

IN AND OVER WINE AND OVER WINE שמונה עשרה IN קדושת היום

Our discussion in last week's newsletter as to the origin of the prayer of מעין שבע may have led some of you to consider the following issue: why is it necessary to recite קידוש בעל twice; once in שמונה עשרה of שבת ליל שבת in the middle ברכה and once over wine? The בעל ספר הרדים may have tried to answer that question when he asserted that the קידוש that takes place in שמונה עשרה is the fulfillment of a Torah obligation and the קידוש that we recite over wine is a Rabbinic obligation. That answer fails to provide a reason why our Sages felt the need to add a second act of sanctification. Perhaps an explanation is found in the chapter entitled: קידוש, pages: 178-181 in Eliezer Levy's book, יסודות התפלה:

"מצות עשה מן התורה לקדש את יום השבת בדברים, שנאמר: 'זכור את יום השבת לקדשו', כלומר: זוכרהו זכירת שבת וקידוש. וצריך לזכרהו בכניסתו בקידוש היום וביציאתו בהבדלה". "קידוש בדברים" הוא ב"ברכה" (מכילתא) ואת נוסחתה תיקנו אנשי כנסת הגדולה. "ואמר רבי יוחנן: בתחילה קבעוה בתפלה, העשירו, קבעוה על הכוס-ואז נשתכחה תקנת עזרא (רש"י) - וכשחזרו והענו, קבעוה שוב בתפלה-ונחלקו היאך יאמרוה (רש"י)². וכמו ניסוך היין בעבודת בית המקדש, כך קידוש על היין ב"עבודת ד" בבית הכנסת. ש"אמר רב שמואל בר נחמני אמר ר' יונתן: אין שירה אלא על היין³". "וכמו שדברו הלויים בשיר במקדש רק בניסוך היין, כך אומרים קידוש רק על היין⁴". "ואמר רב: אין אומרים קידוש היום אלא על היין הראוי לינסך על גבי מזבח⁵". וחז"ל סמכו את תקנתם: "זכרהו על היין" על הפסוק, בהושע: "זכרו כהן לבנון⁶".

Translation: It is a positive commandment from the Torah to sanctify Shabbos in words as it is written: Remember Shabbos by sanctifying it. In other words: mark it with a commemoration that includes praise and sanctification. It is necessary to commemorate Shabbos as it begins, with the sanctification of the day, and as it departs, with Havdalah. Sanctification with words is performed by way of a Bracha (Mechilta). The wording of the Bracha was composed by the Men of The Great Assembly. Rav Yochanan said: at first the words that needed to be said were placed within Shemona Esrei. Once the Jews became wealthier, the words that needed to be recited were said over a cup of wine. Then the practice established by Ezra was forgotten (Rashi). When the financial condition of the Jews deteriorated, our Sages placed the words that needed to be said back into Shemona Esrei. They disagreed at that time as to what should be said (Rashi). Just as the pouring of wine in the Beis Hamikdash was considered service of G-d so too Kiddush over wine was considered service of G-d in the synagogue. So said Rav Shmuel son of Nachmani said Rav Yonasan: Song is not performed without wine. Just as the Leviim did not sing in the Beis Hamikdash except when the wine was poured over the alter so too we recite Kiddush only on wine. Rav said: we do not recite the sanctification of the day except with wine that

1. רמב"ם, הלכות שבת כט', א' (The footnotes are provided by Levy).

2. תלמוד בבלי ברכות לג', א'.

3. תלמוד בבלי ברכות לד', א'.

4. מחזור ויטרי קו'.

5. תלמוד בבלי בבא בתרא צו', א'.

6. תלמוד בבלי פסחים קו', א'.

qualified to be poured in the Beis Hamikdash. Our Sages based their practice of requiring wine as part of the commemoration of Shabbos on a verse in Hosea: Remember it like wine from Lebanon.

