Darkhei Shalom: Communities Built on Peace and Harmony Repair the World

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In rabbinic thought, harmonious interactions among people and the pursuit of peace, *darkhei shalom*, are presented as crucial values that will lead to ultimate repair of the world. Respecting and acknowledging the feelings and emotions of all of human beings created by God leads to building communities that reflect God's image in the world as a whole. The larger rabbinic concept of *tikkun ha-olam*,[1] of which *darkhei shalom* is an integral part, first appears in the Mishnah, in the fourth and fifth chapters of Gittin, the tractate that deals with Jewish divorce law. The first *mishnah* in the series about *tikkun ha-olam* (4:2) discusses the laws of divorce and so, from a technical perspective, one can understand the unit's placement specifically in this tractate. However, it seems that the editor of the Mishnah is presenting a deeper, more meaningful idea with this placement. The unit on *tikkun ha-olam* appears in the middle of a tractate that focuses on the ultimate breakdown of human relationships; it seems that this literary placement is intended to express the rabbis' view that in working to repair the world at large, people need to expend effort first and foremost in the realm of their interpersonal interactions. The importance of harmonious interpersonal relations also figures prominently in the last two *mishnayot* of the unit (5:8–9[2]), which specifically deal with rules governing human behavior and interaction undertaken in the interest of peace. Interestingly, these latter *mishnayot* use a different phrase to explain the rationale behind

the laws: *mi-p'nei darkhei shalom* ("in the interest of peace"), rather than the phrase *mi-p'nei tikkun ha-olam* ("for the sake of repairing the world") that is found throughout the earlier part of the unit.[3] However, the effect of the literary construction is striking: anchoring these *mishnayot* that invoke *tikkun ha-olam* and *darkhei shalom* together in this two-chapter unit, in the midst of legal material concerning divorce, indicates that harmonious interpersonal interactions lies at the heart of creating a more just world at large.

The thematic link between *tikkun olam* and *darkhei shalom* is strengthened by repeated ideas and language, as many of the words in the first half of chapter 5 are repeated in the final *mishnayot* (5:8–9), which list actions undertaken "in the interests of peace."[4] Moreover, similar general themes also appear in both sections of the chapter.[5] Also creating a link and parallel structure between the two chapters, both chapter 4 and chapter 5 end with a *mishnah* (4:9 and 5:9) about interactions between Jews and non-Jews, land, and agricultural commandments (which will be discussed further below).

Legally, the laws that are grounded in a concern for *tikkun olam* and those that are grounded in a concern for *darkhei shalom* function in a similar manner. Common to both sets of laws is a proposed deviation from the basic application of the *halakhah*. Although certain behaviors might technically be licit, they could lead to an undesirable outcome; therefore, in order to right a moral ambiguity, have society function in an optimal manner, or foster peace between people, the rabbis "repair" the law and require people to adhere to a different standard. For example, in the case of *tikkun olam* (5:3), to ensure that people will try to return lost objects to their rightful owners, the finders will not be required to swear that they honestly have returned the entire package and did not keep anything for themselves, despite the fact that legally the owners could require them to do so. Similarly, in a case of *darkhei shalom* (5:8), to ensure that a deaf-mute, the mentally disabled, or a minor does not feel angered, hurt, aggrieved, and robbed, one is forbidden to take from them an object that they found

(for which the owners cannot be identified), even though legally it would be permitted to do so (since people of their status—lacking adult cognizance—cannot legally acquire objects for themselves). With the examples done in the interests of peace, explained below, the deviation in law is sometimes done despite the legal reality (as in the case just cited), and at other times the law prescribes a particular behavior that otherwise is legally not required.

Ten situations and the appropriate behavior for each one, to avoid strife between people, appear in Mishnah Gittin 5:8–9. The list is introduced with the statement: "These are the things they [the rabbis] said in the interests of peace"; and the theme is reinforced by the repetition of the phrase "in the interests of peace" (*mi-p'nei darkhei shalom*) to explain each example. Some of the examples create order and give rules and guidelines where none are legally prescribed, so as to avoid situations that could lead to discord, argument, and in-fighting. Other cases ensure that individuals go beyond the legal norms to prevent other people from feeling hurt and mistreated. The choice of specifically ten examples, and the knowledge that these cases cannot possibly be the only ones in which human beings need guidance on how to avoid enmity and strife, suggest that these examples were chosen not just because of the specific laws that are contained within them, but also because they convey some broader message and represent paradigmatic ideas on the topic of fostering peaceful and harmonious interactions between people.

