Talmud

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The **Talmud** (Hebrew: תַּלְמוּד *talmūd* "instruction, learning", from a root *lmd* "teach, study") is a central text of mainstream Judaism, in the form of a record of rabbinic discussions pertaining to Jewish law, ethics, philosophy, customs and history.

The Talmud has two components: the Mishnah (c. 200 CE), the first written compendium of Judaism's Oral Law; and the Gemara (c. 500 CE), a discussion of the Mishnah and related Tannaitic writings that often ventures onto other subjects and expounds broadly on the Tanakh.

The terms *Talmud* and *Gemara* are often used interchangeably. The Gemara is the basis for all codes of rabbinic law and is much quoted in other rabbinic literature. The whole Talmud is also traditionally referred to as ***Shas*** (ש"ס), a

Hebrew abbreviation of *shisha sedarim*, the "six orders" of the Mishnah.

History

Originally, Jewish scholarship was oral. Rabbis expounded and debated the law (the written law expressed in the Hebrew Bible) and discussed the Tanakh without the benefit of written works (other than the Biblical books themselves), though some may have made private notes (*megillot setarim*), for example of court decisions.

The first page of the Vilna Edition of the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Berachot, folio 2a.

This situation changed drastically, however, mainly as the result of the destruction of the Jewish commonwealth in the year 70 CE and the consequent upheaval of Jewish social and legal norms. As the Rabbis were required to face a new reality—mainly Judaism without a Temple (to serve as the center of teaching and study) and Judea without autonomy—there was a flurry of legal discourse and the old system of oral scholarship could not be maintained. It is during this period that Rabbinic discourse began to be recorded in writing.[1] [2] The earliest recorded oral law may have been of the midrashic form, in which halakhic discussion is structured as exegetical commentary on the Pentateuch. But an alternative form, organized by subject matter instead of by biblical verse, became dominant about the year 200 C.E., when Rabbi Judah haNasi redacted the Mishnah (הנשמ).

The Oral Law was far from monolithic; rather, it varied among various schools. The most famous two were the School of Shammai and the School of Hillel. In general, all valid opinions, even the non-normative ones, were recorded in the Talmud.

Structure

The six orders (*sedarim*; singular: *seder*) of general subject matter in the Talmud are divided into 60 or 63 tractates (*masekhtot*; singular: *masekhet*) of more focused subject compilations. Each tractate is divided into chapters (*perakim*; singular: *perek*), 517 in total, that are both numbered according to the Hebrew alphabet and given names, usually using the first one or two words in the first mishnah. The *perek* may continue over several (up to tens) of pages.[3] Each *perek* will contain several *mishnayot*[4] with their accompanying exchanges that form the "building-blocks" of the Gemara; the name for a passage of gemara is a *sugya* (אי‌גום; plural *sugyot*). A *sugya*, including *baraita* or *tosefta*, will typically comprise a detailed proof-based elaboration of a Mishnaic statement, whether halakhic or aggadic. A *sugya* may, and often does, range widely off the subject of the mishnah. The *sugya* is not punctuated in the conventional sense used in the English language, but by using specific expressions that help to divide the sugya into components, usually including a statement, a question on the statement, an answer, a proof for the answer or a refutation of the answer with its own proof.

In a given *sugya*, scriptural, Tannaic and Amoraic statements are cited to support the various opinions. In so doing, the Gemara will highlight semantic disagreements between Tannaim and Amoraim (often ascribing a view to an earlier authority as to how he may have answered a question), and compare the Mishnaic views with passages from the Baraita. Rarely are debates formally closed; in some instances, the final word determines the practical law, but in many instances the issue is left unresolved. There is a whole literature on the procedural principles to be used in settling the practical law when disagreements exist: see under #Logic and methodology below.

Mishnah

The *Mishnah* is a compilation of legal opinions and debates. Statements in the Mishnah are typically terse, recording brief opinions of the rabbis debating a subject; or recording only an unattributed ruling, apparently representing a consensus view. The rabbis recorded in the Mishnah are known as Tannaim.

Since it sequences its laws by subject matter instead of by biblical context, the Mishnah discusses individual subjects more thoroughly than the Midrash, and it includes a much broader selection of halakhic subjects than the Midrash. The Mishnah's topical organization thus became the framework of the Talmud as a whole. But not every tractate in the Mishnah has a corresponding Gemara. Also, the order of the tractates in the Talmud differs in some cases from that in the *Mishnah* (see the discussion on each order).

Baraita

In addition to the Mishnah, other tannaitic teachings were current at about the same time or shortly thereafter. The Gemara frequently refers to these tannaitic statements in order to compare them to those contained in the Mishnah and to support or refute the propositions of Amoraim. All such non-Mishnaic tannaitic sources are termed *baraitot* (lit. outside material, "Works external to the Mishnah"; sing. baraita אתיירב). The *baraitot* cited in the Gemara are often quotations from the Tosefta (a tannaitic compendium of halakha parallel to the Mishnah) and the Halakhic Midrashim (specifically Mekhilta, Sifra and Sifre). Some *baraitot*, however, are known only through traditions cited in the Gemara, and are not part of any other collection.

Gemara

In the three centuries following the redaction of the Mishnah, rabbis throughout Palestine and Babylonia analyzed, debated, and discussed that work. These discussions form the Gemara (אראמג). *Gemara* means “completion” (from the Hebrew *gamar* רמג: "to complete") or "learning" (from the Aramaic: "to study"). The Gemara mainly focuses on elucidating and elaborating the opinions of the Tannaim. The rabbis of the Gemara are known as Amoraim (sing. *Amora* אראמא).

Much of the Gemara consists of legal analysis. The starting point for the analysis is usually a legal statement found in a Mishnah. The statement is then analyzed and compared with other statements used in different approaches to Biblical exegesis in rabbinic Judaism (or - simpler - interpretation of text in Torah study) exchanges between two (frequently anonymous and sometimes metaphorical) disputants, termed the *makshan* (questioner) and *tartzan* (answerer). Another important function of Gemara is to identify the correct Biblical basis for a given law presented in the Mishnah and the logical process connecting one with the other: this activity was known as *talmud* long before the existence of the "Talmud" as a text.[5]

Halakha and Aggadah

The Talmud is a wide-ranging document that touches on a great many subjects. Traditionally Talmudic statements are classified into two broad categories, *Halakhic* and *Aggadic* statements. Halakhic statements directly relate to questions of Jewish law and practice (Halakha). Aggadic statements are not legally related, but rather are exegetical, homiletical, ethical, or historical in nature. See Aggadah for further discussion.

Minor tractates

In addition to the six Orders, the Talmud contains a series of short treatises of a later date, usually printed at the end of Seder Nezikin. These are not divided into Mishnah and Gemara.

Bavli and Yerushalmi

The process of "Gemara" proceeded in the two major centers of Jewish scholarship, the Land of Israel and Babylonia. Correspondingly, two bodies of analysis developed, and two works of *Talmud* were created. The older compilation is called the Jerusalem Talmud or the *Talmud Yerushalmi*. It was compiled in the fourth century in Israel. The Babylonian Talmud was compiled about the year 500 C.E., although it continued to be edited later. The word "Talmud", when used without qualification, usually refers to the Babylonian Talmud.

Talmud Yerushalmi (Jerusalem Talmud)

The Jerusalem Talmud, also known as the Palestinian Talmud,[6] was one of the two compilations of Jewish religious teachings and commentary that was transmitted orally for centuries prior to its compilation by Jewish scholars in Israel.[6] It is a compilation of teachings of the schools of Tiberias, Sepphoris and Caesarea. It is written largely in a western Aramaic dialect that differs from its Babylonian counterpart.

A page of a medieval Jerusalem Talmud manuscript, from the Cairo Genizah.