תחילה – בימי הסופרים – אמרו, אפוא, קידוש היום בתפלה בבית הכנסת, ש"עיקר תקנתא בתפלה"⁷, וכשקבועו על הכוס, קידשו על הכוס בבית הכנסת. והטעם שבדבר היה, שבזמן הבית השני היו אורחים מרובים, שאכלו ולנו בבית הכנסת. שם התכנסו כל אלה, שעלו בסך לרגל, מביאי בכורים או אנשי מעמד. "כגון יהויריב – מהמשמר הראשון – ומכיריו וילינו בבית הכנסת"⁸ (ראה במדורים "משמרות ומעמדות" ו"תפלות וידוי וידוי בכורים").
ואף שהברייתא אומרת⁹, שאכילה ושתייה אסורה בבית הכנסת, הרי הכוונה רק לאכילה "בקלות ראש", אבל לשלוחי מצוה, התירו חז"ל להתארח בבית הכנסת¹⁰. וסעודת שבת מצוה היא, שכן מצינו בירושלמי¹¹, שאכלו בבית הכנסת בשבתות ובראשי חדשים. (ראה במדור "ראש חודש").

Translation: At first, at the time of the Sofrim, they held that the sanctification of the day should take place in the Shemona Esrei being recited in synagogue based on their rule that the main sanctification of the day should take place in Shemona Esrei. When they established the further rule that the sanctification of the day should be performed with a cup of wine, the Kiddush took place in synagogue. The reason that it happened this way was that at the time of the Second Temple, there were many guests who would sleep and eat in the synagogue. It was at the synagogues that all who would come to Yerushalayim for the holidays gathered. So too would those who brought their first fruits or were part of the Ma'A'Mad like those who were part of the Mishmar (of Kobanim) called Yiborain-the first Mishmar- its group would sleep in the synagogues. (See my chapter on Mishmarot and Ma'A'Madot and the prayers of Confession and Confession of Bikurim). Although the Baraisa teaches us that eating and drinking were prohibited in the synagogues, the Baraisa is referring to the type of eating that leads to levity but not to the type of eating by those who were visiting for the purpose of performing a Mitzvah. They were permitted by our Sages to be guests in synagogue for all purposes. This included eating a meal on Shabbos which is deemed a Mitzvah as we find in the Talmud Yerushalmi, that it was customary to eat in synagogue on Shabbos and on holidays (see my chapter on Rosh Chodesh).

ואחרי התפלה, כשהיו מקדשים על היין בבית הכנסת, התחילו האורחים בסעודתם. במשך הזמן הצטרף ה"קידוש" לסעודת האורחים. אבל בעל "אור זרוע" כותב: "כי תקנת התנאים והאמוראים לקדש השבת ולהעיד עליו ב"קידוש", שיום קדוש הוא, לא נתקן עיקר כלל בעבור האורחים אלא לקידוש היום ברבים נתקן". מכאן שלדעתו עיקר הקידוש בבית הכנסת היה, כדי "לקדש את יום השבת ברבים". ומאחר שה"קידוש" היה סמוך לפני סעודת האורחים בבית הכנסת, התחילו לקדש על הכוס לפני הסעודה בבית. ובימי הלל¹² כבר נהגו לקדש על הכוס בסעודה. וכך קידשו, בזמן התנאים, בין בבית הכנסת ובין בבית.

Translation: After the services in synagogue, they would sanctify the Shabbos over wine and then the guests would begin their meal. Over time, the sanctification of Shabbos over wine became associated with the meal

7. תלמוד בבלי ברכות לג, א'

8. תלמוד ירושלמי בכורים ג, ב'

9. תלמוד בבלי מגילה כח, א'

10. תוספות פסחים קא, א', ד"ה דאכלו.

11. תלמוד ירושלמי פסחים א, א'.

12. משנה ברכות ח, א'.