A closer examination and reading of the text is required to understand the rabbinic message embedded within it[6]:

Mishnah Tractate Gittin 5:8

These are the things they said in the interests [literally "ways"] of peace (*mi-p'nei darkhei shalom*):

[1] A priest reads [from the Torah] first, and after him a Levite, and after him an Israelite—in the interests of peace [i.e., to prevent fighting about who should receive which *aliyah*].

[2] An *eiruv* [consisting of food, to enable carrying objects in a joint courtyard on Shabbat] is placed in the old [i.e., previously used for this purpose] house [in the courtyard]—in the interests of peace.[7]

[3] The cistern [used to water fields] that is nearest to the [head of the] canal is filled [from it] first, in the interests of peace [to prevent fighting between the field owners, each of whom has to take a turn to stop up the canal to fill their cistern].

[4] [The taking of] animals, birds, and fish from traps [set by others] is counted as a kind of robbery [even though legally the animals have not yet been acquired by the trap-setter, for he has not yet taken possession of them]—in the interests of peace.
Rabbi Yossi says it is actual robbery.

[5] [To take away] anything found by a deaf-mute, a mentally incompetent person, or a minor is counted as a kind of robbery [even though legally they do not have the full cognizance required to acquire objects]—in the interests of peace.
Rabbi Yossi says it is actual robbery.

[6] A poor person who gleans [by hitting] on the top of an olive tree, [if another takes the fruit] that is beneath him it is counted as a kind of robbery [even though the poor person did not yet legally acquire them by physically taking possession].
Rabbi Yossi says it is actual robbery.

[7] We do not prevent the poor non-Jews from gathering gleanings (*leket*), forgotten sheaves (*shikh·ḥah*), and the corner of the field (*pei·ah*) [which were left for the Jewish poor]—in the interests of peace.

Mishnah Tractate Gittin 5:9

[8] A woman may lend to her friend, who issuspected [of transgressing the laws] of the Sabbatical year, a fine sieve, or a coarse sieve, or a hand mill, or an oven [even though the friend

may be using them with ingredients which are prohibited] but she [the lender, who does keep the laws of the Sabbatical year] must not sift nor grind with her [friend].

[9] The wife of a *ḥaveir* [a member of the elite rabbinic faction who is scrupulous in the observance of ritual purity and tithes] may lend to the wife of an *am ha-aretz* [one who is suspected of transgressing the laws of ritual purity and tithes] a fine sieve, or a coarse sieve, and she may winnow or grind or sift with her; but when she [i.e., the wife of the *am ha-aretz*] pours the water, she [i.e., the wife of the *ḥaveir*] must not touch it [i.e., the formed dough] with her,[9] because one does not strengthen the hand of those that transgress.[10]—And all these have only been said for the interest of peace.

[10] And they strengthen the hands of non-Jews in the Sabbatical year [by blessing their labor for success] but not the hands of Jews, and one greets (*sho·alim bi-sh'loman*) them [i.e., non-Jews]—in the interests of peace.[11]

Interestingly, each *mishnah* ends with laws concerning interactions with non-Jews, thus structurally breaking the two *mishnayot* into two parallel units. The theme of peace is doubly reinforced in the last case, as the Hebrew idiom for greeting people is to inquire about the *shalom* of another: How are you? Are you at peace?[12] Concern for the well-being of the ultimate other is the pinnacle example of the collection.

Much can be said about each case brought in these *mishnayot*, and the *g'mara* and the traditional commentaries unpack each law individually. It is instructive to consider, in each case, what creates peace and what is required to bring about harmony. Is the Mishnah simply trying to avoid fighting between people (for example, in legislating the order in which people are to receive *aliyot*, [1] above; or the order in which cisterns are to be filled, [3] above)? Or are the rabbis advocating that one must "do the right thing" even when

not legally required to do so (for example, in the cases that may not technically constitute theft, but in which case people will most certainly feel that they have been robbed; [4], [5], and [6] above)? These important issues are beyond the scope of this essay, which will only analyze the literary structure and the ideas presented therein.

