ARTSCROLL ENGLISH TANACH: THE JEWISH BIBLE, WITH INSIGHTS FROM CLASSIC RABBINIC THOUGHT

Selected Bibliography of Classic Sources Through 1850

Note: Entries that are names of commentators are in **bold**; entries that are names of works are in **bold italic**.

Abarbanel, Don Isaac — (1437–1508) Philosopher, statesman, leader of Spanish Jewry at the time of the Expulsion in 1492. Wrote massive commentary on nearly the entire Tanach.

Akeidah, Akeidas Yitzchak — Profound philosophical-homiletical commentary on the Pentateuch by R' Yitzchak Arama (1420–1494), one of the leading rabbis of 15th-century Spain.

Alshich — Extremely popular commentary on the Tanach by R' Moshe Alshich (1508–1593?), dayan and preacher in Safed during its golden age.


Baal HaTurim — Commentary on the Pentateuch by R' Yaakov (c.1275 – c.1340), the son of the Rosh. The commentary is composed of two parts: a) a brief one based on gematria (a system of the numerical values of Hebrew letters) and Masoretic interpretations, known as Baal HaTurim; b) an extensive exegetical commentary, known as Peirush HaTur HaAruch.

Bais HaLevi — Commentary on the Pentateuch by R' Yosef Dov HaLevi Soloveitchik (1892–1950), Rosh Yeshiva and Rabbi of Slutzk. Considered one of the most brilliant Talmudists of the 19th century.

Bamidbar Rabbah — The section of Midrash Rabbah on the Book of Numbers. See Midrash Rabbah.


Bereishis Rabbah — The section of Midrash Rabbah on the Book of Genesis. See Midrash Rabbah.

R' Bunim of P'schis'cha — (1765–1827) Leading Chassidic Rebbe in Poland in the early-19th century. Some of his teachings are collected in Chedvas Simchah, Kol Simchah, and Ramasayim Tzofim.


R' Chananel — (died c.1055) Rosh Yeshiva and Rabbi of the Jewish community of Kairouan, North Africa; author of famous Talmud commentary, and of commentary on the Pentateuch that is quoted by Ramban, Rabbeinu Bachya, and others.

Chasam Sofer — Title of the many works of R’ Moshe Sofer (1762–1839), Rabbi of Pressburg and acknowledged leader of Hungarian Jewry who led the battle against Reform.

Chinuch — see Sefer HaChinuch.

Chizkuni — Commentary on the Pentateuch by R' Chizkiah ben Manoach, who lived in the 13th century, probably in France.


Daas Zekeinim — Collection of comments on the Pentateuch by the Tosafists of the 12th and 13th centuries.


Derech HaChaim — Commentary on Ecclesiastes by R’ Pinchos ben Yehudah, 19th century, Grodno.

Devarim Rabbah — The section of Midrash Rabbah on the Book of Deuteronomy. See Midrash Rabbah.

Di Trani — R’ Yeshaya HaZaken (the Elder) (Rid) (c.1180–c.1260), Tosafist, Halachist, teacher, composed many Tosefos (lit., additions; the medieval commentaries to the Talmud) to various tractates of Talmud. In addition, he answered halachic queries from all over Italy and Germany; his responsa are cited in Shibolet HaLeket. He also wrote commentaries on the Torah and the Passover Hagadah.

Drashos HaRan — A collection of discourses by R’ Nissim of Gerona, Spain (c.1290–c.1375). A classic exposition of the fundamentals of Judaism.

Emek HaNetzio — Commentary on Sifri’s volumes on Numbers and Deuteronomy by Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Yehudah Berlin (HaNetziv or Netziv) (1817–1893), Rosh Yeshivah of the famous yeshivah of Volozhin in Russia.


Gemara — Commentary on and explication of the Mishnah; also known as Talmud. See Mishnah.

Gur Aryeh — Supercommentary on Rashi’s Pentateuch commentary by the Maharal of Prague (1526–1609).

