ZERAIM
Contains eleven books or Tractates. This Order deals with the regulations governing public and private prayer and laws concerning agriculture and the produce of the fields and vineyards. Special attention is paid to the laws of tithes, mixed planting and grafting, the Sabbatical year and the first fruits.
Since the Jewish people were originally an agricultural people it is natural that the first collection of their laws should be devoted to the regulations which concern the land and its produce.

MOED
Contains twelve Tractates. This Order deals with all the laws concerning the festivals. Detailed attention is paid to the Shabbat, Pesach, Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur, Succot and the fasts. Most of these regulations are still applicable even though many of the laws contained in this section are concerned with the ancient practices in the Temple. Much of our religious ritual as used in the home and synagogue is traceable to this section; for example, the Haggada of Pesach is drawn largely from this section.

NASHIM
Contains seven Tractates. This Order deals mainly with the laws of marriage and divorce and family life. Since the Jewish home plays so prominent a part in Jewish life such a section is obviously of supreme importance in the formulation of traditional law. Detailed attention is paid here to the laws governing marriages, which are permitted and forbidden; regulations regarding the writing of the Ketuba, the marriage contract and the Get, the bill of divorce. One Tractate is devoted to the laws of vows, because the acceptance of a vow can cause serious disturbance in the family group.

NEZIKIN
Contains ten Tractates. This Order is mainly devoted to the regulations governing the relations between man and his fellow in society. Special attention is paid to the laws of damages, both to persons and property, and the forms of compensation to be paid. Stress is naturally laid on the regulations governing the procedure of the courts of justice and the behaviour of judges and witnesses. The relations between Jews and non-Jewish courts is also dealt within the responsibility of religious authorities when issuing their decrees.

KODASHIM
Contains eleven Tractates. This Order is mainly devoted to the regulations governing the Temple procedure and the sacrifices which were offered. These are carefully enumerated with detailed instructions as to the form to be adopted. Of special interest to us is the Tractate called "Chulin" which is concerned with the dietary laws and matters affecting that which is kosher and treifah; all the regulations governing the types of food which may be eaten, the method of slaughter of animals and the detailed examination to which they must be submitted before the meat is permitted for consumption.

TOHOROT
Contains twelve Tractates. This Order is devoted to the laws of personal hygiene and the "levitical purity". The Torah demands that the camp of Israel shall be holy" and this meant that it had to be free from defilement. Contact with corpses was the main source of such defilement in ancient days as well as the main source of contracting contagious diseases. Special ceremonies existed in Temple times for purification. All these regulations are set out in this order and some of them, especially those concerned with personal hygiene, are still an integral part of Jewish life.
This is the first page of the first volume of the Babylonian Talmud, Berachot. It deals with the discussion concerning the time for reading the Shema during the day.

THE MISHNA. The code of Jewish law which was written during many generations by Jewish Rabbis, called Tannaim, and was edited and compiled by Rabbi Yehuda Hanasi, who died approximately 210 C.E. The Mishna is divided into six parts or "orders" (shishah sedarim or abbreviated Sifra), Zera'im, Moed, Nashim, Nezikin, Kodshim and Tohorot. Each order is divided into a number of treatises. There are sixty-three treatises in the Mishna altogether.

THE GEMARA. The Gemara, or Talmud, is the collected discussions of the Rabbis who lived after the Mishna was completed. They were called Amora'im. There are two Talmudim, Talmud Yerushalmi, which was written in Jerusalem, and Talmud Bavli, which was written in Babylon. The Talmud is divided into two types of discussion, based on the laws of the Mishna, and the Gemara. All these legal discussions are called Halacha. Other parts of the Talmud, called Agada, contain historical records, legends, parables and ethical discussion. While the Mishna is written in Hebrew, the Talmud is mainly written in Aramaic. The Talmud Bavli deals with thirty-seven of the sixty-three treatises of the Mishna, and was completed about the year 500 C.E.

THE COMMENTARY OF RASHI. Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki (1040-1105), who6 established the Talmudical Academy in Troyes, France, and who wrote a commentary on the Bible, was the first to write a Student's Handbook to the Talmud. His commentary has become an indispensable companion to all students of the Talmud because of its clarity, brevity and the depth of its understanding. Note the Hebrew characters which are called "Rashi letters" and are used even today by Oriental Jews.

THE TOSAPHOT. The collected comments of descendants and pupils of Rashi, which are mainly devoted to discussions on Rashi's comments and a critical analysis of the text of the Talmud.

HIN MISHPAT. Cross references to the code of Maimonides (1135-1204) and other early codes of Talmudic Law. These codes were taken from the Talmud text and the student, with the help of these references, can ascertain the final decision of the law.

RAV NISSIM GAON. The commentary of Rabbi Nissim ben Yaakov, an eminent scholar of the eleventh century, who lived in Kairwan, North Africa.

GILYON HASHAS. Footnotes to the text compiled by Rabbi Akiva Eger (1701-1837), a famous Rabbi of Posen.

HAGAHOT HABACH. Marginal notes compiled by Rabbi Joel Stertz (1561-1640). The name "Bach" is derived from the initials of his famous commentary on the codes called "Bayit Chadash" ("New House").

MESORET HASHAS. Cross references to other volumes of the Talmud.