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THE TRIPARTITE STRUCTURE IN SUGYOT FROM  
TRACTATE ERUVIN OF THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD

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**Abstract:** This article describes the tripartite structure, a formative style used in the redaction of some sugyot in Tractate Eruvin. The attitude to the tripartite structure is portrayed here as reflected by commentators and researchers who mentioned this pattern, whether directly or indirectly. The purpose of the article is to present several select examples of the tripartite structure in some sugyot in Tractate Eruvin. This will have the significant effect of illuminating different literary forms worthy of exploration, such as the tripartite structure here, as well as in other Talmudic sugyot whose focus is mainly halakhic. Sometimes the form utilized has a considerable effect on redaction of the contents, for example for understanding the sugya or solving various difficulties that it contains. These patterns are also evident in other additional sugyot and they constitute an important research foundation for examining their application in additional sugyot in the different tractates.

**Key Words:** Tripartite, structures, sugya, Eruvin, Babylonian, Talmud, Halakhic, form, style, patterns.

## 1. The tripartite structure and its significance

This article is a development and expansion of an issue discussed in a study that deals with several sugyot (=passages) in the three first chapters of Tractate Eruvin (Zur 1999, 17). This study served as the basis for additional research on other sugyot in Tractate Eruvin, as a separate topic dealing with the tripartite structure of sugyot from Tractate Eruvin of the Babylonian Talmud (Zur 2016, 23).

One of the conclusions arising from the first study is that the most common and admired structure in the sugyot of Tractate Eruvin is the tripartite structure (Friedman 1978, 41; Jacobs 1983, 138). The second study focused on portraying the tripartite structure and demonstrating it in sugyot of Tractate Eruvin, and as a consequence implying its relatively valued and high prevalence among the tractate's (forty sugyot).

The tripartite structure appears in various sugyot in diverse manners, evident formatively as a manifestation of the contents (for example an expression, give and take, etc.) or as a way of arranging three items together, for example three statements by a certain sage in one place in the sugya, sometimes even with no content-related connection between the statements (HaLevi 1970, 31; Sirilio 1972, 127; Weiss 1962, 204), or three statements by different sages.

The significance of research on the tripartite structure in the sugyot in general stems from the fact that very few studies have examined the sugyot from the perspective of their stylistic form, evident in the Babylonian Talmud as a stylistic formative unit and as part of the redactors' considerations when editing the contents of the Babylonian Talmud (Valler 1995, 169; Valler 1999, 10).

The customary conception perceives the content-related or halakhic message as the decisive factor in redaction of the sugyot with no room for other considerations, certainly not formative-stylistic considerations such as utilizing a tripartite structure; however a study of the sugyot in Tractate Eruvin shows that many of them make use of different designs, of which the major one is the tripartite structure.

The significance of the tripartite structure is not only in stressing something by repeating it three times (Pope 1962, 564), or as a structure that represents wholeness (integrity) and importance (Friedman 1978, 41), or as an extremely important structure associated with sacred matters, rather it is also considered the perfect formative-stylistic structure, one that has a beginning, middle, and end.

An additional significance of using the tripartite structure is that sometimes this stylistic form is the best way of solving problems or difficulties that arise in the sugyot. In many cases the commentators who encountered such difficulties solved them by using casuistry, rather than through recognizing the formative-stylistic dimension of shaping the

Talmudic contents in a tripartite structure, although some commentators notably hinted at the tripartite structure or insinuated this „between the lines”.

## 2. Background of the tripartite structure

Tractate Eruvin brings a statement in the name of R Hisda, who stated: „The Torah can only be acquired with [the aid of] mnemonic signs, for it is said, *Put it in their mouths* (Dt. 31:19); read not ‘*put it*’ but ‘*its mnemonic sign*’ [Here and henceforth from the Epstein ed.] (Eruvin 54b). Rashi explains: „Signs of traditions - one after the other, and signs of the sages[’ names] - as in the Talmud, and you shall place the denoted version in their mouths” (Rashi, Eruvin 54b).

