

Concordia Seminary - Saint Louis

Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary

Bachelor of Divinity

Concordia Seminary Scholarship

6-1-1946

The Talmud- Descriptive, Historical, and Character Sketch

Eugene C. Ryding

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, ir_rydinge@csl.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/bdiv>



Part of the [History of Christianity Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Ryding, Eugene C., "The Talmud- Descriptive, Historical, and Character Sketch" (1946). *Bachelor of Divinity*. 210.

<https://scholar.csl.edu/bdiv/210>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Concordia Seminary Scholarship at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Bachelor of Divinity by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact seitzw@csl.edu.

THE TALMUD:
DESCRIPTIVE, HISTORICAL, AND CHARACTER SKETCH

A Thesis Presented to
The Faculty of Concordia Seminary
Department of Historical Theology

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Bachelor of Divinity

by
Eugene C. Ryding

June 1946

Approved by:

A. D. Perennial
George V. Schick

INTRODUCTION

The Talmud is no mean work. The size of it is comparable to a respectable encyclopedia. It has been called an encyclopedia. It is obvious, then, that in a paper of this kind, or of any kind, of paper, for that matter, the subject Talmud must be limited to a very small portion of what the word itself covers. About a thousand Rabbis, during the course of about 800 years, have contributed their best to it. One could write a book on any phase of the Talmud, and not cover the subject.

But this paper does not intend to cover even one subject in the Talmud. The purpose is quite different. Since the Talmud is such an obscure work to most Gentiles, the average person would not be able even to understand a discussion of the Talmud without a certain amount of study of the work.

The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to make a superficial study of what the Talmud is, how it grew, and what kind of materials are in it. That alone is a tremendous ambition, because the Talmud covers so much intellectual territory. There is history, religion, and secular knowledge in the Talmud, all jumbled together in a mass of discussions, most of which grew up in an informal manner. It is impossible to look in any section of the Talmud, and there find a subject covered. Any subject matter contained in the Talmud can be found in almost any portion of the work, inserted for

whatever use it may have in the discussion of the particular problem involved in that section. A biography, for example, will be found in a discussion on a purely doctrinal point. The biography is there to illustrate a point in the doctrinal discussion. That is why the Talmud has never been indexed. All one needs to do to find a subject he wants, is to look in any volume of the work, and after reading for a few minutes, one is very likely to find an example of the material he is looking for. If one would desire to find all the instances of any subject matter in the Talmud, he would have to read the entire work, and note each example as he found it. Everything is incidental to the ceremonial law of the Mishna code. The Mishna code itself is almost the only organized material in the Talmud. It is divided broadly into several parts; and even there, extraneous material, or material that can hardly be classified, is found where one would least expect it.

The Talmud partakes of the Spartan attitude toward speech, for certain purposes. In the course of development of Rabbinical learning, formulas developed for ideas that had become a part of the national consciousness. All the Jews were acquainted with certain of the rules, and with the methods of learning. Therefore, when the teachers wrote down these ideas, they had no need to write them in detail, and explain them, but they used a technical terminology that resulted in a laconic mode of expression for these ideas. Names of teachers, names of traditions, laws, rules, and

introductions of subject matter, became stereotyped, and unless one knows the stereotype, he is quite incapable of deciphering the meaning of them. The Jews had one word they used to indicate that this or that teaching came from a Baraitha, or some one of the various Midrashic writings extant.

Some of these expressions the Jews have found it impractical, or impossible, to translate; others have they found unfeasable to transliterate. Accordingly, the English is almost as undecipherable as the original tongue, unless one is acquainted with the terms, and their meanings. In this paper we will choose the more frequent and basic terms for study and explanation.

The Talmud also takes history for granted. References are made to men and their times quite as casually and laconically as the references to the varieties of subject matter. Altogether, the Talmud is not a book easy to be read. No one would sit down and read it by the hour merely for intellectual pleasure, nor for learning, nor for entertainment. Yet all these things may be derived from reading in the Talmud, if one knows how to look for them. We shall also sketch the history of the Talmud, for this reason, that a broad view of its growth and its past will increase the ease and ability of a reader to understand the references that occur. Very briefly put, this paper has for its aim to acquaint the reader with the Talmud; and if possible, to awaken an interest in the ancient work.

Certainly, there is much of interest to be found in the work. The psychology of the Jewish mind shows itself in part; history is there, of the unique nation; entertaining stories are there in great numbers; superstitions abound; and observations of wise men, and men who were thought wise, appear throughout; and the work is altogether fascinating, especially for the kind of personality that possesses a waste-basket mind. All sorts of ideas and speculations are in the Talmud, that one can read, and save, like one saves pieces of string.

But the study of the Talmud also serves a useful purpose for the student of theology. From reading the Rabbinical traditions and laws, one begins to have a deeper appreciation of the struggle Christ, and his disciples after Him, had against the Jewish religious organization. One begins to understand the vehemence of the tirades of Jesus against Rabbinism, and also the deep hatred the Jews had for Jesus. A reference is made in this paper to the temptation of Jesus by Satan; the tradition there mentioned explains the strength of the temptations Satan used. The Talmud is deeply bound up with the New Testament, because the New Testament was brought forth at the height of Rabbinism. It is our firm conviction that more study of the Talmud by Lutheran ministers would serve a very useful purpose in understanding the implications of the New Testament, because so many arguments found in the various books deal with the

very subject.

It is our only regret that we cannot cover the material more completely in this paper.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.	i
Outline.	viii
PART ONE: DESCRIPTION.	1
Chapter I. Terminology.	1
A. Basic Terms.	2
B. Important related facts.	14
Chapter II. Content and Divisions.	19
PART TWO: HISTORICAL AND CHARACTER SKETCH.	34
Chapter I. Sopheric and Zugothic Periods.	34
A. The Sopherim.	39
B. The Zugoth.	42
Chapter II. Tannaim.	52
First Generation.	52
Second Generation.	57
Third Generation.	64
Fourth Generation.	75
Fifth Generation.	83
Sixth Generation.	89
Chapter III. Amoraim.	90
A. The men of the Transition Period.	90
B. The Amoraim Proper.	92
First Generation.	94
Second Generation.	101
Third Generation.	108

Fourth Generation.	114
Fifth Generation.	117
Sixth Generation.	118
Chapter IV. Character.	121
A. The Talmud as a Phenomenon of the Jewish Character.	121
B. How the Ancient Jews considered the Talmud.	127
C. The Imprint of the Talmud on the Modern Jew.	131
Some Concluding Remarks.	133

THE TALMUD:

DESCRIPTIVE, HISTORICAL, AND CHARACTER SKETCH
(Outline)

Controlling purpose: The purpose of this paper is to present a picture of the Talmud, so that one who has read this paper will be able to read the Talmud with a degree of understanding.

- I. One must be acquainted with the terminology of the Talmud in order to understand the work.
 - A. The terminology is unique, specialized, and stereotyped.
 - B. The terminology is confusing and very detailed, with a number of overlapping terms.
 - C. When one has learned the basic terminology, the laconic references take on added meaning.

- II. The reader of the Talmud should be acquainted with the nature of its contents, and with its divisions.
 - A. In order to appreciate the subject matter of the Talmud it is necessary to be prepared for the peculiar nature of the discussions.
 - B. The discussions are all grounded in ceremony and religion.
 - C. The subject matter also touches many secular fields.
 - D. The Talmud is divided broadly into six fields: Seeds, Festivals, Women, Damages, Consecrated Things, Purifications.
 - E. The six divisions are again subdivided into 63 treatises, called Masechtoth.

- III. For an appreciation of the contents, one must be acquainted with the history of the Talmud, and of the men who contributed to its material.
 - A. The Sopherim were the leaders of the Jews for 200 years after Ezra.
 - B. The Zugoth were the leaders of the Jewish council from the time of the Maccabeans to 30 B.C.
 - C. The Tannaim lived from the first to the third centuries. They formed the Mishna on the basis of oral tradition and the Torah.
 - D. The Amoraim lived from the third to the fifth centuries, being successors of the Tannaim. The Amoraim formed the Gemara on the basis of the Mishna, and closed the Talmud.

- IV. The history and content of the Talmud supplies a key to the character of the work, and to the character of the people whose product it is.
- A. The Jews had merged their religion with their national existence.
 - B. The Torah was a book of laws to the Jews, and therefore needed the Talmud to supply the casuistry.
 - C. The Talmud supplied the necessary supernatural and mystical element of the religion of the Jews.
 - D. The Talmud is the product of men who thought of themselves as martyrs.
 - E. The Jews took their traditions seriously.
 - 1. They were willing to be persecuted, and to die for their traditions.
 - 2. They persecuted their own people who desecrated their traditions.
 - 3. They would, however, relax a tradition for the sake of a man they admired.
 - F. The study of the Talmud is useful.
 - 1. It throws light on the New Testament.
 - 2. It affords a glimpse into the Jewish psychology.

PART ONE: DESCRIPTION

Chapter I. Terminology

In order to understand a discussion concerning the Talmud, it is necessary that one be acquainted with its more common terms. The Jews gave names to each part of the work, and to each period of its history. The Rabbis of different times and different places also had distinctive titles, indicating the place each live, the time he flourished, and the extent of his authority. The technical vocabulary of the Talmud has grown to be a veritable maze. To add to the confusion, some titles overlap. There are for example, three uses of the title Rabbi. Rabbi is the title of an ordained teacher; it is also used as a kind of proper name for two Rabbis, Jehudah Hanasi and Judah II. Again, during the Amoraic period, the Palestinian Rabbis still bore that title, because they were ordained by the Patriarch¹; while the great teachers in Babylonia during that time were called merely Mar or Rab, because they did not have the Patriarchal ordination.

1. Moses Mielziner, Introduction to the Talmud, p. 40.

The term Rabbi, therefore, may indicate a teacher of the second or third period of Talmudic development, or it may mean one of two men, or it may mean the Palestinian Rabbis of the fourth period of development. The context must indicate which is meant.

On the other hand, different names sometimes refer to identical objects. Halacha, for example, is identical with Mishna. But to add to the difficulty, there is a wider and a narrower meaning to these two words. Halacha or Mishna may indicate the whole text of the Oral Law, or it may mean the smallest division of that text.

Much of the terminology of the Talmud comes from the Hebrew tongue, though many of the terms have been influenced by other languages. Some of them are Aramaic. Some are not standardized, because they are a growth, and have come from many countries. We shall therefore begin this discussion with a sketch of the names and terms necessary for an understanding of the paper.

A. Basic Terms

There are two Talmuds. The one is called the Palestinian, and the other is the Babylonian. The former is not as large, nor as highly esteemed as the latter. The Mishna of the Palestinian, that is, the text on which the discussions are based, has more divisions than the Babylonian. It is composed of thirty-nine parts, while the Babylonian has only thirty-seven.

2. Michael L. Rodkinson, The Babylonian Talmud, vol. 10: History.

Otherwise the Mishna text of both Talmuds is the same. The difference in the size is due to the lack of discussion in the Palestinian, which makes up the great bulk of the Babylonian.

The word Talmud is used in a variety of senses. By a "literary usage", both the Mishna text and the Gemara, or discussion on it, are together called the Talmud, though strictly speaking, the Talmud is the Mishna text itself.³ Sometimes the Gemara, or discussion, is called Talmud, to indicate a kind of commentary, referring rather to the nature of the discussion than to the work as an object. Note the use of the word Talmud in the following phrase quoted from the Jewish Encyclopedia: "The Mishna treatises which have no Talmud...."⁴ The grammatical usage indicates the nature of the word in this connection.

Furthermore, the word means learning, as well as teaching. It includes hermeneutics, exegesis, commentary, and related subjects. It sometimes refers to the work as a unit, sometimes as a study,⁵ almost equivalent to Commentary. The Talmud is a hybrid product. It is not a commentary on the Old Testament, but an encyclopedia of Jewish work and thought,⁶ yet it is so closely connected with the study of the Torah that it cannot be divorced from its

3. Hasting's Bible Dictionary, Talmud, p. 890.

4. Jewish Encyclopedia, Talmud, vol. 12, p. 12.

5. ibid.

6. Rodkinson, vol. 1, Editor's preface, p.XII.

religious connection. Many parts of it do deal with the Torah, and great portions of it are extensions of the Levitical law. But on the other hand, it contains also stories, legends, biographies, civil as well as religious laws, history, medicine, science, and astrology of the day. Some of these will appear in this paper.

It is a loose-leaf compendium of doctrines, discussions, legal decisions, sanitary ordinances, ritualistic regulations, and maxims, together with witty sayings, interpretations, personal views, reminiscences, and homilies of about a thousand Rabbis, who lived and worked in various countries, during a period of almost eight hundred years; who belonged to different strata of society, with different degrees of education, different outlooks on life, and different conceptions of divine revelation.

The word loose-leaf in the above quotation is well chosen; because, although the Talmud is a development of many centuries, it is not written up in chronological order according to the day in which the various contributors lived. The reason is that it is based on discussions by men of a later period, and written up by a few men, after the traditions had been in existence for many centuries. For example, in the Gemara on one Mishna, this phraseology occurs: " R. Ashi (4th-5th cent. A.D.) in the name of R. Jochanan (3d cent.), quoting R. Jehudah ben Bathyra (1st cent.)...". Here we see in one sentence, references to men who covered a period of about four centuries. That is typical of the Talmud. The divisions of the Talmud rest, not on chronological sequence, but on the basis of content; as far as one can distinguish a really consistent

7. Max Reichler, What is the Talmud?, p.4.

8. Babylonian Talmud, Nez., Ch. 2, Mishna IV. The reference can be found in Rodkinson's short English edition, p 58.

division of the parts of the Talmud at all.

Although the Talmud is a work of the Jews as a race and a religion, nevertheless the lines are not too strictly drawn. It is well-known that the Jews did not care to accept proselytes, but some of the contributors to their great work were themselves proselytes, or descended from proselytes. The Jewish duumvirate in Palestine at the time of Hyrcanus II were Shamaiah and Abtalion. These men were descendants of proselytes; yet they were the dual heads of the Sanhedrin,⁹ and they take a prominent place among the Rabbinical authorities. Perhaps that is a result of their early date. One cannot be certain. The Jews did revere the men who had gone before them, because they were the Fathers. Aquilas, or Onkelos, is also said to have been a proselyte, though there is much scholarly bickering concerning him. A discussion of him will follow.

The Talmud is the child of the Pharisees, who were finally victorious in the internal controversies of the Jewish sects. They are the ones who "Received their name [Perushim] from the fact of their explaining the laws in a peculiar manner, and of deriving new laws from the new interpretation."¹⁰ This is a phenomenon of the Talmud as a whole. The Pharisees, who were the learned men of the nation, naturally took the responsibility of preserving their race. Their method resulted in the formation of the Talmud. That they succeeded in their

9. D. A. Friedman, Rabbis of Ancient Times, p. 70.

10. Herman Graetz, History of the Jews, vol. II, p. 12ff.

self-appointed task is obvious.

The word Mishna means Second Law. It is the collection of oral traditions believed by the Jews to have been handed down from Moses, who had received them from the mouth of God on Sinai. They were considered by the devout as of divine source, and binding. These traditions, they believed, explained and expanded on the Torah. The Mishna is the text upon which the Talmud is based.

The Mishna is composed of six divisions called Sedarim, which means Orders, or Series. These are in turn divided, in the Babylonian Talmud, into thirty-seven tracts; which in turn are divided into sixty-three Masechtoth, or treatises. The treatises again are subdivided into chapters called Peraqim. The Peraqim break up into the smallest division, which is again called Mishna. The Mishna, in this latter sense, appears as a small paragraph, which propounds a certain rule or group of rules. Immediately after each Mishna, there follow the discussions of the later Rabbis concerning the matter in that particular Mishna.

It is necessary to ascertain what is meant by the word Mishna each time it is used, because it may refer to the whole text, or merely to the small paragraph just mentioned. These small Mishnayoth are also called Halacha. Mishnayoth is the plural of Mishna; the plural of Halacha is Halachoth.

-
11. Hasting's Dictionary, Talmud, p. 890.
 12. Hermann L. Strack, Einleitung in Talmud und Midrash, pp. 32-59.
 13. Rodkinson, vol. 10, History, p. 21.
 14. Mielziner, p. 8.
 15. ibid.
 16. Hasting's Dictionary, Talmud, p. 891.

The word Halacha is also a versatile one. It refers primarily to legal tradition. It may mean one paragraph, or it may mean the whole body of legal tradition. It has become identified with Mishna,¹⁶ and when it appears, one may understand the two as identical. The difference is perhaps mostly etymological.

The word Haggada is more general. It refers, not to a specific arrangement of material, as does the Halacha, but of a kind of material. It means Narration. It includes stories, homilies, folklore, philosophy, astrology, etc, in contradistinction to the legal matter, or Halacha. The Haggada is the non-legal matter of the Talmud.¹⁷

The word Baraitha means an apocryphal Halacha. It includes material excluded by the rabbi Jehudah Hanasi who finally codified the Mishna in the last quarter of the second century A.D. There were contemporaries of Jehudah who included their rejected works after the death of the codifier.¹⁸ These Halachoth are referred to with the expression: There is a Baraitha.

The word Midrash is another one of those words with a ubiquitous nature. It refers to Biblical hermeneutics that goes beyond the literal interpretation of the text. It deals with the text of the Torah itself, being devoted to Biblical exposition. It is frequently allegorical in nature, one of its principles being that there are no superfluous words in

16. Hasting's Dictionary, Talmud, p. 891.

17. op. cit., p. 892.

18. ibid.

Scripture. The Halachoth are a result-deductions-from the
²⁰
 Midrash. The history of the Midrash is parallel to that of
 the Mishna text. The Mishna, it might be said, is the result
 of the method, which is the Midrash.

Midrashic writings are the Siphra, Siphre, and Mechilta.
 There are numerous others, all under the general term Midrash.
 In this case, the word Midrash means the work itself, not the
²¹
 method. A discussion is not in place here, beyond a short
 description of the three mentioned.

Before going into a description of the three pertinent
 Midrashim, there is another work that should be considered,
 because portions of it are quoted in the Talmud by way of
 the Gemara, or discussion on the Midrash. This work is the
 Tosephta.

The word Tosephta means addition, or supplement, perhaps
 so called because it is usually printed as an appendix to the
 Talmud, and because its purpose was to supplement the Mishna.
 It is composed in form and subject matter like the Mishna text,
 being divided into Masechtoth and Peraqim; although the
 smallest division: the Mishnayoth (or Halakoth), does not
 appear. The matter is arranged in a different order than
 the Mishna, but the subject matter is similar in character.
 It consists mainly of the remnants of the Mishnic codes of
 codifiers from an earlier time than that of Jehuda Hanasi,
 whose code is the official one. Other additions were made

20. Jewish Encyclopedia, Midrash, p 548.

21. Strack, p. 195ff.

by the disciples of Hanasi after his death. There are also to be found in this work additions made by numerous scholars of later date. According to Mielziner, the Tosephta in its present shape belongs to the fifth or sixth century. In certain portions of the Talmud, the Gemara (Discussion) on the Mishnayoth are composed of Tosephta.

The Midrash Mechilta, as also the Siphre and Siphra, are a running commentary and discussion on the Bible passages from which the rabbinical law was deduced. The Mechilta comes first under discussion. The name means form, or rule for deduction of Halachoth from the Scriptures. That is a description of the work. It claims to be Halachic, but since it is a running commentary, it is actually more Haggadic in nature. That means that it contains less of laws than it does of stories, homilies, allegories, and the like. The Mechilta was once considered as the product of Rabbi Ishmael, at the beginning of the second century,

But against this opinion speaks the fact that the names of teachers living at a much later date are mentioned in the work. Modern scholars hold that the Mechilta was originally a collection of teachings of Rabbi Ishmael and his school. This collection having been brought from Palestine to Babylon received there many interpolations. In the form we possess it, the book belongs to the fourth or fifth century.²⁷

The Mechilta is quoted in the Talmud, but the source is not mentioned in the Gemara. As a rule the Gemara mentions the source of each statement, with the exception of the well-known

22. Mielziner, p. 17.

23. *ibid*, footnote.

24. Robinson, Vol. 5: Nec., Aboth; The Gemara is the Tosephta.

25. *cf.* Tosephta on Tract Aboth.

26. Strack, p. 201.

27. Mielziner, p. 18.

Halachoth of the ancient rabbis. In that case, however, there is reference given in some such form as 'the Fathers taught', etc.

The Siphra, meaning the Book, is also called Torath ²⁸ Cahanim. It is a collection of traditional interpretations of the whole book of Leviticus. It is introduced by the thirteen famous rules of hermeneutics, ascribed to Rabbi Ishmael. It contains more Halachic material than the Mechilta, being devoted to Levitical laws, on which the Jews laid such great stress. The Haggadic content is scanty. ²⁹ By the nature of the subject matter, it is more argumentative than the Mechilta. It defends the traditional interpretations against possible objections, which was a favorite pastime of the scholastic Jewish teachers. That characteristic will be discussed later. It is frequently quoted in the Talmud, and both its names are used. The Talmud ascribes the essential parts of the book to Jehudah b. Ilai (cir. 139-165 A.D.). It is said to have increased considerably at the hands of later teachers, especially of the Babylonian school in Sura, after the beginning of the third century A.D. It is not unreasonable that this should be, because it is in keeping with the nature of the Jewish learning, and their method of discussing and elaborating on their traditions almost ad infinitum.

The Siphra has two separate divisions. The one is a division according to subject matter, and the other is a

28. Strack, p. 200.

29. Mielziner, p. 19.

division according to the customary Sabbath lessons, each done in the usual manner of the Jewish religious works.