The beauty and power of these *mishnayot* lies in the thematic messages imbedded within the halakhic text. Besides delineating technically what is required in order to maintain peace, the Mishnah paints a clear picture of a community and presents a strong argument for harmonious interaction among community members. The Mishnah stresses that interactions with others should be grounded in, and reflect, the value of *shalom*/peace, and it explains that this value must even be extended to people whom one might not necessarily at first glance define as being part of the community (as will be explained below).

Why are these specific cases discussed, and why are they presented in this specific order? If one considers the physical locale in which the first four laws mentioned in M. Gittin 5:8 are operative, the settings mirror the geographic layout of a small rural town (see Diagram A):

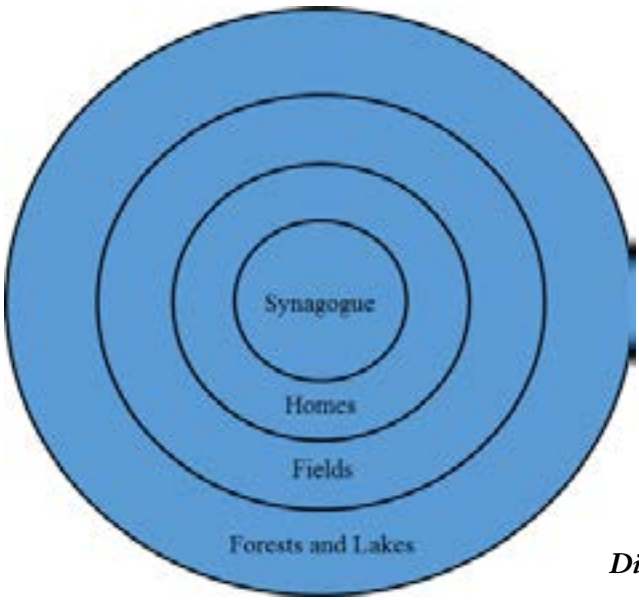

Diagram A

The synagogue lies at the center, and here the Torah is read [1]. Houses and courtyards are built around this most important edifice, and it is there that the *eiruv* is placed [2]. Surrounding the houses are the fields, water for which is supplied by the cisterns [3]. And the forests and lakes are found on the outskirts of town, and it is there that animals are trapped [4].

On closer examination, however, it becomes clear that the *mishnah* does not just describe the physical structure of a town; it also makes a statement about the people one might encounter within that community. Unrest and discord can arise in every segment of community, and the synagogue is listed at the outset as a prime example of a place in which communal in-fighting may arise. The cases listed in this mishnah begin by addressing an individual's core community and proceed outward, widening to include those on the periphery (see Diagram B):

