



Jewish History 9

Rabbi Daniel Levine

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Geonim (700 CE - 1000 CE)

1000 CE: Jewish Center Moves to Europe (predominantly Spain)

“The talmudic commentaries that emerged from the Geonic era primarily focused on straightforward explanations of difficult talmudic lexicons or on the elucidation of specific complicated passages. Additionally, Geonic attention was turned toward the issuance of legal rulings for the many communities that looked toward the Babylonian academies for legal decisions.”

-Professor Aryeh Leibowitz



A tale of two sages and regions

Saadia Gaon (Rosh Yeshiva of Sura)

Born 882-942 in Egypt - went to Israel - then ended up in Iraq

Wrote "Book of Beliefs and Opinions" where he showed that Plato and Aristotle can be reconciled with Torah

Wrote a book on Grammar

Worked hard to keep Jews Jewish!



Rabbenu Gershom

Born 960-1028 in Germany

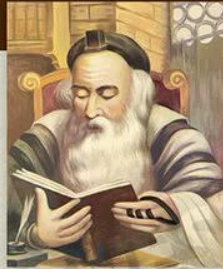
Banned Polygamy!
Departure from the Babylonian academies
Europeanized Judaism!



רבי יצחק אלפסי - רי"ף



רבי שלמה יצחקי - רש"י



רבי יעקב בן מאיר - ריב"ז



רבי משה בן מיימון - רמב"ם



רבי משה בן נחמן - רמב"ן



רבי אשר בן יחיאל - רא"ש



רבי יעקב בן אשר - טור



רבי יצחק אברמנאל



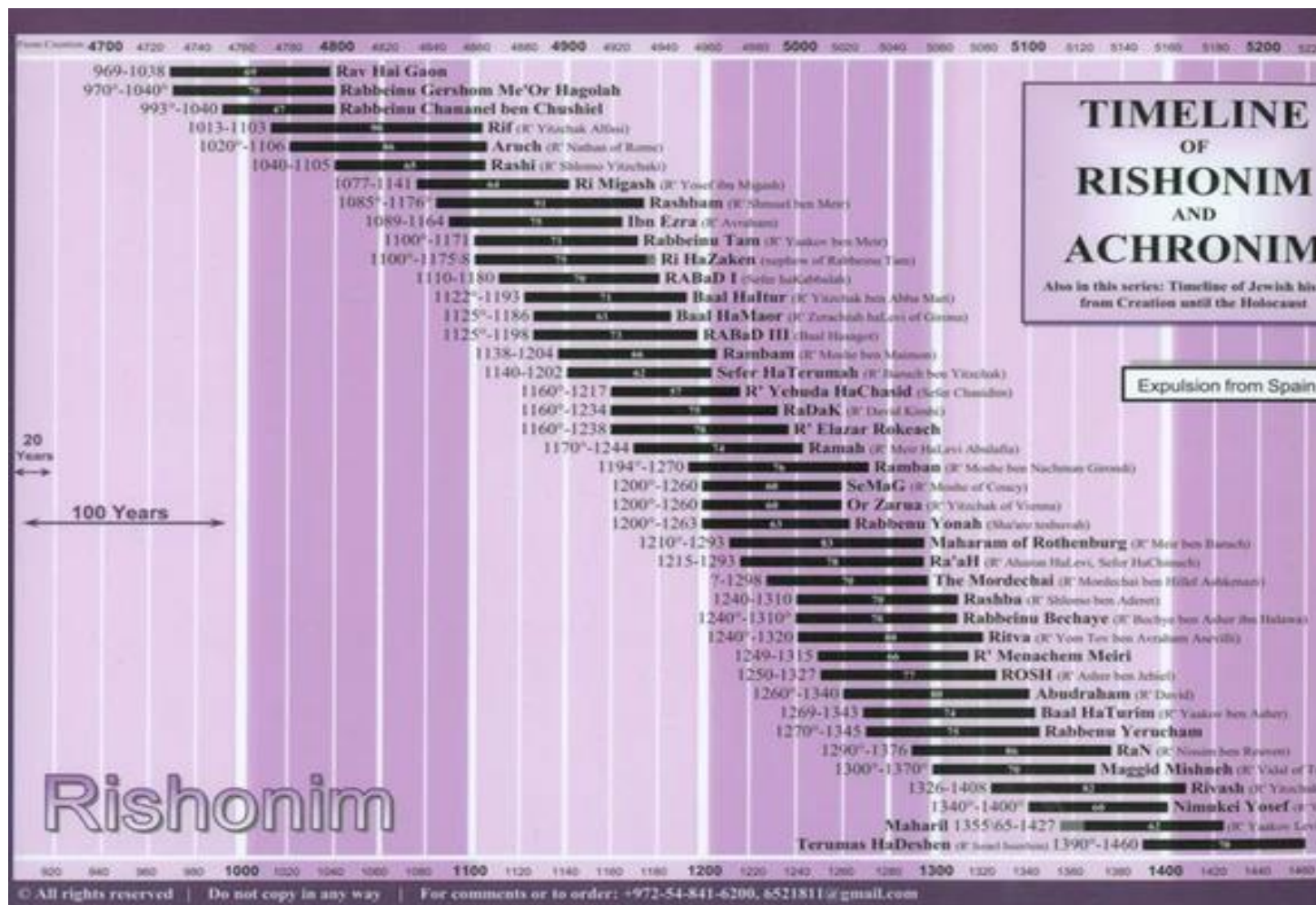
רבי יוסף קארו - בית יוסף



רבי משה איסרלש - רמ"א

רבותינו הקדמונים





Medieval Literature:

Halachic/Exegetical:

Biblical Exegesis: Rashi, Ramban, Ibn Ezra (Gen 1:1)

Codes: Rif, Rambam, Shulchan Aruch (Laws of Megillah)

Talmudic scholarship: Tosafot (pesachim)

Responsa: (Rashi's responsa)

Rashi's Responsum after 1096

Herewith do I, the undersigned, answer him who has questioned me concerning the marriage of a certain girl who was married at a time when she and the groom, as well as the witnesses to the ceremony, had already been forced by Gentiles to disavow the Jewish religion

I am of the opinion that this woman requires a bill of divorcement before she can marry another man. The marriage of a Jew who has even voluntarily become an apostate and then marries is legal [according to Jewish law]. For it is said [Joshua 7: 11] "Israel has sinned," meaning [Sanhedrin 44a] that even though he has sinned he is still an Israelite. How much the more is this true in the case of all these forced converts who at heart are still loyal to God.

Now In this particular case how their final conduct reflects their original attitude, for as soon as they were able to find some form of escape they returned to Judaism. And even though the witnesses may have led a loose life while living among the non Jews and may be suspected of the iniquities of the Gentiles, nevertheless their testimony to the marriage does not thereby become invalid...

Peace! Solomon the son of Rabbi Isaac

Philosophic:

Guide to the Perplexed

Kuzari

Cultural/Artistic:

Poetry (secular?)

Piyutim (Adon Olam, Ein Kelohenu, Hakafot, Ma'oz Tzur, Yedid Nefesh)

Mystical (Kabbalah):

Zohar

Sefirot