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eaten by the guests. The Ohr Zarua disagrees with that thesis: the practice of sanctifying Shabbos instituted by the Tana'Im and the Amora'Im and by which we testify to the establishment of Shabbos through Kiddush that it is a holy day was not instituted at all for the guests who were in the synagogue but was instituted for the purpose of publicly sanctifying Shabbos. From this we can see that in his opinion reciting Kiddush in synagogue was instituted in order to publicly sanctify the Shabbos. The practice of sanctifying the Shabbos just before the meal eaten by the guests in synagogue led to the practice of reciting Kiddush at home just before eating the Shabbos meal. We see that by the time of Hillel the practice of reciting Kiddush over a cup of wine before the meal was a regular custom. We further see that the practice of reciting Kiddush over wine both in synagogue and at home was a regular practice during the period of the Tana'Im.

וכן נהג רב בבבל ואמר: "אותם בני אדם, שקידשו בבית הכנסת יצאו ידי קידוש". וכששאלו אותו, למה מקדשים גם בבית? ענה: "כדי להוציא בניו ובני ביתו"¹³, שגם האשה, מחויבת בקידוש (ראה להלן). אבל שמואל תיקן תקנה חדשה ואמר: "אין קידוש אלא במקום סעודה", ובקידוש בבית הכנסת לא יוצאים. ועל השאלה: למה מקדשין בבית הכנסת? הוא ענה: "כדי להוציא את האורחים ידי חובתן, שאכלו ולנו בבית הכנסת"¹⁴. לפי רב חובה לקדש בבית הכנסת, אולם לפי שמואל מקדשים בבית הכנסת, רק אם נמצאים שם אורחים¹⁵. והלכה כשמואל (רי"ף). כך ניתן ל"קידוש" טעם נוסף: לקדש את סעודתנו. וכן אמר רבא: "יום השביעי שבת היא לישראל, אוכלין ושותין ומתחילין בדברי תורה ובדברי תשבחות"¹⁶—וזהו הקידוש.

Translation: And so too Rav followed that practice in Babylonia and said: those who heard Kiddush in synagogue fulfilled their obligation to sanctify Shabbos. When they asked him: why do we follow the practice of reciting Kiddush at home as well? He answered: in order to allow the children and the other members of the household to fulfill their obligation of sanctifying Shabbos based on the rule that women were also obligated to fulfill the Mitzvah of sanctifying the Shabbos. But Shmuel instituted a new practice and said: Sanctifying Shabbos must take place wherever the Shabbos meal is eaten and one does not fulfill his obligation by hearing Kiddush in synagogue. According to Shmuel, why was it necessary to recite Kiddush in synagogue? In order to assist guests who were eating and sleeping in the synagogue to fulfill their obligation. According to Rav there is an obligation to sanctify Shabbos in synagogue. According to Shmuel we sanctify Shabbos in synagogue only if guests are present. The Halacha follows Shmuel (RIF). In this way a new reason for reciting Kiddush developed; i.e. to sanctify our meals. So said Rava: the seventh day is Shabbos for the Jewish people. They eat, drink and begin with words of Torah and praise. Rava was describing the words of Kiddush.

כל זמן, שישבו בני ישראל בארצם, היה להם יין בשפע—ומים בצמצום, לכן נתעוררה השאלה, אם מותר ליטול ידים ביינ¹⁷—והברייתא אומרת, אפוא, ש"אין מקדשין אלא על ביינ¹⁸" וגם אמוראי ארץ ישראל נהגו, ש"אין מקדשין אלא ביינ¹⁹". לא כן בבבל. שם היו להם מים בשפע, אבל היה מחסור ביינ. וכתהליף ליינ יצרו כל מיני משקה (שכר תאנים, תמרים, תותין, שעורין²⁰).

13. תלמוד בבלי פסחים קא, א' 13.

14. תלמוד בבלי פסחים קא, א' 14.

15. תוספות פסחים קא, א' ד"ה ולשמואל.

16. תלמוד בבלי מגילה יב, ב' 16.

17. תלמוד בבלי ברכות נ, ב' 17.

18. תלמוד בבלי פסחים קו, א' 18.

19. תלמוד ירושלמי ברכות ה, א' 19.

20. תלמוד בבלי פסחים קו, א' 20.

