

# **An Overview Of Talmud Babylonian And Yerushalmi And Their Styles Of Interpretation And Legal Opinion About Oral Tradition**

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## **Abstract**

In the field of Talmudic teachings two cities are very important. Present Babylon (Iraq) and Jerusalem, both ancient cities, are centers of Talmudic teachings. From generation to generation of rabbis belonging to these cities, the Talmud is a written form of commentary and discourse on oral law (Mishna). Based on this, two collections of Talmuds were formed. The collection of rabbis from Babylon was called the Talmud Babylon and the collection of rabbis from Yerushalm was called the Talmud Yerushalmi. In fact, three centuries have passed since the compilation of the Mishna in which the appendixes of the Mishna were prepared and the scholars of Babylon and Palestine took part in their preparation. The current research work is qualitative in nature and based upon both primary and secondary sources, Talmud, Bible, Oxford Dictionary, books and articles published in various journals. In fact, these appendixes are a collection of Jewish sharia, legal, ideological, intellectual and mythical tales, and the Jewish literature of the time is called Gemara, and the Talmud was formed by the combination of Mishna and Gemara. And

Talmudic literature has had a profound effect on Jewish thought, and it is thanks to the Talmud that the Jews relate and benefit from their predecessors. Both types of Talmud, Talmud, Babylon and Jerusalem will be highlighted below.

**Keyword:** Talmud Babylonian, Talmud Yerushalmi, Oral Tradition, Oral Tradition, Mishna, Gemara.

### **Introduction:**

A study of the Talmud explains that the Talmud is basically a collection of healthy research. And in the light of this, the implementation and application of the Shari'ah rules of the Jews became possible. Usually when the word Talmud is spoken, it means Talmud Babylon. The main reason for this is that the Babylonian Talmud covers all the subjects of the mission and in contrast the basic division of the Talmud Yerushalmi mission which consists of six booklets. Four of them describe the opinions of the rabbis. For this reason, the Babylonian Talmud is three times larger than the Yerushalmi Talmud in terms of volume. To the Jews, the Talmud is considered more authoritative than the Babylonian Yerushalmi, and the Talmud is not an argument for all Jews but an argument for the majority of Jews. Talmudic phrases are in Hebrew and Aramaic. The official statements of (Amoraim) were transcribed in Hebrew and their statements are explained in Aramaic. Jewish scholars in Babylon set up a very Talmudic school in the city of Babylon to edit the Talmudic Babylon. And especially in their establishment is the role of the scholars who compiled the Talmudic literature of the migration from Jerusalem to Babylon. The historical status of the city of Babylon is of great importance.

### **City of Babylon:**

Babylon is an ancient city located 80 kilometers south of present-day Baghdad on the Euphrates River. Babylon is a Hebrew word and it is a combination of the two words Bab (Door) and Al (God) Babylon is the name used for the land of Egypt in the ancient dictionary, especially Fustat settled here. Before that it was called Babylon.

Ibn Hasham says:

“Babylon was a king, one of the Yemen who ruled Egypt in the time of Abraham”<sup>i</sup>

The ancient name of Iraq is Mesopotamia. Iraq is considered to be the center of the first human civilization. But this is the name given to them by the Greeks, which in Greek means, between the rivers, because this civilization grew between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. This area was the center of Samaritan, Sassanid and Babylonian civilizations.

“According to the Old Testament, the city was founded by King Nimrod in the field of Shinar”<sup>ii</sup>

Historically, the city of Babylon has been very important. The main reason for this is that the city of Babylon has been the center of various civilizations. Characteristically, there were rabbinic schools of oral law. During the Orthodox period, Babylon was ruled by a Persian family, the Sassanid's.

“Babylonia was ruled by a Persian dynasty which was commonly present during Talmudic era, the Sassanid's”<sup>iii</sup>

The interpretation on the Babylonian Mishnah, Talmud explains the commands stated in it. It also deals with many aspects of Mishnah, but in most cases it goes far beyond mere explanation.