The Siphre, the last of the Midrashic writings to be considered here, is called also the Books of the School of Rab. Rab was a teacher of great authority, who lived and taught in his school at Sura in Babylon at the end of the second Century A.D. (Cf. the notes on the source of the Siphra, above). It contains the traditional interpretation of the Book of Numbers from Chapter Sff., and of the entire book of Deuteronomy. In the Siphre, many Tannaim (Rabbis from the third of the four historic periods of the Talmud's development) are mentioned that do not appear at all, or are only very seldom mentioned in the Mishna text of Jehudah Hanasi, the official code. There are also Mishnayoth (individual precepts and laws) contained therein that are at variance with the Mishnayoth of the accepted text. The Schools of Hillel and Shammai, who were colleagues at the time of Herod, are famous for their opposing views. In the Siphre many differences of opinion are recorded that otherwise would be unknown. Mielziner sees a difference in style between the Siphre on Numbers and that on Deuteronomy. He sees that the Siphre on Numbers is more argumentative and discursive than that on Deuteronomy. The latter, he sees, is more like the Siphra in character, while that on Numbers more resembles the Mechilta, which is largely Haggadic. From this he infers that there

30. Mielziner, p. 20f.

31. Strack, p. 201.

must have been two authors. That view is highly probable, considering the long history of the books, and the method of the Jewish scholars. The Talmud ascribes the anonymous sections to earlier teachers, about at the midpoint of the development of the Talmud, but teachers are mentioned in the Siphre that can be traced to a much earlier period, while on the other hand, mention is made also of teachers of a much later date. The consensus of modern scholars is that there were two authors, one for the book on Numbers, and the other for the book on Deuteronomy. ³² They also believe that the book was cast in its present form in the Babylonian schools founded in the beginning of the third century A.D. The division of the Siphre corresponds to the Sabbath lessons, and is subdivided into paragraphs.

The Gemara forms the greater part of the bulk of the Talmud. As indicated already, the Gemara is the discussion of the Mishna text. It is written up on the basis of minutes of the academic lectures of Rab Ashi, a Rabbi who lived and taught from 375-427, in the Babylonian town of Sura, where he had his academy. For fifty years Rab Ashi and his students collected the heritage of the preceding centuries of Rabbinical scholasticism. When he was through he had the basis of the Gemara, that endless collection of debate and discussion of the Mishnayoth, oral and written. His pupils finished it after him. That is what the Gemara

32. Mielziner, p. 19.

is. Of course, it does not appear now as it did then, in every respect, because the redactors of centuries worked over it, until it was finally set down in a form as we have it today, and the Jews were no longer allowed to make variations on it in accordance with the needs of the day, as they had been accustomed to doing until then. Our best MSS today come from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Up till that time, there were interpolations added by way of glosses; made piecemeal through the centuries by commentators and disputers.

33. Strack, p. 27, et passim.

34. Rodkinson, Vol. 10, pp. 23ff.

B. Important Related Facts

There are a few other facts that pertain to the subject, but which are not an integral part of this discussion. To have a more complete picture of the Talmud and its culture, however, it is well to have these facts in mind. Therefore, they appear here at the end of the section on terminology.

The first pertains to the language of the Talmud.

The language of the Mishna is New Hebrew, as developed during the period of the Second Temple [After the return from the Exile]. The Hebrew having been supplanted by the Aramaic dialects as the language of the common life, the ancient idiom was cultivated by the learned for liturgical and legal purposes. Many new words and phrases had to be coined to express new ideas and objects, and new grammatical forms and syntactical constructions adopted for the favored processes of legal dialectics. As far as possible, use was made for this purpose of new derivations of the stock of Biblical words and of some genuine Hebrew roots which, though not happening to occur in the Biblical literature still lingered in the memory of the people. Besides, recourse was had to the dominating languages. From the Aramaic especially some word roots and grammatical inflections, derivations and constructions were borrowed and modified according to the genius of the Hebrew idiom. Utensils and other objects and ideas until then unknown were designated by the same terms used by that nation from which they had been borrowed. In this way, many Greek terms, and with them also some Latin words more or less modified, were adopted and naturalized.³⁵

This occurred during the time of John Hyrcanus, 135-100

B.C. The Tosephta, Siphre, Siphra, Mechilta, and Baraitha³⁷ were also written in New Hebrew.

The Characters of the Torah were changed at the time of

35. Mielziner, p. 15.

36. Graetz, vol. 2, p. 15ff.

37. Mielziner, p. 17.

the Sopherim, from an "old antique script, with Phoenician or old Babylonian Characters, which could be deciphered only by practiced scribes", into the characters which it now has.

"The new style was called Assyrian, because it had arisen in the Assyrian provinces"³⁸. Before that time, the book was unavailable to most people, and was, as Graetz well puts it, a book with seven seals.

In this same connection, we have a good descriptive statement by Graetz. It follows in effect: This was the beginning, it seems, of the Midrash—the applying of the Torah to life, with all the queer rules for interpreting the Torah. It was a result partly of the reading of the Scripture in public twice a week.

"Their purpose was to 'Bring up a great many disciples'³⁹". For this purpose they established schools, one of which was in Jerusalem. The teachers were called Sopherim (Wise men) or scribes.

The wise man or scribe had a two-fold activity: on the one hand to explain the Torah, and on the other, to make the laws applicable both to individual and communal life. This supplementary interpretation was called 'Exposition' (Midrash); it was not arbitrary, but rested upon certain rules laid down for the proper interpretation of the Law. The Supreme Council and the house of learning worked together, and the one supplemented the other.⁴⁰

This is the common view of the Jews themselves, of the history of the Midrash previously described, and the circumstances under which it arose, very briefly told. There are

38. Graetz, Vol. 1, p. 395.

39. Aboth, Mishna 1.

40. Graetz, vol. 1, p. 396.

some debated statements as to the nature of the institutions, and the time that the titles were given to the men and their institutions, but the fact that some such institutions and teachers existed is obvious; because both have been perpetuated into the time of known and proven fact, with their character little changed throughout the years. We must conclude, therefore, that this quotation from Graetz gives a good picture of the origin of the Midrash, though its purpose here is to supply a picture of the language shift.

There are a few less frequent names of less importance, but because they appear in the Haggadic material, especially in the biographies, it is well to note them. The Aaronides are the descendents of Aaron, and of the high-priestly family, the Tobiades are the descendents of Tobiah, the children of Joseph.⁴¹ The principle is obvious. Whenever a class of people is referred to, with a term having the suffix--ides, it is fairly safe to assume it is a derivative from a family name. This is an indication that the Jews at least in part tried to keep up the old pedigrees. We know it is true of St. Paul, who had been a Pharisee, and who knew he was of the tribe of Benjamin.⁴²

The Yeshibah was the Jewish school of higher learning, a Rabbinical college. It is the oldest institution of Jewish learning. It is also called Metibta. Both of these terms are found in the Talmud. The Metibta was conducted

41. Graetz, vol. 1, p. 437.

42. Rom. 11,1.

like a session, or council, of scholars. The descriptions of it strongly remind one of the scholastic universities of the middle ages. The students would discuss and debate all day long, and it was considered a virtue, as long as they were talking about the Torah or the Midrash. A leading teacher would preside over the school, and it would often take his name. The Patriarchs (Nasis) were all elders over a Yeshibah. In the Talmudic period the Palestinian Yeshiboth were at Sepphoris, Tiberias, and Caesarea; the Babylonian at Machuzah, Nehardea, Sura, and Pumbeditha. The last two⁴³ flourished during the Gaonic period (described below).

The Jews of Babylonia no doubt shared in the changes and movements that Ezra and his successors, who came from Babylonia, introduced into Palestine. But for the four centuries covering the period from Ezra to Hillel, there are no details, and the history⁴⁴ of the succeeding two centuries, from Hillel to Judah I, furnishes only a few scanty items on the state of learning among the Babylonian Jews. From Sherira Gaon's letter, we find that until the death of Judah I there were no recognized heads of schools. The principle seat of Babylonian Judaism was Nehardea, where there certainly was some institution of learning.⁴⁴

The fact that there is very little historical record on the early periods, causes us to leave the matter in the words just quoted. The rest of the facts mentioned therein will be substantiated in the historical sketch.

There is doubt concerning the relative status of two official positions in ancient Jewry. From the rise of the Maccabees to the time of King Herod the Great, there were

43. Jewish Encyclopedia, Yeshibah, vol. XII, p. 595.

44. op. cit., Academies in Babylonia, vol. I, p. 145.

two men who stood at the head of the Jewish politico-religious life. The one was called Ab Beth Din, the other Nasi.

Together they headed the Sanhedrin. The Nasi was the political leader, and the Ab Beth Din was the spiritual head.

Nasi means Prince, and is equivalent to High Priest. Ab Beth Din literally means Father of the house of Justice, and was equivalent to Prophet.

But there is also another meaning to the title Nasi. The leaders of the Sanhedrin after Hillel, as long as that dynasty lasted, were called Nasi. Most of the references to the word refer to this specialized meaning, but it is necessary in each case to determine by the reference which of the two meanings is meant. At the time of the so-called Hillelites, there no longer existed a Jewish Hierarchy. The Nasi of the later date was also often called Patriarch, the Roman name for the chief Jewish Rabbi. "The Presidency of the Sanhedrin [The men who held the title of Nasi] was hereditary in Hillel's family for more than four centuries."

45. This is a Rabbinical tradition. But it has been denied by modern scholars. Strack (p. 117) denies the existence of the Zugoth. He bases his denial on the fact that the High Priest was the head of the Sanhedrin. We have two reasons to advance if we desire to accept the duumvirate theory. There is a passage in Josephus, quoted in footnote 46, below, that refers to the High Priest and the Prophet. Although there is no authority in a tradition, yet there ought to be a reason for rejecting it. Neither the tradition nor the passage in Josephus contradict the proposition that the High Priest was head of the Sanhedrin. It does not seem that Strack's proposition warrants the conclusion that there was no Ab Beth Din.

46. Josephus' *Antiquities*, Bk. IV, Ch. 8, par. 14. "Let them send the cause undetermined to the Holy City and there let the High Priest, the Prophet and the Sanhedrin, determine, as it shall seem good to them." This is good evidence for the duumvirate.

47. Graetz, vol. 2, p. 131.

Chapter II. Content and Divisions

The nature of the material contained in the Talmud has already been indicated. This chapter will be devoted to a few examples of the text itself. The Mishna text is not as interesting to read as the Gemara, because it is a code of laws. On the other hand, large portions of the Gemara also have an interest only as far as it discloses the Hebrew character and way of thinking. But interspersed with the scholastic discussions of the Gemara is the kind of material we have described under the Haggadah. This proves the most interesting-one might almost say entertaining-of all the material in the twelve folio volumes. But for the purpose of finding out what the Jews thought about when they applied themselves to their unique politico-socio-religious study, the Mishna text offers a most fascinating glimpse into the thoughts of the ancient people, about whom there has always been such an air of mystery. A few Mishnayoth follow. We will try to include a typical-cross section of the various phrases of law.

The character of the Mishnayoth, as well also of the Gemara, has been nicely summarized in a few brief sentences by the Jews themselves. They are written in the form of principles. How old these written principles are, it is not possible to determine, but we do know that they are of

ancient origin. But even if they are not as old as tradition declares, and they are probably not, they are nevertheless descriptive and to the point. They are ascribed to the last members of the so-called Great Assembly, which we discuss on page thirty five. The need for the laws, and the principles for making them of such a strict and minutely described nature, from the point of view of Jewish theology, is well put in the following quotation.

After the establishment of a permanent government among the Jews, however, it was found that the exhortations of the prophets after the manner of Isaiah were of no avail, the people still continued seeking pleasure on the Sabbath, after the manner of other nations, and were still wont to enjoy the pastimes of their neighbors. The enforcement of the prohibition of carrying burdens was then decided upon to act as a check upon the people by defining minutely the meaning of burdens, and the prohibition was interpreted to include not only heavy burdens, but all portable articles, such as money, trinkets, eatables, etc., while only necessary articles of clothing and apparel were permitted to be worn."¹

This could be multiplied by many similar quotations, but the point is established. It is well illustrated by the ancient principles. They are: Be not hasty in judgment, Bring up many disciples, Build a fence about the Law. (The last of the three has a freer translation in Rodkinson. The one here used is the more accurate.²)

The most illustrative of the three is the latter, for it is the principle upon which the Talmud is based. As we noted in the quotation above, the Jews found that the people did not hearken unto the prophets of the type of Isaiah,

1. Rodkinson, vol. 1, p. xxv. Introduction to Tract Sabbath.

2. Nez., Aboth, Mishna 1.

as they should have. They did not notice that their cure was worse than the ailment. The cure was the fence about the law, and this is what they meant by that expression: if there was a law in the Pentateuch that prescribed a duty, the law was expanded to forbid any act that would tempt a man to break the first law. Thus they forbade that which was not forbidden by God, even under the Old Covenant. The ethics and implications of this will be discussed later. We will content ourselves with a few examples.

The Rabbis taught: one who searches his garments and finds a louse shall not crack it, but simply rub it with his fingers and throw it away (on the Sabbath).³ Says R. Huna: This should also be done even on week-days, out of self respect.⁴ Again: One may save enough victuals to last for three meals (on the Sabbath in the event of a conflagration). Such food as is fit for human beings may be saved for the use of human beings, and such as is fit for cattle may be saved for cattle. How so? If a conflagration happens on the eve of Sabbath, one may save enough victuals for three meals. If it occurs in the forenoon of Sabbath one may save enough for two meals, and if it occurs in the afternoon of Sabbath, one may only save enough for one meal.⁵

This Mishna serves as an excellent example of the fence about the law. Another shows the tendency even more plainly:

One who falls asleep on the eve of Sabbath while on the road and thus knows not that the night has set in, is permitted (upon awaking) to go two thousand ells in any direction. Such is the decree of R. Johanan b. Nuri; but the sages hold that he has only the right to move four ells. R. Eliezer said: 'And he himself forms the center of the four ells.' R. Jehudah however said: He can go four ells in any direction he pleases. Still, R. Jehudah admitted that if the man had made his choice (which direction

3. Parentheses in these quotations from Rodkinson are his own, not Author's.

4. Moed, Sabbath, Mishna III (This reference can be found in Rodkinson vol. 1, p. 19.)

5. Moed, Sabbath, Mishna p. 245. (Rodkinson).

to take) he must not afterwards (change his mind and) go in another direction. Should there be two persons so situated (i.e., form the center of the four ell's they are allowed to move in), and part of the four ell's permitted to one is within the limits of the other, they may meet provided that neither exceed his own limits by going into those of his neighbor. If there are three persons so situated, and part of the four ell's occupied by the middle one forms part of the space belonging to each of the other two, the one situated in the middle is at liberty to meet each of the others, or each of the others may meet him; but the two on each side of him must not meet each other.⁶

That this was an effective means to arrive at the results the Pharisees desired is a matter of history. It certainly explains why Christ chafed at the Pharisees, who were then right in the midst of the Talmudic period.

The Jews' reputation for being lovers of money seems to be well founded, from the impression one receives from reading in the Talmud, because they devoted so much space to the discussion of it. This attitude is exemplified in a Halacha:

Three days before the festivals of the heathen it is forbidden to have any business with them. One must not lend them anything (Which can be useful to them) nor borrow such from them. And the same is the case with cash money, even to pay or to receive payment is forbidden. R. Jehudah, however, maintains: To receive payment is allowed, because it is a displeasure to the payers. And he was answered: Although it is now a displeasure, it pleases them in the future.⁷

Add to this the fact that deeds of charity marked a man among the Jews as a man of real virtues, almost disregarding the rest of his life, and we have a fair picture of

6. Moed, Erubin, ch. 5, Mishna p. 101 (Rodkinson).
7. Nez., Abuda Zara, ch. 1, Mishna 1 (Rod., 9, p.1).

that part of their character. The Mishna text abounds with such references to Jewish finances as just quoted.

With respect to marriage, much could be said and much selected from the Talmud, but in most cases it is better to let the matter rest in quietness. The following quotation explains the reason.

The home life would be all the purer (in Galilee), that the veil of wedded life was not so coarsely lifted as in Judea, not its sacred secrecy interfered with by an Argus-eyed legislation. The purity of betrothal ~~ether~~ in Galilee was less likely to be sullied, and weddings were more simple than in Judea--without the dubious institution of groomsmen, or 'friends of the bridegroom', whose office must not infrequently have degenerated into utter coarseness.⁸

The reader who wishes to understand what we have only ventured to hint, is referred to the Mishnic tractate Niddah.⁹

Marriage, to the mind of the Jews, meant much more than just merry-making and festivities. They almost bordered on the idea that marriage was a sacrament. "Entrance into the marriage state was thought to carry the forgiveness of sins". The Jews ardently insisted on marriage, "from the first prayer at the circumcision of a child, onwards through the many and varied admonitions to the same effect".

There was, as Edersheim calls it, a "bold allegory of the times" to the effect that God Himself had spoken the words of blessing over the cup, when He joined Adam and Eve in marriage, and that Michael and Gabriel acted as groomsmen, while the Angelic choir sang the wedding hymn.

8. Edersheim, Life and Times, vol. 1, p. 148.

9. Moed, Sabbath, Mishna p. 243, (Rodkinson).

All things, even funeral processions, had to give way in the street, to a wedding procession. It was considered a virtue to follow the procession and honor the bride.

They had a strict system of Betrothals. These engagements preceded the marriage by a varied length of time, but if the bride-to-be was a virgin, the period was not to exceed a year.¹⁰ The bride-to-be was given a piece of money or a paper, with the statement that the man thereby espoused the woman. From that time on both bride and groom were legally considered married, even with respect to inheritance, etc., except that they did not live together. The dowry of each was fixed by a legal document. In Judea, the stronghold of Rabbinism, there was generally a great feast at the end of the betrothal ceremony. This was not done in Galilee, the home of the simple people. That was one reason sins in connection with the betrothal feast were not in evidence in the northern province.

The marriage was performed in the evening. The bride was led to the house of her groom. There was torch light, music, garlands and flowers. It was considered a prime virtue for all who saw the wedding procession to join in, and praise the bride handsomely. The groom was to make some handsome additions to his wife's dowry. When discussing the matter, the Rabbis had difficulty with the possibility that the groom was a poor man, and could not carry out

^{Edersheim}
10. *op. cit.* vol. 1, p. 353f. The Talmudic references are found there. They are too numerous to be mentioned here. Edersheim's summary has drawn the pertinent references

the demands of the ritualistic law. But they were comforted, as Edersheim well puts it, with the thought that every man had some property, even if it was only the six feet of ground he was buried in. That is true to the character of the Jewish scholastic approach to the ritual problem. The groom signed the document; there was the pouring of the ritual cup of wine; the benedictions were spoken; and the feasting began. Everyone tried to increase the jovial atmosphere with his wit, and sometimes the jests were very dubious. The groomsmen led the couple to the bridal chamber, and not infrequently, improprieties occurred. As has been noted, this was not the custom in Galilee.¹¹

One interesting sidelight on the Jewish view toward marriage and wives is reflected in this quotation from festival rules:

One must not espouse a wife on the middle days--neither widows nor virgins; not must one marry the childless widow of his deceased brother, as that (the espousal) is a cause of joy to him (individually), but one may receive back his own divorced wife.¹¹

With respect to divorce: "Because if one has a bad wife he should divorce her. Those, however who declare that one who has a bad wife will not see Gehenna, refer to those who cannot afford to make a settlement upon their wives, or to those who have children, and cannot divorce their wives."¹²

together in very practical fashion. A good instance of the attitude toward wedding processions can be found in Rodkinson, vol. 5, Aboth of R. Nathan, p. 22.

11. Moed, Moed Katan, Mishna VIII.

12. Moed, Erubin, ch. IV (Rodkinson vol. 2, p. 94).

Mention has been made of superstition to be found in the Haggadic portions of the Gemara. They believed, for example, that snakes drink wine from pitchers. They even believed that snakes would drop water into a pitcher containing wine, until the pitcher was full, and that then the snakes would proceed to lap up the wine. They believed they had to cover it well to protect it from the snakes.

The references in the Mishna text to the Messiah were deleted, but some were brought in by way of the Gemara, after the death of those who rejected the original references. They had some peculiar ideas concerning the Messiah. The following is a chance reference to Him.

If one say: I wish to be a Nazarite at the coming of the Messiah, he may drink wine on a Sabbath or on a festival, but must not do so during the week-days. (For Messiah is liable to come at any time.) The Baraitha would then be correct if we assume that there is a legal limit above ten spans from the ground, because Messiah will then not come on the Sabbath or on a festival, but if there is no legal limit above ten spans, the man should not drink wine even on those days, because the Messiah might come. In that case it is different: for it is written (Mal. 3, 23): "Behold, I send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the day of the Lord, the Great and Dreadful." Hence, if Elijah did not come on the day preceding Sabbath, He may drink on the Sabbath. If this is so, then he may drink on a week-day also, providing Elijah did not come on the preceding day. It might be assumed, however, that Elijah had already come and appeared before the high court and for that reason the man should not drink on any day, lest Elijah had already

13. Nez., Abuda Zara, ch. 2, Mishna 4 (Rodkinson vol. 4, p. 56-57).

come, then this would apply also to the Sabbath? There is a tradition among the Israelites that it is an assured fact, that Elijah will not come on the eve of a Sabbath or a festival. If that is so, why should the man not be permitted to drink wine on the eve of the Sabbath? Because, although Elijah^h ~~an~~ will not come, the Messiah Himself might come.¹⁴

From this discussion on the Nazarites, several implications are made concerning their beliefs about the Messiah. In the first place, they evidently thought that He would come as a good Rabbinical Jew, obeying the Sabbath rules to the limit. It is also implied that He would present Himself to the service of the high court. That is close to unutterable arrogance. They thought, as can be seen, that He would be preceded by Elijah. Furthermore, the implication is obvious that they expected Him to come sailing down out of the sky like
¹⁵
 a great heavenly king. That is brought out by the point of the discussion. It was legal only to travel within certain limits on the Sabbath. Therefore they argued whether there was a legal limit above the ground. If there was none, then the Messiah could come on the Sabbath without breaking the rabbinical law, but if there was one, then He would not be able to come, by the same token.

