselves.

These goals — the received document they wished to examine, the questions that they brought to that document — realized in the layout and construction of their writing, dictate the points of uniformity and persistence that throughout come to the surface. How people lay out their ideas guides us into what they wished to find out and set forth in their writing, and that constitutes the system that defined the work they set out to accomplish. We move from how people speak to the system that the mode of discourse means to express, in the theory that modes of speech or writing convey modes of thought and inquiry.

We move from the act of thought and its written result backward to the theory of thinking, which is, by definition, an act of social consequence. We therefore turn to the matter of intention that provokes reflection and produces a system of inquiry. That statement does not mean to imply I begin with the premise of order, which sustains the thesis of a prior system that defines the order. To the contrary, the possibility of forming a coherent outline out of the data we have examined defines the first test of whether or not the document exhibits a structure and realizes a system. So everything depends upon the possibility of outlining the writing, from which all else flows. If we can see the order and demonstrate that the allegation of order rests on ample evidence, then we may proceed to describe the structure that gives expression to the order, and the system that the structure sustains.

The present work undertakes the exegesis of exegesis, for the Talmud of Babylonia, like its counterpart in the Land of Israel, is laid out as a commentary to the Mishnah. That obvious fact defined the character of my academic commentary, since we have already faced the reality that our Bavli-tractate is something other than a commentary, though it surely encompasses one. The problems that captured my attention derived from the deeper question of how people make connections and draw conclusions. To ask about how people make connections means that we identify a problem — otherwise we should not have to ask — and what precipitated the problem here has been how a composition or a composite fits into its context, when the context is defined by the tasks of Mishnah-commentary, and the composition or composite clearly does not comment on the Mishnah-passage that is subjected to comment.

The experience of analyzing the document with the question of cogency and coherence in mind therefore yields a simple recognition. Viewed whole, the tractate contains no gibberish but only completed units of thought, sentences formed into intelligible thought and self-contained in that we require no further information to understand those sentences, beginning to end. The tractate organizes these statements as commentary to the Mishnah. But large tracts of the writing do not comment on the Mishnah in the way in which other, still larger tracts do. Then how the former fit together with the latter frames the single most urgent question of structure and system that I can identify.

Since we have already examined enormous composites that find their cogency in an other than exegetical program, alongside composites that hold together by appeal to a common, prior, coherent statement — the Mishnah-sentences at hand — what justifies my insistence that an outline of the document, resting on the premise that we deal with a Mishnah-

commentary, govern all further description? To begin with, the very possibility of outlining Babylonian Talmud tractate Taanit derives from the simple fact that the framers have given to their document the form of a commentary to the Mishnah. It is in the structure of the Mishnah-tractate that they locate everything together that they wished to compile. We know that is the fact because the Mishnah-tractate defines the order of topics and the sequence of problems.

Relationships to the Mishnah are readily discerned; a paragraph stands at the head of a unit of thought; even without the full citation of the paragraph, we should find our way back to the Mishnah because at the head of numerous compositions, laid out in sequence one to the next, clauses of the Mishnah-paragraph are cited in so many words or alluded to in an unmistakable way. So without printing the entire Mishnah-paragraph at the head, we should know that the received code formed the fundamental structure because so many compositions cite and gloss sentences of the Mishnah-paragraph and are set forth in sequence dictated by the order of sentences of said Mishnah-paragraph. Internal evidence alone suffices, then, to demonstrate that the structure of the tractate rests upon the Mishnah-tractate cited and discussed here. Not only so, but the sentences of the Mishnah-paragraphs of our tractate are discussed in no other place in the entire Talmud of Babylonia in the sequence and systematic exegetical framework in which they are set forth here; elsewhere we may find bits or pieces, but only here, the entirety of the tractate.

That statement requires one qualification, and that further leads us to the analytical task of our outline. While the entire Mishnah-tractate of Taanit is cited in the Talmud, the framers of the Talmud by no means find themselves required to say something about every word, every sentence, every paragraph. On the contrary, they discuss only what they choose to discuss, and glide without comment by large stretches of the tractate. A process of selectivity, which requires description and analysis, has told the compilers of the Talmud's composites and the authors of its compositions* what demands attention, and what does not. Our outline has therefore to signal not only what passage of the Mishnah-tractate is discussed, but also what is not discussed, and we require a general theory to explain the principles of selection ("making connections, drawing conclusions" meaning, to begin with, making selections). For that purpose, in the outline, I reproduce the entirety of a Mishnah-paragraph that stands at the head of a Talmudic composite, and I underscore those sentences that are addressed, so highlighting also those that are not.**

*This statement requires refinement. I do not know that all available compositions have been reproduced, and that the work of authors of compositions of Mishnah-exegesis intended for a talmud is fully exposed in the document as we have it. That is not only something we cannot demonstrate — we do not have compositions that were not used, only the ones that were — but something that we must regard as unlikely on the face of matters. All we may say is positive: the character of the compositions that address Mishnah-exegesis tells us about the concerns of the writers of those compositions, but we cannot claim to outline all of their concerns, on the one side, or to explain why they chose not to work on other Mishnah-sentences besides the ones treated here. But as to the program of the compositors, that is another matter: from the choices that they made (out of a corpus we cannot begin to imagine or invent for ourselves) we may describe with great accuracy the kinds of materials they wished to include and the shape and structure they set forth out of those materials. We know what they did, and that permits us to investigate why they did what they did. What we cannot know is what they did not do, or why they chose not to do what they did not do. People familiar with the character of speculation and criticism in Talmudic studies will understand why I have to spell out

these rather commonplace observations. I lay out an argument based on evidence, not on the silences of evidence, or on the absence of evidence — that alone.

******A comparison of how the continuator-documents of the Mishnah read the Mishnah is therefore called for, lining up the Tosefta's, the Yerushalmi's, and the Bavli's reading of Taanit, and the Tosefta's, Sifré Numbers's, the Yerushalmi's, and the Bavli's reading of Nazir. Such a systematic comparison will allow us to form a theory of comparative hermeneutics for the Rabbinic classics. That is planned as *The Comparative Hermeneutics of Rabbinic Literature. The Case of Mishnah-tractates Taanit and Nazir*. Atlanta, 2000: Scholars Press for *South Florida Studies in the History of Judaism*.

It follows that the same evidence that justifies identifying the Mishnah-tractate as the structure (therefore also the foundation of the system) of the Talmud-tractate before us also presents puzzles for considerable reflection. The exegesis of Mishnah-exegesis is only one of these. Another concerns the purpose of introducing into the document enormous compositions and composites that clearly hold together around a shared topic or proposition, e.g., my appendix on one theme or another, my elaborate footnote providing information that is not required but merely useful, and the like. My earlier characterization of composites as appendices and footnotes signalled the fact that the framers of the document chose a not-entirely satisfactory way of setting out the materials they wished to include here, for large components of the tractate do not contribute to Mishnah-exegesis in any way at all. If these intrusions of other-than-exegetical compositions were proportionately modest, or of topical composites negligible in size, we might dismiss them as appendages, not structural components that bear much of the weight of the edifice as a whole. Indeed, the language that I chose for identifying and defining these composites — footnotes, appendices, and the like — bore the implication that what is not Mishnah-commentary also is extrinsic to the Talmud's structure and system.

But that language served only for the occasion. In fact, the outline before us will show that the compositions are large and ambitious, the composites formidable and defining. Any description of the tractate's structure that dismisses as mere accretions or intrusions so large a proportion of the whole misleads. Any notion that "footnotes" and "appendices" impede exposition and disrupt thought, contribute extraneous information or form tacked-on appendages — any such notion begs the question: then why fill up so much space with such purposeless information? The right way is to ask whether the document's topical composites play a role in the re-presentation of the Mishnah-tractate by the compilers of the Talmud. We have therefore to test two hypotheses:

1 the topical composites ("appendices," "footnotes") do belong and (ordinarily) serve the compilers' purpose, or

2 the topical composites do not participate in the re-presentation of the Mishnah-tractate by the Talmud and do not belong because they commonly add nothing and change nothing.

The two hypotheses may be tested against the evidence framed in response to a single question: is this topical composite necessary? The answer to that question lies in our asking, what happens to the reading of the Mishnah-tractate in light of the topical composites that would not happen were we to read the same tractate without them? The outline that follows systematically raises that question, with results specified in due course. It suffices here to state the simple result of our reading of the tractate, start to finish: the question of structure, therefore also that of system, rests upon the position we identify for

that massive component of the tractate that comprises not Mishnah-commentary but free-standing compositions and composites of compositions formed for a purpose other than Mishnah-commentary.

The principal rubrics are given in small caps. The outline takes as its principal rubrics two large-scale organizing principles.

The first is the divisions of the Mishnah-tractate to which the Talmud-tractate serves as a commentary. That simple fact validates the claim that the tractate exhibits a fully-articulated structure. But the outline must also underscore that the Mishnah-tractate provides both more and less than the paramount outline of the Talmud-tractate. It is more because sentences in the Mishnah-tractate are not analyzed at all. Mishnah-sentences that are subject to comment are given in bold face lower-case caps; those that are untreated are given in bold face lower case caps and underlining.

Second, it is less because the structure of the tractate accommodates large composites that address topics not defined by the Mishnah-tractate. That brings us to the second of the two large-scale modes of holding together both sustained analytical exercises and also large sets of compositions formed into cogent composites. These are treated also as major units and are indicated by Roman numerals, alongside the Mishnah-paragraphs themselves; they are also signified in small caps. But the principal rubrics that do not focus on Mishnah-commentary but on free-standing topics or propositions or problems are not given in boldface type. Consequently, for the purposes of a coherent outline we have to identify as autonomous entries in our outline those important composites that treat themes or topics not contributed by the Mishnah-tractate.

I. Mishnah-Tractate Taanit 1:1

A. FROM WHAT POINT IN THE SEASONS DO THEY INCLUDE THE MENTION OF “THE POWERS OF RAIN” [IN THE PRAYER]?

1. [I.1] On what basis does the Tannaite authority of the passage rest his case [in taking for granted] by using the language, “From what point do they include the mention...” [that it is obligatory to make mention of “the powers of rain” in the Prayer]?

2. [I.2] And why not formulate the Tannaite rule, They include the mention of rain. Why state matters [more simply] in the language of the power of rain?

3. [I.3] And how do we know that [the prayer for rain] is included in the Prayer in particular?

a. [I.4] Said R. Yohanan, “Three keys are in the hand of the Holy One, blessed be he, that are not handed over to the hand of an agent, and these are they: the key to rain, the key to childbirth, and the key to the resurrection of the dead.

B. R. ELIEZER SAYS, “ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE FESTIVAL [OF TABERNACLES].” R. JOSHUA SAYS, “ON THE LAST DAY OF THE FESTIVAL.” SAID TO HIM R. JOSHUA, “SINCE RAIN IS ONLY A SIGN OF A CURSE WHEN IT COMES ON THE FESTIVAL ITSELF, WHY SHOULD ONE MENTION IT?” SAID TO HIM R. ELIEZER, “I TOO HAVE SAID SO NOT FOR THE PURPOSE OF ASKING [FOR RAIN], BUT ONLY OF MENTIONING

‘RESTORING THE WIND AND BRINGING DOWN THE RAIN,’ [THAT IS,] IN ITS DUE SEASON.” HE SAID TO HIM, “IF SO, ONE SHOULD ALWAYS MAKE MENTION OF IT.”

1. [II.1] The question was raised: Whence [by what analogy] does R. Eliezer derive [the rule that the petition for rain is included in the Prayer from the first day of Tabernacles onward]? Does he derive that rule by analogy to the law governing the shaking of the lulab [the palm-branch, encompassing the four species, Lev. 23:40)] [which commences on the first day of the Festival] or does he derive that rule by analogy to the law governing the rite of presenting a water-offering on the Temple altar?

a. [II.2] It has been taught on Tannaite authority: R. Nathan says, “‘In the holy place you shall by pouring pour out a drink offering of strong drink to the Lord’ (Num. 28: 7) — Scripture speaks of two libations, one a libation of water, the other a libation of wine.”

2. [II.5] A Tannaite statement: In respect to the petition for dew and winds [“who restores the wind and brings down the dew,”] sages did not make it obligatory to make mention of the matter [even in the rainy season], but if one has come to do so, he may indeed do so.

3. [II.6] *A Tannaite statement:* With regard to clouds and winds, sages did not make it obligatory to make mention of the matter, but if one has come to do so, he may indeed do so.

II. Thematic Composite: Clouds and Rain

A. [II.7] *A Tannaite statement:* Clouds and winds are derivatives of rain [and as important as rain].

1. [II.8] *Said Raba, “Snow is as beneficial to the mountains as five times the same volume of rain to the earth, as it is said, ‘For he says to the snow, fall on the earth, likewise to the shower of rain and to the showers of his mighty rain’ (Job. 37: 6). And said Raba, “Snow is beneficial to the mountain, heavy rain to the orchards, light rain to the produce of the field drizzling rain even to the seeds under a hard clod.”*

a. [II.9] Said R. Samuel bar Nahmani said R. Jonathan, “Three men put forward their petition improperly, two were answered, nonetheless, in a proper way, and one they answered not in a proper way, and these are they: Eliezer, the servant of Abraham, Saul son of Qish, and Jephtha of Gilead.”

III. Mishnah-Tractate Taanit 1:1

A. THEY ASK FOR RAIN ONLY NEAR [THE TIME OF] RAIN.

1. [III.1] They ask for rain only near [the time of] rain: *[Sages] theorized that [in the wording of the Mishnah-paragraph, the word-choices] “ask” and “make mention” are really one and the same thing.*

IV. Mishnah-Tractate Taanit 1:2A-D

A. R. JUDAH SAYS, “HE WHO GOES BEFORE THE ARK [TO LEAD THE CONGREGATION IN RECITING THE PRAYER] ON THE LAST DAY OF THE FESTIVAL [OF TABERNACLES] — THE LATTER PERSON [AT THE ADDITIONAL SERVICE] MAKES MENTION [OF RAIN]” THE FORMER ONE [AT THE MORNING SERVICE] DOES NOT MAKE MENTION [OF RAIN]. ON THE FIRST DAY OF PASSOVER, THE FORMER PERSON MAKES MENTION OF RAIN, THE LATTER PERSON DOES NOT MAKE MENTION OF RAIN.”

1. [IV.1] *A contradiction was proposed as follows:* Up to what time do they ask for rain? R. Judah says, “Until Passover is passed.” R. Meir says, “To the end of Nisan” [M. 1:2E-F]. [Here, by contrast, it is only until the beginning of Passover.]
2. [IV.2] Said R. Assi said R. Yohanan, “The decided law accords with the position of R. Judah.”

V. Mishnah-Tractate Taanit 1:2E-H

A. UP TO WHAT TIME DO THEY ASK FOR RAIN? R. JUDAH SAYS, “UNTIL PASSOVER IS PASSED.” R. MEIR SAYS, “UNTIL THE END OF NISAN, SINCE IT SAYS, ‘AND HE CAUSES TO COME DOWN FOR YOU THE RAIN, THE FORMER RAIN AND THE LATTER RAIN IN THE FIRST [MONTH]’” (JOE. 2:23).

1. [I.1] [Since the prophet refers to “former rain,” ordinarily identified with the rainfall after the Festival of Sukkot, the aptness of the proof-text is addressed:] Said R. Nahman to R. Isaac, “Does the former rain fall in Nisan? Surely the former rain falls in Marheshvan, *for we have learned in a Tannaite statement*, The former rain in Marheshvan, and the latter rain in Nisan [T. [Taaniyot 1:1B](#)].”

VI. Appended Block of Nahman/Isaac compositions

- A. [I.2] *Said R. Nahman to R. Isaac, “What is the meaning of the verse of Scripture, ‘For the Lord has called for a famine, and it shall also come upon the land for seven years’ (2Ki. 8: 1)? During those seven years what did they eat?”*
- B. [I.3] *And said R. Nahman to R. Isaac, “What is the meaning of the verse of Scripture, ‘The Holy One is in your midst, and I will not come into the city’ (Hos. 11: 9). [Can it possibly mean,] because the Holy One is in your midst, I shall not come into the city?”*
- C. [I.4] *And said R. Nahman to R. Isaac, “What is the meaning of the verse of Scripture, ‘But they are completely brutish and foolish; the vanities by which they are instructed are nothing but a piece of wood’ (Jer. 10: 8)?”*
- D. [I.5] *And said R. Nahman to R. Isaac, “What is the meaning of the verse of Scripture, ‘For my people have committed two evils’ (Jer. 2:13)? Were they only two? Has he neglected the twenty-four [sins enumerated in Ezekiel 22]?”*

E. [I.6] *And said R. Nahman to R. Isaac, “What is the meaning of the verse of Scripture, ‘And it came to pass, when Samuel got old’ (1Sa. 8: 1). But did Samuel ever get that old? Lo, he reached only fifty-two, for said a master, ‘If someone died at the age of fifty-two, that is the death of Samuel the Ramatite.’”*

1. [I.7] *R. Nahman and R. Isaac were sitting together for a meal, and R. Nahman said to R. Isaac, “Let the master say something [of learning].”*

a. [I.8] Said R. Isaac, “Whoever repeats the name of the courtesan, Rahab, two times, on the spot ejaculates.”

VII. Composite on the Theme of the Former Rain and the Latter Rain

A. [I.9] *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:* The former rain is called *yoreh* because it teaches [*moreh*] people to plaster their roofs, bring in their produce, and do all their needs [before the rainy season hits full-force].

B. [I.10] *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:* The former rain in Marheshvan, and the latter rain in Nisan [T. **Taanivot 1:1B**].

C. [I.11] *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:* The former rain in Marheshvan, and the latter rain in Nisan [T. **Taanivot 1:1B**].

D. [I.12] *A further Tannaite statement:* “The former rain in Marheshvan, and the latter rain in Nisan,” the words of R. Meir. And sages say, “The former rain is in Kislev.”

1. [I.13] *In accord with what authority is the following statement that has been set forth as a Tannaite tradition:* Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel says, “Rains which fall on seven successive days without ceasing constitute the first, and second, and third rainfall” [T. **Ta. 1:4F**].