This Talmud is a synopsis of the analysis of the Mishnah that was developed over the course of nearly 200 years by the Academies in Israel (principally those of Tiberias and Caesaria.) Because of their location, the sages of these Academies devoted considerable attention to analysis of the agricultural laws of the Land of Israel. Traditionally, this Talmud was thought to have been redacted in about the year 350 C.E. by Rav Muna and Rav Yossi in the Land of Israel. It is traditionally known as the *Talmud Yerushalmi* ("Jerusalem Talmud"), but the name is a misnomer, as it was not prepared in Jerusalem. It has more accurately been called *The Talmud of the Land of Israel*.[7]

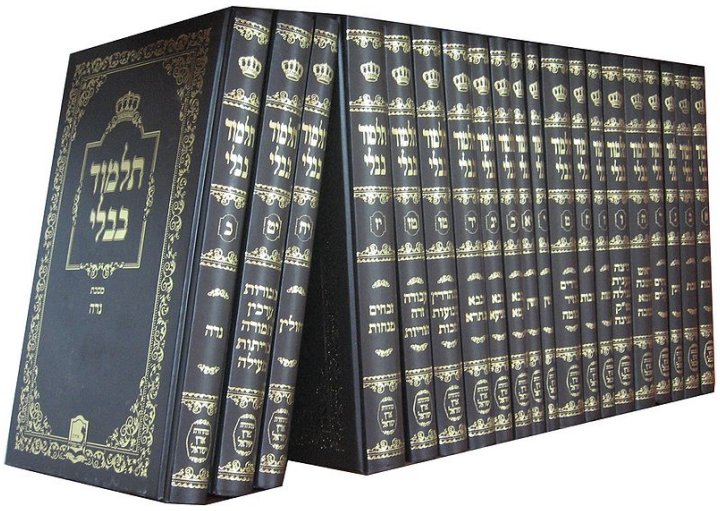
Its final redaction probably belongs to the end of the fourth century, but the individual scholars who brought it to its present form cannot be fixed with assurance. By this time Christianity had become the state religion of the Roman Empire and Jerusalem the holy city of Christendom. In 325 CE Constantine, the first Christian emperor, said "let us then have nothing in common with the detestable Jewish crowd."[8] This policy made a Jew an outcast and pauper. The compilers of the Jerusalem Talmud consequently lacked the time to produce a work of the quality they had intended. The text is evidently incomplete and is not easy to follow. The apparent cessation of work on the Jerusalem Talmud in the fifth century has been associated with the decision of Theodosius II in 425 C.E. to suppress the Patriarchate and put an end to the practice of formal scholarly ordination. Some modern scholars have questioned this connection: for more detail see Jerusalem Talmud: Place and date of composition.

Despite its incomplete state, the Jerusalem Talmud remains an indispensable source of knowledge of the development of the Jewish Law in Israel. It was also an important resource in the study of the Babylonian Talmud by the Kairouan school of Hananel ben Hushiel and Nissim Gaon, with the result that opinions ultimately based on the Jerusalem Talmud found their way into both the Tosafot and the Mishneh Torah of Maimonides.

There are traditions that hold that in the Messianic Age the Jerusalem Talmud will have priority over the Babylonian. This may be interpreted as meaning that, following the restoration of the Sanhedrin and the line of ordained scholars, the work will be completed and "out of Zion shall go the Law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem". Accordingly, following the formation of the state of Israel there is some interest in restoring Eretz Yisrael traditions. For example, Rabbi David Bar-Hayim of the *Makhon Shilo* institute has issued a siddur reflecting Eretz Yisrael practice as found in the Jerusalem Talmud and other sources.

Talmud Bavli (Babylonian Talmud)

The Talmud Bavli was transmitted orally for centuries prior to its compilation by Jewish scholars in Babylon about the 5th century CE.[9]



A full set of the Babylonian Talmud.

Since the Exile to Babylonia in 586 BCE, there had been Jewish communities living in Babylonia as well as in Judea, as many of the captives never returned home. From then until the Talmudic period, the Babylonian Jewish population increased through natural growth as well as migration. The most important of the Jewish centres were Nehardea, Nisibis, Mahoza, Pumbeditha and the Sura Academy. It was no longer necessary for scholars to travel regularly to Israel to gather authentic traditions.

Talmud Bavli (the "Babylonian Talmud") comprises the Mishnah and the Babylonian Gemara, the latter representing the culmination of more than 300 years of analysis of the Mishnah in the Babylonian Academies. The foundations of this process of analysis were laid by Rab, a disciple of Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi. Tradition ascribes the compilation of the Babylonian Talmud in its present form to two Babylonian sages, Rav Ashi and Ravina. Ashi was president of the Sura Academy from 375 to 427 CE. The work begun by Ashi was completed by Ravina, who is traditionally regarded as the final Amoraic expounder. Accordingly, traditionalists argue that Ravina's death in 499 CE is the latest possible date for the completion of the redaction of the Talmud. However, even on the most traditional view a few passages are regarded as the work of a group of rabbis who edited the Talmud after the end of the Amoraic period, known as the *Saboraim* or *Rabbanan Savora'e* (meaning "reasoners" or "considerers").

The question as to when the Gemara was finally put into its present form is not settled among modern scholars. Some, like Louis Jacobs, argue that the main body of the Gemara is not simple reportage of conversations, as it purports to be, but a highly elaborate structure contrived by the *Saboraim*, who must therefore be regarded as the real authors. On this view the text did not reach its final form until around 700. Some modern scholars use the term *Stammaim* (from the Hebrew *Stam*, meaning "closed", "vague" or "unattributed") for the authors of unattributed statements in the Gemara. (See eras within Jewish law.)

Comparison of style and subject matter

There are significant differences between the two Talmud compilations. The language of the Jerusalem Talmud is a western Aramaic dialect, which differs from the form of Aramaic in the Babylonian Talmud. The Talmud Yerushalmi is often fragmentary and difficult to read, even for experienced Talmudists. The redaction of the Talmud Bavli, on the other hand, is more careful and precise. The law as laid down in the two compilations is basically similar, except in emphasis and in minor details. The Jerusalem Talmud has not received much attention from commentators, and such traditional commentaries as exist are mostly concerned with comparing its teachings to those of the Talmud Bavli.

Neither the Jerusalem nor the Babylonian Talmud covers the entire Mishnah: for example, a Babylonian Gemara exists only for 37 out of the 63 tractates of the Mishnah. In particular:

- The Jerusalem Talmud covers all the tractates of Zeraim, while the Babylonian Talmud covers only tractate Berachot. The reason might be that most laws from the Orders Zeraim (agricultural laws limited to the land of

Israel) had little practical relevance in Babylonia and were therefore not included.[10] The Jerusalem Talmud has a greater focus on the Land of Israel and the Torah's agricultural laws pertaining to the land because it was written in the Land of Israel where the laws applied.

- The Jerusalem Talmud does not cover the Mishnaic order of Kodashim, which deals with sacrificial rites and laws pertaining to the Temple, while the Babylonian Talmud does cover it. It is not clear why this is, as the laws were not directly applicable in either country following the Temple's 70 CE destruction.
- In both Talmuds, only one tractate of Tohorot (ritual purity laws) is examined, that of the menstrual laws, Niddah.

The Babylonian Talmud records the opinions of the rabbis of Israel as well as of those of Babylonia, while the Jerusalem Talmud only seldom cites the Babylonian rabbis. The Babylonian version also contains the opinions of more generations because of its later date of completion. For both these reasons it is regarded as a more comprehensive collection of the opinions available. On the other hand, because of the centuries of redaction between the composition of the Jerusalem and the Babylonian Talmud, the opinions of early amoraim might be closer to their original form in the Jerusalem Talmud.

The influence of the Babylonian Talmud has been far greater than that of the *Yerushalmi*. In the main, this is because the influence and prestige of the Jewish community of Israel steadily declined in contrast with the Babylonian community in the years after the redaction of the Talmud and continuing until the Gaonic era. Furthermore, the editing of the Babylonian Talmud was superior to that of the Jerusalem version, making it more accessible and readily usable. According to Maimonides, all Jewish communities during the Gaonic era formally accepted the Babylonian Talmud as binding upon themselves, and modern Jewish practice follows the Babylonian Talmud's conclusions on all areas in which the two Talmuds conflict.

