

EPIPHANIUS WILSON



HEBREW
LITERATURE

Hebrew Literature

Comprising Talmudic Treatises, Hebrew Melodies, And The Kabbalah Unveiled

Epiphanius Wilson, A.M.

Contents:

The Kabbala - A Primer

Hebrew Literature

Special Introduction

Selections From The Talmud

On Blessings

Chapter I

Chapter II

Chapter III

Chapter IV

Chapter V

Chapter VI

Chapter VII

Chapter VIII

Chapter IX

On The Sabbatical Year

Chapter I

Chapter II

Chapter III

Chapter IV

Chapter V

Chapter VI

[Chapter VII](#)

[Chapter VIII](#)

[Chapter IX](#)

[Chapter X](#)

[On The Sabbath](#)

[Chapter I](#)

[Chapter II](#)

[Chapter III](#)

[Chapter IV](#)

[Chapter V](#)

[Chapter VI](#)

[Chapter VII](#)

[Chapter VIII](#)

[On The Passover](#)

[Chapter I](#)

[Chapter II](#)

[Chapter III](#)

[Chapter IV](#)

[Chapter V](#)

[Chapter VI](#)

[Chapter VII](#)

[Chapter VIII](#)

[Chapter IX](#)

[Chapter X](#)

[On The Day Of Atonement](#)

[Chapter I](#)

[Chapter II](#)

[Chapter III](#)

[Chapter IV](#)

[Chapter V](#)

[Chapter VI](#)

[Chapter VII](#)

[Chapter VIII](#)

[On Tabernacles](#)²⁴⁴

[Chapter I](#)

[Chapter II](#)

[Chapter III](#)

[Chapter IV](#)

[Chapter V](#)

[The New Year](#)

[Chapter I](#)

[Chapter II](#)

[Chapter III](#)

[Chapter IV](#)

[On Fasting](#)

[Chapter I](#)

[Chapter II](#)

[Chapter III](#)

[Chapter IV](#)

[The Feast-Offering](#)³⁵²

[Chapter I](#)

[Chapter II](#)

[Chapter III](#)

[The Sanhedrin](#)

[Chapter I](#)

[Chapter II](#)

[Chapter III](#)

[Chapter IV](#)

[Chapter V](#)

[Chapter VI](#)

[Chapter VII](#)

[Chapter VIII](#)

[Chapter IX](#)

[Chapter X](#)

[Chapter XI](#)

[On Idolatry](#)⁴³⁸

[Chapter I](#)

[Chapter II](#)

[Chapter III](#)

[Chapter IV](#)

[Chapter V](#)
[The Fathers](#)

[Chapter I](#)

[Chapter II](#)

[Chapter III](#)

[Chapter IV](#)

[Chapter V](#)

[Chapter VI](#)

[The Daily Sacrifice](#)

[Chapter I](#)

[Chapter II](#)

[Chapter III](#)

[Chapter IV](#)

[Chapter V](#)

[Chapter VI](#)

[Chapter VII](#)

[On Measurements](#)

[Chapter I](#)

[Chapter II](#)

[Chapter III](#)

[Chapter IV](#)

[Chapter V](#)

[The Tabernacle](#)

[Chapter I](#)

[Chapter II](#)

[Chapter III](#)

[Chapter IV](#)

[Chapter V](#)

[Chapter VI](#)

[Chapter VII](#)

[Chapter VIII](#)

[Chapter IX](#)

[Chapter X](#)

[Chapter XI](#)

[Chapter XII](#)

[Chapter XIII](#)

Chapter XIV

The Heifer⁷¹⁹

Chapter I

Chapter II

Chapter III

Chapter IV

Chapter V

Chapter VI

Chapter VII

Chapter VIII

Chapter IX

Chapter X

Chapter XI

Chapter XII

Hands

Chapter I

Chapter II

Chapter III

Chapter IV

The Kabbalah Unveiled: The Lesser Holy Assembly

Chapter I: Which Containeth the Introduction

Chapter II: Concerning the Skull of the Ancient One, and Concerning His Brain; and Concerning the Three Heads, and the Hair, and the Discriminatory Paths

Chapter III: Concerning the Forehead of the Most Holy Ancient One

Chapter IV: Concerning the Eyes of the Most Holy Ancient One

Chapter V: Concerning the Nose of the Most Holy Ancient One

Chapter VI: Concerning the Beard of the Most Holy Ancient One

Chapter VII: Concerning the Brain and the Wisdom in General

[Chapter VIII: Concerning the Father and the Mother in Special](#)