It is well to repeat here that not all the Jews agreed on all such teachings. There were violent disagreements among them, and as we have noted before, there was never any systematic Jewish theology. You can find an example of almost any belief in the Talmud. No one Jew could subscribe

14. Moed, Erubin, Mishna 4, (Rodkinson, vol. 4, p.98).

15. Satan at the temptation of Jesus, evidently made use of this tradition. If Jesus had thrown Himself from the pinnacle of the temple, as Satan tempted him to do, He would

to all statements, though the Gemara discussions attempt to make them all harmonious, by the various scholastic hair-splittings.

A number of ethical maxims and proverbs show the wisdom of some of the scholars of the Jews. In such a long history of literary and religious effort, even though it be based on a false religion, it would be surprising if not a few words of deep wisdom should not appear from the mouths of some of the men; the best that a nation could produce for eight hundred years. It is a fortunate thing that the Jewish scholars loved to put all their wisdom into epigrammatical form. In spite of the fact that among the Jews there was an opinion that only Jews were included in the moral obligations they were under, there were those of a broader outlook, who saw that morality is not a circumscribed injunction, but that it is binding on all men at all times. It is more understandable, when we consider that the Jewish religion was not a religion of theology and dogmatics; but one of general morality, with a one-sided application, that some of the men would rise above the one-sidedness, and turn to philosophy instead of clinging to the purely Jewish religious idea. Of course, their philosophy was not of the metaphysical kind, like that of the Greeks, but it was based on ideas fundamental to Jewish religion. God, creation, nobility of man, a real moral standard, and the like, were taken for granted, and from that

have seemed to be fulfilling the expectation of this tradition, and would have been hailed by the people as Messiah.

point on, they developed their ideas and ethics. One might say that the ethical epigrams of the Jewish scholars could teach many of us a lesson. They have their roots in Biblical injunctions, after all, and they were no mean minds which meditated upon them. In many cases, the ethical maxims are the result of a whole life of human thought, put with no small effort into one epigram. The maxims of some of the chief Rabbis will be noted in their biographical sketches in this paper. Many times they are pure human wisdom. The ones that appeal most, are the ones concerning family life. The Jews are noted to this day for their good family life. It stems, no doubt, to the great stress they laid on it in ancient days, and the great number of laws, as well as the great honor they laid upon it. That also stems from the principles laid down in the Old Testament. In spite of the fact that they had the wrong motive in mind when they followed the principles, they did follow them outwardly, and that has had its own effect. Some of the Maxims have been selected by different authors and put into series. A few of them follow.

Let a man be careful to honor his wife, for he owes to her alone all the blessings of his house. Who is rich? He who has a noble wife. Tears are shed on God's Altar for the one who forsakes the wife of his youth. He who divorces his wife is hated before God. The honor and reverence due to parents are equal to the honor and reverence due to God. Parental love should be impartial, one child must not be preferred to the other. First build a house and

plant a vineyard, then take a wife. Let youth and old age not be joined in marriage, lest the purity and peace of domestic life be disturbed. A man's home means his wife. If in anger the one hand removed thy wife or thy child, let the other hand bring them back to thy heart.¹⁶

Many of the proverbs sound very familiar in modern ears. Sometimes one does not expect to find such well-known maxims so old. Some of them seem at first glance obvious, and not very deep, or full of meaning, but it must be remembered that they are epigrams, and often couched in allegorical terms. That was the delight of the Jewish scholars. The tendency shows an Oriental mystic personality. The Maxims that follow are more general in nature, and show the scope of Rabbinical thought.

Teach thy tongue to say: I do not know. It matters not how much or how little, but how devotional. Avoid ~~and~~ anger, and you shall avoid sin. The seal of God is truth. The elephant fears the fly. The world rests on the breath of school children. Only the merciful shall receive divine mercy. The body follows the head. Conceit causes wisdom to depart from the wise and vision from the prophet. The Lord hates the man who speaks one way and thinks another. The greater the man, the greater his temptations. Greater is he whose motive is the love of God, than he whose motive is the fear of God. Work honors its master. Do not attribute to others the fault that is thine. A single coin in a pitcher makes a great deal of noise. The liar is not believed even when he tells the truth. No man is envious of his son or pupil. Say a little and do much. Not learning, but doing, is the chief thing. The world can exist without wine, but not without water. Judge all men by their merits. Where there are no men, strive thou to be a man. Let thy neighbor's honor be as dear to thee as thine own. Be rather a tail to lions than a head to foxes. Look not at the outside of a pitcher, but at what it contains.¹⁷

16. Quoted in Rodkinson, vol. 10, p. 90.

17. Quoted by Max Reichler, What is the Talmud?, pp. 23-24.

We will let the matter stand there, and let every man judge them as he will.

The divisions of the Talmud are the key to the references. The Talmud is absolutely unindexable, by its very nature. The reason is, that it is built up on the basis of discussions. In these discussions, as has been noted, the subject matter was restricted only by the demand that it be based on the Torah, or the traditions that were derived from the Torah; or that they considered as derived from the Torah. As a result, many different subjects appear in each discussion. They were satisfied as long as the discussion kept alive. It reminds one strongly of the "shop-talk" of college students in dormitory discussions. The six divisions of the Talmud have each been given a name, as have also the individual tractates within the divisions. There are seven to twelve tractates within each Seder (division). The tractates are divided into chapters. The references, then are written accordingly, with the name of the Seder first, the tractate second, the chapter third. Then, to find the exact location of the reference, one must read the chapter. The names of the Sederim and the Tractates are usually abbreviated. One must therefore know the names, in order to read the references. The names of Seder and tractate follow in order. The transliterations vary from one author to another. We will here keep close to the original sound of the Hebrew word as nearly as possible.

We have not attempted to transliterate the ~~latter~~ ain and waw. The first of the six sedarim is called Zerain. The word means Seeds. The contents give laws and discussions concerning the tilling of the soil and the fruits of the land. The second is called Moed, which means Festival. It deals with the laws concerning the feasts of the Jews. The third is Nashim, Women, and deals with laws of marriage, ritual laws concerning women, etc. The fourth is Neziqin, Damages. There have been a number of euphemistic renditions of this name, one of which is jurisprudence. Another euphemistic name is Jeshuoth, Deeds of Help. The fifth Seder is Qodashim, Consecrated Things. It deals with offerings, and dedicated and consecrated things, the rituals of the temple services. The sixth is Teharoth, Purifications. The term is euphemistic for Temaoth, ritual uncleanness. These names already were in evidence at the time of Simon b. Lakish, in the third century A.D.

The names of the tractates are old, known already to the Amorites. For the sake of reference we include them.

Zerain: Berachoth, Peah, Demai, Kilajim, Shebiith, Terumoth, Maasroth, Maaser Shen&, Challa, Orla, Bikkurim.

Moed: Sabbath, Erubin, Pesachim, Seqalim, Joma, Sukka, Betza, Rosh Hashana, Tamnith, Megilla, Moed Qatan, Hagaga.

Nashim: Jebamoth, Kethubboth, Nedarim, Nazir, Gittin, Sota, Qiddushin.

Neziqin: Baba Qamma, Babba Metzia, Babba Bathra, Sanhedrin,

Makkoth, Shebuoth, Edujjoth, Abuda Zara, Aboth, Horajoth.

Qodashim: Zebachim, Menachoth, Chullin, Bachoroth, Arachin,
Temura, Kerithoth, Meila, Tamid, Middoth, Qinnim.

Teharoth: Kelim, Ohaloth, Megaim, Para, Teharoth, Miqvaoth,
Nidda, Machshirin, Zabim, Tebul Jom, Jadajim, Uqtzin.

This is the order of the Sedarim and the tractates, or treat-
ises, as they appear according to the text of Moses Maimon-
ides.
18

PART TWO: HISTORICAL AND CHARACTER SKETCH

Chapter I. Sopheric and Zugothic Periods

Each period of the growth of the Talmud bears a technical name. The two main periods are called the Mishna period and the Talmudic period. The former is counted from the time of Ezra (sometimes, more explicitly, from the time of the duumvirate, 150 B.C.¹), to the closing of the official text of the Mishna, by Jehudah Hanasi, cir. 200 A.D. The latter is the time of the formulation of the Gemara, from 219 A.D. to 499 A.D.² Sometimes the whole period of the formulation of both Mishna and Gemara is referred to as the Talmudic period. That is necessarily so, because of the fact that the whole work is called Talmud.

There is a tradition that there was a great assembly from the time of Ezra that lasted to the time of the Sanhedrin as we know it from its appearance in the Maccabean time. This so-called Great Assembly, or "men of the Great Synod" were supposed to have received the oral law as it was handed down to them from Ezra, who in turn had received it from his

1. Reichler, p. 14.f.

2. Encyclopedia Britannica, Gaon, vol. I, p. 8.

spiritual predecessors, who had preserved it from the mouth³ of Moses, who had received it on Mount Sinai. They believed that the Oral Law was as binding as the written law, when it was given to Moses on Sinai⁴.

The element of the tradition that is apropos here is that concerning the Great Assembly. Graetz⁵ presents a good case for the legend that the men of the Great Assembly actually existed. It is certain that they had to have some government, and it is well-known that there were councils of leaders in the towns of the Old Testament times. The Book of Nehemiah⁶ implies the same condition, although not stating it in so many words. The legendary Great Assembly, then, would be the continuation of the council of Politico-religious leaders. There is no need to assume that there was no Great Assembly, however necessary it may be to reject the doctrinal supplement of the legend. The Sanhedrin goes as far back as authentic history goes in this period, and seems to be the heir of the traditional Assembly, which in its turn, was heir to the council of Nehemiah's time. The dividing of the spiritual and civic heads of the Sanhedrin at the time of the Maccabees also speaks for the ancient heritage of the body. The men who composed the assumed Assembly were called Sopherim, Wise Men, or Scribes. That is the first period of the Mishnic epoch.⁷ They cover the two hundred years after Ezra.

3. Nez., Aboth, Mishna Aff.

4. Strack, p. 7, lists three occurrences in the Babylonian Talmud where this doctrine is inculcated. (Pea 2,6; Eduj. 8,7; Jad., 4,3).

The second period was that of the Zugoth, or the pairs. They are the Ab Beth Din and the Nasi, as previously described. The name Zugoth is a Hebraized version of the Greek $\zυγός$, because they were co-rulers. The period of the Zugoth lasted from the time of the Maccabean wars to cir. 30. B.C.⁸

The third Mishnic period was that of the Tannaites, or the Tannaim, as they are variously called. The singular is Tana. This period lasted from the beginning of the first century to the beginning of the third century A.D.⁹ There is more definite information concerning this period and its men than there is on the previous ones. The Tannaites were men of great authority, from the point of view of those that followed. The earlier the teacher was, the more weight his words held in the eyes of the later Jews, as shall be demonstrated. The title Tana means teacher of the Oral law. It does not occur in the Mishna which they helped to compile, nor in the Baraitha, which is the Mishnic material rejected or not known by Jehudah Hanasi, who codified the official text. This title was added by the later teachers, and appears in the Gemara. The run-of-the-mill ordained teachers of that time were called Rabbi, as to this day. The title of the president of the Sanhedrin was Rabban, which means as much as My Teacher. In the Mishna itself the Tannaim are

5. Graetz, vol. I, ch. XX, p. 393ff.

6. Neh. 11. 12.

7. Strack, p. 117f.

8. Encyclopedia Britannica, vol. X, p. 8.

9. op. cit., Talmud, vol. XX, p. 769.

called the Sages, while the men of the previous period are called the Former Sages, or Elders¹⁰ (The Sopherim and the Zugoth). The Tannaim are the real collectors, developers, and codifiers of the Mishna. Those who had gone before had their traditions, which they had developed and handed down orally, but it was a confused mass of material without any order or system. The impression one receives is that before the Tannaites began to teach the Oral Law as a body it must have been much like a national folklore, with no seeming coherence at all. The one unifying principle that holds it together and that must have held it together then, is the racio-religious undertone of all the traditions. That is the flavor of the whole Talmud as we have it, even now.

Following the period of the Tannaim was that of the Amoraim, also called Amorites. The word really means speakers. They are the teachers who came after the closing of the Mishna text by Jehudah Hanasi. They expounded mostly on that code, which had become the official text¹¹. The Amoraim were not as independent as the Tannaim had been. They had not the authority to contradict any of the established Halachoth of those who had gone before, and so they spent their time, and centered their debates on expounding the Mishna code as they had it laid out for them. They had to resort to all kinds of hair-splitting and fine reasoning, as well as the most liberal type of so-called exegesis, to harmonize

10. Mielziner, p. 23.

11. Strack, p. 2.

conflicting opinions expressed in the Mishna, or even in the Baraitha, which was material of teachers which was excluded by Hanasi. At that time the Baraitha carried considerable authority, as has been noted previously. The Amoraim of Palestine generally had the title of Rabbi, because they were ordained by the Patriarch (Nasi), while the Babylonian Amoraim were simply called Rab, or Mar.¹² The origin of the words Rabbi and Rab, was the same, both being derived from a word signifying greatness and honor, but the title Rabbi had already at that time taken on the specialized significance which it still holds today among the Jews. As can be seen from the fact that the most prominent of the Amoraim did not have the title of Rabbi is evidence that the title meant practically nothing in the long run, and it serves us now only to understand what is meant in a given case when a title is applied to a man from a certain period or place. The terminology helps in this manner to identify names with times and places. The time of the Amoraim extended from the end of the Tannaitic epoch to the last part of the fifth century A.D.¹³

Not included in the scope of this thesis, but relevant to the subject matter, are the titles of the later teachers of the Talmud. Saboraim were the scholars who completed the Talmud in the first third of the sixth century, adding manifold amplifications to the text. Gaon was originally the

12. Mielziner, p.40.

13. Strack, p. 3f.

title of the head of the Academy of Sura. It came into general use in the seventh century under Mohammedan supremacy.

Both Saboraim and Gaonim are titles of the heads of the academies at Sura and Pumbeditha. Thus they were the successors of the Amora'im, with whom this paper terminates.

A. The Sopherim

Moses received the Law on Sinai and delivered it to Joshua; Joshua in turn handed it down to the Elders (Not to the Seventy Elders of Moses' time, but to the later Elders who have ruled Israel, and each of them delivered it to his successor); from the Elders it descended to the prophets (beginning with Eli and Samuel), and each of them delivered it to his successors until it reached the men of the Great Assembly. The last named originated three maxims: "Be not hasty in judgment; Bring up many disciples; and Erect Safeguards for the Law (Build a fence about the law is more accurate)." Simeon the Just was one of the remnants of the Great Assembly. His motto was: 'The order of the world rests on three things: On law, on worship, and on the bestowal of favors.' Antigonus of Socho, who received it from Simeon the Just, was in the habit of saying: 'Be not like slaves who serve their master for the sake of the compensation; be like such servants as labor for their master without reward; and let the fear of heaven be upon you.'¹

That is practically all there is to be known about the period of the Sopherim. We have discussed the possibility of its existence, and related matters under terminology. It is useful here to get the order of the succession of the possessors of the Oral Law, as the Jews told it. Simeon the Just and Antigonus of Socho are historical characters. They

14. Jewish Encyclopedia, Gaon, vol. X, p. 8.
1. Nez., Aboth, I.

are the first we can be sure of, and of whose history we have any fair record, with respect to the Oral Law of the Jews. Simeon, or Simon, the Just was either the High-Priest Simon I, who lived from 310-292 B.C., or his grandson Simon II, who lived from 220-202 B.C. Graetz takes him to be the former. He was the head of the community, and chief of the council, which afterwards became the Sanhedrin. He was the first ruler of the Jews since the Exile that came from the Jews in their own homeland.² It will be remembered that at the time of the Exile, only the lowest class of people was left; even artisans, as well as all business men, educated men, and men of high estate, having been dragged into the land of captivity. It was about 250 years before the homeland could once more begin to contribute its own men for its highest offices. It is Simon the Righteous about whom tradition tells, that he met Alexander the Great on the road to Jerusalem, and persuaded him to spare, and even honor the city. The legend is well-known, that Alexander had dreamed of a priest in white, who came out to meet him with a train of followers, and that when Simon appeared to him on the road, he remembered his dream, and worshipped at the feet of the Jewish priest. Simon's powers as high-priest~~est~~ included also temporal power. Simon improved the facilities~~es~~ of Jerusalem. He repaired the temple, and built a huge cistern under it, that was fed by the springs of Etom,

2. Graetz, vol. I, ch. XXI, p. 422.

3

that the city might the better with stand long sieges.

After the death of Simon, his grandson Joseph took over the control of the Jews. He was a favorite with the Egyptian king Euergetes. Disorder reigned in the political situation after the death of Simon, until 240 and shortly following, at which time Joseph gained control. Under Joseph, the Jews became more prosperous, because their leader was a powerful man in the Egyptian court, and bled the other areas of the Near East, of which Palestine was a part. The benefits of the bleeding of Syria fell into ~~the~~ laps of the Jews. The result was the Hellenizing of the Jews.⁴ There was dissension among their ranks also on account of that. That was the beginning of a long fight among the Jews, of which the outcome was the rabbinical traditions of the Pharisees, embodied in the Talmud.

In the strictly spiritual field, the successor of Simon the Just was Antigonus of Socho. Sometime in this period between 200 and 176 Jesus Sirach b. Eleazar wrote Ecclesiasticus. The interest in him here is that at the time of the translation of this work into Greek the translator did not know of any rule that forbade the writing down of the Oral Law,⁵ although there was a strong sentiment against it for many years in the later times.

3. *ibid.*

4. *op. cit.*, p. 425.

5. Strack, p. 10.

B. The Zugoth

The Zugoth were the duumvirate dynasty, that lasted from Jose b. Joezer till Hillel. There is a traditional list of five pairs. The men are historical characters. The debate concerning them deals with their respective positions in the leadership of the Jewish nation. Some of these names are well-known.

1. Jose b. Joezer and Jose b. Jochanan, who flourished at the time of the Maccabean wars.
2. Joshua b. Perachia and Nitai of Arbela, of the time of John Hyrcanus.
3. Jehudah b. Tabbai and Simon b. Shetach, at the time of Alexander Jannaeus and Queen Salome.
4. Shemaiah and Abtalion, of the time of Hyrcanus II.
5. Hillel and Shammai, who lived at the time of King Herod⁶ the Great.

Not too much is known of the first pair, but to them there are ascribed certain maxims of the type described in the previous chapter. Jose b. Joezer perceived, according to tradition, that the best thing for a man to do, who wanted wisdom, was to keep his house full of wise men all the time. That has become a well-known principle since that time. Jose b. Jochanan also thought that it was not good to talk to women too much, nor to have too much to do with them.⁷ He is also accredited with urging great

6. Nez., Aboth I.

7. *ibid.*

charity upon his people.

Joshua b. Perachia is anachronistically declared to be the teacher of Christ, when the fact is, that he lived a hundred years too soon to have done that service. Nitai of Abbela is also called Mattai, but is better known by the former name.⁸

Simon b. Shetach and his colleague Jehudah b. Tabbai together are called by the Jews "Restorers of the Law". They have a right to this title, for Simon b. Shetach is responsible for the great system of schools set up among the Jews of all countries of that time. That is one of the strong points of Judaism, and no doubt has had much to do with the fact that the nation did not die out, but kept its identity. By the Law, we here intend it in the sense in which the Jews understood it, namely, the Rabbinical traditions. The story is told of Simon b. Shetach, that he was offered the presidency of the Sanhedrin, but that he refused it, in favor of his older colleague, Jehudah b. Tabbai, of Alexandria. Simon was brother-in-law to Alexander Jannaeus, since he was married to the sister of Jannaeus' Queen, Salome. He is called the Oracle of the Pharisaic Party.⁹ He and Tabbai, it is said, reorganized the Sanhedrin. It is certain that after their time, the Sanhedrin was solidly Pharisaic. Before this time, the Sanhedrin had been mostly composed of Sadducees. Jannaeus had been a Pharisee, but

8.—Strack, p. 117.

9. Graetz, vol. 2, p. 39ff.

he turned Sadducee, and persecuted the former. Simon had to flee for his life at the time, but was later allowed to return, by a political machination. Later, Tabbai was forced to resign as chief of the Sanhedrin, because he had executed a false witness, and false witness was not a capital offence. Shetach took his place. The tide turned after that, and by good diplomacy, Shetach gradually cleaned the Sadducees out of the Sanhedrin. The plan he is said to have used, was to shame them before the king, and they had to get out because of public disfavor. That sounds logical, and there is good reason to believe that that was the case. There was not much else to do, with the king at the helm. After the death of Jannaeus, Salome made peace with the Pharisees, and those who were still in exile were allowed to return. This was the end of the power of the Sadducees. After that, they were a second-rate sect. Tabbai and b. Shetach are noted among the Jews especially for that. They set about to uproot the ideas of the Sadducees from the minds of the people. The latter party never regained the power again, and so the two leaders of this time succeeded in their attempt. That is the story of why the Talmud is the child of the Pharisees.

There is a story told about Simon b. Shetach, that he once crucified eighty women in Ashkalon, for witchcraft;¹⁰ but that is obviously not true, because Ashkalon had been an independent city since 104 B.C.¹¹ He is also said to have

10. Nez. Sanhedrin, ch. 4,6.

11. Strack, p. 118.

executed his son, who had been accused by false witnesses. After the sentence had been spoken, the witnesses reversed their testimony, but because a law decreed that a witness was not to be believed if he changed his testimony, the son insisted that he be executed to save his father's honor.¹² This is a typical Jewish legend. They loved to show how the Jewish people would go to extremes to live up to the laws of the Fathers. No one has to believe the story unless he is a Jew of the Talmud.

