

CHAPTER III.

THE AMORAIM OR EXPOUNDERS OF THE MISHNA.

As the Mishna compilation of R. Jehuda Hanasi became the authoritative code of the oral Law, the activity of the

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teachers was principally devoted to expounding this code. This was done as well in the academies of *Tiberias*, *Sepphoris*, *Cæsarea* in Palestine, as in those of *Nahardea*, *Sura*, and later of *Pumbaditha* and some other seats of learning in Babylonia. The main object of the lectures and discussions in those academies was to interpret the often very brief and concise expression of the Mishna, to investigate its reasons and sources, to reconcile seeming contradictions, to compare its canons with those of the Boraithoth, and to apply its decisions and established principles to new cases not yet provided for. The teachers who were engaged in this work, which finally became embodied in the Gemara, are called *Amoraim*, meaning speakers, interpreters, expounders. ¹ They were not as independent in their legal opinions and decisions as their predecessors, the Tanaim and semi-Tanaim, as they had not the authority to contradict Halakhoth and principles accepted in the Mishna or Boraitha. The Palestinian Amoraim, having generally been ordained by the Nasi, had the title of *Rabbi*, while the Babylonian teachers of that period had only the title of *Rab* or of *Mar*.

The period of Amoraim extends from the death of R. Jehuda Hanasi to the compilation of the Babylonian Talmud; that is, from the beginning of the third to the end of the fifth century. This period has been divided by some into six, by others into seven, minor periods or generations, which are determined by the beginning and the end of the activity of the most prominent teachers flourishing during that time.

The number of Amoraim who are mentioned in the Talmud amounts to several hundreds. The most distinguished among them, especially those who presided over the great academies,

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are contained in the following chronological tables, of the six generations of Amoraim. ¹

THE FIRST GENERATION OF AMORAIM.

A. Palestinian (219-279).

1. R. Chanina bar Chama.
2. R. Jochanan (bar Napacha).
3. R. Simon ben Lakish (Resh Lakish).
4. R. Joshua ben Levi.

B. Babylonian (219-257).

1. Abba Areca, called simply Rab.
2. (Mar) Samuel.

Strack adds to the first generation of the Palestinian, (5) Hama b. Biza; (6) Janai; (7) Jehuda; and (8) Hiskiah sons of Hyye; (9) Bnya or Bnaah; (10) Pdaya or Jehuda b. Pdaya; (11) Hoshia b. Hanninah b. Biza, named Rabbh the Great; (12) Jose b. Zimra; (13) Simon b. Yehozodak.

To the Babylonian Amoraim he adds, (3) Shila; (4) Abba b. Abba (father of Mar Samuel); (5) Kama [2](#); (6) Mar Uqba (the Exilarch).

All the Palestinian Amoraim named here are very often mentioned in the Babylonian Talmud, and as their biographical sketches are interesting we could not omit them.

Biographical Sketches.

A. PALESTINIAN AMORAIM.

During this generation R. Gamaliel III. and R. Judah II. were successively the patriarchs.

1. R. *Chanina bar Chama* (born about 180, died 260), was a disciple of R. Jehuda Hanasi, whose son and successor, R. Gamaliel III., bestowed on him the title of

Rabbi. He then presided over his own academy in Sepphoris and stood in high regard on account of his learning, modesty and piety. As

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teacher he was very conservative, transmitting that only which he had received by tradition, without ever allowing himself an independent decision. Of his prominent contemporaries are: *R. Ephes*, who reopened a school at Lydda, in South Judea; *Levi b. Sissi* (called simply Levi), who, though not presiding over an academy, was a distinguished teacher, and later emigrated to Babylonia; further *Chizkia*, who was a son of R. Chiya the Elder, and whose teachings are frequently quoted in the Talmud. This Chizkia, who had not the title of Rabbi, must not be mistaken for R. Chizkia, who belonged to the third generation.