[Chapter IX: Concerning Microprosopus and His Bride in General](#)

[Chapter X: Concerning Microprosopus in Especial, with Certain Digressions; and Concerning the Edomite Kings](#)

[Chapter XI: Concerning the Brain of Microprosopus and Its Connections](#)

[Chapter XII: Concerning the Hair of Microprosopus](#)

[Chapter XIII: Concerning the Forehead of Microprosopus](#)

[Chapter XIV: Concerning the Eyes of Microprosopus](#)

[Chapter XV: Concerning the Nose of Microprosopus](#)

[Chapter XVI: Concerning the Ears of Microprosopus](#)

[Chapter XVII: Concerning the Countenance of Microprosopus](#)

[Chapter XVIII: Concerning the Beard of Microprosopus](#)

[Chapter XIX: Concerning the Lips and Mouth of Microprosopus](#)

[Chapter XX: Concerning the Body of Microprosopus](#)

[Chapter XXI: Concerning the Bride of Microprosopus](#)

[Hebrew Melodies](#)

[Ode To Zion](#)

[God, Whom Shall I Compare To Thee?](#)

[Servant Of God](#)

[My King](#)

[To The Soul](#)

[Sabbath Hymn](#)

[O Sleeper! Wake, Arise!](#)

[The Land Of Peace](#)

[The Heart's Desire](#)

[O Soul, With Storms Beset!](#)

[Sanctification](#)

[Hymn Of Praise](#)

[Passover Hymn](#)

[Morning Prayer](#)

Judgment And Mercy
Grace After Meals
Lord Of The Universe
Hymn For The Conclusion Of The Sabbath
God And Man
Hymn For Tabernacles
Hymn For Pentecost
Hymn Of Glory
Hymn Of Unity For The Seven Days Of The Week⁸⁸⁰
Penitential Prayer
The Living God We Praise
Footnotes

Hebrew Literature, E. Wilson
Jazzybee Verlag Jürgen Beck
86450 Altenmünster, Loschberg 9
Germany

ISBN: 9783849631611

www.jazzybee-verlag.de
www.facebook.com/jazzybeeverlag
admin@jazzybee-verlag.de

Cover Design: Based on an image by Roy Lindman
(Roylindman at en.wikipedia), licenced under the Creative
Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported license.
Details for re-usage etc, can be found at
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/deed.en>.

The Kabbala - A Primer

The term is now used as a technical name for the system of esoteric theosophy which for many generations played an important part, chiefly among the Jews, after the beginning of the tenth century of our era. It primarily signifies reception, and, secondarily, a doctrine received by oral tradition. Its application has greatly varied in the course of time, and it is only since the eleventh or twelfth century that the term *Kabbala* has become the exclusive appellation for the system of Jewish religious philosophy which claims to have been uninterruptedly transmitted by the mouths of the patriarchs, prophets, elders, etc., ever since the creation of the first man.

The two works which the advocates of this system treat as the authoritative exposition of its doctrines are the *Book of Creation* and the *Zohar*.

The Book Of Creation

The *Book of Creation* is a short treatise consisting of six chapters subdivided into thirty-three very brief sections. It is written in Mishnic Hebrew, and is made up of oracular sentences. It professes to be a monologue of the patriarch Abraham, who enumerates the thirty-two ways of wisdom by which God produced the universe, and who shows, by the analogy which is assumed to exist between the visible things and the letters which are the signs of thought, the manner in which all has emanated from God and is inferior to Him.

The Zohar

The *Zohar*, or second expository work of the Kabbala, has justly been called the "Bible" of the Kabbalists. It is written in Aramaic, and its main portion is the form of a commentary on the Pentateuch according to the latter's division into fifty-two weekly lessons. Its title *Zohar* (light, splendour) is derived from the words of Genesis 1:3 ("Let there be light") with the exposition of which it begins. It is a compilatory work, wherein several fragments of ancient treatises can still be noticed. The following is a brief account of the chief contents — doctrinal, hermeneutical, and theurgical — of the *Zohar*.

Doctrinal content of the Zohar

The First World

Considered in Himself, the Supreme Being is the *En-Soph* (Endless, Infinite) and, in a certain sense, the *En* (Non-existent) since existence is in human conception a limitation which as such should not be predicted of Him. We can conceive and speak of God only in so far as He manifests and, as it were, actualizes Himself in or through the *Sephiroth*.