During the time of Hyrcanus II, and the beginning of the Herodian dynasty, the two proselyt leaders Shemaiah and Abtalion flourished. The Sanhedrin was weak at the time, for the powers that existed took over also much of the spiritual area of the Jewish life. Politics had entered into the priesthood. Not local politics, but the politics of the woovers of Rome. Shemaiah and Abtalion were leading spirits in the Sanhedrin. They were good diplomats, and knew how to face the king. How they did it, we do not know. We do know that they were no favorites of Herod's, because he sent spies into the Beth Hamidrash (The house of Midrash, the Rabbinical academy in Jerusalem), to catch any words spoken against his rule. He knew the Jews hated him, and called him the Edomite slave. Any non-Jew, they considered a slave. The Jews then posted a guard at the doors of the academy, to see that no strangers were allowed to enter. They then

12. Graetz, vol. 2, p. 54.

developed, in good Oriental fashion, a series of allegories condemning certain ways of living, and ways of doing things. These were understood by the pupils to refer to the political traitors to Judaism.¹³ Thus they had an opportunity to vent their spleen against the hated rulers, and at the same time keep out of their clutches. That is another one of the strong points in the life of Judaism. It illustrates their method of going underground, and keeping the Rabbinical spirit alive, even when they are outwardly keeping strictly within the bounds set for them by those who dislike their principles. Perhaps that also helps to explain the aura of mystery that surrounds the Jews as a group.

The last of the so-called Zugoth are the most famous pair of them all. They are Hillel and Shammai. The former of the two is well-known, and is revered by the Jews as one of the greatest fathers of their race and religion.

Shammai has the reputation of being of a severe and uncompromising nature--a legalist. He would have nothing to do with anyone who wanted a liberal interpretation put on any of the Rabbinical laws. All his life he carried on a controversy with Hillel, and it was continued by their respective schools after them. Hillel was head of the academy at Jerusalem, and Shammai had a school named after himself. That was the privilege of any ordained Rabbi. It was called Beth Shammai, meaning the house of Shammai. It became a

13. Friedman, p. 66.

matter of principle for Shammai, or his disciples, to contradict Hillel, or the school of Hillel. In later times, when the Gemara was formed, Hillel's decision automatically took precedence over that of Shammai. Their decisions are printed one next to the other in the Mishna text of Jehudah Hanasi.

Hillel was born about 75 B.C. He was born in needy circumstances in Babylonia. He traced his maternal lineage to David. He was a most devoted disciple of Shamaya and Abtalion, whose teachings of the traditional law he tried to hand down to his disciples, not only faithfully, but literally. This shows the beginning of the trend to recognize the Oral Law as a divine body of truth, which by this time had the aura and mystery of age behind it. It is very likely that the very age of the traditions had much to do with the authority they gathered in increasing measure through the years.

Hillel left Babylon to study in the academy at Jerusalem. There he hired himself out to obtain the necessary funds for attending the lectures. Later he became principal of the academy, and Herod appointed him to the head of the Sanhedrin. The many stories that are told of meek and mild character of the man may or may not be true. No doubt some of them have a basis of fact. But from the things that we do know about Hillel we understand that he was the type of man tradition declares him to have been. At the time he came into

14. Graetz, vol. 2, p. 96.

power among the Jews, there was still strong feeling between the Sadducees and the Pharisees, although the former were out of power. Hillel then developed the so-called seven logical rules, designed partly to unite the two opposed parties on common ground, and thus wipe out the dissension
 15
 in the ranks.

The primary purpose of the seven rules was to show that the Oral Law was based on Scripture. Not on the dead letter, but on the general spirit. It is noticeable that he had as broad a view on the general spirit of the Scriptures as the modern liberalists have. At first the Jews did not take well to the seven rules, but a question was raised at the time, in which the people were highly interested. Hillel, as the head of the Sanhedrin was the logical person to whom to look for an answer. He answered it on the basis of the seven rules, and the people were satisfied. After that, the precedent was set, and the rules were accepted. After Hillel's victory with his seven rules, the other officers of the Sanhedrin resigned, and Hillel was sole leader of the great council. It is strange that no one objected to the change. Not even King Herod, to whom it seems, it would have been an advantage to have the authority in the Jewish council split among various members. The Essene Mnaham, who had been appointed by Herod to a position in the Sanhedrin, resigned ~~ed~~ in favor of Shammai about 30 B.C. It is surprising

15. Fredman, p. 30.

that nothing was done about it by Herod. From all the evidence of this kind, it almost seems as if Herod had a great deal of fear of the Jews, or respect for their religion. From his character, we would be tempted to judge that it must have been the former. But whatever the cause was, Hillel became the head of the Sanhedrin, and seems to have had great authority in his own time already. After Hillel, the presidency of the Sanhedrin stayed in the family for more than four hundred years, as has been noted previously. The fact is a tribute to his diplomatic powers.

He is known for his reforms. They are in the line of liberalizing the old astringent laws, with the face on them of remaining just as strict and virtuous as they had been before. We cite an example. The old law that no bills could be collected in the year of release was still valid at his time. Of course, the closer it came to the year of release, the harder it was to obtain credit, and the harder it became, necessarily, to do business. So Hillel abolished the strength of the law without changing its surface form. He decreed that judges could collect for the debtor after the year of release, instead of allowing the debt to be absolved. We must not censure Hillel for declaring the law powerless, because it was a law based on a different economy than that of the time the law was given. It was based on a rural economy, but by this time the Jews were not all farmers. They were merchants, and money was the means of carrying on their

business. What we consider wrong about the rule of Hillel in this case is that he pretended to keep the law as it had stood. We look at this matter from the point of view of the Jewish faith, and therefore the New Covenant does not apply to our judgments concerning the Jewish law. We must base our discussions on the law as they put themselves under it.

Hillel was the first to collect the Halachoth in logical form as a body of laws. He did not write them down. If he did, it was secretly done, and used as an aid to his own memory. This marks an important stage in the development of the Mishna. From this time the code grows and crystallizes, as we shall observe it in the next two chapters.¹⁶

The political situation in Babylon at this time is evidenced by a remark of Josephus. He explains how Hyrcanus II had fled to Parthia from Herod. Phraates, King of Parthia, received Hyrcanus, treated him well, and gave him residence at Babylon. There the Jews treated him like a king. Herod tried to lure him back to Judea, where he would be in his power, but the Jews in Babylon tried to persuade him to stay, for they suspected the motives of Herod, the arch-murderer. The implication is that Babylon, and therefore the Jews who lived there, were under the Parthian King. These Jews then were not under the Roman rule. They had a recognized status of some sort, as we see from the fact that they acted as a group, in their relations to Hyrcanus.¹⁷

16. *Encyclopedia Britannica*, *Talmud*, vol. XX, p. 770.
 17. Josephus' *Antiquities*, ch. 15, p. 445.

An interesting politico-religious sideline is the partly true, partly traditional story of Choni Hamagel, the wood-turner. He was an Essene, but nevertheless he made the Jewish Who's Who--the Talmud. As his name indicates, he was a wood-turner by trade. He was noted for his piety. No doubt he did not have time to study continually. He lived at the time of Hyrcanus and Aristobolus. The soldiers of Aristobolus killed him, when he would not pray for the success of their siege against Jerusalem. The substance of his prayer was in effect the pious wish moderns use before a prizefight: May the best man win. He is interesting mainly because he was an Essene.

18. Friedman, p. 16.

Chapter II. Tannaim

Mention has been made in considerable detail, of Hillel and Shammai. With their disciples the period of the Tannaim begins. The period lasted about 210 years, from 10 to about 220 A.D. The period of the Tannaim is usually divided into five or six minor historical periods, which are called generations, although the work of some of the men extended into and through more than one so-called generation. The main purpose of the divisions is to chart the contemporaneous teachers, that the student may get a clearer idea of the times, and can easily place the teachers in the proper relation to one another. Some authorities divide the periods one way, and others prefer a different division. There is as a rule, however, very little difference, there being a discrepancy at the most of a generation or two. The men themselves are fairly well dated. In this presentation we use the division employed by Mielziner, the English standard work on the subject.

The first generation lasted from 10-80 A.D.

1. The schools of Shammai and Hillel.
2. Akabia ben Mahalalel.
3. Rabban Gamaliel the Elder.
4. Rabbi Chanina, chief of the priests.
5. Rabbi Simon ben Gamaliel.

1. Mielziner, p. 23ff.

6. Rabbi Jochanan ben Zaccai.

1. Enough has been said on the schools of Hillel and Shammai. It might be noted here that the opinion of Shammai is always quoted first in the text so it can be refuted by Hillel's opinion afterward.

2. Akabia b. Mahalalel. There is only a little recorded^d concerning the history of this Rabbi. There are the usual stories concerning his upright life, and the necessary traditional legends, but his main work was a number of opinions of his which are recorded in the Mishna.²

3. Rabban Gamaliel the Elder is one of the most well-known of the ancient Rabbis. He was the grandson of Hillel. Hence the title Rabban, that distinguished him as head of the Sanhedrin. He established the patriarchate on a solid basis. He received a good deal of help from Herod Agrippa. It was evidently to the advantage of that king to have the Hillelite dynasty at the head of the Sanhedrin. He was a reformer in true Hillel tradition, which had set firmly already by this time. He revised the marriage law, so that in the case of the death of a spouse, the remaining spouse^{se} ~~use~~ could remarry, even though there were only one witness to testify that the other spouse was dead. Another reform that must have been strange to the ears of the Jews was the ruling that the heathen poor were to share equally with the Jewish poor in the Leketh, Peyah, and Shikcha. These terms referred to the leaving of the wheat in the field for gleaning.

2. Most of the legends concerning these Rabbis are selected from the Talmud by Friedman. The chief historical

The heathen poor were also to share in the public charity, It will be remembered that the Jews had been Hellenized to an extent. That may explain the broad views of the great teachers of that time. It was during the time of Rabban Gamaliel the Elder that Jesus lived and taught. Gamaliel I died 18 years before the destruction of Jerusalem.

Gamaliel I is often confused with his Grandson, Gamaliel II, who lived in the next generation. Many things that were said and done by the latter have often been accredited to the former. Gamaliel II, for example, while he was in Jabne, ordered Samuel Hakatan to compose the prayer against the Minim (Christians) and informers. Rabban Gamaliel is all the title that is given in the Talmud, and many have accredited his grandfather with these actions, But the Jews did not have serious trouble with the Christians during the time of the older man, and the town of Jabne was not famous as a place of learning until the time of Gamaliel II. It gained its fame from Rabban Jochanan ben Zaccai, who established the Sanhedrin in Jabne.³

4. The fourth man of the generation is Rabbi Chanina ben Dossa, chief of the priests. He was the proxy of the high priest. He is incidentally mentioned in a few Halachoth in connection with temple and sacrifice laws. Most of the information we have of him is Haggadic, and therefore legendary. There are a few very interesting tales about this man that would make fine bedtime stories for little children. If one

matter is from Mielziner, Strack, and Graetz. Peculiar details will be specially documented.

3. Friedman, p. 127.

would take all these Rabbinical legends and put them into a collection, they would make as fine a collection as the Arabian Nights. They are very entertaining reading. He is said to have been very poor. He may have been; but whatever the facts are, his poverty serves as the basis for a good many miracle legends. His life's maxim was that piety and fear of the Lord are more important than learning. That serves as an indication that he actually was poor, for we have noted that if a man was poor, he had to work for a living, and could not therefore afford the time to attend many lectures and memorize a great many Halachoth. It would be natural, then, that he would conclude that there is more virtue in piety than in learning. Other Rabbis have done the same thing, of whom we know that they were poor.

One of the legends about Chanina is the story of Ben Zaccai's daughter. She had become very ill, but none of the prayers of her father helped any. Then Chanina arrived, and cured her quickly with a prayer. When asked for an explanation, he said it was because he was the servant of God, by his pious life, while ben Zaccai was the minister of God.

Another legend relates that Chanina was bitten by a very poisonous snake, but instead of the Rabbi dying, the snake died. We are reminded of the story of Paul on the Island. Who knows where the Jews got their story?

5. Rabbi Simon ben Gamaliel was son and successor of Gamaliel I. He was of the school of Hillel. His opinions are rarely quoted in the Mishna. He also must not be confused

with his grandson, who had the same name, but lived in the fourth generation. He was executed by the Romans at the destruction of Jerusalem.

6. Jochanan ben Zaccai was the youngest of the disciples of Hillel. He finished studying at the academy when he was forty, then went into commerce. But he continued to study on the side, and gave lectures in the shadow of the temple in Jerusalem. He held a high position in Jerusalem until the destruction of the Temple. During the siege he was caught in the city. He tried to dissuade the Zealots from their abortive attempt at revolution, but he failed. The following story is told of his escape from the town.

His disciples put him in a coffin, and put a rotten bone in with him to supply the odor of death. The disciples then carried him out of the city, and he thus escaped and came to Vespasian, who was the head of the besieging army. He was not yet emperor. But Jochanan approached him with the title of emperor on his lips. For that, and for being a leader of the Jews in the revolt, Vespasian threatened to have him executed. Just at that moment a messenger came from Rome with the news that the emperor had died, and Vespasian was really Emperor. Thus Jochanan showed his powers of prophecy. As for the accusation of being a leader of the revolt, it did not take him too long to explain that he had no sympathy with it, but had tried to stop the Zealots. He asked the Roman for a fagor and it was granted him.

That last remark is history. He asked that he be allowed to go and start an academy in Jabne (also called Jamnia, and is more frequently called by that name now than the older name of Jabne). Jabne then became the new Jewish headquarters. He set up a Sanhedrin there and named it the Beth Din. (House of Judgment).

He is said to have lived 120 years. Forty he spent in studying, forty in commerce, and forty in teaching. He perpetuated the spirit of Judaism after the fall of Jerusalem, by replacing the Zion of the Temple with the Zion of the Law. This marks the end of the Jews as a nation. From that time forward they have been a spiritual race; religion has taken the place of a national home ever since.

Some others of this period are: Admon, Chanan, and Nachum the Mede. They were civil judges before the destruction of Jerusalem, and their opinions are therefore quoted occasionally in the Mishna. These are by no means all the Rabbis and teachers of the period. They are only some of the most prominent among them. They had many scholars of the Oral Law in every generation. It was a virtue with them. They were as common as college graduates in our day. That is true also of all the other generations, both of the Tannaim and the Amoraim.

The second generation lasted for forty years, from 80-120.

1. Rabban Gamaliel II.
2. Rabbi Zadok

3. Rabbi Dosa ben Harchinas.
4. Rabbi Eleazer ben Jacob.
5. Rabbi Eleazer ben Hyrcanus.
6. Rabbi Joshua ben Chanania.
7. Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah.
8. Rabbi Judah ben Bathyra

1. As has been noted, he was the grandson of Gamaliel the Elder. He succeeded ben Zaccai as chief of the Sanhedrin. He was called Nasi by the Jews and Patriarch by the Romans. That designation lasted throughout the Hillel dynasty. His position as Patriarch was approved by Rome. He lived, of course, in Jamnia, because Jerusalem had come to its end. A pacifist, and a true Hillelite, he tried to end the fight between the Beth Shammai and his own house, the Beth Hillel, as his ancestor had tried to settle the Pharisee-Sadducee fight. His method was reasonable, but his Oriental temperament caused him a great deal of trouble.

This is the story. What the one school called clean, the other called unclean; what the one approved the other forbade. This controversy was at its height, and the people as a result were conscious of the fight. The life of the nation depended on their common ground. The situation was serious. Gamaliel II decreed that all disputed matters be placed before the Sanhedrin, and the judgment of that august body was to be observed, on the pain of being banned.

The ban was a serious matter to the Jews. It meant that the person under the ban was an outcast, no longer acceptable

in Jewish circles. On the other hand, he was unmistakably a Jew, and was therefore not acceptable to the Gentiles. The result was tragic. We shall see an example of one of these cases among the later Rabbis.

Rabbi Eleazar, Gamaliel's brother-in-law, was put under the ban, for the reasons mentioned. The people were offended at the action, and even the mild Rabbi Joshua ben Chanania was angry. The two were at odds with one another over the matter, and Gamaliel insulted his colleague in a debate, with a personal remark. That gave the dissatisfied members an opportunity to obtain Gamaliel's deposition from the patriarchate. Gamaliel apologized to Joshua ben Chanania, Eleazar was brought back into the fold, and Gamaliel was reinstated.

The patriarch was known for his amount of secular learning. He was an astronomer and a mathematician, as well as a philosopher. What this amounted to was the usual type found among the Jews. They were not an Aristotelian race. He was the first to systematize the service. He engaged one Simon Hapikuli to compose the Sh'mona' Esra before alluded to. He also started the custom of burying all their dead in common white linen instead of elaborate clothing, and having an elaborate funeral, as was the custom among them up to that time. The purpose was to keep the poor from going through too much hardship when there were funerals in their houses; and to keep them from shame when they were not able to make expensive outlays for their dead. We can admire the custom. The purpose was to help keep the Jews united, so

that they would not disappear as a race. Gamaliel II was known for his tender-heartedness. He considered his slaves as a part of his family. One of his remarkable dicta was that it is as great a crime to rob a heathen as it is to rob a Jew. The Jews still love to quote that, to show that the Jews were not a self-centered and narrow people. But whenever we see one of those statements we are led to wonder what brought on the need for any such ruling. That indicates the very opposite condition among the people at the time.

2. Rabbi Zadok lived before the destruction of the temple. The thing that he is most known for is the tradition that he fasted for forty years in an effort to save the city. He ruined his health doing so, and did not even accomplish his purpose. That should have been a lesson to the Rabbinists. There is another story about him that looks like a direct steal from the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife. He was serving a noble Gentile woman. One day she made advances to him. He put his head in the oven to bake it, and when the woman saw how serious he took the sin, she desisted, and honored him instead. One would judge that apocryphal legends have a tendency to run in the same line of thought. It is a shame to put them in the same catalogue with spiritual stories.

3. Rabbi Dosa ben Harchinas was also of the school of Hillel. He migrated to Jabne after the destruction of Jerusalem, and taught there for many years. He became very old, and as he advanced in age, he advanced in prestige and authority,

after the manner of the Jews. Finally, in his very old age, all questions that could not be settled were appealed to him, and his judgment was final. He was a respected man in his age. For that he was remembered, as well as for the decisions which he made with regard to the oral law, and which were of course included in the Mishna.

4. Rabbi Eleazer ben Jacob was at the head of a school which he himself had founded. He is a very important man to the Jews, because he was in possession of traditions concerning the structure and interior arrangements of the temple. But he deserves to be remembered for another reason. Students of his day admired him for his clear and concise way of teaching. Students those days were evidently as much in search of such a man as they are now. For his teaching ability, his fame spread far and wide among his fellow religionists. There was another Tanna by the same name in the fourth generation.

5. Eleazer ben Hyrcanus was a man about whom there was some difference of opinion. He was a Hillelite by loyalty, but a Shammite in spirit. He would memorize all the Halachoth ~~th~~ he could find, and he had a prodigious memory. But he would not have anything to do with the liberal interpretations of those Halachoth that were so popular among the Hillelites in that day. For that reason the epithet-loving Jews called him the Lined Cistern, because he took it all in, but would let nothing seep out again.

He was brother-in-law to Rabban Gamaliel~~l~~. He was

the one whom Gamaliel banned. The reason for the ban was that he would not submit to the liberal interpretations of the Hillelite Sanhedrin.

He is said to have been the son of a wealthy man, but since he was a younger son, he had no education. Therefore he ran off and entered the academy of Jochanan ben Zaccai. At the insistence of his brothers, his father determined to disgrace and disinherit him, but he was made aware of the fact that his son was a brilliant student at the academy. Therefore he ~~recognized~~ his son again.

One of the most interesting sidelights of the Talmud here comes to light: During a controversy, Eleazer/^{po}pronounced the dictum that no amount of great miracles of any kind could serve to make a Jew give up one Halachah he had learned from a teacher he admired. It has been suggested recently that that attitude is the reason *why* Jesus did not show Himself to the multitudes after his resurrection; it would have hardened their hearts.

6. Rabbi Joshua ben Chanania was one of the five great disciples of ben Zaccai. He was born 26 years before the destruction of Jerusalem. He was a blacksmith by trade. After the latter died, ben Chanania's authority grew. Some say he was patriarch, and some say he was Ab Beth Din. It seems most likely that in any case his authority was not as unquestioned as that of his predecessor. He wanted to lift many restrictions, but was restrained by his colleague Jochanan ben Nuri. He founded an academy at Bekin, from

where he carried on a controversy with his colleague, the Limed Cistern. Ben Chanania was liberal in his views. He welcomed proselytes, and condemned the 18 resolutions of the time of the revolt, which were intended to keep proselytes out. Ben Hyrcanus objected to such broad views. There is contention wherever there are beliefs, we conclude. Toward the end of his life Ben Chanania was sent to Adrian's court in Egypt to ask a favor of Adrian. He died on the way home.

7. Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah is interesting largely because he took the place as head of the Sanhedrin for the short while that Rabban Gamaliel was deposed. When Gamaliel was reinstated, ben Azariah was not put out of office completely, because he was a wise young man, but because of his youth, he was made second in charge, and became the Ab Beth Din. He was a rich man--immensely so, and was therefore called a Box of Spices; Kupa Shel Besamim.

8. Rabbi Judah ben Bathyra had a school in Nisibis in Assyria already before the destruction of the temple in 70. He is supposed to be a descendent of the Family B'ne Bathyra, who were leaders of the Sanhedrin under Herod, and who resigned that office in favor of Hillel. Several other Tanna'im had the same family name: Rabbi Joshua ben Bathyra, Simon ben Bathyra and one called simply Ben Bathyra.

Other teachers of the period are: Rabbi Nachunia ben Hakana, who was the teacher of Rabbi Ishmael, one of the

greatest rabbinical authorities; and Nachum of Gimzo, who introduced the hermeneutical rule of extension and limitation, which was later further developed by his disciple, Aqiba.

The third generation of Tannaim lasted only 19 years, and were the younger contemporaries of those of the second generation. (Some writers put these men under a subheading of the second generation, hence the apparent discrepancy in the numbering⁴). The years are from 120-139.

1. Rabbi Tarphon.
2. Rabbi Ishmael ben Elisha.
3. Aqiba ben Joseph, commonly Aqiba.
4. Jochanan ben Nure.
5. Jose the Galilean.
6. Simon ben Nanos.
7. Judah ben Baba.
8. Jochanan ben Broka.