2. *R. Jochanan bar Napacha*, in general called simply R. Jochanan (born about 199, died 279), was in his early youth a disciple of R. Jehuda Hanasi, later of R. Oshaya in Cæsarea, also of R. Janai, and especially of R. Chanina b. Chama. He then founded his own academy in Tiberias, which henceforth became the principal seat of learning in the Holy Land. By his great mental powers he excelled all his contemporaries, and is regarded the chief Amora of Palestine. In expounding the Mishna he introduced an analytical method, and laid down certain rules for the final decision in such cases in which the Tanaim expressed opposite opinions. His legal teachings, ethical aphorisms, and exegetical remarks, transmitted by his numerous disciples, form the principal elements of the Gemara. He is supposed to have laid the foundation of the Palestinian Talmud, though, in its present shape, this work can not have been compiled before at least one century after R. Jochanan's death. [1](#)

3. *R. Simon b. Lakish*, whose name is generally abbreviated to Resh Lakish, was a man who combined great physical strength with a noble heart and a powerful mind. It is said that in his youth he was compelled by circumstances to gain his livelihood as a gladiator or soldier, until making the acquaintance of R. Jochanan, who gained him for the study of the law and gave him his sister in marriage. Having developed

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extraordinary mental and dialectical powers, he became R. Jochanan's most distinguished friend and colleague. In the interpretation of the Mishna and in legal questions they differed, however, very often, and their numerous controversies are reported in the Babylonian Talmud as well as in the Palestinian. Also is his Hagadic teachings, Resh Lakish was original and advanced some very rational views.

4. *R. Joshua b. Levi* (ben Sissi) presided over an academy in Lydda. He is regarded as a great authority in the law, and his decisions prevail even in cases where his celebrated contemporaries, R. Jochanan and Resh Lakish differ from him. Though himself a prolific Hagadist, he disapproved of the vagaries of the Hagada, and objected to their being written down in books. The circumstance that, on a certain occasion, his prayer for rain proved to be efficient, probably gave rise to the mystic legends with which the fancy of later generations tried to illustrate his great piety.

To other celebrities flourishing in this generation belongs R. *Simlai* of Lydda, who later settled in Nahardea. He was reputed less as teacher of the Halakha than for his ingenious and lucid method of treating the Hagada.

B. BABYLONIAN AMORAIM.

1. *Abba Areca* (or Aricha) was the real name of the chief Babylonian Amora, who, by way of eminence, is generally called *Rab* (the Teacher). He was born about 175 and died 247. As an orphaned youth he went to his uncle, the celebrated R. Chiya in Palestine, to finish his studies in the academy of R. Jehuda Hanasi. The mental abilities which he displayed soon attracted general attention. After the death of R. Jehuda, Abba returned to his native country, and in the year 219 founded the academy in Sura, where 1,200 pupils flocked around him from all parts of Babylonia. His authority was recognized even by the most celebrated teachers in Palestine. Being regarded as one of the semi-Tanaim, he ventured in some instances even to dispute some opinions accepted in the Mishna, a privilege otherwise not accorded to any of the Amoraim. Most of his decisions, especially in ritual questions, obtained legal sanction, but in the civil law his

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friend Samuel in Nahardea was his superior. Over one hundred of his numerous disciples, who transmitted his teachings and decisions to later generations, are mentioned in the Talmud by their names.

2. *Samuel*, or Mar Samuel, was born about 180 in Nahardea, died there 257. His father, Abba bar Abba, and Levi b. Sissi were his first teachers. Like Rab he went to Palestine and became a disciple of Rabbi Jehuda Hanasi, from whom, however, he could not obtain the ordination. After his return to Nahardea, he succeeded R. Shela in the dignity of president of the academy (Resh-Sidra) in that city. Besides the law, he cultivated the sciences of medicine and astronomy. As Amora he developed especially the rabbinical jurisprudence, in which he was regarded as the greatest authority. ¹ Among other important principles established by him is that of "*Dina d'malchutha Dina*," that is, the civil law of the government is as valid for the Jews as their own law. The most friendly and brotherly relation prevailed between Samuel and Rab, although they often differed in questions of the law. After Rab's death (247), his disciples recognized Samuel as the highest religious authority of Babylonia. He died about ten years later, leaving behind numerous disciples, several of whom became the leading teachers in the following generation.

