

Explanation and interpretation of three unclear words in Bavli Eruvin 104a-b

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This article engages in the explanation and interpretation of three unclear words, *dyofe*, *meiarak* and *kitana*, that appear in the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Eruvin 104a–b. The words are part of the Talmudic text and the article addresses the various meanings ascribed to them and explains them. This is required because of the contradiction and confusion that exist in the explanation and interpretation of these three words. The research method employed involves examining the various explanations given by the commentators, comparing the words with other sources and checking their suggested meanings in Talmudic dictionaries. The research results show different versions of these three words and the conclusions indicate that the different versions change their possible explanation and interpretation.

Contribution: The innovation of this article is in presenting the various sources of these words, noting their various versions and the different interpretations that derive from them. The article also describes the interpretive development of these words, as well as noting the commentators who offer explanations for the two first words, which generate contradictory meanings.

Keywords: *dyofe*; *meiarak*; *kitana*; Eruvin; Babylonian Talmud.

Introduction

In Tractate Eruvin (104a), the Babylonian Talmud presents a controversy between the Amoraim Ulla and Rabbah on the topic of producing a sound on the Sabbath. According to Ulla, producing any sound on the Sabbath is forbidden, but according to Rabbah producing a musical sound on the Sabbath is forbidden but producing a sound that is not musical is permitted. Abaye points out an objection to Rabbah's words (based on a baraita) that notes that wine can be transferred in a *dyofe* (*dyo*, 'two'; *fe*, 'mouth', i.e., two mouths), meaning a bent tube or bent reed comprising two reeds connected diagonally, where water is dripped from a vessel called *arak* or *meiarak* (which is a metal vessel with a narrow mouth and thin holes in the bottom) on a reversed metal vessel so that the dripping of the water produces a sound for the sick to wake him up on the Sabbath. According to this baraita, Abaye wanted to reject Rabbah's opinion, as from this baraita it appears that producing any sound is forbidden¹ aside from a special case such as for a sick person, when producing a sound is permitted. But in other cases, producing any sound is forbidden and not only a musical sound, which is forbidden as Rabbah said (but Rabbah permits producing a sound that is not musical on the Sabbath). However, in the sugya, Abaye's objection is answered by saying that this does not refer to a sick person who wants to be aroused, but rather the opposite: it refers to a sick person who is awake, and this is an attempt to put him to sleep, as the dripping water sounds like the soft ringing of bells. In such a case, even according to Rabbah, it is permitted to produce such a sound only for a sick person and not for a healthy one.

Furthermore, in the sugya, Amemar permits drawing water with a wheel on the Sabbath in a place called Mehuza because he argues that the reason the sages decreed that water should not be drawn with a wheel on the Sabbath is their concern that the same person would also water his garden and his ruins on the Sabbath. However, in this specific place, Mehuza, there is no garden, no ruins and no chance that one would water them on the Sabbath; therefore, Amemar gave them permission to draw water with a wheel on the Sabbath. But Amemar discerns that people have taken advantage of his permission and used water drawn on the Sabbath to soak flax (*kitana*), so he repeals the permit and forbids them from drawing water with a wheel on the Sabbath so that they will not soak flax on the Sabbath.

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1. Abaye is accurate from the baraita saying, 'liquids may be drawn by means of a siphon [*dyofe*], and water may be allowed to drip from the *arak* for a sick person on the Sabbath'. Thus, only 'for a sick person' is this allowed, but not for healthy one. Now, how are we to imagine the circumstances? Would you not agree that this is a case where the sick man was asleep and it was desired [by the production of the sound of the *arak*, which is a mere noise without any musical quality whatever] that he should wake up? May it not then [as the answer is presumably in the affirmative] be inferred [as the instrument mentioned may be used for a sick man only but not for a healthy one] that [on a Sabbath] the production of any sound [even one that is unmusical] is forbidden? [on the Sabbath; an objection against Rabbah].

In this article the author will explain and interpret these three words: '*dyofe*', '*meiarak*' and '*kitana*'.

Method

The text of the printed version (bEruvin 104a-b)

Ulla once happened to visit R. Manasseh when a man came and knocked on the door. 'Who,' he exclaimed, 'is this person? May his body be desecrated, for he desecrates the Sabbath.' 'Only a musical sound,' said Rabbah to him, 'has been forbidden.' Abaye raised an objection against him [from a baraita]: 'Liquids may be drawn by means of a siphon and water may be allowed to drip from the *arak*, for a sick person on the Sabbath.' Thus, only 'for a sick person' is this allowed but not for a healthy one. Now, how are we to imagine the circumstances? Would you not agree that this is a case where the sick man was asleep and it was desired that he should wake up? May it not then be inferred that the production of any sound is forbidden? – No; this is a case where he was awake and it is desired that he should fall asleep, so that the sound heard is one like a tinkling noise...