1. The first of these younger men, Rabbi Tarphon, was one of the teachers of Aqiba. That is one of the most honorable things you can say about a Rabbi. Later he became Aqiba's colleague. He lived in Lydda. The story of how he honored his mother is reminiscent of Solomon, and is highly far-fetched, like most apocryphal stories. It is said of Tarphon that he would kneel down and serve as a step upon which his mother would climb into bed. He would lay his hands on the ground in the garden, for his mother to walk on,

4. Strack, p. 124.

so that she would not be uncomfortable from the ground. Such extravagances takes the life out of a story. They should have been more modest with their legends.

Another legend declares that Taraphon would swear by the life of his sons. For this he was punished by the death of all his sons while he himself was still alive.

2. Ishmael ben Elisha, usually called simply Ishmael, was of priestly descent. When he was a boy, he was released from imprisonment in Rome by Joshua ben Chanania. He lived in the village of Aziz, on the borders of Edom. He established a school which he called Debe Rabbi Ishmael, in Darom, which is in the extreme south part of Judea. He was one of the most important of the Rabbis of ancient times, though his glory does not equal that of his colleague Aqiba. He based his teachings on the premise that the language of the Torah was written in the usual style of men, and was to be taken in its literal sense; he also proposed that the sense of the words was meant to convey ideas known in the ordinary lives and thoughts of men. He was no Sophist, but believed in arriving at truths by good logic. He added six rules to the seven of Hillel. They were then called the thirteen rules of Ishmael. For this reason he and Aqiba were opposed to one another in practically all doctrine, since Aqiba stood for the mystical and allegorical interpretation. Rabbi Ishmael is accredited with the authorship of the Mechilta; hence his fame.

There is a legend that Ishmael, who was a wealthy man,

used his wealth for the purpose of rehabilitating homeless girls whose parents had died in the contemporary persecutions under the Romans. The purpose was to make them fit and able to find husbands.

Ishmael was martyred under Hadrian. It is said that his head was taken to Rome.

3. Rabbi Aqiba was very highly honored among the Jews, and he still holds the admiration of the Orthodox Hebrew. He was the ideal of the Jew. His life was one of misfortune and good fortune. Like many of the ancient Rabbis, stories are told about him that would make fine material for Horatio Alger stories.

He was born and reared in poverty. For that reason he had not even enough education to be able to read. But he had a great deal of ambition. He wanted an education. He hired himself out to a rich man, and had the misfortune immediately to fall in love with his master's daughter. They were married. But the bride entered a stipulation into the contract. Aqiba would have to acquire an education. That was very much to the liking of the future Rabbi. It looked very easy. The bride was the daughter of a rich man. But when her father heard of the trick she had played on him, he cast them both out of his house, and disinherited his daughter. The fact that Aqiba was descended from a proselyte family made the situation even worse. But the loyal bride did what poor but beautiful brides have done ever since, in story and song. She sold her hair, and with

the price, her husband entered the academy, where he studied for twenty-four years. By that time he was famous. He made a trip home at the end of the long period, and the people met him en masse, to proclaim their reverence for him. In this crowd there appeared a shabby and undistinguished-looking poor little woman. The people began to shove her aside, but Aqiba recognized his wife, and took her to his bosom again in the sight of all the people. What an honorable man, indeed!

Aqiba was a member of the Sanhedrin in Jabne, and founded a school in B'ne Brak, near Jabne. He was the first to arrange a systematic study of the Oral law. At this time, and before, there had existed a strong sentiment against writing the Oral law, but at this time that taboo gradually began to break down. After Aqiba, there were writings on the Oral law in great abundance. From that period many of the apocryphal writings have come. He arranged the Mishnic matter, and added many Halachoth of his own. It will be remembered that Hillel already had started the task of unifying the traditions, which up to that time had existed in a kind of atomized condition, having no body and no place to rest. After Aqiba the task was taken up by his disciple Meir. That corpus became the groundwork for the Mishnic code of Jehudah Hanasi, whose text is still the official one.

The liberal method of interpretation which he developed, after he had received the idea from his teacher Nachum of Gimzo, enabled him to find a rule in Scripture for almost

every law in the oral traditions. He had opposition of the type already described, but he was much admired, and he is quoted in all parts of the Mishna.

During the time of this admired Rabbi, there was much persecution of the Jews. Adrian forbade all Jewish practices. This led to the revolt of the Jews in 132 under the leadership of the false Messiah Bar Kochba. Aqiba was already a hundred years old at this time, but he traveled to all parts of the known world to incite the Jews to rebellion. Then he returned and became armour-bearer for Bar Kochba. After the slaughter of about a half-million⁵ Jews the revolt ended in disaster. The Jews were no longer even permitted to enter their holy city. This marks the period of the beginning of even more bitter hatred of the Christians by the Jews than before. Traces of it will appear in these biographies. It might be inserted here, that the Jews have no sympathy for Bar Kochba any more. He was not the Messiah he proclaimed himself to be.

In spite of the strict decrees of Adrian against the study of the Torah and the traditions, Aqiba, among others continued to do so, and even to teach in public. Aqiba was caught and imprisoned for his audacity, but even there he continued to keep up his ceremonies, even giving up his drinking water to wash his hands according to the ceremony. For that he was tortured with an iron comb. He

5. Qualben, A History of the Christian Church, p. 72.

said that he was happy to be able to serve the Lord with his life, as he had done with his time and talents all his life. He lived, it is said 120 years. The more lurid details of this story need not be thrust upon the naive, but there is no reason to doubt his martyrdom. He was not the first Jew to die thus, nor was he the last.

As about all national heroes there grew up beautiful myths, so a goodly share have been appointed to Aqiba, one of the idols of the race. A few examples are not out of place. Aqiba and three other Rabbis who were his colleagues studied Greek together. The other two began to have their doubts about their Jewish faith; the one became a Gnostic, and the other was badly shaken in his trust in the old Oral Law. But not Aqiba. Was he not a father of his race? He learned his Greek, and emerged triumphant.

His colleague Rabbi Tarphon gave him a good sum of money to buy a farm for the two to live on in their old age. Aqiba portioned the money out to the students who needed it, that they could spend more time studying. When Tarphon asked him years later how the farm was prospering, Aqiba showed his colleague his academy, and said that the students were the fruits of the farm, for he had planted the money in the school. He quoted Ps. 112,9 to prove his point: "He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness endureth forever; his horn shall be exalted with honor." This affords a glimpse into his exegetical method.

At the time of his daughter's wedding, he presented her

with a golden bridal wreath. She befriended a beggar that night. While she was walking in the garden the crown felt heavy on her head, so she removed it, and hid it in a creanny in the wall. The next morning a dead snake was found in the crown. She had been saved from a horrible death. That was her reward for befriending the beggar the night before. The Jews can't give up their work-righteousness.

One day Aqiba was walking along the road. There he met a ghost. It appeared to him in the form of a man who was carrying a heavy burden. He had been condemned to carry the burden in the after life because he had committed a terrible sin. Until someone relieved him, he was unable to rid himself of the wearying load on his back. Aqiba took the man's son and educated him in the finest Hebrew style. What a relief ⁶ it was to his dead father to be relieved of his burden! Aqiba had canceled the guilt for the sin by his good deed.

He had good sense, however. He had a debate with a pagan priest. The priest wanted to know why people who prayed to an idol recovered in many cases. The pagan knew that the idols were no gods at all. Aqiba's answer was realistic. Nature preceeds according to fixed laws. If the poor fools pray to a false God, does that anull the laws of nature? they would get better in any case.

His maxim, written into the will, and directed to his son, declared that it was better to work on the Sabbath than

6. Orthodox Jews to this time derive a doctrine from this legend. For 11 months after a person's death the chief mourners must keep candles lighted for the departed, and

depend on the bounty of others. Never enter your house, nor another man's unannounced; and get up very early for breakfast: it will keep you out of trouble. These epigrams are typical of the Rabbinical fathers.

He is said to be the author of the Kaddish, a Rabbinical writing accepted by all Jews, Orthodox and Reform. It is obvious that it is a treatise of very broad views.

4. Jochanan ben Nuri was a colleague of Aqiba. He frequently differed with him on points of the law. He presided over an academy in Beth Shemarim, a place near Sapphoris in Galilee. He seems to have been a disciple of Gamaliel II in his youth, because he kept a "warm veneration" for him all his life.

5. He first appeared to the public eye in a debate with Tarphon and Aqiba in the Sanhedrin. He debated so cleverly that he attracted a good deal of admiration, and his reputation as a teacher was established from that time. He was an authority especially in laws of the temple services and sacrifices.

He married his niece, it is said, but she was of the breed of Xantippe. Her greatest failing was that she would scold him before his pupils. He could not free himself from her; however, for he lacked the means. His older colleague Eleazer ben Azaria rescued him, however, with a sum of money, with which he then divorced his wife. He was not censured for that.

offer prayers for his soul, to relieve him from any possible guilt. The last month is allowed for the transition of the soul from the half-world to heaven. They quote this legend for proof.

7. Mielziner, p. 29.

6. Simon ben Nanos is often called simply Ben Nanos in the Talmud. He was a great authority in civil law. His legal controversies were mostly with Aqiba and Rabbi Ishmael. The latter however, recommended that all law students study under Ben Nanos.

7. Judah ben Baba is remembered largely for two facts. The first is that he was so pious. He earned the name of Chasid during his lifetime, because of his great piety. From the Jewish point of view, that included especially ceremonial piety. The other thing he is noted for is the fact that he ordained seven disciples though the Roman law forbade it. For that he was stabbed to death, and that was the demise of a great Rabbi. But his disciples appear in a later generation.

8. Jochanan ben Broka is also remembered especially because of his legal decisions, quoted in the Mishna.

Others in this connection who deserve to be mentioned are the following.

Rabbi Elazar, also called Eleazar, was an authority on Haggadic interpretation. Rabbi Mathia ben Charash, a disciple of Eleazar ben Hyrcanus, founded a school in Rome, and was therefore the first to transplant the knowledge of the rabbinical law from Asia to Europe. Simon ben Zoma, usually called by his family name only, and Simon ben Qaqi, were earlier disciples of Aqiba. They were, as usual, well versed in traditional law, but they are especially known because they indulged heavily in the theosophic speculations of the day.

Rabbi Chananya is known because he was a martyr. He died at the stake for teaching the Torah, against the decree of Adrian. He was wrapped in the scrolls of his own Torah, and burned with it. A wet sponge was put on his chest, to keep him from dying too soon. They must have loved to torture the Jews. The story is interesting, and it may be true as well.

Nathan de Zuzitha is "known in the Talmud, not because of his erudition, but because he conquered a great passion."⁸ The conquering of the great passion looks like a composite of the stories of David and Bathsheba, and Amnon and Tamar. One would hesitate to say it is certain.

During the time of Adrian, the Targum Onkelos came upon the scene. There is great conflict among the learned about this man. Some of the more ancient hold that Aquilas and Onkelos are two different people. Aquilas was a Greek, and translated the Old Testament into Greek, while Onkelos translated it into Aramaic.

Graetz, in company with many other later men, holds that the two were the same person. It might be so, because the Talmud relates some traditions of the two as one person. Onkelos is said to be the Aramaic rendition of the Greek Aquilas. Graetz holds that someone translated Aquilas' Greek and called it Onkelos. Dr. Nathan disagrees. He says the two must be one person, because the translation is

8. Friedman, p. 55.

not accurate enough. Onkelos is truer to Hebrew tradition, wandering from the text, like the Halachoth. According to this theory, Aquilas did the Greek before he entered the Jewish academies under Eleazer and Joshua.⁹

There are Talmudic stories of Aquilas. It is said he was related to the emperor Adrian. He lived on the island Pontus, where he owned much land. He did research in theology to have something to do. He became first a Christian, then later a Jew. He is also said to have lived a more rigorously pious life than even Rabban Gamaliel. When his father died, he left his sons some golden idols. Aquilas did not want them, but his brothers did, and bought them from him. He didn't even want to have anything to do with the money from them so he threw it into the sea.

He asked Adrian what to do with his time. He was evidently bored with his life. Adrian told him to go and find something of great value that the people despised. So he went out and espoused Judaism. Adrian in a rage sent a regiment of soldiers to fetch him to judgment. He converted them all. He sent another regiment. He converted them. Adrian was losing good soldiers by the camp-full. He therefore requested Aquilas to present himself at court under a safe conduct pledge. He did so. When asked for an explanation of the horrible deed, he reminded his relative of the advice to buy what other people despised, but what he found very valuable.

9. Friedman, p. 125.

Onkelos' work was a slavish transliteration of the Old Testament. This is how the Jews look at the matter: There was an old custom dating back to the time of Ezra, that the scrolls of the Torah should be read in the language of the people. That was Aramaic at the time, but afterwards they had to use the LXX. The Christians deliberately put in reams of errors, so Onkelos did it in Greek, that the people might have the truth. Later he put it into Aramaic on the basis of his Greek translation. That translation is the Targum Onkelos we have now.

The fourth generation lasted for twenty-six years, from the death of Aqiba to the death of the patriarch Simon ben Gamaliel II. Almost all the leading teachers of this generation were of the school of Aqiba. His tradition had set.

1. Rabbi Meir.
2. Jehudah ben Ilai.
3. Jose ben Chalafta.
4. Simon ben Jochai.
5. Elazar ben Shama.
6. Jochanan the Sandelar.
7. Elazar ben Jacob.
8. Nehemia.
9. Joshua ben Korcha.
10. Simon ben Gamaliel II.

1. Rabbi Meir was one of the seven students ordained by Judah ben Baba in a cave, and for which the latter was stabbed to death. Meir was a native of Asia Minor, but after his

ordination by the old Rabbi, he went with the other six students to Babylon to live until Adrian died, and the Jews obtained relief under Antonius. He had studied under Aqiba, but he had not grasped the lectures. He was a very young man, and did not have the proper background of the law to understand the fanciful flights of the great liberal. Therefore he went to Ishmael to study law. When he was capable of handling the subject matter, he returned to Aqiba. The latter ordained him while he was very young, because he admired the intelligence of the young man. The others did not like that however, and would not recognize the ordination. Meir was very sarcastic in his language towards the other Rabbis. His second ordination under Baba, mentioned above, was recognized.

After the return from exile he helped his colleagues set up the Sanhedrin in Usha, whither it had fled from Jabne. Meir's academy was in Emmaus, near Tiberias, and for a time also in Ardiscus, near Damascus, where a large group of disciples gathered under him. He was known for his wisdom, and was called Chacham in the Sanhedrin under Simon ben Gamaliel II. That meant that he was considered the wisest among them, and had the honorable duty of preparing the subjects to be discussed in the Sanhedrin.

He got himself entangled in a conflict with the patriarch, was deposed from his capacity as Chacham, and cast out of the Beth Hamidrash. Rabbi Jose got him back into the Beth Hamidrash, but the quarrel continued until Meir had to leave

Usha and go back home to Asia Minor. He died there, and was buried close by the sea. That was the fate of those who kicked against the Jewish pricks, even when there was no longer a political Jewry. This is the phenomenon we mentioned at the beginning of this chapter.

When Meir was still in the good graces of the Rabbinitists, he was a very popular lecturer, in addition to his ability to handle the Oral Law. He was a first-rate Haggadist, who used to illustrate his lectures by interesting Fables and parables.

The Jews remember him because he carried on the work of Aqiba, whose greatest disciple he was. He attacked the great task of arranging the oral law according to subjects. That was a worth-while accomplishment, especially in view of the fact that the subject matter of the Mishna is so nearly unclassifiable. Jehudah Hanasi accepted Meir's Mishnayoth as law. That was a great tribute to Meir.

2. Jehudah ben Ilai is usually called simply Rabbi Jehudah. That is a sign of greatness, for there were so many Jehudah's. He was born in Usha, before the Sanhedrin was there. He was a pupil of Aqiba, but was instructed in the law by his father Eleazer ben Hyrcanus, and attended the lectures of Tarphon before he was able to handle the material of Aqiba. He was called the "First speaker", and had a considerable amount of authority. His opinion generally prevailed over that of Meir and Simon, when there was a difference. He kept the populace quiet under the Roman

yoke, which was a heavy one at that time. This was the period of Adrian, and the revolt of Bar Kochba. For this populace-pacifying task he had need to call on his powers as an orator.

He had to work for a living, and taught that every man must teach his sons a trade. He was almost a total abstainer, and thought that the tree Adam and Eve ate from was a grape vine. That would make good grist for a W.C.T.U. meeting.

Rabbi Jehudah is accredited with the essential parts of the Siphra. He is quoted in all parts of the Mishna and Baraitha. The Haggadah also records many of his sayings. He was a little more clear-headed in his interpretation of Scripture than most. He did not take the dead bones, in Ezekiel, for example, to be literally brought to life, but understood it to mean the rejuvenation of Israel. We would judge that that was not such bad exegesis, from the point of view of a man who had no Messiah in his faith. He had two learned sons, who lived in the next generation.

3. Jose ben Chalaftha, generally simply called Rabbi Jose in the Mishna, was also one of the seven students ordained by the redoubtable old Judah ben Baba.

He was the first among the Jews of his day to interest himself in history. He wrote the first Jewish history, called the Seder Olam, which started with creation and ended at the revolt of Bar Kochba under Adrian.

He was a pious man, but held very liberal views. He used a very different exegesis on the Torah than the Jews

popularly held. None of it was very good, neither the former nor the latter.

4. Simon ben Jochai was also known usually by the shorter title, Rabbi Simon. Simon was another of the seven of the ordination of the cave. He felt slighted because Meir was preferred to him, though Meir was younger. He also served at Usha with the Sanhedrin. He was another avis rara among the Rabbis, because he proposed that the Torah was written in the common language of men, and is to be understood like any other book. He studied the context and the motive, to see how the law under consideration was to be applied. But he followed his teacher Aqiba in the oral law. He is regarded as the author of the essential parts of the Siphre.

There is a later tradition that says he is the author of the Kabbala, and a book called Zohar. These books are highly mystical, and the Orthodox Jews loudly condemn them. They have a right to. They do not want their famous Rabbi to have his name connected with the nefarious works.

5. Elazar ben Shamua is known by his first name in the Mishna. He was also among those of Aqiba's disciples who had to flee Adrian's persecution. He went south, then to Nisibis. He did not rejoin the others at Usha. The place of his academy is not known, but he was a great authority on the law, and he was a very popular teacher. He must have had the wanderlust. He went to Asia Minor to visit Meir.

10. Friedman, p. 74.

His conversations with the expatriated Rabbi are recorded in the Mishna and Baraitha.

6. Jochanan the Sandaler's name no doubt reflects his trade. He was born in Alexandria, like so many Jews of the time. He went to Palestine to hear the famous Aqiba. He became so faithful a disciple that he visited Aqiba when the latter was in prison, to hear lectures from him. The Mishna, Baraitha, and Tosephta quote the Sandaler's opinions occasionally.

7. Elazar ben Jacob had a predecessor whose exact name he bore. We discussed the predecessor under the second generation. Ben Jacob was a member of the Sanhedrin at Usha. The main purpose for mentioning him is to prevent the probability of confounding him with his spiritual ancestor.

8. Rabbi Nehemiah was one of the last disciples of Aqiba the Great. His controversies were carried on mostly with Judah ben Ilai. He was an authority especially in sacrificial law and levitical purification. He is said to have compiled a collection of Mishnayoth which was embodied in the Tosephta. That is entirely possible, and may be the truth. There is no way of knowing with any certainty.

9. Joshua Ben Korcha is the center of an argument over the implications of his last name. Korcha means the Bald One. Aqiba was once called by that name. Therefore some believe that Joshua was his son. It is doubtful, though because it hardly sounds plausible that a son would cast off such an illustrious name as Aqiba in favor of a name that is hardly

complimentary. Joshua furthermore never alludes to Aqiba. That is not the way of a Jewish son. Aqiba did have a son, but his name was Judah. Only a few of Joshua ben Korcha's opinions are included in the Mishna.

10. Simon ben Gamaliel II is the most important man in this generation. He was the son and successor of the patriarch Gamaliel II of Jabne, and the father of Jehudah Hanasi, whose name no Jew will ever forget. He was very young at the time of the revolt of Bar Kochba against Adrian. He saw the fall of Bethar, and fled to escape arrest. Tradition says that he was arrested, and sentenced to death, but that the executioner warned him, and he took his chance to flee. Whatever the details were, he came back after the death of the persecuting Romans, and set up the organization of the Sanhedrin again, and again assumed the patriarchate, as he held it before he left. He also reopened an academy. Aqiba's students, who also returned at the same time, preferred Usha to Jabne as the place for the Sanhedrin, so ben Gamaliel II moved there. He appointed Nathan Ab Beth Din, and Meir as Chacham. In order to put the patriarchate on a higher level than the other two offices, he ordained that the Nasi, or patriarch be shown more honor by the people in the synagogue, than the other officers. Nathan and Meir were offended, and plotted against the patriarch, to make him ashamed in front of the people. They would hatch impossible questions ahead of time, and planned to present them to Simon ben Gamaliel II in a meeting of the Sanhedrin,

there to see him without an answer in front of all the Rabbis. The plot would no doubt have worked, but it was discovered in time, and that was the occasion of the quarrel that led to the deposition of Meir and Nathan, and the final departure of Meir to the land of his nativity. Simon ben Gamaliel II was never called Rabban, but only Rabbi. The times may have made the difference, though it is said it was his lack of erudition in comparison with the previous ¹¹ Nasis.

Whether or not he was as well versed in Jewish learning as his predecessors, that did not affect his influence on the Talmud. He is quoted often, and shows wisdom of the kind common to the better Rabbinists. He introduced some laws on the rights of women and slaves, though he couldn't get them out of the same category. He is known as well for his laws for the welfare of the community at large. All his opinions quoted in the Mishna, except three, are taken as authority by the later teachers. He seems to have been acquainted with the Greek language, and with the sciences of the day.

