

# מקורות התורה

## 39 - סבוראים וגאונים

מכללת מבשרת ירושלים

### **A] WHEN WAS THE TALMUD FINALLY SEALED? THE SAVORAIM**

1. רב אשי ורבינא סוף הוראה

בבא מציעא פו.

2. ובתר הכי אע"ג דודאי הוראה לא הות, הוּ סבוראי דמפרשי פירושי דמקרי להוראה ואקרי אנהו רבנן סבוראי. וכל מאי דהוה תלי וקאי פרשוה

איגרת רב שרירא גאון: רבנן סבוראי

- What does Rav Sherira mean when he says that the Savoraim were 'close to Hora'ah'?<sup>1</sup>

3. ובתריה מלך רב יוסי וביומיה סוף הוראה ואסתיים תלמודא

איגרת רב שרירא גאון: רבנן סבוראי

- Read the attached extracts from Rav Meir Triebitz's article<sup>2</sup>

### **B] MAJOR TORAH WORKS OF THE EARLY GEONIM**

#### **(a) Teshuvot of the Geonim c.650-1050**

- from the time of R. Sheshna Gaon (Sura 660-670)
- mostly from Sura but also from Pumbedisa and other Gaonim
- Arab conquests opened communications between Bavel and the rest of the Jewish world

#### **(b) She'iltot of Rav Achai Gaon c.750**

- first main Torah work after the Talmud
- arranged according to the weekly Parasha
- deals with specific questions asked interwoven with ideas on the parasha

#### **(c) Halachot Pesukot of R. Yehudai Gaon c.750**

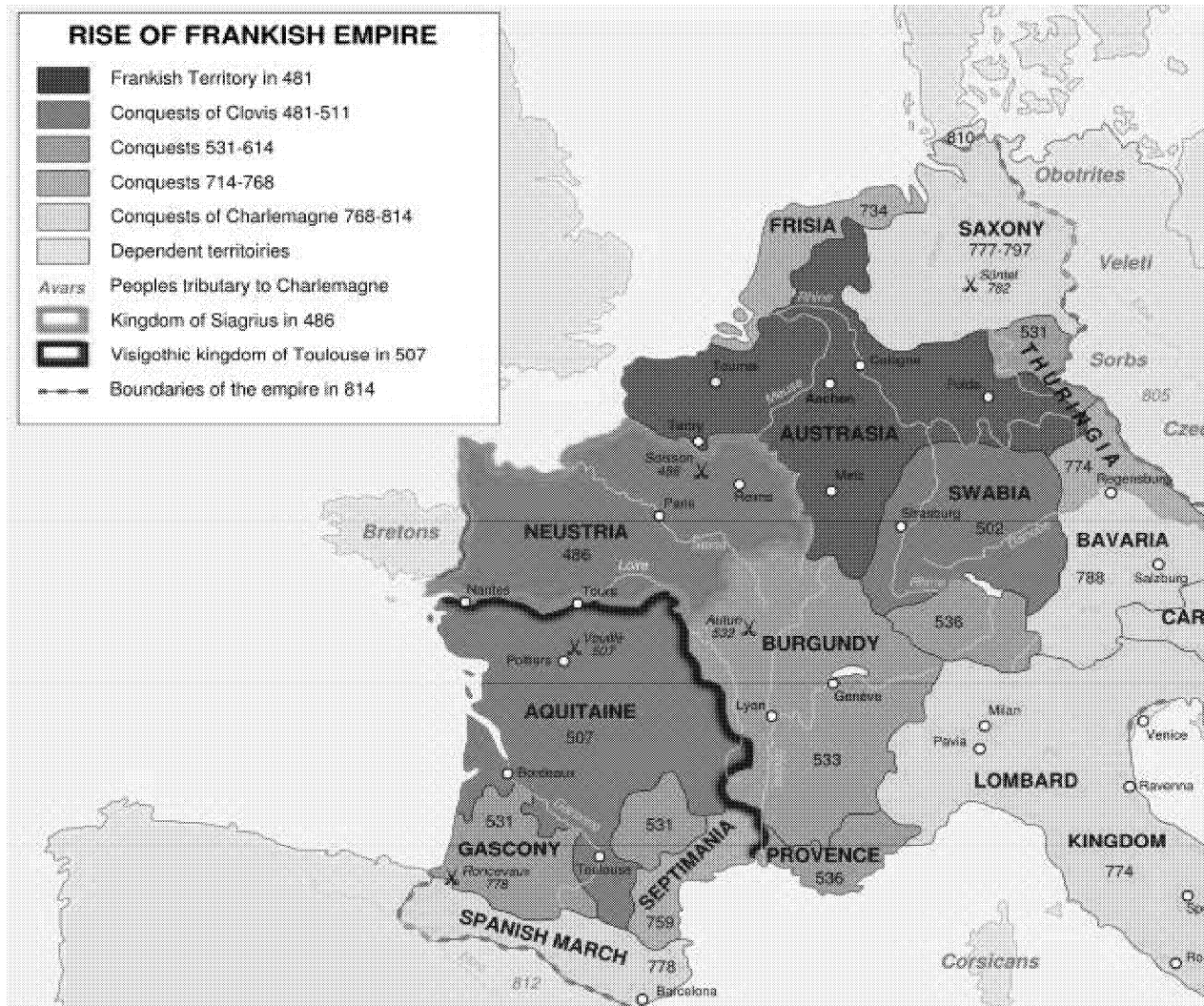
- first halachic codification of the final rulings of the Talmud, without the argumentation

