

people were injured. An army unit sent to disperse the rioters joined the mob. In 1945–49 most of the surviving Jews emigrated. The Great Synagogue was turned into a warehouse.

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[Yeshayahu Jelinek (2nd ed.)]

TOPOLEVSKY, GREGORIO (1907–1986), Argentine politician and physician. Born in Grodno, Russia, Topolevsky immigrated to Argentina as a child and became a physician specializing in otorhinolaryngology. Between 1933 and 1945, he was frequently arrested for political agitation against the dictatorial governments in Argentina and was again imprisoned in 1951. In 1937 he fought on the republican side in the Spanish Civil War. After World War II he was a member of the Unión Cívica Radical del Pueblo party and was appointed Argentine ambassador to Israel (1955–58). Later, during the presidency of Arturo Illia, Topolevsky was appointed director general of social welfare in the Ministry of Communications. Active in Jewish communal affairs, he was chairman of a number of local Jewish organizations, among them the Instituto de Intercambio Cultural Argentino Israelí.

[Israel Drapkin-Senderoy]

TOPOLSKI, FELIKS (1907–1989), pictorial chronicler and muralist. Topolski, the son of Edward Topolski, a well-known actor, was born in Warsaw and studied art at the Warsaw Academy, and also studied at the Officers' School of Artillery. He later traveled in Italy and France, studying the old masters, before he settled in England in 1935. He developed an outstanding reputation as a draughtsman, writer, muralist, and portrait painter, and also worked in the theater. Appointed an official war artist during World War II, he recorded the British and Allied forces in Russia, the Middle East, the Far East, and Europe. His drawings were used widely in the press and have appeared in a series of books he published on these wartime experiences. Topolski also excelled as a mural painter, for which he received commissions all over the world. His most famous murals are *Cavalcade of Commonwealth*, 60 × 20 feet, painted in 1951 for the Festival of Britain, and *Coronation of Elizabeth II*, 100 × 4 feet, painted between 1958 and 1960 at the request of Prince Philip, which is now in Buckingham Palace, London. Another important commission was for 20 portraits of English writers in 1961, from the University of Texas. Topolski illustrated numerous books, notably the plays of George Bernard Shaw, as well as his own 20 works, including *Was Paris Lost* (1973). From 1953 he published *Topolski's Chronicle*, a hand-printed, pictorial broadsheet on current events. In 1969 he made a television film *Topolski's Moscow* and his environmental painting,

Memoir of the Century, in London's South Bank Arts Centre was begun in 1977. He was elected to the Royal Academy in the year of his death. Topolski wrote an autobiography, *Fourteen Letters* (1988).

[Charles Samuel Spencer]

TORAH (Heb. תּוֹרָה).

The Term

Torah is derived from the root ירה which in the *hifil* conjugation means “to teach” (cf. Lev. 10:11). The meaning of the word is therefore “teaching,” “doctrine,” or “instruction”; the commonly accepted “law” gives a wrong impression. The word is used in different ways but the underlying idea of “teaching” is common to all.

In the Pentateuch it is used for all the body of laws referring to a specific subject, e.g., “the *torah* of the meal offering” (Lev. 6:7), of the guilt offering (7:1), and of the Nazirite (Num. 6:21), and especially as a summation of all the separate *torot* (cf. Lev. 7:37–38; 14:54–56). In verses, however, such as Deuteronomy 4:44, “and this is the Torah which Moses set before the children of Israel” and *ibid.* 33:4, “Moses commanded us a Torah, an inheritance of the congregation of Jacob” and the references in the Bible to “the Torah of Moses” (cf. Josh. 1:7; Ezra 3:2; 7:6; 8:1, 8; Mal. 3:22), it refers particularly to the Pentateuch as distinct from the rest of the Bible. In later literature the whole Bible was referred to as *Tanakh*, the initial letters of Torah (Pentateuch), *Nevi'im* (Prophets), and *Ketuvim* (Hagiographia), a meaning it retained in halakhic literature to differentiate between the laws which are of biblical origin (in its Aramaic form, *de-Oraita*, “from the Torah”) and those of rabbinic provenance (*de-rabbanan*). The term is, however, also used loosely to designate the Bible as a whole.

A further extension of the term came with the distinction made between the Written Torah (Torah *she-bi-khetav*) and the Oral Torah (Torah *she-be-al peh*). The use of the plural *Torot* (e.g., Gen. 26:5) was taken to refer to those two branches of divine revelation which were traditionally regarded as having been given to Moses on Mount Sinai (Yoma 28b, and see *Oral Law). Justification was found in the verse of Exodus 34:27, which can be translated literally as “Write thou these words for by the mouth of these words I have made a covenant.” The word “write” (*ketav*) was regarded as the authority for the Written Law (hence Torah *she-bi-khetav*, i.e., the Torah included in the word *ketav*) while “by the mouth” (*al pi*) was taken to refer to the Torah *she-be-al peh* (i.e., the Torah referred to in the phrase *al pi*; cf. Git. 60b). Lastly, the word is used for the whole corpus of Jewish traditional law from the Bible to the latest development of the *halakhah*. In modern Hebrew the word is used to designate the system of a thinker or scholar, e.g., “the *torah* of Spinoza.”

See also *Judaism.