Amemar allowed the drawing of water by means of a wheel at Mehuza; 'for,' he said, 'on what ground did the Rabbis enact a preventive measure against such drawing [on the Sabbath]? Only on the ground that a person might also draw water for his garden or his ruin. But in this place there is neither garden nor ruin.' When, however, he observed that they began to [104b] soak flax in it he forbade it to them... (Epstein 1935:725–728)

Methodologically, I shall begin by presenting an analysis of the sugya and the structure of the argument in the sugya. According to the story depicted at the beginning of the sugya and from the words of Ulla to the man who knocked on his door on the Sabbath, it appears that Ulla contends that it is prohibited to make any sound on the Sabbath, even knocking on a door (the reason for the prohibition is to prevent one from fixing a musical instrument on the Sabbath, which is prohibited). Rabbah replied and said to him that only a musical sound is prohibited on the Sabbath. From Rabbah's words, it appears that the sages did not prohibit producing all sounds on the Sabbath, rather only a pleasant sound that sounds like music, but a sound of knocking on a door is neither a pleasant sound nor a musical sound and therefore the sages did not prohibit the sound of knocking on a door. Abaye raises an objection against the words of Rabbah, while relying on a baraita from which it appears that even a sound that does not sound like music was permitted only in the case of a sick person, when sounded to wake him, and not in the case of any person; from this it is possible to conclude that all sounds are prohibited on the Sabbath and not only musical sounds, in contrast to the words of Rabbah. Abaye's objection is rejected, however, with the claim that the baraita deals with the reverse situation, of a sick person who is awake and the sound of water dripping from the *arak* is to be used to put him to sleep. This baraita mentions the word *dyofe* [siphon], which is unrelated to the content of the sugya but appears in the content of the baraita. This is also true of the word *meiarak* (= *arak*), on which Abaye relied when objecting to Rabbah. These two words are unclear, and there is an interpretation of the word *meiarak* that is associated with the word *dyofe* too, as we shall show here.

Furthermore, in the sugya, there is a halakha determined by Amemar on the topic of drawing water on the Sabbath. At first, Amemar permitted drawing water on the Sabbath using a wheel in the town of Mehuza. As he saw it, the sages decreed that it is prohibited to draw water with a wheel on the Sabbath in order to prevent people from drawing water on the Sabbath for their gardens or ruins (of their houses), which is prohibited. As there are no gardens or ruins (of houses) in the town of Mehuza, however, there is no room for this decree and no room for the concern that someone will transgress and draw water for his garden or ruins on the Sabbath. Ultimately, Amemar retracted his words and prohibited drawing water on the Sabbath in the city as well. This was because Amemar saw people drawing water on the Sabbath to soak *kitana* [flax] on a weekday, and it is prohibited to draw water on the Sabbath in order to use it on a weekday, so he prohibited this. Here, too, the meaning of the word *kitana* is unclear, and this word also has different explanations, as we shall show here.

All the claims raised previously on this topic are related to the laws of Sabbath, what type of sound is considered a desecration of the Sabbath, whether it is possible to use an implement that produces a sound on the Sabbath for the purpose of a sick person or for a healthy person as well and whether it is permitted to use water drawn on the Sabbath to soak *kitana* on a weekday. The function of the three words *dyofe*, *meiarak* and *kitana* is significant for understanding the content of the sugya, as only a precise explanation and interpretation of these words makes it possible to understand the use made of the *dyofe*, *meiarak* and *kitana* in the past on the Sabbath, whether it is prohibited or permitted. The role of this article is to clarify non-Aramaic terms for technical implements, which became Aramaized but whose referents then became unclear to later generations.

Methodologically, the interpretations and explanations of these three words were grouped for each word separately, including chronologically. But as we shall see in the article, the words *dyofe* and *meiarak* have different or opposite interpretations, both as explained by the commentators and in the dictionaries. Therefore, there may be contradictory interpretations or double interpretations or chronological deviations with regard to these two words, or a mixture of different genres. In the case of the word *kitana* as well, there are different explanations that also indicate different usages made of *kitana* and in this regard too we grouped the interpretations and explanations for each interpretation separately, which might result in a chronological deviation or mixture of different genres.

Discussion

The explanation and interpretation of three unclear words

The author shall now explore and explain the three words discussed in this article: '*dyofe*', '*meiarak*' and '*kitana*'.

Interpretation of the word *dyofe*

The word '*dyofe*' has several similar interpretations and forms, as follows. R. Hananel's version of this word is '*dyfe*' / '*dyfin*' (and in the singular '*dyf*'), and he explains how it was used (Bar Barzilai 1903; Bar Hushiel 1961):

A sucking implement (Bar Shrirra 1978; Ben Yechiel 1955c; Epstein 1982) [*hollow reed* (Yitzchaki 1962), *siphon, tube* (Jastrow 1967a)] that has two mouths and one mouth [*of the hollow reed*] is placed in a barrel, suctioning the jug and raising the wine by his force and there is another mouth above it, the *dyf* opening that is placed in his mouth like a type of breast and when the wine reaches the breast it flows out into another vessel, until all the wine in the barrel has been emptied. (p. 146)