### **The style of the Babylonian Talmudic Interpretation (Oral law):**

1. Explain how missionary commandments or disputes are resolved through interpretations of the biblical text.
2. Exploring the basic logical principles of mission statements and showing that different understandings of mission arguments can result in the dissimilarities in their practical application.
3. Resetting prevailing or real contradictions among various statements in the mission, in process of the mission and other customs, for example, explaining that two conflicting sources are dealing with different situations. Views of various rabbis are represented by them.<sup>iv</sup>

Now there is a group of Jewish scholars who were involved in the compilation of the Mishnah and others who were involved in the compilation of the Talmud.

“Rabbis who have taken active part in Talmud are closest to as "Amora'im" [singular: "Amora"], belongs to an Aramaic word that originally designated the academy, to teach the scholars before the public is official job”<sup>v</sup>

### **Tanaim and amoraim:**

They played a role in the formation of the Talmud during the Talmudic period. They are called Amoraim and the word Amoraim which comes from (amor'a) and is specially spoken for those who were formally part of the universities who first read the teachings of the rabbis of the missionary age before the people. The following is a description of the Tanaim and Amoraim in the form of a map, which contributed to all stages from the mission to the Talmud.

1. The Tanaimi period refers to the period that begins shortly before the Second Temple and this period is the period of the compilation of the mission and this period ends in the early third century AD.

2. The Amorite period refers to the period after the third century AD in which the Talmud Babylon and Jerusalem were completed. Babylonian Amoraim edited the Talmud Babylon and Jerusalem Amoraim completed the Talmud Jerusalem.

It is also important to know that Jewish scholars used two terms, such as Rav and Rabi, to refer to their scholars.

### **Rabi and Rav:**

The use of the two basic terms rabbi and Ravi is commonly found in the Talmudic literature for ancient scholars. Officially, the term Rabbi is used exclusively for scholars living in the land of Israel. Therefore, the term rabbi is not commonly used for the Babylonian rulers of the Jews, but they are called by the name of Ravi.

“In the Land of Israel only authorized Rabbinic ordination could be achieved. However, many Babylonian sages and saints did not accept the title "Rabbi," but they were commonly known as honorific Rav”<sup>vi</sup>

### **Famous Babylonian Schools:**

The formation of the Talmud Babylon is due to a large group of Amoraim and various Babylonian universities which have played their part in its formation from generation to generation.

First generation:

1. Rav" (Actual name: Abba Arikha), was the pioneer member of the great school located at Sura.<sup>vii</sup>

Ravi Aba Erika who founded a major center of Talmudic teachings called (sura) and died in 247 AD.

3. Samuel, established the rabbinic school at the place of Nehardea, after sometimes it shifted to Pumbedita.<sup>viii</sup>

Second generation:

Rav Huna, was Rav's leading successor in the chairmanship of the Sura school.<sup>ix</sup>

4. Rav Judah [bar Ezekiel] run the academy at Pumbedita.<sup>x</sup>

Samuel was succeeded by Judas Samuel, who died in 297 AD.

Third Generation:

5. Rav Hisda, who was died at 309, remained stood at the head officer of the Sura school.<sup>xi</sup>

Ravi (Hisda) was appointed superintendent of the Norwegian Huna Talmudic School of Sura and died in 309 AD.

6. Rav Nahman [bar Jacob], his death year is 320. His social activities revolves around Nehardea, he was a judge, at the court of the Exilarch (the political head of the Babylonian Jewish community)<sup>xii</sup>

7. Rabbah [bar Nahmani], death year is 330: he was the most prominent teacher of his time, Pumbedita academy was directed by him. His most authentic dialectical abilities reputed him a reputation as an "uprooter of mountains."<sup>xiii</sup>

Fourth generation:

8. After Rabbah, Abaye headed the academy at Pumbedita, he died 339.<sup>xiv</sup>

9. Rava [bar Joseph bar Hama], death year is 352. He established an academy at the place of Mahoza.

The conflicts and discussions of these above mentioned scholars, Babylonian Talmud are full of the Rabbahian students.<sup>xv</sup>

Bar Joseph Bar Hama founded the Mahoza Talmudic Academy. The two men who were disciples of Rabbi Rabbah and their importance can be gauged from the fact that the Talmud Babylon has their differences and their discussions on every page. He died in 352 AD.