E. [I.14] Said R. Abbahu, “What is the meaning of the word *rebi’ah* [former rain]? It is that which fructifies the ground.”

F. [I.15] Said R. Abbahu, “From what point in the year do people say a blessing for rain? From the time at which the husband goes forth to greet the bride [which is to say, when the drops of rain fall so hard that they rebound from the earth (Simon, p. 371, n. 8)].”

VIII. Composite on the Theme of the Greatness of a Rainy Day, the Great Days to which a Rainy Day is Comparable. Torah-Sayings

A. [I.16] Said R. Abbahu, “Greater is the rainy day than the resurrection of the dead, for while the resurrection of the dead encompasses only the righteous, rain serves both the righteous and the wicked.”

B. [I.17] Said R. Judah, “A rainy day is as great as the day on which the Torah was given, as it is said, ‘My doctrine shall drop as the rain’ (Deu. 32: 2), and ‘doctrine’ refers only to the Torah, as it is said, ‘I give you a good doctrine, forsake not my Torah’ (Pro. 4: 2).”

C. [I.18] *Raba contrasted these verses, “It is written, ‘My doctrine shall drop as the rain’ (Deu. 32: 2), followed by, ‘My speech shall distil as dew’ (Deu. 32: 2) — if a disciple of the sages is mannerly, then he is like dew, and if not, then drop him like rain.”*

Subset on Torah-study, amplifying the theme of the proper disciple of sages

1. [I.19] *It has been taught in Tannaite authority:* R. Bena'ah would say, "Whoever engages in Torah-study for its own sake — his Torah-study is turned for him into a healing medicine, as it is said, 'It is a tree of life to those that hold onto it' (Pro. 3:18), and, further, 'It shall be as health to your belly' (Pro. 3: 8), and, 'For whoever finds me finds life' (Pro. 8:35). But whoever engages in Torah-study not for its own sake — his Torah-study is turned for him into a poisonous medicine, as it is written, 'My doctrine shall drop as the rain' (Deu. 32: 2), and the word for 'drop' uses letters that can yield, also, the word 'death,' in line with the usage, 'And they shall break the heifer's neck there in the valley' (Deu. 21: 4) [the word for 'break the neck' being formed of the same consonants as the word for drop]."

a. [I.20] *Said R. Jeremiah to R. Sira, "May the master come and teach a Tannaite statement." He said to him, "I'm not feeling so well today and I can't." "Then let the master teach a matter of aggadah?" He said to him, "This is what R. Yohanan said, 'What is meant by the verse, "For is the tree of the field man" (Deu. 20:19) — so is man a tree of the field?! But since it is written, "For you may eat of them but you shall not cut them down [for is the tree of the field man]" (Deu. 20:19), followed by, "That is what you shall destroy and cut down" (Pro. 20:20), [we must ask,] how are these verses to be interpreted? If a disciple of sages is mannerly, "of him you may eat and you shall not cut him down," but if not, "That is what you shall destroy and cut down."'"*

b. [I.21] *Said R. Hama bar Hanina, "What is the meaning of the verse, 'Iron sharpens iron' (Pro. 27:17)? It is to tell you, just as iron sharpens its fellow, so two disciples of sages sharpen one another in halakhic study."*

c. [I.22] *Said Rabbah bar bar Hanah, "Who are words of Torah likened to fire, as it is said, 'Is not my word like fire, says the Lord' (Jer. 23:29)? It is to tell you, just as fire does not ignite on its own, so words of Torah do not last on their own [but are best exchanged with other disciples of the Torah]."*

d. [I.23] *Said R. Nahman bar Isaac, "Why are words of Torah compared with a tree, as it is said, 'It is a tree of life to those who hold on to it' (Pro. 3:18)? It is to say to you, just as in the case of a tree, small pieces of wood kindle large ones, so in the case of disciples of sages, the lesser ones sharpen the greater ones."*

e. [I.24] *R. Hanina bar Papa contrasted these verses: "It is written, 'Unto him who is thirsty bring water' (Isa. 21:14), and also, 'Lo, everyone who thirsts, come for water' (Isa. 55: 1). If he is a mannerly disciple, 'To him who is thirsty, bring water,' but if not, then 'All who thirst, come for water.'"*

f. [I.25] A.R. Hanina bar Hama contrasted these verses, “*It is written*, ‘Let your springs be dispersed abroad’ (Pro. 5:16), and also, ‘Let them be only your own’ (Pro. 5:17). If he is a mannerly disciple, ‘Let your springs be dispersed abroad,’ but if not, ‘Let them be only your own.’”

2. [I.26] Said R. Hanina bar Idda, “Why are words of Torah compared to water, as it is written, ‘Lo, everyone who thirsts, come for water’ (Isa. 55: 1). It is to say to you, just as water leaves a higher spot and flows to a lower spot, so words of Torah endure only for him who is humble in his knowledge.”

D. [I.27] A.Said R. Hama bar Hanina, “The day on which rain falls is as great as the day on which heaven and earth were made, as it is said, ‘Drop down, heavens from above, and let the skies pour down righteousness, let the earth open that they may bring forth salvation and let her cause righteousness to spring up together, I the Lord have created it’ (Isa. 45: 8). What is said is not, ‘I created them,’ but ‘I created it’ [rain].”

E. [I.28] Said R. Oshaia, “Said R. Oshaia, “Great is the day on which rain falls, for on it even salvation springs up and grows, ‘Let the earth open, that they may bring forth salvation’ (Isa. 45: 8).

IX. Composite on the Theme of Why Rain is Bestowed or Withheld

A. [I.29] A.Said R. Tanhum bar Hanilai, “Rain falls only if the sins of Israel are forgiven, as it is said, ‘Lord, you have been favorable to your land, you have turned the captivity of Jacob, you have forgiven the iniquity of your people, you have pardoned all their sins’ (Psa. 85: 2-3).”

B. [I.30] A.Said R. Tanhum bar Hiyya of Kefar Akko, “Rain is withheld only when Israel merits destruction: ‘Drought and heat consume the snow water, so does the nether world consume those that have sinned’ (Job. 24:19).

C. [I.31] Said R. Hisda, “Rain is withheld only because of the nullification of the separation of priestly rations and tithes, as it is said, ‘Drought and heat consume the snow waters’ (Job. 24:19).”

D. [I.32] A.Said R. Qattina, “Rain is withheld only because of nullification of Torah-study: ‘By slothfulness the rafters sink in’ [YMK] (Qoh. 10:18). On account of the sloth that overtook Israel so that they did not engage in Torah-study, (the enemy of) the Holy One, blessed be he, becomes poor.

E. [I.33] Said R. Ammi, “Rain is withheld only because of the sin of violent robbery: ‘He covers his hands with lightning’ (Job. 36:32) —on account of the sin of violent robbery done by their hands, he covers the light.

F. [I.34] R. Ammi further said, “*What is the meaning of that which is written*, ‘If the iron is blunt and one does not whet the edge’ (Qoh. 10:10)? If you see the sky as hard as iron, so neither dew nor rain falls, it is on account of a generation that is utterly corrupt: ‘And one does not whet the edge.’”

Subset on Discipleship

1. [I.35] Said R. Simeon b. Laqish, “If you see a disciple whose studies are as hard for him as iron, it is because his learning in the Mishnah is not well ordered for him [he is not mastering the memorization of the traditions], for it is written, ‘And one does not whet the edge’ (Qoh. 10:10).”

2. [I.36] Raba said, “If you see a disciple whose studies are as hard for him as iron, it is because of his master, who does not encourage him: ‘and one do not whet the edge’ (Qoh. 10:10).”

G. [I.37] *And said R. Ammi, “What is the meaning of that which is written: ‘If the snake bites before it is charmed, then the snake-charmer has no advantage’ (Qoh. 10:11)? If you see a generation for which the heavens turn rust color like copper so neither dew nor rain falls, that is on account of those who whisper their prayers, who are lacking in that generation. What is their remedy? Let them go to someone who knows how to whisper prayers: ‘The noise thereof tells concerning it’ (Job. 36:33). then the snake-charmer has no advantage’ (Qoh. 10:11): And someone who has the possibility of whispering prayers and does not whisper them — what advantage does he have.*

1. [I.38] Raba said, “Two disciples of sages who dwell in the same town and are not forbearing toward one another in matters of law provoke anger and bring it: “The cattle also concerning the storm that comes up’ (Job. 36:33).”

a. [I.39] Said R. Simeon b. Laqish, “ “*What is the meaning of that which is written: ‘If the snake bites before it is charmed, then the snake-charmer has no advantage’ (Qoh. 10:11)?*

2. [I.40]. Said R. Ammi, “A person’s prayer is heard only if he puts his soul to the palms of his hands: ‘Let us lift up our heart with our hands’ (Lam. 3:41).”

H. [I.41] Said R. Ammi, “Rain falls only on account of people of integrity: ‘Truth springs out of the earth and righteousness has looked down from heaven’ (Psa. 85:12).”

1. [I.42] Further said R. Ammi, “Come and see how great are persons of integrity. How do we know? From the story of the Weasel and the Well [a man extracted a promise of marriage from a maiden who fell into a well if he rescued her. The well and a weasel were witnesses to the undertaking. They avenged the maiden for the man’s breach of promise.]

Miscellany

a. [I.43] Said R. Yohanan, “Whoever adheres to a high standard of justice down below do they justify on high: ‘Truth springs out of the earth and righteousness has looked down from heaven’ (Psa. 85:12).”

i. [I.44] Said R. Joshua b. Levi, “Whoever rejoices when suffering comes upon him brings salvation to the world: ‘upon them have we stayed of old, that we might be saved’ (Isa. 64: 4)

I. [I.45] *Said R. Simeon b. Laqish, "What is the meaning of the verse, 'And he will shut up the heaven' (Deu. 11:17)? When the heaven is shut up and does not bring down dew or rain, it is like a woman who is in labor but cannot give birth."*

J. [I.46] *Said R. Samuel bar Nahmani, "What is the meaning of the verse of Scripture, 'Whether for correction or for his earth or for mercy that he cause it to come' (Job. 37:13)? Whether for correction: 'he will make it rain on the mountains and the hills. 'for mercy: 'he will make it rain on the earth, on the fields and vineyards.*

1. [I.47] *In the time of R. Samuel bar Nahmani there was famine and pestilence. People said, "What should we do? Should we ask for mercy on two counts? That is not possible. So let's ask for mercy on the count of the pestilence, and we will bear with the famine."*

a. [I.48] *In the time of R. Zira there was a decree, and it was forbidden by decree to sit in a fast. Said to them R. Zira, "Let us take upon our selves the obligation to fast, and when the decree is annulled, we shall observe the fast."*

K. [I.49] *Said R. Isaac, "Even though the years were like the years of Elijah [and the land suffered drought], yet if rain fell on a Friday, they represent nothing other than the omen of a curse."*

Subset of Isaac-Sayings

1. [I. 50] Further said R. Isaac, "Sun on the Sabbath is an act of righteousness to the poor: 'But to you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in its wings' (Mal. 3:20)."

2. [I. 51] Further said R. Isaac, "Great is a rainy day, for even a penny in the pocket is blessed: 'To give the rain of your land in its season and to bless all the work of your hands' (Deu. 28:12)."

3. [I. 52] Further said R. Isaac, "A blessing is located only in what is hidden away from sight, as it is said, 'The Lord shall command the blessing upon you in your hidden things' (Deu. 28: 8)."

L. [I.53] *Said R. Yohanan, "Said R. Yohanan, "A rainy day is as great as the day on which the exiles are gathered in to the land, as it is said, 'Turn our captivity, Lord, as the streams in the dry land' (Psa. 126: 4). 'Streams' refers to rain: 'And the channels of the sea appeared' (2Sa. 22:16)."*

M. [I.54] Further said R. Yohanan, "Rain is for an individual, but sustenance is for the community.

1. [I.55] *R. Huna bar Manoah and R. Samuel bar Iddi and R. Hiyya of Vestania would frequent [the sessions of] Raba. When Raba died, they came before R. Pappa. Whenever he said to them a tradition that made no sense to them, they would make derogatory gestures to one another. He lost confidence in himself. In a dream this verse was declaimed: "And I cut off the three shepherds in one month" (Zec. 11: 8). When they [next] took their leave of him, he said to them, "May the rabbis go in peace" [the greeting to the dead; to the living, it is, "To go peace."]*

a. [I.56] *R. Shimi bar Ashi would frequent [the sessions of] R. Pappa. They would give him a hard time. One day he saw that R. Pappa fell on his face [reciting the Supplication, Tahanun]. He heard him saying, "May the All-Merciful save me from the insolence of Shimi." He took on him the obligation of silence and did not give him a hard time any further.*

2. [I.57] *So too R. Simeon b. Laqish took the view that rain is for an individual, for said R. Simeon b. Laqish, "How on the basis of Scripture do we know that rain is for an individual? Because it is written, 'Ask of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain, even of the Lord who makes lightnings, and he will give them showers of rain, to every single one grass in the field' (Zec. 10: 1). Might one suppose that that is when all [need the rain]? Scripture says, 'to every single one.'"*

a. [I.58] [*"Ask of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain, even of the Lord who makes lightnings, and he will give them showers of rain, to every single one grass in the field" (Zec. 10: 1):] What is the meaning of "Lord who makes lightnings"*

b. [I.59] *It has been taught on Tannaite authority: R. Eliezer says, "The entire world draws water from the ocean: 'But there went up a mist from the earth and watered the whole of the ground' (Gen. 2: 6)." R. Joshua says, "The entire world draws water from the upper water: 'And drinks water as the rain of heaven comes down' (Deu. 11:11).*

i. [I.60] *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority: The Land of Israel was created first, and then the rest of the world was created afterward: "While as yet he had not made the Land nor the fields" (Pro. 8:26).*

ii. [I.61] The master has said, "They are sweetened in the clouds."

c. [I.62] *In accord with the position of which of the two authorities is the following statement that has been made on Tannaite authority: The upper water is suspended by a word, and their fruit is the rain: "The earth is full of the fruit of your works" (Psa. 104:13)? In accord with whom? It is in accord with R. Joshua*

iii. [I.64] [Reverting to I.60:] Said R. Joshua b. Levi, "The entire world drinks from the residue of the water of the Garden of Eden, as it is said, 'And a river went out of Eden and from there it divided into four parts' (Gen. 2:10)."

d. [I.65] *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority: Ethiopia, Ethiopia is a sixtieth of the world, the world is a sixtieth of the Garden, the Garden is a sixtieth of Eden, Eden is a sixtieth of Gehenna. So the whole world is comparable to a pot lid in respect to Gehenna.*

X. Mishnah-Tractate Taanit 1:3

A. ON THE THIRD OF MARHESHVAN THEY PRAY FOR RAIN. RABBAN GAMALIEL SAYS, "ON THE SEVENTH DAY OF THAT MONTH, THE FIFTEENTH DAY AFTER THE

FESTIVAL, SO THAT THE LAST ISRAELITE [RETURNING HOME] MAY REACH THE EUPHRATES RIVER.”

1. [I.1] Said R. Eleazar, “The decided law accords with the position of Rabban Gamaliel.”

2. [I.2] *It has been taught on Tannaite authority:* Hananiah says, “In the exile, [they begin to pray for rain] from the sixtieth day after the autumnal equinox [the cycle of Tishri].”

a. [I.3] *The question was raised:* Does the sixtieth day count within the period prior to the sixty days from the autumnal equinox, or is it counted with the days that follow [what is the status of November 21]?

XI. Mishnah-Tractate Taanit 1:4-5

A. [IF] THE SEVENTEENTH DAY OF MARHESHVAN CAME AND RAIN DID NOT FALL, INDIVIDUALS BEGAN TO FAST A SEQUENCE OF THREE FASTS [MONDAY, THURSDAY, MONDAY].

1. [I.1] *What is the definition of individuals?*

a. [I.2] *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:* A person should not say, “I am merely a disciple, I am unworthy to be deemed ‘an individual.’” But all disciples of sages fall into the category of “individuals.” Who [then] falls into the category of an “individual” and who falls into the category of a disciple?

b. [I.3] *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:* Not everyone who wants to set himself up as “an individual” may do so, but anyone who wants to set himself up as a disciple may do so,” the words of R. Meir. R. Yosé says, “Indeed, anyone may do so, and his memory is a blessing, for it is not self-aggrandizement for him but it is a cause of distress for him.”

B. MISCELLANY ON FASTING

1. [I.4+5] *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:* Lo, if one was fasting for a person who was sick, and the person got better, for a trouble, which passed away, lo, this one should complete his fasting [on that day] [cf. M. **Ta. 3:9**]. He who goes from a place where people are not fasting to a place where they are fasting, lo, he should fast with them. If he goes from a place in which people are fasting to a place in which they are not fasting — lo, this one should complete his fast [**T. 2:15-16**].

2. [I.6] Said R. Judah said Rab, “Whoever starves himself in years of famine is saved from a bizarre death, as it is said, ‘In famine he will redeem you from death’ (Job. 5:20). *What it should have said is, ‘from hunger.’ But this is the sense of the passage:* ‘As a reward for starving himself in times of famine, he is saved from a bizarre death.’”

Miscellaneous Points

a. [I.7] When the Israelites are in trouble, and one of them takes his leave [of the community], the two ministering angels who accompany a person

put their hands on his head and say to him, ‘Mr. So-and-so, may this one who has abandoned the community never see the consolation [that is coming to] the community.” *A further Tannaite statement:* When the community is in trouble, a person should not say, “I’m going home and I’m going to eat and drink and ‘well and good for you, o my soul!’” And if he does so, concerning him Scripture says, “And behold joy and gladness, the slaughter of oxen and the killing of sheep, the eating of meat and the drinking of wine — ‘Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die’” (Isa. 22:13). And what follows? “And the Lord of Hosts has revealed himself in my ears, surely this iniquity shall not be expiated by you until you die” (Isa. 22:14).

a. [I.8] “A God of faithfulness and without iniquity” (Deu. 32: 4) — “A God of faithfulness: just as they exact punishment from the wicked in the world to come even for the slightest transgression that they do, so they exact punishment from the righteous in this world for the slightest transgression that they do. “...and without iniquity:” just as they pay a just recompense to the righteous in the world to come for even the most minor religious duty that they carry out, so they pay recompense to the wicked in this world for even the slightest religious duty that they do.

