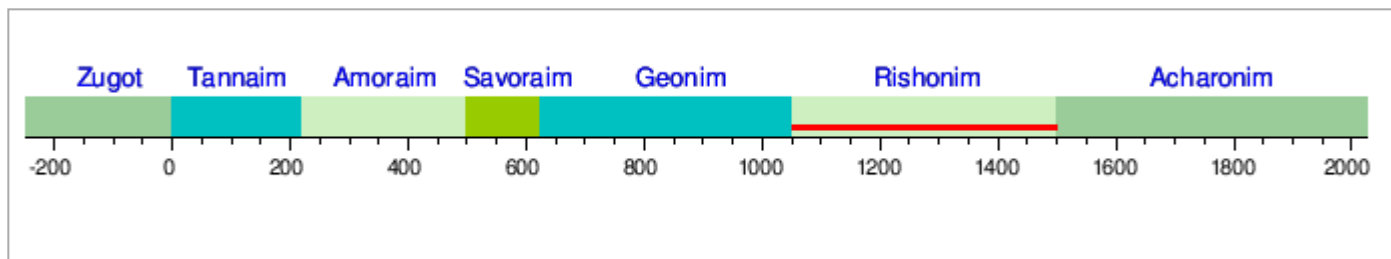


# Rishonim

**Rishonim** (Hebrew: [ɾiʃoˈnim]; Hebrew: ראשונים, lit. 'the first ones'; sing. ראשון, *Rishon*) were the leading rabbis and *poskim* who lived approximately during the 11th to 15th centuries, in the era before the writing of the *Shulchan Aruch* (שולחן ערוך, "Set Table", a common printed code of Jewish law, 1563 CE) and following the *Geonim* (589–1038 CE). Rabbinic scholars subsequent to the *Shulchan Aruch* are generally known as *acharonim* ("the latter ones").

The distinction between the *Rishonim* and the *Geonim* is meaningful historically; in *halakha* (Jewish law) the distinction is less important. According to a widely held view in Orthodox Judaism, the Acharonim generally cannot dispute the rulings of rabbis of previous eras unless they find support from other rabbis in previous eras. On the other hand, this view is not formally a part of *halakha* itself, and according to some rabbis is a violation of the halakhic system.<sup>[1]</sup> In *The Principles of Jewish Law*, Orthodox rabbi Menachem Elon writes that:

[such a view] "inherently violates the precept of *Hilkheta Ke-Vatra'ei*, that is, the law is according to the later scholars. This rule dates from the Geonic period. It laid down that until the time of Rabbis Abbaye and Rava (4th century) the *halakha* was to be decided according to the views of the earlier scholars, but from that time onward, the halakhic opinions of post-talmudic scholars would prevail over the contrary opinions of a previous generation."<sup>[2]</sup>



## List of Rishonim

- Eleazar of Worms (*haRokeah*), 12th century German halakhist.
- Judah ben Samuel of Regensburg (*Hasidim*), 12th century German mystic and halakhist.
- Abraham ben Nathan (*HaManhig*), 13th century Provençal Talmudist.
- Moses de León (*Zohar*), 13th century Spanish Kabbalist.
- Isaac ibn Ghiyyat (*Me'ah She'arim*), 11th century Spanish halakhist and commentator.
- Moses ben Meir of Ferrara, 13th century Tosafist.
- Eliezer ben Samuel of Metz (*Yereim*), 13th century Tosafist. (c. 1140-1237)
- Eliezer ben Samuel of Verona, 13th century Tosafist.
- Immanuel of Rome, 14th century Italian poet (1261-c. 1335)



Abraham Ibn Ezra  
(center)

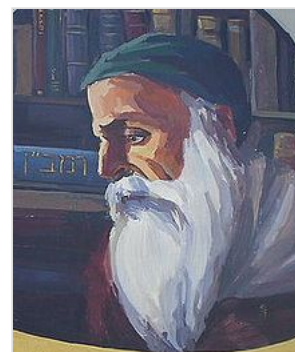
- Benjamin ben Judah, 14th century Italian exegete. (c. 1290-1335)
- Benjamin ben Isaac of Carcassonne, 14th century scholar.
- Judah ben Benjamin Anaw, 13th century Italian halakhist and Talmudist (c. 1215-1280)
- Zedekiah ben Abraham Anaw (*Shibbolei HaLeqet*), 13th century Italian halakhist (c. 1220-1280)
- Benjamin ben Abraham Anaw, 13th century poet, exegete, and halakhist. (d. c. 1289)
- Abba Mari, (*Minhat Kenaot*), 13th century Provençal rabbi (c. 1250 – c. 1306)
- Isaac ben Abba Mari (*Ittur Soferim*), 12th century Provençal rabbi (c. 1122 – c. 1193)
- Jacob ben Meir, 12th century Talmudist, halakhist, and Biblical philologist (1100–1171)
- Simhah ben Samuel of Vitry, 11th century French Talmudist(?-1105)
- Shemaiah of Soissons, 12th century Talmudist and Biblical exegete
- Crescas Vidal, 14th century Talmudist and philosopher
- Joseph Kara, 12th century Biblical exegete. (c. 1065 – c. 1135)
- Isaiah di Trani, 12th century Biblical exegete and halakhist. (c. 1180 – c. 1250)
- Isaiah di Trani the Younger, 13th century Biblical exegete and halakhist
- Don Isaac Abravanel, (*Abarbanel*), 15th century philosopher and Torah commentator (1437–1508)
- Israel Bruna, (Mahari Bruna), 15th century German Rabbi and Posek
- Abraham ibn Daud, (*Sefer HaKabbalah*), 12th century Spanish philosopher
- Abraham ibn Ezra, (*Ibn Ezra*), 12th century Spanish-North African Biblical commentator
- David Abudirham, said to be a student of the Baal Ha-Turim (but this is doubtful)
- Samuel ben Jacob Jam'a, 12th century North African rabbi and scholar
- Asher ben Jehiel, (*Rosh*), 13th century German-Spanish Talmudist
- Moses Kimhi, 12th century biblical commentator and grammarian.
- David Kimhi, (*RaDaK*) 12th century French biblical commentator, philosopher, and grammarian
- Yaakov ben Moshe Levi Moelin, (*Maharil*), 14th century codifier of German minhag
- Obadiah ben Abraham of Bertinoro, (*Bartenura*), 15th century commentator on the Mishnah
- Meir of Rothenburg, 13th century German rabbi and poet
- Bahya ibn Paquda, (*Hovot ha-Levavot*), 11th century Spanish philosopher and moralist
- Hasdai Crescas, (*Or Hashem*), 14th century Talmudist and philosopher
- Dunash ben Labrat, 10th century grammarian and poet
- Rabbeinu Gershom, 11th century German Talmudist and legalist
- Isaac ben Moses of Vienna, 13th century Bohemian Posek
- Gersonides, Levi ben Gershom, (*Ralbag*), 14th century French Talmudist and philosopher