The expression „signs of traditions” can be interpreted widely (and not only as signs that head each issue) (Horowitz 1881, 51; Lewin 1930, 46; Rosenthal 2005, 844), also indicating the numbering of the traditions, as evident from the following: „In any matter or homily, you must inquire into its roots and branches and mark them with signs and rules such that they will be remembered... just as signs were given in the Talmud for traditions, and to these numbering should be added as it is said: „A woman is acquired [in marriage] in three ways (Kiddushin 2a)... and the like” (Kanfanton 1980, 25).

Accordingly, we can further say that other topics, for example statements by the sages or other matters, were also collected in certain sugyot in the Talmud as a three-fold sugya (in folklore, there is a common „rule of three” utilized in various folk tales) (Olrik 1965, 133; Noy 1971, 198), where the redactors found this possible or appropriate. In other words, when is possible to link certain matters in Talmudic sugyot by numbering them, for instance by citing three items, then we have a fundamental tripartite structure phenomenon that should be studied and better established, as the tripartite structure as a style is normally not explicitly mentioned (Jacobs 1983, 140) rather assimilated naturally within the sugyot.

As a subjective definition (Friedman 1978, 40), it is possible to define the tripartite structure as a form of expression that links together three within a sugya and as part of it, or as a whole sugya presented in a tripartite form (three-fold sugya).

## 3. The tripartite structure in the various tractates

As stated, only few researchers have dealt with the tripartite structure in sugyot within the tractates of the Babylonian Talmud. Some expanded on this subject and some only referred to it in short, as an aside.

On the tripartite structure of sugyot in the Babylonian Talmud we have already seen, for example, a discussion on the three-fold sugyot in

Tractate Yebamot, in the tenth chapter, and also in tractate Bava Metzi'a, first and second chapter (Friedman 1977, 389; Friedman 2010, 10). Other tripartite structures are also evident in sugyot of the first three chapters from Tractate Eruvin of the Babylonian Talmud (Zur 1999, 368, 392) and in other chapters of the tractate (Zur 2016, 23), as well as elsewhere (Wünsche 1911, 66; Melamed 1962, 157; Nádor 1962, 301).

Some of the researchers mentioned in their studies various phenomena related to the tripartite structure within sugyot or as an entire sugya constructed in a tripartite format; but not all of them dealt with this issue through the systematic study of one tractate from beginning to end, rather they only discussed several chapters from the Babylonian Talmud's tractates, as stated above. We shall now present select examples of the researchers' different attitudes to the tripartite structure in Talmudic sugyot comprised of three parts.

One of the notable examples of reference to the tripartite structure is the contention that „the structure of the sugyot in several chapters of the gemara [Babylonian Talmud] implies that the sugyot, as well as their parts, are based on numerical harmony... three, seven, and ten... that a sugya that covers several pages is in essence actually three statements made by *amoraim* [sages] and the debates surrounding these statements.” (Friedman 1978, 40; Weiner 1983, 47; Cohen 1998, 34 n.89; Rubenstein 2005, 417).

Another example of a reference to the tripartite structure states that the foundation of some of the Babylonian Talmud's sugyot is based entirely on a tripartite structure, i.e., three parts that comprise the entire sugya (or as some of the researchers call it, a three-fold sugya – *sugya meshuleshet*) (Friedman 1977, 391; Faur 1999, 180) for example three statements that relate to the sugya of the Mishna or three matters (for example, halakhic issues) that deal with one subject or refer to one subject (Weiss 1962, 202; Friedman 1978, 42), or „a statement by an early *amora* that serves as the basis for three later *amoraim*” (Friedman 1977, 391).

Another example of a reference to the tripartite structure is evident with regard to the anonymous sugya (*stam sugya*) with its three-fold form „such as: *Ilema... ve-ei... ella...*” or the triple form that is also manifested in conjunctions. Thus, parts of the sugya are „also triple”, and sometimes the structure of the sugya is „threesomes within threesomes” (Friedman 1978, 42).

