

III. The Period of the Savoraim (A.D. 500-700)

These scholars in Babylonia studied the Talmud and introduced only minor amendments and additions. Savoraim means "expositors."

IV. The Period of the Geonim (A.D. 700-1050)

A gaon was the head of an academy in Babylonia. Copies of the Talmud were secured by all of the Jewish communities in Asia, Africa, and Europe. But scholars in the Diaspora communities often found it difficult to understand and apply. Thus they consulted the heads of the Sura and Pumbedita academies, who wrote responsa containing halakhic rulings and drawing practical conclusions from the talmudic text.

- AHAI
- R. Yehudai ben Nahman Gaon
 - R. Aha
 - R. Amram Gaon
 - R. Paltoi ben Abbaye Gaon
 - R. Saadiah Gaon
 - R. Samuel ben Hophni Gaon
 - R. Sherira Gaon
 - R. Hai Gaon
 - R. Simeon Kayyara of Basra, Babylonia
Author of Halakhot Gedolot

THE RABBINIC AGE (A.D. 1050-1948)

I. The Period of the Rishonim ("early" scholars) (A.D. 1050-16th century)

The rishonim are classified as either Sephardic (North Africa and Spain) or Ashkenazic (Western Europe, including Italy, France, and Germany).

A. Eleventh Century

- THE RIF
- R. Isaac ben Jacob ha-Kohen Alfasi
Author of Sefer ha-Halakhot, a codification geonic halakhah.
 - Rabbenu Gershom ben Judah of Mainz ("the Light of the Diaspora")
 - R. Jacob ben Yakar of Worms (teacher of Rashi)
- RASHI
- R. Solomon ben Isaac of Troyes
The author of commentaries on the Bible, and the master commentator on the Babylonian Talmud.
 - R. Nathan ben Jehiel
The author of the first talmudic lexicon, Arukh.
 - R. Meir ben Samuel
 - R. Judah ben Nathan

Note: the twelfth and thirteenth centuries are called the Age of the Tosafists - French and German scholars who made "additions" to talmudic exegesis.

B. Twelfth Century

- RAMBAM
- R. Moses ben Maimon (Maimonides)
Author of a commentary on the Mishnah, a book of commandments (Sefer Mitzvot), and Guide of the Perplexed.
 - R. Abraham Ibn Ezra
- RIBAM
- R. Isaac ben Meir
- RASHBAM
- R. Samuel ben Meir
 - R. Solomon ben Meir
- RABBENU TAM
- R. Jacob ben Meir
Almost every page of the Babylonian Talmud contains comments by him.