3. [I.9] Said Samuel, “Whoever sits in a fast [for self-affliction] is called a sinner.

4. [I.10] Said R. Jeremiah bar Abba, “Public fasts are not held in Babylonia except for the ninth of Ab alone.”

C. THEY EAT AND DRINK ONCE IT GETS DARK. AND THEY ARE PERMITTED TO WORK, BATHE, ANOINT, PUT ON SANDALS, AND HAVE SEXUAL RELATIONS [ONCE] THE NEW MOON OF KISLEV HAS COME AND RAIN HAS NOT FALLEN, THE COURT DECREES A SEQUENCE OF THREE FASTS FOR THE COMMUNITY. THEY EAT AND DRINK ONCE IT GETS DARK. AND THEY ARE PERMITTED TO WORK, BATHE, ANOINT, PUT ON SANDALS, AND HAVE SEXUAL RELATIONS.

1. [II.1] They eat and drink once it gets dark. [And they are permitted to work, bathe, anoint, put on sandals, and have sexual relations]: Said R. Zeira said R. Huna, “An individual who took upon himself to observe a fast — even though he ate and drink the entire prior night, in the morning he says the prayer for fast days. If he spent the prior night fasting, however, he does not recite the prayer for fast days [on the next morning].” [a fast must be explicitly undertaken on the preceding day. In the case where he merges one day’s fast into another for which he has failed to make that undertaking, he is not entitled to recite the prayer for fasting, since the second day’s fast in the absence of the undertaking is considered no fast and can be broken at all.]

a. [II.2] Mar Uqba R. *Aqiba visited Ginzaq. He was asked, “Are fasts to take place only for a specified number of hours valid or not?” He did not know the answer.*

b. [II:3] Said R. Hisda, “*With regard to what you have said, People are permitted to fast only for a specified period of hours [and not for the whole day], that is the case only if the person has not tasted a thing until evening.*”

- c. [II:4] And said R. Hisda, “Any fast on which the sun has not set is not classified as a fast.”
2. [II.5] [Reverting to the issue of II:1,] said Samuel, “Any fast that before sunset on the prior day one has not [already] undertaken to observe is not classified as a fast.”
3. [II.6] *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:* On the night preceding a fast, to what time may one eat and drink? “Until the morning star comes up,” the words of Abbi. R. Eleazar bar Simeon says, “Until the cock crows.”
4. [II.7] Said R. Kahana said Rab, “An individual who undertook to fast is forbidden to put on sandals. We take account of the possibility that he has undertaken to observe the restrictions of a public fast [and not merely those pertaining to a private one].”
5. [II.8] Said R. Judah said Rab, “A person may ‘borrow’ a fast and pay it back on another day. *When I repeated this statement before Samuel, he said to me, ‘Now did he take upon himself a vow that he has to pay it back? He merely undertook the obligation to suffer distress. If he can, he suffers distress, and if not, he doesn’t do it.’*”
- a. [II.9] *R. Joshua b. R. Iddi visited the household of R. Assi. They prepared for him a third-grown calf and said to him, “Will the master taste something?” He said to them, “I am observing a fast.” They said to him, “But why should the master not borrow and pay the fast back later, for doesn’t the master concur with what R. Judah said, for said R. Judah, ‘A person may borrow against his fast and pay it back’?*”

XII. Mishnah-Tractate Taanit 1:6-8

A. ONCE THESE [FASTS] HAVE GONE BY AND THEY HAVE NOT BEEN ANSWERED, THE COURT DECREES A SEQUENCE OF THREE MORE FASTS FOR THE COMMUNITY. THEY EAT AND DRINK [ONLY] WHILE IT IS STILL DAY [ON THE DAY PRIOR TO THE FAST]. AND THEY ARE FORBIDDEN [ON THE FAST] TO WORK, BATHE, ANOINT, PUT ON SANDALS, AND HAVE SEXUAL RELATIONS.

1. [I.1] [And they are forbidden [on the fast] to work, bathe, anoint, put on sandals, and have sexual relations:] *Now there is no difficulty with understanding the prohibition of these other items — bathing, anointing, putting on sandals, sexual relationships — all involve pleasure [to be abstained from]. But as to work, that is a source of stress [and not pleasure, so why forbid it on the specified fast days]?*

B. AND THEY LOCK THE BATHHOUSES. IF THESE [FURTHER FASTS] HAVE PASSED AND THEY HAVE NOT BEEN ANSWERED, THE COURT DECREES A SEQUENCE OF SEVEN MORE FASTS FOR THEM, WHICH THEN ADD UP TO THIRTEEN FASTS FOR THE COMMUNITY.

1. [II:1] [And they lock the bathhouses:] Said Rafram bar Pappa said R. Hisda, “In connection with any fast that is called by reason of mourning, for example, the ninth of Ab and [for] a mourner, it is forbidden to bathe whether in hot or cold

water. But in connection with anything forbidden by reason of pleasure [to be avoided on a fast day], for example, [prohibitions connected with] a communal fast, it is forbidden to use hot water but permitted to use cold water.”

a. [II.2] Said Raba, “A mourner is permitted to wash in cold water all seven days, as he may eat meat and drink wine.” [II.3] *There are those who say*, said Raba, “A mourner is forbidden to wash in cold water all seven days.”

C. WHERE IN THE LITURGY IS THE PRAYER FOR THE FAST DAY INSERTED?

1. [II.4] *The Prayer for the Fast Day — where in the liturgy do we make mention of it? R. Judah appointed as speaker R. Isaac, his son, and expounded as follows: “An individual who has taken upon himself the observance of a fast should recite the Prayer for the Fast Day. And where does he say it? Between the blessing in the Prayer, ‘redeems Israel,’ and the blessing, ‘heals.’”*

D. SPECIAL CLASSES OF PERSONS ON THE SPECIFIED FAST-DAYS

1. [II.5] *One Tannaite statement: pregnant women and nursing mothers fast on the first set of fasts but not on the later ones. Another Tannaite statement: pregnant women and nursing mothers fast on the last set of fasts but not on the first.*

E. HOW ARE THESE [FURTHER FASTS] STILL MORE STRINGENT THAN THE FIRST ONES? IT IS THAT ON THESE THEY SOUND THE SHOFAR, AND THEY LOCK UP THE STORES.

1. [III.1] How are these [further fasts] still more stringent than the first ones? It is that on these they sound the alarm [shofar], and they lock up the stores [M. 1:7C-D]: How do they sound the alarm? R. Judah said, “With shofars.” And R. Judah b. R. Samuel bar Shilat in the name of Rab said, “With the recitation of the prayer, ‘Answer us’” [the Prayer for the fast].

a. [III.2] *In the time of R. Judah the Patriarch there was some sort of trouble. He decreed thirteen fasts and they were not answered. He considered decreeing another set. Said to him R. Ammi, “Lo, sages have said, ‘They do not burden the community too much.’”*

2. [III.3] *The men of Nineveh sent the question to Rabbi, “What about us, for example, who need rain even in the time of the autumnal equinox? How should we behave? Are we in the category of individuals, or are we in the category of a community? If we are in the category of individuals, it is said in ‘who hears prayer,’ or if we are in the category of the community, then it is inserted into the blessing of the years.”*

F. ON MONDAYS THEY PARTIALLY OPEN [THE STORES] AFTER DARK. AND ON THURSDAY THEY ARE PERMITTED [TO OPEN THEM ALL DAY LONG] BECAUSE OF THE HONOR OWING TO THE SABBATH.

1. [IV.1] [On Mondays they partially open [the stores] after dark. And on Thursday they are permitted [to open them all day long] because of the honor owing to the Sabbath: *The question was raised: what is the sense of the Tannaite formulation?* On Mondays the stores are partially open at dusk, and on Thursdays they are partially open during the whole day on account of the honor owing to the

Sabbath, *or perhaps the sense is*, on Mondays they are open partially and on Thursdays they are open wide the entire day?

G. [IF] THESE TWO HAVE PASSED AND THEY HAVE NOT BEEN ANSWERED, THEY CUT DOWN ON COMMERCE, BUILDING, PLANTING, THE MAKING OF BETROTHALS AND MARRIAGES:

1. [V.1] [If] these two have passed and they have not been answered, they cut down on commerce, building, planting, the making of betrothals and marriages: *A Tannaite statement*: building — for happy reasons. planting — for happy reasons.

H. AND ON GREETING ONE ANOTHER, LIKE PEOPLE SUBJECT TO DIVINE DISPLEASURE. INDIVIDUALS GO BACK AND FAST UNTIL THE END OF NISAN. [ONCE] NISAN HAS ENDED, IF IT THEN RAINS, IT IS A SIGN OF A CURSE, SINCE IT SAYS, “IS IT NOT WHEAT HARVEST TODAY? [I WILL CALL UNTO THE LORD, THAT HE SEND THUNDER AND RAIN, AND YOU SHALL KNOW AND SEE THAT GREAT IS YOUR WICKEDNESS WHICH YOU HAVE DONE IN THE SIGHT OF GOD TO ASK A KING FOR YOURSELF]” (1SA. 12:17).

1. [VI.1] and on greeting one another, like people subject to divine displeasure: *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority*: Associates [of sages] do not greet one another. Ordinary folk who offer a greeting — they answer, but in a low voice, and in a dignified way.

2. [VI.2] Said R. Eleazar, “A prominent authority is not allowed to fall on his face [in reciting the Supplication-Prayer (Tahanun)], unless he is answered like Joshua bin Nun, as is written, ‘And the Lord said to Joshua, Arise; [why are you falling on you face]’ (Jos. 7:10).”

XIII. Mishnah-Tractate Taanit 2:1-13

A. THEY BRING FORTH THE ARK INTO THE STREET OF THE TOWN AND PUT WOOD ASHES ON THE ARK, ON THE HEAD OF THE PATRIARCH:

1. [I.1] The manner of fasting: how [was it done]? They bring forth the ark into the street of the town and put wood ashes on the ark, on the head of the patriarch, and on the head of the head of the court: *Does this pertain even to the first six fasts? Then there is the following contradiction*: On the first three fasts and on the second they enter the synagogue and pray exactly as they pray through the entire year, but on the seven last fasts they take the ark out into the street of the city and put ash on the ark and on the head of the patriarch and on the head of the head of the court, and everybody takes and puts ashes on his own head.

B. AND ON THE HEAD OF THE HEAD OF THE COURT. AND EACH PERSON PUTS [ASHES] ON HIS HEAD.

1. [II.1] and on the head of the head of the court: *Then the Tannaite rule goes on to say*, And each person puts [ashes] on his head.

2. [III.1] And each person puts [ashes] on his head: *Said R. Adda*, “*Since everybody else puts ashes on his own head, why shouldn’t the patriarch and head of the court also take ashes and put them on their own heads — what distinguishes them that someone else should take and put ashes on their heads?*”

3. [III.2] *And where do they put the ashes?* Said R. Isaac, “On the place where the Tefillin are placed: ‘to appoint to them that mourn in Zion, to give them a garland for ashes’ (Isa. 61: 3).”
4. [III.3] [They bring forth the ark into the street of the town and put wood ashes on the ark:] Why do they go out into the street?
5. [III.4] And why do they bring the ark into the street of the town?
6. [III.5] And why do they put on sackcloth?
7. [III.6] And why do they put wood ashes on the ark?
8. [III.7] And why does each person put [ashes] on his head?
9. [III.8] Why do they go out to the cemetery?
- a. [III.9] What is the meaning of “Mount Moriah”?

C. THE ELDEST AMONG THEM MAKES A SPEECH OF ADMONITION: “OUR BROTHERS, CONCERNING THE PEOPLE OF NINEVEH IT IS NOT SAID, ‘AND GOD SAW THEIR SACKCLOTH AND THEIR FASTING,’ BUT, ‘AND GOD SAW THEIR DEEDS, FOR THEY REPENTED FROM THEIR EVIL WAY’ (JON. 3:10). “AND IN PROPHETIC TRADITION IT IS SAID, ‘REND YOUR HEART AND NOT YOUR GARMENTS’ (JOE. 2:13).” THE MANNER OF FASTING: HOW [WAS IT DONE]?”

1. [IV.1] The eldest among them makes a speech of admonition: “Our brothers, concerning the people of Nineveh it is not said, ‘And God saw their sackcloth and their fasting,’ but, ‘And God saw their deeds, for they repented from their evil way’ (Jon. 3:10). And in prophetic tradition it is said, ‘Rend your heart and not your garments’ (Joe. 2:13).” *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:* If there is an elder, the elder speaks, and if not, a sage speaks, and if not, a man of stature speaks.
2. [IV.2] [He says,] “Our brethren, it is not the wearing of sackcloth and the fasting that make the difference, but repentance and good deeds make the difference. For so we find of the men of Nineveh, that, in their connection the people of Nineveh it is not said, ‘And God saw their sackcloth and their fasting,’ but, ‘And God saw their deeds, for they repented from their evil way’ (Jon. 3:10).”
3. [IV.3] “Let them be covered with sackcloth, both man and beast” (Jon. 3: 8): *What did they do?*
4. [IV.4] And let them cry mightily to God” (Jon. 3: 8): *What did they say?*
5. [IV.5] “Let them turn everyone from his evil way and from the violence that is in their hands” (Jon. 3: 8): *What is the meaning of “and from the violence that is in their hands”?*

D. THEY ARISE FOR PRAYER. THEY BRING DOWN BEFORE THE ARK AN EXPERIENCED ELDER, WHO HAS CHILDREN, AND WHOSE CUPBOARD [HOUSE] IS EMPTY, SO THAT HIS HEART SHOULD BE WHOLLY IN THE PRAYER.

1. [V.1] They arise for prayer. They bring down before the ark an experienced elder, who has children, and whose cupboard [house] is empty, so that his heart should be wholly in the prayer: *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:*

When they arise for reciting the Prayer, even if there is present an elder and sage, they do not bring him down before the ark, but a man who is fluent in his prayer.

a. [V.2] “My heritage has become to me like a lion in the forest, she has uttered her voice against me, therefore I have hated her” (Jer. 12: 8): *What is the meaning of* she has uttered her voice against me? Said Mar Zutra bar Tobiah said Rab, and some say, said R. Hama said R. Eleazar, “This refers to the representative of the community who descends to the ark even though he is unworthy.”

E. AND HE SAYS BEFORE THEM TWENTY-FOUR BLESSINGS: THE EIGHTEEN SAID EVERY DAY, AND HE ADDS SIX MORE TO THEM. AND THESE ARE THEY: REMEMBRANCE VERSES, SHOFAR VERSES, “IN MY DISTRESS I CRIED TO THE LORD AND HE ANSWERED ME...” (PSA. 120), AND, “I WILL LIFT UP MY EYES TO THE HILLS...” (PSA. 121), AND, “OUT OF THE DEPTHS I HAVE CRIED TO YOU, O LORD...” (PSA. 130), AND “A PRAYER OF THE AFFLICTED WHEN HE IS OVERWHELMED” (PSA. 102).

1. [VI.1] And he says before them twenty-four blessings: the eighteen said every day, and he adds six more to them. [And these are they: Remembrance verses, Shofar verses, “In my distress I cried to the Lord and he answered me...” (Psa. 120), and, “I will lift up my eyes to the hills...” (Psa. 121), and, “Out of the depths I have cried to you, O Lord...” (Psa. 130), and “A prayer of the afflicted when he is overwhelmed” (Psa. 102)]: *Are there only six, and aren't there seven, as we have learned in the Mishnah:* For the seventh he says, “He who answered David and Solomon, his son, in Jerusalem, will answer you and hear the sound of your cry this day. Blessed are you, O Lord, who has mercy on the land.”

F. R. JUDAH SAYS, “HE DID NOT HAVE TO SAY REMEMBRANCE VERSES AND SHOFAR VERSES. “BUT IN THEIR STEAD HE SAYS, ‘IF THERE BE IN THE LAND FAMINE, IF THERE BE PESTILENCE’ (1KI. 8:37FF.). “AND, ‘THE WORD OF THE LORD WHICH CAME TO JEREMIAH CONCERNING THE DROUGHT’ (JER. 14: 1FF.). “AND HE CONCLUDES EACH OF THEM WITH ITS APPROPRIATE ENDING.” FOR THE FIRST [ENDING] HE SAYS, “HE WHO ANSWERED ABRAHAM ON MOUNT MORIAH WILL ANSWER YOU AND HEAR THE SOUND OF YOUR CRY THIS DAY. BLESSED ARE YOU, O LORD, REDEEMER OF ISRAEL.”

1. [VI.2] *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:* When completing the first blessings, he says, “Blessed is the Lord, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Blessed is the redeemer of Israel.” And they answer after him, “Blessed be the name of his kingdom forever and ever. And the precentor of the synagogue says, “Sound a sustained sound on the shofar, o priests, sound a sustained sound,” and then he says, “He who answered Abraham at Mount Moriah will answer you and hear the sound of your outcry on this very day.”

2. [VII.1] R. Judah says, “He did not have to say Remembrance verses and Shofar verses. But in their stead he says, ‘If there be in the land famine, if there be pestilence’ (1Ki. 8:37ff.). And, ‘The word of the Lord which came to Jeremiah concerning the drought’ (Jer. 14: 1ff.). And he concludes each of them with its appropriate ending:” *Said R. Adda of Jaffa, “What is the operative consideration*

for R. Judah? It is that people say remembrance-verses and shofar-verses only on the New Year and on the Day of Atonement of the Jubilee year, and in war time.”

3. [VIII.1] For the first [ending] he says, “He who answered Abraham on Mount Moriah will answer you and hear the sound of your cry this day. Blessed are you, O Lord, redeemer of Israel.” *A Tannaite statement*: There are those who reverse the order and assign “crying” to Elijah and “praying” to Samuel.