A distinguished contemporary of Samuel was *Mar Uqba*, at first head of the court in Kafri, and later Exilarch in Nahardea.

THE SECOND GENERATION OF AMORAIM.

A. Palestinian (279-320).

B. Babylonian (257-320).

1. R. Elazar b. Pedath.
2. R. Arne.
3. R. Assi.
4. R. Chiya bar Abba.
5. Simon bar Abba.
6. R. Abbuhu.
7. R. Zera (Zeira).

1. Rab Huna.
2. Rab Juda, bar Jecheskel.
3. Rab Chisda (or Chasda).
4. Rab Shesheth.
5. Rab Nachman b. Jacob.

To the second generation of the Palestinian, Strack adds, (8) Jehudah the Second (son of Gamalia III.), (Johanah and

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Simon b. Lakish Strack refers to the second generation); (9) Hilfa or Ilfa; (10) Alexanderi; (11) Khana; (12) Chia bar Joseph; (13) Jos b. Chaninah; (14) Abba b. Zabdah, and (15) Simlaie.

To the Babylonian Strack adds, (6) Ktinah; (7) Adda b. Ahba; (8) Rabba b. Abuhu, and (9) Mathna.

Remarks and Biographical Sketches.

A. PALESTINIAN AMORAIM.

The patriarchate during this generation was successively in the hands of R. Gamaliel IV., and R. Judah III.

1. *R. Elazar ben Pedath*, generally called simply R. Elazar, like the Tana R. Elazar (ben Shamua), for whom he must not be mistaken, was a native of Babylonia, and a disciple and later an associate of R. Jochanan, whom he survived. He, enjoyed great authority and is very often quoted in the Talmud.

2. and 3. *R. Ame* and *R. Assi* were likewise Babylonians, and distinguished disciples of R. Jochanan. After the death of R. Elazar they became the heads of the declining academy in Tiberias. They had the title only of "Judges, or the Aaronites of the Holy Land," and subordinated themselves to the growing authority of the teachers in Babylonia. Rabbi Assi is not to be confounded with his contemporary the Babylonian Amora Rab Assi, who was a colleague of Rab Saphra and a disciple of Rab in Sura. [1](#)

4. and 5. *R. Chiya bar Abba* and *Simon bar Abba* were probably brothers. They had emigrated from Babylonia and became disciples of R. Jochanan. Both were distinguished teachers, but very poor. In questions of the law they were inclined to rigorous views.

6. *R. Abbahu* of Cæsarea, disciple of R. Jochanan, friend and colleague of R. Ame and R. Assi, was a man of great wealth and of a liberal education. He had a thorough knowledge of the Greek language, and favored Greek culture. Being held in high esteem by the Roman authorities, he had great political influence. He seems to have had frequent controversies with the teachers of Christianity in Cæsarea. Besides being a

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prominent teacher whose legal opinions are quoted in all parts of the Palestinian and Babylonian Talmud, he was a very popular lecturer.

7. *R. Zeira* (or *Zera*), was a Babylonian and a disciple of Rab Juda bar Jecheskel, but dissatisfied with the hair-splitting method prevailing in the academies of his native country, he emigrated to Palestine where he attended the lectures of R. Elazar b. Pedath in Tiberias, and tried, in vain, to unlearn his former method of study. Having been ordained as Rabbi, he became one of the authorities in Palestine, together with R. Ame, R. Assi and R. Abbuhu.

B. BABYLONIAN AMORAIM.

1. *Rab Huna* (born 212, died 297) was a disciple of Rab, whom, after Mar Samuel's death, he succeeded as president of the academy in Sura. In this office he was active for forty years. He employed fifteen assistants to repeat and explain his lectures to his 800 disciples. Highly revered for his great learning and his noble character, he enjoyed an undisputed authority to which even the Palestinian teachers R. Ame and R. Assi voluntarily subordinated themselves.