The Rif and Rashi also interpreted as did R. Hananel. The Rif explains the word '*dyofe*' concisely: 'A sucking implement [hollow reed, siphon, tube] that is used to draw wine' (Alfassi 1961; Ben Yechiel 1955c; Deterrani (the Elder) 1966; Ha-Meiri 1962). The Aruch lexicon details how it was used:

Dyofe like a sucking implement [*hollow reed, siphon, tube*] that has two mouths and one mouth is placed in a barrel, suctioning forcibly and raising the wine by this force and there is another mouth above the *dyofe* (mouth) opening that is placed in its mouth like a breast, and the wine, when reaching the breast, flows out and is received in another vessel, until all the wine in the barrel has been emptied. (Ben Yechiel 1955c:43–44)

Rashi explains the word '*dyofe*' (or as he says, following the Tosefta, '*andifi*') as two mouths (Ha-Meiri 1962; Lieberman 1962; Yitzchaki 1960), and he details the manner of use similarly:

[W]ine is raised from a barrel to [another] barrel by two reeds cut diagonally and the sloped tops are placed facing each other and one of the reeds is put in the barrel and [one] sucks through his mouth from the top of the other reed [*until drawing*] up some of the wine and leaving and the wine [*rises*] entirely by itself. (Deterrani (the Elder) 1966:195–196; Yitzchaki 1961a)

'And he places an empty barrel under the flow and wine rises entirely by itself from barrel to barrel' (Yitzchaki 1962).

In his commentary, R. Haye Gaon compares the word '*dyofe*' with the word '*titros*'²:

Titros is a Greek word meaning *dyofe*, as it says (Eruvin 104a): [*Liquids*] may be drawn by means of a *dyofe* on the Sabbath, and its meaning in the Persian language is *fishbera'in* (Epstein 1982), but the *dyofe* is made of metal and this is made of clay. The meaning of *dyofe* and *titros* is a hollow ewer, and it resembles a dome and is perforated on the bottom with twenty (Ben Yechiel 1955d; Wertheimer 1899) holes the size of a needle hole, and on top is one hole the size of a *kush* (Ben Yechiel 1955f; Yare 1978a) and when it is full of water and plugged on top, nothing comes out of the bottom. And whenever it is open on top, it drips on the bottom, like producing small coins. (Bar Shrirra 1978; Ben Yechiel 1955b, 1955c:43–44)

Indeed, the word '*titros*' (or '*tatras*') is interpreted similarly as the word '*dyofe*' in other places as well. For example, the Aruch interpreted this in his lexicon:

2. Kelim 2:6.

Tatras ... is a vessel made of metal, perforated on the bottom with twenty holes the size of a needle hole, and on top is one hole the size of a *kush* (Ben Yechiel 1955f), and when it is full of water and one places his finger on the upper hole so that it is not affected by the wind, the water stands and does not come out of the bottom. And when one removes his finger, the wind affects it and the water comes out of the bottom like producing small coins, drop by drop. (Ben Yechiel 1955c:43–44, 1955d: 27, 211, 275, 343, 362; Yitzchak 1978)

Also, Maimonides' commentary explains the word '*titros*' similarly to the word '*dyofe*' in the Mishna:

And *titros* is a clay vessel that has a wide capacity and it has a narrow, long and very thin neck and the bottom of the vessel is perforated. And when it is filled with water and one's finger is placed on the top of the thin neck then the entrance of air to the vessel is halted and none of the water comes out of those holes and if one removes his finger from the top of the vessel the water comes out of the bottom ... because when the water comes out of the holes, the vessel does not empty at once but rather drop by drop, extremely slowly, and this is a container because this is its purpose. (Ben Maimon 1968:63)

Similar to this interpretation, the word '*titros*' was interpreted by R. Ovadya mi-Bartenura:

Sitros [in the Venice edition: *Titros*] a vessel that is perforated on the bottom with many thin holes the size of a needle hole and on top is one hole of the size of a *kush* (Ben Yechiel 1955f), that is, a spindle used by the women to spin, and when it is filled with water and someone places his finger on the hole on top so that it is not affected by the wind, not a drop comes out of the thin holes on the bottom and when he removes his finger the water comes out. (Yare 1978a:17)

Another interpretation from the late commentators is:

[*Titros*] is a vessel that has many holes in its circumference in order to water down the [dust in the] house or water the garden plants, and when one puts his finger on the narrow mouth at the top of the vessel then the liquids in it do not come out of the bottom through the small holes. (Lifshitz 1978a:17)

Thus, the word '*arpachas*' is also rendered as '*arak*' and was the interpretation given by the Aruch lexicon for the word '*dyofe*' (Ben Yechiel 1955a). The word '*arpachas*' or 'in the language of the Talmud, *meiadak*', is brought as an explanation for the word '*titros*' (Adani 1978a).