[Louis Isaac Rabinowitz]

Origin and Preexistence

“Moses received the Torah from Sinai” (Avot 1:1). Yet there is an ancient tradition that the Torah existed in heaven not only before God revealed it to Moses, but even before the world was created. The apocryphal book *The Wisdom of Ben Sira* identified the Torah with preexistent personified wisdom (1:1–5, 26; 15:1; 24:1 ff.; 34:8; cf. Prov. 8:22–31). In rabbinic literature, it was taught that the Torah was one of the six or seven things created prior to the creation of the world (Gen. R. 1:4; Pes. 54a, et al.). Of these preexistent things, it was said that only the Torah and the throne of glory were actually created, while the others were only conceived, and that the Torah preceded the throne of glory (Gen. R. 1:4). According to Eliezer ben Yosef the Galilean, for 974 generations before the creation of the world, the Torah lay in God’s bosom and joined the ministering angels in song (ARN¹ 31, p. 91; cf. Gen. R. 28:4, et al.). Simeon ben Lakish taught that the Torah preceded the world by 2,000 years (Lev. R. 19:1, et al.) and was written in black fire upon white fire (TJ, Shek. 6:1, 49d, et al.). Akiva called the Torah “the precious instrument by which the world was created” (Avot 3:14). Rav *Hoshaiah, explicitly identifying the Torah with the preexistent wisdom of Proverbs, said that God created the world by looking into the Torah as an architect builds a palace by looking into blueprints. He also took the first word of Genesis not in the sense of “In the beginning,” but in that of “By means of the beginning,” and he taught that “beginning” (probably in the philosophic sense of the Greek *archē*) designates Torah, since it is written of wisdom (= Torah), “The Lord made me the beginning of His way” (Prov. 8:22; Gen. R. 1:1). It was also taught that God took council with the Torah before He created the world (Tanḥ. B. 2, et al.). The concept of the preexistence of the Torah is perhaps implicit in the philosophy of Philo, who wrote of the preexistence and role in creation of the Word of God (*logos*; e.g., Op. 20, 25, 36; Cher. 127) and identified the Word of God with the Torah (Mig. 130; cf. Op. and II Mos.).

*Saadia Gaon rejected the literal belief in preexistent things on the grounds that it contradicts the principle of creation *ex nihilo*. In his view, Proverbs 8:22, the verse cited by Rav Hoshaiah, means no more than that God created the world in a wise manner (*Beliefs and Opinions* 1:3; cf. Saadia’s commentary on Proverbs, ad loc.).

*Judah b. Barzillai of Barcelona raised the problem of place. Where could God have kept a preexistent Torah? While allowing that God could conceivably have provided an antemundane place for a corporeal Torah, he preferred the interpretation that the Torah preexisted only as a thought in the divine mind. Ultimately, however, he expressed the opinion that the Torah’s preexistence is a rabbinic metaphor, spoken out of love for the Torah and those who study it, and teaching that the Torah is worthy to have been created before the world (commentary on *Sefer Yezirah*, pp. 88–89; cf. Solomon b. Abraham Adret, *Perushei Aggadot*).

Abraham *Ibn Ezra raised the problem of time. He wrote that it is impossible for the Torah to have preceded the

world by 2,000 years or even by one moment, since time is an accident of motion, and there was no motion before God created the celestial spheres; rather, he concluded, the teaching about the Torah’s preexistence must be a metaphoric riddle (cf. Commentary on the Torah, introd., “the fourth method” (both versions); cf. also Judah Hadassi, *Eshkol ha-Kofer*, 25b–26a; and cf. Abraham Shalom, *Neveh Shalom*, 10:8).

*Judah Halevi explained that the Torah precedes the world in terms of teleology; God created the world for the purpose of revealing the Torah; therefore, since, as the philosophers say, “the first of thought is the end of the work,” the Torah is said to have existed before the world (*Kuzari* 3:73).

*Maimonides discussed the origin of the Torah from the standpoint of the epistemology of the unique prophecy of Moses (*Guide of the Perplexed* 2:35; 3:51; et al.; cf. Yad, introd.). The tradition of the preexistence of the Torah was not discussed in the *Guide of the Perplexed*; however, the closely related tradition of the preexistence of the throne of glory was (2:26, 30, et al.). The discussions of Moses’ prophecy and of the throne of glory are esoteric and controversial, and each reader will interpret them according to his own views, perhaps inferring Maimonides’ position concerning the origin of the Torah.

Within the framework of his Neoplatonic ontology, Isaac ibn Latif suggested that the Torah precedes the world not in time, but in rank. He cited the aggadic statements that the Torah and the throne of glory preceded the world, and that the Torah preceded the throne of glory, and he intimated that the Torah is the upper world (wisdom or intellect) which ontologically precedes the middle world (the celestial spheres, the throne of glory) which, in turn, ontologically precedes the lower world (our world of changing elements; *Sha’ar ha-Shamayim*).

While the tradition of the preexistence of the Torah was being ignored or explained away by most philosophers, it became fundamental in the Kabbalah. Like Ibn Latif, the kabbalists of Spain held that the Torah precedes the world ontologically. Some kabbalists identified the primordial Torah with *Hokhmah* (God’s wisdom), the second of the ten *Sefirot* in emanation. Others identified the Written Torah with the sixth *Sefirah*, *Tiferet* (God’s beauty), and the Oral Torah with the tenth *Sefirah*, *Malkhut* (God’s kingdom). Emanational precedence signifies creative power; and it was with the Torah that God created the angels and the worlds, and with the Torah He sustains all (*Zohar* 3, 152a; Num. 9:1).