Haamek Davar — Commentary on the Pentateuch by Rabbis Naftali Zvi Yehudah Berlin (HaNetziv or Netziv) (1817–1893), Rosh Yeshivah of the famous yeshivah of Volozhin in Russia.
**Halchos Gedolos** — Halachic work by Rav Shimon Kayyara (Bahag) (9th century), arranged in the order of the Talmud and stating the Talmud’s conclusions.

**Halchos Matnos Aniyim** — Laws of Gifts to the Poor; a section of Mishnah Torah, Rambam’s work on the mitzvah of giving charity.

**Halchos Melachim** — Laws of Kings; a section of Mishnah Torah, Rambam’s work on the laws of kings; also discusses the Messianic age.

**Halchos Teshuva** — Laws of Repentance; a section of Mishnah Torah, Rambam’s work on the requirements of true repentance.

**Halchos Tumas Tzaraas** — Laws of the Impurity of Tzaraas; a section of Mishnah Torah, Rambam’s work on the biblical affliction of tzaraas, caused by improper speech.

**Hil. Yesodei HaTorah** — Laws of the Foundations of Torah; a section of Mishnah Torah, Rambam’s discussion of the obligation to love and fear God.

**Hirsch, R’ Samson Raphael** — (1808–1888) Rabbi in Frankfurt-am-Main; great leader of modern German-Jewish Orthodoxy and battler against Reform; author of many works, including a five-volume commentary on the Pentateuch.

**Ibn Ezra, R’ Joseph ibn Nachmias** — (1210–1280) Philosopher and bibliographer, and Halachos of Hai Parchi (c.1282 – c.1357), a disciple of the Rosh. odom Zohar. He wrote commentaries to Esther, Jeremiah, and the Five Megillos, and was a talmid of the Rosh in 14th-century Spain.

**Iggeres Shmuel** — Encyclopedic commentary on the Book of Ruth, authored by R’ Shmuel de Uzeda (c.1570–1643), a middle vote commentary on the Pentateuch. His pithy comments are published in Iggeres Shmuel.

**Ibn Nachmias** — R’ Joseph ben Joseph ibn Nachmias was a talmid of the Rosh in 14th-century Spain. He wrote commentaries to Esther, Jeremiah, and Mishlei.

**Ibn Yachya** — Talmudic tractate dealing with the laws of marriage, betrothals, and the mitzvah of giving charity.

**Ibn Yachya, R’ Joseph ibn Nachmias** — (1210–1280) Philosopher and biblical commentator in Toledo, Spain; early commentator on Rambam’s Moreh Nevuchim (Guide for the Perplexed).

**Ibn Yevoni, R’ Joseph Azulai** — (c.1550 – 1619), one of the seminal figures in Jewish thought in the last five centuries. Chief Rabbi in Lemberg and Rabbi of Prague, one of the leading Polish rabbis of the early-17th century. Talmid of Maharal.

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**Kluger, R’ Shlomo** — (1785–1869) Rabbi of Brody in Galicia, author of numerous works, one of the leading Torah scholars of the 19th century.

**Kotzk, R’ Menachem Mendel** — (1787–1859) One of the leading Chassidic Rebbes in the mid-19th century; his pithy comments are published in Emes V’Emunah, in Ohel Torah, and in the numerous works of his disciples.

**Lechem Dim’ah** — Commentary on Megillas Eichah (Lamentations) by Rabbi Shmuel de Uzeda (see Iggeres Shmuel).

**Mahara Azulai** — R’ Abraham Azulai (c.1570–1643) was a Kabbalistic author and commentator born at Fez. In Hebron he wrote a commentary on the Zohar.

**Maharit** — Acronym for Meir Leibush ben Yechiel Michel (1526–1609), one of the seminal figures in Jewish thought in the last five centuries. Chief Rabbi in Moravia, Posen, and Prague. Author of numerous works in all fields of Torah.

