

תוכן עניינים

חלק עברי

א

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ABSTRACTS

THE LITURGICAL ROOTS OF THE KABBALISTIC CONCEPT OF “UNIFICATION”

Michael Schneider

The Kabbalistic concept of “unification” includes several aspects: the unio mystica of the soul with God, the theosophical syzygy of the sefirot; and the theurgical influence of human intention and action on this syzygy. This concept, sometimes formulated as a bold challenge to the traditional view of the unity of God as an unchanging theological dogma, is in fact perfectly compatible with the traditional use of the causative verb *yihed* (“to unify”), as applied to the God: “to unify You” “to unify His name.”

This article surveys the changing meaning of the causative language of unification and the concepts that have formed around it. Such language developed long before the appearance of Kabbalah in the liturgical context with the Shema at its center. The term “unification” primarily describes the liturgical act of the reciting Shema by an individual or a congregation, as well as the intention and meditation that accompany this act. The meaning of the term, however, goes beyond the liturgical realm and becomes an ultimate expression of the covenantal way of life.

In addition to expansions of the existential dimension of “unification,” a related meditative tradition develops. These traditions are also reflected in various circles outside Rabbinic Judaism, including those of Samaritans and Judeo-Christians. The parallels between the texts produced by these circles and the *Sefer Yetzirah* (Book of Creation), and between that text and the meditative tradition of Shema, are of great interest. These parallels indicate, among other things, that the meditative unification of God in six dimensions of space has evolved into the theosophical contemplation of the hypostatic “extensions” emerging from God (the sefirot) and their return and unification with their source. The *Sefer Yetzirah* emphasizes the imitation, interaction, and integration between the contemplative individual and the sefirot and thus paves the way for theurgical unification.

**“ONE MUST SPEAK WITH SILENCE”:
THE FUNCTION OF SILENCE IN VIRGINITY CLAIM
STORIES FROM THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD**

Eliyahu Rosenfeld

This study proposes a new reading of two Talmudic stories (b. Ketubot 10a) which discuss virginity claims, in light of the concept of silence. The understanding of the connection between speech and silence allows a better understanding of the way the stories understand virginity. The glaring absence of speech enables the stories to convey information while staying vague, thereby creating another layer in the story, parallel to the spoken one. The disparity between speech and silence in each of the stories reveals that, despite their similarities, each story represents a different concept of virginity. The methodological use of silence becomes an effective tool that allows implicit concealment while subtly imparting information. Furthermore, these stories demonstrate the advantages of silence as a literary tool that melds with the unique poetic nature of rabbinical stories.

**THE TALMUD
AS RHETORICAL EXERCISE:
PROGYMNASMATA AND CONTROVERSIAE IN
RABBINIC LITERATURE**

Richard Hidary

This article compares the structure, methods of reasoning, and contents of Greco-Roman progymnasmatic school exercises with those of Midrash Halakha and other Talmudic sugyot. It then probes parallels between the more advanced declamations, called controversiae, with similar sets of arguments on both sides of theoretical legal cases in rabbinic literature. By reading the

Talmud as an anthology of rhetorical exercises, we can better understand its penchant for arguing both sides of an issue, its use of a dialogic format, and the discussion of hypothetical cases that characterize rabbinic literature. Furthermore, the similarities and differences between the Talmud and classical rhetoric offers new perspectives on the educational methods of the rabbis, the structures of their compositions, and their epistemological worldviews.

THE ORDER AND STRUCTURE OF THE LIST OF THE MAIMONIDEAN PRINCIPLES: BETWEEN FORM AND MEANING

Eli Gurfinkel

The thirteen principles of faith listed by Maimonides have played an important role in Jewish philosophy. The issues they raise have been the focus of ongoing discussion, and the principles themselves have been the subject of numerous discussions and analyses. Inter alia, Jewish scholars and commentators have examined formational and formal aspects of the Maimonidean list and deliberated on ways to classify the list and divide it into groups of principles. Many of them have assumed that, like every Maimonidean text, the list of principles has an orderly structure which is the product of deep thought.

The current research offers a new description of the various proposals of division by subject order. It examines the sources of these systems and their evolution from one scholar to another; studies the connection between the general scholarly conceptions of the essential nature of the list of principles, and seeks to understand Maimonides's aim in formulating the list as it has been received.

“THE COURSE OF IDEAS IN ISRAEL” AS A RESPONSE TO WISSENSCHAFT DES JUDENTUMS”

Hagay Shtamler

Rabbi Abraham Isaac HaKohen Kook’s essay, “The Course of Ideas in Israel,” is a historiosophical analysis of the history of the Jewish People that was influenced by Hegelian dialectical idealism. It contends with similar attempts by two scholars associated with the intellectual movement, Wissenschaft des Judentums: the first, a paper by Immanuel Wolf, one of the founders of The Society for the Culture and Science of the Jews in Berlin; the second, a paper written by the historian Tzvi Heinrich Graetz and published by Zacharias Frankel.

In this article, I analyze the viewpoints in these three papers concerning the fundamental ideas that move the history of the Jewish People. What dialectical process bursts forth during transitions from exile to redemption? What is the role of the People of Israel among the nations of the world and how is it to be accomplished? How did the Halakha (the rabbinic system of biblically derived rules for living as a religious Jew) develops and what does the future have in store for us? Rabbi Kook agreed with some of the principles of the Wissenschaft movement, but rejected others. Rabbi Kook concluded his essay with the statement that only from now on “can the wisdom of the Jews and its true literature (!) begin to help our people, and revitalize it in the dew of its revival.”