The commentary of the Geonim has and interprets '*dyofe*' and its interpretation in the Persian language, '*fishbera'in*', but '*dyofe* is made of metal' (Epstein 1982). The interpretation of the word '*dyofe*' is:

[A] hollow ewer, and it resembles a dome [*i.e., rounded*] and is perforated on the bottom with twenty holes the size of a needle hole, and on top is one hole the size of a *kush* (Ben Yechiel 1955f) and when it is full of water and plugged on top, nothing comes out of the bottom. And whenever it is open on top, it drips [*on the bottom*], like producing small coins [*namely, thin trickles*]. (Epstein 1982 11–12, 17)

The interpretation in the commentary of the Geonim is in fact that of R. Haye Gaon, located at the end of the Mishna in chapter two of Tractate Kelim (Bar Shrirra 1978).

The responsa of the Geonim has 'eidifi', and in the words of the sages, 'knishkin' (Ben Yechiel 1955g; Ha-Meiri 1962; Yitzchaki 1962),³ however the Geonim explain the word 'eidifi' differently:

A metal ewer whose mouth is short and it is merely the size of the mouth of a *kush* (Ben Yechiel 1955f), and it is entirely hollow and resembles a type of dome [*i.e.*, rounded] and it can hold about two liters and its seat [*bottom*] is perforated with twenty small holes. The size of each hole is that of a needle's mouth, and it is filled with water, and when one places his thumb on the mouth, the water clings to the wind and does not fall, and when he wishes to drip water from it, he brings a cup and places it underneath and raises his thumb from the mouth and the water comes out of those holes and falls into his cup and makes a pleasant sound. (Lewin 1930:79, 104–105; Wertheimer 1899)

R. Haye Gaon's interpretation of the word 'dyofe' ('titros') here and the explanation for the word 'dyofe' in the commentary of the Geonim or 'eidifi' in the responsa of the Geonim here is contradictory and in fact explains the word as 'meiarak' (Wertheimer 1899) or 'meadak' (Ben Yechiel 1955c) or 'mearak' ('mei arak'/'mei arag') (Ben Yechiel 1955a) or 'tatras' ('arak') (Ben Yechiel 1955d) in the Aruch lexicon, or the Rif's explanation of the word as 'mei arag' ('meiarag') (Alfassi 1961), or Rashi's interpretation of the word as 'meiarak' (Wertheimer 1899; Yitzchaki 1961a) (or 'meiadak') (Adani 1978a).

In the Tosefta, the word 'be-dyofe' appears,⁴ as in the Cairo Genizah fragment's version (Cambridge UL T-S F2 (2) 23, FGP No. C98947) and the printed version, and the interpretation of the word is:

[It is] raised from the siphon [*a bent tube in the form of the letter π that serves to transfer liquids from a tall vessel to a low vessel by means of air pressure*] into the *arak* (which is a vessel that has small holes in its bottom part) so that it will drip slowly and the tinkling will put the sick person to sleep.⁵

But in the Talmud Yerushalmi, this word appears in a different form: 'be-dyobe',⁶ similar to the word 'dyofe', because the letters *fe* and *bet* are used interchangeably (Shulzinger 1979) or 'be-dyobit' (eds. Schäfer & Becker 2001),⁷ or perhaps the word 'dyofe' is an erroneous form of the word 'dyobit' (Ben Yechiel 1955c). But some contend that the interpretations of the words 'dyobit' and 'adak' in the lexicons are not accurate (Lieberman 1934). The researchers, however, support the version of the Talmud Yerushalmi, 'be-dyobit', because it 'seems more original and this means a siphon', and the explanation of the word is:

[A] bent tube whose end would be placed in a barrel of wine and the air would be sucked from the other side and by means of the external air pressure the liquid would pass from barrel to barrel as interpreted by the Geonim and by Rashi in Bavli Eruvin ad loc. (Jastrow 1967a:125, 296, 623, 637, 673, 777, 847; Lieberman 1962:31–32)

3.Cf. Avoda Zara 72b.

4.Tosefta, Shabbat 2:7, Lieberman edition.

5.Tosefta, Shabbat 2:7, p. 8, line 25.

6.Y. Eruvin 10:13.

7.Y. Eruvin, 10:12, 26d; Ms. Or. 4720 (Scal. 3), Eruvin 10:14, p. 496.

Interpretation of the word *meiarak*

The word 'meiarak' is pointed in the fragment and it has different versions and similar interpretations. The Talmud Yerushalmi has 'adak' (eds. Schäfer & Becker 2001),⁸ or 'arak',⁹ and the Tosefta has 'arak',¹⁰ or 'adak' (Ben Yechiel 1955a) or 'arak' (Lieberman 1962). The explanation of the word is:

[A] vessel that has holes on the bottom,¹¹ and when the water drips out of it on metal (or stone) it produces a sound ... such a vessel would be used to awaken one who was asleep, by means of the water's noise and also to put to sleep a sick person with the sound of the water's tinkling. (Lieberman 1962:31–32)

In the response of Mar Rav Zadok the version is 'mei arak' (Deterrani (the Younger) 1966; Epstein 1982; Wertheimer 1899) and the explanation is:

... *gishtha* = sucking implement [Ben Yechiel 1955b, 1955e] = hollow reed, siphon, tube] and *bat gishtha*¹² [*another hollow reed*] used to draw wine from the pitcher and water from the vessel and whenever water is placed near the bottom mouth it draws by itself and drips into the [*other*] vessel until all that is in the pitcher is drawn, up to wherever it reaches. (Bar Barzilai 1903; Ben Yechiel 1955b; Lewin 1930; Wertheimer 1899)

The explanation of Mar Rav Zadok for the word 'mei arak' is in fact the interpretation of the word 'dyofe'/'eidifi' (Wertheimer 1899) in the Aruch lexicon (Ben Yechiel 1955c) and in Rashi's commentary (Yitzchaki 1961a, 1962).