**Maharzur** — Acronym for Moreinu HaRav Zeev Wolf Einhorn of Vilna (died 1862), author of a comprehensive commentary on the Midrash Rabbah.

**Maimonides** — See Rambam.

**Malbim** — Acronym for Meir Leibush ben Yechezkel Michel (1809–1879), Rabbi in Germany, Romania, and Russia, leading Torah scholar and one of the preeminent Bible commentators of modern times. Demonstrated how the Oral tradition is implicit in the Biblical text.

**Matnos Aniyim** — See Halchos Matnos Aniyim.

**Mekhilta** — Tannaitic Halachic midrash to the Book of Exodus.

**Megillah** — Talmudic tractate dealing with the laws of Purim and of reading the Megillah (Scroll of Esther), found in Seder Moed. See Mishnah.

**Meiri** — Rabbi Menachem HaMeiri (1526–1609), one of the seminal figures in Jewish thought in the last five centuries. Chief Rabbi in Moravia, Posen, and Prague. Author of numerous works in all fields of Torah.

**Maimonides** — See Rambam.

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**Matnos Aniyim** — See Halchos Matnos Aniyim.

**Meitzar** — Talmudic tractate dealing with the laws of Purim and of reading the Megillah (Scroll of Esther), found in Seder Moed. See Mishnah.

**Meiri** — Rabbi Menachem HaMeiri (1249–c.1310) was a famous Catalan rabbi, Talmudist and follower of Rambam. Meiri’s work on the Talmud, Beis HaBechirah, presents a synopsis of the arguments
presented in the Talmud and of the commentators’ commentaries.

R’ Menachem — R’ Menachem ben Chalbo (11th century) was one of the first Bible commentators in northern France. He was the uncle of R’ Yosef Kara (see above), who conveyed his comments to Rashi (see below).

R’ Menachem Mendel of Kotzk — See above, Kotzk.


Metzudos — Two works by Rabbi David Altschuler, including Metzudas Zion, which explains individual words, and Metzudas David, which provides a running commentary to the text. Due to their simple and concise language, the dual commentaries have become almost indispensable aids in Bible study.

Michlal Yofi — A lexicon by Solomon ibn Melek (c.1480), philological and lexicographer commentator, published in Constantinople, 1554.

Midrash — Genre of Rabbinic literature. Selections from the Aggadic teachings of the Tannaim and Amoraim arranged according to the verses of the Tanach.

Midrash Aggadah — Midrashic collection based on the works of R’ Moshe HaDarshan, see below.

Midrash Lekach Tov — Midrashic work on the Pentateuch and the Five Megillos compiled by R’ Tovia (ben Eliezer) HaGadol (1036–1108) of Greece and Bulgaria. This work is also known as Pesikta Zutrasa.

Midrash Mishlei — Midrashic explication of the Book of Proverbs.


Midrash Tanchuma — See below, Tanchuma.

Minchas Shai — Comparison of the variant readings concerning spelling, vocalization, and accentuation of the words in Tanach found in Talmudic and Midrashic literature as well as in published and unpublished manuscripts, compiled by R’ Yedidiah Shlomo of Norzi (1560–1625), Rav in Mantua in 1585, and originally titled Poretz Geder.

Mishnah — Compilation of the Oral Law into six divisions, each known as a seder, i.e., order: Seder Zeraim (Seeds), dealing with the laws of farming and produce; Seder Moed (Time; Season), dealing with the laws of the festivals; Seder Nashim (Women), dealing with the laws of marriage and divorce; Seder Nezikin (Damages), dealing with civil law, damages, idolatry, and moral and ethical principles; Seder Kodashim (Sacred Things), dealing with Temple offerings, the daily routine in the Temple, and the Temple’s dimensions and furnishings; Seder Taharas (Purities), dealing with ritual purity and impurity.