- His first manifestation was by way of concentration in a point called the first Sefira — "the Crown", as it is called — which is hardly distinguishable from the *En-Soph* from Whom it emanates, and which is expressed in the Bible by the *Ehieyeh* (I am). From the first Sefira proceeded a masculine or active potency called wisdom, represented in the Bible by *Yah*, and an opposite, i.e. a feminine or passive potency, called intelligence, and represented by *Yahweh*. These two opposite potencies are coupled together by the

"Crown", and thus yields the first trinity of the Sephiroth.

- From the junction of the foregoing opposite tendencies emanated the masculine potency called love, the the fourth Sefhira, represented by the Biblical *El*, and the feminine one justice, the fifth Sefhira, represented by the Divine name *Elohah*. From them again emanated the uniting potency, beauty, the sixth Sefhira, represented in the Bible by *Elohim*. And thus is constituted the second trinity of the Sephiroth.
- In its turn, beauty beamed forth the seventh Sefhira, the masculine potency, firmness, corresponding to *Yahweh Sabaoth*, and this again produced the feminine potency splendour, represented by *Elohe Sabaoth*. From splendour emanated the ninth Sefhira, foundation, which answers the Divine name *El-Hai* and closes the third trinity of the Sephiroth.
- Lastly, splendour sends forth kingdom, the tenth Sefhira, which encircles all the others and is represented by *Adonai*.

These ten Sephiroth are emanations from the En-Soph, forming among themselves and with Him a strict unity, in the same way as the rays which proceed from the light are simply manifestations of one and the same light. They are infinite and perfect when the En-Soph imparts His fullness to them, and finite and imperfect when that fullness is withdrawn from them (Ginsburg). In their totality, they represent and are called the archetypal man, without whom the production of permanent worlds was impossible. In fact, they constitute the first world, or world of emanations, which is perfect and immutable because of its direct

procession from the Deity. *The Second, Third and Fourth Worlds*

Emanating immediately from this first world is the world of creation, the ten Sephiroth of which are of a more limited potency, and the substances of which are of the purest nature. From the world of creation proceeds the world of formation, with its less refined ten Sephiroth, although its substances are still without matter. Finally, from this third world proceeds the world of action or of matter, the ten Sephiroth of which are made of the grosser elements of the other works.

The Angels

Of these worlds, the second, that of creation, is inhabited by the angel *Metatron*, who governs the visible world, and is the captain of the hosts of good angels who in ten ranks people the third world, that of formation. The demons or bad angels inhabit the fourth world, that of action, the lowest regions of which constitute the seven infernal halls wherein the demons torture the poor mortals whom they betrayed into sin in this life. The prince of the demons is *Samael* (the "angel of poison or of death"); he has a wife called the Harlot; but both are treated as one person, and are called "the Beast".

Man

Man was directly created not by En-Soph, but by the Sephiroth, and is the counterpart of the archetypal man. His body is merely a garment of his soul. Like God, he has a unity and a trinity, the latter being made up of the spirit representing the intellectual world, the soul representing the sensuous world, and the life representing the material world. Souls are pre-existent destined to dwell in human

bodies, and subjected to transmigration till at last they return to God.

Destiny of the World

The world also including *Samael* himself, will return ultimately—viz. at the advent of the Messiah born at the end of days—to the bosom of the Infinite Source. Then Hell shall disappear and endless bliss begin.

Hermeneutical content of the Zohar

All these esoteric doctrines of the Kabbala are supposed to be contained in the Hebrew Scriptures, in which, however they can be perceived only by those initiated into certain hermeneutical methods. The following are the three principal methods of discovering the heavenly mysteries hidden under the letters and words of the Sacred Text:

- The *Temurah* (change) by means of which each letter of the Hebrew alphabet is interchanged with another, according to some definite process, as when *Aleph*, the first letter, becomes *Lamed* by interchange with the twelfth, the second, *Beth*, becomes, *Mem*, the thirteenth, etc.; or as, when the last letter takes place of the first, the last but one takes the place of the second, etc.;
- the Gematria (Gr. *gemetria*), which consists in the use of the numerical values of the letters of a word for purposes comparison with other words, which give the same or similar combinations of numbers: thus in Genesis 49:10, "Shiloh come" is equivalent to 358, which is also the numerical value of *Mashiah*, whence it is inferred that *Shiloh* is identical with *Messias*;

- the *Notarikon* (Lat. *notarius*), or process of reconstructing a word by using the initials of many, or a sentence by using all the letters of a single word as so many initials of other words; for instance, the word *Agla* is formed from the initials of the Hebrew sentence: "Thou (art) (a) Mighty (God) forever."