והשאלה, אם מותר לקדש בהם, לא נפתרה: "דבעאי מיניה מרב, ורב מרבי חייא, ורבי חייא מרבי ולא פשט ליה"²¹. בכל זאת, היו שקידשו על שכר, מפני שזה "חמר מדינה"²², והיו שקידשו על לחם²³. מענינת תשובתו של רב נטרונאי גאון: "אם אין תקנה כל עיקר להביא יין, ישרה ענבים צימוקין במים, שלפי הגמרא²⁴ זה בדיעבד כשר לקרבן. וכיון דכשר בדיעבד לקרבן, כשר לקידוש ולהבדלה לכתחילה. ובמקום שאינו מוצא כל עיקר לא זה ולא זה, יקדש על משקה של רבש".

Translation: For as long as the Jews lived in their homeland they had a plentiful amount of wine but had very little water. That is why the question arose as to whether it was permitted to wash ones hands with wine. That is further why the Baraisa says "we do not recite Kiddush except over wine". The Amora'Im in Israel also followed the practice not to recite Kiddush except over wine. That was not the case in Babylonia. There, water was plentiful and wine was scarce. As a substitute for wine they created different kinds of beverages (liquor made from dates, figs, mulberries and barley). The question arose as to whether Kiddush could be recited using those beverages. It was an issue that was never resolved. It was asked of Rav and Rav asked Rav Chiya and Rav Chiya asked Rebbe and no answer was given. The answer to a question asked of Rav Natroni is worth noting: if it is not possible to use grape wine, it is adequate to use raisins soaked in water because according to the Gemara that type of beverage could be used in the Temple service if wine was unavailable. Since it could be used as a last resort for the service in the Temple, it was adequate for Kiddush and as a first resort for Havdalah. And in places where neither grape wine nor water soaked raisins were available, one could use a drink made of honey (dates).

וכך – מחוסר יין – פשט המנהג בבבל, לקדש על היין בבית הכנסת ובוזה להוציא את כל הקהל. ואף על פי ש"אין קידוש אלא במקום סעודה", יצא הקהל ידי חובת קידוש בתוקף מנהג חדש: המקדש על היין בבית הכנסת היה נותן לכל אחד ואחד מהקהל קצת מהיין וכל אחד היה מורח ממנו על עיניו לשם רפואה. והגמרא מספרת, ש"מלח סדומי מסמה את העינים"²⁵, ו"פסיעה גסה נוטלת אחת מחמש מאות ממאור עיניו של אדם". והיא שואלת: ובמאי מהדרא ליה? ומשיבה: "בקדושי דבי שמשי – בקידוש ליל שבת"²⁶. ואמרו אביי ורבא: "כל דבר שיש בו משום רפואה, אין בו משום דרכי האמורי"²⁷. "הילכך זימנא, דאיכא צבור דלית ליה חמרא ומקדש בבית אריפתא, תיקנו חכמים לקדש על היין בבית הכנסת משום רפואה"²⁸. ויתר על כן: בבבל היו קהילות, שבכלל לא היה להם יין, אפילו לצורך קידוש בבית הכנסת. ובמקומות אלה נהגו לפי תקנת עזרא לקדש בתפלה, ש"עיקר תקנתא בתפלה". כך מובא בירושלמי²⁹: "אמר רבי יוסי בי רבי בון: נהגין תמן בבבל במקום שאין יין, שליה הצבור יורד לפני התיבה ואומר ברכה אחת "מעין שבע" וחותרם "מקדש ישראל ויום השבת". (האמורא מארץ ישראל מוסר את החתימה של

21. תלמוד בבלי פסחים קו, א'.

22. תלמוד ירושלמי ברכות ח', א'.

23. תלמוד בבלי פסחים קו, א'.

24. תלמוד בבלי בבא בתרא צו, ב'.

25. תלמוד בבלי פסחים מב, א'.

26. תלמוד בבלי ברכות מג, ב'.

27. תלמוד בבלי שבת סז, א'.

28. מחזור ויטרי קו'.

29. תלמוד ירושלמי ברכות פרק ח' הלכה א'.