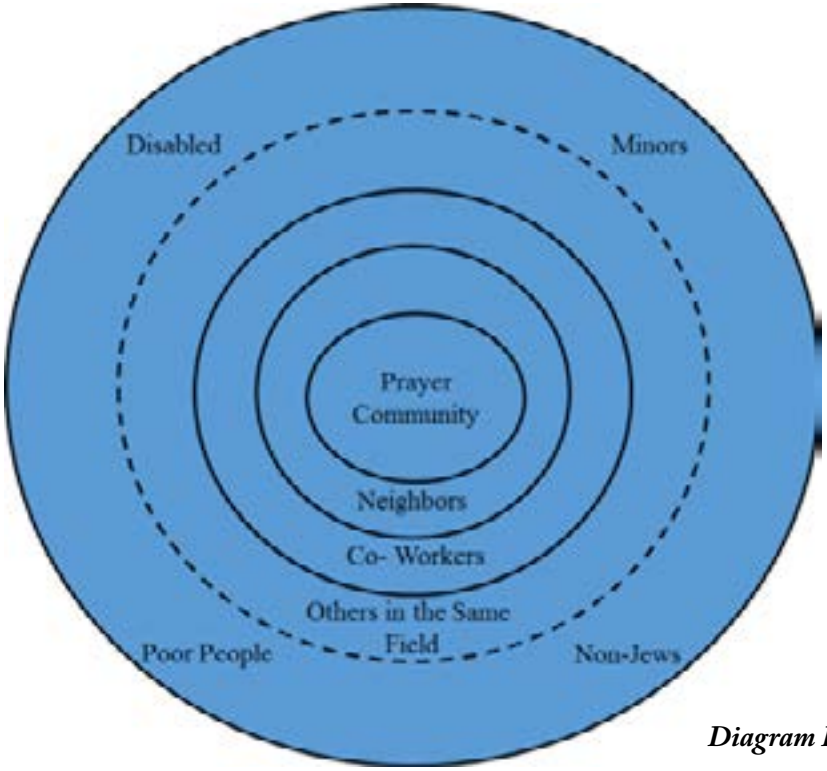

Diagram B

The nucleus of a Jew's community consists of people with similar belief systems and ritual practices. The *mishnah* includes all segments of the Jewish people—priests, Levites, and Israelites—in the description of one's prayer community, at [1]. The text then goes on to address interactions outside of the synagogue, discussing those who live nearby—one's neighbors, at [2]—and those who work nearby and with whom one must share nature's resources—one's co-workers (those in the "same field," so to speak), at [3]. The *mishnah* suggests that other people, even those with whom one does not interact daily, are still part of a Jew's community. The case involving animal traps, at [4], addresses individuals that one does not see but who work in the same profession. While such people are portrayed as peripheral, perhaps due to the solitary nature of their work, they are still within the community and need to be treated appropriately, even if one does not routinely encounter them face-to-face.

The *mishnah* then emphasizes that there are other groups who are also less visible, due to their marginalized social status: the disabled, minors, and poor people, at [5] and [6]. Yet, they are included here in the description of community specifically for that reason: they deserve the same regard and consideration allotted to others in the core community. Although, according to the majority view as expressed in the *mishnah*, the disabled and minors do not legally have a claim, due to their diminished mental capacity, and moreover they may have a lesser legal status within society as a whole, they definitely do have human feelings and emotions that are equal in importance to those of the core or full-functioning community members, and so they would be troubled if they could not keep that which they had found. Similarly, a poor person who has worked hard to glean from the top of the tree may not understand the legality of the situation, and may feel that others are stealing from him and treating him with contempt and disrespect. A community that strives to live harmoniously must not take advantage of those on the margins, but must actively acknowledge and respect their feelings

as individuals worthy of respect, for they too are created in the image of God. Interestingly, the *mishnah* chooses to include in its picture of community non-Jews as well, at [7]. The *mishnah* began its description of the Jewish community by listing those included in the covenant of Torah, and it ends by acknowledging that the same high standard of human interaction must be afforded to those who may seem to be the diametrical opposite of the original group: those with different religious beliefs and practices. Not only that, but the particular laws that were set in place by the Torah itself to care for those in need within the Jewish community—such as gleaning, forgotten sheaves, and the corner of the field[13]—must be extended to those on the periphery, the poor of the non-Jewish community, as well.

Within Jewish law and community, women too are often considered to be on the sidelines of society; but in this text, which gives them their own parallel treatment (in 5:9), women become a reflection of the community as a whole. Even though (or possibly because) the sphere of women is in the home, attending to domestic chores, they have strong neighborly and communal relationships that can be a model for all. Another way of categorizing members of the Jewish community may be according to their level of religious practice and adherence to Jewish law. Inevitably, those who are punctilious in the performance of *mitzvot* are well aware of those whom they deem to have a lesser commitment to law than they themselves do. In modern times, this often leads to creating distance and separation; the different groups do not socialize and may not live in the same neighborhoods. Yet here, in the second *mishnah* (5:9), one finds two examples of interactions with Jews who do not follow *halakhah* as the rabbis would desire. At [8] the text describes a woman suspected of not following the rules of the Sabbatical year, and at [9] the case is presented of a woman who belongs to a group other than the *ḥaveirim*, the elite rabbinic faction that is scrupulous regarding observance of ritual purity and tithes. The woman is married to an

ignoramus, an *am ha-aretz*—a group that the rabbis generally did not trust to keep the laws of purity and tithes correctly. In both cases, it seems that the women of the rabbinic community live close to—either next door to or in the same courtyard as—these other, less observant Jews. In fact, the woman in [8] who is suspected of transgressing the Sabbatical year is referred to as "her friend," *ḥavertah*—a word from same Hebrew root as the *ḥaveirim*, the very elite rabbinic faction mentioned in the following law, at [9]. The text instructs observant women to maintain neighborly ties and lend cooking utensils to these other women, just as long as they themselves do not transgress the law and aid in any prohibited actions. Not only is there is no requirement to reprimand the other for transgressing, but the mishnah's desire to prevent embarrassment or upset (which might occur if one were to refuse to share or help a neighbor) far outweighs the worry that it may look as if one is sanctioning a transgression.