G. FOR THE SECOND HE SAYS, “HE WHO ANSWERED OUR FATHERS AT THE RED SEA WILL ANSWER YOU AND HEAR THE SOUND OF YOUR CRY THIS DAY. BLESSED ARE YOU, O LORD, WHO REMEMBERS FORGOTTEN THINGS.” FOR THE THIRD HE SAYS, “HE WHO ANSWERED JOSHUA AT GILGAL WILL ANSWER YOU AND HEAR THE SOUND OF YOUR CRY THIS DAY. BLESSED ARE YOU, O LORD WHO HEARS THE SOUND OF THE SHOFAR.” FOR THE FOURTH HE SAYS, “HE WHO ANSWERED SAMUEL AT MIZPEH WILL ANSWER YOU AND HEAR THE SOUND OF YOUR CRY THIS DAY. BLESSED ARE YOU, O LORD, WHO HEARS A CRY.” FOR THE FIFTH HE SAYS, “HE WHO ANSWERED ELIJAH AT MOUNT CARMEL WILL ANSWER YOU AND HEAR THE SOUND OF YOUR CRY THIS DAY. BLESSED ARE YOU, O LORD, WHO HEARS PRAYER.” FOR THE SIXTH HE SAYS, “HE WHO ANSWERED JONAH IN THE BELLY OF THE FISH WILL ANSWER YOU AND HEAR THE SOUND OF YOUR CRY THIS DAY. BLESSED ARE YOU, O LORD, WHO ANSWERS PRAYER IN A TIME OF TROUBLE.” FOR THE SEVENTH HE SAYS, “HE WHO ANSWERED DAVID AND SOLOMON, HIS SON, IN JERUSALEM, WILL ANSWER YOU AND HEAR THE SOUND OF YOUR CRY THIS DAY. BLESSED ARE YOU, O LORD, WHO HAS MERCY ON THE LAND.”

1. [IX.1] For the sixth he says, “He who answered Jonah in the belly of the fish will answer you and hear the sound of your cry this day. Blessed are you, O Lord, who answers prayer in a time of trouble.” For the seventh he says, “He who answered David and Solomon, his son, in Jerusalem, will answer you and hear the sound of your cry this day. Blessed are you, O Lord, who has mercy on the land.” *Now didn’t Jonah come after David and Solomon? So why is he mentioned first in sequence?*

2. [IX.2] *A Tannaite statement*: In the name of Sumkhos they said, “Blessed are you...who humbles the haughty.”

H. M’S H B: IN THE TIME OF R. HALAPTA AND R. HANANIAH B. TERADION SOMEONE PASSED BEFORE THE ARK AND COMPLETED THE ENTIRE BLESSING, AND THEY DID NOT ANSWER AFTER HIM, “AMEN.” “SOUND THE SUSTAINED SOUND ON THE SHOFAR, O PRIESTS! SOUND THE SUSTAINED SOUND ON THE SHOFAR! “HE WHO ANSWERED ABRAHAM OUR FATHER AT MOUNT MORIAH WILL ANSWER YOU AND HEAR THE SOUND OF YOUR CRY THIS DAY. “SOUND THE QUAVERING SOUND ON THE SHOFAR, SONS OF AARON! SOUND THE QUAVERING SOUND ON THE SHOFAR!” “HE WHO ANSWERED OUR FATHERS AT THE RED SEA WILL ANSWER YOU AND HEAR THE SOUND OF YOUR CRY THIS VERY DAY.” AND WHEN THE MATTER CAME BEFORE SAGES, THEY RULED, “WE PRACTICED THAT CUSTOM ONLY AT THE EASTERN GATE [AND ON THE TEMPLE MOUNT].” “ON THE FIRST SET OF THREE FAST DAYS THE MEMBERS OF THE PRIESTLY WATCH [ON DUTY THAT WEEK] FAST BUT DO NOT COMPLETE THE ENTIRE DAY [IN FASTING], AND THE MEMBERS OF THE FATHER’S HOUSE [ON DUTY THAT PARTICULAR DAY] DID NOT FAST AT ALL. “ON

THE SECOND SET OF THREE FAST DAYS THE MEMBERS OF THE PRIESTLY WATCH FAST AND COMPLETE THE DAY IN FASTING, AND THE MEMBERS OF THE FATHER'S HOUSE [ON DUTY THAT DAY] FAST BUT DO NOT COMPLETE THE DAY IN FASTING. "ON THE SEVEN LAST FAST DAYS, THESE AND THOSE FAST AND COMPLETE THE FAST DAY," THE WORDS OF R. JOSHUA. AND SAGES SAY, "ON THE FIRST THREE FAST DAYS THESE AND THOSE DID NOT FAST AT ALL. "ON THE SECOND SET OF THREE FAST DAYS THE MEMBERS OF THE PRIESTLY WATCH FAST BUT DO NOT COMPLETE THE DAY IN FASTING, AND THE MEMBERS OF THE FATHER'S HOUSE [ON DUTY THAT DAY] DID NOT FAST AT ALL. "ON THE LAST SEVEN FAST DAYS, THE MEMBERS OF THE PRIESTLY WATCH FAST AND COMPLETE THE FAST DAYS. AND THE MEMBERS OF THE FATHER'S HOUSE FAST AND DO NOT COMPLETE THE FAST DAY." THE MEMBERS OF THE PRIESTLY WATCH ARE PERMITTED TO DRINK WINE BY NIGHT BUT NOT BY DAY, AND THE MEMBERS OF THE FATHER'S HOUSE [ARE] NOT [PERMITTED TO DRINK WINE] EITHER BY DAY OR BY NIGHT. MEMBERS OF THE PRIESTLY WATCH AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC DELEGATION ARE PROHIBITED TO GET A HAIRCUT AND TO WASH THEIR CLOTHES. BUT ON THURSDAY THEY ARE PERMITTED TO DO SO, BECAUSE OF THE HONOR OWING TO THE SABBATH.

1. [X.1] "On the first set of three fast days the members of the priestly watch [on duty that week] fast but do not complete the entire day [in fasting], and the members of the father's house [on duty that particular day] did not fast at all. On the second set of three fast days the members of the priestly watch fast and complete the day in fasting, and the members of the father's house [on duty that day] fast but do not complete the day in fasting. On the seven last fast days, these and those fast and complete the fast day, "the words of R. Joshua. And sages say, "On the first three fast days these and those did not fast at all. On the second set of three fast days the members of the priestly watch fast but do not complete the day in fasting, and the members of the father's house [on duty that day] did not fast at all. On the last seven fast days, the members of the priestly watch fast and complete the fast days. and the members of the father's house fast and do not complete the fast day." The members of the priestly watch are permitted to drink wine by night but not by day, and the members of the father's house [are] not [permitted to drink wine] either by day or by night: *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority*: On what account have they said, The members of the priestly watch are permitted to drink wine by night but not by day? It is a precaution lest the liturgy weigh heavily on the men of the father's house so that they will be asked to come and help them.

2. [XI.1] Members of the priestly watch and members of the public delegation are prohibited to get a haircut and to wash their clothes. But on Thursday they are permitted to do so, because of the honor owing to the Sabbath: *What is the operative consideration?* Said Rabbah bar bar Hannah said R. Yohanan, "It is so that they should not enter the week of their priestly service in a slovenly state."

a. [XI.2] *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority*: A king gets a haircut every day, a high priest on Fridays, an ordinary priest once in thirty days.

i. [XI.3] A. Said Rabina to R. Ashi, “As to this teaching [that priests whose hair is too long should not officiate and are subject to the death-penalty if they do], before Ezekiel came along, who stated it?”

I. AS TO ANY [DAY CONCERNING WHICH] IN THE FASTING SCROLL [MEGILLAT TAANIT] IT IS WRITTEN [IN ARAMAIC:] “NOT TO MOURN” — ON THE DAY BEFORE, IT IS PROHIBITED TO MOURN. ON THE DAY AFTER, IT IS PERMITTED TO MOURN. R. YOSÉ SAYS, “ON THE DAY BEFORE IT AND ALSO ON THE DAY AFTER, IT IS PROHIBITED TO MOURN.” [ON THOSE DAYS CONCERNING WHICH IN THE FASTING SCROLL IT IS WRITTEN] “NOT TO FAST,” ON THE DAY BEFORE AND ON THE DAY AFTER, IT IS PERMITTED TO FAST. R. YOSÉ SAYS, “ON THE DAY BEFORE IT, IT IS PROHIBITED, ON THE DAY AFTER, IT IS PERMITTED.”

1. [XII.1] As to any [day concerning which] in the Fasting Scroll [Megillat Taanit] it is written [in Aramaic:] “not to mourn ‘— on the day before, it is prohibited to mourn. On the day after. it is permitted to mourn: *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority: These are the days on which there is to be no fasting, and on some of them also, mourning is forbidden as well: from the new moon [first] until the eighth day of Nisan, during which the Daily Whole Offering was set up, mourning is forbidden; from the eighth of Nisan until the close of the Festival of Passover, during which time the date for the Festival of Pentecost was reestablished, fasting is forbidden.*

a. [XII.2] The master has said: *from the new moon [first] until the eighth day of Nisan, during which the Daily Whole Offering was set up, mourning is forbidden: Why say, “from the new moon,” rather say, from the second of Nisan, and as to the new moon itself, it is a festival day and in any event forbidden for mourning!*

b. [XII.3] The master has said: *from the eighth of Nisan until the close of the Festival of Passover, during which time the date for the Festival of Pentecost was reestablished, fasting is forbidden: Why say, “until the close of the Festival of Passover”? Why not say simply, until the Festival, and since the Festival itself is a festival period, mourning is forbidden at that time anyhow.*

c. [XII.4] The master has said: *from the eighth of Nisan until the close of the Festival of Passover, during which time the date for the Festival of Pentecost was reestablished, fasting is forbidden: Why formulate the rule as, from the eighth of Nisan? Why not say, from the ninth day, and the eighth day itself will be forbidden for mourning, for it is the day on which the Daily Whole Offering was established [and so is one of the eight festival days listed in any case]?*

i. [XII.5] *It has been stated: R. Hiyya bar Assi said Rab [said], “The decided law accords with R. Yosé [at XII.3.E: It is forbidden to mourn both on the day prior and on the day following the specified occasions].”*

d. [XII.6] *What is Nicanor’s Day, and what is Toreyanos’s day? It has been taught on Tannaite authority: Nicanor was one of the Greek*

generals. Every day he would wave his hand toward Judah and Jerusalem and exclaim, “When is it going to fall into my power so I can trample it!”

e. [XII.7] *And what is Toreyanos’s day?* They say: When Toreyanos sought to kill Lulianos and Pappos, brothers in Lydia, he said to them, “If you come from the people of Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, let your God come and save you from my power as he saved Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah from the power of Nebuchadnezzar..”

J. THEY DO NOT DECREE A FAST FOR THE COMMUNITY IN THE FIRST INSTANCE FOR A THURSDAY, SO AS NOT TO DISTURB MARKET PRICES. BUT THE FIRST THREE FASTS ARE ON MONDAY, THURSDAY, AND MONDAY. AND THE SECOND SET OF THREE FAST DAYS ARE ON THURSDAY, MONDAY, AND THURSDAY. R. YOSÉ SAYS, “JUST AS THE FIRST ONES DO NOT BEGIN ON A THURSDAY, SO ALSO THE SECOND SET AND THE FINAL SET [DO NOT BEGIN ON A THURSDAY] “

1. [XIII.1] They do not decree a fast for the community in the first instance for a Thursday, so as not to disturb market prices. But the first three fasts are on Monday, Thursday, and Monday. And the second set of three fast days are on Thursday, Monday, and Thursday. R. Yosé says, “Just as the first ones do not begin on a Thursday, so also the second set and the final set [do not begin on a Thursday]” “ They do not decree a fast for the community to take place on the New Moon, Hanukkah, or Purim: What is the definition of “a beginning” [such that the sequence of fasts is not broken off]?

K. THEY DO NOT DECREE A FAST FOR THE COMMUNITY TO TAKE PLACE ON THE NEW MOON, HANUKKAH, OR PURIM. “BUT IF THEY HAD BEGUN [A SEQUENCE OF FASTS], THEY DO NOT BREAK OFF, “ THE WORDS OF RABBAN GAMALIEL. SAID R. MEIR, “EVEN THOUGH RABBAN GAMALIEL SAID THAT THEY DO NOT BREAK OFF, HE WOULD CONCEDE THAT THEY ALSO DO NOT COMPLETE [FASTING FOR THE WHOLE DAY].” AND SO IS THE RULE FOR THE NINTH OF AB WHICH COINCIDES WITH A FRIDAY.

XIV. Mishnah-Tractate Taanit 3:1-11

A. THE CONDUCT OF THESE FAST DAYS WHICH HAVE BEEN DESCRIBED APPLIES IN THE CASE OF THE FIRST RAINFALL. BUT IN THE CASE OF CROPS THAT EXHIBIT A CHANGE [FROM THEIR NORMAL CHARACTER] THEY SOUND THE SHOFAR ON THEIR ACCOUNT FORTHWITH.

1. [I.1] The conduct of these fast days which have been described applies in the case of the first rainfall: *An objection was raised:* If rain does not come at the time of the first and second rainfalls, it is time to ask for rain. If at the time of the third, it is time to fast. Said R. Judah, “*This is the sense of the statement:* As to the order of fasts that has been stated, when does it apply? At an occasion on which the time for the first, second, and third rainfalls have not come. But if rain fell at the time for the first fructifying rainfall and they sowed but nothing sprouted, or if the plants did sprout but changed in an unusual way, the alarm is sounded right away.”

2. [I:2] A. Said R. Nahman, “That is in particular if they changed in appearance, but if they merely dried up, that is not the rule.”

B. AND SO [IF] THE RAIN CEASED BETWEEN ONE RAINSTORM AND THE NEXT FOR A PERIOD OF FORTY DAYS, THEY SOUND THE SHOFAR ON THAT ACCOUNT FORTHWITH, FOR IT REPRESENTS THE BLOW OF FAMINE.

1. [II.1] And so [if] the rain ceased between one rainstorm and the next for a period of forty days, they sound the shofar on that account forthwith, for it represents the blow of famine: *What is the definition of the blow of famine?*

C. IF THE RAIN FELL SUFFICIENT FOR CROPS BUT NOT FOR TREES, FOR TREES BUT NOT FOR CROPS, FOR THIS AND THAT, BUT NOT FOR [FILLING UP] CISTERNS, PITS, OR CAVERNS, THEY SOUND THE SHOFAR ON THEIR ACCOUNT FORTHWITH.

1. [III.1] If the rain fell sufficient for crops but not for trees, for trees but not for crops, for this and that, but not for [filling up] cisterns, pits, or caverns, they sound the shofar on their account forthwith: *Now it is so that rain sufficient for crops but not for trees does happen, when it rains gently and not heavily; so too, rain that is good for trees but not for crops happens, when it rains heavily and not gently; and there can be rain that is good for both crops and trees but not fill up cisterns, ditches, and caves, if it falls heavily and gently but not yet sufficiently. But how is it possible for sufficient rain to fall to fill cisterns, ditches, and caves, yet not to be good for crops and trees, in accord with the Tannaite formulation?*

2. [III.2] *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:* They sound an alarm for rain for trees if it has not rained by half a month prior to Passover [that is, the new moon of Nisan], and for cisterns, ditches, and caves even half a month prior to Tabernacles; and whenever there is not sufficient water for drinking, it is done at once.

3. [III.3] *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:* They sound the alarm on account of the condition of the trees [needing rain] through the other years of the Sabbatical cycle [but not in the Seventh Year], and for cisterns, ditches, and caves, even in the Sabbatical Year.

4. [III.4] *It has been taught on Tannaite authority:* From the day on which the house of the sanctuary was destroyed, rains have turned irregular for the world: there is a year in which the rain is abundant, and there is a year in which the rain is scanty; there is a year in which the rain falls at the anticipated time, and there is a year in which the rain does not fall at the anticipated time.

- a. [III.5] *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:* One time all Israel ascended to Jerusalem for the festival, and they didn't have enough water to drink. Naqedimon b. Gurion went to a certain lord. He said to him, “Lend me twelve wells of water for the pilgrims, and I shall pay you back with twelve wells of water, and if I don't do it, then I'll give you instead twelve talents of silver,” with a fixed time for repayment. When the time came for repayment and it did not rain, in the morning, he sent him a message, “Send me the water or the money that you owe me.”

D. AND SO TOO: A TOWN ON WHICH RAIN DID NOT FALL, AS IT IS SAID, “AND I CAUSED IT TO RAIN UPON ONE CITY AND CAUSED IT NOT TO RAIN UPON ANOTHER

CITY, ONE PIECE WAS RAINED UPON AND THE PIECE ON WHICH IT RAINED NOT DID WITHER” (AMO. 4: 7) THAT TOWN DECLARES A FAST DAY AND SOUNDS THE SHOFAR. AND ALL ITS NEIGHBORS FAST BUT DO NOT SOUND THE SHOFAR. R. AQIBA SAYS, “THEY SOUND THE SHOFAR BUT DO NOT FAST.”

1. [IV.1] And so too: A town which is afflicted with pestilence or ruination [of houses] — that town declares a fast day and sounds the shofar. And all its neighbors fast but do not sound the shofar. R. Aqiba says, “They sound the shofar but do not fast.” Said R. Judah said Rab, “And both conditions [having too little rain, having too much] are a curse.”

a. [IV.2] “Jerusalem is among them as one unclean” (Lam. 1:17) — Said R. Judah said Rab, “It is for a blessing. Just as a menstruating woman [when her period is over] becomes permitted again, so Jerusalem has its remedy as well.”

i. [IV.3] *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:* A person should always be as yielding as a reed and never as unyielding as a cedar.

E. AND SO TOO: A TOWN WHICH IS AFFLICTED WITH PESTILENCE OR RUINATION [OF HOUSES] — THAT TOWN DECLARES A FAST DAY AND SOUNDS THE SHOFAR. AND ALL ITS NEIGHBORS FAST BUT DO NOT SOUND THE SHOFAR. R. AQIBA SAYS, “THEY SOUND THE SHOFAR BUT DO NOT FAST.”