He held most of his discussions with his illustrious son, Jehudah Hanasi. We are inclined to wonder if that is one channel by which his influence on the Talmud was brought to bear.

Other teachers of the day were: Abba Saul, Rabbi Eleazer ben Zadok, and especially Rabbi Ishmael ben Joohanam

11. Mielziner, p. 36.

ben Broka.

The only two teachers of Rabbi Ishmael's school mentioned are Rabbi Josiah and Rabbi Johathan.

Elisha ben Abuya must be mentioned here. He had been a Rabbi, but was an apostate. He became a Gnostic. He is also said to have been in immoral one. He continued to teach Halachoth after his apostasy. Rabbi Meir followed him in spite of his aberrations, and was taken to task for it. Meir said Ben Abuya was like a pomegranate: he had seeds but he also had good fruit. Meir took the fruit. That also contributed to his expulsion. We wonder what the difference was between the theosophic speculations of Aqiba's disciples Simon ben Zoma and Simon ben Qaqi, and Elisha ben Abuya's.

The fifth generation is counted from the death of Rabbi Simon ben Gamaliel II in 165 to the death of his son Jehudah Hanasi in 200. The period covers about 35 years.

1. Rabbi Nathan the Babylonian.
2. Symmachos.
3. Jehudah Hanasi.
4. Jose ben Judah.
5. Elazar ben Simon.
6. Simon ben Elazar.

1. Rabbi Nathan the Babylonian was the son of one of the Jewish leaders in Babylon, the Resh Haluthath. He went to Judea to study, but no one knows why. There were good schools in Babylon at the time. This is toward the end of the Tannaitic period, and the Jewish culture was spreading to the

East, in readiness for the next period, the Amoraic. No doubt Palestine itself still held a certain amount of traditional authority and glamour, and that may have been the reason for the emigration of Nathan. He became Ab Beth Din under Simon Ben Gamaliel at Usha, but was deposed for a time, when he became involved in the plot with Meir against the patriarch. He was soon reinstated, however, and remained in the good graces of the rabbinists the rest of his life. The next patriarch also speaks well of Rabbi Nathan. He is given credit for the authorship of the Aboth de Rabbi Nathan, a kind of Tosephta to the tract Aboth. ¹² Astronomy and medicine of the day were his special delight, and the people thought of him as an authority on the subjects. He wrote a work on Geometry which he called the 49 rules of Rabbi Nathan.

2. Symmachos was the great disciple of Meir. After the death of Meir he was cast out of the school of the patriarch. It is evident that the only reason more serious persecution did not fall on Meir and his disciples before the death of the expatriated Rabbi was that the people liked Meir, and the fathers of the Sanhedrin were afraid to go too far in incurring the resentment of their people. These were life-and-death times for the Jews as a race and a religion.

The charge they brought against Symmachos was that he was a Sophist, and had no purpose but to show off his

12. The Aboth de Rabbi Nathan can be found in Rodkinson, vol. 5, p. 1ff. It is worth reading; it affords a glimpse into the rabbinical mind, and furthermore it is entertaining.

dialectical powers. We have reason to believe that he confounded the arguments of the chiefs with his dialectical powers. That would be indeed dangerous to the Sanhedrin and their racio-religious effort to exist. There is no reason to believe, however, that the charge was untrue. In spite of the fact that he was cast out, his opinions are quoted often in the Mishna and Tosephta, because of the principles he laid down in matters of rabbinical jurisprudence. He must have been a very clear thinker.

3. Jehudah Hanasi is the magic name of the Talmud. Stories by the score have been woven about him. He was a very intelligent man. His main teachers were Simon ben Joohai and Elazar ben Shamura. He had a great deal of secular Greek knowledge, and was very much at home in the language. He hated the Syro-jargonic language spoken by the people. Greek was acceptable to him, and he would have rejoiced to hear his people speak Hebrew. But he would inveigh against the language that marked his people as provincials. He had a case for his argument. He was cosmopolitan enough to understand at least to an extent how his people looked to the Gentile. He held academies first at Beth-Shearim, at Sepphoris, and finally at Tiberias. He was an authority among authorities. In his day the Rabbis, though still in the Tannaitic period, had progressively less authority, and by the time Hanasi came into power at the tender age of twenty-five, no one could contradict a teaching of the older Tannaites except another one. When Hanasi grew older

and more famous he also became more powerful, until at last the people conceded to him the right to contradict an older sage. They admired him greatly.

He had the greater power because he had no Ab Beth Din. That office with whatever influence it had carried, was gone, and it never returned. Hanasi was sole ruler. It will be remembered that the Jews had no autonomy, but they had a society within a society, which was very powerful, because it held the faith of a race, and control over the only society to which the people could belong.

In the Mishna Jehudah Hanasi is called simply Rabbi. He is not to be confused with the Amora Judah II, who is also called merely Rabbi. There has been confusion, which we shall discuss in its proper place. Rabbi was a contemporary of Marcus Aurelius, and the great-grandson of the famous Rabbi Gamaliel II.

Rabbi was very severe toward those of whom he disapproved, and put several of his colleagues under the ban because he did not like the way they behaved. The case of some of them will be discussed under their respective biographies.

He reformed many customs the people held sacred. He used the persecution of the Romans at the time as the compelling cause. There was logic in his reasoning. He eased, and for all practical purposes, invalidated the law of the year of release and the tithes. He wanted to do away with the year of release entirely, but his colleague Pinchas ben Yair would not allow such a radical departure from the ways of

the fathers. Rabbi's authority had its limits.

His best pupils were Chiya, whom he banned; Simon bar Kappara, whom he refused to ordain; Levi bar Sissi; Rab, who did him the most credit as a successor; and Mar Samuel, who was not far behind Rab in greatness among the later Rabbis.

The fame of Rabbi rests on his Mishna collection. "It was recognized as the authoritative source book of all the teachings of the senior Rabbis (Tannaites).) His object in writing the collection "was not to provide a law-book, but rather to compose a kind of encyclopedia, incorporating all the important opinions of the classical masters (Tannaim)."¹³ Rabbi's Mishna was known at first as the Mishna de Rabbi Jehudah Hanasā, but later called merely Mishna, because it had superseded all the rest. In the collection he included much of his own material, and added also much that was his contemporaries' work. It is in substance the Mishna as we have it today. He systematized the Halachoth which had been handed down since the days of the Maccabees, and developed in the academies through the centuries. In his old age he revised the collection. To help him he had recourse to the Megilloth, the private and largely secret manuscripts of the fathers, which they had used to refresh their memories when the material grew too voluminous. More of these appeared from time to time. Some of them were acceptable to Rabbi, and others were not. Some were good and some were poor; some

13. Reichler, pp. 10-12.

were genuine and some apochyphal. Some of them which were rejected by Rabbi were included later. We have discussed the phenomenon.¹⁴ He built up his Mishna largely on the collection of Meir, which Meir in turn had carried on after Aqiba had started the work. Meir's collection was almost law to Rabbi, but he did not hesitate to make his own changes when he felt it necessary.

4. Jose ben Judah was a friend of Rabbi, and is often quoted in the Mishna and Tosephta. That is the only reason for mentioning him here.

5. Elazar ben Simon was a disciple of Simon ben Gamaliel and Korcha. He was an authority in the rabbinical law, to whom sometimes even Rabbi yielded. But he incurred the wrath of the Jews because he helped the Romans persecute some freebooters.

This is the story. He helped hunt out the thieves, and then had them hanged. The people would run after him and call him Vinegar, the Son of Wine: Chometz ben Yayin. He caused a Jew to be hanged like a thief for calling him that name, and after that he was completely out of the graces of the Jews. That last detail strikes one as an embellishment to the facts.

He became a bitter opponent of the patriarchate. When he died, tradition says, Jehudah Hanasi offered to marry his widow, but she refused him because he was a patriarch. That also makes a fine legend.

14. Cf. Part One, Ch. I, Terminology.

6. Simon ben Elazar was a disciple of Meir, and quotes him often. He established several important rabbinical principles, especially in the civil law.

The sixth generation is composed of the younger contemporaries of Rabbi. They are not mentioned in the Mishna, but are quoted in the Tosephta and Baraitha. They form the connecting link between the Tannaitic and Amoraic periods, and are therefore called semi-tannaim.

1. Plimo.
2. Ise Bar Judah.
3. Rabbi Elazar bar Jose
4. Rabbi Ishmael bar Jose.
5. Rabbi Judah bar Lakish.
6. Rabbi Chiya.
7. Rabbi Acha.
8. Rabbi Abba Arecha.

The most famous of these Rabbis are Chiya and Abba Arecha. These men are mentioned here to indicate that they close the Mishna period, but since their work is so closely connected with the Amoritic time, we shall discuss their work and lives under that epoch.

Chapter III. Amoraim

A. The Men of the Transition Period.

Before taking up the Amoraim, we shall discuss the teachers of the transition period. They are usually called Semi-Tannaim. Although the men listed as the Semi-Tannaim are generally included in that period, they actually did most of their work in the Amoraic period.¹ They did not have the authority of the older Tannaites, as we have mentioned, and the work of some of them was purely Amoraic; that is, their work is included as part of the Gemara.

These are the teachers of the transition period:

1&2. Rabbi Janai the Elder and Rabbi Jonathan the Elder should be mentioned. The former lived in Sepphoris and was one of the teachers of Jochanan bar Napacha, the greatest of the Palestinian Amoraim.

3. Chiya bar Abba the Elder, so-called to distinguish him from a younger man with exactly the same name, was a Babylonian contemporary of Jehudah Hanasi. When he was already well along in years he emigrated to Palestine. There he became the most distinguished disciple and friend of Rabbi. Chiya came from a well respected family, whose pedigree stretched back to the time of David. Chiya claimed descent from one of David's brothers. He was also uncle to Rab, the great Babylonian Amora.

1. Strack puts these men under the 5th generation of Tannaites. p. 133ff.

He is remembered largely because Rabbi banned him for lecturing in the streets. He had a passion for teaching the Torah to the youth, and that was probably what caused him to go out in the streets to teach. He might be called the Jewish Socrates of the day. He had more secular learning than the average Rabbi of his day; he was well versed in medicine, as well as medicine was known in that day.

Legend makes a great man of Chiya, comparing him to Elijah. He is even supposed to have been able to do miracles. The stories are very interesting, and make entertaining reading.

4. Bar Kapparah must not be overlooked. His real name was Elazar, but he is known by his family name in the Talmud. His chief claim to fame is the fact that Rabbi refused to ordain him. He is called a learned man, who was a poet and a wit. It was for the latter fault that Rabbi punished him. He had a habit of making puns on sacred matters that irritated the patriarch. The Rabbis were not above some very coarse jests.² Many instances of indelicate conversation are to be found in the Talmud.

5. Pinchas ben Yair has a more noble claim to immortality. He was the man who shortened the authoritative arm of Rabbi. When the latter wanted to annul the year of release, Pinchas restrained him. That was a sign that he was a respected man in his day. His is a biography of

2. Edersheim, vol. 1, p. 355, footnote 2.

legends. He was very superstitious, and for that reason lived a life of strict piety. Piety among the Jews means ceremonial punctiliousness.

B. The Amoraim Proper

The rest of this chapter will be devoted to the genuine Amoraim. As the Tannaites were the expounders of the Torah, so the Amorites were the expounders of the Mishna. Neither Amorite nor Tannaite felt obligated to a realistic interpretation of their text; accordingly the term expound must be taken in a very loose sense. These teachers, the Amoraim, held forth in academies in the same fashion as their predecessors. The difference lies in this, that the Amoraim expounded the Mishna, whereas the Tannaim had expounded the Torah.

During the course of the years the seat of learning had passed out of Judea into Galilee. At the same time, great academies were founded in Babylonia. The Babylonian academies in time outshaded the Palestinian, and as a result, the Babylonian Talmud (comprising Mishna and Gemara) outshone the Palestinian. The great Palestinian academies of the Amoraic period were located at Tiberias, Sepphoris, and Caesarea. The Babylonian were situated in Mehardea, Pumbeditha (Pumbeditha), Sura, Mechuzah, and lesser academies in lesser towns.

The task of the Amorites was actually a more difficult one than that of the Tannaites. The Amorites were bound to the Mishna text as codified by Hanasi, but the Tannaites had been privileged to choose their traditions from the oral body. Besides the Mishna text, there were a number of Baraithah, which were considered authoritative by the Amorites. In these texts there were contradictions. The problem was to harmonize the contradictions, for the texts were inviolable. The methods are fascinating, if not very practical or realistic. In very severe cases of contradiction, surgery was the only answer; and a number of Baraithah had to be labeled spurious; but it was not without a Herculean struggle.

The Palestinian Amoraim still had the advantage of being called Rabbi, because they were ordained by the Patriarch, while the Babylonian had to be satisfied with the title Rab or Mar. That fact supplies the reason for the terminological confusion described in the introductory page of the first chapter.

The Amoraic period extends from the death of Jehudah Hanasi to the completion of the Babylonian Talmud at the end of the fifth century.

There are several hundred Amoraim mentioned in the Gemara. We shall discuss the outstanding ones under the several generations. The first generation contains some of the greatest names of the epoch. They are catalogued below. The men of this period are divided into Babylonian

and Palestinian Amoraim. Rabbi Gamaliel III and Rabbi Jehudah II were successively the patriarchs of this generation.

First generation:

- | Palestinian, 219-279. | Babylonian, 219-257. |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Chanina bar Chama | 1. Abba Arecha, or Rab. |
| 2. Jochanan bar Napacha. | 2. Mar Samuel. |
| 3. Somon ben Lakish (Resh Lakish). | |
| 4. Joshua ben Levi. | |

We will follow the method, in this chapter, of discussing first the Palestinian, then the Babylonian teachers.

The Palestinian:

1. Chanina bar Chama was born about 180, and died in 260. He was the disciple of Rabbi. Rabbi's son, Gamaliel III, the next patriarch, ordained him, giving him the title of Rabbi. It will be remembered that not all teachers of the Amoraic epoch bore the title. He headed the academy in Sepphoris. Being a modest Amora, he never attempted to render a decision of his own, but always relied on the Mishna of Rabbi. For this he was called conservative.

2. Jochanan bar Napacha, who came from Jerusalem, founded a school in Tiberias. He was not strict in religious ~~was~~ matters, and supported Judah II. The apparent paradox in the last sentence harmonizes itself when one considers that strictness of religion among the Jews meant ceremonialism, and the reforms were largely in the direction of easing the ceremonies, and instilling moral principles into

the people. Morals to them were a matter more of secular character than of religious. Greek before this time had been a language of the heathen, but the bar was lifted by Ben Napacha. He declared that Greek was necessary for men, and an accomplishment for women. He was right.

Jochanan bar Napacha laid down a series of analytical principles by which to make a decision in cases where the Tannaites contradicted one another. By his great mental powers he influenced the entire generation. His teachings became so famous that they were kept by the people. These later became the groundwork of the Gemara. Thus already at the beginning of the Amoraic period much of the creative work of the Gemara was done.

3. Rabbi Simon ben Lakish is known generally by the name Resh Lakish, after his initials (ר' ל). Resh was a man of the world. Some say he had been a gladiator, some that he had been a robber leader. The latter is more interesting by far, but the former is more probable. Whatever he was, it influenced him as a Rabbi later on. He had violent controversies with Jochanan, which are described in the Gemara of both Talmuds.

There was reason for the controversies. Resh was a higher critic. He declared that Job was a fictitious character, and his history an allegorical poem. The angels, he proposed, were not named till after the exile, because the Jews learned the names from the Babylonians. Resh Lakish

3. Mielziner, p. 42.

4. Friedman, p. 82.

was an independent man. He taxed his people, they said, so that he could live in luxury; for that reason he refused a request to pray for the lightening of the Roman taxes. Not only that, but he proposed that the Amrain were greater teachers than the Tannaim, because they taught under persecution. Furthermore he insisted that the patriarch should be punished for sins the same as the common people. Nasi Judah II banned him for that arrogance, but had to recall him because he was shamed before the people.

Legends of the finest and most fantastic type glorify the memory of this man who had been a fighter. The story of his conversion can hardly be improved upon.

One beautiful day Jochanan bar Napacha was bathing in the Jordan. Now, Jochanan was a young man with a very handsome girlish face. Resh the fighter happened upon the scene. He mistook the young Rabbi for a lovely maiden. In a twinkling he was in the water. What a surprise was his. But Jochanan liked him. He made him the very finest offer. If Lakish would reform and become a Rabbi, he would have Jochanan's sister to wife. Jochanan's sister was even fairer to look upon than Jochanan, which is reasonable. The red-blooded young bandit could not resist. He became a Rabbi, and Jochanan's brother-in-law. But his past haunted him; and that leads to the next legend.

One day he and Jochanan were arguing after their usual manner; but the two became heated, and suddenly Jochanan called Resh a robber. The fierce anger burned in Resh's

eyes. He had laid away his weapons forever, but he could still look daggers. He killed his brother-in-law with a sharp look.

4. Joshua ben Lévi was master of an academy in Lydia. He was such a great authority that his opinion sometimes prevails over that of Jochanan and Resh. He objected to the wild imaginings of the Haggadah, but he himself was a prolific maker and teller of Haggadic material. He thought it should not be written in books, though it was useful for illustration and entertainment. It is said that he went to Rome, where he saw the striking contrast between rich and poor. He pictured it by describing a starveling in rags leaning against a golden statue in the street. The soldiers of World War II can testify to the fact that the statuary of the Eternal City is still unreasonably lavish.

The two Babylonian Amoraim of this generation are two of the greatest names in Talmudic literature.

1. Abba Arecha is more well-known by his abbreviated title, Rab. He was born in Babylon in 175. He studied in the academy of Jehudah Hanasi, where he became one of the greatest disciples. When he was through there he returned to Babylon and founded an academy at Sura. That city has been famous among the Jews ever since. There he collected the enormous aggregate of 1200 students. They swarmed his great building, so he set large gardens about his academy, where the younger students studied and were taught the Mishna. According to the custom of the times, Rab lectured

but two months out of the year, Adar and Elul, the equivalent of March and September. During this period the activity of the academy was feverish. The students hardly took time out to eat, but insisted on spending all their time debating. The description of this Jewish academy is like a preview to the Medieval scholastic universities.

During the part of the year when they were not studying, the students spent their time in agriculture. Rab was a very rich man, who could afford to support his poor students. 1200 students could produce a great amount of revenue in a year. One can see a close connection between Rab's wealth and his students agricultural efforts.

Rab had a wife who made him very unhappy. He set up principles on marriage which reflect his own misery. No man should marry until he had made a thorough character study of his bride-to-be. No man could live with the parents of his espoused until after the wedding. No man was allowed to marry his daughter to a man she did not love. These are sound principles. It was no doubt a desire to see his pupils do better than he had done in marriage, that suggested the principles.

Rab was the nephew of Rabbi Chiya the great, discussed under the Tannaim. Rab himself was considered a Semi-Tanna. He availed himself of his privilege to change a few minor Halachoth of the Mishna. He was called an authority by all, even those in Palestine, and when he died, all good Jews mourned his passing. There was only one man who could

prevail against him, and that was only in regard to civil laws. He was Samuel, whom we will discuss next.

Over 100 of Rab's disciples are mentioned in the Talmud by name. That is a sign of distinction that never deceives.

2. Mar Samuel was born in 180 in Nehardea, and died there in 257. His father, Abba bar Abba, was a famous Rabbi of the time. Abba bar Abba and Levi bar Sissi were Mar Samuel's teachers. Samuel went to Palestine after the manner of ambitious students of the day, and became a pupil of Jehudah Hanasi. The patriarch would not ordain him, however, so Samuel was never called Rabbi. Mar returned to Nehardea, and became successor to the elder of the academy there, a man by the name of Shela. After Samuel had taken over the presidency of the school, its fame began to spread. It ranked close to Rab's in popularity, but during Rab's life the school at Nehardea was never able to reach the heights of fame enjoyed by Sura.

Law, medicine, and astronomy were the chief secular fields of Mar's learning. In the Rabbinical field he excelled in Jurisprudence: the civil law. He had many a controversy with his good friend and colleague Rab. The two were well matched. Rab was the expert in rituals, Mar in the law. In the one field the one prevailed, in the other field, his colleague. They argued, but they never fought. The two

academies were not in competition with each other. Such a harmony does not always exist among religious schools. After the death of Rab, about ten years before the departure of Samuel from the vale of bears to whatever his reward is, the latter became Primus Omnium among the Rabbinists. Mar left a number of disciples who became the leaders of the next generation.

Mar Ukba must be mentioned in this connection, because he was a teacher of influence at the time of Samuel and Rab. After the death of Samuel, Ukba became Exilarch in Nehardea. The Exilarch was the ruler of the Jews in the ancient land of the exile, Babylon. One remembers that the Jews always had a society within a society.

A word is also due the Patriarch of this period. Judah II was grandson of Rabbi. Judah II is also called merely Rabbi in the Talmud. Sad confusion has reigned because of this fact. Judah II lived at the time of the good Emperor Alexander Severus, who was partial to the Jews. This was the golden age of the Jews. They had good fortune as they had never had it before. At this time the Jews became more like the rest of the world than they had ever been before. Some of them even went to the extreme of cutting their hair like the Romans did. That was a radical step for them.

Under the influence of Judah II, Severus is said to have posted Hillel's negative version of the Golden Rule in his palace, for his soldiers to see, so that they would become

morally improved, like the Jews. Severus gave Judah II great powers among his people, and he took advantage of his powerful position, to lift restrictions of long standing. He revoked the rule against using heathen oil, and freed the consciences of many a compatriot in this way. He abolished the sign of mourning worn by all Jews since the destruction of the Holy City. The Sanhedrin revoked his right to ordain because he had ordained some who were unfit.

The second generation of Amora'im lasted from 279-320. This is the period of the shift of learning from Palestine to Babylonia, under the great schools in the land of exile. The poverty of Palestine, as well as incipient persecution seem to be the causes of the shift.

