

Mozilla Skin

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Historical Overview

From The Sanhedrin - en

The term, Sanhedrin is the name of the Beth Din HaGadol (The Great Court) as it was called during the Second Temple Period. Most secular scholars derive the term from Greek, though they admit that if so, the word has strayed considerably from its original meaning.

Our sages, however, suggest a more applicable derivation of the term. P'siqta D'Rav Kahana (chapter 25), teaches that the first part of the word, "sin," referring to the Torah that was received at Mount "Sinai," was combined with the second part of the word, "hadrin," meaning, "glorification," to express the Great Court's role, the glorification of G-d's Torah through its application. Rabbi Ovadia Bartenura suggests an alternative meaning (commentary on Mishnah Sota, chapter 9, Mishnah 11). Also taking the term as a combination of two words to mean, son'im hadarath pan'im b'din, "foes (opposing litigants) give respect and honor to its judgment." Other commentators confirm his interpretation, suggesting further that the first letter was changed from "sin" to "samekh," at a later date (Tosofoth Yom Tov and the Maharal).

The following history is largely based on "History of the Jewish People", in the ArtScroll History Series, published by Mesorah. This in turn is based on Yekutiel's Friedner's Divrei Yemei HaBayis HaSheni.

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Biblical Origins

The origin of the Sanhedrin can be found in the Council of the seventy elders founded by Moshe Rabbenu (Moses): "Gather to Me 70 men of the elders of Israel... and bring them to the Tent of Meeting, so that they should stand there with you" (Numbers 11:16). This was the first Sanhedrin. Counting Moses himself, it consisted of 71 members. Further, G-d commanded Moshe Rabbenu to lay hands on Yehoshua [Joshua] son of Nun. It is from this point that the Sanhedrin is considered as beginning. As individuals within the Sanhedrin passed away, or otherwise became unfit for service, new members underwent Semicha ordination. These ordinations continued, in an unbroken line: from Moshe Rabbenu to Yehoshua, to the elders, to the prophets (including Ezra, Nehemiah), to the Knesses HaGedolah or Great Assembly, to the sages of the Sanhedrin. It was not until several hundred years after the destruction of the Second Temple that this line was broken, and the Sanhedrin dissolved.

References to the Sanhedrin can be found in the council created by Yehoshafat: "Moreover in Jerusalem, Yehoshaphat appointed Levites and priests, and of the heads of the fathers' houses of Israel, for the judgment of the L-rd, and for controversies. They returned to Jerusalem." (2 Chronicles 19:8) According to the Talmud (Meod Katon, 26a), King Saul was president of the Sanhedrin in his reign, and his son Jonathan was vice-president.

Babylonian Exile

The leaders of the people called upon the Jewish people throughout Babylonia and urged them to return to the Land of Israel and begin working on rebuilding the Temple. This included Zerubavel ben She'altiel, a descendant of King David; Yehoshua [Joshua] ben Yehotzadak [Jehozadak], the High Priest; Nechemiah [Nehemiah]; Mordechai; and the Prophets; Chaggai [Haggai], Zechariah and Malachi. Yehoshua and Zerubavel appointed the Levites to supervise the work, while the questions of halachah which arose in the course of construction were decided by the Sages of the Sanhedrin, among who were many prophets. [HOJP I, 25]

Ezra the Scribe came to Jerusalem only after the Temple was built. The Persian king appointed Ezra as the chief judge over the Jews, and authorized him to enforce his decisions. When Ezra arrived in Jerusalem he quickly discovered the truth of the many reports concerning the disappointing spiritual level of the local Jews. The physical construction of the Temple was completed but the spiritual structure of the people was not. Ezra summoned all the men of Yehudah and Benyamin to Jerusalem. So great was Ezra's impact on the people that they all promised to divorce their foreign wives. All that winter, until the first of Nissan, the Sanhedrin in Jerusalem and the various local courts occupied themselves with establishing the family purity of the returnees. Seeing that the lack of Torah sages and teachers was the cause of Israel's downfall, Ezra promptly sent scholars to the different communities. These men were known as the Sofrim or Scribes. [HOJP I, 31]

The society's need for national spiritual leadership was met by the creation of a body called the Knesses HaGedolah, or Great Assembly [Sanhedrin]. Its central role in Jewish history is evident in the Mishnah: Moshe received the Torah at Sinai and handed it on to Yehoshua; Yehoshua to the Elders; and the Elders to the Prophets. The Prophets handed it on to the Men of the Great Assembly. Essentially the Great Assembly was the Great Sanhedrin, the supreme legal and religious authority of the nation. Among them were many prophets, including Chaggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Daniel, Chananiah, Mishael, Azariah, Ezra, Nechemiah, Mordechai, and Zerubavel. Altogether, 120 sages were members of the Great Assembly, although not all 120 were members at the same time or lived in the same place. Together they took steps that would enable them to transmit the Torah in its entirety to the coming generations. [HOJP I, 34-35]

The Men of the Great Assembly [Sanhedrin] undertook many activities to strengthen the spiritual lifestyle of the people. These activities formed the sacred spiritual legacy that the last generation of prophet left to all future generations that would not be privileged to see and hear the spirit of prophecy. From their time to ours, we live according to their heritage, and so will it continue until the coming of Mashiah, when G-d will again bestow the spirit of prophecy upon us. For all laws and Rabbinic commandments they composed a text that was to be handed down and explained from teacher to student. This teaching later became the basis of the Mishnah. Likewise, to give the prayers a clear framework, they established the wording of the Shemoneh Esrei, Eighteen Blessings, as well as the blessings before and after food, before and after performing a mitzvah, and before and after the Sabbath (Kiddush and Havdalah). They translated the Tanach [Bible] into the Aramaic vernacular as an authoritative interpretation of each verse. This they divided into twenty four books, and sealed the Tanach, meaning that only these were declared holy books to which nothing could be added or subtracted. They taught: "Be deliberate in judgment; raise many students; and make a fence around the Torah" (Avos 1:1). [HOJP I, 36]

Many ordinances adopted during the period of the Great Assembly [Sanhedrin] are attributed to Ezra. He ordained that on Mondays and Thursdays at least ten verses of Torah should be read publicly. Ezra and the Great Assembly also arranged that judges should sit in court on these busy market days. He also ordained

that all sacred texts be again written in Ashuri script, a sacred square-letter script, after falling in disuse. Ezra and the Great Assembly placed a ban on the Cuthites (Samaritans), due to their questionable conversion to Judaism, and lack of observance of Jewish laws concerning marriage and divorce. [HOJP I, 37-38]