2. *Rab Juda bar Jecheskel*, generally called simply R. Juda (or Jehuda), was a disciple of Rab, and also of Samuel. The latter teacher, whose peculiar method he adopted and developed, used to characterize him by the epithet, "the acute." He founded the academy in Pumbaditha, but after R. Huna's death he was chosen as his successor (Resh Methibta), at Sura, where after two years (299), he died at an advanced age.

3. *Rab Chisda* (or Chasda) belonged to the younger disciples of Rab, after whose death he attended also the lectures of R. Huna. But from the latter teacher he soon separated on account of a misunderstanding between them, and established a school of his own. At the same time, he was one of the Judges in Sura. After Rab Juda's death, R. Chisda, though already above eighty years old, became head of the academy in Sura, and remained in this office for about ten years.

4. *Rab Shesheth*, a disciple of Rab and Samuel, was member of the court in Nahardea. After the destruction of that city he went to Mechuza; later he settled in Silhi, where he founded

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an academy. Being blind, he had to rely upon his powerful memory. He was R. Chisda's opponent in the Halakha, and disapproved of the hair-splitting dialectical method which had come in vogue among the followers of Rab Juda in Pumbaditha.

5. *Rab Nachman b. Jacob*, called simply Rab Nachman, was a prominent disciple of Mar Samuel. By his father-in-law, the exilarch Abba bar Abuha, he was [appointed](#) chief justice in Nahardea. After Mar Samuel's death, he succeeded him as rector of the academy in that city. When two years later (259), the city of Nahardea was destroyed, R. Nachman settled in Shechan-Zib. He is regarded as a great authority especially in the rabbinical jurisprudence, in which he established many important principles. Among others, he originated the rabbinical oath, that is, the purging oath imposed in a law suit on claims even in cases of general denial on the part of the defendant.

Of other teachers belonging to this generation, who, though not standing at the head of the leading academies, are often quoted in the Talmud, the following must be noted:

(a) *Rabba bar bar Chana*, who was a Babylonian and son of Abba bar Chana. After having attended the academy of R. Jochanan in Palestine, he returned to his native country, where he frequently reported the opinions of his great teacher. He is also noted for the many allegorical narratives ascribed to him in the Talmud.

(b) *Ulla* (b. Ishmael), was a Palestinian who frequently travelled to Babylonia, where he finally settled and died. Although without the title of Rabbi or Rab, he was regarded as a distinguished teacher whose opinions and reports are often mentioned.

THE THIRD GENERATION OF AMORAIM.

A. Palestinian (320-359).

B. Babylonian (320-375).

1. R. Jeremiah.

2. R. Jonah.

3. R. Jose.

1. Rabba bar Huna.

2. Rabba bar Nachmani.

3. Rab Joseph (bar Chiya).

4. Abaye.

5. Rabha.

6. Rab Nachman bar Isaac.

7. Rab Papa.

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To the Palestinian, Strack adds, (4) Samuel b. Nachman (in the Babylonian he is mentioned as Nachmani); (5) Itzhak the second (his contemporary in Babylonia is Nachman b. Jacob); (6) Lewi; (7) Abuhu; (8) Ami; (9) Assi; (10) Hyya b. Abba II. (Elazar b. Pedath he quotes in the third generation); (11) Simeon b. Abba; (12) Simur (also Zera is mentioned among the second generation); (13) Samuel b. Itzhak; (14) Hilla or Illeh; (15) Zrika; (16) Hoshia the second; (17) Chananiah (the colleague of the Rabbinat [1](#)); (18) Janai b. Ishmael; (19) Joshua; (20) Ban b. Mamal (in Babylonia named Abba b. Mamal); (21) Jacob b. Ide; (22) Itzhak b. Nachma; (23) Maysha; (24) Bibe; (Haggi and Jeremiah Strack quotes as belonging also to the fourth generation).

