The History of the Talmud

What is at Stake? Why Should We Care?
Professor David Weiss Halivni
Rechov Dorot Harishonim
The Early Chronologies

• b. Bava Metzia 86a: רב אשי ורבינא סוף הוראה

• Zakhor (Yerushalmi) – Memory vs. History

• Seder Tanna’im ve Amoraim 886 CE – Sura?

• Iggeret Rav Sherira Gaon 986 CE – Pumbedita

• Sefer Haqabbalah – Ibn Daud 1161 CE
History of the Talmud

• History as a tool of interpretation

• Original Intent, Originalism or Living Constitution

• Tradition versus Creativity

• History: Leopold Ranke and Scientific Study (Wissenschaft)

• Geiger and the evolution of law

• The Struggle against Reform
The Issues

• Authority – Top Down or Bottoms Up?

• R Elchonon Wasserman and Rav Kook (Rihata Dehaqlei)

• The Sealing of the Talmud: Organic or Deliberate?

• Role of Interpretation
R Yitzhak Isaac Halevy

• Heinrich Graetz’s *History of the Jews*
• Isaac Hirsch Weiss’ *Dor Dor Vedorshaiv* (6 editions)
• Volozhin and R Chaim
• *Dorot Harishonim* and *Hokhmat Yisrael* (1897)
• The Historian/Talmudist combination
• Rav Kook
• Chazon Ish
Rav Kook and Halevy’s Matseva
Agudath Israel

- Halevy and Rosenheim
- Bad Homburg (August 1909)
- Kattowitz (May 1912)
- Mo’etses Gedolei Hatorah
- Rav Chaim and the 18 “points”
- Rav Moshe Soloveitchik
Sources for Next Class

www.aribergmann.com