1. [V.1] And so too: A town which is afflicted with pestilence or ruination [of houses] — that town declares a fast day and sounds the shofar. And all its neighbors fast but do not sound the shofar. R. Aqiba says, “They sound the shofar but do not fast.” *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:* The ruination of which they have spoken refers to the collapse of sound buildings but not of those that were shaky anyhow; only those that are not shaky, not to those that are going to fall down.

F. APPENDED COMPOSITE ON THE MERITS OF SAGES THAT PERMIT THEM TO DO WONDERS

1. [V.2] *R. Huna had wine stored in a certain dilapidated house and wanted to take it out. He brought R. Adda bar Ahbah there and kept him busy with tradition-recitation until he had emptied out the place. Once he got out, the house fell down. R. Adda bar Ahbah realized what had happened. He took offense, because he concurs with what R. Yannai said, “A person should never stand in a dangerous place and say, ‘They’ll do a miracle for me,’ Maybe they won’t do a miracle for him. And if they do do a miracle for him, they will deduct it from his treasury of unearned grace.”*

2. [V.3] *Said Raba to Rafram bar Pappa, “Would the master report to us some of those lovely things that R. Huna used to do?”*

3. [V.4] *Ilfa and R. Yohanan were studying Torah together in great poverty. They said, “Let’s get up and go and get into trade and realize in our own regard the verse, ‘Howbeit there shall be no needy among you’ (Deu. 15: 4).” They went and sat down underneath a dilapidated wall. They were wrapping their bread. Two ministering angels came. R. Yohanan heard that one said to his fellow, “Let’s*

throw this wall on them and kill them, for they abandon the life of the world to come and take up the life of the transient moment.”

G. APPENDED COMPOSITE ON THE MERITS OF NAHUM OF GIMZO

1. [V.5] They said about Nahum of Gimzo that he was blind in both eyes, his two hands were cut off, his two legs were amputated, and his whole body was full of boils, and he was lying in a dilapidated house, with the legs of his bed in bowls of water so that the ants should not crawl up onto him. One time his disciples wanted to remove his bed and then clear everything out of the house. He said to them, “My children, empty out the furniture and then clear out my bed. For I guarantee you, so long as I am in the house, the house won’t fall down.” So they cleared out the furniture and afterward they cleared out his bed and the house fell down.

2. [V.6] *And why did they call him Nahum of Gimzo? Because whatever happened to him, he would say, “This too is for the good” [Gam Zo letobah].*

H. WHAT IS THE MEANING OF “PESTILENCE”? A TOWN WHICH HAS A POPULATION OF FIVE HUNDRED SOLDIERS WHICH PRODUCES THREE CORPSES IN THREE SUCCESSIVE DAYS — LO, THIS IS [A SIGN OF THE PRESENCE OF] PESTILENCE. [IF THE DEATH RATE] IS LESS THAN THIS, IT IS NOT [THE SIGN OF THE PRESENCE OF] PESTILENCE.

1. [VI.1] What is the meaning of “pestilence”? A town which has a population of five hundred soldiers which produces three corpses in three successive days— lo, this is [a sign of the presence of] pestilence. [If the death rate] is less than this, it is not [the sign of the presence of] pestilence: *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority*: A town that produces fifteen hundred foot soldiers, for example, Kefar Akko, from which nine corpses were removed on three successive days — lo, this constitutes a sign of pestilence. If this takes place on one day, or on four days, this is not a sign of pestilence. And a town that produces five hundred foot soldiers, for example, Kefar Amiqa, from which three corpses were removed on three successive days, lo, this is a sign of pestilence. If this was on one day or on four days, it is not a sign of pestilence.

I. COMPOSITE OF CASES THAT UNDERScore THE RECOGNITION OF SAGES’ VIRTUE AND, BY THE WAY, ALSO ILLUSTRATE THE LAW OF THE MISHNAH

2. [VI.2] *In Sura there was pestilence. It did not affect the neighborhood of Rab. People drew the conclusion that it was on account of the unearned grace enjoyed by Rab, which was abundant. It was shown to them in a dream that Rab’s unearned grace was too abundant for so small a thing, but it was on account of a certain man, who would lend out a shovel and spade for burials.*

3. [VI.3] *In Deroqeret there was a fire, but there was no flame in the neighborhood of R. Huna. People drew the conclusion that it was on account of the unearned grace enjoyed by R. Huna, which was abundant. It was shown to them in a dream that R. Huna’s unearned grace was too abundant for so small a thing, but it was on account of a certain woman, who would heat her oven and let her neighbors use it [on Fridays].*

4. [VI.4] *They told R. Judah, "Locusts have come." He decreed a fast. They said to him, "We didn't suffer losses." He said to them, "Did they bring along their own provisions?"*

5. [VI.5] *They told R. Judah, "There is pestilence among the pigs." He decreed a fast.*

6. [VI.6] *They told Samuel, "There is pestilence in Khuzistan." He decreed a fast.] They said to him, "But it's a long way away!" He said to them, "There is no crossing that can stop it."*

7. [VI.7]. *They told R. Nahman, "There is pestilence in the land of Israel." he decreed a fast, saying, "If the mistress is smitten, all the more so the servant-girl."*

J. COMPOSITE ON SUPEREROGATORY MIRACLES DONE TO PAY RESPECT FOR VARIOUS SAGES

1. [VI.8] *Abba was a cupper. He got greetings from the heavenly academy every single day. To Abbaye greetings came every Friday, to Raba on the eve of every Day of Atonement. Abbaye was depressed, because of Abba the cupper. They said, "It is because you can't do deeds such as those of Abba." And what are the deeds of Abba the cupper? ...Raba was depressed because of the honor paid to Abbaye. They said to him, "Let it be enough for you that you protect an entire town [by the special grace owing to you]."*

2. [VI.9] *R. Beroqa of Khuzistan would commonly go to market at Be Lapat. Elijah would frequently come to him. He said to him, "In this very marketplace is there anyone who is destined for the world to come."*

K. ON ACCOUNT OF THE APPEARANCE OF THESE DO THEY SOUND THE SHOFAR IN EVERY LOCALE: "BLASTING OR MILDEW, LOCUST OR CATERPILLAR" (1KI. 8:37):

1. [VII.1] *On account of the appearance of these do they sound the shofar in every locale: "blasting or mildew, locust or caterpillar" (1Ki. 8:37): Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority: On account of the following they sound the alarm everywhere: on account of blast, mildew, locusts, crickets, and wild beasts.*

L. WILD BEASTS:

1. [VIII.1] *"wild beasts" [Lev. 26: 6]: Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority: As to the wild beasts of which they have spoken, when it is a divine visitation they sound the alarm on that account, but if it is not a divine visitation they do not sound the alarm on that account. What is the definition of a divine visitation, and what is the definition of that which is not a divine visitation? If [the wild beast] is seen in town, it is a mark of a divine visitation, if in the field, it is not a divine visitation. If it is seen by day, it is a divine visitation, if by night, it is not a divine visitation. If two men saw it and it ran after them, it is a divine visitation. If it hid away from them, it is not a divine visitation. If it tore two men and ate up one of them, it is a divine visitation. If it ate both of them, it is not a divine visitation. If it climbed up to the roof and took an infant from its crib, it is a divine visitation.*

M. "AND THE SWORD" [LEV. 26: 6]. [EVERYWHERE] DO THEY SOUND THE SHOFAR ON THEIR ACCOUNT, BECAUSE IT IS AN AFFLICTION WHICH SPREADS:

1. [IX.1] “and the sword” [Lev. 26: 6]: *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority*: The sword of which they have spoken — it is not necessary to say, a sword that does not come in peace, but even a sword that comes in peace [is an occasion for alarm].

N. M'SH S: ELDERS WENT DOWN FROM JERUSALEM TO THEIR TOWNS AND DECREED A FAST BECAUSE IN ASKELON THERE HAD APPEARED BLIGHT TO THE EXTENT OF [THE AREA OF] AN OVEN'S MOUTH.

1. [X.1] M'SH S: Elders went down from Jerusalem to their towns and decreed a fast because in Askelon there had appeared blight to the extent of [the area of] an oven's mouth *The question was raised*: like an oven full of grain or perhaps like an oven full of bread [the former is larger]? *Come and take note*: as much as would fill the mouth of an oven.

O. AND A FURTHER FAST ON THE NEXT DAY DID THEY DECREE BECAUSE WOLVES HAD EATEN TWO CHILDREN IN TRANS-JORDAN. R. YOSÉ SAYS, “NOT BECAUSE THEY HAD EATEN ANYONE, BUT MERELY BECAUSE THEY HAD APPEARED.”

1. [XI.1] And a further fast on the next day did they decree because wolves had eaten two children in Trans-Jordan: Said Ulla in the name of R. Simeon b. Yehosedeq, “There was a case in which wolves ate two children and excreted them through the excrement. The case came before sages, who declared the flesh of the children clean but the bones unclean.

P. ON ACCOUNT OF THESE DO THEY SOUND THE SHOFAR [EVEN] ON THE SABBATH. ON ACCOUNT OF A TOWN WHICH GENTILES HAVE BESIEGED, OR A RIVER, AND BECAUSE OF A SHIP WHICH IS FOUNDERING IN THE SEA. R. YOSÉ SAYS, “THEY SOUND THE SHOFAR ON THE SABBATH] FOR HELP, NOT FOR SUPPLICATION.”

1. [XII.1] On account of these do they sound the shofar [even] on the Sabbath. On account of a town which gentiles have besieged, or a river, and because of a ship which is foundering in the sea. R. Yosé says, “They sound the shofar on the Sabbath] for help, not for supplication:” *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority*: A town which gentiles besieged, or a river [M. **Ta. 3:7B**] — and so too, a ship foundering at sea, and so too, an individual pursued by gentiles or by thugs or by an evil spirit — [they sound the alarm even on the Sabbath].

Q. SIMEON THE TEMANITE SAYS.” ALSO ON ACCOUNT OF PESTILENCE.” BUT SAGES DID NOT CONCUR WITH HIM.

1. [XIII.1] Simeon the Temanite says.” Also on account of pestilence:” *The question was raised*: did sages not agree with him concerning the Sabbath alone, but on a weekday they would concur with his rule? Or perhaps they did not agree with him at all?

R. ON ACCOUNT OF EVERY SORT OF PUBLIC TROUBLE — MAY IT NOT HAPPEN — DO THEY SOUND THE SHOFAR, EXCEPT FOR AN EXCESS OF RAIN.

1. [XIV.1] On account of every sort of public trouble — may it not happen — do they sound the shofar, except for an excess of rain: *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority*: On account of every sort of public trouble — may it not happen — do they sound the shofar, except for an excess of rain.

2. [XIV.2] They asked R. Eliezer, “To what extent must rain fall that people may pray that it not fall?” He said to them, “Sufficient that one may stand in Keren Ofel and waggle his feet in the water.”

3. [XIV.3] *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:* “And I will give you your rains in their season” (Lev. 26: 4) — [so that the soil will be] neither soaked nor parched but middling, for so long as the rain is abundant, it scours away the soil and the soil does not produce fruit.

S. M'SH S: THEY SAID TO HONI THE CIRCLE DRAWER, PRAY FOR RAIN.” HE SAID TO THEM, “GO AND TAKE IN THE CLAY OVENS USED FOR PASSOVER, SO THAT THEY NOT SOFTEN [IN THE RAIN WHICH IS COMING].” HE PRAYED, BUT IT DID NOT RAIN. WHAT DID HE DO? HE DREW A CIRCLE AND STOOD IN THE MIDDLE OF IT AND SAID BEFORE HIM, “LORD OF THE WORLD! YOUR CHILDREN HAVE TURNED TO ME, FOR BEFORE YOU, I AM LIKE A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY. I SWEAR BY YOUR GREAT NAME— I’M SIMPLY NOT MOVING FROM HERE UNTIL YOU TAKE PITY ON YOUR CHILDREN!” IT BEGAN TO RAIN DROP BY DROP. HE SAID, “THIS IS NOT WHAT I WANTED, BUT RAIN FOR FILLING UP CISTERNS, PITS, AND CAVERNS.” IT BEGAN TO RAIN VIOLENTLY. HE SAID, “THIS IS NOT WHAT I WANTED, BUT RAIN OF GOOD WILL, BLESSING, AND GRACIOUSNESS.” NOW IT RAINED THE RIGHT WAY, UNTIL THE ISRAELITES HAD TO FLEE FROM JERUSALEM UP TO THE TEMPLE MOUNT BECAUSE OF THE RAIN. NOW THEY CAME AND SAID TO HIM, “JUST AS YOU PRAYED FOR IT TO RAIN, NOW PRAY FOR IT TO GO AWAY.” HE SAID TO THEM, “GO, SEE WHETHER THE STONE OF THOSE WHO STRAY HAS DISAPPEARED [UNDER WATER].” SIMEON B. SHATAH SAID TO HIM, “IF YOU WERE NOT HONI, I SHOULD DECREE A BAN OF EXCOMMUNICATION AGAINST YOU. BUT WHAT AM I GOING TO DO TO YOU? FOR YOU IMPORTUNE BEFORE THE OMNIPRESENT, SO HE DOES WHAT YOU WANT, LIKE A SON WHO IMPORTUNES HIS FATHER, SO HE DOES WHAT HE WANTS. CONCERNING YOU SCRIPTURE SAYS, ‘LET YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER BE GLAD, AND LET HER THAT BORE YOU REJOICE’” (PRO. 23:25).

1. [XV.1] M'SH S: They said to Honi the Circle Drawer, Pray for rain.” *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:* On one occasion the larger part of the month of Adar passed, and rain had not fallen. They sent word to Honi the Circle-Drawer: “Pray so it will rain.” He prayed, but it did not rain. He drew a circle and stood within it in the way in which Habakkuk the prophet did, as it is said, “I will stand upon my watch and set me upon the tower” (Hab. 2: 1). He said before him, “Lord of the world, your children have turned to me, for I am like a member of your household. I take an oath by your great name that I shall not move from here until you have mercy on your children. Rain came, drop by drop.

2. [XV.2] *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:* What message did the members of the Hewn-Stone Chamber [superior court] send to Honi the Circle-Drawer? ‘You shall also decree something and it shall be established for you and light shall shine upon your ways. [When they cast you down, you shall say, there is lifting up. For the humble person he saves. He delivers him that is not innocent, yes, he shall be delivered through the cleanness of your hands]’ (Job. 22:28) — ‘You shall also decree something’ you have decreed below, and the Holy One, blessed be he, carries out your word above. ‘and light shall shine upon your ways.’ a generation that was shrouded in darkness did you illuminate through your prayer.

3. [XV.3] Said R. Yohanan, "All the rest of the life of that righteous man he was troubled by this verse of Scripture: 'A song of ascents: when the Lord brought back those that returned to Zion, we were like those who dream' (Psa. 126: 1). *Honi thought, 'Is there anyone who sleeps and dreams for seventy years?' One day he was going along the road. He saw a man who was planting a carob tree. He said to him, 'As to that tree, how long does it take to bear fruit?' He said to him, 'It takes seventy years.' He said to him, 'Is it absolutely obvious to you that you are going to live another seventy years?' He said to him, 'That man [I] found a world full of carobs. Just as my fathers planted for me, so I plant these for my children.'*"

T. COMPOSITE ON HONI'S DESCENDANTS: ABBA HILQIAH

1. [XV.4] *Abba Hilqiah was the grandson of Honi the Circle-Drawer. When the world needed water, rabbis would send word to him and he would ask for mercy so it rained.*

2. [XV.5] *Hanan the Retiring was the son of the daughter of Honi the Circle-Drawer. When the world needed rain, rabbis would send to him kindergarten children, and they would take hold of the hem of his garment and say to him, "Father, father, give us rain!" He would say before the Holy One, blessed be he, "Do it for the sake of these, who don't know the difference between the father who gives rain and the father does not give rain."*

U. COMPOSITE ON OTHER SAGES AND THEIR POWER TO BRING RAIN

1. [XV.6] Said R. Zeriqa to R. Safra, "Come and see [from the contrast between the actions of these masters] what is the difference between the brawny men of the Land of Israel [who acted arrogantly] and the pious men of Babylonia [who acted humbly]! With respect to the pious men of Babylonia, R. Huna and R. Hisda, when the world needed rain, they should say, 'Let's get together and seek mercy, perhaps the Holy One, blessed be he, will be pleased to give rain.' The brawny men of the Land of Israel, for example, R. Jonah father of R. Mani, when the world needed rain, would go home and say to the household, 'Give me my haversack and I'll go and buy grain for a zuz.'