Language

Of the two main components of the Babylonian Talmud, the Mishnah is written in Mishnaic Hebrew and the Gemara is written, with a few exceptions, in a characteristic dialect of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic.[11] This difference in language is due to the long time period elapsing between the two compilations. During the period of the Tannaim (rabbis cited in the Mishna), the spoken vernacular of Jews in Judaea was a late form of Hebrew known as Rabbinic or Mishnaic Hebrew, whereas during the period of the Amoraim (rabbis cited in the Gemara), which began around 200 CE, the spoken vernacular was Aramaic. Hebrew continued to be used for the writing of religious texts, poetry, and so forth.[12]

Since the Mishnah and all of the Baraitas and verses of Tanakh quoted and embedded in the Gemara are in Hebrew, Hebrew constitutes somewhat less than half of the text of the Talmud. The rest, including the discussions of the Amoraim and the overall framework of the Gemara, is in Jewish Babylonian Aramaic. There are occasional quotations from older works in other dialects of Aramaic, such as Megillat Taanit.

Printing

The first complete edition of the Babylonian Talmud was printed in Venice by Daniel Bomberg during the 16th century. In addition to the *Mishnah* and *Gemara*, Bomberg's edition contained the commentaries of Rashi and Tosafot. Almost all printings since Bomberg have followed the same pagination. The edition of the Talmud published by the Szapira brothers in Slavuta in 1795 is particularly prized by many hasidic rebbes. In 1835, after an acrimonious dispute with the Szapira family, a new edition of the Talmud was printed by Menachem Romm of Vilna. Known as the *Vilna Shas*, this edition (and later ones printed by his widow and sons) has been used in the production of more recent editions of Talmud Bavli.

A page number in the Talmud refers to a double-sided page, known as a *daf*; each daf has two *amudim* labeled א and ב, sides A and B (Recto and Verso). The referencing by *daf* is relatively recent and dates from the early Talmud printings of the 17th century. Earlier rabbinic literature generally only refers to the tractate or chapters within a

tractate. Nowadays, reference is made in format [*Tractate daf a/b*] (e.g. Berachot 23b). In the Vilna edition of the Talmud there are 5,894 folio pages.

The text of the Vilna editions is considered by scholars not to be uniformly reliable, and there have been a number of attempts to collate textual variants.

1. In the early twentieth century Nathan Rabinowitz published a series of volumes called *Dikduke Soferim* showing textual variants from early manuscripts and printings.
2. In 1960 work started on a new edition under the name of *Gemara Shelemah* (complete Gemara) under the editorship of Menachem Mendel Kasher: only the volume on the first part of tractate Pesachim appeared before the project was interrupted by his death. This edition contained a comprehensive set of textual variants and a few selected commentaries.
3. Some thirteen volumes have been published by the Institute for the Complete Israeli Talmud (a division of Mechon ha-Rav Herzog), on lines similar to Rabinowitz, containing the text and a comprehensive set of textual variants (from manuscripts, early prints and citations in secondary literature) but no commentaries.[13]

There have been critical editions of particular tractates (e.g. Henry Malter's edition of *Ta'anit*), but there is no modern critical edition of the whole Talmud. Modern editions such as those of the Oz ve-Hadar Institute correct misprints and restore passages that in earlier editions were modified or excised by censorship but do not attempt a comprehensive account of textual variants. One edition, by Rabbi Yosef Amar,[14] represents the Yemenite tradition, and takes the form of a photostatic reproduction of a Vilna-based print to which Yemenite vocalization and textual variants have been added by hand, together with printed introductory material.

There have been three editions aimed at bringing the Talmud to a wider audience. One is the Steinsaltz Talmud, which contains the text with modern punctuation and a detailed translation and explanation in modern Hebrew: there have since been versions in other languages. A second is the Schottenstein Talmud, published by ArtScroll, which contains a translation into English. A third is the Metivta edition, published by the Oz ve-Hadar Institute: this contains the full text in the same format as the Vilna-based editions, with a full explanation in modern Hebrew on facing pages as well as an improved version of the traditional commentaries.[15] (A previous project of the same kind, called *Talmud El Am*, "Talmud to the people", came to an end after a few volumes.)

Commentary and study

From the time of its completion, the Talmud became integral to Jewish scholarship. This section outlines some of the major areas of Talmudic study.

Geonim

The earliest Talmud commentaries were written by the Geonim (approximately 800-1000, C.E.) in Babylonia. Although some direct commentaries on particular treatises are extant, our main knowledge of Gaonic era Talmud scholarship comes from statements embedded in Geonic responsa that shed light on Talmudic passages: these are arranged in the order of the Talmud in Levin's *Otzar ha-Geonim*. Also important are practical abridgments of Jewish law such as Yehudai Gaon's *Halachot Pesukot*, Achai Gaon's *Sheeltot* and Simeon Kayyara's *Halachot Gedolot*. After the death of Hai Gaon, however, the center of Talmud scholarship shifts to Europe and North Africa.

Halakhic and Aggadic extractions

One area of Talmudic scholarship developed out of the need to ascertain the Halakha. Early commentators such as Rabbi Isaac Alfasi (North Africa, 1013–1103) attempted to extract and determine the binding legal opinions from the vast corpus of the Talmud. Alfasi's work was highly influential, attracted several commentaries in its own right and later served as a basis for the creation of halakhic codes. Another influential medieval Halakhic work following the order of the Babylonian Talmud, and to some extent modelled on Alfasi, was "the *Mordechai*", a compilation by

Mordechai ben Hillel (c. 1250 – 1298). A third such work was that of Rabbi Asher ben Yechiel (d. 1327). All these works and their commentaries are printed in the Vilna and many subsequent editions of the Talmud.

A fifteenth century Spanish rabbi, Jacob ibn Habib (d. 1516), composed the Ein Yaakov. *Ein Yaakov* (or *Ein Ya'aqob*) extracts nearly all the Aggadic material from the Talmud. It was intended to familiarize the public with the ethical parts of the Talmud and to dispute many of the accusations surrounding its contents.

Commentaries

The Talmud is often cryptic and difficult to understand. Its language contains many Greek and Persian words that became obscure over time. A major area of Talmudic scholarship developed to explain these passages and words. Some early commentators such as Rabbenu Gershom of Mainz (10th c.) and Rabbenu Ḥananel (early 11th c.) produced running commentaries to various tractates. These commentaries could be read with the text of the Talmud and would help explain the meaning of the text. Another important work is the *Sefer ha-Mafteaḥ* (Book of the Key) by Nissim Gaon, which contains a preface explaining the different forms of Talmudic argumentation and then explains abbreviated passages in the Talmud by cross-referring to parallel passages where the same thought is expressed in full. Commentaries (*ḥiddushim*) by Joseph ibn Migash on two tractates, Bava Batra and Shevuot, based on Ḥananel and Alfasi, also survive, as does a compilation by Zechariah Agamati called *Sefer ha-Ner*.[16] Using a different style, Rabbi Nathan b. Jechiel created a lexicon called the *Arukh* in the 11th century to help translate difficult words.

By far the best known *commentary* on the Babylonian Talmud is that of Rashi (Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac, 1040–1105). The commentary is comprehensive, covering almost the entire Talmud. Written as a running commentary, it provides a full explanation of the words, and explains the logical structure of each Talmudic passage. It is considered indispensable to students of the Talmud.

Medieval Ashkenazic Jewry produced another major commentary known as Tosafot ("additions" or "supplements"). The *Tosafot* are collected commentaries by various medieval Ashkenazic Rabbis on the Talmud (known as *Tosafists*). One of the main goals of the *Tosafot* is to explain and interpret contradictory statements in the Talmud. Unlike *Rashi*, the *Tosafot* is not a running commentary, but rather comments on selected matters. Often the explanations of *Tosafot* differ from those of *Rashi*.

Among the founders of the Tosafist school were Rabbi Jacob b. Meir (known as *Rabbeinu Tam*), who was a grandson of Rashi, and, *Rabbenu Tam's* nephew, Rabbi Isaac ben Samuel. The Tosafot commentaries were collected in different editions in the various schools. The benchmark collection of Tosafot for Northern France was that of R. Eliezer of Touques. The standard collection for Spain was that of Rabbenu Asher ("Tosafot Harosh"). The Tosafot that are printed in the standard Vilna edition of the Talmud are an edited version compiled from the various medieval collections, predominantly that of Touques.[17]

Over time, the approach of the Tosafists spread to other Jewish communities, particularly those in Spain. This led to the composition of many other commentaries in similar styles. Among these are the commentaries of Nachmanides (Ramban), Solomon ben Adret (Rashba), Yom Tov of Seville (Ritva) and Nissim of Gerona (Ran). A comprehensive anthology consisting of extracts from all these is the *Shittah Mekubbetzet* of Bezalel Ashkenazi.