The *mishnah* ends by once again discussing interactions with non-Jews, focusing on the fact of religious differences between people. Non-Jews are not bound by Torah law and are therefore permitted to work the land during the Sabbatical year, unlike Jews. The whole unit concludes with the idea that one should inquire after the well-being (*shalom*) of the ultimate other[14]—clearly completing the overall structure of the entire *darkhei shalom* unit.

Interestingly, the theme of greeting (*she'eilat shalom*) is also mentioned elsewhere in the Mishnah, and an examination of these other texts may shed some light on the importance the rabbis placed on the act of greeting other human beings. Mishnah Berakhot 2:1 discusses the rules about interrupting one's recitation of the Shema, the ultimate statement of faith in the Divine and the acceptance of God's reign, in order to greet or respond to others. Whether or not the interruption may be made depends on one's relationship to the other person, whether one is initiating or responding to the greeting, and whether one is in the middle of one of the three paragraphs or its surrounding blessing that comprise the *mitzvah* of reading the

Shema or at a break between the paragraphs or at a break between the paragraphs. This *mishnah* concludes with Rabbi Judah's view that "at the paragraph breaks…one responds shalom to all human beings," thus underscoring the supreme value of acknowledging others by greeting them. This link between one's belief in God and one's interactions with others is also seen at the end of the entire tractate, at Berakhot 9:5. After discussing various blessings in which one is permitted to recite God's name, the text states that one may greet another by evoking the power of God's name, just as is done with blessings and prayer: "They [the rabbis] decreed that a person should greet one's friend with the name of God [*sho·eil sh'lom ḥaveiro b'sheim*]." This mishnah seems to be the flip side of the earlier text about the Shema—for it considers greeting another person to be a religious act, worthy of revealing God's presence in this world. Indeed, the word shalom itself is considered by the rabbis to be one of God's names (B. Shabbat 10b). To inquire about someone's well-being, to really see another person, is in fact to acknowledge the divine image imbedded within each individual. And to ignore another person while reciting the Shema, proclaiming that God is One, would ultimately be a farce. All human beings—Jews and non-Jews, men and women, young and old, rich and poor, able-bodied and not—are created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27) and so should be treated with the respect and dignity that the divine image demands. Concern for the *shalom* of all others is an acknowledgment of the divine presence in this world.

Returning to Mishnah Gittin 5:8 and the discussion about achieving harmonious interactions among people: it is important to note that the text includes the dissenting view of Rabbi Yossi ("it is actual robbery") three times (at [4], [5], and [6]). It is not unusual to find opposing voices throughout the Mishnah. However, it may seem, at first glance, somewhat ironic to include a rabbinic dispute precisely in this context of discussing peaceful community-building and the desire to avoid discord and fighting. However, including

a dissenting voice on particularly this issue, of striving for peaceful interactions, forces one to notice the impressive way in which the community of *tanna·im* (the sages living in the time of the Mishnah) were able to respectfully differ and disagree with each other. One may disagree even with people from one's own core community—let alone with others, who have different commitments to law and ritual, or even different faiths and religions altogether. In the realm of ideas and the search for truth, one may—and even possibly *should*—voice disagreement. Different views should be acknowledged and respected, as one sees throughout the Mishnah. However, different opinions and ideas should not in any way impact upon how one interacts with others on a daily basis; such interactions should always be conducted respectfully and socially. An understanding of others' feelings, a respect for their well-being, and an acknowledgment that they too were created in the image of the Divine should always be at the forefront of all human interaction—despite any differences of opinion. This point alone is a lesson that any Jewish community today should strive to inculcate and emulate, and in doing so would no doubt bring a small measure of peace as part of repairing this world.