Fifth generation:

10. Rav Papa, death year is 375. He was the student of two eminent scholars Abaye and Rava, he established a school in the place of Narsh.<sup>xvi</sup>

Sixth generation:

Rav Ashi, death year is 427. Sura academy was led by him, redaction of the Babylonian Talmud was done by him<sup>xvii</sup>.

Seventh generation:

Rav Ashi's son, Mar bar Rav Ashi [also known as "Tavyomi"], died 468.

The first volume of the Babylonian Talmud was edited by Ravi Ashi at the Talmudic Academy of Aashi shortly after the Jerusalem Talmud and the last volume was prepared by Rabina III.

### **The Talmud Jerusalemi:**

A study of Jewish history reveals that rabbinical Judaism originated in the Israel. Historically, the evolutionary era of Rabbinic Judaism took place from the 2nd century AD to the 7th century AD, and this evolution did not take place suddenly but through a gradual process called the Talmud of Jerusalem, which is called the Talmud of the land of Israel. Also known as the Palestinian Talmud, another name for the Talmud is the Talmud of Israel. <sup>xviii</sup> And for some, the name is even more appropriate because it was compiled in Galilee, not Jerusalem, in the Holy Land. And there were no Jews living in Jerusalem at that time. Completion of the Talmud Jerusalem Evidence of the period of the <sup>xix</sup> compilation of the Palestinian Talmud before the Talmud Babylon is found in the internal evidence of the Jerusalem Talmud itself. Jacob N. Epstein emphasizes that the Talmud was completed in Jerusalem between 400 and 420 AD. <sup>xx</sup>

The Jerusalem Talmud and the Babylonian Talmud, though structurally and materially similar, are individually unique in many respects. The Talmud Jerusalem also contains the commentaries of the Jerusalem rabbis on the subjects of the missionary. The Talmud Jerusalem was established in the land of Israel, and then further stages of its completion were decided in the Byzantine provinces of Palestine Prima and Palestine Sequoia.

### **The city of Jerusalem:**

The Jewish God established his only kingdom among the people. This is his capital. The temple was built here and sacrifices were offered to God Almighty here. This city was the city of the prophets and the kings of David and their descendants. These words are found in the Bible book of Kings about this city.

“This city was chosen by the Lord for all the tribes of Israel to keep their name there” <sup>xxi</sup>

### **According to the first century Roman historian Pliny:**

"Jerusalem, the most famous city in the ancient East, has been a pilgrimage site for two thousand years." <sup>xxii</sup>

No city, like Jerusalem, is praised in the Old and New Testaments. According to the Bible, no place in the world has been promised glory.

Jerusalem is basically a Semitic name. It was not first given to it by the Hebrews It was called Urusalim in 1400 BC, at the time of the Til Umerna letters. In the Hebrew Bible, the

word was first used in the book of Joshua.<sup>xxiii</sup> In the weekly translation it is called Jerusalem. In the time of Herodotus, in 165 AD, it was named Alia Capitalina.<sup>xxiv</sup>

According to the rabbis, Jerusalem is frequently mentioned in the Bible. The term Jerusalem is not mentioned in the Old Testament in the books of Job, Hosea, Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk, and Hajji. But the term is used 600 times in the rest of the books, and most of the time in the books of Chronicles and in the scriptures of the prophets, Jerusalem is called the city of David.<sup>xxv</sup>

Unlike other cities that have experienced great historical events, it has survived in one way or another. The city is located on three hills, according to geologists. The area is the epicenter of the written and oral Jewish law of the Meshna and the Talmudic period. Jerusalem is situated away from 33 miles east of the Mediterranean Sea and 14 miles away from the west of the Dead Sea at an altitude of 2550 feet above sea level and this area is the earliest center for the written and oral law of Judaism and the Talmudic period. .