Yet another example of a reference to the tripartite structure can be seen in sugyot from Tractate Eruvin of the Babylonian Talmud. There are sugyot that include triple topics, rules, names of sages, statements by sages, instances of give and take, and linguistic expressions (Zur 1999, 368, 393; Zur 2016, 23).

#### 4. The tripartite structure in Tractate Eruvin as interpreted by the commentators

Some of the commentators mentioned the tripartite structure indirectly or implicitly. The following are select examples of indirect reference to the tripartite structure by the commentators.

1. In a sugya that includes an inquiry by R. Hisda with Mari son of R. Huna as to the justification they [the people] use for coming from Barnish [name of a city] (Rabbinovicz 1960, 72; Abramson 1965, 123; Obermeyer 1929, 296; Eshel 1979, 63; Oppenheimer 1983, 63) to Daniel's synagogue, a distance of more than two thousand cubits, which therefore exceeds the Sabbath limits, Mari replies in practical terms and shows R. Hisda that they base their practice on contained towns located between these two places that give them a halakhic justification to walk from Barnish to Daniel's synagogue, because the city limit of Barnish is extended for purposes of the Sabbath limits by virtue of those ruined towns (Eruvin 21a-b).

Then two other statements are brought in the sugya in the name of „R. Hisda who cited Mari b. Mar” on aggadic matters that are completely unrelated to the previous issue but their inclusion creates a tripartite structure consisting of statements brought in the name of „R. Hisda, Mari b. Mar.”

The redaction of these three statements in the sugya was interpreted in light of the two additional aggadic statements cited merely because „R. Hisda cited Mari b. Mar” as saying them, where the justification for their inclusion involves a process of elimination, as if we do not say that the two additional aggadic statements were added due to the identical name of the sage R. Hisda who cited Mari b. Mar, then what do these two statements have to say about the previous halakhic matter? (Rabbinovicz 1960, 72). This implies an implicit recognition of the tripartite structure, based as it is on the names of the sages mentioned above.

Other commentators said the same thing, although slightly differently: „R. Hisda cited Mari b. Mar. Because the name of Mari son of R. Huna was already mentioned previously, the matter was adjoined [to the name of the sage].” In other words, the two statements were added here to the sugya in light of the recurring names of the sages in these two statements, which repeat the names of the sages mentioned previously in the previous matter (Zimering 1974, 21a).

Other commentators explained the redaction of these three statements in the sugya in a similar manner, and their clarification resembled that stated in the previous paragraph (these two statements were brought in this sugya only because „R. Hisda cited Mari b. Mar” as saying them), as what connection do these two statements have to this sugya unless we say that they were included due to the identical names of

the sages mentioned in the first halakhic issue that preceded them? (Schiff 1968, 21a).

In light of all this, it is clear from the commentators that they noticed the stylistic design of the sugya and indirectly indicated the tripartite structure, although they did not explicitly mention it.

2. In another sugya, three proofs were brought in support of the opinion of R. Shesheth, who ruled: „In respect of the one as in that of the other [the law of the Torah and the law of the Scribes] there is a legal presumption that an agent carries out his mission” (Eruvin 32a).

The cohesiveness of the three proofs brought in support of R. Shesheth's opinion is manifested in a formative-stylistic form as a tripartite structure through the opening words: „Said R. Shesheth, do I derive this?”

One of the commentators discerned and indicated this cohesiveness by means of a formative-stylistic difficulty that he mentioned in this context: „And it is necessary to specify that in the other expressions of ‘And said R. Shesheth, do I derive this?’... should have been utilized, but this [expression of] ‘R. Shesheth again said, Whence do I derive this?... Go out and gather for yourself some figs from my fig tree’ is difficult” (Gantzfried 1989, 32a) etc.

This implies that R. Shesheth's two following proofs in the sugya (according to the same commentator: „The other [=R. Shesheth's other statements that begin with the expression:] ‘Do I derive this?’”) - the second proof and the third proof, or at least the third- should have begun, in light of his conclusion, with the words „And R. Shesheth said” with the addition of the conjunctive *vav* and in addition to the first proof.