#### **(d) Halachot Gedolot - "Behag" of R. Shimon Kayyara c.800**

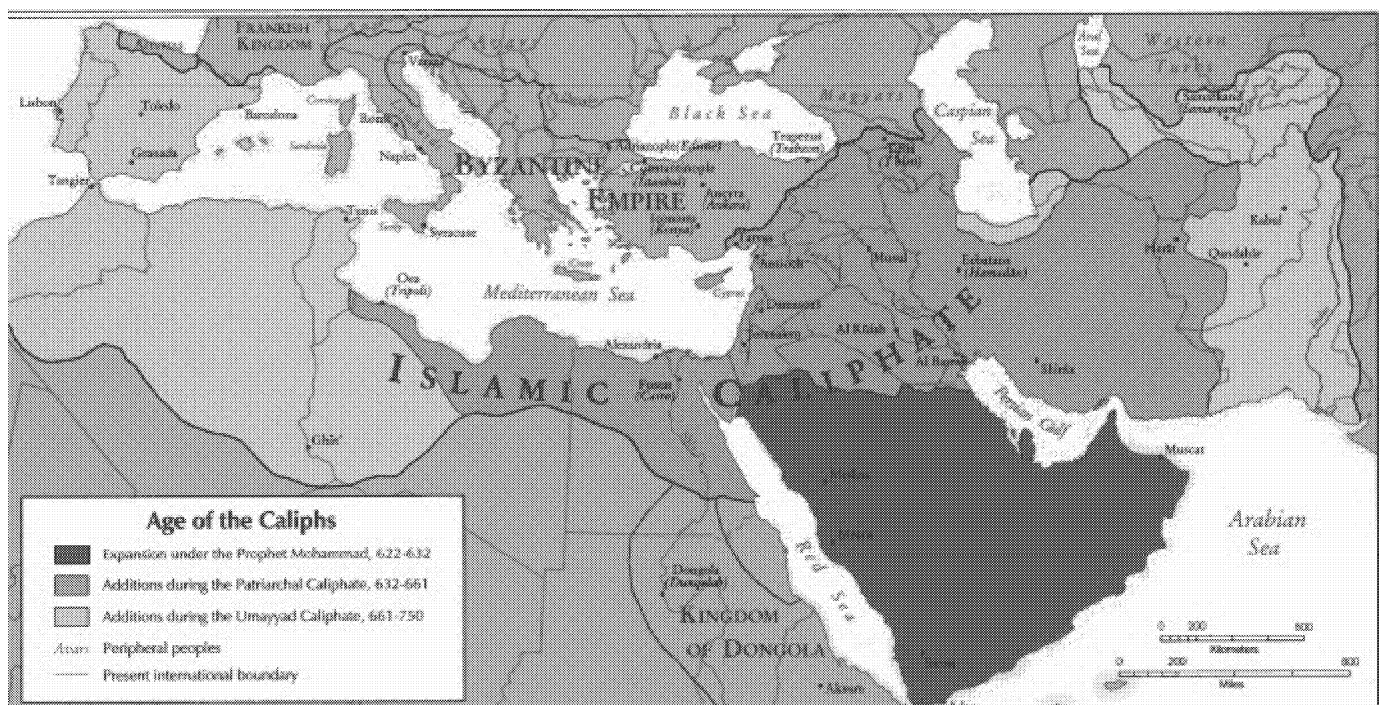
- halachic codification of the Talmud
- first to compile a list of 613 mitzvot. Often disputed by the Rambam. The Behag included 5 mitzvot in his 613 which are Rabbinic - Chanukah candles, Megillah, Hallel, 100 berachot a day and Shabbat candles!