Isaac Alfasi



Maimonides' statue in Córdoba



Nachmanides



Rashi

- Eliezer ben Nathan, 12th century poet and pietist
- Hillel ben Eliakim, (*Rabbeinu Hillel*), 12th century Talmudist and disciple of *Rashi*
- Ibn Tibbon, a family of 12th and 13th century Spanish and French scholars, translators, and leaders
- Isaac Alfasi, (the *Rif*), 11th century North African and Spanish Talmudist and Halakhist; author of "*Sefer Ha-halachoth*"
- Jacob ben Asher, (*Baal ha-Turim* ; *Arbaah Turim*), 14th century German-Spanish Halakhist
- Jonah ibn Janah, 11th century Hebrew grammarian
- Joseph Albo, (*Sefer Ikkarim*), 15th century Spain
- Joseph ibn Migash 12th century Spanish Talmudist and rosh yeshiva; teacher of Maimon, father of Maimonides
- Meir Abulafia, (*Yad Ramah*), 13th century Spanish Talmudist
- Maimonides, Moshe Ben Maimon, (*Rambam*), 12th century Spanish-North African Talmudist, philosopher, and law codifier
- Mordecai ben Hillel, (*The Mordechai*), 13th century German Halakhist
- Nahmanides, Moshe ben Nahman, (*Ramban*), 13th century Spanish and Holy Land mystic and Talmudist
- Nissim of Gerona, (*RaN*), 14th century Halakhist and Talmudist
- Rashi, (Solomon ben Yitzchak), 11th century French Talmudist, the primary commentator of Talmud
- Elazar Rokeach, (*Sefer HaRokeach*), 12th century German rabbinic scholar
- Samuel ben Judah ibn Tibbon, 12th-13th century French Maimonidean philosopher and translator
- Tosafists, (*Tosafot*), 11th, 12th and 13th century Talmudic scholars in France and Germany
- Yehuda Halevi, (*Kuzari*), 12th century Spanish philosopher and poet devoted to Zion
- David ben Reuven, (Rabbeinu David), 12th century Talmudist with a commentary on Masechet Pesachim that has become influential on contemporary lyyun.
- Menachem Meiri, (*Meiri*), 13th century Talmudist
- Yom Tov Asevilli, (*Ritva*), 13th century Talmudist
- Yitzhak Saggi Nehor, (Isaac the Blind), 12th-13th century Provençal Kabbalist
- Solomon ben Aderet, (*Rashba*), 13th century Talmudist
- Aharon HaLevi, (*Ra'ah*), 13th century Talmudist
- Zerachiah ha-Levi of Girona, (*Baal Ha-Maor*) 12th century Talmudist
- Meshullam ben Jacob, (*Rabbeinu Meshullam Hagodol*), 12th century Talmudist.(1235-1310)
- Joseph Caspi, 13th–14th century talmudist, grammarian, and philosopher. (1280—1345)
- Bahya ben Asher ibn Halawa, 13th-14th century commentator, Talmudist and Kabbalist

## See also

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- Rabbinic literature
- Eras of history important in Jewish law
- List of rabbis

- History of Responsa: Rishonim

## References

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1. See Kesef Mishna (Maamrim 2:2), Kovetz Igros Chazon Ish (2:26)
2. See Piskei Ha'Rosh, Bava Metzia 3:10, 4:21, Shabbat 23:1

## External links

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- The Rules of Halacha ([http://www.aish.com/literacy/concepts/The\\_Rules\\_of\\_Halacha.asp](http://www.aish.com/literacy/concepts/The_Rules_of_Halacha.asp)), Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan
- The different rabbinic eras (<http://www.faqs.org/faqs/judaism/FAQ/03-Torah-Halacha/section-52.html>), faqs.org
- RabbiMap (<https://shlomo232.github.io/RabbiMap/>) - interactive map showing where the *rishonim* and other notable rabbis lived
- Torah Personalities and the Times in Which They Lived (<https://web.archive.org/web/20051109101043/http://www.tzemachdovid.org/gedolim/jhistory/index.html>) (MP3s), Rabbi R. Y. Eisenman
  - 9th Through 11th Century (<http://chaburas.org/911cent.html>)
  - 12th Century (<http://chaburas.org/12cent.html>)
  - 13th Century (<http://chaburas.org/13cent.html>)
  - 14th Century (<http://chaburas.org/14cent.html>)
  - 15th Century (<http://chaburas.org/15cent.html>)
  - 16th Century (<http://chaburas.org/16cent.html>)

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