Thus, it is also evident from his words that he sees these three proofs as one grouping aimed at bringing three proofs to support R. Shesheth's opinion, requiring the addition of the conjunctive *vav* at the beginning of the second and third proof. In light of his arguments, it appears that he perceived the three proofs of R. Shesheth's opinion as a single unit with a tripartite structure, manifested in the sugya in the words: „Said R. Shesheth, do I derive this?” (Hyman 1964, 1232), although he did not specifically mention the tripartite structure in his commentary.

3. In another sugya dealing with a person who went out deliberately beyond the Sabbath limits (Eruvin 41b-42a), three statements were brought in the name of „R. Nahman stated in the name of Samuel.” Some are of the opinion that the third statement was included in the sugya only because „the controversy between ‘R. Nahman stated in the name of Samuel’ and R. Huna was written here [in the sugya] for several reasons, first of all because ‘R. Nahman stated in the name of Samuel’ was already quoted [previously] above” (Dinner 1896, 40).

This interpretation clearly implies that the first „reason” for including the third statement in the sugya is because the name of this sage was mentioned previously, in the second statement (and maybe even in

the first statement): „R. Nahman stated in the name of Samuel , as it is in the third statement „R. Nahman further stated in the name of Samuel.”

Consequently, in light of this, if the name of a certain sage was mentioned previously in a sugya and there exists another statement (or statements) ascribed to him – there is definitely room to include them in the same sugya, if this is possible based on various considerations, as the redactors see fit.

This approach also implies that the joining of the three statements in the name of „R. Nahman stated in the name of Samuel” in the same sugya, results from the identical name of the sage by reason of which these three statements were joined together to form a tripartite structure. In light of this, it is clear that the commentator too refers indirectly to the tripartite structure, although he does not mention this term explicitly.

4. Finally, in another sugya three attempts were made to prove a single halakhic rule: „In a dispute between R. Judah and R. Simeon the *halachah* is in agreement with R. Judah” (Eruvin 46b-47a).

All three attempts are in the same form of difficulty: „Who is it that differs from him [R. Simeon]? Evidently R. Judah; but has it not been laid down that ‘In a dispute between R. Judah and R. Simeon the *halachah* is in agreement with R. Judah?’”, as is the solution to each of them, which recurs: „But is this really a difficulty? Is it not possible that the rules [in this case „In a dispute between R. Judah and R. Simeon the *halachah* is in agreement with R. Judah”] are disregarded only where a ruling to the contrary has been stated, but that when no ruling is stated the rules remain in force?” (Epstein 1935, 325).

Hence, at least two of the arguments appear to be redundant, as they are all based on a recurring difficulty stemming from the same principle, and the solution to the difficulty is also based on the same recurring solution. If so, there is no reason to repeat them thrice (Yorboger 1999, 46b; Halivni 1982, 138; Newman 1983, 93; Cohen 1998, 25), unless we are to say that they were brought for other reasons, such as to form a tripartite structure within the sugya.

One of the commentators referred to the tripartite structure indirectly but positively (Yorboger 1999, 46b). According to him, it appears that the purpose was to object to the practice evident in the other halakhic rules cited in the sugya, based as they are on three items [=three proof attempts] in which R. Simeon's opinion was accepted as halakha, which were questioned as one and refuted as one. Rather „[the redactors of the Talmud] set each proof separately, accompanied by its refutation; this seems clear to me.”

This implies that, to begin with, the sugya was formed differently. In his opinion, the redactors of the Talmud had before them the three proof attempts in which R. Simeon's opinion was accepted as halakha – and they were stated „all at once” and all refuted at once, but the redactors of the

Talmud presented each of these three proof attempts separately, each with its own refutation.

The commentary includes no explanation of the redactors' action, but it is clear that this was done for a certain reason, and from the commentator's words it seems that he discerned that setting each of the three proof attempts separately, and adding the same refutation beside each of them, was based on considerations pertaining to the tripartite structure, although he does not say so explicitly.

## 5. The tripartite structure in Tractate Eruvin in light of the research

A small number of researchers who studied the sugyot of Tractate Eruvin referred minimally (when at all) to the tripartite structure in some of the sugyot, and this too not directly rather at random and unsystematically. Here are select examples of references to the tripartite structure, expressed indirectly by the researchers.