Other commentaries produced in Spain and Provence were not influenced by the Tosafist style. Two of the most significant of these are the Yad Ramah by Rabbi Meir Abulafia (uncle of the mystic Abraham Abulafia) and *Bet Habechirah* by Rabbi Menahem haMeiri, commonly referred to as "Meiri". While the *Bet Habechirah* is extant for all of Talmud, we only have the *Yad Ramah* for Tractates Sanhedrin, Baba Batra and Gittin. Like the commentaries of Ramban and the others, these are generally printed as independent works, though some Talmud editions include the *Shittah Mekubbetzet* in an abbreviated form.

In later centuries, focus partially shifted from direct Talmudic interpretation to the analysis of previously written Talmudic commentaries. These later commentaries include "Maharshal" (Solomon Luria), "Maharam" (Meir Lublin) and "Maharsha" (Samuel Edels), and are generally printed at the back of each tractate.

Another very useful study aid, found in almost all editions of the Talmud, consists of the marginal notes *Torah Or*, *Ein Mishpat Ner Mitzvah* and *Masoret ha-Shas* by the Italian rabbi Joshua Boaz, which give references respectively to the cited Biblical passages, to the relevant halachic codes and to related Talmudic passages.

Most editions of the Talmud include brief marginal notes by Akiva Eger under the name *Gilyonot ha-Shas*, and textual notes by Joel Sirkes and the Vilna Gaon (see Textual emendations below), on the page together with the text.

Pilpul

During the 15th and 16th centuries, a new intensive form of Talmud study arose. Complicated logical arguments were used to explain minor points of contradiction within the Talmud. The term *pilpul* (related to the Hebrew word *pilpel*, meaning "spice" or "pepper") was applied to this type of study. Usage of *pilpul* in this sense (that of "sharp analysis") harks back to the Talmudic era and refers to the intellectual sharpness this method demanded.

Pilpul practitioners posited that the Talmud could contain no redundancy or contradiction whatsoever. New categories and distinctions (*hillukim*) were therefore created, resolving seeming contradictions within the Talmud by novel logical means.

In the Ashkenazi world the founders of *pilpul* are generally considered to be Jacob Pollak (1460–1541) and Shalom Shachna. This kind of study reached its height in the 16th and 17th centuries when expertise in pilpulistic analysis was considered an art form and became a goal in and of itself within the yeshivot of Poland and Lithuania. But the popular new method of Talmud study was not without critics; already in the 15th century, the ethical tract *Orhot Zaddikim* ("Paths of the Righteous" in Hebrew) criticized pilpul for an overemphasis on intellectual acuity. Many 16th- and 17th-century rabbis were also critical of pilpul. Among them may be noted Judah Loew ben Bezalel (the *Maharal* of Prague), Isaiah Horowitz, and Yair Bacharach.

By the 18th century, pilpul study waned. Other styles of learning such as that of the school of Elijah b. Solomon, the Vilna Gaon, became popular. The term "pilpul" was increasingly applied derogatorily to novellae deemed casuistic and hairsplitting. Authors referred to their own commentaries as "al derekh ha-peshat" (by the simple method) to contrast them with pilpul.[18]

Sephardic approaches

Among Sephardi and Italian Jews from the fifteenth century on, some authorities sought to apply the methods of Aristotelian logic, as reformulated by Averroes.[19] This method was first recorded, though without explicit reference to Aristotle, by Isaac Campanton (d. Spain, 1463) in his *Darkhei ha-Talmud* ("The Ways of the Talmud"), and is also found in the works of Moses Chaim Luzzatto.[20]

According to the present-day Sephardi scholar José Faur, traditional Sephardic Talmud study could take place on any of three levels. The most basic level consists of literary analysis of the text without the help of commentaries, designed to bring out the *tzurata di-shema'ta*, i.e. the logical and narrative structure of the passage.[21] The intermediate level, *'iyyun* (concentration), consists of study with the help of commentaries such as Rashi and the Tosafot, similar to that practised among the Ashkenazim (historically Sephardim studied the *Tosefot ha-Rosh* and the commentaries of Nahmanides in preference to the printed Tosafot). The highest level, *halachah* (law), consists of collating the opinions set out in the Talmud with those of the halachic codes such as the Mishneh Torah and the Shulchan Aruch, so as to study the Talmud as a source of law. (A project called *Halacha Brura*,[22] founded by Abraham Isaac Kook, presents the Talmud and the halachic codes side by side in book form so as to enable this kind of collation.)

A somewhat similar distinction exists in the Ashkenazi yeshivah curriculum between *beki'ut* (basic familiarization) and *'iyyun* (in-depth study).

Today most Sephardic yeshivot follow Lithuanian approaches such as the Brisker method (see below): the traditional Sephardic methods are perpetuated informally by some individuals.

Brisker method

In the late nineteenth century another trend in Talmud study arose. Rabbi Hayyim Soloveitchik (1853–1918) of Brisk (Brest-Litovsk) developed and refined this style of study. Brisker method involves a reductionistic analysis of rabbinic arguments within the Talmud or among the Rishonim, explaining the differing opinions by placing them within a categorical structure. The Brisker method is highly analytical and is often criticized as being a modern-day version of Pilpul. Nevertheless, the influence of the Brisker method is great. Most modern day Yeshivot study the Talmud using the Brisker method in some form. One feature of this method is the use of Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah* as a guide to Talmudic interpretation, as distinct from its use as a source of practical halakha.

Rival methods were those of the Mir and Telz yeshivas.

Critical method

As a result of emancipation from the ghetto (1789), Judaism underwent enormous upheaval and transformation during the nineteenth century, (see Reform Judaism, Haskala). Modern methods of textual and historical analysis were applied to the Talmud.

Textual emendations

The text of the Talmud has been subject to some level of critical scrutiny throughout its history.

Rabbinic tradition holds that the people cited in both Talmuds did not have a hand in its writings; rather, their teachings were edited into a rough form around 450 CE (Talmud Yerushalmi) and 550 CE (Talmud Bavli.) The text of the Bavli especially was not firmly fixed at that time.

The Gaonic responsa literature addresses this issue. Teshuvot Geonim Kadmonim, section 78, deals with mistaken biblical readings in the Talmud. This Gaonic responsum states:

> ...But you must examine carefully in every case when you feel uncertainty [as to the credibility of the text] - what is its source? Whether a scribal error? Or the superficiality of a second rate student who was not well versed?....after the manner of many mistakes found among those superficial second-rate students, and certainly among those rural memorizers who were not familiar with the biblical text. And since they erred in the first place....[they compounded the error.]
> Teshuvot Geonim Kadmonim, Ed. Cassel, Berlin 1858, Photographic reprint Tel Aviv 1964, 23b.

In the early medieval era, Rashi concluded that some statements in the extant text of the Talmud were insertions from later editors. On Shevuot 3b Rashi writes "A mistaken student wrote this in the margin of the Talmud, and copyists {subsequently} put it into the Gemara."[23]

The emendations of R. Yoel Sirkis and the Vilna Gaon are included in all standard editions of the Talmud, in the form of marginal glosses entitled *Hagahot ha-Bach* and *Hagahot ha-Gra* respectively; further emendations by R. Solomon Luria are set out in commentary form at the back of each tractate. The Vilna Gaon's emendations were often based on his quest for internal consistency in the text rather than on manuscript evidence;[24] nevertheless many of the Gaon's emendations were later verified by textual critics, such as Solomon Schechter, who had Cairo Genizah texts with which to compare our standard editions.[25]

In the nineteenth century R. Raphael Nathan Nota Rabinovicz published a multi-volume work entitled *Dikdukei Soferim*, showing textual variants from the Munich and other early manuscripts of the Talmud, and further variants are recorded in the Complete Israeli Talmud and *Gemara Shelemah* editions (see Printing, above).