1. Read the attached extract from the Iggeret of Rav Sherira Gaon

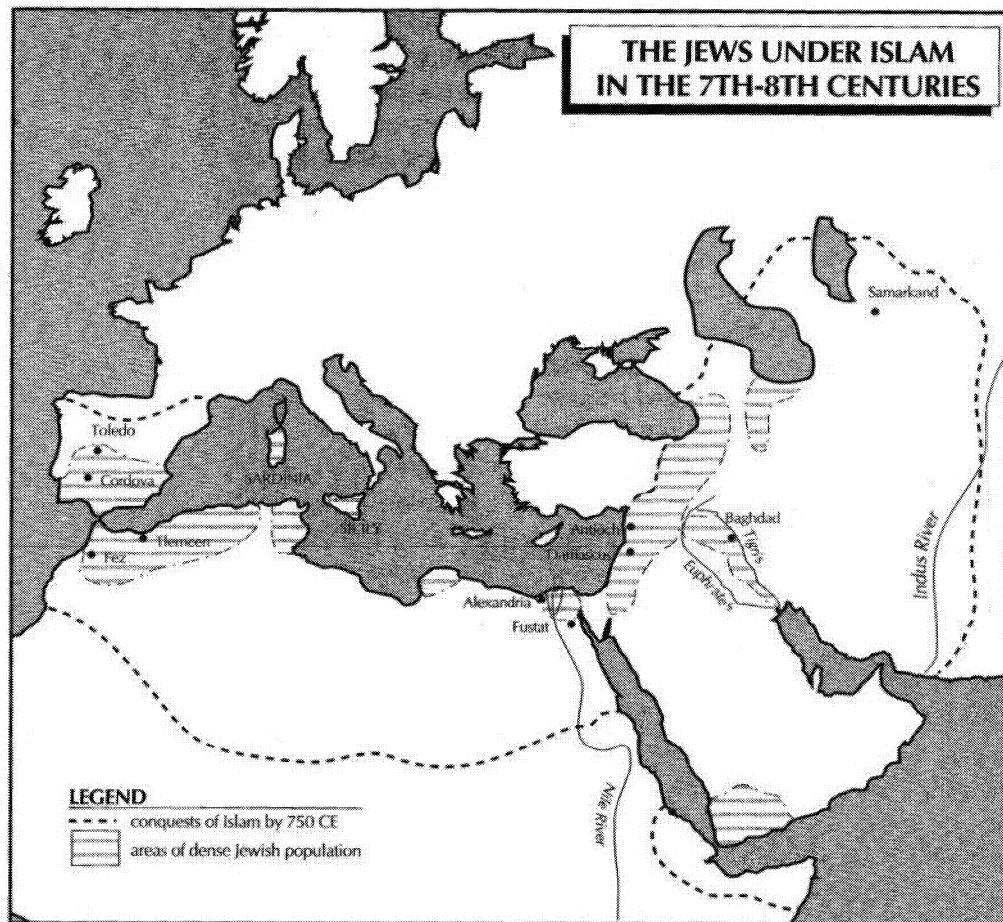
2. Rav Meir Treibitz understands the position of many Rishonim to be that this post-hora'ah period saw the development and formulation of the discussion, dialogue and dialectic in the Talmud, as opposed to the 'rulings - hora'ah' of the Talmudic period which were brought to and end in the time of Rav Ashi - see his essay on [http://www.hashkafacircle.com/journal/R3\\_RMT\\_Talmud.pdf](http://www.hashkafacircle.com/journal/R3_RMT_Talmud.pdf)



