

Abbreviated, Abridged, Incomplete  
Outline of the Teaching (Torah literature)

**The Written Torah/Teaching (*Torah she'bichtav*)**

- a. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy
- b. Contains law, narratives, and poetry

The Rest of the Tanakh (Bible): (TaNaKh – Torah (The Teaching), Nevi'im (the Prophets), Ketuvim (the Writings))

2. Nevi'im – Prophets

- a. “Former Prophets”
  - i. Books of History in which Prophets (and prophet like persons) appear:
  - ii. Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings,
- b. “Latter Prophets” - Prophetic Literature
  - i. Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the 12 Minor Prophets

3. Ketuvim – Writings

- a. Wisdom and Poetry: Psalms, Proverbs, Job
- b. The Five Scrolls: Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther
- c. The book of Daniel
- d. Ezra and Nehemiah
- e. Chronicles

According to scholars, the Torah *she'bichtav* (The Written Torah - the Five Books of Moses) achieved its final form in the Persian period – 400's BCE, and the rest of the Bible soon after.

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The concept “Midrash” – that the Torah could be interpreted in a formal, disciplined way.



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**The Oral Torah/Teaching**  
**(*Torah she'b'al peh*)**

- 1. Oral understandings and interpretations of the Bible developed as soon as the texts came into being.
- 2. Formal, canonized interpretations of scripture (legal and non-legal) developed in an ongoing way; it took centuries for a what became the rabbinic canon of interpretation to develop.
- 3. Midrash: The *idea* that the inner meaning of the Written Torah could be brought out in a disciplined, formal way.
  - a. “Midrash Halakhah”: Interpretations of the legal (halakha) aspects of the Written Torah

- b. “Midrash Aggadah”: Interpretations of the non-legal (aggadah) aspects of the Written Torah.
  4. There is evidence that there were attempts at organizing the Oral Torah, both legal and non-legal, in the first and second centuries C.E., but probably began much earlier.
  5. Rules of Interpretation evolved –13 Rules, 39 Rules, etc.
  6. The Mishnah:
    - a. The great redaction of the legal material in the Oral Torah is called the Mishnah (roughly, “teaching by repetition”) and was promulgated around 220 C.E.
    - b. The Mishnah is ordered by topic, very unlike Midrash, which is organized as commentary of verses in the Torah
    - c. Six Orders of the The Misnhah:
      - i. Zeraim “seeds” – Prayer and Agricultural Law
      - ii. Mo’ed “time” – The holy calendar
      - iii. Nashim “women” – Family Law
      - iv. Nezikin “damages” – Civil, Criminal Law, Jurisprudence
      - v. Kodashim “holies” – he realm of holiness
      - vi. T’horot “purities” – The realm of purity
    - d. Each Order of the Mishnah is divided into “Tractates” (Masechet, Masechtot, plural), each Masechet is divided into chapters, and chapters are divided into paragraphs called “A Mishnah”. There are 60 Tractates in the Mishnah
    - e. Vast amounts of legal Oral Torah were not included in the Mishnah. In addition, the Mishnah is extremely laconic, and does not devote much of its text to citing scriptural sources, nor does the Mishnah resolve disputations.
    - f. The commentary and expansion of the Mishnah began as soon the Mishnah came together.
  7. The Gemara (from the Aramaic “*le-migmar*”, to study)
    - a. is the commentary and expansion on the text of the Mishnah.
    - b. The Gemara is filled with many digressions and is composed of about half legal, half non-legal material.
    - c. The Gemara reaches its final shape around 600 CE.
    - d. The Mishnah and Gemara together make up “The Talmud”, referred to by Masechet in the order of the Mishnah.
    - e. There is “gemarah” on 37 of the 60 tractates in the Mishnah, but some tractates of the Mishnah are subdivided. 63 tractates of the Gemara.
    - f. Study of the Talmud is typically referred to by “daf” folio number (two sided), either the A side or the B side, referred to as “Amud.”
    - g. Example: If a person were studying “Sanhedrin 72a”, that would mean they are studying from The Order of the Mishnah “Nezikin,” Tractate “Sanhredrin.” (Chapter Eight), daf/folio 72, first side of the folio page (amud aleph)

8. The Midrash:

- a. Distinguish between “midrash” as a concept – that the Written Torah has an inner meaning that has to be brought out.
- b. And “the Midrash” – the non-legal aspects (aggadah) of the Oral Torah that were organized into texts. At the same time the Gemara was coming together (beginning around 200 CE), the formalizing of aggadah into “the Midrash” was occurring.

Overview:

**The Written Torah/Teaching**

The Five Books of Moses, to a lesser degree, the rest of the Bible

**The Oral Torah**

1. Legal Oral Torah (halakhah)  
The Mishnah and Gemara – together - the Talmud

2. Non-legal Oral Torah (aggadah)

Midrash Rabbah (The Great Midrash)

On the Five Books of Moses and several books from the Writings in the Bible

Other compendia of Midrash and Aggadah

Sifra d’bei Rav – on Leviticus

Sifrei d’bei Rav – on Numbers and Deuteronomy

Midrash Tanchuma

The Mechilta (on Exodus)

3. Legal Codes and Commentaries – create from the complex forest of the Talmud a much straighter path to law and commentaries on the law.
4. Commentaries on Scripture:
  - a. Tens of commentaries on scripture, citing Midrash, Talmud, addressing vocabulary and grammatical questions, and giving entire sermons on passages in scripture.
  - b. The most notable commentator is Rashi – Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki – France – 1040-1105
  - c. Many, many others