Historical analysis, and higher textual criticism

Historical study of the Talmud can be used to investigate a variety of concerns. One can ask questions such as: Do a given section's sources date from its editor's lifetime? To what extent does a section have earlier or later sources? Are Talmudic disputes distinguishable along theological or communal lines? In what ways do different sections derive from different schools of thought within early Judaism? Can these early sources be identified, and if so, how? Investigation of questions such as these are known as *higher textual criticism*. (The term "criticism", it should be noted, is a technical term denoting academic study.)

Religious scholars still debate the precise method by which the text of the Talmuds reached their final form. Many believe that the text was continuously smoothed over by the savoraim.

In the 1870s and 1880s Rabbi Raphael Natan Nata Rabbinovitz engaged in historical study of Talmud Bavli in his *Diqduqei Soferim*. Since then many Orthodox rabbis have approved of his work, including Rabbis Shlomo Kluger, Yoseph Shaul Ha-Levi Natanzohn, Yaaqov Ettlinger, Isaac Elhanan Spektor and Shimon Sofer.

During the early 19th century, leaders of the newly evolving Reform movement, such as Abraham Geiger and Samuel Holdheim, subjected the Talmud to severe scrutiny as part of an effort to break with traditional rabbinic Judaism. They insisted that the Talmud was entirely a work of evolution and development. This view was rejected as both academically incorrect, and religiously incorrect, by those who would become known as the Orthodox movement. Some Orthodox leaders such as Moses Sofer (the *Chatam Sofer*) became exquisitely sensitive to any change and rejected modern critical methods of Talmud study.

Some rabbis advocated a view of Talmudic study that they held to be in-between the Reformers and the Orthodox; these were the adherents of positive-historical Judaism, notably Nachman Krochmal and Zacharias Frankel. They described the Oral Torah as the result of a historical and exegetical process, emerging over time, through the application of authorized exegetical techniques, and more importantly, the subjective dispositions and personalities and current historical conditions, by learned sages. This was later developed more fully in the five volume work *Dor Dor ve-Dorshav* by Isaac Hirsch Weiss. (See Jay Harris *Guiding the Perplexed in the Modern Age* Ch. 5) Eventually their work came to be one of the formative parts of Conservative Judaism.

Another aspect of this movement is reflected in Graetz's *History of the Jews*. Graetz attempts to deduce the personality of the Pharisees based on the laws or aggadot that they cite, and show that their personalities influenced the laws they expounded.

The leader of Orthodox Jewry in Germany Samson Raphael Hirsch, while not rejecting the methods of scholarship in principle, hotly contested the findings of the Historical-Critical method. In a series of articles in his magazine *Jeschurun* (reprinted in Collected Writings Vol. 5) Hirsch reiterated the traditional view, and pointed out what he saw as numerous errors in the works of Graetz, Frankel and Geiger.

On the other hand, many of the nineteenth century's strongest critics of Reform, including strictly orthodox Rabbis such as Zvi Hirsch Chajes, utilized this new scientific method. The Orthodox Rabbinical seminary of Azriel Hildesheimer was founded on the idea of creating a "harmony between Judaism and science". Another Orthodox pioneer of scientific Talmud study was David Zvi Hoffman.

Orthodox Rabbi Yaakov Hayim Sofer (great-grandson of the Kaf ha-Hayyim) notes that the text of the Gemara has had changes and additions, and contains statements not of the same origin as the original. See his *Yehi Yosef* (Jerusalem, 1991) p. 132 "This passage does not bear the signature of the editor of the Talmud!"

Orthodox scholar Daniel Sperber writes in "Legitimacy, of Necessity, of Scientific Disciplines" that many Orthodox sources have engaged in the historical (also called "scientific") study of the Talmud. As such, the divide today between Orthodoxy and Reform is not about whether the Talmud may be subjected to historical study, but rather about the theological and halakhic implications of such study.

Contemporary scholarship

Some trends within contemporary Talmud scholarship are listed below.

- Orthodox Judaism maintains that the oral law was revealed, in some form, together with the written law. As such, some adherents, most notably Samson Raphael Hirsch and his followers, resisted any effort to apply historical methods that imputed specific motives to the authors of the Talmud. Other major figures in Orthodoxy, however, took issue with Hirsch on this matter, most prominently David Tzvi Hoffmann.[26]
- Some scholars hold that there has been extensive editorial reshaping of the stories and statements within the Talmud. Lacking outside confirming texts, they hold that we cannot confirm the origin or date of most statements and laws, and that we can say little for certain about their authorship. In this view, the questions above are impossible to answer. See, for example, the works of Louis Jacobs and Shaye J.D. Cohen.
- Some scholars hold that the Talmud has been extensively shaped by later editorial redaction, but that it contains sources we can identify and describe with some level of reliability. In this view, sources can be identified by tracing the history and analyzing the geographical regions of origin. See, for example, the works of Lee I. Levine and David Kraemer.
- Some scholars hold that many or most the statements and events described in the Talmud usually occurred more or less as described, and that they can be used as serious sources of historical study. In this view, historians do their best to tease out later editorial additions (itself a very difficult task) and skeptically view accounts of miracles, leaving behind a reliable historical text. See, for example, the works of Saul Lieberman, David Weiss Halivni, and Avraham Goldberg.
- Modern academic study attempts to separate the different "strata" within the text, to try to interpret each level on its own, and to identify the correlations between parallel versions of the same tradition. In recent years, the work of R. David Weiss Halivni and Dr. Shamma Friedman have suggested a paradigm shift in the understanding of the Talmud (Encyclopaedia Judaica 2nd ed. entry "Talmud, Babylonian"). The traditional understanding was to view the Talmud as a unified homogeneous work. While other scholars had also treated the Talmud as a multi-layered work, Dr. Halivni's innovation (primarily in the second volume of his *Mekorot u-Mesorot*) was to differentiate between the Amoraic statements, which are generally brief Halachic decisions or inquiries, and the writings of the later "Stammaitic" (or Saboraic) authors, which are characterised by a much longer analysis that often consists of lengthy dialectic discussion. It has been noted that the Jerusalem Talmud is in fact very similar to the Babylonian Talmud minus Stammaitic activity (Encyclopaedia Judaica (2nd ed.), entry "Jerusalem Talmud"). Shamma Y. Friedman's *Talmud Aruch* on the sixth chapter of Bava Metzia (1996) is the first example of a complete analysis of a Talmudic text using this method. S. Wald has followed with works on Pesachim ch. 3 (2000) and Shabbat ch. 7 (2006).

Role in Judaism

The Talmud is the written record of an oral tradition. It became the basis for many rabbinic legal codes and customs, of which the most important are the Mishneh Torah and the Shulchan Aruch. Orthodox and, to a lesser extent, Conservative Judaism accept the Talmud as authoritative, while Reconstructionist and Reform Judaism do not. This section briefly outlines past and current movements and their view of the Talmud's role.

Sadducees

The Sadducees Jewish sect flourished during the Second Temple period. One of their main arguments with the Pharisees (later known as Rabbinic Judaism) was over their rejection of an *Oral Law*, and their denying a resurrection after death. The disagreement was not about the Talmud, since it had not been written at the time.

Karaism

Another movement that rejected the oral law was Karaism. It arose within two centuries of the completion of the Talmud. Karaism developed as a reaction against the Talmudic Judaism of Babylonia. The central concept of Karaism is the rejection of the Oral Torah, as embodied in the Talmud, in favor of a strict adherence to the Written Law only. This opposes the fundamental Rabbinic concept that the Oral Law was given to Moses on Mount Sinai together with the Written Law. Some later Karaites took a more moderate stance, allowing that some element of tradition (called *sevel ha-yerushah*, the burden of inheritance) is admissible in interpreting the Torah and that some authentic traditions are contained in the Mishnah and the Talmud, though these can never supersede the plain meaning of the Written Law.

Karaism has virtually disappeared, declining from a high of nearly 10% of the Jewish population to a current estimated 0.2%.

Reform Judaism

With the rise of Reform Judaism, during the nineteenth century, the authority of the Talmud was again questioned. The Talmud was seen by Reform Jews as a product of late antiquity having relevance merely as a historical document. In some cases a similar view was taken of the written law as well, while others appeared to adopt a neo-Karaite "back to the Bible" approach, though often with greater emphasis on the prophetic than on the legal books.