Theurgical content of the Zohar

The theurgical, or last chief element of the *Zohar*, needs no long description here. It forms part of what has been called the "practical" Kabbala, and supplies formulas by means of which the adept can enter into direct communication with invisible powers and thereby exercise authority over demons, nature, diseases, etc. To a large extent it is the natural outcome of the extraordinary hidden meaning ascribed by the Kabbala to the words of the Sacred Text, and in particular to the Divine names.

Conclusion

Of course, the *Book of Creation* does not go back to Abraham, as has been claimed by many Kabbalists. Its ascription by others to Rabbi Akiba (d. A.D. 120) is also a matter of controversy. With regard to the *Zohar*, its compilation is justly referred to a Spanish Jew, Moses of Leon (d. 1305), while some of its elements seem to be of a much greater antiquity. Several of its doctrines recall to mind those of Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, the neo-Platonists of Alexandria, the Oriental or Egyptian Pantheists, and the Gnostics of the earliest Christian ages. Its speculations concerning God's nature and relation to the universe differ materially from the teachings of Revelation.

Finally, it has decidedly no right to be considered as an excellent means to induce the Jews to receive Christianity, although this has been maintained by such Christian scholars as R. Lully, Pico della Mirandola, Reuchlin, Knorr von Rosenroth, etc., and although such prominent Jewish Kabbalists as Riccio, Conrad, Otto, Rittangel, Jacob Franck, etc., have embraced the Christian Faith, and proclaimed in their works the great affinity of some doctrines of the Kabbala with those of Christianity.

FRANCIS E. GIGOT

Hebrew Literature

Special Introduction

Hebrew literature contains some of the most profound and most influential productions of the human spirit. It constitutes a potent factor in modern civilization, and possesses merits which place it far above most other literatures of the world. The common salutation of the Hebrew is "Peace," while that of the Greeks is "Grace," and that of the Romans, "Safety." The Greek sought after grace, or intellectual and bodily perfection, and the power of artistic accomplishment. The Roman's ideal was strength and security of life and property. The Hebrew sought after peace, peace in the heart, as founded on a sense of Jehovah's good providence, and a moral conformity in conduct to His revealed will. While the Greek in art, literature, and even in morals, made beauty his standard, the Roman stood for power, domination and law, and the Hebrew for religion. The Hebrew, indeed, introduced into Europe the first clear conception of religion, as implied in

monotheism, and a rigidly defined moral law, founded upon the will of Jehovah. The basis of morals among the Latins was political, among the Greeks æsthetic, and among the Hebrews it was the revealed will of Jehovah.

While the most important remains of Hebrew literature are comprised in the Scriptures known to us as the Bible, there exists also a voluminous mass of Hebrew writings which are not included in the sacred canon. These writings are of supreme importance and value, and the selections which we have made from them in the present volume give a good idea of their interest, beauty, and subtlety of thought.

From the very beginning of their history the Hebrews were a deeply poetic race. They were fully alive to the beauties of external nature, and no national poetry contains more vivid descriptions of the sea, sky, and the panorama of forest, stream and mountain, peopled by the varied activities of animated nature. The songs of Zion glow with poetic enthusiasm, but their principal characteristic is their intense earnestness. They are no idle lays of love and wine or warlike triumph. They depict the joy of existence as dependent upon the smile and favor of Jehovah, and all the happiness, plenty, victory and success of life are attributed, without hesitation, to nothing else but "the loving-kindness of the Lord." Yet this religious fervor becomes the basis of sublimity, pathos, and picturesqueness, such as can seldom be approached even by the finest productions of the Attic muse.

But the Hebrews were also philosophers, and if they never attained to what we may call the *netteté et clarté* of the Greek metaphysician, they excelled all other thinkers in the boldness and profound spirituality of their philosophical mysticism. In proof of this assertion we may point to that body of writings known as the Kabbalah.