In the commentary of the Geonim the word 'adak' or 'adak' is brought to explain the words 'u-menikot be-tokha':

The interpretation of *gishtha* -is the sages' language. And its name is also *adak* or some use *adak*, as it says: 'they drip from the *adak*', but this is made of glass while the sucking implement can be of reed or of a clay vessel. (Epstein 1982:11–12, 17)

R. Hananel has 'meiadak', 'mei adak' or 'meadak' (Adani 1978a; Bar Hushiel 1961), and he interprets:

We have heard that it is a vessel made of *vlueh* [*zluéh*, 'bottle' in the Syrian language (Ben Yechiel 1955c; Lewin 1930)], a type of *kuz* (Adani 1978b; Ben Maimon 1967; Lifshitz 1978b; Yare 1978b)¹³ perforated on the bottom with small holes and its mouth is narrow and it is filled with water and its mouth is sealed. So long as its mouth is sealed the water in it does not spill out of the holes, as the power of the air stops the water. And when its mouth is opened and the air comes in, it pushes out the liquid that is in it and drips drop by drop, small drops and a brass vessel such as a cup is placed under it ... and when a drop drips into the vessel it produces the sound, drop by drop or like a type of singing sound. (Bar Barzilai 1903:146; Bar Hushiel 1961; Lewin 1930)

8.Y. Eruvin, 10:13, 26d; Ms. Or. 4720 (Scal. 3), Eruvin 10:14, p. 496.

9.Y. Eruvin 10:13.

10.Tosefta, Shabbat 2:7, Lieberman edition.

11.Tosefta, Shabbat 2:7, Lieberman edition, p. 8 line 25.

12.Avoda Zara 72b.

13.Tamid 3:6.

Rif has *'mei arag'* (Sirkash 1961:104a) and he interprets:

A vessel whose mouth is narrow on top and wide on bottom and on the bottom are small holes that let out the wine and when it falls into vessels made of metal the sound resembles music. (Alfassi 1961; Ben Yechiel 1955c; Ha-Cohen 1961; Ha-Meiri 1962)

R. Yehonatan in his commentary reads *'mei marak'* and he expands the Rif's interpretation:

It is a vessel and its mouth is short and made of metal and it is perforated on the bottom with holes and one fills it with water and seals its top mouth. So long as its mouth is sealed the water does not come out through the bottom holes and when desired [one] takes off the upper plug and water drips out of the holes, drop by drop and [one] places a metal vessel under it and its sound is heard by the sick person. (Alfassi 1961; Ben Yechiel 1955c; Ha-Cohen 1961; Ha-Meiri 1962)

Another [truncated] interpretation of the Rif:

[Missing text] And when these drops are doubled [probably: drip] in a vessel made of metal that is placed under it and it is hung, they produce a sound that is like music, as it comes out drop by drop and is like one who beats with his finger one by one. (Ben Hakhmon 1974:104a)

The Aruch has *'mei adak'* (Bar Barzilai 1903; Ben Yechiel 1955c; Wertheimer 1899) and he interprets:

A vessel made of *zluch* [a bottle] like a *kuz* (Ben Yechiel 1955f; Yare 1978a) that is perforated at the bottom with small holes and its mouth is narrow. It is filled with water and its mouth is sealed and so long as its mouth is sealed the water in it does not spill out of the holes, as the power of the air stops the water. And when its mouth is opened and the air comes in, it pushes out the liquid that is in it and drips drop by drop, small drops and a brass vessel is placed under it, such as a cup and such, and when a drop falls on the vessel it produces the sound, drop by drop, like the sound of music. (Ben Yechiel 1955c:43–44)

In the Aruch lexicon, however, the word *'mei adak'* appears in different forms: *'adak'* (Ben Yechiel 1955a; Epstein 1982), *'arak'* (Ben Yechiel 1955d; Wertheimer 1899), *'arpachas'* (Adani 1978a; Ben Yechiel 1955a; Wertheimer 1899), under the entry *'dyofe'* (Ben Yechiel 1955c). But in this entry, he notes *'u-metifin me-arak'* (Bar Baruch 1977; Deterrani (the Elder) 1966) and subsequently noticed *'metifin me-adak'* (Wertheimer 1899) twice (Ben Yechiel 1955a, 1955c). In other places, the Aruch has other versions *'adak (= arak)'* (Ben Yechiel 1955f) or *'mei arak'* or *'mei arag'* (Ben Yechiel 1955a).