Second Temple Period

Upon the death of Shimon HaTzaddik, who was the leader of the Children of Israel during the time of Alexander the Great, his brother Elazar had become Kohen Gadol, while the spiritual, or rabbinic, leadership had been inherited by Shimon's disciple, Antigonus of Socho. The people then had two leaders, Elazar the High Priest who was also its political leader and had the authority to collect taxes, and Antigonus, the greatest of the Torah scholars of his time, who occupied the position of Nassi, President of the Supreme Court, the Sanhedrin. With the death of Antigonus the authority that he represented was transmitted to his two outstanding disciples, Yose ben Yoezer of Tzreidah and Yose ben Yochanan of Jerusalem. With them began the period of the Zugos [Pairs], whereby the leadership of the people was shared by two outstanding sages: the Nassi [president of the Sanhedrin], a new created office; and the Av Beis Din [dean of the Sanhedrin] an office that was now given new significance. Of the two positions, that of Nassi was the more powerful since it held political power, while that of Av Beis Din dealt with purely halachic matters. The apparent reason for dividing the leadership between two people was the shameful transfer of authority for collecting revenue from the High Priest Chonyo, to Yosef ben Toviah. The Sages now felt that they could no longer entrust the undivided leadership of the people to the High Priest if he could be outwitted by a man of deceit and cruelty, as Chonyo had been by Yosef. [HOJP I, 57-58]

At the beginning of Seleucid rule, the integrity of the Holy Temple and of the priesthood was faithfully maintained. When Antiochus Epiphanes came to the throne in Syria, however, things soon took a different turn. The Hellenists now had a sympathetic royal ear. The Hellenists managed to take over even the spiritual function of the Kehunah Gedolah. Yeshua, a brother of Chonyo, who had Hellenized his name to Jason, offered Antiochus a generous bribe to depose Chonyo. Jason's emissary to Antiochus Epiphanes, Menelaus, made use of his position also to bribe the king. Menelaus was appointed Kohen Gadol, even though he wasn't a Kohen. Menelaus proceeded ruthlessly to oppress his people and persecute the Jewish religion. Menelaus and his brother Lysimachus took the golden vessels of the Holy Temple and sold them to raise the money they needed to pay the royal tribute. When Chonyo, the lawful Kohen Gadol protested this act, they had him murdered. Alarmed at the turn of event, the Sanhedrin sent three of its members to Antioch to accuse Menelaus before the king. Menelaus was in great danger of being found guilty, but he managed to bribe a close advisor to the king, who saw to it that not only Menelaus was acquitted, but that the three sages were condemned to death. This dissatisfaction and the harsh decrees Antiochus Epiphanes of eventually lead to the revolt of Chanuka. [HOJP I, 63]

After the victory of Chanuka, and the establishment of the Hasmonean dynasty, king Yochanan Hyrcanus was worried about the many non-Jews which lived with the newly expanded borders of Judea, especially now that the Edomites had been added to their number. He feared that in a future time of war the aggressive Edomites would join forces with the enemy and rebel against the rule of the Jews. His solution was a surprising one: he forced the Edomites to convert to Judaism, even though conversion under duress is against Halachah. From these converted Edomites there later emerged Herod [Hordos], a man who caused untold harm to our people and country. Like his father before him, Yochanan bore the dual responsibility as Nassi of Judea and Kohen Gadol. However, the Sages continued to appoint a Nassi as the leading member of the Sanhedrin, so that civil authority would belong to those who interpret the Torah. The Nassi of the Sanhedrin at the time was Yehoshua ben Perachiah, while Nitai of Arbel held the title of Av Beis Din, the

head of the Sanhedrin. [HOJP I, 89]

Yochanan Hyrkanus reigned during the period of the Zugos, when two sages shared the spiritual leadership. The two people in office during Yochanan's time were Yohoshua ben Perachiah and Nitai of Arbel. They were disciples of the previous "Pair," Yose ben Yoezer and Yose ben Yochanan, who functioned during the troublesome years of the conflict between the Hasmoneans and the Hellenists. Most of the people followed the Sages and remained loyal to the laws of the Torah. The Sages were called Pharisees [Perushim], which means "those who separate themselves." The title chaver was awarded to a learned person who was known to observe the Halachah scrupulously, particularly with regard to the laws of ritual purity and tithes. The Sadducees, disciples of Tzadok, openly opposed the Torah. The Hellenists were assimilationists who saw no reason for the existence of a Jewish nation. After the Hasmonean revolt, the Hellenists pretended they were nationalists who were dedicated to the independence of their country. The religious expression of the Hellenists followed Tzadok, and became known as the Sadducees. The Sadducees denied the existence of the World to Come, ruling out any reward and punishment in the life after this. Hence, no fear of consequences would deter them from any sin. Their only concern was to enjoy physical pleasures, and keep the literalist, minimum of the Law. The Sanhedrin became the battleground between the Pharisees and the Sadducees for the control of the leadership of the Jewish people. Under the patronage of Alexander Yannai, the Sadducees gained control of the Sanhedrin, although under the quiet influence of queen Shlomis Alexandra, Shimon ben Shetach replaced many Sadducee members of the Sanhedrin with genuine Sages. Becoming alarmed over the rising influence of the Pharisees, Yannai and his Sadducee allies orchestrated a conflict during the festival of Succos. This resulted in the arrest and crucifixion of 800 Pharisees. Although the Pharisees were gradually being eliminated from political leadership, they had captured the heart of the people. [HOJP I, 92-98]

Under Roman rule

The Sanhedrin met in a building known as Lishkat Ha-Gazit or the Hall of Hewn Stones, which has been placed by many scholars as built into the north wall of the Temple Mount, half inside the sanctuary and half outside, with doors providing access both to the Temple and to the outside. The name presumably arises to distinguish it from the buildings in the Temple complex used for ritual purposes, which had to be constructed of stones unhewn by any iron implements.

In 63 BCE, Pompey was invited to intervene in the civil war between the sons of Yannai, Aristobulus and Hyrkanus. He did so and conquered Jerusalem, and placing Hyrkanus as a puppet king. Antipater, an advisor to Hyrkanus was a favorite of Rome and held the real reins of power. Six years later, Antipater advised Roman proconsul Gabinius to divide the country into five provinces. Gabinius disbanded the Sanhedrin and handed their functions over to local councils made up of Sadducees and their followers. This lasted until Julius Caesar rose to power. As a gesture to his conquered provinces, he displayed a liberal attitude towards the Jews in Judea and in the other countries of his empire. He annulled the harsh Pompeian orders that included the abolition of the Sanhedrin. He allowed a central Jewish government in Jerusalem, permitted the rebuilding of its walls, and restored to the Jewish state the port city of Jaffa and other cities. [HOJP I, 122-5]