1. In a sugya dealing with the „shape of a doorway” (Eruvin 11b), two statements and one *baraita* were brought as three parts that comprise the tripartite structure, based on the expression „shape of a doorway.”

Some of the researchers mentioned only the expression „shape of a doorway” that recurs three times (Weiss 1970, 56), but did not explicitly emphasize that this is in fact a tripartite structure in the sugya, did not ascribe special significance to this, and certainly did not discuss the issue (Friedman 1977, 396; Brooks and Davis 1983, 105; Cohen 1998, 8).

2. In another sugya, three questions (*eiba'aya*) of Rabbah from R. Huna were joined in one place in the sugya in tripartite form in light of the identical opening term and the names of the sages „Rabbah stated: When we were at R. Huna's we raised the following question” (Eruvin 40a-41b), and each question concluded with a double ending in order to form an external unity between all three, although there is no link between their contents.

A few researchers noticed the joining of the three questions of Rabbah from R. Huna in one place in the sugya due to the above stated linguistic form, and said that the first statement is linked to the topic, the second statement is a shift of focus, but the third statement is an entirely different matter and it was joined to the two previous statements only in light of the similar linguistic style, such that the three statements originally appeared together (Weiss 1962, 209). But the redactors separated them and shaped them as a tripartite structure within the sugya. Nonetheless, the researchers did not state that this sugya has a tripartite structure, and neither ascribed any significance to the tripartite structure nor discussed it.



## 6. Tripartite structure of sugyot from a visual angle

Sometimes the tripartite structure is evident in sugyot of Tractate Eruvin only from a visual perspective, without any possibility of proving this. Here are some examples of a tripartite structure in sugyot from the visual angle.

### 1. Eruvin 8a-b

- a. „If from there it might have been assumed... but... also...”
- b. „If from there it might have been assumed... but not...”
- c. „If from there it might have been assumed... but not... hence...”

### 2. Eruvin 14a-b

- a. „The sea that Solomon made... but consider how much is...”
- b. „The sea that Solomon made was round. But consider: By how much does...”
- c. „The sea that Solomon made was square... how much is...”

### 3. Eruvin 16b-17a

- a. „It was taught... one individual is allowed two *beth se'ah*, so are two individuals also allowed two *beth se'ah*, but three become a caravan and are allowed six *beth se'ah*...”
- b. „R. Nahman in the name of our Master Samuel... one individual is allowed two *beth se'ah*, two individuals are also allowed two *beth se'ah*, but three become a caravan and are allowed six *beth se'ah*...”
- c. „Thereupon R. Nahman appointed an *amora* on the subject... an individual is allowed two *beth se'ah*, two are also allowed two *beth se'ah*, but three become a caravan and are allowed...”

### 4. Eruvin 26b

- a. „Rabbh replied... in respect of five persons who lived in one courtyard and one of them forgot to join in the *'erub*. According to the ruling of R. Eliezer this man, when he renounces his right, need not renounce it in favour of every one of the tenants.”
- b. „In accordance with whose view... if five persons live in one courtyard and one of them forgot to join in the *'erub* he, when renouncing his right, need not do it in favour of every one of the tenants... in accordance... with that of R. Eliezer.”
- c. „R. Tabyomi taught... in accordance with whose view... if five persons live in one courtyard and one of them forgot to join in the *'erub* he, when renouncing his rights, need not do it in favour of every one individually?... in accordance with that of R. Eliezer.”

### 5. Eruvin 28b

- a. „An *'erub* may be prepared from *cuscuta*... with what quantity...? as R. Yehiel said, 'a handful'...”
- b. „An *'erub* may be prepared from *kalia*... and what... quantity?... R. Yehiel replied: A handful.”
- c. „It is permitted to prepare an *'erub* from green beans. And what must be its quantity? - R. Yehiel replied: A handful.”