The word *'mei arak'* has several other forms (Bo'az 1961; Epstein 1982; Ha-Meiri 1962; Wertheimer 1899).

Rashi has the same version as the Genizah fragment, *'mei arak'*, and he explains:

It is a vessel and its mouth is narrow and made of metal and it is perforated on the bottom with small holes. And [one] fills it with water and seals its top mouth. And so long that its mouth is sealed the water does not come out of the bottom holes and when desired [one] takes off the top plug and the water comes out of the holes drop by drop. And a metal vessel is placed under it and the sound is heard by the sick person. (Yitzchaki 1961a:104a)

From a lexicological perspective, the words *'adak'*, *'adak'*, *'arak'* were interpreted as a perforated vessel similar to a water clock (*clepsydra*) used in sickrooms (Jastrow 1967a).

Explanation of the word *kitana*

The word *'kitana'* has other alternate forms (Epstein 1960)¹⁴ and different interpretations. R. Hananel has, similar to the Genizah fragment (mentioned here), the wording *'khintei'*, and he interprets: '[they] fill [it] with water and soak mortar in order to make *kindei'* (Bar Barzilai 1903; Bar Hushiel 1961). The word *'kussemet'* (buckwheat) appears in the Pentateuch,¹⁵ and Onqelos translates it as *'khunataya'* in the plural (Lewin 1930; Sokoloff 2017)¹⁶ and in the singular *'khunata'* (Ben Yechiel 1955d; Jastrow 1967s; Sokoloff 2017)¹⁷ or perhaps *'khintei'* as in the fragment's version. R. Sa'adya Gaon translates the word *'kussemet'* (buckwheat) into Arabic as *'karsenah'*¹⁸ and in Hebrew *'karshinah'* (vetch) (Ben Maimon 1963a, 1963b; Ben Yechiel 1955d) (a plant used as animal feed [Ben Maimon 1963a, 1963b; Jastrow 1967a] of the species *Vicia ervilia*), in the Mishna called *'karshinin'* (vetches)¹⁹ as in the Babylonian Talmud,²⁰ but some contend that it is 'a type of desert wheat' (Korach 1960). In another version *'khinta'*, which means soaking the 'spelt' [בימי החול] or 'mortar that is soaked in a lot of water and used to make a clay vessel, and in the singular it is called *khinta'* (Bar Baruch 1977; Ben Hakhmon 1974).

Rashi observed two forms of this word. The first is *'kitana'* (Yitzchaki 1961a), which he explains: 'flax (Ha-Cohen 1961) is soaked' [on weekdays], also adding a second form: 'and some have *bunta* (= spelt)' (Arik 1975; Sokoloff 2002; Yitzchaki 1961a, 1961b). According to his interpretation there is another form (of the word *'khintei'*), which is *'bunta'* (Arik 1975),²¹ and it means *'kusmin'* (spelt – a type of wheat, cultivated binuclear wheat, *Triticum dicoccum*, that served in ancient times as an alternative for wheat for baking bread; or a type of low grain, *Triticus spelta*), which is appropriate for the word *'khinte'* in the fragment as it too is interpreted as meaning *'kussemet'* (spelt). However, Rashi's first option, *'kitana'* (which is rendered as in the printed version and MS Oxford 366) was defined in the responsa of the Geonim as an inaccurate version (Lewin 1930; Sokoloff 2002). Indeed, the word *'kitana'* (or *'khitana'* (Sokoloff 2002)²² or *'khatana'*²³ or *'kitan'*

14.Cf. Venice edition and Pisaro edition.

15.Exodus 9:32.

16.Targum Onqelos, Exodus 9:32, Hassid edition.

17.As Pisaro edition.

18.Tafsir RSG, Exodus 9:32, Hassid edition.

19.Shabbat 20:3; Oholot 17:1.

20.Berakhot 32a; Shabbat 53b, 155b; Yoma 69a.

21.As Venice edition.

22.Targum Onqelos, Exodus 9:31, Eraki edition; Targum Onqelos, Exodus 9:31, Hassid edition.

23.Targum Onqelos, 9:31, Hassid edition.

(Ben Yechiel 1955d; Jastrow 1967a; Sokoloff 2017)²⁴ or *'khitana'*²⁵ appears in Onqelos' translation as a translation of the biblical word *'pishtah'*²⁶ ('flax') or *'pishtim'* (Jastrow 1967b; Sokoloff 2017),²⁷ and so in the translation of Yonatan ben Uziel as well.²⁸ Flax is an annual cultivated plant, *Linum*, whose stems are used to produce linen fibres that serve as raw material for the cloth industry, and oil is produced from flax seeds. As the word *'pishtah'* (flax) or *'pishtim'* is translated (and interpreted) as *'khitana'* (Ben Yechiel 1955d) (or as the various options mentioned here) and the word *'kussemet'* (buckwheat) is translated as *'khunataya'*, these are two completely different words that also have different meanings. The word *'khintei'* in the fragment's version is different from the word *'kitana'* or other forms of the word located in the other versions. These words may have been switched in the different versions in light of the great similarity in how the two words are written in Aramaic or by switching the letters *nun*, *tav* and *tav*, *nun* that comprise these two words.²⁹

Results

The explanation of the first word *'dyofe'* and the interpretation it was given by R. Haye Gaon is unique and differs from other explanations of this word given by commentators such as R. Hananel, the Rif, and Rashi, as well as the Aruch Lexicon. Therefore, their interpretation of the word *'dyofe'* should be preferred, which gives the following explanation: a bent tube which, when one end of it is placed in a barrel of wine and the air is sucked out of the other side, the liquid passes from barrel to barrel by means of the external air pressure.