Second Generation:

Palestinian	Babylonian.
1. Elazar ben Pedath.	1. Rab Huna
2. Ame.	2. Rab Judah bar Jechekel.
3. Assi.	3. Rab Chisda (Chasda)
4. Chiya bar Abba.	4. Rab Shesheth.
5. Simon bar Abba.	5. Rab Nachman bar Jacob.
6. Abbahu.	
7. Zeira.	

The patriarchs of this period were Rabbi Gamaliel IV and Judah III.

The Palestinians:

1. Rabbi Elazar ben Pedath, called by his first name in the Talmud, must not be mistaken for the Tanna Elazar ben

Shamua, who is also known by the simpler name. Elazar ben Pedath was a native of Babylonia; later he became associated with Rabbi Jochanan. His authority is attested by the fact that he is quoted in the Gemara with some frequency.

2 & 3. Rabbi Assi must not be confused with his contemporary Rab Assi, who was a student of Rab in Sura. After the death of Elazar, Rabbis Ame and Assi became heads of the academy at Tiberias, which was now in its decline.

4 & 5. Rabbis Chiya bar Abba and Simon bar Abba were probably brothers. This conclusion proceeds from the identical family name of the two. They came from Babylonia to study under Jochanan. They were very poor, but they were famous because of their teaching ability. They were of the conservative school, insisting on strict adherence to the law. That type of Judaism was not very common any more at that late date.

6. Rabbi Abbahu was one of the most widely learned of the Palestinian Amoraim. He was at home in all the Jewish learning, including the sciences and philosophy of the day. He was furthermore well versed in Greek. He taught Greek to his daughter also, thinking it was an accomplishment. It was.

Much of Abbahu's biographical material is legendary, but there is no doubt a grain of truth behind the legends, that caused them to spring up. He was a very rich man. He was a manufacturer of shawls. He had Gothic slaves and furnished the house with ivory chairs. But with all of

his wealth, and in spite of the fact that he was well respected by the emperor Diocletian, he remained all his life a humble and a modest man.

He was once offered the headship of the great Jewish academy in Palestine, but refused it, because he thought Rabbi Abba from Acco was a better man.

One time he was in the same town with Chiya bar Abba. The latter at the time, being an older man, expected to have the greatest popularity in the town, but when the two men began to lecture, all the people flocked to hear Abbahu. Chiya wanted to know why. In his humble manner, Abbahu explained that the people liked his common goods better than the gems of the great Chiya, because they couldn't appreciate the deeper teachings as well.

Another time, Abbahu was drawn into a debate with a Christian in one of the schools set up by the Christians at the time for the purpose of converting Jews by argument. The Christian insisted that Enoch was translated, thereby attempting to prove the doctrine of resurrection. The great Abbahu completely vanquished the poor deluded heretic (Min) by his argument that the passage (Gen. 5,27) referred merely to the death of Enoch. The Christian was right in his exegesis, but we would doubt the wisdom of trying to prove immortality to the Jew by the use of such a passage. The Jews themselves were divided upon the subject.

There is another interesting anecdote about Abbahu, which throws a light upon the work-righteousness theology of the

Jews. There was a great drought in the land, and the people murmured, as of old. Abbahu set about in usual Jewish fashion to find a righteous layman to pray for them all. He found a man who worked in the local theatre. Those days the theatre was a place of sinful amusement, and no Jew was allowed to go there. But this man worked there, and served the sinners. He had done just about all the sinful things it was possible for a man to do in connection with the theatre those days. Abbahu asked the man if he had not done any good thing in his life. Yes, the sinner had. Once he had seen a woman outside the theatre early in the morning, weeping sadly. In curiosity he had asked her the cause of her wailing. She told the whole sad story. Her husband had been taken prisoner, and the only way for her to earn enough money to ransom him was by sacrificing her honor in that horrible theatre. The sinner, in all haste, went and sold everything he had, and gave the money to the woman to ransom her husband. Thus he rescued the woman from her horrible plight. Abbahu decreed that he was holier than all the rest of them, and was worthy to pray for them. After all, had he not parted with his money?

One story about Abbahu pictures him as having better judgment than the last one portrays. He sent his son off to Tiberias to go to the academy there. He heard that his son was spending his time in what was then called piety. That is, he was attending funerals, following wedding processions, and the like. Abbahu sent word to his son that he should

stop being so pious and start being studious. "Are there no graves in Caesarea, that I have to send you to Tiberias?"

During his life Abbahu took no public office, because he thought it was better that he should spend his life in study. He thought better of it after it was too late, and he regretted that he had not taken the opportunity to serve his people.

7. Rabbi Zeira was a student in Babylonia under Rab Judah bar Jecheskel. He disliked the hair-splitting scholasticism of the Babylonian academies, and therefore went to Tiberias, to hear lectures from Ben Pedath. There he tried unsuccessfully to "unlearn" the Babylonian methods he hated but had absorbed. He was ordained Rabbi, and became one of the distinguished Palestinian teachers of his day.

The Babylonian Amoraim of the second generation:

1. Rab Huna is another name that the Jews will never forget. A disciple of Rab, he succeeded that great Amora as president of the academy at Sura. He taught there for forty years. More modern than many of his predecessors, he hired a faculty of fifteen assistants to repeat and explain his lectures to his 800 students.

His authority was undisputed. Even the Palestinian Amoraim Assi and Ame voluntarily subordinated themselves to him.

2. Rab Judah bar Jecheskel's name has been shortened in Talmud fashion, into Rab Judah. He was disciple of both Rab and Mar Samuel. He founded the academy in Pumbeditha,

but after the death of Huna, he headed the academy at Sura until his death two years later in 299.

While he was a student of Samuel, that great man used to say of him that he was a clear thinker, and for that reason sur-named him the Acute. Rab Judah used Samuel's method of teaching.

3. Rab Chisda, or as he is sometimes called in English, Chasda, was another of Rab's pupils. But being a younger man, he was still at the academy when Huna took the eldership of the school. It was not long before a disagreement separated master and pupil, and the pupil set up a school of his own. At the same time Rab Chisda was one of the judges in Sura, not being completely estranged from his former teacher. After Rab Judah died, who had taught at the academy after Huna, Rab Chisda assumed the reigns of the great institution. At this time he was already 80 years old, but he taught another ten years before he died at the ripe old age of 90.

4. Rab Shesheth, another pupil of the two greatest Amoraim, was a member of the court in Nehardea. Nehardea was destroyed by Odenathus in 259, ⁵ 22 years after Rab's death, and five after Samuel's. That sent Shesheth to Mechuzah, from where he left for Silhu. In the latter metropolis he founded an academy. He was blind, and therefore had to rely on his powerful memory. It served him well, and he became well-known. He and Chasda were sparring partners, and they shapened their wits on one another's steel all their time. Shesheth disapproved of the scholastic

5. Jewish Encyclopedia, Academy, p. 147.

dialectical approach which was popular by this time.

5. Rab Nachman bar Jacob will be recognized by the name Rab Nachman. A very prominent disciple of Samuel, he was honored by his father-in-law, the Exilarch, with the appointment as chief justice of the court at Nehardea. When that great city fell, Rab Nachman decamped, and settled in Shechem-Zib. He was a great authority in Jurisprudence.

Two other men of the period are worthy of mention. Rabba bar bar Chana, a Babylonian, is noted for his allegorical narratives, which are distributed throughout the Gemara. Ulla ben Ishmael was a Palestinian with an amour for Babylonia. He finally settled there and died. Although Ulla was never ordained, and never bore a title, he was known as a distinguished teacher. His opinions have been found in the Talmud.

The time of the third generation was a time of terrible persecution under Constantine and Constantius. The result is seen in the following list of Palestinian Amoraim. There are only three great men, and they are the last. Several religious leaders were banished from Palestine. That meant the death of the great academies there. But they had been decaying for years, as the evidence of the last three generations indicates.

There is reason to believe that the Palestinian Talmud was completed about this time, although no one knows who composed the work. The Mishna, as has been pointed out, is almost identical with that of the Babylonian; the difference is in the Gemara. The Palestinian is not as fanciful as the

Babylonian. The reason is evident; one needs merely consider the conservative tradition of Palestine, and the character of the men she received in the Gemara period. When we speak of conservative and liberal in connection with rabbinism, we speak of it from the point of view of the rabbinist. It is true that there is no real conservatism in Jewry. It is based on fantastic methods of interpretation, and the Mishna itself is a collection of all sorts of opinions, from the slavishly literal to the outrageously free.

The third generation of Amoraim:

Palestinian, 320-359	Babylonian, 320-375
1. Rabbi Jeremiah.	1. Rabba bar Huna.
2. Rabbi Jonah.	2. Rabba bar Nachman.
3. Rabbi Jose.	3. Rab Joseph bar Chiya.
	4. Abaye.
	5. Raba.
	6. Rab Nachman bar Isaac.
	7. Rab Papa.

The patriarch of this period was Hillel II, who fixed the Jewish calendar, and introduced it successfully among his people. Hillel II sat under Joseph, a member of the Sanhedrin, who later became a Christian. The Jews bear Joseph no love. It is said among them that he was a rabid Jew-hater, and tried to besmirch the character of his former pupil, Hillel II.

6. The Jewish calendar is so arranged that the first day of the second month will not fall on Sunday, Wednesday, or Friday; else the day of Atonement might fall on Friday or Sunday, and food having to be prepared for Saturday,

But before the days of Hillel II were over, Julian the apostate had come into possession of the great Empire, and the Jews rejoiced, for he gave them equal footing with all other people and religions. Perhaps Jewish history is the only kind that lauds Julian with a loving warmth.

We will consider the last group of Palestinians first.

1. A number of Babylonians have been discussed, who disapproved of the subtle method of the teachers there. In Palestine, the rabbis were not influenced by the liberal element to any great degree. Therefore the dissatisfied literalists of the eastern land would go west. Most of them went because they wanted to. Rabbi Jeremiah went because he had to. He had developed the annoying habit of propounding puzzling questions of trifling casuistry. The teachers and colleagues felt that he intended to ridicule their methods. Therefore they expelled him from the academy. In Palestine he was among friends, because the methods of Jeremiah were like those of the Palestinian teachers. Jeremiah became their authority.

2. Rabbi Johah was a disciple of Rabbi Jeremiah, and one Ila. One may find him quoted in the Talmud; more frequently in the Palestinian than in the Babylonian, which is as we would expect it to be.

3. Rabbi Jose's claim to immortality lies mostly in the

would lead to violation of the Sabbath. Also the last day of Feast of the Tabernacles might fall on Saturday. In case that should happen, they merely add a day to the passing year and subtract it from the next. The Jewish year is lunar, of 354 days. Seven out of every ~~ninty~~ years, having an

fact that he was the last Palestinian Amora with any authority. His opinions are to be met with in the Talmud upon occasion.

The Babylonian Amoraim of the third Generation:

1. Rabba bar Huna was the son of Rab Huna, the successor of Rab. He has been wrongly supposed to be the son of the Exilarch Huna Mari. After the death of Rab Chisda in 309 Rabba bar Huna became the president of the academy in Sura. He held the position until his death thirteen years later. During the time of Rabba, his academy was outshone by that in Pumbeditha. After his death, the academy of Sura was completely deserted, and remained deserted until Rab Ashe restored it to its glory fifty years later.

2. Rabba bar Nachmani, called in the Talmud by the simpler Rabba, was one of the most renowned Amoraim of Babylonia. He was born in Palestine, in Galilee, the village of Mamala. He claimed descent from the High-Priest Eli. He came from a poor family, and both his brothers were shoemakers. He went to Babylon to study at Pumbeditha. There he became a disciple of the Great Rab Chisda. Rab Joseph had been picked to succeed Rabba, but he declined, because he had a superstition that he would not live long after becoming the head of the great school. Therefore his friend Rabba became the Elder there. He was such a clever debater that he was called the Uprooter

extra month. The calendar and the month names are Babylonian. (Wm. Rosenau, The Jewish Holidays, p. 13f.)

of Mountains. He had a habit of propounding puzzling questions to his students, to sharpen their wits. His method of teaching attracted great crowds of scholars, and the academy grew great in his time.

His method was to determine the reasons for all the laws that were in existence, both in the Torah and in the Oral Law; and by making logical deductions, to propound new laws from the principles of the old. He did much to reconcile the contradictions between the various rabbinical writings: the Mishna, Baraithoth, and traditional teachings of the later authorities.

Presently a charge was made against him that he attracted Jewish students for the sake of obtaining their exemption from the poll tax. Rabba then fled from Pum Beditha and lived in solitude. It is said that he was sitting in a tree one day studying. He fell out of the tree, and died from his injuries.

3. Rab Joseph bar Chiya hesitated no longer. After his friend Rabba fell out of the tree, he took the chair at Pum Beditha. Joseph was a wealthy farmer, but he was sickly and ill-tempered. His is a name to remember, because he was the only Amora in Babylon who thought it was more important to know many Halachoth than it was to interpret them and try to reconcile them with one another. It was no doubt because of this propensity that he was named Sinai.

He translated large portions of the prophets into Aramaic.

The translation is called the Targum of Rab Joseph. It is well to keep in mind that this translation was made in the fourth century. Rab Joseph died in 333, after being the head of Pumbeditha for only three years.

4. Abaye was nephew to Rabba bar Nachmani, and bore the same surname as his uncle. After the death of Rab Joseph, Abaye became the head of the academy at Pumbeditha. Meantime, Raba founded his school at Mechuzah, and all the students of the former academy left to attend Raba's institution. Before that time, Pumbeditha was the outstanding school. Abaye and Raba were great dialectical rivals. They together developed the rabbinical subtlety to its highest point. When the two men began each in his own way to reconcile contradictions, they would make such fine distinctions, and imagine such cases of casuistry, that they became a racial proverb. After their time, the expression, "The critical questions of Abaye and Raba" was used to indicate subtle argument. The arguments of the two men are recorded all over the Talmud in great profusion. Abaye, however, was victor only six times. The later men who compiled the Talmud gave preference to Raba's decision in every other case.

5. Raba, son of Joseph ben Chama in Mechuzah, lived from 299-352. He was a fellow student of Abaye under Rabba bar Nachmani in Pumbeditha. It was not long before he had surpassed all of his contemporaries. He opened his school in Mechuzah, and after the death of Abaye, his school complet-

ely eclipsed Pum Beditha, and was almost the only seat of Jewish learning in Babylonia. His statements in the Talmud are almost always immediately followed by the counter-opinion of Abaye.

6. Rab Nachman bar Isaac, not to be confused with his teacher, Rab Nachman bar Jacob, was an officer in Raba's academy. Raba died, and his pupil Nachman left Mechuzah, to go to Pum Beditha. There he revived the academy, but he was there only four years, from 352-356, and left little trace of his sojourn. His successor Rab Chama, who was there for 21 years, from 356-377, made still less of an impression on Jewish history.

7. Rab Papa bar Chanan, a disciple of Raba and Abaye, founded a school in Nares, in the vicinity of Sura. He presided over its lectures for 19 years, from 354-375. Although he used the subtle dialectical methods of his teachers, he did not have their ingenuity, nor their independence of thought, and could not satisfy his pupils, who had attended lectures under Raba. He is known for the fact that he used to refer frequently to popular proverbs of the day. In that he rendered his posterity a certain service.

He is not to be confused with an older Rab Papa, whose son R^afram became head of the academy at Pum Beditha in the fourth generation. One must also take care not to confuse him with Papi, who was a lawyer of the previous generation.

The fourth generation takes our attention next. From the fourth to the sixth and last generation of Amoraim, Palestine no longer had any part in the development of Jewish tradition. From 375 onward, all the great teachers were heads of academies in one of the three cities of Sura, Pumbeditha, or Nehardea. Nehardea also did not endure long after this time. We shall discuss its passing under its last teacher. The rise and fall of these schools meant no more than the coming and departure of its great teachers.

Fourth generation of Amoraim, 375-427.

Sura.	Pumbeditha.	Nehardea.
1. Rab Ashi.	1. Rab Zebid.	1. Amemar.
	2. Rab Dimi,	
	3. Rava.	
	4. Rab Cahana.	
	5. Mar Zutra.	

Rab Ashi, the man who outlived all the other teachers of his generation, is also the most important man of the time. He was born in 352, and his death in 427 ended the fourth generation. His importance lies in one accomplishment. He compiled the Gemara. The material of the Gemara had been gathering for three hundred years. Rab Ashi gathered the minutes of the academic discussions for the whole period, and proceeded to spend the next fifty years classifying it. He enlisted the aid of his students, and with the concerted efforts of them all, the work was almost complete at the time of Rab Ashi's death. His disciples after him

7

finished the huge task.

Rab Ashi can rightly be called the editor and author of the Babylonian Talmud, by virtue of the enormous task he undertook during his fifty-two years as head of the academy of Sura. He was a wealthy man, he had a great deal of intelligence, and he was ambitious. The result was inevitable. He became very learned in Jewish learning, and he was able to assume the authority to pass judgment on the Gemara material, as well as to edit it and select from it as much as he saw fit, for to be included in his Talmud. He did for the Gemara what Rabbi did for the Mishna. There was this difference, that, since the Gemara is commentary on the Mishna, Rabbi's text was included in Rab Ashi's work. The result was the Talmud, in effect, as we have it now. "It is settled that he was the editor of the Talmud Babli, but whether he wrote it or classified it verbally is not clear. His successors until the beginning of the sixth century made many additions." ⁸ We hazard a guess here. It would take an intelligence almost inconceivable to keep all the material of the Talmud in mind, without writing it down. Passing it on to the next generation would be even harder.

A word on Ashi's academy is in place here. The academy had been closed for approximately fifty years. When Ashi was

7. Reichler, p. 14ff.

8. Friedman, appendix, p. 125.

but twenty years old he reopened it. The old building had fallen into disrepair. Ashi therefore built a new one on the site, after the death of Rab Papa, who had been teaching in his academy in Nares near by. Under the guidance of Ashi, the academy once more knew the glory it had seen under Rab. For his work on the Talmud, and because he was a renowned teacher, Rab Ashi was honored by the title Rabbana. For a Jew, a title like that was well worth a lifetime of hard work.

Pum Beditha:

1. Rab Zebid bar Ashaya succeeded Rab Chama, and held office for eight years, from 377-385.

2. Rab Dime succeeded Zebid, but lived only three years, from 385-388. He came from Nehardea.

3. Rafram bar Papa the elder, whom we have mentioned before was a disciple of Raba. He succeeded Dime, and was head of Pum Beditha 388-394.

4. Rab Cahana bar Tachlife, another of Raba's disciples, took the chair in Pum Beditha as an old man. He died in 411. He is not to be confused with a man of the same name, who had been a disciple of Rab, nor with another, a Rab Cahana bar Manyome, who had been a disciple of Rab Jecheskel.

5. ⁹Mar Zutra, according to some historians, succeeded Cahana, from 411-414. He was probably the same as Mar Zutra

9. Mielziner, p. 52.

bar Mare, who shortly after was Exilarch, succeeded at Pumbeditha by Rab Acha bar Raba, 414-419, and he by Rab Gebiha, 419-433.

Nehardea:

1. Amemor was the last elder of Nehardea. After him the school passed out of existence. Besides being the head of the school he was also a judge in the city. He took the chair in Nehardea in 390, and died about 422.

By the time of the fifth generation of Amoraim, there were only two great schools left. The one was Sura, and the other Pumbeditha. The generation is counted from 427-468.

The fifth generation of Amoraim:

Sura.

1. Mar Jemar (Maremar).
2. Rab Ide bar Abin.
3. Mar bar Rab Ashi.
4. Rab Acha of Difte.

Pumbeditha.

1. Rafram II.
2. Rechumai.
3. Rab Sama bar Rabba.

Sura.

1. Mar Jemar succeeded Rab Ashi at Sura, and held the post about five years, from 427-432. He was held in high esteem, perhaps because he was the head of so great an academy.

2. Rab Ide bar Abin followed Jemar, and lived for 20 years, from 432-452. He continued the completion of the Gemara, which he had worked on during the time of his great teacher's life.

3. Mar bar Rab Ashi was surnamed Tabyone. He was the son of Rab Ashi, but in the first election of the president of

the academy after the great teacher's death, he was passed over. He had evidently not shown the great talents of his father. Mar bar Rab Aghi held the chair in his father's academy for thirteen years, from 455-468. He was independent and intelligent, like his father.

4. Rab Acha of Difte, being a gifted man, and well known, was on the ballot for election to the chair at Sura, but was outvoted by a mere three votes.

Pum Beditha.

1. Rofram II followed Rab Gebiha, and held the position from 433-443.

2. Rab Rechumai was president from 443-456.

3. Rab Sama bar Rabba held the post from 456-471.

Toward the end of this generation, the academies could do no more than exist, because Firuz, the Persian King, had instituted a terrible persecution against the Jews and their religion. The men mentioned immediately above, therefore, added practically nothing to the work of the rabbinical tradition, but they ought to be thought of as men who held together the race, when the Persian nation was trying to annihilate them.

The sixth generation was able to do more, because King Firuz died, and the persecutions ceased. The first part of this generation, however, was still under the heel of the Jew-hater.

The sixth and last generation of Amoraim, 468-500.

Sura.

Pum Beditha.

1. Rabba Thaspia.

1. Rab Jose.

2. Rabina II.

Sura:

1. Rabba Thaspia succeeded Mar bar Rab Ashi. During his time the Persian King Firuz abolished Jewish jurisdiction, and the academical assemblies. He was determined to make an end of the Jewish "society within a society." Of course, Thaspia could not accomplish much. He held his post six years.

2. The name Rabina is a contraction of Rab Abina. He is called Rabina II to distinguish him from Abina I, who was no relative, but a predecessor. They are called the same name in the Talmud; the context shows which Abina is meant. He held the chair from 488-490. Firuz had died, the persecution had ceased by this time, and there was great activity in the Jewish academies again.