Ḥasdai *Crescas, who in the course of his revolutionary critique of Aristotelian physics had rejected the dependence of time on motion, was able to take preexistence literally as chronological. He interpreted the proposition about the preexistence of the Torah as a metonymy, referring actually to the purpose of the Torah. Since, according to him, the purpose of the Torah and the purpose of the world are the same, namely, love, and since the purpose or final cause of an object

chronologically precedes it, it follows that the purpose of the Torah (i.e., love) chronologically preceded the world. As its final cause, love (= the purpose of the Torah) is a necessary condition of the world; and this is the meaning of the talmudic statement, "Were it not for the Torah [i.e., the purpose of the Torah, or love], heaven and earth would not have come into existence" (Pes. 68b; *Or Adonai* 2:6, 4; cf. Nissim b. Reuben Gerondi, Commentary on Ned. 39b).

Joseph *Albo also interpreted the preexistence of the Torah in terms of final causality, but his position was essentially that of Judah Halevi, and not that of his teacher, Crescas. He reasoned that man exists for the sake of the Torah; everything in the world of generation and corruption exists for the sake of man; therefore, the Torah preceded the world in the Aristotelian sense that the final cause in (the mind of) the agent necessarily precedes the other three causes (*Sefer ha-Ikkarim* 3:12; cf. Jacob b. Solomon ibn Ḥabib, *Ein Ya'akov*, introd.; Joseph Solomon Delmedigo, *Novelot Hokhmah*, 1).

The theory, based on the statement of Rav Hoshaiah, that the Torah was the preexistent blueprint of creation, was elaborated by Isaac Arama, Isaac Abrabanel, Moses Alshekh, Judah Loew b. Bezalel, and others.

In modern Jewish philosophical literature, Nachman *Krochmal analyzed the interpretation of the Torah's preexistence by the author of *Sha'ar ha-Shamayim* (Ibn Latif and not, as Krochmal supposed, Ibn Ezra), and his analysis bears implications for his own idealistic concept of the metaphysical and epistemological precedence of the spiritual (*Moreh Nevukhei ha-Zeman*, 17; cf. 12, 16).

Franz Rosenzweig, in his existentialist reaction to the intellectualist interpretation of the Torah by German rabbis, appealed to the *aggadah* of the preexistence of the Torah in an attempt to show the absurdity of trying to base the claim of the Torah merely on a juridical or historical reason: "No doubt the Torah, both Written and Oral, was given to Moses on Sinai, but was it not created before the creation of the world? Written against a background of shining fire in letters of somber flame? And was not the world created for its sake?" ("The Builders," in: N. Glatzer (ed.), *On Jewish Learning* (1955), 78).

Nature and Purpose

In the Bible, the Torah is referred to as the Torah of the Lord (Ex. 13:9, et al.) and of Moses (Josh. 8:31, et al.), and is said to be given as an inheritance to the congregation of Jacob (Deut. 33:4). Its purpose seems to be to make Israel "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex. 19:6). It was said that "the commandment is a lamp and the Torah is light" (Prov. 6:23). The Torah was called "perfect," its ordinances "sweeter than honey and the flow of honeycombs" (Ps. 19:8, 11; cf. 119:103; Prov. 16:24). Psalm 119, containing 176 verses, is a song of love for the Torah whose precepts give peace and understanding.

In the apocryphal book The Wisdom of Ben Sira, the Torah is identified with wisdom (see above). In another apoc-

ryphal work, the laws of the Torah are said to be drawn up "with a view to truth and the indication of right reason" (Arist. 161). The Septuagint rendered the Hebrew *torah* by the Greek *nomos* ("law"), probably in the sense of a living network of traditions and customs of a people. The designation of the Torah by *nomos*, and by its Latin successor *lex* (whence, "the Law"), has historically given rise to the sad misunderstanding that Torah means legalism.

It was one of the very few real dogmas of rabbinic theology that the Torah is from heaven (Heb. *Torah min ha-shamayim*; Sanh. 10:1, et al.; cf. Ex. 20:22 [19]; Deut. 4:36); i.e., the Torah in its entirety was revealed by God. According to the *aggadah*, Moses ascended into heaven to capture the Torah from the angels (Shab. 89a, et al.). In one of the oldest mishnaic statements, Simeon the Just taught that (the study of the) Torah is one of the three things by which the world is sustained (Avot 1:2). Eleazar ben Shammua said: "Were it not for the Torah, heaven and earth would not continue to exist" (Pes. 68b; Ned. 32a; cf. Crescas' interpretation above). It was calculated that "the whole world in its entirety is only 1/3,200 of the Torah" (Er. 21a; cf. TJ, Pe'ah 1:1, 15d). God Himself was said to study the Torah daily (Av. Zar. 3b, et al.).

The Torah was often compared to fire, water, wine, oil, milk, honey, drugs, manna, the tree of life, and many other things; it was considered the source of freedom, goodness, and life (e.g., Avot 6:2, 3, 7); it was identified both with wisdom and with love (e.g., Mid. Ps. to 1:18). Hillel summarized the entire Torah in one sentence: "What is hateful to you, do not to your fellow" (Shab. 31a). Akiva said: "The fundamental principle of the Torah is the commandment, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself'" (Lev. 19:18). His disciple Simeon ben Azzai said that its fundamental principle is the verse (Gen. 5:1) which teaches that all human beings are descended from the same man, and created by God in His image (Sifra, Kedoshim 4:12; TJ, Ned. 9:3, 41c; Gen. R. 24:7).

Often the Torah was personified. Not only did God take council with the Torah before He created the world (see above), but according to one interpretation, the plural in "Let us make man" (Gen. 1:26) refers to God and the Torah (Tanḥ. Pekudei, 3). The Torah appears as the daughter of God and the bride of Israel (PR 20; 95a, et al.). On occasion, the Torah is obliged to plead the case of Israel before God (e.g., Ex. R. 29:4).