To the Babylonian, Strack adds, (8) Chisda; (9) Hamnuna; (10) Shesheth; (11) Nachma b. Jacob; (12) Rabba b. b. Hanna; (13) Ulla b. Ishmael; (14) Rabba b. Nachmene, and (1) Joseph b. Hiah.

Remarks and Biographical Sketches.

A. PALESTINIAN AMORAIM.

The patriarch of this period was Hillel II., who introduced the fixed Jewish calendar.

In consequence of the persecutions and the banishment of several religious teachers under the emperors Constantine and Constantius, the Palestinian academies entirely decayed. The only teachers of any prominence are the following:

1. *R. Jeremiah* was a Babylonian and disciple of R. Zeira, whom he followed to Palestine. In his younger days, when still in his native country, he indulged in propounding puzzling questions of trifling casuistry, by which he probably intended to ridicule the subtle method prevailing among some of the contemporary teachers, and on this account he was expelled from the academy. In the Holy Land he was more appreciated, and, after the death of R. Abbahu and R. Zeira, was acknowledged as the only authority in that country.

2. *R. Jonah* was a disciple of R. Ila (Hila) and of R. Jeremiah.

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His opinions are frequently quoted, especially in the Palestinian Talmud.

3. *R. Jose* (bar Zabda), colleague of R. Jonah, was one of the last rabbinical authorities in Palestine.

It is probable that the compilation of the Palestinian Talmud was accomplished about that time, though it cannot be stated by whom.

B. BABYLONIAN AMORAIM.

1. *Rabba* (or Rab Abba) *bar Huna* was not, as erroneously supposed by some, the son of the exilarch Huna Mari, but of Rab Huna, the disciple and successor of Rab. After the death of R. Chisda (309), he succeeded him in the dignity of president of the academy in Sura. Under his presidency, lasting thirteen years, this academy was eclipsed by that of Pumbaditha, and after his death it remained deserted for about fifty years until Rab Ashe restored it to its former glory.

2. *Rabba bar Nachmani*, in the Talmud called simply Rabba was born 270, and died 330. He was a disciple of Rab Huna, Rab Juda and Rab Chisda, and displayed from his youth great dialectical powers on account of which he was characterized as "the uprooter of mountains." Selected as head of the academy of Pumbaditha, he attracted large crowds of hearers by his ingenious method of teaching. In his lectures which commented on all parts of the Mishna, he investigated the reason of the laws and made therefrom logical deductions. Besides, he tried to reconcile seeming differences between the Mishna, the Baraitoth, and the traditional teachings of later authorities. He also liked to propound puzzling problems of the law, in order to test and sharpen the mental powers of his disciples. A charge having been made against him by the Persian government that many of his numerous hearers attended his lectures in order to evade the poll-tax, he fled from Pumbaditha and died in solitude.

3. *Rab Joseph* (bar Chiya) was a disciple of Rab Juda and Rab Shesheth, and succeeded his friend Rabba in the dignity of president of the academy in Pumbeditha, after having once before been elected for this office, which he declined in favor of Rabba. On account of his thorough knowledge of the sources

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of the Law, to which he attached more importance than to ingenious deductions, he was called Sinai. Besides being a great authority in the rabbinical law, he devoted himself to the Targum of the Bible, especially of the prophetic books. In his old age he became blind. He died in the year 333, after having presided over the academy of Pumbeditha only for three years.

4. *Abaye*, surnamed Nachmani (b. 280, d. 338) was a son of Kaylil and a pupil of his uncle Rabba bar Nachmani, and of Rab Joseph. He was highly esteemed not only for his profound knowledge of the law and his mastership in Talmudical dialectics, but also for his integrity and gentleness. After Rab Joseph's death he was selected as head of the academy in Pumbeditha, but under his administration, which lasted about five years, the number of hearers in that academy decreased considerably, as his more talented colleague *Raba* had founded a new academy in Machuza which attracted greater crowds of pupils. Under these two Amoraim the dialectical method of the Babylonian teachers reached the highest development. Their discussions, which mostly concern some very nice distinctions in the interpretation of the Mishna, in order to reconcile conflicting passages, fill the pages of the Talmud. ¹ In their differences concerning more practical questions, the opinion of Raba generally prevails, so that later authorities pointed out only six cases in which the decision of Abaye was to be adopted against that of his rival.