The explanation of the second word, *'meiarak'*, and the interpretation it was given in the commentary of Mar R. Zadok is unique and differs from other explanations of this word given in the Talmud Yerushalmi and by commentators such as R. Hananel, the Rif and Rashi, as well as in the Aruch Lexicon and in the modern dictionaries of the Talmud. Therefore, their interpretation of the word *'meiarak'* should be preferred, which gives the following explanation: a vessel made of metal that has a narrow mouth in its upper part and a wider bottom part with small holes and is filled with water, while the top mouth is sealed. So long as the top mouth is sealed the water does not come out of the holes at the bottom of the vessel. When desiring for the water to come out, the top plug is removed and the water drips out of the holes at the bottom of the vessel drop by drop and falls on a reversed metal vessel placed under the water, such that the sick person hears the sound of the water dripping on that metal vessel.

24. Targum Onqelos, Leviticus 13:47, Eraki edition; Targum Onqelos, Leviticus 13:47, Hassid edition.

25. Targum Onqelos, Deuteronomy 22:11 Eraki edition; Targum Onqelos, Deuteronomy 22:11, Hassid edition.

26. Exodus 9:31.

27. Leviticus 13:47, 48, 52, 59; Deuteronomy 22:11.

28. Targum Jonathan ben Uziel, Joshua 2:6; Judges. 15:14; Jes. 19:9; Jeremiah. 13:1; Proverbs 31:13.

29. See MS Munich 95.

The explanation of the third word, *'kitana'*, changes according to the alternate versions of the word. If the word is *'kitana'*, as in Rashi's first version and MS Oxford 366, then it means flax or linen. If the word is *'khintei'* as in R. Hananel's version, Rashi's second version and the Genizah fragment, then it means buckwheat or spelt.

Conclusion

In this article we explained and interpreted three words that appear in Tractate Eruvin. The first word, *'dyofe'*, has different verbal versions, such as *'andifi'* in the words of the Tosefta (cited by Rashi), *'knishkin'* in the Babylonian Talmud (Tractate Avoda Zara), *'be-dyobit' / 'be-dyobe'* in the Jerusalem Talmud (Tractate Eruvin), *'eidifi'* in the responsa of the Geonim or *'dyfe' / 'dyfin'* (and in the single form *'dyf'*) in R. Hananel's commentary (in Tractate Eruvin).

The word *'dyofe'* is also compared in foreign languages to an implement called *'titros'* (*'tatras'*) in Greek (or *'fishbera'in'* in Persian) following the commentary of Rav Haye Gaon and also according to the Arukh Lexicon, Maimonides' commentary on the Mishna and the commentary of R. Ovadya mi-Bartenura (on Tractate Kelim). The word *'arpachas'* is also brought as an explanation for the word *'titros'* in the Melechet Shlomo commentary (on Tractate Kelim).

The word *'dyofe'* is also affiliated with other words such as *'arpachas'* and it is also called *'arak'* and is interpreted in the Aruch Lexicon under *'dyofe'*.

The word *'dyofe'* is divided in two: *dyo*, *fe*. The first part, *dyo*, is explained as a number: two. The second part, *fe*, is explained as a mouth. The two parts in one word, *'dyofe'*, are explained in Aramaic as two mouth, two mouths. (Another example of this type is in Tractate Eruvin 18a: *dyomadin* = *dyo* *'amudin* = two pillars. Another is *dyofra* = *dyo fra* = two fruits, or *dyo partzuf panim* = two full faces.)

The interpretation of the word *'dyofe'* and the use made of the *'dyofe'* are identical or similar in the interpretations of the lexicons and in some of the commentators. They say that the *'dyofe'* is a hollow reed, siphon or tube that has two mouths (two openings), with which liquids are drawn from one mouth (*fe*) (namely, one end of the tube) by forcefully sucking from one vessel (such as a barrel) and transferred to another mouth (*fe*) (namely, the second end of the tube) to another vessel (such as a jug). In this way, the liquids are transferred from one vessel to another by means of the *'dyofe'*, the hollow tube, even after they are no longer being drawn by the force of one's mouth. In short, the *'dyofe'* is a tube with two mouths for raising liquids from a vessel or for transferring liquids from one vessel to another. This is also evident from the commentary on the Tosefta (Tractate Shabbat), the Talmud Yerushalmi (Tractate Eruvin) and this is the interpretation of R. Hananel, the rulings of the Rif and Rashi and modern lexicons too prefer this interpretation (Jastrow). Notably, Mar R. Zadok brought this interpretation for the second word, *'meiarak'*.