Present day

See also Halakha: How Halakha is viewed today and Halakha: The sources and process of Halakha.

Orthodox Judaism continues to stress the importance of Talmud study and it is a central component of Yeshiva curriculum, in particular for those training to be Rabbis. This is so even though *Halakha* is generally studied from the medieval codes and not directly from the Talmud. Talmudic study amongst the laity is widespread in Orthodox Judaism, with daily or weekly Talmud study particularly common in Haredi Judaism and with Talmud study a central part of the curriculum in Orthodox Yeshivas and day schools. The regular study of Talmud among laymen has been popularized by the *Daf Yomi*, a daily course of Talmud study initiated by Rabbi Meir Shapiro in 1923; its 12th cycle of study began on March 2, 2005.

Conservative Judaism similarly emphasizes the study of Talmud within its religious and rabbinic education. Generally, however, the Talmud is studied as a historical source-text for Halakha. The Conservative approach to legal decision-making emphasizes placing classic texts and prior decisions in historical and cultural context, and examining the historical development of Halakha. This approach has resulted in greater practical flexibility than that of the Orthodox. Talmud study is part of the curriculum of Conservative parochial education at many Conservative day schools and an increase in Conservative day school enrollments has resulted in an increase in Talmud study as part of Conservative Jewish education among a minority of Conservative Jews. See also: *The Conservative Jewish view of the Halakha*.

Reform Judaism does not emphasize the study of Talmud to the same degree in their Hebrew schools, but they do teach it in their rabbinical seminaries; the world view of liberal Judaism rejects the idea of binding Jewish law, and uses the Talmud as a source of inspiration and moral instruction. Ownership and reading of the Talmud is not widespread among Reform and Reconstructionist Jews, who usually place more emphasis on the study of the Hebrew Bible or Tanakh.

Attacks

Historian Michael Levi Rodkinson, in his book *The History of the Talmud*, wrote that persecutors of the Talmud, both during and subsequent to its formation, "have varied in their character, objects and actions" and the book documents a number of critics and persecutors, including Nicholas Donin, Johannes Pfefferkorn, Johann Andreas Eisenmenger, the Frankists, and August Rohling.[27] Many attacks come from antisemitic sources, particularly Christian antisemites such as Justinas Pranaitis, Elizabeth Dilling or David Duke. Criticisms also arise from Muslim sources,[28] Jewish sources,[29] and atheists and skeptics.[30] Accusations against the Talmud include alleged:[31]

1. Anti-Christian or anti-Gentile content[32]
2. Absurd or sexually immoral content[33]
3. Falsification of scripture[34]

Many of these criticisms, particularly those by antisemitic critics, are based on quotations that are taken out of context, and thus misrepresent the meaning of the Talmud's text. Sometimes the misrepresntation is deliberate, and other times simply due to an inability to grasp the subtle and sometimes confusing narratives in the Talmud. Some quotations provided by antisemitic critics deliberately omit passages in order to generate quotes that appear to be offensive or insulting.[35]

Middle ages

The history of the Talmud reflects in part the history of Judaism persisting in a world of hostility and persecution. Almost at the very time that the Babylonian *savoraim* put the finishing touches to the redaction of the Talmud, the emperor Justinian issued his edict against *deuterosis* (doubling, repetition) of the Hebrew Bible.[36] It is disputed whether, in this context, *deuterosis* means "Mishnah" or "Targum": in patristic literature, the word is used in both senses. This edict, dictated by Christian zeal and anti-Jewish feeling, was the prelude to attacks on the Talmud, conceived in the same spirit, and beginning in the thirteenth century in France, where Talmudic study was then flourishing.

The charge against the Talmud brought by the Christian convert Nicholas Donin led to the first public disputation between Jews[37] and Christians and to the first burning of copies of the Talmud in Paris in 1242.[38]

The Talmud was likewise the subject of the Disputation of Barcelona in 1263 between Nahmanides (Rabbi Moses ben Nahman) and Christian convert, Pablo Christiani. This same Pablo Christiani made an attack on the Talmud that resulted in a papal bull against the Talmud and in the first censorship, which was undertaken at Barcelona by a commission of Dominicans, who ordered the cancellation of passages deemed objectionable from a Christian perspective (1264).[39]

At the Disputation of Tortosa in 1413, Geronimo de Santa Fé brought forward a number of accusations, including the fateful assertion that the condemnations of "pagans," "heathens," and "apostates" found in the Talmud were in reality veiled references to Christians. These assertion were denied by the Jewish community and its scholars, who contended that Judaic thought made a sharp distinction between those classified as heathen or pagan, being polytheistic, and those who acknowledge one true God (such as the Christians) even while worshipping the true monotheistic God incorrectly. Thus, Jews viewed Christians as misguided and in error, but not among the "heathens" or "pagans" discussed in the Talmud.[40]

Both Pablo Christiani and Geronimo de Santa Fé, in addition to criticizing the Talmud, also regarded it as a source of authentic traditions, some of which could be used as arguments in favour of Christianity. Examples of such traditions were statements that the Messiah was born around the time of the destruction of the Temple, and that the Messiah sat at the right hand of God.[41]

In 1415, Pope Benedict XIII, who had convened the Tortosa disputation, issued a bull (which was destined, however, to remain inoperative) forbidding the Jews to read the Talmud, and ordering the destruction of all copies of it. Far more important were the charges made in the early part of the sixteenth century by the convert Johannes Pfefferkorn,

the agent of the Dominicans. The result of these accusations was a struggle in which the emperor and the pope acted as judges, the advocate of the Jews being Johann Reuchlin, who was opposed by the obscurantists; and this controversy, which was carried on for the most part by means of pamphlets, became in the eyes of some a precursor of the Reformation.[42]

An unexpected result of this affair was the complete printed edition of the Babylonian Talmud issued in 1520 by Daniel Bomberg at Venice, under the protection of a papal privilege.[43] Three years later, in 1523, Bomberg published the first edition of the Jerusalem Talmud. After thirty years the Vatican, which had first permitted the Talmud to appear in print, undertook a campaign of destruction against it. On the New Year, Rosh Hashanah (September 9, 1553) the copies of the Talmud confiscated in compliance with a decree of the Inquisition were burned at Rome, in Campo dei Fiori (auto de fé). Other burnings took place in other Italian cities, as at Cremona in 1559. Censorship of the Talmud and other Hebrew works was introduced by a papal bull issued in 1554; five years later the Talmud was included in the first Index Expurgatorius; and Pope Pius IV commanded, in 1565, that the Talmud be deprived of its very name. The convention of referring to the work as "Shas" (*shishah sidre Mishnah*) instead of "Talmud" dates from this time.[44]

The first edition of the expurgated Talmud, on which most subsequent editions were based, appeared at Basel (1578–1581) with the omission of the entire treatise of 'Abodah Zarah and of passages considered inimical to Christianity, together with modifications of certain phrases. A fresh attack on the Talmud was decreed by Pope Gregory XIII (1575–85), and in 1593 Clement VIII renewed the old interdiction against reading or owning it. The increasing study of the Talmud in Poland led to the issue of a complete edition (Kraków, 1602-5), with a restoration of the original text; an edition containing, so far as known, only two treatises had previously been published at Lublin (1559–76). In 1707 some copies of the Talmud were confiscated in the province of Brandenburg, but were restored to their owners by command of Frederick, the first king of Prussia. A further attack on the Talmud took place in Poland (in what is now Ukrainian territory) in 1757, when Bishop Dembowski, at the instigation of the Frankists, convened a public disputation at Kamianets-Podilskyi, and ordered all copies of the work found in his bishopric to be confiscated and burned.[45]

The external history of the Talmud includes also the literary attacks made upon it by Christian theologians after the Reformation, since these onslaughts on Judaism were directed primarily against that work, the leading example being Eisenmenger's *Entdecktes Judenthum* (Judaism Unmasked) (1700).[46] In contrast, the Talmud was a subject of rather more sympathetic study by many Christian theologians, jurists and Orientalists from the Renaissance on, including Johann Reuchlin, John Selden, John Lightfoot and Johannes Buxtorf father and son.[47]