5. *Raba* was the son of Joseph b. Chama in Machuza. He was born 299, and died 352. In his youth he attended the lectures of Rab Nachman and of R. Chisda. Later, he and Abaye were fellow-students in the academy of Rabba bar Nachmani. Here he developed his dialectical powers, by which he soon surpassed all his contemporaries. He opened an academy in Machuza which attracted a great number of students. After Abaye's death this academy supplanted that in Pumbeditha and during Raba's lifetime became almost the only seat of learning in Babylonia. His controversies with his contemporaries, especially with his rival colleague, Abaye, are very

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numerous. Wherever an opinion of Abaye is recorded in the Talmud, it is almost always followed by the contrary view and' argument of Raba.

6. *Rab Nachman b. Isaac* was a disciple of Rab Nachman (b. Jacob), and afterward an officer as Resh Calla in the academy of Raba. After the death of the latter he was made president of the academy in Pumbeditha, which now resumed its former rank. In this capacity he remained only four years (352-356), and left no remarkable traces of his activity. Still, less significant was the activity of his successor, *R. Chama* from Nahardea, who held the office for twenty-one years (356-377).

7. *Rab Papa* (bar Chanan), a disciple of Abaye and Raba, founded a new school in Nares, in the vicinity of Sura, over which he presided for nineteen years (354-375). He adopted the dialectical method of his former teachers without possessing their ingenuity and their independence, and consequently did not give satisfaction to those of his hearers who had formerly attended the lectures of Raba. One of his peculiarities was that he frequently refers to popular proverbs people say. [1](#)

THE FOURTH GENERATION OF BABYLONIAN AMORAIM.

(375-427).

A. Sura.

1. Rab Ashe.

B. Pumbaditha.

1. Rab Zebid.

2. Rab Dime.

3. Rafram.

4. Rab Kahana.

5. Mar Zutra.

C. Nahardea.

Amemar.

To the fourth generation Strack adds, (1) Jeremiah (who though a Babylonian native, emigrated to Palestine, and was counted among the Palestinian); (2) Haggi; (3) Juda the third (Nassi), son of Gamaliel the fourth; (4) Jona; (5) Josa the second (colleague of Jona); (6) Pinchas (who also emigrated from Babylonia); (7) Judan; (8) Chelbo; (9) Hisda; (10) Chinna; (11) Tabbi; (12) Juda b. Pazi, from Lydda, and

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(13) Jehoshua of Siknin. Concerning the fourth generation of Babylonian, he counts also Abbaye and Rabba, and adds to the list of Mielziner, Rabba b. Mari, Rabbi b. Ulla, and Rabba b. Shilla. Strack does not distinguish between the colleges of Sura, Pumbaditha and Nahardea.

Remarks and Biographical Sketches.

A. *Rab Ashe* (son of Simai bar Ashe) was, at the age of twenty, made president of the reopened academy of Sura, after the death of Rab Papa, and held this office for fifty-two years. Under his presidency, this academy, which had been deserted since the time of Rabba bar Huna, regained its former glory with which Rab had invested it. Combining the profundity of knowledge which formerly prevailed in this academy with the dialectic methods developed in that of Pumbaditha, he was generally recognized as the ruling authority, so that his contemporaries called him by the distinguishing title of *Rabbana* (our teacher). Invested with this great authority, Rab Ashe was enabled to assume the task of sifting, arranging and compiling the immense material of traditions, commentaries and discussions on the Mishna, which, during the two preceding centuries, had accumulated in the Babylonian academies. In the compilation and revision of this gigantic work, which is embodied in the Gemara, he was occupied for over half a century, and still he did not complete it entirely, but this was done, after his death, by his disciples and successors.