The beginning of the Talmud Jerusalem is probably Tabarias.

In Johanan Bar Nappaha's Talmudic Academy, this is primarily the result of the joint efforts of the Talmudic Academies of Tiberias, Sephoras, and Caesarea, and is written mostly in Palestinian Aramaic, a Western Aramaic variety distinct from its Babylonian Talmud.

### **Some important points about the Talmud Babylon and the Talmud- Jerusalemi:**

1. Talmudic Babylon was written in East Aramaic and Jerusalem was written in West Aramaic
2. The Talmud Babylon is lengthy than Jerusalem in terms of volume and if there is a difference of opinion between the two, then the Talmud is referred to Babylon.
3. The Talmud Babylon Jerusalem was written and completed 150 years after the Talmud. In contrast, the Jerusalem Talmud could not be completed after the Roman occupation of Israel because the Jerusalem Halakah had emigrated from there, which is why the Babylonian Talmud is considered final for understanding Jewish traditions.
4. Sometimes the style of the Jerusalem Talmud is such that it merges with another subject without a complete explanation of the subject matter. On the contrary, in the Babylonian Talmud, along with a complete explanation of the subject, the views of the Amurai on this subject are also quoted.
5. The Babylonian Talmud does not cover all the chapters and subjects of its subdivision which is related to agriculture which is known as Zara'im. On the contrary, Qadashim (sacred) is described in detail.

The Babylonian Talmud is influenced far greater than that of the Jerusalem Talmud. This is mainly due to the fact that the Jews of Israel played a lesser role in the completion of the Talmud than the Jews of Babylon. Furthermore, the revision and refinement of the Babylonian Talmud was better than the Jerusalem version, which made it more accessible and easily applicable. It would be appropriate to quote Hai Gaon.<sup>xxvi</sup>

Instead of relying on the contradictory doctrines of the Jerusalem-Talmud in the Babylonian Talmud, attempts have been made to resolve them accidentally. The main reason for this is the period in which the completion of the Jerusalem Talmud stopped (Roman period).

A place of Hai Gaon says:

In the Jerusalem Talmud, there is nothing contradicts in our discussed Talmud (i.e Talmud Babylon), or that provides a detail account for the issues under discussion, we can call the Talmud Babylon and we can count on it.<sup>xxvii</sup>

### **The views of the major Jewish sects regarding the oral law (Talmud):**

#### **1. Sadducees**

The Sadducees were the oldest of the Jewish sects that grew up in the second period of the Temple. One of the main reasons for opposing the Sadducees, the Pharisees (forerunners of Rabbinic Judaism), was their disapproval of the oral law. The Sadducees revoked the Talmud theory and insisted that only five of Moses' books were authentic. They were<sup>xxviii</sup> also less interested to approve the some prophet's authority and other biblical literature, especially topics such as the resurrection of the dead. Since they were connected with the rabbis of the temple, but the influence of the Sadducees finished after the fall of the temple in the year of 70 AD.

#### **2. Karaism:**

Another movement that rejected the oral law (the Talmud) was Karaism. This two-century-old revolution of the Talmud emerged as a reaction against the Talmudic Judaism of Babylon. The main concept of Crime is to reject the oral law and that is why the Rabbinic Authority was in favor of strict adherence to the written law only. Karaism was once a major movement, but in recent centuries it has declined, from about 10 percent of the Jewish population to the current estimate of 2 percent.

#### **3. Reform Judaism:**

Reformist Judaism, when took bird eye view on the authority of the Talmud was question marked during the nineteenth century. The Talmud (along with the written law) was seen as a product of the ancient and limited compatibility with modern Jews.<sup>xxix</sup> Reform does



not emphasize the study of the Talmud in Judaism and its Hebrew schools, as is the case with other forms of Judaism of the day.