The Frankish Empire 450-800



The Spread of Islam 622-750



### C] HISTORICAL CONTEXT - 750-900

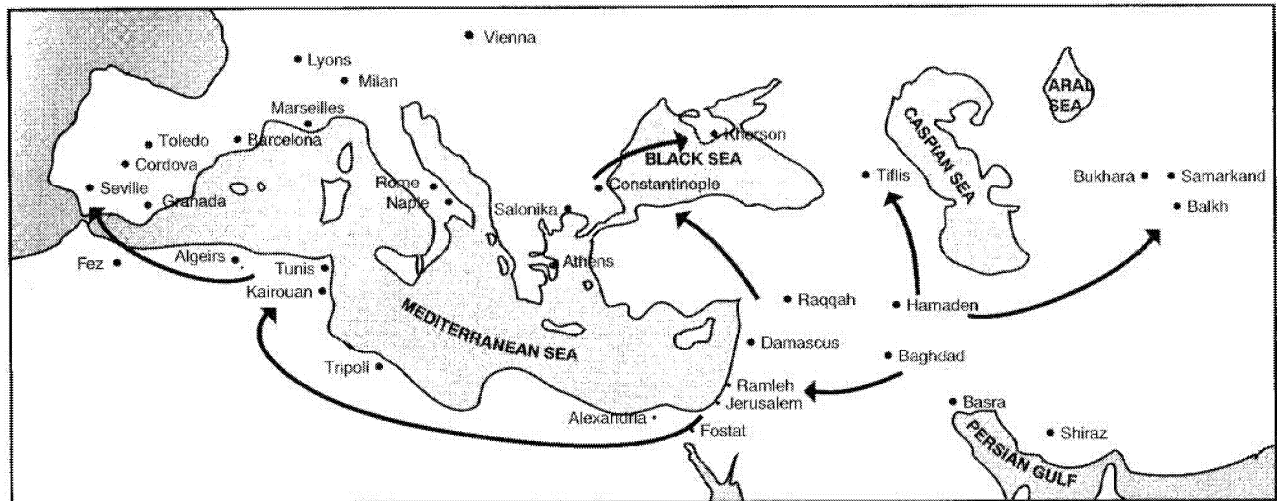
750	Omayyad Moslem Dynasty ends and Abbasid Dynasty begins
760	The split of Anan from Judaism and the founding of the Karaite religion
c.800	Charlemagne invites the Jews back to France/Germany
c.850	R. Moshe Hazaken moves from Italy to the new community of Mainz in Germany
853	Rule of R. Netronai Gaon of Sura
856	Rule of R. Amram Gaon of Sura
c.870	Writing of the first Siddur - Seder of R. Amram Gaon
c.875	Move of the Yeshivot of Sura and Pumpedisa to Baghdad
882	Birth of Rav Saadia Gaon
c.900	R. Aharon ben Meir becomes head of Yeshiva in Eretz Yisrael
c.900	R. Machir moves from Bavel to set up a new community in Narbonne in the Provence
942	Death of R. Saadia Gaon