Nineteenth century and after

The Vilna edition of the Talmud was subject to Russian government censorship, or self-censorship to meet government expectations, though this was less severe than some previous attempts: the title "Talmud" was retained and the tractate Avodah Zarah was included. Most modern editions are either copies of or closely based on the Vilna edition, and therefore still omit most of the disputed passages. Although they were not available for many generations, the removed sections of the Talmud, Rashi, Tosafot and Maharsha were preserved through rare printings of lists of *errata*, known as *Chesronos Hashas* ("Omissions of the Talmud").[48] Many of these censored portions were recovered ironically enough from uncensored manuscripts in the Vatican Library. Some modern editions of the Talmud contain some or all of this material, either at the back of the book, in the margin, or in its original location in the text.[49]

In 1830, during a debate in the French Chamber of Peers regarding state recognition of the Jewish faith, Admiral Verhuell declared himself unable to forgive the Jews whom he had met during his travels throughout the world either for their refusal to recognize Jesus as the Messiah or for their possession of the Talmud. In the same year the Abbé Chiarini published at Paris a voluminous work entitled "Théorie du Judaïsme," in which he announced a translation of the Talmud, advocating for the first time a version that would make the work generally accessible, and thus serve

for attacks on Judaism. In a like spirit nineteenth century anti-Semitic agitators often urged that a translation be made; and this demand was even brought before legislative bodies, as in Vienna. The Talmud and the "Talmud Jew" thus became objects of anti-Semitic attacks, for example in August Rohling's *Der Talmudjude* (1871), although, on the other hand, they were defended by many Christian students of the Talmud, notably Hermann Strack.[50]

Further attacks from anti-Semitic sources include Justinas Pranaitis' *The Talmud Unmasked: The Secret Rabbinical Teachings Concerning Christians* (1892)[51] and Elizabeth Dilling's *The Plot against Christianity* (1964).[52] The criticisms of the Talmud in many modern pamphlets and websites are often recognisable as verbatim quotes from one or other of these.

Contemporary accusations

Criticism of the Talmud is widespread, in great part through the Internet.[53]

The Anti-Defamation League's report on this topic states that antisemitic critics of the Talmud frequently use erroneous translations or selective quotations in order to distort the meaning of the Talmud's text, and sometimes fabricate passages. In addition, the attackers rarely provide full context of the quotations, and fail to provide contextual information about the culture that the Talmud was composed in, nearly 2,000 years ago.[54]

Rabbi Gil Student, a prolific Internet author, states that many antisemitic attacks on the Talmud are merely recycling discredited material that originated in the thirteenth century disputations, particularly from Raymond Marti and Nicholas Donin, and that the criticisms are based on quotations taken out of context, and are sometimes entirely fabricated.[55]

Translations

Talmud Bavli

There are five contemporary translations of the Talmud into English:

- *The Talmud: The Steinsaltz Edition* Adin Steinsaltz, Random House (incomplete). This work is in fact a translation of Rabbi Steinsaltz' Hebrew language translation of and commentary on the entire Talmud.
- *The Schottenstein Edition of the Talmud*, Mesorah Publications. In this translation, each English page faces the Aramaic/Hebrew page. The English pages are elucidated and heavily annotated; each Aramaic/Hebrew page of Talmud typically requires three English pages of translation. Complete.
- *The Soncino Talmud*, Isidore Epstein, Soncino Press. Notes on each page provide additional background material. This translation is published both on its own and in a parallel text edition, in which each English page faces the Aramaic/Hebrew page. It is available also on CD-ROM.
- *The Talmud of Babylonia. An American Translation*, Jacob Neusner, Tzvee Zahavy, others. Atlanta: 1984-1995: Scholars Press for Brown Judaic Studies. Complete.
- *The Babylonian Talmud*, translated by Michael L. Rodkinson. (1903, contains all of the tractates in the Orders of *Mo'ed*/Festivals and *Nezikin*/Damages, plus some additional material related to these Orders.) This is inaccurate and was wholly superseded by the Soncino translation: it is sometimes linked to from the internet because, for copyright reasons, it was until recently the only translation freely available on the Web (see below, under Full text resources).

Talmud Yerushalmi

- *Talmud of the Land of Israel: A Preliminary Translation and Explanation* Jacob Neusner, Tzvee Zahavy, others. University of Chicago Press. This translation uses a form-analytical presentation that makes the logical units of discourse easier to identify and follow. This work has received many positive reviews. However, some consider Neusner's translation methodology idiosyncratic. One volume was negatively reviewed by Saul Lieberman of the Jewish Theological Seminary.
- *Schottenstein Edition of the Yerushalmi Talmud* Mesorah/Artscroll. This translation is the counterpart to Mesorah/Artscroll's Schottenstein Edition of the Talmud (i.e. Babylonian Talmud).

Notes

[1] See, Strack, Hermann, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*, Jewish Publication Society, 1945. pp.11-12. "[The Oral Law] was handed down by word of mouth during a long period...The first attempts to write down the traditional matter, there is reason to believe, date from the first half of the second post-Christian century." Strack theorizes that the growth of a Christian canon (the New Testament) was a factor that influenced the Rabbis to record the oral law in writing.

[2] The theory that the destruction of the Temple and subsequent upheaval led to the committing of Oral Law into writing was first explained in the Epistle of Sherira Gaon and often repeated. See, for example, Grayzel, *A History of the Jews*, Penguin Books, 1984, p. 193.

[3] For the meaning of "page" in this context see under #Printing.

[4] Jacobs, Louis, *Structure and form in the Babylonian Talmud*, Cambridge University Press, 1991, p.2

[5] e.g. Pirkei Avot 5.21: "five for the Torah, ten for Mishnah, thirteen for the commandments, fifteen for *talmud*".

[6] "Palestinian Talmud" (http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/439785/Palestinian-Talmud). *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*. Encyclopædia Britannica. 2010. . Retrieved August 4, 2010.

[7] The Yerushalmi--the Talmud of the land of Israel: an introduction, Jacob Neusner, J. Aronson, 1993

[8] Eusebius (circa 330 CE). "XVIII: He speaks of their Unanimity respecting the Feast of Easter, and against the Practice of the Jews" (http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf201.iv.vi.iii.xviii.html). *Vita Constantini* (http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf201.iv.i.html). **III**. . Retrieved June 21, 2009.

[9] "Early compilations » The making of the Talmuds: 3rd–6th century" (http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/581644/Talmud/34869/The-making-of-the-Talmuds-3rd-6th-century#ref=ref24372). *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Encyclopædia Britannica Online. 2008. . Retrieved 2June 21, 2009.

[10] Steinsaltz, Adin (1976). *The Essential Talmud*. BasicBooks, A Division of HarperCollins Publishers. ISBN 0465020631.

[11] "Judaic Treasures of the Library of Congress: The Talmud" (http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/loc/Talmud.html). American-Israeli Cooperative Enterprise. .

[12] Sáenz-Badillos, Ángel and John Elwolde. 1996. A history of the Hebrew language. P.170-171: "There is general agreement that two main periods of RH (Rabbinical Hebrew) can be distinguished. The first, which lasted until the close of the Tannaitic era (around 200 CE), is characterized by RH as a spoken language gradually developing into a literary medium in which the Mishnah, Tosefta, *baraitot*, and Tannaitic *midrashim* would be composed. The second stage begins with the *Amoraim*, and sees RH being replaced by Aramaic as the spoken vernacular, surviving only as a literary language. Then it continued to be used in later rabbinic writings until the tenth century in, for example, the Hebrew portions of the two Talmuds and in midrashic and haggadic literature."

[13] Friedman, "Variant Readings in the Babylonian Talmud — A Methodological Study Marking the Appearance of 13 Volumes of the Institute for the Complete Israeli Talmud's Edition," Tarbiz 68 (1998).

[14] Amar, Yosef. "Talmud Bavli be-niqqud Temani" (http://www.nosachteiman.co.il/?CategoryID=856&ArticleID=3022&Page=1). Nosachteiman.co.il. .

[15] The other Oz ve-Hadar editions are similar but without the explanation in modern Hebrew.