The Gemara, or Talmud, was developed as a commentary and explication of the Mishnah.

Mizrachi — Basic supercommentary on Rashi’s Pentateuch commentary by R’ Eliyahu Mizrachi (1450–1525) of Constantinople, Chief Rabbi of the Turkish Empire.


Moreh Nevuchim — Guide for the Perplexed, a major work of Jewish philosophy. See Rambam.

Moshav Zekeinim — Collection of comments on the Pentateuch by the Tosafists of the 12th and 13th centuries.

R’ Moshe HaKohen — (12th century) Also known by the acronym Ramach; author of Hasagos (Criticisms) on Mishneh Torah.

Nachal Eshkol — Homiletical work of the Five Megillos, authored by Rav Chaim Yosef David Azulai (Chida) (1724–1806).


Netziv — See above, Haamek Davar.


Onkelos — See below, Targum Onkelos.

Or HaChaim — Commentary on the Pentateuch by the famous Kabbalist and Talmudic scholar R’ Chaim ben Attar (1696–1743), Rabbi and Rosh Yeshiva in Livorno, Italy, and subsequently in Jerusalem.


Pesikta Rabbasi — Midrashic collection of homilies compiled in the Geonic era on parts of the weekly Torah reading, certain Haftaros, and certain special Sabbaths.

Pirkei D’Rabbi Eliezer — Midrash composed by the school of the Tanna R’ Eliezer ben Hircanus (c.100). An important commentary on this midrash was composed by R’ David Lorius (1798–1855), one of the leading Torah scholars in Russia in the early 19th century.

Rabbeinu Bachya — (1263–1340) Student of the Rashba, author of a commentary on the Pentateuch containing four modes of interpretation: plain meaning of the text, and midrashic, philosophical, and kabbalistic exegeses.

Rabbeinu Tam — (1100–1171) Grandson of Rashi, and one of the foremost Tosafists.

Rakov — Acronym for R’ Dovid Kimchi (1160–1235) of Provence, leading Bible commentator and grammarian. Of his famous commentary on Tanach, only the sections to Genesis, the Prophets, Psalms, Proverbs, and Chronicles have survived.

Ralbag — Acronym for R’ Levi ben Gershon [Ger-sonides] (1288–1344) of Provence. According to some, he was a grandson of Ramban. Composed rationalistic commentary on the Scriptures that explains the text, and then sums up the philosophical ideas and moral lessons contained in each section.
Rambam — Acronym for R’ Moshe ben Maimon [Maimonides] (1135–1204), one of the leading Torah scholars of the Middle Ages. His three major works are: Commentary to the Mishnah in Arabic; Mishneh Torah, a comprehensive code of Jewish law; and Moreh Nevu’chim (Guide for the Perplexed), a major work of Jewish philosophy.

Ramban — Acronym for R’ Moshe ben Nachman [Nachmanides] (1194–1270) of Gerona, Spain, one of the leading Torah scholars of the Middle Ages; successfully defended Judaism at the dramatic debate in Barcelona in 1263; author of numerous basic works in all aspects of Torah, including a classic commentary on the Pentateuch.

Ran — Acronym for R’ Nissim of Gerona, Spain (c.1290–c.1375), famous for his Talmudic commentary; see above, Drashos HaRan.

Rashbam — Acronym for R’ Shmuel ben Meir (c.1085–1174), grandson of Rashi and brother of Rabbenu Tam, leading Tosafist and Talmud commentator, author of a literalist commentary on the Pentateuch.

Rashi — Acronym for R’ Shlomo Yitzchaki (1040–1105), considered the commentator par excellence. Rashi’s commentaries on the Pentateuch and on the Talmud are considered absolutely basic to the understanding of the text to this very day.

Rema — Acronym for Rabbi Moshe Isserles (1520–1572), an eminent Ashkenazi rabbi, Talmidust, and posek, renowned for his fundamental work of halachah (Jewish law), entitled HaMapah (lit., The Tablecloth), glosses on Shulchan Aruch, and his Darchei Moshe commentary on the Tur.