להבין את התפלה

ארץ ישראל, על אף שבבבל אמרו "מקדש השבת". הרי לפנינו מנהג שנהגו בבבל, מחוסר יין, לקדש בבית הכנסת בתפלה כבימי אנשי כנסת הגדולה. ולמרות שנתקבלה ההלכה כשמואל, שאין קידוש אלא במקום סעודה, נוכחנו לדעת, שמחוסר יין חזרו בבבל לקדש על היין בבית הכנסת. ובמקומות, שבכלל לא היה יין, קדשו את השבת לקהל בברכת "מעין שבע". המנהג לקדש על היין בבית הכנסת נשאר בזמן הגאונים (רב עמרם), גם בזמן שהטעם של חוסר יין בטל. בעל ה"כל בו" מבאר את המנהג לקדש בבית הכנסת, "שזה פרסום גדול לשם יתברך ודומה למה שנוהגים להדליק נרות בחנוכה בבית הכנסת לפרסומי ניסא". בארץ ישראל, שבה אין חוסר יין, לא התקבלה מנהג הזה. שכן כותב בעל "שולחן ערוך" "שאינו מנהג בארץ ישראל לקדש בבית הכנסת"³⁰.

Translation: And so because of the scarcity of wine, the practice began in Babylonia to recite Kiddush in synagogue and by doing so to fulfill the obligation for sanctifying Shabbos over wine for those present. Although the Halacha required that Kiddush take place where the meal was being eaten, a new practice was instituted; i.e. the one who would recite Kiddush over wine in synagogue would give a little wine to each person present and each one would place some wine on his eyes as medicine. The Gemara tells us that salt from Sodom blinds the eyes and taking long strides destroys a portion of one's vision. The Gemara then asks: what is the remedy? The Gemara answers: He can restore his vision through the wine of Kiddush in synagogue, through the Kiddush of Sabbath eve. Abaye and Rava said: Any act that is meant to heal is not considered an act that follows in the way of the gentiles. Therefore when a community did not have easy access to wine, they would recite Kiddush over bread. For those areas, our Sages instituted the practice to recite Kiddush over wine in the synagogue and giving as the reason, that the wine of Kiddush had healing capacities. In addition, there were communities in Babylonia where no wine was available and it was not possible to recite Kiddush over wine in synagogue. In those places they followed the practice instituted by Ezra to recite Kiddush in Shemona Esrei because the essence of the Mitzvah is to recite the sanctity of the day in Shemona Esrei. This is what we find in the Jerusalem Talmud: Rav Yossi son of Nun said: We follow the practice here in Babylonia that in places where wine is unavailable, the prayer leader descends to the ark and says the abbreviated form of Shemona Esrei and ends it with the words: Mikadesh Yisroel V'Yom Ha'Shabbos. (The Amora from Israel provides for the conclusion of the Bracha as it was recited in Israel even though in Babylonia they would conclude the Bracha with the words: Mikadesh Ha'Shabbos). That is a report of the practice in Babylonia where grape wine was scarce. They followed the practice of reciting Kiddush in synagogue as part of Shemona Esrei as in the time of the Men of the Great Assembly. Although the Halacha follows Shmuel that Kiddush must be recited in the place where you eat your Shabbos meal, we have come to learn that those who did not have wine available returned to the custom of reciting Kiddush over wine in synagogue. In places where no grape wine was available, they would recite the abbreviated form of Shemona Esrei as a substitute. The practice of reciting Kiddush in synagogue remained at the time of the Gaonim (Rav Amrom), a time when the problem of a scarcity of wine no longer existed. The Kol Bo explains the practice of reciting Kiddush in synagogue as follows: it is a public display to honor G-d and is similar to lighting candles on Chanuka in synagogue which is also as a public display of the miracle of Chanukah.

30. אורח חיים רס"ז, י"א.