The message of the Torah is for all mankind. Before giving the Torah to Israel, God offered it to the other nations, but they refused it; and when He did give the Torah to Israel, He revealed it in the extraterritorial desert and simultaneously in all the 70 languages, so that men of all nations would have a right to it (Mekh., Yitro, 5; Sif. Deut. 343; Shab. 88b; Ex. R. 5:9; 27:9; cf. Av. Zar. 3a: "a pagan who studies the Torah is like a high priest"). Alongside this universalism, the rabbis taught the inseparability of Israel and the Torah. One rabbi held that the concept of Israel existed in God's mind even before He created the Torah (Gen. R. 1:4). Yet, were it not for its accept-

ing the Torah, Israel would not be “chosen,” nor would it be different from all the idolatrous nations (Num. 14:10; Ex. R. 47:3, et al.).

In the Hellenistic literature contemporaneous with the early rabbinic teachings, Philo considered the Torah the ideal law of the philosophers, and Moses the perfect lawgiver and prophet and the philosopher-ruler of Plato’s *Republic* (II Mos. 2). His concept of the relationship of the Torah to nature and man was Stoic: “The world is in harmony with the Torah and the Torah with the world, and the man who observes the Torah is constituted thereby a loyal citizen of the world” (Op. 3). He wrote that the laws of the Torah are “stamped with the seals of nature,” and are “the most perfect picture of the cosmic polity” (II Mos. 14, 51). Josephus, in his *Against Apion*, discoursed on the moral and universalistic nature of the Torah, emphasizing that it promotes piety, friendship, humanity toward the world at large, justice, charity, and endurance under persecution. Both Philo and Josephus wrote that principles of the Torah, e.g., the Sabbath, have been imitated by all nations.

Saadia Gaon expounded a rationalist theory according to which the ethical and religious-intellectual beliefs imparted by the Torah are all attainable by human reason. He held that the Torah is divisible into

(1) commandments which, in addition to being revealed, are demanded by reason (e.g., prohibitions of murder, fornication, theft, lying); and

(2) commandments whose authority is revelation alone (e.g., Sabbath and dietary laws), but which generally are understandable in terms of some personal or social benefit attained by their performance. Revelation of the Torah was needed because while reason makes general demands, it does not dictate particular laws; and while the matters of religious belief revealed in the Torah are attainable by philosophy, they are only attained by it after some time or, in the case of many, not at all. He taught that the purpose of the Torah is the bestowal of eternal bliss (*Beliefs and Opinions*, introd. 6, ch. 3). He held that Israel is a nation only by virtue of the Torah (see below).

In the period between Saadia and Maimonides, most Jewish writers who speculated on the nature of the Torah continued in the rationalist tradition established by Saadia. These included Bahya ibn Paquda, Joseph ibn Zaddik, Abraham Ibn Ezra, and Abraham ibn Daud. Judah Halevi, however, opposed the rationalist interpretation. He allowed that the Torah contains rational and political laws, but considered them preliminary to the specifically divine laws and teachings which cannot be comprehended by reason, e.g., the laws of the Sabbath which teach the omnipotence of God and the creation of the world (*Kuzari* 2:48, 50). The Torah makes it possible to approach God by awe, love, and joy (2:50). It is the essence of wisdom, and the outcome of the will of God to reveal His kingdom on earth as it is in heaven (3:17). While Judah Halevi held that Israel was created to fulfill the Torah, he wrote that there would be no Torah were there no Israel (2:56; 3:73).

Maimonides emphasized that the Torah is the product of the unique prophecy of Moses. He maintained that the Torah has two purposes; first, the welfare of the body and, ultimately, the welfare of the soul (intellect). The first purpose, which is a prerequisite of the ultimate purpose, is political, and “consists in the governance of the city and the well-being of the state of all its people according to their capacity.” The ultimate purpose consists in the true perfection of man, his acquisition of immortality through intellection of the highest things. The Torah is similar to other laws in its concern with the welfare of the body; but its divine nature is reflected in its concern for the welfare of the soul (*Guide of the Perplexed*, 3:27). Maimonides saw the Torah as a rationalizing force, warring against superstition, imagination, appetite, and idolatry. He cited the rabbinic dictum, “Everyone who disbelieves in idolatry professes the Torah in its entirety” (Sif. Num. 110; Guide 3:29; Yad, Ovedei Kokhavim 2:4), and taught that the foundation of the Torah and the pivot around which it turns consists in the effacement of idolatry. He held that the Torah must be interpreted in the light of reason.

Of the Jewish philosophers who flourished in the 13th and early 14th centuries, most endorsed Maimonides’ position that the Torah has as its purpose both political and spiritual welfare. Some, like Samuel ibn Tibbon and Isaac Albalag, argued that its purpose consists only or chiefly in political welfare. Others emphasized its spiritual purpose, like Levi b. Gershom, who taught that the purpose of the Torah is to guide man – the masses as well as the intellectual elite – toward human perfection, that is, the acquisition of true knowledge and, thereby, an immortal intellect.

While Maimonides and the Maimonideans generally restricted their analyses of the nature of the Torah to questions of its educational, moral, or political value, the Spanish kabbalists engaged in bold metaphysical speculation concerning its essence. The kabbalists taught that the Torah is a living organism. Some said the entire Torah consists of the names of God set in succession (cf. Nahmanides, *Perushei ha-Torah*, Preface) or interwoven into a fabric (cf. Joseph Gikatilla, *Shaarei Orah*). Others said that the Torah is itself the name of God. The Torah was identified with various *Sefirot* in the divine body (see above). Ultimately, it was said that the Torah is God (Menahem Recanati, *Taamei ha-Mitzvot*, 3a; Zohar 2, 60a [Ex. 15:22]). This identification of the Torah and God was understood to refer to the Torah in its true primordial essence, and not to its manifestation in the world of creation.