An examination of the earliest *mishnah* to present the concept of *tikkun olam*, with a verse explaining the origin of the phrase, will further solidify the link between this central concept and action undertaken in the pursuit of peace. Mishnah Gittin 4:5 presents a dispute between the schools of Hillel and Shammai concerning a person who is half free and half a slave:

> One who is half slave and half free works for his master one day and for himself one day; these are the words of the School of Hillel.
> The School of Shammai said to them: "You have repaired [benefited][15] his master, but he himself you have not repaired!
> To marry a[nother] slave is [legally] impossible for him, as

> he is already half free. [To marry] a free woman is [legally] impossible for him, as he is still half slave. Should he be annulled [by never marrying and producing descendants]? Was not the world created only for reproduction, as it is said: 'Not as a void [did God] create it [i.e., the world; rather,] to be inhabited [did God] create it' (Isaiah 45:18)? Rather: in order to repair the world (*mi-p'nei tikkun ha-olam*), we force the master and make him a free man, and he [the slave] writes a bond [to the master] for half his worth.
> The School of Hillel retracted and taught like the School of Shammai.[16]

The School of Shammai is from the earliest generation of *tanna·im*[17] to use the phrase *tikkun ha-olam,* and this *mishnah* is the only one in the entire unit concerning *tikkun olam* to bring a verse to support its enactment. In this case, the meaning of the decree is very specific. The individual in question, due to his status within human society, cannot legally marry and have children. The desire to reproduce is assumed not only to be a natural human need and right, but actually the sole purpose for which God created the world. God desires that human beings fill the world by reproducing and thus avoiding personal extinction. Repairing the world means setting it back on the course to which God had planned from the beginning—that is, with the goal of human reproduction—but which human constructs such as slavery at times seem to thwart. Although this case describes an uncommon occurrence, it is presented as the paradigmatic example of rabbinic legislation enacted to bring about the betterment of human society, for it requires both a breaking down of human social divisions and also the capability of seeing the other as an individual human being with needs and feelings. The Mishnah seems to be teaching that God wants all of God's creations to enjoy this world and inhabit it, without the distinctions between people that exist in the constructs of human society and hierarchy.

The rabbis saw it as their job to bring the world back to the state that God intended for it: one in which *all* human creation would flourish and inhabit the world. They took the example of empathy and understanding for the needs and situation of the half free man (as taught by the School of Shammai) and they expanded on it, applying the same measure of empathy toward people in other situations, beyond the narrow issue of reproduction. And so they legislated about various issues concerning divorce laws with particular sensitivity toward women (4:2, 3), and about the Sabbatical year with an eye toward the plight of poor people in need of loans (4:3). Apparently the rabbis felt that this concern and respect for the other, also created in God's image, was itself a value, worthy of its own category and legal construct. Creating and living in a peaceful community (and, ultimately, a peaceful and whole world) is not just a good thing that happens randomly to some lucky individuals; rather, one of the great goals of Jewish behavior is the pursuit of justice and peace in the world for all. The Mishnah's laws enacted *mi-p'nei darkhei shalom* are delineated specifically so that they are not lost in the larger context of the laws enacted *mi-p'nei tikkun ha-olam*—because they are important in their own right. Strict but mindless adherence to the law will not bring peace, nor will it constitute a real *tikkun ha-olam*, as God originally intended. The ideal is punctilious observance focused through a moral prism, so that one never ends up doing wrong to others by following the law, and so that concern for all people and their well-being is always at the forefront of one's thoughts and actions.

NOTES

[1] The Mishnah uses the formulation *tikkun ha-olam*, but the definite article (*ha-*) is not usually employed in modern colloquial English use of the term. In this essay, I use both locutions, *tikkun olam* and *tikkun ha-olam*, interchangeably.

[2] In the Kaufman manuscript, they appears as *mishnayot* 9 and 10.

[3] The phrase *mi-p'nei tikkun ha-olam* appears in chapter 4:2–7 and 5:3. The phrase *mi-p'nei darkhei shalom* appears only in chapter 5:8–9. Not every *mishnah* or case mentioned in these two chapters states explicitly *mi-p'nei tikkun ha-olam*. Some, however, remark that the law is a *tikkun* for a more specific reason than to generally repair the world—for example, to prevent kidnapping (4:6) or to encourage repentance (5:5), both of which in the end do repair the world. In other cases, *m'pnei tikkun ha-olam* is understood by the *g'mara* to be the unstated reason for the law taught in the *mishnah*; see, e.g., B. Gittin 48b.

[4] Both the first and last *mishnayot* of the chapter (5:1 and 5:9) mention a woman, thus creating an "envelope structure" for the entire chapter, which is reinforced in the middle of the chapter in 5:3 and 5:6. Found objects are discussed in both 5:3 and in the fifth case of 5:8; priests are mentioned in 5:4, 5:5, and first case of 5:8; the deaf-mute appears in 5:5, 5:7, and the fifth case of 5:8; Israelites (and their relationships to priests) are discussed in 5:5 and first case of 5:8; stolen objects are discussed in 5:5 and in the fourth, fifth, and sixth cases of 5:8.

