

## **BIG IDEAS FROM CLASS TEN:** **TALMUD: ARGUMENT FOR THE SAKE OF HEAVEN**

Contemporary Judaism is based on the innovations of the Rabbis, who explain, expand, and modify Biblical Judaism to fit a new, post-Temple era. This process is expressed primarily in the debates and discussions that form the Talmud.

The RABBIS emerge as the leaders of the Jewish People, following the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans in 70 CE. They emerge from the sect called the PHARISEES, who believe that both the WRITTEN TORAH & ORAL TORAH are binding.

The first collection of rabbinic discussion is the MISHNAH, edited in 200 CE. The commentary on the MISHNAH is the GEMARA, finished in Babylonia around 500 CE. These two works together form the TALMUD. In other words: MISHNAH + GEMARA = TALMUD

### **WE ARE NOT BIBLICAL JEWS, WE ARE RABBINIC JEWS:**

- the rabbis **UPDATED** certain laws to keep judaism more relevant.  
*e.g.: replacing animal sacrifice with prayer and good deeds*
- the rabbis **EXPANDED** certain laws to make judaism more meaningful  
*e.g.: filling in the details of how one is to make shabbat holy*
- the rabbis **RESTRICTED** certain laws to make judaism more compassionate  
*e.g.: effectively eliminating the death penalty from jewish law*

The Talmud contains two types of material:

**HALAKHA:** Discussion of Jewish law and practice

**AGGADAH:** Folk and morality tales, history, theology, and assorted miscellany

Most of the Talmud is written in the form of **MAKHLOKET**, meaning holy debate. Of the over 5000 MAKHLOKETs in the Talmud, only around 50 are resolved (LESS THAN 1%!!!). The Jewish conversation is never closed.