Antipater treated the Land of Israel as if it were his private property. His older son he appointed governor of the Jerusalem area, and his younger son, Herod, he made governor of Galilee in the north. Herod immediately revealed his brutal nature. He arrested many of the young Galilean patriots together with their leader Chizkiyahu, and without any semblance of a trial executed them. With the mass murder Herod forfeited his life. According to Jewish law he should have been tried before the Sanhedrin, but Roman law

left the Jewish courts without the power to compel the accused to appear before them. The community leaders and the relatives of the slain turned to Hyrkanus, the Nassi and the High Priest, and did not desist until he agreed to convene a special court of the "Sanhedrin". Among the recognized sages who participated was Shammai, the disciple of Shemaya and Avtalyon, already known as a leading scholar. Herod accepted the summons, but decided to intimidate the judges. He appeared before them wearing royal garments of purple and escorted by a retinue of soldiers. Many of the judges were afraid to speak up. Only Shammai remained strong, and under his leadership they were prepared to condemn Herod to death, but Hyrkanus came to his aid. He ordered the verdict to be postponed to until the next day. During the night, Herod fled to Damascus. As the commanding general of Lebanon, he gathered troops and marched on Jerusalem, intending to avenge himself on the Jewish leaders who had dared to judge him. He was stopped by his father Antipater, but not many years later he took revenge and murdered the judges. [HOJP I, p125]

Herod's son and successor, Archelaus, was no better. Archelaus called upon Roman soldiers bloodily to assert his authority over Jerusalem. On Pesach, the foreign soldiers killed some 3,000 Jews and drove the others away. This was repeated on Shavuos, as a demonstration of Archelaus' power. A Jewish delegation was dispatched to Augustus. The Jews presented their case in stirring words. They described their sufferings under the Herodian regime and requested restoration of the Sanhedrin as the final authority in purely internal matters, while political control should be in the hands of the Roman consul in Damascus. Had Augustus accepted the plea of the Jews, life in their homeland would have returned to what it had been in the days of the Men of the Great Assembly, when the Sages of the Torah directed the life of the people, while foreigners controlled external and political matters. But Heaven decided otherwise, and their plea was rejected. Archelaus was not appointed king, but rather given the title of "Ethnarch" or governor. When even the Samaritans joined the Jews in their complaints against Archelaus, Augustus Caesar was convinced. He removed Archelaus from his position and banished him to Gaul (modern-day France). This begins the chapter in Jewish History known as the era of the Roman procurators. [HOJP I, p141]

During the many decades when then Jewish monarchy failed to provide proper leadership, the people looked for guidance to the Sages, especially the Zugos (marked below in blue). By the time of the first Zugos, during the civil war of the two Hasmonean brothers, the High Priesthood had already become a political pawn. High Priests began to be replaced with increasingly rapid frequency. The spiritual leadership of the people lay with Shemaya and Avtalyon. Acting on their advice, the Torah scholars of the time retreated from political and nationalistic matters. This enabled them to continue the study and teaching of the Torah even under the most trying circumstances, and this assured that the Jewish people would pass on the heritage of Sinai from generation to generation. However even this did not prevent Gabinius from abolishing the Sanhedrin in the first year of the common era. When he abolished the great Sanhedrin, there was no institution to decide on matters which were crucial to the people as a whole, such as the calendar. After a number of years the Sanhedrin returned to the Chamber of Hewn Stone in the Temple, but it lacked authority and could not act independently with fear of intervention by Roman officials who, directly or indirectly ruled the land. The Sages therefore thought it advisable to hand over some of the basic functions of the Sanhedrin, including determination of the calendar, to one of the most respected families in Jerusalem, the family of Beseira. As long as the Edomites [Herodians] ruled the land, the Sages realized that there was little reason to believe that in the foreseeable future the Sanhedrin would be restored to its former power. They therefore sought a more effective way to administer the religious and moral life of the people. The opportunity came with the arrival of Hillel on the scene of Jewish history. [based on HOJP I, pp.142-143]

Hillel and Shammai received from Shemaya and Avtalyon the authority to interpret and transmit the Torah. Upon the death of Shemaya and Avtalyon, Hillel returned to Babylonia. When he came back to the Holy

Land many years later, the land was in the grip of Herod's despotic rule. With Hillel's appointment as Nasi, there began a new era in the annals of the Jewish people. Previously, the Nasi has been elected only by the members of the Sanhedrin. The new conditions of life in Eretz Yisrael, however, forced a change in this procedure. No longer could the Sanhedrin be given the sole authority over the choice of Nasi, because the Romans appointed and removed the membership of the Sanhedrin at will, according to their own political considerations. The Sages decided, therefore, that Hillel should be chosen not by the Sanhedrin alone, but by all the scholars of the great House of Study in Jerusalem. As a result of this new procedure, Hillel and all the Nesi'im who followed him were not only the heads of the Sanhedrin, but also the recognized leaders of the people. True, they had neither police nor army to impose their will upon the people, but the people responded to them voluntarily, because they knew that the voice of the Torah spoke through them and that their decisions were based upon broad agreement among the Sages of Israel. [HOJP I, pp.144-145]

Since Gabinius from abolishing the [independent] Sanhedrin in the first year of the common era, there was no single authority competent to decide the many halachic disputes between the nation's outstanding Torah scholars. Many such questions remained unresolved until one generation after the Destruction of the Temple. At that time Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai established a central yeshiva at Yavneh [Sanhedrin], where the rule was adopted that in most cases the Halachah follows the view of Beis Hillel. [HOJP I, pp.144-146]

As a rule, the Romans did not intervene in the internal affairs of the native provinces. Because their interest was in political control and personal enrichment, they found it convenient to allow the Jewish leaders to regulate the internal matters of their people. So it happened, paradoxically, in 20 CE when the political independence of the people in Judea came to an end, they were granted a significant degree of local self-government. The Great Sanhedrin was restored to its rightful place in the Chamber of Hewn Stone alongside the Temple; there they could once more lead the nation according to the laws of the Torah and regulate everyday life for the common good. The leaders of the Sanhedrin supervised the Temple service and disbursements from its treasury. The sense of order and tranquility, that had so long been absent, returned to Judea. [HOJP I, pp.149]

The time of relative calm did not last long. The Sadducees could not tolerate the raising of the Sages from the Pharisee camp to positions of power and control and sought ways to regain their lost power and influence. The Sadducees quickly realized that the office of High Priest held the best promise to achieve this aim. The Roman rulers followed Herod's example of bestowing this sacred office upon the highest bidder. As the Sadducees had no lack of money, they offered huge personal bribes to the procurators, and a candidate of their choice became High Priest. The Roman officials soon realized that the office of High Priest was an infallible source of income. At frequent intervals, they would dismiss the current Kohen Gadol and auction off the position to the highest bidder. The prestige of the office thus suffered during this period as the Kohen Gadol came to be regarded as a petty politician who was appointed by the secular government and cared only about his own glory and enrichment. In the course of time, with their numbers growing, they became a domineering aristocracy and together with their relatives and friends, they abused the people and brought about the Destruction of the Temple. (Pesachim 57a) [HOJP I, pp.149]

Under procurator Pontius Pilate, there were several acts of aggression against the Jewish people, and these bloody incidents could easily have served as a signal for popular uprisings throughout the country. But the wisdom of the Sages and the Sanhedrin prevailed, and order was maintained. It appears from a Mishnah (Eduyos 7:7) that Rabban Gamliel the Elder (son of Hillel's son Rabban Shimon), as Nasi of the Sanhedrin, went to Damascus to talk to the proconsul Vitellius about the various current problems and impressed upon him the savagery of his representative in Judea. As a result of this protest and the complaints of the Samaritans, who were also oppressed, Pontius Pilate was removed from his office and recalled to Rome.