The word "Kabbalah" means "doctrine received by oral tradition," and is applied to these remains to distinguish them from the canonical Hebrew Scriptures, which were written by "the Finger of Jehovah." Hebrew speculation attempts in the Kabbalah to give a philosophical or theosophic basis to Hebrew belief, while at the same time it supplements the doctrines of the Old Testament. For instance, it is a disputed point whether the immortality of the soul is taught in the Hebrew canon, but in the Kabbalah it is taken for granted, and a complete and consistent psychology is propounded, in which is included the Oriental theory of metempsychosis. This account of the human soul, as distinct from the human body, treats of the origin and eternal destiny of man's immortal part. On the other hand God and Nature, and the connection between the Creator and the creation, are most exactly treated of in detail. God is the *En-Soph*, the boundless One, as in modern philosophy God is the Absolute. He manifests Himself in the ten *Sephiroth*, or intelligences. It would be easy on this point to show Dante's indebtedness to the Kabbalah in his description of the various heavens of his Paradise. These intelligences control, in groups of three, the three worlds of intellect, of soul, and of matter. The tenth of the *Sephiroth* is called Kingdom, *i.e.*, the personal Deity, as seen in the workings of Providence, with which conception we may compare Dante's description of Fortune, in the seventh book of the "Inferno." This last of the *Sephiroth* is manifested visibly in the Shekinah. This is the barest and baldest outline of the main features in this famous system.

The rise of Kabbalism is not very clearly known as regards authorship and date; it is in turn, by different Jewish writers, ascribed to Adam, Abraham, Moses and Ezra; but doubtless the work is an aggregation of successive writings, and some critics believe that it was not compiled

before the Middle Ages, *i.e.*, in the centuries between the conquest of Gaul by the Franks and the period following the death of Dante.

There can be no doubt that the Kabbalah contains the ripest fruit of spiritual and mystical speculation which the Jewish world produced on subjects which had hitherto been obscured by the gross anthropomorphism of such men as Maimonides and his school. We can understand the revolt of the devout Hebrew mind from traditions like those which represented Jehovah as wearing a phylactery, and as descending to earth for the purpose of taking a razor and shaving the head and beard of Sennacherib. The theory of the *Sephiroth* was at least a noble and truly reverent guess at the mode of God's immanence in nature. This conception won the favor of Christian philosophers in the Middle Ages, and, indeed, was adopted or adapted by the angelic Doctor Aquinas himself, the foremost of ecclesiastical and scholastic metaphysicians. The psychology of the Kabbalah, even its treatment of the soul's preëxistence before union with the body, found many advocates among Gentile and even Christian philosophers.

We are therefore led to the conclusion that the Kabbalah is by far the most exalted, the most profound and the most interesting of all that mass of traditional literature which comprises, among other writings, such remains as the Targums and the Talmud.

A study of Hebrew literature would indeed be incomplete unless it included the Talmud.

“Talmud” in Hebrew means “Doctrine,” and this strange work must be looked upon as a practical handbook, intended for the Jews who, after the downfall of Jerusalem and the Dispersion, found that most of the Law had to be

adjusted to new circumstances, in which the institution of sacrifices and propitiatory offerings had been practically abolished. The Talmud contains the decisions of Jewish doctors of many generations on almost every single question which might puzzle the conscience of a punctilious Jew in keeping the Law under the altered conditions of the nation. The basis of the Talmud is the Mishna, *i.e.*, an explanation of the text of the Mosaic laws, and their application to new cases and circumstances. The Mishna has been well described by the illustrious Spanish Jew, Maimonides, who in the twelfth century published it at Cordova, with a preface, in which he says: "From Moses, our teacher, to our holy rabbi, no one has united in a single body of doctrine what was publicly taught as the oral law; but in every generation, the chief of the tribunal, or the prophet of his day, made memoranda of what he had heard from his predecessors and instructors, and communicated it orally to the people. In like manner each individual committed to writing, for his own use and according to the degree of his ability, the oral laws and the information he had received respecting the interpretation of the Bible, with the various decisions that had been pronounced in every age and sanctified by the authority of the great tribunal. Such was the form of proceeding until the coming of our Rabbi the Holy, who first collected all the traditions, the judgments, the sentences, and the expositions of the law, heard by Moses, our master, and taught in each generation."

The Mishna itself in turn became the subject of a series of comments and elucidations, which formed what was called the Gemara. The text of the original Hebrew scripture was abandoned, and a new crop of casuistical quibbles, opinions and decisions rose like mushrooms upon the text of the Mishna, and from the combination of text and Gemaraic commentary was formed that odd, rambling, and

sometimes perplexing work, “wonderful monument of human industry, human wisdom and human folly,” which we know as the Talmud. The book is compounded of all materials, an encyclopædia of history, antiquities and chronology, a story book, a code of laws and conduct, a manual of ethics, a treatise on astronomy, and a medical handbook; sometimes indelicate, sometimes irreverent, but always completely and persistently in earnest. Its trifling frivolity, its curious prying into topics which were better left alone, the occasional beauty of its spiritual and imaginative fancies, make it one of the most remarkable books that human wit and human industry have ever compiled.