R’ Menachem Recanati — (late-13th–early-14th cent.) Italian Kabbalist who composed a mystical commentary on the Pentateuch.

Ri Mitrani — See Di Trani, above.

Rosh Hashanah — Talmudic tractate dealing with the laws of Rosh Hashanah; found in Seder Moed. See Mishnah.

Ruth Rabbah — The section of Midrash Rabbah on the Book of Ruth. See Midrash Rabbah.

R’ Saadia Gaon — (882–942) Head of the famous yeshivah of Pumbedisa, zealous opponent of Karaitism; author of many works in all areas of Torah learning, including the philosophical work, Emunos v’Deos, and an Arabic translation of the Pentateuch.


Sefer HaChinuch — The classic work on the 613 commandments, their rationale and their regulations, by an anonymous author in 13th-century Spain.

Sforno — Classic commentary on the Pentateuch by R’ Ovadiah Sforno of Rome and Bologna, Italy (1470–1550).


She’elos U’Teshuvos Maharit — A work in three parts by R’ Joseph Trani (Maharit), consisting of halachic responsa.

Shekalim — Literally, “Shekels.” Tractate dealing with the laws of funds collected to maintain the Holy Temple and to provide public offerings. Talmudic tractate in Seder Moed. See Mishnah.

Shemos Rabbah — The section of Midrash Rabbah on the Book of Exodus. See Midrash Rabbah.


Sh’lah — Acronym for Shnei Luchos HaBris (The Two Tablets of the Covenant), by R’ Yeshayah Hurwitz (1560–1630), Rabbi in Poland, Frankfurt, Prague, and Jerusalem, one of the leading Torah scholars of the early-17th century. It includes fundamental tenets of Judaism, basic instruction in Kabbalah, and a commentary on the Pentateuch.

Shoocher Tov — Haggadic midrash on the Book of Psalms.

Sifra — Tannaitic halachic midrash to the Book of Leviticus; also known as Toras Kohanim.

Sifre, Sifrei — Tannaitic halachic midrash to the Books of Numbers and Deuteronomy, often referenced by the name of the relevant Torah portion (parshah).

Sifrei Zuta — Ancient Midrash on the Book of Numbers quoted by medieval commentators.


Talmud — Also known as Gemara. Commentary on and explication of the Mishnah. See Mishnah.

Talmud Baali — Literally, “Babylonian Talmud.” This multi-volume work includes the Mishnah and the Babylonian Gemara, which is the culmination of more than 300 years of analysis of the Mishnah — plus other related material — in the Babylonian Academies, approximately 200–500 CE.

Talmud Yerushalmi — The Talmud composed by the Amoraim of Eretz Yisrael in the 2nd–4th centuries. Although traditionally called the Talmud of Jerusalem, it was composed in the Galilee, since in that era the Romans did not permit the Jews to reside in Jerusalem.

Tanchuma — Aggadic midrash on the Pentateuch, attributed to the school of the Amora R’ Tanchuma bar Abba of Eretz Yisrael (late-4th century). There are two published versions of this Midrash: a) Tanchuma Yashan, the only one known until the late 19th century; b) Tanchuma Buber; manuscript discovered by the scholar S. Buber in 1885.

Targum, Targum Onkelos — Authoritative Aramaic translation of the Pentateuch by the proselyte Onkelos (c.90). This work, which earned the approbation of his teachers, the Tannaim R’ Eliezer and R’ Yehoshua, is an interpretive translation.
Targum Yonasan — Aramaic paraphrase of the Pentateuch; although attributed to Yonasan ben Uziel, the disciple of Hillel (1st century B.C.E.), others maintain that the initials in signify Targum Yerushalmi, meaning that it was composed in Eretz Yisrael, and ascribe a later date to its composition.