The first Jewish philosopher to construct a metaphysics in which the Torah plays an integral role was Hasdai Crescas, who, notwithstanding his distinguished work in natural science, was more sympathetic to the Kabbalah than to Aristotle. He taught that the purpose of the Torah is to effect the purpose of the universe. By guiding man toward corporeal happiness, moral and intellectual excellence, and felicity of soul, the Torah leads him to the love of neighbor and, finally, the eternal love of God [*devekut*], which is the purpose of all

creation (*Or Adonai*, 2:6). Like Judah Halevi, he took an ultimately anti-intellectualist position, and maintained, in opposition to the Maimonideans, that the very definition of the Torah as the communication of God to man implies beliefs about the nature of God and His relation to man which cannot, and need not, be proved by philosophy.

Joseph Albo, developing some Maimonidean ideas, taught that the Torah, as divine law, is superior to natural law and conventional-positive law in that it not only promotes political security and good behavior, but also guides man toward eternal spiritual happiness (*Sefer ha-Ikkarim*, 1:7).

In the writings of Isaac Arama, Isaac Abrabanel, Moses Alshekh, Judah Loew b. Bezalel, and other late medievals, the conflicting approaches to the Torah of Maimonideanism and the Kabbalah converged to give expression to the theme, already adumbrated in Philo, that the Torah exists in the mind of God as the plan and order of the universe (Arama, *Akedat Yizhak*, 1; Abrabanel, *Mifalot Elohim*, 1:2; Alshekh, *Torat Moshe* to Genesis 1:1; Judah Loew, *Netivot Olam*, 1:1; *Tiferet Yisrael*, 25; cf. above). In Italy, *Judah b. Jehiel (Messer Leon), influenced by the Renaissance emphasis on the art of rhetoric, composed the *Nofet Zufim*, in which he analyzed the language of the Bible and, in effect, presented the first aesthetic interpretation of the Torah (cf. Judah Abrabanel, *Dialoghi di Amore*).

Influenced by Maimonides, Baruch *Spinoza took the position taken by some early Maimonideans that the Torah is an exclusively political law. However, he broke radically with those Maimonideans and with all rabbinic tradition by denying its divine nature, by making it an object of historical-critical investigation, and by maintaining that it was not written by Moses alone but by various authors living at different times. Moreover, he considered the Torah primitive, unscientific, and particularistic, and thus subversive to progress, reason, and universal morality. By portraying the Torah as a product of the Jewish people, he reversed the traditional opinion (but cf. Judah Halevi) according to which the Jewish people are a product of the Torah.

Like Spinoza, Moses *Mendelssohn considered the Torah a political law, but he affirmed its divine nature. Taking a position similar to Saadiah's, he explained that the Torah does not intend to reveal new ideas about deism and morality, but rather, through its laws and institutions, to arouse men to be mindful of the true ideas attainable by all men through reason. By identifying the beliefs of the Torah with the truths of reason, Mendelssohn affirmed both its scientific respectability and its universalistic nature. By defining the Torah as a political law given to Israel by God, he preserved the traditional view that Israel is a product of the Torah, and not, as Spinoza claimed, vice versa.

With the rise of the science of Judaism (*Wissenschaft des Judentums*) in the 19th century, and the advance of the historical-critical approach to the Torah, many Jewish intellectuals, including ideologists of Reform like Abraham *Geiger, followed Spinoza in seeing the Torah, at least in part, as a prod-

uct of the primitive history of the Jewish nation. Nachman Krochmal, in his rationalist-idealist philosophy, attempted to synthesize the historical-critical thesis that the Torah is a product of Jewish history, with the traditional thesis that the entire Torah is divinely revealed. He maintained that, from the days of Abraham and Isaac, the Hebrew nation has contained the Absolute Spiritual, and this Absolute Spiritual was the source of the laws given to Moses on Mt. Sinai, whose purpose is to perfect the individual and the group, and to prevent the nation's extinction. The Oral Torah, which is, in effect, the history of the evolution of the Jewish spirit, is inseparable from the Written Torah, and is its clarification and conceptual refinement; which is to say, the true science of the Torah, which is the vocation of the Jewish spirit, is the conceptualization of the Absolute Spiritual (*Moreh Nevukhei ha-Zeman*, esp. 6–8, 13).

The increasing intellectualization of the Torah was opposed by Samuel David *Luzzatto and Salomon Ludwig *Steinheim, two men who had little in common but their fideism. They contended – as Crescas had against the Maimonideans – that the belief that God revealed the Torah is the starting point of Judaism, and that this belief, with its momentous implications concerning the nature of God and His relation to man, cannot be attained by philosophy. Luzzatto held that the foundation of the whole Torah is compassion. Steinheim, profoundly opposing Mendelssohn, held that the Torah comes to reveal truths about God and His work.

While Spinoza and Mendelssohn had emphasized the political nature of the Torah, many rationalists of the late 19th and early 20th centuries emphasized its moral nature. Moritz *Lazarus identified the Torah with the moral law, and interpreted the rabbinical statement, “Were it not for the Torah, heaven and earth would not continue to exist” (see above), as corresponding to the Kantian teaching that it is the moral law that gives value to existence. Hermann *Cohen condemned Spinoza as a willful falsifier and a traitor to the Jewish people for his claim that the Torah is subversive to universalistic morality. He held that the Torah, with its monotheistic ethics, far from being subversive to universalism, prepares a Jew to participate fully and excellently in general culture (in this connection, he opposed Zionism and developed his controversial theory of “Germanism and Judaism”). He maintained that in its promulgation of commandments affecting all realms of human action, the Torah moves toward overcoming the distinction between holy and profane through teaching all men to become holy by always performing holy actions, i.e., by always acting in accordance with the moral law.