B. During the long period of Rab Ashe's activity at the academy in Sura, the following teachers presided successively over the academy in Pumbaditha:

1 *Rab Zebid* (b. Oshaya), who succeeded Rab Chama and held the office for eight years (377-385).

2. *Rab Dime* (b. Chinena) from Nahardea, presiding only for three years (385-388).

3. *Rafram bar Papa* the elder, in his youth a disciple of Raba, succeeded R. Dime (388-394).

4. *Rab Kahana* (b. Tachlifa), likewise a disciple of Raba, was one of the former teachers of R. Ashe. In an already advanced age, he was made president of the academy of Pumbaditha, and died in the year 411. This Rab Cabana must

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not be mistaken for two other teachers of the same name, one of whom had been a distinguished disciple of Rab, and the other (Rab, Cahana b. Manyome), a disciple of Rab Juda b. Jecheskel.

5. *Mar Zutra*, who, according to some historians, succeeded Rab Cahana as rector of the school in Pumbaditha (411-414), is probably identical with Mar Zutra b. Mare, who shortly afterwards held the high office as Exilarch. In the rectorship of Pumbaditha he was succeeded by *Rab Acha bar Raba* (414-419), and the latter by *Rab Gebiha* (419-433).

C. *Amemar*, a friend of Rab Ashe, was a distinguished judge and teacher in Nahardea. When his former teacher Rab Dime became president of the academy in Pumbaditha, he succeeded him in the rectorship of that of Nahardea, from 390 to about 422. With him this once so celebrated seat of learning passed out of existence.

THE FIFTH GENERATION OF BABYLONIAN AMORAIM (427-468).

A. Sura.

1. Mar Jemar (Maremar).

2. Rab Ide bar Abin.

3. Mar bar Rab Ashe.

4. Rab Acha of Difte.

B. Pumbaditha.

1. Rafram II.

2. Rechumai.

3. Rab Sama b. Rabba.

To the fifth generation of Palestinian Strack adds, (1) Abba b. Kohen; (2) Abba Mare; (3) Mattanjah; (4) Mana the second b. Jona; (5) Chananiah the second; (6) Jos b. Bune; (7) Jona of Bozrae; (8) Tanhum, and (9) Chiah b. Adda the second.

To the Babylonian fifth generation he counts, (1) Nachman b. Itzhak; (2) Papa; (3) Huna b. Johusua.

Remarks and Biographical Sketches.

A. 1. Mar Jemar (contracted to Maremar), who enjoyed high esteem with the leading teachers of his time, succeeded his colleague and friend, Rab Ashe, in the presidency of the academy in Sura, but held this office only for about five years, (427-432).

2. *Rab Ide* (or *Ada*) *bar Abin*, became, after Mar Jemar's death, president of the academy at Sura, and held this office

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for about twenty years (432-452). He as well as his predecessor continued the compilation of the Talmud which Rab Ashe had commenced.

3. *Mar bar Rab Ashe*, whose surname was Tabyome, and who, for some unknown reasons, had been passed over in the election of a successor to his father, was finally made president of the academy in Sura, and filled this office for thirteen years, (455-468.). In his frequent discussions with contemporary authorities, he exhibits independence of opinion and great faculties of mind.

4. *Rab Acha of Difte*, a prominent teacher, was on the point of being elected as head of the academy of Sura, but was finally defeated by *Mar bar Rab Ashe*, who aspired to that office which his father had so gloriously filled for more than half a century.

B. The academy of Pumbaditha, which had lost its earlier influence, had during this generation successively three presidents, of whose activity very little is known, namely:

1. *Rafram II.*, who succeeded *Rab Gebihah*, from 433 to 443.

2. *Rab Rechumai*, from 443-456.

3. *Rab Sama b. Rabba*, from 456-471.

Toward the end of this generation, the activity of both academies was almost paralyzed by the terrible persecutions which the Persian King Firuz instituted against the Jews and their religion.

THE SIXTH AND LAST GENERATION OF BABYLONIAN AMORAIM (468-500).