The selections which we print in this volume are from the Mishna, and form part of the Sedarim, or orders; in them are given minute directions as to the ceremonial practice of the Jewish religion.

The treatise on “Blessings” speaks of daily prayers and thanksgiving. It is most minute in prescribing the position of the body, and how the voice is to be used in prayer. It specifies the prayers to be said on seeing signs and wonders, on building a house, on entering or leaving a city; and how to speak the name of God in social salutations. That on the “Sabbatical Year” is a discourse on agriculture from a religious point of view. The Sabbatical year among the Hebrews was every seventh year, in which the land was to be left fallow and uncultivated, and all debts were to be remitted or outlawed. Provision is made in this section for doing certain necessary work, such as picking and using fruits which may have grown without cultivation during the Sabbatical year, with some notes on manuring the fields, pruning trees and pulling down walls. Very interesting is the section which deals with “The Sabbath Day.” The most

minute and exhaustive account is given of what may and what may not be done on the seventh day.

The treatise on “The Day of Atonement” deals with the preparation and deportment of the high-priest on that day. That on “The Passover” treats of the Lamb to be sacrificed, of the search for leaven, so that none be found in the house, and of all the details of the festival. “Measurements” is an interesting and valuable account of the dimensions of the Temple at Jerusalem. “The Tabernacle” deals with the ritual worship of the Jews under the new conditions of their exile from Palestine.

All of these treatises show the vitality of Jewish religion in Europe, under the most adverse circumstances, and illustrate the place which the Talmud must have occupied in Jewish history, as supplying a religious literature and a code of ritual and worship which kept Judaism united, even when it had become banished and dissociated from Palestine, Jerusalem, and the Temple.

Selections From The Talmud

The Talmud (teaching) comprises the Mishna and the Gemara. The Mishna (“learning” or “second law”) was, according to Jewish tradition, delivered to Moses on Mount Sinai. “Rabbi Levi, the son of Chama, says, Rabbi Simon, the son of Lakish, says, what is that which is written, ‘I will give thee tables of stone, and a law and commandments which I have written, that thou mayest teach them’?”¹ The Tables are the ten commandments; the Law is the written law; and the commandment is the Mishna; ‘which I have written’ means the prophets and sacred writings; ‘that thou mayest teach them’ means the Gemara. It teaches us that

they were all given to Moses from Mount Sinai.” From Moses the Mishna was transmitted by oral tradition through forty “Receivers,” until the time of Rabbi Judah the Holy. These Receivers were qualified by ordination to hand it on from generation to generation. Abarbanel and Maimonides disagree as to the names of these Receivers. While the Temple still stood as a centre of unity to the nation, it was considered unlawful to reduce these traditions to writing. But when the Temple was burned, and the Jews were dispersed among other peoples, it was considered politic to form them into a written code, which should serve as a bond of union, and keep alive the spirit of patriotism. The Jewish leaders saw the effect of Constitutions and Pandects in consolidating nations—the advantage of written laws over arbitrary decisions. Numberless precedents of case law, answering to our common law, were already recorded: and the teachings of the Hebrew jurisconsults, or “*Responsa prudentium*” which were held to be binding on the people, had been preserved from former ages.

All these traditions Rabbi Judah the Holy undertook to reduce into one digest. And this laborious work he completed about A.D. 190, or more than a century after the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus. Rabbi Judah was born on the day that Rabbi Akibah died. Solomon is said to have foretold the event: “One sun ariseth, and one sun goeth down.” Akibah was the setting and Judah the rising sun. The Mishna of Rabbi Judah, afterward revised by Abba Areka in Sura, is the text of the Babylon Talmud. The commentaries written on this text by various Rabbis in the neighborhood of Babylon, until the close of the fifth century, are called the Gemara (completion), and are published in twelve folio volumes, called the Babylon Talmud—the Talmud most esteemed by the Jews. The Jerusalem Talmud contains commentaries written partly by

Rabbis in Jamnia and partly in Tiberias, where they were completed by Rabbi Jochanan in the beginning of the fourth century. As now published it has only four out of the six orders or books of the Mishna, with the treatise Niddah from the sixth. In the time of Maimonides it contained five orders. On twenty-six treatises it has no Gemara, though in the treatise on shekels the Gemara of Jerusalem is used for the Babylon Talmud. The six books of the Mishna are subdivided into sixty-three treatises, in the following manner:

Book I

This book, called Order of Seeds, contains the following treatises:

1. "Blessings," together with prayers and thanksgivings, with the times and places in which they are to be used.
2. "A Corner of a Field" (Lev. xxiii. 22; Deut. xxiv. 19) treats of the corners of the field to be left for the poor to glean them—the forgotten sheaves, olives, and grapes—and of giving alms, etc.
3. "Doubtful" treats of the doubt about the tithes being paid, as the Jews were not allowed to use anything without its being first tithed.
4. "Diversities" (Lev. xix. 19; Deut. xxii. 9-11) treats of the unlawful mixing or joining together things of a different nature or kind—of sowing seeds of a different species in one bed—grafting a scion on a stock of a different kind, suffering cattle of different kinds to come together.
5. "The Sabbatical Year" (Exod. xxiii. 11; Lev. xxv. 4) treats of the laws which regulated the land as it lay fallow and

rested.

6. “Heave Offerings” (Num. xviii. 8) treats of separating the heave offering—who may eat it, and who may not eat of it—of its pollutions, etc.

7. “The First Tithes” (Lev. xxvii. 30; Num. xviii. 28) treats of the law of tithes for the priests.

8. “The Second Tithes” (Deut. xiv. 22; xxvi. 14) treats of those which were to be carried to Jerusalem and there eaten, or to be redeemed and the money spent in Jerusalem in peace offerings.

9. “Cake of Dough” (Num. xv. 20) treats of setting apart a cake of dough for the priests; also, from what kind of dough the cake must be separated.

10. “Uncircumcised Fruit” (Lev. xix. 23) treats of the unlawfulness of eating the fruit of any tree till the fifth year. The first three years it is uncircumcised; the fourth year it is holy to the Lord; the fifth year it may be eaten.

11. “First Fruits” (Exod. xxiii. 19; Deut. xxvi. 1) treats of what fruits were to be offered in the Temple, and in what manner; also of the baskets in which they were to be carried.

Book II

The Order Of The Festivals:

1. “Sabbath” treats of the laws relating to the seventh day.

2. “Mixtures,” or combinations, treats of the extension of boundaries, whereby all the inhabitants of the court, or

entry, where the mixture is made, are counted as one family inhabiting one domicile; and are therefore allowed to carry victuals from one house to another. It also treats of the mixtures for a Sabbath day's journey, whereby the distance may be extended for an additional 2,000 cubits.

3. "Passovers" treats of all rites and ceremonies relating to the Paschal Lamb.

4. "Shekels" (Exod. xxx. 13) treats of the half shekel, which every Jew, rich or poor, was obliged to pay every year to the daily sacrifice.

5. "Day of Atonement" treats of the solemnities peculiar to it.

6. "Tabernacles" teaches how they are to be built, and how to be used.

7. "The Egg Laid on a Festival" treats of the works which may or may not be done on any of the festivals, which are called days of holy convocation, on which no servile work may be done.

8. "New Year" treats of the laws and solemnities of the feast of the New Year, as also of the feasts of the New Moons.

9. "Fasts" treats of the various fasts throughout the year.

10. "The Roll" treats of the feast of Purim, and gives instructions how and in what manner the Book of Esther and other Lessons are to be read. The Gemara directs Jews to get so drunk on this feast, that they cannot discern the difference between "Blessed be Mordecai and cursed be Haman," and "Cursed be Mordecai and blessed be Haman."

11. "Minor Feasts" treats of the works that may and that may not be lawfully done on the 2d, 3d, 4th, 5th, and 6th days, when the first and seventh are holy; these intermediate days being lesser festivals.

12. "Sacrifices on Festivals" treats of the three great festivals, when all the males were obliged to appear before the Lord, and of the sacrifices which they were to bring. It also lays down rules for the dissolution of vows, which it says "are like mountains hanging on a hair, for the text is slender and the constitutions many."

Book III

On Women:

1. "Brother's Widow" (Deut. xxv. 5-11) treats of the law obliging a brother to marry the relict of his deceased brother; also, when the obligation is to take place, and the ceremonies to be used at its performance.

2. "Marriage Settlements" treats of dowries and women who happen to obtain estates, either real or personal. From this tract the baptism of infant proselytes can be proved.

3. "Vows" (Num. xxx. 4-16) shows when vows are binding and when null and void. When a married woman makes a vow the husband can confirm or annul it. This tract points out what vows fall under his cognizance and what do not.

4. "The Nazarite" (Num. vi. 21) treats of the laws relating to the different sorts of Nazarites.