In their German translation of the Bible, Martin *Buber and Franz Rosenzweig translated *torah* as *Weisung* or *Unterweisung* (“Instruction”) and not as *Gesetz* (“Law”). In general, they agreed on the purpose of the Torah: to convert the universe and God from It to Thou. Yet they differed on several points concerning its nature. Buber saw the Torah as the past dialogue between Israel and God, and the present

dialogue between the individual reader, the I, and God, the Thou. He concluded that while one must open himself to the entire teaching of the Torah, he need only accept a particular law of the Torah if he feels that it is being spoken now to him. Rosenzweig objected to this personalist and antinomian position of Buber's. Taking an existentialist position, he maintained that the laws of the Torah are commandments to do, and as such become comprehensible only in the experience of doing, and, therefore, a Jew must not, as Buber did, reject a law of the Torah that "does not speak to me," but must always open himself to the new experience which may make it comprehensible. Like Cohen – and also like the Ḥasidim – he marveled that the law of the Torah is universal in range. He contended that it erases the barrier between this world and the world to come by encompassing, vitalizing, and thereby redeeming everything in this world.

The secular Zionism of the late 19th and early 20th centuries gave religious thinkers new cause to define the relationship between the Torah and the Jewish nation. Some defined the Torah in terms of the nation. Thus, Mordecai *Kaplan translated *Aḥad Ha-Am's sociological theory of the evolution of Jewish civilization into a religious, though naturalistic, theory of the Torah as the "religious civilization of the Jews." Others, like Buber and Rosenzweig, considering secular nationalism dangerous, tried to "interdefine" the Torah and the nation. Whereas Buber saw the Torah as the product of a dialogue between the nation and God, he held that the spirit of the nation was transfigured by that dialogue. Rosenzweig, whose position here resembles Judah Halevi's, stated both that the nation's chosenness is prior to the Torah, and that the acceptance of the Torah is an experiential precondition of its chosenness. Other thinkers defined the nation in terms of the Torah. Thus, Abraham Isaac *Kook, whose thought was influenced by the Kabbalah, taught that the purpose of the Torah is to reveal the living light of the universe, the suprarational spiritual, to Israel and, through Israel, to all mankind. While the Written Torah, which reveals the light in the highest channel of our soul, is the product of God alone, the Oral Torah, which is inseparable from the Written Torah, and which reveals the light in a second channel of our soul, proximate to the life of deeds, derives its personality from the spirit of the nation. The Oral Torah can live in its fullness only when Israel lives in its fullness – in peace and independence in the Land of Israel. Thus, according to Kook, modern Zionism, whatever the intent of its secular ideologists, has universal religious significance, for it is acting in service of the Torah (see esp. *Orot ha-Torah*).

In the State of Israel, most writers and educators have maintained the secularist position of the early Zionists, namely, that the Torah was not revealed by God, in the traditional sense, but is the product of the national life of ancient Israel. Those who have discussed the Torah and its relation to the state from a religious point of view have mostly followed Kook or Buber and Rosenzweig. However, a radically rationalist approach to the nature of the Torah has been taught by Yeshayahu Leibowitz who, in the Maimonidean tradition, em-

phasizes that the Torah is a law for the worship of God and for the consequent obliteration of the worship of men and things; in this connection, he condemns the subordination of the Torah to nationalism or to religious sentimentalism or to any ideology or institution. Outside the State of Israel, a similarly iconoclastic position has been taken by the French phenomenologist Emmanuel *Levinas, who has gone further and written that the love for the Torah should take precedence even over the love for God Himself, for only through the Torah – that knowledge of the Other which is the condition of all ethics – can man relate to a personal God against Whom he can rebel and for Whom he can die.

ETERNITY (OR NONABROGABILITY). In the Bible there is no text unanimously understood to affirm explicitly the eternity or nonabrogability of the Torah; however, many laws of the Torah are accompanied by phrases such as, "an everlasting injunction through your generations" (Lev. 3:17, et al.).

The doctrine that the Torah is eternal appears several times in the pre-tannaitic apocryphal literature; e.g., Ben Sira 24:9 ("the memorial of me shall never cease") and Jubilees 33:16 ("an everlasting law for everlasting generations").

Whereas the rabbis understood the preexistence of the Torah in terms of its prerevelation existence in heaven, they understood the eternity or nonabrogability of the Torah in terms of its postrevelation existence, not in heaven; i.e., the whole Torah was given to Moses and no part of it remained in heaven (Deut. 8:6, et al.). When Eliezer ben Hyrcanus and Joshua ben Hananiah were debating a point of Torah and a voice from heaven dramatically announced that Eliezer's position was correct, Joshua refused to recognize its testimony, for the Torah "is not in heaven" (Deut. 30:12), and must be interpreted by men, unaided by the supernatural (BM 59b). It was a principle that "a prophet is henceforth not permitted to innovate a thing" (Sifra, Be-Ḥukkotai 13:7; Tem. 16a; but he was permitted to suspend a law temporarily (Sif. Deut. 175)). The rabbis taught that the Torah would continue to exist in the world to come (e.g., Eccles. R. 2:1), although some of them were of the opinion that innovations would be made in the messianic era (e.g., Gen. R. 98:9; Lev. R. 9:7).