[HOJP I, p149]

In 66 CE, the great revolt against Rome raged through the whole of Eretz Yisrael, the inhabitants were divided into three factions: (1) the party on the side of Agrippa and the Romans; (2) the great mass of the poor, who were partizans of the rebellion; and (3) the neutrals, including the historian Justus of Tiberias, who were neither friendly to Rome nor eager for the revolution. The revolutionaries, headed by Yeshua ben Zopha, archon of the city, soon gained control; but the Roman faction would not give way. When, therefore, John of Giscala lodged a complaint in the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem against Josephus, who was then at Tiberias, the council sent to the city an embassy of four men with 2,500 troops. Josephus at first sought to annul the decision of the Sanhedrin; but his efforts proved unsuccessful, and, compelling the embassy to return to Jerusalem, he subdued the revolutionary party, whereupon the Roman sympathizers appealed to Agrippa for aid, which he refused to grant. After Vespasian had conquered the greater part of Galilee, however, Tiberias voluntarily opened its gates to him, and favor was shown the inhabitants for Agrippa's sake. [JE Tiberias]

The two leading Torah personalities at the end of the Second Temple period were Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai, dean of the Sanhedrin, and Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel, of the family of Hillel, the Nasi. Of the two, the undisputed leader was Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai. He counteracted every attempt of the Sadducees to tamper with the Halachah. The importance of his success in this defense of the Torah is highlighted by the fact that the Sages proclaimed as minor holidays the occasion when Rabban Yochanan defeated his Sadducean opponents. In his capacity as president or Nasi of the Sanhedrin, he participated in the central government, and led the political opposition to the treacherous conduct of Josephus in the Galilee. The Sages, led by Rabban Yochanan and Rabban Shimon generally supported the political line of the more moderate Zealots in their resistance to Rome. However, when they realized that because of the internal conflicts and wars there was no chance of withstanding the Romans, they chose to take the initiative in a daring action to save Jerusalem and the Holy Temple from total destruction. Rabban Yochanan pledged non-involvement in the revolt to Vespasian in return for three things: "give me Yavneh and its sages [to reconstitute the Sanhedrin]", the family of [Hillel] Rabban Shimon ben Galiel should not come to harm, Vespasian should provide a physician for the R'Tzadok, the tzaddik of the generation who had been fasting and praying that Jerusalem and the Temple should be spared from destruction. [HOJP I, p183-184]

After the Destruction of the Temple, Yavneh became the spiritual center of the people, and the secret of its survival. Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai re-organized the Sanhedrin, which fixed the date of each new month and the time of each leap year. From Yavneh he sent instructions to the scattered Jewish communities in matters of law and observance, and Jews from all over the Diaspora turned to Yavneh for answers and advice. Without any formal declaration [and without the immediate participation of the leading scholars of the generation], Yavneh became the new center of the Jewish people. When the Sanhedrin proclaimed the beginning of a new month, messengers were sent out to the more remote communities, and fire signals were used to communicate the news to the Jews in Babylonia. In deliberating on whether to add a month to the year, the Sanhedrin considered whether bad weather would prevent the far-flung exiles from arriving in Jerusalem in time for the Pesach pilgrimage. It is true that with the arrival of Ezra and his followers Jerusalem had returned to its place of pre-eminence in Jewish life, and it was from there, and especially the Sanhedrin, that authoritative instructions went forth to Jews everywhere. Nevertheless, the study of Torah had continued throughout all these years in Babylonia uninterrupted. [HOJP I, p201-203]

Christian Traditions

See Also The 'Sanhedrin' in the New Testament

The New Testament, according to gospel accounts, says that Jesus was brought before the Jerusalem Sanhedrin, presided over by high priest Joseph Caiaphas (a Sadducee). There is no record of such a trial in the Talmud and it is unknown in contemporary Rabbinic Literature. This 'trial' has not only been the source of unmeasurable trouble and persecution of the Jewish people, but it is also not logical from a Jewish point of view as there are many disagreements between the New Testament account and Rabbinic procedure. See link below.

Rabbinic Judaism rejects any connection with the trial of Jesus with or without a "sanhedrin". Modern Judaism is called Rabbinic Judaism and claims descent from the Pharisees, a group at odds with the Sadducees. It is possible that the trial was as a Sadducean illegal court, or perhaps the details as we know them today are incomplete or inaccurate. Josephus (Ant. 20:9, etc) generally portrays the Sadducees as antagonistic to early Christianity, while the New Testament (John 3:2, Acts 5:34, etc) portrays Pharisees as being tolerant. The role of the Sadducees in trying and executing early Christians is explicitly referenced in Josephus. In 62 CE the Jewish priest and Sadducee, Ananus, convened the Sanhedrin in his house and condemned Yaakov [James], half-brother of Yeshua, who is then summarily executed.[Josephus, ibid]

Roman Exile

After the destruction, the Sanhedrin was re-established in Yavneh: it was thence transferred to Usha [under the presidency of Gamliel II. ben-Simon II., 80-116 CE], conveyed back to Yavneh, and again to Usha, to Shefaram [under the presidency of Simon III ben-Gamliel II., 140-163 CE], to Beth Shearim and Sephoris, under the presidency of Yehudah I. [163-193 CE], and finally to Tiberias, under the presidency of Gamliel III., ben-Yehudav I. [193-220 CE], where it became more of a consistory, [but still retaining, under the presidency of Yehudah II., ben-Shimon III. [220-270 CE], the power of excommunication]: while under the presidency of Gamliel IV., ben-Yehudav II., it dropped the appellation Sanhedrin, and the authoritative decisions were issued under the name of Beth HaMidrash. Gamliel V. [400-425 CE] was the last president. With the death of this patriarch who was executed by Theodosius II., for erecting new synagogues contrary to the imperial decree, the title Nassi, the last remains of the ancient Sanhedrin, became illegal to be used after 425 CE.

- ■ ■ Begin Area Under Contruction ***

Yavne

70 CE Rabban Yohannan ben Zakkai, who fled during siege, re-establishes the Jewish Sanhedrin council for national leadership in Yavneh [Jamnia].), where the Sanhedrin era of Judaism begins (ends 640), and the term rabbi is first used for Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai; the use of the Greek Septuagint version of the Hebrew scriptures by the new Christian cult causes Jews to cease using it.