### D] JEWS IN THE 9TH CENTURY ISLAMIC WORLD

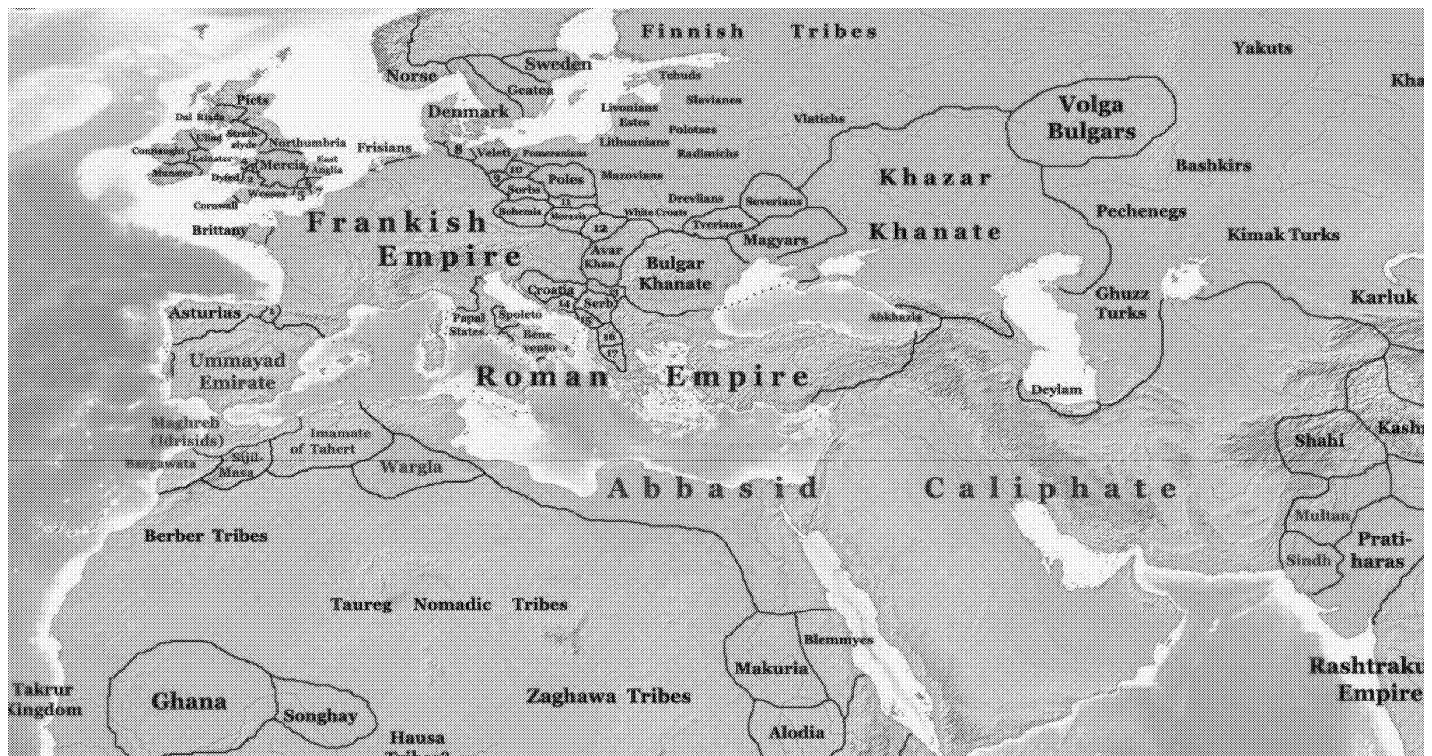
- Arab conquests bring Islam into contact with Greco-Roman culture. Philosophical works of Plato and Aristotle translated into Arabic
- Islam divided in attitude to rationalism:- *Mu'tazila* school promotes a rationalist understanding of Islam (*Kalam*). *Ash'ariyya* school promotes non-rational revelatory understanding of Islam
- Abassids move Islamic capital from Damascus to Baghdad which becomes very cosmopolitan
- Jews assimilate and are influenced by Islamic ideas and, through them, Greek philosophy. Move in Judaism towards synthesizing revelation and rationalism
- Growth of messianic and heretical groups in Egypt and Bavel - particularly the Karaites

**E] HISTORICAL CONTEXT - 900-1038**

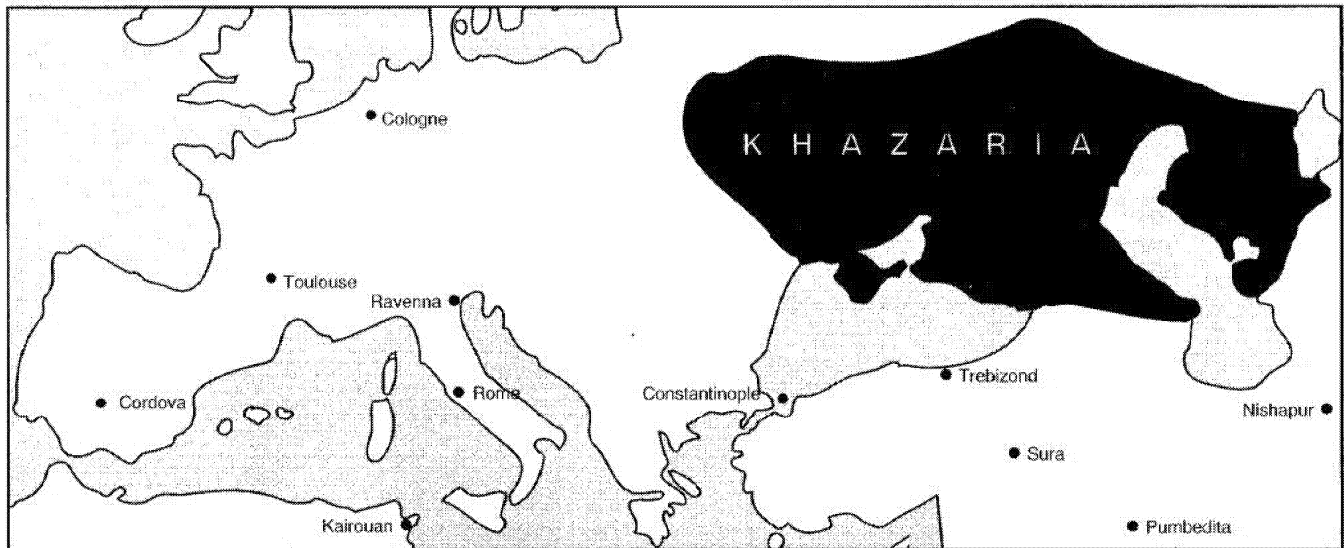
- c.900 Conversion of the Khazar Kingdom to Judaism (see map below)
- 942 Death of R. Saadia Gaon. Beginning of the decline of the academies of Sura and Pumpedisa
- c. 960 The 4 Hostages
- R. Chushiel (father of R. Chananel - sold to N Africa
  - R. Moshe (father of R. Chanoch) - sold to Cordova, Spain
  - R. Shmaryahu - sold to Alexandria, Egypt
  - 4th hostage unknown
- 968 Rav Sherira Gaon (900-1000) appointed head of Pumpedisa
- 969 Khazar kingdom overwhelmed by growing Russian tribes and Byzantines
- 998 Rav Hai Gaon (Rav Sherira's son) (939-1038) appointed head of Pumpedisa
- 1038 Rav Hai Gaon dies