Philo saw the eternity of the Torah as a metaphysical principle, following from the Torah's accord with nature. He believed that the laws and enactments of the Torah "will remain for all future ages as though immortal, so long as the sun and the moon and the whole heaven and universe exist" (II Mos. 14; cf. Jer. 31:32–35). The belief in the eternity of the Torah appears also in the later apocryphal works (e.g., I Bar. 4:1; Ps. of Sol. 10:5) and in Josephus (Apion, 2:277).

With the rise to political power of Christianity and Islam, two religions which sought to convert Jews and which argued that particular injunctions of the Torah had been abrogated, the question of the eternity or "nonabrogability" of the Torah became urgent.

Saadia Gaon stated that the children of Israel have a clear tradition from the prophets that the laws of the Torah

are not subject to abrogation. Presenting scriptural corroboration for this tradition, he appealed to phrases appended to certain commandments, e.g., “throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant” (Ex. 31:16). According to one novel argument of his, the Jewish nation is a nation only by virtue of its laws, namely, the Torah; God has stated that the Jewish nation will endure as long as the heaven and earth (Jer. 31:35–36); therefore, the Torah will last as long as heaven and earth (cf. Philo, above). He interpreted the verses, “Remember ye the Torah of Moses... Behold, I will send you Elijah...” (Mal. 3:22–23), as teaching that the Torah will hold valid until the prophet Elijah returns to herald the resurrection (*Beliefs and Opinions* 3:7).

Maimonides listed the belief in the eternity of the Torah as the ninth of his 13 principles of Judaism, and connected it with the belief that no prophet will surpass Moses, the only man to give people laws through prophecy. He contended that the eternity of the Torah is stated clearly in the Bible, particularly in Deuteronomy 13:1 (“thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it”) and Deuteronomy 29:28 (“the things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this Torah”). He also cited the rabbinic principle: “A prophet is henceforth not permitted to innovate a thing” (see above). He offered the following explanation of the Torah’s eternity, based on its perfection and on the theory of the mean: “The Torah of the Lord is perfect” (Ps. 19:8) in that its statutes are just, i.e., that they are equibalanced between the burdensome and the indulgent; and “when a thing is perfect as it is possible to be within its species, it is impossible that within that species there should be found another thing that does not fall short of the perfection either because of excess or deficiency.” Also, he mentioned the argument that the prophesied eternity of the name of Israel (“For as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before Me... so shall your seed and your name”; Isa. 66:22) entails the eternity of the Torah (cf. Saadia above). He held that there will be no change in the Torah after the coming of the Messiah (commentary on Mishnah, Sanh. 10; Yad, Yesodei ha-Torah 9; cf. *Sefer ha-Mitzvot; Guide of the Perplexed* 2:29, 39; Abraham ibn Daud, *Emunah Ramah*).

Hasdai Crescas listed the eternity of the Torah as a non-fundamental true belief, i.e., required by Judaism, but not essential to the concept of Torah. Unlike Saadia and Maimonides, he did not try to found this belief directly on a biblical text (but cf. his *Bittul Ikkarei ha-Nozerim*, 9), but solely on the rabbinic dictum: “A prophet is henceforth not permitted to innovate a thing” (see above). To elucidate the belief from the point of view of speculation, he presented an argument from the perfection of the Torah, which differed markedly from its Maimonidean precursor. The argument proceeds as follows: The Torah is perfect, for it perfectly guides men toward the ultimate human happiness, love. If God were to abrogate the Torah, He would surely replace it, for it is impossible that He would forsake His purpose to maximize love. Since the Torah is perfect, it could be replaced only by an equal or an infe-

rior; but if inferior, God would not be achieving His purpose of maximizing love; and if equal, He would be acting futilely. Therefore, He will not abrogate the Torah. Against the argument that replacement of the Torah by an equal but different law would make sense if there were an appreciable change – for better or worse – in the people who received it, he retorted characteristically that the Torah is the excellent guide for all, including both the intellectuals and the backward (*Or Adonai*, 3, pt. 1, 5:1–2).

Joseph Albo criticized Maimonides for listing the belief in the eternity of the Torah as an independent fundamental belief of Judaism. In a long discussion, which in many places constitutes an elaboration of arguments found in Crescas, he contended that nonabrogation is not a fundamental principle of the Torah, and that moreover, no text can be found in the Bible to establish it. Ironically, his ultimate position turned out to be closer to Maimonides’ than to Crescas’; for he concluded that the belief in the nonabrogation of the Torah is a branch of the doctrine that no prophet will surpass the excellence of Moses (*Sefer ha-Ikkarim*, 3:13–23).

After Albo, the question of the eternity of the Torah became routine in Jewish philosophical literature (e.g., Abraham Shalom, *Neveh Shalom* 10:3–4; Isaac Abrabanel, *Rosh Amanah*, 13). However, in the Kabbalah it was never routine. In the 13th-century *Sefer ha-Temunah* a doctrine of cosmic cycles (or *shemittot*; cf. Deut. 15) was expounded, according to which creation is renewed every 7,000 years, at which times the letters of the Torah reassemble, and the Torah enters the new cycle bearing different words and meanings. Thus, while eternal in its unrevealed state, the Torah, in its manifestation in creation, is destined to be abrogated. This doctrine became popular in later kabbalistic and ḥasidic literature, and was exploited by the heretic Shabbetai Zevi and his followers, who claimed that a new cycle had begun, and in consequence he was able to teach that “the abrogation of the Torah is its fulfillment!”