Tosafos — The Talmudic glosses of the French and German rabbis of the 12th and 13th centuries on the Babylonian Talmud printed in all editions of that work alongside the text of the Gemara.

Tosefta — Collection of Baraisos, traditionally attributed to R’ Chiya and his circle (Iggeres R’ Shiria Gaon); a parallel work to the Mishnah.

Tur — (Literally, “Row”) Code of Jewish law composed by R’ Yaakov, the son of the Rosh (c.1275 – c.1340). The Arba Turim (Four Rous, which is its full title) is composed of four parts: Tur Orach Chaim (Path of Life, on daily, Sabbath, and holiday practices), Tur Yoreh Deah (Teacher of Wisdom, on dietary laws, oaths, usury, niddah [ritual impurity], mikveh, and mourning), Tur Even HaEzer (The Rock of Assistance, on marriage and divorce), and Tur Choshen Mishpat (Breastplate of Judgment, on business, disputes, and compensation for injury and damage).

Tuw Taam — Commentary on Ecclesiastes by R’ Yisrael Asher Shapiro, printed in Warsaw, 1895.

R’ Tzaddok HaCohen — (1823–1900) Chassidic sage and thinker; prolific author in many aspects of Torah; one of the leading Torah scholars of the 19th century. Largest of his many works is Pri Tzadik, a collection of his discourses on the Pentateuch.

Tzror HaMor — Homiletic commentary on the Pentateuch by R’ Avraham Saba (c.1440–c.1508). Fear of the Inquisition forced him to bury the book in Portugal; he subsequently rewrote it from memory when he escaped to Morocco.

Vayikra Rabbah — The section of Midrash Rabbah on the Book of Leviticus. See Midrash Rabbah.

Vilna Gaon — R’ Eliyahu ben Shlomo Zalman (1720–1797), also known as R’ Eliyahu HaChassid (“the saintly R’ Eliyahu”) or by the acronym, Gra. Considered the greatest Torah scholar in many centuries; acknowledged leader of non-Chassidic Jewry of Eastern Europe.

Yalkut — See below, Yalkut Shimon.

Yalkut HaMachiri — By R’ Machir ben Abba Mari, probably composed in the late 13th or 14th century. The Yalkut HaMachiri itself is similar in its contents to the Yalkut Shimon, with the difference that this compilation of Talmudic and midrashic sentences is limited only to the Books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the Twelve Prophets, Psalms, Proverbs, and Job.

Yalkut Shimon — The best-known and most comprehensive Midrashic anthology, covering the entire Tanach; attributed to R’ Shimon HaDarshan of Frankfurt (13th century).

R’ Yehudah HaChassid — (c. 1150–1217) Ethicist and Tosafist who authored Sefer Chassidim (Bologna, 1538), which covers the entire scope of Jewish life and teaches ethics by citing specific examples from life experiences rather than by formulating abstract principles. He also authored many kabbalistic works and had great influence both in his time and in succeeding generations.

Yerushalmi — See Talmud Yerushalmi.


Rabbeinu Yonah [of Gerona] — Spanish Rav and moralist of the 13th century who wrote many works, among them commentaries on portions of Tanach; commentary on Avos; Chiddushim on several tractates of the Talmud; his famous Mussar works, later reprinted, include: Igeres HaTeshuvah; Shaarei Teshuvah; and Sefer HaYirah.


Yosef Lekach — A commentary on the Book of Esther by Rabbi Eliezer ben Eliyahu Ashkenazi of Cairo (1512–1585).


Zohar — The basic work of Kabbalah, attributed to R’ Shimon ben Yochai and his disciples in the form of a commentary on the Pentateuch and the Megillos. Hidden for centuries, it was first published in the late-13th century by R’ Moshe de Leon (c.1250–1305), in Spain.

Zohar Chadash — Kabbalistic Midrash, part of the Zohar.