Some of the interpretations in the lexicons and the commentators, however, have a different interpretation of the word *'dyofe'* than of the word *'titros'* (or *'tattras'*). In R. Haye Gaon's commentary, the word *'dyofe'* is interpreted differently. He interprets this as a hollow clay vessel resembling a dome that is full of water and sealed (plugged) on top, and in the bottom it has some 20 needle-wide holes. So long as it is sealed (plugged) on top, the water in it does not drip out the bottom. But when the plug on top is opened, the water drops out of the bottom (because of the air pressure) gently through the small perforations at the bottom of the clay vessel. This is also the interpretation of the Geonim and in the responsa of the Geonim, the Arukh Lexicon (under: *tattras*), Maimonides' commentary on the Mishna (on Tractate Kelim) and the commentary of R. Ovadya mi-Bartenura (on Tractate Kelim).

Also the second word, *'meiarak'*, has different verbal versions, for example *'arak'*, *'adak'*, *'arak'* in the Tosefta (Tractate Shabbat), *'adak'* or *'arak'* in the Talmud Yerushalmi (Tractate Eruvin), *'adak'* or *'adak'* in the commentary of the Geonim, *'meiadak'*, *'mei adak'*, or *'meadak'* in the commentary of R. Hananel (Tractate Eruvin) or *'mei arag'* in the rulings of the Rif (on Tractate Eruvin, according to Hagahot ha-Bach [on Rif]). The Arukh Lexicon noted different versions: *'adak'*, *'arak'*, *'arpachas'*, *'me-arak'*, *'me-adak'*, *'adak'* (= *'arak'*), *'mei arak'*, *'mei arag'* or *'meiarak'* according to Rashi's commentary (in Tractate Eruvin).

The word *'meiarak'* is explained as a type of vessel, interpreted as a container whose mouth (upper opening) is narrow with a wide bottom part and it is perforated below with small holes, filled with water and plugged on top. So long as it remains plugged, the water does not drop out from the bottom because no air enters the upper opening, and when the plug is opened and air enters, the water drops down from the small holes at the bottom of the vessel, drop by drop. And when a brass vessel is placed below it, then the water falls onto it drop by drop and produces a gentle sound (like a musical sound). Such a perforated vessel would be used to wake sick people or to put them to sleep by dripping water on some metal vessel. This implement was used like a clepsydra in sickrooms.

All the commentators and the lexicons are agreed as to the explanation and interpretation of the word *'meiarak'*, although it has many versions (aside from Mar R. Zadok, whom we mentioned earlier with regard to the first word *'dyofe'*).

In light of the explanation and interpretation of these two words, *'dyofe'* and *'meiarak'*, it is possible to understand the objection of Abaye on Rabbah based on the baraita, 'Liquids may be drawn by means of a siphon and water may be allowed to drop from the *arak'*, as follows:

The water is raised from the siphon, which is a tube used to transfer liquids from a tall vessel to a short vessel by force of the air pressure into the *arak'*, which is a vessel that has small perforations in the bottom, so that it will drip drops of water, drop by drop and the dripping water causes a sick person to fall asleep or to awaken.

The third word, *'kitana'*, has many versions, for example *'khintei'* in the commentary of R. Hananel (in Tractate Eruvin) and in the Genizah fragment (mentioned here), *'bunta'* in Rashi's commentary (in the additional version) and in the Venice edition, *'khunata'* in the Pisaro edition or *'khinta'* in the commentary of Ben Hakhmon and in the research literature.

According to the commentary of R. Hananel, the word *'khintei'* is explained as a product of soaking mortar and water. Ben Hakhmon's commentary (in the name of R. Haye Gaon) also explains the word *'khinta'* in this way, and he adds that the product of soaking mortar in water is intended to prepare a clay vessel.

The word *'kitana'* is explained in Rashi's commentary as flax and the word *'bunta'* in the additional version that he observed is explained as spelt. But the responsa of the Geonim and some of the commentators contend that the word *'kitana'* in the sugya (also according to Rashi's version) is not accurate and they support the word *'khintei'* (Bar Barzilai 1903).

In any case, in light of the word's explanation and interpretation, it seems in the sugya that Amemar prohibited drawing water on the Sabbath because on weekdays this water that had been drawn on the Sabbath was used to soak mortar (*'khintei'*) to prepare clay vessels (*'khinta'*), which is the preferred interpretation in the responsa of the Geonim and some of the commentators. Another option, as suggested by Rashi, is that the water was used to soak flax (*'kitana'*) or spelt (*'bunta'*), a version that, according to the responsa of the Geonim and some of the commentators, is not accurate.

In light of all this, although ultimately there are still multiple versions and understandings, with some slight differences, it may be said in summary that the explanation and interpretation of these three words helps readers to better understand them and, accordingly, the Talmudic text as a whole.

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