80 CE Gamliel II takes control from Yohanan ben Zakkai of Jewish leadership in Yavneh, asserts authority inherited from Sanhedrin in Jerusalem before the Roman war. Until this time, many scholars who had avoided associating themselves with Rabban Yohannan ben Zakkai's Sanhedrin, begin to fully participate.

132 CE Incited by Roman plan to reconstruct Jerusalem as colony called Aelia Capitolina, Jews in Judea

revolt against Romans, led by Shimeon Bar-Kochba (supported by the Sanhedrin and proclaimed Messiah by Rabbi Akiva) Jews capture Jerusalem, sacrificial rituals re-instituted, coins struck and independent Jewish state declared. Jews in Israel who believe Christianity are persecuted by followers of Bar-Kochba since they cannot agree that Bar-Kochba is Israel's Messiah, or that they are perceived as loyal to Rome.

138 CE Antoninus Pius, Roman emperor, recognizes [Pharasaic] Judaism as a legitimate religion. Jewish residents constitute up to a tenth of the population of the Roman Empire. Jewish Sanhedrin located at Usha in the Galilee.

138-220 CE Yehudah HaNassi [Judah the Prince] was nown simply as Rabbi. He was the first acknowledged Nassi responsible for both the Sanhedrin and for acting as the political head of the community. For the most part, Patriarchs like Yehudah HaNassi were chosen from descendents of Hillel. The last Hillelite Patriarch was Gamliel VI (b.370- d.425). Yehudah HaNassi's greatest contribution was collecting and codifying the Mishna.

Usha

140 Usha (Eretz Israel) After the disaster of the Bar Kochba revolt, the Lower Galilee replaced Yabneh as the center of Talmudic learning and the Rabbinical Court (Sanhedrin) in Eretz Israel. Among the Tannaim studying there were Rabbi Meir, Rabbi Simeon b. Gamliel, Rabbi Yehudah HaNassi and Rabbi Yehudah b. Ilai. One of their important contributions was Takanot Usha (Ordinances of Usha), which included the following laws: 1. A father must support his daughter until marriage and his son at least until the age of 12. 2. Limiting the amount of charity one can order given away upon his death to a fifth.

Shefaram

165 CE Jewish Sanhedrin held in Shefaram in the Galilee.

Beth Shearim

180 CE Jewish Sanhedrin meets in Beth Shearim. (until 210).

195 Rabbi Yehudah, Ha Nassi, the Prince, exercises powers of taxation of Jews for the Sanhedrin, imposes death sentences which Rome tolerates.

Sepphoris

210 CE Jewish Sanhedrin meets in Sepphoris in Galilee. Jewish oral Code of Law, the Mishnah, completed by students of Rabbi Yehudah Ha Nassi, the Prince, in Palestine.

210 Baraitot (Also called apocryphal Mishnayot) were compiled. They are included in the overall term Talmud (Gemara), which embraces both the Jerusalem Talmud and the more famous Babylonian Talmud.

222-235 Alexander Severus (Roman Empire) Reigned as emperor. His respect for Judaism enabled Yehudah II (President of the Sanhedrin - the Jewish Supreme Court located in Eretz Israel), to obtain a revival of Jewish rights, including permission to visit Jerusalem.

Tiberius

240 Jewish Sanhedrin held in Tiberias, Galilee., headed by Rabbi Yohanan ben Nappaha.

358 Jewish calendar fixed on basis of astronomical calculations, celebration of new moons and holy days no longer dependent on announcements by the Sanhedrin. Theodosius forbids Sanhedrin to assemble, reaction to Julian's pro-Jewish stance. Calendar adopted at clandestine, & maybe last meeting. (Note: Julian ruled after Sanhedrin disbanded by imperial decree) (I)

359 Hillel II (Eretz Israel) Issued the Jewish calendar based on the lunar year. Previously, only the Sanhedrin could announce the new month and oncoming festivals. Due to the dispersion, every individual had to be able to determine the exact days for himself. (JH)

429 Theodosius orders Sanhedrin to turn over money collected for the Jewish Patriarch, effectively abolishing patriarchate, this in accordance with the Church's desire to eliminate Davidic patriarch of Jewish people, which appeared to contradict Christian claims. (K)

640 CE The Saracens conquer Caesarea following a 7-month siege after a Jew named Joseph leads the Muslims through a tunnel under the city. The Arabs under Amr Ibn-el-Aas besiege the Fortress of Babylon on the east bank of the Nile. The Sanhedrin (High Court) period of Judaism ends. (T)

becomes central authority [HOJP II, 15]

qualifications for [HOJP II, 16-17]

re-established in Yavneh [HOJP II, 16-19]

wanderings of [HOJP II, 24]

supreme decisor [HOJP II, 27-29, 41]

authority over calendar [HOJP II, 41-42]

registry of marriages [HOJP II, 42]

in Usha [HOJP II, 45]

growing influence [HOJP II, 49]

in Lod [HOJP II, 52]

return to Usha [HOJP II, 58]

forced to leave Yavne [HOJP II, 76]

at shefar'am [HOJP II, 77-80]

history of [HOJP II, 88]

providing schools [HOJP II, 102]

source of authority [HOJP II, 104, 120-121, 126]

in Tiberias [HOJP II, 110, 154, 165]

end of [HOJP II, 110-112, 124, 132]

replicated in Babylonia [HOJP II, 238-240]

Attempts to re-establish the Sanhedrin

The Rambam, 1135-1204

The Rambam (1135-1204) was born in Córdoba, Spain, then under Muslim rule during what some scholars consider to be the end of the golden age of Jewish culture in Spain. Rambam studied Torah under his father Maimon who had in turn studied under Rabbi Joseph ibn Migash. The Almohades conquered Córdoba in 1148, and offered the Jewish community the choice of conversion to Islam, death, or exile. The Rambam's family, along with most other Jews, chose exile. For the next ten years they moved about in southern Spain, avoiding the conquering Almohades, but eventually settled in Fes in Morocco, where the Rambam acquired most of his secular knowledge, studying at the University of Fes. During this time, he composed his acclaimed commentary, the Mishna Torah.

The Rambam ruled that semicha can be reintroduced by consensus. The Rambam writes: “It appears to me that if all the Chachomim in Eretz Yisroel agree to appoint dayanim and grant them semicha, they have the law of musmachim and they can judge penalty cases and are authorized to grant semicha to others. If someone received semicha from someone who already has semicha, then he does not require authorization from all of them. He may judge penalty cases for everyone since he received semicha from beis din. However, this matter requires a final decision” (Rambam, Hilchos Sanhedrin 4:11).