#### **4. Orthodox Judaism:**

Orthodox Judaism emphasizes the significance of the Talmud and is a main element of the Yeshua (educational centers) curriculum. Regular study of the Talmud has become popular among the general public through Daf Yumi. A daily cover of the Talmud was started <sup>xxx</sup> by Meir Shapiro in the year of 1923. The rabbinic teaching which was traditional in nature emphasizes the knowledge of the Talmud.

#### **5. Conservative Judaism:**

Conservative Judaism focused on its religious and theological teachings in the study of the Talmud. Therefore, the Talmud is generally regarded as the historical source of the Halakah. making emphasizes the need to place -The orthodox approach to legal decision <sup>xxxi</sup> classical writings and previous decisions in historical and cultural contexts and examine the historical development of Halakah, resulting in high practical flexibility than the Orthodox approach.

#### **6. Secular Judaism:**

Secular Judaism is a branch of Judaism that identifies itself only as ethnically or culturally Jewish. These Jews categorically reject the principles of Judaism, calling themselves either Gnostic or Atheist. Their extreme forms include Jewish Marxists and Marxist-Leninists, who promoted a militantly stance, following that religion is obviously a source of economic maltreatment. <sup>xxxii</sup>

Most of the aforementioned Jewish sects recognize the Talmud and oral traditions as the source of Judaism, and those who do not believe in it are aware of its historical significance. Because the Talmud is one of the most important sources of Jewish cultural life, without which Jewish religious customs and culture cannot be understood. That is why the Talmud is the most important part of Jewish society and the characteristic Rabbinic which seems incomplete without the oral tradition. Whether it is the oral tradition of the Talmud in the form of Babylon or the Judaism of Yerushalm, the Talmud is the best tool to examine Jewish teachings.

The Jerusalem Talmud is not a commentary on the mission of Judaism, but an independent and comprehensive work by Halaka and Hagadah. The first three generations are the same as the Babylonian Amorites. Many of the real and unique aspects between the two Talmuds differ from the textual tradition of Mishna that Sugyot of Babylon often gives.

#### **CONCLUSION:**

Talmud Babylonian and Yerushalmi are basically oral laws of the Jews. Both have sacred place in Judaism. Talmud is actually considers the healthy and pure way of getting information about Jewish laws. Style of Talmudic interpretative laws and details of Talmudic schools which starts from first to seventh generations are discussed in this research work. The views and opinions belongs to the major Jewish sects regarding the oral law are the main component of this study. Babylonian Talmud is considered the most authentic and detailed account, the current study presents the differences among the various types of Judaism as well that the Babylonian schools of ancient times highlight the different phases of the development of Talmud. Jews still considers Talmud as their most authentic source of laws and traditions. The views and comments of the main Jewish sects regarding the oral law are comprehensively mentioned in this research paper. The thing about Babylonian Talmud is, it is lengthy and oldest than Yerushalmi Talmud. The main objective of considering it most authentic is, the laws of Babylonian are most authentic and applicable by the Rabi. It has profound effects on the thinking and research of the Jews and still being used by the Jewish Rabbis.

In comparison with Jerusalemite Talmud it is shown that Jews of Babylon paid much attention in the compilation of Babylonian Talmud while Yerushalmi Jews did not worked so much that's why it is brief and does not provide a huge details about Jewish laws. In the Jewish society Babylonian Talmud has a sacred place and it is widely used in Jewish society for seeking guidance .

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<sup>i</sup> Ahmed ,Adil kamal,Atlas fatohat Islamia, Publisher darul salam,Riaz ,P225

<sup>ii</sup> Genesis:10,10

<sup>iii</sup> Saad Jaffar, and Dr. Abdul Rasheed Qadri. 2020. "An Overview of Fundamental Articles in Talmūd (Mishnā): متن التلمود(مشنه) کے اساسی مضامين کا اجمالی جائزہ. *Ihyā' al'ulūm - Journal of Department of Quran O Sunnah* 20 (01). <https://doi.org/10.46568/ihya.v20i01.78>.

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<sup>x</sup> Ibid

<sup>xi</sup> Ibid

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