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**Jewish emigration from Bavel in 9th to 11th Centuries**

World Empires c. 800 CE



### **F] KEY TORAH FIGURES (900-1050) - BAVEL**

- Rav Sherira Gaon (900-1000)
- Rav Hai Gaon (Rav Sherira's son) (939-1038)

### **G] KEY TORAH FIGURES (900-1050) - SPAIN**

- Chisdai ibn Shaprut (915-990) - linguist, scholar and author in the court of the Chaliph of Cordova
- Menachem ibn Saruk (c.920-c.970) - grammarian - author of the first complete Hebrew dictionary
- Donash ibn Labrat (920-990) - grammarian - fierce critic of Menachem ibn Saruk
- Shmuel Hanagid (993-1055) - vizier to the King of Granada
- R. Bachya ibn Pakudah (c.1000-1065) - dayan in Saragossa, Spain
- Shlomo ibn Gavirol (1021-c.1058) - one of greatest Hebrew poets - composed *Keter Malchut*

### **H] KEY TORAH FIGURES (900-1050) - NORTH AFRICA**

- Rabbeinu Nissim ("Gaon") (990-1062) - wrote commentary on Talmud
- Rabbeinu Chananel b. Chushiel (990-1053) - wrote commentary on Talmud

### **I] KEY TORAH FIGURES (900-1050) - FRANCE/GERMANY**

- Rabbeinu Gershon (Meor Hagola) (960-1040) - student of R. Hai Gaon and head of Yeshiva in Mainz
- Rabbi Eliezer Hagadol of Mainz (c.990-1055)
- Rabbi Ya'akov ben Yakar (c1000-1064) - student of R. Gershom and main teacher of Rashi

### **J] KEY TORAH FIGURES (900-1050) - PROVENÇE**

- Rabbi Moshe Hadarshan (11th C) - head of the Yeshiva in Narbonne; often quoted by Rashi

**K] MAJOR TORAH WORKS - 900-1050**

- Iggeres Rav Sherira Gaon      historical account of Jewish history up to his times
- Hamekach V'Hamimkar      of Rav Hai Gaon - on commercial halacha
- Machberet      of R. Menachem ibn Saruk - Hebrew dictionary
- Mevoh Hatalmud      of R. Shmuel Hanagid - guide to methodology of Talmud
- Emunot Vedeot      of R. Saadia Gaon
- Chovot Halevavot      of R. Bachya (ibn Pekuda) - based on Emunot Vedeot of R. Saadia - presents Jewish belief, ethics and philosophy
- Rabbeinu Nissim      Commentary on Talmud
- Rabbeinu Chananel ("Rach")      Commentary on Talmud
- Rabbeinu Gershom      Commentary on the Talmud. Many takanot including (i) bigamy; (ii) reading others' mail; (iii) divorcing a wife against her will; (iv) forcing a Jew to go to non-Jewish courts; (v) leaving a minyan