Rabbi Yaakov Beirav, 1538

In 1538 CE Rabbi Yaakov Beirav of Safed made an attempt to reintroduce the semicha. The Rambam taught (Hilchos Sanhedrin 4:11,12, written around 1180 CE) that if the sages in Eretz Yisroel would agree to somech (ordain) one of themselves, they could do so, and that the man of their choice could then ordain others. For a year, Rabbi Yakov Beirav discussed the halachic issues of re-establishment institution of semicha with the scholars of Safed. After much discussion the scholars at Safed came to the conclusion that Rambam's view was correct, and that there was a pressing need to re-establish the Sanhedrin. In 1538 twenty-five Rabbis met in an assembly at Safed and ordained Rabbi Yakov Beirav, giving him the right to ordain others who would then form a Sanhedrin. After sending a delegation to Jerusalem, Rabbi Yakov Beirav expounded on Shabbat before all the scholars of Safed the halachic basis of the re-establishment of semicha and its implications, with an intent to dispel any remaining doubts. On hearing of this event most of the other scholars in Eretz Yisroel also expressed their agreement. Rabbi Yakov Beirav then ordained a few other Rabbis, including the chief Rabbi of Jerusalem (the Mahralbach, Rabbi Levi Chaviv), Rabbi Yoseph Karo, Rabbi Moshe of Trani, and Rabbi Yosef Sagis. The chief Rabbi of Jerusalem, slighted that the scholars of Jerusalem had not been involved in the reinstitution, was of the opinion the Rambam was unsure, so he held the halachah was according to the Rambam who did not allow renewal of semicha by consensus. He first accepted and then rejected the semicha. Some other Rabbis of Jerusalem also objected, as a result, the semicha was never widely accepted, and no Sanhedrin was ever formed. However, Rabbi Yosef Karo, in his commentary the Beis Yosef (Choshen Mishpat 295), answered the objections of the Mahralbach by recording as definitive halachah the Rambam's opinion that semicha can be renewed by

consensus. Rabbi Yoseph Karo later ordained Rabbi Moses Alsheich, and Alsheich ordained Rabbi Hayyim Vital around 1590.

The Mahari Beirav and Beis Yosef's attempt to re-establish a Sanhedrin in 1538, and its halachic implications

Napoleon Bonaparte's "Grand Sanhedrin", 1806

1806 July 26, Napoleon. Emperor of France, formed the Conference of Notables to deal with the relationship of the Jews and the French State, which was called a "Sanhedrin" although was unrelated to the Rambam's teachings. It consisted of 112 deputies from all parts of the French empire. At the assembly, which was led by the financier Abraham Furtado and Rabbi Joseph David Sinzheim, the delegates were confronted with a questionnaire on polygamy, usury, loyalty, and intermarriage. Pleased with their answers, Napoleon decided to re-establish the Sanhedrin under his careful direction, with representatives from all congregations. Even though the assembly was to be held on the Sabbath (some claim this was a loyalty litmus test), they decided to attend and not risk the wrath of the Emperor. (JH)

Rabbi Yisroel Shklover, 1830

1830 CE Rabbi Yisroel from Sokolov attempted to reintroduce the Semicha

Rabbi Yisroel Shklover's, talmid muvhak of the Vilna Gaon, attempt to re-establish a Sanhedrin in 1830, and its halachic implications

Rabbi Aharon Mendel haCohen, 1901

1901 CE Rabbi Aharon Mendel haCohen attempted to reintroduce the Semicha

Rabbi Zvi Kovsker, 1940

1940 CE Rabbi Zvi from Kovski attempted to reintroduce the Semicha

Rabbi Yehudah Leib Maimon, 1949

1949 CE, Rabbi Yehudah Leib Maimon's attempt to reform the Sanhedrin in 1949 and onwards. Rabbi Yehudah Leib Maimon was the fourth to work towards the idea of re-establishing the Sanhedrin. Rabbi Maimon was one of the founders of the Mizrachi movement (1902), and one of the leaders of the early religious Zionists. In 1913 he immigrated to Eretz Yisroel and settled in Tel Aviv. When Rabbi Avraham Yitzhak HaCohen Cook founded the Chief Rabbinate in Israel, the leadership of the Mizrachi party was in the hands of Rabbi Maimon. He believed that it was within his power to found such an institution. He felt that the Chief Rabbinate was the first step in forming such an institution. In 1949, Rabbi Maimon began to publish articles on the "Re-establishment of the Sanhedrin in our re-established Land". In these articles, he covered the halachic and theoretical issues of its re-establishment. In spite of Rabbinic opposition to the implementation of his plan, he felt in his heart this was an idea that he could not suppress. He felt that the generation which say the re-establishment of Jewish homeland would be worthy to see the re-establishment of this higher Torah institution.

Recent attempt to Re-establish the Sanhedrin in Eretz Yisroel

Maimonides and other medieval commentators suggested that, although the line of semikha (Biblical Ordination) from Moses had been broken at the dissolution of the Sanhedrin, if the sages of the Land of Israel united in promoting a single candidate as Nasi (leader), that individual would have semikha, and could then grant it to others, thus re-establishing the Sanhedrin. Following the establishment of the State of Israel, the new minister of religion, Rabbi Yehuda Leib Hacohen Maimon, was in favour of the idea, but was unable to persuade ultra-Orthodox groups.

Any attempt to re-establish the Sanhedrin must be based on the re-institution of semikha, according to the principles set out by Maimonides. Rabbi Dov Levanoni explained the steps that he and others leading to the reinstitution of semikha, renewed through a consensus of over seven hundred leading rabbis living in the Land of Israel. Rabbi Levanoni explained that Rabbi Moshe Halberstam, a senior rabbi on Jerusalem's Eda Haredis, became the first samukh (ordained one). This was after receiving approval by the leading rabbis followed by most of Israel's religious Jews and none of the hundreds of rabbis consulted via written letters expressed objections. Leading sages have supported the semikha directly, indirectly or abstained. Supporting rabbis, Rabbi Levanoni said, included Hareidi-Religious Rabbi Shalom Elyashiv and former Chief Sephardic Rabbi Ovadia Yosef. "Rav Zalman Nechemia Goldberg gave his blessing as well, along with many others," Rabbi Levanoni said, "and we pray that all of Israel will join in this effort in our days." Rabbi Dov Stein, explained that Former Chief Sephardic Rabbi Mordechai Eliyahu endorsed the project indirectly - his son was ordained by nascent Sanhedrin. Former Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi and Rosh Yeshiva of Merkaz HaRav Kook Rabbi Avraham Shapira chose to abstain on the issue, but also refused to discourage it.