Formal Composite on Mani

a. [XV.7] *And further, his son, R. Mani, was persecuted by the household of the patriarch. He prostrated himself on his father's grave and said to him, "Father, father, these men are persecuting me." One day, they were passing by there. The knees of their horses stiffened until they undertook not to persecute him.*

b. [XV.8] *And further, R. Mani would regularly attend the lessons of R. Isaac b. Eliashib. He said to him, "The rich members of the household of my father-in-law are persecuting me." He said, "May they lose all their money," and they lost all their money.*

i. [XV.9] *There were these two disciples who were regularly in the presence of R. Isaac b. Eliashib. They said to him, "May the master seek mercy for us, that we may get smarter."*

Formal Composite on Yosé bar Abin/Yosé of Deroqeret

ii. [XV.10] *R. Yosé bar Abin was regularly in the presence of R. Yosé of Deroqeret. He left him and came before R. Ashi. One day he heard him reciting the tradition, “Said Samuel, ‘He who nets a fish from the sea on the Sabbath, once it has dried off to the extent of a sela’s space, is liable for violating the Sabbath.’” [Yosé bar Abin] said to him, “Will the master add, ‘[a spot] between the fins?’” He said to him, “But does the master not concur that R. Yosé bar Abin said that?” [Ashi] said to him, “But were you not regularly in the presence of R. Yosé of Deroqeret?” He said to him, “Yup.” He said to him, “And why did the master leave him and come here?” He said to him, “A man who had no mercy for his son and for his daughter — was he going to treat me mercifully?”*

I. [XV.11] *What’s the story involving his son?*

II. [XV.12] *What’s the story involving his daughter?*

III. [XV.13] *He had an ass. When people would rent it out for a day, they would send the fee tied to its back and it would come home on its own to its master’s house. If they put on too much or too little money for the fee, it wouldn’t go. One day they tied on a pair of sandals. And it would not go until they took them off, and then it went along.*

IV. [XV.14] *R. Eleazar of Birta — when the charity-collectors would see him, they would hide from him, because whatever he had he would give them. One day he was going to the market to buy a trousseau for his daughter. The charity collectors hid from him. He went and ran after them. He said to them, “By an oath! What are you engaged in at just this minute?”*

2. [XV.15] *R. Judah the Patriarch decreed a fast, asked for mercy, but it didn’t rain. He said, “How great is the difference between Samuel the Ramathite and Judah son of Gamaliel! Woe is the generation that finds itself so, woe to him in whose time this has happened.” He felt humiliated and it rained.*

3. [XV.16] *The household of the patriarch decreed a fast but they did not inform R. Yohanan and R. Simeon b. Laqish. In the morning they informed them. Said R. Simeon b. Laqish to R. Yohanan, “Lo, we did not take the fast upon ourselves from the preceding night!”*

4. [XV.17] *The household of the patriarch decreed a fast, but it didn’t rain. Oshaia the youngest of the collegium repeated a Tannaite teaching for them: “‘Then it shall be, if it be done in error by the congregation’ (Num. 15:14) — the matter may be compared to the case of a bride to be, in the household of her father. So long as her eyes are beautiful, her entire body does not have to be examined. If her eyes are bleary, then her whole body needs examination.*

[Everything depends on the eyes, so too here, everything depends on the condition of the patriarchate.]”

5. [XV.18] *Rabbi decreed a fast but it didn't rain. Ilfa — some say, R. Ilfi — went down before the ark and recited, “He causes the wind to blow,” and the wind blew; “the rain to fall,” and rain fell. He said to him, “What sort of deeds to you do?”*

6. [XV.19] *Rab came to a certain place. He decreed a fast but it didn't rain. In his presence the precentor went down before the ark. He said, “He causes the wind to blow,” and the wind blew; “the rain to fall,” and rain fell. He said to him, “What sort of deeds to you do?”*

7. [XV.20] *R. Nahman decreed a fast. He asked for mercy but it didn't rain. He said, “Take Nahman and throw him from the wall to the ground. He felt humiliated and it rained.*

8. [XV.21] *Rabbah decreed a fast. He sought mercy but it didn't rain. They said to him, “And lo, when R. Judah decreed a fast, it rained.” He said to them, “What can I do about it? If it has to do with mastering Tannaite traditions, we excel them, For in the time of R. Judah, all the Tannaite traditions that they learned were in Damages, while we study all six divisions of the Mishnah. And when R. Judah reached the passage, The woman who was preserving vegetables in a pot [M. **Toh. 2:2**], or the passage in Uqsin, If olives are pickled together with their leaves, the leaves are insusceptible [M. **Uqsin 2:1**], he would say, ‘The speculations of Rab and Samuel do I see here,’ while we repeat as Tannaite traditions in tractate Uqsin alone no fewer than thirteen version! But when R. Judah would remove a single shoe [in preparing for a fast], it rained. But as for us, we cry out all day long, but no one pays attention to us. If it is because of some deed or if anyone has seen anything, let him say so. But what can the principals of the generation do when their generation does not appear proper.”*

a. [XV.22] *R. Judah one time saw two men wasting bread and exclaimed, “I should then infer that there is plenty in the world.” He cast his eyes. There was famine.*

b. [XV.23] *R. Mari, son of Samuel's daughter, said, “I was once standing on the bank of the Papa canal. I saw angels who appeared in the guise of sailors, bringing sand and loading ships with it, and it turned into fine flour. Everybody came to buy it. I said to them, ‘Don't buy of that, because it is the result of miracles. The next day boat-loads of wheat came from Perezina.”*

9. [XV.24] *Raba came to Hagronia and decreed a fast but it didn't rain. He said to them, “Let all the people continue with your fasting.”*

10. [XV.25] *Once someone was sentenced by Raba's court to a flogging because he had sexual relations with a gentile woman. Raba had him flogged, and he died. The matter was reported to the court of King Shapur [II]. He wanted to punish Raba. Said to him Ifra Hormiz, King Shapur's mother, to her son, “Don't get involved with these Jews, for whatever they ask from their master he gives them.”*

11. [XV.26] *R. Pappa decreed a fast and it didn't rain. He felt humiliated. He supped on a plateful of grits and asked for mercy but it didn't rain. Said to him R. Nahman bar Oshpazarti, "If you would sup on another plateful of grits, it will rain." He was embarrassed and felt humiliated and it rained.*

12. [XV.27] *R. Hanina b. Dosa was going along the road. It rained. He said before him, "The entire world is in good shape but Hanina is in trouble." The rain stopped. When he got home, he said before him, "The whole world is in trouble but Hanina is in good shape." It rained.*

V. COMPOSITE ON HANINA B. DOSA

1. [XV.27] *Said R. Judah said Rab, "Every day an echo comes forth and says, 'The entire world is sustained on account of Hanina, my son, and Hanina, my son, suffices with a qab of carobs from week to week. Every Friday [having no food to prepare for the Sabbath] his wife would light the oven and toss in what makes smoke on account of embarrassment. She had a bad neighbor. She said, "Now I know that they have nothing, so what's all this [smoke]?" She went and knocked on the door. [Hanina's wife], being embarrassed, went into a room. A miracle was done, and the neighbor looked into the oven and saw an oven full of bread and the kneading trough full of dough. She said to her, "Mrs. So-and-so, Mrs. So-and-so, bring a shovel, your bread is charring."*

2. [XV.28] *Said to him his wife, "How long are we going to go along and suffer like this?" He said to her, "What should we do?" "Ask for mercy that something be given to you." He asked for mercy. Something like a hand came forth [from heaven] and handed to him the leg of a table of gold. He saw in a dream rich righteous men eating at a table of gold that had three legs, but he was eating at a table with only two legs.*

3. [XV.29] *On a Friday one time he saw. One Friday night he saw his daughter feeling sad. He said to her, "My daughter, why are you sad?" She said to him, "My confused my vinegar jar with my oil jar and I kindled the Sabbath light with [vinegar]."*

4. [XV.30] *R. Hanina b. Dosa had goats. They said to him, "They're doing damage [to peoples' property]." He said, "Well, now, if they're really doing damage, let bears eat them, but if not, then this evening let each one of them bring home a bear on its horns!"*

5. [XV.31] *He had a neighbor-lady, who was building room but the beams would not reach the walls. She came before him. She said to him, "I have built my room but the beams don't reach." He said to her, "What's your name." She said to him, "Eiku" [resembling the Greek, eike = would that... (Rabbinowitz)]. He said to her, "Eiku that your beams should reach."*

6. [XV.32] *How come R. Hanina b. Dosa had goats, since he was poor? And moreover didn't sages say, "They do not raise small cattle in the Land of Israel?"*

a. [XV.33] *R. Eleazar b. Pedat suffered extreme privation. He underwent a procedure [of being bled] and had nothing to eat. He took the skin of a garlic and put it into his mouth. He felt faint and slept. Rabbis came to greet him. They saw that he was crying and laughing, and that a beam of*

light radiated from his forehead. When he woke up, they said to him, "How come you cried and laughed?"

W. COMPOSITE ON SAGES' POWER TO BRING RAIN, CONTINUED

1. [XV.34] *R. Hama bar Hanina decreed a fast but it didn't rain. They said to him, "Now look, R. Joshua b. Levi decreed a fast and it rained."*
2. [XV.35] *Levi decreed a fast but it didn't rain. He said before him, "Lord of the world, you have ascended and taken your seat on high, and you don't have mercy for your children." It rained, but he was lamed.*
3. [XV.36] *R. Hiyya bar Luliani heard clouds saying to one another, "Let's go and bring water to Ammon and Moab." He said before him, "Lord of the world, when you gave the Torah to your people, Israel, you made the rounds of all the nations of the world but they did not accept it, and now you give them rain! Let the clouds pour out their water here, and they poured out the water on the spot."*
 - a. [XV.37] *R. Hiyya b. Luliani expounded as follows: "'The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree, he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon' (Psa. 92:13). If we speak of a palm tree, why mention a cedar, and if we mention a cedar, why mention a palm tree? If we had spoken of a cedar but not a palm tree, one might have thought that, just as the cedar does not produce fruit, so the righteous will produce no fruit; therefore the palm tree is noted. And if the palm tree is introduced as the governing analogy but not the cedar, it would have been supposed that just as the stump of the palm tree does not grow afresh, so the shoot of the righteous will not grow. Therefore the cedar also is mentioned."*
4. [XV.38] *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority: There is the case of R. Eliezer, who decreed thirteen fasts for the community but it didn't rain. When at the end the community began to depart, he said to them, "Have you dug graves for yourselves." The whole people broke out in tears, and it rained.*
5. [XV.39] *There is another case involving R. Eliezer, who went down before the ark and said the twenty-four benedictions but was not answered. R. Aqiba went down after him and said, "Our father, our king, we have no king besides you, our father, our king, for your sake have mercy on us," and it rained.*

X. IF THEY WERE FASTING. AND IT RAINED FOR THEM BEFORE SUNRISE, THEY SHOULD NOT COMPLETE THE FAST. [IF IT RAINED] AFTER SUNRISE, THEY SHOULD COMPLETE THE DAY IN FASTING. R. ELIEZER SAYS, "[IF IT RAINED] BEFORE NOON. THEY SHOULD NOT COMPLETE THE DAY IN FASTING. [IF IT RAINED] AFTER NOON, THEY SHOULD COMPLETE THE DAY IN FASTING."

1. [XV.40] *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority: To what extent must rain come down for the community to suspend its fast? [The rain must have penetrated] to as far as the knee of the plough breaks the soil," the words of R. Meir. And sages say, "In arid soil, a handbreadth; in partially soft soil, two handbreadths, and in ploughed soil, three handbreadths."*
 - a. [XV.41] *It has been taught on Tannaite authority: R. Simeon b. Eleazar says, "You do not have a handbreadth of rain that descends from above, that the deep does not rise to meet with three handbreadths from below"*

[T. 1:4J]. *But has it not been taught on Tannaite authority: two handbreadths? There is no contradiction, the one measure applies to soil that is ploughed, the other to soil that is not ploughed.*

b. [XV.42] Said R. Eleazar, “When on the Festival of Tabernacles they pour out the water offerings, the deep says to its fellow, ‘Let your waters spring forth, I hear the voice of two friends [namely, the utensils bearing the water and the wine libations]:’ ‘Deep calls to deep at the voice of your cataracts’ (Psa. 42: 8).”

2. [XVI.1] If they were fasting and it rained for them before sunrise, they should not complete the fast. [If it rained] after sunrise, they should complete the day in fasting: *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:* “If they were fasting and it rained for them before sunrise, they should not complete the fast. [If it rained] after sunrise, they should complete the day in fasting,” the words of R. Meir. R. Judah says, “If it rained before noontime, they need not complete the fast. If it rained after noontime, they should complete the day in fasting.” R. Yosé says, “If it rained before the ninth hour, they need not complete the fast, if after the ninth hour, they must complete it. For lo, we find in the case of Ahab, king of Israel, that he did fast from the ninth hour onwards: ‘See you how Ahab humbles himself before me’ (1Ki. 21:29).”

a. [XVI.2] R. Judah the Patriarch decreed a fast and it rained after dawn. He considered that people should complete the fast. Said to him R. Ammi, “We have learned: before noontime...after noontime.”

i. [XVI.3] Samuel the Younger decreed a fast and it rained before dawn. The people thought that it was a gesture of praise for the community. He said to them, “I shall tell you a parable: to what is the matter to be compared? To a slave who asked his master for a favor, and the master said to them, ‘Give it to him, so I don’t have to hear his voice.’”

ii. [XVI.4] Again Samuel the Younger decreed a fast, and it rained after sunset. The people thought that it was a gesture of praise for the community. He said to them, “This is not a gesture of praise to the community. But I shall tell you a parable: to what is the matter to be compared? To a slave who asked his master for a favor, and the master said, ‘Let him wait until he is submissive and upset and then give him his favor.’”

Y. WM'SH S: THEY DECREED A FAST IN LUD. IT RAINED BEFORE NOON. R. TARFON SAID TO THEM, “GO, EAT AND DRANK AND CELEBRATE A FESTIVAL.” SO THEY AROSE AND ATE AND DRANK AND CELEBRATED A FESTIVAL DAY. THEN THEY ASSEMBLED IT TWILIGHT AND PROCLAIMED THE GREAT HALLEL [THAT IS. PSA. 136].

1. [XVII.1] WM'SH S: They decreed a fast in Lud. It rained before noon. R. Tarfon said to them, “Go, eat and drank and celebrate a festival.” So they arose and ate and drank and celebrated a festival day. Then they assembled it twilight and proclaimed the Great Hallel [that is. Psa. 136]: *Shouldn't they have said*

Hallel to begin with? Abbayye and Raba both said, “It is because they say Hallel only in a sated spirit with a fully belly.”

XV. Mishnah-Tractate Taanit 4:1-7

A. ON THREE OCCASIONS IN THE YEAR PRIESTS RAISE UP THEIR HANDS [IN THE PRIESTLY BENEDICTION] FOUR TIMES A DAY: AT THE MORNING PRAYER, THE ADDITIONAL PRAYER, THE AFTERNOON PRAYER, AND THE CLOSING OF THE GATES; ON THE OCCASION OF FASTS, ON THE OCCASIONS OF [PRAYERS OF MEMBERS OF THE] DELEGATION [MA’AMAD], AND ON THE DAY OF ATONEMENT.

1. [I.1] On three occasions in the year priests raise up their hands [in the priestly benediction] four times a day: at the morning prayer, the additional prayer, the afternoon prayer, and the closing of the gates; on the occasion of fasts, on the occasions of [prayers of members of the] delegation [ma’amad], and on the Day of Atonement: As to the inclusion of the additional prayer in the list,] *on fast days and on the occasion of prayers of members of the delegation, is there an additional prayer? [Certainly not!] The passage is flawed and this is how it should be formulated as a Tannaite law:* On three occasions in the year the priests raise up their hands in the priestly benediction at every occasion on which they are reciting prayers. And among them there is an occasion on which that four times a day: at the morning prayer, the additional prayer, the afternoon prayer, and the closing of the gates. The following are the three occasions: on the occasion of fasts, on the occasions of [prayers of members of the] delegation [ma’amad], and on the Day of Atonement.

a. [I.2] *In any event all parties concur that a drunken priest is forbidden to raise his hands in the priestly benediction. What is the source for this view?*

B. WHAT WERE THE DELEGATIONS [MA’AMADOT]? [IT IS SAID,] “COMMAND THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL AND SAY TO THEM, ‘MY OBLIGATION. MY FOOD [FOR MY OFFERINGS MADE OF FIRE, OF A SWEET SAVOR TO ME, SHALL YOU OBSERVE TO OFFER ME IN THEIR DUE SEASON]’” (NUM. 28: 2) — NOW HOW CAN A PERSON’S OFFERING BE MADE WHILE HE IS NOT STANDING BY ITS SIDE? THE EARLY PROPHETS MADE THE RULE OF TWENTY-FOUR WATCHES, AND FOR EACH WATCH THERE WAS A DELEGATION [MA’AMAD] IN JERUSALEM MADE UP OF PRIESTS, LEVITES, AND ISRAELITES.

1. [II.1] What were the delegations [ma’amadot]? *What is the sense of the passage? What is the sense of the passage?* What were the delegations [ma’amadot]? And what is the reason that they instituted the priestly delegations??

2. [II.2] *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:* There were twenty-four priestly watches in the Land of Israel

a. [II.3] Said R. Judah said Samuel, “The absence of any component of the delegation, whether priests, Levites, or Israelites, invalidates the offering.” [All are essential.]

3. [II.4] Said R. Hama bar Guria said Rab, “Moses instituted for Israel eight priestly watches, four from Eleazar and four from Ithamar. Samuel came along and

increased them to sixteen; David came along and increased them to twenty-four: 'In the fortieth year of the reign of David they were sought for and there were found among the mighty men of valor at Jazer of Gilead' (1Ch. 26:31)."

4. [II.5] *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:* Four priestly watches came up from the Exile: Jediah, Harim, Pashhur, and Immer (Ezr. 2:36-39). The prophets who were in Jerusalem went and divided them into twenty-four watches, mixed up [lots], and placed them in an urn.

C. WHEN THE TIME CAME FOR A WATCH TO GO UP TO JERUSALEM, ITS PRIESTS AND LEVITES GO UP WITH IT TO JERUSALEM. AND ISRAELITES WHO BELONG TO THAT WATCH GATHER TOGETHER IN THEIR TOWNS AND STUDY THE STORY OF THE WORKS OF CREATION.

1. [III.1] And Israelites who belong to that watch gather together in their towns and study the story of the works of creation: *What is the basis for this rite?* Said R. Jacob bar Aha said R. Assi, "Were it not for the priestly watches, heaven and earth could not endure: 'And he said, O Lord God, how shall I know that I shall inherit it' (Gen. 15: 8) —

2. [III.2] *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:* The [lay-] men of the priestly watch would pray over the offering of their priestly brethren that it may be accepted with good will. And the men of the delegation would gather in the synagogue and would sit out four fasts, on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday of that week. On Monday they would fast for those that go down to the sea [in ships], on Tuesday for those that traverse the wilderness, on Wednesday that croup not afflict the children, on Thursday for pregnant women and nursing mothers, that the pregnant women not suffer a miscarriage, that the nursing mothers be able to nurse. On Friday they did not fast, because of the honor that is owing to the Sabbath — all the more so on the Sabbath itself [they did not fast].

D. THE MEMBERS OF A DELEGATION WOULD FAST FOUR DAYS A WEEK. FROM MONDAY TO THURSDAY. BUT THEY DID NOT FAST ON THE EVE OF THE SABBATH, BECAUSE OF THE HONOR OWING TO THE SABBATH, NOR ON SUNDAY SO AS NOT TO GO FORTH FROM RESTING AND ENJOYMENT TO TRAVAIL AND FASTING, AND SO PERISH.