5. "Trial of Jealousy" (Num. v. 11-31) treats of the mode of trial and punishment of criminals. Men may go home to their wives from voluntary wars, but not from wars of command. This tract shows the miserable state of the Jews at the destruction of the second Temple, and at the future advent of the Messiah.

6. "Divorces" treats of the laws relating to divorces, also the formalities to be observed both before and after they are given. A man may divorce his wife if she spoil his broth, or if he find another more handsome.

7. "Betrothing" treats of the laws of espousals and some other previous rites of marriage. It commands sons to be taught suitable trades. It states that all ass-drivers are wicked, camel-drivers are honest, sailors are pious, physicians are destined for hell, and butchers are company for Amalek.

Book IV

On Damages:

1. "First Gate," so called because in the East law is often administered in the gateway of a city. It treats of all such damages as may be received from man or beast. It assesses damages done by a beast according to the benefit which the beast receives. If it eat a peck of dates its owner would be fined for a peck of barley, as dates are not more nourishing for a beast than barley.

2. "The Middle Gate" treats of laws of usury and trusts, of letting out on hire, of landlord and tenant, etc.

3. "Last Gate" treats of the laws of commerce and co-partnership, of buying and selling, of the laws of

inheritance and the right of succession.

4. "Sanhedrin" treats of the great national senate.

5. "Stripes" treats of false witnesses, of the law of the forty stripes save one, of those who were bound to fly to the cities of refuge.

6. "Oaths" explains the laws for administering oaths; when an oath is to be admitted between contending parties who are qualified to take them. In Hilchoth Eduth. ix. 1 it is taught that ten sorts of persons are disqualified—women, slaves, children, idiots, deaf persons, the blind, the wicked, the despised, relations, and those interested in their evidence.

7. "Evidences" are a collection of many important decisions gathered from the testimonies of distinguished Rabbis. It is observable that the decisions of the School of Shammai are more rigorous than those of the School of Hillel, from whence it is inferred that the former adhered more closely to Scripture, the latter to tradition. The former were the Scribes, and are now represented by the Karaites, who reject the Talmud.

8. "Idolatry," or the worship of stars and meteors, treats of the way to avoid this grievous sin.

9. "The Fathers" contains a history of those who handed down the Oral Law, also many maxims and proverbs.

10. "Punishment" treats of the punishment of those disobedient to the Sanhedrin (Deut. xvii. 8-11).

Book V

On Holy Things:

1. "Sacrifices" treats of the nature and quality of the offerings; the time, the place, and the persons, by whom they ought to be killed, prepared, and offered.
2. "Meat Offerings" treats of the flour, oil, and wine, and the wave loaves.
3. "Unconsecrated Things" treats of what is clean and unclean, of not eating the sinew that shrank, and not killing the dam and her young in one day (Deut. xxii. 6).
4. "First Born" treats of their redemption by money, and their being offered in sacrifice; also of the tithes of all manner of cattle.
5. "Estimations" (Lev. xxvii. 2) treats of the way in which things devoted to the Lord are to be valued in order to be redeemed for ordinary use; also, how a priest is to value a field which a person has sanctified.
6. "Cutting Off" treats of offenders being cut off from the Lord.
7. "Exchanges" (Lev. xxvii. 10, 33) treats of the way exchanges are to be effected between sacred things.
8. "Trespass" (Num. v. 6, 8) treats of things partaking of the nature of sacrilege. It asserts that if a man take away a consecrated stone or beam he commits no trespass. If he give it to his companion he commits a trespass, but his companion commits none. If he build it into his house he commits no trespass till he lives in the house long enough to gain the value of a half-farthing. If he take away a consecrated half-farthing he commits no trespass. If he give

it to his companion he commits a trespass, but his companion commits none. If he give it to a bath-keeper he commits a trespass though he does not bathe, because the bath-keeper says to him, "See, the bath is open, go in and bathe."

9. "The Daily Sacrifice" treats of the morning and evening offerings.

10. "The Measurements" treats of the measurements of the Temple.

11. "Birds' Nests" treats of the mistakes about doves and beasts brought into the Temple for sacrifice.

Book VI

On Purifications:

1. "Vessels" treats of those which convey uncleanness (Lev. xi. 33).

2. "Tents" (Num. xix. 14) treats of tents and houses retaining uncleanness, how persons who enter them become unclean, and how they are to be cleansed.

3. "Plagues of Leprosy" treats of leprosy of men, garments, or dwellings, how their pollution is conveyed, and how they are to be purified.

4. "The Red Heifer" directs how she is to be burned, and how her ashes are to be used in purifying.

5. "Purifications" teaches how purifications are to be effected.