In October 2004 (Tishrei 5765), a group of rabbis representing varied communities in Israel undertook a ceremony in Tiberias, where the original Sanhedrin was disbanded, which they claim re-establishes the body. The nascent Sanhedrin was established by Rabbi Dov Levanoni, who received ordination from Rabbi Moshe Halberstam, a leader of the Eda Haredis' Beis Din Zedek religious court. Rabbi Levanoni ordained Rabbi Tzvi Idan as temporary Nasi, but he soon stepped aside in favour of well-known Jewish author Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz.

The nascent Sanhedrin is not recognized by the Israeli government, nor by the vast majority of Jews, regardless of their level of observance. In the Hareidi world, most people are unaware of its existence or do not accept its authority. It appears to have quasi-recognition from the secular court system as a rabbinical court. This appears to be inherited from Turkish law, where Christian and Islamic courts were recognized as having authority over their members. A year after its establishment, it was reported that the body was in "dialogue with the Ministry of Education over the Bible and Scriptures curriculum".

Though the majority of the membership of the 71-member nascent Sanhedrin remain anonymous, seven members have been selected to represent the body to the public. Three of these seven are leaders in the Temple Mount Movement. Subscribers to the Temple Mount Movement believe that the obligation to build the Temple is still in force, and that Jews have an obligation to work towards that end. Some of them also believe that if the Temple can be rebuilt, it will usher in a Messianic Era of eternal peace. The nascent Sanhedrin has confirmed some of the policy of the Temple Mount Movement by announcing its intention to form a committee to research the steps necessary to prepare for the rebuilding of the Temple at some time in the future.

On the other hand, apparently few Sanhedrin members see the nascent Sanhedrin with such an extreme messianism. According to Arutz Sheva correspondent Ezra HaLevi, reporting from the November Sanhedrin session open to the public, the Nasi (President of the Sanhedrin) Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz clearly comes from a far more conservative perspective: "He expressed his opinion that the project should steer

clear of political pronouncements. This point that was challenged by Rabbi Yisrael Ariel of the Temple Institute, who said that publicly opposing the expulsion and supporting those Jews expelled from Gaza and northern Samaria could not be referred to as political. The diverging viewpoints gave those in attendance a glimpse of the manner in which Sanhedrin members disagree with one another, recognizing their responsibility to enable the body to provide a wide spectrum of religious Jewish thought." Representing this more conservative view, the spokesman writes, "The rebirth of the Sanhedrin is a slow, ongoing process. Although it makes headlines and many like to highlight its controversy, it is in truth a humble project by rabbis from all sides of the Torah world joining together simply to fulfill a Torah commandment. Rather than a source of religious division, G-d forbid, it is a vehicle to bring about Jewish unity and civil justice, to help repair some of the deepest rifts in our society, and to provide an active, exemplary and unified Torah leadership so lacking in our times."

The Sanhedrin has also selected a group of non-Jewish leaders, scholars and teachers from the Noachide movement - the best-known of these is Dr. Vendyl Jones, to form a High Council of Noahides responsible for outreach education from within the non-Jewish world. In 2005 the Sanhedrin sent an emissary to the USA to liaise with Jones and other Noachide groups; he told Arutz Sheva that the plan was to "transform the Noachide movement from a religious phenomenon - a curiosity many have not heard of - into a powerful international movement ... the pure authentic faith that was given to humanity through Noah, the father of us all"

Some Christians, like evangelist Hal Lindsey, see the reinstated Sanhedrin as good news, believing that the Sanhedrin would be responsible for the rebuilding of the Temple, which would eventually be desecrated by the false Messiah during the end times and inhabited by the true Messiah during the period of Christian eschatology referred to as the Millennial Reign.[Wikipedia]

- ■ ■ End Area Under Contruction ***

Nasiim Presidents of the Sanhedrin

Table of Zugos

During the many decades when then Jewish monarchy failed to provide proper leadership, the people looked for guidance to the Sages, especially the Zugos (marked below in blue). During the period of the Zugos, leadership of the people was shared by two outstanding sages: the Nassi [president of the Sanhedrin], a newly created office; and the Av Beis Din [dean of the Sanhedrin] an office that was now given new significance. Of the two positions, that of Nassi was the more powerful since it held political power, while that of Av Beis Din dealt with purely halachic matters. The apparent reason for dividing the leadership between two people was the shameful transfer of authority for collecting revenue from the High Priest Chonyo, to Yosef ben Toviah. The Sages now felt that they could no longer entrust the undivided leadership of the people to the High Priest if he could be outwitted by a man of deceit and cruelty, as Chonyo had been by Yosef. [HOJP I, p57-58]

By the time of the first Zugos, during the civil war of the two Hasmonean brothers, the High Priesthood had already become a political pawn. High Priests began to be replaced with increasingly rapid frequency. The spiritual leadership of the people lay with Shemaya and Avtalyon. Acting on their advice, the Torah scholars of the time retreated from political and nationalistic matters. This enabled them to continue the study and teaching of the Torah even under the most trying circumstances, and this assured that the Jewish people would pass on the heritage of Sinai from generation to generation. [based on HOJP I, pp.142]

After the destruction of the Temple -- because the Rabbinic Jews had avoided participation in the revolt -- Yochanan ben Zakkai was given permission by the Romans to re-establish the Sanhedrin in Yavneh. Under Rabban Gamliel, Rabbinic Judaism became the only legal form of Judaism permitted in the Roman empire. All other forms of Judaism: Sadducean, Samaritan and early Christianity were persecuted by the Roman authorities as seditious. During the Persian-Roman wars, stability in Rome declined; emperors were being replaced or assassinated with increasing frequency. Relations became strained between Rome and the Sanhedrin over the years, because the Rabbinic leadership either sided, or was suspected of siding with Persia, the seat of the Jewish Exilarch. This collimated in the crushing of the Sanhedrin a hundred years after Rome had declared Christianity its official religion.

Division in the Leadership of the Jewish People

President <i>Nassi</i>	Chancellor <i>Av Beis Din</i>	High Priest	Tax Collector	King
Zerubavel ben She'altiel Yohoshua ben Yehotzadak Nechemiah Mordechai Chaggai Zechariah Malachi :	same	same	same	Darius Cyrus
Shimon HaTzaddik	Shimon HaTzaddik	Shimon HaTzaddik 280-260 BC	Shimon HaTzaddik	Ptolemy I 323-285 BCE
Antigonus	Antigonus	Eleazar ben Chonyo 260-245 BCE Manasseh be Yaddua 245-240 BCE	Elazar	Ptolemy II 285-246 BCE
Yosei ben Yoezer <i>Ish Tzeredah</i> 170-140 BCE	Yosei ben Yochanan <i>Ish Yerushalayim</i>	Chonyo II ben Shimon, 185-175 BCE Simon II ben Chonyo 218-185 BCE Chonyo III ben Shimon 185-175, murdered 170 Jason ben Shimon 175-172 BCE Menelaus 172-162 BCE <i>was not a cohen</i> Chonyo IV ben Chonyo III <i>fled to Egypt and built a Jewish Temple</i> Alcimus 162-159 BCE	Chonyo <i>forcibly given to</i> Yosef ben Toviah	Ptolemy III 246-221 BCE Antiochus III 223-187 BCE Seleucus IV 187-175 BCE Antiochus IV Epiphanes 175-163 BCE