E. ON THE FIRST DAY [THEY READ] FROM, "IN THE BEGINNING" TO "LET THERE BE A FIRMAMENT" (GEN. 1: 1-8):

1. IV.1] On the first day [Sunday, they read] from, "In the beginning" to "Let there be a firmament" (Gen. 1: 1-8): *A Tannaite teaching:* [The paragraph in the Torah beginning] "In the beginning" [i.e., Gen. 1: 1-5] is [read] in two [parts] and [the paragraph beginning] "Let there be a firmament" [i.e., Gen. 1: 6-8] is [read] as one [cf. M [Sheq. 4:3](#)].

F. ON THE SECOND DAY, FROM "LET THERE BE A FIRMAMENT" TO "LET THE WATERS BE GATHERED TOGETHER" (GEN. 1: 6-13); ON THE THIRD DAY, FROM "LET THE WATERS BE GATHERED TOGETHER" TO "LET THERE BE LIGHT" (GEN. 1: 9-19); ON THE FOURTH DAY, FROM "LET THERE BE LIGHT" TO "LET THE WATER BRING FORTH ABUNDANTLY" (GEN. 1:14-23); AND ON THE FIFTH DAY, FROM "LET THE WATERS BRING FORTH ABUNDANTLY" TO "LET THE EARTH BRING

FORTH” (GEN. 1:20-31); AND ON THE SIXTH DAY, FROM “LET THE EARTH BRING FORTH” TO “AND THE HEAVEN AND THE EARTH WERE FINISHED” (GEN. 1:24-31, 2:1-3).

G. IN THE CASE OF A LONG PERICOPE, THEY READ IT BY TWO, AND IN THE CASE OF A BRIEF ONE. BY ONE PERSON.

1. [V.1] In the case of a long pericope, they read it by two, and in the case of a brief one. by one person. At the morning service, at the additional service, and at the afternoon service they come together and recite it by heart, just as they recite the Shema’: *The question was raised: what is the sense of this statement?* At the morning service and at the additional service they read it from a scroll and at the afternoon service they read it from memory, as people recite the Shema’? *Or perhaps this is the sense of the statement:* At the morning service they read it in a scroll and at the additional and afternoon services they recite it by memory as they recite the Shema’?

H. AT THE MORNING SERVICE, AT THE ADDITIONAL SERVICE, AND AT THE AFTERNOON SERVICE THEY COME TOGETHER AND RECITE IT BY HEART, JUST AS THEY RECITE THE SHEMA. ON THE EVE OF THE SABBATH AT THE AFTERNOON PRAYER THEY DID NOT COME TOGETHER, BECAUSE OF THE HONOR OWING TO THE SABBATH.

I. “ON ANY DAY ON WHICH THE HALLEL IS SAID, THERE IS NO DELEGATION [GATHERING FOR THE STUDY OF THE WORKS OF CREATION] AT DAWN; [IF THERE IS] AN ADDITIONAL OFFERING, THERE IS NO DELEGATION AT THE CLOSING OF THE GATES; “[IF THERE IS] AN OFFERING OF WOOD, THERE IS NO DELEGATION AT THE AFTERNOON SERVICE,” THE WORDS OF R. AQIBA. SAID TO HIM BEN AZZAI, “THIS WAS THE WAY IN WHICH R. JOSHUA TAUGHT THE RULE: “[IF THERE IS] AN ADDITIONAL OFFERING, THERE IS NO [DELEGATION AT] THE AFTERNOON PRAYER; “[IF THERE IS] A WOOD OFFERING, THERE IS NO [DELEGATION AT] THE CLOSING OF THE GATES.” R. AQIBA REVERTED AND REPEATED THE TRADITION IN THE FORMULATION OF BEN AZZAI.

1. [VI.1] On any day on which the Hallel is said, there is no delegation [gathering for the study of the works of creation] at dawn: What’s the distinction between this and that [Rabbinowitz: why on the day of the wood-offering is no ma’amad held at the closing of the gates but takes place as usual at the afternoon service]?

2. [VII.1] [if there is] an offering of wood, there is no delegation at the afternoon service: *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:* How come they found it necessary to state a specified time for the wood offering of the priests and of the people?

J. THE TIME OF THE WOOD OFFERING OF PRIESTS AND PEOPLE [COMES ON] NINE [OCCASIONS IN THE YEAR]: ON THE FIRST OF NISAN [IS THE OFFERING OF] THE FAMILY OF ARAH B. JUDAH [EZR. 2: 5, NEH. 2:10]; ON THE TWENTIETH OF TAMMUZ [IS THE OFFERING OF] THE FAMILY OF DAVID B. JUDAH; ON THE FIFTH OF AB [IS THE OFFERING OF] THE FAMILY OF PAROSH B. JUDAH [EZR. 2: 3, NEH. 2:8]; ON THE SEVENTH OF THAT MONTH [IS THE OFFERING OF] THE FAMILY OF YONADAB B. REKHAB [JER. 35: 1FF.]; ON THE TENTH OF THAT MONTH [IS THE OFFERING OF] THE FAMILY OF SENAAB B. BENJAMIN [EZR. 2:35, NEH. 7:38]; ON

THE FIFTEENTH OF THAT MONTH [IS THE OFFERING OF] THE FAMILY OF ZATTU B. JUDAH [EZR. 2: 8, NEH. 7:13].

K. AND WITH THEM [COMES THE OFFERING OF] PRIESTS, LEVITES, AND WHOEVER IS UNCERTAIN AS TO HIS TRIBE, AND THE FAMILIES OF THE PESTLE SMUGGLERS AND FIG PRESSERS. ON THE TWENTIETH OF THAT SAME MONTH [IS THE OFFERING OF] THE FAMILY OF PAHAT MOAB B. JUDAH [EZR. 2: 6, NEH. 7:11]. ON THE TWENTIETH OF ELUL [IS THE OFFERING OF] THE FAMILY OF ADIN B. JUDAH [EZR. 2:15, NEH. 7:20]. ON THE FIRST OF TEBET THE FAMILY OF PAROSH RETURNED A SECOND TIME [WITH ANOTHER WOOD OFFERING]. ON THE FIRST OF TEBET [HANUKKAH] THERE WAS NO DELEGATION, FOR THERE WAS HALLEL ON THAT DAY, AS WELL AS AN ADDITIONAL OFFERING AND A WOOD OFFERING.

1. [VIII.1] and with them [comes the offering of] priests, Levites, and whoever is uncertain as to his tribe, and the families of the pestle smugglers and fig pressers: *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority*: What is the matter involving the families of the Pestle-Smugglers and the Fig-Pressers? What was the matter having to do with the families of the Pestle-Smugglers and the Fig-Pressers [M. **Ta. 4:5H**]?

2. [VIII.2] *A Tannaite statement*: What is the matter having to do with the family of Salmai the Netophathites [cf. 1Ch. 2:54: “The sons of Salma: Bethlehem, the Netophathites”]? Now when the Greek kings set up guards on the roads so that the people should not go up to Jerusalem, [Bavli: that they should not bring wood for the wood pile to Jerusalem, and they set up guard posts on the roads,] just as Jeroboam the son of Nebat did, then whoever was a suitable and sin-fearing person of that generation would take two pieces of wood and make them into a kind of ladder and put it on his shoulder and go up.

3. [IX.1] On the twentieth of that same month [is the offering of] the family of Pahat Moab b. Judah [Ezr. 2:6, Neh. 7:11]: *A Tannaite statement*: “The family of Pahat Moab b. Judah is the same as the family of David b. Judah,” the words of R. Meir. R. Yosé says, “They are the same as the family of Joab b. Zeraiah.”

4. [X.1] On the twentieth of Elul [is the offering of] the family of Adin b. Judah [Ezr. 2:15, Neh. 7:20]: *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority*: The family of Adin b. Judah is the same as the family of David b. Judah,” the words of R. Judah.

a. [XI.1] On the first of Tebet the family of Parosh returned a second time [with another wood offering]: *In accord with which authority is this Mishnah-statement? It cannot accord with R. Meir or with R. Judah or with R. Yosé. If it were to accord with R. Meir, the Tannaite formulation should be, “...returned the family of David b. Judah a second time....” If it were to accord with R. Judah, the Tannaite formulation should say, “...returned the family of David b. Judah a second time....” If it were to accord with R. Yosé, the Tannaite formulation should say, “...returned the family of Joab b. Zeraiah a second time....”*

5. [XII.1] On the first of Tebet [Hanukkah] there was no delegation [prayer, that is, Ma’amad prayer], for there was Hallel on that day, as well as an additional offering and a wood offering: *Said Mar Qashisha, son of R. Hisda, to R. Ashi,*

“What differentiates Hallel, that it overrides and suspends its own Ma’amad prayer, from the afternoon service, which does not override and suspend its own Ma’amad?” [Rabbinowitz: on the day when Hallel is recited the corresponding Ma’amad prayer of the Morning service is eliminated; on the day when there is an additional service, the ma’amad of the afternoon service is eliminated and not the one attached to the additional service itself.]

6. [XII.2] *The Tannaite formulation of the rule* [On the first of Tebet (Hanukkah) there was no delegation, for there was Hallel on that day, as well as an additional offering and a wood offering] *should also make reference to the first of Nisan in the same way, namely:* On the first of Nisan there was no delegation, because there was Hallel on that day, and an additional offering and a wood offering?

a. [XII.3] *Rab came to Babylonia. He saw that the people were reciting the Hallel on the New Moon. He considered stopping that practice, but, when he saw that the skipped parts of it, he said, “It is to be inferred that a custom from their fathers is in hand.”*

7. [XII.4] *A Tannaite statement:* An individual should not commence reciting the Hallel, but if he has started, he should complete it.

L. FIVE EVENTS OCCURRED TO OUR FATHERS ON THE SEVENTEENTH OF TAMMUZ, AND FIVE ON THE NINTH OF AB. ON THE SEVENTEENTH OF TAMMUZ THE TABLETS [OF THE TORAH] WERE BROKEN:

1. [XIII.1] Five events occurred to our fathers on the seventeenth of Tammuz, and five on the ninth of Ab. On the seventeenth of Tammuz the tablets [of the Torah] were broken: On the seventeenth of Tammuz the tablets [of the Torah] were broken — *how do we know that fact? It is in accord with that which has been taught on Tannaite authority:* On the sixth of the month [of Sivan] the Ten Commandments were given to Israel.

M. THE DAILY WHOLE OFFERING WAS CANCELED:

1. [XIV.1] the daily whole offering was canceled: *This is a tradition [gemara].*

N. THE CITY [WALL] WAS BREACHED:

1. [XV.1] the city [wall] was breached: *Was this actually on the seventeenth of Tammuz? And is it not written, “In the fourth month in the ninth day of the month the famine was heavy in the city” (Jer. 52: 6), then “Then a breach was made in the city” (Jer. 52: 7)!*

O. APOSTEMOS BURNED THE TORAH:

1. [XVI.1] Apostemos burned the Torah: *This is a tradition [gemara].*

P. AND HE SET UP AN IDOL IN THE TEMPLE.

1. [XVII.1] and he set up an idol in the Temple: *How do we know this fact?*

Q. ON THE NINTH OF AB THE DECREE WAS MADE AGAINST OUR FOREFATHERS THAT THEY SHOULD NOT ENTER THE LAND:

1. [XVIII.1] On the ninth of Ab the decree was made against our forefathers that they should not enter the land: *How do we know this?* It is written, “It happened in the first month of the second year, on the first day of the month, that the tabernacle

was set up” (Exo. 11:17) — and a master said, “In the first year of the exodus, Moses made the tabernacle, in the second, he set it up and he sent out the spies. And it is written, ‘And it came to pass in the second year in the second month on the twentieth day of the month that the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle of testimony’ (Num. 10:11), and further, ‘And they set forward from the mount of the Lord three days’ journey’ (Num. 10:33).”

R. THE FIRST TEMPLE....:

1. [XIX.1] ...the first Temple was destroyed: It is written, “Now in the fifth month on the seventh day of the month which was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylonia, came Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, servant of the King of Babylonia, to Jerusalem. And he burnt the house of the Lord” (2Ki. 25: 8-9) And it is written, “Now in the fifth month on the tenth day of the month which was the nineteenth year of King Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylonia, came Nebuzaradan, captain of the guard, who stood before the king of Babylonia, to Jerusalem” (Jer. 52:12) *And it has been taught on Tannaite authority:* One cannot say it was on the seventh day, for lo, it has further been said on the tenth, and it is not possible to say it was on the tenth, for lo, it has further been said it was on the seventh, Lo, how then? On the seventh the gentiles entered the sanctuary, and they ate and desecrated it through the seventh and the eight, and on the ninth, near dark, they kindled a fire in it, and it turned continuously through that entire day, as it is said, “Woe to us, for the day declines, for the shadows of evening are stretched out” (Jer. 6: 4).

S. ...AND THE SECOND [TEMPLE] WERE DESTROYED:

1. [XX.1] ...and the second [Temple] was destroyed: *how do we know that that is the case?* [T.: R. Yosé says,] “They assign a meritorious matter to a day that merits it, and a disadvantageous matter to a day of disadvantage.” They say: When the Temple was destroyed the first time, it was the ninth of Ab, the day after the Sabbath, and the year after the Sabbatical year. And it was the watch of Jehoiairib.

T. BETAR WAS TAKEN:

1. [XXI.1] Betar was taken: *This is a tradition [gemara].*

U. ...AND THE CITY WAS PLOUGHED UP [AFTER THE WAR OF HADRIAN]:

1. [XXII.1] ...and the city was ploughed up [after the war of Hadrian]: *It has been taught on Tannaite authority:* When Torenos Rufus the wicked destroyed the Temple, the decree of death was issued against Rabban Gamaliel. A lord stood at the school house and said, “Big-Nose is being summoned, Big-Nose is being summoned.” Rabban Gamaliel heard. *He hid out from them. The other went to him secretly. He said to him, “If I save you, will you bring me into the world to come.” He said to him, “Yes.”*

2. [XXII.2] *Our rabbis have taught:* When the first Temple was destroyed, bands of young priests gathered together, with the keys of the sanctuary in their hand, and they went up to the roof of the sanctuary and said before him, “Lord of the world, since we have not had the merit of being faithful custodians, let the keys be given back to you,” and they threw them upward” [Abot deR. Nathan IV.vi.2].

V. WHEN AB COMES, REJOICING DIMINISHES.

1. [XXIII.1] When Ab comes, rejoicing diminishes: Said R. Judah, son of R. Samuel bar Shilat in the name of Rab, “Just as, when Ab comes, rejoicing diminishes, so when Adar comes, rejoicing increases.”

a. [XXIII.2] “To give you a future and a hope” (Jer. 29:11): Said R. Judah, son of R. Samuel bar Shilat in the name of Rab, “This refers to palm trees and flax clothing.”

b. [XXIII.3] “And he said, See, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field that the Lord has blessed” (Gen. 27:27): Said R. Judah, son of R. Samuel bar Shilat in the name of Rab, “That is the smell of an apple orchard.”

w. IN THE WEEK IN WHICH THE NINTH OF AB OCCURS IT IS PROHIBITED TO GET A HAIRCUT AND TO WASH ONE’S CLOTHES. BUT ON THURSDAY OF THAT WEEK THESE ARE PERMITTED, BECAUSE OF THE HONOR OWING TO THE SABBATH.

1. [XXIV.1] In the week in which the ninth of Ab occurs it is prohibited to get a haircut or to wash one’s clothes [But on Thursday of that week these are permitted, because of the honor owing to the Sabbath]: Said R. Nahman, “They have taught that law only in connection with laundering the clothing and then putting it on, but as to laundering the clothing and then leaving it for some other time, that is permitted.” And R. Sheshet said, “Even laundering the clothing and then leaving it for some other time is forbidden.”

2. [XXIV.2] R. Isaac bar Giori sent word in the name of R. Yohanan, “Even though they have said that flax garments are not subject to the prohibition against laundry work, still, it is forbidden to wear them [if they are freshly washed] in the week in which the ninth of Ab falls.”

X. ON THE EVE OF THE NINTH OF AB A PERSON SHOULD NOT EAT TWO PREPARED DISHES.

1. [XXV.1] On the eve of the ninth of Ab a person should not eat two prepared dishes: Said R. Judah, “That rule applies from six hours onward [midday], but in meals taken before six hours [noon] it is permitted to eat two prepared dishes.” And said R. Judah, “That rule applies to the meal at which eating prior to the fast comes to an end, but as to any meal that is not the last meal before the fast, it is permitted [to eat two prepared dishes].”

2. [XXV.2] *It has further been taught on Tannaite authority:* “On the eve of the ninth of Ab a person should not eat two prepared meals. He should not eat meat and he should not drink wine,” the words of R. Meir. And sages say, “He should make a change in his ordinary way of eating, and eat less than the usual quantity of meat and drink less than the usual volume of wine. How does he diminish? If he was accustomed to eat a litra of meat, let him eat a half-litra. If he was accustomed to drink a log of wine, let him drink a half-log of wine. And if he is not accustomed to meat or wine at all, he is forbidden to eat meat or drink wine.”

3. [XXV.3] *It has further been taught on Tannaite authority:* At the final meal prior to the ninth of Ab, it is forbidden to eat any amount of meat at all and forbidden to drink any amount of wine at all, and it is forbidden to wish. At the

meal not intended as the final meal prior to the ninth of Ab, it is permitted to eat meat and to drink wine but forbidden to wish.

4. [XXV.4] *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority:* All religious duties that apply to the mourner apply on the ninth of Ab. It is forbidden to eat, drink, anoint, put on shoes, have sexual relations.

Y. ...NOR SHOULD ONE EAT MEAT OR DRINK WINE. RABBAN SIMEON B. GAMALIEL SAYS. HE SHOULD MAKE SOME CHANGE FROM ORDINARY PROCEDURES."