Like his contemporary Shabbetai Zevi, but for much different reasons (see above), Spinoza committed the heresy of advocating the abrogation of the Torah. Subsequently, in the 19th century, Reform ideologists held that the abrogation of parts of the traditional Torah was not a heresy at all but was necessary for the progress of the Jewish religion. Similarly, many intellectuals and nationalists held that it was necessary for the progress of the Jewish nation. Ahad Ha-Am called for the Torah in the Heart to replace the Torah of Moses and of the rabbis, which having been written down, had, in his opinion, become rigid and ossified in the process of time.

Jewish philosophers of modern times have not concentrated on the question of the eternity or nonabrogability of the Torah. Nevertheless, it is not entirely untenable that the main distinction between Orthodox Judaism and non-Orthodox Judaism is that the latter rejects the literal interpretation of the ninth principle of Maimonides’ Creed that there will be no change in the Torah.

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TORAH, READING OF.

History

The practice of reading the Pentateuch (Torah) in public is undoubtedly ancient. The sources, however, do not permit the definite tracing of the historical development of the custom. The command to assemble the people at the end of every seven years to read the law "in their hearing" (Deut. 31:10–13) is the earliest reference to a public Torah reading. A second mention is made in the time of *Ezra when he read the Torah to all the people, both men and women, from early morning until midday, on the first day of the seventh month (Neh. 8:1–8). These two occasions are isolated instances, and do not help to establish when the custom of regular Torah readings arose.

Moses' command that the Israelites should read the Torah on the Sabbath, on festivals, and on new moons, and Ezra's that it should be read on Mondays, on Thursdays, and on Sabbath afternoons (TJ, Meg. 4:1, 75a; BK 82a) are not historical statements in themselves; they point, however, to an early date for the introduction of regular readings. It may be assumed that the custom dates from about the first half of the third century B.C.E., since the Septuagint was apparently compiled for the purpose of public reading in the synagogue. Josephus (Apion, 2:175) and Philo (II Som. 127) refer to public Torah readings as an ancient practice. This contention is supported by evidence in the New Testament: "For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogue every Sabbath day" (Acts 15:21). Elbogen is of the opinion that originally the Torah was read only on the festivals and on certain Sabbath days before the festivals; the reading was to instruct the people as to the significance of these days. If this is correct, the original Torah reading was didactic rather than liturgical.

The Mishnah shows that by the end of the second century C.E. there were regular Torah readings on Mondays, on Thursdays, and on Sabbaths; special readings for the Sabbaths during the period from before the month of Adar to before Passover; and special readings for the festivals, including those of Hanukkah and Purim, and for fast days (Meg. 3, 4–6). The length of the reading, however, seems not to have been fixed by that time. R. *Meir states, for instance, that the practice was to read a short portion on Sabbath mornings, the portion that followed on Sabbath afternoon, and further portions on Monday and Thursday, beginning on the following Sabbath morning from the end of the Thursday portion. According to R. Judah, the procedure was to begin the reading each Sabbath morning service where it had ended on the morning of the previous Sabbath (Meg. 31b).

The passage in the Babylonian Talmud (Meg. 29b) is the earliest reference to a fixed cycle of consecutive readings. It states that "in the West" (Palestine), they completed the reading of the Torah in three years. The old division of the Pentateuch into 153, 155, or 167 *sedarim* ("divisions") is based on this triennial cycle. Buechler, with great ingenuity, attempted to reconstruct the weekly portions of the *triennial cycle, assuming the cycle to have begun on the first day of Nisan. On the basis of his reconstruction, he proceeds to explain various traditions regarding events of the past (e.g., that Moses died on the seventh day of Adar and that Sarah was "remembered" on the first day of Tishri). Buechler contends that since the portions describing these events were read once every three years at these times, the tradition grew that the events themselves had taken place then.

In Babylon and other communities outside Palestine, an annual cycle was followed according to which the Pentateuch was divided into 54 *sedarim* (sing. *sidrah*, i.e., *parashah*). This became the universal Jewish practice, except for certain isolated instances. In Palestine, the triennial cycle was also superseded by the annual, possibly under the influence of Babylonian immigrants. However, the eminent traveler *Benjamin of Tudela writes about the community of Cairo (c. 1170): "Two large synagogues are there, one belonging to the land of Israel and one belonging to the men of the land of Babylon... Their usage with regard to the portions and sections of the law is not alike; for the men of Babylon are accustomed to read a portion every week, as is done in Spain, and is our custom, and to finish the law each year; while the men of Palestine do not do so but divide each portion into three sections and finish the law at the end of three years. The two communities, however, have an established custom to unite and pray together on the day of the Rejoicing of the Law, and on the day of the Giving of the Law" (M.N. Adler (ed.), *The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela* (1907), 70). Similarly, in the 12th century Maimonides (Yad, Tefillah 13:1) writes that the universal custom was to follow the annual cycle; he states, however, that the triennial cycle was nevertheless followed in some places.

The Mishnah rules that three persons read the Torah on Sabbath afternoons, on Mondays, and on Thursdays; four on *hol ha-mo'ed* of the festivals and on the new moon; five on a festival; six on the Day of Atonement; and seven on a Sabbath morning (Meg. 4:1–2). The privilege of reading the first portion of the day was given to a priest, the second to a levite, and the others to Israelites (Git. 5:8). Originally, each person read his own portion. In time, with the deterioration of Torah learning among the lay people, a special official of the synagogue read the portion while the person called to the reading recited the benedictions. At an early period, it was customary to translate the Hebrew text into the vernacular at the time of the reading (e.g., in Palestine and Babylon the translation was into Aramaic). The **targum* ("translation") was done by a special synagogue official, called the *meturgeman* (Meg. 4:4–10). Eventually, the practice of translating into the vernacular was discontinued.