Yehoshua ben Perachiah 140-100 BCE	Nitai ha'Arbeli	Jonathan Apphus 153-143 BCE Simeon Tassi 142-134 BCE John Hyrcanus I 134-104 BCE		Maccabees 165-135 BCE Yochanan Hyrcanus 135-104 BCE
Yehudah ben Tavai 100-60 BCE	Shimon ben Shetach	Aristobulus I 104-103 BCE Alexander Yannai 103-76 BCE John Hyrcanus II 76-66 BCE Aristobulus II 66-63 BCE		Yehudah Aristobulus 104-103 BCE Alexander Yannai 103-76 BCE
Shemaya 60-30 BCE	Avtalyon	John Hyrcanus II (restored) 63-40 BCE Antigonus 40-37 BCE		Aristobolus & Hyrcanus
Hillel "The Elder" 30BC-10CE	Shammai	Ananelus 37-36 BCE Aristobulus III 36 BCE Ananelus (restored) 36-30 BCE Joshua ben Fabus 30-23 BCE Simon ben Boethus Mattathias ben Theophilus Joazar ben Boethus 4 BCE Eleazar ben Boethus 4-3 BCE Joshua ben Sie 3 BC-6 CE Ananus ben Seth 6-15		Herod Augustus 27-14
Simeon I ben Hillel 10-30CE		Ishmael ben Fabus 15-16 Eleazar ben Ananus 16-17 Simon ben Camithus 17-18 Joseph Caiaphas 18-36		Tiberius 14-37 CE
Rabban Gamliel I "The Elder" 30-50 CE		Jonathan ben Ananus 36-37 Theophilus ben Ananus 37-41 Simon Cantatheras ben Boethus 41-43 Matthias ben Ananus 43 Aljoneus 43-44 Jonathan ben Ananus 44 (restored) Josephus ben Camydus 44-46 Ananias ben Nebedeus 46-52		Caligula 37-41 CE Claudius 41-54 CE
Rabban Simeon II ben Gamliel, 50-70 CE		Jonathan 52-56 Ishmael ben Fabus 56-62 (restored?) Joseph Cabi ben Simon 62-63 Ananus ben Ananus 63 Joshua ben Damneus 63 Joshua ben Gamliel 63-64 Mattathias ben Theophilus 65-66 Phannias ben Samuel 67-70		Nero 54-68 Galba 68-69 Otho 69 Vitellius 69

		Temple Destroyed		
Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai 70-75 CE				Vespasian 69-79 CE
Gamliel II, "of Yavneh" 75-102 CE <i>his sister, Imme Shalom married Eliezer ben Hyrcanus</i>				Titus 79-81 CE Domitian 81-96 CE Nerva 96-98 CE
Rabbi Elezar ben Azariah 102-?				Trajan 98-117 CE
Interregnum 120-140 CE Bar Kockba Revolt				Hadrian 117-138 CE Persian-Roman wars
Simeon II ben Gamliel 142-161 CE <i>his brothers were Haninah and Yehudah</i>				Antoninus Pius 138-161 CE
R' Yehudah HaNassi 165-192 CE				Marcus Aurelius 161-180 CE Commodus 180-192 CE
R' Gamliel III 192-200? CE <i>his brother was the ancestor of the Rambam</i>				Pertinax 193 CE Didius julianus 193 CE Septimius severus 193-211 CE
R' Yehudah I Nesiah 200-235 CE				Caracalla 211-217 CE Geta 211-212 CE Macrinus 217-218 CE Elagabalus 218-222 CE Severus Alexander 222-235 CE
R' Gamliel IV 235-240 CE				Maximianus 238 CE Gordian I 238 CE Gordian II 238 CE Balbinus 238 CE Pupienus 238 CE Gordian III 238-244 CE
R' Yehudah II Nesiah 240-305 CE				Philippus 244-249 CE Decius 249-251 CE Trebonianus 251-253 CE Aemilianus 253 CE Valerianus 253-260 CE Gallienus 253-268 CE Claudius gothicus 268-270 CE Aurelian 270-275 CE

				<p>Tacitus 275-276 CE</p> <p>Florianus 276 CE</p> <p>Probus 276-282 CE</p> <p>Carus 282-283 CE</p> <p>Carinus 283-285 CE</p> <p>Numerianus 283-284 CE</p> <p>Diocletian 284-305 CE</p> <p>Maximian 286-305 CE</p>
<p>R' Gamliel V</p> <p>305-308 CE</p>				<p>Constantius 292-306 CE</p> <p>Galerius 293-311 CE</p>
<p>R' Yehudah III Nesiah</p> <p>308-351 CE</p>				<p>Licinius 311-323 CE</p> <p>Constantine I 324-337 CE</p> <p>Rome declared Christian</p>
<p>Hillel II</p> <p>351-365</p>				<p>Constantius 337-361 CE</p> <p>Julian the Apostate 361-363 CE</p> <p>Jovian Emperor 363-364 CE</p>
<p>R' Gamliel VI</p> <p>365-385</p>				<p>Valentinian I Emperor</p> <p>364-375 CE</p> <p>Valens Emperor 364-378 CE</p> <p>Gratian Emperor 367-383 CE</p>
<p>R' Yehudah IV Nesiah</p> <p>385-400 CE</p>				<p>Valentinian II Emperor</p> <p>375-392 CE</p> <p>Eugenius Emperor 392-394 CE</p> <p>Magnus Maximus Emperor 383-388 CE</p> <p>Theodosius I (The Great) Emperor 379-395 CE</p> <p>Honorius Emperor 395-423 CE</p> <p>Arcadius Emperor 395-408 CE</p>
<p>R' Gamliel VII 400-425</p> <p>Sanhedrin made illegal</p>				<p>Constantine III 407-411 CE</p> <p>Constans Emperor 408-411 CE</p> <p>Constantius III Emperor 421 CE</p> <p>Priscus Attalus Puppet 409-410 and 414-415 CE</p> <p>Johannes Usurper 423 - 425 CE</p>
<p>Sutra I son of the 30th</p> <p>Exilarch Mar-Zutra II, 550 CE</p>				

				Justinian 527-565 CE
550-890 CE Nassi reigning at Tiberias				
691-1099 CE, Rival Nassi reigning at Jerusalem				
1187-1849 CE, Nassi reigning in Palestine				

Nassi and Av Beis Din information from "History of the Jewish People", based on *Seder Olam Zuta*.

High Priest information based on Josephus

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