[16] Sefer ha-Ner on Berachot (http://hebrewbooks.org/40633)

[17] For a list see Ephraim Urbach, s.v. "Tosafot," in *Encyclopedia of Religion*.

[18] See *Pilpul*, Mordechai Breuer, in *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Vol. 16, 2nd Ed (2007), Macmillan Reference, USA and H.H. Ben Sasson, *A History of the Jewish People*, pp. 627, 717.

[19] *Kol Melechet Higgayon*, the Hebrew translation of Averroes' epitome of Aristotle's logical works, was widely studied in northern Italy, particularly Padua.

[20] For a comprehensive treatment, see Ravitzky, below.

[21] Examples of lessons using this approach may be found here (http://www.moreshetsepharad.org/GEMARA.html).

[22] Rav Avraham Yitzchok Ha-Cohen Kook, zt"l, Late Chief Rabbi of Israel (February 17, 2008). "A labor of great magnitude stands before us, to repair the break between the Talmudic deliberations and the halachic decisions... to accustom students of the Gemara to correlate knowledge of all the halacha with its source and reason..." (http://www.halachabrura.org/). Halacha Brura and Birur Halacha Institute. . Retrieved 20 September 2010. It should not be confused with the halachic compendium of the same name by Rabbi David Yosef.

[23] As Yonah Fraenkel shows in his book *Darko Shel Rashi be-Ferusho la-Talmud ha-Bavli*, one of Rashi's major accomplishments was textual emendation. Rabbenu Tam, Rashi's grandson and one of the central figures in the Tosafist academies, polemicizes against textual emendation in his less studied work *Sefer ha-Yashar*. However, the Tosafists, too, emended the Talmudic text (See e.g. *Baba Kamma* 83b *s.v. af haka'ah ha'amurah* or *Gittin* 32a *s.v. mevutelet*) as did many other medieval commentators (see e.g. R. Shlomo ben Aderet, *Hiddushei ha-Rashb"a al ha-Sha"s* to *Baba Kamma* 83b, or Rabbenu Nissim's commentary to Alfasi on *Gittin* 32a).

[24] Etkes, Immanuel (2002). *The Gaon of Vilna*. University of California Press. p. 16. ISBN 0520223942.

[25] Solomon Schechter, *Studies in Judaism* p.92.

[26] See particularly his controversial dissertation, *Mar Samuel*, available at archive.org (http://www.archive.org/details/MN41459ucmf_6) (German).

[27] Rodkinson

- Lewis, Bernard, *Semites and anti-Semites: an inquiry into conflict and prejudice*, W. W. Norton & Company, 1999, page 134
- Johnson, Paul, *A history of the Jews*, HarperCollins, 1988, p 577
- *Arab attitudes to Israel*, Yehoshafat Harkabi, p 248, 272

[29] Such as Uriel da Costa, Israel Shahak and Baruch Kimmerling.

[30] Such as Christopher Hitchens and Denis Diderot

- Hyam Maccoby, *Judaism on Trial*
- Rodkinson
- ADL report The Talmud in Anti-Semitic Polemics (http://www.adl.org/presrele/asus_12/the_talmud.pdf), Anti-Defamation League.
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- Fraade, p 144-146
- Kimmerling, Baruch, "Images of Gentiles" (book review), *Journal of Palestine Studies*, April 1997, Vol. 26, No. 3, pp 96–98
- Siedman, p 137
- Cohn-Sherbok, p 48
- Steinsaltz, pp 268-270
- See, for example, Uriel DaCosta, quoted by Nadler, p 68
- Cohn-Sherbok, p 47
- Wilhelm Bacher, "Talmud", article in *Jewish Encylopedia*
- ADL report, p 1-2
- For examples of some selective quoting and omissions, see:

  Responses to criticisms by [[Gil Student (http://talmud.faithweb.com)]]

  Responses to criticisms by Michael Gruda (http:/ / www. mail-archive. com/ ctrl@listserv. aol. com/ msg18762.html)

[36] Nov. 146.1.2.

[37] The Jewish representatives included Rabbi Yechiel of Paris and Rabbi Moses ben Jacob of Coucy

- Rodkinson, pp 66–69
- Levy, p 701
- Maccoby
- For a Hebrew account of the Paris Disputation, see Jehiel of Paris, "The Disputation of Jehiel of Paris" (Hebrew), in *Collected Polemics and Disputations*, ed. J. D. Eisenstein, Hebrew Publishing Company, 1922; Translated and reprinted by Hyam Maccoby in *Judaism on Trial: Jewish-Christian Disputations in the Middle Ages*, 1982.
- Cohn-Sherbok, pp 50-54
- Maccoby

[40] Maccoby

[41] Hyam Maccoby, op. cit.

- Maccoby
- Roth, Norman, *Medieval Jewish civilization: an encyclopedia*, Taylor & Francis, 2003, p 83

[43] Rodkinson, p 98

[44] Hastings, James. *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics Part 23*, p 186

[45] Rodkinson, pp 100-103

- Rodkinson, p 105
- Levy, p 210
- Boettcher, Susan R., "Entdecktes Judenthum", article in Levy, p 210

[47] Berlin, George L., *Defending the faith: nineteenth-century American Jewish writings on Christianity and Jesus*, SUNY Press, 1989, p 156

[48] Chesronos Hashas (http://www.dhengah.org/torah/chhashas.pdf)

[49] The Talmud: The Steinsaltz Edition, pp 103-104. Heller, Marvin J. (1999). *Printing the Talmud: a history of the individual treatises printed from 1700 to 1750*. Basel: Brill Publishers. pp. 17, 166.

[50] Rodkinson, pp 109-114

[51] Levy, p 564

[52] Jeansonne, Glen, *Women of the Far Right: The Mothers' Movement and World War II*, University of Chicago Press, 1997, pp 168-169

[53] Jones, Jeremy (June 1999). "Talmudic Terrors" (http://www.aijac.org.au/review/1999/246/talmudic.html). Australia/Israel Review. . Retrieved 2008-06-12. "If any reader doubts the maliciousness, virulence and prevalence of such material in cyber-space, it is well worth a visit to the Internet site known as Talmud Expose (www.geocities.com/Athens/Cyprus/8815), in which Melbourne's David Maddison has performed the Herculean task of responding, one by one, to the hundreds of "anti-Talmud" quotes, lies and themes he has encountered on the Internet."

[54] Anti-Defamation League (February 2003). "The Talmud in Anti-Semitic Polemics" (http://www.adl.org/presrele/asus_12/the_talmud.pdf) (PDF). Press release. . Retrieved September 16, 2010. "By selectively citing various passages from the Talmud and Midrash, polemicists have sought to demonstrate that Judaism espouses hatred for non-Jews (and specifically for Christians), and promotes obscenity, sexual perversion, and other immoral behavior. To make these passages serve their purposes, these polemicists frequently mistranslate them or cite them out of context (wholesale fabrication of passages is not unknown).…In distorting the normative meanings of rabbinic texts, anti-Talmud writers frequently remove passages from their textual and historical contexts. Even when they present their citations accurately, they judge the passages based on contemporary moral standards, ignoring the fact that the majority of these passages were composed close to two thousand years ago by people living in cultures radically different from our own. They are thus able to ignore Judaism's long history of social progress and paint it instead as a primitive and parochial religion. Those who attack the Talmud frequently cite ancient rabbinic sources without noting subsequent developments in Jewish thought, and without making a good-faith effort to consult with contemporary Jewish authorities who can explain the role of these sources in normative Jewish thought and practice."

[55] Student, Gil (2000). "The Real Truth About The Talmud" (http://talmud.faithweb.com/articles/intro.html). . Retrieved September 16, 2010. "Anti-Talmud accusations have a long history dating back to the 13th century when the associates of the Inquisition attempted to defame Jews and their religion [see Yitzchak Baer, *A History of Jews in Christian Spain*, vol. I pp. 150-185]. The early material compiled by hateful preachers like Raymond Martini and Nicholas Donin remain the basis of all subsequent accusations against the Talmud. Some are true, most are false and based on quotations taken out of context, and some are total fabrications [see Baer, ch. 4 f. 54, 82 that it has been proven that Raymond Martini forged quotations]. On the Internet today we can find many of these old accusations being rehashed…"

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