Rabina wanted to complete Ashi's Talmud, and was assisted therein by Rab Jose of Pum Beditha, and others. They succeeded in their intention, and the Talmud was closed in 499, at the end of the period of the Amoraim.

The teachers of the next fifty years were called Saboraim. They had no authority to change anything in the Talmud. They had only the authority to decide in cases of disagreement among the Tannim. These they added to the Talmud. They also added Haggadic material, which they were authorized to do, by their contemporaries.

Pum Beditha:

1. Jose, who taught at Pum Beditha from 475-520, flourished after the close of the Talmud, and is considered first and greatest of the Saboraim. Like the men at the end of the Tannaitic period, and the beginning of the Amoraic, Jose is in the twilight zone. He may be classified with either group. But since he did most of his work in the latter period, he is most commonly classified therein.

There were others who helped form the connecting link between the two periods. Their names and opinions appear in the Talmud, and they may therefore be mentioned here. They are Rab Achai bar Huna and Rab Samuel bar Abbahu. Thus ended the last generation. The period of the closed Talmud had set in, and the great creative work of the Jews was now over.

Chapter IV. Character

A. The Talmud as a Phenomenon of Jewish Character

There are dreams and dreamers among all peoples. They are the national poets and singers. The Jews also have their dreams and dreamers. They also have an intense national feeling. But since 70 A.D. they have been a nation without a country. The question immediately arises: How could they keep their identity through the ages, without a country, without a king or a political head, without any tangible means by which to keep their people separated from all the peoples of the world? The answer lies partly in the character of the Jew. By the time the Romans had destroyed the city, the Jews had already developed a long tradition of Oral Law. They had long had a national conscience. They had been accustomed to thinking of themselves for many years as the chosen of God, and the only nation in the world who knew the true God. They had something that no other people had. But they had little else. They had always been poor country with a few exceptions. They made no great mark in the political history of the world. They had been exiled, they had been persecuted, they had been dominated by almost every great power that arose and died during the many centuries of their history. If the Jews had been a worldly, politically aggressive people only, they would no doubt have gone into

oblivion with the rest of the small nations that existed side by side with them.

But the Jews thought of themselves as the possessors of the one and only true religion. This was a feeling that had been among the Jews almost since they had first been a nation, and in the course of their history, they had almost completely merged their religion with their national existence. That seems to be a good explanation of why they continued to exist as a people even after they no longer had a country. The Talmud was one of the factors that helped to preserve that religion, although there was no special place for them to be, and where tradition could grow and live. An old place of habitation, helps perpetuate tradition. Traditions often grow up about places: they are concrete. The Talmud being as it is, codified tradition, served the Jews as a substitute for a place.

The Jews have always held the Torah on the very highest plane of honor: every word of it is the word of God. But they did not look upon the Torah as Christians do. If they did, it would not be the same book for them that it is. For them it is a book of Law. It is the religious constitution of the world. Therefore, we say that it is not the Old Testament that God gave to man. It is their own fancy, even though they have not changed a word in it.

But under the conditions described, the Torah was not enough. If the Torah is a book of laws only, it suffers from the same lack that all other law-books suffer under.

The laws do not cover all casuistry. Therefore the Jews had to decide their own cases of law, based on the fundamental principles they saw in the Torah. Those principles, as we have demonstrated in the previous chapter, are not the same principles God had in mind when He gave the books of the Old Testament to men. That explains why the Jews had need to "build a fence about the law". An infringement of the least of the rules of the Torah was a breach of the fundamental law of man. To forestall that there was need to provide rules which would keep a man from doing that which would put him into temptation. The necessary rules were provided in abundance,¹ and thus the Mishna developed: a true phenomenon of Jewish character.

But the law alone could hardly be enough to satisfy the religious feelings of a race of people. There was also an element in the Jewish religion that might be called mystic. One can hardly conceive of a religion without a mystical element. Although the Jews are a worldly people, with a mundane view, they also evidently had need for a purely spiritual outlet. This outlet was supplied, at least in part, by the scholastic methods of the great academies. The mystical element of traditional Judaism was more pronounced in the later times. One can detect a detached attitude on the part of the Amoraim, when the need for a spiritual coherence was very great, and there was no country to cling to for solidarity. We do not mean to imply that the Jews themselves were any less worldly, but their religion at this time was

1. Cf. Part One, Ch. II.

the core of their nationality, and that religion had to detach itself from its surroundings, because they were foreign, and often hostile surroundings. We have followed the development of the academies from the beginning, when they were schools of the Torah, to the time of the close of the Talmud, when they were highly imaginative, and unrealistic institutions of learning. That unreal attitude was their answer to the need for the spiritual, or as we have chosen to call it, the mystical, element of their religion. In the words of a Jew we discover their own attitude: "Pure theoretic study of the Torah, extending and developing it to its furthest limits, without any thought as to its practical value, afforded the Rabbis of the Talmud great intellectual and spiritual delight."²

At the same time, however, there was another spirit that had grown up in Judaism. They imagined themselves as the benefactors of the world, because they had the Torah, and worshipped Jehovah as the one and only God. But they had been persecuted and maltreated throughout the ages. Therefore they thought of themselves as martyrs for the truth. This phenomenon of martyrdom appeared early in their history. There were Jews serving in the Greek army at the time of Alexander the Great. Alexander set his soldiers to building a temple to the Chaldean idol Bel. The Jews would not help, and no superiors could force them to work, with all their

2. Reichaer, pl 13.

threats and punishments. Fortunately for them Alexander was favorably inclined toward the Jews, and pardoned them ³ en masse.

But it was not until the time of the Syrian domination, that the severe persecutions set in. The Jews underwent a trial of blood and fire, that proved to be the life-or-death crisis of their nation. Having kept their identity through that period, they would never allow themselves to be annihilated or destroyed as a people by any other persecution, by any other nation. The memory of the trials of the fathers, and the triumphs of the people over any attempt to obliterate them, lived, and still lives in the memory of every good Jew.

They remember the story of their illustrious forbears, the Maccabees: Antiochus Epiphanes held the rule of Syria, after the death of Alexander the Great. In his ambition, he took also Egypt. On the way back, he stopped and despoiled Jerusalem, and there set up heathen idols and practices, and profaned the Temple. The men whom he then set over Jerusalem continued the policy of desecrating the Temple, and instituting the horrible heathen practices and worship all over Palestine. The people suffered much. Those of them who did not do according to the heathen wishes of the Syrian rulers were pursued and killed. The circumcised children were hanged, the mothers killed, the cattle and goods taken from the people, and it looked as though Judaism were at an end.

3. Graetz, vol. 1, p. 415.

Thousands of people were massacred, because they would not fight on the Sabbath, nor would they yield to the heathen conquerors.

Then arose Mattathias, the father of the Maccabees. He decreed that it was lawful to defend oneself on the Sabbath, and having gathered a band of rebels, he set the stage for the mighty deeds of Judas Maccabeus. That warrior gathered in time a sizable group, and after many battles of great heroism, established a kind of independence for Judea.

The Jews remember the story of that persecution; they also remember the story of their deliverance. That has given them hope throughout the ages, and that was no doubt a strong factor in supplying them with courage during the later persecutions, during which time their country was taken from them, and they were obliged to accept the book of traditions as a substitute.

When Pilate, in his time, took holy money to make an aqueduct into Jerusalem, the Jews remembered the story of Antiochus and the Maccabees, and rioted in the streets against Pilate's arrogance. They remembered that story so well that they were willing to emulate their fathers in giving their lives for the principle. Many of them were killed on the third and last day of their riot.

So the history of their martyrdom grew, and with it grew the Jewish martyr complex, so that it seems, they derived strength from their very martyrdom. That is a common result

4. I Maccabees, esp., chs. 1, 2, and 3.
5. Josephus' Antiquities, bk. 18, ch. iii.

of martyrdom. Whether there was actually any good reason behind it does not materially alter the situation. The very fact that Jews had died for centuries for the same principles was a source of strength to them.

The Talmud has grown out of minds that have thought in the pattern of martyrdom for centuries. That fact has had its effect on the work. The interest of the work is solely Jewish. There is no broad world-view in its various parts, whatever the subject. It gives the impression that it is of the Jew, by the Jew, and for the Jew. The attitude toward Gentiles, though softened by some of the great teachers to a certain extent, is one of hostility, or at the least, of indifference. This is not entirely due to the martyr complex, of course, but that suffering-in-innocence attitude has helped to produce this character of the Talmud.

B. How the Ancient Jews Considered the Talmud

Since the time of Ezra, the Jews had considered their traditions very seriously. Not all the Scriptures and the Oral Law were on the same plane, to the Hebrew mind. There was a veritable Scriptural hierarchy, with the Torah ranking highest. The Jews have always taken the Torah as their highest authority. What they have made of the Torah is beside the point here. The fact is, that all of them thought of the Pentateuch as the unbreakable source of all Jewry. Next in line of descent were the Prophets. These the Jews

called Holy Writ. One cannot determine exactly what is meant by that term, since they held the Prophets in lower esteem than the books of Moses, and thus thinned out the meaning of the term Holy Writings. We do know, however, that though they were considered from God, they stood below the Torah. The third class was that of the Mishna. That also was sacred and binding, but to a lesser extent than the two former classes. The fourth and last class was that of the Gemara. Not all the Gemara was considered binding. Nevertheless, if many Rabbis, or if one or two of the ⁶ older Amoraim, agreed on a saying, then that was binding. Here we hazard the generality that in many cases, it was left to a man's tastes, what it was he wanted to be bound to. The truth of that is shown by the history of the later Rabbis, as we discussed them in the chapter on Amoraim.

We have already demonstrated by the story of the Syrian persecutions, that the Jews were willing to die for one of their laws. We have discussed the history of some of the later teachers also, who were willing to die for teaching the Torah.

But the Jews had their own way of dealing with those members of their own people who desecrated their traditions. We remember the banishment of Rabbi Meir, among others. The following quotation from Josephus gives us the setting for another such story: "There was a man who was a Jew, but had been driven away from his own country by an accusation laid

6. Graetz, vol. 5, p. 400.

against him for transgressing their laws, and by fear he was under the punishment for the same; but in all respects a wicked man." Here we see that the Jews did not hesitate to inflict punishment and exile on a fellow Jew who did not obey their laws as they saw fit. It is hard to tell, in this case, as in the last one, what the motive of the Jews was in punishing this man, or threatening him with punishment; because he was partly to blame for the banishment of the Jews from Rome. He and several other Jews had swindled a great deal of money from Fulvia, a noble proselyte woman in Rome. They had taken the money she had donated for the Temple, and had used it themselves. ⁷

Another phase of this story helps show the Jewish attitude toward their laws. The consuls made soldiers out of 4000 of the Jews. They had the choice of becoming soldiers or being banished. The 4000 Jews evidently thought more of the comforts of life than the Sabbath, while at the same time many thousands chose to abide by the ceremonies of their fathers. It is evident that there was a strong feeling in the good Rabbinites, for the keeping of the law. It meant much to them.

Again: Pilate had brought ensigns bearing the effigy of Caesar, to Jerusalem in the night. The Jews rioted for six days, and would not be quieted. On the sixth day Pilate set out his soldiers. The Jews paid no heed, but "threw them-

7. Josephus' Antiquities, bk. xviii, ch. iii, p. 536.

selves on the ground, laid their necks bare, and said that they would take their death very willingly, rather than⁸ that the wisdom of their laws should be transgressed."

The word wisdom is important in this connection. It was no longer merely the revealed word for which they would die, but for the wisdom of their Rabbis.

That has been their philosophy ever since. It is worth while to give up everything for the wisdom of their ancient Rabbis. We have considered the martyrdom of several Rabbis by fire and torture, because they would not give up one teaching of their great masters.⁹ Some of the masters were yet alive, when their pupils gave up their lives for them.

We think it is strange and unreasonable that the Jews even today, take as sacred the word of a Rabbi, while at the same time, they deny any other matter they object to, in any part of the Rabbinical writings.¹⁰ They are willing to admit that it is merely the teaching of a man, but that to them it is law. They don't know why, and we don't know why. But are the Jews alone in this failing? That question raises spectres from the graves of Christian heresies.

Notwithstanding the fact that most of the Jews would go through torture rather than give up one sentence of their law, they would make exceptions according to their tastes. Theodus, a Roman Jew, made a substitute for the

8. op. cit., p. 536.

9. Cf. part 2, chs. 2 and 3 of this paper for examples.

10. Cf. Isserman's catalogue of denials, This is Judaism, p. 13.

Paschal Lamb, which could not be eaten outside of Jerusalem. The Palestinian Jews were, of course, offended, and according to their laws, they should have taken immediate action against the man. Instead, they wrote to him: "If thou wert not Theodus we should excommunicate(ban) thee." ¹¹ Theodus was a well-known and honored man among the Jews. The decision of the Palestinian Jews indicates that it was a partly racial, and not wholly religious character of the Jews, that was involved in the building of the Talmud.

C. The Imprint of the Talmud on the Modern Jew

Rabbi Isserman proposes that there is no Jew today who is not a Talmud Jew. ¹² That is true, in a sense. All Jews, of course, do not take the Talmud as their religious source book. The Reform Jew is a brother to the Protestant Modernist, ¹³ to whose creed he could sign his name. Nevertheless, as we have demonstrated, the Jews could not have existed unless the Pharisees of the time of the destruction of Jerusalem had not set up the Sanhedrin in Jabne. They could not have existed without the principles the Amoraim practiced so long. The descendants of the Talmud writers, all the way down to the Middle Ages, trace their methods back to the Amoraim. The Jew today owes his separate racial and religious existence partly to the Talmud and the men who studied and preserved it.

11. Graetz, vol. 2, p. 68.

12. Isserman, p. 1.

13. op. cit., p. 13 et passim.

True, the Talmud did not make the Jew, but it helped preserve his race.

As in all religions, there are those who know nothing of the religion they profess, so there are also those Jews who know nothing of their religion. Yet they all know of Yom Kippur, and they are not unacquainted with the festival of the Passover. Furthermore, they partake of the way of life of the Jews, by necessity, if for no other reason; and the Jewish way of life has been much the same through the ages. The point we wish to make with these remarks is, that although the Talmud did not originate the Jewish consciousness, and way of life, it has had a strong hand in preserving that phenomenon, and thus indirectly has affected the modern Jew, be he Orthodox or Reform.

Some Concluding Remarks

In the preceding chapters we have traced Jewish tradition from its faint and nebulous beginnings after Ezra, to the crystallized formulae of the fifth-century Talmud. We have seen how the schools developed from the small Torah school in Jerusalem, to the great scholastic academies of Babylon. We have followed the expansion of the schools from the Jerusalem-centered rivalry between the Beth Hillel and the Beth Shammai, to the other parts of Judea, to Galilee, and finally to Babylon. We have noted that the Palestinian schools held the conservative tradition throughout, and that the farther away from Jerusalem the academies were located, the more liberal they became. Those in Galilee had a more liberal outlook than the Judean schools, and the Babylonian schools in their time were the most liberal institutions of the Jews. The historical sketch describes some of the controversies of the two elements.

It is also noticeable from the sketch, that the academies grew up around great teachers. The strength and greatness of each school was almost wholly dependent on the teacher. If there were students in those schools who were able to reach the heights of their masters, they took the positions of their teachers, when their time came, and the academies were able to keep their size and influence. But when there were no students to take the places of the teachers, the academies died.

The question, why did the academies grow as they did, and why did they move from one district to another as they did, is answered by a composite of three influences. Palestine was a poor country to begin with, and the Jews who lived there were often under one form or another of persecution, and always in a political turmoil. That kind of existence drives away scholars, and causes learning to languish. That happened in Palestine. First many of the students and teachers left Judea because of the unfavorable living conditions. But they stayed in Palestine, merely removing from the center of strife in and about Jerusalem. The Gallilean towns of Usha, Sepphoris, and others were chosen largely because a teacher lived in that town, or in some cases, because numbers of students coming back from exile settled together in one of the towns, and the teachers had to go where the students were. The trouble in Palestine increased with the passage of time, until the number of teachers and students there decreased to a minimum. Since Palestine was the seat and origin of the tradition, those who lived there partook of the old spirit, and therefore, when Jerusalem Talmud was closed, that also partook of the conservatism of its codifiers.

Meanwhile, the Babylonian academies had grown large and popular, because of the scholastic appeal, and because of the great reputation of the teachers. Therefore, when the Babylonian Jews closed their version of the Talmud at the end of the fifth century, they had a work that included a great deal of speculative matter, an immense amount of far-

fetched interpretation, and pages of subtle dialectic. As a result, the Babylonian Talmud became far more interesting to later students, while the Palestinian has almost fallen into disuse among the Jews. Another reason for the preference of the Babylonian Talmud over the Palestinian is the fact that the later schools received their impetus and their subject matter from the Babylonian schools. We have seen how the path of the Talmud started in Palestine, and went to Babylon. From there it went to Europe, but that is beyond the scope of this paper.

Parallel to the Talmud and the academies, the Jewish synagogue schools spread among all Jewry. They kept up the tradition among the lay Jews, and helped keep the strength of the Talmud, because the two were based on the same philosophy. The Sanhedrin also helped keep the Jewish strength from waning, but that stayed in Palestine, as we have noted, and could not wield as much influence as the other two institutions. Toward the end of the Palestinian Talmudic period, the Sanhedrin also declined, and in the weakness of its old age, it lost its power and influence.

All of the men we have discussed in this paper were important in the development of the Talmud. Only a few of them actually helped codify the work, and write it down, but their contribution was the subject matter. If one would open the Babylonian Talmud and read in it for any number of pages, he would find most of these men mentioned. That is why they must be included in a paper of this kind.

The Talmud, as we have frequently said, is not a well-integrated and organized piece of work, and its history therefore, also appears confusing and purposeless. But that is exactly how the Talmud grew, and we must take cognizance of each element as it appears. When one has the general succession of men and teachers in mind, and the general trend of thought, ~~ught~~, then the Talmud becomes fairly easy to understand. There is no real system either in the Talmud, or in the history of its men. Like Flopsy and ^{Topsy?} Mopsy of the old nursery rhyme, ^{Uncle Tom's Cabin} the Talmud "just grew". That is part of the charm of this work. Its arguments are endless; its stories entertaining, and its psychology intensely interesting. The use of studying the work lies in the opening it gives into the Jewish mind, both of the times of the New Testament, in which we are interested by our calling, and of modern times. We should be interested in the modern Jew, because of the Jewish problem, that seems as if it, like the poor, will be always with us.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BOOKS

APOCRYPHA, according to the Authorized Version.

EDERSHEIM, ALFRED, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, fifth edition, vols. I & II, Anson D.F. Randolph & Co., New York, cir. 1886.

FRIEDMAN, D.A., Rabbis of Ancient Times, Rochester Volksblatt Print, Rochester, New York, 1896.

GRAETZ, HEINRICH, History of the Jews, vols. 1 & 2, translated by a committee of the Jewish Publication Society of America, Philadelphia, 1891.

IDELSOHN, A.Z., Jewish Liturgy, Henry Holt & Co., New York, 1932.

ISSERMAN, FERDINAND M., This is Judaism, Willett, Clark, & Co., New York, 1944.

LAMPARTER, EDUARD, Das Judentum in seiner Kultur- und religionsgeschichtlichen Erscheinung, Leopold Klotz Verlag, Gotha, 1928.

MAGNUS, LAURIE, The Jews in the Christian Era, E. P. Dutton & Co., New York, 1929.

MIELZINER, MOSES, Introduction to the Talmud, Funk and Wagnalls Co., New York, 1903.

RODKINSON, MICHAEL L., The Babylonian Talmud, Original Text Edited, Corrected, Formulated, and Translated into English, vols. 1-10, first edition revised and corrected by Dr. Isaac M. Wise, The Talmud Society, Boston, 1918.

STRACK, HERMANN L., Einleitung in Talmud und Midrash, C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, Muenchen, 1920.

JOSEPHUS, FLAVIUS, The Life and Works of Flavius Josephus, standard edition, translated by William Whiston, The International Press, The John C. Winston Co., Philadelphia, n.d.

QUALBEN, LARS P., A History of The Christian Church, revised edition, Thomas Nelson & Sons, New York, 1942.

ENCYCLOPEDIAS AND DICTIONARIES

ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA, 14th edition, Encyclopaedia Britannica Ltd., New York, 1937.

COOK, STANLEY ARTHUR, Talmud, vol. XXI, pp. 769-772.

ANONYMOUS, Gaon, vol. X, p. 8ff.

ANONYMOUS, Midrash, vol. XV, pp. 458-459.

HASTINGS, A Dictionary of the Bible, Scribner's, New York, 1909.

OESTERLEY, W. O. E., Talmud, pp. 890-892.

JEWISH ENCYCLOPEDIA, Funk and Wagnalls Co., New York, 1907.

BACHER, W., Academies in Babylonia, Academies in Palestine, vol. I, pp. 145-148.

BACHER, W., Gaon, vol. V, pp. 567-572.

BACHER, W., Sabora, vol. X, pp. 610-612.

BACHER, W., Talmud, vol. XII, pp. 1-26.

EINSTEIN, JUDAH DAVID, Yeshibah, vol. XII, pp. 595-600.

HOROWITZ, S., Midrash, vol. VIII, pp. 548-550.

LAUTERBACH, J. Z., Mishna, vol. VIII, pp. 609-619.

PAMPHLETS

BETTAN, ISRAEL, Post Biblical Judaism--I. Its Biblical Foundation--The Midrash, The Tract Commission, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Central Conference of American Rabbis, Merchants' Building, Cincinnati, n.d.

BETTAN, ISRAEL, Post Biblical Judaism--III. Its Healthy-Mindedness, The Tract Commission, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Central Conference of American Rabbis, Merchants' Building, Cincinnati, n.d.

REICHLER, MAX, What is the Talmud?, The Tract Commission, Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Central Conference of American Rabbis, Merchants' Building, Cincinnati, n.d.

ROSENAU, WILLIAM, The Jewish Holidays, The Tract Commission Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Central Conference of American Rabbis, Merchants' Building, Cincinnati, n.d.