1. [XXVI.1] ...nor should one eat meat or drink wine: *A Tannaite statement:* But he may eat salt meat and drinks new wine

2. [XXVI.2] Said R. Judah said Rab, "This was the custom of R. Judah b. R. Ilai: On the eve of the ninth of Ab they bring him a dry piece of bread with salt, and he sits between the baking oven and the cooking oven and eat, and he would drink a jug of water. And he looks like someone whose deceased relative is lying dead before him."

3. [XXVI.3] *There we have learned in the Mishnah:* Where they are accustomed to do work on the ninth of Ab, they do it. Where they are accustomed not to do work, they do not do it. And in every place disciples of sages refrain from labor. Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel says, "Under all circumstances should a man act on his own like a disciple of a sage" [M. **Pes. 4:5A-D**].

4. [XXVI.4] *It has further been taught on Tannaite authority:* Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel says, "Whoever eats and drinks on the ninth of Ab is as if he were eating and drinking on the Day of Atonement." R. Aqiba says, "Whoever carries out an act of labor on the ninth of Ab will never see a mark of blessing from his work."

5. [XXVI.5] Concerning whoever eats meat and drinks wine on the ninth of Ab Scripture says, "And their iniquities are upon their bones"(Eze. 32:27).

AA. R. JUDAH DECLARES PEOPLE LIABLE TO TURN OVER BEDS. BUT SAGES DID NOT CONCUR WITH HIM

1. [XXVII.1] R. Judah declares people liable to turn over beds. But sages did not concur with him: *It has been taught on Tannaite authority:* They said to R. Judah, "Within your theory, what will become of pregnant women and nursing mothers?"

BB. SAID RABBAN SIMEON BEN GAMALIEL, "THERE WERE NO DAYS BETTER FOR ISRAELITES THAN THE FIFTEENTH OF AB AND THE DAY OF ATONEMENT."

1. [XXVIII.1] Said Rabban Simeon ben Gamaliel, "There were no days better for Israelites than the fifteenth of Ab and the Day of Atonement:" *Now there is no problem understanding why the Day of Atonement is a good day, since it is the day of forgiveness and pardon, and the day on which the second tablets of the law were given, but why the fifteenth of Ab?*

2. [XXVIII.2] *It has been taught on Tannaite authority:* R. Eliezer the Elder says, "When the fifteenth of Ab arrives, the power of the sun diminishes, and they would no longer cut wood for the altar, because it would not dry sufficiently."

CC. FOR ON THESE DAYS JERUSALEMITE GIRLS GO OUT IN BORROWED WHITE DRESSES — SO AS NOT TO SHAME THOSE WHO OWNED NONE. ALL THE DRESSES HAD TO BE IMMersed. AND THE JERUSALEMITE GIRLS GO OUT TO DANCE IN THE

VINEYARDS. WHAT DID THEY SAY? THOSE WHO CAME OF NOBLE FAMILIES SAID, “FELLOW LOOK AROUND AND SEE — CHOOSE WHAT YOU WANT. “DON’T LOOK FOR BEAUTY, LOOK FOR FAMILY.” “CHARM IS DECEITFUL AND BEAUTY IS VAIN, BUT A WOMAN WHO FEARS THE LORD WILL BE PRAISED” (PRO. 31:30). AND IT SAYS, “GIVE HER OF THE FRUIT OF HER HANDS AND LET HER WORKS PRAISE HER IN THE GATES” (PRO. 31:31). AND SO IT SAYS, “GO FORTH, YOU DAUGHTERS OF ZION, AND BEHOLD KING SOLOMON WITH THE CROWN WITH WHICH HIS MOTHER CROWNED HIM IN THE DAY OF HIS ESPOUSALS AND IN THE DAY OF THE GLADNESS OF HIS HEART” (SON. 3:11). “THE DAY OF HIS ESPOUSALS” — THIS REFERS TO THE DAY ON WHICH THE TORAH WAS GIVEN. “THE DAY OF THE GLADNESS OF HIS HEART” — THIS REFERS TO THE BUILDING OF THE TEMPLE — “MAY IT BE REBUILT QUICKLY IN OUR DAYS.

1. [XXIX.1] For on these days Jerusalemite girls go out in borrowed white dresses — so as not to shame those who owned none: *Our rabbis have taught on Tannaite authority*: A princess borrows from the daughter of the high priest, the daughter of the high priest from the daughter of the prefect of the priests, the daughter of the prefect of the priests from the daughter of the priest anointed for war, the daughter of the priest anointed for war from the daughter of an ordinary priest, and all the Israelites borrow from one another, so that the one who has none will not be embarrassed.
2. [XXX.1] All the dresses had to be immersed: Said R. Eleazar,, “Even though they had lain folded in a box [unworn].”
3. [XXXI.1] And the Jerusalemite girls go out to dance in the vineyards: *A Tannaite statement*: Whoever had no wife went there.
4. [XXXII.1] What did they say? Those who came of distinguished lineage said, “Fellow look around and see — choose what you want. Don’t look for beauty. look for family.” The really beautiful among them — what did they say? “Look for beauty, for a woman is only for beauty.” Those who came from distinguished lineage — what did they say?
5. [XXXI.2] Said Ulla Biraah said R. Eleazar, “The Holy One, blessed be he, is destined to make a dance for the righteous, and he will dwell among them in the Garden of Eden, and every one will honor him with a gesture: ‘And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God, for whom we waited, that he might save us; this is the Lord for whom we waited, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation’ (Isa. 25: 9).”

Points of Structure

1. DOES BABYLONIAN TALMUD-TRACTATE TAANIT FOLLOW A COHERENT OUTLINE GOVERNED BY A CONSISTENT RULES?

The Mishnah-tractate Taanit dictates the Talmud's treatment of its topic, and seen whole, the Bavli-tractate belongs in the classification of a commentary. The order of topics demonstrates that fact, since at only a very few points are we unable to relate a large-scale composite to the topical program of Mishnah-tractate Taanit. At the same time, Bavli Taanit contains a number of sizable composites that do not serve the task of Mishnah-exegesis. Most of these address themes introduced by the task of Mishnah-exegesis.

2. WHAT ARE THE SALIENT TRAITS OF ITS STRUCTURE?

Overall, we find two distinct components of the structure of the Talmud-tractate: comments on the Mishnah, generally episodic if also systematic, and also large-scale composites. These are clearly identified. In general we can understand why the composites have been inserted. The structure of the tractate, however, is dictated by the task of Mishnah-exegesis; compositions and composites that serve that purpose clearly distinguish themselves from those that do not and everywhere predominate. Compositions and composites formed for other purposes, e.g., to expound a theme or to collect stories pertinent to a given topic, take a subordinate role and ordinarily serve to amplify topics that the Mishnah introduces or that follow in the wake of those that the Mishnah has introduced. As the outline shows clearly, the work of Mishnah-exegesis is primary, takes first place, predominates.

3. WHAT IS THE RATIONALITY OF THE STRUCTURE?

The rationality of the document finds its definition in the principles of Mishnah-exegesis, on the one side, and the program of Mishnah-re-presentation on the other. That is to say, if we were to remove all of the compositions and composites not linked to Mishnah-amplification in one form or the other, we should find little left of the tractate as we know it. These are the units of the tractate that focus upon Mishnah-exegesis: I, III, IV, V, X, XI.A, C, XII.A-B, D-H, XIII.A-K, XIV.A-E, H-I, K-S, W-Y, XV.A-CC. That is to say, nearly the whole of the Talmud-tractate is assembled around the work of clarifying the law of the Mishnah, then of amplifying the topics of the Mishnah. A very, very tiny proportion of the whole addresses tasks other than those two.

4. WHERE ARE THE POINTS OF IRRATIONALITY IN THE STRUCTURE?

I identify these asymptomatic entries, classified as indicated. A topical composite holds together because all of its compositions expound a given theme. Occasionally, the topical composite will expound a theme systematically, making points that connect and unfold. Sometimes the topical composite shows no internal plan; it does not expound its topic so much as simply portray random data concerning said topic. For our purpose that distinction makes little difference, but for future inquiry it will bear its messages. A formal composite holds together around a trait that does not pertain to matters of substance, e.g., a common attributive formula. At issue for us, in due course, is: can we explain the inclusion of the composites, whether topical or formal? It is nearly always easy to account for the formal composite's insertion, since the indicative formal trait of a pertinent composition of the composite will pertain to the substantive exegetical program, and then

the inclusion of the relevant composition of the composite draws in its wake the rest of the composite. That hardly surprises.

A. TOPICAL COMPOSITES

II Thematic Composite on clouds and rain

VII Thematic composite on the theme of the former rain and the latter rain

VIII Composite on the classification, in the large scheme of Israel's life, of the rainy day: comparable to the day on which the dead are resurrect, the day on which the Torah was given, and so on

IX. Composite on Why Rain is Withheld or Why Rain is Given

XI.B Miscellany on Fasting

XII.C Where in the Liturgy is the Prayer for the Fast Day Inserted?

XIV.F The Merits of Sages that Permit Them to Do Wonders

XIV.G A Particular Sage: Nahum of Gimzo

XIV.J Other Miracles Done to Pay Respect to Various Sages

XIV.T Composite on Honi's Descendants: Abba Hilqiah

XIV.U Other Sages and their Power to Bring Rain

XIV.V Hanina b. Dosa

B. FORMAL COMPOSITES

VI. Formal composite: Nahman/Isaac attributions

XIV.U.1.a-b Formal Composite on Mani

XIV.U.1.b.ii etc. Formal Composite on Yosé bar Abin etc.

Now the issue is, how have these entries changed the face of the Bavli-tractate's representation of the Mishnah-tractate? The formal composites may be dismissed out of hand. They always identify themselves; we never have difficulty explaining their presence. At some point they intersect with an established exposition, one integral to Mishnah-exegesis or amplification. What about the topical composites? Here, it is self-evident, we can explain the pertinence of each topic of the topical composites, accounting for its particular location as well. Let us consider in detail the rationality of including the topical composites' themes and of positioning them in particular where they are located. Then we ask whether we can characterize the Bavli's own contribution through the selection, inclusion, and positioning, of the topical composites.

Points of System

1. DOES THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD-TRACTATE TAANIT SERVE ONLY AS A REPRESENTATION OF THE MISHNAH-TRACTATE OF THE SAME NAME?

This question finds its answer in two facts. First, how many compositions of the Mishnah-tractate altogether lack Talmud-discussions? The answer is, few, and these prove episodic. We cannot predict which Mishnah-paragraphs will lack Talmud-compositions or propose a theory on the traits that would characterize the Mishnah-sentences that are treated or those that are not. The matter appears to me to be random. But that is only because comparative hermeneutics has yet to accomplish its task, to permit us to characterize what the Tosefta is likely to do that the Bavli is not likely to do in the work of Mishnah-exegesis. Second, and perhaps of greater interest, how many composites in the Talmud stand completely out of relationship with the Mishnah? Here we are well qualified to deal with the issue. That question is answered in the next rubric.

2. HOW DO THE TOPICAL COMPOSITES FIT INTO THE TALMUD-TRACTATE TAANIT AND WHAT DO THEY CONTRIBUTE THAT THE MISHNAH-TRACTATE OF THE SAME NAME WOULD LACK WITHOUT THEM?

The topical composites take shape around their own subjects but fit well with the exposition of the Mishnah that forms the Talmud's principal program. Let us review the items we have identified.

II THEMATIC COMPOSITE ON CLOUDS AND RAIN: The reference at II:6 to clouds and rains accounts for the inclusion of this composite. II.9 is anomalous.

VII THEMATIC COMPOSITE ON THE THEME OF THE FORMER RAIN AND THE LATTER RAIN: the reference in the Mishnah's proof text to "former rain and latter rain" invites the inclusion of an exposition of the traits of each classification of rain.

VIII COMPOSITE ON THE CLASSIFICATION, IN THE LARGE SCHEME OF ISRAEL'S LIFE, OF THE RAINY DAY: COMPARABLE TO THE DAY ON WHICH THE DEAD ARE RESURRECT, THE DAY ON WHICH THE TORAH WAS GIVEN, AND SO ON: This composite and the one that follows are to be read in the same large context.

IX. COMPOSITE ON WHY RAIN IS WITHHELD OR WHY RAIN IS GIVEN: VII-VIII deal with two sides of the same coin: what is the meaning of the advent of rain, what is the meaning of the denial of rain? Given its systematic and coherent theological perspective, the Talmud's exposition presents no surprise. The sages here move the topic at hand to that larger context in which they wish to present the principles of the faith. A rainy day then compares with the resurrection of the dead, the day on which the Torah was given, the day on which the world was made, the day on which salvation bursts forth. So rainy days recapitulate the massive theological constructs, creation, revelation, and redemption, the last-named in both of its components, personal and communal or national. So rain is no longer prayed for or fasted for as an episode in the natural year. It is now the embodiment of the entire supernatural structure in which Israel's life takes place. Rain falls when Israel is sinless — comparable to the condition of resurrection. It

is withheld by reason of Israel's sins. Chief among these is Torah-study, sloth, and the like. Rain falls, especially, in response to the prayers of especially meritorious persons. IX is a huge composite, and some of the entries must be classified as miscellaneous, though the inclusion of these is subject to rational explanation in most instances.

XI.B MISCELLANY ON FASTING: The miscellany amplifies the Mishnah's allusion to the sequences of fasts that follow upon drought. This seems to me a random composite around the theme at hand.

XII.C-D WHERE IN THE LITURGY IS THE PRAYER FOR THE FAST DAY INSERTED; SPECIAL CLASSES OF PERSONS: Once the Mishnah has referred to the conclusion of the fasting period in a time of drought, the exposition of two sub-topics is called for. The first asks where the Prayer for the Fast Day is included in the liturgy, the second, the status of special classes of persons as to fasting.

XIV.F THE MERITS OF SAGES THAT PERMIT THEM TO DO WONDERS: This composite forms a continuous statement with the next.

XIV.G A PARTICULAR SAGE: NAHUM OF GIMZO: We take up a coherent account of the general theme, the traits of sages that render their prayers for rain particularly effective. But this — predictably — is treated in the broader framework, why sages can do deeds of a supernatural character, while others cannot. The theme of Torah-study in poverty then shades over into the particular merit of Nahum of Gimzo.

XIV.I-J OTHER MIRACLES DONE TO PAY RESPECT TO VARIOUS SAGES: The composite of XIV.I continues the same theme, how sages' unusual virtue or merit affords supernatural favor from which Israel as a whole benefits, particularly the Israelites of the area. XIV.J continues the same theme.

XIV.T COMPOSITE ON HONI'S DESCENDANTS: ABBA HILQIAH: Once we take up Honi, we are given a composite of stories about his continuators; in the context of Mishnah-exegesis, the inclusion of Honi explains why the composite on his grandson follows naturally.

XIV.U OTHER SAGES AND THEIR POWER TO BRING RAIN: This continues the foregoing.

XIV.V HANINA B. DOSA: Once Hanina b. Dosa enters in, in the set of XIV.U, the story carries in its wake the entire composite that assembles stories about him.

The Talmud not only explains and extends the laws of the Mishnah. At the specified points, it also re-presents the theme of the Mishnah, so that the law of Taanit as we receive it in the Mishnah not only is clarified but also is reconfigured. This is done in those thematic composites that take up the general topic, rain and drought, and that make that topic into the medium for large-scale theological contemplation. This is in two fundamental aspects.

First, at No. VIII, we take the rainy day into the system beginning with creation, extending through revelation, and concluding with the resurrection of the dead and with salvation. Then, at No. IX, the exposition links rain (and, by analogy, salvation) to the merit of Israel, drought to the sin of Israel. The Mishnah's presentation of the topic, both its law

and its lore, lays its stress, by contrast, upon the act of fasting and the prayers for divine favor, without recourse to the great theological themes before us.

Second, while the Mishnah recognizes that a particular person, Honi the Circle-Drawer, has the power to bring rain, the Talmud at XIV.F, G, I-J, U+V, as well as at numerous passages that do not constitute free-standing composites, redefines matters completely. First, it moves beyond the specific topic of bringing rain. Second, it vastly expands the range of personalities under consideration. In so doing, the Talmud reshapes matters. Now sages in general, not a particular, named figure, are expected to exhibit the traits of divine favor such that they accomplish diverse supernatural deeds. The Mishnah tells what the community at large is expected to do in times of drought. The Talmud portrays a different transaction altogether, one involving not the community at large but the holy man, and not the holy man in general but the sage in particular.

3. CAN WE STATE WHAT THE COMPILERS OF THIS DOCUMENT PROPOSE TO ACCOMPLISH IN PRODUCING THIS COMPLETE, ORGANIZED PIECE OF WRITING?

Commenting on the treatment of Honi the Circle-Drawer in the Talmud of Babylonia, at Bavli Taanit 23a in comparison with Mishnah-tractate Taanit 3:9-10, William S. Green states, "This later version of the Mishnaic account [that is, the Bavli's] has reshaped Honi into an unmistakably rabbinic image and restructured the account of his rain-making to make it serve different purposes."*

*William Scott Green, "Palestinian Holy Men: Charismatic Leadership and Rabbinic Tradition," in Wolfgang Haase, ed., *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt. II. Principat. 19.2. Religion (Judentum: Palästinisches Judentum [Forts.], pp. 619-647. Quotation: p. 644.*

Green goes on, "Rabbinic Judaism dealt with the charisma of miracle-working by making its validity depend on knowledge of Torah and controlled it by making it a function of the rabbinic system.

The process is illustrated by the traditions of Honi the Circle-maker.

Neither healer nor exorcist, he was a relatively easy figure for Tannaitic authorities to 'rabbinize,' and the powers attributed to him were appropriate and necessary to the new rabbinic religion...Honi...first century B.C. Palestinian magician, has become 'Rabbi' Honi, whose miraculous powers are the result of his piety and mastery of Torah."*

*pp. 646-7.

Green's observations about the transformation of Honi, we now have seen in considerable detail, serve also to characterize the movement of the topic, Taanit, from the Mishnah to the Bavli.

It is, in particular, in its large-scale topical composites that the Talmud imparts the imprint of its own view of the subject upon the Mishnah's presentation of the same subject.