"נוסח הקידוש": מדברי הירושלמי³¹: "אשכחה בתפלה", משמע שנוסח הקידוש בתפלה נשכח לאחר שתיקנו לקדש על הכוס. ואם אנו מוצאים בתוספתא³² שהלל התפלל בשבת שבע ברכות ובאמצע ברכת "קדושת היום", יש להניח, שברכת "קדושת היום" שבתפלה היתה גם ברכת "קדושת היום" על הכוס. שכן חז"ל משוים את ברכת קדושת היום שבתפלה לקידוש על הכוס: "אמר רבי זירא: בקידושא, אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו" כתודה על העבר, בצלותא "קדשנו במצותך" – כבקשה לעתיד³³. ותלמידי רב מוסיפים: "בין דצלותא בין בקידושא, חותמים "מקדש השבת". (ובני ארץ ישראל חותמים: "מקדש ישראל ויום השבת"³⁴) לאמור: קדושת היום היא הברכה לתפלה וגם לקידוש וחותרמת "מקדש השבת".

Translation: The wording of the Kiddush: From the words of the Jerusalem Talmud: the wording as Kiddush appeared in Shemona Esrei was forgotten, we can conclude that the wording of Kiddush as it appeared in Shemona Esrei was forgotten once they instituted the practice of reciting Kiddush over wine. We find in the Tosephta that Hillel would recite on Shabbos a Shemona Esrei that contained seven Brachos and in the middle was the Bracha of Kedushas Ha'Yom. We can surmise that the middle Bracha of Shemona Esrei, Kedushas Ha'Yom, was the same Bracha of Kedushas Ha'Yom that was recited over wine. That can be supported by the fact that our Sages compared the Bracha of Kedushas Ha'yom that appeared in Shemona Esrei with the Bracha of Kedushas Ha'Yom that was recited over wine. Rav Zeira said: in Kiddush over wine, we say Asher Kidishanu B'Mitzvosav V'Tzivanu as a show of thanks for what G-d did for us in the past; in Shemona Esrei we say: Kadsheinu B'Mitzvosecha, as a request for the future. The students of Rav added: in both Sheoman Esrei and over wine, we need to end with the Bracha of Mikadesh Ha'Shabbos. (The Jews living in Israel ended both Brachos with the words: Mikadesh Yisroel V'Yom Ha'Shabbos). This means that the same Bracha ended the Bracha of Kedushas Ha'Yom in Shemona Esrei and Kiddush over wine.

SUMMARY

The Torah requires that we sanctify Shabbos with words as Shabbos begins. At first, the obligation was fulfilled by reciting the middle Bracha of Shemona Esrei. To enhance the act of sanctification, the sanctification was moved from the middle Bracha of Shemona Esrei to a Bracha that was recited on its own over a cup of wine in synagogue. Reciting Kiddush over wine in synagogue also began for the benefit of guests who ate their meals in synagogue. When guests no longer ate and slept in synagogue, the practice continued because of the price and availability of wine. Those two economic factors led to additional practices being brought forth; i.e. to once again recite the sanctification of Shabbos in Shemona Esrei, to recite an abbreviated form of Shemona Esrei in synagogue as a substitute for Kiddush over wine and to recite Kiddush over bread and over other beverages. Levy further argues that the two Brachos of sanctification that we recite today, one in Shemona Esrei and one over wine contained the same wording. Because the original wording was forgotten, two versions of the Bracha developed.

31. תלמוד ירושלמי ברכות פרק ה' הלכה ב'.

32. תוספתא ברכות ג', טו'.

33. תלמוד בבלי פסחים קיז', ב'.

34. תלמוד ירושלמי ברכות פרק ח' הלכה א'.

SUPPLEMENT

The Use Of The Synagogue As A Guesthouse And For Meals

In this week's newsletter, we once again encounter a historical fact; that early synagogues were used as guesthouses and places for meals. Below are two excerpts from the book: *The Ancient Synagogue* by Lee Levine, Yale University Press, 2000, that discuss this issue.