A. Sura.

1. *Rabba Thospia* (or *Tosfaah*).

2. *Rabina*.

B. Pumbaditha.

Rab Jose.

To the sixth generation of Palestinian Strack adds, (1) *Samuel b. Jose b. Bune*, and to the Babylonian, (1) *Ashi*; (2) *Rabban bar Thachlifa*; (3) *Mar b. Rabina*; (4) *Mar Zutra*. *Meremar* and *Tospha* he counts to the seventh generation, whilst *Mielziner* counts them to the sixth. [1](#)

Footnotes

[23:1](#) In a more restricted meaning the term *Amora* (from ••• {Hebrew *ʔMR*}, to say, to speak) signifies the same as *Methurgeman* (the interpreter), that is, the officer in the academies who, standing at the side of the lecturer or presiding teacher, had to announce loudly and explain to the large assembly what the teacher just expressed briefly and in a low voice.

The term *Tana*, which generally applies only to the teachers mentioned in the Mishna and Boraitha, is in the period of Amoraim sometimes used also to signify one whose special business it was to recite the memorized Boraithoth to the expounding teachers. In this sense the term is to be understood in the phrase: A Tana (teacher) repeated a Boraitha (or taught same) before so and so, etc.

[24:1](#) Some scholars count the semi-Tanaim as the first generation, and have consequently seven instead of six generations. The period of Palestinian Amoraim being much shorter than that of the Babylonian, ends with the third generation of the latter. Frankel in his introduction to the Palestinian Talmud, treating especially of the Palestinian Amoraim, divides them also into six generations.

[24:2](#) Who was appointed by Mar Samuel to examine Rab. (Will be translated in Tract Kethubath.)

[25:1](#) As to further characteristics of this and the other prominent Amoraim, the following works may be consulted: Graetz, "History of the Jews," Vol. IV.; Z. Frankel, "Mebo"; I. H. Weiss, "Dor Dor," Vol. III.; I. Hamburger, "Real Encyclopädie," Vol. II. Besides, J. Fürst, "Kultur und Literaturgeschichte der Juden in Asien," which treats especially of the Babylonian academics and teachers during the period of the Amoraim.

[27:1](#) Mar Samuel made also a compilation of Boraithoth, which is quoted in the Talmud by the phrase "the disciples of Samuel."

[29:1](#) See Tosephoth Chullin, 19a.

[31:1](#) There are eight Tanaim and twenty-three Amoraim named Chananiah. We do not remember who was called so as Strack did.

[33:1](#) The often very subtle argumentations of these two teachers became so proverbial that the phrase "the critical questions of Abaye and Raba" is used in the Talmud as a signification of acute discussions and minute investigations.

[34:1](#) This Rab Papa must not be mistaken for an elder teacher by the same name, who had ten sons, all well versed in the law, one of whom, Rafram, became head of the academy of Pumbeditha in the following generation. Neither is Rab Papa identified with Rab Papi, a distinguished lawyer who flourished in a former generation.

[37:1](#) We refrain from giving our own opinion on the differences between the generations of Strack and those of Mielziner; for the reason, we confess, that we do not understand why only those named here should be mentioned among the different generations, whilst each of them has so many contemporaries named by Halpern in his special collection of Tanaim and Amoraim, which takes up a great part in Halakha p. 38 as well as in Hagada in both Talmuds and Medrashim. I. H. Weiss's method is to give the particulars of those who have much contributed to the development of the oral law; but nevertheless he mentioned many of the great men without particulars. Should we say that Mielziner has adopted his method while Strack did not, it would also not be correct. There are many whom Weiss speaks of lengthily whilst Mielziner does not mention them at all and *vice versa*. The modern scholars like Bacher, and others, took the trouble to write particulars of each one mentioned by Strack although even they omitted many who are mentioned by Halpern, and therefore we hesitate to give our own opinion on this matter.

[Next: Chapter IV: The Classification of Halakha and Hagada in the Contents of the Gemara.](#)