## 6. Eruvin 29a-b

- a. „Samuel stated, this was taught in respect of the leaves only, but... there can be no objection.”
- b. „And even regarding the leaves this has been said only... but... there can be no objection.”
- c. „R. Papa said: This has been said only... but... there can be no danger.”

## 7. Eruvin 54a (1)

- a. „R. Ammi said... when are the words of the Torah...? When...”
- b. „And when wilt thou keep them within thee? When they will...”
- c. „R. Zera said... when ‘*hath a man joy*’? When he has...”

## 8. Eruvin 54a (2)

- a. „Another version: ‘When *hath a man joy*...’? When the...”
- b. „R. Isaac said... when ‘*is it very high unto thee*’? When it is...”
- c. „Raba said... when ‘*hast Thou given him his heart’s desire*’? ...when...”

## 9. Eruvin 104a

- a. „Abaye pointed out an objection... ‘Liquids may be drawn... may it not then be inferred that the production of any sound is forbidden?’”
- b. „He [Rabbah] pointed out... a further objection: If a man guards his fruit... is it not that the man produces sound and that the production of any sound is forbidden?”
- c. „Rab Judah citing Rab made that women who play with nuts... is it not that this produces sound and that the production of any sound is forbidden?”

## 7. The tripartite structure in conjunctions within the sugyot

There is an approach that sees tripartite consistencies in the „anonymous sugya” (*sugya stamit*) as well (Friedman 1978, 42). Thus, in some sugyot the tripartite structure is also evident in the conjunctions. The following are select examples of the tripartite structure in conjunctions within the sugyot.

## 1. Eruvin 2a

- a. „But is not this text (Lev. 3:2) written in connection with the Tabernacle?”
- b. „We find that the Tabernacle... for, should you not concede this...”
- c. „The fact, then... we find that the Sanctuary was called *Tabernacle*...”

## 2. Eruvin 2a-b

- a. „If it be suggested: From the Scriptural text, *And the Kohathites...set forward* (Num. 10:21) ...”
- b. „That was written in respect of the ark”
- c. „Rather it is from the following text... *And let them make me a sanctuary* (Ex. 25:8) ...”

## 3. Eruvin 6a

- a. „If it be suggested... with wider than ten cubits...”

- b. „Consequently... within... ten cubits...”
- c. „From which it definitely follows that... a breach in a side... of an alley...”
- 4. Eruvin 49a
  - a. „Could Samuel have said, ‘If a man divides his ‘erub...”
  - b. „Seeing that he [Samuel] has laid down, ‘The house in which an ‘erub is deposited...”
  - c. „The other [Rab Judah] replied: There the ‘erub is valid even...”
- 5. Eruvin 59b-60a
  - a. „Could R. Nahman, however, have made such a statement?”
  - b. „Did not R. Nahman in fact lay down in the name of Samuel...”
  - c. „Here we are dealing with the case where the balcony...”
- 6. Eruvin 85a (1)
  - a. „From which ruling of Samuel, however, could this be derived?”
  - b. „If it be suggested: From the following which R. Nahman reported in the name of Samuel... might be in agreement with the opinion of R. Papa?”
  - c. „It is rather from this ruling: ‘Each owner...”
- 7. Eruvin 85a (2)
  - a. „From which ruling of Rab, however, was the view here attributed to him derived? If it be suggested from this: ‘If two balconies...”
  - b. „Could it not be retorted that the case here comes under a different category...”
  - c. „It is rather from this ruling: which R. Nahman cited in the name of Rabbah b. Abbuha who had it from Rab...”
- 8. Eruvin 95b
  - a. „Must it be assumed that they differ on the principle of R. Samuel son of R. Isaac...”
  - b. „No, all may hold the view of R. Samuel son of R. Isaac...”
  - c. „But the point at issue between them is whether the Sabbath is a time for *teffilin* [phylacteries]...”

## 8. Conclusion

The tripartite structure appears in the sugyot in a varied and changing form, according to the content of each sugya. The tripartite structure is more prevalent as a formative-stylistic phenomenon within the sugya and as part of it, and less as a complete sugya.