Pages 54-55

Undoubtedly, the single most important piece of evidence relating to the pre-70 Judaen synagogues generally and Jerusalem synagogues in particular, is the Theodotos inscription, found by Weill during the City of David excavations in 1913-1914. Discovered in a cistern along with other building fragments, the slab of stone bearing this inscription came in all probability from a nearby structure, traces of which were claimed to have been found. The inscription, written in Greek and dating from the first century C.E. is ten lines long and reads as follows:

Theodotos, the son of Vettos, priest and archisynagogos³⁵, son of an archisynagogos, grandson of a archisynagogos, built this synagogue for the reading of the Law [i.e. the Torah] and the study of the commandments, and a guesthouse and rooms and water installations for hosting those in need from abroad, it [i.e. the synagogue], having been founded by his fathers, the prebyters, and Simonides.

As noted, the name Vettenos appears to place this inscription among Jews who came from Rome. Of singular importance in this inscription is the listing of three synagogue activities: reading the Torah, studying the commandments, and providing rooms and water for itinerant pilgrims. Whether the hostel services were intended only for Jews from Rome in the context of a Landsmannschaft or whether they were available to others as well is unknown.

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THE SYNAGOGUE AS A COMMUNITY CENTER

The role of the synagogue as the focal communal framework is reflected in its function as a venue for public gatherings. Tiberias in 66-67 C.E. provides a striking example of such a function. In debating whether to join the rebellion then in progress, the populace convened in either the city's stadium or the local proseuche³⁶. In addition, several decrees quoted by Josephus regarding Jewish rights and privileges in Asia Minor make the association of a synagogue as a community center quite clear:

Jewish citizens of ours have come to me and pointed out that from the earliest times they

35. The Greek word archisynagogos is defined as head of the synagogue.

36. The Greek word proseuche is defined as a place where prayer takes place.

have had an association of their own in accordance with their native laws and a place of their own, in which they decide their affairs and controversies with one another.

It has therefore been decreed by the council and people that permission be given them to come together on stated days to do those things which are in accordance with their laws, and also that a place be set apart by the magistrates for them to build and inhabit, such as they may consider suitable for this purpose.

There is also some indirect evidence that Egyptian synagogues served a wider communal purpose. As will be recalled, several inscriptions mention *ra' ouykupovra* when referring to the proseuche. What precisely is intended remains unclear, but it may well be a reference to ancillary rooms used for a variety of purposes, as in contemporary pagan temples. Moreover the building(s) mentioned in the Theodostos inscription, together with the Gamla and Delos buildings and the inscription from Cyrene, seem to indicate that these structures functioned in a similar fashion.

In addition to serving as a meeting place for the community as a whole, the synagogue also hosted various subgroups within the community. Several papyri from Hellenistic Egypt indicate that a burial society once met in a local proseuche; another papyri indicates that an association in Appollonpolis Magna organized a series of banquets, probably in the local synagogue. This may also have been the case with regard to the Sambathic association in Naucratis, although the precise nature of this group (Jews? *sebomenoi*) remains unclear. The various professional guilds mentioned in the Tosefta in connection with the Alexandrian synagogue may have used the premises for professional gatherings as well as for worship purposes.

One of the most intriguing functions of the ancient synagogue which is mentioned on a number of occasions was to provide a place for communal meals. Once again, Josephus provides us with the clearest statements of this activity. In an edict issued by Julius Ceasar (cited above), the following rights are confirmed: "Now it displeases me that such statutes should be made against our friends and allies, and that they should be forbidden to live in accordance with their customs and to contribute money to common meals and sacred rites . . . I forbid other religious societies but permit these people alone to assemble and feast in accordance with their native customs and ordinances." The edict is a general recognition of two basic rights which the Jews enjoyed: to assemble to their ancestral tradition and to collect monies for communal meals. Similarly in writing to the Jews of Asia Minor, Augustus makes reference to their sacred books and sacred monies which are stored in the synagogue (here referred to as a sabbation) and banquet hall.

It is difficult to determine the nature of these meals. Were they holiday feasts, meals for transients and visitors, or events sponsored by local Jewish associations? Alternatively, might they have been regular communal gatherings on the Sabbath and perhaps New Moon? Or perhaps they were all of the above in various permutations over time and place. Whatever the answer, one fact remains eminently clear from the documents quoted by Josephus. These meals were recognized by Romans and Jews alike as important communal activities which played an integral part in the corporate life of the Jews.