[5] Issues of impurity with respect to tithes are treated in both 5:4 and 5:9; issues related to the question of whether minors and deaf-mutes have cognizance so that they can acquire objects are treated in 5:7 and 5:8; and the general theme of concern for those who are disadvantaged is seen throughout the chapter as a whole, with cases of feeding a widow and her daughters, a guardian caring for orphans, marrying off a minor girl whose father is deceased, taking into account the feelings of a the mentally and physically disabled, and finally concern and protection for the poor.

[6] I thank my *ḥevruta*, Dr. Meesh Hammer-Kossoy, with whom I first seriously examined these *mishnayot*.

[7] It is difficult to understand why this action would create peace between people. Rambam, in his commentary on this *mishnah*, explains that one in which whose house the eiruv was placed did not have to contribute to the food that made up the *eiruv*—and so there was a benefit to having the eiruv placed in one's home. However, this fact would lead to fighting about where it should be placed, and so the rabbis imposed a rule about its placement—thus preventing any such fights. Alternatively, the *g'mara* (at B. Gittin 60b) explains this as a rule to prevent suspicion, but even this explanation is difficult to understand. Rashi's commentary ad locum (s.v. *mi-shum ḥashada*) explains that if the *eiruv* was normally kept in one house and then it is suddenly moved, if people enter the old house and do not see an *eiruv*, they will suspect that the people of that courtyard are breaking Shabbat and carrying objects without an *eiruv*. The Tosafot (s.v. *ella mi-shum ḥashada*) suggest that when people see the *eiruv* is

missing from the old house they will suspect that the people of the household stole the bread.

[8] In the interests of peace, the observant woman is permitted to share her utensils—even though she knows that most likely they will be used to aid her friend in transgressing the laws of the Sabbatical year when the friend bakes bread with grain that is forbidden. However, the observant woman may not actively assist her friend in the act of baking by sifting or grinding with her, since a transgression is thereby being committed.

[9] In this case, as there is no explicit transgression, the more observant woman only has to stop assisting her friend at the moment when the dough could become ritually impure at the hands of the wife of the *am ha-aretz*—that is, at the moment when the water is added to the dough. For the interests of peace, the observant woman can rely on the fact that, at least most of the time, the wife of the *am ha-aretz* does in fact tithe, and so she can winnow or grind or sift with her friend; however, when the dough surely becomes impure and then the portion of *ḥallah* that must be given to the priest from the bread baked also becomes defiled, the wife of the *ḥaveir* must not participate in aiding that transgression.

[10] This line applies to both cases: those who transgress the Sabbatical year and those who transgress the laws of purity.

[11] It is not the case that it was forbidden to greet non-Jews; just there was no mandated practice requiring that it be done until the rabbis instituted that it should—for the interests of peace. Based on *mishnayot* that appear earlier in the unit—such as 4:6 (which discusses captives and religious objects taken and ransomed by non-Jews), 4:9 (which discusses Jews who either sell themselves [as slaves] or alternatively their fields to non-Jews), and 5:6 (which deals with land confiscated by non-Jewish rulers)—one can imagine that in many cases, relationships with non-Jews during this time period could well have been very strained and filled with strife.

[12] Similar to the modern Hebrew greeting *mah sh'lomkha*—literally, "What is your *shalom*/peace?"

[13] These laws, known in Hebrew as *leket, shikh·ḥah*, and *pei·ah*, are set forth in Leviticus 23:22.

[14] This rule also appears in two other places in the Mishnah: Sheviit 4:3 and 5:9 (and the latter is in fact a word-for-word repetition of M. Gittin 5:9, in its entirety).

[15] Hebrew *tikkantem*, from the same verbal root (*tav-kof-nun*) as *tikkun*.

[16] Compare to the discussion above, concerning rabbinic disagreement. The School of Hillel also knew when to admit they were wrong and to change their minds, when presented with a challenge to their view and a differing opinion that they found compelling.

[17] M. Gittin 4:3 states that Hillel instituted the *prozbol* because of *tikkun ha-olam*; however, cf. M. Sheviit 10:3–4, where the law originates and the phrase *mi-p'nei tikkun ha-olam* is not found.