One possible explanation is the considerable complexity involved in designing a tripartite structure as a single unit. Sugyot that consist of only a tripartite structure are more complex and complicated and the redactors must employ judgment and care when connecting the different parts.

Tractate Eruvin has forty sugyot that include a tripartite structure. A possible explanation for the relative prevalence of the tripartite structure as evident in statements, linguistic forms, and give and take, may be that the redactors were familiar with a variety of statements ascribed to different sages and therefore it was relatively easy for them to connect

these statements in a tripartite structure. A tripartite structure based on common language is even easier to form. Even establishing a tripartite form consisting of one part of the give and take (dilemmas, difficulties, proofs, etc.) must have been relatively easy for the redactors.

In some of the texts, difficulties were stated that eventually led to proof of the tripartite structure. In others the tripartite structure could be proved using constructive evidence or by a process of elimination. In some of the texts it was possible to prove the tripartite structure based on comparisons between Genizah fragments or binding fragments, alternative versions provided by early and later commentators to the printed version, or by using comparisons between the printed version and parallel sources of the Babylonian Talmud and Yerushalmi Talmud, the literature of the Geonim, etc.

In some of the texts the evidence for the tripartite structure is based on textual surplus, omissions, or additions that distinguished between manuscripts and the printed version, or various (textual) options that could have been added to the text or that were not included in the text in order to form the tripartite structure. Some of the evidence for the tripartite structure relies on the words of the commentators (some of the commentators imply between the lines of their commentaries that they were aware of the tripartite structure) and some of the evidence for the tripartite structure builds on the research literature.

Notably, the existence of a tripartite structure within the text was brought as the best possible explanation for difficulties in the given text or as a formative explanation linking three (items) in the text. The distribution of the tripartite structure among the sugyot takes a variety of forms, as follows.

In twelve sugyot the tripartite structure is based on three statements that appear in the sugya three times. Of these, five sugyot are based on three statements brought in the name of a certain sage (*Amora*); four sugyot are based on three statements brought in the name of a sage who cited another sage; two sugyot are brought in the name of sages in a homiletic style, with one consisting of three homilies in the name of one sage and the other comprising a halakhic inquiry together with two homilies in the name of a sage who cited another sage; and one sugya is brought in the name of elder sages.

In nine sugya the tripartite structure is based on a form of expression that recurs three times. Of these, four sugyot have a form of expression that recurs in the sugya three times; three sugyot have the same form of expression that recurs three times within the sugya; one sugya has an identical linguistic reply that recurs three times; and one sugya has an identical form of expression in a give and take that is repeated three times.

In eight sugyot the tripartite structure comprises part of the general give and take. Of these, three sugyot are based on three questions or three

difficulties; two sugyot are based on three premises; two sugyot are based on three proofs; and one sugya is based on three controversies between two sages (*Amoraim*).

In three sugyot the tripartite structure constitutes a general give and take (identical or compatible or short) that appears in the sugya three times. Two sugyot have a tripartite structure consisting of three different halakhic rulings that follow the opinion of a certain sage. Two sugyot have a tripartite structure that is based on content that recurs three times in the sugya. Of these – one sugya has a tripartite structure of similar content or an identical opening, and one sugya has a tripartite structure consisting of contents that discuss a single question.

There are four single sugyot, in each one of which the tripartite structure takes a different form. In one sugya the tripartite structure is based on a certain rule in the name of a sage R. Johanan that recurs three times in the sugya. One sugya has a tripartite structure of „three by three”. One sugya has a tripartite structure based on a story that is repeated three times in the sugya. One sugya has a tripartite structure based on three different examples of a certain occurrence.

Some of the sugyot include unique features. Three sugyot have alternative options for a different composition of the tripartite structure. In two sugyot the tripartite structure appears sequentially as a double tripartite structure. In another sugya, each of the three instances of give and take in the tripartite structure has a double ending. In another sugya, the tripartite structure is not only brought in the name of the same sage but also utilizes an identical linguistic form. In another text, the tripartite structure is comprised of three premises, each of which is proposed by two sages (*Amoraim*) (Zur 2016, 367).

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